



Fight on!

ISSUE 6

SUMMER 2009

dedicated to Lee Gold,
who spearheaded the fanzine movement,
launched a thousand heroes on the road to adventure,
and kept the home fires burning

This looks good, Dear...three bedrooms, sunken
living room, subterranean parking, two torture
chambers, and a month's supply of virgins
guaranteed, all for a mere 65,000 Gold
Pieces on a one year lease.



ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS #1

REPRINT

We delighted in the flexibility of original *D&D*: making up not just our own worlds but our own creatures and character classes, our own weapons and armor and spells. Bards showed up in an early issue of *A&E*, for instance. So did hoop snakes and larls and many other creatures from myth, legend, science fiction and fantasy.

— Lee Gold, *Grogardian*, April 2009

Issue 6
A New Hope

It is a period of civil war.
Rebel gamers, striking from
a hidden base, have won their
first victory against the Corporate
Gaming Empire.

During the battle Rebel spies managed
to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate
weapon, FUN. Pursued by the Empire's sinister
agents, the *Fight On!* crew races home aboard their
starship, custodians of the stolen plans that can save their
people and restore freedom to the galaxy....

Welcome back! Great news just keeps on coming here at *Fight On!* We would like to thank the legendary Erol Otus for judging our recent art contest, won by Mark Allen and Mikko Torvinen among many others. You'll be hearing more from Erol in issue 8! We are also excited about our new contest for fantasy fiction, which will be featured in a special volume called *Weird Enclaves & Black Pits*, out early 2010. Please send stories (as well as your usual submissions for *Fight On!*) to iggyumlaut@gmail.com. We would also like to thank M.A.R. Barker for his blessing in publishing material for the original *Empire of the Petal Throne* game, Dan Proctor for similar permission for *Mutant Future*, and Jason Vey for *Spellcraft & Swordplay*. Our abbreviations should be broadly recognizable to lovers of old-school fantasy games. We use DC for Defense Class. *Fight On!* is a quarterly publication. Our authors and artists own all their own work. *Fight On!* only asks for the right to print your work in the issue it's originally published in in perpetuity. Authors and artists own all other rights and may re-use and resell their work as they see fit. If you want to contact our authors or artists, drop us a line and we'll put you in touch (or just contact them directly if you know how).

Fight On! is a journal of shared fantasy. We who read and write for this magazine are a community of role-playing enthusiasts unified by our love of the freewheeling, do-it-yourself approach that birthed this hobby back in the 1970's. We are wargamers who write our own rules and fantasists who build our own worlds, weekend warriors sharing dreams of glory and authors collaborating on tales of heroism and valor. We talk, paint, draw, write, act, costume, build and roll dice in service of our visions. We game. And you're welcome to join us.

-Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor

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Variant Races

character options by Calithena

I tend to be pretty permissive about which character races are allowed in my games. Creatures that can naturally fly or who have exceptional magical or psychic abilities need to be carefully considered, but most other types really come down to campaign considerations and personal preference. What follows are some straightforward rules for some of the most commonly requested types.

Bugbears can advance to 4th level as Warriors or 6th level as Thieves, and can multiclass if this is allowed in your game. They receive a bonus to moving silently, sneaking up on folks, and surprise.

Centaurs can advance to 6th level as Warriors or Priests, but can not multiclass. Instead of their regular attacks they may attempt a kick at -2 for double damage to opponents directly behind them. They move as light warhorses, or slightly more slowly, and can carry as much as same. Their armor costs as much as human armor and barding combined. Due to their size I generally require them to start at 2nd level, and would only allow a new centaur character into a party that had already risen to that level.

Demonspawn are immune to fire and can advance to 10th level as Warriors or Mages or 8th level in both. Such characters look like men, elves, dwarves, hobbits, goblins, orcs, etc. with horns and red-tinted skin.

Goblins are especially versatile, and can rise to 4th level as Warriors or 8th level as Mages or Thieves. Liberal GMs may permit Warrior-Thief or Mage-Thief multiclassing (though in the latter case I would impose a maximum level of 6/6). Many adventuring goblins are Neutrals of exceptional ability who have left their corrupt societies looking for a better deal. Goblin society also includes gob-

Optional Attribute Score Modifiers for Variant Races:

	STR	INT	WIS	CON	DEX	CHA
Bug	+2	0	-1	0	+1	-2
Cen	+2	-1	0	0	-1	0
Dem	0	0	-1	0	0	+1
Gob	0	0	0	0	+1	-1
Hob	+1	-1	0	+1	+1	-2
Liz	+2	-1	0	+1	-1	-1
Orc	+1	0	0	0	0	-1
Serp	0	+2	-1	-1	0	0

Alternately, roll as normal and require 13 minimum for +2 attributes, 9 minimum for +1 attributes, and 14 maximum for -2 attributes to select the race in question.



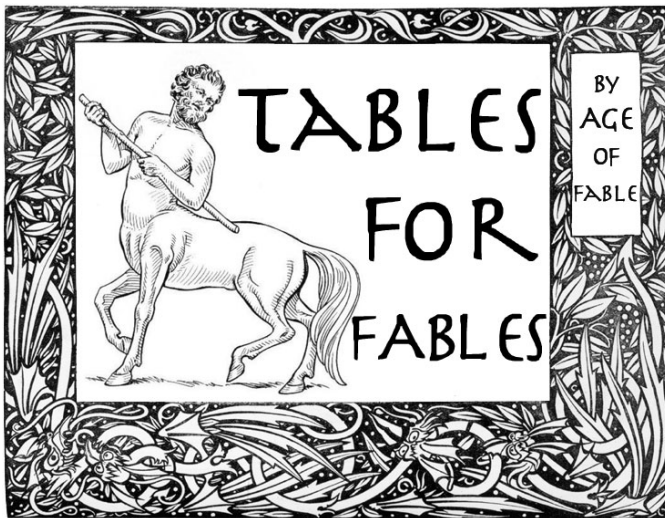
-lin shaman-priests, but these never adventure except with their own kind, and so are not suitable as player characters outside an all-goblin party.

Hobgoblins only advance as Warriors, but may rise to the 8th level in this profession. Hobgoblin characters are very tough and receive a +2 to saves against poison, etc.

Lizard Men are another consummate warrior race, and may rise to 8th level as such. Their claws and jaws allow them to fight as armed when they are not. Their speed is only 9, but their natural scales protect as chainmail. (Actual chain raises their DC by 1, plate by 3, but such armors cost double and triple normal respectively and must be specially made to fit these unusual creatures). Prolonged exposure to extreme cold requires them to save vs. sleep, however.

Orcs may rise to the 7th level as Warriors or 5th level as Thieves, and may multiclass (up to 6/4) if such is allowed.

Serpent Folk are an ancient and magically potent race which can rise to 4th level as Warriors, 12th level as Mages, or 4/10 in both. All serpent folk have a *hypnotic gaze* (taken as a 1st level charm spell by magical serpent folk, or received as an automatic ability once/day for non-mage warriors) which they use in cunning and subtle ways in order to function in a society which fears and dreads them insofar as it remembers them at all. Ω



Mounts: Land (d100)

01-64	whatever is the most common local mount: camels in the desert, giant lizards underground, a dogsled in the snow, horses in most other places
65-67	a coach pulled by the most common local mount
68-70	a chariot pulled by the common local mount
71-73	a baby elephant
74-76	a giant turtle or tortoise
77-79	an animated suit of armour which carries the rider piggy-back
80-82	a centaur
83-85	a giant scarab beetle, whose carapace is (d6) 1 battered as if it had been in many battles, 2 painted in the colours of its owner, 3 covered in armour, 4 covered in furs, 5 polished to a fine gleam, 6 studded with precious stones
86-88	a palanquin or rickshaw, pulled or carried by animated skeletons
89-91	roll again, ignoring results of 86-91: the mount is an undead version (d6: 1-2 ghostly, 3 zombie-like, 4 demonic, 5-6 skeletal)
92-94	roll again, ignoring this result – the mount has human-like intelligence
95-97	roll again, ignoring this result –the mount can fly (d6: 1-4 has wings, 5-6 without wings).
98-00	roll again, ignoring this result –the mount is a mechanical simulation of whatever the result is.

Mounts: Air (d20)

1	hot air balloon
2	living hot air balloon
3	giant bird (d6: 1 eagle 2 hawk 3 swan 4 dove 5 crow 6 vulture)
4	giant flying insect: 1-2 dragonfly 3-4 bee 5-6 blowfly
5	sleigh pulled by reindeer
6	d6: 1-3 flying shark 4-6 flying dolphin
7	flying house (d6: 1-2 cottage 3 cottage w/garden 4-5 family-sized house 6 family-sized house with garden)
8	magic item which allows the bearer to fly
9-10	flying horse (d6: 1-2 pegasus 3-4 hippogriff 5 winged centaur 6 wingless flying horse)
11	coach pulled by flying horses (roll as above)
12	cloud
13	carpet
14	broomstick
15	wyvern
16	d6: 1-3 dragon, 4-6 griffon
17	roll on the 'Mounts: Land' table above, with 'the most common mount in the area' as the most common land mount below, d6: 1-3 has wings, 4-6 wingless
18	a cloud of butterflies
19	a chair (d6: 1-2 throne 3-4 normal chair 5-6 normal chair accompanied by side table).
20	roll again, re-rolling this result or any inanimate object: the mount is an undead version (d6: 1-2 ghostly, 3 zombie-like, 4 demonic, 5-6 skeletal)

Mounts: Personality (d12)

1	Mean: likes to bite or threaten those getting too close
2	Proud: preens and prance around other animals
3	Well-Trained: responds well to commands
4	Loyal: always seeks to return to its owner if separated
5	Courageous: only retreats from battle if ordered

6	Shy: avoids danger and other creatures
7	Ham: difficult if not given frequent treats or affection
8	Flirt: always chases after mounts of the same species
9	Hungry: always on the look out for a stray bit of food and chews on things
10	Possessive: hates its owner to notice other animals
11	Lazy: hates to run or do heavy labor
12	Skittish: jumps at shadows, startles easily

Hindquarters of a Centaur (d6)

1-2	Horse
3	Donkey – the centaur will likely be less susceptible to fear and intimidation than most centaurs
4	Zebra – the centaur will likely be more attractive, but worse at hiding than most centaurs
5	Camel – the centaur will likely be able to survive in the desert and go without water longer than most
6	Mountain goat – the centaur will likely be better at climbing than most centaurs

Horse Colour (d20)

This table may also be used for parts of centaurs, hippogriffs, etc.

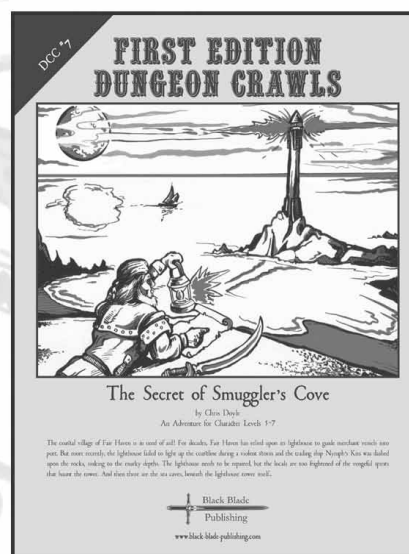
1-2	black
3-4	light chestnut (light brown)
5-6	dark chestnut (dark brown)
7-8	light bay (light brown body, black 'points' - mane, tail, and lower legs)
9-10	dark bay (dark brown body, black 'points' - mane, tail, and lower legs)
11	white
12	'grey' (a mix of white and color that looks grey)
13	dapple grey (grey w/patterns of round white spots)
14	palomino (yellow-tan body, white mane and tail)
15	blue roan (a mixed pattern of black and white hairs, except that the head and 'points' - mane, tail and lower legs - are black)

16	bay roan (a mixed pattern of brown and white hairs, except that the head is brown, and the 'points' - mane, tail and lower legs - are black)
17	leopard (white with coloured spots – d6 for colour of spots: 1 black 2 light chestnut 3 dark chestnut 4 light bay 5 dark bay 6 palomino. The mane and tail will be coloured as for the spot colour; remember that bays have black manes and tails, and palominos have white manes and tails)
18	snowflake (as above, except the horse is mostly coloured, with white spots)
19	d6: angelic white-gold or demonic red-black
20	d8: 1-7 solid spectral color (ROYGBIV), 8 invisible



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Git ‘R Done!

task resolution methods from Will Mistretta, Mátyás Hartyándi, M. J. Harnish, and Northrunicandus.

We were deluged with good ideas for resolving non-combat situations this issue. After a little thought, we decided to abridge them and combine them together into a grab bag of goodies. Enjoy! - Ig

Will Mistretta – The Thief Skill As Saving Throw: The thief has been under siege of late. One main line of criticism is that making activities like picking pockets and hiding in shadows dedicated thief abilities creates awkward situations where warriors, priests, and mages are *de facto* prohibited (or at least strongly discouraged) from attempting to perform the same feats. This is a fair criticism; on the other hand, the thief is a basic fantasy archetype, and many of us like the thief! So how do we fix the thief without rewriting the class or implementing elaborate supplemental rules? Simply treat the percentile thief ability score as a sort of saving throw that the thief is entitled to in the event that the initial attempt at a given task fails. If this second roll succeeds, the initial failed roll is ignored, and the thief is considered to have succeeded after all.

Example One: Two intrepid adventurers, a warrior and a thief, are faced with a sheer wall. The GM rules that there is only a 1 in 6 chance to safely complete such a tricky ascent with no special equipment, possibly with a +1 modifier to the roll for extraordinary dexterity. The fighter rolls a four and doesn't make it. He loses his grip and suffers falling damage. The thief rolls a five and also fails, however his follow-up Climb Walls "saving" roll is 41%, a success! He completes the climb safely.

Example Two: A thief and his mage companion are attempting to tiptoe past a distracted orc sentry. Neither are heavily encumbered or wearing metal armor, so the GM assigns a base 1-3 in 6 chance of success for each character. A failure by either is sure to be noticed by the orc. The magic-user succeeds with a roll of two. The thief scores a six and fails. His follow-up Move Silently roll is 88%, also a failure. Despite his advantage, the thief has blown it this time around. Roll for initiative!

This approach is quick to employ, easy to remember, and doesn't require changing one word of the thief class description from your rulebooks. It actually strengthens the thief (though perhaps not relative to other classes) by allowing two chances to succeed at any given usage of a "class skill," but doesn't infringe on the ability of other classes to attempt "thiefly" actions.

Mátyás Hartyándi – Universal 1d6 Knowledge System: This is a system for knowledge checks. My assumptions

are that even if the game focus is on player skill and there is no skill system in the game, the "What does my character know about The Ouroboros?" type of question is legitimate. Resolution should be as simple as possible, but when considering knowledge, grades are better than just Y/N results. Giving some information (even if it is false) is always better than nothing. This table works the best with uncommon topics. If the party works as a group have the character with the best chance roll once, possibly with a +1 if other characters contributed substantially.

Knowledge Check (1d6)

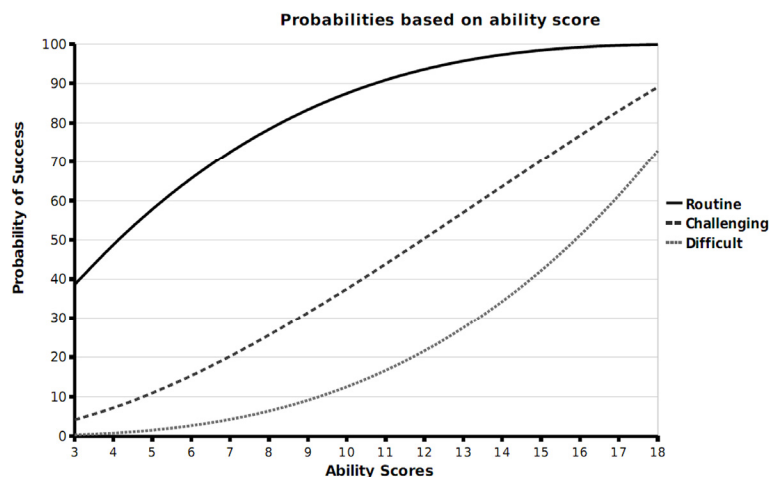
0-	False information (definitely dangerous)
1	False information (possibly dangerous)
2	No information
3	Cannot recall (roll again with -1 if there something jogs the PC's memory, e.g. another PC or research)
4	Rumors
5	Basic knowledge
6	Broad knowledge
7+	Mastery

Modifiers:

- relevantly high INT or WIS: +1
- relevantly low INT or WIS: -1
- topic alien to class: -1
- help/tool (e.g. library): +1
- character's level is high enough that they would be likely know this sort of thing: +1
- character's level is too low for this information: -1

M. J. Harnish – 3d20 Ability Checks: Rolling d20 under an appropriate attribute score is an old and time-honored way of resolving character actions, but doesn't allow for varying levels of difficulty. While modifiers can be used on the rolls, the system still suffers from a flat probability curve that leads to erratic results: even very high ability scores have a notable "whiff" factor, while low abilities can be wiped out entirely by even a small modifier. In contrast, using ability score modifiers instead of the actual ability scores tends to homogenize all the characters. The system that follows is a simple but relatively sophisticated way of making ability checks. It allows for three levels of "difficulty" to cover routine, challenging, and difficult situations. It also generates an asymptotic rather than flat probability curve which lends itself to more natural results, where even the worst score has some chance of success and the best scores have a chance of failure. I've used this system in my own *Labyrinth Lord* games and have found it very robust and simple.

The System: For any ability check, the GM simply assigns a difficulty level (Routine, Challenging, Difficult) and decides on the appropriate ability to be tested. The player then rolls 3d20 and then compares the results of one of



the dice to the appropriate ability – a roll that is equal to or less than the ability score is a success (roll under).

- For Routine tasks, the lowest of the three results is used
 - For Challenging tasks, the middle die result is consulted
 - For Difficult tasks, the highest of the three dice is taken
- For more granularity and difficulty at the high end one could use 5d20 with difficulty from 1 to 5. It's also possible to modify attribute scores when the test is for a "skill" that would fall within the class's talents or training. Thus a priest gains a bonus for religious knowledge. I suggest +1 when making class-related tests at levels 1-5, +2 at level 6+. Special training might also account for bonuses, but never modify an attribute over 19.

Northrundicandus – A Simple Skill System: Using the tables below, roll 2d6 and equal or exceed the posted number. At each level a PC may take a +1 to any skill of their choice. If you want quick character generation make this +1 at each level after first, or let them choose their +1 first level skill during play. The GM can provide a modifier of up to + or – 2 for difficulty if desired.

Chances of Success (2d6)

	Warrior	Mage	Priest
Athletics	6	12	10
Listening	10	10	10
Locks	12	12	12
Lore	12	6	7
Searching	10	10	10
Stealth	9	10	10
Trade	10	10	8
Wilderness	10	10	10

If you wanted to incorporate a thief class using this kind of system, a suggested baseline is Athletics 7, Listening 8, Locks 9, Lore 10, Searching 8, Stealth 8, Trade 8, and Wilderness 10. They should get +2 worth of bonuses each level instead of +1 as well. How to deal with different races is something else a GM working with this system will have to consider. +/-1 modifiers for what the race is

good/bad at is one option. Another is to make a custom table for each race, such as the following. Enjoy! Ω

	Elf	Dwarf	Hobbit
Athletics	6	8	9
Listening	8	9	8
Locks	13	11	11
Lore	7	8	11
Searching	9	9	8
Stealth	8	10	8
Trade	12	9	9
Wilderness	7	10	10

Is your coin pouch a little light?



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Hell-Grave of the Tveirbróður

by Jason Morningstar (with thanks to Clinton R. Nixon)

Beneath a stinking funeral mound lies a fortune in ancient treasure – and a terrible, long slumbering foe obsessed with greed and vengeance.

Máfurflói: The fishing village of Máfurflói (Gull Bay) is as out-of-the-way as it is possible to get, tucked in a sheltered bay far from civilization. The hundred or so residents are prosperous enough, catching, drying, and salting fish for trade. They are merchants by inclination and glad to make the acquaintance of strangers. Máfurflói has no inns but an abundance of warm hearths. Adventurers are unlikely to miss *Tindur Torsson*, a handsome young fisherman who fancies himself an adventurer as well. Tindur is barely more than a boy, but he's been in his share of local scrapes – stealing nets, moving boundary stones, seconding his uncle in a legal duel, chasing sea monsters and treasure-hunting. He's intensely interested in tales from afar, and will do his level best to match them point for point, embellishing where necessary. His trump card is a beautifully worked harness ornament from a horse's bridle, silver filigreed with gold. It is very old. Tindur got it grave-robbing beneath Bölvabrekka down the coast, the place known as the Hill of Curses, and he knows there is more treasure there to be discovered. Naturally he'll offer himself up as an expert guide and partner in the enterprise. *Old Fjóla* is Máfurflói's resident crone, and a font of knowledge concerning Bölvabrekka. If treated with kindness she will gladly spin a gruesome tale about an ancient witch and her ghostly wanton handmaidens – one for each

adventurer – who labor under a dreadful curse beneath the black turf of Bölvabrekka. These maidens promise carnal delights but deliver only death. It's all nonsense, but hopefully worrisome, bone-chilling nonsense. If asked, anyone else in Máfurflói will warn that the ancient hill is cursed, it is bad luck, it shouldn't be visited and it certainly shouldn't be tampered with. If gossip circulates that strangers are headed for the mound, picks and shovels can't be bought in the village for any price.

Bölvabrekka: Old Fjóla's stories to the contrary, Bölvabrekka is the grave of a pair of powerful warrior-brothers from the lost times, known in legend as the Tveirbróður. They were buried along with their ship, their treasure, their families, and their loyal servants, all slumbering beneath powerful death magics. None of them sleep peacefully. The mound is the better part of a day's walk from Máfurflói by rocky beach, threading up onto the cliffs when promontories jut out to challenge the sea. The footpath is haunted by outlaws and wild beasts, and a particularly exposed section of beach known as Smárs-traumr Umfirð (Neap-Tide Passage) is said to be the hunting ground of a tentacled horror with a taste for man-flesh that lurks in the shallows. Bölvabrekka is a lonely, forbidding place, lashed by wind and rain. The keening of gulls competes with the pounding of the surf at the base of the sea cliff far below. The mound forms a great, turf-covered hump facing the ocean, obviously fashioned by human hands. Its summit affords a magnificent view in those rare moments of clear weather – snow-capped peaks to the east, endless rolling ocean to the west, pristine coast stretching north and south forever. At the west end of the mound is an ugly, washed out hole where Tindur went grave robbing.

Digging: It's likely that Tindur's abortive efforts will be the point of entry for adventurers. It's also possible (and probably smart) for them to dig down at some other point. If they choose to do this, sketch out a map of the mound and let them dig where they choose. If they are digging over an actual chamber, after much hard work and ten feet of vertical drop they will hit wooden ceiling planks. If not, they will eventually hit cliff stone – a dead end.

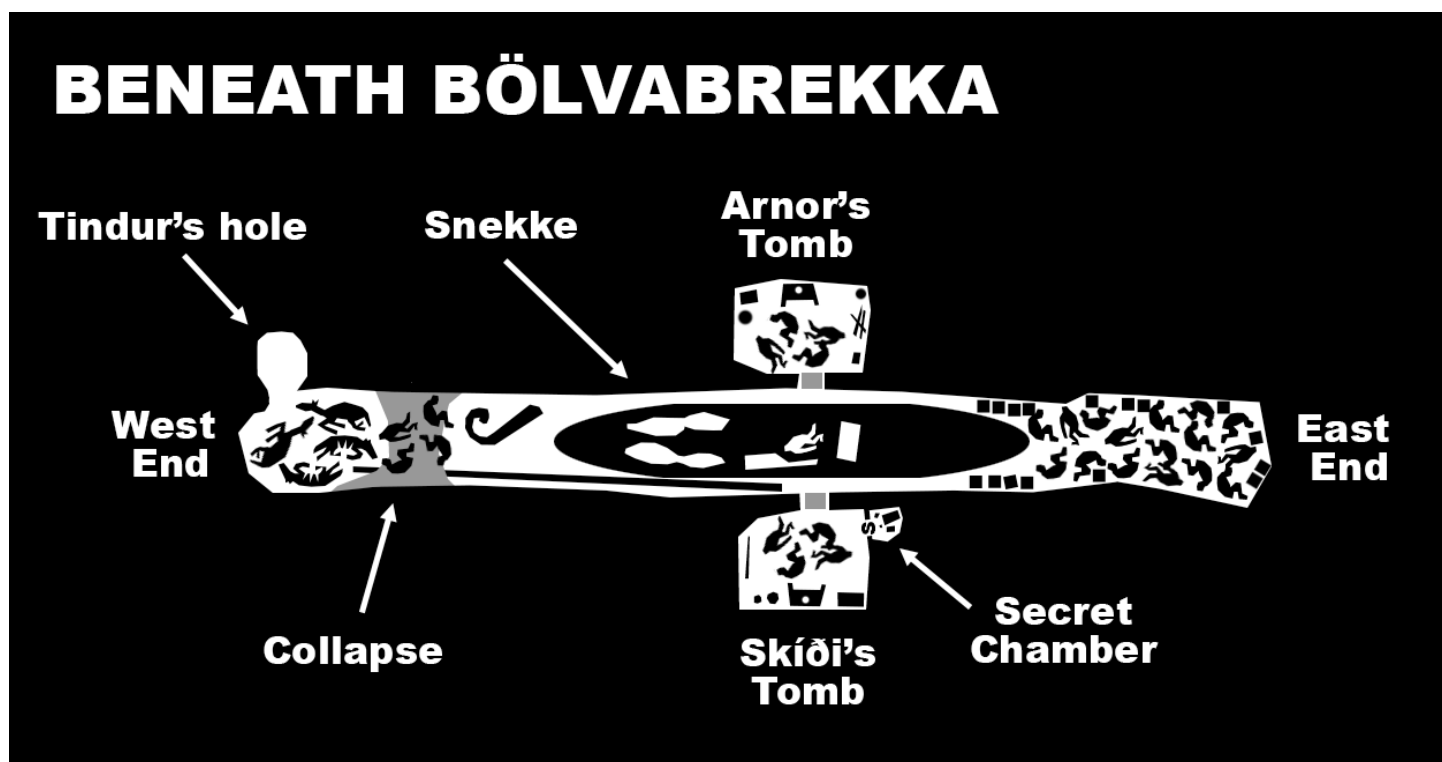
Beneath the Mound: Space is tightly confined, footing is unsure, and the undead have numbers to swarm. This can easily turn into a complicated pitched or running battle.

West End: The west end of the grave complex is marked by a massive stone plinth, the long buried final seal, which Tindur found, exposed, and dug around. Ten feet below the surface, he discovered a partially collapsed chamber containing the remains of four horses and their accouterments. It was here he found the silver ornament, amid smashed tack and powdery leather harness fittings. Beyond the silver ornament's mate, beneath a horse skull, there's nothing here of value (the matched set of tack are worth 20 gp). However, the collapse is obvious – in fact, the end of an oak pole juts out from the dirt at floor level. Any sailor will instantly recognize the spar of a ship – a big one at that. Loose earth can be excavated, but it is a slow, dirty, painful process. Light will be a problem, as will rain flooding in. Buried in the collapse are the desiccated corpses of four horsemen in tattered leather and four chests in various states of disrepair. The undead horsemen, if disturbed (and digging from the west end definitely disturbs them), will gradually re-awaken and writhe free of the dirt, causing a minor collapse in the process. This collapse effectively

seals the hole to the west end. They then wait for a chance to attack the interlopers with knives – ideally from behind, and ideally after the warriors in the east end have also been roused. **Lesser Undead (Horsemen, Coxswain, Families):** HD 2, DC 8, SPD 12, Atk 1x1d8/weapon, Save W1, Morale 12, or ST 8 DX 10 IQ 0 Wpn Dagger or Club 1d-1 Armor none. Treasure:

- The two largest chests contain textiles, once very fine but now long rotted.
- A smaller one with a badly corroded lock containing two twisted neck rings and four matching arm rings, a large gold buckle and a set of antler combs.
- The fourth chest, crushed and fallen to pieces, has the following mixed among the debris: several sets of matching bronze bangles, anklets, hair ornaments, and a dozen rusty knives.

Snekke Chamber: Beyond the collapse is the main chamber, ten feet wide but very long. Torchlight won't illuminate one end from the other. Jammed in the center of is a magnificent snekke, a shallow-draft coastal warship some 55 feet long and as wide as the underground hall. It is in fine shape and could even be made seaworthy, if anyone was ambitious enough to dig it up. The gunwales touch the walls of the chamber, so getting from one end to the other requires either climbing on deck or crawling next to the keel. On one side lies the mast (sticking out into the west end), and on the other are the ornamental bowsprit, encased in gold leaf and shining like the sun. Beneath the chamber's sagging timbered roof, the ship's deck boasts a compact, locked chest beneath a pair of rotted sails. The corpse of the ships' coxswain lies amidships, clutching the ship's rudder. He wears two silver arm bands and carries a



sunstone in a drawstring bag. Like the horsemen (same stats), the coxswain will slowly awaken and seek the shadows, awaiting an opportunity to strike. Treasure:

- The deck chest contains a magnificent mast finial in the shape of a dragon, leafed in gold. There are also two silver arm torques. One is marked ARNOR in the old tongue, and the other matching torque reads SKÍÐI.

The Trap-Stones: Rough-hewn stone columns brace identical doors, carved with ancient runes, to the north and south. These doors lead to the burial chambers of the two warrior-brothers, and they are trapped. Each door delicately supports a third enormous stone, and when opened from the Snekke chamber side brings tons of granite down on the unlucky opener. Not only is this intended to kill, it is also designed to seal the doorway forever. A triggered doorway also wakes the undead in the chamber it has sealed, and they will scrape their bones against the stone hungrily. The terrible brothers, if roused, can open the un-triggered doors from inside their burial chambers easily and without danger. Trap Stones: Save/Dodge or take 9d6, or else 4d to detect, 3d to dodge, 6d to disarm, 4d damage.

East End: The far end of the main chamber has sixteen small chests lining the earthen walls, and the floor contains neat rows of corpses, sixteen in all, dressed for war and lying next to wooden oars. These undead sleep fitfully, and will wake in a protective fury at any loud noise or disturbance. Their goal is to destroy the intruders, and they will follow them beyond the mound to accomplish that if necessary. The undead warriors wear ring mail stiffened with rust and carry rusty axes and shields. **Warrior Un-dead:** HD 2+1, DC 6, SPD 12, Atk 1x1d8/weapon, Morale 12, or 8 with ST 10 adjDX 8(9) IQ 0 Wpn Hammer 1d+1 Armor Small Shield (1) and 8 more skeletal ones with the same attributes, Wpn Cutlass 2d-2, Armor Small Shield (1), immune to spells and missiles and auto-matically destroyed by a single blow doing 6+ damage. Treasure:

- The sixteen wooden boxes, warrior's sea chests, contain rags, dust, and rusty cooking implements. A careful search of all sixteen will also find 12 sp & an electrum boot knife.

The Tombs: Skíði and Arnor rest in matching high seats, each in his own stone-lined chamber, each surrounded by their immediate family and the treasure of a lifetime of plunder and conquest. The two brothers are wights, and they share a psychic bond – if one is disturbed, the other will arise to punish the intruders, rousing his undead family in the process. There is no reasoning with them – they are monsters of pure wrath and greed, blindly protecting their hoards and lashing out at those who defile their graves.

North Tomb: The north tomb is the resting place of Arnor, the strong brother. Upon alarm, Arnor will take a direct approach to destroying anyone foolish enough to desecrate his grave. His four undead family members will fight by his side and are functionally identical to the



horsemen. Arnor wears a long coat of ring-mail and carries a fearsome hammer-axe with a long iron handle. His wife carries a pouch full of beautifully carved cannel coal jacket buttons worth 5 gp and wears an elaborate bronze head-dress worth 20 gp. His daughter carries a leather bag containing gold rings and pins. Even in death, Arnor is obsessed with the long-forgotten reputation of the Tveir-bróður. If anyone takes the mast finial from his snekke, he will stop at nothing to strike that person down and take it back. The mere sight of the mast finial in enemy hands will drive him into a blind rage, which clever adventurers can use against him. **Arnor:** HD 5, DC 5, SPD 12, Atk 1x1d8 plus cause fear in one opponent each round (only one try per opponent, save vs. spells), Save F5, Morale 12, or ST 14 DX 9 IQ 10 Wpn Great Hammer 2d+2 Armor none Sp ½ damage from non-magic weapons. Treasure:

- Arnor's high seat, wooden with gold leaf and clusters of garnet and amethyst.
- An iron-bound wooden bucket containing a helmet wrapped in decayed cloth, rusted and smashed to pieces.
- A lead box containing seven bracelets and seven rings with inlays of rock crystal.
- A wooden chest with a lock rusted shut containing a pair of drinking horns made from a long-extinct wild ox.
- A tiny concave-sided bronze cauldron filled with 600 sp.
- A strange rectangular block of soapstone with life-sized human faces carved on each of the four long sides, with a bronze ring mount on the top.



- A set of fearsome-looking barbed spears, oiled and wrapped in leather.

One item from the North Tomb treasure list should be magical; GM option as to which and its powers.

South Tomb: The south tomb is the resting place of Skíði, the clever brother. Skíði retains some tactical were-witch, and will try to block any exit and ambush intruders from behind. His four family members will conceal themselves behind the high seat and wedged against the roof beams of Skíði's chamber to ambush anyone who sets foot within. Like Arnor's family, they are functionally identical to the horsemen. Skíði carries a wand with a small mount depicting a wolf and a well-made shortsword. His wife wears two gold rings and a gold cloak pin worth 10 gold pieces. **Skíði:** HD 5, DC 4, SPD 12, Atk 1x1d6, Save

M5, Morale 12, can cast *Paralyze Person* and *Icy Chains* (like web spells) once each with his wand, or ST 9 adjDX 9 (13) IQ 12 Wpn Hatchet 1d Armor Chain & Small Shield (4) Spells Mage Sight & Strength Drain with wand, the latter of which may be cast on other undead. Treasure:

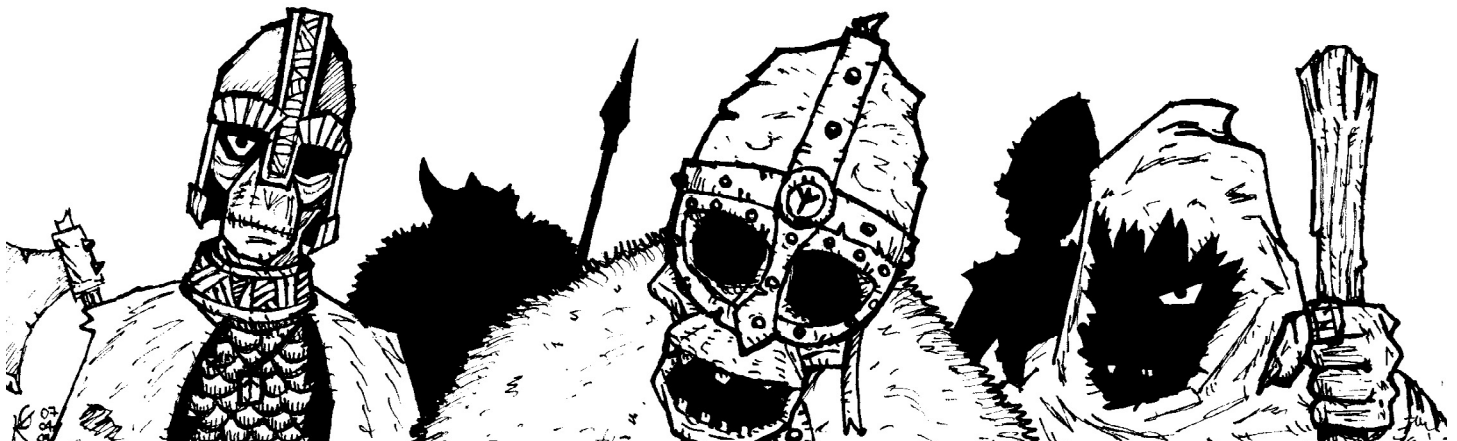
- Skíði's high seat, wooden with silver and dentalium inlay.
- A fluted silver dish with the relief image of a curious map, a small silver bowl and a very large round silver platter with elaborate ornamentation.
- A locked and heavily-reinforced wooden chest containing a six-stringed lyre, six gold hair rings, and several thick books, now crumbled to dust.
- A bronze bowl with drop handles, decorated with figures of the old gods and w/40 wire arm spirals bundled inside.
- A staff with gold facing at the top.

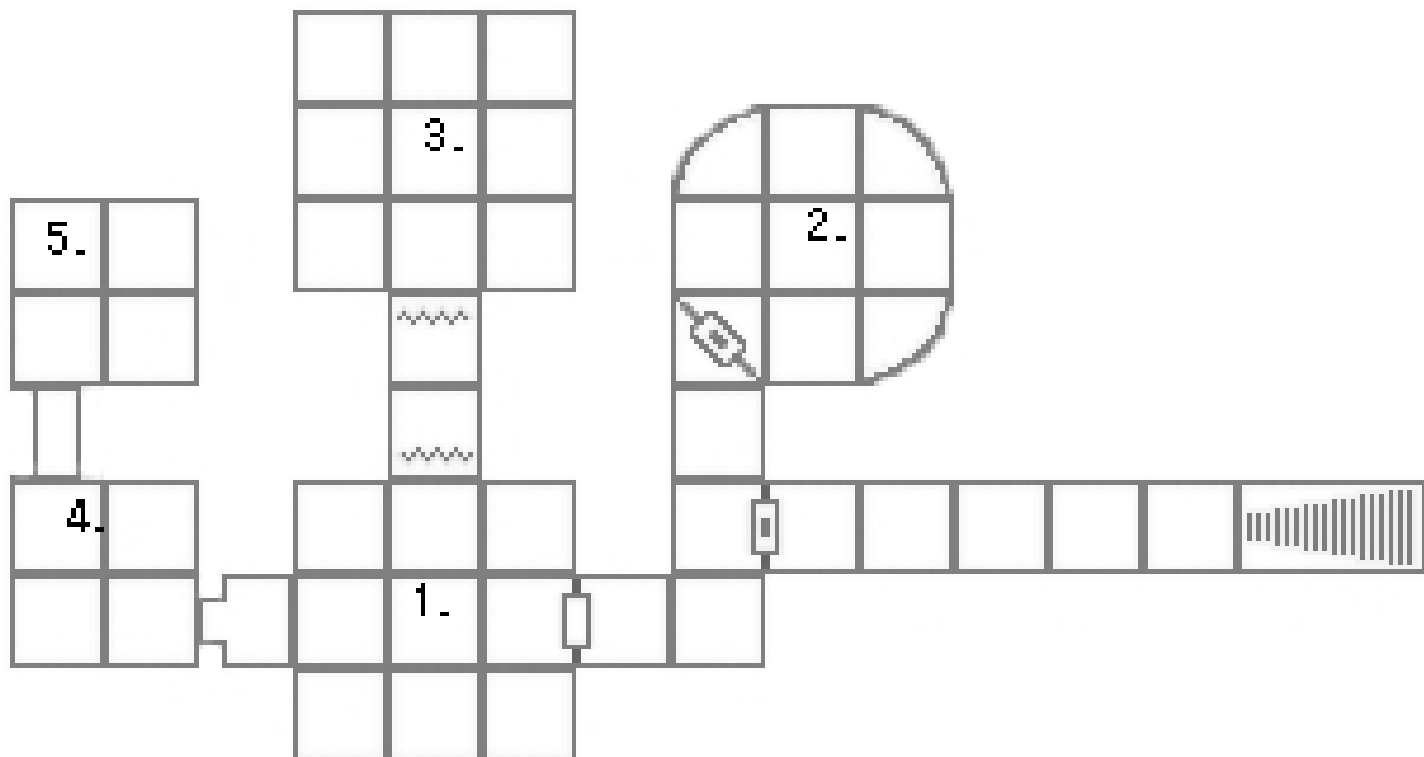
As before, one item from this treasure list should be magical.

The Secret Hoard: Carefully concealed is a tiny chamber taking advantage of the lay of the trap-stones. It is itself trapped – when the section of wall concealing the secret room is removed, a tripwire snaps, triggering a powerful spring-loaded dart (attacks as W6, 2d8+2 damage, or 5d to detect, 4d to dodge, 4d to disarm, 1d damage). This mechanism, worked in silver and tempered steel, is itself quite valuable. The brother's most precious items are within. Treasure:

- A beaver-skin satchel containing a bronze-antlered human figurine made of wood.
- A finger ring containing a woman-shaped gemstone.
- A drinking vessel of thin beaten bronze, decorated with a frieze depicting naked warriors carrying swords and shields in combat with a sea monster. Above the frieze and below the rim is a zone of inscription in the old tongue lettering which translates 'USE THIS IN GOOD HEALTH, MY BROTHER'. Inside it are 200 gold coins.
- A matched set, decorated richly in gold and garnet: A magnificent sword with a cloisonné pommel, in its sheath; its harness and belt, fitted with a suite of solid gold mounts; and two shoulder clasps, with lugs and clasps for attaching a stiff leather cuirass.

Again, one item from this list should be magical. Ω





The Tribe of Rorvash

minidungeon by Erin "Taichara" Bisson

There will always be those who find it easier to take from others than to do a day's honest work. Rorvash was always one of those despicable individuals -- and magic only made it easier; a few judiciously-applied charm spells on a splinter tribe of goblins and he had his very own band of bandits. Now Rorvash and his goblin underlings, along with their pack of mantids, ambush small-merchants and travellers along the trade roads before retreating to the old ruin in the hill with their ill-gotten gains...

The Ruin: An outpost of bygone days, the small complex is carved out impeccably and faced with tight-fitting stones of grey granite. Every twenty feet is measured by a torch-bracket on the walls; the scale is one square = 10'.

1. Common Room. This chamber is cluttered with the detritus of goblin occupation: worn furs, ratty leathers, crude and broken pottery, bits of cold-worked metal, and the remains of mantid shells not yet worked into weapons or other objects. A firepit is in the centre of the chamber; to the north lies a corridor blocked with a stained tapestry, whereas to the west a corridor runs 10' before abruptly narrowing to a tiny passage. In the chamber are four goblins (DC 6; HD 1-1; hp 5, 3, 4, 3; SPD 9 (tunnel 3); Dam 1-6; Sv Normal Man; Morale 7) who will immediately stop their game of knucklebones, snatch up weapons and attack any intruders, shouting for reinforcements. Each goblin carries a handful of silver coins: 8, 5, 11, 7.

2. Mantid Den. The floor of this circular chamber has been layered with soil and half-rotten logs to make a lair for the band's mantids. Three verdant mantids are present (DC 4; HD 1+3; hp 9, 6, 8; SPD 18 (fly 6); Dam 2-5/2-5; Sv F1; Morale 10), along with one goblin handler (DC 6; HD 1-1; hp 5; SPD 9 (tunnel 3); Dam 1-6; Sv Normal Man; Morale 7); the handler will take one mantid and join any scuffle in **1** or **3** in three rounds.

3. Leader's Quarters. Less cluttered with trash than the outer chamber, and also curtained off by another ratty bit of tapestry, this room contains rough beds belonging to Neth, the goblin band leader (DC 6; HD 3; hp 15; SPD 9 (tunnel 3); Dam 2-7; Sv Normal Man; Morale 7), and his two lieutenants (DC 6; HD 2; hp 9, 10; SPD 9 (tunnel 3); Dam 1-6; Sv Normal Man; Morale 7). If combat breaks out in **1**, the trio will spend two rounds preparing and then enter combat. Neth carries 4 gold pieces and 13 silver pieces; his lieutenants carry 2gp and 8sp each. Piled along the walls of the chamber are an abundance of bulk goods stolen from unwary travelers: 10 casks of wine (3 gp ea.), 23 hand-sized ingots of fine blue glass flecked with gold (2 gp ea.), 60 sacks of grain (1 gp ea. -- some complete with mice!), and 24 bolts of reddish-violet silk (5gp ea.).

4. Rorvash's Chamber. Equipped with bed, desk, storage chest and chamber-pot, this smaller room is kept immaculately clean by the obsessive Rorvash. The magic-user will remain squirreled away in his chamber unless it looks like the goblins are taking a severe beating; then he will try to bargain his way to safety only to attempt to betray or charm the party at the earliest convenience.



Verdant Mantid

Defense Class: 4

Hit Dice: 1+3

Speed: 18 (fly 6)

Attacks: 2 claws (special)

Damage: 2-5/2-5 (special)

No. Appearing: 1-6

Save As: F1

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: Nil

Alignment: Neutral

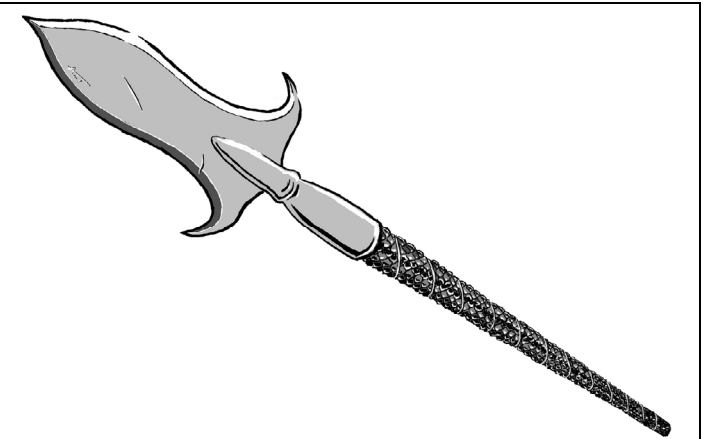
EP Value: 19

Nearly three feet long and sheathed in glittering emerald chitin as dense as crystal and sharp as glass, verdant mantids are dangerous and patient predators on anything they set their azure-tinted eyes on. More disturbing is their increased intelligence: verdant mantids are perfectly capable of working in small packs for greater gain, and they may be trained if acquired fresh from the egg-case. A verdant mantid attacks with the two spined, razor-sharp "switchblades" in its forearms, inflicting 2-5 hit points with each successful strike. If both attacks succeed, the mantid holds on and begins to chew through its prey, automatically inflicting 2 points of damage each subsequent round.

Rorvash's desk is cluttered with tallies of the band's victims, entomological minutiae, crazed musings on an

ancient snake-cult, and haphazard notes on his magical research. The chest is packed with many rust-red robes and a moth-eaten fur cloak; Rorvash's spellbook is hidden in a secret compartment in the bottom. Another tight passage links Rorvash's chamber with **5. Rorvash:** Mage 2; DC 7; hp 6; SPD 12 (tunnel 4); S 8 I 15 W 11 C 12 D 16 C 10; Align Chaotic; spells – 2x1 from spellbook; equipment: silver dagger, spellbook (read magic, shield, charm person, bloodbite), healing potion x2, pink pearl (100gp) and silver pearl (50gp) in a small leather pouch. *Bloodbite:* works similarly to *mystic missile*, inflicting 1-6 damage and disorienting the target (-1 on all rolls) for two rounds.

5. Treasure Vault: This room contains the true valuables Rorvash's band has acquired, as well as a few antiquities the magic-user found within the ruin before leading the goblins to it. Laid out neatly against the furthest wall are: 6 electrum ingots (15 gp ea.), 10 fat waxed leather pouches packed with gold dust (75 gp ea.), two strongboxes containing 2230 sp and 463 gp respectively, and a small bronzewood coffer containing an ivory and coral set of prayer beads (130 gp) and an amber ring set with a carnelian sealstone depicting a coiled wyvern (224 gp). Set to one side are a two foot tall greenstone idol of a winged serpent with a feline head (432 gp) and *Winterfang*. Ω



Winterfang: This broad-bladed spear has a shaft of frosted steel with grips of white dragonhide, and long tassels of soft white fur dangle from the socket of its sapphire-inlaid crystal head. The soft ice-blue light emitted by Winterfang signals its enmity towards creatures of heat and flame, who suffer coldly burning wounds from the weapon's head and the bitter frost it represents. The enchanted spear was crafted as tribute to the Winter Court of Water by a cabal of human magic-users, but was never recorded as received by the emissaries of the Court.

Winterfang is a *spear* +1, +2 *vs fire* creatures. Additionally, all damage dealt by the weapon is considered to be cold damage when applied against creatures vulnerable to cold, whether flame-based or no.

Dispelling a Myth: Sandbox Preparation

campaign advice from Michael "Chgowiz" Shorten

A common misconception about the sandbox style of campaign is that a great deal of preparation is required prior to the first game. The sheer number of things one's players might do causes many Game Referees to believe they have to plan for all of them. That large amount of work may tempt a Game Referee to revert to the "story-driven, plot-driven" campaign, where events will follow a pre-set path. In thinking about my own sandbox campaign I've started and am still running, I looked at what I had written down - did I really prep that much? I'd have to say no. Here are six tricks I use to make it work:

1. Just in time preparation
2. One page dungeon levels
3. Write it down - play it on game day
4. Let the players flesh things out
5. Broad brushstrokes to events and plots
6. Don't over prepare

Let's discuss each of these in turn.

1. Just in time preparation. A sandbox is inherently player driven. If we go back to FRP's wargaming roots, preparing a sandbox is much like setting up the terrain and starting points of the pieces in a miniatures battle. You have the troops prepared, but you don't know what's going to happen until play begins. I treat a sandbox the same way. I set up the starting points of the dungeons, monsters, set pieces and villains. I may have a note or two about who they are and what's going on. I know the basic rough few sentence outline of what the campaign setting is, but beyond that, I develop it in play. When I started planning my sandbox campaign, I had a general idea of the layout of the lands about 5 days travel out. I had three dungeons. I had one town. I had one set piece. Here's the cool part - one of those dungeons is STILL virgin territory for my players (who are now probably scrabbling through notes trying to figure out where it is...). I had only level 1 done for each of the dungeons. I didn't even have a map of the town, and only a few NPCs fleshed out beyond names and jobs. It worked, quite well. With just the rough ideas of what was where (broad strokes, see that below) and a single random encounter, we had a blast and the first session was a success. That's not to say all details are improvised. I do try to stay about 1 or 2 steps ahead of my players. If they do something completely unexpected, I can take 5 minutes, put my thoughts together, look at my notes from previous games, and go with what I have. My 3 ring binder has plenty of loose leaf. For instance, when my

players started exploring an area of kobold mines in earnest, it's only then that I started planning/creating the second level. When the players wanted to know more about the town so they could live there, I finally drew a map. As the players meet NPCs and do things, I take notes and factor them into my game as we go along.

2. One page dungeon levels. The philosophy behind one page dungeon keys is that the DM adds the flavor and plots and "whys and wherefores" at the table - the initial creation of the dungeon is just the bare bones, the minimum detail to get the jist of the dungeon written down. That neatly fits in with "just in time preparation" because I can just draw a map, populate it using my favorite ruleset, and boom, done. When the players get to that point, I can look at the level and what's happened so far and go from there. For instance, let's return to the previous example of the kobold mines. In my one page key, I had cavemen on one side, kobolds on the other. When I was creating the dungeon, I had no real why; I didn't plot things out. At game time, however, I was inspired to cast the dungeon as a battleground where kobolds and cavemen were fighting over territory. The muse suggested that the kobolds didn't delve deeper because they were scared of ancient Dwarf ruins on level 2. Things went on from there. In game, one of the cavemen fell down a hole and died and the cavemen buried the hole because evil came from it, changing the map. The kobolds made some forays to recapture the mines, but failed. Under duress the cavemen fled the caves. These things all came as game-day decisions and reactions to what the players did. I didn't pre-plot this because I didn't need to. I started with broad brushstrokes and let the game dictate how they fit together.

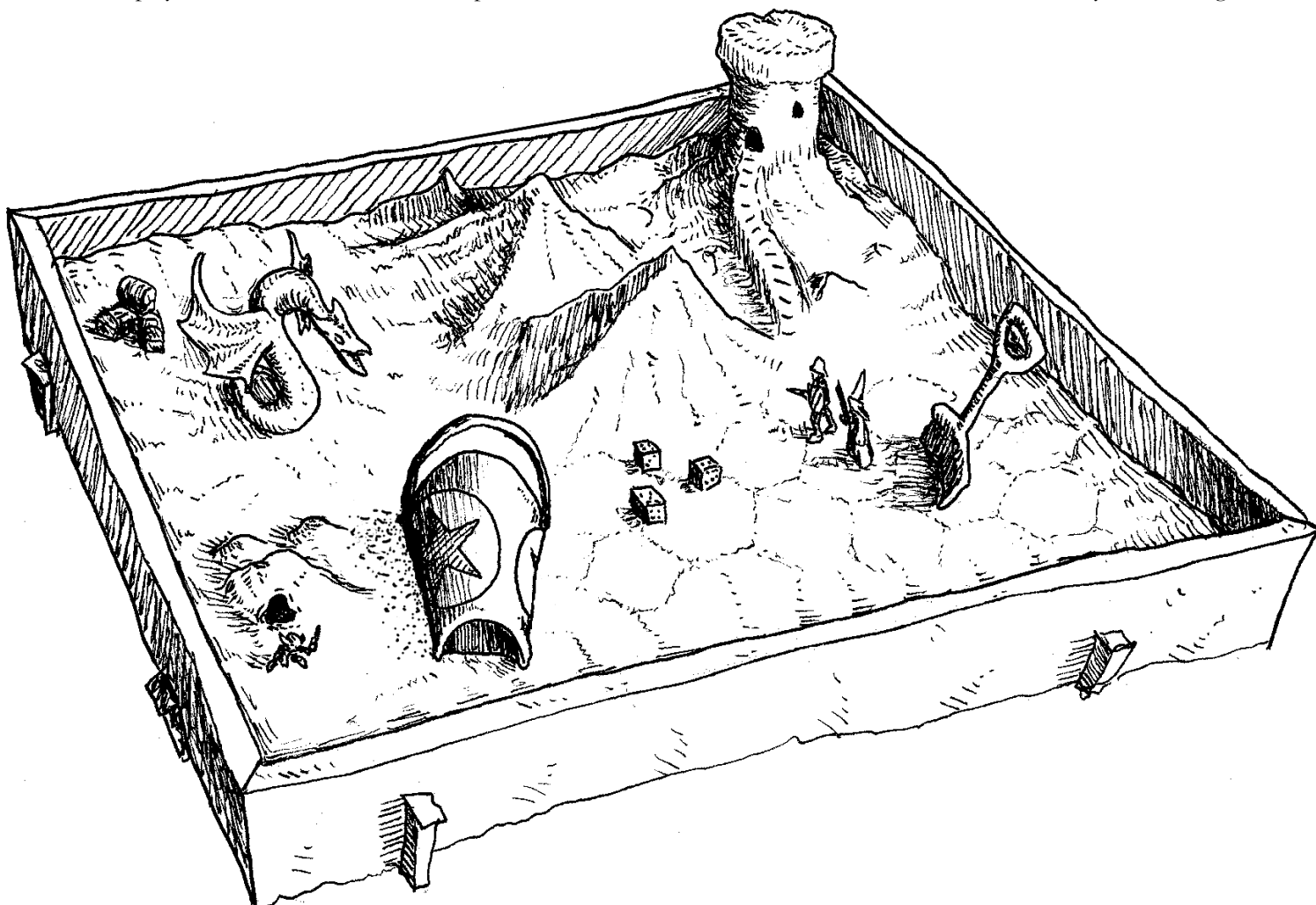
3. Write it down as it plays out on game day. Prior to the game, I try to write down my crazy ideas and inspirations, but I don't try to detail things out until it has to be. I find that the bulk of my writing is usually in reaction to what the players do. To me, what has happened is the preparation prior to the game is replaced by notes and reminders in reaction to play and post-game-details. This reinforces the "players drive it" attitude. As the game session unfolds, I try to keep good notes on what happens. I find that there are usually enough pauses to jot down notes - and sometimes I will even scribble (concise!) notes as I am talking. My players have come used to it, and it doesn't seem to interrupt the game too much. I also have some abbreviations I'll use in the margins to point things out: circled exclamation points for something important, the phrase "XP" circled for notations on monsters killed, or circled dollar signs circled to indicate treasure. One of my biggest problems as a Game Referee is that I get too excited and forget to write things down! I get into the combat, or I get into the moment and then when it's over, I completely forget things. That's why I try to write down room by room, encounter by encounter, at least 2 to 3

words. Then I can go back and fill it in later. I'll also note NPC names. One bit of prep that I have done is to print out about 100 or so names from the random name generators and then use them at random during the game. As the players encounter them, I'll jot something about them in the town section of my notes. I'll go back later and reorganize. Example - the players found a book. They read it and wanted to know what it means. I told them, based on vague ideas, but I noted on my notes what I said - now there's an entry for this book in my notes so that if the players come back to it, I know what it is.

4. Let the players flesh things out. When I first created my sandbox campaign, I had no clue what I wanted to do with demihumans, save minimize their involvement in the world - for now. I had no idea on what kind of history I wanted for them. So I let the players tell me. I came up with broad guidelines. I know what won't work for player ideas - and I let them run with it. I don't want to give away any spoilers, but the littleling (halfling) back-story that one of my players came up with rocks. It's full of puns, but it's really cool. The elf history and story is continuing to be written, but I riff based on what my players give me. Players even suggested their own deities for our pantheon, save for the Church of Light - and I've adjusted that based on what the players saw and how the Church presented in

game. In fact, one of the players is now a cleric of the Light and it's going to be interesting to see how she interprets the Light. I don't expect her to give me 50 pages of notes, but I'm going to go based on how she goes, within the general idea that I have for the Light. The joy of this method is that not only does this give me player buy-in, but I also don't have to prepare as much. Motivated players will most likely give me a great amount of detail and suggestions to work with.

5. Broad brushstrokes. My campaign has a consistent flavor and that's because I've thought about the broad brush strokes, or major themes, to the areas both mapped and unmapped. I know in general terms what each area is like about 10 days of travel out from the players "home base". This gives me enough information that should the players decide to wander far off the map, I'll be able to still conduct a game. For example, there's a very interesting, but unexplored and unmapped area in my campaign - the city of Irecia. Thanks to rumors and legends, the players are itching to go there, but they haven't - they respect the clues given so far that it's far more dangerous than they can presently handle. Do I have the city mapped out and populated? Nope. However, thanks to the broad brush strokes I've applied to Irecia, I do know it was the "diamond of the East" and a beautiful city for learning. I



know it was a fairly civilized place. I know there are probably sewers. I have some vague ideas of what is going on in that city. That's all I need; those broad strokes that sets the stage for "just in time preparation". I also am not locked into something - if the players do something or something changes in the game, I can take that into account going forward. My broad brushstrokes also apply to events and plots. I do have a "ticking clock" of sorts in the campaign, but it's not a detailed flowchart, rather there are broad strokes that I fill in when needed. The players drive the plot of the campaign, but the world does continue to evolve and turn around them. There are some things that may happen as the players do things, and there are some things that will happen no matter what. For instance, the legendary cataclysm in my game was heralded by meteor showers. I knew I wanted to have events occur that play on that theme. When I realized that in my game calendar the end of summer was approaching, I decided to have a Summer's End Festival (another just in time creation) - and then I decided to have the shooting stars appear and one of the "sensitive" town NPCs go mad. Now the players have something to chew on - the world is doing stuff. What does it mean? Another example is the campaign session, the session where my players did something completely unexpected - they ignored the dungeons and hooks and chased down a rumor of goblins gathering for war in an area called the Darkwoods. At game time, I did not have precise maps or laid out encounters of goblins. I knew that goblins were in the Darkwoods and they had patrols and various camps. I knew they were sparring with the kobolds. During this session, I decided that they'd run into a goblin patrol - and they did, and it was a good game. I didn't have the encounter planned out to where exactly the left foot would slide on the fourth goblin to the left in the fifth segment of the second round. The only detail I knew was that there would be goblins who'd rather be camping than marching run into humans that they haven't seen in 50 years. Once they ran into each other, I tossed a few dice to see how many there were and battle ensued. Thanks to that unplanned session, I threw together a couple of pages after the game on types of patrols that might be encountered. Now I have a bit more detail, but it was as needed, not required for pregame preparation.

6. Don't over-prepare. You don't have to know the details down to how many pimples are on my troll-mage's rear-end. I've since learned that while it helps to know the areas surrounding, I don't need to have everything detailed out. That being said, you do have some prep. You have to put some planning into the area around the "home base". You have to have some places for the players to go. You have to have an idea of what else is out there. It helps to have some random events/encounters sketched out. I recommend trying to be at least 2 days travel beyond where the players seem to be interested or capable of handling. (In my campaign, the further out they go, the

more dangerous it generally is.) For hooks and adventuring ideas, I came up with a dozen or so rumors, based on the locations and my broad brush strokes. Upon delivering those, I sit back and let the players start exploring on their own. As they do things, and the world changes, I provide new rumors, or lay out new hooks based on what is going on. That's the nice thing - I can be reactive more than I have to be proactive - because the players are the actors and the drivers, not my story. The campaign is their story. I record it and the details as it goes along.

Summary & Conclusion. A lot of this might seem like improv, although I would tend to call it "inspired improv within broad guidelines." In general, I wait to fill in the details where needed and I try not to over-reach. I try to be ahead of the players by about a session or two, so that way I can easily riff on a change in player priority, or to an unexpected event. Sandbox campaigns are a lot of fun to run, as your players get to engage in a freedom seldom found in games. The prep work may seem daunting, but with a little preparation up front, some good note taking and a willingness to relax and let the game flow as it goes, and some post-game detailing, you can have a sandbox campaign up and running in no time. It should be noted that as of the writing of this article, I'm putting some of these techniques to work on my blog in writing up a sandbox campaign based on the Ultima computer game fantasy RPG setting. Please feel free to drop on by and check it out: <http://oldguyrpg.blogspot.com>. Ω



Welcome to Slimy Lake

post-apoc mini-sandbox for *Mutant Future* by Jeff Rients

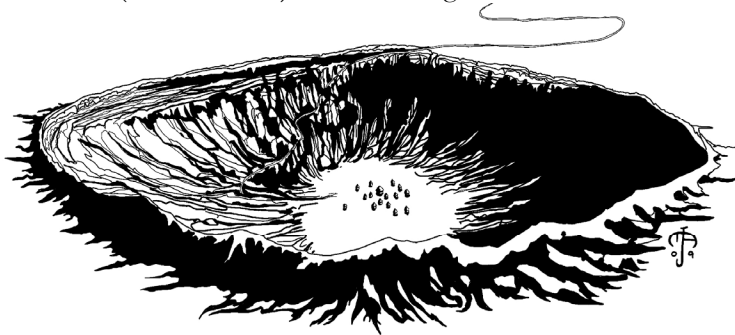
Major Geographical Features: Unless otherwise indicated the referee should consider open hexes to be lightly wooded grasslands. Wandering monsters can come from either the grasslands or wooded/forest charts, with equal chances for either.

Crunchy Desert – The two sections of this waste of broken glass and oily sand connect just off-map, one hex to the east of the edge. One way of beginning an adventure in the Slimy Lake region would be to suppose the PCs have just crossed the desert at its narrowest extent, arriving on the map in either hex 15.04 or 15.05.

Lumpy Hills – Mudslides are common in this region, with a 1 in 20 chance per hex travelled without benefit of a local guide (e.g. one of the nuns from hex 10.02). Everyone caught in a mudslide must save versus death or take 12d6 points of damage.

The Glowing Maw – This large crater glows faintly, visible by night from 2 hexes away as an eerie bluish aurora. The effect would be beautiful if it weren't so dead-

ly. See individual hex references for the radiation levels. The hexes adjacent to the Maw and all hexes between the Maw and the east map-edge count as either grassland or desert (50/50 chance) for wandering monsters.



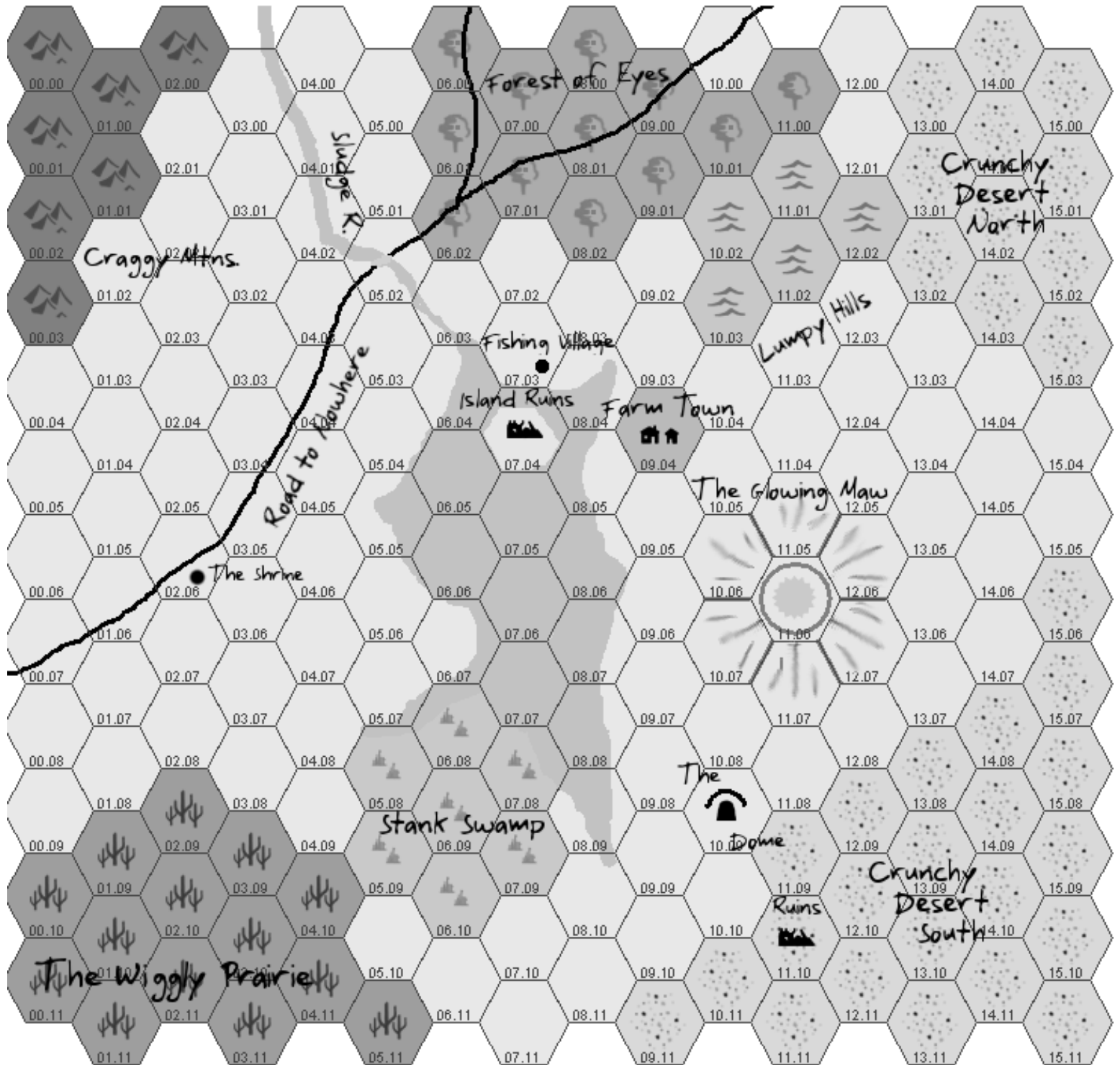
Forest of Eyes – The most common tree in this forest is the Ocu-Oak, whose fist-sized eyefruit glare balefully at all visitors to their realm. Plucking the fruit, chopping down Ocu-Oaks, or setting an improperly controlled fire will anger the trees. They cannot act on their own but they will mentally scream, attracting the attention of nearby forest inhabitants determined by consulting the wandering monster charts. Whatever shows up will be driven berserk by the Ocu-Oaks' mental signals, attacking twice as often as normal and at +2 to-hit.

Sludge River – The waters of this river are poisonous (4d6, save for half) to creatures not adapted to the local ecosystem. 1 in 6 of all wandering monster encounters along the river will be with a Black Pudding, Gray Ooze or Ochre Jelly (equal chance of each) floating down the river.

Road to Nowhere – Outside the Forest of Eyes this ancient 4 lane divided highway retains greater heat than the



SLIMY LAKE & ENVIRONS



One Hex = Five Miles

surrounding terrain, and therefore at night it attracts cold-blooded creatures seeking warmth. After sundown roll an extra wandering monster check. If a monster is indicated it will be a giant lizard, snake, etc.

Stank Swamp – Some biochemical mechanism here leaches poisons out of the Sludge River, leaving the waters of Stank Swamp potable. Unfortunately the odious aroma of the swamp is so retch-inducing that anyone travelling

here is at a -2 penalty to reaction rolls for d6 days afterwards. Swamp natives are unaffected.

Craggy Mountains – Many of these mountains are snow-capped year round. 2 in 6 random encounters here are with creatures from the Arctic/Cold wandering monster charts.

The Wiggly Prairie – From a distance this region appear to consist of vast fields of tall grasses, but upon close approach it is revealed that the predominant lifeform here consists of undulating tentacles sprouting from the ground. Movement through the Prairie is at half normal rate as grabbing tentacles slow travel and NPCs such as mounts and hirelings must pass morale checks just to enter the region. When generating random encounters here reroll any non-flying encounter, keeping the second roll even if a ground-based creature is indicated.

Slimy Lake – The water of the lake is mildly poisonous (2d6, save for half) to non-locals. Anyone making 5 successful saves in a row has become accustomed to the putrid waters and need not save again. The lake is rather shallow, 10d10 feet to the bottom in any random location. Once the site of an ancient city, much of the lake's bottom is covered by a twisted maze of rusted metal and broken concrete.



Individual Hex Descriptions

00.01 A shallow cave here serves as the lair of a mutated Cave Bear (hp 36) with gamma eyes that shoot 6d6 radiation damage (save for half) up to 60'. Among the bones in the cave can be found some Reagan pennies (28 cp) and a plasma pistol (7d6 damage, 6 charges remaining).

00.06 An overgrown mound here is actually the ancient wreck of a large ground vehicle. A thorough search of the various cavities in the mound will reveal a mostly intact water purification unit with a depleted power pack.

01.03 A wizened old mutant skunk woman (25 hp, night vision, mind reflection) inhabits a ramshackle hut here. She is knowledgeable in local herbs and anyone under her care heals at three times the normal rate. At the GM's option she might also be able to cure disease, poison, etc.

01.10 A multi-acre patch of purplish black flowers serves as the mating grounds of the local Electric Firefly population, with a 10% chance per night of a swarm of thousands of these tiny insects, stinging all present for d100 electrical damage per round for d20 rounds. Only fire or radiation can drive off an attacking swarm. From a safe distance the electrical display is breathtakingly beautiful.

02.06 A former roadside rest stop has been converted to a shrine to Bodisattva Elvis. The last monk attending the shrine died years ago, his skeleton still sits in the lotus position in front of his sequined idol. The statue of the Buddha King weighs 100 pounds and would be worth 50gp to the right buyer.

03.00 This stretch of the river is home to a trio of Giant Scorpions (hp 27, 22, 14) adapted to an amphibious life. They will attack from below the surface of the water.

03.02 Spread over this hex is the shattered remains of a crashed atomic fighter jet. Travel through the hex is safe, but anyone closely investigating the broad scorch marks or shiny metallic debris will be subject to 5d6 radiation damage (save for half).

03.09 Lost among the tentacle grass is a massive piece of sculpture made soon after the Bad Times, a gigantic sneering head composed entirely of twisted, rusted junk haphazardly welded, chained and lashed together. At the base of this monument is the inscription "Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" Some later hand has partially crossed out the word "upon", to read simply "on". The Homo Erectus of the region (from hex 04.07, 05.09 and other groups) consider this titanic head sacred and visit once a year for their primitive tribal rites.

04.02 A series of waterfalls in this hex make navigating upriver impossible without several portages. Those travelling downriver will have a 5 in 6 chance of their watercraft being destroyed, suffering 6d12 damage in the process.

04.07 Here a dozen Homo Erectus (hp 36, 2x 32, 3x 30, 4x 28, 25, 20) struggle with life on the open plain. They have no treasure beyond their crude spears and their fire. The latter they will defend to the death.

05.02 The ancient metal bridge across the river is in astonishingly good condition, but it is also draped with webs spun by the five Spidergoats (hp 30, 27, 25, 20, 19) that lair here. Among the web-cocooned husks of past victims can be found a satchel with 300gp, a stun baton with a drained beltpack, 2 sticks of dynamite, a broken geiger counter and an aluminum baseball bat. Note that the webbing drapes down from the bridge to the waters below, preventing watercraft from passing under.

05.09 Hidden here is a secret enclave of 20 Homo Erectus living in camouflaged huts woven of reeds. They are led by a female Homo Erectus Lord (hp 57). In her hut can be found a rusted 50-gallon drum containing 14,000 sp, which she will gladly trade for food or artifacts. Her greatest goal is to find a suitable mate.

06.02 The highway interchange here has been converted to a makeshift village, using the overpass as the basis for the biggest building, a wooden lean-to construction. A few scattered bones suggest that the last inhabitants of this place died here decades ago. A thorough search of the ruins reveals an colorful plastic chest decorated with the image of MIK-EE (god of mice). Inside the ancient container is 1,300 cp and 800 sp but anyone touching these coins will be exposed to the Flesh Eating Bacteria that doomed the prior owners of this filthy lucre.

06.04 Silt build-up in the waters of this hex have concentrated the river's poison to maximum toxicity. Anyone drinking the water here must save or die, a successful save indicates 4d6 damage. The poison lingers in the air as well and anyone spending a whole day in the hex will take 3d6 poison damage (save for half).

06.06 The fishing in this particular part of the lake would be excellent, were it not for the pair of Large Crocodiles (hp 31, 25) that hunt these waters.

07.00 This region is the territory of a mated pair of Zunicorns (hp 31, 26) and their foal (HD 3, hp 12, half damage). The adults will use the extra-cute foal as bait to lure the innocent into a deadly ambush.

07.03 Many of the 65 inhabitants of this fishing village have become experts in navigating the lake and avoiding



its hazards. They also know how to safely prepare several otherwise-poisonous species of fish. All the villagers are mutant humans or animals and all possess at least one hideous physical defect. Due to the villages tense relations with the farm town (hex 09.04), the locals tend to distrust pure humans and beautiful people.

07.04 The 'island' here consists of the tops of several skyscrapers and the detritus that has accumulated around them. The rest of the city is submerged below the water, a twisted tangle of rusted metal and broken concrete. Many waterlogged artifacts might be found in this deadly aquatic maze, but the ruins above the water are the hunting grounds of a wandering pack of seven vicious Chicken Wolves (hp 17, 15, 14, 14, 13, 10, 5), and the waters below are home to an aquatic Purple Worm (hp 66).

07.08 A hidden dry spot in the middle of this marshy hex contains a small (30' x 30') windowless cinder block building with a metal door that has been welded shut. Inside this ancient structure is a baby blue metal coffin containing three dog-eared copies of *Dianetics*, framed copies of the cover of *Mad* magazine issue #30 (first Alfred E. Neuman cover) and issue #166 (middle finger cover), and a dozen cans of Spam.

07.10 Merchants travelling to the farm town (09.04) most commonly enter the region from this hex.

08.02 A village of 20 Ape People live here in harmony with the forest, cultivating orchards of various fruits and hunting wild game. Their leader (45 hp) is hostile to humans and humanoids, but will treat fairly with mutant animals and plants. He wields a warpfeld sword (12 minutes of power) and possesses a plastic bottle containing a dozen proton energy pills. A large (50-gallon) makeshift

water purification device and a regeneration tank are maintained by the village shaman (29 hp, mental phantasm).

08.04 This hex is partially cultivated, with three farmsteads aligned with the town in hex 09.04. The largest farm is operated by an extended family of mutant animals of lobster stock. They are a suspicious lot, unfriendly to strangers and only interacting with outsiders when they take their crops to market.

08.05 This hex is partially cultivated, with two farmsteads aligned with the town in hex 09.04. The more successful of the two farms is operated by a family of mutant humanoids, most of whom have three eyes. In addition to food crop production, the Three Eye family operates a rickety old still, producing the only locally made hard liquor in the region.

08.07 Cliffs 60' high overlook the lake from here. Despite all the pollution and ruination the view is gorgeous, especially at sunset as the light sparkles off the water.

08.10 Rot grubs are very common here. The local species burrow through the ground, sniffing for blood exposed to

the air. A wounded character who rests here overnight has a 25% chance of suffering a grub attack

09.04 The farm town here (population 1,200) represents the pinnacle of civilization in the Slimy Lake region. The locals grow a barley-like grain and several types of fruits and vegetables. Most households keep one or two domesticated Rabboxxen for milking and/or pulling plows. The most important artifact in the community is the mayor's meteorology computer, able to predict local weather patterns with 85% accuracy. While any sentient is welcome to stay at the inn or attend the weekly market days, only those free from obvious mutational defects are welcome to reside in the town on a permanent basis.

09.06 Travel through this hex results in 3d6 radiation damage (save for half).

10.02 On a hilltop here is the Convent of the Violet Flame, a small outpost of the Sisterhood of Silence, an all-female religious organization devoted to development of psionic sensitivity. Each of the dozen sisters here has at least one beneficial mental mutation. The Mother Psuperior of the convent is a mutant tigress with 43 hp and the mutations empathy and killing sphere. The sisters here teach a semi-telepathic discipline that allows them to pick Ocu-Oak eyefruit safely (see Forest of Eyes description). This fruit and chickenmilk obtain from a penned flock are periodically taken to the farm town (09.04) to trade for necessities.

10.06 Travel through this hex results in 5d6 radiation damage (save for half). A visible haze during the day and faint glow at night warns off most lifeforms.

10.07 Travel through this hex results in 5d6 radiation damage (save for half). A visible haze during the day and faint glow at night warns off most lifeforms.

10.09 A geodesic dome constructed of high-tech materials. Would serve as an excellent base of operations and at GM's discretion may contain other artifacts. Two aggressive riot bots must be defeated to gain control of this facility. These robots are equipped with energy grenades instead of their usual nonlethal payloads

11.05 Travel through this hex results in 4d6 radiation damage (save for half). A visible haze during the day and faint glow at night warns off most lifeforms.

11.06 The mouth of the Glowing Maw is a vast blast crater nearly 4 miles in diameter and almost 2 miles deep. Anyone entering the hex will be subject to 9d6 radiation damage (save for half). At the bottom of the crater are some huts inhabited by 10 Irradiated (hp 44, 36, 34, 32, 2x 30, 29, 36, 24, 20). Each Irradiated has d10 sp and gp.



The smallest one has an Inferno grenade she's saving for a special occasion.

11.07 Travel through this hex results in 4d6 radiation damage (save for half). A visible haze during the day and faint glow at night warns off most lifeforms.

11.10 Here can be found the ruins of a vast commercial megafarm that in ancient times raised thousands of swine. The ruins have subsequently been claimed by tribe of 50 Suidoid pig people. They raise large semi-ambulatory mutant truffles as their primary food source, hunting game and occasionally raiding other sentients in the region to supplement this diet. Most of the Suidoid use spears, shortbows, and handaxes but their king and queen (39 hit points each) use black powder rifles and long swords.

12.02 A hilltop cairn of concrete rubble marks the burial site of three ancient soldiers. If dug up it will be discovered that most of their equipment is either missing or completely useless now, but all three wear high quality boots of a synthetic leather-like material.

12.06 Travel through this hex results in 3d6 radiation damage (save for half).

12.07 Travel through this hex results in 3d6 radiation damage (save for half).

14.02 An ancient military complex is buried under the sands here. The atomic power plant is still operation and the central computer controls a dozen maintenance and security robots. The computer long ago gave up hope of successfully communicating with the 30 soldiers wandering the facility. It does not realize that they became the Walking Dead centuries ago.

14.06 A species of twisted orange cactus grows wild in large numbers here. These useful plants contain great quantities of water, they're tasty and nutritious, and their large spines could be used as arrowheads. These cacti will only grow in the dry plain between the Glowing Maw and the Crunchy Desert.

14.09 A small oasis here appears idyllic but the water is extremely poisonous (save or die). The trees surrounding the spring grow a lumpy blue citrus fruit that is extremely juicy. The fruit can provide safe hydration and nourishment for 3d6 man-days but then the supply is entirely exhausted until the following year. Since the oasis is a primary watering hole for many creatures in this part of the desert the chance of a random encounter doubles with every consecutive day spent here.



15.07 A gnarled old tree, ancient and nearly dead, is the only large vegetation in this entire hex. Close examination of the tree reveals a pair of large metal staples driven into two broad branches, but they are almost completely overgrown. Anyone lingering at this woeful place for more than a turn or two has a 50% chance of attracting the attention of d10 Death Birds.

Final Notes: Obviously some areas beg for further development by the individual referee. Such enterprising individuals are invited to submit their additions to Slimy Lake for a future issue of *Fight On!* Those unfamiliar with *Mutant Future* can find a free downloadable version at the Goblinoid Games website, www.goblinoidgames.com. Ω

Fight on!

Knights & Knaves

detailed NPCs by Timothy J. Kask

Syndicate of Venturers

Strength **11**

Wisdom **16**

Dexterity **17**

Intelligence **9**

Constitution **17**

Charisma **14**

LG

Human Patriarch

Saving Throws

dr/p=9 : w=10 : St.=12 : db=14 : s+s=12

Panoply

Armor	AC	net AC
Leather +2	7	5
Bracers +1		4
Helmet of St. Mel* +1		3

Weapon

Weapon	Enchantment
Hammer	+2 to hit +2 damage
Shillelagh	+2 to hit +1 damage
Bag of Stones	

Possibles Bag

4 Potions: Cure LW
2 Potions: Cure Serious
Potion: Universal Antidote
Holy Symbol

Spells

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Haesel

hit points

47

Vs. Undead

Skeleton D
Zombie D
Ghoul D
Wight D
Wraith D
Mummy T
Spectre T
Vampire 7

* Adds +2 to any healing or cure performed by wearer

enthusiasm, winning smile, piety and power of persuasion made him a likable acolyte, however, and eventually he completed his training. Eschewing monastic life, Haesel instead entered the portion of the Order that interacts with the world, known as The Guild of Itinerant Crazy Clerics. Their mission is to go amongst the peoples of the world, offering the medicinal abilities for which their Order is so widely and justly known to any who need them.

Haesel appears to a simple cleric of his order. However, under that hooded, sun-symbol adorned robe there resides a most doughty fighter. His first success in the outside world was to recover the *Helmet of St. Mel*, which was still in the possession of the bugbear that had killed and boiled its previous owner. (Fortuitously, as one of the requirements of his order, Haesel has had all of his hair removed.) This "helmet" is a metal skull cap; it intensifies Haesel's healing skills when St. Mel is asked to intercede. In battle Haesel employs a Gadorian war hammer, kept concealed under his robe in more peaceful circumstances. In his hand he carries a seemingly innocent walking stick that is actually a shillelagh. He is also uncannily accurate throwing stones, and carries a bag of about two dozen of various sizes ranging from a small grape to medium apple. Haesel lives for the sole pleasure of smiting Evil.

Syndicate of Venturers

Strength **14**

Wisdom **16**

Dexterity **18**

Intelligence **13**

Constitution **16**

Charisma **15**

CN

Human Thief Level 9

Saving Throws

dr/p= 8 : w= 9 : St.=10 : db=10 : s+s=12

Panoply

Armor	AC	net AC
Leather +3*	7	4
Feathery Cloak**		3

Weapon

Weapon	Enchantment
Sabre	+3 to hit
Dagger X2	+2 to hit +1 damage
Throwing Knives X6	+1 to hit +2 damage

Possibles Bag

3 Potions: Cure LW
Ring of Healing-33 hp/turn
Skeleton's Key**
Carnelian Beetle****

Swag

Quicksilver Harry

hit points

27

* Wearer makes no noise unless fighting; +40% Hearing

** Cloak made of feathers; blends into any background in 1-6 Rounds making wearer invisible

***+30% to open any door or chest; detects all traps on lock or door

**** Carnelian carving can become giant flying beetle capable of carrying a person at 4X regular speed, beetle AC 0

Haesel - 8th Level Human Priest: When Haesel was but a tad, his peaceful agrarian community was utterly destroyed by nomad slavers. The old and infirm were butchered out of hand; the children were scooped up to become merchandise as the men fell one by one to the flashing scimitars and cruel steel-tipped lances of the slavers. (What happened to the women and girls does not bear retelling.) Haesel only escaped by hiding in the mid-den behind the community stables. Days later, it was a very skinny and odiferous four-year-old that the warders of the Great Abbey found wandering through the shell of his former village. The good clerics immediately took the waif in. It became apparent while he was studying at the Great Abbey that Haesel was not the sharpest quill in the drawer. His

Quicksilver Harry - 9th Level Human Thief : Harry was orphaned as a lad when both parents and two siblings perished of the Purple Flux in the last pandemic. His home was burned, along with the bodies of his family, to root out the disease. For a while he lived by his wits in the near-empty town, raiding larders where he could and scavenging food and shelter. As new people moved in, the survivors were shunned and even persecuted. According to Harry, he organized a gang of orphans such as himself into an efficient petty crime organization based underneath a burned-out manor. Harry is a legend in his own time, to hear him tell it. He might be right, as one does not attain his reputation at such a tender age without some authentic feats of derring-do. It is undeniably true that he is a wanted man: he is a prominent suspect in the theft of Arzmon's Teats, a pair of pearls the size of chicken eggs stolen from the Shrine of Arzmon; he is a person of interest in the disappearance of the Ruby Slippers of Kannsus, the Chalice of Jazmon, and the Eye of Mote; and the Egg of Coot, rumored the largest emerald ever found, was stolen from the strongroom of Abdel abba Ken while Harry sojourned in Arribec. Harry is dashing as well, and gossip claims a trail of broken hearts and promises among young ladies of wealth and breeding, and more than one "hedge baby" along the wayside bears him a striking resemblance.

Harry wears a ensorcelled set of tanned leathers that render him virtually silent doing anything short of fighting and are said to enhance his hearing abilities. He wears a cloak made from tens of thousands of chameleon scales, which lets him blend into any background (effective invisibility) in 1-6 rounds. Harry prefers stealth, but if cornered is a deadly earnest opponent. He wears a curious ebony carving of a beetle around his neck and a streaked jade ring that cures 1 hp of damage every three turns. Harry's most prized possession is a curious contraption, seemingly all wires, rods and levers. It is the legendary Skeleton's Key, which gives any thief using it a +30% chance to open any lock while detecting all traps on that lock or door. It leaves shiny scratches when it's done, reminiscent of quicksilver. That, and his seeming ability to slip through the slightest crack or opening, have bestowed his sobriquet upon him.

Ameroo "Wyrml Slayer" Genglar - 1/2 Elf War 6/Mag 6/Thf 4: Once upon a time, there was a lovely human maid, blue of eye, blonde of hair and laughing always. So beautiful was this maid that she attracted countless suitors, from noble born to peasant. The maid would have none of them. One day whilst searching for henbane in the woods, she came upon a beautiful elf warrior injured by the giant boar he'd spitted on his spear. One thing led to another, and a short while later it led to Ameroo. Despite the scandal, she loved her son madly. The boy's father was equally proud, so they came to an arrangement whereby Ameroo stayed with his mother from sowing to harvest and with his father throughout fall and winter. This made it difficult for Ameroo to decide just who he was.



Syndicate of Adventurers



Amaroo Genglar
Wyrml Slayer

Strength

12 14

Wisdom

15 12

Dexterity

18 12

Intelligence

11

Constitution

11

Charisma

12

1/2 Elf

Myrmidon

Magician

Burglar

hit points

29

Paraphernalia

Armor	AC	ref AC
Scale Shirt*	5	2
The Fire Shield**		0

Weapon

Wyrmls Breath*** Spec.

Wand of Repulsion

Wand of Reverse Gravity

Possibles Bag

2 Potions: Cure LW

Potion: Universal Antidote

Spells

1	1
1	1
2	2
3	3

dr/p=9 : w=10 : St=11 : db=11 : s+s=13

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Marginalia





*Shirt is made of Fire Lizard scales; despises fire or breath weapon with no harm; reduces lightning by half

** Made from scale of Gold dragon; will shelter all behind from Dragon Breath of any kind

*** Wyrmls Toofit +2 to hit, +4 damage; can become Flaming Sword 6/day; can shoot Dragon Breath (any) once per day; will Slay any of dragonkind

One day word came from a neighboring county that an old green dragon had been sighted in the Organdy Mountains and was preying on local kine. Hasty oaths sworn after a few steins of new-brewed barley beer found Ameroo in front of his home and packed for a trip to the county in question. What really happened and the tales told about it bear little resemblance to each other. The popular ballad fancies Ameroo boldly setting off to confront the beast, full of stratagems to confound it. What really happened is that the beast was ill; probably from eating a pig that didn't agree with it. Ameroo literally stumbled over the dragon while seeking shelter from a sudden downpour, waking the wyrml. As its eyes were gummed up from the illness, the dragon had some trouble locating our hero. Dim vision and a hacking cough caused it to spew acid well away from our skulking hero. Scrambling backwards through the horde, Ameroo seized upon a bottle and unerringly threw it into that lolling maw, where it broke halfway down the monster's gullet. Ameroo had lucked upon a bottle of concentrated mandrake juice, which reacts with acid to form huge amounts of gas. The dragon exploded. Ameroo hauled a good deal of the salvageable horde back to his villages, and shared it generously, launching a successful adventuring career from his early lucky break. Ω

Chaos Monks of Kthulhu!

by Jeffrey P. Talanian (swordsmen-and-sorcerers.com)

Fervently dance the naked, painted savages about the swirling devil-flames of the bonfire. They cavort to the thunderous pounding of mammoth-skin drums, kicking and shaking their limbs, their eyes rolled to white as they gibber harrowing chants and let loose blood-curdling shrieks. The bonfire is encompassed by cyclopean stone columns graven with all manner of weird runes and sigils. There are thirteen columns in total, each variable in height, randomly if not haphazardly positioned about the tiny, secluded island. Perched atop each titan column there sits cross-legged a monk garbed in a black frock and wearing a gleaming silver mask. Each mask portrays the octopoid visage of Kthulhu, the behemoth high priest who whispers to his cultists (and other bearers of his effigies) through eerie dreams and visions. At first glance the thirteen sentinel monks appear as stone-still as the columns on which they sit, their masks reflecting the undulating light of the leaping flames, but the astute observer soon notes a fitfulness about these men, a nearly imperceptible clenching and twitching that ultimately betrays a lack of control.

It is estimated that 95% of all fighting monks embrace the ethos of Law or Neutrality. In most realms of the fantastic this is true, but Hyperborea is unlike other realms. In Hyperborea, the default campaign setting for the forthcoming *Astonishing Swordsman & Sorcerer of Hyperborea* RPG, where fearless swordsmen match steel against nameless horrors and wicked sorcerers conduct foul necromancies, the scales are weighted in favour of Chaos.

Conceptually, the Chaos Monk is by no means exclusive to *AS&SH*. Furthermore, worship of Kthulhu is not integral to being a Chaos Monk; any demon, deity, or other force of Chaos, Doom, or Destruction might stand in his place. The essential idea is to have a fighting monk that does not comport with the precepts of Lawfulness or Neutrality.

The Qi of Chaos: Chaos Monks seek self-enlightenment much as other monks do, but their philosophies and theologies are in diametric opposition to those espoused by their Lawful counterparts. They do not aspire to master self-control and discipline; rather, they embrace disorder and recalcitrance. Their theologians pronounce vehemently on the futility of Law, and they reject the “absurd notion” of an ordered, predictable universe. When they enter their deepest reveries, enlightened Chaos Monks of Kthulhu stare into the mouth of madness and behold the unbridled turmoil within. They perceive mankind’s frightfully insignificant position in the universe, and they embrace it. Through potent vision quests and other methods, as well as physical and mental training, they are able to tap into and harness mystical energy, sometimes to deadly effect, for Living Chaos is the qi of the Chaos Monk. The Chaos Monks of Kthulhu described above perform heinous rituals with bonfires and blood. Others might venerate terrible storms, floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, avalanches,



or the brutal, unforgiving power of the sea. Chaos Monks might chew the roots of rare and exotic plants so as to induce potent visions of their dread deity, or engage in deliberately repulsive rites, including human and animal sacrifice. In Hyperborea, Chaos Monks of Kthulhu are scattered about the realm, but their numbers grow. They preside over malign rituals in which their bloodthirsty subordinates engage in terrifying orgies. Some Kthulhu monks are devil-worshipping northerners reputed to file their teeth to points and partake in cannibalistic feasts. Ages ago, their heretical ancestors journeyed to Hyperborea through an auroral portal in Northwest Greenland.

Chaotic Melee: Chaos monks, like all monks, are adept at open hand combat, though they also use deadly weapons of an alien flavor. To those who have not fought them before, including other monks, their uncanny combat style appears to lack discipline and form, but their enemies soon learn otherwise. What appears to be an unpredictable and reckless approach to battle is in truth more akin to a weird, patternless species of dancing. The deceptive force of their stunning fists often remains unrecognized by opponents until it is too late. Ω

CREEPIES CRAWLIES

by Lee Barber, Shaine Edwards, and Geoffrey McKinney

A Spawn of Shub-Niggurath (McKinney, *Carcosa*)

Orientation: Chaos

Number: 1

DC: 6

Speed: 6

Hit Dice: 4

Found In Lair: 100%

Treasure: Incidental

Description: This spawn of Shub-Niggurath is shaped like a 12' tall leafless willow tree with a swollen trunk and thick limbs. Its rough hide is variegated purple and jale, and dark orange mouths cover its trunk and limbs. Typically quiescent, whenever a human comes within 30' it awakens and its limbs begin to slowly undulate. It can attack up to eight man-sized opponents simultaneously by stretching forth its limbs (with a reach of 8'), grasping victims, and clutching them against its horrid bulk. The spawn's mouths then suck blood from its prey, automatically inflicting one die of damage to each victim per round. Grasped humans have a 25% chance per round of breaking free. When consuming blood, this monstrosity's multitudinous mouths emit an eerie wail that unnerves those hearing it (all attacks at -1, no saving throw). The spawn is immune to any poison save that of the Black Lotus.)

The Four Pharaohs (Barber, *Mutant Future*)

Hit Dice: 10

Frame: Biomorph

Locomotion: Legs or Ducted Fan Flight Wing (75 mph)

Manipulators: Basic Hand

Armor: Plastex shell (AC 3)

Sensors: Class V

Mental Programming: AI (overridden by slave program)

Accessories: Vocalizer, Magnetic Tool/Weapon mounts

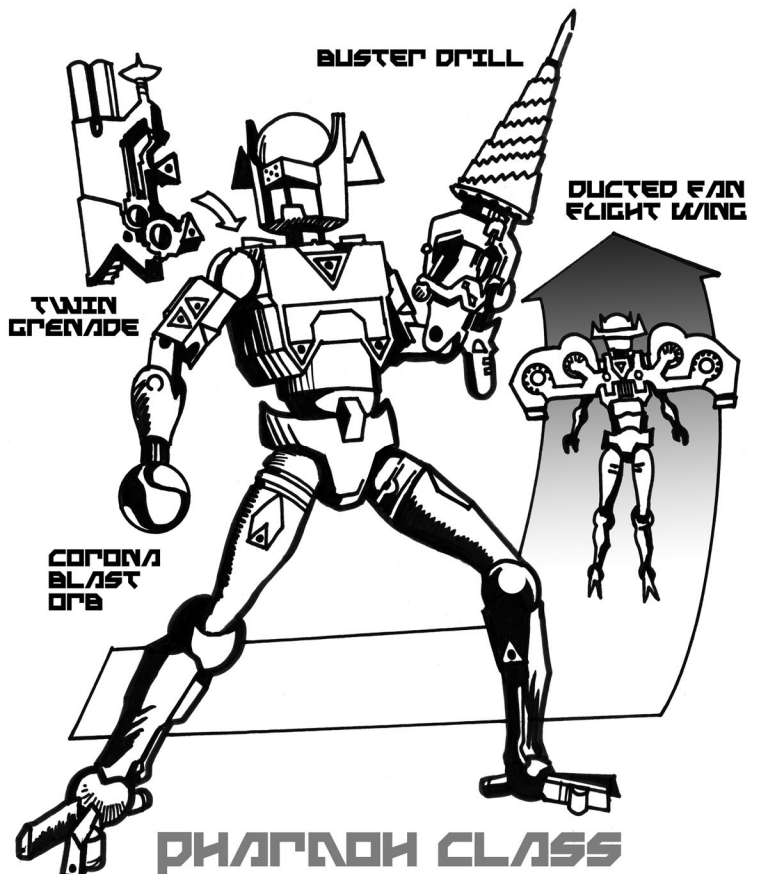
Weaponry: Twin Grenade Launcher, Buster Drill, Corona Blast Orb

Buster Drill: Mounted on the wrist instead of a hand, this mining tool combines the pulverizing power of a 6 inch vibro-chisel and spiral drill bit. Attacks with this device treat any armor as 2 worse. Damage is 1d10+6. The Buster Drill (or any Pharaoh weapons) cannot be equipped by players unless modified by a cybernetics expert.

Corona Blast Orb: Far less intimidating than the drill, this wrist mounted sphere is surprisingly deadly. Powered by the diactinic radiation, the emitter bulb can flood an area (15 foot diameter) with tissue-vaporizing energy once every two rounds. Unprotected victims within range will

have their skin turned to powder, taking Class IV radiation damage. The Orb makes no sound when triggered; the only signature is an eye-searing purple flash. Pharaoh Black has both hands replaced with these weapons, dealing double damage as a result.

History: Late in the time now called The Age of the Holy Bomb, a Pacific Bloc scientist named Dr. Takahiro Moritou designed one of the first portable fusion engines. Comparable in size to a lantern battery, the Diactinic Fusor Drive became the design that was eventually refined into the minifusion cell. In addition to his work in the nuclear field, Moritou had a notorious role in the robot industry. He was resolute in his disapproval of androids with organic features, designed only for trivial entertainment. He forbade the orbiting "fashion-droid" factories from using his energy drive, and only did business with manufacturers of industrial machines. Moritou reached retirement just as the breakthrough of artificial intelligence was made, a discovery that he proclaimed wouldn't make him give a synthetic a job sorting protein pellets. However, as military tensions rose worldwide, Moritou gave in to the temptation to make an "immortal being", a machine with a silicon soul. Working in a secret underwater lab tethered to the ocean floor, he upgraded a series of mining robots with AI imprints. The four he managed to complete were given the codenames Pharaoh Red, Pharaoh Blue, Pharaoh Gold, and Pharaoh Black. Regrettably, the doctor, in a final moment of hubris, used an illegal program to compile his own personality for Pharaoh Gold. After his death and



a security lockdown triggered by the first nuclear attack launched by the Phobos Crusade, the geodesic facility remained submerged for centuries. Now, in a time of bizarre mutation, the robotic agents of Moritou have returned to the surface. Pharaoh Gold, possessing a mind driven mad by the imprisonment and devastated ecology, has made slaves of the other three, removing from them any purpose but to kill inhuman creatures and synthetics.

Description: The robots under the control of Pharaoh Gold are all charmingly antiquated, 1.5 meter tall biomorphs with translucent Plastex bodies and chromed heads. Their sleek components are studded with magnetized sockets, which hold spare parts or mounted tools. The Pharaohs conduct airborne raids from their old mining base, which is now washed up on a reef a few kilometers from shore. Pharaoh Gold rarely leaves this sanctuary, but during assaults he is recognizable due to his head being a life-mold of Dr. Moritou. A raiding party typically comprises one Pharaoh and five standard robots.



Giant Monster Arm (Edwards)

Number: 1d2

Orientation: Chaotic

Speed: 0, but a Giant Monster Arm can reach of 1d4 x 5'.

DC: 3

Hit Dice: 6

Attack: 1 (grab)

Damage: 1d8 plus Abduct

Save As: Warrior 6

Morale: 12

Description: Giant Monster Arms are as much dungeon hazard as monster. They reach out suddenly from darkened doorways, alcoves, crevices, and other apertures no less than 5 feet across, always attempting to grab the nearest enemy. Once grabbed, the victim suffers 1d8 points of crushing damage and must make a saving throw

or risk abduction into the Mythic Underworld. If the saving throw fails, roll 1d6 and consult the following:

- 1-2:** Victim suffers additional 1d8 damage and is dropped.
- 3-5:** Victim dragged through aperture into darkness, only to reappear dazed and confused 1d4 rounds later in a randomly determined area/level of the dungeon.
- 6:** Victim disappears into the Mythic Underworld, never to be seen again. Roll 3d6 six times...

Giant Monster Arms appear as arms only. No one has ever seen the body to which one is attached. Indeed, some scholars believe they have no body, and that they are in fact an extension of the dungeon itself. This is of course a ridiculous notion and several dungeon expeditions are currently being planned to repudiate such annoying beliefs.

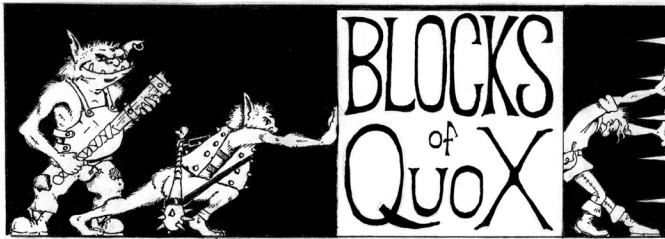
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contest winning adventure by Tony Rosten

Synopsis: Legend tells of an eccentric illusionist named Quox that decided to do something extremely foolish: summon and force into servitude a creature from the Lower Planes. Quox was a clever and methodical madman and spent years formulating a plan that would maximize his chances of success in this deadly venture. He prepared an extravagant “fiend trap” which met his very specific needs, sparing neither coin nor slave in its construction, and when it was completed he disappeared into his creation, never to be seen again. Over time the story of the illusionist and his suspected demise became nothing more than a cautionary tale told by cranky wizards to overenthusiastic apprentices, but recently a new twist has emerged. An old man who says his father was a slave of Quox’s claims he knows the location of the illusionist’s dungeon. Even more intriguing, he tells how Quox took his remaining riches with him, and that they too never emerged from that cursed place.

“The Blocks of Quox” is designed for 4-8 characters of levels 3 to 5. Characters of lower level may not have the resources to successfully solve some of the puzzles, while higher level characters might find the challenges to be unrewarding. A wide range of character types is essential to effectively navigate this dungeon. To properly run this adventure the GM should read it completely, since there are a number of special conditions that apply throughout. This adventure can be run either stand-alone or inserted into a larger dungeon of your own devising.

Start: Through either a chance encounter or a meeting arranged by a third party, the characters will come into contact with Banu, a crippled old man who claims to be the son of a slave of Quox. He will tell the party the story his father told him: how Quox drove his slaves to create a dungeon where he could summon and trap a creature from the bowels of Hell, and how his father alone escaped before Quox murdered all of the slaves save two concubines. According to Banu, his father watched from a hidden spot as Quox entered his dungeon, taking with him these two women and as well as his remaining riches and magical relics. This happened seventy years ago and since that day Quox has never been seen, presumably destroyed in his encounter with the monster he summoned. Respecting his father’s wishes Banu had never told anyone this tale, but now that he is old and in poor health he has decided to enlist a party of adventurers to enter Quox’s dungeon and recover the treasure that is surely there. He will give the

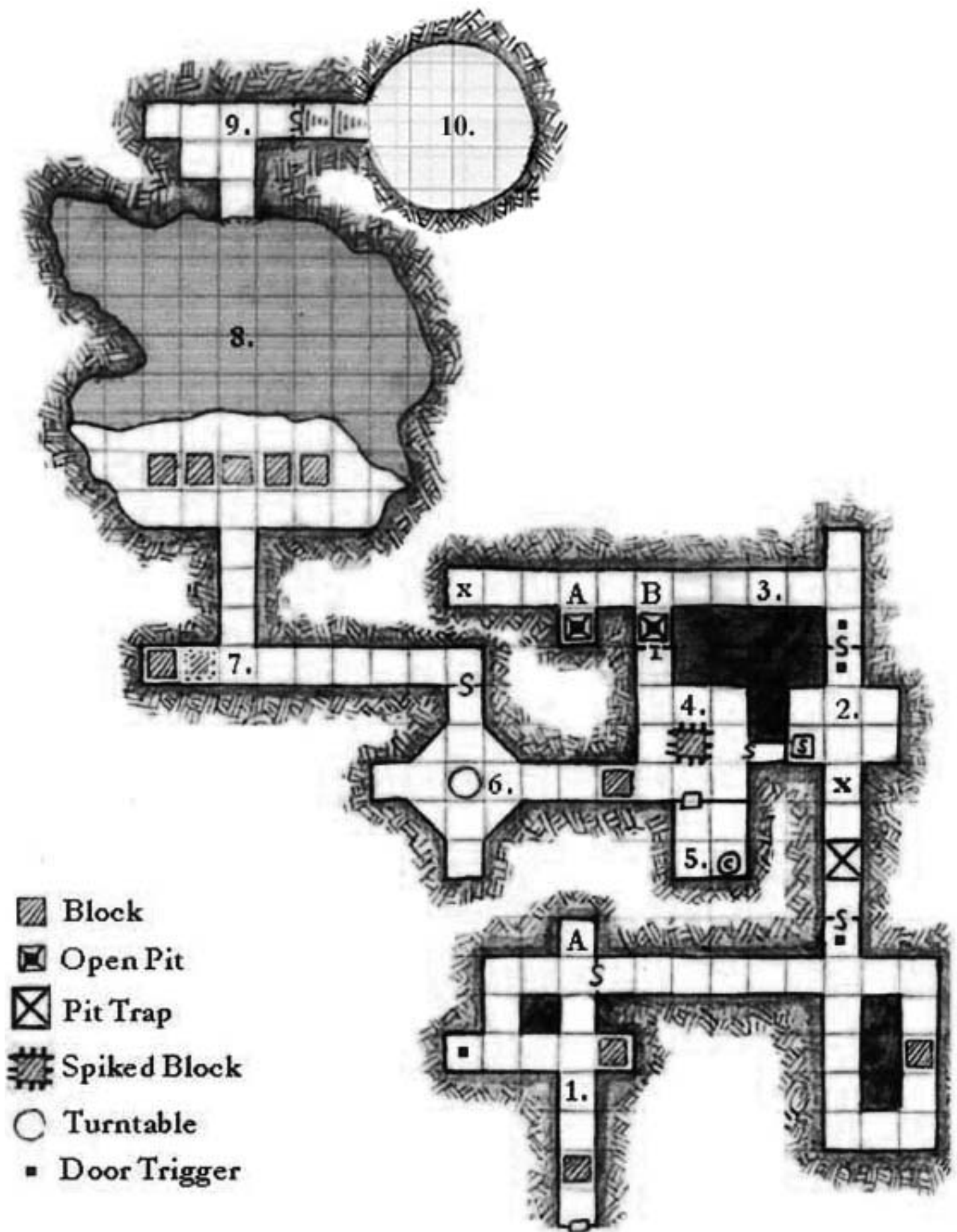
party a map showing the dungeon’s location, asking in return only that the characters bring him a single treasure: an ivory statuette of a palace (“It’s a replica of the ancestral home of my family, handed down through generations uncounted and stolen by that bastard Quox!”). All other treasure is the party’s to do with as they wish. (**Banu**, 0 level human: DC 10, SPD 6, HD 1-6, hp 2, LG.)

Banu knows no particulars about the dungeon itself, “his father never having told him.” This is certainly the case, because the truth is that Banu’s father was never Quox’s slave. Banu is under a powerful charm and is being magically manipulated to lure the characters to Quox’s dungeon. See the “Conclusion” section for more details. The map that Banu provides leads to a small cave a couple of days travel into the wilderness (or to an appropriate location in your campaign). This cave is obscured by bushes and not visible to the casual observer. The cave is 20’ deep and shows signs of being occupied by animals many years ago. At the back of the cave is a rusty metal door. It is locked and will need to be picked or magically opened.

General Notes: Unless otherwise stated, all rooms and corridors are constructed out of smooth interlocking stones that fit so tightly that the seam between them is almost undetectable. Ceilings are 10’ above, and with the exception of the secret passage between 2 and 4 all corridors are exactly 10’ wide. This dungeon contains no wandering monsters, though it is conceivable that some of the occupants may leave their areas if properly motivated.

The Blocks: The defining element of this dungeon is the large stone blocks found at various points. These blocks are integral to the function of this dungeon, and unless stated otherwise they all share the following characteristics:

- Each block is exactly 9’9” cubed, made of solid stone, and weighs in at approximately 20,000 lbs. Mounted into the center of each vertical side is a large iron rung that, unless pulled upon, rests perfectly flush within an indentation carved into the side of the block. Three characters can grasp this rung at once.
- The bottom of each block is covered with a liberal coating of *wizard wax*. This magical substance creates an almost frictionless surface, making it possible (though not easy) to push or pull the blocks. The wizard wax cannot be removed from the bottom of the block by any means and does not wear away.
- Up to three characters may push or pull upon a block at the same time. For every point of Strength above 30 applied, a block will move one foot/round. Example: Two characters with Strengths of 17 and 12 attempt to shove a block but are unable to move it (17 + 12 = 29 Str; close, but not quite the 31 required to get the block moving). A third character with a Strength of 14 comes to their aid, and with much huffing and grunting they are able to move the block thirteen feet per round (17 + 12



+ 14 = Str: 43; 13 beyond 30, which translates into 13'/round).

- Due to a peculiarity in their design, blocks cannot be spun in place. The turntable in 6 will allow characters to spin blocks if they find a need to (and they will!).

Doors and Triggers: Most doors on this level are not doors at all, but 10' sections of sliding wall that open when the full weight of a block is placed on its corresponding trigger. They look just like any other section of wall and can be located as secret doors, or dwarves may spot them with their ability to detect sliding/shifting walls. Door triggers may be located in a similar fashion, but triggers for traps are handled on a case-by-case basis. The entire block must occupy the 10' trigger square to activate a door, and the door will close five rounds after the weight of the block is removed from the trigger.

1. Entrance and Introductions. Behind the door a 10' wide corridor that goes for 10' and then is obstructed by a large stone block (see the "General Dungeon Notes" section above for information on the blocks found in this dungeon). Written on the block are the following words:

STONE AND BLOOD THAT BLOCK THE WAY
BEASTLY LIES AND VISCOUS GREY
YEARS IN HELL THREE SCORE AND TEN
I LONG TO HOLD THE SUN AGAIN

Beyond the block the corridor turns back on itself, with three 10' alcoves branching off. Occupying the SE alcove is another block, and if a block is placed on the trigger in the SW alcove it will open the door in the NW corner.

1A. If the block is placed in this alcove it will activate a spear trap. Four spears will fire from the W wall to strike those who may have been pushing the block. They hit as if thrown by a 4th level warrior and do 1-6 damage each.

2. When Push Comes to Shove. This area is accessed by a secret door in the south which is activated when a block is set upon the trigger directly in front of it. The characters should be able to hear a grinding noise as the secret door slides open, at which time they will be able to push on. The door will close 5 rounds after the block is pushed off the trigger. Observant characters will notice that some brown substance (dried blood) seems to have been smeared over the walls. When a block activates the trigger located at the "X" it opens the pit trap just to the south, most likely behind the party, but it may catch one or two characters (1-6 damage). The pit is exactly 9'9" deep, and at the bottom there is a trigger that re-activates the door at the southern end of the corridor. If a block is pushed into the pit it will not only keep the southern door open but will provide a surface on which to slide another block. To complicate matters, three bugbears lurk here. They are well

aware of the pit trap and will wait for the characters to trigger it, at which time they will attempt to push the block (as well as the characters) into the pit. Each bugbear is considered to have a Strength of 15 (for a total of 45). For game purposes, to determine if the bugbears or the party are in control of the block, subtract the total of the side with the lower strength from the side with the higher. The difference is the number of feet/round that the stronger group is able to advance the block. (Example: if a party with the combined strength of 43 is pushing against the bugbears combined strength of 45, the bugbears will be able to push the block forward two feet per round.) A great deal of blood has been wiped over these walls, just as it had throughout the corridor to the south, and with the exception of some bits of unidentifiable meat and an old barrel that has been used as a table, the room is empty. Located in the floor in the SW corner of the room is a secret trapdoor that opens upon a 20' deep shaft with a wooden ladder attached to it. This shaft leads to a small passage that terminates in a secret door. This secret door opens on 4, and if things go bad for the bugbears they may try to flee to this location. **Bugbears:** DC 5, SPD 9, HD 3+1, hp 19, 13, 11, At Morning Star 2-8, surprise on 1-3, CE, large, 1-10 gp and 3-30 sp each.

3. "Squish Like Grape!" The door to this area has two triggers, one on either side. It opens upon a short (30') corridor, from which branches from a much longer (100') corridor. This longer east/west corridor has two alcoves along its southern wall, labeled A and B. Each of these contains an open pit: A is 10' deep, while B is 20' deep. The lower 10' of the southern wall of B is an illusion that conceals the entrance to 4. If the characters push a block

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all the way down the corridor to the X at the end they are in for a nasty surprise, for the block will be propelled back down the hallway at an accelerating rate of speed, pushing the characters along with it and crushing them into the east wall for 6-60 hp damage. This is a magically activated trap, and detecting magic will show a magical radiation covering the entire 10' where the X is located. Dispelling will deactivate this trap (treat the trap as if it were cast at 14th level). There are, however, ways to avoid this fate. While characters with a speed of 6 will be set upon by the block in under 20', characters with speed 9 will be able to outrun the block to Pit A, and characters with speed 12 will be able to get all the way past Pit B before the block catches them. These characters can choose to leap into the pits they can run to without needing to make any kind of roll. Characters being pushed by the block may attempt to throw themselves into a pit as well, but will need to roll a save vs. paralyzation (DEX defense adjustment applies) to see if they make it. A character that fails can try again on the next pit. If a character misses their save there is a 10% chance that they will be pinched between the block and pit wall for a hearty 2-20 hp damage, after which they will fall into the pit. The saving throw is standard for Pit A, but those trying to jump off the block into Pit B will roll at -1, since the block is moving faster at this point. As a last ditch effort, characters can also attempt to jump from the block just before it smashes into the wall. Since the block is traveling so fast at this point the save is a -4, and even if successful the character will still take 1-6 hp from being thrown into the wall. As above, there is a 10% chance that the character who fails his save got partially out from behind the block, and will take a "mere" 2-20 hp damage.

4. Between a Rock and a Sharp Pointy Place. This room is 30'x30', with a door in the center of the south wall, a 10' alcove in the northern wall of the northwest corner, and an opening in the western wall of the southwest corner. This opening is blocked by a unique stone block that is described in **6**. In the center of the room is a block that is like the rest encountered in the dungeon except that it is bristling with cruel 1' spikes. There are 5 bugbears in this room. If the trap is set off at **3** they will hear if anyone comes crashing down into Pit B and will not be surprised. When the characters are able to get into the room, the bugbears will attempt to pin them between the spiked block and a wall by having two of the bugbears try to block either side of party while the other three push on the far side of the block. Any characters crushed in this way will be stabbed by 1-6 spikes, each causing 1-6 damage. Just as with the bugbears in **2**, these bugbears have 15 Strength for purposes of moving the blocks. It should also be noted that due to the spikes the party will not be able to push this block from the room, since they make the width of the block wider than the corridor openings. **Bugbears:** DC 5, SPD 9, HD 3+1, hp 22, 17, 17, 15, 9, At Morning Star 2-8, surprise on 1-3, CE, large, 1-10 gp and 3-30 sp each. As in **2**, the walls are covered

with dried blood. If the dried blood and gore on the east wall (above the secret door) is cleaned off the following will be discovered faintly etched into the surface:

*From the Spiral of the Void comes the one True Vision;
From the Flames will rise the Serpent to Devour the Soul of Man.*

This is a reference to the pattern in which the blocks in **8** need to be placed.

5. The Vision of Hruggek. This room is empty with the exception of eight flea-infested bedrolls, a keg of weak beer and the hindquarters of a horse that the bugbears have been eating. There is a trapdoor in the ceiling with a knotted rope hanging from it. Here is where the bugbears sleep in this "holy place", for that is what they believe it to be. Every day there is a 5% chance that an image of a great bugbear covered with blood will appear in this chamber, speaking of how these chambers (**2**, **4** and **5** to be specific) are hallowed and that all non-bugbears who enter should be slain and their blood smeared over the walls. In fact, all surfaces in this room have been covered with so much blood that the room appears to have been painted reddish-brown. While the bugbear shamans of all the local tribes have interpreted this as a command from the god Hruggek himself, the reality of the matter is that the image is nothing more than a programmed illusion created by Quox to ensure the continued support of the bugbears over the years. Of course, the bugbears are unaware that they've been duped and have continued to send "custodians" to this place for decades. On average the bugbears spend a two week stint here as part of a holy pilgrimage, and then are replaced by another group of eight. The trapdoor in the ceiling opens on to a small tunnel that twists and turns for a few miles, eventually opening into the wilderness.

6. The Brass Block. The corridor leading from **4** to this room is obstructed by a unique block. Unlike most of the other blocks located on this level, this one is made of brass, and on each of its four vertical faces is a different bas-relief. In its current position the designs are as follows:

NORTH FACE:	A cresting wave
EAST FACE:	The sun
SOUTH FACE:	A lone mountain
WEST FACE:	A crescent moon

The brass block does have rungs affixed to the center of each surface, and it can be pushed or pulled just like any other block. This room is a 30' by 30' octagon with 10' alcoves set in the north, west and south walls (the entrance of the room being in the eastern wall). Each alcove has been painted a different primary color, with the north alcove blue, the south red and the west yellow. In the center of the chamber is a 10' round brass disc set flush into the stone. Examination of this disc will reveal that it spins effortlessly, much like a turntable. If the block is

placed on this disc the party will be able to spin it so that the different surfaces will face whichever direction they choose. Pushing the brass block into the different alcoves will cause a variety of different effects, depending on which alcove they place it in and the face that is facing out towards the party. These effects are as follows:

Red Alcove

Wave: “The floor of the room appears to transform into turbulent green water, from which two sea lions emerge and attack.” The water is a visual illusion that will disappear when the sea lions are slain, and whether the characters believe it or not they will be able to stand on the floor without penalty. The sea lions, however, are shadow monsters: DC 5/3, SPD 18, HD 6, hp 5 each; At claw/claw/bite 1-6/1-6/2-12, N, large).

Sun: “The block fades to nothing, revealing a passageway stretching into a brightly lit area”. This too is an illusion. If a character succeeds in disbelieving the illusion he will see that the block still occupies the alcove, and will be able to pull it out as normal. However, if the character is unsuccessful in disbelieving he will be susceptible to the second part of this deception. Any character “walking” into the corridor must save vs. paralyzation. Those that make their save will simply believe that an invisible wall blocks their way. Those that fail will become paralyzed, and in their minds they will be walking down the illusory corridor in a dream-like state. Characters will remain in this state until they are no longer physically touching the block, and then for another 1-6 turns. Dispel is effective at countering the illusion and paralysis.

Mountain: “The peak of the mountain image begins to glow as if an erupting volcano, and then dims to a small crimson sparkle.” This sparkle is a real (not illusory) 1000 gp ruby that can be easily removed from the relief.

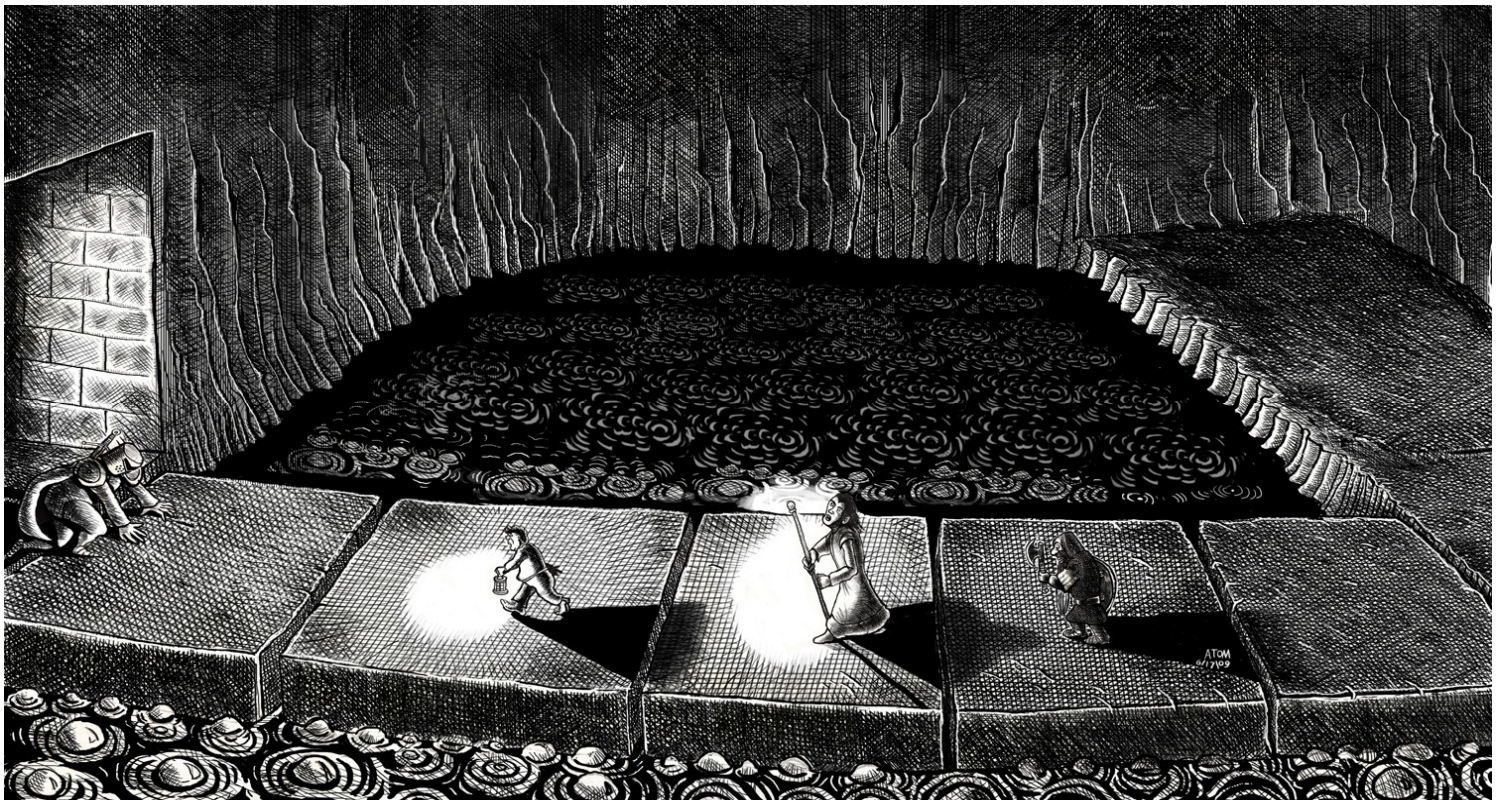
Moon: Nothing will happen when the block is placed in the alcove in this position. However, if the rung is pulled to remove the block tiny holes will open along the crescent moon’s edge, creating a cloud of poisonous gas in a 10’ square in front of the block. Those that fail a save vs. poison will lose 1-4 points of strength (which they will regain at a rate of 1/day). This could have a devastating effect on how the party travels through this level!

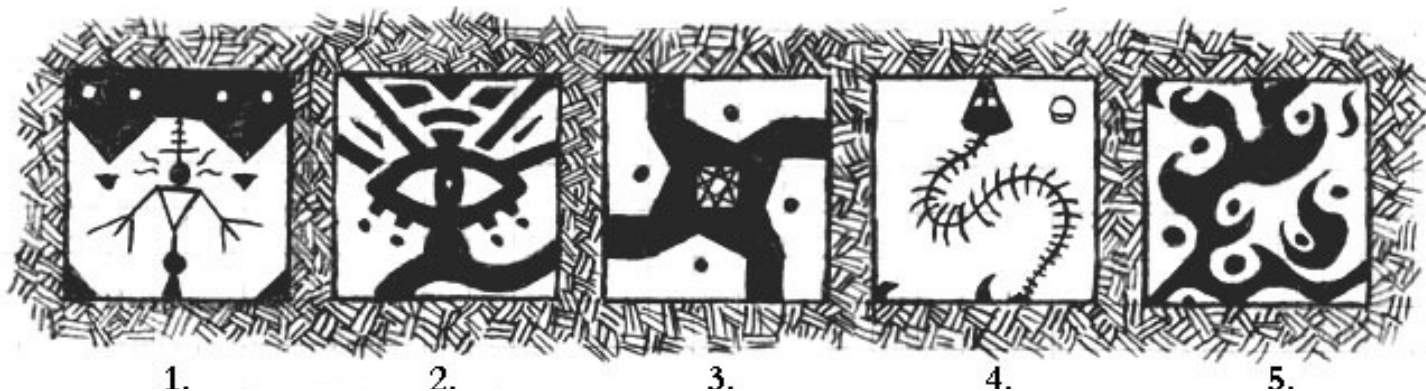
Yellow Alcove

Wave: When the block is placed into the alcove a jet of acid squirts from small holes that open in the block, covering everyone within 10’ of the block’s face (2-12 hp, save vs. breath for ½). Note: this acid could damage belongings.

Sun: “The sun glows as bright as the real thing and then slowly dims. When the characters can look directly at it again they see 10 golden arrows radiating from around the sun’s globe like flames.” These are magic arrows +1 and can be easily removed from the bas-relief.

Mountain: “There is a deep rumbling from the northeast wall, and suddenly a large monster with four eyes and huge mandibles bursts forth and attacks!” As with the sea lions, this umber hulk is a shadow monster. The tunnel is a visual illusion that disappears after the monster is defeated, and any character inspecting feels only the wall beneath. **Umbral Hulk:** DC 2, SPD 6, HD 8+8, hp 10; At c/c/b 3-12/3-12/2-10, Confusion, CE, L.





Moon: “The block fades away, revealing a passageway stretching into darkness.” This illusionary corridor is the same as the sun/red alcove combo above.

Blue Alcove

Wave: “The wave design appears to toss violently, eventually settling back to its original design. There is something sparkling at its crest.” The sparkling item is a *ring of swimming*, which can be easily removed from the relief.

Sun: When the block is set completely into this alcove an electric current will flow through it, shocking any in contact with it for 1-8 hp damage (no saving throw).

Mountain: “The block fades to nothing, revealing a passageway beyond.” This time the block really does disappear, and the corridor beyond is real. There is no way to make the block reappear.

Moon: “The ceiling of the room melts away, revealing a starlit night sky. From this sky two large griffons swoop down and attack!” As with the other creatures, these griffons are shadow monsters. The sky is also an illusion that will disappear when the monsters are defeated. Any character that examines the illusionary sky will feel the ceiling underneath it. **Griffons:** DC 3, SPD 12/30, HD 7, hp 7 each, At c/c/b 1-4/1-4/2-16, N, large.

7. Yet Another Rude Surprise. At this point the corridor forms a T, with a corridor branching to the north. To the west the corridor is obstructed by yet another block. The “block” that blocks the way is in reality a gelatinous cube with an illusion cast over it. It should go without saying that it will attack the first character that attempts to move it! **Gelatinous Cube:** DC 8, SPD 6, HD 4, hp 21, AT acidic engulfing 2-8 + paralysis, special defenses, N, large. Floating in the cube are 17 cp, 47 sp, 10 gp, a citrine worth 50 gp and the skeletons of hundreds of rats: its only means of sustenance. Located behind the gelatinous cube is another cube, this one made of iron and adorned with the same rungs as the standard cubes located in this level.

8. The Great Bubbling Goo. “The corridor terminates in a giant cavern, approximately 80’ in diameter, its ceiling 40’ above and its walls consisting of rough-hewn stone. The entire chamber is lit by an eerie glowing green mist that sits at ground level. The southern 30’ of the chamber’s floor is

made of stone, and lined up on this section are five blocks that appear to be the same as others found on this level. The rest of the chamber is filled by a small lake of foul-smelling grey/green goo that gurgles and percolates in a most unpleasant fashion. In the center of the northern wall of the cavern – on the opposite side of the lake of goo – is a 10’ opening.” As the astute GM may have already assumed, the lake is 9’3” deep and comes up to within six inches of the edge of the ledge. It is equally close to the lip of the opening in the north wall. The goo itself is vicious, horrible stuff: it is too thick to swim through, and anyone that enters it will sink to the bottom and drown. If anyone exposes their eyes to the stuff they will need to make a save vs. poison or be struck blind (requiring magic to have their sight returned). Unfortunately the goo cannot be used as a weapon, for it dries into a harmless crumbly powder within one round of removing it from the lake. Lurking in the lake of goo camouflaged by its consistency and color is a greyish ooze. This horror slowly slithers through the muck, and much like the gelatinous cube in 7 has subsisted mostly on vermin that have the misfortune of falling into the goo. It only attacks those entering the goo and will surprise on a 1-5. **Ooze:** DC 8, SPD 1, HD 3+3, hp 14, At corrosive contact 2-16, special abilities, N, small.

If a character climbs atop the blocks he will see that there are markings carved into the top surfaces. From west to east the designs follow the graphic at the top of this page. These carvings, when lined up properly, form one unbroken line running from south to north. The proper order is 3, 2, 5, 4, 1. If these five blocks are pushed into the lake in this order they will form a stone bridge that crosses to the opening in the north wall, and the party will be able to push the iron block across without incident. If the pattern is incorrect and the party attempts to push the iron block across, 4 shockers will float out of a secret hatch on the top of the iron block and attack the party. **Shockers:** DC 3, HD 2+1, hp 14, 10, 9, 6, At 1-4 bite + 2-12 shock, immune to electricity, N, small. They have no treasure.

9. The Far Side of the Lake. This 20’ square room is devoid of any kind of decoration. There are 10’ alcoves on the northern halves of the east and west walls. If the iron block is placed in the eastern alcove it – along

with the secret door wall – will slowly sink into the floor, allowing access to the stairway beyond. Only the iron block allows passage in such a manner, and any other block placed in this alcove will have no effect. If the characters have lost the iron block (say, in the lake of goo), powerful magic such as passwall, disintegrate, stone to mud or similar spell will be required to obtain access.

10. Quox and the Devil. Almost seventy years prior to the party entering this chamber, Quox left the sunlit world, set his traps, closed the way behind him, and summoned into this room a barbed devil, a creature from the planes of Hell. Of this monster he asked only one thing - the true name of one of the powerful Dukes of Hell - and in exchange he would give the barbed devil an opportunity to win his soul for eternity. The devil was intrigued but cautious (after all, names of such creatures were not to be tossed about lightly) and listened to Quox's proposition with a diabolically attentive ear. When the illusionist finished speaking the devil cracked a predatory grin, gave the true name of his duke (Merodach), and began the challenge. The game presented was this: Quox and the barbed devil were to spend seventy years together in this chamber, with Quox forced to remain in a 5' circle in the center of the room and the devil forbidden to enter this 5' circle. A single piece of flatbread and a cup of water would magically appear every day, and waste would be magically removed. Neither devil nor man could leave the chamber, nor could anyone enter. If mortals were to breach the chamber Quox would be ripped apart and forfeit his soul; if any extraplanar creature or being under the control of the devil were to enter he'd be forced to serve Quox for the rest of his living years. Mind-influencing magic could not be used by either devil or man to force the other to break these rules. The devil was not allowed to physically harm the illusionist, but if Quox were to die before the seventy years passed his soul would be transferred to the devil in the afterlife. If Quox survived the seventy years or the barbed devil broke any of the rules, the illusionist's soul would be spared and he will have won.

When the party enters the chamber they will look upon a surreal scene. Across the walls of this 40' diameter chamber a barrage of images collide and twist: snowy mountains and flowing waterfalls, tranquil rural countryside, soft sunlight, cool streams and image upon image of simple comfortable life. Above everything on the domed ceiling is what appears to be open sky, except that day and night cycle through in seconds instead of weeks. The stars, sun and moon spin in a grand hyper-accelerated dance. In the center of the room and surrounded by hellish flames is a very old and frail Quox. He is covered with sores, balled into a fetal position and rocking ever so slightly. Walking around Quox (just outside the ring of fire) are two voluptuous nude women. One holds a crystal pitcher filled with ice water and the other a bunch of plump grapes. They whisper in comforting tones to the illusionist, telling

him how they can give him the peace he longs for. Sitting in an iron chair on the opposite side of the room is the barbed devil. Next to him is a gigantic glass water clock, almost empty, which appears to drip blood into an ornate goblet. He occasionally picks up the goblet and takes a sip. **Barbed Devil:** DC 0, SPD 12, HD 8, hp 43, At c/c/tail 2-8/2-8/3-12, special devil abilities, LE, human-sized. The devil will not react directly to the party upon their entrance, but instead will talk to Quox. "Poor, poor Quox. You were so close! Almost seventy years you have stayed in your miserable circle, waiting beyond your own sanity for this to end. Seventy years of torture and anguish, and for what? A name you can't use, a prize you will never claim! You exchanged a life of power for one of despair. Now, days before you were to win this bet, these mortals come bumbling into our parlor, and according to the rules we agreed upon such a breach is grounds for automatic forfeit by you. The game is over, and you are the fool." At this point the devil gets out of his chair and starts walking towards the ancient wizard. "The best part is, I know that somewhere deep in that broken mind you understand that freedom just slipped from your grasp and the real torment is just beginning. Now, if our visitors would please excuse us, we have a deal to close."



The barbed devil will not attack the party unless they attack him or try to hinder his access to Quox, in which case he will fight intelligently and teleport away if things get ugly. He will also discontinue the illusions in the room, including all the images on the walls, the water clock and goblet, the iron chair, and the two women (who in reality are the animated skeletons of Quox's concubines that he had sacrificed during the summoning process: DC 7, SPD 12, HD 1, hp 5 each, At bone strike 1-6, 1 point from piercing/slashing weapons, N, human-sized.) If the party doesn't interfere, the barbed devil will step through the flames surrounding Quox, lift his cruel tail, and lash it

down upon the illusionist. It is at this time he will learn the real truth: that he had been deceived, for the thing that the devil thought was Quox is actually an illusion!

Quox may have been insane, but he was smart. He knew that the only way he'd get the name of a duke out of another devil would be to give it a deal that was too good to pass up. Under the guise of an illusion of himself he made his pact with the creature, and upon obtaining the duke's name he quickly teleported from the chamber, leaving the barbed devil to spend the next seventy years tormenting a Quox that wasn't there. The illusion was very detailed: it aged at an appropriate rate (Quox was 40 years old at the time of the summoning), its hair grew, and it even acted as if it were going slowly insane. The daily bread and water were illusions as well. The devil, having confirmed he was dealing with a real person at the onset of their agreement, never thought to magically check and see if the illusionist were still the real thing. When the barbed devil does learn the truth he will fly into a fit of infernal rage, screaming "Deceiver!" over and over again, but then his anger will shift to terror. Seventy years is more than enough time to put Merodach's real name to use, and Quox's reneging on their deal will be of no consequence compared to the fury of a betrayed devil of such power. The barbed devil, frantic to thwart his doom, will vanish in a cloud of smoke. With the illusions dispelled the party will see that the room is bare except for some burned pieces of parchment, a number of candle stubs, and a jade knife (worth 50 gp). If the party searches they find a small hatch in the floor under where the illusion of Quox had been. When it is opened the party will find in the space beneath 2000 gp, a potion of *gaseous body*, and a locked teakwood box. Inside is the ivory statuette of a palace which Banu had originally requested the party return to him.

Conclusion: Quox hadn't been the only one reinterpreting the rules of the game. After years of watching Quox go insane but never break the rules, the barbed devil began to fear that he could actually last the full seventy years. There was little doubt in the devil's mind that Quox would never have the mental or magical abilities to capitalize on the name he was given, but could he afford to take the chance? The devil chose to hedge his bet by summoning another barbed devil just outside the door of the chamber. This second fiend, unconfined by the rules of Quox's challenge, located a man suitable for his needs and charmed him. With this man - Banu - as his sock puppet he set out to recruit an adventuring party with the strength to surpass Quox's defenses and breach the summoning chamber. When the party exits the dungeon Banu will be waiting at the entrance and will ask if they managed to obtain the statuette (observant party members may notice that Banu is sweating and seems agitated). If they say they have, Banu will demand that it be given to him immediately and will become hostile if it isn't handed over on the spot. If the party says they never found it Banu will go into hysterics

and run into the dungeon, most likely to his doom. If the party simply refuses to give it to him then the barbed devil will step in to "change their minds". (**Devil:** DC 0, SPD 12, HD 8, hp 29, At c/c/tail 2-8/2-8/3-12, special devil abilities, LE, human-sized.) Like all of its kind, this devil is a cunning creature. It is not opposed to cutting a deal for the statuette (and more), but would just as soon rip the party apart if that is the more viable option. It would be very interested to hear of the other barbed devil's betrayal of their master, as well as its inability to destroy Quox, and this information could be used to a clever party's advantage. What exactly is the ivory palace statuette? That is for each GM to decide, but it should be something of great importance to the barbed devil. Some suggestions:

- A barbed devil talisman
- A perfect model of an actual palace that reveals clues to the location of a treasure/imprisoned being/gate/etc.
- An item of great significance to a creature of the Upper Planes that should NOT fall into infernal hands
- A piece to a puzzle that, when combined with other pieces, helps form a powerful magic item or a gate
- An extra-planar monster that has been polymorphed into this statue and trapped on the Prime Material Plane

Easter Eggs: Sometimes players are pretty clever and often they are blatantly stupid, but usually they're just plain lucky. What follows are a couple of hidden "extras" that the party may stumble upon by luck alone:

- If the first block that the characters encountered (the one with the poem carved into it) is placed in the western alcove of **9**, it will shrink down to one inch in size and become a fully charged cube of force. (Note that a block can be pushed into Pit B of **3**.)
- The eastern face of block #2 in **8** has an illusion cast over its top 3' that resembles a plain stone surface. If this illusion is dispelled, the words "TWO CENTER NORTH, THREE EAST, ME LAST" will be revealed. If the blocks are placed in the lake of goo according to these coordinates (with the inscribed block being the last one in the chain) the lake will drain, revealing a chest in the far northwest corner. The chest is locked and has a poison needle trap (save or die). Inside the following goodies can be found: 700 sp, 200 gp, 300 pp, 4-200 gp opals, 2 potions of *super-healing*, a +2 dagger, and a scroll with *spectral forces*, *mass tree illusion*, and *enmaze*. Since the lake is empty the blocks can be arranged into the bridge formation (The ooze will drain away with the goo).
- The spikes on the block in **4** are threaded and can be unscrewed and removed. It takes 6 turns per face to remove the spikes. If this block is then pushed into the space where the iron block sits at **7** it turns into a pulsating cube of blue light. Anyone who steps into this light will be completely healed, including any diseases, poisons, blindness or deafness that they may have acquired. This blue cube will remain for an hour, after which it will disappear, never to return. Ω

Colourful Castings: Summonings Vile and Dark

by Matthew "The Fiendish Dr. Samsara" Slepín

He shuddered again as he stood within the pentacle and summoned Quaolnargn...Theleb K'aarna was taking the opportunity of summoning all the aid he could control. Quaolnargn must be sent to destroy Elric, if it could, before the albino reached the castle. Theleb K'aarna congratulated himself that he still retained the lock of white hair which had enabled him, in the past, to send another, now deceased, demon, against Elric.

Quaolnargn knew that it was reaching its master. It propelled itself sluggishly forward and felt a stinging pain as it entered the alien continuum. It knew that its master's soul hovered before it, but for some reason was disappointingly unattainable. Something was dropped in front of it. Quaolnargn scented it and knew what it must do. This was part of its new feed.

--The Stealer of Souls, Michael Moorcock

The magician summoning aid from the Other World, to me, is one of the pivotal images of fantasy. I have spent many frustrated years as a player of Sorcery-Utilizers wondering where my demons were. This article is a suggestion for making magic work from summoning and binding supernatural beings, giving the game a flavour more akin to both Sword & Sorcery literature and medieval conceptions of magic, but without adding substantive new rules or mechanics. The ideas presented here are for *Spellcraft & Swordplay* and make use of that game's unique magic rules, but can be easily tweaked for most standard FRP games.

On Summoning and Binding Extradimensional Beings. At its simplest, magic allows a Wizard to conjure one or more beings from some other plane and have them perform some service. The basic protocols necessary for this are Pacts established long ago by the Archimagi, and practicing these codified summonings is fairly straightforward. There are, however, many lost rituals as well as beings which have never been bound into pact, and Wizards may discover these in the course of their adventures.

When a Wizard "memorizes/prepares" a spell, he is actually performing the conjuration ritual, consulting his grimoire and performing summoning ceremonies. The conjured being appears to the Wizard in immaterial form and agrees to perform the service specified in the words of the spell, which are ancient and accepted covenants. Following the ritual, the summoned being must be bound into some physical object to anchor it to the material world. This object may be virtually anything, although many spirits object to iron for some reason or another. The most common binding objects are rings, staves, gems, and books, although there is a noted preference for oil-



lamps in some cultures. When the Wizard wishes to bring forth his extraplanar ally, he presents the binding object and calls forth the being, who appears immediately or in the following round (depending upon the Casting Roll).

Thus, the 1st level spell *Light* might summon a Minor Lucifugeous Demon, who will manifest as a glow resembling torchlight for the specified period. A more complex ritual, *Continual Light*, will cause one to manifest as a larger sphere, equal to daylight, bound into an object until it is dispelled back into its luminiferous realm. Unless the Wizard fails the Casting Roll, the summoned being will return to its binding object once the specific parameters of its service are met (these generally being either a set time limit or a specific service rendered). The spirit will remain bound until the Wizard either chooses to summon a different being in its place (i.e. memorizes a different spell) or fails his Casting Roll. In the latter case, the summoned being will retreat to its home plane (see the *Disaster Option* below for more options). Of course, no Wizard worth his salt is defenseless against the depredations of these ultramundane entities. In this system, the power to counter-spell can be renamed "exorcism" or "abjuration" and represent the Wizard's ability to ward off the actions of inimical demons. Instead of simply dispelling that *Lightning Bolt*, you can stand up to the Lord of Thunders, plant your staff, and shout: "You shall not pass!"

All Wizard spells are summoning spells of this sort. Mechanically unaltered, the descriptions of the functioning

are changed to reflect the fact that some other entity is doing the actual work. The names of the spells given in the book should, ideally, be generic, out-of-game names; in the game, each should be given an appropriate, setting-specific name. Some suggestions for the 1st level spells:

Charm Person—Summon the Seductive Succubus, Herodias, Whisperer of Inducements, who enchants any humanoid to believe that the Wizard is a trusted friend.

Dancing Lights—Summon the Willow-the-Wisp, which will dance to the Wizard's tune, but prefers to befuddle and mislead.

Detect Magic—Summon the Eldritch Observer, who will tell the Wizard if anything in his vicinity is enchanted.

Hold Portal—Summon the First Guardian of the Gate, who will invisibly lock and hold fast any door, window, etc.

Light—Summon the Lucifugeous Demon, who will manifest a torch-like glow into its binding object.

Magic Missile—Summon the Faerie Archer, who will pierce the Wizard's foe with invisible Elf-Shot.

Detect Evil—Summon the Recorder of the Black Roll, who announces the presence of those in league with darkness.

Read Languages—Summon the Adamantine Scribe, who will read and translate any text written in any language.

Sleep—Summon Somnos, Herald of the Oneiric Realms, who brings the gift of sleep to any chosen by the caster.

Demon, Daemon, or Daimon? If this conjuration system is used, one of the most important considerations for the Referee is the nature of the supernatural entities. This

decision will be based, at least in part, upon the specifics of the game setting, and it will also be affected by how the Referee sees sorcerers fitting into that setting. For example, if all summoned beings are infernal spirits of evil, then all Wizards will be morally dodgy at best. This set-up would be very good for games that seek to emulate medieval conceptions of necromancy and witchcraft, as well as those finding their inspiration in classical Sword & Sorcery fiction. However, in a setting where the cosmos is created and run by primal, amoral, elemental powers, it is not appropriate. In that setting, all of the conjured entities should be elementals. More complex would be those settings in which multiple types of entities are available. Consider a setting with a fiercely dualistic religion. All Wizards in this world are trained by one of two inimical societies: the Black Lodge and the White Lodge. Those of the Black Lodge practice goetic arts, summoning and controlling the Hosts of Hell, while the theurgists of the White Lodge invoke the aid of the Host of Heaven. Magic in this setting brings with it a host of social implications even if both goety and theurgy actually function identically both with each other and with the magic system as written.

If the group wishes to venture further afield, actual mechanical differences could be introduced into the above scenario. Perhaps the sorcerers of the Black Lodge do not have access to any spells dealing with light and learn comparable spells dealing with darkness. So, instead of *Light*, they receive *Darkness*, which creates a foul gloom that fills an area equal to that which the spell *Light* would. Of course, both spell lists should include more evocative names: The White Mages summon Arakiel, Lesser Lumen of the First Heaven, while the Black Sorcerers invoke the Fetor of Buruchias. Another way to complicate the situation is to allow individual Wizards to summon different kinds of beings. Perhaps all spells dealing with light involve the Hosts of Heaven, while *Fireball* summons an entity of Elemental Fire, and *Invisible Stalker* actually calls forth the Unquiet Dead. Do dealings with these various, perhaps inimical beings, result in complications for the Wizard? Once can only hope so.

The Disaster Option. In my games, I sometimes add the possibility for disastrous results whenever a character rolls snake-eyes (not when modifiers force the result to "2" or less). This is the time for swords to break, shields to shatter, horsemen to fall, and traps to be inadvertently set off. The options are particularly colourful for disastrous Casting Rolls. In the case of Summoning spells, a disastrous roll does more than simply cause the spell to fade away as per the rules. A Summoning Disaster means that the Wizard either incorrectly performed the ceremony or that he has offended the being in some way subsequently. In either case, this frees the conjured being from the restrictions of its ancient pacts and allows it free run on the material plane. Freed beings will act according to their natures, with beneficent beings likely returning home,



neutral beings perhaps wandering off to pursue their interests and inclinations, and malicious beings doing something awful. In the latter case, the Referee may wish to roll and consult the following table:

d6	What does the summoned creature do?
1	attacks Wizard for 1 round (1-3) or to death (4-6)
2	attacks random target for 1 rd (1-4)/to death (5-6)
3-4	cackles evilly, vanishes to wreak havoc elsewhere
5	cackles evilly and disappears, but stalks the Wizard, waiting for a chance to cause him problems before returning home. Actions may include making noises while the Wizard is sneaking, distracting the Wizard when a foe is about to surprise him, yelling out disparaging remarks while the Wizard is trying to charm a princess, etc.
6	reports Wizard's incompetence to its fellows. The next time the Wizard makes a Casting Roll, he suffers a -2 penalty, as the conjured being arrives ill-disposed to the mortal.

Expanding the Idea. This straightforward change in the nature of magic can lead to all kinds of mechanical tweaks. One idea would be to add a need for ceremonial items (i.e. spell components). This tends to limit magic powers a bit, but adds more reasons for Wizards to adventure, goes further toward the feel of medieval and pulp magic, and can be colourful as all get-out. If the group does not wish to go that far into Advanced Old Game territory, one might allow the use of ceremonial items to aid the Casting Roll and/or impose a penalty on the Saving Throws of targets. For example, perhaps the Seductive Succubus Herodias responds favourably to Wizards who burn incense and sacrifice a beautiful dove to her. Whole realms of magical research might be based around finding better ways to summon demons.

Another idea is the Compact, an improved form of Pact. Mechanically, the Compact is represented as a magic item. Instead of a Ring of Spell-Turning, a Wizard might find The Evocation of the Arcane Aegis, which summons a Gorgon who will agree to protect the magician from spells up to three times a day if the ancient Compact is discovered. It's the same effect, but feels quite different. Instead of having to learn the command word the Wizard has to learn the formula for the Compact.

That opens up yet another possibility, which is to use the rules for intelligent magic swords to represent the ego-struggles between the Wizard and his bound demon (Note: *Spellcraft & Swordplay* does not include these rules, but they are easy enough to import). Thus: a Wizard discovers the formula for summoning and compacting with Nimbroth, Knight of the Argent Blade. With Nimbroth accepting the Compact, the Wizard may now call upon him to smite his foes in combat, as well as use his other powers to aid him.

However, Nimbroth is dedicated to the slaughter of all lycanthropes, and the Wizard must struggle mightily to prevent his pet demon from leaping into combat every time they hear a howl in the moonlight. Mechanically, Nimbroth is just a magic sword. When he fights, the Wizard rolls in combat as if he were wielding a Sword +2, but the description is that of a fearsome man with silvery skin, wearing a monk's robe and wielding a great blade, who appears from nowhere and strikes out at the foe. Any attacks against Nimbroth are rolled as if against the Wizard and any damage dealt is felt by the Wizard as psychic feedback. Nimbroth has a Purpose (Slay Lycanthropes); appropriate Minor Powers; and Intelligence and Ego.

This idea could be extended beyond magical weapons as well. A Staff of Power could be given an Intelligence and Ego and retooled as a demonic servant. Perhaps Aza'az, Lord of the Lower Exhalations of Arcane Influence, will bar portals, cast eldritch bolts, and do the other things a Staff of Power will do until such time as It feels that the terms of the Compact have been reached (i.e. it has run out of charges).

What if a Wizard finds the formula for summoning a being but not for pacting with it? In that case, does the Wizard have to bargain directly and hope not to get eaten for his trouble? *Control Weather* can be a powerful spell, if used wisely. But what if the Wizard has to convince the Tempestarii to do what he wants, lest they blast him with lightning for his impudence? Counter-spelling-as-Exorcism has room for expansion as well. Could Wizards attempt to abjure demons that are not acting in accordance with a Spell Pact; that is, if a Wizard stumbles upon a Slobber Demon guarding a room, could he try to exorcise it with his Counter-spell ability? The Priest's ability *Bane of the Dead* as the obvious parallel, but Wizards have no limit to the number of times they can counter-spell, which makes this potentially a very powerful option.

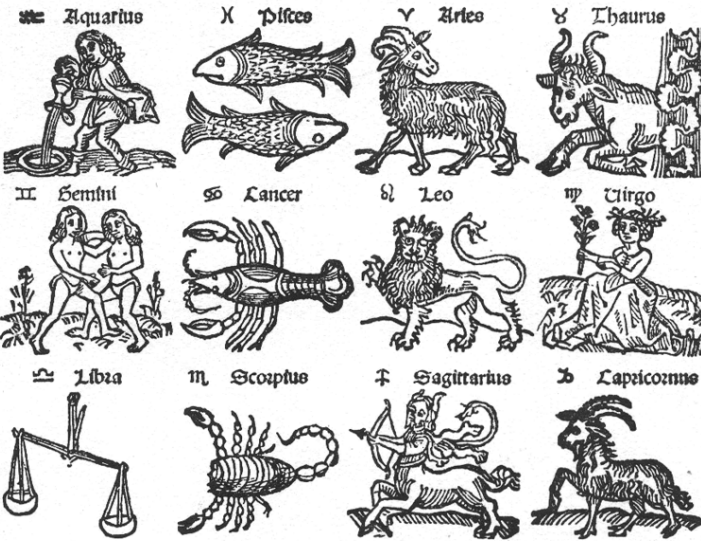
These are just a sampling of ideas which springboard from the central notion of magic as summoning. At it's most basic, this system can be used to make your Wizards feel a little different than others they have played. But this system can also be used to generate adventures hooks, new magical items, and, best all, new kinds of trouble for your players to sort out. Ω



Esoteric Arts for Wizardly Know-it-Alls

by Baz Blatt

Astrology, alchemy, geomancy, numerology, batraquomancy, chalcography: all are arts and sciences on the curriculum of the Arcane College your Mage probably studied at or has ponderous tomes about in his lab. All are part and parcel of the spell-slinger's repertoire and can enhance and personalise his use of magic and give him something useful to do when he has used up his memorised spells.



Astrology: This art has several uses. A GM may create a table for determining the birth sign of a PC at creation and assigning appropriate bonuses. The exact details will depend on how far the GM wishes to take it, using just sun signs or a whole plethora of moons, planets, houses and aspects. Taking our real-world European astrological system, a simple table for sun-sign bonuses might be:

Sign	Bonus
1 Aries (The Ram)	fights as one level higher
2 Taurus (The Bull)	+1 strength
3 Gemini (The Twins)	re-roll 1 attribute, take higher
4 Cancer (The Crab)	+2 save v. breath weapon
5 Leo (The Lion)	+1 charisma
6 Virgo (The Virgin)	+1 save v. magic, wands, etc.
7 Libra (The Scales)	+1 intelligence
8 Scorpio (The Scorpion)	+1 charisma if evil, +2 save v. poison if good
9 Sagittarius (The Centaur Archer)	+1 dexterity
10 Capricorn (The Sea-Goat)	+1 constitution
11 Aquarius (The Water Bearer)	+5% bonus to experience
12 Pisces (The Fishes)	+1 wisdom

These bonuses might be permanent or might only apply during the month the sun is in your sign at the GM's whim. The skies of your fantasy world may not be the same as our of course, and Astrologers need not divide them into 12 signs or houses. Once a wizard who knows a bit about astrology knows a person's date of birth and has access to a set of Ephemerides, he can start working out lucky and unlucky days. If a Mage rolls his intelligence or less on a d20 he can spot the next lucky or unlucky day in the ephemerides for a given person. This process takes an hour's worth of calculation and messing about with abacuses per use, and is best not done in the wilderness or in a dungeon where the immanent danger of being eaten by monsters disturbs concentration (+2d6 to roll). The next lucky day is 3d6 - Mage's level days away, the next unlucky day is the same. If the two coincide they cancel each other out. On that day the PC may re-roll any one dice roll made for any circumstances for good luck, or have the GM force him to re-roll a success to reflect bad luck.

Certain spells may also have especially good or bad times to be cast. Demon summoning magic is notoriously tricky and can often only be done at all 'when the stars are right', Charm spells may be especially effective when the moon is in the victims sun-sign and/or Venus is above the horizon (-2 or even -4 saving throw), lightning spells may be especially dangerous (+1d6 damage) when Jupiter is at the zenith, and so on. The GM will adjudicate each spell and whether the Wizard is knowledgeable enough to take advantage of these fluctuations. For a more abstract 'on the fly' system a GM might allow a wizard to spend a night poring over books and waggling his astrolabe to see if he can get an astrological bonus of some kind that day. To succeed he must roll under his Intelligence on a d20 with modifier of +2 per level of spell and -1 per caster level. If he fails the GM may impose a penalty to the effects of the spell for the 'stars being wrong'.

Finally, there is the predictive from of astrology. A wizard can determine from a birth chart and the current state of the heavens the most likely cause of a PCs death. The lower the roll, the more accurate the prediction, from the highly vague 'I'd avoid sharp things if I were you', to the penetratingly accurate 'Poison needles from trapped chests may figure prominently in your fate'. Such predictions are good for the next 1d6 months and when the hazard is encountered the PC has a -4 modifier to his save or DC against it. On the up side, if he meets likely death from any other source, rolling the predicting mage's level or under on a d20 sees him 'luckily' saved to meet his predicted fate.

Example: Mezlo the Thaumaturgist has an Intelligence of 14. He rolls 7 when predicting the fate of his comrade Sir Harlan the Brave; not vague, but not exactly accurate either. He looks up from his arcane tomes saying "The cause of your death will be green!" Sir Harlan checks out the colour of the dragon he is off to slay and finds to his relief

that it is red. On the way, the party is caught in a landslide. Things look bad for Harlan when a massive boulder hits his destrier, but (since Mezlo's level is 5 and Harlan's player rolls 4 on his d20 'fate' roll) the rock is grey, and though the horse is killed fate spares Harlan for a green death elsewhere. He understandably stays well back when the party meet a gang of goblins, but in the dragon's lair Sir Harlan wades in with his longsword, secure in the knowledge that red things are not going to cause him harm! He is duly toasted (fate roll of 12, way above Mezlo's level) when he slips and catches the dragon's fiery breath full blast. The in-game cause of the slip, as it turned out, was a smear of dragon snot left on the cavern floor...

Geomancy: This is the art of detecting channels of mystic power running through rocks, soil, and plants, and making use of them to preserve health and ensure good fortune. The usual appurtenance is an enchanted pendulum which wobbles in a way detectable only by the user when power flows change. The most common use of geomancy is dowsing, using the pendulum to detect nearby substances such as water, gold, or gems. Pendula used for this purpose should be made of the same substance as what is sought after (such as a water filled glass phial or a large uncut diamond), with a pure mithril pendulum also able to detect magic. The geomancer can only detect within 1d3x10 feet per level and will get a vague sense of direction. He will also only pick up the closest such matter, not the largest source. If he is after gold he must divest himself of all valuables and have an assistant take them far away.

Another common use of geomancy is to plan and choose sites for buildings, placing them on good power flows to ensure good fortune for the residents, making sure evil vibes from the garderobe are dissipated out the windows and the emanations of wealth from the treasury are reflected back around the building using carefully polished silver mirrors and not out of the door. An astute geomancer will use this on his own home to gain a variety of bonuses to his spells and/or saving throws, depending on what room he or his servants are in, such as +1 AC on the battlements due to strategically placed haematite floor tiles, and have a few global bonuses such as +2 on saves vs disease for all residents while anywhere in the building thanks to ubiquitous planters full of aspidistras. This feng shui can even be applied to campsites, as long as the party are willing to follow a muttering mage waving a pendulum around for an hour or two looking for the right site. A properly located camp with everyone sleeping with their head and feet aligned to beneficial power flows can add +1 to the number of hit points regained over night, reduce the chances of a night time encounter, or allow wizards to regain one extra level's worth of spells.

Finally, for the most elaborate sorcerous rituals the right location is an absolute must. Ley lines flowing in and out of long lost holy sites can put off or encourage demons

depending on alignment, and standing in the right vantage point when cursing an army or a city can greatly enhance the range and number of people affected.

Alchemy: Alchemy is about more than just potions. About 50% of spells need material components, and an alchemically trained mage can enhance these spells by improving the materials used. As a rule of thumb, a spell will require $\text{Level}^2 \times 10$ gp in basic components good for 5+2d6 castings. For example, to cast *Protection from Evils*, a mage needs a stick of calcium carbonate with powdered silver in it. Doubling the cost of the component adds 50% to the spell's range or duration, adds 1 caster level worth of effect for variable spells like fireball, or gives -2 saving throw for the target. Thus, making a more expensive stick worth 20 gp with gold dust might add 3 turns to the duration of the *Protection of Evils*, while a 40 gp stick with platinum dust adds 6 turns. The GM may wish to impose an upper limit on what alchemy can do to enhance a spell, lest extremely rich wizards take too much advantage and/or make the wizard and his henchmen risk their lives questing for the rarest and most potent ingredients.



Spheromancy: This word refers to the use of crystal balls, but other arcane adjuncts such as enchanted bowls of Elf-wood spring water, skulls sawn in half and filled with mercury, and mirrors made from dragon scales work in the same way. These enhance the use of information gathering spells such as *Find Object*, *Extrasensory Perception*, *Clairvoyance*, and *Clairaudience*. The scryer concentrates for an extra round and then rolls his Intelligence + level or less on a d20 to increase the amount of information gained. If

	'Standard' Trumps	Tolkeinesque Trumps	Carcosan Trumps
0	The Fool	The Hobbit	Polychromatic Man
1	The Magician	The Wizard	The Bone Man
2	The Priestess	The Elven Queen	Lady of Similarity
3	The Empress	The Steward	The Solid Queen
4	The Emperor	The King of Men	The Fluid King
5	Hierophant	The Elven King	The Lord Mutant
6	The Lovers	Beren and Luthien	Torment
7	The Chariot	The Prince of Men	The Spaceship
8	Strength	Durin the Firstborn	The Dinosaur
9	The Hermit	Orthanc	The Greys
10	The Wheel	Earendil's Ship	Larceny
11	Justice	Numenor	Murder
12	Hanged Man	The White Tree	The Psychic
13	Death	The Dragon	Death
14	Temperance	Shire/The Forest	Inertia
15	The Devil	Morgoth	Banishing
16	The Tower	Minas Tirith	Imprisonment
17	The Star	The Seven Stars	Binding
18	The Moon	The Moon	Invocation
19	The Sun	The Sun	Conjuration
20	Judgement	Mount Doom	Mummy's Brain
21	The World	Arda	The Void

successful the spell effect is improved in some way: *ESP* might detect not merely minds beyond a solid barrier, but how intelligent they are; *Find Object* gives distance as well as direction, and so on. If the sryer tries for another round and rolls half his intelligence + level or less he gets another extra element of information; this can be iterated indefinitely at GM discretion. If this skill is used I suggest giving magical crystal balls a bonus of +1 to +4 to spheromancy and doubling the range of *Clair*-spells for each +1 bonus rather than the usual rulebook approach.

Cartomancy: The use of Tarot cards can be simulated, obviously enough, by the use of Tarot cards. Issue the player of the cartomantic wizard a set and let him shuffle and deal and try and convince the GM that what he turns up will have an effect. You can also use the following abstract system. The mage spends an hour or so examining the cards and trying to glean information about the immediate future. Shuffle the greater trumps only, then take his Intelligence – 2d6 + level and allow him to deal that many cards, numbered 0 (The Fool) to 21 (The World), face down. This is his fate hand, and whenever he is required to roll a d20 he has the option of playing a card instead and using its number as the score. He cannot make another reading until all of the cards in his hand have been played, no matter what the score. Playing card 0 enables him to force a GM controlled character or monster to accept one of his fate cards as the score of a d20 roll, while playing card 21 means he can also regain a card he has just played and put it back in his hand.

Another way of using the cards is for the player to get one-use bonuses or penalties to rolls for each card as it is played. For example the Fool may allow a magician one re-roll of any die, playing the Chariot may mean her next saving throw is reduced by 1, and Temperance may temporarily make her alignment neutral. Only one card may be played at a time, and again all cards must be played before another reading can be made. Your world need not use the same trumps as ours; at left is a table with a couple of optional decks. The suits of the lesser trumps, numbered Ace to ten plus the Page, Knight, Queen and King, are:

Standard	Tolkienesque	Carcosan
Swords	Swords	Swords
Pentacles	Anvils	Gems
Cups	Leaves	Skulls
Wands	Rings	Lasers

Thingomancy: There are dozens of other arts the mage might try, mainly dedicated to foretelling the future. For example scapulomancy is the art of divining the future from the marks left on the shoulder-bones of burnt sacrifices, while amniomancy foretells a newborn child's fate by looking at the afterbirth. See phrontistery.info/divine.html for a list of techniques, but in game terms most will use the same procedure as predictive astrology above unless the player can come up with a creative method of using a specific art to enhance his spell casting. For example, a pyromancer who can see the future in the flickering of flames might be able to convince a GM that he is entitled to a bonus in using any fire related spell, as long he never uses any watery or cold related ones; an amniomancer could be able to use the dried and ground up remains of the afterbirth to create especially effective magic potions for the person (if he knows alchemy as well); and a spatilomancer, who divines the future by examining faeces, could attack people secretly from afar by obtaining their stools and moulding them into figurines that act as targets for his spells.

Gaining para-magical skills: I suggest allowing mages one of these skills at 1st level and then one more at each of 5th, 9th, etc. Combining these skills in practice should be allowed if the player can tell you how this will work, but GMs should note that they are all somewhat time consuming and will become extremely so if the wizard gets carried away. If the GM does not wish these to be free, perhaps 10,000 experience might be expended to train for each instead, perhaps more for priestly PCs if allowed. Another alternate or additional option is to have the various practitioners of these arts as NPCs hired by the wizard to assist in the same way as he might employ an alchemist. Many will be charlatans of course, while others will prove to be hopeless cowards when taken on expeditions to assist their masters, but all will demand funds to pursue their own esoteric arts and threaten to quit if denied. Ω

THE CAMPAIGN (EXAMPLE OF PLAY)

DD: "Roll to avoid being turned into guacamole"

LC: (rolling against his save vs. dips & condiments) "Crap! I rolled a 1!"

DD: (grinning mercilessly) "Right. Wench-Layer screams in pain as he dissolves into a mass of turgid, green-yellow dip."

LC: "You know this is bullshit, Rick. There's no way a dip dragon could even fit in this room!"

DD: "Well, this one did, so now you're guacamole. Suck it up."

LC: "You're still pissed I slept with Tina, aren't you? That's what this is really all about."

OC: "What?! You %\$@#!& Tina?"

LC: "Yup. Last week after the Blue Oyster Cult concert. Seems ol' Rick's been wearing a girdle of femininity/masculinity lately."

DD: "That's it, you sonofabitch!" (leaping across the table)

OC: "Does this mean we're done playing?"



OLD SCHOOL GAME DETERMINATION

As of late, there has been much gnashing of teeth and the tearing of raiment going on around the sand tables of the world. With the release of several new games (obviously hoping to ride the coattails of the much superior **DRAGONS & DEEP PITS™**), there has been heated discussion as to the pedigree of certain games. This serious topic affects all gamers, young and old or amateur and professional, alike.

Perchance there shall come a time when the players and the Dragon Dude™ need to make a determination as to whether or not they are playing a campaign worthy of the title of "old school." Are your weekly (or more!) sojourns into the dungeon true enough to the wargaming spirit from which these prestigious tomes were birthed? For many a year, such determinations were left solely upon the already heavily-burdened shoulders of the humble game master.

No more, say !! With the advent of **ADVANCED DRAGONS & DEEP PITS™**, such a determination is only a d% roll away. Gather your Crown Royal bag unto ye and produce forthwith from it a pair of these enchanted knucklebones. All shall be revealed!

Each game has a base 10% chance of being an "old school game." This base chance is modified by a number of variables which are presented below. Add or subtract the pertinent modifiers from the base chance and then roll the d% for a final, no-more-arguments-allowed decision.

OLD SCHOOL GAME DETERMINATION

OLD SCHOOL BASE DETERMINATION MODIFIERS:

Rulebook Appearance & Number	Modifier
one rulebook, soft cover	+25%
one rulebook, hardcover	+05%
rulebooks ≤ 3, soft cover	+30%
rulebooks ≤ 3, hardcover	+15%
rulebooks > 3, soft cover	- 25%
rulebooks > 3, hardcover	- 55%
rulebooks came in a boxed set	+45%
rulebooks came in a collector's edition boxed set	- 27%

Character Stats Generated With	Modifier
2 dice	+13%
3 dice	+35%
4 dice	- 15%
points	- 5%
dots	- 26%
chits drawn from a cup	+33.3%
imagination/descriptive adjectives	-43%

Monsters	Modifier
have six stats	+20%
have seven stats	+15%
have 10-16 stats	+10%
have 17+ stats	- 15%
have a full page description and aren't sahuagin	- 31%
have poorly-drawn breasts	+12%
have artistically-drawn breasts	- 23%

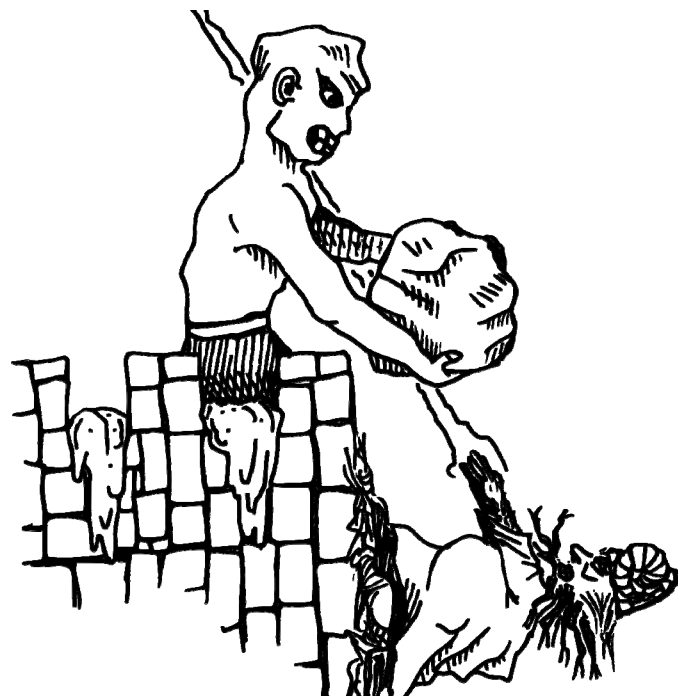
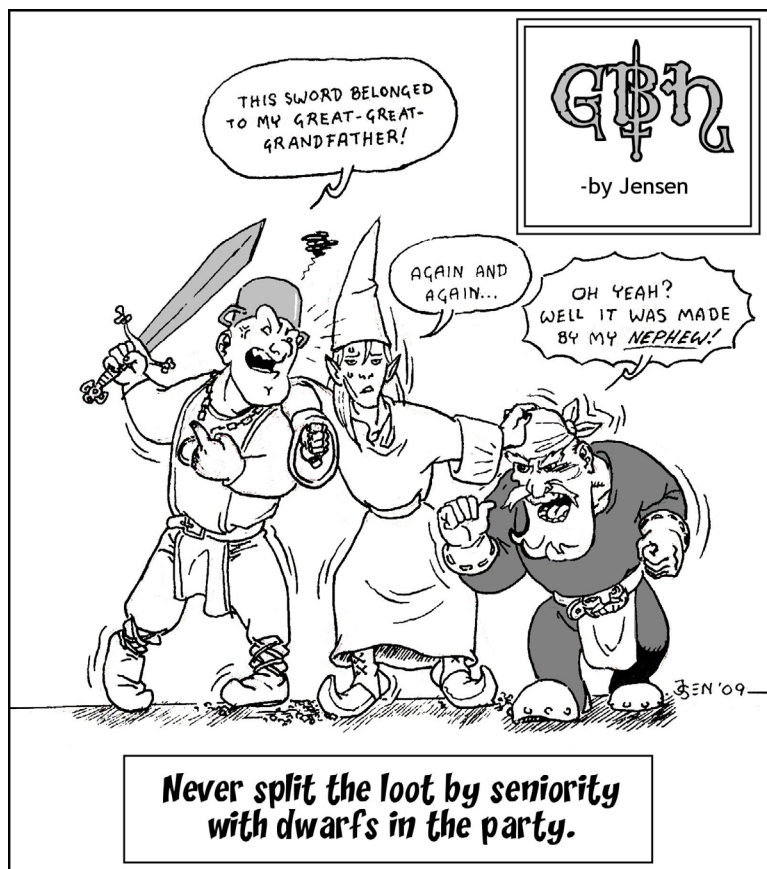
Character Sheets	Modifier
index card sized	+42%
one page	+20%
two pages	+5%
three or more pages	- 10%
have space for character drawing/symbol	+2%
have space for skills	- 21%
aren't required	- 66%

Character Is Represented By	Modifier
painted lead miniature but only as marching order	+21.3%
unpainted lead miniature	+15%
painted plastic miniature	- 15%
a die, poker chip, coffee bean or other marker	+35%
an X on a hastily-drawn room map	+16%
the imagination	+42%

Player Races	Modifier
"borrowed" from Tolkien	+50%
from folklore/mythology	+10%
have more than 1 type of elf or a dragon race	- 48.1%
were created by the referee while high	+13%
were created by the referee after watching anime	- 31%

Character Deaths	Modifier
occur several times a week	+49%
occur once per game session	+25%
occur once per month	+10%
occur once per year	+0%
never occur unless dramatically appropriate	- 82%

Miscellaneous	Modifier
it's a Wednesday	+3%
game is played while listening to Rush	+2112%
game is played while listening to My Chemical Romance	- 51%
mountain dew is in the fridge	+4%
billy beer is in the fridge	+19%



Congratulations Winners! The

EROL OTUS

Art Challenge has concluded. **Our champions:**

First Place, Color: Mark Allen

First Place, Black & White: Mikko Torvinen

Second Place, Color: Raven Daegmorgan

Second Place, Black & White: Steve Robertson

Third Place, Color: Stefan Poag

Third Place, Black & White: Steve Zieser

First Honorable Mention, Color: Peter Mullen

First Honorable Mention, Black & White: Lee Barber

Honorable Mention, Color: Brad Ingle, Kevin Mayle, Alex Schröder, Andy "Atom" Taylor, Simon Turnbull, and Kevin Vito

Honorable Mention, B&W: Bat, Paul "Bliss Infinite" Fini, Kelvin Green, Keshner, Samuel Kisko, Anthony Stiller, and Jennifer Weigel

Many, many thanks to Erol and to our fine contestants, whose work will be seen gracing the covers and interior pages of this and upcoming issues of *Fight On! - Ignatius*

When I Was a Girl

by Lee Gold. Anthologized in *Filker Up* #6.

(to the tune of "When I Was a Boy" by Frank Hayes; men may sing "when I was a boy" and change the chorus's next to last line to end with "...and the monsters were ours to destroy".)

When I was a girl, I had Chainmail
And a three-book boxed D&D set,
And I used all the Platonic solids
To determine what monsters I'd get.
And the top magic spells were sixth level
And the highest undead was vampire.
There were Tolkienesque Hobbits and Balrogs –
And they all had a "per cent in liar."

And we walked twenty miles in the dungeon,
detecting for danger both ways,
Garlic and rope on our pack mule,
back in the good old days.
Back when MUs were rolled on D6s,
and the DM was God of the world
And we hacked Orc tribes up to get EP –
when I was a girl.

When I was a girl, I had settings
Adapted from books on my shelf
No pre-packaged modules were needed;
I made my whole world up myself.
Lawful, Unaligned, and quite Neutral,
Chaotic and Hungry — good bunch,
And I'd grin as I'd tell a new player
To note that the five spelled out LUNCH.

And we walked twenty miles in the dungeon,
detecting for treasure both ways,
Torches and sacks on our pack mule,
back in the good old days.
Back when fighters were rolled on D6s,
and the DM was god of the world,
And we stole bags of coins to get EP –
when I was a girl.

When I was a girl, every PC
Had only six stats on the sheet
And the NPCs sometimes had fewer:
Just a minute would make one complete.
But our gaming was wildly creative,
And cheap 'cause we did all the work,
Our PCs went from dungeon to dungeon;
Our DMs dealt with each others' quirks.

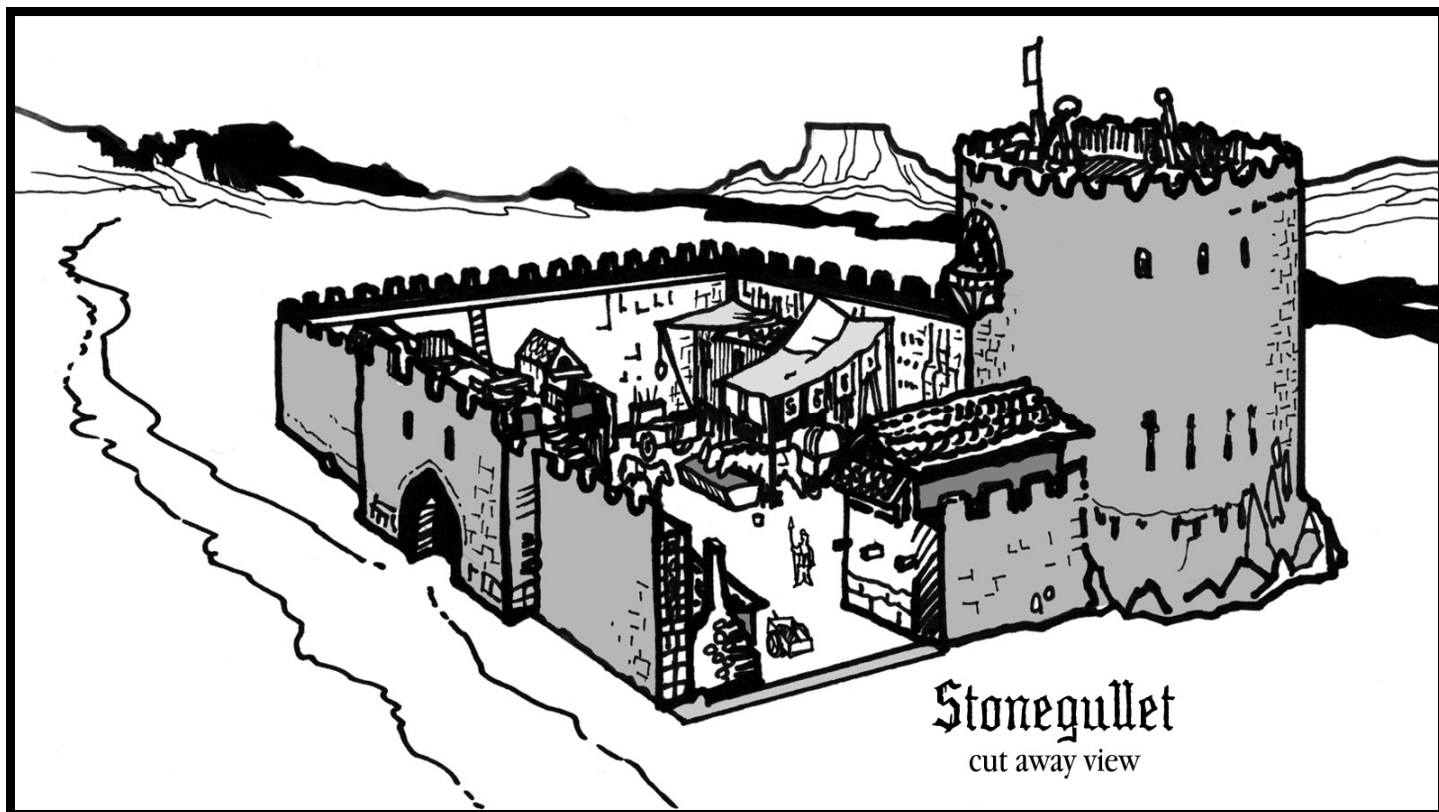
And we walked twenty miles in the dungeon,
detecting for undead both ways,
Mallet and stakes on our pack mule,
back in the good old days.

Back when damage was rolled on D6s,
and the DM was god of the world,
And we subdued teenaged dragons for EP –
when I was a girl.

Education of a Magic-User:

Part the fifth: Recruiting Specialists (or: Rounding Out the Party)





Stone Gullet

keep on the border by Gabor Lux

Playtesters: 1st party: Akos Barta (Zorlan, Son of Odbuj, Archer 3), Laszlo Simonits (Tio Blackbird, Warrior 3), Gyorgy Gergovatz (Hagdor Ordur, Priest 3), Marcell Pap (Habbar al'Hadr, Thief 3); 2nd party: Gabor Acs (Hawk the Etunian, Archer/Thief 2/2), Zsolt Bagdi (+Ratomil the Rogue, Thief 3, died to illusionary monsters in the first round of his first combat without even gaining initiative); Kalman Farago (Harmonos, Follower of Karttekeza, Archer/Illusionist 3/2), Laszlo Feher (Licar del'Avellos, Mage 5), Gabor Izapy (Beristo Akelis, Pr 4 of Mereskan)..

Overview: The tower of Stone Gullet is a fortified garrison in the Desert of Regulator, a refuge from desert brigands, monsters and evil mirages. Here, caravans from the western lands may rest before they embark on their seaward route; likewise, the tower protects the city state of Khosura from dangers known and imagined. In the second month of each year, it sees a different sight from the usual tradesmen, beggars and the obsessed who ply the wastes for secrets that may or may not be: flower-girded sacrificial youths and maidens, escorted here by the grim riders of Khosura and onwards along the untravelled road to the southwest, where waits the Land of the People of the Worm with its crater city. Seen no more, the sacrifices are lost to men, while the riders return in an unusually dark mood that spurs them back home without stopping to rest or make merry.

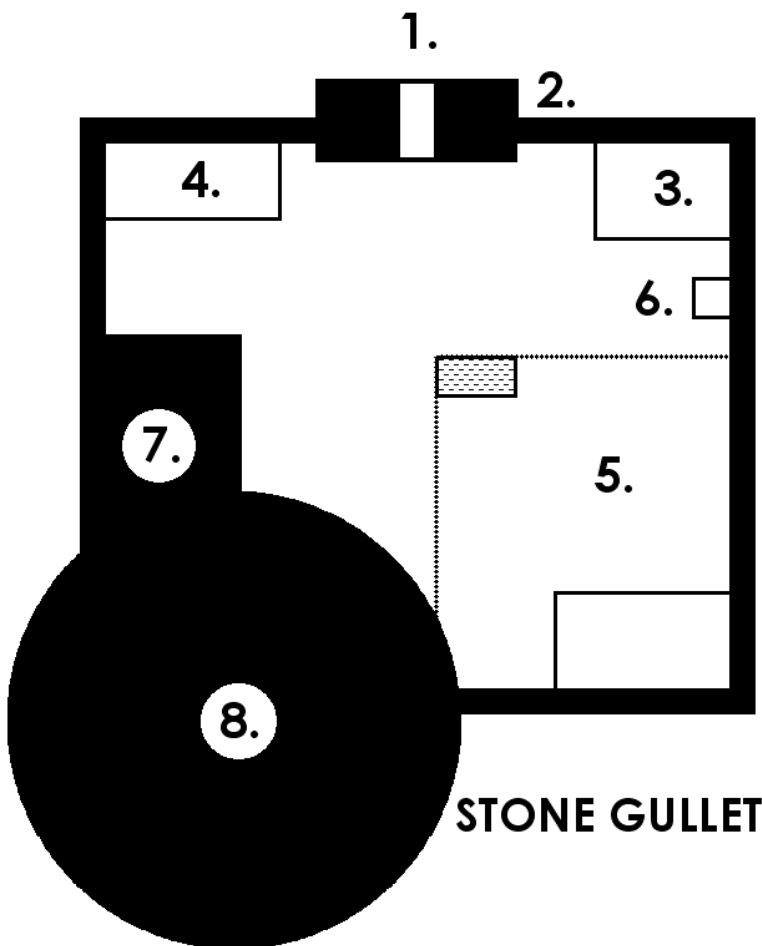
The four-level tower stands near a dry river bed. In time, the round structure was supplemented by a walled courtyard, a new wing and finally small houses and workshops clinging to the courtyard walls: when times became less warlike, the new wing was turned into a caravanserai and sold to whoever would rent it. Shops soon followed: a smithy and a trade monopoly, catering to both the garrison and passers-by. Stone Gullet today is a place to rest while on the road, a haven of safety from which to seek adventure, but also a locale where trouble may be found – if one seeks it hard enough.



The commander of the fortress is **Krandol the Minstrel**, sent here by the grand vizier of Khosura's enigmatic priest-king for his services to the city. But Krandol, once a popular figure in the city-state's high life, has proved disgraceful and believes the boon to be a hidden form of exile for satirical songs, and treats his situation with disgust and contempt. Absent his leadership, **Captain Tarvosk** of the guard contingent has been running Stone Gullet's affairs, something the disciplined but unimaginative soldier finds an agreeable development. Altogether, he oversees 20 light cavalry patrolling along the caravan route, while another 20 footmen and 20 bowmen are stationed within the fortress walls; in sore need, another ten servants may be armed to defend the stronghold. **Light Cavalry (20)**: Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or lance 1d6 or shortbow 1d6; hp 21,16,13,21,16,16,18,16,29,17,20,26,21,22,15,18,22,18,23,16. **Footmen (20)**: War 2; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6 or spear 1d6; hp 3,13,7,20,10,8,16,10,3,4,12,6,16,4,4,6,12,13,19,10. **Bowmen (20)**: Archer 2; DC 7 (studded leather); Atk 2*shortbow 1d6 or scimitar 1d6; hp 8,13,14,10,12,5,3,3,16,12,5,7,17,8,12,6,8,13,12,7. **Servants (10)**: Warrior 1; DC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk scimitar 1d6 or spear 1d6; hp 9,5,10,10,1,7,7,10,2,5.

- chainmail (1 suit)	80 gp
- small metal shield	10 gp
- large metal shield (1)	20 gp
- spear	5 gp
- longsword (2)	20 gp
- scimitar	18 gp
- arrows, 10	2 gp

Gothran the Rabiater: War 4; DC 8 (leather); Atk hammer 1d4+2 or scimitar 1d6+1; Str 17, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 9; hp 21.



1. Gate: A wide gatehouse usually manned by two sweat-soaked lookouts. Limp banners hanging from faded poles, two ballistae trained on the road. A toll of 1 sp is levied on all travellers who pass by, and it costs 4 to enter the fortress proper; the price is 1 sp for mounts, 5 for loaded beasts of burden, 2 gp for carts and other conveyances. The lower level of the gatehouse is defended by Captain Tarvosk's right hand, **Lieutenant Tanner**, with five men. **Lieutenant Tanner**: War 3; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk longsword 1d8+1 or spear 1d6+1; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 8; hp 28.

2. Parapets: Worn but massive fortifications to a height of 15'; easy to scale unless the guards (including archers on top of the tower) see you. By day there are usually two guards for every stretch of wall; during night three or four.

3. Smithy: **Gothran the Rabiater**, blacksmith; bullying, violent and lustful. Greying short-cropped hair, hardened leather apron. Gothran's workshop is on the lower floor of the building, while his wife and five children (who usually run naked around the courtyard) live on the second, where there is also a small altar to Phum the Crimson Bull, a demigod of the western wastes. At the moment, Gothran is seeking a priest to bless a bundle of arrows for him; in exchange, he will give a fine dagger (15 gp). His goods are:

- horseshoe	1 sp
- leather armour	6 gp
- studded leather	20 gp
- chain shirt (4 suits)	60 gp

4. Trade Monopoly: A small trading house owned by **Palmedies**, a lean and murky-eyed fellow; sedate and uncertain of manners, he often indulges in narcotic substances. Regardless of their interests, he tries to sell customers opium oil, drugged wine or pure opium; if refused, he gradually becomes irritable and unpleasant. The monopoly is crammed with a multitude of crates, bundles and hanging sacks. Palmedies sleeps in a side-chamber separated from the store by a tattered curtain. Locked metal chest; 310 gp, 200 sp, glyph-engraved black iron dagger, scorpion amulet, white ceremonial robes, lacquered urn with opium to a value of 160 gp); an iron brazier and a few amphorae of rose-scented water. Goods for sale:

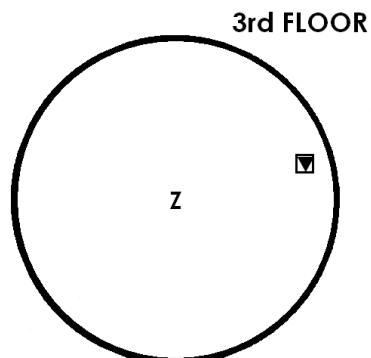
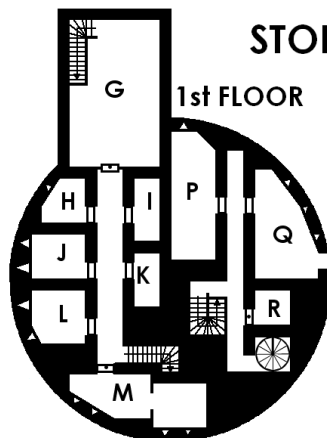
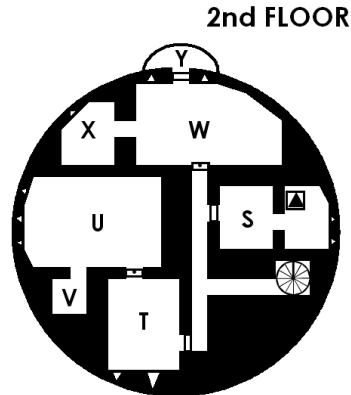
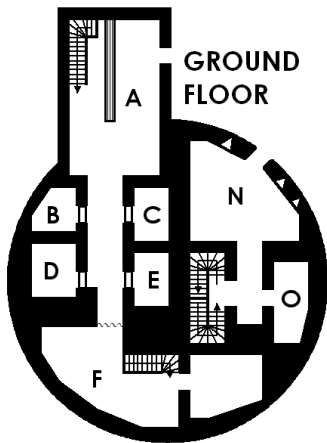
- iron rations, 1 day	5 sp
- wineskin	5 sp
- flint & steel	1 sp

- clay oil lamp	2 sp
- oil, scented	1 gp
- rope, 50'	1 gp
- chest, small	2 gp
- sack	1 sp
- blankets	2 sp
- tent, large (2)	20 gp
- opium oil	15 gp
- drugged wine	3 gp
- opium	30 gp

Palmedies: Thief 3; DC 9 (Dexterity); Atk dagger 1d4+ scorpion poison; S 12, D 15, C 11, I 8, W 11, Ch 12; hp 9.

5. Courtyard: An open space flattened by men and beasts. In one corner, there is a horse tie with a through of water; in the other, stables for the cavalry. There are altogether 30 light horses, 10 usually saddled for travel. Any given time, there are going to be 1d3-1 caravans in the courtyard; even one means a bustle of men, while two invariably result in a multitude of voices, haggling, fistfights, odd arguments and all the chaos of the road. The guards only intervene if there is blood, and then usually only after it is too late.

6. Privy: Four wooden privies by the wall, used by everyone in the fortress.



7. Zorten's Caravanserai: The side wing of the tower is now an old building, having served a succession of tenants. The current proprietor is **Zorten**, relaxed and sometimes indifferent. He is squat of stature with trimmed hair and simple clothes. On an expedition to the Mountains of Monoculus in his younger days, he acquired psionic powers; as *telekinesis* spell up to three times per day, 200 kg max, usually used on rowdy patrons and insolent servants. Lodgings in the serai can be had for 2 sp per night in the common room, 5 sp in the ground floor rooms (**B-E**), 1 gp upstairs (**H-L**) and 3 gp in the suite (**M**); availability is highly variable. All separate rooms may be locked, and locks are of average quality except Zorten's lodgings above the bar (**G**), which he shares with a slave wife. **Zorten:** Warrior 2; DC 10; Atk cudgel 1d6+3; psionic telekinesis; Str 18/10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10; hp 17.

A. Bar: Six round tables, the bar, braziers hanging from the beams also serve as a grille for spiced meats. Porridge 5 cp, viands 1 sp, palm wine 2 sp, thil or quat 2 gp. A full feast can be had for 1 gp per person. The patrons are various travellers – mule drivers, caravan guards and the like; 2d6+2 per caravan present sleep in the common room. 1d6+2 more interesting guests (selected from the accompanying article or inserted by the Referee) also tend to be here, renting rooms according to their means.

- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

F. Common Room: Crowded and dark sleeping quarters. Arguments and fights are common, and theft is not rare, although it still beats sleeping in the courtyard. There is a 1 in 6 probability the whole common room is rented by someone at the rate of the upstairs suite.

G. Zorten's Room: Well-illuminated room overlooking the courtyard and wastelands. The door to the corridor is always locked (-10%). Various carpets, cushions and copper dishes, crated food and drinks – everything that would be unsafe to leave in the bar for the night. Locked chest, 520 sp, 61 gp, mummified ape hand pierced by old knife.

H. _____

I. _____

J. _____

K. _____

A long-departed guest has hidden a message under a loose floorboard, now yellow with age: *"Two weeks after the ring of monarchs falls, by the tyrant's head."*

L. _____

M. _____

Suite: Secure door (-20%), 2-room suite with carpets, pillows and all the comfort the middle of nowhere can offer.

8. Tower: The tower of Stone Gullet, once serving purely military purposes, is overcrowded now that it shares space with the serai. Entering undetected would be a task for a master thief.

N. Common Room: The entry room has bunks for 10 soldiers, while the long wooden table and the worn chairs are used to seat guests and envoys. There are trophies on the walls, including a lion's head (from a chimera if anyone believes it), lizardman, giant wolf, and two huge, yellow birds' feet of unknown origin. South of the room there are stairs up and down. The latter lead to a well-guarded jail; there is only a 1 in 6 chance of a prisoner, as unimportant criminals are usually hanged the day after they get caught, while important ones are escorted to Khosura.

O. Kitchen: Ompos Del, cook. Greasy man of enormous girth, copper and silver rings, golden chain around neck (50 gp), cheap perfumes. Smarmy behaviour, but always carries a giant machete type knife (scimitar equivalent). **Ompos Del:** Warrior 2; DC 10; Atk machete 1d6; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 5; hp 15.

P. – Q. Barracks: Each with 10 men; **Q** exits to parapet.

R. Armoury: Dark room closed off by a massive steel door (-20%). The only keys are held by Krandol, Captain

Tarvosk and Lieutenant Tanner. 80 spears, 30 longswords, 10 longbows, 30 shortbows, 5 suits of leather armour, 3 suits of plate mail, 25 small and 10 large metal shields, and the battle banner of Stone Gullet, as well as another won by the fort's men in an old campaign.

S. Barracks: 20 men; ladder from inner room to rooftop.

T. Barracks: Another 10 men, plus Tarvosk's two bodyguards. Small table, boardgame in larger window niche, wolfskin rug, footlockers, bull's head, old spears on wall. The north door is always kept locked. **Bodyguards:** War 3; DC 4 (chain, shield); Atk sword 1d8+1; S 16; hp 18, 23.

U. – V. Captain Tarvosk's Quarters: Puritanical, almost bare room. Heavy, dark wooden table, and soldier's footlocker (-20%) containing Stone Gullet's funds, 1200 sp and 900 gp, as well as coded reports and messages. Tarvosk's ceremonial banded mail (only worn on visits to the priest-king and similar occasions) and fitting helmet are mounted on a dummy. On the table, there is a jug of palm wine and a leather case containing a fairly accurate map of the Desert of Regulator. **V** is a sleeping chamber, with personal effects, a set of extra goblets for the use of guests, etc. **Captain Tarvosk:** Warrior 6; DC 1 (banded mail, shield, Dexterity); Atk *bastard sword* +1 2d4+1; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12; *potion of healing*, hp 42.

W. – Y. Krandol's Quarters: With his thinning hair, bloated appearance and quiet desperation, Krandol has all the distinguishing characteristics of a second-rate has-been. Since he is uninterested in the affairs of the fortress, he has become isolated from his own men and is almost always bored. When he acts, he is either unpredictably malevolent or surprisingly generous; with the right words, he can be easily – although not reliably – manipulated. However, Krandol *will* jump at every chance to be portrayed as the



Wasteland Travellers

by Gabor Lux

I. Caravans (d4). Caravans on the road are 50% likely to attract 1d3*10 additional travellers looking for protection; there will usually be 1d3 notable NPCs among them.

Caravan #1: This company carries bone carvings and exotic glass from the Land of the Khans and miscellaneous goods back to the sea. When first encountered, the pack mules carry the following:

- Weapons (scimitars, falchions and exotic polearms) from Pentastadion, 900 gp
- Snow-white cat furs from beyond Propyla, 1000 gp
- Dyes from Glourm, 1000 gp
- Scented oils from Glourm, 800 gp

The caravan is led by a consortium of three merchants; Angore Iron-head, Orn Thyros and Varos Leng. Bearded, fat **Angore Iron-head** is a calm, middle-aged man, a collector and teller of improbable tales. He is happy to tell a few to anyone who would listen (50% true, 25% fabrication based on true elements, 25% wild fancy). **Orn Thyros** is an old man with a knotted face; incessantly tormented by a skin ailment and multiple other ills. When he can, he spends all of his time in hot baths. Orn Thyros follows the tenets of transarchism, a declining philosophical school advocating personal anarchy. **Varos Leng** is a tall, thin figure with thick stubble and long flaxen moustaches. He always appears tired and withdrawn; in truth, he is under the effect of The Curse of Deterministic Pursuit, a destructive force only a few steps from his heels. The curse is tied to *the hallowed scrolls of Y'a*, which he hopes to deliver to a desert khan before he is destroyed. The caravan is followed by **30 guards, 3 officers** and **Gerthyun Gwyld**, a seasoned mercenary leader.

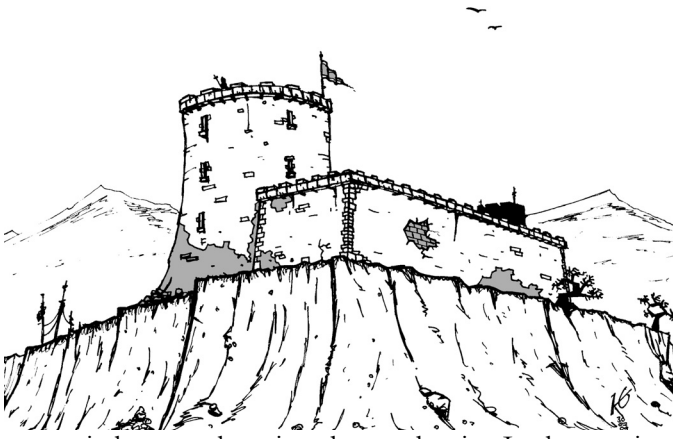
Angore Iron-head: Warrior 5; DC 6 (scale mail); Atk halberd 1d10 or composite longbow 1d6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11; hp 27.

Orn Thyros: War 6; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk battle-axe 1d8; St 13, Dx 13, Cn 18, In 12, Ws 12, Ch 8; hp 55.

Varos Leng: Thief 4; DC 6 (leather, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d6 or throwing dagger 1d4; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 9; *oil of blessings*, *potion of levitation*, *potion of healing**2, *the hallowed scrolls of Y'a*; hp 26.

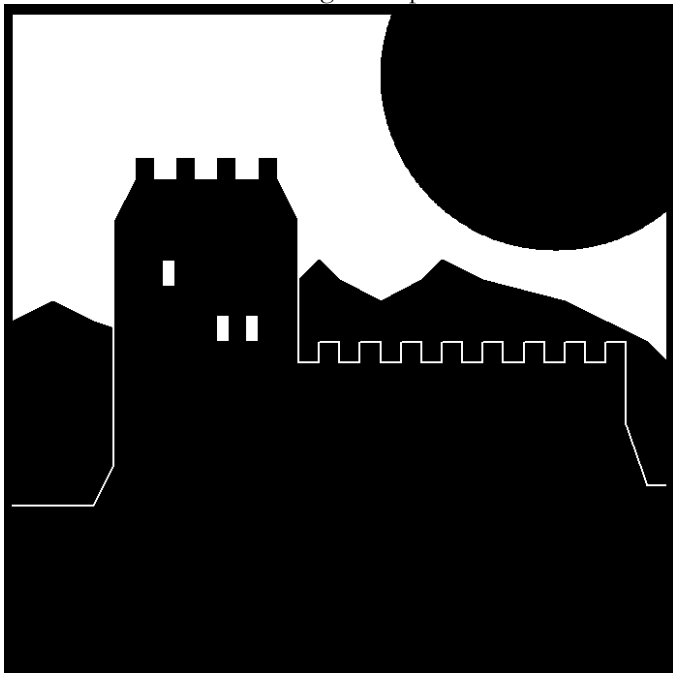
Gerthyun Gwyld: Warrior 4; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4; hp 28.

Officers (3): Warrior 3; DC 6 (chain shirt); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 17, 18, 11.



romantic hero or the misunderstood artist. In the evening, it is not uncommon to see him playing his harp on the tower balcony, something that invariably ends in self-contempt and depression. Krandol wears rich, fur-trimmed purple clothing with golden buttons. **W** is the room of the fortress commander: canopied bed, armoire and table, various writings (sketches, half-completed poems, a few letters), musical instruments on the wall (lyre, broken harp, flutes), bearskin rug and a brazier. **X** is a bathroom and storage containing a wooden tub and step, bottles of perfume, and soap (110 gp). In a locked chest (-10%), there are 130 gp, 600 sp, 3 gems (800 gp, 100 gp, 500 gp), 5 pearls (70 gp, 100 gp, 90 gp, 120 gp, 160 gp), Krandol's spellbook, and a depleted wand. **Y** is a round balcony overlooking the wastelands; the view, if picturesque, is devoid of variety. **Krandol the Minstrel:** Thief 3/M-U 2; DC 10; Atk shortsword 1d6; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10; spells (only 50% underlined spell memorised): 1: detect magic, identify, light, magic missile, Nalle's magic aura, read magic, unseen servant; hp 14.

Z. Tower Top: Usually, 5-6 archers are stationed here. There is a ballista and two light catapults.



Guards (30): Warrior 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 9, 10, 7, 11, 15, 15, 10, 14, 7, 16, 8, 9, 16, 12, 19, 5, 6, 14, 17, 8, 6, 16, 17, 14, 5, 19, 13, 6, 10, 7.

Caravan #2: Sthran Mirza and Ezilim Bek are merchants from the Land of the Khans, travelling the wastelands with their rag-tag band; trading, serving as mercenaries or robbing weaker companies depending on which is the more profitable. Currently, their goods consist of the following:

- Powdered sulphur in leather bags, 600 gp
- Unrefined scorpion venom, 11 doses, 550 gp
- Three wooden chests with mummies preserved in fragrant resin; 1500 gp for the correct customer
- 20 slaves, able-bodied men, 1000 gp



Sthran Mirza is a warrior clad in a sheepskin svitza and wearing a round, fur-trimmed metal helmet; his smile reveals black teeth. Sthran is always ready to hire thugs with a low moral fibre, and considers himself a ladies' man – a feeling rarely reciprocated. The assassin **Ezilim Bek** still bears the black marks of fire on his face and left arm, which he wraps in white cloth. He is never seen without his trusty old chain shirt. Ezilim Bek is daring, but trusts no other than Sthran Mirza. The leaders of the caravan are accompanied by **36 guards**, **4 officers** and **Daske**, a young, handsome man with blue eyes, blond hair and no memories. Daske is one of the overmen, the starfaring people who originally colonised Fomalhaut; he was found in a desert valley by Ezilim Bek, who, to his surprise, discovered that a body in a copper sarcophagus was not just perfectly preserved but alive. So far, attempts to discover the mysterious man's origins have proved unsuccessful. Daske has a *doctrinator* sunk into his right temple; he is always sardonic and downbeat.

Sthran Mirza: War 4; DC 3 (plate mail); Atk *footman's flail* +1 1d6+3; S 16, D 10, C 13, I 12, W 18, C 10; hp 26.

The hallowed scrolls of Y'a: these magical documents function as a spellbook and reveal the following mage's spells: *conjure frog demon* (as *conjure elemental spirit*, 5th level), *exorcise* (as priest, 5th level), *animate the restless dead* (3rd level, animates 4 HD of low-level undead per experience level but bestows no control over the spell's subjects) and *contact other plane of existence*. The scrolls bear The Curse of Deterministic Pursuit, which may not be removed until the documents are discarded. The spells in the hallowed scrolls of Y'a may not be transcribed into a spell book.

Doctrinator: When pressed against the forehead or temple, this round metal bar sinks into the skull. The doctrinator encourages its subject to act in accordance with a loosely or narrowly defined, preset doctrine, occasionally sending helpful messages right into the brain. If it detects deviation or a lack of appropriate enthusiasm, it may resort to disciplinary measures in the form of excruciating pain (a saving throw may be attempted to retain freedom of action). Some specimens are equipped with a small detonator & corresponding charge.

Ezilim Bek: Assassin 6; DC 2 (chain shirt, shield, *ring of protection* +2, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d6 or dagger 1d4+scorpion poison or shortbow 1d6; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6; *potion of speed*; hp 38.

Daske: War 2; DC 0 (chain, shield, Dex); Atk scimitar 1d6 +3; St 18/56, Dx 18, Cn 18, In 18, Ws 18, Ch 18; hp 28.

Officers (4): Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6 or footman's mace 1d6+1; hp 11, 20, 14, 8.

Guards (36): Warrior 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 18, 3, 10, 9, 12, 19, 13, 3, 13, 11, 14, 9, 15, 18, 14, 7, 17, 2, 14, 12, 12, 10, 12, 9, 11, 14, 5, 15, 5, 6, 4, 12, 8, 8, 9, 11.

Caravan #3: Valdesia Mir and Amran Mir are husband and wife; their caravan is accompanied by their only daughter, **Zeni**. The family are exiles from the arid lands of Thasan, and have resorted to trade and the pursuit of certain relics so that they may one day return to their ancestral home. The members of this company are fanatically loyal to each other and their cause. Current wares include:

- Alcoholic essences from the city of Kaswul, 1200 gp
- Narcotics from Kaswul, 1200 gp
- Three carved wood idols, each on a separate cart, altogether 3000 gp for the right buyer
- Cloths and carpets from the sects of Im Khuus, 700 gp

Valdesia Mir is a middle-aged woman of sharp features. She is an excellent swordswoman and a passable minstrel.

Out of respect for her man and the Red God she wears pure copper armaments. Although an able leader, on some occasions she shows inexplicable uncertainty and makes severely erroneous judgements. **Amran Mir** is a proud man who has suffered long for his cause, and still bears its signs on his face. His blue-red turban is decorated with crane feathers; by nature, he is merciless and devoted if he sees a threat to himself and his loved ones. The girl **Zeni** is young and curious, as well as a 2nd level practitioner of magic. She is not at all interested in the work of revenge, a sentiment she tactfully doesn't share with her parents or guardians. The company is protected by **26 guards**.

Valdesia Mir: Archer 8; DC 2 (chain shirt, Dexterity); Atk 2*composite longbow 1d6 or scimitar 1d6; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8; *potion vs. paralysis*, *potion of respectably increased yet not superlatively efficacious healing**2, *the dust of Khalil Azim**6 (a mixture ground from rare spices and the innards of unearthed mummies; airborne poison. Beings slain by the dust return as zombies in 1d4 rounds, and may be given verbal commands as usual); hp 46.

Amran Mir: Warrior 7; DC 2 (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity); Atk *scimitar* +2 1d6+3; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 14; hp 33.

Zeni Mir: Illusionist 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 18; *scroll (IOUN stones, improved illusion)*, *scroll (hypnotic pattern, fear)*; Spells: 1: rainbow spray, dancing illuminations, detect illusion, hypnotise, light, lesser illusion, sound illusion; 2: hypnotising pattern, improved illusion; hp 9.

Guards (28): Warrior 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 7, 13, 8, 8, 4, 11, 8, 10, 12, 11, 4, 13, 13, 9, 8, 2, 14, 8, 11, 4, 12, 8, 7, 14, 5, 11, 11, 15.

Caravan #4: Uflonz Mork the Gnasticator drives a disciplined, powerful caravan. They usually operate as slavers, but don't shun other wares as long as they are profitable. When first encountered, the caravan has:

- 30 slaves, able-bodied men, 1500 gp
- 30 slaves, women and children, 900 gp
- Divlis Mil, dancing girl, 400 gp
- Carpets and textiles, 800 gp
- Glass prisms and pyramids, flawless, 1400 gp

Uflonz Mork the Gnasticator wears a rich turban, dark green caftan, and well-tended beard. When the caravan is at rest, he spends his time in a rich tent, usually in the company of 1d3 slave women. His demeanour is polite but menacing. Uflonz Mork is a champion of the frog-god Tsathoggus, in whose hierarchy he enjoys a high position. He is involved in shady affairs at all times, and will always

have some work for those with few scruples. Uflonz Mork is accompanied by two bodyguards (veteran soldiers) at all times. His force consists of **30 guards, 10 veterans** and their lieutenant, **Miraxis al Nar** (this quiet but cruel man, seemingly wearing light chain, is in fact a doppelganger).

Uflonz Mork the Gnasticator: Warrior 8; DC 4 (*chainmail* +1); Atk *scimitar* +3 1d6+3; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13; *potion of healing**2, *hydrocreation dust* (turns a great amount of dust into potable water), *ring of demon conjuration* (frog demon, 5 charges); Spells (one-use divine gifts from Tsathoggus): augur, curse, converse with dead, animate dead, occasion critical wounds; hp 39.

Miraxis al Nar: Warrior 4 (doppelganger); DC 0 (natural, chain shirt, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4 or strike 1d12; imitation 90% accuracy, ESP, immune to sleep/charm, save as 10th level warrior; hp 36.

Guards (30): War 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk spear 1d6 or javelin 1d6; hp 14, 9, 3, 13, 15, 14, 11, 17, 9, 7, 11, 10, 10, 4, 10, 9, 15, 15, 14, 7, 12, 13, 13, 9, 11, 7, 11, 7, 8, 4

Veterans (10): War 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk halberd 1d10 or bow 1d6; hp 13,15,21,15,14,23,15,11,28,22.

II. Travellers (d20). On the road, travellers are only rarely encountered alone – even if they lack the armed escort of a caravan or patrol, 80% of all encounters consists of 3d10 travellers banding together for mutual protection. These individuals usually range from 1st to 3rd level, with gear and treasure as appropriate. The other 20% consists of 1d6 individuals, who will be very careful to avoid running into something unpleasant. In both cases, 1d3 of the travellers will be interesting, the others being average pilgrims, traders, thieves looking for their opportunity and so on.

1. Amagarte, morose assassin. Dark, hanging moustaches, grey, unfocussed eyes, dull felt clothing. Masquerading as a pilgrim, Amagarte is fond of drink and in an evil mood when he is deep in his cups. Normally of 14 Intelligence, he has lost some of his edge after suffering the side-effects of a long charm spell. If needed, he kills without remorse. **Amagarte:** Assassin 4; DC 6 (leather, shield, Dexterity); Atk longsword 1d8 or dagger 1d4+snake poison; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 10; hp 24.

2. Bel Amir and Raskar. Both are adherents of Kang the Thousand-Eyed, god of adventurers and good exemplars of their violent, materialistic faith. Bel Amir is a moustached, glum type, while Raskar mixes an insolent, disrespectful personality with a horrendous fashion sense – green breeches, yellow vest, and green cloak with plum boots. The pair guards their treasure map with obstinate determination. **Bel Amir & Raskar:** Warrior 2; DC 5

(chain shirt, shield); Atk longsword 1d8; Raskar also has a longbow 1d6; hp 19,14.

3. Merton, Master of Illusions: Wearing a cloak that is blue on one side and red on the other, this bald, liver-spotted old man sporting a mere wisp of a beard is travelling beyond the Land of Khans, but stays for a long spell at every resting place along the way. He is short-sighted, shrewd and distrustful. He is usually seen when ingesting colourful drops and dusts from glass vials, taken for a stomach ailment. Merton's valuables are carried in a sack which has been reinforced with an illusion-enhanced *magic mouth* spell (attacks as 5th LVL monster, bites for 3d4 points of damage, 5 rounds). He is especially fond of the following illusion tricks:

- [lesser illusion]: impassable grid made of smoke
- [improved illusion]: flaming staff – the flames inflict 2d4 on touch, touched opponent catches on fire unless a save is made
- [improved illusion]: “Summoning the Secondary Aura” – blocks melee attacks around the illusionist and stuns attacker unless a save is made
- [greater illusion]: 5 illusionary tentacles, each attacks as 2nd LVL monster, damage 1d6, Hp 2 each, 5 rounds

Merton, Master of Illusions: Illusionist 5; DC 9 (Dexterity); Atk quarterstaff 1d6; Str 6, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12; *scroll (improved illusion*2, greater illusion, paralysation), potion vs. Poison*; Spells: 1: rainbow spray, dancing lights, detect illusion, hypnotism, light, lesser illusion*2, sound illusion; 2: cloud of fog, detect magical dweomer, improved illusion*2, magicked mouth; 3: greater illusion, paralysation; hp 10.

4. Ovotral tal Varius, merchant. A commanding type in turban and kaftan; oiled beard, expensive rings (6*120 gp). He is transporting three virgins to a female-exclusive cult and guards the naïve-yet-lustful beauties like a dragon – seeing all strangers as potential kidnappers and seducers. **Ovotral tal Varius:** Warrior 5; DC 3 (leather, shield, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d6; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15; *scintillating dust**2 (save vs. spell or mesmerism for 1d10 rounds); hp 35.

5. Oskander Effendi, insane pilgrim. Man in white linen clothes, turban and weapons; obsessed visage, thick stubble. He has sworn a holy pledge to find and slay Uzmag Bey, a killer fleeing him for years. To this end, he will ally with strangers, even offering his possessions in case of victory. Every evening, 10% probability that the personality of Uzmag Bey surfaces and commits some horrid crime. **Oskander Effendi:** Warrior 4; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk footman's flail 1d6+2 or dagger 1d4+1; Str 16, Dex 7, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 10; hp 22.

6. Palairos Monothos, envoy. This official has been sent to these lands to conclude a deal, as well as to keep an eye open for the strengths and weaknesses of potential allies. 50% probability of chest with a gift worth 2d6*100 gp. Bodyguard **Medoros** has a secret mission to spy on Palairos and deliver the *real* message. **Palairos Monothos:** Warrior 3; DC 7 (leather, shield); Atk short sword 1d6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12; hp 20. **Medoros:** Warrior 4; DC 6 (chain shirt); Atk two-handed sword 1d10+3; Str 18/39, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14; *potion of invisibility, potion of gaseous form*; hp 21.

7. Namsur, snake charmer. He travels the roads of the wasteland with a mule-drawn cart bearing six clay jars: five contain his trained snakes, the sixth a wraith he commands with an ancient, corroded metal token. Three gemstones, 600 gp, 250 gp, 200 gp. **Namsur:** Thief 3; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4+snake poison; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 7; snake poison*6; hp 13. **Snakes (5):** LVL 4+2; DC 5; Atk bite 1d3+poison; hp 28, 23, 19, 24, 20. **Wraith:** LVL 5+3; DC 4; Atk touch 1d6+LVL; energy drain, silver or magical to hit; hp 24.

8. Ums Orthyl the Haggler, cursed traveller. This seller of brass lanterns is dragging heavy iron chains on the road, and he will not be able to cast off this load and eternal life until someone voluntarily assumes both. Non-combatant but undying.

9. Gargaris Gigantes, a hairy-chested goliath; bushy black beard and burning eyes. He wears beautifully decorated bronze plate mail and a huge two-handed sword which he can use single-handedly. He enjoys bullying the weak, but is stupid enough to be easily fooled (if he recognises this, he kills). Gargaris Gigantes is tracked by three assassins thirsting for his blood. **Gargaris Gigantes:** Warrior 7; DC 2 (plate mail, shield); Atk two-handed sword 1d10+3; Str 18/69, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 11; hp 41.

10. Marunce, Associate Fellow of the Greater Syncretistic Rabbinate, PhD. Young dandy affecting a fashionable green hat, eccentric boots and robe, and refined manners. Following his studies on the island resort of Dusal Dagodli, Marunce has been endowed with a generous scholarship for the customary post-doctoral research trip. His research subject is either hopelessly esoteric or just a good bluff; the “research trip” suspiciously resembles a pleasure voyage with only the bare hint of serious work. Marunce carries 900 gp worth of silk cheques issued by the Church of Fedafuce sewn into his garments. **Marunce, Associate Fellow of the Greater Syncretistic Rabbinate:** Thief 3; DC 8 (leather); Atk scimitar 1d6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 16; hp 15.

11. Elwyna, Dorisand and Moira: three Amazon adventurers. They stick together and distrust all men. Moira, unlike the other two, is impulsive and over-curious,

given to capriciousness when disobeyed. Currently, the amazons are looking for the golden treasures of a lost temple. **Elwyna, Dorisand and Moira:** Amazon 4; DC -1 (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity, Amazon, collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6; *potion of healing* (Elwyna); Spells (one-use, Dorisand): augur, pray, cure heavy wounds; hp 28, 32, 29.

12. Badzum Mirza, older nomad warrior. Scarred brown face, moustaches, fur-trimmed round helmet, curved sabre. He is mute, communicating by hand signs. Badzum is calm and indifferent by nature, but guards his gem-encrusted dagger (800 gp) fanatically. The blanket of his horse is a stolen war flag. **Badzum Mirza:** Archer 6; DC 5 (chain); Atk 2*composite longbow 1d6 or sabre 1d6 or dagger 1d4; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 7; hp 21.

13. Ravix Yeld, spice merchant. He trades in exotic salts, spices, drugs and poisons, usually carrying them to a value of 3d6*100 gp. He is fond of gossip and will listen to it just as happily. **Ravix Yeld:** Thief 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4+deadly poison (-2 save); Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 9; hp 12.

14. Xaxor, swordsman and paladin of Dornak. A follower of this peace-loving deity, Xaxor's mission of pacification involves the wholesale massacre of people he detects as evil, preferably in their sleep. During his holy tasks, he has amassed a considerable war chest (1600 sp, 700 gp, 600 gp ring). **Xaxor, Paladin of Dornak:** Warrior 5; DC 3 (banded mail, shield); Atk footman's flail 1d6+1; detect evil 3/day; St 12, Dx 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Ch 10; hp 37.

15. Menzar Marmax, evil mage. Due to bad luck, Menzar lost his spellbook and was forced to flee with only the spells in his head. Since then, even this arsenal has been partially depleted. He is willing to commit any deed to gain a new spell repertoire – if necessary, even good ones. **Menzar Marmax:** Mage 6; DC 6 (Dexterity); Atk staff 1d6; St 15, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 13; Spells (no spellbook): ESP, mirror image, lesser illusion; hp 17.

16. Zorm Ozvalq the Altruist, wandering philosopher, and **eight disciples**; renounced all wealth and encourages others to do the same; sustains himself with jobs taken on the road but donates excess profits to charity. The pious disguise has been of great service to the small pillaging band, who have robbed many during their career, and maintain a lavish lifestyle in their tower hideout. **Zorm Ozvalq the Altruist:** Cleric 3; DC 7 (ring mail); Atk staff 1d6; St 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 13; Spells: 1: cure wounds*2, command*2; 2: paralise person*2, silence; hp 20. **Disciples:** Warrior 2; DC 7 (ring mail); Atk footman's flail 1d6+1, hp 7, 7, 13, 19, 15, 13, 16, 16.

17. Ephemerides Barbanikos, glass merchant. He trades in colourful glass blocks, which he offers for sale from his mule cart. Each block sells for 1d6*10+60 gp; some are exquisitely beautiful and, when looked at from specific angles, display human faces trying to say something to the onlooker. They also detect as magical (having been enchanted with *lesser illusion* spells). Ephemerides “doesn't recognise” the extraordinary specimens and sells them at his regular price, feigning ignorance about their ultimate origins. **Ephemerides Barbanikos:** Illusionist 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4; Spells: 1: change self, dancing lights, lesser illusion; 2: ventriloquism; hp 6.

18. Athauran, archer. Blond primitive with flowing mane, sunken eyes below sloping forehead, hairy legs and arms, and hunched gait. Athauran barely knows the language of the land, and is not in any case given to much speech. He drinks the blood of his slain enemies and worships strange gods. **Athauran:** caveman Archer 4; DC 4 (hides, Dex); Atk 2*composite short bow 1d6 or spear 1d6+1; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 10; hp 28.

19. Murmuraos, vampire. This aristocratic potentate from the city state of Pentastadion is guarded by five charmed servants; the lead-encased coffin is seemingly only one of the crates on their heavily laden wagon. Murmuraos is extraordinarily shrewd, never engaging in affairs where he is at a disadvantage, but if he has an opportunity to acquire wealth or suck blood, he doesn't tarry. The vampire's treasures are carried in an invisible chest affixed to the bottom of the wagon – 500 gp, 200 gp opal medallion, *shield +1*, *banded mail +1*, *potion of levitation*, *potion of fire breath*. **Murmuraos, vampire:** LVL 8+3; DC 1; Atk claws 1d6+4+LVL; energy drain, +1 to hit, vampire abilities and weaknesses; *cloak of protection +1*, *scarab of death* (worn as a sign of transcending death); hp 37. **Retainers (5):** Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or javelins 1d6; hp 15, 16, 20, 20, 17.

20. The Heroes of Leget, adventurers. **Volonar the Woodsman**, archer – green and brown clothes, moustaches, somewhat dim. **Im Ver**, olive skin, slanted eyes, bronze armour and sharp features, hails from a foreign dimension. **Yacub the Clever**, short, hyperactive cutpurse of a hundred wiles. **Volonar the Woodsman:** Archer 5; DC 5 (chainmail); Atk 2*longbow 1d6 or longsword 1d8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 6; hp 26. **Im Ver:** Warrior 4; DC 3 (banded mail, shield); Atk glass glaive-guisarme 2d4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 12; green glass medallion; hp 28. **Yacub the Clever:** Thief 5; DC 7 (studded leather, Dexterity); Atk shortsword 1d6 or 2*throwing dagger 1d4; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14; the holy symbols of six different gods – whichever comes handy!; hp 28. Ω



A Few for the Road

wilderness encounters by Michael J. Curtis

Drunken Giants: This encounter should take place in a relatively unpatrolled section of road that travels through rocky or hilly terrain. After a long, uneventful day, the party's complacency is suddenly interrupted by the sounds of shattering stone and loud, drunken laughter from just around the next bend in the road. If they venture further along, they round the bend to discover two Stone Giants standing on the road at the edge of a low vale. At the bottom of the vale stand several mounds of stones; most topped by a rocky 5' tall menhir. A few of the mounds are missing these large fingers of stone but the fallen menhirs nearby and the scattered number of small boulders embedded in the soft soil around them indicate that the giants have been using these for target practice. The smell of rancid goat milk is in the air, and the giants' stumbling and clumsy movements lead the party to guess that this duo has been imbibing heavily of fermented mountain goat milk (*kefir*). If the party manages to observe the giants without being detected, they will witness the duo attempting to knock the menhirs off the mounds of stones below with small boulders they've accumulated by the roadside. In between throwing bouts, they drink from huge leather skins filled with the fermented milk, laugh and guffaw, stumble, fall down, get back up, and slap each other on the back heartily. They only occasionally manage to knock down an upright. If the party settles in to wait out the giants, they're in for a good 1d4 hour delay before the giants run out of *kefir* or grow bored with their game and wander back into the rocky hills to return to their lair.

If the party is detected or approaches the giants, they greet the party warmly in the Giant tongue, slurring words badly. Should the party speak Stone Giant or possess magic to understand it, they learn that the giants are inviting them to play a few rounds of "Chuck 'Em", a traditional giant sport. If questioned further, the giants, Chisel and Ike (those names being the closest translation in the common tongue), explain that today is *Gudrokfeir*, a sort of giant's Thanksgiving marked by much feasting, drinking of *kefir*, and feats of strength. The duo wandered down to the vale after the traditional wrestling match back at their lair ended. If Chisel and Ike can't make themselves understood, either by speaking or pantomime, they may grow cross with these stupid small folk and try to drive them off by lobbing stones at the party. If a fight breaks out, the two giants are -4 to hit due to their inebriated state.

In order to join in on the game of "Chuck 'Em", at least one member of the party must possess phenomenal strength, usually in the form of a magical item or spell. *Gauntlets of Ogrish Might* or an *Enstrengthen* spell will allow them to throw the stones at the menhirs, but they suffer a -3 to hit as the strength granted by these magics is barely enough to lob the sizable rocks. Characters drinking a *Potion of Gargantuan Strength* or wearing a *Girdle of Giantish Might* may lob boulders without penalty. The rules of the game are simple: a round of "Chuck 'Em" consists of each participant throwing a single stone at any topstone of his choosing. Regardless of whether the player knocks down a stone, his turn is over. At the end of ten rounds, whoever has toppled the most stones is declared winner. Ties are settled by sudden death, with the first to knock over a stone after a tied score declared the winner. In order to successfully knock a stone from atop its base, the thrower must hit an AC of 5 and do at least 8 points of damage

(thrown rocks do 2 dice of damage each). A successful hit doing less than 8 points of damage indicates the thrower struck the stone but without enough force to dislodge it. When rolling the giant's throws, remember they have a -4 penalty for being pie-eyed.

Chisel and Ike are currently playing for bragging rights, but if the party suggests a more lucrative wager, they'll agree to it. The problem is that the two don't have any money on them, having left it back at the lair. If the party is willing to wait, Chisel will go back to get some coin, leaving Ike to drink more *kefir* and carouse with the party. When Chisel returns, he brings not only 1,000 pieces of gold with him but 1d6+1 more Stone Giants as well! Having heard of the party's arrival, the other giants have come down to watch. These other giants won't join the game – admitting that Chisel and Ike are the best “Chuck ‘Em” players in the band – but will participate in the betting and the consumption of *kefir*. For the purpose of covering wagers, assume each additional giant has 2d4x100 gold coins. Even in their drunken state, the giants are gracious losers and will honor any wagers made. The only dangers in playing with the giants lies in their intoxicated aim (a natural “1” on a giant's to hit roll means that the thrown stone sails into the crowd of onlookers, possibly striking a member of the party) and the chance they might get a sudden drunken inspiration to create new rules for the game – an example of which might be attempting to use one of the party's mounts or pack animals in place of a thrown stone. A party attempting to cheat or otherwise get over on the giants could also rouse their ire if the deception is detected. If the game ends amicably, the giants will settle up any bets and declare eternal friendship with their new little buddies, insisting the party shares a round of *kefir* with the band. While the fermented milk is not deadly to humans and demi-humans, its rancid state requires anyone tasting the stuff to save vs. poison or vomit up the consumed draught. If the save is successful, they must immediately make another save vs. poison or become drunk on the heady brew. This intoxication inflicts the stated -4 penalty to all attack rolls as well as any saving throws where agility and quick movement might be a factor. This drunken state lasts 1d6+1 hours and ends with an excruciating hangover the following morning. Characters that successfully pass their first saving throw to stomach the *kefir* need never make another again to keep the drink down, but must always make a save to avoid intoxication. If the characters ask to sample the brew while playing “Chuck ‘Em”, the referee should apply the penalty for intoxication to their “to hit” rolls should they succumb to the brew's effects. Party members vomiting from the *kefir* will not offend the giants, instead causing them to burst out in uproarious laughter. Only an outright refusal to share a drink with the giants will be taken as an insult.

The party may leave this encounter believing that they've made some powerful new allies. Unfortunately, due to the

inebriated state of the giants, there's only a 25% chance that the giants will remember the events of the day upon waking up the following morning. The next time the characters pass this way, they may discover their assumed allies want nothing to do with them, or worse. The referee might wish to prepare a rough map of the giant's cavern home in the event that one or more of the characters seek to take advantage of the giants' preoccupation with the game and drunken state to infiltrate and loot their lair. The exact number of giants in the lair and their state of alertness is left to the referee to judge, but if Chisel has returned to fetch his bag of wagering coins and was joined by more giant spectators, the number of giants in the lair should be rather few. If the party makes off with the giants' treasure and/or slays any of their number, this will certainly be remembered by the giants regardless of how much they had to drink.

Professor Isosceles' Travelling Wonder Show of the Bizarre and Macabre:

A creaking Burton wagon (a type of *vardo* or Romany wagon) drawn by a tired-looking mare rolls slowly down the road ahead. The sides of the wagon have been decorated with sun-faded paintings of griffons, dragons, skeletons, ghosts, and other threatening beasts and monsters. Above these paintings, in bold curlicue calligraphy, reads “Professor Isosceles' Wonder Show.” The writing was once embellished with gold leaf but, like the paintings beneath, it has flaked and faded with time and the elements. One side of the wagon is hinged, allowing it to be unlatched and propped open to allow viewing of the wagon's contents. A squat figure, dressed in a discarded priest's cassock, sits atop the wagon's bench, reins in hand. A floppy, wide-brimmed hat shades his pallid face from the sun but does little to conceal the large, hairy mole that adorns his cheek. He reins in his mare as the party approaches and, with a cracked and almost sinister voice, asks about the conditions of the road ahead.

The driver of the wagon is Fritz, a short, hunchbacked man of evil countenance. His hat-shaded face and compact stature makes him look more akin to some creature from the Pit rather than a man of flesh and blood. Even his simple inquiries about the conditions of the road and the location of a nearby inn or caravanserai seem to conceal some malicious intent. Before he can spook the party too much, however, the door behind the bench that leads to the wagon's interior opens and a tall, gaunt man steps out. This individual is Professor Isosceles, showman, charlatan, and bunko artist. Standing 6' 4" tall with a hawkish nose, meticulously maintained mustache, and brown hair that rises in a widow's peak, Professor Isosceles bears a passing resemblance to both Vincent Price and Peter Cushing. The Professor wears a frilled and ruffled blouse with black breeches and high boots. A red silk dressing robe that has been embroidered with quasi-mystical symbols and glyphs

covers his form and a crumpled cravat encircles his neck. It will only take a moment for the Professor to realize he has an audience before dropping into his well-rehearsed patter, scolding Fritz for failing to alert him that fellow travelers are about.

The Professor offers the party water – or stronger drink if they're so inclined – to wash away the dust of the road before launching into his spiel touting the wonders he has for display. Perhaps if they're not in too much of a hurry they might be willing to part with a bit of silver for a rare glimpse of such trophies the likes of which they, even in all their travels and adventures, have never laid eyes upon? The back of the wagon is crammed with an eclectic collection of trinkets, baubles, taxidermy specimens, moldering bones, strange devices, and anything else that the referee is inclined to include. The majority of these items (see below) are nothing more than doctored junk and animal parts enhanced by the Professor's verbal embellishments. A broken sword with a snakeskin-wrapped hilt becomes the sword that Sir Xulverick used in his battle against the Great Wyrn Meneraxis; a rune-covered elf skull is billed as the last mortal remains of the lich, Aruthander, slain some two hundred years ago by the Green Blade Company; a vial of chicken blood contains the viscera of Duke Turpish, vile vampire of Verovia, and so on. Should these exhibits not be enough to pique the interest of the party, the Professor also has an inventory of philters, elixirs, potions, and reagents guaranteed the cure their ails and provide magical assistance in their journeys. Predictably, all of these are snake-oil.

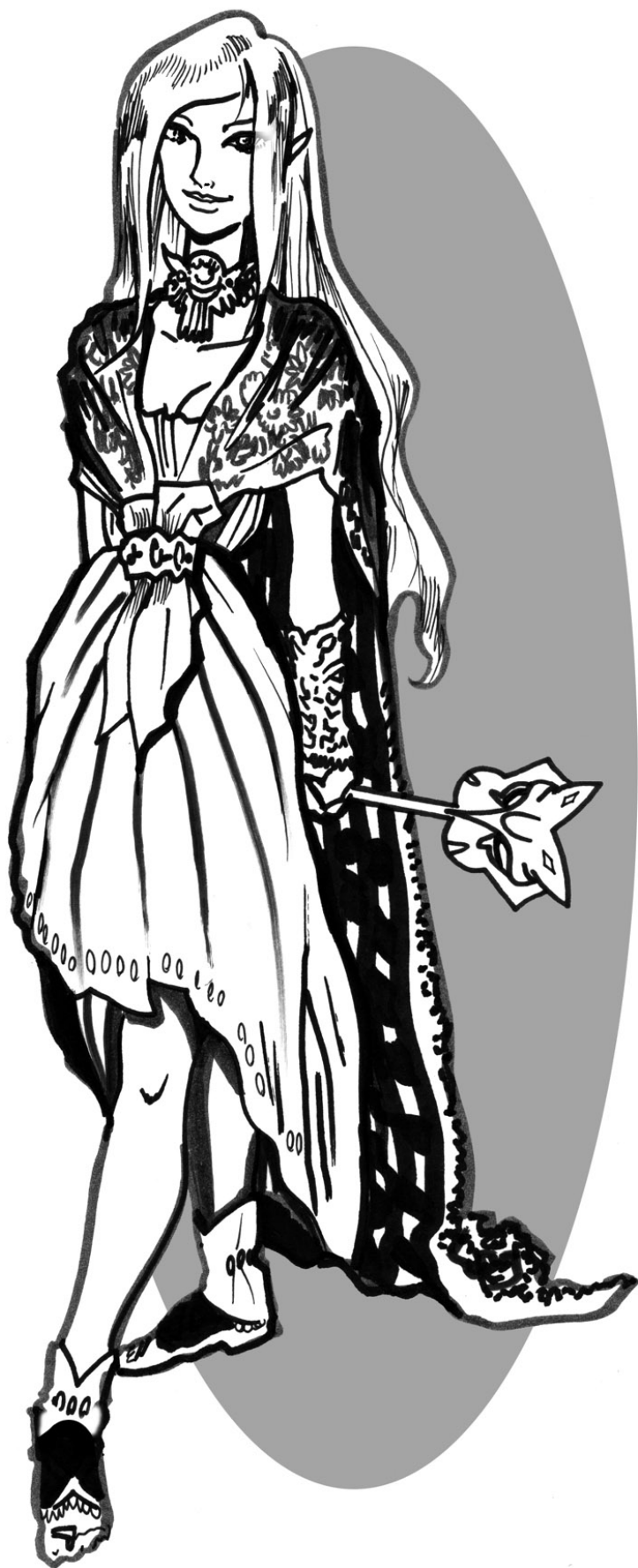
In addition to his collection of these "wonders," the Professor also bills himself as an "Oracle Supreme," being the thirteenth son of a thirteenth son and born on the night of a lunar eclipse. Such a prestigious pedigree grants him the ability to commune with "The Spirits" and to foresee the future. If the party is daring, he says, he'd be willing to consult with the dead in order to learn what awaits them on their next excursion. In portraying his role as an Oracle Supreme, Professor Isosceles goes as far as donning a blue velvet turban decorated with a large fake ruby of cut glass; an item once owned by the dread sorcerer, Abdullah ibn Mustapha Seteh – or so he claims. For a gold coin (less if the party looks gullible but poor), the Professor will light incense, scatter rabbit bones and odd-shaped stones, fall into a "trance," and proceed to spout prophecy that always seems to foretell great danger ahead for the party, but with a sizable monetary reward if they persevere. All of this is pure hokum, of course, and a cynical party will likely suspect as much before the Professor has a chance to bilk them out of too much coin. Astute characters also notice that, while the Professor is a gifted speaker and showman, he often stammers and grows flustered when the conversation steers away from his usual well-practiced banter. During these times, he glances surreptitiously at Fritz, who assists him by "jogging

his memory" with some fact that the Professor has forgotten. Suspicious players may suspect that it is actually Fritz who is the brains behind this con, and they'd be correct. Fritz's stunted form hides a keen and creative mind. He was the originator of this sideshow con, taking on Professor Isosceles (real name: Buckwald Greensfarmer) to serve as the face of the operation. While Isosceles' patter keeps the yokels' money flowing in, it is Fritz who creates most of the show's exhibits and the false legends surrounding them. Despite his malicious appearance, Fritz is not an evil man, merely a greedy and selfish one. Isosceles alternates between fearing Fritz (usually when business is slow and Fritz's mood is foul) and being in awe of his mental prowess and cunning schemes (when their coffers are flush with coin). If a more lucrative offer was to present itself and Isosceles could be convinced that he'd be safe from Fritz's wrath, he might just abandon the scheming hunchback to seek greener pastures.

In spite of the fact that most of the Wonder Show is bunk, there is always a possibility that not all of it is a complete fabrication. Some of the items that make up the sideshow have been acquired through dealings with unscrupulous individuals and down-on-their-luck adventurers. If the referee uses rules that require spell-casters to employ rare materials and occult components in their castings, there is a 20% chance that the Wonder Show currently has an item or two that would be useful to such in its collection. Professor Isosceles (and Fritz) will consider any reasonable offer to purchase these items from them, but will attempt to drive the price as high as possible, claiming that "the loss of such a rare and wondrous item would certainly be a grave blow to my esteemed collection of oddities, and thereby diminish the pecuniary recompense I might otherwise acquire via exhibition." Besides such baubles, there is a 5% chance that the Wonder Show also contains a minor magical item that might be available for sale at as high a price as can be negotiated. Such items should be limited to potions, scrolls or other expendable magic, and may be cursed or otherwise unreliable as determined by the referee. Likewise, the Professor and Fritz are always on the lookout for interesting new items to add to their collection. If the party is wont to take trophies from slain beasts or monsters, the duo might offer to pay them some small pittance in return for one of these trophies – the more grotesque the better. While their funds are almost always low, usually having no more than 1d10x10 silver coins and 2d4x5 gold coins at any given time, this could be a quick way for a cash-strapped group of adventurers to earn enough coin to pay for a night's lodging somewhere.

The Wonder Show and its operators can become recurring characters in the campaign, should the referee desire. The travelling con men make perfect foils for the party and can pop up at the most inopportune moments. If the party takes a liking to the shady pair and befriends them, they might later encounter them in dire straits and requiring

assistance – fleeing from an angry mob that has discovered their con game, for instance. Should the initial meeting be-



tween the Wonder Show and the party result in bad blood, the adventurers may end up on the receiving end of Fritz's mean streak. While the hunchback can do little to them physically, he's not above spreading rumors about them in the Wonder Show's travels. The party might arrive in a small village seeking rest only to discover that the villagers have been warned of miscreants matching the party's description who've been known to butcher humble village folk in their sleep! If the referee is inclined to the melodramatic, he might even chose to make the Professor more thrall than partner to Fritz's schemes, turning him into a very unlikely "damsel in distress" figure in need of rescue.

The Faerie Ambassador: The following encounter is a good way to introduce the otherworldly to the campaign, and to remind the players that, just when they think they know everything about their milieu, they've only scratched its surface. It takes place during twilight or early evening as the characters camp by the roadside. Before they have a chance to settle in, they are witness to a bizarre event. A small low hill, located not far from their campsite, suddenly ripples as a wave of invisible energy flows off it. A moment later, a tall glowing portal opens in its side as if a pair of huge double doors was thrown open. From out of this portal rides a coterie of ethereal figures dressed in gleaming armor and fluttering silk raiment the color of spring. Some are small, wizened creatures who ride atop goats and sheep. Others are huge, lumbering brutes with faces of gleeful children. At the head of this strange group is a tall, beautiful female dressed in regal attire. Her skin is the color of fresh milk and her hair the hue of sun-dappled honey. Her very form seems to glow with a soft light that conjures up images of star-filled night skies with a full moon riding high. Following in her wake are ten male soldiers of similar beauty, adorned in lacquered and filigreed armor of a strange, alien metal. These are the *daoine sídhe* or "the people of the mound" – faerie folk who dwell in the Otherworld and achieve access to the mundane world via certain enchanted hills and mounds – otherwise known as *sídhe* – located throughout the world. The party has witnessed the opening of one of these mounds, and with good reason: the *daoine sídhe* need their help.

The woman, for lack of a better term, is Lady Caoihme, She-Who-Breathes-Flowers of the Seelie Court. Caoihme needs the party's services. Two days from here, in a direction perpendicular to the direction the party is traveling, lives a wizard who is a very old and dear friend of the *daoine sídhe*. Caoihme needs to get a message to him but due to the distance (the *daoine sídhe* are only able to visit the mundane world between the hours of twilight and dawn and there is no *sídhe* or mound in which to rest between here and the wizard's home) and a fast-flowing river between here and there (the *daoine sídhe* cannot cross running water), she must rely on mortals to carry it. Lady Caoihme prefers to keep the contents of the message and

her reasons for needing a mortal wizard's help secrets, judging them to be of no consequence to hired help. However, if this becomes a point of contention that keeps the party from agreeing to serve her, or if the party examines the contents of the scroll afterwards, she (or the scroll) reveals that a local noble has begun construction of a keep atop a faerie *sidhe*; an action that the *daoine sídhe* cannot ignore. While both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts agree that this construction must be halted, the Seelie believe that the intervention of a mortal friendly to the *daoine sídhe* – the wizard she seeks to contact, in this case – is sufficient to solve the problem without exposing the *daoine sídhe* to unwanted contact with or interference from mere mortals. The Unseelie Court, influenced by Lady Caoihme's brother, Lord Tuathal, Sower-of-Thorns-and-Thistles, believes that only the slaughter of the noble, his family, his servants, and anyone else unlucky enough to be nearby will achieve the desired result. Devotees of wanton violence, the Unseelie-aligned seek to undermine the efforts of the Seelie Court and revel in inevitable bloodshed.

If the party is willing to conduct this errand for her, she will agree to pay them each a thousand gold coins once the message is delivered. If the party refuses the gold (which might be wise – see below), she offers enchanted items instead: one item per person, applicable to their class. The referee is encouraged to make these items as attractive and otherworldly as possible. A sword that ignores the protection of armor, a book of spells containing fifty incantations never before seen by mortal magi, or a cloak that allows the wearer to bypass all traps and barriers may be offered to sweeten the pot. If not even these items entice the party's assistance, Caoihme will offer the only thing she has left to barter with – the services of herself and a cadre of her guards on one future occasion when the party requires them. Assuming that the party agrees to help Lady Caoihme, she presents them with a scroll made of pressed leaves and give them directions to the wizard. Once the missive is delivered, they may claim their payment by returning to this *sidhe* during the twilight hours. She wishes them good fortune and regrets that she cannot offer them hospitality within the mound for the evening: such accommodations do not always prove to be beneficial to mortals, she explains. With that, she and her entourage return to the mound and the portal closes behind them.

If the party cannot be convinced to assist the *daoine sídhe*, Caoihme's face darkens like that of a summer sky suddenly occluded by storm clouds. While she and her entourage take no hostile action against the party, she warns that the *daoine sídhe* have long memories and to anger them often leads to the demise of fools. If even this veiled threat fails to sway the party, she and her company return to the *sidhe* and are seen no more. The referee is strongly encouraged to make good on her threat at a later date, possibly long after the characters have forgotten it. Exact details are left to the referee, but traditional fey punishments include cur-

ses, the kidnapping of loved ones, deadly "accidents", and other malicious acts. Once the party has agreed to deliver the Caoihme's message, they are free to leave immediately or wait for morning before embarking on their errand. Regardless of whether they begin straightaway or wait until morning, they will be attacked before dawn by agents of the Unseelie Court who wish to thwart their efforts. Lord Tuathal, unbeknownst to his sister, has dispatched a group of horrible redcaps to slay the party and intercept the message. The redcaps only have this evening to attack and kill the party; should they wait longer to strike, the party will have moved far enough away from the *sidhe* that the redcaps cannot track them and return back to the mound before the cock crows. The redcap assassins consist of a squad equal to the number of party members + 3. They prefer to take the party unawares, but are not adverse to direct assault; howling and stomping their iron-shod boots to drive fear into the hearts of the adventurers.

Once the redcaps are dispatched, the party encounters no other threats beyond random encounters and those planned by the referee. After two days of travel, crossing over a small but fast river during their journey, the party arrives at the domicile of the wizard. Math ap Weylin greets them cordially but not enthusiastically; feeding them and allowing them to rest while he reads the scroll. After absorbing the contents of the missive, Math informs the party that he will indeed come to the aid of Lady Caoihme and the rest of the *daoine sídhe*. He intends to depart at twilight, *teleporting* from his humble abode to the *sidhe* from which Caoihme emerged. He's willing to take the party along so they may collect their payment, if they ask. At the next twilight (Math will provide shelter until then), he and the adventurers *teleport* to just outside of the *sidhe*. Very soon after their arrival, the hillside ripples again and the glowing portal appears to announce the coming of Lady Caoihme and the rest of her entourage. Caoihme is very glad to see both Math and the party, greeting them all warmly and apologizing for the actions of her brother and the redcap assassins. She learned of his scheme too late to warn the adventurers or to interfere.

Redcaps: : # 1-4, DC 4, Speed 15, Hit Dice 3-6, % in Lair 25, Treasure C, Int: Average (10), Outlook: Chaotic, **Description:** Redcaps appear as hulking, gnarled, goblin-like creatures. Their most distinctive features are the heavy, iron-shod boots that they wear on their feet and the bloodstained caps that adorn their heads and from which they get their name. Redcaps delight at killing and eating lost travelers, using the blood of these victims to dye their headgear. Despite the huge iron boots that they wear, redcaps are exceedingly fast and almost impossible to outrun. In combat, they wield heavy iron pikes, which they may also throw as missile weapons. Redcaps are aligned with the Unseelie Court of the *daoine sídhe* and are often used as assassins and bogeymen to plague mortals.

In honor of the arrival of Math and the party's success, Lady Caoihme grants the visitors a sumptuous feast outside the faerie mound. Casks of light, sweet faerie wine are broached, victuals of superb flavor and impressive quantity are produced (with Math assuring the party that the food is safe for mortal consumption if eaten outside of the *sidhe*), and the celebration lasts long into the night. During this revel, Lady Caoihme bestows upon the adventurers the rewards agreed upon, thanking them each in turn for their valued assistance to the *daoine sidhe*. If the Lady Caoihme has promised the party to come to their assistance as a reward for their aid, she explains to them during the revel that, when she and her guards are required, the party need only speak her name and request her presence while standing in the open air. She will hear of their need, no matter where they may be, and will arrive at their location no later than the following twilight.

Eventually, as the night wears on, the adventurers, grunted with fine food, drink, and the excitement of the feast, fall into a deep slumber despite any efforts to remain awake. They rise in the late morning to discover the *daoine sidhe* have vanished with the sun, leaving no trace of them or their festivities on the green grass outside the mound. The party also quickly learns that the *daoine sidhe* are not the only thing that has vanished. An inspection of their rewards reveals that these fine riches have become worthless. Any gold they were paid has turned into dead yellow leaves. Their magic items have become poor quality implements, with swords turned rusty and dull, books moldy, crumbling, and blank, and clothing rendered drab, moth-eaten, and powerless. Such is the fate of all faerie items once the sun has risen. Only if the party was wise or stubborn enough to hold out for Caoihme's promise of aid at some later date will they walk away from this encounter with their reward intact. While the faerie are somewhat capricious when it comes to material rewards, they are beholden to their oaths. If the adventurers ever summon the Lady Caoihme in the manner she outlined above, she and ten of her guardsmen do, in fact, arrive to assist the party. Treat Lady Caoihme as an elf Champion and Enchanter and her guardsmen as 5th level warriors for purposes of combat and magical skill. Lady Caoihme will assist the party in one task or battle, departing upon its completion and having honored her debt. Ω



Enharza

by Santiago Luis “Zulgyan” Oría

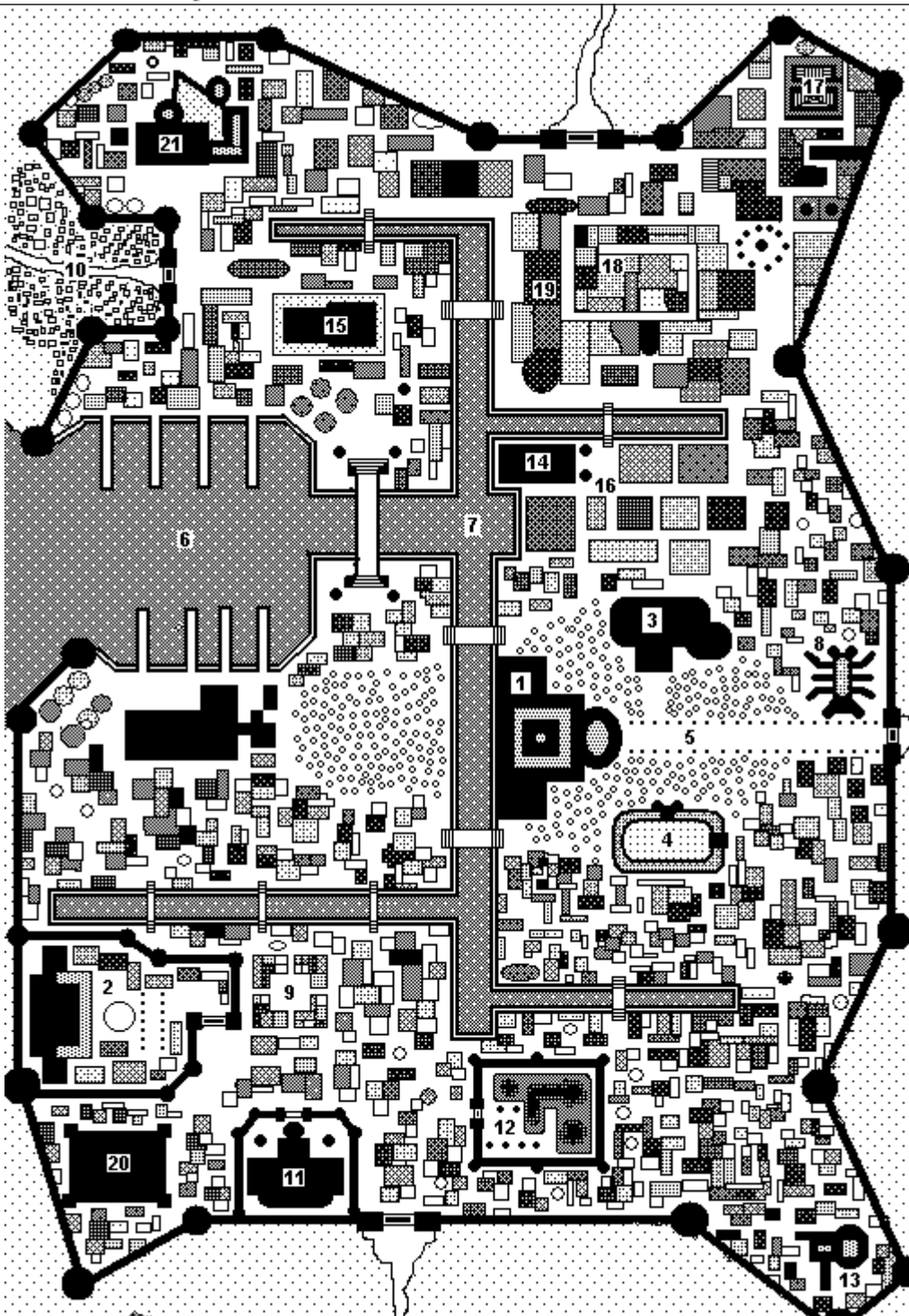
In Your Campaign: Background on the city has been kept minimal so that you can adapt Enharza to your campaign as easily as possible. You need only a coast; the rest of the surroundings can be anything: plains, wastelands, forests, deserts, etc. I purposely avoided referring to the architectural style of the city, local dress, languages spoken, etc., so that you can go with whatever “feel” suits your campaign better: Roman, Asian, Persian, Medieval, Hellenic, Mediterranean, or something totally new. You may also develop the political relations with its neighbors. It’s up to you! Assumed demographics are close to the old *Judges’ Guild* products. That means a lot of classed and leveled NPCs! But that can be easily ignored.

Exploring the City: The PCs will usually arrive at one of the three gates or at the docks by ship. Describe what they see, get them to *feel* the place, and then let them explore the city at their own whim with the aid of the Player’s Map (p. 64), pretty much like a dungeon! As they go from one place to the other, describe what they see, hear, and smell. If they are passing by a relevant building or area, describe it to them. Let them interact with the people, improvise mini-encounters, and when you find it appropriate, roll for a *random encounter*. Give them many chances to find adventure opportunities or mercenary jobs. The city is meant as a prime scenario for adventure.

Player’s Map: Photocopy the full page map of the city and let your players have it as they explore. By looking at the map, some buildings and locations will call their attention and they will know their options for exploration. “That building looks intriguing, let’s go and check it out” – “That place looks like a market. Let’s see if I we can get some dry rations over there” – “Does that look like an arena stadium to you? Let’s go see if we can sign-up for a fight!” Without the map, the game will be much slower and harder to conduct, and you will waste a lot of time on mundane stuff. I recommend introducing the map in a fun way and as an in-game artifact. For example, using the campaign background, say that the guy who plays the thief stole it from a drunken sailor, or that an old friend of the fighter gave it to him as a gift or inherited it from his father. If your campaign is already on course, place it in a treasure if you know the PCs might visit Enharza soon, or have a cartographer sell it to them. If your campaign is already underway, place it in a treasure if you know the PCs might visit Enharza soon, or have a cartographer sell it to them.

You Give Life to Enharza: The city has been described in broad strokes to convey its particular personality, together with some juicy details that can be the seeds for

ENHARZA, CITY RULED BY BACKSTABBING THIEVES



Random Encounters:

Day (roll 1d12, then 1d4 when applicable):

- 1d4+2 city guards (F2) seek: 1- to know PCs names/business, 2- a bribe, 3- to offer job for pay, 4- to sell "immunity" to PCs (see below).
- Thief L1d4+2 attempts to pickpocket a PC.
- 2d6 thieves L1d3 seek: 1-to know PCs names/business, 2- a PCs possession, 3-offer "protection" (see below), 4- employ PCs.
- A merchant thinks PC stole him something.
- L1d4 thief will follow PCs and spy on them.
- 1d4 barbarians L1d4 seek: 1-friendship, 2- a PCs possession, 3- help for quest, 4- kill a PC.
- 1d4 priests L1d4 seek: 1- to convert PCs, 2- gold for the poor, 3-suitable sacrifices, 4-help to assault on other religion's priests or temple.
- 1d4 pirates L1d3 seek: 1-sell treasure map, 2-offer to join crew, 3-PC possession, 4-sell a weird and mysterious gadget (70% just junk).
- 2d6 mercenaries (F2): 1- offer services, 2-want PC possession, 3-attack PCs (by mistake or other wise), 4- sell info or map (20% false).
- Merchant (60% guarded by 1d4 mercenaries F2) seeks: 1- to employ PCs, 2-sell random magic item, 3-information PC might know, 4- a PC possession.
- PC mistaken for someone else and offered a risky job.
- Roll on other city encounter table.

Night (roll 1d12 then 1d4 when applicable):

- 1d4+2 city guards (F2): 1-drunk, 2-hostile drunk, 3- fully on duty, 4-roll on the *Day* "seek" alternatives for (1) above.
- 2d4 prostitutes (L1d2 thieves).
- 2d6 robbers (F1). Attack only weak groups.
- Lost/lone merchant or noble will pay for protection to home (carries 3d20 gp).
- 2d8+4 giant rats (10% disease per hit)
- 2d6 thieves L1d2+1, will: 1- attack PCs, 2-want a PCs possession, 3-offer "protection" (see below), 4- employ PCs for dirty job.
- 2d4 thieves L1d3+1, same as above but 4-will attempt to kidnap PCs.
- 3d6 or 4d6 cultists (F1) will attempt to kill (30%) or kidnap (70%) PCs.
- 1d4+1 shadows, looking for prey.
- 1d4+2 wererats attempt to kidnap PCs.
- A monster from the undercity. Roll on the "Sewer Monster" table (found in next offering!)
- Roll on other city encounter table.

Re-fill (in case of repeated encounters):

- 1 mage L1d4+2, 2d4 mercenaries (F2).
- 2d4 mages L1d4, 1d4+1 mercenaries (F2).
- 1 priest L1d6+2, 2d4 priests L1.
- 1 lone operating L1d4+4 thief.
- Noble (F L2d4), with 2d6 F1 entourage.
- 1 ghost or 1d2 specters (night only)

General Guidelines: The thieves are the true masters of Enharza. Archon Deolon is but a puppet of the thieves' guild; his power is void. As the extremely fat, lazy and irresponsible person he is, he enjoys this *status quo*, dedicating himself to lavish, eccentric, orgiastic banquets rather than matters of government. His palace of foul smells and exotic perfumes has more cooks, dancers, prostitutes, rich merchants and decadent nobles than state officials or bureaucrats. Corruption is high at all levels of government. The city is a *de facto* near-anarchy. The Master Thief is the true "not-so-secret" power of Enharza. Internal struggles to control the Guild are constant. Final Note: don't tell the players this is the city of backstabbing thieves! Let them discover it on their own as they adventure in Enharza.

Laws: Religious freedom is high. Commerce is highly unregulated and taxes low. Piratical loot may be sold freely. Slavery is legal, and slave religious sacrifice permitted. Guard and law enforcement are low (50% chance to "get away with it", adjust according to the situation).

Thief Guild "Rules": Freelancers are caught 30% of the time and forced to compulsory membership (300gp). Otherwise that is the last warning, and next time caught will be attacked by 3d6 thieves (2nd level). The thief guild sells "protection" from itself at 20gp/month - a seal (its design changes every month) is given for display at the shop/building or to be carried to prove "subscription". Guild members pay 30gp/month and receive a schedule with 5 days in which they can operate freely. "Extra" days may be "bought" at 20gp/day. The Guild has eyes and ears everywhere - 30% chance that incautious PCs are getting spied upon to know what they are up to.

City Guard: Guards sell "immunity" to prosecution at 10gp/month (petty theft), 50gp/month (high thievery), 80gp/month (murder). Crimes done "in the open" not covered. Not all guards are into this business, so there is a 40% chance they will not honor the "immunity voucher".

Key to Enharza: (Pop. 10,000; AL-CN/CE; Resources: Market; 20% chance of being pickpocketed per day - adjustable by precautions).

1. The Rosso Palace: Seat of Archon Deolon (F6; CN). Exteriors and most interiors are made of rosso alicante marble. Decorated with arousing colors and frescoes/statues/carvings of pleasure gods and scenes. Administrative offices are minimal; most of the palace is meant for pleasure, banquets, parties and guest rooms. There is a 40% chance each day of a banquet/party being held with 2d100 guests, plus enough dancers, musicians, servants and pleasure slaves to entertain them. If PCs are famous/important people and Deolon knows they are in town they might get invited – gifts are expected. Good job opportunities are to be found among such an elite circle, but also many dangers. Palace Guard: 50 F2, 30 F3, 2 M5, “Thargad” - Captain F6. The treasury stores 20,000gp in valuables - magically warded.

2. Army Barracks: Houses a poorly equipped and underdisciplined army of 400 light infantry, 200 archers, and 150 light cavalry (all F2) also serving as city guards. Deolon's parties keep neighbors friendly and he cares a lot about not gaining enemies. The Army is commanded by Kritas (F8-LN). He plots to overthrow Deolon and purge the Thieves' Guild, but so far has too many spies on him and too few allies.

3. “The Fiery Ruby” Gaming House & Inn – Thief Guild: Huge and expensively decorated in very bad taste, all gambling games imaginable are played. It hides the main entrance to the Thieves' Guild. This, of course, is a secret to most, even many guild members, though the abundance of shady types makes it all very suspicious. V.I.P.s game at “The Royal Saloon”, which is small compared to “The Great Saloon” where the masses waste their gold. Musicians, jugglers and exotic shows entertain players. Prostitutes and drugs are available. The Inn offers many varieties of rooms, foods and price ranges. It is all run by Madam Zenopatra (T8), a woman of character who commands her staff like a warship captain. Private Security: 40 F2, 10 F3, 2 M4, 10 T3. The treasury (super-locked) holds 30,000 gp - guarded specially by 4 5F, 1 5M. The Thieves' Guild is accessed through a secret door in room 302 (obviously never available). The Master Thief (L12) wears a white mask to cover his identity. The ancient law of the guild says whoever wears the mask becomes the Master Thief – there are no other succession rules besides this one. The power network of the Master Thief reaches the highest places throughout the entire city. Ascending through the thief hierarchy is a career of intrigue and treason, in which PCs might become unknowing pawns.

4. Arena: PCs can fight gladiators or captured monsters for gold. People bet high sums. Archon Deolon attends on special occasions.

5. Market: A dusty chaos of tents/stands and shouting vendors. This area is more patrolled than others. Despite that, if PCs visit the market, increase pickpocket chance by +10%, +20% if wealth is displayed. Foods, drinks, low manufacture goods/crafts can be found, up to 20% lower in price! 10% chance per day of finding a potion (40%), scroll (30%), minor magic item (20%) or high-tech item (10%) for sale.

6. Docks: Since selling piratical loot is legal in Enharza, the docks are full of pirates! The most famous of them all is Sir Bazayad (F9-CE) who commands an unnamed weird metallic galleon (actually a semi-ruined spaceship that lost its power to fly, but has enough to sail). Many foreign sailing merchants from distant, exotic lands are also seen. The army has a small fleet of 6 warships that see little activity. Ship masters offer rides and voyages to the PCs for gold. There is a shipyard where PCs can commission the construction of a ship of their own.

7. City Canals: Murky, of foul smell (sewer/human waste), but navigable by small boats. Tentacled and slimy monsters have been spotted.

8. Temple of Yezud (spider-god): Speerax (P6), 15 P1, and 20 mutant spiders provide the Thieves' G. (and PCs) with all poison needs.

9. Armories: square of many weapon/armor shops that provide the army and the rest. All weapons/armor available. A weapon of high quality (+1 to-hit) can be ordered (1 week). Heavy armor needs 1d4+1 days to fit. 10% of finding a minor magical weapon/armor being sold.

10. Shantytown: a place of disease, hunger and little of interest, but beggars can make good spies! They know many secrets of the city.

11. Haunted Cathedral: former place of worship of a LG deity. It's now sealed, abandoned and undead-infested. Priests of the deity are looking for someone to retrieve an important relic (The Sincere Tongue of Rao). PCs can cleanse the place for good or the remaining loot.

12. Xulkor's Mansion: A huge and eccentrically decorated mansion that serves more like a giant lab for the twisted experiments of Xulkor (M12 – N), who rarely sees the outside world anymore. Fortunately for the people of power in Enharza, he is anti-social and completely uninterested in politics or public relations. Most people would go insane if they dared to explore this place. It's guarded by monstrous aberrations in the interiors, but 20 F3 are the first line of defense. All dealings with the outside are in hands of Danoar (M5). He is in charge of trading spells from Xulkor's repertoire for rare ingredients (no interest in \$) such as medusa brains, manticores livers, etc.

13. Temple of Ishtar, goddess of love and war (N): A very popular and luxurious temple. HP Jinnessa (P6), 4 F4, 10 F2, 2 T4 and 10 T2.

14. Temple of Afipos (merchant-god): popular among Enharza's rich and those struggling to get there. HP Accuntus (P9), 2 P5, 10 P2.

15. Temple of Mobharadur (CE), the Whale-Mother, Lady of the Sea and Creatures of the Deep: popular among pirates, it's a dirty place, full of mud and algae. Large pools contain sea monsters and pulpoid creatures. HP Jackoldor (P9), 2 P7, 4 P3 and 10 “Deep Ones”.

16. High Class Residences: here live the most rich and influential (and evil?) of Enharza. Private guards patrol this area (6 F3 per patrol).

17. School of Commerce: rich merchants, local and foreign, send their sons to this prestigious institution. Its teachers are advocates of individualism and *laissez faire* economics. They think taxes could be even lower, and that Archon Deolon should waste less money. They also dislike the Thieves' Guild because they “distort the market”. Commander Kritas has asked them to finance his coup, but has been rejected because of his socialist ideas. They are still determining who to back. Head-Master Freetman (Ill 7, CG).

18. Weird Shop: in this area of many shops that sell higher manufacture goods is this small, unadvertised store owned by Thilantros, an old, crazy wizard (M7). He sells all kinds of weird ingredients and esoterica. He may also have some magic item or high-tech object (30%).

19. Judicial Courts: This block houses all jurisdictions: Commerce, Sea, Foreign, Low, High, and Government. The administration of justice is slow and inefficient, so trial-by-combat has been introduced for many matters to ease procedures. 60% magistrates accept bribes.

20. Prison: unfortunate criminals, tax debtors, and political enemies, end up in this overpopulated prison. To solve the problem, many are sent to the arena where they can fight for their freedom. Bulwar (F6), 10 F3, 40 F2 are in charge of security. Convict revolts make it hard.

21. Stronghold of the Glorious Legion: Xärragus the unpleasant (F10, CN) established his head-quarters here. He is a slaver and mercenary who fights wars for distant rulers. His legion includes 30 F4 white-horse archers (brotherhood of lightning), 1 M5, 1 P5, and 100 heavily armed F3. His stronghold is also an important slave market, where all types, sizes and colors can be found. Xärragus is usually traveling, leaving his trusted friend Guthargor (F8) in charge of the stronghold. But Guthargor has ambitions of its own and plans to betray him. The Legion is open to new members if qualified enough. They are frequently hired by rich people in Enharza for varied jobs/missions.

Rumors – Adventures (d12):

1. Until the threat is diminished, 3gp per barbarian head is being paid at the barracks. Bands have been raiding caravans in the area.

2. Tentacled horrors under the orders of Mobharadur clerics are kidnapping people at night to offer as sacrifices. Stay away from canals!

3. A ship vanished near the Amadorian Archipelago while looking for a treasure. The captain's best friend keeps a copy of the map.

4. Caves have been found in nearby hills, infested with monsters. Ancient treasures have been brought back by expedition survivors.

5. The Master Thief was assassinated (F). Power struggles will make Enharza dangerous, but profitable to those who benefit from conflict.

6. At the “Fiery Ruby” is a foreign noble who claims to have never lost a game of cards. He is betting his own castle in a distant land.

7. A cult that worships a pile of blue ooze in the sewers is kidnapping people and gaining more adherents. 400 gp reward for leader's head.

8. A traveler sells the map to some ruins of a shrine to a forgotten god, nearby but well hidden. There must be something interesting there.

9. A serial killer (F4/T4) has escaped the prison and is hiding, probably somewhere in the sewers. 300 gp to capture him dead or alive.

10. Sailors have spotted a ghost ship at sea. It's the 300 year old ship of Yerge the Merciless, who kept a great secret no man should know.

11. A young dragon has been spotted in the forests nearby. Soon he will start raiding the countryside to build up his hoard.

12. An important merchant was killed by a mind flayer yesterday at an important inn. The creature escaped. No one knows the reason.

hundreds of adventures. I have avoided mundane, non-adventure relevant details that can be easily improvised. You bring the city alive! A good way to do it is to use a lot of mini-encounters to get your players to *feel* the city: a desperate vendor trying to sell some junk, a bump into a hurried merchant ("get out of my way, you fish-smelling, miserable foreigners!"), a crippled beggar, a black lotus dealer, a suggestive trio of prostitutes, pirate press gangs, a runaway beast, etc. There are many taverns, shops, and stores that are not detailed - make them up as needed.

Random Encounters: The encounters on the tables are supposed to be "major encounters" - 1 or 2 per day or night is OK. If they would interrupt the flow of what is already happening in a session, it is better to ignore them. Your GM intuition will know what's best for the game. Sometimes a bit of unexpected chaos added to the adventure can be a good idea too.

Locations Left for Your Development: Some locations (such as the Abandoned Cathedral, Xulkor's Mansion, Sir Bazayad's ship, etc.) have been only sketchily described. You can transform them into fully detailed adventure locales tailored to your campaign's needs.

Sewers: The ancient tunnels (mapped at right) and pipes (not mapped; too small for humans anyway) were constructed centuries ago, at a time when Enharza was governed by slightly more responsible rulers. Today they receive little to no maintenance and are slowly crumbling away. It is the filthiest, foulest, most unbearable place one might visit. Anyone staying in the sewers for more than 10 minutes has a 10% chance of contracting a disease. On the sewer map, "E" signs indicate entry points into the sewers. As you may see, some of these accesses are on the streets and some inside buildings. The thieves of Enharza constantly make use of the sewers to go around the city in pursuit of their ill ambitions. These tunnels are also a main battleground for internal guild wars. Other factions make use of the sewers as well, and fight to control them. It is really dangerous down there! You can place entry points into lairs, hideouts, tombs, crypts, cult-temples, sorcerer cabals, or even full blown mega-dungeons at different spots all around the sewers as your campaign needs them.

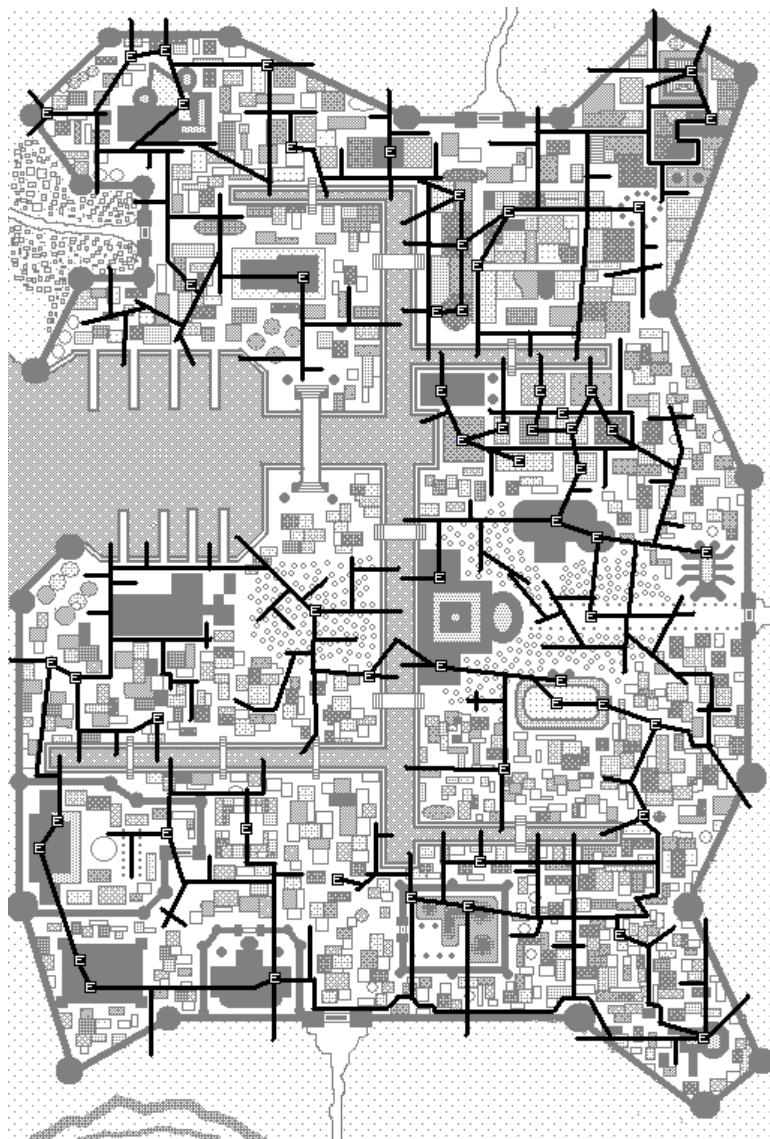
Random Enharza Sewers Encounters (1d20):

1. 5d6 giant rats - 20% disease carriers.
2. 2d8 zombies, of thieves, guards, beggars, etc.
3. Garbage (or crumbled wall - 20%) completely blocks the path. PCs must dig, excavate, or go another way!
4. Permanent & wandering "Stinking Cloud".
5. 2d4 giant spiders from the Temple of Yezud.
6. 1d4+1 barbarians 2nd or 3rd Level - 30% non-hostile.
7. Shambling garbage elemental.
8. 1d6 tentacle-faced sewage scuttlers - 20% non-hostile.
9. 2d4 wererats, looking for some easy prey.
10. 3d6 insane cultists (F1) (20% of 4th to 6th Level priest).

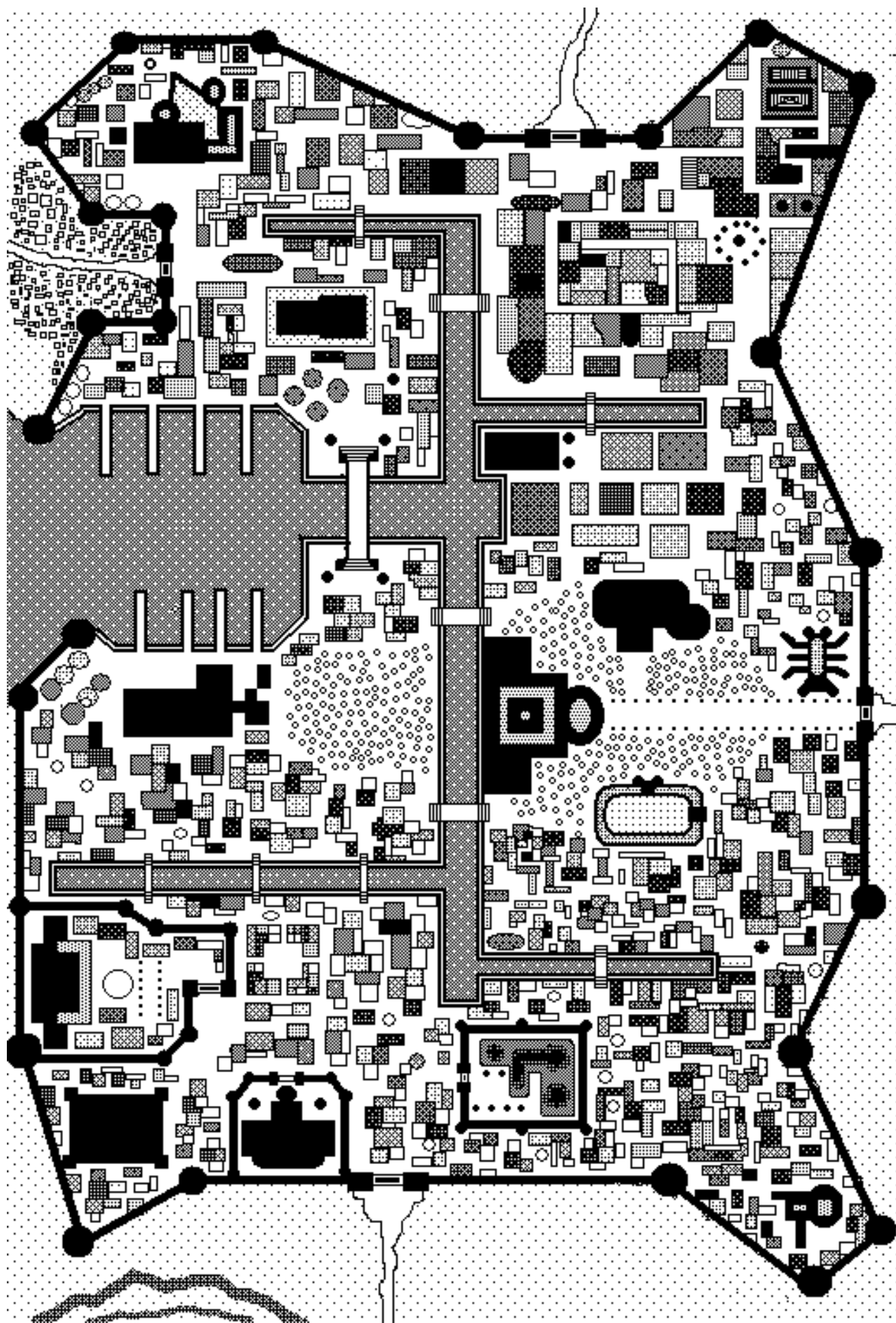
11. 2d6 thieves, 2nd Level - 50% non-hostile.
12. 2d6 thieves, 3rd Level - 50% non-hostile.
13. 1d4+1 thieves 4th Level - 60% non-hostile.
14. 3d6 city guards (F2). - 80% non-hostile.
15. Giant amphibious octopus (HD 8 to 10), 70% faithful to the Temple of Mobharadur. Very malicious!
16. Weird water elemental - from a very ancient time.
17. A well fed animate gelatin cube, still quite hungry.
18. 2d4 deep ones, faithful to the Temple of Mobharadur.
19. 1d4 slimes/oozes of random type.
20. The Sewer God (This unspeakable terror is up to you!)

Example of Play: You can check out the session, posted on May 31st 2009 on my blog, to see Enharza in action. I ran the whole city part of the game using only what you see published here, one-page of generic NPC stats, and my monster book. Improvisation was key and very rewarding.

<http://zetaorionis-zulgyan.blogspot.com>



Enharza Players' Map on next page.



Holy Crap! I Need a Dungeon RIGHT NOW!

by Jeff Rients

Maybe you forgot the players were going to follow that treasure map this week; maybe your dog ate your dungeon; or maybe the party's found a way into an unfinished section of your megadungeon. Whatever the reason, you need a dungeon level that's ready to go in the minimum time possible. Don't reach for a canned module! In a situation requiring haste, using another author's work risks you missing something crucial and fumbling the execution. What you need instead is a dungeon that comes together quickly but which you can run from rough notes because you created it yourself. With a little confidence in your own abilities and the following super-easy method for quick dungeon design, you'll only need ten or fifteen minutes to get your new level up and running.

Drawing The Map: Use a single piece of graph paper and a pencil (not pen). If the entrance to the level is a known quantity, go ahead and mark it in. Then start distributing square/rectangular rooms at random around the map, at least three each of the sizes 20' x 20', 20' x 30' and 30' x 30'. Don't worry about the layout of the dungeon at this point, just start peppering the maps with rooms. Add two or three larger square rooms, say a 40' x 40' and a 50' x 50'. Now add at least two rooms of irregular shape: a triangle, a circle, an L-shaped room, or perhaps a square/rectangular room with the corners cut off or some other alteration. That's not a lot of rooms on your emergency level, but you're not building Greymoor Keep here. The goal is to get through a session with your dignity as a referee intact. Never let the players see you sweat!

Now it's time to connect those rooms. You just have to eyeball this phase. Wherever a simple 10' east-west or north-south corridor will connect two rooms, add those passages to the map. Connect the rest of the rooms via 10' corridors that turn or bend or take off at an angle. Include at least one corridor of larger width and one that's narrower than the 10' standard. Add at least two dead ends to the array. Make sure that at least half the rooms can be approached by two or more routes. (That's a key difference between a proper dungeon and a railroaded storyline in graph paper drag.) If you haven't already, pick a room or corridor as the access point to the level and add in the dungeon entrance. Note the entrance directly on the map. In fact I recommend putting all the notes for the entire level directly onto the map. If you can't fit all your notes onto the map, you're probably writing too much.

Now add some doors to the map. Roughly half the places where passageways meet rooms should have a door, and you'll want at least one additional door connecting two

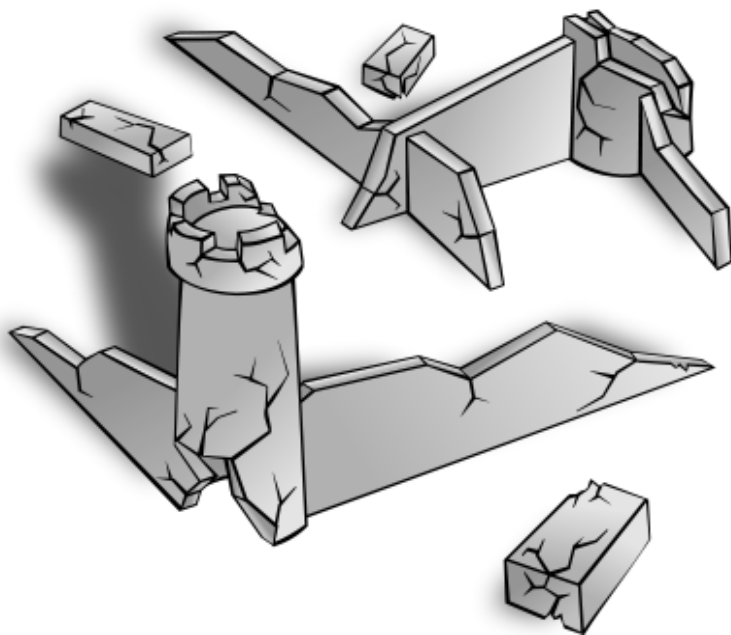
different passageways. Take a look at your map. Does anyplace suggest itself as a good location for a secret door, a one-way door, or a false door? Add at least two secret doors and either a single one-way door or false door.

The next thing you need are some miscellaneous features. Pick at least three from this list: a ramp, a few stairs, an archway, a statue, a pool of water, some slime or mold, one or more columns, a pile of rubble, a dungheap, some cobwebs, graffiti, a caved-in section, a scary pentacle on the floor, strange smells, unsettling noises, a corpse, a weird-looking door, something else you made up. Again, make any notes directly on the map, like if you decide the archway is enchanted or something like that.

Before you go on to stocking the dungeon, give your map a quick look-over. Does the party have multiple avenues of exploration? Consider opening up choke points to give the players more decisions. Trust your gut: if you feel like you need to make a change, go ahead and do it. You want to feel confident when the players get back with the Chinese takeout. But remember that there's a difference between a gut instinct and second guessing yourself.

Stocking the Dungeon: You need three basic components here: monsters, treasure, and traps. Since the level you just laid out is fairly small, you don't need a lot to fill up your map, especially since most dungeon levels feature at least a few empty rooms. We'll start with monsters. You really only need to pick three critter types: the main bad guys, the lone wolf, and the miscellaneous creeps. The main bad guys are a monster type that is normally encountered in numbers. Usually you'll want something intelligent, but that's not required. The standard pick is a humanoid race with HD equal to your dungeon level, but you could easily consider other options. Perhaps a couple of rolls on a wandering monster chart will suggest something. Or maybe you want to go with undead. For undead main bad guys, go with fewer HD than the dungeon level to account for all those spiffy special abilities. Look at your map for a cluster of three or four rooms. That's where your main bad guys can be found. In the largest room of the cluster put down maybe d6+6 of your selected monster. If the monster has a standard boss type, like a chieftain, put one in here as well. The other two or three rooms should have about d6+1 monsters each. One of the smaller rooms in the cluster should have something that sets it apart from the others. Add in a miscellaneous architectural feature or change something about the monsters. Something as simple as "biggest ogre has an eyepatch" or "lizard man archers use the columns for cover" will be enough to make the encounter a richer experience.

The lone wolf is one particular tough monster, tough enough that the main bad guys have been unable to drive it off the level. You have lots of options here, but your basic choices are something with awesome special abilities (a



basilisk, for instance) or just a monster of a higher level than the dungeon (a hill giant on level three). If you need ideas, roll on the wandering monster chart two levels higher than the one you used for the main bad guys until you get something you like. Consider customizing the lone wolf. It can be as simple as adding a single special ability (bat wings on a giant snake, for instance, or a two-headed manticores). Alternately, roll twice on the wandering monster charts and amalgamate an all-new critter based on the results. Place the lone wolf in a large room on the opposite side of the dungeon from the main bad guys.

The final monster type is the miscellaneous creeps. These are monsters that can be dropped into the level without terribly altering the tension between the main bad guys and the lone wolf. The basic categories are vermin (rats, bats, spiders, snakes, etc.), oozes, funguses, mindless undead, and constructs like golems. You want two or three different kinds of creep sprinkled across the dungeon. If you use three creeps, place one of them in a hallway; otherwise drop them into rooms not already in use. The range of possible creeps is large, but generally you'll want them to be slightly weaker than standard encounters on the level. Don't let them outshine the main bad guy or lone wolf.

A totally optional step at this point would be a custom wandering monster chart, e.g. (d6):

1-2	d6 main bad guys
3	lone wolf (from room x)
4	d6 miscellaneous creeps (small)
5	miscellaneous creep (large)
6	interloper (use standard wandering monster tables)

Now add the treasure. The main bad guys' treasure goes in the room where they are most concentrated. If you don't want to roll on the treasure type charts, just eyeball it. When in doubt I use 1,000 gold pieces per dungeon

level, usually half in coinage and half in gems and jewelry. Add a roll or two on the magic item charts and you're good to go. Again, note treasure right on the map. Draw an arrow from the monster in the room to any magic items it could use in combat. Circle the rest and make some note like "In a locked chest" or "Under the rubble pile". The lone wolf doesn't need a lot of treasure. On wimp levels a couple of coins and a useful piece of equipment ought to do. Deeper in the dungeon, go with a single gem or piece of jewelry and maybe one magic item. This is a good place to throw in a unique item, like a lavishly described jewel or a magic item not on the charts. If you're hard-pressed to come up with a cool new magic item make two or three chart rolls and try to come up with a hybrid item like a *sword of fire resistance* or a *crystal ball of paralysis*. Don't forget to note the location of the lone wolf's meager treasure. When in doubt, go with "in its gullet". For the last treasure on the level, hide something in an otherwise empty room. A bag of gold worth 25 gp times the dungeon level will do, or maybe a treasure map leading to someplace faraway. Note on the dungeon map where the treasure is hidden. "Under a loose flagstone" will do, or "in secret compartment in the statue".

Now you need some traps: at least one and no more than four. Pick from this list: in the hallway, on a door, in one of the empty rooms, and/or on one of the treasures. As a rule of thumb, I assume that default traps do one d6 damage per level of the dungeon, save for half or none depending on the trap. But not all traps need to be deadly. If you use three or four traps make at least one of them something not directly lethal: an alarm that summons monsters, a sliding wall that cuts off the party's escape route, rust gas that destroys their metal equipment, etc.

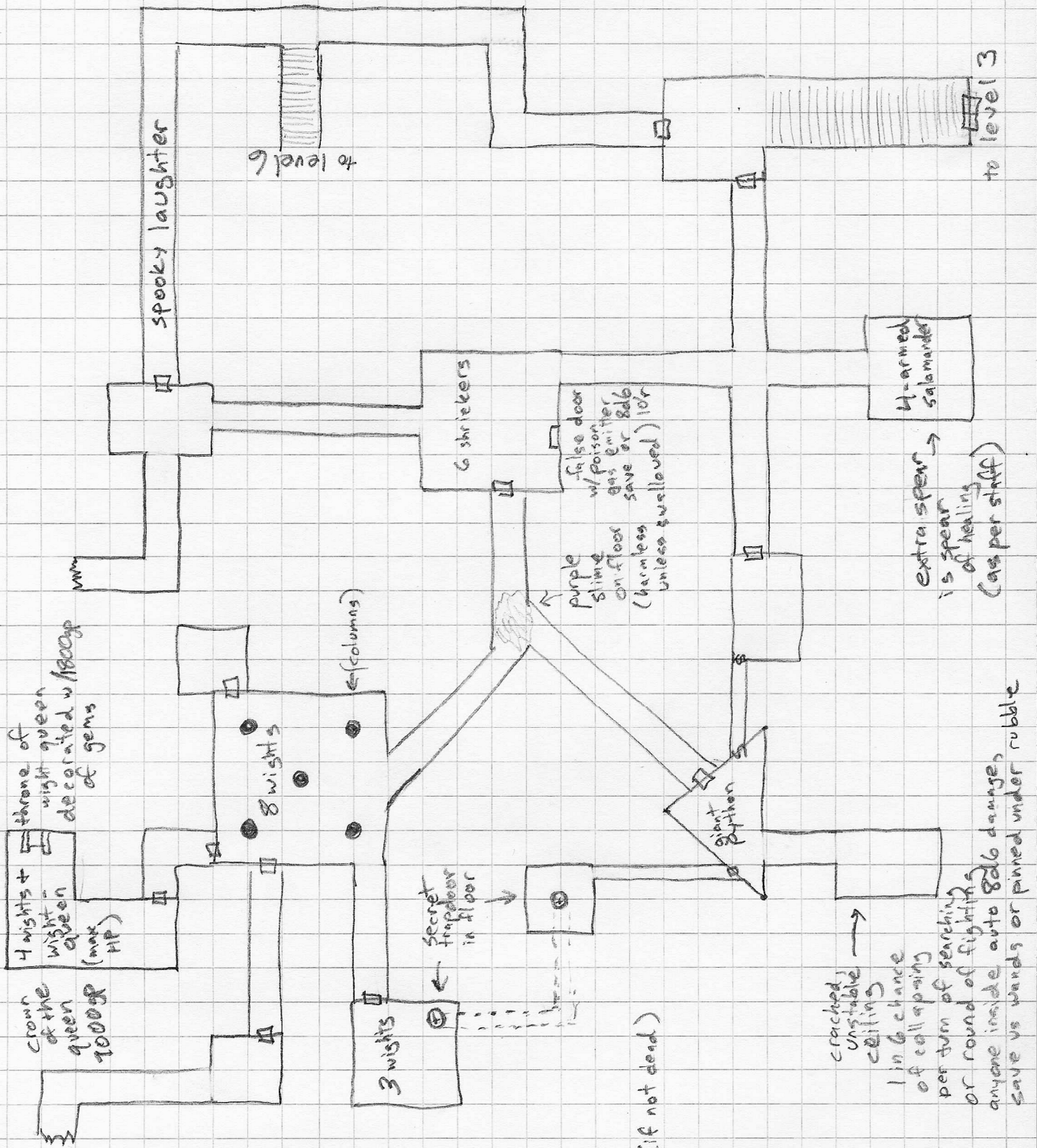
You're almost done! Look over your combined map/key to see if any changes suggest themselves. If the dungeon looks too sparse, simply label an empty room or two with things like "the abandoned torture chamber" or "the mysterious runes". And don't hesitate to go outside these guidelines altogether. This article is meant to be a jumping-off point for quickie dungeons, not the final word. As a final step I strongly suggest naming the dungeon level. You are going to run this baby and it is going to knock your players' socks off! Years later when your crew asks "What was that awesome adventure with the fire-breathing ghoul and the hat that cast lightning bolts?" you will want an answer like "Ah, yes. The Seven Chambers of the Undergnolls. That was a fun little romp."

Sample Level: Let's say the party has been exploring the third level *Under Xylarthen's Tower*, available at jrients.tripod.com/xylarthen/uxt.pdf. A player unexpectedly uses a *wish* to open the magelocked double doors, leading to the uncharted level 8! I call a smoke break and get cracking. The result isn't necessarily pretty, but it will keep the party fighting on! Ω

Domain of the Wight-Queen

↑ N

level 8 UXT



Wander monsters

- 1-2 d6 wights
- 3 4-armed salamander (if not dead)
- 4 d8 pit vipers
- 5 1 black pudding
- 6 use standard chart

Dungeon Modules

drop-in locations by Geoffrey O. Dale

There are certain kinds of place that seem to show up again and again in adventuring scenarios. This column, first in a new series, details such locations to be dropped in to your game as needed. - Ig

Arcane Library: A non-descript wooden door hangs on a splintered frame in a dusty hallway, with creaky brass hinges and a stuck latch (the door is *mageocked* on d6 rolls of 1-3). Behind the door is a passage 6' wide by 8' tall by 15' long ending in a narrow, steep, stone stairway leading down. The stair is filled with a cold, wispy fog and completes three full spirals over a vertical distance of 70'. The right-hand wall is decorated with motifs associated with an obscure or forgotten deity of knowledge, or a mystic cult (for example, the *Illuminati*) associated with such a deity; Judges may allow adventurers to identify the workmanship. Adventurers hear an audible phantasm of footsteps running ahead of them as they climb down the stairs. At the bottom is a black stone arch 15' tall by 12' across at the floor, decorated at the capstone with a glowing (open) green book flanked by scrolls.

Antechamber: Past the arch is an 40' arched tunnel (12' tall by 10' across) that opens into a six-sided chamber through an 8' diameter circular aperture. The tunnel has a floor made up of old oaken planks that creak eerily as adventurers tread on them. The chamber is 22' high by 30' across at its widest, with a polished onyx floor and ochre walls. Thick brass ribs are located at the seams between walls, arching upwards to join together over the center of the room. A lit red lantern hangs from each rib 10' off the floor, and a large red lantern hangs from a brass chain at the junction. In the center of the floor an open green book is inlaid in semiprecious tiles. On a wall to the left as adventurers enter is a 10' tall iron door secured with an oversized iron chain and padlock (-25% to pick); this door leads to a lower dungeon level. On a wall to the right is a 10' tall brass door with adamantine hinges and handle (no lock; opens outward) that leads into the Library; This door is found closed and does not open when pulled (held closed by three adamantine bars on the inside). Above the brass door is an inset ledge 15' long by 8' deep with a brass railing (provides cover and protection against missiles - 3 to hit) and at the back of the ledge is a round brass door 6' in diameter with adamantine hinges (no handle or obvious latch; this door opens inward and is held closed on the inside by two brass bars slipped through adamantine wall brackets). Both brass doors (and their hinges) are enchanted, sustain 400 hp, ignore acids and heat, and cannot be cut by weapons or tools weaker than +4. When an adventurer stands on the book inlaid into the chamber floor and taps their foot (or staff, etc.), a booming echo sounds in the chamber (d20+Con 28+ or *stunned* 3d20

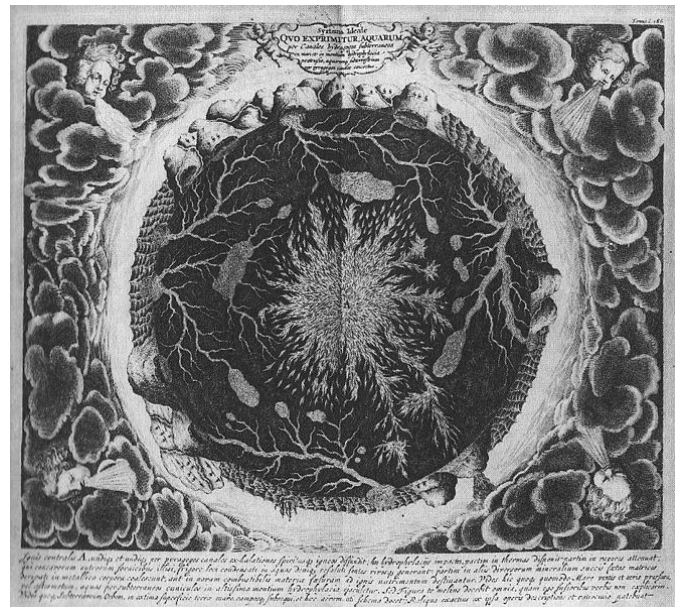
rounds). 1d8 rounds later, a mature Gnome, Korilyam, opens the upper brass door and emerges onto the ledge. He carries a loaded crossbow (+2 to hit, *Arrow of Human Slaying*), wears a *Ring of Protection vs. Missiles* +2, and has a mandolin on his back; the door is immediately shut behind him. If Korilyam is attacked he can also invoke a *chain lightning* spell three times (does 3d10 on the inlaid book symbol, 2d10 at 6' distance from the book, 1d10 at 12', 1d6 at 18'). The Gnome inquires why the adventurers want to enter the Library of Entallikles; he can be persuaded through normal means (roleplaying or d100+Cha rolls of 90+, mages add level, sages add +20, dwarves add +5, elves subtract -10, any bribes subtract -30).

Library Lobby: Immediately behind the brass door is a rectangular chamber with an arch in the opposite wall leading into the main library; an enchanted repulsion field prevents unauthorized persons from entering the Main Library beyond (each librarian wears a silver ring which allows passage through the field, as does holding a valid Library Card). The floor is red tile, the walls are covered in green-and-blue wallpaper, and the ceiling is of cherry wood planks. Ten oil paintings of balding old men in robes and spectacles hang on the walls. Two glowing spheres are attached to the ceiling by brass rods. In this area are four antique wooden desks/chairs (for the librarians Korilyam, Hellasene, Greggress, and Myron), a 7' marble statue of Athena standing on a half-globe base and holding an open scroll, a scarred old wooden table with a vase of dried flowers, and a wood watercooler with ceramic jug. None of the desks have locks; inside are found a variety of ordinary office supplies along with 21 cp, 16 sp, 8 gp, a small carving (207 gp), a pewter bowl, 2 silk handkerchiefs (each 32 sp), 3 golden goblets (each 122 gp), 6 steel knitting hooks, a sewing kit, a cartographic drawing set (18 gp), 4 empty coin tubes, a blue glass eye, a barber's razor, a pipe lighter, tinted gold-framed spectacles (414 gp), 5 pouches of fine pipeweed, an incense stick (3 gp), a pouch of dried hallucinogenic mushroom (for pipe, 45 gp), 2 vials of Holy Water (Wodin), and a 30' cloth tape measure. If the statue is overturned, two books are hidden in the hollowed base (*Manual of Greater Stone Golem Construction*, *Manual of Magelore* +5000 ep). At least two librarians are present here at all times (one is required to open the antechamber door). The Librarians will buy any unusual or rare book, paying the same price as a collector or mage for appropriate volumes.

Main Library Chamber: A circular room 80' in diameter, having an arched ceiling 70' high in its center, with six arches equally-spaced along the perimeter leading to other book rooms and two marble stairs leading up to a mezzanine level (18' above the floor and 25' deep). The flooring is made of terra cotta tile, the walls are paneled with a light wood, and the ceiling is white, painted with a colorful mural showing the construction of the Great Library of Anacaphas at Feddrisport. A crystal chandelier hangs over the room's center, and green glowing orbs (permanent

daylight spell) are attached to the walls at 9' intervals. Several mountain goat-fleece rugs are on the floor. Twelve upright staves in gold stands (140 gp) are scattered about the Main Chamber, the Mezzanine Level, and the various library study rooms; if any staff is touched by any Librarian (or person wearing a Librarian's ring), ten Library Guards are summoned, appearing on the Mezzanine Level 1d10 rounds after being summoned. On the main floor are ten circular table, each with six ornate wood chairs, two large wooden desks with cushioned office chairs (senior librarians Mortimus and Kellavenna), two wood lecterns, three book stands, a three-gallon urn holding rich hot chocolate with a dozen ceramic mugs, five oversize ceramic pots each with a bushy plant, a recirculating fountain (water dyed red) shaped like a cherub holding four jugs, a rack of maps, two upright scroll cases, and twelve large upright wooden bookcases. The desks are unlocked and contain a variety of standard office supplies; in addition the desks contain: 18 sp, 14 gp, 3 ep, 6 inkwells of colored ink (green, red, orange), a gold seal (368 gp), a silver-bladed dirk (2 emeralds in the hilt, 1014 gp), a folding knife, a four-power magnifying glass, a silver thimble (7 gp), a steel combination padlock (3 digits, dwarf-made, 72 gp), a brass buckle shaped like a wolf's head (2 gp), a pot of hand lotion salve, a vial of good-quality perfume (72 gp), a brass dog whistle, a steel lock pick, a silver-onyx ring (giant-sized, 148 gp), *Far-Seeing Spectacles*, *Spectacles of Kent*, an *Orb of Translation*, and a Wand (one spell, level 1, 81 charges). The room has a permanent spell which immediately extinguishes any open flame, and suppresses fireball and lightning spells (roll 14+ on d20+caster level to overcome; also applies to Mezzanine level). The room has a permanent *bush spell* which muffles any loud noises or shouting. The six book rooms along the perimeter are rectangular, 120' long by 24' wide by 9' tall, having dark blue tile flooring, azure walls, and a light blue ceiling; glowing green glass balls (permanent *light spell*) are found at 8' intervals. They each contain four rectangular tables with six chairs, two bookstands, a scroll rack, and 20 pairs of heavy wood bookcases. If Library visitors succeed in removing a book, each book has a *recall spell* cast on it, so that it teleports itself back to Library from a distance of 20 miles.

Mezzanine Level: A balcony area above the main library 25' wide, having purple tile floor and wainscoted walls; green glowing orbs (permanent *light spell*) are attached to the walls at 10' intervals. Ten round white tile circles are on the floor, equally spaced along the inner perimeter – these are teleportation arrival points for the Library Guards. Nine arches equally spaced along the perimeter lead to more rooms; six of these contain books, one is a sleeping room for visitors, one is a sleeping room for staff, and one is a combination kitchen and lounge. Landscape and seascape paintings are hung at 6' intervals along the perimeter. In the balcony area are found 5 rectangular tables, each with 6 ornate chairs, three sitting groups with a couch, four stuffed chairs, and a coffee table, four statues



of armored warriors (detect as enchanted), a sideboard table with a 2 gallon urn of cold beer and 10 pewter steins, 2 large blackboards on wheels, five scroll racks, and a book stand with *Retsbeud's Most Accurate Dictionary of The Common Tongue* (20 inches thick). The six library rooms along the outer perimeter are typically rectangular, 120' long by 24' wide by 9' tall, having dark blue tile flooring, azure walls, and a light blue ceiling; glowing green glass balls are attached long the walls at 8' intervals. They each contain four rectangular tables with six chairs, two book stands, a scroll rack, and 20 paired lines of heavy wood bookcases. The common sleeping room holds eight plain wood beds (surrounded by black curtains), each with a wood chest (contents depends on who is visiting), a worn couch, a floral stuffed chair, and a small round table. The staff sleeping room holds six plain wood beds (each surrounded by black curtains) with plain wood chests; the chests do not have locks or traps and are held closed by *power words* (known to the owner, changed every 12 weeks, -65% to pick). Together the chests hold a variety of ordinary clothing sized for their owners plus: 77 cp, 104 sp, 58 gp, 4 pp, 3 diamonds (4800, 8820, 14105 gp), 5 pearls (420, 617, 1288, 3300, 6525 gp), 2 bloodstones (370, 605 gp), a topaz piece (910 gp), ten pieces of ivory (each 1d100*1d20 gp), a silver comb (34 gp), 2 gold chains (1220, 4100 gp), a gold-ruby ring (9460 gp), two bottles of exceptional wine (2025, 3215 gp), 2 silver candlesticks (42, 70 gp), 5 silver goblets (each 2d20*10 gp), 2 religious icons, a book of sacred scriptures (Freya), ivory prayer beads (Balder, 155 gp), a chess set, a carved cribbage board, 4 decks of cards, a dulcimer, a brass harmonica, a mandolin, 40 sheets of current music, *Alertness Tonic*, *Clairaudience Potion*, *Fatigue Banishing Nostrum*, *Sobriety Potion*, *Lust-Inducing Potion*, *Giant Insect Repellent* (salve), *Snake Venom Curative* (salve), *Stone-to-Skin Salve*, a pouch of *Green Mushrooms* (of *Shrinking*), a *Blanket of Warming*, *Cheshire Cloak*, *Sky Walking Boots*, *Boxing Gloves*, *Hero's Masque*, *Many-Pocketed Vest*, *Maxyale's Wondrous*

Firewood Axe, *Abar Anathee's Swordsmith Hammer*, *Fool's Deck*, and a *Romance Stone* (ruby).

Library Research: Non-staff are not permitted to enter the Library without a Library Card; adventurers are issued a Library Card good for 20 entries upon payment of 30 GP and taking a pledge of nonviolence (*geas*-enforced, 34+ on d20+Wisdom to overcome). It takes one hour to thoroughly search/examine both sides of one bookcase. A persons searching for a specific piece of information (fact, record, map, sketch, music score, picture, genealogy chart, etc.) succeeds in the search on a roll of 100+ on 1d100+Intelligence, checked hourly. If the information needed is in an unknown tongue, Intelligence should be divided by 4 for this calculation. Priestly/divine information requires a 100 on d100+Wisdom/2, and arcane/magical information requires a 100 on d100+Intelligence/3, checked every three hours. General information about most topics is readily available, and is found after 2d100 hours search. Skills or +1 bonuses to various task types can also be learned here with sufficient research (GM option, but d20 weeks might be a good rule of thumb for broader areas, 2d4 days for narrower ones). In addition to research, the library can conceivably offer sanctuary, a training ground for level advancement, and/or adventures in its own right if it is threatened, books are stolen, and so forth.

Visitors: At any time there are 3d10 visitors in the Library. Determine their race on 1d100: (01-02) Bugbear, (03) Cyclops, (04) Devil, (05-15) Dwarf, (16-34) Elf, (35) Ettin, (36-38) Giant, (39-43) Gnome, (44-50) Half-Elf, (51-57) Halfling, (58-72) Human, (73-79) Lycanthrope, (80-83) Medusae, (84-91) Minotaur, (92) Naga, (93-95) Ogre, (96) Slyph, (97-100) Vampire. Where racially appropriate, 2/3 of visitors will be of level 1d8 in an appropriate class(es); if an 8 is rolled add an additional d8-1, continuing until no more 8's are rolled. Visitors are equipped with reasonable gear, including magical items, for their type.

Library NPC's

Greggess: male half-Ogre, Librarian and Translator, age 34, hp 30, *robe of protection* +3, tends neutral-good, knows Common, Elven, Giantish, Minotaur, Infernal, Dwarvish, Centaur, Ancient Yssian, Pashtu, Magyar, modern Hellene; carries wood cudgel and a +1 *Bullwhip of Strangling*.

Hellasene: female human, Librarian and Sage, age 46, hp18, knows Yssian, Hellene, Common, Gnome, Ancient Elvish & Dark Elvish; carries *Levitation* and *Invisibility* potions, *Glasses of Diplomacy*, and a gold chain (*Limited Teleportation*, 250").

Kellavenna: female half-elf, Mage 10, Senior Librarian, age 42, knows Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Orcish, Giantish, and Harpy; carries *Wand of Sleep*, *Elven Dagger*, *Gloves of the Spider Queen*, and a silver *Ring of Chameleon Power*.

Korilyam: male Gnome, 114 yrs, Minstrel 9, Librarian, hp 52, *robes of protection* +4 and *displacing*, knows Common, Gnome, Dwarven, Giantish, Elven, Draconic, Orc, and Minotaur; carries a *Cordial of Health*, *Haste Potion*, *Belt of Dwarvenkind*, and a round stone (*Warning of Monsters*).

Library Guards: male human/elf, Warriors level 1d6+7 (plus a Sergeant of 1d4+9), each has exceptional strength and dexterity and DC -6 with chainmail, shield, and *helmet of night vision* +3; rapier +2, *healing potion*, *greater healing potion*, *potion of poison antidote*, *displacement potion*, and one of 1d6: (1) *spear* +1 of *paralysis* (2) *wand of mage arrow volley*, 28 charges, (3) *chain of blindness*, (4) *girdle of gigantic strength*, (5) +3 *two-handed axe*, (6) *hero's staff* +2 (raises level of warrior fighting with it by 1d4).

Mortimus: male Halfling, Senior Librarian and Sage, age 67, hp 14, knows Common, Dwarvish, Yssian, Elvish, Jute, Pashtu, Berber, and Infernal; carries silver-bladed dagger, *Philosopher's Pendant*, *Charm (Protection versus Mental Influences)*, a *Potion of Tongues*, and a *Potion of Shapechanging (Centaur)*.

Myron: male Minotaur, Warrior 7, Librarian and Book Conservator, age 36, hp 36, knows Minotaur, Pashtu, Common, Magyar, Dwarvish, and Yssian; carries a *Axe* (+2, *Cleaving*) and a *Rod of Paralysis*, and wears two *Rings (improved climbing, poison antidote)*.

Orc Fighting Position: A rectangular room 70' deep by 30' wide by 14' high (oriented west to east), having a rough stone floor, walls, and ceiling. 10' corridors exit from the northwest, southwest, and northeast corners; a 10' wide corridor joins the room in the southeast corner from the east. A sturdy wooden door (no lock) is set into a wood frame centered in the east wall. An 8' wide stone stairway centered in the south wall leads down to a lower dungeon level.

A rough stone wall, 44" tall by 8" thick by 28' long, stretches diagonally to the southeast from the north wall midpoint. The wall ends at a crude wooden door in a frame, 8' high by 5' wide, which connects the diagonal wall to the south wall; the door opens inward and is usually barred on the inside. The stone wall provides cover for eight Orc Guards (Warrior 1d4, DC 6, armed with dirk & maul/long-handled war hammer/single-blade war axe, wearing studded leather armor, metal cap, scale gauntlets, and circular wood shield). Behind the barricade is found a wood table, five rickety wood chairs, an open cask of water, an open barrel of beer with tin dipper, three loaded crossbows, four boar spears, 2 small barrels of flammable oil (enough to burn 30 rounds), five flasks of smoking oil (creates a smoke screen), three sets of flint & steel, and a

four pound bag of caltrops (enough for five throws). Four lit torches sit in metal brackets attached to the east wall.

Behind the barricade against the north wall is a wooden platform 7' off the floor, large enough for two Orc Guards, with a ladder across the back; a vertical strip of wood across the front provides some cover against missile fire. On the platform are kept three short bows, 5 quivers of war arrows (x22), two throwing axes, a flash grenade, two flasks of flammable oil, and two throws of caltrops.

The corridors that enter on the west each have trip cords installed 50' up the passage; each cord is black, and mounted 3 inches from the floor. When tripped they cause a bell to ring, sufficient to warn the posted guards that someone is coming (orcs pull the cord three times to signal their comrades, four times if accompanied by enemies). A wooden door is mounted on hinges above each of the two corridor entrances on the west side. Each has several metal spikes facing outward; the guards can release the latches by pulling on a string (work 5 in 6); if they fail persons are blocked from entering the room and must dodge/save or suffer 1d12+3 impaling damage (and disease 30% of the time). Four one-shot dart throwers are mounted on the west wall so that they can shoot into the backs of enemies attacking the fortified position; each can be activated by pulling a string for 1d6+1 damage (roll to hit). A dart

thrower can be spiked or disabled in two rounds. A rough channel, 3" deep by 2" wide, is chiseled into the floor (north to south) between the barricade and the corridors on the west end; three channels run (west to east) from this one under the barricade. It takes 1d6+3 rounds for oil (poured from behind the barricade) to completely fill the channels. When the oil is lit (from behind the barricade) it takes 1d4+1 rounds for all of the oil to begin burning. Anyone caught in the fire will take normal burning oil damage. Persons (not orcs) nearby should also make stamina/paralysis saves/checks or be discommoded by the thick smoke (-4 to attack rolls). A tripwire is stretched across the top of the stair, connected to a strong net attached to the ceiling above the entrance; the net falls on the third round after the tripwire is stretched or cut.

The tunnels on the east side of the room lead to rooms and areas occupied by the Orc colony. The door in the east wall leads to a rectangular room normally occupied by a male Bugbear (Warrior 4, hp 31, DC 3, two-handed spiked club, short sword, metal helm, chain mail, steel gauntlets) and a male juvenile Ogre (Warrior 3, hp 42, DC 5, oversized club, morning star, leather cap, leather shirt, copper breastplate). They support the orc guards when the latter are attacked. The position is normally held by 9-12 orcs at a time, but there may well be a ready supply of more close by. Ω



AVAILABLE NOW:
Giants, Demon Idol, Kobolds, Pig-faced Orcs, Barbed Devils, Bugbears, Gargoyles, Ogre, Troll, Gnolls, Minotaur, Slimes & Oozes, Purple Worm, Stirges, Giant Centipedes, Shriekers, Giant Ticks, Hobgoblins, Skeletons, Fire Beetles, Type I & II Demons, Troglodytes, Giant Rats.

COMING SOON:
Goblins, Medusa, Bone Devils, Harpies, Type III & IV Demons, Wights

Kick down the door,
roll for initiative

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Oceanian Legends

Gelidia, Part 3 – Berasah, Continued

Del L. Beaudry

The Story of Kormander (*see* FO! #5): Alkhlandra's famous book *On Foot*¹ collects hundreds of Kormander's adventures from a wide range of reporters. Their quality is various. Many are commonplace wonderworks: wells dowsed, droughts broken, scabious peasants salved, livestock multiplied. But there is better stuff as well.

In the "Tale of Ghojinn" Kormander challenges and bests three evil djinn² at *prahnko*³ and thereby restores the Sultana Qhualherin to her throne. "The Fissure" recounts how the mage turned back an incursion from the sub-worlds which threatened to overrun Tyre. In "Gilby's Net" the greed and rapacity of Tyre's fishermen have offended the fish-god Oannes. For punishment the latter recalls his subjects to his undersea caverns, leaving the whole of the Inner Sea bereft. Mass starvation ensues. It falls to Kormander to swim to the bottom of the ocean, locate Oannes' watery palace and plead the fish-god for clemency on humanity's behalf.⁴

The stories are nothing if not fantastic. Kormander spends a year without speaking, then a year speaking in verse. He visits in sequence: the ocean's deepest trenches; Lakaloka, the mountains which ring the world; and the deep void between the stars. He tames sphinxes and chastens lamiae. He weaves an enormous net and traps the leviathan, Kur, in its expanse, albeit briefly.⁵ Yet here is the most outrageous claim of all: For all of these great deeds and

mighty labors, for the arms and legs re-grown, the blinded eyes given sight, the fountains raised in deserts, the rescued princesses, the sand worms slain, the wizard Kormander *would accept as reward not a solitary brass tewel!* Each and every one of Kormander's deeds (so Alkhlandra avers) was done on behalf of the commonweal, and the good work was its own reward.

It is hard to know what to make of all this. One is tempted to toss the whole thing to the winds, saying: Enough! This is pure nonsense! Regrettably, such treatment is no longer considered sound scholarship. We must grudgingly acknowledge the likelihood that Kormander's legend has some basis in fact. While we cannot reasonably accept that a single man—indeed, one who spent the balance of his years as a scholar!—could have accomplished so much in so brief a span, on balance the sheer volume of the evidence seems to preclude outright fantasy. ("Even a septic flood may conceal precious grains of truth," as Vereoes put it.) Granted, many of the tales must be exaggerated while others are surely false. (Even Kormander's staunchest defenders will admit that he was a famous liar.) Still others are likely the work of another mage entirely, whose name has long since been lost to history and whose works are now ascribed to Kormander.

Yet, still. Even after allowing for such distortions and falsehoods, the accomplishments of the Orphan Mage cannot simply be dismissed. For two reasons. The first is eyewitness corroboration. While Kormander himself is dust, certain of his peers persist: the ifrit Pandu, for instance, who was for many years his bondsman,⁶ and also the she-demon, Jalla, who troubles Kendor even in the present day. The second is the fact of The Lyceum, which admits no caviling.

The Founding of the Lyceum: Concerning its history we find ourselves on firmer foundations (if you will forgive the expression). The school kept meticulous records which are independently corroborated by the Selidarkan and Echreonean annalists. The ceremonial cornerstone was laid in SE 4329, and construction in earnest followed three years later. SE 4336 saw the arrival of the inaugural class, who graduated in 4345.⁷ The central tower, The Spurned Keep, was completed in SE 4378, while work on the adjoining complex continued for centuries.

Contrary to popular superstition, the Keep was not raised by ghosts or stone giants.⁸ Rather, it was built by freeman.⁹

¹ The title refers to a famous quirk. The Orphan Mage abhorred every sort of conveyance—he is said to have walked everywhere he went, even up into the clouds across the oceans.

² The djinn were brothers, and expert gamers. The youngest was able to recall the location of each grain of sand on a beach of several leagues extent. (He could also remark on a given grain's unique qualities—whether it was brown or black or white or made from crushed glass or mermaid scales or the like.) The middle djinn was said to be three times as clever as the youngest, and the elder three times cleverer again. Kormander defeated them nonetheless.

³ A boardgame played with colored pebbles.

⁴ As fish yet swim the Inner Sea, we can infer Kormander's success.

⁵ In her struggle to escape Kur wounds Kormander with her poisonous stinger. He is made lame in his left leg, and henceforth walks with the aid of a staff.

⁶ The reasons for his thralldom are disputed. Pandu claims altruism, but authorities are skeptical.

⁷ One of Kormander's liberal reforms was to reduce the course of study to nine years from the traditional twelve.

⁸ Locals still hawk "ghost stones"—allegedly relics of the Keep's founding -- to credulous tourists.

Soon everyone on Berasah who fancied a job digging ditches or carting rocks had secured employment, but demand for labor continued to swell. Landless men poured in by the thousands; the ferries from Eblor ran full day and night. A ramshackle town sprang up around the ferry terminal. Food grew scarce. An iron pick commanded twelve gold sovereigns. Soap was rare as ambergris, and more costly. In such times great fortunes dangle for the taking, and folk of Berasah did their utmost to seize the day. En masse they abandoned ditch-digging in favor of commerce. In a few short years theirs had become an island of guildsmen and factors, ardent converts to the cult of Chag, Hoarder of Coins.

The Present Day: Berasah's aspect has changed since the pioneer era. Once a muddy delta camp, Whesbern is today a prosperous waterfront town of perhaps twenty thousand. Its charming terra-cotta cottages and stately townhouses of riverstone evoke placidity, not ruckus. Yet the public ethos forged in earlier times still governs conduct.

Now, as then, most of the populace makes its living through trade.¹⁰ Whelsbern is thick with emporia of every description. Fine goods abound, marked with even finer prices. Quality is generally excellent, but don't bother haggling, as discounts are prohibited by law.

But the isle's shopkeepers would have little incentive to compete in any case. They are tender and tolerant with their proverbial golden goose. For with the advent of each fall a fresh throng of credulous young students debark into the city's precincts. These aspiring sorcerers must look to local establishments for their every need, whether exotic or mundane, for the college itself provides nothing whatsoever, not even bedding.

Live crickets and pickled salamanders for witch-boils; calvellum and inks for spells (in cerulean and cadmium and coal); platters of bockwurst and flagons of lager to fill the belly and enliven the mind: by such means a river of coins pass into the hands of Berasah's omnipresent vendors. Such trade may be occasionally dull, but it is surely lucrative: Kormander's Lyceum, conceived as a college for the people, now educates the scions of the Archipelago's aristocracy, whose interests run less to magic than prestige. Tuition, once nominal, reflects brightly the facts of present demography. It is no place for orphans or paupers. Ω

⁹ Though it may have been designed by troll architects: See Kurzan's fascinating treatise "Rethinking Trollish Scrollwork" in the winter issue of Proceedings of the Nalison Architectural Society.

¹⁰ One can still find old-fashioned cheeseries and lush vineyards upcountry and around the Sajikrow Valley, though their rates are thoroughly modern.

The Devil's in the Details: Ahoggyá

non-canonical character options for Tékumel by Baz Blatt

Ahoggyá are peculiar looking beasts to terrestrial eyes, having four brawny arms and four legs arranged equidistantly round a hairy barrel-like torso, and four pairs of eyes looking to the front, left, right and behind. They only have one mouth though, and this is equipped with sharp pointed teeth, the other sides of their body having peculiar wrinkled and whorled protuberances that may be ears, noses, or sexual organs, no one quite sure which.

Stereotypes: Ahoggyá stink, drool, and eat with their mouths open, make obscene gurgling noises, and shit on the floor. There is only one reason for putting up with the disgusting brutes, and that is their aptitude for violence. They are big, strong and can wield several weapons at once, and they are too stupid to think of betraying an employer. Watch out though, if they kill something they expect to be allowed to eat it, and few humans want to see even their worst enemies dismembered and masticated raw rather than given a decent burial.

The Reality: Ahoggyá do not give a damn what humans think of them. They have their own ways and cannot comprehend abandoning them to please members of another species. They genuinely cannot see what is so objectionable about their behaviour and adopt a live and let live attitude to the peculiar habits of others – if humans want to go hide in a little room to void their bowels that's up to them, though surely it is easier by far to do it on the floor and sweep it up later if it gets in the way? They have their own customs, but do not bother to explain the rationale, if any, to outsiders, making them look capricious, unpredictable and slightly insane to other species. They will often take insults such as 'Get lost you stinking oaf!' without a murmur, agreeing that a) they do not know where they are, b) they do indeed stink and c) do not know what an oaf is, but can you eat it? On other occasions they will tear an old lady's legs off for politely asking them not to gurgle quite so loudly outside her bedroom window.

Clan and Lineage: Ahoggyá may or may not have families. They claim to have eight sexes, though never explain what this entails, and live in groups or alone as the whim takes them. They seem to owe some vague sort of loyalty to their home villages out in the swamps, and in far off Ónmu Tlé Hléktis there is an Ahoggyá called the Loudest Grumbler who appears to be some sort of king. Otherwise they are loyal only to whoever last paid their wages, and while they sometimes appear to have vague friendships with persons of other species they spent a lot of time with



they will always eventually pack up and go home without a word of thanks or a goodbye. No human clan, however lowly, would dream of admitting an Ahoggyá.

Religion: Emperor Durúmu famously concluded that Ahoggyá have no religion and therefore qualified as animals for census purposes. Unlike most animals they are still taxed, but at half the rate of other sentient species resident in the Empire. They show no interest in human gods and have no supernatural beliefs of their own, and the closest they come to a religious ceremony are their great communal dances which might be some kind of mating ritual. Temples allow them to wander round the courtyard in the same way they allow dogs and Chlén, and do not admit them into the building as they know what kind of mess they will make of the mosaic floors. A few zealots try and talk theology to them but get little sensible reply. The followers of Sárku and Durrítámish note their obnoxious habit of disinterring corpses and eating them and often demand that they be expelled from the Empire.

Names: The Ahoggyá language sounds like something viscous and lumpy disappearing down a half-clogged drain, and Ahoggyá in human lands adopt (or are given) descriptive names such as Splotch-Furred One, He Who Has a Big Axe, Gnarled Knees, Ugly-Stinky-Thing and the like.

Rules: Ahoggyá can only be Warriors. As noted above they have no religion and they are useless at magic; in fact many are 'magic-dampeners' who suppress magic use in their vicinity. As noted below a few very exceptional high level Ahoggyá warriors may learn the odd simple spell if they can persuade a rogue sorcerer to teach them. Ahoggyá can use scrolls if they know the language, but even if they are not outright magic dampeners they can radically reduce the chances of spell success due to their innate magic resistance. Eyes will work near a magic dampener once, but must be taken at least twenty feet away from them before they can draw power from their other-planar batteries and be used again. Note that this spell resistance cannot be 'turned off,' making healing and curing spells harder to use on Ahoggyá. Ahoggyá do not roll for Original Skills as humans do, but roll on the tables below for number of skills and again for maximum skill level at first level. They can only gain skills from the Ahoggyá table, since their weapon use does not follow the human pattern of progression through ever more honourable weapons and other martial skills, and their maximum skill level rises by one at fourth level and each level thereafter. Ahoggyá are not required to have all lesser skills before they gain the next higher one; they can pick and choose as they like, and can make more than one choice at a given level if available (so an Ahoggyá can choose the level 2 skill Wrestling and another level 2 skill such as Hunter if he wants). They automatically gain one skill per level with a 50% chance of gaining two. Note that an Ahoggyá will have two Comeliness scores, one for his own species and another for how he looks to humans and other species.

Ahoggyá Starting Skills:

% roll	# of skills	max. skill level
01-10	2	3
11-30	3	4
31-70	4	5
71-90	5	6
91-00	6	7

Attribute Score Generation:

Str $(1d100 \times 0.6) + 60$
Int $1d100 \times 0.7$
Con $(1d100 \times 0.8) + 20$
PsyAb $1d100 \times 0.5$
Dex $1d100 \times 0.8$
Guile $1d100 \times 0.5$ (if being used)
Com $1d100 (x0.2 \text{ to other species, if applicable at all})$

All Ahoggyá start with:

- 1d20 káitars worth of coin, 2d20 worth of trade goods
- +2 AC due to horny carapace
- Use two weapons against different targets at -2 to hit
- Have 360 degree vision
- Are surprised only on a roll of 1

- Have no movement penalty in swamps
- Speak human languages in a garbled and 'broken' form
- Hate and are hated by Shén – a fight between the two species is inevitable if they meet
- If Psy Ab ≤5 qualify as a full Magic Dampener; no one can cast a spell within ten feet of you, have half success chance within 20 feet and you gain +2 save vs all magic
- If Psy Ab 6-15 gain +1 save vs magic, -10% chance of spells working near you

Optional: Ahoggyá start with 3 dice HP. There is a table on p 31 of the EPT rulebook for level advancement for 3-die creatures, but for game balance I suggest that Ahoggyá not be allowed to gain HP or skills until they have 8000XP and have reached level IV. At first level roll 3 dice for the Ahoggyá's 'natural' HP and roll on the human warrior table for Level I, choosing the highest score. At second level repeat the procedure, and if either score is higher than the current HP, then that is the new total. At level III and above treat the Ahoggyá as you would a human.

Skills:

- 1 Fist (Ahoggyá have big gnarled knuckles and do 1 dice damage to unarmoured targets, -2 to those with armour, and have no penalty for attacking two targets at once with this form of attack)
Labourer
Offensive Stench (all Ahoggyá smell bad, but this one is so unpleasant that any sensitive creature nearby must save vs. poison at +4 or fight at -1; also gives -2d10 Com vs. humans and even less likely to be allowed inside buildings than usual)
Speak Tsolyáni
Speak Salarvyáni
Speak Hijajái
- 2 Fisher
Hunter
Wrestling (anyone grabbed by an Ahoggyá can be restrained by its massive strength and then flattened by its great weight, or pulled apart for 1 dice damage per turn until they escape its grip. They have four arms and can grab one target in front and another behind)
- 3 Prosaic resistance (+2 save vs. any Illusion or Mind Control due to sheer pigheadedness and lack of imagination, -5% spell casting success)
Spearman
- 4 Carpenter
Eat Anything (+2 save against poison and disease due to resistance built up from ingesting all kinds of peculiar rubbish and carrion)
Gladiator (fought in arena, knows the ropes)
Mace

Sailor

- 5 Elemental Resistance (+2 save vs magic causing physical damage of any kind, -5% spell casting)
Javelin (despite having multiple eyes, or perhaps because of it, Ahoggyá are not very good at throwing and have an extra -1 to hit and can only use one missile at a time)
Shield (shield use is not automatic for Ahoggyá - their instinct is to attack, not cringe behind a bit of wood! – this skill enables the use of one shield)
Throwing Club (boomerang-like clubs with bits of sharp stone embedded in them; can be thrown at normal chance to hit for -1 damage at short range)
- 6 Advanced Two Weapon Fighting (penalty for multiple attacks is -1, can use two two-handed weapons at -2 to hit, or a one hander at -1 and a two-hander at -2)
Axe
Military service (has served in a human organised military unit and has some idea of marching, formations, and sometimes following orders)
- 7 Resist Poison (exposure to toxic swamp beasts and innately tough metabolism gives +2 v. poison)
Sling (Ahoggyá are poor shots and have -1 to hit)
- 8 Bronzsmith
Read Ahoggyá Quipu knot-language if Int 40+
Shipbuilder
Streetwise (if lived in human society for five years or more, has developed a partial idea of human behaviour and what upsets them)
Sword
- 9 Military Commander (requires Military Service, has served as NCO or junior officer in a human-style military unit. Can issue commands and sometimes have them followed, can comprehend orders from above and reissue them in manner acceptable to Ahoggyá troops)
Reinforced Carapace (+1 AC and +2d10 Com to own species for having plates of chlén hide riveted to the top of your head with bronze bolts, -5% spell casting success due to metal content)
- 10 Advanced Shield use (requires Shield Use, can use two shields for double AC bonus)
Read a human language – only if Int 50+
- 11 Expert Two Weapon Fighting (requires Advanced Two Weapon Fighting, can use weapons against two targets for no penalty, or three targets (if in a suitable position) at -1 to hit)

- 12 Magic Resistance (+2 save vs any and all forms of magic attack, -10% to any spell casting success)
Magic Use (if they can read a human language, have Intelligence is 60+, Psychic Ability 40+ and the Ahoggyá can persuade someone to teach him he may gain the use of one of the following spells: I Heal Minor Wounds, I Light, I Protection from Evil/Good. His chances of spell success are a base 40% and cannot improve with level increase)

Roll on the following tables to personalize Ahoggyá characters, in any ruleset:

Many Ahoggyá (roll 1d20 3 times):

- 1 suffer dietary deficiencies in human lands from lack of copper in the diet and often complain of feeling ill (10% chance of -1d10 Str and Con on any given day)
- 2 find alcohol a lethal poison (save or die)
- 3 can fart whenever they feel like it
- 4 have involuntary stomach gas and may belch or fart even when they are doing their best to hold it in
- 5 paint their carapaces in bright colours so humans can tell them apart
- 6 consider peeling Chlén for their hide cruel and may well interfere if they see it being done
- 7 are vegetarians
- 8 try and join in human dances, though the stomping and hooting style of the Ahoggyá rarely goes down well and sometimes causes injury
- 9 are excellent drummers
- 10 wear kilts of dyed leather or coarse cloth with 'sporrans' made of fur
- 11 have garish tattoos on their arms and legs
- 12 file their teeth to keep them sharp
- 13 take the Imperial ruling that they are animals literally and habitually sleep in chlén pens and káika coops
- 14 dream of going to Ónmú Tlé Hléktis, thinking of it as an Ahoggyá utopia
- 15 actually don't mind Shén and wonder why the two races can't get on
- 16 have red hair
- 17 collect the skulls of their enemies as mementoes
- 18 are good at jumping and able to leap several yards from a standing start
- 19 cannot climb and are scared of heights
- 20 have an allergy to something in human lands that causes a kind of eczema, making them scratch incessantly and break out in a red scabby rash

Some Ahoggyá (roll d16 once)

- 1 bear the title 'Beloved of All Eight Sexes' and are accorded great respect among their own kind (+2d10 Com to own species)
- 2 are albinos and lose 1d10 Str and Con but gain 1d10 Psychic Ability
- 3 are skilled at chipping axes and spears out of stone
- 4 have lost one of their eight eyes and wears a patch

- 5 have naturally shiny black carapaces which they are very proud of and polish carefully (+1d10 Com/own species)
- 6 can taste trails in watery environments, sipping foul swamp water and knowing which creatures passed through it and when
- 7 are involved in a war between some of the villages of the Sharúna Lowlands and the Flats of Gyógma
- 8 are secretly spies in human lands for the Loudest Grumbler of Ónmú Tlé Hléktis
- 9 change all their coinage into gold and then beat it into hollow cylinders to be shipped home
- 10 hate the sight of blue-green, the colour of their blood
- 11 compulsively think aloud, constantly mumbling commentary on their thoughts and deeds in Ahoggyá
- 12 are in fact quite old and have dozens of children and grandchildren back home in the swamps
- 13 are suicidally depressed (not that a human would know) and are looking to die dramatically in combat
- 14 are very well travelled, having been all the way round the seas between the northern and southern continents
- 15 think that all humans and members of other species can do magic, such is their unfamiliarity with it
- 16 are hunting Pygmy Folk and Hláka, whose fur is a rare luxury worth dozens of gold cylinders to the merchants of Ónmú Tlé Hléktis

Ahoggyá sometimes carry (roll d16 for 1d3 items before buying equipment):

- 1 a barbed stone fishing spear on a leather thong
- 2 a box or bag of ground malachite for use as a condiment
- 3 a bunch of multicoloured Quipu (knot-writing strings)
- 4 a piece of pumice for scouring lichen off one's carapace
- 5 a hollow tree trunk drum and beaters
- 6 a set of wooden greaves
- 7 a bronze tooth file
- 8 the folded leather skin of a coracle – just needs a frame of withies cut from a suitable tree or bush
- 9 a small stone hand axe they made themselves
- 10 a string with 1d3 gold cylinders
- 11 a belt adorned with strings of stone beads
- 12 a small stone pot of water-repellent oil for greasing one's fur before swimming
- 13 a Feshénga tooth belt/necklace
- 14 the skull of an enemy of another intelligent species or a piece cut from the carapace of an Ahoggyá foe
- 15 a bag with mollusc shells, twigs, dried leaves, living beetles and rotting fruit
- 16 a carved war-club of impressive size

Ahoggyá can use any human weapon easily enough, though the richer ones often have custom-made two-handed weapons of bronze made to their own specification – these are too heavy and unwieldy for anyone but an Ahoggyá or maybe a Shén to use. There is a fair bit of secondhand Ahoggyá armour for sale around the bigger Tsolyáni cities, the legacy of many Ahoggyá ending up in the arena as professional gladiators. Ahoggyá usually only

wear plate on their arms and legs, and these are simple plates strapped on rather than complex articulated armour of the kind crafted from chlén hide for humans. A set of wooden, leather or chlén hide greaves and vambraces will give +1 AC and cost 20kt, thicker bronze plates will give +2 AC and cost 100kt and a full set of plates for upper and lower arms and legs will give +3 to AC and cost 300-500kt depending on the quality of ornamentation. Steel armour for Ahoggyá is not available and only a few armourers have Ahoggyá assistants able to bolt and rivet reinforcing plates to the head carapace without causing brain damage.

Playing an Ahoggyá: Some Tékumel GMs will rule that the psychology and motivation of non-humans is so bizarre that they should not be used as PCs. Ahoggyá are the extreme example of this, their poor communication and lack of a common conceptual framework makes their behaviour mostly incomprehensible. If Ahoggyá are allowed I suggest the following as a rough guide:

- **What's it to do with you?** Ahoggyá really do not give a damn about the opinion of others. Negative comments about their behaviour are usually met with blank incomprehension as to why it is anyone else's business but their own what they do and why. If you are playing an Ahoggyá do randomly annoying things and then refuse to say why.
- **Hmgggrrrmrgnrg, gurglunggrm.** Ahoggyá do not talk human languages very well and speak only in brief, barely comprehensible phrases. Any party with an Ahoggyá should have communication problems, and GMs may rule that anyone playing an Ahoggyá can make utterances of no more than seven words from a vocabulary of single syllable words (see the excellent *Land of Og* RPG for a more extreme version of this idea), or put three ball bearings and a treacle toffee in his mouth whenever he is speaking 'in character'.
- **I like fumping fings, I am good at it.** Ahoggyá are very violent, but not in a berserk impassioned way like a Pygmy Folk: they just see violence as a viable and acceptable option for solving most problems. In the Tsolyáni army Ahoggyá units are useless for the intricate phalanx manoeuvres many generals favour, using them on a battle field is more a matter of trying to keep them entertained until the enemy come close enough to be overwhelmed by a stampede of axe wielding maniacs. Many an Ahoggyá gets bored listening to prissy etiquette disputes and tactical plans he cannot comprehend and decides to solve matters in a direct fashion.

Ahoggyá in Traditional Fantasy Games: Ahoggyá can only be Warriors and have a level limit of 10, though they cannot build a stronghold and attract followers as a human or Dwarf fighter would. I suggest they be allowed three hit dice at first level as noted above and be given the same bonuses to magic and poison saves as Dwarves, with a

10% chance of being a full Magic Dampener if such beings exist in your universe.

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Sample Ahoggyá NPCs:

The Wrassler

Level III Warrior

Str 110 Int 28 Con 72 Psy Ab 9 Dex 42 Com 38/8

+2 to hit, +1 damage, AC 7, HD 3+ 1, HP 16

Abilities: Non-Psychic; +2 AC due to horny carapace; use two weapons against different targets at -2 to hit each; 360 degree vision; surprised only on a roll of 1; no movement penalty in swamps; speak human languages in a garbled and 'broken' form; hate and hated by Shén – a fight is inevitable if they meet; +1 save vs magic; -10% chance of spells working

Skills: Fist, Wrestling, Spear

Equipment; Two spears, barbed fishing spear, Feshénga tooth belt

Description: 'The Wrassler' is large even for an Ahoggyá and makes a living in the arena, wrestling against teams of humans with considerable success. He speaks very little Tsolyáni, a few garbled words only, being much more fluent at burping and farting due to perpetual dyspepsia. He has garish red hair on his body and arms and loves nothing more than to join in dances, oblivious to the bruises and lumps he inflicts on the other participants. He might be acquired as a companion on a trip into the Tsuru'úm if offered a gold tube of the kind used as currency among the Ahoggyá, where he will probably appal his comrades by licking the walls and floor, being curious about the strange scents and the creatures that left them, and the edibility of the many moulds, which remind him of his favourite moss-based snacks from back home.

Bluehead the Happy Ahoggyá

Level III Warrior

Str 85 Int 38 Con 67 Psy Ab 41 Dex 62 Com 82/16

+2 to hit, +0 damage, AC 7, HD 3+ 1, HP 16

Abilities: +2 AC due to horny carapace; use two weapons against different targets at -2 to hit each; 360 degree vision; surprised only on a roll of 1; no movement penalty in swamps; speak human languages in a garbled and 'broken' form; hate and hated by Shén – a fight is inevitable if they meet; +2 poison save

Skills: Fist, Speak Tsolyáni, Spearman, Resist Poison, Read Quipu

Equipment: Spear, Bronze Tooth File, Bunch of coloured strings

Description: Bluehead, so called because he has patriotically painted his carapace Imperial azure, works at the Jakállá Zoo as a keeper-cum-exhibit. He is the only member of staff with a strong enough stomach to muck out the Kurukú pit and is immune to the bites of some of the smaller poisonous critters. He is also cheap to employ, getting a roof over his head and his meals and nothing else. As a side line he lets kids ride round the zoo on a cushion he places on his head for a few coppers, amusing them with his hooting and drumming as he goes, and for a silver coin he will grab a live Kurukú out of its cage to drop into the Dnélú enclosure to tempt it out of its subterranean lair. Unbeknownst to anyone this amiable goon is in fact a spy for the Loudest Grumbler of Ónmú Tlé Hléktis. He may be observed from time to time tying knots into the coloured strings that hang from his leather belt, but unless an observer knows about Ahoggyá knot-writing it is unlikely they will read anything sinister into this.

Many Scars on Big Knuckles

Level VII Warrior

Str 102 Int 61 Con 65 Psy Ab 21 Dex 45 Com 64/12
+3 to hit, +2 damage, AC 4, HD 7+1, HP 22

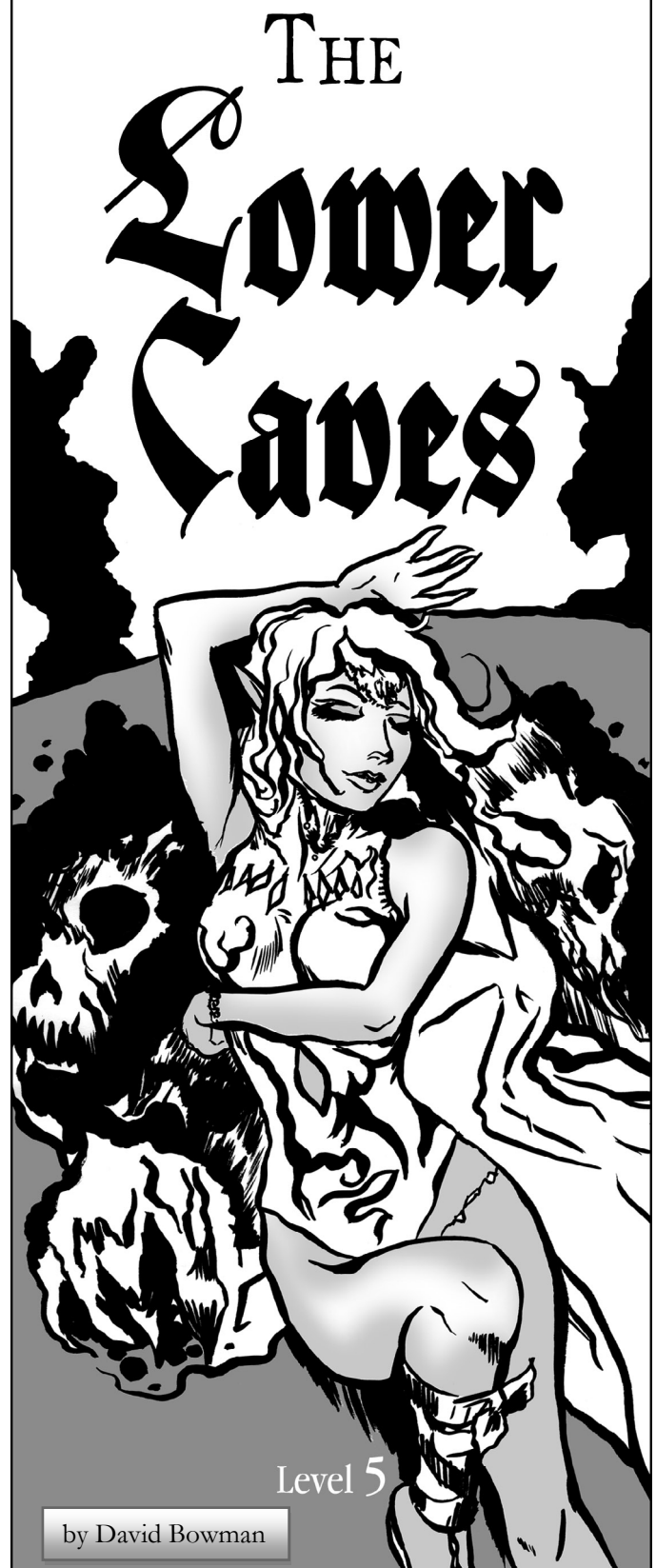
Abilities: +2 AC due to horny carapace; use two weapons against different targets at -1 to hit each, -2 if using a double handed weapon; 360 degree vision; surprised only on a roll of 1; no movement penalty in swamps; speak human languages in a garbled and 'broken' form; hates and hated by Shén – a fight between the two species is inevitable if they meet; +2 save vs any magic that causes physical damage of any kind, -5% spell casting success

Skills: Speak Tsolyáni, Speak Salarvyáni, Fist, Mace, Shield, Axe, Military Service, Advanced Two Weapon Use, Elemental Resistance, Military Command

Equipment: Two-handed axe, Mace, Shield, heavy bronze limb armour, bag of malachite

Description: Many Scars is a Heréksa commanding 100 Ahoggyá in The Legion of Guruggma, the Des Imperial Ahoggyá Auxiliary Heavy Infantry, based just outside Jakállá. He is nobody's fool and knows the low opinion humans have of his species, doing his best to keep new recruits just out of the swamps away from town. He is usually in a bad mood due his bad digestion, and troopers who get out of line are in for a brutal pummelling. He is a vegetarian because in his early days in Tsolyánu he spent a lot of time in sleeping out with the animals and saw how cruelly humans treat their domesticates – he will eat meat he has hunted himself though. He also does not like seeing chlén peeled, and uses bronze and wood rather than chlén hide for his own personal equipment. On the other hand, when there is an enemy handy he is a whirling mad-Ahoggyá, gurgling bloodcurdling insults and laying into all and sundry with his heavy bronze poleaxe, especially Shén, for whom he has an unreasoningly vicious hatred. Ω

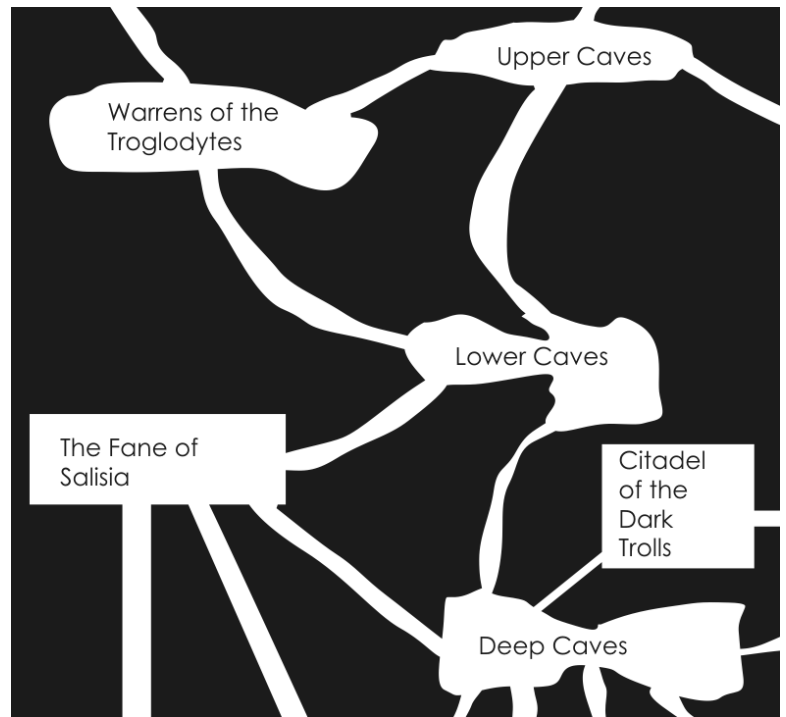
THE DARKNESS BENEATH



Although Lower Caves is designed to be used as Level Five of the megadungeon The Darkness Beneath, it could easily be placed in nearly any subterranean locale in your own campaign world. - David

Background: Before the shadow of man stretched across this land, the world was governed by the laws of Fae. The Fae ruled the Four Corners; the Seelie Court oversaw the Day, and the Unseelie Court, the Night. The inevitable Dawn of Man heralded change, however. Fae magic began to lose its sway over the world and the young magic of Man slowly drained away their power. The Graeth, a proud, ancient race led by their monarch, Hjorvart, were one of these dwindling Fae lineages. Hjorvart Graeth-King knew that the once-potent magic which held this world together and was the very life force of the Fae was diminishing. In his desperation, the King searched high and low until a suitable locale with still-potent wellsprings of Fae magic was located, deep within the earth. These three springs, known as the *Stone Circle*, *Spirit Pool*, and *Ancestral Oak*, worked together to enrich this entire area with potent, life-preserving energy for the former surface-dwellers. The presence of the Graeth in the underworld helped maintain a certain balance between the burgeoning dark forces below, and the young chaotic race of man, still groping and feeling its way to civilization. Here the Graeth could return to their self-serving ways, far enough away from man and the young magic to go about their Fae pursuits in relative seclusion.

Graeth-Queen Ylfrit, wife of Hjorvart, found she was not content with this new *Graeth-Home*. Ylfrit longed to see the Night once more, the Moon and the Stars, and to dance in the cool air of evening. This desire drove her to be tempted by the forces of the Unseelie Court. Ylfrit was encouraged to overthrow her Husband, and lead the Graeth against the savages on the surface. Behind the scenes she secretly sowed tension and distrust amongst the remaining Graeth, and sought to strike bargains with the Dark Trolls below, themselves not keen on the races of Man wresting control of the Day. When Ylfrit's treacherous plot was uncovered, a rift grew between the once-united Graeth. The Loyalists behind Hjorvart and the Denouncers of the Queen split into two contentious factions. The long struggle reached a conclusion when the two forces met in what is now the *Grove-Bog* for a final clash. Much Graeth blood was spilled, and the day was decided when the Dark Trolls, who had sworn to come to the Queen's aid, failed to do so. Hjorvart, beseeching the Seelie Court, was able to bind his former love with a *Hex of Unending Dream*, hoping that one day he might awaken her and rid her mind of the despicable Unseelie influence she had fallen under. Drained by this mighty grammar, Hjorvart led what were left of his Loyalists back to the *Spirit Pool*, while the scattered forces of the Queen's Denouncers returned to the *Stone Circle*. Waiting in ambush, as instructed by Ylfrit, was a Graeth more corrupt than his own Mother, the Prince Rognvald. There to claim



Kingship should the Denouncers fail, the Prince had feigned loyalty to Hjorvart during this struggle, and now avenged what he assumed was the Queen's defeat. In an instant a blade of silver, ensorcelled by Unseelie Spirits, brought an end to the reign of Hjorvart. With maniacal laughter the Prince fled through the *Grove-Bog* to the *Ancestral Oak*, where he was finally slain himself. Rognvald took his last breath while gazing upon his sleeping Mother, seeking unrequited approval as his disemboweled body crumpled on that age-old node of Fae. With their monarchs gone, the Loyalists and Denouncers were split for all time. The Loyalists were able to claim the slumbering form of Ylfrit and cast her into the *Oubliette*, where she yet dreams her torment. The *Ancestral Oak*, stained by the blood of treachery, became a place of tainted, twisted energy, bringing an end to the magical balance of this place. While many Graeth chose to forge deeper into the depths, most long ago became one with the earth, returning from whence they came. The Graeth legacy is all but forgotten to mankind. If the *Ancestral Oak* were ever reattuned, the three nodes might once again work in conjunction to envelop the entire dungeon level in Fae magic. Perhaps then the Graeth would rise once more, unite and claim back their long abandoned *Graeth-Home* stronghold, now controlled by Jalen Longspear.

Jalen Longspear is something of a legend amongst the peoples of this land. Jalen made his fame and fortune through deeds of daring and adventure. The stories that surround his exploits have been exaggerated with time, with some claiming he is mad, or cursed, or serving the Dark Trolls themselves. The mighty Warrior himself will admit he is somewhat unhinged after seeing so many sights not meant for mortal eyes! Jalen feels he is now not able to

live amongst his fellow Man; visions, voices and violent dreams have driven him to forge a permanent home here in the deep, dark underworld he once sought to plunder for treasure. The once mighty *Graeth-Home* has been turned into a safe haven of sorts by Jalen and his fellow *Trap-Springers*. Dubbed the *Halfway Inn*, this place of comfort and rest amidst a world of chaos truly is *half way in*. Jalen maintains an Inn for adventurers or a hide-out for ne'er-do-wells; if the gold is handed over, no questions are asked, and Jalen is known as a square bargainer. One of Jalen's motivations for founding the Halfway Inn was to create a home away from home for the bravest men of the land; a home away from the criminal corruption, treachery and deceit found on the surface. It is his theory that the only honesty to be found in this world is beneath it, in the underworld, where one knows who the enemy is right off. From time to time the now semi-retired adventurer will gather his men to him for another foray into uncharted regions below, but something about his dreams in the *Lower Caves* keeps Jalen coming back each night, something alluring, something enticing: something named *Ylfrit*.

It is to this complex of caves and tunnels of ancient stone that the player characters now come. Perhaps they have been sent to deliver a message to one of Jalen's guests; perhaps they have been sent to locate a villain rumored to be hiding here; perhaps they have heard the riddle of the Faerie Queen; or perhaps they are simply stumbling, blindly, into a world of unreason here in *The Darkness Beneath*.

Level Overview: There are five distinct regions within the Lower Caves; the *Troll Highway*, the *Halfway Inn*, the *East Tunnels*, the *West Tunnels*, and the *Oubliette*. There are a number of Specific Personalities found upon this level. Their descriptions are located within their 'lair' or room, but they often roam. It is left to the Referee to determine when and where these individuals are encountered. No matter what is suggested, don't be afraid to have them pop up whenever you deem it appropriate.

Inter-level Connections: Troll Highway up to Level One (1), Back-door up to Level One (11), Slippery Tunnel up to Level Two (38), Winding Passage up to Level Two (24), Guarded Hall down to Level Six (7), Forgotten Steps down to Level Six (40), Troll Highway down to Level Eight (8), Secret Passage (circumvents Troll Outpost and connects with the Troll Highway to Level Eight) (38C).

The Taint: The tragedy which befell the Graeth many ages past upset the delicate balance of Fae magic here, utterly corrupting the *Ancestral Oak*. Betrayal and deception had been an unknown to the Graeth until then. The roots of the ancient tree drank from now-bloodied waters while the maniacal Prince met his demise almost within reach of the powerful node's branches. Instead of returning from whence he came, as Graeth do, Rognvald's spirit became one with the *Ancestral Oak*. The psyche of the Prince

perceived the fact that his Mother was still alive, and watched helplessly as the Loyalists dragged her slumbering form away from him forever. Through the countless years, Rognvald's vile presence festered and polluted the caves and tunnels around the *Grove-Bog*. The result has been a deviant, chaotic force of supernatural origin called the Taint. The roots of the *Ancestral Oak*, now gnarled and deformed, have been able to burrow under many areas in the *Lower Caves*, seeking out Ylfrit while spreading the Taint. *Foul Saplings* grow in areas with particularly high concentrations of Taint. *Evil Roots* protect and expand Rognvald's influence. The Taint causes ruptures in the natural order of things. The resulting breaches of reality in both time and space have caused many inexplicable occurrences, most importantly the amplification of Ylfrit's dark dreams and her search for a new King.

Ylfrit's Dreams (Sleeping in the Lower Caves): Any male character that sleeps in the Lower Caves has a small chance to be visited by Ylfrit in their dreams. A sultry, elf-like Graeth with cascading raven hair and deep brown eyes will enter by dream and speak in hushed tones. Ylfrit is searching for a new King to join her and her court of dreamers in escape from *The Darkness Beneath* to rule over the surface world once more. These dreams are never lucid, and upon waking, the victim might recall one or two details about a beautiful Queen and the promise of vast riches. If the visits continue, the dreamer will begin to remember more and more, and will soon be falling for Ylfrit and her false promises. Once in the final stage, Ylfrit's Embrace, individuals are completely bound to the Lower Caves and will not spend a night away from Ylfrit's influence. Whether or not the character acts upon these invitations is for him to decide. Ylfrit instructs those who wish to become King to find her place of imprisonment. Ylfrit truly believes that she is searching for a King to lead her out of this place, but she makes empty promises concerning riches or Kingship; only a Graeth may actually become King. The Twisted Faerie Queen has been living this lie for centuries, and has no idea what has transpired since she was placed in the Oubliette. Eventually, those who do not act on their desires and seek Ylfrit will become unhinged and possibly stark raving mad as the Queen torments them and attempts to prod them to action. The referee is free to use this information or ignore it, and the chance of visits or further effects is to be controlled in the manner which best suits the individual game.

Cleansing the Caves: A *Remove Curse* spell cast upon the *Ancestral Oak* will cause Rognvald (and all *Evil Roots*) to become dormant for one day provided he misses his save vs magic (needs a 12). If a second *Remove Curse* is cast while Rognvald is dormant, he will be expelled from the *Ancestral Oak* for good. The Taint will remain for many more months, but the *Evil Roots* and *Foul Saplings* begin to wither away. Once Rognvald is displaced his memory will fade and he will cease to exist. With Rognvald gone, both the

Spirit Pool and the *Stone Circle* may be cleansed with further *Remove Curse* spells. Once all three wellsprings are so cleansed, Ylfrit's dreams will slowly lose their power. The Twisted Faerie Queen will continue to search for her King, but only in her mind. The area might require years to rid itself entirely of the Taint, as other evils from depths yet unexplored gradually take up new residence.

Area Descriptions by Region

All new monsters, and much besides, are detailed in the appendices.

A. Dark Troll Highway (1-8): The reach of this enormous tunnel extends beyond the map provided, creating a gargantuan road for the self-proclaimed Lords of this dungeon, the Dark Trolls. The long stretch of that tunnel depicted here, in **1** through **8**, is marked by rubble, but for the most part the floor is smooth from the ancient river which once ran through and the regular travel to and fro of the Dark Trolls and their heavy Blood Thump mounts.

1. Dark Troll Highway East End. This massive, cavernous tunnel winds its way up through the earth to Level One (or a higher dungeon level of your own).

2. Halfway Inn North Entrance. Along the south wall here is a tunnel of winding steps hewn into the very rock. Just outside it is a pile of carefully placed stones which supports a wooden sign. Painted upon the sign, in the common tongue, are the words "*Longspear's Halfway Inn. Privy for paying customers only – no exceptions.*" The steps wind down to the heavy iron gate at **9**.

3. The Howling Rift. Characters approaching this area will hear a swirling, whistling wind which constantly howls from a hole in the floor ahead, a 50' long crevice in the stone floor fully 10' wide at its center. It continuously tosses about sand, dirt and pebbles; the air it releases is hot and dry. At its very center is a 5' round column of pressure which has the force to blow small objects up and out toward the ceiling before they careen off in a random direction. Every so often the terrors below will toss a handful of coins into this air stream, hoping to attract the foolhardy. There is a small chance that silver and gold coins are scattered about in the tunnel here. Heavy objects of 120-180 lbs able to get inside the central pressure column will sink slowly down into the rift at a rate determined by their weight and mass. Thus, brave adventurers might be able to devise a method to slowly descend, riding the air current down into this deep rift. The rest of the rift offers no more than a dangerous descent of jagged rocks to the strange geological phenomenon some 120' below. Egress is another matter entirely, as the air flow is not of high enough pressure to blow a character back up and out. There is a pack of foul Chasm Creeps haunting this deep, dark rift. **Chasm Creeps** (13): DC 6 (only hit by magic), Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1 die+Exhaustion. Scattered silver and gold is all that

remains of past unfortunate delvers devoured by the Creeps. To the north of the Howling Rift is a tunnel atop a shelf 12' up on the stone wall leading to **3B**. The area immediately below the shelf is littered with large boulders and rubble. It is a navigable, but extremely difficult to climb using the loose rocks as footing to access the tunnel from below. Just beyond the shelf is **3B**, the Keyhole Pass.

3B. Keyhole Pass. This long tunnel is remarkable for its distinct keyhole shape. A deep single-file trench guides travelers through its center while the walls and ceiling above open into an airy, tube-like space. A hungry pack of **Claw Maws** (16) (DC 2/7, Spd 18, HD 2, Dam ½ die+special) prowls this area. Able to take advantage of the open space above, the Claw Maws will attempt to attack from behind with surprise so that their prey may not easily retreat.

4. Five Way Intersection. This area offers numerous paths, two of which are not immediately obvious. To the south cut into the wall is a tunnel filled with hewed steps descending down to the heavy-iron gate at **23**. A pile of carefully placed stones just before the tunnel supports a wooden sign, painted with a message in the common tongue: "*Longspear's Halfway Inn. And now, so are you.*" The other two obvious directions are the highway proper, leading north or south-west. To the east is a craftily hidden and magically-locked secret door leading to **21**, and to the west, high in the dark recesses of the wall 18' up is a small 3' wide by 4' high tunnel leading to **28**.

5. Shaft Down. Directly to the east is a shaft with a 30' drop to **38** below. To the west is a concealed shelf in the stone wall 15' up, beyond which is a tunnel leading west to **32**. Inspection of the loose rubble and stones below this shelf will reveal that a carefully constructed but crude set of steps has been formed from the rocks.

6. Rocky Slope. To the east is a sheer ramp to a tunnel below. This drastic slope has a steep incline, and there are numerous loose boulders and rubble above, below and along the slope. Climbing up or down here is a challenge, and there is a good chance to dislodge stones, which might cause severe damage from sliding rocks and will create a significant amount of noise (check for Wandering Monsters in case of such an event).

7. Iron Grate and Steps. A shaft in the floor has been covered with a large, heavy iron grate of thick bars. The grate is locked, and an opening mechanism can be seen below at the bottom of a short, narrow flight of stone steps. This grate and stairwell leads to a long tunnel which is guarded by the servitors of Salicia on Level Six (or the inhabitants of your own fell shrine).

8. Dark Troll Highway West End. The cavernous tunnel continues here, leading farther down and eventually to Level Eight (or a level of your own device). Just beyond

the edge of the map is a six-foot thick stone wall constructed of heavy boulders, at the center of which is a single, large passageway. This wall is constantly under guard by no less than half a dozen **Dark Trolls** (DC 4, Spd 12, HD 6+3, Dam 1d+2, Regenerate). Anyone attempting to pass this way will be eaten unless they present a *Multiversal Bazaar Token* or are accompanied by an authorized escort. If characters have not yet encountered Tagart, this might be a good time. The Envoy will gladly sell passage for 500 gp per man. The guards are not authorized to do so, being under strict orders to kill intruders.

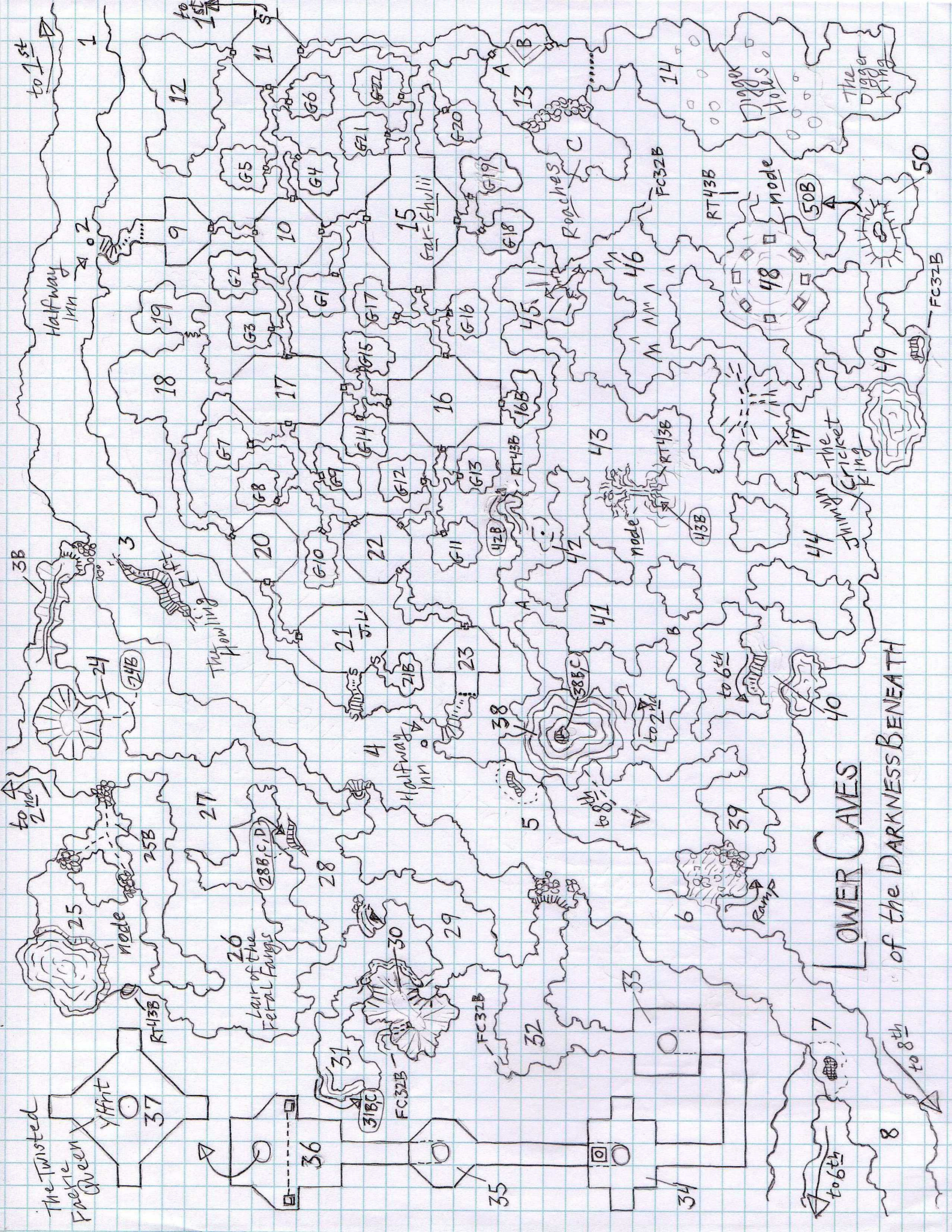
B. Halfway Inn (9-23 and G1-G22): This region is Jalen Longspear's establishment, the onetime *Graeth-Home*. The entire area is lit at all times by lamplight from hundreds of oil-burning vessels set into hand-hewn sconces throughout. Most of the region was formed by the Graeth centuries ago. While the Graeth favored carefully hewn chambers of exacting dimensions featuring portals, floors, walls and ceilings etched with intricate designs, they contrasted those with rough passages and personal quarters. The Graeth style of architecture displays both skill at stonework and appreciation of nature. Dwarves will marvel at the chambers and be confounded by the doors, while historians and scholars will be astounded by the intricate carvings in each chamber. The doors are all perfectly balanced heavy stone portals which, unless altered, swing open and shut with but a push. All of the normally 'evil' members of Jalen's Staff and Crew here are on his payroll, and while not the most polite employees are nevertheless willing to work for the powerful warrior. Employment with Jalen provides a steady source of gold, food, and protection here in the underworld. The Goblins have been allowed to establish a full hall here, complete with King and families, and the Ogres employed here come from other reaches of the underworld. The Ogres respect and fear Jalen and his *Trap-Springers*, as that adventuring group conquered and captured countless Ogres in days long past. For a short time, Jalen served as the Ogre Overlord, and before establishing the *Halfway Inn* used the Overlord's Stronghold in the Ogre Downs as a base of operations. Upon agreeing to crown a new Ogre Overlord, Jalen reached a long term pact which assured him aid from these violent, often chaotic enemies of man. The *Halfway Inn* is a busy place; and Jalen has done his best to bring a slice of surface life to this region of the underworld. Attempting to take the Inn and its residents by force is likely suicidal, but would certainly provide the referee with an opportunity to plan an entertaining sequence of events.

Running the Halfway Inn: The Inn is a hub of constant activity, as there is no proper day or night here deep beneath the surface. Referees should read each area description and gain a general understanding of the inhabitants who mill about the Inn. The Roaches, The Diggers, the Inn guests, the Ogres and the Inn staff should be a living, breathing part of this establishment as PCs go

about their activities. The referee will find limitless side stories and possible paths to adventure here in Jalen's Inn. This level of *The Darkness Beneath* should provide an entertaining setting which invites continued play as characters return to the Inn's warm confines from session to session.

9. North Gate. At the dotted lines on the north side of this room is a heavy iron gate which rises in front of a narrow stone walkway crossing a shallow pool of oil. South of this gate is an iron lever which opens it. The guards are under orders to ignite the oil pool when threatened. Doing so creates a raging pit of fire all around the heavy gate and enough roiling, thick smoke to fill the tunnels and chamber. It will burn for hours before cooling and being refilled. Anyone caught in the conflagration will sustain 6d6 from the initial blast, and the flames will create a curtain of fire 10' thick which burns for 4d6 if entered. Needless to say, the use of the oil is for extreme emergencies only. At all times there are a pair of **Goblins** (DC 6, Spd 6, HD 1-1, Dam 1 die) and an **Ogre** (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) posted here. The Goblins are charged with greeting potential guests in the common tongue and collecting the 25 gp entrance fee. The gate will not be lifted until enough gold has been handed over. They will instruct visitors to register in **10**, past the south door.

10. Halfway Inn Registry. Carved stone benches, shelves, and blocks serve as a waiting area, storage space and registration desk for Jalen's establishment. Normally this room is staffed by Falltee (**G1**), Nyles (**14**), an Ogre Porter (either Goomba or Serios from **G6**), and a trio of Goblin Runners. The entry fee of 25 gp paid in **9** or **23** includes a complimentary meal and day of rest at the Inn. If guests wish to remain longer, lodging is available at 20 gold per day in one of the Inn's eight vacant, double-occupancy Guest Rooms. Long-term lodging is available at a discount, but all fees must be paid in advance. Large brass room keys are presented to those paying to become lodgers. If further services are required, Nyles sends a Goblin Runner to fetch Les Clefdors, the Concierge, from his normal station in **17** to the west. Guests are registered in a large troghide bound log* with quill and ink. Coins are deposited into a slot atop a heavy iron chest with three locks (the keys for which are either with Jalen or Pullo). The chest is emptied every few days and the gold is transported to **13**. On the wall behind the desk are the following posts, painted in the common tongue: "*Welcome to Jalen's Halfway Inn! May your stay be safe and your dreams fulfilled. Absolutely no manner of threat or offending action shall be permitted within the Halfway Inn! Violators will be removed from the premises...or beaten...or decapitated...or fed to Gar-Ghulii...or worse!*" Below this message are 14 hash-marks etched into the stone; a count of past guests who have in fact been fed to Gar-Ghulii (see **15**). A row of carved message box niches in the wall behind the desk are numbered 1-22, each with a hook set into the stone below it. Observant characters might notice that box 13 is not marked, and there is no key hang-



ing there. Vacant rooms have a pair of keys for potential guests hanging from a hook. (*If characters are able to read the registry they might gain knowledge of the current guests, the names under which they are registered, and their room numbers. The referee should feel free to expand on the older pages and records in the log if desired.)

11. Coat Room. This chamber stores gear, packs, armor, and other heavy equipment for day guests or those lodged at the Inn. There is all manner of adventuring miscellany here, hung on pegs or stowed in piles, many covered in dust. There is nothing magical here, just standard gear – enough to open an outfitting store, in fact. Ropes, Sacks, Packs, Poles, Spikes, Mallets, Grappling Hooks, Chests, Spears, Halberds, Picks, Torches, Lanterns, Helmets, Armor, Shields, Boots, Bows, Arrows, Crossbows, Bolts, a large wooden Litter, a pair of wicker Bird Cages with long deceased canaries, a crude Mining Cart, a ramshackle Wheel-Barrow, a heavy Battering Ram, a malfunctioning Greek Fire Cart, four Kegs of Naphtha, a mummified Dwarf, a brass Trumpet, and a bag with seven Human Skulls are just the beginning; the referee should feel free to add to this list. All of the equipment is sorted by living and deceased or missing guests. The above miscellany all falls into the latter category, and is available for use by guests provided they slip the pair of Goblin Runners here a bit of gold to ‘look the other way’. Jalen wishes to see most of this junk disposed of, and if he is approached about the equipment, he will happily give it all away as long as it is removed and not returned to his Inn. On the east wall is a secret passage which eventually leads to the **back door** entrance on Level One (or a dungeon of your own devising).

12. Coop’s Workshop. This cave serves as Coop’s magical workshop and tinker room. Coop is normally found here, in his room at **G5**, or in the Pub at **17-18**. Members of *The Roaches* (**13C**) are often present, helping Coop with errands and odd jobs or just keeping an eye on things for him. Coop has developed a form of conjuring and enchanting called *Tinker Magic*. Through the use of this unique sorcery, Coop has been able to create life-like miniature production facilities. *Tinker Magic* is the creation of a world in miniature which is carefully controlled and monitored by Coop, and tended to by miniature life forms called *Tinks*. Recently, Coop has begun infusing the *Tinks* with human-like traits and personalities. In fact, Coop is becoming so engrossed with his *Tinker Magic* that more often than not he is to be found in either the *Micro-Farm* or the *Micro-Brewery*, observing and interacting with his tiny creations. The cave is a haphazard mess of tables, desks, shelves, stands, chairs, papers, diagrams, books, scribing materials, raw clockwork materials, spare parts, tools, magnifying glasses, jeweler’s loops, etc. Of note is a long workbench on the north side of the cave, over which is suspended a *Sun Globe*. This delicate brass and glass device is designed to replicate day and night for the *Tinker World* creation resting below it. *Tinker World* is home to Coop’s *Micro-Farm*

and the *Micro-Brewery*, both populated with life-like *Tinks*. A magic *Clockworks Box* of brass rests on a desk near the workbench. It holds 42 charges of *Tinker-Passage* which shrinks the user and his items, sending him to *Tinker World*. On a book-stand near this workbench is Coop’s *Tinker Magic Book*, which contains the spells for creating his life-forms, as well as the spells *Tinker-Passage*, *Tinker-Growth* (this spell transforms anything micro-item retrieved from Tinker World to 100 times its size), and *Tinker-Mule* (usable only in Tinker World, summons a mule for loading supplies. All supplies so loaded will be transported back to the cave when the caster exits Tinker World). *Tinker World* itself looks like a tiny replica diorama of the surface world beneath a thick glass dome some 4’ round. Amongst other details *Tinker World* includes both the *Micro-Farm* and *Micro-Brewery*. The farm is a ‘real life’ operating farm and orchard in miniature. It is used to supply the Inn with produce, water, meat, dairy products and herbs. The brewery is a ‘real life’ operating brewery and distillery in miniature. It is used to supply the Inn with beer, ale, lager, stout and liquor. Output is limited only by Coop’s daily spell usage. The rest is left to the referee to flesh out, but many potential adventures in *Tinker World* await.

13. Inn Bank and Roach Hide-out. This room is controlled by the Banker, **Cici** (aka CC, The Crafty Cozener), and her reluctant minions *The Roaches*. The inhabitants of this room are present due to dealings Jalen has with the organized crime network in Marchand. Cici is an attractive woman of 28 years, cunning, convincing and confident. Cici operates the Inn Bank and Vault here, and is charged with turning a profit by undervaluing treasure during transactions, charging hidden fees, miscounting coins, and charming customers with her disarming demeanor. Cici claims to be Jalen’s niece, but she is actually a fugitive from Marchand who skims all of the treasure here, sending along a smart profit to the crime organization on the surface. *The Roaches* are a gang of street urchins based in Marchand: a junior thieves’ guild of sorts. Members are human children from nine to twelve years of age. As far as Guests are concerned, they are the orphaned children of slain adventurers. *The Roaches*, aside from their ‘leader’ **Bonedust**, have come here to hide out from the heat. *The Roaches* are ornery, smart-mouthed, ill-mannered hoodlums. Jalen calls them the “*Surly Youts*”, but puts up with their antics as a favor to his surface connections. *The Roaches* reluctantly help and perform duties here in the Inn, and they actually have taken to both Coop and Pullo. They respect Jalen, but dislike most other adults. At every chance they will play games and tricks or test out their skill at pilfering. Members of the gang carry juvenile devices for creating diversions or making hasty retreats: slingshots, marbles, ‘jacks’-like mini caltrops, oil vials, glue pots, trip wires, pocket knives, etc. Other members of *The Roaches* are the girls **Sunshine**, **Pineapple**, **Farina** and **Breezy**, and the boys **Wheezer**, **Chubby**, **Woim**, **Waldo**, **Junior**,



Stinky and Froggy. These children retreat or beg for mercy rather than fighting when cornered. Jalen often has to step in to reprimand his 'niece' Cici, or the youngsters, to keep the peace here in the Inn, as they seem to be getting into shenanigans and chicanery at nearly every turn.

13A. Banker's Desk and Guard Post. Cici sits on a bench behind a stone table here when conducting business. The table is flanked by a pair of **Ogres** (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) at all times. Cici keeps the Vault Key on a necklace. Services include converting coins into gems or silver into gold, evaluating and purchasing loot, storing deposited treasure, investment accounts, and loans. Optionally, Cici might have a limited stock of potions and scrolls available for purchase at ridiculously high rates, perhaps even an unclaimed magic weapon or other device which could aid the PCs if they can weather her gouging.

13B. Inn Bank Vault. This stout block room consists of mortared stones 3' thick, with a locked door to the south. It also serves as Cici's bedroom. The exact contents of the vault are left to the referee. It does contain quite a small fortune; mostly the valuables of the Inn's current guests. Unclaimed treasure becomes the property of Jalen after Cici takes a 10% cut; this form of income is perhaps the most lucrative of all the Bank's enterprises.

13C. Roach Hide-out. The west wall of this area appears to be no more than rubble and large stones. There are actually three concealed crawlways here, barely large enough for *The Roaches* who use them to access their hideout beyond. The hideout is what one might expect from a gang of children. Of note is a large painted message here, which quotes their true leader in the common tongue: "*Per Cici: This is not My Gang, this is **Our Gang!** Remember that, Roaches!*" There are various cots and bedrolls here, and the whole place is an absolute mess, organized to provide hiding spots for both the children and their valuables.

14. Digger Holes: A large cavern, absolutely off-limits to guests, serves as home for *The Diggers*. These **Goblins** (DC 6, Spd 6, HD 1-1, Dam 1 die) are the miners and construction crew for the Inn. Diggers may be hired as henchmen provided Jalen gives consent. The cost is 200 gold, of which one-half is paid to Jalen and one-half to Magwire. The Goblins are only good for carrying packs, torches, or shields as well as providing limited knowledge of mining and construction. They will of course defend themselves, but will not lead any attacks. They live in dug-out holes in the floor here and tend to the oil pools to the south. A large natural well contains enough oil to keep the Inn alight for centuries. There are 88 Goblins here; most are nondescript and provide labor under the command of **Magwire**, King of The Diggers. Magwire's personal

guards are the Diggers **Wortle, Katrinka, Bang, Skipper** and **Hogg** (Magwire and his bodyguards all fight as **Hobgoblins**: DC 5, Spd 6, HD 1+1, Dam 1 die). **Nyles**, the Inn's Valet, also has a smartly appointed hole dug here. Magwire is kept happy with gold payments and a safe place to order his subjects around. Magwire's Goblin Hole is large, essentially a sublevel beneath this cave, and contains a Goblin's fortune in silver, gold and gems. Many of the Diggers have begun worshipping Gar-Ghulii (15), thinking it an awakened Elder One. Although Magwire does not approve, the Cult of the Pit, led by the witch-doctor **Woo-woo**, meets regularly to propitiate their god, sacrificing valuables, naughty Goblins, and fancy pebbles.

15. Water Closets and Waste Pit. This chamber holds a half-dozen crude water closets and a large central well used for waste disposal. Both the WC waste and the well drop down 15' to the ceiling of a much deeper cave. This Waste Pit, which is flooded with dank, murky water 6 feet deep, serves as Gar-Ghulii's lair. Jalen has ordered 14 guests to their death by having them dropped into the well here to be devoured by Gar-Ghulii. The foul creature's presence aids in the disposal of the Inn's rubbish, from which it gains nourishment between rare living snacks. Countless Goblins have either fallen or been pushed into this well, so many that the Diggers have a superstitious fear of what lies below. Gar-Ghulii requires a few minutes to awaken, but then stalked eyes, a dozen tentacles, and razor-sharp scythe-like appendages will arise from the water all around the room. Gar-Ghulii can attack up to twelve targets each round and its body forms a floor beneath the pool of water here. Treat the tentacles as Hydra heads with Troll-like regeneration. (**Gar-Ghulii**: DC 5 Spd 0 HD 12 Dam 1 die, 12 attacks/round). Lodged in Gar-Ghulii's innards is the fist-sized Big Honkin' Pearl (50,000 gp value). There is graffiti throughout the upper room. In common: "*Old Tekkos shat here*" beneath which is "*Young Zhoolg had an accident here*", and then "*Yeah...he was polishing his wand and it went off in his hand*". In Goblin: "*Gar-Ghulii is watching you have stage fright*", and "*Flush twice, it's a long way to the Dark Troll Citadel*", also "*For a good time, visit room 13*", and, "*Gar-Ghulii ATE your god of men*", lastly "*As well as the world's biggest honking Pearl*". Old Tekkos and Young Zhoolg are friends and one-time Inn guests, both now supposedly adventuring deeper in *The Darkness Beneath*.

16. "Shady" Schamn's Game Parlor. Various tables, benches, stools and chairs fill this gaming room. There is activity here around the clock as the gambling action attracts Ogres, Goblins, guests, staff members, and sometimes even Dark Trolls! A large sign is posted to each wall stating in the common tongue that "*Cheaters shall be punished to the fullest extent of the CLAW*". The CLAW is Jalen's version of running the gauntlet, comprised of two assembled lines of 20 Diggers armed with pick-axes. "Shady" Schamn (16B) has a well-trained crew to run the tables, and they are reliable even when he is not present.

The staff is comprised of Vaettes (see Appendix) who return to their invisible homes when not working for Schamn. No one is sure how Schamn is able to control the Vaettes, and anyone who knows enough about them is not going to pry. Although the Vaettes could easily cheat customers, or even aid them, they do not care whether customers win or lose. They can, however, easily detect when someone is cheating. There are six main tables running bets, and the staff of bankers always has a large mound of gold at each table. The basic rules for the six standard "bones" games (with their real world names in parentheses) are as follows:

Hydra (*Klondike* with no Full House or Straight): Normal Limit is 100. Bettors make wagers against the bank. Once wagers are placed, the banker rolls 5d6, then the players in turn roll the same dice, once each, trying to beat the banker's roll. Combinations are ranked, lowest to highest, as one pair, two pair, three of a kind, four of a kind and five of a kind. The banker wins ties, and the numerical value of the rolls is not relevant, just the combinations. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

King's Coin (*Coin-Die Game*): Limit is preset to 1, 5 or 10 per unit. Players flip a coin and then roll the die. If the coin comes up heads, the player wins and receives twice the number of units shown on the die. If the coin comes up tails, the banker wins and is paid four units plus the number of units shown on the die. This is normally a game with unit value set at 1, 5 or 10 gold. Thus, when the unit is set to 5 gold, a bettor who flips tails and rolls a 5 owes the banker 45 gold. *Variable Payoff.*

Twenty-five (*Qualify*): Normal Limit is 100. Players place wagers before dice are rolled. Each player in turn has five throws, the first with 5d6, putting the highest die to one side after each roll and throwing with the remainder. After the last throw the five dice put aside are totaled. If the sum is 25 or more, the player wins and takes his stake back with an equal amount of the banker's. If the sum is 24 or less, the banker collects the player's stake. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

Two Bones (*High Dice*): Normal Limit is 10. The most basic game played here. Players lay a wager and the banker rolls 2d6. Then the players in turn roll the same dice, once each, trying to beat the banker's total. The banker wins ties. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

Dagger (*Twelve Up*): Normal Limit is 10. A simple game played with 1d6. Players lay bets against the bank and pick a number between 14 and 18. They then roll a single d6, continuing to do so while totaling the values thrown until they reach a sum over twelve. If the total is 13, they lose and the banker takes the wager. If the total is the number they chose, they win and receive back their wager plus an equal amount from the banker. If any other total is thrown, no one wins or loses. A slower moving game with

possible free plays, Dagger is very popular with casual gamblers. *Payoff is 1 to 1.*

Scepter and Crown (none): 2d6, one roll. Bettor is attempting to roll a Scepter (3) and a Crown (6) in a single roll of 3-6 or 6-3. This is the lone high Payoff game and normally has no limit. S&C, as it is called, plays so quickly that it is often limited to serious gamblers only despite the poor odds. Payoff is 12 to 1.

16B. Schamn's Cave. "Shady" Schamn's bedroom and vault. "Shady" is middle-aged, quick of wit, energetic, and easy to chat with. Somewhat plain, his smile is unmistakable and his handshake firm. Schamn is no adventurer, but is a long-time friend of Jalen. At one time Schamn had amassed great wealth on the surface world, but his less-than-scrupulous means of gaining coin left him with more than a few enemies. Seeking refuge, the gambler couldn't pass up Jalen's invitation to run a Game Parlor here in the relative safety of the Halfway Inn. Still a marked man, "Shady" is protected by the Vaettes who consider him an odds-making genius and welcome him to their secret realm on a regular basis in order to try and best him at games of chance. His nickname is derived from the fact that this hopeless gambling addict has an uncanny ability to create favorable odds for any wager. "Shady" will gamble on virtually any situation, and has a long-standing custom of taking bets as to whether certain Inn guests will live or die. Schamn's dreams have been visited by Ylfrit before, but not in ages. Aside from a pocketful of gems for gambling, Schamn stores his valuables at the Inn Bank. The vault holds the Parlor's daily winnings which are transferred to the bank on a regular basis.

17. The Trampled Crown. Tavern and gathering area for the Inn, with tables, booths and chandeliers. The area is staffed by Goblins training under Les Clefdors (**G1**), who serves as host when not attending to his Concierge duties. Standard fare (stew, meat pie and bread from *Tinker World*) is included with lodging, but special dishes, which vary from day to day, are available for 5-15 gp extra. Specials include *Roasted Trog Shank*, *Broiled Crab-man Claws*, *Bat Surprise*, *Dimshroom Pie*, *Deep Fried Raptor*, etc. At the center of the Tavern is a sunken area which is cleared of tables for a few hours each day. This serves as the Brawling Pit, where individuals have a go at nominally harmless grappling matches. From time to time Jalen will bring a captured monster here and allow Pullo or anyone willing to shed some blood the opportunity to take on a deadly foe in single combat. When the Brawling Pit is open the Tavern tends to be crammed full of gambling onlookers and revelers. At least once every few days Jaxine will perform her erotic *Dance of the Coiled Mystery*. Of late a rivalry has been brewing between Jaxine and current guest Tatjana, who Jalen has allowed to dance as well. Tatjana has quickly become a crowd favorite with her dazzling, hypnotic gyrations. Coins shower down from the crowd after each

dance while a typically out of tune Goblin Band supplies strange pipe, string and drum music.

18. The Moistened Bint. This roomy cave is nearly always busy with customers. It boasts a curving 25 foot long bar, seemingly carved from the stone floor of the cave, and similarly fashioned shelves of stone line the walls. Nearly all of the Graeth artifacts discovered during Jalen's renovation have been moved here, hanging from the walls, placed in niches, or adorning the bar itself. The central area is open and surrounded by recovered Graeth stone furnishings; low couches, settees, benches, stands and tables. The bar is staffed at all times by one of the Dwarf bartenders in Jalen's employ; **Boyd**, **Melone** or **Pantyzuo (G4)**. Goblin bar backs keep the booze stocked, and can be seen scurrying back and forth behind the bar and up and down a wide spiral staircase in the back wall. Below the bar is the store room (**18B**). **Fare** (with price) includes *Tangled Ale* (2), *Five Hop Lager* (2), *Gargoyle Stout* (3), *Coop's Own Porter* (5), barley wine (1), rot gut (1), hooch (2), corn liquor (3), and *Eel Juice* (5). All are served from the keg or cask into pewter mugs or jiggers (shots). The bar also serves as the **Inn Tobacconist**, selling *Common* (1) *Aromatic* (3) and *Fine* (5) tobacco by the cup, *Clay* (1) or *Carved Pipes* (5), and *Kindle Sticks* (1) by the box. An iron lock box, the contents of which are transferred to the Inn Bank regularly, lies beneath the bar and accepts coins through a small slot. It has a complex lock and opening mechanism, known only to the three bartenders. The bartenders are the best source of rumors here in the Halfway Inn, and tipping them well is the only way to learn these rumors. See **RUMORS FROM THE MOISTENED BINT** in the **TABLES** section of **The Appendix**.

18B. Bar Cellar and Ogre Lair. Accessed by a spiral stair from **18**, this storeroom is lined with stacked kegs of beer and casks of liquor. Shelves and bins hold cleaning tools, drinking vessels and various bar tools. At the far end of the cellar is a large smelly beer stained cave which the **Ogres** (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) working for Jalen use while off-duty. These huge monsters are permitted to drink their fill while here, and the lair is always littered with empty kegs which are used like enormous beer vessels by the Ogres. There will be 2 or 3 of them here, drinking, drunk, or asleep. Ogres are sent to work in the Inn by the Ogre Overlord, toiling here for a period of 50 days and consuming as much beer as possible until replacements from the Ogre Downs arrive to relieve them.

19. Tenhove's Kitchen. Just off of the Moistened Bint is the steamy, smoky Kitchen run by **Tenhove** and **Teabuck Ten** (Appendix). This cave was selected to be the Kitchen due to the fresh water spring and stone chimneys formed naturally here. Chef Tenhove and his brother the Sous-Chef, Teabuck, truly enjoy cooking and take great pride in their hobby. A few Goblin cooks help roast, steam, simmer, bake, broil and grill various foodstuffs from *Tinker*

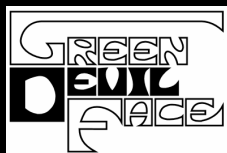
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World. There is a huge fire pit at the room's center, a large bronze soup pot, a pair of brick and clay ovens, an iron smoker, and neatly stored ingredients and serving dishes. The Kitchen is well stocked with utensils and tools, including a particularly valuable gold handled cutlery set of finely crafted razor sharp obsidian highly prized by Teabuck (12,000 gold to the right buyer). While Tenhove and Teabuck normally get along very well, they often fall into heated arguments while trying to cook together. It is not unusual to hear shouting and the clanging of thrown pots or pans emanating from the Kitchen.

20. Pullo's Room. The black skinned **Pullo** (War 6) is a massively muscled, one-time professional Gladiator who now serves as Jalen's Pit Champion and bodyguard. His elbows, knees, forehead and hamhock fists are an irresistible force in the ring. Gruff and stand-offish, Pullo is a seasoned bully who enjoys mixing it up with all comers. A loyal friend, the former Gladiator owes his life to Jalen. These days Pullo rarely goes adventuring, and when the *Trap-Springers* do venture deep into the dungeons below he tends willingly to be charged with keeping order in Jalen's absence. Pullo's room is a ramshackle mess, containing all sorts of martial training devices. The only order at all to the room is the neat, straight path from one door to the other which is used by both Jalen and Jaxine to pass through. Jalen can often be found here sparring with Pullo or trying to best him in feats of strength. Included in this mess is a chest containing silver and gold, and a pair of closets stuffed with a veritable arsenal of arms and armor. Pullo sees Ylfrit in his dreams from time to time.

21. Jalen's Room. Jalen's room is sparsely decorated. His most valuable possessions are locked away in **21B**, but Jalen has placed a not-so-well-hidden chest beneath his bed that might satisfy burglars and prevent them from searching for his vault. It contains silver, gold, and a dozen gems. The chamber holds a bed, closet, desk and a few chairs all resting upon a gigantic *Hydra Hide Rug* (worth 3,500 gp). Both secret doors here are magically-locked and require a password to open ("Tirfly"). Jaxine, Jalen's current love interest, sleeps here as well. Jaxine is a stunningly attractive, exotic woman from a far-off culture. The temptress loves to flirt, and even the famous Longspear will not be able to keep her happy forever. Of course, Jalen is the only one who knows her true nature. **Jaxine the Werepython:** DC 4, Spd 6, HD 6, Dam 1 die+2, Special: Constrict. Jalen's full description is in the appendix.

21B. Jalen's Vault. The exact contents are determined by the referee, if necessary. The vault holds half a dozen chests loaded with gold and gems, as well as Jalen's personal adventuring gear (described in the appendix). A *Bag of Holding* in one of the chests contains all that is left of Jalen's famous adventure into the Valley of Giant Diamonds, four enormous rough uncut diamonds. The actual value of the Giant Diamonds is difficult to estimate, if it is

even possible. Most important is Jalen's prized possession, his magic spear *Crimson Hate*. Note that whenever the spear sits idly for an hour, it masks itself with invisibility.

22. Trophy Room. This chamber serves as a quiet relaxation spot away from the bar or tavern. There are unusual pieces of carved Graeth furniture here, including chairs, couches and tables. The floor is covered with a woven *Roc Feather Rug* (2,000 gp) and the walls are decorated with portraits (mostly of Jalen, detailing his adventures), curios, skulls, pelts, skins, shields, weapons and other items of note. Chief among these trophies are the following items (with approximate collector's value): a massive *Dragon Skull Chandelier* (8,000), a *Black Pudding Bean Bag Chair* (2,800), a stuffed and mounted *Human-headed Chimera* (3,500), a *Cockatrice Feather Coat* (4,000) worn by a *Deactivated Bone Golem* (1,800) with a sign saying "Do Not Touch", an enormous *Big Skull Throne* (6,500), a *Solid-Ivory Pedestal* (5,000) atop of which is a stasis globe holding a *Miniature Black Golem* (12,500), a huge *Gold Plaque* (12,000) upon which Ylfrit's Poem (see Appendix) is etched in an ancient tongue, a mounted *Frost Giant Claymore* (4,000) broken in three pieces and still covered in ice, a *Petrified Elder Sphinx* (6,000) adorned with a *Scarf of Medusa Serpent-Heads* (4,500), a carved *Jade Sarcophagus* (38,000) which is opened and filled with the fangs, horns, talons, claws, pincers, eyes and stingers of various underworld monsters, 12' up a *Shelf of Blue Quartz* (3,500) lines the room holding 200 Ettin skulls, a *Floating Vampire Statue* (5,000) is chained to the floor, etc. There is plenty more to be discovered by the characters, and Jalen can tell the story behind each trophy.

23. West Gate. This area is identical in all respects to the North Gate at **9**, save those detailed on the map.

Guest Rooms (G): Each of these natural caves is smartly appointed with a pair of cots, a pair of carved and curtained closets, a pair of lockable anchored large chests, a pair of wash basins with toiletries, and a pair of under-bed chamber pots. Goblin attendants with passkeys empty pots and change water daily. The Graeth-designed stone doors have been fitted with stout iron locks and interior dead bolts for privacy, and each bears a brass plaque identifying the room number (1 to 12 and 14 to 22). Many of the guest rooms are leased by various semi-permanent lodgers, including members of the *Trap-Springers* and Inn staff.

Vacant Rooms: **G7, G8, G9, G11, G15, G17, G21, G22.** These are all available. **G8** and **G9** were recently cleared out of possessions left by the former lodgers, The Marchand Rovers. The four adventuring mates have still not returned from their last delve into the dungeon over two weeks ago (see **28B**).

G1. Falltee and Les Clefdors. The Elf Falltee is the Inn Manager. Overworked, jittery, sarcastic and often sneering.

Les is the Concierge. A man of 35, polite, accommodating and overachieving unless tipped poorly by guests.

G2. Orlaith the Younger. See Appendix.

G3. Tenhove Ten and Teabuck Ten. See Appendix.

G4. Boyid, Melone and Pantyuzo, the three Dwarf bartenders. Boyid is the youngest and somewhat thick-headed. Melone is the self-proclaimed Bar Manager and is well-liked but bossy. Pantyuzo, the eldest, is somewhat forgetful and prone to nonsense.

G5. Coop Falter and Gargo Greengas. See Appendix.

G6. Goomba and Serios. These two Ogre Porters (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2) are charged with carrying packs and chests for guests to and from their rooms, the coat room, the vault, or wherever else is necessary. They both work for tips and get paid in room and board. Both were hired by Jalen after they worked as Guards for him here at the inn. Serios is convinced that he has strange, alien mental powers. Goomba is quiet and moody.

G10. Marholm (War 4) and Triggs (War 5). Marholm is a shady dealer, Triggs his bodyguard. Marholm is more or less a permanent guest, and has managed to establish a good business dealing in poisons, acids, potions, scrolls and other hard-to-find goods. Given time and gold, he can acquire nearly anything. Marholm has secured Multiversal Bazaar Tokens which he sells for 250 gp each. These allow passage to the Multiversal Bazaar deeper in the dungeon. Triggs is very loyal to Marholm and always sleeps with one eye open, though he has begun to see Ylfrit in his dreams.

G12. Quigmoor (Mage 5) and Darmley (War 3). Quigmoor is a nerdy, daydreaming bookworm prone to minor accidents. He arrived here in his search for Jhimyn (44) to learn about the lost Wizard's magical research. Darmley is Quigmoor's overworked eyes and ears and is normally burdened with the Thaumaturgist's books, quills, ink pots, parchment and other tools. Darmley is always keeping Quigmoor out of trouble. To complicate matters, Quigmoor is a notorious sleepwalker, prone to roaming the halls in a deep slumber while Darmley follows behind. Waking him while he's sleepwalking induces a fit of rage.

G13. Sealed Guest Room. Rognvald's Memory is here. The door to this guest room has been sealed and off limits for over a year now. The door itself is well-concealed but a Dwarf or Elf would sense it rather easily, and inspection could locate the shoddy Goblin mortar job. Inside the room, and arising from time to time, is a strange haunting brought about by the Taint. An unnatural force awakens and paces the room, appearing as a faint ghost-like form. It mumbles and moans in ancient Graeth, and slowly begins to pace faster and speak louder, eventually running about

screaming and howling strange words. Included in those words might be smatterings recognized as Ylfrit, Hjorvart, Graeth, etc. Between these fits the form scrawls upon the walls of the room in Graeth. Deciphering reveals that the form is Rognvald, Ylfrit's son and former Prince; seeking his mother's approval and affection.

G14. Valahimt (War 4) and Tatjana (Mag 5). Valahimt and Tatjana are traveling gypsies from another world. Valahimt is a highly skilled tattoo artist, and Tatjana, who poses as her mate's concubine, is an erotic dancer and seductress. Valahimt will ink customers, and for the right price will work with Tatjana to create magic tattoos. Both guests are evil but have no defined motivations here. Valahimt is being visited by Ylfrit nightly now, and is on the path to accepting her embrace, much to Tatjana's dismay. Tatjana has caught Jalen's eye while Valahimt is ignorant of Jaxine's jealous advances.

G16. Sleeping-Bear (Pr 5) and Silent-Wolf (War 2). Sleeping-Bear is a large, burly shaman from another world. Normally performing odd rituals in his room, the Chief, as the other guests call him, is quiet and brooding. Silent-Wolf is betrothed to the Chief, and is certainly his better half. Charming and friendly, she is worried about what is happening to her husband. Sleeping-Bear has one spell-like power allowing him to shape shift into a huge **Grizzly Bear** (DC 7, Spd 9, HD 6+1, Dam 1 die+2) three times per day for 60 minutes. He is currently enthralled with Ylfrit, and will likely seek her out soon if he can recruit aid.

G18. Shenydar. Shenydar the Orc (DC 6, Spd 9, HD 1, Dam 1 die) is Inn Custodian. The mustached handy-man performs all sorts of odd jobs while sauntering around acting like a lady's man. His every step is accompanied by the jingling tools hanging from his belt, and he wears a leather vest covered with buttoned pockets. Jalen captured Shenydar when he was a wee Orc-lad and raised him while adventuring with the *Trap-Springers*. Eventually no trap or locked door could slow Shenydar down, and Jalen still calls on him in times of need.

G19. Gloam. Gloam once roomed in **G13** until the nightly visits of Rognvald's Memory drove him out. Gloam wanders the Inn babbling gibberish and having jerky spasms. Having arrived with a vast fortune, Gloam's room is more than paid for. Unfortunately, all of Gloam's retainers abandoned him long ago. Something of a novelty here, Gloam never hurts anyone and seldom stays in one spot long enough to annoy. Jalen calls him the Whale Prince, and no one remembers how he got the nickname Gloam. Driven mad by Ylfrit's Embrace, Gloam wishes the Queen would visit his dreams again; alas she no longer does. Gloam is in actuality *Owain Glyndwr, former Prince of Wales*.

G20. Rum-Tum and Morto. This pair of Ogres (DC 5, Spd 9, HD 4+1, Dam 1 die+2), Rum-Tum (the Wrecker)

and Morto (the Maker), are posing as envoys from the Ogre Overlord, sent to negotiate with Jalen. They are actually in the employ of a nefarious crime boss in the Ogre Downs and are here to abduct Jaxine and return her to her former lover in a distant land across the sea. The two are getting cold feet now that they see the difficulty the job presents, but aren't brave enough to return empty-handed. The pair did not arrive here ill-prepared and each is an accomplished thug. Morto is the brains and Rum-Tum the brawn of the outfit.

C. West Tunnels (24-32): The natural, ancient cave formations of both the East and West Tunnels present navigational challenges which the referee may choose to ignore should a more traditional dungeon crawl be desired. The wild variation in floor depth and ceiling height produces a maze of horizontal and vertical obstacles which slow movement to a maximum of 6 and severely limit the effectiveness of light sources. The age-old cavern network is marked by looming stalactites, teetering stalagmites, ominous columns, massive flowstones, jagged concretions, dead drop shafts and other natural formations. Unless an area is specifically described as flat, assume that travel throughout demands careful and cautious footsteps. Strange sounds echo all around; the fluttering of wings, the dripping of water, the sliding of stones, and sometimes the distant call of the unknown. The very weight of the world threatens to crash in on the characters as they explore these hazardous caves and passages.

24. Pit of Never. This gaping 30' wide hole in the floor drops to a narrow crevice, filled with scree and jagged stalagmites. The walls slant ever slightly inward, meeting at the bottom 90' below. Hidden from plain view, 60' down, is a crawlspace tunnel which runs haphazardly 35' and opens into the Great Guano Gallery (24B). During the night there is a chance that thousands upon thousands of bats will be traveling through here from the crawlspace to the chimney above or vice versa depending upon the hour. **Bat Chimney:** High in the ceiling above the Pit of Never, concealed by stone boxwork, is a small chimney which eventually squirrels up to the surface in the Jagged Plinths. Negotiating this chimney would require great climbing skill, stamina, courage, and hours of exhaustive exertion. The tunnel to the west appears to be caved in (see 25B). To the north is the **Winding Passage** which connects to Level Two (or a dungeon level of your own devising).

24B. Great Guano Gallery. The only entrance to this area is from the crawlspace in the Pit of Never, which opens 60' above the floor here at the top of the wall. A cacophony of bat wings fluttering bombards this area with constant echoes during the day. The floor of the cave forms a mound in the center. Further inspection will reveal that the entire floor is layer upon layer of (mostly dried) guano. Beneath ages of deposit, in the mound, is a long-forgotten stone carving of a great face (Easter Island

Head). It will require many hours of labor to excavate the Stone Face. Anyone taking the time to do so will see that it is carved with unrecognizable hieroglyphs. Studying the hieroglyphs will give the vague impression that this huge carving was transported here centuries ago, from a remote island filled with similar such carvings by what would seem to be bat people. The bat people worshiped the Stone Face and brought men to it for ritual sacrifice. What became of the bat people is not known, nor is the reason for moving the carving here. If the Stone Face is toppled, which requires great force, a recessed niche will be revealed in the floor below. This niche holds the mummified remains of Anyoodwei, a long-dead bat person, along with 52 large gold discs (each worth 25 gold) and a jeweled amulet on a gold chain (**Amulet of Memory:** allows Mag or Pr to cast one 1st and 2nd level spell each day without removing it from his or her memorized spell list. Must be worn while memorizing and may not be "shared" between characters).

25. Spirit Pool. One of the three ancient Fae magic nodes, the Spirit Pool is now corrupted by the spread of Taint. This large natural pool was once clean and clear with vibrant power, but is now swirling and murky from a dark green glow within. Huddled around the pool is a mass of Pale Spawn, some chanting ominously. These savage, devolved Fae will notice intruders on a cumulative 1 in 6 chance each round. The characters will be attacked by the entire group if spotted. (**Pale Spawn** (22+11): DC 7, Spd 9, HD 2+1, Dam 1 die, each round 1d3-1 more appear.) Anyone coming within 10' of the pool must save vs. magic as they subject themselves to an arcane attack from the Tainted Spirit Pool. Failure indicates that a Psyche Swap has occurred. One of the long-dead spirits within the pool has traded places with the victim. These spirits are random psyches from other worlds and times. The Psyche Swap will last for 1d6 minutes, at the end of which victims will emerge exhausted and jabbering about a near-death experience and how they remembered to not "go towards the light". Other entities present include **Evil Roots** (8): DC 7, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special, protect the edges of the Spirit Pool. There are four **Foul Saplings:** DC 9, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special, within the room, and a large Root Tunnel is in one of the walls. **Root Tunnels** (see 43B): 8' diameter Root Tunnels connect this room to 42B, 43B and 48. Referees should make note of **Cleansing the Caves in The Taint**, section IV.

25B. Crumbled Crawlway. At first glance the tunnels here appear to be sealed off from the collapsed ceiling. However, a safe crawlway worms its way through both passages, provided one is willing to crawl virtually blind along its course. Those entering will hear the sound of a few **Chirping Crickets**. The noise slowly increases in intensity, and soon it will sound as if a swarm of crickets has joined in an insect symphony. The cacophony continues as long as anyone is in the area. Those with INT 13+ will swear they can almost make out words in the cricket song.



26. Collapsed Gallery. Stone fragments of every size have shattered on the floor here, including an enormous chunk of stalagmitic floor. A mass of concretions developed long ago in this collapse, and traversing the area is challenging and dangerous. There is no visible path, and every step seems to cause shifting stone and sliding pebbles. A large Feral Fang lair is hidden high in the ceiling. The beasts sense movement and stealthily crawl out from the holes above, seeking to attack with surprise. **Feral Fangs** (26): DC 6, Spd 12, HD 3, Dam 1 die, Paralyzing Gaze. 26 Fangs make their lair here, but a number of their kind might be on the prowl in other parts of the Lower Caves.

27. Fallen Towers: Gigantic blocks of stone dominate this cave, the remains of once-strong columns. Water drips constantly from above and has coated the blocks, which range in diameter from 8' to 15', in a damp sheen. The floor of the cave is slippery and unusually treacherous.

28. Flowstone Nook. This rocky, jagged cave has two notable features. The first is an unusually large pale yellow Flowstone, 18 feet high, which reaches from wall to floor. Beneath the massive stone is a well-concealed nook, accessed by a narrow gap 2' wide and 4' tall. Within the nook are the remains of a Wild West Bandito with a fancy Felt Sombrero; his boots are missing, but in his tightly

clinched fists is a pair of **Six-Shooters** (treat all targets as DC 9, Range 90 feet, Damage 2 dice). Each Six-Shooter has two rounds remaining, and there is a leather bandoleer holding 28 more rounds. Use of these, if they are sorted out, will nearly always demand a Wandering Monster roll. The referee shall decide who, if anyone can use these oddities. Awakening in the dark recesses is a foul **Dread Lurker**: DC 2 (only hit by magic), Spd 6, HD 6, Dam special. The second notable feature is a large crack in the floor to the north, which opens in a straight plunge to **28B**. An anchored rope dangles down into this crevasse, but it extends only 25 feet, having been cut or severed.

28B. The Yawning Chasm. The plunge from the floor of 28 opens high above the Yawning Chasm at the very peak that forms the ceiling of this large area. The chasm is so deep it might as well have no floor. It is left to the referee to decide the depth, whether it is bottomless, or whether it terminates on another, lower dungeon level. Directly beneath the plunge and ceiling peak, 70' down, is a stone bridge. Called **Anso's Arch**, this 55' long arch bridge spans the Yawning Chasm in an east-west direction. Anso's Arch is only 8 feet wide, but is solid and sure. The bridge is decorated with four stone statues, one toppled and the others reaching for the ceiling above. At the eastern end of the bridge lies **28C**, and to the west, **28D**. The statues are in fact what is left of **The Marchand Rovers**, all turned to stone by the beast beneath the bridge, the Stone Wretch. These four adventurers, Ephrii Jae (War 5), Gowizch (DWar 5), Ivilmic Aamit (Mag 5), Risnor (Pr 6), might yet be saved. The **Stone Wretch** (DC 2 (only hit by magic), Spd 0, HD 14, Dam 3 dice+3, Special: Breathe, Gaze) awakens as soon as anyone sets foot on Anso's Arch. It begins creating a rumble from below in 3 rounds. By round 5 it will have extended its massive stone-snake like form from the wall of the chasm below, and rise up above the characters in order to slay them.

28C. Fleyerg's Grotto. An old stone door at the east end of Anso's Arch opens to a stairwell leading down to Fleyerg's Grotto, at the bottom of which are some items discarded by the Goblins in the pool: two shields, a mace, a short sword, and a sack containing delving sundries. This large 40' diameter nearly spherical cave is adorned with natural pale flower-like halite formations and is half-filled with murky water. At the center of the room, rising 8 feet above the water is a stone pillar, 18' away from the cave walls and the landing beneath the entry steps. Atop this old stone column is a 3' tall squatting imp-like idol carved from quartz, now coated with the grime of ages and difficult to discern. A handful of stones might be seen floating in the pool, and at its bottom, beneath the idol, are three dead Goblin Diggers, former hirelings of The Marchand Rovers. The entire pool has a permanent "reverse buoyancy" effect: that which should float sinks, while that which should sink floats. Moving the idol sets off a trap as the cave rotates with a violent jolt, blocking the entry passage

and exit and possibly toppling the intruders. This rotation also exposes an otherwise blocked water-filled conduit which allows more reverse buoyancy effect water to flood in and fill the room in 6 rounds. 6 rounds later the room will reset and the water will slowly return to its normal level. Replacing the idol during the 6 round initial sequence will reset the trap. Anyone able to see into the pillar beneath the idol will notice it is hollow and creates a steep shaft dropping down 30 feet into darkness. In a small recessed area, at the bottom of this shaft are Fleyerg's remains. A mummified bat person, Fleyerg was buried with 74 large gold discs (each worth 25 gold), and a curved dagger fashioned from a dinosaur hind-claw (**Talon Rip**, Dagger, +1 to hit; if thrown by an Elf or other Fae-kind it has a range of 50 feet, is +2 to hit and deals two dice of damage, returning like a boomerang automatically).

28D. Sjetnir's Tomb. An old stone door at the west end of Anso's Arch opens to a stairwell, choked with thick curtains of cobwebs, leading down to Sjetnir's Tomb. The tomb itself is a 30x40 heavy block chamber with a low 4' ceiling, save an area at the center of the tomb where the bottom of a 10x10 shaft opens into it. The slabs and blocks in this room are broken, uneven, dislodged, and the entire place appears about to cave-in. Soaking up the Fae vibes here is a vicious pack of **Cryptlings** (11: DC 7/2, Spd 9, HD 3 (+4 to hit), Dam 1 die, The central shaft rises 20' to a burial niche. Within, very faintly coated in **Yellow Mold**, are the remains of Sjetnir, a mummified bat person interred with 57 large gold discs (each worth 25 gold), a pair of thick serpent-hide bracers (**Venom Creeps**: on a roll to hit of 20, the wearer's sharp or edged melee attacks inject the target with poison), and a dozen loose fangs, each drilled through with a small hole. If these fangs are strung together with a cord they will form a magical necklace (**Cinder's Teeth**, confers cat-like quickness, Spd 15 when unencumbered, +1 DC, and a bonus to saves, surprise and initiative when appropriate).

29. Hall of Candles. Sharp stalagmites coated with multi-faceted calcite crystals festoon this cave at varying heights. Light sources reflect and refract brilliantly off the crystals. Rays of golden light shift and dazzle, creating impressive patterns starkly in contrast with the looming shadows formed while moving through this area. Visitors shall hear **Whispers** as barely audible voices speaking in an indecipherable tongue. These voices might be audible to all, a select few, or a single PC only. This twisted tongue will shortly make sense to those that hear it, whispering devious suggestions or diabolical ideas. The voices continue to incite unseemly acts until the cave is exited.

30. Deepening Pit. Both of the entrances to this area end abruptly in sharp plunges above a vast round pit, the floor of which is 120' below and choked with stalagmites. Above both entrances, 15' up, are the two ends of the **Treacherous Traverse**: Carved by unknown craftsmen, this narrow

path high above the Deepening Pit works its way around the east wall just below, between and through the heavy stalactites dangling from the ceiling. The steep, sheer walls of the pit are impossible to scale without proper gear and great care. Four long-dead explorers lie at the bottom of the pit, their possessions repeatedly picked over. Just beyond these remains is a narrow gap in the north wall of the pit which opens to a tunnel leading to the **Frostwork Conduit (32B)**, connecting **32B, 46 and 49** to this one.

31. Entrance to King's Rest. This area is decorated with stone carvings depicting the story of Hjorvart Graeth-King. A steep ramp leads down to **31B**. A group of six Gnomes has made camp here along with their packs and supplies. These world spanning Gnomish burglars are the **Madcappers**: Fidget, Og, Randall (L), Strutter, Vermin and Wally. Treat each as D 1 but with *Uncanny Luck*; essentially they are perpetually blessed with survival but not fortune. They have come here to plunder the resting place of the Twisted Faerie Queen. Randall has a scroll with a copy of Ylfrit's Poem (see Appendix) and a sketchy map showing the time-hole that allowed them to travel here. Currently waiting for Randall to formulate a plan, they occupy their time by gambling, arguing, fighting and drinking. Randall is worried that they have in fact once again entered the *Fortress of Ultimate Darkness*, and is weighing whether or not they should return through the time-hole...if only he could sort out his quickly drawn map.

31B. Sparkling Grotto. A wondrous sight to behold, nearly every surface in this grotto is covered in multi-hued crystalline spar. Footing is unsafe upon the slick, uneven floor, which surrounds a large stone carving at the center of the cave. Perched atop a wide base is an age-old statue of a Graeth (Giervald-Kingard) chiseled from a natural column extending above the handiwork to meet the ceiling. The statue will summon the spirit of Giervald if Hjorvart's possessions in **31C** are disturbed. A sealed stone door with Graeth carvings leads from the north wall to a narrow tunnel opening to **31C**. Opening this door will require super-human strength, or an *Opening Charm*. Doing so will release a **Wintry Gust**; a powerful blast of super chilled air sweeps through the area, blowing out all open flames as the Cryptlings in **31C** rush out and attack.

31C. King's Rest. Hjorvart's tomb has been ransacked by a pack of **Cryptlings** (14: DC 7/2, Spd 9, HD 3 (+4 to hit), Dam 1 die) that have made this their lair. Each and every Graeth artifact here has been smashed to pieces or torn from the walls of this large, roughly 30'x40' area. The floor is covered in piles of loose stone which once bore Graeth carvings. A low slab of stone was Hjorvart's resting place, where his body returned to the earth shortly after his death. The Fae essence that keeps these Cryptlings alive emanates from below this spot. There might be means by which Hjorvart's spirit could be awakened, but none are to be found in the Lower Caves. Beneath the heavy slab is a

cut-out holding a few of Hjorvart's ancient possessions that have survived the ravages of time: a silver tipped spear (*Mjolnir*: +2 to hit, deals 1d+2 used one-handed and 2d+2 used two-handed, on a roll to hit of 20 target is impaled for 3d+2), a gold crown (*Life-bond Diadem*: +1 per HD or level to hp total), and a crystal eye (*Eye of the Tiger*: must be inserted into empty socket, provides normal and low-light vision, user may conduct melee as a 6 HD Monster/Level +1). Disturbing these items will awaken the guardian spirit of Giervald-Kingard in **31B** who will attack with surprise. **Giervald-Kingard**: DC 5 (only hit by silver), Spd 12, HD 7, Dam 1 die+1, Special: Sleep or Hold Person.

32. Breghoneir's Post. Little remains of Breghoneir's worldly possessions, and his post is nothing more than ancient Graeth carved stone seats. In the west wall here is a small tunnel which leads beneath this cave to the **Frostwork Conduit (32B)**. Finally in the twilight of his existence, the Graeth outcast Breghoneir spends his last decades here warning those under Ylfrit's Embrace to turn away. Breghoneir also roams these tunnels, and the Dark Trolls have learned to avoid him if at all possible. Although not able to speak the tongues of men, Breghoneir can communicate via telepathy. If encountered here, while watching over the entrance to the Oubliette at **33**, Breghoneir will read the thoughts of intruders, and will sternly implore fortune-seekers to turn away or face his wrath. Only those actually under Ylfrit's Embrace will be permitted to pass, but Breghoneir's strong warnings might give pause to those misguided victims of the Taint. Breghoneir will not pursue those who flee from this encounter as his only concern is to deter those seeking the Queen's resting place. See Graeth in the Appendix for full description. The outcast wears a heavy intricate robe and the lone device he wields, which is only drawn to shed blood, is a silver falchion (*Vigil's Edge*: Sword, +1 to hit, deals two dice of damage). **Breghoneir**: DC 5 (only hit by silver), Spd 12, HD 7, Dam 2 dice, Special: Sleep or Hold Person. If probed, Breghoneir might relate details about the events outlined in the **Background**.

32B. Frostwork Conduit. This Frostwork-lined dried river conduit forms a large, smooth tunnel, connecting **30**, **46**, and **49** to this area. Breghoneir often roams this tunnel, and there is a good chance to encounter him here.

D. The Oubliette (33-37): The true power and capabilities of the Graeth may be realized if adventurers traverse these rooms. Built to protect and imprison Ylfrit, the Oubliette refers to both the actual oubliette and the four rooms designed to prohibit passage in or out. The walls, ceilings and floors of this region are graced with intricate stone carvings, and rife with **Graeth Glyph-magic**, detailed in the **MISCELLANY** section of the **Appendix**. Furthermore, Ylfrit's dreaming impinges upon reality in this region. The Twisted Faerie Queen wields some influence here in these chambers and shafts, to the point

that she may alter the outcome of the encounters in **33**, **34**, and **35** (though not **36** or **37** in most cases). It is her desire that those who have succumbed to Ylfrit's Embrace shall find their way through these obstacles and rescue her from internment. Ylfrit will immediately gain awareness of the presence of characters within the Oubliette. If any of these interlopers are in her embrace, she will employ her tainted dream power to embolden and build resolve in her devotees. This effect will essentially augment vigor and drive to the point that the recipient will be healed of 1d6 damage when the referee deems it appropriate. The benefactor will understand that Ylfrit is looking after him or her, and might have further bonuses as determined by the referee.

33. Entrance to the Oubliette: Past Breghoneir's post is a 30'x30' block room with a large round hinged bronze trapdoor covering an 8' diameter shaft dropping down 15' to a hallway below. Guarding the area in front of the shaft is a **Time-lost Glyph-magic** sentinel who appears as soon as intruders are 15' away from the shaft. The sentinel is a Living Statue (Mercury). Its Time-lost interval is 10 minutes, so if melee is still raging at that point the statue will blink out and back in, fully rebuilt, provided intruders are still within 15' of the shaft. **Living Statue (Mercury)**: DC 3, Spd 6, HD 12, Dam 1 die x2.

34. The Accursed Statue. This room is under the watch of a **Time-torn Glyph-magic** trap called the Accursed Statue (courtesy of Gabor Lux). A large, round hinged bronze trapdoor covers an 8' diameter shaft dropping down 15' to a hallway below. A large stone statue of a bearded, ominous-looking old man stands on a pedestal to the north of the trapdoor, overlooking a floor strewn with weapons – maces, swords, scimitars, daggers, halberds and axes. When the adventurers enter the chamber, the will of the statue commands the weapons to rise and fight the intruders. Altogether, the weapons have 16 levels of fighting ability: there may be sixteen fighting as HD 1 monsters, four as HD 4 monsters, or any other combination. Each combination which forms a monster will deal a minimum amount of damage equal to the number of weapons it is composed of, not to exceed the normal maximum on the die. Each weapon can have the statue's will knocked out of it via damage: assume each weapon equates to HD 1 and will fall to the floor harmlessly when damage is taken. At the beginning of each round, regardless of damage sustained to its weapons, the statue can recreate 16 levels of weapon fighting capability. To make things worse, the statue can and *will* animate the weapons of the characters, who must roll an open doors check to hold onto them! *Dispelling of Magic* counters the enchantment for 1d3+3 minutes, and destroying the statue (requires a +1 weapon, has 50 hp) will allow passage through until the Time-torn Glyph activates and “rebuilds” it, once per hour. Some spells may alter the enchantment's effects (avoid *haste* if you know what's good for you!). At the base of the pedestal, beneath the intricate

Graeth glyphs, is some alien writing, "*Made in Hungary*". Of the various weapons present, three are of note: *Silver Headed Mace* +1, *Halberd* +1 and a *Cursed Sword* -2.

35. Rain of Darts. Like those before it, this room houses a large round hinged bronze trapdoor covering an 8' diameter shaft dropping down 15' to a hallway below. The entire floor of this room is covered in hundreds of heavy darts of iron and wood. Scattered about as well are miscellaneous iron weapons, shields and tools. Once intruders approach, the **Time-torn Glyph-magic** trap will warm up. The ceiling and floor here are in fact magical super-magnets, both of which alternate activation, generating power with a low humming sound which quickly increases in intensity and climaxes with a violent rumble through the room as the magnetic force pulls the darts, and any other iron (or magnetically attracted item) toward it with great velocity. As the magnet gains momentum, the darts will slowly begin to move, the tips pointing at the opposing magnet, lining up and then WHAM! striking the surface with deadly force. The cycle has roughly 30 second intervals as the magnets take turns building power and drawing the darts to them, so it "fires" twice each minute, repeating this pattern continually while intruders are present. *Dispelling of Magic* counters the enchantment for 1d3+3 minutes, possibly long enough for the adventurers to open and scramble through the hatch. Any in the volley of darts will sustain 6d6 damage, save for ½. Weapons and armor might be torn away, or cause the victim to be slammed into the magnet for 3d6. Items charged by the magnets will be impossible to remove from the ceiling or floor as long as the trap is running.

36. Above the Oublette. As the characters enter this area those in the Queen's embrace will hear her voice urging them on: "You have come for me, now claim your rightful place, my King!" A large round-hinged bronze trapdoor is opened above an 8' diameter shaft which drops down 25 feet to **37**. Secured to the cover is a heavy knotted rope for climbing into and out of **37**. If the adventurers have made it this far, they might witness the last of three figures emerging from below through this portal. Protecting the shaft and the now assembled **Time-locked Dreamers** is a **Time-torn Glyph-magic Barrier**, stretching between two basalt columns in the east and west niches. Coursing back and forth in a continuous cycle are purple lightning-like discharges of negative energy. These bolts crackle and spark, filling the room with an eerie glow of unearthly light. **Adventurers in Ylfrit's Embrace:** As soon as any character in Ylfrit's Embrace enters this area, and once each round while in **36** or **37**, a save vs. spell must be made. Failure indicates that the victim's mind is controlled by the Queen; such a character will either aid the Time-locked Dreamers in their possible struggle against uninvited adventurers or descend the knotted rope to the floor of **37** and join the Twisted Faerie Queen's dreams forever. No saves are permitted once the floor of **37** is reached.

Any action which might jar the recently controlled character will allow another save vs spell to break the control; this includes such things as damaging a party member, taking damage, and each round climbing the knotted rope.

Climbing the Knotted Rope: This rope can be climbed in or out of **37** in three minutes. Those descending while under Ylfrit's Embrace will be permitted three final saves to avoid reaching the floor of **37**. **Time-torn Barrier:** The barrier may be crossed in three ways; normal movement, carefully timed jump, or by squeezing between one of the basalt pillars and the wall. Moving through normally indicates impact from a bolt. The energy hurls victims back twenty feet, causes 3d6 damage, stuns for one minute, and demands a save vs death to avoid the loss of one level. Once/minute a character can attempt to time the bolts and jump through unscathed. The player must succeed in a DEX check rolled with 4d6 in order to succeed; otherwise a bolt strikes the character as above. Observation might reveal a narrow gap between each pillar and the wall which would allow a slender or small, unarmored character to force his or her way past the barrier. The Time-locked Dreamers are pre-pared for such tactics. *Dispelling of Magic* will halt the barrier for 1d3+3 minutes. **Time-locked Dreamers:** The only surviving members of Ylfrit's dream court, Aleth Enach, Metherym and Vin Phinaar the Odd, are under the Queen's mental control, mere puppets. The Queen awakens her court members at the appropriate time, not only to defend herself, but to usher visitors under the sway of her dreams down to the Oublette that they too might join her in eternal slumber. Those slain here are tossed into the shaft. If saved from her clutches, the three might become NPC's as they are in fact lawful adventurers from the alien dimension of Evarg-Rah. **Aleth Enach:** DC 4, Spd 9, HD 7, Dam 1 die+2 with scimitar, Special: Cold Scream. Aleth is a silver-skinned Elf-kind. Primary attack is with a blue glowing scimitar (*Cold Scream*, Sword, +1, adds 2 cold damage, on a 20 target is frozen solid until thawed, save or die), optional attack expends one of three remaining missiles (*Thunder Javelins*, quantity three, single use missile creates a booming stroke of lightning, range 60 feet, deals 7d6 save for ½). **Metherym:** DC 5, Spd 12, HD 7+1, Dam 1 die+4 with two-hander, Special: Glitch Gut. Metherym is a huge four-armed, blue-skinned Alien. Primary attack is with a great sword which has rotating serrated edges in melee (*Glitch Gut*, Two-handed Sword, +1, requires regular cleaning and oiling, deals 1 die+4, on a 1 malfunctions and requires major repair), optional attack requires two rounds to utilize (*Pocket Boulders*, quantity 13, STR 18 to throw, on command small stone grows to boulder-size and can be thrown up to 10 feet at +2 to hit, deals 3d6, throwing takes two rounds). **Vin Phinaar the Odd:** DC 2, Spd 12, HD 6+1, Dam 1 die+1 with rapier, Special: Widow Sting. Vin is a tall bipedal green Insectoid. Only attack is with a gold-handled rapier (*Widow Sting*, Sword, +1, each hit injects small poison dose of 1 damage, after five doses or on a 20 target must save vs poison or die). Vin also possesses a pair of

custom-fitted anklets (*Floating Footwear*, wearer always falls like a feather and can activate levitation thrice daily for 10 minutes at Spd 6). During this encounter Ylfrit is so preoccupied with controlling her dreaming puppets that she cannot use her influence. If all of the Time-locked Dreamers are slain and there are none present under her embrace, the Queen is defenseless, lying helplessly below in **37**.

37. Twisted Faerie Queen's Oubliette. Ylfrit imagines that she still rules from her throne. In reality she is locked in dream, sleeping in the oubliette after being placed here for her betrayal. She visits the dreams of men, trying to entice them into rescuing her and becoming her King. Some men have been lured to her; they too are now locked in Ylfrit's world of nightmare. Others have died trying to save the alluring temptress, and many have been driven to madness by her dreams. This entire area is a **Time-locked Glyph-magic Chamber**, aging simply does not occur. The eternally youthful, age-old former monarch of the Graeth now lies calmly slumbering upon a rune-carved stone dais in this, her prison. Ageless and beautiful, the Queen's raven hair and lithe beauty are capable of melting the staunchest of hearts. Should the adventurers arrive here after dealing with her guardians, Ylfrit will be expending all of her dreaming capabilities to lure some hero to save her from these usurping invaders. Remember that even now, those under Ylfrit's Embrace will become Time-locked Dreamers as soon as they step onto the floor of this room; meaning, of course, that the Queen suddenly has a puppet hero to save her. The chamber has been organized under Ylfrit's direction, with piles of slain would-be Kings to the south, a mass of treasure from same to the west, a pile of items to the east, and an area to the north, at the Queen's feet, where her three dreaming slaves stand guard when not encountered in **36**. Inspecting the corpses will find some frozen solid, some pale from poison, some torn to bloody shreds, and some fried to a crisp; all that died and were thrown here should be treated as recently slain. Forgotten in this pile are *Potions* (*Giant Strength* x2, *Healing* x3, *Heroism* x1, *Invulnerability* x1), *Scrolls* (Random Spells x6, Mag or Pr), and a *Ring of Protection*. The pile of items contains plenty of useful arms, armor and delving gear. Of note is the following: *Staff of Striking*, *Necklace of Rat-shape* (78 charges), a *Magic Bow*, and an *Ifrit Bottle* with a very angry, wholly evil prisoner named Crox. The pile of loot amounts to 7,528 silver, 4,265 gold, and 18 gems (50x4, 100x9, 500x3, 1000x2). Time-locked Dreamers may be rescued in two ways; slaying Ylfrit or ending the Taint, see **Cleansing the Caves** in **The Taint**, section IV. Slaying Ylfrit is rather simple if she is undefended. Doing so might have long reaching effects, determined by the referee, not limited to her dream subjects seeking revenge. Regardless, referees should not hesitate to allow players to gain the satisfaction of doing so.

E. East Tunnels (38-50): See description for **C** (West Tunnels) above.

38. Stone Theater. The floor here resembles an amphitheater of sorts. Multiple tiers, descending to the center of the cave, were formed many centuries past when the very stone sank deeper into the depths. Dozens of wide shelves form the floor and rim the middle of the cave, some 30' below. At the center of the floor is an opening from which heat rises, and beneath it a stone shaft that wends and winds down 25' to the ceiling of **38B**. On the south wall is a steep ramp leading up to the **Slippery Tunnel** which connects to Level Two (or a level of your own creation).

38B. Sweltering Grotto. The humid air in this deep cave is palpable. Thermal water condenses below and rises through vents and cracks in the floor, creating a thick, damp atmosphere. A visible column of steam rises from a shaft opening in the floor which drops suddenly 40' down to the Bathtub Stalagmites (**38C**). The Troll Exiles in the cave below have rigged a crude warning system. All around the edges and in various nooks within the shaft they have placed numerous large loose stones. These measures might drop with a thud into **38C** if intruders are approaching, possibly alerting the Exiles in time to react.

38C. Bathtub Stalagmites. Beneath the Sweltering Grotto, this cave is remarkable for its bathtub stalagmites. Naturally formed pools of heated water, these bathtubs vary from 3' to 15' in diameter. Each was formed from dripping condensation which now collects in calcite-rimmed pools resembling bathtubs. Vision is reduced to 15' in the heated mist. The **Troll Exiles** lair here and are normally found relaxing in one of the natural hot tubs. These banished Dark Trolls are named Dokh, Eshrek, Grothok and Ogg Grodd (L). Run out of the Dark Troll Citadel many years ago, these four have made this out-of-the-way cave their home. By working as a group, the Troll Exiles have been able to survive the dangers of the Lower Caves and have become somewhat ambivalent regarding normal Dark Troll concerns. Ogg has begun to consider potential foes with more respect as he now feels that any enemy of the Dark Trolls is possibly an ally of his. Ogg has hidden their loot at the bottom of a small but deep tub here; it consists of silver and gold as well as an iron box containing some gems. The Exiles despise the Bogbears but tire of killing them: their numbers are rarely reduced and they are entirely inedible. Former **Dark Trolls**: DC 4, Spd 12, HD 6+3, Dam 1 die+2, Special: Regenerate. Of particular note is a dried tub which now has a very heavy boulder placed upon it by the Trolls. The bottom of this stalagmite is actually a shaft angling down after a short drop, turning into a low passage that eventually connects to the Dark Troll Highway. This **Secret Passage** circumvents the guarded outpost at **8**, and is known only to the Troll Exiles who keep it sealed from above.

39. The Looming. Most denizens of the Lower Caves avoid this area. A heavy presence looms here, hanging from the very air with a palpable sensation of doom. The

cave itself is fairly mundane, with a few stalagmites on the otherwise smooth floor. The feeling that deters underworld beings is of an unknown origin, but it does create what might at first seem to be a safe zone for surface dwellers. However, anyone who remains here for more than 10 minutes will be subject to the Looming. Each round thereafter the individual will begin to leak out of time as their existence unravels. There is a chance that if Arazul is nearby he will warn characters to escape immediately. Once the Looming begins, the sensation of doom actually lessens as the cave begins to feel more and more relaxing and comforting. In an amount of time equal to the sum of CON and level, the character shall disappear and cease to exist in the memory of this world, becoming re woven into a random alternate existence. The current inhabitants of this cave arrived here in this fashion from another world, and are trying to figure out how to get back (they are not affected by the Looming of this world). **Lost Corsairs:** Ank Moaf, El Amn, Kafi, Kimali Zhues, Molif Yot (L), Zliff. Treat all as War 3, and Molif Yot the Leader as War 4. Armed with scimitars and daggers, and wearing sandals and turbans, these Barbary pirates are ill-equipped to survive in the Lower Caves. They speak a stuttering version of the common tongue and are very thirsty. Also of

note is the fact that Kafi somehow learned Ylfrit's Poem months before the Lost Corsairs arrived here (See *Ylfrit's Poem* in the Appendix).

40. Arazul's Cave. The mysterious stalking black cat Arazul lays claim to this extremely uneven, rocky cave. A pair of bathtub stalagmites are formed here, one at the center of a shallow pool of clear, cool water. Arazul stalks the Lower Caves watching denizens and explorers alike. Like the Lost Corsairs (39) he was brought here by the Looming. Arazul has been living off of Mad Crickets and other prey while roaming these caves for many years. Arazul is an otherworldly being, from a place where his kind is worshiped as gods by alien reptiles. Arazul watches visitors, attempting to discern their motives. At times he will be helpful, at other times not. Arazul has gathered much knowledge of both the Graeth and the Dark Trolls. Arazul alone knows the secrets of both Rognvald and Ylfrit. Anyone seeking to cleanse the Taint will be aided by Arazul, but he is loathe to mingle too much in mortal matters lest it upset the higher beings that hold sway over this world. On the north wall are the **Forgotten Steps** connecting to Level Six (or a dungeon of your devising).



41. Bogbear Dens. This cave serves as the lair for Urgan's Bogbears who are charged with preventing anyone entrance beyond this area. There are always at least two lying in ambush at **A** and **B**. The rest will move to eradicate any ambushed intruders by circling around through **38** if possible. **Bogbears** (7): DC 5, Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1 die, Special: see description.

42. Moonmilk Grotto. This remarkable cave boasts seven large precarious scalloped stalagmites (called splattermites) surrounding a naturally formed multi-tiered pyramid-like mass of rock. Upon this formation thick globules of mineral-filled mud drop continuously from the ceiling, coating the pyramid and the entire floor in semi-dry moonmilk. This cave is under the sway of the *Eerie Presence* (see Great Bogbear, Appendix). At the cave's edge a wide passage slopes down and winds under the floor, leading to **42B**.

42B. Urgan's Pit: Home of Urgan, the **Great Bogbear** (DC 4 (only hit by silver or magic), Spd 6, HD 5+1, Dam 1 die+2, Special: see description). This cave is also under the sway of the *Eerie Presence*. At one time this served as Jhimyn's research cave where he grew Bogbears to defend himself, tried to learn the secrets of the Taint, and attempted to decipher the songs of the Mad Crickets. Rognvald found him first, and the Evil Roots spread the Taint, creating a Great Bogbear named Urgan that tried to slay Jhimyn. Escaping from the cave, Jhimyn attempted to return to the Halfway Inn, leaving all his research materials behind in his desperation. It was then that Jhimyn finally understood the song of the crickets, and before he even got as far as the Dark Troll Highway he had become the Cricket King (see **44**). Now, Urgan has destroyed much of Jhimyn's work save the Bogbear Pumpkin Patch and various cultivation tools. Jhimyn's Journal is still here as well, and Urgan will from time to time place Jhimyn's old wizard's cap on his gigantic head and attempt to read that book, thinking that he is a sorcerer of sorts. Jhimyn's Journal contain's a copy of Ylfrit's Poem (Appendix), Bogbear Growth techniques, some random notes on the Taint, and the odd trees which are springing up in the cave, but then reads as if written by a man obsessed with the crickets and devolves into the scribbles of a madman. There are three **Foul Saplings** (DC 9, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special) here, and a large Root Tunnel is in one of the walls. **Root Tunnels** (see **43B**): 8' diameter Root Tunnels connect this room to rooms **25**, **43B** and **48**.

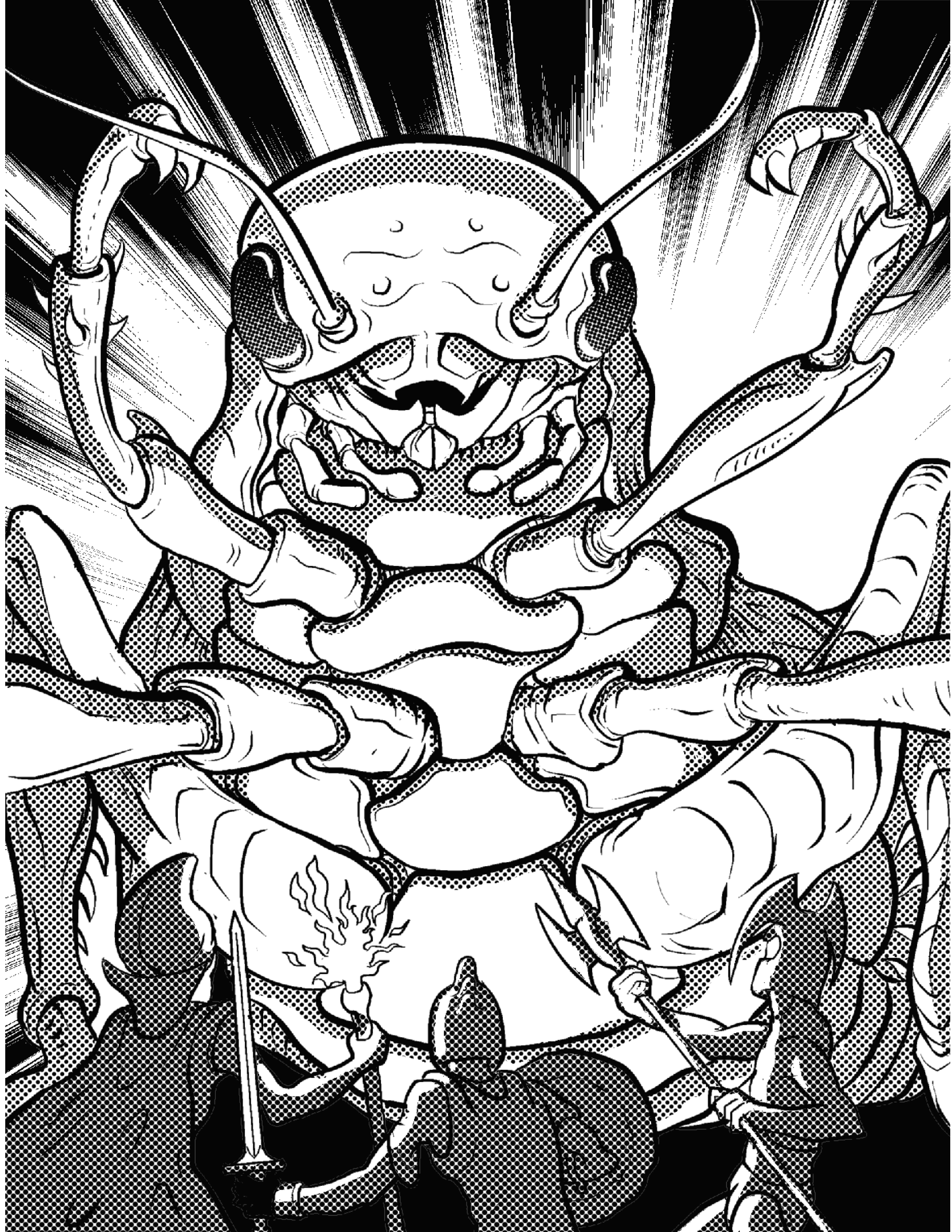
43. Grove Bog. This enormous cavern is a swampy expanse of tainted, unnatural growth. At its center is the pale Ancestral Oak, twisted, gnarled and seemingly writhing with evil. The bog is a cacophony of cricket chirps and songs; thick clouds of bog flies buzz about, the mushy ground belches out malodorous swamp gas, green fireflies skit about or settle on surfaces throughout, and beneath the various sounds a low moaning echoes along the ceiling. **Every 5 minutes here roll 1d6: 1-5: Mad**

Crickets attack, 6: Jhimyn (44) and Mad Crickets attack. The **Ancestral Oak** (as noted earlier in **The Taint**) is corrupted by Rognvald's demented, ancient psyche. This once-enriching Fae magic node is now the source of the Taint which pervades the region. Anyone approaching within 20 feet of the tree will get Rognvald's attention. **Mad Crickets**, **Evil Roots** and **Dread Lurkers** will begin to assail the characters, and will continue to do so until the area is vacated, or they duck directly out of Rognvald's view by going under the tree to **43B**. Referees should make note of **Cleansing the Caves** in **The Taint**.

43B Beneath the Tree: A half-flooded murky pit lies beneath the Ancestral Oak, haunted by a trio of **Dread Lurkers** (DC 2 (only hit by magic), Spd 6, HD 6, Dam special). **Root Tunnels:** Formed by the Evil Roots in Rognvald's never ending search for his Mother, these tunnels range in diameter from 2' to 8'. The chaotic network is dug through the very stone below many regions of the Lower Caves. These roots have not yet been able to burrow into the Halfway Inn or the Oubliette. From the area beneath the Ancestral Oak, the tunnels eventually connect four different areas (**25**, **42B**, **43B** and **48**). Dread Lurkers stalk these larger tunnels and there is a good chance of encountering one or more here.

44. Jhimyn the Cricket King. The former Wizard Jhimyn, who let curiosity get the better of him, is here. Now mindless and transformed, Jhimyn is the Cricket King, charged with protecting the Grove-Bog and watching over his Mad Cricket disciples. The cave is home to no less than three dozen Mad Crickets at all times, as well as pair of Foul Saplings, and unless he is on the prowl, Jhimyn himself is here. See **42B** for some background. Jhimyn is an elephant-sized mutated albino cricket monster, able to leap great distances to land on its prey, and once every 10 minutes can spray acid in a cone 30'x10'. **Jhimyn:** DC 4, Spd 9, HD 9, Dam 2 dice, leap 90' space permitting, leap Attack +3 to hit, double damage, acid spit 30 feet for 8d6, save ½, items must save. If slain, Jhimyn will slowly revert back to his true form, but will be quickly devoured by crickets and bog flies unless rescued immediately. In the back of the cave, mostly covered in muck, are the remains of three recently slain intruders. Of note amongst the thrashed and dissolved corpses are a *Helm of Teleportation*, and a *Satchel of Gold Holding* (Acts as a Bag, but ONLY accepts gold coins! Good for foiling counterfeiters, currently holds 2,400 gold).

45. Golden Gape. At the southeast end of this cave the ceiling slants sharply downward with a massive slab of immeasurably heavy stone. This slab is coated with a glowing yellowish coating of long-decomposed minerals. Ancient Glyphs, large and small, greet onlookers. Carved into the radiant formation centuries ago by Graeth hands, the Glyphs demand attention. The entire area below the symbols is a field of **Time-toss Glyph-magic** (see Appendix).



Below the pitched ceiling is a 3' low, 13' wide gaping portal yielding egress.

46. Toothy Maw. This cave boasts a stalagmitic mass choked with rubble and strewn with fallen blocks between thick, stout columns of stone. Sharp calcite protrusions jut from between the varied formations, creating a blanket of jagged, reflective teeth. Progress through this room is precarious even for the skilled spelunker. A sloping tunnel to the east impinges upon the Frostwork Conduit (see **32B**), connecting areas **30**, **32B** and **49** to this one.

47. Pinching Cave. The floor of this cave rises rapidly while the ceiling drops at its center, creating a crawlspace no more than 3' high. Passage requires cautious crawling through the jagged pinch, some 20' in length. Those crawling through here will happen upon a Long Lost Friend of an individual party member. This life-like illusion has taken form from the memories and mental images of someone within the adventuring party. The Friend could be a long-dead relative, a recently slain member of the group, someone's child, or similar. The Friend will greet and interact normally, then plead for help, beseeching the party to unlock him or her from the dark devices of the Faerie Queen Ylfrit and her dream prison.

48. Stone Circle: One of the three ancient Fae magic nodes, the Stone Circle is now corrupted by the spread of Taint. Consisting of a carefully arranged ring of large monolithic stones, the Stone Circle floods this entire cave in an aura of strange magic. Dancing in the circle just inside the perimeter are a mass of **Hidden-folk** (19: DC 2, Spd 12, HD 5, Dam 1 die). The magic of the circle causes all viewing it from this cave to save vs spell or be drawn to it. This effect, called the *Lure of the Dance*, will cause the afflicted to join the ritual. The enchanted characters will dance their way around the circle until they become incapable due to reverse aging or are rescued from outside. Each lap of the Stone Circle causes the victim to reverse age one-tenth of his current age. While this sounds like a fabulous boon, it is potentially dangerous, normally protected by Hidden-folk, and will only affect a mortal once per lifetime. A trio of Foul Saplings spread the taint while on the east wall a narrow slope leads down to large **Root Tunnels** (see **43B**): 8' diameter Root Tunnels connect this room to rooms **25**, **42B** and **43B**. Referees should make note of **Cleansing the Caves in The Taint**.

49. Crystal Spring. A freshwater spring of icy cold water has formed a large, shallow pool in the western half of this cave. The bottom of the clear pool is lined with pink tendril-like crystal formations which jut out of the water in certain spots. Darting to and fro amongst the crystalline webs are scores of tiny multi-hued, striped fish. In the eastern half of the cave, perched atop a wide base, is an age-old statue of a female Graeth (Sikke-Qwyngard) chiseled from a natural column extending above the handiwork

to meet the ceiling 15' up. From this magic statue the spirit of Sikke will emerge and attack intruders if Ylfrit's Memory, **50B**, is disturbed. Eating any of the rather easy-to-catch fish will heal the individual 1d3 damage. Each of these *Garbb Fish* has a small amount of poison from a tiny gland, and devouring more than six in ten minutes will necessitate a save vs poison to avoid death. There are 86 Garbbs in the pool, and more will fill it provided at least a half dozen are left behind. The healing power of the Garbb lasts but one day once out of the water. Anyone drinking the water from the pool will have all poison in their system neutralized. The water remains usable for one day, afterwards turning into a foul tasting liquid which will induce nausea and pain but will no longer neutralize poisons. The *Pink Crystal* is nourishing, and will dissolve in the mouth or may be crushed and mixed with water (making an addictive substance called *Pinkie*). Anyone eating it will not require rest of any sort for three days, at the end of which the strung out character must sleep for 12 hours straight. Near the center of the south wall a shallow pit drops into the top of the **Frostwork Conduit** (see **32B**), connecting **30**, **32B**, and **46** to this area.

50. Entrance to Ylfrit's Memory. This large cave has a very uneven floor, littered with numerous concretions which have fallen from the ceiling and shattered into large fragments. Amidst the loose stone are four **Evil Roots**: DC 7, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special. The center of the floor rises up to a level plateau, the top of which ranges from eight to ten feet and is out of view. At the center of the rise is a hollowed area, the lair of a **Quivering Mass**: DC 9, Spd 0, HD 12, Dam 2d+special, Glob Spew. The tentacles of this mindless devourer will reach down from the darkness and attack, and it can lob its missiles from out of sight as well. Above the rise is a small hole formed by the bottom of a vertical shaft leading up 10 feet through the ceiling to **50B**, Ylfrit's Memory.

50B. Ylfrit's Memory. A small grotto is connected to **50** by a short vertical shaft. On the wall above the floor and shaft is a low, wide natural stone shelf. A pair of carved pillars, depicting Unseelie scenes, frames a shrine of sorts to Ylfrit. Seated upon an elaborate throne, the Queen's likeness is sculpted from the wall itself. Atop the statue's head is a diadem of silver and upon her lap is a silver scepter, both covered with the dust of ages. Non-magic, the crown and scepter are both set with emeralds and the value of these relics is 2,200 and 3,100 gold, respectively. The base of the throne has a secret compartment, within which are a few unusual items: a decapitated ancient statue head weighing 15 lbs (*Balthagorn's Head*, confers a delusional feeling of invincibility, bonus of 1 on all saves), a snake-skin pouch rotted with age holds a rather large white rabbit paw (*Wallbanger's Paw*, owner eventually befriends an imaginary friend named Yevrah, endlessly entertaining and always nearby unless tired. Totally imperceptible to others, Yevrah can function as an

invisible servant for up to five minor tasks before he must rest for a day), four old charred leg bones (*Black Dog's Bones*, if bones buried in the ground the user gains the spell-like power *Black Dog's Bite*: once per day summon ghostly dog which can bite once per level of the caster for 1d6 damage, never missing, and doing so no more than once per minute. Better bury the bones well, because when not summoned the ghost dog is searching for them in order to dig them up and gain some peace), and a large thick glass vessel sealed with a hammered silver lid (*Zim's Innards*, drinking foul black liquid causes immediate memory loss of one level, the liquid is to be applied to weapons by a spell-caster, adding a bonus of +1 to magic or non-magic items and coating in a glittering sheen, enough liquid for 6 swords or equivalent). Touching any of the above items causes the guardian spirit of Sikke-Qwyngard to be summoned forth from her statue in **49**. The spirit will float up into the grotto and attack with surprise. **Sikke-Qwyngard**: DC 5 (only hit by silver), Spd 12, HD 7, Damage 1d+1, Special: Sleep or Hold Person.

Appendices I-IV

I. NEW MONSTERS:

Blood Thumps (*Utahraptor*): DC 4, Spd 12, HD 10, Dam 2 dice. 10 feet long (20 with tail), 7 feet tall, and weighing about 1,500 lbs. Covered in dark brown feathers with massive jaws, long tails and bird-like feet topped by a single massive curved hind-claw. Blood Thumps are trained to bite rather than use their formidable dagger-like claws, so as to not unsaddle their riders. These huge dinosaurs can trample opponents if able to charge into melee, causing 2d6 to all in a 5' wide by 20' long path, plus a save vs paralysis to avoid being bowled over and spending one round gaining footing.

Bogbears: DC 5, Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1 die. Surprise 3 in 6, they themselves are only surprised 1 in 6. Bogbears are immune to charm, hold and sleep. While engaged in melee, the target of a Bogbear's attacks must save vs paralyze at the beginning of each round or become *Frozen with Fear* for that round. Bogbears attack at +2 against foes *Frozen with Fear*. Particularly bright light will cause Bogbears to lose 1 round of action until they adjust to it. (A full Bogbear description can be found in *Fight On!* #3.)

Chasm Creeps: DC 6, Spd 9, HD 3+1, Dam 1d+special. Also called False Wights, Chasm Creeps are blood-thirsty, devolved, corrupted Fae known for long periods of dormancy. While hibernating for years at a time, Chasm Creeps decompose into the earth. Awakening requires a regenerative period of many days, after which they begin feeding immediately. Their very touch drains physical energy from their targets. Each successful attack regenerates the Chasm Creep 1 hp and requires a save vs paralyze

to avoid Exhaustion. Failure indicates the loss of 1d3 points of CON. Any character reduced to zero CON dies immediately. Normal rest will return lost CON points at a rate of one per 10 minutes. Chasm Creeps are only struck by magic weapons and are immune to all mind altering (sleep, charm, hold, fear, etc) magic.

Claw Maws (*Velociraptor*): DC 2/7, Spd 18, HD 2, Damage: ½ die+special. 3 feet long (7 with tail), 2 feet high at the hip, and weighing about 35 lbs. Covered in grey and black feathers, with strong razor fang filled jaws, long thin tails, and bird-like feet topped with a single sharp, curved hind-claw. Claw Maws are the ultimate hunters; fast, silent, sly, cunning and always hungry. They hunt in large packs and work in unison to flush prey into ambushes or simply overwhelm larger, slower moving targets with their vicious bites. Their sharp hind-claws are normally used to puncture a target, pinning them in place or allowing the raptor to cling to a target as they lock their jaws for the kill. Once a Claw Maw has hit a target, it will cling to it and deal 3 hp damage per round thereafter. Up to four of these murderous little predators can attack a man each round. Claw Maws are lightning quick, as reflected by their superior DC, which is reduced to 7 after they have locked their jaw in for a kill. Slain raptors will have to be carefully removed from their prey by prying open those deadly jaws.

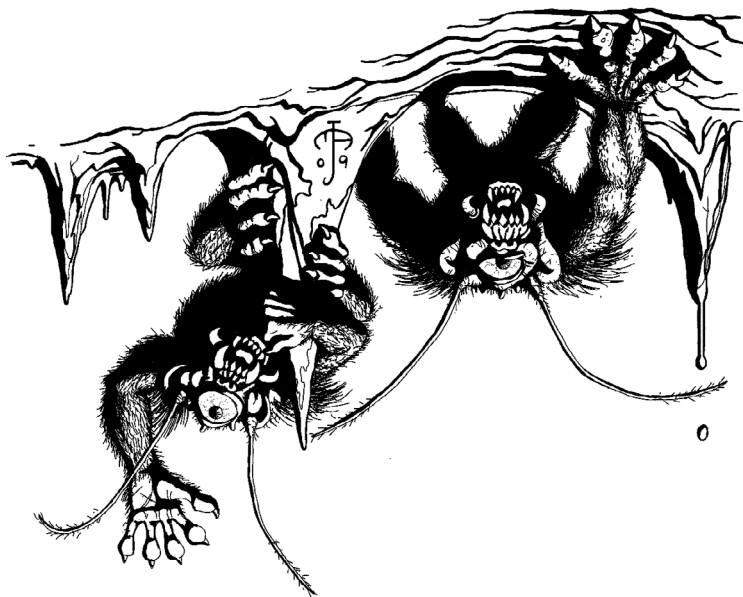
Cryptlings: DC 7/2, Spd 9, HD 3 (+4 to hit), Dam 1 die. Mutated, deformed, once magical servants, Cryptlings are dusky, bristly and bent. Vaguely humanoid and no more than a meter tall, Cryptlings give off a constant aura of Unseelie magic which causes intense unease in surface dwellers. This effect causes Cryptlings to gain initiative nearly all the time. Attacks upon them are at a marked disadvantage, reflected in their effective DC of 2. Cryptlings assail their targets with all manner of physical blows from their malformed shapes, and each strike is at +4 to hit due to the unsettling aura which surrounds them. Their only link to Unseelie magic is now found in ancient Fae burial sites, and they protect these places with all of their power.

Dark Trolls: DC 4, Spd 12, HD 6+3, Dam 1d+2, Regenerate. Intelligent trolls who wear armor and prefer to attack with weapons (dealing +2 damage). Dark Trolls consider themselves the 'Lords' of *The Darkness Beneath*, and frequently emerge from their citadel on Level Nine to remind the other denizens of that fact. Dark Trolls are not quick to attack, normally preferring to parley or intimidate those they encounter. In fact, many of their kind consider 'breaking a sweat' when dealing with surface folk an insult, and will typically insist on some sort of monetary tribute before moving along. Most Dark Trolls encountered in *The Lower Caves* will be traveling the *Troll Highway*, simply passing through and usually mounted on a Blood Thump. Dark Trolls will be described in more detail in a forthcoming issue of *Fight On!*

Dread Lurkers: DC 2, Spd 6, HD 6, Dam special. These undead stalkers are the embodiment of evil Fae memories and violent bloodshed. Waiting in the darkest depths, Dread Lurkers awake when surface dwellers are nearby. Best described as lengthening shadows, Dread Lurkers creep slowly and undetected until they are able to attack with surprise (4 in 6). Long taloned claws of darkness grasp at their victim's throat. Targets successfully struck must save or find themselves paralyzed in a chilling death clutch which causes strangulation damage of 2 dice per round. The Dread Lurker will never repent from its relentless effort to destroy life. Only by turning undead or slaying the Dread Lurker can it be stopped, and even then the choking victim will require 1d3+3 rounds to recover. Dread Lurkers are only struck by magic weapons and being incorporeal are immune to most magical effects. Intense light might drive them away, and if brought to bear while they are strangling will destroy the dark undead being at a rate of 2d6 damage per round.

Evil Roots: DC 7, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special. Burrowing network of roots connected to a sentient tree. Each instance of these abominations consists of three 1 HD roots. Evil Roots are capable of snatching and holding targets and can also lash out to grab weapons. The reach of these unnatural tentacles ranges from 10 to 30 feet, and targets out of reach might still be subject to more Evil Roots from adjacent floors, walls, or ceilings. Each strike upon a foe necessitates a save vs paralyzation. If that strike was the result of a roll to hit score of 20, a failed save indicates that the target's weapon, shield or other held item has been lashed and removed. Otherwise these failed saving throws mean that the victim has become coiled by a root. Targets coiled are incapable of movement but may still attack roots until they have failed three times and a trio of roots has effectively paralyzed them. At this point the roots begin to constrict and strangle, causing 1 die of strangulation damage per round.

Feral Fangs: DC 6, Spd 12, HD 3, Dam 1 die. Subterranean, vaguely ape-like creatures living in the highest recesses of underworld caverns, Feral Fangs are thin, gaunt and tall, extremely agile and deceptively strong. Able to spend their entire lives without ever touching the ground, these monsters crawl, leap and climb amidst the rocky crags of their homes. They are able to scale stone surfaces in a "spider-like" fashion, and normally stalk prey while hanging upside down from stalactites. A large sightless green glowing eye can execute a gaze attack once/round, causing paralysis for 1d6 minutes at a range of 30 feet. A pair of forehead-mounted antennae detects movement at a distance of 300 feet. Feral Fangs are naturally resistant to magic, saving against it at +4. Feral Fangs are able to surprise their foes on a 4 in 6 and prefer to attack from above in great numbers if able. Crafty and cunning, they are excellent ambushers and hunters.



Foul Sapling: DC 9, Spd 0, HD 1, Dam special. Small, pale trees connected via roots and growing from a parent sentient tree; Foul Saplings radiate an aura of Taint, creating chaotic changes to the natural order of things nearby. Incapable of attack, Foul Saplings have but one defense: if destroyed the sapling releases one last wave of Taint in a 15-25' radius. This intense arcane burst causes 4d6 damage (save for one-half) to both surface dwellers and denizens of the underworld. Those failing are bewildered for 2d6 rounds, unable to take any actions.

Graeth: DC 5, Spd 12, HD 5-7, Damage 1d+1 or by weapon. Mostly forgotten and nearly extinct, the once all-conquering Graeth are now reduced to a relative few. Certain powerful Graeth are particularly long-lived, but cannot foster the growth of their kind without the presence of strong Fae magic, itself nearly exhausted. Rumors exist of still-thriving Graeth communities deep within the earth in areas untainted by the magic of men. Graeth are regal, majestic Fae-kind, ranging from six to seven feet tall with gray skin, large double-pupilled amber eyes, long silver hair, wiry or lithe physiques, heavy intricate robes or flowing gowns, melodic voices, graceful cat-like movements, and an air of divinity. Graeth may use the spell-like powers of *Sleep* and *Hold* and in addition may engage foes in melee (+1 to hit for 1d+1 damage or by weapon). Graeth are only damaged by silver weapons or standard, unarmed attacks from fantastical beasts of 5 or greater HD. However, these ancient Fae are extremely susceptible to the magic of man. All spells or spell-like effects will have double effect on Graeth, and Graeth roll all saving throws vs magic as a 1st level Warrior (13 vs. Wands, 16 vs. Spells).

Great Bogbears: DC 4, Spd 6, HD 5+1, Dam 1d+2. Great Bogbears are only hit by silver or magic weapons, and are immune to charm, hold and sleep. Great Bogbears deal +2 damage in combat. In addition to the Bogbear *Frozen with Fear* power, simply seeing a Great Bogbear can

Cause Panic, with saving throws against paralyze rolled as follows: 1 HD or lower: No save, flee in panic; 2-4 HD: Save or flee in panic; 5-7 HD: Save at +2 or flee in panic; 8+ HD: Immune. If the saving throw is made, the character is immune to *Cause Panic* for the rest of that encounter. Those fleeing will do so for 1d6+4 rounds. The lair of a Great Bogbear is enveloped in an *Eerie Presence* with a radius of 90-180 feet. The presence is marked by cold drafts, whisperings of dark omen, moving shadows, and an ominous feeling of dread which intensifies as its center is approached. The *Eerie Presence* creates an otherworldly unease, causing all characters to suffer a penalty of 1 on both attacks and saving throws. (The full Great Bogbear description can be found in *Fight On!* #3.)

Hidden-folk: DC 2, Spd 12, HD 5, Dam 1 die. Ageless spirits not of this world, Hidden-folk can be found near realm-connecting wellsprings of Fae magic, participating in Fae rituals of dance or chant while in their wispy incorporeal forms. Mortals witnessing the rituals must save vs magic or become enthralled (elves save at -4). Characters watching the ritual for five or more rounds while enthralled will begin to age at a rate which doubles each round, beginning with two years in the first. Victims removed from the area will gain their senses and end the aging effect. Anyone approaching the ritual too closely will cause the Hidden-folk to notice. Some of them will materialize and most likely attack the trespassers. If intruders continue to remain nearby there is a chance that more Hidden-folk will notice and join in. Hidden-folk may not be damaged while incorporeal, and once material they are only struck by magic weapons. Elf-like with dark gray skin, Hidden-folk have no hair, ears or noses. They dress in heavy robes of leaf and vine and defend themselves with magically summoned daggers of quartz.

Living Statue (Mercury): DC 3, Spd 6, HD 12, Dam 1 die x 2. The Mercury construct is an 8' tall mass of shining liquid mercury with a vaguely humanoid form. It attacks twice each round, and when it moves or is struck it momentarily loses its shape as the mercury reacts and slowly reforms. This version has the innate power to *Rebuild* itself, fixing 3 hp damage at the end of each round. The statue strikes for 1 die damage with each arm, and any target struck for 5 or 6 damage (from one or both attacks) must save vs poison or become enveloped with mercury. Failure indicates that the target begins to suffocate and slumps to the floor covered in liquid mercury, with death ensuing in 1d3 minutes or as judged by the referee. This mercury will slither back and rejoin the statue, healing it of 1d6 damage after the victim is slain. Living Statues (Mercury) are immune to non-magical weapons, and to all spells and magic with the exception of *Dispelling of Magic* which will cause 1d6 damage/level of the caster outright by loosening the magic which binds the liquid mercury.

Mad Crickets: DC 6, Spd 9, HD 1 hit, Dam 1 hp. Tainted, twisted chirping bugs, Mad Crickets range in size from 6" to 18" in length. Their homes and surroundings are nearly always cascaded in their maddening ceaseless chirping. Their songs have patterns which might be noticed over time, and anyone taking the time to listen and consider the patterns will begin to think he can almost make out words in them. Doing so leads down the path to madness. Their painful bite deals damage from a flesh-softening acidic fluid. Mad Crickets use long antennae to sense movement and changes in atmosphere, and they are able to leap great distances, up to 25' or more. "All you hear is crickets" takes on a whole new meaning!

Pale Spawn: DC 7, Spd 9, HD 2+1, Dam 1 die. Devolved cave-dwelling Fae, Pale Spawn subsist on the fading emanations of Fae magic nodes. They normally huddle near these sources in large groups. Pale Spawn react quickly and violently when they notice intruders. Hairless and pallid, Pale Spawn are little more than savage neander-elves now, with strong, sharp claw-like nails and jagged, filthy fangs. They conduct melee with these, and will only pursue foes so far from their magical sustenance. Pale Spawn are fading like their life-giving Fae magic: many have slipped partway out of existence, but are still tied to this world by their brethren. For every two Pale Spawn encountered, another will appear should combat begin. At the beginning of each round of combat, 1d3-1 more will appear and add to their number until no Pale Spawn remain. Slain Pale Spawn decompose in under a minute.

Quivering Mass: DC 9, Spd 0, HD 12, Dam 2 dice + special, Glob Spew. This immobile organism is the result of vile experiments best left untold. It appears to be a writhing, bubbling mass of small pale worms. It is always found in a shallow pit or indentation which it fills to some degree, giving the impression of a pool of white worms. Normally dormant, it detects movement at 60', and will begin to attack as soon as prey is within the 20' reach of its pseudopod. The Quivering Mass is immune to all non-fire spells; all forms of fire deal +3 damage per die and it receives no save even if one is normally permitted. It has two attack modes; a single 20 foot long tentacle which lashes once per round and a Glob Spew which spits a mass of its own body to a range of 60 feet up to five times per day. The tentacle lash deals 2 dice of damage, and those hit must save vs poison or be subject to *Festering Wounds* (damage continues at a rate of 1 per minute for the next 15). Targets of the glob spew must save vs breath or be struck for 1 die of damage and become *Infested* (nausea and vomiting incapacitates for 1d6 minutes, at the end of which a save vs poison indicates if the victim lives or not). Only magic weapons deal damage to this abomination.

Stone Wretch: DC 2, Spd 0, HD 12-18, Damage: 3 dice + 3. A massive quasi-elemental stone serpent formed from the rock of the ancient underworld, the Stone Wretch is a

mindless, immortal guardian of solid, living earth. Growing through the centuries to their maximum length of 180 feet, mankind can be thankful that these ancient evils are tethered to the caves from which their bodies were formed. Thus, even the largest Stone Wretch may only attack that which it can reach, or targets within 180 feet of its source. The Stone Wretch has two attack forms and a reflective gaze effect. In the first round of an encounter it will breathe a violent blast of stone shards in a cone 60' long and 40' wide which causes 1d6/HD, save for one-half. It may only breathe thus once per hour. The thing can also eat targets. Its bite deals 3 dice+3, and any bite which reduces a target to zero hits indicates that the victim has been swallowed whole. Perhaps most fearsome, though, is its passive reflective gaze attack. Its enormous quartz eyes reflect like a mirror, and anyone seeing themselves in those eyes must save vs stone or be turned into a statue. The Stone Wretch is only damaged by magical weapons, and only magic which could hurt dirt will effect it.

Vaettes: DC 7, Spd 15, HD 3, Damage: n/a. Uncommon, mysterious family-based subterranean Fae. Small in stature, Vaettes are normally gray-clad with red caps, looking otherwise like smallish Gnomes. Able to become invisible at will, Vaettes are known for their utterly ruthless and vengeful nature, and can bring luck or misfortune to people. They never fight, but cause sickness in those that cross them, and can curse the rich to become poor. Only the most foolish mortals dabble in Vaette affairs.

II. TAGART, the TRAP-SPRINGERS, JALEN LONGSPEAR, and CRIMSON HATE:

Tagart, Troll Envoy: Tagart is a Dark Troll Envoy, charged with collecting tribute from various intelligent denizens of *The Darkness Beneath*. Every three Clutches, Tagart arrives at the West Entrance of the *Halfway Inn* and demands his tribute. Jalen has a tenuous truce with the Dark Trolls: as long as he continues to fork over this tribute, the Dark Trolls allow him to conduct business here. Tagart views every surface dweller he encounters outside of the Inn fair game, and will demand a hefty tax before allowing them to go free. Tagart is crafty, and will not risk his neck if he feels such a confrontation might go poorly. Tagart is an obese but ferocious Dark Troll, mounted on a particularly thick Blood Thump (add HD to both standard types), and is always accompanied by a pair of muscular Dark Troll Bodyguards likewise astride raptors and decked out in the finest arms and armor. Tagart will have a considerable amount of gold in his saddle bags. The Troll Envoy is no easy target, and slaying him will certainly enrage both Jalen and the Trolls in the citadel below.

The Trap-Springers: The Trap-Springers were formed two decades ago under the guidance of another fortune-seeking band, the Ribald Five. Jalen at the time was noteworthy only for the fact that he had served as a shield-

bearer for the Ribald Five, and after a string of successful adventures was charged with forming a band and aiding the Ribald Five by removing traps and flushing out monsters; an advance party of sorts. The nickname Trap-Springers stuck. One ill-fated excursion into *The Darkness Beneath* nearly did both bands in, leaving the Ribald Five at one member and the Trap-Springers at two. Jalen led the survivors out and quickly became the leader of the rebuilt group, which kept the Trap-Springers' name alive.

Coop Falter (Mag 7): Charter members of the Trap-Springers, Coop and Jalen have been friends since childhood. Coop is a slug of a man, adverse to physical exertion and perfectly content to sit down and work on his Tinker hobby locked away alone in his workshop. The most reluctant delver of the Trap-Springers, Coop remains here because, as Jalen promised when he convinced him to join all those years ago, one day he'd be famous and rich and would have his own wizard's lab. Although overweight, out of shape, sometimes lost in thought and altogether without direction, Coop is in fact a powerful Enchanter. He owns a *Staff of Power* and a *Ring of Invisibility*.

Gargo Greengas (DWar 6): Formerly of the Ribald Five, Gargo and Jalen are steadfast friends, both having saved the others' life numerous times. Gargo suffers from obsessive compulsive behavior. Organized and fastidious, the Dwarf insists on killing Orcs in the same order and with the same stroke of his sword every time. As meticulous as he is discerning, Gargo cannot stand to be near Orlaith until the action starts, when he becomes so focused on his methods that he finds her an invaluable ally. The Dwarf often has to stop and fix things which to his mind are out of order and utterly distracting. Prized possessions include a *Sword of Life Sucking* and a *Belt of Hill Giant Strength*.

Jalen Longspear (War 8): A legendary adventurer and founder of the Trap-Springers, Jalen is a tall, strapping man with chiseled features and a disarming smile. Somewhat unbalanced and altogether eccentric, Jalen is nevertheless a remarkable, striking presence and natural leader of men. Despite his predilection for grabbing the limelight and controlling the scene, Jalen brightens a room simply by entering it. The famous Hero has hundreds of fantastic adventuring tales, and will gladly share them with any who might listen. Of note: *Crimson Hate* (see below), *Serpent Shield* (-1 damage from each melee attack), *Basilisk-hide Bracers* (+4 saves vs stoning), *Royal Hauberk* (Plated Maille +2, half damage from fire, cold, lightning), *Bewinged War Bonnet* (Attack & Damage rolled twice, using higher result).

Crimson Hate: Jalen's prized possession, claimed from *The Darkness Beneath* years ago and forged by unknown hands, this war spear is nearly as famous as its owner. Some call it Toothpick of the Titans or Needle of the Gods; the menacing spear has a large head which vaguely resembles a dragon's, and its octagonal shaft is wrapped

entirely in thick reddish dragon-hide. The spear confers the Strength of Five, and commands the Five of Strength, or so the legends go. Five command words, uttered in the tongue of dragons, allow control of the spear's unusual magic abilities. *Eyes*: A cone of pale light extends to 30 feet, illuminating darkness and penetrating illusions. *Wings*: The spear flies at move 24, remaining under the owner's control, and may strike as if wielded by him or her out to 100'. *Breath*: A cone of rolling flame 60 feet long and 30 feet wide spews forth from the spear head, dealing 10d6, save for 1/2; usable thrice per day. *Fangs*: Sets melee mode to Strength of Five, attacking at +3 and dealing 3 dice+3 damage. *Claws*: Sets melee mode to Five of Strength, which summons four mirror images of its wielder. All five spear-toting figures may attack a separate target at +1 to hit, dealing 1 die of damage. The mirror images may only conduct melee, and vanish once combat ends, appearing again only during the next. Crimson Hate turns invisible when left idle for over one hour.

Orlaith the Younger (E War/Mag 4/4): Rescued by the Trap-Springers from Ogre captivity, this Elf maiden was raised by the brutes in the Ogre Downs. No one is sure if she learned her ill-mannered, unkempt ways from that upbringing or if she was kept alive because of them. Whatever the case, Orlaith is remarkable for her complete lack of etiquette, femininity, modesty, and grooming. Orlaith and Gargo are polar opposites, and unless in the field can barely stand one another's presence. The fact is that Orlaith enjoys needling Gargo, but loves him like a brother. Her best tools are a *Displacer Cloak* and *Last Request* (Great Axe +2: Deals 2 dice+2 damage).

Teabuck Ten (Pr 4): The newest and youngest member of the Trap-Springers, Teabuck is Tenhove's little brother. Often resentful of the fact that the Trap-Springers are semi-retired now, Teabuck remains in order to pursue his other passion, cooking. Orlaith jokes that Teabuck is only here for his Popovers. Prone to mood swings between deep depression and feverish euphoria, Teabuck is a handful at times, and only his brother Tenhove really understands him. He has a *Mace* +2 and an *Elven Cloak and Boots*.

Tenhove Ten (Pr 7): Tenhove joined up with the Trap-Springers shortly after the Ribald Five disbanded. Despite his unabashed love for wine and ale, Tenhove has often proven to be the glue that keeps the band united. Tenhove seems to be able to function perfectly well whether he is partaking, hung over or suffering from the shakes. Had Tenhove the striking looks of Jalen, might be the more natural leader. He keeps a *War Hammer* +2 and *Plate* +2.

III. MISCELLANY

Glyph-magic: Highly magical, intricately drawn symbols of long-lost sorcery. *Dispelling of Magic* has a chance to delay or temporarily disrupt Glyph-magic. Proper deactivation

requires mastery of Glyph-magic, however. **Time-locked**: prevents the effects of time with respect to aging and decay. **Time-lost**: areas so enchanted cease to exist until certain criteria are met, at which point they exist once more. After a predetermined or random amount of time, the magic will reactivate, causing the target to once again cease to exist and return to its original Time-lost state, returning to existence as before if the same criteria are met. **Time-sent**: the entire field captures a specific time, past or future, and an aperture in the present can be located which leads to this field. Time-travelers may not exit the Time-sent field except by the aperture back to the present. **Time-torn**: this Glyph-magic activates at regular intervals. The results of all actions that altered the enchanted area since the last activation are torn from time and did not, effectively, occur. **Time-toss**: passing through this field thrusts the traveler forward in time randomly. Each character is tossed 1d6x10 minutes into the future. Be sure to make Wandering Monster rolls when they return!

Ylfrit's Poem

*Ware the Queen of Faerie Twisted
Promises not oft resisted
Scheming, somber eyes of sorrow
Recollected on the morrow
Night's long shadow never-ending
Greets the sleeping death impending
Dawn breaks forth reveals the dreaming
One by one your souls fade screaming
Ware the Queen of Faerie Twisted
Damned before this world existed*

It is not known who wrote this poem, but there is evidence that it is very old. Copies can be found in the Trophy Room, in Jhimyn's Journal, in Randall's possession, and anywhere else the referee feels appropriate. Single lines or partial versions might be located as well. Kafi, one of the Lost Corsairs, knows this poem by heart, and has been reciting the lines in his sleep for months before the Looming brought the pirates to this place.

Hazes, Clutches and Time in the Underworld: Time is an unknown quantity to most denizens of the underworld. Here beneath the earth, there is a certain maddening constancy; change is rare. Living things age, die, decompose, and turn to dust, but the surroundings undergo few perceptible changes. Time is simply not a consideration here, especially given that so many of the monsters who call this forsaken place home do not even age. Time is a concept which has been introduced to the underworld by surface-dwellers that have braved the dangers here and found they simply could not do without the rigid laws of the world above. The Dark Trolls now track time, and the methods they use are shared by Jalen and his cohorts. Various standards have been explored over the years, including the sleeping patterns of cave bats, growth rates of mold, and

how long it takes a Goblin to bleed to death. But the time unit which finally proved most reliable was the lifespan of a Haze Grub when deprived of food. The Haze Grub is a large, larval pest which will grow into a Giant Beetle over time, but must eat immediately upon hatching. This unit of measure became known as a Haze, and is almost identical to six minutes. The Haze is the basis of all time measure-

ment in the underworld. A very complex system of determining time has evolved from this which no longer entails actually watching dying insect larvae. Candles, hourglasses and brass clockworks are used throughout the depths. 250 Hazes is known as a Clutch, and is the standard 'day' down here, although few of the races actually agree on what Clutch it is from one 'day' to the next.

IV. TABLES

MASTER NPC QUICK REFERENCE:

Name	Who	Location	Name	Who	Location
Aleth Enach	Time-locked Dreamer	37	Molif Yot	Lost Corsair	39
Ank Moaf	Lost Corsair	39	Morto	Guest	G20
Arazul	The Cat	40	Nyles	Valet	14
Bang	Digger	14	Og	Madcapper	31
Bonedust	Roach	13	Ogg Grodd	Troll Exile	38C
Boyid	Bartender	G4	Orlaith	Trap-Springer	Appendix
Breezy	Roach	13	Pantyuzo	Bartender	G4
Breghoneir	Lone Graeth	32	Pineapple	Roach	13
Cici	Banker	13	Pullo	Pit Champion	20
Chubby	Roach	13	Quigmoor	Guest	G12
Coop Falter	Trap-Springer	Appendix	Randall	Madcapper	31
Darmley	Guest	G12	Risnor	Marchand Rover	28B
Dokh	Troll Exile	38C	Rum-Tum	Guest	G20
El Amn	Lost Corsair	39	"Shady" Schamn	Gambler	16B
Ephrii Jae	Marchand Rover	28B	Serios	Ogre Porter	G6
Eshrek	Troll Exile	38C	Shenydar	Inn Custodian	G18
Falltee	Inn Manager	G1	Silent-Wolf	Guest	G16
Farina	Roach	13	Skipper	Digger	14
Fidget	Madcapper	31	Sleeping-Bear	Guest	G16
Froggy	Roach	13	Stinky	Roach	13
Gargo Greengas	Trap-Springer	Appendix	Strutter	Madcapper	31
Gloam	Guest	G19	Sunshine	Roach	13
Goomba	Ogre Porter	G6	Tagart	Dark Troll Envoy	Appendix
Gowizch	Marchand Rover	28B	Tatjana	Guest	G14
Grothok	Troll Exile	38C	Teabuck Ten	Trap-Springer	Appendix
Hogg	Digger	14	Tenhove Ten	Trap-Springer	Appendix
Ivilmic Aamit	Marchand Rover	28B	Triggs	Guest	G10
Jalen	Owner and T-S	Appendix	Urgorin	Great Bogbear	42B
Jaxine	Jalen's Guest	21	Valahimt	Guest	G14
Jhimyn	Cricket King	44	Vermin	Madcapper	31
Junior	Roach	13	Vin Phinaar	Time-locked Dreamer	37
Kafi	Lost Corsair	39	Waldo	Roach	13
Katrinka	Digger	14	Wally	Madcapper	31
Kimali Zhues	Lost Corsair	39	Wheezzer	Roach	13
Les Clefdors	Concierge	G1	Woim	Roach	13
Magwire	Digger King	14	Woo-Woo	Digger Cultist	14
Marholm	Guest	G10	Wortle	Digger	14
Melone	Bartender	G4	Zliff	Lost Corsair	39
Metherym	Time-locked Dreamer	37			

NPC's BY TYPE (and where to find their descriptions):

Wandering Types: Arazul (40), Breghoneir (32), Jhimyn (44), Tagart (Appendix), Urgorin (42B).

Halfway Inn Staff: Bonedust and the *Roaches* (13), Boyid (G4), Cici (13), Falltee (G1), Goomba (G6), Jaxine (21), Les Clefdors (G1), Magwire and the *Diggers* (14), Melone (G4), Nyles (14), Pantyuzo (G4), Pullo (20), "Shady" Schamn (16B), Serios (G6), Shenydar (G18).

Halfway Inn Guests: Darmley (G12), Gloam (G19), Marholm (G10), Morto (G20), Quigmoor (G12), Rum-Tum (G20), Silent-Wolf (G16), Sleeping-Bear (G16), Tatjana (G14), Triggs (G10), Valahimt (G14).

Lost Corsairs: Ank Moaf, El Amn, Kafi, Kimali Zhues, Molif Yot (L), Zliff. (All found in 39).

Madcappers: Fidget, Og, Randall (L), Strutter, Vermin, Wally. (All found in 31).

The Marchand Rovers: Ephrii Jae, Gowizch, Ivilmic Aamit, Risnor. (All found in 28B).

Time-locked Dreamers: Aleth Enach, Metherym, Vin Phinaar the Odd. (All found in 36).

The Trap-Springers: Coop Falter, Gargo Greengas, Jalen Longspear, Orlaith the Younger, Teabuck Ten, Tenhove Ten. (All found in the Appendix).

Troll Exiles: Dokh, Eshrek, Grothok and Ogg Grodd (L). (All found in 38C).

TRAP-SPRINGERS QUICK REFERENCE:

Trap-Springers	Class	Level	STR	INT	WIS	CON	DEX	CHA	Bedroom	Notes
Coop	Mag	7	9	13	17	6	11	8	G5	Nerdy, Overweight
Gargo	DWar	6	12	15	13	10	8	11	G5	Fastidious, Neat-nick
Jalen	War	8	14	11	8	10	15	18	21	Overbearing, Confident
Orlaith	EWar/Mag	4	16	10	7	9	11	6	G2	Ill-mannered, Unkempt
Teabuck	Pr	4	12	12	12	15	9	7	G3	Moody, Dramatic
Tenhove	Pr	7	9	11	13	14	16	15	G3	Hard Drinker, Outgoing

NEW MONSTERS QUICK REFERENCE:

Monster	DC	Spd	HD	Damage	Special
Blood Thumps	4	12	10	2 dice	Trample
Bogbears	5	9	3+1	1 die	Surprise, Frozen with Fear, Immunities
Chasm Creeps	6	9	3+1	1 die	Exhaustion, Regenerate, Immunities
Claw Maws	2 or 7	18	2	½ die	Jaw Lock
Cryptlings	2 or 7	9	3	1 die	Unseelie Aura, +4 on RTH
Dark Trolls	4	12	6+3	1 die+2	Regenerate
Dread Lurkers	2	6	6	Special	Surprise, Paralyze, Strangle, Immunities
Evil Roots	7	0	1	Special	Snatch, Lash, Coil, Constrict
Feral Fangs	6	12	3	1 die	Surprise, Paralyzing Gaze
Foul Saplings	9	0	1	Special	Death Burst
Graeth	5	12	5 to 7	1 die+1	Sleep, Hold Person, +1 on RTH, Silver to strike
Great Bogbear	4	6	5+1	1 die+2	FwF, Panic, Eerie Presence, Immunities
Hidden-folk	2	12	5	1 die	Enthrallment, Immunities
Jhimyn	4	9	9	2 dice	Leap, Acid Spit, Immunities
Living Statue (Mercury)	3	6	12	1 die x2	Envelopment, Rebuild, Immunities
Mad Crickets	6	9	1 hit	1 hit	Leap
Pale Spawns	7	9	2+1	1 die	Appear, Join
Quivering Mass	9	0	12	2 dice	Throw Globbs, Festering Wounds
Stone Wretch	2	0	12 to 18	3 dice+3	Breathe, Swallow, Gaze

NEW MAGIC QUICK REFERENCE:

Item	Usage	Location	Notes
Amulet of Memory	Mag, Pr, E	24B	Cast one 1 st and 2 nd level spell twice
Talon Rip	Any but Pr	28C	+1 Dagger, Hidden Fae bonus
Venom Creeps	Any but Pr	28D	Bracers, Poison target on 20
Cinder's Teeth	Any	28D	Necklace, 15 Spd, +1 DC, other bonuses
Mjolfipt	War, E, D	31C	+2 Spear, 1 die+2, 2 dice+2, or 3 dice+2
Life-bond Diadem	Any	31C	+1 hit per level
Eye of the Tiger	Any	31C	Fight as a 6 HD Monster/+1 Level
Vigil's Edge	War, E, D, H	32	+1 Sword, 2 dice damage
Satchel of Gold Holding	Any	44	As Bag, only accepts gold
Necklace of Rat-shape	Any	37	Shape shift into a sewer rat
Ifrit Bottle	Any	37	Holds <i>Shaita'an</i> the Ifrit
Cold Scream	War, E, D, H	36	+1 Sword, adds 2 cold damage, freezes on a 20
Thunder Javelins	War, E, D, H	36	Single use, creates a 60 foot range 7d6 bolt
Glitch Gut	War, E, D	36	+1 Two-handed Sword, deals 1 die+4, breaks on a 1
Pocket Boulders	Any	36	Single use mini-boulders
Widow Sting	War, E, D, H	36	+1 Sword, 1 poison damage, cumulative, kills on a 20
Floating Footwear	Any	36	Fall like feather, Levitate x3/day
Balthagorn's Head	Any	50B	Delusional invincibility, +1 on saves
Wallbanger's Paw	Any	50B	<i>Yevrah</i> the imaginary friend
Black Dog's Bones	Mag, E	50B	Confers <i>Black Dog's Bite</i>
Zim's Innards	Mag, E	50B	Six applications of weapons coating
Crimson Hate	War, E, D	Appendix	Jalen's famous spear

RESTOCKING THE DUNGEON

Roll 1d6

1: Monster

2: Monster & Treasure

3-5: Empty

6: Something Hidden. 1d6: 1-2 : Junk, 3-6: Treasure

RANDOM TREASURE IN THE LOWER CAVES

Roll all 4 together: 1d6, 1d10, 1d12, 1d20

1d6 for Silver: Result x 1,000 in coins

1d12 for Gold: 1-6: Result x 200 in coins, 7-12: No Gold

1d10 for Gems: 1-2: Gems, 3-10: No Gems

1d20 for Magic: 1-2: Magic, 3-20: No Magic Items

WANDERING MONSTERS: At 20 minute intervals the referee should check for Wandering Monsters with a d6 roll. A roll of 6 indicates that the referee may roll on or choose from the list for the appropriate region. There are no Wandering Monsters in the *Halfway Inn* or *The Oubliette*. **Other** indicates that the referee should pick some Specific Personality, such as The Troll Exiles, or Jhimyn if appropriate, or simply choose whatever makes sense at the time. **Dual Encounter** indicates that the referee should roll twice more, ignoring this result, and combine the results. Both parties are encountered at the same time. The two might be allied, or in mid combat.

Troll Highway (areas 1-8), roll 1d12:

1	<i>Tagart, Troll Envoy</i>	With 2 bodyguards	7 to 8	<i>Feral Fangs</i>	1d6+2
2	<i>Dark Trolls</i>	1d3+1	9	<i>Arazul</i>	See 40
3 to 4	<i>Claw Maws</i>	2d6+2	10	<i>Breghoneir</i>	See 32
5	<i>Chasm Creeps</i>	1d4+1	11	<i>Other</i>	Pick
6	<i>Dread Lurker</i>	1	12	<i>Dual Encounter</i>	Roll twice more

West Tunnels (areas 24-32), roll 1d12:

1 to 2	<i>Claw Maws</i>	2d6+2	9	<i>Arazul</i>	See 40
3	<i>Dread Lurker</i>	1	10	<i>Breghoneir</i>	See 32
4 to 6	<i>Feral Fangs</i>	1d6+2	11	<i>Other</i>	Pick
7 to 8	<i>Evil Roots</i>	1d4+1	12	<i>Dual Encounter</i>	Roll twice more

East Tunnels (areas 38-50), roll 1d12:

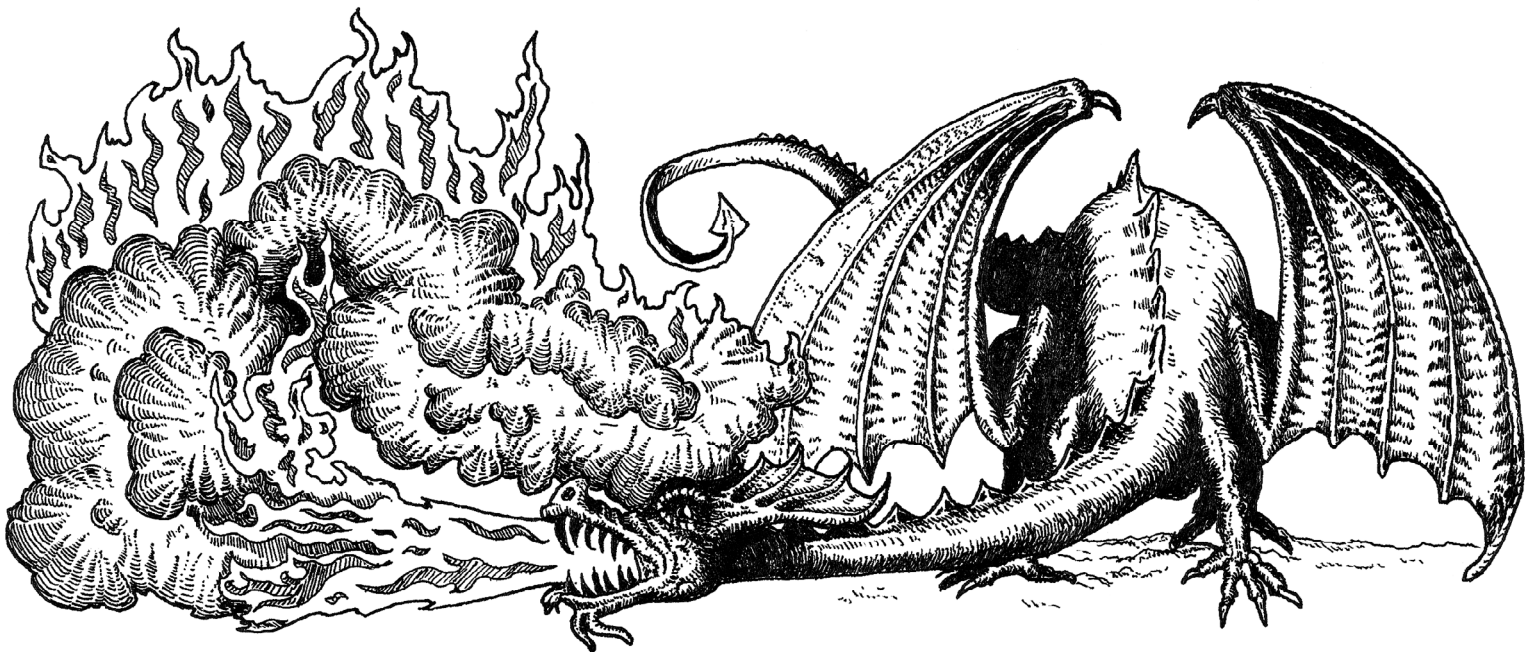
1	<i>Claw Maws</i>	2d6+2	8 to 9	<i>Evil Roots</i>	1d4+1
2	<i>Dread Lurker</i>	1	10	<i>Arazul</i>	See 40
3 to 4	<i>Bogbears</i>	1d4+1	11	<i>Other</i>	Pick
5 to 7	<i>Mad Crickets</i>	3d6+10	12	<i>Dual Encounter</i>	Roll twice more

RUMORS FROM THE MOISTENED BINT (as delivered by whispering Dwarves – 1d20):

- Gloam's gotta wagon-loada gems and glitterys stiched up all tights like in 'is room. (F)
- Dem Dark Trolls're ben run out from dey 'omes by sumpin' mean, dey plannin' on makin' dis joint dey new digs. (F)
- Crickets, me boy...crickets. Dey runnin' da show down 'ere, not da Dark Trolls. (F)
- One a dem Roaches is really a spy come from Marchand set to watchin' Jalen. (F)
- Dem Marchand boys (Rovers) run into Tagart 'n crossed 'im but good, dey now shackled down in da Troll 'omes. (F)
- Dose lil faeries dat run Shady's games use dat evil eye ta rig da bones. (F)
- Jalen's so-called Champeen Pullo's a floppin' flounder wit' 'is weak knees an' all. (F)
- Dat sly Elf Orlaith locked 'er own pops in room tirteen an' bricked 'im in all snug, 'e's still tryin' ta claw 'is way out. (F)
- Dem Ogres Morto and Rum-Tum are chattin' wit' Jalen 'bout buyin' dis 'ere inn. (F)
- Dere's an Odd-elf in dem caves, older dan ta time hisself. (T)
- Some idjut Gar-Ghulii worshipin' Digger trew dis giant like pearl into 'is pagan god's scrap 'eap. (I)
- Jalen 'e's been eyin' dat Tatjana an' Jaxine in return's gettin' all mushy-like wit' Valahimt. (I)
- Dis 'aff-baked wizard guy, Jhimyn, so 'e sets 'im up a magic shop in dem caves. 'E's na' ben 'earda since. Some sez 'e's done ben turnt into a black cat. (T except black cat bit)
- Jalen was de Ogre Overlord, won de t'rone on a lucky bet. If yer askin' me twas no luck 'tall. Some sez dat 'e be da Dark Troll King afores we knew it. (T with some conjecture)
- Dat hare-brained wizard guy Coop spends affa 'is days in dis wee lil toy land he done conjured up by magic. (I)
- I don't trust dem Diggers, dey're upta no good I tells ya. Dere's a reason none're let back into dem holes. (I)
- Dat Odd-elf Queen she lives in men's dreams. No man can be 'er King, butya din't 'ear dat from me. (I)
- So dis lodger year or two back claims 'e sees a dragon in one dem pits and high tailed it outta dere faster'n Shady can say Yer On. (T but he saw the Stone Wretch, not a dragon)
- Some sez a grotto wit steammin' 'ot-tubs is out dere in dem caves, but same sez look out fer Trolls if ya sees 'em. (I)
- Dere's dis Odd-elf King buried somewhere'bouts in one dem pits, pertected by elfish bad-uns, so I'm told. (I)

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ADVENTURE (1d20, when desirous of random events):

1. **Digger Uprising:** The Goblins are either planning to or have overthrown Magwire the Digger King.
2. **Labor Strike!:** The Roaches, Diggers or Ogres are refusing to continue work unless drastic changes are made.
3. **Fight! Fight! Fight!:** Bonedust and Magwire are finally squaring off in the Brawling Pit. Bonedust has serious tricks up his sleeve, which if exposed could send the already contentious groups into all-out feuding.
4. **The Anthill Gang:** Rival street urchins from Marchand have found the Roaches and are looking to cause trouble.
5. **Gar-Ghuliians:** The Cult of the Pit is spreading and gaining power, stirring up problems in Marchand. Rumor has it a back-alley church has formed and is growing rapidly.
6. **Gar-Ghuliians in Tinker World:** Woo-woo is inducting Tinks into his Cult of the Pit having found a way to enter Tinker World.
7. **Cici and the Jilted Lover:** Cici needs help - a ruthless Crime Boss in Marchand is sending thugs to harass her into keeping her wedding vows.
8. **Coop's Love:** The Thaumaturgist has fallen in love with one of his more life-like Tinks.
9. **Gloom Becomes Lucid:** but no one realizes it because he keeps raving on about "whales". Something he says tips off the characters; there might be more to the story.
10. **Rascally Roaches:** The Roaches have been sneaking into Tinker World and upsetting apple carts, tipping cows, knocking on doors then hiding, and so forth. Coop thinks some of his Tinks have gone bad and wants the PCs to investigate..
11. **Trapped Coop:** The Magic User has become trapped in Tinker World, held by some powerful force.
12. **Ogre Downs Needs Help:** Messages from Jalen's allies plead for aid, their Overlord is dying and there is tension brewing.
13. **The Problem with Pinkie:** The Pinkie in the Crystal Pool is addictive and potentially valuable. Guests or staff might be getting hooked on it, selling it, etc.
14. **The Bat People?:** Explore the history and specifics of these winged Elf-kin, themselves older than the Graeth. Why did they worship an Easter Island Head? Perhaps their otherworldly cousins have arrived in search of the missing Stone Face.
15. **Go Get Loomed:** Bored with his monotonous life, a noble from Marchand is looking for adventurers to lead him safely to the Looming. Virtually no one besides Arazul even knows what the name means.
16. **Dark Troll Carousers:** A group of hell-raising Dark Trolls have had too much to drink. They'll gladly escort adventurers to lower levels, for a price.
17. **Evil Comes Calling:** *Evil*, the Madcappers' nemesis, has followed their trail here along with his Flying Cow Heads. Someone's got to stop them!
18. **A "Shady" Contest:** Schamn and his gambling cronies are running a winner takes all contest (with plenty of side action) to see who can be the first to fetch Old Tekkos and Young Zhoolg (see **15**), last known seeking Level 9, the Dark Troll Citadel.
19. **Salician Girls Night Out:** A drop-dead gorgeous gang of Salicia's girls (priestesses of the Goddess of Lust) from Level 6 are whooping it up in the Moistened Bint, and one of them has her eyes set on a PC.
20. **Long Arm of the Law:** The Warden of Marchand has amassed enough do-gooders to send a small army of Priests and Paladins to the gates of the Halfway Inn. The Warden is convinced that Jalen is in cahoots with the Dark Trolls.



The Petrified Garden

Del L. Beaudry

The seasons fall in disarray and sheathe me in their husks:
Ricked days heaped up like brittle kites broken on Limbo's wind.
Too high to rake. No, not days. For now days count as nights...

Of late the work decelerates, grows slower with each
twilight's decline. Yet, still, I possess the sky. You doubt?
Observe.

Here is Arcturus, Algol, Tsih. Let us cast the diamond bones,
the toddling dice. What fun. Together we can watch them sprawl.

Permit me to welcome you, dear friend, to the petrified garden.
Here amid the chip-stone petals, the fossil vines, we will wind
together, cozy
our calcite bower. Struggle is for wastrels, believe me, I know.
Better to relax and enjoy the show.

See how death becomes the garden: it bestows a grandeur
immune to all that lives. Soon you, too, will savor the solemnity
of boneyards,
apprentice yourself to the night. In time even the thirst will slake;
the rest hardly counts: Aside from water, I do not miss the
former things.

Is it too much to call this great good fortune? You would laugh...
Yet such wisdom could not have been mine by other means
even if by will or right or lore, I had awakened old Sumer from
her dusty slumber,
each ziggurat risen whole, each graven idol intact—

And hence explored the vaulted passageways, visited
chamber and antechamber in turn, deciphered entire her
sacred ideographs, her secret glyphs and called
faithfully on the priestly shades, the Elect shades

(to inquire or acquire)

Of vizier shades and attendant shades, guardian shades
or shades of shades with eons to perfect astrolabes,
eons to count the stars, and ask each one if, somehow,
by vanity or oversight my forecast had gone askew.

What more would you demand of me in discernment or craft?
Should I make myself a circus freak? Disembowel
newborn lambs just to satisfy your doubts?

(Kneel over steaming offal. Pluck at sinew and gut—
and for what? To what avail? If I traced bloody patterns
on faces, torsos, floor, could you then begin?

Then begin. To awaken and begin?)

We all take it on faith in the end. What laws concern

such precious matters are esoteric hoards,
guarded by anchorites, by greedy sages—
all in all a jealous cabal. Misers one and all.

Perhaps if I had studied different mysteries, the subtle shuddering
of the earth, learnt how she stacked the Urals cloudward,
a babe at play with blocks, yet rent Olduvai slantwise

gouged maws from blanched effluvium,
spilled secrets in sand and loch:
An intimate tectonics might be more simple.

I only pray that my own drifting continents—blind of purpose
heedless to will—might discover at last some new order,
submit to natural law.

Night by night I watch and wait for this new esthetics to emerge.

I have tried from time to time by explanation or art
(or different art) on the canvass of the sky
to demonstrate what it is we have been called upon to witness.

(After all, as the Wise maintain: all secrets seek escape.)

"They are titans, we are paltry; surely you see that much — even
you must understand we cannot measure out the deeds of gods
by coffee spoons. Such spectacle requires constancy
beyond the scope of men. Patience. More patience. Then."

These things and more have I said, and much else, too—
I have declaimed my theses to all comers, to pilgrims and
vagabonds and knights
(errant and otherwise), to spiteful sophists, in short, to all
without regard to rank or grade. It has been a full year since a
stranger came.

Last night sixty degrees of the southwestern horizon
thickened like fresh-turned loam in a light rain.
After midnight the sky started to run in upon itself.

(Muddy river with flotsam stars
rushing on to some far end—
Permit us, too, the ways of dissolution!
Upon your mercy, we also shall make our end.)

I have witnessed venerable empires recede
watched hinterlands deformed, grown fallow under weeds.
For this, shall I in turn concede?

Lay forgot to ponder questions
aligned with equinox in strict precession
until in due course and with a precision
both like and unlike Order

the marching stars of autumn lose their time and drift away,
a child's top grown sorry drunk
and heaven gone astray. Ω

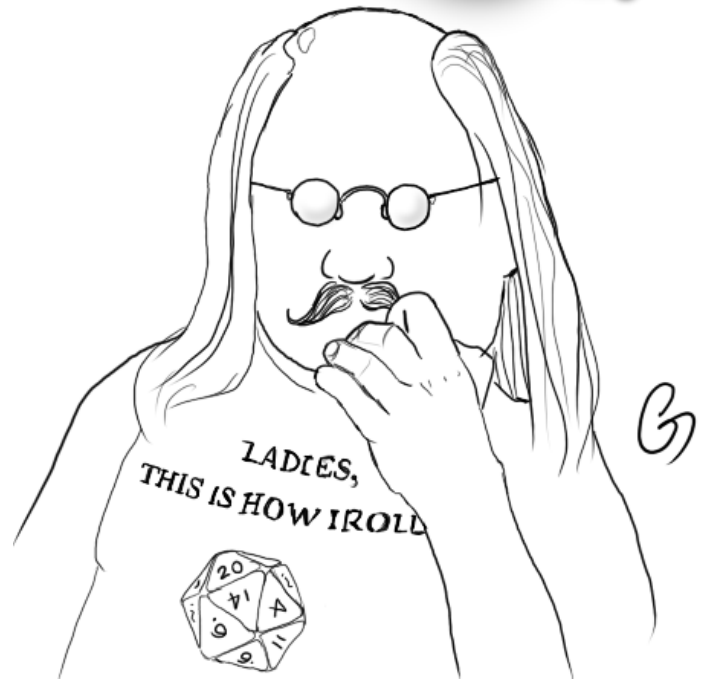
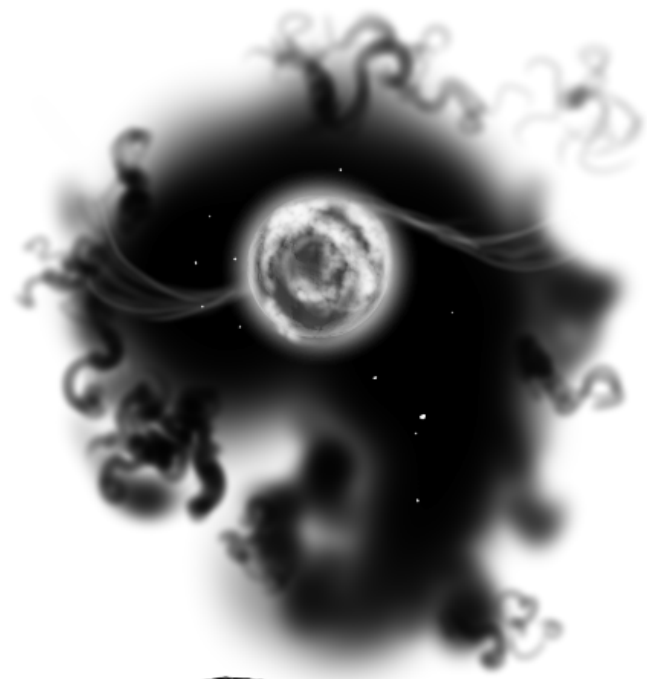
World Creating as a Hobby

by Lee Gold, editor of *Alarums and Excursions*

My husband and I learned about *D&D* in 1974 or 1975, and shortly after getting the rules I roughed out my first dungeon, Neocarn, setting up a map with most of each level divided into rooms and corridors – mostly by normal stone walls, but also by lead-lined walls impenetrable by X-ray Vision that spelled out ONE on the first floor, NEO on the second and EON on the third. Transport between floors was largely provided by an elevator powered by Giant Squirrels running on a wheel, each squirrel able to lift one mule, two people in metal armor, three people in leather armor, or two hundred pounds of treasure. (I rolled 2D12 for the number of squirrels on duty when a party summoned the elevator.) I used the standard tables to populate Neocarn, supplementing them with my own imagination. PCs were allowed in freely from adventures in other dungeons, and could bring in all the magic items they'd gotten from other GMs. Each party had at least one person doing detailed mapping of each room.

In 1976, I decided that Neocarn was getting a bit boring, and providing map information was extremely boring. So I created another dungeon, Alph, named after the river that ran through it. I explained that as Coleridge had written (in his poem *Xanadu*), this cavern was "measureless to man" and also to elf, dwarf, and all other creatures, so there wouldn't be any mapping. The complex was set up as a condominium which let one and only one group of each species rent a room, so most of the rooms and "wandering monsters" were non-standard. I put them each on a 4"x6" card so I could easily move them around if they decided to move. Clean-up service was provided not by Green Slime and the like but by invisible (and very powerful) charwomen. The first level was equivalent to a second level dungeon, the second to a fifth level dungeon, and the third (never explored) to an eighth level dungeon. Player characters had to pass through a Customs Office to enter the world -- and all magic items carried were inspected, with a few being ruled out. (I remember one Cleric who carried Magic Bowling Balls which did several dice of damage, and would roll smoothly across any corridor or room, no matter how rough its surface or what obstacles they encountered.)

In 1980 or thereabouts, I started my first world, set in an alternate 1281 Japan, with the PCs starting by dealing with a kidnapped spirit taken from her body's grave, by a jealous rival, setting the dead woman free to reincarnate. The players liked the game session and asked for more, so I started a Japanese campaign using modified *Chivalry & Sorcery* rules which would later be published by Fantasy Games Unlimited as *Land of the Rising Sun*. Like *C&S*, these rules had long and complex encounter tables, based on time of day and setting. But in practice I also used



what I called the I Kanji, a book of the two thousand ideographs of the Toyo Kanji, and rolling D2000 (a D20, a D10 and a second D10 -- all different colors). Thus if I got 1358 (weigh, measure), 861 (wife), and 1584 (spirit), I might let the characters encounter a dead woman's ghost weighing her living baby boy to see how much he weighed after she'd been breast-feeding him for two years.

I still run a monthly roleplaying game, with some players who were originally friends and started attending my game sessions and some who began as players and became friends. One player started as a wargamer and still wants to have the most powerful character he can imagine for the setting. Over the years we've had two players die, but

another now comes along with his teenage daughter, who seems to enjoy the games. When a new player shows up I describe the campaign I plan to run that day and mention some of the character types who'd be welcome. Most players have more than one character, and some may find a new character foisted on them by speaking up to comment on the action, when I'll ask, "OK, who said that?" One player in a *Toon* game replied "NPC," and got told, "OK, you've got a Neon Polkadot Catfish." Recently, in my current Japanese campaign, my husband kept making sarcastic comments -- and acquired a demon as his new PC. This procedure is my only defense against having the conversation drift away from the game session.

I don't insist on PCs staying together in one area. Sometimes the characters divide up to investigate several different problems simultaneously. Other times, one character may find other characters' actions boring or annoying. Our first Japanese campaign had a quarrel between a shapechanging cat and an imperial court noble (both mentors for a street urchin the party had picked up) that lasted for a couple of months game time and a year or two of real time. I feel free to handle a split party just like a TV or film director who cuts from what's going on in one place to what's going on in another. Some players may create a new character during these interludes so as to have a character anywhere that seems interesting.

We do have rules (mainly my own *Lands of Adventure*, except for the *Toon* campaign) but most players don't bother to go through the bookkeeping of keeping track of hit points, money, encumbrance, etc. -- or even bother to improve skill %ages with experience, because there's so little dice rolling. And because each campaign is firmly set in its own world, I don't any longer allow players to immigrate from other roleplaying worlds. I've had a number of campaigns, some resolved, some ongoing. Current ones include:

SANSHU NO SHIMBUN (News of the Three Treasures -- alternate 14th century feudal Japan): Emperor Godaigo was once banished to an island, but escaped and returned to rule Japan again. He didn't let his death stop him any more than exile did. He made a pact with the Shadow Demon, an aspirant to the Demon Empire Throne, and is planning on re-conquering Japan from his new palace in the Meido (the astral afterlife). He started by stealing the Sword, Mirror, and Jewel which are the Imperial Regalia. Each of these sacred artifacts emanated a spirit which, together with other heroic characters, succeeded in locating the hidden artifacts and restoring them to the Emperor. Since then the players have taken on new PCs and succeeded in banishing Godaigo and his ally from the Dragon Court. Now they find themselves on the island where Godaigo was once exiled (recently assigned to one of the PCs by the current Japanese Emperor). The goal is to defeat this attempt to usurp the

sovereignty. (The former wargamer used to play the artifact spirit of the Imperial Mirror, but is now playing a fire mage who's an attendant of the Dragon Emperor.)

THE SPANISH EXPEDITION (alternate 13th Century Europe): In this setting Spain still tolerates people of all monotheistic religions and cooperates with the Vikings to develop the trade resources of the Americas. The Peace of Richard the Lion-Hearted and Saladin still holds (though Saladin died recently), and Spain has sent an expedition to the courts of Christian Europe in an attempt to get them to order continuing supplies of chocolate, potatoes, tomatoes, and other New World commodities. The party is very mixed, led by a Jewish female scholar and a Muslim alchemist, with a Bedouin who's got a crystal ball, a Persian poet, a half-Afrete as head of the caravan guards, and an occasional visit from a Djinn (the former wargamer).

THE SPACE CAMPAIGN (30th century): this one follows a five-century-long collapse of hyperspace that destroyed the old galactic civilization. The hypership Peachy (the former wargamer) is traveling to the stars, trying to keep it secret that one of her passengers is Dr. Gheistel-tech whose experiments inadvertently caused the hyperspace crash. Most AI hyperships went crazy when unable to access hyperspace during the crash, but Peachy is only slightly demented. PCs are from Fooj (originally Refuge), an asteroid founded for escapees from various other Asteroid civilizations. Technology includes forcefields and biotanks (with people able to change their shape quite easily), artificial intelligence, and other high-tech options. There's also Spell Weaving (a powerful sort of magic).

CHANNEL SIX (current era): A group of Toons have taken over a previously unused LA-area television station. The West Coast has broken off from the US as a separate nation, with its capital in Seattle, and all *\$ (= Starbucks) are consulates. All taxpayers get free Windows computers. One of the character is Doc Duck (the former wargamer), who carries a Does-It-All Gun and the Encyclopedia Galactica (consultable on all reality -- and rewritable once a session). Others include a multi-bladed Knife (like a Swiss Army Knife) who sells all sorts of specialty knife models, a Leopardess who delights in high fashion, a roll of Duck Tape, and a Neon Polkadot Catfish with a cell phone that can phone anyone and teleport in anything. This game has had some odd adventures. One used *Call of Cthulhu* rules to run a story in which the Toons read a news bulletin on the National Enquirer teletype which predicted that a boy would be killed by a Dimensional Shambler. This episode ended up with Geraldo Rivera's head being torn off, but his ghost starting a new TV show ("Beyond Geraldo") shown at midnight. Another used *Paranoia*, with the Toons going into Alpha Complex and reprogramming the computer there by jumping into a monitor. This campaign's sessions mainly focus on topical events, like a Presidential election with Santa Claus as one of the

candidates or a midnight Rose Parade down the channel of the LA River (with an entry from Hogwarts). There has also been an invasion of the Delgonian Underlords (a tribute to the Lensman Saga) and a group of child magicians who arranged to have it snow in LA over Spring Break and a lot of other strange happenings.

THE SNAEFELLNESS SAGA (alternate 10th century Norse): PCs hail from a decidedly odd area of Iceland. Having rescued Loki from imprisonment a while ago, they have since been cooperating with him in revising what's going on in Asgard while attempting to protect Hel (Loki's daughter) against her kingdom being redefined by the spreading belief in Christianity. When last seen they were exploring Vinland and had slaughtered some shape-changing otters. They've also shut down the Black School (based in Paris) and have some of its ex-students with them. And, oh yes, some people who were taken into the Sidhe hills in Ireland. Their ships include both standard Viking craft and Sidhe-built swan ships. The former wargamer's character is a dead rune mage who occasionally drops in from Valhalla.

When I set up a new campaign, I start with an area I'm interested in and have background information on. Then I e-mail the players and ask if they're interested. If one player isn't interested, I may run that campaign chiefly when that person can't make it. If there's a campaign session and one or more players are unable to attend, I'll try to come up with an in-game reason that their characters weren't able to do anything. In the past, such characters have succumbed to food poisoning or been kidnapped by enemies. A character native to the culture is apt to know a lot more about it than the player, so a lot of my campaigns feature a journey to strange places, so that I don't have to keep telling players, "As your character knows...."

One reason I like to run a campaign set in an alternate world is that it's so easy to get background information. In the old days, that meant buying books. Nowadays it might mean looking for webpages. Either way, you want to get a regional map and monthly table for usual high and low temperatures, precipitation, sunrise and sunset times. You'll usually find these in a good tourist guide. You also want regional history (up to the point where your alternate world diverged), folklore, legend, and religion(s).

After I determine the campaign background, I start by thinking about the major NPCs: what are their personalities and goals and fears, their resources and limitations? One way of visualizing a personality, if I'm not feeling creative, is rolling 3D6 for each of the Seven Virtues (Faith, Hope, Charity, Courage, Temperance, Justice, Prudence) and the Seven Deadly Sins (Extravagance, Gluttony, Greed, Laziness, Anger, Envy, and Pride). You can also look for an astrology book and roll D12 for the character's Sun and Moon signs. Some of these NPCs are

likely to be antagonists or rivals of the player characters, others are likely to be allies or friends, and still others may sometimes be helpful and sometimes unhelpful, depending on what the player characters are doing at a particular time. Once I know the NPCs all I have to do is roleplay them. What are their schemes for obtaining their goals and avoiding their fears? The characters may see an NPC's scheme develop as the campaign progresses: first as the tip of an iceberg, far away on the horizon; later on, getting nearer and nearer, bigger and bigger. I may also create events inspired by help from some random device, and these in turn will make me think of other NPCs or perhaps help me flesh out an NPC's personality. I mentioned rolling ideographs for the Japanese game. I also know people who have used a thesaurus or dictionary for campaign ideas, and others who have used Tarot cards or a regular deck of playing cards plus a book on divination. Ω

Interview with Lee Gold

by Lee Gold, James Maliszewski, and Allan Grohe

James: *A&E* is one of the few unbroken connections between the present day and the dawn of the hobby, in part due to its indefatigable publisher, Lee Gold, whose labors have ensured its regular monthly release, with only two exceptions in the entirety of its 34-year existence. Lee, how did you first become involved in the RPG hobby?

Lee: Our friends, Owen & Hilda Hannifen, came down from San Francisco to visit us, with a copy of the original *D&D* rules. My husband and I were fascinated, and they lent us a photocopy of the rules after seeing us write a check to TSR to order our own copy, so we wouldn't have to wait till the rules arrived (in a brown box) from TSR.

James: *Alarums and Excursions* began in 1975 and now has published over 400 issues. Can you provide some background on A&E's origins?

Lee: *Alarums and Excursions* #403 was the April, 2009 issue. #404 will be the May issue. Deadline is typically the 21st of the month at 5 PM Los Angeles time (so in the summer it's Daylight Savings Time). See thestarport.com/xeno/aande.html for further details. Back in 1974 or 1975, a number of us were discussing *D&D* and other RPGs in *APA-L*, the weekly APA collated each Thursday night at the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, a science fiction fan club. Bruce Pelz, a LASFSian and APA-Ler who wasn't a roleplayer was bored by all this and asked us to start our own APA. It seemed like a good idea so I did, offering to print contributors' zines for them. We started with gamers I knew, some in Los Angeles, some like the Hannifens in the San Francisco area, some like former-LA dweller Mark Swanson in the Boston area. And we spread by word of

mouth. In August of 1975, my husband and I went off to Japan for four months when his employer transferred him there, and we returned in mid-December to find that Jack Harness (who I'd asked to edit *A&E* while I was gone) had only brought out three issues in those four months. On the other hand, he'd gotten more subscribers, a good thing. I set a firm deadline for January 1976, and got *A&E* reliably running again. Since then the only time we've missed a month was in 2006 when I knew I had major surgery scheduled, and announced well in advance that we'd be skipping the July 21st deadline.

James: Are there any articles from *A&E* that have stuck with you after all these years as being ground-breaking or significant? That is, are there any you consider classics?

Lee: *A&E* is a collection of zines (each zine being a short amateur magazine, aka "fanzine"), not articles. A zine may include essays, comments on previous issues, poems or songs, a writeup of a play session, artwork, and just about anything imaginable. I remember zines from Dave Hargrave giving tidbits of the *Arduin Grimoires*, Steve Perrin's "Perrin Conventions" which were the start of the system that later grew into *Runequest*, Ed Simbalist's and Wilf Backhaus's discussion of *C&S*, John T. Sapienza, Jr.'s discussion of various game systems, and other professional and semi-professional writers. I remember Mark Swanson's "character traits," a way of individuating characters with minor bonuses and penalties. I remember Wes Ives' essay on how to integrate player characters into a major wargamed battle (which later got republished in the *C&S* Sourcebooks). I remember a number of people (including myself) getting tapped to write games professionally because RPG publishers read their *A&E*zines. I remember writing "You Bash the Balrog" (to the tune of "Waltzing Matilda"). There have been a lot of wonderful contributions to *A&E* over the years.

James: In the early days of the hobby, APAs like *A&E* played a role very similar to that played by the Internet today. Has the rise of online sites, forums, and blogs had any effect, positive or negative, on *A&E* in recent years?

Lee: Probably these sites (and also mailing lists and newsgroups) have affected *A&E*, but I'm not sure what all the effects are. Probably some effects are positive and some are negative. I think because *A&E* only comes out once a month, people take a bit more care writing their zines than they do for an online site, which will let them easily write in to correct or amplify their original statements only a few hours or a week later, instead of having to wait another month. I think the greatest negative effects on *A&E* in modern times come from the soaring costs of paper and postage. I introduced the emailed electronic subscription some years back, when the postal service discontinued the Printed Matter rate to the non-US, and have since made it also available to those living in

the US. About a third of the subscribers now take *A&E* electronically, rather than on printed paper. The emailed issue is only \$2 total -- or free to anyone who contributed to that issue or the previous issue, but contributors pay \$1.75/page contributed.

Allan: Would it be possible for A&E back-issues to be made available in a .pdf archive?

Lee: Back issues from #312 (that's 94 months) are available in pdf at \$2 per. Scanning or photocopying old back issues on fragile paper would be fairly difficult, and quality (from stuff originally mimeographed or dittoed) is very uneven. I'd figure 20 cents a page, and many early issues were 150-160 pages, so we're talking a significant amount of money here. A buyer would also have to honorably promise not to pass on the material to anyone else.

James: It's sometimes been said that the roleplaying scene on the West Coast was much different than that in the Midwest, where the hobby began. Do you think this is true and, if so, what would you say were the key differences between the scenes?

Lee: I've played in LA, San Francisco and Boston, but never in the Midwest, so I can't compare Midwest Style to the styles I know. I do know that *A&E*ers weren't content with the *D&D* rules as written. Most of them dropped Vancian magic (use a spell once and lose it) for a spellpoint system which would let you throw the same spell again and again. Players typically had one or two PCs each, but never drone followers, so though there might be a formal "party leader" (sometimes a lieutenant in charge of strategy, plus a sergeant in charge of tactics), there wasn't one "party caller" as shown in Original *D&D*'s sample adventure. We delighted in the flexibility of Original *D&D*: making up not just our own worlds but our own creatures and character classes, our own weapons and armor and spells. Bards showed up in an early issue of *A&E*, for instance. So did hoop snakes and larls and many other creatures from myth, legend, science fiction and fantasy. *A&E* still is a community with a lot of new ideas -- and discussion of previous months' new ideas. There are currently contributors from across the US, plus England and Ireland. In the past, we've also had contributors from Canada, Australia, Scandinavia, Italy and France.

Allan: Say more!

Lee: In our games a party might have a lieutenant (who set strategy) and a sergeant (who set tactics), or might not be organized at all, though it would usually have a marching order (fighters in front and rear, mages and clerics in the middle). We did figure out that if you put dwarves (with crossbows and axes) in the first row and elves or humans (with longbows and swords) in the second line, you could have two rows of missile fire. In one Boston gathering (at

an SF fan convention) where people questioned this, I stood up (4'10") and aimed an imaginary crossbow, and my husband Barry stood behind me (5'8") and aimed an imaginary longbow, and the crowd agreed that dwarves were probably shorter than I was, and our lineup was totally realistic and efficient. A round consisted of

- a) Mages and clerics select and aim spells.
- b) Archers aim missiles
- c) Melee fighters declare targets for their weapons.
- d) Optional speaking one sentence, moving a step or turning halfway around; also optional dodge.
- e) Everyone rolls at once, adjusting as foes are downed.

Allan: Outside of *A&E* and *The Wild Hunt*, the *D&D* fanzine phenomenon never really seemed to have as broad a base of support and publications in the US as compared to the UK. Do you have thoughts on why the fanzine phenomenon seemed to inspire so many more zines in the UK vs. the US?

Lee: No, no thoughts, sorry. I saw some UK *D&D* fanzines (like *News from Bree*). And a very strange one that reviewed *Reaper*, a game where hp depended on the miniature used (not surprisingly, sponsored by a miniature company). But I didn't see enough to generalize. Ω



Naked Went the Gamer

by Ron Edwards

I'm going to try to talk about what it was like to be a pop-fantasy teen in the mid-late 1970s. A minor qualifier: I don't claim to have been in on the absolute origins of role-playing. I'm from the California coast, not the *D&D* belt. I encountered role-playing in 1977, not at or near GenCon 1974. But I was close enough and can speak about what those times were like.

It was a different world. We saw or had no rock videos, no video games, no anime, no VCR (in fact, no way to see movies at will), no cable by modern standards, and no personal computers, much less the internet. Forget cell phones; we didn't even have cordless units in our houses or call waiting. Nothing was digital, so recording devices all used film or tape. A pop culture snapshot: "ninja" was an unknown term. Superheroes weren't mainstream, and when they tried to be the results were embarrassing, with few exceptions. *Star Wars* was a new movie but not yet a franchise. No *Alien* – much less *Aliens* – no *Blade Runner*, no Indiana Jones, no *Terminator*, no *Transformers*, no *G.I. Joe* cartoon series. Steve Austin was a cyborg, not a wrestler. Mainstream Fantasy-SF, as a target market, was only just beginning to gel.

Therefore I didn't enjoy science fiction and fantasy through a socially recognized subculture or even fandom in the modern sense. Instead, I shared an interest with others personally and verbally. The material was vastly diverse: Barsoom and a host of imitators, Lord Dunsany, Charles Dexter Ward, a mash-up of Conan authors, *Jurgen*, Greek and Norse mythology, the unfinished Amber series, the *Planet of the Apes* movies, Narnia, Prydain, Poul Anderson, Fritz Leiber, *The Worm Ouroboros*, Jack Vance, *Creature Features*, the one and only *Star Trek*, Cheech Wizard, *Heavy Metal* (the magazine), the Batman, Wonder Warthog, *Battle Circle*, Mr. Natural, Philip K. Dick, Harlan Ellison, Larry Niven, Earthsea, Karl Edward Wagner, Elric and company, *Wizards*, *The First Kingdom*, *Elfquest*, Silver Age Marvel comics and their "Cosmic Zap" phase, *Dune*, the Tolkien revival, Berni Wrightson, Frank Frazetta, and that newcomer Boris Vallejo. None of this was common knowledge. You were either into it or oblivious to it. Socially, that meant nearly anyone might be a pack member, and we met individually while doing something else. Marilyn was a woman doing gestalt therapy with my stepdad, and we talked about *Star Trek*, which led to her giving me a copy of *The Hobbit* in 1974, and I discovered and devoured the trilogy in my elementary school library. Mr. Whitmeyer, my seventh-grade history teacher, gave (gave!) me his Lancer paperbacks of the Fafhrd and Mouser stories. Cammie was a woman in her late twenties at the local liberal church who wanted to learn to play *D&D*,



and she taught me some things too. We kids loved this subculture. These elders were willing to treat us seriously as peers due to a common interest and familiarity with the source material, and we enriched ourselves as well. Ed Doolittle, a fellow trumpet player one grade ahead of me, saw me reading “Adept’s Gambit” and quoted a line, which turned out much later to be a central concept in my college philosophy classes. Matt Tobiasen, a kid one grade behind me, was first to get the *AD&D Monster Manual* and I bought it from him.

Our interests overlapped with the techie, older-school science fiction folks, whose tastes ran to Asimov, Clarke, and *Analogue* magazine, but they weren’t the same. Their stories seemed corny and mannered. Our stuff ran more underground, more enthused about bloodshed and pulp-style driving plots, and the associated science fiction was rebellious and rude as in *Dangerous Visions*. As often as not, the stories spun off into hallucinations and horror, or cut off at the dilemma’s height rather than tie up neatly and logically. I sometimes think that we kids experienced it a little differently, even more extremely. Our older friends and siblings enjoyed cracks in their universe, but to us, the kaleidoscopic material made a phantasmagoric whole.

Two powerfully important aspects of that material were the monstrous and the naked.

The Monster Part: We were hungry for monsters, especially visually and in some way we could share. Film at the time didn’t really cut it; Harryhausen animation as in *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* was fun but no comparison to the imagination, and most movies featured painfully bad technique or guys in rubber suits. Illustration was still the single most powerful medium for monster-enjoyment.

D&D delivered. It was the passion, I think, expressed by the occasional turn of phrase and the illustrations, not so much their skill or rendering, but composition. The net effect was instantly to want to be there and to imagine this thing doing whatever it does next. For me, it was Dave Trampier’s minotaur illustration in the 1977 *AD&D Monster Manual*. It’s bold pen-and-ink, so starkly black-and-white that it’s practically a woodcut. There’s no panorama, no depth, no shading – not bad things in themselves, but in this case, any more would make a mess. The thing is coming right at you, and you can see it holding that axe preparatory to one more stride and an awe-inspiring strike; the mind leaps forward to the next pose. Nor is it an “it,” as the body is human and instantly familiar ... so much so that not only do I see it coming at me, but I feel as if I were indeed that monster, in motion.¹

Now that I think about it, the crop choice is crucial too; it establishes proximity, and also means that the reader’s understanding of the minotaur’s posture is largely imagined rather than seen, invoking your participation in his forward drive. Still, I have to clarify that I’m not talking about Trampier’s remarkable skill or anyone else’s, but rather the passion that underlay it, which in his case found expression through technique. You can find that same quality in far less skilled pieces by other artists, and to me, its presence compensates for any number of technical shortcomings. In such art, the monster is undeniably present in a scene in which you are present as well, even if the immediate locale is not shown, and it is doing something immediate and enthralling, even if it’s just looking at something.

The Naked Part: Naked was in! Pop culture exploded with explicit unclothed male and female presence throughout all the arts. Its roots lay in myth, literature, classic art including figure drawing, and the fairy tale. It had a body-savvy, art-school quality: characters weren’t illustrated solely to display their body parts so much as they simply had them while doing whatever it was they were doing. Strands of hair, leafy branches in the foreground, and casually placed hands concealed nothing. It wasn’t isolated

¹ Trampier’s genius is that he could do all this with still figures as well as moving ones, as with those spooky wererats.

from the mainstream, either. Remember that elementary school library? During first grade I read every book they had on Greek and Norse mythology, and one of the former featured gorgeous illustrations with nude characters. Our librarian, Betty Allen, must have been a century old by my estimate at the time, but she clearly thought it perfectly all right to order that book for us to borrow and read.

D&D and early role-playing was right in the thick of this. Amazon boobs were front and center in the first publication of *D&D* in 1974. *Tékumel* certainly demonstrated continuity with the Barsoom books, for instance, in which all the characters were habitually unclothed except for sword-harnesses and the odd pendant or cape (anyone remember Queen Nayári of the Silken Thighs?). Dave Sutherland's succubus illustration in the 1977 *AD&D Monster Manual* flashed her bush. The cover of my copy of the original *Melee*, published by Metagaming in 1977, features adventurers battling an unclothed gargoyle with anatomical cock and balls hanging out. The detailed Humakti sword hilt in *Cults of Prax* (1979) was nothing more nor less than a full-frontal woman. Liz Danforth's sorcerer's clothes shredded off his body as he summoned a demon on the endpage illustration in *Tunnels & Trolls*, 5th edition (1979); her warrior's naked breasts hung down as she crouched to meet the orc's leaping strike in *Death Test 2* (1980).

What I'm trying to emphasize is not how risqué any of this was in gaming, but rather the opposite – how consistent it was with other pop culture was at the time, and how diffuse and non-branded most of pop culture was, although that was already changing. I'm also trying to describe, probably badly, how the illustrations were more naturalistic and more loving of the human form itself than typically found in porn. Check out that weary-succubus-and-sunset picture at the end of the 1979 *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

What Happened? Along came what can only be called a sudden national hysteria. It had a lot to do with the emergence of the Moral Majority in the run-up to Ronald Reagan's nomination, but it penetrated deeply into the mainstream. Strangely, it managed to subsume and include what had been anti-establishment activism as well. Tipper Gore kept us all safe with warning labels on Frank Zappa albums. Mothers everywhere threw their kids' stacks of comics into the trash in a replay of the late 1950s. Much of this activity was the direct sequel to the Zap Comix obscenity case, exposing a split between pro-sex women's libbers and the more puritanical second-wave feminists,² and paralleled the run-up to the Meese Commission Report in 1986.

In the midst of all this *D&D* was tagged as devil worship, one of the bevy of obvious conspiracies to pump the souls

of American children to Satan. Maybe not as bad as rock music, *evolooshun*, or baby-killing, but to be spotted and rooted out fast just the same. Taken by itself, BADD was a laughably incompetent, marginal, and short-lived endeavor.³ But as a member of the new phalanx of organizations that co-opted humanist activism, it gained media presence through association and found expression in families and institutions that were not concerned so much with Satan as with kids becoming "troubled" or "maladjusted." That meant it hit far harder than it had any right to based on content. And since Satan or maladjustedness were sort of hard to observe and combat, this more mainstream effort instead went after exactly what you might expect: the monsters and the naked bodies.

Characteristically, distributors of books, movies, comics, and games fell all over themselves trying to prove that the products were innocent of all intent or content to offend.⁴ Never mind them; they were and are cowards, with only a few exceptions. I want to focus on how gamers themselves internalized the criticism.

I don't know whether it was due to the current enthusiasm about the "hottest new hobby" breaking into the mainstream or what, but the newly-organized role-playing hobbyists performed a huge, collective flinch. Instead of defying the pressure, they apologized. They promised, yes, in fact, all that naughty stuff wasn't really there. They put the lid back on and themselves into a self-created closet. There, they hoped that one day, if they were very good, the mainstream would accept that gaming was OK after all. (They're still in there and still hoping.)

Then as now, role-playing publishers were themselves gamers. They flinched too, and the 1980s RPG books saw a dramatic downturn of all this content I'm talking about. *D&D* went Disney while *GURPS* shed Metagaming's zesty illustrations. *Rolemaster*, *Rifts*, and the *Hero System* were born eunuchoid and stayed that way. *T&T* and *Tékumel* remained marginal, and the latter's *Book of Ebon Bindings* vanished. Even the *Arduin Trilogy*, of all things, cleaned up its act. *RuneQuest* content floundered and was eventually scrubbed to nothing by Avalon Hill. Role-playing publishing became monster-ly and naked-ly cleansed, in as stunning a victory for the coalition of censors as anyone could have imagined.⁵ I'm also saying it's time to stop playing the victim about it. We the gamers bear some of

³ See The Escapist at www.theescapist.com for the history.

⁴ The de-politicizing of fantasy and science fiction is a larger story out of the scope of this essay, including issues of Hollywood, the re-framing of acceptable venues for fictional sex, and bookstore economics.

⁵ The "mature" motifs in White Wolf Publishing in the early 1990s were so compromised by branding and target marketing as to nullify any actual underground content or importance.

² Zap Comix vs. New York, 1970, and its later follow-up; see also Miller vs. California, 1973.

the blame for giving them that victory both in magnitude and in longevity.

That blame isn't abstract either. Genuine suffering and loss were involved. A few years later, the new teens and pre-teens coming up through the hobby never even saw the original stuff. Collectively, the incoming generation learned that to participate they'd have to parrot the official line that gaming was squeaky clean, nothing to do with backwards-played Led Zeppelin, demon pictures, or bare titties. Some who rebelled went off to counseling, deprogrammers, and medication, and no, I'm not kidding or exaggerating. Such absurd stupidities as *Dark Dungeons* (1984) and *Monsters & Mazes* (1982) should have been laughed to scorn, not tolerated in squirming silence. But the battle had been lost by then, and when the wonderful game-comics-bookstore Novel Ideas in Gainesville, Florida, was hit with an obscenity suit, it beat the suit but was driven into bankruptcy. The moral high ground didn't save it in the absence of the cultural bedrock that would have thrown the case out in the first place. It was not an isolated example.

A Challenge to The Old School Renaissance: The current OSR is an opportunity for great celebration and renewal of the untrammelled origins of the hobby. But is that happening? This question worries me. What's there to like is wonderful: investigation of real play, finding one another and bouncing ideas around, better institutional memory of texts and influences, insights for techniques and preferences ... all the enthusiasm and the casting-off of often-repeated claims about role-playing are pure fun.

But the puritanical strains that have long deviled us are still visible as well. The most obvious examples are the response to Geof McKinney's *Carcosa*, including his agreement to publish a censored version, and the decision to edit James Edward Raggi's *The Random Esoteric Creature Generator* for publication by Goodman Games. The posted disapproval of the content doesn't concern me, but the far more common high-sounding capitulation does. Tolerance, getting along, understanding of others' views, and similar ideas are raised not in defense of letting content stand, but as masks for acceding to that content's suppression and even for recommending it. "YMMV" is not being used to defy censorship or bowdlerization, but rather to excuse them. I'm also seeing conformity to basically Victorian societal values: explicit content is permitted and considered non-pornographic in certain mainstream venues, limited to specific themes and standards, all under effective oversight and tagged as specific consumer items (horror fiction, romance fiction, film). Outside of that context, all the very same visual or stated content is labeled pornography. However, since commercially-effective porn consists solely of display, such a value system neatly excises from the landscape explicit imagery associated with ideas, especially inspiring or provocative ones.

Regarding fantasy, I referred earlier to a specific phantasmagoric effect, which came about in part because the sources were so diverse: ancient literature, modern literature, underground fiction, visual media, and more. Fantasy was not a genre, but an activity which cut across time, across media, and across sectors of society; it did not describe parameters but rather broke them open. The difference between participating in that activity and discovering a new medium (gaming) to apply it with, vs. encountering gaming sourcebooks as one's primary source of fantasy itself, is profound. The former has been excised by the Victorian trick, leaving only the latter.

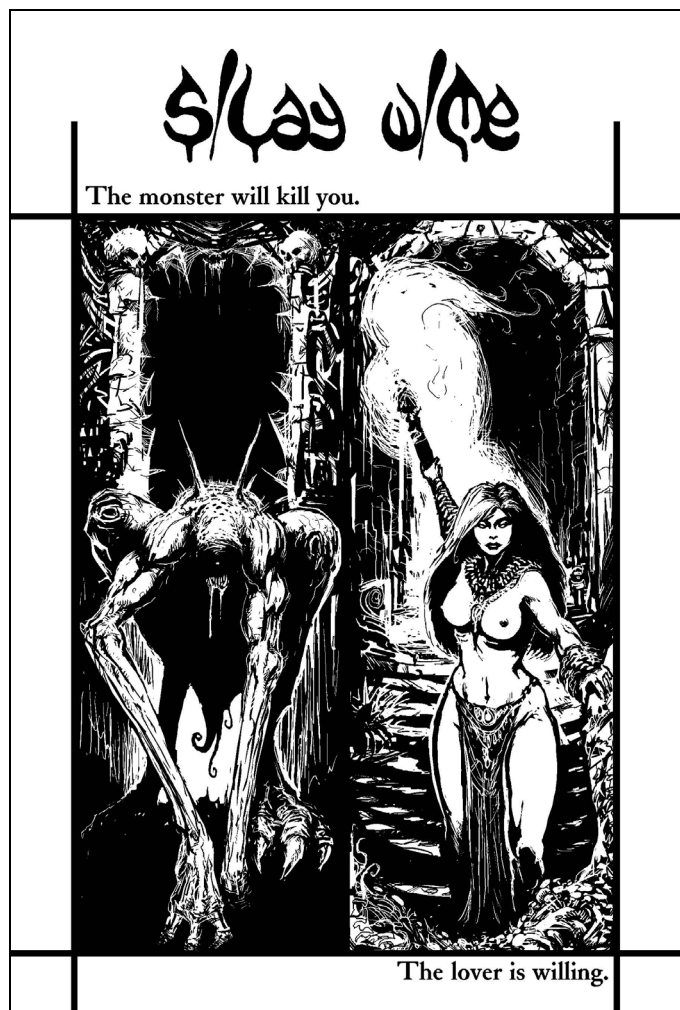
Another form of censorship is revisionism, which is related to the previous point in that not only are RPG texts cited as fantasy sources, their content is also being described inaccurately, i.e., as free of all such explicit content. Therefore such content is cast as an intruder upon "original fantasy" in an outright falsification of history. To summarize, the current discourse about explicit material in OSR publications not only illustrates illiberal capitulation to anti-intellectual establishmentarianism, it hides behind high-sounding fake-free-thinking phrasing, then compounds this act by mistaking gaming texts for fantasy itself, and compounds it all yet further by ignoring the blissfully and wildly-individual gaming material from the 1970s to source the much more homogenous and exponentially tamer material from the 1980s instead.

This isn't directed toward those who simply disapprove. I'm directing this to anyone who flinched and failed to defend these works' original content *even while disagreeing with the criticism*, and to anyone who cleans up an OSR product in the face of moral critics. I simply and fully condemn such actions, and it's nothing to do with mileage, but because doing this is wrong. Why, if you concede that others' mileage may vary, do *you* dial it back? Why do *their* preferences prevail? I mean, who are you trying not to offend? Anita Bryant? Andrea Dworkin? Ed Meese? Who are you trying to protect? Yourself? Your store owner? "The hobby?" Pah!

My question is whether all this, *Fight On!* and otherwise, is rediscovering and re-brewing the real bug juice, or tamely sipping the second-stage, caffeine-free, sugar-free version. It's a choice between a fearless recovery of the birth of a new (small-a) art and game form or a nostalgia wave for one's pre-teen and teen years. Such a recovery is long overdue and should be cause for rejoicing. But if nostalgia for 1980 is accidentally including 1980's repudiation of 1974-79, retaining the collective flinch as a feature, then the OSR is a mere curiosity. Role-playing originated precisely in individuals publishing what they wanted to publish, and violating this principle harms no one worse than ourselves. Which finally brings me to my own little latest offering, now available from Adept Press.

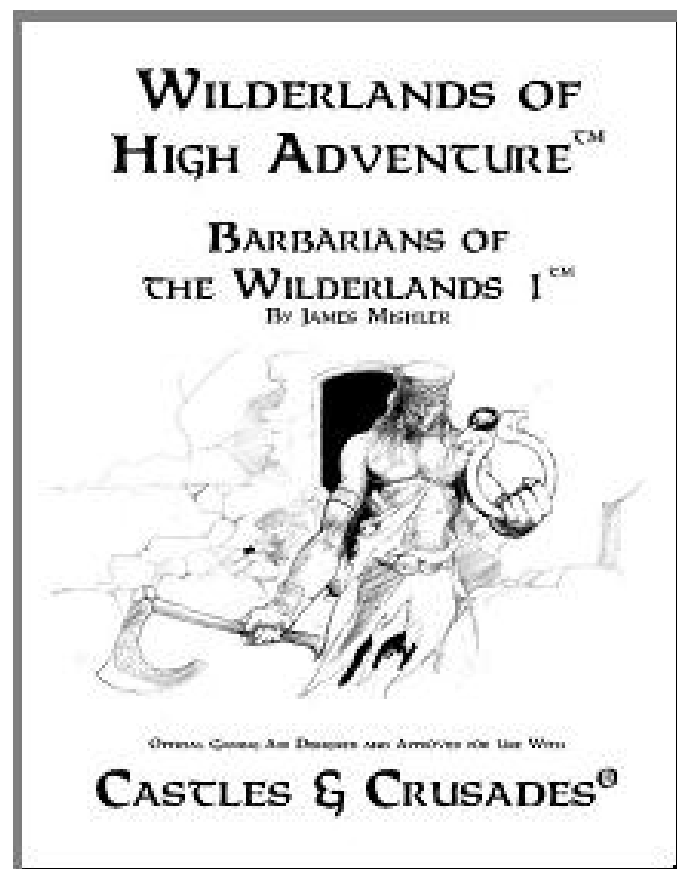
S/Lay W/Me as a game didn't strike me originally as good OSR. I thought it way too free-form, with totally different starting points for imagination and means for making things happen. Then I remembered friends who conducted long-term, back-and-forth correspondence regarding characters and their adventures, and realized I was being more old-school than I thought. Aside from procedures, though, its content is what I saw, did, wanted, and still seek in gaming. That content was vibrantly present in what I encountered in 1977. It is as pure to the hobby's origin as red dragons, saving throws, and Gutboy Barrelhouse.

I hope the OSR can take that content more seriously. I'm not only talking about pictures. I'm talking about the cracking-open of "the normal," into the hallucinatory, gory, gleeful, sexy realm of fantasy before it became Reagan-era teenfic, Hollywood's PG-rated bitch, and canonical fantasy-RPG motifs. The visuals matter too. Let's see monsters in motion, fully present, engaging the viewer rather than merely posing for them. Let's see bodies as they are, the whole form in its positions at rest and in action, with titties by all means, but especially pussy, and cock and balls. Ω



Merlin's Mystical Mirror

reviews by Zach Houghton



Barbarians of the Wilderlands I (PDF, Adventure Games Publishing): James Mishler may have been rather vocal in his online opinions of late, but his work for Adventure Games Publishing is rock-solid as ever. In *Barbarians of the Wilderlands I*, Mishler expands the classic Wilderlands game setting while providing new variants for the *Castles & Crusades* rules system. *Barbarians* follows the format of most of Mishler's other work; it is a no-frills PDF, crisply laid out. Coming in at 20 pages, this work truly expands on a class for the *Castles & Crusades* RPG that many found lacking.

The first 10 pages represent a greatly-expanded Barbarian, one that is not especially Wilderlands-specific, but could be used with most any *Castles & Crusades* campaign. The barbarian as presented by Mishler is a much more versatile class, a resilient warrior proficient with native arms and armor, with differing barbarian types marked out by choice of special abilities. For example, a character from a nomadic horse tribe might choose Horsemanship and Horse Warrior; those of a hunter-gatherer tribe near a mighty river might have Canoeing and Bowyer. This customization truly lends itself to a wider array of potential barbarian archetypes. A small section on barbarian equipment is also welcome, if perhaps a bit scanty.

After the base class presentation, *Barbarians of the Wilderlands* goes into the various tribes of the Wilderlands. This part of the product really shines, as the various tribes, their appearance, beliefs, structure, language, favored equipment, and naming conventions are all featured. Retailing for \$4 at DriveThruRPG and RPGNow, Mishler's work will be well worth the price for those who love the Wilderlands of High Adventure or *Castles & Crusades*. Fans of other neoclassical games and their cousins may not get quite as much utility out of this product, but should still be able to pick and choose some ideas from it. All in all, I would rate *Barbarians of the Wilderlands I* a solid 3/5 on style and 4/5 on substance, for a 3.5/5 total rating.



Swords & Wizardry Quick Start (PDF/Print, Michael Shorten): The full retro-clone or neoclassical RPG of *Swords & Wizardry* is a tremendous product for a specific style of classic adventuring. However, at over 100 pages in the Matt Finch version and 64 in the Finch/Marvin Breig version, it may still be slightly intimidating for the DM looking to return to this ageless style of gaming.

Enter Michael Shorten's *Swords & Wizardry Quick Start*, a 26-page product that introduces both player and game master ("referee") alike to the essence of *Swords & Wizardry* in easily-digestible bits. The first item I was struck by is how excellent the art is for a "labor of love" product. From the tremendous cover by Mark Allen inward, the art is never overpowering, but always suitable and evocative of

the text's tone. A clean layout assists with the presentation as an introductory product.

The first section is the Player's Section, and breaks character creation down into easy steps. The Human/Dwarf/Elf and Fighter/Magic-User Cleric axis of selection is still at play here. Grey-boxed tips and reminders assist throughout the section.

The GM's section is especially impressive—not overwhelming, but full of handy information covering basic situations bound to come up as well as overall referee philosophy. The grey boxes again assist in this section, and set it up for the introductory adventure which follows, "Dungeon of Akban." Akban appears to be a good introductory dungeon, with a healthy mix of traps, combat possibilities, and different paths. Shorten does a great job throughout of explaining some of the responsibilities and duties of the Referee, as well as giving tips on how the dungeon should be run. I would note that Akban is perhaps not best suited to be replayed multiple times. Then again, this Quick Start states it is only to be used for Level 1-type adventuring; presumably, players interesting in progressing further will pick up *Swords & Wizardry* itself.

I was pleased to see the all-important character sheet added at the back of the product—something all too many products forget entirely. You can find the pdf of *Swords & Wizardry* free at lulu.com. The print module retails for \$6.95 plus shipping. I can recommend this product wholeheartedly for those looking for an easy introduction to Gygaxian play, as well as a suitable product for convention game orientation. Presentation is a 4.5/5, and substance a 5/5, for a sparkling 4.75/5 overall. Ω



Artifacts, Adjuncts, & Oddments

by Mo Mehlem, Marcel Selinger, Horst Adams, and Calithena

Broadsword of Kinslaying (Cal): This magical broadsword +1 gains a progressive 'plus' for each creature of a given type it slays in battle, for the duration of that fight. (Example: a warrior armed with the blade battles five ogres. After one is slain it becomes +2, after 2 +3, etc.) If the wielder rolls a 1 on the attack and there are any relatives or lovers nearby, they are struck for triple damage.

Dwarven Lorestones (Cal): scribed in Dwarvish, these are effectively low-level magical scrolls only usable by dwarves of 4th+ level and mages who speak Dwarvish of 10th+ level. Dwarves who use Lorestones lose all bonuses to saves against magic for 1d6 days afterwards, cumulative for each Lorestone.

Lendor's Bones (Cal): These three fragile, yellowing daggers receive no bonus to hit, but their blades are poisonous to living and undead alike (save or +3d4 damage). Dexterity 18 may throw all 3 in a single round, while Dexterity 13+ will allow 2 to be thrown in a round. They will hit incorporeal beings and return to their thrower the round after they're thrown, but if she is distracted, immobilized, or otherwise prevented from catching them, she must roll to hit herself for full damage.

Staff of Wingenback: This staff was created centuries ago by a crazed druid. Wingenback wanted to become the next Archdruid, but he hadn't been chosen 33 years in a row. He then created the Staff of *Wingenback* (more commonly known as the *Staff of the Crazed Druid*) in order to have a better chance in the next election. The staff is an extremely mighty magic item which can create 100 different magical effects, with only one flaw: the wielder has no way of knowing which one he's going to create! Some of the effects take place immediately; some can be triggered at will. If the effect doesn't take place immediately, the wielder has got 60 minutes to activate it. The staff has no charges; it can create two effects per day. Only druids or priests can wield the *Staff of Wingenback*.

d100	Effect
1	20 liters of water sprinkle from the staff's end.
2	A randomly chosen animal, monster, or human within 50' (max 2 HD) is killed and transformed into a grilled chicken that tastes absolutely fabulous.
3	The staff grows roots and becomes a vine carrying 5d20 grapes.
4	The upper end of the staff grows 3d4 apples.

5	A fog cloud (10'x10') completely obscuring view flows out of the staff (duration 1d10 rounds).
6	The staff strips life energy from the environment, adding it to the character's life force. Flowers, bushes and trees in a radius of 10' wither away and die, while the character gains 10 hit points (over max OK).
7	The staff strips life energy from the PC and sends it into the environment. Flowers, bushes and trees within 10' bloom brightly as the character loses a level.
8	The tree or bush closest to the staff goes through an entire yearly cycle in only 15 minutes. Should the plant grow fruit, such can be harvested and eaten.
9	The staff points to the north.
10	The user can see in the dark for 1d20 rounds, but if this power is activated in full daylight, the user will be blinded for 1d20 rounds instead.
11	As long as he doesn't move, the character wielding the staff is nearly invisible for 1d12 rounds.
12	Wielder smells of spruce needles until a bath is taken.
13	For the next 1d20 rounds the staff emits a soft humming noise human ears can't hear. It scares away mosquitoes but attracts dogs.
14	The wielder's skin grows leathery for 1d8 rounds, giving him an DC two points better than his usual.
15	The wielder grows functional gills for 1d10 turns.
16	The staff turns into a huge carrot (2m tall). The staff can be found in the centre of the carrot.
17	The staff grows 2d20 extremely hot chili peppers.
18	A piece of clothing the wielder is wearing turns into the animal it came from, if any.
19	Delicious dandelion soup appears in small bowls of rootwood. The soup can nourish up to 10 humans.
20	A wooden door appears in front of the wielder. Walking through it magically transports a person to a kitchen apparently built into the roots of a giant oak tree. This is where Elmar the root gnome lives. He's a highly gifted healer, alchemist, and cook who will help the group as long as they are nice to him.
21	A field of cannabis (5x5') appears. Market value of the grass depends on local need for drugs and ropes.
22	Gacki, a riding chicken the size of a horse, appears. It will serve loyally as steed, supper, or both.
23	For 10 turns the wielder can clear a path through even the thickest brush by pointing the staff.
24	A 60' radius area around the staff is magically transported to a remote desert (including all characters, plants and livestock).
25	Every living being in a 20' radius is completely healed.
26	In seconds the person wielding the staff grows thick hair that makes him or her look like a Sasquatch, giving +1 DC. The hair can be shaved without problems.
27	The wielder can fire 10 fiery bolts inflicting 1d8 each.
28	The staff drops 3 pods which become full grown trees in only 5 seconds (d6: 1 birch, 2 beech, 3 hazelnut, 4 chestnut, 5 oak, 6 mammoth).
29	The wielder can summon 3 wild boars to help him or

	her in a fight, disappearing afterwards.		being in a radius of 10'. After 2 rounds the splinters start moving, even "flowing", together, <i>Terminator</i> -like. The staff is completely reconstructed after 1 turn.
30	Until a bath the wielder smells of honey and almonds.		
31	One enemy of the forest can be turned to stone.		
32	The wielder grows magnificent antlers. They might look kind of silly, but are very useful in a fight as they deal 1d10 damage. The antlers fall off after 1d6 days and can then be sold for ~20 gp to a button-maker.	55	The staff's wielder knows if somebody he's talking to is speaking the truth.
33	Nature strikes back! In a radius of 1d10x10' nature turns against anything "unnatural." Animals fight everyone "civilized," plants have a growth spurt and their roots topple buildings or streets, etc..	56	Until he takes a bath, the wielder smells like a skunk.
34	A huge fungoid being called Fungor grows in front of the wielder. It is as strong and powerful as an ogre and has a special daily attack as it can emit a poisonous cloud of spores. d6: 1-4 Fungor likes the wielder and will be a faithful companion until he dies, 5 Fungor is free-willed and will help the wielder of his own accord, 6 Fungor attacks immediately.	57	The wielder and everybody else within 20' is teleported to the closest forest. If they are in a forest, they are teleported to the closest settlement.
35	In a radius of 1d10 miles the season changes. d6: 1-4 to next season, 5 two seasons hence, 6 season prior.	58	The staff acts like a magnet for glass. All items made of glass within 20' are drawn towards it.
36	In a radius of 1d20 miles all food grows stale.	59	Staff replicates thousandfold, creating a palisade around wielder. The wielder can choose the wall's radius.
37	One insect in a radius of 10' grows to gargantuan proportions. d6: 1 ant, 2 fly, 3 flea/louse, 4 mantis, 5 mosquito, 6 wasp.	60	All of the wielder's companions are sucked into the nearest tree. The wielder must then do something special to free them. His action must be something that helps the cause of nature, like freeing all the horses in a village, stopping a group of lumberjacks from following their profession, etc.
38	All humanoids within 30' are transformed to nature-loving elves if they don't make their saving throw.	61	For 10 rounds every enemy hit by the staff is held magically for 1d10 rounds.
39	All humanoids within 30' are transformed to stone-loving dwarves if they don't make their saving throw.	62	Throwing the staff on the ground changes it to a magical rope, as long as the staff's wielder wants it to be.
40	All humanoids within 30' are transformed to justice-loving lawful humans if they don't make a save.	63	Wielder permanently gains ability to speak with plants.
41	Until he takes a bath, the wielder smells of garlic.	64	A locked door made of wood, iron or metal can be opened by touching it with the staff.
42	The staff turns into a boa constrictor and attacks a randomly chosen person, possibly even the wielder.	65	The wielder emits strong pheromones and attracts the opposite sex for 1 hour to a degree that he/she needs a 10' pole to push them away...
43	A permanent fountain appears at the wielder's feet.	66	A compost golem appears in front of the staff's wielder. It can follow simple commands and will not leave the wielder's side for 1d4 days, which will make him an outcast quicker than he can spell "otyugh".
44	All paper in the vicinity (including books, scrolls, etc.) merges and forms a tree.	67	The wielder magically gains 4 permanent hit points.
45	The wielder of the staff can send lightning bolts inflicting 5d6 against all the "enemies of nature" in sight he chooses.	68	The staff acts like a magnet for wood. All wooden items within 20' are drawn towards it.
46	All the humans, monsters, animals, plants, etc. in a radius of 100' become friends.	69	One person touched by the staff is killed. Nothing happens if he or she rolls a successful saving throw.
47	Wielder immune to heat and cold for 24 hours.	70	Wielder is transformed into an ent for 2d6 hours.
48	A wise owl appears and answers a question.	71	One person touched by the staff is completely healed.
49	Touching the ground with the staff opens a 20'x20'x20' hole which quickly fills with water.	72	Wielder can talk to rocks for a period of 1d10 turns.
50	The druid/priest wielding the staff finds an animal that will serve him as the familiar of a mage. d6: 1 mouse, 2 rat, 3 bat, 4 cat, 5 dog, 6 wolf.	73	The druid/priest is swept away by a strong wind. He can then tell the wind where he wants to land.
51	Every living being in a radius of 50' (except for the wielder) falls asleep for 2 hours.	74	The wielder can animate an object (max. 6'x6'). The object can follow simple orders.
52	The staff acts like a very strong magnet. All metal (including weapons/armor) within 20' are drawn to it.	75	Wielder permanently gains the ability to speak with normal animals.
53	Touching the ground with the staff opens a 10'x10'x10' hole in the ground.	76	Staff points in the direction of a person the wielder wants to find.
54	The staff explodes into small splinters of wood. These splinters inflict 1d6 points of damage to every living	77	Staff points in the direction of an item the wielder wants to find.
		78	Throwing the staff on the ground summons the mightiest creature within 1000'. This creature will treat the staff's wielder like its best friend for 2 days.
		79	If moved over the head like a propeller the staff lifts the wielder into the air, where he can move with the

	speed of a griffon.
80	The wielder and his friends are immune to heat, cold, acid and magic for 12 hours.
81	Wielder can move at twice normal speed for 1d4 days.
82	The temperature in an area of 20 miles climbs to 45 degrees Celsius (113° F) for 24 hours.
83	The caster falls asleep for 2d6 hours. While he's sleeping he's invulnerable to attack and can't be touched or moved. When he wakes up he's fully healed and one point is added to his wisdom score.
84	A huge dark cloud moves over the wielder and starts raining. The cloud follows the caster for 1d4 days.
85	The staff can be thrown, hitting automatically for 1d20 damage and then returning to the wielder.
86	One of the wielder's companions (wielder's choice) is turned into a Cave Bear for 1d4 turns.
87	Wielder permanently gains the ability to speak with magical animals.
88	Wielder transformed into a griffon for 2d6 hours.
89	The temperature within 20 miles drops to -10 degrees Celsius (14° F) for 24 hours.
90	Gravity in a 20' cube centered on wielder is reversed.
91	All beings dangerous/hostile to the wielder in a radius of 50' glow in a silvery light for the next 2d4 days.
92	Animals appear and transport the group where they want (water – dolphins; air – pegasi; ground – horses).
93	Enemies of the wielder within 50' are thrown on the ground by strong currents of wind.
94	For 1d4 hours the wielder can pass through any form of matter (stone, wood, etc.).
95	A magical club+3 appears in the wielder's hand.
96	The staff grows 3 pods. These can be thrown and explode upon impact for 5d4 damage in a 10' radius. The pods can be "harvested" and kept until used.
97	The druid/priest wielding the staff finds a magical animal that will serve him as the familiar of a magic-user. d6: 1 griffon, 2 pegasus, 3 displacing beast, 4 dire wolf, 5 – compost golem, 6 golden dragon.
98	Wielder grows wings for 1d4 weeks.
99	A small army of 20 giant ants appears and follows simple commands. They disband after 1d4 days.
00	Wielder is immune to all missile attacks (normal and magical) for 24 hours.

Wings of the Dove (Cal): These magical, feathered wings allow the wearer to fly at Speed 18 for an indefinite period. They also protect their wearer from attack, forcing any who wish to assault him or her to save vs. magic (maximum 1 attempt per day) or be unable to strike. However, while flying with these wings, the wearer may not attack or take any other aggressive action against a foe, even if one makes its save and assaults the wingwearer. Long flight to land and removal of the wings may be necessary to make self-defense viable in such cases. Ω

