

MM 2

a Dungeon World monster manual

WIZARD-SPAWNED INSANITIES

• Johnstone Metzger & Nathan Jones





Module MM2

Wizard-Spawned Insanities

a monster manual
for the Dungeon World fantasy role-playing game

by
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&
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Wizard-Spawned Insanities

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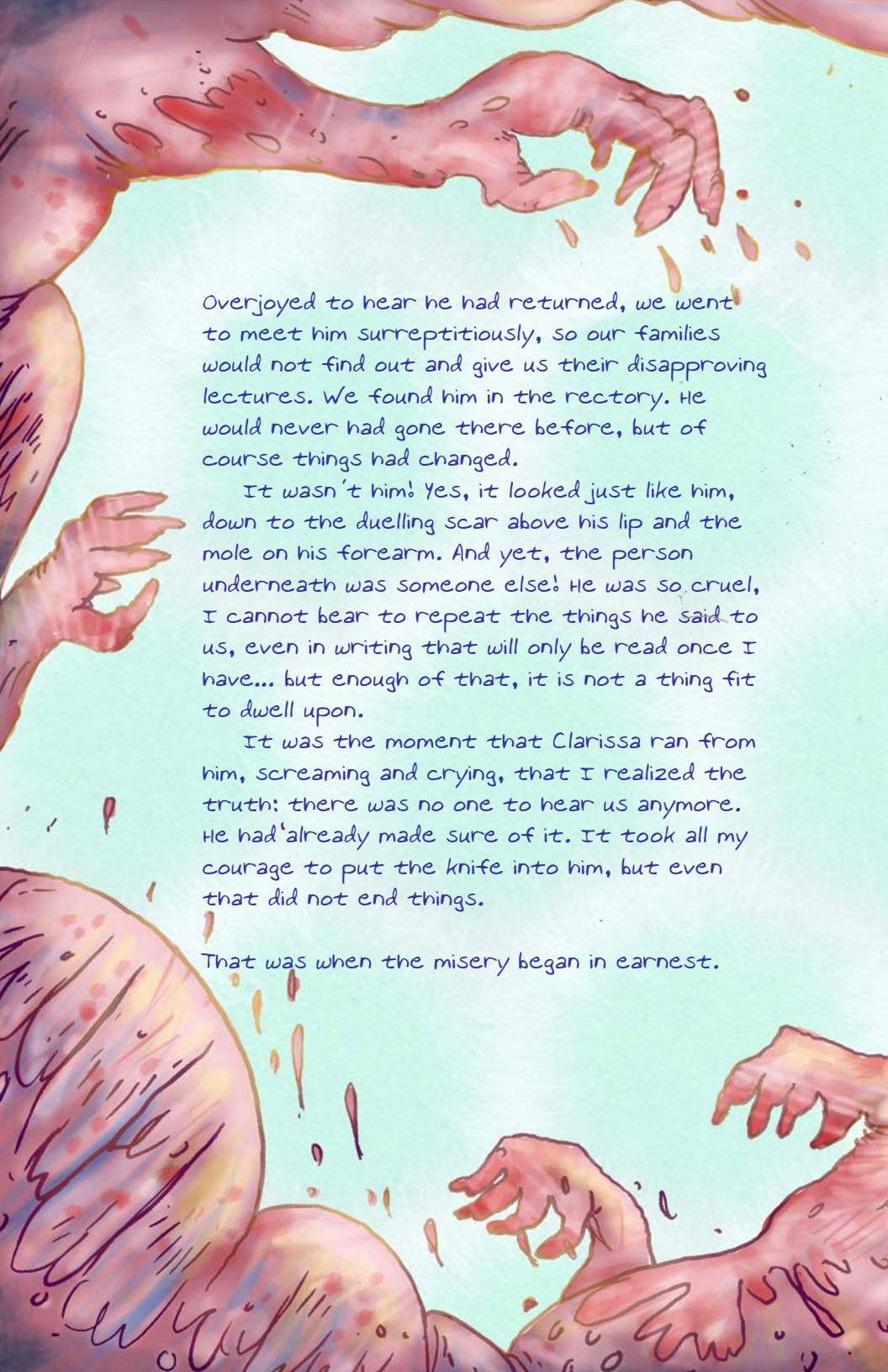
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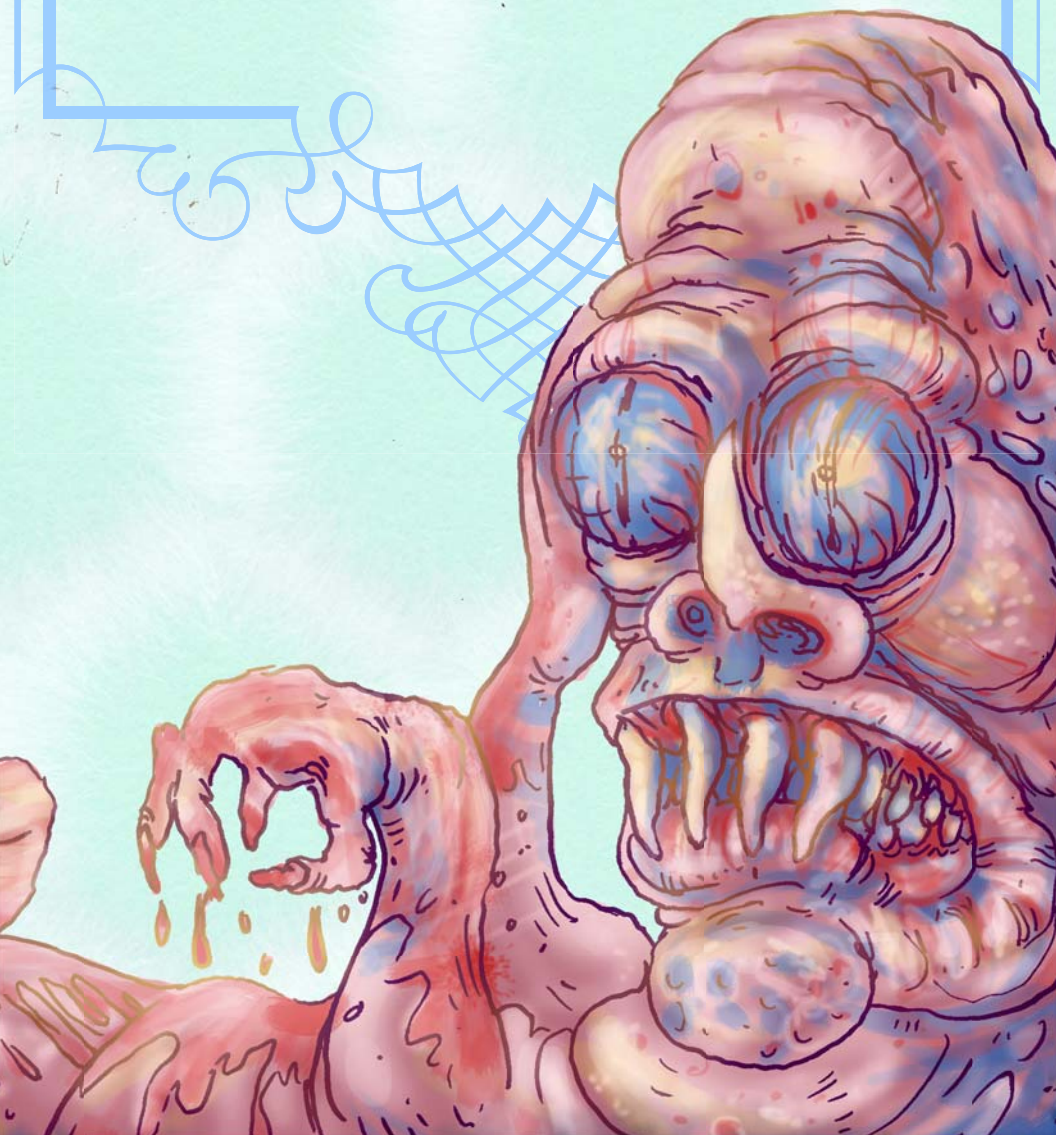
Overjoyed to hear he had returned, we went to meet him surreptitiously, so our families would not find out and give us their disapproving lectures. We found him in the rectory. He would never had gone there before, but of course things had changed.

It wasn't him! Yes, it looked just like him, down to the duelling scar above his lip and the mole on his forearm. And yet, the person underneath was someone else! He was so cruel, I cannot bear to repeat the things he said to us, even in writing that will only be read once I have... but enough of that, it is not a thing fit to dwell upon.

It was the moment that Clarissa ran from him, screaming and crying, that I realized the truth: there was no one to hear us anymore. He had already made sure of it. It took all my courage to put the knife into him, but even that did not end things.

That was when the misery began in earnest.

The
Astral Glutton





Devils of the Astral

Created by the **magical residue** of thousands of unfortunate wizards who met their doom on the astral plane, the astral glutton is a fearsome thing. A worm-like **ghost**, it passes through the material world, becoming solid just long enough to tear apart the flesh of creatures it has been angered by. It's favourite activity is to **possess the living** and live through them—not “vicariously,” exactly, since the astral glutton experiences every pleasure directly and the host body suffers all the consequences—in order to sate its alien appetites.

It would not have access to this world, of course, were it not for the lure of magical power. Those fallen sorcerers, floating in limbo between the stars, still retain vast quantities of the quintessence that is the arcane itself. What would you pay for such a treasure? It is like gold to the poor, weapons to the oppressed, or water to a man dying in the desert. Mages of all stripes lust after this pure arcane power, but to get it, they must venture between dimensions, and risk encountering something things best left beyond the veil—things like the astral glutton.

Secret Origins

Though the threat posed by the astral glutton is known to experts, its origins are shrouded in mystery. What diligent researchers may discover, as a reward for their hard work—or perversely, a punishment, perhaps—is that an astral glutton can only be created by the death of **a mortal human who can wield no sorcery**, but was nonetheless left stranded to die on the astral plane, amidst the sorcerous debris fields that occasionally litter its expanse.

But this is also very dangerous knowledge, for it means one could—if one was malicious or mad enough—engineer the creation of new astral gluttons to plague and bedevil astral mages.

Motives

The astral glutton is a fickle creature. What does it want? Why does it do the terrible things that it does? **Roll 1d6 to find out** (or choose a motive from the following options):

- 1 All the astral glutton cares about is **getting high** and experiencing multiple layers of reality at the same time. It will consume any and all hallucinogenic drugs and stimulants until its mortal body is burned out.
 - 2 The astral glutton holds some seemingly-random **philosophical idea** in reverence, and it attacks anyone it perceives as being at odds with this idea (in either their words or behaviours). It does not actually act in accordance with this idea, by any definition, it just attacks others because of it. The astral glutton sees no contradiction in this.
 - 3 The astral glutton is driven only by a burning **desire for revenge** upon the descendants of those who it feels offended it during its mortal life. These are the only memories that still linger in its mind.
 - 4 The astral glutton likes to jump from body to body and **cause drama**. It's a griever, basically—the more strife and drama, the better. The specific drama means little to the astral glutton. All that matters is outrage, conflict, and attention.
 - 5 The astral glutton wishes only to experience all **sensual pleasures** of the flesh, and does not care what lengths it has to go to in order to do that. It will be obsessively attracted to any type of body it has not possessed before and any physical experience it has not yet grown tired of.
 - 6 The only food that sustains the astral glutton is the **psychic residue** of the human mind in captivity. Its modus operandi is to possess powerful people and, while feeding off their anguish at not being in control of their body, using their influence to enslave others.
-

ASTRAL GLUTTON

20 HP ○ Armour

*Devious, Intelligent, Large, Planar, Solitary, Terrifying.***Special Qualities:** Astral parasite, Flying, Mostly intangible.

Although the astral glutton desires living hosts, it is also petulant and wrathful. It has no problem rending and battering any humans it finds annoying or troublesome. Because it is usually intangible, it has little experience of mortals that know how to hurt it.

Instinct: To possess the living.**Attacks:**

- Bite and chew (1d8 damage, 1 piercing, messy; hand).
- Grab a foe and rend them apart (1d8+2 damage, forceful, messy; close).

Moves:

- Fly through the air.
- Possess a living person's body.
- Return to the astral plane.

Tactics:*If they are annoying:* Pummel them until they cower.*If they are completely boring:* Return to the astral plane.*If they can harm astral creatures:* Throw a fit and flee.*If they have an interesting body:* Possess them.**Weaknesses:**

Because it is a creature of the astral, anything that destroys magic or has an increased effect on magical planes will have an increased effect upon the glutton. Most magical weapons will also be able to harm it, even though it is intangible.

When the astral glutton attempts to possess you, you can either accept it into your body or defy the danger it poses to you. If you do, **on a 10+**, you are safe and the astral glutton may not try again. **On a 7-9**, you are fighting over who controls your body. If no one comes to your aid, you must split your waking time with the astral glutton. Each full day you remain in control you must mark a debility. Once you run out or when you give in, the astral glutton controls your body for the same amount of time. If someone helps to exorcise the astral glutton, it must flee from your body. **On a miss**, your body is lost to the astral glutton. It has complete control.

Ambassador's End

An Opening Scenario

Choose where the scenario starts, then read this to the players:

You have been gathered into a small audience chamber inside the home of [an important royal institution; see below], along with the recently-arrived foreign ambassador and Shaliyas, the court sorceress. Before your very eyes, the ambassador's body is rent asunder, split open as if from the inside. A ghostly horror emerges, worm-like and gibbering, with huge, sightless eyes and numerous arms. What do you do?

Important Royal Institutions (choose or roll rd8):

- 1 The castellan of the royal palace.
- 2 The chief cartographer of the royal geographical society.
- 3 The king's favourite mistress.
- 4 The royal master of horses.
- 5 The offices of the War Ministry.
- 6 The queen's preferred executioner.
- 7 The royal family's private cathedral.
- 8 The Royal Repository of Ancient Artifacts.

Spout Lore

If someone spouts lore about this ghastly chest-burster, they should be able to identify the astral glutton by its appearance. Spouting lore also provides information found in boxes like the one below, which are scattered throughout this book:

Something Interesting

The astral glutton is known to possess people and use their bodies for its own purposes. Normally, it has perfect control of its host, and does not leave unless it seeks a new body or it has been forced out.

Questions

As the action commences, ask the players some of these questions and use the answers they give you:

-
- *What foreign kingdom does (did) the ambassador represent? Why are tensions between your two kingdoms so high right now?*
-

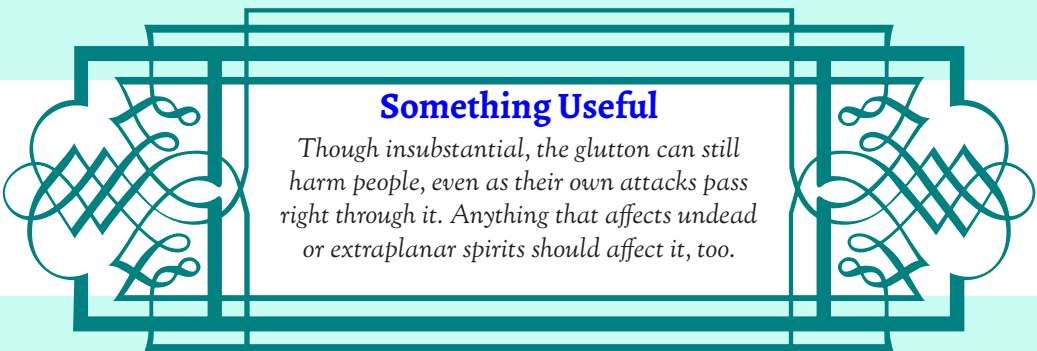
What the players say in answer has the potential to turn this incident into an international disaster. **If the foreign kingdom does not accept the possession of its ambassador**, there could be dire repercussions: persecution of foreigners in that kingdom, restrictions on trade, or even outright invasion.

Use what they tell you not only to define exactly what could go wrong here, and how easily, but also as a source of ideas for how it could be remedied.

-
- *Did you kill the ambassador, and if so, why?*
-

If anyone answers in the affirmative, bring their relationships with the other PCs into the situation. Ask the other players what they thought of the relationship between the killer and the killed. Did they suspect it would come to this? Did they approve? Who tried to stop it? Were any of them friendly with the ambassador?

This is also an opportunity to **introduce sub-plots**, if the ambassador was killed for completely unrelated reasons. If any other NPCs are mentioned in the answers to this question, keep them in mind and ask about them—or even introduce them outright—later on.



Something Useful

Though insubstantial, the glutton can still harm people, even as their own attacks pass right through it. Anything that affects undead or extraplanar spirits should affect it, too.

-
- *Who asked you to spy on the ambassador, and did you do it?*
-

Use this question to add a sense of **espionage and intrigue** to the scenario. Was this a routine procedure, to keep an eye on a visiting dignitary? Does this PC often spy on people, or was this something unusual? Did someone suspect the ambassador was possessed, or are there other plots happening?

Keep notes on this spymaster (or *would-be* spymaster, if such is the case) so you can track their assets, motives, and movements. You might want to turn them into a full-fledged danger once the session is over.

-
- *Why did you come to this hastily-convened meeting, and who summoned you? Did you keep it a secret?*
-

Use their answers to add **a sense of urgency** to the atmosphere of intrigue. Something more than just a terrifying monster bursting out of the foreign ambassador is going on here. Some possible plots that could be involved here are:

- The ambassador was unexpectedly and forcibly **exorcised** by the magical power of the location, where **secret experiments** in sorcery are currently being conducted.
- The astral glutton desires **Shaliyas' body** so it can experience sorcery and manipulate the royal family all at the same time.
- The foreign kingdom sent the possessed ambassador here, with **full knowledge** of the astral glutton.
- A **plot** to assassinate the king and place his bastard daughter on the throne is in the works, planned by a small cabal of unscrupulous nobles.
- Shaliyas unmasked the ambassador in front of the PCs to **shift the blame** for it over to them.

Ask these of different players:

-
- *What issues of state have you and Shaliyas butted heads over before? Have you argued in front of the royals, or just in private?*
-
- *Why does Shaliyas bear a grudge against you? Is it warranted?*
-

Use their answers to **create dialogue** between her and the PCs. They obviously do not agree on everything, and will need to discuss their options with Shaliyas before they make a final decision on how to handle this incident. Make sure there are consequences for attacking, ignoring, or snubbing Shaliyas. She is an important person!

Questions No One Wanted To Ask

- Is it really dead, or just banished?
- Was the ambassador possessed after arriving here, and did someone in the royal household have something to do with it?
- What if there is more than one?
- Where does it come from? Did someone orchestrate its arrival?
- Who knew about the ambassador being possessed and said nothing?

If the PCs do research on the astral glutton, valuable information can be found in the notebooks of Themaculus (turn to page 90).

If the PCs look for a way to travel to the astral plane, they might want to use a Griffarcus to do so (turn to page 48). If the PCs look for someone who can teach them how to tame the Griffarcus, you might direct them towards Narriot Zorbal (turn to page 106).

If the PCs look for a place they can keep the astral glutton safely imprisoned, there is an ancient, buried temple where such magics are fairly easy to accomplish (turn to page 80).

If the PCs look for the astral glutton's enemies, they might find references to a mass of limbs on a planet deep in the void-dark astral sea (turn to page 73).

Continuing the Scenario

Once the PCs have dealt with the immediate threat of the astral glutton, either it will have been captured or destroyed, or it will have escaped. All three outcomes require them to take stock of their situation and make decisions.

If it has escaped, the PCs will need to formulate a plan to go after it. If it has escaped in Shaliyas' body, it now has magical powers and a level of access to the royal family that the ambassador did not. It will make a formidable arcane enemy danger, likely with a short list of grim portents moving it toward an impending doom at a prodigious speed. Probably the most important question to ask is: who do the PCs go to next?

If it has been captured, the PCs will need to decide what to do with it. Perhaps they will research ways to destroy it, or to keep it imprisoned forever, or even to study it and gain its powers. They will need allies who can help them do these things and they will probably need to keep their activities a secret, which—at the very least—requires Shaliyas to do them a favour (if she has not been incapacitated somehow).

If it has been destroyed, the PCs can stop worrying about its activities. But another question immediately leaps to the fore, and cannot be ignored the way it can be if the astral glutton is captured or escapes: what are the consequences of this incident? The royal family and the foreign kingdom that sent the ambassador will both want answers, not to mention the royal institutions involved, and possibly Shaliyas. Everyone will try to spin these events to their favour, so they can push their other agendas. Who benefits from this? Whose plans are scuttled by it? Keep in mind: just because someone can advance their own cause off the back of the PCs doesn't mean they will act favourably toward them.



Tomb of the Possessed Lord

Deep within the bowels of the earth there lies the tomb of **Lord Valdegaart**, a man possessed by the astral glutton. He was said to have been buried laden with gold and jewels, in a casket made of diamonds, itself resting inside a gilded cage.

Astute research may discover that he was buried on his younger brother's instructions, and that this same brother was later beheaded for the crime of poisoning, in an entirely unrelated affair. Even more astute research may incline the researcher to think that this brother was even innocent of the crime!

The Tomb

The lord sits inside a **glass box** that is five feet wide, five feet deep, and five feet high. Attached to the edges of the box are small **glass globes** of a greenish colour, that appear to have some kind of liquid in them. This is poison, but its toxicity has been leached out of it by age and magical residue. If the glass is broken, the poison is harmless—although the broken glass may not be.

The glass box is itself inside an **iron cage** (that is most definitely not gilded). The cage has a door on it that is locked, and to which there is no key still in existence. The space between the bars is about four inches at most. The cage is set into the stone floor.

The good news, for dungeon robbers, is that the lord is wearing his **treasures** about him. Hundreds of coins worth of golden rings and necklaces beset with gems adorn his body, as well as a golden torque and a golden crown.

The Truth

Lord Valdegaart was put to sleep with poison, and then buried by his brother, as if he were dead, and the astral glutton has been trapped here ever since.

The lord appears only slightly decomposed and remarkably held-together, as if he was undead. The bad news, for dungeon robbers, is actually worse than that **When the glass is broken**, the astral glutton is freed, and will attack anyone inside the room immediately. Once it has possessed a body, it flees the dungeon, to wreak havoc in the world. Those that survive it's wake, however, are free to help themselves to the riches left behind.



Bluish Multitudes



A Dungeon Terror

These hideous abominations were invented by **the archmage Drakdagor** as a way to both punish his failure-prone minions and guard his underground storehouses. First, he transmogrified one of his long-suffering minions into a doughy, bluish creature with a blob-like torso that slowly absorbed the minion's original head. Then he found that he could also add more minions to it and they would meld with the blob. The result was a new creature with multiple limbs and mouths, and a ravenous appetite for intruders. Those minions that failed Drakdagor would often find themselves becoming part of a bluish multitude.

Ultimately, Drakdagor created too many of them and they destroyed him, devouring his flesh and his magic. Those multitudes that ate of their master became magical themselves and have proved to be far longer-lived than the others.

Treasures of Drakdagor

The tales of Drakdagor's sins are many and varied. If even a portion of them are true, he was truly a despicable man. He wore clothes made of human flesh. He threw hundreds of slaves into the ocean in an attempt to poison the mighty kraken. He was tricked into devouring his own children, but when the ruse was revealed, ate this meal with even greater gusto.

Or so they say. But some things are true—the bodies inside the walls of his tower were discovered when it was demolished. The seals on the doors to the underworld below killed dozens of labourers. His notebooks detail vast inquiries into the limits of human suffering, but who can tell if they are fact or fiction?

The tales of what treasures still remain in his subterranean stores are equally overwrought. He flaunted a **green jar** when the Leper King petitioned him to cure the plague ravaging the eastern half of his empire. Inside was a cure for both ailments. He kept a **phoenix egg** in his study, sealed in a cage of light, so he could read at night by it. He had a **magic sword** that could spit out any words ever spoken by those it had slain. He had **statues made of gold**, encrusted with jewels, said to have been looted from the tombs and temples of ancient sorcerer-priests, just like the one in Nairomia that belongs to the king. None of these have ever been found, nor have the **verdigris tablets** that contained his spells. Where else could they be but where the bluish multitudes dwell?

BLUISH MULTITUDES

15 HP 1 Armour

Amorphous, Construct, Hoarder, Large, Solitary.

Special Qualities: Infectious.

The bluish multitudes are bound by Drakdagor's magic to patrol his storehouse. They roam the labyrinthine dungeons of his fortress, preying on vermin, hapless thieves, and the sacrifices brought to them by superstitious villagers.

If the spells that bind them were to be broken, though...

Instinct: To protect the underground storehouse.

Attacks:

- Grab a foe and eat (1d10+2 damage, forceful; hand, close).
- Push and shove a group of foes apart.

Moves:

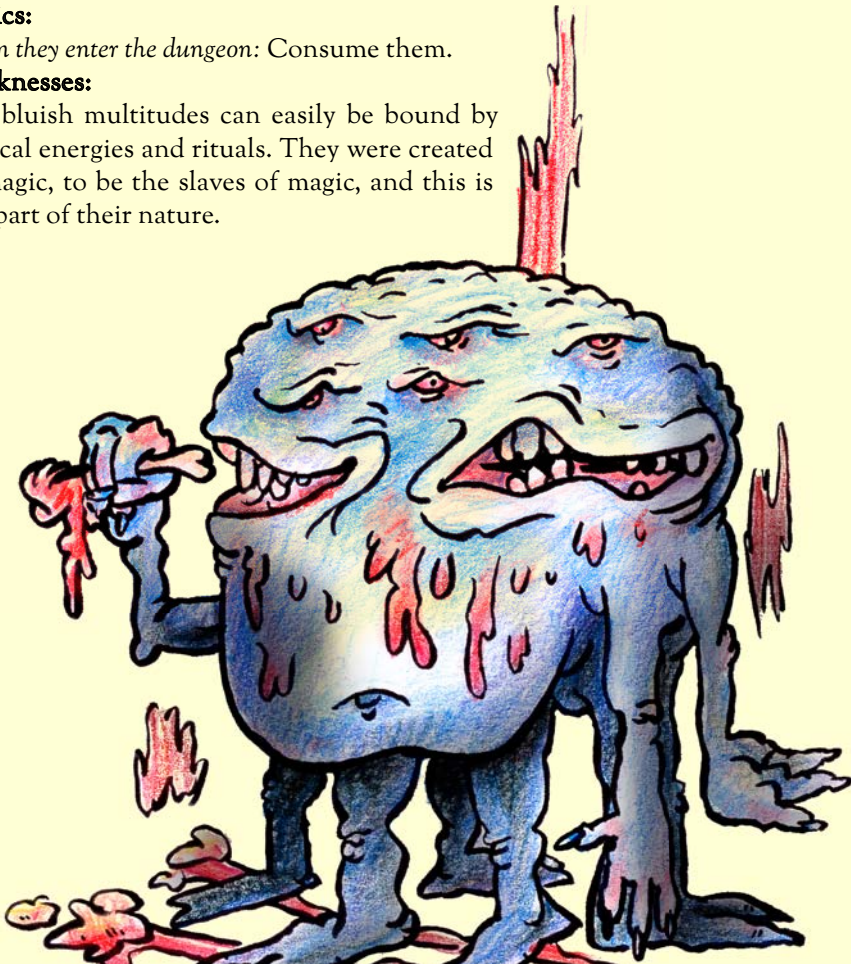
- Merge with someone who is already infected.
- React strangely when touched by magic.

Tactics:

When they enter the dungeon: Consume them.

Weaknesses:

The bluish multitudes can easily be bound by magical energies and rituals. They were created by magic, to be the slaves of magic, and this is still part of their nature.



The Infection

Fighting the bluish multitudes is a dangerous affair. You may become what you wish to destroy! At the end of a fight, some characters may have to make this move:

When you have been wounded by a bluish multitude, roll+CON. Take +1 if you also consume a healing potion or the cleric heals you. **On a 10+**, you are fine, it's only a flesh wound. You're not infected. **On a 7-9**, your wounds are infected and begin to turn blue over the next few days. You have enough time to get to a healer and do something about it, though. **On a miss (or if you leave the infection alone for more than a few days)**, you start turning into a bluish multitude.

The Danger

If one of the PCs is turning into a bluish multitude, they are shunned by the local villagers, who know what blue-tinted flesh means. People in the cities might not guess what is happening, but those who do would rather slay the infected outright than risk contact with them.

The progress of their infection is also a danger all on its own, that you keep track of like any other. Advance through the grim portents when the infected PC spends time attending to other matters instead of obtaining magical healing to deal with the problem.

Impulse: To transform the host into a bluish multitude.

GRIM PORTENTS

- The area around the wound begins to turn blue.
- Blue spots appear on other parts of the host's body.
- An entire limb or section of the host body turns blue and flabby.

Impending Doom: The host completely changes into a bluish multitude.

Merging

The bluish multitudes can absorb each other, combining and becoming composite creatures of many limbs and faces—hence their name. **If a bluish multitude tries to merge with an infected PC,** they can defy this danger using CON (or another stat if they have a particular way of resisting) and retain their independence.

Should they be successfully assimilated, the rest of their body turns to bluish multitude in a matter of hours. Their mind is still conscious, of course—or this would not be the punishment Drakdagor intended it to be!





The
Crystal King

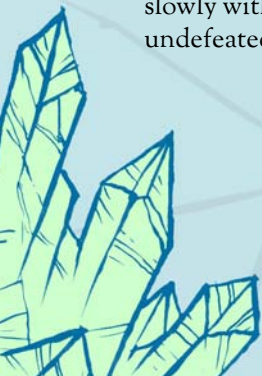
A New Kingdom

When people first began to see strange crystals in the forest, no one thought it was a cause for concern. Strange things were always happening here and there, what with all the reckless magic-users wandering the land. There was even that hot-headed young sorcerer **Charnuvor**, who headed into the woods a while ago, armed with his fancy magical clothes and his obsidian eyes. Not that anyone could say what became of him, but then again, wandering wizards do come and go, don't they?

But then the crystals became more and more numerous. At some point, it was obvious there was a whole area covered in crystalline growths. And then the **crystal men** came. At first, frightened woodsmen told tales of them, but later, they came in hordes and attacked villages outside the forest. Every season—every month—the crystal kingdom grew in size, consuming the land around it. Whenever the locals tried to do anything about it, the crystal men came and cut them down.

It had begun with a single **crystalline monolith**, then another and another and another, until the ground itself turned to crystal and glass and this strange, invasive new kingdom's inhabitants emerged. It was not until armies were dispatched and the war between living flesh and glittering stone ground to a stalemate that humanity discovered who ruled this land. Ambassadors were exchanged, negotiations occurred, and the **Crystal King** was revealed.

Under the Crystal King's direction, his kingdom has displaced local farmers and villagers, diverted rivers, and destroyed forests. That first truce was broken, after several years of peace, and again war came, and again a truce was made. This too, lasted for years, but in the end was broken. The crystal kingdom does not shrink in size, it only grows larger and larger, even though it grows quite slowly with the forces of humanity arrayed against it. Still, it grows, undefeated.



THE CRYSTAL KING

16 HP 3 Armour

*Hoarder, Intelligent, Large, Magical, Organized, Solitary.***Special Qualities:** Flying, Made of crystal, Super-vision.

The Crystal King has been learning human language, and is willing to strike a deal. If his foes are strong enough, he agrees to a truce, and might even give back some conquered territory. He is patient. Those lands will be claimed again, even if it takes decades.

But if a deal cannot be struck, he is merciless. He orders his minions against his enemies or fights them himself, whichever is most expedient. He may not always kill his enemies, though—some can be encased in crystal, the way Charnuvor is, so their magic or life force can power his crystal machines.

Instinct: To expand his kingdom.**Attacks:**

- Grab a foe and fling them away (1d8 damage, forceful; close).
- Pummel foes with crystal fists (1d12+2 damage, forceful; close, reach).

Moves:

- Cause the landscape of the crystal kingdom to shift and change.
- Command the crystal men that are his minions.
- Float through the air.
- Sense a foe's weakness with extra-planar vision.

Tactics:*When in control of earthly territory:* Turn it into crystal.*When they are weak:* Take advantage and strike quickly, seizing ground.*When they have a superior force:* Negotiate a truce.*When they invade the crystal kingdom:* Repel them with savage force.**Weaknesses:**

Because of his composition, the crystal king's body is susceptible to certain frequencies of sound. Some high tones destabilize his body and senses, as do some very low notes. He can even take damage if the sounds are loud enough. He has developed an intense hatred of human music.



Missions

It is quite easy to become enmeshed in the intrigues surrounding the Crystal King. He is willing to deal with adventurers in search of employment—as are his enemies.

Conversion

There are those who make **pilgrimages** of a sort to the crystal kingdom, to swear fealty to the Crystal King. They drink petrifying water and practice other rituals in order to replace parts of their bodies—their bones, limbs, organs—with crystal structures. The PCs might accompany them, as bodyguards or fellow supplicants. What will they do once they reach the kingdom and witness such transformations?

Rescue Mission

There are numerous wizards that might want **Charnuvor** recovered. Are the PCs the perfect group of adventurers to enact this rescue? How will they make their way into the crystal kingdom and free Charnuvor?

Sabotage

The Crystal King is always interested in **waging war** against his human neighbours. He will hire adventurers willing to agitate for war between human communities, commit assassinations, or sabotage human military structures. He can pay them in diamonds and other precious stones, or in supplies of petrifying water. Successful missions may even inspire the Crystal King to offer them initiation into his cult of human worshippers.

Something Interesting

In lieu of ink, the Crystal King signs peace treaties using a strange liquid that perhaps might serve as blood inside his crystalline body.

The House of Weldern

Elona Maria, matriarch of the House of Weldern, has a significant problem on her hands. Her son is sick, his body slowly petrifying, due to a poisonous snake bite. If she does not find a cure for him, he will eventually die. That day draws ever nearer.

She has been told that magical crystals are needed to reverse the poisoning. She has already tried samples from the crystal men, to no avail. She must have more powerful crystals. If the PCs are presented to her as capable adventurers, she hires them to bring her **samples from the crystal kingdom** itself. She emphasizes that only the most powerful crystals will do. She does not realize how true this is, for only the body of the Crystal King himself has the power to cure her son.

Type: Cursed place.

Impulse: To cause war between humans and the crystal kingdom.

GRIM PORTENTS

- The lands of House Weldern are overrun by bounty hunters all seeking to be hired and charlatans bringing counterfeit crystals in the hopes of getting paid.
- A party of reckless adventurers cause trouble on the crystal kingdom's borders.
- A force of crystal men sally forth to invade the lands between the crystal kingdom and the House of Weldern.
- The crystal men reach the lands of House Weldern and ravage them.

Impending Doom: The complete destruction of the House of Weldern and all their lands.

Something Useful

The crystal kingdom is obviously some kind of extraplanar intrusion, so there must be a portal at its centre, allowing it to access the material plane.

Charnuvor

As a young man, he was one of the Royal College of Wizardry's best and brightest students, but after graduation he failed to live up to his potential. He specialized in **elemental magic**—water and stone, in particular—but was never very good at the politicking that leads to financial and social affluence. After spending several years in monastic contemplation of the astral planes of earth and water, he headed out into the woods to put his research into practice.

But things went awry. Though he contacted another plane of existence, he could not control it. The portal he created was too strong and stable, and the strange inhabitants on the other side seized control of it, and then of him. The Crystal King pushed through the portal and brought his crystal kingdom with him. He conjured a **crystal prison** to hold Charnuvor's body, and now the wizard is stuck immobile, with magical **petrifying water** perpetually flowing from his hands. This liquid washes across the grounds of the crystal structures surrounding him, feeding their growth.

Charnuvor is still alive, but the functions of his biology are in stasis. The crystal kingdom feeds off his magical energy, leeching it out of him slowly, especially in the form of petrifying water.

Magical Items

Like many wizards, Charnuvor has accumulated a collection of enchanted items, and he has retained some of them, even in his crystal prison.

Diamond Teeth: Charnuvor's proudest achievement is being able to turn his teeth into pure diamond, by using the petrifying water. Aside from being extremely valuable, Charnuvor's teeth can grind down and tear through any non-magical material.

Emerald Eyes: After graduating college, Charnuvor replaced his human eyes with magical emerald lenses. These lenses allow him to see into inhuman spectrums. Not only can he perceive extra-planar beings active in our world, but he can also see into other planes of existence through them.

Magic Coat: Charnuvor developed his magical coat to protect him from elemental magic. Though not strong enough to protect him from the Crystal King, the coat still grants +2 armour against the physical elements, magical or mundane.

Trouble

But things went awry. Though he contacted another plane of existence, he could not control it. The portal he created was too strong and stable, and the strange inhabitants on the other side seized control of it, and then of him. The Crystal King pushed through the portal and brought his crystal kingdom with him. He conjured a crystal prison to hold Charnuvor's body, and now the wizard is stuck immobile, with magical petrifying water perpetually flowing from his hands. This liquid washes across the grounds of the crystal structures surrounding him, feeding their growth.

Charnuvor is still alive, but the functions of his biology are in stasis. The crystal kingdom feeds off his magical energy, leeching it out of him slowly, especially in the form of petrifying water.





The
Crystal Men

The Crystal Army

First there were tales of strange dancing men in the forest. Most people thought these were just fanciful stories of leprechauns, but no. The **green** men made of crystal came first, marauding through local villages. When the humans fought back, they encountered the **purple** ones, climbing all over the strange crystal structures growing in the woods. When the floating, obsidian-black **titans** showed up, the war began in earnest.

Of course, there is peace now, but how long will it last? This is not the first peace treaty the crystal men have agreed to. Meanwhile, in the dark corners of society, desperate people make **deals** with the crystal men—they are willing to betray their own people in exchange for power. Will the crystal kingdom even need to wage another war to conquer the humans who live next door, or will they expand this time through betrayal?

Organization

The first crystal men the humans ever encountered were actually the purple crawling crystal men, seen by those who ventured into the budding crystal kingdom in its earliest days, but there were few reports until the crystal men became violent. When the invasions of human-occupied lands finally came, different types of crystal men were seen. The most common were green and yellow, dancing and capering, slicing the lives of villagers and militiamen away with savage crystal claws. The dancing crystal men are the foot soldiers of the crystal kingdom's invasion of this plane. But all foot soldiers need generals, and the crystal men are no exception. The black titans lead them, hovering over the battlefield, blasting away with their beams of dark energy.

Occasionally, other types of crystal men are seen. The aforementioned half-human zealots of course, but there are also multi-coloured crystal men, with the abilities of two different types—one might be black and purple, unable to fly, but constantly surrounded by crystal hornets. Other colours have been sighted, too, orange and blue, and creatures made of clear crystal whose forms are not humanoid. These are special cases, and usually unique. Are they special creations of the Crystal King? Are they humans who have been transformed into new forms by the petrifying water and the gems they swallow? So far, none have been able to find out for sure.

The Value of Crystal

Because the physical material of the crystal kingdom is not the same as the gemstones of the material plane, and also because it relies on some kind of arcane energy stemming from its home dimension to retain what properties it does have, it is **not considered valuable**. There is, as yet, no demand for it as a type of precious stone, nor do the merchants of the world know how to appraise it properly. There is simply no real market for it, even if it looks pretty.

The Crystal Cult

Tales are told of a **crystal cult** of humans who swallow gemstones that grow inside their bodies, of fanatical zealots with limbs made of crystal who fight alongside the crystal men themselves. Some even wonder if the crystal men themselves were not all people once, transformed into strange new life forms by the power of the crystal kingdom.

When you join the crystal cult and drink the petrifying water, choose one gift from the list below and roll+CON. **On a 7+,** you are granted that gift, and **on a 7-9,** you are also granted a second, randomly-determined gift. **On a miss,** you are granted two randomly-determined gifts, neither of which can be the one you wanted. Crystal body parts all have 3 armour.

Gifts of the Crystal Cult:

- 1 **Crystal Arm:** Your arm has sharp edges that can cut flesh.
 - 2 **Crystal Body:** You can no longer digest human food.
 - 3 **Crystal Brain:** Your mind can speak to the crystal men.
 - 4 **Crystal Eyes:** You can see in the dark.
 - 5 **Crystal Face:** You can no longer speak.
 - 6 **Crystal Leg:** Your leg is very heavy and hard to move.
 - 7 **Crystal Organs:** Weapons that pierce your body may break.
 - 8 **Dirt Bones:** You can bend and twist into inhuman shapes.
 - 9 **Dirt Eater:** You can eat rock and stone as if they were food.
 - 10 **Sand for Blood:** You cannot bleed to death.
 - 11 **Stone Face:** Your expression no longer changes involuntarily.
 - 12 **Stone Hands:** Your hands can be used as weapons, but have very poor dexterity and are discoloured.
-

CRAWLING CRYSTAL MAN

6 HP 3 Armour

*Group, Organized, Planar.***Special Qualities:** Made of jagged crystal.**Instinct:** To defend the crystal kingdom from invaders.**Attacks:**

- Grab a foe and hold onto them.
- Pointy claws (1d8 damage, plus bonus; hand, close).
- Throw rocks down upon foes below (1d6 damage, near, far).

Moves:

- Alert other crystal men to dangers.
- Cling to any surface.
- Leap over vast distances.
- Sense the weaknesses of stone and metal.

Tactics:*If they are strong:* Hang back and pelt them with stones.*If they are weak:* Rush them, all at once.*If they strike at vulnerable areas of the crystal kingdom:* Defend those areas first and foremost.**Weaknesses:**

The crawling crystal men prefer to attack as a group. If they are separated from each other, or most of them are destroyed, they spend time regrouping or they retreat to find more crystal men.

Jagged Crystal: If a crawling crystal man suffers damage but is not killed, add the damage to all subsequent attacks it makes.



DANCING CRYSTAL MAN

6 HP 3 Armour

*Group, Organized, Planar.***Special Qualities:** Made of energized crystal.**Instinct:** To drive the meat-things away and expand the crystal kingdom.**Attacks:**

- Blade hands (b[2d8] damage, 1 piercing; close).
- Slash away at a foe's equipment to disarm them.

Moves:

- Call other crystal men to come.
- Dance around and over dangerous obstacles.
- Sense the weaknesses of stone and metal.

Tactics:*When the Crystal King or a Dark Titan commands: Obey.***Weaknesses:**

The dancing crystal men cannot stand still. If they are forced to stop moving for any reason—either magically or physically—they begin to crumble apart.

Energized Crystal: When a dancing crystal man is killed, the volatile energy inside it explodes, dealing 1d6 damage to anyone nearby that is not also made of crystal.





Something Interesting

As one might expect, the crystal men seem to have no sense of smell or taste. Their hearing is also rather poor. They can sense vibrations in solid matter better than in the air.

DARK TITAN

12 HP 3 Armour

*Large, Organized, Planar, Solitary.***Special Qualities:** Flying, Made of dark crystal.**Instinct:** To lead other crystal men against the foes of the crystal kingdom.**Attacks:**

- Dark beams (1d10 damage, ignores armour; close, near).
- Grab foes and fling them (1d8+2 damage, forceful; close).
- Toss giant rocks down on foes (1d6+2 damage, forceful; near).

Moves:

- Command other crystal men.
- Fly up high to get a better view of the enemy.
- Produce a vial of petrifying water to use against foes.
- Sense the weaknesses of stone and metal.

Tactics:*When all other crystal men have been defeated:* Retreat to the crystal kingdom for reinforcements.*When the Crystal King commands:* Obey.**Weaknesses:**

The black stone that the titans are made of is poisonous to organic creatures. Even long periods of physical contact will cause illness. Because of how it refracts light, however, any magic that is based on positive light or fire causes double damage and has twice the normal effect on a titan.

Crystal Hornets: The tips of the black titan's fingers detach and fly through the air, clustering around a foe. As they spin and dart through the air, they make it harder for that foe to concentrate and fight against the other crystal men (-1 ongoing until the cloud of crystal "hornets" is cleared away).

Something Useful

The alchemist Carl Scheele is able to make a clear liquid that dissolves glass and crystal. It is poisonous, highly corrosive and must be carried in Carl's special containers.



The
Dragon Armour



An Ancient Wonder

Once, long ago, the barbarian armies of **the archmage Coraleith** marauded across the lands of civilized peoples. Even such luminaries of sorcery as Drakdagor himself fled before her savage hordes, up into the safety of the mountains, there to build his famous fortress. Many cities were smashed by this horde, and many peoples enslaved by them.

At the front of her army, Coraleith put the massive form of **Möglöra**, her champion. The greatest of all wrestlers and an expert swordsman, Möglöra fought the champions of other armies in single combat. He sent every one of them down to the House of Death. Sometimes he would even fight three or four of the enemy's greatest warriors at a time, just to show off.

But this was not enough for Coraleith. The accolades of leading such a triumphant army could never be enough for her, for she was also a brilliant sorceress and worker of outlandish thaumaturgies. She fashioned a **suit of armour** for her champion out of the iron of a meteor, shed from the mote in the eye of Khathadriorh, the cyclopean god of smiths and alchemists whom only the celestial dragons of the Hyades still worship. And when Möglöra wore this armour, he could defeat not only champions single-handedly, but whole armies.

Of course, such hubris is what brings the prideful down. Not only did Coraleith's army suffer for want of glory to achieve—there being none to have in the shadow of dragon-armoured Möglöra—but she also intended to build **more suits** of this same armour. She intended, in this, to create a new and even more impressive army. The backbone of this new force would be a whole regiment of warriors wearing her magical dragon armour. This, perhaps, proved to be her undoing.

The Fatal Mistake

Möglöra was, in the end, laid low by the sword of Aurelo Porfyros. When the frost-rimed blade cut through his breastplate and spilled his life upon the cold sandy ground of the Zakhhab Wastes, the wrestler's blood was like fire spilled from the mouth of a dragon. It burned through the faulty, magically-chilled metal. The earth shook, and building crumbled.

After her army was forced to retreat, Coraleith took what was left of her dragon armour and tried to replicate it, to replace the full suit of metal, and to create a second. It did not work. The armour was too fragile from its altercation with the icy blade, its draconic nature turned degenerate. Those who took up the armour after this point were eventually consumed by it, driven to a berserk killing rage that even Coraleith succumbed to, as did what was left of her army.

All That is Left

Although the elaborate **helmet** is not the only piece of the dragon armour left, it is the only important part. It appears to have **dragons** protruding from either side of it, and the lower part extends down over the wearer's torso like a mouth. The sharp fangs of this mouth can pierce and tear the wearer's skin quite easily—wearing this helmet is not for the faint of heart.

The **faceplate** resembles the door of an oven more than a knight's helmet, and when the armour grips its host with a lust for battle, fire appears inside the helmet, and smoke pours from the mouths of the dragons that ornament it. This does not harm the wearer. Instead, there is a different problem.

Since the armour cannot be removed without causing harm, the lock that keeps the faceplate shut must be opened in order for the wearer to eat. Unfortunately, the **key** to this lock is never found along with the helmet or any other piece of the armour.

Wearing the Armour

The dragon armour is not to be worn by the faint of heart of the soft of arm. It feels warm to the touch, and grows warmer when you put your head inside it. The dragon ornaments begin to tremble and waver, and the mouth tightens around your chest.

When you don the dragon armour, you may remove any debilities affecting your Constitution, Dexterity, or Strength. You are also harmed for 1d8 damage, which cannot be healed until after you engage your foes in battle.

The reasons one would want to wear the armour, however, are obvious. Even though it is not the full, original suit, it is enough to turn one into a rampaging beast of battle.

When you enter a fight wearing the dragon armour, roll+CON. **On a 10+,** for the entirety of the fight, the magic of the dragon armour gives your blows +2 damage and the forceful tag, and reduces damage from all weapons and fire by 4 points. You also ignore the forceful and messy tags when your foes attack you. **On a 7-9,** the dragon armour reduces damage from all weapons and fire by 3 points, but deals 1d6 damage to you if you stop fighting while foes remain undefeated. You also ignore the forceful tag when your foes attack you. **On a miss,** your mind is sent to another dimension (GM's choice) while your body continues to fight anyone and anything like a frenzied berserker, trapped within the rampaging dragon armour.

Something Interesting

The dragon armour is said to contain a portal to other planes of existence, in addition to its fighting prowess. If one were to study it, perhaps this effect could be controlled....?

Adventures in Other Dimensions

If your mind is sent into the mind of Harlan Blackhand, turn to page 58. You will have to deal with both the salamander as well as the remnants of Harlan's memories and imagination.

If your mind is sent to the astral plane, turn to page 11. The good news is that the astral glutton cannot possess you while you wear the dragon armour.

If your mind is sent to the crystal kingdom, turn to page 26. You may escape the crystal kingdom and the dragon armour if you find the portal created by Charnuvor that leads to the material world.

If your mind is sent to frozen Yuggoth, turn to page 73. Because it is only your mind, this planet is not a hostile environment—although encountering a mass of limbs could be fatal.

If your mind is sent to Skull Mountain, turn to page 62. You may encounter any of the monsters that Maggie Marlinspike creates. If they reduce you to zero HP, you return to your body insane, but still alive.

Perhaps, on second thought—or after seeing the armour in the field—you may decide the consequences to outweigh the rewards? Not so fast! Are you sure you want to get rid of it that quickly?

When you remove the dragon armour, you take 1d8 damage and mark the debility of your choice. If you cannot mark a debility, because they are all marked already, you take another 1d8 damage.

Something Useful

There is a thief in Adelida who picked the locks to Death's dreary kingdom and escaped. Surely she could open the dragon armour's faceplate, or forge a key that would fit that lock.



The
Griffarcus



A Wondrous Steed

Most people who encounter a Griffarcus up close see one only as the steed of some veteran adventurer or a powerful mage. Little do they realize the dangers such a steed presents. The Griffarcus is a **traveller between worlds**, wandering from plan to plane, able to grow and shrink in size. Perhaps its most important characteristic, however, is that its tail can transform into a **venomous snake** at a moment's notice. Those who wish to tame a wild Griffarcus and make it their steed must use magical spells to counter this attack, or they will quickly find themselves walking through Death's dark gate.

On the surface, a Griffarcus seems to have the body of a llama or an alpaca, but its head is more like that of an anteater, and it has white, feathery wings with which it can fly short distances. They normally travel in small herds, though it is not unknown for planeswalkers to encounter an ancient, hoary Griffarcus all by its lonesome. These loners are usually more dangerous than herds, however, being unafraid to attack those who oppose their wanderings.

The Griffarcus, being an **omnivore**, eats vegetation, any kind of small animal that is slow enough to be caught, and whatever carrion or garbage that is left behind by others. Perhaps because it travels so widely across dimensional boundaries, the Griffarcus is highly resistant to poisons, toxins, and other food impurities.

If you can find the **spells and rituals** that wizards and adventurers use to tame, them, maybe you can make one your own steed. But do not expect someone else to sell you one, for the Griffarcus is literally priceless—the spell only protects its caster from the venomous bite of its serpentine tail.



GRIFFARCUS

7 HP 1 Armour

Horde, Huge or Large, Organized, Planar.***Special Qualities:** Flying, Planeswalker, Variable Size, Venomous.

The tail of the Griffarcus looks like a normal horse's tail most of the time, but it can transform instantaneously into the front end of a venomous snake. Sometimes, a Griffarcus will pretend to be tame and friendly, only to strike a prospective rider once their back is turned.

The Griffarcus is not a strong flier, using its wings to bypass mountain chasms and other areas of broken ground. However, it can find its way to destinations in other dimensions. If you tell it to go somewhere, it may not always take the safest or shortest route, but it will get you there eventually. In order to take advantage of this power, an adventurer must first use magic to tame a Griffarcus.

Instinct: To ignore planar barriers.

Attacks:

- Attack with venomous snake tail (1d6 damage, venomous; close, reach).
- Trample a foe beneath its hooves (1d6+1 damage; close).

Moves:

- Cry out to warn the herd.
- Find a route to a desired location.
- Fly over a short distance.
- Grow or shrink in size.

Tactics:

If a place looks interesting: Wander over and check it out.

If they look like a wizard: Be wary of their intent.

If they threaten the herd: Defend the young and drive foes off.

If they won't be driven off: Flee.

Weaknesses:

The Griffarcus is possessed of a powerful wanderlust and a dangerous curiosity. It wanders into places and situations it finds interesting, regardless of threats, and can become trapped by this. It also cannot stay still, and grows ornery and destructive if prevented from travelling through the planes.

Wandering the Planes

The Griffarcus is not impeded by the normal barriers that keep other creatures from moving between different worlds and planes of existence. Normally, it will use this ability simply to find new and interesting food sources, but wizards have found a way to use this power for their own benefit.

Taming a Griffarcus

In order to tame a Griffarcus, you must first prepare a **magical potion**. To brew this potion, you must dissolve crystal dust in tears of joy, mix that with water from a holy river that has been infused with one or more enchantments (the water you use, not the river itself), and then infuse this liquid with the smoke of mountain ash charcoal.

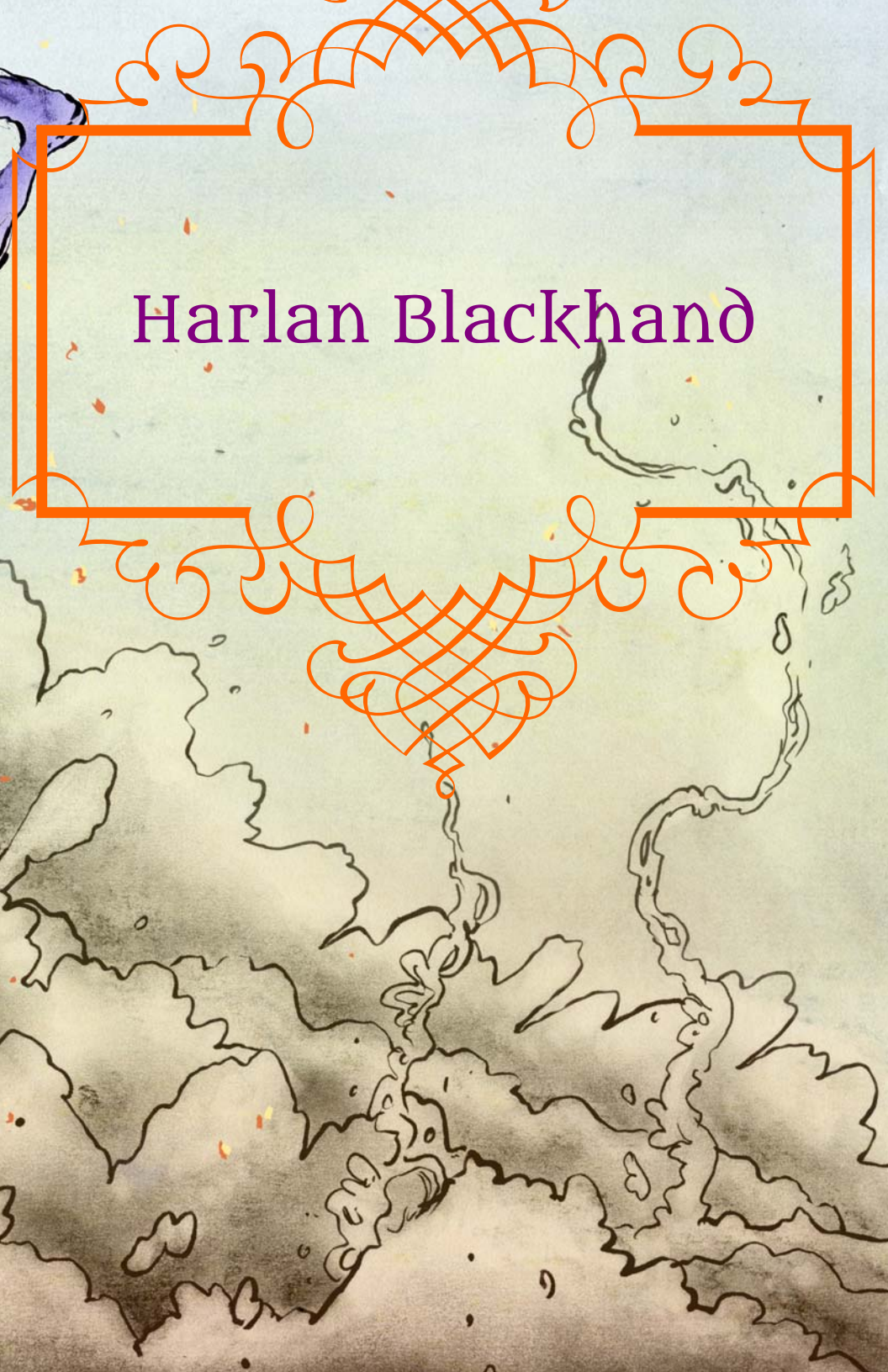
Once you have this potion brewed, you must drink it and chant the required magical formula when you encounter a Griffarcus. If you have performed the magical formula correctly, the Griffarcus will be charmed and you will be able to tame it and ride it as an obedient steed.

Travelling with a Griffarcus Steed

Once you have tamed a Griffarcus successfully, you can (in theory) travel anywhere you want to go.

When you tell the Griffarcus to take you somewhere, roll+CHA. **On a 10+**, it can find a route there that is relatively short. If the way is dangerous, you must still undertake a perilous journey, but you can get there in decent time. **On a 7-9**, there is some kind of complication—either it takes an inordinately long time, or the Griffarcus takes you through dangerous or hostile locations. **On a miss**, you wind up somewhere you really don't want to be before you can reach your desired destination.





Harlan Blackhand

A Foul Tongue

For years, Harlan Blackhand has been the terror of the region. From atop his wizard's tower, high up on **Mad Man's Bluff**, he surveys the lands around him, searching for victims. Tales of his cruelty are told in hushed whispers far and wide, and all the neighbouring lords have been scrambling to obtain their own wizards, for fear that Harlan Blackhand may decide to extend his reach.

Origins

The man now called Harlan Blackhand was once a hedge wizard of little renown, but dungeon delving saved him from obscurity. Ancient **scrolls of power** taught him forbidden secrets, and he took a fateful plunge from which there is no coming back—he became a **lich**.

The **death ritual** was performed at midnight, under the full moon. Harlan slaughtered half a village as payment to the gods of death. All that the survivors could remember about Harlan were his hands, dripping black with blood in the moonlight. It was not his first foray into wanton murder and destruction, and it would not be his last.

Determined to gain more power, he has continued to push the limits of sorcery. He began to learn the secrets of the elements, one by one. Many peasants and even a few nobles were drowned or frozen alive, or burned to death in bonfires at the top of his tower, their screams echoing out across the plains and valleys.

No one knows Harlan the man, so none can say if he has become more erratic and strange of late, or if he has succeeded in mastering new sorceries. There have been many **fires** of late, and almost no drownings. More and more people have begun to leave the region, even though Harlan Blackhand has punished people for doing so before...

Insults

Harlan Blackhand inevitably throws insults at anyone he meets, whether they act like friend or foe, regardless of how powerful they seem. It almost seems like second nature to him that mean things come out of his mouth, no matter what else he is doing. He insults peoples' appearances, their mannerisms, their speech, their actions—everything he can think of.

Here are some examples:

- “A penny for your thoughts? No wait, that’s far too much!”
- “Do tell me about your life. I’m a big fan of tragedies.”
- “Every time you open your mouth, all I can hear is some idiot talking.”
- “Have you been to the zoo before? Oh, who am I kidding? You obviously live there!”
- “I’d break you in half, but I don’t want to have to look at two of you.”
- “If you’re such a great wizard, why don’t you disappear?”
- “I’m going to shrink your head and use it as a paperweight.”
- “Is that hair or a dog on your head?”
- “Most days, I would have to dig to find something as repulsive as you.”
- “Oh my, you’re as pretty as a picture. You just need to be hung!”
- “The only good thing about your sword arm is that it’s not as ugly as your face.”
- “What are you doing here, did your parents ask you to run away from home?”
- “When I saw you the first time, I thought my eyes were going. Now I wish they were!”
- “Your family tree needs a little trimming, let me get my shears.”

HARLAN BLACKHAND

16 HP 1 Armour

*Hoarder, Magical, Solitary, Stealthy.***Special Qualities:** Immune to fire, Mostly lobotomized, Possessed by a salamander, Undead lich, Wizard.

Harlan Blackhand's once-fancy purple robes have fallen into tatters, but he still wears golden jewellery to complement the original colours. He wears a necklace of actual human heads to match his own ruined lich-face, and his hands are burned and fiery. He hurls insults at people no matter what else he is doing.

Instinct: To terrorize and belittle others.**Attacks:**

- Magical blast (1d10+2 damage, 1 piercing; close, reach, near).

Moves:

- Cast a spell.
- Control fire.
- Hurl insults.

Tactics:*Whatever happens:* Insult someone.**Weaknesses:**

Unfortunately for him, Harlan Blackhand is no longer in full control of his own actions. It is always possible that one of the gods of death will arrive to save him from his present predicament, but events like that are few and far between, and his chances for lasting another year do not look very promising.

Something Interesting

Rumour has it that there is a local peasant rebellion stirring. Some members of its leadership are secretly learning sorcery in order to use it against Harlan Blackhand.

Possessed!

In truth, Harlan Blackhand's hubris got the better of him, and now there is little left of him, lich or not. His experiments of fire conjured a being of primal flame to the physical world, and this **salamander** took his body for its own.

Normally, someone possessed by a salamander would be burned to cinders in mere moments, but Harlan Blackhand's sorcerously fortified body has proven to be, if not an ideal vessel, at least a functional container. His hands are now quite literally black—charred and smoking with the elemental fire they weave constantly. His mind, unfortunately for him, has been blasted beyond repair. He has effectively been lobotomized, and he can do little other than hurl insults at people while the salamander maintains control of his every action.

The salamander is by no means the cruel and vindictive blackguard that Harlan Blackhand is—or was—but it is still a creature of fire. It's appetite is voracious, and it lives to consume all before it—life, matter, knowledge, sensation. It has been granted the opportunity to explore the material plane, and it does not wish to let this experience go to waste.

Something Useful

*Harlan Blackhand's tower is often left
unguarded, with the front door open, even.
Harlan's reputation is enough to keep people out.
At least it has been so far.*



SALAMANDER

15 HP 5 Armour

*Amorphous, Intelligent, Magical, Planar, Solitary.***Special Qualities:** Fire elemental.

The salamander is a serpentine creature made of elemental fire. It is not native to the material plane, but Harlan Blackhand's experiments summoned it here, and it took advantage of the opportunity. It currently resides inside his body and mind, directing his every movement—although it often loses track of certain functions and allows Harlan to speak. The salamander does not really understand his insults or why he would feel the need to voice them. Its primary concern is to explore the material world and to consume all that it can, especially when it comes to knowledge and sensation. It is not solely concerned with burning everything!

Instinct: To consume.**Attacks:**

- Fiery touch (1d12+2 damage, ignores armour, messy; close).

Moves:

- Control fire.
- Create fire.
- Escape in a cloud of smoke.
- Fly through the air.

Tactics:*If Harlan Blackhand is killed:* Emerge from the body.*If they have air or water at their disposal:* Proceed cautiously, do not be afraid to bargain with them.*If they have consumables:* Consume them!*If they offer new experiences unique to the physical plane:* Strike a deal with them.**Weaknesses:**

The salamander has all the same weaknesses as fire, save for the fact that it needs no fuel to burn eternal. Cold and water can have a devastating effect on it, if used appropriately.



The
Kruffalump



The Marlinspikes

East Ditch is a small village, of no particular interest to anyone save the people who live there. "And to our neighbours," the people of East Ditch would say, though the neighbours might not always agree. Like most inconsequential villages in out-of-the-way corners of the kingdom, it is a sleepy little place where nothing much ever happens, and like most sleepy little villages, this is not entirely true.

For many years and several generations, the patriarch of the **Marlinspike clan** held the mayor's office, though there was little to do as an official of such a small place, but mediate petty squabbles and organize the various festivals, plantings, and harvests. But these days the clan has fallen far indeed. East Ditch drove out old **Maggie Marlinspike** last year and things haven't been the same since. She lives up on the side of **Skull Mountain** now, summoning monsters from the abyss to plague the people of the village.

Who would blame the new mayor, **Pascal Aquison**, for such a tragedy? He has already lost one son to the tyrannical monster that haunts the night, that comes with the wind between the trees to steal cattle and children from Maggie's enemies. With **Carmin Gartenrab**, he has helped the village prosper in recent years. New traders have arrived, bearing goods normally seen only in cities and the promise that East Ditch might exceed its neighbours in prosperity.

And yet, if Maggie could speak to them, the villagers would hear of Aquison and Gartenrab running the Marlinspike estates, of their crooked accounting and systematic embezzlement, of poisons in the food, of private assaults kept quiet for fear of public shame and scandal. She would speak of revenge for the deliberate ruination of the Marlinspikes by these two men and their cronies over the course of not just years, but decades.

But she does not need to speak of revenge, for she has **monsters** to do it for her. Up on Skull Mountain, she makes them herself, dresses them in flesh and bones and the urge to bathe in blood and sends them against the ones who wronged her.

MAGGIE MARLINSPIKE

12 HP ○ Armour

*Devious, Intelligent, Magical, Solitary.***Special Qualities:** Witch.

Once, ages ago, Maggie's life was full of warmth and prosperity, but then Aqison and Gartenrab took over the management of her father's estates. From that point on, her life was ruled by fear. But now the tables have turned, and since her father's death, she has been driven only by hate.

An old book once mentioned by Gartenrab showed her how to use black magic to cast spells and make monsters. She doesn't know why he would have known about this book, but she doesn't think about it much.

Instinct: To get revenge on the world.**Attacks:**

- Curse a foe from afar. (1d10 damage, ignores armour; near).

Moves:

- Call a storm to arrive in the night.
- Command monsters to attack.
- Create monsters.
- Transform someone into a monster.

Tactics:

If they are prosperous and happy: Attack them.

If they stand in the way of revenge: Destroy them.

Weaknesses:

Maggie is bitter and spiteful, and it twists her soul to the very core. She will do whatever it takes to get revenge against those she feels have wronged her, including making deals with questionable people.

Monster Parts

Maggie has a small collection of pieces she has saved from various monsters. She can use one of these to summon a monster quickly, though it does not remain for very long—less than half an hour. The piece itself disappears along with the monster when the time is up.

These pieces can also be worn, and give the wearer their powers for up to an hour at a time. Putting a fang in your mouth gives you a fearsome bite. Wearing a spiny hide gives you protection and is dangerous to those who get close to you. A monster eye put over your own eye lets you see in the dark. Maggie has 1d6 of these on her person at any one time, and a few more she leaves up on Skull Mountain.

THE KRUFFALUMP

20 HP 1 Armour

*Construct, Huge, Intelligent, Solitary, Stealthy.***Special Qualities:** Magical creation.

Maggie's little sister Jenny told her about the Kruffalump, a monster she saw at night that would hide under beds, behind trees, and just beneath the windows. It could be huge when it wanted to, but it could also squeeze through small openings to get inside the house. After their father died, Maggie used her magic, and now young Jenny is the Kruffalump.

Instinct: To revenge the Marlinspikes.**Attacks:**

- Beastly hands (w[2d10]+5 damage), forceful; close, reach).
- Hurl foes through the air.
- Tear a limb off (1d6+2 damage, messy; hand).

Moves:

- Move silently through the night.
- Squeeze through small openings.

Tactics:*If Maggie says to do it:* It must be the proper thing to do... right?*If they hurt the Marlinspikes:* Tear them apart!**Weaknesses:**

Like her sister, Jenny wants revenge on the people who wronged her and the Marlinspikes, but she does not have as much hate in her heart. Once they have destroyed East Ditch, Maggie wants to keep going, to march upon the city and the royal palace so she can lord her powers over as many people as possible. This is also what the Kruffalump wants, but Jenny hates to be mean to people. She just wants the bad men out and her old life back.



The Monsters

The monsters Maggie makes, up on the side of Skull Mountain at night, come in a hundred different forms and shapes. Many are alike, but none are the same.

This monster has the same stats as... (roll 1d12):

1	a centaur (p. 266)	7	a lizard man (p. 249)
2	a gargoyle (p. 236)	8	a normal human
3	a ghoul (p. 258)	9	an orc (pp. 280-283)
4	a gnoll (pp. 278-279)	10	an owlbear (p. 292)
5	a goblin (p. 237)	11	a troglodyte (p. 241)
6	a kobold (p. 249)	12	a zombie (p. 263)

but it also... (roll 1d20 twice):

1	burns when it touches bare flesh.	11	has numerous tentacles.
2	can breathe fire.	12	has skin like stone.
3	can cast two random spells.	13	is constantly vomiting.
4	can impersonate a person for short periods of time.	14	is covered in long hair.
5	changes shape and size.	15	is diseased.
6	has acid for blood.	16	is rotting.
7	has an animal's head on its chest.	17	paralyses with its touch.
8	has centipede legs.	18	spits acid.
9	has eight arms.	19	stinks horribly.
10	has a mouth that can swallow a person whole.	20	suffers from lycanthropy.

It's main weakness is... (roll 1d6):

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 fire | 4 religion |
| 2 iron | 5 silver |
| 3 magic | 6 sunlight |

and its other weakness is... (roll 1d10):

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 alcoholism. | 7 laughter. |
| 2 garlic. | 8 music. |
| 3 gluttony. | 9 running water. |
| 4 greed. | 10 its short temper. |
| 5 incompetence. | 11 wood. |

When it attacks, it... (roll 1d4):

- | |
|---|
| 1 attacks quickly, by surprise. |
| 2 charges in furiously, screaming and wailing. |
| 3 issues a challenge first, to scare its foes. |
| 4 tries to lure its foes into a trap. |

When defeated, this monster... (roll 1d8):

- | |
|---|
| 1 bleeds profusely and melts into nothing more than a sticky puddle of noxious liquid. |
| 2 burns to ashes in an instant. |
| 3 changes into the dead body of a child. |
| 4 disappears in a puff of smoke. |
| 5 dissolves into a mildly poisonous gas that covers a large area, initially, but quickly dissipates. |
| 6 turns to foul-smelling ichor immediately. |
| 7 turns to stone. |
| 8 wails, spits, and thrashes around dramatically, falling to pieces as it does so. |



The
Mass of Limbs



Zorbal's Monster

This writhing mass of violent tentacles was summoned to the material plane by **Narriot Zorbal**, after consulting arcane oracles for a way to harass the **Crystal King**. Now, Zorbal keeps it in a pit inside one of his towers, waiting for the right moment to unleash it.

Zorbal obtained this particular specimen from **powdered fungus** that he scraped off the walls of a rival wizard's dungeon. He was not imprisoned there for long, as his servants quickly raised the ransom demanded. Once freed, Zorbal worked quickly to achieve his vengeance, but was thwarted. The rival wizard was murdered in his sleep by forces unknown—though a strange **mass of tentacles** was seen by local villagers leaving that area around the same time.

After being tipped off by the oracles, Zorbal experimented with the now-powdered fungus, which had masses of limbs gestating inside it, and was much luckier than his deceased rival. He did not fall prey to the mass of limbs he hatched, but instead became its master!

The Pit

Zorbal keeps his mass of limbs in a **pit in the dungeons** below his tower. The upper sections comprise a purely theatrical dungeon, full of stage props and scary-looking torture devices that do not actually work. When he wants to show off for guests and rivals, he hires actors to dress up as jailers, prisoners, and even torturers. He finds it amusing.

Below this theatrical set piece is a much more gruesome dungeon, where he keeps both his real prisoners, and his more valuable **treasures**. Many brave thieves have gone missing here, even after preparing themselves for Zorbal's arcane defences—for they did not expect the mass of limbs.

Princess Cyleria

The kingdom of Chrysofasia has been rent by **civil war**. The princess Cyleria is leading a rebellion against her uncle Dastartius, the current king. She suspects her parents were murdered while negotiating with the wizard Narriot Zorbal, as part of a scheme Dastartius concocted to take the throne for himself. The royal council backed his claim, but they have no knowledge of any secret agreements between Dastartius and Zorbal.

Princess Cyleria has heard that Zorbal used a creature made entirely of limbs to kill her parents. It is not the first rumour about Zorbal to include this creature. Cyleria consulted with hedge wizards and a swamp witch about this creature, and things like it, and they have told her many tales that normal people do not like to listen to. She purchased a jar full of **poisoned ghostrock**, harvested on Yuggoth, from a sorcerer travelling through this planet, on her way to the morningstar.

This ghostrock is not poisonous to humans, but to extraplanar creatures like the mass of limbs, it means death. Most extraplanar creatures have no use for ghostrock, but the mass of limbs uses it to reproduce, and will succumb to this trap.

Right now, the princess is using an **old castle** in the mountains as her headquarters. Sir Mocent, the knight who has inherited the castle, is not very well-known and is not suspected of any rebellious sympathies—for now, anyway. It is only a matter of time before his allegiance is discovered by Dastartius, either because the princess chooses to strike from this location, or because the movements of her other troops give her away.



The Terrible Truth

What Zorbal does not realize is that the mass of limbs is not unique, but part of a whole race of similar monstrosities, reproducing asexually via **parasitism** in various other dimensions. Their choice of **hosts** is almost nonsensical, for their criteria rests on occult principles unknown to the material world and unsensed by mortal humans. They breed inside of such varied creatures as dead gods, a magical fungus found in the cellars of a now-obsolete style of wizards' tower, the minds of heretical priests exiled to the moons of Neptune, Plutonian ghostrock, and even certain inorganic crystals.

This race of many-limbed masses originated in **three separate locations**, summoned into existence by the combined efforts of a Hasturian cult on **Yuggoth**, the morbid druids of **Hyperborea**, and the octopus kingdom of drowned **Atlantis**. All three groups dedicated their temples by amassing collections of severed limbs. Adventurers who journey to all three original sites and destroy them will also destroy the power that gives life to the mass of limbs, and all such creatures will cease to exist. Such an undertaking is not without its perils, however.

Drowned Atlantis

The **octopus kingdom** that occupied Atlantis immediately after its sinking has long since fallen to the ravages of time and enemy species. Nothing has moved in to take its place, owing primarily to a decree by the gods. Atlantis lies empty. Anyone who can travel safely underwater may access the octopodean temple, the grounds of which are not safeguarded by the gods. Should an intruder improperly touch any of the ancient ruins of drowned Atlantis, they risk the fury of the divine, and the unleashing of a kraken.

The Forests of Hyperborea

Though druidic holy sites are scattered all across the forests of the North, the primary location of limb sacrifice lies upon an island in an **underground lake**, located just past another, older temple, now occupied by **pygmy cave trolls** (turn to page 78). The island itself is bleak and desolate, receiving no sunlight, an eternal nightscape of chthonic opulence. The rude structures that populate it are guarded by the people sacrificed by the Hyperborean druids to the bloodthirsty gods they worshipped. The murdered have been left here by evil sorcery, forever to guard the buried offerings of limb-bones.

The Planet Yuggoth

Located far out in space, the dark, frozen planet of Yuggoth is home to races inimical to humanity at the best of times. The old collection of **Hasturian shrines** has been abandoned, shunned by those nations that destroyed the cult. They let loose monsters upon the area, however, to encourage others to stay away as well. Giant insectoid monstrosities, ravenous for the taste of living flesh, scuttle their way between the graves and idols. The alien Mung Mung are said to meet here on mercantile business, in spite of the apparent danger, and they are well-known slavers of the softer races.

Perhaps worst of all, the Hasturian shrines of Yuggoth are actually infested with masses of limbs. The weird **ghostrock** they are built from is a perfect hosting material for these creatures, though they have been consuming the physical integrity of the material over the centuries. It is now extremely **brittle**, and though it looks and feels as hard as stone, a strong blow will cause it to crumble into a fine powder—though this also unleashes the ghosts trapped within. Entire buildings can be demolished with mere punches. Of course, breathing in this dust is extremely harmful, not least because it can still be used by the masses of limbs for reproduction.



MASS OF LIMBS

23 HP 1 Armour

*Amorphous, Hoarder, Huge, Planar, Solitary, Terrifying.***Special Qualities:** Interplanar traveller (can survive in hostile environments).

On this plane, they appear as masses of suckered tentacles, but elsewhere in the multiverse, their limbs appear surprisingly different—from a mass of crustacean legs and pincers in the Astral Sea, where they infest the floating corpses of dead Titans, to a mass of human arms when found on Yuggoth. Older specimens also manifest other organs on occasion—eyes, teeth, etc.

The mass of limbs is not intelligent in the way we think of such things—it cannot be conversed with, it understands no morality, it relentlessly pursues and defends suitable hosts—but it can immediately solve and overcome any puzzle based in logic. It always understands games, can decipher codes it needs to bypass magical barriers, and it can cast spells out of wizards' spellbooks. How it does this is unknown to humans, and probably unknowable. Zorbal has seen no evidence of these powers so far and does not even suspect they exist.

Instinct: Pursue a suitable host.**Attacks:**

- Battering limbs (1d10+5 damage, forceful; close, reach).
- Immobilize a foe in tentacles.

Moves:

- Crawl quickly across even the most dangerous terrain.
- Slip through dimensions.

Tactics:*When a proper host appears:* Claim it.*When threatened:* Stalk them before attacking quickly.**Weaknesses:**

The mass of limbs does not understand the material plane very well. It does not acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of enemies it encounters there, except perhaps at random, and is not good at adapting itself to these factors.

The Mass in Zorbal's Pit

Zorbal's captive mass of limbs is **enchanted**, and must pursue the prey that Zorbal chooses for it. If Zorbal gives it suicidal commands, it rebels, but may not have the strength to succeed. It will not be grateful to adventurers who free it from bondage.







Pygmy Cave Trolls

Strange Growths

The pygmy cave troll is not actually a type of troll—or not the way we typically think of such things, anyway. They are called this because they resemble trolls, and regenerate like trolls, but are usually the same size as kobolds and troglodytes.

They are actually a type of **magical fungus**, created by long-dead arch-mages driven mad by the arcane energies of other planes. This fungus has the ability to absorb and replicate the genetic material of other living things it consumes. This is not a particularly fast process, but over the last thousand years or so it has resulted in the fungus achieving its present form. Pygmy cave trolls reproduce by budding, and must continue to consume living things in order to profit from their abilities. They have absorbed so much more of the **essence of trolls** precisely because of the magical regenerative qualities of those creatures—there is always more for the fungus to consume. If pygmy cave trolls are not able to consume trolls or similarly evolved creatures, their mimicry of higher life forms degenerates. Even eating other pygmy cave trolls is not enough.

Aside from **regeneration**, which is partly due to the innate ability of the fungus to reform itself, pygmy cave trolls have achieved a sort of **bioluminescence** and a rudimentary **animal intelligence**.

This same bioluminescence is a characteristic of many of the underground lairs where the pygmy cave trolls dwell. It is produced by molds and fungi that grow upon damp stone walls. Not only does this light interfere with nightvision, but it changes the perception of colours in near-random ways. Any colour-based decisions made under the influence of this bioluminescence will be little more than guessing games—violets appear blue, black clothes appear to glow yellow, a sprightly green jacket seems washed in ugly purples and artificial orange.

These colour-warping properties can shift over time—even as the light given off seems to stay the same—due to the frequencies of non-visible light that these growths give off in conjunction with their bioluminescence. Unexpected interactions with magical effects can also occur.

PYGMY CAVE TROLL

10 HP 1 Armour

*Group, Hoarder, Organized, Small, Stealthy.***Special Qualities:** Amphibious, Made of fungus, Regenerates, Sonar.

Pygmy cave trolls have poor eyesight, but an excellent sense of smell and sonar. When they ambush creatures in the dark, they rely on their smell so that their chirping does not alert their prey.

The longer they go without consuming genetic material similar to that which they use in their bodies, the more listless they become and the more they have to sleep. So they spend most of their time hunting trolls and eating whatever else they can find that walks on two legs.

Even if they are reduced to zero hit points, they can continue to regenerate damage not caused by acid, burning, lightning, or magic. If they are frozen, however, they stay frozen.

Instinct: To devour the living.**Attacks:**

- Makeshift weapon (1d8 damage; close).

Moves:

- Ambush a foe from the darkness.
- Glow in the dark.
- Regenerate (heal 1d6 damage not caused by acid, burning, lightning, or magic).
- Sniff out the living.

Tactics:*If they are living:* They are food.*If they are unconscious or dead:* Drag them off to be consumed.*If they flee:* Let them run away if food is available.*If they have only mundane weapons:* Concentrate on obtaining food over defending against attacks.*If they have powerful weapons:* Stay away.**Weaknesses:**

The most obvious weaknesses of the pygmy cave trolls are acid, fire, lightning, and magic, because they cannot regenerate injuries caused by those sources.

Behaviourally, they also crave sugar, and will risk extreme danger to obtain fruits and sweets.

The Buried Temple

The pygmy cave trolls are occupying a series of natural and unnatural **caves** that have become connected to an ancient **temple** of the monster-god **Larrankvog**. This temple was buried by the gods long ages ago.

Squares are approximately 10 feet by 10 feet. Pygmy cave trolls wander through the caves regularly, and occasionally through the buried temple. Noise and commotion will draw them, especially if it is continuous.

1. Glowing Cave

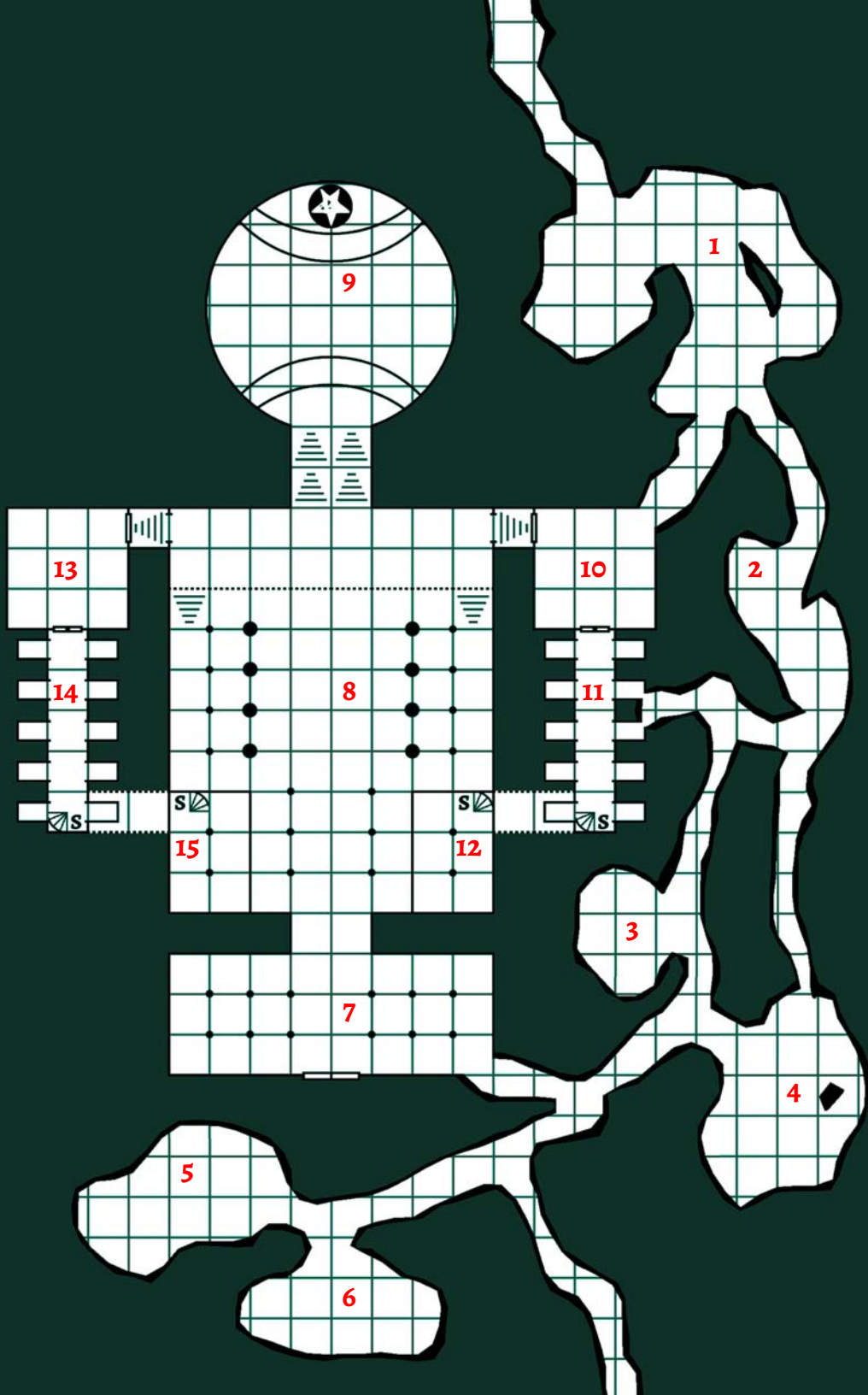
This large, curving cave is covered in **brightly glowing fungus**. Anyone walking through it can also hear a **strange buzzing** that does not seem to be an actual sound. The pygmy cave trolls love this cave and will often hide in nooks and crannies or underneath the fungus.

Magic used in this cave causes the fungus to mutate, calling out to planar entities, summoning strange items, and warping the laws of reality.

Questions:

- What is the worst thing you've ever done with your magical powers?
- What scares you about magic?
- Which element or elements are the antithesis of your magic?
- Which planes of existence other than this one do your magical powers draw upon?

Use the answers to create strange effects or draw the attention of meddling outsiders.



2. Refuse Cave

The pygmy cave trolls dump the remains of creatures they eat in this cave. There are **piles of bones** and the **bodies of several adventurers** amongst them. Numerous rusted weapons and piles of rotting clothes round out the refuse. There is no bioluminescence in this room, so if anyone intends to search through the refuse, they must bring their own source of light.

Questions:

- Do you know of anyone else who dared to venture into these caves before you?
- Who did you come down here to find, and what did they bring with them?

Maybe that person's body is here.

3. Dragon Cave

There is a **thin vein of gold** in the rock here, which has attracted the **young dragon** that sleeps here. Because it can breathe fire, it does not worry about the pygmy cave trolls. They worry about it, however, and try to go around it, whenever possible.

The cave itself is rather unremarkable save for the fact that it is almost completely **charred and blackened**. Even the tunnels that lead to it have burn marks on them.



4. Crude Temple

The pygmy cave trolls have started constructing a **crude idol** out of rocks in this cave, in imitation of the temple. The pile of stones is barely recognizable as a three-headed creature. The only bioluminescent fungus in this cave is arranged around the idol.

5. Prophecy Room

Shrouded in darkness save for a single spot on the ceiling where drops of water fall from a stalactite into a thin, deep pit, this cave is seldom occupied by pygmy cave trolls.

The small **patch of fungus** on the dripping stalactite causes spellcasters to see **visions of the future**. They are not prophetic, merely hallucinatory and annoying.

6. Spawning Pit

This cave, covered in **glowing fungus**, is where the pygmy cave trolls come to **reproduce by budding**. They are a grotesque sight, with body parts growing out of strange locations, in later stages looking like Siamese twins. They can still move slowly and even fight, but prefer to lie around until the process is finished. Other pygmy cave trolls **stand guard** over them, in case of intruders.



7. Temple Foyer

This room looks pleasant enough, with a white-tiled floor and fancy columns holding up the vaulted ceiling. The **huge double doors** are impossible to open because there is solid rock on the other side of them.

8. The Temple Hall

This **hundred-foot long hall** is the main worship area. The area closest to the foyer has a blue-and-white tiled floor and arcades to either side. The vaulted ceiling is supported by thin columns.

Further in, the hallway widens out, and has two rows of arcades on each side. In the middle are rows of **ancient wooden pews**, some knocked aside. The floor is tiled in various shades of blue and indigo.

At the north end of the hall is a **stage**, set six feet off the ground, with carvings of monsters all over its face. Stairs lead up to it from the outermost arcades. To the left and right, past **arched doorways**, stairs lead down to the ancient storeroom (room 10) and the torture chamber (room 13). To the north is a **wide staircase** leading down into the dome of worship (room 9). The back wall is equipped with hooks and rods to hang **curtains and tapestries** on, but these fabrics have rotted away and lie in scraps across the stage.

9. Dome of Worship

At either end of this large, domed room are tiered daises. The floor in the middle is covered in 2 feet of **muddy water**. The roof of the **dome** is 40 feet high and the walls are damp.

On the far dais is an **immense stone statue** of the god Larrangkvgog, an unholy combination of a troll, a mantichore, and an antelope, ready to accept offerings and sacrifice. There is old, **dried blood** on the dais in front of it. **Touching** the statue causes it to summon manticores.



10. Ancient Storeroom

This room is strewn with **ruined religious paraphernalia**, all of it now worthless. Soiled robes, battered candlesticks and thuribles, even some unreadable books and scrolls lie moldering on the damp floor. Splinters of wood are all that is left of the shelves that once housed them.

The doors that lead to the crypt no longer close, and now hang permanently ajar. A **steady trickle of water** flows through these doors, from the caverns outside this room.

11. West Crypt-Hall

Niches in the walls to either side of this hallway once held the **mummified remains** of former priests and monsters who served the god Larrangkvoq. But dampness and clumsy searching have scattered bones on the floor and some have even been stuffed haphazardly back into the grave-niches.

A **small stream** of water flows in from outside, terminating at the end of the hall, where loose flagstones, worn by the water, cover a spiralling stone staircase that leads down to a **short hallway**. This hallway is now almost completely submerged in water. At the other end of it there is a **spiral staircase** leading up to the temple treasury (room 12), which is above water.

12. Temple Treasury

This room has a high vaulted ceiling but is mostly bare of decoration. The temple kept its treasures hidden here in ancient times. Bales of precious cotton and silk have decayed into **garbage**, vials of expensive perfumes have gone rank, and **nearly 100 bottles of wine** have turned to vinegar.

However, there are still some **valuables** worth looting here, including a chest full of gold coins, gilded statuettes, and several weapons that are magically preserved.



13. Torture Chamber

This room is a torture chamber, full of strange, painful implements. Some of them do not look like they ever actually worked, and many more are rusted and useless. Some of the larger pieces include:

Iron Maiden: This sarcophagus-shaped torture device was originally purchased from a museum in Londinarium. There is ample evidence that it was in fact used, at least once, and that someone attempted to clean the gore off, but gave up after only a few spikes. It seems the task was more difficult than they expected.

The Rack: Made out of green serpentine, this device weighs more than a thousand pounds. The blood of someone stretched out on this rack will contain portions of their memories. If the blood is imbibed, those memories can be transferred, rendering the need for confession obsolete.

The Wheel: No longer functional, the wheel has three monstrous heads prominently displayed on each side: a troll, a manticore, and a demonic-looking antelope.



14. East Crypt-Hall

This hallway is similar to the West crypt-hall (room 11), but is **mostly undisturbed** and the double doors are locked (but not particularly difficult to batter down). The bodies in these grave-niches are **undead**, and all ten of them will arise to murder living, intelligent intruders.

The **secret stairwell** at the end of the hall is cleverly hidden beneath the flagstones. Stairs lead down to a plain hallway of crude stonework that leads to another spiral staircase and the observatory (room 15).

15. Observatory

This vaulted room is similar to the temple treasury (room 12), but is not a repository for treasure. There are two iron braziers and several sacks of **valuable resin** here. The resin comes from an extinct species of aquatic dinosaur and causes delightfully bizarre hallucinations if smoked.

The walls are only a foot thick and there are **peep-holes** about 8 feet above the floor, where one can see into the main hall.

More Questions:

- There are no trolls in these caves. So where are they?
- What sorts of obstacles did you overcome to reach this part of the dungeon?
- Where have you heard of Larrangkvgog before? Who worships this god nowadays?
- Who asked you to bring them samples of this glowing fungus?
- Why was this temple buried by the gods? Which gods?





Rhinocorn Homunculi



Sorcerous Origins

Of late, it has become chic to gossip about the doings of a certain estate in the vicinity of **Larrendon Grove**. One may hear that a famous alchemist from the city of Ormok obtained the private notebooks of **Themaculus**, the estate's former owner, for a paltry handful of coins. Or one might be amused to hear how a particular socialite was ridiculed after arranging for the ownership of a popular theatre company to be exchanged for what amounted to be a hundred pounds of mundane glass from the aforementioned Themaculus' arcane laboratory.

Themaculus—known as “the Amazing Wizard” to his supporters (and even a few of his detractors)—was renowned in life as a generous if eccentric man. He was always kind to beggars, but could not abide the dramatic professions. When the **Foreign Actor's Association** went to war against the **Beggars' Guild** over a petty signage dispute, Themaculus provided fair wages to the beggars, and even bought them weapons—even though they were clearly the party in violation of city edicts.

And yet, when the **Royal College of Dramaturges** took what many considered to be drastic steps to ban foreigners from working on stage within the kingdom, he would support neither side, even going so far as to petition the king to eject both organizations' members from the city. And yet again, he fed **Commorian refugees** from his own pantry, spent two days of every month brewing potions for the **Cold Street Children's Hospital**, and regularly purchased slaves from the pirates of the **Sword Coast** in order to bestow upon them their freedom.¹

However, it is perhaps his most charitable act of all that has led to so much recent trouble, and may yet lead to so much more if measures are not taken. During the irresponsible tenure of Liopald Kark as Primarch of Rangers, a **band of meddlesome orcish vermin** inveigled their way onto Themaculus' property and bred with his prize unicorns, producing offspring of a particularly strange and

¹ For a full list of events and sources, see Jeremiah Lodebrock, *Aftermath of Themaculus: The Restoration of Irredential Domains to the Marshall of Eastwatch* (Narvon: Qiamat Press, 1141), 7-12.

unsettling nature.² But Themaculus was not one to rain down the fire of his sorcery on the undeserving. He took them into his home and raised them as his own children. In time, they became known to academia as the **rhinocorn homunculi**.³

The **legal will** that Themaculus left behind was quite clear—all of his estates, possessions, and wealth he bequeathed to his adopted children. There is no indication in the writings he left behind that he was at all concerned about their intellectual abilities, nor is there any awareness of the limits of their ability to interact with civilized society. And yet, it is quite clear that their management of their inheritance has created havoc within the city, and far beyond.

Disruptive miscellanies of an arcane nature have been circulating through all levels of society. Coinage in this province was critically devalued when Themaculus' vast savings being dumped on the market at once. Clearly, something must be done.

2 An account of Kark's incompetence is given in Mira Wodeweaver, *Wrath of the Rangers: The Interregnum of Liopald Kark and its Legacy of Graft* (Mournhaven: Nornfell University Press, 1142), and the mutiny that led to the particular orcish incursion under discussion here is detailed in Boron Hashan, *Malevolent Invasion: The Orc, the Troll, and the Death That Comes With Them* (Ormok: Lysistrata, 1139), 322-394.

3 As Lodebrock rightly points out (*Infestation*, xcvi), having not been born of seed and clay, but from the cross-breeding of two different arcane species, they are not true homunculi. His later examinations of blood and tissue samples bear this out (*Aftermath*, 56-447, though cf. Warro, 333-335 for an interesting caveat). Use of the term "rhinocorn," popularized by Maespetrosian (mainly via *Horned Mammals*, *Rhinocorn Riders*, and *Tropic of Consequence*), has been thoroughly decimated by Shahkal (212-266): the *ῥινόκερως* of the ancient world bears no relation to the magical horned ungulates so common to the Elven forests, and neither should rightly be termed "unicorn" in any case, as it is only the White Steeds of Elshadril that have but a single horn (see Pallas). And yet this dual fallacy continues to dominate the academic discourse to such a degree that it is neither possible to leave the matter unaddressed, nor to use a more appropriate term, for one does not, in fact, exist.



RHINOCORN HOMUNCULUS

6 HP 2 Armour

Group, Hoarder, Intelligent, Magical.

With the death of Themaculus, his considerable worldly possessions have passed into the hands of his adopted children, the so-called rhinocorn homunculi. While they have at least a decent education, they are not particularly clever, compared to humans, and have poor impulse control. They also have a rudimentary knowledge of magic and spellcasting, but can't reliably cast any spells effectively—or safely.

Instinct: To act on impulse.

Attacks:

- Charge a foe, horn out (1d8+2 damage, forceful; reach, near).
- Fight like a boxer (1d6+2 damage, ignores armour; hand).
- Wield a simple human weapon against a foe (1d8+2 damage, forceful; close).

Moves:

- Attempt to cast a spell.
- Bellow and rage like an arrogant wizard, thwarted by lesser beings.
- Offer to sell miscellaneous items of wizardry.
- Perform a feat of prodigious strength.

Tactics:

If they are really, really poor: Give them a bit of charity.

If they come with the intent to do business: Listen to their offer, see what they want.

If they have shiny coins or uncommonly tasty victuals: Offer them things until they agree to a trade.

If they think something is valuable: Jack the price way up, or refuse to sell. It must be valuable!

If they trespass on papa's estates: See if they are lost first, then get really mad if they are up to no good.

If violence breaks out: Fight or flight, pick one (fight may include smashing objects and bellowing; flight may include flailing about and blubbing).

Weaknesses:

The rhinocorn homunculi want to be a normal part of human society. They were raised in a way that made them think they deserve acceptance, and they have things that other people want. Unfortunately for them, however, they have neither the social skills to make this happen, nor the intellectual capacity to learn them at this stage. This reality does not sit well with them.

Options

Goblinoid: If a homunculus is more “goblinoid” than “orcish,” it has the small tag instead of the forceful tag, deals only 1d6 damage, and can hide as one of its monster moves.

Trollkin: If a trollkin homunculus is reduced to zero HP by something other than acid or fire, it rises again a minute or so later with 1d6 HP.

Possessions

The rhinocorn homunculi could have any kind of magical items in their vast and uncatalogued possessions, including:

- An **alchemical laboratory** that was built entirely for show and does not work.
- A **gauzy shroud** that turns you invisible when you drape it over yourself, but reduces your vision by half.
- A **golden helmet** that removes your fear and peripheral vision when you wear it.
- A **quill** made from the feather of a roc. It never runs out of green ink, but the script it writes is rather large.
- A **ring of telekinesis** that allows you to move an object in sight that is lighter than yourself at a walking pace when you wear it and concentrate. You can move yourself through the air, but only if your eyes are closed.
- A **shield** that weapons stick to, held fast until you release your grip on it.
- A **slim notebook** with an infinite number of blank pages contained between its covers. You can only find pages that have been written on if you know they exist.
- A **stuffed lizard** that grows increasingly hot when in the presence of someone who intends both treachery and murder. It does not burn, but other things might.
- A **sword** that buzzes like a bee when unsheathed and kills birds and closely-related creatures with but a single blow.

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The
Swamp Witch

Cities Underwater

“Some people find her out in the swamp, half naked, covered in blood. Others say she looks like some kind of... *creature*, wearing a woman’s skin like a bag. Still others meet a normal person out there between the trees and claim she must have been the swamp witch. Maybe you’ll meet her and maybe then you’ll know the truth. Or maybe not.

“She says there’s an ancient city out there, under the water, says that’s why things are so strange around here. Lots of folks say it’s strange out here, but I don’t think it is. They’re just from far away. They have ruined cities everywhere else, too, I’ve heard people talk about them.

“What’s that? Well, I can’t rightly say how long she’s been out there. Long enough to get old, long enough to have a daughter grow up and take over, certainly. That’s not my theory, I heard that from someone else. I’m no cynic though, I believe in magic. Seen it with my own two eyes, I have.

“You see this cup? It’s from the city, she says. Everything just tastes better out of this cup. They had nice things back in the ancient days, before cities got ruined, and that’s no lie. She’ll want this cup back someday, I reckon, but that’s okay by me. It’s only for special occasions anyhow, and this ain’t one of those. It’s a fast day, besides. You’re not supposed to indulge on fast days, or that’s what the parson keeps telling me. I suppose I’d better listen, it’s only my soul, after all. Let me get you another drink in the same glass you’ve been using.

“The swamp provides, they say. The swamp gives with one hand and takes with the other, that’s what I say. If the witch wants her stuff back, it’s no skin off my back to let her speak for the swamp. She knows it better than I do, better than anyone does, I reckon, and my momma didn’t raise no fools. Besides, she ain’t alone out there, no sir. She’s got friends with her. Golden serpents, elemental spirits, ghosts even, if you can believe what other people say. No surprise to me, that one, there’s a dead city out there, why wouldn’t there be ghosts? Why, this one time, Old Man Marmaduke was down by the abandoned cabin at night when he saw—

“Well, now. That’s just rude. If you don’t want to hear no stories, you can just say so.”

THE SWAMP WITCH

20 HP 1 Armour

*Devious, Hoarder, Intelligent, Magical, Solitary, Stealthy.***Special Qualities:** Amphibious, Witch.

There's an ancient empire down there, underneath the water. It's her job to revive its glory. Some people might be hurt by that, if they don't adapt to the new order, but that's just how it works. Some people are good, some bad, it's not her responsibility. She's going to bring something beautiful back into this wretched, ugly world even if it kills her—or anyone else, for that matter.

She likes things that are wild and crazy, though. She respects that. People need to be tough! They can't just let others carry them through life forever. Only children can do that. Once people grow up, they need to take control of their own lives.

Beneath her skin there are nightmares, not blood and bones.

Instinct: To raise what has been lost in the swamp.

Attacks:

- Horns (1d10 damage, 1 piercing; close).

Moves:

- Cast a spell on plants, slime, or water.
- Command the creatures of the swamp.
- Contort into inhuman shapes.
- Disappear into the swamp.
- Pull something ancient out of the swamp.
- See strands of possible future events.
- Travel magically through water.

Tactics:

When they come to do business: Do business—if they have something valuable.

When they show interest in the sunken city: Evaluate them to see if they might be useful.

When they threaten violence: Back down and strike from a position of strength later.

Weaknesses:

As a creature made of nightmares, the swamp witch has less power over people good at resisting sleep, like insomniacs and speed freaks. Her powers often fall short against them.

When you track the Swamp Witch through the swamp, roll+INT if you are using magic or roll+WIS if you are not. **On a 7+,** you can follow her as long as you overcome the same obstacles she does, but **on a 7-9,** she notices you quickly. **On a miss,** the swamp tries to swallow you.

Feuds

The Swamp Witch, unfortunately for her, does not live in a world of magic all by herself. There is a myriad of other arcanists out there, all pursuing their own plans. The monsters up on **Skull Mountain**, which rises out of the ground just beyond the swamp, are a particular nuisance.

If the PCs come to her for assistance in fighting monsters, she is happy to give them items that will help them clear out the woods around Skull Mountain and the village of East Ditch, that they can also keep for their own missions (if they last long enough). But her favours do not come without a price.

- **If they are fighting spirits and other intangible creatures**, she gives them a ghost-killing sword but tells them that the astral glutton (turn to page 9) threatens her attempts to revive the sunken city, and that they must end its existence for her.
- **If they dislike wizards in general**, she asks them to assassinate Zorbal the Damned (turn to page 106). In exchange, she will give them valuable treasures and magical items recovered from the sunken city. She knows where Zorbal's tower is located, but tries to stay well away from his attentions. Should they accept this mission, she gives the PCs each a special ring that prevents them from speaking about her in the presence of other wizards.
- **If they need something that shatters objects**, she gives them a fearsome hammer, but asks them to drive the crystal kingdom (turn to page 34) back and keep it well away from the swamp.
- **If they are opposed to fire elementals or pyromancers**, she gives them frost-producing rings and asks them to drive Harlan Blackhand (turn to page 54) away from the region. She knows of his affliction and wants to see him stop being a nuisance once and for all.
- **If they want to cure diseases**, she tells them about the bluish multitudes (turn to page 20). She wants their dungeons cleared out so they don't infect the city she intends to raise up out of the swamp. She might also direct them to Themaculus (turn to page 90), not knowing that he has recently died.

Once Lost, Now Found

Many things come out of the waters of the swamp. Precious items, made of gold. Magic swords, to take the heads off kings. But there are also things still alive down there, lurking and waiting for the day when the city rises again.

GOLDEN SERPENT

10 HP 2 Armour

Construct, Group, Small.

Special Qualities: Amphibious, Flying, Venomous.

Once part of the ancient city, these guardian golems have returned to serve the Swamp Witch. Their venom is not deadly, but causes an intense and painful burning sensation.

Instinct: To defend the city.

Attacks:

- Bite with venomous fangs (1d8 damage, venomous; hand, close).
- Coil around a foe and suffocate them.

Moves:

- Obey the Swamp Witch.
- Swim through air and water.

Tactics:

If they are looking for the city beneath the swamp: Watch them, tempt them, see what they are willing to do.

If they desire the rebirth of the city: Aid them, show them secrets.

If they threaten the city: Harry them until they turn back or die.

Weaknesses:

The golden serpents are creatures of an ancient empire, built for the temple of the sun. As such, they are susceptible to ancient strains of magic meant to affect things from their world. They are also vulnerable to magic that calls upon the forces of elemental darkness.



Treasures of the Swamp

When the Swamp Witch retrieves an item or object of significance from the dead city underneath the swamp, roll 1d12 four times to see what it is, and what it does:

d12	It is...	...that makes...
1	a bracelet	animals
2	a chariot	blood
3	a hooded scarf	despair
4	an item of cutlery	fire
5	a lens	flowers and vines
6	a mansion	jewels
7	an ottoman	people
8	a ring	pure mathematics
9	a robe	red wine
10	a tent	stone
11	a wand	the swamp
12	a weapon	tears

d12	(do what?)	(and what?)
1	act as fuel for	[battlefields / battles].
2	attack	beauty.
3	be repelled by	[its / their] surroundings.
4	become attracted to	lampreys.
5	become valuable in	magical [items / rituals].
6	cause harm to	most peoples' eyes.
7	evaporate in the face of	(raising) the dead.
8	fall from	(repelling) intruders.
9	grow quickly around	the sky.
10	permeate	[spoken words / your mouth].
11	speak truth to	stone statues.
12	turn into	whomever possesses it.

When the Swamp Witch produces a weapon from the sunken city, roll 1d6 thrice to see what it does:

This weapon is a...

1	dagger	4	spear
2	hammer	5	sword
3	ring	6	wand

...that... (daggers, hammers, spears, and swords):

1	damages enemies with immunities (ghosts, spirits, etc).
2	deals double damage to a specific type of enemy.
3	gives the wielder +1 armour.
4	glows in the presence of a specific type of creature.
5	glows in the presence of magic.
6	kills a specific type of monster with but a touch.

...that produces... (rings and wands):

1	fire.	4	light.
2	force.	5	lightning.
3	frost.	6	random monsters.

...and...

1	attracts the magic of the city to it.
2	bears the sigil of an ancient noble house.
3	exists in multiple realities at the same time.
4	is always wet.
5	is indestructible.
6	is very fragile, but when broken, the shards are superhumanly sharp.





Zorbal
The
Damned



Zorbal, the Man

Known universally as “the Damned” for more than just his unhealthy appearance, the wasted, spindly form of **Narriot Zorbal** is immediately recognizable mostly because of the **tendrils of darkness** that constantly accompany him. A superstar even amongst evil wizards, he has not one, but **three towers** from which he terrorizes the countryside, through which many younger wizards journey, either to apprentice themselves to the master, or simply to observe his successes firsthand.

Zorbal was not always so fearsome. He was sickly as a boy, and experienced several life-threatening illnesses. Asthma, fistulas, plague, and rickets were all familiar friends to the young Zorbal. He turned to sorcery when neither physician nor surgeon could help him take control of his body and his life. Now he is not as aged and decrepit as he looks, nor is he as yet undead—but there is no denying that only sorcery sustains him at this point.

But even so, he has no fondness for the isolated hermit mystique that so many other wizards cultivate. Not only does he constantly maintain **feuds** with other wizards—everyone from **Harlan Blackhand** to the **Crystal King**, and even the recently-deceased **Themaculus**—but he is also constantly **hiring minions** to undertake missions on his behalf, as well as working to undermine the powers of law and order that surround him and try to keep him boxed in by their civilized standards of decent behaviour.

He is a master of the **arts of shadow** and the **beasts of the outer planes**. He reaches through the darkness of our world and the cold beyond space to desolate planets, pulling the ghosts of ancient warrior races from their frozen hell-worlds into bodies made of shadow here, to wage his wars for him. His primary offensive and defensive measure is the tendrils of darkness that constantly accompany him. These shadowy tentacles can squeeze the life out of a man or horse with ease.

When you first meet Narriot Zorbal, roll+CHA. **On a 10+**, he acts like everything you say is some hilarious joke, and treats you fairly until you “betray” him. **On a 7-9**, he thinks you might be useful but constantly complains about you, berates you, and second-guesses your actions. **On a miss**, he is reminded, by your presence, of the people who could not help him as a child, and he becomes abusive.

Zorbal the Wizard

In his daily life, Narriot Zorbal is a schemer and a planner. He brews potions, investigates possible schemes that will sabotage his enemies, and pays his minions to perform menial tasks. Often he is engaged in meditation that takes his mind to the furthest reaches of existence itself.

But when a plan falls into place that requires his personal attentions, he is ready to summon a retinue of otherworldly monsters and rain down dark bolts of destruction upon his foes. After his victory, he celebrates, gloating over the defeated and revelling in the suffering of others.

ZORBAL THE DAMNED

16 HP ○ Armour

Devious, Hoarder, Intelligent, Magical, Organized, Solitary.

Special Qualities: Wizard.

If shadows are not enough, Zorbal summons other hideous monsters: lizard-cats from the celestial graveyard of rotting jungle gods, slime-covered skeletons from alien planets where life is now extinct, or undead dinosaurs from the world's ancient past.

Instinct: To exert his power over others.

Attacks:

- Cast a harmful or destructive spell.
- Tendrils of darkness (1d8+2 damage, forceful; close, reach).

Moves:

- Brew magical potions.
- Control shadows and darkness with magic.
- Hire thuggish mercenaries.
- Offer gold in exchange for service.
- Summon creatures from far-away realms.

Tactics:

If they are too strong to attack directly: Feud with them, sabotage their work.

If they obey: Allow them some small reward.

When bored: Find someone to belittle.

When they attack: Unleash planar creatures upon them.

Weaknesses:

Without the magical potions and rituals that sustain his body, Zorbal would soon be deceased. Any disruption to his necessary medicines drives him into a panic. Also, his arrogance is well-known, and even though he is powerful, his hubris still outreaches his abilities. He can be drawn easily into a trap when he thinks his enemies are weaker than they really are.

Zorbal the Employer

Because he wants so many things from the world, Zorbal is an **excellent source of employment** for unscrupulous adventurers. He can find dungeons to raid, rival wizards to steal from, and quests to undertake, providing a way for the GM to introduce these into the game without need for a further plot hook.

Item Recovery

When Zorbal wants something—a magic item, usually, or perhaps physical spell components—he does not always have the time or means to get it himself. **In these situations**, he hires adventurers and rogues. If a party of thieves agree to retrieve an item for him, he allows them to keep anything else they find or steal in the process. If they want a fee on top of that, he is stingy, but is willing to part with a few hundred coins or so. If his employees should take the cash advance and fail to retrieve the object of his desire—or worse yet, run off with the item—he tracks them down and gruesomely **murders** them.

He is fairly particular about what he wants, but if he sees that his minions have retrieved something else that fits his criteria, he takes that, too. As far as he is concerned, other mortals are lucky he is so magnanimous as to allow them to live and even serve him. He is unconcerned that he might be breaking the deal he offered.

Zorbal may send a party of adventurers to a dungeon that has no treasure aside from the thing he wants. Or he might send them to a dungeon full of loot he cares nothing for. These things—along with how monster-infested a place is—are of little or no concern to him. **He wants what he wants**, and he doesn't mind a little bit of manipulation to get it.

Kidnapping

Zorbal often hires doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals. Regardless of their credentials or efficacy, Zorbal treats them all quite poorly. Few enjoy treating him for very long, as the tribulations he puts them through quickly outweigh the financial benefits—he is physically and verbally abusive, enjoys cruel pranks and mind games, and flaunts his callousness towards others. And word gets around pretty quickly.

Of course, if the doctors will not come to him, they must be brought. When he feels the need, or when he hears about an interesting practitioner, he **hires thugs** to kidnap them. He pays

based on the market—whichever price is the most competitive. He is not pleased by incompetence, however, and considers any advance payment a promise that cannot be broken. He does not engage in speculation with his money. He does not pay for possibilities.

Sabotage

Because his time is also consumed by **feuds** with so many other wizards, Zorbal is always in need of minions to send against them. If there is a house that can be broken into, a laboratory that could be set on fire, a relative that could be threatened, a magic item that could be stolen, Zorbal has the coin to pay for it. He is not completely reckless, however, and prefers to send attacks where they will cause another wizard to spend time dealing with non-magical hassles or that will cause emotional distress.

Other Quests

- **If Zorbal sends his minions into the dungeons of long-dead Drakdagor**, in search of his secret storehouses, turn to page 20. He does not have a cure for the bluish multitudes, though he could probably formulate one if he cared enough to.
- **If Zorbal sends his minions to obtain pieces of the crystal kingdom**, for use in his experiments, turn to page 34. He is not afraid of the Crystal King, but expects his hirelings to handle this task without needing his advice.
- **If Zorbal sends his minions to obtain samples of pygmy cave trolls**, so he can study them, turn to page 80. He prefers complete live specimens.
- **If Zorbal sends his minions to tame a Griffarcus**, turn to page 48. He does not hesitate to give them the **potions and incantations** necessary to achieve this, since he knows a spell that will transfer the Griffarcus' loyalty to himself. If adventurers bring him a charmed Griffarcus, he is gleeful and effusive, but does not pay them an excessive amount of money for the deed. If adventurers set out to bring him a Griffarcus fail to do so, and choose to undertake some other quest instead, he will become enraged if it is brought to his attention.
- **If Zorbal wants the dragon armour**, turn to page 42. He tells his minions they are allowed to wear it to fight their enemies, but they must report back on the effects.

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