

Perilous Deeps



Dungeons
for *Dungeon World*



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This supplement relies upon rules and concepts published in *Dungeon World*, by Adam Koebel and Sage LaTorra, and *The Perilous Wilds*, by Jason Lutes; it is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

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Introduction

How do dungeons work in *Dungeon World*? Ask that question of this book, and you'll get six different answers.

More than the mechanics in most RPGs, *Dungeon World* mechanics lend themselves to personalization by players and GM. In that spirit, the diggers of these dark places were asked to contribute personal interpretations of the dungeon creation guidelines laid out in *The Perilous Wilds*.

Each “Deep” herein has been conceived and written according to the unique sensibility of its author. Think of them as six different suggestions for ways in which you yourself might write up a dungeon. If you plan to run one of these at your own table, make sure to read it over at least once, in order to get a handle on the author’s approach. That being said, a few commonalities exist:

Any word that appear in **SMALLCAPS** is either a reference to an entry elsewhere in the adventure, or an entry heading.

Impressions are suggestions for sensory details that can be used to describe the area in question.

Connections are ways to reach other areas or locales from the area being described.

Common areas are parts of the adventure site that are likely to recur as the place is explored.

Unique areas are places that only occur once in the adventure.

Discoveries are anything the party finds that is interesting, but not immediately threatening.

Dangers are anything which pose a real threat to the characters, including things like traps and monsters.

Mapping a Deep

None of the sites described herein include maps in the traditional sense. Mostly they are lists of rooms and their potential contents, for you to arrange and connect on a map drawn for the first time at the table, as the places are explored. This means you’re free to tailor the physical form of each dungeon to the fiction, your play group, and your personal approach to running an adventure.

By spelling out some of the contents ahead of time, we step away from the wholly improvised nature of orthodox *Dungeon World*, trading some of that edge for a level of detail and atmosphere usually only achievable via some degree of prep. There’s still plenty of room to wing it—these places are more playgrounds than railroads—but by putting the cartography in your hands we hope to do two things: maintain that sense of “playing to find out what happens” that’s so central to *Dungeon World*, and encourage you to personalize each Deep by deciding for yourself how its various parts fit together.

Our interpretation of the GM Principle “Draw maps, leave blanks” in this context is loose: each of these Deeps lays out a “map” of descriptive components, while the “blanks” are the undefined spaces between those components, waiting to be filled in, during your prep and/or at the table.

In other words: here are the building blocks; make each Deep your own.

—Jason

Uncertain Reflections

by Joe Banner • Illustrated by Niels Burger

Introduction

This is a story about what happens when those with mortal desires and failures are given the power of a god.

The Magus did not go insane. It was insane from the start, as so many of us are. What happened was the Magus found a way to cope with the madness it perceived around it.

It wanted to return to the pristine purity it had been raised on. It wanted a retreat from a world of sand and grit and blood and sickness.

It went into the Iron Marches. Oh, how the yellow salt afflicted its senses! But it went into the desert. And in the desert it made a shining castle. It burned the sand into glass. It made the glass into peaks and walls and vaulted ceilings and a crystal throne. And there it sat, and there for a time it found peace.

But acolytes came, filled with dirt and sin. They promised to serve, they wished for redemption. They would not leave. It hated them. So it promised them what they wanted. Then took from them everything. (They served it better as drones than devoted.)

And there the wives' tales end... Except you found the citadel, after days or years of search, or none at all. You stand at the mirrored gates and all is still in the desert sun. Your rivals pursue you, black dots on the horizon.

What will you do next, I wonder?

Questions

- * Who are your rivals?
- * How do your rivals communicate with each other?
- * Do you want to serve the Magus? Destroy it? Or something else?
- * What dangers and discoveries did you find in the desert?



The Iron Marches

Torrid, Arid Desert, Barren, Perilous, Chaotic

Connections

- * **West of Umberto**, called “the Fortunate City” by some
- * **South of Mahima D’utari**, the borderlands of Mirkasa
- * **North of the Malachite Mines**, source of the caliph’s vast wealth

Impressions

- * By day: relentless sun, endless dunes, wavering dots on the horizon (friend or foe?)
- * By night: a full, alabaster moon; flickering witchlights; the whispers of *djinns* and *hashshashin*
- * Savage sandstorms
- * Clear blue skies
- * Circling carrion birds
- * The occasional mesa, and the shelter it may offer
- * Eroded ruins, of ancient sandstone

Discoveries

A lush oasis, safe but coveted by all travellers. How long do you dare stay here? What claim from another party is already embedded in the soft earth?

A soft place, where the sand is deadly and the dunes seemingly endless. What lies beneath the sand layer for those that fall through it? What time-spanned souls have been wandering the soft places helplessly for centuries?

A mile-wide crop of cactus, each plant several feet tall.

When you **attempt to work your way safely through the field**, roll +DEX: on a 10+, your clothing is torn, but nothing of value is lost; on a 7-9, something important is hooked—leave it behind or spend the necessary time to free it.

When you **travel around the field instead**, you risk wasting time and drawing unwanted attention.

A desert ironwood, maybe a thousand years old or more. What answers might a druid learn from it? What marks of distant conflict scar it’s ancient bark? What is said to happen when the ironwood blooms? Is it blooming now?

An outpost of foreigners, perhaps a Chalcedoni legion or grove of Green-scar Godsworn. What might the foreigners want in exchange for shelter or safe passage?

By default, the outpost is *Poor*, *Shrinking*, *Guard*, *Need* (supplies), *Oath* (its parent nation). Also, choose or roll one:

1d12 DETAIL

- 1-3 ☐ The foreigners are despised by the locals, and harried at every opportunity: +*Blight* (nomads)
- 4-5 ☐ Built on the site of an ancient curse: +*Blight* (cursed earth), +*Need* (exorcists), -*Population*
- 6-7 ☐ Formerly a town, captured and fortified by the foreigners, its former residents enslaved: +*Population*, +*Safe*, +*Defences*, +*Blight* (would-be rescuers)
- 8-10 ☐ The outpost was a prison for exiled criminals: +*Lawless*
- 11-12 ☐ The outpost is home to more esoteric foreigners: (choose one) +*Elves*, +*Dwarves*, +*Antfolk* (etc.)



Citadel of Glass

SORCERER'S SECLUSIUM
Size Small

GM Notes

Use the “See What They Find” move from *The Perilous Wilds* as the party explores the Citadel.

When you *need a theme, common area, or unique area*, choose or roll from the lists on this page.

When you *need a Discovery*, invent one or roll one up.

When you *need a Danger*, choose one from the entries on page 7, invent one, or roll one up.

Themes

1d12 THEME

- 1-4 Madness ○○○
- 5-8 Forbidden Knowledge ○○
- 9-12 Elements (Sand and Fire) ○○

Common Areas

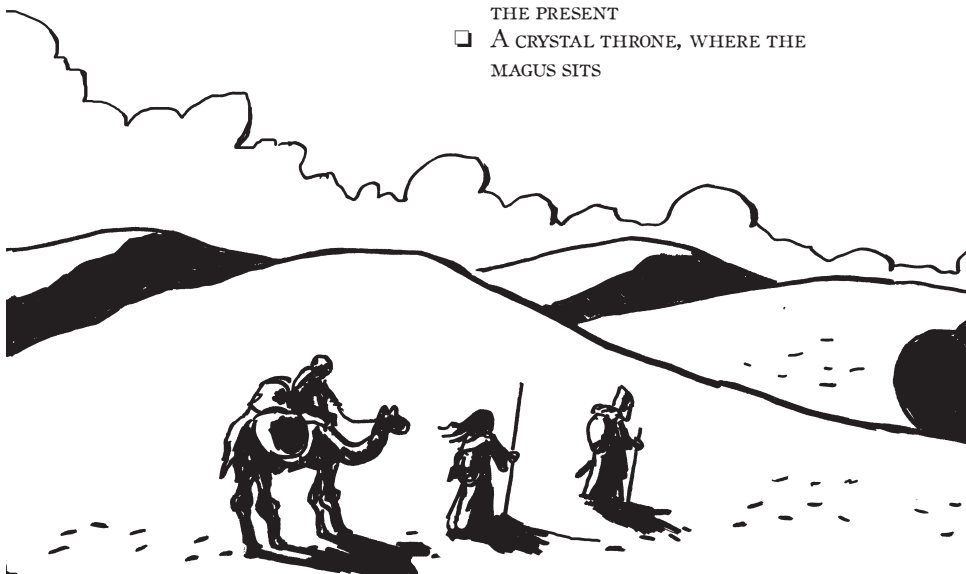
The Citadel has five *floors*: basement (-1), ground (0), first (+1), second (+2), and third (+3). When they come across a new common area, have them roll +floor:

2d6+floor COMMON AREA

- 1-3 NATURAL CAVERN
- 4-7 INTACT ROOM
- 8-10 SHATTERED ROOM
- 11-13 STUDY
- 14+ BALCONY

Unique Areas

- ☐ A KILN, WHERE GLASS AND MEN ARE FIRED
- ☐ A GREENHOUSE, ABUNDANT WITH LIFE
- ☐ A POOL, FROM WHICH TO SCRY THE PRESENT
- ☐ A CRYSTAL THRONE, WHERE THE MAGUS SITS



Common Areas

Add exits, stairs, ramps as you see fit.

NATURAL CAVERN

Rocky walls, floors of fine sand, piles of particularly fine sand piled up in places. It may be possible to dig through to the surface through some areas.

The Citadel's foundations, where the first sand was collected and forged. Fragments of THE MAGUS' past lie embedded in the living rock, open to interpretation.

INTACT ROOM

A chamber of yellow glass.

GM move

- * The walls, floor, and/or ceiling begins to crack, turning this place into a SHATTERED ROOM
-

SHATTERED ROOM

Time, entropy, or the rage of Magus has taken its toll on this chamber of cracked, fissured, and broken glass.

GM moves

- * The ceiling gives way, showering them with shards of glass
- * The floor collapses, forcing them to Defy Danger to grab a hold of something or survive the fall

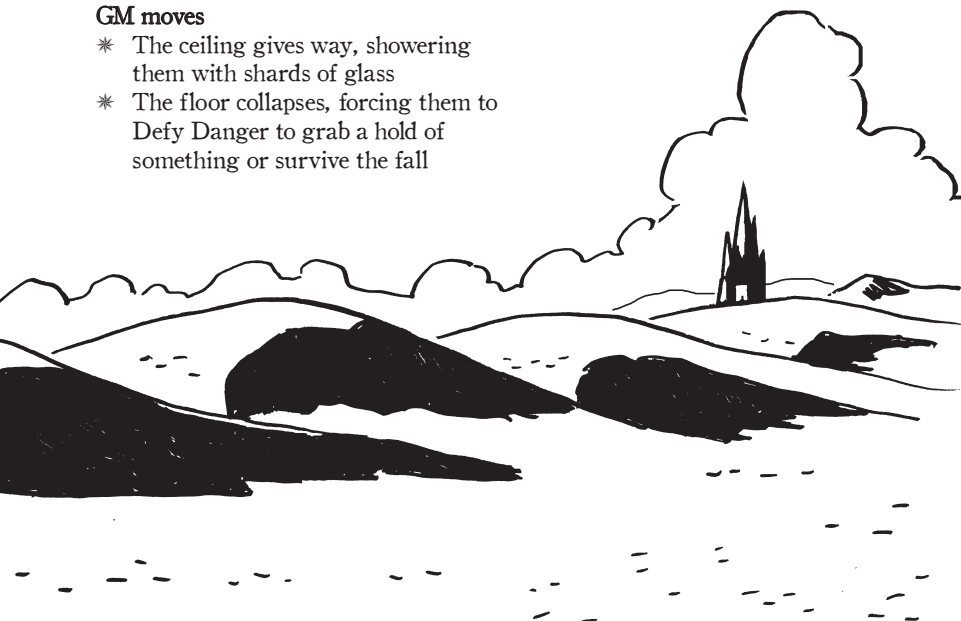
STUDY

A laboratory and/or library of THE MAGUS. It might not have been touched in decades, yet there is not a speck of dust anywhere to be found.

BALCONY

An exterior area, complete with airlock-like seal to stop dirt entering. Made by THE MAGUS in its weaker moments, wistfully thinking of home.

All balconies face towards Umberto, the city of silks and fortune. On a clear night, you can just about see it—a single twinkling light on the horizon.



Unique Areas

Add exits, stairs, ramps as you see fit.

❑ A KILN, WHERE GLASS AND MEN ARE FIRED

A room near the foundations where sand and devotee alike were reshaped.

The kiln still glows with magical heat; the air is scorching hot. The walls are lined with the skulls of former devotees, each sealed in a glass sphere.

PC moves

When you *break a glass sphere*, the skull explodes for 2d4 damage, and the soul contained within flees.

When you *are quick enough to ask a fleeing soul a question*, it may answer if it resents its death, but many of the fools believed their sacrifice to be right.

When you *quench the magical heat of the kiln*, the Citadel will become cold and brittle after sundown (every room becomes a SHATTERED ROOM).

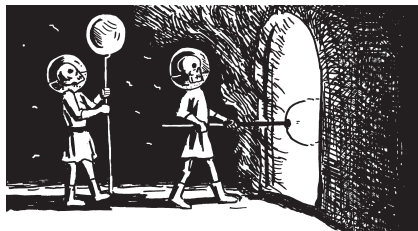
❑ A GREENHOUSE, ABUNDANT WITH LIFE

This area is precious to THE MAGUS; the presence of its minions is discouraged.

PC moves

When you *make a Discovery or Spout Lore*, you find an acolyte or disciple who turned against their master, and fled here to hide from the others.

When you *search for useful plants*, say what the plant needs to do (heal a wound, cure poison, serve as a reagent for a ritual, etc.) and roll+WIS: **on a 10+**, you find just what you need; **on a 7-9**, you find something interesting, but it's probably not useful right now; **on a 6-**, mark XP, and you find something you wish you hadn't.



❑ A POOL, FROM WHICH TO SCRY THE PRESENT

Crystal clear, encircled by a low wall of yellow glass.

PC move

When you *make a Discovery or Spout Lore*, you may find a means to communicate—with allies, enemies of their enemies, or forces beyond their control. On a miss with Spout Lore, one of the above (probably not the first one though!) may find a way to communicate with you.

❑ A CRYSTAL THRONE, WHERE THE MAGUS SITS

If it's time for the PCs to have a final encounter, THE MAGUS is sat here, cradling some creepy keepsake of its mortality like his mother's shawl or a miniature model of Umberto city.

If no fight is in the offing—perhaps you want to save THE MAGUS to haunt the PCs another day—the Magus is elsewhere, or absent from the Citadel altogether.

In any case, two ETCHED EPISTOLARIES stand dutifully on either side of the throne at all times.

PC move

When you *touch the crystal throne*, and THE MAGUS is not present, it knows you are here.

Dangers

ETCHED EPISTOLARY

Solitary, Organized, Construct, Intelligent, Magical

Damage 1d8 (*close*)

HP 10 **Armor** 1

Special Qualities Made of glass

The more intelligent acolytes rise up the ranks, etching sigils of power on their own increasingly-refined bodies. The highest deacons are crystalline entities of perfect form and function, save their slavish devotion to their MAGUS.

Instinct To follow master's teachings

- * Babble on about arcane theory
- * Hurl a glass projectile
- * Lead DEVOTEES by example
- * Summon a necrotic reflection of something (HP 3, Armor 0, damage 1d4, *close*)
- * Turn a limb or item to glass
- * Absorb or dissipate a blow

GLASS DEVOTEE

Group, Organized, Construct

Damage 1d8 (*close*)

HP 8 **Armor** 1

Special Qualities Made of glass

Found anywhere except the basement level. A bleached skull, encased in a glass globe filled with fused glass. What little self-awareness it retains remembers the last words THE MAGUS told it: "Through servitude to me, you will ascend to true awareness!"

Instinct To earn approval of THE MAGUS

- * Serve mutely
- * Bring an item of perceived importance
- * Bear witness to terrible acts
- * Shatter, sending sharp shards everywhere

THE MAGUS

Solitary, Organized, Intelligent, Magical

Damage 1d10+2 (*close, reach, messy, 3 piercing*)

HP 16 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Spellcaster

Describe the Magus however you see fit, given the image of it that forms in your head as the characters explore the Citadel.

Instinct To hoard magical treasures and suffer no trespassers

- * Know when something's been stolen
- * Fuse things together with a gesture
- * Cast a spell of sand or fire
- * Entrap them in a prison of glass
- * Summon a demonic reflection (HP 5, damage 1d6, *close, messy*)
- * Hesitate when reminded of home

SAND GOLEM

Group, Organized, Construct

Damage 1d8 (*close*)

HP 8 **Armor** 1

Special Qualities Made of sand

Found only on the basement level. A bleached skull, encased in a glass globe filled with sand.

Instinct To earn approval of THE MAGUS

- * Serve mutely
- * Bring an item of perceived importance
- * Bear witness to terrible acts



Brightrock Barrow

by Jeremy Strandberg · Illustrated by Jan Burger

Background

In ancient times, these woods were home to a mighty nation of elves. But there are no elves here now. Few signs of their civilization remain. The Brightrock Barrow is one, and a well-hidden one at that.

Near the end of the elven nation, a minor noblewoman named **CAHIRIN** rose to prominence as a warrior and a general. A scheming sorcerer named **MIHOVAL** seduced her and fed her pride and ambition. Under his influence, Cahirin called for the subjugation of the “crude” races and the extermination of those who resisted. The elven nobility opposed her. A terrible civil war began.

The Princess **ILINKA**, bearer of the **WHITE CROWN**, had once been Cahirin’s lover. Heartbroken and burning with hatred of Mihoval, she used the Crown to summon the demon **ANOK-HOB-SHARATH** from the Pits. She set it after Mihoval. Cahirin saved Mihoval and drove the demon off, but was mortally wounded in the process.

Cahirin’s forces were soon routed, killed, or captured and executed. War-mages tracked down Mihoval and reduced him to ash.

Knowing the burning will that drove Cahirin and the undying oaths of her followers, the elves built a barrow of brightrock. There they interred Cahirin, her followers, and the ashes of the treacherous Mihoval, binding their spirits to the place forever.

Princess Ilinka fell into despair. The demon was left unchecked and inflicted untold suffering on the survivors. Anok-

Hob-Sharath was eventually brought low by brute force, dragged screaming back to the Brightrock Barrow, and buried beneath tons of loose stone. For her complicity in the demon’s crimes, Ilinka was condemned to death and her body entombed, the White Crown still upon her brow.

The elves, broken and bloodied, set wards upon the Barrow to contain the spirits within and repel those who would set them free. And then they all left, save for a small band charged with eternal watchfulness, and a single weeping elf-maid—one of Mihoval’s long-suffering mistresses—singing heartbreaking dirges in memory of her undeserving lover.

Rumors

- * *Old Luci says she stumbled on an ancient barrow mound in the woods. ‘Course, old Luci ain’t never been right in the head...*
- * *I was camping out in the woods, near where Luci said she saw that barrow. And I swear, that night I heard the most heartbreakingly beautiful singing.*
- * *The White Crown was last known to be in these lands. Perhaps it’s in that barrow?*
- * *The elves left these woods long ago, but there’s at least one still wandering about. Bohzidar, they call him. Maybe he knows more?*
- * *The elves left after a great war. There was tell of a mighty warrior whose name is now forgotten. Perhaps the tomb is theirs?*

Getting there

The Brightrock Barrow is protected by powerful enchantments and glammers. No one can find it without an elven guide or some other means of overcoming the old elven magic.

The characters might find Brightrock Barrow by...

- ❑ ... accident, while hallucinating on certain mushrooms.
- ❑ ... hiring Luci to guide them there, and doing whatever nonsense she says.
- ❑ ... following the song of ROSALIJA, heard under a high moon.
- ❑ ... working some sort of divination or counterspell of their own.
- ❑ ... following a path passed down to them from their ancestors/mentor.
- ❑ ... meeting BOZHIDAR the antiquarian, and agreeing to help him find the Barrow.



BOZHIDAR

ELVISH ANTIQUARIAN

History-wise, Athletic, Cunning, Devious, Guide (these woods), Self-Sufficient, Stealthy

Quality +2 Loyalty +1

Cost Knowledge

Traits Sharp-eyed, patient, has seen it all

HP 9 Armor 2 Damage 1d8 Load 2

Special Qualities None

A scholar, explorer, and collector of ancient artifacts. He's been assembling clues as the location of the Brightrock Barrow and is extremely interested in any adventurers who seek it out (or who can be convinced to do so).

Instinct To restore CAHIRIN to glory

- * Speak intimately of the past
- * Dismiss concerns
- * Evade a confrontation
- * Plan a trap or ambush

GM note: If elves are ageless in your game, then Bohzidar is one of the last surviving followers of CAHIRIN. If elves grow old and die, he is the reincarnation of one of CAHIRIN's devoted followers who vowed deathless loyalty. He hunted down and murdered the elves charged with protecting the Brightrock Barrow (possibly in a past life). The other elves who survived the civil war left these woods long ago and have tried to forget those horrid times.

Bozhidar wants nothing more than to release CAHIRIN and see her restored to glory (either reincarnated or in her undead form). He cannot cross the threshold—warded as it is specifically against disciples of CAHIRIN—but is able to guide the characters to and encourage them to destroy the warding runes.

If he gets inside the Barrow, his first priority is to find CAHIRIN's Tomb and release her. He'll gladly mislead or even betray the characters in order to achieve this goal.

The Barrow

ELVEN TOMB

Size Medium

BARROW ENTRANCE

Impressions

- * The echo of a haunting song
 - * A wide clearing, deep in the old-growth forest
 - * Pale stones stacked into a low hill, the size of a longhouse
 - * A ring of menhirs at clearing's edge
 - * Faded elf-runes on the menhirs
 - * Tufts of sickly weeds sprouting from between the barrow-mound's stones
 - * Eerie stillness; even the wind avoids the clearing
 - * A dug-out entrance to the barrow, hard to look upon
 - * A stone passage curving inward
 - * Runes etched into threshold stones
-

Lore

- * The white stones have many names: brightrock, ghost marble, deadstone
 - * Brightrock is impervious to spirits and magical senses alike
 - * Brightrock may be marked by magic, but not shaped by it
 - * The menhir runes are spells of confusion and non-detection
 - * They also are enchanted to compel trespassers to defend the Barrow
 - * The runes on the threshold ward against trespassers—but they're also keeping something in
-

Discoveries

- * Signs of another expedition from long, long ago
 - * BOZHIDAR reveals himself to the party and attempts to join them
 - * BOZHIDAR (if he's already with the party) does something that hints at his true intentions
 - * ROSALIJA'S GHOST emerges from the Barrow to sing dirges to the moon
-

PC Moves

When you *study the runes on the menhirs*, roll +WIS: **on a 10+**, your vision blurs for a moment, but you can then read the runes just fine; **on a 7-9**, you forget what you're doing and wander off for a few minutes; **on a 6-**, mark XP, and either take the *confused* debility or attack one of your allies (your choice).

When you *study the runes on the threshold*, your vision blurs and your head pounds. If you force yourself to focus on them, take 1d6 damage (ignoring armor) and see them with perfect clarity.

When you *approach the threshold with the intent to cross it*, you are filled with otherworldly dread. If you persist, roll +CON: **on a 10+**, describe a deep fear from your past and how you conquered that fear, then cross the threshold; **on a 7-9**, describe the unconquered fear that still lurks in your soul, then cross the threshold; **on a 6-**, mark XP, describe an unconquered fear, and if you cross the threshold take either the *shaken* or *confused* debility (your choice).

GM moves

When they *cross the threshold*, the party finds itself in a CURVING PASSAGE. This particular passageway leads to the NEXUS. From there, use the Connections entry for each location to see what comes next.

The entire Barrow is suffused with spells of misdirection. When they *mar a surface or leave some other sign of their passing*, it is subject to illusory erasure as soon as no one is looking at it.

GM note

Common areas, unique areas, Discoveries, and Dangers are listed in alphabetical order on the following pages.

Common Areas

BURIAL VAULT

Impressions

- * A chamber, walls of brightrock
- * 1d12 grave-niches
- * Well-preserved corpses of elven warriors, coated with white dust
- * Glint of gold, elf-gem, or mithril

Connections

- * The way they came
- * 1d4-1 doorways, leading into darkness (roll 1d6):

1d6 Room

- 1-2 CURVING PASSAGE
- 3-4 CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger)
- 5 CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Discovery)
- 6 CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger, +1 Discovery)

Lore

- * The warrior's livery is unknown among modern elves—these must have been the last of their army
- * Some corpses bear signs of precise, surgical wounds, while others bear signs of brutal, horrific violence
- * These bodies were clearly placed here with respect, but elves would inter even traitors in such a fashion
- * By being buried in brightrock, these elves have been denied the afterlife and any chance of reincarnation; their spirits are likely still here, bound to these corpses

PC moves

When you *disturb the corpse of an elven warrior*, it will rise as an ELF-WIGHT.

When you *attempt to remove a grave-good from the corpse of an elven warrior without disturbing the corpse*, roll +DEX: on a 10+, you get it, and the dead do not stir; on a 7-9, you get it or you avoid disturbing the corpse, your choice.

CURVING PASSAGE

Impressions

- * A narrow, curving hall, stretching out of sight
- * Walls, floor, and ceiling of crudely chiseled brightstone blocks
- * A low, arched ceiling
- * A gentle slope
- * A sense of stillness, loneliness, being cut off from the beating, breathing world outside

Connections

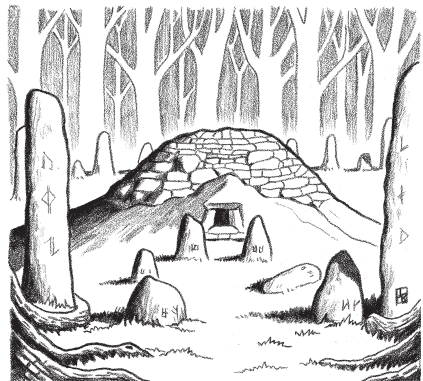
- * The way they came
- * The other way (roll 1d12):

1d12 Room

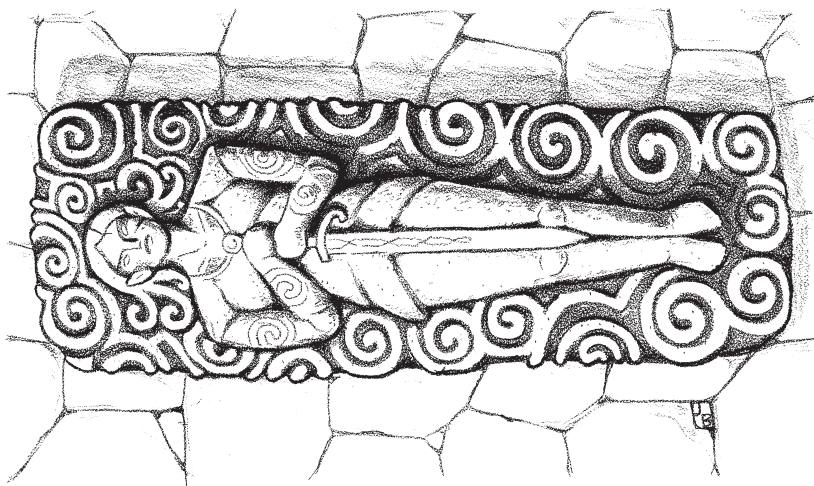
- 1-2 CURVING PASSAGE
- 3-4 CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger)
- 5 CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Discovery)
- 6 CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger, +1 Discovery)
- 7 BURIAL VAULT
- 8 BURIAL VAULT (+1 Danger)
- 9 BURIAL VAULT (+1 Discovery)
- 10 Unique area (choose one)
- 11 Unique area (choose one; +1 Danger)
- 12 Unique area (choose one; +1 Discovery)

Discovery

- * ROSALIJA'S REMAINS



Unique Areas



☐ CAHIRIN'S TOMB

Impressions

- * A large, square, high-ceilinged room
- * A tattered, blood-stained standard hanging on the far wall
- * A massive sarcophagus of elaborately carved brightrock
- * The lid of the sarcophagus, cut in the image of a female elf warrior, resplendent in her arms and armor
- * An inscription in ancient Elvish: *Herein lies one whom the world must forget and whose deeds must never be forgotten*

Connections

- * The way they came

Lore

- * Detailed embroidery along the edge of the standard records dozens of battles won by CAHIRIN, but the device at its center is unknown today
- * The sword carved into on the lid of the sarcophagus resembles one of the fabled Shining Blades, the work of the smith Jadranko, sought after by warrior and collector alike

- * Faint runes of protection rim the edge of the sarcophagus lid—symbols of pain and weakness.

PC moves

When you *damage or otherwise mar the sarcophagus*, take 2d6 damage (ignores armor) and the *weakened* debility. If you are already *weakened*, take another debility of your choice.

When you *attempt to lift the lid of the sarcophagus*, take 1d6 damage (ignoring armor) as you are wracked with pain. If you persist, roll +STR: **on a 10+**, gain 1 progress, and if you have 3 or more progress, lift the the lid clear of the sarcophagus; **on a 7-9**, as above, but 1d6 damage (ignoring armor).

When you *lift the lid clear of the sarcophagus*, CAHIRIN awakens.

Discoveries

- * SVIJECIO, THE SHINING BLADE
- * CAHIRIN'S MITHRIL PLATE ARMOR
- * CAHIRIN'S STANDARD

Dangers

- * CAHIRIN

❑ ILINKA'S TOMB

Impressions

- * A short but wide chamber
 - * A sarcophagus against the far wall, lid flipped open
 - * Tapestries depicting an elf princess wearing the WHITE CROWN
 - * The corpses of two dead adventurers, smashed as if by a giant hammer
-

Connections

- * The way they came
-

Lore

- * The WHITE CROWN was a terrible weapon, said to focus emotions into raw force
 - * It was last borne by the elf princess Ilinka; perhaps this is her tomb
-

❑ INTERSECTION

Two passageways cross, with an utter lack of footprints (even from the way they just came).

Connections

- * The way they came
- * Three other ways (roll 1d10 for each):

1d10 Room

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | CURVING PASSAGE |
| 3-4 | CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger) |
| 5 | CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Discovery) |
| 6 | CURVING PASSAGE
(+1 Danger, +1 Discovery) |
| 7 | BURIAL VAULT |
| 8 | BURIAL VAULT (+1 Danger) |
| 9 | BURIAL VAULT (+1 Discovery) |
| 10 | Unique area (choose one) |
-

GM Moves

When they *stop at the intersection and consider which way to go*, ask them to roll 1d4: **on a 1**, they go the way they intended; **otherwise**, they go a random direction.

❑ MIHOVAL'S COLUMBARIUM

In a CURVING PASSAGE or BURIAL VAULT, one wall is illusory, concealing a closet-like niche. On the far wall is a slab of brightrock, polished to a mirror sheen.

The brightrock mirror conceals an even smaller niche, which in turn holds an urn of white clay, sealed with wax. Within are the ashes—and spirit—of the sorcerer MIHOVAL.

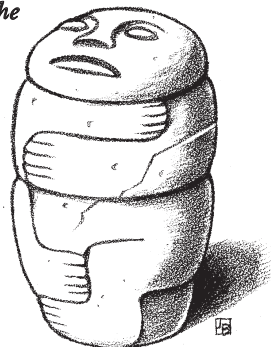
The urn is enchanted to contain psychic energy, but does not inhibit it completely; MIHOVAL'S SPIRIT may bring its attention and powers to bear upon anyone who touches the vessel.

PC Moves

When you *see your reflection in the brightrock mirror*, however dim, roll +WIS: **on a 10+**, you feel a little disoriented but quickly shake it off; **on a 7-9**, something slips from your mind—choose 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, mark XP, and all 3 from the list apply.

- ❑ You lose a vital memory (ask the GM to choose one; the GM may reveal their choice now, later, or never)
- ❑ You become disoriented and *confused* until you next breathe fresh air outside the Barrow
- ❑ You stumble back out of the chamber, forget it exists, and become unable to perceive it, no matter how hard anyone tries to convince you of its existence

When you *break the urn or its waxen seal*, MIHOVAL'S SPIRIT escapes into the Barrow (but remains unable to cross the threshold at the BARROW ENTRANCE if the warding runes are intact).





❑ NEXUS

Impressions

- * Wide, domed room, ten paces across
- * Curved wall lined with large, perfectly-cut, identical slabs of polished brightrock
- * A sensation of vertigo, like when you spin 'round and 'round and suddenly stop
- * Which way did you come from again?

Connections

- * The CURVING PASSAGE back to the BARROW ENTRANCE
- * Five other dark doorways, each opening into a different CURVING PASSAGE

PC move

When you *look closely at the polished slabs of brightrock*, roll +INT: on a 10+, you experience a vision, an important memory of another who once looked on this same piece of wall; on a 7-9, as above, and you're also subject to strange, disorienting flashbacks until you make camp outside; on a 6-, mark XP, and plunge into a full-sensory hallucination of an ancient elven war.

GM move

When they *attempt to leave the Nexus without a guide or protection from mind-altering magic*, ask them to roll 1d12: on a 1-5, they take a random CURVING PASSAGE further into the Barrow; on a 6-12, they take the CURVING PASSAGE that leads back to the BARROW ENTRANCE.

❑ PIT OF THE DEMON

Impressions

- * Low, domed ceiling held up by ancient timbers
- * A "floor" of brightrock stones, piled as if filling a pit
- * Foggy breath, bitter cold, hoarfrost
- * Faint cries of a child, calling for help

Connections

- * The way they came
- * 1d4 exits, each a CURVING PASSAGE

Lore

- * Bone-chilling cold is a sign of a supernatural presence—like a demon
- * The wards on the threshold of the BARROW ENTRANCE are powerless against demons
- * Some demons must possess a body to enter this world, gaining great resilience but consuming souls to heal

Dangers

- * ANOK-HOB-SHARATH

❑ SPIRAL STAIR

A narrow stairway built of bright-stone, twisting downwards into inky blackness.

Connections

- * The way they came
- * 1d4 openings onto lower levels (roll 1d10 for each as it is explored):

1d10 Room

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | CURVING PASSAGE |
| 3-4 | CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger) |
| 5 | CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Discovery) |
| 6 | CURVING PASSAGE (+1 Danger, +1 Discovery) |
| 7 | BURIAL VAULT |
| 8 | BURIAL VAULT (+1 Danger) |
| 9 | BURIAL VAULT (+1 Discovery) |
| 10 | Unique area (choose one) |

PC Moves

When you *descend the Spiral Stair*, the air becomes noticeably colder.

Discoveries

Each Discovery listed here can be found in a specific common or unique area, as noted in that area's entry. When in need of additional Discoveries, invent them or roll them up using the tables in *The Perilous Wilds*.

CAHIRIN'S MITHRIL PLATE ARMOR

worn, 3 armor, 2 weight

When you *attempt to don Cahirin's armor and are not an elf*, it doesn't fit.

CAHIRIN'S STANDARD

2 weight

Worth 2000 coins to the right buyer.

ROSALIJA'S REMAINS

Rosalija's remains lie in a CURVING PASSAGE, where she collapsed from thirst long ago. Once-fine elven robes shroud her skeleton; a few pieces of ancient elven jewelry lie amongst the bones.

When you *cast Speak With Dead on Rosalija's remains*, her ghost will return to the site of her death and suffer the communications of the living.

When you *bury or cremate Rosalija's remains outside of the Barrow*, her ghost will likewise be called to the place, and grudgingly pass on to the afterlife.

SVIJECIO, THE SHINING BLADE

close, messy, +1 damage, 3 piercing, 1 weight



THE WHITE CROWN

worn, 1 weight

Of a pale white metal, unknown even to dwarves. A thing from Elsewhere, foisted upon the natural world. The elves entrusted it to a wielder of great wisdom and patience, thinking to use its powers for good. They thought wrong.

When you *don the White Crown*, describe the most intense experience of your life, answer any questions the GM has about it, and hold 1 *power*.

When you *channel your emotions into raw kinetic force*, roll +power: **on a 10+**, choose 2 from the list below, or spend 1 power to choose 3; **on a 7-9**, Choose 1 from the list, or spend 1 power to choose 2; **on a 6-**, mark XP, lose 1 power, and the GM makes a move.

- * The effect is potent (+forceful, +messy)
- * The effect is far-reaching (+far)
- * You can affect multiple targets or a small area
- * You can sustain the effect with little effort
- * You wield the force with great precision

By default, you can affect a single target within *near* range. If used to inflict direct harm, the force of the Crown deals 1d10 damage (ignoring armor).

When you *experience an overwhelming sensation or emotion and indulge it wholly—consequences be damned*, gain 1 power (max 3) and the GM makes a hard move. If you already have 3 power, you may instead reach through time and space for something to satiate the raw need of your emotions. If you do, ask the GM what it is that you pull into your reality.

Dangers

Each Danger listed here can be found in a specific common or unique area, as noted in that area's entry. When in need of additional Dangers, invent them or roll them up using the tables in *The Perilous Wilds*.

ANOK-HOB-SHARATH

Solitary, Small, Intelligent, Devious, Stealthy, Divine, Magical, Planar

Damage Spindly fingers and sharpened teeth b[2d12]+2 (*hand, forceful, messy, 3 piercing*)

HP 20 Armor 4

Special Qualities Climbs like a spider, unnatural resilience

A powerful and ancient demon of endless hate and fury, summoned and bound into the tattered body of some poor elf boy. Hungry and hating, waiting to be set free.

Instinct To kill, destroy, devour

- * Pretend to be helpless
- * Act with surprising patience and subtlety
- * Leap into the fray with impossible speed and fury
- * Gleefully devour a soul

CAHIRIN

Solitary, Organized, Intelligent, Cautious, Terrifying

Damage SVIJEĆIO THE SHINING BLADE b[2d12]+1 (*close, messy, 4 piercing*)

HP 20 Armor 5

Special Qualities Undead, aura of cold dread

Centuries of lying bound in a tomb would have broken a lesser mind, but Cahirin's fearsome will has only honed her sense of purpose. There is no doubt left in her; the lesser races must be conquered, for their own good.

Instinct To prove her superiority

- * Fight with perfect grace
- * Counter all but the most inspired attacks
- * Call ELF-WIGHTS to service

MIHOVAL'S SPIRIT

Solitary, Intelligent, Devious, Stealthy, Divine, Magical, Cautious, Hoarder

Damage Word of pain 1d8 (*near, ignores armor*)

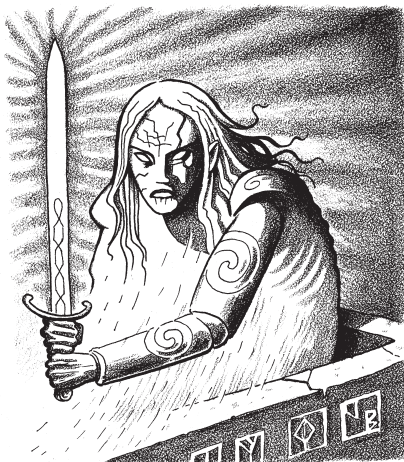
HP 16 Armor 5

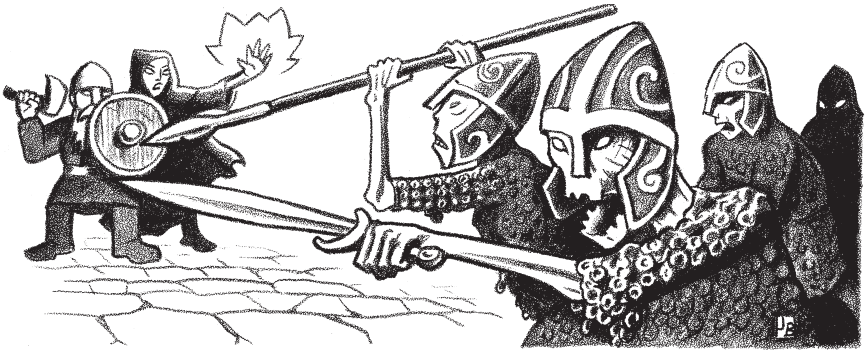
Special Qualities Undead, insubstantial

In life, Mihoval was a sorcerer skilled in using honeyed words to get his way; when words did not suffice, he would twist minds to his desired end by infernal means. Mihoval wooed CAHIRIN away from ILINKA out of petty vindictiveness, then stoked her ego and fed her ambitions, plunging the elves into war. In death, he remains a spiteful, egocentric ass.

Instinct To escape the Barrow, thence to escape his fate

- * Sense their passions, fears, and insecurities
- * Tell someone exactly what they want to hear
- * Inflame or subdue emotions
- * Wrack them with crippling pain





ROSALIJA'S GHOST

Solitary, Intelligent

Damage Soul-numbing touch w[2d8]
(*hand*, ignores armor)

HP 16 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Undead, insubstantial

Mihoval's mistress, desperately in love with him despite his selfishness and cruelty. She refused to leave the Barrow and wasted away, singing beautiful dirges to her lost love unto her final breath. Her ghost sometimes wanders out of the Barrow to sing lamentations to the moon.

Rosalija once found MIHOVAL's COLUMBARIUM, but her knowledge of its existence was wiped clear as soon as she looked into the brightrock mirror.

Instinct To be reunited with MIHOVAL

- * Sing a dirge of haunting beauty
- * Speak highly of MIHOVAL
- * Blithely ignore a flaw or fault

When you *first listen to the dirge of Rosalija*, say what loss has left an emptiness in your soul or what you now most fear to lose, and roll +WIS: on a 10+, you shake yourself free of your melancholy after a few moments; on a 7-9, you're overwhelmed with sadness until you suffer injury or your allies shake you free; on a 6-, mark XP, and you're overwhelmed with sadness as above, but take -1 ongoing until you do something desperately reckless, hedonistic, or charitable.

ELF-WIGHT

Group, Organized, Intelligent

Damage Sword or spear b[2d8] (*close or reach*, 1 piercing)

HP 14 **Armor** 3

Special Qualities Undead

Soldiers in CAHIRIN's army, sworn to undying loyalty and ready to rise without hesitation to her aid.

Instinct To see enemies everywhere

- * Attack with speed and precision
- * Ignore a piercing blow
- * Call fellow soldiers to the fray

LINKA

Solitary, Intelligent, Stealthy, Magical, Terrifying

Damage Telekinesis 1d10+2 (*near, forceful, messy*, 1 piercing)

HP 16 **Armor** 5

Special Qualities Undead, flight, aura of raw emotions and roiling telekinetic force

Released from her sarcophagus by fool adventurers, she now haunts the halls in a whorl of emotion flitting constantly between grief, rage, self-loathing, and despair. The WHITE CROWN upon her brow converts this turmoil into pure force, but the brightrock reflects it back, transforming her into a silent storm of pain and power.

Instinct To act erratically

- * Float silently though the dark
- * Overwhelm them with emotion
- * Fling things about

Those Who Make Vows

by Johnstone Metzger • Illustrated by Carl Antonowicz

"Kestral sat down on the bench, no problem. It was just a bench, plain wood. Thiago, like a reckless maniac, kicked the grandfather clock over onto the floor of the cave. It was just a normal clock, but we were all pissed he made so much noise.

"Not that it mattered much. Right after that, Peiter opened up the desk drawer and found some gold coins inside. When he reached in and touched them, the desk ate his hand and he wouldn't stop screaming 'til Kestral shanked him good.

"Take it from me, kid: Never. Touch. Anything."

Background

From a distant star, they travelled across the Elemental Plane of Hunger to reach our world. Brilliant sorcerers on their home planet, these fungoid insects found their power greatly diminished here, their connection to the Goddess of Promises debased and tainted.

At home, they would vow devotion to her and receive her blessings in the form of a magical body, superimposed over their own. But here, in this world, they find that body toxic. It is the source of a slow death. They must purge their second self of the vows that connect it to the goddess by consuming the flesh of thinking creatures. But without these vows, the magic also fades, and not slowly enough. On a regular basis, the Promisers must renew their vows, regain their magic, and devour yet more.

On this world, they are parasitic creatures, living inside the bodies of other animals, or building a shell around themselves that can mimic inanimate objects. Though they grow all throughout their long lives, most are about the size of a cat or a small dog, so they like to use hulled human bodies as hosts, devouring the brain and occupying the skull, from whence they control the still-living body. Inside smaller creatures, they remove other internal organs. Or all of them, if required.

Because of the goddess' blessings, Promisers can also disguise themselves as inanimate objects, such as furniture or treasure, but they cannot hold such forms for more than an hour, and even that is an effort. They use these forms exclusively to ambush living creatures.



Overview

PROMISER OUTPOST

Size Small

Themes

Alien religion ○○○

Parasitic invaders ○○○○

Foundation & entrance

Choose or roll:

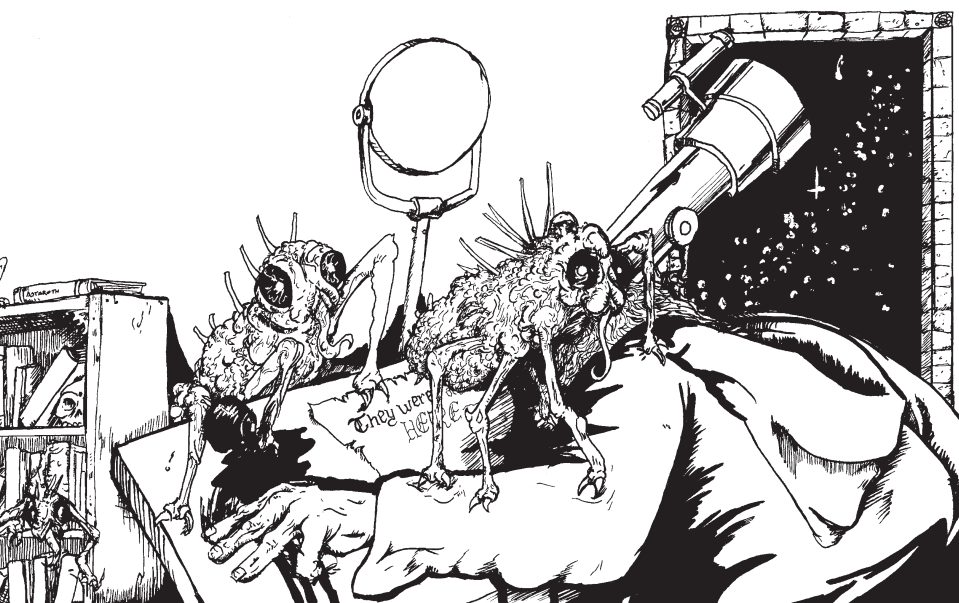
1d4	FOUNDATION	ENTRANCE
1	cave complex	coastal cave at base of cliff
2	city sewers	spiral staircase behind rusted iron gate
3	petrified forest	clearing where living forest ends
4	ruined castle	crumbling gate house over a dried-up moat

Common Areas

1d12	COMMON AREA
1-2	DUMPING GROUND
3-5	HOUSE ROOM
6-8	KITCHEN
9-10	PRISON CELL
11-12	STORE ROOM

Unique Areas

- ☐ CHURCHYARD
- ☐ CONSERVATORY
- ☐ DINING HALL
- ☐ THE IDOL
- ☐ MUSEUM



The Rooms that Devour

"He said he was a dungeon robber, like us, just here looking to make some fast money. He'd already checked out the caves ahead, showed us some gilded superware he found, offered to split the loot if we teamed up. Said he knew the fence Argomil, so we believed him.

"Of course he stabbed Thiago in the back before we got even a hundred yards. He tried to stab Kestral too, but she threw him to the ground and cracked his skull open. There weren't no brains inside, just this hideous bug that scurried out. I threw a torch down between us and whatever that thing was, pulled Kestral behind me, and we ran for it.

"Take it from me, kid: Never. Trust. Anyone."

These areas are ordered alphabetically, with suggested themes in parentheses.



CHURCHYARD

Unique Area (alien religion)

Storage for religious paraphernalia, items necessary for worshipping the Goddess of Promises.

This area holds 1d4+1 magical items. Each possesses different properties, rolled on the following tables, in order:

1d8 THIS ITEM...

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | ...allows for communication with or understanding of... |
| 2-3 | ...attracts or detects... |
| 4 | ...creates or summons... |
| 5-6 | ...protects against... |
| 7 | ...repels to whence it came... |
| 8 | ...turns the bearer into... |

1d6

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | ...chromatic arcenergy, ... |
| 2 | ...disease vectors, ... |
| 3 | ...extraplanar spirits, ... |
| 4 | ...freezing cold, ... |
| 5 | ...magical items, ... |
| 6 | ...predatory animals, ... |

1d10 ...AND THE BEARER...

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1-2 | ...has complete control over the effect, ... |
| 3-5 | ...has limited control over the effect, ... |
| 6-7 | ...has no control over the effect, ... |
| 8-10 | ...can only turn on and off the effect, ... |

1d12 ...WHICH...

- | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | ...requires a random roll to use. |
| 2-3 | ...requires a skill roll to use. |
| 4 | ...can be used 1d12 times ever. |
| 5-8 | ...can be used once per day. |
| 9-10 | ...can be used twice per day. |
| 10 | ...can be used thrice per day. |
| 11-12 | ...can be used indefinitely. |

If there is a Danger here, it is a powerful Promiser.

If there is a Discovery here, it reveals how these items work.

CONSERVATORY

Unique Area (parasitic invaders)

Numerous musical instruments.

This is where the Promisers hollow out living beings in order to occupy their bodies. Unearthly music is played during the operation. Maybe it drowns out the screams. Or not.

If there is a Danger here, it is a hulling in process.

If there is a Discovery here, it is sheet music with magical properties.

DUMPING GROUND

Common Area

Full of dead people, bones, and garbage.

The Promisers and their human cultists dump trash here. Once a dumping ground is full, it gets covered in limestone rubble and dirt.

If there is a Danger here, it can be an ambush, illness, or a monstrous scavenger.

If there is a Discovery here, it belongs to a dead person.

DINING HALL

Unique Area (parasitic invaders)

The largest area, a huge hall full of tables and benches.

The Promisers and their human cultists eat here, as a group. Members of this community may eat whenever they like, but they are not allowed to eat alone.

Cultists engage in cannibalism because the Promisers see nothing wrong with it.

If there is a Danger here, the hall is full.

If there is a Discovery here, it is a conspiracy of cultists who are still part of human society.

HOUSE ROOM

Common Area (parasitic invaders)

Small room with normal household furniture.

The Promisers leave furniture in these rooms so they can ambush people in them.

If there is a Danger here, it is a Promiser in disguise, waiting in ambush.

If there is a Discovery here, it is something valuable amongst the furniture.

THE IDOL

Unique Area (parasitic invaders)

The idol is a window to the Goddess of Promises herself. This area is meticulously clean and contains only the idol.

When you *make a vow before the Idol*, she births a magical body in your image and superimposes it upon your physical form. This body is toxic to life on this plane. On the Promisers' blasted, dead planet, it would not be, but that world no longer supports life, so it doesn't matter. Each week you have a magical body superimposed over your physical body, your Maximum HP is reduced by 1d8. You cannot regain your original Maximum HP until you are purged.

When you *possess a magical body*, the following things are true:

- * You may disguise yourself as an inanimate object for no more than an hour
- * You must abide by whatever vows made to the Goddess of Promises
- * You receive sustenance from any living creature you devour
- * Your senses have a chance to detect arcane energies (illusions, spells, spirits, etc.)
- * The GM may grant other powers as necessary (possibly using the magic item procedure described in the CHURCHYARD entry)

When you *possess a magical body and eat the flesh of a thinking creature*, roll 2d6...

...+1 if the creature is human-sized or larger,

...+1 if the creature is of human intelligence or smarter,

...and +1 if you devour multiple creatures in one sitting:

on a 10+, you are purged of the body and your powers last for another month; on a 7-9, you are purged and your powers last for another week; on a 6-, you are purged but the magic body is destroyed.

KITCHEN

Common area

A tiny room with food and a fire.

The Promisers have always cooked in numerous small areas, even though they eat in groups. They refuse to change this habit. There is probably human flesh here.

If there is a Danger here, the kitchen is in use.

If there is a Discovery here, it belongs to the cook.

MUSEUM

Unique Area

The Promisers create art that reminds them of their home.

If there is a Danger here, the Promisers are hard at work.

If there is a Discovery here, it comes in the form of alien art.



PRISON CELL

Common Area

Prisoners or evidence of prisoners.

The Promisers have many reasons to take prisoners—to hulk them, ransom them for money, or torture them for information. There are 1d6-3 prisoners here (but not less than none).

If there is a Danger here, Promisers or their cultists are using this room.

If there is a Discovery here, a prisoner (alive or dead) has valuable connections, information, or items.

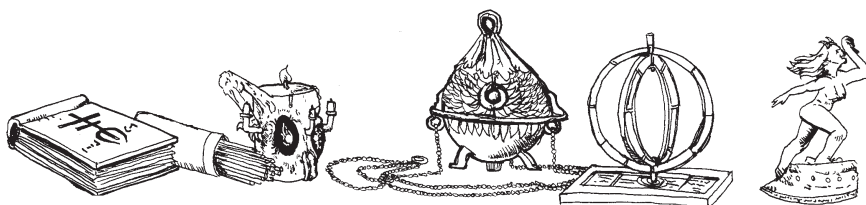
STORE ROOM

Common Area

The Promisers are unsure what is useful on this world and what is not, so they hoard everything.

If there is a Danger here, the items are trapped or being rearranged.

If there is a Discovery here, the stores are not just useless trinkets.



The Cult of Promises

"We were almost out when we ran into a whole mob of those guys in the black robes. Nearly jumped out of my skin, I did. Then Kestral pushed me into them and we went down in a heap of tangled limbs, kicking and shouting. I got a few good licks in—you see the black eyes and split lips on those guys?—but she didn't give me no help at all. She just ran for it, threw me away to get out alive.

"That's why I'm here with you, kid. They caught me, trussed me up like a pig, they did. I've never been so humiliated in all my life. Don't bother trying to slip your hands out of the manacles, you'll just cut up your wrists like I did. See? Now they're all infected.

"You hear that? They're coming back. Probably going to take me away like they did the last guy, and you'll be all alone here. I won't come back, none of the others did. If you ever do make it out of this alive, kid, take it from me: Never. Go. Anywhere."

Rank 1: Initiates

The lowest ranks of the cult of the Goddess of Promises are staffed by humans. Alienated from society, they come seeking divine revelation, and the cult promises to fill them up with the spirit of the Goddess. They live in hope that one day they will advance to the ranks of the Possessed, who live with the Goddess inside them.

The Initiates do all the manual labour the cult needs, and the Possessed lead them into battle against those who blaspheme the Goddess. Being fanatics, they are not afraid to kill their enemies, but prefer to bring them to the Overlords alive, so their bodies can be put to good use by the cult.

Rank 2: Possessed

The most common leadership positions in the cult are held by people who have been possessed by the spirit of the Goddess of Promises. They have made their vows and had the emptiness in their souls filled up with divine love.

What the Initiates do not know is that each of the Possessed has actually been hulled and occupied by a Promiser. Because the Promiser devoured the human's brain, it has enough knowledge of the person to act like them. The Initiates are too blinded by faith and hope to see through this charade.

Rank 3: Overlords

The top dogs in the cult are Promisers who have revealed their true forms to the human cultists. They command the loyalty of the other Promisers as well, and orchestrate the doings of the cult from on high, communicating their intentions to the Initiates through the mouths of the Possessed.

They prefer to occupy the bodies of the cult's enemies, captured specifically for this purpose. They never act like the people whose bodies they possess, always behaving like themselves, so as not to give away the truth of the Possessed.

The other Promisers, who have not obtained human bodies and have not become Overlords, must make do with the bodies of animals or no bodies at all. Their main purpose is to serve as traps, luring unwary humans into letting their guards down, so they can be killed or captured. Disguised as a wounded dog, perhaps, or a chest full of gold and jewels—whatever it takes to lure the humans in, so they can be devoured, and new vows can be made to the Goddess of Promises.

The Pit of Vanzwink

by Jason Lutes • Illustrated by Jan Burger

Introduction

The giant sorcerer **VANZWINK** came to the Wounded Wood 150 years ago in search of **MAGNITE**, a rare ore with both magical and magnetic properties. By dire means, he enslaved a diminutive race of forest-dwellers called **LURKERS**, putting hundreds of them to work excavating the chosen site.

A lurker “singer” called **DIVINCA VAYA** taught her people to sing praises disguised as work songs to their god, **REKKALA**. After many years, the Crane God heard their prayers and swept out of the south to attack the **OVERSEERS**, constructs created by Vanzwink to keep the lurkers in line.

Sensing the end, Vanzwink secreted his spirit in the **BOX OF BOFURUS** and holed up in his **SANCTUM**, but the lurkers tunneled their way in. Overwhelmed by the vengeful horde, the giant laid his **RAGING BLIGHT** upon them, and seized **DIVINCA VAYA** in one enormous fist. His final act was to crush her and curse her spirit to wander the earth until her remains could be buried in the lurker home city of Nagaram, which lies elsewhere in the Wounded Wood.

The surviving lurkers were stricken by the **RAGING BLIGHT**, and brought down one by one, even as they attempted to make their escape. The few who had remained outside and not joined in the attack on their oppressor fled the area, but upon returning to Nagaram found it overtaken by the Wolfkin, a barbaric human tribe. Homeless and diminished, they turned south, in search of the fabled land of the Crane, never to be seen in this part of the world again.

The Pit

The mouth of the deep mine from which enslaved lurkers extracted magnite is about 200 feet across, and descends into an apparently bottomless blackness. This gaping maw is surrounded by a high berm of rock and earth—the stuff removed during the excavation of the Pit—which has been completely overgrown and would seem a natural part of the surrounding woods if it did not describe a near-perfect circle.

STONE HEAD

On the east side of the Pit, set back from its lip, is a great stone head carved in the image of Vanzwink, now toppled and broken. Distinguished by a beard, bald pate, and the Sigil of Strange Stars cut into its forehead, this bust is one among several remaining signs of the giant’s vanity. The large fragments of the face are stained with guano from a species of gray dove which nests in large cracks in the rock.



MAIN ENTRANCE

Opposite the stone head, set within the **PIT MOUTH** and 40’ below its lip, is a stone platform accessible from the forest



floor by two wide sets of stairs, one at each end. In the middle of this platform, set into the wall of the Pit, is a set of double doors about 20' tall, made of petrified timber and bound in iron. An iron boss in the center (10' up) bears the mark of Vanzwink ("V"). The doors are magically locked, but open automatically for the bearer of VANZWINK'S SIGNET; other attempts to breach them will prove nigh impossible. These doors grant access to the ENTRY HALL in VANZWINK'S REDOUBT.

RUINED HOISTS

The remains of two drum hoists, used to raise and lower ore baskets, may be found at the north and south edges of THE PIT. They are totally overgrown, and the timber arms which once extended over the shaft have long since broken off, but one still holds a coil of corroded chain, the end of which descends out of sight into the darkness. The iron-weave basket attached to that end is still intact, but the chain and basket together are so heavy that it would take a feat of magic or engineering to hoist it up.

PIT MOUTH

The Pit itself descends into a darkness that seems bottomless, as attested by the lack of sound made by anything dropped within. In truth, it descends 1200 increasingly humid feet to a floor of jumbled, moss-covered rock.

A network of ledges, stairs, and ladders is cut into walls of the shaft along a downward spiral. These precarious paths are lurker-scale—about half size to a human—and reach from the top of THE PIT to the bottom, connecting the various MINEHEADS in between.

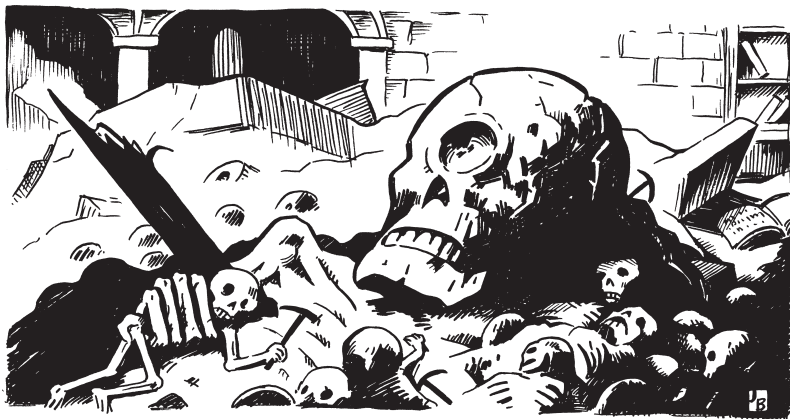
Impressions

- * Steam issuing from the depths
- * Doves nesting in nooks and crannies
- * Broken ledges
- * Small handholds, cut into the rock

MINEHEAD

Each of the numerous mine entrances poking the walls of the Pit is a rectangular timber-framed opening about 4' wide and 6' tall, leading into a MINE TUNNEL of similar dimension. These offer direct access to the MAGNITE MINES.

• VANZWINK THE SORCERER •



Outcast from an ancient race of Cyclopean humanoids, the great and powerful sorcerer Vanzwink sought solitude in order to pursue his theories about magic magnification and keep company with the only being he considered of any worth: himself. His gargantuan skeleton has sat slumped in his SANCTUM for over a century, surrounded by the scattered bones of those LURKERS he managed to destroy during his last stand.

• MAGNITE •

A blue-black ore imbued with arcane energy from the dawn of creation. Raw, its magical charge and magnetic properties are weak, but these can be intensified when the ore is alloyed with other metals or elements:

EVERHOLD (magnite + cobalt) possesses a strong magical charge that regenerates after being spent.

LOATITE (magnite + quicksilver) generates a strong anti-gravity field.

WIZARD'S WOE (magnite + lead) is five times heavier than lead itself, and drains magical energy from its surroundings.



• THE RAGING BLIGHT •



Among Vanzwink's repertoire was a powerful curse which spelled the end of the lurkers (and perhaps the giant's own people, centuries ago).

When you *suffer the effects of the Raging Blight*, roll +CON: **on a 10+**, you manage to keep it under control for now, but a new rash of green boils manifests suddenly; **on a 7-9**, you are consumed by rage against all life, and seek to wreak havoc against it before the boils overwhelm you; **on a 6-**, mark XP, and the GM makes a move.

• REKKALA •

THE LURKERS (and perhaps others) worship The Great Crane, also known as The Protector or Queen of the Winded. Rekkala manifests as a white crane with black wingtips and a red beak. It is said that to be crossed by her shadow is a great blessing for the faithful, but a sign of sure doom for her enemies.



The domains of her power include the sky, the winds, patience, and physical grace. Prayers in her



Mark of Rekkala.

name take the form of chants or dances; offerings found at her shrines—sometimes carved high in the branches of old-growth trees—include dead rodents, giant insects, fish, and berries.

All winged things that travel by daylight are subject to her command, acting as messengers or embodiments of her will, to be brought to bear against her enemies.

• THE LURKERS •



Branded “lurkers” by fearful humans spinning false tales of child abduction and theft, these former residents of the Wounded Wood called themselves *divinca*, or “the Blessed People.”

Half human size, hairless, and resembling graceful goblins, their remains litter the Pit; the few survivors of Vanzwink’s tyranny and the RAGING BLIGHT fled to safer climes long ago.

• DIVINCA VAYA •

Among those lurkers forced to mine MAGNITE was a devout and charismatic singer, or *gayakudu*, who called the god Rekkala to save her people in their time of greatest need. Cursed by Vanzwink to roam the Pit restlessly until her body is laid to rest in her home city of Nagaram, Divinca Vaya (“Blessed Voice”) may prove a useful ally (see page 39).



Magnite Mines

When you *See What They Find while they explore the Magnite Mines*, describe connections leading elsewhere from a given area as you see fit.

Themes

Ruin ○○○○○

Infestation ○○○○○

Impressions

- * Pitch dark
 - * Damp, humid, warm
 - * Steam venting from cracks
 - * Metallic odor
 - * Puddles of oily water
 - * Pockets of cold
 - * The mark of Rekkala, carved into a support beam
-

Common Areas

1d12 COMMON AREA

- | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | MINE TUNNEL, straight |
| 2 | MINE TUNNEL, right turn |
| 3 | MINE TUNNEL, left turn |
| 4 | MINE TUNNEL, T-intersection |
| 5-7 | MINE TUNNEL, 4-way intersection |
| 8-9 | DEAD END |
| 10 | SHAFT, leading up |
| 11 | SHAFT, leading down |
| 12 | SHAFT, leading up and down |
-

DEAD END

The result of a ceiling collapse, or merely the extent of a tunnel's reach. Rough, unbraced earth and rock.

MINE TUNNEL

4' x 6', dug straight where possible, corners are mostly right angles.

SHAFT

A means of passing from one level to another. Each shaft is roughly 4' in diameter and cut with handholds for climbing up and down.

Unique Areas

Listed from most to least accessible.

Choose one or roll 1d6 and count down the list, skipping marked entries; then, mark off the entry rolled. If your count takes you past the last entry, continue your count at the beginning of the list.

❑ GALLERY

An expansive area, supported by evenly spaced square columns of natural rock.

❑ CHASM

Some seismic event shifted the rock here, creating a 5'-wide crack in the entire tunnel, from which a curtain of steam rises. Easy enough to jump across, but hazardous if stumbled into.

❑ SUPPLY CACHE

A repository of mining tools and supplies. Shelves cut into the walls and disintegrating wooden crates contain between them 2d6 MINING TOOLS (as opposed to 1d4 as indicated).

❑ THE WARDING WALL

A rough wall of stacked stones and clay mortar, blocking a tunnel from floor to ceiling. Painted on the near side in flaking dried blood is a Sigil of Sealing. The wall cannot be broken by mundane means until the sigil is completely removed. What danger has been trapped on the other side for all these years?

❑ THE VOID

The floor gives way into empty blackness, a vast subterranean space judging by the acoustics. What might lie below?

❑ SITE OF INSURRECTION

A four-way intersection, at the center of which are 1d6 LURKER REMAINS and the headless body of an OVERSEER, floating a few feet off the ground. Scattered about are MINING TOOLS. The Overseer is scarred by blows from diamond-tipped picks, its iron body hollow save for a FLOATITE SUSPENSOR in its belly.

❑ LIFT SHAFT

A 20' wide square shaft that rises to the LIFT TERMINUS at the very top of the complex (page 33), with a stop at many levels of the Magnite Mines.

Mounted on the wall at each stop is an iron boss impressed with the Sigil of Strange Stars. Placing a hand on this boss will call the FLOATITE-powered lift to that stop.

The lift itself is a square platform of hardwood timber, with an iron control pylon at its center and 6 FLOATITE SUSPENSORS (page 39) attached to its underside. The control pylon is 6' tall and capped by a bowl-shaped cavity which supports a 1' diameter glass sphere half-full of quicksilver. The control pylon operates by means of enchantment, with the movement of the sphere increasing and decreasing the repulsive force of the suspensors (not unlike a trackball).

Discoveries

Listed alphabetically. Choose 1, roll 1d12, or make up your own.

1d12 DISCOVERY

1	OIL LEAK
2-3	OILY TRAIL
4-5	LURKER REMAINS
6-7	MINING TOOLS
8-9	LURKER TUNNEL
10	SIGN OF TREASURE HUNTERS
11	LOOSE MAGNITE
12	MAGNITE VEIN

LOOSE MAGNITE

A chunk of MAGNITE, between pebble and fist size, floating just off the ground.

LURKER REMAINS

The diminutive, dust-covered skeleton of a lurker, perhaps battered and broken.

LURKER TUNNEL

A 4' diameter hole in the wall connects to a network of lurker-sized tunnels that run throughout the complex.

When you *enter a lurker tunnel*, roll 1d12 to see where you emerge:

1d12 EXIT

1-4	Common area in the Magnite Mines (page 28)
5	Unique area in the Magnite Mines (page 28)
6	Common area in Vanzwink's Redoubt (page 32)
7	ENTRY HALL (page 33)
8-10	SLAVE QUARTERS (page 33)
11	OVERSEER WORKSHOP (page 34)
12	MAGNITE FORGE (page 34)

MAGNITE VEIN

An area of exposed MAGNITE ore, which can only be removed with diamond-tipped implements (see MINING TOOLS).

MINING TOOLS

Roll 1d4 to see how many items are found, and then 1d12 for each. All tools are sized to suit lurkers.

1d12 ITEM

1-2	broken ceramic jar (contained tallow, eaten by OIL SLIME)
3-4	iron candle-holder
5-7	ore basket (worn on head)
8-9	iron spade
10-11	diamond-tipped pick (100 coins)
12	loose diamond tip (100 coins)

OIL LEAK

A crack in the wall allows a trickle or sheet of thick crude oil to seep into the tunnel, pooling up or draining by another route. Flammable, but not violently so. Where there's an oil leak, an OIL SLIME or three cannot be far.

OILY TRAIL

A shiny trail that leads off along a floor, wall, or ceiling. Following it will likely lead the party closer to one of the OIL SLIMES that infests the mines.

SIGN OF TREASURE HUNTERS

Obvious footprints, the remains of a campsite, or signs of a Discovery recently disturbed by THE FEARLESS FOUR.

Dangers

Listed alphabetically. Choose 1, roll 1d12, or make up your own.

1d12 DANGER

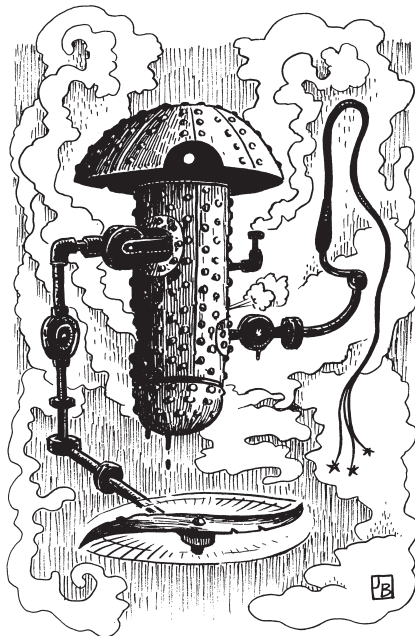
- 1-2 OVERSEER
 - 3-4 THE FEARLESS FOUR
 - 5-6 OIL SLIME
 - 7-9 ALARM
 - 10-12 STEAM JET
-

ALARM

An iron boss, marked by an alarm sigil, is set into the ceiling, anchoring a copper wire that encircles the tunnel. When anything other than an OVERSEER crosses the copper wire, a high-pitched whine will issue forth and echo throughout the caves, alerting 1d4 nearby OVERSEERS to the violation.

THE FEARLESS FOUR

A crew of four treasure hunters, hired by an interested party in the nearest steading to retrieve the BOX OF BOFURUS. See the facing page for a complete description.



OIL SLIME

Group, Amorphous, Stealthy

Damage Pseudopod 1d8 (*close*)

HP 6 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Immune to physical damage, combustible

A sentient slick which now infests the tunnels, sating itself on OIL LEAKS opened up during the mining operation, but hungry also for all forms of grease and fat. Easy to set alight, but beware the spreading of fire (and choking black smoke) via its ubiquitous trails of flammable slime.

Instinct Feed upon fat

- * Mimic a harmless pool of oil
- * Get slippery on them
- * Ooze into the narrowest of spaces

Treasure Combustible remains.

OVERSEER

Solitary, Construct, Organized, Magical

Damage Whip 1d8 (*reach, entangle*) or whirling blade 1d10+2 (*reach*)

HP 16 **Armor** 3

Special Qualities Metal, mindless, floating

Created by Vanzwink to keep the lurker slaves in line and now heavily corroded with the passage of many years, these mushroom-shaped, iron-shelled automatons still float through the tunnels, seeking laggards in need of discipline.

Instinct To keep everyone in line

- * Behave erratically
- * Repel with magnetic force
- * Absorb or reflect magic

Treasure FLOATITE SUSPENSOR.

STEAM JET

A blast of steam issues from the wall, floor, or ceiling, searing the unwary for 1d6 damage, and/or creating an obstacle that must be bypassed.

• THE FEARLESS FOUR •



These fortune seekers plumb the MAGNITE MINES in search of a way into VANZWINK'S REDOUBT. Someone called Valthala the Sage scryed the location of the BOX of BOFURUS, hired the Four to retrieve it, and promises a handsome reward for its delivery. The Four will not take kindly to interlopers.

ELVINA

Leader, Lawful

Damage Greatsword 1d8+2 (*reach*)

HP 12 **Armor** 2

Special Qualities Fighter, fear of chaos

Traits Missing ear, compassionate

Instinct To live by a code of honor

- * Issue a challenge
- * Deflect a powerful blow
- * Sever a limb

Gear Greatsword, chainmail, poultices & herbs, 1d6 rations, adventuring gear (1d4 uses), 4d8 coins.

BRIMLID THE BLACK

Evil, Intelligent, Devious

Damage Shortsword 1d8 (*close*) or longbow 1d8 (*near, far*)

HP 12 **Armor** 3

Special Qualities Fighter

Traits Wiry, cleft chin, black hair, disloyal

Instinct To be pragmatic at all times

- * Disappear in the confusion
- * Loose an arrow from afar
- * Strike from behind

Gear Shortsword, longbow, quiver, chainmail, shield, 1d6 rations, lantern, 2d8 coins.

ATHELAN PENNYCATCH

Evil, Intelligent, Devious

Damage Knife 1d6 (*hand*) or sling 1d6 (*near*)

HP 8 **Armor** 1

Special Qualities Thief

Traits Badly scarred, cowardly, vengeful

Instinct To get the most out of everything

- * Bolt at the first opportunity
- * Beg for mercy
- * Plot revenge

Gear Knife, sling, ammo pouch, leather armor, lockpicks, 1d6 rations, silver bracelet (2d8 coins), 3d8 coins.

BROTHER NEFUR

Lawful, Intelligent, Divine

Damage Hammer 1d8 (*close, forceful*)

HP 12 **Armor** 2

Special Qualities Cleric

Traits Dark skin, goatee, fanatical

Instinct To serve Colm, God of Creation

- * Solicit divine aid from the depths
- * Imbue hammer with holy power
- * Smash a thing to bits

Gear Glowing bronze hammer (weapon, light source, and holy symbol), chainmail, 1d6 rations, 3d8 coins.

Danzwink's Redoubt

When you *See What They Find while they explore Danzwink's Redoubt*, add connections from one area to another as you see fit, and/or use any of the connections listed for a given area.

THEMES

Arcane research ○○○

An ancient curse ○○○

Corruption/blight ○○○

Chaos and destruction ○○○

Impressions

- * Pitch dark
- * Architecture scaled to accommodate a giant
- * Walls, ceiling, floor of polished blue-gray granite blocks, intricately arranged
- * Doors of iron latticework (many holes to peek through)
- * Empty wall sconces and freestanding braziers of woven iron, once lit by magical flame
- * Sharp echoes, softening into space
- * Over a century of accumulated dust



Common Areas

1d12 COMMON AREA

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | PASSAGE, straight |
| 2 | PASSAGE, right turn |
| 3 | PASSAGE, left turn |
| 4 | PASSAGE, T-intersection |
| 5 | PASSAGE, 4-way intersection |
| 6-8 | HALL |
| 9 | BLINKSTONE ARCHWAY |
| 10 | SPIRAL STAIR, up |
| 11 | SPIRAL STAIR, down |
| 12 | SPIRAL STAIR, up and down |
-

BLINKSTONE ARCHWAY

A 15' high archway framing a wall of solid, rough-hewn rock. Seemingly mundane, in actuality a magical portal. Each blinkstone archway connects to another, but only the STONESILK MANTLET allows passage between.

Connections

- * Another BLINKSTONE ARCHWAY.
-

HALL

Of varying dimensions but always 25' tall, arched ceiling. Halls over 40' wide in any dimension will contain cylindrical support columns of polished blue-gray granite.

Connections

- * 1d4 iron-lattice doors open in different directions.
-

PASSAGE

15' wide by 20' tall, arched ceiling.

SPIRAL STAIR

Giant-sized, carved from the living rock.



Unique Areas

Listed from most to least accessible.

Choose one or roll 1d6 and count down the list, skipping marked entries; then, mark off the entry rolled. If your count takes you past the last entry, continue counting from the beginning of the list.

Note that if they enter via the MAIN ENTRANCE, they find the ENTRY HALL.

❑ ENTRY HALL

The great double doors that connect this area to the MAIN ENTRANCE are exactly the same on this inside as they are on the outside: an iron boss in the center (10' up) bears the mark of Vanzwink ("V"), and the doors open automatically for the bearer of VANZWINK'S SIGNET.

The hall itself is of polished blue-gray granite blocks, 40' wide, 80' deep, with a 25' vaulted ceiling.

Connections

- * Double doors to MAIN ENTRANCE
 - * 1d4 PASSAGES leading away in different directions
 - * 1d4 LURKER TUNNEL openings in walls, ceiling, floor
-

❑ SLAVE QUARTERS

An extensive series of interconnected galleries of different sizes, dug out of the existing rock, which once housed several hundred LURKER miners. The ceilings are a scant 6' high and supported here and there by columns of rough-hewn stone.

Climbing rungs and sleeping berths (in stacked sets of 4) alike are cut into the walls, while the central area of each gallery is occupied by small chairs, tables, rugs, and the general detritus of daily LURKER life, most of it disintegrating.

Connections

- * 1d4 PASSAGES leading away in different directions
- * Numerous LURKER TUNNEL openings in walls, ceiling, floor



❑ LIFT TERMINUS

This 40' x 40' chamber surrounds a 20' x 20' square opening in the floor, the top opening of the LIFT SHAFT that descends through the Magnite Mines.

A 6' high iron pylon near the opening is crowned by an iron sphere, impressed with the Sigil of Strange Stars. Placing a hand on this sphere will call the FLOATITE-powered lift up the shaft until it is level with the Terminus floor.

The lift itself is a square platform of hardwood timber, with an iron control pylon at its center and 6 FLOATITE SUSPENSORS attached to its underside. The control pylon is 6' tall and capped by a bowl-shaped cavity which supports a 1' diameter glass sphere half-full of quicksilver. The control pylon operates by means of enchantment, with the movement of the sphere increasing and decreasing the repulsive force of the suspensors. Much like a trackball that directs the lift to move up or down.

Connections

- * LIFT SHAFT
- * 1d4 PASSAGES leading away in different directions

❑ OVERSEER WORKSHOP

A long chamber lined by supply closets, with an iron-topped work table running down its middle. Scattered across the work surfaces and floor are tools, debris and metal scraps used to construct and repair OVERSEERS. Vanzwink built the First Overseer (see below), which in turn built the others and supervised the Workshop and MAGNITE FORGE.

During the lurker uprising, a dozen lurkers battled the First Overseer here, and managed to trap it in one of the supply closets, where it has remained ever since. The closet it occupies is the only one that's locked.

When you *open an unlocked supply closet*, roll 1d12 to see what you find among the mostly useless junk within:

1d12 SUPPLY CLOSET CONTENTS

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | the corpse of a LURKER, sealed inside for over a century, and infected with the RAGING BLIGHT |
| 3-4 | a BLIGHT-CRAWLER, waiting in ambush |
| 5-6 | a LUMP OF WIZARD'S WOE |
| 7-8 | useless junk |
| 9 | a key to the locked supply closet |
| 10 | a malfunctioning FLOATITE SUSPENSOR |
| 11 | a sheet of beaten iron, usable as a makeshift shield |
| 12 | a DARKLIGHT TORCH |

When you *open the locked supply closet*, the First Overseer bursts forth and sets about purging the Redoubt of all intruders. It acts as an OVERSEER in all respects, except for that fact that it is clearly much older, and lacks the whirling blades of later models.

Connections

- * 1d4 iron-lattice doors opening into common areas
- * Short passage to MAGNITE FORGE
- * The mouth of a LURKER TUNNEL, hidden by debris

❑ MAGNITE FORGE

A vast and long vaulted hall, subdivided into three sections, each devoted to a different stage of magnite processing. The battle between slaves and overseers left this entire area damaged and littered with LURKER REMAINS.

SORTING STATION: here the lurkers would break down large pieces of rock by hand to separate out the magnite ore. Iron work tables are covered with bits of rock. Hammers, chisels, and ore baskets are scattered about.

SMELTING STATION: here the lurkers would subject the magnite to incredible heat, reducing it to molten form and alloying it with cobalt, quicksilver, or lead. Each side wall is dominated by an enormous smelting furnace, resembling a fat-bellied round oven and chimney made of basalt bricks, open in the front. Grooves cut in the stone floor once allowed molten magnite to flow from the bottom of each smelter to the FORGING STATION. Stacks of ancient charcoal remain piled on either side of each smelter. A few smashed barrels have spilled their contents: chunks of lead (soft, dull gray) and cobalt (hard, lustrous silvery-gray). A single JUG OF QUICKSILVER sits on a low stone shelf.

FORGING STATION: here the molten magnite alloys were cooled and shaped to various uses. Grooves cut in the stone floor lead from the SMELTING STATION to the crucible, a bowl-shaped depression in the floor. Lining the side walls are the forges themselves: rectangular, open firepits equipped with massive bellows, and filled with ancient dead coals from which various iron implements protrude. The walls are lined with iron rods, ladles, and molds used to shape molten alloy.

When you *search the forging station for anything of interest*, you find 1d6 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

❑ HALL OF COGITATION

A 30' wide by 240' long hall, with a 25' high ceiling and a single line of polished granite columns running down the middle. At a height of 10', the polished granite of each column is replaced by a 5' tall section of cloudy quartz crystal.

When you *walk a circuit of the Hall of Cogitation*, roll +INT: on a 10+, you experience clarity of mind—all of the quartz crystal in the hall momentarily becomes as clear as glass, and you have some insight into a thing that has confounded you (propose something to the GM); on a 7-9, you experience clarity of mind, and take +1 forward.

The Hall's mind-clearing capacity may only be utilized once per day.

❑ LIBRARY & SCRIPTORIUM

A cylindrical chamber, 30' in diameter and 90' deep, entered via an iron-lattice door near its top. The door is held fast by a 10"x10"x8" iron cage, inhabited by a mute LOCK GOBLIN.

When you *kill the LOCK GOBLIN*, getting through the door becomes more than you bargained for.

When you *proffer VANZWINK'S SIGNET to the LOCK GOBLIN*, it reaches out to touch it lovingly with one spindly hand before the door swings open to admit you.

An iron spiral stair, accessible via a catwalk, descends through the center of the library to the floor, 90' below, where may be found a writing desk sized to fit Vanzwink. Cut into the walls from floor to ceiling are numerous shelves, holding all manner of dusty tomes and scrolls, 10' away and out of reach from anyone on the stair.

When you *search the shelves for an item of interest*, roll 1d6 and count down the list below to see what you find, skipping any marked entries; then, mark off the entry you rolled.



LIBRARY ITEM

- ❑ An untitled ledger composed of paper-thin sheets of ivory, covered in runes from a dead language.
- ❑ A tome, bound in seal-hide, called *Concerning the Theatrical Practices of the Merfolk*
- ❑ *Best-Loved Yet Little-Known Songs of the Spheres*, a thick folio of loose-leaf melodies, heavily annotated in faded brown ink
- ❑ A book with blue metal covers and a silver spine, entitled *Magnite: Residue of the World's Conception*
- ❑ A complete eleven-volume set of *The Memoirs of Khof Aranped*, the ancient and renowned wizard-lord
- ❑ *Recent Advances in the Evocation of Phlogiston*, a sulfur-smelling heap of poorly-bound red paper, liable to combust at any moment
- ❑ A little black book full of microscopic text, the title *Armac Ampoor's Alamanac of Annihilation* written in tiny gold letters on the title page
- ❑ *The Vindication of Vanzwink the Great*, an enormous original manuscript detailing the giant sorcerer's self-exile from the land of Xor, and subsequent collapse of said civilization (recounted with some gusto)

When you *take the time to read an item found in the Library*, say what you hope to get out of it based on its title, and roll +INT: on a 10+, you get what you want, but the GM has the option to tack on a single caveat; on a 7-9, you get what you want, but there are unforeseen repercussions to this new knowledge (for the GM to reveal, now or later).

❑ AUDIENCE CHAMBER

A large chamber, cut from the living rock and floored with hexagonal purple tile. The domed ceiling is painted to resemble a blue sky covered with a pattern of stars, with a single large eye cut from stone (and painted gold) peering down from the apex. Unfinished wall frescoes depict scenes from Vanzwink's life: eschewing giant society; scrying the location of magnite; constructing his Overseers; enslaving lurkers to excavate the Pit. Wide steps at one end rise to a platform that holds a simple hardwood chair suited for a giant.

Here Vanzwink met with rare visitors, mostly wizards and merchants with

whom he did business. There are no chairs beyond the giant's—guests must have been expected to stand.

When you *pass beneath the watchful eye with ill intent for Vanzwink or his property*, an ancient warding enchantment triggers, trapping you in a column of golden light from above. You are paralyzed in all but thought and speech and must answer all questions truthfully, until the proper release phrase (now lost) is uttered or the eye (HP 10, Armor 4) is destroyed, whichever comes first.

When you *destroy the watchful eye*, its paralyzing beam ceases, but 1d8 OVERSEERS register the security breach and will arrive shortly.



❑ SANCTUM

The innermost chambers of Vanzwink's Redoubt, consisting of four interconnected areas:

QUARTERS: Finely but not ostentatiously appointed, Vanzwink's sleeping chamber is dominated by his huge bed of petrified wood, its covers now ragged and insect-eaten. Items of interest include a large SEEING GLASS, mounted on one wall, an OPALIGHT mounted on the ceiling, and a hardwood wardrobe full of brittle cloaks and robes, among them the STONESILK MANTLET.

GARDEROBE: A small room (by giant standards), carved from the living rock. A stone bench protrudes from one wall, and in it a 3'-wide circular hole opens into a black void. How deep does it go?

STUDY: A vaulted chamber, partially collapsed and half-full of rubble from the tunneling efforts of the lurkers who confronted their oppressor here. Vanzwink's gargantuan skeleton, surrounded by the crushed and dismembered remains of many lurkers (including those of DAVINCA VAYA), lies slumped amidst the debris.

When you *examine Vanzwink's remains*, you find VANZWINK'S SIGNET among 1d6 GIANT RINGS on his finger-bones.

When you *clear away some of the rubble*, you reveal a circular iron hatch (5' in diameter) set into the floor, engraved with protective runes set in silver. The hatch may be opened by turning an iron wheel set into its face, and grants access to the MAGEIASPHERE.

THE MAGEIASPHERE

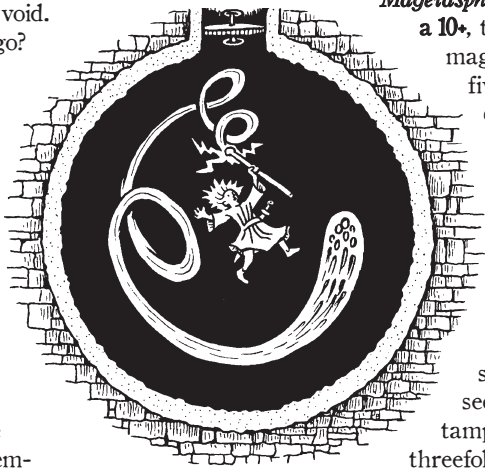
A spherical chamber, 30' in diameter, entered only via the circular iron airlock in the floor of the Study. The chamber itself is one of Vanzwink's great accomplishments: lined with a 2'-thick layer of FLOATITE, it concentrates and intensifies all magic forces within; this makes it an ideal but volatile environment for the enchanter's craft.

When you *enter the Mageiasphere*, you will be forcibly ejected unless you bear some connection to the arcane world (ability, item, etc.), in which case you drop immediately to the center of the chamber, where you become suspended in midair.

When you *wield magic in the Mageiasphere*, roll +INT: on a 10+, the effect of the magic is magnified

fivefold, but the GM chooses 1 from the list below; on a 7-9, the effect is magnified threefold, but the GM chooses 2 from the list below; on a 6-, mark XP and suffer the consequence of your tampering, magnified threefold and turned inward upon the very center of your being.

- * You suffer a permanent disfigurement related to the magic wielded (ask the GM what)
- * You suffer 2 debilities of the GM's choice, which may only be removed by magical means
- * You are marked by otherworldly forces as an unqualified threat
- * Vanzwink's consciousness, if extant, registers your violation of this most precious of his creations



Discoveries

Discoveries in this section are listed in alphabetical order. Most are only to be found in specific areas, but when you need a random Discovery, choose 1 from the list below, roll 1d12, or make one up.

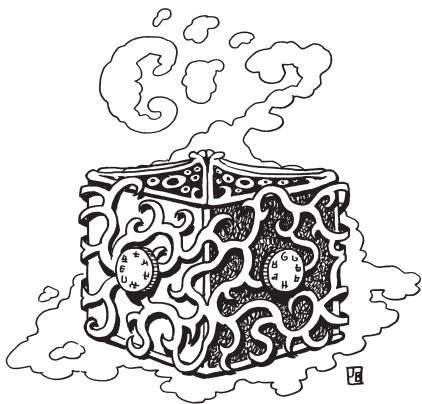
1d12 DISCOVERY

1-5 MISCELLANEOUS ITEM

6-8 LURKER TUNNEL

9-10 SECRET PASSAGE

11-12 DAVINCA VAYA



Box of Bofurus

invaluable, magical, 1 weight

A lidded 1'x1'x1' cube of opalescent bluestone, encased in a lacelike mesh of magnite. Mounted in the center of each of its four sides is a rotateable silver disc marked with arcane runes along its edge; together these form a four-part combination lock. How this combination might be learned is up to the GM.

When you *arrange all four discs in the proper combination*, the lid of the Box opens in four parts to release the spirit captured within. At the same time, the Box lays claim to your spirit, seeking to replace that which has just escaped.

When you *resist the claim the Box makes upon your spirit*, roll +WIS: **on a 10+**, you manage to keep yourself in this

world, but you immediately suffer 2 debilities of the GM's choice; **on a 7-9**, you suffer 3 debilities of the GM's choice and retain your spirit, but it's damaged in some permanent way (describe, now or later, how you will never be the same); **on a 6-**, your spirit is imprisoned until the Box claims another—your physical self survives, but bereft of feeling and purpose beyond mere survival. In all cases, the lid snaps shut immediately afterward, and the silver discs spin to scramble the combination.

Any spirit freed from the Box will immediately seek out and reanimate its corporeal remains. If said physical vessel is not within a day's journey, the spirit may choose to either take possession of a weaker entity or seek final relief through the Black Gates of Death.

Vanzwink purposely committed his spirit to the Box when he realized he would fall to the lurkers; at the point which the party finds it, his life force will likely still be trapped within.

Blue Hand

magical, 1 charge, 600 coins, 0 weight

A charm of translucent blue EVERHOLD, cast from a mold in the shape of a small human hand.

When you *brandish a Blue Hand and Cast a Spell*, spend its charge and treat your result as one step better (i.e., a 7-9 counts as a 10+, or a 6- counts as a 7-9). Then, the Hand loses its charge until right after the next time its holder rolls a 10+ (or equivalent) to Cast a Spell.

Darklight Torch

magical, 1d6 uses, 25 coins/use, 0 weight

A stick of petrified hardwood, one tip of which is coated in a silvery resin.

When you *hold a darklight torch in your bare hand*, the tip ignites with black fire that illuminates the surroundings for you alone.

DAVINCA VAYA

The ghost of the *gayakudu* and spiritual leader of the lurkers haunts this place in accordance with the arcane curse laid upon her. She may be encountered as an apparition or a purely psychic presence, offering assistance or seeking aid in the laying to rest of her physical remains (amongst those of the other long-dead lurkers in Vanzwink's SANCTUM).

When you *lay Davinca Vaya's physical remains to rest in the ruins of her home city of Nagaram*, she thanks you deeply before departing, and you earn the blessing of REKKALA (in whatever form the GM deems appropriate).

FLOATITE SUSPENSOR

magical, -2 weight

An iron sphere, 9" in diameter, enclosing a FLOATITE core and marked by a number of attachment points, by which it was intended to be screwed or fitted into the chassis of an OVERSEER. Such suspensors are what allow OVERSEERS to hover above the ground and move easily across rough terrain. How a ball that generates an antigravity field might be otherwise applied is anyone's idea.

GIANT RING

2d6 x 10 coins, 0 weight

Made of gold or silver; perhaps set with blue chalcedony, hessonite, or yellow sapphire; etched with geometric designs.

JUG OF QUICKSILVER

1d10 uses, 10 coins/use, 1 weight

A stoppered ceramic jug containing what looks like liquid silver.

When you *take a swig of quicksilver*, roll +CON: **on a 10+**, you choke it down, and take +1 ongoing to use or resist magic until you vomit, which you will do at an inopportune moment of the GM's choosing; **on a 7-9**, you vomit it back right now, and become *sick*.

LOCK GOBLIN

Solitary, Tiny, Magical

Damage Needle-like teeth 1d4 (*hand*)

HP 2 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Does not need to eat, drink, or sleep

More homonculus than goblin in the traditional sense, this small gray humanoid is bound to a specific portal by arcane means. As long as it lives, the door may be opened, but only if the proper "key" is employed.



LUMP OF WIZARD'S WOE

100 coins, 0 weight

A misshapen blob of flat gray metal.

When you *observe the effects of Wizard's Woe*, it's probably too late, because it's been slowly (and permanently) draining the magical energy from everything in its immediate surroundings.

LURKER TUNNEL

A 4' diameter hole in the wall connects to a network of lurker-sized tunnels that run throughout the complex.

When you *enter a lurker tunnel*, roll 1d12 to see where you emerge:

1d12 EXIT

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | Common area in the Magnite Mines (page 28) |
| 3 | Unique area in the Magnite Mines (page 28) |
| 4-6 | Common area in Vanzwink's Redoubt (page 32) |
| 7 | ENTRY HALL (page 33) |
| 8-9 | SLAVE QUARTERS (page 33) |
| 10 | OVERSEER WORKSHOP (page 34) |
| 11 | MAGNITE FORGE (page 34) |
| 12 | Vanzwink's SANCTUM (page 37) |
-

MISCELLANEOUS ITEM

1d12 ITEM

1-2	LUMP OF WIZARD'S WOE
3-4	MINING TOOLS (p29)
5-6	JUG OF QUICKSILVER
7-8	DARKLIGHT TORCH
10-11	FLOATITE SUSPENSOR
12	BLUE HAND

OPALIGHT

magical, 200 coins, 1 weight

A 1'-diameter sphere of polished opalescent stone, imbued with magical light.

When you *move into the the vicinity of an opalight*, it emits a soothing glow as bright as an oil lamp; if you face no immediate threat you are calmed, worries and regrets banished from your mind.

SEEING GLASS

invaluable, magical, 5 weight

An oval piece of silvered glass, 4' x 7', framed by a border of 32 crystal hemispheres (each 4" in diameter).

When you *touch a crystal on the Seeing Glass*, the image visible is blown clear as if made of sand, revealing the specific physical location keyed to the crystal that was touched. 30 of the crystals are each keyed to a different area of the Magnite Mines or Redoubt; the bottommost returns the view to that of a normal mirror, while the topmost shows the overgrown ruins of the capital city of Xor, the Cyclopean realm from which Vanzwink was exiled.

When you *make use of arcane knowledge to re-key the Seeing Glass*, you may set the point of view activated by each crystal as you see fit, as long as you've personally visited the place in question.

SECRET PASSAGE

Adventurers passing through an area where Vanzwink installed a secret door may notice something curious: a footprint in stone dust facing a blank wall;

a section of floor covered by a single large flagstone; an iron ring inexplicably mounted on an otherwise featureless ceiling. Further investigation may grant access to a Vanzwink-sized corridor, twisting through the rock.

When you *explore a secret passage*, roll 1d12 to see where you find the next peephole or point of egress:

1d12 AREA

1-2	Common area in Vanzwink's Redoubt (page 32)
3	ENTRY HALL (page 33)
4	SLAVE QUARTERS (page 33)
5	OVERSEER WORKSHOP (page 34)
6	MAGNITE FORGE (page 34)
7-8	HALL OF COGITATION (page 35)
9	AUDIENCE CHAMBER (page 36)
10-12	Vanzwink's SANCTUM (page 37)

STONESILK MANTLET

worn, invaluable, magical, 1 armor, 2 weight

A pale gray, giant-sized short cape—more like a cloak when worn by a human—magically woven from strands of stone. Surprisingly heavy, given its silk-like texture and appearance.

When you *wear the Stonesilk Mantlet*, you may pass unimpeded through a BLINKSTONE PORTAL.

VANZWINK'S SIGNET

invaluable, magical, 5 charges, 0 weight

A ring, 2" in diameter, forged of EVERHOLD and set with a chunk of raw MAGNITE, into which has been chiseled a "V" (Vanzwink's name-rune).

When you *carry Vanzwink's Signet and Cast a Spell*, spend 1 charge and treat your result as one step better (i.e., a 7-9 counts as a 10+, or a 6- counts as a 7-9).

The ring recharges fully when exposed to the light of a full moon.



Dangers

Dangers here are listed in alphabetical order. VANZWINK ARISEN will only be found in his SANCTUM, but when you need a random Danger, choose 1 from the list below, roll 1d12, or make one up.

1d12 DANGER

- 1-3 ALARM
- 4-6 OVERSEER (page 30)
- 7-10 BLIGHT-CRAWLER
- 11-12 OIL SLIME (page 30)

ALARM

An iron boss, marked by an alarm sigil, is set into the ceiling, anchoring a copper wire that encircles the area. When anything other than an OVERSEER crosses the copper wire, a high-pitched whine issues forth and echo throughout the Redoubt, alerting 1d4 nearby OVERSEERS to the violation.

BLIGHT-CRAWLER

Group, Stealthy

Damage Whiplike tendrils 1d8 (*close, reach, entangle*)

HP 6 Armor 1

Special Qualities Blind, Blight carrier

The bizarre result of exposing local insect life to the Raging Blight, this half-fling-sized horror resembles a grubby carpet propelled along by twoscore legs, probing its surroundings with a mass of sensory tendrils.

Instinct To feast on the dead

- * Transmit the Raging Blight
- * Stick to them like glue
- * Excrete paralyzing ichor

Treasure None.

VANZWINK ARISEN

Solitary, Large, Intelligent, Organized, Devious, Magical

Damage Great fist 1d10+1 (*reach, forceful*) or searing blast 1d10+1 (*reach, near, ignores armor*)

HP 20 Armor 4

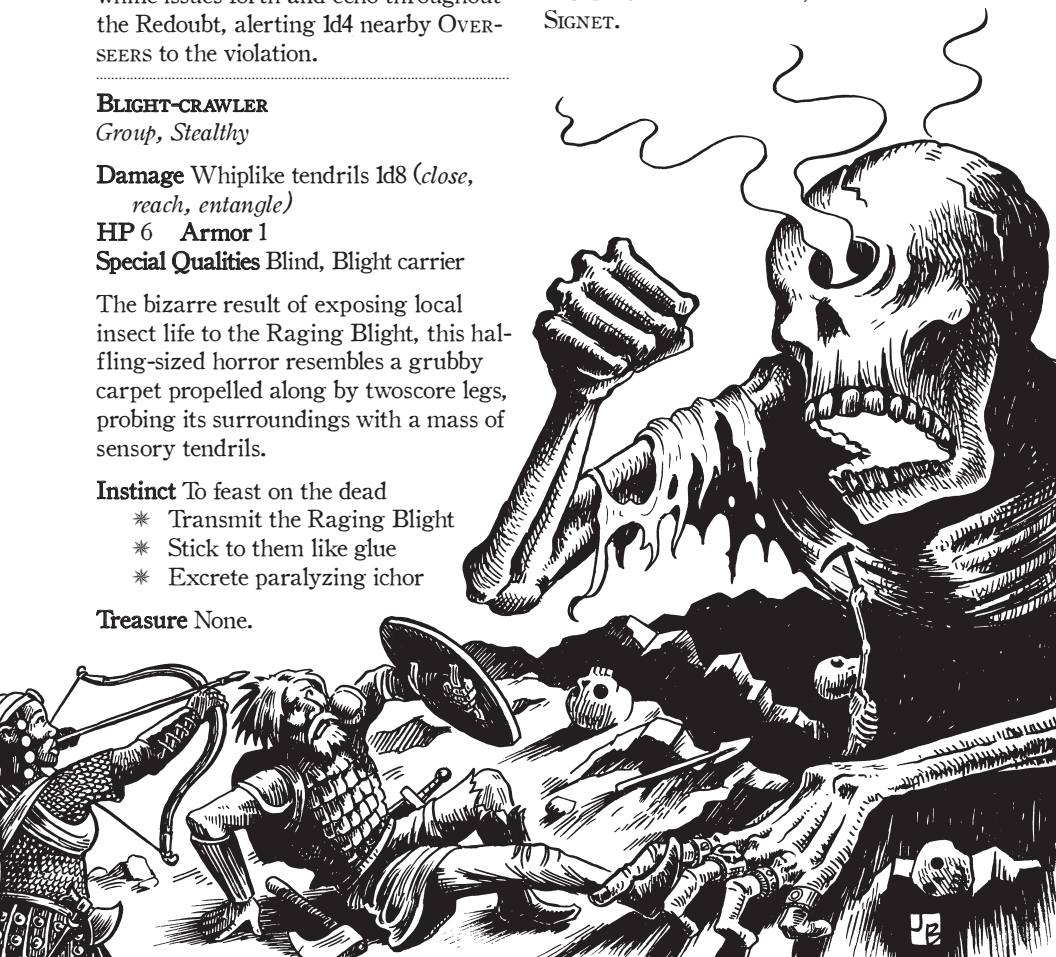
Special Qualities Sorcerer, blind, undead

The eyeless skeleton of the Great Vanzwink, reanimated by his vengeful spirit, egomaniacal even after 150 years of imprisonment in the BOX OF BOFURUS.

Instinct To pick up where he left off

- * Lay the Raging Blight upon them
- * Open a gateway to Strange Stars
- * Consign them to the Void between the stars

Treasure 1d6 GIANT RINGS, VANZWINK'S SIGNET.



Eesha's Gulf

by Adam Koebel · Illustrated by Laurel Lynn Leake

Background

Eesha Gallows-Lurker had a singular talent, of that there was no doubt. She was, bar none (save those long-dead magi who dwelled in empires ancient) the greatest fisher of souls this age has known. Her skill at the fine craft of the magic circle, her deep connection to the spirits of the recently deceased, and her empathy for every soul—living or dead—made her a seeress, a summoner and a friend to those bereaved. For three highly profitable years, Eesha called ghosts up from Death's dark foyer before that entity took them forever. We lost Eesha to a terrible mistake. Hubris led her down the path that took her from us and created the bleak not-quite-place known as Eesha's Gulf.

Using profits given over by weeping widows and money-hungry siblings desperate to glean the details of their parents' hidden fortunes, Eesha conducted research into her powerful obsession. If one could conjure up a circle into which the land of the dead might be projected, could one not, then, invert the abjuration? Could one not conjure a circle by which the world's rules might be contained—a platform from which one could gaze out upon the bleak landscape where souls go to await their judgement? Affix the circle to a device—staff, dagger, the bones of a child perhaps—and carry it with you, moving as though protected by a diving bell? What could one see from such a place? What could one discover?

Eesha drew the circle, wrote the sacrilegious lines and vanished forever, leaving only her pretty home and the Gulf behind.

Getting there

The entrance to the “dungeon” known as Eesha's Gulf is obvious and known to everyone. Her home, opulent and beautiful, still stands in perfect condition. It might be found in a cosmopolitan capital, a crumbling metropolis, or anywhere the rich might dwell. It might be guarded—blocked off by the local authorities to protect would-be trespassers. It might also be a “sacred” site if you want Eesha to have a posthumous fan club slash cult.

The dungeon itself is a loose connection of nodes, a strung-together collection of rooms, halls, caverns and other imagery with neither rhyme nor reason. One trip into the Gulf might take you to the Hall of Shards but you may never find that place again, no matter how many times you return. Adventurers entering the Gulf always begin in that funereal ritual chamber known as EESHA'S CIRCLE, where the fatal ring was first inscribed upon the floor.

Questions

- * How do your people honour their dead?
- * What do you imagine awaits you when you die?
- * What do the gods think of those who go where they are not welcome?
- * What personal superstitions do you have about the dead?
- * Who do you know has died? What do you wish you could have said to them before they left this world?
- * What do you owe Death?
- * What treasure is Eesha's manse alleged to hold?



Entrance & exits

ONE WAY IN

- * A fine manor house in the city, abandoned and forsaken, but which cannot be torn down

When you *step across the threshold of Eesha's manor house and into the Gulf*, the GM will ask you something you bring with you. Answer honestly.

INFINITE WAYS OUT

Among them:

- * The Gates of Death's Kingdom
- * Just about any bleak place, if you're willing to walk the shadow long enough to get there

When you *exit the Gulf back into EESHA'S CIRCLE*, find a door to open and roll **+WIS: on a 10+**, you emerge from the Circle, all together and intact; **on a 7-9**, you leave something important behind or bring something awful with you (ask the GM which); **on a 6-**, the door opens into another node—you'll have to keep looking for a way out.

When you *exit the Gulf into any other place*, find a door to open and roll **+WIS: on a 10+**, choose two from the list below; **on a 7-9**, choose one.

- * You come out where you expected
- * You don't leave anything important behind
- * You don't bring anything awful through with you

On a 6-, the GM will tell you where you emerge, and with what in tow.



The Gulf

Impressions

- * The far-off sound of weeping
 - * A cold mist, crawling
 - * Mirrors that reflect strange things, or things from out-of-time
 - * Funereal trappings of the varied peoples of the world
 - * Images, statuary, paintings or the like of Eesha herself
 - * The sense that something is stalking the nodes, always just one room behind you
 - * Sudden unexpected bursts of verdant space
 - * Spirits of the dead, wandering too, either oblivious or desperate
 - * Hints at the edges of heaven, hell or whatever place lies adjacent to the waiting-lands of the dead
 - * Everywhere the presence of that which the players brought with them
-

Common Areas

Between the unique nodes, Eesha's Gulf is full of places of connection—staircases, hallways, twisting passages, miscellaneous tombs. Feel free to describe these as you like to connect the nodes. They do not require any kind of consistency. A hallway might begin as the dusty stone of a desert tomb and slowly become a sodden barrow-cave dripping with mud and worms. Dust liberally with ghosts. Get weird with it.

Unique Areas (Nodes)

When you need a unique area, choose 1 unmarked entry from this list. Then, mark it off.

❑ EESHA'S CIRCLE

Every journey into the Gulf starts here, and all the safe ones end here, too. This is the first step in; a room of infinite egress—all open windows, archways and doors, all potential in every shady direction. On the floor, the chalky circle and, on the shadow-side, one long footstep dragged through its otherwise perfect lines. You might, if you spent some time searching, find clues as to who Eesha was (or may still be if she's in these halls someplace); you might find something to help you navigate this place or its dangers. If a nasty spirit were waiting to set an ambush, this is where they'd do it, too.

❑ THE WAITING PLACE

Not all ghosts get to skip the queue like heroes recently deprived of their last ounce of strength. Not all dead get to jump right up to Death's doorstep and say, "You there, black-cloaked arbiter, give me a quest and pop me back into the world." Mostly, after you die, there's a lot of waiting: lines of souls crawling beyond the horizon; rooms full of shuffling ghosts. The great eternal wait before the next thing.

Sometimes, wandering through Eesha's Gulf will bring you to one of these waiting places, where ghosts (many, few, or a single lonely soul) await their judgment at the Black Gates.

When you *ask the dead for directions*, roll **nothing: on a 10+**, they tell you, best as they can, what's back along this path they've followed; **on a 7-9**, they tell you what's back there, but they omit a cost, a danger, or a tricky turn; **on a 6-**, they mislead you intentionally, and the GM will tell you what awaits.

❑ A MOURNING FRENZY

Powerful emotions carry over into the lands of the dead. When we mourn, our feelings seep through the divide and feed the ghosts that dwell on the other side. In places where this is particularly concentrated, spirits of all kinds gather to feast. Some intelligent, picking through the feelings for the ones they like best; others, too weak or too frenzied to care, gorging themselves on whatever leaks through. Not a nice place for the living, either way.

❑ THE SORROW FENS

A sticky floor, at first. Soggy carpet. Dewy dark grass 'round the ankles. Then, slowly, more muck and mire. Add faerie candles in the distance and a cold breeze. Rain, seemingly from nowhere. These places are where sorrow and the bleakest feelings gather and coalesce. Where hope is dead and every step weighs as much as a sword in your heart. Crossing the Fens is a hellish ordeal, to be faced with forewarning only by the bravest; but you get into it so gradually that an escape from the muckiest middle is usually your only choice. No turning back, really.

When you *Make Camp in the Sorrow Fens*, you may spend 1 XP for a strange dream: ask the GM any one question about your situation and they'll answer it honestly. They'll also tell you something you'd rather not have learned. Such is the way of the Fens.



❑ CATACOMB OF AETHERLINGS

As with every ecosystem, the nodes of Eesha's Gulf have fauna. The aetherlings have always been here and none of the dead know where they came from, even those closest to the Gate.

They take the shape of all sorts of lost things: trinkets of sentimental value, words on the tip of your tongue, a feeling of *déjà vu*, a long-forgotten lover from when you were still young and the world seemed kind. They'll eat you up in pieces as you travel, but if you're strong and hold them at bay, you might find something in their twisting tunnels that you didn't expect. A souvenir, of sorts.

❑ THE BEAUTIFUL LIE

Death's neighbours are a billion little semi-real places where He sorts the dead into lists and piles. Where the spirits of those who've accepted their fate—and those who've had no say in it—are funnelled into selected afterworlds.

In places, a break occurs and an ADJACENCY can leak through, but in others, it's not so much a crack as it is a slow rubbing-away of the walls, a frictional dissolution. So here, if you stare into the light (or smoke, or shadow, or blurring cloud of sound) that emerges from the other place, you might be able to make a connection. To touch something truly gone from this world. And if you reach out, you might be able to get ahold of it.

When you *try to take something from the other side*, tell the GM what you want and roll +CHA: **on a 10+**, you get it, and it won't last forever, but at least you have it, here and now; **on a 7-9**, you get something flawed or damaged—whether it was like that originally or ended up that way thanks to all your pulling is up to the GM; **on a 6-**, gods only know what you've got on your hands.

Discoveries

- * "Tomb Treasures"
 - * "An Artifact of a Dead Empire"
 - * "A Message Left by Eesha"
 - * "Something Crafted by The Dead"
 - * "A Feast Laid Out Just For You"
 - * "A Secret Taken to the Grave"
-

Dangers

DEATH'S STALKING HOUNDS

Group, Small, Construct

Damage Slavering jaws b[2d8] (*close*)

HP 10 **Armor** 1

Special Qualities Shadowmade

Where one might see a true hound, flanks dark and teeth sharp, another might spy a hunting-hawk, circling overhead. Whatever their shape, it comes from the beholder, not the behold-en beast itself.

These are Death's harrowing-crew, the spirits bound by Death to stalk the after-lands looking for ghosts who might have escaped the great queue that leads to their final rest. Such fugitive souls find themselves stalked by the Hounds, to be carried back or torn apart, as depends the ferocity of the creatures.

Instinct To hunt and capture

- * Scent out an escaped soul
- * Craft a direct way through the maze
- * Report back to Death's lieutenants

A CLUSTER OF DESPERATE SPIRITS

Horde, Stealthy, Organized

Damage Barrage of dour emotions 1d6
(*close, ignores armor*)

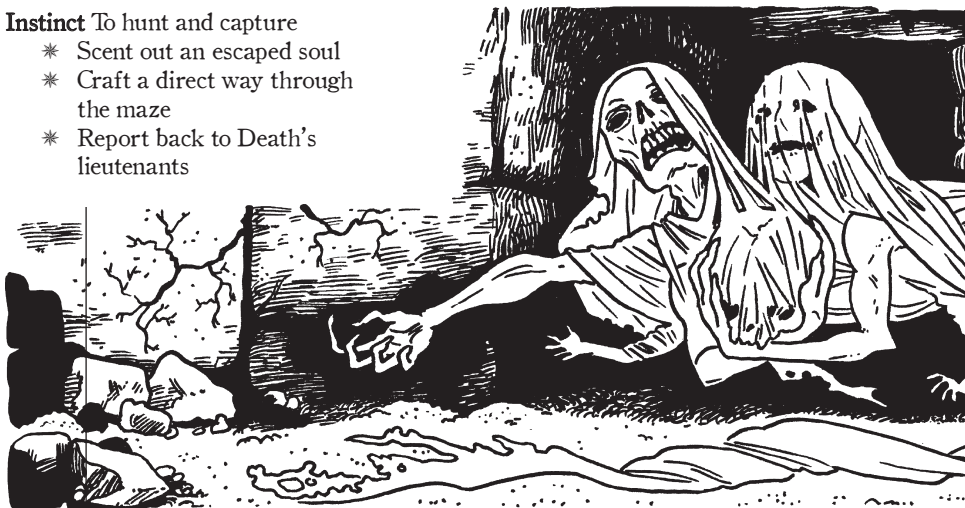
HP 3 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Immaterial

Where there's one, there's another. Where there's two, there's ten. A hundred then, before you can blink and a sea of these displaced souls all gnash their teeth and moan and weep for all they've lost. They can smell the life on you. Lick the vapours of the living lands from your skin while they debase themselves, desperate for a way back to the sweet delicious warmth you carry in your blood. Maybe if they ask again, louder yet, maybe promises will encourage you to take them home with you. If not, a sharp knife of ghost-stuff slipped between your ribs might let all that warmth out.

Instinct To escape this horrible place

- * Clamour for aid or succor from the living
- * Promise something that cannot be delivered
- * Draw attention to the flickering heat of life



AN IMPERIOUS CORPSE

Solitary, Intelligent, Cautious, Hoarder, Terrifying

Damage Weapon of legendary reputation 1d12+2 (1 piercing, *close, reach, forceful*)

HP 16 **Armor** 4

Special Qualities Countenance of darkness

Some rare heroes (or villains) can, when they die, achieve a sort of celebrity in the badlands where the dead await their final reward. These folk carry their body, or a form something like it, into the darkness when they go, all the weight of legend and myth on their backs. As you might imagine, this makes them cranky and expectant of a sort of respect when they're approached. Particularly, they desire the approval and memories of the living.

If you can recall (and recount in entertaining fashion) the personal mythology of an Imperious Corpse, you might just be able to befriend one. Otherwise, expect to become another entry in their infamous list of victories.

Instinct To demand respect and attention

- * Block passage
- * Recount an ancient tale
- * Demand respect

AN ADJACENCY

Group, Large, Devious, Intelligent, Planar, Construct, Terrifying

Damage Chants, moans, admonishments b[2d6] (*close, reach, near, ignores armor*)

HP 14 **Armor** 4

Special Qualities An incompatible ontology, off-its-leash, it should not be (not here, by the gods)

What we believe will kill us. What we believe will eat us alive and spit our bones into the metaphorical dust, and in the land of the newly dead who knows what that might mean? Are these the beasts that took Eesha away from us? Do they come from Heaven? From Hell? From some place stranger still, crafted by the dream-prayers of entities that we cannot yet comprehend? What beautiful crystalline structures make them up, what brilliantly impossible angles.

Instinct to colonize the land of the dead with cosmic ideologies

- * Exude energies of another place
- * Change a thought, just one, for now
- * Know that which must not be known

AN OLD FOE, DISPATCHED ONCE AND WAITING FOR VENGEANCE

Who knows who we'll run into down here, among the dead.

DEATH HIMSELF

Some say Old Shadowguts walks the halls of the Gulf, sometimes. Always searching, gentle and enduring, but for what? A rumour among the newly-dead hints that He might have fallen for that interloper, Eesha.

How fickle the heart. Even that which does not beat.



Raising Hell Under the Holy Mountain

by Claytonian · Illustrated by Claytonian

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The chassis for this adventure was developed while paying heed to two primary sources: the random dungeon generators of *The Perilous Wilds*, which gave me ideas and constraints to work with; and *Servants of the Cinder Queen*, an adventure by Jason Lutes which showed me how to structure those elements. I've run the latter a few times, and it opened my eyes to a great approach to *Dungeon World* adventure design.

Starting with this chassis, I expanded, fleshed out, and changed details to bring together quite the interesting little module, if I do say so myself. Remember, whenever you think of something even more awesome than whatever your random generation tool of choice produces, go for it!

I left a few blanks for you to fill in. You can alter things on the fly. Be flexible. Ask your players for ideas. Interpreting the dice is an oracular feat. Two of the greatest joys of being a game judge are creating your own worlds and discovering things at the same time as the players. It's as true now as it was in 1974.

—Claytonian

Background

In the beginning, the Great Beings formed the Cosmos, and at once a struggle for control broke out among them. On one side were the gods and their angelic servants, the **HELIOIDS**; opposing them was an alliance of giants, titans, and ashuras. Countless gigantomachies would rage across existence, but for most of the world's history, the conflict lay dormant.

During this Age of Peace, the **HELIOIDS** determined to make a home as splendid as themselves, and so carved out the interior of a mighty mountain, therein to construct a great pyramid. This pyramid served as their abode and as edification to the might of the gods. Over the ensuing years, countless pilgrims flocked to the site from the four corners of the world.

But the Golden Age was brought to an end by **THE UNCREATED**, who led a force of demons and monsters to besiege the Holy Mountain. The **HELIOIDS** withstood and beat them back, but just barely. The most loathsome among this unclean host could not be destroyed outright, and so were captured and imprisoned within certain repurposed areas of the pyramid.

Repairs upon the damaged structure were undertaken, but its splendor and reputation would never be recaptured. Many among the resident clergy went mad, became possessed, or both. It was said that the home of the angels

was forever cursed by its defilement. All resources were exhausted. Slowly, steadily, pilgrimages to the pyramid declined, until even the few remaining HELIODES and saints forsook the place.

The last of the devout cleared out some years ago, leaving the manifold wonders of the mountain to fade into obscure legend. Creatures from outside found their way in past once-impenetrable barriers, and now two factions—the **HOBBS** and the **SNAIL-MEN**—vie for territory. Other beings and monsters have taken up residence in the pyramid as well. Those who venture within will soon realize that they are not alone.

The Holy Mountain in your campaign

An entrance to the mountain's interior could be stumbled upon during regular overland explorations. Or an entrance can be an already known location.

The Holy Mountain can be just about anywhere, but it will probably work best in a rustic or forgotten part of the world, where one or two villages are all that remains from a time when mercantile and pilgrimage routes converged on the area.

There should be plenty of half-buried ruins, skeletal remains of once-great structures testifying to the majesty and prosperity of the distant past. Perhaps strange local customs originated in those times; villagers might even maintain shrines to the forgotten gods, to the HELIODES, or to the famed saints of the old faith.

The characters might take note of these and other signs of an ancient mystery. In any case, if and when they start to ask around, those who live in the vicinity will be happy to tell them about the PYRAMIDAL GATE.

Questions

If the PCs are locals (or if this is an introductory adventure or one-shot), they may already know something about the Holy Mountain. Ask some or all of the questions below to generate interesting details. Give them opportunities to prove their answers true or false, especially if they allow you to put a twist on things.

For a Fighter, Bard, or historian:

- * What happened during the final battle between those who dwelt in the Holy Mountain and those who laid siege to it? What songs are sung of this event?

For a Cleric or devout character:

- * What blessed relic or site do you believe to lie within the bowels of the Holy Mountain?

For a Barbarian or refugee:

- * Who were the people who once hunted and subjugated your own ancestors, under a banner of faith? What did that banner look like?

For a Thief or treasure hunter:

- * What treasure did a drunken companion tell you was left behind when this place was forsaken?

For a Ranger or Druid:

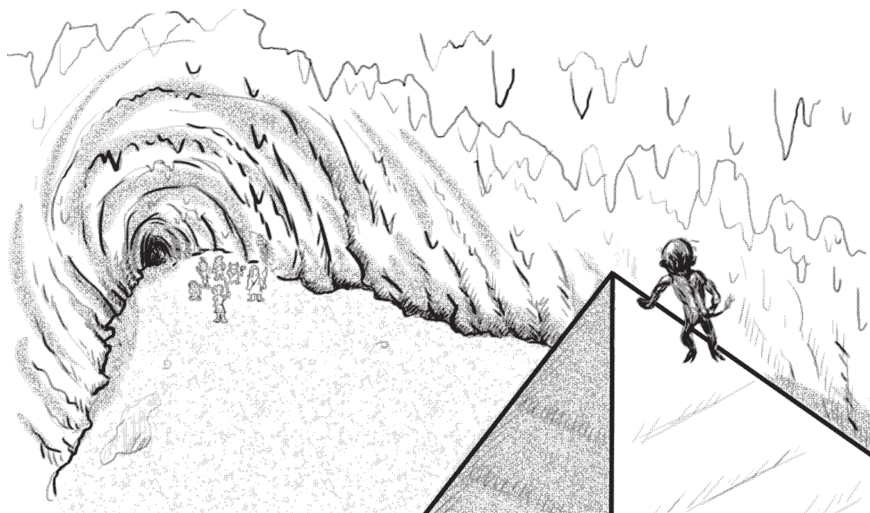
- * What is worshiped at a humble shrine at the Mountain's summit?

For a cultist or agent:

- * What in the area around the Holy Mountain is of vital interest to your organization?

For a Wizard, dwarf, or architect:

- * It is said that a great pyramid was built long ago within the Mountain. What does this shape signify?



The Pyramid

Various natural caves on the slopes of the Holy Mountain may connect to the GREAT CAVERN, but the most obvious way in is by way of the PYRAMIDAL GATE, a well-known landmark.

PYRAMIDAL GATE

Details

A small, pyramid-shaped structure in the wilderness. A doorway in this weathered stone structure opens into a tunnel, which leads under the earth for some distance to join the GREAT CAVERN that holds the Pyramid.

Connections

- * Wilderness, all around
- * Tunnel to the GREAT CAVERN

GREAT CAVERN

Details

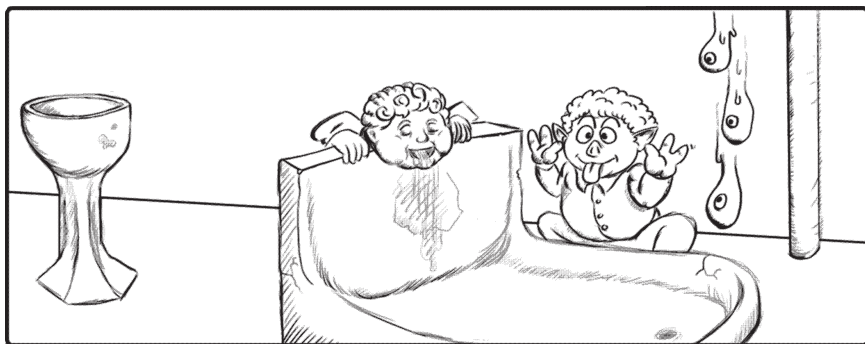
The Holy Mountain was hollowed out by inconceivable means in order to house the massive Pyramid of the HELIODES, the terraced surface of which—illuminated by a dim silver light that is the last trace of a faded enchantment—is an awesome sight to behold. One can only imagine the splendor and spectacle of the Golden Age, when the interior must have bustled with throngs of reverential visitors.

Impressions

- * Numerous stone watering troughs
- * Clumps of petrified dung
- * Knee-high obelisks, marked with sigils of warding

Connections

- * Tunnel to the PYRAMIDAL GATE
- * Portal in the Pyramid face, leading to the FONTS OF PURIFICATION



FONTS OF PURIFICATION

Details

This area was for pilgrims to wash off the dust of the road and their sins alike.

Impressions

- * Smell of sulphur
- * Sound of dripping
- * Pale lichen, covering everything

Discoveries

- * A fountain, spigot, or font that still gurgles out a small stream of water
- * Slimy tracks, leading into a small tunnel dug into the wall or ground
- * A font of a size and ornamentation suggesting it was for blessing babies
- * A font broken in twain and covered by claw marks
- * A dry basin with the inscription *Bless Here Thy Tools* (see PC Moves)

Connections

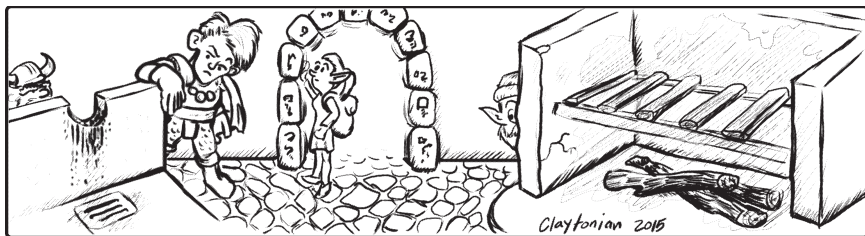
- * Bare, high-ceilinged halls leading to The CHAMBERS OF SACRIFICE (page 52)
- * STAIRS OF CONTEMPLATION (page 53), leading hither and thither
- * Hidden drain pipe (only large enough for a halfling to climb down) leading to THE UNDERWORLD (page 60)

GM Moves

- * A tapping code through the ancient pipes, deciphered as “Help me”
- * 2 SNAIL-MEN slither around a corner
- * A TUBLICKER sidles up to someone
- * A SLITHER OF SLIMES drips from the ceiling

PC Moves

When you *immerse your weapon in a blessing basin*, pray to the powers that be and roll +CHA: **on a 10+**, your weapon is blessed for this adventure—when you wield it within the Holy Mountain, you take +1 ongoing to Hack and Slash against enemies of the gods, and your damage die is increased by 1 size; **on a 7-9**, the GM chooses one or the other.



CHAMBERS OF SACRIFICE

Details

Worshippers once brought their best calves, kid goats, and geldings to these rooms, in order to slaughter and burn them in offering to the forgotten gods.

Impressions

- * Sense of abandonment
- * Domed ceilings, soot-stained and broken by square chimney-holes
- * Smell of copper

Discoveries

- * An area of large, blackened stone pots, where incense was burned
- * Rusty instruments of slaughter
- * A pile of broken prayer-plaques, engraved with wishes for the sick and the dead
- * Battle-scarred stone floor and walls
- * An area sealed off by rubble from a massive ceiling collapse
- * Hob spoor (tracks, fetishes, etc.)

Connections

- * Ornate archways framing STAIRS OF CONTEMPLATION (page 53)
- * Bare, high-ceilinged halls leading to the FONTS OF PURIFICATION (page 51)

Lore to be Spouted

- * The finest newborn animals of each year were brought here as offerings
- * Burning slaughtered offerings and incense was said to bring good luck
- * This place was destroyed during the siege of the Pyramid, but most of it was later rebuilt

PC Moves

When you *slaughter a good animal here and offer it to the gods for the first time*, roll +CHA: **on a 10+**, the HELIOIDS smile on you and give you +2 to your primary ability score for this adventure; **on a 7-9**, the HELIOIDS charge you with stopping the SNAIL-MEN from weakening THE UNDERWORLD seals, and deign to answer 3 questions about the Holy Mountain (ask them now); **on a 6-**, Mark XP, and feel the distinct impression that you're a trespasser in a sacred space before the GM makes a move.

GM Moves

- * Pious party members feel a sense of loss or resentment
- * Sense of being watched
- * Sound of phlegmatic breathing
- * Spectral chattel herded past by a ghostly figure
- * A wailing specter appears
- * Party member is taken by sudden urge to place their head in a slaughter notch, whereupon a phantom in holy garb drags a ceremonial knife across their neck. *Psyche! It was just a disturbing vision, but they become shaky*
- * 1d6 Hobs appear
- * An ANGELIC CORPSE, radiating righteous fury, corporates and attacks
- * A RELIEF-SNAKE hanging out on a wall makes a sneak attack
- * Ceiling collapses for 2d6 damage

STAIRS OF CONTEMPLATION

Details

Stairways of varying widths and lengths, connecting different parts of the Pyramid.

Impressions

- * Quietude
- * Steps worn low by millions of feet
- * Broken ceiling tiles underfoot
- * Faded murals of pilgrims and saints
- * Sense of non-Euclidean architecture
- * Tunnel vision

Discoveries

- * A koan, carved in a dead language
- * The remains of a RELIEF-SNAKE
- * Graffiti (*Kilroy wuz here*)
- * Blood stains, signs of battle (from recent inter-faction conflict)

Connections

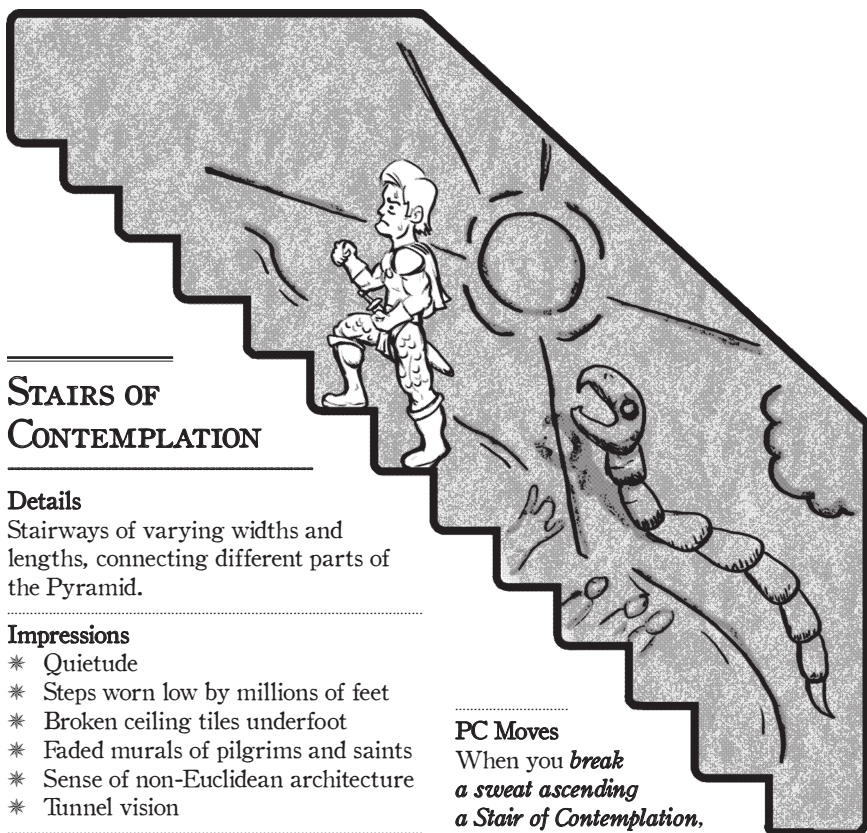
- * Down to FONTS OF PURIFICATION (page 51) and CHAMBERS OF SACRIFICE (page 52)
- * Up to REFECTORY & KITCHENS (page 54)
- * From REFECTORY & KITCHENS (page 54) to CHAMBERS OF ADULATION (page 55), DORMITORIES (page 56)
- * The MYSTICAL MAZE, at the top of the longest Stair (page 58)

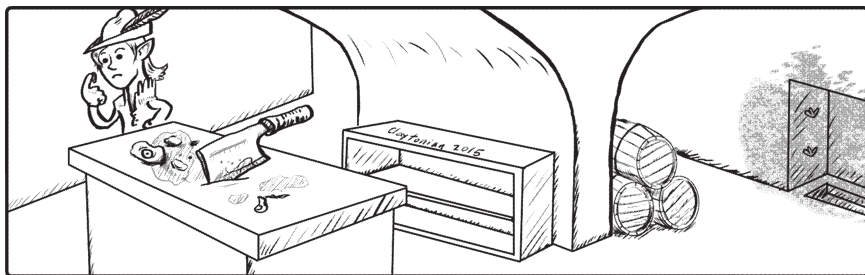
PC Moves

When you *break a sweat ascending a Stair of Contemplation*, the imagery of the passing murals conspires with your physical exertion to create a sense of euphoria, followed by a deep empathy for the struggles of the saints. Perhaps transcendence awaits at the top.

GM Moves

- * A pilgrim brusquely brushes past (it's actually a ghost)
- * They enter a non-Euclidean zone which may take days to traverse
- * Stairs turn into a slide
- * Weakest party member becomes exhausted, *weak* and/or *shaky*
- * Hobs push a gigantic stone head down the stairs from above





REFECTORY & KITCHENS

Details

These rooms were equipped to deal with hundreds of diners. Perishable foods are long since gone, but some preserved stores remain, to be fought over by the resident factions.

Impressions

- * Sooty firepits, iron spits
- * Petrified wooden trestle tables
- * Broad countertops, scarred with use, warped by age and moisture
- * Shattered barrels, scraps of sackcloth

Discoveries

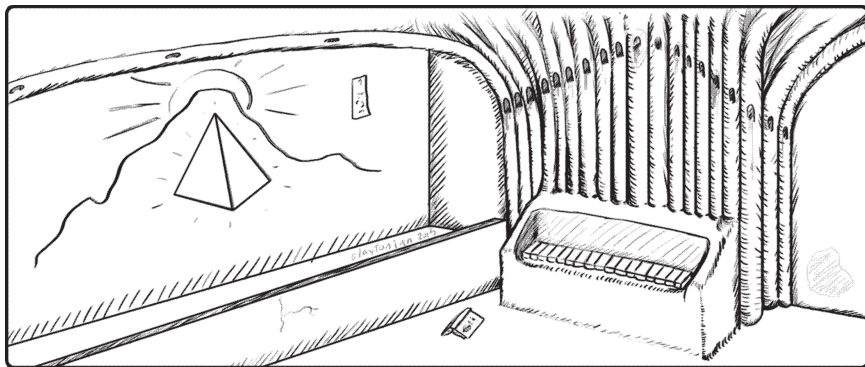
- * Tracks of HOBBS and SNAIL-MEN
- * Signs of a fracas over foodstuffs
- * Vestments under a dining table
- * Prayers carved into benches, tables
- * A granary, long emptied
- * Carcass of a SNAIL-MAN, carved up like a holiday goose
- * Locked larder holding shelves of sealed glass and ceramic jars
- * Ancient can of stinky fish (contents under pressure)

Connections

- * STAIRS OF CONTEMPLATION (page 53), leading up and down
- * The FREIGHT ELEVATOR (page 57)
- * Chimneys, large enough for a child or halfling to climb, venting eventually into the GREAT CAVERN (page 50)

GM Moves

- * A dumbwaiter activates, bringing up an illusory severed head that forces a test of sanity
- * A high shelf topples onto them
- * A barrel rolls out of nowhere to knock them down like ninepins
- * A poltergeist hurls sharp objects
- * 1d6 Hobs initiate combat by pelting the party with jars of spoiled pickles
- * The God of the Hearth takes umbrage at the intrusion and sets all firepits alight, turning the entire area into an unbearably hot sauna



CHAMBERS OF ADULATION

Details

These rooms were once occupied by a chorus singers and organists, whose holy music vibrated in perfect resonance throughout the entire Pyramid. The music's secret potential function as a self-destruct device was never revealed.

Impressions

- * Stone organs of ancient construction
- * Melted stubs of a thousand candles
- * Whistling of a distant wind, as if through a canyon
- * Ambient lilting music, barely audible

Discoveries

- * Crank for automatic organ operation
- * Strange receptacle in the face of an organ (for holding a wax cassette)
- * Wax organ cassette of demon-warding music, effective only if the organ is cranked at top speed
- * Hymnal of lamentations in a dead, ecclesiastical language
- * *General Ardur's Book of Corporeal Chants and War Ditties*
- * A small, sylph-themed altar
- * A folio of the *Song of Perdition*

Connections

- * Ornate archways framing STAIRS OF CONTEMPLATION (page 53)
- * Organ-pipes of varying widths, extending throughout the Pyramid

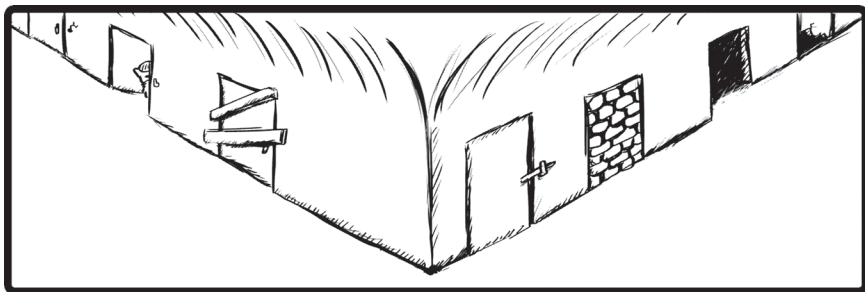
PC Moves

When you **play a stone organ**, roll +INT: **on a 10+**, you manage a few soothing notes—everyone heals all debilities, and insane characters gain sobriety and levity for 1 hour; **on a 7-9**, everyone heals 1 hit point; **on 6-**, a strange vibration is felt everywhere in concordance with a sour note, and a curtain of dust falls from above.

In this last case, the PCs have found the Pyramid's resonating frequency (don't tell them this). If they try to play the same notes again, the vibration recurs, and the structure begins to destabilize, with visible cracks appearing in the walls, ceiling, and floor. If they persist in their playing, conditions will worsen until the Pyramid collapses. Rocks fall, everyone dies. And then they wake up in Limbo, faced by angry HELIOLDS with a job in need of doing...

GM Moves

- * Rubble falls on an organ, triggering a sudden, deafening note
- * A vision of supernatural beings flashes through the area
- * A deafening cacophony threatens to collapse the room
- * A slew of TUBE-CRAWLERS bursts from multiple organ-pipes at once



DORMITORIES

Details

Once the quarters for resident and itinerant monks, clergy, pilgrims, dignitaries, and saints, the cells of this labyrinthine area were (and in some cases remain) sealed by means mundane and magical, in order to contain demons and other damnable entities captured during the Siege of THE UNCREATED. Later, the HOBs claimed the Dormitories as their territory.

Impressions

- * Faint sound of weeping
- * Rattling of doors and chains
- * Preternatural cold

Discoveries

- * Many doors locked, cells sealed
- * A skeleton in meditative posture, draped in the robes of a monk
- * Bedding, tracks, odor of HOBs
- * A cell door, busted outward
- * Holy words and aphorisms, painted with obvious haste
- * A Hob hiding-place, from which they shout unintelligible warnings
- * Roster of inmates, in the Bishop's quarters
- * Spatter of glowing ichor (angel or demon blood?)
- * A loose brick, concealing treasure
- * THE BOOK OF EFFULGENT DEEDS

Connections

- * STAIRS OF CONTEMPLATION (page 53), leading up and down
- * The FREIGHT ELEVATOR (page 57)
- * Halls to REFECTORY & KITCHENS (page 54)

GM Moves

- * A fight between HOBs and SNAIL-MEN breaks out within earshot
- * Sanctified silver nails in boards used to seal a door begin to withdraw and plink to the floor
- * Someone feels compelled to release an inmate
- * A ghostly priestess appears behind them, uttering "All is lost" before fading from sight
- * Someone becomes possessed and attacks their comrades
- * A demon, horror, or possessed one is released (go with LEGION first)
- * A squad of LAWOIDS appears to arrest the party for its recklessness, citing a number of stuffy charges
- * A group of MASOCHISTS arrives to release the forgotten evils held here

FREIGHT ELEVATOR

Details

A common connector between many areas within the Holy Mountain, this conveyance is a stone room large enough to hold a horse-drawn wagon, and able to whisk its contents noisily hither and thither throughout the Pyramid via a network of shafts. The Elevator will be present at a given stop on a roll of 1 on 1d6; when it's not present, the party will find themselves peering through a rectangular portal into yawning blackness.

A PSIONIC KEY, specimens of which may be found secreted or carelessly dropped in various places, is necessary to summon and operate the Elevator.

Impressions

- * Utter stillness when at rest
- * Starts and stops with a sickening lurch
- * Scraping and grinding noise when in motion sets teeth on edge

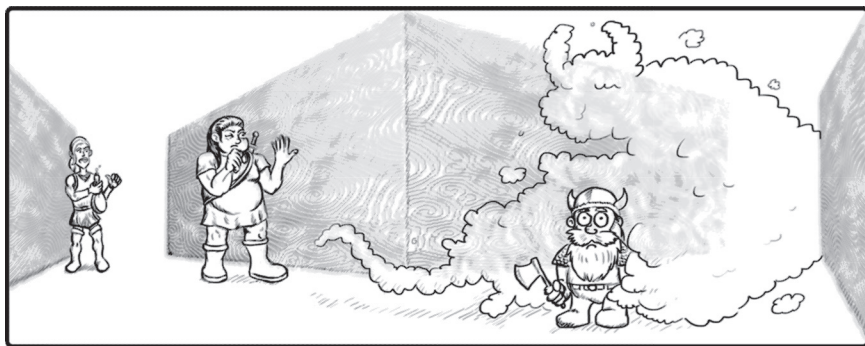
Discoveries

- * Centuries of accreted tally-marks and inventory notes scribbled on the walls
- * The silver glitter of a PSIONIC KEY, lying in the dust nearby

Connections

- * REFECTORIES & KITCHENS (page 54)
- * DORMITORIES (page 56)
- * MYSTICAL MAZE (page 58)





MYSTICAL MAZE

Details

Trial, transcendence, and treasury all in one. Not subject the laws of reality.

Impressions

- * Cool, dry, confusing
- * Cyclopean stonework

Discoveries

- * Rare minerals woven in precise, mystical configurations
- * Dimensional fold connecting to the HOLY OF HOLIES

Connections

- * The longest STAIR OF CONTEMPLATION (page 53), leading down
- * The FREIGHT ELEVATOR (page 57)
- * Dimensional fold at Maze's heart leads to the HOLY OF HOLIES (page 59)

Lore to be Spouted

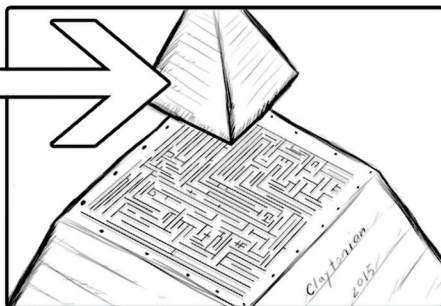
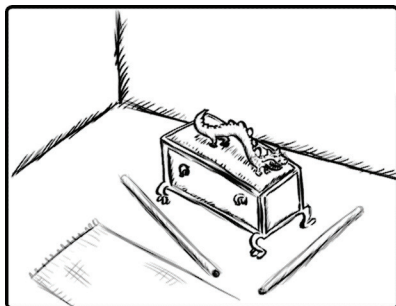
- * Scripture claims that the most sacred place of the Helioids was contained in a labyrinth such as this

PC Moves

When you *try to find your way through the Maze*, Roll +WIS, +1 if you carry a PSIONIC KEY engraved with a maze-like pattern: **on a 10+**, you find the HOLY OF HOLIES (see next page) or a small treasure cache (GM decides); **on a 7-9**, you become lost, but discover a clue (mural, sculpture, etc.) about the history of the Pyramid.

GM Moves

- * A strange piping is heard
- * They find their own long-dead remains! All their own stuff is there—save food and water—but all enchantments have faded
- * Impossibly, they emerge at the FONTS OF PURIFICATION (page 51) or the UNDERWORLD (page 60)
- * Vise-like walls converge to crush
- * They discover they're wandering through one of their own minds, peopled by fears that must be fought
- * The MINO-MIST rolls in



HOLY OF HOLIES

Details

If the party materializes in this small room, all corrupted (possessed, demonic, Chaotic) party members will be left behind. This room is where the high priests of the Pyramid conversed with ineffable beings, gods, and angels, kneeling before the Dragon Shrine.

Impressions

- * Pristine, white, sense of *gravitas*
- * Relaxing, ambient light
- * Alabaster reliefs of prophets, saints

Discoveries

- * An oblong glass dome on a pedestal, draped in white silk and containing the HEAD OF HELIOTRO
- * The Dragon Shrine, waist-high and carved in the shape of its namesake
- * The top of the Dragon Shrine is a lid, which when removed reveals valuable scrolls of holy scripture
- * The interior of the Dragon Shrine has a false bottom which conceals the TABLETS OF REALITY

Connections

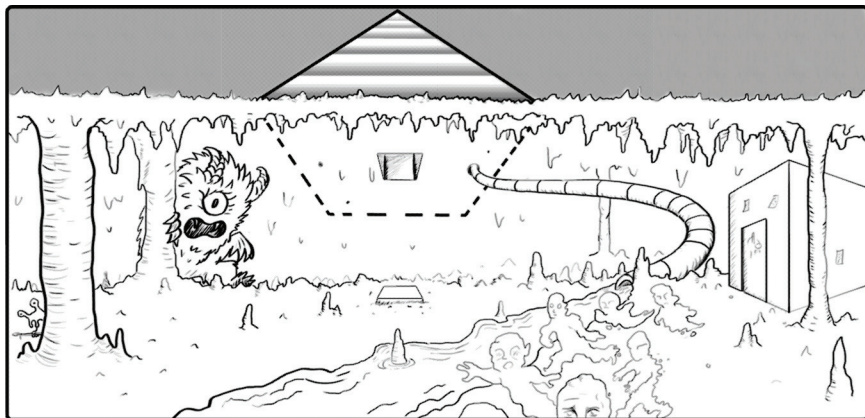
- * Dimensional fold connecting to the MYSTICAL MAZE (page 58)

PC Moves

When you *kneel at the Dragon Shrine and ask a question of any Lawful god to whom you were once or are now faithful*, you will receive an answer, but any question beyond the first goes unheard.

GM Moves

- * Someone is struck by a feeling of unworthiness, and becomes *shaky*
- * The Dragon Shrine sheds a wrathful light that pierces souls and humbles all onlookers
- * The Dragon animates and grows to gigantic size as the room transforms into a heavenly skyscape where the PCs can fly; of course the dragon is spoiling for an epic battle



THE UNDERWORLD

Details

The Underworld, stretching into the depths beneath the Pyramid, has had a number of different functions: salt mine, sewer outlet, prison, oubliette. Many horrors wander its twisting tunnels, but all cower in fear before the HOLY BEAST THAT LURKS BELOW. The wrath of the gods incarnate, the BEAST was created to keep prisoners in and interlopers out. Thanks to their psionic contrivances, the SNAIL-MEN are invisible to it.

Impressions

- * Terrible cold, sound of dripping
 - * Rumbles, near and distant, evoking a fury, barely restrained
 - * Suffused in a sense of hopelessness
-

Discoveries

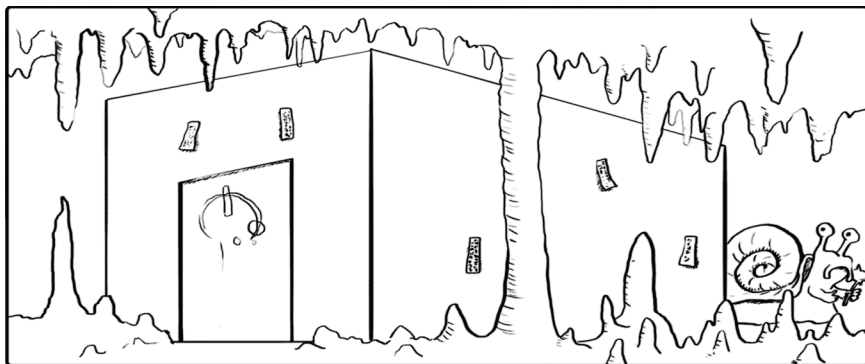
- * Shiny trails of dried slime
- * Tunnel walls scraped by the passage of something that filled it to capacity
- * Smell like dirt mixed with dead flesh
- * A prison cell, hastily excavated and sealed for all time; demonic curses, cries, exhortations from within
- * The SWORD OF AELPHRON, frozen in ice

Connections

- * The FREIGHT ELEVATOR (page 57)
 - * Sealed door to THE VAULT (page 61)
-

GM Moves

- * They realize they're lost
- * They realize they're being followed
- * The roar of the BEAST reverberates
- * A parade of forsaken souls (UNRESTFUL SPIRITS) drifts by
- * Someone slips in snail slime and takes a tumble down a slide
- * The HOLY BEAST THAT LURKS BELOW appears and attacks
- * An ashura, titan, or giant appears, looking to pull off a jailbreak
- * Someone becomes entranced by whispers in the dark and heads towards THE VAULT



THE VAULT

Details

THE UNCREATED sought out this place during the Siege, because It knew certain powerful relics might be stored here. The HELIIDS managed to trap and entomb It within, marking the turning point in the battle. After the Pyramid was abandoned and the SNAIL-MEN moved in, THE UNCREATED used Its infernal influence to force their rapid evolution. It hopes that their increased intelligence can be bent to the task of finally releasing It from Its prison.

Impressions

- * Walls densely covered in the holy words that comprise a Supernal Seal, hastily painted
- * Sealing-papers, curled like dried bark and littering the floor
- * Feeling of being watched

Discoveries

- * CHALICE OF THE EBON BISHOP
- * SHROUD OF HARMIAN
- * BONES OF THE LAUGHING SAINT

Connections

- * THE UNDERWORLD (page 60)

PC Moves

When you *attempt to undo the Supernal Seal*, Defy Danger using the ability most relevant to your method: **on a 10+**, the painted words covering the door dissolve, and the door falls to dust; **on a 7-9**, the Seal issues a burst of light that completely blinds you or your allies (your choice), and the Vault door cracks down the middle; you might gain entry with further effort.

GM Moves

- * THE UNCREATED senses opportunity and reaches out to control you, the GM, forcing you to mislead your players by asking, “So, how do you want to go about breaking in to get to the treasure?” You’ll only be able to admit the truth after the game session is over
- * THE UNCREATED ensorcells one of them into doing Its bidding, imparting the knowledge necessary to safely break the Supernal Seal
- * THE UNCREATED telepathically communicates to them in a robotic voice: “Hello. Is. Someone. There. I. Have. Been. Here. So. Long. Batteries. Drained. Cannot. Move.” and so on. THE UNCREATED has detected that this might work to confuse the entities linked to the interlopers’ souls (i.e., the players)



Conclusion

If the party breaks the Supernal Seal, inadvertently or by choice, **THE UNCREATED** will take out Its pent-up rage on anyone that tries to prevent It from escaping, swatting away obstacles like flies, but paying no heed to anyone who covers in fear. If the **HOLY BEAST THAT LURKS BELOW** is still alive, it might show up in time to distract **THE UNCREATED** and give the party enough time to make a run for the **FREIGHT ELEVATOR** before **THE UNDERWORLD** collapses from the stresses of battle.

If the party finds **THE VAULT**, but does not release its prisoner, you may opt to make a new Front: **THE UNCREATED** will exploit the thread of connection to the outside world represented by the party to spread its influence like a virus, awakening external evils and bending them toward the breaking of the Supernal Seal.

If the party returns to civilization with treasures from the Pyramid in tow, it may be difficult to find a buyer anywhere outside of a thriving trade center, but each treasure can be bartered away for 1d4x100 gold worth of goods or carousing capital.



Monsters

These denizens of the Pyramid are listed in alphabetical order. Some of the tags employed are new; decide what they mean for yourself.

ANGELIC CORPSE

Solitary, Planar, Stealthy, Undead, Smoldering, Sadistic

Damage Flame sword, claws 1d10 (*close*)
HP 12 Armor 1

Special Qualities Immune to mundane damage

Righteous fury keeps the remains of this once-heavenly being animated and angry, stalking the Pyramid between worlds, shifting into existence to strike as if at random.

Instinct To feed its rage

- * *Heart Grip*: squeeze a heart with telekinesis
- * *Rage Chain*: impart the urge to assault an ally, who in turn will feel the urge
- * *Wrathfire*: set them burning with otherworldly flame

HELIOID

Solitary, Divine, Organized, Intelligent

Damage Flaming sword 1d10+2 (*close*)
HP 14 Armor 3

Special Qualities Flying

Heliods all but abandoned the mundane plane after the Siege of THE UNCREATED, but the Pyramid still resonates in their hearts, and anything that distrubs it overmuch may draw their attention.

Instinct To illuminate and punish

- * Blind them with righteousness
- * Wrack their souls with guilt
- * *Soul Trial*: confront them in a moment between moments and force them to justify their existence or be erased from reality
- * *Nova Blade*: melt a face with an anime blast from flaming sword

HOB

Group, Devious, Organized, Intelligent, Slippery

Damage Shiv 1d6 (1 piercing, *hand*)
HP 5 Armor 1

Special Qualities None

Hobs descend from a servile species that attended to the clergy and maintained the facilities of the Pyramid. Without overseers, they've turned feral, and now vie with the SNAIL-MEN for territory and resources. 1 out of every 6 Hobs will be a HOB ELDER.

Instinct To stab and run

- * Slip through a crack
- * Feint to make them maneuver imprecisely
- * Lead them into each other
- * Jump on their weapon and hold on for dear life
- * Leap on face, then tumble away

HOB, ELDER

Leader, Devious, Intelligent, Organized, Slippery, Artful

Damage Illusory manifestation 1d8
(ignores armor, *close*, *reach*, *near*)

HP 7 Armor 2

Special Qualities Illusionist

Elder hobs have a bit of that old fey magic in their veins. They like to trick foes who consider themselves smart.

Instinct To befuddle and englamer

- * Slip through a crack
- * Trick them into fighting each other
- * Summon an illusory monster
- * Create an illusory pit trap
- * Was a bundle of sticks all along!

LAWOID

Group, Organized, Intelligent, Planar

Damage Khopesh 1d8 (*close*)

HP 6 **Armor** 2

Special Qualities Immune to holy power

Typically—and always in squads of four—Lawoids roam the upper planes of existence, looking for entropy in need of correction. But sometimes they slum around in the lower realities, spoiling for a fight.

Instinct To create and maintain order

- * *Law Field*: paralyze culprits in a zone of pure law
- * *Energy Shackle*: detain them in snaking bonds of white light
- * *Goodoid, Badoid*: Extract a confession from the unwilling

LEGION, THE CURSED

Solitary, Genius, Possessed, Insane

Damage Biting limb 1d10 (*close, reach*)

HP 12 **Armor** 2

Special Qualities Vulnerable to area effects

Legion predates the Siege of THE UNCREATED by hundreds of years. However, its whispered blasphemies played a key role in weakening the Pyramid's defenses. An amalgam of several dozen demons possessing one body, its humanity was given up for lost by clerical experts long ago. Indeed, Legion is the barest semblance of a humanoid, let alone a human; it appears as a seething mass of dozens of faces, held together by cilia-like tendrils.

Instinct To corrupt, invade, consume

- * Seethe and swallow an attacking or off-balance foe
- * Corrupt their flesh with a touch
- * Gift them a demonic face somewhere on their body
- * Try their sanity by revealing a child's face that pleads for mercy

LURKING DEMONS AND DEVILS

Group, Organized, Intelligent, Infernal, Poetic

Damage Claws or hell hooks 1d8

(1 piercing, *close*)

HP 6 **Armor** 2 (5 vs. fire/cold)

Special Qualities Psionic, vulnerable to holy power

Foul creatures—comprising the rank and file of THE UNCREATED's army of darkness—which might be encountered imprisoned in the DORMITORIES, stalking THE UNDERWORLD, or testing the defenses of the Pyramid in these latter days. Despite appearances, they are unfailingly polite, and speak in rhyming quatrains (if that's within the GM's skillset).

Instinct To evoke sweet lamentations

- * Flay exposed skin
- * Afflict with tumorous growth
- * Twist limbs with telekinesis
- * Eat the fallen
- * Call forth chains of hellfire



MASOCHOIDS

Group (3, 5, or 7), Terrifying, Chaotic, Sadistic, Masochistic, Blasphemous

Damage Glob of cancerous, thorny flesh
1d8 (*close, reach, near, disgusting*)

HP 5 Armor 0

Special Qualities Regenerating

Birthing from horrid sins and bubbled up into the mundane world from the Seven Hells, these vile aberrations band together to disorganize. Oblong in form with several limbs, faces dominating their midsections. They constantly drip smelly caustic globs of flesh, and their indeterminate internal organs makes them extremely resistant to damage.

Instinct To corrupt, destroy, savor pain

- * Cause insanity with ceaseless, chaotic gibbering
- * Adhere to them or their things like hot glue
- * Utter a blasphemy that fills them with fear or rage
- * Thank them for damage, then squeeze own wound to blind them with a jet of foul ichor

When you *strike a Masochoid with a mundane weapon*, roll 1d6 along with your damage die: if you roll doubles, the Masochoid melts into a puddle of vomit. If you don't roll doubles and your damage roll is higher than the thing's HP, you kill it outright; otherwise, it regenerates immediately to its full HP.



MINO-MIST

Solitary, Large, Slow, Amorphous, Incorporeal

Damage Caustic touch 1 (*hand, ignores armor*)

HP 20 Armor 0

Special Qualities Vulnerable to explosions and electricity

A living miasma of white mist that smells of bull-sweat. It eats away at flesh and mind alike, but spares those who sing or hum holy songs found elsewhere in the Pyramid.

Instinct To envelop, confuse, consume

- * Reduce visibility like thick fog
- * Separate them
- * Reveal a bull-like shadow
- * Afflict all who have suffered from its caustic touch by reducing each of their Constitution and Intelligence scores by 1
- * Teleport them to a private maze

HEAD OF HELIOTRO

Solitary, Intelligent, Divine, Authoritative

Damage Mincing glance 2 (*reach, ignores armor*)

HP 10 Armor 4

Special Qualities Hovering

Heliotro was once a luminous being, charged with creating music to praise the works of the gods. During the attack on the Pyramid, he was beheaded, but not destroyed. His head remains haughty, but one clever enough to placate it might learn the dulcet tones necessary to calm the HOLY BEAST THAT LURKS BELOW.

Instinct To order around lesser beings

- * Teleport from here to there
- * Upbraid or remonstrate them
- * Compel them to stand still and sing adulations to the gods
- * Make them doubt themselves
- * Force one to attack another

HOLY BEAST THAT LURKS BELOW

Solitary, Large, Magical, Inexorable

Damage Fists of stone 1d10+1 (*reach, forceful, messy*)

HP 16 Armor 4

Special Qualities Immune to mundane damage

De facto jailer for those imprisoned in THE UNDERWORLD, the Beast will attack anyone unable to soothe its ancient rancor (see the HEAD OF HELIOTRO, above). The SNAIL-MEN PSYCHERS that share its territory avoid its wrath by using their psionic powers to camouflage themselves and their kin.

Instinct To SMASH!

- * Pick them up and hurl them, into each other, into stalagmites
- * Scrape the ceiling, causing a localized cave-in
- * Execute a suplex

RELIEF SNAKE

Solitary, Stealthy, Devious, Magical

Damage Constriction 1d10+1 (*hand*)

HP 12 Armor 2

Special Qualities Stone

A lithomorphic life form that resembles a bas-relief snake or other sinuous design element. A Relief Snake is able to hibernate for years before sensing the life force of passing prey, at which point it awakens to stalk at a distance and watch for a chance to strike.

Instinct To sleep and seek sustenance

- * Entangle or trip them up
- * Hurl entangled foe
- * Constrict until prey blacks out
- * Bite unconscious victim, injecting magical venom that converts protein to carbon crystals
- * Consume carbon crystals to heal 1d8 HP

A SLITHER OF SLIMES

Horde, Small, Amorphous, Stealthy

Damage Acerbic touch 1d6 (*hand*)

HP 3 Armor 0

Special Qualities Mindless, blind

A herd of small, disk-shaped slimes composed of a caustic substance.

Anatomically, they are rather like jellyfish, but can propel themselves on both land and water. They can sense organic matter in proximity, and will attack it mindlessly.

Instinct To break down life

- * Drop onto them from above
- * Spring from the floor to someone's face
- * Dissolve organic matter
- * Sting an extremity with a pain like a thousand knives

SNAIL-MAN

Group, Organized, Slimy, Spooky

Damage Polearm 1d6 (*reach*) or ragged bow 1d6 (*near, far*)

HP 4 Armor 1

Special Qualities None

Snail-Men emerged from the depths of the earth beneath the Holy Mountain some time ago, and since entering the Pyramid have started to encroach upon the territory of the HOBs, inciting occasional skirmishes. Of late, strange radiations from THE UNCREATED have begun enhancing the brains of the SNAIL-MEN, to the point where some are capable of performing the rituals necessary to break THE VAULT's Supernal Seal. These most evolved of the molluskoids, about 1 in 4, have become PSYCHERS.

Instinct To acquire and defend turf

- * Get sticky on them
- * Wrench something from them
- * Spit slime into their eyes
- * Retreat into shell (+2 armor, regenerate 1d4 HP)



SNAIL-MAN PSYCHER

Leader, Intelligent, Devious, Organized, Slimy, Spooky

Damage Polearm 1d8 (*reach*)

HP 6 **Armor** 1

Special Qualities Psionic

A molluskoid distinguished from its kin by an enlarged, visibly pulsing brain, the source of surprising intelligence and psionic powers. Unfortunately, with greater cognizance comes recognition of the futility of existence without the aid of a greater power, which some PSYCHERS take as motivation to release THE UNCREATED.

Instinct To improve their lowly lot

- * Get sticky on them
- * Wrench something from them
- * Spit slime into their eyes
- * Retreat into shell (+2 armor, regenerate 1d4 HP)
- * Create an invisible barrier via aerokinesis
- * Throw enshelled SNAIL-MAN at them with telekinesis
- * Challenge their self-control via psychokinesis

TUBE CRAWLER

Horde, Small

Damage Bore into flesh 1d4 (*hand*)

HP 1 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Blind

How they came to be in the Pyramid is a mystery, while their presence is a horror. Moving by way of pneumatic propulsion, they are attracted to warmth and bore into soft things in search of the pulse of life.

Instinct To seek heat and rocket about

- * Bore into exposed flesh
- * Bore deeper, in search of pulse
- * Bore into their heart
- * Release air, causing an embolism

TUB-LICKER

Solitary, Gross

Damage Tongue-lash 1d10 (*close, reach*)

HP 12 **Armor** 0

Special Qualities Disease-ridden

A spirit of perversion which revels in revolting more refined lifeforms. Unable to communicate even with each other, and possessing only the basest instincts.

Instinct To gross out onlookers

- * Use long tongue to diddle with its own wounds (the deeper the gash, the better)
- * Shove tongue into someone's ear
- * Give someone's eyeball a burning, blinding lick

When you say "*Eww!*" or "*Grody!*" or *something similar*, the Licker ejaculates an independent, squirming tongue from an orifice. Each such tongue-worm has 1 HP and its own set of moves:

- * Stuff self down someone's throat
- * Make them *sick* with a touch
- * Impart a leprous malady

THE UNCREATED

Solitary, Genius, Devious, Planar, Commanding

Damage Finger-beam of uncreation 3d6
(2 piercing, *close*, *reach*, *near*)

HP 20 Armor 3

Special Qualities Psionic, immune to mind control

The Uncreated maintains that It is, was, and will always be; that It is ineffable, inexorable; that Its current reality is a fool's dream begging for destruction. It is aware of you and your players, and will seek to manipulate even you, Its alleged "Master," in order to carry out Its plans to annihilate the the Wheel of Karma that constitutes the multiverse.

The HELIoids consider It a sort of demiurge, believing It brought order to the Cosmos to pave the way for the higher powers. Tragically, according to the histories of the angels, the Uncreated went mad with jealousy, and sought to bring them down by conquering the Pyramid.

Instinct To control everything

- * Call them star-excrement (technically true, since people are made of stars)
- * Acquire the TABLETS OF REALITY
- * Create a simulacrum of one of them and cause it to attack
- * Control them by sheer force of will
- * Revoke someone's existence (erase them and any memory of them)

UNRESTFUL SPIRITS

Horde, Incorporeal, Undead, Cold

Damage Cold touch 1d4 (1 piercing, *hand*)

HP 3 Armor 0

Special Qualities Floating

A river of souls that flow through the underworld, numbering in the hundreds, their fate only to be guessed at by theologians. They will ignore anyone wise enough to not draw their attention. They are so numerous that any force opposing them will eventually have no choice but to retreat or submit to the current.

Instinct To steal warmth from the living

- * Draw them into the current
- * Cover metal in a patina of frost
- * Drain warmth from a living thing
- * Carry them away

WAILING SPECTER

Solitary, Incorporeal, Bloody, Loud

Damage Wail 1d4 (1 piercing, *close*, *reach*, *near*, *area effect*, *stunning*) or scream 1d6 (2 piercing, *close*, *reach*, *near*, *stunning*)

HP 7 Armor 0

Special Qualities Floating

A spirit of pain, taking the form of a maw surrounded by spindly, torsioned limbs. It seems to target sapient beings.

Instinct To cause suffering

- * Collapse part of the environment with a scream
- * Shatter an item with a scream
- * Crack open someone's head... with a scream

Treasure, Items, and Relics

BOOK OF EFFULGENT DEEDS

1 weight

Recounts the deeds of great religious heroes fighting demons, turning temple gamblers out on their ear, hanging out with hungry lions, etc.

When you *try to find a buyer for the book*, roll •nothing, but only the GM is privy to the meaning of the result:

On a 10+, the buyer is part of a secret organization, happy to pay well for the book, which will try to recruit you into their illustrious order and give you lots of interesting missions.

On a 7-9, the buyer will pay you handsomely, and has connections to a group looking to hire some adventurers to retrieve a certain lost relic.

On a 6-, don't mark XP. The buyer is an agent of chaos, who acts impressed and makes lots of inquiries of how you got the Book. They'll make you feel like a hero with lots of "What happened next?" type encouragements. After departing, they'll use this info to create or advance a campaign Front.



BONES OF THE LAUGHING SAINT

divine, 1 weight

When you *take the time to consult the Bones using a ritual of divination*, roll •WIS: on a 10+ the GM will tell you the potential weal or woe of a specific course of action ("Should we touch the button?" is a better question than "Should we enter the dungeon?")—take •1 forward to act on that information, and choose 2 from the list below; on a 7-9, the GM will whisper a vital piece of information (only once, so listen closely), and all 3 from the list apply.

- * You do not erupt into a laughing fit that echoes up and down the halls
- * You do not get possessed by the Laughing Saint long enough to pull a prank on someone (the GM will take control of your actions when the opportunity presents itself)
- * You are not filled with a strange mirth that makes you caper and cavort in a disturbing fashion

CHALICE OF THE EBON BISHOP

divine, 1 weight

Knowledge of this item's properties has been lost to the ages; figuring out what it does may only be done via careful research or experimentation.

When you *pour any liquid into the Chalice*, it becomes potable to you. However, any Evil or Chaotic person who drinks from it will be struck deaf and dumb, in addition to suffering the effects of the liquid.

When you *kill a creature intentionally using the properties of the Chalice*, the Ebon Bishop is dismayed by such an evil act, and passes word of your misdeed along to the higher powers. You will no doubt suffer their wrath ere long.

PSIONIC KEY

0 weight

A metal rectangle about two inches wide and five inches long, with a hole punched through at one end. Sometimes a chain or thong of preserved leather runs through the hole, indicating that it might have been worn around the neck. A Psionic Key (there are at least half a dozen) is necessary to operate the FREIGHT ELEVATOR.

When you *come across a Psionic Key*, roll 1d12 twice and consult the table below to determine the two places between which that particular Key is able to move the ELEVATOR. If you roll the same area twice, the Key is broken and is only capable of summoning the ELEVATOR to that area.

1d12 AREA

- 1-4 DORMITORIES (page 56)
- 5-9 REFECTORY & KITCHENS (page 54)
- 10-11 MYSTICAL MAZE* (page 58)
- 12 THE UNDERWORLD (page 60)

*Any Key to the MYSTICAL MAZE is engraved with a maze-like pattern, and will glow brighter the closer it gets to the HOLY OF HOLIES.

SHROUD OF HARMIAN

divine, 1 weight

When you *drape the Shroud over a fallen ally*, roll +Deeds (the number of things that you can list, off the top of your head, that were performed by the deceased in the name of your deity): **on a 10+**, your fallen ally returns, a little worse for wear—they lose 1 point of a random ability score that isn't Wisdom, permanently; **on a 7-9**, Death demands its due, appearing before the party to ask for a volunteer to take the fallen ally's place. If no one acquiesces, it's on you: volunteer, and your ally returns to life in perfect condition; decline, and Death sweeps up both Shroud and body before departing.

SWORD OF AELPHRON

close, 2 piercing, 3 weight

This overlarge sword can only be lifted by one of Lawful alignment, and glows with rage when worthy foes are nearby.

When you *apply the blood of a fallen ally to the Sword and swear an oath to avenge them*, roll +Bond with that ally: **on a 10+**, you're immune to the effects of hunger, thirst, injury, and age until your oath is fulfilled; **on a 7-9**: as with on a 10+, but you will expire upon fulfillment of your oath.

If your oath goes unfulfilled for a year and a day, you become subject again to hunger, thirst, injury, and age. In addition, you suffer -1 ongoing until you submit to the rage of the Sword and slay a worthy foe. At that point, you lose your Lawful alignment (choose another), and your oath is held against you for all time.

TABLETS OF REALITY

divine, 5 weight

The tiny glyphs chiseled into these small, oddly heavy stone tablets are from ancient holy tongue, decipherable only by the most learned of ecclesiastical sages. They comprise nothing less than the rules of reality.

When you *chisel something new into the Tablets*, that thing becomes true. If you are foolish enough to author an impossibility (2+2=5, etc.), reality undoes itself and the GM is encouraged to restart the campaign in an alternate universe that depends in some way (discernible or not) upon your new rule.

When you *chisel a third new thing into the Tablets*, a heavenly host of unimaginable beings arrives to claim them. Sure, you could stop them with the tablets, but just how fast can you chisel, anyways?

Contributors

Those Who Write the Deeps

Joe Banner designs things (websites and books, mostly) and writes adventures in a range of pubs and coffee shops across Surrey, England. You can find his ramblings online at joebanner.co.uk

Claytonian lives in far-off Japan. He enjoys drawing weird dungeons and peopling them with curiosities. You can find his works at <http://www.rpgnow.com/browse/pub/6976/Kill-It-With-Fire> and in many “old school” RPG zines.

Adam Koebel is a full-time Twitch streamer and co-designer of the *Dungeon World* roleplaying game. He exists primarily on the internet. You can watch him play video games at <http://twitch.tv/adamkoebel>.

Jason Lutes is a cartoonist and a teacher at the Center for Cartoon Studies in White River Junction, Vermont. In his spare time he plays and writes games.

Johnstone Metzger is a game designer and publisher from Vancouver, Canada who doesn't like anything.

Jeremy Strandberg has opinions about role playing games, especially *Dungeon World*. Some are nitpicky, others grandiose, and still others downright heretical, but he's usually willing to share them. You can find him at the *Dungeon World Tavern*.

Those Who Draw the Deeps

Carl Antonowicz, Disciple of the Ink Queen, has offered up his soul on the Drafting Altar. View his prostrations at thulsadude.tumblr.com or cantocomics.wordpress.com.

Jan Martijn Burger grew up in New England and now lives in North Carolina. He is a puppeteer, cartoonist, activist, and game designer. He spends most of his time rummaging through the bushes looking for insects with his one year old daughter.

Niels Burger lives in the Boston area. He draws, paints and teaches art. He is excited to make illustrations of dungeons and monsters and enjoys designing board games. His work can be found out NielsBurger.com.

Laurel Lynn Leake is a comics creator, writer, and educator fascinated by the unique layered language of comics. She earned her MFA from the Center for Cartoon Studies in 2013, and lives in Providence, RI.





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