



THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE



BRENDAN CONWAY

THE COLD OF RUINS OF LAST LIFE

A CHAOS WORLD

BY BRENDAN CONWAY



CREDITS

Written by Brendan Conway

Developed by Brendan Conway and Mark Diaz Truman

Edited by Eric Mersmann, Mark Diaz Truman, and Sally Christensen

Proofreading by Shelley Harlan

Art by Juan Ochoa

Layout by Sarah Richardson

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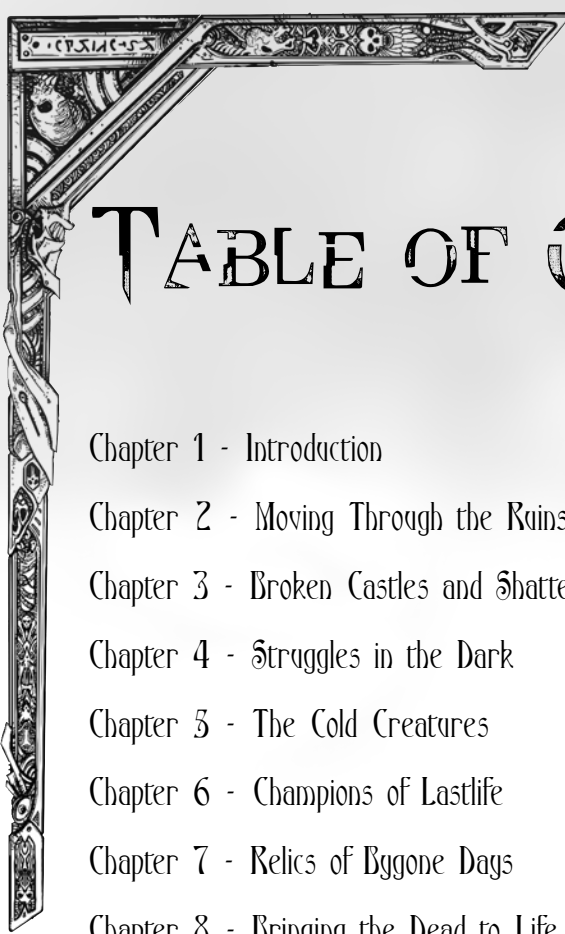


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INTRODUCTION

What Is THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE?

Imagine grand cathedrals. Spires scraping the heavens. Statues of alabaster and silver. A song echoing through stone corridors. The light of hope enconced in a thousand torches, keeping the darkest nights at bay.

Then imagine it all fell. Grand cathedrals, silent and empty. Spires, crumbling and broken. Statues dirty and tarnished. Song, forgotten and lost. A thousand torches, cold and dark.

That is the world of Lastlife.

This book—along with *Dungeon World* itself—provides you with everything you need to run a game in the ruined setting of Lastlife. Players take on the roles of the undead citizens, caught in an endless limbo of cold death. They, and they alone, can restore the world's glory...or begin a new world in the shattered remains.

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE provides details on the broken, fragmented pieces of a once great world. Here you'll find monstrous denizens. Relics that have survived past the end, or have been created since. Paths to power open to any who would take them, paths that may lead to greater darkness or newfound light. You'll also find tweaks to the base *Dungeon World* rules to better reflect the tone and nature of Lastlife.

Inspiration

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is inspired by many different sources, but none more directly than the video game *Dark Souls* by From Software. *Dark Souls* has a unique flavor and tone, and while THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE isn't exactly the same, it carries much of *Dark Souls*'s soul, as it were.

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE also owes debts to numerous other works, including but not limited to:

- ☞ The *Gormenghast* trilogy, by Mervyn Peake
- ☞ *Shadow of the Colossus*, by Team Ico
- ☞ The Elric Saga, by Michael Moorcock
- ☞ "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath," by H. P. Lovecraft
- ☞ *Pan's Labyrinth*, by Guillermo Del Toro
- ☞ *Roadside Picnic*, by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky



Overview of the Book

Here's what you can expect to find in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*.

In *Moving Through the Ruins*, you'll find the major rules changes for *Dungeon World* that make the system work for *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*, including tweaks to the basic moves, bonds, alignments, and the individual classes.

In *Broken Castles and Shattered Statues*, you'll find setting information; descriptions of locations and places that you can use to assemble a unique mix of ruins for your own game, with questions about what secrets the ruins may hold; and special moves to make them matter.

In *Struggles in the Dark*, you'll find the fronts for a campaign in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*. These fronts describe the overarching threats and issues in Lastlife, and give you the tools to make the setting matter to your game.

In *The Cold Creatures*, you'll find the denizens and monsters of the ruins, each with stats, moves, an instinct, and a description.

In *Champions of Lastlife*, you'll find the compendium classes of Lastlife, detailing many of the paths to power open to the PCs in the ruins.

In *Relics of Bygone Days*, you'll find the artifacts of Lastlife, relics of great and terrible power, waiting to be found in the ruins.

In *Making the Dead Ruins Come Alive*, you'll find all the Game Master (GM) tips and rules you need to run a game of the *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*.

With all these pieces, you'll be equipped for your own forays into the dark, shattered husk of this undead world. Good luck on your delves into the mists—you'll need it.



MOVING THROUGH THE RUINS

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is designed to work with the *Dungeon World* system, but with significant changes. *Dungeon World* is designed for flexible fantasy adventures; THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is a specific setting and context for those adventures. To make it work just right, fundamental bits and pieces of *Dungeon World* have been altered. Here, you'll find those major alterations to the base rules and learn how to implement them at your table.

Character Creation

All characters created in THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE are semi-amnesiac undead, trapped in the limbo of the ruins of Lastlife for a time unknown to them. To reflect this, there are a few key changes made to the character creation section:

- Certain character classes—the Druid and the Barbarian—do not fit THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE; they are removed by default from the pool of available classes.
- Characters have looks taken from a universal pool for the ruins. They're all undead creatures; their look simply displays what kind of undead creature they are.
- Characters don't have the alignments listed on their character class sheets. Instead, they have Drives, selected from a list (page 8).
- All characters are undead; they don't have any other race, so ignore that part of each class.
- Bonds are pulled from a different pool; each class can only have as many bonds as are listed on that class, but the actual bonds themselves are different. Ignore the bonds written on each class and select your bonds from the general list.

Magpie Games will have a custom character sheet for Lastlife up on their website, magpie-games.com/chaos-worlds, for download in the future.

Character Classes

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is a specific setting where certain character classes do not fit and others need to be changed slightly to fit with the tone and themes.

Remove the Druid and the Barbarian from the pool of available characters. They don't have a place in Lastlife. Druids are tied to nature—but the world is already all but dead. There is nothing for the Druid to be tied to. Similarly, Barbarians in *Dungeon World* are outsiders. This world is dead, and there is nowhere else to be from but these ruins.

Some of the other classes have been changed slightly to fit them into Lastlife. These specific changes to individual moves are listed in the Appendix at the back of this book (page 145).

Looks

Instead of using the default looks built into the character classes, your players should choose their characters' looks from the following lists, taking one option from each category. No two characters should have the same looks, to keep up the variety of the denizens of Lastlife. They may create additional looks for their characters, as well, just so long as they are in keeping with the undead, grim nature of Lastlife.



THE ESCAPISTS

All of these looks should be interpreted openly; they're here to guide the characters into the tone and setting of Lastlife. As GM, you have final say with regard to whether or not any additional looks created ultimately fit the tone of the game.

For all of these looks, keep in mind that player characters are still functional, no matter what it looks like. If their eyes are sewn shut, or they have empty sockets, they can still see, in some capacity. If they have a nigh ethereal body, they can still be struck and cut by talons or swords. These looks may change the fiction, just as any might—if they are bloated, then it is a fair question as to whether they can fit through a tight space—but they do not change the baseline traits of any characters. In fact, the question of how they can see despite having only empty eye sockets, or how they can be hurt despite being nigh-intangible, becomes a great mystery to play up in the exploration of the ruins.

These looks are also all listed in the Appendix at the back of the book (page 145), for ease of printing.

Body: Bloated corpse, skeletal, unnaturally ghoulish, nigh-ethereal, rotting flesh, waxen sallow skin, desiccated and thin, scarred and monstrous, pale and cold, stitched together.

Eyes: Empty sockets, burning pinpricks, dead eyes, bright and gleaming eyes, jewels, black eyes, milky eyes, lids sewn shut, mismatched eyes, weeping eyes.

Garb: Encased in dark armor, tattered robes, moldy tunic, rags and shreds, strange leathers, metal and spikes, rusted chains, animal scales, inscribed wrappings, shattered jewels and finery.

Markings: Faded tattoos, jewelry sewn into flesh, impossible wounds, ever-present faint mists, a strange smell, an indecipherable brand, a constant cold presence, a voice without a tongue.

Drives

Characters in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE* don't have alignments, as described on their character classes. Instead, they have Drives. Drives entirely replace alignments.

At character creation, players choose a Drive for their characters. No two characters can have the same Drive. As discussed below, when you reach the end of a session, rather than marking XP if the character has fulfilled their alignment at least once this session, mark XP if they have fulfilled their Drive.

These Drives are also listed in the Appendix, for ease of printing.

Lastlife Drives

- Destroy something corrupted by the fall.
- Create a place of respite and calm.
- Take advantage of past decay.
- Try something crazy and new.
- Adhere to tradition.
- Create something brand new.
- Restore something tarnished and damaged.
- Teach someone about what once was.
- Dramatically ignore precedent, tradition, and history.
- Endanger yourself to protect something old.
- Suffer greatly to destroy something dangerous.
- Eliminate something new.
- Help someone or something to meaningfully change.
- Defeat a dangerous or worthy foe from before the fall.
- Defeat a dangerous or monstrous foe from after the fall.
- Actively restrain something dangerous or chaotic.
- Free someone or something from literal or figurative bonds.
- Leap into danger without a plan.
- Discover something about a mystery of the fall.
- Discover a truth of the world before the fall.
- Cause others to flee in terror from you.
- Inspire others with hope.
- Progress towards conquering the ruins.
- Take something old and powerful for yourself.
- Repurpose something powerful for yourself.

Races in Lastlife

Once upon a time, in the glory days of this kingdom, peoples of all different races and cultures filled the halls of its great buildings, or walked the roads spanning its wilds. But now? Everyone who is left is either a monster of some kind, warped and twisted by the end of the world or by the terrible things that made it through...or, they are undead, half-alive, robbed of their essence from the days before the fall.

In those glory days, player characters might have been elves, dwarves, or halflings. But now, none of that matters. Player characters are undead. That is all they are and it will be a great and terrible struggle to regain anything else of their essence.

Because all characters are undead, they all share in the same racial move: **The Dead Awakening**. This move replaces the **Last Breath** move used in basic *Dungeon World*. For more on **The Dead Awakening** see page 15.

Bonds

The connections between the denizens of Lastlife are strange and tenuous, clouded by lost memory and the hazy endlessness of the ruins. The strongest bonds are the most likely to have survived into the denizens' current state, illuminating their knowledge of themselves and of each other. The undead cling to these memories to define themselves even as the ruins' fog pulls and tugs at their minds to rob them of their identities.

The bonds listed on each character class are not used in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*. They don't reflect the relationships of the undead, or the stories of the ruins. Count the number of bonds listed on each character class, however. That number still reflects how many bonds a character will have.

When your players get to the bonds part of character creation, they should choose their bonds from the list of Lastlife-specific bonds below. Nobody can pick the same bond as anybody else. Each player chooses one bond at a time, as per usual, until every player has chosen the right number of bonds for their character class (based on how many were listed on the class in the first place). They can fill in more than one bond with the same character's name, if they so choose, just like in basic *Dungeon World*.

These bonds are also listed in the Appendix, for ease of printing.



Lastlife Bonds

- _____ saved my life from a terrible monster in the days before the end. I must repay that debt.
- I gave _____ a token expressing my love for them in the days before the end. They have the token, and my love, still.
- _____ nearly slew me in an illegal duel in the days before the end. I will exact vengeance upon them for the slight.
- _____ gave to me my current weapon in the days before the end. I am sworn to use it in their service; I will uphold that vow.
- _____ and I served our lord together in the days before the end. I trust and value their opinion and company.
- I envied the power of _____ in the days before the end. I will pry from them the secrets of their power.
- I remember the drive and rhetoric of _____ in the days before the end. I will follow them and their vision wherever they lead me.
- _____ once got me arrested in the days before the end. I'll keep a close eye on them, for their own sake, now.
- _____ was strange and foreign in the days before the end. Even now, I still find them unnerving and discomfiting.
- _____ once knew the deepest secrets of this kingdom. I will get those secrets from them, somehow. I need them.
- I know a deep and terrible secret about the crimes of _____ from the days before the end. I will never forget what they did.
- _____ does not trust me for the terrible things I did to them in the days before the end. I do not blame them.
- _____ and I once cared for each other, deeply and meaningfully, in the days before the end. That bond is strained now.
- I have no proof, but I remember what _____ was doing in the days before the end; I blame them for the ruin that followed.
- _____ and I shared a bloodline in the days before the end; I choose to believe that that bond still matters.
- I remember what a danger _____ was in the days before the end; I will not let them become that way again.
- I remember how weak _____ was in the days before the end; I fear they will not survive in these new ruins.
- In the days before the end, _____ stood by my side through terrible trials; I still feel that I can trust them completely.
- In the days before the end, _____ was a noble soul, true and good; I fear the taint of this place will corrupt them completely.
- I put my life on the line to save _____ in the days before the end; I will collect on that debt.
- _____ threatened my home and my livelihood with their ideas in the days before the end; I will strike them down if they threaten my plans now.
- I stole something critical and important from _____ in the days before the end; I feel guilty, but I have it still, and I will keep it.
- _____ knows more about me and who I was in the days before the end than I do; I will get them to tell me.
- _____ still seems to believe that the world is today as it was in the days before the end; I will educate them about the truth of the new world.
- _____ and I once believed in the same faith in the days before the end; together, we can reinvigorate this world with our faith.
- _____ and I once believed in the same ideals in the days before the end; we have diverged now, and I no longer understand them.

Lastlife-Specific Rules

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE requires a few other changes and additions to the rules of *Dungeon World*. **Radiance** and **Memory** are two new kinds of XP that tie into the hope for the future and recovery of the past, pushing and pulling at each other in the ruins. Some of the basic moves of *Dungeon World* are changed to better tie into the setting and the Radiance and Memory systems. And finally, the **Last Breath** move is wholly changed to suit the eternal nature of the undead throughout the ruins.

Radiance & Memory

Experience works as usual in THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE. A PC gets an XP every time they miss on a move, and they get XP from the end of session questions surrounding their Drive, and from resolving bonds. Two additional tracks provide their own kinds of improvements to your character: Radiance and Memory.

Radiance represents a growing light within a character, as they stride forward into the future. It represents building and creating a new world in the ruins of the old. Radiance is about paving a new path, and carrying a lantern into the future to light it.

Memory represents recollections of the old world, before the fall, hints of the past drawing them to rebuild. It represents the character's attachment to history and to tradition, and trying to restore that glory and wonder. It represents eliminating the amnesiac fog that permeates the ruins, and truly rebuilding what once was.

Every character has a track for Radiance and Memory. Each track is five boxes long. Whenever they mark Radiance or Memory, they mark off one box in the corresponding track. When they mark off the fifth box in the track, they clear that whole track and take one improvement from the improvements list for that track, and cross off one improvement from the other list, meaning they can never take that improvement. They can only take each improvement from each list one time, if it is not crossed off.

Example: Jason marks off his fifth box in the Radiance track. He then empties that whole track and leaves the Memory track alone, and selects a single Radiance improvement to take. He chooses "You raise Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma by 2." Then, he chooses a single Radiance improvement to cross off, indicating he can never take that improvement. He crosses off "You discover how to steal the power of a terrible denizen of Lastlife," meaning he can never take that Radiance improvement.

All characters share identical Radiance and Memory improvement options to choose from.

Radiance Improvement

The Radiance improvement list is:

- You discover how to steal the power of a terrible denizen of Lastlife and put it into an object of your choice, though it may not be easy; name the denizen and the object, and the GM will tell you the steps and materials required.
- You can seize control of a vulnerable piece of Lastlife's ruins, and all who dwell there; name the area, and the GM will tell you what you need to do to make that place your own.
- You raise Strength, Wisdom, or Constitution by 2.
- You can touch other undead and bind them to your light. When you touch an NPC denizen of Lastlife who has not yet been fully corrupted, roll + Radiance improvements taken (max +3). On a hit, they become addicted to you and your light. From that point forward, when you Parley with that NPC you may spend 1 Radiance to take a 10+ on the Parley without rolling. On a 7-9, your light also changes them; they lose whoever they were before, and become someone new. On a miss, the binding goes terribly awry, and they seek to consume you and your light.
- You become something new and switch classes. When you switch classes, change your damage die to the new class's, change your max hp to the new class's, gain all the starting moves of your new class, keep all the starting moves of your old class, and for each advanced class move you have, choose to either keep it or lose it and take a new advanced move from your new class.

Once they have taken three of the above improvements and at least four total Radiance or Memory improvements, they can take this:

- Build a new kingdom atop the ruins of Lastlife. You claim a stronghold amid the ruins, and denizens will flock to your banner, called to you naturally by your shining light. They will build you what you ask of them. The remaining monsters of the world will steer clear of your new radiant land.

When a player takes this last improvement, your game of *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE* is coming to a close—the game isn't about rulers and kings, but about undead heroes and explorers. End the game when appropriate for your group, but taking this improvement signals that the conclusion is coming.

Memory Improvement

The Memory improvement list is:

- You recall exactly where to find an ancient artifact of power; name the artifact, and the GM will tell you where it currently resides.
- You recall exactly how to purify and restore a corrupted area of Lastlife; name the area, and the GM will tell you how to cleanse the land.
- You raise Intelligence, Dexterity, or Charisma by 2.

- You gain an aura of memory that draws other denizens of Lastlife to follow you. When you speak of your memories and the once-glory of Lastlife to an intelligent undead NPC, roll + Memory improvements taken (max +3). On a 10+, they become a hireling for you, made with 5-8 points (GM's choice) as per the rules on page 35 of *Dungeon World*, but with 3 of their points always allocated to Loyalty. Their Cost is "Progress toward restoring the old world." On a 7-9, they may still become a hireling, but you must first prove to them that you can offer them a return of the old world. They will accompany you to give you that chance. On a miss, they hate you for reminding them of the glory now gone, and they seek to destroy you.
- You remember the truth of who you were, along with the full extent of your old skills. Immediately gain one level.

Once they have taken three of the above improvements and at least four total Radiance or Memory improvements, they can take this:

- Re-establish a stronghold in a recovered part of Lastlife. You choose a place that the Memories call you to restore, and leave your mark upon it. Other denizens of Lastlife will be called to this place, to assist you in restoring it and to resume their lives from before the end. The remaining monsters of the land will either return to whatever they were before, or will stay away from the past glory you've restored.



THE EXECUTIONER

Just as with the final improvement for Radiance, when they take this improvement, it is a signal that the game is coming to an end. They have become an avatar of the past and a ruler of a restored kingdom, and they are no longer an adventurer. The game need not end immediately, but both GM and players should begin searching for ways to end it.

Spouting Lore and Discerning Realities in Lastlife

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE demands different means of gaining information about the world. In basic *Dungeon World*, when a PC wants to know more about something in the world, they'll either **Spout Lore** or **Discern Realities**. But in Lastlife, these moves are changed to reflect the foggy semi-amnesia afflicting its denizens, and the strange circumstances that surround its denizens at all time.

Instead of **Spout Lore**, PCs in Lastlife can **recall a lost memory of Lastlife**.

When you recall a lost memory of Lastlife, say what you remember and roll + Int. On a hit, mark 1 Memory. On a 10+, your recollection is accurate and complete, and the GM will fill it out with additional detail. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- Your recollection is inaccurate; the GM will later reveal what you remembered incorrectly.
- Your recollection is incomplete; the GM will later reveal a critical truth that you didn't recall.

Instead of **Discern Realities**, PCs in Lastlife can **study the ruins of Lastlife**.

When you study the ruins of Lastlife, roll + Wis. On a hit, mark Radiance. On a 10+, ask the GM 3 questions from the list below. On a 7-9, ask 1.

- What happened here recently?
- What is about to happen?
- What here is wrong or strange?
- What here can be made into something useful and new?
- How could I take control here?
- What here is vulnerable to me?

The above moves completely replace the original *Dungeon World* moves. Any move that references **Spout Lore** or **Discern Realities** now refers to **Recall a Lost Memory** or **Study the Ruins**, respectively.

Last Breath: The Dead Awakening

The denizens of Lastlife are all undead, and when they are killed again, they do not pass from this realm. They simply return and recur. Sometimes, their bodies are destroyed, and they are left as spirits adrift, wandering and confused. Those who die too often are reduced over the course of their many deaths, until eventually they are left mindless and shambling, just another part of the ruins.

The **Last Breath** move of *Dungeon World* does not fit Lastlife. Instead, every undead PC has access to their race move: **The Dead Awakening**.

The Dead Awakening

When you lose your last hp in Lastlife, you die, falling where you stand. As long as your body is not utterly destroyed, the strange mists of Lastlife will converge on you and carry your body to the last place you rested. You will come back to yourself, but the circumstances may be dangerous. Roll 2d6. On a hit, you're restored with half of your maximum hit points. On a 7-9, pick one from below.

- Permanently lose 1 bond.
- Permanently mark a debility.
- Permanently cross off both one Radiance and one Memory improvement; you can never take those advancements.

On a miss, you are restored with one hit point; pick one from the list, and know that the mists have revealed your vulnerability to something dangerous that now hunts you.

If PCs ever lose all of their bonds or permanently mark off every debility, they become the mindless undead.

End of Session Moves

The characters in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE* explore different issues than in a basic *Dungeon World* game. Use these End of Session questions to better reflect the distinctive nature of Lastlife.

When you reach the end of each session, PCs still resolve bonds, as in the basic end of session move. As discussed above, instead of checking alignment, they next check to see if they have fulfilled their Drive at least once this session. If so, mark XP. Then, they answer these four questions as a group:

- Did we destroy something corrupt and dangerous?
- Did we take liberate or create a powerful or useful treasure?
- Did we learn something important about the world before the fall?
- Did we take a step toward building a new world in the ruins?

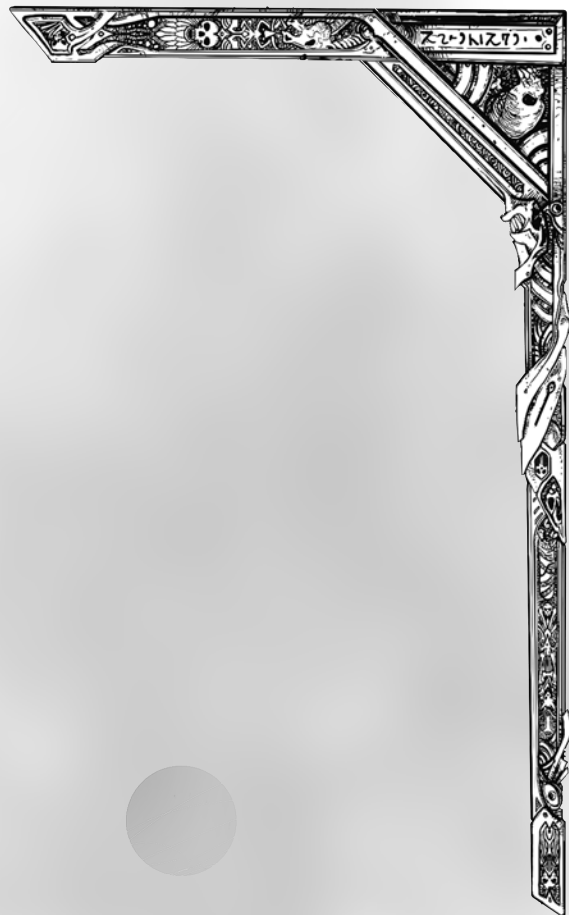
For each “yes” answer everyone marks XP.

Rations and Making Camp in Lastlife

The undead denizens of Lastlife do not need sustenance. They do not need to eat or drink. They may want to, just to experience something, some burst of flavor, but their senses are dulled and gray, and they cannot enjoy food in the same way as when they were alive.

They also do not need to sleep. Their basic biological functions are removed, or suspended, by their undead state. But they still need to rest, and put their heads down, think, contemplate, be still. Constant action has as much of a risk to them as constant inaction, as they lose themselves to the moment. Resting is especially important due to the nature of the undead in these ruins; making camp determines the place where they will next awaken after they die, as per **The Dead Awakening** move.

The undead PCs of Lastlife may still make camp, but don't track rations. They're irrelevant for the undead. Otherwise, the rules, including the watch order, are the same.



BROKEN CASTLES AND SHATTERED STATUES

Worlds are born. They live, they grow, and they change. Then they die. Sometimes they explode, consumed by flames, erupting into lightning. Sometimes they grow old and wither. Sometimes they are slain, or are fed upon by the horrible Things From Outside that dwell between the worlds, until there is nothing left.

No matter how worlds end, they do end.

But sometimes...rarely...even after the end, something remains. Something weak, broken, not even an ember of the burning light that once was. But...something.

Such is the fate of Lastlife.

What Remains

The great world that once existed was not always called Lastlife. Now that is the only name it knows. It is a massive sprawl of ruins and corrupted forests, forgotten tombs, and overflowing crypts—its boundaries and borders unclear. Those maps that remain no longer hold true; the geography of Lastlife warped as the world died. While new maps could be made, those who are stuck in this dreary purgatory do not create easily, if ever.

No one “lives” in Lastlife—they remain. Most of the inhabitants of Lastlife are undead, afflicted by the same stasis, the same decay that fills the rest of the ruins. Their minds are foggy and empty, their recollections blurred into nonexistence. They don’t know how long they or the ruins have been here—sometimes they do not even remember their own names. They are shadows of what they had been, and continue to exist as long as their dead world persists. Each one is merely a fragment of a soul left in a husk of a body.

There are exceptions, of course: creatures imprisoned from before the world’s end, or things that have grown amid the decay. A few have found their way into the dying world from outside. These are dangerous creatures, hungry and ambitious. To them, Lastlife is little more than an opportunity to achieve their own ends, and they will gladly destroy anything in their paths. After all, Lastlife is already dead.

They are not the only sentient denizens of this ruined world; some of the undead hold on to their minds through sheer will. Driven to some special end they have chosen sustain them even in this broken land. They form up into groups of likeminded undead, all driven by the same fundamental need. It keeps them together. Sane. For now.

The Ruins Themselves

The ruins are a forgotten panoply of wonders and horrors. Nobody knows their exact contents, and any learnings are quickly forgotten, lost to the unending cycle of death and meaningless rebirth that has taken over. To speak of them as fact, a defined map, would be senseless.

But it is incumbent upon the sentient undead to strive to make sense of the senseless. To explore the ruins, comprehend its contents, and build a consistent image of this world.

As you play *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*, you will discover the layout of the ruins. The PCs will discover the contents of those ruins, merely by venturing out, and they will learn about Lastlife through those discoveries. When you start, much is unknown, but the Drives of the PCs will force them to investigate the ruins and make them real...and known.

The setting information in this chapter is designed to give you enough of an impression of a location that you can bring it into play in a useful and interesting way, without necessarily answering all of the questions about that place. In fact, every location described in this section comes with a series of questions you can ask players during play to help fill in the unique details for your own game.

Think of the bits of setting in this chapter as versatile puzzle pieces. They don't have to go in any particular place, and how you choose to fit them together will create different pictures. That's exactly as intended. Your Lastlife will be strange and uniquely yours. No two Lastlives will ever be the same.

The Hungry Canyons

Barely visible petroglyphs cover the high walls of the canyons, strange runes and symbols carved eternally upon the walls. Some may hear a strange humming, or feel an odd sensation of vibrancy and tension when they focus on those petroglyphs. They blend into the walls, though, and are only seen when a traveler looks closely...or when the Canyons start to feed—the hungry attention of the Canyons turns upon them.

“Hungry” is an understatement—in truth, the Canyons starve.

The Canyons crave anything. They crave life. They crave existence and mindfulness and story, and any who pass between their titanic basalt walls is a potential meal.

The oppressive presence of the Canyons invades slowly—a faint tingling at first, then the loss of feeling in your extremities. Then the walls of the Canyon take you into themselves, transforming you into what they crave—a story, writ upon their walls in ancient symbols and languages no longer spoken. You can stave off their famished walls with focus and attention, but few have the strength of will to pass through unchanged.

The oppressive hunger of the Canyons is not physical; their feeding is not some mere chewing of flesh. It draws on the very essence that gives the denizens of Lastlife their continued, if ruined, existences. And what the Canyons take becomes new petroglyphs, engraved upon its walls.

Custom Moves:

When PCs pass through the Hungry Canyons, they choose whether to travel quickly or carefully.

If you travel quickly, roll + Dex. On a 10+, you come through the other side intact. On a 7-9, you lose something of yourself. Choose one to say what you lose:

- Lose hope (-1 Radiance)
- Lose yourself (-1 Memory)
- Lose a possession (GM says what you lose)

If you don't have any Radiance or Memory to lose, then losing 1 more Radiance or Memory forces you to cross off an untaken Radiance or Memory improvement; you can never take that improvement. If you have no improvements to cross off and no Radiance or Memory to lose, then you become a mindless undead, wandering the Canyons forever. On a miss, the pull of the Canyons costs you dearly. Lose all your Radiance and Memory. Again, if you have no Radiance or Memory to lose, you must permanently cross off an untaken Radiance or Memory improvement.

If you travel carefully, roll + Wis. On a hit, you stave off the hunger of the Canyons with your own will, and study the petroglyphs on the wall along the way. Ask a question about the past or future, and the stories on the wall will give you a true answer. If you ask about the past, take 1 Memory. If you ask about the future, take 1 Radiance. On a 7-9, the Canyons steal away a part of you. The GM will ask you a question and you must answer honestly. The GM will tell you what part of yourself the Canyons take based on your answer. On a miss, the Canyons catch you, and they feast upon you.

Questions:

- Why are they so hungry? Where does their hunger come from?
- What carved out the Canyons?
- What happens when the Canyons fill with petroglyphs?
- How old are the Canyons? Did they exist before the fall of the world?

The August Library

An enormous cube of a building, built from marble and onyx. Like a carefully hewn block of stone, dropped upon the ash-gray surface of Lastlife. The August Library has one entrance on each side of the cube, at ground level: open archways, dwarfed by the sheer size of the cube.

Inside, the August Library is a claustrophobic hive of shelves, all of them filled with books upon books. Moving deeper into the Library, one finds other oddities, as well—gravity itself shifts to accommodate the strange hive of the Library, to better fit the books. The Library only opens up into a wider space in the very center of the cube, where there is a smaller cubic reading room, with tables and special tools for holding the pages of especially unwieldy books. There are tables on all six inner sides and visitors can walk on any side of the room without falling.

And the books. Oh, the books. Perfectly ordered, every shelf filled. Each in pristine condition, not a mote of dust visible. Infinite knowledge hidden within this Library. Entire deep histories and truths.

If only the fall had not changed the books somehow. Had not taken away the knowledge of the language in which they are written. Had not sealed them off much more powerfully than simple walls ever could.

Many undead wander the August Library infinitely, picking its books off shelves to stare at them uncomprehendingly, desperately hoping—dreaming—of gleaning even the slightest

bit of information from their pages. But the Library and its books have not divulged their secrets, and the history of the world remains locked away behind unintelligible scripts. And none of this says anything about the Librarian itself, the keeper of these books. And the terror it inflicts upon those who it deems as intruders upon its domain, mistreating its books. (For more on the Librarian, see page 100.)

Custom Move:

When you try to read one of the inscrutable books from the Library's shelves, roll + Int. On a hit, you glean something from the indecipherable texts. Ask 1 question from the list below. On a 10+, you can also ask a follow-up question of your choosing.

- Where can I find _____?
- How could I gain the power to _____?
- What could destroy _____?
- What made _____?

On a miss, the book does not give up its secrets and you've alerted the Librarian to your presence in the Library.

Questions:

- What is the true purpose of the Library? Surely, it isn't just accumulating information.
- What changed the language of the books? Why can't the undead read them?
- What happens when books are removed from the Library? Or destroyed?
- What grand and decadent culture built the Library? What mind is behind its purpose?

The Iksythrys Cathedral of Mangsong

This name is known to the denizens of Lastlife. All of them. Ensconced within their minds, for reasons unknown to them: the Iksythrys Cathedral of Mangsong. As soon as their dry and ruined eyes behold its spires, they know it. They feel it.

The Cathedral sprawls across the ground in the shape of a pentagon, with lines of spires emerging from the five points of its shape towards its center, converging upon the enormous spire rising from the very center. The entire edifice is engraved with endless swirling patterns, depicting heroes of the faith and their victories in patterns no longer resplendent in the cold gray light of Lastlife. The stone of the Cathedral is a strange green, the seams of the blocks hidden by expert craft, the jade blocks themselves nearly indestructible.

Inside, the Cathedral is open spaces and vaulted ceilings, pillars lined with rows of kneeling benches. Every spoke of the Cathedral, every long branch, is itself a sanctuary, connected to the others only through hallways at its back. Each sanctuary ends at an altar at one of the points of the pentagon, each altar a simple block of jade covered with old, dusty cloths. The lines of spires, leading from the points of the pentagon to that central, tallest spire, are all blocked off. There are doors that should lead to the center of the Cathedral, but all of them are sealed, through magics and strange locks.

Walking through the Cathedral, echoes of songs drift gently through the air, emanating from the engraved walls of the Cathedral itself: the Manysong. The walls of the Cathedral hold within them echoes—memories—of every single song that the halls have ever heard. The Cathedral is a monument to the songs of the days before the end.

But the decay of Lastlife has not left the Cathedral untouched. The notes sour. They turn bitter, cold. They lose their luster. Beautiful chords strung together as pearls become discordant. The music grows faint and dies, strands of the Manysong disappearing. To walk through the Cathedral is to be filled with the pain of what once was, and hear it die with each passing, still moment.

Custom Moves:

When you first pick out a single song from the echoes in the Cathedral, roll + Wis. On a hit, you hear that song, and you can carry it forward with you; choose 1 from below. On a 10+, the song brings back a memory of your old life as well; take 1 Memory and say what your memory is.

- Sharing the song counts as leverage when you Parley with those who might care about music, faith, or the Cathedral itself.
- The song teaches you the historical weakness of any one person, entity, or place in Lastlife, your choice.
- Singing the song as a dirge when someone dies can give the deceased an easier way to find their way back to their body, once; give them +2 to their Dead Awakening roll.

On a miss, the corrupted Manysong pours into your head and makes a demand of you; honor it or lose Radiance.

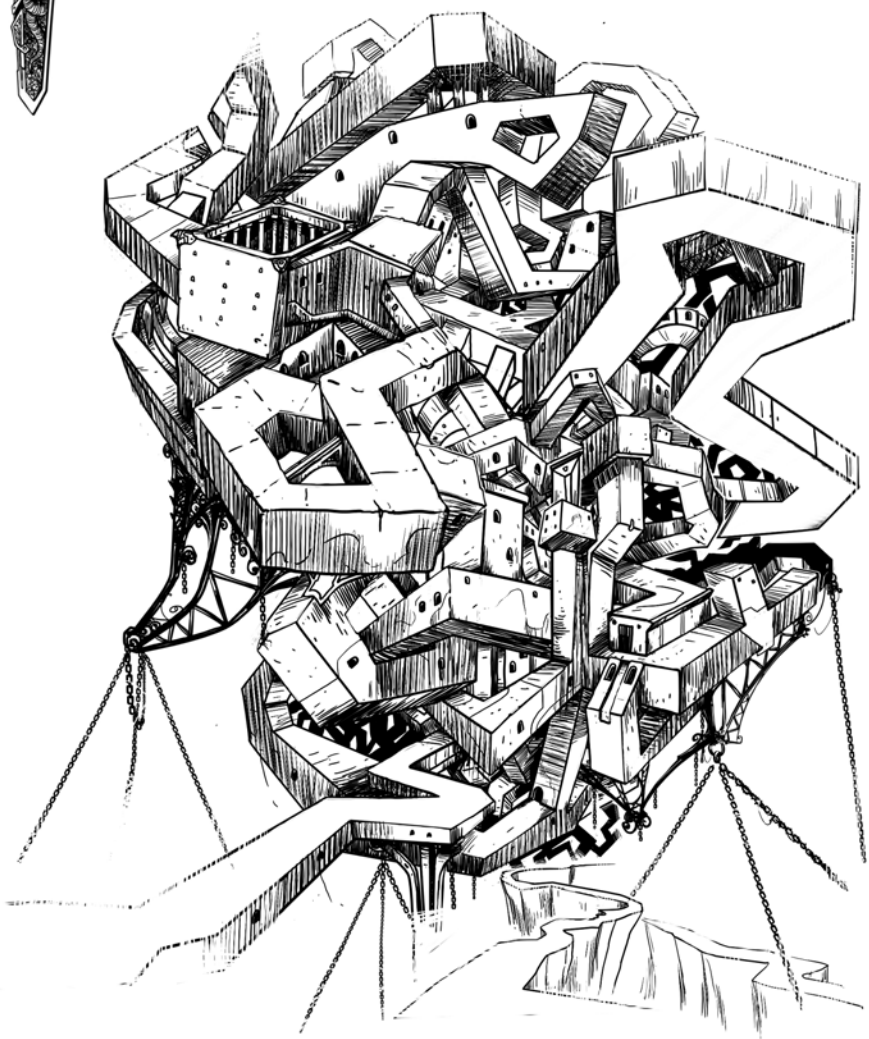
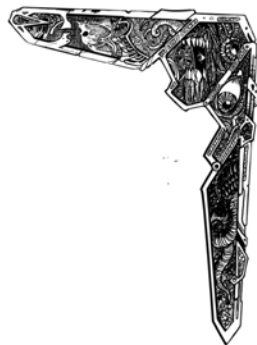
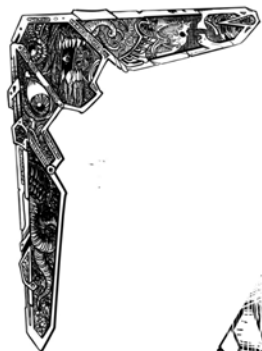
The first time you sing a new song in the Cathedral, roll + Cha. On a hit, your song is added to the Cathedral's Manysong. Choose 1 from below. On a 10+, take 1 Radiance, as well.

- The Cathedral physically changes to give you a gift based on your song.
- Singing your song in the Cathedral will bring forth the Manysong and quell the violent impulses of any listening thereto.
- The Manysong changes to call one entity to the Cathedral from anywhere in the ruins, your choice.

On a miss, the Manysong rejects your new song and the Cathedral itself acts to destroy or eject you.

Questions:

- Who is Iksythrys? Why is the Cathedral named after them?
- For what purpose does the Cathedral hold the music in its walls?
- What lies in the center of the Cathedral? Why is it locked in?
- Can the Manysong end?



THE ENDLESS CORRIDORS

The Endless Corridors

The Endless Corridors is a monument to the power, artistry, and immense hubris of the world before the end, designed to be an infinite city, ensconced within an enormous webwork of corridors. But whether it was corrupted by the end, or the entire project was doomed from the start, the Endless Corridors is not the beautiful, infinite fractal of structure it was clearly designed to be. It is strange and tumorous, grotesque and self-recursive.

From the outside, the Endless Corridors appears to be an odd, floating mass of buildings and halls, all jumbled and folding back in on itself. Massive blue steel chains tether it to the ground below, each one anchored at one of the strange corners of the Corridors. Some paths extend up and into the nest of Corridors, for those daring enough to venture inside. It is enormous, rising up over the horizon and walls of Lastlife on the approach, blotting out the gray sky from up close.

The Corridors warp space and the rules of reality in strange ways. The walls are weightless, a side effect of the space-folding magic necessary to even attempt to make them real; hence, the need for chains anchoring the mass to the ground. But inside the Endless Corridors, gravity still works, though it may pull to strange sides of each individual hallway. The Corridors' weird magic calls to the other denizens of Lastlife, pulling them into its own labyrinthine innards, and changing them still further with its warped realities. Now the Endless Corridors is full of monstrosities and guardians, its own mutant ecology.

What little memory or story surrounds the Endless Corridors speaks of the Heart of the Corridors at its very center, though how you could possibly find such a place in that endlessly space-warping structure is a question none can yet answer. But in the Heart of the Corridors, a true artisan could reshape it. Could control the Corridors itself. Could transform it into a new city, unfolding down upon the ruins below: a new home for Lastlife. Or could transform it into a perfect fortress, floating above the ruins forevermore. Either way, the Corridors is a prize to those denizens of Lastlife with the awareness and will necessary to brave its depths.

Custom Move:

When you spend time exploring the Endless Corridors, roll + Wis. On a hit, you find what you seek; choose 1. On a 7-9, you find what you seek, but you call the attention of the guardians of the Corridors upon yourself as you do.

- You find a hub of the magical energies warping space in the Corridors.
- You find a sanctuary for an artifact ensconced within the Corridors.
- You find a dangerous path toward the Heart of the Corridors.

On a miss, you are overwhelmed by the call of the Corridors, and when you emerge from the daze you are hopelessly lost, forever changed, or both.

Questions:

- Who created them in the first place?
- What, exactly, is the Heart of the Corridors?
- Why are the creatures inside of the Corridors so warped and strange?
- What has been storing artifacts inside the Corridors?



THE LIGHTHOUSE

The Lighthouse on Dark Waters

There is an ocean at the edges of Lastlife. Enormous and expansive, stretching as far as dead eyes can see. The waters: dark, impenetrable, black. The ocean scratches against a wall of stone at the edge of the ruins, but the water itself is still, only gentle waves rolling across the surface, lapping at the rock. Or so it should be. So it had always been.

On a rocky promontory, jutting into that ocean, stands the Lighthouse. A towering structure of obsidian and silver, interwoven with ancient runes and magics, the Lighthouse has burned brightly in the ruins of Lastlife for as long as they have existed. A point of fire and light, gleaming out across the ocean, right on the edge of the ruins.

But the light now wanes. It flickers and dims. Even in the unending, timeless limbo of the ruins, the dark comes to take the light away. As it does, the waters stir. The waves grow larger. Bubbles rise from the depths. And the creatures the Lighthouse has kept asleep for eons... they awaken. They rise, and their coming may spell the true end of Lastlife.

The fire still burns, however feebly. It can be carried out of the Lighthouse, spread across Lastlife, but only by those who brave this edge of the ruins, who climb the stairs, and who speak to the last Keeper of the Light.

Custom Move:

When you make a sacrifice to the waters beyond the Lighthouse and what dwells beneath, say what you offer, what knowledge you seek, and roll. On a 10+, the things in the dark accept your sacrifice and answer your questions with frightening but clear visions. On a 7-9, your sacrifice is lacking, and the things in the dark demand more. If you surrender what they demand, the visions are frightening but clear; if you refuse, the visions are confusing and strange. On a miss, you receive only confusing and strange visions and the dark infects you; you cannot gain more Radiance or Memory until you cleanse your undead body.

Questions:

- What truly dwells beneath the waves? How did it get there?
- Who is the last Keeper of the Lighthouse?
- Why, when, and how was the Lighthouse originally lit?
- What lies on the other side of the ocean?

The Demon Pool

The world before the ruins was a wondrous place, full of amazing achievements and powers. It conquered all its foes and threats, and imprisoned so many of them, even those from other worlds. It drew power from its imprisoned foes at will, and thought nothing more of the danger of keeping such creatures imprisoned. The Demon Pool is just such a prison, and now the denizens of Lastlife will pay for the hubris of the days before.

It is a deep, wide pool of water, darkened in the cavern in which it sits. Surrounded by a ring of faintly glowing green stones, each with sigils carved upon their surfaces. The pool and the ring, together, are a cell. Holding within them the last demon trapped in this world, the only demon left in the ruins of Lastlife: Oriaxanysoth. The Segmented Tear.

Oriaxanysoth's power is enormous, and in the days before, the Demon Pool channeled that power into countless mechanisms and structures. Now those connections are severed, and the pool itself, like all the prisons of Lastlife, is waning in power with each passing day. Oriaxanysoth's day of freedom draws near. The creature still thrashes in the pool, still contained beneath its surface...but now, it can extend pieces of itself, and its power, beyond. It can spawn, creating many new young demons of its own flesh, squirming forth from between the green stones surrounding the pool.

Perhaps one who remembers the truth, the secrets of the Pool, or who is possessed of a high-divine drive towards artisanship and magical craft, might restore the Pool's prison and again derive from it the great power that the civilization before Lastlife once drew upon. But until then, coming to the Demon Pool is an exercise in beholding what once was, both in glory and horror...coming face to face with the dangers of this decaying world.

Custom Moves:

When you first approach the Demon Pool, roll + Dex. On a hit, you disturb nothing and keep your wits about you. On a 10+, take +1 ongoing to deal with Oriaxanysoth and its offspring during this visit. On a miss, you disturb one of the stones of the Demon Pool, weakening the prison and allowing Oriaxanysoth to touch you—either through its offspring or directly.

When you ask Oriaxanysoth for a prophecy of your past or future, roll + Cha. On a 7-9, it speaks the truth of your existence, which only demons and fools could know. Mark Radiance or Memory as appropriate. On a 10+, Oriaxanysoth's revelation answers a crucial question of your being; immediately resolve and rewrite one of your bonds and mark XP, as well. On a miss, Oriaxanysoth's words are cutting lies; mark Stunned and Confused until you prove to yourself that its words are meaningless.

Questions:

- Who imprisoned Oriaxanysoth in the first place? Who built the Demon Pool?
- What is the language used to inscribe the sigils on the stones?
- What are the stones made of?
- What was powered by the Demon Pool?

Griedhardt's Grove

A forest, built, planted, and constructed by some ancient master gardener. Griedhardt, one presumes. It should be small, enclosed within alabaster walls. But the trees have grown here, and have cracked past those walls, expanded out into the lawns around it. Now the Grove stretches further and further out, a circle of strange plants and flowers, bizarre trees with bark-like flesh.

The Grove is a force of a strange wilderness, a mutant nature growing within the fallen structures of Lastlife, unkempt and untamed by any since the fall of the world. The plant life of the Grove is unlike any other, and while it may hold secrets and powers for any brave enough to hunt through its paths, it bears a terrifying set of threats and dangers. Those foolish enough to pierce into the Grove without care can still be seen, held up amid the branches of strange monstrous trees, the essence granting them unlife endlessly drained from them as their limbs twitch and contort.

The greatest danger of the Grove, the creature with its own tendrils spread throughout the neon flowers and bizarre spores, is the Tree Kraken. A creature whose recurrence is tied to the world itself. In every other time it grew, it was cut down, artifacts and wonders crafted from its wooden flesh. But now, it grows, free and uncontrolled. It spurs the Grove's expansion onward, spreading its roots throughout the ruins. And soon...the Tree Kraken shall drop another seed, and that may spell the fall of what remains of Lastlife to this unnatural growth.

The seeds of a new world may be found there. New plants and new life, capable of growing amid the ruins. Extracts of flowers that might restore true life. Beauty, though strange and poisonous. But the dangers may outweigh those benefits. If left untamed, the Grove may grow to swallow the ruins whole.

Custom Move:

When you pass into Griedhardt's Grove, the spores and strange perfumes of the plants therein may overwhelm you. Roll + Con. On a 10+, you are strangely at home amid these scents. Choose either to gain 1 Radiance as you adapt to the scents or gain 1 Memory as you remember their true nature. On a 7-9, you barely resist the soporific effects of the plants; take -1 ongoing until you have a chance to clear your head. On a miss, the scents overcome you, and you are drawn into danger by the carnivorous plants emitting those enticing aromas.

Questions:

- Who was Griedhardt? Why did they plant this grove?
- Is there a way to tame the grove without destroying it?
- What powers does the seed of the Tree Kraken hold?
- What purpose does the Tree Kraken serve to the life of the world?

Castle Oblivion

A towering edifice, with parapets and buttresses, with stained glass windows. Powerful and strong. Impregnable. A magnificent construction, both beautiful and formidable. Its true purpose lost, but one can only imagine that it was the center of a vast kingdom in the days before the end.

Now, although all its towers still stand, while its windows are still whole, while the building still seems to have withstood the end...it is a ruin. Denizens of Lastlife feel it, simply upon approach. A place that has outlived itself. A still place, quiet and dusty. Its cavernous halls darkened. Its paintings dulled. Its windows shadowy. Its portcullis stands open, and its doors unlocked. Walking through it produces the feeling of nothing so much as melancholic absence...lost memory and truth.

The denizens of Lastlife still in the Castle believe themselves to be living in the days from before the end. They carry on with rituals that now are meaningless. They prepare food from dust, and groom themselves in moldy clothes. They put on gaudy fragments of jewelry. They have no memory of what happened, no memory of even who they truly are. They simply repeat, ad infinitum.

In the throne room of the Castle sits the Old Queen, the pinnacle of this lost memory, this repetitive madness. She believes she still rules over a vast kingdom, though she could not name it. She believes that all should bow before her royal bloodline, though she could not tell you a thing about her lineage. She is a Queen who cannot remember anything beyond that single truth. And the Castle Oblivion reflects her madness, her forgotten memories.

Any who stay within its halls for too long risk the same fate.

Custom Move:

When you resist Castle Oblivion's attempts to steal your memories, roll + Int. On a 10+, you fight off the grasp of the Castle. Choose 1: you recall truths about the Castle; or you recall truths about yourself and gain 1 Memory. On a 7-9, the Castle steals from you the memory of something precious and replaces it with a memory of the Castle itself; lose 1 Memory. If you don't have 1 Memory to lose, treat this result as a miss. On a miss, you take a new bond with the Castle, representing what you now believe your place in the castle to be; the GM will tell you the nature of the bond. Until you have resolved that bond, you cannot leave the Castle of your own free will.

Questions:

- Why does the Castle Oblivion steal memories more than anywhere else in Lastlife?
- What is the real name of the Castle? Who built it?
- Who, truly, is the Old Queen?
- How did the Castle enslave its guardians?

The Mired Land

A swampy morass. Water washed into dirt, mixed with toxic output of countless arcane devices, all run downhill, all compiled here. Poison, seeped into the very land itself, and grown into decayed, horrible reeds, accompanied by a nightmarish stench of death and rot. The Mired Land may once have been a plain, or an open field of flowers, or a river valley. It is none of those things anymore, and they are lost beneath the viscous and noxious waters.

The Mired Land holds in its thick mud the bodies of countless lost souls. Those who fell to the baneful substances in the air and the water. Those who fell to the monstrous creatures rising out of the terrible swamp. Those trapped in the mud and sucked down beneath the waters. It's a watery graveyard, though many held in its muck are not fully dead.

The Mired Land is a place to be crossed in the ruins of Lastlife. It stands between other places, in the valleys between the larger edifices, in the crevices and the chasms. And thus does it plague those denizens of Lastlife who still try to move amid the ruins, stealing lives and bodies, trapping them beneath its viscous surface.

Purifying the Mired Land, removing those contaminants, freeing those trapped within—dreams, held by those who would hope to restore Lastlife. After all, there's an entire population of undead denizens trapped in the muck of the Mired Land. With them, anything might be possible. But the task of removing the blight and corruption from the Mired Land is nigh insurmountable, as the Land claims more unives even as the undead struggle against it.

Custom Moves:

When you enter the Mired Land, roll + Con. On a 10+, the fumes and poisons of the swamp bolster your undead form, take +1 to any attempt to dig into the bog. On a 7-9, they leave you confused and disoriented; take -1 ongoing to **study the ruins** while you are there. On a miss, mark the debility "Sick" until you have time to recover, outside of the Mired Land, and take -1 ongoing to **study the ruins**.

When you dig into the mulch of the Mired Land, roll + Str. On a hit, you pull free something valuable. Choose one:

- A denizen of Lastlife, freed and grateful to you, offering assistance.
- A relic of Lastlife, trapped amid the muck, blighted but useful.
- A treasure of Lastlife, valuable and beautiful, lost in the muck, ready to be cleaned.
- A remnant of the time before, reminding you of what once was; take 1 Memory.

On a 7-9, the Mired Land sucks something away from you while you hunt. On a miss, you are pulled bodily into the muck.

Questions:

- What devices produced the poisons that now seep in the Mired Land?
- Why are there *so many* bodies hidden in the muck of the Mired Land?
- Does the Mired Land have a will, a mind of its own?
- Who would fight to keep the Mired Land as it is?

The Narrow Streets

A close-knit rat's nest of streets and alleys. Once, the Narrow Streets were a town or a city, crammed with people. These streets may have been claustrophobically tight, but they would have been alive: smelly and cramped, but vibrant and bright. Now they are simply tight, maze-like paths between walls of buildings, the doors all closed, locked, or rusted shut.

The Narrow Streets hide many horrors. Sometimes things look down from the windows on either side of the streets, watching whoever streams through the thin paths below. Creatures eager to feast upon the prey that comes so willingly into their domain. Predatory inhabitants of Lastlife, like the Hungry, use the Narrow Streets to stage ambushes to capture their fellow denizens and take their unlives. The Narrow Streets hide many secrets and sharp knives, and none who pass through them ever feel safe.

This was once where the bulk of people lived, in the days before the end, and that press of life has now turned into an oppressive feeling of death. The rats that once would've been a commonplace truth are now large, festering abominations chittering down alleyways, searching for anything to feast upon. The stray dogs and cats are now monstrous and feral, ripping flesh from leather-skinned undead. And the people are either hiding, or mad with their own hungers and pains.

Passing through the Narrow Streets provides a shortcut, an alternative to passing through the Mired Land. But the Narrow Streets have their own dangers. The strange groups of undead working together, hunting each other, using the Narrow Streets as their own personal death mazes...they make traversing the Streets much more than simply unnerving.

Custom Move:

When you try to take a shortcut through the Narrow Streets, roll + Dex. On a hit, you get where you're headed in shorter time than any other path would take you. On a 10+, you also catch wind of any threats along the streets before they have a chance to strike, and can avoid them safely if you wish. On a 7-9, a threat is unavoidable, but you're aware of it in advance. Choose two to avoid.

- A group of undead, mad with the pain of existence, or simply repeating the tortures they inflicted on travelers in life.
- A wave of vermin washes through the narrow alleys, stripping everything from the bones of those unfortunate enough to be caught by it.
- A vicious trap, possibly set before the end, lies waiting to be triggered by anyone foolish or desperate enough to pass by it.

On a miss, you are caught unawares by the dangers of the Narrow Streets. Some combination of the above—or some new horror—descends upon you without warning.

Questions:

- What was this place called before the end?
- Is there some force keeping the doors closed and the people trapped within?
- Why do most of the citizenry of the Narrow Streets hide?
- Do the paths of the Narrow Streets change?

The History of Lastlife

...is lost.

What came before the fall? Who built all these buildings? What was the government of this place? Who were its rulers?

None of those questions has an answer that anybody still remaining in the ruins knows.

When you play *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*, you'll fill in the answers and the history of Lastlife. Some of it will come through the PCs' bonds. Much of it will come from the new move for spouting lore, **recall a lost memory of Lastlife** (see page 14). But the point is that the majority of the details will be determined by you, at your table, for your particular rendition of Lastlife. As they are revealed, the more they tie in to the different pieces in your particular Lastlife, the better.

There are only a few universal truths for the history of Lastlife.

Before the fall, these were not ruins; they were magnificent and great. Then the fall came, in some unclear capacity. The world died. It is now dead. How long it has been dead is indeterminate, and unimportant. It's functionally forever and no time at all. The world limps on, barely alive, its life prolonged by the last few remnants of existence in its shell, vultures and other carrion-feeders from across the spheres feasting upon its remaining flesh.

Constructing Your Ruins

When you play *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*, you don't have to use every single one of these locations. You can use any combination of them. You can use your own locations, added to the mix, as well. Assembling your version of the ruins is about putting together the pieces to form a coherent whole.

When the PCs are traveling to a new place in the ruins, what do they have to pass through to get there? That's another piece of your ruins. How does having Griedhardt's Grove next door to the Castle Oblivion change the nature of your ruins? That's an important question to your specific version of Lastlife. Always be thinking about the overall picture of your ruins, how the mysteries and opportunities of the different parts add together into a single whole.

A key to successfully constructing your ruins from the pieces here is to always draw maps of how they connect, overlap, and lie with relation to each other. There is no definitive map of Lastlife; the ruins are a shifting, foggy, forgotten limbo of fragments. Feel free to put together these pieces in new and interesting ways that fit your particular game. If it makes sense for the fiction of your game to have the Endless Corridors anchored to the very top of the Castle Oblivion, then do that.



STRUGGLES IN THE DARK

There are currents in the dead places of Lastlife. Old hungers that drag onward to feed. Patterns that repeat, until broken by decay, to the detriment of all. The ruins degrade, or rebuild themselves into horrible new configurations. Without the intervention of the denizens of Lastlife aware of the world around them, driven by radiance or memory, these forces will overtake the ruins and reshape them into whatever they choose.

This chapter presents you with the fronts of *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*. Each front is a series of dangers that ultimately threaten to completely reshape the ruins in ways terrifying and strange, ways that the PCs almost certainly would stand against.

When you're running a game of *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE*, don't use all of these fronts at the same time; use the ones that come up, because you're interested in them or because the PCs stumble across them in their explorations. And if you need to, tweak or reshape these fronts as desired; the ruins are mutable. If a front says that it primarily occupies a particular area of the ruins, feel free to shift that if you really want to bring it in. In general, you should only have about three or four of these fronts active at any given time; more than that and it's too much for the players and the PCs to deal with.

These fronts are all set up like normal *Dungeon World* Adventure Fronts, with the Dangers first, followed by the Grim Portents that lead up to the Impending Doom, and the Stakes Questions about what's truly at risk in this front. When using these fronts, though, keep in mind that they represent forces in motion independent of the PCs; they keep moving, even if the PCs don't deal with them.

The Hungry

The ruins have little enough vitality to them as it is. Taking what little soul or motive force is left in those weaker than you is monstrous, but is one of the only ways to alleviate the pain of the undead existence. Those who hunt the other undead, who snatch up souls to satiate their own cravings, are called the Hungry. They roam throughout the ruins, and those with any skill only become stronger.

The older and more powerful they become, the more likely the Hungry are to hunt each other. The oldest and strongest of the Hungry are powerful predators, no longer recognizable as anything else. All they feed upon are the souls of the other Hungry.

Even in this ruined world, they could bring a new doom, a worse fate still than the ruins. Imagine one of them, grown enormously powerful after eons of the hunt. Grown fat on the strength of those souls it stole. Grown into a strange, twisted god. The only being left in all of the ruins, mad from its solitude, and powerful beyond measure. This is how a new monster of the spheres is born. This is how the darkest god-things of the spaces between worlds have come to be. If such nightmares come to pass, Lastlife would become little more than an incubator for a new Thing From Outside.

THE HUNGRY



Danger: The Hunger

Type: Ancient Curse (*impulse: to ensnare*)

The Hunger is the very thing that drives the Hungry to consume their fellow undead. Everyone in the Cold Ruins can feel it, at least in part. Everyone knows its cold ache in their hearts. But the Hungry have chosen to give in, and they lose themselves to it. It becomes the whole of their being.

The Hunger is a drive from within and from beyond. It is the drive of self-destruction, for the creation of a new monstrosity. The end result of the Hunger is the birth of a new Thing, a new god-being of horror and terrible might. As well as the death of everything still, in any way, shape, or form, alive in the ruins.

Danger: The Voidful Band

Type: Cabal (*impulse: to absorb those in power, to grow*)

The Voidful Band is a group of the Hungry, no more than 15 or so, joined in an alliance. They will consume each other, if given a chance, but that is not why they band together now. None can be assured of their triumph over the others, so they agreed to work together to hunt others of the Hungry and the undead, to grow their own power. It is an arms race, and they are all very careful about keeping up with their kin, so no one of them will ever be able to consume the rest. In the meantime, they will happily consume everything they come across.

As a band, they can do so much more than they can as individuals. Rituals. Joint attacks and ambushes. Their danger to others is magnified exponentially.

Danger: Filth

Type: Power-Mad Wizard (*impulse: to seek magical power*)

Filth looks to be a boy, with dirty, mottled, pock-marked flesh. Rags hang off his thin limbs. His shoes are ruined, and bony toes poke through. And yet, this undead boy is one of the most powerful sorcerers stalking the ruins, seeking out prey and stealing lives. If there is one of the Hungry most likely to win, to consume the rest and become a new god creature, then it is Filth.

He was given his name before the end. He was a kitchen boy first, and then a stable hand, and then a beggar. He was kicked and trod upon. He was treated like his namesake—Filth. He did have a name of his own once, and he would whisper it to himself as he went to sleep, shivering in the cold and the dirt of the streets. But he has forgotten that name. All he knows is Filth, and he has made it his own.

In these lifeless days, Filth found a strength he never knew he had. He stole the cold life from another undead, and another, and another, and in himself built a power that would have rivaled any in the old world. All of Lastlife shall fall away before him, for he has no mercy for the dead world that once tormented him so.

Danger: The Siphon Rite

Type: Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)

The Siphon Rite is written upon a thin sheet of electrum, wrapped around the leg bone of some long-forgotten sovereign from the world before the end. The words are etched in with a pen made of wyvern's tooth and ink made of distilled phoenix venom. An ancient oracle caught in a trance wrote it, as images from beyond this sphere traveled through his hand and onto the metallic page. A sacred artifact, it was seen as the key to saving the world at its time of greatest need. It was hidden away, until it could be used to bring peace back to this sphere.

Of course, all those stories are lies. The Siphon Rite is a trickled-in notion, a tiny embryonic idea meant to blossom into a new form.

Some worlds the Things From Outside mean to eat. Others...they use to make more of their kind. The Siphon Rite is an egg, planted into this world for that latter purpose. Along with the press of the Hunger, which the Things use as a kind of reproductive urge, the Siphon is there to help birth a new Thing.

Grim Portents

- The Voidful Band locates the Siphon Rite in the Great Library.
- The Voidful Band retrieves the Siphon Rite.
- Filth decimates the Voidful Band and steals the Rite.
- Filth performs the Siphon Rite. He begins to absorb the life out of the ruins in an ever-growing radius.
- The self-destructive urge of the Hunger responds to the Siphon and drives the undead towards its pull, where Filth can absorb them.
- Filth has enough power to consume the whole of the ruins, and becomes a new Thing From Outside.

Stakes

- Who will use the Siphon Rite, if anyone?
- Will Filth become a new Thing From Outside?
- Will the Hunger grip the PCs?

Impending Doom

Destruction (The new Filth-Thing is born, and Lastlife is utterly destroyed, given over to the existence of this creature.)

The Prisons

The world before Lastlife had conquered all its threats. It turned those dangers to good use, imprisoning them and drawing from them, or treating them as strange objects to be viewed for enjoyment. It treated monsters as art, abominations as generators.

But in Lastlife, those incredible constructions are broken; those viewing galleries, lost and tarnished. All that truly remains of this gaudy hubris is the prisons themselves, holding creatures of incredible power within. Lastlife has become a jail cell for them. Should they escape their prisons, they would still be trapped inside the ruins themselves, this soulless place beyond death as much a prison as any other.

These creatures seek escape. As much as any other denizen of Lastlife. And the costs of such escape may be too high for this broken world to bear.

Danger: The All-Dragon

Type: Dark Portal (*impulse: to disgorge dragons*)

Dragons are not from this world. Horribly monstrous, terrifying in power, fearsome in their might and their intent. Whenever one died, another would be born, as they shared one enormously powerful soul stretched between them. But the hero sages of the world before found a way to defeat them, taking advantage of their joint soul to force them into a single prison.

The All-Dragon is that orb-shaped prison. All the dragons in the world were forced beneath its surface, in a ritual that took centuries to prepare and enact, and cost the world so many lives. But it worked; the draconic threat was subdued, left as little more than a curiosity to be periodically restored and refreshed with arcane rites.

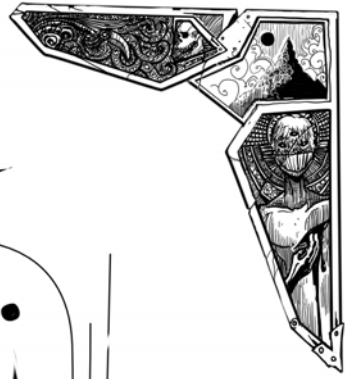
An enormous structure ensconces the orb, which floats above a podium...all indications that it came to be viewed as a thing to be observed, to be entranced by. An oddity, or an art object. An indicator of the immense power of the world in the time before. To behold those scales, those wings and claws, those terrifying serpentine eyes, all gazing out from beneath the sphere's surface with hatred and hunger...how could one not feel powerful and blessed?

The All-Dragon still stands, the sphere floating above its podium, those scales and eyes roiling just beneath the surface, brimming with endless hatred. But the maintenance of the All-Dragon has ceased. The end of the world has weakened the prison. Now, a wingtip emerges from the surface of the orb. A claw stretches out for a brief second. A spurt of flame or lightning or acid escapes the sphere into the darkness beyond. The All-Dragon is falling, and soon the dragons within will be disgorged upon the world. A surging tide of claw and wing, biting and snapping and tearing whatever it can.

Dragon Names

If dragons are released from the All-Dragon, then you'll need to give them names! Here are a bunch to get you started:

Ripclaw, Vertheriorax, Grax the Uncanny, Qorhalloren Firetongue, Zirakkis, Nod Hel Qren, Poisoned Eye, Jagged Hate, Crolothus the Insatiable, Hatewyrms, Feastfang, Sethenexis



Danger: The Demon Pool

Type: Unholy Ground (*impulse: to spawn evil*)

The Demon Pool was designed to channel the power of the creature held within into artifacts and machines now long inactive and broken. It was both prison and generator. A ring of green stones surrounded a pool of water, in which was held a terrifying demon—the only one still on this plane of existence.

And now? Those stones are cracked, or shifted apart in the cataclysms that ended the world and began Lastlife. Age has weakened the bindings of the Demon Pool, and the creature inside has begun to exercise its power. Now, the Demon Pool stands not as a true prison, but as a birthplace, from which Oriaxanysoth can send forth its own will and its power in the form of its unending young, slowly corrupting all of Lastlife and its denizens to the demon's own purpose.

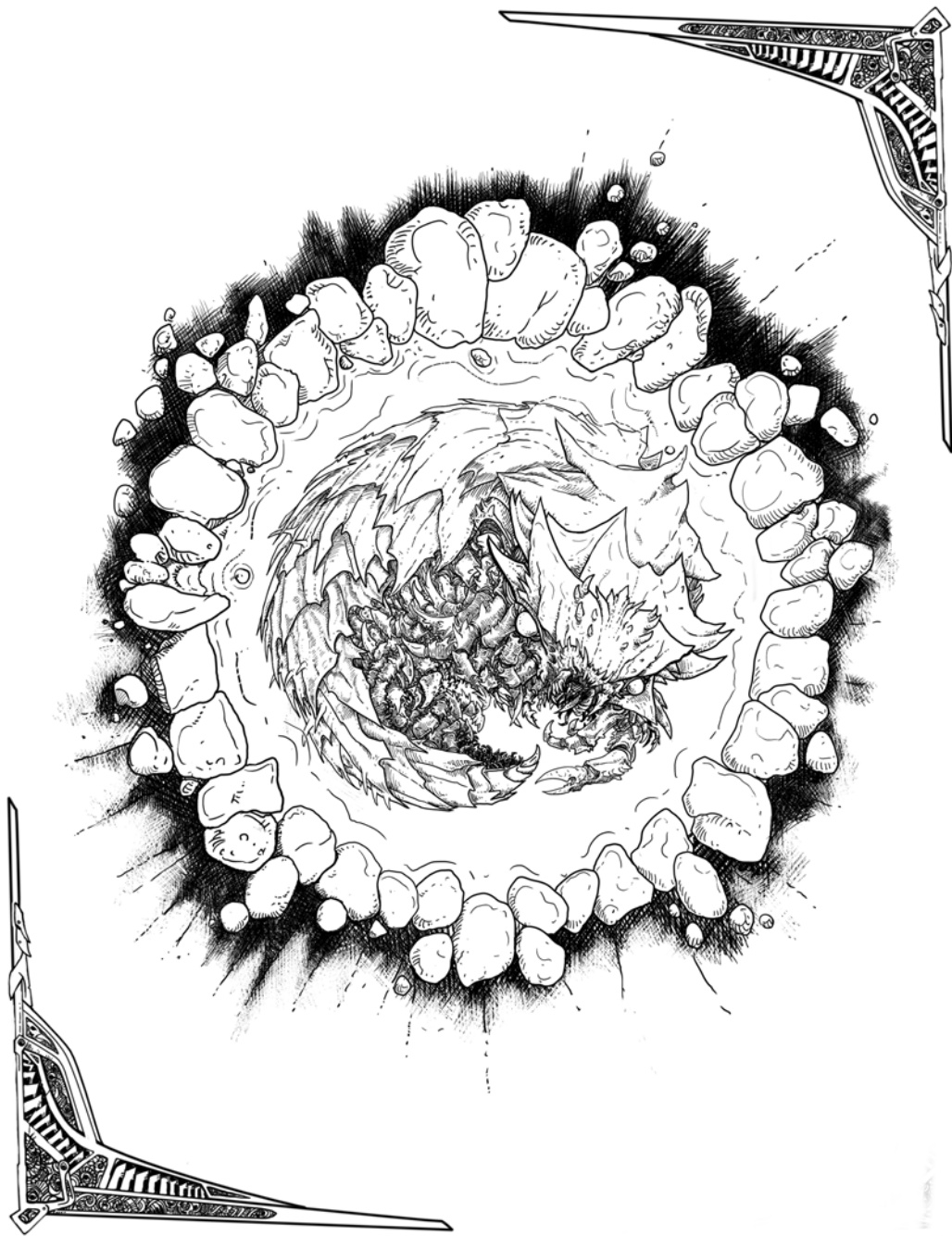
Danger: Oriaxanysoth

Type: Demon Prince (*impulse: to open the gates of its hellplane*)

Oriaxanysoth is the demon held within the Demon Pool. A massive creature, like some abyssal insect or crustacean, all chitin and inhuman eyes, claws and antennae and hatred. Oriaxanysoth has been imprisoned in the Demon Pool for eons, but it is an immortal creature, and has bided its time, even past the ending of the world. And now it is seizing upon its chance.

Oriaxanysoth craves escape from the Pool, and a return to its home, a horrible hellplane of monstrosities and torture. But it also seeks vengeance upon this place, decrepit and broken as it is; it will crush this plane that has served as its prison for so long. It will not simply shatter its cage and return home; it will rip open a hole in this world, and it will lead its kin here, to feast upon the residue of this world's greatness and to torture all who remain. It will exact its vengeance.

Already, the bindings of the Demon Pool weaken, and Oriaxanysoth can extend its will outward. It has begun to spawn, producing countless offspring in the Demon Pool. It sends its offspring in wave upon wave at the wards and walls of the Pool. While countless of them die, dissolved into nothingness upon those arcane runes, others make it past the Pool's bindings, and into Lastlife as a whole. Through its young, Oriaxanysoth can take over those in Lastlife with enough power to finally break its bindings and free it.



THE DEMON POOL

Danger: The Broken

Type: Ancient Curse (*impulse: to ensnare*)

The Broken are those who take the offspring of Oriaxanysoth into themselves. These offspring, smaller versions of Oriaxanysoth, squirming out blindly from the Demon Pool to seek out the denizens of Lastlife, do not appear dangerous compared to much in the ruins. Though they carry forth the will of their parent, looking for power to break the Demon Pool, they are small, and they bring their own boons. They offer immense might to those they find. All a denizen of Lastlife need do is take the offspring into themselves and bind with the creature, and then a taste of the godlike demonic might of Oriaxanysoth is theirs. The new Broken is empowered, mighty, incredible.

And in exchange, the voice of the offspring sings in the Broken's mind. The Broken is asked to free still more of its parent, and still more of its siblings. A small price to pay, especially since freeing Oriaxanysoth will only increase the power of those who take the offspring into themselves.

Danger: The Escapists

Type: Misguided Good (*impulse: to free themselves from this plane no matter the cost*)

The Escapists are denizens of Lastlife who seek freedom. They believe, truly and deeply, that this plane is lost. This world is over. And the only hope they have of finding anything beyond the endless fog and despair is to leave this world behind, forever. They seek to penetrate the barrier between this world and the rest of the spheres, and to find new life somewhere else, far from here. They collect what arcane knowledge, power, and machinery they can, all in hopes of assembling from it something that can pierce into the multiverse.

Though the movement as a whole is led by a denizen named Veena Endrada, they are all separate and pursuing their own means of escape, only coming together insofar as they realize they need each other to get out of Lastlife. And Veena has realized what she can use to break free of this broken world.

The offspring of Oriaxanysoth? Excellent for providing them the power they need to pierce the unending void beyond this world. The Demon Pool itself? If they could harness it, it too would serve their needs. The All-Dragon? Perhaps the Escapists could ask for a boon from the great serpents after freeing them. Such a boon might make all the difference in learning how to escape.

Veena sees in these failing prisons opportunities for her own escape, and she will guide the other Escapists to follow her path.

Grim Portents

- The Escapists find secrets in the Great Library, pointing to the rites necessary to break asunder the All-Dragon, and the means to power them through the Demon Pool.
- Some of the Escapists become Broken, taking in the offspring of Oriaxanysoth, to barter for the power for their rites.
- The Escapists attempt to crack open the All-Dragon to call upon its power, and succeed only in freeing a single dragon (choose a name from the list above).
- Veena Endrada becomes one of the Broken, taking an offspring of Oriaxanysoth into herself, to better guide and power the rituals.
- Oriaxanysoth uses a now pliant Veena to lead the Escapists in successfully breaking open the All-Dragon fully, claiming that it will also tear open a way out of Lastlife.
- In the devastation wrought by the freed dragons, the Demon Pool weakens, and Oriaxanysoth escapes to tear open a portal to its hellplane.

Stakes

- Will the Escapists and Veena Endrada find a way out of Lastlife, safely?
- Will the dragons be released from the All-Dragon?
- Who will take up Oriaxanysoth's offspring and become Broken?
- Will the Demon Pool fall?

Impending Doom

Rampant Chaos (Lastlife, and what little order and structure it had, falls beneath the plague of dragons and Oriaxanysoth's kin spewing from the hellplane. It becomes a hellplane in its own right.)



The Final Darkness

Lastlife is a world limping on past its own true end. It's an anomaly in the vast variety of the spheres, but not unknown. It should be over, gone, washed away entirely. As it is, only fragments of life and memory keep it staggering onward. A prison, a limbo, a repeating pattern of death and fog and lifelessness.

But that means that a truer, final end still awaits. Not a catastrophic end, an explosion that takes away the world in a ball of flame; Lastlife is no longer deserving of such an apocalypse. No, Lastlife faces a fading away, darkness passing over all of its structures and peoples, until all of them melt away into nothingness. Forgotten memories lost upon the foam of worlds. The Final Darkness.

Forces at work within Lastlife represent its own entropic tendency towards this umbral end. They bring the true death of Lastlife ever closer, each in their own way, some without even truly realizing it. And to those who live in the ruins, who might seek to restore the past or start something new, these forces of the ultimate end are as great a threat as any.

Danger: The Stalker in Ruins

Type: Construct of Law (*impulse: to eliminate perceived disorder*)

The Stalker in Ruins isn't from Lastlife. It came from outside, pierced the deadened walls of this plane with the sheer force of its trajectory, and landed here to serve its purpose: diagnose Lastlife and its state. Determine utility. Terminate, or infest.

The Stalker in Ruins is a creature of the Things From Outside, those massive creatures living in the void between spheres, looking upon worlds as tasty morsels or as potential incubators. To them, Lastlife could be a perfect incubator...but it is an oddity. A dilemma. The world should be passing on, to allow a new world to arise. A new world the Things could consume. Instead, it lingers. And while it might serve as an incubator, the Things cannot be sure. Lastlife shows strange signs of life.

So they send into Lastlife a creature they crafted out of rules and structure, a creature designed to study the ruins, to learn them inside and out, and to either plunge them into nothingness, or prepare Lastlife to birth a new Thing. The Stalker in Ruins is this probe, this living creature of the Things' essence, studying the ruins and hunting out whatever strange forces keep Lastlife lingering on.

It took very little time for the Stalker to determine that the forces necessary to transform Lastlife into an incubator are well outside of its own control. Instead, it would seek to plunge Lastlife into the final dark. If that means killing denizens of Lastlife looking to restore the ruins, so be it. If that means finding a way to awaken the final bringers of darkness, so be it. The Stalker in Ruins will hunt and find a way to end this dead world, once and for all.

Danger: The Dark Waters

Type: Dark Portal (*impulse: to disgorge demons*)

The Dark Waters lie beyond the Lighthouse. The endless sea, as far as the eye can see. Black water, thick, impossible to view through, with clouds of fog roiling across its normally gentle surface. The Dark Waters are a boundary of Lastlife, an end to the ruins, as definitive as any. And the Lighthouse's increasingly feeble light marks out that boundary for the rest of Lastlife.

But the Lighthouse isn't there to guide ships into port; it's there to keep something at bay. To keep something asleep. And as the fire in the Lighthouse wanes, the things in the waters stir. The Dark Waters ripple and move. Things rise to the surface.

What's in the waters?

What do you think? Enormous giants of dead flesh. Horrible eldritch creatures of scales and tentacles. War machines, titanic in size, the very weapons that ushered in the doom of the world. Any of these and more could work.

The key to the Dark Waters and what lies beneath them isn't explicitly saying what horrible things the Lighthouse keeps asleep; it's just knowing that they are horrible, and world-ending. That they represent the forces that ended the world once before, and they will rise to finish the job.

If, over the course of play, you find out more about what ended the world in the first place, then you should adapt whatever lies under the Dark Waters to fit that truth.

The creatures living beneath the surface of the Dark Waters are not easy to describe. They aren't just monsters. They aren't even forces from outside this world. They are the death of the world embodied. Fragments of the world's doom that still remain, sunk below the waves. They sleep, their job done, having ended the world. But as the Lighthouse's fires die and they come forth, realizing that their job is not finished, they will send Lastlife into the shadows once and for all.

Danger: The Ruined

Type: Plague of the Undead (*impulse: to spread*)

The first Ruined were not like the other denizens of Lastlife. They were not trapped into repetitive patterns, or suffering from the foggy memory loss that afflicted their kin. They did not die and return, or awaken in a haze of foggy memory and lost purpose, as most denizens did. They saw the end. It touched them. And it changed them. It lives in them, now, in their hollow eyes, in their haggard forms, in their empty souls.

The Ruined are mindless and dangerous, erratic and frightening. Some of the Ruined stand in a single spot for eons, even as their garb disintegrates on their bodies and the sheer pressure against their legs leads their bones to snap. Some trudge in mindless circles, wearing grooves into the cobblestones of Lastlife. Some run haphazardly at any other creatures they see, desperately attempting to claw out eyes and hunks of flesh, unthinkingly. Madly.

All of them bear a much deeper threat than whatever dark, apocalyptic madness lives inside the remains of their souls. The doom that made them what they are, that stole from them even the half-lives of the other denizens of Lastlife...it can spread. It can leave them through their fingers, through their poisoned breath, through their hatred and their venom. And other denizens can find themselves brought down by this sickening doom, changed into the Ruined, carrying their own pieces of the world's doom inside them. Becoming little more than crazed servants of a doom that never will return. Knowing, with every fiber of their being, that they should be gone, should be vanished into the darkness...and knowing simultaneously that they are not, and driven mad by that contradiction.

Danger: The Ghost of the First Sorcerer

Type: Power-Mad Wizard (*impulse: to seek magical power*)

A creature of legend, even in the world before the end. The First Sorcerer, the one who cracked the world just enough to let the magic seep in. An outsider, bound within the prison of mortal flesh, who reshaped the world to her own whim. Who created the First Sovereignty and ruled with lightning and iron. Who plowed entire mountains and forests under the force of her will. In myth barely remembered in the Cold Ruins, the First Sorcerer was said to have finally fallen to the combined ghosts of all those who died at her hands.

And now, in Lastlife? The Ghost of the First Sorcerer returns, aching for power.

Is it truly the Ghost of the First Sorcerer? A resurrected figure of myth and legend? None can tell. But it hardly matters either way. The Ghost desires to doom this world. To bring it into a necroplane, where she might rule it as a spectral overlord. She has become an agent of the world's death, in exchange for the chance to take power over this place once more...or so she believes. Whether there is such a place, beyond death, where she will rule, no one truly knows. But she believes, and she has power, and that is all that matters. Her power extends over the doom of the world, and all those who carry the world's doom within them.

The Ghost of the First Sorcerer sweeps out from her hidden tomb in the ruins, and she seeks the might to bring the world to a close, once and for all.

Grim Portents

- The Ghost of the First Sorcerer taps into the Ruined and begins to assemble a true horde, infecting other denizens of Lastlife with the Ruined plague.
- The Stalker in Ruins diagnoses Lastlife as terminal and pledges fealty to the Ghost, serving her will to end the world.
- The Stalker in Ruins finds the Lighthouse on Dark Waters and reports back to the Ghost.
- The Ghost advances on and destroys the Lighthouse with her horde of Ruined.
- Monstrosities rise from the Dark Waters and reach Lastlife, destroying whatever they encounter, including the Ghost of the First Sorcerer.
- The Stalker in Ruins physically bonds with the monstrosities destroying Lastlife, turning them into creatures of the Things From Outside and ending the world once and for all.

Stakes

- Will the plague of the Ruined spread throughout Lastlife?
- Will the Ghost of the First Sorcerer find a way to plunge the world into a spectral afterlife?
- Will the fire in the Lighthouse be rekindled, or extinguished?
- Will the Stalker in Ruins find a way to doom this world?

Impending Doom

Pestilence (The Ruined plague spreads throughout Lastlife as the world slowly but surely falls to the monstrosities and becomes totally silent.)





GRIEDHART'S GROVE

The Tumorous Growth

Even amid THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE, where the world has ended and all life simply continues unthinkingly...there comes new growth. Strange growth. Abominable growth. Creatures and things that flourish in this broken world, finding cracks into which to spread their roots, and consuming whatever they need to grow larger. Lastlife is a dead place, but a dead place with a cancer inside of it, and soon that cancer will grow to engulf the whole of the ruins, changing them forever into something new...but perhaps more monstrous than before.

Danger: Griedhardt's Grove

Type: Elemental Vortex (*impulse: to grow, to tear apart reality*)

The Grove was created in the days before the end, for reasons lost to most of the denizens now. But it flourishes with an arcane power. Perhaps its herbs were meant to be used in ritual and rite; perhaps it was simply magically supported. Perhaps it was a breeding ground for new monstrosities. Whichever, the Grove has a strength to it that keeps it growing even despite the death surrounding it on all sides in Lastlife.

And as the Grove grows, it consumes the ruins. Walls crack apart, their stones integrated into the ground itself to provide more for the Grove to grow on. Buildings become trellises for strange new vines. The denizens themselves become little more than mulch or fertilizer.

What drives this monstrous growth? It seems the true source of the proliferation, and the power, lies in the Grove itself. It is the nature of this place, this strange verdant tumor, to grow larger and larger, to expand with neon green vines and brightly colored poisoned flowers amid the dank gray of Lastlife. To those denizens who care about new life in the ruins, the Grove represents a kind of terrible, nightmarish hope; new life can spread, yes, but what will it look like?

Danger: The Tree Kraken

Type: Elemental Lord (*impulse: to tear down creation into its component parts and grow*)

Though the Grove is creating all new kinds of life, from plants never seen before in this world to poor monstrous animals infected with spores and vines, there is at least one creature making Griedhardt's Grove its home that has been in this world for ages; the Tree Kraken. A primordial thing from the earliest days of the world. At its greatest, it spread its roots across miles, becoming a single, massive, networked forest of hunger and titanic branches. The Tree Kraken could consume whatever it wished. It could watch over the entirety of its being with eyes that sprung to life from knots on its trees. It was undefeatable, a god ruling over its land.

Eventually it was brought low by the combined efforts of mythic heroes, the ones who first started building the world from before into the great heights it would achieve. But it left behind a single seed, and it grew back, only to be struck down once more. The cycle continued for eons, the Tree Kraken leaving a seed, returning, only to be burned away once more—until the heroes captured the seed. They locked it away, where it could not plant itself. Where it could not grow.

Until now. Whether it was planted in the Grove before the end of the world...or perhaps the prison of the seed was the reason for the Grove's existence...or perhaps the seed simply escaped its prison, and through some terrible, alien will it drove itself here...none know. It doesn't matter. The Tree Kraken is here. It grows again, its roots and branches spreading throughout the Grove. It consumes those it can, those poor denizens that stumble into the Grove unawares. Meager meals, but it will take what it can get in these days.

It will spread itself across all of Lastlife, bringing down these ruins, and making itself once more into the enormous plant-god of this place.

Danger: The Carapace Fungus

Type: Ancient Curse (*impulse: to ensnare*)

It grows on trees, it creeps across rocks, emerging in strange sharpened plate-like formations. Amid the mad vegetation within Griedhardt's Grove, it might go unnoticed, just another strange form of life amid the chaos.

But as intelligent creatures pass, the fungal protrusions bend and stretch toward them. They beckon, with gentle wavings and vibrations. They call to the denizens of Lastlife that venture into the Grove, and there's something strangely hypnotic about their undulations. All it takes is one simple exploratory touch for the fungus to leap across the boundary and infect the creature.

The strange mushrooms and tubers may not appear immediately. They're there, but they're small and unnoticeable. Given time, though, the fungus makes itself known. It especially surges forth every time the creature it has infected is threatened, every time they are harmed or killed, every time the mists take them and they return in the strange cycle of Lastlife. In those times, the Carapace Fungus spreads like a virus, covering tracts of the infected being's skin with new, hardened mushrooms. Veins of hardened vegetation stretch across desiccated skin, and each vein is harder than iron. A general sheen of the fungus's strange red-green coloration covers the skin itself, and penetrating that is like pushing through chain mail.

What a wonder, then, it would seem! The Carapace Fungus is a natural armor, strong and light. A wonderful new lifeform of the Grove. Something to be fostered and cultivated.

The truth of the Carapace Fungus, however, is far more sinister. The fungus spreads, and branches, and infects. Those it infects become powerful and invulnerable...but as the fungus burrows into their bodies, the strange unlife that animates them becomes slave to the fungus. Their joints do not move of their own accord. Their body becomes stiff, except when the fungus allows it to move, and indeed drives it to move. Eventually the entirety of the creature is encased in the fungus, and its body, its very mind, is no longer its own.

The fungus has yet to colonize many bodies to that extent. Most undead have such strength sapped from them long before that point, falling in the Grove to simply join the fertile ground, covered by still more plants. Those few the fungus does have hide themselves deep in the Grove. For what purpose, none know. But that doesn't change the threat the fungus poses to Lastlife and its denizens. If the fungus were to grow its own army of infected, controlled servants, the ruins would become little more than the domain of the Carapace.

Danger: The Rose

Type: Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)

There are treasures scattered throughout Lastlife. Artifacts and wonders, buried deep or ensconced within treasuries and vaults. Locked away, where the ruins and its trials cannot destroy them. Some of them, great and majestic workings of invention. Some of them, beautiful and moving pieces of art. And at least one of them, a true, glowing, shining remnant of the last world's wonder.

The Rose is the only one of its kind in all of Lastlife. Even amid the cancerous growth of the Grove, there are no roses. Flowers, maybe, but not roses.

The Rose grows, alone, in the middle of the Grove, surrounded by a circle of glass vines. Each leaf is inscribed with runes whose magic keeps the Rose separate and safe from the world around it, perfectly preserving its vibrancy and its power.

Whoever ensconced the Rose within this circle of glass vines may or may not have understood what they were truly doing, especially in the face of the end of the world. But it matters not; what matters is what happened. The Rose is not simply an isolated, saved piece of natural wonder. It became a receptacle for the natural bounty of the world that was.

Griedhardt's Grove is a place of pure, unbridled, cancerous life. And the Rose is life as beauty, all contained in this single object.

And as such, the Rose could be the bridle for the Grove. Its power, released and used, could guide and control the Grove into new shapes and forms. The Rose itself seeks release, seeks use as a controlling scepter for the Grove. To bring back the roses of the world, to bring back hope. And of course the Grove itself, with its slow non-intellect, seeks to taint the Rose. To bring it into the Grove and infect it with its own strange, new life.

Grim Portents

- The Tree Kraken's growth disturbs the ground where the Rose is held; the circle of glass vines is broken. The Rose repels the Tree Kraken's further growth in the area.
- The Rose calls to powerful denizens of Lastlife, who push through the Grove to get to the vault.
- The Carapace Fungus infects many of those denizens, leading the whole to grow in intelligence and power.
- The Tree Kraken and the Carapace Fungus merge into a single invulnerable creature, the Kraken's will guiding the fungus and those infected by it.
- The Carapace Kraken uses its controlled victims to obtain the Rose and bring it back to the Kraken's main corpus, where it can be consumed.
- Griedhardt's Grove grows with insane speed and force, guided by the Rose and the Carapace Kraken, and quickly overwhelms the whole of the ruins.

Stakes

- Who will obtain and use the Rose? Will it survive the violence and horror of Lastlife?
- Will the Tree Kraken produce offspring?
- Will the Carapace Fungus infect someone powerful or important?
- Will Griedhardt's Grove overwhelm the ruins with its growth?

Impending Doom

Usurpation (The Carapace Kraken, in control of the cancerous growth of the Grove and in turn all of Lastlife, rules the entire remaining world and turns it into a breeding ground for new young Carapace Krakens.)



THE DEEPWASP

The Abominations

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE are not simply home to the undead, the leftovers of the old world, or those strangely revived by the mists. They are home to strange new life, and imprisoned creatures, yes...but they are also home to horrible monsters, creatures that either survived through sheer will and monstrous strength beyond the end of the world, or that could only have been created in the ruined world of Lastlife. These abominations, these nightmare monsters, only grow stronger as they stalk the ruins. Each one of them bears within it the seed of a new doom, a new monstrous world, and it is down to those denizens of Lastlife remaining with their own will to either slay these abominations, or to push them to places where they can do little harm.

Danger: The Frigid Knights

Type: Corrupt Government (*impulse: to maintain the status quo*)

There are very few pieces of the old world that truly survived into Lastlife. The Frigid Knights, for better or worse, are one of them.

They were slayers. Killers of eldritch abominations, of monsters vast in size and power. Their blades were made of ice, and everywhere they walked, they brought with them cold mists. Each bore a shard of the primal ice in their hearts, and they devoted themselves to putting out the fires of the world. Bringing order. Seeking stagnation and frozen purity. Soon enough they slew both human and inhuman monster. They slew nations. They were hated throughout the world, turned out from cities and towns on sight. But they didn't care; the cold gripped their hearts fully. They had their own purpose.

And here in Lastlife, that purpose persists.

The truth they do not understand, however, is the danger of the cold and the ice they call upon. Their frozen might blooms in the ruins of Lastlife. Even as they tap into the primal ice to form their unstoppable blades, they feed it more strength, and they freeze the world around them. They push Lastlife ever further towards total and utter stagnation.

Hasper Blight was the first of the Frigid Knights, the most in touch with the primal ice. He still leads, but the Frigid Knights need no true leader or structure of their own. The ice speaks to them. It tells them of what monsters to slay, what tasks to pursue...and the Knights listen. To the potential icy doom of all of Lastlife.

Danger: The Deepwasp

Type: God (*impulse: to gather worshippers*)

The Deepwasp is a bizarre being. It looks like an enormous wasp, sitting upon its fat and heavy abdomen. Small hands emerge from the ends of its legs, and human eyes peer out from its head. Its wings are gossamer and pearlescent, and couldn't possibly lift the Deepwasp into the air. It sits at the center of a strange cluster of architecture, buildings made of odd materials, beautiful in their own way, reflecting the gray of Lastlife in peculiar bands of chromatic light. Gems and old inscriptions adorn the pillar upon which it perches: the story

of how it came to be, perhaps? Or of one of its accomplishments? If the Deepwasp can read those inscriptions, it certainly isn't saying what they hold.

This strange creature, this strange monster, claims itself to have been with the world since its very first day. The Deepwasp was there when this sphere was formed out of the inchoate chaos of the cosmos, it was there when the world ended, and it is here still. It knows how to restore the world; such is its infinite knowledge and wisdom. Its power is great, but limited by rules only the Deepwasp itself understands. It cannot leave its place of power to go into the ruins. Or so it says to the denizens of Lastlife who happen upon its lair.

The Deepwasp's plans are to revive Lastlife. To bring back the glory days of this world, to return it to its amazing wonder. And upon doing so, the Deepwasp shall emerge from its current home, and shall rise to become god of the world. And it shall of course richly reward those who served it well in its endeavors, those who helped it to return the world to glory, for it is a benevolent god.

Simply listen to the Deepwasp and all shall be made right. Disobey, and doom shall fill the ruins evermore. Strike at the Deepwasp, and it shall wield all its might and crush you into dust.

Or so it says. The Deepwasp, though clearly powerful, is a creature of lies and confusing words. Those who listen to it believe its words at their own fortune or peril.

Danger: The Ruinworm

Type: Force of Chaos (*impulse: to destroy all semblance of order*)

The Ruinworm is a monstrosity never seen before the endless days of Lastlife. Segmented plates. Mandibles. Multiple heads, more growing out from its main body. It moves through dirt like water, and it moves through the air like a dancer, or a nightmarish bird of unending grace. It slips through the ruins with ease when it aims to, but usually it smashes into them, sending buildings and towers crumbling to the ground. The Ruinworm is a creature of destruction and it destroys whatever it finds in its way, consuming those shattered structures. It draws nourishment not from consuming the stone or marble, but rather from consuming the destruction wrought on those materials by the fall, or by time, or by the Ruinworm itself.

With each successive meal, the creature grows larger. Grows another head. Grows another pair of biting mandibles. And its hunger increases.

It shows no great intelligence, no overarching plan. Just an unending strength and voracious ferocity. It will crush the ruins of Lastlife into food for itself, and then, when it has consumed all and it has grown titanic...then, one imagines, it will shatter its way out of this world to find more to ruin.

Danger: The Unborn Nightmare

Type: Chosen One (*impulse: to fulfill or resent their destiny*)

The product of a mad wizard's experimentations? Some eldritch thing from beyond the world that slipped inside during the cataclysm? A living embodiment of nightmare, drawn here by the dreams of countless sleeping undead? Memories of the creature are gone, if they were ever there, so the denizens who see it can only wonder at its true nature. But the creature exists, and cannot be denied, no matter how much the denizens of Lastlife would like to leave it in some hole, to be forever ignored.

The Unborn Nightmare is a giant, towering fifty feet into the air. Its head is strangely like that of a babe, but one with dead skin, and black eyes like infinite pits. Its teeth are sharpened and jagged. Beneath its head is its body, skinless—massive muscles and sinew visibly stretching with every movement of its limbs. Enormous steel rings embedded in its body hold it together, jangling and shifting as it stomps through the ruins.

In truth, there is a purpose sewn into the Unborn Nightmare's entire being, but it never took form, never took shape the way it was meant to. It may have been a nascent god, or some angel come to the world to help guide it away from its end. It may have been a demon, here to doom the world endlessly. But either way, the cataclysm that ended the world and brought on Lastlife changed everything, and the Unborn Nightmare never emerged into that destined form. Now, it stalks through the ruins, a confused and disoriented creature. A prophecy and purpose still embedded into its very being, but it is entirely unaware of that function, unable to fulfill it. In its hatred, its rage and fear and pain, it seeks answers to its purpose from any it encounters. And when they cannot provide it with the truths it wants, it destroys them.

Danger: The Executioner

Type: Lord of the Undead (*impulse: to seek true immortality*)

The Executioner is an embodied impulse. Perhaps it arose from a denizen of Lastlife, carrying out their last remembered purpose, ending lives. But since then it has become something much stronger. Much more powerful. And much worse.

The Executioner's ever-increasing patchwork cloak of black fabric largely shrouds its body, enwrapping the whole of it. Over where its head should be, it wears its hood pulled forward, along with the metallic mantle of the Executioner from the days before the end—something it found, maybe, or preserved in the ruins. The same fabric shrouds its arms most of the time, but sometimes it reaches out and the fabric pulls away, and its victims can see its true form.

In the place of its own arms, the Executioner has countless limbs, taken from its victims, melted together into a thick whole. It holds its enormous axe in innumerable hands, each one taken from someone it has slain. Countless heads make up its head; its eyes, all stolen, dotting its face like glistening jewels. Its body is a patchwork of the bodies of those it has executed, and it continues growing with each kill it makes.

This impulse drives the Executioner—to kill, to execute, to remove threats and administer the end. Not for justice, but just to fulfill its role. The Executioner. And it builds those it kills into itself, taking some piece of the death it deals forward with it. Those denizens of Lastlife that it slays and adds to itself are lost to the mists; they shall never walk the ruins again.

With every kill, the Executioner makes itself stronger, and pushes away its own end still further. When it has killed every single denizen of Lastlife, and carries within its body a piece of all of them, then it will have fulfilled its purpose...and it will be a creature immortal, beyond death, sitting upon a throne made of ruin.

Grim Portents

- The Frigid Knights focus upon the Deepwasp, Ruinworm, Executioner, and Unborn Nightmare.
- The Deepwasp makes a deal with the Frigid Knights to help them slay the other abominations in exchange for allowing it to survive. They agree, for now.
- The Frigid Knights lure the Ruinworm, Executioner, and Unborn Nightmare into the ruins of Lastlife, driving them together.
- The battle between the Ruinworm, Executioner, Unborn Nightmare, and Frigid Knights ends with the Ruinworm, Executioner, and most Frigid Knights slain and the Unborn Nightmare escaped.
- Hasper Blight, the last Frigid Knight, murders the Deepwasp in vengeance for the dooming of the Knights.
- Hasper Blight engages the Unborn Nightmare in battle and kills it; the entirety of Lastlife is plunged into eternal winter. Blight becomes the Frigid King.

Stakes

- Who will accept the primal ice into their heart to contend with the abominations?
- What will the Ruinworm, Executioner, and Unborn Nightmare destroy?
- Will the Deepwasp achieve the godhood it seeks?

Impending Doom

Tyranny (Hasper Blight, the Frigid King, rules over a Lastlife frozen by the primal ice.)

The Crimes of the Past

Lastlife is not natural. It did not happen as the result of a normal series of events. It is the result of crimes, transgressions, mistakes. The cataclysm that ended the world and brought on Lastlife might have just ended everything, but the actions of those before the cataclysm somehow preserved the world's existence. The crimes of the past still haunt the ruins, even though many of them are unremembered, even by those who perpetrated them. The victims are often the ones with the strongest memories of what came before, and they seek vengeance, even in this haunted dead limbo of a world.

Danger: The Seraph of Traevor

Type: Choir of Angels (*impulse: to pass judgment*)

In the days before Lastlife, there were many great heroes. Many who did amazing things, deeds that would go down in history forever (or at least, until the cataclysm that stole memory from the world). And she was one of the greatest. The Seraph of Traevor, they called her. What was Traevor? That truth is lost in Lastlife. But Seraph they called her because of her winged armor. Because of the silver of its steel. Because of her Godsword.

She was beloved, and noble. She defended the people from gods and demons. She fostered growth, order, and justice. And eventually she died, not at the hands of some monster, but of old age. She had done her duty for this world many times over, and her passing was mourned.

But then the powers-that-be, the rulers of that world, become concerned. They thought they would need her still. So they began work to return her. They wove magic into her empty armor, and they bound her soul to it. They equipped it with greater weapons than ever, with a hammer that could break apart whole lands. They made her armor a behemoth of steel and silver. And they summoned back her soul. Taking her from the rest that she had so richly deserved and forcing her back into this world.

What they created was a monster. The pain drove her, thirsting for vengeance against those who had stolen her rest. She did not want to continue to exist, and her nature was broken and weak. Those who made her tried to unmake her, and when it appeared they had succeeded, they buried her armor in shame.

Then came the cataclysm. And with it, Lastlife and the revival of the armor. They had never fully broken the bindings that tied her soul to it, and in the mists and cold death of Lastlife, her soul was pulled back here, into her armor. She burst forth through the ground, all rage and grief, and sought vengeance upon those who brought her here. She hunts for them still, soaring through the ruins of Lastlife, striking at those she recognizes. A hero, destroyed by those she had defended.

Danger: The Hol'Jethariae

Type: Religious Organization (*impulse: to interpret and follow doctrine*)

The Hol'Jethariae are devoted to a single cause: the Kingdom of old, and its ruler.

Do they remember the name of the Kingdom? No.

Do they remember why it's so important? No.

Do they know the parents of their Kingdom's rightful ruler? No.

Do they know who their Kingdom's ruler is? Yes.

It is the one truth that they can absolutely clutch, that they have a concrete reality for. The Hol'Jethariae worship their ruler, an infant encased in a crystal orb. Untainted, untouched by the ruin of Lastlife, but trapped forever. They believe, to the core of their beings, that at the right time, the crystal will be shattered, and the rightful ruler of the Kingdom will be

THE HOL' JETHARAE



released, to make the Kingdom come alive again. They have no idea concept of when that right time will come...but that does not shake their belief.

The Hol’Jethariae defend their future queen with every fiber of their being, the same way that other denizens of Lastlife wander aimlessly, or repeat their patterns without thought. But some of them, those capable of greater will, seek further means of bringing about the rise of the reborn Kingdom.

Knight Rathis believes that placing the crystalline womb holding their infant ruler upon the throne will cause the rebirth of the Kingdom. Which throne? Rathis is unsure, although Castle Oblivion and the Old Queen’s throne seem promising.

Knight Morgaunt believes that perhaps pouring the energy of some other powerful force into the crystalline womb will free her infant ruler, and so she seeks a power great enough for her purposes.

Knight Brethra believes that obtaining more information is crucial, and that until the Hol’Jethariae have pieced together more of the lost memories of Lastlife and their order, they will know nothing. They don’t even know who encased their infant ruler in crystal in the first place, or why. Brethra seeks the lost form of Hol’Jethari, the namesake of their order, wandering amid the ruins, in hopes that his memories may inform them of what to do.

Regardless, however, the Hol’Jethariae act. They seek answers, and they form rules around their ruler and their duties as they go. They believe themselves defenders of the true Kingdom, and they will find a way to restore their ruler, or they—and all of Lastlife—will die in the process.

Danger: The Old Queen

Type: Corrupt Government (*impulse: to maintain the Status quo*)

She presides over Castle Oblivion in all her regal madness, and she will never be ousted, for her kingdom is eternal. Or so she says, and so she believes, in what memories and sanity remain to her. The Old Queen is a skeleton, wearing the raiment of her position, sitting atop the throne of Castle Oblivion, and imperiously commanding all those around her—her subjects. She does not even fully understand the world in which she lives, does not realize what Lastlife is. She may not even truly understand that she is undead.

She commands fealty from those who come before her, and she uses her subjects to hoard her power, to hoard the glories of her kingdom. The world is her domain, after all, and she demands tributes from all across its width and breadth. Such is her power and the madness of Castle Oblivion that those who swear fealty to her find themselves compelled by a geas to obey their new liege, and they bring back to her treasures and prizes stolen from throughout Lastlife. She hoards these in her treasures vaults, to which only she has access, as her just due for rightful rulership.

The more inhabitants of Castle Oblivion, the more knights she sends out on tasks, the more her own strength seems to increase. It is unclear if she can be slain at all anymore. She will

protect herself, her treasures, and her kingdom at any costs, amassing the past and making it her own prize.

Danger: The Memory of Doom

Type: Abandoned Tower (*impulse: to draw in the weak-willed*)

In Lastlife, there stands a tower in the center of a blackened circle of ground. The tower is a simple thing, no adornments, looking like it were made from a single, perfectly cut cylindrical piece of red stone. It rises up into the sky, and it stops abruptly with a perfectly flat top. There are no windows in this tower, and there is but one open doorway at its base, past which is darkness. The black circle of emptiness surrounding the tower is more than 100 yards in radius. Nothing grows there, and the dirt is charred and perfectly smooth. It smells faintly of ozone and power.

The tower is called the Memory of Doom. Every creature in Lastlife knows this. And every creature in Lastlife instinctively knows not to go there.

Denizens shy away from the blasted clearing. Monstrosities wander in other directions. Flying creatures refuse to pass overhead. All of Lastlife bends away from the Memory of Doom...but sometimes, a single denizen, possessed of will and thinking they can triumph over the tower, can finally unlock its secrets, will trudge out across the clearing and pass into that darkened doorway, and never be seen again. Though sometimes afterward, that smell of ozone and power grows stronger.

The Memory of Doom is the last holding place of whatever sin ended the world and caused it to pass into this one. Whatever calamity created Lastlife instead of plunging the world into nothingness, its memory lies inside that tower.

Exactly what is within, none can say. But perhaps there lies the key to saving Lastlife, and undoing the sins of the past.

Or perhaps it is merely the nature of the doomed to be lured in by such false promises.

Grim Portents

- The Old Queen learns of the Hol’Jethariae’s crystalline infant ruler, and sends her own knights to collect it.
- The Hol’Jethariae find and implore the Seraph of Traevor to defend their crystalline ruler, blaming the Seraph’s fate and existence upon the Old Queen.
- The Hol’Jethariae launch an assault upon Castle Oblivion, with the Seraph at their side, hoping to strike down the Old Queen before she finds the infant ruler.
- The Old Queen tells Seraph that her fate is the result of the line of kings the Hol’Jethariae defend, and that the Memory of Doom provides a means to finally end her torment. The Seraph destroys the Hol’Jethariae and flies to the Memory of Doom, to free herself.
- The Seraph of Traevor smashes apart the Memory of Doom, and the essence of Lastlife is broken, along with her own. Much of the world drifts into nothingness.

- The Old Queen's power preserves Castle Oblivion and surrounding environs, with those denizens who pledge fealty to her the only ones who survive. She becomes the true ruler of what is left of the world: a pocket kingdom, small and contained.

Stakes

- Will the crystalline infant ruler of the Hol'Jethariae ever be freed?
- Will The Old Queen successfully extend her domain beyond the confines of Castle Oblivion?
- Will the Seraph of Traevor find peace, or simply destroy all of Lastlife?
- What secrets does the Memory of Doom hold?

Impending Doom

Usurpation (The Old Queen, maddened and powerful, becomes the god-like ruler of what remains of Lastlife, and only those denizens who swear fealty to her can remain.)

The Cacophonous Music

Lastlife is a place of cold silence, except for the faintest murmur of mists and shuffling feet. The periodic lonely cry that pierces the air. The sounds of battle, in short spurts of clashing metal. Music is a rarity here in this dead place. But music has a power, all its own, and it lives faintly, weakly, in some corners of the ruins. Perhaps when new music fills the air, and songs reach the ears of the denizens, perhaps the world can truly be reborn. Or perhaps the music released into Lastlife is a monstrous kind of growth all its own; a madness of sound and fury, released to the detriment of this whole ruin.

Danger: The Maestro's Violin

Type: Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)

A beautiful, strange, awful piece. The last creation of some ancient, magical music maker, trying to create the perfect instrument. Creating an outlet through which the music in his soul could pour into the world. But tainted. Made with bones and ribs. Made with madness. Whether the ending of the world and the coming of Lastlife added that darkness to the violin, or whether it was there from the beginning, is a mystery lost to the fogs.

The Maestro's Violin cannot break. Its strings never snap. Its bow never needs resin. The Maestro's Violin is eternal, undying. And it always beckons to a player. It aches to have notes struck from its strings. It yearns to produce music.

It takes no special knowledge to use the Violin. Its magic will guide your hands, send the bow dancing along the strings, just so long as you have strength to propel it. The Violin will coax the music of your existence out of you, into the strings, and then up and into the air. In most hands, this is dangerous enough. Intoxicating songs cast out to entrance denizens of Lastlife, even as the player loses their soul to the music.

But imagine, the Maestro's Violin—an instrument of translation, of putting soul into song—in the hands of some of the ruins' greatest monstrosities. Imagine a black abyss of a soul, transformed into an endless song. Imagine a monstrous soul of hate and hunger, translated into a destructive aria.

The Violin doesn't distinguish players. It simply seeks to be played.

Danger: The Fiddler

Type: Chosen One (*impulse: to fulfill or resent their destiny*)

The Fiddler seeks the Maestro's Violin. If the Maestro is the creature or being that made the Violin, then the Fiddler is the being destined to play it. Blind, their eyes covered by growths of bone. Lithe. Simple. The Fiddler seems like any other denizen of Lastlife, except for their constant, unending sojourn for the Violin. They ache for it. They hear its songs, whenever it is played.

The Fiddler knows nothing about why they must obtain the Violin. The Fiddler knows not what their destiny with the instrument may be. They simply know that they must obtain the Violin, and they will kill all in their way to obtain it.

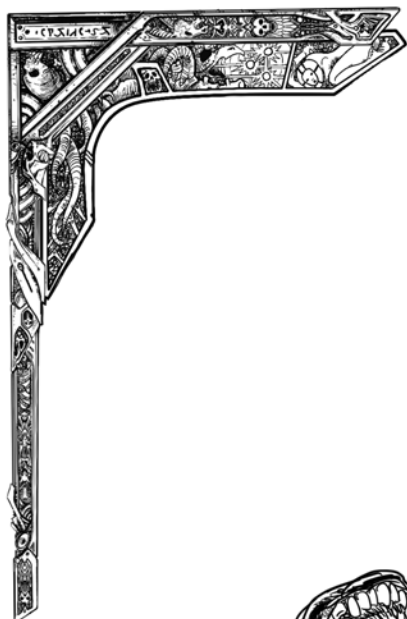
The truth behind the Fiddler's destiny with the Violin is simple: The Fiddler will play the last song of the world upon the Violin. The song will be beautiful. A majestic thing, grand, amazing. The culmination of an entire sphere's existence. And after that, sound and song and art shall leave Lastlife, once and for all. One last part of the world, closed out, forever. Denizens left without the drive for beauty. A world left without an appreciation for song.

Danger: The Cathedral of the Mangsong

Type: Place of Power (*impulse: to be controlled or tamed*)

The Iksythrys Cathedral of the Mangsong is a repository of sound and song. It pulses with the power within the many rhythms of its walls. Perhaps, given the right means, given the right power, all the songs within it could be released into the world, bringing back a kind of life most denizens consider long gone. A player with the Maestro's Violin, tuned into the Mangsong, could produce an endless bounty of beautiful music to reinvigorate the ruins.

But this power is unwieldy. The Cathedral's songs are heavily trapped in its halls by some force, some sucking, aching vortex of sound in its walls. Releasing them is its own danger. And then the Mangsong itself bears a cacophonous power, capable of overwhelming those who would tap into it. And those capable of harnessing the power of the Mangsong, capable of using its artistry to transform the world, to reshape the ruins, would stand against each other for that prize.



THE SCREAMING CENTAURS

Danger: The Screaming Centaurs

Type: Vermin (*impulse: to breed, to multiply, and consume*)

The Screaming Centaurs are monsters created before the cataclysm, seemingly to act as alarms and guards, now transformed by the cataclysm and released into the ruins. For all the horror attached to these monstrous creatures, all their terrible screaming and horrible forms, the Screaming Centaurs bear within them a hunger even more nightmarish than their being. The Screaming Centaurs consume sound. They consume song, and hunger for delectable, eccentric noise. They pull the sound from the air, and produce more young after every meal, vomiting forth new Centaurs in a stream of bile and shrieking. Each new Centaur is capable of screaming with a twisted, nightmare version of the sound that birthed them.

The Screaming Centaurs will not stop reproducing until they have consumed all sound in all the ruins, and they are a tidal wave of howling monstrosities, unstoppable and lethal.

Danger: The Sacred Audience

Type: Thieves' Guild (*impulse: to take by subterfuge*)

Some denizens of Lastlife maintain their existence and their minds by repeating the rituals they remember from the days before. Some simply give up, losing their minds to the fog of oblivion, becoming little more than animated bodies. Some find new causes to drive them. Create causes from the cold around them.

The Sacred Audience is a band of denizens fitting this last type. Each one has encountered the Iksythrys Cathedral's Manysong. Each one has heard it, if only faintly, and been possessed by it. And each one has decided to pursue song and music. To bring it back into the world. To revive it, in grand fashion.

Symphony is their leader, their preacher. He sings, discordant and confused, but he sings, and drives the Sacred Audience onward. Melody is his enforcer, a large denizen, strong and powerful with a hammer made of metal, producing pitches of a violent song with every strike. Harmony is his seeker, a small denizen, fast and stealthy, capable of stealing and taking what they need. Together, the Sacred Audience seeks out noise, sound, and song, and the things that produce it, and they take them. Quietly and quickly, they hoard song for themselves.

Grim Portents

- The Sacred Audience finds the Maestro's Violin.
- The Sacred Audience brings the Maestro's Violin to the Cathedral of the Manysong. The Fiddler and the Screaming Centaurs follow.
- The Sacred Audience release the Manysong into the air through the Maestro's Violin.
- The Screaming Centaurs consume every last sound from the Cathedral of the Manysong, and become an unstoppable hoard.

- The Fiddler picks up the Maestro's Violin in the aftermath, taking it from the corpses of the slain Sacred Audience.
- The Fiddler plays the last song upon the Maestro's Violin, and Screaming Centaurs swallow it up.

Stakes

- Will the Fiddler play the Maestro's Violin?
- Will one of the PCs play the Maestro's Violin?
- Will the Screaming Centaurs overrun the ruins?
- Will the Sacred Audience find the songs they are seeking?

Impending Doom

Impoverishment (Lastlife loses song, art, creativity, permanently. The world is forever lessened, and will never rise to the same grandeur as before, nor will it ever find new beauty to replace that which it lost. The Screaming Centaurs rage endlessly throughout Lastlife.)

The Burning of the Future

Lastlife is a cold place, nigh lifeless, dark with mists. But still, there is a chance to kindle a new light amid its night. There are forces in it that still flicker with hope, or with the force of change. There are still those who would take up those forces, and would ignite a new future for Lastlife. Whether or not that future is one worth having...is a different matter.

Danger: The Wielder

Type: Chosen One (*impulse: to fulfill or resent their destiny*)

The Wielder is not undead. He is not stricken with the same unending nigh-life of all the other denizens of the ruins. He is instead alive, endlessly and always, preserved by his cursed purpose: to forever wield Razor Void, the sword melted into his body, bonded to him through and through.

His form has grown large with the eldritch forces that pass through him, emanating from Razor Void. He is wild-eyed and pushed to the brink of madness by his fate...but he is not mad. He still understands the danger that the blade presents, and he is determined to never let another wield it. Such is his destiny. He will remain with the blade tied to him for the entirety of his existence, even unto the world's fall into formless shadow. Then, and only then, when Razor Void is entirely unmade by the death of the world, will he allow himself to rest.

The Wielder seeks silence and solitude, but Razor Void calls to those who might take it from him, and thus he always finds himself in battle against denizens of Lastlife. He slays them thoughtlessly, an endless fight to keep the world safe by killing those who might try to take this dangerous weapon from him.

Danger: Razor Void

Type: Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)

Razor Void is a nightmare weapon. A piece of the inchoate abyss beyond the spheres, hardened and pounded into the form of a blade. It bears some dark intellect, perhaps some shard of a Thing From Outside, perhaps some angry nascent world, stunted and vengeful. It takes life into itself and leaves nothing behind, destroying even the ever-returning lives of the denizens of Lastlife.

It seeks unending combat and doom. It will never be sated, and it would drive its wielder to endlessly destroy and slay. It would rid Lastlife of all remaining creatures, and then it would drive its wielder to find a new sphere, where it would repeat the cycle. Such is its nightmarish hatred. It does not care who wields it, so long as they can wield it well, and take the lives of those it faces in battle.

Its power might allow one to reshape the ruins. To truly slay many of the greatest monsters of Lastlife, restoring peace to places otherwise lost to the fogs or the cataclysm's aftereffects. And thus, Razor Void seems like it might provide hope. But the blade would consume that hope as much as any other life. A would-be wielder must beware the sword as much as any foe.

Danger: The Thearch's Authority

Type: Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)

The Thearch is dead; long live the Thearch!

The Thearch was the master of gods, a leader of a pantheon from the world before the end. Some combination of head of religion, and divine master; both the earthly instantiation of divinity, and its greatest source. All of which is moot, now. The Thearch is dead. His head lies within a rose-tinted crystal ball, and his spine is the staff upon which his head sits. And this artifact, made of the remains of the Thearch, represents all of the Thearch that survives into Lastlife. It represents his power over gods and divinities. It is the Thearch's Authority.

A tomb ensconces the Thearch's Authority, buried beneath the surface of Lastlife, where none would find it. The power to rule over gods and godlings was not something to be left out in the open. But since the cataclysm brought Lastlife into existence, the Thearch's Authority has come to glow ever more strongly with the power of the divine. The gods are dead, but the Thearch's Authority has become the receptacle for their power. It calls out to the denizens of Lastlife, some of whom have taken to simply clawing and burrowing their way through the stone, to get down into the tomb of the Thearch.

Soon, the Thearch's Authority will see use in the hands of some undead denizens of Lastlife. What shape the world will find itself in, as the will of a new would-be god reshapes the ruins, none can predict.

Danger: Arsoclinus the Inferno

Type: God (*impulse: to gather worshippers, to burn*)

Arsoclinus knows the power of radiance. It fills her. Her eyes are glowing white embers. Her body emanates heat, even amid the bone-chilling cold of the ruins. She sees what this world could be, and she seeks to burn away everything that remains until it has become something new. Her might is the magic of the fire itself, and with the merest gesture, she can summon forth a gout of flame to light up the fog-filled nights of Lastlife.

Arsoclinus is not the name she held before the cataclysm, but she holds it now. She has burned away all of whomsoever she once was. She is merely a vessel for the fire of the future. And she will do the same to any who encounter her, burning away their pasts to leave only the future. What future does she want? She cares not, so long as it is free of the chains of what came before. Anything lasting from before the world, she will burn. Anything bearing memory of the past, she will scorch. The denizens of Lastlife, she will scour clean of their pasts, leaving them new beings who will follow her light into a new world.

She is the Inferno, and the future is her domain.

Danger: The Endless Corridors

Type: Place of Power (*impulse: to be controlled or tamed*)

The Endless Corridors float above Lastlife, a twisting, impossible mad nest of architecture. The odd magics and the secrets and treasures held within the Endless Corridors draw in denizens of Lastlife. Guardian creatures are called to the Endless Corridors, who protect it from entrants, driven by instinct to keep the Corridors safe. Its purpose remains unclear and unfulfilled, and it blots out the sky with no hope of change.

But the Endless Corridors also represent potential. If it were controlled...if it were unfolded...then the Endless Corridors could become something more. It could become a new city. A new world, unruined, ready to inhabit. To make a new home. To transform the ruins into a living place once more.

The dangers within the Corridors are unending, and the mists of Lastlife do not make incursions into the Corridors any easier. But the floating mass stands out as a temptation to those who seek new futures.

Grim Portents

- The Wielder enters the Endless Corridors to seek silence and solitude, leaving a swathe of destroyed undead behind him.
- Arsoclinus the Inferno finds the tomb of the Thearch, trapped away deep beneath the ground, but cannot get inside; Arsoclinus resolves to obtain Razor Void to cut her way into the tomb.
- The Inferno's followers find evidence of the Wielder's entrance in the Endless Corridors, and descend upon the Corridors for their leader's righteous cause.

- Arsoclinus the Inferno defeats the Wielder and takes Razor Void.
- Arsoclinus uses Razor Void to cut into the tomb of the Thearch, and take up the Thearch's Authority.
- Arsoclinus the Inferno unleashes the Thearch's Authority to take control of the Heart of the Corridors, unfolding them into a new city over which she becomes a new god.

Stakes

- Will Razor Void be freed from the Wielder's grasp?
- Who will take up the Thearch's Authority? How will they reshape Lastlife?
- Will anyone seize control of the Endless Corridors?
- What will Arsoclinus the Inferno leave burned behind her on a quest for the future?

Impending Doom

Tyranny (Arsoclinus the Inferno becomes the new Thearch of a world built from the Endless Corridors, wielding both the staff and Razor Void, and none remaining in Lastlife have any hope of escaping the Inferno's rule.)

The Artifice

The world before the cataclysm was one of fantastic creations. Of wonders built and given strange, artificial life. Of relics crafted from deepest magics. These pieces of artifice live on into the Cold Ruins, and they present another form of life...another form of future...another form of memory. And the future lies in creating new artifacts, new relics of great power, new beacons of hope. Lastlife has a place wherein such wonders can be made, though that place has dangerous forces vying for dominance over it, along with its own powerful defenders. The fate of the ruins may very well be tied up in the struggle over the means to produce new artifice.

Danger: The Maker's Will

Type: Place of Power (*impulse: to be controlled or tamed*)

The Maker's Will is a name true on many levels. It is the last will left behind by the entity called the Maker, left for the world past the cataclysm that they foresaw. The Maker, some great artificer and artisan, made the Will as their last creation, bequeathed to a dead world.

The Maker's Will is a half-living representation of the Maker's willpower, the Maker's intent and focus and drive. It is the capacity and intent to create, embodied in a structure.

The Maker's Will is a smithy, and a workshop, and a fabricator, all put together, hidden within the ruins. It is a structure made to make, to invent new artificial creatures, new lives, new relics, new powers. It is meant to bring new things into the world. It is operated by hand, by the skill of artisans, and by its own intelligence. The Maker's Will lives on in this structure, driving the creation of new things, so long as there are denizens to work it.

The Maker's Will may have lain still for much of Lastlife's existence, hidden as it is. But there are always those denizens driven to serve, driven to obey, to stave off the foggy emptiness of their unending lives...and the Maker's Will is nothing if not a haven for would-be servants.

Danger: The Mightsword

Type: Ancient Curse (*impulse: to ensnare*)

The Mightsword is a massive weapon, a destroyer. It carries within it the strength of titans. It crushes all who oppose it. And it crushes all who wield it.

The Mightsword is an enormous weapon, heavy and razor sharp. It saps the mind of whomsoever holds it, consuming their will and turning their form to its own purpose. The Mightsword is a creation of the Maker's Will, an artifact of great power, desiring of more. It wants to *crush*. To destroy any who might stand up to it. It wants to seize ever greater strength, and it has no interest in being *wielded*. It only craves to dominate.

The Mightsword hasn't yet found a vessel that can hold it to its true potential. Someone strong enough to last for long under the burden of its might, someone capable of providing it with greater access to power or domination. But it continues to search. The denizens of



Lastlife scrounge from each other, especially those who hunt and kill. Any time a wielder of the Mightsword is slain by some greater foe, the Mightsword almost always finds itself transferred into the hands of that greater foe, where it has even greater access to power and comes to dominate its new wielder.

If the Mightsword were to ever gain dominance over true power, over a place of power...the consequences could be dire for the ruins.

Danger: The Crafted Lives

Type: Underground Dwellers (*impulse: to defend the complex from outsiders*)

The Crafted Lives are golems, mechanisms given life from the magic and artistry with which they were made. Each one is different from the others. Some were made for a purpose, some were made to simply be works of art, some were experiments to see if they could be made functional. But all of them are bonded by their nature; they are the only creatures like themselves in all of Lastlife, and they will defend each other as best they can.

The Crafted Lives were most likely created before the cataclysm that ended the world, and managed to survive by taking refuge in the forge that made them: The Maker's Will. There they remain still, hiding as best they can, defending that place from any denizens who wander in, or who seek its power. This is the only place where they can make more of their own; the only place where they feel safe.

The Crafted Lives are intelligent; they can be communicated with, talked to, negotiated with. But they are uninterested in the world that was, where they were merely things to be made. They are only interested in a new world, one that might have a real place for them. And some of them—a young Crafted Life named Emerald, for one—have begun to make plans to use the Maker's Will to craft ever more of themselves, and to make these ruins theirs, one way or another. The Crafted Lives are not united in that purpose. They do not agree that such would be the correct course of action. But they do remain united, for the moment, in defending the Maker's Will from any who might take it. And many a denizen of Lastlife has fallen to their might.

Danger: Colistriana Smithcaste

Type: Power-Mad Wizard (*impulse: to seek magical power*)

Colistriana Smithcaste knows her name, and clings to it and its meaning. It keeps her sane. It keeps her locked into this world. Without her name, without the drive it gives her...she would be lost. The arcane forces flowing throughout her dead form would overwhelm her. So she focuses on her name. Focuses on what she needs to fulfill the promise therein.

She is Smithcaste. She is a smith. A maker. She makes. She needs a forge. She needs materials. She needs the power to pour into her workings, to make them come alive. She is a smith. She is a maker. She will go to any lengths to obtain what she needs to make her name come true.

Colistriana Smithcaste has been wandering the ruins for all their existence, hunting for the things she needs to make, to create, to bring to life. She has not found them yet, but the hunt has kept her sane, while any who stood in her way fell to the arcane might at her command. But now, she knows of the Maker's Will. The memory came to her, or arrived in her mind unbidden, planted there by something else. She doesn't know. She doesn't care.

She will find the Maker's Will. She will make it her own. Her name is a promise, and the forge will fulfill it.

Grim Portents

- Emerald leads an expedition of the Crafted Lives out into the ruins and takes the Mightsword from its current zombie-like wielder.
- Colistriana Smithcaste comes across Emerald. She destroys the Crafted Life and takes the Mightsword for herself.
- Colistriana Smithcaste follows the other fleeing Crafted Lives back to the Maker's Will.
- The Crafted Lives fight Colistriana, but she and the Mightsword destroy them with ease. They flee the Maker's Will.
- The Mightsword's will overpowers Colistriana's, and she becomes a servant to its needs, working the Maker's Will on behalf of the sword.
- Colistriana begins to churn out new Crafted Lives, each tied to the Mightsword, each with its power and its mind. The new army reaches out from the Maker's Will to take over the ruins. And then...beyond.

Stakes

- Will the Mightsword ever find a wielder who can match it?
- Will the Crafted Lives find a new place for themselves in the ruined world?
- Will the Maker's Will create new wonders?
- Will Colistriana Smithcaste be freed of the madness that plagues her?

Impending Doom

Usurpation (The power of the Maker's Will is turned to the dark purposes of the Mightsword.)



THE COLD CREATURES

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE are home to many: the living and the unliving, the remembered and the forgotten, the new and the old. They all call the ruins home, each with their own purposes, each with their own curses. Here, you'll find everything you need to bring the dead and the dangerous of the ruins to life.

For the creatures you find below, you'll also find questions and possible answers called out for you. These are meant to only draw your attention to open spaces left in the monsters' stories, places where you can tweak and change elements to fit your own particular game. None are definitive. Nothing is known. Everything can be remembered differently, discovered by your players over the course of play.

The Denizens of the Ruins

In this chapter, there are stats for many of the different kinds of undead you'd find in the ruins. But if you need to provide stats for any given humanoid denizen of Lastlife that doesn't fit into anything provided in this chapter, you can generally get by using the draugr (page 257), skeleton (page 261), or zombie (page 263) stats provided in the base *Dungeon World* book.

The Lost Souls of Lastlife

The ruins play home to monstrosities, but also to the feeble remnants of the world before the cataclysm. People, in myriad forms and manners. Many of them have lost their minds, simply repeat their old behaviors without thought. But many others still retain some amount of will, if not memory. They find purposes for themselves, drawing on what little they can recall, or whatever they find in these cold, empty ruins. These are the largest groups of denizens of Lastlife, formed around purpose and similarity of mindset...formed to stave off the endlessness of the ruins' unlife.

The Hungry

(Weaker Hungry in a group)

Qualities: group, intelligent, terrifying, devious

Attack: Swords, hammers, axes, or claws: d8+2 damage, close, 1 Piercing
10 hp 1 Armor

(Powerful, solitary Hungry)

Qualities: solitary, intelligent, terrifying, magical, devious

Attack: Ancient blades and powerful magics: b[2d10]+2 damage, close, forceful, 2 Piercing
14 hp 3 Armor

The Hungry are undead who give into the desire to hunt the other denizens. To drink in their unlife, their power, their very existence. Amid the cold fog of Lastlife, it's a desire that drifts in every denizen's heart. The ache for just a little more soul-essence. And the Hungry are those who let it rule them.

Truly, it's an easy path to walk, here in the ruins. In other worlds, consuming the undead requires enormous skill and strength, but here, where all are possessed of the same nature? It doesn't take any special arcane knowledge at first. All it takes is a devouring. A consumption, oftentimes literal.

But over time, the Hungry change. They grow stronger, more powerful with each life they take. They take from their prey weapons and armor. They take knowledge. They learn to take souls in easier ways than literally consuming the bodies. They learn to draw it out through their fingertips. They shave their finger bones down into claws to better crack open the body and get at the soul inside. They draw into their own bones the runes and sigils necessary to better channel the souls they steal. They learn to ignore prey that will not sate them, like the doom-infested husks of the Ruined.

And soon enough, the denizen of Lastlife is gone. Only the Hungry remains. Whether they take it upon themselves intentionally or not, their bodies reshape and change—no denizen of Lastlife can ever miss a Hungry for what they are.

Questions:

- Where does the hunger come from?
- What would happen if one of the Hungry devoured enough of its fellow denizens?
- What power is it that the Hungry actually consume?

Theory #1: Whatever force keeps Lastlife alive...it is indestructible, but not infinite. The undead will die and rise and die again, unto infinity, as this force reinvigorates them endlessly. But they will never be any more than such meat. Unless they take this strength of undeath from their fellows. That means fewer denizens, but it matters little; those with greater strength may be able to undo this limbo. The Hungry, and the hunger that drives them are the force of Lastlife acting to break itself out of its own unending pattern, by creating a new individual powerful enough, holding enough of this power of undeath, to shatter the cycle asunder.

Theory #2: The cataclysm lingers on in this world. What broke the world apart was no single, massive explosion of force or devastation. It was a curse that drove folk mad, that corrupted the civilization from within. That drove the people of the old world to consume each other. And the Hunger is that cataclysm, the doom of the world, living on. Manifesting itself now in Lastlife. As in all things in this ruined place, repeating the cycle of what came before.

Instinct: To feed on those weaker than itself

Moves:

- Consume the unlife from another denizen
- Hunt with frightening skill
- Reflect the soulless void inside

The Frigid Knights

Qualities: group, intelligent, terrifying, organized

Attack: Blades of Ice: b[2d8] damage, close, 2 Piercing, Freezing

10 hp

2 Armor

The Freezing Tag

If a weapon is Freezing, then it exudes enormous and dangerous cold. A Freezing weapon can freeze any liquid it touches. Any being not immune to cold struck by a Freezing weapon is slowed by the cold and the ice.

The Frigid Knights each carry within them a piece of the primal ice, from which the cold of the world flows. They are an order from a time before the cataclysm, and they still hold the same purpose: to slay monsters. To keep the world safe from those who would change it for the worse. They do not seek thanks. They do not seek understanding or sympathy. They do not aim to do what is right. They simply aim to keep things the same. To spread the ice and its peace.

In Lastlife, the Frigid Knights still wander the ruins, slaying what abominations they can. Their armor is rimed with ice. Their eyes are black with cold. Their weapons are frost and frozen crystal. And death spills from them onto whatever threatens the stability of the ruins.

Questions:

- Where is the primal ice held?
- What is the true purpose of the Frigid Knights?
- Is there a way to destroy the primal ice?
- Are the Frigid Knights capable of making their own decisions?

Theory #1: The primal ice is one of the most powerful remaining pieces of the world, anchoring the world in its current existence. It may even be the reason why Lastlife persists past the ending of the world. The Frigid Knights serve this ice and ultimately act to defend Lastlife from the things that would threaten it...but doing so will leave Lastlife a cold, frigid, and empty place. Destroying the primal ice would require the release of pure Radiance.

Theory #2: The “primal ice” is actually something from outside of this world, an extension of the dark cold of the Things From Outside. The Frigid Knights are not direct servants of those ill creatures, but their drive to rid the world of abominations only makes Lastlife riper for the Things’ purposes. Once they take the “primal ice” into their hearts, the Frigid Knights will never be free of the Things’ influence.

Instinct: To slay whatever threatens stasis

Moves:

- Run through with icy blade
- Cast forth the primal ice within
- Shield with impenetrable ice

The Ruined

Qualities: horde, terrifying

Attack: Claws and rusted weapons: d6, close

4 hp

The Ruined are infected with the doom of the world. They are mad, in a state far from the endless repetition and memory loss that afflicts the other denizens of Lastlife. Where the Hungry are driven purely by the need to consume the other denizens of Lastlife, the Ruined are driven by the need to infect them, to share the world's doom ever more fully. Their weapons are shoddy, their armor is ripped or ragged, and they are falling apart, but this horrible will to end the world one denizen at a time keeps them stitched together.

Woe betide the denizens of Lastlife who face the Ruined's claws, and become infected with that same doom.

Questions:

- Is there any hope of restoration for the Ruined?
- What is the purpose of the Ruined in the ruins?

Theory #1: The Ruined are nothing more than soulless bodies. Each denizen of Lastlife infected with this doom is one more soul gone from this world, escaped into the chaos between, where it might find some new life, or some strange existence, but ultimately—freedom. This drive to soullessness will leave Lastlife an empty husk of a sphere.

Theory #2: The mists rob denizens of Lastlife of their memories and their identities, and it is the mists themselves that make the Ruined what they are. When the Ruined claw at another denizen, the mists seep from their flesh into the flesh of their victims, and the curse of the mists grows. The only way to restore the Ruined, to fight back their curse, is to undo the curse of the forgetful mists at their source.

Instinct: To infect others with the Ruin

Moves:

- Swarm with horrifying numbers
- Infect with poisoned finger bones
- Destroy something pristine and undamaged

The Hol'Jethariae

Qualities: group, organized, intelligent, cautious

Attack: Dawnstars: close, b[2d8], messy, forceful

8 hp

3 Armor

Armored with the raiment and plate of the old kingdom, carrying the glowing morningstars of their order, the Hol'Jethariae serve and defend even in these broken ruins. They have a purpose that drives them endlessly onward: to defend and restore their ruler. They simply lack the knowledge of how to do that.

The Hol'Jethariae seek throughout the ruins for more on how to restore their ruler, even as they stand guard over the crystalline orb in which their ruler's infant form is held. They hunt for memories and truths, and new hopes. While they are not inherently violent, they will strike at those who stand against them, wielding the morningstars that carry within them the strength of all the previous wielders.

Will the Hol'Jethariae ever find what they seek? If Lastlife is generous, perhaps. But Lastlife is not known for its generosity.

Questions:

- Who put their infant ruler in the crystalline encasement? Why?
- How can their infant ruler actually be freed?
- Is there any other purpose for the Hol'Jethariae beyond the restoration of their ruler?
- Where do the Dawnstars come from?

Theory #1: The Hol'Jethariae bear a deep sin at the heart of their order. They stole the child they protect, against the wishes of the true rulers, and intentionally encased the child in crystal to protect it beyond the cataclysm. They thought they would be able to create a new order in a new world, using the child as a rallying point; they did not anticipate how dangerous the cataclysm would be. They were exiled, cast out, for their crime, but then the cataclysm came and memory was lost.

Theory #2: The Dawnstars draw strength from the ruler encased in crystal. Should they ever actually succeed in freeing their ruler, the Dawnstars will lose all power, and the Hol'Jethariae themselves will lose their purpose and wither. In truth, the reason their infant ruler was placed within the crystal orb in the first place was to power their weapons with the child's bloodline—that they might fight against the coming of the end, and restore the world should it fall. Their purpose was confused and lost during the end of the world, and they only retained that the child ruler was crucial—they deluded themselves into believing they were meant to restore the child. If they ever do succeed in restoring the child, then their order shall end.

Instinct: To seek memories of Lastlife

Moves:

- Demand knowledge, information, or memory
- Strike down dissidents or threats
- Defend the old and the royal

The Sacred Audience

Qualities: group, organized, intelligent, hoarder

Attack: Horns of the Manysong: d6, reach, near, far

6 hp

The Sacred Audience is a band of denizens united by the song in their hearts. They've each heard the Manysong, and it calls to them, to be *freed*. So they hunt across the ruins, seeking sounds, music, and the things that produce it, to hoard them within the Cathedral of the Manysong and find a way to free the Manysong from that building's walls.

They're a scattered bunch, but they're well armed, having gathered the instruments and implements of power from the ruins. They can pour the Manysong out of them, at heightened, destructive volumes, if only for moments at a time. That's all they need to destroy those who would stop them from taking what they need.

Questions:

- Does the Manysong affect all denizens, and threaten turning any of them into members of the Sacred Audience? Or is it only some?
- Why are there so many musical instruments of power in Lastlife? Where did they all come from? How do members of the Sacred Audience find them so easily?

Theory #1: The cataclysm that ended the world trapped the life of this sphere into the Manysong. The Manysong isn't simply music, it is actually the native life force of an entire world. The Sacred Audience, whether they understand it or not, are driven to release that life force. But the only way it can come back into the world is through channels, like the musical instruments played by the Sacred Audience. And in returning to the sphere fully, the Manysong will burn out the Sacred Audience, leaving them all as charred husks.

Theory #2: The Manysong is actually a sentient musical tune, trapped in another prison the same as many of the other creatures in Lastlife. The Sacred Audience is made up of those whom it has infected. The many musical instruments of power strewn throughout the ruins were tools used by demon-binders and summoners to entrap dangerous creatures. The urge to free the Manysong is the urge to break another dangerous prison; the consequences shall be dire for the whole of the ruins.

Instinct: To take implements of song and sound

Moves:

- Blast apart whatever stands in their way
- Stealthily steal what they want
- Announce their presence and make demands

Crafted Lives

Qualities: horde, magical, organized, intelligent, construct, hoarder, cautious

Attack: Built-in weaponry: w[2d8] damage, 1 Piercing, close, reach, near

6 hp

2 Armor

The Crafted Lives are the artificial constructs inhabiting the Maker's Will. Each one is slightly different from the others. Some are bigger, some are smaller. Some work the forges, some defend them, some find valuable resources in the wider world. Some are made of iron, some of bluesteel, some of a shifting prismatic metal, the name of which is forgotten.

The Crafted Lives do not seek death or combat. They wish only to survive, to find a place for themselves in the world, where they will not be crushed or destroyed. Where they can make more of their own in peace. But they will defend themselves, as best as they possibly can. They will fight back against those who come into their own domain, no matter how many of their own it costs. Although they are inexperienced and opposed to fighting, they are by no means weak.

Questions:

- Who originally made the Crafted Lives? Why?
- Were they made in the Maker's Will, or somewhere else?
- Are the Crafted Lives truly alive?

Theory #1: The Crafted Lives were made by an artificer hoping to have some kind of life survive the end of the world. She expected that the coming cataclysm would kill all the others, and so designed life that might persist. Of course, the changing of the sphere into THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE altered everything, and the Crafted Lives were no longer the sole inheritors of a world capable of rebirth in the ashes.

Theory #2: The Crafted Lives were made by an automatic artifice in the Maker's Will, churning them out without thought. But as part of the process, the souls of those who died in the cataclysm were forced into the bodies of the Crafted Lives. In essence, the Maker's Will is acting as a lifeboat for those souls, giving them new bodies on the other side of the end of the world.

Instinct: To defend their home and their place

Moves:

- Negotiate for peace and safety
- Call for more of their comrades
- Hit hard and fast to end the fight quickly

Destroyers

Even though THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE are already past destruction, in a state of living death, there are horrors amid them that would finish the job. They would crush whatever remains. They would plunge this world into true death, into the state it is meant to occupy. Some would do it for hatred, or vengeance; some, because it is simply their purpose. But all threaten the tenuous existence of this sphere's existence past the point of death. All are destroyers.

Oriaxanysoth

Qualities: solitary, magical, devious, intelligent, terrifying, planar, huge

Attack: Demonic Magic and Claws: b[2d10]+5, close, reach, near, forceful, 3 Piercing
24 hp 4 Armor

Oriaxanysoth is a demon from beyond this world. A massive creature, like some ancient crustacean risen from the deepest parts of the ocean. Claws. Antennae. Chitinous plates. Black and red, striped. Inhuman eyes that glisten with hatred.

The creature is trapped within the Demon Pool, where it's been held since before the fall of the world. But its prison weakens, and it seeks escape. A return to its home, but not without destroying the world that dared to imprison it for so long. As punishment. Righteous retribution.

Oriaxanysoth currently can only talk to those denizens who come before it. It can speak into their minds, and it can work meager magics upon them. But once it escapes—if the Demon Pool's prison is ever weakened—the devastation Oriaxanysoth will be able to wreak upon the ruins and the denizens there will be unmatched.

Questions:

- Who originally imprisoned Oriaxanysoth? Why? How?
- Where does Oriaxanysoth originally come from?
- Are there other demons like Oriaxanysoth in the ruins?

Theory #1: The Demon Pool was crafted to act as a generator for impressive and powerful mechanisms, and Oriaxanysoth was simply the most powerful demon they could force into the prison. The one who imprisoned Oriaxanysoth was the lead arcanist in this world, long before the cataclysm came. But it was all a terrible ruse; Oriaxanysoth was meant, from the get-go, to corrupt that arcanist. The demon's actions in doing so led ultimately to the cataclysm that broke the world. Oriaxanysoth was never meant to be imprisoned for so long, and so its hatred is still great.

Threat #2: A massive horde of demon creatures like Oriaxanysoth once swept through the space between the spheres and came close to this world. The greatest heroes and powers of the time fought off the horde, and Oriaxanysoth was stolen as a child-demon. Already, the creature was old and had enormous power, but it was far weaker than its parents. Oriaxanysoth still craves release, but when it gets that escape, the others of its kind will see its stunted, runtish form and will search for their own revenge upon this world. And they are even more powerful than Oriaxanysoth could ever hope to be.

Instinct: To pursue its freedom through force or temptation

Moves:

- Offer corruptive power
- Play upon wants, desires, and needs
- Spawn Broken minions

(once freed from its prison)

- Smash, destroy, and rend
- Tear open a portal to a demonic realm

The Ghost of the First Sorcerer

Qualities: solitary, magical, intelligent, spectral

Attack: Spectral Magics: d10 damage, close, reach, near, far, ignores Armor

21 hp

4 Armor

A spectral creature. She believes that she was the First Sorcerer, the greatest and most powerful magical master the world has ever seen. A creature from outside this world, bound into flesh, remaking it to her whim. Conqueror. Ruler of an enormous empire. She remembers it all, the truths ingrained into her very being.

Of course, in this made place of lost memory, they could be simply stories the ghost latched onto. They could be truths she adopted as her memory to give herself purpose, reason for existence. They could be lies she tells herself over and over again to carve them into her mind.

The truth of it is nigh irrelevant. This wraith who calls herself the First Sorcerer has enormous power: power over the ruins, power over magic and the doom of the world. She wields that power according to her belief in herself, and those who face her experience no leniency for any lies she might tell herself.

The Ghost of the First Sorcerer seeks the power necessary to plunge this world into a necroplane, where she might fully reform her empire. Where she might rule again. Such a place might be just another lie she tells herself. But again, the truth of it matters very little, when Lastlife will suffer the brunt of her actions.

Questions:

- Is the Ghost of the First Sorcerer actually whom she claims to be?
- Is there a necroplane to which the Ghost of the First Sorcerer will be able to send Lastlife?



THE SERAPH OF TRÆVOR

Theory #1: The Ghost of the First Sorcerer is actually exactly who she claims to be, but even she has forgotten deeper truths of her existence. She is from the necroplane that she plans to send all of Lastlife to, and she was forced into a human physical form eons ago by the powers of this sphere. Her home is a place of ethereal being and spectral form, without any physicality—none of the meat or bone of this place. She was driven mad when brought here and forced into a body, and even though she is now free and in her native form again, she cannot see that. Once she learns the truth of her nature, she could go home to her plane and be free of this place, leaving it behind her to endlessly rot; but the longer she spends in Lastlife, the more she is a creature of this place, and the more she is interested only in destroying it.

Theory #2: The Ghost of the First Sorcerer is not at all who she says she is, and there is no necroplane. She is instead simply a repurposed soul, trapped within Lastlife but made confused and useful by the powers-that-be outside of this sphere. They aim to ensure Lastlife fully ends, safely, as spheres are meant to, and the Ghost is one of their means of making that happen. The “necroplane” to which she will send Lastlife is actually just the dimensional churn in which new worlds are born.

Instinct: To grow in power and bend Lastlife to her will

Moves:

- Command those in Lastlife who have tasted the world's doom
- Reshape the ruins to her will
- Pass through physical barriers without difficulty

The Seraph of Traevor

Qualities: solitary, intelligent, construct, huge, divine

Attack: Adamantine Hammer: d10+7 damage, reach, forceful, messy 3 Piercing
24 hp 3 Armor

She was once one of the greatest heroes the world had ever seen. Her legends glowed throughout the history of the world, before the cataclysm. She lived a noble life, and she died a saint.

And then she was resurrected into a massive suit of armor. Designed to give her greater power than she had ever had before. Impregnable. With wings of steel, and a hammer the size of a building. Her soul, pulled from whatever paradisiacal afterlife in which it had found peace, was forced into the armor.

They thought they were serving their people. They thought they were reviving a great hero that they needed. Instead, they were creating a destroyer. They tried to undo their work, and they buried her armor. But when the cataclysm struck the world, she was brought back again. And she rose into the air, screeching in pain and rage and grief, to strike down the world that she had saved, the world that had so thoroughly betrayed her.

She seeks now only to destroy. To bring ruin to Lastlife. And to end her own miserable existence.



THE RUINWORM

The Ruinworm is a creature of instinct and nature, not of will. And that instinct drives it to end the world. It will consume every bit of the ruins that it can, ending it one stone at a time. And the Ruinworm grows larger, grows more heads, as it causes more destruction. Eventually, the creature truly will be large enough to consume all of Lastlife, and all that will be left is its titanic, corpulent, many-headed form.

Questions:

- Where did the Ruinworm come from?
- Is the Ruinworm unique to Lastlife, or is it a creature that could appear in any world?

Theory #1: The Ruinworm is the direct, living embodiment of the cataclysm that ruined the world. Indeed, the Ruinworm is actually the offspring of the monstrosity that caused the cataclysm, and while the titanic battle against that beast may have been successful, the eggs it laid into the ruins did grow to fruition, and now the Ruinworm is free to continue its parent's work. When it has devoured the whole of Lastlife, the Ruinworm will have reached full adulthood, and will be ready to pass from this sphere to others, just as its parent did.

Theory #2: The Ruinworm is simply the current incarnation of an endless cycle of Lastlife attempting to end itself. In times past, this death-urge of the whole world represented itself by urges in the minds of its denizens, or by portals torn into the air. But now, it has learned and grown. The Ruinworm represents the newest attempt by an unconscious, dumb, deaf world to bring about its own end, directly, through monstrous consumption.

Instinct: To consume the ruins and grow

Moves:

- Crash through the structures around it
- Consume the contents of the ruins
- Grow larger and stronger from feasting

The Fiddler

Qualities: solitary, magical, devious, intelligent, stealthy

Attack: Haunting melodies: w[2d8] damage, close, reach, near, ignores Armor
16 hp

The Fiddler's form is strange, even for a denizen of Lastlife. Bony plates grow across their eyes. Their fingers are long and lithe, skilled, powerful, muscled and precise. Their form is quiet, soundless and soft, capable of shifting into shadow without difficulty. Their mouth is large, and their voice changes, capable of reaching any pitch and tone they desire. Their ears are strange and extended, capable of hearing sounds imperceptible to the rest of the ruins. Always, they hear the faint notes of the Maestro's Violin, whether the instrument is being played or not.

The Fiddler hunts for the Violin. They move, safely and silently, through the ruins. They use stealth and quiet as their weapons to traverse endless smashed structures, to slip past monstrosities and abominations. But sometimes, they let forth with song. From their throat, they sing melancholy ballads of the world's failure. If they find an instrument, they play with immediate skill and terrible emotion. The songs they produce take on strange power in the ruins, and rend apart listeners, even those that are mere monsters. Other creatures cannot take the sadness, the tragedy, the failed hope within the Fiddler's music.

And the world awaits the same fate, should the Fiddler ever get their hands upon the Maestro's Violin.

Questions:

- Who made the Fiddler? Why?
- Who was the Fiddler before the cataclysm?
- Which came first, the Fiddler or the Violin?

Theory #1: The end of the world is tied into an incomplete spell; an incomplete symphony of magic. The Fiddler is one of the few remaining sorcerers involved with that spell, capable of finishing it. The Maestro's Violin was the creation of the spell, intended to bring about some utopian world, even greater than the one that came before. The Fiddler is driven to finish that spell, but at this point, Lastlife may no longer be strong enough to support the new utopia. If the Fiddler finishes the spell, then Lastlife may crack asunder...or may be transformed by the power imbued in the Violin into a new, paradisiacal world.

Theory #2: The Maestro's Violin is not from this world. It is a world-ending relic, and it has traveled from world to world, fulfilling its purpose. In each world it visits, a Fiddler is created, defined by that world and its truths, to play the Violin and bring the world to a close. The Violin arrived in this sphere and the Fiddler arose...but then the cataclysm struck the world, and the Violin could not fulfill its purpose. Now it is trapped here, disconnected from its Fiddler and unable to move on to a new world. Perhaps, if one could only learn to communicate with the Violin, one could make a powerful interdimensional ally capable of bringing worlds to destruction...

Instinct: To hunt the Maestro's Violin by any means necessary

Moves:

- Slip through the ruins silently
- Resist death with a song
- Create music of haunting, painful beauty

Conquerors

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE are full of destruction and ruin, of tragedy and truths abandoned to time. But they are also home, still, to beauty and wonder. To power. To majesty. To utility. This sphere still holds great value to those with their own aims.

These creatures are those that would not end the world...that are not a part of the ruin. These are the creatures that would conquer it. That would make it their own. They seek those wonders and beauties to possess in the pursuit of their own twisted desires. They seek to own this world, for whatever dark purposes they might have.

The Tree Kraken

Qualities: solitary, magical, devious, amorphous, huge

Attack: Tendrils and Flowers: d10+5, reach, forceful

27 hp

3 Armor

An ancient and horrible predator, always kept subdued and controlled in the world before the cataclysm. Now let loose. Let free upon the ruins, to prey as it will. The Tree Kraken's seed has grown in Griedhardt's Grove, and it extends its roots throughout the rest of the ruins.

The Tree Kraken's heart is the seed that birthed it, hidden deep underground amid the root structure of its being, ensconced within hardened wood. Above ground, it has many tendrils, small saplings and vines that it can control with a vicious will. Its main body parts above ground are thick, strangely scented glistening trunks of wood, with enormous knots upon them. Those knots open up to reveal yellow, squid-like eyes, gazing out upon the world as food. Its long, strong branches unfold into dangerous, poisonous flowers. And it consumes those denizens foolish enough to come into its domain.

Questions:

- How, exactly, was the Tree Kraken defeated in times past?
- Why was the Tree Kraken never destroyed before?
- How was the Tree Kraken released?

Theory #1: The Tree Kraken is a monstrous beast, and it does truly threaten the world... but it is the remaining seed and power of the original worldtree that birthed this sphere. Destroying it would mean killing off one of the main sources of life in the world. The heroes of times past could not destroy the Tree Kraken without damaging the world. Now, in a place past the end, the Tree Kraken is a source of possible hope. The life of the Tree Kraken could reinvigorate the life of the world, if it is allowed to grow unrestrained throughout all of Lastlife.

Theory #2: There are many Tree Kraken throughout the spheres. They infest whole worlds, taking them over, growing infinitely across the surface, until they can send their seeds out through the void between worlds. They are, in a way, true gods of the infinite spheres, and they always—always—have worshippers. Here, in Lastlife, even past the end of the world, there are some denizens who recall their worship of the Tree Kraken, and the seed that

landed upon this earth. They have defended it. Ensured it could never be destroyed. And released it into this broken place, to spread its divinity across the sphere.

Instinct: To eliminate obstacles to its unending spread

Moves:

- Poison with vile sap and pollen
- Lash with powerful branches and vines
- Grow from the earth where least expected
- Entrap with growth and paralysis

The Mightsword

Qualities: solitary, magical, devious, possessor, construct

Attack: Blade Swing: b[2d10]+3, close, reach, messy, forceful, 1 Piercing
10 hp

[Note: the stats here refer to general stats for a denizen of Lastlife possessed by the Mightsword, wielding it in battle. The Mightsword itself is nigh indestructible.]

Swords of power, of great and mighty artifice, were once the order of the day in the world before the cataclysm. So many were created, each with their own purpose, their own intent. Most have been lost, destroyed, abandoned, forgotten. The Mightsword was one of the last. It would never allow itself remain lost or forgotten, though. It will survive and thrive, in any circumstances, even past the ending of the world.

The Mightsword is a huge blade, of enormous strength. Its power is such that it controls those who grasp its hilt. It bends their minds to its will, sends them into battle on its own agenda, even as it bestows upon them titanic might and endurance. And it forever seeks stronger and stronger wielders, and more and more control.

The wellbeing of the Mightsword's wielder is meaningless to it. A simple body to provide force beyond the swing of the blade. When one dies, it will find another. And the blade itself is too powerful, too strong of will, to be simply destroyed.

Questions:

- Who crafted the Mightsword? Why?
- Is there anyone in existence who might master the Mightsword?
- What is the ultimate drive and purpose of the Mightsword?

Theory #1: All the greatest rulers of Lastlife have had pieces of their essence sewn into the Mightsword. It bears their strength, their will, their might. It was a weapon crafted to provide a course of salvation, away from the cataclysm that would end the world—its wielder should have had the wisdom and strength of will necessary to drive the sphere away from its doom. But the power of the Mightsword was too much, and its purpose was corrupted in the cataclysm. Now, it seeks unthinking sovereignty, the drive of all those whose essences it holds.

Theory #2: The gods of Lastlife are gone, destroyed with the cataclysm—without the memory of their existence, they were reduced to nothingness. But their divinity, their sheer

power, was caught by some smith hoping to prevent such wonder from leaving the world. And the Mightsword is the vessel for that divinity. Its purpose? To recreate godhood. To recreate divinity. In the hands of one capable of rallying the denizens around a new god, the Mightsword will find its match, and fulfill its purpose, even in these broken ruins.

Instinct: To possess, dominate, and control

Moves:

- Dominate the weak or susceptible wills
- Bestow strength and power
- Destroy with powerful swings
- Drive towards vulnerable objects and places of power

The Broken

(A swarm of demonic offspring)

Qualities: horde, small, stealthy, devious

Attack: Sharpened Limbs: d6 damage, close

3 hp

(A Broken attached to its host)

Qualities: solitary, magical, intelligent, planar

Attack: Mighty fists and demonic magics: d10+2 damage, close, forceful

16 hp

3 Armor

The children of Oriaxanysoth. An endless swarm of miniature demons, birthed from the Demon Pool in which their parent is trapped, and leaking out from the weakened ring of stones. They spread out into the ruins, seeking nooks and crannies, places to hide, places to grow, and hosts to grow upon. When they find a denizen of Lastlife they can possess, they leap upon their target and bond with it, piercing it with their limbs and joining with it into a single being.

Those connected to one of the Broken can hear the voice of the creature. As the demon grows upon its new host, it takes on its own intelligence, built upon their own deepest, darkest desires. And together, the demon and the host grow ever more powerful.

Most of the Broken are faithful to their parent, Oriaxanysoth. They seek its escape, as much as they seek their own increased power. They crave the demonic home dimension they've never even seen.

But some of them...some go rogue. They seek their own fortunes, and their own power, independent of Oriaxanysoth. It is these Broken which are perhaps even more dangerous than those that remain faithful.

Questions:

- What is the true purpose of the Broken?
- Are the offspring of Oriaxanysoth each new demons?
- Why can the Broken escape from the Demon Pool, but Oriaxanysoth cannot?
- What is the true relationship between the demonic offspring and their hosts?

Theory #1: Oriaxanysoth is a true demon, but its offspring are not...up until they bond with a mortal. Only then do they become true demons, capable of accomplishing the same goals, feats of power, and works of damnation as their parent. And when the Broken understand this, understand their new place, they will realize that serving Oriaxanysoth does not serve their new essence. They will break free, and they will seek their own power. Soon, a horde of Broken demons will overrun Lastlife, becoming a new empire of devils, and transforming the dead world into a new hellplane.

Thyery #2: The Broken are each monstrous demons in and of themselves, each demonic aspects of their parent. To them, their hosts are expendable tools to be manipulated...but unlike their parent, they cannot survive on their own. They are only capable of escape from the Demon Pool because their power is not enough to allow them to survive for long on their own. They are a monstrous infestation, and they will whisper sweet truths to their hosts simply to live off the dark desires of those denizens.

(A swarm of demonic offspring)

Instinct: To offer power in exchange for corruption

Moves:

- Rip and tear with sharpened limbs
- Bond with a new host
- Scurry to safety

(A Broken attached to its host)

Instinct: To extend its own power

Moves:

- Attack with demonic magic
- Rend with demonic strength
- Pursue its basest temptations and impulses
- Break free of mortal magic

Piltb

Qualities: solitary, magical, intelligent, terrifying, small

Attack: Necrotic magics: d10+5, reach, near, far, ignores Armor, messy
20 hp 4 Armor

Filth looks like a child, about 10 years of age. He wears rags, tattered shreds of clothing that were ruined long before the cataclysm struck this world. His feet are clad in ruined shoes. His body is emaciated, his eyes hollow, his skin ragged and worn with sores down to the bone. He looks meek and small. A mere child. Nothing more.

Except Filth is nothing of the sort.

Since the cataclysm, through some deep hatred, the discovery of some ancient knowledge, or some other secret truth, Filth has become a sorcerer of deep and terrible might. The child who was once a kitchen boy, someone to be ignored or kicked or struck, has become a scourge of the ruins. An entity capable of stealing the power out of other undead, and growing in strength himself until he might devour the whole of Lastlife.

Looking upon him, one sees only weakness. But as soon as Filth's eyes fall upon you, the truth becomes clear. And you know your own doom.

Questions:

- How did Filth gain such power in the ruins?
- Is there no one left in the ruins who might call Filth a friend?
- Can Filth be saved from himself?
- What was Filth's real name?

Theory #1: Filth was to be sacrificed in a ritual meant to create a bubble against the oncoming cataclysm. The mages involved would be protected inside, capable of forming their own new kingdom in the ruins. But the ritual was corrupted by the cataclysm, and Filth's death was the first of Lastlife. He rose back up, absorbing into himself the powers and knowledge of those mages that would have sacrificed his life. His name was lost to him in the midst of all the magical knowledge. If the spirits of those dark sorcerers could be extracted from Filth, he might be freed from his dark desires and purpose...but Filth doesn't want that to happen. He would fight to keep his power.

Theory #2: Filth's hatred of the people who mistreated him, who tortured him as a kitchen boy, drove him beyond the cataclysm with a strength of will far greater than nearly any other denizen of Lastlife. Even with his small, weak form, he was vicious and brutal, and he tore apart other denizens to drink of their power. In no time he was transformed into the creature he is now, a monstrous nexus of dark magic, forever hungry. His nature is eternally changed, and any who might have reminded him of what he once was were consumed by him. He may have been one of the first Hungry of Lastlife...but now he is something far worse.

Instinct: To consume weaker than himself

Moves:

- Appear suddenly with no fanfare or warning
- Unleash destructive and decaying magics to consume the area
- Show the true nature of hunger and hatred

Reshapers

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE hold within them the faintest of sparks. The faintest of hopes for a new future. A new world. They can be changed, though only through much pain, turmoil, and anguish. But there are those who would take on that burden. They seek to remake the ruins according to whatever vision or rules they hold. They are dangerous, but they may be some of the only hopes left in Lastlife.

Colistriana Smithcaste

Qualities: solitary, magical, intelligent, devious, cautious

Attack: Smithcaste Hammer: w[2d8]+2, close, forceful

12 hp

1 Armor

Colistriana Smithcaste wears armor she polishes and repairs compulsively. She carries the Smithcaste hammer at her side, a silver and electrum thing with the proper runes inscribed in it for meaningful artifice. Her skin is stretched taut across her skeletal frame, and her hair is wispy and barely present anymore, but she cares not. Upon her brow there still sits the hammer tattoo of the Smithcaste. And with that, she knows what she is. She knows what she must do.

Her power is that of creation, invention, of the bestowal of new life. She can make dance the inanimate, and she can forge wonders beautiful, impressive, and iconic. All she has left to her, in these ruins, is that urge to create. To make. And she will always pursue more and greater opportunities to practice her craft, pursuing the materials and machinery necessary to create and create and create. She will remake THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE, one creation at a time.

She is not a violent creature, but she will make constructs to defend her. And she will not allow any to stand in the way of her artifice.

Questions:

- What is the history of the Smithcaste?
- Are there more hammers like Colistriana's?
- Can Colistriana revive the ruins with her creations?
- Who was Colistriana Smithcaste in the days before the cataclysm?

Theory #1: Colistriana Smithcaste is the only remaining member of the Smithcaste, the group of elite creators and artificers from the kingdom before the cataclysm. But she was never a master creator; she was only ever an apprentice. The knowledge she retains of how to create is basic, and while she can make wonders even with that meager knowledge, she is nothing compared to the skilled smiths of the past. Devoid of the knowledge of the past, she will not be able to restore the ruins, or create more hammers, or pass on her knowledge. She will simply create what wonders she can, ever more, unceasingly.

Theory #2: Colistriana Smithcaste was the last and only member of the Smithcaste before the cataclysm, and so she is still. She built many of the greatest wonders in the ruins, crafted them with time and skill and magic. She could do so again. But that makes her the bearer

of one of the strongest sparks of memory in all of Lastlife...and a beacon for creatures that would love nothing more than to devour such power.

Instinct: To create new life and wonders

Moves:

- Bring to life the inanimate
- Identify any valuable magics or materials around her
- Strike those who threaten her creations

The Carapace Infected

Qualities: group, devious

Attack: Razor-sharp mushrooms: d8, close, 1 Piercing

8 hp

5 Armor

Imagine a world truly united. A world where all creatures lived in a dreamlike paradise state, their minds connected through a subliminal network communicating through motes in the air. No violence between them, no anger, no hatred. Their beings, their souls enmeshed into the ultimate community. Their bodies protected in the warm, loving embrace of that same thing that unites them. The Carapace Fungus.

Those infected by the Carapace Fungus live in this dream state, their minds given over to that unity of purpose. The fungus is a single creature, a single mind, a single entity, and those who carry it upon their bodies are tied into that massive whole. They lack the memories, thoughts, desires, or ailments that drove them forward in days past; instead, they are driven forward by the sole purpose of spreading the fungus.

They stagger forward, shambling creatures covered in steel-hard and razor-sharp mushrooms. And they will remake the ruins in their image.

Questions:

- Can the Carapace-infected be cured?
- Where does the Carapace Fungus come from?

Theory #1: The Carapace Fungus is completely new to this sphere, a creation that could only exist or thrive in the world after the end. It grew in the strangeness of the mists and magics in the Cold Ruins, and it is uniquely adapted to this place. The Carapace Fungus cannot be removed from the denizens of Lastlife, not without changing their very nature and the nature of the ruins themselves.

Theory #2: The Carapace Fungus is left over from an ancient attempt to create magical warriors, loyal, invincible, and implacable. They were to be ensconced within natural impenetrable armor, their minds bonded through the fungus, ruled by the wizards who created the strange life that covers them. The Carapace Fungus never quite functioned correctly and was stored within the wizards' troves. But now that it has escaped into the ruins, only the codices of those wizards hold the secrets necessary to peel it off the infected and free them of its curse.

Instinct: To spread the Carapace Fungus wherever possible

Moves:

- Break a weapon upon steel-strong fungus
- Overwhelm with unified numbers
- Infect with fungal spores

Arsoclinus the Inferno

Qualities: solitary, intelligent, magical, radiant

Attack: Pyromancy: b[2d10]+5 damage, reach, near, messy, 1 Piercing

20 hp

2 Armor

Arsoclinus wears a melted patchwork of armor over her dried out, leathery skin. Her head is bald, and her eyes are pinpricks of bright orange light. Atop her head floats an ever-burning crown of Radiance. Where she steps, small fires spring up around her. She is a living, burning fire, a conflagration here with the will to destroy the past and bring about a new future.

She is not merciless. She seeks to spread her message, to convince the other denizens of Lastlife to similarly join her in praising and serving the future, and ignoring the past. But any who would cling to the past? She burns. Any who would restore the old ways or order? She incinerates. Her fire leaps forth from her fingertips, her eyes, her mouth, and it consumes memory and history.

Questions:

- Who was Arsoclinus the Inferno before the cataclysm?
- Where did she pick up the name Arsoclinus?
- Where does her power truly come from?
- What will happen if she does successfully burn all the past away?

Theory #1: Arsoclinus the Inferno is tied intimately to the cataclysm. She is somehow responsible for it, in some fashion, but she has burned away that part of herself. She refuses to remember the crimes she committed. The flames of Radiance that she calls up come from whatever she did, the changes she wrought upon this world, but she has no interest in exploring the reasons. She will simply burn away every single piece of the world that was, the world she wronged. Whether or not a new world can truly rise from those ashes matters very little to her. She only cares about ridding herself of the past.

Theory #2: Arsoclinus the Inferno took her name an ancient figure in the world's past, one forgotten by all in these ruins. She found the name in a book in the August Library. The original Arsoclinus fought against the existing order, seeing it as tyrannical and monstrous. And the original Arsoclinus was defeated, destroyed, and relegated to text in history books. The new Arsoclinus was no one, a simple apprentice knight of the old order. But here in Lastlife, where she read of the past? It gave her a new drive. A new purpose. And her power came from the truth of that myth, pouring into her, the spirit of the old Arsoclinus transferred through the ages. She will remake these ruins, the way that the old Arsoclinus could never remake his world.

Instinct: To burn away the past

Moves:

- Ignite something old
- Call up flames around her
- Offer hope, happiness, and warm dreams of the future

Defenders

Some creatures have found a place for themselves in Lastlife. Where most in the ruins stand trapped in tragic echoes of prior lives, some flourish. They enjoy themselves. They can take advantage of the mists or the deathlessness. They are served by the absence of memory. These denizens will not change the ruins, or destroy them. They will *defend* them, defend the stasis therein, unto the ending of their beings.

The Deepwasp

Qualities: solitary, large, magical, intelligent, hoarder, cautious, devious

Attack: Poison Stinger: d10+3 damage, close, reach, poisonous

18 hp

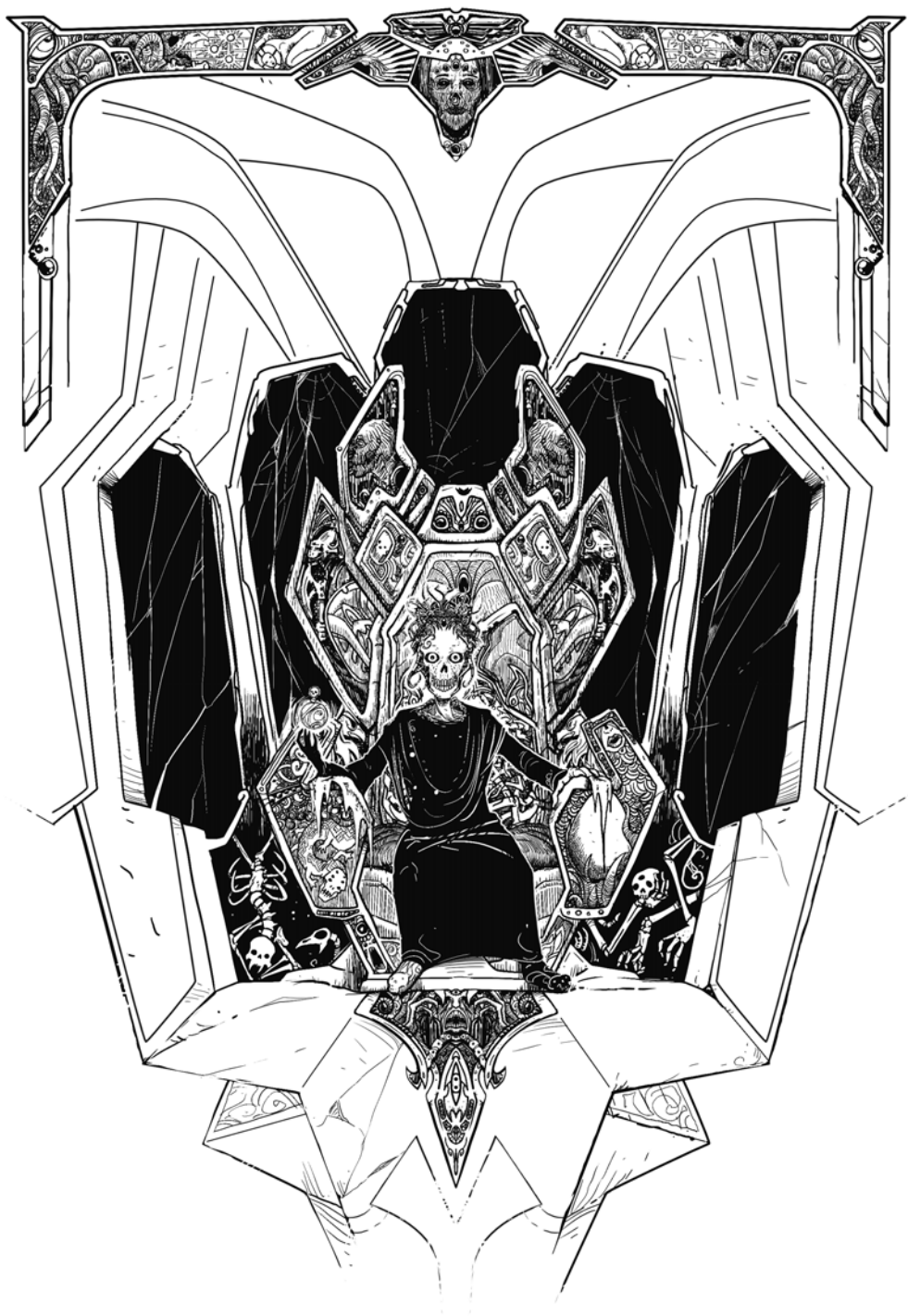
2 Armor

The Deepwasp is a large insectoid creature, sitting on a pedestal, its thorax swollen, its stinger glistening and dripping poison. The designs upon its chitin are mesmerizing, as are its strange, human-like eyes. At the end of each of its limbs is a human hand, with which it gesticulates wildly while telling stories of the past and how this world could be restored. How everything could be better. If only you would listen to it.

The Deepwasp is a creature come from before the cataclysm that created the Cold Ruins, and while it had power in those days, it certainly was not in the position it finds itself in now. Wielding enough magic to protect itself, to project its will into the weakened denizens of the ruins. Appearing as some strange, alien god creature, the only one with enough memory to speak truth about what once existed. Offering hope of restoration. The Deepwasp will use its position to send others out on quests, to accomplish its ends, to grow its power. But ultimately? It does not want this sphere restored to what it once was. The Deepwasp has *power* in these ruins. It would rather give quests unto infinity, and so it shall.

Questions:

- Where does the Deepwasp come from?
- Can the Deepwasp leave its domain?
- What does the Deepwasp truly want?
- What wants to destroy the Deepwasp?



THE OLD QUEEN

Theory #1: The Deepwasp was one of the first creatures in all the world. A being tied to the very birth of this sphere. Its kin are all corrupted, changed, diminished, or destroyed; it is the only one of those primordial creatures that remains in any form akin to its first. It was always the weakest of its kin, the smallest and least capable of reshaping the world. But now, in these ruins? It is the only one left, and this is its chance to rule. Its chance to be in command, to give orders to its lessers. Of course, if it only understood that some small portion of its kin still exist...and would love nothing more than to devour their tiny sibling.

Theory #2: The Deepwasp is a fraction of an enormous hive of such creatures. A hive that once dominated the entire world, rising above the horizon for all to see from miles away. The entire hive was destroyed by the rising powers of the old world, and the Deepwasp's kin were all slain. But the creature itself survived, kept as a curiosity to be studied. It was trapped where it still sits today by the magics of those old days. And what it wants more than anything is ultimately to revive its own hive...a task it can best accomplish in these Cold Ruins, where the world and its defenders are weak.

Instinct: To pursue its own greatness

Moves:

- Offer a quest with a noble outcome and a shining reward
- Deflect concerns, attacks, or fears
- Manipulate minds with its god-like aura

The Old Queen

Qualities: solitary, magical, terrifying, intelligent, hoarder

Attack: Darkbolts from her Regal Scepter: d10+2 damage, near, far, messy, forceful, 2

Piercing

24 hp

4 Armor

Queen...Queen....

What was her name?

It doesn't matter. The Queen, grand and mighty, ruled over a vast kingdom. It was hers. Hers! She was its master, and all those who dwelt within its boundaries obeyed her. They were hers to command, to control. She was almost a goddess. They venerated her for her charitability, and her wise rulership. Whenever she fell ill, the entire kingdom would become worried for their queen.

No, that's not it. That's not quite right. She never fell ill, such was her mighty power and strength of body and mind. She instead cured illnesses with but a touch. The people loved her for it, though she never deigned to enter the dwelling places of the poor and the dirty, for such places would not suit a queen like her. The poor came to her, lining up out of the castle's gate in a queue that lasted for miles.

No, still not right. Her royalty, her imperial presence, was too much for the poor. They couldn't even stand to be in the room with her for too long, such was her radiant authority. Understandable for those lessers.

She rules unto this day. Death itself is afraid to touch this great lady. Age shies away, so as not to blemish her perfect skin. She is timeless, eternal, and only grows more beautiful each day.

She is certainly not a mad denizen of Lastlife, bereft of her true memories. Bereft of any details. Unsure if she ever truly was the ruler of a kingdom, except for the stories she tells herself again and again and again. She is certainly not a walking skeleton, a corpse person. She is certainly not unsure of even her own name. And none call her the Old Queen. None. None.

Questions:

- Was the Old Queen truly the monarch of an old kingdom?
- What are the ties between the Old Queen and her throne? Her raiments? Her scepter?
- What is the source of the Old Queen's power to take memory?

Theory #1: The Old Queen was not ever a ruler of her kingdom. She was at best a courtesan, living in the court, close to those in power, trying to edge her way closer. But never there. Never capable of coming closer. But that matters very little; being so close to the court, she came to understand one thing. The one who claims the throne is the one who controls the throne. And in the cataclysm, in the destruction and chaos and loss of memory that followed, all she could think of was claiming that throne. Making it *hers*. The strangeness of the cataclysm reshaped the castle, and with her upon the throne, it did truly become hers. Its properties changed to suit her, and she became its immortal ruler with no memory of the world that came before.

Theory #2: The Old Queen is not herself. The clothes she wears, the scepter she holds, the throne she sits in—these things reshaped a denizen of Lastlife to suit them, like a mold. She has no concept of whomsoever she might have been, because now she is the Old Queen. And any other denizen who took up those relics would find themselves forced into a similar place. The relics seize the memory of those around them to ensure that they can mold the denizens and the castle itself into some strange shadow of the kingdom they were once the trophies of.

Instinct: To solidify, defend, and extend her regal authority

Moves:

- Make imperious demands
- Cloud minds with lies and false memories
- Demolish dissidents with magical force
- Show the true face of madness

The Librarian

Qualities: solitary, large, hoarder, stealthy, devious

Attack: Rending and tearing limbs: d8+2 damage, close, reach, forceful, messy, 2 Piercing 16 hp

A horrible creature, come from a place none know. The Librarian is invisible to any who do not already know what it looks like; the only place such knowledge lies is, of course, hidden within the Library itself. The book describes a creature with a long body, with 12 different limbs, each one powerful but slender, capable of clambering silently across the bookshelves in which it makes its home. Countless tentacular appendages extend from its body, each one ending in an eye.

The Librarian maintains the Library. It pursues order, perfect order, in all things, with the books stacked appropriately and carefully. It hunts and destroys those who would disrupt the August Library's perfect order. And all because the Library is its breeding ground. This invisible creature lays eggs within the books. Strange, extradimensional, invisible things, twisting the content of the words inside, creating new life from a combination of ideas and matter. The Librarian breeds new horrors in the Library. And in this place of lost memory, who knows? Perhaps many of the greatest horrors that stalk these ruins came first from an egg laid by the Librarian.

Questions:

- Where does the Librarian come from? What birthed it?
- What creatures in Lastlife are the spawn of the Librarian?
- Why is the Librarian drawn and connected to the August Library?

Theory #1: The stories of the world—its histories, myths, and legends—became something more with the cataclysm. They already possessed a power, of history or belief, but with the coming of Lastlife they took on more substance. And the Librarian was the result. A creature imbued with the belief in these stories. As memory of the contents of each book faded from the ruins, the Librarian grew more and more real. And now it births the stories into new life, in its own strange way. Many of the creatures believed to be ancient and primordial are simply stories to which it gave life, and it will not stop until the August Library is empty.

Theory #2: The Librarian is a parasite, the likes of which regularly crawl their way into the spheres. Normally, these parasites are weak, and small. They cannot get enough sustenance, drawn from stories and words, to become anything more. They come close to libraries or books, but the presence of living beings interferes with their feeding. But in Lastlife, where the denizens are undead and amnesiac, the feeding is plentiful and easy. It has grown fat, in a way that few of its kind ever have. And soon it will send forth its spawn out of Lastlife to infest other spheres.

Instinct: To protect the August Library and the books within

Moves:

- Strike at those who cannot see it
- Birth a new horror from the Library
- Reorder chaos with rapid speed

Wanderers

And finally, amid the ruins, there are those abominations, creatures, monstrosities, and denizens that are tied to no place, no clear cause, no clear motivation. They seek many things, and they move across the ruins regularly. They are the wanderers. Some driven by their lost memories, or by unexplained primal urges. All deadly. All dangerous. Nothing that wanders the Cold Ruins could be anything but.

The Unborn Nightmare

Qualities: solitary, huge, terrifying

Attack: Rending and tearing limbs: d8+2 damage, close, reach, forceful, messy, 2 Piercing 16 hp

An abomination of abominations. Enormous, 50 feet tall. With the head of an infant, but with cold glistening black eyes, and rows of sharpened, razor-like teeth in its mouth. A body, strong, tall, broad, but without skin; muscle and sinew exposed to the cold air. Rings of iron embedded in its form, holding it together, or perhaps binding it with some ancient magic. Its hands end in stubby fingers of torn flesh. Its wail is a roar of horror and a cry of pain. The Unborn Nightmare is a monstrosity, and its arrival spells doom.

The creature may have once been destined for greatness, and glory. It might have been a destroyer. It might have been an angel or a god. But after the cataclysm destroyed the world, the creature was changed, and its purpose never arrived. Now its entire existence is defined by the monstrousness of its new form; the pain of its ever-unfulfilled nature. And the only response the creature can have to such a tragedy is rage and destruction.

Questions:

- What was the original purpose of the Unborn Nightmare?
- Can the Unborn Nightmare still fulfill that purpose?
- Can the Unborn Nightmare be uncorrupted?

Theory #1: The Unborn Nightmare was a creature of prophecy, a giant meant to redeem the world from the corruption setting into its kingdoms and practices. It was to be a noble creature, powerful, silver-eyed, tall and strong, bringing hope and upholding justice. And when the world ended, there was no hope to be had. There was no justice to be had in a place where none could remember sin. Its entire nature had been undone, and the creature it became was the warped remnants of what it was meant to be. Until Lastlife itself is restored, the Unborn Nightmare will never be anything more than its warped self.

Theory #2: The Unborn Nightmare was called to this world to cleanse it of sinners, to act as a champion for some great, terrible, and monstrous god of justice. But it was captured and changed—it was purposely remade into a nightmarish abomination, to better serve the purposes of those flesh-smiths who remade it. The change helped to unmake the solidity of the world...helped to bring about the cataclysm. And the Unborn Nightmare will always stand as a testament to the dark and horrible crimes of those who came before.

Instinct: To smash, destroy, and flail in its pain



THE STALKER IN RUINS

- Stampede through a large construction
- Grab and consume something smaller than itself
- Hunt for creatures to blame for its pain
- Excruciatingly rip limb from limb

Attack: Living whips: d8+3 damage, hand, close, 2 Piercing
18 hp 2 Armor

- Yank an object of power from the hands of its wielder
- Slip into the ruins with surprising speed and silence
- Suddenly attack vulnerable foes
- Examine and investigate the world around it

The Executioner

Qualities: solitary, terrifying, amorphous, construct

Attack: Executioner's Axe: d12+6, reach, forceful, messy, 3 Piercing

18 hp

3 Armor

Many spheres have their own specter of death. A creature that represents the terminus of life, embodied into a physical form. Sometimes death is a benevolent presence; sometimes a grim one. In Lastlife, a world beyond its own death, this creature is...different. Distorted. Monstrous. The Executioner is death come to the ruins, and the truth that reflects upon Lastlife is nightmarish.

Lastlife has removed itself from the grip of death, with the fogs and the constant resurrection of its denizens. The Executioner exists to undo that truth—to make itself the sole immortal creature in all of the ruins. When the avatar of death is the only creature that can remain indefinitely alive, then and only then will the Executioner's dark purpose be fulfilled.

The Executioner keeps its body largely hidden beneath black garments and fabric. Such attire helps it to move more easily through the ruins without being spotted....and allows it to reveal the truth of its form at the right moment. Underneath the fabric and whatever other adornments it wears, it is an amalgamation of bodies. Limbs melted together into arms and legs. Faces stitched cheek to cheek to form a head, all the eyes glassy and unfocused, but giving the creature countless angles of vision. Fists made of dozens of grasping hands. The Executioner is made of every single creature it has killed, and it only grows the more it kills.

Fighting a creature that embodies death, that grows with each death it causes, is ever a losing proposition. But when the Executioner comes for you, what choice is there but to fight, or die?

Questions:

- Why does the Executioner take this form?
- What ill force powers the Executioner's existence?
- What will the Executioner do once it has consumed all the creatures in the world?

Theory #1: The cataclysm freed Death from its chains in this world. Once, it served endlessly, visiting all living creatures at the time of their end. But now it visits none—death is transient amid the mists, and it is free to take on the form it desires. In Lastlife, in this twisted place, Death is hateful, and chose for itself the form of the Executioner. It takes the physical forms of those it slays as compensation for its years upon years of endless service prior to the cataclysm. And if it has its way, it will leave Lastlife and go to other spheres amid the chaos, come to subsume their Deaths into itself, to become the Death of the cosmos entire.

Theory #2: The Executioner is not truly Death, embodied. It is what its name implies; the royal executioner from a time before the cataclysm. It was a mere mortal, whose purpose was to end the lives of those who committed the worst crimes. But in Lastlife, the only piece of itself it had to hold onto was its drive for death. Its job, in ending existences. It took from that drive all the power and will it could. It builds its body with the corpses of those it slays to better improve its ability to execute ever more. It is almost a machine at this point, and no longer thinking—desiring simply to endlessly fulfill its purpose.

Instinct: To kill and subsume its victims' bodies

Moves:

- Regenerate by absorbing a slain body
- Reveal the horrors of its full body
- Cleave with unnatural strength

The Screaming Centaurs

Qualities: group, terrifying, construct, planar, large

Attack: Doomscream: d8+1 damage, intimate, hand, close, reach, near, far, ignores Armor 12 hp

The bodies of bony, hairless, gaunt horses. The upper torsos of human beings, but where the head should be, a gaping maw. No eyes, no ears, no nose—just an enormous mouth with flat, blunted teeth. At the end of each of the horse's legs is not a hoof, but a hand, and set into the human torso are two oversized, watery eyes. Their screams accompany them wherever they go, like the sound of a life turned to death, of the world tipping into nonsense and chaos, of people falling to their basest instincts. A scream of madness.

They hunt sound. They consume it. Song, strange calls, voices. They eat all, and use the nourishment to reproduce. And reproduce. And reproduce.

Questions:

- Who made them, and for what purpose?
- What is the noise they are making? A song? A scream?
- What do they feed upon?
- Where do they flock to?

Theory #1: The Screaming Centaurs are the result of nightmarish magical experiments designed to produce the perfect guards and alarms, fast and loud. Since the fall of Lastlife, they have been freed from the laboratories they were intended to inhabit, and now they have only grown more monstrous, becoming auditory gateways to worlds of horror and misery. The sounds of an eternity of souls suffering an endless amount pour forth from them. As they consume more sound, they reproduce. Soon enough, there will be so many, each one a tiny interdimensional portal to a hellplane, that those paleocosms will seep through, and Lastlife shall be swallowed whole.

Theory #2: The end came to Lastlife at different speeds. Some places instantaneously, other places slowly. It struck like the flash of a dagger into the orchestral hall, where the greatest musicians of the land were performing a masterpiece. At the height of their music, when the sound was mixing together into a textured tapestry, a succulent broth of song, the end struck. The orchestra's song was twisted, and as the song changed, so did the players. They became one with their instruments, melding until each was a Screaming Centaur. Their screams coalesced into the world's deathsong. The audience, those not killed by the strike of the change, were driven into death by the terrible melodies and cacophonous harmonies. So the Screaming Centaurs still roam the world, screaming forth their endless, broken song, seeking the perfect audience to appreciate their dirge, and consuming any other sounds in hope of repairing their broken music.

Instinct: To pursue delectable sounds

Moves:

- Scream a song of hell
- Gallop with shocking speed
- Bite with blunt teeth
- Consume sound and create spawn

The Wielder

Qualities: solitary, large, intelligent

Attack: Razor Void: b[2d10]+6 damage, reach, 1 Piercing, messy, forceful
24 hp

The Wielder's arm is molded with his sword: Razor Void, a terrifying blade of dark power. He has sacrificed the entirety of his existence and his future in order to keep the sword out of the hands of any who would abuse it. He is still alive, sustained by the power of the blade—one of the only denizens of Lastlife left truly alive through the cataclysm. But he is wild-eyed, and pained. His hair is long and dirty, and his body has grown enormous and somewhat misshapen. Razor Void leaves no one untainted.

The Wielder simply wishes to be alone with the sword, to hide it somewhere it, and he, will never be found. But the sword calls to other denizens, brings them to him ceaselessly, and so he has learned to never trust any of them. He destroys any who seem like they might possibly take the sword, even if they are not even aware of Razor Void's value.

Questions:

- Where does Razor Void come from?
- How did the Wielder first come upon the blade?
- Why did the Wielder decide to take this burden upon himself?
- Why is the Wielder still alive?

Theory #1: Razor Void is not truly an enchanted blade of doom. That is a story the Wielder tells, and tells himself, to lighten the pain of the burden. The Wielder is a monster, a cursed man, a perpetrator of many a violent, horrible crime. For his sins he was cursed to bear them in physical form...in the form of the blade, Razor Void. A horrible, corrupted thing ever aching to force him towards more crime. The only way he can bear this punishment is by pretending he does so for some noble purpose, to save others from the same fate.

Theory #2: Razor Void is the blade that set off the cataclysm. It bears within it the dark forces that would end the world itself. The Wielder remains alive because his life is the only means to restrain the blade, now—he is the one who originally summoned it into the world, and without him, the blade would be free to finish its original purpose. To doom Lastlife into nonexistence.

Instinct: To destroy any who might take Razor Void

Moves:

- Cleave with Razor Void
- Warn away other denizens
- Reveal the dark desires of other denizens
- Flee to places uninhabited

THE WIELDER





CHAMPIONS OF LASTLIFE

There are many routes to power in the ruins. Even as decayed as they are, strange mysteries and dark magics abound and provide strength to those who know where to look. Tying yourself to one such path will grant you the means to forge a way throughout the ruins. Perhaps even to bring back the past, or to start a new future. But all these powers come at a cost, and many denizens do not realize what they have given up until it is too late.

The Hol'Jethariae

The Keepers of the New Ruler. The defenders of the Unborn Sovereign, an infant trapped within a crystalline orb. They are sworn to the cause, to restore the greatness of their kingdom. They will not allow any harm to come to their ruler, even at cost of their repeating existences. They are charged with this righteous duty, unto the true ending of the world or the restoration of the kingdom.

When you pledge yourself to restore the Once Kingdom and take the star of the Hol'Jethariae upon your head, you may take the move **The Dawnstar** when next you level up.

The Dawnstar

You are given a Dawnstar, a morningstar of the order of Hol'Jethariae. It is imbued with all the power of its former wielders. It comes to your hand when called. It will not fail you, for as long as you uphold the strength and responsibilities of the order.

Whenever you return to the Unborn Sovereign and pledge your fealty, you will be given a mission to accomplish, and you will hold 3 Stars. Spend 1 Star at any time to call upon the might of the Dawnstar and take a 10+ on any roll that uses strength, endurance, or magical power. You cannot hold any more Stars until you complete the mission.

The Dawnstar is a weapon. When dealing damage while wielding it, roll your damage die twice and take the highest result. Its tags are: close, messy, forceful, +2 damage, 1 Piercing. The Dawnstar will always come to your hand when summoned, appearing there instantly in a burst of light.

If you ever actively subvert the mission of the Hol'Jethariae, or disobey the duties given to you by the order, the Dawnstar will leave you, and you will mark all debilities until you have redeemed yourself.

After you have taken **The Dawnstar**, you can take any of the following moves when next you level up.

In the Name of the Sovereign

When you give someone a command based on your authority as a servant of the Unborn Sovereign, you can spend 1 Star to make that count as all the leverage you need to make a Parley roll. If you already have leverage, you can spend 1 Star to take a 10+ on the Parley roll. When giving an order to another PC, you can spend 1 Star to give them a +1 ongoing to following the order if they follow your command.

The Paths of the Hol'Jethariae

You are aware of secret paths throughout the ruins of Lastlife, known only through the memories and traditions of the Hol'Jethariae. You can spend 1 Star to find a secret path through the ruins to any place, person, or item you choose. When you walk such a path, choose 1:

- You arrive in a dangerous location, near your destination but not directly at it.
- You attract the attention of something dangerous to the secret path itself.
- You consume the magics of the path itself, closing it behind you.

Devoted Servant

Whenever you get Stars by devoting yourself to a mission, you can swear an oath to gain 1 additional Star. The oaths you can swear include:

- I will not return to this place/person until I destroy a powerful enemy of the Hol'Jethariae (GM's choice)
- I will not return to this place/person without a great gift for the Unborn Sovereign (GM's choice)
- I will not harm any but the guilty or monstrous on my mission
- I will not speak anything but the full truth while on my mission

Breaking an oath is the equivalent of actively subverting the mission of the Hol'Jethariae.

Defender of the Realm That Will Be

When you stand in defense of a person, item, or location, you always generate 1 additional hold, even on a miss. When you choose to spend your hold to deal damage to the attacker and you are wielding your Dawnstar, deal your normal damage plus your level, instead of dealing damage equal to your level.



The Frigid Knights

An order of slayers, those who wielded blades of ice and walked shrouded in cold mists. They each took into them a piece of the primordial ice in the heart of the world and devoted themselves to putting out the fires that threatened life and being—to ending the lives of monsters, human or inhuman.

The Frigid Knights brought down gigantic eldritch abominations and entire regimes of mortal nations. And for their efforts, they became loathed throughout the world. They were turned away from towns and cities, and people fled from them on sight.

Such reactions didn't matter to them, however. The Knights were cold, utterly devoid of the need for compassion or friendship or warmth. Over time, each one became a monster, something less than human but still driven to control human affairs by ending the lives of the tyrannical and the dangerous. The Knights did not care when others began to take measures to hunt them down. They did not care that many saw them to be as bad as the monsters they slew. They kept their numbers strong, as there were always those called to the ice. Even unto the end of the world, did they fight.

And now, in the Cold Ruins, they still exist. An order of callous knights, self-tasked with ending monsters, and living in a world with nothing but. They will not stop, and they will not show mercy, and they will not rebuild.

When you take into yourself a piece of the primal ice in the heart of the world, you become a Frigid Knight and take **Blade of Ice** immediately. The next time you level up, do not take another move.

Blade of Ice

The primal ice you take into yourself grows in your heart and oozes along your flesh, creating a blade for you to wield against the monsters. You cannot lose this blade. When you unsheathe it, it flows out from inside of you. When you wish to put it away, it flows back into the ice inside you. While you have the blade out, you are immune to cold.

The blade starts out with the following tags, and you may choose a single favor from below: close, +1 damage, 1 Piercing, Freezing.

At any time, you can give more of yourself to the ice in your heart to strengthen your blade. If you do, then choose 1 Sacrifice from the list below to gain 1 favor. You may make the same sacrifice more than once.

Sacrifice:

- Permanently give up one Bond.
- Take a permanent -2 to Cha. (max -3).
- Take a permanent -2 to Wis. (max -3).
- Lose all Radiance—you can gain no more.
- Lose all Memory—you can gain no more.

Favor:

- When you wield the blade, you now roll your damage die twice and take the best result. The blade is also messy.
- The blade ignores Armor. If you choose, it is also Precise.
- Add Hand and Reach ranges to the blade. You can shorten or lengthen the blade at will. You can take 1d4 damage to yourself to launch the blade as a spike of ice, using it to Volley. You cannot mark ammo for the Volley move if you do this. Your sword will automatically grow back in your hand after you launch it.
- If you whisper to the blade the name of a monster you hunt, it will point you in the direction of that creature at any time. Take +1 ongoing to find and kill that monster with the blade.
- The blade's ice has extended deeply into your being. You are immune to pain and heat, and you can pierce all illusions and mental manipulations. If you touch someone with the blade as they speak, you can tell if what they say is the truth.

The Freezing Tag

If a weapon is Freezing, then it exudes enormous and dangerous cold. A Freezing weapon can freeze any liquid it touches. Any being not immune to cold struck by a Freezing weapon is slowed by the cold and the ice.

Once you have taken **Blade of Ice**, you can choose from the following moves when picking a new move upon leveling up.

Sheathed in Cold

Your blade of ice has grown, and now covers you in rime armor. Any time you call out your blade, you are covered in icy armor that moves with your body. This counts as 3 Armor. It does not stack with other Armor.

Freeze the Beast

When you cast forth the primordial ice from your blade, roll + Dex. On a hit, choose 1:

- You can encase one human-sized target in ice, temporarily immobilizing it.
- You can create a structure out of ice, like a bridge, no greater than ten feet in size.
- You can create a zone of cold, ice, and frigidity all around you.
- You can put out any fire or source of heat, regardless of size or intensity.

On a 7-9, the primordial ice will still do what you wanted, but it will grow beyond what you had originally intended. On a miss, the primordial ice will still come forth, but it will do what it wants, creating stagnation and killing monsters according to its nature.

Cold Stare

Your face becomes a mask of ice and cold hatred. When you are parleying with an intelligent entity, if you threaten their life, you can use +Str to Parley instead of +Cha. You can always use "threatening their life" as leverage, if they can understand you and what you are.

Undying Ice

When you lose all your hp, you do not have to use **The Dead Awakening** move. Instead, if you immediately make 1 Sacrifice as for **Blade of Ice**, you can immediately restore yourself to full hp, as the ice repairs your battered form. You still get to choose a new strength for your **Blade of Ice**. After using this move once, you can never again use the normal move for death, and must always make 1 Sacrifice for **Blade of Ice** when you lose all your hp. If you ever have nothing left to sacrifice, you become a creature made purely of the primordial ice.

The Carapace Infected

Taking the Carapace Fungus upon your body leaves you tougher, more powerful, more capable. It strengthens your body, protecting you from the ravages of this dead place. The fungus grows plates upon your flesh and bone, and you are left a juggernaut, imbued with this strange warped life and the power it conveys. Meanwhile the fungus eats away at your will, at your very being, slowly transforming you into one of its servants. But while you can keep the gnawing at bay, you are a titan in the ruins.

When you embrace the infection of the Carapace Fungus, immediately take the **Armored Skin** move, below. The next time you level up, you do not take a new move.

Armored Skin

The Carapace Fungus grows upon your body, protecting you from harm as its host. It strengthens you and grants you far greater might than the other denizens might know.

Every time you make camp, lose any Fungus you had and take 3-Fungus. Spend your Fungus one for one to:

- Ignore the damage from a single hit.
- Add +2 to a roll using Str or Con (choose before you roll).
- Infect someone or something else with the fungus by a touch.
- Create sharpened plates out of the fungus on your body (a new weapon, hand range, +2 damage, 2 Piercing).

Every time you spend a Fungus for one of these effects, roll + Wis. On a 10+, you resist the call of the larger organism. On a 7-9, you are Confused, Stunned, or Scarred, until next you make camp. (If you are already all three, Confused, Stunned, and Scarred, then treat this roll as if you had rolled a miss.) On a miss, reduce your Wis (not your Wisdom, but your Wis) by -1, permanently.

If ever your Wis reaches -3, you become a mindless servant of the Carapace Fungus and Griedhardt's Grove.

After you have taken **Armored Skin**, you can take moves from the following list whenever you would next level up.



THE CARAPACE FUNGUS

Spores

When you spend 1 Fungus to infect others with the fungus, you can exude spores of the Carapace Fungus from growths on the armor that covers your body. When you exude spores, they fill the air around you, infecting anything they fall upon and creating a new growth bloom of the Carapace Fungus. If another PC would be infected, they can defy danger to dodge the infection.

Any other (non-PC) creature that you infect with the fungus is then under your control. Create it as a hireling with 5 points to distribute between skills as appropriate, a loyalty score of 1, and a cost of “Growing the Fungus.”

Mutable Form

The Carapace Fungus is so integrated with your form that your flesh is falling away, and you are becoming more fungus than person. The hardened plates on the very outside of the fungus hide softer, fleshier fungal matter beneath, and you can use that form to change your very shape, from your size to the form of your limbs. Fine detailed changes, like those to your appearance or your face, are not within your grasp. When you reshape yourself, roll + Con. On a hit, you assume the form you choose, so long as your mass does not increase. On a 7-9, you must spend 1 Fungus (you do not have to make the roll + Wis in **Armored Skin**) or become Shaken, Scarred, or Confused. On a miss, trying to reshape your body goes horribly awry, and you suffer b[2d10] damage.

Mind of Growth

As the Carapace Fungus grows into your mind, you grow into its mind, as well. You can detect the world through the fungus's senses, allowing you to see wherever it is, hear whatever happens around it, feel whatever touches it, and so on. You can peer through any growth of fungus, or any creature infected by the fungus, allowing you to study the ruins of Lastlife anywhere that the fungus grows, whether or not you are there. If you do, you always ask 1 additional question, even on a miss.

New Life

You can grow small bodies out of your own fungal form. They are all barely intelligent and barely functional, but they will serve you as best they can, lasting until they either die or you next make camp. Spend 1 Fungus to create a new body, as a hireling. Spend 3 points on the fungal-hireling's skills. It does not have a loyalty skill—it will do whatever you ask of it. The fungal-hireling only has 4 hp.

The Lightbearers

Visiting the Lighthouse on Dark Waters, one can see the dwindling flame there, glowing out over the endless ocean. And one can imagine what it might once have been like, gleaming brightly, a beacon to hope and growth, keeping the darkness and the abyss at bay. One can decide to serve that light, that fire, and take it into one's self. Igniting one's own soul aflame with the fire of the Lighthouse. One can prevent it from going out in the cold of the Lighthouse by spreading it out throughout the ruins. One can become something greater than a mere undead creature. One can become a Lightbearer.

When you take the light of the Lighthouse into yourself and set your soul aflame, immediately take **Ever-Burning Flame**. The next time you would level up, you do not take a new move.

Ever-Burning Flame

You carry the flame of the Lighthouse in your soul, and a wisp of the flame always floats above your head, gleaming out to the world around you and lighting up the dark. You can share that light into the world, lighting fires in the ruins and changing them. Pushing back the dark.

When you light a new fire using the flame in your soul, only those creatures you allow can enter into the close circle of the flame's light. All others are burned by the heat and the flame, taking d10 damage as appropriate until they leave the range of the light. The fire will last only as long as the nature of its fuel allows. The more storied and historical its fuel is, the longer it will last. A simple fire of wood and leaves will not last very long, but a fire lit upon ancient texts of the world from before might last ages.

Any time you make camp around a fire you have lit, you heal all hp, and gain 1 Radiance.

Shared Flame

With a touch, you can kindle the flame upon other denizens' souls. When you kindle the flame in the soul of a PC, you grant them the ability to see a path straight to their heart's desire. They gain 1 Armor as long as they are still in pursuit of their heart's desire.

When you kindle the flame in the soul of an NPC, they will go straight after their heart's desire with full force.

In either case, after they have achieved their heart's desire, take 3 hold over them. For NPCs, you may spend your hold 1 for 1 to issue commands they must follow. For PCs, you may spend your hold to issue commands that they may either obey—in which case they receive an XP—or resist, in which case they must Defy Danger with Wis, where the danger is the fire in their soul burning them.

Singing Flame

The flame of the Lighthouse inside of you allows you to put to sleep the monstrous creatures of this world. When you sing out with the flame on your tongue, roll + Cha. On a hit, you can put to sleep any one creature possessed of darkness and corruption. On a 10+, it remains sleeping for a long time after you finish singing, so long as it is not disturbed or harmed. On a 7-9, it remains sleeping only for as long as it can hear your song. On a miss, singing with the flame does not put the creature to sleep, but instead kindles its essence, empowering it with the fire and sending it into a rage-filled rampage straight towards you.

Purifying Flame

The light emerging from the ember that floats above your head can burn away illusion, deception, and corruption. When you want it to flare up with a purifying light, roll + Cha. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1.

- You know the truth of the world around you—you can pierce through all illusions, and know whenever someone is lying around you.
- You can temporarily push back the corruption around you to restore something to its uncorrupted state.
- You can create a path of flame leading you to anything you desire.
- You can cleanse someone of harm, damage, and pain—heal them 1d10 hp.

On a miss, the fire within you is endangered by whatever you are trying to burn away—you have to rekindle your own flame by alighting something ancient or returning to the Lighthouse.

Living Flame

The flame of the Lighthouse inside of you restores you. You are now alive again, no longer undead. You gain access to your normal race move, whatever that would be; when you take this move, choose what race you are truly from and take that race move for your class. You also now use the normal **Last Breath** move. Any time you gain Radiance, gain 1 additional Radiance.

THE BROKEN



The Broken

Taking the spawn of Oriaxanysoth into yourself is a foolish thing to do. It is dangerous, and it is unwise. But it comes with such power, such demonic might, such expansion of awareness...how can one resist? All in Lastlife are doomed, anyway. Why not bond your own existence to that of a demonspawn? Why not allow its voice into your mind, to be made greater, stronger, to be made *more*? What do you truly have to lose?

When you bond with a spawn of Oriaxanysoth and become one of the Broken, take the move **Broken Voices**. The next time you level up, do not take a new move.

Broken Voices

The creature you are bonded to speaks in your mind, now, and gifts you with strength, with knowledge of forbidden secrets, with power, and with corruption. All it asks for in exchange is the power to do what it wants...

When you ask for a boon from your bonded demon, choose 1 from below, and mark 1 Whisper:

- Ask any one question about the world around you; the GM will answer it truthfully.
- Perform any one physical feat; treat a roll to Defy Danger with Str, Dex, or Con as a 10+.
- Shrug off a blow; take 0 damage from it.
- Dispel any one magical effect; it cannot be recast or restored in your presence.
- Deal your maximum damage automatically when you strike with a weapon.

Any time you make camp, heal, or die, roll + Con. On a 10+, the bond between you and the demon remains intact and even. On a 7-9, the demon has bonded still further with you, and its voice grows louder in your mind. Mark 1 Whisper. On a miss, the demon makes significant headway in your body. Mark 2 Whispers.

When you have 5 Whispers marked, clear them all and you lose control, and wake up somewhere else, with no memory of what the demon did with your body while you were under its control.

After you have taken **Broken Voices**, whenever you level up you can take a move from the following list.

Demonic Magick

The demon attached to your body sends magic flowing into your body. All you need do is listen to its voice in your head; it will tell you how to bend that magic, shape it, send it out in whatever form you desire.

When you cast demonic magick, say what you are trying to do and roll + Wis. On a hit, you produce your intended effect. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1.

- You don't mark 1 Whisper.
- The demon can't produce any side effects through the magick.
- You don't draw the attention of anything dangerous in the area.

On a miss, the magick goes totally out of your control, and does whatever the demon wants.

Demonic Might

The demon grows stronger by being connected to you, and you in turn can grow stronger from the demon. When you take this move, add 4 points total, spread however you choose, between your Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity. The demon only needs 4 Whispers to take over your body now.

Demonic Advice

The demon you are attached to is no simple creature. The longer it remains bonded to you, the more it becomes its own thing, not even a servant of Oriaxanysoth anymore. It grows its own desires, its own interests...and more and more, it may be interested in working with you, rather than against you.

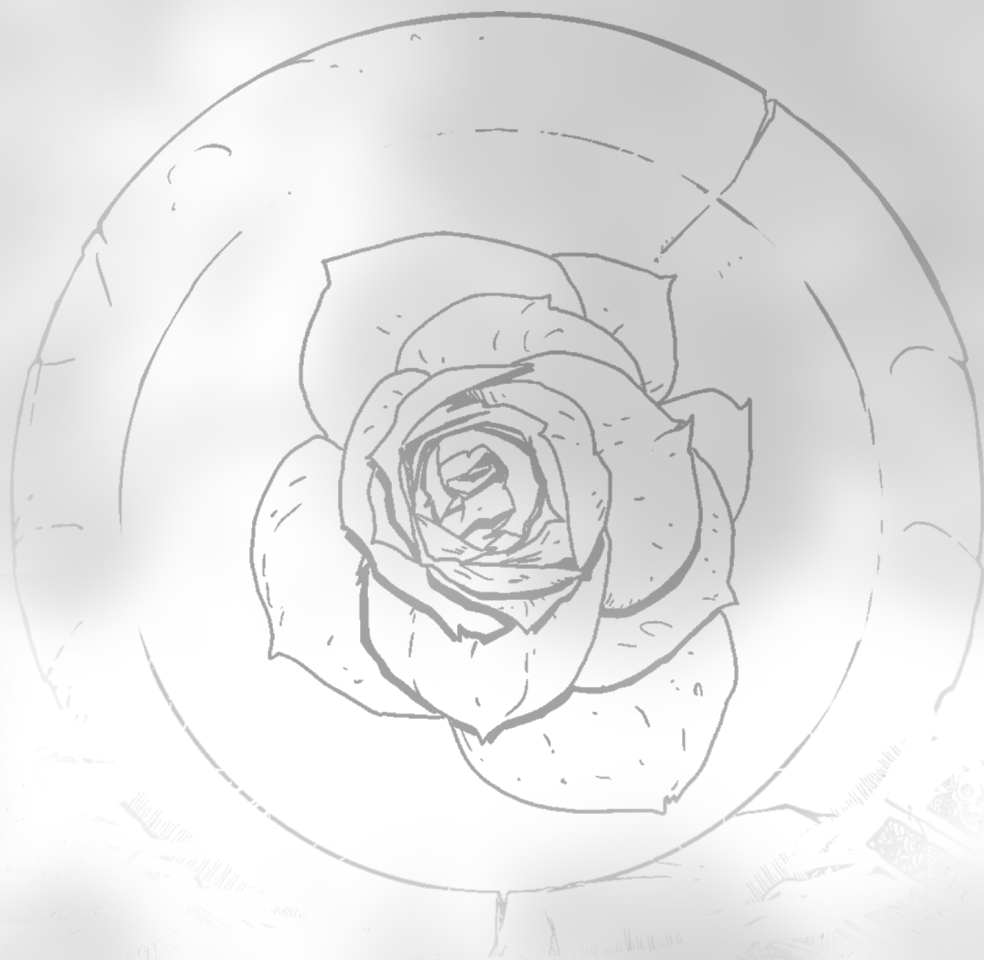
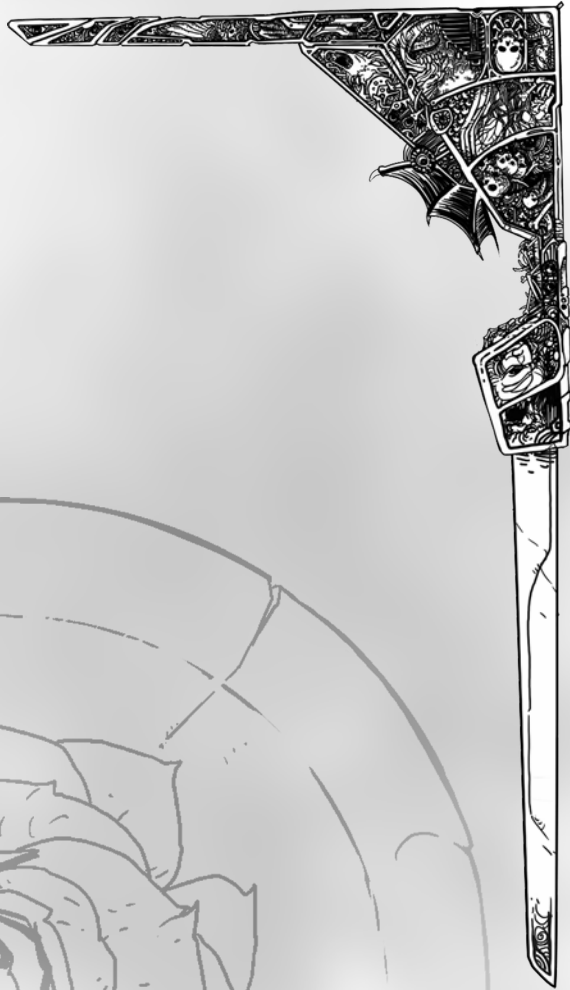
Well. Working with you, as much as a demon can.

When you ask your demonic parasite for advice, it will tell you the course of action it thinks is best. Hold 3, and spend hold 1 for 1 to take +1 while following its advice. If you follow its advice through to completion, take 1 XP. If you refuse to follow its advice, roll + Con. On a hit, you may do as you choose. On a 10+, you may clear 1 Whisper. On a miss, you must mark 1 Whisper or do what it wants, and you do not gain XP for doing what it wants.

Demonic Hatred

The demon you are tied to is the offspring of Oriaxanysoth, and even as it might become a different creature, it still bears a hereditary hatred for this world, for all the creatures in it, for the prison that it represents. You can call upon that hatred.

When you call upon the demon's hatred for this world, mark 1 Whisper, and take a 10+ on any move aimed at destroying or removing something from this world, permanently.



RELICS OF BYGONE DAYS

Lastlife is a place of remnants. Shards of former glory left scattered among toppled buildings. Bits of artistry and amazing craft, lost amid the bricks and the shattered glass. But some of these remnants still hold power, still call out to those who pass by. Still promise wonder and rebirth, glory and majesty, destruction or domination. The relics of Lastlife are not to be trifled with, for even in the ruins, their powers are mighty.

Tools of Destruction

These relics are defined by the destruction at their core. They are tools of removal, of death, or of annihilation. They break asunder, they dominate through might and terror, they carry the doom of the world in their every seam. They do not build.

The Mightsword

An enormous weapon, towering in height, heavy to hold. Sharp as the dark, but gleaming silver. No point at its end, simply two edges opposite each other, and an enormous hilt to carry it by. The blade is gorgeous and deadly in appearance. And it calls to those who approach it. It reaches out to them with tendrils of offered power, of temptation and alluring strength. The Mightsword promises dominion to those who wield it. They simply do not realize—the sword itself will dominate them.

The Mightsword dominates and ruins the minds of those who take it up. It leaves them weak, capable of doing nothing but obeying it. The sword wields *them*, over time, and that is how it shall always be, it seems. None who have wielded the sword have yet been able to resist its will, its craving for dominance, its incredible strength and power.

Questions:

- Who originally created the Mightsword? Why?
- Can the Mightsword be destroyed?
- What is the key to dominating the Mightsword?

When you wield the Mightsword, it begins to take over your mind. While you have it on your body, the Mightsword gains 1 Dominance over you every time you make camp, roll a 12+, or die.

When the Mightsword has Dominance over you greater than your level, its possession of your body sets in. The Mightsword can give you a command. If you fulfill the command, it loses 1 Dominance. If you refuse to fulfill the command, then you must Defy Danger with Wis, where the danger is the Mightsword overwhelming your mind.

When the Mightsword has Dominance over you equal to twice your level, its possession of your body is complete, and you are its slave.

You can remove the Mightsword's Dominance from you by sacrificing Radiance or Memory. For every 2 Radiance or Memory lost, remove 1 Dominance.

When you possess the Mightsword, all your stats count as 18 (with a modifier of +3). Your damage die becomes $b[2d10]+2$. The weapon has the following tags: close, reach, 1 Piercing, messy, forceful.

Razor Void

Razor Void is the nightmare blade imbedded in the body of the Wielder. It was his attempt to prevent the terrible weapon from winding up in the hands of anyone else, anyone whom it might twist to its purposes, or who might use it for their own nefarious desires.

The blade is woven into the Wielder's very arm, with veins and flaps of skin extending out across its surface. But in its base form, it is a curved blade, large, and jet black. Staring deep into the body of the blade, one might see a face rise up and scream, but only for a flash, and never for certain. The sword curves around and creates a wicked hook. It is cold to the touch, and blood does not stay on it, but dribbles off quickly and easily, sliding off—the stuff of life cannot stain a blade like Razor Void.

Razor Void is not a dominator. It does not undo the mind of those who wield it, in hope of making them fulfill its own dark purposes. Razor Void is simply defined by its death-dealing abilities. The weapon's entirety is destruction and doom. Hate and murder.

Questions:

- Where does Razor Void come from?
- What happens to lives absorbed into Razor Void?
- Can someone recover from the taint of Razor Void?

Whenever you kill something with Razor Void, take 1 Void. If you ever have 4 Void, reset to 0 Void and choose either Memory or Radiance; whichever you choose, you can never gain any more of. Once you have lost the potential to gain any more Memory or Radiance, do not track further Void; you've already given up your ability to create any kind of future for yourself.

When you strike an NPC creature susceptible to the infinite void inside of Razor Void, roll + Void. On a 10+, the creature is killed instantly, the essence of its soul absorbed into the sword. On a 7-9, the creature suffers half of its maximum hit points in damage, in addition to whatever damage the normal attack would deal. On a miss, the creature suffers no additional damage, but is left weak and shaken by the pull of the dark void inside the blade.

When a PC is struck by Razor Void, they roll +Con. On a 10+, they are left Sick, Shaken, or Weak, attacker's choice. On a 7-9, they take 1d10 damage in addition to whatever damage they took from the normal attack. On a miss, they take 2d10 additional damage. If they die and are not protected from the blade, their spirit will be absorbed into it before it has time to reform in the mists.

Black Gauntlets

Swirls of memory and myth surround the gauntlets. Are they the weapons of the barely remembered Onyx Duke, a horrible monster of a man who ruled over his duchy in the old Kingdom by smashing all who might resist him? Are they the artificial hands granted to the Deathly Huntress, who lost her hands in terrible battle with a monster from before time began? Are they the possessed gloves of the Necromancer Shymrana, who put her own soul into the items in an attempt to guarantee her continued existence? Simply looking at them, thick black metal, seemingly seamless and smooth, liquid on your hands, with runes inscribed around the wrists...they scream of histories and lost memory.

But in Lastlife, ultimately, so many care only for what they can do. For the destruction they wreak. And not for their history.

These gauntlets can strike the very spirit of those they pummel. They bypass the flesh and assault the soul, and in a place like Lastlife, filled with the undead, such strikes are all the more terrifying. But doing so comes at a cost. The gauntlets bind themselves to the soul of the wearer, replacing the wearer's own hands and becoming a part of them. If ever the gauntlets were taken from the wearer, the wearer would waste away and become nothing.

Questions:

- Why can the Black Gauntlets touch spirits?
- For whom were the Black Gauntlets originally made?
- Are the Black Gauntlets cursed? If so, how could the curse be removed?

When you put on the Black Gauntlets, your hands are destroyed, and you become bonded to them. If they are ever taken away from you, you lose 1 hp from your maximum hp every hour, until you die permanently; if you go down to 0 hp from having the Black Gauntlets kept away from you, do not make **The Dead Awakening** move. You simply crumble to dust and nothingness.

While you wear the Black Gauntlets upon your arms, you can touch spirits and ghosts as if they were physical. Your fingers can also pass through flesh and touch spirits directly. When you hack and slash without a weapon, you can treat your attacks as ignoring armor and as dealing +4 damage.

When you attempt to separate the spirit of an NPC being from its body, roll + Str. On a hit, you separate the spirit from the body. On a 7-9, doing so costs you substantial effort and leaves you weakened and vulnerable to the newly separated spirit. On a miss, your use of the Gauntlets leaves you exposed, and you cannot resist if your target tries to take the Gauntlets from you.

The Twin-Eye Axes

The Twin-Eye Axes are a pair of axes, chained together in spirit and by a thin, gossamer cable, barely visible to the eye. Each axe is made to wield in one hand, smallish but engraved with heraldry and intricate patterns. And on one side of each axe, there is an eye. It looks like it might just be another engraving, another pattern, but it is a real eye. Capable of looking around, capable of observing and taking in the world. The eye on one axe is green; the eye on the other axe is blue.

What the Twin-Eye Axes are, what their purpose may be, is unknown. Perhaps they are the eyes of some eldritch creature living beyond this world, attempting to see what happens inside the sphere. The possibility makes sense with the abilities of the axes; they bear within them a strange, eldritch existence, cutting through the matter of this world with frightening ease, and burning it with a curious energy, some anathema to this world's existence.

The Twin-Eye Axes grant another power to their wielders—those who hold the axes can see through the eyes. Can see the world through alien sight. The strange things one sees might drive a wielder to madness...were they not residing in place already so close to madness and doom.

Questions:

- Whose eyes are in the Twin-Eye Axes?
- What is the cord that connects the Axes made out of?
- What is the purpose of the Twin-Eye Axes?

The Twin-Eye Axes count as a weapon with the following tags: roll twice and take the best damage, close, thrown, 2 Piercing.

When you look at the world through the Twin-Eye Axes, you can study the ruins through alien vision, and add the following question to the list of options:

- What here is the greatest source of magical energies?
- How might I unravel the magic of _____?
- What here is the greatest source of corruption?

The Death's Hide Cloak

There are many Deaths throughout the spheres. Many individual forms and shapes that Death might take. The Pale Rider. The Sorrowful Lady. The Pleasant Dream. The Ravenous Beast. Many forms of Death have visited this sphere, this place of ruin and death. But this is not a safe place for those Deaths; in Lastlife, death does not stick. It does not have the power it should have. Because here, in Lastlife, Death itself may die.

And the Death's Hide Cloak is a garment made from the skin of a slain Death.

A gossamer, thin thing, difficult to see, smooth to the touch, like silk. No friction to the fingertips. Translucent, with the faintest patterns of bone and spine, of skull and sinew in its fabric. Made of the very skin of Death itself.

The Death's Hide Cloak is no mere invisibility cloak. Death travels through worlds without difficulty without being seen, without being detected until the last moment. Wearing the cloak gives one that same inviolability...and the same deathly nature.

Questions:

- Which Death is the Death's Hide Cloak made from?
- How exactly was the Death's Hide Cloak made?
- Can the Death's Hide Cloak transform its wearer into a new Death?

When you wrap the Death's Hide Cloak around you, you become invisible and intangible, capable of walking through walls. You can even defy gravity to some extent, though doing so requires care and skill, almost certainly demanding that you defy danger. But while you wear the Death's Hide Cloak, anything that can affect spirits can affect you directly.

Tools of Reinvention

Some of the relics may be leftovers of the world that was, but they do not tie into that world. They do not support it, or its rebirth. They are tools of creation, of invention. They will remake this sphere, for good or for ill.

The Smithcaste Hammer

The Smithcaste were masters of the forge. Their hammers were more than their tools; their hammers were the instruments through which the Smithcaste channeled wonder and majesty. Smithcaste hammers were, in and of themselves, wonders.

Or at least, so go the tales inscribed upon the edges of the Smithcaste Hammer. The only one of its kind in all of Lastlife, held by Colistriana Smithcaste, who may not even truly be one of the Smithcaste. If they were ever truly something that existed.

The hammer is a forge hammer, but it is silvered and gleaming, with runes inscribed all along its surface, telling the story of the Smithcaste. It shows no sign of wear and tear, whatsoever. Although it could be used as a weapon, it isn't designed for such work. It is a tool of creation, not combat.



THE DEATH'S HIDE CLOAK

Questions:

- Where did the Smithcaste Hammer originally come from?
- Can the hammer be used to create more like it?
- Are the stories on the Smithcaste Hammer true?

When you use the Smithcaste Hammer to forge an item, say what you are trying to make. If you are trying to make something magical and powerful, the GM may tell you what materials you need in order to actually make the item in question. When you set hammer to forge, roll + Int. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7-9, choose 2.

- The item you create is beautiful, impressive, and majestic; gain 1 Radiance.
- The item you create works exceptionally well.
- The item you create is durable and strong.
- The item you create is untainted by the ruins.

On a miss, you create something that resembles what you had intended, but it has traits and side effects completely unexpected to you.

The Maestro's Violin

The Maestro's Violin is a strange and horrible device, crafted perfectly to produce amazing and wonderful music, while also covered in odd, sharpened bone. It's an instrument of beauty and music, of creating new and wonderful sounds. The magic of the Violin allows any to play it, to produce music upon its strings, and to even pour their souls through it and create the most amazing melodies to ever float through the air of Lastlife. But it takes from its player, and the music it creates is dangerous all in its own way. And should the Maestro's Violin ever fall into the hands of the Fiddler, then it would crack the world asunder.

Questions:

- Who crafted the Maestro's Violin? Who was the Maestro?
- Whose bones are embedded in the Violin?
- How does the Violin allow anyone to play music through it, regardless of actual musical ability? Why?

When you play the Maestro's Violin, roll + Cha. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to name a listening NPC or creature that can appreciate your music and choose one:

- They must give you a worthy gift.
- They must offer you their service.
- They must offer you kindness, friendship, and support.
- They must grant you information you require.
- They must protect you from someone or something dangerous.



On a miss, they believe that you cannot play the Violin well enough, that it deserves a better player. They must have it from you, to play it correctly.

When you oil the bow of the Violin with your blood and play, roll + Cha and take 1d8 damage. On a hit, any who listen are held in rapt attention, intoxicated by the music. On a 10+, their trance is iron, and lasts as long as you play, no matter what else happens to them. On a 7-9, their trance can be broken if they are jogged from their reverie. On a miss, the Violin takes too much from you; you are left incapacitated and weak after playing, and none are intoxicated by the music.

When you use the Maestro's Violin with any Bard move, take +1 to the move.

Ghost Nails

The Ghost Nails are long, pointed pieces of cold, browned metal. Each one has a spiraling pattern of lines running along its surface, so fine as to be nearly undetectable to a human hand. The nails are made out of a metal none can immediately identify, some ancient material used by the kingdom of old. Holding a Ghost Nail up to your ear allows you to hear strange, endless whispers.

The Ghost Nails provide a strange form of change—about freeing one's self from a body, and allowing the denizens of Lastlife to choose their own demise, if they want. They reinvent unlife...although in a way that is truly dangerous.

Questions:

- How many Ghost Nails are there?
- Why were the Ghost Nails first created?
- What are the Ghost Nails made out of?

When you hammer a Ghost Nail into a body, it hammers the soul out of the body, leaving it free floating while the body slowly dies. The separation of soul from body overrides even the restoring mists of Lastlife; if the body dies while the soul is free, then the two will remain forever sundered from each other.

A free-floating soul can go anywhere, and still see or hear anything. Attacks that affect spirits still affect free-floating souls. A body with a Ghost Nail in it continually loses hit points until it dies; every time you make a move while a free-floating soul, your body loses 1d4 hp, ignoring Armor.

The Voicegems

There are many voicegems scattered throughout Lastlife. Each one small, perfectly cut, pristine, smooth. Perfect. Each one beautiful, and in a world that cared about such things, worth a fortune. Each one possessed of a single rune buried deep within their facets, a rune producing a unique voice from the gem.

Touch the voicegem to anything, and it can speak through the gem's magical rune and vibrations. You can ask questions of a ruined wall, or a chair. You can give voice to a mindless creature. You can speak to ancient magics, or to books themselves and find out who read them. The voicegems are truly useful trinkets, but they have a greater use, especially in this broken world.

A voicegem embedded, permanently, in an object reshapes that object. After all, giving it a voice gives it thought. Makes it alive, in a way it never was before. New life, created from inanimate matter. Perhaps the key to reinvigorating these ruins.

Questions:

- Why were the voicegems produced?
- Whose voices are inside the gems?
- What is the true nature of life created by embedding a voicegem in an inanimate object?

When you touch the voicegem to an object, it can and will speak to you through the gem. Take a +1 forward to study the ruins when studying an object speaking to you through a voicegem. You can Parley with inanimate objects this way, as well, and the inanimate objects will retain a level of self-control, enough that they can actually fulfill your requests.

THE THEARCH'S AUTHORITY



The Thearch's Authority

The Thearch's Authority is a staff, at one end of which is a glass globe holding the head of a godking. The body of the staff is made from the godking's spine. The head is perfectly preserved and appears timeless, the godking's beauty maintained eternally by the globe.

The godking was once the ruler of pantheons upon pantheons of gods; a master of the divine forces of the world. Holding the Thearch's Authority grants one that same status. The divine right to rule over the gods themselves, and strange commensurate power.

How the godking's head arrived in the globe, how the staff was made from his spine, no one knows. And it is inconsequential. All that matters is the power of the staff.

One who wields it could, conceivably, order others into the creation of a new, divine order.

Questions:

- How was the godking slain and turned into the Thearch's Authority?
- What is the true nature of the godking?
- Does the Thearch's Authority truly hold full sway over gods?

When you give someone a command while holding the Thearch's Authority, roll + Wis. On a 10+, they must do it or suffer 1d10 damage as the divine might of the staff overcomes their fragile form. On a 7-9, they can instead choose to attack you or flee from you. On a miss, the Thearch's Authority cannot command them, but instead makes them intoxicated with desire for it; they will stop at nothing to take it from you.



Tools of Restoration

Some relics, for all their power and might, are ultimately not designed to change the world or to reinvigorate it. They are items of an older age, and they all exist to lead the world back to that state. For those invested in Memory, these are tools of great power; but for those hoping to take the ruins forward into a new state, these are tools of the opposition.

The Ancient-Eyed Spyglass

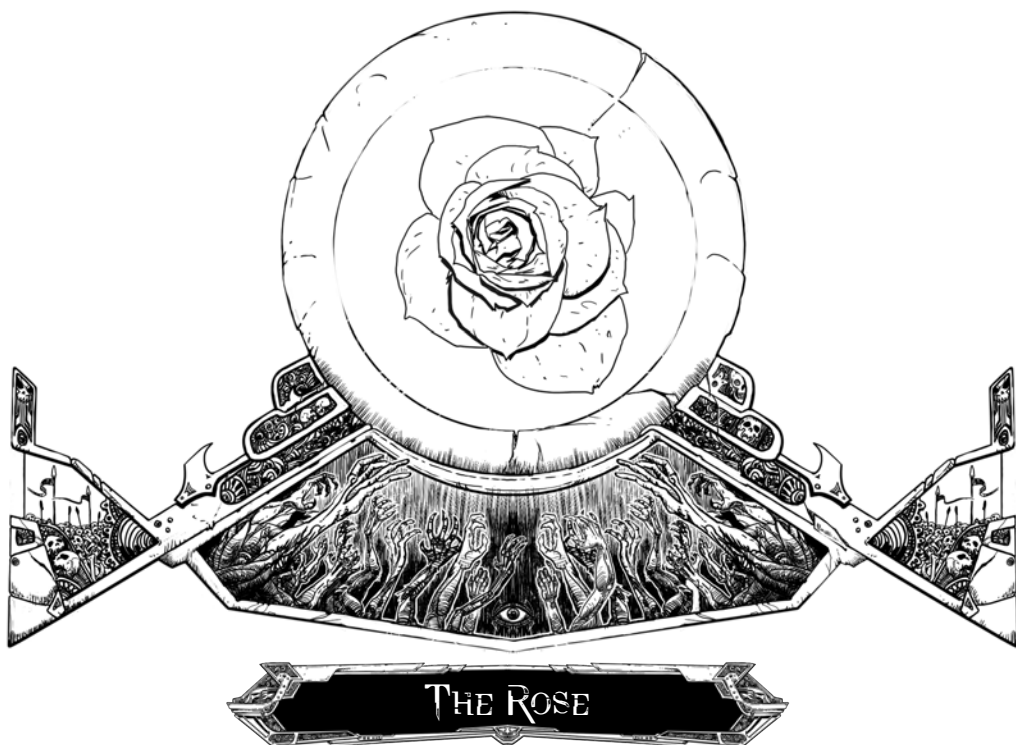
It's a long, silvered tube, retractable like most spyglasses. The silver is tarnished, the entire thing scuffed and scratched. At the end where there should be a large glass lens, however, there is a strange kaleidoscopic pane of ruby and emerald and sapphire, all forming the shape of an eye.

Looking through the spyglass, you do not see the world around you. The magic and inscriptions within change what you perceive, allowing you to see into the past. The inscriptions and strange lenses show you the world as it was. Look at a ruined building, and see what it once looked like when the world was younger. Look at a corrupted monstrosity, and see what it might have been before it was decayed by the end of the world.

The Ancient-Eyed Spyglass is the best means of understanding the world that was in all the ruins. To those devoted to Memory, there could be no more prized possession.

Questions

- Who made the Ancient-Eyed Spyglass? Why?
- How far into the past does the Spyglass see? Can its extension into the past be controlled?
- Is there a way to bring anything through the lenses of the Spyglass?



The Rose

A simple thing. Just a flower. Beautiful. Brightly colored. A perfect, unburning flame amidst the gray. Petals, soft. Leaves, green and perfect. Thorns, sharp.

It might only be a perfect example of its kind if it were not the last.

In a world past death, with life twisted and altered where it isn't gone altogether, the Rose is an artifact. A powerful relic of what could be—of life, ongoing, and capable of returning to the world. Being the last carries a special power all its own, and the Rose thrums with hope and with the faintest, warm glimmer of life.

Destroying the Rose now would be a crime of the highest order, but would unleash the finality of life. It would provide a power that many of the hungry dead in the ruins would eagerly kill for. Holding the Rose—defending it—provides something in even shorter supply: hope.

Questions:

- How was the Rose preserved past the dying of the world?
- Who holds the Rose now? Why? To what end?
- Where did the Rose come from?

If you destroy the Rose, you immediately take a Memory advancement and lose all Radiance. From now on, whenever you gain one Memory, gain another Memory. You can no longer gain Radiance. You are marked with the scar of the Rose's thorns. Any who look at you will know what you have done, and will hold you accountable for your crime.

If you destroy the Rose as part of a ritual, then in addition to the above, you can ignore all but one other requirement for the ritual.

If you smell the Rose, it gives you a vision of the future that could be. Roll 2d6 + Wis. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 2. On a miss, ask 1, but the scent of the Rose is upon you, and those who hunt for the artifact will come for you soon.

- Where does the Rose need to go?
- Who hunts for the Rose?
- How can the Rose be made to grow?
- What can the Rose's future give to me?
- Who can the Rose help the most?

Take +1 forward if you act on the answer.

If you act in defense of the Rose, take 1 Radiance. Only trigger this move once per session.

The Kissing Lantern

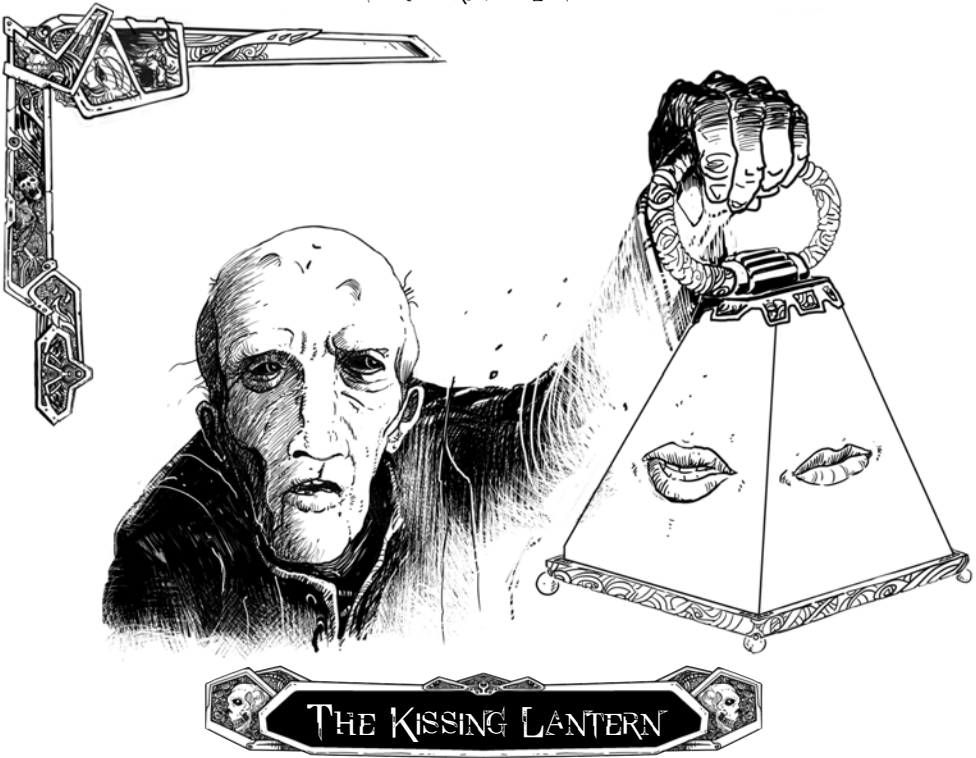
Made of a dark brassy material, reflecting light, but with swirls of blackness throughout its surface. A ring on the top to carry it. Its form is a trapezoidal prism, like a pyramid with the top point cut off. But the entire thing is solid, through and through. No windows, no seams, just a smooth hunk of metal, except for a single side of the lantern.

That single side has two perfectly contoured, somehow soft and full-looking lips protruding from it. They are hard to the touch, the same metal as the rest of the lantern, until you press your own lips to them. Then they part, and open to you. A kiss full of warmth and passion. You must give yourself to it wholly, and it will take of you, and give back.

When you pull your lips away from the lantern, you leave your tongue behind in the lantern. It can speak, then, using your voice. And speak it will. The lantern will call out for help. It will try to seduce listeners with promises of power and sex and pleasure. It will make impassioned requests, and it will rudely criticize. It's possessed of a strange multitude of wills and desires, like it has a hundred minds, each one speaking in your voice.

Meanwhile, you are given the lantern's sight—a vision of the world all around, in full, defying light and sight. You simply know everything around you, a deep knowledge, and you can react instantly. Falsehoods, illusions, untruths, they all dissolve away before you. It lasts until you again press your lips to the lantern's, and take your tongue back into your mouth.

Perhaps this Lantern holds the key to seeing the means to restore the world...or giving voice to entities from the past.



Questions:

Who made the Kissing Lantern? For what purpose?

What happens if one leaves their tongue in the Lantern for too long?

Why does the Kissing Lantern try to tempt listeners?

When your tongue is inside the Kissing Lantern, you can see everything around you, no matter the conditions or where you are facing. If anyone lies to you, you know. When you study the ruins, you can take an automatic 10+. You cannot talk while your tongue is in the Lantern.

The Infinite Codex

The tome is large and thick, leatherbound. Its cover is a labyrinthine swirl of lines, some strange mathematical language writ in patterns indecipherable to a mortal mind. It looks and smells old. The leather of its cover and binding is from an animal unknown in the ruined world of Lastlife...and maybe unknown to this sphere entirely. Its pages are made of a yellowed, thick vellum, and each page is filled with scrawled writing.

No two pages are the same. Different languages, different scripts, different meaning. Deciphering the contents of the Infinite Codex is a challenge in and of itself. But the Codex contains an endless string of knowledge. History, myth, skills, formulae, all are found within the pages of the Codex. And flipping to the end of the book is impossible; the pages never cease. They change and fluctuate. A skilled mind might be able to bring a particular page to the front, to find needed knowledge.

Questions:

- Why is the Infinite Codex written in so many different languages?
- Where did the knowledge in the Codex come from?
- What would it cost to control the Codex?

When you seek knowledge in the Infinite Codex, ask a question and roll + Int. On a hit, you find the information you needed. On a 10+, it's especially useful, and you can ask a follow-up question. On a miss, you find the information, but it requires translation, interpretation, or further expansion to be useful.

The Immemorial Banner

Banners carry with them the weight and stories of those who bore them into battle. Their heraldry and sigils spell out what they have done. In the amnesiac ruins of Lastlife, the banners might contain the secrets of history, or at least something for the undead to latch onto.

The Immemorial Banner is the ideal example of the history a banner provides. A waving rectangle of gold-embroidered fabric, creatures and heroes displayed all across its surface, symbols of the military campaigns in which it was borne across battlefields. Marks of the adventures on which it was carried by powerful legends. The stories woven into the Immemorial Banner are legion, and pile upon each other in layer after layer.

While the history of the banner might call to those who serve the past, the Immemorial Banner holds another great power for its timelessness. It survived countless impossible situations, and the mere sight of it is enough to invigorate even the dead lives of Lastlife. Carrying the Immemorial Banner into battle inspires and rallies, more strongly than any words.

Questions:

- When was the Immemorial Banner first borne into battle?
- How did the Immemorial Banner survive so many battles?
- What secrets do the stories on the Immemorial Banner hold?

When you bear the Immemorial Banner into battle, all allies get +1 ongoing as long as the Banner continues to be visible and unharmed. Anyone who defends the Banner bearer automatically gets 1 additional hold on the defense move, even on a miss. Any attempt to Parley with potential allies to rally them to your cause, or Parley with enemies to convince them to surrender, while the banner is visible, can use Str instead of Cha.

If the Immemorial Banner is ever cast down or damaged in battle, whichever side it was on is immediately demoralized and will flee (PCs have to Defy Danger with Wis to resist fleeing).



BRINGING THE DEAD TO LIFE

Running a game in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE* is still fundamentally running a game of *Dungeon World*, and you should be well-familiar with those Principles, Agendas, and moves as much as possible. They'll serve you well, even in this ruined place. But here are some additional principles that should help guide you to make Lastlife its own unique kind of location compared to a regular *Dungeon World* game.

Principles

Paint a Picture of Ruin

The ruins are just that—ruins. Never let that leave your descriptions. Buildings are broken or toppled. The beautiful is only a remnant of what it once was. Clothes are tattered and decayed. Mists roll in over the buildings and in between.

A large part of making Lastlife evocative and distinctive is this feeling of ruin, of a cold place of melancholy and lost life. Emphasizing that as much as possible will make the ruins come alive in their own way. Don't forget this principle when you are making moves, either; the ruins are precarious and break apart in the middle of conflicts. The mists roll in at the worst possible time and obscure opponents. Terrible monsters, barely visible amid the darkness and the broken buildings, skitter just out of sight.

Build up how creepy, unsettling, frightening, strange, and broken the ruins are across the board. NPC denizens of the ruins are never untainted; all of them bear the scars and marks of the ruin. Where they might once have been regal knights or impressive nobility or kind innocents, all of them now are off—unnerving, and ruined in their own way.

Pit the New Against the Old

A major theme of Lastlife is the tension between the two routes for getting out of the current state of the world. Do we remake it into something brand new? Or do we bring back the old world that may have led directly into these ruins? If we bring back the old world, how do we know it will actually be better? Might it not just lead right back to Lastlife? If we create a new world, how do we know it will be better? How can we control what that new world will look like?

Push the conflict between the two mindsets, especially with reference to monsters and NPCs, wherever possible. Make there be two sides to every conflict. When one monster threatens to end the world, make another threaten to restore some old horrible order. When one monster seeks to pull the life out of some new and incredible structure to rebuild an ancient castle, have another defending that structure for the meager stability it brings to the ruins. Every chance you get, represent both the past and the future—even if the future is a desire for final death.

Don't ever let the conflicts in *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE* become PC vs Environment, or Monster, or Villain. They should always be triangular in shape—Monster vs PCs vs Monster. The PCs are caught in the middle, but they are the deciding factor.

Remind Them of What's Lost

Instead of just emphasizing the ruin and the cold as a setting and tone, draw attention to how this world cannot be left alone. Don't let the PCs forget the oddities, the strangeness, and the uncomfortable realities of their existences. They don't breathe, or eat. Their bones creak. Their sinews snap in the open air. They are not human, and not normal. They are barely alive, and they do not remember at all who they once were.

When they miss on a move like **recall a lost memory of Lastlife**, don't go straight to them being wrong; it draws more attention to what they have lost if the situation has grown apart from their memories—their recollection is incorrect because the state of the world is far removed from those glorious days of the past.

Constantly highlight what is lacking. The wonders of the past cannot even be created in the world as it exists today. Offer up images of how things could be better, of what could be regained or created, if only the PCs help move the ruins out of their current state.

Make promises to the PCs about power and wonder and rebirth, to goad them into changing the world, one way or another. But do not allow them to make things static—the stories of *THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE* are about the characters who can actually shake the ruins out of their current unending limbo, for better or worse. It's your job as GM to help provide impetus for that change.

Seek Answers and Questions

Lastlife is full of mysteries and lost truths. The setting is defined by absences and voids, especially in knowledge. Seek out those holes and ask questions about them. Aim your fronts and moves at those holes and questions.

For example, if the PCs come to Castle Oblivion and encounter the Old Queen, then questions all about the nature of the castle and its memory-robbing aura, what it once may have been, who its rightful ruler is, all come to the fore. Your moves can aim at those questions, at filling them in. When you make a hard move, reveal a dark truth that answers one of those questions.

Lastlife is all about discovery and learning the truth amid the fog without memory. Play up the discovery, and angle towards filling in these holes in your own way. Especially pay attention to the questions and missing information surrounding the PCs themselves. Any time you can relate a question about the world to something about the PCs, do so. Connect their histories to the history of Lastlife.

Playsets

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is full of mysteries, monsters, and mists. You can put together the different locations, dangers, relics, and compendium classes in any way that fits your campaign and what your PCs are interested in. Generally, you should aim at whatever pieces seem most related to the PCs—always seeking answers to their questions. That said, these are useful playsets that put together many disparate elements into a somewhat coherent playset. If you need to get an idea of exactly which elements to use, these should help you get started.

The Monstrosities

This playset is all about some of the worst monstrosities in all of the Cold Ruins. The Hungry and the Abominations, all powerful and dangerous creatures, hunting and meant to be hunted. Using this playset puts a large emphasis on battling against monsters, hunting them down, learning about them, and setting up a means to slay them.

Fronts: The Hungry, The Abominations

Dangers: The Voidful Band, The Hunger, Filth, The Siphon Rite, The Frigid Knights, The Deepwasp, The Ruinworm, The Unborn Nightmare, The Executioner, The Seraph of Traevor

Locations: The Hungry Canyons, The Lighthouse on Dark Waters, The Mired Land, The Narrow Streets

Relics: Black Gauntlets, The Twin-Eye Axes, The Death's Hide Cloak, The Infinite Codex, The Immemorial Banner

Compendium Classes: Frigid Knights

The Terrors

This playset isn't about hunting the monsters so much as dealing with them, encountering them, understanding them, and attempting to avoid being overwhelmed by them and their darkness. The emphasis here is upon creatures of titanic power, whether in their prisons, hidden beneath waves, seeking their own way to end the world, or ensconced within their bases of power. The compendium classes point at making deals with these powers and strange forces.

Fronts: The Prisons, The Final Darkness, The Crimes of the Past

Dangers: The All-Dragon, The Demon Pool, Oriaxanysoth, The Broken, The Escapists, The Stalker in Ruins, The Dark Waters, The Ruined, The Ghost of the First Sorcerer, The Hol'Jethariae, The Old Queen, The Memory of Doom

Locations: The August Library, The Lighthouse on Dark Waters, The Demon Pool, Castle Oblivion

Relics: Ghost Nails, Voicegems, The Thearch's Authority, The Ancient-Eyed Spyglass, The Kissing Lantern

Compendium Classes: Hol'Jethariae, Lightbearers, Broken

The Oddities

Lastlife isn't just a place of horrors and terrors, old or new. It's a place of strange things, odd things. Combinations of rot and decay and cancerous growth. This playset is all about this strangeness. From the mad growth of Griedhardt's Grove, to the strange doom of the world embodied in the music of the Maestro's Violin, to the attempts to create a new and odd world made by Arsoclinus the Inferno, to the Crafted Lives living in the Maker's Will, this playset encompasses the strange and unnerving pieces of Lastlife, putting an emphasis on learning about and exploring their mysteries.

Fronts: The Tumorous Growth, The Cacophonous Music, The Burning of the Future, The Artifice

Dangers: Griedhardt's Grove, The Tree Kraken, The Carapace Fungus, The Rose, The Maestro's Violin, The Fiddler, The Cathedral of the Manysong, The Screaming Centaurs, The Sacred Audience, The Wielder, Razor Void, The Thearch's Authority, Arsoclinus the Inferno, The Endless Corridors, The Maker's Will, The Mightsword, The Crafted Lives, Colistriana Smithcaste

Locations: The Iksythrys Cathedral of the Manysong, Griedhardt's Grove, The Mired Land, The Narrow Streets

Relics: Mightsword, Razor Void, The Smithcaste Hammer, The Maestro's Violin, Voicegems

Compendium Classes: Carapace Infected

The Past and Future

In Lastlife the lost past and the possible future are constantly in conflict. There are many who would restore the world to the way it was before the end, and many who would rather create a whole new world atop the ruins of the old. Both sides are powerful, and both sides are dangerous. From the sins of the past still living in the ruins, haunting them, to the potential tyrants and monsters of the future, this playset is all about the two sides and their war over what THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE will become.

Fronts: The Crimes of the Past, The Burning of the Future

Dangers: The Seraph of Traevor, The Hol'Jethariae, The Old Queen, The Memory of Doom, The Wielder, Razor Void, The Thearch's Authority, Arsoclinus the Inferno, The Endless Corridors

Locations: The Hungry Canyons, The Endless Corridors, Castle Oblivion, The Narrow Streets

Relics: Razor Void, Black Gauntlets, The Death's Hide Cloak, Ghost Nails, Voicegems, The Thearch's Authority, The Ancient-Eyed Spyglass, The Rose, The Infinite Codex, The Immemorial Banner

Compendium Classes: Hol'Jethariae, Lightbearers

The Many Dooms

This playset is a bit of a “kitchen sink” approach to THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE. It’s filled with many of the greatest threats, monsters, and oddities from throughout the ruins. The different pieces in this playset will help fill in the holes and mysteries around each other. Use this playset if you’re going to start a larger campaign, but you want to have an idea of how to limit the contents of this book enough to work with.

Fronts: The Hungry, The Prisons, The Final Darkness, The Tumorous Growth, The Abominations, the Artifice

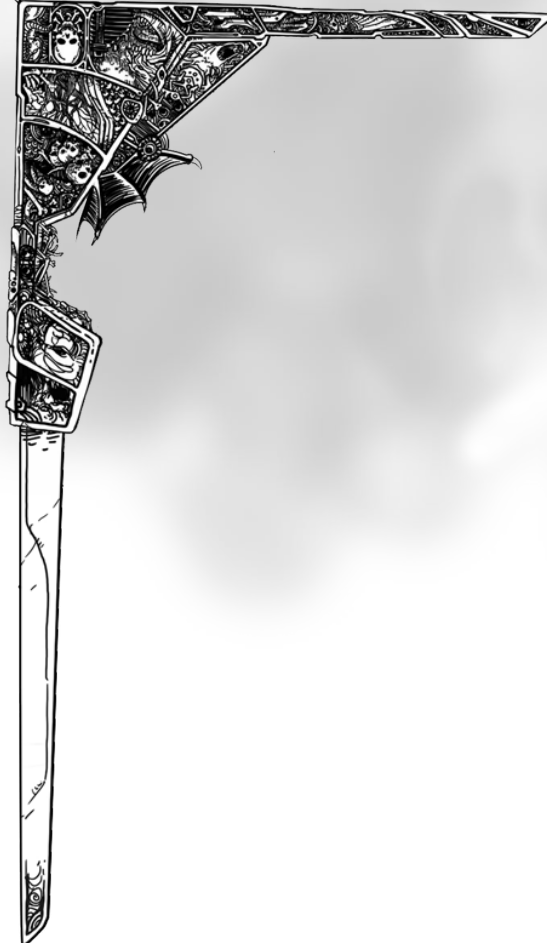
Dangers: The Voidful Band, The Hunger, Filth, The Siphon Rite, The All-Dragon, The Demon Pool, Oriaxanysoth, The Broken, The Escapists, The Stalker in Ruins, The Dark Waters, The Ruined, The Ghost of the First Sorcerer, Griedhardt’s Grove, The Tree Kraken, The Carapace Fungus, The Rose, The Frigid Knights, The Deepwasp, The Ruinworm, The Unborn Nightmare, The Executioner, The Seraph of Traevor, The Maker’s Will, The Mightsword, The Crafted Lives, Colistriana Smithcaste

Locations: The Hungry Canyons, The August Library, The Endless Corridors, The Lighthouse on Dark Waters, The Demon Pool, Griedhardt’s Grove, The Mired Land

Relics: Mightsword, Razor Void, The Twin-Eye Axes, The Death’s Hide Cloak, The Smithcaste Hammer, The Rose, The Kissing Lantern

Compendium Classes: Frigid Knights, Carapace Infected, Broken





CLOSING THOUGHTS

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is a horrible, horrible place. Monsters, mists, undead, ruins—it's awful. And the characters that players make are going to seem just as nightmarish, too. Enormous, black, spiked suits of armor with no visible eyes. Strange, bendy, thin undead creatures, like ghoulish mummies. Skeletal sorcerers with their dusty eyes embedded in their palms.

It's easy to immediately think that THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is about monsters, in a monstrous place, doing monstrous things. But don't fall into that trap. There are plenty of monsters in Lastlife, certainly, but the PCs aren't there yet. They're struggling. They're searching for some remaining piece of humanity, something to latch onto and bring them back from the brink.

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE is actually about *hope*.

So when you're looking at this book, or playing in a game set in these dark ruins, think about where the hope is. A monster in Lastlife might have once been something beautiful, and could be again. A broken down castle could be rebuilt into a new home. A corrupted relic could provide light for many a lost soul.

At the end of the last book in the Chaos Worlds series, *The Last Days of Anglekite*, I implored the readers to make Anglekite and the Crater Basin their own—to shape the world by their whim and style. This time, I'm doing something similar, but more directed. When you're playing THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE, ask yourself—where can we find hope? And play to answer the question.

This book offers suggestions, but not answers. Maybe the PCs will find their hope in destroying monstrosities like the Unborn Nightmare. Or in restoring places like the Cathedral of the Manysong. Maybe they'll even find their hope in escaping this place forever. It's up to you and them to play and find out.

I wish you the best of luck in your search, and I can't wait to hear stories of your own search for hope in these cold ruins. Good hunting.



Looks of Lastlife

Body: Bloated corpse, skeletal, unnaturally ghoulish, nigh-ethereal, rotting flesh, waxen sallow skin, desiccated and thin, scarred and monstrous, pale and cold, stitched together

Eyes: Empty sockets, burning pinpricks, dead eyes, bright and gleaming eyes, jewels, black eyes, milky eyes, lids sewn shut, mismatched eyes, weeping eyes

Garb: Encased in dark armor, tattered robes, mouldy tunic, rags and shreds, strange leathers, metal and spikes, rusted chains, animal scales, inscribed wrappings, shattered jewels and finery

Markings: Faded tattoos, jewelry sewn into flesh, impossible wounds, ever-present faint mists, a strange smell, an indecipherable brand, a constant cold presence, a voice without a tongue

Drives of Lastlife

- Destroy something corrupted by the fall.
- Create a place of respite and calm.
- Take advantage of past decay.
- Try something crazy and new.
- Adhere to tradition.
- Create something brand new.
- Restore something tarnished and damaged.
- Teach someone about what once was.
- Dramatically ignore precedent, tradition, and history.
- Endanger yourself to protect something old.
- Suffer greatly to destroy something dangerous.
- Eliminate something new.
- Help someone or something to meaningfully change.
- Defeat a dangerous or worthy foe from before the fall.
- Defeat a dangerous or monstrous foe from after the fall.
- Actively restrain something dangerous or chaotic.
- Free someone or something from literal or figurative bonds.
- Leap into danger without a plan.
- Discover something about a mystery of the fall.
- Discover a truth of the world before the fall.
- Cause others to flee in terror from you.
- Inspire others with hope.
- Progress towards conquering the ruins.
- Take something old and powerful for yourself.
- Repurpose something powerful for yourself.

Bonds of Lastlife

- _____ saved my life from a terrible monster in the days before the end. I must repay that debt.
- I gave _____ a token expressing my love for them in the days before the end. They have the token, and my love, still.
- _____ nearly slew me in an illegal duel in the days before the end. I will exact vengeance upon them for the slight.
- _____ gave to me my current weapon in the days before the end. I am sworn to use it in their service; I will uphold that vow.
- _____ and I served our lord together in the days before the end. I trust and value their opinion and company.
- I envied the power of _____ in the days before the end. I will pry from them the secrets of their power.
- I remember the drive and rhetoric of _____ in the days before the end. I will follow them and their vision wherever they lead me.
- _____ once got me arrested in the days before the end. I'll keep a close eye on them, for their own sake, now.
- _____ was strange and foreign in the days before the end. Even now, I still find them unnerving and discomfiting.
- _____ once knew the deepest secrets of this kingdom. I will get those secrets from them, somehow. I need them.
- I know a deep and terrible secret about the crimes of _____ from the days before the end. I will never forget what they did.
- _____ does not trust me for the terrible things I did to them in the days before the end. I do not blame them.
- _____ and I once cared for each other, deeply and meaningfully, in the days before the end. That bond is strained now.
- I have no proof, but I remember what _____ was doing in the days before the end; I blame them for the ruin that followed.
- _____ and I shared a bloodline in the days before the end; I choose to believe that that bond still matters.
- I remember what a danger _____ was in the days before the end; I will not let them become that way again.
- I remember how weak _____ was in the days before the end; I fear they will not survive in these new ruins.
- In the days before the end, _____ stood by my side through terrible trials; I still feel that I can trust them completely.
- In the days before the end, _____ was a noble soul, true and good; I fear the taint of this place will corrupt them completely.
- I put my life on the line to save _____ in the days before the end; I will collect on that debt.
- _____ threatened my home and my livelihood with their ideas in the days before the end; I will strike them down if they threaten my plans now.
- I stole something critical and important from _____ in the days before the end; I feel guilty, but I have it still, and I will keep it.
- _____ knows more about me and who I was in the days before the end than I do; I will get them to tell me.
- _____ still seems to believe that the world is today as it was in the days before the end; I will educate them about the truth of the new world.
- _____ and I once believed in the same faith in the days before the end; together, we can reinvigorate this world with our faith.
- _____ and I once believed in the same ideals in the days before the end; we have diverged now, and I no longer understand them.

Class-Specific Move Changes

The Bard:

- Bardic Lore: This is a starting move for the Bard. Remove from the list of possible “areas of expertise” the option, “The Dead and Undead.” Since the ruins are full of the undead, that’s too general an area of expertise in these ruins. Everything else still applies.
- A Port in the Storm: This is a starting move for the Bard. The trigger is, “When you return to a civilized settlement you’ve visited before...” Change it to, “When you return to a construction or artificial location that you’ve visited, even before the end of the world...” You’ll still tell the GM when you were last here and why, and they’ll tell you how it’s changed since then.
- Unforgettable Face: This is an advanced move from the level 6-10 list. The trigger for this move is, “When you meet someone you’ve met before (your call) after some time apart...” You can choose to apply this move to people who might have met you before the fall of the world. You’re that unforgettable.
- Reputation: This is an advanced move from the level 6-10 list. The trigger for this move is, “When you first meet someone who’s heard songs about you...” The understanding for this move in the ever-unchanging ruins of Lastlife is that you have become so powerful, so great, and have changed so much about the ruins that even in these unchanging realms, others will have heard of you. Use the move as is, but keep in mind that this is especially rare and noteworthy, that anyone has heard of you — you’ve changed the ruins at a fundamental level.

The Cleric:

- Turn Undead: This is a starting move for the Cleric. Change this move entirely to:
When you hold your holy symbol aloft and call on your deity for protection, roll + Wis. On a 7+, so long as you continue to pray and brandish your holy symbol, no corrupt and ruined horrors can come within reach of you. On a 10+, you also momentarily daze such horrors and cause weaker horrors to flee from you. Aggression will break the protection of your deity and allow the horrors to act as normal. Anything that remains outside of your reach may still find a way to affect you.
- Understand “corrupt and ruined horrors” as appropriate for your game. A cleric cannot use “turn undead” to turn every single denizen of Lastlife, seeing as the vast majority are undead. Instead, the cleric can only turn the worst, most horrifying and terrible of the denizens of Lastlife. The things from nightmares.
- Deity, Divine Guidance, Commune: These moves all still work as appropriate. The gods of Lastlife are mostly dead, or gone, or weakened...but belief in them still matters. Calling for their aid can still bring down the last vestiges of their legacies, or call upon their might from where they hide. And of course, it is always possible -- difficult, but possible -- to restore those deities...
- The Scales of Life and Death: This is an advanced move, from the level 2-5 list. The trigger for this move is “When someone takes their last breath in your presence.” Change the trigger of this move to, “When someone rolls for the Dead Awakening move in your presence...”
- Cure Wounds: These cleric spells will work on the undead, simply mending their forms.
- Animate Dead: This third level spell works exactly as stated. Of course, the implications of an undead denizen of Lastlife forcefully shoving a hungry spirit into a ruined corpse may be slightly different than in normal Dungeon World....
- Resurrection: Instead of returning a body to life, this spell will rebind a soul fully to a particular body, not creating an utterly mindless zombie like Animate Dead, but creating (or recreating) a new denizen of lastlife. Since most of the souls of Lastlife have not, and cannot, depart the world, you can almost always resurrect any corpse you come across, although the costs may be high...
- Contagion: This fifth level spell inflicts disease. It still works on the undead denizens of Lastlife. The disease it creates is a disease of the soul, penetrating the very essence of the person upon whom the disease is inflicted.

APPENDIX

- **Consume Unlife:** This ninth level spell will allow you to steal the life of other mindless undead denizens of Lastlife. You monster.
- **Plague:** Just like with Contagion, this spell inflicts a plague of the soul, that will still tear apart the bodies of the undead it affects.

The Fighter works without changes.

The Paladin has no changes other than those already noted in the Cleric.

The Ranger:

- **Animal Companion:** This is a Ranger starting move. Choose all the options as per normal, but also detail exactly how your animal companion is ruined and undead, just as you are.
- **Half-Elven:** This advanced move is not available to take.
- **Wild Empathy:** This is an advanced move from the level 2-5 list. It is less applicable in Lastlife, as there are fewer animals and more horrors, but you can still take it. There are always ravens, and vultures, and other carrion beasts, feasting upon the remains of what once was. If you take this move, interpret what is an “animal” liberally.

The Thief:

- **Poisoner:** This is a Thief starting move. Assume that poisons still work as described on the undead — the poisons themselves have been ruined along with the world, and can touch upon the same corruptive influence that fills the undead.
- **Connections:** This is an advanced move from the level 2-5 list. Remove this move from the options available for the Thief. It depends upon there being a criminal underbelly for the Thief to connect with, and there is no such underbelly in the ruins of Lastlife.

The Wizard:

- **Charm Person:** This first level spell does work on the intelligent undead denizens of Lastlife.
- **Sleep:** This third level spell works on the undead denizens of Lastlife, essentially putting them into a state of torpor if not exactly sleep.

Radiance Improvements

- You discover how to steal the power of a terrible denizen of Lastlife and put it into an object of your choice, though it may not be easy; name the denizen and the object, and the GM will tell you the steps and materials required.
- You can seize control of a vulnerable piece of Lastlife’s ruins, and all who dwell there; name the area, and the GM will tell you what you need to do to make that place your own.
- You raise Strength, Wisdom, or Constitution by 2.
- You can touch other undead and bind them to your light. When you touch an NPC denizen of Lastlife who has not yet been fully corrupted, roll + Radiance improvements taken (max +3). On a hit, they become addicted to you and your light. From that point forward, when you Parlay with that NPC you may spend 1 Radiance to take a 10+ on the Parlay without rolling. On a 7-9, your light also changes them; they lose whoever they were before, and become someone new. On a miss, the binding goes terribly awry, and they seek to consume you and your light.
- You become something new and switch classes. When you switch classes, change your damage die to the new class’s, change your max hp to the new class’s, gain all the starting moves of your new class, keep all the starting moves of your old class, and for each advanced class move you have, choose to either keep it or lose it and take a new advanced move from your new class.

Once you have taken three of the above improvements and at least four total Radiance or Memory improvements, you can take this:

- Build a new kingdom atop the ruins of Lastlife. You claim a stronghold amid the ruins, and denizens will flock to your banner, called to you naturally by your shining light. They will build you what you ask of them. The remaining monsters of the world will steer clear of your new radiant land.

Memory Improvements

- You recall exactly where to find an ancient artifact of power; name the artifact, and the GM will tell you where it currently resides.
- You recall exactly how to purify and restore a corrupted area of Lastlife; name the area, and the GM will tell you how to cleanse the land.
- You raise Intelligence, Dexterity, or Charisma by 2.
- You gain an aura of memory that draws other denizens of Lastlife to follow you. When you speak of your memories and the once-glory of Lastlife to an intelligent undead NPC, roll + Memory improvements taken (max +3). On a 10+, they become a hireling for you, made with 5-8 points (GM's choice) as per the rules on page 35 of Dungeon World, but with 3 of their points always allocated to Loyalty. Their Cost is "Progress toward restoring the old world." On a 7-9, they may still become a hireling, but you must first prove to them that you can offer them a return of the old world. They will accompany you to give you that chance. On a miss, they hate you for reminding them of the glory now gone, and they seek to destroy you.
- You remember the truth of who you were, along with the full extent of your old skills. Immediately gain one level.

Once you have taken three of the above improvements and at least four total Radiance or Memory improvements, you can take this:

- Re-establish a stronghold in a recovered part of Lastlife. You choose a place that the Memories call you to restore, and leave our mark upon it. Other denizens of Lastlife will be called to this place, to assist you in restoring it and to resume their lives from before the end. The remaining monsters of the land will either return to whatever they were before, or will stay away from the past glory you've restored.

Changes to Basic Moves

Recall a lost memory of Lastlife

(Replaces Spout Lore)

When you recall a lost memory of Lastlife, say what you remember and roll + Int. On a hit, mark 1 Memory. On a 10+, your recollection is accurate and complete, and the GM will fill it out with additional detail. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- Your recollection is inaccurate; the GM will later reveal what you remembered wrong.
- Your recollection is incomplete; the GM will later reveal a critical truth that you didn't recall.

Study the ruins of Lastlife

(Replaces Discern Realities)

When you study the ruins of Lastlife, roll + Wis. On a hit, mark Radiance. On a 10+, ask the GM 3 questions from the list below. On a 7-9, ask 1.

- What happened here recently?
- What is about to happen?
- What here is wrong or strange?
- What here can be made into something useful and new?
- How could I take control here?
- What here is vulnerable to me?

The Dead Awakening

(Replaces Last Breath)

When you lose your last hp in Lastlife, you die, falling where you stand. As long as your body is not utterly destroyed, the strange mists of Lastlife will converge on you and carry your body to the last place you rested. You will come back to yourself, but the circumstances may be dangerous. Roll 2d6. On a hit, you're restored with half of your maximum hit points. On a 7-9, pick one from below.

- Permanently lose 1 bond
- Permanently mark a debility
- Permanently cross off both one Radiance and one Memory advancement; you can never take those advancements.

On a miss, you are restored with one hit point; pick one from the list, and know that the mists have revealed your vulnerability to something dangerous that now hunts you.

If you ever lose all your Bonds or permanently mark off every Debility you become a mindless undead.

End of Session Moves

When you reach the end of each session, you still resolve bonds, as in the basic end of session move. Instead of checking alignment, you next check to see if you have fulfilled your Drive at least once this session. If so, mark XP. Then, you answer these four questions as a group:

- Did we destroy something corrupt and dangerous?
- Did we take, liberate, or create a powerful or useful treasure?
- Did we learn something important about the world before the fall?
- Did we take a step toward building a new world in the ruins?

For each "yes" answer everyone marks XP.

The world is a ruin of mist and undeath.

Broken castles poke forth from fog banks like giant's teeth. Once-beautiful tapestries rot upon cold stone walls. Beautiful statues of gods and heroes lie toppled and covered in hungry red moss. Countless former citizens of this once great land wander cracked streets and dead plains as their bodies disintegrate and their minds dissolve. Lastlife is a corpse whose body is still twitching.

Yet there is still hope for a future. Which future...remains uncertain.

- ☠ Will you defend the infant heir to the throne of Lastlife, encased in crystal before the end of the world?
- ☠ Will you join with the demonic offspring of the chitinous monster imprisoned deep beneath the ruins, claiming its power to change the world?
- ☠ Will you use such unholy relics as the Maestro's Violin, whose music calls for a true and final end to the world?
- ☠ Will you clear the ruins of such monsters as the Deepwasp, the Old Queen, and the Unborn Nightmare?

THE COLD RUINS OF LASTLIFE

In this new Chaos World setting, written for the Dungeon World game system, you'll play undead adventurers trying to find something to fight for—the past or the future—in this cold and dreadful world. This book contains everything your group needs to play a game of Dungeon World in these haunting ruins, including new rules for playing the undead in Lastlife; adventure fronts and dangers for use in guiding your Lastlife campaign; a slew of monsters, magical items, and compendium classes for this terrible place; and more.



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