



MAZING DVENTURES 5E

THE RUINS OF ENDS MEET



Walt J



THE RUINS OF ENDS MEET

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This Amazing Adventures 5E rules set adventure presents the town of Ends Meet. This adventure setting is a sandbox design for characters to play in that supplies key elements to the Game Master (GM) to expand their adventures beyond the material presented herein if they so choose. It is designed for play with any numbers of characters of any level, but considering that travel between dimensions, planes, or planets may be involved, it is recommended that the characters be of at least mid-level.

The GM should place **The Ruins of Ends Meet** in any forested locale that is far from the haunts of civilization, such as the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina, anywhere in Arkansas, eastern Kentucky, or other forested environs. The setting includes a number of encounter areas, most of them purposely open for the game master to flesh out. Those areas that are fleshed out leave the GM a great deal of latitude in developing them, including monsters, treasure, and other flavoring.

INTRODUCTION

Ends Meet is a small town that has largely been abandoned. It was built sometime in the past and was last occupied not long after the gas pumps were installed at the Doss's Gas & Repair. The roads were never paved, but were so well-trodden by the locals that the dirt is hard and dusty. So fine that cards and bikes kick up small clouds of dust that settle on nearby trees and bushes.

It was once a thriving town visited by local farmers who raised wild pigs, grew crops of food, cotton and tobacco (yields were strictly controlled by the government to protect large farmsteads closer to town). The people here lived a quiet, calm life undisturbed by the ever-changing world beyond the little creeks that hemmed her in. They ate well, enjoyed lemonade, iced tea, or a cold Dr. Pepper or Coca-Cola from the soda box. The Butcher Block at the motel was always busy, serving up fresh ham and pork chops to the town's inhabitants. People here lived a hard, but rewarding life.

When Ends Meet was abandoned, and quite suddenly, it took people by surprise. The usual suspects were listed. The locals said that the youth dreamed of bigger things; "they saw it on television and were never the same." Historians speak that first the rail road passed Ends Meet by and then the highway. It just was too far removed from the regular nodes of commerce and it died because of it. Still others will tell you big corporations came into the region and bought up all the farmland and that dried up all the money the locals could make. There was nothing else, and people had to leave to find work. There were those, of course, who said it was more than economics or listless youth, something darker. That the town was never as wholesome as people thought and that darkness drove everyone off. Whatever the cause, and maybe it was all of them or something completely different, the people of

Ends Meet did eventually drift away and the town fell quiet.

It has stayed much the same as it appeared in those days. The forest has not encroached much on the town, though some kudzu has crept over some of the property; the roads are still made fine dirt; the sidewalks, though broken up, still remain and the houses are still standing, if a bit worn down. Its almost as if it was preserved for some purpose or through the will of some force greater than our own.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

Though most of its inhabitants did not know it, Ends Meet is a magical place. The town exists in several dimensions and parallel universes, and even in the material world, in more places than one. The motel was built where an old trading post once stood, the Cocklebur Post & Trade, which, in turn, had been built over an ancient chamber that housed a gate to other worlds. Its owners, the original and those who came after, never knew of the door's existence. It was only discovered later when the pantry was excavated. This door covered a portal, one of the Rings of Brass, and led to an almost infinite network of tunnels that sprawled beneath and beyond the world that we know.

The town grew up and spread through the forest. Tucked away far from the haunts of others it became a favored place of creatures, great and small, to take the guise of normal people and hide themselves away. As such some of its citizens were very powerful, others just regular people. Later when the Ring was discovered several people steeped in the arcane knowledge of such things built other towns in distant locals and times, all to anchor themselves when they traveled from one dimension to another. Thus, it was that Ends Meet became a town at the end of many more roads than the one; it was the end of the road, but yet the beginning.

EARTH

Founded shortly after the American Civil War as a result of the Southern Homestead Act of 1866, Ends Meet sprang up around the Cocklebur Post & Trade, a post that had stood in the forest for as long as anyone could remember. The Cocklebur was built in the midst of Caddo hunting grounds and used by trappers and fur traders in their dealings with the Native Americans. It stood by it lonesome, undisturbed by any but the natives and the trappers. That changed with the Homestead Act of 1866. After the Civil War the U.S. Government was giving land grants from public land and that land lay all around the Trading Post. In short order people began eating up the land and very soon the town of Ends Meet was founded. The Cocklebur was torn down and the Butcher Block built where it stood. Later, a motel was added.

Ends Meet grew quickly for a few years and then stopped, never much expanding beyond the 40 plus houses, much of which remain to this day. Small land holdings, a few cattle farms, some mixed livestock, and hunting wild pigs all fed the little town for many years. Founders such as the Old Gaitlun woman, Sumner Jackson and Barret Blackwell remained for years, or at least their families did. Several African American families took advantage of the Homestead act and set up home in Ends Meet as well.

A number of its sons went to war to fight the Kaiser in the Great War. Most came back, like Joe Shelby and Vaughn Chambers, returned from the trenches and settled back into old rhythms and older habits. Others like Arnold Harding brought back strange habits and odds and ends they collected on their road in war. Regardless, they settled back in Ends Meet to live their lives as they saw best.

Ends Meet passed through the roaring twenties with hardly a notice that anything was roaring. There was a speak-easy during prohibition on the southwest part of town. Locals called it The Stump. It stayed ever after, but became a rough place to visit, on the wrong side of the tracks. Never very wealthy the loss of wealth on Wall Street and factory jobs vanishing during the Great Depression had little impact on the citizens of Ends Meet. People had always grown their own food in small gardens, so they didn't go hungry. If they could acquire a bolt of cloth, they made their own clothes. Bedding they made by "piecing" old clothes. Their engines needed little more than a blacksmith. A beer, if not bought from up the road, was made locally by the Hoag Brothers and sold on the penny wagon with all the other odds and ends those three boys rounded up from about the county. People still gathered at the Butcher Block for coffee and dinner, and a pint of beer.

The first car came to Ends Meet by way of Hot Springs and Arnold Harding. He lumbered into town in a 1930 Pierce-Arrow Model B. He was followed by others, mostly farm trucks, and this led eventually to the town getting her first gas pumps and service station installed at Doss's Gas & Repair. People settled into new routines, farmers growing more and taking more to market. The only real changes lay in the level of noise.

Life went on and more of her sons and some daughters served to fight the Germans and Japanese in the second World War. Much as before, a few were lost and others returned. Some changed, some not so much. Old man Harding lost a boy in the Heurtigen Forest (fighting Germans) and was never much the same after that. In 1949, the Bisbys bought the Ends Meet Motel & Butcher Block Restaurant and settled into the town. Randy Bisby was a friendly, normal fellow. Jessica was a dark-haired woman, quiet but helpful and kind. She came from the east originally, and many of the visitors from out of town came to see her. She stood out as an outsider, not because of her origins, but more because of demeanor and her visitors,

who were often strange people. Unbeknownst to most in the town, Jessica Bisby was into the occult and her mother had been an associate of Aleister Crowley in the 1920s.

The Korean War did much the same as the previous wars. Caroline Hardgrave was the most noted of the veterans, as she volunteered and served as a nurse in the far east. She returned and settled into the small house of her parents, never married and kept to herself. She too brought home many curiosities from her adventures overseas, adventures rumored to have taken her as far north as Mongolia, and south as Vietnam. Though she was seen talking with old man Harding from time to time. No one paid much attention to it, as people had always kept to themselves in Ends Meet.

Not long after that, the Ends Meet Motel & Butcher Block Restaurant suddenly closed and its owners moved. Hardly a word was said to anyone and few knew why they had left town. The doors were locked and the store eventually fell into ruin. Unknown to most townsfolk the Bisbys had discovered the Ring of Brass (see Ends Meet Motel & Butcher Block Restaurant below for more details).

Aside from a few kids who poked around the old building, it stood empty and undisturbed. And the town of Ends Meet, already suffering from fewer young people, could not withstand it. People had to leave the county to get supplies and eventually they began moving off. By the late fifties the town was all but deserted. Only a few families remained. The Gaitluns, the Shelbys, and a few misfits that gather at The Stump from time to time.

PLAYING THE RUINS ENDS MEET

The GM should read the material below before embarking on any adventures. Aside from a few NPCs, there are few inhabitants in Ends Meet. Most of the houses below are described as to contents and occupants with notations for the GM to include whatever monsters or treasures they desire.

Ends Meet is meant as a launching point for adventures beyond the material world.

RINGS OF BRASS

These are interdimensional doorways or portals that give access to tunnels that connect specific places on Earth, other material planes, the solar system, other galaxies, as well as other planes and dimensions. These tunnels were created by a race of ancient humanoids, called the Trot-tigen giants, whom came from the inner world of Venus. They tunneled into the matter that surrounds all things (the Eahrtaut, often depicted as a great tree) while attempting to find the surface world. They created an extensive network of tunnels by carving through the matter in a root-like fashion. They were eventually stopped by a being opposed to their designs, the dragon goddess. They gave up their attempts to return to the surface world. But,

so that their knowledge would not be lost, they wrote all that they knew of their secret language, the Inzaa-ut-Pilt, upon the walls and steps of the many tunnels and steps of the rings. They also interspersed with it the Language of Creation, the Alenerde-ut-Pilt, upon the steps, so that both languages were written down in their entirety.

The Trottigen then returned to the inner world, where they remained as slaves to the dragon goddess.

Later these tunnels were discovered and used by those wise in ancient lore. Doors were constructed to keep creatures from willfully entering or leaving the tunnels. These doors are the Rings of Brass. Unriddling a door and opening it allows one entry into the tunnels and passages beyond.

The physical rings take many sizes, but are all circular and made of stone with inlaid brass reliefs. Some are built into walls, others into the floor. All are raised from the surface upon which they are constructed, much like a well. Some of the rings are bound in ancient devices, such as rings or coins, though these are rare if they exist at all. The stone work around the rings contain a host of magical runes laid in brass. Looking into the ring, or portal, one sees a dark tunnel, with steps leading down into the darkness. Each rune-enhanced ring creates a portal to the roots of the Eahrtaut, the tunnels.

The tunnels are dominated by a wet, earthy smell, as if fresh dirt were just turned over. The tunnels inside are comprised of thick, fibrous material; these are the living roots of the Great Tree.

There is one such Ring of Brass in the pantry beneath the Butcher Block Restaurant.

When Mr. Bisby (see below) opened the door to the Ring and the portal beyond, he opened a portal to realms he could not begin to imagine. Several creatures escaped, passing he and his wife as they fled into the surrounding countryside. Some of these creatures haunt the region still, and they are most assuredly what ran off Bisby, his wife, and eventually most of the town.

For travel in the Rings, see Beyond the Portal below.

GAITLUN

Ennith Gaitlun appears as a woman in her late 50s; she is comely, and well dressed with long gray hair. She is thought to be the great grand-daughter of one of the founders of Ends Meet, Edwin Gaitlun. This could not be further from the truth. Ennith is actually a dryad, a fey from a different world and a different time, who came to Earth through the Ring of Brass now located beneath the restaurant. She is immortal; a fey, born when Venus was young and inhabited many long ages ago. Having learned the peculiar, magical nature of Ends Meet she settled there. When Venus suffered its demise and all life (but a little) was extinguished, she followed the paths in

the Rings of Brass to Earth and lives there now, in the town that exists in many dimensions at once. For a full write up on Ennith, see below. To all intents and purposes, she appears and acts like a human woman. She never reveals her nature.

SHELBY

The Shelbys settled in Ends Meet during the 1890s. The ran a large cattle ranch outside of town and owned quite a bit of farmland. Their youngest son, Joe "Birchwood" Shelby, joined the army and fought in the Great War where he was twice wounded. He returned to find his family impoverished because the cattle herds became infected with black leg and died or failed to reproduce. Most of the herd was slaughtered. Attempts to revive the family business failed and Joe's father killed himself in the early twenties. His mother died not long after. His oldest brother moved away to Hollywood where he appeared in minor roles in minor films.

He returned years later to settle on the farm. Joe remained though and slowly rebuilt his families' fortunes, leaving behind one daughter and a son, both of who manage the family farm. They live on the south side of town. They are but of the few people who still call Ends Meet home. For more on the Shelbys, see below.

LOCATING ENDS MEET

Ends Meet is set in west-central Arkansas near Deckard Mountain, east of highway 7. The town can of course, be placed in almost any rural environment that is forested.



Access to it should not be easy. Only dirt roads lead to the town and these are mostly forgotten, even by the locals. The town is not visited often, and the only people who come and go are the Shelbys. And they only leave once a week to attend Church in Alpine, purchases supplies and equipment, and go to family reunions and the like.

ENCOUNTERS IN ENDS MEET

There is no limit to the number of creatures, good and evil, lawful or chaotic, that can have crawled out of the open portal. Your imagination and designs of your campaign and game should be the only limit. It should be noted, of course, that the portal does not constantly spew forth monsters. The Rings of Brass open to vast tunnels, almost infinitely long, such that creatures do not crowd the corridors. They do, however, enter the tunnels and wander listless for many years until they find an egress. An open portal would be such an egress. The list below can serve as a wandering monster chart if one is desired. Roll a d6 once in the early morning and again late at night. A roll of a 1 in the morning means there is an encounter; a roll of 1-2 in the evening means there is an encounter. The characters should not have the same encounter twice.

- 1 Dire Wolf
- 2 Dretch (Demon)
- 3 Vrock (Demon)
- 4 Hell Hound
- 5 Gibbering Mouther
- 6 Servant of Yig
- 7 Shambling Mound
- 8 Spider of Leng

GETTING STARTED

The Ruins of Ends Meet should weave into any ongoing game or campaign without too much trouble, but if you need a little more reason to arrive in the town, here are several explaining why the characters might be journeying to Ends Meet. Pick one or combine several.

1 The Will: One of the characters receives a letter in the mail from an estate attorney. The letter explains that she has been attempting to track the party member down for over a year but has only just found them. It seems that a distant relative of the party member's mother, Vaughn Chambers, left her a motorcycle and it subsequently has been given to the party member. They can pick it up at 16 Main, Ends Meet. The title and keys are with someone called "Old Man Tyler."

2 Wandering Players: The characters are traveling in the vicinity when their car breaks down. They see an old sign that says Ends Meet, Population 340. The sign is planted next to an old, well beaten dirt road. When

they wander down the road they come emerge from the forested surroundings in front of the Ends Meet Motel & Butcher Block Restaurant.

3 Newspaper: While sitting at a coffee shop one of the characters finds a copy of a national newspaper. In it is an editorial about Ends Meet. It reads much like any expose would. An old town, abandoned by all but a few, home to strange stories about travelers from the far east, creatures of the other world and artifacts taken from an old city in Germany. The story is vague and filled with obvious exaggerations, but warrants investigating.

4 Corporate Contract: The CG Corporation contacts one of the players (or all of them) inquiring if they would be interested in doing a survey of a small, rural town. The town may house some type of artifact in one of the larger houses. The corporation wants to hire the party to investigate.

ENDS MEET

Approaching from Highway 7, travelers take Country Road 121 to where it ends at the Oakdale Bridge. The bridge spans the Muddy Wash Creek, bringing the traveler to Main Street. An old barn sits on the north bank of the creek, a mill to the right on the south bank. A few houses are clearly visible.

County Road 121 is a true dirt road. The fine dust of it picks up behind you, hanging in the air. The forest eves crowd around you, long leafy-dark branches hanging over the road. Little dust clings to them, proving the absence of traffic to the little town. After a short drive you come to a bridge spanning a narrow stream. Thrush and cattails grow along the bank, crowding out any sign of the water slowly flowing to the deeper beds. The bridge is short, an old hard top bridge but with stone rails. The emblem of the CCC is stamped in one of the posts, marking it made by the Civilian Conservation Corp during the Great Depression. Beyond the hard-top gives way to dirt again. A smattering of houses, clearly abandoned ring the road. Further houses lie beyond.

MUDDY WASH BARN

This long, tall barn is the only building north of the Muddy Wash. It is a long, wide building with a loft that spans the length of it. The lower floor is empty except for some swing blades, posts, bobbed wire, bailing wire, and an old tractor. Some other odds and ends lay about.

A few mice have made this place their home. Wasps nest almost everywhere and continually buzz about the structure, swooping down at any interlopers that may come in.



ITEMS OF INTEREST: The tools are all old, though a little cleaning would make some of them sound and very useful again. There is enough fencing posts and wire to fence a good quarter acre.

ENCOUNTER:

OAKDALE BRIDGE

As noted above, the town's northern border is marked by the Muddy Wash Creek. The creek is a good 30 feet wide and anywhere from 1-6 feet deep. It is spanned by the Oakdale Bridge.

The Oakdale Bridge is very old, built by the CCC back in 1934. Asphalt top and stone pillars blend the modern and old world look in such a way that its rather pleasing. Its footing is set on solid piles of stone so that it has not shifted in all its long history. The deck sits on an arched superstructure of stone and is covered in black top, worn smooth by the many years of traffic. The stone railing is short, only a foot or so on either side.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Only one car at a time can cross the bridge.

ENCOUNTER:

MILL ON THE MUDDY WASH

The Old Mill is built in a crook of the Muddy Wash. The Mill itself is still in fair condition. The top floor has sagged and portions of it collapsed. But the remaining two floors are in good shape. The mill was clearly abandoned long ago, though someone used it for storage for a while as both floors are filled to overflowing with all manner of things.

A thorough search of the place reveals little of value, just tools that might come in handy.

There are three main floors to the mill.

Sprout Floor

Here the processed grain was dropped into a chute and collected in sacks, ready for transport. The large spin wheel that connects to the water wheel outside is here. It spins gently, round and round as it has for many years, though doing so causes a great deal of grinding racket as it has not been oiled in some time.

There are tools aplenty here, almost any kind one might need. There are several large 50 gallon drums, each sealed. If opened they reveal telephone wire, cables, plumbing parts, and other odds and ends. It looks as though they were used to store certain types of household goods. There are truck ramps, tow chains, battery chargers, battery cables and other auto parts. A drum of oil stands in one corner, though it has rusted just enough that a bit of oil has leaked out and soaked into the floor.

Stairs lead up to the Stone Floor above.

Stone Floor

This is the second floor the grain was milled on, and where the huge grind wheels are set as part of the spindle, gears, and other apparatus. Though intact the whole machinery has suffered from years of neglect. Cracks have appeared in the grind wheels and the spindle due to constant swelling. The ropes are gone and the chutes are rusted.

Stairs lead up to the Bin Floor above.

Bin Floor

This is the top floor where the unprocessed grain was collected. It is empty now, only a few very old grain sacks, long since eaten through are laying about. The center of the room has sagged a great deal and part of it collapsed into the Stone Floor beneath. The machinery, on this level, though still intact is in real need of servicing and has no ropes left.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Tucked away on one of the beams in the ceiling is a strong box. It is not easy to see but any detailed search reveals it. A casual glance with passive Perception 12 or a DC 10 Intelligence (investigation) check over the Bin Room reveals it. Within the strong box is \$1,917 in U.S. dollars, some loose coins and a death certificate marked with the date June 9, 1957, on it. The certificate is made out to a woman, Marylee Ethers. Cause of death listed as decapitation from wild animal attack.

ENCOUNTER:

MAIN STREET

Main Street runs from the Oakdale Bridge south to the decorative South Wall a few blocks beyond the Meeting Hall. It's a broad, dirt road about 30 feet across. The dirt is hard and dusty and kicks up with much traffic.

1 MAIN STREET

This small 40 x 40 foot square house has white siding and a black tar shingled roof. Its small porch sports an old metal glider that sits two. The windows are busted out and some tattered curtains hang in them. Within is a large common room, two small bedrooms and a kitchen. A small bathroom was added to one of the bed room closets. The house is largely empty. A few chairs sit here and there. A table is in the kitchen with a cupboard and old ice box, its door hanging open.

Mice abound.

ITEM OF INTEREST: The ice box is in amazing condition and still works if ice is put in it.

ENCOUNTER:

2 MAIN STREET

This L shaped house is not much larger than 1 Main St, though it sports a back porch and has a large wood worker shop out behind it. Though the house sits on the street, the back yard was once rather large and well groomed. An old rusty gasless push mower sits in the grass, which is strangely not very high. The house itself is closed up and locked. It is easy enough to pick the lock and get in, or even force the old door open (no check required).

Inside, the house is well furnished, with couch, chair, coffee table and a small piano in the living room. A second room spots several chairs and a tv. A small kitchen with dining area flanks the two rooms in the back of the house. The place has a musty smell and seems to have been deserted quite suddenly as the cabinets are filled with plates, silverware, and even some old boxes of food. The dressers in the room have old threadbare clothing in them, along with linens and towels.

Though none of the cloth is worth anything, the rest has some relative value (how much can one sell a 1957 tv for?).

Strangely the electricity is still on in the house.

The shop behind the house is completely collapsed. There are clear signs of water damage on the ruins of the roof and the ceiling joists. Beneath the rubble are signs of old work benches and various tools, all ruined from exposure to the weather.

ITEM OF INTEREST: The mail on the side table by the front door is post marked June 7, 1957. It is brittle to the touch, and is an insurance claim for water damage to the roof from the previous March.

ENCOUNTER:

3 MAIN STREET: ENDS MEET MOTEL & BUTCHER BLOCK RESTAURANT

The Butcher Block was Ends Meet's main eatery. It was built before the Great War, just after the turn of the century. It has been renovated a number of times but still sports much of the original timber, large 8" x 8" sycamore posts and rafter beams that hold the building together. The latest renovation happened just after World War II in 1947. New siding, a fresh coat of paint, new windows, and new doors all gave the Block a nicer appearance. A motor lodge was added in 1948 with a 8 rooms for incoming visitors. The Ends Meet Motel & Butcher Block Restaurant was born.

It remains today, much as it did when it was built, though now greatly abused by weather and time.

Note: The room where the Ring of Brass was discovered lies off the pantry beneath the kitchen in the Butcher Block. The wall has been loosely sealed up with stone.

However, the stone is not mortared. See The Ring of Brass below.

THE BUTCHER BLOCK

The large building with solid, plank siding and thick slate shingles dominates the area around it. The restaurant is a large, open affair able to sit a good hundred souls, though it was rarely that full. A small host of pillars are ranged evenly about the great hall, holding up a large wooden ceiling. The walls are stone and crafted well so that the room is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. A large brick fire place keeps the room warm and adds a level of ambience to eating in the Block. Food was cooked in the ovens in the kitchen and served up to order. Meats, breads, cheeses, a medley of vegetables, as well as a host of cakes, brownies, pies and the like were regularly served. It was, in its day, a warm, friendly place.

The Block was best known for its fresh beef served on the hoof. It was also known for its Bradley Country Tomatoes, brought from the south. They were known far and wide.

In its day, it was a busy place, hosting locals, farmers and the occasional traveler who ended up at the Motel. All manner of signs, doodads, trophies, farm implements and other bric-a-brac line the walls and hang from the wooden beams. They range from highway signs, to advertisements asking one to drink more Dr. Pepper or buy Arm and Hammer Baking Soda. Some farm tools and other stuff hang about as well.

In all it is dimly lit, though the roof is partially caved in. A great deal of dust and detritus from outside, leaves and limbs, animal droppings, bones of some small creature, dirt dobber nests, and the like abound. There is a great deal of value in the room. There are old tables and chairs are still in decent shape. Collectible signs could be sold at pawn shops. Some old fishing gear is here as well. A bit of hard work and cleaning will return much of the place to its original luster.

A counter near the front door offered patrons a place to pay as well as rent a room in the back.

But overall, the room is in utter shambles. Read or paraphrase the following:

The door gives way before you, falling off one hinge with some noise. It stirs up a small cloud of dust that rises on the gently moving air where it passes through beams of light from above, dancing in wild gesticulations. Casting about, you see a large room with a vaulted ceiling. Immense ceiling joists tell you how old the building is, cut, no doubt, from hundred-year-old trees. A counter stands next to the door, but the room itself is in some disorder. The many tables are pushed about or flipped over. Chairs lay all about, in no particular order. Dust covers everything. The various signs on the wall are covered in dirt and grime, though an occasional soda



bottle or razor peaks out, advertising some device or food from long ago. The whole room is quiet, though for a moment, through all the dust and grime, you can hear the lively conversation of people from long ago. There they are sitting around in their short sleeve shirts and ties, fedoras at hand and the women in flowered dresses with their hair pinned up. But that passes, leaving the quiet of the room, and the ruin of time.

CHECK IN COUNTER

The counter by the front door has a register at it, a key box on the wall behind it, and both a cash box and guest register beneath the counter. All the keys for the rooms are there but for rooms 2 and 3. The register is filled with names going back several years. The last entry is "John Olivers, Fayetteville". He was assigned to room 7.

ITEM OF INTEREST: On the wall to the right of the fire place is a rack of unopened soda bottles. All are fairly normal but for one. They range from 7-up, Coca-Cola, Sunkist, Dr. Pepper, and Frost Root Beer. There are 12 in all. One of them, however, has no label, is in a blue, sealed, very ornately carved bottle. The bottle has relief of a massive stag on it. The seal is wax and closed tight. Anyone who opens it and takes a drink is immediately invigorated for 1d8 hit points. The bottle refills once the cap is put back on after 2 days. The bottle belonged to Leoanor Kurtengraf and was left in her room when she disappeared in 1936.

ENCOUNTER:

KITCHEN

The kitchen is large and possesses two large ovens, cook tables, and hanging racks. One of the ovens is an older, wood burning oven and very serviceable. The other is a gas oven, but since the gas has been turned off to the property, it does not work. The kitchen is fully stocked with kitchen utensils, pots, pans, cutting boards, dishes, mixing bowls and other restaurant implements. It seems to have been largely left be, though a great deal of decay has spread throughout the cabinets. Many are partially rotted. Despite this, there is much for the collector, to be salvaged here.

There is very little food left here, and what is left, are old cereal boxes, mostly chewed up and in horrid shape.

One large butcher block stands in the middle of the room.

A door leads off the side to the owner's apartment.

ITEM OF INTEREST: There is one large, 10 lb. bag of salt in one of the cabinets.

ENCOUNTER:

APARTMENTS

The apartments consist of three rooms: a small foyer with a desk in it; a bedroom; and one large sitting area.

A: FOYER:

The foyer has a single drawer desk and chair in it. It sits against a restaurant wall. There is an old pencil there and a desk lamp. The lamp is still plugged in, but offers no light as there is no electricity to the room.

ITEM OF INTEREST: There is a package of Curtiss Mints, a candy very popular in those days.

ENCOUNTER:

B: BED ROOM

This room contains of a large double bed with a dresser and a table top sewing machine. The bed is broken in, the mattress and linen largely disintegrated. The dresser has been emptied, though a few old, tattered articles of clothing remain. A broken axe handle lies on the floor. The sewing machine is an old foot powered metal affair. It is very heavy but still serviceable. It has four drawers, they are still filled with various needles, threads, buttons and the like.

ITEM OF INTEREST: In the back of one of the sewing drawers is a master key. It is on a wooden key ring and has the words "motel" written on it in faint lettering. The key fits all the rooms to the motel.

C LIVING ROOM

The living room is large with several chairs and couches fronting a fire place, and next to that an old TV on a stand. In the corner, looking outside to the barn yard, is a round table surrounded by chairs. On the table are a smattering of dishes and a few mugs.

ITEM OF INTEREST: Lying on the floor by the table is an old booklet, tattered and weather beaten. It is titled: The Method of Science -- The Equinox -- The Aim of Religion." At the top is "Vol 1 Price Ten Shillings Number VIII" Stenciled alongside some strange geometric figures and a ram and woman bearing a sword are the words "The Review of Scientific Illuminism" on one side and "The Official Organ of the A.. A.." on the other. The pages are folded back at an article called "Across the Gulf" by Aleistair Crowley. In the article the writer discusses life in another form in ancient Egypt during the time of Isis and Osiris.

ENCOUNTER:

LARDER

Steps lead down from the kitchen to the larder below. It is almost as large as the kitchen and apartments above. It consists of two rooms lined with shelves and counters,

several old ice boxes, a wine rack, several large beer barrels and a meal prep area. There are a number of crates and boxes too, each marked with addresses and contents. The contents are food stuffs but these have long been eaten or disintegrated.

Beneath the stairs are a jumbled pile of other boxes, packed tightly beneath.

The wine rack covers one entire wall and has about 200 bottles in it.

The back wall of the second room is plastered over with a light layer of wall paper. The wall paper has tea cup patterns. It is thread bare and not well plastered. All of this covers the Ring of Brass. There is a light switch on the wall here, the wall paper plastered around it in a very unprofessional way.

ITEM OF INTEREST: There are several rock bars, crow-bars, shovels and pickaxes piled in the corner. They are blunted as with much use. There is also a generator, hooked to a cord that runs to the wall with the wall paper. There a light switch is set into the paper.

ENCOUNTER:

SECRET CHAMBER

Behind the south wall, beneath the wall paper is a wall of loose stone and masonry. Pulling the wall paper back

readily reveals it. Breaking through the wall will take some few minutes but should be easy enough with the tools at hand. Beyond is a stone tunnel with wooden beams set along the walls to prop it up. The light switch is connected to a series of cables and lights that stretch down the hall into a broader room.

The hall is about 20-30 feet long. If the generator is fired up, it works just fine, and the lights can be turned on and off. What they, or other light sources reveal, is a room that holds the portal and door that is the Ring of Brass.

The tunnel is cool, the air almost cold. The lights flicker, catching the shadows of rough rock and poorly built walls. At the end of the tunnel, it opens up into a broader room, and there, in the wall is a large brass and stone tube protruding from the wall, capped by a door of some type. It is easily 6 feet in diameter. It seems more as if the wall were built around it than it was set in the wall. Whatever the case, it is huge and too large to manhandle. The brass on the cylinder catches the light and some type of rune, written in repeating fashions, is carved onto its front.

THE RING OF BRASS

Mr. Bisby, owner of the Butcher Block, decided that business had grown enough that he needed to expand his pantry to store more food. He hired some locals to be-



gin excavating one of the walls to allow him to do so. At first, they uncovered some old pillars, sunk deep in the ground. They really didn't know when these pillars were sunk, but they were well preserved enough to keep them intact. They seemed extremely old. Mr. Bisby speculated they dated from the old Cocklbur Post and Trade. Regardless, they pulled them out and kept digging. They soon discovered that they had unearthed a short, 20-foot stone tunnel that had been sealed long ago.

Clearing the debris, they crept down the tunnel and discovered a huge brass and stone door built into the rock wall. It was clearly a vault of some sort, built long ago. The Spanish, the French, and the Confederates all ruled this area for a while, and even before them the Native Americans had wandered these woods for years. Maybe this was the fabled gold of the city of gold. There was no telling what lay beyond. Bisby paid the two boys a handsome sum to keep quiet about the whole thing and set about closer investigations. He constructed supports for the wall and ceiling above, cleaned the hall, and ran some lighting in so he could better see what he was up against.

He called his friend Sandyman (from the feed store) to have a look at it and see if they couldn't open it. Sandyman had served in World War II and was known to be something of an engineer.

The two set about attempting to open the portal. They used hammers, chisels and other devices. They brought down a hydraulic drill and at one point even attempted to dig around it. All of their efforts failed. Both began to look outside the box and make quiet inquiries as to what this thing could be. They began to approach professors of anthropology, both in state and out of state, including John Olivers of the University of Fayetteville.

About that time, Bisby's wife discovered there was more to the renovation than simply expanding the room. Rumors were floating around town that something weird was afoot in the basement of the Butcher Block and she got wind of it. Upon questioning her husband closely, he revealed the "vault" to her.

It just so happened that Mrs. Jessica Bisby was a student of the occult. Significantly younger than her husband, she was fascinated by ghosts, ghouls, the undead, faeries and demons. Her mother had been a member of the magician Aliester Crowley's O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis) for a period of time and left her daughter with an insatiable appetite for all things paranormal. She devoured anything she could get her hands on, including the Equinox and the hidden writings of Crowley. She kept in contact with many people in the O.T.O as well.

When she discovered the brass door and saw the runes written around it, she immediately suspected magic and began tinkering with her mother's many texts. She knew of a hand written text called "Magick, Liber AbA, 4" that her mother had left her. It was written in her mother's

hand writing, but was dictated by Crowley himself. Producing "4" she began studying various forms of magic and its application, hoping that it might open the portal. She also wrote letters to some of her friends in the O.T.O. to come and help her.

Eventually her efforts bore fruit and she succeeded in opening the Ring of Brass to the tunnels that lie beneath. Her husband was amazed and Sandyman frightened half to death. But not nearly as much as he was when shortly thereafter a small dog-like, rat creature came out of the tunnel and set on Bisby himself. His own hound rushed to his aid and scared the creature off, but not before Bisby was chewed up and bloody. Sandyman became convinced that this was no portal to Aztec gold but rather a gate to hell.

The town Doc cleaned Bisby up but his wounds healed in the most grotesque fashions, and they smelled of soot or sulphur every after. They tried to clean him and his clothes, but to no avail. The stench of it spread from his clothes to the washer and dryer, both of which ended up in the yard.

At this juncture the town was abuzz about things going on in the Butcher Block. Few people went there to eat and Bisby opened it up less and less, until only a few came to eat their food before they nervously left. Arnold Harding came almost every day, trying to figure out what was going. He deduced much (for more on Harding, see below). Strange events began occurring around town. Things went missing. People saw eyes in the shadows. Animals were found dead. All manner of strange, unexplained things occurred.

While this unfolded, Professor John Olivers of Fayetteville showed up, bidden by a letter from Sandyman. He checked into Room 7 of the Motel.

Though Sandyman would have nothing to do with any of it, Bisby approached Oliver and bid him to explore the open portal and tunnels beyond. The ancient writing on the floor and wall was enough to bring him in and he did so. With pack, gun, and flash light he entered the Ring of Brass and passed down the portal. The last that was heard of him was a shout from the darkness, "The writing continues. It goes as far as my light will shine. I'm going a little further." He vanished into the dark and never returned.

Not long after Jessica was found dead in her bed. Her face pale white and a look of loathing on her face. Bisby laid her to rest and closed up shop and fled. Strange things began occurring. Dark shadows were seen lurking beneath windows. Livestock were killed and mutilated, but not eaten. A boy drowned in shallow water. Rumors flew about and people began to pack up and leave. In short order, the town was almost wholly abandoned.

It was Arnold Harding (see 3 Redbud Lane below) and Old Man Tyler (see 16 Main St. below) who braved the

Butcher Block, found the portal, and closed it. They sealed the tunnel behind a loose wall of stone and plastered that over with wall paper. Arnold set himself the task to watch over it, but was soon snared in the magics it had unleashed.

ITEM OF INTEREST: There is a backpack set amidst the rubble here. The back pack is old, probably made in the 1940s. It has a number of items in it. Inside are the following items:

Oil lamp
Oil
50' rope
Box of 50 matches
Toolbox
Geiger counter

ENCOUNTER:

OPENING THE PORTAL

Opening the portal cannot be done by normal means. It does not yield to hammer or pick axe, and it cannot be blasted or shot open. There is neither locking mechanism nor hinges to pry loose. The portal can only be opened magically, through use of some spell or spell-like effect or through some type of telekinetic or psychic ability.

The book used by Jessica Bisby is in the barn, wrapped in seal leather, stuffed in the motorcycle saddle bag. Her husband put it there, but then forgot it when he took his car to flee town (See below). There is another book in Room 7 of the Motel (see below), it is the second volume of "The Equinox, No. 14" that contains an article called "Divine Will". It too has the magical incantations to open the door.

Note: Any similar power the characters may possess can open the door. The CK should do this at their own discretion, making entry possible but not necessarily easy.

Once the door is opened, and for adventures in the Rings of Brass, refer to Beyond the Portal below.

WASHER & DRYER

Lying just outside of the Butcher Block is an old washer and dryer. They look as if they were hurled there in some rage. There are no signs of any other trash about them, or any reason they should be where they are. The washer and dryer still retain the vestiges of a foul stink. Anyone who sticks their heads in them smells it as something of the other world. The stench is actually demon stench.

ENCOUNTER:

BARN

The barn lies in the back southwest corner of the lot. It is in pretty rough shape with portions of the roof caved in and a part of the north wall as well. The barn itself is

a split-level barn, whose first floor is partially stone and partially wood. The second floor is an open loft. A water silo on the south side and an attached smoke house round out the whole structure.

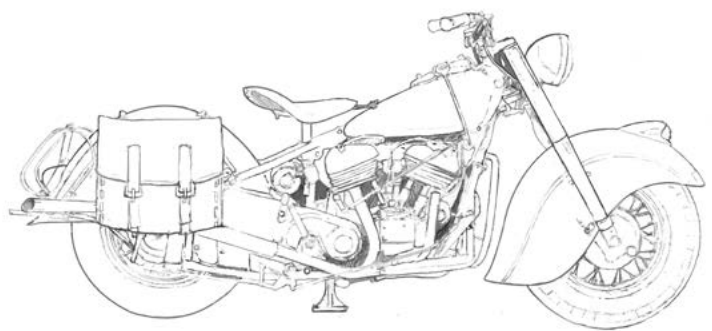
First Floor: Ground

Though the barn has not been used in some time, it once housed livestock as well as a small tractor and other farm implements. The tractor sits outside, its tires mostly rotted away, the seals on its engine too. Its in horrid shape, clearly battered and weathered. Inside, the barn is in a little better shape. The stone walls are well made, with stout mortar to keep them together. This had kept some of the moisture out until a small portion of the roof gave away, and more recently, a cleft in the north wall appeared. Despite this, the inside is in remarkable shape. The stout beams of the loft floor joists are in good shape and the wall braces are as well. Overall, it is in decent shape and affords enough protection from the elements to have kept it sound.

There are a number of spools of barbed wire here: 10 spools with 100 feet of wire on each. A leather bag of fencing gear and a cum-along hang on a peg next to it.

In one of the horse stalls is a motorcycle beneath a tarp.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Beneath an old tarp is a motorcycle. It's a 1951 Indian Chief with saddle bags. In one of the saddle bags is hand written copy of "Magick, Liber AbA, 4". See below for new magic items. With a little bit of work, gasoline, and oil, the bike runs just fine. The bike is in remarkable condition, even a simple glance will tell anyone that. Arnold Harding comes down every so often and cleans and oils it, and occasionally takes it for a ride.



ENCOUNTER:

Second Floor: Loft

The loft is largely abandoned. There is no hay here, only dust and old mounds of rot. Two pitch forks are leaning against the wall. The loft door is closed, but opens with a loud groan and some effort. Oil on the runners will make

it much easier to open.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is a cowbell hanging on the wall next to the loft door. The leather strap is somewhat battered, and the bell rusted completely over, but it still makes a goodly racket when rung.

ENCOUNTER:

SMOKE HOUSE

The smoke house is attached to the barn. The door is latched from the outside and securely shut. It opens with a little effort. There are no windows here, only a small opening at the top of the walls, allowing an updraft. This updraft pulled the smoke up from the fires to smoke the hanging meats.

The floor here is dirt though stained with salts and ash. An old bag of salt, much dissolved but laying in the corner like a lump, sits by the door. A number of hooks hang from the ceiling that run the length of the barn. Clearly designed to hold the carcass of a deer, cow, or pig, which-ever was being treated.

In the corner of the room is an open wooden box. The lid leans against the wall. In front of the box are a dozen pieces of tiny, plastic furniture. There is a bed and sideboard, a dresser, table with chairs, hutch, and other pieces of furniture. They are partially set up. The table and chairs on the dirt floor, the bed not a far distance away, and so on. It appears as if someone intentionally set them up. There is a large, painted metal object in the box.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Inside the box is a metal doll house. The paint on it is partially faded, but the designs of shingles, windows on the outside, and curtains, decorations and the like are still visible on the inside. Several dirt do-bbers have made their homes in the doll house. Dolls for the house would be about 6 inches tall.

Note: The doll house can serve as a red herring or an encounter. It is possible that this is where some child played with the house and forgot about it. Or perhaps some creature whose mind is not altogether intact comes and plays with the small toys: a fey, or demon, or something similar.

ENCOUNTER:

SILO

The silo on the south side of the barn is in amazingly good shape. It clearly still holds water and the piping that allows water to flow from it to the cow troughs still work. It would be easy enough for anyone to stand there and take a shower in fresh water, refresh water supplies, put water in a radiator, or whatever was needed. A ladder leads up to the top of the tower, allowing one to climb up and look around, or fix the tower if needed.

It does however leak a little, and the ground beneath the tower is rather wet and muddy.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: A pipe line runs from the base of the tower to the Butcher Block. It runs into the back of the kitchen, bringing water to the kitchen if need be. The parts to hook it up are laying in the grass around the base of the tower. Anyone with a little pipe installation experience can hook it back up and get water to the kitchen. The GM should decide if an intelligence check is necessary.

ENCOUNTER:

TRACTOR

The tractor is broken beyond immediate repair. It needs new tires, engine seals, and an electrical system from the battery to the distributor. All of these items can be found in the Feed Store and Mercantile.

ENCOUNTER:

MOTEL

The motel sits across from the barn. It has 8 rooms with a parking lot out behind. Travelers parked their cars behind the motel, passed around through the gate and to the rooms. Though it was never a popular tourist destination, it was used by locals, people visiting their families, hunters and the like.

The rooms were heated with fire places, one chimney, and a double faced, corner fire place per two rooms. These are largely intact, but for the one that services rooms 5 and 6, where the top of the chimney has fallen by the way side and pieces of it fill the fire place. The rooms were not cooled but did have box fans to place in the window and bring in fresh air.

They have not been used for a long time and there is little left but ruins and are in varying states of decay.

ABANDONED CAR

There is an abandoned 1957 Chevy Bel Air parked in the lot behind the motel. It is half turned around or just oddly parked. There are no keys in it. It is in horrible shape, weathered, and rusted, though it was clearly a baby blue color at one point. There are papers in the glove box for one Jeremy Dixon (see room 2 below).

ROOM 1: STANDARD SINGLE

The door is locked and the windows shuttered. Inside, the room's furnishings remain, including a full-size bed with box springs and mattress. A bedside table with lamp, a dresser and small table with two chairs round the room out. There is a small bathroom with shower. There is a hole in the roof over this room and due to water damage, the ceiling is showing serious signs of decay and the floor beneath as well. Some of the rot has spread to the wall

between rooms 1 and 2. There the wall paper is peeled revealing the boards beneath.

Note: One could kick through the wall and into room 2 with only a little effort (DC 12 Strength (athletics) Check).

ITEMS OF NOTE: The room has little of value in it. The drawer in the bed side table has some old state maps in it.

ENCOUNTER:

ROOM 2: STANDARD SINGLE

The door is locked and the room shuttered. Like above, there is a standard full-sized bed, dresser, side table, table and two chairs. This room has been saved from the weather as its walls and ceiling are intact. Though dusty and somewhat worn out, the furniture here is in a good shape.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is a wallet and set of keys in the side table drawer. The wallet has \$38 dollars in it and a driver's license. The old paper license has "State of New Jersey Auto Driver's License 1950" on it. It is issued to one Jeremy Dixon. Age 34. 170 lbs, 5.6". The address listed is 216 Inslee Place, Elizabeth N.J. The keys go to the Chevy Bel Air sitting out back.

The bathroom in the back has a shaving kit in it, circa 1957, with a tooth brush, paste, a jar of Brylcreem, comb, razor, brush and soap in it. There is \$25 folded up in the shaving kit as well as 6 rounds for a .38 revolver.

Note: Jeremy Dixon got wind of strange happenings through his connections with the O.T.O. He came to Ends Meet to poke around. He arrived after Jessica was laid to rest and the Butcher Block abandoned. In poking around, he stole the room key to room 2 and stayed there. Few even knew he was in town, and when he disappeared, none took notice. His abandoned car, parked outside, just added mystery to the old motel.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is nothing here.

ENCOUNTER:

ROOM 3: STANDARD TWIN BEDS

The door is locked, shuttered and slightly swollen. Getting in will require a necessary Strength (athletics) check (DC 15).

The room has 2 twin beds in it and a shared bedside table with lamp. A long dresser and clothing rack faces the beds. A table with two chairs sits in front of the window, and a small bathroom is in the back. The ceiling to this room has a huge hole in it, right over the second bed. Water damage is prevalent everywhere, especially on the bed and dresser. Everything is damp and a little moldy.

ITEMS OF NOTE: Beneath the bed is a guitar. It is a Magatone MK-V Bigsby Electric Guitar in the case. Its in

pretty good condition.

ENCOUNTER:

ROOM 4: STANDARD KING

This room is locked and the windows shuttered. Like room 2 it has survived the test of time with minimal damage to the room and furnishings. Within the room is a king-sized bed, table with 2 chairs, tall dresser, a small desk by the bed, and a lamp. A bathroom lies in the back of the room. The bed is made with linens though all is much worn out with the passage of time. The room is extremely dusty.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is a camera on a tripod in one corner of the room, facing the door. In the top dresser drawer are a pile of photographs. They are risqué photos of a dark-haired woman (Jessica Bisby) in lingerie. Next to them are a small leather whip and a set of handcuffs.

Note: There is a half painted picture of Jessica Bisby in the adjoining house on 6 Main Street. If that house has been explored then the characters may make the connection.

ENCOUNTER:

ROOM 5: STANDARD TWIN

The screened door is on the ground in front of the room and the door itself is slightly ajar. One of the shutters appears to have fallen or been ripped off. It too lies in the dirt. The room is in deplorable shape. There is a large hole in the ceiling that extends to room 6 next door and the water damage is substantial. Some wild animal, or several wild animals, have savaged the bed, tearing the mattress, blankets, and pillows up and using it as a nest. Bats have used the room as a nest as well. The whole place smells of decay and rot.

The wall too has suffered rot and as with rooms 1 and 2, can be kicked in to gain entry to room 6 next door.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is a long knife hidden in the chimney of the fire place. It is much abused with heat as it was clearly put there and left long ago. Though the handle is damaged, the blade is in remarkable shape. There is the symbol of Ornduhl the Red God (see **Rise of the Red God** for more) set beneath a gem in the pommel.

ENCOUNTER:

ROOM 6: STANDARD SINGLE

The screen door here is bent over and the screen hanging out. The door is closed though unlocked. The room has suffered much as has room 5, from the hole in the ceiling. The full-sized bed is in a little better shape, though not much, suffering from damp and what appears to be rats nesting in it from time to time. The side of the dresser

closest to the door has given way and the whole thing lies in ruins, drawers all askew across the floor. The table has two coke bottles on it, long drained. The bedside table has a Bible in it. The bathroom is empty.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is an old book, stained and mildewed, but still readable laying on the hearth before the fire place. It is called "Constitution Rules and Regulations and Edicts Grand Chapter Order of the Eastern Star of Arkansas." There is an upside-down pentagram on it. This is a religious tract for the O.E.S.. It has a copyright date of 1955.

ENCOUNTER:

Room 7: Standard Single

The door is locked and the windows closed and shuttered. The screen is closed as well. Inside the room is one large queen-sized bed with night stand and lamp. Two chairs and a table stand in front of the window. Across from the bed is a tall dresser and a desk with another lamp. There is a stack of 6 books on the desk, some paper and a pencil. The bathroom has a few old towels, and a shaving kit with various shaving supplies in it, a comb, and empty cologne bottle. The room is in remarkably good shape.

This was the room John Olivers checked into when he came to see the Bisbys at Sandyman's request. Olivers was an anthropologist working at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He specialized in primitive religious beliefs. His travels had taken him to Papau New Guinea, West Africa, the Congo Free State, and other exotic locales. He came to town after Sandyman contacted him. By the time he arrived, Sandyman would have nothing to do with the now open portal and Bisby was very tight lipped, terrified because something had escaped, attacked him, and fled into the woods. Olivers could get very little out of the Bisbys, even Jessica who was normally very inquisitive and talkative. After a day of fruitless conversation, he investigated the portal. On the following day he gathered his explorers pack, flash light, and a small pistol and plunged into the dark tunnel. He vanished into the dark and did not come back.

He went unmissed by all. No one at the University even knew that Olivers was in Ends Meet. He had no close family. He just vanished. When he did not return to class the following semester, the University did a halfhearted search for him and then turned his classes over to Dr. Stillman.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is a small suitcase on the floor by the dresser. It is empty. Three days of cloths are in the dresser: 2 shirts, various socks, a pair of dress shoes, tie, undershirts, and underwear. There is a box of 45 cartridges as well, but 18 of the 25 are missing. The six books are: "The Equinox, No. 14" by Aliaster Crowley; "The Book of Forbidden Knowledge" published by Johnson Smith & Company; "Demonology and Witchcraft" London: William Tegg & Co.; "Hidden Symbolism of Alchemy and

the Occult Arts" by Herbert Silberer; "The Mystery of the Ages Contained in the Secret Doctrine of all Religions" Third Edition; and "The Teachings of Ptahhotep" by Asa G Hilliard. Each of these books has been read multiple times. Olivers scholastic notes are throughout them all. There is a bus ticket to Ends Meet from Fayetteville as well, it is marked July 21, 1957.

OPENING THE PORTAL: In the book "The Equinox", there is an article entitled "Divine Will". Contained within the article is a *knock* spell. The article is bookmarked and clearly read through and through. There is a note in one column that says "reading may open?" The article contains a mention of knocking on magical chambers. Reading that, or the whole article before the Ring of Brass, activates the spell and opens the porta.

Room 8: Suite

The door is locked and the windows shuttered, including the double paned window facing the northwest. This is the largest room in the motel. It's the "honeymoon suite" and consists of a large king-sized bed, two side tables and lamps, two chairs in front of the fire place, a table and chairs by the window, and a large dresser. It is in relatively good shape, and hasn't been used in some time. The bed is in surprisingly good shape, though the mattress is old enough that it gives quite a bit if any try to sleep on it.

Jessica used to come to this room to seek quiet and solitude. She would sit and dream of worlds beyond her own. The sewing material and magazines are hers.

ITEMS OF NOTE: In a basket next to one of the sitting chairs are some knitting materials. Much degraded with time, it is clearly a shawl being knitted by someone. In a wooden coke box, on the floor next to the basket, is a copy of Weird Tales, August, 1934. It has a man fighting a snake on the cover and the title "The Devil In Iron", a Conan story by Robert E. Howard. It is in rough shape, but still worth a bit of money.

4 MAIN STREET

This older, run down house is partially stone and partially wood. Its narrow porch and door front the lane and a back, side door faces south. It is long, with a high shingled roof. Grasses, shrubs and smaller trees grow close to the house. Within is a large hall, small room, and a loft.

The yard was once well groomed and gardened. Jonquilss line the walk up to the door, and though the fence is long gone, an old metal gate remains standing, though somewhat the worse for wear.

The front door is open and the house has suffered because of it. Furniture that might have survived has been used by various animals, rats mostly, for nesting and other uses. The kitchen has been thoroughly ransacked, probably by a bear or racoons or both more than once.

Only the back room remains in decent shape. The windows were closed and two old rockers sit facing a wall mounted gas heater. A side table sits between them.

ITEM OF INTEREST: In the side table between the two rocking chairs is a small drawer, and in it is a single action colt 45. The gun is loaded and a box of ammo sits next to it. A pack of lucky stripes and match box are in the drawer as well. The cigarettes have survived, and if smoked will make one a bit high for a few minutes as the tobacco is very strong.

ENCOUNTER:

6 MAIN STREET

The house fronts the road, with a nice lawn, shaded by several large trees. It is a two-story affair and made of stone and wood with a broad porch. A porch swing and several chairs decorate the porch. This was the home of the Crews family. They were often on the porch, sitting, smoking long stemmed pipes, and greeting those who wander down the lane. The signs of smoke damage to the siding is plain to see. Though the porch swing is long gone, the chains of it still hang from the ceiling of the porch.

The front door is locked but the back door is not.

THE MAIN HOUSE

The house itself is an L shaped house, with a smaller structure adjoining it. Tim and Lisa Crew lived here, with their daughter Lynnette. The main house consists of a living area, one large bedroom with a nice tiled bathroom and a kitchen. The house is very well kept and some money was clearly spent on it. The bathroom itself has a clawfoot tub and shower stand with it. The pedestal sink is crowned by a nice mirror that must have put the owners back a little. The water still runs in the bathroom.

The house is clean, still furnished and seems to be lived in, though there is no food nor signs of anyone actually living in it.

Ennith comes here and cleans the house about once a week. She always liked the Crews family and does their memory service by taking care of the house itself.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is no mail in the house. Anywhere. There is however a type writer on a small metal desk in the bedroom with a letter partially started. It is dated August 1, 1957. It says

"Dear Governor Faubus,

I understand that you are a busy man what with the Supreme Court Ruling and all, but I feel as you should take some time to come to Ends Meet. This town has become very peculiar in recent months and this might warrant an investigation. We have had at least one"

The letter is incomplete.

ADJOINING HOUSE

The adjoining house is a painter's gallery. Lynnette, an amateur painter used it. The one room is filled with all manner of canvasses. Paints, mostly oils and acrylics, long since dried, are on the shelves and in the cabinets. A multitude of brushes are there as well. A painter's smock hangs on a hat rack next to the door. There are a dozen or so paintings of fields and barns and people spread about the room. All the paintings show serious people, staring at the looker.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is a half-finished painting on a tripod. It is of a woman, long and gaunt, lying in a bed. Her features are pale and she seems lifeless, though her eyes look out at the viewer with a piercing gaze. The painting is of Jessica Bisby. Anyone who has been in the Motel, Room 4, and found the pictures of her will be able to make the connection.

Similarity: Anyone who takes the time to look at each of the portraits may notice one or both of two consistent oddities. Upon a successful Intelligence (investigation) check (DC 16) or Wisdom (perception) DC 17, they notice that all 17 paintings have the same autograph and date "L 07/57". Also, with a successful Wisdom check they notice that the strange recurrence of a circular pattern with what seems lettering on it. The pattern appears in clouds, hair, clothing, or on knots in wood. It is in every painting and vaguely resembles the Ring of Brass.

ENCOUNTER:

8 MAIN STREET

This house survived a fire, though just barely. The walls are blackened and the ceiling and roof charred. The doors and windows have been knocked out via heat or someone putting the fire out. There is nothing of value in the house as it was all burned up. Weeds grow up around the house everywhere, choking out what once was probably a nice garden.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is a fireman's axe stuck in one of the walls. It is in decent shape, though the blade is rather rusted.

ENCOUNTER:

9 MAIN STREET

This small house fronts the street with only a short dirt path leading up to the screen door. The screen door is intact, though warped so that it never shuts, but the front door is broken from the hinges and lays on the floor. It looks as if it were violently knocked to the floor and the hinges ripped from the door frame.

Inside, the house is a mess. Enough moisture has gotten in that cushions, linens and the like have all partially or completely rotted away. The furniture has suffered from the damp air as well. It consists of two bedrooms on the right side, and a living room and kitchen-dining room on the left side. One of the dressers in the back bedroom has the doors still open and old clothes still inside. Its as if someone rummaged through them quickly.

The house is fully stocked with all manner of dishes, cookware, old spice tins, and implements. Much of it has gone to waste.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is nothing of particular value here.

ENCOUNTER:

10 FIRST ASSEMBLY CHURCH

This L-shaped building was built before World War II and it shows it. The building is a bit run down, with a slight sag in the roof. The walls possess their old, chipped painted siding. The doors and shutters are all old as well. A large, white cross hangs above the lintel of the main door. The words First Assembly are beneath it. It's clearly a church.

The church consists of the main nave, a sanctuary, and a small apartment. The local preacher lived here in the church.

NAVE

This long, open nave is lined with tall, narrow windows. Some of these are shuttered, though several shutters have fallen away. Most of the glass is still intact. During the day the nave is well lit, though the many trees make for a host of shadows as the sun sets and rises. The church has a good 20 pews in it and a lectern at the end of the nave, slightly elevated so the preacher can see out over his flock. Behind the lectern is a chancel with a large table in it and behind that the altar with a crucifix over it.

The sanctuary lies off the main nave, next to the preacher's living quarters. It is accessed by a single door.

ITEMS OF NOTE: Most everything in the Church was long removed. A few bibles and a couple of song books are still in the pew shelves. A couple candelabra are on the table in the chancel. The only real item of note is the organ sitting to the left of the lectern. It rather small, very old, but still very able to play a tune for anyone who can play it. It needs tuning.

ENCOUNTER:

SANCTUARY

This small room sits off the nave. It is only 10' x 10'. Inside it are two cushioned chairs, much abused by time

and a small table. A third chair sits in the room facing the other two. Here people came to prey or find solitude in the house of worship.

ITEMS OF NOTE: On the table is an old notebook. It is blank but for one entry. It says, "The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn. – Martin Luther"

ENCOUNTER:

APARTMENT

These very simply quarters consist of a bed room, small kitchen with a kitchenette table, and a bathroom. The bathroom looks like it was very much added to the apartment later. The place is wholly cleaned out, the cabinets empty, the refrigerator empty as well. The bedroom is cleaned out as well. Here there is a bed, dresser and small desk.

ITEMS OF NOTE: In the bathroom, the small porcelain sink is broken, half of it laying on the floor, up against the wall. A careful DC 17 Intelligence (investigation) check reveals brownish stains on the edges of the broken porcelain. Laying under the broken part of the sink is a straight razor. It too has rust colored stains on it.

ENCOUNTER:

14 MAIN STREET

The Meeting Hall is a large building on Main street with big double doors in the front and one single door on the north side. The hall is exactly what it is called, a meeting hall. There are host of aluminum folding chairs hanging on the wall, 5 per peg, and a number of folding tables in a closet at the front of the room. In all there are 100 chairs and 12 tables. They are in decent shape but in terrible need of some oil and cleaning. There is a mobile podium in the corner opposite the back door.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Hanging on the wall at the rear of the hall is an old tattered banner. The banner is decorative with the symbol of a stemmed white rose in the center and two unicorns on either side of it. It seems faded and threadbare, but upon closer inspection it is not; it is only covered in a thick layer of dust and pollen. If cleaned it shines as bright and clear as the day it was woven. The tapestry is magically woven as well, and can be determined as such by anyone able to unravel the mysteries of that art. It does not fade, nor suffer from the ill usage of age.

Note: Some readers may note that this is the symbol of the Kingdom of Aachen in the World of Aihrde, see **Codex of Aihrde**. Edwin Gaitlun placed this banner here long ago. No one asked its origins, just assuming it was some family heirloom from the old country. She brought it over from the old world, when she passed through the Rings of Brass.

ENCOUNTER:

16 MAIN ST.

This is one of the few houses in Ends Meet that is still occupied. The house itself is clean with old, though freshly painted clapboard siding on it. The roof is in good condition but somewhat weather beaten. A small porch on the front of the house fronts Mains Street. Though there is little in the way of garden, the lawn is well kept and clean. A Lincoln town car is parked next to the house. The car, like the house, is a bit aged.

Old man Tyler lives here. He's lived here for many years and it is his hand that keeps the town in relatively decent shape. He mows yards and cleans gardens, makes sure buildings stay boarded up, and people, what few that come to town, keep their distance.

Tyler has long hair and a longer beard. Well dressed, he always carries a pistol at his side and a second in his pocket. He is extremely friendly, and very talkative and knows a little more than any one should about most anything. He never has a bad word to say about anyone and as such any information gleaned from him will be tainted with kindness and innocence. He doesn't smoke and only drinks occasionally. He is an avid collector of comics and games, and does a brisk business with several stores in Little Rock.

Note: He will entertain anyone in the world on his porch or at the table in his front yard, but he does not allow people in his house (his collections are too valuable to risk).

Tyler often sits on his porch with Adele Kalley, a very aged African-American woman, from 1 Beechwood. They visit each other often, talking about the weather and old times.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: None other than Tyler himself. If anyone needs a generator, he directs them to the one at 17 Main St.

ENCOUNTER: Tyler has two huge dogs, friendly enough unless they are told to attack. He's a dead shot with both pistols and the small arsenal he has in his house.

17 MAIN ST.

By the southern wall, along its eastern edges lies a low, long wooden house with a shingled roof. The shingles are peculiar to Ends Meet as they are green, slate, and imported from Louisiana to the south. There is chimney and a sagging roof. The grounds about the house are filled with all manner of broken, half-repaired farm equipment from small tractors, to wheel barrels, hammers, hoes, axes and so on.

This was clearly some type of machine repair shop. Inside are a host of tools, long benches, stools, cabinets and shelves. Machine parts are everywhere, stored in no par-

ticular manner. Several generators are in the building, one of them kept in good shape and used occasionally by Old Man Tyler (see above).

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There are literally hundreds of parts in the building. Almost anything needed to get machines around the town up and running is here.

ENCOUNTER:

REDBUD LANE

RedBud Lane is a single dirt lane with one house at its end. It is a shady drive.

3 REDBUD LANE

A very nice log home sits here, tucked back into the woods. It is the only house on Redbud Lane and belongs to Arnold Harding.

The lane is narrow, about 14 feet wide, and consists of dusty dirt. The trees here are nicely groomed and the drainage ditches on either side are mowed and clean. The lane leads to a nice, almost stately, two-story home. The yard is clean and moved with a few small dogwood trees growing near the broad, front porch. Light tumbles from the windows and spills across the yard. Curtains rise and fall, tugged out of their window homes to float ghost like on the breeze. A swing on the porch and a few old gliders mark the place as one of tremendous comfort. As you approach, the screen door opens and an elder, well dressed gentleman steps out, a small bird on his shoulder.

Arnold is very friendly and invites the strangers up on the porch for refreshments. He does not reveal his nature. He does however have a small bird that follows him about, constantly talking in his ear. He seems to pay no attention to the bird except for occasionally giving it a small seed or crumb he is holding.

Arnold Harding is far older than he appears. He was born in 1871 and spent his youth exploring Africa. There he encountered the strange worlds of arcane magic and learned the trade of the arcanist that he has practiced ever since. He served as an officer in the Great War, mostly in German East Africa fighting the Germans under English Arms. Later he joined the American Army. After the war he returned to Ends Meet and there made his home. But from there he has traveled great distances, passing through portals and into other dimensions, crossing the world and exploring the unknown.

He was absent on such a journey when the Bisbys discovered the Ring of Brass, and when he returned was stunned to see the town in the process of falling apart as people fled to avoid whatever horror came from beneath the Butcher Block. He went to explore the source of this

panic, and while he and Old Man Tyler were closing the portal he was unknowingly snared in the machinations of a small demon and charmed. The creature lingers with Arnold, manifesting as a small bird that talks to him almost constantly. The bird-demon has cast a small charm on Arnold, addling his memories and blocking out all thought of the Ring of Brass. Unless the demon is slain, Arnold has neither memory of it nor knowledge of those creatures that escaped.

Arnold is a 15th level Arcanist.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: Arnold's house contains a secret library filled with all manner of books of lore, spell books, and other such knowledge.

ENCOUNTER: DEMON, PARALYTE (CE Small Fiend)
HP 38(HD 7d6+14), AC 17, Spd 50 ft. Str 16 Dex 8 Con 14 Int 5 Wis 5 Cha 6. Perception 7(-3). Claws +5 (1d6+3) slashing, Spew Acid recharge 6, one target 15 ft range, Target must make a Dexterity Save (DC 13) taking (3d6) acid damage on a failure, or half on a success. SA Immune to poison, resistant to acid.

If the demon is slain and Arnold freed, he is grateful but is rather closed mouthed about who he is and where he has been. If pressed or someone in the party makes a genuine connection with him, either through role playing or a successful Charisma check, then he may be a little looser with aid to the party. He is not a fan of opening the Ring of Brass.

BEECHWOOD LANE

Beechwood Lane runs west off of Main Street. It is largely two addresses and a few wooded lots. It front Mains in a broad open space, but quickly narrows to wooded land with tightly packed dirt.

1 BEECHWOOD LANE

This lot at 1 Beechwood is in shambles. It was clearly once a thriving service station and malt shop, but time has pounded the buildings to ruin.

The service station itself was made of rough-cut planks but a very solid shingled roof. This has partially caved in, allowing water to flood the office area, ruining everything in there. The malt shop, built off the service station has suffered as well. Its light color stained with mold and decay. The main house, a two-story affair, with nice siding and broad windows has suffered as well. The roof on the north end is caved in and it has caused the second floor to collapse in on the first. Holes in the roof promise more damage elsewhere.

One of the outbuilding's roof is all but gone and the fifth building on the lot has been repaired by unskilled hands too often to hold out the weather.

Wayne Kalley built a house here in 1868. The Jacksons were African-Americans who used the Homestead Act to secure a goodly bit of land outside of town. The prospered in Ends Meet, and in 1912 they pulled down the original home and put up a larger house for the family. That house was renovated a number of times and still stands, though it is greatly abused by the weather. Eventually, the Kalleys purchased the land behind their house and shop and the family moved there. They rented the old house out from time to time, for meetings, revivals and the like.

The Kalleys were the first to put gas pumps in Ends Meet and their service station became the town's second hub. People came to fill up their cars and pick up candies, sodas and other sweets. Several outbuildings were added in the late forties and the Kalleys thrived, becoming pillars of the community.

But like everyone else, they did not remain long after the Bisbys opened the Rings of Brass. After several harrowing incidents they packed up and left. All, that is, but Adele Kalley. Born in 1933 she worked the malt shop, the tire shop, the family farm and every other part of the business. When the town fell apart, she would not be moved. Even after the loss of her husband, she remained. By 1959 she was living alone in the big house at 5 Beechwood Lane (see below).

With no customers and no business, the service station closed up and the malt shop as well. It has sat ever since, though Ms. Kalley comes down from time to time and tries to clean, though it is way beyond her, and becomes more so ever year. Old Man Tyler helps her when he can.

MAIN HOUSE

This house has multiple rooms downstairs and upstairs, however the roof damage has given way to water damage which has laid waste to part of the second floor and a good part of the first. The house was rented out to groups and has a host of chairs and tables about it, but these too are battered by the weather.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is a rocking chair in front of the downstairs, living room fire place. It is in decent shape, though no one has been by to oil it or take care of it in many long years.

ENCOUNTER:

SERVICE STATION & MALT SHOP

The service station is a one car garage with offices and an attached building, the Malt Shop. It saw a great deal of traffic until 1957, but by year's end it had seen its last customer. Its open to the weather as the garage door broke long ago, so what was in it, is mostly ruined. A few old car parts, tools, and the like are scattered about.



The pumps still work, but the gas beneath, what little is left, is highly volatile. Adele's father's car sits out front, the tires long rotted away, weeds and grass growing up around it.

The malt shop is closed up and in little better shape, but wind damage has seen tiles blown off which allowed water and ice to get in. Inside, the counters are all warped but the malt machine still intact.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There is an old malt machine here, and with a little work, it can be brought back to life. Adele will sell it to whoever wants it for \$1000.00. She would be "glad to see it get a home" as she is forever telling Old Man Tyler.

ENCOUNTER:

OUTBUILDINGS

Both of these buildings are in a horrid state, with the roof off of one and much of it fallen in on the other. They were used for storage when the service station was active. There is little of value left.

ITEMS OF NOTE: In the second shed is a trap door that leads to a closed storm shelter. In there are a number of tools, some oil, car parts and the like. Sitting in the corner, carefully wrapped and bagged are four tires. Though very old, their storage in cool, dry place, away from the sunlight and sealed has preserved them remarkably well. They can be used on the Bel Air that even now sits in front of the Motel. They won't last long, as they are old, but they are good for a few hundred miles for sure.

ENCOUNTER:

5 BEECHWOOD LANE

The Kalley House stands at the end of Beechwood Lane. It's a large two-story affair with tall, Doric pillars lining its broad front porch. Its painted white, clean, and well kept. The yard is meticulously manicured with pretty azalea bushes lining the front porch. The windows are usually open, allowing the cool breeze to blow, though all are screened to keep out the evening's insects.

Miss Kalley is 86 years old and has lived here her entire life. She inherited her father's fortune (and much of her family's beside) and is extremely wealthy. Supplies are delivered to her monthly by some of the young men who live further out. Her car, a 1976 Chevy long bed truck, is well kept, cleaned and serviced regularly. She wants for very little. Old Man Tyler and Shane Bradley, her closest friends, helps her maintain the yard and house, though even they are getting up there in years and move a bit slower than they used to.

Miss Kalley is a rather religious woman, though she keeps quiet about it, only shushing those who use vulgar language in her presence. She keeps Church on her

front porch every Sunday, whether alone, or with Tyler or Shane. She is well informed of the history of Ends Meet and the creatures that came out of the Ring of Brass, though of that peculiar doorway she has little knowledge. She has seen things moving in the dark, beastly creatures, and shadows. She's heard strange sounds and calls in the dark. She faces them all fearless, holding the cross she wears around her neck.

It is rare that any of the creatures hound the old matron, whether it is from fear of her religious convictions, her powerful will, or her two large rottweilers.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

ENCOUNTER: Dogs, Large

HAWTHORNE LANE

Hawthorne Lane runs off Main Street and goes west into the wood toward the creek bed. It is narrow, only about 15 feet wide, wide enough to take two cars but just barely. Its heavily wooded and a bit overgrown as the only one who uses it is Shane Bradley and he rides a motorcycle. There are a few abandoned shacks on the lane.

5 HAWTHORNE FEED STORE & MERCANTILE

This is a long, narrow building with white, clapboard siding, though the paint is very chipped and old. A few old, rusted, metal signs hang on the wall outside the door advertising Dr. Pepper, 7-up and various feeds. One sign has a woman smoking a cigarette with the words, "Smoke Chesterfield, So Much Milder", stenciled around her.

It was Ends Meet's only general store, grocery, and feed store. It carried most of the supplies any town needs, from basic canned goods, breads, flour, sugar, cook ware, linens, cloth, and more. The Feed Store also carried a wide assortment of tools and farm equipment. The attached building had lumber, feed, small farm equipment, fencing material and the like. You could also purchase hunting rifles, shotguns, and hand guns here as well as all the relevant ammunition.

All the doors are locked, windows shuttered and nailed shut. The doors are also barred from the inside. So even if the locks are successfully picked getting in through any of the doors is not going to be easy. It will require a further Strength (athletics) check (DC 17), and physically breaking down the doors.

The grass around the Feed Store is tall, lapping up against the windows themselves. Flowers grow wild in the back yard and vines cling to the building up and down. It looks utterly undisturbed and so it is.

Entering: Breaking into the building is not hard to do. If a careful search of the building is conducted, one of the

back window frames has given way to rot, and the lower half of the window can easily be opened. Once inside a bit of work will open the doors. How it was barred from inside is an apparent mystery.

The owner, Charles Sandyman, lived in an apartment in the back room until he died. He was found, laying in his bed, eyes wide open, staring up at the ceiling by Arnold Harding (then in his 70s). Arnold paid for Charlie's funeral, and having failed to find any living relatives, he closed up the Feed Store, locked its doors, and nailed the windows shut. He entered the building through a potion of gaseous form and barred the doors, and then returned to the outside the same way. No one has been in the building since then.

The store is much as it was left. Wooden plank floor, two long shelves of canned goods and other things, much degraded by time, going to the meat counter in the back. There, a glass refrigerated meat cooler stands, flanked by a butcher block. A meat cleaver sticks in the butcher block, faint rust colored stains on it. A coke box stands in the back as well. It is filled up with bottles of Dr. Pepper, 7-Up, Orange Crush and Root Beer.

Weapons: A counter at the front of the room has a chain locked cupboard behind it. In the cupboard are 3 hunting rifles, 2 shot guns, and three revolvers (a .38, .44, .357). There are 4 boxes of ammo for each of the weapons.

The back L shape of the building is the Feed store. Here are all the fencing materials, feed bags, and other farm equipment.

ITEMS OF NOTE: A pile of mail lies on the front counter all dated to June and July, 1957. There is one letter from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville from the Anthropology Department. The letter is addressed to Charles Sandyman and says simply:

Mr. Sandyman,

I received your letter concerning the strange design you have run across. It appears to be an old Germanic design, though this is hard for me to determine without seeing it. It is very odd that it should find its way to rural Arkansas. I will make arrangements to come see you as soon as I can. How does next week sound?

Kind Regards,

John Olivers

July 1, 1957

ENCOUNTER:

2 ABANDONED HOUSES

These small shacks were built with the intent to let them out to farm hands and storage. They were never really

used. They are in deplorable shape. The roofs have holes, the walls are degraded, and the windows are broken or absent. Damage from time and weather is extraordinary. There is very little of value here.

ITEMS OF NOTE: There are 8 wooden boxes with coke bottles in them stacked up in one of the sheds. These are worth a little to collectors, and can fetch about \$50 on the market.

ENCOUNTER:

3 HAWTHORNE LANE

This well-kept brick house lies tucked back in the woods at the very end of Hawthorne Lane. The windows are broad with heavy shutters in case of storms. The yard is clean, mowed, and squared away. A few chairs out front seem used often enough. The drive way is gravel, though the lane itself is packed dirt. The door is a made of heavy wood. There's an odd sign in the yard, red with a blue oval in the center. Inside the oval are large letters, "AA", put back to back.

This is the home of Shane Bradley. He's an older man, in his mid-70s. He's lived in Ends Meet his whole life, except for the 3 tours of duty in Vietnam with the 82nd Airborne and a stint in a Motor Cycle (MC) club back in the seventies. He is always meticulously groomed and walks with a silver capped can. His slight limp is attributed to a war wound where part of his foot was blown off in an RPG attack. It was rumored that he tied his boot tighter to hold his foot together until the battle was over. But the truth of that is known only to Mr. Bradley and the wild jungles of his youth.

Bradley is a little stand-offish with strangers, always questioning people's motives. Once he assesses someone's worth, he's friendly and open. He is close friends with both Old Man Tyler and Adele Kalley. They frequently visit one another, sitting on their respective porches passing the time by talking about the old days.

Bradley has a motorcycle he uses to get around, though he doesn't use it much. It is an old baby blue, 1970 Harley Electra Glide. He keeps it in perfect shape and well cleaned. He picked it up in Arizona in 1972, after he joined (some say founded) Torvald's Riders, an MC that operated out of the southwest for a short while.

As his house is tucked away in the woods, Mr. Bradley has seen more of the weird and strange creatures that lurk around Ends Meet. Because of it, he carries at all times two Smith and Wesson 9mms. Both are tucked in high holsters under his arms, and not easily seen under his vest.

ITEMS OF NOTE:

ENCOUNTER:

TREEHOME TRAIL

Treehome Trail runs the length of the south bank of the Muddy Wash Creek, passes through some houses, around a wall and then past Ennith Gaitlun's home and on to the old Manor House. There it passes into the woods behind the manor.

12 TREEHOME TRAIL

This is a small house tucked beneath the eaves of the trees and on the edge of the Creek. The house is yellow with white trim, freshly painted. There are plant boxes beneath the windows and in spring they are always filled with hanging flowers. Two posts flank the dirt walk that leads to her door. These are often covered in morning glories. Honey suckle grows wild all around the small house, adding sweet scents to the air along the flowers that are everywhere abundant.

This is the home of Ennith Gaitlun. She has lived here for many years. Unbeknownst to the townsfolk, Ennith is a dryad. She moved here from the world of Aihrde in the towns of Ends Meet, fleeing the Gonfod (see **Codex of Aihrde**). She and some others came through the Ring of Brass. She has lived here, in various guises, living peacefully in the town of Ends Meet. She has done so by changing her appearance from time to time, and several times just moving away, returning as a younger version of herself, claiming to be a relative of the original settler. Some, like Old Man Tyler and Arnold Harding have long since discovered her secret, though they keep it to themselves.

Ennith has very little to do with the Rings of Brass. She was part of the small band that closed the Ring so many years ago to protect both Ends Meet and Earth. When it was rediscovered, she understood fully what was coming through the portal and what was happening, but chose not to interfere, fearing her discovery could lead to her own demise. As she is one of the few who survived the Gonfod and can speak of the world of Aihrde, with her passing would pass so much of the world that once was.

Ennith is very old; one of the Valk Fahrkuhn of Aihrde. Even so, she has a narrow focus on the world she occupies and her gardens. She will aid the characters as she sees fit, and will only very reluctantly be drawn into any kind of fight with other worldly monsters. She will, however, if questioned about other worlds and dimensions, speak of Aihrde, almost as if it is a fictional realm. Her knowledge of it is vast.

Note: She does not really understand how the Rings of Brass work, nor how she got here when she originally passed through the tunnels. Whether it was the will of some ancient god, or pure chance, she cannot speak.

DRYAD (N Medium Fey) HP 22 (HD 5d8), AC 11/16, Spd 30. Str 10 Dex 12 Con 11 Int 14 Wis 15 Cha 18. Perception 14 (+4). Stealth +5. Club +6 (1d8+4; shillelagh). SA Darkvision 60ft., magic resistance, plant/beast speak,

tree stride, fey charm (24 hrs.; DC 14 Wis neg), innate spellcasting (save DC 14): At will – druid craft; 3/day – entangle, goodberry; 1/day – barkskin, pass without trace, shillelagh.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is one massive elm tree behind her house. It is easily 5 feet in diameter and stands about 120 tall. It is very old, though it is very healthy. This is the tree she passes into when she flees those hounding her.

ENCOUNTER:

15 TREEHOME TRAIL

Off the main lane, but at the end of a long path stands an old manor house, once the home of the wealthy Craddocks.

A small path leads off the main road, heading east. It is lined with old willow trees, the branches of which sway gently to and fro, casting about in their struggle to reach the ground. A goal both close yet so very far away. The lane ends in a wide clearing dominated by a small hill and two giant chestnut trees, beneath the broad leaves of which stands an old, three-story stone building. It has a wide veranda, though the porch roof has fallen in, and most of the one-time pillars lie in ruin in the deep green grass. Dark, hollow apertures serve the building as windows. Two each flank the front door, and five run the length of the second, though there are only two on the third. They are broad, with sills, but for the middle second floor window which has a balcony. The whole facade of the building is covered with vines, and brush grows along the length of the building's foundation.

The Manor House itself is filled with beautiful, if old, furniture that is largely undisturbed. It is locked though easily accessed as the windows are long since broken and shutters rotted away. The roof is intact but leaks horribly. Where it does leak, the floors are rotted and the furniture ruined.

The Craddocks were wealthy land owners in Ends Meet who possessed quite a fortune. Jeremiah Craddock was the last of the line and become something of a recluse, claiming the world was coming to an end. It is rumored that he built a series of interconnected bomb shelters beneath his house, where he hid his vast wealth of money, gold, jewels, and weapons. He stayed in the town and was seen puttering around for many years. But, he has not been seen for about 4 years. The truth of it, however, is that he did not die naturally. He was slain by a beast from the Rings and his body drug into the bomb shelters beneath his house. There the creature lairs with the ruins of Jeremiah.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: There is a dungeon beneath the mansion that the CK may desire to design and expand. The creature lairs in the dungeon.

BEYOND THE PORTAL

In the long-ago Days-before-Days, the Eahrtaut, a tree of unfathomable size, grew through the interdimensional worlds. It has various incarnations and is identified with many religious traditions and histories. It is known by names such as Yggsdrasil, the Sefirot or Kabbalistic Tree of Life, the Acacia Saosis, The Tree of Knowledge, and many others. Its roots and branches span many times and many places, and dimensions great and small. It breached other planes of reality and some of the very worlds we call home. In time these roots were hollowed out by a race of beings called the Trottigen. They sought to return to their home world, but only managed in opening up doors to all these manifold dimensions. Though they never returned to their home world they took the time to write down all they knew of the forces of creation and destruction. These languages were written in tens of trillions of characters on the walls of the tunnels of the Rings. In time the Trottigen died out or returned from whence they came and their portals were closed and sealed with brass and stone and bound with magical scripts so that only the knowledgeable would be able to pass through them. These portals, these doors, were called the Rings of Brass.

The physical rings take many sizes, but are all circular and made of stone with inlaid brass reliefs. Some are built into walls, others into the floor. All are raised from the surface upon which they are constructed, much like a well. The stone work around the rings contain a host of magical runes laid in brass. Looking into the ring, or portal, one sees a dark tunnel, with steps leading down into the darkness. Each rune-enhanced ring creates a portal to the roots of the Eahrtaut. The tunnels are dominated by a wet, earthy smell, as if fresh dirt were just turned over. Inside, the tunnels consist of a thick, fibrous material; these are the living roots of the Eahrtaut.

INSIDE THE RINGS

Once inside, it's much like walking in any tunnel or set of stairs, with a slight downward angle. The tunnel and stairs are always going down; no matter in which direction one is walking, they will perceive that they are going down. Even if two travelers leave the same point going opposite directions, they will each seem to be traveling downward. The tunnels are dark with no ambient light, and any traveler will require an outside source of light, unless they can see in darkness. There are many branches in the tunnels shooting off in many directions, some to other planes, others to different dimensions, others to places on the material plane, some to spill into other tunnels or double back, etc.

ENCOUNTER: Though the tunnels are seldom used, it is possible to encounter any number of creatures inside, from other travelers, gods, and monsters, such as phase spiders.

Movement: Unless some of the runes upon the Ring were

destroyed, it is active, and one has but to step through the ring, or portal, to enter the hollowed-out roots of the Eahrtaut. If one knows of another Ring of Brass, all they must do is envision it and begin traveling. They will not become lost. They travel to it, either magically, or by foot. If travelers know their destination but are forced to walk there, the first Ring they encounter is always their destination Ring; however, it may take them a great long journey to get there. Every 12 hours, the traveler with the clearest vision of the destination must make a successful Intelligence (arcana) or Wisdom (survival) check (DC 14) to arrive there.

If the traveler knows his destination Ring and has the ability to magically transport himself, he can do so through the use of a *teleport* or similar spell, *fold space*, one of the Winter Runes, or any other magical transporting spell or device. Movement is automatic from the point of the spell-casting to the destination Ring. However, propelling oneself through the tunnel with such speed places the traveler at risk of leaving part of themselves behind. Travelers must each make a successful constitution save (DC 10) or suffer the loss of 10% of their corporal forms: hit points, experience points and the accompanying levels, and attributes. This loss is permanent unless a *greater restoration* spell is cast upon the traveler.

If travelers are walking through the tunnels and do not know their destination, they have a 1% chance of encountering another Ring of Brass for each 12 hours of travel. Though time does not exist here, travelers must eat and sleep; the GM should make the check each time they take a full rest. Whenever they encounter another Ring, roll randomly to determine to which plane it leads. One could walk for a lifetime and never find an exit, or one could find one within a few minutes.

The tunnels can only be cut or scarred with a +3 (or better) weapon or tool. It takes hours to make any progress on the root, as about eight hours of cutting digs only a foot or so.

Time & Sustenance: Time and space are relative in the tunnels. Travelers must eat and sleep in the tunnels. Though time has no meaning there, their bodies continue to suffer the needs of the physical form.

ENTERING THE RING

Opening the door is the most challenging part of entering the room. This is done in one of three ways.

- 1 Using the spell found in the book in the saddle bags hidden on the motorcycle in the barn.
- 2 Using the spell in the book found in Room 7 of the Motel.
- 3 Barring that, it takes someone with a mechanical background like a gadgeteer or the right tool kit proficiency, **and** someone with a mystical bent (spellcaster or psychic) working together to puzzle out how to get

one working. An Intelligence (science) check for the Science aspect, and an Intelligence (arcana) check for the mystical aspect, both at DC 15. Still, the ability to control the Ring is all but nonexistent. If both characters score an 18-20 on their check, they might be able to force it generally where they need to go.

- 4 The CK should be generous in other approaches devised by the players.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Once the portal swings open, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

The door swings noiselessly open, exposing a broad stone tunnel before you. An odd smell of earth and stone waft up from beneath. It has the hint of cinnamon to it. The stone is worked over with markings and runes that look like the ravings of a mad man as they seem to decorate the wall as far as you can see.

Entering the tunnel sends them on an adventure into other planes and dimensions where your imagination is the only limit.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: John Olivers vanished about 1000 feet into the tunnel. He dropped his flashlight on the floor, and a portion of his vest was torn away. It contains the key to Room 7 and four pieces of chalk. The flashlight still works. It is a Eveready black and yellow lantern with a 6V battery.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Magick, Liber AbA, 4

This wonderous book is a handwritten copy of Aleister Crowleys Magnum Opus. Magic Liber is a book of magic and the occult. It includes all manner of information on eastern yoga, hermeticism, magical theories, practices, lists of grimoires and other information on the spell craft. This is the only hand written copy known to exist. It was taken directly from his dictation by Ms. Bisby's mother, and written in long hand. It is an invaluable source for arcanists, magic-users, and mystics. It contains a host of spells, including the *knock* spell, that allows adventurers to open the Ring of Brass.

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MAZING DVENTURES 5E

ENDS MEET.

AN OLD TOWN NESTLED BENEATH THE COMFORTING BRANCHES OF A FOLD OF DARK OAKS, ELMS AND LOCUST TREES. FEW PEOPLE LIVE HERE ANYMORE. GARDENS THAT HAVE LONG SINCE RETURNED TO THE WILD CROWD THE DIRT STREETS AND PATHS THAT LEAD UP TO HOUSES LEFT EMPTY TOO LONG. BIRDS ABOUND, SINGING AND CALLING TO ONE ANOTHER, FILLING THE RUSTIC OLD TOWN WITH A JOYFUL SOUND THAT BELIES THE DECREPIT NATURE AND RUINS OF ALL HER STRUCTURES. HOUSES, ONCE WHITE, WITH TALL WINDOWS AND FENCES ARE GRAY WITH AGE AND WEATHERED, BEATEN BY TIME AND DECAY. SOMEWHERE A HOUND BAYS MOURNFULLY. ITS VOICE IS MOURNFUL, PROMISING SOMETHING LONG FORGOTTEN, MUCH LIKE THE LITTLE TOWN.

BUT IT'S HERE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO GO. HERE YOU WERE TO MEET THE MAN IN GREEN. THIS OLD TOWN THAT TIME SEEMS TO HAVE FORGOTTEN.



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