

DUNGEON FANTASY™

POWERED BY GURPS®



MONSTERS 2

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

NO SUCH THING AS TOO MANY MONSTERS!

The day will come when the heroes have fought every creature in the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* – or the players have read the book. The solution? More monsters!

Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2 provides 24 new creatures for the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. Not all are *necessarily* hostile (though that's the way to bet!), but they're sure to spice up your adventures. Each monster's two-page spread includes:

- *Description*. An essay that delves into origins, mythology, habitat, outlook, capabilities, and tactics – everything you need to use the creature as part of your campaign world.
- *Art*. A picture is worth a thousand words, so each creature appears in full color. The stats were created to go with the art – not vice versa – so these images are genuine *illustrations* you can flash to the players to let them know what they're facing.
- *Statistics*. Every monster has fully detailed stats, with an emphasis on the special abilities and terrifying attacks that make encountering it memorable.
- *Adventure Seeds*. Each monster comes with two mini-scenarios, which serve both to introduce unknown creatures and to inspire side-quests or even entire adventures.
- *Notes*. Variants, new abilities, GMing advice, and more . . . every monster comes with all the details you need to run it in play and keep future encounters fresh.

Whatever your favorite class of monsters, and whether you need fodder or bosses, you're sure to find new friends to use as foes!

Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2 is a sequel to *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*. The *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* is required in order to use the monster stats in this supplement – but since that game is “Powered by *GURPS*,” *GURPS* fans can use this book, too!



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By Sean Punch

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Rick Hershey/Fat Goblin Games

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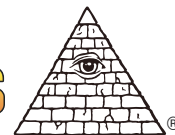
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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ABOUT THE *DUNGEON FANTASY* ROLEPLAYING GAME

The *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* is compatible with *GURPS*. Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of players of these and all its games. We can be reached by email at info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources that we provide include:

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INTRODUCTION

A fantasy game can never have too many monsters! That's the reasoning behind *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2*. It offers the heroes of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* a horde of new creatures to battle.

This book devotes some space to classics from myth and folklore: the angel, chimera, giant, naga, strix, and succubus. These fill important niches; e.g., fantasy *needs* giants, and in a universe where Good and Evil are tangible forces, the existence of demons implies angels (that's what clerics say, anyway). But most of the monsters here are crazy creations calculated to challenge creature connoisseurs. And *all* offer surprises for gamers who've read *Monsters* or played many hours of the *Dungeon Fantasy RPG*.



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

To understand the rules and traits in *Monsters 2*, you'll want *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters* handy. Without it (and the *Dungeon Fantasy RPG* in general!), you'll be able to use the *ideas* but not the *stats*. *GURPS* fans

should have no trouble interpreting it, though – the games are almost identical.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

While a few monsters in this book share names with creatures previously published for the *Dungeon Fantasy RPG* or *GURPS*, none were borrowed from those sources – this is all-new material!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as the lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, which led to his design of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango (and occasionally tending bar). He lives in Montréal, Québec.

READING MONSTER STATS

The creatures in this book use a uniform stats format:

ST, DX, IQ, HT, HP, Will, Per, FP, Speed, and Move:

Basic attributes and secondary characteristics mean exactly what they do for heroes. Creatures with ST 0 can't pick up or move objects, or grapple or slam. Those with IQ 6+ can understand language and use tools. Things that list FP as "N/A" can't spend FP and are immune to fatigue damage. Move is *ground* Move except as noted.

SM: Size Modifier affects all rolls to hit the monster. If larger than 0, *Multi-Hex Figures* (*Monsters*, pp. 7-8) applies and the energy cost to use Regular spells on the creature is multiplied by (1 + SM). The monster's stats *already* reflect the effects of long limbs on Move, reach, etc.

Dodge and Parry: Defenses are refigured from DX, Basic Speed, and melee combat skills, and *already* include bonuses for Combat Reflexes and Enhanced Dodge.

DR: Total DR from all sources. Only creatures noted as wearing armor have it (though the GM is free to add that, Armor spells, etc.).

Attacks: Listed by name. No matter how many options appear, a monster can attack once plus one *extra* time per

level of Extra Attack, unless noted otherwise. For strikes and grapples, the number in parentheses is effective skill. For afflictions, curses, venoms, etc., it's the resistance roll, which might be a simple attribute roll or a Quick Contest against the victim's score. The given skill, damage, reach, etc. *already* factor in the effects of the being's other stats (attributes, SM, advantages, skills, etc.).

Traits: Important advantages or disadvantages. For brevity's sake, DR and attacks aren't listed a second time. "Color" traits don't appear at all; the GM can add them as necessary.

Skills: Skills possessed by all monsters of this type. Levels *already* reflect the effects of permanent modifiers from advantages and disadvantages. Exceptional specimens might have different skills. Beings with IQ 6+ can learn almost any skill!

Class: See *Monster Classes* (*Monsters*, p. 14). If two classes apply, see the notes for effects.

Notes: Details of complex traits; whether the monster will negotiate; whether it's truly evil (important for certain abilities and spells); notes on valuable body parts; and any exceptions (to the listed stats or these guidelines).

ANGEL

Not all “monsters” are evil, much less Evil. Some are good – even Good. Angels are a great example.

Angels come in as many varieties as their infernal counterparts and hated opposites, demons. The greatest are unique beings not unlike demigods, while many more belong to orders or “choirs” known to mortals by peculiar names (which vary by belief system). Beings this mighty insist upon being properly and respectfully identified, wield power beyond that of the greatest heroes, and spend as little time as possible among mortals.

“Angel” without a name, choir, or other distinction refers to one of the humblest of divine servitors of Good, an entity that could appear to adventurers in tangible form and – if it comes to that – give them a memorable-but-winnable battle in which they could prevail without attracting divine retribution (victory means being found “not guilty” in trial by angel). An angel like this might assume countless forms, but most such beings manifest as paragons of humanoid races – fit and handsome, strong and swift – with the addition of feathered wings, a glowing nimbus, and extraordinary coloration (typically metallic: bronze, silver, or gold). This seems true regardless of the specific gods they serve.

Such angels aren’t necessarily wiser than the clerics and holy warriors to whom they most often appear; they just have inside knowledge of the mission their god dispatched them on (“The Task”), which gives the *illusion* of wisdom. Despite common belief, they also aren’t bound to be truthful, respect temporal law (Divine Law is another matter), defend the weak, minister to the faithful, or even be chaste (although they lack the, um, proper bits to be gleefully unchaste) – such vows are for *mortals*. Angels are pitilessly judgmental and care about only three things: The Task in particular, their master’s design in general, and destroying Evil . . . always in that order.

The stats below are *generic*, yet no angel is. There’s no such thing as a “wandering angel”; angels always have The Task, and when that is done, they vanish from the mortal plane. Their god – being omniscient or at least pretty darn savvy – provides any specific tools required to do the work of The Task: languages, skills, spells, and Holy abilities are most common, but nothing is out of the question. The traits given here are a minimum.

Such an angel is as easy to “kill” as any creature with No Blood, No Vitals, Unliving, and the passel of immunities

typical of spirits – though with Very Fit giving effective HT 17, it’s liable to survive down to $-5 \times \text{HP}$, especially if the Higher Purpose kicks in. Death of the corporeal form is unimportant. When destroyed, it rejoins the Choir Invisible and can be reincarnated by its superior as needed. Well, unless it’s defeated by something that specifically devours souls . . .

ST: 18	HP: 25	Speed: 7.00
DX: 12	Will: 15	Move: 7 (Air Move 14/28)
IQ: 12	Per: 12	
HT: 15	FP: 15	SM: 0
Dodge: 11	Parry: 13	DR: 5

Smite: 6d-1 burning *or* crushing – depending on the deity, this might be a bolt from the blue, giant glowing fist, meteor, pillar of flame, or other attack from above. Affects *one* enemy of the angel’s master. Range is just 10 yards, but cover is ineffective; the angel can smite anything it can see! Requires an Attack maneuver. The only defense allowed is a dodge at -2, and the target *cannot* retreat or take cover for +3. Can be used once per hour, unless recharged sooner by divine intervention.

Weapon (18): Damage based on 1d+2/3d. A glowing holy sword (*Magic Items*, p. 23) is traditional, giving +2 with Exorcism and Turning, and +3 to skill and damage thanks to Holiness 6; one based on a very fine broadsword would give effective skill 21 and do 3d+6 cutting *or* 1d+9 impaling. Most such weapons *further* have the enchantments Ghost Weapon (*Exploits*, p. 79), to affect the incorporeal, and Holy Weapon (2 HP of follow-up injury, 3 HP vs. enemies of the angel’s superior). Such a weapon *isn’t* left behind if its owner is destroyed or recalled – it vanishes with the angel. Reach 1.

Traits: Appearance (Very Handsome/Very Beautiful); Bright Vision (see notes); Callous; Combat Reflexes; Detect Evil*; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Enhanced Move (Air); Faith Healing*; Fanaticism (Carry out the will of my deity); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Higher Purpose 3 (The Task); Holiness 6; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Improved Magic Resistance 4; Indomitable; Intolerance (Evil); Luck; Nimbus (see notes); No Blood; No Sense of Humor; No Vitals; Resist Evil 6*; Rest in Pieces*; Single-Minded; Spirit Empathy; Temperature Tolerance 10 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 10 (Heat); Turning*; Unfazeable; Unliving; Very Fit; Weakness (1d HP in areas of high or better sanctity to Evil gods, repeating every minute).

Skills: Esoteric Medicine (Holy)-14; Exorcism-17; Intimidation-17; Occultism-14; Theology-14; any Hidden Lore, Physiology, or Psychology specialties essential to The Task at 14; and a melee weapon skill at 18.

Class: Divine Servitor.



I aspire to the standards of my angelic ancestors: driven, holy, and the direst of enemies to demons.

– Samar Alqatil, Holy Warrior

Notes: Bright Vision grants the benefits of the spell (*Spells*, p. 46). Higher Purpose gives +3 on *all* dice rolls related directly to the specific job the angel's god has assigned it, but *not* to "side quests." Nimbus is a suffusing glow the angel can tune (a free action on its turn) from candlelight level to a radiance that functions as sunlight in every respect; it eliminates darkness penalties over a one- to five-yard radius, and the glare gives those without Bright Vision -1 to -5 to hit the angel. Angels speak Angelic (*Adventurers*, p. 9) plus whatever languages their master felt necessary for The Task. Some but not all have Power Investiture 6 instead of Holiness 6, Energy Reserve 1-20 (Holy), and clerical spells at IQ + Power Investiture level, or additional Holy abilities – and again, these are whatever their superior felt The Task would demand. Unwilling to negotiate. Angels are capital-G Good – whether this helps ("Only the

truly Good can wield this item.") or hinders (say, when attempting to hide from Detect Good) – and are attacked on sight by demons.

* Works exactly like the Holy ability of the same name; see *Adventurers*, pp. 20-21, 27.

† Works exactly like the holy warrior trait of the same name; see *Adventurers*, p. 27.

Angel Adventure Seeds

Angel Of Mercy. When on a quest against Evil – especially one on behalf of a temple – if the delvers find themselves in dire straits and resort to the measures in *Last Ditch* (*Exploits*, pp. 90-91), the answer to their prayers may be an angel. Such a powerful being could provide essential guidance if they're stuck, heal them if they're sorely wounded, or fly them out of trouble (one at a time), and would definitely tip the scales in combat. The catch? The adventurers owe the angel their unreserved assistance with The Task (if they refuse, skip to the next adventure seed . . .). This mission is *probably* something related to their own anyway, but if the gods saw fit to dispatch an angel, you know Things Just Got Real.

Avenging Angel. Less-than-ethical delvers might offend a deity by double-crossing or robbing a temple, using forbidden magic or artifacts, or making deals with evil monsters. But the gods operate in mysterious ways – even ethical delvers who donate at

the temple, save villages from dragons, and rescue people abducted by monsters could be doing the right things for the wrong reasons, like trying to win a battle The Powers That Be have decided must be lost in order to win the war. Either way, punishment might come on the wings of an angel. Such a foe is *powerful*, especially since The Task would be punishing the PCs, meaning it would get +3 to attack, damage, defend, resist, etc. *and* possess any additional abilities and knowledge its superior feels it needs to defeat them. This would certainly complicate an adventure in progress, and might lead to extreme penance . . . or calling upon The Devil for a bailout, which is never the lesser of two Evils.



BAYANGANAGA



The bayanganaga resembles a dragon but differs from it in several important respects, the most significant of which is that it's a demon incarnate, not a denizen of this world. Specifically, it's a demon given draconic form – much as a hellhound is a demon given canine form – because Hell knows dragons hold a special, terrifying place in mortal mind and myth. When the evil that needs doing isn't corrupting the weak-minded or providing an arrogant sorcerer with a familiar or guardian to keep an eye on their soul, but *laying waste* to a temple or even a city that broke its deal with The Devil, accept no substitutes.

The first thing those confronting a bayanganaga notice is the palpable aura of terror. The instant they get close enough to perceive or engage the monster, they must make a Fright Check (*Exploits*, pp. 10-11). Roll only once per encounter,

at a cumulative +1 per Fright Check after the first in a 24-hour period.

Once combat starts, the most obvious difference between a dragon and a bayanganaga is that the latter has no breath weapon. Instead it *wails*, injuring or killing any mortal near enough to engage it in melee combat – even those incapable of hearing the howl. This ability is draining, but the bayanganaga has deep energy reserves (more on that later).

The wail highlights the bayanganaga's definitive feature: It is *unlife embodied*. It is the killing frost, inured to cold. It is poison, unaffected by toxicity. Its presence kills plants smaller than trees, and insects – it can blight a season's harvest just by walking through the fields, withering crops and pollinators alike. If defeated, its corpse melts into

the soil and nothing will grow in that spot ever again, not even with the aid of magic like Create Plant and Purify Earth. The sole upside for delvers is that the bayanganaga is *harm*ed by Healing spells, as they're inimical to its nature.

The bayanganaga is also deeply magical. While this means it needs mana to survive, that's a small price to pay for being *extremely* resistant to magical harm (it has an *extra* DR 9 vs. anything that could be construed as "supernatural") and able to see through magical concealment such as Invisibility spells. It can also cast a range of thoroughly evil clerical spells, which – along with its wail – draw upon a large Energy Reserve.

Beyond all that, the bayanganaga has the mindset of a demon, not that of a "merely" greedy and rapacious dragon. It enjoys *slaughter*, and isn't above stomping the dying to

hasten their demise. It feels *nothing* for mortals, and has no interest in anything they say or offer – even pledging souls won't appease it, because you're damned already if The Devil has sent the bayanganaga for you.

Fortunately for demon-slayers, the bayanganaga is flesh and blood. It breathes, eats, and drinks (though it can't be poisoned, so this isn't easily exploited), sleeps as a dragon would, and has a dragon's vital areas. On the other hand, this means it isn't Unnatural, so rather than simply going away at -1×HP like many supernatural beings, it fights down to -5×HP if it doesn't fail its HT rolls – which with HT 15 means it's likely to take 210 points of injury.

Where something is left unsaid above, fill in the gaps using the guidelines for dragons (*Monsters*, pp. 21-23). Assume the bayanganaga works like a medium dragon, as that's the "typical" dragon of mortal imagination. Smaller ones wouldn't be terrifying enough; larger ones would, and may exist at the GM's option.

ST: 35	HP: 35	Speed: 7.25
DX: 14	Will: 18	Move: 7 (Air Move 14/21)
IQ: 14	Per: 14	
HT: 15	FP: 15	SM: +4
Dodge: 10	Parry: 11	DR: 9

Bite (16): 4d+2 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Front Claw (16): 4d+2 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Hind Claw (14): 4d+3 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Horns (16): 4d+2 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Tail (14): 4d+3 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-4.

Wail: Costs 5 energy per use, from FP or Energy Reserve, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day. All *living* targets within three yards of the bayanganaga – whether or not they can hear – must roll against HT. Critical success means no effect. Success means 2d injury (direct HP loss, ignoring all DR). Failure means 4d injury. Failure by 5+ or critical failure causes a heart attack; see *Mortal Conditions (Exploits*, p. 66).

Wing (16): 4d+2 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-4.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Bloodlust (12); Callous; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Divine Curse (see notes); DR 9 vs. supernatural only; Energy Reserve 35 (Unholy); Enhanced Move (Air); Extra Attack 2; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Lifebane; Nictitating Membrane 9; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Power Investiture 4 (Demonic); See Invisible; Temperature Tolerance 10 (Cold); Terror; Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Intimidation-18; Tactics-14; and 10 demonic clerical spells at skill 18, chosen from among Agonize, Blackout, Curse, Dark Vision, Darkness, Death Vision, Deathtouch, Debility, Decay, Dehydrate, Destroy Air, Destroy Water, Frailty, Frostbite, Pain, Panic, Protection

from Good*, Sense Good*, Sensitize, Strike Blind, and Wither Limb.

Class: Demon.

Notes: Bayanganaga can attack *three times* but can use each natural weapon (e.g., "left front claw" or "wail") just once. Living flesh inhabited by demons cannot be healed by clerical spells other than those of devil-worshippers; treat Minor Healing, Major Healing, etc. as Resisted by HT, with failure to resist inflicting the injury that spell would normally heal, tripled for *High HP and Healing (Exploits*, p. 62). At SM +4, such spells cost five times normal. DR vs. "supernatural only" affects spells, magic items, and potions, and powers and abilities resembling these things – even if they do direct injury or bypass DR, like Deathtouch and death potions – but *doesn't* protect against clerical healing. Does *not* leave body parts if defeated; the corpse putrefies in seconds, poisoning a dragon-sized patch of earth. Unwilling to negotiate. Truly evil.

* Sense Good and Protection from Good work like Sense Evil and Protection from Evil, but affect angels, clerics, holy warriors, etc.

Bayanganaga Adventure Seeds

Save Our Souls! Helpless villagers facing death at a fiend's claws seek courageous monster-slayers to protect them. While they have no money, they offer the reward of a powerful artifact (magic sword, holy headdress, or whatever) their village has had for generations and that's doubtless more useful to delvers than to farmers. The adventurers are welcome to take this classic quest at face value, but if they investigate, things won't add up: How do these people know a monster is coming when no *other* settlements nearby have been attacked? Why do they have this artifact (which, if the PCs finagle a viewing and cast Sense Evil, will prove to be Evil) – and why is it in a temple to gods nobody around here worships? A giant wicker statue in the fields is strictly optional.

Sympathy For The Devil. It's hard to make a *demon* – especially one that exists solely to kill mortals – an ally. In this case, evil sorcerers, unsatisfied with deals with The Devil, have turned to Elder Things for power. When the bayanganaga arrives to punish them, it finds itself facing Things From Beyond Time And Space – not what it signed up for, but an incarnate demon can't just zip back to Hell, and anyway The Devil wants the black magicians' souls. Enter the adventurers, on a quest to defeat "evil wizards" and *not* alerted to the possibility of Elder Things. The bayanganaga offers a hasty deal: It slays the mortal cultists with its wail, the heroes fight the Elder Things, and everybody goes their separate ways afterward. Clerics and holy warriors should find the offer hard to stomach – but it's harder to battle spellcasters *and* invaders from Outside with a bayanganaga wailing nearby, making no effort to be selective.

BLEEDER

When a necromancer reanimates a dead body, they get a zombie or something similar. Such undead are mindless slaves that retain many of the weaknesses they had in life; for instance, smashing the skull of a zombified human is an efficient way to lay it to rest for good. Thus, zombies are merely *somewhat* creepy and unpleasant.

When a demon-worshiper or actual demon engages in reanimation, the results are far creepier and less pleasant. A mortal slain on the sacrificial altar offers a demonic spirit a conduit to the mortal plane that's less demanding – and less risky – than manifesting in its natural form. A demon who helps one of its kind inhabit a corpse creates an “undead” being that's a gleefully willing ally, while cultists who extend such invitations often end up being the ones enslaved. Either way, the result isn't a mere automaton, and the black magic twists the cadaver into *something else*.

The bleeder is a fine example. It's a corpse transformed into a monster that feeds on the living to sustain its presence in the mortal world. Telltale hints of its demonic origins are cloven hooves and a plethora of pointy protrusions: claws, fangs, and random spikes. These things aren't always easy to see, as the fiend is generally covered in gore from its victims.

This last point is what makes it a terrifying monster: Its attacks cause its prey to bleed out, and their blood “feeds” and regenerates it. As well, relative to a zombie, a bleeder is smarter, stronger, faster, and tougher; not merely Unliving but also without vital areas; and *not* destroyed at -1xHP. It's also fouler (if that's possible), as it's deformed, blood-soaked, and terrifying to animals on top of being rotten. And it's intensely unholy, being immune to things that affect *only*

demons or *only* undead – although this does mean holy water harms it, rinsing off its nourishing blood and burning its flesh.

One last thing for delvers to note: A bleeder might not *seem* that dangerous, because its attacks are close-ranged, aren't particularly deadly, and force it to risk being parried by weapons. Yet it takes only a scratch to be at risk of bleeding to death, unless the cleric bothered to learn Stop Bleeding. And if you *do* bleed out, there won't be enough left to resurrect.

ST: 15	HP: 15	Speed: 7.00
DX: 13	Will: 13	Move: 7
IQ: 10	Per: 13	
HT: 13	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 11	Parry: 11 (unarmed)	DR: 4

Bath of Gore: Any injury from the bleeder – even 1 HP from its crushing hooves – starts bleeding! Bleeding victims lose 1 HP/second on the bleeder's turn, until treated with Stop Bleeding (*Spells*, p. 39) or as described in *Bleeding (Exploits*, p. 63). Multiple injuries don't accelerate the bleeding rate but require separate treatment; e.g., three wounds call for three Stop Bleeding spells. If the bleeder is wounded, track *all* injury it inflicts through physical attacks or this ability, to *all* foes; every full 3 HP heal the bleeder 1 HP.

Bite or Claw (15): 1d+1 cutting + bath of gore (above). Reach C.

Hoof (13): 1d+3 crushing + bath of gore (above). Reach C, 1.

Spike (15): 1d+1 impaling + bath of gore (above). Reach C.

BLEEDER HORDES

One bleeder isn't *that* dangerous to well-equipped delvers. It's a little harder to put down than a zombie – it has good HT, can survive below -1xHP, and can't be whacked in the skull for a quick kill – but not so much that it's a threat on the scale of greater demons or undead. Even the bath of gore, though disgusting, is unlikely to tip the balance in combat; it's mostly a way to do a bit of extra injury and extend the fight slightly as the creature regenerates.

There need not be just one, though! As with zombies, there could be an entire horde. This can make it annoying to track bleeding effects, however. To prevent combat from bogging down, do the following:

- If *any* bleeders are wounded, *all* injury *all* bleeders inflict on *all* foes – via physical attacks or the bath of gore ability – go into a single pool for the entire horde. Every 3 HP restore 1 HP to the bleeder who's currently the most

badly wounded. If several are equally hurt, choose one at random.

- All bleeders temporarily gain one level of Slippery per person bleeding!

- Victims lose 1 HP/second on the bleeders' (collective) turn – and must have their bleeding treated once per wound sustained in the fight – regardless of how many different bleeders delivered the injuries.

The visual is that blood is swirling everywhere on the battlefield, a thin stream from each victim to each bleeder. For added nastiness, once the bleeding starts, assess a penalty to Vision and *ranged* attack rolls equal to the smaller of the number of bleeding victims and the number of bleeders; e.g., if three adventurers are bleeding in a battle against five bleeders, that's -3, and if they destroy three bleeders, they'll reduce it to -2. The penalty never grows worse than -10.

Traits: Appearance (Horrific); Bad Smell; Callous; Combat Reflexes; Disturbing Voice; Divine Curse (Treat holy water as *Acid*, **Exploits**, p. 65); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink (see notes); Doesn't Sleep; Frightens Animals; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Infravision; No Blood; No Brain; No Vitals; Slippery (see notes); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Mortal Blood); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Heals only by bleeding victims); Unliving.

Skills: Brawling-15.

Class: Demon/Undead.

Notes: Blood streams visibly (through air, water, etc.) from the bleeder's victims to it, and the monster grows increasingly blood-slicked, temporarily gaining one level of Slippery per person it's bleeding. Those a bleeder kills continue to lose 1 HP/second after death, until at $-10 \times \text{HP}$ they crumble to dust and cannot be resurrected. Doesn't consume food or water, but each day without a bloodbath costs it 3 HP, and should it "die" from this (roll vs. HT at $-1 \times \text{HP}$, $-2 \times \text{HP}$, etc.; death is inevitable at $-5 \times \text{HP}$, or after a month of privation) – or in any other way – its spirit returns to Hell. Against skills, spells, Holy abilities, and artifacts, treat a bleeder as "demon" or "undead," whichever works in its favor; a holy warrior uses the lower bonus of Higher Purpose (Slay Demons) and (Slay Undead), adventurers seeking weaknesses use the lower of Hidden Lore (Demons) and (Undead), and so on. A bleeder will negotiate *if* the deal includes bleeding at least one mortal to death, though it doesn't care if that individual is good or evil (it's possible to feed it the cultists who created it, which is still an evil act). Truly evil.

Bleeder Adventure Seeds

These Aren't The Zombies You're Looking For. The typical non-delver knows little about monsters, and bleeders are tricky even for knowledgeable adventurers. "Eliminate this zombie horde" is a common quest near civilization, as settlements have to bury their dead, and curses and necromancers like to drag the bodies out of the ground again (the Final Rest spell, at 20 energy, isn't cast as often as it should be, and not every religion accepts cremation). You can see where this is going . . . The heroes accept the "simple" job of destroying zombies and end up battling bleeders, along with the cultists – or the *demon* – that created them.

Bloody Hell. Some crazed demonologist has developed a new-and-improved ritual for creating bleeders. The resulting monsters behave like the standard ones, except they can gain HP even if unwounded, raising HP above their starting score of 15 (still at the usual rate). If such a bleeder attains the HP of the powerful demon inhabiting the corpse – an as-Sharak (HP 18), a demon of old or peshkali (HP 20), or even a bayanganaga (HP 35) – that demon manifests in its natural form! For an added twist, have the heroes witness sacrifice victims or even *willing* devil-worshippers being bled for this purpose. They'll never look at bleeders the same way again.



BONE GOLEM

The bone golem – like the corpse golem (*Monsters*, pp. 18-19) – is a construct made from body parts, and thus bears a disquieting resemblance to the undead. The prototype was created not as a guardian, but as straight-up a terror weapon. Its deranged wizardly inventor harvested bones from an assortment of sapient beings, painstakingly carved and fit these together, and then developed entirely new enchantments to animate the resulting assemblage. She kept disturbingly detailed notes, which later mad magicians found and “improved” on.

For most practical purposes, this monster is an oversized (8’ to 9’ tall) skeleton with a scorpion-style stinger for injecting potions – and parrying blows. It is exceptionally long of limb,



which grants it great reach and striking power, and allows it to run distressingly fast. It’s also *vicious*; when it finally overtakes its fleeing victim, it stings and kicks them until they’re dead. Its “eyeballs” are really carved bone spheres, magicked to let it detect the heat emanated by living prey. And although doughty delvers are unlikely to care, its deformed, unnatural appearance is *calculated* to be intimidating.

Beyond that, it’s a fairly straightforward opponent. While it’s large and can absorb a few solid blows before going down – as well as Homogeneous, making impaling attacks less effective and meaning blows to the skull and vitals have no special effect – it’s no tougher than anything else made of bone. Notably, it has only DR 2, is Brittle, and takes double injury from crushing blows. It’s also Unnatural, falling to fragments at -1xHP.

The catch is that adventurers almost never face *one* bone golem. These constructs are the favored minions of necromancers, who like to cheat death (by stealing youth from the innocent . . . or becoming liches) and keep piles of corpses sitting around. Such a surfeit of time and raw materials ensures that anyone who has mastered the art of bone golem-making has a whole platoon of the things. It’s rare for all the golems in a horde to inject the same potion; typically, some have concoctions that make their victims less able to resist other potions or easier for the whole pack to chase down. There are also rumors of potions so unstable that they must be stored as multiple components; if someone were stung by several bone golems with these ingredients, all but the final injection might do nothing, but *that* attack could cause a fatal internal reaction (anything from 6d to 6d×3 HP of injury).

ST: 17	HP: 24	Speed: 8.00
DX: 14	Will: 8	Move: 9
IQ: 8	Per: 8	
HT: 12	FP: N/A	SM: +1
Dodge: 12	Parry: 12	DR: 2

Bite (16): 2d cutting. Reach C.

Claw (16): 2d+1 cutting. Reach C-2.

Kick (14): 2d+2 impaling. Reach C-2.

Sting (16): 2d+3 impaling + follow-up potion (see box). Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry. Reach C-2.

Traits: Automaton; Bloodlust (12); Brittle; Cannot Float; Cannot Learn; Combat Reflexes; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Infravision; Mute; No Blood; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Pressure Support; Reprogrammable; Single-Minded; Striking ST 2; Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Unnatural; Vulnerability (Crushing ×2).

Skills: Brawling-16; Climbing-14; Intimidation-14; Stealth-14.

Class: Construct.

Notes: Roll Hidden Lore (Undead) or Thaumatology at -5 to realize that a bone golem is a construct, not a weird skeleton variant; see *Recognition (Monsters)*, p. 4). Total skull DR is 2; don't add an extra DR 2 as on p. 54 of *Exploits*. Sting constantly produces a single variety of noxious potion (see box). When the golem is defeated, an Alchemy roll – at -1 per minute after death – gathers a number of doses of this potion (which work normally without being injected) equal to the margin of success. No golem will negotiate or reveal useful information.

Bone Golem Adventure Seeds

Run Away! Run Away! This quest starts as so many seem to, with a monster-besieged settlement offering a reward to heroes. The locals claim to be plagued by undead raised by a necromancer, who of course has a creepy castle or haunted house suspiciously close to town yet distant enough that getting there means crossing undead-infested moors. The villagers have a militia (pitchforks and torches!), but as they lack the resources to defeat an evil wizard, they want the delvers to lead them. If the PCs accept, they'll head a good-sized company – and in the first battle, against a large force of skeletons, their "troops" will acquit themselves well. In the *second* battle, against bone golems, the townies will take one look and flee, leaving the adventurers outnumbered against the constructs. After that, anybody who has Hidden Lore (Undead) or Thaumatology can return to town and roll against skill to explain that the second wave of foes were difficult-to-replace golems, so there won't be more and the necromancer will have to be less brazen. Although that's mostly just a ploy to win the reward, it's largely true – but facing the angry golem-maker is another adventure.

Raw Materials. Why should the heroes always *fight* constructs? Respected wizards in town occasionally have a legitimate need for totally loyal and utterly intimidating troops, and bone golems fit the bill. The delvers might be contracted to go forth into the world and drag back bones – not just any bones, but those of specific monsters. The GM should make a checklist of dangerous mundane creatures to slaughter,

A VARIETY OF NOXIOUS POTIONS

Bone golems are magical factories that secrete potions as "venom." *Standard* potions produce the effects on pp. 116-117 of *Adventurers* but only affect those injected (at least 1 HP of injury from the stinger), even if the potion is customarily inhaled or swallowed. Classic choices are:

Alkahest: Injected, this does *triple damage*, or 3d HP of injury. No roll to resist! If damage type matters, it's *corrosion*.

Death Potion: Victim takes 4d injury, or 2d with a HT roll.* Damage type, if important, is *toxic*.

Liquid Ice: Injected, this does the usual 2d HP of injury. No roll to resist! Should damage type be relevant, it's *burning*.

Magebane: Victim cannot cast wizardly spells for one hour.†

Sleep Potion: Victim must make a HT-4 roll* or sleep for (16 - HT) hours.

Weakness Potion: Each injection gives -3 ST (up to -12), for 1d minutes.†

* Health roll get a bonus from Magic Resistance, *not* Resistant to Poison.

† Victims with Magic Resistance (only!) get a HT + MR roll to be unaffected.

Strange Brews Never Before Encountered

Yet bone golems being the creations of mad wizards, anything is possible! To invent new potions, start with *any* unpleasant spell and use the closest example above, possibly reducing or limiting its effects if it's excessively powerful. Some examples:

Agonize: Victim must make a HT-4 roll* or be incapacitated with agony (*Exploits*, p. 66) for 1d minutes.

Burning Touch: Does 2d HP of injury. No roll to resist! Should damage type matter, it's *burning*.

Clumsiness: Each injection gives -3 DX (up to -12), for 1d minutes.†

Flesh to Stone: Victim must make a HT roll* or suffer petrification (*Exploits*, p. 66). *Gear* is unaffected.

Frailty: Each injection gives -1 HT (up to -5), for 1d minutes.†

Hinder: Each injection gives -1 Move and Dodge (up to -4), for 1d minutes.†

Retch: Victim must make a HT-4 roll* or retch for (25 - HT) seconds; see *Exploits*, p. 66.

Strike Blind: Victim must make a HT-4 roll* or be blind (*Adventurers*, p. 57) for 1d minutes.

Total Paralysis: Victim must make a HT-4 roll* or suffer paralysis (*Exploits*, p. 66) for 1d minutes.

Weaken Will: Each injection gives -1 Will (up to -5), for 1d minutes.†

* Gets a bonus from Magic Resistance.

† Victims with Magic Resistance resist with HT + MR.

each yielding an arbitrary weight of materials; all the adventurers have to do is find suitable beings, kill them, and lug the remains back to town for a reward. Total weight is around a ton per golem, which could get heavy if somebody is building an army.

CHIMERA



A chimera is a hybrid beast with an oversized lion's body and head, *at least* one other front-facing head (most often two), a serpent for a tail (ending in yet *another* head), and a ferocious temper. Most examples sport wings, which may be leathery like a dragon's or – for chimeras that possess a *bird's* head – feathery like an eagle's. Regardless of the combination of heads and wings, a chimera always breathes fire from its lion's head.

A chimera's numerous heads grant it extra control over its many body parts; it has a number of attacks equal to its total head count. The lion's head can bite, breathe fire, *or* initiate a (fore- or hind-) claw attack; other forward-facing heads can bite, gore with any horns they possess, *or* use the claws; and the serpent's head can bite *or* control the hind claws. No body part can attack more than once; e.g., if the lion's head makes a fore-claw attack, the other heads can only bite, butt, *or* use the hind claws. Horned heads can also parry as if they were weapons.

Although a winged chimera can fly, and exploit *Combat at Different Levels* (**Exploits**, p. 47) to get +2 to defend vs. melee attacks and give ground-bound victims -2 to defend, its anatomy makes it an ungainly aerial combatant: All of its attacks have -2 to hit while airborne, and it *cannot* swoop down for extra damage like a gryphon (**Monsters**, p. 35) can. Whenever possible, it prefers to land and fight on the ground, taking to the air only if sorely wounded.

The chimera below is the most common variant, with three front-facing heads – lion, goat, dragon – plus a giant viper for a tail, and leathery dragon's wings.

ST: 23	HP: 23	Speed: 6.50
DX: 14	Will: 13	Move: 10 (Air Move 13)
IQ: 5	Per: 12	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +1
Dodge: 10	Parry: 12 (x2)	DR: 2

Dragon's Head (16): Bite *or* horns, 2d+2 cutting. Horns count as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Fire Breath (16): 2d+1 burning in a 1-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone that inflicts large-area injury (**Exploits**, p. 53); see *Area and Spreading Attacks* (**Exploits**, pp. 45-46). Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day.

Front Claw (16): 2d+2 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Goat's Head (16): Horns, 2d+2 impaling. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Hind Claw (14): 2d+3 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Lion's Head (16): Bite, 2d+2 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Serpent's Head (16): Bite (at only ST 18), 1d+2 impaling + follow-up 2d toxic, *or* 1d with a successful HT roll. Reach C, 1.

Traits: 360° Vision; Bad Temper (9); Combat Reflexes; DR 2 vs. heat/fire only; Extra Attack 3; Extra-Flexible; Extra Heads 3; Flight (Winged); Night Vision 5; Penetrating Voice; Quadruped; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Heat); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-16.

Class: Hybrid.

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

Chimeras can vary considerably, with many and varied body parts.

Different Faces, Different Races

All chimeras have a lion's head up front and a serpent for a tail – *those* parts never vary. But the dragon and goat's heads are occasionally replaced by other things. Examples include:

Bull: Replaces the goat's head, and butts and parries in much the same way. Stronger and tougher, with ST 25 (making goring damage 2d+3 impaling) and an *extra* DR 2. On the downside, a chimera with such a head has Berserk (12).

Eagle: Like a gryphon's head, replacing the dragon's head. Attacks using its beak for 2d+2 large piercing damage at reach C, 1. Grants Acute Vision 3, gives the chimera birdlike wings, and eliminates the -2 to airborne attacks (swooping still isn't possible – the monster is too ungainly).

Human: Replaces the goat or dragon's head. Has a useless bite (a mere 1d-2 crushing), but the head still increases the *number* of attacks, and can control the claws. The chimera loses Wild Animal, gains IQ 9-14, may learn IQ-based skills similar to those of dragons (*Monsters*, pp. 21-23), and might even have Magery 1-3 and wizardly spells. If it casts spells, add Compartmentalized Mind 1 to let it do

so while fighting. Unaffected by Animal spells – use Mind Control Magic.

Weirder! Anything is possible. Damage is typically 2d+2; type follows from the creature in question. Special abilities or flaws are mental (tied to the brain inside the head) or related to the head's physical structure (most often a thicker skull or keener senses).

Head Count

A rare few unfortunate chimeras have only *two* heads in front: that of a lion plus that of a bull, dragon, eagle, goat, or human. Lower Extra Attack and Extra Heads levels from 3 to 2.

Even fewer have four or five heads in front! For every Extra Head after the third, add +1 to ST (+2 to ST gives +1 to damage, including fire-breath damage), +1 to HP, and another Extra Attack. There's no specific pattern, but many such chimeras boast exotic heads.

Wingless Wonders

Not all chimeras possess wings – those in ancient depictions lack wings, and breathe fire from a goat's head on their *back*, where the wings would go. For a chimera like this, remove Flight (Winged) and Air Move 13. Since they have no need to fly, they can be bulkier, with *at least* +2 to ST (giving +1 to damage, including fire-breath damage) and +2 to HP.

Notes: Can attack *four times* but can use each natural weapon just once. Per Extra Heads, stunning or knocking out a head affects just that head, not the whole creature; reduce the number of attacks by one for each head currently stunned or unconscious. Dragon and goat heads can parry with their horns independently of one another, like someone with two ready melee weapons. Dragon and serpent heads have Nictitating Membrane 2 to protect their eyes. 360° Vision and Extra-Flexible allow the chimera to attack and defend in any direction without penalty – it has no blind angles!

Chimera Adventure Seeds

One Plus One Plus One Is . . . Four? The heroes receive a classic quest: The Wizards' Guild needs organs harvested from a magical beast, a village wants a man-eating monster slain, or a cloaked stranger tells of fantastic treasure guarded by a fiend. Their target is a creature with lion, goat, and dragon's heads – a chimera. When the adventurers locate it, though, they see their quarry also has a *human* head, and there are no heaps of remains or plunder to suggest it eats people or loots villages. Unless the delvers attack immediately, it will prove intelligent (IQ 14) and civilized (no Bad Temper or Wild

Animal), and try to parley, offering a counter-quest such as informing the world that the Wizards' Guild murdered somebody and used their severed head to create it, hunting the real monster terrorizing the village, or kidnapping the cloaked stranger, who's another monster that used to work with the chimera but then fled with their loot and started sending bounty-hunters after its former ally. The chimera promises to reveal where the *real* bad guy hid the valuables if they succeed.

Not A Chimera; The Chimera! The Chimera of Greek mythology lacked wings and breathed fire from a goat's head on her back; see *Wingless Wonders* (above). She seemed to be about as intelligent as the average human (IQ 10) but thoroughly uncivilized – keep Wild Animal, and consider Bad Temper (6) and/or Intolerance (Civilization) – and was widely considered “invincible.” She was defeated only by the greatest monster-slayer of her age (Bellerophon, who in some versions of the story was the son of a god and in any case powerful enough to aspire to godhood), with the aid of a flying horse (Pegasus) and a dirty trick. Powerful delvers on quests of mythological importance may encounter her without knowing she's *that* Chimera. There are many ways to simulate “invincible,” but Injury Reduction 2-3 (against *all* damage!) and Supernatural Durability permitting death only by suffocation should do the trick.

DEEP BEYONDER

The “deep” in this horror’s name stems from a mistaken belief on the part of ancient sages, who theorized that it made its home beneath the ocean. It doesn’t – although the error is easy to understand in light of the entity’s physical appearance. The “beyond” part, however, is completely appropriate for a Thing From Beyond Time And Space.

Deep beyonders, like spheres of madness (*Monsters*, pp. 51-52), share a disturbingly large number of features with mundane sea creatures. In their case, this means a bulky, slimy fish-like body with a faceful of writhing limbs – four large, powerful ones plus a variable number of small, useless ones – that could be described as falling somewhere between squid tentacles and shrimp antennae. Also like spheres, beyonders move using levitation the laws of neither Nature nor magic can explain.

But where spheres of madness are more brawn than brain, deep beyonders are closer to *another* being that wears

the features of ocean denizens (starfish and octopuses) – the mindwarper (*Monsters*, pp. 41-42) – in being inhumanly intelligent and intelligently inhuman. They, too, possess potent psychic abilities, emanated from their well-protected eyes: Each unnaturally red orb can project an attack similar to that of the eye of death (*Monsters*, pp. 26-27), but shorter-ranged. Alternatively, the Thing can fix the gaze of all three eyes on one victim, causing a Fright Check (*Exploits*, pp. 10-11) at -5; while this affects just that person, it can be used *repeatedly*, unlike standard Terror. Lastly, against opponents with IQ 1+, it can detect the mind, making concealment and stealth fruitless.

Which isn’t to say deep beyonders are physically unimposing. They’re huge (over 20’ long and three tons in weight) and *strong*, capable of using their four larger tentacles to pummel or crush victims. They can also parry with these tentacles. And while they aren’t especially fast, they can “fly” at Move 6 through air, water, other dimensions, voids *between* dimensions, or anything else that isn’t solid matter. The deep beyonder *can* use this last ability to journey between planes of existence, but this requires 10 seconds (10 successive Concentrate maneuvers), which it’s unlikely to get when embattled.

ST: 37	HP: 37	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 18	Move: 6 (All)
IQ: 16	Per: 16	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +3
Dodge: 9	Parry: 10 (x4)	DR: 6

Psychic Blast (Resisted by HT-5): If it fixes one of its three eyes on a *living* opponent, that person must make a HT roll at -5 or suffer 1d toxic damage. This attack ignores *all* DR! Range 10.

Tentacle Grapple (14): Effective ST for grappling is 39 due to Wrestling skill. May use up to four tentacles, gaining +2 to skill *and* ST per limb committed after the first two! Usually followed by Constriction Attack, which counts as an attack. Reach C-2.

Tentacle Strike (14): 4d+3 crushing (x4). Treat as weapons, not as body parts, both to attack and parry! Reach C-2.

Terror Gaze (Fright Check at -5): Requires fixing all three eyes on one target. Range 10.

Traits: Aerial; Amphibious; Constriction Attack; Detect (Minds); Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Extra-Flexible; Extra Arms 2; Extra Attack 3; Flight; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Magic Resistance 6; Nictitating Membrane 12; No Blood; No Neck; No Vitals; Pressure Support; Slippery 5; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Unfazeable.

MANY IQ-BASED SKILLS

Deep beyonders are *smart*, and won’t simply charge into battle. They’ll hover to avoid melee – or at tentacle distance (reach 2), if their foes have only reach 1 weapons – knowing that missile fire is likely to be directed at their DR 12 eyes (at least at first), and that hostile magic will be penalized for range and Magic Resistance, and at quadruple energy cost due to SM.

Still, they have mediocre active defenses and DR, which means they won’t last long against powerful parties. Their survival depends on immobilizing foes *quickly* with high-ST grapples and the terror gaze. Or on using their *brain*.

The GM should tailor a deep beyonder encounter to the group and adventure, but generally, a given Thing has skills at 14-18 in three categories:

Deal-Making: Some or all of Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, and Intimidation, to use for *Influencing PCs?* (*Exploits*, p. 10). And some sort of Hidden Lore – possibly an obscure one PCs can’t have – so it has knowledge to trade.

Smart Fighting: Tactics to start battle at an advantage (*Adventurers*, p. 91) and Thaumatology to know the limitations of enemy magic. Strategy is likely, and absolutely *can* be used to predict the delvers’ plans using the rules on p. 57 of *Exploits*. Deep beyonders with cults usually know Leadership for commanding their minions.

Sneakiness: Camouflage, Poisons, Traps ... the list goes on. Delvers who encounter a deep beyonder will be *expected* – both because it can sense minds and because it wouldn’t enter their dimension if it didn’t have *plans*. A few nasty surprises waiting are standard, in case the heroes don’t accept the deal.

Skills: Brawling-14; Stealth-14; Wrestling-14; *many* IQ-based skills at 14-18.

Class: Elder Thing.

Notes: Can attack *four times* per turn but can't use most of its attacks four times – it can make at most four tentacle strikes (fewer, when using tentacles to grapple), three psychic blasts (none, if making a terror gaze), two tentacle grapples, two Constriction Attacks (one per grappled victim), and one terror gaze. Can parry using any tentacle not used to grapple. Detect works as well in combat as sight would for someone with a Vision roll of 16, and is unaffected by darkness, invisibility, smoke, etc. Psychic blast, terror gaze, Detect, and Flight are “psionic” abilities, unaffected by any kind of magic. Deep beyonders are scheming, rarely appearing unless they want to make deals with adventurers to strike at enemies or attract cultists. Truly evil.

Deep Beyonder Adventure Seeds

The Cult. The smarter kinds of Elder Things seem obsessed with being worshiped by cults. As noted for mindwarper, *some* of these “faithful” are made into slaves who suffer from Automaton and Reprogrammable, using processes too slow for combat (assume a deep beyonder or mindwarper can “zombify” a helpless prisoner in an hour by *winning* a Quick Contest of Will) – but not all! Why? Because these abominations serve even scarier entities who can accumulate the power to manifest and wreak havoc, perverting nations and perhaps worlds and universes, only by being worshiped *freely*. A beyonder boss might be the least of the heroes’ worries on an adventure, as they face hordes of mindless victims, armies of armed fanatics, high priests slinging spells similar to those suggested for Demons from *Between the Stars* (*Monsters*, p. 20), and curses (*Exploits*, pp. 23-24) that ordinary skills and magic find difficult or impossible to dispel. Delves will have to decide how many enslaved but essentially innocent people they’re willing to kill to solve the problem.

At Least It Isn't The Devil. Someone tasks the heroes with an unenviable quest to exterminate an Elder Thing



menace: a serious plague of Demons from *Between the Stars*, eyes of death, or spheres of madness, or even a mindwarper or deep beyonder with a large cult. All hints point to it being too tough for the group – a reality the GM can drive home by making the opening exchange lopsided and unfair, which might require little effort if the PCs really *aren't* ready for the monsters or the players use sloppy tactics. Having serious monsters like dragons turn up dead sends a message, too. Enter a deep beyonder with a deal: It will show the party a weakness or back door, give them a one-shot secret weapon, perhaps help them fight . . . *if* they do it a favor first, presented in a “I’m a huge, floating fish-monster and can’t visit town, but you could handle this in five minutes” kind of way. Of course there’s nothing innocent about it; the boring item is a horrific artifact, the innocuous message sets dreadful plans in motion, the bad person who “deserves” assassination isn’t and doesn’t. What’s the lesser evil?

FLY-DRAGON

Everybody knows what a dragonfly is. Like that insect, a fly-dragon has two pairs of wings and an iridescent coloration . . . and that's where the similarities end. It's *much* larger, ranging from falcon- to housecat-sized. It has grasping forelimbs not unlike those of a mantid. Most notably, it has the tail, clawed hindlimbs, and fanged head of a dragon in miniature.

Beyond the resemblance of certain body parts to those of beasts, little about the fly-dragon is mundane – it's an enchanted creature of Faerie. Its extensive magical abilities include impossibly good luck, a scintillating aura that makes targeting it in flight tricky, a mind-altering venom that works like a magic potion with unpredictable effects, spells that vary seemingly at random from one fly-dragon to the next, and resistance to magic *despite* all this. Like many faeries, it requires mana not only for its powers but also to survive.

The fly-dragon is also uncannily nimble, with a phenomenally accurate bite (mostly ignorable, aside from the venom), a knack for evasive flying, and a gift for theft. It *loves* to snatch things! If it manages to grab something, it buzzes off at Move 13 next turn. At the start of the turn after that, make a self-control roll for Kleptomaniac; on any success, it breaks off the encounter and continues to fly off with its booty, while on any failure, it drops its prize someplace inconvenient for its mark (e.g., up a tree) and returns to steal more.

Fly-dragon encounters always start with the monster casting a harassing spell to make thieving easier. If this prevents the subject from attempting a potentially harmful weapon parry – e.g., Invisibility to ensure a surprise attack, or Tickle to send the target into fits – the critter may bite for the fun of it. It won't take undue risks, though; its goal is to steal, and after at most one bite, it starts grabbing items.

As far as anybody can tell, fly-dragons are motivated by curiosity and a love of shiny things. It's hard to be sure because they cannot speak, only hiss and trill. They're smarter than animals and require Mind Control spells to influence, which is complicated by their Magic Resistance. They can *understand* speech if the speaker has Spirit Empathy (if not, they just look confused), and may respond to pleas to trade one thing for another – or to credible threats.

ST: 3	HP: 3	Speed: 6.50
DX: 14	Will: 12	Move: 2 (Air Move 13)
IQ: 9	Per: 12	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: -4 or -3
Dodge: 12	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

Bite (18): 1 point cutting + venom (below). Attacks target's *exposed* body parts: hand (-4) if not wearing gloves, face (-5) if without full-face protection, etc. Reach C.

Snatch (12): Uses mantis limbs to seize a piece of its target's gear that isn't currently in hand and weighs at most 1.8 lbs.: hat, knife, light purse, lockpicks, piece of jewelry, potion, scroll, etc. This is a Deceptive Attack at -6 to hit, giving -3 to defend. The only legal defense is a dodge; the victim can retreat for the usual bonus, but a shield's Defense Bonus provides no benefit. Reach C.

Venom (Resisted by Will-4): Affects those injured by the bite. Resistant/Immunity to Poison give no benefit; Magic Resistance adds to the resistance roll. On a failure, roll 1d and apply the resulting effect from *Incapacitating Conditions* (*Exploits*, p. 66) for one minute: 1-2, ecstasy; 3-4, hallucinating; 5-6, sleep.

DARK FAERIE

As presented, fly-dragons are minor monsters meant to make life "interesting" for the heroes. While one might *incidentally* endanger delvers by casting a spell on them while they're fighting a major foe, or by stealing something important to their mission, its goal isn't to cause harm. It's simply being curious in a hard-to-understand faerie way.

Yet traditional faeries aren't always nice, or even *good* – some are sinister, if not Evil. And perhaps some fly-dragons are, too! For these, replace Curious and Kleptomaniac with Intolerance (Mundane beings) and Trickster (9). Now instead of stealing things from anybody and everybody, it tries to pull stunts that lead to the demise of any being that isn't noted as being a "magical creature."

To make these dark fly-dragons even creepier, change their magical powers, *too*. Their Bedazzlement might take the form of being *painful* to look at (a special effect,

but appearances are everything). Their venom may cause agony instead of ecstasy, a terrifying version of hallucinating (failed Will rolls count as failed Fright Checks), and coma (typically one ended by some unusual action, such as being kissed by the right person) instead of sleep. Their spells could be sinister, in the vein of Blackout, Darkness, Death Vision, Debility, Fear, Frailty, Nauseate, Panic, Retch, Shatter, Sickness, Strike Blind, Strike Deaf, Strike Dumb, and Terror.

Worst of all, dark fly-dragons *are* opportunistically evil. They'll wait until good guys are fighting a horrible monster and *then* cast a spell that puts them at a disadvantage. They'll bite heroes who are knocked down and already in a bad way, using their venom to make things worse. And they'll do things like snatch the cleric's holy symbol in a battle against a zombie horde, or steal alchemist's fire and drop it on its owner's head.

Traits: Acute Vision 3; Bedazzlement (see notes); Curious (9); Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Enhanced Dodge 3; Flight (Winged); Improved Magic Resistance 3; Indomitable; Kleptomania (9); Luck; Mute; Night Vision 5; No Fine Manipulators; Peripheral Vision; Spider Climb (Move 2).

Skills: Acrobatics-14; Body Sense-14; Brawling-18; Pick-pocket-18; Stealth-14; and any three spells for *harassing* or *avoiding* people at skill 15, favorites being Apportation, Blink, Drunkenness, Foolishness, Grease, Hide, Invisibility, Mystic Mist, Perfect Illusion, Pollen Cloud, Round-about, Silence, Tangle Growth, Tanglefoot, and Tickle.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: Bedazzlement works like maximum-strength Blur (*Spells*, p. 46), giving -5 to hit – cumulative with SM – due to glare, prismatic distortions, and distracting sparkles, but only when the creature is flying, not walking or clinging to a surface. Enhanced Dodge also works only in flight; Dodge is 9 on the ground. Innate spells require no prerequisites; treat as if wizardly (even ones that usually aren't) and cast by someone with Magery 3. Despite a fly-dragon's resemblance to a beast, Animal spells *won't* work – use Mind Control magic. Will negotiate after a fashion, though Indomitable limits Influence rolls to people with Spirit Empathy.

Fly-Dragon Adventure Seeds

Playing All Sides. The heroes are locked in combat with a serious opponent when, a few turns into the battle, a fly-dragon shows up. It's equally cautious of the delvers and whatever they're fighting, but it can't resist . . . It steals a choice piece of treasure from the enemy's hoard, then a key item of the adventurers' (e.g., a shiny silver dagger while they're battling werewolves), and so on, disappearing with each prize. The GM should try not to upset the balance of the fight – if it casts noxious spells or uses venom, it ought to do so to both sides (or at random!). Afterward, the PCs have a new side-quest: Locate the stolen goods. This can be especially pressing if one of the missing objects is whatever they were questing to recover, and particularly annoying if they or their main

opponent *killed* the fly-dragon, eliminating any odds of trading with it.

Endangered Species. Fly-dragon venom seems like an ideal ingredient for a variety of potions – and indeed, alchemists in town are offering a good price (\$100 or more) per set of venom glands. Of course, obtaining these involves slaughtering an intelligent and not inherently evil creature. Druids and elves tend to err on the side of treating faeries as part of nature, and then there's the risk of killing the pet or familiar of a powerful faerie being . . . Needless to say, a bog-standard ingredient-gathering quest can quickly embroil the adventurers in a secret war, with the Alchemists' or Wizards' Guild on one side and an order of druids, or even elven or faerie nobility, on the other.



FORGELING

In time long passed into legend, a dwarf clan grew so proud of their metalcraft that they became convinced they could enchant weapons through artistry rather than spells. They would require magical forges, however, and while they knew better than to bind demons – hellfire is fantastic for smithing, but the results are cursed as well as magical – they believed they could easily command dimwitted fire elementals. Besides, who’s ever heard of elementals stealing souls?

Elementals *don’t* steal souls, but their godlike rulers deem binding their subjects to forges a personal affront, and see poetic justice in giving the spirits they rule the power to possess those who would possess them. In this way, a hubristic dwarf clan was cursed by an elemental lord. An outbreak of spontaneous dwarven combustion ensued.



But dwarves have gods, too – one of whom took exception to his worshipers’ punishment. Thus, an elemental godling and the divine patron of dwarven smiths fell to bickering. The ensuing theomachy wasn’t pleasant for the fire elementals, who became isolated from their home dimension, *or* the dwarves, who suffered through hot times and cold forges.

The conflict was eventually settled, but not everything was restored to *status quo ante bellum*. While *bound* fire elementals and *possessed* dwarves were freed, the offspring of fire-elemental-possessed dwarves, warped by divine whim, were forgotten. Which brings us to the present.

Forgelings are abominations of flesh and fire – dwarven bodies with elemental spirits as souls – and they’re *bitter*. Their dwarven part craves meat and ale, but must subsist on minerals, like lowly rock mites. Their elemental part is frustrated at being fully corporeal and unable to burn as hot as they would like.

Both halves agree on one thing: *Spellcasters must die!* Clerics treat with gods, which is who abandoned them to their fate. Druids routinely attack forgelings, fearful they’ll set Nature ablaze (actually, they would). And wizards, lured by enchanted items and beings, regularly loot ancestral artifacts and lore – and some try to replicate the hell forgelings have endured for millennia.

Fortunately for delvers facing them, forgelings have lost the bright spark of dwarven ingenuity. Elemental spirits aren’t clever, so exceptional traps and weapons are unlikely. Unfortunately for adventurers, the bright spark of setting people aflame burns intensely.

ST: 11	HP: 11	Speed: 6.75
DX: 12	Will: 11	Move: 5
IQ: 9	Per: 9	
HT: 11	FP: 14	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 11	DR: 2

Alchemist’s Fire (14): See *Adventurers*, p. 115. Ranged, with Acc 0, Max 26, Bulk -2.

Flaming Hair: 1d-1 burning to anyone touching or attacking the *head* (skull, eyes, face). *Can* destroy wooden weapons (*Damage to Objects*, **Exploits**, pp. 55-56), though this risk should be obvious beforehand. Casts light equivalent to a campfire, eliminating darkness penalties in a three-yard radius but preventing Stealth vs. Vision.

Kick (12): 1d crushing + follow-up 2 points burning. Reach C, 1.

Long Axe (16): 1d+4 cutting + follow-up 2 points burning. An *ordinary* weapon that grows red-hot in the forgeling’s hands. Reach 1, 2*.

Punch (14): 1d-1 crushing + follow-up 2 points burning. Reach C.

Throwing Axe (16): 1d+3 cutting. Ranged, with Acc 2, 1/2D 11, Max 16, Bulk -3.

Traits: Appearance (Hideous); Bad Temper (12); DR 25 vs. heat/fire only; Higher Purpose 2 (Slay spellcasters); Intolerance (Spellcasters); Lifting ST 2; No Blood; Pickaxe Pendant 2; Pyromania (9); Resistant to Disease 6; Resistant to Poison 6; Stubbornness (12); Temperature Tolerance 10 (Heat); Weakness (1 HP if *immersed* in water, repeating every minute).

Skills: Brawling-14; Forced Entry-14; Throwing-14; Thrown Weapon (Axe/Mace)-16; Two-Handed Axe/Mace-16.

Class: Elemental/Mundane.

Notes: Have a long axe, two throwing axes, and one vial of alchemist's fire; lack armor (leather and cloth burn, while forgelings have lost the secret of metal armor) and carry no shield (for similar reasons). Higher Purpose gives +2 on *all* dice rolls when opposing spellcasters of any kind, including those not using magic – but only against the casters, not their non-casting allies. Free-willed and living (with vital areas but no blood), and cannot be banished . . . but count as magical, and are affected by other magic that normally affects elementals. Stats describe *warriors*; noncombatants have ST and DX of 10-11, and lower combat skills, while forgeling heroes have attributes, advantages, and combat skills comparable to barbarians or knights, and often possess what's left of their kind's best weapons, metal armor, and metal shields. There are no forgeling spellcasters! Forgelings will parley – they're not implacably evil – but attempts have an extra -10 if a spellcaster would benefit.

Forgeling Adventure Seeds

Hot Deals. The dwarven Greed disadvantage has faded in forgelings, but they still like gold and sometimes sell their apparently endless supply of alchemist's fire when they crave coin; some also trade in dwarven gear. Delvers deep underground, far from town, might encounter such a forgeling market. Honest heroes may shop there – but with no guilds, Town Watch, or King's Men around, the less-scrupulous sort might decide to *take* what they want. The question is whether they can defeat five to 10 times their number in forgelings who have potion belts stuffed with flaming goo (to which they're effectively immune). The forgelings may cast the first stone if the party has spellcasters! However things go, forgelings might turn up later, seeking what was stolen or even what was *bought*.

You Have My Axe! No, Really, That's Mine! Delvers often quest for fabled items with long, bloody histories . . . and forgelings just happen to have a lengthy, tumultuous past rooted in an unhealthy fixation on producing magical artifacts. Anything their ancestors forged is part of the racial baggage of willful, foul-tempered beings who want to see the world burn. Any well-made dwarven weapon – especially if enchanted, particularly with Fire magic – could be a forgeling relic. Adventurers who acquire such a thing may be in for unscheduled adventures when a dogged band of forgeling heroes enters the dungeon by a back route (they *are* expert miners, after all) to play a three-sided game of death with the PCs and the native monsters.

FORGELING HEROES?

The GM may allow forgeling PCs. For the sake of party harmony, these lack Intolerance (Spellcasters) and consequently Higher Purpose (Slay spellcasters). They still cannot *be* casters! Racial cost is high (100 points), so assume they're "barbarians" or "knights," but instead of using professional templates, forgelings spend their last 150 points – plus points from personal disadvantages (up to 50 points) and quirks (up to 5 points) – on ST, DX, HT, HP, and their profession's advantages and skills.

Forgeling

Racial Cost: 100 points

Attribute Modifiers: IQ-1 [-20]; HT+1 [10].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Will+2 [10]; FP+3 [9]; Basic Speed+1.00 [20]; Basic Move-1 [-5].

Advantages: DR 25 vs. heat/fire only [75]; Fiery [5]; Lifting ST 2 [6]; No Blood [5]; Pickaxe Pendant 1 [5]; Resistant to Disease 6 [6]; Resistant to Poison 6 [6]; Temperature Tolerance 10 (Heat) [10]; Tough Skin 2 [6].

Disadvantages: Appearance (Hideous) [-16]; Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Pyromania (9) [-7]; Stubbornness (12) [-5]; Weakness (1 HP/minute from immersion in water) [-10].

Features: Armor isn't interchangeable with human armor. Consumes minerals equal in cost and weight to rations; can't eat food. Cannot become casters. Considered magical – for good or for ill.

Special Forgeling Traits

Appearance (Hideous): -4 on reactions and -8 to Sex Appeal.

DR vs. Heat/Fire Only: Effective against ordinary flame, alchemist's fire, Fire spells, fiery monster attacks, etc.

Fiery: Gives illumination in a three-yard radius, means *metal* melee weapons in hand behave as if under the Flaming Weapon spell, and anything touching or touched by the *head* suffers 1d-1 burning damage – but forgelings cannot use gear made of cloth, leather, paper, wood, etc. (it's incinerated!).

Lifting ST, Temperature Tolerance, and Tough Skin: Identical to barbarian abilities of the same name; see *Adventurers*, p. 16.

No Blood: Identical to monster ability of the same name; see *Monsters*, p. 11.

Pickaxe Pendant: Identical to dwarf ability of the same name; see *Adventurers*, p. 44.

Weakness: Loses 1 HP per minute while immersed in water to chest height or above, or when soaked by a waterfall or anything similar.

GALDURNAUT

Wizards and sometimes other spellcasters (legend holds that a cleric created the first golem) are constantly building new and “better” constructs. The majority are animated by spirits, which tend to rampage out of control; as a result, most of these inventions are one-offs. The method remains in use, though, because enchantments that can deliver the necessary autonomy *without* spirit-binding demand far more energy; in the words of the archmage Sanjock, “At least 50 times as much, and for what – the illusion of safety?”

The galdurnaut is a classic example of a “rampaging out of control” outcome. It was designed on imperial commission as a war machine for battering down castle gates – and castles, for that matter. The prototype worked flawlessly, so the emperor ordered dozens more for his upcoming military campaign. What the emperor didn’t appreciate was that the constructs took years to build; he wanted the work done in a single winter. But as his pronouncements generally carried an implied “. . . or I’ll have you executed,” his court enchanters knew they had to deliver, and cut many corners to do so.

Anyone who knows anything about magic – especially magic involving enchantments or spirits, *particularly* magic involving both – is aware of the dangers of cutting corners. The emperor’s wizards had to bind demons to beat their deadline, and this was followed in a timely fashion by the “rampaging out of control” part. That’s why the story tells of “an emperor,” not a specific, named figure: His galdurnaut

squadron (nobody is sure how many, but *too* many) flattened him, his army, and much of his empire.

Nowadays, galdurnauts show up in all kinds of unexpected places – *especially* ruins. Nobody is sure whether these are the remnants of the emperor’s fortifications, those of his rivals, or those of the wizards who built the things. There have even been reports of galdurnauts underground, fallen through the floors of crumbling structures and roaming the adjoining dungeons.

A galdurnaut is easy to describe: a huge (15’ long, 9’ wide, 12’ high at the shoulder), all-metal bull that rages around smashing things. Its physical attacks are one-shot kills against all but the toughest, most heavily armored warriors. Worse, for defense against infantry, it was given the ability to exhale noxious gas. It attacks people on sight, goring by preference, stomping foes who try to stay out of reach, and breathing poison at targets too agile to land a hit on.

The galdurnaut cannot be stopped except by destroying it, which is challenging given that it has DR 17, HP 70. It’s also Homogeneous (*Exploits*, p. 55) – it has no brain or vitals, and its “eyes” and “neck” are merely sculpted decorations. Fortunately, it suffers from severe Battle Rage and almost always launches All-Out Attacks (Determined for +4 to hit against people, Strong for +8 damage against objects), so it won’t be defending. It’s also Unnatural and destroyed at -1×HP, slow, and can’t open its ornamental mouth, so it can’t chew people up.

GALDURNAUT 2.0

Wizards are always trying to reverse-engineer constructs (and anything else magical). It’s just possible that somebody could have a galdurnaut under control. It might *really* be controllable, or it could be temporarily stable. If this person is the adventurers’ enemy, that’s bad news.

A “stable” galdurnaut replaces Hidebound, Incurious, and No Sense of Humor with Automaton (effectively adding Slave Mentality). It also swaps its Battle Rage for Reprogrammable. As a result, it *won’t* attack on sight but only when its orders are to attack, and its master might be convinced to call it off.

On the other hand, it’s likely to have skills programmed into it. Most notably, if it has Brawling-12, it will hit more often *and* receive a +1 per die damage bonus, for an 8d+16 ram or 8d+9 stomp. Since it isn’t rampaging, it won’t make All-Out Attacks all the time; this means it has at least a chance of dodging, and if it has Brawling, it may also parry with its horns as if they were weapons (Parry 9).

It’s conceivable that a wizard with such a pet would *ride* it. If so, they’ll be out of range of reach 1 melee weapons. *Combat at Different Levels* (*Exploits*, p. 47) will let them defend at +2 and give enemies -2 to defend.

ST: 70	HP: 70	Speed: 6.00
DX: 10	Will: 8	Move: 3/7
IQ: 8	Per: 8	
HT: 14	FP: N/A	SM: +3
Dodge: 6	Parry: N/A	DR: 17

Poison Breath (12): Every target that breathes in a 2-yard radius directly in front of the head must roll vs. HT. Success means 1d injury; failure, 2d injury. For further details on area effects, see *Area and Spreading Attacks* (*Exploits*, pp. 45-46). Has a recharge time of two seconds, allowing use as often as every third turn.

Ram (10): 8d+8 crushing head butt *or* 8d+8 impaling horn gore. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-2.

Stomp (10): 8d+1 crushing. Reach C-3.

Traits: Battle Rage (6); Cannot Learn; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Enhanced Move (Ground); Hidebound; High Pain Threshold; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Incurious (6); Indomitable; No Blood; No Eyes; No Neck; No Sense of Humor; Pressure Support; Quadruped; Sealed; Single-Minded; Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Unnatural.

Skills: Forced Entry-12; Innate Attack (Breath)-12.

Class: Construct.

Notes: Against inanimate objects, like doors or walls delvers might hide behind, attacks do +2 per die with the Forced Entry bonus; thus, the ram does 8d+24, rising to 8d+32 if (as usual) it uses All-Out Attack (Strong). The latter can blast through one-, two-, or three-foot-thick dungeon walls in at most five, eight, or 11 seconds, respectively, or sunder an average door in one shot (two if iron). See *Exploits*, p. 82 for details. No golem will negotiate or reveal useful information – and *this* one is out of control, so it will keep coming, through whatever barriers might get in the way, and has no master to convince to stop it.

Galdurnaut Adventure Seeds

A Load Of Bull. The Wizards' Guild is a veritable goldmine of dangerous missions nobody sane should accept, but it's almost a literal goldmine, too, paying far better than most other quest-givers. This time the Guild wants a galdurnaut, ostensibly to study but more than likely to reverse-engineer. First, the adventurers need to find one (making this a good long-term goal). Then they have to defeat it with *crushing attacks only* – it's easy to hammer out dents, difficult to replace internal magical components that get chopped up, cooked, or dissolved in acid. Finally, they must drag it back to town for their reward; it's mostly hollow and "only" weighs 2.7

tons, but still. It might be worth it, though, for what the Guild is offering – GM's decision, but as this is a *dangerous, difficult* job, the payment should be lucrative, perhaps magic items.

No Exit. The treasure room that defies lockpicking and force, and requires the heroes to find some "plot token" (magical key, passphrase, or whatever), is a classic bit. A less-common ploy is the dungeon that seals the delvers in after they enter, requiring them to search for that token to escape. What if the only practical way through one or the other kind of gate were to have a galdurnaut batter it down? Someone would have to draw its ire while the others stay out of sight, and then stand, back to the portal, *dodging* its horns without the benefit of retreating. Assume each attack dodged strikes the barricade, which calls for a good number of whacks (*at least* 10). For extra fun, have the dungeon's vault *and* exit work this way, meaning that after the former is open, bull-dancer would have to "kite" the galdurnaut (charging at Move 7) to the latter for an encore. The delvers must take care not to destroy the monster before its work is done . . . and the nimble volunteer had better hope their allies are poised to strike at that moment, not distracted by the loot in the vault half a dungeon away.



GIANT

Giants are easy to describe: “Like humans, but *huge*.” The smallest stand five yards tall (SM +2); the largest, 15 yards tall (SM +5), a match for even colossal dragons. The majority aren’t supernaturally gifted (beyond scaled-up human proportions that disregard sensible biology), nor are they better or worse than humans in most areas: brains, martial skill, magic, etc. However, their size grants frightening strength, reach, and stride, so it’s never fun to fight them. Those oversized eyes, ears, and nostrils don’t miss much, either – stealth isn’t necessarily the easier option.

Due to their size, it’s a common error to assume giants are related to ogres or titans. They aren’t. Ogres are unbelievably *stupid* man-eaters who can interbreed with goblin-kin (and apparently enjoy doing so); giants are a distinct group of races who can be as intelligent and charming as dwarves, elves, humans, and so on, and only primitive and savage giant tribes eat people. Titans are magic-using demigods who dwarf the largest giants and rarely visit the material world. Such distinctions may seem academic to the average Joe.



Giants love to hurl boulders – especially in anger. Even *non-warriors* are proficient. Assume that a giant enters combat with one or two relatively light rocks in hand or a sack (to minimize encumbrance).

The GM should realize that giants rely on a mountain of HP and thicker-than-human skin for survival; an arrow to the eye will drop them, though most are too tall to *stab* there. Yet their attacks can shatter weapons – and the heroes holding them – in one shot. They’re “glass cannons.” To increase life expectancy, use intelligent tactics or decide that for whatever reason, *these* giants wear armor.

Rock Giant

So called not because they’re made of rock (their skin isn’t *that* thick) but because they’re big enough to walk on boulders much as lesser races clamber over pebbles – or maybe because they like to hurl rocks. Average height is 15’ (an SM 0 melee fighter needs a reach 3+ weapon to attack the head).

ST: 25	HP: 25	Speed: 6.25
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 8
IQ: 10	Per: 12	
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: +2
Dodge: 9	Parry: 10	DR: 2

Club (14): 5d+2 crushing. Reach 1-3.

Kick (12): 2d+4 crushing. Reach C-2.

Punch (14): 2d+3 crushing. Reach C, 1.

Thrown Rock (14): 2d+2 crushing. Range 27.

Traits: Fearlessness 2; High Pain Threshold; Penetrating Voice; Resistant to Disease 2; Resistant to Poison 2; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold).

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; Throwing-14; Wrestling-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: For delvers interested in parrying or casting magic on the giant’s gear, the club weighs 20 lbs.; the boulders, 50 lbs. each. When casting spells on the giant, multiply energy costs by three for size. Effective grappling ST is 27 due to Wrestling skill; apply SM difference to attack rolls when grappling (+2 vs. SM 0 humans). Stats reflect a *warrior*, who relies on an oversized “light” club (one no smaller being could wield), rocks, and thick skin because – normally – nobody makes more sophisticated weapons and armor for giants. Noncombatants have DX 10-11, HT 10-12, and lower combat skills, although they still have Throwing-14; conversely, heroic rock giants can have up to ST (and HP) 35, and no hard limit on DX, HT, or skills. Clerics, druids, and wizards exist, with IQ 11+, and Magery or Power Investiture 1-3; they prefer Earth spells. Giants are as likely as humans to be good, evil, violent, or peaceful, but *delvers* encounter evil, violent ones all too often.

Hill Giant

Named for both their size (“Big as a hill, ’e was!”) and preferred habitat (when you’re this tall, you get no privacy if you live somewhere flat). Average height is 21’ (an SM 0 melee fighter needs a reach 5+ weapon to attack the head).

ST: 35 **HP:** 35 **Speed:** 6.25
DX: 12 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 9
IQ: 10 **Per:** 13
HT: 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** +3
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 3

Club (14): 6d+5 crushing. Reach 1-4.
Kick (12): 4d+3 crushing. Reach C-3.
Punch (14): 4d+2 crushing. Reach C-2.
Thrown Rock (14): 4d-1 crushing. Range 37.

Traits: Fearlessness 3; High Pain Threshold; Penetrating Voice; Resistant to Disease 3; Resistant to Poison 3; Temperature Tolerance 3 (Cold).

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; Throwing-14; Wrestling-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: The club weighs 40 lbs.; the boulders, 100 lbs. each. When casting spells on the giant, multiply energy costs by four for size. Effective grappling ST is 37 due to Wrestling skill; apply SM difference to attack rolls when grappling (+3 vs. SM 0). Heroic hill giants can have up to ST (and HP) 45. Other notes are as per rock giants.

Mountain Giant

Mountain giants, too, are named by smaller races for their size and where they live (though few inhabit high peaks, as there’s nothing to eat). Average height is 30’ (an SM 0 melee fighter needs a reach 8+ weapon to attack the head or a reach 3+ weapon to attack the vitals).

ST: 50 **HP:** 50 **Speed:** 6.25
DX: 12 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 10
IQ: 10 **Per:** 14
HT: 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** +4
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 4

Club (14): 8d+4 crushing. Reach 1-6.
Kick (12): 5d+7 crushing. Reach C-4.
Punch (14): 5d+6 crushing. Reach C-3.
Thrown Rock (14): 5d+2 crushing. Range 52.

Traits: Fearlessness 4; High Pain Threshold; Penetrating Voice; Resistant to Disease 4; Resistant to Poison 4; Temperature Tolerance 4 (Cold).

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; Throwing-14; Wrestling-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: The club weighs 75 lbs.; the boulders, 200 lbs. each. When casting spells on the giant, multiply energy costs by five for size. Effective grappling ST is 52 due to Wrestling

skill; apply SM difference to attack rolls when grappling (+4 vs. SM 0). Heroic mountain giants can have up to ST (and HP) 60. Spellcasters seem obsessed with volcanoes; Fire spells are as likely as Earth magic. Other notes are as per rock giants.

Sky Giant

Sky giants don’t live in the sky (though backward cultures believe that) – they just tower so high that they seem to reach the sky. Average height is 45’ (an SM 0 melee fighter needs a reach 13+ weapon to attack the head or a reach 5+ weapon to attack the vitals).

ST: 75 **HP:** 75 **Speed:** 6.25
DX: 12 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 11
IQ: 10 **Per:** 15
HT: 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** +5
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 5

Club (14): 10d+10 crushing. Reach 1-9.
Kick (12): 8d+10 crushing. Reach C-6.
Punch (14): 8d+9 crushing. Reach C-5.
Thrown Rock (14): 8d+2 crushing. Range 77.

Traits: Fearlessness 5; High Pain Threshold; Penetrating Voice; Resistant to Disease 5; Resistant to Poison 5; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold).

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-14; Throwing-14; Wrestling-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: The club weighs 170 lbs.; the boulders, 470 lbs. each. When casting spells on the giant, multiply energy costs by six for size. Effective grappling ST is 77 due to Wrestling skill; apply SM difference to attack rolls when grappling (+5 vs. SM 0). Heroic sky giants can have up to ST (and HP) 85. Spellcasters prefer Air and Weather spells over Earth or Fire magic; you would, too, if you were a walking lightning rod. Other notes are as per rock giants.

Giant Adventure Seeds

I Have A Little Job For You. Friendly giants often propose quests that their height prevents them from undertaking – most dungeon-crawls qualify. Yet giants stereotype “little people” as much as smaller races do giants! It won’t occur to a giant that while the tunnels of giant rats, ice weasels, and other vermin, or the lairs of horde pygmies, may be navigable by halflings and gnomes, they’re awkward for armored humans and willowy elves. Meaning they probably won’t mention that *little* detail.

A Big Challenge. Giant-kind includes capable craftsmen. A giant-excavated dungeon would be quite the challenge for ordinary-sized adventurers – and not merely because of the angry giants. For starters, doors would be huge and hard to kick in, with keyholes far above the thief’s head. Stairs would literally have to be *climbed*. And gaps a giant could step over would be major “pit traps” for delvers.

KROA-KROA

Dubbed a “cavern croaker,” “deep leaper,” “gloom crawler,” and several other things (most of them less polite) in Common, this creature is encountered so often in the tunnels of goblin-kin and ogres that it’s best known by its Orcish name: “kroa-kroa.” It’s a stout, blunt-clawed humanoid with a tough hide and spiky natural armor protecting its back. Its head is inevitably described as being somewhere between toad-like and turtle-like.

Although kroa-kroa are small, even many monsters fear them as predators, for several reasons. They’re *extremely* mobile, running swiftly on all fours, leaping great distances using their powerful legs, and climbing so skillfully that folklore claims they can cling to walls. At the same time, they’re stealthy, even when on the move. Their bulging jet-black eyes can penetrate total darkness by means undiscovered by sages – they *don’t* see body heat, like those of many dark-dwellers, and aren’t supernatural. Lastly, they hunt in large, highly cooperative packs.

Kroa-kroa have another ability of note: When *they* are hunted – or when their homes are threatened – the entire

pack will tune its croaking chorus to the natural resonance of the surrounding caverns, setting up sympathetic vibrations that trigger a cave-in. “Kroa-kroa” is Orcish onomatopoeia for this sound. They’re experts at judging the frequency needed (explaining their exceptionally keen hearing) and at “aiming” the effect. While this capability *seems* to be mundane, some natural philosophers claim it somehow draws on elemental forces latent in the rock.

While kroa-kroa are capable of moving and breathing in the water as well as on land, this adaptation is a remnant of an aquatic ancestry. They don’t infest bodies of water – even deep ones – open to the surface. They use subterranean lakes as “moats” to keep their colonies safe, and underground rivers to travel from A to B, but set their ambushes on land.

ST: 11	HP: 11	Speed: 6.50
DX: 14	Will: 10	Move: 10
IQ: 8	Per: 10	(Water Move 6)
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: -1
Dodge: 10	Parry: 12 (unarmed)	DR: 2



Bite (16): 1d-1 cutting. Reach C.

Front Claw (16): 1d crushing. Reach C.

Hind Claw (14): 1d+1 crushing. Reach C, 1.

Neckbreaker (15): 1d+4 crushing. This leaping claw attack is possible only if the kroa-kroa has surprise *and* space to leap its full 11 yards at its foe; it’s used as the opening move in an ambush. It’s always aimed at the neck (×1.5 injury from crushing attacks). Listed skill *already* includes all modifiers. The monster ends its turn in close combat, and must roll vs. Jumping to land on its feet rather than fall down.

Traits: Acute Hearing 8; Acute Vision 2; Amphibious; Appearance (Hideous); Chummy; Combat Reflexes; Dark Vision; DR 2 vs. attacks on back torso only; Gills; Kroa! Kroa! (see box); Nictitating Membrane 2; No Fine Manipulators;

KROA! KROA!

If kroa-kroa notice creatures they believe they could eat, and which they outnumber at least 2:1 (more, when hunting ogres, armed-and-armored delvers, etc.), they'll exploit Stealth to set an ambush, which will open with neckbreaker attacks. If they know they're outnumbered or outmatched, or facing something inedible (like trolls or Elder Things), they'll use Stealth to stay hidden instead.

Of course no tactics are infallible; for instance, adventurers with keen senses or magic might behave in ways that make hiding ineffective. If kroa-kroa fear their foes are hunting *them* or intend to push straight through their colony – or if their fellows lost a previous fight with that group – they'll attempt to bring down the cavern on their enemies before fleeing or making a desperate last stand.

Kroa-kroa song works much like the “severe” intensity of the Earthquake spell (*Spells*, p. 27). It takes 30 seconds – but this is singing, not spellcasting. Each kroa-kroa in the chorus counts as two “energy points.” The kroa-kroa have an effective skill of HT, +3 for Penetrating Voice, for 15, and roll at -1 per *full* 20 yards to the target area (which they can select with precision). Most underground chambers resist with HT 12; if they lose, they collapse, with effects as described for the spell.

Repeated attempts have no penalty but take 30 seconds apiece.

Example: Six delvers crush an ambush by a dozen kroa-kroa. The remaining 12 monsters know they haven't a chance of defeating an *alerted* foe at the same odds, so they start singing. After 30 seconds, this counts as Earthquake cast using 24 energy. That's enough to affect a three-yard radius at the “severe” level – more than sufficient to collapse a tunnel. The kroa-kroa are 60 yards down the passage, so they roll at -3, or 12. They have even odds of blocking the way with a cave-in that does 3d+3 crushing to their enemies.

Speedy foes with good Sense rolls might be able to find and overrun the kroa-kroa before it's too late. (In the example above, the heroes have 30 seconds to cover 60 yards, so they'd need only Move 2 on clear, level ground). The catch is that kroa-kroa *know* their surroundings: They always put a slope, rough ground, or water between them and their opponents; see *Bad Footing* (*Exploits*, p. 35). They may use climbing and leaping to go *up* a sheer vertical obstacle. And they take cover from ranged attacks and spells by hiding behind rocks.

Odius Racial Habit (Eats other sapient beings, -3 reactions); Penetrating Voice; Semi-Upright; Super Jump (11 yards); Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold).

Skills: Brawling-16; Climbing-18; Jumping-14; Stealth-18.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: In the dark, sneaking past kroa-kroa involves a Quick Contest of Stealth vs. the creatures' Hearing 18 – and hearing them coming is a Quick Contest of Hearing vs. their Stealth-18. Semi-Upright means that when standing up to fight, the kroa-kroa has Move 6, but when it takes a Move maneuver to run, it has Move 10 on all fours. Kroa-kroa young aren't as strong or fast (ST and HP 9-10, Move 8-9, a jump of 9-10 yards, -1 to most damage, -2 to neckbreaker damage) but still count when singing! Spellcasters don't seem to exist. Not truly evil, but *highly* predatory and unlikely to care about the words of talking food.

Kroa-Kroa Adventure Seeds

Elder Sings. There's always evil stirring in the world's deep places – if there weren't, delvers would miss a lot of paydays. This time, it isn't just Elder Things but Elder *Gods* . . . a little too tough for adventurers to fight with swords and spells. Someone wise has discovered that the weird portal opening to admit these fiends has sucked mana, Nature's strength, and sanctity out of a column a thousand feet deep, and that collapsing passages there would contain the approaching

evil, as it would be impossible to clear the way with magic. Of course, spells can't be used to do the collapsing, either, but there's a kroa-kroa colony in the affected zone, and their song sung in a few key places would do the trick. The heroes' job is to make this happen. Doing so *without* being eaten or buried, or losing the kroa-kroa's interest, in a place where they can't use magic, would be a masterpiece of negotiation or tactics worthy of a great reward.

The Enemy Of My Enemy. Goblin-kin make good foes for low-powered delvers, and a party exploring their first dungeon are likely to tangle with them. If they find themselves losing, the GM *could* let them surrender or be beaten unconscious, and follow up with a “prison break” adventure. An alternative would be to have the cavalry arrive, but instead of friendly adventurers or passing soldiers, it's kroa-kroa. This particular pack likes the taste of goblin-kin, and uses the battle as a distraction to slaughter them from behind. As far as the kroa-kroa are concerned, they *own* the dead and their possessions – and heroes who were in the process of being defeated are in no condition to dispute this. But if the players are crafty, they might try to exploit the kroa-kroa to take down other goblin-kin hordes. Letting this work would be a good way to teach the lesson that not all monsters are for killing.

MANAPLASM

The manaplasm is another example of how varied “slime” can be. Like an ooze, it’s a diffuse mass – not quite a liquid, but close enough – that attacks with pseudopods. Like a pudding, it has limits on how flat it can make itself, and is disquietingly *intelligent*. And like both, it squidges along the ground swiftly enough to chase down prey. It could easily be mistaken for either monster; positively distinguishing it requires a Naturalist roll.

Where the manaplasm differs most is in what it “eats”: not organic matter, but *magic*. It can sense magic of every kind from afar, and moves toward it as quickly as possible. Upon arriving, it reaches out for the magic with a pair of tentacles, the touch of which usually dispels temporary magic and may drain the permanent kind – and if it oozes atop a magic item, the artifact is *certain* to be drained eventually. The manaplasm is insatiably hungry; the only way to break off an encounter with it is to kill it, run away, or become uninteresting.

Killing a manaplasm is a challenge, as it’s Diffuse (*Exploits*, p. 55) and difficult to injure . . . and *utterly immune to all magic*. The usual way around Diffuse is using area effects, cones, and explosions, but most of those available to delvers are magical. The monster also possesses no vulnerable areas, and is unaffected by poison.

Running away is feasible if the group can move faster than the manaplasm or place an impediment in its path. It negotiates vertical obstacles at only Move 1, and has no ability to

open, bypass, or destroy doors. Fleeing isn’t practical when the manaplasm blocks the only route into or out of a key location, however, or for people who fall into a pit with it (or who it *follows* into a pit).

A group radiating no magic is of no interest to a manaplasm. To accomplish this, end all spells or allow the manaplasm to dispel them, and discard all magic items or let the monster drain them.

ST: 0	HP: 20	Speed: 6.50
DX: 14	Will: 11	Move: 6
IQ: 4	Per: 12	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

Anti-Magic: For anyone *touching* or *touched* by the manaplasm, roll a Quick Contest: Its HT+5 (17) vs. *each* spell (use caster’s skill level) or potion (assume Alchemy-15, unless noted otherwise) affecting that person; if the monster wins, that magical effect is dispelled. Contact with a permanent magic item (e.g., enchanted armor or weapon) poses the risk of disenchantment. Roll a Quick Contest: The manaplasm’s HT 12 vs. the artifact’s Power (assume 15 if unknown; see *Exploits*, p. 77); if the monster wins, the object loses one randomly chosen magical property – permanently!

Devour Magic: Can use the movement portion of any maneuver to crawl atop any object on the ground that’s at most one yard across (a piece of jewelry, potion bottle, scroll, wand, piece of armor, or weapon with reach 1 qualifies). This is a free action. Roll to permanently drain the item of magic, as for anti-magic (above), but each second the monster engulfs the artifact, it may roll again at a cumulative +1, rolling at 12 the first turn, 13 the second, 14 the third, and so on. Getting it *off* the object is challenging, as it can’t be moved magically and – being Diffuse – can’t be grappled or slammed.

Touch (14): As anti-magic (above). The manaplasm *will* try to touch individual magical objects if there are no easier targets (like people affected by spells). Reach C, 1.

Traits: 360° Vision; Acute Detect 4; Detect (Supernatural); Diffuse; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Sleep; Extra Attack 1; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Magic; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Invertebrate; No Eyes; No Fine Manipulators; No Head; No Neck; Single-Minded; Slithers; Spider Climb (Move 1); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Magic); Unfazeable; Wild Animal.

YES, IT’S EXACTLY LIKE THAT

The GM who has perused the manaplasm’s description, stats, and adventure seeds has doubtless deduced the truth: This creature exists to take the delvers down a notch when they’re relying too heavily on spells and magical gewgaws. *This is a “meta-game” mission, so handle with care!*

Players of spellcasters are likely to find manaplasm encounters monotonous. Moreover, gamers often see their characters’ gear as a more-or-less permanent part of their capabilities, and object to losing it. That last point goes double for those who’ve paid points to “insure” magic items as Signature Gear.

Thus, even more so than for most monsters, think through the consequences of using a manaplasm. It’s reasonable if the players are letting nearly automatic magical tricks replace stealth, combat, and even *thinking* – that’s boring for the GM, who has a right to have fun, too. It isn’t fair to use it to clean up mistakes, however, like neutralizing something you regret ever having given the delvers; that’s punishing the players for *your* blunder.

Keep the Law of Unintended Consequences in mind, too: Crafty players *will* exploit a manaplasm to shed cursed items, remove hostile spells, and so on. If that’s part of the plot, great! If not, it’s unfair to declare, “It doesn’t work.” That’s punishing the players for *thinking*, which isn’t much fun, either.

Skills: Stealth-16.

Class: Slime.

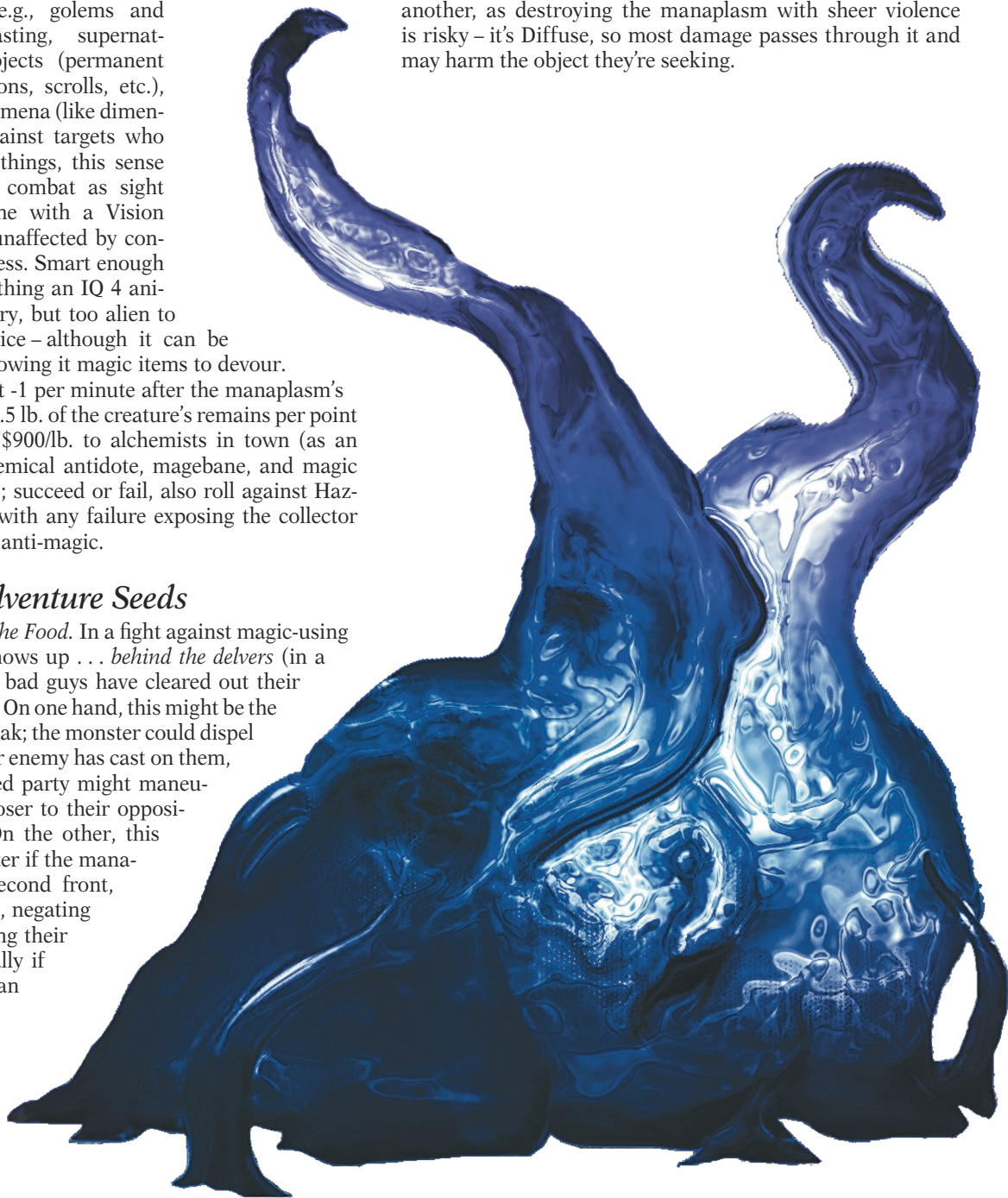
Notes: Can attack twice per turn. Totally unaffected by spells cast on it, ongoing spells in areas it traverses (e.g., Glue), and even jet and Missile spells; indirect effects, such as fires set by magic or pits dug using spells, affect it normally. Diffuse, and injured normally only by *nonmagical* area, cone, or explosive attacks. Detect can sense the subjects of spells “on,” users of potions, magical beings (e.g., golems and zombies), spellcasting, supernaturally imbued objects (permanent magic items, potions, scrolls, etc.), and magical phenomena (like dimensional portals); against targets who *are* or *carry* such things, this sense works as well in combat as sight would for someone with a Vision roll of 16, and is unaffected by concealment or darkness. Smart enough to understand anything an IQ 4 animal would in theory, but too alien to negotiate in practice – although it can be “distracted” by throwing it magic items to devour.

An Alchemy roll, at -1 per minute after the manaplasm’s death, can gather 0.5 lb. of the creature’s remains per point of success, worth \$900/lb. to alchemists in town (as an ingredient in alchemical antidote, magebane, and magic resistance potions); succeed or fail, also roll against Hazardous Materials, with any failure exposing the collector and their gloves to anti-magic.

Manaplasm Adventure Seeds

I’m Just Here For The Food. In a fight against magic-using foes, a manaplasm shows up . . . *behind the delvers* (in a dungeon, assume the bad guys have cleared out their side of the battlefield). On one hand, this might be the adventurers’ lucky break; the monster could dispel unpleasant spells their enemy has cast on them, and a well-coordinated party might maneuver so the thing is closer to their opposition than to them. On the other, this could be a total disaster if the manaplasm opens up a second front, distracting the heroes, negating their buffs, and ruining their magic items – especially if the group’s rivals can actively exploit the situation. Solving this tactical puzzle might not be a quest, but it’s certainly a *challenge*.

A Mystery Within An Enigma. Spells won’t go through a manaplasm; if it’s engulfing something, magic can’t find that item. There are countless ways to use this to increase an scenario’s challenge level. For instance, a magical quest item might be in a sealed vessel surrounded by the manaplasm, which knows there’s “food” inside but can’t get at it. One consequence is that the heroes must search for their objective the hard way; they can’t just use Information-class or Knowledge spells to find it. When they finally solve *that* puzzle, they have another, as destroying the manaplasm with sheer violence is risky – it’s Diffuse, so most damage passes through it and may harm the object they’re seeking.



MINDHOUND

Sages have difficulty classifying the mindhound: It's a flesh-and-blood creature, yet one too intelligent to categorize as an animal (dire or otherwise), too bizarre to qualify as mundane, and – as far as magic can divine – not from an alien dimension (like a demon or other spirit) or beyond (like an Elder Thing). Yet it shares traits with *all* these groups, so it gets classed as “faerie,” mostly by default.

The mindhound doesn't *look* particularly strange: a shaggy lupine, similar in build to a dire wolf but with a shorter snout, longer ears, and a more pronounced ruff. Its howl is much like a wolf's, too, if more chilling. But its cold, piercing gaze isn't remotely bestial . . . it seems to peer into the souls of those it stalks.

Which isn't far from the truth. Although the mindhound *does* see in the normal world (and see well at that), it can also view the spirit world – including genuine spirits and the subjects of Ethereal Body, Projection, and comparable spells. Moreover, it can perceive the *soul* of anyone in the material realm, however well hidden their body is.

This dual nature extends to the mindhound's behavior in combat: While it is entirely physical when on the receiving end of blows, its bite tears into and feeds on the psyche of its prey. This attack can be evaded but not deflected, and the only effective protection against it is the Armor spell or the Fortify enchantment (*not* the armor it's cast on!); even being insubstantial (again, spirits or those using Ethereal Body or Projection spells) is no defense. In addition to doing

physical injury, this robs the victim of intellect and renders the beast harder to kill – and those it slays are dead for good, their soul torn out! Because its bite operates outside the material world, the monster neither tastes nor smells in the classic sense.

The mindhound is an implacable hunter. It needs to eat spiritual essence to survive, and it cannot be deterred from the chase. Those stalked by one – or worse, a pack, which can include up to 20 monsters – are advised to find a strongpoint and prepare for a fight.

ST: 16	HP: 16	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 9
IQ: 10	Per: 14	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +1
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Psyche Bite (14): 1d+1 cutting. This attack can be dodged, but *not* blocked or parried, and ignores all DR except that of Armor or Fortify spells; it can even injure entirely insubstantial targets. This feeds the mindhound's Force Field ability (see notes). As well, every full 3 HP of injury inflicted temporarily reduces the victim's IQ by 1, to a minimum of IQ 1; this affects IQ, Will, Per, and all skills based on them (including spells), and recovers at the rate of one level of IQ per 3 HP healed. Mortals killed by this attack can't be resurrected! Reach C, 1.

BEING A LEGUME

Those savaged by mindhounds can end up with exceedingly low IQ scores. Lower Will and Per by the same amount as IQ. Use these reduced values for *all* purposes, including IQ-, Will-, and Per-based resistance and skill rolls. The latter include spells – and spells with a minimum IQ prerequisite can no longer be *cast* if the caster's IQ drops below that level, although those already cast can still be *maintained*.

Down to IQ 6, the victim is very stupid but remains sapient; the only effects are as described above. Below IQ 6, the GM may opt to assess more serious consequences:

IQ 4-5: Victim is about as intelligent as a smart animal. At this level and below, they cannot talk, read, or write, and can't understand language beyond one-word commands. They can't use tools, either – they'll leave armor, clothing, and jewelry on, but a shield just hangs there (reduce Defense Bonus by one, and the wearer won't block or attack with it), they'll drop weapons (including bucklers), and they'll ignore carried gear (never readying or trying to use it). They cannot cast

or maintain spells, or roll against any IQ-based skill or skill that requires equipment to use. Still, they know which side they're on and stay loyal to their allies, fighting *unarmed* to assist them and responding to simple orders like “stay” and “attack.”

IQ 2-3: Victim is about as intelligent as a not-so-bright animal. Treat as IQ 4-5, but now they won't take the initiative. They'll be confused or terrified, moving away from the nearest violence and fighting back only if attacked. They *still* know who their allies are.

IQ 1: Victim can walk, laugh, cry, drool, eat with their hands, react to heat and cold, etc., but notices only colors, pretty things, movement, and other things a baby would be curious about. They're unable to grasp concepts like “sides” and combat, affecting combat only by getting in the way or becoming easy prey. In effect, they are out of the fight.

None of this has anything to do with how low-IQ *monsters* behave! Instinct, adaptation, and a lifetime of experience govern their behavior.



Traits: Acute Vision 2; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Force Field (see notes); Frightens Animals; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Magic Resistance 4; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Penetrating Voice; Quadruped; Single-Minded; Spirit Sight (see notes); Temperature Tolerance 1 (Cold); Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Spiritual Essence); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-14; Stealth-14; Tracking-14.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: Force Field provides one-shot DR against enemy attacks; it starts at zero (unless the GM rules it's "charged" from a previous hunt) and grows by one point per HP of injury the monster's bite inflicts. Each point absorbs one point of *basic damage*, once. At zero, handle excess damage normally (the beast's DR 2 is permanent); e.g., if the mindhound bites for 6, 7, and 4 HP of injury before it's hit, the next 17 points of basic damage it takes just blow away the force field – and later injury it deals can rebuild the field. Spirit Sight allows the 'hound to perceive any entity that *has* or *is* a spirit (including anything alive), regardless of obstacles, obscurity (including fog, smoke, and Blur or Hide spells), darkness, or invisibility; as a side effect, it sees right through ruses like stuffed dummies or illusions portraying such beings, and is immune to the

Mystic Mist spell. Animal spells won't affect it – use Mind Control magic. Unwilling to negotiate.

Mindhound Adventure Seeds

Scooby-Doo! Because the mindhound can see and damage spirits, it's the ideal ghost-hunter. If there's one in the same dungeon as a dangerous intangible entity, adventurers may try to manipulate things so that the mindhound destroys the spirit and they just have to slay the 'hound. Of course, delvers bent on doing this must work around the fact that the thing wants to eat their souls, too, and is Indomitable, unwilling to negotiate, and too magic-resistant to control reliably. Thus, such an exercise would become a convoluted side-quest, probably one involving the heroes making themselves less-than-tasty targets with potent Armor spells, or luring or tricking the spirit into approaching the mindhound. Plot twist: Prophecy says that *only* a mindhound can defeat this particular spirit, forcing the issue!

Village Idiot. A badly wounded person stumbles into town, clad in rags. Not only are they mostly dead, but they also appear to have the mental capacity of a turnip. While the delvers *could* ignore the situation, those with disadvantages like Charitable or Selfless – or Greed, if banking on a reward – are likely to heal the poor soul. At which point the *powerful evil wizard* who unwisely believed they could bind a mindhound as a familiar regains their wits. That doesn't mean they shout "You gullible fools!" and start cursing people; even ruthless necromancers avoid angering mobs when alone and unequipped. Instead, they offer the heroes a quest to help them defeat a mindhound pack and reclaim their possessions (including a fat purse), which is bound to turn out badly if the adventurers fail, worse if they succeed.



*Spirit-sniffing wolves
that eat foes' wits and radiate
magical force? Classic Faerie!*

– Uncle Seamus, Wizard

NAGA

Divine servitors come in countless forms, not all of them pleasing. Everything about the gods is ineffable, including their esthetics, and even those served by beautiful angels (pp. 4-5) send other beings on occasion. The naga (also *nāga* – or *nagini* or *nāgini* for one that presents as female) offers an example: It's a giant (15') snake with a humanoid head, typically dispatched to lands where huge snakes thrive and thus are feared, respected, or even worshiped.

The physical description is the easy part; how a particular naga will behave is harder to know. Nagas range from benevolent beings sent to answer prayers; through neutral (or thoroughly disinterested) messengers; to aggressive guardians of places sacred to deities who, while not evil, aren't *friendly*; to what are for all practical purposes demons. All are utterly devoted to their assigned duty. Adventurers can't be sure what they're in for until they speak with the naga or, if it's hostile, it attacks – and delvers who err on the side of caution by attacking preemptively (understandable when you

encounter a monster with a humanoid face and slithery animal parts) run the risk of offending a god, perhaps *their* god.

Nagas combine archetypal ophidian abilities (constriction, hypnotic swaying, sensing body heat, stealthy slithering, venom, etc.) with gifts typical of nonliving entities from other dimensions (no need for sustenance, immunity to many things, and being Unliving and lacking vital areas, despite having body parts similar to those of natural creatures). The biggest unknown after their motivation is their magic. All nagas cast spells which, despite their divine connection, aren't always clerical.

ST: 25	HP: 25	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 15	Move: 7 (Ground or Water)
IQ: 12	Per: 15	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +2
Dodge: 11	Parry: N/A	DR: 6

Bite (16): 2d+3 cutting + follow-up 4d toxic, or 2d with a successful HT-3 roll. Reach C, 1.

Grapple (16): Apply SM difference to attack rolls (+2 vs. SM 0 humans). Effective ST for grappling is 27 due to Wrestling skill. Inevitably followed by Constriction Attack, which is a *free action*. Reach C.

Traits: Amphibious; Catfall; Combat Reflexes; Constriction Attack; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fanaticism (Its task); Fascinate (see notes); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Infravision; Nictitating Membrane 6; No Blood; No Brain; No Neck; No Vitals; Silence 4; Single-Minded; Spellcasting (see *Naga Magic*); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Unfazeable; Unkillable (Achilles Heel, Magic weapons); Unliving; Vermiform; Vibration Sense (All).



Skills: Brawling-16; Climbing-18; Intimidation-15; Stealth-14 (18 vs. Hearing if moving, 22 if motionless); Swimming-15; Theology-12; Wrestling-16; and spells (see *Naga Magic*).

Class: Divine Servitor.

Notes: *Minimum* IQ is 12 – nagas sent for purposes other than violence can be very wise, with higher IQ (and Will, Per, and related skills). Fascinate is similar but not identical to the spell (**Spells**, p. 54): Each turn, the naga may use it at no energy cost, instead of a dodge or Blocking spell, against one opponent attacking it in melee combat (not just entering close combat!); if it *wins* a Quick Contest of Will, the attack misses, ending the attacker's turn immediately, and the naga may opt to take Concentrate maneuvers on future turns to keep the victim in a daze (**Exploits**, p. 66). Vibration Sense (All) lets the naga sense vibrations created by opponents moving on the same surface or in the same body of water as it, or through the air, using the rules on p. 12 of **Monsters**. A naga may be good, evil, or neither, and will usually talk unless ordered to attack on sight, though willing to *negotiate* only where this wouldn't compromise its assigned task; for more, see *Naga Personalities*.

Naga Adventure Seeds

Why Did It Have To Be Snakes? The delvers learn the new town they've arrived in is having trouble with snakes. Officials are offering a bounty for each snake nest destroyed (treat a nest as a swarm; see **Monsters**, p. 54), plus a large bonus for the heads of *giant* snakes (**Monsters**, p. 31). With appropriate countermeasures against venom, this quest is straightforward – that is, until the heroes discover that the locals are being punished by their Snake God for being lazy about offerings at the temple (it's hardly devil-worship – live rats will do) . . . which they learn from a naga. A low-powered group won't be up to defeating an Unkillable spellcaster, so for them it's clearly a social challenge; a higher-powered party might want to see what a naga head is worth; and a *blundering* team might fail a Vision roll and attack the naga, thinking it's a giant snake. Outcomes that result in a dead naga risk angering the Snake God and causing trouble with clerics in town (who aren't the ones paying the bounty!).

With Friends Like These. A high-powered group is given a holy quest that comes with a divine servitor as a temporary ally: not a beautiful angel, but a naga. Nagas lack social traits because they can't "pass in town"; they'd suffer *at least* -6 on reactions, even from the faithful. Don't bother rolling for commoners who don't pal around with extraplanar beings – they freak out automatically! The heroes have to escort a *monster* from a temple in the middle of town, through mass panic, to the outskirts,

NAGA MAGIC

All nagas are spellcasters, but the details vary greatly.

Spellcasting Talent: This can be any of Magery, Power Investiture, or Power Investiture (Druidic). Level equals (IQ - 10); e.g., Magery 2 if IQ 12, Magery 3 if IQ 13, and so on. The maximum is 6, at IQ 16+. Some powerful nagas can cast more than one class of spells – most often clerical and wizardly ones.

Energy Reserve: A naga has levels of Energy Reserve equal to its IQ for each kind of spell it can cast. For instance, a naga with IQ 13, Magery 3, and Power Investiture 3 would possess Energy Reserve 13 (Holy) and Energy Reserve 13 (Magical). Remember that Energy Reserves can be used only for spells of the appropriate type!

Spells: A naga casts spells befitting the deity it serves and/or the task it has been assigned, regardless of whether those spells are standard for a caster with its spellcasting talent(s). For example, a naga of the Fire God would cast spells of the Fire college; if it had Power Investiture, it would cast those spells instead of those under *Clerical Spell List* (**Spells**, p. 6), and it would cast them as a cleric even if they were exclusively wizardly. Likewise, a naga sent to heal the faithful would know Healing spells, although it might have Magery and cast as a wizard. Ignore prerequisites in all this, as gods can make exceptions; spellcasting talent serves strictly to rate skill level, which is always IQ + talent (e.g., 16 for the naga with IQ 13, Magery 3, and Power Investiture 3). In a hurry, list what *colleges* the naga can use and assume it knows all spells in those colleges at this level.

NAGA PERSONALITIES

Nagas are as variable as mortals, but their personalities suit their tasks and masters, not their life experiences and preferences. While Fanaticism gets the job done, the GM might find it fun to add other mental disadvantages: Bloodlust, Hidebound, and Stubbornness for the disciplined-but-deadly guardian that won't abandon its post; Bully, Compulsive Lying, and Sadism for the de facto demon; Callous, Incurious, and No Sense of Humor for the emissary sent to deliver a decree, not listen to pleas; Charitable, Selfless, and Sense of Duty (The faithful) for the spirit sent to aid worshipers; and so on. Divine personalities also provide inspiration; e.g., Pyromania in service to the Fire God.

and they mustn't endanger the townsfolk (even ones who attack in blind fear). For extra challenge, have the naga appear the instant the quest is accepted and be too proud to stay in the temple while the party prepares; local merchants won't unbolt their doors, making the adventure "come as you are."

PETRIGNIS

Petrignes (singular: *petrignis*) exemplify what happens when arrogant wizards try to summon entities that don't exist. In this case, a now-discredited school of thaumatological thought posited that if there are elemental planes of air, earth, fire, and water, these must overlap to create a steam dimension where fire meets water, a realm of mud where water meets earth, and so on. The error in this thinking was the assumption that abstract planes of existence are crammed into a quasi-physical space, forcing them to touch, when in fact they're infinities within a larger infinity (uh . . .).

When the time came to test their theory, the wizards figured they'd call up a creature from the realm of magma, where earth meets fire. What they got was an earth elemental *and* a fire elemental crammed into a single form. Wizards being great at speculation but lousy at imagination, this form resembled most of theirs: that of a stout humanoid. The composite creature was furious but – bound within a Pentagram – it just glowered, did nothing interesting, refused to answer questions, and eventually got sent home.

The unimpressed wizards scribed the summoning spell (and the note "Of no practical use.") in a grimoire, which they stuck on a shelf and promptly forgot about. From time to time since, wannabe wizard-kings seeking secret

weapons, apprentices digging through books for research projects, and crazy magicians who believe in crackpot theories about mud and magma dimensions have copied and cast the spell. Those not using Pentagrams are generally killed by the petrignis, who then flees the scene. Thus, petrignes sometimes turn up in dungeons with names like "Caverns of the Mad Magus."

A petrignis can be thought of as a magma-filled stone shell; gouts of flame shooting out of cracks in its surface hint at this. It can control its temperature and magma to an extent, melting metal and stone, and spitting scorching gobs of liquid rock. Touching it is a bad idea – it's *hot*. Cracking the shell is a worse idea, as that lets a little magma escape, torching the attacker. And slaying it is a *terrible* idea; at -1xHP, its twin spirits return to their home dimensions (planes of earth and fire), while its body explodes like a mini-volcano.

Beyond its fiery features, a petrignis is much like an earth elemental: strong, resistant to damage, and Homogeneous. Its only other unusual ability is a complete resistance to control, thanks to the presence of *two* angry spirits. Although it's a magically summoned creature that can be contained within a Pentagram and consigned to its home planes by a Banish spell or enough damage, no known magic can force it to *serve* . . . and it isn't keen on talk, either.

ST: 20	HP: 20	Speed: 5.75
DX: 10	Will: 10	Move: 5
IQ: 8	Per: 8	
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: +1
Dodge: 8	Parry: 9	DR: 8

Grab (10): Treat like any grapple, but hot! (below) applies each turn. Usually used to seize metal weapons (-4 to hit) and melt them. Assume damage erodes DR first, then HP, and destroys the weapon when both reach 0 (so a DR 6, HP 12 broadsword is slag in nine turns); see *Damage to Objects (Exploits, pp. 55-56)*. Reach C, 1.

Hot! Anyone *touching* or *touched* by the petrignis, or dealing a *physical blow* that fails to penetrate its DR, takes 2 points burning; damage sustained while attacking with a weapon affects the weapon. Blows that penetrate DR crack the stony shell, releasing magma that does 1d burning; damage is to the attacker if unarmed, weapon if reach 1+, or both if the weapon is reach C.

Magma Gob (13): Costs 1 FP per use. 1d crushing + 1d burning, applied *separately* to DR. Ranged, with Acc 3, 1/2D 10, Max 100.

Superheated Fist (12): 2d+1 crushing + hot! (above). Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C, 1.

Volcano: On dying, produces a 6d×2 burning explosion (like a *huge* Explosive Fireball; see *Spells, p. 29*) and everyone within 10 yards is hit with a 2d crushing attack from flying rock (those who can see the explosion get a Dodge roll against the fragments).

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

The petrignis' shtick is "two elemental spirits in one body." This explains why it cannot be controlled. Otherwise, it acts as a single creature. If the GM likes, this can have further game effects. Some ideas:

- Two spirits means two minds – and two attacks. The petrignis gains Extra Attack 1.

- Two spirits means two lives. Once it's slain and its body explodes, a fire elemental (*Monsters, pp. 25-26*) coalesces from the flames and must *also* be defeated.

- Two spirits means two bodies! The petrignis can't separate its earth and fire elemental selves, but has enough spiritual essence for two combined beings. It takes a Concentrate maneuver to split in two and a Concentrate maneuver (and being in the same hex) to recombine. When split, each being has the same stats; when these recombine, *average* HP, rounding down, and do the same for FP. Thus, a form with 1 HP and 12 FP left merging with one with 20 HP and 3 FP left would have 10 HP and 7 FP – and if it split again, *each* would have 10 HP and 7 HP. A slain demi-petrignis produces only a 6d burning explosion that pelts everybody within 5 yards with a 1d crushing attack.

Traits: Bad Temper (6); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; DR 25 vs. heat/fire only; Fearlessness 4; Ham-Fisted 2; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Magical Control; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Melting (see notes); No Blood; No Neck; Temperature Tolerance 10 (Heat); Unnatural; Weakness (2 HP if immersed in water, repeating every minute).

Skills: Brawling-12; Innate Attack (Projectile)-13.

Class: Elemental.

Notes: Cannot see in the dark, but periodic bursts of flame eliminate darkness penalties in a two-yard radius (and also prevent Stealth vs. Vision). Melting lets it *slowly* cut its way through stone or metal barriers out of combat; this takes $(DR + HP)/2$ seconds, and leaves a permanent opening anybody could walk through, although the walls are hot and inflict 2 points burning for 30 seconds after the passage is cut and 1 point burning for another 30 seconds. Always summoned, so it's Unnatural (vanishes at $-1 \times HP$) and can be dismissed by Banish. Is *not* controllable and will negotiate only if offered vengeance against its summoner first.

Petrignis Adventure Seeds

Safecracking. The delvers battle their way through the dungeon only to encounter an obstacle they lack the ability to remove, standing between them and their hard-won loot. Elsewhere in the tunnels is a rampaging petrignis, seeking the wizard who summoned it. And that summoner is, naturally, after the same treasure as the adventurers. Perhaps a deal is possible? Give the petrignis its revenge and, out of gratitude, it will melt through the barrier stymieing the PCs. Of course,

during the negotiations, the wizard might use a ritual of opening or a magical key to gain access to the prize, and even if the heroes escort the petrignis to its enemy, it isn't guaranteed to win . . . an exploding petrignis could leave a sorely wounded group fighting a powerful new foe.

Forbidden Lore. The wizardly spell for summoning the petrignis doesn't have to stay unavailable to delvers. But it *should* be slow and expensive – say, requiring at least five minutes and 20 energy – and have steep prerequisites, perhaps eight each Earth and Fire spells. And it summons a monster that immediately seeks revenge on the one who called it! Nevertheless, a spellbook (**Exploits**, p. 76) or scroll containing the spell would make an excellent treasure, possibly even a quest object (with a substantial cash value, set by the GM). It could be interesting to include puzzles where a petrignis offers a solution: melting a cursed item, or cutting through a barricade (as in the previous adventure seed), perhaps by being summoned on the far side of the obstacle from the wizard.



RAMEX



Ramices (singular: *ramex*) exist Beyond Time And Space, and so meet the customary criterion for categorization as Elder Things. Yet they aren't native to Outside – inasmuch as *any* entity can be indigenous to a non-place – nor are they clearly part of the Things' unspeakable designs on three-dimensional space and linear time. They're fundamentally glitches in those plans. But the strangeness only begins with their classification . . .

A ramex is actually a *mortal* who was abducted into the void between dimensions by the Elder Things. They somehow escaped captivity, but they cannot fully reenter reality due to the elastic boundary surrounding regular time and space: the Membrane. As they desperately – and futilely – strain against this, they manifest as a grotesque intrusion into the material realm. While no two ramices look alike, common themes are an inside-out appearance (“interior vs. exterior” being a meaningless distinction Outside); truncated body parts (especially extremities), pinched off by the Membrane's tension; and distorted features, reconstructed by a shattered ego and willed into being by a mad sculptor.

No mortal mind – however intelligent, however curious, however steeped in occult lore – is built to process time moving not only forward but also backward and *sideways*, or the breakdown of distinctions like “inside vs. outside,” “here vs. there,” or “self vs. other.” Blind desperation has displaced personality, and ramices share the delusion they can reclaim their lives if they can somehow creep inside new bodies. It doesn't work that way, but they persist in trying – appearing out of nowhere, reaching inside people, and causing harm. Thus, ramices *might as well be* Elder Things; they are hostile and share many practical similarities.

A ramex is always partially Outside, letting it “see” the entirety of ordinary reality at once. It perceives everything in a sphere around it, never gets lost, and senses objects and beings from their pressure on the Membrane (rendering darkness, invisibility, etc. irrelevant). Sounds and odors don't traverse the boundary as readily, giving the entity a muffled voice, poor hearing (-4), and no sense of smell.

The ramex can shift effortlessly between being partly and completely Outside. This lets it disappear – and then reappear *anywhere*, regardless of physical obstacles. It uses this ability mostly to attack victims from behind. A ramex moves Outside to some extent even when pushing into the world; while it's subject to gravity and walks on the ground, no mundane terrain hampers it, not even the ocean's crushing depths.

In conflicts, the fact that the ramex isn't quite *there* offers further advantages. Spells have difficulty crossing the dimensional boundary (granting Magic Resistance), and the Membrane insulates the thing completely from contact effects (Sealed). As it isn't flesh, it lacks weak points and all injury is halved – and wounds rarely last, because time has no meaning Outside, so when the ramex retreats there, it can heal completely and return unharmed. Thus, it's prudent to try to kill a ramex with a single blow, which must do at least 20 HP to reduce it to -1×HP (where HT 10 makes death likely); that's really 40 HP with the Injury Reduction. With no brain or vitals to target, that necessitates a 20-point impaling attack or 27-point cutting one. That said, a blow half as damaging reduces the ramex to 0 HP, which can render it unconscious (again, HT is only 10), preventing it from stepping Outside.

ST: 10	HP: 10	Speed: 6.00
DX: 10	Will: 14	Move: 6
IQ: 10	Per: 14	
HT: 10	FP: 10	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

Reach Inside (15): 1d-2 impaling. This attack can be dodged, but *not* blocked or parried. It ignores *all* DR but affects only material targets (someone using the Ethereal Body spell, or a ghost, would be immune). This is impaling damage, not direct injury, so it inflicts 2-8 HP to the torso – or 3-12 HP if the ramex targets the vitals (-3), as it often does. Reach C.

Traits: 360° Vision; Absolute Direction; Appearance (Horrific); Dark Vision; Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Hard of Hearing; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Injury Reduction 2; Magic Resistance 5; No Blood; No Brain; No Sense of Smell/Taste; No Vitals; Obsession (6) (Get inside someone and reclaim my life); Pressure Support; Sealed; See Invisible; Step Across (see box); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Terrain Adaptation (All).

Skills: Brawling-15; Stealth-15.

Class: Elder Thing.

Notes: Alert (Per 14), but Hearing roll is only 10. Regenerates completely if it uses Step Across. Terrain Adaptation (All) means *Bad Footing* (*Exploits*, p. 35) never applies; the ramex negotiates ice, mud, slopes, stairs, water, etc. at a gliding Move 6, without combat penalties. This combined with its ability to “see” everything at once allows it to move in *any* direction at full Move, too – and to attack and defend in *any* direction without penalties. Not evil, but completely insane; still, a ramex that rolls 6 or less to resist its Obsession might negotiate with people it believes could restore its mortal existence.

STEP ACROSS

The ramex can use a step (*Exploits*, p. 33) – only, never regular movement – to *enter* or *leave* reality. It can step just once as part of a maneuver; e.g., with an Attack maneuver, it could begin Outside, step into existence, attack, and remain afterward, or it could start in the material world, attack, step out of existence, and stay *there*. To step across without taking other action, it selects the Concentrate maneuver (which allows a step).

The ramex can use this ability for the step permitted with a retreat (*Exploits*, p. 50). This gives +4 (not just +3) to its Dodge rolls against one enemy's attacks, and moves it Outside whether or not its defenses succeed, foiling later attackers until it steps back in. It *can* step out of reality by retreating just after it steps into existence to attack, using this ability twice in a turn – the only way it can do so.

A ramex that's Outside simply *isn't there*, though it “occupies” its former hex on the battle map – such a step doesn't move it. On its turn, it can take Move maneuvers to run at Move 6, invisible and unobstructed by obstacles; no known spell can see or block it. It reappears at its new location, usually behind a victim, the next time it steps across. If it appears behind someone with Danger Sense, a successful Perception roll lets them dodge its touch at -2.

Linear time doesn't exist Outside, so the ramex heals for as long as it needs to before reappearing, returning at full HP. Its enemies had better knock it out or kill it in one shot!

Ramex Adventure Seeds

“*Simple*” Isn't “*Easy*.” The heroes get the “simple” job of mopping up a squid cult – hardly a cakewalk, but these cultists aren't scary foes backed up by Elder Things. Well, not exactly . . . but the cult's sacrifice victims haunt its sanctum as ramices, a possibility the quest-giver failed to mention. (If someone with Hidden Lore (Elder Things) *requests* a roll to speculate on possible threats, the GM should offer vague hints of these obscure entities on success by 2+.) Just when the assignment looks complete, the ramices come out of nowhere and the *real* work begins.

(I'm Always Touched By Your) Presence, Dear. This creature offers a *wonderful* way for the player who chose Weirdness Magnet to earn their 15 points. A ramex that doesn't share the standard delusion – but that's no less insane! – decides the strangeness-plagued hero can save it. It *doesn't* attack, but manifests at inopportune moments; it has an 8 or less chance on 3d of showing up when the delver is dealing with NPCs, its appearance and voice giving -8 to reactions with the NPCs (who react at the usual -2 for Weirdness Magnet afterward). The adventurer can't hide from an invisible, insubstantial being that perceives everything, so options are “kill the ramex” or “rescue this thing from Outside,” with the latter being a serious quest with possible rewards.

REDTHORN

“Dire plants” are less widespread than dire animals but tend to be more dangerous, as they are stronger and tougher than fleshy creatures of comparable size, lack obvious vital areas, and possess alien minds. The redthorn is an excellent example of all of the above. Though not a lot bigger than an adult human (typically 6’ to 8’ tall), it’s made of resilient wood animated by Nature’s strength – illustrating what cynics refer to as “the dark side of druidic magic” – and has a thirst for blood, whence its colorful name.

The redthorn can uproot itself at will to seek prey, its root system doubling as myriad small-but-swift legs. It isn’t choosy – if a creature breathes, the monster *will* detect and stalk it. The redthorn’s initial approach is subtle; it conceals

its presence among ordinary vegetation, gliding through the densest brush to slink as close as possible before striking. The attack itself is savagely straightforward: a bite from the outsized “blossom” (which bears an uncanny resemblance to the head of some fanged, eyeless beast) atop its woody, tree-like trunk.

Redthorns neither establish communities nor have the intelligence to set coordinated ambushes. The trouble is that well-fed specimens shed root fragments that sprout *more* redthorns . . . if there’s one in the area, there are several. Thus, although these horrors are solitary, the sound of struggling prey attracts others, which emerge from the surrounding forest on all sides of the conflict.

Beyond this, the main thing to know about redthorns is that they’re *tough*, with thick bark (respectable DR) and dense wood (high HP). Like all plants, they’re Homogeneous (*Exploits*, p. 55) and thus lack vulnerable skull or vitals hit locations. In extremely wild forest, HT and Will get a boost; effective HT 13-17 can mean a redthorn must be hacked down to -5xHP (a net 276 points of injury!). Adventurers are advised to verify the kill, too, because a wounded redthorn can root itself and regenerate in a matter of hours.

ST: 23	HP: 46	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 6
IQ: 3	Per: 12	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 6

Bite (12): 2d impaling. Any hit counts as a grapple, even if it doesn’t penetrate DR. This allows the redthorn to *worry* – roll damage each turn as a free action until the victim breaks free from ST 23. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Acute Detect 4; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in areas where Nature’s strength penalty is -5 or worse); Detect (Breathing); Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Limited Camouflage (Vegetation); Loner (15); Nature’s Blessing (see notes); No Blood; No Eyes; No Manipulators; No Neck; Regeneration (1 HP/hour, but only if in contact with good soil); Regrowth; Slithers; Unfazeable; Walk Through Plants (see notes).

Skills: Camouflage-14 (16 if motionless in vegetation); Stealth-14 (16 if motionless in vegetation).

Class: Plant.

REDTHORN WEAPONS

Redthorn wood is about as good as any other for weapon-making. A weapon made *entirely* of such wood exhibits special properties, though. This is an option for an atlatl, baton, blowpipe, boomerang, club, jo, knobbed club, long staff, quarterstaff, short baton, short staff, tonfa, wooden stake, or woomera. The GM may further permit normally metal-tipped weapons that inflict only thrust impaling damage – like arrows, bolts, darts, and spears – to be had as metal-free pointed sticks that suffer -1 to damage and an armor divisor of (0.5).

In places where Nature’s strength gives a penalty or bonus to druidic spells and abilities, all-redthorn weapons get *half* this modifier – drop fractions – on all rolls to use them (attack, damage, and parry) and to resist spells cast on them. This means -2 to -5 in defiled areas (-5 to -10 to druidic spells), -1 in town (-3), no modifier in dungeons (-1) or ordinary wilderness (0), and up to +2 in primeval wilderness (+1 to +5). As areas where such weapons function better than usual are much rarer than those where they don’t work as well, merchants in town see these items as bad investments and don’t sell them. They regularly show up in the hands of dwellers in unspoiled wilderness, especially wildmen (*Monsters*, pp. 60-61).

Adventurers who desire such weapons must take them from defeated foes or make them from slain redthorns. Crafting requires a toolkit (*Adventurers*, p. 112) for and a skill roll against the relevant Armory specialty (Melee Weapons or Missile Weapons). Each attempt takes minutes equal to the price in \$ on the weapon table, doubled if the weapon is ranged; e.g., a knobbed club (\$20) requires 20 minutes per attempt while an atlatl (also \$20, but ranged) takes 40. *Halve* the final selling price of redthorn armaments sold in town – but always use full list price to calculate both production time and value as a druidic power item.

Each redthorn provides enough wood for dozens of projects, but if the heroes are abusing the privilege, assume that the *useful* parts of a redthorn yield \$250 in weapons (selling for at most \$125). As well, any redthorns encountered will preferentially attack people bearing such weapons.

Notes: The redthorn's Detect works as well in combat as sight would for someone with a Vision roll of 16, and is unaffected by darkness, intervening vegetation, invisibility, etc. Nature's Blessing means that where druidic spells receive +1 to +5 for "primeval wilderness" (*Spells*, p. 6), the redthorn adds the same bonus to all HT and Will rolls. Walk Through Plants works like the spell (*Spells*, p. 63), meaning vegetation never slows the redthorn's movement and Tracking is at -8 to find its trail in its woodland home; this is always on at no energy cost. Determining whether a "dead" redthorn is really dead requires winning a Quick Contest of *Per*-based Naturalist vs. its effective Camouflage skill of 16. Plant spells affect redthorns normally – but wherever druidic magic works especially well, Nature's Blessing helps resistance rolls! Someone who can communicate with plants *might* be able to "negotiate" by offering live prey that's easier to kill and eat than armed, armored adventurers.

Redthorn Adventure Seeds

A Thorny Issue. The adventurers are hired for a classic mission – hunt a monster, map unexplored wilderness, recover a lost artifact, rescue someone, etc. – by druids, elves, or other nature-worshippers. The reward is especially generous because the objective is deep in redthorn territory . . . and to make matters trickier, the quest-giver won't tolerate even a single dead redthorn (their rapport with local nature spirits guarantees they'll *know* the truth). For the delvers to succeed at their assignment, they have to come up with creative ways to avoid, repel, or distract redthorns, or to defeat them non-lethally; Plant spells, particularly Plant Control, would be a great help here. For an added twist, crank Nature's strength up to at least +2 and fill the wilderness with foes who wield redthorn weapons, granting a combat advantage the heroes can't match without breaking the rules of their quest. Naturally, such a bonus makes the redthorns more challenging, too!

I'm A Lumberjack And I'm Okay. An interesting thing about redthorns is that they can regenerate from practically nothing; even a single severed root can grow into a full-sized



creature in approximately a week and a half, as long as it's nourished with blood. There are reports of "blood farmers" who exploit this by hacking apart redthorns, planting root fragments, "watering" these with blood, and harvesting the high-quality lumber. Even an entire herd of livestock is a small price to pay for 30 or more harvests of timber per year! Of course, the crop is ambulatory, voracious, and hard to contain or control, and rumor has it that anyone who protests the danger – including lumberjacks from rival lumber towns, nature-lovers who want to stop the exploitation, and do-gooder adventurers – is fed to the monsters. There are also whispered fears that Something deep in those woods demands blood sacrifices, and the locals are in reality members of a murderous druidic cult. Guess who gets the job of investigating it all?

RESKINNED

The reskinned are undead, named – quite aptly – after how they're produced: Starting with a magically animated zombie (*Monsters*, p. 62), strip away the soft tissue to reveal a skeleton (*Monsters*, pp. 47-48); while some patient necromancers wait for natural decay, most employ flesh-eating insects, carrion beetles being customary. Make the thing more frightening and dangerous by unhinging the jaw, lengthening the limbs (with parts from other skeletons) to increase reach and striking power, and so forth. Encase the amended skeleton in a gray paste of clay, dissolved *living* flesh, and alchemical elixirs, which not only keeps all the pieces in place but also lets the reanimator sculpt “muscles” and other features to taste; traditionally, pointy skeletal “claws” are left protruding. Lastly, cast a second reanimating spell on the abomination.

The resulting horror is superior to a standard zombie in most regards. Its argillaceous “flesh” resists damage and decay. The total absence of internal organs means it isn't just



Unliving (and therefore less affected by impaling attacks), but also has no vital parts to target for additional injury. Three layers of reanimating magic – the initial dark sorcery, the sinister alchemy of the flesh, and the concluding ritual – render it stronger in every way: physically powerful, harder to turn, and *not* Unnatural, meaning it isn't dispelled at -1xHP. And the grotesque skull and arm modifications make its natural attacks deadlier.

The reskinned are no more *mentally* capable than any other zombie. They're still only useful as fodder in a fight. They are, however, *much* better at that task!

ST: 17	HP: 21	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 8	Move: 6
IQ: 8	Per: 8	
HT: 12	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 9	DR: 4

Bony Claw (14): 1d+4 crushing. Arms are long and gangly, and have reach C, 1.

Gaping Bite (14): 1d+3 crushing. Reach C.

Weapon (12 or 13): Axe (3d+1 cutting), broadsword (3d cutting or 1d+4 impaling), mace (3d+2 crushing), morningstar (3d+2 crushing), etc. Extra-long arms give reach 1, 2.

Traits: Appearance (Horrific); Automaton; Bad Smell; Cannot Float; Cannot Learn; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Mute; No Blood; No Brain; No Eyes; No Sense of Smell/Taste; No Vitals; Reprogrammable; Resist Good 4; Single-Minded; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Unliving.

Skills: Bowling-14; Wrestling-14; *one* of Axe/Mace-13, Broadsword-13, or Flail-12.

Class: Undead.

Notes: Unaffected by Death Vision or Sense Life, but susceptible to Pentagram, Sense Spirit, and Turn Zombie. For reskinned, the main benefits of Resist Good are that it resists Turning with Will 12 instead of 8, and that Turn Zombie spells must succeed by 4+ to have any effect. Effective grappling ST is 19, thanks to Wrestling. Almost all reskinned are made from better-than-average starting material, but even higher ST, DX, HT, and combat skills are conceivable. A one-handed melee weapon and nothing else is typical gear, as armor that fits reskinned is *rare*; a wealthy reanimator might spring for better weapons or custom armor (which would add its DR to the monster's natural DR 4). *Not* truly evil, though the magic animating it is. No undead servitor will negotiate or reveal useful information.

GREATER RESKINNED

The likely developers of the reskinning process are lichs: masters of black magic, with ample time and zombies. And you know one of them will eventually encase its skeletal *self* in magical clay to become even stronger. But instead of styling itself as a grotesque, it would sculpt a good-looking form (complete with fake eyes carved from gemstones) so that with suitable makeup and clothing, it could reenter society for nefarious purposes.

Appearance (Attractive) is the best possible for a clay statue, but lichs who bother to achieve this will also learn the Disguise skill. If there's cause to suspect such a "greater reskinned" of being a monster rather than an ordinary person, *winning* a Quick Contest of Perception or Observation vs. Disguise will confirm it – and the undead has -2 for the odor of the clay (or the perfumes to hide this). A suspicion confirmed isn't proof, though!

Like a lich, Unkillable (Total) means reducing a greater reskinned to -10×HP anywhere there's mana just turns it into a ghost that will return in a new body – a *reskinned* body, not a skeleton. It also has higher DR and HP than a lich, and no special vulnerability to crushing attacks.

ST: 14	HP: 18	Speed: 6.50
DX: 12	Will: 18	Move: 6
IQ: 16	Per: 16	
HT: 14	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 11	DR: 4

Staff (12): 2d+2 crushing – usually with a horrid spell, like 6d worth of Deathtouch. Reach 1, 2.

Traits: Appearance (Attractive); Bad Smell; Cannot Float; Dark Vision; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Energy Reserve 30 (Magical); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Magery 6; No Blood; No Brain; No Eyes; No Sense of Smell/Taste; No Vitals; Resist Good 4; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Heals only when Unkillable is triggered); Unkillable (Total; Achilles Heel, Can be truly killed in no-mana areas); Unliving.

Skills: Dozens of spells at skill 20+; Staff-12; and numerous IQ-based skills at 16+, always including Alchemy, Disguise, Hidden Lore (Undead), and "social" skills like Diplomacy and Savoir-Faire.

Class: Undead.

Notes: Favorite spells are at -2 to energy cost and half casting time – or better – due to skill 20+. Energy Reserve can be any size; 30 points is the *minimum*, and greater reskinned also wield sizable power items (possibly hidden *inside* them!). Resist Good means it resists Turning with Will 22 and has an effective Magic Resistance 4 against good clerics. Like lichs, greater reskinned make deals . . . and may well do so in the guise of being guildmasters, merchants, and other "trustworthy" mortals in town. Truly evil.

Reskinned Adventure Seeds

The Shopping List. Villains create reskinned to build fighting forces that are stronger and tougher than typical mercenaries, are unwaveringly loyal and obedient, and don't need pay or barracks. Still, there's a considerable up-front cost in obtaining a supply of recently deceased warriors, a specific strain of beetle, spare skeletons, high-quality clay, alchemical components, and the occasional abductee for living flesh. Using these things – and working dark rituals – also requires a secluded locale. These needs pose a risk, as they're clues that somebody is up to no good. The PCs are charged with following the trail and possibly getting one step ahead, which becomes easier if somebody succeeds at a Hidden Lore (Undead) roll

at -5 to deduce what's going on and what ingredients are left to harvest. Add +1 to this roll per item the necromancers are known to have obtained . . . but each step closer for the bad guys means graves robbed, sacred ground desecrated, or innocents victimized, with consequences ranging from economic loss, through murder, to angry ghosts.

The Trade Secret. Reskinned needn't be well-known monsters that have existed for ages. Hidden Lore (Undead) might be unable to predict them ahead of time, but merely offer a vague theory as to what they might be after meeting them in battle and making a skill roll at -5. In that case, being the first to encounter them could spell profit . . . if the heroes can capture one intact and deliver it to the Wizards' Guild or temple.

That's quite a challenge with a physically strong monster that cannot be controlled, put to sleep, or otherwise subdued by magic! Making it trickier is the fact that whoever is producing the reskinned – probably powerful evil sorcerers, vampires, or even lichs – will object to having the secret exposed. For a further twist, there could be *other* evil types interested in the process or a captured specimen, who might make the heroes an offer they can't refuse, or just attack them while they're weakened by what looked like the adventure finale.



Evil's fastest servants are mortals who create abominations of their own free will.

– Sister Miriam Suntemple, Cleric

SNĀW WIHT

Snāw wihtu (singular: *snāw wiht*) are undead created when somebody is *deliberately* left to die in bitter cold. If that person's thirst for revenge is strong (especially if they're a druid or wizard specializing in cold magic), their spirit may return to the body once it freezes solid. The ghost's arrival shatters the corpse into a cloud of icy crystals, which remain bound together by hate.

Snāw wihtu appear to be incredibly detailed snow sculptures of people, with hair of hoarfrost and the illusion of a diaphanous veil or cloak caused by condensing moisture. Whatever coloration the revenant once had, it's now snow white, although tricks of light and shadow sometimes throw a bluish cast or give the impression of dark patches near the eyes.

These undead embody cold and are *immune* to harm or even inconvenience by it or anything symbolic of it – not just

glacial temperatures, but also the crush of avalanches, the jaggedness of icicles, the slipperiness of ice, and so on. This extends to the unnatural cold of monsters, Frostbite spells, liquid ice grenades, etc. Their chill touch drains their victims' energy. And *any* heat draws their eye – nothing warmer than them can hide.

Undead-hunters should know that snāw wihtu *look* solid but are Diffuse; they cannot be slammed or grappled, and lack vital areas, and attacks other than area effects, cones, and explosions inflict only 1 or 2 HP. While heat and fire cause double injury (if only twice 1 or 2 HP), the creature's energy-draining touch heals it. This and the fact that snāw wihtu are tough (HT 14, HP 20) and *not* Unnatural means they may have to be chipped down to -5xHP a couple of HP at a time, unless the delvers have powerful Fire spells and avoid being touched.

FROZEN DEAD

It can be fun to give snāw wihtu servitors. Such lesser undead are also good foes for lower-powered adventuring parties.

When the living are incapacitated in places where ice forms *quickly* due to supernatural cold, they sometimes freeze and enter suspended animation. Eventually, their minds go, leaving vessels for the area's uncanny forces to inhabit and reanimate!

The resulting "frozen dead" resemble horde zombies in that they're an undead force of nature. However, their condition isn't contagious and they attack for a different reason: to defend their evil animating spirits' icy home from the living, whom they perceive by body heat. They're also cunning enough to use stealth and wield weapons.

Frozen dead are adapted to icy terrain. Their coating of ice slows them down but protects against damage, makes them slick and tricky to restrain, and renders them difficult to spot in ice-covered environments – until they erupt from the ice to attack! While Unliving and hard to injure, they're also Unnatural and destroyed at -1xHP – and being frozen means they take double injury from crushing attacks and are dismembered by crippling blows.

ST: 13	HP: 17	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 5
IQ: 10	Per: 10	
HT: 12	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 10	DR: 0

Bite or Punch (14): 1d crushing + chill. Reach C.

Chill: Hands – and weapons wielded in them – are phenomenally cold. Anyone injured suffers an *extra* 2 HP of injury, as for Icy Weapon (*Spells*, pp. 69-70).

Weapon (14): Axe (2d+1 cutting) or knobbed club (2d crushing) + chill. Reach 1.

Traits: Appearance (Monstrous); Brittle; Cannot Learn; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; DR 10 vs. cold/ice only; High Pain Threshold; Ice Armor (see notes); Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Incurious (6); Indomitable; Infravision; Intolerance (Interlopers); Limited Camouflage (Ice); No Blood; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Slippery 5; Temperature Tolerance 10 (Cold); Terrain Adaptation (Ice); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Unliving; Unnatural; Vulnerability (Crushing x2).

Skills: Axe/Mace-14; Brawling-14; Camouflage-10 (12 if motionless in ice); Stealth-12 (14 if motionless in ice).

Class: Undead.

Notes: Unaffected by Death Vision or Sense Life, but susceptible to Pentagram, Sense Spirit, and Turn Zombie. Ice Armor absorbs 17 points of *basic damage*, and must be chipped off before the undead can be injured; DR 10 vs. cold/ice is permanent, remaining after Ice Armor is gone. The underlying corpse is that of a tribal warrior – all that's left of its gear is a primitive melee weapon. Frozen dead never rot or become skeletons. Uninterested in negotiation. Truly evil.

Although snāw wihtu want vengeance, ones that achieve this are laid to rest. Those encountered wandering ice caverns and snowfields have been driven insane by years, maybe *centuries* of fruitless haunting. They attack *any* warm being they meet, on the off chance they'll kill the right one.

ST: 10	HP: 20	Speed: 6.00
DX: 10	Will: 14	Move: 6
IQ: 10	Per: 10	
HT: 14	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 8 (unarmed)	DR: 0

Energy-Draining Touch (14): Any living creature, being that needs warmth (including creatures of fire), or entity that can freeze (e.g., water elemental) loses 1d HP *and* 1d FP, regardless of hit location. Targets with "FP: N/A" lose only 1d HP. Armor doesn't protect! Each HP drained heals the monster 1 HP; each FP drained restores one point of Energy Reserve, if any. Reach C.

Traits: Appearance (see notes); Bloodlust (12); Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Diffuse; Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Cold/Ice; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Infravision; Intolerance (Warm beings); Limited Camouflage (see notes); Terrain Adaptation (see notes); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Heals only by draining energy); Vulnerability (Heat/Fire x2).

Skills: Brawling-14; Camouflage-12 (14 if motionless in suitable setting); Disguise-14 (Only to pose as ice/snow statue); Stealth-12 (14 if motionless in suitable setting).

Class: Undead.

Notes: Resembles a flawless snow statue or ice carving with Appearance between Attractive and Very Handsome/Very Beautiful – but once it starts walking, treat as Hideous! Limited Camouflage and Terrain Adaptation work in ice, snow, or any other environment linked to cold. Some snāw wihtu are magic-users with IQ 11+. Casters are *either* druids with Power Investiture 4+ (Druidic), Energy Reserve 20 (Druidic), and Fog, Freeze, Frostbite, and Hail at IQ + Power Investiture level, *or* wizards with Magery 3+, Energy Reserve 20 (Magical), and Cold, Freeze, Frostbite, Ice Dagger, and Ice Sphere at IQ + Magery level. Recently manifested snāw wihtu replace Intolerance with Obsession (Slay my killer), and may negotiate if that would facilitate vengeance; the majority have Intolerance and will not negotiate.

Snāw Wiht Adventure Seeds

Strike While The Vengeance Is Cold. On a quest in icy lands, the heroes sight a group the size of a farming village. It soon



becomes clear they're snāw wihtu. They're recently formed and willing to negotiate: They were promised escape from oppression, only to be betrayed by evil "guides" who took their valuables and left them to freeze. They're not professional trackers or diviners, and ask the adventurers to use such abilities to facilitate their revenge; the party is welcome to the stolen wealth. The PCs have many choices: leading the undead to their foes, attacking the robbers, attacking the monsters, etc. They should act quickly, though; the self-control number on the creatures' Obsession starts at 3 (they're focused *entirely* on vengeance) but rises by +1 per day until, at 18, Intolerance replaces Obsession, creating a horde of hostile undead!

Monumental Evil. For two feuding clans, no deed is too low: defamation, vandalism, assault, even murder. They mostly keep the evil between their families – but when they need help, adventurers receive generous offers (time to roll self-control for Greed). The latest misdeed was an ambush on a lonely road in the dead of winter – except things got messy and a survivor fled and froze to undeath. His kinfolk found him and hatched a plan to put his "statue" among dozens of ice sculptures in their enemies' garden. Guess who's offered gold to sneak a heavy crate containing an *undead monster* over the walls of a fortified manor? What could *possibly* go wrong?

STRIX

Striges (*strix* is the singular, though there's never just one) are flying horrors that prey on anything that bleeds and can't outrun them. Survivors differ on whether they're more like birds or bats. In folklore, they live in trees, rock crevices, or caves – or under eaves or bridges – like natural animals, yet many a retired delver has told of encountering them in deep places close to the Underworld. In most tales they suck blood, but in a few they carry off small children and disembowel adults. What everybody agrees on is that they're bad news if you're made of flesh.

A strix flies into close combat, grapples its victim using four clawed limbs (a pair of misshapen arms and two short, strong legs), and – unless disposed of quickly – sticks its beak into its prey to drain blood. This proboscis is supernaturally fine, sharp, and *hard*: Divide the victim's DR (natural, armor, or magical) by 10, dropping fractions. Thus, DR up to 9 is ineffective, and DR 10-19 is vulnerable to a lucky shot; even warriors clad in enchanted plate had better dodge. Dodging is difficult, though, as striges are fiendishly agile, slipping past defenses as easily as they pierce armor.

It may seem a trivial matter to dislodge such a small creature, but a strix's size belies its grip (effective ST 16). Given that a strix isn't especially tough, the alternative is to squish it. The person who's grappled attacks it at -4 for being grappled (*Exploits*, p. 41), while allies are subject to -2 for *Striking into Close Combat* (*Exploits*, p. 51). In either case, if the attacker misses or the strix dodges, *its prey* is hit on 9 or less! And the strix is nimble and likely to dodge – its Dodge score is extremely high, and it can use *Acrobatic Dodge* (*Exploits*, p. 48) to get +2 without letting go of its victim.

DIRE OR DEMON?

While striges are “officially” dire animals, the two most common origin stories for them mention demons, they're exploited by black magicians to weave curses and brew death potions, and the Sense Evil spell (*Spells*, p. 26) and Detect Evil ability (*Adventurers*, p. 20) identify them as evil. It *could* be that like many dire animals, they were mutated by magic – just unusually *evil* magic. Or there could be more to it . . .

Demonic striges would belong to the demon monster class, and therefore rate as extradimensional, magical, and not living. They would exchange Wild Animal for the Dependency, Divine Curse, and Immunity traits of hellhounds (*Monsters*, pp. 35-36). Being killed by them would mean having your *soul* slurped out and being beyond resurrection!

Worst of all, there's never just one. Striges attack in flocks, outnumbering their prey by 2:1, 3:1, or more, always swooping down from all sides. For instance, if a group of six delvers faces 18 striges, the striges will arrive along headings almost exactly 20° apart, and each hero will have three striges to deal with, with at least one in a side or back hex.

ST: 5	HP: 5	Speed: 7.00
DX: 16	Will: 10	Move: 2 (Air Move 14)
IQ: 4	Per: 10	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: -1
Dodge: 13	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

Bite (18): 1d-4(10) large piercing, minimum 1 point + follow-up 1 HP. This initial bite is *always* made in close combat after a grapple; the only permitted defenses are a dodge at -1 or a close-combat parry at -2, and retreating is impossible. In most cases it's *also* a Deceptive Attack at -4 to hit (effective skill 14), giving *another* -2 to defend. Reach C.

Blood-Draining: A bitten victim *automatically* loses 1 HP per turn after the initial bite, unless the grapple is broken or the strix is slain. Every 3 HP drained (including the 1 HP follow-up to the first bite) heals the strix 1 HP. This drain cannot raise the strix's HP above normal, but it continues regardless.

Grapple (22): Uses arms *and* legs as four “arms,” giving +4 to hit, already figured into effective skill. Typically made as a Deceptive Attack at -8 to hit (effective skill 14), giving -4 to defend. If this works and the victim fails to break free, the strix uses its bite next turn – and once *that* works, blood-draining on later turns. Reach C.

Traits: Cowardice*; Enhanced Dodge 3; Extra Arms 2; Flight (Winged); Infravision; Lifting ST 5; No Fine Manipulators; Uncontrollable Appetite (Blood)*; Wild Animal.

Skills: Acrobatics-16; Brawling-18; Wrestling-18.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: Lifting ST, Wrestling skill, and using four limbs to hold on give effective ST 16 for grappling. Strix wings are prized ingredients for numerous potions, while *all* body parts are supernaturally potent and used as ritual components in sinister curses. Wings weigh 2 lbs. and fetch \$35 from alchemists in town; roll versus Survival to chop them off. A whole strix without body parts missing weighs 15 lbs., and is worth \$250 dead or \$500 alive; it *must* be sold on the black market using *Streetwise* (*Exploits*, p. 16), and critical failure means being accused of demon worship, with whatever effects the GM finds amusing. Though “just” animals and not magical creatures, striges emanate supernatural evil and qualify as truly evil. (Leading theories on this are “striges are demon-worshippers turned into monsters as punishment by the gods” and “striges are demon-worshippers rewarded with monster-form by their demonic masters.”)



* These disadvantages work specially for striges. The self-control roll for Cowardice is 6 or less if they're outnumbered at all, 9 or less at even odds (one strix per victim), 12 or less at 2:1 odds, or 15 or less at 3:1 odds or better. Roll once for the entire flock. If the striges *fail*, they won't attack. If they succeed, they will – and they'll automatically suffer from Uncontrollable Appetite (*Monsters*, p. 14), attacking until they or their victims are all dead.

Strix Adventure Seeds

He Ain't Evil, He's My Brother. A man buttonholes the heroes and claims his brother, Agrios, was changed into a mindless dire bat by a black magician, and then flapped off into the moonrise. If the group locates Agrios and brings him back alive, they'll be well rewarded; he's easy to identify, as his signet ring ended up around one ankle, too tight to slip off. If the delvers follow the trail, they'll find Agrios not as a dire bat but as a strix – complete with ring – in a *huge* flock. An Occultism roll at this juncture will suggest that Agrios was almost certainly a

demon-worshiper; adventurers who know that can decide whether it's worth fighting dozens of striges to rescue such a miscreant. If they do and prevail, they'll be rewarded upon returning to town, provided that they ask no questions but "Where's the money?" Agrios' restoration to human form happens out of sight, but once he's himself again, he offers a bounty on the evil sorcerer . . . which should have anyone who made the Occultism roll pondering whether this "sorcerer" is a demon who transformed Agrios as a reward or a divine servitor who did so as punishment.

Trade Re-Strix-Ons. The adventurers learn the Alchemists' Guild needs strix wings pronto; otherwise, the heroes and everybody else in town will have to make do without flight, sleep, and death potions, and – most important – *healing* potions, for months. Each pair of wings is worth its weight (2 lbs.) in coppers: \$100, or about three times the usual bounty. A party member with Occultism or Streetwise (preferably both) *also* learns that the strix shortage spells tough times for practitioners of the dark arts, notably demonologists and necromancers; street price for an intact strix (15 lbs.) is \$1,000, dead or alive. To sweeten the pot, both quest-givers are offering a bonus for a provably steady, secured supply: the alchemists, some potions; the black magicians, one no-questions-asked *resurrection* at a future date. The moral dilemma should be obvious . . . and then there's the question of what "resurrection" means to people whose stock in trade is animating the undead.

SUCCUBUS

Everybody thinks they know what a succubus is: A demon from Hell, as evil as they come, that can appear as a beautiful woman (traditionally human, but every humanoid race has its version of the myth). She uses her beauty to tempt mortal men to sin. In art and the fantasies of young men who've never faced monsters, she's typically dressed – or more often *undressed* – for the job. While not *incorrect*, that isn't the full story.

First – dashing many fantasies, inspiring others – a succubus is the same thing as an *incubus*: a handsome hunk of he-demon that goes around tempting women. Demons are sexless by mortal standards, so this is just a matter of shape-shifting to suit the task at hand. The time-honored stratagem is to appear to a man as a succubus, get intimate with him, leave, assume incubus form, visit a woman, and get her pregnant by the man. Then the demon takes the form of individuals in its victims' lives and spreads gossip of illicit affairs, which is eventually “proved” true by the birth of a child that *always* resembles its purported father, but has an evil soul provided by . . . let's say its “third parent.” In this way, communities are destroyed.

That's not useful when facing bands of armed adventurers – good luck getting one of *them* alone (though bad luck to fools who drop their guard and tell their allies to buzz off for a while). This is why a succubus (incubus, for a predominantly female party) resorts to other ruses. A favorite game is to show up in a dungeon or similar isolated, dangerous place; play the innocent victim; be rescued by the heroes; and then bide her/his time until its saviors are engaged in battle with foes aligned with Evil, at which point the demon jumps in on the monsters' side (and the delvers' back).

Where heroes are involved, things *will* eventually degenerate into fighting. For this, the succubus relies on speed and agility more so than strength and special powers.

It can assume its natural form instantly (a free action on its turn) – one that's winged for flight, with a beast's powerful legs for running and leaping, and a tail for balance. It fights with a sword but always looks for opportunities to *kiss* opponents.

A succubus' kiss – in torrid intimacy or in battle – is a dangerous weapon. If it meets a mortal's lips, the succubus has the *option* of sucking the breath of life from her victim. Those who fail to resist (which amounts to holding one's breath) are rapidly depleted and risk death. Being killed this way in battle is no different from death by suffocation; dying while *willingly* having relations with a succubus costs you your soul and puts you beyond resurrection!

ST: 13	HP: 13	Speed: 7.00
DX: 16	Will: 15	Move: 8 (Air Move 14)
IQ: 12	Per: 15	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 12	Parry: 13	DR: 2

Kick (16): 1d+1 crushing (1d+2 in natural form, with hooves). Reach C, 1.

Kiss (12): Always targets the lips (built into effective skill). Roll a Quick Contest: Will 15 vs. the victim's HT or Breath Control skill, whichever is higher. If the succubus *wins*, she drains *dice* of FP equal to her margin of victory; e.g., winning by 5 means 5d FP. Repeated or prolonged kisses can take the victim to negative FP, inflict injury, and cause death; see *Effects of Accumulated Fatigue (Exploits, pp. 63-64)*. Reach C.

Punch (18): 1d crushing. Reach C.

Weapon (18): Cavalry saber (2d cutting *or* 1d+1 impaling), saber (2d-2 cutting *or* 1d+1 impaling), cutlass (2d-1 cutting *or* 1d+1 impaling), or smallsword (1d+1 impaling). Reach 1.

SUCCUBUS MAGIC

In some myths (and other RPGs), a succubus is also a magic-user. It's up to the GM whether this is true in some or all cases. If so, add these traits:

Magery: A succubus is a bit of a rebel, an outsider among demons, as she has relations with mortals and enjoys the work, and rarely visits Hell. Making her a priestess of The Devil, with Power Investiture, doesn't jibe with this. She has plain old Magery – at least two levels of it.

Spells: Obvious choices come from the Communication and Empathy and Mind Control colleges. A fitting “stock” list would be: Bravery, Charm, Command, Daze, Fascinate, Fear, Foolishness, Forgetfulness, Hide

Emotion, Hide Thoughts, Loyalty, Persuasion, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sleep, and Weaken Will, all at IQ + Magery level. A succubus who can cast such spells becomes *extremely* dangerous, as she can Command or Charm people to kiss her (among other things).

Energy Reserve (Magical): This has a special feature: FP the succubus drains with her kiss recharge it! Energy Reserve 10-15 would probably be enough if she can cast cheap spells that compel victims to kiss her (Command costs 2 energy) and then suck out *several dice* of energy. To make a succubus extra-scary, let her charge her reserves to an *unlimited* degree, but have the energy above her usual maximum bleed off at the rate of 1 point/turn.

Traits: Alternate Form (see notes); Appearance (Very Handsome/Very Beautiful); Combat Reflexes; Cultural Adaptability; Doesn't Breathe (but fakes this and many other things flawlessly); Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Enhanced Dodge 1; Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Infravision; Lecherousness (9); Perfect Balance; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Trickster (12); Voice.

Skills: Acrobatics-15; Brawling-18; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Draw (Sword)-17; Fast-Talk-16; Holdout-14; Jumping-16; Sex Appeal-20; Stealth-15; Wrestling-18; and *one* of Broad-sword-18, Saber-18, Shortsword-18, or Smallsword-18.

Class: Demon.

Notes: Kiss is *never* attempted if the enemy could parry with a weapon, cutting her pretty face – it's used only on enemies who are defenseless (say, due to an All-Out Attack), grappled by the arms (by her or someone else), stunned and knocked down (meaning weapons are dropped), or helpless owing to magic (e.g., Sleep spell). Alternate Form takes 10 seconds when changing from demonic to mortal form, or between two mortal guises, but is a *free action* when returning to demonic form. Effective ST 15 when grappling, thanks to Wrestling. All too willing to negotiate. Truly evil.

Succubus Adventure Seeds

Goody Two-Horns. Some theologians believe the main difference between angels and demons is who (or *what*) they work for, not their manifestations, although their mindsets obviously differ. This is probably half true: Good and Evil originally employed similar servitors, but things have diverged as Evil goes around damning and punishing (look at the as-Sharak) while Good maintains a more beatific image. A succubus poses a riddle, as it can look like many things – and though *lust* is a sin, *love* is seen as a positive thing, and in a lot of cultures (and for a lot of people), the dividing line is thin indeed. One that appeared in her natural form, claiming to serve Good, might earn credit for showing her true appearance . . . yet demons are notorious schemers, and any intrigue that involves posing as an angel would surely include a way to spoof the Sense Evil spell. How would delvers react to this? The adventure is in finding out!

Love Hurts. Mythology is full of romances between mortals and supernatural beings: faeries, angels, and even undead . . . so why not demons? The traditional answer is that demons are Evil and thus can't experience love; lecherous ones that mate with humans always do so through either force or deception.

Yet it's conceivable that a demon who encounters a sufficiently fit and powerful mortal could come to see that person as their favorite for entirely lustful reasons, and value them as an ally in violent matters – two selfish motivations suitable for a demon. The demon might not feel love, but something more akin to *attachment*; the mortal could love (some faiths command loving everyone, however sinful). Delvers are fit and powerful, and valuable allies; an interesting long-term storyline would involve a succubus that gradually transitions from “that annoying monster that flies away before we can kill it” to “Ed the Barbarian's better half.”



TERROR BIRD

Divination has determined that in the epochs before Man (and most other tool-users besides elves, who claim to have witnessed all of Creation firsthand), the world was home to many flightless proto-birds that ran around on two legs, eating anything smaller and slower than themselves. Predictably, after one school of wizards scryed this, another went to work recreating the beasts “to advance our understanding of natural philosophy.” Equally true to form (for wizards), somebody in the latter group decided they could improve on Nature.

The terror bird is the end product of this magical tinkering. It’s 10’ from beak to claw, and has a *much* bigger head – and scarier beak – than any normal flightless bird (say, an emu or ostrich, although the monster’s nearest mundane relatives are seriemas), and a shorter, far thicker neck. This makes its bite frighteningly powerful. Perhaps worse (as its creators learned at great loss of life), the larger brain makes it extremely cunning . . . imagine the craftiest, most evil-minded parrot you’ve ever encountered, and you might come close.

The other major change the wizards made was to grow the bird’s wings into a second set of wickedly clawed legs. This allowed a beast that was already well-adapted for land movement to run even faster. It actually *needs* the forelimbs to

support its massive head and neck, and cannot stand upright on its hind legs.

Terror birds don’t see armed-and-armored adventurers as being more dangerous than many other things they hunt, but don’t regard them as *less* dangerous, either. They have the intelligence to bide their time, pick off stragglers, identify the softest parts of armor, and not stick a claw in front of a weapon (that sturdy *beak* is a whole other story). Their brains give them outstanding situational awareness, too – their attacks are well-aimed, and they can use their beaks to parry blows. And like parrots, they’re capable mimics, an ability they use to lure people into ambush.

On that last point, it’s important to note that terror birds nearly always operate in pairs, and never come at prey from the same side. If you can see only one, *circle up* – the other is behind you, and at the speed these things run, it’s a second or two away at most. The GM should roll vs. Naturalist *in secret* and mention this fact on a success.

ST: 25	HP: 25	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 8/20
IQ: 6	Per: 12	SM: +2
HT: 12	FP: 12	DR: 1
Dodge: 10	Parry: 12	



Beak (16): 3d+2 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Likes to attempt *two* attacks as a Rapid Strike, at effective skill 10. Reach C-2.

Front Claw (16): 2d+3 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Hind Claw (14): 2d+4 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Chummy; Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Move (Ground); Nictitating Membrane 1; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Quadruped; Striking ST 4 (Bite); Trickster (12); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-16; Mimicry (all)-12; Observation-12; Running-14; Stealth-14; Tracking-12.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: Terror birds are smart enough that Animal spells *won't* work – use Mind Control magic (at triple cost for SM +2). They're also cunning enough to use Mimicry skill to imitate harmless animals or to “speak” in words, Observation skill to figure out who has ranged weapons or casts spells (*before* they attack), and Tracking skill to cover their tracks. However, they're not intelligent enough to negotiate – they just want to eat you. Their large, colorful feathers are worth \$7 per pound, and the average terror bird has about 60 lbs. of plumage.

Terror Bird Adventure Seeds

There's Something Out There Waiting For Us, And It Ain't No Man. The delvers are given what seems like a classic “Please help!” quest: Bad guys are preying on a peaceful settlement in the jungle (or forest, swamp, or other overgrown terrain). The locals have heard voices, villagers have gone missing, and whoever is responsible has been covering their tracks. All signs point to another village, reputed to be a tribe of cannibals led by a witch doctor who collects shrunken heads. The reality is that a smarter-than-usual terror bird (see *Tales of Terror*) is trying to encourage the two communities to send out more scouting parties it can gobble up . . . and seems to enjoy the chaos it's creating more than it enjoys eating people. But the adventurers *won't know that* – at least, not at first – and may find themselves attacking another, more-or-less inoffensive village, then embroiled in guerrilla warfare, and finally attacked by one or a group of terror birds.

Til Her Daddy Takes The T-Bird Away. A wealthy heiress who's definitely on the wacky side wants a terror bird as a mount – she read about it in a book written by some wizard, and wizards know what they're talking about, right? Of course, the author was one of the wizards eaten by the terror birds they created, but that little detail is lost to history. Still, the quest-giver is a *rich* lunatic, and offering an exorbitant sum – whatever it takes to tempt the PCs – for a

TALES OF TERROR

Despite their strength and size, terror birds are ultimately just animals – and ones without much DR at that – so high-powered delvers are liable to see them as pests rather than as serious opponents. The GM *could* accept that they're fodder, stop using them after a certain point, or even ramp up their defenses.

There are more interesting options, though. Like many animals that stalk and kill (ordinary) people and leave few survivors with a clear memory of anything but a blur in the bushes, terror birds have inspired a body of folklore. To challenge adventurers, some of it might be *true*.

Bird-Brains: Birds have efficient brains, and the brains of terror birds outmass those of many humanoids. Higher IQ is possible! As adventurers won't likely talk philosophy with them, make this interesting by having each +1 to IQ give +1 not just to Will, Per, and IQ-, Will-, and Per-based skills, but to *all* skills. Thus, an IQ 10 specimen – as smart as the average human – has Will 16, Per 16, Brawling-20 (giving Parry 14), Mimicry-16, Observation-16, Running-18, Stealth-18, and Tracking-16.

Devil Bird. Some stories claim wizards used *demonic* magic to mutate terror birds, and say their screech (Penetrating Voice) heralds death. To make them deadlier in a straight-up fight, give them the wail attack of the bayanganaga (pp. 6-7).

Flocking Hell! By dint of having IQ 6, terror birds are sapient. They're already too smart for Animal spells, and smart enough to grasp language (*Adventurers*, p. 9) – indeed *many* tales report mysterious cries just before an attack. If they can communicate, it's a short step to them making deals among themselves. When their prey is too dangerous for a pair to take down, they might attack in threes, fours, or more.

Speak and Spell: Ordinary IQ 6 terror birds can't learn magic but might mimic the words – and being wizardly creations, they could possess “residual Magery” that means this is enough to cast a spell. Assume they can cast one, *maybe* two spells; using words alone requires skill 15+ (*Spells*, p. 10). These spells are always ones that have no others as prerequisites, good choices being Haste for chasing down victims even faster, Ignite Fire for starting forest fires to drive prey their way, Sound for diversions, Test Food to check bait for poison, and Keen Sense, Seek Food, Sense Foes, and Sense Life for hunting.

live bird (“Oh, eggs would be nice, too, but the bestiary says these creatures take four years to grow big enough to ride, and who can wait that long?”). Heroes who accept the job have to find some way to bring in a one-ton bird that can't be subdued with Animal spells and is about as strong as six normal men. “By next week, please, because that's when Daddy gets back and I want it to be a surprise.” How her wealthy, powerful father reacts could lead to its own adventure.

TOMB BUG

This monstrosity's moniker has nothing to do with burial places or necromancy. It's a nod to the way the thing stores people in suspended animation underground, similar to an Entombment spell (*Spells*, p. 27). The important differences are that the process is less-than-instantaneous – the victim is dragged off screaming and *slowly* loses consciousness – and that a tomb bug inoculates its prey with its young.

The tomb bug appears to be an outsized (10'- to 12'-long, 800- to 900-lb.) arthropod of some kind. A distinct head, thorax, and abdomen make it tempting to conclude "giant insect," but *eight* legs are as common as six, and these and its exoskeleton come closer to those of crustaceans. Its toothy mandibles aren't found on anything natural.

A hunting tomb bug erupts from beneath prey – or from a wall behind or beside its quarry, if underground – and strikes with its venomous bite. This may count as surprise, causing mental stun: -4 to active defenses, no retreat allowed. Those attacked from the side or below defend at another -2; those taken from behind have *no* defense. The turn after a successful bite, the monster tunnels away *carrying the victim*, its escape route collapsing behind it. It holds on (with effective ST 42) until venom and suffocation put its prey into suspended animation. Then things get unpleasant.

The turn after the victim falls comatose, the bug injects its young, which are blood-borne parasites at this stage. As these grow and eat, they inflict 1 HP per day – but the victim *won't die*, thanks to the venom, until at -5xHP. Then the corpse explodes (and is beyond resurrection) and a number of hatchlings equal to the incubator's HP score scurry off to seek more food; see *The Little Things*.

If an incubator is rescued before exploding, they can be revived with spells – Awaken (they're considered drugged), Neutralize Poison, or Instant Neutralize Poison – or a universal antidote (*Adventurers*, p. 117). If awakened at -1xHP or worse, they must make HT rolls to avoid dying (*Exploits*, p. 59), so it's wise to heal *before* reviving. Either way, the bugs remain, eating away 1 HP/day, which *can* kill a revived victim; removing them uses the rules in *Horrible Grubs* (*Exploits*, p. 63).

A tomb bug normally strikes just once – it needs only one victim. If its initial target proves too strong (ST 21+) or heavy (more than 320 lbs. with gear), though, it lets go and grabs somebody else. If the initial bite kills the subject, or someone who wasn't envenomed suffocates to death, the bug abandons the corpse and returns to try again.

ST: 20	HP: 20	Speed: 7.00
DX: 12	Will: 13	Move: 8
IQ: 4	Per: 10	
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: +2
Dodge: 11	Parry: N/A	DR: 6

Huge Mandibles (14): 2d+3 cutting + venom. Treat as weapon, not as body part! If the target is bitten, then injured or not, they're also *grappled* with effective ST 42 due to Lifting ST and Wrestling skill. The bug wants live prey, so it doesn't do damage on later turns – it heads underground. Reach C, 1.

THE LITTLE THINGS

Small tomb bugs bursting from a corpse quickly grow into big ones. They *don't* grab people, have venom, or use victims as incubators. They just *eat*.

Hatchling

ST: 5	HP: 5	Speed: 6.50
DX: 12	Will: 11	Move: 7
IQ: 3	Per: 9	
HT: 11	FP: 13	SM: -1
Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Mandibles (12): 1d-3 cutting. Reach C.

Traits: As adult, but with Lifting ST 5 and Nictitating Membrane 2.

Skills: Brawling-12; Stealth-12; Tracking-14; Wrestling-12.

Juvenile

ST: 10	HP: 10	Speed: 6.75
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 7
IQ: 4	Per: 10	
HT: 12	FP: 13	SM: 0
Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 4

Mandibles (13): 1d-1 cutting. Reach C.

Traits: As adult, but with Lifting ST 10 and Nictitating Membrane 4.

Skills: Brawling-13; Stealth-13; Tracking-15; Wrestling-13.

Young Adult

ST: 15	HP: 15	Speed: 7.00
DX: 12	Will: 13	Move: 8
IQ: 4	Per: 10	
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: +1
Dodge: 11	Parry: N/A	DR: 6

Mandibles (14): 1d+3 cutting. Reach C.

Traits: As adult, but with Lifting ST 15.

Skills: Brawling-14; Stealth-14; Tracking-15; Wrestling-14.

Subterranean Drag: If on the turn *after* the biting grapple the bug isn't defeated and the victim hasn't broken free, it drags its quarry underground unless that person has ST 21+, in which case it switches to someone less beefy. It travels 16 yards, which takes two turns at Move 8; if victim and gear weigh more than 320 lbs. and would slow the bug, it picks on somebody else. Each yard traveled inflicts a 1-point cutting attack; DR 1+ protects completely, but those with DR 0 lose 1 HP/yard to abrasion. Then the bug holds on until its prey falls insensible from venom and/or *Suffocation* (*Exploits*, p. 70) – those who breathe lose 1 FP/turn during and after the journey. Those without biting injury aren't envenomed but *are* still dragged underground and held, and die slowly of suffocation. Dragging and holding isn't an "attack," but the bug can do nothing else during this time.

Venom: The mandibles inject venom to keep prey unconscious and alive for incubating and feeding young bugs. Those who take even 1 HP of biting injury have venom in their system and must roll vs. HT at -4 on the turn bitten and the next *three* turns (four times total). Each failure costs FP equal to margin of failure but also *heals* 2 HP per FP lost. If a poisoned victim reaches 0 FP for any reason (e.g., they make the HT rolls but hit 0 FP due to suffocation) – or has 0 or fewer FP when injected – FP drain and healing end, and the effects of an irresistible Suspended Animation spell (*Spells*, p. 40) set in. Only an Awaken, Neutralize Poison, or Instant Neutralize Poison spell, or a universal antidote, can counter this.

Traits: Absolute Direction; Combat Reflexes; Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe (but see notes); Extra Legs (Six or Eight Legs); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Lifting ST 20; Nictitating Membrane 6; No Fine Manipulators; Resistant to Poison 3; Sensitive Touch; Subsonic Hearing; Tunneling (see notes); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-14; Stealth-14; Tracking-15; Wrestling-14.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: Strictly speaking, the bug *does* breathe and would suffocate in water or vacuum, but it can't suffocate while in contact with minerals. Can tunnel through earth/stone at full Move, navigating via Absolute Direction and Dark Vision. Uses vibration-based Tracking rolls to stalk; success lets it judge the ST and weight of suitable quarry, and emerge beneath or beside them, with success by 5+ enabling an attack from behind.

Make a Poisons roll to milk the bug's venom, at -1 per minute after death; each point of success gathers one dose (minimum one), which is enough to craft an equal number of balms of regeneration (*Adventurers*, p. 116) by making an Alchemy roll for each (failure ruins that dose).

Tomb Bug Adventure Seeds

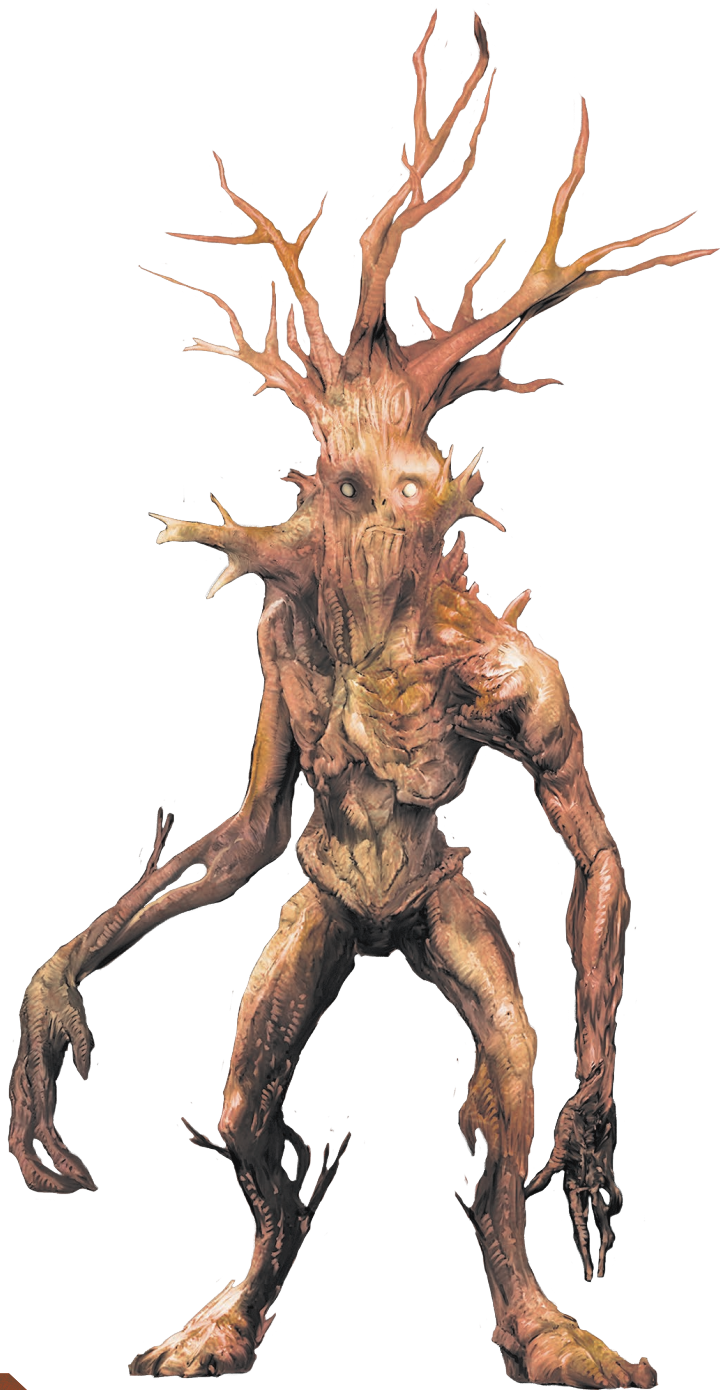
Bug Food. The obvious quest is for someone to beg the heroes to rescue a tomb-bug victim. The adventurers will need a means of finding the subject (e.g., Earth Vision or Seeker spell), a way to disentomb them (digging or Shape Earth, but *not* Entombment in reverse – that's strictly counter-magic), and the resources to heal them, revive them, and get the bugs out. The commotion is sure to attract the original bug, searching for a replacement incubator. It could bring *several*.

A Little Drop of Poison. If someone needs more healing than the heroes can swing, they may be tempted to get someone envenomed by a tomb bug – perhaps using a Frailty spell to ensure they *don't* resist, and bolstering FP with Lend Energy so they don't reach 0 FP. The catch? Attracting a specific, dangerous monster to a particular person, letting a wounded friend be bitten for *more* injury, and keeping the bug from carrying off its prey. That last part might be optional if the delvers are banking on a *Bug Food* quest later on, leaving their ally safely in suspended animation.



TRÉTROLD

Trétrolde (singular: *trétrold*) are intelligent humanoid plants that stand 13' to 15' tall (SM +2). Although they resemble trees in many respects – sporting bark, branches, and leaves – they're fully ambulatory, “rooting” their outsized feet only to absorb water and nutrients, and to anchor themselves against knockback in combat. Those who've fought them



often describe them as giants (pp. 22-23) made of wood rather than flesh.

Guardians of ancient wilderness, trétrolde are rarely encountered by members of city-building races except when primeval forests are endangered. When adventurers enter such lands (say, on a quest to explore uncharted wilds), the trétrolde observe from afar, hiding among the trees and using their keen senses; they're especially sensitive to heat and vibration. Visitors who cut live wood or set uncontained blazes (tended fires built from dead wood are tolerated) will soon be accosted by a number of trétrolde at least equal in size to their group. Make a reaction roll (3d), with the only modifiers being -5 per previous warning and a bonus equal to the party's highest level of Green Thumb (*Adventurers*, p. 50). A result of 10+ means a stern warning; anything worse, an attack.

When *civilization* encroaches on trétrolde-protected forests – most often by logging, clearing land for farms or settlements, or sending in armies to exterminate the creatures – the monsters go on the offensive. They prefer guerrilla tactics, striking at night (when their Infravision gives them the upper hand), often when wagons and armored warriors are bogged down in loose forest soil. Adventurers entering such conflict zones are likely to be assumed hostile. If the GM wants to leave it to chance, roll for a reaction as above but apply a basic -10.

Angry trétrolde rely on massive strength and hard wooden branches to bash enemies, and thick bark to stop blows – even their “eyes” are tough. They're also Homogeneous and thus lack vital areas; moreover, every part of a trétrold counts as a weapon for the purpose of parrying or being parried (while trétrolde have “hands,” they never use *actual* weapons, which they deem unnatural and unnecessary). Their only notable weakness is a vulnerability to flame, which they dislike but don't fear. Trétrolde defending their lands against invaders are particularly dangerous, enjoying +2 to attack, defense, damage, and resistance rolls!

For travelers who respect Nature, though, trétrolde make valuable allies. They never forget anything that happened in their lands (even centuries ago), can track down almost anybody lurking there, and know the fastest and safest ways to get just about anywhere. They have a basic idea of what's going on with the spirits in their realm, too. They also have a deep knowledge of Nature in general, particularly plants, with which they can actually speak and bargain. On an outdoor adventure, a druid who has Green Thumb and Plant Empathy might be able to make friends with a trétrold and render the quest *much* easier – though the race's tendency to stick to “the old ways” is sometimes frustrating.

ST: 25	HP: 50	Speed: 6.25
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 8
IQ: 10	Per: 12	
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: +2
Dodge: 9	Parry: 10	DR: 8

Stomp (12): 2d+7 crushing. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-2.

Whipping Branch (14): 2d+6 crushing. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-2.

Traits: Absolute Direction; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Sleep; Eidetic Memory; Ham-Fisted 2; Hidebound; High Pain Threshold; Higher Purpose 2 (Defend forests); Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Infravision; Limited Camouflage (Woodlands); Nictitating Membrane 8; No Blood; No Neck; Outdoorsman 4; Plant Empathy*; Sense of Duty (Nature); Speak with Plants*; Subsonic Hearing; Temperature Tolerance 1 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 1 (Heat); Terrain Adaptation (Soft/loose soil); Unfazeable; Vulnerability (Fire x2).

Skills: Brawling-14; Camouflage-14 (16 if motionless among trees); Hidden Lore (Nature Spirits)-10; Immobile Stance-14†; Intimidation-14; Naturalist-14; Navigation-17; Observation-14; Stealth-12 (14 if motionless among trees); Tracking-17; Weather Sense-14.

Class: Plant.

Notes: Higher Purpose gives +2 on all dice rolls whenever the trétrold is punishing the specific individuals who've menaced its forest; this bonus is supernatural, and doesn't apply against adventurers who stumble into a conflict zone without doing anything wrong. Trétrolde are too intelligent to be affected by the Plant Control spell, and *all* Regular spells cost triple for size. Some trétrolde are druids with IQ 11+ and Power Investiture 1-6 (Druidic); they prefer Earth and Plant spells. Trétrolde are generally *peaceful*, but that doesn't necessarily align with humanoid notions of *good*. Most are willing to talk, if not negotiate, even with defilers of their forest.

* Works exactly like the Druidic ability of the same name; see *Adventurers*, pp. 23-24.

† Works exactly like the chi skill of the same name; see *Adventurers*, p. 32.

Trétrold Adventure Seeds

Clues Don't Grow On Trees. A person of interest is somewhere in a vast, unexplored forest; perhaps they're lost, maybe they're hiding, or possibly someone has kidnapped them and is lying low. Neither mundane tracking nor magic has had any success, which the locals claim is because the woods are haunted – which they are, by trétrolde. The adventurers receive the quest of contacting the trétrolde and bringing back the subject. Finding cunning woodland beings who are on native soil and don't *want* to be found is tricky; one obvious way is to do something they don't like and hope they decide to

VARIANT TRÉTROLDE

There may be several types of trétrolde corresponding to different mundane trees, with the listed stats describing common beech- and oak-inspired strains. Distinguishing between these requires a Naturalist roll.

Tall: Trétrolde inspired by some ash and fir varieties may be taller than usual. SM +3 (at least 21') gives ST 35, HP 70, Move 9, 4d+7/4d+8 damage, and reach C-3; SM +4 (at least 30') gives ST 50, HP 100, Move 10, 5d+12/5d+13 damage, and reach C-4.

Stout: Cypress- and baobab-like trétrolde could be extremely *broad*, adding +1 or +2 to SM for bulk, not height. Use the stats above for SM +3 and +4, but instead of increasing Move and reach, raise DR to 9 or 10.

Flexible: Willow trétrolde and similar very supple varieties might merit +1 or +2 to DX – raising Basic Speed and DX-based skills (Brawling, Immobile Stance, and Stealth) – and gain the Double-Jointed advantage.

Thorny: Trétrolde modeled on honey locusts, acacias, and other trees with massive thorns could leave horrible gashes, converting damage type to cutting.

Everything Else: The baobab is famously fire-resistant, so baobab trétrolde may lack Vulnerability, or at least reduce the multiplier to ×1.5. Trétrolde inspired by hard species like the quebracho, lignum vitae, and ironwood might have DR 9-12 without being visibly different. Trees like the gypie-gypie, manchineel, and tree nettle could suggest trétrolde that add 1 point to *1d* toxic or corrosion damage as a follow-up.

talk instead of attack, which could backfire badly. Even if the heroes manage to get in touch and learn where to look, there's the possibility that the individual they're seeking has riled up other trétrolde against humanoids, whether deliberately or by setting a fire to stay warm and alive.

Wood Work. Although trétrolde are strong and sturdy, fleshy races live in populous settlements defended using Fire spells and flaming arrows; thus, when the tree-folk need a job done in town, they work through intermediaries. In this case, a trétrold was taken, probably by lumberjacks, and its associates want it back. They contact one of the party's outdoorsmen (druid, barbarian, or scout) outside city walls and offer to hand over the hoarded goods of *dozens* of adventurers who died in the woods in exchange for the return of their kin-tree or its remains. Helping monsters is risky business, but this mission is extra-tough, as the trail leads to the mayor's home, a prominent temple, or other high-profile building, where the dead trétrold – still recognizable – has been used as banister, column, or newel. Recovering it is sure to be a challenging task that could anger local bigwigs, and returning it in such an undignified state may trigger a war . . . but the loot is *really* tempting.

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