THE HOUNDS OF HALTHRAG KEEP

Run for your life! You've been captured and dumped into a precarious situation, over which you have absolutely no control. Armed with only your legs, a cool head, and whatever junk you can find, you might - if the Various Gods are willing - make it out alive and in one piece! Also, it would be nice if you got rich and took your revenge upon those who have wronged you, but alive and in one piece would be fine!

A punishing funnel adventure for exactly one zero-level adventurer and the debut of The Hapless Henchman Press!

COMPATIBLE WITH DCC RPG

- A fully usable, condensed version of the DCC rules, optimised for solo play
- A bunch of neat pseudo-random tables, just like you like!
- A potential for practically unlimited (note: not mathematically accurate) number of grisly deaths!
- Original monsters to drive you to the brink of despair!
- Exploding Laser Pistols!
- Hyperbole!
- Familiar monsters so you're a little more relaxed and less defensive!
- Weird extra-dimensional entities that want to touch your brain-stem!
- Zombies!
- More Zombies!
- ZOMBORGS!
- Magic spells that any 0-level DCC schmuck would be proud to use!

THE HOUNDS OF HALTHRAG KEEP

Noah M. Stevens

In case you wonder, all the torturous things in here were made by me, Noah Stevens, with the exception of two pieces of art and the text of Vendel Re'Yune. The two art works are:

The illustration by Russ Nicholson that heads the Random Encounters section and the cover illustration by Sam Schultz.

Find more about Russ Nicholson at

http://russnicholson.blogspot.com/

Find more about Sam Schultz at

http://www.patreon.com/swordguys?ty=a

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Paul's blog for his publishing company The Mystic Bull is here:

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I look forward to tasting the sweet, sweet tears of your rage, and the statistically-less-likely cries of Huzzah, questions, comments, and feedback of all kinds, good or bad or whatever.

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HHSOLO 1 "The Hounds of Halthrag Keep"

Introduction

A modified DCC Rules Set

This is an adventure for a single player, playing the part of a character forced by marauders to do their dirty work for them, under the most untenable and dangerous conditions. It represents a simplistic introduction to one of the unique aspects of the Dungeon Crawl Classics role-playing game, namely the "funnel" and play as a 0-level character before that character blossoms into the role of a fully fledged hero. The scenario is meant for a single player solo play, with no Judge. Lone characters played in this module may be used, if they survive, as a basis for Level 1 DCC characters without modification if the Judge of that game permits it.

Dungeon Crawl Classics is a game generally played by groups of players running Player Characters, with a Judge or Keeper moderating and coordinating the story. Since the scope of the HHSOLO 1 game is very much smaller, only a very small subset of the DCC rules is necessary. If this is your introduction to DCC, your character that survives Halthrag Keep will need a larger and more diverse set of rules, possibly including rules for magic, combat, and adventuring. Not to mention the bestiary, rules for interacting with powerful entities and gods, and… But I digress. These are the DCC rules, available at the Goodman Games web site.

If you already own Dungeon Crawl Classics, many of these rules will be familiar to you and the modifications will be easy to learn. If not, then think of what's given below as a dramatically slimmed down DCC rule set – the full version will allow very complicated and exciting adventures for a group of inexperienced, would-be heroes (i.e. a "funnel group"), or a somewhat smaller party of stalwart adventurers.

In this particular story you are a lone commoner, fighting for his or her life who is about to encounter adventure of the most deadly sort. The rules presented here are close enough to the actual DCC rules that when and if you decide to move on to 'real' DCC, you will be familiar enough to 'upgrade' your character and commence playing with others. Veteran DCC players will understand after playing through this module that the rare character that escapes Halthrag Keep alive will be slightly overpowered compared to typical funnel survivors.

Don't be discouraged by repeated losses and deaths, O player! This is in keeping with the spirit of DCC. A character that survives this adventure will have taken the full brunt of an evil place, surrounded by conniving men and women and creatures that are pawns of the powers of Chaos. That character will be fully ready to take his or her place in the titanic cosmic struggle of which Halthrag Keep is only a very small part. Only the most cunning and artful of characters (and players) will enact meaningful vengeance upon the evil forces at work, here. Most will die unmourned and forgotten.

RULES

R01) Dice rolling conventions - If you are new to Dungeon Crawl Classics, it's likely you don't have access to the "Weird" Zocchi dice – namely the d5, the d7, the d14, the d16, and the d30. You may already have the standard RPG players' dice – the d4, the d6, the d8, d10, d12, and d20. In order to keep things simple, only these more commonly found dice are used in this module. If you don't have even these, a variety of online random number generators exist – figuring these out is beyond the scope of the rules laid out here, but an intrepid soul such as yourself is certain to sort out this logistical issue (but you may try the Purple Sorcerer if all else avails you not). Once you expand your horizons and move on to the larger DCC world, only a modest investment in polyhedra or software will allow you open access to all kinds of weird random numbers.

Any time a roll is called for in this game, it will be designated with the following convention (true to most forms of dice-based RPGs). You'll see XdY, and sometimes a + or – after. The X is the number of times to roll a single die, or the number of dice to roll all at once. The Y is the type of die; the + or - sign tells you how much to add or subtract to the roll. For example 3d6-2 means "Roll a d6 three times, and subtract 2 from the total". This would give you a range from 1 to 16, in this example.

R02) Ability scores - The ability scores for characters in DCC are as follows: Strength, Agility, Stamina, Personality, Intelligence, and Luck. In order to determine your character's scores, roll 3d6 in the order they are listed. Write each total in the box next to the statistic on the character sheet. The higher the score the better - see Table HH1 for the modifiers that each score gives. Strength affects combat damage and chance to hit with a melee weapon, Agility impacts your character's base Armor Class and Reflex Saving Throws, Stamina affects Hit Points and Fortitude Saving Throws. Personality will impact your dealings with intelligent entities and your Will Saving Throw, and Luck… Well, Luck is important for reasons that will become obvious. It is possible to take damage to ability scores from the special attacks of monsters or other dangerous events in Halthrag Keep. If at any time any of your ability scores reaches zero or less, you succumb to adversity and have died. Follow the rules below for Death.

Table HH1

Score	Modifier
3	-3
4,5	-2
6,7,8	-1
9,10,11,12	None
13,14,15	+1
16,17	+2
18	+3

R03) Lucky roll - Each character that is generated in DCC has a Lucky Roll, some universal circumstance upon which Fate plays an important part for that character. Luck scores may vary through the course of the game; as the Luck score rises and falls this may impact a particular roll or event that the character may encounter. When this is the case, the Luck modifier applies to the given situation. In this module, a slightly smaller chart TABLE HH2 determines your Lucky Roll. Unfortunately, if your Luck modifier is negative – for example if you have less than a 9 in Luck, then you may actually have the equivalent of an "Unlucky Roll". May this drive your decision to flee or parley or not as the situation calls for!

R04) Occupation - Just as in our world, most people on the fantasy world of Aereth have crummy and unfulfilling jobs. Nobody starts as an intrepid adventurer – your character will become one through adventuring. This module uses a pared-down version of the random occupation chart from DCC for the sake of simplicity. In the usual game, characters may attempt to use their occupational knowledge to attempt skill rolls with a d20 instead of the d10 that an untrained character would use. There are some instances in this module that skilled versus unskilled knowledge will become useful. If you opt to use another occupational chart to generate your character, when you are prompted by the text to decide whether your character has certain knowledge, you'll have to judge for yourself. Be honest - a clerk would know how to read, but she probably doesn't know carpentry! See Table HH3 for the modified occupation chart. Once you have played a few characters in the module, you could conceivably try other methods of occupational generation (see the Appendix for some awesome links).

R05) Money - Characters in DCC start out with a small amount of copper coinage, called "Pfennigs" in this neck of the woods. You may generate this amount for your Halthrag Keep character by rolling 3d6 and writing that amount in the "money" entry to represent the number of pfennigs you start with. It is very likely you will lose all of this money quite quickly, so stay awake and alert. There may be times when you can buy things. The next denomination is "Stags", made of silver, followed by golden "Crowns".

R06) Equipment - One important aspect of the normal DCC "funnel game" is that characters that survive the tragic events that cause the deaths of their companions get to keep the things their former fellow adventurers no longer have use for. Your character is alone in exploring Halthrag Keep, but still needs material goods! Your occupation determines your basic starting possessions, but you also have another item. Roll for it on TABLE HH4. This item may very well save your life, so do your best to hang onto it!

R07) Inventory - In the spirit of some of the old adventuring game books of yore, your character may carry ONLY two (2) hand to hand combat weapons and one (1) missile weapon at a time, as well as ten (10) miscellaneous items, i.e. as many items as there are entries on the character sheet. Please note that ammunition for missile weapons counts as one entry on the equipment list. If you stumble upon an item in the Keep entries, it will have a check mark by it – you may take it and check the box indicating that you have it and it is no longer found in that Keep entry location. Also, you may take any item written in the marginal journal entries or leave an item from your inventory by writing it in the margin and erasing it from your sheet at any time after combats are resolved in that entry.

R08) Hit Points and Armor Class – In DCC 0-level characters like yours start with 1d4 Hit Points representing the vitality and survivability of the character. For 0-level characters, when Hit Points are winnowed down to zero through combat or other damage, that character is dead. Since this module is designed to be somewhat unforgiving, you may give your character the full 4 Hit Points to start, plus or minus your Stamina modifier. This is a divergence from the normal play of DCC, but you will find that you will need those Hit Points to make it through Halthrag Keep alive to escape or take your revenge upon your captors. A character's or monster's Armor Class is the Difficulty Class of an attack against it. Your character's Armor Class starts at 10 and is adjusted by the kind of armor he or she wears, as well as his or her Agility modifier. So a character with Worn-out Chainmail (AC bonus +2) and Agility of 17 (giving a +2 AC modifier) has a total AC of 14.

R09) Skill Checks, Difficulty Class, and the Action Die – In DCC, for every task whose important outcome is undetermined, a Difficulty Class is assigned. The DC could be 10 – this is about the difficulty that a person with no special skills or experiences related to the task might find very difficult, almost impossible to accomplish without lots of luck. The occupational skill rolls are a type of DC roll, in that having a background in the task can improve your roll from a 1d10 roll to a 1d20 to accomplish the task. These rolls are made with the character's Action Die – in all cases in HHSOLO this will be a d20, but in 'normal' DCC, more experienced characters can have higher-powered dice. Anytime an entry says "Make a DC X roll and add Y modifier", roll a d20 and add the appropriate or stated modifier. If you roll higher than the DC, you are assumed to have succeeded.

R10) Burning Luck – at any time in the game, you may need to make a roll to determine success or failure at some endeavor. Whatever the rolled result is, you may "burn" Luck to increase your chances of success, provided your current Luck score is above 1. When you burn 1 point of Luck, it adds 1 point to your total of the roll and modifier.

R11) Death and The Journal - You will notice that the Entries portions of the module have margins that are ruled. This is "The Journal" given to you by your persecutors so that the demonic being they send along with your character can bring back key information if and when your character dies. If you die, make a note that your character's body may be found in the margin next to the Keep Entry number where he or she was killed, unless the encounter text or the Keep Entry text tells you otherwise. This way, should your next character find his or her way back to that part of the Keep, he or she may take all the stuff the previous character had, if it's there. There is a good deal of magic that reanimates the dead in Halthrag Keep, so don't crumple up your character sheet in frustration. It could be that you might bump into the dead character on the way back to that portion of the keep, or afterward. Set the sheet aside, and if you do not encounter the Reanimated Corpse of Your Character (any of the previously dead ones) before you return to that Entry, then when you do return there, roll a 1d6 and add your current Luck modifier. On a total of 5 or higher, the cold body of the previous character is there, with all of its possessions intact. Choose the items from the dead character's inventory that you will take with you.

R12) Encounters - In the Bestiary portion of the full DCC rule book, monsters are given a chunk of text that helps you understand how to play them. The simplified rules only use a small portion of that chunk, since not all the rules for things like movement will be needed. Here is what the stat blocks look like:

SAMPLE MONSTER: Init -2; Atk sword +2 (1d8); AC 18; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +6; AL N, Parley 8. XP 1. TR 2

The "Init" is the monster's initiative modifier, the number added to the 1d20 roll at the start of combat to see who goes first. Highest total wins initiative. The text after "Atk" describes the type of attack the monster uses, and the bonus on its action die, followed by the amount of damage a successful attack causes your character, in parentheses. The number after "AC" is its Armor Class, the number that your character must score higher than on a d20 to hit. The Hit Points the monster has are just like your Hit Points – in almost all cases when the monster's hit points reach zero it is defeated. The entries following SV are the monster's bonus to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will saving throws. They are included here mostly for completeness' sake, since there are only a few small cases in this module in which a monster might need to make a Saving Throw. 'AL' indicates the creature's alignment and whether it will Parley with you – usually 'C' for Chaotic, generally having no bearing on the game unless the Keep Entry states that it does. The monsters or people your character encounters in this game book generally just want to eat or murder your character. The XP entry is for the number of experience points you earn for defeating this monster. TR stands for 'Treasure', and indicates the number of rolls you make on TABLE HH5, to determine what your character finds after the battle is finished.

R13) Parleying – First, in the monster's stat block, after the Alignment code, you will see "Parley" if you have the chance to reason with the monster before combat proceeds. If this is the case, then you may make a Personality check at the number listed after 'Parley'. The 'Parley' score is the DC value for the Personality Check– if the check succeeds, or if you burn Luck to make it succeed, then you and the monster come to an uneasy truce, and it wanders off to murder someone else, or whatever it is it does. Follow the directions in the appropriate entry.

R14) Initiative - Second, determine initiative by rolling 1d20 for your character, and add your character's Initiative Modifier, dependent upon the current Agility of your character. Roll another 1d20 and add the monster's Initiative Modifier. Whoever's modified score is highest attempts to strike first in hand to hand combat, that is, "wins initiative"

R15) Missile attacks - If your character has a missile weapon, then you may attack with the missile weapon once before combat begins if you win the initiative roll, and then follow up with a hand-to-hand attack. You may choose to use the missile weapon in combat, but then you must opt to strike second in combat regardless of the initiative roll.

R16) Attack Round - Roll 1d20 for yourself, and add your Strength modifier for hand to hand weapons or your Agility modifier for missile weapons. If your total is higher than the monster's Armor Class, then you hit! Roll your weapon's damage die and subtract it from the monster's Hit Point total. If your attack roll is less the monster's AC, then you miss – however you may burn Luck to increase your attack score. The rules for burning Luck are listed above. You may also elect to burn Luck to add to the total damage of your attack in very dire situations; 1 point of damage for 1 point of Luck.

Roll a d20 (i.e. the Action Die) for the monster, and add its attack bonuses, or else follow the text as listed in the entry. If the monster's modified attack roll is higher than your Armor Class, then it hits you and you must reduce your Hit Points by the score of its listed damage dice, or whatever the effect of its successful attack is.

R17) Fumbles - If you roll a 1 on any attack roll, then you have fumbled! This can happen to the monster, too. The Fumble Table is HH6, and is used for both monsters and players. Roll 1d6 and do what the table says.

R18) Critical Hits - Conversely, either you or the monster may roll a 'natural 20' on an attack roll. In this case, you or it has made a critical hit! Some amazing stroke of Luck has made the attack extra-impressive and damaging. In the normal DCC rules, monsters and characters have separate critical hit tables. The Critical Hit for HHSOLO1 is HH7, and is used for both player characters and monsters.

R19) Hit Points and Death – If your character's Hit Points fall to zero then he or she dies, as listed above. Make note of the Keep Entry in which he or she died, and put the character's name in the journal margin next to the Keep Entry. Your character is lost, but his or her loot may not be! Perhaps The Fates have set up your next character for success…

R20) Spell Casting - If you know a spell, then you may cast it during combat provided you do not attack that round. Let the monster attack you as normal, and then follow the directions of the spell. Characters don't leave behind knowledge of spells when they die, by the way. That knowledge disappears with their souls into the aether.

R21) Victory - If the monster's Hit Points fall to zero or less owing to attack or spell, then you win the combat. Add the monster's XP value to your XP total, and roll on the Treasure Table (TABLE HH5) to determine what your loot is. If there is no victor at the end of the Attack Round or after the Magic round, repeat the Attack and Spell Casting phases again until the combat is resolved (i.e. either your character or the monster dies or flees).

R22) Fleeing – If combat goes against you, you may still be able to flee. For randomly encountered monsters, there is sometimes a penalty for fleeing listed in its entry in the Random Encounters section. For Keep Entry monsters, fleeing may or may not be possible. If it is possible, then you may roll 1d20 and if the score is less than your Agility, then you may escape. In your haste you have lost 1 randomly determined item on your equipment list; you may modify the 1d10 result by your Luck modifier if you wish (this assumes you are following the normal Inventory rule). Write the item in the Journal Margin next to the Keep Entry from which you fled, coward! And don't forget to cross it off your list of equipment.

R23) Time – As you explore Halthrag Keep, desperate to find a way out, time inexorably passes. If you dally overlong, then night must fall. As night falls, the more dangerous monsters that stalk the keep come out. The moonlight may have effects upon the keep itself, and also upon your character. Each Keep Entry will tell you when to check a Turn Box on your character sheet. In DCC, 6 turns

equals 1 hour. Night will fall after 24 turns have taken place. We hope you will have escaped at that point or before, stalwart hero! That said, dangerous though it is, Halthrag Keep rewards courage more generously in the light of the moon…

R24) Light - It is best to bring a torch or lantern, or a magical source of light. No one will supply you with these items, although your character may start with some feeble source. They must be found and entered on your equipment list as any other tool. It is known that slavering monsters wander the keep and delight in devouring adventurers who wander in the darkness. The Keep Entry text will alert you when you need to be wary of these gruesome beasts – best have light on hand in these cases. In all cases, light sources indicate how many turns they last. For torches, as an example, this is 6 turns or 1 hour. Circle the turn box on your sheet to indicate when you light your source, and determine when the turn is that it will extinguish. Some events may extinguish your light source!

R25) Random Encounters - Whenever you move from one place in Halthrag Keep to another, there is a chance that you may bump into a wandering denizen or find an item. When this is called for in the entry, roll 1d10 and add or subtract your Luck modifier. On a total of 1 or less, you have encountered a monster and it has found you flat-footed. Proceed to combat immediately and lose initiative, without firing a missile weapon. On a total of 2 or 3, you encounter a Wandering Monster – consult the Wandering Monster portion of the rulebook, and follow the directions there. On a total of 12 or higher, you have found a random item: roll once on TABLE HH5 and take the item if you wish. Else, leave it there for the next lucky soul that wanders through by indicating it in the Journal margin.

When You Are Prepared To Face Halthrag Keep, Turn to

Keep Entry 1

Table HH2	
d10 Lucky Roll	Effects
1. Belligerent Drunk	Add Luck modifier to Attack Rolls
2. Slippery When Wet	Add Luck modifier to Initiative Rolls
3. Thick Skinned	Add Luck modifier to Armor Class
4. Bad Reputation	Add Luck modifier to Enemy Morale
5. Rabbit's Foot	Add Luck modifier to Flee Rolls
6. Moon Elves' Plaything	Modify Random Encounter Rolls at night
7. Seventh Son	Add Luck modifier to Spellcasting Rolls
8. Ghost Talker	Add Luck modifier to XP vs. Undead
9. People Person	Subtract Luck modifier from XP vs. Humans
10. Whispered Prophecy	Gain 1 XP at start, Re-Roll (once only)

Table HH3		
D20	0-Level Occupation	Trade Goods, Weapon (Damage)
1	Fisherman/-woman	Creel, Fishing pole (as Staff 1d6)
2	Tailor/Seamstress	Spool of Thread, Shears (as Dagger 1d4-1)
3	Foot Courier	Running Shoes, Club (1d4)
4	Coin Diver	Bamboo Snorkel, Knife (1d4)
5	Egg Snatcher	50' Hemp Rope, Knife (1d4)
6	Highwayman/-woman	Ugly Scarf, Crossbow (1d6) – 3 quarrels
7	Rat-catcher	Pugnacious Terrier (AC 14,HP 2), Knife (1d4)
8	Rag-picker	1d4 Bits of Interesting Trash, Knife (1d4)
9	Bank clerk	1d4 Pilfered Gems, Knife (1d4)
10	Cliff Diver	Striking Loincloth, Knife (1d4)
11	Mudlark	Thigh-high Boots, Trowel (as Knife 1d4)
12	Baker	1d4 Loaves of Bread, Baker's Peel (as Staff 1d6-1)
13	Tombstone Carver	Leather Gloves, Chisel (as Mace 1d6-1)
14	Food Cart Vendor	Chicken (AC 8, HP1), Peppermill (1d4-1)
15	Coffin Maker	1d4 Planks of Wood, Hammer (1d6)
16	Fletcher	1d10 Arrows, Dagger (1d4)
17	Bowyer	1d3 Arrows, Short Bow (1d6)
18	Puppeteer	1d6 Puppets, Big Puppet (as Club 1d6-1)
19	Barber	Jar of Leeches, Razor (1d4-1)
20	Coiffeur	1d3 Powdered Wigs, Dagger (1d4)

Table HH4 Random Starting Goods	
d20 roll	**Goods**
1	A frayed Hempen Rope, 50 feet
2	2 Torches (last for 6 turns each)
3	A Battered Shield (gives +1 to AC, no 2H weapons allowed)
4	A Steel Grappling Hook
5	d4 Iron Rations (use 1 to gain 1 HP after an encounter)
6	A Large Sack (adds 2 slots to your inventory)
7	A Lantern – enough oil to last d10 turns
8	A trusty Rusty Telescope
9	A Flask of Lamp Oil (enough to fill a lamp for 10 turns)
10	An Ill-fitting Leather Jerkin (AC 11)
11	A poorly-patched Leather Helmet, (gives +1 to AC)
12	Shoddy Throwing Knife (use as a missile once, -1 to hit, 1d4 damage)
13	Stout Leather Boots
14	A worm-eaten Black Grimoire
15	d4 Candles (gives light for 3 turns each)
16	Locket on a gold chain, inside is a picture of your spouse
17	3 Sprigs of Wolfsbane
18	A glowing Rune-Carved Stone
19	A silver and mother-of-pearl Comb, worth 5 GP
20	The stolen, Lurid Diary of an important public official

Table HH5 – Randomly Generated Treasure and Items			
1	An Engraved Brass Bell, the letters and pictographs make no sense	51	An Ivory Powder Horn, with 1d4 shots of Black Powder inside
2	1d6 chunks of glowing Space Rock†	52	A Golden Locket, the man and woman depicted inside look feverish
3	1 Torch (6 turns of light)	53	3 Iron Rations, you may eat one after a battle to regain 2 Hit Points
4	A Rusty Knife, 1d6 damage	54	A Fire Flower Potion, which will heal you of all damage when drunk, once
5	A Tooled Leather Helm (+1 AC)	55	A bit of Red Shale from atop the Red Tower, a souvenir worth 20 Silver Stags
6	A Purity Seal, dedicated to the Goddess Justicia (+1 to any roll, one time)	56	3 ounces of Quicksilver in a small crystal vial, worth 15 Gold Crowns
7	A somewhat moldy paper playing card, the Jack of Rubies	57	A Stone Tablet, describing the hideous Pit of Chaos
8	A Rusted Mace, 1d8 damage	58	A Faulty Silgurian Laser Pistol, a missile weapon that does 1d10 damage. If you roll a fumble with this weapon then it will explode and kill you and destroy everything you carry
9	A cracked Vial of Lamp Oil, with 1d8 turns of oil left inside	59	25 Silver Pistol Shot
10	A rotten Leather Flogging Whip, 1d4 damage	60	A Vistornoi-made Shield Breaker Charm +3 to a melee attack one time, then it disintegrates whether you hit or not
11	3 Torches (6 turns of light each)	61	A Walking Stick, the silver head carved into the shape of a growling wolf, 1d4 damage
12	1d8 Gold Crowns	62	An Inscribed Meteoric Iron Bell – strangely it has no clapper
13	1d20 Silver Stags	63	A very pointy Steel Stiletto, 1d4+2 damage
14	A weathered Short Sword, sturdy and serviceable, 1d6 damage	64	A wooden Actor's Sword, 1d4-1 points of damage (0 damage possible)
15	A half-rotten Studded Leather Cuirass (AC +2)	65	13 Arrows
16	1d4 chunks of Space Rock†	66	1d100+50 Silver Stags
17	1d10 Easterling Arrows	67	A Fancy Bronze Key
18	A Throwing Knife, missile weapon 1d4 damage (useable once)	68	A Serrated Dagger, 1d4 damage
19	A Tripe Ration, eating it will restore 1 HP but cause 1d4 damage to your Stamina; it will heal a companion dog of all damage.	69	A Parchment Flyer, listing the virtues of the Cat's Purr Inn in Marbourg
20	A sprig of Wolfsbane	70	A Bronze Mask of Ludronus, worth 1d100 Silver Stags
21	1d6 Black Candles (burn for 2 turns each)	71	A Cudgel, 1d6 damage. 47 notches carved on the handle
22	A slightly damaged Chainmail Shirt (AC bonus +3)	72	1d12 chunks of Space Rock†
23	1d10 Crossbow Quarrels	73	A clay tablet, containing the spell Lesser Ray of Logic (See Appendix S)
24	An Ivory Playing Card, The Fool's Goose	74	3 Torches
25	A Silver Mace, delicate and spindly, 1d4 damage	75	A Gold Ring, set with a Black Emerald, worth 250 Gold Crowns
26	A Vellum Map that leads to a fortune in gold – far, far away	76	A Kenku's Foot Good Luck Charm, worthless but will anger Kenku that see it.
27	A stout Wooden Spear, 1d6 damage	77	A Quarterstaff, 1d6 damage
28	1d10 makeshift Arrows (-1 damage)	78	A Bone Whistle, its note shrill and piercing
29	A vial of Holy Water	79	A leather-bound quarto-sized book, containing the single 0-level spell Ifrit's Pizzle (see Appendix S)
30	1d4 somewhat stale Lembas Wafers, eat anytime to heal 2 HP of damage	80	1d20 Gold Crowns
31	A papyrus scroll, containing the spell Fae Chill (see Appendix S)	81	1d4 Sprigs of Wolfsbane
32	A Dwergar-made Hand Crossbow, 1d4 damage	82	A Torch
33	A Silver Short Sword, 1d6 damage	83	3 Gold Pyramids, inscribed with images of fishy gods, worth 100 Gold Crowns

Table HH5 – Randomly Generated Treasure and Items			
34	A Rusty Steel Left Greave, +1 to AC	84	An Obsidian Dagger, 1d6 damage
35	A Jug of half-soured Quince Wine, worth 20 Gold Crowns	85	1d3 small chunks of Space Rock†
36	A Steel Pot, a leather strap added to serve as a helm, +1 to AC	86	A Vial of Rendered Werecarp Oil
37	3 Torches	87	A chunk of purple broken Glass, smelling of lemons and lavender
38	A Creaky Crossbow, 1d6 damage	88	6 Arrows
39	A stout Grappling Hook of forged iron	89	A Fancy Bronze Key
40	1d12 Crossbow Quarrels	90	A weathered Orc Skull, upon which is written YORUCK in red wax crayon
41	A Black Arrow of Slaying, +12 points of damage to hit with a bow, one time	91	A goblin-made Warhammer, 1d8 damage
42	A Parchment Scroll, detailing a spell of great power (a randomly determined 4th level Wizard Spell from the DCC Rule Book)	92	Burned-out Crystal Shard
43	An Ivory Playing Card, the Queen of Hooks	93	1d8 small chunks of Space Rock†
44	A pint of Lamp Oil, enough for 20 turns	94	A Shoddy Pistol, a missile weapon for which any to-hit roll of 1-5 means the shot is wasted No Shot or Powder found with it
45	An ugly but durable Brass Lantern, still 7 turns of oil left in it	95	9 Crossbow Quarrels
46	5 Torches	96	A Tyroshi Feather Falling Charm, quaint and probably worthless
47	An Ebony Wand, 125 charges left (unknown effect and command word, radiates terrible magic)	97	10 Silver Arrows
48	A single Gauntlet of Troll's Strength, raises Strength by 3 points to a maximum of 14, -3 to initiative rolls	98	A Bottle of Phraint Spittle, adds +3 to Personality for one day if drunk.
49	A Curvy Dagger, 1d4 damage	99	A Fancy Bronze Key
50	A Minotaur's Horn, the stump-end bloody and grisly	100	A single prize specimen of Space Rock†, worth 500 Gold Crowns if sold

Table HH6- Fumbles		
d6	You Fumble	Opponent Fumbles
1	You cause yourself 2 point of damage, and lose your next turn!	The enemy suddenly dies of fright and dismay! You win!
2	You break your primary weapon.	The enemy takes 1d4 points of damage
3	Your armor suffers damage - Lose 1 AC	The enemy loses the next combat round
4	Lose 1 Hit Point	The enemy flees, dropping all its treasure!
5	Lose 1 Luck	The enemy must make a DC 12 Will Save, or run off!
6	Lose half your current hit points in a colossal accident!	The enemy gives you a random treasure from Table HH5 and then leaves sheepishly!

Table HH7- Critical Hits		
d6	**Your Critical Strike**:	**Your Enemy's Critical Strike**:
1	Does double damage this round! PEW PEW PEW	Surprises you in its cleverness! Lose the next combat round!
2	Stuns the enemy! It loses this round and the next one! Gain a Luck Point!	You are unwise to LOWER YOUR DEFENSES! Lose 4 points to your AC for this combat!
3	Hits it so hard that its soul is knocked out of its body! You win but gain no XP...	Nicks you for an extra damage point's worth of blood!
4	Lops off the things head! You Win, and are covered in juicy gore.	Destroys your primary weapon!
5	Impresses even the Barbarian Gods - Gain 1d4 Luck points up to your maximum.	Cuts your coinpurse! Lose 3 Personality OR all of your money! Your choice.
6	Does an additional 1d12 damage! It's CLOBBERING time.	Teaches you something new AND amazing! Gain 1d4 XP, but lose the same number of additional HP...

Random Encounter Entries

1

This is the wandering monster encounter section. These ruins are plagued by animals and bandits by day, and evil spirits and other foul things at night. Be sure to note your current location entry, and consult the turn counter. If there are more than 24 turns (i.e. 6 hours) ticked off on your character sheet, then night has fallen.

Is it day or night-time now?

- *It is day time (i.e. you have taken less than 24 turns) - 3*
- *It is night! (i.e. you have taken more than 24 turns!) - 2*

2

At night, the souls of the dead animate the corpses that litter the ruins hereabouts. Abominations and summoned daemons skitter to and fro. Roll 1d20 and encounter the entity listed. If your Lucky Roll is "Righteous Heart", then you may burn a Luck point to adjust the result up or down by 1.

- *1, the reanimated body of a fellow hostage! - 41*
- *2, a Possum-man - 46*
- *3, an Animated Skeleton - 18*
- *4, a Were-rat! - 39*
- *5, The Thief - 29*
- *6, A Were-hyena - 50*
- *7, a Lumbering Howler! - 44*

- *8, a Rust Mephit - 14*
- *9, a Mongrelman - 48*
- *10, an Imp - 36*
- *11, a Quasit - 38*
- *12, a Were-tiger - 21*
- *13, a Hooded Cultist - 6*
- *14, a Will o' Wisp - 42*
- *15, a Goat Spider - 47*
- *16, a Demigrue - 23*
- *17, a Wereboar - 32*
- *18, a Skullflit - 9*
- *19, a bedraggled Old Man - 15*
- *20, a Catwoman - 24*

3

During the day the Ruins of Halthrag Keep are stalked by animals, magical creatures, and of course the notorious THIEF! Roll a d12, and encounter the following entity:

- *1, a Dire Rat! - 19*
- *2, a Stirge! - 31*
- *3, a Goblin! - 28*
- *4, a Kobold! - 13*
- *5, a Krokodilith - 30*
- *6, a Hyena Rat - 37*
- *7, a Cliff-racer! - 51*
- *8, a Jinxie - 16*
- *9, The Thief - 29*
- *10, a fellow hostage! - 40*
- *11, a Shrieker - 5*
- *12, a sleepy and irritable Possum-Man - 46*

4

The WILL-O-WISP leads you on a merry chase through the ruins of Halthrag Keep! The cool night air whistles through your hair, the stars leer overhead, and the very stones of the keep itself sing a pleasant song. Other creatures wonder at your joy as they witness your mad dash through this foreboding place.

Just ahead, the WILL-O-WISP dances in the air, shimmering. It begins to resolve itself into the laughing form of a beautiful sprite, beckoning to you to come and embrace it, which of course you are eager to do.

Plunging recklessly forward, arms outstretched, you are sure the spritely form will give you a chaste kiss, more than your heart can bear.

As you fly off the cliff through the air behind the WILL-O-WISP, you realize that the chase was for naught and merely a playful (if somewhat cruel) joke. Your body cannot be recovered during the course of play, as it is crumpled at the base of a cliff to the northwest of the keep. However, your spirit becomes a WILL-O-WISP as well, flitting in the moonlight to lure unwitting adventurers to their deaths. Perhaps you will meet the next adventurer forced to undertake your task.

5

The SHRIEKER is a babbling, semi-conscious fungal creature that is cowardly beyond compare. They usually spend their entire short existences in one place, murmuring quietly to themselves. Since they have no arms, legs, or fangs - indeed, they have no offensive abilities of any kind - they cannot attack. You may sneak past it quietly on a DC 8 Agility roll; if you succeed then no combat occurs. If you fumble, then the Shrieker erupts into frightened howling!

These are its statistics:

SHRIEKER: Init -5; Atk none; AC 8; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +5, Ref -10, Will -10; AL N, no parley. XP 1. TR 0

If you hit the SHRIEKER, then it will immediately erupt into ear-piercing cries for help. Provided you kill it on the first attack round, then all is fine. However, if you cannot do so, then following the death of the SHRIEKER you must immediately roll another random encounter, except you must use the night-time entry list. You have awakened a very dangerous enemy who is drawn to the sound of shrieking!

Once dead, you may eat bits of the SHRIEKER as a makeshift healing potion - SHRIEKER flesh heals 1d4 HP of damage when ingested. If you roll a 4 on the die, then still add the HP but also subtract 1 from your Personality score owing to the sudden emergence of a fungal skin disease.

- *You arouse the SHRIEKER - - 2*

6

You encounter a hooded CULTIST with a plainly visible snake tattoo on his left wrist. He murmurs a prayer to his Mad God in an unholy language.

If your alignment is Chaotic or Neutral, he may attempt to sway you to the worship of the Mad God. If you accept his sermon, gain 1 Luck point, and add The Mad God's Favour to your sheet in the "Special" area, then change your alignment to Chaotic if it is Neutral. If you are Lawful or have Justicia's Mark, he will attack immediately.

CULTIST: Init -2; Atk kris +2 (1d6); AC 12; Hit Points 4; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will +3; AL N, parley 8. XP 1. TR 2

7

A placeholder for some other text.

You know not why it is here. Mysterious, wouldn't you say?

Return to your current Halthrag Keep Entry.

8

After a confusing and reckless chase through the keep, you realize you have no idea where you are or what time it is. The moon glares down from above, and as you walk and stare at it you stumble into a large hole in the ground!

Odd that someone would place a hole, here. As you lay on your back - somewhat embarrassed - a headstone is tipped over the edge of the grave you are in. It crushes you into a pulpy wet mass.

Make a new character and try again, if you wish.

9

The SKULLFLIT is randomly spawned by the skull of a dead adventurer that died under moonlight. They are generally harmless and if caught they may be bullied for a random item. Make a DC 17 Agility check. If you succeed, then the SKULLFLIT will grant you an item - make a roll on the treasure table. You may spend 1 Luck point to modify the result in either direction.

If you fail the Agility check, then you will provoke its wrath, and it will attempt to bite you for 1 round before escaping into the night. If you defeat it before it flees, then roll for treasure as normal. If you do not wish to catch or engage it, it will flutter away ruefully and you must lose 1d3 Luck for cowardice and sloth.

SKULLFLIT: Init +8; Atk bite+0 (1d4); AC 18; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +2; AL N, no parley. XP 1. TR 1

10

You do not know exactly why, but you fly headlong after the WILL-O-WISP. It gives you a frantic chase through the ruins, never stopping, laughing at your entreaties. You dash through the foggy night, until you can just make out the glowing form of the WILL-O-WISP ahead. As you near, it pauses - laughing gleefully. You reach out with both hands and catch it, quick as a wink!

When you open your hands, you hear it laughing in the distance but the direction is unclear, and your heart is filled with loss and longing.

All your possessions have been lost on the chase, including your money and weapons. You're not sure where you left them!

You find yourself before an oaken door, lost and

shaking. The sounds of ominous chanting carry through the door and stone walls.

- *Turn to Encounter Entry - 35*

11

After a smelly and mucky scrabble, you make your way through the drain pipe to a spot just above a damp patch of earth in the southern wall of the keep.

With some effort, you squeeze through the rusty bars. With a tearing sound, you realize that your pack has been torn - lose 1d6 items from your pack at random.

- *Find yourself at Keep Entry - 17*

12

The stranger removes a beautiful jewelled amulet from his neck, fashioned in the shape of a menacing eye. The pupil is a dimly glowing Black Sapphire, mined in the far-off jungles of Khet. This will allow a bonus of +2 to any saving throw the wearer may need to make, once per day. However, it draws the magic needed for this protection from the wearer's vitality, costing 1d6 points of temporary Stamina damage. This is The Rakshasa's Eye, a rare magical item.

The STRANGER salutes you, turns, and leaves. Return to your current Keep entry.

13

A horned and vicious KOBOLD appears! The kobolds in these parts are unused to the presence of other races and are somewhat dim, so you must fight. Luckily, they are also somewhat cowardly and will flee automatically when wounded.

Its statistics are as follows:

KOBOLD: Init -3; Atk club +1 (1d4); AC 7; Hit Points 3; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will -4; AL C, no parley. XP 1. TR 1

In addition, if you wound but do not kill it, then it will flee immediately, and drop one random treasure.

14

A RUST MEPHIT feeds upon the particles of rust that its attack upon metal objects generates. Any time it hits, roll a d6. On a 1-3, your Armour Class is reduced by 1 point, as the chains, plates, or buckles of your armour rust, tarnish, and disintegrate. You may offer it an Iron Bar before combat, which will occupy it while you flee without further penalty.

RUST MEPHIT: Init -2; Atk sword +2 (1d8); AC 18; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +6; AL N, parley 8. XP 1. TR 2

Note that your base armour class is 10, plus or minus any agility modifiers. It may be worth your while to abandon any armour that suffers enough hits to take its protective AC rating below your starting AC. But it may be worth while to continue wearing rusty armour, as well!

15

This bedraggled OLD MAN seems weary and despondent.

Roll a d6,

- *On a 1, he is in the midst of transforming into a Wereboar! - 32*
- *2, he is The Thief in disguise! - 29*
- *3, he is another hostage, like you, pursuing the ominous will of the Jackals. - 40*
- *4, he pulls a hood over his head and approaches you. - 6*
- *5, with a squeak, he transforms messily into a Wererat! - 39*
- *6, you see the blood-red rings around his eyes that indicate he is a Werehyena! - 50*

16

An unlucky day for both you and the JINXIE that you find here. At the moment you encounter it, it begins to siphon away your Luck! Take 1 point of Luck damage automatically for encountering it. It is too simple minded to parley with, and attacks in order to steal the Luck that it craves.

These are its statistics:

JINXIE: Init +2; Atk bite+2 (1d4); AC 11; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will -3; AL N, no parley XP 2. TR 1

In addition to hit point damage when it strikes, the JINXIE will automatically steal a Luck point each time it does damage to you. Luckily, when you slay it then you get back one Luck point (sadly, not all the Luck it may have taken).

17

Another empty and mysterious Random Encounter entry. Nothing to see, here. Nothing to see.

Return to your current Halthrag Keep Entry, you wandering cheat!

18

An animated SKELETON clatters up from the debris, here. It may only be harmed by silver or magical weapons, or by spells. It will not parley, but it is easy to flee and relatively slow-moving. It will turn and run from Justicia's Mark presented strongly.

If the battle goes against you, or you do not wish to fight it, flee and return to your Keep Entry. It will stand and fight the next living thing that approaches in your stead. Mark it down in the Journal next to the Keep Entry, and if you enter again it will still be there.

SKELETON: Init -2; Atk sword +2 (1d8); AC 14; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C, no parley. XP 1. TR 2

19

A lean and hungry DIRE RAT skulks the ruins looking for bones to gnaw or flesh to guzzle. It seems like there are always rats in these things, doesn't it? You must fight it, or flee!

If you choose to flee, then make a DC15 Agility check. If you succeed, then you successfully flee but lose 1 item at random from your pack.

If you choose to fight or are unable to flee, the DIRE RAT has the following statistics:

DIRE RAT: Init +1; Atk bite+1 (1d4); AC 9; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -3; AL N, no parley XP 1. TR 1

20

The WILL-O-WISP dances around you laughing. You laugh, too! You laugh and laugh and laugh, until you pass out laughing merrily.

You awaken, bruised and battered, in the dim light of a deep hole.

Take 2 points of permanent Stamina damage, and reduce your current Hit Points to 1.

Now, turn to - Random Encounter 26

21

You hear low and ruinous growling, as a peal of thunder before a storm. A WERE-TIGER has stalked you down.

Make a DC15 Luck check. If you succeed, then the WERE-TIGER is still in Human form, see below.

If you fail the check, all is not yet lost. You may attack it with Wolfsbane, at a one time 1d3 penalty to your attack roll. If you hit it, then it transforms in an agonizing display. If you miss, then you are in dire peril. Whatever the result, your Wolfsbane withers and is lost.

If you have no Wolfsbane, then it snarls and attacks. It will not parley and it is far too fast to flee from!

WERETIGER: Init +5; Atk claws (1d8); AC 14; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; AL C, parley special. XP 4. TR 5

- *If the WERE-TIGER is luckily in human form - 33*
- *If you hit the WERE-TIGER with Wolfsbane! - 22*

22

The WERE-TIGER collapses, howling and snarling. Smoke tendrils rise up from its body. After a moment, quiet prevails and a handsomely dressed person stands before you.

"For too long have I stalked the dead and dying, here. You have relieved me of my curse, at least temporarily. I offer you this in penance and friendship, and I hope that you will forgive me for the harm I may have done you."

Roll a d6

- *On 1-2, go to - 25*
- *On a 3-4, go to entry - 12*
- *On a 5-6, turn to - 27*

23

The horrible spawn of a Gruesome Lurker and its last victim. The DEMIGRUE can be turned away by strong light - if you have a Bull's-eye Lantern lit, then it will flee squealing in agony. Torchlight merely makes it uncomfortable, causing -2 to its attack roll if the torch is lit when you encounter it. A candle or oil lamp has no effect.

It will not parley, but you may flee with a DC 14 Agility check. If it defeats you, then your character's body will be unrecoverable. No one knows what becomes of people killed this way.

DEMIGRUE: Init +5; Atk bite+3 (1d6); AC 13; Hit Points 6; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will +6; AL C, parley 8 XP 4. TR 5

If you parley with it and succeed, then it will take all of your items and money in exchange for your life.

24

A CATWOMAN sets upon you from the rubble nearby!

Make a DC15 Intelligence check. If you succeed then you gain initiative. If you fail then the CATWOMAN sneaks up behind you and gains one free attack at +2, before the combat starts. Then proceed as normal. She is looking for food for her litter and will not parley. Fleeing is impossible.

CATWOMAN: Init +2; Atk claw+4 (1d4); AC 16; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -2; AL N, no parley 8. XP 3. TR 2

25

The STRANGER bows and removes a scabbard from his belt. A magnificently crafted curved blade, forged of a silver and iron alloy, is sheathed inside. This is a Silver Scimitar and it causes 1d10 on a successful attack and it will hit undead and were-creatures, bypassing their paranormal protections. It is not enchanted but merely very sharp and well-made.

Before leaving, the stranger wishes you good fortune and bestows the Silver Scimitar upon you.

Return to your last Keep Entry.

26

This is the Oubliette of Halthrag Keep, where transgressors are forgotten. Cramped, quiet, and dingy, you wait and wait on a bench of mushroom wood. Strangely, you become neither hungry nor thirsty.

After some undetermined time, a party of MOON-ELVES arrives to take your physical form deeper into the crust of Aereth. You work as a slave for a while, living a whole new life beneath the surface. You see cities of phosphorescent fungi, plumb the depths of the Nethermost Caverns, and carry trade goods across the Endless Bridge.

You have effectively escaped Halthrag Keep through no fault or action of your own, and may decide what comes of your character hereafter. Each of your traits is reduced by 1d6, except Strength and Stamina which are increased by 1d4. If in daylight, your character suffers a -2 on all die rolls hereafter. Your possessions were taken from you when the MOON-ELVES arrive, but you leave them with a dagger (1d4) and 3 rations of Mushroom Stew. Start your new life with 1d20 XP, plus whatever you earned on this adventure.

Begin a new life, if you so desire.

27

The STRANGER removes an ornate and unwieldy glove-like portion of his armour, passing it delicately to you.

"May Herzog protect you better than he has me. Wear his vambrace with dignity." With this, the stranger turns and flees into the night.

In any combat round, a character armed with Herzog's Vambrace may elect to add +3 to his or her Armour Class, or else make an additional punching attack with a reduced die (so on a d16 if the character's normal action die is a d20). This attack does 1d6 points of damage, modified by strength. Luck may be burned to affect the attack roll.

Return to your last Keep Entry.

28

A lanky and bedraggled GOBLIN sidles into view. When it sees you, it cackles gleefully. You may attempt to flee, parley with it, or fight it.

If you would like to fight it, the GOBLIN has the following statistics:

GOBLIN: Init -2; Atk sword +0 (1d4); AC 10; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will -3; AL C, parley 14 XP 2. TR 1

If you choose to flee, then make a DC 9 Agility check. If you succeed, then you flee and may return to your last Keep Entry.

If you choose to parley, then make a DC 14 Personality check. Roll a d20 and add your Personality modifier; if the result is 14 or higher, then it leaves you alone and moves on. If you fail, then it will accept all your money in exchange for leaving you alone. If you will not or cannot pay, then you must fight it. If you roll a 1 then it attacks immediately and will not lose a Morale roll - fight to the death!

- *If it beats you, it drags you to the Oubliette.*
  - Encounter Entry 26

29

A lean and hungry gentleman sneaks up behind you. He approaches so swiftly and adroitly that you may not notice.

THIEF: Init +5; Atk rusty knife+2 (1d8); AC 15; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will -3; AL N, parley 12. XP 5. TR 4

You must make a DC17 Intelligence check to even notice him. If you fail, then lose a random item from your inventory - you may spend 1 Luck point to modify the result in either direction after the d10 is rolled. He stalks off into the ruins without being detected, and you return to the Keep Entry.

If you pass the Intelligence check, then you may Parley with him to avoid combat. If you fail, then he will attack you. If you succeed, then he will slink off on his way. If you roll a 20 on the check, then he likes the cut of your cloth and gives you 1 item determined randomly from the Treasure Table. However, once he is gone you notice that all of your money is gone!

30

A KROKODILITH slithers into sight. These vicious reptilian animals are affected by their own poison and bits of flesh hang off their sinewy bodies. You must fight it or flee!

KROKODILITH: Init +6; Atk bite -3 (1d8); AC 10; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -3; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR 1

If you choose to flee, then make a DC13 Agility check. If you make it, then lose 1 random item from your pack.

The KROKODILITH'S venom is highly dangerous - in addition to hit point damage, KROKODILITH bites do temporary Strength damage. If a KROKODILITH hits you in combat, then make a DC 13 Fortitude Save. If you fail, then subtract 1d3 points of Strength - mark a circle on the time tracker 3 boxes ahead. Your Strength points will return then. If your Strength reaches zero or lower then you succumb to its poison and die. If your Strength goes below 9, then you will need to make adjustments to your attack rolls until your Strength returns.

31

A bloated STIRGE flutters into view, looking for blood to feed the clutch of eggs in its ovipositor. You cannot flee and must fight it.

It has the following statistics:

STIRGE: Init +2; Atk proboscis+1 (1d6); AC 14; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 1

If you win, then return to your previous Keep Entry

32

A belligerent and hirsute WEREBOAR sulks here. As with any were-creature, you may attempt to force it to take human form by striking it with Wolfsbane. If you succeed, then it changes into an embarrassed and mostly nude man, who flees into the night. If you miss, then not only do you lose the Wolfsbane but all further attacks by the WEREBOAR will gain an additional +3 bonus, as you have enraged it

.WEREBOAR: Init -3; Atk tusks -2 (1d8); AC 14; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +6; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR 2

33

This powerfully built man is a WERETIGER, not yet changed into feline form. Still a capable and dangerous fighter, you will need to be quite careful if you decide to attack him.

You may offer a tribute, but if you do not then the WERETIGER will attack. It will accept 3 items from your inventory or all your money to let you turn and slink away. If you will not offer tribute, then prepare for a desperate fight!

WERETIGER: Init +5; Atk claws (1d8); AC 14; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; AL C, parley special. XP 4. TR 5

34

Heart racing, breath coming in short gasps, and fingers aching, you leap the last five feet to the ground. Bits of moss are wedged beneath your

fingernails, and you have not yet fully recovered from your fight with the CLIFF ROOSTER. Had you not made a hasty escape you would have been torn to pieces by a clutch of CLIFF ROOSTER chicks!

Recover 1d4 hit points after a period of rest, and gain 1 Luck for your quick thinking and adroit clambering down the face of the Black Tower.

- *Dust yourself off and find yourself at the foot of the Red Tower at Keep Entry 91*

35

For some reason, you are compelled to open the door and find out what manner of creatures are engaged in chanting at this hour.

- *Turn to Keep Entry 21*

36

A fuzzy little IMP, sharp of tooth and claw and hungry for your blood! The IMP is small, but fast and persistent, shrugging off attacks that would lay strong men low.

IMP: Init +3; Atk claws +2 (1d3); AC 15; Hit Points 10; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will -2; AL C, no parley XP 4. TR 2

You may flee if you are able to make a DC14 Intelligence check, to outwit the IMP as it trails behind you.

37

A half-mad, possibly rabid HYENA RAT runs barking and giggling into view. These filthy monsters accept no quarter and it is impossible to flee from them as they are far too fast.

These are its statistics:

HYENA RAT: Init +4; Atk bite +1 (1d4); AC 7; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR 2

If it hits you then make a DC 12 Fortitude save. If you fail, then you have contracted Foaming Rage. Gain +2 to strength, but you will be unable to parley or flee until the adventure is done (unless noted in the text). The illness will abide in several weeks naturally, but can be cured with Feverfew herbs or magical healing.

38

A malicious little QUASIT prances about, here, its prehensile tail whipping to and fro.

QUASIT: Init +5; Atk tail+2 (2 points); AC 18; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will -3; AL C, parley 15. XP 3. TR 3

The QUASIT is a vain and deceitful creature. If your Parley roll succeeds, it will let you live and give you a gift of a Loadstone!

The Loadstone takes up 3 slots in your inventory, although it is only a handful of Hematite inscribed with runes. You may never be rid of it on purpose, unless you can pass it off on another creature or character. Further, any random rolls that indicate you lose it (for example, during flight from combat) must be re-rolled. While you have it, your saves are all at -1, and your Agility is reduced by 3 - this may reduce your Reflex save even further if your Agility is reduced below 9. Since it is shiny, you can easily pass it off to a creature that will take an item if you wish.

39

A devious WERERAT snarfles through the refuse in this location. It will leave you alone if you have one Stinky Cheese, one Mouldy Cheese, or 3 rations to give it. Else it attacks immediately. If you attack it with Wolfsbane and hit it, then lose your Wolfsbane. The WERERAT transforms into a pot-bellied beggar and runs off into the ruins, likely to be devoured. It can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons or spells. You may attempt to flee, but it will not parley for any other items than the aforementioned foods.

WERERAT: Init +3; Atk short sword +1 (1d6); AC 14; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -4; AL C parley 8. XP 4. TR 3

40

You meet a fellow HOSTAGE! You may fight him or her, turn tail and flee, or parley. If you wish to parley, determine the hostage's alignment with 1d6: 1-2 Lawful, 3-4 Neutral, 5-6 Chaotic. You must make a DC 12 Personality check to determine the hostage's stance, adding 2 if your alignments are the same. If you succeed, then you may trade an item from your pack for a randomly determined item from the hostages', after rolling on HH5 to see what it offers. If you fail by 5 points or less, then the HOSTAGE flees. If you fail by more than this, the HOSTAGE will attack. If you fumble the check, the HOSTAGE gains initiative and then attacks!

HOSTAGE: Init -2; Atk sword +2 (1d8); AC 18; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +6; AL N, parley 8. XP 1. TR 2

In some cases, you may be advised to attack every hostage you meet, but this is a matter of preference and style. Also, Justicia frowns upon those who attack Lawfully aligned hostages. If you have Justicia's Mark and attack a Lawfully aligned hostage, then lose Justicia's Mark at once.

41

A shambling ZOMBIE wanders, here, moaning plaintively. Perhaps you knew it from the coach ride when it lived. It will shamble off into the night if you rebuke it with Justicia's Mark, without fail. You do not get to collect its treasure in this case.

ZOMBIE: Init -5; Atk claw+2 (1d4); AC 8; Hit Points 9; SV Fort +5, Ref -8, Will +0; AL C, no parley XP 3. TR 4

Any time it hits you, you must make a DC13 Fortitude save. If you fail, then lose 3 points of Stamina for the duration of the adventure. If your Stamina drops below 0, then you succumb to Zombie Plague and die, becoming a ZOMBIE yourself shortly thereafter.

This ZOMBIE may be the reanimated corpse of a previous character. If you defeat the ZOMBIE, then make a DC8 Luck check - if you succeed, and there is a dead character still left unrecovered, then this is its body and all of its inventory is with it. If there are no unrecovered characters, then there is no need to make the Luck check - simply add a Luck point.

42

A beautiful but sinister little flitting ball of light, the WILL-O-WISP is much more dangerous than it appears.

Make a DC15 Will save. If you fail then roll a d6 and check the results on the table below.

If you succeed, you may attack the WILL-O-WISP, but it is immune to non-magical weapons. A magic spell or cantrip might hurt it, depending upon the spell result. Magical weapons will do full damage - silver ones are not sufficient.

WILL-O-WISP: Init +5; Atk spark +5 (1 point); AC 17; Hit Points 1; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +5; AL C, no parley. XP 4. no treasure!

- *on a 1, go to Encounter Entry - 43*
- *on a 2, go to Encounter Entry - 8*
- *on a 3, go to Encounter Entry - 4*
- *on a 4, go to Encounter Entry - 45*
- *on a 5, go to Encounter Entry - 20*
- *on a 6, go to Encounter Entry - 10*

43

The WILL-O-WISP leads you on a desperate chase! Without knowing how or why, you rush without thinking past the stones of Halthrag Keep, over marshy ground, through a dark wood, over a meadow in the moonlight, across an ocean of sand, and finally into a wondrous graven doorway on the side of a hill.

As you pass beneath the lintel, you see lithe and supple figures carved into the stone, dancing merrily. You are unsure, but they seem to bid you welcome.

You are no longer in Halthrag Keep, that much is certain. The WILL-O-WISP is gone. Instead, you find yourself agape in a crowded waiting room, full of haughtily dressed courtiers in otherworldly silks. You have interrupted an interminable wedding party in the land of Fae, at the manse of a minor Elfin noble.

You may stay and seek entrance into the noble's household as a servant. Who knows? After millennia in service you may leave it slightly better off than

you are now. Or you may wander off as best you can and take your chances in Elfland. Halthrag Keep is behind you and your vengeance is far off in any case.

Why don't you bring this tray of Dragon Liver canapés to the Duke of The Shining Islands, while you are here?

44

A LUMBERING HOWLER ambles into the area. It begins to howl immediately! If you survive this combat, go immediately to Wandering Monster entry 3 (the daytime entry) and roll another encounter, as it has awakened a less-dangerous foe interested in recovering the pickings of your corpse.

LUMBERING HOWLER: Init +1; Atk bite -1 (1d6); AC 12; Hit Points 10; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +1; AL N, no parley. XP 3. TR 1

45

You become confused, recklessly chasing the flitting WILL-O-WISP through the ruins of Halthrag Keep. Your heart races and your breath comes in short gasps. This keeps up for 1d10 turns - check them off the time-keeping box as appropriate.

Finally, you come to - face down in smelly brackish water! You have somehow taken a wrong turn and become mired in the swampy moat that rings the Keep. You know not how, since the wall that surrounds the keep is stern and harbours no breaks. Before you is a drainage grate through which you may crawl back into the keep's interior.

If you so choose, you may abandon your gear and your money, and swim blindly through the muck in the darkness. It will take 1d10 further turns, and for each turn you take you must roll a d20. If the roll is higher than your Stamina, you take 1 point of damage from hypothermia and fatigue.

If you somehow live through this ordeal, then congratulations! You have escaped Halthrag Keep! Your vengeance upon the Jackal Gang will have to wait another day, as for now you are nearly dead, tired, weaponless, and covered in muck. Through the bare and evil-looking trees, you can see the village of Marbourg in the distance. It may be that you can make it there to rouse the locals to help you. That is, if you can make it through the forest...

Add up the XP you earned in Halthrag Keep. If the total is above 10 XP, then you may consult the DCC rule book and create a level 1 character from your current one. It may be that vengeance will be yours soon, as there is nothing keeping you and a stalwart band of heroes from coming back to right the wrongs committed here!

If you choose to re-enter Halthrag Keep by climbing through the drainage grate, go to Encounter Entry - 11

46

You have roused a sleepy and discombobulated POSSUM-MAN. They are not the brightest of creatures, and are also nocturnal. Luckily you have caught it dazed and confused before it becomes fully active.

These are its statistics:

POSSUM-MAN Init -5; Atk bite -3 (1d4); AC 6; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref -5, Will -5; AL N, parley 10. XP 2. TR 4

If you hit it once, then it will turn to flee with a surprising burst of speed. Make a DC14 Luck check.

If you fail, it gets away and leaves behind 1 random treasure.

If you succeed, then you block its path and it begs for mercy and clemency, spitting and drooling in the Common tongue. It will offer you 3 treasures and d20 Gold Crowns for clemency, but you get no experience for allowing it to live this way - merely warm feelings. If you choose to slay it, then change your alignment to Neutral if you are Lawful, and Chaotic if you are currently Neutral, and lose Justicia's Mark automatically if you have it.

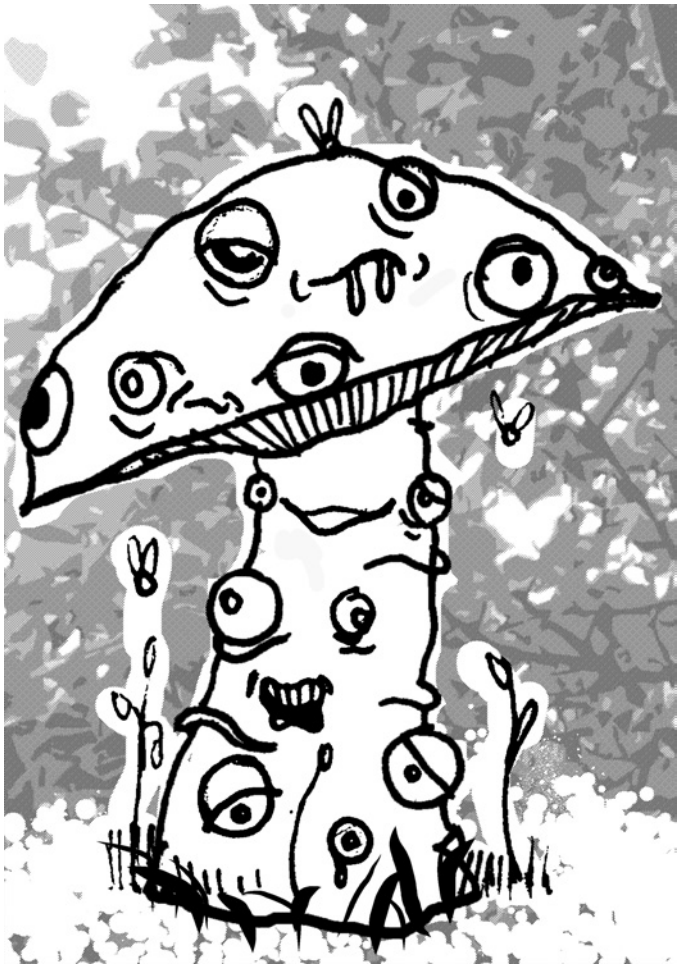
47

A GOAT SPIDER looks for human livers to devour so that it may reproduce. The horns on its head and the bleating of its mandibles cause heightened fear in those unfortunate enough to live in this region. It is not particularly tough, but its bite can be exquisitely venomous.

GOAT SPIDER: Init +4; Atk bite +2 (1d4!); AC 14; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR 2

The GOAT SPIDER'S bite is venomous and it may certainly kill you. If it rolls a 4 on its damage roll, then roll an additional d4 - if this roll is a 4, then continue rolling anytime a 4 comes up, adding each roll to the total. (note: this is called an "exploding d4" roll). For most characters that stalk Halthrag Keep, this spells certain doom and the loss of a liver.

If you win, in addition to any other treasures it may possess, you may take and use its Venom Sack. Using the Venom Sack will allow you to coat your melee weapon with poisonous ichor that will cause additional d10 damage points on the next hit. You can do this as a single action in a melee combat or at any time before a combat. The Venom Sack holds one use of poison, and counts as an item in your inventory.



48

A chimerical MONGRELMAN sifts through the junk in this location. They are cowardly nocturnal creatures. However, they obsessively hoard objects and enjoy trading. Roll 5 times on the treasure chart. These are the objects the MONGRELMAN has on it. It will trade objects one-for-one from you, and you can purchase one item from it for half your gold and silver pieces - but then it will not trade further as it runs off to spend the money in some nearby den of dissolution. If you attack it, then it mysteriously has only 2 items on it (the others are hidden in a cache nearby).

MONGRELMAN: Init -2; Atk claw+2 (1d4) and bite -3 (1d4); AC 12; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will -5; AL N, parley special. XP 3. TR special

49

You awaken with a ringing headache and the taste of blood in your mouth. You have 1 Hit Point. You have all of your possessions, but you have unfortunately lost any weapons you were armed with.

A clutch of mottled blue eggs sits nearby, and high-pitched peeping erupts from beneath the cracked shells. A brood of CLIFF ROOSTER chicks is about to hatch. It seems you have been left as a first meal.

There are d4 objects from the Treasure Table scattered in the nest. One of them may be a rope. If you already own a rope, then you may tie it off and descend to the ground below without danger - lose the rope. If you don't own or find a rope, you may choose to be devoured by the hatching chicks, leap from the tower nest and die, or scale down perilously.

If you scale down the outside of the tower, then make a DC18 Agility check. You may burn luck to improve your roll.

- *If you make the Agility check, or if you have or find a rope, then turn to - 34*
- *If you fail the Agility check, then turn to - 52*

50

The WEREHYENA is said to be excellent blacksmith, but also prone to eating small children on impulse. This one strides forward giggling and cackling, brandishing a finely made iron sword. As with any were-creature in Halthrag Keep, you may attempt to strike it with Wolfsbane. If you hit the WEREHYENA, it immediately reverts into human form, becoming a simple Hostage like yourself.

You may not parley with nor flee from the WEREHYENA in its were-form, but these are its statistics:

WEREHYENA: Init -1; Atk sword +0 (1d8); AC 12; Hit Points 7; SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +4; AL C, no parley. XP 3. TR 2

If you strike it with Wolfsbane (like a regular attack, but with a -2 modifier) then it becomes a Hostage - 40

51

The CLIFF ROOSTER is a noxious avian creature that infests the limestone cliffs of the Island of Kreld, upon which Halthrag Keep sits like a crown. They are known to flock around wounded creatures, attacking from above, delaying progress and causing much consternation. You cannot flee from this birdlike creature, and must fight it.

These are its statistics:

CLIFF ROOSTER: Init +1; Atk beak+2 (1d4); AC 15; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -4, Ref +5, Will +1; AL N, no parley. XP 3. TR 0

- *If it beats you, awaken in the Tower Nest - 49*

52

The last thought you have as the ground approaches is that you wish you had worn shoes more suitable for climbing.

A flock of CLIFF ROOSTERS flaps above, circling down upon your twisted body. As your heartbeat slows and your vision fades, you hear their malicious cackling and cawing but thankfully your awareness ends there.

Make a new character, and try again if you wish.

The Hounds of Halthrag Keep

1

You have a splitting headache. In addition, you are bound and gagged, having been beaten quite harshly by various and sundry members of the Jackal Gang for the past few days. They are a leering, syphilitic mob of highwaymen that plague the by-ways of the Kingdom of Thrend, and they recently overtook and captured the stage-coach in which you and your fellows travelled. Why did you come? You received a letter – in short, a distant relative lies dying (probably now dead) in the town of Marbourg, and you spent almost your whole life savings to travel to the bequeathing ceremony to claim your inheritance. There was a recent spate of Zombie Plague in Marbourg and many poorer serfs the kingdom over are travelling there to claim what is owed them.

But the coach didn't make it, having been waylaid by the Jackals some days ago. Was it three days? Five? In a haze of beatings and sleepless nights, you've been kept tied up in a makeshift stockade for who-knows-how-long. Your position on the ground allowed you to peer through the rough-hewn slats of your wooden prison. By the light of the moon at night and rising sun every day you have seen the crenellations of a crumbling castle wall and your heart sinks when you think of where you must be. That is, you are almost certain that you are dangerously close to Halthrag Keep! Others in the stockade were taken away screaming and crying - every morning and afternoon - and you gradually have realized that your turn must come eventually.

At dawn today, you were roughly roused; your wounds tended by a withered old crone, and then fed a meal of stale brown bread and gruel. At slightly before what you reckon to be 3 o'clock, you are dragged before the leader of the Jackals – one foppish dandy by the name of Diptherio. You've seen wanted posters of him hung in the alehouses and shops in your home town and on way-signs from here to the Forest of Doom. He is almost as oily and sweaty in real-life as the posters suggest. He is also rumoured to be a werewolf - some say a werevulture - but the only impression you have at the moment is the rotten smell of his breath, and the glint of the fine jewels that hang audaciously from his neck and dangle from his fingers.

"Go now, Jackals, and prepare the demon's bottle!"

At this cryptic remark, the pair of Jackal lieutenants that roused you turn and leave.

Your hempen bonds are cut, and Diptherio addresses you directly:

"Hello, my poppet! I hope heh heh that my boys weren't too hard on you! Heh heh. Come, come, stand up, stand up. Would you like a pull of wine to rinse out the blood?"

He offers you a pewter flagon, smelling of sour verjus, and for a moment you tremble with thirst and the fear that you may be sick.

"I assure you, it's not heh eh heh poisoned, poppet! And why would we poison you, when you are now the newest member of the Jackals! Well, not officially, of course heh eh heh, No – our recruitment procedures are very strict."

He wipes a swollen hand across his tongue and protruding lips. His front teeth seem oddly pointed in an unsettling way.

"You see, we have need of you – heh - need of your services! You are hale and hearty and can enter the Keep, whereas my Jackals and I cannot. I see you wonder, but please - Hush your questions! Let us only say that heh heh forces in the Keep align against us. They keep us without, which is why you are needed, and we see now that we have been wrong to beat you so!"

His face takes on a ridiculous and also menacing pout, and he brushes your shoulders off with a lacy and ostentatious kerchief. Satisfied you are somewhat cleaner, he returns to his monologue.

"We offer you a heh heh ha heh proposition, thusly: Enter Halthrag Keep as our coursing hound, and find and bring us a few mere handfuls of these"

At this he removes from a billowy side pocket a glowing rock that shines even in the afternoon sun. A pulsating blue and noisome light nearly drips from the rock, and you wonder what damage the man does to his soul and essence –

for even children in this kingdom know that these rocks are not to be trifled with.

"Ah! You recognize the heh heh value of this ore – the so-called Space Rock! It is from the celestial kingdoms, truly, and we have need of as much as you can find… but a little will suffice us for the time being. We know that you are tired and a-thirst."

The nugget of Space Rock drips an almost palpable evil. The legends that all Threndians know from their cribs tell that a great chunk of the heavens tore down a thousand years ago and interrupted the war of a group of sorcerers and warlocks, destroying most of Halthrag Keep and ending a hundred years of wanton bloodshed. The cataclysm poisoned the land for hundreds of years and nothing would grow nearby but twisted trees and stunted weeds. Any who would enter the inner curtain of the keep of the Wizard Halthrag risks death and madness and worse! Could Diptherio be insane to offer you such a bargain? Does he truly believe that you – a simple peasant – can live through such a venture?

"And so, enter the inner reaches of Halthrag Keep, find us a few of these glowing rocks, return when you can to us, and we may take you on or set you free as you wish."

With this, he returns the foul thing to his pocket and smiles.

"If you do not return, heh eh heh heh heh, well then, it is no great loss to us but of course you will be mourned. My lieutenants – One Eyed Enoch and Butcher Bill will take you to the gates and heh eh heh brief you. We have an agreement, yes?"

Speechless, you nod – for what else can you do?

"I am glad you see reason, poppet, but do not worry! We would not send you into harm's way unprepared. You may have your personal weapon again, and a few trifles that you might need that we can spare. But we also have some gifts! You are heh heh sceptical, eh? And rightly so, I trust. Behold, a bottled demon, to assist you!"

Enoch, or perhaps it is Bill, returns holding a worn leather journal and a bottle of smoked blue glass. He hands the bottle to Diptherio, who promptly removes the cork with a flourish. Almost instantaneously, a winged gremlin with red skin sits upon your left shoulder flapping his wings and tittering annoyingly. It smiles lugubriously at you.

"This impish thing is Spellvexit, and the leather journal contains the wisdom of those who have gone before you on this task. Spellvexit will return the journal to us if you fall, in the hopes that your experiences will benefit those who might follow you. He has also given guidance to your heh heh precursors, and knows the keep well enough. Sadly, none have as of yet returned successfully and so heh heh our ranks may soon be depleted! It is well we have so many potential recruits to choose from heh heh heh eh heh! Good luck and make haste, for in a few hours the moon will rise!"

His eyes shine and grow fierce at the mention of the moon – perhaps there is something to the rumours you have heard. At this, Diptherio waves you off.

Spellvexit looks you over and titters again, this time spitting out a single squeaky phrase – "Fresh meat!"

Enoch and Bill return and, laughing rudely, they drag you away in the direction of the ruined gatehouse of Halthrag Keep. The sun looms lazily in the sky over the keep's Black Dragon Tower. Why Diptherio has saddled you with this demon is not clear at this time, and you hope you may stay alive long enough to avenge yourself or escape or complete the task the Jackals have demanded of you…

- *Get dragged to the Gatehouse - 129*

2

(TIME)Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(LIGHT) You must have light to see, here.

(GRUE) If you have no light, roll a night-time encounter immediately.

This portion of the Red Tower lies well below the ground level outside. Sulphurous fumes flicker around, and giant blue letters on the floor read:

LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

Someone has removed a flag-stone from the floor and dug a hole in the ground.

- *If you do not have a light source, go back up after resolving the encounter - 124*
- *Enter the hole (only if you have a light!) - 27*

3

He does a double take - apparently you've caught him off his guard!

"Hmm. Misjudged again, I see. Oh well."

Gain initiative in the first round.

IAN GRAM: Init +3; Atk spear+1 (1d6); AC 14; Hit Points 12; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -3; AL N, Parley 8. XP 2. TR special

You may not choose to parley if you have struck IAN; he is sly and well-mannered but does not easily forgive treachery. He will take all your Space Rocks and allow you to flee into the forest, but will give you nothing in return and will need to use the potion he promised himself.

If you kill him, then you may take his Spear and 20 Silver Stags, as well as 1d4 Gold Crowns. However, the potion he offered is stashed and you will not find it.

- *He beats you - 78*
- *Flee into the forest, cur - 81*

4

Diptherio smiles! He peeks inside your bag and for a brief moment you can see his eyes twinkling in the sick glow of the Space Rocks inside.

"Yes, yes poppet! Well done, well done!"

He gives you a sickly, greasy smile, and embraces you roughly. A kiss on each cheek, and it's done.

You're now a Jackal instead of a Hound. You feel warm and strange all over, and somewhat hairier, and greasier. And less compassionate.

Ah well, it's better than life in that town, after all. And you get to push around the captives that come through, and get a pick of their loot from the Keep.

THE END

If the XP you accumulated through the course of the adventure is not more than 10, bring it up to 10, now. Most of the Jackals are Neutral or Chaotic Thieves and Warriors, although Diptherio may be a... Well. Consult Appendix X in this work and the DCC rulebook if you'd like to continue to use this character in other games.

5

The THING IN THE DARK jubulates blobtitiously

WUB WUB WUB

The tentacle snakes out of your third eye, and you hear giggling

OVERJOYOUS MAMMAL MUCH GIFTS

The THING reaches into the disc-like brazier, and draws out a tube.

MAMMAL YOU MUST OBSERVE

It twists the tube in its cloud of tentacles, and a shimmering blue blade leaps from one end. This is an Astrablade Short sword, and will do 1d6+4 on a successful hit, with no bonus to hit, and it will strike monsters immune to non-magic weapons.

PLENTIFUL ORE YOU MUST BRING MY FOOTMEN ABIDE

(ZOMBORGS will no longer attack you unless you attack them first.)

NOW GO RETURN QUICKLY

- *You leap back into the water and return the way you came. - 29*

6

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

The tower continues to sway and totter, and the air shimmers evilly. A pale blue residue appears to coat everything, here, and you are definitely not feeling well.

The rubble that the mysterious cloaked figure was perched on only thickens as you continue up the winding stairwell.

There appears to be no way to continue. Perhaps you missed some sign or some clue?

- *Return to the bottom of the tower - 124*

7

The air around you thrums with divine power and wroth. Justicia's statue turns its head to gaze at you, and you know that deep in your heart you are found wanting.

Justicia will not abide heathens or perverts, or those who think too freely.

Your physical form is reduced to a pile of ash in a thunderclap and stroke of lightning. However, your soul is dragged into the Netherhells, to be flayed and lashed forever by gleeful subcreatures.

THE END

You may start again with another character, if you wish.

8

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

You have entered into a dimly lit, high-ceilinged chapel. The windows were once stained glass but they were destroyed and pillaged long ago. There are dried up fonts for holy water but they appear long-unused.

A gilded statue of Justicia, blind goddess of righteous justice, figures prominently at the rear of the room, bidding stalwart worshippers enter. Some vile and rowdy heathen has attacked the statue and marred its beauty, hacking off an arm and scarring the face.

If you alignment is Chaotic, then you feel a strong sense of ill foreboding and imminent doom.

If you have Justicia's Mark, then you gain 1 Hit Point for every turn you spend in contemplation here, up to your maximum amount.

- *If you are Chaotic, turn to - 52*
- *You may pray and turn to - 120*
- *Return the way you came - 17*

9

Somewhat nervous, you fish the stiletto out of your waistband and eyeball the keyhole. Darkness. That's all.

Journal Notes

You slip the stiletto's point into the keyhole and give it a little bit of a twist, and wiggle it up and down. You've heard that this is how it's done by real thieves.

Roll 1d10, and add your Agility modifier.

- *On a 1-8, turn to 118*
- *On a 9 or better, go to 73*

10

The mark of Justicia signals your commitment to a higher good, and fervent work for truth and righteousness. This offends the dark thing to which this basalt altar is consecrated, and he takes offense from his deathless sleep.

A pungent and acrid cloud of bluish-green smoke arises from the candle atop the shrine. Slowly, insidiously, it takes the outline of an eight-foot man-shaped form, with outstretched wings and a rueful axe. It whispers a plaintive challenge and tumbles from atop the altar in your direction. Prepare thyself!

HORROR OF NEBROVOLENT: Init -4; Atk Rueful Smoke Axe -2 (1d10); AC 15; Hit Points 20; SV Fort +4, Ref -5, Will +1; AL C, no parley. XP 5. TR 5

- *If, by Justicia's grace you somehow survive, then turn to - 94*

11

With the slag-puddle that was your Bell smoking and cooking here, you realize you have gotten a headache.

It's possible you're hallucinating from all the burning metal fumes, but you think you hear cursing and muttering in the corners of the room, and your vision sways and your eyes grow heavy.

You feel like you ought to flee now, and these kinds of gut reactions ought to be heeded.

Add 1 point of Intelligence to your total, permanently.

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

- *Flee this place and never return whilst you live - 113*

12

Even with the meagre diet of gruel and fish bones and dirty water upon which you have subsisted for the past few days, your jutting belly and burly frame is too much for this small space.

With a crash of rock, you are squished into a fine red paste! As your consciousness dims, you hear what seems to be the buzzing of an angry bee coming your way...

Return to the beginning and start your quest over if you like.

13

This is a narrow stone corridor between the north-western outer wall and a stout stone building. The outer wall is too high up to reach, and even standing upon a crumbling interior wall you cannot find purchase.

(COND) You can try to use a rope to reach the uppermost curtain of the outer wall, if you also have a Grappling Hook.

- *In this case, throw the hook and you may climb to the wall. - 126*
- *Else, turn around and go back to the gate-house - 116*

14

With one last mighty blow, you pummel the Lawful being before you and with a sharp crack, it teeters back and topples over.

You see you have damaged the statue of Justicia in a moment of malicious fury!

The air grows cold and stale. A dry, coughing laugh erupts from the darkened recesses of the chapel, and a figure in a black cloak approaches you.

Beneath the cowl of its hood, you can see green eyes glowing coolly. You can't quite make out its face.

"You have done exceeding well, Initiate. There is a place in our tribe for ones who can do as much; come with me and I will teach you many things."

The hand that reaches out is scaled and the fingertips end in black talons. Unsure if you should trust this thing, you look around for an exit.

"Before you flee, requiring I kill you, know that your next lesson will be revenge - revenge upon the Jackal Gang. Do you not wish revenge?"

"Choose now - flee and die, or come with me and take your vengeance upon Diptherio and the worms who have trod you?"

You hesitate.

THE END

The ending is purposefully unclear. Consider that you have won the game if you agree to follow the mysterious figure. It will lead you out of the Keep to murder the Jackals - especially Diptherio. In either case, add 10 XP to your total and decide later if you will keep this character alive, and what happens to him or her next.

Play another character, if you wish.

15

Maybe there will be a GRUE. Or maybe a THIEF.

It smells down here.

Go back from where you came.

• *RUN COWARD - 37*

16

(GRUE) If you have no light, go to the Random Encounters Entry 2 immediately. You may be eaten by a Grue!

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

Down a flight of narrow and rickety stairs, you leave the kitchen behind and work your way into the darkness. A chill wind cools your skin, and you come to the bottom relieved - how far down have you come? The opening in the hearth through which you came seems impossibly small for the distance you've travelled.

Before you, a chunk of blackened basalt stone has been mostly dug out of the putrid and squelching earth. A single red candle stump sits on top, amidst a network of rusty red streaks. You cannot know this information, but this is a shrine to the ancient and mad god Nebrovolent.

You may sacrifice points of Strength, Agility, or Stamina in exchange for Luck, here. Offer a blood sacrifice, change your alignment immediately to Chaotic, and then for every 3 points of Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage you take, you will gain 1 current Luck point, up to your maximum total. These will not heal during this adventure but will come back in time (1 point per day).

- *If you have received the Mad God's Favour - 41*
- *If you have Justicia's Mark - 10*
- *You can flee up the stairs if you want nothing further of this unholy place - 87*

17

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This bedraggled courtyard was clearly once a great hall where visiting nobles and aristocrats dined when they visited Halthrag, and where he must have listened to his subjects' grievances. There are destroyed tables and benches and a great High Chair - not quite a throne - on the western side of the clearing. You can see an overlook to the north, and what appears to be a chapel to the northeast. A collapsed tower - The High Tower - lies in ruins to the east. You can peer a portion of the destroyed northern wall through gaps in the rubble, but it is too dangerous to scrabble through from here.

You may

- *Head west to a guano-flecked part of the yard - 91*
- *Wend through the rubble to the northern overlook - 61*
- *Go northeast to the chapel ruins - 123*
- *Go back to the Inner Ward - 76*

18

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

The strange metallic ropes plunge from outside into this hole in thick, sticky masses. They dip down into a pool of dimly lit water, overarched by the stone foundation of the keep. You can see the sick blue glow of the Space Rock shimmering at the bottom of the pool in the distance. If you want to go any further into this crater, you'll need to drop all your armour and any burning lights here and swim for it. Put your armour in the marginal Journal for this entry and plunge in, and roll 1d10, adding your Stamina bonus.

If you are occupationally trained to swim, then you may roll a 1d20 instead of a 1d10.

- *If your total is less than 8 - 63*
- *If the total is 8 or over (you make the DC 8 Swim check) - 122*
- *You can leave the way you came - 29*

19

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

A stunted, crumbling tower rises up from the ground here - it used to be called the Low Tower. The doorway gapes into blackness beyond.

Will you

- *Enter? - 47*
- *Return to the Inner Ward Courtyard - 76*

20

The stone around you clatters ominously as you wiggle through it. You hear it shifting overhead. Perhaps this wasn't the wisest choice

(DICE) Roll 1d20 to test whether your fumbling girth upsets the stone.

- *If you roll under your Stamina - 12*
- *If you roll over your Stamina - 101*

21

Uneasy, you realize some time has passed and you were not in control of yourself!

Although you cannot recall doing so, you find yourself in a low and grubby kitchen.

(TIME) Check 4 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet. Apparently you wandered for some time.

(LOST) Roll 1d10 and remove the item from that numbered space on your inventory!

- *The kitchen is dark and smells of age-old rot - 87*

22

You come to the Jackal camp, at last. Raucous laughter greets you, followed by a hushed silence as you enter the circle of tents.

It appears the Jackals are gathered around the fire pit in the centre, laughing merrily, eating roast capons, rabbits and other bits of meat that are foisted on spits around the fire.

Diptherio himself steps forward - the other Jackals eye you and your sack of goods, and your weapons. And your look of weariness and grim determination.

"Ha! I chose well, did I not, my Jackals? Look at this one - alive, mostly untainted, and no sign of zombification! I believe that One-Eyed Enoch owes me some silver!"

The Jackals all chuckle as if on cue.

"Well, Hound? Have you the precious Space Rock you were tasked to collect? It would be easier if you gave it to us and joined the Jackals, but we don't mind a little more death before dinner!"

All the Jackals laugh mirthlessly, and each one appears to be readying his or her weapon.

You must choose:

- *Hand over the Space Rocks - 42*
- *Prepare for a fight. - 133*
- *'I haven't found any!' - 60*

23

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

This is the collapsed eastern portion of the New Hall.

You can see an open yard to the east, strewn with rubble and evil-looking grasses.

From here you can go

- *West to the other side of the New Hall - 37*
- *East into the courtyard - 92*

24

Luminous blue paint, possibly made of ground-up Space Rock, indicates

SEF

here.

- *Return to - 62*

25

You feel uneasy.

The Runes on the wall make no sense, and neither does reading the book provide any insight.

You head is swimming from the baleful energies of the writing that sways and dances. You feel certain that you have forgotten things that you should have remembered.

Lose 3 Personality points permanently!

- *You flee down the stairs, remorseful for ever coming to this room. - 113*

26

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(GRUE) If you have no light, roll a night-time encounter immediately.

This is the cramped inner recess of the south-eastern guard tower. A funk hangs in the air, here.

- *Back up the ladder and out the hatch - 110*
- *Out the doorway into the courtyard - 29*

27

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

On your hands and knees, you enter what appears to be a tunnel dug by someone using a spoon. It likely took a very long time, and the tunnel wends its way through the earth for a good distance - possibly to the east but it is quite difficult to keep your bearings straight down here.

You hear the laughing of a small boy up ahead, and the tunnel's opening is only a short crawl away.

- *Turn around and crawl back the way you came - 2*
- *Keep crawling to - 93*

28

You make your way toward the Gatehouse of Halthrag Keep, feet sounding dully on the wood of the drawbridge. It is well-preserved and sound, for a thousand year-old collection of wooden planks. Your heartbeat rings in your ears and a crossbow bolt follows the cry of someone behind you. They hoot and holler and you don't bother to look back as you run.

You move past a man's crumpled body. He is dressed in a grey-green robe and his skin is sallow and waxy.

(ITEM) You may try to scoop up the Black Grimoire the dead man grasps to his chest. Make a DC 12 Agility check. If you succeed, take the Black Grimoire and add it to your character sheet. Else, keep running!

A few more yards and you duck under the rusty iron portcullis, narrowly avoiding a concussion. All is cool and relatively dark and quiet.

With a booming crash and the screeching of metal on metal, the portcullis slams down behind you.

From the approach beyond the drawbridge, you hear "You can run, but you can't hide from us, Hound!"

- *It is somewhat dark, here. Go to 116*

29

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

You have come to the base of the crumbling wreck known as the Shattered Tower.

Roll a 1d4, and subtract 1. You encounter that many BUZZDRONES. These are the small, larval type that will attach to dead bodies and create ZOMBORGS; there are no ZOMBORGS here but you hear the wailing and scrabbling of dead things to the north, where fallen rubble litters the courtyard. Pieces of strange machines connected by metallic ropes are strewn haphazardly around the base of the tower, and a yawning whole dips into the earth where the tower once stood. The uncanny metallic wires lead from the machines down into the hole.

Fight the BUZZDRONES before continuing, if you encounter any. Each will attack you every round - if they defeat you, then your corpse becomes a ZOMBORG and wanders off somewhere (there will be no corpse from a defeated player character, here)

BUZZDRONE: Init +2; Atk zap-2 (1d3); AC 8 vs. melee, 14 vs. missile attacks; Hit Points 1; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 5 GP Motivator Jewel and 1 Space Rock

- *Southeast to the southern wall - 89*
- *North into the rubble-filled courtyard - 111*
- *Into the Hole - 18*

30

Someone has artfully burned

END

in the grass here, possibly with a drip torch.

- *Return to - 13*

31

You hand Diptherio your meagre collection of Space Rocks. He titters a little, as does Spellvexit.

Spellvexit screeches out "Weak sauce! Weak sauce!"

The Jackals all join him in a good laugh.

Diptherio twirls his mustachio somewhat ill-naturedly.

"Hmm. Heh heh. I see. A coward, a weakling, and somewhat dim, to boot. I rescind my offer, Hound. You will never be a Jackal; a Hound you must stay."

The Jackals split your money up between them, and send you on your way to Marbourg. After a half day's travel, you find the barrister's office where your bequest paperwork was waiting. Although you haven't the filing fees, the barrister - one MR. FLUGGINS, ESQ. - loans the paltry sum to you at exorbitant rates. You are now the owner of a rundown, rat-eaten shack on the edge of town. You're not sure why you came all this way, but now you need money more than ever. Then a thought occurs to you.

You have your gear! You could take up adventuring!

THE END

You survived Halthrag Keep and the Jackals' task. If your total experience gained was less than 10 XP, then bring it up to 10, exactly. Now if you'd like to take this character back into the world - perhaps to avenge your humiliation by the Jackal Gang and further explore the Keep - consult Appendix X and the DCC rulebook.

32

As you approach the idol, you feel a sense of foreboding. This god is not a local one; the pantheon of Thrend does not include a squat and shaggy man with tusks and three horns. You can see this was carved from wood by a skilled hand, and then brass horns and tusks were added, and the whole was gilded with leaf.

The thing glitters dully in your feeble light, and a strange feeling of homesickness and loneliness overwhelms you.

What is your alignment?

- *Is it Chaotic? - 98*
- *Is it Lawful? - 90*
- *Is it Neutral? - 100*

33

Now you know what the smell was from - a tawny form is curled up on a bed of straw, here, and a pair of tattered leather wings move ever-so-gently when you enter the room. The north-eastern wall of this square room has fallen away, exposing a portion of the cliff outside. Below, the river churns idly toward the ocean far to the south.

G'rrrrrlanvargyld, known in the East as "The Shadow", sleeps here. He is mad with grief and burning with fever. His life-mate was killed by a party of adventurers on the plains between Helix and Helleborine recently, undoing years of fruitful marauding and destroying the tribe of hobgoblins that they ruled together unchallenged. He is balefully blinded in one eye, but luckily he appears asleep. You heart beats faster - hopefully not too loudly! - as you observe his mangy fur and his tattered mane. The spikes of his tail glitter in the dim light of this place.

You become aware that THE SHADOW is not asleep, but rather awake and watching you.

"Grrrrreetings, ape-thing. Long am I hungered for flesh that walks to me and you have arrived just in time. You smell pressed and worried, and your fear delights me. What have brought to offer me for repast, this hour, before I devour thee?"

- *If you offer all of your treasures, equipment, and money, he may allow you to flee out of his cave and into the valley below. - 114*
- *If you offer everything you have, including BILL's Floppy Hat and ENOCH's Tattered Poncho - 85*
- *Attack Him? - 103*

34

BILL laughs out loud. "I knew it, Enoch, this'n'd rather die outside than go in! Must know what awaits inside! Do me a favour, would ya? If I don't knock this biter out in a couple of passes, shoot it, would you?"

ENOCH takes two steps back, and levels his crossbow at you but does not yet fire.

Every turn that you fight BILL, ENOCH will take a shot at you with the crossbow. He's a crack shot, too, is ENOCH. Although they are scum, they are a fair bit tougher than the peasants they usually prey upon.

BUTCHER BILL: Init -2; Atk Brass Knuckles+1 (1d4); AC 8; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -5; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR special.

ONE EYED ENOCH: Init +1; Atk Rickety Crossbow+2 (1d6); AC 12; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will -2; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR special.

If you kill BILL then ENOCH will turn and flee - he's a vicious brute but not stupid. In this case, you may attack him once. If you kill him also, you may take

(ITEM) BILL'S Brass Knuckles (1d4)

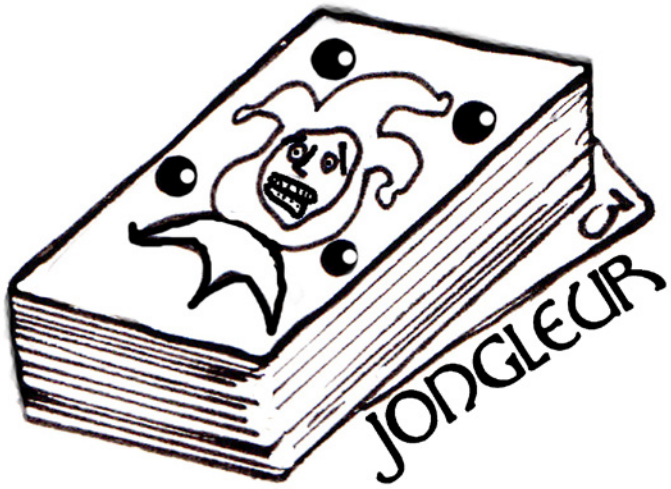
(ITEM) BILL'S Floppy Hat

(ITEM) ENOCH'S Rickety Crossbow (1d4)

(ITEM) ENOCH'S Tattered Poncho

Then decide:

- *Try to reach the Gatehouse of Halthrag Keep? - 28*
- *Flee into the woods and try for Marbourg? - 121*



35

You move nervously past the murder holes, here.

Is it night?

- *No it's daytime - 50*
- *Yes, it's night time (after turn #24) - 86*

36

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

A furious cawing as from angry crows comes from the high, red-topped tower to the north. The wall of the Inner Keep stands before you, its entryway destroyed. The hinges are miraculously un-rusted, but twisted as if by a great force. The splintered wood spreads out from the doorway into the Inner Ward, where piles of bones and rusted armour and weapons lie strewn about.

A trail through the dust goes south to around a low tower into the southern portion of the ward.

- *Through the destroyed doorway into the Inner Ward - 76*
- *South on the dusty trail to an opening between the wall and a low tower - 107*

37

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the gloomy, dusty remains of the New Hall of Halthrag Keep. The furnishing have been ransacked and set afire long ago, and the roof is pockmarked with ominous holes. You hear the flitting and buzzing of winged things as they zoom past the rents in the ceiling. The eastern side of the building is collapsed.

(ITEM) Each turn you spend here, you can search the dusty floor and find 1d6 pieces of Space Rock. If you roll a 1 or a 6 when determining how much you find, you attract a strange 4-winged creature, with a single glaring eye. You can drop the Space Rocks and flee, in which case it leaves you be. Otherwise, resolve the combat. You get no experience points for fleeing!

BUZZDRONE: Init +2; Atk zap+1 (1d4); AC 14 vs. melee, 10 vs. missile attacks; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR none

You may

- *Go back to the southern intersection - 107*
- *Scramble east out to the yard - 26*

38

(LIGHT) You must have light to see, here.

- *If you have no light, return to the Dead Cyclops - 62*
- *If you have a burning Torch or Lantern, proceed to - 84*

39

You wade out into the cool inky water, climb the rope ladder that is foisted overboard, and scale it with some speed and skill.

You are made to tie some simple knots and checked for disease and madness by Chell, the GENERATOR's resident cleric. Given a clean

bill of health, the landing party loads on a fresh barrel of water and some salted Croakling meat and then you weigh anchor.

Even in the relative lightless-ness of the Great Undersea caverns, you can see the sinister blue glow of Space Rock under the water near the shore, poisoning everything it touches.

As you glide silently away, your heart grows cold at the thought of the other prisoners left behind in the Jackal's camp, but anyway, who are they to you after all?

CONGRATULATIONS

You have sailed away from Halthrag Keep in a quasi-dimensional space that opens into the vast lightless sea beneath Aereth. Add 5 XP to your current character's total and keep them for later use. Make another character and play again, if you wish.

40

Groggily, you come to in what seems to be the centre of a swarm of angry bees or hummingbirds!

There is rubble and activity all around you.

(TIME) Check 5 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet. It feels much later!

(ONLY) There is a beautiful Brazen Shield, here, with a warrior's helmet painted on the front in black. Its visor is made of some clear substance and you may hold the shield before you and still see your enemy. The Brazen Shield will give you +2 to your Armour Class, but for any round in which you claim this bonus you will automatically lose initiative since it is also quite heavy. If you take it, check the box - it will no longer be found here.

You are at the centre of whirlwind of angry activity!

- *Go to the base of the Shattered Tower - 29*

41

A gleeful and awful cackle resounds through the air!

Nebrovolent senses that your heart has turned down a wicked path, and he offers you a vision of revenge and gleeful carnage!

On the far side of the keep from where you stand, a terrible fury slumbers. Although you cannot see it, you know it smells of carnage and fever, and it dreams of pain and humiliation.

It wears the fur of a rabid predator and the face of a madman!

Perhaps it could be connived to your purpose of revenge, somehow... It lusts for revenge against something, anyone, anything...

- *Leave this place and return to - 87*

42

You pull from your belt a sack of the greasy, shining blue Space Rocks. You feel better having done for them, anyhow.

Diptherio licks his chops. How many have you found?

- *1 to 5 pieces - 31*
- *6 to 20 pieces - 4*
- *21 or more - 88*

43

You run, harder than you have ever run, until your lungs burn as acid and your legs feel as if they are lead. Crossbow bolts and arrows zip past you in the hot afternoon sun, and the occasional harquebus round booms out and crashes off tree trunks to your left and right. Strangled cries and shouts in guttural foreign tongues assault your ears from every direction! The forest is alive with the sounds of pursuit.

Suddenly growling, baying and the weird keening of what might be actual jackals assaults you. You never saw or heard any animals during

your time in the wooden stockade! Startled, you turn to look over your shoulder and see a great pack of furry, slavering horrors streaking through the woods to overtake you. They cackle menacingly and you do not see the fallen log over which you trip.

You are torn to pieces without so much as a stifled cry.

(END) Restart with another character, if you wish.

44

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

The dishevelled and tottering postern gatehouse lies before you. You see a passage that passes under a row of murder holes, then out through a portcullis and over a drawbridge. This lies to the east.

Through the dusty haze, you can see that the upper floor of the gatehouse is inaccessible to you, but you can pick your way to a downward staircase, under a partially destroyed round cove set into the floor. This leads to the dungeon.

- *Make for the Eastern Exit - 35*
- *Investigate the Dungeon - 93*

45

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This squat building is of rough-cut stone. The oaken door is remarkably solid, for a door that has been out of use for a millennium. Un-rusted iron bands frame a large steel pull-ring set centrally, underneath which is a strangely shaped keyhole. You hear the screeching of birds high up to the northeast. You can just make out from here that the screeching come from the red roof of a high tower.

A pair of charred skeletons lays on the ground before the door.

- *If you have a Fancy Bronze Key, you may unlock the door - 38*
- *You may try to pick the lock with a Stiletto, if you have one - 9*
- *Go south to the Cyclops's corpse - 62*
- *Go east to the base of the Red Tower and the walls of the Inner Keep - 36*

46

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

The Low Tower was used as storage in the time of Halthrag, but it was ransacked long ago. It is barren of items and creatures rarely come here.

Through the partly destroyed eastern wall, you can view the Inner Ward courtyard, a mostly ruined building across the courtyard to the east, a higher damaged tower behind that, and a cluster of buildings to the north, including another tower and a chapel.

An angry humming comes from the east, but the source is not clear.

- *Go back down the winding staircase to - 19*

47

The base of the Low Tower is a confused morass of rubble and skeletal bodies, all draped around a crumbling stone spiral staircase that winds up into the murky blackness.

Every time you enter here, you may disturb the rest of the dead, and prompt one of them to attack you.

(DICE) Roll a d6 - if you roll a 1 or 2, then an unarmed but nonetheless dangerous SKELETON rises up to attack you.

SKELETON: Init -4; Atk claw-1 (1d4); AC 8; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +3, Ref -4, Will +5; AL N, no parley. XP 1. TR 1

Assuming you survive, you may

- *Climb the stairs up - 46*
- *Exit and return to the Inner Ward - 76*
- *Pick your way down the staircase into the inky blackness - 80*

48

You sprint through the crumbled remains of the northern wall, where it appears that some force shattered it and made a meandering path down to the river below.

This is almost too good to be true!

You peer out through the breach, at the wind-whipped path. It's fairly steep, but you shouldn't have any problems getting down it, unless of course it's guarded.

- *Turn back to the courtyard - 111*
- *Over the low ruined wall and down the path - 67*

49

You scramble carefully on the crumbling outer wall and slip in through a hole. A buzzing sound zips pass the arrow western arrow slit. Perhaps it was a giant bee or a hummingbird! Peering out through the slit, you see the drawbridge and the crumpled body of a man upon it. Figures - probably the Jackal Gang - move around to the west. From here you can see the western-most portion of the moat, and an embankment on the other side. A gloomy forest sulks at the top of the embankment. You can almost make out the tops of buildings - Marbourg!

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

- *There is a half-rotted trapdoor in the floor; you can take it to - 116*

50

As you move beneath the murder holes set in the ceiling, here, you become aware of ominous laughter above.

Then, you are briefly aware of the twang of a crossbow but only for an instant, before the bolt slams into the back of your neck.

You lie twitching as the murderous POLLY of the Jackal Gang comes down to fish your goods from your corpse.

THE END

Play another character if you like!

YOUR PHYSICAL BODY NEED NOT DIE!
write today for full details!
send a self-addressed & stamped envelope to:
Vivimancer's Guild Local 637B
Ketterem, Alfgrim, Demi-Plane of Dread

51

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

The air continues to shimmer in an unsettling fashion. Below, and to the outside, you can hear the flapping of large and angry birds but the noise is strangely hollow and tinny, here.

The stairwell winds around up, and the whole tower teeters and sways with the winds - at least, you hope it's from the wind.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

- *Continue up - 108*
- *Go back down the staircase - 124*

52

"Infidel! You pollute this place."

Make a DC 15 Will saving throw. If you have The Mad God's Blessing, take a +3 bonus to your roll.

If you make the save, then a towering form of pure Lawfulness shimmers into view before you; prepare to die!

SENTINEL OF JUSTICE: Init +3; Atk Mighty Spear (1d10); AC 18; Hit Points 10; SV Fort +4, Ref -5, Will +5; AL L, no parley. XP 8. TR special

In the unlikely event that you win, you have proven yourself a mighty Champion of Chaos! Your current weak state belies the potential within you.

- *If you fail the save or if the SENTINEL defeats you, then you are smitten by holy wrath - 7*
- *If you vanquish the SENTINEL - 14*

53

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

You travel along the top of the west side of the southern wall, here. It is still and quiet, although you can hear the buzzing of angry bees to the east and north.

You can go

- *Along the top of wall to the west - 49*
- *Along the wall to the east - 79*

54

You clear your throat. You learned long ago that when anyone asks if you are a God, you ought always to reply that you are.

Your blood pumps in your ears and your voice squeaks nervously in the affirmative.

The robed figure rises up, and gestures lazily in the air. It grasps the handle of its terrible Black Sword.

You begin to disappear, wondering what went wrong and where you will end up.

- *Disappear and reform elsewhere - 62*

55

You slip past the portcullis, into the dim and dusty air of the eastern Weeping Forest. You stand on the drawbridge, where a lone member of the Jackals stands guard waiting for "recruits" like yourself.

He appears to not have expected you, and brandishes his spear lazily.

"Hmm. I guess I owe Enoch a Stag - I thought the Imp would be back well before night, and we'd do this whole thing again, tomorrow. May as well give me the journal, I guess."

He gestures at your pack and winks, leaning over to whisper.

"If you'll give me the rocks, I'll trade you this healing draught and you can run off as you like."

He holds out his hand expectantly, and winks again.

- *Deliver your load of Space Rock to Diptherio? - 115*
- *Slip away quietly? - 70*
- *Attack him? - 3*

56

The booming of an harquebus!

You might be hit as you sneak along the walkway.

(DICE) Make a DC 11 Agility Check.

If you succeed, the ball of the harquebus clatters off the stone, but you are unharmed.

If you fail, then you've been hit by a sniper somewhere across the moat! Take 1d4 points of damage!

If you are killed, then your body and possessions can be found here, later. Make a new character and start again.

Else,

- *Turn back west along the wall - 79*
- *Dash east down the stairway to the courtyard below - 92*
- *Further East along the wall - 110*

57

Dusting yourself off, you wend your way up the stairwell, conscious of the cries of CLIFF ROOSTERS outside the tower and a curious humming as of angry bees. There is no reason one would come up this way, since the place has been picked clean over the years, it is highly dangerous below, and the inside of the tower fairly shimmers with the poisonous glow of the evil Space Rocks that litter Halthrag Keep.

It is unclear to you why you have come - have you received a sign? Some waking dream that directs you? In your mind's eye you see a hand, attached to an arm, attached to... What is the arm attached to? The hand has a finger, and the finger beckons you forward.

Up you climb, until at last you come to an undecorated tower room. Strangely there are no windows nor arrow slits - not at all what you imagine a tower room to look like in one of these musty old castles.

- *Is it night? - 72*
- *Is it day? - 68*

58

The strange blue energies in this room dance and sway in a hypnotic, moire pattern. The patterns dance and shift and hum in a way that is quite unpleasant.

Spellvexit seems uneasy and restless, and his maniacal giggling stops abruptly.

Stowed away in your gear, of its own accord, the Bell you carry rings a clear and beautiful tone. The note is perfect and right, if a little sinister.

You grab the thing and look at it - the figures on the bell glow and dance and shift in the way that the blue energies on the walls here did - but the glow on the walls has calmed and taken on runic shapes and halted their frenetic dancing.

Your nose is bleeding. Subtract 1 Strength point, temporarily.

Do you have a Black Grimoire? The condition does not matter.

- *You have a Black Grimoire - 128*
- *You lost it, or you've never had one - 117*
- *If you want to flee this place - 113*

59

You realize that you cannot keep your head above the water for much longer, and gasping and flailing, you take one last desperate breath of air before sinking below the swift river's surface.

All is quiet, and somewhat warm for this time of year.

You think you see a RIVER NYMPH coming for you at last, but this could just be a lack of oxygen. Who knows? It could be a nymph, also!

THE END

Make a new character and start over, if you like.

60

Diptherio scowls in disapproval.

"You made it all this way without bringing out any Space Rocks? Hmm. Perhaps I placed too much confidence in you!"

He licks his greasy mustachio.

"Jackals! Take this Hound back inside!"

OH NO!

You turn to run but someone clubs you behind the ear, and your consciousness takes flight fairly quickly.

- *Wake up in - 116*

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is an unprotected portion of the northern part of the keep. The outer wall has collapsed, probably falling into the river below many years ago. From here, you can see for many miles to the north, northeast, and northwest. The river below churns lazily, and it is unlikely that the fishing is good. You've heard it is infested with RIVER NYMPHS and the ghosts of dead soldiers and river-boaters.

Every so often, a buzzing thing flies past searching, too fast for you to see clearly. Raucous cawing comes from atop the Red Tower directly to the west - so named because the stone shingles can be seen for miles around. The tower itself appears to teeter and sway in the gentle breeze, but this could be an illusion.

To the east, you can see the stained glass windows of what must be a chapel.

A CLIFF-ROOSTER feeds on the dead body of a Dwarf, here.

(ONCE) CLIFF ROOSTER Init 0; Atk bite-2 (1d4); AC 15; Hit Points 4; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL C, no parley. XP 1. TR special

If you can kill or drive off the CLIFF ROOSTER, you can take the

(ITEM) Dwarf's Battle Axe +1 (1d10), a finely made weapon of solid iron, still razor sharp.

You may go

- *South again to the Northern Courtyard - 17*
- *East to the Chapel - 8*
- *Southwest to the ruins beneath the Red Tower - 91*

62

This is the western courtyard of Halthrag Keep. A thick layer of dust obscures the bones of many dead warriors strewn about the yard, but most prominent of them is the ominous decayed corpse of a huge Cyclops. You know from childhood stories that his club was named Dwarfmeal and levelled many a castle wall throughout the young Kingdom of Thrend.

As strong as he was, Halthrag's troops somehow overcame him - but it seems that none of them survived the battle, either. Bones are scattered everywhere here. It is dismal and grim.

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet each time you enter, here. It is difficult to manoeuvre through the mounds of bones.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

(ITEM) If you want to search, then make a DC 15 Luck check. If you succeed, you can scrounge a random item from table HH5. Each time you find an item, you automatically incur a random encounter and advance the time a turn.

- *Go west to the gatehouse - 116*
- *There is a stout building to the north, with a miraculously intact oaken door - 45*
- *The walls of the Inner Keep and the Low Tower are visible to the east - 36*
- *The ruined Kitchen is to the southwest - 87*
- *Around a bend to the southeast, you can pass the Low Tower close to the outer wall - 107*

63

This ought to be easy!

Leaving all your armour and light behind, you plunge into the black water.

You swim and swim and swim. Finally, although you are fairly sure you have swum a great distance, you drown and die.

THE END

Play another character if you wish.

64

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

(ITEM) Make a DC 12 Luck check, here. If you succeed, scrounge a random item from table HH5

This is the gloomy base of the southernmost guard tower. The door to the courtyard outside is jammed and blocked by rubble, barring exit that way.

You may go

- *Back up through the hole - 79*

65

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

Yes - it's very clear! The runes are a prayer, or an invocation, and the strange energies enable one to make a door in the glow of candlelight in this place, at this time.

The Black Grimoire holds simple translations for the runes, and you intone them your hasty marginal notes suggest, your voice adding to the clarion ringing of the Bell you hold:

"AK LAWT UNIK TOBAR AHT"

As you chant the words over and over, the runic figures on the wall dance wildly and the Bell becomes quite hot to the touch!

You lose your Bell, dropping it to the floor where it glows white hot and gives off a cloud of metallic smoke. The very air around you seems charged with possibility, with ominous hope and fiendish desire.

Do you have a Candle of any kind?

- *Light a Candle, and intone the words again - 106*
- *No, I have no Candle - 11*

66

NONE... UNHAPPY... SERVE BETTER WITHOUT FREEWILL

The THING IN THE DARKNESS slaps a chittering metallic spider on you and with its 5th Dimensional tentacle, it turns off your brain permanently.

It may be easier for you to collect the Space Rock for it, this way.

THE END

67

Easier done than said, and easier said than thought!

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

You've escaped.

The river drifts lazily to the east past you, where it bends sharply to the south. Which way do you go? Careful! You are likely to be found by the Jackals!

THE END

Start again with another character, if you so desire. That was sort of anti-climactic, but at least you escaped!

68

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

Nothing. There is nothing here. Well, dust and dead flies.

You hear the shrill cry of the CLIFF ROOSTERS outside, and the strangely persistent angry buzz. The buzz is reminiscent of bees or wasps, and sets your teeth on edge.

You imagine the place would seem somewhat more interesting at night. Maybe.

You turn and pace back down to the jumbled ruin that blocks the middle stairwell.

- *Find yourself at the base of the Red Tower - 113*

69

Uneasy, you realize some time has passed and you were not in control of yourself!

Although you cannot recall making your way here, you find yourself in a high-ceilinged and dusty chapel.

(TIME) Check 4 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet. Apparently you wandered for some time.

(LOST) Roll 1d10 and remove the item from that numbered space on your inventory!

- *You find yourself in the doorway of the Chapel - 8*

70

You weigh the evils you have encountered since arriving here. Surely no good could come from fulfilling Diptherio's request.

IAN GRAM gestures impatiently and leans in - "Hurry, mendicant! If we are seen it will be the end of us both!"

You hand him all the Space Rocks you have recovered, even the bigger ones (cross all Space Rocks from your inventory).

"A wise choice. Hold on! Be right back."

He pops off into the brush for a moment, and returns with a green bottle.

"This ought to fix you up nicely. Use it in need. Now get out of here, and give me that journal and the bastard Imp!"

(The Magic Draught will heal you of any one malady, including poison and disease, and may even work on curses a little.)

Spellvexit titters and leaps onto IAN's shoulder. He takes the journal, also.

You leap off the drawbridge and run off into the forest - away from this hellish place. Who was that man, anyhow?

- *Run! - 81*

71

Coughing and sputtering, you swim to the edge of the river and pull yourself up its muddy bank to a spot where you can stand. You're alive. Of course, you had to give the fiendish Manticore everything you owned, and are thus no better nor worse off than when the Jackal Gang attacked your stagecoach. But then, you've had a striking adventure and there is the small matter of your inheritance in Marbourg.

Marbourg - you think that was to the west of here, wasn't it? And a bit downstream?

Congratulations!

YOU'VE ESCAPED HALTHRAG KEEP.

However, the Jackal Gang goes unpunished, and your future is not yet secure...

You may start over with a new character - but read the afterward for hints on continuing your adventure.

72

(GRUE) If you have no light, roll a night-time encounter immediately.

In the dim light you carry, you can see the pulsing, wicked glow of baleful energies all around you. The glow is same colour as the hideous Space Rocks you've been sent to gather in this place, and it makes your nose bleed and your eyes hurt.

Subtract 2 points from your Stamina, permanently. The awful radiations of the Space Rocks have contaminated this place more than is evident from a casual inspection. It seems a great deal of them must have been stored here at some time, and their energies linger.

Do you have a Bell of any kind?

- *Yes, a Brass or Meteoric Iron Bell - 58*
- *No - I've not yet collected a Bell in my travels in the Keep - 112*

73

Ever so carefully, ever so deftly, you work the stiletto blade in a graceful arc within the lock. You don't feel it so much as see the mechanism in your mind's eye. Finally, you give a gentle twist to the handle of the stiletto and you hear a gentle whirring inside the guts of the door.

That's odd. You never heard a door whir, before. You take a half step back, careful not to tread on the charred remains on either side.

Within a few moments, the door clicks open and swings ominously inward.

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

- *Inward to the Barracks - 38*
- *Turn away back to the Courtyard of the Cyclops's Corpse - 62*

74

The words are simple - a simple chant that you have heard in many chapels and on the mouths of hedge wizards from here to the Alabaster Palace!

You lower your voice, raise the Bell above your head - where it still strangely rings a clarion note - and cry out:

"ANALL NATHRACHT

UTHSVAH BESTHUD

DOHIEL NIENVEH"

You pause for dramatic effect.

"ANALL NATH -"

A thunderous peal splits the air of the high room of the Red Tower. A discharge of intense magical power - focused by the ringing of the Bell you carried and intensified by the chant you have rashly issued forth - destroys everything inside.

You and everything you carry are rendered into component atoms, scattered into a sickly glowing blue film that coats everything in the room.

YOU HAVE LOST!

Start again with a new character, if you so desire.

75

(TIME) Check 1d6 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

The stairway goes down to an impossible depth! It is amazing feat of construction, or is it magic? You notice that the very air shimmers around you, and you feel the urge to vomit.

Finally, you come to a landing in a wide cavern, lit above and around you by phosphorescent mushrooms. Strange luminescent bat-like creatures flitter in the dim light above. You hear the croaking of frogs in the distance. You think you may hear the lapping of waves from the south, but surely this is impossible.

(ITEM) Each time you enter, you may pick a piece of Glowing Mushroom, and use it for a working light source for 20 turns.

When you arrive, you will likely encounter a creature. Roll a d6:

On a 1-3, fight a

RADSTIRGE: Init +2; Atk proboscis+1 (1d4 Strength or Stamina damage, any combination); AC 8; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 1

On a 4 or 5, fight a:

CROAKLING: Init +2; Atk tongue-2 (1d4); AC 14; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 1

On a 6, meet a PALE ELF MERCHANT. He will buy any goods you have to sell, and then move into the misty recesses of the cavern. He will sell you one Healing Potion for 20 Silver Pieces, which will heal you completely of any disease or wounds, and provide a temporary boost of 3 Hit points above your maximum.

- *If you do not have a light source, return to - 47*
- *Go back up the stairs, if you wish - 80*
- *Move toward the sound of lapping waves - 77*

76

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the Inner Ward, the last bastion of defence for Halthrag Keep. It is dim, and thin weeds grow up around the bones of the fallen dead, here.

Several sets of footprint head off in differing directions, and blood trails as well.

You may follow them

- *Southwest to base of the Low Tower - 19*
- *Southeast to a partly ruined building - 119*
- *East through a ruined portcullis into the courtyard beyond - 111*
- *Over a partly destroyed wall into the Northern Courtyard - 17*

77

The Great Undersea spreads out before you! Strange, you understood it to be thousands of leagues away from Marbourg, but perhaps this is a northern shore of that vast underground ocean.

A crew of PURPLE GNOMES has anchored a shroomwood galleon off the shore, here. They hail you in the common surface tongue, asking if you have seen a source of fresh water or food. Their captain is a GNOMISH SORCERER and a very affable fellow.

(ONCE) If you have fought and beaten a nearby RADSTIRGE or CROAKLING, then you may direct them there, for which they will reward you 3d20 Silver Pieces.

- *Go back to the Great Caverns - 75*
- *Talk to the Captain - 83*

78

IAN GRAM shakes his head.

“Strange how the morons always try to kill me. Poor buggers must go mad from all the horrors inside there.” He looks across the drawbridge into the recesses of Halthrag Keep.

The last thing you are conscious of is that he rifles through your sack, looking for Space Rocks. He takes your money, also.

“Diptherio mustn’t get his hands on these - you would have done well to escape as I instructed. Moron.”

Journal Notes

And then he throws your limp carcass over the edge of the drawbridge into the dirty water of the moat.

THE END

79

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the top of a ruined tower, part of the outer curtain wall of Halthrag Keep overlooking the weed-choked moat. You can see ripples of movement heading southwest through the murky water, but cannot make out the cause.

It is somewhat isolated and lonely, and empty of items or creatures.

You can go

- *Down through the rotten trapdoor - 64*
- *East along the walkway - 56*

80

(TIME) Check 2 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet, as it takes a long time to navigate the slippery stairs. If your first career was Mudlark, you incur no time penalty.

(GRUE) It is quite dark, here. If you haven't a light source, roll a night-time encounter immediately.

The stairwell is covered with slippery moss and algae, and the occasional bone tumbled down from above. A slight updraft suggests an opening below.

Spellvexit cries "FLEE! FLEE!"

- *If you do not have a light, return to the dimly lit base of the Low Tower - 47*
- *You can go back up, if you desire - 47*
- *Take your chances below - 75*

81

Halthrag Keep is behind you. The Jackals are behind you. You are dirty, wounded, and have been exposed to the taint of terrible evil magic.

You're getting used to this! You check your weapon and wonder what will come next.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have survived Halthrag Keep! Assume the role of another character, if you like. If you intend to continue playing this one in other games, add 6 experience points to your total - or bring it to 10 if you earned less than that altogether. Determine which career path you'll assume and consult the DCC rule book and the Appendix X for more ideas for playing Dungeon Crawl Classics!

82

You feel that you're lost.

Wandering around in this miserable place, in the dark. Having monsters and abominations chase you down for your flesh and soul.

For what? For your dead Uncle's teetering house? Surely there must be a way out of this place!

- *Climb out of the spy hole, cheater! - 64*

83

Romarj the Purple Sorcerer smiles down at you from the deck of the galleon GENERATOR. He occasionally takes new members onto his crew who have skill in seafaring or boat-handling.

If you have any of those occupational skills, he will allow you aboard and sign your name in the register of crew members. If you can swim, he will accept it if your Strength score is higher than 12 or if your can make a DC 10 Personality check.

If you join, he asks that you dump the poisonous Space Rock that you have found overboard, since its mutating properties would play havoc on the crew and the AEOLIAN MEPHITS that power the shroomwood galleon.

- *If you join the crew of GENERATOR, go to - 39*
- *Else, he bids you good luck and Gruumsh's blessings. - 75*

84

The flickering light you carry barely illuminates this room. Rows of cots line the northern and southern walls, and everything within smells musty and mouldy. Outside, through holes in the roof, you can hear the buzzing of a hummingbird or perhaps swarm of bees. Here and there lie the withered bodies of what were men and women of Halthrag's guard.

A shaft of light pierces the darkness and settles for a moment upon a golden idol that takes up a portion of the northern wall. The western side of the room is still cloaked in darkness.

(ONLY) There is a Spear here, 1d8 damage

(ONLY) There is a Longsword here, 1d8 damage

(ONLY) There is Silver-Headed Handaxe here, 1d6 damage

(ITEM) Make a DC 9 Luck check, here. If you succeed, scrounge a random item from table HH5. Each time you succeed, you incur an encounter with an angry reanimated guard! Bits of strange glowing metal and coppery wires protrude from his head and wind down his arms and legs. His eyes glow an ominous, pulsing blue and regard you with hatred. His stats are as follows:

ZOMBORG GUARD: Init -2; Atk claw -1 (1d6); AC 15; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR none

The decayed corpse only arises if you disturb the contents of the room, although they seem untroubled by the taking of weapons...

- *Move to the western portion of the room - 96*
- *Leave this misbegotten place - 62*

85

G'rrrrrlanvargyld eyes your gifts suspiciously. He pauses and wrinkles his nose at the hat and poncho you offer him.

"These are not long yours, supplicant. They are the clothes of fighting men grown fat, and ripe with the fear of other rabbits and apes like you. Where are these jackals, that I may see them for myself?"

You explain your encounter with the Jackal Gang and the circumstances as best you can. The Shadow quivers and his single sound eye narrows in anger and the knowledge that another hunter stalks his domain. When he shakes his mane, the gaping hole that used to be his other eye almost glows with hatred and bloodlust.

"Go now, rabbit. I will hunt you again some other day. Leave these things and flee down to the river and swim away if you will. I have your scent. But this affront to my kingdom will not stand."

He shakes out his leathery wings and pounces out through the ragged hole in the rock wall, and as you watch he wheels to the south and west where you are unable to see. But you hear the cries and screams of men being marauded by a gifted and jealous hunter.

CONGRATULATIONS

You have escaped Halthrag Keep and incidentally taken a quick and brutal revenge upon the Jackal Gang. If any survive then you may mop them up later if you like. However, The Shadow's rage will likely extend to Marbourg's relatively peaceful citizens, and so you may have accidentally unleashed a terror upon them far greater than the simple bandits that plague travellers near the keep.

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

Gain "The Shadow's Contempt" as a special trait - if your Luck ever goes below 6, then you may encounter G'rrrrrlanvargyld again and he does not forget rabbits.

86

In the dim moonlight, you briskly run the length of the passage, avoiding the murder holes in the ceiling as best you can. You think you hear snoring above, but this is probably your imagination.

- *The Portcullis and Drawbridge beckon - 131*

87

(LIGHT) You must have light to see, here.

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

This sour-smelling and mouldy place has the sheen of a thousand years of grease about it. You notice that some of the bricks in the hearth are misplaced, and a gaping hole yawns behind them. It appears a stairway is behind the soot-blackened bricks.

You may take any number of Dull Knives (1d2 damage in combat), or Dented Pots (+1 to AC if worn as a helmet, or 1 point of damage if used as a weapon in combat) any time you come here.

If you have any skill with cooking, you may roll 1d20 and attempt to make something. If you roll a 9 or better, then you fabricate one Emergency Ration from the still-viable dried goods, here. This will heal 2 points of damage when eaten at any time, even in combat. If you have no cooking skill, then you can still try but you may only roll 1d10.

In either case, if you roll 9 or under, you make a Tainted Ration. This will wound you if eaten for 1 point, although the smell will likely warn you off. However, almost any unintelligent creature will eat it and it will kill them after 2 rounds of combat provided you survive that long.

Journal Notes

Add the appropriate item if you attempt to cook something.

- *If you have no light, return to the courtyard - 62*
- *Through the hearth to the Evil Shrine - 16*

88

Diptherio hefts the canvas sack you give him. His eyes are quite wide.

"What's this? My goodness! A special treat! You've done heh eh heh fine work, here, my dear heart! Come, embrace me, and become one of us!"

You awkwardly reach to give a perfunctory hug of congratulations, and Diptherio smiles and gives you the tiniest bite...? Was that a bite? On your outstretched arm? And did he have fangs just then?

He laughs! "Not to worry, lieutenant! All will be explained in due time! Go into the tent, there, take a morsel of meat with you, and lay down! Your night's sleep will be very unpleasant, rest assured, but when you awake you will be a whole new person! Heh heh heh!"

You feel dizzy. Spellvexit laughs and laughs and laughs, and whispers in your ear until dawn.

THE END

You've survived Halthrag Keep and lived to tell the tale, for now. If your XP is less than 10, then raise it to 10 now. If it's between 10 and 15, raise it to 15. Consult Appendix X and the DCC rulebook if you'd like to keep using this character for further adventures.

89

This is the southeast wall of Halthrag Keep. Weeds grow sulkily, here.

You may go:

- *East to the base of the guard tower - 26*
- *Northwest to the rubble of a destroyed tower - 29*

90

Although you meant no harm, you feel distinctly unwelcome and ill-at-ease as you gaze upon the burnished wooden god. You feel pity, loneliness, and homesickness in a jumble of unwelcome emotions.

Make a DC 15 Will saving throw.

- *If you Will save is 15 or more - 69*
- *If you Will save is less 14 or less - 40*

91

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the base of the Red Tower. The area was once a finely-made retiring room, but now it is a heap of rubble and guano covers everything. Irritable cawing and squawking begins as soon as you set foot, here.

Every time you enter, a CLIFF ROOSTER will swoop down from atop the Red Tower and attack you. Individually, they are mere nuisances, but a flock can devour a man in a matter of seconds!

CLIFF ROOSTER Init +1; Atk claw +1 (1d4); AC 14; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -1, Ref +4, Will -1; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR 0

The CLIFF ROOSTER will have no treasure on it - but there may be some nearby.

If you survive,

- *Run through the opening into the base of the Red Tower - 124*
- *Return east to - 17*

92

This is the long stretch of wall between the southern guard towers. The ruined New Hall lies to the northwest. A weed-choked set of stairs climbs up to the top of the wall.

To the north a crumbling tower lies in ruins, as if shattered by some great force. The wall stretches away to the east into the gloom.

- *Northwest into the Rubble - 23*
- *Back up the stairs to the top of the wall - 79*
- *North to the base of the destroyed tower - 29*
- *Further East along the wall - 89*

93

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

This gloomy landing is essentially an area where a gaoler managed his charges. A upturned card table lies here, and a large iron cauldron has been unseated from a fire pit and rolled willy-nilly into the middle of the landing.

Empty water barrels and crates marked "HARD TACK" and "MUTTON JERKY" lie in a alcove to the east, but they have been emptied long ago.

The whole area is littered with toys - apparently a young boy plays with tin soldiers and jacks around here, but if he lives here you don't see him at the moment.

(ITEM) Make a DC 12 Luck check, here. If you succeed, scrounge a Hobby Horse (as Club 1d6). The hobby horse is badly painted and somewhat eerie.

The strong smell of an animal wafts from the southeast, and the cells lie to the north around a corner.

- *Back up the stairs? - 44*
- *To the cells - 104*
- *Southeast? - 33*

94

Your last desperate and miraculous stroke disrupts the coherency of Nebrovolent's avatar on Aereth!

You are shaken and breathless, and filled with righteous furore. Strangely, the air about you is shimmering and beams of warm and comforting light stream in through the cracks of the walls.

With a thunder-crack and crash, the altar of Nebrovolent splits in twain and the pealing of great bells resounds in this black place.

A booming voice rings out "WELL FOUGHT, AVENGER!"

You bow your head in thanks - for Justicia has reached from the Nine Heavens to touch your heart.

When you raise your head again, you find yourself in a quiet garden, surrounded by the smell of Grey Nightshade - the flowers most holy to Justicia's order. A monk approaches you, in awe that you were plainly not here only moments ago.

"Welcome, stranger, to the Temple of Justicia in Marbourg! I know not what brings you to this holy sanctuary, but she moves in strange ways. Are you in need, and may I help you?"

You have escaped Halthrag's Keep through divine intervention! Congratulations! Perhaps you can return to the Keep and exact righteous revenge upon the Jackal Gang, and rescue the innocents they keep entrapped there. Or else you may move your character's Fate in a

different direction. Whatever the case, you clearly have the good will of a Goddess of Law and perhaps she may guide your movements from here.

THE END

95

You run, harder than you have ever run, until your lungs burn as acid and your legs feel as if they are lead. Crossbow bolts and arrows zip past you in the hot afternoon sun, and the occasional harquebus round crashes off tree trunks to your left and right. Strangled cries and shouts in guttural foreign tongues assault your ears from every direction! The forest is alive with the sounds of pursuit.

Suddenly, the sound of growling, baying and the weird keening of what might be actual Jackals assaults you. You never saw or heard any animals during your time in the wooden stockade!

At last, you come to a river and dive in, and are deposited rudely some miles down stream. Bruised, battered, and half-drowned, you crawl weakly up the muddy bank. A little ways off, you can see what must be the run-down town of Marbourg! There are no other towns or cities within leagues of this place. You stand up, wobbly from your trip down the river, and make your way toward the town. Perhaps you can gather some lawful citizens to your cause and rescue the victims still held by the Jackals. Or else you can forget any of this occurred and simply make your way to the bequeathment or start over in Marbourg and leave your old life behind. You are penniless and lost all your items in the water, and somewhat at a loss as to what to do next.

Two dozen pairs of gleaming eyes watch you from the far bank, stumbling toward the town unwitting and relieved...

(END) Add 4 XP to your character sheet for escaping the Jackal Gang, and start again with a new character if you wish.

96

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(LIGHT) You must have light to see, here.

This is the western end of the large barracks building of Halthrag Keep. The Guard Captains' desk is here in this gloomy room, in addition to a small shrine to a foreign god which you do not recognize.

At a sturdy oak desk, the body of a large man in moth-eaten robes is slumped over, a pen knife clutched in his bony fingers. You cannot make out the scratched message beneath him from here.

The tarnished brass and wood idol of a strange god looms from a niche in the southern wall. Its form beckons you to investigate.

- *If you have no light, return to the Dead Cyclops courtyard - 62*
- *If you would like to investigate the idol - 32*
- *If you would like to investigate the corpse - 99*

97

As you pull the mass of Space Rock from your satchel, the snaking cloud of tentacles and eyes that is the THING IN THE DARK beats and waves frenetically

SLEPT LONG WISE APETHING HOME GENEROUS GIFT

You'd rather this hideous blob get the load of warp-rock than Diptherio.

Chubbing frabjously, it enters the disc-like brazier and the silvery object begins to glow almost incandescently.

COME NOW LET US LEAVE THIS EVIL PLACE

A tentacle brushes your prefrontal lobe and you experience the rapturous joy of trapped and caged being, a prisoner, about to see its home for the first time in hundreds of years. For a brief second you know things no hominid in this Kingdom has known for 10,000 years, but then the complex equations and philosophies vanish.

In a blink, you find yourself in Marbourg. It is night - and as you dust yourself off of the awful blue shimmering dust, you see a comet-like trail bolting into the sky. Strange, they usually go the other way. I wonder what could have happened, there?

THE END

(END) Raise any statistic (except Luck) by 3 points, and raise your Luck score by 1. Add 3 XP as well. Continue your character's adventures on Aereth by reading Appendix X and the DCC core rulebook, if you are interested.

98

You suddenly feel the powerful urge to smash the idol from raw spite - surely an unwise course of action.

Make a DC 15 Will saving throw.

- *If you fail, you pass out and find yourself at the top of a windy tower. (go to the Red Tower Wandering Monster Entry - or else maybe move it to here in the main entries)*
- *If you succeed, your mind suddenly goes blank and you find yourself in a grubby kitchen - 21*

99

The skeletal corpse of a once tall man is slumped over a crude but stately desk, here. The skeletal hand holds a rusty knife.

You can see that he carved "FORGIVE OUR VICTORY BOUGHT WITH POISON" into the desk before he died.

(ONLY) You may take the Rusty Knife, it will do 1d4 damage combat

(ONLY) The corpse has a serviceable Chainmail Vest, +4 to Armour Class. You would need to disturb the corpse quite a bit, and if you do so, you will acquire Lung Taint. His corpse is tainted with the evil of the Space Rocks that litter this place. Lung Taint will cause you to lose 3 Stamina points at night until healed.

- *There is nothing further. - 84*

100

You do not know this strange god from long ago and far away, but as you stare at the idol in wonderment something reaches out and touches your heart.

You feel sad, and lonely, and heartsick. You suddenly recall a dim and foggy memory, in which a mass of warriors led by a stalwart captain stand against a thousand abominations and a booming giant.

You hear, as if through a mist of eons, a voice raised in desperate prayer and the once-powerful god moving the heavens in answer. A comet plunges through the night sky, plummeting toward a mass of stone on a hill, crashing into the ground.

The tide is turned and the hero and his legion beat back the hordes of mutants but the victory is not celebrated long for they grow listless and weary and ill.

And then you find yourself staring again at the burnished idol, somewhat ashamed and full of doubt. Was your decision to come here a wise one? Your conscience nags you and you turn away, saddened for reasons you cannot fully explain.

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(ONLY) For recovering the memory of the Lost God, you may take 2 XP once, and once only, for this character.

- *Investigate the barracks further - 96*

101

Whew! Just made it! The diet the Jackals forced on you these past few days - and your natural leanness - paid off for once.

You find yourself in a gloomy space beneath the partially-destroyed gatehouse towers.

- *There is a termite-riddled trapdoor up - 49*
- *You can hold your breath and shimmy back outside to fresh air - 116*

102

You hold out a bare handful of Space Rock

HAPPINESS... COME AGAIN PLEASE... SURVIVE

The THING IN THE DARKNESS offers you a Silver Beetlebot. The Beetlebot will stitch you back together and apply nourishing chemicals for a temporary boost of 1d8 Hit Points that will last for the duration of a fight, at which point it will fly back here to rejoin its master.

Your vision fades and you find yourself somehow back in the impact crater at the base of the Shattered Tower!

- *Return to your senses - 18*

103

Interestingly, The Shadow knows your intent before your mind is even settled about it. Your hand quivers nervously over the hilt of your weapon, your heart rate increases, and he can smell the surge of adrenaline that signals you are about to attack. Even with his one ruined eye, he sees well enough that it may have been better for you to send him a letter explaining your actions.

Before your weapon is drawn, he begins to laugh and purr good naturedly.

"Not quite the coward you appear, eh ape-thing?"

You are quite dead before you realize what he means by this, and your savaged body speeds his recovery a bit.

THE END

You may make another character and play again, if you wish.

104

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

These are the cells of the dungeon of Halthrag Keep. Who knows what prisoners were kept here long ago when Halthrag held sway, here? A dim blue glow permeates everything, and weak moaning suffuses the place.

There will always be a ZOMBORG here, poking around for pieces of Space Rock to collect. When you enter, it will attack you.

ZOMBORG: Init -2; Atk claw +1 (1d6); AC 12; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +2; AL C, no parley. XP 1. TR special

If you beat it, you may search the area for items, rolling randomly for the item on chart HH5, and in addition you will always find 1d6 pieces of Space Rock as well. You must defeat the ZOMBORG to search, though, and if you flee you won't have the time to do so.

- *Flee or return to the dungeon entrance - 93*

105

A scrawling of blood on the stone wall here reads

TEE

- *Return to - 107*

106

You now know why you are here. You have come to free a great thinker and powerful mage from his imprisonment between dimensions.

How you know it is unclear, but as you light the candle all nefarious influences of a thousand extra-dimensional entities are suddenly and completely silenced, leaving only the calm sure voice of a being trapped and waiting just beyond this door - you are unsure if it was here before...

The twisting runes on the walls quiet themselves and quit their dancing, the blue glow of evil extra-terrene rocks dims, and you are left alone in a quiet room. The dissipating smoke of a melted bell lingers for a moment, and you see a withered human arm extruded from the wall before you. You did not notice before, but this room is octagonal. Was it thus when you entered here? And where is the staircase and door through which you came?

The arm beckons, and as if entranced you step forward, and with a flick of its wrist the index finger of the hand reaches out and touches your forehead.

Within a brief moment, the path laid out before you becomes bare. You know the location of the exit from Halthrag Keep. You know the way to go to get there, and the number of steps you must take to avoid chance encounters. You know the location of every member of the Jackal Gang, and exactly the course of action that it will take to exact revenge and justice for their crimes, if you choose to do so.

All that it takes is a few small favours for this being - who you know is named Vendel Re'yune - and its mysterious arm.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have escaped Halthrag Keep and solved a deeper mystery that few have plumbed. You may ally yourself with this mysterious being in future, which will aid a Wizard especially well. Read appendix VR at the end of this book for more details.

Add 10 XP to your total, and take revenge upon the Jackals if you will - no harm will come to you on your swift and sure path. Exit the Keep with all your gold and possessions. But rest assured that Vendel Re'Yune will ask a steep price for his favours down the road.

107

This is a calm area between the Outer Wall and the Low Tower. A low humming comes from the east.

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

A destroyed doorway opens into a dark room in the base of a guard tower.

- *Into the dark opening - 125*
- *A dilapidated building stands to the east - 37*

108

The staircase halts abruptly at a pile of rubble, probably from a collapsed wall of the tower, above.

Perched on top of the rubble, a hooded figure sits, turning a cube of pale blue stone over and over in its bony hands. You are not sure, but it feels as if you have seen this figure before.

It looks at the stone lovingly, almost longingly. You notice an imposing black sword leaned up against its lap. When it looks up at your approach, it asks:

ARE YOU A GOD?

And you can see that one eye houses an enormous diamond and in one there is a flashing ruby. Its strangely feminine face appears to be awaiting an answer.

Do you say

- *Yes - 54*
- *No - 109*

109

The figure looks peeved, but also strangely relieved at your weakly intoned 'No.'

It stands, brushes itself off, grasps the hilt of its terrible Black Sword, and approaches.

You feel that something has gone wrong.

INTERDIMENSIONAL SENTINEL: Init +3; Atk Terrible Black Sword+5 (1d6); AC 17; Hit Points 15; SV Fort +3, Ref -5, Will +8; AL N, no parley. XP 4. TR special

The SENTINEL will never parley, but you may try to flee. It will not abandon its post and will stay here guarding this rubble. If by some chance you beat it, then you watch as it dissolves into a puddle of greasy gray ooze.

There will be a 300 GP Diamond and a 100 GP Ruby left behind, as well as the Terrible Black Sword, which hits magical and undead creatures without penalty, and also drains any creature hit of the will to go on. Any time a creature is struck by this weapon, a morale check is called for immediately. Carrying it will take up both melee weapon slots and cause a Luck loss of -1 any time you carry it.

The pale blue Glowing Cube the creature was toying with has vanished entirely.

- *You may flee or return down the stairs. - 124*
- *Continue upwards - 6*

110

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the top of the Eastern most guard tower, on the southern wall of the Keep.

A rotted wooden hatch hangs precariously over yawning darkness down below.

You may go:

- *West along the wall again - 56*
- *Down through the hatch - 26*

111

Eddies of dust and faint, incomprehensible whispers accompany moaning and the sound of dead men clawing their way out from underneath blocks of stone and charred wood. A twisted portcullis stacked with stone and blocks leads west to the Inner Ward, and you espy a wide breach through the north wall that looks to lead to freedom! Also, the Postern Gatehouse looms ominously to the east.

Each time you enter here you will be faced with a ZOMBORG, a mindless automaton of withered flesh, animated by a buzzing and clicking metal nightmare. They shamble around the courtyard, evidently looking for something. They wander among strangely chiselled blocks and foul, throbbing machines, strung together by thick metal ropes. The ropes lead southwest to the ruins of a tower.

ZOMBORG: Init -2; Atk claw +1 (1d6); AC 12; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +2; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR 1

The ZOMBORG will always strike last. If you choose to flee from it, it will remain here, and you'll need to fight it in addition to the one that will arise upon your next entry.

- *Out of the breach in the North Wall - 48*
- *West into the Inner Ward - 76*
- *Southeast into a gloomy looking guard tower - 26*
- *Back southwest to the Shattered Tower - 29*
- *Into the Postern Gatehouse - 44*

112

There is no need to tarry here any longer. This glow is literally killing you!

- *Hurry down the stairs and over the jumbled ruins - 113*

113

Somewhat dazed and weary, you find yourself in the Inner Ward, in the shadow of the Red Tower.

- *Go to Keep Entry 91*

114

You throw down all you own: all food, all money, all armour and weapons. It is clear that you are outmatched by The Shadow - he would tear you to tiny pieces if you raised so much as a hand against him.

"Hurrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr."

G'rrrrrlanvargyld apparently takes a certain amount of pleasure in your offering- his low rumbling laughter makes your hair stand on end.

"I've had my fill of rabbits of late, and too much fear spoils the meat, little morsel. I grow weary of your presence."

He opens his one yellow-slitted eye wide and bares his fangs, stretching his claws languidly. The other eye is a ragged hole, oozing with pus and charred on the edges.

When he springs up suddenly, your heart fairly stops.

"NOW RUN, COWARD!"

You take off like a jackrabbit and leap through a hole in the wall, tumbling headfirst down the side of the cliff upon which Halthrag Keep is perched.

Make a DC 15 Stamina check after you plunge into the tepid but quickly flowing Verlash River.

- *Pass the Stamina check? - 71*
- *Fail the Stamina check? - 59*

115

IAN GRAM shrugs his shoulders.

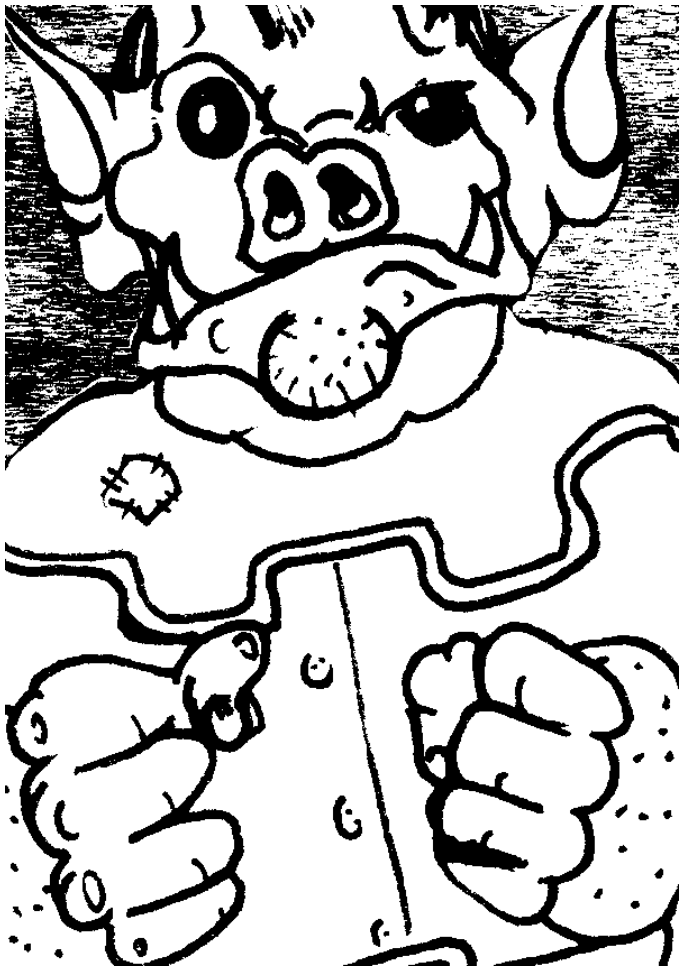
"It'd be best if you didn't, but I see you are determined. I haven't the stomach for murder, this evening. If you're determined to give him that sack of evil, then I won't argue."

He stands aside.

"Go on, then - best of luck."

You walk past him and across the drawbridge, toward the Jackal camp.

- *Cross the bridge - 22*



116

This is the gatehouse. All is quiet, here. In the distance you can here cries of anger, but only faintly. Someone has scrawled

STAY AWHILE STAY FOREVER

in faintly luminescent chalk on the north wall, to the left of the great portcullis as you enter.

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(WAND) Use the random encounter entries to check for a Random Encounter here.

The portcullis completely bars your way to the west - just as well, since the Jackal Gang awaits you on the other side and across the drawbridge. They won't be very happy with you after your run-in with Enoch and Bill.

- *Through a narrow stone alley to the North, you can see the base of a decrepit tower. - 13*
- *Eastward, the entryway opens into a wide courtyard in which all is mostly still. - 62*
- *You can just barely squeeze through a hole in the southern wall into the crumbling remains of the guard tower - 20*

117

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

If you only had some way to read the runic texts on the walls! When they were etched and engraved on the Bell, they were simply too small to see.

However, these runes must mean something! There has not been any unimportant place in this hellish keep, let alone a lonely room in a high tower.

You've heard that there are things like this in the foul Black Grimoires of necromancers and sorcerers, but these things are beyond your ken at the moment.

- *Dejected, you make your way down out of this lonely room - 113*

118

The lock doesn't seem to be giving way to your tender ministrations. For a few scant minutes, you prod and wiggle the stiletto in the keyhole.

Journal Notes

All of the sudden, there is a <CLICK> and you exhale sharply. Maybe you've done it! Your heart leaps and races - that will teach the locksmiths of old to bar your way!

Your hand on the stiletto, a brief flash of light and a whiff of ozone are all you know before your body is blasted by intense electrical energy. Your hair burns, your eyes explode, and your equipment bursts into flames. You died a few seconds before that, of course. The passing carrion birds don't seem interested in your charred remains.

Return to the start of the game and begin again, if you wish.

119

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This squat building is mostly destroyed, but it is hard to tell what did the damage. Dragonfire? Hellfire? The walls are scorched and the rubble glows a sickly blue.

Behind the ruins to the southeast, a higher tower shows serious structural damage. All around, you can see streaks of blurry motion and the angry drone of what sounds like hummingbirds. The sound is too low and insistent to be insectile. The shapes streak around in wide arcs and loop-de-loops but they are too fast to glimpse clearly.

You can search the rubble for items - for each attempt, mark off a turn on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet and make a DC 7 Luck check. If you succeed, scrounge a random item from table HH5. Whether you succeed or fail, there is always one (1) piece of Space Rock to be found each time you check.

Each time you fail the Luck check, a wandering monster appears! Resolve it in the wandering monster portion of the Keep Entries.

From here, you can

- *Go back to the Inner Ward - 76*
- *Move west to the Low Tower - 47*
- *Move carefully to the Northern Courtyard - 17*

120

(TIME) Check 1d4 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

You kneel before the statue of Justicia, contemplating her lost arm, scarred face, and perfect serene anger. The gilding could be repaired if this place weren't so hellish.

You pray for guidance.

- *If you are Lawful and desire it, Justicia will give you her Mark. Acquire Justicia's Mark and go forth to vanquish evil and chaos!*
- *If your alignment is Neutral, you may adjust it to Lawful instead, a convert to the cause of Law. You may not acquire Justicia's Mark until you leave the Chapel and destroy 5 Chaotic enemies and return here.*

Either way, return to Keep Entry 8

121

You dust off your hands. Not too badly bruised, you showed these two Jackal thugs a lesson they will not soon forget. However, a hue and cry goes up as you stand there gloating, and the decision is made. You must run!

Make a DC 14 Stamina check.

- *If you make the check - 95*
- *If you don't make the check - 43*

122

After what feels like an infinity of swimming in the darkness, you pass over a stretch of shimmering blue Space Rock dust. It twinkles like stars and then dims. How strange!

You reach the surface of the pool in what must be a tunnel carved by some great force into the rock. Gasping for air, you pull yourself up and into a dimly lit cavern. Spellvexit shakes off his wings in irritation.

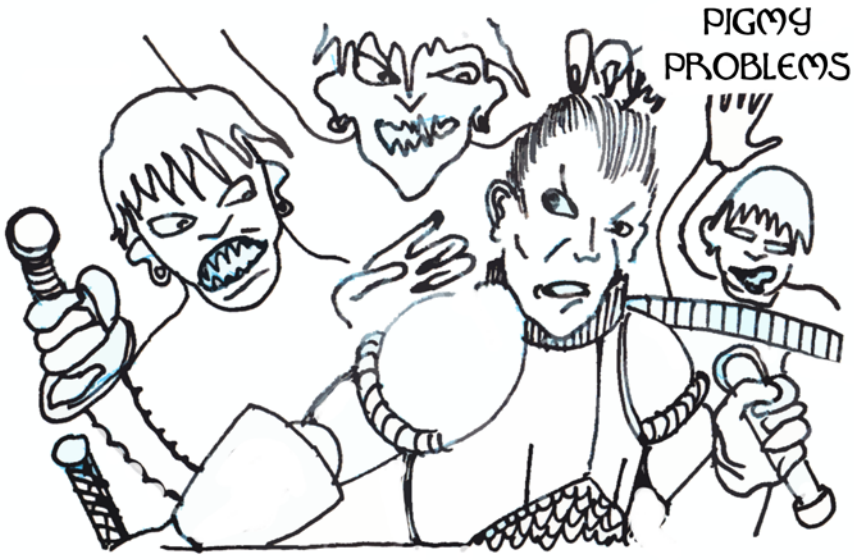
Before you, there is a wide metal disk, perhaps a silver brazier, on a stand of three long legs. It is covered with glowing black runes that pulse with blue radiance.

Whickering through the darkness, a THING comes and insinuates its tentacle into your brain, right through your forehead. Not to worry! This is one of those formless, 5th dimensional tentacles.

APETHING GOOD ORE IS NEEDED BRING IT HERE HAVE YOU ANY NOW

Your mind is flooded with thoughts of desperation and confusion and loneliness. Maybe you could give it this "ore" - the Space Rock that Diptherio mentioned? Do you have any?

- *No - I have no Space Rock - 66*
- *Give it 1 to 10 pieces - 102*
- *Give it between 11 and 30 pieces - 5*
- *Give it more than 30 pieces of Space Rock - 97*



123

Wending your way through the rubble, you feel you approach a holy place. Spellvexit becomes uncomfortable and fidgety.

He squeaks out "Turn Back! Turn Back!"

- *Proceed - 8*
- *Do as he advises - 17*

124

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the ground floor of the Red Tower. Furious cawing and flapping outside disrupts the otherwise ominous silence. The air shimmers and twinkles here in a way that makes you feel somewhat lightheaded.

- *A staircase goes up - 51*
- *Another staircase goes down - 2*

125

This is the empty and musty interior of the south-western guard tower.

A worn and shaky wooden stairway wends up to the top of the tower, where there is a landing and a trapdoor.

A scorched and hacked oaken door hangs from rusty hinges.

- *Take the rickety stairs up - 53*
- *Through the ruined door back to the intersection - 107*

126

You brush yourself off, a job well done. Not even any blisters - your hands must be getting tougher!

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

You are now perched on a slightly destroyed patch of the outer wall. A sheer cliff face plummets down to a river some hundreds of feet below. To the east, you can see the roof of a stout building, mostly intact. However, you can't leap over the gap from here.

- *You can scramble southward to the second floor of the remains of the gatehouse - 49*
- *You can lower yourself back down the rope - 13*
- *You can jump down if you have no rope: take 1 HP damage and go to - 13*

127

(TIME) Check a turn box on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet.

This is the ruined eastern courtyard of Halthrag Keep.

(ONCE) An irritable RADRAKELING scours the ground here, looking for Space Rock to devour and convert to radioactive steam to breath upon its prey. Piles of crumbling corpses - enmeshed with web-works of strange alloys - lie strewn around. Some of them moan feebly. They all glow with faint, sick light.

RADRAKELING: Init +5; Atk radioactive breath +3 (1d8 and special); AC 17; Hit Points 37; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will +7; AL C, parley 17 XP 4. TR 2

If this hideous radioactive serpent breathes upon you, reroll your Strength and Stamina Scores immediately, adjusting your base hit points if you live. You probably won't live.

- *You vanish and reappear in - 57*

128

(TIME) Check 1d6 turn boxes on the timekeeping portion of the character sheet. You are not clear how much time passes as you stand entranced, watching the blue energy runes dance and sway.

(XP) Add an Experience Point to your total!

You are quite certain that you've seen these runes before: in the copy of the bedraggled Black Grimoire you found laying around out in the grounds of the keep!

Add your Intelligence and Personality scores.

- *If the total is 24 or above - 65*
- *If the total is between 18 and 23 - 25*
- *If the total is 17 or less - 74*

129

You stand before the crumbling gatehouse of Halthrag Keep, brought here by the Jackal Gang's lieutenants One-Eyed Enoch and Butcher Bill. Enoch holds a wicked crossbow pointed at you, and Butcher Bill glares menacingly. He is a towering side of beef, not a man, as far as you can tell. He has a club in his left hand that appears to be made of human bones cast from iron, studded with nasty spikes. When he points at the gatehouse, he smiles at you – revealing a rotten mouth of mostly missing teeth.

"GO!" he rumbles. With this, he tosses your trusty weapon to the ground at your feet and a bag into your arms. The leather journal Diptherio showed you and a few other sundries are inside it.

As you grab your weapon, One-Eyed Enoch's crossbow flits up – you can see the tip of the quarrel pointed directly at your eye. Although he seems somewhat dim and appears to have only one good eye, the dirty man is as fast as a snake. He clears his throat and he says "Make it quick, Hound! The stew pot's bubblin' and me an' Bill have a game o' Cribbage a'waiting. We ain't got all day." Out of the corner of your eye, you can see him caress the trigger of the crossbow as if to highlight his point. He looks bored, stupid, and cruel - and also ready to kill you quite casually. After a moment, he kicks a little sand in your direction.

"Go on, now, git!"

In a voice like mashed potatoes, Bill says "Hurr! I think we got us a biter, here, Enoch! I'll bet you a fiver this biter won't make it past the portcullis! Hurr hurr hurr!". He gestures toward a body crumpled on the lowered drawbridge, riddled with crossbow bolts.

Enoch smiles. The portcullis hangs above the drawbridge like rotten fruit.

Do you

- *Attack them? - 34*
- *Turn and run toward the gatehouse? - 28*

130

A lonely sign here is etched in High Gloranth, painted blue. It says

FIF

- *Return to - 116*

131

Sprinting, winded, you come at last to the exit of this hellish place.

The portcullis is down and firmly locked, but the bars look rusty and loose in spots. You think you can hear raucous laughter and carousing in the night air beyond the drawbridge.

You may be able to get through by:

1) Rolling beneath your Strength on 1d20 to

bend the rusty bars of the portcullis wide enough to creep through

2) Rolling above your Stamina on 1d20 to shimmy through the gap in the bars

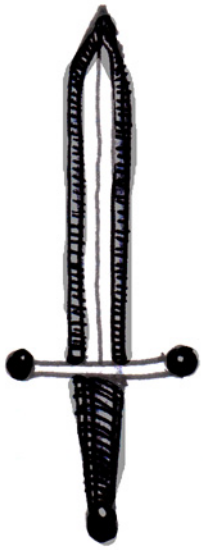
- *You can turn around and run back to the courtyard - 50*
- *If either of these methods work, then proceed to the drawbridge - 55*

132

You have returned to this place in an attempt at closure. Benighted though it is, it harbors great treasures and a few secrets worth knowing, too.

Now, gird your loins and re-enter the Keep. If Spellvexit left you before, you find that he flits down to you from the Keep's high walls and lands cackling on your shoulder, carrying a battered copy of the Halthrag Keep Journal.

- *Approach the Keep and enter it from the blasted northern wall - 111*



133

"Gods! Not again!" - Diptherio bunches up his face in disbelief! He is stunned, rooted in the spot as you approach him with your weapon drawn. He looks ridiculous and childish as he laughs at you, and the Jackals all titter uneasily as if you are joking. The Jackal woman POLLY cries out "Oi? What's that Hound doin', there?"

You may attack DIPTHERIO once for free, for your audacity, but then he is upon you like some wild animal. In fact, he looks furrier the madder he gets! He rolls a 1d20 for initiative as usual, but add the number of combat rounds that have passed – DIPTHERIO'S fury grows as he becomes more desperate.

DIPTHERIO Init +8 the number of combat rounds that have passed; Atk rapier+1 (1d6); AC 12; Hit Points 12; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -3; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR special

On round 3, DIPTHERIO will cast a desperate spell at you – Storm of Teeth – a spell of his own devising. If you make a DC 12 Will Save, then you will take no damage, but the spell will turn on him and he will take 1d8 points if he fails the save. If you fail the save, then you are torn apart in a hail of teeth – shark, tiger, wolf, velociraptor. That is the end of you.

If you or he or not dead by round 5, then The Jackals will fire into combat with their crossbows (they have no loyalty for their leader if he is so weak). Roll 1d6 for you *and* DIPTHERIO. Subtract your current Luck Bonus (or add it if the modifier is negative) and take that much damage. DIPTHERIO takes an unmodified 1d6 points as well. You may give up your attack that round to take cover for half damage.

If you are still standing after that – highly unlikely but not impossible – then DIPTHERIO falls over in dismay and surrenders.

If you beat him, then you are allowed to go free! They clap you on the back, and salute you in silence as you go. Soon, POLLY or IAN GRAM will be the new leader of the Jackals. You may

stay, and perhaps they will elect you to the leadership position – but that is another tale. Count up your XP, turn to Appendix X, and sort out what you'd like to do with your heroic character. Also, you may become a Wererat or Were-Vulture like he is sometime in the future. You won't know until you reach Level 2! Mark Suspicious Fever in your 'Special' box on the character sheet. Nothing good can come of this, for certain! Now move to Marbourg and finish your family business there, if you wish. Or continue on with your brutal adventuring life-style.

If he beats you, or if the Jackals riddle you with crossbow bolts, then you are dead. He infected you with some shape-changing disease as you died, but it doesn't matter now.

THE END

Appendix B: Bestiary

A Menagerie of Menacing Mediocre Monsters with which to Mug Middling Mendicants

These monsters stalk the parochial Kingdom of Thrend, from the Gurjeff Mountains to the north, all the way to deeps of the Frobojian Sea. A particularly varied collection lives in and around the half-destroyed keep of the long-dead Geomancer Halthrag, owing to a religious cataclysm brought on by his guard captain during the last battle of The War of the Sorcerer Lord. The whole place is suffused with eerie light at night, caused by the ubiquitous glowing bits of meteorite that litter the grounds. Some say that the Keep knows who treads its halls and varies its difficulty accordingly. Patently false, but scary nonetheless.

A particularly menacing MANTICORE has taken up residence in the keep, one Grrrr'rra'nvar'gyld. He once ruled undisputed as "The Shadow of the East" in the grasslands that used to surround Helleborine. He is bereft of one eye and nearly mad with grief after the death of his life-mate and several pups at the hands of a wandering acolyte of Yiog-Sotot.

SHRIEKER: Init -5; Atk none; AC 8; HD 1; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +5, Ref -10, Will -10; AL N, no parley. XP 1. TR 0	When attacked, a SHRIEKER will howl inconsolably and attract more monsters in the following round.
CULTIST: Init -2; Atk kris +2 (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8; Hit Points 4; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will +3; AL N, parley 8. XP 1. TR 2	Never trust a CULTIST; especially ones that have snake tattoos
SKULLFLIT: Init +8; Atk bite+0 (1d4); AC 18; HD 1d4; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +2; AL N, no parley. XP 1. TR 1	SKULLFLITS sprout from the skull of a dead adventurer, killed under moonlight.
KOBOLD: Init -3; Atk club +1 (1d4); AC 7; HD 1d4; Hit Points 3; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will -4; AL C, no parley. XP 1. TR 1	KOBOLDS are sometimes described as dog-like, sometimes as reptilian. Both of these misconceptions are heretical.
RUST MEPHIT: Init -2; Atk sword +2 (1d8); AC 18; HD 2d4; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +6; AL N, parley 8. XP 1. TR 2	RUST MEPHITS destroy metal armor and weapons used against them. They love bars of pig iron.
JINXIE: Init +2; Atk bite+2 (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d4; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will -3; AL N, no parley XP 2. TR 1	JINXIES suck away 1 Luck point with every bite or scratch.
DIRE RAT: Init +1; Atk bite+1 (1d4); AC 9; HD 1d4; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -3; AL N, no parley XP 1. TR 1	A DIRE RAT is just a big RAT with an attitude.
WERETIGER: Init +5; Atk claws (1d8); AC 14; HD 2d6; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; AL C, parley special. XP 4. TR 5	Fearsome opponents - run!
DEMIGRUE: Init +5; Atk bite+3 (1d6); AC 13; HD 2d4; Hit Points 6; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will +6; AL C, parley 8 XP 4. TR 5	A GRUE kills and does... something to its victims, and then a DEMIGRUE is born.
CATWOMAN: Init +2; Atk claw+4 (1d4); AC 16; HD 2d4; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -2; AL N, no parley 8. XP 3. TR 2	The CATPEOPLE are sneaky and vicious and hide well.
THIEF: Init +5; Atk rusty knife+2 (1d8); AC 15; HD 2d6; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will -3; AL N, parley 12. XP 5. TR 4	THIEVES commit theft. Good ones get away with it.
KROKODILITH: Init +6; Atk bite -3 (1d8); AC 10; HD 2d6; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -3; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR 1	The bite of a KROKODILITH causes a rotting, wasting disease in the flesh of victims.
STIRGE: Init +2; Atk proboscis+1 (1d6); AC 14; HD 1d4; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 1	STIRGES drink blood in order to commit unwholesome acts of wanton.
WEREBOAR: Init -3; Atk tusks -2 (1d8); AC 14; HD 2d6; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +6; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR 2	WEREBOARS are easily offended and less easily struck in combat.

IMP: Init +3; Atk claws +2 (1d3); AC 15; HD 3d4; Hit Points 10; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will -2; AL C, no parley XP 4. TR 2	IMPS like to kill defenseless innocents and take their souls to Dis for bargaining with.
HYENA RAT: Init +4; Atk bite +1 (1d4); AC 7; HD 1d6; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3; AL C, no parley. XP 2. TR 2	Verminous scavengers that transmit plagues and laugh maniacally all the while
WERERAT: Init +3; Atk short sword +1 (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d4; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -4; AL C parley 8. XP 4. TR 3	There're no such things as WERERATS
QUASIT: Init +5; Atk tail+2 (2 points); AC 18; HD 1d6; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will -3; AL C, parley 15. XP 3. TR 3	QUASITS are malicious and prone to bullying
HOSTAGE: Init -2; Atk sword +2 (1d8); AC 18; HD 1d8; Hit Points 5; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +6; AL N, parley 8. XP 1. TR 2	HOSTAGES ought to escorted to the exit; don't mistake them for CULTISTS
ZOMBIE: Init -5; Atk claw+2 (1d4); AC 8; HD 3d6; Hit Points 9; SV Fort +5, Ref -8, Will +0; AL C, no parley XP 3. TR 4	Dead flesh, motivated by sorcery. Eat brains, transmit disease through biting.
WILL-O-WISP: Init +5; Atk spark +5 (1 point); AC 17; HD 1d4; Hit Points 1; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +5; AL C, no parley. XP 4.	Delight in cruelty. Formed from the souls of children drowned in swamps.
HOWLER: Init +1; Atk bite -1 (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d12; Hit Points 10; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +1; AL N, no parley. XP 3. TR 1	A big evil MONKEY, or maybe a MANDRILL.
POSSUM-MAN Init -5; Atk bite -3 (1d4); AC 6; HD 1d12; Hit Points 8; SV Fort +5, Ref -5, Will -5; AL N, parley 10. XP 2. TR 4	Slow, sleepy, stupid. Your neighbor might be one!
GOAT SPIDER: Init +4; Atk bite +2 (1d4!); AC 14; HD 1d8; Hit Points 4; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C, no parley. XP 4. TR 2	Spin webs from their teats; eat hearts for fun.
MONGRELMAN: Init -2; Atk claw+2 (1d4) and bite -3 (1d4); AC 12; HD 2d4; Hit Points 6; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will -5; AL N, parley special. XP 3. TR special	Debased race of scientific experiments gone awry. They love glittery objects.
CLIFF ROOSTER: Init +1; Atk beak+2 (1d4); AC 15; HD 1d6; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -4, Ref +5, Will +1; AL N, no parley. XP 3. TR 0	Pernicious race of birds that plague travellers near mountains.
WEREHYENA: Init -1; Atk sword +0 (1d8); AC 12; HD 1d10; Hit Points 7; SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +4; AL C, no parley. XP 3. TR 2	Known for blacksmithing well and for eating naughty children.
HORROR OF NEBROVOLENT: Init -4; Atk Rueful Smoke Axe -2 (1d10); AC 15; HD 4d12; Hit Points 20; SV Fort +4, Ref -5, Will +1; AL C, no parley. XP 5. TR 5	The manifested will of a cruel and almost forgotten god.
BUZZDRONE: Init +2; Atk zap-2 (1d3); AC 8 vs. melee, 14 vs. missile attacks; HD 1d3; Hit Points 1; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 5 GP Motivator Jewel and 1 Space Rock	Technology from the planet Voodrasixth - Makes ZOMBORGS for drudgework
SKELETON: Init -4; Atk claw-1 (1d4); AC 8; HD 1d6; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +3, Ref -4, Will +5; AL N, no parley. XP 1. TR 1	The unarmed SKELETON is the laughingstock of the Netherworld, so they often kill passersby out of boredom, looking for spare weapons.
RIVER-NYMPHS: Init +3; Atk draining kiss (1d4/round); AC 8; HD 1d6; Hit Points 2; SV Fort -3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C, Parley 11. XP 1. TR 1	No one's ever seen a real RIVER-NYMPH, but they like to drown good-looking men and women

RADSTIRGE: Init +2; Atk proboscis+1 (1d4 Strength or Stamina damage, any combination); AC 8; HD 1d6; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 1	RADSTIRGES drink blood and turn it into mutating ichor, ostensibly for fun.
CROAKLING: Init +2; Atk tongue-2 (1d4); AC 14; HD 1d6; Hit Points 2; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N, no parley. XP 2. TR 1	A big, semi-humanoid amphibian, prone to drying out and becoming senselessly violent.
ZOMBORG GUARD: Init -2; Atk claw -1 (1d6); AC 15; HD 1d8; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C, no parley. XP 2. No treasures!	ZOMBORG GUARDS have easy jobs. They guard things.
ZOMBORG: Init -2; Atk claw +1 (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d6; Hit Points 3; SV Fort +5, Ref -3, Will +2; AL C, no parley. XP 1. TR special	Regular ZOMBORGS, on the other hand, are made to find things and bring them to their masters, including the raw materials for more ZOMBORGS
INTERDIMENSIONAL SENTINEL: Init +3; Atk Terrible Black Sword+5 (1d6); AC 17; HD 3d12; Hit Points 15; SV Fort +3, Ref -5, Will +8; AL N, no parley. XP 4. TR special	These ominous creatures have diamond and obsidian eyes, and guard fractures in reality.
RADRAKELING: Init +5; Atk radioactive breath +3 (1d8 and special); AC 17; HD 4d12; Hit Points 37; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will +7; AL C, parley 17 XP 4. TR 2	A RADRAKELING has caustic radioative steam for breath and likes to eat ELVES and DWARVES and SHRIEKERS.
MANTICORE: Action Die 3d20; Init +10; Atk 2x claw+3 (1d10), bite (1d8), venomous stinger (1d4 + 1d4 per round); AC 22; HD 9d8; Hit Points 56; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +10; AL C, parley 22 XP 4. TR 6	MANTICORES delight in terrorizing whole kingdoms, collecting treasure, and baking the occasional dormouse and lentil pie.

APPENDIX frieNds

Bits & Bobs & Things, added last minute with good-will and in the spirit of those Who Have Gone Before:

My Thanks to Him, and to Calabraxis the Wizard-Collector,

This is from +Claytonian JP of Google Plus, author of The Wizardarium of Calabraxis:

Mad Drift Through the Gray

There is rumored to be a dimension at perpendicular angle to our own. Some say that it is for the transmigration of souls and psychopomps, but psions can use it for their own end: travel.

Pers check success: You and your carried possessions fade from this world-- intangible-- over the course of a round, and materialize in an expanse of infinite greyness that is littered with forms that resemble geometric and built features of the real world. It is populated by strange, white blobs that float about. You can travel towards any destination you've been to before at a rate of 1 league x ML per turn.

Roll 1: You've opened a stable wormhole from this spot to your destination. You can travel between the two without having to concentrate or make a check.

Roll 20: Roll a d5: (1) works, but you end up 1d20 miles far from your destination in a random direction; (2) a strange entity possesses your shadow and becomes the monster from DCC core rules (p425); (3) your soul makes the journey but mistakenly leaves your body behind (until reunited, your body is a Per 0 thing that has to be led around); (4) you glimpse the madness that underlies this reality and collapse in revulsion and horror for a turn (or use sanity rules if you have them); (5) the denizens of the gray can sense and interact with you, and they want what you have (life)!

Failure: You are shunted to a random, open spot within 100 feet.

Clay's power works in this way: You roll a d20 and try to get under your Personality score to succeed. If you get a natural 1, that's a critical success! Good dicing! On a 20, various bad things may happen and roll the d5 (or a d10 and divide the roll by two, rounding up). His idea is terrific but needs adjusting for our context in HHSOLO 1 - once you are playing DCC in the wider world, you may take this up with your game's Judge. At that time, you may have the ability to MINDBURN, but you haven't learned it, yet.

For our purposes in HHSOLO1, you acquire this power if the 5th dimensional tentacle of the THING brushes your brain 3 times or more - so, take note. You may use it at any time if you have it, but the rules inside the confines of Halthrag Keep are different. Roll a d10 each time you successfully use it, and you may attempt it at any time as you wish, with the noted risks and benefits. If you get a stable wormhole as indicated by a '1' result, note that in the Journal margin entry, and find it at that entry and note where the wormhole goes. The d10 roll will indicate to which of the following Keep Entries you may travel upon successful use:

d10 roll	Keep Entry
1	Torn apart by Tindalian Hounds! You're Dead!
2	Entry 93 - The Gaol
3	Entry 62- Western Courtyard
4	Entry 37 - The New Hall
5	Entry 17 - Destroyed Great Hall
6	Entry 79 - Ruined Watchtower
7	Entry 87 - The Kitchen
8	Entry 40 - The Swarm
9	Entry 13 - The Northwest Wall
10	Escape! You land outside of Marbourg! Turn to Entry 81

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the remainder of this space has been intentionally left blank, at the request of the sinister Silgurians

Hounds of Halthrag Keep

Appendix S

New Spells

These are minor magical effects that any who find them within the bounds of Halthrag's Keep may use, as a kind of introduction into the spellcasting mechanics of DCC. As you only have a 3 in 100 chance of finding these (keep looking anyways!) I'm not terribly worried about the breakdown in mechanics and game-play. Whether they work outside the bounds of the keep, and whether your character can still cast them when they reach level 1 and choose a class, is entirely a matter between you and your Judge. I think that in the weird spirit of DCC, maybe this could inform your character's Elfy disposition or maybe your Warrior's Mighty Feats – as you choose.

The roll is a 1d10 for untrained skills, as always. The difference being that these are intentionally low-powered, compared to normal Wizard spells. If corruption is indicated, there is a tiny corruption table at the bottom of the appendix. Luck may be burned, as usual, to adjust the roll before or after (but not both). Since your character is not a Wizard, they cannot add Intelligence modifiers and level bonuses are for naught (see what I did, there?)

Fae Chill

A glittering blast of cold fairy animosity, directed from the caster's hands at an enemy or an item

Roll	Effect
1 or less	Corruption! Consult the corruption table and lose the spell. You hear sprites giggling in the distance
2	Failure! The Fairies hate you even more than before.
3	Failure!
4	Failure! Lose a point of Strength for 5 turns.
5	Failure! Roll 1d10 and lose that item from your inventory.
6	Failure! Lose 1d20 Gold Crowns!
7	Success! Cause 1d4 points of damage to the enemy.
8	Success! The enemy is frozen in place for 3 combat rounds!
9	Success! Cause 1d10 damage to the enemy! You owe the Faeries one to for this, Mortal!
10 or more	The enemy is killed, but the Fairies still hate you.

Lesser Ray of Logic

Enemies struggle with the force of reason and good sense, and may be paralyzed momentarily if they fail a Will saving throw at DC 15

Roll	Effect
1 or less	Corruption! Consult the corruption table and lose the spell.
2	Failure! You are befuddled – lose the next combat round!
3	Failure! Lose 2 points of Intelligence for the day.
4	Confusion! Your next blow does half damage.
5	Failure! Your mentors back home are embarrassed.
6	Failure! If only you had paid better attention. Lose 1 XP!
7	Success! Cause the enemy to be paralyzed if they fail the save.
8	Success! Cause the enemy to be paralyzed for 2 rounds if they fail the save.
9	Success! Cause the enemy to be paralyzed for 3 rounds, regardless of its saving throw.
10 or more	Superlative! The enemy's head explodes, killing it instantly. Your application to the Mages' Guild will automatically be forwarded via Gremlin to the nearest Intake Counselor.

Ifrit's Pizzle

A hot stream of slightly acidic fluid darts from the caster's outstretched finger and may assist in slowing an enemy long enough for the caster to escape.

Roll	Effect
1 or less	Corruption! Consult the corruption table and lose the spell.
2	Failure! An ornery ash mephit will visit you if and when you die.
3	Failure! Lose 2 items at random from your inventory.
4	Failure! Extradimensional backwash causes a loss of 2 Personality points and the need for new clothes.
5	Failure!
6	Failure!
7	Success! Cause 1d4 points of damage to the enemy.
8	Success! Cause 1d8 points of damage to the enemy.
9	Success! Cause 2d6 points of damage to the enemy.
10 or more	Success, and also Corruption! You are both drenched in foul ichor, but you escape combat and your deeds are lauded throughout Thrend. Consult the corruption table and gain 3 XP. The enemy's inventory is not recoverable.

Corruption Effects of Failed Cantrip Casting

Roll 1d20	Effect
1	All of your hair falls out!
2	You are accosted by Fairies whenever you eat, henceforward, until you repay your insult.
3	Mephits pelt you with rocks whenever you relieve yourself for the next year.
4	Your eyes turn another less attractive color
5	Your gender switches to the opposite for 1 week. Or a different one. Whatever.
6	Double your hit points and always lose initiative for the rest of the adventure.
7	An irritable godling takes notice of your romantic habits, and resents them.
8	Treble your hit points but reduce your effective Armor Class by half for the rest of the adventure
9	Your nose disappears. Decrease your Personality score by 3, permanently.
10	Your teeth become jagged fangs. Always have a 1d4 attack available, whether you have a weapon or not. Vampire hunters take notice of you.
11	Your ears lengthen and you may be taken for an elf, or perhaps a naughty human boy midway through transmogrification into a burro.
12	Going forward, you must make a Will save at DC 14 in order to tell a falsehood
13	Moonlight gives you a bonus of +4 to Armor Class, but in sunlight you are sapped of 3 points of strength.
14	Your shadow leaves you until further notice – reduce your maximum Luck score by 2.
15	You must speak in rhyme until the curse is lifted. Seek advice from the nearest sage.
16	Dreams of deep water and vast undersea vistas plague you. Make a DC 8 Will save to regain Hit Points from rest.
17	You are transformed into a Moon Dweller until you set foot upon the surface of the Moon.
18	You feel a kinship with Dwarves and Goblins. Gain +1 to Armor Class when below ground, but lose 1 point from Personality
19	Dogs and cats will be infuriated by your presence going forward, but will not attack you unless cornered.
20	Every gold piece you touch becomes 5 silver pieces instead, if you handle them without gloves. Hire someone you trust to hold your wallet. This curse can be lifted by an honest neutral Cleric.

APPENDIX V

What is the mysterious entity known as Vendel Re'Yune? Excellent question... Strange that you know that name. Aside from being a Patron written by Paul Wolfe, and published in Angels, Daemons, and Things in Between, he was once a great sorcerer. But don't worry, you won't catch up to him in this adventure.

...What's that you say? You DID catch up to him? You established some kind of link to him? You're prepared to do his will? Oh! Oh dear me.

Well. Ahem. Here's Vendel Re'Yune, in a nutshell, and what he'll do for you once you get out of here. He is a great Wizard trapped in a couple of different dimensions but sadly still alive and thirsting to be set free (sort of like everything in Halthrag Keep!)

If you are a 0-level character, or a non-spell using character of Level 1 or higher, the Action Die for this Action is 1d10, but you can still burn Luck to increase the roll. Wizards and Elves will receive other benefits from a close association with Vendel Re'Yune!

When you Invoke The Arm of Vendel Re'Yune, roll your Action Die, and add your Intelligence modifier

1 – Catasrophe! Vendel Re'Yune causes your psychic obliteration. Become a lump of fleshy but inert matter!
2-11 - No effect! Vendel Re'Yune's arm travels the multiverse and is too busy to intervene on your behalf.
12-13 Vendel Re'Yune's unending pain bubbles to the surface of the caster's psyche. A bolt of pure pain shoots out at the nearest enemy causing the victim such intense pain that he or she collapses for 1 round (Will DC = Spell Check). The caster experience similar pain to a lesser degree (-2 to all d20 rolls for 1d3 rounds).
14-17 As above, but the pain bursts out of the caster in a wave stretching to a 30' radius. All caught in this wave must make a Will Save (DC = Spell Check) or collapse in excruciating pain for 1d4 rounds. Once the fit ends, the victims are at -2 to all d20 rolls for 2d3 rounds. The caster experiences the same effects; however, there is no save, and he or she receives a patron taint.
18-19 As above, but the wave of pain has a chance to kill. On a natural 1 on the Will save, the victim dies at the end of the initial duration. The wave of pain extends for a 60' radius and the initial collapse duration increases to 2d3 rounds. The caster experiences the same effects without a save and receives a patron taint.
20-23 Through pain is power. The caster must let a quart of blood (4 hp damage and 1d4 STR, STA or AGI damage - caster's choice) to receive a +10 on his or her next spell check.
24-27 The Arm of Vendel Re'Yune bestows a killing touch. The caster can make up to three touch attacks in the next 2d4 rounds. Each requires a Will Save (DC=Spell check). Those that fail the check collapse in pain and die when the duration expires. Those that pass the check collapse in excruciating pain for 1d3 rounds. The caster receives a patron taint.
28-29 The mind heals the body under intense pain. The caster collapses in an all-body pain for 1d3 rounds. At the end of this time, he or she is healed 2d4 hit points. The caster can roll a free save (at the original DC) to cure any lingering effects of diseases or poisons that currently affect him or her. (This means that a disease or poison will not continue to affect the caster; Any effects previous to casting are not healed).
30-31 Pain clarifies the body with protection from outside influences. The caster collapses in excruciating pain for 2d4 rounds. Afterwards, he or she is healed 4d4 hit points. Lingering effects of poison and disease effects are cured. Additionally, the caster heals 1 point of temporary ability damage (caster's choice -- cannot be used to heal spellburn damage).
32+ As above, but the caster collapses for 2d6 rounds and is healed 8d4 hit points. Poison and disease effects are cured, and the caster is healed of all ability damage except spellburn damage. The caster receives a patron taint.

PATRON TAINT: THE ARM OF VENDEL RE'YUNE

Though Vendel Re'Yune uses his servants to escape from his painful, endless existence, he is also consumed by a vengeful rage that manifests when one of his servants is tainted.

Roll Result 1d6

1	Pain courses through the servant's body. The first time this result is rolled, the caster collapses in intense pain every time a spell is cast. The fit lasts for 1 round. The second time this result occurs, the caster collapses as described above, and then receives phantom pains 1d3 times per day per spell cast with the same effect. The third time this result is rolled, the caster is in a constant state of barely endurable pain. This causes the caster to move at half speed and take -2 to all physical checks. The caster can temporarily ignore the pain by making a Will save (DC 17). This allows the caster 1d3 rounds of painless existence and can be attempted up to 3 times per day.
2	The caster's arm becomes partially paralyzed. The first time this result is rolled, the caster's left arm becomes paralyzed for 1d3 rounds each time a spell is cast. The second time this result is rolled, the caster has 1d3 additional random bouts of paralysis for each spell cast in a day. The third time this result is rolled, the caster's left arm remains paralyzed permanently.
3	The caster becomes displaced momentarily in time and space. The first time this result is rolled, the caster's form flickers in and out of existence for 1d3 rounds. The effect of this is that the caster cannot cast spells or otherwise manipulate the physical world. The second time this result is rolled, the caster's form displaces from reality for 1d4 hours. During this time, the caster has no sense of his or her own existence, though he or she does exist in a semi-dimensional state. The third time this is rolled, in addition to the original effects each time a spell is cast, the caster experiences 1d3 additional incidents of disjunction from reality per day.
4	Madness seizes the caster for a short time. The first time this result is rolled, the caster falls into a fugue state for 1d3 turns each time a spell is cast. In this state, the caster can only take actions if they are described by a compatriot (though anyone can suggest actions by the caster, as per the Suggestion spell) The second time this result is rolled, the caster experiences fugue states as above but only for 1d3 rounds each time a spell is cast. Once the fugue state wears off, the caster remains in a paranoid maniacal state for 1d3 hours in which he or she flees from friends and enemies alike. If the caster cannot flee, he or she fights like a cornered rat. The third time this result is rolled, the caster experiences a fugue state for 1d3 rounds after casting a spell and randomly experiences maniacal states 1d3 times per day. The caster may make a Will save DC 26; otherwise, the state last for 1d5 hours each.
5	The caster is seized with the desire to free his or her master. The first time this result is rolled, the caster must make a Will Save (DC 15) each time a spell is cast or spend a full hour thinking of strategies in which Vendel Re'Yune might be freed from his curse. He or she can engage in no other actions besides moving at half speed. The second time this result is rolled, the caster must make a Will save (DC 22) at the beginning of each day. On a failure, the caster spends the day researching possible cures: spending 2d100 gp for rare texts, consultations with sages, etc.. The third time this result is rolled, the caster will engage in no long-term actions that don't directly relate to freeing his master, including spending any amount of gold to see the work done.
6	The caster is teleported to a random location. The first time this result is rolled, the caster is teleported to a location 1d6x10 feet from his or her current position. If the caster encounters a solid object, he or she takes 1d4 damage and appears in the closest open area. The second time this result is rolled, the caster is randomly teleported as above 1d3 times per day. The third time this result is rolled, the caster is teleported 1d100 miles from his her current location. On a second 1d100 roll, if the caster rolls a 99-00, he or she appears inside a solid object and is immediately killed. On a roll of 95-98, the caster ends his or her teleport 2d6x10 feet from the ground.

APPENDIX X

Now What?

I want to apologize. After some play-testing, I found that this work is needlessly cruel. So much so that I think that BEATING IT ought to be put aside in your hearts and thoughts. I have given up in despair a few times with good characters and excellent inventories. I know the places to go and things to look for and do, since I wrote and imagined this place. It's not so much a *thing to beat* as it is a fancy 1st level character machine, in that if your character makes it out of Halthrag Keep, chances are it's a (ahem) keeper. Almost all the "solutions" in which you don't callously and needlessly die will have brought you to about 10 XP or more by the time you find them. The other endings... well, the bite of these endings has historical precedence in many a Choose Your Own Adventure book.

Why did I make it so difficult? Well, it's sort of an homage to TSR's BSOLO 1 - The Ghost of Lion Castle. That module is so difficult that my mind still quails at the thought of it almost 30 years on. Often times, when I cranked it up for a go on a rainy Saturday afternoon, my rolled up character died within a few turns. The first few rooms of the module were fair littered with bodies, and in truth I would use the pre-generated characters with good spellbooks and inventory so that they would die where I could easily reach them with the next character! I only beat that module when I tweaked the implied rules and used a 3rd level Basic D&D Fighter, rather than the Magic-Users and Elves it insisted upon. Perhaps this is the way you ought to approach my unruly torture machine, here. Justicia knows that it will be hard to "beat" HHSOLO1 if you don't think outside the box a little. She forgives you.

In its capacity to frustrate if you're focused on *RULES*, this module resembles Telengard for the C64 back then, and Nethack and Spelunky, now. Roguelikes are back in fashion; it's okay to die. Okay to lose a character, okay to start over from scratch. One great thing about Dungeon Crawl Classics as a rules-set is that if you're using it correctly, you ought to be enjoying the *play* and not too focused on the *character*. This seems to me to be the take-home lesson of The Funnel, and it's great to learn it up front. If you play this module correctly, you'll learn this lesson a lot and then some!

So, if you've escaped... Great! Grab the DCC book and go forth. Play a character that's not immediately suggested by the stats. Make your survivor into a clumsy but quick-witted thief, or a Mummy-Rot-Hampered Warrior. A luckless Halfling, eager to become the mascot of a team of adventurers. Get on the internet and find yourself a 3rd Party Class after you've tried the core seven classes a couple of times.

There's a story and a reason behind Halthrag Keep, and I guess maybe one purpose of the thing is to promote discovery of the story. It's a little cliche, but it's all there in the Entries. And I warn you, you'll need to pull a 54-40 to get a particular ending. But you can find it on accident, of course. But you can't legitimately win that way without actually playing it and getting *very, very lucky*. You'd need a system, too, to get kitted up in a jiffy so you can cruise around and explore in relative safety.

At any rate, thanks for reading.

If you beat the game and want to go back in to explore some more, use your new character (I warn you that you will break the current rule set of HHSOLO 1 quite a bit with a Cleric or Thief or Wizard) and

- *Dust yourself off, check your equipment, and turn to Keep Entry - 132*

Yours,

Noah Stevens

July 27, 2014

HHSOLO 1 Character Sheet

Name
Occupation

TURN TRACKER										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										

	SCORE	+/-
STRENGTH		
AGILITY		
STAMINA		
INTELLIGENCE		
PERSONALITY		
LUCK		

CURRENT HP/MAX	
WILL SAVE	
REFLEX SAVE	
FORTITUDE SAVE	
Lucky Roll:	

WEAPONS and ARMOR	
WEAPON 1/DAMAGE	
WEAPON 2/DAMAGE	
MISSILE WEAPON/ DAMAGE	
BASE AC/CURRENT	

ITEMS	
1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10

SPECIAL

HHSOLO 1 Character Sheet

Name
Occupation

TURN TRACKER										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										

	SCORE	+/-
STRENGTH		
AGILITY		
STAMINA		
INTELLIGENCE		
PERSONALITY		
LUCK		

CURRENT HP/MAX	
WILL SAVE	
REFLEX SAVE	
FORTITUDE SAVE	
Lucky Roll:	

WEAPONS and ARMOR	
WEAPON 1/DAMAGE	
WEAPON 2/DAMAGE	
MISSILE WEAPON/ DAMAGE	
BASE AC/CURRENT	

ITEMS	
1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10

SPECIAL

jinxed HHSOLO 1 Character Sheet

Name
Occupation

TURN TRACKER										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										

	SCORE	+/-
STRENGTH		
AGILITY		
STAMINA		
INTELLIGENCE		
PERSONALITY		
LUCK		

CURRENT HP/MAX	
WILL SAVE	
REFLEX SAVE	
FORTITUDE SAVE	
Lucky Roll:	

WEAPONS and ARMOR	
WEAPON 1/DAMAGE	
WEAPON 2/DAMAGE	
MISSILE WEAPON/ DAMAGE	
BASE AC/CURRENT	

ITEMS	
1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10

SPECIAL

Lucky HHSOLO 1 Character Sheet

Name
Occupation

TURN TRACKER										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										

	SCORE	+/-
STRENGTH		
AGILITY		
STAMINA		
INTELLIGENCE		
PERSONALITY		
LUCK		

CURRENT HP/MAX	
WILL SAVE	
REFLEX SAVE	
FORTITUDE SAVE	
Lucky Roll:	

WEAPONS and ARMOR	
WEAPON 1/DAMAGE	
WEAPON 2/DAMAGE	
MISSILE WEAPON/ DAMAGE	
BASE AC/CURRENT	

ITEMS	
1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10

SPECIAL

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