

THEATER OF THE HAMMED

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An
**Order of
the Quill**
Adventure

COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

THEATER OF THE HAMMED

**AN ADVENTURE FOR 3RD & 4TH-LEVEL DCC RPG CHARACTERS
BY CLINT BOHATY**

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OVERVIEW

Theater of the Hammed is written to be played by five to seven 3rd-level characters, or four to six 4th-level characters, in approximately six hours of playtime. Because of the dangerous encounters waiting within the amphitheater, it is recommended that the party have both a warrior and dwarf class. Over the course of the adventure, PCs will collect the scattered pages of an enchanted bedtime tale to decipher the weaknesses of their fabled opponents. While exploring the theater, characters will potentially fall deeper under its curse – bolstering both their own strength and their enemies. A new mechanic called the Misbelief Rating (MR) is used to track the players fall from reality. If players fail to manage their MR with vigilance, the adventure may become too much, as the blood-thirsty illusions lurking within complete their passage from the pages of fable into the planes of reality!

Since all of the demons within this adventure are caught between the planes of fable and reality, they are immune to powerful binding spells like *sleep*, *polymorph*, and *charm person*. When any spells of this type are successfully cast upon a creature of fable, the judge should ignore the spells effects, and instead have the creature act momentarily stunned, attacking at a reduced die for one round.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Once upon a time there lived a child-prince, Prince Brayden of Minstrel, in whose tired ears a tale was whispered by his queen-mother every night until sleep befell him. The enchanted fable was a treasure within Minstrel's bardic collection, and without its power the prince was unable to fall asleep. The tale - titled *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons* - told of a poor boy whose golden heart awakened a sleep-cursed princess. When uttered, the fable's enchantment is placed upon its listener, and the listener is overtaken by dreamy sleep the moment the princess awakens in the story. Not much was known of the enchanted fable's author, Ulifer Slagg, but all bardic scholars agreed that the work was too dangerous for untrained peasants and poets, and was therefore kept within Minstrel's private collection.

On a deadly night known by its survivors as "The Ides of the Red Tide," raiders from an unknown land to the west stormed the shores of Minstrel, which was always proud of its might in arts over arms. Before Prince Brayden fell into spell-brought sleep, gurgling cries and clashes of steel interrupted the queen's gentle voice. Fleeing the raiders and carrying their drowsy son, the king and queen escaped their doomed keep by way of a hidden passage, racing toward the safety of Minstrel's great amphitheater. A light-footed raider followed in their shadow and made certain that neither noble made it beyond the tunnel's end. By the divine luck of Melodalia, the two-faced goddess of Joy and Sorrow, Prince Brayden alone was able to escape through the passage's riddle-locked door. By dawn, the sea-side port of Minstrel had fallen, the shore was awash with blood, and the

townspeople had retreated to the safety of their nearby amphitheater. Of the royal family, only the young prince was found, crying alone in the under-theater with his face stained by dirt and blood.

In the months following “The Ides of the Red Tide,” the villagers of Minstrel turned from fear to anger; not against the murderous raiders who still held their port and keep, but against their young king, whose sleepless nights had turned him ornery and temperamental. Healers were summoned to study and lift his affliction, but none succeeded. With imprisonment and banishment becoming punishments for such minor offenses as yawning before the king, any hope beyond rebellion was lost for the people of Minstrel... until an unknown soothsayer arrived with a divine solution.

The mysterious traveler, who called himself Gilgus Faler, claimed that he had dreamt of a sleepless young king and was ordered by the goddess Melodialia to cure his affliction by putting on a performance of *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons* in Minstrel’s great amphitheater. The townsfolk quickly made preparations, and word spread throughout the region that the famed amphitheater was to finally reopen. Unbeknownst to the people of Minstrel, the soothsayer whom they lavished with their attention was actually the chaotic wizard-bard Ulifer Slagg, sent to the vulnerable town under the hog-demon Hammaritus’s guidance to perform a desperate ritual!

While attending the Minstrel Bard College over a century before, a young and eager Ulifer Slagg struck a perilous bargain with Hammaritus to infuse a spell of sleep within his fable. Ulifer believed that by intermixing story and spellcraft he could father a more powerful magic, gaining for himself an artist’s immortality. In unexpected exchange for infusing the spell, Ulifer’s true love was locked within its pages, and Ulifer’s own body was corrupted to resemble the boar-demon with which he dealt! Wild with anger at being tricked by the demon, Ulifer fled the college into seclusion for decades, searching for ways to rescue his trapped love. Feeling the ill-effects of old age, Ulifer made a final pact with Hammaritus (pronounced ham-mah-rah-bee), agreeing to sacrifice his body to the demon fully in exchange for his love’s freedom. With the blood-pact made, Ulifer traveled back to Minstrel to perform Hammaritus’s ritual.

On the three year anniversary of “The Ides of the Red Tide,” before a full audience and their sleepless king, Ulifer’s deadly ritual began. Hushed admiration under wine-fogged breath soon spread through the theater, and the more the people of Minstrel believed in the creatures performing before them, the more lifelike they became. The audience roared with applause in spellbound lust, unnerving the giant cave worm in the fourth act to charge into the crowd, slaying most of the audience! Spectators who were blessed with poor vantage and not yet entranced by the play evacuated the theater to take refuge in their makeshift camps outside, spreading news about the tragic event. With King Brayden missing in the chaos,

the peasants turned to the soothsayer Gilgus Faler (Ulifer Slagg), who reassured them that once the monsters had been vanquished and the final act complete, all would be set right. He ordered that the theater remain closed until a party of brave adventurers could be found to lift the curse and save the king. Where could such a party be found, who would dare face creatures and beasts so vile as to even hurl the imaginative minds of a theater audience into abject terror!

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Table I: Encounters and Treasure

Area	Type	Encounter	Notable Treasure
OLD KEEP	C/P	4 Baktoua raiders Baktoua raider leader	Handout A
D-1	C	Siren 2 Wailing rock crabs	Handout B
1-1	C	2 Forest trolls	Enchanted golden hat*
1-2	T	Plum-beetle wine	Handout D
1-3	P	Spellbound spectators	Handout H
2-1	P	Spell glyphs	Candle snuffer Tower key Candle of healing
2-2	C	3 Digestive slugs	Handout E
2-3	T	Forest troll costume	Handout C Enchanted golden pantaloons*
2-4	T/C	Skolex 2 Digestive slug clusters	Handout F Enchanted golden heart necklace* Alumni record
3-1	C	2 Black knights Mounted black knight Warhorse	Enchanted golden saddle*
3-2	T/C	Hammaritus 1d12 Demon piglets	Candle of pain

*Enchanted item from *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons*.

The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons

During the grisly chaos within the amphitheater, Ulifer Slagg's children's fable, which was being used as the play's script, was torn and scattered; some pages seized by crazed actors, while others by the ritual's evil winds. Since the creatures which terrorize the theater were spawned from Ulifer's tale, PCs who collect the fable's pages may decipher tricks to weaken or defeat their illusionary opponents. Any PC who collects all eight pages of *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons* may cast the spell *sleep* as if it were a spell scroll (see core rulebook, pgs. 155 & 373). The spell can be cast once a day, and requires the caster to recite the entire fable to his target(s). Any wizard who studies the fable in an attempt to learn *sleep* opens himself up to Hammaritus's corruption. Whether learning the spell has succeeded or failed, the knowledge-hungry wizard must make a DC 18 Fort save, or else roll 1d4 on Table V.

The following are brief notes as to the clues PCs may learn from each handout:

HANDOUT A

Location: OLD KEEP, or within the deadly winds when first entering the amphitheater.

Notes: As the first page in the story, Handout A sets up the fairy tale but offers no clues as to the adventure ahead.

HANDOUT B

Location: D-1

Notes: This fairy tale page has been splattered by the blood contract between Ulifer Slagg and Hammaritus. It hints at the deeper evils sought within the theater beyond an innocent ritual to cure the king's sleeplessness.

HANDOUT C

Location: 2-3

Notes: This page cryptically warns the PCs of the golden orb which will attempt to lure them into Area 2-4. If PCs are trapped within the belly of the cave worm when they destroy the orb, they will be vomited out, just like the merchant in the fable.

HANDOUT D

Location: 1-2

Notes: This fourth page from the fairy tale hints at the magical powers of the enchanted golden hat. As in the story, a PC may make a Personality check to try tricking the trolls into letting him wear the hat prior to initiating combat.

HANDOUT E

Location: 2-2

Notes: Reciting the boy's battle with the three knights, this page hints at a clever way to defeat the mounted knight at the start of combat. If a PC wearing the golden hat states "*If a chance is to be had, I surely can't wear this magical hat*" before setting it upon the ground, the mounted knight will be blown off the bridge after acquiring it - just like in the fable!

HANDOUT F

Location: 2-4

Notes: This sixth page from the story warns the PCs of the siren's presence, and hints at a way to quickly defeat her. Following the tale, any PC who manages to rope the golden heart necklace around the siren's neck will sink her to the bottom of the sea.

HANDOUT G

Location: Given by Gilgus Faler at the start of the adventure.
Notes: This page notes the presence of a sleeping princess and mentions that only one with a golden heart (lawful) may awaken her.

HANDOUT H

Location: 1-3
Notes: As the final page of the fairy tale, this handout ends its story. This page is also the only one which notes the author’s name: Ulifer Slagg!

Misbelief Rating

The Misbelief Rating (MR) is a number value representing how overwhelmed by illusion the adventuring party currently is. The higher the MR, the more the players are mesmerized by the illusion of the theater, bolstering both themselves and their illusionary enemies. The lower the MR, the more the players see through the theatrics - reducing their bonuses but also weakening their enemies. Use Table II below to determine the MR bonus gained by both PCs and enemies:

TABLE II: Misbelief Rating Effects

MR	PC Bonus	Monster Bonus
1	No bonus.	No bonus.
2	+1 to attack and damage.	No bonus.
3	+1 to attack and damage.	No bonus.
4	+1 AC; +1 to attack and damage.	+1 AC
5	+1 AC; +1 to attack and damage.	+1 AC; +1d3 to attack and damage.
6	+1 AC; +2 to attack and damage.	+2 AC; +1d3 to attack and damage.
7	+1 AC; +2 to attack and damage.	+2 AC; +1d3 to attack and damage.
8	+2 AC; +2 to attack and damage.	+3 AC; +1d4 to attack and damage.

When the players first enter the amphitheater, their MR is 2.

Determining the Misbelief Rating

While inside the cursed amphitheater, there will be moments when the judge may require the party to roll a Will save to determine if their Misbelief Rating increases or decreases. This may be: at the start of combat, at the death of a PC, on a fumbled roll, or so on. First, determine who will roll for the party by selecting the PC with the highest Will save modifier. This player will wear Melodalia’s Medallion of

Misbelief given to the PCs by Gilgus Faler at the start of the adventure, and will be in charge of tracking the party's MR. The PC wearing the medallion rolls the party's Will save, adding +1 for each party member assisting who rolls a DC 15 Will save or higher. Use Table III below to determine the resulting MR changes based on the final Will save result:

TABLE III: Misbelief Check Results

Will Save	Result
1-10	Increase Misbelief Rating by 2.
11-15	Increase Misbelief Rating by 1.
16-20	No change.
21-25	Reduce Misbelief Rating by 1.
26-29	Reduce Misbelief Rating by 2.
30+	Reduce Misbelief Rating by 3.

Judges should let the players learn how the Misbelief Rating affects gameplay, rather than telling them about the bonuses upfront. This may result in the players eagerly burning Luck to reduce their group's Will save, hoping to gain easy bonuses for their weapons... until witnessing an enemy grow in height and strength after a failed Will save before combat!

Looking for Melodalia's Medallion of Misbelief?

Create your own using the template in the back of this adventure, or else visit www.orderofthequill.com to order a premade, full-color medallion!



GETTING STARTED

True Love: Before beginning the adventure, judges should ask all players to write down the identity of their PC's true love and collect their written responses. Their true love can be either alive or dead, but must be an animal, e.g., a childhood pet, a family member, a patron, a milk maiden, a bashful farming boy. These responses should be kept secret, and will be used at the end of the adventure in Area 3-2.

The adventure begins on the outskirts of the doomed amphitheater, where the remaining survivors of Minstrel have taken refuge. There are many paths which may lead the PCs toward Minstrel, like a mysterious letter or a haunting dream. The course the PCs take can be as safe or as dangerous as the judge desires, for the road to Minstrel is plagued by marauders.

A Mysterious Letter: While in town or in travel, one of the PCs discovers a letter inviting all healers and priests to Minstrel. The letter may be hanging on the notice board of a tavern, being loudly discussed by drunkards and men wishing for an escape, or it may simply be blowing in the wind, gusted into the face of a distracted PC. No matter, the letter describes a sleepless king and promises any healer or priest with the hands to cure his insomnia his own title and chapel within Minstrel. The letter is vague in detail, but directs PCs to travel to Minstrel's amphitheater, located atop a towering crag north of Minstrel's fallen port city. The letter cautions PCs to travel armed, and warns of raiders patrolling the southern roads and captured port.

A Haunting Dream: If the pleading letter and its promise of riches isn't enough to entice the PCs, a haunting dream may be an appropriate start to the adventure. While resting, the PC strongest in the ways of Law receives a vivid apparition in his sleep. Standing before him is a nude female, whose body is masked by light and face is covered by mask. Looking upon her is like looking into the sun, and the PC must shade his eyes to even glimpse the golden mask she wears. With a voice like windblown chimes, the apparition sings:

*"Follow red tides to the shores of the dead.
Curse all the heathen and lies that they spread.
Travel to Minstrel where balance is sought.
Rid it of demons else land will be fraught."*

Upon waking, the PC finds his body tingling with waning numbness and that he has slept past sunrise. A sense of mortality weighs upon his consciousness as the haunting song replays through his memory.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

When the PCs reach the survivor's encampment outside the Minstrel amphitheater, they are met by the soothsayer and interim leader, Gilgus Faler. Gilgus is a rather frail looking fellow with thick white eyebrows and a wispy black beard. He walks with a hobble caused by gout, and wears a loose fitting robe of brandy-wine color. A skilled sorcerer of illusion, Gilgus must use his full power to mask the hog-like corruptions placed upon him by the demon Hammaritus. If PCs were able to see beneath his robe, they'd discover that his body is callous and leathery, and protruding from his lower back is a short hog's tail ended by a bulb of black hairs. Gilgus will ask the PCs for their assistance in lifting the curse on the theater and rescuing the young king of Minstrel lost somewhere within.

When the PCs encounter Gilgus Faler, read or paraphrase the following speech:

"Welcome to the great port city of Minstrel...or what is left of it. As you see, the people of Minstrel have lost much. Their homes. Many of their family. And most recently, their famed amphitheater - a symbol which now stands as the keystone in an arch of tragedy that has collapsed upon these people. I don't know why you've come, but thank Melodalia that you have, for you may be our last hope in lifting the curse over this theater, and reversing the ill-tides which beat upon Minstrel.

My name is Gilgus Faler. I arrived here three seasons ago as an advisor to the sleepless King of Minstrel, young King Brayden. I myself once attended Minstrel's Bard College, decades upon decades ago. But only months ago, a dream, or prophesy as I believe it, came to me insisting that the king's sleepless affliction would be cured by way of theater. This divine instruction I passed to the king, who worked tirelessly, excuse my tongue, to reopen the theater. On the performance's opening night, by some unspeakable bewitchment, the creatures once brought to life only in theater crossed beyond the realms of the imagination! Many died. I ask and beg, for the people of this city, that you lend your arms to strike at these fabled foes and clear out the theater of Minstrel. Will you?"

Gilgus will answer any of the PC's questions when it comes to the cursed theater or the recent history of Minstrel, but will never reveal or acknowledge his personal quest or his authorship of *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons*. To do so would be against the wishes of Hammaritus, and would risk the ritual's failure - preventing him from ever seeing his true love again. Because of the theater's powerful wine, no survivors in the encampment can quite remember the performance or story. Any PCs with acute knowledge of fables and/or forbidden magics may have learned of the enchanted bedtime story and its infused sleeping spell, but have never heard the actual tale.

Handout G: Before the PCs depart from Gilgus, he delivers to them **HANDOUT G** - a torn page from the cursed fable. It was the only page he was able to hold fast while fleeing the theater. The parchment is very fragile, and the text and illustrations scrawled upon it are drafted by hand.

Medallion of Misbelief: Gilgus also bestows upon them Melodalia's Medallion of Misbelief, a small disk adorned by rubies, lapis, and ivory. At the top of the medallion is an empty gem socket. Gilgus informs the PCs that the medallion will help them identify how far they've fallen under the theater's illusions. The farther into illusion they fall, the more exorbitant the gem within the socket will appear!

Outside of this adventure, Melodalia's Medallion of Misbelief can be used by PCs to detect illusionary magic. Once per day, the PC wearing the medallion may check to see if he is being deceived by magic. In the presence of deceptive magic (within 60'), the medallion's empty gem socket will appear filled. The more powerful the magic, the more exorbitant the illusionary gem within the socket will appear!

When the PCs are ready, Gilgus points them toward the front entrance of the theater, which is surrounded and obscured by a cyclone of deep purple winds, leading into Area 1-1. Gilgus also tells the PC's of a suspected secret tunnel between the old keep of Minstrel and the theater. *"If you can find the entrance amongst the raiders, then you may be able to enter the theater in secret,"* he advises.

Deadly Squall: Rubble and debris whirl dangerously within the winds surrounding the amphitheater, while the crackle of magical energy sparks inside like heat lightning. Any PC who passes through the winds into Area 1-1 must make a DC 10 Reflex save, or else be struck by flying debris while entering. Those who fail the Reflex save should also roll a Luck check. The PC who succeeds his Luck check by the most points is struck by **HANDOUT A**, while the rest are struck by rocks and broken branches, taking 1d4 damage each.

TABLE IV: RUMORS (1d7)

If the PCs explore around the camps and hovels of the Minstrel encampment, they are likely to hear several rumors. The judge should either choose his favorite or let the dice decide.

Roll	Result
1	<i>"We need a real leader, not some shore-footed outsider like that Gillygus fell'a. Someone with some real bravery about him, like me'self! And have you seen 'em eat? Needs a trough just to keep the food from spillin' about the floor. Ain't right for an ol' man such as that to be eating so much at a time like this..."</i>
2	<i>"My brother and me, Melodalia rest his soul, used to work down at the theater's docks before the raiders came. I wonder if them pulleys are still working. Could probably use 'em here now that the theater is all closed for good."</i>
3	<i>"Over all the screams and panic of the theater, after that giant devil went and crashed into the nobleman's section, I could 'a sworn I heard singin' coming out from the drain pipes! I know it sounds funny, but I wouldn't mind going back in just to hear that voice..."</i>
4	<i>"Curse that disgusting wine! A sip of the stuff was enough to make them plays more real, so I don't see why now we needed ta-down a whole handful! And it tasted like medicine too – blech! Last time I'll drink from that Fountain of the Weeping King..."</i>
5	<i>"I'd never seen those mysterious runes carved into the stage before. Did they chisel those in for the play? I couldn't read them of course, but I swear one of them drew itself out before my eyes. As if carved by an invisible dwarf. Dwarves... they can't be invisible, right?"</i>
6	<i>"My aunt Gilda, bless her spirit, used to say the old queen, bless her spirit too, would read an enchanted story to the child-king, curse his wretched soul, to make him fall asleep. Back when he was a prince that is. Pa said baby'in em would only make him weaker than O'l Brockston's Ale. S'why me nose is all broked and my backside paddled. I guess we seen who was right after all. Me bein' here and the boy-king bein' lost."</i>
7	<i>"I seen the torches of the Western raiders last night. I could swear they were getting closer. It's only a matter of time before they attack again, with us being trapped outside of our own theater walls! I wish they'd just stick by the old keep and let us be!"</i>

THE OLD KEEP

Toppled granite walls and charred cedar beams, overgrown with brush, cross your path as you weave closer to what remains of the old Minstrel keep. The taste of sea salt and ash parch your tongue, and an aroma of freshly cooked pork lingers in the air. Ahead you see a column of grey smoke rising from within the only standing structure in sight.

These ruins are what remains of the Minstrel Keep, which the Baktoua Raiders have destroyed and looted for its granite and gold. Camped within the ruined keep are five raiders. The raiders are not expecting an attack from the villagers of Minstrel, and therefore have slackened their normally strict guard duties. The PCs cannot see the raiders until they sneak in or enter the keep. As soon as the PCs enter the keep, the raiders will attack!

Baktoua Raiders: The Baktoua Raiders are a nomadic seafaring people who follow the central god Baktoua, and dress in buffalo pelts adorned with the bones of small mammals and fowl. Their homeland, also called Baktoua, is located 100 miles across from the western coast of Minstrel. The leader of the raiders wears a king's golden crown, dented and stripped of its jewels. They've taken Minstrel as their port city on this unexplored and unconquered continent. The raiders of Baktoua are brutal and savage, leading by strength and fighting until death. It is an honor for a Baktoua raider to die in battle. When first entering combat, the raiders will cry out "Baktoua!" in honor of their land and god. When a raider loses more than half his HD, he gains a second 1d16 attack die, emboldened by the prospect of death in battle and striking out with double intensity!

Baktoua Raider (4): Init +1; Atk spear +3 melee (1d8), sling +1 missile fire (1d4); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 16 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP taste for death (gain second 1d16 attack die at ½ hp); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4; AL N.

Baktoua Raid Leader: Init +2; Atk spear +3 melee (1d8), javelin +1 missile fire (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP taste for death (gain second 1d16 attack die at ½ hp); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4; AL N.

Tunnel: Upon the floor of the old keep near the remains of a smoldering campfire is the unsealed entrance to the underground tunnel leading to Area 2-3. The tunnel has been used by the Baktoua Raiders for temporary lodging and storage, and contains rudimentary camp supplies. If the PCs inspect the camp, they discover **HANDOUT A** (if not already discovered from entering through the storm into Area 1-1) tucked within a stack of pillaged books and clothing intended for kindling.

Secret Passage: The tunnel ends at an enchanted iron wall adorned by the jeweled depiction of Melodalia. The goddesses' portrayal is of two masks: The first, an inlaid ebony mask, expresses sorrow, while the second, an inlaid ivory mask, expresses joy. Some of the jewels have been pried away by the raiders, while others show scratch marks from unsuccessful pillaging. Below the relief is written the riddle:

*I am trapped within a stare
And in sadness I slip down.
I am formed within a pair
And in mirth I may be found.
But to answer what I am
Calls for more than just a sound.*

The riddle's answer is "tears," and the enchanted door will unlock only when presented with someone crying. When tears are shed before the door, a crossbar unfastens from the bottom frame allowing it to be lifted like a portcullis, giving access to Area 2-3. Alternately, the enchanted door can be destroyed by a DC 16 Strength check.

Area D-1 — Dock

You come upon a small cliffside seaport, whose single storm-beaten dock fights to stand amidst the rough sea. An iron rung ladder powdered with salt rises up the cliff, ascending to an opening within the bottom of the theater's northeastern tower. Burrowed in the cliff face east of the ladder is a large cave mouth, and protruding over the water to each side of the dock are two large, algae covered drainage pipes. Like a miniature banner rippling in the wind, a yellowed parchment caught within the drain's mouth flutters.

A beautiful woman, as pale blue as seafoam and loosely covered by broken shells, sits cradled upon a rocky skerry near the water's edge. In a mournful tone she sings of lost sailors and the search for true love. With flickering interest she playfully invites you forward, opening her arms in a yearning embrace!

★★★ MR Combat Check! ★★★

This dock was where the stagehands of Minstrel would sail heavy set dressings and backdrops to be hoisted up to the theater. The water along the crag's shore is 3' deep, and can be traversed at half movement speed by PCs. A well-maintained iron ladder rises up 150' from the dock's base to a trapdoor in the northeastern tower of Level 2.

Backdrop: A series of ropes and pulleys dangle down from the theater's two flanking towers. High up, a bundled backdrop can be seen supported near the tower's connecting bridge. By operating a rope knotted near the ladder's base, the pulleys can be mechanically lowered or lifted. The backdrop's ironwood spit can support up to 3 PCs at a time. Because of the weight of the backdrop, operating the rope requires at least two PCs. If a single PC attempts to lower the backdrop, he must make a DC 16 Strength check, or else be launched skyward as the backdrop free falls. All PCs standing below the backdrop must then make a DC 7 Reflex save, or else take 1d12 damage as the backdrop crashes upon them. The PC holding the rope may choose to let go, taking 4d6 falling damage, or hold on, being lifted to the edge of the stage in Area 2-1.

Drainage Pipes: The iron drainage pipes protruding from the cliff face lead up to Areas 1-1 and 2-1. Because of the algae and sea-moss, the pipes are difficult to safely ascend unaided. Climbing up the pipes requires a DC 17 Agility check, or else the PC dangerously slides out, taking 1d4 damage as he splashes into the shallow water. Caught among debris within the drainage pipe's mouth is **HANDOUT B**. The crumpled and blood-stained fairy tale page was used as a contract between Ulifer and Hammaritus. Afraid that someone might discover it, Ulifer buried it in the overgrown drainage ditch of Area 1-1.

Siren: Singing from the jagged shores of the nearby rock island is a beautiful siren. The siren's song is unlike any other the PCs have ever heard, a warbling mix of simultaneous and harmonized pitches emitted from her four luscious mouths of temptation. When the PCs first hear the siren's song, they must make a DC 15 Fort save, or else become entranced, journeying thoughtlessly toward her shores. The siren's enchantment can only be broken once the PC has taken physical damage or is dispelled. Otherwise, he will sit and admire her, even while she strikes out against his allies. If any PC, entranced or not, offers the siren the golden heart necklace before engaging in combat with her, she will accept it, sinking deep into the sea under its weight, just like as described in Handout F. If already engaged in combat, a PC can still lasso the necklace around the siren's neck by succeeding a called melee strike at a reduced attack die, or for warriors, a successful deed die.

Once an entranced PC reaches the siren's skerry, or after a PC initiates combat with the siren, she will cease singing and attack. At the start of combat, her beautiful nude body sheds away like a scab into a scaled sea harpy, whose clawed flippers make her deadly in the water. When the siren bites a single target, she does so with all four saw-toothed mouths, rolling 4d20 to attack. The siren will first target the closest PC in the water, and will never willingly fight on land, preferring to lash out at those stranded on the dock or shore. The water by the shore is shallow enough for the PCs to stand, but their movement speed is halved and they become vulnerable to the siren's drowning attack.

When the siren successfully attacks an opponent wading in the water, he must make a DC 16 Reflex save, or else be fully submerged by the siren's grapple. The siren continues to hold the PC underwater until he succeeds the Reflex save, or until she takes damage. Attacking the siren while she is holding a PC underwater works the same way that shooting into combat does; any miss has a 50% chance of hitting her victim as long as she clutches him. Drowning creatures take 1d6 points of Stamina damage per round and die when Stamina reaches 0; lost Stamina is restored after one full round above water. When trapped out of water, the siren's AC is reduced by 5.

Wailing Stone Crabs: At the start of combat, two large boulders upon the skerry's rocky shore rise up to reveal themselves as stoney crabs chiseled with the terror-stricken faces of those the siren has drowned. If any of the PCs are killed during combat, their pain-stricken faces suddenly appear carved into the shells of the stoney crabs. If the siren dies, the crabs must make a DC 16 Will check to continue fighting, or else they retreat into the sea, as the screaming faces upon their shells are once again drowned.

Siren: Int +3; Atk bite/claw +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 16 Agility save or drowned), or special; AC 15 (9); HD 5d8; hp 28; MV 10' or swim 45'; Act 4d20 (single target); SP Sailor's lament (twice a day, DC 14 Fort save, else burst into tears, all attacks -2 for 1d12 rounds); SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

Wailing Stone Crabs (2): Int -3; Atk gash +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 18; HD 3d8; hp 18 each; MV 15'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +3; AL C.

Area 1-1 — Garden of Theatrical Delights

You enter a hedged courtyard enclosed by high granite walls veined with flowered creepers. The sweet aroma of honeydew pollen tickles the air, spoiled occasionally by a foul waft of the sea. To the east and west spread two bridged drainage ditches, each brimming with vivid blooms. A cobbled pathway wraps around the gardens, upon which lays a golden hat with gold plumage. Standing at either side of the treasure are two, hulking, knobby, humanoid-beasts wrestling with each other in an equal battle of strength.

If the PCs enter Area 1-1 through the main portcullis, also read or paraphrase the following:

The filthy brutes roar at each other, but then turn their aggression upon you!

★★★ MR Combat Check! ★★★

This pleasure garden entertained royals and commoners alike, who arrived before a performance to gossip about backstage romances, and lingered after to discuss the deeper meanings of the play which no one quite grasped. With a dazzling assortment of flowers and hedges selected by the late queen, the garden itself inspired many romance-minded playwrights whose scripts were later performed on the very stage beyond. To the north, a broad marble perron leads up to a set of large open archways granting access to Area 1-2. Flanking both sides of the perron are two stone stairwells sinking down into the halls of Area 2-5.

Drainage Ditches: To both sides of the courtyard are drainage ditches designed to expel excess rainfall to the bottom of the crag. Any PCs who search either drainage ditch will uncover a large grated gutter hidden within the foliage. Both grated lids are locked, and require a DC 14 pick lock check to open. Otherwise, the iron locks can be destroyed by a DC 19 Strength check. Unless the siren in Area D-1 has been killed, her haunting yet beautiful singing will be heard echoing up the gutter. Because of the creature's four mouths, PCs may mistake the singing as coming from multiple maidens.

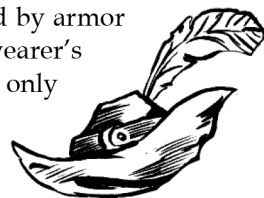
Any PC who inspects the gutter must make a DC 12 Will save, or else will be wildly determined to reach the maidens who sings so sadly. He will try removing the gutter's grating, and demand that the PCs descend to comfort them. Other PCs who listen closely at his request also have a chance at being bewitched, and must also make the Will save. If need be, the entranced PC will descend the gutter alone. The spell will be broken when the PC takes damage, or if another PC successfully casts *dispel magic*. Climbing down the gutter unaided requires a DC 15 Agility check, or else the PC will slide 200' down, launching from the pipe's outlet into the shallow waters of Area D-1, taking 1d12 damage.

Forest Trolls: The two forest trolls wrestling at the center of the garden are protected by thick, calloused bright-yellow skin with tufts of matted black hair. If the PCs enter Area 1-1 from Area 1-2, it is possible for them to sneak past the embattled trolls, taking cover behind the garden's tall hedges and thick flowers. Any thief wishing to sneak up on the trolls must make a DC 10 sneak silently check, or else will be heard.

Forest Troll (2): Int +3; Atk bite +4 melee (2d4+2), claw +3 melee (1d6+1); AC 17; HD 5d8; hp 25 each; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6; AL C.

At the beginning of combat, if the PCs have discovered Handout D, they may attempt to trick the trolls into letting one of them wear the golden hat. As in the fable, the trolls will agree to let one of the PCs wear the hat, as long as whichever troll kills the PC becomes the hat's keeper. To successfully trick the trolls, the PC must make a DC 12 Personality check, or else the trolls will become befuddled and irritated - turning to physical combat for mental relief.

Golden Hat: The golden hat is enchanted, and will ease the burden of encumbrance on its wearer. Any Agility penalties induced by armor weight (excluding shields) are ignored. Furthermore, the wearer's maximum speed is also increased by 10'. These bonuses are only in effect when the hat is worn. **If the party's MR ever drops below 2**, the hat will lose its magic and forever take on its true appearance: nothing more than a maiden's fancy bathing cap with a mottled pigeon feather tucked into its side!



Area 1-2 — Lobby

You enter an ornately domed foyer centered by a silver fountain; its sweet violet liquid spilling down into a petal-shaped basin below the sculpture of a royal figure. Under each ivory petal hangs a purple-stained rag. Carved into the surrounding walls of the room are reliefs depicting renowned bardic stories, like "Nimble Tom and the Wicked Plum" and "The Hungry Friar with the Forked Tongue."

This entry room is where frequenters of the theater reveled in its fantasies by drinking wine from the Fountain of the Crying King. Along the southern wall of the foyer are two large open archways granting access to Area 1-1. To the northwest and northeast are two closed oak doorways leading to the lower class seating levels of Area 1-3. A double set of doors on the north wall open to the noblemen seating level of Area 1-3.

Fountain: The silver fountain is delicately detailed, and depicts King Yarvin of Minstrel, who is celebrated for opening the theater. It is said that by the third act of the theater's first play, the king was so moved to tears that he never stopped crying; having to appoint a royal Towel Bearer - an honored position still ceremoniously held within Minstrel. Below the statue is carved "*Sip all who enter from the spoils of the weeping king. May his draught awaken the beauty of the acts performed within this sanctuary.*" A silver plaque mounted upon the fountain's basin details the statue's history.

Plum-beetle Wine: When the fountain is inspected, PCs will discover **HANDOUT D** floating within its six-petaled basin. The wine it's stirring inside is a formula unique to Minstrel, and can be brewed only by a master alchemist. Fermented from the pulp of a plum-beetle harvested deep within the coves off Minstrel's shore, the wine heightens the drinker's sense of belief, making the theater's performances more real than any other!

★★★ MR Check! ★★★

Each PC who sips from the fountain must make a DC 12 Fort save, or else raise the group's MR by 1. If any PCs drink deeply from the basin, they must instead make a DC 12 Fort save, or else become stricken by drunken paranoia, losing 1d4 temporary Intelligence, and raising the group's MR by 2 each. Whether a PC drinks a drop or a chalice full, he'll receive 1 HD of magical healing as the wine blots out any current feelings of pain.

Admission Boxes: Next to each doorway is a small iron locked box with a slotted lid mounted to the wall. Any thief can pick open the locked boxes with a DC 14 pick lock check. Within the commoner boxes are 150 large copper coins stamped with the sigil of the Minstrel Amphitheater. Etched in an elegant script on each coin's circumference is the phrase "*Coin of Admittance.*" The locked box next to the nobleman's entrance contains 60 gold coins with similar stamping.

Area 1-3 — Seating

You enter an expansive, horse-shoe shaped arena divided into three sections; each section filled by a handful of tiered benches which overlook the amphitheater's grand stage. To the east and west, the benches are hewed from marbled soapstone and are cushioned by fresh hay. To the south, centering the stage, are gilded oak benches pitted to comfortably seat a noble's hindquarters, with the front-most rows cushioned by goose-feather pillows. In all sections, countless benches have been overturned, and bodies are piled within the seating area's narrow aisles. Sitting in a mesmerized state are two dozen noblemen and common folk, none of whom turn to acknowledge your presence. They lean far on the edges of their seats as if waiting for the final act of a captivating performance!

The group of spellbound spectators are the unlucky few who fell prey to the ritual full-heartedly before chaos overcame the theater. All of them drank deeply, as encouraged by Gilgus, from the Fountain of the Weeping King in Area 1-2. If PCs look into the spectator's blank stares, they will witness the reflections of intimate fantasies which keep them entranced. The ritual holding the theater in curse gains its power from each spellbound PC and NPC. **For each of the spellbound spectators killed, the party's MR is reduced by 1.** If the area is searched and the spectators robbed, PCs will discover 1d24 gp, as well as a silver key which can be used to unlock the coin boxes in Area 1-2. Also found beneath a nobleman's blood-soaked corpse is **HANDOUT H**.

Area 2-1 — Stage

You enter the great, open stage of the amphitheater. To the north, where once spectators could gaze upon the open sea, now swirls a thunderous wind. Flanking the northern mouth of the stage are two high towers, each weather worn but in the distinct shape of women. High above, their hands are extended toward each other to create a bridge between them, from which hangs a wooden spit holding a canvas backdrop.

There are four seals carved into the stage - each representing one of the four challenges faced by *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons*: The cave worm, two forest trolls, three knights, and siren with four mouths. As each fabled creature is conquered, the matching seal will cease emitting black smoke, marking the progress of the ritual. The judge should count how many fabled challenges remain, and modify the flavor text before reading or paraphrasing the following:

Carved into the granite floor of the stage are four circular runes. Black pillars of smoke rise up from each sigil and envelop the top of the northeastern tower like the dark gloved hands of a strangling thief!

This stage is the central and most important location within the amphitheater, and has hosted many acclaimed thespians and bards. The northern edge of the stage is unbarred, and opens to the sea 150' below. Currently, the ceaseless cyclone encircling the theater obscures what would normally be a view of endless beauty. To the northwest, a curtained stone archway leads into the stairwell between Areas 2-2 and 3-1.

Spell Glyphs: The spell glyphs carved into the stage were etched by Ulifer, as instructed by the boar-demon Hammaritus for the ritual which he's now invoked. Any PC who tries standing within a rune emanating black smoke must make a DC 19 Fort save, or else the swirling smoke will solidify into coal black chunks of clay, clumping upon and crushing him for 1d6 damage before knocking him backward. Once all four seals have ceased smoking, the ritual will be near complete, and Area 3-2 can be safely accessed.

Drainage Pipes: To the left and right of the stage's southern entrance are two locked, grated drainage pipes. Any PCs who inspect the pipes will hear a beautiful yet eerie singing echoing out from them, with the same enchanting results as the drainage pipes of Area 1-1.

Candle Maker: At the foot of the northeastern tower lies the crumpled body of a master candle maker, who appears to have fallen from somewhere within the black smoke obscuring the tower's top. On his robed corpse can be found an ornate candle snuffer, a simple iron key, and a silver-speckled candle. The candle snuffer is finely detailed, etched with a twisting pattern of smoke, flame, and musical bars. It is worth 50 sp to any nobleman, candle maker, or alchemist with the coin for frills. The iron key can be used to unlock the doors of both the northwestern and northeastern towers.

Candle of Healing: The silver-speckled candle is magical, and when lit, will shed white crackling smoke, healing a single PC who smells it for 1 HD per round exposed. The enchanted candle may also raise the recently deceased when held under the nose of a corpse for three rounds. It has already been used several times, but is still good for four rounds. The candle maker was pushed from the northeastern tower by Ulifer in blinded frustration after the artisan's magical healing candle failed to awaken his true love who still lies asleep within.

Area 2-2 — Prop Storage

You enter a vast storage room crowned by a high vaulted ceiling. Dry thunder from the hellborn winds above echos throughout the crowded room, rattling its many iron shelves. From floor to ceiling stand oak-framed scaffolds holding an assortment of like-treasures; one shelf carries a dozen ornately jeweled thrones, while from another hangs a collection of robes that would cause even the most cantankerous wizard to swoon. Lying still at the center of the room is the corpse of a man whose lower body resembles that of a horse. Gorging upon his body are three large slugs. Upon seeing you enter, the slugs attack!

★★★ MR Combat Check! ★★★

This large room holds a century's worth of hand-made costumes and theatrical accessories. **Unless the PC's MR is 1**, all props and costumes scattered about the shelves appear to be authentic, rather than the cheap theatrical imitations they truly are. An old tin can looks like a battered iron knight's helmet. The painted lid of a wooden wine cask looks like an ornate silver shield. PCs are welcome to switch out any of their equipment with the illusionary equipment found within this room or about the theater. As long as the adventuring party's MR is 2 or higher, the theatrical props will maintain the properties and appearance of their intended imitations.

Performer's Corpse: The corpse at the center of the room is that of an ill-fated theater performer who died while dressed as the bottom half of a horse. In his hand is clutched a torn piece of paper, **HANDOUT E**. If the PCs remove the paper, the performer's arm will fall loose.

Digestive Slugs: The digestive slugs are the size of a man's thigh, and are born from the giant reeling worm occupying Area 2-4. Their bite carries a poison which weakens muscles and breaks down tissues. When a PC is successfully bitten, he must make a DC 13 Fort save, or else take -1 ability point damage to either Agility or Strength (player's choice).

Digestive slug (3): Int +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 +1 plus disease); AC 11; HD 3d6+2; hp 12 each; MV 40' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP disease (DC 13 Fort save, else -1 Agility or Strength damage); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N.

Area 2-3 — Dressing Chambers

You enter a narrow, brightly lit chamber edged by six curtained anterooms. A pole is mounted near the ceiling of the chamber from which hang several gaudy costumes; the rest have fallen to the floor amidst a mess of bodies and blood. Over the rancid smell of death can be whiffed the rich perfumes and oils of an apothecary.

Unless the PCs are entering by way of the secret passage, include the following:

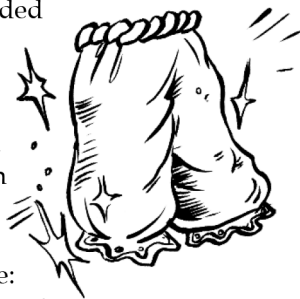
At the chamber's end is fixed a full-length crystal mirror whose illuminated surface seemingly doubles the butchery before you!

Usually humming with jovial nerves and backstage chatter, this deep, deadened chamber served as the theater's dressing room. Along its walls are six sunken fitting-rooms hidden behind battle-torn curtains. Each room is identical in size and contains: an iron hook for hanging outfits, a small wooden bench, and a silver hand mirror. If the alcoves are searched, PCs will find within one of the rooms a strange, leathery, quasi-demon costume hanging on a hook. They also discover an

Forest Troll Costume: The costume is made of up of wooden stilts, a headband ornamented by two ear-like fungal stalks, and a one-piece hooded leather outfit patched with clumps of skunk fur. If the PCs have encountered the trolls located in Area 1-1, they may recognize the costume as looking similar. If a PC puts on the costume, the party must immediately make a MR check. If/Once the party's MR is 5 or higher, the PC wearing the costume must make a DC 16 Will save, or else transfigure into a 12' tall, raging troll, immediately attacking friend or foe alike. Once the enraged PC drops below half his hit points, he may again roll a DC 12 Will save, or else continue to fight to the death!

Forest Troll Costume: Int +3; Atk bite +4 melee (2d4+2), claw +3 melee (1d6+1); AC 17; HD 5d8; hp 25; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6; AL C.

Golden Pantaloons: If the PCs inspect the suspended clothing, they will discover a gleaming pair of golden pantaloons. Besides being highly valuable and masterfully stitched, the pantaloons allow the wearer to convince others that he is of great wealth and prosperity, granting a +3 to all Personality checks when dealing with those of noble birth. **If the party's MR ever drops below 2**, the pantaloons will lose their magic and forever take on their true appearance: nothing more than two burlap sacks garnished with 20 gp!



Crystal Mirror: The full-length, luminous crystal mirror at the end of the room is enchanted, and reflects the PCs as the audience would believe them. Warriors may appear more intimidating than normal, while wizards may appear bent at more uncomfortable angles. Known to Minstrel performers as the “Mirror of Melodialia,” the mirror was a gift to the amphitheater centuries ago by Elvenking Adamar, whose troupe of elvish performers were the first non-humans to act upon the theater’s stage. The mirror’s magic comes from the bound spirit of a kidnapped gnomish child, whom the elves forcibly trapped within to channel its infinite imagination. After the mirror was discovered to poke fun at whomever stood before, with names like “pointy-ears,” or to ask curious but pointless questions like “how come you’re so tall,” Elvenking Adamar had it put into storage until a new purpose could be found. Although centuries have passed since its making, some Minstrel performers will claim to hear a strange high-pitched voice speak out from the cold crystal of the mirror, asking for someone to play.

Fastened to the mirror by a bone hairpin is **HANDOUT C**. Behind the mirror is hidden the secret tunnel leading to the fallen keep. If the PCs haven’t dealt with the Baktoua Raiders, a DC 14 Intelligence check will overhear throaty laughter coming from behind the mirror. Shattering the mirror will reveal the entrance, but otherwise the concealed passage only opens from the opposite side. Any PCs searching for secret passages must make a DC 17 Intelligence check to discover the tell-tale signs of a hidden doorway, but will find no ways to open it. Destroying the enchanted mirror requires a DC 16 Strength check, and will initiate combat with the startled raiders on the other side. Destroying it also releases the spirit of the imaginative child trapped within, lowering the party’s MR by 2 and sending the ghostly gnome laughing and skipping past the PCs until fading from existence.

Perfumes: On a small table near to the mirror are dozens of exotic perfumes and scented oils. Although most of them give off a pleasant aroma, one labeled *Heat of the Swine* would cause even the most stoic warrior to heave. Any wealthy apothecary or royal alchemist would gladly pay 100 gp for the full set.

Judges should take note of which PCs, if any, spritz themselves with <i>Heat of the Swine</i> . This seemingly harmless action will have ill effects during the final battle with Hammaritus!

Area 2-4 — Archives

The room that was once the theater's archives has become the burrow and feeding grounds of Skolex, the giant reeling worm. Unlike its smaller kinsworm, Skolex has mouths at both its head and tail. Like it does within its native caves, Skolex has pressed its sphincter-like orifices around the room's entryways in hopes of luring in gullible adventurers.

Golden Orb: Before passing into the archives, the PCs will come upon a gilded, glowing orb lying still on the ground. The golden orb is roughly the size of a healthy head of cabbage. If a PC approaches it, it pulls closer to the archives entryway, seemingly rolling on its own power. The PC may attempt a DC 14 Agility check to successfully catch the orb. When gripped, the orb instantly reels back into the mouth of Skolex, whose mouths muscle shut, trapping the greedy PC within. Any PC inspecting the orb must make a DC 18 Intelligence check to reveal a thin muscular tendon attached to the orb's rear. The tendon leads to the center of the worm's body, where the orb will lure the PCs if they are so willing.

Once the PCs enter the mouth of Skolex, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter an irregular tunnel of dark, wet stone. The air within is warm and humid, but a slight breeze brings comfort to your sweat-laced brow. To the far center of the passage you spy the golden shimmer of the orb, whose rich warm glow reveals the slumped figure of a man. The walls of the tunnel are damp with moisture, and your boots drag as if treading honey. The smell of bile fills your nose, bringing you to the edge of retching.

The inner walls of the creature's throat are stone hard, but membranous and wet with sticky acid. Any PC who touches the walls must make a DC 15 Fort save, or else take 1d4 damage as the steaming acids burn into his skin. At the center of the worm is the luminous golden sensory organ which has evolved to attract greedy meals by mimicking the appearance of a richly gilded orb glowing like a sunrise. This lethargic hunting strategy allows Skolex to conserve its low energy for combat, in cases where the prey discovers its trap. The worm's throat is 60' deep, winding back into the tunnel between D-1 and 2-4.

Dead Merchant: Resting next to the golden organ is the body of a richly dressed merchant, whose rotting corpse withers as a digestive slug cluster feasts within his ribcage. If his corpse is disturbed, the cluster will attack the responsible PC(s). Around the merchant's neck hangs an enchanted golden heart pendant upon a leather band. The heart is small but anatomically correct, and beats regularly.



Golden Heart: When the magical necklace is worn, its weight matches the weight of burdens upon its wearer's heart. If the wearer is lawful and honest, the necklace will feel weightless, and the heart will grant the wearer a +4 temporary HP bonus. If the wearer is chaotic and deceitful, the necklace will be unbearably heavy, and may cause the wearer great pain or injury, and at minimum, slow his movement speed by 10'. If clasped around the neck of a chaotic patron, the weight will be so heavy as to render the patron imprisoned under its own wretchedness. Chaotic PCs who destroy the necklace in their patron's honor will be highly rewarded and gain +2 Luck. **If the party's MR ever drops below 2**, the necklace will lose its magic and forever take on its true appearance: nothing more than a walnut suspended by a bit of twine!

Skolex: The moment a PC touches Skolex's golden orb, or runs towards the exit, the giant worm closes its many-toothed maws trapping as many PCs within its body as possible. Any PCs caught within the creature's bite must make a DC 14 Agility save or else be crushed by the closing orifice, taking 2d8 damage. If the PC survives the bite, he may make a DC 16 Strength test to escape the clenched sphincter.

During combat, a dozen digestive slugs pour out from Skolex's deep membrane-like cracks. The slugs spill out from all directions, and attack the PCs as a group. When a PC is successfully bitten, he must make a DC 15 Fort save, or else take -1 temporary ability point damage to either Agility or Strength (player's choice). Attacking the slug cluster with non-area-of-effect attacks results in ½ damage (rounded up). Skolex will regurgitate its prey after sustaining half HD damage internally. The hardened lining of the worm's throat has a 17 AC, but can be bypassed by piercing into the worm's membranous cracks. Alternatively, the worm will instantly open its mouths and regurgitate the adventurers along with a cluster of digestive worms if its golden organ is pierced, bleeding out black oily bile.

★★★ MR Combat Check! ★★★

Skolex: Int -1; Atk slam +5 melee (2d6), bite +2 melee (2d8), or special; AC 14 or 17 inside; HD 5d10; hp 38; MV 10'; Act 2d20; SP digestive spew (Twice a day, release a digestive slug cluster); SV Fort +10, Ref -1, Will +5; AL N.

Digestive slug cluster (2): Int +2; Atk bite +4 melee (1d4 +1 plus disease); AC 11; HD 2d10; hp 18; MV 40' or climb 20'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 10'x10' space, disease (DC 13 Fort save, else -1 Agility or Strength damage); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N.

If Skolex is defeated, the room it occupied is revealed to be an archive holding the theater's oldest scripts and stories, but almost all have been decimated by the worm. Among the loose papers and broken bookshelves, PCs will find **HANDOUT F**, along with the Minstrel Bard College Alumni Record.

Alumni Record: This book contains the handwritten names of all students and professors since the time of the school's foundation. Investigative PCs may look in the book for the name Gilgus Faler, but will not find it. Instead, PCs will notice that the book has been recently opened, and a leather strip marks a page detailing a student named Ulifer Slagg. Next to the name is written a note declaring that Ulifer was expelled due to his admitted transfusing of fables and wizardry, and for being suspect in the disappearance of a woodman's daughter. The controversial fable's title has been ripped out, but its last recorded location was within the Minstrel royal library.

Beyond the worm's corpse is a large earthen-tunnel delving down to Area D-1. Any PCs standing near the tunnel's mouth will hear the soft echoes of beautiful singing intermixed with the crash of waves against the shore, with the same enchanting results as the drainage pipes of Area 1-1.

Area 3-1 — Tower of Joy

Expanding from the mouth of the northwestern tower's spiraling stairway is an ancient stone bridge. Suspended from the bridge by a series of pulleys is a large canvas backdrop spooled around a wooden spit. A dangerous gale blows seaward across the bridge's crumbling deck, ripping away loose stones and straining the backdrop's rope supports. Guarding the end of the bridge are three armed knights, with one mounted upon a warhorse. In unison, the knights call out, "to cross, you must face us three!"

★★★ MR Combat Check! ★★★

The bridge between the towers of Joy and Sorrow spans 50' across, is 15' wide, and soars 150' above the stage (300' above the sea). Because of the raging winds surrounding the theater, crossing the bridge is dangerous. Any PC's wearing leather armor or lighter must make a DC 8 Reflex save, or else be swept off either side of the bridge (determine randomly). If swept off the north side, the PC may make a Luck check to see if he is able to grasp onto the canvas backdrop. If he fails his Luck check, or is swept off the southern side, the PC drops 300', taking 30d6 falling damage. Any PC wearing the enchanted golden hat must make the Reflex save no matter the armor type he wears.

Three Knights: All three knights wear black tunics bearing a single gold circlet, and are armed with coal-black short swords and shields. Of the three, one is carrying a lance and mounted upon a warhorse wearing a golden saddle. Once

one or more PCs are on the bridge, warhorse and rider will charge the PCs, attempting to knock them off. Any PC hit by mounted assault not only takes attack damage, but must also make a DC 8 Agility save, or else be swept off the bridge as described earlier. After his initial charge, the mounted knight will toss his lance off the bridge and strike out with his short sword. The warhorse will also strike out with its hooves each turn, attempting to trample any PCs within melee range. The remaining two knights will follow in the wake of the first, but charging on foot instead of horseback.

If the PCs have discovered Handout E, they may attempt to trick the mounted knight into wearing the enchanted golden hat. Before stepping out onto the bridge and initiating combat, the PC wearing the golden hat must call out *"If a chance is to be had, I surely can't wear this magical hat"* as it's written upon Handout E, and leave the hat upon the ground. During his initial charge, the black knight will target the golden hat with his lance instead of a PC. Once he reaches the hat, he will shovel it up and place it over the top of his helmet. The moment the black knight puts on the hat, he will be swept off his horse and over the side of the bridge tumbling to his death. The PCs will still need to battle the warhorse and remaining two knights. The golden hat can be retrieved from Area D-1 before entering Area 3-2 and beginning the final encounter against Ulifer.

Golden Saddle: The golden saddle worn by the warhorse is another magical item from *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons*. The enchanted saddle allows any horse wearing it to travel across water as if it were land, and fills the horse with boundless endurance. **If the party's MR ever drops below 2**, the saddle will lose its magic and forever take on its true appearance: nothing more than a simple leather saddle poorly brushed in gold leaf!



Knight (2): Init +2; Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 1d12; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5; AL L.

Mounted Knight: Init +3; Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6), lance +3 melee (1d12, double damage on mounted charge); AC 13; HD 1d12; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5; AL L.

Warhorse: Int +1; Atk hoof +5 melee (1d6+3), trample +2 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 17; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SP can walk on water with golden saddle; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

Area 3-2 — Tower of Sorrow

The Tower of Sorrow can only be accessed after the PCs have defeated all four challenges from *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons*: the giant reeling worm, two trolls, three knights, and siren with four mouths. Until then, a deadly black sulfurous cloud will swirl around the tower's top, concealing the room's entrance. Any PC who tries passing into the black cloud must make a DC 19 Reflex save, or else the swirling smoke will solidify into coal black chunks of clay, clumping upon and crushing him for 1d12 damage before casting him back onto the bridge.

Keenly watching the PC's progress from the Minstrel encampment, Ulifer will rush toward the tower the moment its surrounding black clouds lift, hoping to awaken his true love and escape the city. It takes him 15 minutes to reach Area 3-2. If the PCs immediately head for the tower without delay, they will arrive before Ulifer and be able to lift the curse upon the sleeping woman, awakening whichever lover the PC with puckered lips has in mind. If the PCs don't head straight to the tower, Ulifer will arrive there first and awaken his own true love.

If PCs arrive first...

If the PCs enter the Tower of Sorrow **before** Ulifer, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a dimly lit rotunda atop the theater's eastern tower. Throughout the room, spools of colorful wax lay about stone workbenches. On a shelf high above are candles of various color and size; some never lit, while others are burned down to their stumps. Mounted within a single window overlooking the stage hangs a large empty lantern with copper shades.

Upon a central wooden table is the body of a fully veiled figure deep in sleep, whose chest slowly rises and falls, undisturbed by your intrusion. The body of a richly-dressed young boy lies collapsed nearby, also overcome by sleep.

This circular chamber is the workshop of Minstrel's late master candle maker. All of the candles accessible throughout the room are harmless, and usually burn a colored flame that matches the candle's wax. The lantern mounted within the tower's window has space to set a single candle, and was used during performances to beam light down onto the stage.

Candles: Also found throughout the room are spools of wick, bronze candle molds, and scented oils. PCs who inspect the workshop's tables will discover a set of tall containers: one crafted from mother-of-pearl and the other onyx. The pearl container is unlocked and empty, hollowed out with space for a single candle. This container belongs to the magical healing candle found in Area 1-1. The similar onyx container is locked, and can be opened by any thief with a DC 12 pick lock check. Inside the box is an unusual black candle speckled with bone fragments. When

lit, it will emit a coal black smoke, dealing 1d6 damage per round to a single target who can smell it (DC 17 Fort save for half damage). The candle may also send a single creature to its death when held under its nose for three consecutive rounds. The candle has never been lit and is good for 6 rounds.

King Brayden: The richly dressed boy asleep upon the floor is King Brayden. He is bound by a magical slumber, having tried to awaken the sleeping woman with a kiss. Like in the fable, the woman upon the table is bound by an enchanted sleep which can only be broken by one with a golden heart.

True Love's Kiss: Any neutral or chaotic PC who tries kissing the sleeping figure without wearing the golden heart necklace must make a DC 20 Fort save, or else fall asleep until either the ritual has been completed (the figure awakens), or he himself has been kissed by a character with a golden heart. Succeeding the save doesn't awaken the figure.

Any PC wearing the golden heart necklace or of lawful alignment who kisses the veiled figure will awaken her, and she will become whomever the PC was thinking about during the kiss. At this moment, the judge should reveal the PC's true love as written down at the start of the adventure. That true love has just been awakened before the PC's eyes. Always one for trickery, the boar-demon Hammaritus never agreed to whose true love he would free from the fable!

Ulifer's Arrival: Ulifer arrives in the doorway of the candle room just in time to witness the PCs awaken the veiled figure, and to learn that he has again been betrayed by Hammaritus! After revealing his true intentions and blaming the ritual's failure on the PCs, Ulifer is overcome by violent, full-body tremors. Foam falls from his mouth, and he begins to bloat, causing his robe to drop and revealing the true horror of his naked corrupted body!

If Ulifer arrives first...

If the PCs enter the tower **after** Ulifer, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a dimly lit rotunda atop the theater's eastern tower. Throughout the room, candles and spools of colorful wax clutter stone workbenches and wooden shelves. The body of a richly-dressed young boy lies collapsed nearby - his chest slowly rising and falling in deep sleep.

Standing above a table at the center of the room you recognize the frail frame of Gilgus Faler, whose lips are pressed firmly upon those of a fully veiled figure lying before him. After releasing his lips, the figure gently awakens, and the veil covering her body drops to the floor to reveal a beautiful young woman. Overcoming grogginess, the maiden suddenly appears frightened by the old man hovering over her, until hastily asking, "Ulifer? Is that you? Your face...your hands... they're so wrinkled! What has done this to you? Where are we?"

The PCs have entered the Tower of Sorrow just in time to witness Ulifer awakening his true love. In excitement, Ulifer begins to babble about all he has gone through to free her, and tearfully apologizes for locking her away within the fable. Before he can receive her forgiveness, Ulifer is overcome by violent, full-body tremors. Foam falls from his mouth, and he begins to bloat, causing his robe to drop and reveal the true horror of his naked corrupted body!

FINAL BATTLE

After either scenario, read or paraphrase the following:

An ethereal voice, high-pitched and broken by fits of snorting laughter, calls out to Gilgus from his own mouth... "The ritual is done and the pact is sealed. A true love was bargained, and a true love's revealed. Now the bonds which imprisoned me within the demon-plane are broken, and a new, greater universe will be born!"

In a sudden squeal of pain, Ulifer drops on all fours and explodes in size, causing the tower to collapse under his immense weight. Tumbling among cracked stones and debris, all of the PCs and NPCs fall to the theater's stage, and must make a DC 10 Reflex save, or else take 1d6 fall damage. Ulifer's bones loudly crack and twist but are quickly healed into a grotesque form. Shooting out from his back like corn stalks are thick black hairs, and two large tusks erupt from his face. By the time the PCs emerge from the rubble, Ulifer has already taken the shape of the giant, boardemon Hammaritus. If the theater's seating is still occupied by spellbound spectators, they begin to oink, snort, and squeal in excitement for the final act of the performance they'd been waiting for. Once the PCs are on their feet, the unworldly demon attacks!



Hammaritus: Not having fully developed his demonic powers, Hammaritus is limited to physical attacks, but his large size makes them equally deadly. After four rounds of combat, Hammaritus strengthens, gaining an additional 1d16 action die. His razor sharp tusks can reach PCs within 10' of melee, and his

powerful hooves can launch debris at any PCs within 60'. Any PCs who are struck down by Hammaritus or his demonic piglets, but survive by their own luck, suffer from a random corruption of Hammaritus on Table V in addition to normal ability point loss.

Once Hammaritus reaches half hit points, he cries out in a pained squealing voice *"Awaken my children! Awaken!"* At that moment, 1d12 spellbound spectators explode into demonic piglets bearing the faces of their former selves. The piglets storm the stage, lashing out with smaller-but-deadly tusks! If any of the PCs are wearing *Heat of the Swine*, they become the sole focus of the piglets' aggression.

Hammaritus: Int +4; Atk hoof +7 melee (1d12+2), tusk +4 melee (2d6, range 10'), hurled debris +5 missile fire (2d4+1, range 60'); AC 17; HD 5d12; hp 50; MV 35'; Act 2d20, 1d16 (becomes 2d16 after four rounds); SP Summoning squeal (at ½ health, summons 1d12 demon piglets); SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +7; AL C.

Demon piglets of Hammaritus (1d12): Int -1; Atk tusk +1 melee (2d4); AC 11; HD 1d10; hp 6; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +3; AL C.

TABLE V: Hammaritus's Corruption

Roll	Result
1	The PC is plagued by ill-timed bouts of snorting laughter! Whenever confronted with tragic news, the PC must make a DC 15 Will save, or else burst into a snorting guffaw, bringing offense to those around him!
2	Over 1d3 weeks, a hog's tail slowly sprouts out from the PC's upper intergluteal cleft! The PC forever finds leather armor and above uncomfortable, taking an additional -1 Check Penalty when wearing.
3	The PC is cursed by insatiable hunger, slobbering to have a taste of each new plant or animal he encounters! If the PC wishes to control his famishment, like in cases where poison may be present, he must succeed a DC 15 Will save, or else take -1 Stamina permanently for suppressing his urge.
4	Over 1d4 days, the PC's hands and feet callous exponentially until left resembling the hooves of a pig. During this time, the PC finds wielding hand weapons difficult, suffering a -2 penalty to attack rolls. When running on all fours, his speed is doubled to 60'. The disease may be healed magically by a cleric's <i>lay on hands</i> spell. If left untreated for 24 hours, the callouses will harden into bone, becoming permanent.

CONCLUSION

Once Hammaritus and his demon piglets have been defeated, the curse surrounding the amphitheater is broken. Each PC should select one illusionary item in their possession and make a DC 20 Will check, each adding the party's final Misbelief Rating to their result. Each PC who succeeds the check has unintentionally willed their item into existence, pulling it from the planes of fable before the curse lifted and portals closed. All other illusionary items found within the theater are lost, revealing themselves to be the cheap props they truly are.

After the battle, both the young King Brayden and the awakened figure will emerge from the rubble injured (non-fatal).

When PCs return to the encampments, they find that some of the survivors have sprouted strange boar-like growths, like tufts of black hair and leathery tails, or an occasional tusk! Although deformed, their minds have been cleared, and they are eager to begin rebuilding Minstrel into the center of culture that it once was. Although the survivors don't have much in terms of treasure, King Brayden, now well rested and in good spirits, agrees that the first performance the rebuilt theater shall put on will be one in the PCs honor!

If the PC's fail to kill Hammaritus, then he will continue to grow in size and strength, completely destroying the amphitheater and spreading his terror; raising an army of demonic boar-men to begin ushering in the extinction of humanity and the birth of a second, boundless, demonic world!

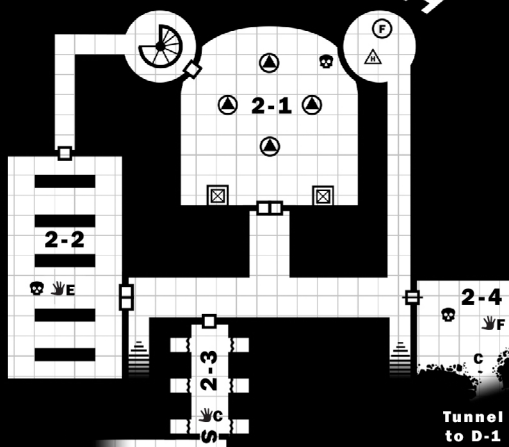
MAP OF THE

Minstrel Amphitheater

Level 3



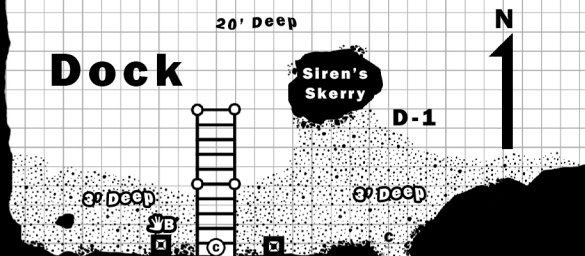
Level 2



Secret Tunnel to the Minstrel Keep



Dock



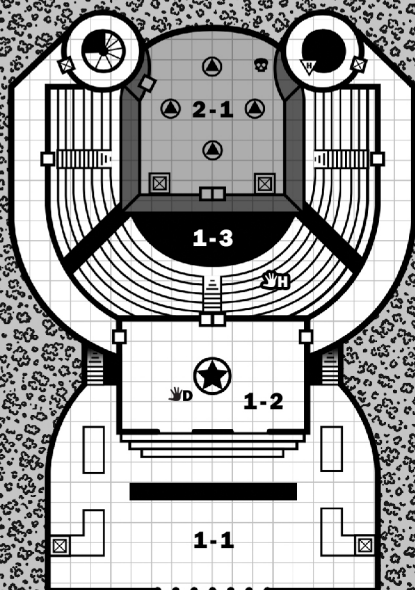
Tunnel to 2-4



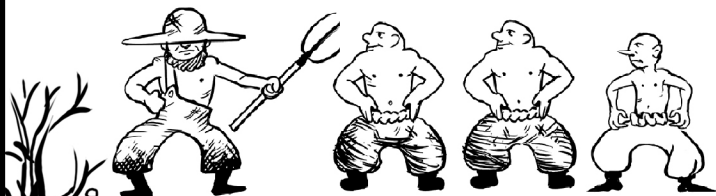
	Door		Covered Chute (+)
	Trapped Door		Chute In Ceiling (+)
	Locked Door		Ascending Ladder (+)
	Secret Passage		Descending Ladder (+)
	Concealed Entry		Spell Glyph
	Curtained Entry		Column
	Portcullis		Trapdoor In Floor (+)
	Spiral Stairwell		Trapdoor In Ceiling (+)
	Stairwell		Notable Corpse
	Statue		Player Handout

Each square equals approx. 10 feet

Level 1



The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



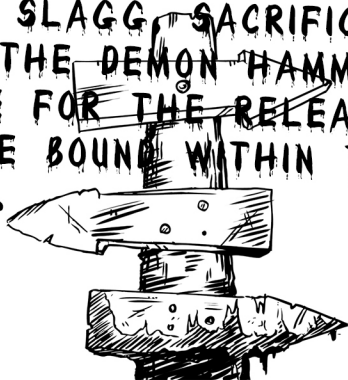
he next week, the youngest son waited patiently for his father to come to him, but he did not come. So the youngest son asked his father why he too was not sent forth to seek his fortune.

The farmer laughed and said "my youngest son, you are so lazy that you have never worked a day in your life and your trousers are snow-white. Seek your fortune, but you had better not return until those pantaloons are made of solid gold, or you will feel thrice my wrath!"



The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons

I, ULIFER SLAGG, SACRIFICE MY
BODY TO THE DEMON HAMMARITUS IN
EXCHANGE FOR THE RELEASE OF A
TRUE LOVE BOUND WITHIN THE PAGES
OF FABLE.

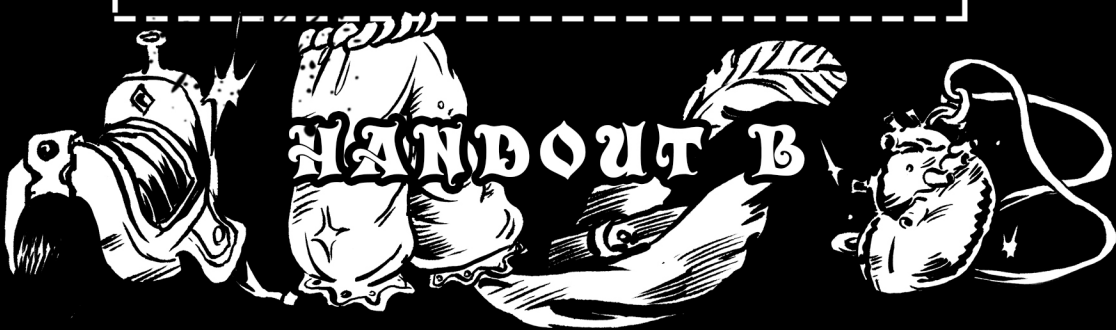


he boy traveled the same road
as his brothers, but at the fork he
took the rightmost path which
was treacherous looking, for he
heard his brothers tales and
knew the left and center path did
not lead to fortune.

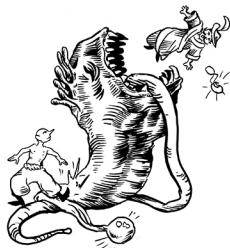
ULIFER SLAGG



HANDBOUT B

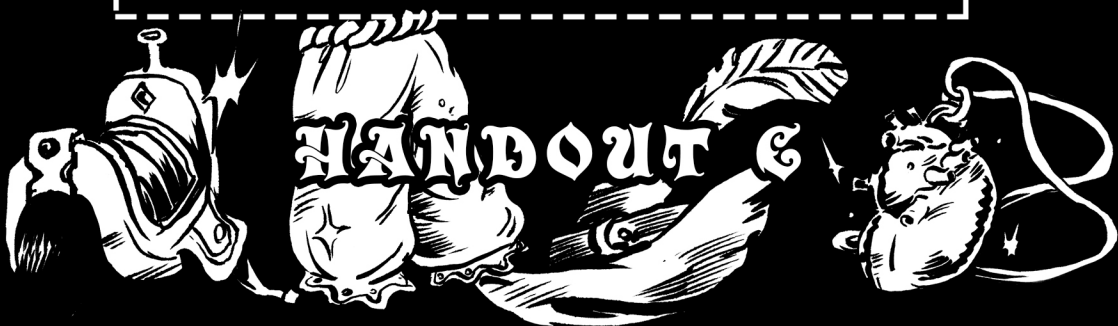


The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



He traveled for three days, and on the third day he came across a merchant trapped within the belly of a worm. Unlike the merchant, the boy wasn't greedy, and knew that gold easily come by was gold better left alone. The boy kicked away the gold and freed the merchant.

The merchant gave the boy a golden heart necklace, and told him about a cursed princess trapped in sleep atop a tower. "This golden heart will awaken her, and surely she will have enough gold to pay you for my rescue!" said the merchant.



The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



After three more days of travel, the boy came across two forest trolls arguing over a magical golden hat. The trolls were both equally strong and couldn't agree as to which should own it. Cleverly, the boy told the trolls that he would wear the hat, and whichever troll caught him first would own it...

Surely both trolls were faster than a lazy boy. But the boy was fast, and used to running from his older brothers. The second he put on the hat, he took off running faster than any boy that lived, for the hat was magical, and made its wearer as light as a duck!



The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



After another three days of travel, the boy came upon a bridge guarded by three knights. "To cross, you must face us three!" called the knight upon the golden saddle. Seeing that the bridge was very high and very windy, the boy removed his magical hat. "If a chance is to be had, I surely can't wear this magical hat" said the boy.

Thinking that boy meant the magical hat gave him strength, the knights raced at the hat and stole it off the ground. The moment the knight placed the hat upon his head, he became as light as a duck, and was swept off the windy bridge!

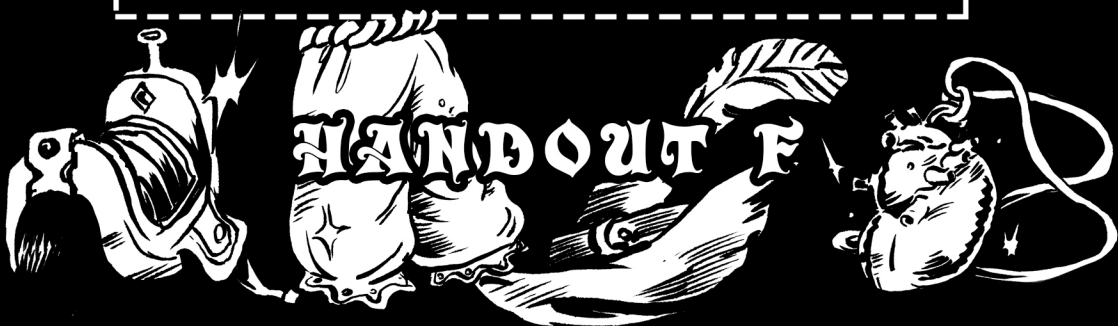
HANDOUT E

HANDOUT E

The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



"If you love me, come closer, and give me your golden saddle," sang the siren. So the boy rode closer and gave her his golden saddle. "If you love me, come closer, and give me your golden hat," sang the siren. So the boy walked closer and gave her his golden hat. "If you love me, come closer, and give me your golden heart," sang the siren. So the boy walked so close he placed his golden heart around the siren's neck. Suddenly, the siren sank to the bottom of the sea, for her heart was so full of evils and murder that the golden heart became a heavy stone.

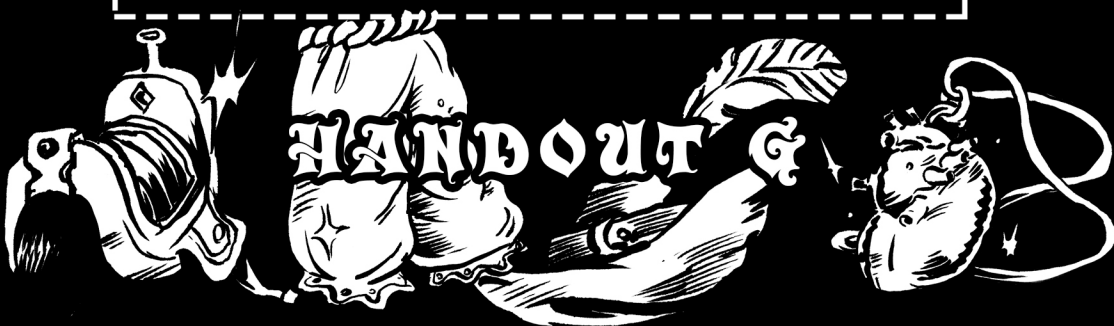


The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



For three days the boy swam, until he washed ashore below the tower of the sleeping princess. "I gave up all my gold and now my father will surely beat me," he cried. "For without a golden heart, the princess will never awaken!"

Before the boy left to go home to his angry father, he gave the sleeping princess a kiss goodbye. The princess felt the boy's kiss fall upon her cheek, and knew he indeed had a heart of gold. To the boy's surprise, she awoke, and promised him all of her gold for waking her.



The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons



The boy in the snow-white pantaloons and the princess were married, and the boy soon returned home to his angry father. "Boy, where have you been!" yelled his father. "The fields need plowing and the chickens need roosten, and thrice you'll feel my wrath!" But before the father could beat the boy, he was dazzled by the boy's pantaloons, for they were stitched from solid gold! The farmer cried tears of joy, for he knew that his young boy was now a young man.

The Boy in the
Golden Pantaloons

By **U**lifer **S**lagg

The **E**nd.



HANDOUT **H**



CREATE YOUR OWN...

Melodalia's Medallion of Misbelief

...to track your PC's Misbelief Rating (MR)

AS FEATURED IN

THEATER OF THE HAMMED



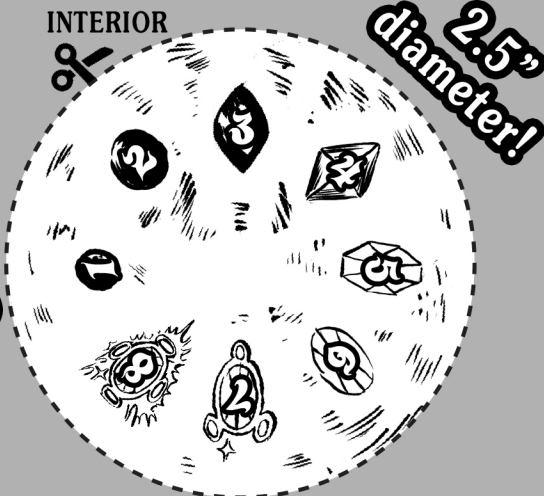
Step 1: Cut out the interior and exterior dial pieces along the dashed lines.

Step 2: Fold the exterior dial piece in half, placing the interior piece inside.

Step 3: Poke a brass fastener through the center of the dial at the marked location.

Optional: Fasten a string to the back of the dial to turn it into a necklace!

INTERIOR



2.5" diameter!



DO NOT SEPERATE!

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THEATER OF THE HAMMED

he people of Minstrel need your help! A divine ritual meant to heal our sleepless king has gone abominably, giving birth to blood-thirsty creatures from the pages of fable! Now we are trapped between both the Western raiders which rule our port, and the nightmarish demons which hold our once great amphitheater. Scattered within the theater are the cursed fable's pages, which we need to complete the ritual! Where could such a group of adventurers be found, who would dare face creatures and beasts so vile as to even hurl the imaginative minds of a theater audience into abject terror!

Bound within this module is an eight-page set of illustrated player handouts that combine into *The Boy in the Golden Pantaloons* – A dungeon crawler's fairy tale written exclusively for this adventure!

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