

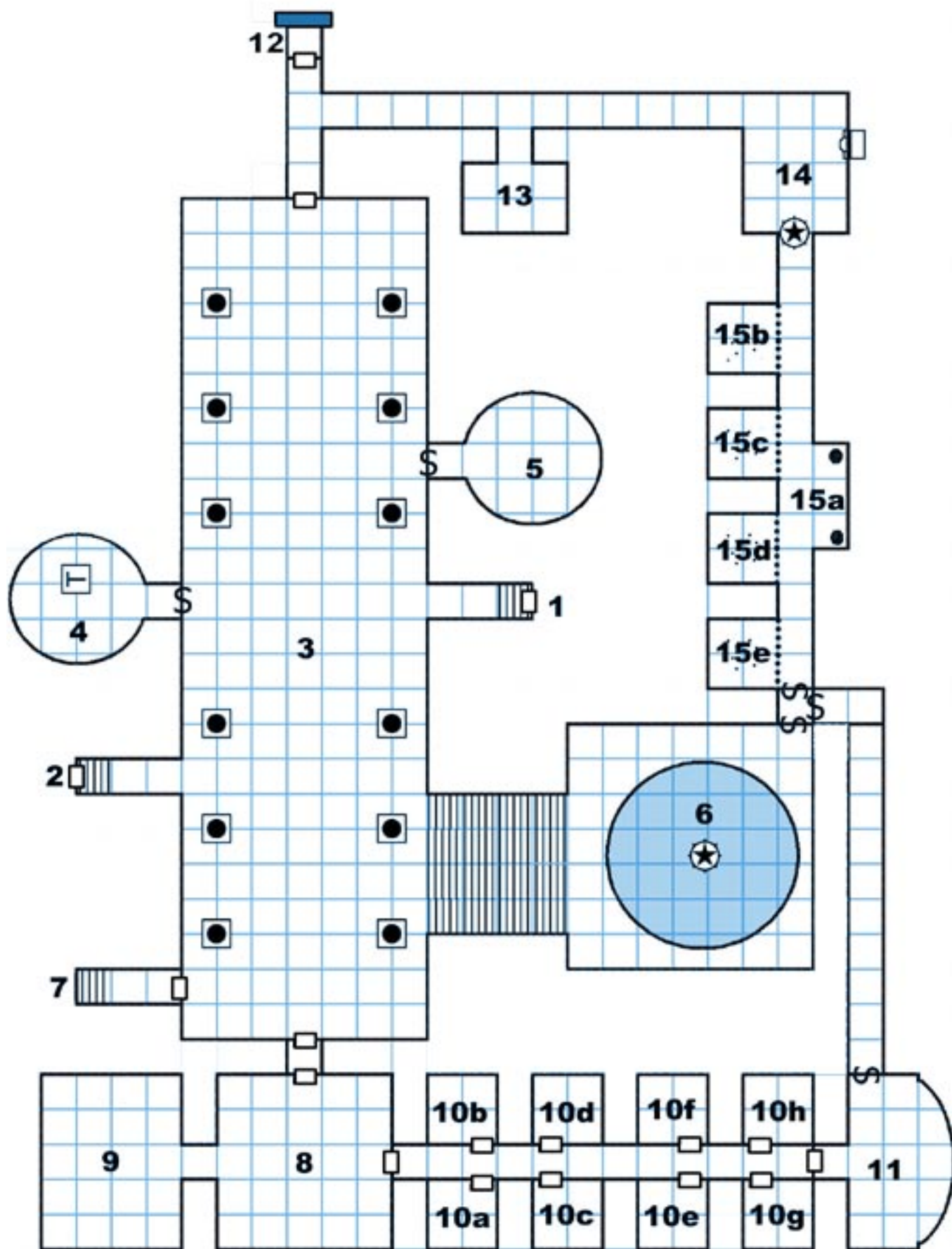
Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

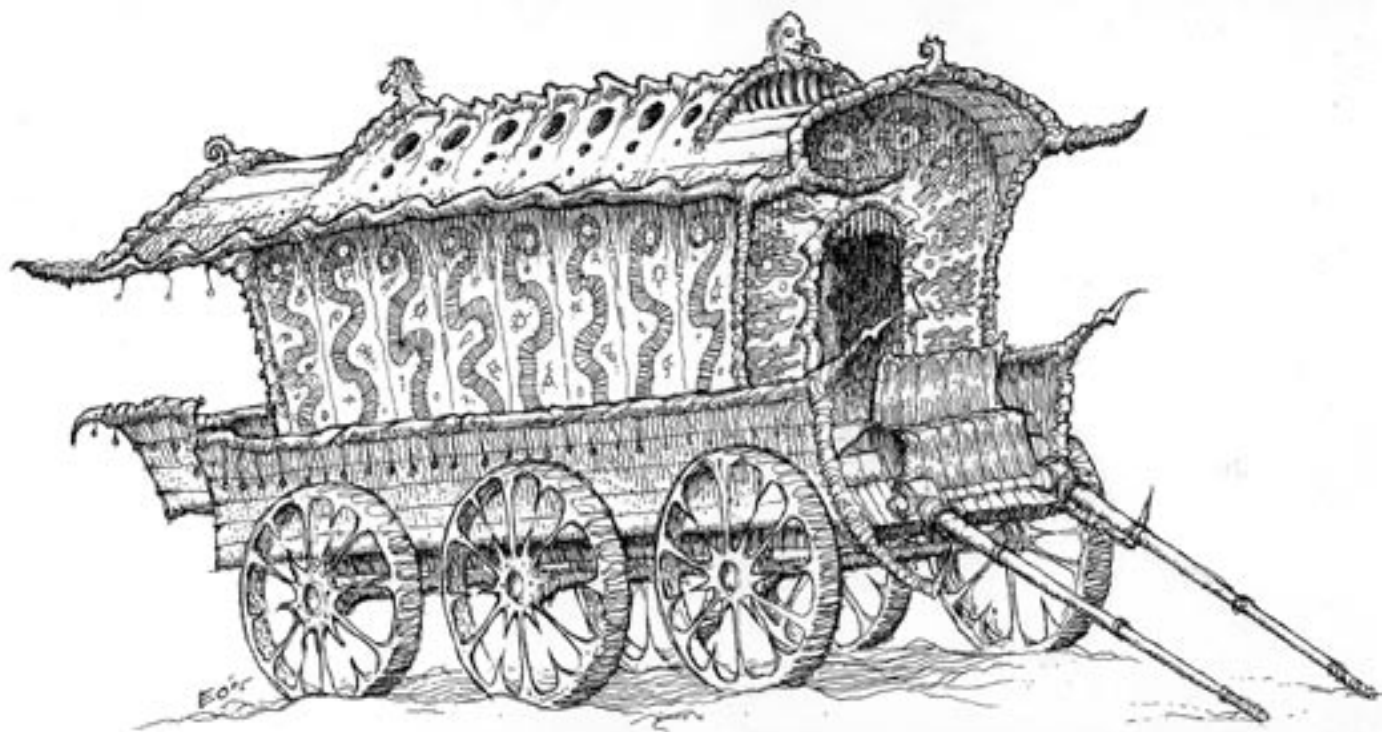


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An Adventure Module for Characters Level 4—6

GAMEMASTER'S EYES ONLY

WRITTEN BY: DAVID REEDER

EDITED BY: PAUL BACKSTROM, CHRISTOPHE SHILL, DOUG CURTIS, ERIK DEWEY

CHIEF EDITOR: ERIK DEWEY

ARTIST LIAISON: DAVID REEDER

COVER ARTIST: DOUGLAS CURTIS

COVER COLORS: SAME GUY

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS: (IN D8 RANDOM ORDER) EROL OTUS, KENT CLARK, BRENDON AND BRIAN FRAM, DOUG CURTIS, CHRISTOPHE SHILL, ERIN ASPLUND AND PAULINE STAPELS, DON DENNIS

MAPS: CRAIG ZIPSE, DAVID REEDER, DON DENNIS

BEHIND-THE-SCENES: DIRTY STEVE

HACKTESTING: DIRTY STEVE, ERIK DEWEY, TIM PARKER, PAT DUFRIEND, ANDY SUNDERLAND, STEVE HANAN, PAUL BACKSTROM, CHRISTOPHE SHILL AND ASSORTED OTHER NE'ER-DO-WELLS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION.

This adventure module is fully compatible with the HackMaster RPG system. HackMaster itself is based upon the Original Dungeons & Dragons game by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. No Hard Eight Enterprises employees were authorized overtime, travel pay or per diem to assist with this project, so there was no Hard Eight representative involved in the creative process.

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Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

A NOTE BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

This adventure module (and that's what this is, an adventure module) is for a Role-Playing Game. Game. As in pretend and imagination. If you feel in some way that reading this, or participating as a player in this, will urge, compel, prompt or incline you to try and summon demons, go exploring the sewers with a kitchen knife in your hand, sacrifice small animals, join the ACLU or grow up to be a defense attorney, then just don't read it. All this crap about role-playing games being the work of the devil or turning people into murderers is just that—crap. If you hear voices from people that aren't really there or believe there are rings that will turn you invisible (or allow you to rule the world), then dude, you need help. But don't try to cast the blame for your issues on this. Not on the module, not on the game that spawned it (but especially not the module). This shouldn't be an excuse for you doing something stupid, hurting yourself or filing a spurious lawsuit, nor for that matter should any RPG (LARPs maybe, but RPGs no—just kidding). Coffee is hot, you should brace your ladder before you climb up it, if you get yourself locked in a house you tried to rob it's your fault and this module is just part of a game. Okie doke? Okay then. Oh, and incidentally, through this whole thing the term “he” and “him” and “his” are used generically. That's not because the author is sexist, nor because I disapprove of girls being gamers, it's because that's accepted grammatical practice. This business of say “hers” and “her” and “she” the whole time is awkward and annoying. Nothing negative or insulting is meant by it. It's seriously irritating that this kind of note needs to be written at all, but I appreciate you bearing with me.

A WARNING TO PLAYERS

Have you lost your mind? What in the hell do you think you're up to, reading this? Granted, it's not an official KenzerCo product (more on that later), nor is it officially sanctioned by the HMGMA (well, not yet) but that doesn't mean you have any business poking your nose into it! The information contained herein is to be considered EYES ONLY, GM LEVEL CLASSIFIED. Honestly, you shouldn't have even read to this point, not even to get the warning. You shouldn't be poking through this any more than you should go poking your pimply non-credentialed, no GM-card carrying nose into any module. It's not only unethical, it'll ruin all your fun. If the module winds up sanctioned by the HMA (and it probably will, eventu-

ally, they've got an eye for the good stuff) then you'll seriously have screwed up. If your GM finds out, he'll have you and all your fellow conniving players by the short hairs (since they're undoubtedly watching out for your GM to return right now while you continue to CHEAT). Please keep this amiable warning in mind and do the right thing, would you? Put the module down and we'll pretend it never happened.

ABOUT THE MODULE AND THE GAME FOR WHICH IT IS WRITTEN

Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom is an adventure designed and written for use in an RPG campaign. Specifically, this module is compatible with HackMaster, though provisions have been made for use with other systems. (Yes, before you go any further, HackMaster is a real game, with real players and real rulebooks and all that—in fact, it's the kewlest game.) Same as any of the other RPGs, just much kewler and more fun to play (unless you take yourself or your gaming too seriously, in which case you'll be properly horrified). Yes, it has its roots in the game played by the characters of Knights of the Dinner Table, the classic gamer's comic book written by Jolly Blackburn and the D Team, but it is a real game. The fact that you're reading this is proof of that.

Throughout this book, encounter areas are listed with a very convenient format provided for the GM by a thoughtful author. Flavor text, i.e., the part you'll read aloud to the players if you so choose, is denoted by the use of a gray box. Critters and monster statistics, along with other critical information, is included in an abbreviated format including some or all of the following:

Definition of Abbreviated Terms

HF=Hackfactor
EP=Experience Points
Int=Intelligence
AL=Alignment
AC=Armor Class
MV=Movement Rate
HD=Hit Dice
HP=Hit Points
SZ=Size
#AT=Number of Attacks per round
Dmg=Damage
SOA=Significant Other Attacks
SOD=Significant Other Defenses

Lang.=Languages Known

Hon=Honor value (can be a specific number or may be listed as a general term, such as average, dishonorable, that kind of thing)

ML=Morale level of creatures

TOP=Threshold of Pain (see the HackMaster GMG p. 105). This is typically half of a creature's full hit points, but may be adjusted up or down depending on the nature of the critter. N/A means that this critter has an infinite TOP (which is pretty kewl if your players are getting sassy), such as for undead and golems and liberals of the self-righteous and incorrigible variety.

FF=Fatigue Factor. See page 107 of the HM GMG.

Fatigue Factor represents how many rounds of exertion it takes before a creature must save versus fatigue.

The fatigue save is an ability check against a creature's combined average Constitution and Wisdom scores.

HOB=Hacklopedia of Beasts, the authoritative works of player-killin' critters, published by Kenzer & Company.

Now, if this was an official HackMaster module, it would have a location annotated so you could put into Garweeze Wurld somewhere. It's not an official module, however, so feel free to put it anywhere you like. The kewl thing about this particular adventure is that it is specifically designed to drop into your game as needed. It could even be a "random" encounter, if you adjusted your tables, or you could just use it for fill-in during a pick-up game or for when your creative juices go dry and you need an adventure that isn't too terribly involved or complex. Pick a spot, preferably a clearing or an open meadow tucked away in some remote forest, and drop it in. Let your PCs stumble across it as they travel, or have one of the Grimlocks escape the Meadow Kraken and blunder into them as it flees—they could then backtrack it to the Wheelhouse (since Grimlocks travel in large numbers, as canny PCs will know). It would take little preparation to set up.

Foreward from the Author

This was a volunteer project. No one got paid for it. Not me, for writing it, not the artists for illustrating it, not Second Rat for putting it all together and publishing it. All the proceeds are, essentially, for charity—though not your typical charity. It has been sponsored, if you will, by a non-profit group dedicated to the support of our troops. The funds generated by the sales of this module (and thanks for buying it, by the way) will be used to pay for training and training

equipment for a military unit, a military law enforcement tactical unit to be specific—however, regulations and a commander's directive prevent the disclosure of exactly which unit are to be benefited, for reasons that are arguably reasonable but unarguably binding. Second Rat Games will draft checks periodically to the afore-mentioned IRS recognized, nationally reputable 501-C3 non profit organization, which will then use the money to pay for formal schools as it is needed. It is completely on the up and up. If you need reassurance, however, feel free to contact Second Rat Games and you will be provided with the contact information you require.

Why the extra training? Quite simply, because it's needed and, to steal a phrase from one of my grizzled old trainers (both ex-military and ex-SWAT), "It costs money to go fast." This isn't to say that the military doesn't provide a lot of quality training—on the contrary, American military training is among the best in the world. Just as a matter of practicality and economics, however, it would be impossible for various units to send their troops to all the different specialty schools that are out there, or to purchase all the different new gadgets and training tools that become available on a constant basis. Many former military operators, among them former SF out of various units and branches of service, operate such schools, and there are lots of schools run by current or former SWAT team members. Numerous soldiers spend their money to improve their skills or buy equipment that the military cannot provide. This is unfortunate but, in my opinion, unavoidable. It is probably no different than any other profession wherein those who truly want to excel pursue education and training beyond what is provided to them by their employers.

Because this is a charitable project, and for a purpose that is very near and dear to my heart, I would like to sing the praises of all who have been involved in its development. To Second Rat Games, of course, for being willing to publish it in the first place. To all the artists who willingly donated their time and talent to make it a quality project. To my friends, writers and fellow role-players who helped with ideas, pieces of text and proof-reading (not to mention the playtesting). To David and Jolly and the others at Kenzer & Company, for being gracious enough to let me make a HackMaster compatible product, without question or equivocation. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

You know, let me talk about these artists for a little longer. Just thanking them and putting their

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names in here doesn't really do their enthusiasm for the project any justice. I called my old friend Kent Clark (yes, that's really his name) and started my spiel. I was halfway through when he interrupted me and said, "Whadya need and when?" I e-mailed the Fraim Brothers, whose response was immediate, overwhelming and effusive. "You bet we're in!" they said, when I pitched my idea. I heard from them every week while they were working on the stuff, to see if I needed anything. They wound up sending me more pictures than I'd originally asked for.

The Fraims enlisted as allies, I thought, where else could I go? Well, my main villain for the module was a medusa—and Douglas Curtis did the original medusa illustrations for the Hacklopedia of Beasts. Plus, I've been friends with him since I struck up an e-correspondence with him five years ago from the desert (I was deployed in response to the 9/11 attacks at the time). I don't know why I thought he might not help—it certainly never seemed to have occurred to him not to. It seemed like he'd e-mailed me back the pictures I'd asked for before I'd finished asking for them, then wanted to know if he could do some more.

As for Erol Otus...well, to me he epitomizes old school role-playing. The illustrations he's done for gaming publications in the past are the quintessential gamer pictures as far I was concerned. I'd never had anything to do with him—I mean, the others I had at least some tenuous connection to, through Kenzer & Company—but his response was as effusive as all the others. I started the e-mail with, "Mr. Otus, you don't know me, but..." His response was, of course I'll support the troops, what do you want me to do and how soon do you need it?

Christophe, Pauline and Erin, hell, I knew them only through postings in a forum chat group. All of them put their private or personal endeavors on hold to help me out, despite significant other commitments that should have been the primary focus of their attention. To say that I was happy to have the participation of these three would be a gross understatement. I love their gaming web-comics. Now I've had the opportunity to work with them.

So, how does one respond to the kind of support I received from all these people? I'm not sure. I've been working on this for months and I haven't figured out anything good enough. Once I do I'll let you know.

Let me say that the troops that benefit from this are a young and enthusiastic bunch that deserve the

help. They are as dedicated and patriotic a bunch of young soldiers (and I say young because I'd graduated high school before several of them were born or out of diapers) as any I've ever had the privilege of serving with. They've all already deployed at least once (if not two or three times) to Southwest Asia as part of the ongoing war on terror (it doesn't take a genius to figure out where)—on voluntary deployments every single time. None of them have been tasked to go any of the occasions they went. All of them volunteered for every deployment.

They are my boys. They are my responsibility and my motivation. Every tactical shooting school, civilian SWAT school or other specialty training course I send them to makes them that much more likely to accomplish their mission—and that much more likely to come home in one piece.

So...Second Rat Games, Kenzer & Company, assorted artists and writers and friends and of course the moms, wives, sisters and others of the group actually administering the project...THANK YOU.

The Legend of Wryneck's Wheelhouse

Okay, it is not so much a legend as it is a history and background, really, but it's still good reading.

Danava Wryneck is the first man to have driven and lived in the extra-dimensional wain known for three centuries as Wryneck's Wheelhouse. Easily as famous as Baba Yaga's Hut, perhaps even more so, the Wheelhouse is the granddaddy of all mega-storage devices. It is a Chest of Massive Volume and Bag of Hefty Capacity taken to the greatest, grandest extreme. The former item is not exactly mobile, and who wants to live in a sack? This magic item, now, this one is the penultimate pocket-dimension on wheels—possibly the best relic out there for the adventurer that wants to travel in style, without having to ever worry about encumbrance checks or being spied upon by scrying spells.

In short, it is really kewl.

Unlike a Cube of Opulent Lodging or an Instant Fortress, Wryneck's Wheelhouse retains its outer shape and size at all times. The advantages of an extra-dimensional "war wagon" have been amply demonstrated by several different notable personalities and famed adventuring groups over the years. Why build a stronghold or a house you have to secure, post guards on, keep the lawn mowed and worry about while you're away, when you can take your house, all your furnishings, and sufficient adventuring supplies for a year along with you? There is ample room inside the Wheelhouse, enough that past owners have had everything from libraries to laboratories to a gladiator-training arena to a dawg-fighting pit inside.

In many ways the Wheelhouse is similar to a gypsy varda wagon, though it is of course considerably bigger. A bench at the front will seat the driver and a guard or companion, with a door immediately behind them that leads inside. Railed walkways over the top of the massive wheels run down the outside of the living structure on either side to a back "deck" at the rear of the conveyance. Sages agree that nothing known has ever managed to damage any of the wagon's six chest high wheels, nor have any ever failed (though they are limited in the same ways as mundane wagon wheels, i.e. as regards to road surface and potentially bogging down, etc.). There is another door to the rear of the living structure, accessible from the back deck, and torch sconces along the railings all the way around. A small shuttered window sits a hands-width above the top of the rear door.

Danava never said how he came by the wagon, whether he obtained it adventuring or found it forgotten in some ruin. There are some who say it was a gift from the gawds, though this idea is typically mocked. All sages, scholars, pundits and wagon-experts agree that Danava himself lacked the enchanting skill necessary to create the thing. He was not even a real wizard, just a dilettante multi-classer that dabbled in cantrips and low-level charms.

It is said that originally he dubbed the Wheelhouse, Danava's Commodious Conveyance, but that moniker never really took. Seems everyone just liked the sound of Wryneck's Wheelhouse better. Danava, ever sensitive to the japes people made about his condition (the poor man's head was constantly leaning to the right and one shoulder was usually hunched up, as he suffered from severe torticollis), never came to terms with the name. Eventually, despite its great value and usefulness, he traded the Wheelhouse for a crystal ball, a pair of Eyes of the Eagle and a nice two-bedroom with a loft overlooking Incantatrix Tyrcella's Academy for Young Enchantresses. There he remained, content and untroubled, until the end of his days.

The Joyner brothers, Joyner Breakspear and Joyner Bitterspear, are the adventurers who owned in the Wheelhouse next. These two valiant fighting men were both of that rare and disturbing genuinely valorous breed. They used the thing to house their retainers, followers and henchmen, preferring to ride horses while in search of new heroics to perform. Sadly, they met their match one day in the form of a particularly nasty hydra and most of their company was slain. One Joyner was crippled, the other killed (history, unfortunately, does not tell us which was which). The Wheelhouse was abandoned high in a perilous mountain valley while the battered survivors made their way to a nearby city. When an attempt was made to recover the Wheelhouse the next Spring it was gone.

Once it left the ownership of the Joyners the Wheelhouse passed from one adventuring band to another, sometimes being kept for a few years, oftentimes for decades. The Tallhares flew their rabbit pennant from it for a while, as well as the Lernida's Fellowship, Manuel's Magocracy and at least two different incarnations of the band known as the Graycloaked Gyrovagues. These are but a few of the notable personages who rode in the Wheelhouse. There were others. Interestingly, on at least seven occasions it disappeared from the knowledge of sages

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altogether for lengthy periods of time.

Most recently the Wheelhouse is thought to have been the mobile home of one Woldor Frownharrow and his company, Frownharrow's Band. Woldor is thought to have departed civilized lands for broken and perilous country over two years ago in search of a particular medusa's lair. The reasons for his quest are unknown, and neither he nor the Wheelhouse have been seen since.

Wryneck's Wheelhouse contains 21 rooms that scholars are aware of (though there have been hints and rumors that other chambers and passages remain undiscovered within). The magic of its construction allows it to be pulled by just two beasts of sufficient strength (e.g. large mules, draft horses, oxen or war mooses), though some of its passed owners have yoked stranger creatures to it, including monsters and giants. The enchantment of the Wheelhouse's construction allows it to be pulled far more easily than one would think, given its size and tremendous weight. Looking at the thing, without knowing the magic that infuses it, one would think it would take a dray team of at least a half a dozen such beasts even to move it, but this is not the case.

For more specific details of the Wheelhouse, consult the LOOT section of the module.

Prelude to the Adventure

Wryneck's Wheelhouse is currently occupied by a Greater Medusa named Eunice Concupiscencia and her Grimlock minions. She holds the latter in thrall by force of personality, hints of seduction and the occasional threat of poisoning or just being eaten. Being blind, they are the perfect servants for a gal with a gaze attack, never having to worry about being turned to stone. They moved into the Wheelhouse approximately two years ago after the previous owners, an adventuring band called Frownharrow's Band, drove it up into the mountains where she previously dwelt and went seeking her lair. The company entered the caverns she called home and fought their way through her Grimlocks, but were summarily defeated by the Medusa herself (thanks in part to other monstrous creatures she was allied with).

After defeating Woldo Frownharrow's crew, Eunice and her surviving thralls (but mostly Eunice) found and were intrigued by the now-unoccupied conveyance. Though the medusa had never really considered an itinerant or nomadic lifestyle before, the sudden acquisition of a mobile home-on-wheels

certainly brought the possibility to light. In fact, it actually galvanized her to action. The thought of staying in her home cave and waiting on the next bloodthirsty group of humans and demi-humans to show up and try to take off her head (or show her a mirror) became anethma. She consulted her grimlock leadership on the matter and they (very wisely, from a self-preservation standpoint) agreed. After this little council thing moved swiftly. Within a fortnight they had recruited humanoids to act as drivers and guards and a pair of Ogres to act as dray beasts. After that they took to the road.

Life was good for a couple of years, though by necessity it was time spent on back roads and in out of the way places. Dwelling and traveling in the Wheelhouse was everything the Medusa had hoped it would be—right up until they got stuck in the mud ten days before the adventure begins. A storm had recently blown through the area and the Ogres left the road. Before they'd gotten halfway across the meadow they were completely bogged down.

The medusa and her cronies did not at first realize the extent of their predicament—not until the Ogres were eaten by the Meadow Kraken that lived in the clearing. Grimlocks sent out to investigate what had happened were also eaten.

Nothing could step down off the Wheelhouse in safety. It was dangerous to even walk out on the front deck or rear balcony, lest a tentacle come writhing up from beneath the soil and snatch them from the very doorway.

This is the situation as it stands when the PCs arrive. The Wheelhouse sits seemingly abandoned in the middle of the clearing, its wheels down nearly two feet in now-dried ruts. The grass has been torn up in places and the dirt disturbed, but the Meadow Kraken is currently quiescent (though this will not last once the players enter the clearing, particularly if they are on horseback...).

The Clearing

You emerge from the trees into a long meadow, an open, grass-covered field approximately two hundred yards across and a quarter of a mile long. A bowshot out into the clearing from where you stand is a huge wheelhouse, a massive wain built like a house on six wheels. There's something disturbing about the way the huge wagon is built. Nothing specific or overt, but something unsettling nonetheless. Perhaps it is the strange lines of its construction, or the way the pattern of the wood seems to form faces despite the paint upon it. It sits abandoned there in the meadow, ruts sunk down in the dirt from when the place was muddy from heavy rain but now dried. The big wheels, each nearly as tall as a man, must have gotten bogged down at some point. The wheels are down in dried ruts at least two feet deep, with dried earth heaped up around them. The grass has been torn up in wide swathes around it, like a giant went mad with a spade. The clearing is quiet, with only the songs of birds and the noise of a gently blowing breeze to disturb the afternoon.

It may take a few moments for the Meadow Kraken dwelling here in this field to notice the characters as they enter the clearing (2-8 rounds+1 rounds if they are walking, 1d4+1 if mounted). The big Land Squid has eaten very well over the last couple of weeks. Rather than rendering it lazy, it has come to expect occasional meals—it is well aware that there is more prey living in the wagon and has been keeping an eye on it for something or someone to emerge (this is why it is so close to the Wheelhouse when the PCs arrive). The Meadow Kraken has hunted humans, demi-humans and humanoids before. It remembers weapons and the hurtful effects of spells. Because of this it will seek to snatch riders off their mounts before attacking

the mounts themselves, though there is more meat to a horse or war moose than there is to a man (or a grell, or an orc for that matter). It will attack larger intruders first (i.e., half-orcs before gnomes). If it suffers significant damage from a specific attacker or weapon, it may attempt to disarm that opponent by grabbing his weapon with a tentacle and hurling it away.

Meadow Kraken (1)

HF 25; EP 4,500; Int 2 (Semi); AL N; AR 6; Move 3"; Burrow 12"; HD 9; HP 80; H; #AT 9 (8 tentacle and one beak); Damage 2-7 (tentacle) or 5-20 (beak); SOA Constriction; SOD Stinking Cloud, partial damage from blunt weapons; Magic Resistance: Standard; Lang: N/A; Hon: N/A; ML 16 (Foolhardy); TOP 40; Crit BSL; FF 20; Reference HOB Wryneck's Wheelhouse Critter Compendium.

Victims struck by a tentacle initially take 1d6+1 point of damage (per tentacle), but suffer 2-12 points of damage each round thereafter due to constriction. Humanoids constricted by a Meadow Kraken should roll on the following table:



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01-20%	left arm pinned
21-40%	right arm pinned
41-60%	no arms pinned, torso being crushed
61-80%	both arms pinned
81-100%	mouth and head covered by tentacle

The number of tentacles that can hit a victim is dependent upon size. A halfling can take one, a man up to three (depending on height), and a giant five or six. Each additional tentacle constricting a victim adds +20% to rolls on the table above.

The Meadow Kraken is not particularly smart, but it knows that sharp objects hurt. If a particular weapon is causing it significant distress, it may decide to remove it from the fight by disarming the person wielding it. Treat this as a base Disarm skill of 40%. For each tentacle it does not attack with normally the round it attempts a disarm, add 10% to this skill level. If the attempt is successful the creature will hurl the offending weapon away (5d20 feet + 5' per 5 full points by which the skill check succeeded) in a random direction.

Constricted characters are able to fight, but are limited by the Kraken's grasp upon them. With one arm free, the victim strikes at a -3 to hit; with both arms free, -1. A tentacle can be severed if it takes 10 or more points of damage. Meadow Kraken tentacles take half damage from blunt or smashing weapons such as hammers or maces. Such attacks directed against the creature's body will wound it normally.

If four or more of its tentacles are severed, the monster is 50% likely to go into a frenzy, suffering a -2 to hit but increasing damage to 1d10+1 (tentacle bludgeon) and 5-30 (bite). Meadow Kraken in a frenzy will typically turn any squeeze-victims loose to flail away at their opponents with their tentacles (and snap at them with their beak).

If the creature does not go into a frenzy, it is 90% likely to release a noxious mist (treat as a Stinking Cloud) to cover its retreat and burrow away.

If characters investigate the area around the wagon before trying to gain entry, they will find numerous footprints dried in the grass and mud surrounding it. Most are of bare feet (grimlocks), a few in boots (half-orcs) and two really big sets (the ogres). PCs with some sort of tracking skill should be able to determine that there were at least two different fights immediately adjacent to the wagon. They may also find where one poor blind grimlock ran for the

treeline and actually almost made it before getting drug beneath the sod and devoured.

The Wheelhouse

Note: There are two ways to enter the Wheelhouse, either through the front and rear doors or the trapdoor beneath. If players choose to enter through the aft (rear) doors, go to encounter are #1. The front is encounter area #2 and the trapdoor leads to area #4.

Inside the Wheelhouse things are far sturdier than a normal dwelling or vehicle would usually be, primarily due to the magical nature of its construction (but also because of good old-fashioned superior workmanship). The floors and walls are harder and doors are more difficult to force (-2 to bend bars/lift gates type rolls). In addition, the doors are better fitted than what one would typically find, even in an expensive dwelling of superior craftsmanship. As a result, it is very difficult to hear even loud noises at any distance if separated by multiple doors. This may work to the players' advantage, though they may not realize it, as Grimlocks in one part of the Wheelhouse may very well not hear combat undertaken by their fellows on the far side.

Before turning players loose to go stomping around the Wheelhouse, hacking and looting and carrying on, it would be wise for the GM to familiarize himself with where the main villainess or assorted "Blind Berserkers" tend to loiter and rack out. This will prevent any inconsistencies (such as characters investigating the dead end at area 13, for instance, without attracting the attention of the nogoodniks in area 14). Note that Eunice, to her underlings' chagrin, is a bit of neat freak, and makes them bathe frequently. This and the fact that the interior of the Wheelhouse is so clean make it impossible for them to utilize their normal pseudo-invisibility.

Note: Any time a Grimlock is killed, it can be dissected (so to speak) for loot. According to the HOB III, p. 109, Grimlock teeth can be used for a Shatter spell, increasing the area of effect to a 5-foot radius. Grimlock hair, once properly cleaned, is also apparently good for wigs and is worth 1gp per head. This will not be repeated in the Potential Yield sections of the various encounter areas of the module, but does hold true throughout.

There are a total of 25 Grimlocks in the Wheelhouse, 21 of them normal, 2 leaders and 2 so-called "champions". The entire gang, with the

exception of the cook, carries battleaxes. There are no females—Eunice doesn't like "girl talk". This has, as might be expected, created some additional stressors. If there are females in a party of PCs they fight, all Grimlocks will receive a +1 to their attacks (+2 if the females are wearing perfume or use herbal shampoo). The Grimlocks are led by Horace, Eunice's 'top dawg'. He is backed up by Toby and Berthold, his two sergeants. Emruld, Eunice's personal Grimlock chef, rarely interacts with his fellows, preferring to experiment with different spices and try new recipes for his mistress.

Eunice's Petrified Victims

Eunice Concupiscencia is no dummy, despite having snakes for hair. Though she's curvaceous, she's no "sugar and spice and everything nice" type "lady" but is vindictive, wicked and sadistic. She has painstakingly taken measures to ensure that her death (should it come at the hands of adventurers) will not go unavenged. The medusa realized early on that if her lair was invaded by PCs, it would not be long before they determined that there was a medusa, basilisk or other petrifying-type monster inside. All the different statues herein could lead them to conclude nothing else.

No point trying to hide it. Better to embrace it and make a trap out of their conclusions.

Eunice knows that if her heart is cut out, all of her victims will return to their normal, living state. She also knows that any adventurers worth their salt will be aware of this. So she came up with a plan. Scattered throughout the Wheelhouse are the petrified remains of her past victims. Some of these are character types. Some of them are monsters or predatory creatures.

Eunice, who is a talented sculptor and clayworker, has very carefully added layers of clay to the latter creatures, typically around the neck or other vulnerable places. After years of practice, she is able now to work, sand and tint the clay so that it matches the petrified stone virtually without discrepancy. She uses this added thickness to create the false impression of mortal wounds "inflicted" upon the stone, in order to reduce or eliminate the perception that the petrified monsters will be a threat if they are returned to normal. Characters who see such "statues" and the wounds they bear will in all but the rarest of cases be led to the virtually inescapable conclusion that the monsters will die immediately should stone become

flesh and blood.

PCs will have a 1 in 20 chance of noticing something awry when they see a petrified creature. PCs who actively and specifically investigate an individual petrified predator for whatever reason has a 1 in 10 chance of noticing Eunice's alteration. Those who have some kind of sculpting or clayworking skill have a slightly better chance (1 in 8). Otherwise it will be clear to the PCs that they need not worry about the assorted creatures scattered throughout the Wheelhouse being a threat if they decide to cut Eunice's heart out.

As for the various PC type statues who adorn various Wheelhouse rooms—they too have been altered. All of them actually do have mortal wounds inflicted upon them. Typically this takes the form of rock being chipped away from their neck, in effect giving them a cut throat should they be returned to flesh. These wounds have been dressed with clay and rock fragments, however, utilizing every bit of her craft and artifice, in order to disguise the wounds they bear.

In other words, PCs adventuring through the Wheelhouse will hopefully come to the conclusion that cutting Eunice's heart out will return all the character's to life and cause the deaths of all the other creatures. Though the nature of these wounds is not specifically articulated in each encounter area, you should describe things to them as a matter of course each time, i.e., something like:

Standing against the wall here is another statue—this one is some kind of big, mean-looking dawg. Obviously whatever has been petrifying these different creatures has been busy! Here stands what appears to be a particularly large specimen of Yeth Hound. Again, as in other creatures you've seen, someone has gone to great lengths to ensure that the creature will never again be a threat. Chips of stone have been chiseled away from the Yeth Hound's neck and chest—if this creature was ever returned to flesh, it would bleed out from horrible wounds in just moments.

You know, if they really think it through

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(and you, the GM, should be careful to not steer them away from this conclusion, though you must remain noncommittal), they might even come to the conclusion that they can reap experience points from the death of these monsters—after all, by cutting the medusa's heart out they are returning them to flesh, thereby causing their deaths (albeit from wounds they did not inflict). If they do come to this conclusion, they are playing right into your hands. *snicker* Greedy XP-sucking bastards. This could be your best player smackdown yet. Heh heh heh.

Petrified monsters (or folk that have been left undamaged) inside the Wheelhouse include 3 Spit Vipers (area 2), a Yeth Hound (area 8), 2 Eblis (Vile Storkmen) (area 5), a Giant Jumping Spider (area 4), a Vent Squawler (area 9), a thug halfling assassin/berserker and a half-ogre berserker (the latter two both in area 6). She'd originally intended to treat these latter two like she did all the other PC types, but decided that their particular skills and alignments would make them effective tools of her posthumous revenge.

Among the PC types gathering dust in the Wheelhouse are a gnome illusionist (area 2), a human fighter, a grel ranger, a grel fighter, an elven fighter-mage archer, a human bard and a half-orc paladin (all in area 6). Because of her not-so-tender ministrations, one of these people can be returned to "life" barring some kind of serious epiphany on the part of your players.

Wandering Monsters

Note: Use the stats from the area mentioned for creatures indicated as originating from a particular area.

Encounters occur on 1 in 12 ("1" on d12). Check every three (3) turns. Roll a d8 to determine the encounter. Some encounters cannot be repeated (as will be indicated in description).

1. 2 Grimlocks from area 3 on a mission for Horace. If they don't return within two turns, another pair will come looking for them. If that pair fails to return, another three, led by Toby, will come looking for them. If they fail to return, Horace will lead the remainder of his troops to the armory, marshal the grimlocks there, and start checking every room

in the Wheelhouse systematically looking for intruders (one time only).

2. 2 Grimlocks from area 3 out wandering around. They could be gone for a day or so before being missed.
3. 2 Grimlocks from area 13 walking back to their quarters in #10. They won't be missed.
4. Emruld, from area 9, looking for someone to taste his soup (one time only).
5. 1—2 Vent Squawlers

There are 2 Vent Squawlers living in the Wheelhouse, a pair of spinster sister females nesting in the ventilation system. They don't care for the Grimlocks, and do what they can to annoy them (they actually killed one once), but the Blind Berserkers have yet to get around to cleaning them out (once or twice only, until both have been exterminated).

Vent Squawlers (2 total)

HF 8; EP 270; Int 9 (Average); AL NE; AR 4; Move 9", 12" Climb; HD 3+ 2; HP 35, 37; Size: S; #AT 3; Damage 1-4/1-4/1-4; SOA Squeal; SOD Dodging missiles; Magic Resistance: Standard; ML 12 (Confident); TOP 18; Crit BSL; FF 4; Reference HOB VIII p. 61. Spells requiring a verbal component have a 10% chance of failure for each Squawler present; on their home turf treat as AR 2 vs. missile attacks. Spells that strike as missiles weapons, such as Magic Missile or Fireball, give the creature a special saving throw versus spell. If the creature makes the roll, it takes no damage, having ducked around a corner at the last second.

HPs	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□□□□
	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□□□□	
HPs	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□□□□
	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□□□□	□□

6. 3—12 Fleshpeckers (after blood has been spilled inside the Wheelhouse only), attracted to the smell of the carnage wrought inside. Perhaps a door was incompletely closed behind the PCs...they are inside now, looking for prey. HF 0; EP 15; Int 2 (Semi); AL NE; AR 5; Move 15" Fly (B); HD 1d6+2 hit points; HP varies; Size: T; #AT 1; Damage 1-4; SOA Skull Poke; SOD None; Magic Resistance: Standard; ML 7 (Hesitant); TOP varies; Crit BSL; FF varies; Reference HOB VIII p. 38. Fleshpeckers attack warm-blooded mammalian prey en masse, swarming over their target from every direction (+2 to hit from the side, +4 from behind). On a roll of natural 20, the Fleshpecker has poked the victims skull, causing the victim such intense pain that he must make a Constitution check or fall to the ground unconscious for 1-4 turns. The wound from a Skull Poke is fatal in 2 turns if untreated. Fleshpecker feathers can be sold for 5 sp/bird.
7. 2 Grimlocks from area 13 out wandering around. They could be gone for a day or so before being missed.
8. 1 Grimlock from area 11 running an errand for Eunice. If he is gone for more than an hour she will begin to suspect something bad has happened. (Once only.)

1. The Aft Balcony and Rear Door

Traps: Two (3), see description

Encounter: None

Potential Yield:

- ☐ Figuring out how to open door (EPV=25)
- ☐ Avoiding/Disarming Fear Gas Trap

(EPV=15)

- ☐ Avoiding Glyph of Warding (EPV=10)
- ☐ Avoiding Symbol of Discord (EPV=25)

The window above the door opens into area #5. It is 1' in diameter and made of glassteel—however, it is frosted on the outside and cannot be looked through.

There is a balcony of sorts projecting out the back of the wagon here, perhaps two paces deep and three wide. It appears that you could walk from the balcony around and along to sides

to reach the driver's bench without ever setting foot on the ground. Recessed back behind the overhanging roof is a single door with, oddly, two doorhandles—one on each side. The door is painted blue and despite the fact that the wain has evidently been abandoned for months if not years, none of the paint appears to have suffered from the attentions of sun or weather. In fact, the entire vehicle appears to be undamaged or worn in any way. Even the gilt remains polished. A short ladder drops from this 'balcony' to a couple of feet off the ground, with a hinged gate set in the half-wall that bounds the balcony. There are two fanciful wooden gargoyles mounted to either side of the doorway, each holding a dangling lantern in its hands. Each doorhandle appears to wrought to resemble some kind of bird of prey. There is a small round window high above the door.

The rear door to Wryneck's Wheelhouse is enchanted to open one of two ways. The first is to open with the left hand door-handle. Turning and pulling this one will open up into the "normal" back of the wagon—just a large, bare rectangular room, 10' wide and 20' long. If this is the doorhandle the players choose, read the following description.

Beyond the door is a simple chamber, virtually unadorned and without furnishings. Another door lies on the far end of the large room, presumably opening out onto the driver's bench in the front of the wagon. There are a pair of empty crates along the left wall and a mouldering pallet of moth-eaten blankets along the right. Otherwise the wain is completely empty.

The second method of entering the Wheelhouse is the manner by which the extra-dimensional chambers may be reached. This doorknob is magically locked. It cannot be turned without first knocking three times upon the door. Knocking below the handle with the left hand while grasping the handle with the right hand will unlock it and the door will swing open. Knocking above the handle with either hand will unlock it, but will trigger a trap when the door is opened. The gas is colorless and odorless, and will fill the entire balcony area within one round (including the first five feet of the

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passageway beyond).

☞ **Trap:** Doorhandle trap. Location: Rear door of the Wheelhouse, right doorhandle. Effect: fear-causing gas released from the mouths of the lantern gargoyles. Trigger: opening door improperly. Causes fear as the 4TH level Fear spell. Save vs. poison or run away at top speed for 2—8 turns. The gas will dissipate within a few rounds, sooner if there is a breeze or wind blowing. This trap is enchanted to reset 24 hours after it is triggered.

The door cannot be forced with a Knock spell, though it could be battered down or rammed open. Attempts to gain entry by brute force will activate a second trap in the floor of the balcony (in addition to the gas trap above, which will also activate).

☞ **Trap:** Floor glyph. Location: balcony floor at the rear of the Wheelhouse. Effect: Glyph of Warding (10d4) electrical damage. Trigger: Attempting to break through or force the door with brute strength or ram-like implement. This Glyph is enchanted to reset 24 hours after it is triggered.

Note to the GM: As with the front door to the Wheelhouse (q.v.), if you really want to screw with your players, or if they're getting sassy with you, let them find the door open from the left side into the bare room. Let them try to figure out that they'll need to close the door and reopen it from the right side. Throw in a description of some leaves that have blown inside, and maybe a hornet's nest built on the ceiling.

If the players manage to get the door and get inside, read them the following description.

Beyond the blue door lies a brief set of stairs climbing five steps up to a hallway. The hallway proceeds another ten feet and then opens into some kind of chamber. The walls of this hallway are polished teak and appear to have been recently cleaned. The steps are also wood. A large woven mat lies on the floor between you and the steps. It reads WELCOME, PLEASE WIPE YOUR BOOTS in four different languages.

The mat is just what it appears to be—a welcome mat, with words written on it in the Common, Gnome, Dwarf and Elf tongues.

☞ **Trap:** Mat Symbol. Location: on the Welcome Mat. Effect: Symbol of Discord. Trigger: Walking past the welcome mat without wiping boots (note: only characters in wearing boots can trigger this trap; those in shoes, slipper, sandals, etc., will not set it off). All characters within 25' are affected and immediately fall to loud bickering and arguing; there is a 50% chance of creatures of different alignments coming to blows. The bickering will last for 5d4 rounds, the fighting for 2d4 rounds. This Symbol is enchanted to reset 24 hours after it is triggered.

2. The Driver's Bench & Front Door

Traps: Two (3), see description

Encounter: None

Potential Yield:

☐ Figuring out how to open door (EPV=25)

☐ Avoiding/Disarming Symbol of Stunning

Trap (EPV=15)

☐ Avoiding Glyph of Warding (EPV=10)

The driver's bench of this massive wain is fittingly wide—three men could set upon it side by side and not crowd one another. The curtained doorway behind them looks to have windows of real glass. On either side of the cushioned seat is a walkway running the length of the wain, so that a man could walk from front to back without ever setting foot on the ground. The roof projects forward and out here so that the anyone sitting or even standing here would be shaded from the sun or the rain, though they would have to venture into the open to travel the walk along the sides. An ornate halfwall lines the flank walk on either side, high enough and thick enough that a man could stand behind them and be guarded from arrow or spearthrust to his waist. A crossbowman could loose his quarrel and kneel down behind to rewind his weapon in safety. Though the wagon has obviously sat in this clearing unmoving for quite some time, and from the lines of its construction is surely more than a hundred years old, all of its paint and gilt and ornamentation is as undiminished as the day it was first built. The doorhandle

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is crafted to look like a fierce bird of prey with its wings outspread. There is a small round window high above the door.

The front door to Wryneck's Wheelhouse lies one step up above the driver's bench, so that an intruder must first mount the driver's dais and get past him and any guards who might be with him before reaching it. The door is enchanted to open one of two ways. The first is to turn the doorhandle clockwise, with the right hand. Turning it and pushing the door inwards in this fashion will open up into the "normal" back of the wagon—just a large, bare rectangular room, 10' wide and 20' long. If this is the doorhandle the players choose, read the following description.

Beyond the door is a simple chamber, virtually unadorned and without furnishings. Another door lies on the far end of the large room, presumably opening out onto the balcony at the rear of the wagon. There are a pair of empty crates along the left wall and a mouldering pallet of moth-eaten blankets along the right. Otherwise the wain is completely empty.

The second method of entering the Wheelhouse through the front door is the manner by which the magical (i.e. extra-dimensional) interior is reached. To do so thusly requires that the doorhandle be turned counterclockwise with the left hand after first knocking three times with the right fist. It will take a great effort to turn the handle counterclockwise if the door is knocked upon in this fashion (successful bend bars/lift gates attempt). If the door is successfully opened this way, a trap will be triggered, activating a Symbol of Stunning. The Symbol will affect everyone on the front dais or immediately adjacent to the front end of the wagon.

☞ **Trap:** Doorhandle trap. Location: Front door of the Wheelhouse, above the door. Effect: Symbol of Stunning affects one or more creatures whose hit



points do not exceed 160, leaving them stunning them and leaving them reeling for 3d4 rounds.

The door cannot be forced with a Knock spell, though it could be battered down or rammed open. Attempts to gain entry by brute force will activate a second trap, also on the wall above the door (in addition to the symbol trap above, which will activate simultaneously).

☞ **Trap:** Wall glyph. Location: front wall of the Wheelhouse adjacent to the front door. Effect: Glyph of Warding (10d4) cold damage. Trigger: Attempting to break through or force the door with brute strength or ram-like implement.

Note to the GM: As with the back door of the Wheelhouse (q.v.), if you feel it appropriate to really mess with your players, or if they've been sassy enough to deserve some kind of subtle smackdown, let them find the door open into the bare room. Let them try to figure out that they'll need to close the door and reopen it the right way. Throw in a description of detritus or animal scat within, and maybe a swallow's

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nest built above the doorway on the inside.

If the players manage to open the door properly, read them the following description.

Beyond the front door lie five narrow steps climbing up to into a short hallway. The hallway proceeds another ten feet and then opens into what looks from here like a very large chamber. The walls of the hallway are polished teak and appear to have been recently cleaned. The steps are also wood and appear to have some kind of non-stick adhesive pads placed on them to keep someone climbing the stairs from slipping.

The window above the door opens into area #4. It is 1' in diameter and made of glassteel—however, it is frosted on the outside and cannot be looked through.

3. The Great Hall

Traps:

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

□ Slaying Grimlocks (EPV = 65 each)

□ Slaying Toby, Grimlock Sergeant (EPV=120)

□ Slaying Horace (Grimlock Champion) (EPV=200)

□ Grimlock teeth and hair.

□ Horace's magic helmet

□ Battle-axes (12) (GPV = 5 each)

The hallway ends after just a few paces in an open doorway leading into a huge pillared chamber. This vast hall is wide enough that a strong man could barely hurl a spear from one wall to the other, and more than three times as long—an arrow loosed from one end would be halfway through its flight when it struck the other. Twelve mighty stone columns support a ceiling that arches at least twenty feet overhead, each one sporting torch sconces about its trunk. You have only just begun to take all this in when an bellow of

rage reverberates throughout the chamber, echoed by other maddened, blood-chilling shouts. A band of gray, eyeless humanoids appears from the shadows and behind several of the far columns, belling out their hoarse challenges like mindless hounds and hurl themselves towards you. They are carrying battle-axes and wearing ragged, if oddly clean, clothing, and foaming at the mouth.

Horace, Eunice's Grimlock leader (she calls him her 'top dawg') is in the Great Hall along with nearly a dozen of his cronies. Grimlocks are blind and immune to spells that affect vision, such as Invisibility, Darkness, Phantasmal Force and the like. They have usually have an effective "visual range" of 20', but the amount of time they've spent in the Wheelhouse and their familiarity with the environment extends this range to 35' within the confines of the Wheelhouse. In this particular chamber, where they spend almost



all their time, even just the sudden introduction of a breeze from outside by the door opening, or the smell of intruders, provoke their reaction. At least two normal Grimlocks will stay close by Horace wherever he goes, attacking whatever opponent he attacks. At least two others will remain with Toby, Horace's lieutenant.

Note that Horace is wearing Mortimer's Loud-Assed Sallet (q.v.)

There is a petrified gnome in a phrygian cap standing against the third pillar from the left on the bottom row of columns. It is placed so as to be looking across at the fourth pillar from the left (opposite the hallway leading in from the rear door). At the base of that pillar are a trio of petrified Spit Vipers, their coils piled on top of one another. They have been positioned so that they are staring back at the gnome.

Grimlocks (10)

HF 3; EP 65; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 5; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 19, 21, 22, 24, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32; SZ M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 14 (Brave); TOP 12; Crit BSL; FF 5; Reference HOB III p. 108.

Grimlock, Leader (Toby, Horace's Sergeant) (1)

HF 4; EP 120; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 4; Move 12"; HD 3; HP 39; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); +2 to hit/+4 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 15 (Daring); TOP 21; Crit BSL; FF 6; Reference HOB III p. 108.

Grimlock, Champion (Horace, Eunice's Top Dawg) (1)

HF 6; EP 200; Int 13 (Very); AL NE; AR 0 [2] (DEX and magic helmet); Move 12"; HD 5; HP 66; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battleaxe 2d4); +3 to hit/+6 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; STR 18/60; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa, Orc; Hon: Average; ML 18 (Resolved); TOP 33; Crit BSL; FF 10 (magic helmet); Reference HOB III p. 108.

4. The Peer-ahead Post and Lower Hatch

Traps:

Encounter: Tin Soldiers (3) (Possibly)

Potential Yield:

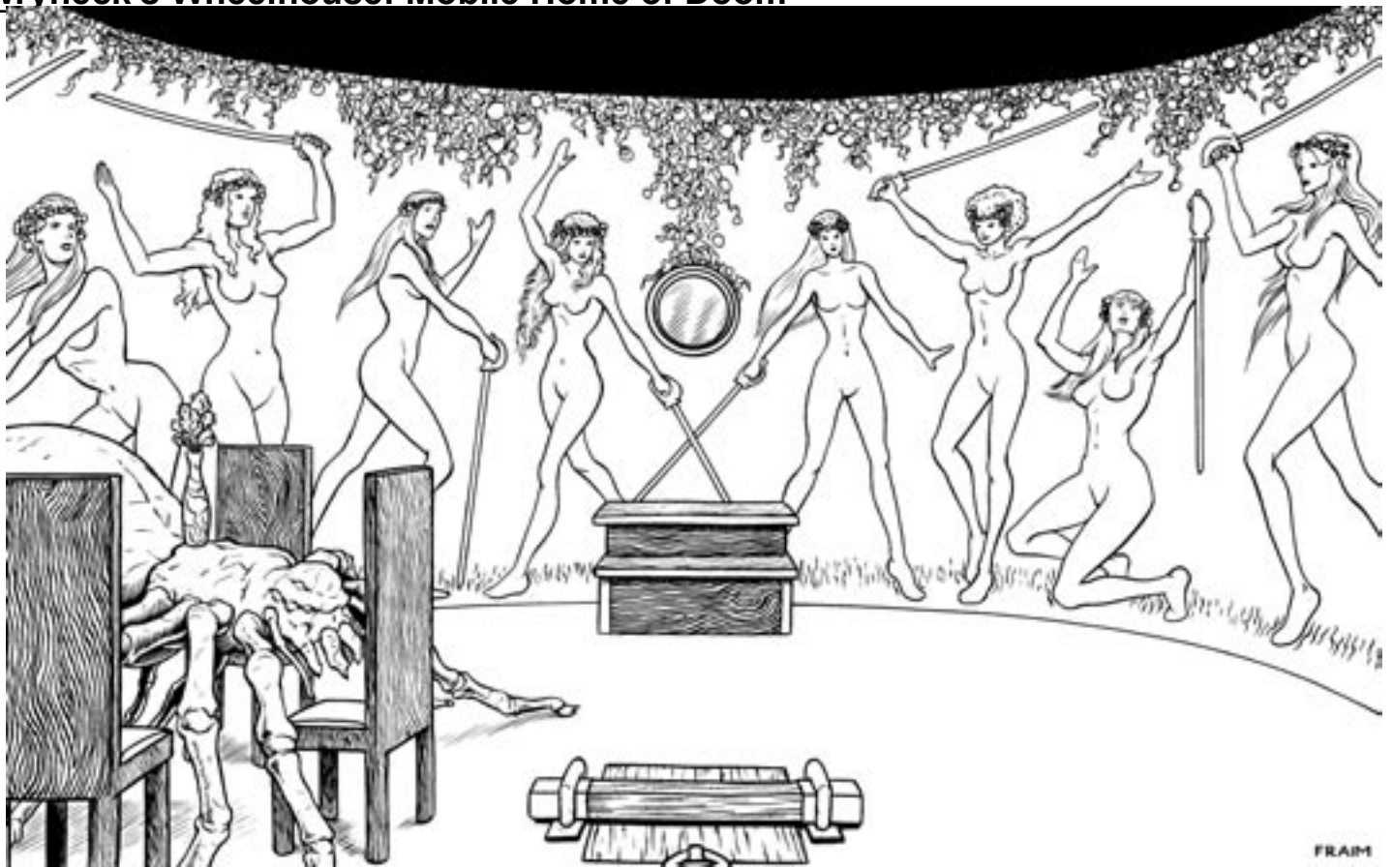
□ "Slaying" Tin Soldiers (if they are provoked into attacking)

This is a bare round room with just one unusual feature. Against the curvature of the wall to your left stands and immense stone spider, its back as high as a man's waist and as big around as a dinner table. In fact, that seems to be sort of the way it is being used—as a table. Three chairs are pulled up to it and a flower vase sits in the middle of its back. Immediately opposite the doorway through which you entered is a small, circular window two-thirds of the way up the wall. A high, bench-like step is beneath this window so that someone standing upon it can look out the window without effort. Evenly spaced around the circumference of the room are several bas relief carvings of tall, slender women bearing swords and wearing crowns of roses and other flowers. There are at total of twenty of the nude, willowy swordswomen. In the floor, with a wooden bar as thick as a man's arm across it, is what appears to be a trapdoor.

This room was built primarily as a storage place, but also as a watchpost. Standing on the shelf beneath the window here, a sentry or just a bored traveler can look out over the driver's head and help keep any eye out for any dangers up ahead. If the Wheelhouse were parked for the night, this room makes a perfect location for a guard to stand watch safely inside. Looking out the window in the wall here provides a reasonably good view of what lies before the Wheelhouse, though not as good as the one that looks out behind (about a seventy degree field of view). The window is glassteel and cannot be opened. It is to look through, not shoot or cast spells.

The trapdoor in the floor opens upward (into the room, rather than outside), allowing someone to drop through the floor and onto the ground. If someone were to exit the Wheelhouse in this fashion they would find themselves two-thirds of the way between the axles of the front and center sets of wheels, centered halfway between the two sides.

The swordswomen on the walls were put



there in the hopes of fooling intruders into believing the room to be defended Golem Guardians. In reality, the room is guarded by a trio of unusually small Tin Soldiers that will only take action if the trapdoor is forced from below to gain entry to the Wheelhouse (such as by force or a Knock spell). The Tin Soldiers are underneath the shelf beneath the window, concealed in a hidden compartment.

The trapdoor is clearly visible within the Wheelhouse. No attempt has been made to conceal or trap it from the inside. However, from the outside beneath it should be treated as a secret door. Opening the secret trapdoor from below is difficult. It is locked with a special-made tumbler lock of gnomish manufacture (-10% to Pick Lock attempts), and can be barred from the inside as mentioned above. The lock is trapped with a poison needle trap (though the poison has long since dried up and become useless, though it could be retreated), -5% to Detect Trap attempts. If characters manage to locate the secret door from below and employ some sort of breaching device or magic to gain entrance, the first one whose head appears through the door will be met with by the little swords of the three Tin Soldiers. If the players somehow manage to move the bar (such as with Telekinesis, assuming they somehow figure out that it

is there) and pick the lock, their entrance will not be interpreted as an intrusion and the Tin Soldiers will leave them alone.

The stone spider is a petrified Giant Jumping Spider (if returned to life, treat as a Huge Spider, solitary, no web movement but can jump 18", morale 16).

The Tin Soldiers are painted to appear wooden. Their painted-on mail and surcoats are blue and green respectively, with black belts, baldrics, jackboots and gauntlets. Each of them is painted with so as to appear bald, in a cabasset helm, and to have a steel-grey mustache and pointed chinbeard. The sigil on their breast, and on the peak of their helms, is a perched owl with amber eyes.

Tin Soldiers (3)

HF 9; EP 420; Int 0 (Non); AL N; AR 5; Move 8"; HD 5; HP 48 each; SZ S (4' tall); #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SOA None; SOD Toxic when melted, painted; Magic Resistance Immune to most spells; ML 20 (Fanatic); TOP N/A; Crit BSL; FF N/A; Reference HOB VIII p. 10.

Tin soldiers are immune to most spells but take double damage from heat-related spells and save against them at -2. The fumes of a melting Tin soldier

can be toxic; victims within 10' of a Tin Soldier that has suffered at least 5 points of fire damage must save vs. poison or suffer as if afflicted by a Stinking Cloud spell for 1-3 rounds.

5. The Watch-behind Post and Hidden Library

Traps: Several (all on various books and scrolls on the shelves)

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

- Numerous books and scrolls (see below)
- Map of Wryneck's Wheelhouse

A round room lined with bookshelves, there is gap in the shelves on the wall directly opposite the doorway. There is a small, circular window two-thirds of the way up the wall in the center of this gap. A high, bench-like step is beneath this window so that someone standing upon it can look out the window without effort. Flanking this single, large step are a pair of statues of wicked looking birds, each standing nearly five feet high, with arm-like wings ending in feathers like fingers. They have been placed here as though standing guard over the window.

Much like area #4 above, this room is another place from which a sentry can keep an eye on what's going on outside. Looking out the window in the wall here provides a good view to the rear of the Wheelhouse (about a one hundred degree field of view). This is an excellent position to post someone if there are concerns that the Wheelhouse is being followed, or if there are worries that the people inside the Wheelhouse are being hunted or stalked. The window is glassteel and cannot be opened. It is to look through, not shoot or cast spells.

The two petrified bird creatures are Eblis, also known as Vile Storkmen.

Though the shelves are by no means full, there are a large number of books and scrolls on the shelves and in pigeon-holes here. These works (21 volumes and 6 scrolls cover a plethora of topics, including academic works of fictional stories and non-fiction reports. Among the books and rolls of parchment

are the following. Some of these volumes or scrolls are protected by a magical warding or trap. These are indicated with a red asterisk (*), with an explanation following the item description. (Note: the following are just samples of what could be found here; the GM should feel free to add to or modify this list at his discretion.) The GM is reminded to familiarize himself with the scroll rules as detailed in Appendix B of the GMG, p. 225. All of the scrolls in the pigeon-holes of the library here are wrapped and tied shut with a length of tasseled silk cord and tucked within a stout leather scroll tube that has a flap cover one end and a loop at the top whereby the tube can be slung from a belt.

📖 *Strings of the Fairer Seasons*, a historical treatise on the a century's worth of elven music; 120 pages no larger than a woman's hand, with leaf-shaped pages and covers. Cover is hammered green metal with gold characters. Written in elvish, by R. Flothdor.

📖 *For the Love of Burning Them All**, an extraordinary tome that discusses the ins and outs of numerous flame spells, particularly all the different varieties of Fireball spells (and including some no one still alive has ever heard of).

Though the book does not hold any of the spells themselves, there is a lot to be learned by reading it. For instance, thoroughly perusing chapter seven and practicing the somatic techniques discussed therein will allow a caster to effectly double the duration of a Flame Chase spell; likewise a dedicated study of chapter two will double the duration of a caster's Affect Normal Fires or Fireflow spells. Chapter eleven discusses, among other things, how to increase the range of a Sidewinder Fireball to 120' per level of the caster (has to do with the verbal nuances of the spoken part of the spell) and to add a sort of Magic Mouth effect to the Sidewinder Fireball's culmination (says "Got ya, ha ha!" in a mocking, nasal tone of voice reminiscent of a school yard bully).

Most significantly however, reading the book in its entirety and devoting at least two months to interpreting it (two months of study without any other significant mental activity, distraction or serious physical endeavors) will

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allow a mage to cut the casting time of all flame-based spells down by 1 segment, and to add 1d6 of damage to all Fireball spells total damage, regardless of spell or caster level.

Written in ink of liquified fire elemental mixed with the ash from the corpse of a cremated pyromancer and bound in covers of Nid'Hogg scales, this book was written by Fwaygo the Ill-Considered. Fwaygo, as those who read the news broadsheets and listen to town cryers are well aware, was the mage who deployed a Maximus Fireball against the Purulent Wound tribe of Bottomland Orcs as they made their way through Checkasa Glade nearly a century ago. This resulted in the utter destruction of nearly twenty score of the creatures, but also burned forty square miles of trees to the ground (including seven treants, eleven dryads, six quickwoods (who should have been immune), four druids, a ranger, a pair of swanmays and an unknown number of elves and other tree-huggers. The fire burned so hot at its center that it was reputedly still too hot to walk through, and was still smoking, two years later.

Fwaygo the Ill-Considered turned out to be a sociopathic pyromaniac and was put to death a few years after the Checkasa Glade Incident, but his book remains a classic and much-sought after text. Rumors that certain druidic circles have a bounty placed upon the book and anyone that owns a copy remain unsubstantiated. (GPV=1,900) * Trapped with a Symbol of Insanity upon the cover triggered by opening the book up.

📖 *Bog Etiquette*, a study of common societal taboos, mores, manners and customs of bullywugs and lizard men. A thin tomb written in very fine print, reading this book will allow someone to carry on a conversation with the folks he's most likely to meet in a swamp without offending anyone. (GPV=5gp)

📖 *Ironhead's Iron Lads*, a novelization of the life and military victories of the gnomish general Allsybydis Ironhead. General Ironhead is best known for his domination of three different hobgoblin armies at the Battle of Four Standards (where he ruthlessly exterminated a

humanoid host once each day three days in a row) and his subjugation of the Xorn battalion sent against his dwarf allies at the Battle for Thunderfalls Mine. The writing quality is not the best, but it is required reading at several different military academies for its insight into the gnome's combined arms tactics and novel use of sergeant-illusionists on the battlefield. Worth at least 100gp on the general market, if taken to a large city with a major military academy or fighters kobar it could bring as much as 500gp. Author unknown.

▲ *Sesquipedalianism at its Finest*, a long (nearly 12' when unrolled to its complete length) scroll dictionary of really big, unusual or unnecessarily complex words. Includes such terms as deosculation, disvirginare, hagiography, euphonious and indumentum. Worth somewhere between 2 and 20gp to writers or scholars. By Shama of Pard.

▲ *The Word Curator's Lexicon for the Historically Verbose*, a sequel to the dictionary above (though nowhere nearly as long), this treatise contains two hundred words no longer commonly used in conversation. Contains such terms as bumwhush, sithcundman, gapesnest, and pissupprest. Also by Shama of Pard. Worth 1 to 10 gp unless sold as part of two-volume set with his other work, in which case the pair would probably bring around 50gp.

📖 *A Manual of Quickness of Action*, see GMG p. 259. Study of this unremarkable looking book contains a regimen of exercise and stretches that will enable a single reader to assimilate the text (after three days of uninterrupted study) and then practice the techniques therein. If this practice is performed faithfully and without distraction or significant other physical effort for one month, the character will gain one point of Dexterity. The manual will transform into a treatise on stretching (the musculature flexibility stretching regimen of the Gnoll monks of Barq-Hiislan, to be precise) immediately after reading, but the contents will be remembered long enough to perform the exercises if they are initiated immediately. Only after the month of prac-

tice is completed will the Dexterity bonus be received. (EPV=1,000) (GPV=15,000)

📖 *Against All Odds*, the story of Major Phil Ashby, a Royal Marine officer sent to Sierra Leone as a part of the UN peacekeeping efforts there. A gritty and compelling read offering a unique and interesting look at efforts to restore order to a country that was at one time rated as the worst place to live in the world.

♣ *Scroll of Rodnard's Red Letter Rejoinder*, a single copy of the spell and a brief explanation of how it would best be used to keep spell-books secure. (EPV=350) (GPV=1,000gp)

📖 *The Illustrated History of Clan ForgeClangor*, a massive tome detailing the first five centuries of the ForgeClangor dwarf clan. Not by any means an example of light reading, it would bring at least 250gp from a sage or scholar specializing in the history of dwarves or races of the under realms. The pages of this book, which weighs over a hundred pounds, are parchment-thin sheets of stone bound with covers of enameled steel. *Trapped with Runes of Eyeball Implosion (triggered when the book is opened.)

📖 *Gleaming Swords, Glittering Mail; the Story of Two Spears*, an unofficial history of the Joyner brothers (Joyner Breakspear and Joyner Bitterspear), two genuinely heroic soldiers whose exploits and deeds against evil creatures of all stripes have become legend. Written by Darno Allbright, a former henchman of the brothers who later became the mayor of his hometown and an author of note. (GPV 50gp)

📖 *Arms of Nemesis*, a murder mystery by Steven Saylor. One of several superb mysteries involving Geordanius the Finder, a must-read for gamers who like verisimilitude and accuracy in their historical fiction.

📖 *Little Vintners*, a whimsical look at several vintages preferred by halflings, and the halfling vintners who create them. (GPV=15gp)

♣ *Frownharrow's Stony Glare*, which is sim-

ply a slightly modified version of the Gaze Reflection spell. Frownharrow's Stony Glare lasts 1 turn, takes 2 rounds to cast and has no visual manifestation. Otherwise it is identical to Gaze Reflection. This spell is written at the bottom of the scroll, underneath a succinct but accurate explanation of the ecology and powers of medusae. (EPV=150) (GPV=450gp)

📖 *The Combatant's Guide to Proper Carnage*, an excellent and finely illustrated treatise on a variety of fighting techniques. Thorough study and practice of the tactics detailed herein will yield a +1d10% for each of the following skills—Press the Attack, Improved Charge, Disarm and Expert Disarm (the latter two skill bonuses received only when the skill is used against swords and similar edged weapons, which are the only kinds of weapons those particular chapters actually deal with). GPV=150gp. *Trapped with Sepia Snake Sigil.

📖 *Sinews of Sorcery; Getting the Most from your Bones*, a work on the finer points of Necromancy by the Carrionarch of Tull. Written by one of the acknowledged masters of the undead, whose Animate Dead spells are thought to be among the finest ever cast.

A mage reading and understanding this work will be able to create far more effective and lasting skeletons than normal. Animated skeletons (including the intelligent versions) he creates may roll substitute 1d6+2 in place of the normal 1d8 for each hit die, and clerics trying to turn them suffer a -1 penalty on the attempt. Damage they suffer from holy water is reduced from 2d8 to 1d6 as well. It is said that some high level mages, able to understand the most subtle (and abhorrent) intricacies of the techniques herein are able to create skeletons that regenerate the damage they suffer (even the most low-end ones, and the animated skeletons of animals as well).

This book, which is extremely hard to find, is considered a "must have" by professional necromancers. Note that certain churches, particularly those of the lawful good variety or those dedicated to the extirpation of undead, have proscribed this tome and have

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even mounted official expeditions to find and destroy remaining copies of it. GPV=1,850gp.

📖 *Pike Drill of Alton LaPeto*, a short, to-the-point illustrated guide to the proper use of pole-arms. Reading this book and practicing its movements to exhaustion will improve the reader's skill with the pike, halberd or ranseur to a level commensurate with specialization. Written by Condottiere Emeritus Alton "Hairy-Breeks" LaPeto, this book never received the attention it should have—its author was as better known for his flatulence than his skill-at-arms, a travesty of justice if ever there was one. GPV=150gp.

📖 *Iocus*, a blood red and puke green checkerboard book small enough to fit in a man's hand. Each page is high quality cotton containing jokes written in an elegant hand using blackberry ink. The quality of the jokes are such that if a reader recounts one of them to an audience, there is a 10% individual chance that each of those listening must save vs. spells or else suffer the effects of a Giggle cantrip. (GPV=40)

▲ *Map of Wryneck's Wheelhouse**, this is a well-executed and completely accurate rendering of the Wheelhouse, drawn to scale and complete (to include markings indicating secret doors). This map might bring a few gold from a scholar, but would be of far more value to those exploring (or owning) Wryneck's Wheelhouse. * Trapped with a Glyph of Warding (10d4 cold damage, triggered when the ribbon wrapped around scroll is undone) and Runes of Instantaneous Esophoria (triggered when the map is actually unrolled).

📖 *Master Anaakeki's Manual of Self Defense*, a large black book with gold silk pages. On the lacquered tortoise-shell cover is a human fist stenciled in real gold. Anyone besides the proper owner who opens the tome and begins reading will find themselves suddenly smitten by a phantasmal fist that manifests in the air between the reader's face and the book and begins pummeling. Damage from the attack (which occurs just the first round it is read

without permission) is 4d4. The range of the ghostly fist is just as far as the reader's face.

Legend has it that a traveler (probably a mage, or so one would think) was ambushed by a large war party of Ogres once many years ago. Master Anaakeki happened upon the man in these dire straits and leapt into the fray, delivering him from peril with naught but his fists. The book, which was later given the name it now bears, gave Master Anaakeki the book as a token of his appreciation.

The book is an embroidered treatise on various martial arts styles and assorted techniques designed to turn an attackers strength against him. A wizard reading the book has a 5% chance/point of intelligence of improving the spells Bash Face or Cloud of Pummeling Fists after reading it (he gets just one attempt to do so, this attempt applying to both spells). He must already know one or both spells to do so. This has the result of increasing the range of the former to a base of 20' (from 10') and the damage of the latter to 1d4+1. A monk or fighter type reading this has a 5% chance per (Intelligence + Wisdom/2) of adding +1 to unarmored armor rating vs. close-range non-missile physical attacks (such as a fist or a swung sword), with similar restrictions.

The book recognizes its "proper owner", if not given as a gift, by first socking a reader in the jaw and then allowing him to read at least an entire chapter. The book currently recognizes Manuel del Toro Verde, former Capitán Grande of the Manuel Magocracy as its rightful owner. Unfortunately, Manuel has been dead for about a century. (GPV=500)

📖 *Fendle Bickbock's Utterly Compleat Collection of Gnomish Rhyme*, is, much as the title explains, an exhaustive collection of notoriously bad gnomish poetry. Banned in numerous schools and bardic colleges for its general lack of metre and quality, the book is strangely coveted by those who can get their hands on it (gnomes in particular). The 50 page book was written to annoy bards and self-declared poetry experts. A sample of the poetry therein:

O wanderin' moon, o' glorious light; revealing the
little bats in the night;

Whisper, whisper little bat, how small you are and
also how fat;
You fly, but I hear no sound; is this 'cause I'm deaf
or because I'm 'neath the ground?

or,

Lithe little squirrel; without a care in the world.
Acorns at his forage; picks 'em up and puts 'em in
storage.
He spied an eagle overhead; clutched at his nuts and
he fled.

Madzo's Collection of General

Mage Knowledge, a self-important and bombastically written tome filled with what is essentially useless mage trivia. Among the topics with entire chapters devoted to them are the various materials that a wizard's hat can be made of, the regulation length of registered wands, proper pentagram-drawing etiquette, tips on befriending druids for help with the veterinary needs of familiars, the fifty most common names of familiars, how to read scrolls if you're missing an eye and other even less useful topics. Naturally, much of the trivia is incorrect and the book is not suggested material for proper mage instruction or reference.

However, chapter ten (which touches very briefly upon pixie-fairy magic and the nature of pixie-fairy tattoos) offers some surprising insight into the nature of skin-painting and various methods of tattooing (including that of the cyclopean aborigines of Bobbatush). Interestingly, there is a very good chance (80%) that a Painted Mage (see *Spellslinger's Guide to World Domination*, page 35) will pick up hints that will prevent him from having to roll on the Painted Mage Tattoo Effects Table (4G) when tattooing a 1ST or 2ND level spell (only).

Other than this effect, though, the book is pretty much full of useless, even banal information. (GPV=25)

 Digging Romsan: The Official Biography of Romsan Pitman, a short book describing the life and highly successful career of a half-elven wizard who made a very good living digging pit traps of various kinds. According to him (or at least according to his biography), this half-elf was the first one to ever dig the standard

pit trap, and the one who came up with all the nifty different variants thereof (such as those with spikes at the bottom, or filled with pit vipers). Says the author, "If you ever wondered who put that 10 foot wide, 10 foot across and 60 foot deep in the middle of the dungeon corridor—this book is for you. Find yourself dropped into one? Look into the corner—a fat werebear wench's weight in coins says the initials 'RP' will be there elegantly carved in the corner!" It is unclear whether the biographer is saying that Romsan Pitman designed, dug and placed every pit trap there is, or if he just came up with the idea, but one of those two things seems to be his main contention. According to the book, RP lived to a life of luxury until he reached his late nineties, whereupon he either got careless or his mind began to wander, because he fell into one of the sample pit traps dug in the floor of his showroom and broke his neck. (GPV=10)

 The Dedbonna Society's Field Guide to Noxious Plants, a well-written book useful to both novice and botanical expert alike. It is packed full of information of hundreds of different seemingly poisonous plants, detailing scores of herbal remedies, medicinal uses and healing extracts that can be drawn from them. A must have for a healer, alchemist or even druid's library (though druids rarely read), and an excellent quick reference for anyone else. It is written in the common tongue but contains reference to several different race-particular uses that some plants are put to (like Widows' Weed, which is an eye irritant to most creatures but is made into a bitter tea by elderly gnomes to ease joint pain). Aside from the alchemical applications, this is a superlative work for use in the accurate identification of poisonous, noxious or otherwise dangerous plants—it also contains some information that could be useful in dangerous botanical encounters (i.e. against Shambling Mounds, Whipweeds and the like). The book was compiled from various sources by A. GaheZhinke for the Dedbonna Society. (GPV=up to 155, depending upon where it is sold).

 Instruments and Implements of the Daw-

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*gsbreathers**, by Guhz Zunnd-I-eiht. A relatively simple book that discusses some of the sacrificial rituals and ceremonies of the Dawgsbreath tribe of goblins (a long vanished clan of interest primarily because of the relative skill of their shamans). The book goes into limited detail, but does talk about the assorted ceremonial tools, instruments and implements the goblins used in their rites, and contains several sketches both of these articles and a selection of the more noteworthy members of the tribe. It is actually written in Goblin (probably the reason it is so simplistic) on vellum, with tanned rawhide (the cover drawing and lettering is actually stamped into the leather). (GPV=10 gp, more to a goblin-lover or sage) Note; goblins would love to have this book, but they can't read and don't care to learn. * Trapped with a Glyph of Ice, creates a freezing blast of cold standing directly in front it and within 5', inflicts 1d6 +14 points of damage. Victim must save vs. spells or suffer full damage and be frozen in place for 1d4 rounds. Those who succeed take half damage but are not frozen at all.

▲ *Scroll of Missile Spells**, a long scroll containing several spells; three Magic Missiles, a Delayed Magic Missile, two Sidewinder Magic Missile, a Magic Missile of Skewering, a Snarchers Multi-Missile Smokevolley and a Snarcher's Corkscrewing Smoking Missile. (EPV=1600) (GPV=4800) * Trapped with a Glyph of Sniping (Strikes as 12TH level MU, +2 to hit, 3d6 +6 damage, inflicts a critical on 19 or 20, dissipates without effect on a 1).

📖 *(Untitled) Diary of Njombeh*, by Njombeh (no other information available). This ancient and poorly preserved collection of partially rotten and decomposed papyrus is the diary of six year old "Njombeh", last child-scribe to Emperor Xhozeh (his successor was murdered and the Empire destroyed after that). The diary chronicles the migration of what is only referred to as "The People," evidently a highly advanced but nomadic Imperialist society, several thousands of years ago. Unfortunately, due of the scribe's extreme youth, the poor

condition of the tome and the unknown origin of the language, reading this work is next to impossible.

If one can decipher the script, and somehow manage to fill in the import of those words that have rotted away, the text remains painful to read if only because of the abundant grammatical errors and disjointed style. Worse yet, instead of truly chronicling the adventure of his Emperor and people, the scribe tends to write of his mother, butterflies, food, and numerous other random subjects that have nothing to do with "The People's" quest. To the great majority, this confused collection of papyrus would be unworthy of fueling a fire, but to a very dedicated individual (one who has heard of Xhozeh's flight in legend, or has seen other scholarly references to the relics of The People) it could very well be priceless—hidden in the off-topic ramblings of the child author are clues to where Xhozeh hid his people's sizeable treasure during his migration, when they finally judged it too heavy to travel with.

Note: the language used by the child-scribe is no longer extant. Would-be translators must be very creative, as even magic cannot fill in words that rotted away centuries ago. (GPV=0, but contains excellent clues to a large trove of priceless enchanted relics if the document can be deciphered.)

6. The Fountain Chamber

Traps:

Encounter: Slobber Weird

Potential Yield:

- ☐ Slaying Slobber Weird (EPV=220)
- ☐ 4 gems of different value (see below)
- ☐ 305gp
- ☐ 4 useless scrolls

A broad set of marble stairs leads up from the great hall into another large room, though not nearly as the one you just came from. Upon the stairs, set up with evident care in order to display them to the best aesthetic effect, are several statues of humans, demi-humans and humanoids frozen in stone expressions of surprise, horror or (in one case) lust. It is like some



horrible tribute to petrifying monsters, or a ghoulish trophy display (or both). The hair stands up on the back of your neck as you see what has happened to the heroes and adventurers who have come before you. Doubtless they came here with high intentions, great hopes and certain of their own valor—are you any different? Will your fate be any different?

Standing one behind the other ranked up the left side are a human swordsman, a dwarf with an axe, a half-ogre with a spiked maul, a grel with an immense bow and, furthest up, what appears to be another grel with a blade. On the right side, opposite their petrified comrades, are (beginning with the closest poor bastard to you) a horrified mage, a noble elven archer (you can tell he's noble from the tiara around his head), a shorn-headed halfling and another human (this one with what looks to have been a wooden shield) and, lastly, another mailed human (though you can't see his features because the visor of his bascinet is down).

The little guy whose head has been shaved is thug halfling, 2ND /5TH level CE assassin/berserker. The half-ogre is actually a rather smallish half-ogre, also a CE berserker (6TH level) who lets the halfling do his thinking for him. The statue with the visor down was once a disfigured (but very competent) half-ogre paladin. The two berserkers have not been damaged in anyway. They have been left behind as part of Eunice's "I get the last hack" revenge plan.

Beyond the stair and its grisly sentries lies a huge room. The room is a great square, seventy feet or so to a side. It is almost completely filled in the center by a gigantic low-walled fountain. This fountain is at least fifty feet across, a dodecahedral construction surmounted in the center by a beautiful, larger-than-life statue of a Nereid or Nymph holding a large flask. Water spouts up from the center of the flask and from the gaping mouths of fishes carved to appear as though they are leaping up from the water. The pleasant noise of the water arcing up and splashing down into

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the water is somehow reassuring. Though the water is not as clear as one might wish it to be, it is by no means stagnant or too foul to drink. The walls of the twelve-sided fountain are over nearly chest high. The ceiling of the room is vaulted, rising to a height of twenty feet at its peak.

The water of this fountain is the home of a Slobber Weird, which Woldo Frownharrow (the previous owner of the Wheelhouse) had been intending to deal with for weeks when his band ran afoul of Eunice and her cronies and met their end. It will rise up from the water and attack as soon as at least two PCs are close enough to get hold of.

Slobber Weird (1)

HF 15; EP 250; Int 10 (Average); AL CE; AR 4; Move swim 10"; HD 4+2; HP 48; SZ L (8' "long"); #AT 1; Damage 2-12; SOA Attacks as an 8 HD creature, Drowning, Disease, Surprise 5 in 10; SOD Reformation, weapon resistance, limited damage from elemental attacks; Magic Resistance Immune to some spells, otherwise standard; ML 19 (Fearless); TOP N/A; Crit BSL; FF N/A; Reference Wryneck's Wheelhouse Critter Compendium

The Slobber Weird will initially form itself into a semi-solid form and begin bludgeoning the closest opponent. After a round or two of this it may attempt to drown a foe (particularly if there is a big armor-clad fighter handy) by pulling him into the water with it. Victims struck with this attack must save vs. paralyzation or be dragged underwater. Victims in the water will drown in 1d6+3 rounds. No spells can be cast nor words spoken, etc., so long as the victim is being held underwater by the Weird. The Weird's victim may attack it, but at a -4 only (victim gains no Dexterity bonus to defend either). Piercing or hacking weapons do only one point of damage per hit, other attacks are limited to half normal. Persons attempting to attack the Weird from outside the water will find it extremely hard to do so, being unable to tell what is water and what is Slobber Weird, and may actually strike their comrade.

If reduced to 0 hit points, the Weird will break apart and dissolve into the water, but will reform anew within 3—6 rounds and attack again. Cold spells slow the critter to half its normal movement rate and weaken its attacks (attacks as 6HD critter instead of 8).

Electricity-based attacks cause half damage and also slow it (save for zero damage). Fire attacks have no effect. Much like a Water Weird, a Purify Water spell will kill any Slobber Weird within its radius (though unlike a Water Weird, this critter gets a saving throw).

There is a base 25% chance that a PC will be afflicted with a disease after contact with the creature (saving throw to avoid); this becomes a 75% chance if the victim gets Slobber Weird "water" in its mouth or has an open wound. The disease is debilitating, resulting in a slow loss of Strength and Constitution. If a victim is aware of the creature's true nature (i.e. is aware that he's being beaten to death or drowned by slobber) and not just regular water, and is struck or touched by the thing, he must immediately save vs. paralyzation or get grossed out (overcome by revulsion for the next 1d4+2 rounds, -3 to all actions while nauseous and feeling icky, saving throw allowed every other round to shake it off).

Grimlocks are allowed to draw water here by arrangement between the Weird and Eunice. Anything besides a Grimlock or Eunice herself approaching the fountain will be attacked. The Grimlocks have yet to fall victim to the creature's disease primarily because she insists that all water be boiled before using to drink, cook or bathe. One or two who did not abide by this edict in the early days were punished so severely they did not survive long enough to die from the disease. The rest took the harsh lesson to heart and there have been no repeated problems.

At the bottom of the fountain lies the Slobber Weird's treasure, which Eunice has wisely chosen not to claim. Scattered under the water are 305 gp, a pair of rock crystals (50 gp each), a piece of blue quartz (10gp) and a peridot (200gp). There are also four scrolls that are so waterlogged as to be useless (each bearing a single spell—Fog Cloud, Mimic Caster, Reveal Secret Portal and Charm Monster). A discerning mage will probably be able to tell what the spells were but they are completely useless, even if thoroughly dried and pressed.

7. Stairs to Nowhere

Traps:

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

□ Manu-Weasel pelt (good for spell components, see HOB VIII p. 78)

□ Nar Wasp exoskeleton (good for spell component as well, see HOB V p. 62)

The door here is unlocked and may take a couple of good yanks to get it open. The hinges will make quite a bit of noise as it opens (note, this door swings inwards).

The door here is unlocked and, judging by the creak it makes when it is swung open. Beyond the doorway is a ten foot hall, terminating in a very steep set of stairs climbing up into the darkness. There are tendrils of silken cobwebs across the hallway at the bottom of the stairs, approximately waist high. These cobwebs grow thicker as the stairs climb. Five feet up they cover the entire stairwell from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. Ten feet up they are so thick as to prevent seeing what lies beyond. Suspended within these cobwebs are several corpses. The closest may be just a few weeks old, though you smell no carrion stink or rot. Those higher up the stairs are mere husks and appear to have been here for months or years. The movement of air caused by the opening of the door causes the cobwebs to ripple and sway slightly, as though something was stirring menacingly within them...

There are no spiders here, nor any real danger whatsoever (apparently). The two corpses closest to the door have been completely drained, so that only the skin remains drawn taut over the bones. They are (or were) Duergar soldiers. Further up the stairs lie the remains of a halfling in a cloak so old that it will crumble to dust when touched. What's left of an Extradimensional Weasel in a Rothe-hide cloak hangs suspended in the air further still, and where the cobwebs are thickest lie the bones of a human (the hide of the Manu Weasel is intact). Beneath the bones of the human is the exoskeleton of a Nar Wasp. The stairwell climbs a total of forty feet and ends in a bare stone wall, ending any exploration here abruptly. There are no secret doors or magical portals here than anyone will be able to find.

Eunice and her cronies discovered this place long ago and, seeing the cobwebs, have simply closed the door and avoided it. Nothing has ever come down the stairs in the entire time they have been here. How the cobwebs came here, or the Duergars, or why the

stairway was built in the first place are an utter mystery.

This is the first place a canny GM could set the stage for further adventures, or an avenue by which he could introduce a critter into his players' midst if they ever settle into the Wheelhouse as their home. How this is done is, of course, limited only by the cunning and treachery of the individual GM.

8. The Mess Hall

Traps:

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

□ Matching salt and pepper shakers, shaped like Avianderthals with clubs (GPV=10)

From the tables, chairs and stacked dishes and utensils here, it is clear that this is some kind of refectory or mess hall. However, either it is not used with any frequency or the occupants are uncommonly neat, because the tables and even the floor have obviously been kept clean. There is not spilled food or a crumb to be seen. The statue of an imp or quasit or something sits atop the longest table in the room, holding down a pile of napkins.

There really isn't much of interest in this room, unless you count the matching set of Avianderthal-shaped salt and pepper shakers on the counter next to the wall. The statue on the long table is actually that of a Vent Squawler.

9. The Kitchen and Larder

Traps:

Encounter: Emruld, Eunice's Cook (Grimlock Champion) (1), Giant Crawling Claw (1)

Potential Yield:

- Slaying Emruld (EPV=190)
- Destroying Giant Crawling Claw (EP=900)
- Grimlock teeth and hair
- Giant Crawling Claw fingernails (spell component)
- Halafactor's Ring of Reinforcements (EPV=1,000) (GPV=10,000)
- "Slaying" the Ringminders (2) (EPV=500 each)

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□ Gear and equipment of the Ringminders
(varies)

There are two potential fights in this room, one likely (Emruld) and one just probable (a Giant Crawling Claw trapped in the cupboard). The former will be unhappy about being interrupted at his work. The latter will attack mindlessly at the earliest opportunity. Note: there is a petrified Yeth Hound in the upper right hand corner of the room (as you look at the map). A cutting board had been set on top of the “statue’s” head to provide a flat surface. There is a silver tea samovar sitting on top of the cutting board (currently empty).

It is hard to say what is more suprising when you enter this room—the corpses suspended upside down from the ceiling, or the brawny Grimlock standing beside a huge stewpot in the corner. This room is evidently both larder and kitchen combined. There are pots and pans stacked on cabinets along the walls, an oven and a fireplace with a spit running through it... kettles and pitchers and utensils and every possible kind of cooking implement. The corpses hanging from hooks have been here for a while, to judge by the smell, hanging like game from hooks alongside bundles of herbs and sacks of vegetables. Though the bodies are wrapped in what appears to be burlap, it is possible to guess at their race. One looks to be a Gripli, another is either a human or a half-orc, and the third could be a Tanuki, if it isn't some more mundane animal. As for the Grimlock, he looks up at you with a snarl when you enter. He carries a cleaver in one hand and a huge ladle in the other, but he doesn't immediately move to attack.

This room is where Emruld, the Grimlock “chef”, cooks meals for his brethren and for Eunice. Imposing a diet of prepared meals upon her minions was one of the medusa's most difficult tasks when she bound them to her service—she can't stand to watch them eat their meals raw (which is of course their preferred culinary delight). Over time, however, Emruld got to be pretty good at the job, which he



was initially forced into. Now his skill in the kitchen would rival some human gourmets.

He's developed a bit of a paunch sampling his own fare over the years, but he's still a fearsome fighter.

The other Grimlocks, for their part, don't particularly enjoy his recipes, but since the alternative is to wind up in the stewpot, they abide by Eunice's edict. (This doesn't keep them from enjoying the occasional bit of raw prey outside the Wheelhouse occasionally, when they are turned loose to hunt.)

Emruld will not immediately attack intruders. He's at a delicate stage of the confection he's currently working on and will not want to ruin it. However, if the players enter his kitchen in force he will have no choice but to attack.

Note: the Giant Crawling Claw is trapped inside a cabinet above the stove, which is padlocked from the outside. It is usually quiescent, though sounds of combat or other loud disturbances will get it stirred up. It has tried several times in the past to break out of the cabinet with no luck—the magically reinforced construction of the Wheelhouse's interior is proof to even its strength. As soon as nosy characters remove or force the lock, however, it will immediately

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leap to the attack. This undead creature wears an enchanted piece of jewelry, *Halafactor's Ring of Reinforcements* (q.v.). Though it is not sentient, there is a 5% cumulative chance each round that it is involved in combat that it will activate the ring's powers due to its reaction to fighting. This percentage will double each round if it is injured in any way. If the creature is brought to 20% or less of its original hit points there will be a 90% chance per round that the ring will be activated, regardless of how many rounds of combat it has engaged in.

Grimlock, Champion (Emruld, Eunice's Cook) (1)
HF 6; EP 190; Int 12 (Very); AL NE; AR 2; Move 12"; HD 5; HP 49; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (cleaver 1d6+1); +2 to hit/+5 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; STR 17/71; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa, Orc; Hon: Average; ML 15 (Daring); TOP 27; Crit BSL; FF 8; Reference HOB III p. 108.

Giant Crawling Claw (1)
HF12; EP 900; Int 12 (Very); AL N; AR 5; Move 16"; HD *; HP 62; L; #AT 1; Damage 2d6 vs. armored foes, 2d8 vs. unarmored foes; +4 to hit/+9 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD ½ damage from edged weap-

ons, enchanted weapons do no additional damage, immune to death magic and Raise Dead (Resurrection renders immobile 1d4 rounds per caster level), undead resistance, cannot be turned or controlled, immune to holy water (cold spells inflict extra damage); STR 21; Magic Resistance: Special; Lang: N/A; Hon: N/A; ML 20 (Fanatic); TOP N/A (undead); Crit BSL; FF N/A (undead); Reference Wryneck's Wheelhouse Critter Compendium. *This critter is wearing Halafactor's Ring of Reinforcements (q.v.).

If the ring is used to summon reinforcements, roll d4 twice. Two of the following will arrive the next round and attack whom ever is fighting the Giant Crawling Claw.

(1 on d4) Galt the Ringminder (1)
HF 8, EP 500, F5, S 18/60, D 12, C 16, I 12, W 11, Cha 9, Com 9; AL NE; AR 3 (Plate Mail); MV 12"; HD 5; HP 65; SZ M; #AT 3/2; D 2d4 (broadsword) +8 due to strength and specialization (+5 to hit with Talent); SOA Nil; SOD Nil; Lang: Common, Obsidian Clan, Orc; Hon: Average; TOP 33; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 30; Height 5' 11"; Weight 205; Quirks and Flaws Loud Boor; Talents Attack Bonus; Skills weapon specialization (broadsword), Wuss Slap, Press the



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Attack.

(2 on d4) Walt the Ringminder (1)

HF 2, EP 500, T5, S 12/32, D 17/80, C 14, I 15, W 12, Cha 11, Com 10; AL NE; AR 4 [7] (studded leather, Dex); MV 12"; HD 5; HP 48; SZ M; #AT 1; D 1d8 (scimitar) +1 due to strength; SOA Backstab (+4 from behind, negates Dex and shield, +2 damage die); SOD -3 Defense adjustment, +4 Reaction adjustment (Dex); Lang: Common, Orc, Chimparian, Thieves Cant, Flounderthal; Hon: Average; TOP 24; Crit BSL; FF 6; Age 30; Height 5' 19"; Weight 185; Quirks and Flaws Close Talker; Talents Blind Fighting; Skills: Pick Pockets 0%, Open Locks 10%, Find Traps 30%, Remove Traps 0%, Move Silently 75%, Hide in Shadows 55%, Detect Noise 35%, Climb Walls 45%, Read Languages 0% (scores include dex and armor adjustments).

(3 on d4) Ch'Yalt the Ringminder (1)

HF 6, EP 725, C5, S 15/41, D 11, C 117, I 11, W 16/04, Cha 11, Com 10; AL CE; AR 5 (chain mail); MV 8"; HD 5; HP 52; SZ M; #AT 1; D 1d4+1 vs. small, 1d6+1 medium, 2d4 large (footman's flail) +1 to hit/ +3 damage due to strength; SOA Spells SOD Spells, +2 to hit with spells requiring to hit roll (Talent), +4 vs. Fear effects (Talent); Lang: Common; Hon: Average; TOP 26; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 36; Height 5' 11"; Weight 178; Quirks and Flaws—Scoliosis, Death Wish; Talents—Courage, Precision Casting, Resistance, Grace Under Pressure; Skills—Basic Anatomy, Resist Persuasion 72, Divine Lore 33, Ulterior Motive 41. Cleric of Kuchooloo (specifically, of the Kuchoolooan Saint Erol Otyugh—though there are normally no standard clerics of the Mad Gawd, there are some for “lesser” members of the pantheon). Typical Spells: (1ST level, 7: Curse (2), Cause Light Wounds, Cure Light Wounds, Cause Fear(2), Sanctuary...2ND level, 4: Cause Color Blindness, Ignite, Rigor Mortis (2)...3RD level, 1: Shock Therapy)

(4 on d4) Boramalt the Ringminder (1)

HF 6, EP 950, MU9, S 10, D 16/27, C 12, I 17/99, W 10, Cha 9, Com 11; AL LE; AR 4 (Hair Clip and Dex); MV 12"; HD 9; HP 61; SZ M; #AT 1 (bastard sword, 1-handed only); D1d6 vs. small, 1d8 medium, 1d12 large); SOA Spells SOD Spells, surprised only on 1 in 10 (Talent); Lang: Common, Chimparian, Elf, Dwarf, Orc, Xill; Hon: Average; TOP 32; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 33; Height 6'; Weight 188; Quirks and Flaws—

Allergic (cats, ferrets/weasels, soap), Flatulence; Talents—Arcane Swindler, Blind Casting, Fast Caster, Martial Tradition, Alertness; Skills—arcane lore 60, spellcraft 63, Penmanship, Arcane Speak. Boramalt is left-handed, right eye dominant. He wields his sword in his left hand, casts spells predominantly with his right.

Typical Spells: 1ST level, 6: Bash Door, Charm Person, Fireball Barrage, Magic Missile, Delayed Magic Missile, Locate Familiar...2ND level, 3: Sidewinder Magic Missile, Cheetah Speed, Magic Missile of Skewering...3RD level, Dispel Magic, Monster Summoning, I, Power Word, Attack: 4TH level, Charm Monster, Delayed Magic Missile...5TH level, Snarcher's Corkscrewing Smoking Missile).

Possessions: *Hair Clip of Protection AC 6 (just like the Bracers)*, *Wand of Wizard Intervention*, *Shrimp Fork of Poking and Prodding*.

10. The Long Hall, Bedrooms, Guest Chambers and Privies

Traps:

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

□ Decanter of Endless Water (EPV=1,000, GPV =10,000)

□ Decanter of Endless Water (EPV=1,000, GPV =10,000)

An extremely long corridor stretches out before you. Four doors line either side, for a total of eight. A ninth sits directly opposite you at the end of the hall.

10a. A 20' square room with a long bench along one the wall opposite the door. There are four holes in the bench—below is a large chamber the exact dimensions of this room. At the bottom of this level are a half a dozen small holes, each approximately the diameter of coin—these holes empty out directly beside the rear wheels of the Wheelhouse. The stink herein makes it clear this is the garderobe. There are numerous unused candles on small shelves along the walls and crude Grimlock graffiti, rendered in charcoal, within arm's reach of the seats in the bench. On one of the wall shelves is a Decanter of Endless Water. Eunice

has taught the Grimlocks (with much effort, and only after eating two of them) to use the magic item to “flush” after themselves.

10b. There is a large amount of straw upon the floor here, along with several rags—probably what is left of the bed that once occupied one corner of this room. What’s left of the bedroom furniture has been destroyed.

10c. See 10b.

10d. See 10b.

10e. See 10b.

10f. See 10b.

10g. See 10b.

10h. This 20’ square room, with a long bench along one the wall opposite the door, is a second privy—only Eunice is allowed to use it, upon pain (literally) of severe punishment. There are four holes in the bench—below is a large chamber the exact dimensions of this room. At the bottom of this level are a half a dozen small holes, each approximately the diameter of coin—these holes empty out directly beside the rear wheels of the Wheelhouse. There is no particular smell herein, both because only Eunice uses it and because she actually employs the candles for their intended use. On one of the wall shelves is another Decanter of Endless Water.

11. The Master Suite

Traps:

Encounter: Greater Medusa (1), Grimlocks (3)

Potential Yield:

- Slaying Eunice (EPV = 4,250)
- Slaying Grimlocks (EPV = 65 each)
- Grimlock teeth and hair.
- Torc of Glare Immunity
- Bracers of Watch and Ward +1 (EPV=850, GPV=8,500)
- BlusterBoar (EPV=1,600, GPV=32,000)
- Choqueteta’s Never Empty Bowl of Fresh

Fruit

- Assorted coins, see below (13 cp, 3ep, 8pp,

650gp)

- Assorted gems, see below (14 gems)
- Battle-axes (2) GPV = 5 each

The secret door here is a superlative piece of work and is much more difficult to locate than a normal door. Elves or half-elves must actively search for the door (1 in 6 chance of spotting it if searching), while non-elves must roll a 1 in 10 (see the rules for secret doors as explained above).

Medusa, Greater, ‘Eunice Concupiscencia’, current mistress of Wryneck’s Wheelhouse (1)

HF 29; EP 4,250; Int 14 (Highly); AL LE, AR 2 (AR 1 vs. weapons, Bracers and DEX); Move 12”; HD 8; HP 72; SZ L (7’ tall, long serpent lower body); #AT 1 + weapon(magic footman’s flail called *BlusterBoar*); +3 to hit/+6 damage (STR); Damage 1-4 or [1d4+1 small, 1d6+1 medium, 2d4 large]; SOA Petrification, Poison; 16 STR; SOD Poisonous blood, Magic Resistance 20%; Lang: Common, Medusa, Grimlock, Derro, Elf, Kangarai; Hon: Above average; ML 18 (Resolved); TOP 50; Crit BSL; FF 18 (*BlusterBoar*); Reference HOB IV pg. 127.

The bite of Eunice’s serpent hair is poisonous (save –1). Her blood is also highly toxic. Anyone coming in contact with it must also save vs. poison. Her gaze will turn anyone who meets it (even on the Astral or Ethereal planes) to stone unless they save vs. petrification. (Note: Remember Eunices magic torc makes her immune to gaze attacks, q.v.).

Eunice carries an enchanted footman’s flail called *BlusterBoar* (+1 to hit, +2 damage and other powers, q.v.), and receives an additional +2 to hit/+4 damage due to her strength. Her Bracers of Watch and Ward +1 only add to her armor rating against manufactured weapons, and reduce her likelihood of being surprised.

Eunice isn’t much for slinking around trying to petrify people from a distance. She’s a scrapper, and prefers to get into the thick of it (though she will certainly turn her opponents to stone if the opportunity arises). She’s never been the kind of girl to worry about broken nails or to shoot her enemies from a distance with a bow. Her Grimlock minions will do their best to remain close to her and watch her back during a fight, though once they get good and worked up and go berserk they tend to forget this.

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Grimlocks (3)

HF 3; EP 65; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 5; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 22, 24, 25; SZ M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 14 (Brave); TOP 12; Crit BSL; FF 5; Reference HOB III p. 108.

These three Grimlocks carry battle-axes and, having been restrained for the last couple of weeks by Eunice, will hurl themselves into battle at the first opportunity—they are not going to want to wait on any small talk, negotiations or blustering.

Eunice is an attractive wench, for a medusa. She is smart, savvy, as good with her flail as she is with her feminine wiles, as skilled in the use of her petrifying glare and her venomous hair as she is in the proper deployment of cosmetics.

Many medusae are misanthropic—Eunice shares this trait, to an extent, but she will occasionally

allow a particularly charismatic or handsome male intruder (human or half-elf only—all others must die) to live if they can convince her of their sincere willingness to serve her. Such service might include an offer to run into town and purchase make-up or a pretty blouse for her, or to remain in the Wheelhouse and provide daily massages, etc. Such a life is tenuous at best, continued only upon her fickle sufferance. If they fail to adequately convince her or if she believes that they are lying or intend to betray her (which is

more often than not the case) she usually just eats them. Likewise if she lets some lucky fellow live at first, there is no guarantee she will not change her mind later. Of course, being a medusa of refined and elegant taste, she will not eat them raw, but will rather give them to her personal chef for preparation first.

Eunice has occupied the Wheelhouse for a couple of years now, ever since a fellow named Woldo

Frownharrow led a band of doughty adventurers into the mountains where she formerly laired specifically to hunt her down. Woldo's original motivation for seeking her out specifically is unknown, but it is entirely possible that he had been engaged to locate *BlusterBoar*, which has occasionally been sought after by weapon collectors and masochists in the past.

Woldo consulted several sages and savants, pored over numerous maps and scraps of old journals, then led his henchmen and fellow adventurers into the well-guarded cavern she lived in at the time. He prepared for the



expedition quite thoroughly, bringing numerous scrolls of *Gaze Reflection* and *Stone to Flesh*, healing potions by the score and several mirrored shields. Unfortunately for the members of Frownharrow's Band, Eunice wore (and still wears) an enchanted torc that made her immune to gaze attacks—so the bulk of his preparations were for naught. Though they were aware ahead of time that she employed Grimlocks as her guards, they did not know how *many* Grimlocks she kept around her. Nor did they know that she'd

domesticated a herd of angus Piercers (a rather critical intel flaw, as it turned out).

To their credit, Frownharrow's lads managed to hack their way through the better part of the Grimlocks, blinding them first by blowing clouds of snuff through the outer cavern with Gust of Wind spells and then slaughtering them while they bumped into each other. The company killed over a score of the blind humanoids suffering only one casualty themselves. They didn't expect death from above however, and were caught completely off guard by the Piercers spiking down into them while they tried to deal with Eunice herself. Her hair accounted for one or two of them and the Piercers for several more. She battered the remaining three into jelly with BlusterBoar and dined upon them, courtesy of Emruld, for the next several days.

Following the defeat of the Band, Eunice backtracked their trail to the Wheelhouse, which Woldo had hidden in a copse of trees just a few miles from her lair. This awakened a sort of wanderlust in her, so she packed up her surviving Grimlock minions and moved in (first recruiting a pair of Ogres to pull the thing, since she had accidentally petrified the two draft horses that Woldo had harnessed to it).

She has been wandering back mountain and forest trails ever since then, hiring an Orkin bounty hunter to act as her driver and emissary to the "outside world". The Grimlocks were turned loose periodically to forage and keep the Wheelhouse victualled and to keep their natural restlessness in check.

Unfortunately, just a week or so before the PCs stumbled across the seemingly abandoned wain, her bounty hunter driver unknowingly steered the thing across a small open field occupied by a Meadow Kraken. He got about halfway across the clearing when the Wheelhouse got bogged down in the mud. He jumped down and let the Ogres out of their traces to help him push them out—and all three of them wound up being the tentacled creature's afternoon meal.

The medusa, unaware of what had transpired and unable to get a response when she called out from the door, waited until dark and sent several of her Grimlocks out to see what had happened. This first band suffered a similar fate and failed to return, so she dispatched a second troop. This time however she slithered out onto the rear balcony to see what happened, and only narrowly escaped being snatched up by the things tentacles when it availed itself of its

third meal of the day.

Since that they have remained effectively trapped in the wagon. The Grimlocks are growing increasingly restless, and she has been trying to figure out a way out of the predicament. The only option she has been able to come up with has been to send the Grimlocks out *en masse* in several different directions at once to provide a distraction while she makes a run for it. Obviously this by no means offers any surety and she has thus far been loathe to order the breakout. That's the situation as it stands when the PCs arrive.

Eunice is a bit of a neat freak. She's never liked things messy or unkempt, which is one of the reasons she was attracted to the Wheelhouse in the first place. She makes her Grimlocks bathe in streams or the fountain in area #6 at least once a fortnight, whether they need it or not, and similarly makes them launder their rags and loincloths.

If Eunice has a weakness, it is (oddly) her love of fresh fruit. She has always been fond of apples, bananas, pears and grapes the same way many girls love chocolate (or other medusae enjoy man-flesh). Though it was her burgeoning wanderlust and her admiration for the cleanliness of the Wheelhouse that originally tempted her to take the enchanted wain as her own, it was her discovery of Choqueteta's Never Empty Bowl of Fresh Fruit in Woldo's kitchen that cinched the deal.

12. Allegedly Dead End Corridor

Traps:

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

□ Grimlock teeth and hair.

The door here is a simple wooden door, unlatched, without traps or ornamentation.

Beyond this doorway the corridor extends just ten feet before ending abruptly. Oddly, however, while the walls, floor and ceiling are gray stone, the end of the corridor is red rock, appearing natural rather than worked or purposefully-built. Of more immediate interest, however, is the drab, eyeless corpse of a Grimlock on the floor facing the wall with a gaping hole in the back of his head.

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The red stone wall across the hallway is in fact a *Wall of Stone*, as the spell, erected here sometime by unknown persons for reasons that remain unclear. Should a part somehow manage to delve through this wall, or bypass it, they will find a *Wall of Iron* on the other side, flush with the stone. If they persist in expending sufficient effort to go past that they will find a *Wall of Wood* on the other side, stacked immediately after the first two. If they continue in this manner they will find, in succession, another *Wall of Stone*, a second *Wall of Wood* and (surprise) yet another *Wall of Iron*. If they still want to keep going, what they find beyond these six magically constructed barriers is up to the GM.

The corpse of the Grimlock is what's left over from an argument between some of Eunice's minions.

13. The Armory

Traps:

Encounter: 8 Grimlocks and Berthold (Grimlock Sergeant)

Potential Yield:

- Slaying Grimlocks (EPV = 65 each)
- Slaying Berthold (EPV=120)
- Grimlock teeth and hair.
- Battleaxes (9) (GPV=5 each)

This smallish chamber was, to judge by the numerous weapon racks on the walls and standing in the corners, once an armory. There are several spears and other pole-arms on one wall, a variety of swords and daggers on another, and a variety of cudgeling and smashing weapons on the last. It is impossible to determine immediately how many there are of each kind, or what condition they are in, because the room is full of gray-skinned, blind humanoids that lift up numerous wicked axes at the sight of you.

Grimlocks (8)

HF 3; EP 65; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 5; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 19, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30; SZ M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 14 (Brave); TOP 12; Crit BSL; FF 5; Reference HOB III p. 108.

Grimlock Leader (Berthold) (1)

HF 4; EP 120; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 4; Move 12"; HD 3; HP 38; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); +2 to hit/+4 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 15 (Daring); TOP 21; Crit BSL; FF 6; Reference HOB III p. 108.

14. The Face of the Great Gray Devil

Traps: Rodnard's Red Letter Rejoinder (Sigil, q.v.)

Encounter:

Potential Yield:

At the end of this short corridor you find yourself confronted by a massive devil's face mounted upon the wall, as though the thing was pushing itself through the stone. It is as painfully well crafted as it is exquisitely evil in appearance. Though it is nothing more than cold stone, the soulless,



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reptilian wickedness of its sinister gaze makes it seem virtually alive. The features are flawless, its surface without blemish or mar. The face's mouth is agape as though stretching to swallow or howl, the "O" between its cold gray lips black as pitch. A faint breeze seems to come past you, blowing towards the thing's mouth, as though it were slowly inhaling. From its broad, smooth forehead curls a single cruel horn. A small sign dangles over the horn, hung at an odd angle there by a length of twine. The words are impossible to make out without approaching the face more closely. Here the corridor ends—there is nowhere else to go but to crawl into its mouth, or return whence you came.

The face's mouth does not, in fact, do anything damaging, fatal or even spiteful (though hopefully it will cause the players some issues, stress and second-guessing). The whole thing radiates magic if detected for, of course, but the whole *place* does that. The mouth is actually a short (10' long) tunnel, round in shape and 3' in diameter, that ends in a falling-block type door set in rails that allow it to slide up and down.

A permanent *Darkness* spell has been cast within the tunnel. The door is opened by flipping a catch (concealed only by the lack of light) and lifting it upwards. Beyond the door is area 15, the Wheelhouse Gaol. Note that the tunnel leading from the Devil's mouth does not appear to be 10' long on the map. The sign hanging from the Devil's horn says simply CLOSED FOR REPAIRS but it is also enchanted with a *Rodnard's Red Letter Rejoinder* (q.v.) spell that will be triggered by the first person who approaches and reads it aloud. If party members perform a search of the Devil before they crawl into the mouth (assuming they do), they will find a small inscription below the thing's chin, well out of site, that says RAKER BROTHERS SCULPTING AND MAGIC DEATH TRAPS INC.

15. The Wheelhouse Gaol and Pillory

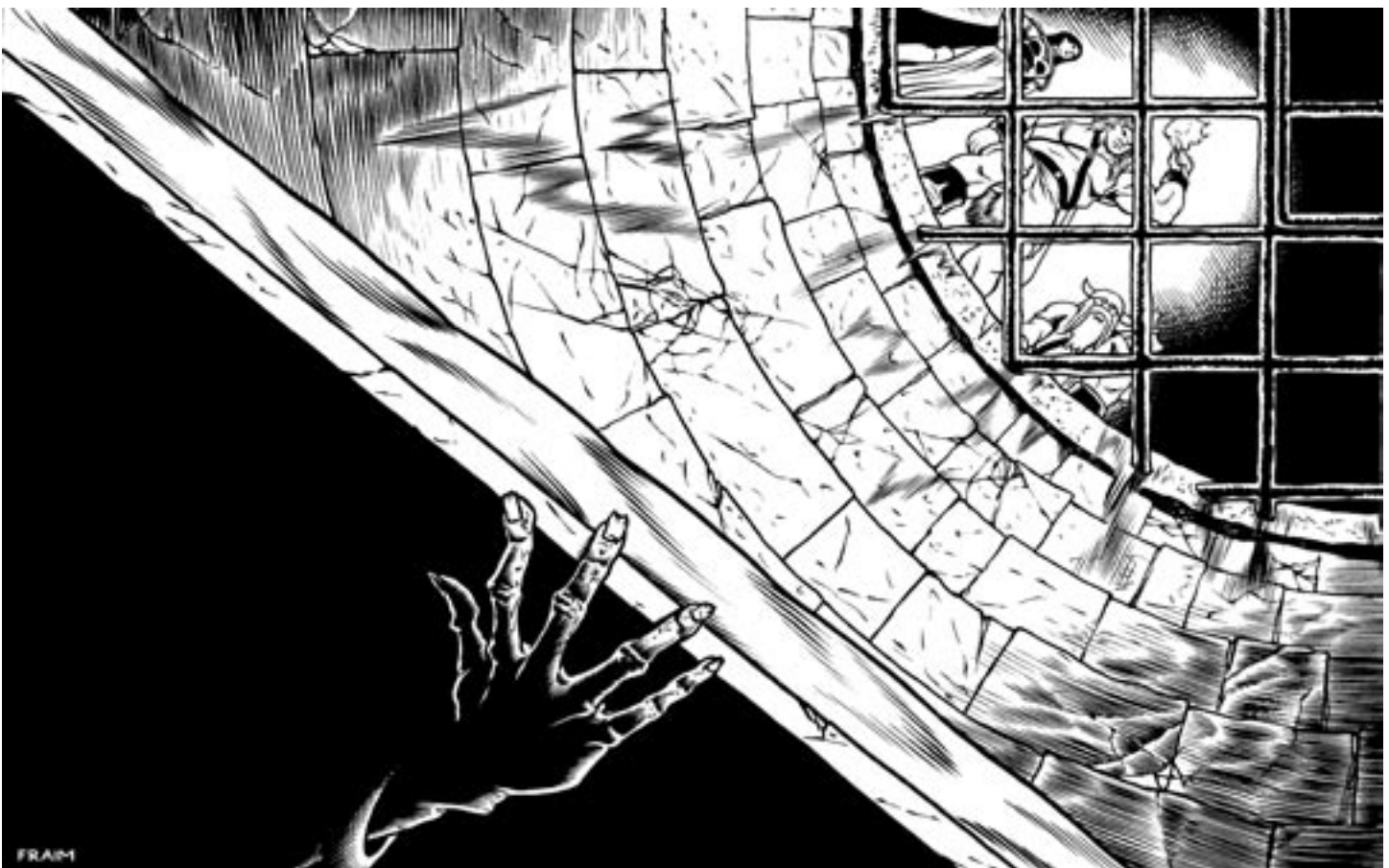
Traps: Gandle's Feeble Trap on all locks

Encounter: Skulking Carcass (1)

Potential Yield:

- Destroying Skulking Carcass (EP 290)
- Ankle Bracelet of Monstrous Attention (EPV=1,000) (GPV=8,500)

Each of these cells is identical. They are round, stone-sided pits in the floor. Entrance is through



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a barred grate with a fist-sized lock on it. There is straw on the floor over the top of the grates. This must be brushed aside to see individual cells. Each individual cell is "trapped" with Gandle's Feeble trap (phantasm of false trap designed to fool a thief; any attempt to detect traps by physical skill, spell or device, will be 100% certain that a trap exists).

15A The Pillory

Set back from the hallway here is a square-sided alcove with a pillory mounted atop a wooden deck on the floor. Four large keys hang from hooks on the wall.

The following description can be used for each cell.

The small room before you is empty, with the exception of a pair of wooden buckets in the corner and a large amount of straw and rushes on the floor, as if for a

pallet or a pet's bed. The detritus on the floor is quite old and has obviously been here for quite a while. All of it appears dry and brittle, as though on the verge of crumbling to dust.

If the rushes and straw are removed and the padlock unlocked (all of the keys are on the wall in 16A), the grate over the top can be lifted up on a set of hinges. The hinges haven't been oiled in years, but they aren't rusty. They will resist opening, but not to such an extent that it is impossible to gain entry.

The hole opening beneath you appears to be some sort of pen or cell, round, eight feet across and approximately twelve feet deep. There is a simple wooden cot at the bottom and a metal basin bolted onto the stone wall.

15B Cell

There is nothing of interest in this cell.

15C Cell

Hiding under the bunk in this cell is a Skulking Carcass wearing the livery of a long-disbanded (in fact, long-dead) adventuring company, the Tallhares (a band of adventurers that actually once owned the Wheelhouse, which is probably where it came from). The undead is wearing a sleeveless jerkin that is, in fact, sewn of the skins of Predator Rabbits and bears the snarling Vorpall Bunny sigil of the Tallhares upon its breast. It will remain completely motionless and quiet if the grating over its cell is disturbed, in the hopes that whoever is poking about will leave it open when they leave (it has been here for a long, *long* time, and will be very patient). If this is so, or if the grate is replaced but not relocked, it will wait a few rounds and then slip out after the characters in the hopes of getting in a good backstab.

*Note: GM, take careful note of what your players do in each of these



cells, because they will probably try to come back later and try to convince you they actually relocked the thing's cell after it cuts one of their precious character's throats. You know how they are—they'll piss and moan endlessly that you've wronged them if you kill one of them off. Make sure you're ready for the inevitable argument.

Skulking Carcass (undead half-elven Tallhare Thief) (1)

HF 3; EP 290; Int 16 (Exceptional); AL NE; AR 6; Move 12"; HD 2+1; HP 30; Size: M; #AT 2; Damage 1-6/1-6; SOA Stealth, backstab; SOD Undead; Magic Resistance: Immune to Sleep, Hold and Charm spells, Turned as a Ghoul; ML 19 (Fearless); TOP N/A; Crit BSL; FF N/A; Reference HOB VII p. 72.

This particular dead thief has Hide in Shadows and Move Silently abilities of 87% and 91% respectively. It will initiate any attack with a backstab (+4 to hit, 2 extra damage dice) if it has the choice, preferably while the characters are engaged in a battle with something else (or more than one something else). It is wearing an Ankle Bracelet of Monstrous Attention (silver bracelet of tiny links with a silk ribbon strung through the links to prevent it from making noise). This item functions like a Phylactery of Monstrous Attention, only it works against characters of all classes *but* clerics.

15D Cell

There is nothing of interest in this cell.

15E Cell

There is nothing of interest in this cell.

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Battle Sheets

Average; ML 18 (Resolved); TOP 33; Crit BSL; FF 9; Reference HOB III p. 108.

2. The Main Hall

Grimlocks (10) HF 3; EP 65; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 5; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 19, 21, 22, 24, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32; SZ M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 14 (Brave); TOP 12; Crit BSL; FF 5; Reference HOB III p. 108.

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Toby, Grimlock Sergeant (1) HF 4; EP 120; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 4; Move 12"; HD 3; HP 39; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); +2 to hit/+4 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 15 (Daring); TOP 21; Crit BSL; FF 6; Reference HOB III p. 108.

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Horace, Eunice's Top Dawg, Grimlock Champion (1) HF 6; EP 200; Int 13 (Very); AL NE; AR 0 [2] (DEX and magic helmet); Move 12"; HD 5; HP 66; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (battleaxe 2d4); +3 to hit/+6 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; STR 18/60; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa, Orc; Hon:

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4. The Peer-ahead Post and Lower Hatch

Tin Soldiers (3) HF 9; EP 420; Int 0 (Non); AL N; AR 5; Move 8"; HD 5; HP 48 each; SZ S (4' tall); #AT 1; Damage 1-10; SOA None; SOD Toxic when melted, painted; Magic Resistance Immune to most spells; ML 20 (Fanatic); TOP N/A; Crit BSL; FF N/A; Reference HOB VIII p. 10.

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9. Kitchen and Larder

Emruld the Cook, Grimlock, Champion (1) HF 6; EP 190; Int 12 (Very); AL NE; AR 2; Move 12"; HD 5; HP 49; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon (cleaver 1d6+1); +2 to hit/+5 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; STR 17/71; Magic Resistance: None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 15 (Daring); TOP 27; Crit BSL; FF 8; Reference HOB III p. 108.

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Giant Crawling Claw (1) HF12; EP 900; Int 12 (Very); AL N; AR 5; Move 16"; HD *; HP 62; L; #AT 1; Damage 2d6 vs. armored foes, 2d8 vs. unarmored foes; +4 to hit/+9 damage (STR); SOA None; SOD ½ damage from edged weapons, enchanted weapons do no

additional damage, immune to death magic and Raise Dead (Resurrection renders immobile 1d4 rounds per caster level), undead resistance, cannot be turned or controlled, immune to holy water (cold spells inflict extra damage); STR 21; Magic Resistance: Special; Lang: N/A; Hon: N/A; ML 20 (Fanatic); TOP N/A (undead); Crit BSL; FF N/A (undead); Reference Critter Compendium, Wryneck's Wheelhouse.

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Galt the Ringminder (1) HF 8, EP 500, F5, S 18/60, D 12, C 16, I 12, W 11, Cha 9, Com 9; AL NE; AR 3 (Plate Mail); MV 12"; HD 5; HP 65; SZ M; #AT 3/2; D 2d4 (broadsword) +8 due to strength and specialization (+5 to hit with Talent); SOA Nil; SOD Nil; Lang: Common, Obsidian Clan, Orc; Hon: Average; TOP 33; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 30; Height 5' 11"; Weight 205; Quirks and Flaws Loud Boor; Talents Attack Bonus; Skills weapon specialization (broadsword), Wuss Slap, Press the Attack.

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Walt the Ringminder (1) HF 2, EP 500, T5, S 12/32, D 17/80, C 14, I 15, W 12, Cha 11, Com 10; AL NE; AR 4 [7] (studded leather, Dex); MV 12"; HD 5; HP 48; SZ M; #AT 1; D 1d8 (scimitar) +1 due to strength; SOA Backstab (+4 from behind, negates Dex and shield, +2 damage die); SOD -3 Defense adjustment, +4 Reaction adjustment (Dex); Lang: Common, Orc, Chimparian, Thieves Cant, Flounderthal; Hon: Average; TOP 24; Crit BSL; FF 6; Age 30; Height 5' 19"; Weight 185; Quirks and Flaws Close Talker; Talents Blind Fighting; Skills: Pick Pockets 0%, Open Locks 10%, Find Traps 30%, Remove Traps 0%, Move Silently 75%, Hide in Shadows 55%, Detect Noise 35%, Climb Walls 45%, Read Languages 0% (scores include dex and armor adjustments).

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Ch'Yalt the Ringminder, HF 6, EP 725, C5, S 15/41, D 11, C 117, I 11, W 16/04, Cha 11, Com 10; AL CE; AR 5 (chain mail); MV 8"; HD 5; HP 52; SZ M; #AT 1; D 1d4+1 vs. small, 1d6+1 medium, 2d4 large (footman's flail) +1 to hit/ +3 damage due to strength; SOA Spells SOD Spells, +2 to hit with spells requiring to hit roll (Talent), +4 vs. Fear effects (Talent); Lang: Common; Hon: Average; TOP 26; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 36; Height 5' 11"; Weight 178; Quirks and Flaws—Scoliosis, Death Wish; Talents—Courage, Precision Casting, Resistance, Grace Under Pressure; Skills—Basic Anatomy, Resist Persuasion 72, Divine Lore 33, Ulterior Motive 41. Cleric of Kuchooloo.

Typical Spells: (1ST level, 7: Curse (2), Cause Light Wounds, Cure Light Wounds, Cause Fear(2), Sanctuary...2ND level, 4: Cause Color Blindness, Ignite, Rigor Mortis (2)...3RD level, 1: Shock Therapy)

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Boramalt the Ringminder
 HF 6, EP 950, MU9, S 10, D 16/27, C 12, I 17/99, W 10, Cha 9, Com 11; AL LE; AR 4 (Hair Clip and Dex); MV 12"; HD 9; HP 61; SZ M; #AT 1 (bastard sword, 1-handed only); D1d6 vs. small, 1d8 medium, 1d12 large); SOA Spells SOD Spells, surprised only on 1 in 10 (Talent); Lang: Common, Chimparian, Elf, Dwarf, Orc, Xill; Hon: Average; TOP 32; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 33; Height 6'; Weight 188; Quirks and Flaws—Allergic (cats, ferrets/weasels, soap), Flatulence; Talents—Arcane Swindler, Blind Casting, Fast Caster, Martial Tradition, Alertness; Skills—arcane lore 60, spellcraft 63, Penmanship, Arcane Speak.

Typical Spells: 1ST level, 6: Bash Door, Charm Person, Fireball Barrage, Magic Missile,

Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

Delayed Magic Missile, Locate Familiar...^{2ND}
level, 3: Sidewinder Magic Missile, Cheetah
Speed, Magic Missile of Skewering...^{3RD}
level, Dispel Magic, Monster Summoning,
I, Power Word, Attack: 4TH level, Charm
Monster, Delayed Magic Missile...^{5TH} level,
Snarcher's Corkscrewing Smoking Missile).
Possessions: *Hair Clip of Protection AC 6 (just
like the Bracers)*, *Wand of Wizard Intervention*,
Shrimp Fork of Poking and Prodding.

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11. The Master Suite

Eunice Concupiscencia, Greater Medusa
(1): HF 29; EP 4,250; Int 14 (Highly); AL LE,
AR 3 (2 vs. weapons); Move 12"; HD 8; HP
72; SZ L (7' tall, long serpent lower body);
#AT 1 + weapon (footman's flail); +2 to hit/+4
damage (STR); Damage 1-4 or [1d4+1 small,
1d6+1 medium, 2d4 large]; SOA Petrification,
Poison; 16 STR; SOD Poisonous blood, Magic
Resistance 20%; Lang: Common, Medusa,
Grimlock, Derro, Elf, Kangarai; Hon: Above
average; ML 18 (Resolved); TOP 50; Crit
BSL; FF 8; Reference HOB IV pg. 127.

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Grimlocks (2): HF 3; EP 65; Int 10 (Average);
AL NE; AR 5; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 22, 24,
25; SZ M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6 or by weapon
(battle axe 2d4); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH
level fighter; Magic Resistance None; Lang:
Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 14
(Brave); TOP 12; Crit BSL; FF 5; Reference
HOB III p. 108.

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13. The Armory

Grimlocks (8) HF 3; EP 65; Int 10 (Average);
AL NE; AR 5; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 19, 21,
22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30; SZ M; #AT 1; Damage
1-6 or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); SOA
None; SOD Save as 6TH level fighter; Magic
Resistance None; Lang: Grimlock, Medusa;
Hon: Average; ML 14 (Brave); TOP 12; Crit
BSL; FF 5; Reference HOB III p. 108.

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Berthold, Grimlock Sergeant (1) HF 4; EP
120; Int 10 (Average); AL NE; AR 4; Move
12"; HD 3; HP 38; M; #AT 1; Damage 1-6
or by weapon (battle axe 2d4); +2 to hit/+4
damage (STR); SOA None; SOD Save as 6TH
level fighter; Magic Resistance: None; Lang:
Grimlock, Medusa; Hon: Average; ML 15
(Daring); TOP 21; Crit BSL; FF 6; Reference
HOB III p. 108.

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15. The Wheelhouse Gaol and Pillory

**Skulking Carcass (undead half-elven
Tallhare Thief) (1)**
HF 3; EP 290; Int 16 (Exceptional); AL NE;
AR 6; Move 12"; HD 2+1; HP 30; Size:
M; #AT 2; Damage 1-6/1-6; SOA Stealth,
backstab; SOD Undead; Magic Resistance:
Immune to Sleep, Hold and Charm spells,
Turned as a Ghoul; ML 19 (Fearless); TOP

N/A; Crit BSL; FF N/A; Reference HOB VII

p. 72.

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Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

New Spells

Durward's Discerning Eye

(Cleric)

(Alteration)

Level: 2 (zealot) 3 (standard clerics)

Range: 50 feet

Duration: 1 turn/level

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Sphere: Divination, Combat

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 3 Segments for zealots, 4 for clerics

Saving Throw: None

Cast upon one archer (or crossbowman), this spell will make the recipient much more adept at skewering specific locations on an opponent's body. This will effectively reduce the penalty of a called shot by one (1) plus for every three caster levels above 4 (+1/3 levels above 4). This spell has no effect on any combat activity other than called shots with a bow or crossbow.

Durward's Discerning Eye is one of several spells thought to have been created originally by Durward Dourdern, an itinerant cleric known for being loud and vocally jealous of all the named spells that magic-users have access to. Durward was a priest of either Par'Kryus, Ra or Tobadzistsini depending upon whose histories you believe (though smart money goes to Par'Kryus). Durward is known for putting out one of his acolyte's eyes with an arrow while trying to shoot an apple off his head (he was drunk at the time, it is said, and that was before this spell was created).

Durward's Paen of Protection from Archers

(Cleric)

(Alteration)

Level: 2 (zealot) 3 (standard clerics)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 rnd/level

Area of Effect: 10' radius (15' radius for zealots)

Sphere: Warding, Combat

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round (5 Segments for zealots)

Saving Throw: None

A protective prayer protects the cleric and all within 10' of him (well, 15' for zealots) from arrows and/or crossbow bolts. Everyone within the defensive perimeter of the spell is considered to have 50% cover

from such missile weapons. The cleric who casts it receives an additional +2 AC bonus. This spell does not hold archers at bay in the same manner as protection spells that defend against undead and lycanthropes and such—it only affects their missiles.

This spell provides no protection against the tail spikes of manticores or other, "non-arrow", "non-quarrel" missiles.

The material component of this spell is the cleric's holy symbol and an arrow or crossbow bolt snapped in half and bound together by a knotted length of string. There is a 10% chance each time the spell is cast that the material component will be consumed at the end of magic's duration.

The Paen of Protection of Archers is another prayer-spell thought to have first been developed by Durward Dourdern or one of his acolytes.

Flock of Diving Ducks

(Evocation/Phantasm)

(Magic User)

Level: 2

Range: 3 yards + 1 yd./level

Duration: 1-3 rounds

Area of Effect: 20' radius

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 2 Segments

Saving Throw: None

Similar in most ways to the Cloud of Pummeling Fists, the Flock of Diving Ducks is thought to have been an alteration of that wizard's staple created some years ago by the Archmage Mergenszer, whose sigil was a duck taking flight on a blue field. The spell creates a number of disembodied, illusory mallards with brilliant green heads, diving and swirling about target creatures within the area of effect. The caster may direct each duck to attack any creature within the radius (the area of effect does not move). Each duck must roll a to-hit as though the caster himself was the one attacking. A successful hit delivers 1d3 points of damage. The number of ducks in the flock is determined by rolling 3d6. Only ¼ of the damage taken by the target of a duck is "real" damage; the rest is considered subdual damage. Note that it should theoretically be possible to cast a version of this spell that conjured grebes or loons or geese, or one would think so anyway.

Pinpoint Familiar

(Divination/Reversible)

(Magic User)

Level: 1

Range: 0

Duration: 1 rnd/level

Area of Effect: 20 yards/level

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 3 Segments

Saving Throw: None

This spell has just one purpose—to locate the familiar of another wizard. A mage could conceivably cast this spell for a variety of reasons, but the most obvious one is offensive. A mage whose familiar is killed is in danger of dying himself—a cunning mage that casts this dweomer can this use the information gleaned to aim an extra-special Magic Missile of Fireball, and...well, it doesn't take much to vaporize a toad or turn a ferret into a pincushion, and bats are no more resistant to lightning than the next vermin.

To locate another wizard's familiar (and note that the wizard, not the familiar, must be within the range of the spell), the magic user casts the spell, makes a V with the fingers of his right hand and peers about. The location of the familiar will become apparent as the eyes of the caster crosses its approximate location. After that the mage will know the familiar's location regardless of where it goes, as long as its wizard master is within range of the spell.

This spell is blocked by lead, by the reverse of the spell (Conceal Familiar), by Minor Globe of Invulnerability

Mergenszer's Spectral WatchDuck

(Magic User)

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 3

Range: 20 yards

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 4 Segments

Saving Throw: None

By means of this unusual conjuration, the magic-user summons up a phan-

tom-like, spectral duck. It is visible to anyone, albeit somewhat uncertainly, like a ghost seen in dim light. He may then command the duck to perform as the guardian of a particular area, such as a passage or a door, or the perimeter of raft or small water craft. The spectral duck is wholeheartedly devoted to its summoner and will do everything within his power to keep him safe. It will immediately begin quacking raucously and flapping its wings loudly if any creature larger than a mouse approaches within thirty feet (or, if paddling around atop a body of water, within ten feet beneath).

The spectral watchduck is able to detect the approach of invisible, astral and ethereal creature, as well as those swimming underwater. This makes the little water fowl a superb guardian (particularly since it cannot be fooled by illusions).

If an intruding creature approaches within ten feet of the watchduck's master, it will immediately attack, though unfortunately only as a 1HD monster and



Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

causing just 1-2 points of damage (the duck's quack is much worse than its bite). Unlike similar spells, such as the Faithful Hound, a Spectral WatchDuck will never become overzealous and attack its master.

The location of the duck can move with the caster if on water, i.e. if it is summoned by a mage floating downstream in a canoe, it will circle around the boat as it travels, never leaving the 20' range limit. The maximum duration of this spell is two hours, plus a half an hour per caster level unless the focal point of the spell is moving, in which case this duration is halved. If an intruding caster causes the watchduck to attack, the spell will last only 2-5 additional rounds, at which point the spectral watchduck dissipates and returns to wherever it is that watchducks come from.

The material component for this spell are a breadcrumb and the feather from a duck, mallard, sheldrake, etc.

Rodnard's Red Letter Rejoinder

(Magic User)

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 3

Range: 5 yards

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: 1 Sigil

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 4 Segments

Saving Throw: None*

The perfect incantation for mages who are annoyed by people who insist on reading aloud every sign or written message they see, this spell's first incarnation was a slightly modified version of Sepia Snake Sigil. It was eventually modified by its creator, polished, honed and perfected, and now stands on its own.

By means of this spell, the caster causes a small, red written symbol to appear in the text of any written work (or upon the face of a sign, etc.). If the words around the sigil are read aloud, the Red Letter Rejoinder manifests suddenly and strikes out at the closest living creature (though it will not attack the mage who originally cast the spell). It attacks as a monster of HD equal to the level of the caster.

The Rejoinder looks much like a long, stylized cobra rendered in incarnadine (picture a Picasso version of a king cobra painted in bright red). It is non-corporeal, of course, and cannot be blocked by a physical barrier such as a shield. The Rejoinder coils

out from the sigil, sways back and forth and strikes all in less than one segment.

If it strikes successfully, the victim becomes enmeshed in a pulsating red field of force. The field covers the victim and all his gear and accouterments completely, to a depth of about 3" beyond the surface. It will throb in time with the victim's heartbeat in various shades and brightnesses of red. While within this field the victim will be held frozen and immobilized until released, either at the caster's command, by a successful Dispel magic spell, or until a time equal to 1d6 days +1 day per caster level has elapsed. Until such a time has passed, nothing can get at or disturb the victim, move the shimmering field holding him effectively in stasis or otherwise affect him. The victim does not age, grow hungry, sleep or regain spells while in this state. He is not aware of his surroundings, nor of the passage of time. The field of force gives off light equivalent to a torch.

If the Rejoinder misses its target, it bursts asunder soundlessly, releasing plumes of red vapor that drift away until completely dissipated. Everyone within 20' of a failed sigil must then save vs. spells or be struck mute as though affected by a Silence spell. This quietening effect will last for d4 rounds. (This only prevents vocal noise. It does not stop other sounds.)

The Red Letter Rejoinder cannot be detected by normal observation, and a Detect Magic spell will reveal only that the entire text (or sign, or page, etc.) is magical. A Dispel Magic can remove it, as can an Erase spell if cast by a mage of higher level than the one who created the Rejoinder.

This spell can be cast in combination with other spells that affect text or visible words.

Note: the attack of the Rejoinder will be modified by the volume of the speaker who reads the text aloud as follows: Speaking softly to self, +0; Normal Whisper, +1; Normal Speaking Voice, +2; Voice Raised Slightly, +3; Yelling Aloud, +4; Shouting at the top of lungs, +5.

The material component for this spell are a small bottle of red ink mixed with 10gp of gold dust, a quill pen that has been used to scribe a scroll within the previous three months, the scale of a cobra and a lock of hair from someone who has laryngitis. All material components will be consumed when the spell is cast.

Runes of Instantaneous Esophoria

(Magic User)

(Alteration)

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: One creature

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 4 Segments

Saving Throw: None

By tracing these awkward and difficult runes upon an object bearing written information (book, tavern sign, scroll, etc.), the magic-user punishes the transgressions of unauthorized persons who read his material without permission. The Runes of Instantaneous Esophoria are extremely difficult to detect (2½% chance per level of magic use of the reader, just 5% chance for thieves). Trap detection by spell or magical devices will usually find these runes (10% chance of missing them). When read, these runes instantly create a feeling of vertigo in the reader and a sudden sharp pain in his eyes that leaves him effectively blind with eyes watering for 1d4 rounds.

Though this causes no physical damage (i.e. hit points suffered), it does cause immediate, chronic esophoria—the reader goes immediately (and very badly) cross-eyed. This will cause negatively impact the victim's depth perception and make them virtually useless with a missile weapon (-1 to melee attacks, -3 to ranged attacks, including targeted spells). The victim loses 2 points of Comeliness and 1d8+2 points of Honor.

The mage who casts this spell and anyone he specifies by full name while performing the enchantment can read the protected writing without triggering the runes. Likewise, the casting mage can remove the runes whenever desired. Others can remove them only with a successful Dispel Magic or Erase spell. The item upon which the runes are placed will be unharmed when the magic is released.

Snarcher's Corkscrewing Smoking Missile

(Magic User)

(Alteration)

Level: 5

Range: 30 yds + 5 yds/level

Duration: Instantaneous

Area of Effect: One creature

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 5 Segments

Saving Throw: None

Snarcher's Corkscrewing Smoking Missile is similar in effect and function to the 1ST level spell Magic Missile, but more powerful. Loosed from the outstretched fingertips of the casting mage, the Corkscrewing Smoking Missile spirals outward towards its target in a circular gyre that leaves a trail of billowing smoke behind it (picture a rocket with the guidance circuitry screwed up). When it strikes its intended target (a single creature) it inflicts 1d4+2 points of damage, plus an additional 1d4 points of damage for every two levels thereafter, to a maximum of 12d4+2 points of damage (i.e., a 9TH level mage would hurl a missile that causes 5d4+2 damage).

Once the arrow-looking Missile hits, the smoke will intensify, growing darker and thicker and more bilious. The round after the arrow hits, it will burst apart in a sudden, violent sulfuric detonation that causes a 1d4 points of damage to everyone within 10' (friend or foe). Afterwards the smoke from the Missile will act as a Stinking Cloud 10' in diameter and lasting 1 round/3 levels of the Missile's original caster.

The material component of this spell is a miniature tomahawk (like a charm from a bracelet), a piece of arrow shaft that has been at least partially burned and an iron corkscrew, all of which are consumed in the casting.

Snarcher's Multi-Missile Smokevolley

(Magic User)

(Alteration)

Level: 3

Range: 25 yards + 5 yards/level

Duration: Instantaneous

Area of Effect: 1—5 targets in a 10-foot square

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 5 Segments

Saving Throw: None

Snarcher's Multi-Missile Smokevolley is the work of Lich Master Snarcher Paladinsbane (well, he's a lich master now, he wasn't when he made it up—in fact, he wasn't even a lich, he was just a particularly nasty wizard who preferred the company of dead folk to live ones). It was just one of many offensive spells he created, an improved version of the 1ST level spell Magic Missile. Much like the lesser spell, this dweomer creates up to a maximum of six missiles that dart

Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

forth from the caster's outstretched fingers to unerringly strike their target. However, unlike Magic Missile, this spell's missiles have a physical manifestation (to wit, ash-gray to cinder-black broadhead arrows). The caster cannot miss with his missiles, though he must be able to see or otherwise detect the target in order to hit it. Most other rules governing the employment of a Magic Missile apply to those of this spell as well, with one exception—these may be directed at inanimate objects (i.e., the caster could direct these against a fighter's shield, the frame of a door, or a mailbox).

As these arrows go sailing forth towards an opponent, they trail a plume of billowing gray smoke out behind them. This looks very much as though the sooty arrows were unraveling enroute to their target. Once the missiles strike, they will completely "unravel" in tendrils of dark smoke. This smoke will waft outwards around the missiles' impact point. If there are at least three missiles within 10' of each other, these plumes of smoke will become a cloud of soot-colored smoke that acts as an unmoving Fog Cloud (q.v.). Their smoke trail(s) will linger in the air for several rounds after their passage, depending upon any wind that might be stirring the air.

Snarcher's smoking arrows inflict 1d4+1 damage apiece; the casting mage can create one missile plus an additional missile for every two levels of the mage above 1ST.

Unique Loot in the Wheelhouse

♦**Wryneck's Wheelhouse:** Danava Wryneck is the first man to have driven and lived in the extra-dimensional wain known for three centuries as Wryneck's Wheelhouse. Easily as famous as Baba Yaga's Hut, perhaps even more so, the Wheelhouse is the granddaddy of all mega-storage devices. It is a Chest of Massive Volume and Bag of Hefty Capacity taken to the greatest, grandest extreme.

In short, it is really kewl.

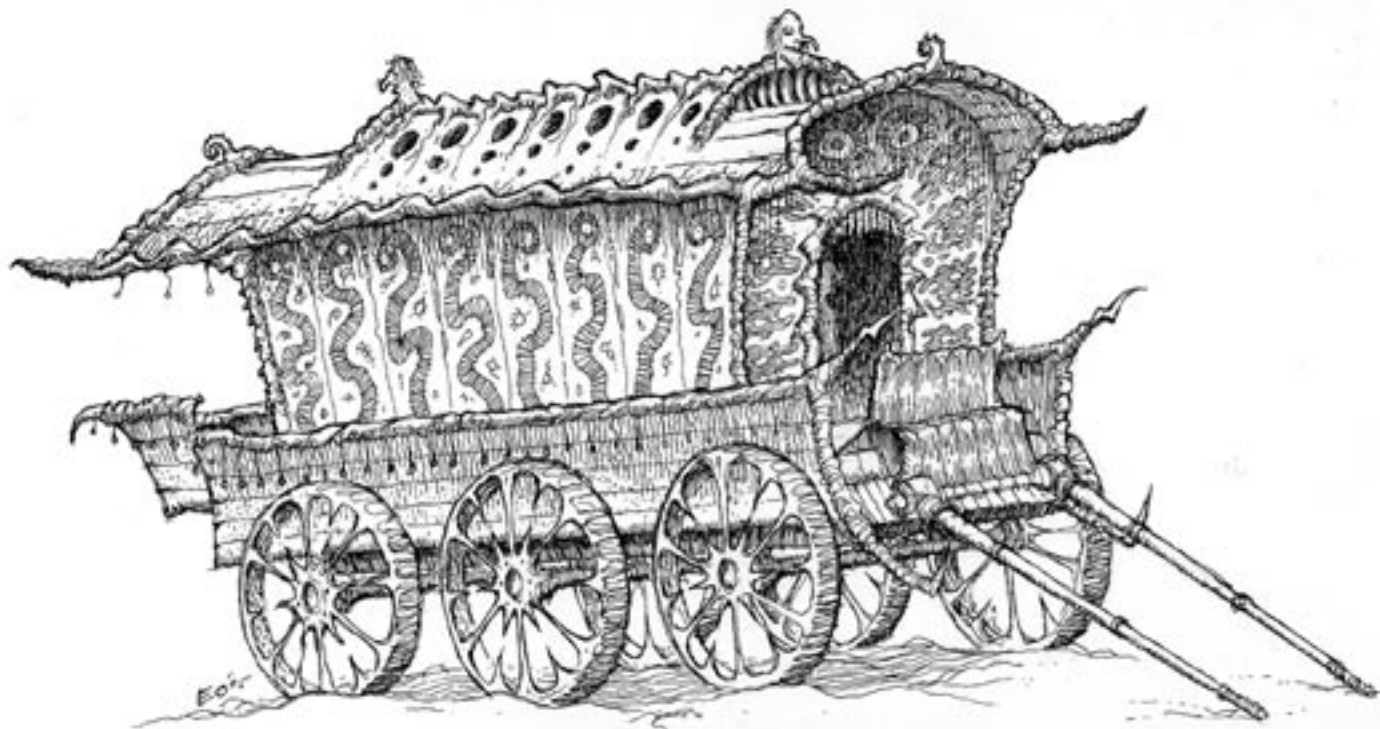
Unlike a Cube of Opulent Lodging or an Instant Fortress, Wryneck's Wheelhouse retains its outer shape and size at all times. The advantages of an extra-dimensional "war wagon" have been amply demonstrated by several different notable personalities and famed adventuring groups over the years. Why build a stronghold or a house you have to secure, post guards on, keep the lawn mowed and worry about while you're away, when you can take your house, all your kit, and sufficient adventuring supplies for a year along with you? There is ample room inside the Wheelhouse, enough that past owners have had everything from libraries to laboratories to a gladiator-training arena to a dawg-fighting pit inside.

In many ways the Wheelhouse is similar to a gypsy varda wagon, though it is of course considerably bigger. A bench at the front will seat the driver and a guard or companion, with a door immediately

behind them that leads inside. Railed walkways over the top of the massive wheels run down the outside of the living structure on either side to a back "deck" at the rear of the conveyance. Of wheels there are six, each chest-high to a tall man. Sages agree that nothing known has ever managed to damage these wheels, nor have any ever failed (though they are limited in the same ways as mundane wagon wheels, i.e. as regards to road surface and potentially bogging down, etc.). There is another door to the rear of the living structure, accessible from the back deck, and torch sconces along the railings all the way around. A small shuttered window sits a handwidth above the top of the rear door.

Danava never said how he came by the wagon, whether he obtained it adventuring or found it forgotten in some ruin. There are some who say it was a gift from the gawds, though this idea is typically mocked. All sages, scholars, pundits and wagon-experts agree that Danava himself lacked the enchanting skill necessary to create the thing. He wasn't even a real wizard, just a dilettante multi-classer that dabbled in cantrips and low-level charms.

It is said that originally he dubbed the Wheelhouse, Danava's Commodious Conveyance, but that the moniker never took. Everyone just liked the sound of Wryneck's Wheelhouse better. Danava, ever sensitive to the japes people made about his condition (the poor man's head was constantly leaning to the



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right and one shoulder was usually hunched up, as he suffered from severe torticollis), never came to terms with the name. Eventually, despite its great value and usefulness, he traded the Wheelhouse for a crystal ball, a pair of Eyes of the Eagle and a nice two-bedroom with a loft overlooking Incantatrix Tyrcella's Academy for Young Enchantresses.

The Joyner brothers, Joyner Breakspear and Joyner Bitterspear, are the adventurers who owned in the Wheelhouse next. These two valiant fighting men were both of that rare and disturbing genuinely valorous breed. They used the thing to house their retainers, followers and henchmen, preferring to ride horses while in search of new heroics to perform. Sadly, they met their match one day in the form of a particularly nasty hydra and most of their company was slain. One Joyner was crippled, the other killed (history, unfortunately, does not tell us which was which). The Wheelhouse was abandoned high in a perilous mountain valley while the battered survivors made their way to a nearby city. When an attempt was made to recover the Wheelhouse the next Spring it was gone.

Once it left the ownership of the Joyners the Wheelhouse passed from one adventuring band to another, sometimes being kept for a few years, oftentimes for decades. The Tallhares flew their rabbit pennant from it for a while, as well as the Fernda's Fellowship, Manuel's Magocracy and at least two different incarnations of the band known as the Gray Gyrovagues. These are but a few of the notable personages who rode in the Wheelhouse. There were others. Interestingly, on at least seven occasions it disappeared from the knowledge of sages altogether for lengthy periods of time.

Most recently the Wheelhouse is thought to have been the mobile home of one Woldor Frownharrow and his company, Frownharrow's Band. Woldor is thought to have departed civilized lands for broken and perilous country over two years ago in search of a particular medusa's lair. The reasons for his quest are unknown, and neither he nor the Wheelhouse have been seen since.

Wryneck's Wheelhouse contains 21 rooms that scholars are aware of, though there have been hints and rumors that other chambers and passages remain undiscovered within. The magic of its construction requires that it has just two beasts of sufficient strength to pull it (e.g. large mules, draft horses, oxen or war mooses), though some of its passed owners have yoked stranger creatures to it, including monsters.

The enchantment of the Wheelhouse's construction allows it to be pulled more easily than one would think, given its size and great weight.

The wagon will travel at the following rates, subject to the normal restrictions covered in the Overland Vehicular Movement tables: in normal terrain, i.e., an actual road or roadway on hard, level ground: 32 miles/day (this is slightly faster than a typical four wheeled wagon, a benefit doubtless provided by the magic of its construction). In rugged terrain, such as rough ground, forest or in snow or hilly country through which roadways or hardened paths have been built: 12 miles per day. In very rugged terrain, such as extremely broken ground, regions of steep and difficult hills and ravines or through deep snow, with just rude trails or roadways: 4 miles/day. Note that these movement rates assume that there is sufficient drayage available to pull the wagon, and that there is some kind of road or track available. If moving on or through a completely unimproved area, each of these movement rates is reduced to ½ the listed rate.

Numerous protective magics were woven into the wood and metals of the Wheelhouse when it was first built. These enchantments are for the most part still effective. Thus if it becomes necessary to address damage dealt to the wagon by an attacker for whatever reason, the GM should bear in mind how difficult it ought to be to permanently harm the thing. The complete details of this are left to the GM, but as a guideline it should probably be considered to be at least as tough as Full Plate (i.e. AC 1, must take a minimum of 40 hit points of appropriate damage to a one foot square area before a hole appears, absorbs 2 points per die, or something similar). It is suggested also that the Wheelhouse have an effective Magic Resistance of 50% vs. spells or spell effects directed at it, and that it suffers only have damage from elemental attacks (none with successful save). The Wheelhouse saves vs. spells and spell effects as a 20TH level Magic User.

Note that anyone inside or upon the Wheelhouse is protected from magical divination attempts by the Nondetection dweomers wrapped around it (treat as an Amulet of Proof Against Detection and Location).

♦**BlusterBoar:** An enchanted flail, +1 to hit, +2 damage, BlusterBoar is the perfect weapon for the fighter who likes to bludgeon his opponents to death and have a good time doing it. Though at a distance it does not

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appear out of the ordinary, closer inspection shows that the head of the weapon is crafted into the broad semblance of a boar's head (there isn't a lot of detail, but the likeness is unmistakable). The weapon's chain is black-enamelled steel and the haft fire-blackened and hardened bone, though this will not be immediately apparent, as it is completely bound in strips of bristly-haired leather hide (bristly enough that it is uncomfortable, though not damaging, to wield bare-handed).

BlusterBoar first came to light when used by the Bastard of Ruehold to pulverize Sir Nathaniel Highdrum at the All-Knight Knight Errant Night Tourney over a century ago. That notable tournament,

sponsored and held by the Dusk Prince, was limited strictly to those who could produce patents of nobility or proof of investiture. It was the first ever to be held strictly by torchlight or in no light at all. One of

the most memorable events (besides the Highdrum's being smashed to jelly, of course) was when Gour of Flaymaiden, probably wearing a Ring of Fire Resistance, covered himself in oil and set himself alight—then proceeded to defeat all comers in a thirty-two knight battle royale by light of his own burning armor.

After the Bastard of Ruehold met his end in a tomb reputedly the size of a market square, the flail he used to such deadly effect disappeared for decades. It has since resurfaced several times in the gauntleted hands of several adventurers, but none have ever achieved a victory to match his that day.

BlusterBoar bears a few enchantments that make it more formidable than just its bonuses in combat. Firstly, it doubles the FF (fatigue factor) of its wielder, and increases its wielder's maximum encumbrance to 125% of normal. Secondly, once per day the flail will allow its wielder to make a called shot to the head or chest which, if successful, does no extra damage (as a called shot normally would), but rather inflicts Pain upon the smitten foe as does the Symbol (creature affected is afflicted with wracking pains throughout his body—this agony causes a -2 to Dexterity and a -4 penalty to attack rolls for the next

2d10 turns). Thirdly and lastly, the bearer of BlusterBoar is immune to all forms of magical fear except for that caused by undead, against which he will gain a +1 to saving throws. E.P. 1,600 G.P. 32,000

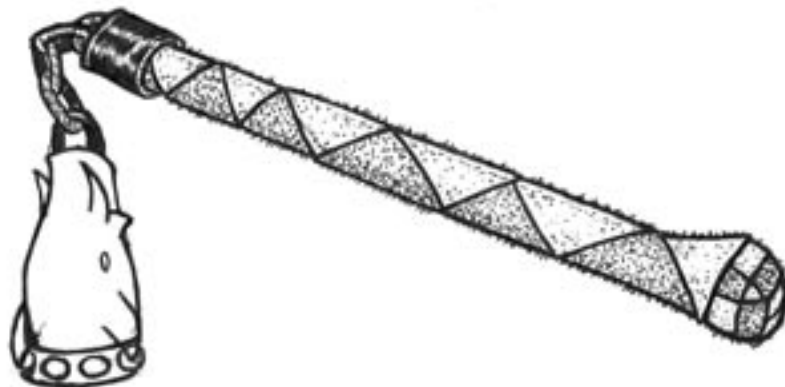
“...the Bastard of Ruehold never forgave the so-called ‘Sword of Flaymaiden’ for overshadowing his victory at the tourney. No one had expected him—or anyone else—to defeat the Highdrum in a fair fight. Big as the Bastard was (he was a half-ogre, did you know that?), Nathaniel Highdrum towered over him and had never been beaten while afoot. Everyone there remarked it a great, if messy, victory. Then that damned Gour went and turned himself into a living torch, personally defeating seventeen

of the thirty-two contenders in the no-blades-barred battle royale the last night of the tournament. Me personally, I think the Bastard could have beaten him. Fire didn't seem like the kind of thing to put him off, and he had BlusterBoar remember...alas, he ate some-

thing he shouldn't have that afternoon, and spent the next twenty hours in the privy! That came closer to killing him than the Highdrum ever did, poor fellow. Wouldn't that have been an awful end to the tale? To defeat the champion of the tourney one day and crap yourself to death the next...”

◆**Bracers of Watch and Ward +1** These items are arm guards, covering the entire lower arm from wrist to elbow. Their magic bestows an armor bonus vs. weapon attacks only (they provide no bonus to natural forms of attack, like claws and fangs and such), varying from +1 to +5 (thes are just +1, of course). Additionally, they provide a like bonus vs. surprise, making it somewhat more difficult for opponents and would-be ambushers to catch the wearer off guard. Like certain forms of protective magics, these bracers can be worn in conjunction with some forms of armor or other enchanted items, so long as there is room for them to be worn (in other words, their bonus could be “stacked” with Ankle Bracelets of Armoring, or with a sleeveless studded leather jerkin perhaps).

E.P. 850 G.P. 8,500



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◆The Bilious Buskins of Flobbagio d'Vescudi:

The aptly named boots of Flobbagio d'Vescudi, also known as Flobbagio the Oft-congested, are crafted of glossy leather, pale gray in hue, with a turned-down cuff at the top. They are so glossy, in fact, that they appear to glisten wetly in the proper light. The front of each boot is adorned with black, coin-sized buttons wrought in the shape of crawling slugs (albeit slugs with an open maw and big teeth). These boots are slick to the touch in every place except the soles of the feet.

Once per day the wearer of the Bilious Buskins will create an area of slick footing twenty feet in diameter, with the wearer at the center. This area is visible as a thin coating of slime, much as a slug leaves when it moves. Within this circle anyone or anything moving on the affected surface as though on a patch of ground affected by a Grease spell. If the wearer moves from this location, he will leave a slippery trail 5' wide behind him for the next d4+1 rounds until the enchantment wears off. The wearer of the Buskins must be standing still to activate the enchantment, which is triggered by stomping first one, then the other foot down briskly and clacking the heels together as though coming to the military position of attention.

Interestingly, there is a side magic to these boots that will prevent the wearer from ever losing his balance or falling down on a slick surface (such as one, for instance, created by a Grease spell).

Flobbagio d'Vescudi was a fighter-mage whose enchanting acumen was much greater than his grasp of social graces. As a consequence, and because his magic often involved gastropods (slug Figurines of Wondrous Power, Medallions of Polymorph-to-Slug, etc.), he was rarely invited to mage conventions or similar wizardly functions. He was, however, as good (or better) with his blade as he was with his spells, and so compensated for his lack of a social life by becoming a renowned (if mostly misunderstood) adventurer. It is during this stellar career that many foemen and even monsters were defeated by first putting them at a disadvantage with the magic of these boots.

The Bilious Buskins of Flobbagio d'Vescudi will stretch or shrink to fit any wearer the size of a dwarf up to an ogre. They will not, unfortunately, alter sufficiently for wear by a halfling, gnome, or giant.

EP: 2,000

GP: 15,000.

"Flobbagio was often mocked for his preoccupation with gastropods, but there is no question but that his creations were effective. One of his few apprentices, now a self-proclaimed lich tyrant on the Boneway, said once that the original inspiration for the boots actually came from observing a fight between some of d'Vescudi's strong-stomached adventuring companions and a pair of gristle golems. This is not a difficult claim to believe, though the mage chose a different method by which to render the floor impassable than golem secretions. When Flobbagio retired from active adventuring, he gave many of his possessions, including the Buskins, to Glarber of Whelk. Little if anything is known of Glarber's career, and nothing at all of his fate. The current location of the Bilious Buskins, sadly, is anyone's guess."

◆Choqueteta's Never Empty Bowl of Fresh Fruit

A rather simple bowl of gray stone, an adventurer possessing this vessel need never fear going hungry (or getting scurvy, for that matter). Though the name of the bowl is a bit of a misnomer (it can and will be emptied on occasion) it is very nearly accurate. Each morning, precisely at sunrise, the bowl will fill with ten pieces of fruit. Among these may be oranges, apples, bananas, bunches of grapes (purple or green) and the occasional pomengranate. It occasionally produces lemons, limes and cumquats, but not as often. The fruit is always ripe and tasty, though if left untended they will decay normally. The bowl will never hold more than ten pieces of fruit. In other words, if there are two apples and a banana in it, it will only conjure forth seven new pieces. EP: 1,500 GP 18,000

◆Halafactor's Ring of Reinforcements:

Hobard "StoneThews" Halfactor wore this ring for over a hundred years in his role as captain of the StoneThew Safari, perhaps the most well known and most highly regarded adventuring band ever to venture into the southern jungles (and certainly the most strangely named). According to his journals, Halafactor prized the ring from the lair of a seriously big-assed behir in his youth. He was a fledgeling adventurer and new member of the Company of the Sneering Saiga in those days (that would be the same adventure wherein his brother lost an arm from the elbow down and he himself suffered terrible electrical burns on his chest). The ring, with its oddly conical ruby setting, was the only piece of loot he took from that particular adventure and he was immensely proud of it.



Inside the stone atop the ring, visible only if you look straight down on it, are carved two tiny, simple, swordsmen. These represent the two bruisers that the magic of the ring will summon upon command, much like a Horn of Valhalla or a Myrmidon's Harmonica of Avalon.

The magic of this ring can be implemented mentally, by simply thinking the command "word". It can be used just once each fortnight. The ring-wielder will never be certain which of the so-called ringminders the band will summon (the results are random). Anyone summoned by the ring is aligned some sort of evil but this will not affect their service—they will fight at the direction or demand of their summoner, or will defend him and themselves if he somehow becomes incapacitated. They will continue to fight or defend as instructed, until they or their opponents are slain or three turns have elapsed, whichever occurs first.

If one of the Ringminders is slain, then he is well and truly dead. His corpse will remain there on the floor and everything (though it will decompose at four times the normal rate of human flesh). If killed, the Ringminder will no longer serve the power of the item.

The bruisers are Galt, Walt, Ch'Yalt and

Boramalt. Galt is a fighter, Walt is a thief, Ch'Yalt is a cleric and Boramalt is a fighter-mage. All of the four are something less than charming or handsome, but all are good at their "job". Roll 1d4 twice when the ring is activated to determine who arrives. 1 is Galt, 2 is Walt, 3 is Ch'Yalt and 4 is Boramalt. Numbers should remain assigned, even if one of them is killed (i.e., a 3 remains Ch'Yalt even if that worthy gets choked to death by a Snaggle-Toothed Throtler or something). From that time on, if a 3 is rolled no one shows up to fill that spot (so only one bruiser will arrive to help). Note: the cleric and the wizard will regain spells between summonses. EPV=5,500 GPV=22,500.

Galt the Ringminder

HF 8, EP 900, F5, S 18/60, D 12, C 16, I 12, W 11, Cha 9, Com 9; AL NE; AR 3 (Plate Mail); MV 12"; HD 5; HP 65; SZ M; #AT 3/2; D 2d4 (broadsword) +8 due to strength and specialization (+5 to hit with Talent); SOA Nil; SOD Nil; Lang: Common, Obsidian Clan, Orc; Hon: Average; TOP 33; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 30; Height 5' 11"; Weight 205; Quirks and Flaws Loud Boor; Talents Attack Bonus; Skills weapon specialization (broadsword), Wuss

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Slap, Press the Attack.

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“...was the first man to appear when I called upon the ring—I later learned he was called Galt. He looked sullen, as though out to have to answer the ring’s enchantment...like I was taking him away from some other, more leisurely pursuit (whoring or fighting in an arena, from the look of the man). He walked stoop-shouldered, with both fists clenched constantly. His hair was dirty blonde and ragged, as if hacked off with a dull knife and he had one lazy eye. On the whole I was less than impressed with the look of him. That only lasted until the Kuo-toans made their play though, and the hacking began—after that he was the Saint of Swords himself...”

Walt the Ringminder

HF 3, EP 550, T5, S 12/32, D 17/80, C 14, I 15, W 12, Cha 11, Com 10; AL NE; AR 4 [7] (studded leather, Dex); MV 12”; HD 5; HP 48; SZ M; #AT 1; D 1d8 (scimitar) +1 due to strength; SOA Backstab (+4 from behind, negates Dex and shield, +2 damage die); SOD –3 Defense adjustment, +4 Reaction adjustment (Dex); Lang: Common, Orc, Chimparian, Thieves Cant, Flounderthal; Hon: Average; TOP 24; Crit BSL; FF 6; Age 30; Height 5’ 9”; Weight 185; Quirks and Flaws—Close Talker; Talents—Blind Fighting; Skills—Pick Pockets 0%, Open Locks 10%, Find Traps 30%, Remove Traps 0%, Move Silently 75%, Hide in Shadows 55%, Detect Noise 35%, Climb Walls 45%, Read Languages 0% (scores include dex and armor adjustments).

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“...down in the temple of some fish-stinking gawd before I ever had need of it. Walt appeared and vanished just as quickly, disappearing into the darkness between the columns with less noise than shadows breathing. It was the

first time I’d gotten a look at him, and though I’ve seen him a half a score times since then, still that first glimpse stays with me. A shock of red hair, fiery as wind-blown embers, pox scars and half his teeth missing—but eyes like honed steel and a sword arm cavaliers in mail would envy. Saw him stroll out from behind a pillar once and slit two Xeblors’ throats once, pretty as you please, then hamstringing a third and plant his knife in another’s back before any one of them had any idea someone had got behind them...”

Ch’Yalt the Ringminder

HF 6, EP 725, C5, S 15/41, D 11, C 117, I 11, W 16/04, Cha 11, Com 10; AL CE; AR 5 (chain mail); MV 8”; HD 5; HP 52; SZ M; #AT 1; D 1d4+1 vs. small, 1d6+1 medium, 2d4 large (footman’s flail) +1 to hit/ +3 damage due to strength; SOA Spells SOD Spells, +2 to hit with spells requiring to hit roll (Talent), +4 vs. Fear effects (Talent); Lang: Common; Hon: Average; TOP 26; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 36; Height 5’ 11”; Weight 178; Quirks and Flaws—Scoliosis, Death Wish; Talents—Courage, Precision Casting, Resistance, Grace Under Pressure; Skills—Basic Anatomy, Resist Persuasion 72, Divine Lore 33, Ulterior Motive 41. Cleric of Kuchooloo (specifically, of the Kuchoolooan Saint Erol Otyugh—though there are normally no standard clerics of the Mad Gawd, there are some for “lesser” members of the pantheon).

Typical Spells: (1ST level, 7: Curse (2), Cause Light Wounds, Cure Light Wounds, Cause Fear(2), Sanctuary...2ND level, 4: Cause Color Blindness, Ignite, Rigor Mortis (2)...3RD level, 1: Shock Therapy)

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“...never learned to like it when that strange, gaunt-faced whoreson showed up. Had a sort of febrile light in his eyes, and even though I never heard him utter more than three words in succession I was never at ease around him. Half the time if he did say anything he was telling ghoulish and ghastrick jokes, even if no

one was listening—really disturbing ghoulish and ghastr jokes, the kind that would get you thrown in jail if people thought you really did that stuff. He was lean, too lean if you ask me, like someone had boiled him to get rid of all the excess meat. He was always doing something strange, like a man with a nervous habit, only the nature of his habit always seemed to change. One moment he was clacking his teeth together, the next picking at his fingernails until they were bloody, the next nodding his head and smiling like a politician, then popping his knuckles and sighing. Looked like he'd been burned once, bad enough to leave scars, and like maybe something had been allowed to gnaw on one of his arms for a while.

Boramalt the Ringminder

HF 6, EP 950, MU9, S 10, D 16/27, C 12, I 17/99, W 10, Cha 9, Com 11; AL LE; AR 4 (Hair Clip and Dex); MV 12"; HD 9; HP 61; SZ M; #AT 1 (bastard sword, 1-handed only); D1d6 vs. small, 1d8 medium, 1d12 large); SOA Spells SOD Spells, surprised only on 1 in 10 (Talent); Lang: Common, Chimparian, Elf, Dwarf, Orc, Xill; Hon: Average; TOP 32; Crit BSL; FF 7; Age 33; Height 6'; Weight 188; Quirks and Flaws—Allergic (cats, ferrets/weasels, soap), Flatulence; Talents—Arcane Swindler, Blind Casting, Fast Caster, Martial Tradition, Alertness; Skills—arcane lore 60, spellcraft 63, Penmanship, Arcane Speak. Boramalt is left-handed, right eye dominant. He wields his sword in his left hand, casts spells predominantly with his right.

Typical Spells: 1ST level, 6: Bash Door, Charm Person, Fireball Barrage, Magic Missile, Delayed Magic Missile, Locate Familiar...2ND level, 3: Sidewinder Magic Missile, Cheetah Speed, Magic Missile of Skewering...3RD level, Dispel Magic, Monster Summoning, I, Power Word, Attack: 4TH level, Charm Monster, Delayed Magic Missile....5TH level, Snarcher's Corkscrewing Smoking Missile).

Possessions: Hair Clip of Protection AC 6 (just like the Bracers), Wand of Serious Hoodoo, Dagger of Groin-Seeking +2.

Boramalt resembles Sean Bean in his role as the Steward of the City's son, only his hair looks even more unwashed, he has really dry skin (especially his hands) and there's a tattoo of a scowling Myconid on his left cheekbone (even he doesn't remember how he got it). Of the four Ringminders, Boramalt is the only one that ever wonders why he has to help "this guys" out ("this guys" being the ring's owner). He will behave and obey as normal for the first 2d4 rounds after he is summoned, but after that will slowly start to remember "this has happened before". After another 1d4 rounds his responses to issued instructions will be sullen and begrudged. By the time the magic summons wears off he will have started to actually get pissed off, but by then it will be too late. Each time he is summoned, there is a 20% chance that Boramalt will remember the last 2—5 rounds of his summonses the next time he is conjured forth. These memories are discordant and disjointed, but may eventually allow him to break the bindings of the ring and strike out on his own—after first killing the owner of the ring and making the other three his henchmen of course.

Boramalt hates any mammalian familiar due to past allergic reactions (several of them humiliating) to those of his peers. He'll kill one if he can, especially if he can get away with it without the owner noticing—even including the familiars of anyone that summons him.

Note that Boramalt is the only one of the ring's reinforcements that possesses any magical items.

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"...clever wizard, even bloodthirsty, that one was, but I wish he'd have found the time to wash his hair whenever he was trapped inside the ring (assuming such a thing was possible o'course). He had a great sneer, he did, and he used it all the time. I never like it when



he arrived, though. I always felt like he was plotting against me...kept looking at me over his shoulder and frowning, even when he was fighting. Like he was remembering something. I just didn't trust the fellow. I still swear to this day it was him that killed Nancalgon's cat, not that spectre, I don't care what he says. Poor wizard went catatonic afterwards and nearly cost us the fight. Anyway, how can you really respect someone that has a man-mushroom tattooed on his cheek?"

◆**Mergenszer's Ring:** The Archmage Mergenszer of the Coldpools, whose personal emblem was a flying mallard on a field of blue, is the man who crafted the original rings of this sort (there are many out there floating around). He is said to have made them for friends, family and apprentices.

Mergenszer's Ring has a variety of valuable effects available for its wearer to command. Among them—the Dry and Dampen cantrips, which it will cast up to thrice per day each. A Fly spell, which can be evoked once per day as though by a 10TH level wizard (though no more than two days consecutively, and no more than on three different days within the same calendar week). Additionally, the Ring will cast Flock

of Diving Ducks and Mergenszer's Spectral Watch-Duck once per day per spell.

Finally, the ring acts in all ways as a Ring of Fall Softly (q.v.), though without the same material manifestation of the cushion effect. The wearer will automatically begin feather falling (as per the spell) if he falls any distance greater than six feet, four inches (6', 4", Mergenszer's height in his prime). Furthermore, if the terrain below is broken or rocky or dangerous, a great mound of soft duck feathers will appear magically on the spot to cushion his fall, vanishing as soon as he is safely on the ground (thus the wearer takes no damage from obstacles during his fall). EP: 2,500 GP: 6,250.

"...there's been more than one unlucky adventurer what owed his life to one of Mergenszer's cunning rings. G'Dish used it when he was washed out of the sewers of Thulk over the falls ahead of his companions that one time you know...he was the only one to survive that ill-fated foray, you know. There've been other notable occasions too—that time the mage Cimón "el Rana" got drunk and fell off the Oddcliffs from the balcony of the Oddcliff Tavern, and the occasion when the Spectral Watchduck saved the Archbishop of Noodel from being eaten by a hammerhead

bulette...”

♦**Mort's Loud-Assed Sallet:** Also known in more well-spoken circles as Mortimer's Resounding Helm, this steel headpiece is one of those unusual styles of sallet that comes down below the wearer's eyes. No one knows who Mortimer is, or was, and it's not clear that anyone has ever really tried to find out. The name comes from the only mark upon the helmet, which is just the name MORTIMER scratched indelibly upon the inside. No amount of buffing or polishing has ever managed to remove it. The interior of the helm is lined with an odd green leather that is actually the hide of a Screaming Desert Tortoise.

Mort's Loud-Assed Sallet takes its name from the fact that for some reason all blows struck against it, whether as significant as a sword blow are as minor as an acorn dropped upon it from a tree, sound preternaturally loud—far louder than it should be. It also comes from an unfortunate side effect that occasionally occurs when the wearer is in combat (see below).

The powers of the Loud-Assed Sallet include adding a +3 to the wearer's AR (Armor Rating), and a protective power that causes an attacker to suffer a -5 to made to make a called shot to the head. An additional enchantment provides the wearer with a form

of gaze immunity, much like the spell—to wit, any gaze attack directed at the wearer (i.e. that of a Basilisk, Eyes of Charming, an Eyebite spell, etc.) will be directed away (though not reflected). Unfortunately there is a 25% chance that anyone in close proximity to the wearer when he is the target of such an attack might “catch” the gaze as it bounces away.

If the wearer of the helm is struck in the head by a particularly powerful blow (such as a head critical, or a successful called shot to the head), the noise created by the blow will be magnified by an order of magnitude, reverberating for a great distance all about. This thundrous noise will smite everyone within 30' of the wearer, temporarily (1d4+1 rounds) deafening them all and causing 2d4 points of damage (save vs. apology to avoid the deafness and take half damage). Any exposed brittle substances within the area of effect must make an object save or be shattered (such items on the wearer's own person save at -2). Deafened creatures suffer a -1 penalty to surprise rolls, and those that cast spells requiring a verbal component are 20% likely to miscast them. This effect will obviate and dispel the 2ND level cleric spell Silence 15' Radius and similar magics. The wearer of the helm will be Stunned for 2d4 rounds, no save, and will drop anything they are holding.



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Interestingly, the wearer of this helm can add one round to any Haste or other movement type spell cast upon him. This was probably a side benefit unintended and unanticipated by the helm's creator.

Rumor has it that several mages have occasionally expressed an interest in this helm in the hopes of melting it down and using the metal to craft a particularly powerful magical horn that combines the powers of a Horn of Collapsing and a Horn of Salutation. Whether or not this could actually be done is a matter of debate for wizards and their ilk.

"...what a noise this helmet made. Deafened Jeorg the Limner when he was wearing it in the Grand Gladiatorial Brouha in Six Roads Crossing, just as he was about to win. This didn't turn out to be as terrible a fate as could have befallen him, though—it knocked two other contenders completely unconscious, and deafened Nejo Steelbard for life (which probably explains how he became a Vengeful Troubador and why he was hunted down and killed by Grinning Whimsy adventuring company outside of Sternholt..."

♦**Torc of Glare Immunity** A torc of hammered gold, set with a peridot or similar stone in the front, the wearer of a Torc of Glare Immunity need fear no gaze attack, regardless of the source or its virulence. Neither basilisk nor medusa can harm him. Note that the wearer must be able to wear the torc. Don't let one a player get one over on you by wearing a great helm and a chainmail coif and the torc. Not happenin', don't fall for it.
EP: 1,500 GP: 15,00

♦**Wand of Serious Hoodoo** A Wand of Serious Hoodoo is bad, bad news for a mage that runs afoul of a rival wizard wielding it. It is a wand made for one thing, and one thing only—to put the smackdown on other magic-users. The wand may appear in any of several forms. They are

typically about two feet long, crafted of wood capped and/or banded in iron, and are usually not as fragile as other wands. They are almost invariably invulnerable to fire, and can never hold more than fifty charges (which is less than a standard wand, of course, but still not bad).

The wand has several powers, each of which will cost one charge to employ. First, it can be used like a Wand of Enemy Detection, detecting any magic-user or magic-user variant within 60' (duration 1d4+1 rounds). Secondly, it will Target Flying Familiar (a spell-like ability), thirdly it will channel offensive spell against magic-users for superior targeting, and fourthly it provides protection against spelljacking; fifthly and lastly, it will cast a variety of spells (though no one spell can be cast more than three times in a single day).

Target Flying Familiar affects everyone within a 10' radius of the wand-wielder, giving them a bonus



to attack any flying wizard's familiar within range (+2 to hit, +1 per die to damage rolls). The spell-channeling ability of the wand gives a +2 to hit (or -2 to saving throws, depending on the nature of the spell being cast) to any dweomer cast through the wand at a magic-user (uses on charge of the wand each time a spell is channeled through it).

The protective power of the wand makes the wizard almost completely immune to harm when spelljacking. He is only 20% as likely to suffer any damaging or harmful effects from failure when spelljacking.

The spells that can be cast by the wand include Pinpoint Familiar, Containment, Dispel Magic, Anti-Magic Shell (costs 2 charges), and Globe of Invulnerability (costs 2 charges).

EP: 3,500 GP: 37,500

Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

Critter Compendium

Slobber Weird

AKA: Slaver Fiend, Saliva Devil

Hackfactor: 15

XP: 250

Common Climate/Terrain Encountered: Any water (relatively small source)

Frequency: Very Rare

Society: Loner

Activity Cycle: Whenever

Diet: Nil

Intelligence: Average (8—10)

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

No. Encountered: 1

Size: L (about 8' long)

Movement: 10" Swim

Psionic Ability: None Suspected

Attack/Defense Modes: Nada

Morale: Fearless (19)

Armor Rating: 4

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 2-12

Significant Other Attacks: Drowning, Disease, Surprise 5 in 10

Significant Other Defenses: Reformation, specific weapon resistance, limited damage from elemental attacks

Magic Resistance: Standard

Hit Dice: 4 +2

Description: Slobber Weirds are created much in the same way as Mud Men are, only a lot different. In point of fact, only the fact that there is enchantment is involved really connects the two. A Slobber Weird will arise or appear in a fountain, small pool or even pond wherefrom a large, drooling magical beast has drunk, but...only if one of the following two criteria are met; one, a traditional Water Weird already lives in the source and comes in contact with the slobber or, two, if a traditional Water Weird moves into the source within a fortnight of the source being contaminated by the slaver. (Note: traditional Water Weirds are creatures from the Elemental Plane of Water. Non-traditional Water Weirds are unconventional and often non-conformist, preferring alternative music and avant garde poetry. They would have lots of piercings if they could. Non-traditional Water Weirds cannot become infected by Slobber Weirds.)

Melee: These critters are spiteful, mean and unsani-



tary. They know they're made of soomethin's drool and they're not happy about it. Seeking to compensate for their self-disgust and inner rage, they will attack anyone or anything that ventures within reach (usually completely unexpectedly). Their initial attack will almost always be to form some part of themselves into a coherent, 'solid', appendage and bludgeon their foe. The septic nature of the slobber that has infected them makes such an attack very likely to cause disease within the victim.

If the joy of beating their victim begins to wane or it is faced with multiple opponents, a Slobber Weird will attempt to drown its foe by pulling him into the water with it. Victims struck with this attack must save vs. paralyzation or be dragged underwater. Victims will drown in 1d6+3 rounds. No spells can be cast nor words spoken, etc., so long as the victim is being held underwater by the Weird (unless the victim possesses some sort of magic item, such as a Ring of Free Action). The Weird's victim may attack it, but at a -4 only (victim gains no Dexterity bonus to defend either). Piercing or hacking weapons do only one point of damage per hit, other attacks are limited to half normal.

The Slobber Weird attacks an 8HD creature. If reduced to 0 hit points, it will break apart and dissolve into the water, but will reform anew within 3—6 rounds and attack again. Cold spells slow the critter to half its normal movement rate and weaken its attacks (attacks as 6HD critter instead of 8). Electricity-based attacks cause half damage and also slow it (save for zero damage). Fire attacks have no effect. Much like a Water Weird, a Purify Water spell will kill any Saliva Devil within its radius (though unlike a Water Weird, this critter gets a saving throw).

Disease attack: there is a base 25% chance of need to make a saving throw after contact with one of these critters. This chance triples if the Slobber Weird's attack gets into the victim mouth or if the victim has an open wound. Saving Throw vs. disease as normal. Failure results in contraction of slow, debilitating affliction that causes the loss of Strength and Constitution at a rate of one point per week until death or cure (death occurs when the diseases reduces an ability to zero).

Note: if a person attacked by a Slobber Weird is aware of the creature's true nature, i.e. is aware that he's being beaten by slobber and not just regular water, and is struck or touched by the thing, he must immediately save vs. paralyzation or become overcome

by revulsion for the next 1d4+2 rounds. Additional saving throws are allowed every other round afterward to overcome this). While grossed out the victim will be at a -3 to all actions.

Habitat/Demeanor/Social Organization: Slobber Weirids can be summoned with modifications of the sorceries that will conjure a Water Weird or, presumably, by unique spells crafted for that purpose. They enjoy watching a victim thrash beneath the water as he drowns, and exult at the air bubbles that come bubbling from his gaping mouth. Unlike Water Weirids, they are unable to possess a Water Elemental. This fact means they are stuck wherever they are created or summoned and are never found anywhere else. This restriction, added to their already overwhelming sense of self-loathing, makes them virtually impossible to reason with. Slobber Weirids are solitary creatures. For some reason they're often found with spell scrolls in their lairs, however, these scrolls are inevitably soggy and waterlogged and of no use to anybody.

Ecology: Slobber Weirids were once Water Weirids. They recollect little of their former life, but they do recall enough to know they do not like the change. Presumably they would like to return to the Elemental Plane of Water, but there is no way to know that for sure. Even if they could, they'd be about as welcome as a particularly hideous leper at a wedding banquet. For some reason Slobber Weirids often like to collect scrolls, though their environment invariably ruins them.

Dissection & Exploitation

Medicinal: Nada

Spell Components: A vial of water left over from a slain Slobber Weird may be used as a material component for a Befoul Water spell of double normal area of effect or a Cause Disease spell that causes its intended victim to suffer a -2 to saving throw.

Hide/Trophy: Nil

Treasure: I, O, T, Y

Edible: Zip. Drinking the substance of a Slobber Weird causes disease, as above, without save.

Other: Zilch

Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

Spittin' Image

AKA: Mirror Monster, Reflectocritter

Hackfactor: 18

XP: 2,100

Common Climate/Terrain Encountered: Any (mirror)

Frequency: Very Rare

Society: Loner

Activity Cycle: Any (but usually when victim is primping)

Diet: Nil

Intelligence: Exceptional (15)

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

No. Encountered: 4

Size: S to M (2'-7')

Movement: 14"

Psionic Ability: Nope

Attack/Defense Modes: Nada

Morale: Daring (15)

Armor Rating: 3 (Prime Material) 8 (Ethereal Plane)

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 4-14 (2d6+2)

Significant Other Attacks: Spitting

Significant Other Defenses: Spells, Certain Immunities

Magic Resistance: 10%

Hit Dice: 6

Description: Thought to perhaps be related in some way to the Tween (Mulligan Spirit), the Spittin' Image has been the bane of more than one vain or primping adventurer. As to what the critter's real appearance is—who knows for sure? Whenever one is seen, it invariably looks like whomever it is attacking. The only thing that's known with certainty is that it is non-corporeal. A Spittin' Image's natural form is most likely that of a vaguely featured humanoid of uncertain gender and appearance. It has actually been described on more than one occasion as a "shimmering inconsistency, like a heat mirage seen in the distance", though it so quickly takes on the form of whomever is looking into its 'home' mirror that even this is probably not entirely accurate.

Melee: The Spittin' Image can only be attacked to full effect on the ethereal plane once it has taken on its reflective form, and cannot be harmed at all if it has not taken such a form (though, thankfully, it is only encountered in its natural state once in a very great



while, and even then only on its home plane).

The first round it becomes aware of someone staring into its mirror it will begin to manifest in such a way as to simply blur the reflective surface, as though whomever is looking into it is looking through watery eyes or a haze. The second round the surface of the mirror will return to normal—at this time the reflection being seen is in fact the Spittin' Image. On the third round the creature will step out of the mirror and attack.

There is no way to visually differentiate between the original person who was reflected and the Spittin' Image once it takes on its corporeal form.

Its attacks will typically take the form of the weapons it is reflecting—i.e., if a bard with long hair is brushing his hair in a mirror occupied by a Spittin' Image, and that bard is carrying a dagger, then the Spittin' Image will attack him with a dagger that is the exact twin (in appearance) of the original. The damage the creature inflicts will be the same regardless, though, whether it looks like its stabbing with a spear or hacking with an axe (this amount is always 4—14, or 2d6+2). The Spittin' Image ignores any non-magical armor or shield when it attacks and suffers only half damage from any attack on the Prime Material plane.

The Spittin' Image can cast Mirror Image once per turn up to a total of once per day/10 hit points maximum. It is immune to mind-influencing spells, psionics, Sleep, Charm Hold and like spells. It takes just half damage from normal weapons, requiring at

least a +1 enchantment to suffer the weapons full effect.

In addition to its regular attack, the Spittin' Image can also spit into the face of its victims once every other round (hence its name). Its spit has a range of 10 feet and causes just 1 point of damage—however, its target must save vs. poison or suffer Confusion as the spell. The person whose form the Spittin' Image has adopted suffers a -4 to this save. All others save normally.

Habitat/Demeanor/Social Organization: No one knows why a Spittin' Image attacks as often or as viciously as it does. Some have speculated that it exists to punish excessive vanity the way a Hubrisite punishes arrogance. Others dismiss such assertions as errant nonsense, saying the creatures live in mirrors and they're just firkin' mean. They are always solitary, and are capricious. They may tolerate one person looking to "their" mirror, then go postal on the next one. They delight in causing pain and stirring up mayhem. All Spittin' Images dream of being able to move into a little hand mirror that's accessible to large numbers of people in a public place (like a tavern or a whorehouse).

Ecology: Though at first glance not dissimilar from certain spectral forms of undead, Spittin' Images are actually living creatures (albeit strange ones). They are kindred to such things as Tweens and...and other things like Tweens. A Spittin' Image would be really bad news at a beauty pageant or in a house of mirrors.

Dissection & Exploitation

Medicinal: The gooey, multichromatic sludge left behind when a Spittin' Image is killed will evaporate quickly, but if scooped up with alacrity can be stored in a ceramic phial. This sludge can be rubbed as a skin crème onto the face to improve Comeliness by +2.

Spell Components: The sludge can be used in lieu of any other spell components for a Mirror Image spell that will triple the number of images produced, and double the duration of the spell.

Hide/Trophy: Zilch

Treasure: J. K. P. O

Edible: Nada

Other: Nil



Meadow Kraken

AKA: Dirt Kraken, Devil Land Squid

Hackfactor: 25

XP: 4,500

Common Climate/Terrain Encountered: Temperate

Frequency: Very Rare

Society: solitary

Activity Cycle: Any

Diet: Carnivore

Intelligence: Semi (2)

Alignment: Neutral

No. Encountered: 1-2

Size: H (30' + long)

Movement: 3", 12" Burrow

Psionic Ability: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: None

Morale: 16 (Foolhardy)

Armor Rating: 6

No. of Attacks: 9 (8 tentacles and one beak)

Damage/Attack: 2-7(8)/5-20

Significant Other Attacks: Constriction

Significant Other Defenses: Stinking Cloud, partial damage from blunt weapons

Magic Resistance: Standard

Wryneck's Wheelhouse: Mobile Home of Doom

Hit Dice: 9

Description: Meadow Kraken are the molluscs that inhabit grassy fields, clearings, and even high plains, traveling through the earth much as Bulettes do. They can burrow through loose soil as fast as a man can walk, and are only slightly slowed by rock, gravel or thick clay. These creatures are related to Land Squids and Arboreal Land Squids, but are much more aggressive. Even the Hammerhead Bulette steers clear of a Meadow Kraken's territory.

Melee: The Meadow Kraken rarely delves too deeply into the earth, preferring to stay within a tentacle's reach of the surface above (though this is not always possible, particular if it needs to go underneath the root structure of a large tree or beneath a riverbed, etc.). They are strong enough to crush a wagon or chariot if aroused, but more often simply burrow up beneath unsuspecting prey strolling by and snatch them underground.

Victims struck by a tentacle initially take 1d6+1 point of damage (per tentacle), but suffer 2-12 points of damage each round thereafter due to constriction. Humanoids constricted by a Meadow Kraken should roll on the following table:

01-20%	left arm pinned
21-40%	right arm pinned
41-60%	no arms pinned, torso being crushed
61-80%	both arms pinned
81-100%	mouth and head covered by tentacle

The number of tentacles that can wrap around a victim is dependent upon the victim's size. A halfling can be constricted by one, a man or elf two or perhaps three (depending on height), and a giant up to five or six. Each additional tentacle constricting a victim adds +20% to rolls on the table above.

The Meadow Kraken is not particularly smart, but it knows that sharp objects hurt. If a particular weapon is causing it significant distress, it may decide to remove it from the fight by disarming the person wielding it. Treat this as a base Disarm skill of 25%. For each tentacle it does not attack with normally the round it attempts a disarm (representing how much effort and concentration it puts into the effort), add 10% to this skill level. Thus it is possible that the creature could be quite determined to wrest a sword away from a troublesome paladin, devoting its every effort (i.e.

no other attacks) to the attempt and having an effective skill rating of 95%. Alternately, if there is an irritating dwarf hewing away with an axe from the side, it could attack normally with just five of its tentacles with a resulting skill rating of 45%.

In order to be successful in this attempt, the critter must make a called shot to the weapon wielded by its opponent (this takes the place of one or more tentacle attack, as explained above). A successful to-hit roll must be made, with the kraken suffering a -4 to attack, against the target's normal AR, followed by the disarm skill check. Failure at either attempt indicates that the attempt failed. If the weapon is being held two-handed, the critter must be successful with TWO skill checks (though just the one attack). If the attempt is successful the creature will hurl the offending weapon away (5d20 feet + 5' per 5 full points by which the skill check succeeded) in a random direction.

Constricted characters can fight, but are necessarily limited by the Kraken's grasp upon them. With one arm free, the victim strikes at a -3 to hit; with both arms free this penalty is -1. A Meadow Kraken's tentacle can be severed if it takes 10 or more points of damage from slashing weapons.

Note that Meadow Kraken tentacles take half damage from blunt or smashing weapons such as hammers or maces. Such attacks directed against the creature's body will wound it normally.

If four or more of its tentacles are severed, the monster is 50% likely to go into a frenzy, suffering a -2 to hit but increasing damage to 1d10+1 (tentacle bludgeon) and 5-30 (bite). Meadow Kraken in a frenzy will typically turn any squeeze-victims loose to flail away at their opponents with their tentacles (and snap at them with their beak).

If the creature does not go into a frenzy, it is 90% likely to release a noxious mist (treat as a Stinking Cloud) to cover its retreat and burrow away.

Habitat/Demeanor/Social Organization: Meadow Kraken are solitary unless mating (and then they put up with another for as brief a period as possible, usually just 1-4 days). Meadow Kraken dates are very much the "let's don't tell each other our names, let's just do the deed and go our separate ways" kind of affairs. They rarely bother attacking anything smaller than a dwarf, though halflings or gnomes will occasionally be snatched down like popcorn shrimp.

Ecology: Meadow

Kraken are most dangerous in territory where there is soft soil, and will often settle in one region for extended periods of time (such as an area of small farms and orchards, for instance) if there is sufficient prey available. Unlike their cousins, the Giant Land Squid, they rarely go near large fortified structures like castles and keeps—why try to tear through a stone wall when you can pluck tasty farmers off their wains?



Dissection & Exploitation

Medicinal: Meadow Kraken tastes like old, gritty calamari.

Spell Components: Dried and powdered Meadow Kraken can be used as the material component for a Dig spell of twice the normal area of effect. A piece of its beak used in the casting of Move Earth will increase the spell's range to 15 yards per level.

Hide/Trophy: Zilch

Treasure: Zero

Edible: Nil

Other: Nada

Crawling Claw, Giant

AKA: Giant Death Grip, Giant's Clutch

Hackfactor: 12

XP: 900

Common Climate/Terrain Encountered: Any

Frequency: Rare

Society: Solitary or Clutch

Activity Cycle:

Diet: Special

Intelligence: Non- (0)

Alignment: Neutral

No. Encountered: 1 or 2—5

Size: L (Giant hand)

Movement: 16"

Psionic Ability: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: None

Morale: Fanatic (20)

Armor Rating: 5

No. of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attack: 2d6 (armored foes), 2d8 (unarmored foes) +9 (STR)

Significant Other Attacks: +4 to hit (STR)

Significant Other Defenses: See below

Magic Resistance: See below

Hit Dice: 5d8 +40 hit points

Description: Giant Crawling Claws are the animated remains of giant hands, paws, or talons, typically hewn from the arm of a giant, cyclops, or other massive humanoid or giant creature. This may be the result of the big fellow getting cross-wise with the mage who created it, or perhaps a particularly thrifty wizard using the parts of his servant creatures or bodyguards after they have been killed in his defense. The flesh is dead, though nearly as hard as iron, and wounds inflicted upon them cannot be healed without magic.

Melee: The Giant Death Grip attacks immediately when it detects a victim, leaping up to 25 feet away. It deals 2d8 damage to unarmored foes (unarmored opponents being anyone in leather, lighter or no armor), and 2d6 to a victim in heavier armor such as mail or plate. Edged weapons inflict just half damage to

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a Giant Crawling Claw; enchanted weapons do not increase the damage in any way, though they will still add to the likelihood of landing a successful blow (or, in certain cases, additional damage due to 'extra' magics, such as that of a flaming blade).

The Giant Death Grip is immune to death magic and Raise Dead spells, though a Resurrection spell will render them immobile for 1d4 rounds per level of the caster. Giant Crawling Claws have undead resistance when it comes to spells, but cannot be turned or controlled, nor do they suffer damage from holy water. Cold spells will, if sufficiently powerful, make the hands brittle and cause +1 point of damage per die to them (save for half damage).

Habitat/Demeanor/Social Organization: These hideous creations have a very limited ability to communicate with each other, empathically (it is believe). They do not speak and make no noise (other than that of their movement) but still somehow manage to coordinate their attacks (this is limited to coordination with other Claws created by the same mage). Some of them do know the rudiments of sign language, however, and find it morbidly amusing to distract a deaf opponent with placating gestures or signed intentions to surrender while one of their evil buddies scuttles up behind their victim and jumps on him. "Clutches" of Giant Crawling Claws often spend their time practicing the "grab and push" maneuver, whereby two of the critters grab hold of an opponent's ankles and a third hurls itself at the immobilized creature's chest or back to knock them down.

Ecology: Giant Crawling Claws are created by mages and clerics with a penchant for necromancy and a yearning for loud applause. The maximum number of GCCs that can be animated is dependent upon the level and manual dexterity of the creator—typically one for every three levels of the spellcaster, plus an additional number determined by his dexterity bonus. Claws are typically programmed when first animated, such instruction necessarily limited and simple (such as, "Throttle anyone that opens this door" or "Squeeze all fruit placed in this basket into this pitcher"). These intructions can be modified or altered somewhat as necessary, but this is a difficult process that takes several turns (such modifications are often met by rude single-fingered gestures, but do usually "take").

Some Giant Claws are not programmed immediately upon creation, but rather are primed for later

direct mental direction by their creator. The mental effort required for such control is tiring and cannot be maintained for more than three rounds without a round of rest. Instructions can be issued from up to twenty feet away, plus 5 feet per level of the caster, plus 10 feet for each point of the creator's intelligence (mages) or wisdom (clerics) over 13 if that caster has psionic ability. (It is in this way that Black Ralph Curtus—the same diabolical mage who was known for pretending to be a homeless man named Dugg in order to fool adventurers—deployed his clutch of animated Cyclops' hands to destroy the Floozfinder Fellowship adventuring company a decade ago. He directed his grasping minions from a hidey-hole behind some curtains on his balcony, chortling gleefully while Shill Floozfinder screamed his last.) The mage or cleric must be able to see the hands in order to direct them. Only unconsciousness or death (or breaking the line of visual communication) will break direct control and the Claws will continue operating on their last instructions. If encountered unexpectedly or by surprise, Giant Claws of this kind will be torpid and loathe to move, and will not even move to defend themselves unless directed to do so.

A mage named Gladzbarger, the so-called "Carrionarch" of Tull, is said to have built a gigantic harpischord on the floor of his receiving and taught a clutch of these things to play it. The music wasn't much to listen to, however, since few giants care much for music.

Some Giant Crawling Claws, depending on what kind of creature they come from, have a penchant for jewelry such as rings and bracelets.

Dissection & Exploitation

Medicinal: Nil

Spell Components: Powdered Giant Crawling Claw fingernail will serve as the material component for a Strength spell of triple normal duration.

Hide/Trophy: Zilch

Treasure: Zip

Edible: Nada

Other: Nuthin'

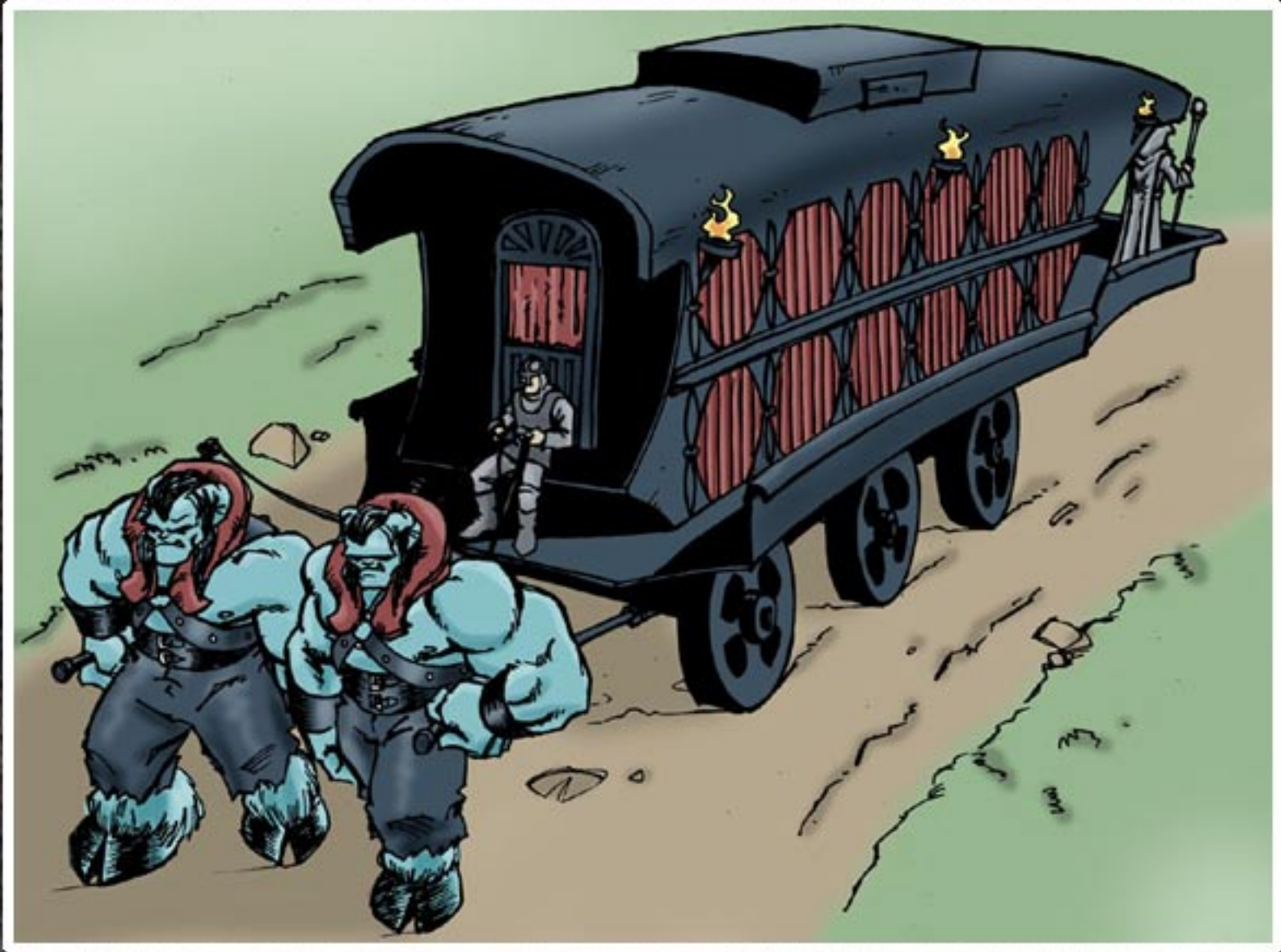
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