

FROM THE SHROUD #2



GRAY

D101 GAMES

FROM THE SHROUD

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Newt Newport

with Neil Shaw

Cover and Internal Art (pages 4,21,29 Jonny Gray

Prince Rona illustration (page 9) Dan Barker

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EDITORIAL

This issue deepens the mystery of the Shroud, by revealing a little bit more about the things that lurk in its mists.

Emerging from the mists this issue:

“All Hail the Death Riders!” on page 4. Face death from above with these flying undead warriors, a new monster for the game.

“My Dirty Little Secret” on page 6. A quick table of dark secrets that player characters can have, and probably wish they hadn't, at character generation.

“Prince Ronas the Lord of Swords” on page 8. A demonic Prince of an Other World, fit to become the characters' latest Nemesis.

“The Pie Makers of Peopolis” on page 10. An adventure location in the Zarth's City of Beggars (although they may have a franchise near you).

“A Strange Thing Happened on the Way to the Ruins” on page 14. An encounter table of weird and wonderful non-player characters to liven up otherwise dull and humdrum journeys.

“The Place of Dark Hooks” on page 18. The old lair of a foul Court Torturer, whose riches and secrets are said to lie in its depths. A full Crypts and Things mini-module, usable with any OSR game, or even 5th Edition with minor changes.

“The Weird and the Warped” on page 30. A selection of ten Others, demonic monsters who live in the Should and who can be either summoned to Zarth or encountered on their home plane.

“Varna Cabal's Travelling Caravan” on page 50. Neil Shaw details this group of travelling merchants who deal with the mysterious and harbour a dark secret.

“Lost Locations” on page 60. Ten strange and malignant locations within the Shroud for your adventurers to find treasure and terror in.

“A Love Like Blood” on page 73. How having a lover affects the character in the fine tradition of Swords and Sorcery romances. This issue would not exist without the help of the Kickstarter that ran during February's ZineQuest promotion. All hail the noble backers! See page 74 for a full list.

All the Best

;O) Newt

May 2019

ALL HAIL THE DEATH RIDERS!



JOHN
GRAY

From out of the Shroud these tall undead warriors come flying, bringing mayhem to remote communities in the more desolate regions of Zarth. Their attacks seem to be entirely at random and have no pattern to them. As far it can be told they have no leader, but despite this work together in groups of 2d4 individuals.

The death rider's mount is a strange hybrid of a giant horse-sized sabretooth lion, with a bare skull and enormous leathery wings. The mount seems to be in telepathic communication with its rider, whose every silent order it obeys. How these undead mounts came into being is all part of the mystery of the Death Riders origin.

DEATH RIDER

Type: Undead

Armour Class: 5 [14]

Hit Dice: 3

Attacks: 2-H Longspear (1d10)

Special: Immune to mind control, poison and disease.

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 4/120

UNDEAD MOUNT

Type: Undead.

Armour Class: 5[14]

Hit Dice: 6

Attacks: Bite (1d12) or claws (1d12)

Special: Immune to mind control, poison and disease.

Move: 3 on the ground, 18 Flying.

Challenge Level/XP: 6/400.

MY DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

Your character has a dark secret that only they know. This secret may come back to haunt you, but only the Crypt Keeper knows when or where.

Roll 1D20 to determine the secret during character generation, just after you've rolled for Life Events. Make a note of it on your character sheet.

D20	Secret
1	I killed my parents because they thought I was in league with Dark Forces.
2.	My sister became pregnant with a demon child. We worked together to expose the child in secret.
3.	My nosy neighbour believed I was in league with Others. They kept on harassing me about it, and I end up losing my temper and killing them.
4.	My best friend from childhood is an Other in disguise. I left our home town to get away from them.
5.	I did a deal with a Greater Other, so my family's farm would prosper. I was to give up my soul when I reached adulthood in payment. I refused, so the Greater Other's cultists killed my family, and razed the farm to the ground. I'm now on the run from them.
6.	I led a mob of angry villagers against a local family accused of a crime that I was guilty of. The mob killed them all and burnt their farm down.
7.	I've worked for a noble, doing his dirty work of making opponents disappear. I later learned that the noble is a Black Sorcerer.
8.	I inherited a fortune, home and title that was not mine after the legitimate heir died in mysterious circumstances.
9.	I was a Cultist of a Greater Other until I saw the error of my ways. I did questionable things while in their service. Nobody ever leaves the cult, ever.
10.	I gleefully participated in the war against a neighbouring city-state. I amassed a small fortune (which I subsequently lost) from the looting and pillaging that I took part in.
11.	Me and two other thieves stole a treasure trove. While we were splitting the loot, we fell out, and one of the thieves was killed in the resulting fight, while the other ran off with the treasure.
12.	In my 'wild years,' I was cursed by a local wise woman for being rude towards her.

D20	Secret
13.	I killed my brother or sister in an argument. My family thinks it was some random stranger.
14.	I have a Maggot Master inside of me. Every now and then it possesses me to do evil deeds.
15.	I have a concealed Khaos feature, which if revealed to others would mark me as unclean.
16.	Sometimes I can't sleep at night and go walking. I have no memory of what I do.
17.	I can't help myself, collecting small shiny things that don't belong to me which are easy to hide on my person.
18.	My dead spouse, who died in an accident, calls to me from the Shroud. Sometimes they visit me in my dreams and tell me to do bad things, so they can be released from the prison they are being held in.
19.	I was attacked by a Vampire but managed to pull free before they made me their slave. They wait for me on the edge of night, and I fear they may come back to finish the job.
20.	Twice Damned, roll twice.

Crypt Keepers! If you want to make your player's lives interesting, at the beginning of each session roll a dice of a number of sides equal to the number of players, after assigning each player a number (easiest way to do this is assign 1 to the player directly opposite you and go clockwise around the table). For example: if your group is six players, roll a d6. The player whose number comes up has their dark secret come back to haunt them in some fashion or another. Alternatively, make them Test their Luck before the adventure begins. Anyone who is unlucky has their secret come up in some form during the adventure.

PRINCE RONAS

THE LORD OF SWORDS

Ronas is a Greater Other, and ruler of the Other World known as the Place of Swords. This is a hard and primitive world, where a human-like elite caste of warriors, The Swords, rule through might over a rural peasant class from small highly defended walled cities. There is constant battle- the farmers are engaged in a neverending cycle of rebellion, and regime changes among the sword-wielding aristocracy lead to highly ritualised war.

Ronas watches Zarth and sends his Swords through the Shroud to challenge the best warriors of that world. Sages, who have taken notice and recorded the highly formalised duels between master swordsmen and mysterious sword-wielding Others, see the hand of Ronas. They predict that the Prince of the Place of Swords has designs on Zarth, even in its dying state, and he is currently slowly and surely testing the mettle of its warriors before the eventual invasion.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 2 [18]

Hit Dice: 20

Hit Points: 150

Attacks: 1 Great Sword (2d10)

Special Rules: Call down the Rain of Swords, Domination, Flight, Immunity to missile weapons, Regeneration, Sword Oath.

Move: 12, 18 Flying.

Challenge Level/XP:23/5,000

As a Greater Other he has the following powers:

Call down the Rain of Swords. Once per day he can bring down a devastating rain of iron swords, that automatically does 2d6 damage to anyone caught in it.

Domination. Ronas can dominate the will of mortals. Only a successful Test vs Luck avoids the character being mentally enslaved in this way. If imprisoned the character gets to re-test their Luck once per day.

Flight. Ronas has thick leathery bat wings that give him the power of flight.

Immunity to missile weapons. A powerful magical pact means that he is immune to missile weapons that bounce off him harmlessly. However, he may never use missile weapons himself.

Regeneration. If wounded he regenerates ten hit points, twenty if in the Place of Swords, per round.

Sword Oath. This is a boon that he gives to characters who swear absolute allegiance to him and join the ranks of the Swords. In return for entering his service, the Sword gets +4 to hit and damage when using a sword. Oathbreakers lose this bonus and are hunted down with great vengeance.



THE PIE MAKERS OF PEOPOLIS

Humans, sentient beings and animals of any kind end up in the infamous pies of the Pie Makers of Bullhead street in Peopolis. They made their fortune in the famine that gripped the city after its previous tyrant was overthrown when the Beggar King seized power. It is well-known that most of their meat came from the purge of the nobility. What is less known is that the Pie Makers are a group of Khaos Mutants (see page 174 of Crypts & Things) from the dreary foothills around the doomed city of Zarn. They speak not of what nasty terror expelled them from their caves in that place, but they have fallen on their feet in Peopolis, being one of the most prosperous businesses in the city.

THE SHOP

Bullhead Street is famous for its shops which specialise in all manner of animal products (meat, leather goods, carved bone ornaments, etc.) and the Pie Makers have an unassuming shop front. The only clue to the shop's trade is a wooden sign hanging above the door that has a crudely painted pie.. Inside, the shop, like its neighbours, is dusty and unclean and almost permanently understocked. Behind a counter is either Bungo or Mungo, both of whom are the most unhelpful shopkeepers ever.

It's assumed that you know what you want if you go in, since most of the shop's trade is through orders. If you dither and blather the shopkeeper will slam down one of the standard pies and roughly tell the characters "That's all we got, 5 silvers please!". The other mutant dozes lightly on a chair in a back room just behind the counter. There is a massive meat tenderiser behind the counter for the shopkeeper to use if a customers get rough (it does 2d4 damage), and a bell that summons help from the Underground Kitchen (see below).

If the bell is rung, who shows up:

Roll 1d6	Mutant who comes up from the Underground Kitchen
1	Bungo*
2	Mungo*
3	Fungo
4	Twonk
5	Head Chef
6	The Spicy Lad

*if either of these Khaos Mutants is already tending shop already, no one comes up.

Also in the back room is a large trap door which leads down into the Underground Kitchen, via The Perilous Stair Below. Gorgeous aromas waft up through the trap door.

UPSTAIRS FROM THE SHOP

Up a single staircase is a collection of three rooms, which sleep five people on straw pallets. These are used as lodgings by the Meat Acquirers when they are back from the hunt (1 in 6 chance during the night, 3 in 6 during the day, when they will be found asleep). These rough men, armed with meat cleavers and wearing rusty ill-fitting chain mail, were once beggars who have forgotten their names and past lives. They were enticed into this life of sin by a supply of regular fresh meat, and copious amounts of ale.

THE PERILOUS STAIR

This set of roughly hewn stone steps in a natural stone corridor is the way down to the underground kitchen. It is booby-trapped with trip wires that set off alarm bells. Beyond this first wave of trip wires is a second designed to trip characters up. If they are not paying attention characters, need to make a successful Test vs Luck or fall down the stairs and take 1d6 damage as they roll into the Underground Kitchen.

THE UNDERGROUND KITCHEN

At the bottom of the Perilous Stair is a large natural cavern, about fifty foot across and fifty foot high.

The cavern where the mutants prepare their pies. There is a colossal oven built into the east wall, and the mutants sleep in front of its raging fire. A giant iron grinder is nearby. The grinder is big enough to grind up a fully grown human all at once, and there is usually a pile of two to five human corpses and a pile of various animals beside it. More bodies hang from hooks in the ceiling, allowing the meat to cure. Next to the grinder is the pastry rolling table, which looks like a repurposed torture table complete with manacles at on the edges.

Against the west wall is a giant statue, made of hard-baked pastry-- standing ten feet tall is the pig-headed Khaos god of the Pie Makers, Pukka. At his feet are the completed pies, receiving his blessing before being sold in the shop. One giant pie, five foot high and five foot across is a special pie. This is the mutant's Treasure Pie, whose lid comes off and reveals their treasure of about 1000 gp.

THE PIES OF THE PIE SHOP

Standard Pies

Dog Pie. Made out stray dogs that the Meat Acquirers find on the street.

The Big Crunch! Mainly insects fill this pie (although they have been known to put in toenail clippings).

The Wormy One. It is recommended that you say a prayer to the worm god when you eat his children, to receive his blessing or at least avoid parasitic gut worms.

Poor Pie. It is rumoured when old, and the infirm come to the end of their lives, to help their relatives, they hand themselves into the Pie Makers, and their relatives get a gold coin before the 'peaceful cut' is administered. The meat then ends up in these poor-quality pies. That's a beautiful story that has no basis in fact.

Speciality Pies

Brainy Pie. +3 to Intelligence for 2d6 hours

Hot Blood Pie. Particularly packed with adrenalin, from victims that the Meat Acquirers call "Runners". +3 to Initiative Rolls for 1d6 hours after eating. Specially spiced by the Spicy Lad for an extra kick!

Eye Pie. Perception greatly enhanced, automatically detects secret doors and hidden items for 2d6 hours.

Carapace Pie. -2 (+2) Armour class.

Eight-Legged Pie. Made of spiders this slightly disturbingly hairy pie, bestows the ability of spider climb on the eater for 3d6 minutes.

Khaos Pie. For 1d8 days, the eater gets on Khaos Feature (see C&T Main rulebook page 174).

The Staff

The Family (Khaos mutants)

Bungo AC 7 (12); HD 5; HP 40; Atks: Machete (1d6); Mv 12; Special: Right Eyeball can be removed and fly about; CL/XP: 5/240.

Mungo AC 7 (12); HD 5; HP 40; Atks: Machete (1d6+2); Mv 12; Special: Extra set of arms CL/XP: 5/240.

Fungo AC 7 (12); HD 5; HP 40; Atks: Machete (1d6); Mv 12; Special: Poisonous fungus spore attack, 1d12 to anyone within 30 feet, successful Test of Luck/Save vs Poison halves damage Mv 12 CL/XP 6/400.

Twonk AC 7 (12); HD 5; HP 40; Atks: Machete (1d6); Mv 12; Attacks Special: Has a giant tentacle that shoots out from his face up to twenty feet away, doing 1d6+3 Mv 12 CL/XP 6/400.

The leader of the Khaos mutants is a giant deformed mutant wields giant two-handed meat cleaver.

Head Chef: AC 7 (12); HD 7; HP 56; Atks: 2-H meat Cleaver (2d6); Mv 12; Special: None; CL/XP: 7/ 600.

The Spicy Lad is the second in command and is naked except for a loin cloth and a fine layer of ash all over his body. In combat, or when applying a special finish to the pies, he breathes fire.

The Spicy Lad AC 7 (12); HD 5; HP 40; Atks: Machete (1d6); Mv 12; Special: Breathes fire for 2d6 damage every other combat round; CL/XP 6/400.

The Help, The Meat Acquirers:

Meat Acquirers AC Chainmail; HD 3; HP 24; Attacks 2 Meat Cleavers (+1 to hit, 1d10 damage) Mv 9 Special: Able to sniff out living things in a thirty-foot distance on a 3 in 6; CL/XP 4/120.

Don't worry if your campaign isn't based in Peopolis-- they've just opened a shop in your local city/town!

A STRANGE THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE RUINS

The following six encounters are presented for those moments when the characters are on their way to the crypt, and the Crypt Keeper wants to throw the players out of the boredom of the journey, either immediately or further down the line in the future.

I've given the creatures in this stats that make them dangerous to a low-level group of adventurers (1st -3rd Level), Crypt Keepers may need to up the Hit Dice to make them formidable opponents for higher level characters.

A TABLE OF STRANGE ENCOUNTERS.

Roll 1d6	Encounter
1	The Hunted & The Damned.
2	Waiting to Wake Up.
3	Soul Sucker.
4	Fearless Doomed Hero.
5	Dead, Dead and Dead again.
6	The Sixth.

THE HUNTED & THE DAMNED

“Help us, help us, please. They are after us.”

Situation: Pale and ghost-like a brother and sister couple appear from out of nowhere plead that the characters help them escape a hunting beast that is on their tail. 1d10 minutes after they appear the Beast comes running out of a strange fog that suddenly appears.

Twist: The pair are potent sorcerers from the Other Worlds, and the beast is retribution for them killing an entire world.

Silvar and Silvara apart from their gender are identical twins. They are both six-foot-tall, with slender, willowy frames, and long silver hair down their backs. They wear white robes and long knee length silver boots.

Silvar AC 7 [12]; HD 5; HP 23; Attacks 1 dagger (1d4); Special: can cast magic like 5th Level Sorcerer; CL/XP 6/400.

Knows the following spells that he can cast once per day:

Curse, Charm, Hold Person, Fireball Magic Missile, Sleep, Web.

Silvara AC 7[12]; HD 5; HP23; Attacks 1 staff (1d6); Special: can cast magic like 5th Level Sorcerer; CL/XP 6/400.

Knows the following spells that she can cast once per day:

Curse, Charm, Hold Person, Lightning Bolt, Magic Missile, Sleep, Web.

The Beast

Hideous and deformed, an eight-foot-tall bear-like creature, with a mass of tentacles where its head should be. This is a hunting creature unleashed by a Sorcerer whose world the twins destroyed, using a twisted artefact called the Key of Undoing. The Key dematerialised when it was used, a side effect of its powers, but the Twins who have a strange link to it, know that it is somewhere on Zarth and are looking for it.

The Beast AC 5 [16] tough skin; HD 7; HP 40; Attacks 2 claws (1d8) or Mass of Tentacles (up to ten foot away) (1d6); Special: none; CL/XP 7/600.

WAITING TO WAKE UP

“I no longer know my name.”

Situation: The characters find a sleeping barbarian who if woken up thanks them for waking him from a magical sleep and then pledges to serve them.

Twist: The barbarian is a pretender of the throne of some ramshackle Northern kingdom, cursed by a rival's sorcerer and dumped far away from home. Initially, he doesn't remember and is happy to follow the characters dumbly. Each dawn roll 1d6 for him. If you roll a one he fully remembers his past, and suddenly demands that the characters follow him as his minions to retake his birthright!

Morr the Barbarian AC 5 [16] Ring mail; HD 5; HP 30; Attacks 1 Battle Axe (1d8 damage); Move 12; Special: none; CL 5/XP 240.

SOUL SUCKER

"It's so good that you'll be my friend."

Situation: The characters meet a defenceless old man on some abandoned pathway. Each day without fail he gives them each 10 Gold Pieces for them to protect him as they take him somewhere "safe".

Twist: The man, who can no longer remember his name, was a court sorcerer for one of the Ancient Emperors which he half-remembers and babbles on about. In this past, he summoned an Other World parasite, a worm-like creature that lives within him. It is like a Maggot Master, identical in stats, but with the additional special ability that any character within twenty feet of it loses 1d6 Sanity each day they spend with him. The sanity loss feels like a depression, with thick black clouds coming over the character's mood. The old man dithers and wants to stay with his new friends.

The Old Man Who Knows Not His Name AC 9 [10]; HD 1; HP 5; Attacks 1 Fist (1d3); Move 12; Special: none; CL /XP 1/15.

Other World Parasite AC 9 [10]; HD 3; HP 10 Attacks: Barb (1D6+ poison) Special: Charming poison, sanity drain 1d6 per day MV 9 CL/XP:4/120.

FEARLESS DOOMED HERO

"We go Kill Vampire Lord now!"

Situation: An angry young youth, armed and armoured to the teeth, crosses the character's path and wants them to join his one-man crusade against the evil Vampire Lords!

Twist: The young man is a pawn of the Vampires, sent to find new victims by eliciting sympathy for his cause. The youth is entirely unaware of this, due to an evil enchantment cast on him when the vampires captured him as he tried to rescue his older sister – who may or may not be a Vampire by now.

Tarsk the Fearless Vampire Killer AC 4[15] chainmail + shield; HD 2; HP 10; Attacks 1 longsword (1d8 damage); Move 9; Special: entirely immune for fear and other mind control magic; CL/XP 3/60.

DEAD, DEAD AND DEAD AGAIN

"I'm Igmorogil the Indestructible!"

Situation: A wild-eyed berserker, called Igmorogil, runs out of nowhere, attacks the characters and If they kill him he raises from the dead after one to six hours, even if the characters burn his body.

Twist: This tribesman was cursed by a Witch to die a painful, bloody death THREE times. On the third time, he dies for good. Each time he dies, he comes back a bit more insane and crazed.

Igmorogil the Indestructible AC7 [12] leather; HD 5; HP 30; Attacks 1 battle axe (1d8); MV 12; Special : none; CL/XP 5/240.

THE SIXTH

"I am the Sixth of my kind."

Situation: Out of the mist a young woman appears. She is bald, has golden skin, wears silver chainmail, which is light and does not impede her movement and carries a two-handed long spear. If the characters converse with her, she is pleasant enough but is confused about where she is and who she is. All she knows is that she is the Sixth of her kind. If the characters allow her, she will gladly join their group, sensing that she will be able to remember her past while she adventures with them.

Twist: The Sixth is a magical clone of a former lover of the Sorcerer Ternon the Blind (see Crypts and Things page 137), and as her name suggests is the sixth in a series of failed experiments. Her 'sisters' are abroad in the world and may be encountered as she adventures with the party. Unlike her, they are all physically or mentally deformed in some way. They have the same stats. They hate her and want her dead. When they encounter her, they will challenge her on one to one combat. Once the other five are defeated, Ternon appears to bring the Sixth home, telling her that he released her into the world that to kill her five sisters. Only she could remove these abominations since of all of them she was the only perfect one. She then returns willingly with him.

Ternon magically created her to be stronger and faster than normal humans. Therefore she has a +3 to hit and damage with her two-handed Sword, has a move of 15 (rather than 12) and -4 [+4] modified Armour Class.

The Sixth AC 1 [18] chainmail; HD 6 ;HP 36; Attacks 1 two-handed sword (1d10+3, +3 to hit); Move 15; Special: especially fast moving, superhuman strength, immune to sleep and other mind control magics; CL/XP 7/600.

THE PLACE OF DARK HOOKS

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

She was the Mistress of Pain, employed by Kings and Emperors to rip secrets from their captured enemies, to wreak terrible vengeance upon unfaithful wives and rebellious subjects. But that was long ago. Time caught up with the Torture Queen and played heavy havoc upon her beauty before bringing her into its oblivion.

In her lair, The Place of Dark Hooks, which lies deep in the Shroud long forgotten by the descendants of the Kings she once served, lies the fortune the Mistress of Pain amassed from a lifetime of charging a premium for her skills. A map maker sold you a copy of the crypt's location for a handful of silvers. After two weeks of travel from the city into the wilderness, you found the entrance in the side of a hill. There you walked into a cave full of mist and emerged in The Shroud. Looking up through the mists you see that the Torture Queen's lair lies within a huge rock that hangs in the air above the ground. Rusty chains with hooks on the end descend through the mist from the rock to where you stand, and it's obvious. To get to the lair, you must climb up. So, you climb up for what seems like an age, limbs ache, just don't look down. Then suddenly you find yourselves climbing up onto a ledge on the rock. You've reached the entrance to the crypt. Your adventure awaits you.

CRYPT KEEPER'S INFORMATION

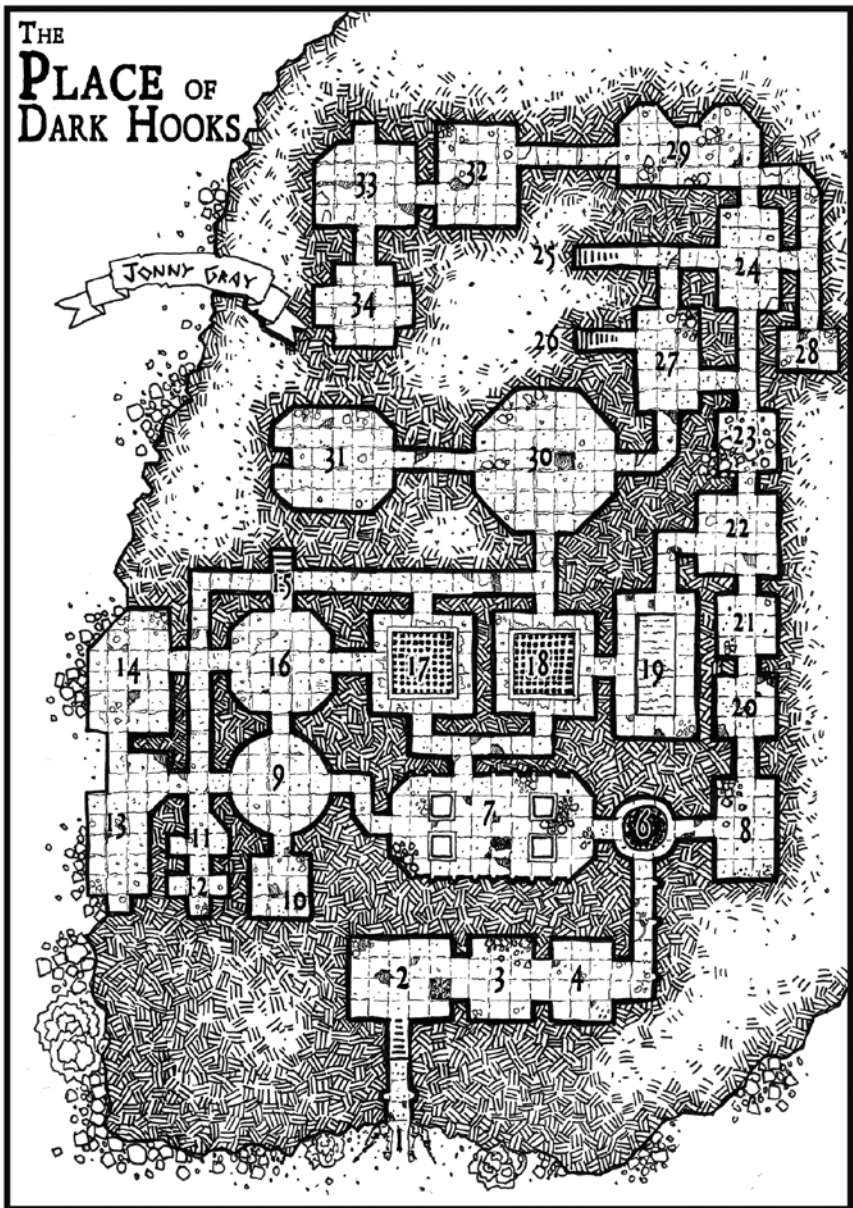
This crypt is an old torturer's lair. So why is it abandoned?

Er, actually it's not. To everyone who knows about the Torture Queen, she died of certain old age, which was massively put off by black magic. But what they don't know is that she made a new body out of the flesh of her victims. So still she takes 'commissions', for the money and the energy she can consume from the pain.

Now, the Mistress of Pain needs more victims, to keep her young and provide body parts for when she rebuilds her body. Ideally, victims who are young, energetic, full of life and brimming with an adventurous spirit. Victims like the player characters.

To lure such people, the Torture Queen's agents in a nearby city hand out treasure maps showing the location of the crypt in the wilderness to promising candidates. These candidates then make their way to her lair, full of dreams of glorious treasure. They are then captured by either her loyal minions or the Queen herself as they wander into the centre of her web.

THE
PLACE OF
DARK HOOKS



CRYPTS KEY

General Features of the Crypt

Unless noted otherwise, all the rooms are made from stone blocks, with a flagged stone floor and a ceiling height of ten feet. The atmosphere is cold and oppressive, and there are puddles of damp everywhere.

1. The Sundered Statue

This is the crypt's entrance. A statue of a man, half-naked, wearing a skirt and sandals, with arms outstretched, split into two halves, in between which is the corridor entrance.

Inside there is a short hall (15 foot long). In which there are two alcoves with stone seats and at the far end there are stairs which go twenty foot down.

2. The Meet and Greet Place

In this desolate and damp room is the ghost of the Butler, who used to serve the Mistress of Pain when she was still alive in her original body. He is a faded memory of himself and is unable to interact with the physical world. The Butler is unable to leave this room, being bound here by the Mistress many hundreds of years ago. He likes to be helpful and can tell the characters what he remembers about the "Court of the Mistress". Unfortunately, beyond a few flowery stories, this isn't much.

3. The Grand Inquisitor

Another ghost lives here, this time not so friendly. This is the black-robed ghost of the Mistress of Pain's Inquisitor, who is wrapped in chains and moans from the eternal pain of his existence. He will sharply ask the characters why they are here, and if they give him answers, he will continue to ask more. If the characters are not careful, he will quite happily get very personal without giving anything away.

4. The Hairy Guards

By now the characters' blood may well be hot for mayhem and murder, and six magical constructs, the Hairy Guards (so called because they are made of hair and fur, as well as clothes and armour) can give it to them.

The Hairy Guards: AC 7(12) (Leather + Shield); HD 2; HP 10; Atks 1 Longsword (1D8); MV 6; Special Immune to mind control, sleep, poison and disease; CL/XP 2/30.

Secret

If the players are peaceful and they can pass this room without a fight and the guards just stand there motionless.

Treasure

If the characters scabble around in this room, they will find the corpse of a past victim, discarded here by the Torture Queen. A grim foretelling of the fate that possibly awaits them.



**JOHN
GRAY**

5. Swinging Men

Out of the three alcoves at this point on the map, swing three hung men, zombies that claw and rake the characters as they move past.

Swinging Zombies AC 8[11] HD 2; HP 10; Atk 1 weapon or strike (1d8); Mv 6; Special: Immune to sleep and charm; CL/XP 2/30.

6. Whispers from the Black Pit of Oblivion

This room is dominated by a seemingly bottomless dark pit. The pit is actually fifty foot deep but is shrouded in a permanent darkness spell. As the characters pass round or stop to look at it, they can hear a whispering voice.

In the pit is a messenger of the local tyrant, dropped in this void by the Hairy Guards on the Torture Queen's orders.

If the characters can be bothered to listen to him, he whispers about how the Torture Queen is still working for the Princes of the City States, and that she has a huge hoard. If they listen to him, he will tell them where it is, and they can use his share to buy him out of the hell that he is currently imprisoned in.

The Messenger has a deal with the Torture Queen, who has promised to free him if he sends new victims her way. The Torture Queen has no intention of holding up her end of the bargain. The messenger could, with enough determination, climb out of the pit. He is too scared to do so.

If any of the characters climb down into the pit, they will find the messenger who is in a sad state. Dressed in rags, half-starved and totally insane, he will not put up a fight if attacked, and will die from the first blow.

7. Four Deadly Columns

Four giant stone columns that stretch up to a fifty-foot-high ceiling dominate this room. On each, there are carvings, which were once painted, of demons torturing and devouring people.

When any character steps into the centre of the room, the columns suddenly come together to crush anyone there. This is a magical trap, so sorcerers can detect it if they direct their awareness towards the columns. Any character in the kill zone must make a successful Test Vs Luck to avoid the crushing columns or take 2d6 damage.

8. The Rubbish Room

In the north-west corner of this room, there is a large pile of discarded items; clothes, bones and broken pottery. Roll once for every half an hour the characters search in the pile.

Table of Found Items.

Roll 1d20	Found item
1	A complete pair of false teeth.
2	A porcelain false leg.
3	A false eye.
4	A brunette wig made of real hair.
5	An eye patch, with a skull and crossbones design embroidered on it.
6	A wooden peg leg.
7	A pair of bongos.
8	A ceramic mug.
9	A crystal vial with some clear liquid (a healing potion that heals 2d6 damage).
10	A crystal vial with some clear liquid (a poison that deals 2d6 damage).
11	A crystal vial that contains clear liquid (urine).
12	A silver skull cap (100 GP value).
13	A discarded lantern.
14	The body of a small rodent.
15	A human skull.
16	A brass key (fits the lock on Og and Zog's back panel).
17	A branding iron with the letter N.
18	An Intelligent Sword, which is +1 to hit and damage, which talks directly into the wielder's mind and always bitches about the character's friends and associates, gives misleading and downright wrong advice.
19	A large red gem made of glass.
20	Roll twice.

9. The Pleasant Room

While this room is just as filthy though age as the rest of the crypt, the ominous atmosphere lifts for some unknown reason.

Secret

An earlier adventuring party had a powerful White Magician who cast a permanent Zone of Safety spell (which is long forgotten in Zarth now). No undead, Demons or Hairy Guards, can enter the room. If the characters rest for an hour here, they will regain 2d6 hit points, once per day.

10. The Screaming Thing

In the centre of this room, attached by chains to the ceiling and floor, is a dark-skinned humanoid, of unknown sex, dressed in a ragged tunic that eternally screams in pain. It can not be heard from outside of this room since there's a magical field of silence around the room.

Secret

This is one of the Torture Queen's victims, who have lost all sense of identity and is completely mad. It has not realised that time has rusted the manacles that hold it to the chains, so If someone attacks it, it will break free and attack manically.

Screaming Thing: AC 7(12) HD 3 HP 23; Atks Claws (1d8); Mv 15; Special: Scream; CL/XP 4/120 .

If the scream is used as an attack, it rises in pitch and is painful to hear. A successful Test Vs Luck is required to block out the sound, but anyone who does so can not attack effectively, suffering a -2 to hit. If the scream is not blocked, it also causes 1d6 damage per round.

Rammed in the gullet of the Screaming Thing is the source of its agony, a large fist-sized rainbow coloured cut gem worth 500 gold pieces.

11. Recovery Room

In the alcove to the east of this section of corridor, is a small stone seat. One sitting on it recovers 2d6 hit points once per day.

12. Teleport Arrival Room

On the floor at this dead end crossroad, to the west, east and south are barely discernible magic circles with script in a long forgotten arcane tongue (which if a Sorcerer succeeds in their Read Language skill, read "Come back to here") that flows in and out of the circle.

13. Viewing Gallery One

In the west wall is a big rectangular viewing window, open to the outside.

By the window is a group of five statues of nobles in beautiful clothes., They look out in shock and awe. They are frozen in time, having been turned to stone thousands of years ago, for the Torture Queen's amusement.

14. Viewing Gallery Two

Virtually the same as room 13, with the exception that its been overrun by a group of six Harpies and is being used by them as a nest.

Harpy AC 7 [12]; HD 3; HP: 15; Atk 2 talons (1d3) and weapon (1d6); Mv 6 (Fly 18); Special: Flight, siren-song. CL/XP 4/120; .

Treasure

In a dirty leather bag under dirty hay bedding is a collection of 500 gp, 200 sp and a pearl necklace worth 100 gp.

15. The Stairs Down to the Bottom of the Rock

These stairs go down, and after about one hundred feet, come to a small room with a trap door in it. If the trapdoor is opened, it is revealed that it opens into the open air.

16. The Inscrutable Guard

In this room stand 6 perfect marble warriors. These are magically animated statues, which stand motionless unless the characters move past them towards the entrance of room 17.

Marble Guard: AC 2(18); HD 3; HP 20; Atks 1 Marble Sword (1d8); Mv 9; Special: Immune to mind control magic, poison and disease, Totally fearless; CL/XP: 3/60.

17. The Pit of Doomed Men

A large iron grill covers a ten-foot-deep pit that dominates the centre of the room. In it are six zombies, which groan and moan.

Zombie: AC 8[11] HD 2; HP 10; Atk 1 weapon or strike (1d8); Mv 6; Special: Immune to sleep and charm; CL/XP 2/30.

Secret

The zombies are victims of the Torture Queen who have been drained of life. One of them has a crumpled note in its pocket that sheds some light on the situation.

"Dearest Melandro,

I offer you a large purse of not less than 23 gold pieces to go to the Place of Dark Hooks and deliver the traitor Zoresta into the gentle care of the Torture Queen. Make sure your negotiations with her are brief and successful, because her hunger is insatiable these days. Do this for me and as well as the money, I shall release your family.

“ (the note is ripped at this point, so the identity of the sender is unknown).

18. The Pit of Saved Men

This room is almost exactly the same as 17, except instead of zombies in the pit there is a captive who is being held for a meal later.

The captive is Zoresta the Bold, a White Sorceress, who was a healer in her mountain village. She fell foul of a local tyrant when she denied him her magic powers. Her brother Melandro betrayed her to the tyrant, who is holding his family hostage, and brought her here. She is desperate to find her brother, not knowing he has met his end and is now a mindless zombie in room 17.

Zoresta the Bold AC 9[10], HD 1; HP 5; Atks: none; Mv 12; Special: Can cast Cure Light Wounds at will; CL/XP 1/15.

19. The Bath of Absolution

This large bathing pool washes away all a character's sins, by wiping their memory. It was something that the Torture Queen uses to make sure her victims are in a pure state before she devours them. In the old days, if a victim was being returned to their former life after a visit to the Torture Queen, they had no memory of their visit.

If the characters come into contact with the water, they must Test their Luck successfully or lose 1d4 INT permanently, each round. Characters who lose their INT entirely become Zombies.

20. Writing on the Wall

In this small dingy room on the East wall daubed in large letters in blood is the message "Please help, they are taking away everything that is ME!!".

21. The Accountant of Death

A skeleton sits at a table with a giant open ledger and an ink quill in hand. Every time someone dies in the crypt, the Accountant becomes animated and writes their name in the book, along with a date of death. If the characters are curious, they will find their names already in the register of death, with a question mark in the date of death section.

22. The Guard Point

More Hairy Guards, this time animated and combat ready. If a character isn't a servant of the Queen or accompanied by one, they will attack. There are two Hairy Guards per character.

The Hairy Guards: AC 7(12) (Leather + Shield); HD 2; HP 10; Attk 1 Longsword (1D8); MV 6; Special Immune to mind control, sleep, poison and disease; CL/XP 2/30.

23. The Collapsed Room

This room has collapsed in on itself. Enterprising characters may dig through it, but it will take a good hour to do so.

24. The Impaled

This room's main feature is six eight-foot-long iron spikes, hammered into the floor. Corpses are impaled on four of the spikes.²⁵Stairs to Where?

Stairs go up, and there is an invisible magical portal that transports characters who unwittingly walk through it to 26 The Stairs to Here.

26. Stairs to Here

Stairs go up and join to 25.

27. Serenity in Death

Despite the grubby run-down nature of the room itself, the atmosphere here is calm and serene.

In the centre of the room, lying peacefully on the floor is the body of a golden-haired young woman in a long white linen dress. Her hands are laid across her chest in a death pose. In them is a note that says:

“This is Jerela the Kind. She was completely impervious to all the horror we could inflict upon her. She died at a moment of her choosing, and her body was left perfectly preserved as you find it now. Here she sleeps, proving that Love can conquer death.”

28. The Iron Maiden

Standing against the south wall of this room is a large oversized eight foot long Iron Maiden. This torture device takes the form of an iron sarcophagus that has foot-long spikes in the lid. If the Maiden is opened a giant Zombie, eight-foot-tall with a giant two-handed axe jumps out and attacks remorselessly.

Eddi the Giant Zombie: AC 7 [12]; HD 5 ; HP 23 ; Atks 1 giant axe (1d12) ; Mv 12 ; Special; Undead, immune to mind control magics, sleep, poison and disease ; CL/XP: 5/240.

Secret

The axe-wielding zombie is a former executioner, given this grisly afterlife as a reward for long service to the Torture Queen. Inside the maiden, are the words “Scream for me” scratched into the inside, and a bag containing 500 GP.

29. Og and Zog

This room is dominated by two alcoves, each thirty foot across and fifty foot high (which is the height of this room’s ceiling). In the alcoves are what appear on first inspection two giant bronze statues of muscular men, with long braided beards, who carry two-handed maces. Each has a grill in his chest.

Secret

These two statues are magical constructs. Inside them are five men and women, captives of the Torture queen, who are held inside as captives. They can be seen through the grill if it is carefully looked at. There is a panel of the back, locked, which is opened can be used to release the prisoners, who are very groggy (moving at 30) because their lifeforce is used to animate the statues. If the prisoners are released the statue becomes motionless.

Og & Zog: AC 2 [18] ; HD 6 ; HP 60 ; Atks 1 2 H mace (1d12) ; Mv 60; Special; immune to mind control magic, sleep, poison and disease, half damage from fire; CL/XP: 7/600 .

Og and Zog are programmed to attack intruders and recapture escapees.

30. The Place of Pain

This large room is filled with all manner of torture equipment. Tables with manacles on the corners. Racks. Iron baskets that would have held burning hot coals and irons. Nothing indicates that the equipment has been used in recent times, and if the characters search the room it has a feeling of a highly organised museum piece.

Secret

When the Torture Queen was mortal this room did brisk business. Since her transformation into her current form, she no longer needs tools to torment her victims.

31. The Arena

The walls of this room which has fifty-foot-high ceiling are covered with weapon racks and rusted weapons. This room was used as an arena where prisoners were forced to fight each other. In the alcoves to the West, are the collapsed wooden stands were the spectators used to observe the fights to the death between friends.

32. The Silence Before Death

This room is completely still and silent. Skulls and broken bones litter the floor.

33. Her name was PAIN!

This large chamber with a fifty-foot-high ceiling is the home of the Torture Queen. She is a grotesque undead thing made up of her original upper torso, and a sack-like lower body made up of the bodies of victims, with crab-like limbs.

The Torture Queen AC 2[18]; HD 8 ; HP 80 ; Atks Sharpened leg ends (1d10) ; Mv 12; Special; Can climb the walls and ceiling like it was the ground, immune to mind control magic, poison or disease, Regeneration, Charm Person once per round, Acid Breath Attack, Claw of life stealing CL/XP: 10/1,400.

She regenerates 1d8 hit points at the start of each round when damaged.

In addition to her attack using her crab like sharpened leg ends, she can perform one of the following:

- Acid Breath Attack, in a cone fifty-foot-long and thirty foot across, the Torture Queen can spew acid that does 4d6 damage (half on a successful Test vs Luck), once per day.
- Her misshapen left hand is a Claw of Stealing Life; this causes 2d6 damage on a successful hit. Any damage taken by the victim is immediately transferred to the Torture Queen's hit points, which can increase beyond their original 60 points. The Queen's abdomen sack glows green with an eerie corpse light when hit points are drained in this way.

She casts Charm Person at will once per round.

34. The Place of Hooks

In this room are four large, ten foot long, five-foot-high treasure chests. When they have approached chains with hooks shoot out from the ceiling and attack any characters nearing the chests. A standard to hit roll is needed, the Crypt Keeper rolling as a 6 HD monster to hit. Any successful hit means the character is impaled by the hook, and suffers 1d10 damage. If an impaled character wants to get free they need to make a successful test vs luck. . Otherwise, the chains pull back into the ceiling, doing further 1d10 damage when they rip out of the character's flesh. The Treasure chests then spring open, and five Hairy Guards (see room 4) spring out.

Once the guards have been defeated the chests contain, 1d6 x 500 GP each.



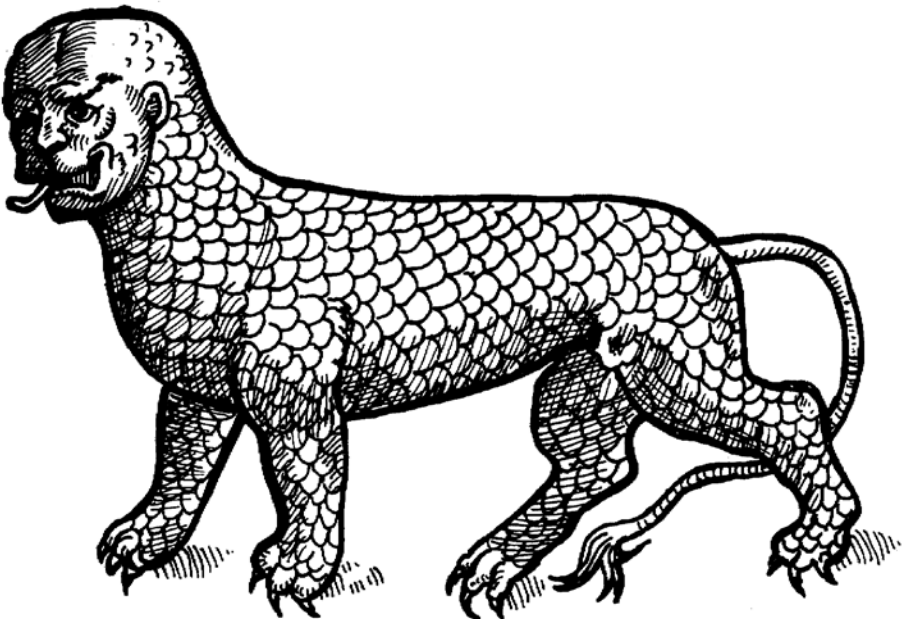
JON
GRAY

THE WEIRD AND THE WARPED

These monsters reside in the Shroud. They are Others, who by their very essence are demonic horrors.

ARMOURED SHENG

"We were lost again in the fog of the Shroud. I looked for Nemieon, in the whirling grey mists, since he was meant to be guiding us to the Jade Tower of Eriskos, but he was nowhere to be seen. I grew alarmed. In this heightened state of anxiety, I heard it. The quiet padding of paws upon the ground. Then seconds later I saw it, as a horse sized creature, covered with silver scales, with the bald head of a man, came leaping out of the mist and with its powerful foreclaws took down poor Istak. As the creature savagely feasted on our baggage handler, I sprinted in the opposite direction. I cared not where I would end up running through the mist, as long as it was not in the belly of that fiend!"



These monsters roam the ill-defined places of The Shroud where it is a dense grey fog. They hunt alone and prey on lost travellers, stalking the weak and ill-prepared. Occasionally they will make a lair in some deserted ruin or in a random hill that has a cave in its side. They avoid the more coherent places; there the Greater Others gather their followers in what passes for cities and strongholds, and there the Sheng often find themselves enslaved and used as guard dogs. Despite their appearance, the Armoured Sheng are not animals. They have high intelligence and cunning and are more than capable of intuitive action.

As the name suggests they are highly armoured with metallic scales, and there are four types:

Copper (5HD), Silver (6HD), Gold (7HD) and the extremely rare Platinum Sheng (8HD)

Sages who study Others and their kind have stipulated that the Sheng sheds its scales and goes up in metallic value as it grows. This is based upon a few explorers who say that they have found Sheng lairs, with 1-100 of each previous coin type. So a Gold Sheng would have 1d100 of Copper and Silver scales. Due to the high purity of the metal content of the scales, they are accepted as currency in most civilisations. In some infernal civilisations, Sheng scales are the basis of their currency.

If undetected, the Sheng charges into battle, or pounces on its prey, doing double damage on the first such attack. It also babbles in tongues constantly while in combat. Any character, who fails a test vs luck is confused for the rest of the combat. Confused characters are unable to cast spells and are at -4 to hit. This lasts until the end of the combat, or until the Sheng stops babbling. Confused characters may take a round to collect their wits, but may not perform any other action while they do so.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 2 [17]

Hit Dice 5-8

Attacks 1 Charge attack (1d10) or 2 fore paws (2d6)

Special: Babbles in Tongues, First Attack Pounce.

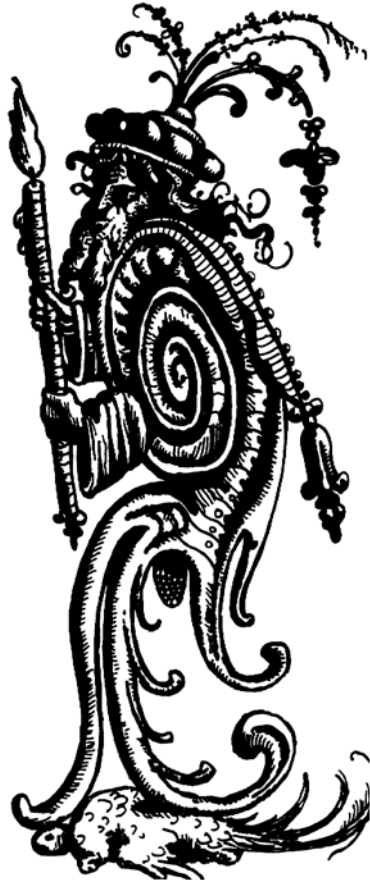
Move 15/18 when pouncing

Challenge Level/XP: 6/400, 7/600, 8/800, 9/1,100

KING BELARAS

“Weird King Belaras, now there’s a sight I won’t forget. Head and arms of man, with a giant snail shell for a body, with some sort of glop coming out if it has legs. Riding the body of a dead fish? Or was he eating the fish? I’m not sure. We met him first in the Haunted City, and he proposed a job that he wanted doing. Some quick grab and smash from an old tomb-house just outside the city.

Which would have made sense, except the tomb was already empty, except for an old clay pot which he wanted us to pick up and bring back to him. Then there was that time where he wanted us to take a jar of bees to a local merchant, and feed the bees to him one at a time. Seeing as these were strange Shroud bees that had deadly stings, we thought it was an assassination attempt. It turned out the merchant was an Other, who considered the bees a delicacy. The last time we met him, it wasn’t so happy. He just materialised in the pub we had taken refuge in and started attacking us with those tentacles which turn out to be venomous. Like all the other encounters, no idea what was going on, but we’ve resolved to avoid him from now on.”



It is said that King Beleras was once a tyrant who disappointed some Greater Other patron and was cursed with his current form and transported to roam The Shroud aimlessly.

Insane by reasonable standards, he considers all humans his subjects. When he meets the characters, he will offer them a job, since this is what he believes his role is.

Roll 1d6	King Beleras wants you to	Will pay
1-2	Go do some trivial task, within 1d6 hours walk away.	2d100 Gp
3-4	Engage in some strange political/social game with an Other local to the present location	3d100 GP.
5	Kill an enemy, usually a powerful Other of at least the character's level in Challenge Level.	4d100 GP.
6	He attacks the characters for some imagined insult.	Nothing

In combat, he attacks with a Magic Flame wand if at range, or with up to five tentacles, coated with venomous barbs, that are his legs.

He stands upon a magic fish, which is dead and rotting, which he can command to fly at great speed.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 3 [16]

Hit Dice:8

Attacks: Magic Flame Wand (2d6) or Barbed Tentacle (1d10)

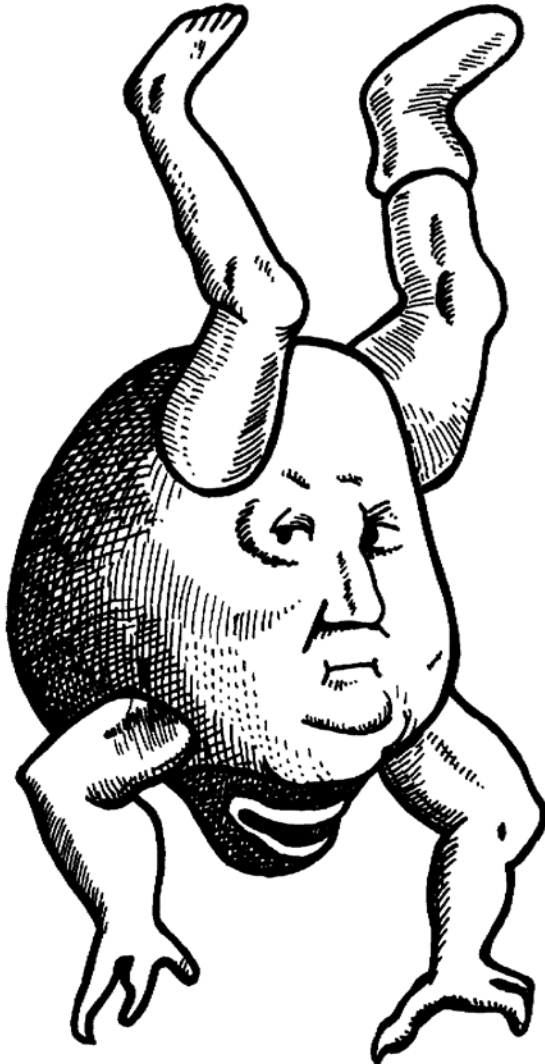
Special: Can attack up to five separate targets with a tentacle attack, Magic Flying Fish.

Move: 9/20 using Magic Flying Fish

Challenge Level/XP: 11/1,7000

CALLUS

“Ab Calus, this one turned up as a botched summoning by our supposed Arch Mage Forden. Once the infernal mists that accompanied its arrival from elsewhere had dispersed, we could clearly discern its form. It had the body of a man-sized fleshy egg with a face dominating one side, of grim countenance. It walked on its hands with its legs pointing up in the air. One leg had a boot on it, which seemed odd seeing as it walked on its hands. Below the face was a black sluglike lump, with an opening. Forden wondered out loud what its function was, and was soon enlightened as it sprayed acid at the poor unfortunate fellow. As he stood there screaming and dissolving the rest of us quickly exited the summoning room and locked the door.”



This egg-like creature is on the hunt for souls, since its strange form is a curse to it. Once has devoured twenty-three souls turns into a new form with a flash and a bang.

Table Calcus' new form

Roll 1d6	New form
1	Horned humanoid with 2 HD
2	Harpy.
3	Decomposing zombie.
4	A beautiful human, who cries "I'm free, I'm free!" before running away.
5	A monstrous large slug (AC 7 [12] and 3 HD who secretes acid and sprays it for 2d6 damage from its 'head'.)
6	A Crawling Corruption.

Killing Calus releases the 1d20 spirits that it has already devoured, which flee the area with an awful scream that causes all living creatures that hear it 1d6 damage.

Even though it walks on its hands, Calus is extremely hard to trip up. In combat, it kicks with its two feet.

Its lower orifice that excretes acid, and it can spray acid up to fifty foot away in a cone of twenty-foot diameter, causing 2d6 damage to anyone it hits, which a successful Test vs Luck halves.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 5 [14].

Hit Dice: 5

Attacks: Kicking 1d8

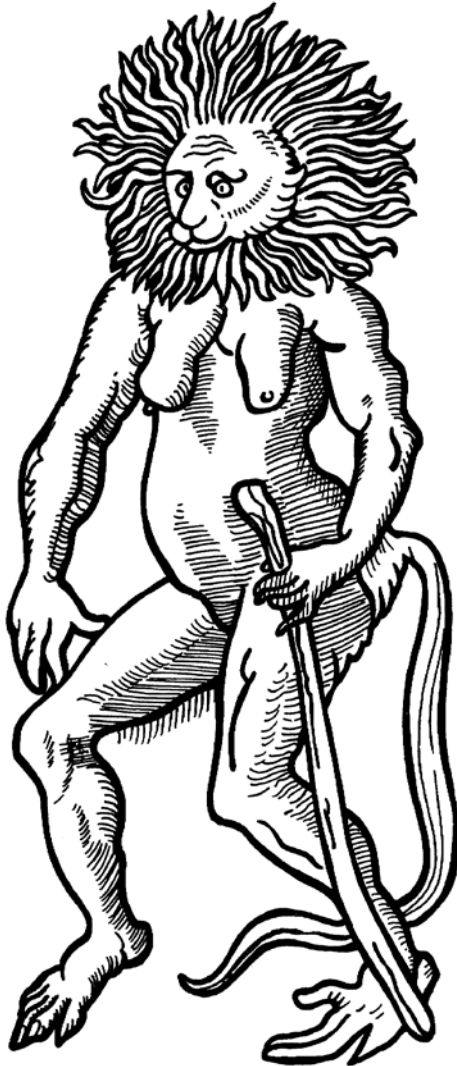
Special: Acid spray every other round.

Move: 9

Challenge Level/XP: 6/400

DROMIC

“We ventured in the Shroud to regain our village’s sacred Wishbone Ash, which the mad idiotic god that our priest called the Dromic had stolen. The priest had summoned it thinking it was one of our old gods and that it would save it from the famine we were currently experiencing. It might have been a kindly lion-headed deity in ancient times, but now it was a thing of madness. We found it in its lair and confronted it. It stood up to a height of over twenty feet, and instead of paws, it had human hands. Hands which it had used to fashion our magic tree into a giant club which it now swung at us with deadly force. As it set about clubbing to death half my fellows it babbled nonsense sending the other half mad. I alone escaped, and I still bear its blasphemous words in my head, almost constantly.”



The Dromic is a drooling idiot god, turned mad by some event in ancient history, who has taken refuge in the Shroud. Sages say that it was once a hunter's god, but require more information to determine if it has any sense or proposes beside being actively malignant to any living beings it encounters.

It appears as a Lion with human-like hands, and which stands like a human on its hind paws. Its maned head looks sleepy and docile. Nothing could be further from the truth since it is very alert and aware, being impossible to surprise, and automatically sensing any character which is hidden or invisible. The head also deals a devastating bite.

It has withered breasts, which when squeezed squirt deadly corrosive acid at ranges of up to thirty feet doing 2d6 damage (a successful Test vs Luck halves damage).

Instead of claws, the Dromic has hands which allow it to hold and fashion tools. One such tool is the Wishbone Ash Club, a magical weapon that deals grievous crushing damage (3d6), which is made out of a magical healing tree that once grew in a meadow near a village on Zarth.

It moves very fast even when standing up, at twice the rate of an unarmoured human.

Type: Other

Armour Class: 3[16]

Hit Dice: 10

Hit Points: 60

Attacks: 1 Club (3d6) or fists (1d12)

Special: Breast Acid Spirt (2d6), Impossible to surprise, detects invisible and hidden.

Move: 24

Challenge Level/XP: 13/2,300

EVERISH STALKER

“We thought we were safe from pursuit, as we waded through the swamp that surrounded the Sorcerer’s tower. Zaric dropped half the loot when the first of the Stalkers silently appeared behind us. Strange things of the Shroud not of Zarth, they had made no noise as they had quickly moved from their pens under the tower across the swamp, catching our group of thieves unawares. We didn’t stand a chance, and they promptly cut us down. I was lucky I still had that teleport scroll and was able to invoke it to get out of there quickly.”



Bound into service as hunting hounds by other more powerful Others or by Sorcerers, Everish Stalkers are fearsome and persistent foes once unleashed.

The Stalker is completely silent, and will automatically surprise its prey. Characters who successfully Test their Luck will avoid being surprised by a whisker. Its main mode of attack is with its hardened bone beak, but it also can use its spindly but springy legs to launch a leap attack of up to twenty foot which it then follows up with a beak attack dealing extra damage (3d6 instead of 2d6).

Its skeleton is also rubbery, so it can collapse its body and slip under small spaces such as under doors.

Type: Other

Armour Class: 5[14]

Hit Dice:5

Attacks: Beak attack (2d6)

Special: Leap attack (3d6 damage, twenty-foot range), Completely silent, flexible skeleton.

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 6/400

FRONG

“What can I tell you about my beloved lord Frong? He’s not actually blind, those white eyes see all and can see straight into your mind. That large nose can smell you from a hundred paces. His breath-- well that’s an acquired taste. To me its pure love. It’s not always been that way, I remember being scared of his savage appearance, and I was worried by this large fangs. But then he commanded me to come to his side in that deep rumbling voice that it’s so hard to say no to, and we’ve been together ever since.”



Frong is an Other with a bestial humanoid form that is like a big hairy ape that stands ten foot tall. He has blind white eyes but has magical senses that are superior to humans and a mouth full of sharp teeth. But despite his savage appearance he is always surrounded by a small group of 2d6 young humans, of both sexes, for he has the black tongue of seduction with which he can cast Charm Person three times per day.

In combat, as well as his fangs, he can breathe out a cloud of poisonous gas that fills an area fifty foot across, doing 2d6 damage to all living creatures caught in it. A successful Test vs Luck halves this.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 6 [15]

Hit Dice: 8

Hit Points: 50

Attacks: Fangs (2d4)

Special: Poisonous Breath, Charm Person

Move:15

Challenge Level/XP: 10/1,400

GORGAMA OF THREE FACES

*“Fear Gorgama of Three Faces. Two that judge silently and one that licks the sin from the world!
Prostrate yourself in worship.”*



Gorgoma is a strange Other who appears as a giant stone-grey head, fifteen foot tall, ten foot across with three faces. One that has a tongue that licks and dissolves anything it touches (3d6 damage) while the remaining the two heads that sneer their disdain for everything and everyone. The sombre faces also shoot red beams of energy from their eyes (2d6 damage).

Gorgoma can fly, by slowly floating and when it is at rest on the ground, it is often mistaken for a statue.

There are multiple Gormagas that appear in different places, and a strange cult of adoration has grown around it. There is a 1 in 4 chance that there will be 2d10 human cultists (see Crypts and Things page 170) gathered to worship Gorgoma when one is present.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 3 [16]

Hit Dice: 6

Attacks: Laser beam eyes (2d6)

Special: Corrosive tongue lick

Move: 9 floating through the air

Challenge Level/XP: 8/800

HELDANU

“Have you heard of sorcerer’s constructs such as cockatrices and griffins, where the vivimancer’s art joins beasts together? Well, the Heldanu is such a collection of beasts where the sorcerer who created it, Heldanu, joined his creation.”



Heldanu is an ex-human sorcerer who used the arts of vivimancy to join his 'perfect' creation. The process, of course, turned him completely mad, and all that is left is his head in the body of the creature that bears his name, that drools incessantly and mumbles to itself.

It also has three other heads on five-foot-long tentacles:

- Beak face, which is eyeless which pecks and squawks at people.
- Little Sun a strange fleshy thing with a small face that looks like a stylised sun from a distance. It fires off a beam of fire that does 1d8 to a target every round.
- Horn Beak a birdlike head with also pecks at enemies.

The scaly body has small wings that are capable of slow rudimentary flight, no more than ten foot off the ground. On its legs, it wears the Winged boots of Tarn the Traveller (a deceased adventurer) which allow it to move at one and a half times the speed of a normal human. Finally, a grasping tail can reach up to fifteen feet away and constrict enemies doing 2d6 damage per round. Grasped victims must spend a round escaping the hold.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 7 [12].

Hit Dice: 8

Hit Points 50

Attacks: Beak attack (1d10)

Special: Grasping tail, magic-missile once per round.

Move: 18 running/9 flying

Challenge Level/XP: 10/1,400

IGNOR THE TRI-PRONGED

New Minion: "They say Ignor is a sorcerer of great and terrible power who ventured into the Shroud, to accumulate more terrible power and drank the soul of a Greater Other to get it. When he had done that he stayed behind and built the Iron Tower?"

More experienced Minion: "Yeah pretty much. They also say the Tri-Pronged sign on his forehead is a magical symbol that lets him read our minds. But I wouldn't think that when he's around!"



Ignore was a Sorcerer of great power on Zarth in ancient times, who decided he had reached the limits of his power. So he decided to go to the Shroud and drain the life out of a Greater Other. This he did after an epic battle with Balthazorg the Horned One. Not only did he take the Greater Other's power but he also retrained his horns, and so is now the wearer of the Horned Hat.

Absorbing Bathazorg's power gave him the following abilities

- Boosted his hit dice from 8 to 12.
- Gave him the power to breathe fire once per day doing 4d6 damage to anyone in a cone, 60 foot long by 30 foot wide.
- Magically hardened his skin, giving him an armour class of 2 [18].
- Gave him the ability to summon the flame sword, that does 2d6 in combat and 1d6 after a hit per round from setting the target on fire. A successful Test vs Luck prevents the character from being set on fire. Otherwise, the character must take one combat round to put the fire out.
- Granted him the standard other immunities to mind control magic (such as Sleep, Charm Person), disease and poison.

If someone removes the horned hat from his head, it removes these abilities until it is placed back on his head. The hat does not bestow these powers on another.

On Ignor's brow is the Tri-Pronged sign, a magic tattoo allows him to read others minds within a range of thirty feet.

Type: Other.

Armour Class: 2 [18].

Hit Dice: 12

Hit Points: 101

Attacks: Flamesword (2d6, 1d6 per round after first until put out)

Special: Magic Casting. Immunities.

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 13/2,300

Igor knows the following spells useable once per day each.

1st Cause Light Wounds, Magic Missile, Oppression, Soul Burn, Summon Minor Other.

2nd Curse, Darkness (15ft radius), Web.

3rd Cause Disease, Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Monster Summoning I.

4th Cause Serious Wounds, Fear, Dimension Door.

JELCOR THE DEATH SHEEP

"When once green Zarth burnt under the harsh glare of Nemesis the Red Sun, the once innocent Lamb of Kindness fled into the mists of the Shroud. There it became the Black Sheep. Its live giving powers and innocence were twisted into the service of death. Where its fleece once gave warmth, it now radiates cold and raises the dead into the undead. Its breath turns the living into hideous ghouls. Its diamond encrusted horns gore its opponents, and it is said that it laughs while it impales its victims. Even though it's a fearsome foe, many would hunt it for it is said its hooves when ground up and drunk gives immortality."



This warped Fertility deity kills and gives undeath. It is always surrounded by a herd of 3d8 Skeletons and 2d6 Zombies and 1d4 Ghouls.

Its diamond encrusted horns deal 2d8 damage when it gores its enemies in combat.

Its magic Black Hooves would grant immortality to those who grind them down and inject the power.

Rubbing a corpse against its Fleece raises the dead as Zombies.

Black breath can raise one newly dead human as a Ghoul once per day.

Type: Other

Armour Class: 3 [16]

Hit Dice: 10

Attacks: Horn gore (2d8)

Special: Black breath raises newly dead as Ghoul

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 11/1,700

VARNA CABAL'S TRAVELLING CARAVAN

There exists many travelling caravans of merchants and travellers that journey through the known world in search of curiosities, treasures, wealth and power. Of the bands of like-minded explorers is the engrammatic caravan of Varna Cabal whose arrival to town is noteworthy event for the local inhabitants and adventurers alike. Universally kept at arms length by any headmen or tyrants of the local population they are rarely moved on quickly or find themselves subject to the cruel whims of less reputable rulers.

Their arrival is marked by a colourful circular arrangement of large tents set up outside town followed by loud music and drifting through the air and then to finally drive the point home; Varna enters town to stand atop a brightly decorated podium and declare the caravan is open for business.

Local businesses are understandably find the whole thing in poor taste as this siphons much needed coin from the locals that would be spent in their businesses and instead they see potential profits walking out the gate.

Visitors are greeted by extravagantly dressed staff who will be happy to point patrons to the tent that satisfies their desires, needs and wants. These charismatic guards keep the peace while at the same time keeping a eagle eye out for light fingered pick pockets or shop lifters. Of the three dozen staff the caravan supports, about half of these are guards that will handle any violent outbursts that could breakout between visitors. Ironically despite the negative attitude of these travelling caravans, its very rare for a local to be robbed or assaulted due to the diligent attention of these guards and the attitude of fair play that all the staff seem to share.

However the transgressors of the laws of the caravan rarely are seen again. Sometimes they will join the caravan as staff or guards or just disappear completely. If ever questioned about this the guards will confirm they ether chased the culprit from the grounds or handed them over to the local authorities. Its nearly impossible to determine if this is indeed the truth. However the cruel nature of the people of Zarth is that there are always instances where the guards get involved and people go missing.

Caravan Guards

Garish and colourful clothes hide well-fitting leather armour and their belts hold a small short sword and throwing knives that are partially obscured by flowing fabric.

Type: Human

Armour Class: 7 [12]

Hit Dice: 3

Attack: Short sword (1d6) or throwing knife (1d4)

Special: Attempts to obscure illegal or nefarious actions have a -2 to Skill Tests.

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 3/60

VARNA CABAL

Varna is an enigma for those who meet him. Despite his travels his skills is pale and un-tanned regardless of the long days he spends in the sun basking for his caravan. His accent is almost always local to where he finds himself so its very hard to figure out where he truly comes from.

His clothing is robes and attire usual for the warmest environments and topped with a simple turban. While his clothes are made from the finest silks he wears very little evidence of wealth on his personal. His hands don't bear any rings and his the robes cover up the rest of his body meaning any jewellery wore would be hidden. However when pressed into having to move quickly, the faint sound of coins can be heard from an unseen purse.

There are many legends about his origins include his escape from lizard man slave pits, being a former elemental priest or a pirate lord without his boat.

Varna has over the many years he has travelled the world developed an extensive collection of contacts including the many tyrants that rule over the people of Zarth. He has been known to sell or gift magic items to gain their trust and his caravan to be left alone from their more vile urges.

In very few instances when he's unable to gain the favour of a local lord, Varna isn't opposed to hiring assassins to remove the offending target from power using the magic items that would be used to keep their favour. Varna has long since stopped being surprised by how easily he can manipulate brave and bold adventurers to carry out his will using a magic sword as a reward, which considering how difficult it usually is to kill a tyrant, is a fair reward.

Varna is no skilled combatant and relies heavily on his surrounding guards and his healing to win any encounter.

Type: Human

Armour Class: 9[10]

Hit Dice: 5

Attacks: Dagger (1D4)

Special: Recovers 5 HP a turn, even when HP are reduced to zero.

Move:12

Challenge Level: 7/600

As Varna cannot be genuinely defeated but escaping his wraith would be enough to earn his experience.

ATTRactions

The caravans sets up their businesses in a circular patten with a blank space left in the middle to allow of ease of travel between each establishment and room for large podium in dead centre. This is where Varna Cabal can be easily found barking to an audience to draw their attention to the various attractions and answering any questions from the curious. When Varna is busy with other business he is replied by the Blind Minstrels, a trio of bards who play their flute, lute and trumpet with great skill and while they wear silk scarf's over their faces obscuring their face and meaning its likely they are blindfolded by this usual garb. However they are never seen like this and when moving around they seem to have no trouble navigating the world around them.

There is no cross over in different establishments and its impossible to find the same product in two different tents. This seems to be prevent competition between the various stall owners and stop any ill will between them. Each advertises its wares with a simple wooden sign with heavily stylised writing and large easy to identify drawings to aid the illiterate. This also has the added benefit of visitors being very unlikely to stumble into the wrong tend and be confronted by a wide-eyed salesman.

While the caravan takes a very dim view of stealing from or short changing its customers. The store owners will not think twice about swindling a patrons with goods that are not as advertised or mis advised for the desired purpose. In short while a visiting adventure may have little to fear in terms of robbery or pick pockets, they are not dealing with good or noble salesmen. Much like the rest of Zarth there are no saints in the caravan.

Below is a list of the typical businesses that make up the caravan but these do change from time to time with additional ones appearing for short periods or main features disappearing occasionally. Crypt Keepers are invited to invent more to fit their games needs if the desired establishment isn't listed below.

The Barrel Top

Beer and other alcohols are served along with tables that are used for games of chance and gambling. While some of the games are hosted by staff the bartender will sell and reimburse chips used for games as gambling for coins is heavily discouraged. This also means that gamblers can stake treasure or jewellery for chips. The owner and bartender Warrick; a fat man with a well-trimmed beard is a skilled appraiser and sometimes Varna will direct sellers to him for valuation of fine treasures.

Guards are always on hand in case things become too heated with the powerful alcohol present and consumed on site. However the staff biggest issues is cheaters, if discovered they are dragged off and their chips are forfeit to the house. Despite this happening upwards of several times a night, there is always one likely rogue who will try his hand at palming card or swapping dice resulting in their expulsion from the premises and in some cases their disappearance.

The Spitted Lizard

Exotic foods are served from a menu that claims to be from around the world. In reality the cheapest foodstuffs (and the most sold) are nothing more than well spiced local fare. However for the customer with a refined pallet and deeper pockets, a variety of monstrous or rare animals are served up. Those who follow the caravan whole note that the latter is usually tied in closely with the latest attractions from The Locked Chest. The cook and owner is an expert ranger called Ansell who may take an interest in any scavenged body parts of monsters that adventurers my present.

Silks and Satin

As the title suggests this tent is filled with clothing and dresses made from styles the are both foreign and outlandish. The seamstress who runs the business; Blanchette rotates the stock so that local fashions don't appear on sale in the place where they would normally be found. Her skills with a needle and thread are legendary in some parts and knowledge spell casters seek her skills as she can make a light weight by tough robe that does prevent spell casting that offers a limited form for protection for the right price. These have no effect on encumbrance much as regular clothes would not.

Armour Class	Cost:
AC 8 [11]	10gp
AC 7 [12]	50gp
AC 6 [13]	300gp

The Tent Foot Pole

Specialist in “adventuring” equipment including climbing gear, door spikes, lanterns and other miscellaneous items including the signature tent foot pole. More than once the owner; Cyphous has parted a young farmer, miner or workman with his hard-earned coins with dreams of the adventures life, usually leading to their early demise. However

this doesn't stop the steady stream young hopefuls who populate the premises with each settlement the caravan travels to.

Additionally for the more experienced adventurers or those bearing silver tongues, will find that Cyphous keeps his best stock 'behind the counter' with illegal goods including poisons, acids, alchemist fire and other substances that most towns openly outlaw.

Earthly Heaven

By far the biggest establishment within the caravan both in terms of the physical size and the number of staff it employs. The interior is a lavish pleasure palace with hanging silk sheets and scented smoke hanging in the air like a lustful fog. This is one of the two businesses that insist upon a fee just to enter the premises and getting past a pair of intimidating guards who gate-keep the entrance. Once the entrance fee is paid guests are offered the chance to gather around drug filled hookah while gentle music hangs in the air to drown out the drone of the outside world. Those who approach Madam Kingsley can for a small pouch of coins book time with the beautiful women and men who can satisfy more carnal desires. These staff rotate frequently as they either burn out from their own drug additions or in rarer instances gather enough coins from their work to settle down for the quiet life that being on the move with the caravan cannot provide.

That said the twins Rebecca and Reece have been part of the attraction for years demanding a high price and have been rumoured to spend the night with numerous tyrants from around the world. Rumours persist from those who have followed the caravan for years that they twins don't appear to age and have an almost supernatural ability to disarm any man or woman with their beauty and tempt even the most devoted holy man into their bed.

The Nine Pointed Star

A small tent that sometimes easy to miss or assume is a staff personal accommodations. Those entering the tent find a densely packed shop of occult and arcane items. Warped wooden shelves hold hundreds of trinkets, body parts hanging in jars, protective amulets or pouches of herbs. The owner Barbok Coltherd is the most accomplished spell caster (Sorcerer 4) that works for Varna Cabal who will upon recognising a fellow practitioner of the craft who open up his small collection of magical scrolls and potions.

His prices to a skilled merchant appear to sky rocket with no discernable reason as if Barbok is making them up on a whim. However this seems to be tailor to the superstitions of the area and the foreign hedge magic he can sell to local with little point of reference. Barbok finds a fool and his money are easily parted by in some rare cases his protective wards or herbal remedies work; enough this his reputation as a con man has never truly cemented itself.

The Locked Chest

The second largest establishment within the whole caravan and more many its the highlight of a journey to visit. Much like the Earthly Heaven a pair of imposing guards stand at the entrance while its owner and barker Tarrok Flint gathers coins from visitors who he can begin his guided tour through his attractions. Once he has gathered a sizeable group of around a dozen he will guide them through the partitioned 'rooms' of the tent each one housing a selection of curiosities and treasures he has gathered from around the world. Visitors can see the a series of unique exhibits that appear to be genuine or skilful forgeries.

Here is a list of some of the highlights of his tour.

- Mummified remains of King Solotice who ruled over a desert kingdom for five life times.
- The soul drinking blade of the duellist Freddic Skillic whose lust for power was undone when his sword shared his ambition and devoured its master.
- Slavers whip that help 'encourage' the building of the Temple of Elements.
- The severed head of the Soothsayer Eric the White who has decayed in all the years its been on display and is reported to have spoken on very rare occasions.

The tour finishes with the spectacle of a massive heavy iron cage which Tarrok uses to house a monstrous creature he has captured. Those skilled in the biology of these monstrous creatures may take note that some of these displays subsist on the flesh of intelligent creatures but there is no note of how these animals are kept alive. However Tarrok is a man who cannot stand to rest on his laurels wants new displays for his tend. This means he has a constant need for new and exciting monsters or treasures to display and he's known to employ local adventurers for this dangerous role.

The Skyward Star

A small but popular tent that houses a jewellery and gem emporium offering simple and affordable items next to expensive and lavish examples of gold and jewels. Many a hopeful suitor will visit with his hard earned coin to gain a ring, brooch and necklace to show his affection to a subject of his affections. The owner Mangor Mattson has a skilful eye and accurately value any stock through him for his to buy or trade. Many an adventurer has visited his establishment as their first port of call after a harrowing delve into the countless Crypts that are scattered around Zarth to turn his discovered valuable into coin to spend in other tents. His smooth and charming voice up-sells his evaluable merchandise that he keeps safe under lock and key in glass topped strong boxes.

While Mangor does make use of the guards to protect his merchandise he also has taken a massive tower of the man know as Skinner as his personal bodyguard, he stays in the tent at all times his chipped sword attest to his use of the weapon from time to time.

Skinner

Type: Human

Armour Class: 5 [15]

Hit Dice: 5

Attack: Long Sword (1d8)

Special: Attempts to obscure illegal or nefarious actions have a -2 to Skill Tests.

Able to see into the Shroud 3 times a day.

Move: 12

Challenge Level/XP: 4/120

Tools of the Trade

All arms and armour sold and traded within the caravan within the confines of this tent. It up sells fine quality weapons and armour from some of the best blacksmiths from around the world. The overall price tends to be around 10-50% more than normal prices due to the long distance these goods have travelled. Rich customers take great pride in their exotic weapons and armour and it is usually considered a sign of wealth within the halls of power around Zarth's nobility.

Despite the high costs of the main articles sold within Tools of the Trade, locals flock to the tent to rummage through its "used" weapons and armour section for cheap protection.

The owner Vadim is a short and powerful man who could be mistaken for a dwarf of legend will happily buy any weapons and armour that adventurers bring in from their journey.

Used Weapon & Armour

Sold at 75% of the normal cost but have the following rules:

The first time using a weapon that a player rolls a natural 1, they must test their luck. If lucky then the weapon is a good quality and no further tests are needed. If unlucky the weapon breaks and is destroyed.

The first time a foe rolls a natural 20 when attacking the player wearing used armour, they must test their luck. If lucky then the armour is of good quality then no further tests are needed. If unlucky the armour breaks and loses -2[+2] from the effect from AC. It can be repaired by a trained blacksmith for 50% of the book price. Yes this means that a poor quality armour could end up costing more than buying armour at the normal price.

Finally used shields again require the wearer to roll for luck when a foe attacks with a natural 20 and in the event that the player is unlucky the shield is destroyed like poor quality weapons.

THE DARK SECRET

The truth is that Varna Cabal is cursed by a medallion that he wears under his robes and grants supernatural healing and has frozen his ageing. The golden chain and the eye shaped medallion is fused to Varna's chest so he keeps it hidden so that none can see his shame and get ideas of killing him for this valuable prize. However the negative effect of the curse is that he may call no land his home. Upon the dawn of a new moon he must move or suffer from crippling pain and rapid ageing; however this rapidly subsides when he's moving to a new home. In spite of the long life that Varna has enjoyed he longs for a place to call home, with four walls and a familiar neighbourhood outside his door.

Varna was once a lowly henchman for a group of adventures who found the cursed medallion and seeing no issues with the curse and forced him to wear the medallion so that he couldn't easily be killed. Upon discovering how rapid his regeneration from wounds was they started to take great delight in throwing him into traps as a crude method to disarm them. This was extremely painful and wore heavily on his sanity. Finally after a harrowing adventure within a lost crypt and watching his arm regrow from a mangled stump he snapped and took up his dagger and murdered his party in their sleep and then disarmed the watchman by allowing himself to be impaled on his spear and walking down the shaft and stabbed the chest of the party leader in a frenzy.

When the dust settled, the blood dried and his wounds healed, Varna was a free man in the middle of nowhere and stumbling through the wilderness for countless days fighting off bandits, monsters and his own madness until he was found by a travelling band of merchants who took him under their wing. However as he grew to love his new companions for their kindness he started to fall deeper under the influence of the medallion and upon hearing the whispered voice of his new patron and the formation of the Cult of the Bloody Eye was the next step into creating a cult of personality around himself that allowed himself over time to take over the caravan and form it into what is today.

THE CULT OF THE BLOODY EYE

Varna from time to time hears the voice of a Greater Other who calls himself Paava-Shrek or the Great Bloody Eye. He sits within his fortress in the shroud and wishes for Varna to travel the world looking for the relics of a long-dead civilisation that trapped him in this otherworldly prison so that he may break his bonds and roam Zarth once more.

To spread his message and allies around the world the Great Bloody Eye taught Varna a ritual used as an initiation within the cult that involves removing one's own eye and then eating it. This causes a divine moment where they envisage themselves within a surreal fortress before the throne of a great Cyclops with tears of blood oozing from his one massive eye. While the cultist is in his haze his eye begins to grow back but truly observant people will note red flecks within the iris. Aside from a face to face meeting with the monstrous Paava-Shrek this also bestows the cultist enhanced powers of

perception.

To the cultist this power of observation is in the form of occasionally obsessing over the smallest detail. A speck of dust on a blade may mean its need to be repaired. A fly on the edge of a soup bowl may inform that the soup is poisoned. A small speck of blood on the collar may mean that person is violent and needs to be killed. If a PC takes the ritual feel free to insert these obsessive observations that will drive them mad and make them question what they are seeing.

Completing the initial ritual will grant PCs a +5 to perception and for NPCs gives a -2 to skill tests to go unnoticed by those who have undergone the ritual.

However Paava-Shrek knows that he has little influence over his puppet Varna and suspects he wishes to break his curse. (something that can only be done with the death of Varna or the destruction of Paava-Shrek). To this end he has reached out to Barbok Coltherd a few short days after his initiation into the cult. He taught Barbok a second ritual that is an extension of the first by having the cultist eat both his eyes at the same time. This results in a deeper connection to the Great Bloody Eye so that Paava-Shrek can observe the world through their eyes and have control over their actions for a limited time. This has created a second tier of the cult, akin to an inner circle that Varna is unaware of and makes sure that he carries out the will of his master and that in the unlikely event of his death, a more loyal acolyte will take up the medallion and bear the curse. Barbok is hopeful that this will be him but is unable to see a way of ending Varna's life as his attempts to assassinate him have proved unsuccessful.

Completing the second ritual will grant both PCs and NPCs the ability to see within the shroud for 1 minute, three times a day. This offers no protection to the sanity-blasting aspect of the Shroud.

However this does allow Paava-Shrek to take control of the cultist for up to an hour once a week. (saving throw to resist).

Most of the store owners and their selection of minions like Skinner, Reece and Rebecca have undergone this second ritual and form the inner circle of the cult. They rarely give the honour to anyone who hasn't been with the caravan for at least a year and ensure their loyalty to the cult and Varna's caravan.

Paava-Shrek

The imposing giant humanoid giant completely lacking a head but in place of this is a fleshy stump with a single massive eyeball that oozes thick dark blood constantly. When it lurches forward its flabby stomach shifts to reveal a massive shark-like mouth of needle sharp teeth splits its gut in two and a massive tongue wet with anticipation glistens within.

Paava-Shrek (continued from previous page).

Type: Other

HD: 12

AC: -4[23]

Move: 12

Attack: Fists (D8)

Special: Upon a successful attack, roll a second to hit roll. If both successful Paava-Shrek scoops up the target and will throw them into his gut mouth. This will cause an automatic (D8) each turn as they are pulverised by teeth., A successful strength check (-2) is needed to break free otherwise no other actions can be attempted. There is room in his gut for two human sized targets.

Spells: As 12th level Sorcerer (all black magic)

Challenge Level/XP: 15/2,900

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The Caravan of Varna Cabal can be easily inserted to any campaign with minimal effort as they have a tendency to just appear outside a town or city with little warning. They offer multiple opportunities for plot hooks of looking for lost relics in hidden crypts, monster hunting or even political intrigue.

While on the surface the Caravan is a safe place to rest and enjoy themselves while selling their loot from their latest adventures, this should spark the paranoid of a more experienced group that something is going on, because it is. If a player is dragged off by guards due to breaking the rules they may depend on their ability to talk out of the situation find themselves bound by quest, forced to join the cult or even feed the monsters in the Locked Chest.

Alternatively the caravan can be a central quest hub with the group following or joining the caravan and working their passage with numerous dangerous jobs and gaining the trust of Varna himself who may impart on them his desire to be free of his curse.

While he is the head of the cult of the Bloody Eye, Varna does suspect that some of his cultist are working against in so is looking for trustworthy outsiders to confide in.

In this case, he will ask the group to hunt down ancient magic items and spells from long lost civilisation that will allow the group to use the medallion as a gateway to the fortress of Paava-Shrek and end his schemes to once again rule over Zarth in the flesh.

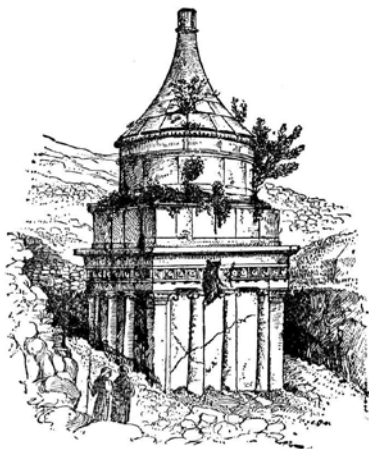
However no good deed should go unpunished, and with the curse of the medallion being removed Varna will be able to abuse its remaining powers of immortality to easily conquer his own lands as the newest unkillable Tyrant of Zarth.

LOST LOCATIONS

This article is a selection of ten adventure locations within the Shroud. Since the Shroud is a place of vague geography at best, and a hellish shifting landscape at worst, these locations are randomly encountered within the grey fog that makes up most of this otherworldly dimension.

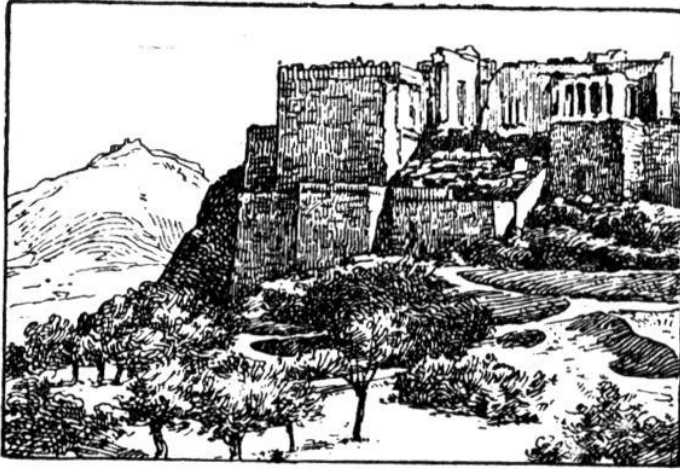
SO WHERE ARE THE PARTY LOST NOW?

Roll 1d10	Location
1	The Monster City
2	The Eerie Stones
3	The Maze of Malice
4	The Head of Horror
5	The Half-Way House
6	Grim Falls
7	The Tomb of Alexisa
8	The Tower of Wood Green
9	The Toll-Fort
10	The Hermit's Cave



THE MONSTER CITY

On Zarth the humans have cities, so in the Shroud, the monsters will have theirs.



First impressions

A small self-contained walled city on a small hill that rises out of a plain of rocks and sparse trees. As the characters get closer to its cyclopean gates, guarded by stone gargoyles, they can see that the city is partially ruined.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	1d8 Monmans, legal and proud citizens of the city.
14-17	1d4 Golgoth Guard, responsible for law and order, with the emphasis on order.
18-19	One of the more seclusive monsters of the city out and about on its business.
20	The Monomaniac, the ruler of Monster City, making a procession through the city,

Secrets

The city is mainly a home for the monstrous Monmans, refugees from wars in Zarth. Warped by the taint of Khaos, they are humanoid in form but have 1d2 Khaos features.

Monman AC 7[12]; HD 1; HP 6; Atks: 1 Shortsword (1d6); Mv 12; Special 1d2 Khaos Features; CL/XP: 2/30.

Other Khaos monsters, who also seek refuge in the city away from the attention of Khaos Killers on Zarth, can be found here. 1 in 20 are refugees from the focus of another Greater Other who is still actively hunting them. Any of the monsters from the Compendium of Fiends (the monster chapter in the main Crypts and Things rulebook) are fair game, but always have 1d3 chaos features.

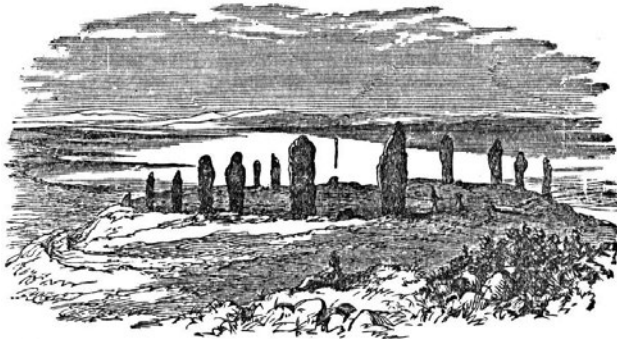
The Golgoth has some sort of contract with the Monomaniac that goes beyond the usual blood and souls that they charge other Tyrants. If the Monomaniac were to be somehow banished/killed, they would quickly turn upon the residents of the city in a state of crazed blood vengeance.

The Monomaniac, resembling his people in hiding, is a reclusive monarch, who rules through a web of committees and middlemen. Occasionally it proceeds through the city, accompanied by its Golgoth guards (see result 20 in the encounters table above). It is roughly humanoid, being obscured in layers of royal robes. In combat it has a giant tentacle that lashes out from its otherwise featureless face, striking up to thirty feet away with deadly force.

Monomaniac, Greater Other: AC -2[22];HD 23;HP 84; Atks: 1 Lashing face tentacle (2d6 damage); Special; 1d6 Khaos features, rolled each time it encountered, regenerates 2d4 each turn. Mv 12; CL/XP: 25/5,900.

THE EERIE STONES

A place of strange and warped magic that may be a route home to Zarth.



First impressions

A large stone circle, onehundred feet in diameter, made up of approximately twenty standing stones varying between three and twenty feet in height. The stones are inscribed with magic symbols that glow a strange green in the pale grey light that surrounds the circle.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	2d6 Others of CL equal to the character's average level come
14-17	A group of 1d4 Infernal Scribes arrive to inscribe new spells upon the stones.
18-19	A group of 4d6 Screaming Witches and 2d6 Cultists (see C&T page XX) arrives with attendants to perform a secret ceremony.
20	The Gate Keeper arrives with an entourage to inspect the integrity of the gate.

Secrets

If you walk around the stones anti-clockwise, a gate to Zarth opens in the centre. If you peer in you can see the location that has opened up. Throwing an item from a specific spot on Zarth into the gate changes the location to that place.

The magic symbols on the stones are black magic spells inscribed for some unknown reason by visiting Infernal Scribes (see result 14-17 on the encounter table above). Roll 1d6, and then pick a random Black Magic spell if a sorcerer spends one hour deciphering the symbols. There is a 25% that the Gatekeeper with three infernal scribes will arrive to protest at the sorcerer's attempt to read the spell.

The Gate Keeper is an uncaring creation of the high powers of dark sorcery that maintain the Shroud. It is intelligent in a mechanical way and capable of communicating in a deep monotone. It inhabits the body of Flesh Golem, provided by the secret powers it serves who have an infinite supply.

THE MAZE OF MALICE

A vast ruin of buildings, roads and walls that make up a maze of bewildering proportions. Because this is the Shroud, this place is home to the cruel and dangerous.



First impressions

The whole site is a mess. It's been smashed into pieces like some huge mad god's plaything. What remains is a network of narrow roads and dividing walls, which weave and close off buildings that were never planned adequately to any uniform standard.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	Ambush in the rubble. The adventurers are attacked by a group of 4d6 monsters of challenge level equal to 1d3.
14-17	A lost group of Archaeologists/Treasure hunters, from a city-state on Zarth. They are entirely unaware that they are in the Shroud.
18-19	A monster lair of a creature of challenge level 3 more than the party.
20	The party find an exit to the maze. Roll 1d6. On an even result, it is guarded by an Angel of Oblivion (see C&T page xx), on an odd result, it is unguarded.

Secrets

The maze hides many secrets. Secrets of the former residents that are left in their homes. Secrets that have intentionally been hidden in the depths of the ruined city. Angels of Oblivion guard the exits to ensure that looters do not take these secrets out of the city, compelled by some ancient pact. However, some exits are unguarded because their Angel has been slain by powers higher than them.

If you are unfortunate enough to come across the maze, you always start in the heart of it.

THE HEAD OF HORROR

An ancient house of torment, where only the damned go.



First impressions

Nested in a cliff of cracked obsidian, this head made of white marble is one hundred feet high and almost as wide. Its mouth is wide open, but there is a wall of stone across it, into which is an open door on the left-hand side. Wide pale eyes stare into the mists of the Shroud that surround it.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	A band of 3d6 Cultists arrive at the head and enter it.
14-17	Screaming in terror, 2d6 Cultists emerge from the head. Babbling and deranged they attack anyone who tries to converse with them.
18-19	A Hypnotiser, see C&T page 172, disguised as an attractive human dressed in beautiful clothing, strides confidently out from the mouth of the head.
20	As above but the human is possessed by a Mamba (see C&T page 177)

Secrets

The head is a gateway to a wound in reality that spawns nightmares. Inside is an apparently featureless cave fifty foot across and deep. In the far corner is the gap in reality, almost invisible but readily discernible by the magical sensitivity ability of a Sorcerer. Through this gap, dirty things from Other Worlds easily slip, and there is a 75% chance of this occurring if the wound is prodded and poked, and a 25% of something coming through even if it is left alone unnoticed.

HALFWAY HOUSE

A resting place and safe house between worlds.



First impressions

A fortified inn made of stone, with a red tiled roof, with a single chimney through which homely cooking smells emerge in a constant stream of smoke.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	2d4 fellow adventurers, who are taking a blessed rest in the inn's bar, and are keen to swap stories with their peers.
14-17	The Hooded Man arrives and sits in a dark corner of the bar. He has exotic goods to trade and missions to hire for mysterious masters.
18-19	The inn's owner, Happy Meric drops his jobs and entertains the guests with songs and dance of exceptionally infectious exuberance. Heal 2d6 hit points.
20	For 1d6 days if you go in the front door of the inn in the Shroud, and go out the back door, you arrive in Port Black Mire back on Zarth in the area of the city known as Impossible Hill.

Secrets

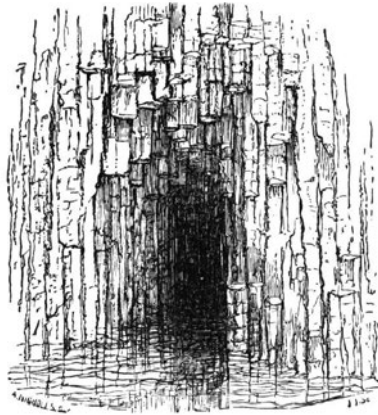
The Half Way House was originally an inn in Port Blackmire long before the arrival of the Shark Pirates. It was moved into the Shroud by the sorcerer who built Impossible Hill, during the same magical action that created the hill. Its owner simply carried on

the business, getting enough passing trade from exiles and trans-dimensional explorers. During the brief periods that the back door of the inn is connected to Port Blackmire, Meric will restock with Zarthly foods and ales.

The inn acts as a safe zone for its guests, and there is even a healer on the staff who will restore the health of anyone wounded. Guests are expected to hand any weapons in at the front desk, and there is an anti-magic field that prevents magic casting within the inn.

GRIM FALLS

A waterfall made of rock, with a dark cave from which dark waters flow.



First impressions

Strands of rock fall from the sky, like water, into a pool of black water. There is a dark gap in the stone curtain, a cave entrance into the unknown.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	2d4 Bashan (see C&T page 150) emerge from the pool.
14-17	A company of 100 zombies shuffle out of the cave entrance, to go abroad to collect more victims for the King of Grim Falls.
18-19	A crystal sword emerges from the pool, held by the arm of the Fair Maiden drowned by the King in the pool. The Crystal Sword does +4 to hit and damage vs the King of Grim Falls but compels the wielder to attack him relentlessly to gain vengeance for the Fair Maiden. The sword shatters when the king is killed.
20	One of the hostages from Zarth has escaped and is making a run for it in a boat that is emerging from the cave in the falls.

Secrets

The cave entrance leads into a huge cave inhabited by the King of Grim Falls, a Crypt Thing (see C&T page 159). He is served by the usual gaggle of zombies and skeletons, who preside over a sizeable banqueting table full of rotting food. Behind the throne at the end of the cavern is an entrance to a treasure room, which as well as containing a fortune in gold and silver also has prisoner cages holding several hostages from Zarth. The King holds the hostages prisoner on behalf of sorcerers who have pacts with him.

THE TOMB OF ALEXSIA

Some sorcerers arrange for their tombs to be built in the Shroud in the hope that the strange magic of the dimension will work upon their corpse and bring them back to life.



First impressions

The old marble tomb of some noble which is overgrown with vines and weeds. There's even a tree growing out of the dome.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	2d6 Sons of Alexsia, cultists who worship the lich, patrolling the area around the tomb.
14-17	2d6 Screaming Witches emerge from the Tomb and go abroad on some mission.
18-19	A force of 2d6+10 men at arms, lead by a 4 HD Warrior, attack the tomb. They are met by a force of 4d6+5 Cultists. 1d6 rounds later 2d10 Screaming Witches emerge.
20	The whole tomb glows bright green for two days. Anyone with one hundred feet of the tomb loses 2d6 hit points, which are drained by the magic aura and transferred to the Lich, which uses them to restore its undead life force.

Secrets

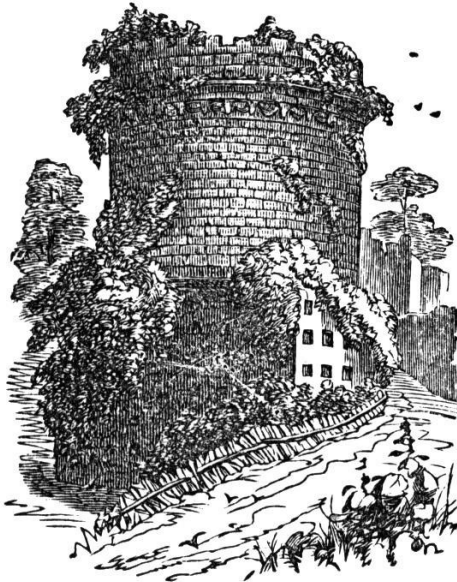
The tomb is inhabited by the lich of the Sorcerer Alessia, who upon his mortal death was interred here in the hope that the ambient magic of the Shroud would bring him back to life as a Lich. These hopes were realised, and the Lich is worshipped and served by a mob of cultists and screaming witches.

The tomb is enchanted, so it is bigger on the inside than its outer dimensions suggest. Inside there are both living quarters for the cultists and witches, magic ritual rooms, and the palatial residence of Alessia himself.

The Lich regularly sends its followers to Zarth to meddle in the affairs there, and long term it has hopes that it will return as a Tyrant of one of the city-states. Therefore, it has many enemies who occasionally work out where the lich is hiding out and send their forces to destroy it. Also, the rumours of a vast stolen horde of treasure stolen over many lifetimes attract many treasure hunters.

THE TOWER OF WOOD GREEN

In the centre of a ghostly wood stands a ruined tower- the home of a lost Warrior.



First impressions

A sizeable squat shell of a ruined tower stands on a small hill in a haunted wood shrouded in mist.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	1d4 Blooms of Death (C&T page 154) that grow amongst the ruins.
14-17	A Crawling Corruption (C&T page 158) which crawls up from an abandoned well.
18-19	A patch of fungus that rapidly grows into 2d6 Fungus Men (C&T page 164).
20	An eight headed Hydra that is found in an abandoned courtyard guarding the bones of the Yelgara.

Secrets

The Tower of Wood Green was once the fortress of the Warrior-Princess Yelgara. It was transported to the Shroud by a rival sorcerer, where it was invaded and ruined by the Hydra and its monstrous followers.

If Yelgara's bones are removed from the tower, she comes back to life, with flesh materialising from thin air and dressing the bones. The revived warrior will want only to find her way home to Zarth and will reward any characters who help her. Whether the sorcerer is still alive after thousands of years is up to the Crypt Keeper.

THE TOLL-FORT

Although the Toll-Fort is a safe resting point for the characters, to go beyond it, they must pay the Bull-Headed Guardians their pound of flesh.



First impressions

A busy and prosperous inn, full of travellers and merchants using it as a stop off point to regroup and reorganise themselves. From the inn's kitchen, there are the warm smells of familiar foods.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	1d4 Minotaur Guards, being surly and roughing up customers.
14-17	1d6 Unseen Servants are going about their business of cleaning up the fort.
18-19	An Iron Golem staggers through the halls of the fort, groaning as it moves.
20	The Bull Chief emerges from the Kitchen, shouting for meat since its quota has not been met by the traveller's paying tolls. It goes on the rampage until it has collected 1d6 bodies.

Secrets

The Bull Chief is the head chef of the Inn. It is expected that anyone staying there should bring at least one fresh corpse, more for large parties, for the minotaur herd's food. The Bull Chief sees this as an immovable rule since the herd is too busy protecting the guests, rather than going out and hunting for food. Even if the guests do not provide their "pound of flesh" upon arrival, they are not allowed to travel on until they do. Hence the toll is not to use the nearby road to nowhere, but the inn services.

THE HERMIT'S CAVE

The Hermit is a humble man who has chosen to live in seclusion a hidden cave in The Shroud. What will the adventurers find when they seek him out for knowledge?



First impressions

The cave is actually a large labyrinth of underground chambers, connected by stairways and paved passageways. There is definite signs that some ancient forgotten civilisation made this place.

Encounters/Events

Roll 1d20	Encounter/Event
1-13	The Hermit greets the adventurers when they arrive at his cave and answers their questions in a vague manner.
14-17	The Hermit is about the cave system collecting herbs and minerals for his longevity potions. His guardian lion prowls his cave defensively.
18-19	The cave is sealed, for the Hermit is under attack from some foul khaos beast, or a group of lesser Others. If the adventurers drive them off, he will heal any wounded, give them potions of longevity in thanks and then ask them to go elsewhere so he can restore his seclusion.
20	The Hermit is in the process of transcending, full of spiritual knowledge, to a purer Other World which is full of good, the fabled home of the Kindly Ones. Before he leaves his home in the Shroud and his body, he will give each adventurer present an essential truth. They may not like it, but he will provide it with them! His guardian lion has changed form into an Angel of Oblivion and stands over guarding him for the last time.

Secrets

The Hermit was once a great sage in one of Zarth's few remaining repositories of knowledge. His thirst for knowledge led him into the Shroud where he discovered the cave, deep within a fabulous underworld known as the Darkness of Enlightenment. In the cave, he discovered scrolls and magical talismans to led him in his quest. What that quest was he no longer knew, since specifics like his name and identity had become irrelevant too. He understood deeply that the cave would provide the answer, and that the lion prowling around it would be his guardian against physical interruptions.

A LOVE LIKE BLOOD

Strong passions run high through the pages of Sword and Sorcery stories, and while there are good doses of magic, fighting and weird locations, the whole adventure is often run through with a lead character's love interest. Usually the hero is fighting to save them from some overwhelming evil while trying to stay alive in adverse circumstances, and the nature of the love is doomed rather than romantic.

PROCEDURE

When the character encounters a potential lover, as determined by their player, the character makes a Test vs Luck to see if they fall under their spell and become their lover. While the character has a lover they suffer the following effects.

1. The character is under effects equivalent to a permanent Charm Person spell until their lover dies. If the Crypt Keeper rules that the attraction is mutual, the lover is charmed as well.
2. If their lover dies, the character loses 2d6 Sanity as the result of sanity-threatening heartbreak. The character also spends 2D100 days brooding over the death of their lover. During this period if they exact revenge against the murderers, they gain double XP.
3. The character gains double XP when performing the wishes of their lover.
4. The character is +3 to attack and damage while fighting to save their lover.

SUBMISSIONS

Issue 3 is already on the drawing board and I'm quite happy to receive submissions. Bear in mind this is a publication specifically to celebrate Crypts and Things and that you should follow the style and format given in the main rulebook. So, for example new monsters should follow the format given in the Compendium of Fiends and adventures should present statblocks in the short-condensed form that appears in The Hall of Nizun-Thun and The Haunted Lands. Other than that, be playful and have fun :)

Submissions should be made to newt@d101games.com.

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