

***Dread Machine** is an adventure for a party of 3-8 characters of levels 3-6 that can function as a follow up to **Prison of the Hated Pretender** as it references (only vaguely) the same ancient despotism and its overthrow by an enigmatic sect whose regalia frequently features birds of prey. No understanding of the prior adventure is necessary, but some themes and ancient mysteries reappear. This adventure is not designed with any world or setting in mind, and should work well enough with any fantasy or science fantasy world, it is designed with the so called OSR or Old School style of play in mind, meaning it includes: instantly lethal traps, level draining undead, encounters that are best fled from and a general disregard for 'balance' or 'fairness'. That is not to say that it's impossible or even hard, just that poor player decisions will lead to character death, which I believe is best considered as much a part of the game as character victory – GUSL.*

# DREAD MACHINE



## ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND HOOKS

Adventurers die, and usually in hideous ways, but the optimism, entitlement and overweening self-importance that often drives individuals towards delving in ancient tombs and battling horrible monsters also means that few adventurers will easily accept the finality of death. When one of their companions predictably dies to the horrors of some pit best left untrodden, adventurers will seek for ways to transcend mortality and cheat death. Returning a comrade to life is not an easy task. Certain deities, and even their most powerful instruments, can sometimes claw a mortal back from death's sweet arms, but few adventuring types are in good graces with the gods, and fewer wish to owe the debts associated with divine grace. To these desperate souls many a sage has an answer, and that answer is often the lost Ziggurat of the Pretender, an artifact, machine or perhaps a building created by a forgotten and hated despot in some antediluvian eon. Pinpointing the whereabouts of this

wondrous edifice is expensive, and details sketchy, but one thing that the overpaid sage will assure his or her clients is that this device allows resurrection of the dead.

Upon asking knowledgeable sages, 'wise' wizardly patrons, rude forest oracles and similar sources of forgotten and disturbing magical lore about ways to return the dead, a few hundred coins will often bring a vague map to a canyon labeled "The Autocrat's Tear" in the hinterlands, a bit of ancient doggerel about a means of resurrection and one or two of the rumors below.

A full investigation by a competent sage will unearth an outline of the truth: the Tear was the lair of a vile ancient tyrant who in retreat would flee to the special valley with captives and slaves and return months later with a renewed army. When his Empire of cruelty was finally crushed by the paladins of the Beaked God the valley revealed a device that could raise the dead. The

DID	WAS THIS BLATHER REALLY WORTH THAT MANY COINS?
1.	The ancient despot's name is lost in time, but it is known that his power derived from strange apparatuses and machines, purportedly of an infernal nature.
2.	The Autocrat's Tear should be a center of farming, with a rich spring, but the water is tainted and nothing wholesome can grow there.
3.	Sometime when the droughts are very bad a village will take sacrifices to drop in the cenotes that fill a cavern at the valley's heart.
4.	A great wizard – Zo Mustaph the Heart Sundered, travelled to the Autocrat's Tear 20 years ago, he has not been seen since.
5.	The crusade that overthrew the despot accused him of having contact, not with demons, but with soulless intelligences, and whatever his allies were they were the enemies of nature, not law.
6.	The ancient people of the yellow grass sea called the Autocrat's Tear "The rift of the sighing gods" and regarded it as a holy place for the sacrifice of golden art objects.
7.	The Skip Lion, a multi-headed predator that is made more dangerous by its partial existence in the spaces between moments is known to hunt the Yellow Lands.
8.	It is key to remember that you are not looking for an object, you are looking for something monumental. The ancient despot made trips to this distant location to revive his champions, which implies the artifact is not something that can be carried off.
9.	One of the reasons for the Hated Pretender's power was that his generals and champions returned after being slain. The legends say that some returned as if they had never been slain, but others returned as monsters, and still others as entities of power.
10.	The device itself is evil, powered by souls and strange substances from outside of space and time, be very careful if you should find this thing, it may be unsafe to even look upon.

Paladins guarded the device, but in the end they fought among themselves, perhaps even over the machine, until schism, war and decadence brought them low as well.

## THE YELLOW LAND

The valley isn't lost, it's worthless, cursed and shunned. Any of the slow moving, stunted, worn dirt farmers for fifty miles can tell you where the valley is, as they make various signs to ward off evil, sorcery, madness and death. It was finding these plains of yellow dirt that was hard, a place forgotten and overlooked. The plains are almost free of resources but teeming with abandoned, sullen, cheerless clans of cruel, murderous folk. There is nothing to trade for here, nothing to plunder, and thus no opportunities to draw the men of civilization. Yet, according to the sage, within a rotten valley that boils from the yellow and rust scrub lands, too poor for even the tireless and moronic dwellers of these parts to farm, is the Autocrat's Tear, a puckered

## THE PEOPLE OF THE YELLOW LAND

No sovereign claims the citizens of the Yellow Land, they are too poor and too quarrelsome, and so they are led by their hirsute priests and sheriffs. Sheriffs lead militias of local farmers that are powerful enough to drive off the odd tribe of waste goblins or pack of shun beasts, while the priests ask for the favor of the indifferent rain spirits and the truculent 'Borrower of Tubers', a subterranean fertility god. As a people the Yellowlanders are very short, and predisposed either a lushness of the figure or skeletal emaciation. In some worlds they would be considered halflings. Despite variations, Yellowlanders are similar looking, with ruddy complexions tanning to a rich brown and dark straight hair. They do not practice incest, punishing it with a variety of imaginative deaths, but are all closely related, descended from a few small clans. Yellow Landers are can be vicious, despite their lack of military force, as every Yellowlander over the age of ten is a fair shot with a cord backed hunting bow. The arrows of the Yellowlanders are invariably tipped

## YELLOWLANDER

HD 1-1\*, AC 6, ATK 1 (spear/bow) DAM 1d6\*\*, MV 40', SV F1, ML 8 – Short Bow (D6), Hand Axe (D6), Leather or Hide Armor, 2D10 arrows, *Vial of Yorge Poison* (Save or paralyzed for 2D6 turns – will curdle to uselessness in 1D4 sessions)

\*Yellow Landers will often be led by sheriffs (As H2-4 or Priests CL1-4). As a people they are excellent hunters, woodsmen and bushwhackers, capable of hiding in the scrublands they inhabit and attacking from ambush (surprise on 1-4), which is their only real military tactic.

\*\*ranged attacks are made at +1 hit and arrows are coated with paralytic Yorge resin (Save or Paralyzed for 2D6 turns).

chancere filled with ancient puissance capable of returning life.

with a paralytic poison (save v. paralysis or fall inert to the earth for 2D6 Turns) brewed from the gummy bark of the Yorge Tree, and kept moist in a vial around every hunter's neck. The poison also provides an anesthetic for the ritual mutilations that the Yellowlanders perform on captives as punishment for imagined slights and clan feuds. While the clans frequently feud amongst, the whole land will erupt with armed bands seeking to capture and torture to death outsiders that commit an outrage on a Yellowlander farmstead. Without this excuse for wild and cathartic violence, the Yellowlanders will be polite; the farmers will feed and guest strangers in exchange for minimal gifts and courtesies.

While the Yellowlanders are happy to allow strangers to guest with them, trading with them is a more difficult proposition. The Yellowland is resource poor, and its people rather distrusting of strangers. Characters



seeking to trade will be besieged by Yellowlanders selling handicrafts, mostly carved bone figurines. Some of these items attractively carved, and most depict native creatures including wyverns, shun beasts, yellow apes and skip lions, but they are not valuable despite the prices asked by their carvers. Yellowlanders lack any industrial capacity, but in addition to craft items can grudgingly provide normal gear (ropes, poles, torches, adventurers' oil and tents) at x4 the list price. Much of this represents the increased cost of mundane items in a distant resource poor land, and the rest is mark up. The only truly unique item available in the Yellowland is Yorge poison, the paralytic resin that Yellowlanders dip their arrows in. Yorge will paralyze a humanoid target for 2D6 turns upon entering the bloodstream if they fail

their saving throw vs. paralysis. It must be daubed on a weapon from a sealed container immediately prior to use however, so it is generally only used on missiles. Even in a sealed container Yorge resin curdles and becomes useless within 1D4 sessions of purchase. Yellowlanders can be convinced to sell Yorge resin sufficient for application to 20 arrows for 100 GP.

If the party act respectfully and offers a 100 GP gift to a priest or sheriff, they will be able to hire a guide for 150 GP who can take them to the Tear. Otherwise vague directions and bad maps are will have to suffice. Yellowlanders will not enter the Tear unaccompanied by a priest, but 1D6 young hunters can be hired to travel with the party for 100GP each in addition to a guide.

D8	WHAT SORT OF STUNTED RUSTICS ARE WILLING TO HOST FOR THE EVENING, AND DO THEY KNOW ANYTHING?
1.	A comely widow and her two attractive daughters gladly provide the party with food and lodging. All three are searching for husbands, and are savvy at both encouraging and limiting the advances of suitors, as they have many locally (some of whom may be violently opposed to outsiders who come courting). The youngest daughter will tell of fabulous golden objects sometimes brought back from the cliff houses of the ancients, and hint that she would adore such a treasure.
2.	A man from civilized lands and his local family are glad to see the adventurers, offering enormous quantities of green plum brandy. He's a former mercenary/bandit but honest enough now. When he first came to these lands he wandered a bit and knows that awful undead ~ wire spouting, electrically charged, mutilated with cogs and half machine are sometimes encountered to the near the Tear.
3.	A large clan who is indifferently civil and when asked about the Tear, a doddering grandfather sings a ballad of "The black valley of grey thorns, where the crusaders tears are hard in the white death water".
4.	Taciturn farmers who feed the party in silence and grunts, except for a drooling idiot in the back of the cabin that begins to laugh and shout "Sacrifice, Sacrifice!" when the party mentions the Tear.
5.	The local priest guests the party, he is covered in hair, wearing a coat of unsheared wool and caked in holy filth. The food in his immaculate home is surprisingly good, if tuber-centric, and he is happy to talk to outsiders. He tells of the crusaders who once came in small bands every few decades, and all of whom sought some power in the valley. Since they disdained the gods of the Yellow Lands they all perished, but their sorrowful ghosts still haunt the Tear, immaterial until they are attacked.
6.	Yellow Land hunters who welcome the party to their lean too. It is filled with pelts, some strange, but the most astonishing is the pelt of a large cat that is a sparkling bluish purple. It is the pelt of a Skip Lion and the hunters say they were lucky to kill it, because doing so can only be done with hand weapons, not arrows.
7.	An old herb woman lives alone in what was once the compound of a large clan. She is friendly and perhaps a bit mad. She will feast the party on preserved meats and pickles, and after her third mug of sweet black wine, the herb woman tells stories of the Tear – she relates that all bodies left there return as unlife, warns of "the iron snails" "wire ghastrs" and "weep-eye statues".
8.	A small family, seemingly rich in sheep, who provide sparse but adequate accommodations. They claim no knowledge of the valley but warn of wyverns the color of dried blood, who swoop from the blinding sun.

# THE LAND WE'VE

The Yellow Land is named for its yellow silty earth which covers everything in ochre dust, salty to the taste. The land is mostly flat with dry wastes of loess, cut by gullies and dotted with copses of stunted reddish leaved trees and patches of rust colored scrub. The sky is generally an overcast light gray and always windy, from a constant breeze to gusting torrents that churn the dust into deadly storms.

Water is somewhat hard to find in the Yellow Land, and generally either taken from the slightly brackish wells

that seem to have been dug in every low spot with a bewildering array of technologies and styles, or obtained by chewing the fibrous and lip numbing root bulbs of local vegetation. Game is less scarce, with antelope, darting ochre feathered turkey-like ground fowl, and an overabundance of lean, tan hares to supplement the black and ruby flint corn grown by the Yellowlanders.



D10	THE DANGERS OF THE YELLOW LAND
1.	<p><b>2D10+3 Yellow Landers</b> (As Above) – This pack of cruel clansmen is either engaging in brigandage or hunting for the party after a perceived slight. They are led by Pops Bonder, a sadistic clan father whose lips were once cut off as payment for a debt.</p> <p><b>Pops Bonder</b> – H3 (14), AC 4, ATK 1 (sickle sword or bow)*, DAM 1D8/1D6*, MV 40', SV H3 ML 10 Ancient bronze khopesh marked with silver cranes (150 GP), shortbow, 36 arrows, patched and cut down mercenary's scale armor, <i>Vial of Yorge Poison</i>, 12 SP. Pops attacks with +2 hit with bows due to his racial and DEX bonus, his arrows are poisoned (paralyze 2D6 turns).</p>
2.	<p><b>Tinker</b> – Jorg Klob the Meanderer is a Yellowlander singer, tinker and seller of curiosities. He acts as a gossip source (may provide a rumor above), matchmaker and diplomat among the Clans.</p> <p><b>Jorg Klob</b> – MU 3, (HP 12) AC 8, ATK 1 (Staff or Sling) DAM 1D8-1/1D4, MV 40' SV MU3 ML 6 STR 6, INT 14, WIS 11, DEX 15, CON 14, CHR 17 Spells: <i>Light, Shield, Stinking Cloud</i> (road spells) Rust colored robe, leather leg/arm bindings, carved bone dust mask, bone staff, sling, 38 SP, hidden purse with 93 GP, 6 PP. <i>Spellbook</i> (carved bone discs) [memorized spells] plus: <i>Floating Disc, Friends, Pyrotechnics</i></p>
3.	<p><b>Silt Pit</b> – A thin crust of hard dirt over a deep pit of loose silt. The 1<sup>st</sup> character in the marching order wearing armor heavier than leather will break the crust and begin sinking into the silt. The sinking victim must make a save vs. paralysis every round or sink deeper into the silt. Two failed saves in a row will mean they sink beneath the surface and are lost, while two consecutive saves allow escape. Throwing a rope or pole to a sinking man will give him a +1 to his saves.</p>
4.	<p><b>1D4 Skip Lions</b> – These two or three headed, lion-like creatures are a sparkling blue in color and exist between moments, meaning that they are never exactly where one expects them. They are fearless hunters and possess and almost human tactical acumen.</p> <p>Skip Lion HD 5, AC 4*, ATK 2 (bite/bite), DAM 2D4, MV 50', FV CL7, ML 11 *Immune to missiles</p>
5.	<p><b>1D2 Wyverns</b> – Cunning hunters of man, the Wyverns of the Yellow Land are still beasts. They have light gray belly scales and rust and ochre mottled hides that give them some camouflage.</p> <p><b>Wyvern</b> – HD 7, AC 3, ATK 2 (bite/sting), DAM 2D8/2D8+poison, MV 30'/80' fly, SV F4, ML 9</p>
6.	<p><b>1D4 Wire Ghosts</b> – This pack of Wire Ghost emerged from the Tear many years ago and have hunted aimlessly since. Both their organic and mechanical parts are cake in yellow dust.</p> <p><b>Wire Ghost</b> – HD 4, AC 4, ATK 3* (claw/claw/bite), DAM 1D4/1D4/1D8, MV 40', SV F3, ML 12 *The tesla coil claws of a Wire Ghost cause paralysis for 1D6+4 rounds. When attacking they are also surrounded by crackling energy that causes 1D2 points of damage per round to all within 10'.</p>
7.	<p><b>1D8+1 Shun Beasts</b> – A hyena's jaws on the sturdy body of a four foot armadillo, shun beasts are semi intelligent pack borrowers with a rudimentary culture. They are quite belligerent, and prefer to capture and eat intelligent prey live, drunk on fermented Shun milk, during ritualistic bacchanals.</p> <p><b>Shun Beast</b> – HD 2, AC 1, ATK 1 (bite), DAM 2D4, MV 30'/5' Tunnel, SV F2, ML 8</p>
8.	<p><b>Pitted Stele</b> – Likely buried in loess up half its length, this ancient monument is still notable. The stele is carved in black stone, and only lightly chipped be the ages. It shows a king like figure with a radiant crown leading an army of heavy legionnaires and larger figures in all concealing plate armor.</p>
9.	<p><b>1D6 Yellow Apes</b> – These heavy bodied, mustard furred, four armed apes are well adapted to the dusty plains, but may hail from another sphere. They will announce their territory with bellowing hoots that carry for miles, then stalk and attack bipeds that do not flee.</p> <p><b>Yellow Ape</b> HD4, AC 6, ATK 4 (clawx4), DAM 1D4x4, MV 40' SV F2, ML 8</p>
10.	<p><b>Dust Storm</b> – Nature only provides a turn of warning or less before a stinging silt storm boils over the party. Unless the adventurers either hunker down or find cover before the storm hits they will each suffer 1 point of damage for every turn exposed to the choking stinging dust. Cover, either natural or a ring of bodies/pack animals will prevent damage. Moving into the storm will cut its duration by half, but any henchman or pack animal has a 50% of becoming forever lost in the storm. The Storm will last 3D12 turns.</p>

# THE AUTOCRAT'S TEAR

The Tear is a dangerous place with a history of magical intrusion from other worlds, human sacrifice and the unnatural works of the Pretender. Encounters within are common, roll a random encounter check about 5 days a day once the party descends into the Tear.

The people of the Yellow Land regularly come to the Tear to make human sacrifices to their ambivalent earth god, the burrower of tubers (who is also responsible for the land's infestation of Shun Beasts). Long lines of fanatically loyal, drugged Yellow Landers, each carrying a sacrificial stone dagger around their necks, are escorted to the **Area E** by their priests and clan warriors. These groups may provide an ally for a party of explorers as they might be willing to work with adventurers for mutual protection while reaching Area E. Yellowlander visitors will not linger in the sacred valley, and will not take kindly to any efforts to stop or interfere with their bloody sacrificial rituals (indeed even the victims themselves will violently protest any effort to 'save' them).

Beyond the odd Yellowlander sacrificial party, there are no allies within the Tear, only otherworldly horrors, in the form of the undead created by the Machine to serve and protect it, unnatural beasts and the horrible remnants of the ancient despots alchemical and arcano-

mechanical experiments. The worst of these are the Iron Snails, arcane novelties once used to scale the Tear's walls by the Pretender's sybaritic court of hangers-on, and now gone feral, leaving trails of bioluminescent slime across the valley floor and up canyon walls.

The landscape itself is marked as strange within the Tear, even more than the desolate alkali waste that surrounds it. The valley is lush in comparison, but monochrome, with black barked gnarled trees and dense underbrush all with oddly structured leaves and foliage in various shades of gray. A naturalist or ranger may determine that these plants are both mildly poisonous (eating them causes stomach cramps for 1D2 days with a corresponding -1 to all rolls) and magical in origin. The creatures within the Tear are likewise bizarre, scurrying grey rodents have extra tails, while crabs with square shells hide in the blackish loam. Even the birds are unnatural with an extra set of wings or feathers that appear normal at a distance but when closely examined prove to be gray chitin.

The foliage is not the only passive danger of the Autocrat's Tear, the water itself is deadly. White in color the water in the Tear's rivers and streams is milky white as if filled with clay silt, but an insidious killer.

## WHITE WATERS OF SLOW DEATH

The surface water of the Tear is a particulate filled, white, like grainy milk, and quite dangerous to drink. It has been long polluted by the alien mechanisms of the Dread Machine. The water causes a slow transformation into stone, beginning with stiffness and progressing into calcification of bone and excruciating pain as the flesh crystalizes. Drinking from or being immersed in the surface waters of the Tear reduces DEX by 1D6 points (save vs. petrification for ½) resulting in petrification (transformation into a marble statue) if DEX goes below '3'. The effect may be cured by a Stone to Flesh spell, but is otherwise permanent.

Drinable water can be had in the Tear, either by collecting rare rain water, dew or digging a pit and allowing it to fill with filtered ground water. Characters need at least one skin of water per day (including the White Water), or they must Save vs. Death



D10	ENCOUNTERS WITHIN THE AUTOCRAT'S TEAR
1.	<p><b>1D6 Wire Ghosts</b> wander about, stand in the sun transfixed by nothing, or lay seemingly inactive amongst the stones. They are waiting for something alive to come near to their voltaic claws.</p> <p><b>Wire Ghost</b> HD 4, AC 4, ATK 3* (claw/claw/bite), DAM 1D4/1D4/1D8, MV 40', SV F3, ML 12* The tesla coil claws of a Wire Ghost cause paralysis for 1D6+4 rounds. When attacking they are also surrounded by crackling energy that causes 1D2 points of damage per round to all within 10'.</p>
2.	<p><b>1D4-1 Skip Lions</b> - Cats lolling on the rocks or hunting the miniature deer that skulk in the Tear's low, thorny black woods. A result of '0' lions means some indication of their presence (roaring, tracks, a kill, etc.)</p> <p><b>Skip Lion</b> HD 5 (HP 25), AC 4*, ATK 2 (bite/bite), DAM 2D4, MV 50', SV CL7, ML 11* Immune to normal missiles</p>
3.	<p><b>Yellowlander Sacrificial Party</b> - <b>3D6</b> Yellowlander warriors armed with bows and hide armor led by <b>1D4</b> fur clad Yellowlander Priests. The armed Yellowlanders guard a group of <b>2D6</b> willing sacrificial victims, naked Yellowlanders each wearing a large stone dagger on a necklace of leather.</p> <p><b>Hirsute Priest</b> CL1D4+1, AC 5, ATK 2 (steel claws) DAM 1D4*, MV 40', SV CL 1D4+1, ML 8 <i>Typical Spells: (Lvl 1)Command, Sanctuary, Cause Light Wounds, Fear (Lvl 2)Hold Person, Spiritual Hammer, Resist Fire (Lvl 3)Animate Dead, Cause Blindness, Glyph of Warding.</i></p> <p><b>Yellowlander Warrior</b> HD 1-1, AC 6, ATK 1 (spear/bow) DAM 1d6*, MV 40', SV F1, ML 8 *ranged attacks are made at +1 hit and both arrows and priest's claws are coated with paralytic Yorge resin (Save or Paralyzed for 2D6 turns). <b>Sacrificial Victim</b> HD 1-1, AC 8, ATK 1 (short sword) DAM 1D6, MV 40', SV F1, ML 8</p>
4.	<p><b>1D4 Living Statues</b> - Cracked and weeping marble figures disfigured by black lichens. With a grinding screech they reach out and attack any who come within range. Most of these ancient artifacts have been worn by rain and are so covered with encrustations that their original detail is impossible to find.</p> <p><b>Living Statue</b> HD 3, AC 4*, ATK 2, DAM 1D6/1D6, MV 30', SV F3**, ML 12</p> <p>* Living Statues are stone, non-magical cutting and piercing attacks do 1 HP of damage. ** Living Statues are animated constructs of marble,, they are immune to non-magical fire, poison and mind effecting spells.</p>
5.	<p><b>Monument</b> - Very similar in appearance to the statue in encounter 4, a ring of marble columns, with a 1D4 cracked figures within.</p>
6.	<p><b>1 Iron Snail</b> - A wheezing absurdity of rust, plating, clockwork and grey rubbery flesh, armed with six spiked tentacles in place of a head. These alchemical creatures one provided an amusing way to climb the sides of the Tear. They have gone feral and mad, with each generation stealing the artificial shells of the one before it and hunting flesh and magic to devour unrestrained by the sorcery that made their ancestors placid.</p> <p><b>Iron Snail</b> HD 6*, AC 3**, ATK 6, DAM D6x6, MV 20', SV F6, ML 8 *Tentacles each have 1 HD independent of body, when tentacle is destroyed snail loses 1 attack. ** Snails are immune to fire and poison, and their iron, glyph warded shells channels and reflects spells, (D10 - 1-6 absorbed, 7-8 reflected. An intact shell is worth 5,000 GP to alchemists and wizards for anti-magical properties, but is large and weighs 3,000 lbs.</p>
7.	<p><b>1 Wyvern</b> - Circling high above on the updrafts one of the blood colored wyverns of the Yellowland has spotted the party and will dive to attack. Surprise on 5 in 6 and the creature's first attack will be at +4 to hit for x2 damage. If the wyvern grabs unencumbered prey, it is 70% likely to soar back to its nest to feed.</p> <p><b>Wyvern</b> HD 7, AC 3, ATK 2 (bite/sting), DAM 2D8/2D8+poison, MV 30'/80' fly, SV F4, ML 9</p>
8.	<p><b>3d6 Zombies</b> - The sun rotted detritus of past Yellowlander sacrifices, a mob of these sad revenants lurches hungrily about trailing their eviscerated innards.</p> <p><b>Zombie</b> HD 2, AC 8, ATK 1*, DAM 1D8, MV 20', SV F1, ML 12* Attack last every round but, on natural 20 these zombies' animated intestines will entangle their victim, preventing attack or movement until slain.</p>



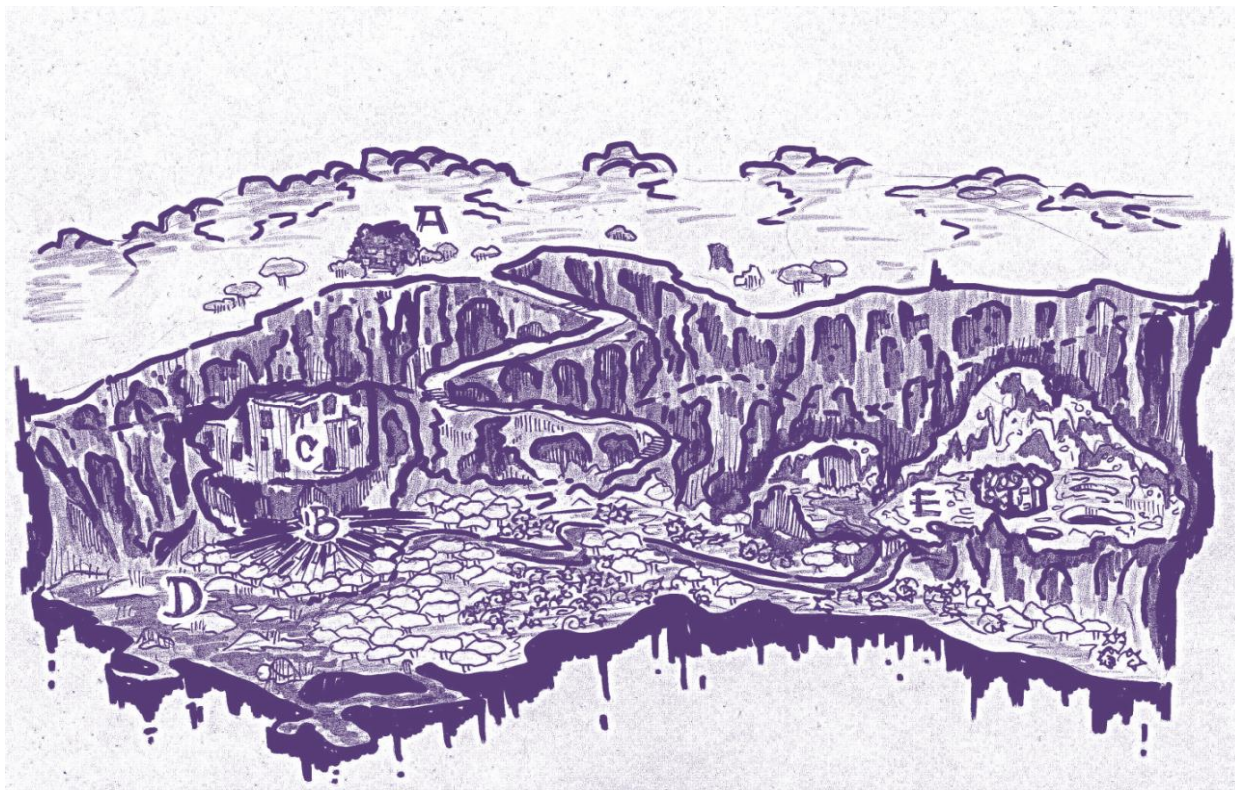
## LOCATIONS WITHIN THE TEAR

**A** ★ **The Watch** – Built of black native stone from deep in the canyon, only the first floor of this well-constructed tower remains, with fragments of the second visible and the source of an intermittent flash, as if some sort of metal object is moving and catching the sun. The intact floor is flattened, only four feet in height, and the walls are belled out, heated and squashed by enormous forces. The doors, stairs and any interior furnishings have vanished (except for some suggestive marks, carbon black on the more reddish black of the wall), and the tower has had no recent residents beyond some sort of messy, foul smelling animal. A student of unnatural creatures will recognize the ozone tang as the faded reek of skip lion urine, but the dried scat spread around the tower interior will confirm that whatever laired here has been gone several months.

A square aperture, easy enough to climb through, lets in daylight and leads to a partially intact second floor. On the second floor is the source of the metallic gleam

visible from afar. A fused block of slag stands here, blasted by whatever power destroyed the tower, but still recognizable as an arcane weapon of some kind; a metal lattice that held a central crystal in a framework of struts, designed to channel magical energies outward a bolts of hellish power.

A student of magic will recognize the device's original purpose and know that a careful examination of the device should provide clues to harnessing such destructive power. It will take 24 hours of effort to glean useful magical knowledge from the device, though any wizard will be convinced that it will only take 1D4 more hours to finish the process after each 1D4 hours of study. If a sorcerer manages to complete a study of the device, a noisy process involving hammering and prying at the broken machine, their notes allow research of the spell *lightning bolt* in ½ the time an increased chance of success. The spell learned this way will be a very evil looking green.





★**The Blasted Crater** – The final stand of Zo-Mustaph the Heart Sundered, a puissant warlock from the alabaster wreck of the far glaciers. About ten years ago, Mustaph attempted to plumb the mysteries of the Pretender's Machine, with a strong force of glacial mercenaries and a pair of apprentices. One of the apprentices' bodies can be found in **Area E**, but Zo met his end here, assailed by the canyon's population of undead, and a blasted crater is his monument. A ragged 200' circle of blacked trunks fans outward among gnarled gray. There is nothing of interest here on the surface. The pueblo of **Area C** is clearly visible however and the Skip Lions that roam it watch the crater for game.

When Zo Mustaph entered the Autocrat's Tear the undead were far more numerous, and the horrible self-detonation spell, destroying two thirds of the undead in the canyon, that he finally cast moments before being overwhelmed. A prolonged digging in the cinder blackened mud (roll a search check for the lead

digger every day to determine success), will discover a cache of valuable items. Otherwise digging will quickly uncover burnt bones, melted armor, lumps of fused machinery and bent, seared weapons.

### THE DEAD WARLOCK'S CACHE

**Seared staff** – Once a magical staff of considerable power, this length of carved alabaster has been permanently blackened by the unnatural fires of Zo's self-immolation. Some trace of power remains and while holding the staff (a normal staff), a magic-user will gain a +1 to Saves vs. Spells and all fire damage received will be reduced by 1 point per die.

**A Molten lump of gold** (formerly a delicate thaumaturgical calculator). (200GP)

**Crystal axe head** – that can be mounted on a haft to make a hand ax that has a +1 bonus to hit when thrown, and can strike immaterial and magical creatures.

**Scattered foreign coins** (25 GP)

### BLACK PUEBLO SKIP LION PRIDE

**Dominant Male** (3 Headed) HD 6, AC 3\*, ATK 3 (bite x3), DAM 2D4+1, MV 50', SV CL7, ML 11

**Juvenile Males x2** HD 6 (HP 36, 30), AC 4\*, ATK 2 (bite/bite), DAM 2D4, MV 50', SV CL7, ML 11

**Hunting Females x9** HD 5 (HP 25), AC 4\*, ATK 2 (bite/bite), DAM 2D4, MV 50', SV CL7, ML 11

**Cubs x6** HD 1 (HP 3), AC 7\*, ATK 1 (bite), DAM 1D2, MV 20', SV CL1

\*Immune to missiles

#### Lion Schedule:

**Morning:** After feeding, skip lion females will be sleep in nests (Cii.), while the males patrol leaving scent markings.

**Day:** Lions will be gathered on the lion lair (Ci.)

**Night:** Lion females leave for hunting at sundown, males retire to nests (Cii.) and intermittently patrol.



★**The Black Pueblo** – Eighty feet above the Blasted Crater (Area B) the walls of the canyon curve inward and under an overhang a complex of black stone clings to the cliff. The cliff dwellings are a vestige of an ancient and forgotten people, and this well preserved ruin is all that remains of the religious complex they once built in the valley. The pueblos' precarious location (they can only be reached by a skilled climber and even then require a climbing check) means that despite the age of the structures they are unlooted. The Pueblos are also home to a pride of Skip Lions, twelve in all, who prowled down from the canyon rim some months ago. The lions now protect the Pueblo, drinking from its reservoir and lounging on its exposed roofs. The pride will be dangerous to dislodge, but may be picked off a few at a time.



## PUEBLO LOCATIONS

Appearance:	Walls of black stone dust ground into a cracking plaster, with square windows that let keening gusts of wind.
Smell:	Stone dust and a harsh reek of animal urine
Lighting:	Most areas have windows or skylights letting in thin rays of daylight, others are dark.
Traps:	Lethal <b>Deadfall</b> , Cursed <b>Ghostfence</b>
Treasure:	<b>Gold Ornaments</b> worth 2,700 GP, <i>Heroes' Cinch</i> (Magical Belt)
Inhabitants:	<b>Skip Lions</b> – 3, 6HD Lions, 9, 5HD Lionesses, 3, 1HD Cubs

Any encounter within the Pueblo will be with 1D4 a (except the cubs) currently in the Pueblo. These lion Skip Lions, and the encountered lions will roar upon reinforcements will arrive in 1D4-1 rounds. encountering intruders, attracting the rest of the pride



THE BLACK PUEBLO



**Ci** **Skip Lion Lair** – The central lair of the Skip Lions, this roof top patio gets a small amount of light in the early afternoon and will be filled with lounging skip lions from midmorning to early evening. The space itself is relative empty, except for a few large gnawed bones.

**Cii** **Lion Nests** – This ruined tower is full of nests piled from dried gray grasses, bits of bones and shreds of ancient cloth. The Skip Lion cubs remain here, active during the day, playing with various old bones and baubles. Scattered among the nests are the following valuables: **black crystal orb** in a golden cage, once a staff head (800 GP), Large **golden hoop earring** (100 GP), A well chewed **golden statuette** of a robed man (50 GP).

**Ciii** **Great Hall** – Once the central ritual chamber of the Pueblo, this huge room is braced with ancient tree trunks, rubbed and waxed to a high sheen. The walls are painted in ochre, red and chalk white with images of animals and monstrous fish. An altar carved from local black stone, hulking and crude, rests in the center of the chamber, its top caked with the azure blue pigment of sacrifice. Beside the altar the room is empty except for smashed ritual ceramics, most showing bright blue pigment residue.

**Civ** **Elevator Platform** – This ledge is the easiest point to climb into the Pueblo, and the only real spot to lower ropes from. There's even winch still affixed to a wooden support structure with a coil of bark rope and a large basket. All of these items appear sturdy enough upon initial investigation, but the ropes holding the support structure are rotted and the entire winch, basket and support will tear free if more than 150 lbs are raised or lowered, plummeting all in the basket 20-80 (2D4x10) feet to the canyon floor.

**Cv** **Reservoir** – A set of ingenious stone troughs and drains collect runoff and store clean water in a huge tank. The lions drink from the tank regularly and it is not odd to

encounter a lone lion here. The tank is twenty feet deep and if the bottom is carefully searched, a skeleton, encrusted with mineral deposits and wearing a gold pectoral in the shape of a school of fish (650 GP).

**Cvi** **Treasure Cache** – In the uppermost of a set of rooms is a hidden cache of ancient artifacts. The Northern wall of the chamber has four skulls set into the plaster of the wall as if at the corner of a square. Tapping the wall between the skulls will reveal a void in the wall, and the plaster is easy to break revealing a dust encrusted set of **golden sacrificial instruments** (300 GP) and a **golden shark mask** inlaid with mother of pearl (1,000 GP). However breaking the plane of the wall, or smashing the skulls, without saying the proper long lost incantation (or casting dispel magic vs. a 5<sup>th</sup> level Cleric), will activate the magic of the *ghost fence* between the skulls. Breaking the fence releases the **First Ones' Doom** that will adhere to the person in the room who rolls the lowest on their save vs. spells.

**First Ones' Doom** – While there is no outward sign of this doom, the spirits of the angry dead now seep into your wounds. Magical healing ceases to function and the edges of wounds grow black and puckered. When wounds finally do heal, the flesh around them is gray and dead look. The victim of this doom will slowly turn undead, and after having cumulatively received their maximum HP they will awake the next morning as a wight, raving and hungry for death.

**Cvii** **Ancient Shrine** – A narrow cave up a narrow tricky path holds a shrine from the age when men hunted with stone arrows. The inner walls are completely covered in paintings and drawings, caked up over the millennia.

An inner chamber of the cave can be reached through a low passage, painted entirely black on the left side and a bright azure blue on the right. The bisected hallway is a trapped with a deadfall and marked to indicate that the black side is safe, while the right is a place of sacrifice.

The deadfall is triggered by loose rubble on the blue side, detectable and avoidable if stopped. If triggered the trap brings down a huge block down on the 10' of the right side of the passage. Anyone caught in the deadfall must Save vs. Breath Weapon. Those who fail are crushed to death, while those who save take 2D6 points of damage from debris.

Within the Shrine are three standing stones, crudely carved with stern faces. They are wrapped in decaying felt armor adorned with leather straps and belts.

Leaning against the statues are three **copper hand axes** (5 GP each) and white, wooden bows and cracked leather quivers, embellished with black stone beads that hold bundles of white wood arrows. The wooden items are brittle and useless, but the belt of the central figure, *The Heroes Cinch*, provides magical protection.

## Heroes Cinch

This belt is obviously ancient, brought to the Autocrat's Tear by the first hero of its now vanished ancient people. The belt is made of knobby black sharkskin, stitched with wave designs in white sinew. These designs appear to undulate and sway, though not unnaturally so.

When worn the belt will confer AC 6, and can stack with other items that provide defensive bonuses, such as shields and rings of protection, but not with armor or items that grant a base AC, such as bracers of defense.

★**The Nacreous Marsh** – The Canyon slopes water of the stream drains downward in the East, and the milky water of the stream drains here. The remaining undead from the Pretender's experiments have drifted to this spot as well.

Any random encounter in the marsh will be off the **Undead Encounter Table** provided in **Area E**.



## THE CAVERN OF CENOTES - AREA E

<b>Appearance:</b>	Vaulted caverns of black stone, with many pillars and other rock formations, filled with water and fungal life much of it glowing. It can be entered from the Tear via a swimming a stream of Milk Water, or entering through a huge cleft in the canyon wall. The Pretender's Machine sits in the main cave (Eiv)
<b>Smell:</b>	A wet fungal reek and the occasional smell of chemics or ozone.
<b>Lighting:</b>	Luminescent fungi and a few shafts of light from narrow rock chimneys fill the cavern with a murky purple glow.
<b>Traps:</b>	None
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Golden Artifacts</b> in the cenotes (100 – 800 GP), <b>Dead Wizard's Effects</b> (234 GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random Encounter 1 in 6 on Undead Table; Rusted Sentinel (HD 5+5)

**E** ★ **Cavern of Cenotes** – This great cavern is not individually keyed, but areas are marked on the map below for ease of use. The cave can be entered either by following the milky stream to its source (Ei) or by entering through a huge cleft in the Western wall of the canyon (Eii). Both sources lead to one of the cavern's two chambers. Encounters within the Cavern of Cenotes should be on the **Undead Encounter Table**.

The first chamber (Eiii) is massive chimney that leads hundreds of feet upward to a where water gushes from a narrow crack, falling loudly to an opalescent pool below. The noise of the falls means that encounters will be a surprise on a 1-3.

A set of stone portals, megalithic post and lintels, covered in time worn spiral engravings and odd scratched graffiti (A bird in flight, the name "Enri", "The Beak Betrays", and a drawing of a skeleton embracing a bear) lead to the second chamber (Eiv). Standing in the left portal is a 9' tall figure of rust covered armor. This is a **Rusted Sentinel** (See Below). The quiescent horror will attack any who touch it (with anything), or try to pass through the opening it guards (the right portal is safe).

The second chamber, the cavern itself is an enormous void filled with black rock pillars that climb to a ceiling vaulting over a hundred feet above. While the 80' cube of the **Pretender's Machine** (Ev) is immediately obvious,

it doesn't completely overwhelm the cavern's strange beauty. Bioluminescent moss, lichen and fungus glows green, yellow and blue while numerous deep cenotes filled with clear, bright azure water dot the floor. Each cenote is 60' – 150' (1D10x10' +50') deep and the color of the water within derives from the azure pigment that coated the bodies of the ancient sacrifices thrown into the cenotes. Golden treasures also adorned these victims and if a cenote is dredged for three turns (or dived in for one) there is a 1 in 10 chance that a golden trinket (collar, headdress, armband or mask) worth 1D8x100 GP will be found. If a party persists in constantly re-diving the cenotes or systematically plundering them, the number and frequency of undead attacks (especially waves of sacrificial zombies) will increase. Likewise, while there is a considerable amount of gold in the cenotes (up to 80,000 GP in all) this amount isn't actually infinite.

Along the rear wall of the cavern is another area of interest, the Stone Mansion (Evi) a crumbled ruin of fortified chambers that once housed the machine's human guard force, visitors and acolytes of the Pretender's Cult.

A careful search of the cavern will find the withered husk of a human wearing a ice blue robe leaning against a stone column. This is the corpse of one of Zo-Mustaph's apprentices and still carries a sigil covered belt pouch with 104 GP inside, a blue pearl worth 100 GP and a silver athame (dagger).



Beyond the Machine itself and the various Centotes, hunched against the rear wall of the Cavern are the crumbled blocks of what was once a stout multi-story stone building. While the upper levels of this **Stone Mansion** (Evi) have collapsed into a spray of moss covered stone, a few rooms, mostly roofless and barren except for fungal life remain. Two wings, with shattered colonnades, still stand, partially buried in rubble, while behind and between them the roofless shell of a more prosaic central building is largely intact. Close inspection of either the tumbled pile or the face of the remaining structure will indicate that the mansion was built of white and pink marble, obviously imported, and that the building did not collapse from age or neglect, but was destroyed by siege weapons and magic. Melted stones, and scattered fragments of stone show the intensity of the battle fought here, and the heavy carpet of bright lichens, and bulbous mushrooms covering the ruin are a clue to how ancient that battle was.

Beneath the lichens and clinging fungus that blanket the structure lumps and vague shapes seem to indicate a large amount of decorative detail on the remaining columns and walls. If a turn is spent scraping away the

fecund fungal life of the Cavern the scarred remnants of a statute or two can be revealed. The building's decoration consisted of unnaturally neat geometric designs, and monumental statues of heroic warriors and wise looking robed priests. All the statues are carved in a rigid sharp featured style of clean lines that manages to feel both oppressive and dull.

Entering the buildings themselves, the interal wooden walls and furnishings have long ago rotted in the humid air of the cavern, and only great piles of green, blue and red fungal life remain to mark the warren of rooms that once filled the Mansion. The entire walled area is about 150 feet square, U shaped and partially filled with ramps of rubble that allow easy entrance.

A visual search will reveal little as almost every surface is encrusted with lichens, but digging and rummaging through the soft growth (much of it bioluminescent) counts as a Search check with the normal chance to find an item of interest from the table below for every turn (remember to roll for random encounters) spent. Multiple copies of items from 1-5 may be discovered, but items 6-8 will only be discovered once, and any repeat treated as item "1" on the table.

DID	AMONGST THE RUBBLE OF THE STONE MANSIONS
1	This oddly shaped chunk of fungus draws the eye, and hints that there might be an artifact concealed within, once the growth is wiped away however it proves only to be a bit of rubble chipped from a statue of decorative carving.
2	A large ceramic bowl, platter or piece of cutlery that somehow remains intact. The ceramic is glazed purple with simple white geometric designs, and difficult to shatter without extraordinary force, but it is worth 5GP at most.
3	A cracked white ceramic mask, featureless except for eye slits. Touching it causes unease.
4	The twisted remains of some kind of tubular metal furniture, now bent and corroded, but still strong and light.
5	A rusted or corroded piece of plate armor forged from steel or bronze. The armor is now useless but was once part of a fine suit, enameled with birds and feather imagery or engraved with fine geometric designs.
6	A tumble of clean bones. Runes of purplish metal are burned into their brittle white surfaces.
7	A nodule of fungus shot through with hexagonal <b>golden coins</b> , (200 GP) stamped with the regal head of an unknown sovereign. The opposite side depicts a crown with six points.
8	A small <b>scroll of engraved silver slats</b> , bound with gold wire (200 GP). Written in an ancient language, <i>read magic</i> or a similar is necessary to read the prayer inscribed on it – the gist of which is that the devotee is blessed because the "Divine Autocrat" offer "the new sunrise" to even those who displease him allowing them to serve him still despite their mortal failings.
9	A <b>black crystal vial</b> (50 GP) with a gold cap, containing purple syrupy oil that smells like ozone. If added to clean water it will create up to eight flasks of holy water.
10	A short <b>red falchion</b> , made carmine stone and enchanted so that it will become wreathed in flame (adding +2 points of damage) when it first strikes an enemy. The flames will die down after the combat, but may be rekindled the next time the weapon draws blood.

06	THE HORRIFIC UNLIVING REFUSE OF THE PRETENDER'S MADNESS (UNDEAD ENCOUNTER TABLE)
1.	<p><b>1D6 Wire Ghosts</b> – A hunting pack of Wire Ghosts, their tesla coil claws alight crackling energy and their gray flesh shimmering with voltaic surges.</p> <p><b>Wire Ghost:</b> HD 4, AC 4, ATK 3* (claw/claw/bite), DAM 1D4/1D4/1D8, MV 40', SV F3, ML 12</p> <p>* The tesla coil claws of a Wire Ghost cause paralysis for 1D6+4 rounds. When attacking they are also surrounded by crackling energy that causes 1D2 points of damage per round to all within 10'.</p>
2.	<p><b>1D6-1 Desolate Crusaders</b> – Slow sadness hangs in the air as a mist around these forlorn soldiers. They stare through the visors of their rotted armor at their prey for 1D6-1 rounds before attacking and are immune to any attack (weapons dent and gouge their armor with no effect) until they do.</p> <p><b>Desolate Crusader:</b> HD 4+1, AC 3*, ATK 1** (touch), DAM 1D4+level drain, MV 30', SV F4, ML 10</p> <p>* Immune to normal weapons, silver and magic weapons do full damage. Immune to all damage until they attack. ** Sadness travels with the Desolate Crusader and all within 10' suffer a -1 to all saves.</p>
3.	<p><b>3D6 Wire Ghosts</b> – An entire colony of these horrid things roams about bickering, howling and generally obsessed with their internal feuds (until they spot living flesh).</p> <p><b>Wire Ghost:</b> HD 4, AC 4, ATK 3* (claw/claw/bite), DAM 1D4/1D4/1D8, MV 40', SV F3, ML 12</p> <p>* The tesla coil claws of a Wire Ghost cause paralysis for 1D6+4 rounds. When attacking they are also surrounded by crackling energy that causes 1D2 points of damage per round to all within 10'.</p>
4.	<p><b>1D2 Rusted Sentinels</b> – Huge and unmoving lumps of lichen shrouded machinery, or stumbling ramdomly, stained and dripping from the colorful waters of a polluted cenote, these ancient guardians continue to protect the cavern from intruders</p> <p><b>Rusted Sentinel:</b> HD 5+5, AC 3*, ATK 1**, D 1D12, MV 30', SV F5, ML 12</p> <p>* Have 1 point per die damage reduction. Meeting the gaze of an active iron sentinel causes violent insanity for 1D12 rounds. Any individual in melee with one of these hulks must save vs. paralysis or launch a melee attack against the nearest target. If more than one target is nearby (as in a melee) attack will be random. Averting one's eyes is an effective means of avoiding the insanity effect, but give a -4 to all attack rolls against the Sentinel ** Blows of the Rusted Sentinel infect those struck with the iron curse, a creeping rust that slowly consumes the body and mind, leaving cankers and corrosion. The curse prevents magical healing and causes 1D2 points of damage a day. It may be cured by remove curse, while victims who die of the curse will arise as <b>Wire Ghosts</b>.</p>
5.	<p><b>3D12 Zombies</b> – Yellowlander sacrificial victims, these compact zombies surge up from the cenotes in waves, dyed horrid colors by the ancient pigments within. These sacrifices were disemboweled and drag behind them glistening animated coils of their rotten innards.</p> <p><b>Zombie:</b> HD 2, AC 8, ATK 1*, DAM 1D8, MV 20', SV F1, ML 12</p> <p>* Attack last every round but, on natural 20 these zombies' animated intestines will entangle their victim, preventing attack or movement until the entangling zombie is slain.</p>
6.	<p><b>1 Bone Hulk</b> – A huge (10' diameter) slow moving mass of barely intelligent undead bones, their collective mind so scattered and lost that action beyond consuming more bones is impossible.</p> <p><b>Bone Hulk:</b> HD 8, AC 5*, ATK 1** (subsume), DAM 2D8, MV 10', SV F6, ML 12</p> <p>* Normal undead immunities, immune to cold and electricity. Cutting and stabbing weapons do 1 point of damage. Fire does ½ damage. **If the Bone Hulk strikes for more than 8 points of damage it subsumes the target, pummeling him with bones every round for 2D8 until freed by a successful contested STR check against the STR 17 Bone Hulk. Subsuming victims leaves the hulk free to attack new victims.</p>

# THE PUISSANT MACHINE

A metal cube 80' by 80' covered in gears, pistons and jutting devices of unknown use, a doorway in its Southern face spilling a weak internal light, white and cold, onto the cavern floor. Trickle of lubricant, oil and other industrial discharge leak from ancient pipe fittings and run in unnaturally bright rivulets across the rocky ground. The upper level of the object appears to largely consist of an angled set of four huge pistons, all closed.

The interior of the cube is similar to its exterior, a mad jumble of pipes, plates, dials, gears and pistons that overwhelms the eye, with hallways and chambers that appear to have been tunneled out of the mechanical bulk. The halls are between 10' and 6' wide where jutting machinery limits passage. The floor is made of either sturdy metal mesh grates, revealing more pipes and devices beneath, or riveted metal plates of steel, bronze or iron. Ceilings vary in height depending on the number of conduits and devices in a particular area of hall, but is never less than 5'.

This is one of the artifacts used by an ancient despot to control his empire. It is powered by sacrificed souls and energy siphoned from beyond the veil of reality. Built partially with the Despot's sorcerous skills and partially with material and knowledge of enslaved otherworldly entities, the machine can extend life, reverse death, create ablife and grant a form of immortality. The alien technology used in its creation is that of the domain of the Machine Intelligences of the Bronze Ziggurat, a plane of perfect, horrible order and merciless calculating rationality.

Much of the machine is constantly in motion, with flywheels slowly turning and pistons moving in obscure patterns. It is largely hydraulic and steam operated, powered by internal energies manifesting both as fires and bizarre radiation. The fuel for the machine's abilities to extend, change and return live is human souls. Currently there are 12 souls trapped within the machine, but various ways exist within of adding more to its batteries.

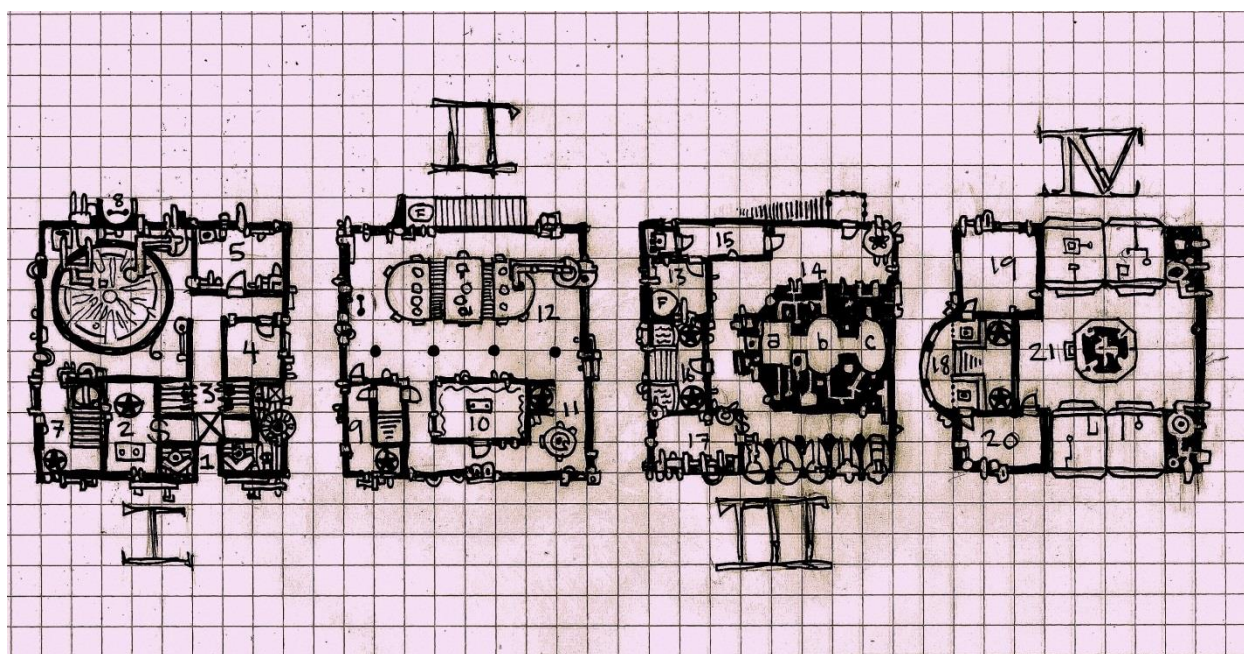
The machine is well constructed by alien but perfectly rational intelligences who built many fail-safes and redundant systems into it as a means of stymieing crude attempts at vandalism or destruction. The interior workings of the machine are tough, and normal, even hard use will not damage them (including errant axe blows and the oil fires). Intentionally smashing or breaking the interior of the machine however can have disastrous effects (See Table) if an attack succeeds against AC 4 and does more than 6 points of damage.





D6 SKULKING THROUGH THE OIL SLOTTED WALLS OF THE PRETENDER'S MACHINE	
1.	<p><b>1D4 Wire Ghosts</b> Scabrous and Crackling with electricity, these horrors move with more purpose than usual, making small repairs to the machine's interior. They are intent on their tasks and will be surprised on 3 in 6.</p> <p><b>Wire Ghost:</b> HD 4, AC 4, ATK 3* (claw/claw/bite), DAM 1D4/1D4/1D8, MV 40', SV F3, ML 12</p> <p>*The tesla coil claws of a Wire Ghost cause paralysis for 1D6+4 rounds. When attacking they are also surrounded by crackling energy that causes 1D2 points of damage per round to all within 10'.</p>
2.	Random <b>Predatory Lubricant</b> (roll a D6 on the Lubricant Table) dripping from above, or waiting to gush from a wall grating (surprise on a 1-3)
3.	<p><b>1D2 Rusted Sentinels</b> – Suddenly standing, seemingly locked in place behind the next door, or even behind the party in an already investigated area, these monstrous constructs move with surprising stealth.</p> <p><b>Rusted Sentinel:</b> HD 5+5, AC 3*, ATK 1", D 1D12, MV 30', SV F5, ML 12 *insanity gaze while in melee causes berserking, 1 point damage reduction ** attacks cause rusting curse, incurable 1-2 HP per day, may be removed with <i>remove curse</i>.</p>
4.	<p><b>2D6 Clockwork Ticks</b> – Discs of copper carapace (20gp/lbs of <u>copper plating</u> per tick) animated by leaking thaumaturgy. They suck the fluids and life force of the Wire Ghosts, and keep the lubricant population down, but are happy to supplement this diet with mortal blood.</p> <p><b>Clockwork Ticks:</b> HD 2, AC 3, ATK 1", DAM 1D4, MV 40', SV F1", ML 10 *After a successful attack the clockwork tick will remain attached, doing 1D6 automatically each round. ** Clockwork ticks are automatons and immune to mind effecting spells.</p>
5.	<b>Mysterious Noises</b> – Not simply the clanking and rattling of the machine. Screams, bellows and teeth clenching grinding noises.
6.	<p><b>Eye of Fire</b> – A floating arcane symbol, reminiscent of an eye and made of black flame. This observer, placed in ancient times, is harmless but rather disconcerting. It will track intruders for 1D4 turns and disappear if struck with a magical weapon or spell, to reappear later. If struck with a magical weapon the Eye will become perturbed and form a <i>Symbol of Pain</i> causing -2 to all rolls and AC for 1D6 turns.</p>

## THE PRETENDER'S MACHINE – 1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



D12	YOUR CLUMSY EFFORTS TO DAMAGE THE STRANGE INNER WORKINGS OF THE MACHINE RESULT IN...
1	A ruptured pipe sprays <b>Superheated Steam</b> at the character damaging the machine. Scalds 3D6 worth of skin off any caught in the gout of steam (attacking the machine or within 10'), Save vs. Dragon Breath for ½ damage.
2	Hydraulic Valve rupture sprays Lubricant onto the character attacking the machine. Use on the <b>Lubricants Table</b> for <b>Area 5</b> to determine just how horrible this is.
3	A vent burps out a bluish gray <b>Gas Cloud</b> that fills a 10' x 10' area. The effect is disorientation, loss of depth perception the desire to eat iron filings, and fits of nausea (-1 on all rolls for the next week). Anyone breathing the gas must also make a save vs. poison to see if they suffer the more serious reaction of blindness from the gas.
4	Sudden extreme pressure change causes <b>Rivets</b> to bursts from the walls all around the corridor. Each party member suffers 1D4 rivet strikes. The rivets attack as 5HD creatures, and do 1D4+1 HP on a successful hit.
5	A gout of <b>Lubricant</b> gurgles from a smashed valve onto the floor. Roll on the <b>Lubricants Table</b> for <b>Area 5</b> for effect.
6	<b>Soul Syphon:</b> Screaming radiation envelopes the destructive party member and attempts to rip free his soul to add to the Machine's batteries. On a failed save vs. Spells the machine is successful, draining 1D4+1 levels of energy.
7	One of the <b>tormented souls</b> trapped within the machine's core escapes as an eel like cloud of sparkling motes. It is mad from centuries of torment and attempts to attack and possesses a party member. <b>Tormented Soul:</b> HD 4, AC 3*, ATK 1(touch), DAM 1D6**, MV 40' (fly), SV F4, ML 10 *Immune to non-magical attacks **On touch make a contested Wisdom check to avoid being possessed. The Soul's WIS is 10, and it will flee the machine in any body it possesses.
8	<b>Soul Radiation</b> from the past evils committed here is released filling the minds of all nearby with horrid visions of human sacrifice and reanimation.
9	<b>Lockdown:</b> All doors within the machine snap shut and locks engage. On a repeat of this result they unlock.
10	<b>Alchemical Rays</b> coruscate briefly from a cracked lens and a random party member's weapon or armor (50% for each) will be bathed in the strange violet light. Metal equipment so effected will turn to gold, rendering it all but useless as a weapon or armor but increasing its value greatly (500 – 1,000 GP for a weapon 1,000 – 5,000 GP for armor).
11	A <b>Thunderous Noise</b> issues from deep within the machine: an explosion, the scream of lost souls or the scream of tearing metal. No other effect.
12	Machine is <b>Damaged</b> , sparks, flames and terrible grinding noises abound. If this occurs three times the machine will be broken permanently. Destruction of the machine will have no effect on the location beyond preventing the use of the devices within. The machine will repair itself in 2D10 years.

## 1. THE NEST OF BLADES

<b>Appearance:</b>	The machine looms illuminated; the air is filled with a dusting of lichen spores. Door leads North into machine and <b>Area 3</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Underworld fecundity, a reek of spore and wet earth. A whiff of rotted iron.
<b>Lighting:</b>	The machine is lit from above by a shaft of daylight, luminescent fungi abound.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Nest of Blades</b> – save v. paralysis or die is attempting to enter doorway to '2'.
<b>Treasure:</b>	None.
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Undead table 1 in 6 per turn.

The face of the cube is complex, and clearly artificial: dull grey metal, with copper accents – covered in a maze of gears, pistons and metal plates. Strange lubricants drip from between the armored plates while encrustations of rust ring odd pipes and hatches here and there. Most notable however is a doorway, illuminated steadily from within. Its door would be welcoming in this

alien subterranean hell, except for the set of huge rusted blades that hang poised around its edges obviously connected to an apparatus of gears and crankshafts that could cause them to slice violently though the areas immediate in front of the doorway.

**Nest of Blades:** This trap is both obvious and menacing, protecting the front entrance of the machine. It is more a warning than a trap, and no effort has been made to hide it, but it remains deadly to the arrogant or stupid. A set of enormous (10' long, weighing thousands of pounds) steel guillotines are laid against the entrance face of the machine. These blades suffer from rust and chipping, but each is more than sufficient to slice or smash an adventurer into bloody ruin. The blades have a rather obvious set of actuators – gears, flywheels and pistons that will cause them to cut through the area in front of the doorway. The trap is triggered by a magic eye, a lens of black stone lost in ornamentation above the arched entrance, that will release the blades when someone tries to enter. The blades kill anyone who tries to walk between them when they are triggered, a save vs.

Paralysis is appropriate, with failure meaning a gruesome death and a save meaning the character leaped backward, miraculously at the last moment. Unfortunately, once triggered, the blades will block the door, resetting in about 3 minutes.

The trap may be avoided several obvious ways. First a quick individual may rush through as it triggers, leaping past the scything blades. This can be accomplished by a DEX check with a two point penalty. Failure means death. The best ways to avoid the trap are to either climb the rough surface of the machine near the blades and jam or break the exposed apparatus that moves them (easy enough with a blunt weapon or several iron spikes), or to cover the magic eye, though this will be impossible without detecting it (a find traps roll will spot the odd lens).

## Area 3: Secret Shrine

<b>Appearance:</b>	A dusty shrine to evil gods. Racks of skulls line the walls around crude totem and altar. Secret door on East wall to <b>Area 3</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Old blood and a reek of overturned soil (from the statue)
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Hidden compartment</b> in altar opens when totem head placed on it.
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Blue crystal skull</b> – worth 1,000 GP concealed in altar.
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	None

Dusty and still, this chamber is obviously a shrine to some sinister power. Metal racks line the Southern and Eastern wall and contain hundreds of skulls, while an altar stands in the center of the chamber with a crude iron totem looming above it. The altar is a chromed metal butte jutting from the floor and sheathed in pipes and tubes. Close examination of the altar will reveal channels for draining sacrificial blood into these pipes. Any sentient slain on the altar will have her soul drawn into the machine's batteries.

Above the altar is a rough metal totem cobbled together from plates of black iron, welded and joined with thumb sized rivets. A humanoid figure almost eight feet tall, the totem exudes menace and power, but it's hard to determine exactly what deity or demon it symbolizes. If examined closely the head appears to come off, and can be removed with a forceful tug.

**Hidden Compartment:** If the totem's head, a twenty pound hollow ovoid of iron plate with indistinct features, is placed on the altar, the altar's secret compartment slides open with a hissing gush of steam (the compartment may also be discovered with a search check at -1). Within the compartment, nestled on a pillow of brittle grey silk is a **blue crystal skull**. Finely carved from a single chunk of rock crystal the skull is worth 1,000 GP as an art object, but is also a holy relic. If placed on the headless totem the skull will speak.

Unfortunately, unless a Cleric of 4<sup>th</sup> level or higher that worships the coldly efficient and exactingly machine intelligences of the Inverted Bronze Ziggurat is present the skull will simply prophesy the death of all present in horrible ways e.g. "You will suffer for 500 years on the rack of razor needles..." before exploding in a shower of worthless crystal shards.



### 3. TRAPPED CORRIDOR

<b>Appearance:</b>	A cross shaped junction. Worked relief of the walls depicts flames and crystals. Passage leads North to junction with doors to <b>Areas 4</b> (South) and <b>5</b> (North) along Eastern passage. Archway to West leads to <b>Area 6</b> . Secret door in Western alcove leads to <b>Area 2</b> . Passage Exits machine South to <b>Area 1</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	The sharp stink of alchemical oils and a musty smell of rust
<b>Lighting:</b>	White light beams from the end of the hall
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Spear Trap</b> (2D6); <b>Pit trap</b> (3D6); <b>Secret Door</b>
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

A metal corridor provides the main entrance to the machine. It is notable because of the efforts that have been taken to decorate it with brass and steel panels on the walls, panels covered in inlays and hammered relief, sculpting a pattern of flames and crystals. The hallway is also heavily trapped.

**Pit Trap:** A covered pit, triggered by heavy pressure (a person or intent prodding with a pole) on the floor of the crossroads causes the floor to snap open, with four triangles of floor plating swinging back in a 'X' pattern. The pit is only about 10' deep but is filled with a grinding apparatus and scything blades that make falling into it very dangerous, doing 3D6 damage. Persons aware of the trap may easily traverse it by moving along the edges of the corridor where there is a small ledge concealing the trap's hinges. The trap will reset after one turn.

**Spear Trap:** Beyond the pit trap is a spear trap using steam pressure to crisscross the hallway with heavy steel spikes. Triggered when a narrow pressure plate at the

end of the 10' section of corridor filled by the trap is depressed, the spears will quickly and forcefully jab from the walls accompanied by a cloud of steam. Anyone within the 10' of corridor beyond the pit trap will suffer 2D6 damage, though an individual setting the trap off may leap clear of the trap on a successful save vs. paralysis. After activating, the spears will slide back into the walls, concealed in tubes amongst the decorative paneling. The trap requires several minutes to reset after discharging, a process accompanied by the chuffing and hissing noise of the trap's hydraulics refilling with steam and ending with a distinct click.

**Secret Door:** The rear wall of the left/Western alcove is decorated with bronze sheets of metal, worked into the same reliefs of crystals and flames, as the other hallway walls. If examined closely a slight difference can be seen, as several of the crystal carvings on the Western wall have subtle skull markings. If all four of these skull markings are pressed simultaneously a hidden catch unlocks, allowing the wall swing inward into **AREA 2**.

### 4. RUSTED STORE

<b>Appearance:</b>	A jumble of rusted objects decayed and rotten with the decay of ages. Metal door on Northern wall to <b>Area 3</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	The reek of rust and musty scent of time.
<b>Lighting:</b>	Flickering strobeing lighted disc on ceiling.
<b>Traps:</b>	None
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

Once storage for mundane supplies and extra parts, this room has been both thoroughly ransacked and left to rot. The room is given an eerie quality by the whitish light disk in the ceiling as it strobes on an off, revealing the jagged shadows of destroyed shelving and reflecting off water pooling in the room's center.

A dripping pipe along the Eastern wall has created several pools of reddish rust tainted water and stained the Eastern wall with rust. The contents of the room consist of a large pile of bent and toppled metal shelving that once contained parts and supplies. Any remaining machine parts are scattered about the floor, rusted into barely distinguishable lumps.

## 2. LUBRICANT STORAGE

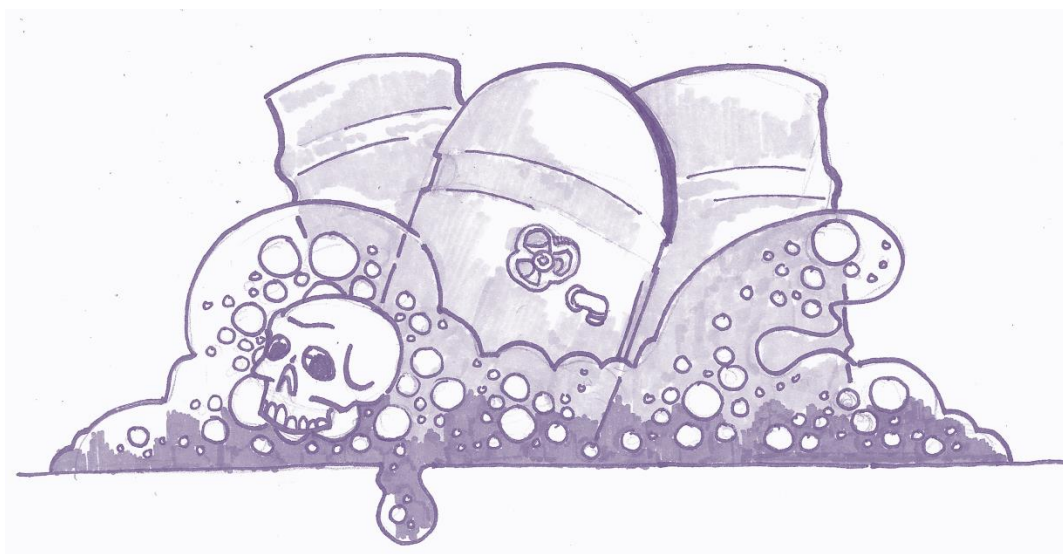
<b>Appearance:</b>	Vats, tubes and drums fill a room where pipes and valves jut from every wall. Metal door on Southern wall to <b>Area 3</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Chemic stink and an oily reek with an undertone of death.
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	Opening valves, drums, tubes or releases dangerous <b>lubricants</b>
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Various Oozes, slimes, puddings and jellies from <b>Lubricant</b> table

The oils, lubricants and fluids that keep the workings of the Pretender's machine operational are as extra-planar in origin as its crafters and technology. Most are dangerous, many animate, some predatory, and a few at least semi-intelligent. This chamber is the centralized stockpile and breeding chamber for the jellies, oozes, and slimes that course through the various pipes and conduits throughout the construction.

Three large sealed vats stand in the center of the chamber and numerous metal tubes with obvious

spigots. If any of the receptacles are opened or breached, or the spigots are opened (there are D8+1 that are immediately obvious) some sort of horrible lubricant ooze will be released, determined randomly by rolling on the **Lubricant Table** that follows.

Beyond the numerous containers (including a few sloshing glass tubes filled with oddly colored liquid) and huge spigot studded breeding columns this room is bare.



1-6	STRANGE LUBRICANTS OF THE DREAD MACHINE (PART I)
1.	<p><b>Raw Ooze</b> A wave of bloody colored slime with a slaughterhouse reek, this horror is a ferocious predator seemingly made from gore. It attacks in a single arching torrent of offal, but more dangerous than its thunderous blows is the creature's near indestructability. Attacks from edged weapons cause the Raw Ooze bud off smaller oozes rather than damaging it, while it is immune to most other attacks.</p> <p><b>Raw Ooze:</b> HD 10, AC 6*, ATK 1, DMG 3D8, MV 20', SV F5, ML 12*Raw Ooze is immune to all attacks, except fire, while electricity heals it for 2D6 HP. Blows with edged weapons propagate the Ooze, doing no damage but creating an identical 2HD Ooze that attacks for 1D8 damage.</p>
2.	<p><b>Clotted Jelly</b> A large spray of chunks resembling congealed gore this creature is similar to the Raw Ooze, but less deadly. The body of the jelly is highly acidic and it will platter nearby living creatures with acidic slime to feed off their pain sensations. Clotted Jelly takes damage from normal weapons, but regenerates quickly and becomes more energetic when struck.</p> <p><b>Clotted Jelly:</b> HD 5*, AC 5, ATK 1**, DAM 2D6, MV 20', SV F2, ML 12 *Regenerates damage from all attacks except cold or electricity at rate of 5HP a round **For every successful attack doing more than 5 HP the jelly gains an immediate melee counter attack and additional attack the next round.</p>
3.	<p><b>Jade Gas</b> A wisp of pale green gas that will float toward the ceiling. This creature is immaterial until it coalesces to feed. It will track any warm blooded target within 10', slowly wafting after them, attempting to hide in the recesses of a ceiling. When prey stops and rests, the gas will descend slowly and almost silently upon a sleeping form coalescing into gelatinous blob, paralyzing (no save for sleeping victim, victims on watch or resting are surprised on a 5 in 6 chance but Save vs. Paralysis at +2) and then draining them of 1D6 HP a turn leaving a desiccated husk within an hour or two.</p> <p><b>Jade Gas:</b> HD 4, AC 6*, ATK N/A, DMG paralysis**, MV Fly 30', SV F 4, ML 6 *In gaseous form it may only be harmed by magical cold or electricity. ** Sleeping victims cannot save, and take 1D6 HP per turn thereafter. Resting victims are surprised and attacked on 5 in 6, save at +2.</p>
4.	<p><b>Glowing Sludge</b> Garish and glowing with searing light this strange jelly is not especially dangerous, except in the presence of magic. Glowing sludge devours magic and the byproduct of this strange digestion is a burning flash of heat and light, a condition that makes this creature very dangerous around sorcerers or those who carry large numbers of ensorcelled items.</p> <p><b>Glowing Sludge:</b> HD 4, AC 6, ATK 1, DAM 1D2*, MV 30', SV MU 4, ML 8 *Glowing sludge will attack any magic using character, or any magical item a character holds. When the sludge contacts magic it will drain it and produce an explosion doing 1D10HP to anyone within 10'. An attack will completely destroy a single-use item, but permanent magic items receive a saving throw vs. magic. Spell casters struck will lose 1D4-1 random memorized spells.</p>
5.	<p><b>Fractal Slurry</b> A blob of brightly colored orange and brown sludge, constantly flowing into crystalline shapes. The creature transforms metallic items into additional fractal slurry and can kill with its jagged protean form. While not hungry for flesh, Fractal Slurry is violently territorial.</p> <p><b>Fractal Slurry:</b> HD 6, AC 8*, ATK 1**, DMG 2D8 MV 3' SV F2 ML 12* Metal Weapons striking the Fractal Slurry do normal damage, but will be destroyed and heal the creature for 1D12 HP the next round. ** Upon striking a target with metal armor, Fractal Slurry does ½ damage, but will dissolve the armor in 1D4 rounds fully healing any damage it has sustained.</p>
6.	<p><b>Memory Muck</b> A mass of clear colorless sludge the quivers momentarily before it snaps into a shape, looking exactly like one of the individuals nearby. Within ten rounds the simulacrum will assume the coloring and exact features of its model and seek to replace him or her.</p> <p><b>Memory Muck:</b> HD 5, AC 4, ATK (As Model)* DMG (As Model)* MV 10' or (As Model) SV (As model) ML 10 *Creature will obtain all statistics, bonuses and special abilities (including spells casting) of model.</p>



6-12	STRANGE LUBRICANTS OF THE DREAD MACHINE [PART II]
7.	<p><b>Orange Dust</b> is a powder, soft and silky to the touch that shifts and swirls almost as if alive. Orange Dust is a predatory entity partially manifesting itself in this universe as a drift rust orange dust. The dust feeds on organic material but does only minimal damage to flesh.</p> <p><b>Orange Dust:</b> HD 2, AC 7*, ATK 1, DMG 1D4**, MV 30', SV F3, ML 10 * Immune to non-magical weapons, flammable (1D4 from torch double damage from fire) ** Causes organic (wood, cloth and leather) items &amp; armor to decay instantly on attack. Non-metal weapons will decay if they strike the dust. Decayed objects are destroyed, but magical items Save v. Spells as F1 or rust.</p>
8.	<p><b>Cryogenic Masses</b> Can form on any metallic surface within the Machine, they appear like an array of crystals made from frost bitten meat, brown and tough, stinking of frozen rot. The Cryogenic Mass is actually an endothermic fungus and will drain the heat from any living creature within five feet. Fire and other heat sources cause the mass to grow rapidly.</p> <p><b>Cryogenic Mass:</b> HD 2, AC N/A*, ATK 0**, DAM 1D8+2, MV 0', SV F0, ML N/A * Immune to all attacks except cold based, poison or pure magical (disintegrate or magic missile). Normal fire attacks cause it to double in size, magical fire causes the mass to quadruple in size. ** drains heat and life of 1D8+2 HP from all within 5'.</p>
9.	<p><b>Red Slime</b> Burbling from a floor level valve this spreading pool of viscous bright red slime is highly corrosive and capable of propagating itself quickly from any organic material. Luckily it is largely immobile and unthinking. Red slime will not melt metal or stone, but can quickly dissolve glass and organic materials. The slime detects movement through vibration, slowly flowing towards moving prey to devour. If left alone for several turns Red Slime will climb to the ceiling to ambush prey.</p> <p><b>Red Slime:</b> HD 2, AC N/A*, ATK 1, DAM 1D8**, MV 1', SV F1, ML N/A * May only be damaged by fire, damage while attached to victim will harm both. ** Will take 1D4 rounds to dissolve clothes or seep through armor and then transform 1D8 HP of target into slime per round until destroyed.</p>
10.	<p><b>Opalescent Oil</b> forms a sheen of unnaturally reflective opalescence and spreads to cover all surfaces in a 10' x 10' area. If disturbed the oily slick will react quickly to send out clouds of tiny bubbles that will fill the lungs of any within 20' of the slick. These bubbles cause choking and death within 3 rounds of inhaling, unless a save is made against poison. While choking a victim may be cured with the spells "purify water" or "cure disease". Samples of the oil that are not sufficiently large to form a bubble producing colony (requiring several gallons) will die off within 1D4 days.</p> <p><b>Opalescent Oil:</b> HD 2, AC N/A*, ATK None, DAM Poison**, MV N/A, SV F1, ML N/A</p> <p>* Opalescent oil is immune to fire and weapons, but may be frozen or electrocuted into becoming inert for several weeks. Purify Water or large amounts of solvent/acid will also destroy the oil. ** 20' cloud of poison bubbles if disturbed, save vs. poison or die in 3 rounds. Purify water or cure disease to save choking victim.</p>
11.	<p><b>Marble Milk</b> resembles a pool of opaque white liquid shot through with strands of black. It can move very slowly, seemingly without purpose, though it will often seek light (which eventually kills it). The touch of the milk, or the jets it can produce at close range, cause petrification, and eventually transformation into a marble statue. Removed from the Machine's radiation the Milk will curdle and rot within hours.</p> <p><b>Marble Milk:</b> HD 2, AC 9* ATK 1, DAM Petrification**, MV 1', SV CL 10, ML N/A * Marble Milk is immune to most attacks, but is flammable and may be diluted with acid. ** Save vs. Petrification or lose 1 point of DEX per turn until turning into a marble statue (at 2).</p>
12.	<p><b>Purple Fungus</b> is a thin fungus that adheres to almost any surface in rich violet clumps. The fungus is harmless, causing itching and sneezing, but if disturbed by motion or light it will release huge clouds of luminescent spores, that will adhere to any surface. Individuals covered in these spore will be unable to surprise enemies and suffer a 1 point AC penalty until the spores are washed off with alcohol or die (1 day).</p> <p><b>Purple Fungus</b> HD 2 AC N/A*, ATK None, DAM Special**, MV N/A, SV F1, ML N/A</p> <p>* Immune to normal and magical weapons, cold, fire, acid, electricity ** 50' cloud of luminescent spores (1 point AC penalty and loss of surprise).</p>

## 6. THE VORTEX

<b>Appearance:</b>	A massive machine hangs from the ceiling above a vortex of light and energy swirling like a maelstrom at floor level. Archway on Eastern wall to <b>Area 3</b> and archway in South to <b>Area 7</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Reeks of ozone and the scent of strange magic (something like cotton candy).
<b>Lighting:</b>	Huge glowing vortex lights room a harsh shocking blue.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Vortex</b> that leads to plane of the Brass Ziggurat, may summon extraplanar beasts
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

Well lit by a huge central vortex of swirling blue light, a maelstrom of magical otherworldly energy. The vortex pulls dust and air towards it and appears to strain, barely held in place by a strange machine that hangs above on thick square chains. The machine is active, glittering with glass lens, covered in spinning whirligigs, and venting bursts of steam every few moments. The rest of the room is clean of dust and appears to be in better order than the rooms nearby.

**The Vortex:** 40' across this magical whirlpool is a gateway to the plane of the bronze ziggurat, a place where entropy has been all but banished under the dominion of calculating and emotionless machine intelligences. While the machine pulls power from the realm of bronze ziggurat, it is capable of transporting objects between worlds as well. In fact the vortex was created to maintain a balance between universes, exchanging terrestrial air for power. If objects, or even living things, are thrown into the vortex, a similar object will be returned in 2D10 turns. The objects taken from the other world will be functional similar (and mechanically identical in game terms) 80% of the time. They will look very different however, a simple steel dagger will be replaced by a short bladed weapon made of some bizarre greenish alloy and structured for an inhuman hand. Otherworldly torches will reek of earth oil and burn blue. Items from the Realm of the Ziggurat are novelties and worth approximately 200% of normal value. Unfortunately meddling with the vortex enlarges the hole between worlds, and eventually this will attract the interest of the creatures that live between worlds – horrors of the outer darkness. Each time the vortex gives up an object there is a cumulative 1 in 10 chance that a **Void Stalker** will emerge along with the new object.

Attempting to return objects or living creatures through the vortex will fail spectacularly, resulting in a crackling blast of purple energy and immediately allowing a **Void Stalker** to slip through.

### VOID STALKER

HD 6, AC 2\*, ATK 2 (lashx2)\*\* DAM (2D6/2D6)  
MV 40', SV CL 6, ML 12

Horrifying hunters from the impossible angles between space and time, these creatures remain invisible as they stalk their prey, and are only detectable in the unease they create in magically sensitive persons. Stalkers prefer to pick off enemies one at a time, suddenly becoming manifest by clothing themselves in shadow (often the targets own) and rending with icy flagellums. If viewed by a mortal capable of seeing into the ethereal, the sight of one of these horrors will cause catatonia for 1D4 days unless a save vs. spells is made.

\*Immune to non-magical attacks and resistant to cold, taking only 1D4 HP per cold attack.

\*\*May attack with a backstab on initial attack (+4 hit/x4 damage) and can drag dead victims into ethereal space to feed.

If living creatures are cast into the vortex, a corresponding creature from the other world will be pushed back through. Strange mechanical looking animals most often resemble insects or spiders made of glass, silver and brass. They will be invariably frenzied

and hostile due to insanity produced by the entropy of the terrestrial world. If an intelligent creature falls into the vortex, one of the machine intelligences will be pulled into the terrestrial universe. This unfortunate entity will resemble a geometric shape made of colored glass, with several limbs and roughly man sized. These creatures must Save vs. Spell or be driven into violent insanity by the nature of the terrestrial world. If not insane, the perfectly neutral and rational Machine Intelligence will accept its situation and knows that it cannot return through the vortex. Depending on the party's response to this entity it may be willing to work with them to escape the Autocrat's Tear, and real efforts to help it return to its home dimension will be rewarded with loyalty of a sort. Whatever occurs, the Entity will always be coldly rational and calculating, attempting to maximize its gain and minimize its risk. It has no sense of group loyalty or emotions, only familiarity and a

willingness to work with those who have proven rational and beneficial in the past.

Individuals from the Terrestrial Universe sometimes survive the strange journey and a few even escape to return to their native world months or years later. For PCs entering the vortex, roll a Save vs. Spells. Success means they have survived the planar transit. Then roll a Constitution check to determine if the alien world's diseases and poisons slay them shortly after they arrive. A Charisma check will determine if the lost character manages to escape death at the hands of the denizens beyond the portal. An Intelligence check determines if they are able to return. Characters that survive the ordeal will return to the terrestrial world in 1D4+3 Sessions and they will return changed: limbs replaced with hideous mechanical tentacles, eyes gone strange, minds warped by what they've seen and with unknown loyalties to extra planar patrons.

## CREATURES OF THE BRONZE ZIGURAT

**Extraplanar Beast (small)** HD 2, AC 6, ATK 1\*, DAM (1D6) MV 40', SV CL 2, ML 12 (insane)

These small creatures resemble spiders, birds, lizards or mollusks made bronze with a single crystalline eye. Most are radially symmetrical and all will be driven to frenzy by the disorder of the terrestrial universe. They will attack with a bite or slashing forelimbs. There is a 2 in 6 chance that the attack of these creatures bite is poisonous to terrestrial life (Save or Die, as crystals form in the blood and internal organs). The shells of these creatures are worth 1D4 X100 GP as art objects.

**Extraplanar Beast (large)** HD 6, AC 4, ATK 3 claw/claw/gore DAM (1D6/1D6/2D8) MV 40', SV CL 6, ML 12 (insane)

Larger versions of the metallic creatures above, these extraplanar beast are predators or dangerous pack herbivores. Most resemble radially symmetrical sea creatures with numerous legs, pincers and mouths sprouting from a bronze shell. When they arrive in the terrestrial universe its lack of order and essential alienness will drive them into a frenzy. Trapped within the Machine this means they will rampage about seeking to attack any source of movement. Eventually they are likely to find a way into the outside, but will undoubtedly die of fear and starvation within a few weeks. The crystal encrusted shells of these creatures are worth 2D6 X100 GP as art objects.



## EXTRAPLANAR AUTOCHTHON

HD 3, AC 2\*, ATK 2 (lashx2)\*\* DAM (1D6/1D6) MV 40', SV CL 6, ML 12

The subjects of the Bronze Ziggurat are strange looking, radially symmetrical creatures made of faceted crystal. Slowly whirring brass clockworks fill the Autochthon's transparent central core while its six limbs, three for walking and three for tool use, are covered in bronze chitin. An Autochthon's face is a mass of glowing crystalline growths, largely without expression, beyond subtle changes in the glow light's color and pattern.

If the terrestrial sentient that is cast into the vortex is a normal human, or even level 1-3, the Autochthon appearing will be a worker or farmer, as above, without class levels or abilities (though if it survives in the terrestrial world it may gain a character class). For characters or NPCs level 4 and above lost to the vortex a leveled Autochthon is cast into the Terrestrial world. This creature will have class levels (and appropriate HD for each level of the lost terrestrial about 3, but will have the spell and to-hit abilities of a classed NPC of its full HD). Such leveled creatures will also have appropriate equipment. Thus if a 5<sup>th</sup> level wizard passes through the vortex an Autochthon of 5HD and 5<sup>th</sup> level class abilities will appear in his place. Autochthons will be either fighters (4 in 6 chance) or Clerics (2 in 6 chance).

## 7. IRON GUARDIAN

<b>Appearance:</b>	A grim iron statue opens its arms towards the Northern arch to <b>Area 7</b> , and a stair leads upward to <b>Area 9</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Rust and strange lubricants. A faint grinding sound comes from the statue
<b>Lighting:</b>	Single red light shines on statue from above casting dim light.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Iron Guardian</b> statue is part of elaborate guardian trap linked to statue in Area 9
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	<b>Iron Guardian</b> , animate statue (8HD).

Entering from the North the blue light of the vortex is quickly lost in the dimness of this chamber. A steep corrugated steel stairway runs along the pipe covered Eastern wall and leads up the next level of the machine, but to reach its base one must walk by almost within touching distance of a malevolent statue, the **Iron Guardian**. A rusted iron statue of an obese horned

humanoid whose face is a mass of unworked slag, the statue stands atop a carefully made column base. The statue is illuminated by a single dusty beam of red light from 20' above, as no pipes, ducts or machinery fill the 10' between levels here. Animate, the **Iron Guardian** is currently still, and part of an elaborate trap.

## IRON GUARDIAN (ANIMATE STATUE)

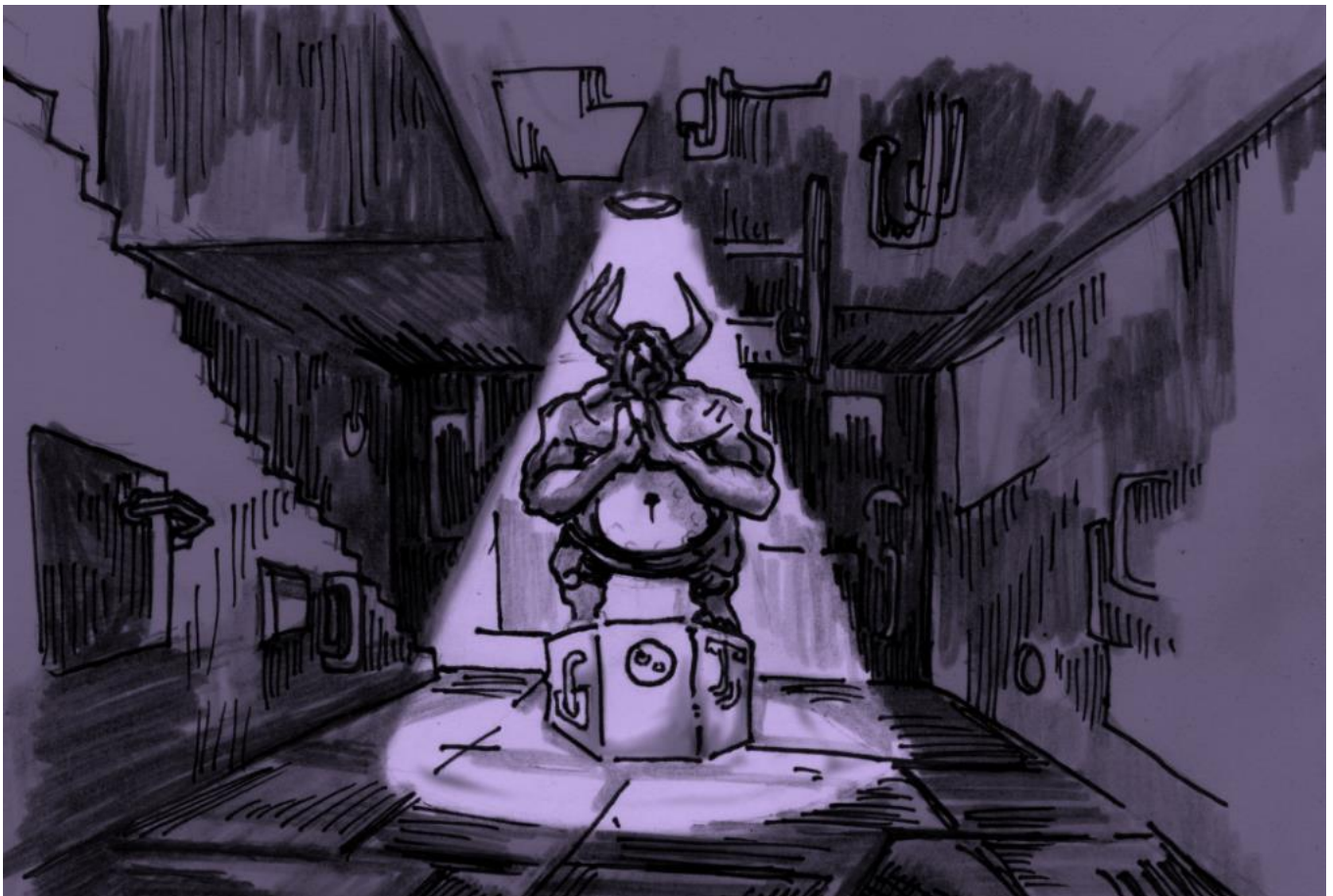
HD 8 (40 HP), AC 3\*, ATK 2 (pummel x 2) DAM (1D8+3/1D8+3) MV 20', SV F 8, ML 12 \*Normal & silver weapons adhere to statue, save v. spells to avoid.

The Iron Guardian is a larger stronger version of the standard Animate Iron Statue brought to life with mechanical genius and otherworldly magic. Like all of its kind, normal metal weapons (including silver weapons) striking the Iron Guardian will do normal damage, but will stick into its iron skin, holding them fast unless the weapon's wielder makes a save vs. spells at -2.

**Iron Guardian (Trap):** The Iron Guardian is an animate statue, but will only attack under particular circumstance. The guardian stands on a rounded base that rotates easily, allowing the statue to be turned almost effortlessly with only a slight grinding noise. A similar grinding noise can be heard from above when the **Iron Guardian** is rotated as the **Steel Guardian** statue in **Area 9** moves in concert with the statue below. When the Iron Guardian faces the wall, the shaft of red light from above will suddenly blink out, and arm the **Iron Guardian**, while disarming the **Steel Guardian** above. The purpose of the **Iron Guardian** (unlike his steel counterpart), is to view and remember all who enter his chamber and to tell his master. The players will not and cannot know the command to make him speak of what

he has seen without using magic, but if they discover it – “Iron in the fire, by your master’s voice you are commanded to speak truth”, the statue will tirelessly relate the last several hundred years of comings and goings – mostly Wire Ghosts going upstairs and coming down again (This should result in at least one random encounter roll).

Once the **Iron Guardian** is armed (having been turned to the wall) it can no longer record comings and goings in the room, and after a turn it will animate, ready to attack anyone who enters **Area 7**. The Iron Guardian will not stray from Area 7, unless attacked with missile weapons from the hallway beyond, and will retreat to stand atop its pedestal after a turn of pacing if its enemies flee.



## 8. ACCESS LADDER

<b>Appearance:</b>	Rickety and corroded, a ladder leads upward through a balcony dripping with slime leads to a stair and doorway to <b>Area 12</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	The cavern's fungal stench, with hints of stinking machine oil, burnt metal and rust
<b>Lighting:</b>	The machine is lit from above by a shaft of daylight, luminescent fungi abound.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Opalescent Oil</b> (2HD)
<b>Treasure:</b>	None.
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Undead table 1 in 6 per turn.

A ladder is affixed to the side of the machine. Its metal is corroded and the bolts holding it are loose, but it is still solid enough. Above the ladder a hatch opens onto a corrugated metal catwalk that leads to stairs rising upward along the side of the machine. The entire hatch and catwalk shines with a thick coat of unnatural **opalescent oil**. The oil is obvious and strangely tinted, sparkling with various bright colors, it is also a deadly alien lubricant, that will foam up and release clouds of dangerous choking bubbles if disturbed.

Once the oil has been dealt with or if it flares up four times from being touched, or struck by missiles, becoming dormant for 2D6+2 turns, the hatch can be easily pushed open to access stairs leading to area 14. The door to area 14 is heavy riveted bronze, and locked by a complex tumbler lock. Attempts to pick it will be at -1 or -10%, and the door's robust construction will require two successful attempts to force it.

### OPALESCENT OIL

HD 2, ACN/A\*, ATK None, DAM Poison\*\*, MV N/A, SV F1, MLN/A

If disturbed the oil reacts with a large cloud of toxic bubbles that will fill the lungs of any within 20' of the slick. These bubbles cause choking and death within 3 rounds of inhaling, unless a save is made against poison. While choking a victim may be cured with the spells "purify water" or "cure disease". Samples of the oil that are not sufficiently large enough to form a colony (several gallons) will die off within 1D4 days.

Opalescent oil is immune to fire and weapons, but may be frozen or electrocuted, making it inert for several weeks. Purify Water or large amounts of solvent/acid will also destroy the oil.

## 9. STEEL GUARDIAN

<b>Appearance:</b>	Riveted steel panels and heavy hatches leading West to the Steel Guardian's Lair, strewn with rotten bones, and East to the hallway between <b>Areas 11</b> and <b>12</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Rust and alien lubricants, with hints of rot, ozone and acrid burnt machine oil.
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Steel Guardian</b> Animate Statute
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Ancient Coinage</b> (200 GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	<b>Steel Guardian</b> , animate Statue (8 HD)

This room is split into two parts, the **Landing** and the **Steel Guardian's Lair**. These sections are connected by a hatch like door that opens with a wheel in its center.

**Landing:** The narrow stairs from **Area 7** lead upward to a small landing forged from riveted steel. The walls of the room are likewise riveted steel plates without the



pipes, panels and ducts common throughout the machine. The entire Southern wall is a lattice of steel, cut with downward facing triangles that are somehow menacing in their orderliness. Light directed at the lattice will produce a bright glint from the **Steel Guardian** behind it. Two heavy metal doors, with wheels that release locking toggle and allow them to swing open lead West to the **Steel Guardian's Lair** and East to a hallway between **Areas 11** and **12**.

**Steel Guardian's Lair:** Behind the door to the West is a narrow 'L' of a hallway leading to the Steel Guardian's pedestal behind the lattice facing the **Landing**. The **Steel Guardian** carries off the corpses of its victims and tosses them here based on ancient instructions, leaving this area strewn with ancient bones, scraps of armor and rotten clothing. A careful search of this area will reveal several rotten purses and pouches containing 200 GP worth of **ancient coinage** in silver, electrum and gold.

All ferrous metals have been devoured by the Guardians. Around the bend in the corridor stands the **Steel Guardian**, a gleaming chromed steel statue of an obese horned figure with the face of a beautiful and bored youth atop an iron pedestal.

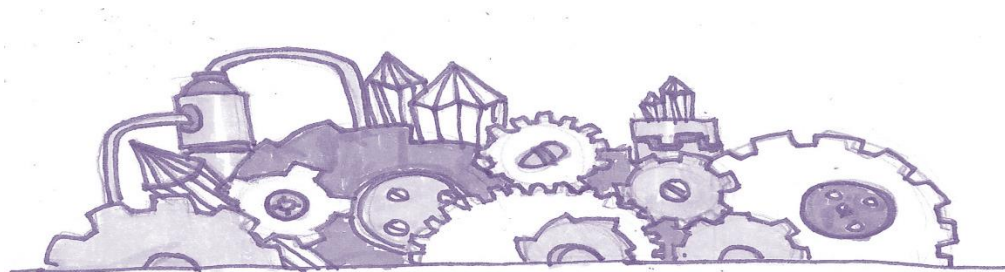
**Steel Guardian (Trap):** The statue is animate, and unlike the **Iron Guardian** below it was created for the purpose of slaying intruders. The **Steel Guardian** will hunt and attack any living creature it sees through the latticed wall between its lair and the **Landing**. The **Steel Guardian** is dormant when turned to face the Southern wall, otherwise it will attack without mercy, pursuing its prey throughout the second level of the machine and dragging those it kills back this room where it will dump their corpses. Once turned to the wall the **Steel Guardian** may be reactivated by turning it to face the chamber again, but it still need a turn to awake and is safe to pass during this time.

### STEEL GUARDIAN (ANIMATE STATUE)

HD 8 (56 HP), AC 2\*, ATK 2(pummel x 2) DAM (1D4/1D4)\*\* MV 20', SV F 8,

ML 12 \*Immune to fire, and all melee attacks on the guardian will release a gout of molten steel doing the same amount of damage to the attacker as the damage from the attack. A successful save vs. wands at -2 will avoid ½ of this retaliatory damage. \*\* Each round of combat after the first the Steel Guardian will heat and its damage will increase a die from 1D4 to 1D6, 1D8, 1d12 and finally 1D20 on the fifth and subsequent rounds.

The Steel Guardian is much like the Iron Guardian below, an animate statue ensorcelled and augmented with mechanical arts. Unlike other animate statues, a demon's spirit is bound within its body keeping its center molten and heating it red hot during combat. If the statue is destroyed the demon will be freed, fleeing rapidly as a wisp of fire to find a new body and haunt the terrestrial world until it is banished. The Demon will likely be grateful to its rescuers, occasionally bringing them horrifying gifts and gory trophies much like a house cat.



## Q. DESECRATED SHRINE

<b>Appearance:</b>	This rich chamber is shattered and profaned, its furnishings smashed, and the altar in its center desecrated with the body of its priest. A door opens South to <b>Area 11</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Ancient incense, the perfume of rotten drugs, and moldering leather.
<b>Lighting:</b>	None.
<b>Traps:</b>	None.
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Tapestries</b> (Heavy) 6,000 GP to the right buyer. <b>Legion Breaker</b> - Magical Flail.
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

This chamber is another shrine to the unspeakable deities of the Bronze Ziggurat as well as a sybaritic den for the acolytes of the Pretender's cult. The room is furnished with dark tapestries, overstuffed arm chairs in oxblood leather, several small tables of dark wood, and a large glass water pipe. In the center of the chamber stands a bulky altar of brass and chromed steel. The rich furnishings have all been slashed and shattered, while rotten cubes of alchemical narcotic are scattered about the room's scarred hardwood floor. The altar has also been profaned with the ancient husk of a robed man. The desiccated man on the altar was once this shrine's priest and his tortured corpse is tied to his altar with wire that has cut deeply into his wrists and ankles.

The tapestries on the walls remain untouched, a single heavy curtain of brocade covering the 70' of the shrine's Eastern, Northern and Western walls, and weighs almost 300 lbs, clumsy even rolled into an unwieldy 20' long bundle. The tapestry is dark and contains several panels depicting horrible images of uncanny mechanical creatures slaughtering cities and overcoming armies, but the majority of its surface is covered with perfect repetitive pattern depicting thousands of skulls. The tapestry are unsettling and unnatural, worth only 3,000 GP even in the markets of a decadent metropolis. Despite its disturbing subject the tapestry is a true work of art and if the party has connections to a proper buyer, such as powerful necromancer, antipope, devil lord or evil despot the tapestry is worth as much as 6,000 GP.

Hanging in the center of the shrine, but lost in the gloom hidden from casual glance, is a large censer

dangling from a spiked chain. This item is magical, made of purple black steel, and if examined its finish is too fine, and workmanship too perfect to be from the terrestrial world. The censer may be used as lighting fixture, but is far more effective if removed and wielded as a flail, once called **The Legion Breaker**.

### THE LEGION BREAKER

Carved or forged from a single piece of unnatural purple black steel, this item consists of a heavy 8' long chain of hexagonal links topped with a melon-sized polyhedral cage decorated with ornate ridges and patterned engravings. The exact number of sides will appear different upon each viewing. Inside the cage is a silver censer for burning incense.

When incense is burned in the censer, it will fill a room up to 50' x 50' with thick purple smoke that creates an area of magical order, preventing demons and similar outsider entities of chaos from entering and making other chaotic creatures uncomfortable.

As a weapon the Legion Breaker is a magical blunt two handed weapon, capable of doing 1D10 points of damage and striking at +1 to hit. If wielded by a cleric in the service of a non-chaotic deity or power it will burn with a pale purple fire in combat. On a natural to hit roll of 17 or better (assuming the attack hits) the weapon's flames will spread to the target doing an additional 1D4 points of damage, and burning for 1 point of damage per round for the next 4 rounds.

## 8. THE VOLTAIC PILLAR

<b>Appearance:</b>	A chromed pillar stands here covered in copper manacles and dangling chromed appendages. The corridor leads North to <b>Area 12</b> and loops Eastward towards <b>Area 9</b> and <b>Area 12</b> , with a door in the Northern wall to <b>Area 10</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Ozone and burnt flesh
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Electrical arcs</b> from the pillar (4D6)
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Copper manacles x 10</b> (200 GP total)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	1 in 4 chance of encountering a group of 2D6 <b>Wire Ghosts</b> whenever the pillar is approached.

An almost 10' diameter pillar stands at in the darkness of the hallway. Its surface gleams with chrome and is festooned the both copper manacles and retractable mechanical arms. The manacles don't appear especially valuable (each set is worth 20 GP), and the various mechanical arms dangle harmlessly. The pillar can **create Wire Ghosts**, originally as repair servitors for the machine, and so is meticulously repaired, cleaned and worshipped by the valley's **Wire Ghosts**. **Wire Ghost** encountered at the pillar will be distracted by its presence and may be surprised on a 4 in 6. **Wire Ghosts** will also take anyone they kill, or any humanoid bodies they find, and attach the corpses to the pillar allowing the mechanical arms to make various modifications and implants and the pillar's voltaic charge, raising them as a **Wire Ghost** if they are not rescued within a day.

**Voltaic Pillar** The pillar is itself dangerous, a capacitor for an enormous amount of electrical power, brimming with an insane alien intelligence. When a living creature steps into the 10' around the pillar (the entirety of **Area 11**) the chromed device will begin to wind up and blue arcs of electricity sparkle across its surface. The next round the pillar will be charged, and remain so, ready to discharge a 4D6 lightning bolts at any living creature within **Area 11** for 6 turns. Targets of the lightning bolt may save vs. spells for ½ damage. After activating the pillar will become dormant for 6 turns. The pillar can be disabled or destroyed by smashing it with heavy blunt weapons or setting it aflame. However, even if the pillar is smashed, the **Wire Ghosts** will repair it within several days or weeks.

## 9. THE INTERNAL ENGINE

<b>Appearance:</b>	The armored casing of a giant black engine, surrounded by a spray of armored bodies. Archways on Southern wall to <b>Area 11</b> and the hallway leading to <b>Area 9</b> . A ladder leads upward to <b>Area 13</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Rot, death and rust
<b>Lighting:</b>	A small yellow light blinking in the far Eastern end of the vast engine
<b>Traps:</b>	None
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Cankered Nadziak</b> (Magical mace), <b>Raptor Panoply</b> (Magical plate armor), Soul Crystals (36,000 GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	<b>The Harbinger of the Beak</b> (8HD), <b>4 Desolate Knights</b> (5HD), <b>10 Brute Zombies</b> (3 HD)



## HARBINGER OF THE BEAK

HD 8, (HP51), AC 3\*, ATK 1 (cankered nadziak),  
DAM 1D8+1\*\*, MV 30\*, SV CL8, ML 10

\*The Harbinger possesses normal undead immunities and may only be harmed by magical or unholy weapons. Additionally he wears the **Raptor Panoply** (below) which allows the Harbinger to deflect magical attacks onto nearby targets 50% of the time. Additionally the Harbinger cannot be turned by either the servants of law, due his own lawful nature.

\*\* Striking with the **Cankered Nadziak** (below) the Harbinger treats armor as if it were leather armor (AC 7) and due to his undead power his attacks drain 1D8+1 Wisdom as well as injure. An enemy reduced to a Wisdom below '3' will fall into a despondent catatonia for 1 turn for every point of wisdom lost, after which they will recover (unless left with the Harbinger), but suffer a permanent loss of a Wisdom point.

Augmenting his melee ability the Harbinger may cast the following clerical spells as a 6<sup>th</sup> level Cleric: *sanctuary, fear, command, hold person, chant, curse, animate dead*. Furthermore with a successful turning effort (as an 8<sup>th</sup> level Cleric) he may both turn evil aligned clerics and return any of his followers who have been turned to the fray (including himself).

The Harbinger floats an inch or two above the floor, a smoky spectral skull behind the open face of his ornate gilded helm. His plate armor is fluted gold and blue enamel, decorated with seabirds in flight and reinforced with delicate golden jazeraint in the between plates. In contrast with the pristine armor the harbingers cape and robe are a rotten, ragged white silk.

The Harbinger speaks softly with the rich melodious tones of a church trained orator.

Arched and vaulted this chamber seems less part of an enormous mechanism and more a strange cathedral. In its center squats the dread engine, 40' long and 8' tall. The Engine is surrounded by fifteen still figures in ornate plate armor, all of whom will rise from the floor, as if pulled by marionette strings when any person or creature approaches. A sturdy ladder is bolted to the floor near the Western wall of this large room a leads upward to **Area 13**.

**The Engine:** The black casing of the Dread Machine's primary engine conceals a series of rotating crystal spindles - a beautiful machine of such alien complexity and puissance that any terrestrial closely examining its workings will likely (Save under Wisdom with a 2 point penalty) be driven to madness (WIS reduced to 3 and other effects such as berserking or catatonia). Luckily the casing is sealed, and may only be opened by removing a series of huge nuts and lifting a several hundred pound panel of meteoric iron. A control console, consisting of a chromed metal plate with several dials and a large knife switch, juts from the Eastern end of the engine, with the yellow light blinking next to it.

Flipping the knife switch up (it is currently down) will restore the feed of energy from the vortex below to the engine and allow the souls stored within the engine to be used by the mechanism above. When the engine is active the light will glow blue and the casing will vibrate with a low hum.

If the engine is remains inactive, the mechanism above will only be able to syphon souls. Currently the engine contains twelve souls, in the form of copper veined **glowing red crystals** grown deep within the engine. If these trapped souls are somehow removed they are very valuable (3,000 GP each) to extra-planar entities (especially the evil sort) and the vilest kind of sorcerer.

**The Harbinger's Party:** The armored corpses are the remains of a splinter faction within the armies of the Raptor God, a fanatical millenarian paladin and his most trusted knights. They are now cursed through their own hubris, as the Paladin, the Harbinger of the

Beak, sought to use the Pretender's Machine to grant himself immortality, and bring his faction to power rather than guard the Machine and prevent its use. He returned as a powerful undead creature and hunted his own men through the halls of the machine, eventually raising them and returning them here to protect the machine. The former paladin is now tormented and insane but still driven by his abandoned mission. He and his former followers will rise if disturbed or if living creatures linger in **Area 12** for more than a few moments.

The Harbinger and the Desolate Knights can speak, but they will not negotiate in good faith with a party seeking to use the machine. They will try to warn off obviously powerful intruders but may offer to allow adventurers to use the machine if they believe they can trick them into annihilating themselves with it. If approached cautiously or offered parley the Harbinger will talk of honor, sorrow and curses, a set of lies that hide his true intent to murder and add the party to his ranks.

The Harbinger has a good idea of the machine's functions, and will provide misinformation aimed at causing the party to misuse it. The Harbinger's suggestion (assuming he doesn't simply attack) will be that any dead individuals be placed in the last chamber of the machine, marked with the upward triangle, while the living members of the party stand in the first chamber of the machine, marked with a sun. Following this advice will of course lead to those in the last chamber being reanimated as wraiths, while those in the first chamber have their souls ripped loose to power the machine. To accomplish this betrayal he will allow the party to examine the engine and activate it, while he and his dead guards loom nearby. Under no circumstance will the Harbinger allow the secrets of the Machine back out into the wider world, but he and his minions cannot pursue beyond its walls for more than a few turns without considerable preparation as they suffer outside of its influence.

## HARBINGER'S PARTY

The Harbinger led a band of picked crusaders when he sought to turn the Machine to his use, gain godlike powers and bring victory to his sect in the wars tearing apart the church of his raptor god. His men perished by his hands when he emerged from the machine's furnace but have been raised to serve him. All are undead and so immune to sleep, charm and other mind effecting spells.

**Desolate Knights x4** HD 5+1, HP 30 each, AC 2\*, ATK 1(touch) DAM 1D6+drain\*\*, MV 30', SV CL5, ML 10

\*Desolate Knights are immaterial and cannot be harmed by non-magical weapons and so profound is the aura of hopelessness around them that all within 20' suffer a -2 to saving throws. \*\*Desolate Knight's touch drains an experience level from those they strike.

Former Paladins, these bleak spirits inhabit their rotten and decayed armor, suits of gilded plate and feather like scale. The touch of these spirits or their long corroded weapons drains life energy and injures. They are slightly more powerful Desolate Crusaders and similar in appearance and behavior, except far more purposeful while under the Harbinger's command

**Brute Zombie x10** HD 3+1, HP 19 each, AC 3, ATK 1\*(giant mace), DAM (1D10+2), MV 20', SV F4, ML 12

\*Brute Zombies, like all zombies, strike last in any melee round.

Once elite church soldiers, these slow moving corpse warriors are still huge, made over 7' tall by the intimidating eagle helms they wear. The zombies are dressed in the decayed remains of rusted plate armor, fluted and molded into sweeping avian shapes. Each Brute wields a massive two handed mace or footman's pick, its battered head depicting a fierce bird of prey.

## CANKERED NAZDIK

A cruelly barbed horseman's pick made of obsidian like black crystal set into a tarnished silver grip. The crystalline shaft and head of the weapon are of an alien and ancient appearance, cratered and pocked as if by acid. The Nazdik's handle is masterfully crafted of tarnished silver decorated with images of migrating birds. The Nazdik is an ancient weapon dating back to humanity's earliest days, and its current form represents one of a series of reforgeings, with the silver handle replacing demon hide wrappings.

In combat the Nazdik is treated as a mace, doing 1D8+1 damage. Its form, material and enchantments make the weapon much more powerful however, allowing it to punch through heavy armor with ease. Against opponents wearing metallic armor (not naturally armored creatures such as dragons) the Nazdik will treat all heavy or medium armor as if it were leather (AC 7). This bonus does not eliminate any magical bonuses the armor may have, so an enemy wearing plate mail +1 with a shield will be treated as AC 5.

## RAPTOR PANOPLY

Gilded, fluted and enameled plate armor plate armor seemingly untouched by time or decay. A blue enamel sea, decorated with seabirds covers the armor's major plates, and is set off by gilding and gold plated gussets of feather like scales. The armor's helmet continues its avian theme, an open faced, enameled morion with a sculpted crest of a fierce sea hawk with wings outstretched. The armor will be recognizable by a rare historian or collector of antiquities as holy armor of a high ranking member of the long forgotten theocracy of the beaked god, but is otherwise remarkable only for its quality.

The Raptor Panoply is obviously magical, and does offer AC 2 protection, but more impressively the armor warps magical attacks directed at the wearer 50% of the time. Rather than effecting the target these warped spells will shift to another nearby target (generally the whomever is closest to the wearer). Area effect spells will not be completely diverted but the panoply's wearer will automatically take only ½ damage as if he had saved vs. the spell.



## THE CLOAKROOM

<b>Appearance:</b>	Smooth wood paneling, worn by time and filled with moldering cloaks. Hatch leading down to <b>Area 12</b> , doorway leading to hallway of <b>Area 15</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Must, dust and mildew
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	None
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Ritual Masks</b> (1600 GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

Lifting the hatch from Area 12 Below reveals a dark chamber filled with benches and the boxy man high shapes of several wardrobes. On examination the room is notable as it is paneled in molding dark wood. The benches and wardrobes are made of similar dark wood, and when opened most will prove to contain moldering, moth eaten hooded robes of various colors. One wardrobe contains a set of locked cabinets (25 in all)

which are easily pried open. Each cabinet holds a **ritual mask**, and several of these are valuable: **rustic silver fox mask** (200 GP), **carved ivory spiral mask** (100 GP), **jade mask of a leper** (500 GP), **ancient golden death mask** (800 GP). The other masks paper, carved wood, bone or felt and depict animal spirits, unknown demons or forgotten god emperors.



<b>Appearance:</b>	A vaulted metal cavern with a complex apparatus at its center. A simple door in the Northwest corner leads to <b>Area 15</b> , a similar door, heavily reinforced exits to the stairs above <b>Area 8</b> and the <b>Cavern of Cenotes</b> while an ornate door in the center of the Western wall leads to <b>Area 16</b> . The <b>Alchemical Lock</b> opens a secret door to <b>Area 17</b> in the Southeastern corner.
<b>Smell:</b>	A faint smell of ozone and burnt metal.
<b>Lighting:</b>	If <b>The Engine</b> in <b>Area 12</b> is active blue light spills from strange cylinders along the Southern wall.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>The Mechanism</b> (Death, Transformation, and Empowerment), <b>Alchemical Lock</b> (Secret door).
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Silver Sigils</b> (25GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

The heart of the Pretender's Machine, this chamber contains two complex puzzles, the core of the Machine's resurrection **Mechanism** and second an **Alchemical lock** guarding the way into Pretender's Laboratory. Adventurers will likely enter the room along the North wall, either from **Area 15**, opening a simple iron door or from the stairs in **Area 8**. If **The Engine** in **Area 12** has been activated the bulk of the machine and the organ like battery of fluted pipes rising from it will be back lit a pale blue. Otherwise the room will be dark.

The black iron walls of the entire chamber are less covered in pipes and machinery than the most other areas within the Machine and the ceiling is a full 20'. Titanic cylinders of iron, chrome and white ceramic (magical condensers) line the Southern wall, and if the mechanism is active they will let off bright blue light from their ceramic components.

**The Mechanism:** Dominating the center of this room is a huge device with a small door in its Eastern face. The Mechanism was designed only for functionality, yet its sinister purpose gives it a grave majesty and the appearance of embellishment. Chromed pipes, some large enough to hold a human, soar from the apparatus' ribbed roof into the gloom above, while gears and pistons encrust its exterior, resembling relief carvings. The Mechanism is an awe inspiring device, even for those who have not guessed its purpose of trespassing against mortality.

The mechanism is an artifact of extra-planar necromancy, high alchemy and fine machine work at a level of expertise now lost to the world, and is capable of raising the dead, creating a wide variety of undead or granting near god-like power. However, the only fuel source capable of powering the device is life energy ripped straight from the living mortal soul. When the Pretender was overthrown the machine contained the souls of 12 unfortunates, all of which are still trapped in **The Engine** below in **Area 12**.

The door in the Mechanism's Eastern face is a heavy affair, much like the door of a furnace, which can be sealed with a large hasp. Around its rim are **silvered sigils** worth 25 GP if meticulously chiseled out over an hour's time. Beyond the door is a narrow tunnel, 4' tall and about as wide, with walls covered in odd devices, bedecked with conduits, engraved with runes and studded with tiny crystals. The narrow corridor runs the length of the machine, and widens at three points to make a rectangular and two oval chambers. Each of these chambers is marked with a series of symbols forged into the heavy plating that lines them. The first chamber shows imagery of sunrise, with its rays spreading across the walls above a bas-relief of a blooming countryside. The second chamber is a contrast to the first, its walls stamped with a bleak pattern of staring skulls. The final chamber is more enigmatic, its walls polished to a high sheen with a single black iron triangle pointing upward inlaid in on the Eastern wall.

To use the mechanism, and the Pretender's Machine as a whole, its power must be activated by throwing the switch on **The Engine** in **Area 12**. Powering **The Mechanism** lights several indicators along its face with a glow blue that winks on and off randomly. Power will also light the cylindrical capacitors along the Southern wall, bathing the entire area in a cold blue glow as the crystals within start to shine through their ceramic casing.

Once active, objects and people inside **The Mechanism**, begin to glow with a faint inner light. The Mechanism

can be operated manually by a pair of large switches on either side of its door or from the pylon in **Area 21**. Once activated **The Mechanism** will hum and shake for a few minutes until its exterior glows blue with magical energy.

Depending on the mixture of living and dead placed within the machine and the chambers they are placed in a variety of effects will occur per the following table. Any results not shown will have no effect except to drain a charge.

1 <sup>st</sup> Chamber (Sun)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Chamber (Skull)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Chamber (Arrow)	Result	Number of Souls Drained
Living			Soul Drain	1
	Living		Necromantic Boon	2
	Dead		Resurrection	2
		Living	Raise as Mummy	1
		Dead	Raise as Wraith	1
Living		Living	Soul Drain/Empower	3

**Soul Drain:** The soul of the individual is torn asunder and his inner power drawn into the machine, forever annihilating it beyond any hope of resurrection. Individuals with class levels may save against this effect as Save vs. Spells at -4. Activating the Soul drain will use 1 stored soul, meaning that the machine can only be powered by placing multiple victims in this chamber.

**Necromantic Boon:** This effect transforms an individual into a sentient form of undead. They become immune to sleep, disease, and non-acidic poisons. Additionally all normal physical damage will be reduced by 1 point, and they no longer require food, water or air to survive. There are negative side effects to undeath, besides an unsightly pallor, and individuals so transformed no longer receive a benefit from magical or natural healing, but may repair themselves if fresh bodies are available at a rate of 1HP per turn (and will rapidly lose Charisma as they become a patchwork of crude stitchery and mismatched limbs). As undead, individuals who have received a Necromantic Boon may be turned and are damaged by holy water. So empowering one person requires two stored souls

**Resurrection:** Raises a body from the dead if less than 5 years dead. Raised individual will be very hungry, but otherwise unchanged. Requires 2 stored Souls.

**Raise as "X":** Will raise or transform the effected individual into a malevolent undead creature (either Mummy or wraith) which will attack any living creatures nearby. Effect uses a single stored soul.

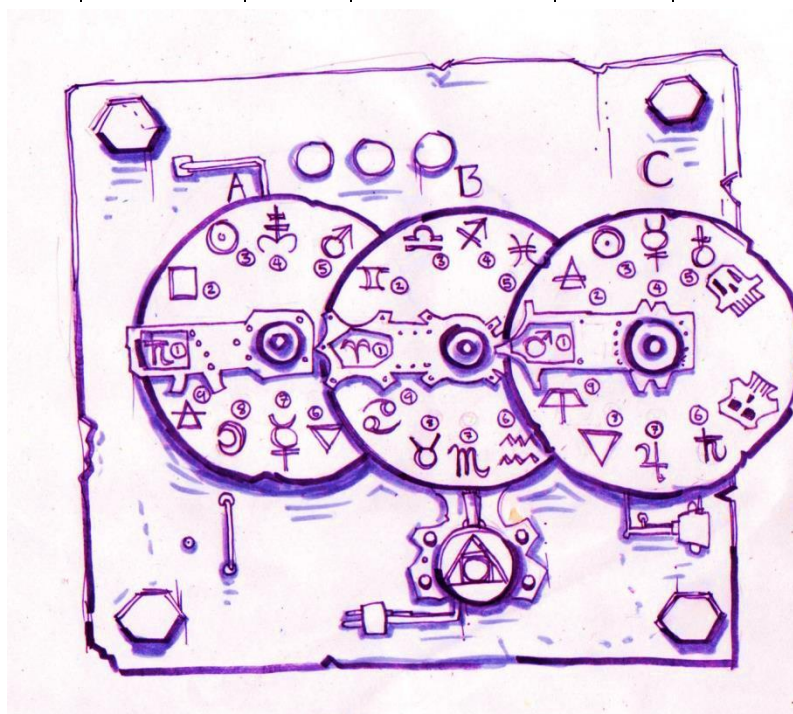
**Empower:** This effect uplifts an individual into an immortal being of immense power while it drives them megalomaniacally insane. Empowerment grants the user +1D6 INT, and the ability to learn and cast spells as a magic user of their current level. Additionally, empowered individuals will be immune to death from normal physical damage, and will regenerate wounds at a rate of 1 HP per round, from wounds caused by non-magical weapons or effects. Additionally, empowered individuals will be able to command undead created by the machine (**Mummies**, **Wraiths** and **Wire Ghosts**). The side effect of these powers is an overweening will to dominate along with intense paranoia. Every game session the empowered must make a **Save vs. Magic** to avoid assassinating their closest companion. On a failed save the GM should select when and how the murder is

attempted. Empowerment requires three stored souls, as well as an additional living sacrifice for each level of the empowered. An insufficient number of sacrifices will raise the individual in the arrow chamber as a vengeful mummy.

**Alchemical Lock:** A search of the Mechanism chamber's Southwestern corner will reveal three overlapping dials of plain iron (see below) set directly into the black iron plating of the walls and engraved with alchemical symbols. A character with an alchemy background or wizard will recognize the symbols and their meanings. Each spin of the dials will create a formula that can be read either right to left or left to right. Several of these formulas have negative effects, a few positive effects, and one will cause the secret door to open in a dramatic fashion.

The meaning of the symbols on the lock are shown below, and the GM should provide them if the party has any members that might have a remote chance of knowing anything about magic, alchemy, potion manufacture, or chemistry. The lock is meant to be a puzzle, not a trap to avoid completely, and the GM should provide the players with the tools to unravel it if remotely plausible. Each arrangement makes up a formula, and the can be read either left to right or right to left (none of the effects depend on a specific order). Triggering an effect will effect whoever is responsible for pressing the button, even if this is accomplished at a distance by either mechanical or magical means. Using an unseen servant spell is likely to result in a nasty surprise for the magic users for example.

A Dial	B Meaning	B Dial	B Meaning	C Dial	C Meaning
1	Lead	1	Calcification	1	Iron
2	Vitrol	2	Fixation	2	Air
3	Gold	3	Sublimation	3	Gold
4	Sulfur	4	Incineration	4	Quicksilver
5	Iron	5	Projection	5	Antimony
6	Water	6	Reproduction	6	Lead
7	Quicksilver	7	Separation	7	Tin
8	Silver	8	Congelation	8	Water
9	Air	9	Dissolution	9	Stone





## POSITIVE EFFECTS

- 1) **Open Door** (Iron Dissolution Quicksilver) **A5→B9→C4/A7←B9←C1** – The Iron wall will dissolve into a shimmering silvery liquid that seems to drain through the floor, revealing a simple hardwood door.
- 2) **Healing** (Water Reproduction Water) **A6 ↔ B6 ↔ C8** – Heals dial user for 1D6 HP per level, cures diseases, neutralizes poisons and restores 1D6 levels lost to level drain effects. After three uses this effect requires a week to recharge.
- 3) **Iron Skin** (Water Projection Iron) **A6→B5→C1/A5←B5←C8** – The skin of the individual pressing the button will quickly take on a dull metallic sheen providing a natural AC of 5. A character with iron skin cannot have an AC less than 5, but armor and magical protection will not improve it unless they would provide a better AC independently. This effect is permanent, but cannot be repeated for a year.

## NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- 1) **Disintegration** (Water & Sublimation) Includes **A6→B3/B3←C8** – Any formula including the sublimation of water will result in disintegration. The individual pressing the button must save vs. spells at -2 or sublimate into a pinkish mist. This is lethal and leaves no corpse to revive.
- 2) **Flame Cyclone** (Incineration) Includes **B4** – Any formula containing the symbol for incineration produces a cyclone of towering flame. It will attack anyone in **Area 16** as an 8HD monster with two attacks per round. Each attack does 6D6 points of flame damage, though a save vs. Dragon Breath will reduce this by ½. The towering cyclone will move ponderously (30' per round, the speed of a man in plate armor) about seeking victims for 1D6 turns. The cyclone cannot be harmed by most attacks but create water, or a magical cold attack will dispel it.
- 3) **Curse of Gold** (Gold) Includes **A3** or **C3** – A formula that includes the symbol for gold will curse, without a saving throw, the person attempting to use the lock, causing golden spurs to erupt from various bones within their body. The pain and stiffness resulting from this curse will give the victim a -4 to all physical rolls (to hit/damage/movement/Armor Class) until cured with a *Remove Curse* spell. Surgical investigation or autopsy will reveal the golden bone spurs (worth 1D10x100 GP if recovered from a corpse).
- 4) **Curse of Stone** (Calcification) Includes **B1** – Any formula with the symbol for calcification in it will curse the lock's user with petrification, transforming them into a limestone statute unless they make a **Save v. Petrification**.

<b>Appearance:</b>	Narrow corridor painted with symbols and arrows leading West to a brass filigree door. A door leads South to <b>Area 13</b> , and two doors on the ends of the hallway lead East to <b>Area 14</b> and West to the shrine itself
<b>Smell:</b>	Oil and rust
<b>Lighting:</b>	None, unless door brightly lit to idol are is open.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Balancing Shrine</b> – 3D6 in 10' line, 1D4x 1D6 3HD attacks each in hall.
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Golden Cylinder</b> (800GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter of 1D4 <b>Wire Ghast</b> worshippers on a 1 in 6 per turn.

A seemingly mundane hallway, pipes and pistons covering every surface, that leads to a brass filigree door. Everything in the hall is well maintained and shines with a coating of machine oil, but oddly defaced with grease paint arrows and symbols pointing West. The door swings open silently on oiled hinges.

Within the small chamber beyond, is an oddly makeshift looking shrine, shaped like a network of pipes cogs and other mechanical detritus, with a **golden cylinder** (worth 800 GP) at the center. Close examination of the shrine will reveal it to be an amazing feat of balance, with a wide variety of heavy objects meticulously balanced on one another and towering up all the way to an 8' ceiling thick with overlapping pipes and ducts.

**Balancing Shrine** – the creation and maintenance of this shrine to mechanical perfection is a strange act of worship, still performed by the **Wire Ghasts** as they intermittently repair and clean the machine. It is also a trap. Disturbing the balance of the shrine will cause it to collapse, dropping an 8' pile of machine scrap onto whatever is within 10' of the front of the shrine. This collapse will do 2D6 points of damage to anyone caught in the deluge, but a save vs. Paralysis will allow a victim to cower for half damage. Worse, the balanced objects in the shrine itself are connected to a series of heavy pipes and beams concealed in the ceiling of the entire

hallway (magical searching, or a detect traps success in the hallway will reveal lose pipes in the ceiling). The entire careful arranged mass will come clattering down, subjecting anyone in the hallway to 1D4+1 attacks by the equivalent of a 3HD monster. Each attack that lands represents pieces of piping or other mechanical debris that will strike for 1D6 points of damage. Triggering this trap makes a great deal of noise and requires an immediate wandering monster check to see if 1D6 **Wire Ghasts** are attracted to the noise

The altar need not be disturbed to trigger the trap as loud noises have a 2 in 6 chance of causing the collapse, as does disturbing the room's ceiling pipes. The golden cylinder may be removed by very careful manipulation of the shrine elements, requiring five successful checks on a D20 under various attributes to succeed. Upon each attempt to manipulate or disassemble the shrine roll 1D6, on a 1-2 a Wisdom check is needed, on 3-4 an Intelligence check and on 5-6 Dexterity. Any failed check will result in the collapse of the shrine. Disassembling the shrine entirely will take ten ability checks but will trigger the hallway ceiling portion of the trap when completed. The best way disarm the trap is to tie a thin cord to a piece of the shrine, requiring an ability check, and taking it out of the area to use as a trigger.

## 15. OSTENTATIOUS ENTRY

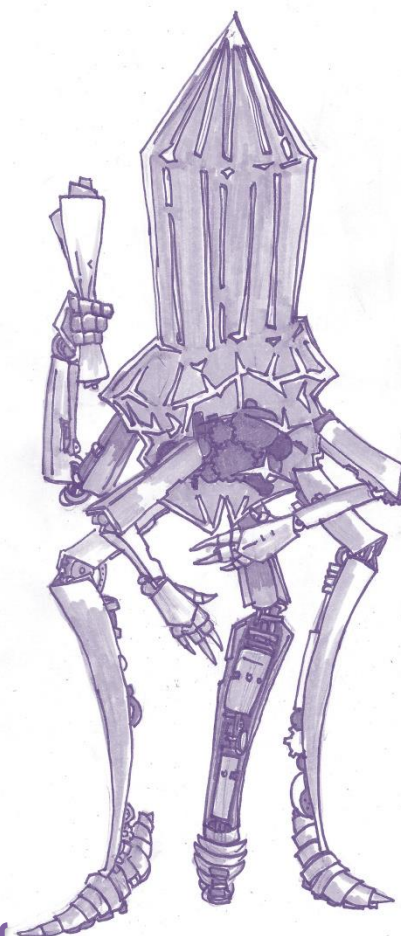
<b>Appearance:</b>	Floors and walls are carved marble, and the soft tinkling of falling water is heard from the balcony of this vaulted 40' chamber. An ornate black iron door, engraved with chrome leads, to <b>Area 14</b> , flanked by twin 30' black iron statues of a robed man with golden faces. A flights of carved marble steps set in fluted brass lead upward to <b>Area 18</b> , over a marble fountain that spans the rear of the room.
<b>Smell:</b>	Perfume of cinnamon and tree resin, deadened and musty with time.
<b>Lighting:</b>	A soft blue light radiates from the balcony
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Searing Statues</b> – May attack with eyebeams as 6HD monster for 3d6 per round.
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Golden Masks x2</b> (6,000 GP each), <b>Crystal Figurines</b> (1,000 GP set)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

The door to this chamber opens with an ominous click with a turn of its mechanical knob. The door itself is black iron worked with chrome patterns of triangles, squares and circles intimating a vaguely alchemical purpose, but without meaning. Beyond the door is a room unlike any other within the machine, it appears to have been built specifically to impress, with white marble walls, floors and a marble ceiling 40' above. Two huge iron statues with golden faces stand on either side of the door looking downward at any who pass it.

A stair of marble blocks, set in a brass lattice climbs steeply from the center of the room to a balcony (**Area 18**) ringed with sinuous brass railings where unknown sources produce a diffuse bluish light and the sound of falling water. Behind and underneath the stairway, spanning the entire Western wall of the chamber is a marble fountain, filled by water flowing smoothly down the wall behind it, the water in the fountain is mundane (unlike that in **Area 18**) but has a perfumed odor of old cinnamon and piney resin. The back of the fountain, where it meets the wall, is decorated with a series of loosely attached rock crystal statuettes depicting chained men being marched to judgment before a robed figure. The simple figures aren't individually worth a great deal (maybe 10 – 100 GP each) but they are numerous and the set of **Crystal Figurines** will easily sell for 1,000GP.

**Searing Statues:** The Statues guarding the door a 30' hollow black iron monstrosities depicting the Pretender as an idealized pope of the false religion he created for

his own praise. The statues ornamented and brocaded robes are cast into the iron, but the beatific faces above shine with beaten gold.



Autochthonic Machine Intelligence

Climbing the statues is not especially difficult, though tricky for a non-expert. From a perch on the statues shoulders it becomes clear that not only are the faces made of gold, but that they are held on only by simple easily turned golden bolts. Once removed the huge **Golden Masks** (each weighing almost a hundred pounds) are worth 6,000 GP each. Removing either mask represents a grave danger to treasure hunters as it reveals a cursed iron skull beneath. The skulls are enchanted and will quickly begin to glow red hot, each becoming capable of directing a deadly heat ray at any movement in the room one round after its mask has been removed. Each round an unmasked statue will attack as a 6HD creature, doing 3D6 fire damage on a successful hit, the statue will aim first at anyone directly attacking it but otherwise prioritize anyone moving towards the stairs or onto the balcony. The statues can be damaged, though they are immune to fire, have an effective AC0 (all strikes will hit the statue, but most won't do more than cosmetic damage) and each require 80 HP of damage to destroy. The statues will not attack as long as the eyes of the iron skulls are covered, but doing so once a statute is active will require magical intervention (a darkness or blindness spell will suffice) or a brave adventurer who can cover the eyes manually with something strong enough not to burn away while in contact with the red hot skull (thick leather or water soaked heavy cloth). While climbing the statues is relatively easy, doing so quickly while under a barrage of heat beams will take three rounds and require a climbing check for each 10' climbed.

## SECRET LABORATORY

<b>Appearance:</b>	A neat laboratory, steel operating table, alchemical equipment and bookcases. A secret door, guarded on the exterior side by the <b>Alchemical Lock</b> exits to <b>Area 14</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Must of old books
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Secret Door</b>
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Rare Books</b> (20,000 GP), <b>Wooden Paneling</b> (1,000 GP), <b>Alchemical Equipment</b> (500 GP)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	<b>3 Literary Phantoms</b> (4+2 HD)

From this side the Secret Door is an obvious and ornate wooden panel carved with a pattern of alchemical symbols. The symbols are decorative, showing a theoretical transformation of gold into steel (and recognizable as such on a successful INT check by a character with magical or chemistry knowledge). The rest of the room is similarly paneled in lovely hardwood and decorated in alchemical and magical symbolism, except where it is covered in built in bookcases. If the **Wooden Panels** (500 lbs of wood) were pried off the walls carefully (it will require 5 checks against INT to do so and each failure will result in a loss of 1D4x100 GP value) the panels could be sold for 1,000 GP. The Numerous bookcases line the walls all made of simple dark wood. The bookcase are marked with confusing alchemical symbols, mercury indicating a shelf of transformative magic, antimony necromancy, quicksilver planar travel, sulfur summoning and earth general knowledge. There are five cases of books, floor to ceiling, and with a scattering of other magical laboratory items. A long worktable is covered in alchemical equipment, glassware and small mechanical devices rests along the South wall, and a steel operating table stands in the center of the room. The **Alchemical Equipment** is valuable, but not especially unique or rare, worth only **500 GP**. The **Rare Books** however, are very valuable (**20,000GP**), providing a basis for research into esoteric aspects of planar travel, summoning and necromancy. They are also protected by a trio of **Literary Phantoms** which will form if any of the books are opened without speaking a proper code word or casting *remove curse* upon them. If the tomes in the library are destroyed the Literary Phantoms will likewise disappear.



## LITERARY PHANTOMS

HD 4+2 (HP 14, 27, 22), AC 4\* ATK 1 (bite), DAM 2D6\*\*, MV 20', SV F4, ML 12

\* Immune to arcane magic, normal weapons, poison, cold and mind effecting spells, take damage from all liquids as if they were holy water and 2x damage from non-magical fire. \*\* Poison Bite, Save or Die.

Not strictly undead and so unturnable, Literary Phantom are forged from the memories of dying scholars and sometimes used by skilled necromancers to protect their libraries. The phantom will form from the words of the library, a maelstrom of floating magical ink and sigils that burn with cold fire. Their bite injects poisonous ink into their victims where it spreads like black tracery through the skin, and if it kills will write the victim's history on their own flesh (10% chance per level that magic user victims' skin will be scribed with their currently memorized spells, which may be peeled and used as a scroll). More dangerous than their ability to poison is the literary phantoms' complete immunity to arcane magic, which they will absorb into their own being as a torrent of words and symbols, regenerating 1HD of damage for every spell level used against them.

## 9.

## BALCONY

<b>Appearance:</b>	A balcony of marble set into a brass lattice above <b>Area 16</b> . Curtains of glowing blue water blur but fail to conceal handsome matching wooden doors to the North ( <b>Area 19</b> ) and South ( <b>Area 20</b> ) while arched windows, barred in decorative twisting brass look out of the Western Wall onto the Cavern of Cenotes.
<b>Smell:</b>	Stale perfume of cinnamon and tree resin.
<b>Lighting:</b>	A warm blue glow softly illuminates this area from the water curtains; diffuse light also trickles in from the cavern beyond the windows.
<b>Traps:</b>	<b>Curtains of Allegiance:</b> Save vs. Spells or become insane/loyal to Pretender
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from Machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

Continuing the opulent grandeur of marble and decorative brass found in **Area 16** below, the balcony adds a vista out onto the Cavern of Cenotes and a pair of gentle curtains of glowing blue water that separate the doors from the rest of the balcony. The doors themselves are locked, but can be picked or forced (though they have steel cores) without complications. The curtains of water are another matter, representing a dangerous trap for the unwary. The windows are thin crystal, as strong as steel.

**Curtains of Allegiance:** The twin cascades of blue water are an enchanted trap, placed by the Machine's original owners to guarantee the loyalty of their servants. If the blue water touches the flesh of anyone passing through

the curtains (and it will unless extraordinary precautions are taken, beyond holding a cloak over one's head), they must roll a Save vs. Spells or find themselves insanely loyal to the long collapsed regime of the Pretender. The first impulse of an effected individual will be to attack their companions as a means of proving their loyalty and then flee into the depths of the machine to plot the restoration of the fallen empire. If a victim is restrained the effects of the curtains are reversible with *remove curse*, or several weeks of aggressive deprogramming and brainwashing. Bypassing the curtains will require either a sealed waterproof suit, or the use of a *shield spell*, or *floating disc spell* to divert the water.



## PRETENDER'S SUITE

<b>Appearance:</b>	Completely ravaged and intentionally sacked bedroom suite with graffiti covering the walls. An ebony door leads South to <b>Area 18</b> .
<b>Smell:</b>	Mold and decaying wooden furniture
<b>Lighting:</b>	None
<b>Traps:</b>	None
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Rotted Diary</b> (0GP ~ provides clues)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	None

A once grand suite, vandalized with a singular obsession to detail. None of the ornate furniture remains intact and the fine clothing has been torn as well as splashed with caustics bleaching and burning it so that even the cloth is worthless. The hardwood paneling on the walls, once a rich shimmering reddish brown, has been hacked and defaced with the phrases “Raptor”, “Death to the False Tyrant” and “No Man Shall Die so Another May Live Again”. Careful searching through the wreckage will reveal a torn and stained book. The **Rotted Diary** is barely legible, with only a few phrases that are legible. Even the readable sections are mostly reports of battles

won and lost, or odd megalomaniacal ranting about “spells of mastery”, “transforming the poisoned garden of the Earth” and “transport of the champions into the very body of the beaked demon”.

One passage is useful to explorers of the Machine and reads *“The efforts of increase are not providing significant returns, despite filling the first chamber to capacity with the highest quality of prisoner, when I stand alone in the last my powers are no longer increased. The machines have lied, and I will not forgot.”*



## CHECKPOINT

<b>Appearance:</b>	Spartan guard room and small armory, smashed and torn apart by battle. Steel cored ebony doors lead to <b>Areas 18</b> (NW) and <b>21</b> (NE).
<b>Smell:</b>	The must of ages and old decay
<b>Lighting:</b>	Flickering light of cracked glass globe in the ceiling.
<b>Traps:</b>	None
<b>Treasure:</b>	<b>Crumbling Parchment</b> (0 GP – Contains Clues)
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

A dim amber light flickers in this from a cracked glass globe on the ceiling, casting the shadows of wrecked furniture, broken weapons and several of moth eaten uniforms. The furniture shows signs of having been hacked apart, either in a melee or through wanton vandalism, while much of the clothing is slashed and covered in bloodstains. A tarnished brass rail and rings on the ceiling indicate this area was once bisected lengthwise by a curtain, which now lies as a rotten pile of brocade in the South Eastern corner of the room. The smashed weapons racks and desks indicate that this chamber once had a soldierly purpose.

Close investigation of the smashed desks and chairs will reveal several brass discs with the Pretender’s seal (A bundle of arrows, a sheaf of grain atop a stylized hide surmounted by a crown or something else equally innocuous) and a bundle of **crumbling parchment** bound with faded purple ribbon.

**Crumbling Parchment:** The duty manual for the ancient Pretender’s elite guards assigned to this distant but prestigious post. The document is written in the dead language of the Pretender’s empire, perhaps distantly related to the languages of giants or ogres (should one’s campaign use such language proficiencies) and

decipherable by a character fluent in either with a successful Intelligence check, but otherwise only accessible via *read magic* or a similar spell.

The content of the Crumbling Parchment is largely admonishments to stand erect, duty schedules,

references to housing in the **Stone Mansion**, reminders of how to treat visitors of differing rank and instructions of weapon polishing. However, a section of the document lists warnings to guards who must move about the machine.

1. Report and fluid, gas or substance leakage, to an acolyte immediately as these are dangerous.
2. Place all deliveries of alchemical supplies and books near the Alchemical Lock in Operations; do not attempt to enter the laboratory.
3. Always check with that the statutes are reset before passage - the black watcher to the room and hunter to the wall.
4. Report all any suspicious sounds, deaths or odors to an Acolyte no matter how trivial
5. Do not throw items in the vortex, do not allow ones fellows to throw items into the vortex, discovery of any vortex forged item found will result in collective punishment.



## SUMMONING CHAMBER

<b>Appearance:</b>	A strange juxtaposition of massive machines and marble clad decadence. A single door enters from <b>Area 20</b> in the Southwestern corner of the room.
<b>Smell:</b>	Ancient incense and machine oil
<b>Lighting:</b>	Ceiling skylights let in the grey light of the cavern outside during daylight hours
<b>Traps:</b>	Central <b>Control Pylon</b> may open gates or summon attackers
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Inhabitants:</b>	Random encounter from machine table 1 in 6 per turn.

Six huge pistons line the walls of this room and skylights cover the ceiling letting in dim shafts of light during the day. When the machine is active these pistons (each several tons of steel) slowly pound in and out with a metallic screaming. The floor is a patchwork of metal piping, riveted plates and marble tiles. A **Control Pylon** stands in the center of the room, made of gleaming chrome with three banks of unlabeled cut glass buttons

on the front and a battery of huge copper wrapped crystals on its rear.

The left bank of buttons controls the Mechanism in **Area 14**, the center panel controls the traps throughout the Machine and the right panel the summoning device on the rear of the pylon itself. While the intricate codes required to properly use the pylon, randomly pressing the buttons will cause an effect as follows:

**Left keyboard:** 1 in 6 chance of activating the machine.

**Central Keyboard:** (1D6) will shut on or off a trap: 1- Searing Statues (**Area 16**), 2- Curtains of Allegiance (**Area 18**), 3- No Effect, 4- Nest of Blades (**Area 1**), 5- Pit Trap (**Area 3**), 6- Steel Guardian (**Area 9**).

**Right Keyboard:** 1 in 6 chance a life form from elsewhere in the valley is summoned in a shimmering whirlwind of sparkling blue light from the pylon's crystals. (1D6) (1-2 Roll on the Undead Table, 3-4 Roll on the Lubricants Table, 5-6 Roll on the Autocrat's Tear Table.

## AFTER THE MACHINE

The Machine is an artifact of enormous power, and only its dangers and distance from settled lands prevent it from again acting as the centerpiece of an empire of depravity and evil, with captives, slaves and prisoners fueling the Machine to build armies of the undead, and create a cadre of powerful megalomaniacs. Many parties will want to destroy the Machine on account of its obvious evil, or conceal it, and it is hoped that players will be reluctant to power it with the sacrifice of others. Other parties, and certainly many forces in almost any game world, will want to shackle the Machine's power to their ambitions. There are several problems that can arise from both these approaches.

Destroying the machine will be difficult, not only is it rather sturdy and filled with dangerous substances, but even if destroyed it is self-repairing and unless the vortex within is somehow closed with specialized and complex magic (the act of a divine being or a specially researched modification of the *Gate* spell), surviving Wire Ghosts (the machine will insure that some will always survive) will rebuild it in a matter of months, years or decades.

The best way of limiting access to the machine is likely to collapse the entrances to the Cavern of Cenotes, but doing so will destroy a site sacred to the Yellowlanders and the entire Yellow Land may rise to hunt the party (even sending diminutive assassins into civilized lands) if they discover (and their gods will tell them) who has destroyed the Cavern.

If the party attempts to seize the Machine for their own uses, they may have some success for a few months, but bring coffles of captives for sacrifice across the Yellow Lands will arouse the Yellow Landers suspicions and their folktales still remember the reign of the Pretender. If the Machine is reactivated the Yellowland's sheriffs, hunters and priests will launch a war against those who would do so, besieging the Autocrat's Tear. Even the Yellowlander's gods may become enraged if their land is too polluted with armies of tortured undead and enough

of their worshippers are slain. Likewise foreign powers, from despots and sorcerer kings, to the high inquisitors of churches of order will eventually hear of the Machine and send forces to seize it for their own purposes. To control the Machine almost requires the creation of an Empire and a willingness to crush any who would claim it. An Empire formed from the enslaved souls of the defeated and rule by a megalomaniac wizard will have few friends, and a party attempting to forge one may find the whole world turned against them, even if the victors will eventually fall into warring amongst themselves over the Machine.

The Machine's exact powers are also somewhat complex to unravel, and its workings (unless discovered through in-game experimentation) will require spending several weeks within its ghastr haunted halls. A savvy GM might enliven this research period with rival seekers after power, perhaps groups sent by those who have funded or know of the player's expedition. The forces of the Tear will not be idle during this research period either, as the Old Gods of the Tear, again glutted with willing sacrifices, wish to prevent the Machine's reactivation. Likewise the Rusted Sentinels will besiege the Machine, as they are loyal to the long lost Pretender and compelled to expel or destroy intruders. If the Harbinger of the Beak survives the adventurer's initial incursion, he will not react calmly, and with both his vow to guard the Machine and his lust to control it offended he may be able to overcome the compulsions that keep him trapped inside the Machine, hunting intruders beyond the Tear and gathering allies with promises of power.

The best option for adventurers who have mastered the Machine is to conceal it and return to use its powers of resurrection, and this shouldn't be game unbalancing, as without a recharge of souls the Machine can only raise six individuals at best. In leaving the Machine unguarded the party will also be forced to navigate its cursed halls again, facing any modifications it has made to itself, if they wish to return and resurrect a companion



Another possible complication arising from the Machine's rediscovery is the return of the Hated Pretender and his attempt to use the Machine to restore some of his power. If the Pretender is still alive, and has been freed from his prison he will eventually make his way back to the Machine, where the Rust Sentinels will still obey him. He understands the device's secrets and should have minimal problems regaining a portion of his ancient power.

# SERVITORS OF THE DREAD MACHINE

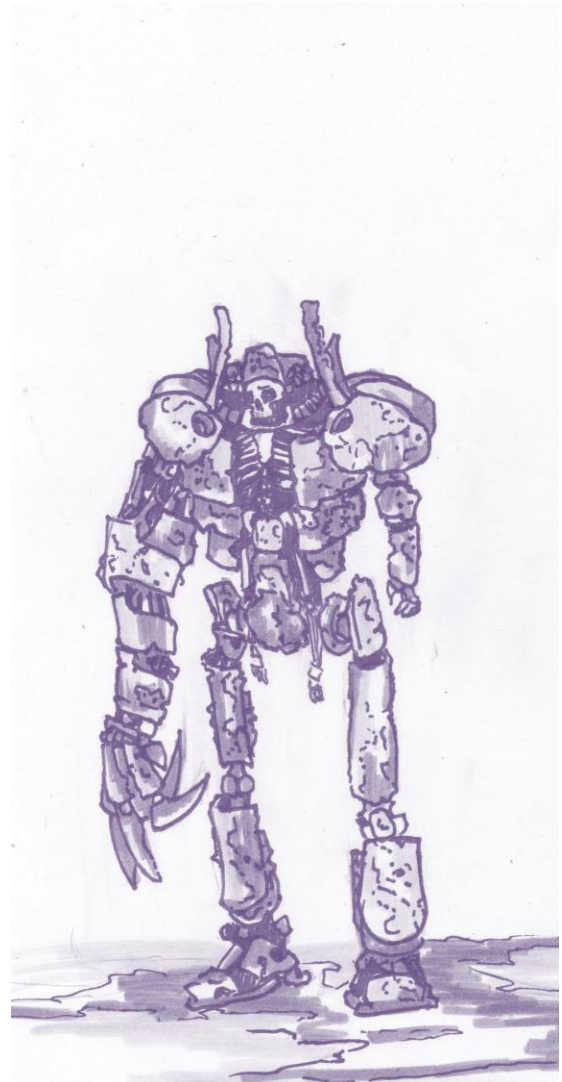
## RUSTED SENTINEL

No. Appearing	1-4
Hit Dice	5+5
Armor Class	3
No. Attacks	1 (smash)
Damage	1D12
Special Attack	Gaze, Disease
Special Defense	Immunities/Damage Reduction (-1)
Move	20'
Save As	F8
Morale	12 (Fearless)

## SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Gaze of Madness:** Meeting the gaze of an active Rusted Sentinel causes violent insanity for 1D12 rounds. Any individual in melee with one of these hulks must save vs. paralysis each round or become afflicted with a hate fueled berserker madness and launch a melee attack against the nearest target. If more than one target is nearby (as in a melee) attack will be directed at a random victim. Averting one's eyes, or using a blindfold is an effective means of avoiding the insanity effect, but gives a -4 to all attack rolls against the Sentinel.

**Iron Curse:** Blows of the Rusted Sentinel infect those they strike with the iron curse, a creeping rust that slowly consumes the body and mind, leaving cankers and corrosion. The curse prevents magical healing and causes 1D2 points of damage a day. It may be cured by the use of a *remove curse* spell, while victims who die of the curse will arise as Wire Ghosts.



## SPECIAL DEFENSES

Damage Reduction: The plating and largely inorganic nature of the Rusted Sentinel make it difficult to damage. Rusted Sentinels reduce all damage by 1 point per die.

Undead Immunities: The Rusted Sentinels is undead and as such immune to all attacks that depend on either the mental fragility of their victims or poison the body. Sleep, charm, feblemind, fear, confusion, exhaustion and similar mental effects cannot harm the undead, nor will poison or disease. Rusted Sentinels, like all undead are susceptible to clerical turning and holy water as well as spells that specifically target the undead.

## ECOLOGY

The Rusted Sentinel is part construct and part undead, the body and soul of a captured war hero, whom the Pretender bent to his service through foul necromancy and the sinister instrumentalities of the Bronze Ziggurat. The source of all Rusted Sentinels were captives, imprisoned in new bodies of iron, steel and bronze, with molten sigils of dark magic burnt into their flesh and fixed in their bones. These enemies of the Pretender died horribly, with tortured bodies and tormented souls, their hopes of victory, rescue or even an honorable death replaced with the knowledge that their imprisoned souls would serve the Pretender eternally. If the process itself didn't drive these heroes insane, the years of abdead psychic bondage afterwards certainly did, and all that remains now is hatred of any who would intrude on their madness and the commands of the Pretender, coded into their hexed bones.

## HISTORY

Massive tangles of rusted magical machinery that encase the tattered remains of once great warriors, these undead entities were constructed by the Pretender himself to provide an incorruptible guard force for the Dread Machine. Like the Wire Ghosts they were largely destroyed by the conquering Paladins of the Beak, but once that Theocracy fell, the Machine began

to again produce Wire Ghosts, which in turn tirelessly reconstructed some number of these titanic guards. The Sentinels now follow their ancient code, and guard the Tear, the Cavern of Cenotes and the Machine, rarely wandering from their posts.

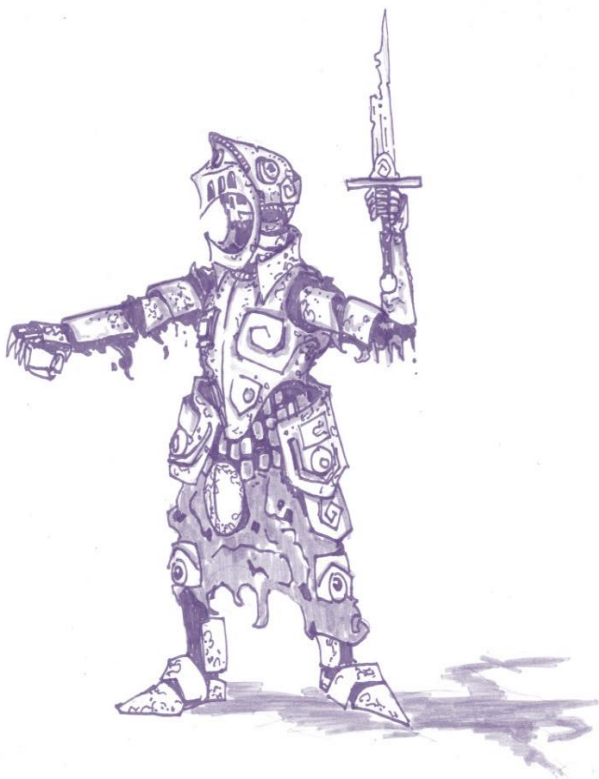
## COMBAT

The Rusted Sentinels are fierce opponents, smashing enemies with a single massive arm of riveted iron and capable of inflicting catastrophic damage with their ponderous blows. They are undead and so immune to many spells, fear and other psychological effects. Additionally the heavy plating of the Sentinel offers not only excellent protection, but absorbs the force of blows and magic. While deadly in melee combat, even those who survive a Sentinel's pulverizing blows will find themselves afflicted by the Iron Curse, a potent magical disease that will kill painfully over the course of several days. Perhaps worse than the Iron Curse is the gaze of a Rusted Sentinel, a glance into its hollow pain filled eyes will drive most mortals into violent berserker insanity.

The obvious method of confronting a Rusted Sentinel is to destroy them from afar, using their slow movement to pepper them with sorceries and missiles until their cantankerous machinery is shattered and the rune covered bones beneath broken. However, Rusted Sentinels' own tactics and manner of combat mitigate this weakness to a degree, for there are patient eternal guardians, not aggressive hunters and are unlikely to pursue a retreating foe, especially one that has proven capable of injuring them at range. Rusted Sentinels will simply retreat into cover, around a corner, behind a large rock formation or into a murky cenote and wait. When intruders again pass by the Sentinel lurches to life, attacking from as close as possible or slowly trailing behind enemies to prevent their escape. So patient are the Sentinels that many in the Cavern of Cenotes are lost beneath layers of lichen, moss and fungus, hard to discern from any other dense growth until they attack. The Sentinels are slow movers but stealthy for their size and construction, having normal chances at surprise as they creep almost silently on their spidery steel shod legs.

## DESOLATE CRUSADER

No. Appearing	1D6-1
Hit Dice	4+1
Armor Class	3
No. Attacks	1 (touch)
Damage	1D4 + level drain
Special Attack	Hopeless Aura, Level Drain
Special Defense	Immunities, Immaterial
Move	30'
Save As	F4
Morale	10 (Despondent)



## SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Aura of Hopelessness:** Desolate Crusaders, whether they broke their sacred vows or fell defending them, died in a pointless struggle as the theocracy they served crumbled around them. As they fought they came to know true hopelessness and to understand the futility of their battles. This sadness has carried over into undeath, and any mortal within 10' will feel a sudden, near overwhelming bleakness in the presence of a Desolate Crusader, suffering a -1 penalty to all Saving Throws.

This effect is additive and for each Crusader within 10' an additional -1 is applied to all Saving Throws.

**Level Drain:** The touch of a Desolate Crusader's corroded weapon siphons life energy, causing a rash of necrotic black flesh and draining an experience level from the victim. The level draining effect of the Desolate Crusader allows no saving throw to avoid it, but is their primary means of inflicting injury. After combat a lenient GM may allow a Save vs. Spells to recover drained levels at a rate of 1 per hour of rest. Any creature reduced to -1 levels is instantly dead, and will rise as a Desolate Crusader the next night.

## SPECIAL DEFENSES

**Immaterial Presence:** Desolate Crusaders do not exist in any materially significant way, until they choose to attack. Their suits of decaying armor and rotten vestments hang in space like moldering clothes in an abandoned closet, purposelessly drifting until they sense pray and manifest to attack. Before a Desolate Crusader attacks, no means of inflicting damage may harm them (though material attacks will crease, dent and puncture their shattered armor). Turning will still effect them, as will non-damaging magics such as *slow* or *curse*.

**Weapon Immunity:** Even when a Desolate Crusader attacks, they are mostly immaterial, and cannot be damaged by normal weapons. Magical and Silver weapons will slice the Desolate Crusader's ectoplasmic form.

**Undead Immunities:** Desolate Crusaders are undead and as such immune to all attacks that depend on either the mental fragility of their victims or poison the body. Sleep, charm, feeblemind, fear, confusion, exhaustion and similar mental effects cannot harm the undead, nor will poison or disease. Desolate Crusaders, like all undead are susceptible to clerical turning and holy water as well as spells that specifically target the undead.

## ECOLOGY

Desolate Crusaders are revenants of sorrow, once paladins and knights of an avian god they perished in the wars between the various sects of their religion, either trying to seize or protect the Machine. The psychic residue of these conflicts, savagery, betrayal and loss of faith combined with the otherworldly radiations of the Dread Machine has brought these warriors back from the dead. Now they exist only to spread hopelessness and sorrow.

Existing largely outside of this universe, with only a tiny spark of bleak grey despondency tying them to their savaged armor Desolate Crusaders linger without real purpose. The faith and direction that once motivated these holy warriors now provides them with a residue of purpose, twisted and reformed into a desire to spread their doctrine of betrayal and hopelessness. While the bulk of the Desolate Crusader's spirit wails endless and disconsolate in the Lands of the Dead, their armor hangs floating inches above the ground, moving in slow circles or drifting without direction. Drawn back into the terrestrial universe by the presence of mortal souls and the compulsion to drain hope and life from them, the armor of the Crusader will float towards their victims, and then it's ectoplasmic body will fill the armor like thick foul smelling oil poured into a leaking bag as it attacks. Once manifest the Desolate Crusader will attack until it is badly injured and flees or it manages drain its opponents. Glutted with life energy, the Desolate Crusader may go into a form of hibernation after successfully attacking, wandering off and losing interest in its prey for some time.

## HISTORY

The Revolution often loses its way after victory, the iron dictates of struggle eroding when they confront the difficulty of governance. The ancient destroyers of the Pretender's Empire suffered from this same fate trying to govern an empire and convert it to their harsh avian god. It's also rumored that in a last act of defiant revenge the Pretender's own heroes killed the Beaked God.

Whatever the cause of the Crusade's decline its Empire collapsed into warring sects, with monastery and holy order set against each other, squabbling over the loyalty of their subjects and the eldritch artifacts remaining from the Pretender's reign. The sects fought most vigorously over the Dread Machine, sending their strongest and most fanatical paladins against each other and to besiege the equally fanatical defenders of the Machine. Those that perished in these petty religious wars had their faith shattered and returned as vengeful revenants of hopelessness.

## COMBAT

In combat the Desolate Crusader lacks the skills and tactics that it had in life, dependent on its total immunity to damage to allow it to approach its enemies. The Crusader does not see its attacks as violence, but rather as a form of preaching its personal religion of despondence. Often before attack the Desolate Crusader will simply hang in the air for minutes before attacking, waiting to be attacked or feeling the fear of its victims.

Crusaders are not without some sense of self preservation, and will flee (slowly) if injured sufficiently or turned. They also lack a real memory or close attachment to their own existence, so they will lose interest in pursuit quite quickly and rarely recollect previous encounters.

## WDE CHART

No. Appearing	1D6-1
Hit Dice	4
Armor Class	4
No. Attacks	3 (claw/claw/bite)
Damage	1D4/1D4/1D8
Special Attack	Paralysis/ Electrical Field
Special Defense	Immunities
Move	40'
Save As	F3
Morale	12 (Fearless)



## SPECIAL ATTACKS

Paralysis: The tesla coil claws of the Wire Ghost are charged with voltaic energy that animates them, each of a Wire Ghost's claw attacks have the potential to paralyze any they strike with a strong arc of electrical energy. A Save vs. Paralysis will prevent this effect, but a failure will result in the victim becoming incapacitated with convulsions for 1D6+4 rounds.

Electrical Field: Wire Ghosts are surrounded by a field of charged voltaic force, visible as crackling blue energy and capable of inflicting injury to any mortal within 10', who will take 1D2 damage per round, while within the energy field. This effect is not cumulative, and no matter how many Ghosts are in melee the field they create will only inflict 1D2 points of damage to anyone within it.

## SPECIAL DEFENSES

Undead Immunities: Wire Ghosts are largely undead and as such immune to all attacks that depend on either the mental fragility of their victims or poison the body. Sleep, charm, feeblemind, fear, confusion, exhaustion and similar mental effects cannot harm the undead, nor will poison or disease. Wire Ghosts, despite their mechanical nature are susceptible to clerical turning and holy water as well as spells that specifically target the undead. Wire Ghosts are also immune to electrical damage as they are animated by the same force.

## ECOLOGY

The Dread Machine makes Wire Ghosts, and Wire Ghosts repair the Dread Machine. The Ghosts are interventions, not normal undead, animated by otherworldly sorcery and mechanical prowess, Ghosts share some sort of vague collective consciousness and attachment to the Machine itself. They have no little in the way of thought and are controlled entirely by the Machine, subservient to its needs, principally repair and a steady supply of more bodies to transform into Wire Ghosts. What little memory of their old lives remains within the tormented mechanical hulks is directed to a sort of worshipful reverence for the Dread Machine.

The appearance of Wire Ghosts reveals their undead nature with clammy grey skin, shrivelled sunken eyes and obvious unhealed injuries that do not bleed. Equally obvious is the strange mechanical modifications that the Machine has made to these creatures. Most obviously the rack of tesla coils that sprout from their shoulders and have replaced their fingers. Additionally, coils of wire, crude ceramic transistors and blinking crystal diodes sprout from their flesh, crackling with the same force that animates the Wire Ghost.



## HISTORY

When the Machine was created by summoned and enslaved extra planar machine intelligences, the first mechanism they built was the Pillar of Ghosts which the Pretender quickly used to convert his human workforce into Wire Ghosts that the machine itself could direct to complete its own construction. Ever since the Machine has created Ghosts to perform repair, maintenance and to send on collection missions for victims to transform into Ghosts.

## COMBAT

Wire Ghosts are simple pack hunters, seeking to surround their prey and drag them down with their numbers and ferocity. They will not run as they lack any sense of self preservation, and cannot speak or parley.

After battle Giest will collect the injured or dead and drag them back to the Machine to be transformed into Ghosts through a process of grafting and alteration that takes approximately a day.

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WIRE GHOST