

ALONG THE ROAD OF TOMBS

The Road of Tombs leads South from the Capital and is as ancient when the Capital was only a provincial trade town. Before the Imperial Peace shattered, the road was the old pilgrims' way towards the religious centers of the True Empire and the Holy Seat of the God Emperors, but it had already been supplanted by newer tracks and canals when the wars came. When the ashes of The Peace settled and the Successor Empire raised a provincial cousin up as Emperor, renaming the Capital the center of the Successor Empire, the Road of Tombs no longer even drew pilgrims, becoming another dingy track towards the ever-burning wastes of the fallen Heart Provinces. Throughout its history the Road has been the Golgotha of the Capital's rich and poor, who have raised mausoleums and dug catacombs for their dead since the Capital was only a riverside trading station amid dark forests, beneath a only a single moon. The road itself is of ancient construction and thus largely imperishable, with only mild crazing in its smooth bonewhite surface to show its age, the tombs around it vary wildly in style and condition from late Imperial tomb spires, to the slumping basalt sepulchers of the Successor Empire and the timeless, constantly replaced rude wooden markers of the poor. The crypts and catacombs along the Road of Tombs have changed over time, abandoned or repurposed, and few are places of respite now as over the eons the outcasts, freebooters and odd of the Capital have moved into the stout structures, when all those who would honor their dead are themselves extinct, transforming much of the Road into a haunt for thieves, smugglers and prostitutes.

The Road of Tombs is little more than a succession of landmarks, but its most notable is the Red Massif, an almost square block of red bedrock, pulled upwards and sculpted by ancient magic to serve as the monument and tomb to one of the sorcerer generals that founded the Successor Empire. The massif is about 20 miles from the city wall, the length of a single night's ride along the Imperial road.

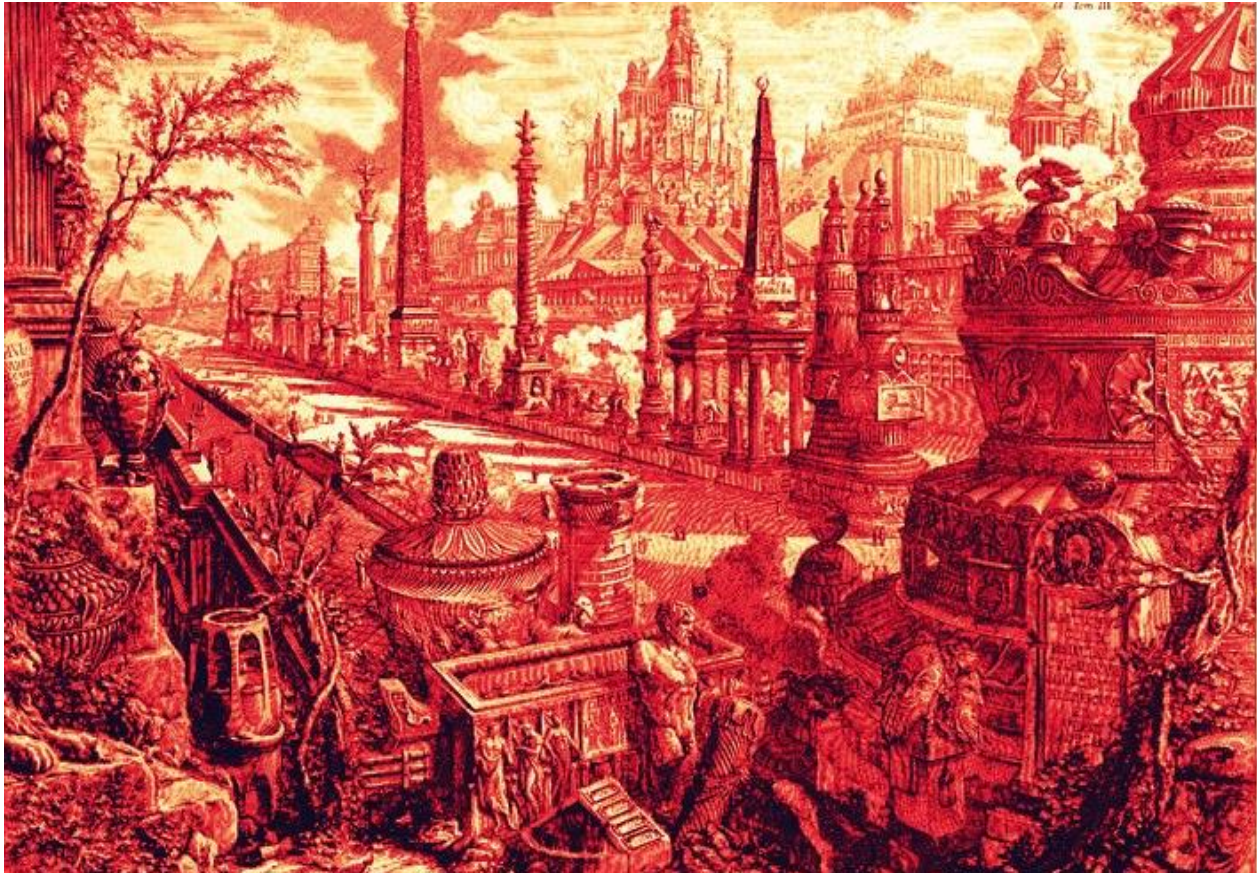
The road is still little used, but since it debouches into a canal near the Bawd's Market it remains one of the main arteries of Capital's smuggling trade. Of late the trade has suffered, as petty extortion and theft along the road have given way to slaughter and plunder, and the Capital's torrent of guard dogs, dream incense, steel sewing needles, full color erotic etchings, pain medicines, spices, sealing wax and other proscribed commodities has slowed to a trickle. Both market traders and the Capital's societies of upright men are frustrated and angry, but the few exploratory parties they have mustered from their own numbers either turn back from superstitious fear of leaving the Capital's warding stones, have discovered nothing abnormal, or have failed to return.

WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

The Red Massif is honeycombed with ancient tombs and catacombs, now inhabited by a variety of dangerous groups. **Area A** is held by the vile Order of the Golden Feast, a millenarian, cannibalistic sect that worships the demon king of slaughter. The Feasters have become the dominant force in the massif, and built an inn into the rock over the last year that they use to lure travelers for sacrifice, transformation into demon hosts and forced recruitment. **Area B** contains the remains of Potilius Vex, and his laboratory. Vex was a relatively weak and benign necromancer who specialized in the reanimation of animals, and traded undead mounts to travelers. He died peacefully two years prior, but his guardians (more showy then dangerous) remain in place. **Area C** is likewise largely deserted, its water and night air subtly poisoned by the prophetic dreams of an ancient war titan. **Area D** contains the third faction within the Red Massif, a band of highwaymen, calling themselves the Dust Family and advised/led by an oracular Robbers' Bride. The Dust Family has inhabited the massif for years, cautiously preying on only the choicest caravans,

foreign travelers and small bands while using the minimum of violence necessary, following their oracle's instructions and attacking from a variety of locations. The Dust Family is desperate to rid the massif of the Feasters, both because the Feasters prey on them and

because they draw attention. However, the Family has been forced into retreat and hiding by the cult's superior numbers, magic and monstrous allies, though neither group is prepared to assault the other's tunnels or fight a pitched battle.



NOTE ON ART AND SETTING: All of the landscape and location art used in this adventure is the work of **Giovanni Battista Piranesi** (1720 – 1778). Piranesi was a fantasist to a degree, though he presented some of his work, including the pictures copied here as real representations of the decaying glories of ancient Rome. The picture above is supposed to be the Via Appia, which indeed does have ancient tombs, mausoleums and several catacombs along its length. Piranesi's work exaggerates both the scale and detail of the Roman ruins as the artist tried imagine what they had looked like in the time of the Emperors hundreds of years before.

This adventure also steals from the history of the Via Appia to some degree, as in late antiquity and medieval times its tombs were sometimes refurbished and their superior ancient construction used as the basis for new buildings. During Rome's decline the monuments along the Appian Way also allegedly became a red light district and home to bands of highwaymen.

Given that Piranesi's art was produced in the mid to late 18th century it is my informed belief that it is freely available to use and reproduce without any copyright protections.

RUMORS

Inquiries will lead to the following rumors and potential hooks, depending on the type of people that the party seeks out. Contacts with the underworld will give a rumor off the “Thieves’ Rumors” table, while contacts with merchants or the wealthy will give rumors from the “Merchants’ Rumors” table. All other rumors will come from the general rumors table. Rumors will likely lead the party to the Red Massif.

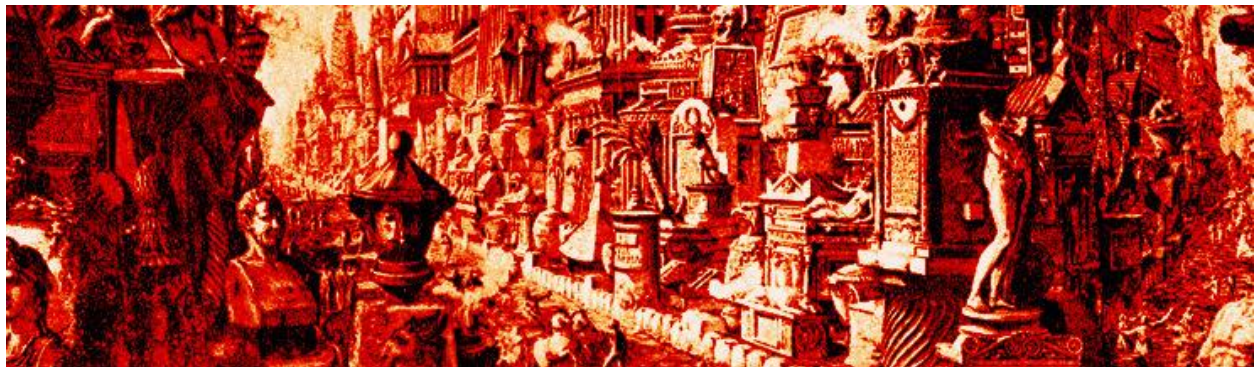
THIEVES’ RUMORS		
D8	RUMORMONGER	RUMOR
1	A grizzled fifteen year old former pickpocket – fingers hammered and twisted into uselessness.	The Road of Tombs is the place to go on the lam, there’s plenty of hidey holes and if you go far enough out not even the private thief takers or the syndicators will find you.
2	A ragged house breaker, her eyes wide with dream berry and her hands twitching.	There’s something real down the Road of Tombs, it’s the wilderness, but it’s calling to me now, a land of true comrades and the balancing of the scales. I’d go but my work is here.
3	A soberly and meticulously dressed professional guide for the slumming gentleman.	The Bawds have been having trouble of late, disappearances from some of the outer crypts, I bet it’s some crime king, trying to scare them into working for him. Little chance there.
4	A matron, dressed in sober black with a grey stone skull mask and pin designating her as a professional tomb robber.	The Road of Tombs is picked clean, anything left is trapped, wyrded, guarded or ensorcelled. Even commoners’ ash jars will sometimes contain ember geists, and the tombs of the ancients ... I didn’t get old by playing with that kind of magic.
5	A portly fence and boaster for the Crime Kings, wearing a red sash of office and the smile of a cannibal hog.	Boss Dixson has put up an honorarium of 500 GP for any who can trace what happened to the lads he sent to the massif! We know there are non-affiliates behind it, those Gladiators I bet – they aren’t real thieves and have no sense of propriety or honor.
6	An elderly confidence man, still attractive in a leathery way, but seemingly retired and dressed in a patched merchant’s suit.	The Road of Tombs was the way out of town fast when I was in the game. There was a necromancer at the massif, something Vex. You could trade him a blown horse for something that would ride like the devil until the sun came up, hell of a guy.
7	A scarred pit fighter, having trouble drinking through the grill of the elaborate bronze helm bolted to his neck.	A gladiator can do little after retirement, sell him or herself as a companion to the wealthy, or a guard. The smugglers will look after a fighter when his time in the sands is done though, and many retired gladiators live along the Road of Tombs
8	An assassin, or something equally dark, her face covered in tiny tattoos, and her right hand replaced with a magically animated steel talon.	Smuggling is weak craft, the weak are smugglers. The gods say they should drown in their own blood, and that is what is coming along the Road of Tombs, a reckoning in blood. I know how to stay before the tide – do you?

MERCHANT'S RUMORS

D8	RUMORMONGER	RUMOR
1	A tinker pushing a cart of battered pots and decorative tin demon wards.	I can't get steel needles anymore, my best seller. Outlawed for decadence I know, but there used to always be a good supply coming down the Road of Tombs.
2	A Caravan guard from the Resurgent Kingdoms, leathers covered in black iron studs.	No danger on the Road of Tombs, ha. There is even an inn set up at the massif, me and the lads stopped on the way in with a load of arena beasts.
3	A hugely fat underwriter, right arm covered in golden rings and bangles so heavy she can barely lift it.	This is something more than bandits, the Road of Tombs always had highwaymen, but they were cautious and almost respectable, taking reasonable pay offs and properly responsive to threats.
4	A fast messenger, business-like in stained leathers and keeping an eye on her alchemically augmented steed.	Road of Tombs, yeah I've ridden in on it, never stop the night though, place is creepy and my horse is fast enough. Last time I heard the sound of strange and terrible hounds on the road, something ghostly I suspect.
5	Boisterous and tanned, trade has been good for this established smuggler who is pouring wine for anyone who will listen to his stories.	Road Wardens, bah, not quite bandits but usually close enough. I got a young scholar in my crew that knows the tax code though – they can't deal with that, and their stamps are as good as the gatesmens' for avoiding excise.
6	A pair of freelance stevedores loitering canal side in tar impregnated overalls. They share a cigar that reeks of illegal mad-kelp.	Don't know much beyond the city, but I heard that the dead still wander from the tombs now and again. Unless you're a bonded Templar or something it's best to just run, because as nasty as they are, the dead are stupid and slow.
7	The barrister stinks of expensive perfume and has been sent to deny the indemnification claims of a furious trade tycoon for smuggled goods lost to banditry. The fight has moved into the road and is easily overheard.	No one has seen what's preventing smuggling along the Road of Tombs. No bandits have been spotted, no monsters slain, and even caravans with a demon hunter or other priest attached have been lost. The lost caravans disappear with no survivors and no trace, which is unusual for these sorts of things, and especially for skilled and crafty traders like smugglers.
8	Eyes filled with pain and hate a man in ragged black clothes stand in a pillory beside the gate with the label 'highwayman' around his neck. He will gladly tell all he knows for water.	Yeah, there are highwaymen along the Road of Tombs, always have been, but they aren't killers. In the past the Madams and Gladiators allowed a certain amount of robbery of foreign traders or those who did not pay protection, but now that arrangement is gone.

GENERAL RUMORS

D8	RUMORMONGER	RUMOR
1	A bravo in ridiculous yellow and green checked silks boasting with numerous dueling scars.	When I was young there was an old necromancer at the red massif, you could sell him a body or a dying man – hid the deed and earned a coin or two.
2	A seller of cheap piscine torches, entire greasy fish dried with a wick at their core. Her hair greased into a monstrous pile and decorated with bright rags.	Those old tombs along there are quite the decadent romp. If something bad is happening I bet it's the gods punishing those harlots and gladiators for their wicked tomb robbing and sinful pastimes – and such a pity, all those fine physiques led into sin.
3	An itinerant underpriest, his rag vestments a mockery of more established priests	The ancient lords buried in the great tombs will speak to a man who sleeps among them, not all they say is clear, but they are saints, and saints are obtuse.
4	A pair of off duty gatesmen brothers, clad in their family uniforms and wearing ancient bonewhite badges of office	It's neither smugglers, bawds or gladiators that prey on travelers it's those damn cults. I bet, half the pilgrims on the road worship one blood soaked heresy or another, and in the last year the vigils chased five covens out of town.
5	A crippled beggar, face scarred with what appear to be the slash of a giant beak.	Owlbears, filthy magic eating creatures. Saw a sloth of them a few years ago, someone once told me they can be distracted by throwing down even the smallest bit of magic.
6	A healthy looking middle-aged man, covered in battle scars and dressed in the leathers of a gladiator. He passes out pamphlets for a dueling school.	The Road of Tombs is safe enough near the Capital, but it's been getting a bit hairy after the first few miles. Why go further though? Every pleasure is available within sight of the city walls. A long trip? Wait a few months and I'm sure the madams will take care of the problem.
7	A matron of the artisan class, her dress and manners proper in every aspect. She drinks heavily and resolutely from a clay jug of aggressively clear liquor for reasons of her own.	My son disappeared along the Road of Tombs, a bit the wild one, I always thought he would grow out of it like his father. He'd taken to attending the sword schools and gallivanting about the burlesque houses, spending more money than we had to look richer then we are. Now he's gone. 1,000 GP for his safe return.
8	A broken bureaucrat, dressed in ragged robes of office, his chains and badges ripped away. He weeps in his hands and offers to sell his battered sandals. Pleading for money to bribe his way into the licensure hall to wheedle for his job back.	The Imperial Equestrian Order is enraged, they were expecting a member from a rural chapter to bring them expired patents that would allow them to elevate some younger members, but the knight has not arrived and the bureaucrats had to deny their claims. They will pay 2,000 GP for the missing knight's whereabouts, and say he was to arrive in secrecy along the Road of Tombs.



THE ROAD

Should the party follow one or another of these rumors they will find themselves stalking down the Road of Tombs. Despite its name and sinister reputation the road seems more decadent than dangerous. For the first three miles the ancient tombs along both side of the road are inhabited as a sort of wild suburb of the Capital. The tomb dwellers are a microcosm of the Capital's lower and middle classes. The mansions and shops of local industrial magnets stand near a profusion of brothels and sword fighting schools, all built in and around ancient mausoleums. Stalls and tables form makeshift bazaars near the first three ancient, mile-marking, magically eternal fountains.

Skills for local bawd houses, dueling academies and sellers of proscribed, but usually terribly mundane, goods call out regularly along the road. The citizens of the Road of Tombs are amicable and free-spirited, but can be hard bargainers and respond to threats or violence by calling in their militia of retired gladiators that serve to keep order in the odd community.

Gladiator (squads of 2D6) F2 [STR 15, DEX 15] AC 5[14], ATK 1, DAM 1D8+1, MV 9, SV 13,

Gladiator/guards and fencing instructors will arrive in militia squads of 2D6 armed with military weapons (axes and swords mostly) and wearing various types of light or medium armor. Most also wear full bronze helmets sculpted into the heads of animals or fantastic beasts as a badge of office.

If forced to retreat or a real fight breaks out the militia will call for backup and another squad ex-gladiators will arrive every 1D6 rounds backed by 2D10 unarmored LVL 0 levies (shopkeepers, prostitutes, carters, sword school students and other normal citizens) equipped with light weapons, spears and/or short bows. In all, there are five groups of militia and levies, and regardless of any other effects their massacre might have, the wealthy and surviving members of the Road's

leaders will take vengeance for their deaths through assassins, hired mages and bounty hunters.

A loose government of the brothel Madams (a gender neutral hereditary title) and dueling school masters (gladiators) share control of the township, and often family ties. If the party asks rumors of the citizens of the road, only 2 in 6 are willing to discuss anything beyond the weather or the price of beer, but the more forthcoming residents will indicate that times are hard and scary. Citizens have disappeared in the night, entire houses (or tombs) smashed open and all their residents kidnapped. The Madams and Gladiators are vigilant, but so far the attacks have been irregular, located at the fringes of the community or preying on the groups of revelers that flock to the Road's libertine amusements.

There is a general suspicion that the trouble centered near the Red Massif, though reports of a decent roadhouse operating out of the massif seem to contradict this. The Madams are willing to pay (100 – 500 GP) for

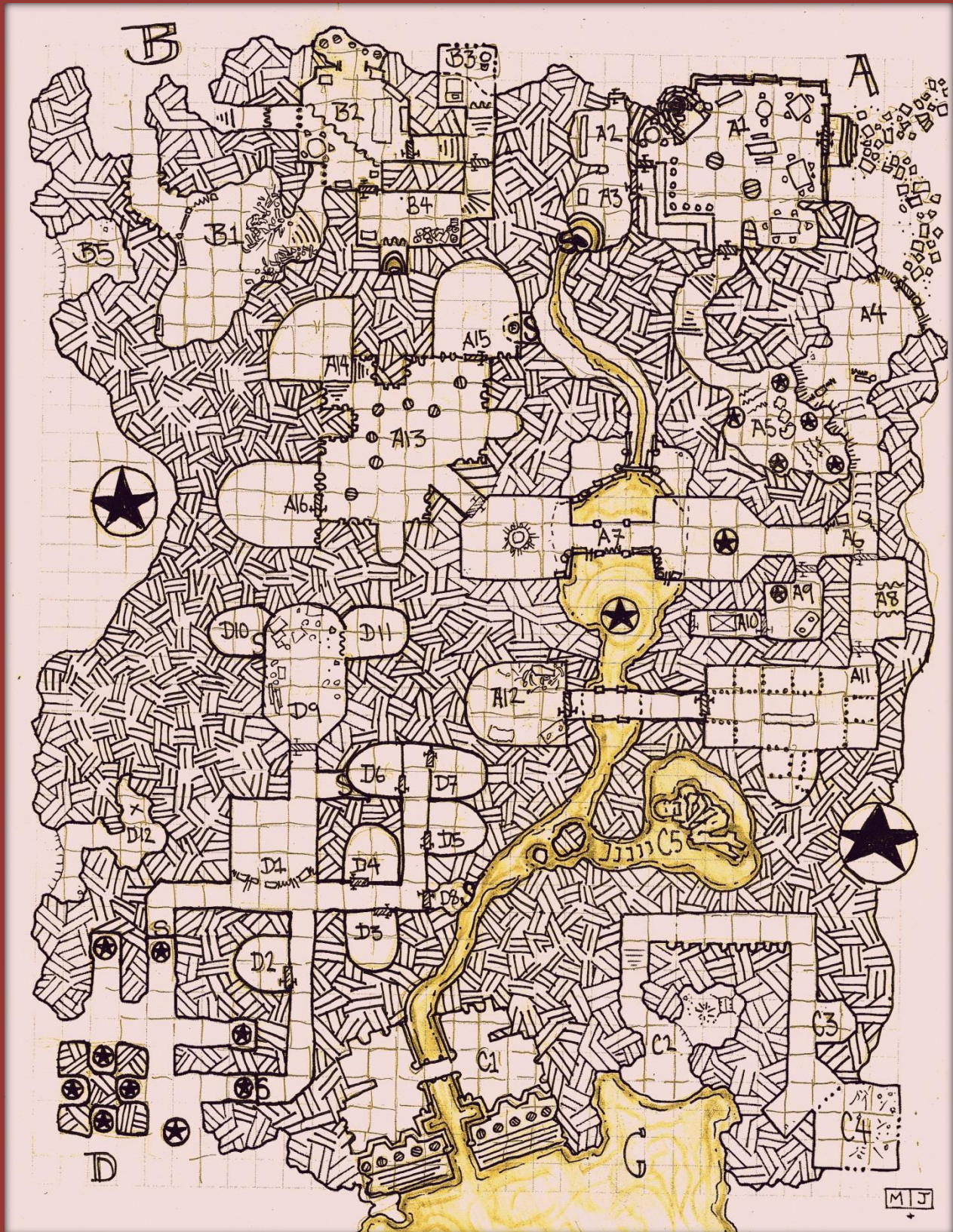
D6	CITIZENS OF THE ROAD OF TOMBS
1	Acrobats – A band of acrobats, performing as advertisement for one of the Road's brothels.
2	Rakes – D4 wealthy rakehells in a carriage, drinking in preparation for their evening debauch. All are armed, LVL 0 and pugnacious.
3	Madam – In a sedan chair with D6 gladiator guards. The madam will speak to strangers and generally promote the community.
4	Pilgrims – A group of silent pilgrims, heading to the shrines of the burned provinces. Their faces are bound, and the argosy is led by a 'speaking priest' to negotiate on their journey.
5	Gladiators – A pair of militia peacekeepers who will encourage the party to spend the night in one of the community's inns and warn of danger ahead.
6	Travelling Tinker – wandering down the road from the Capital with his mule, this weathered elderly woman will offer to make simple armor repairs. She knows only rumors from the Capital.

information and an explanation of who is attacking their settlement and running off trade, the exact amount depending on the quality of the information and proof. If the Madams knew about the Feasters they would hire a group of professional witch hunters, and back them with their militia to exterminate the cult. If they become aware of the Dust Family they will do the same or send a

representative to meet with the bandits and work out an arrangement.

Random encounters within the first quarter of the journey to the massif are from the above table. Beyond the first five miles the land becomes more dangerous, using the table below.

D6	ROAD DANGERS AND MISCREANTS
1	<p>Undead – Slow, shambling, mindless un dead, released by tomb robbers or the collapse of their crypt to prey upon travelers. The group consists of 1D4-2 Mummies and 1d6 Wights. Any mummies encountered are ancient tomb guardians wrapped in parchments of curses and prayers, while the wights are the decaying remnants of tomb robbers and travelers recently slain by the guardians.</p> <p>Mummy – HD 5+1, AC 3 [16]*, ATK 1, DAM 1D12 **, MV 6, SV 11 *Immune to magic and silver weapons, ½ damage from magic weapons. ** Inflicts rotting disease that prevents healing. Carry 2D10x100 GP in gold ornaments.</p> <p>Wight – HD 3, AC 5 [14]*, ATK 1, DAM 1HP**, MV 8, SV 14 *Immune to normal weapons **level drain (one level)</p>
2	<p>Cursed Hounds – Howling builds in the distance, growing louder and louder until the hounds should be among your party, a cacophony of near palpable terror. The sound suddenly stops when the 1d8 huge hounds burst into the road, their filthy yellow coats patterned with vile sigils and their muscled bodies warped and corrupted. They advance in silence, eyes glowing with hunger and hatred.</p> <p>Hound of the Feast – HD 4, AC 6 [13] ATK 1*, DAM 1D6+1, MV 18, SV 13 *The hounds ethereal howls can be heard for miles, but the air around each hound is silent, as the Cleric Spell <u>Silence 15-foot radius</u>.</p>
3	<p>Wardens – The remnants of the Imperial Road Wardens' hereditary clans still patrol the roads, though now they are more bandits than tax collectors. The Wardens will attempt to tax adventurers at the high rate for "mercenary companies" – 40% of their portable wealth. This band of 2D6+4 Wardens are led by a Warden Barrister who knows the basics of the ancient tax codes, but is more mystic than taxman and may be cowed by a party that can convincingly cite Imperial statute.</p> <p>Warden – F2, AC 3 [16], ATK 1, DAM 1D8, MV 9, SV 13 (banded mail, shields, war axes, heavy crossbow and 30 bolts, group has 1D4x100 GP in goods and coin, 200 year old tax code and excise seals)</p>
4	<p>Army Rats – Protean swarms of rats, grown strange from generations among the radiations of ancient Imperial magic. Sleek coal black rats with blind eyes and green crystals protruding from their spines, form this hoard, a single entity ruled by hunger that surges from food source to food source. The swarm will flee if it takes considerable damage from fire or magic.</p> <p>Rat Swarm – HD 5, AC 9 [10]*, ATK Spc **, DAM 1D8 **, MV 8, SV 15 *Weapon blows do 1 pt of damage to the swarm per hit and swarm is immune to mind effecting spells. ** Swarm automatically hits any/all targets within 10' with a surge of gnawing rats. Damage is 1D8 to unarmored targets, 1D6 to lightly armored targets, 1D4 to those in medium armor and 1D2 to any wearing heavy armor.</p>
5	<p>Owlbears – A Parliament of 1D6 ragged owlbears snuffles amongst the debris of a cracked monument, undoubtedly seeking fragments of ancient magic to devour. The feasting arcanovores are of the common brown sort, with yellow eyes and a penchant for territoriality. They are feeding and unlikely to attack even a magically endowed group that moves quickly and quietly past them on the road.</p> <p>Owlbear – HD 5, AC 5 [14], ATK 3*, DAM 1D6x2/1D8, MV 12, SV 12 *On a hit roll of 18+ owlbears hug or maul their prey for an additional 2D8 damage.</p>
6	<p>Prophet of Crime – Ragged and smiling a wild-haired man walks the road, tightly wound in stinking scraps of brown leather. He is harmless, despite the rusted sword at his side, and seeks only to spread his goddess's message of freedom through crime. If engaged he will rant about his goddesses plans for carnivals of the poor, the pillars of the earth, and a reborn society of the proscribed. If his nonsense is treated with respect he will whisper that the party should "Seek the dusts among the statutes."</p> <p>Benito Profane – TH 2* [DX 14, CHR 16], AC 7 [12], ATK 1, DAM 1D6, MV 12** SV 14 (leather wrappings, rusted short sword) *has thief abilities ** will flee or surrender if offered violence</p>



THE RED MASSIF - MAP

THE RED MASSIF

Rising in a confusion of minarets, columns and obelisks a few hundred yards from the gleaming line of the road, it is impossible to mistake the Red Massif. Pulled from deep in the earth by ancient magics, the mausoleum complex is a roughly rectangular block of porous red lava stone, sculpted and twisted into effortless shapes. Huge statues of Imperial soldiers and priests, worn by time, are built into its side amongst a tawdry profusion of smaller sculpture. There are areas that seem to provide obvious ground level entrances (**Areas A-D**) including what appears to be a newer building of raw timber, constructed directly into the overhanging stone. The upper levels of the massif are largely decorative, a veritable city of spires and monuments, many crumbled, rising to a huge rotunda, at least 100' feet above ground level (**Area E**).



AREA A – FEAST HALLS

The most obvious and built up area of the massif, and home to 'The Order of the Golden Feast', a violent and perverse cult that preys on travelers. The Feasters have built a crude inn into the massif and use it to lure victims. They have also reclaimed a large set of tombs that formerly held the bodies of the Sorcerer General's concubines, and reworked them into a blood soaked temple where captives are transformed into abominations or devoured. The Feasters perform unspeakable rituals focused on cannibalism, torture and savage violence within their hidden temple and channel the power of their god to summon Cursed Hounds, ascend into beast headed monstrous Golden Ones, and defile their captives into ghoulish thralls.

Tactics

The Feasters are blood crazed, but they are not mindlessly violent brutes. The inn's residents seek to lure victims to them, attacking only those they believe they can overcome, and whose disappearance is unlikely to be remarked on or draw a strong reprisal. While random encounters with the creatures created by the Feasters are possible along the road and near the massif, these abominations (Cursed Hounds primarily) have been set loose to roam free as the cult deems them (correctly) too violent and unintelligent to reveal any secrets.

The Feaster's priests, militants and laity would be a fairly effective bandit force, even without accounting for their cursed hounds, abominations and ghouls, however they are smart enough to know that open confrontation with the forces of order (such as they are along the road), bands of fortune hunters or even the larger sort of caravans that travel the Empire's dangerous roads will lead to a great number of deaths amongst the cult. The Feasters would rather take their enemies in small groups, in their sleep, or by surprise. It also feeds both the cults' vanity and cruelty to trick and manipulate their victims prior to their destruction or capture.

To this end the feasters have built an inn, the "Feast Hall Inn" into the side of the massif and will seek to capture

victims with the following tactics that depend entirely on the cult's laity and concealing its true profane nature.

The cultists are greedy for sacrifices, mostly insane and sadistically cruel, but they will not endanger themselves by confronting larger, especially well-armed groups, preferring to prey upon smaller bands of smugglers, lone travelers and migrants. Groups that '**Lace**' Swinton deems too dangerous or too important will be treated well (though there's a pretty good chance that they will be fed human flesh) and allowed to leave without any trouble. Others will be subject to an escalating series of tactics to bewilder, separate and weaken individual members until the victims react badly, when they will either be set upon with clubs and knives or the Feasters will flee into their tunnels to set the Golden Ones and Cursed Hounds upon the visitors.

Misdirection – A party that seems evil, mercenary, or simply dangerous and reveals their mission to investigate banditry in the area will be told of the existence of a dangerous band of blood thirsty highwaymen, led by a she-demon that is somehow related to the strange maze of statues in another part of the massif. While wards built into the inn's doors allegedly protect it, the road agents attack customers leaving at night and perform sinister rituals at the massif. The goal of this tactic is to encourage the party to launch an attack on the Dust Family and convince them that the inn is a safe haven. Since the Feasters are not sure of the exact location of the Dusts' hidden warren they can't offer much more information, just general descriptions and the belief that the bandits lair nearby and use the statute maze for 'rituals'.

Poisoned Grog – If one or more of the visitors seems especially fond of drink, **Lace** will fill their mug or glass with poison adulterated booze towards the end of the evening. The drug he uses cause unconsciousness and a painful headache. Victims make a CON check against a D20+the number of drinks (or estimated number) they have consumed. Success results a heavy sleep that will take 1D6 rounds to wake from, while failure cause deep, unshakable unconsciousness for 2D20 hours, and a -1 to all rolls for the day after waking.

The Honeypot – The more attractive of the Feast Hall's employees (**Bundles, Voil the Lad, Cygnia**) will flirt with guests, and if this interest is returned eventually proposition one of them. The guest chosen will ideally be one of the more attractive party members and preferably a magic-user or similar less violent type. The Feaster will lead their victim into the empty kitchen, and then through the secret door and into the tunnel beyond. Nearing the entrance to Area 7 the couple will be blocked by several Feaster guards while The Hierophant and two other guards close in from behind and the victim will be paralyzed with 'hold person' or bludgeoned unconscious. To offset suspicion the seducing Feaster will also remain absent and the other inn workers will try to convince the remaining adventurers that the Dust Family is to blame. Kidnapped party members will be held in **Area A11**.

False Attack – This will be the Feaster's choice tactic if they suddenly discover that the party is exceptionally dangerous. Just before dawn the inn will be awakened by a hammering on the door, and a lit torch hurled into the inn through its front windows. Shadowy figures (Feaster Guards in hoods) will mill before the inn firing arrows and try to lure the party out to chase them. If the party follows, the guards will flee across the road after an initial barrage and hide amongst the fallen tombs. Especially persistent pursuers will meet a deadly ambush by Golden Ones and Cursed Hounds. **Lace** or **Bruno** will explain that these attackers are the bandits of the Dust Family as in the "Misdirection" tactic.

Poisoned Stew – If the party remains at the inn for more than a night, the second night **Trockly** will make them a "special spicy pork stew". This stew is of course human

flesh (and pig) slow cooked with mushrooms and a large amount of flavorful spices. Quite tasty, the spices conceal the earthy flavors of the hallucinogenic poison mushrooms in the stew. Eating a meal of the stuff requires a save v. poison after 1D4+4 turns, and failure results in raving hallucinations that render the victim incapable of meaningful action. A save will still cause horrible vivid hallucinations, but allow the victim to act (at -2 to all rolls).

Late Night Ambush – A full ambush, Feaster guards in armor backed by the inn's residents will grapple the sleeping party (consider the guards to have 13 STR and the laity to have 9 STR) attempting to subdue them. The Feasters are unlikely to try this tactic on an armed adventuring party the first night they sleep at the inn, but once they let their guard down, especially if weakened by other tactics, this method will be employed. Any PC on guard will be backstabbed by **Mad Yurta**.

Area A ~ Entrance

A crude sign, of ochre and black paint on redwood boards stands at the roadside. It read "Eat, Drink, Sleep" and depicts a large steaming cauldron and an arrow pointing down a newly laid path of cracked tombstone fragments. The path splits after a few feet, one side leading to a rough wood building half built into the massif (**Area A1**), and the other leading to a cleft in the stone (**Area A4**). A tall man in a dark cloak, rusted back and breast armor carrying a brass horn and military fork (**Kletch**) watches from a rock near the entrance of this cleft. There are no random encounters in the 'civilized areas' of the Inn and Paddock, **Area A1 – A5**. Random encounter tables for the cult caves follow.



A1 - Feast Hall Inn

A newly laid stone path, and sturdy steps made from cracked tombstones leads from the road to the front doors of this rude building. The doors themselves are huge, black iron, riveted with skull shaped heads that likely came from a noble's tomb, but the rest of the building is less impressive. The inn is typical raw frontier construction, simple sturdy logs, with mud and straw filling the cracks. Two narrow windows, suitable for defense flank the door. The door is locked, but will be opened by **Bruno**, in response to a hail or knock.

The Inn itself has a homey feel, with its log walls planked in redwood, the stone wall rubbed smooth, a huge block fireplace, and a variety of animal heads and rustic cooking implements hung about. A partitioned loft provides a sleeping area for the staff. The furniture is clumsy, simple, and sturdily fashioned from local wood, and the floor covered in bundles of clean grass. A wooden bar with a black and orange feathered **owlbear pelt** (400 GP) nailed above it covers the rear of the room. The **bottles** of cheap gin, wine and barrel of beer (500 GP total) behind the bar are saleable anywhere.

The Feast Hall's employees and inhabitants consist of 8 adults and 4 children, all of whom are fanatical laity in service of the Order of the Golden Feast. All are 0-level humans armed with clubs or daggers, except **Bruno** who has crossbow and rapier, and the children who are non-combatants. At night they will be joined by **Kletch** and 1d4 laconic **Feaster Guards** from **Area A 4**.

The Feast Hall's prices are reasonable, but not especially cheap, with a night sleeping on the main floor of the inn costing 1GP and coming with a bowl of stew and a ½ loaf of black bread. Better meals are available for another gold piece per person per day, including roast chicken, wild game and fresh vegetables. Slightly bitter beer, brewed on premises is 1 GP for a large growler or 1 SP a mug, while mediocre wine is 10 GP a bottle, and rotgut gin 1 SP a glass. Private sleeping arrangements may be requested in the form of a partitioned area, for 1 GP a partition. There is a 1 in 6 chance that every day the party stays at the inn a group of 1D8 0-level travelers will arrive.

RESIDENTS OF THE FEAST HALL INN

Lace' Swinton (M) - Barkeeper/Innkeeper - An lean man in his early middle age, Lace wears the patched clothes of the Imperial gentry, including a large red lace cravat. He apes the manners of the gentry as well, but only lightly and otherwise appears a competent, but easy going innkeeper, and carries a pouch with 25 GP in assorted coins. Lace enjoys feeding living victims to the Cursed Hounds.

Bruno (M) - Door Guard/ Musician - Bruno is a large man in his 50's with a sweet voice, bristly grey beard and reddish hair. He wears a stained jerkin of multicolored leather scales and sits near the door with a light crossbow and rapier nearby. Bruno was once a mercenary, but has lost his edge. He carries the huge iron key to the inn's doors and plays the harp nights near the fire.

Voil the Lad (M) - Kitchen boy/laborer - A big youth of about eighteen, Voil is rambunctious and a bit clumsy. His wide face is handsome, except for a tendency to sneer when he thinks he isn't being watched. Voil is strong [STR 16] and proud of his physique. In a year or two he will be transformed into a Golden One.

Cygnia (F) - Waitress/Cook - In her early twenties, Cygnia has grown up in the cult and is a mystic devoted to the lord of slaughter, delighting in pain, torture and depravity. She is also attractive, charming, and laughs easily (because she is thinking about what people's insides look like). Cygnia serves the inn as a waitress but is quickly learning to cook from Bundles and Tockley.

Bundles (F) - Maid/Cook - In her late 30's Bundles is a bit slow witted but was once a courtesan of some renown. She has lost none of her wiles, and will wink and giggle at guests, especially brawny fighter types in their middle years. She likes to bite off the tongues of those she seduces, and if she gets too excited or drunk she may mention this.

RESIDENTS OF THE FEAST HALL INN

Trockly Giled (M) – Cook – A good chef and excellent butcher, Trockly will come in from the kitchen after meals to sip rotgut by the inn's fire. Almost as big as his sister Scabbers, Trockley looks formidable but is a physical coward. He prefers to feed his guests dishes contaminated with human flesh, and enjoys poisoning others with hallucinogenic mushrooms before capturing and tormenting them with his knives..

'Scabbers' Giled (F) – Drunkard/Laborer – A large woman with square shoulders and a barrel chest, Scabbers does a lot of heavy labor around the inn and has such poor hygiene it's hard to tell her age. She would have become a Golden One long ago, except she's too much of a drunkard. Towards the end of her nightly tub of beer Scabbers may start singing very gruesome and inappropriate songs.

Doc (M) – Waiter – Twenty-five, fair haired, thin and intellectual, Doc wishes to be a priest, but his ambition and love of self are too much for even the god of slaughter. Doc can be condescending, but would really love to get his hands on the laboratory and spellbooks of Pontillius Vex.

Orphan Steen (M) – Scrubber, age 12 – A silent young boy with large eyes that glare with hatred. He stays close to Bundles when he can.

Orphan Shalic (F) – Scrubber, age 10 – Another child, with lank brown hair and a large birthmark. Shalic cries at night as she still remembers what became of her family, but will never tell.

Billy (M) – Child, age 4 – The son of two cult members who have been 'raised' into Golden Ones, Billy is a dour ugly boy and only Lace seems fond of him. Billy knows nothing of the cult's activities.

Baby Cyg (M) – Infant, age 1 – Cygnia's infant, a red cheeked boy with wide eyes. The baby is still innocent and much loved by the cultists, but has been marked by the God of Slaughter as a future vessel

A2 – Store

A locked side door (**Bundles, Trockley** and **Lace** have keys) opens onto the inn's storeroom, containing sacks of dark grain, a brew kettle, hopback, mash tun and standard inn supplies such as clay jugs, rope, lumber, simple tools and nails. A curtain hides a butcher's slab that drains through the wall and several meat hooks whose contents will confirm the inn residents' cannibal nature. The **supplies** (400 GP) and **brewing equipment** (200 GP) have value, but require a wagon to move.

A3 – Kitchen

This simple kitchen is dominated by a slowly bubbling fountain that leaks clear water down over a marble relief into a pool of chipped mosaic tile, and a large stew pot bubbling atop a brick hearth. The kitchen is poorly ventilated and its rafters stained with smoke. Several tables for food preparation, baskets of common herbs, a cask of salted fish and assorted knives and pots hang on the walls. A mattress is rolled near the hearth and a rudely built cradle (often containing **Baby Cyg**) stands nearby.

The Fountain Door – The fountain, obviously far more ancient than the inn, contains a secret door. The fountain's marble rear relief (worn into a procession of warped figures) is a secret door. The latch no longer works, and when a few pounds of force are applied the relief will swing on well-oiled stone hinges revealing a low doorway into the rock.

A4 – Barricade and Paddock

The path of cracked stones leads towards this area as an alternative to the inn. If visitors have mounts or livestock the lone guard, **Kletch**, will wave them over with one hand on his alarm horn. As they approach **Kletch** will call out and inform the any visitors that they should leave their animals in the paddock.

Kletch will accept 1sp per night, per beast to watch and feed the party's animals, warning amicably of wild animal (especially owlbears and phase cats) in the area that will devour unattended beasts. Beyond the round

stone that is **Kletch's** watch post a five foot tall barricade of sharpened stakes, stacked stone and carefully nurtured thorns is visible. While **Kletch** would prefer strangers stay clear of the barricade, he will allow polite visitors behind it, though he will first suggest they leave all weapons outside. If this tactic works and the entire visiting group passes through the barricade **Kletch** engages them in chatter while one of the three **Feaster Guards** behind the barricade runs up the stairs and fetches the entire force of Feaster militants (19 more **Feaster Guards** [Area A 7, Area A 8, Area 11] **Captain Tubbs** [Area A 9] and **Mad Yurta** [Area A 11]) force, who will attack the visitor cruelly, attempting to overwhelm them.

If the visitors insist on maintaining their weapons or otherwise avoid this trap, **Kletch** will allow them to leave, encouraging them to stay at the Feast Hall Inn content in the knowledge that the cultists there will capture the visitors in due time. The paddock normally contains a **rickety wagon** (25 GP) **Captain Tubbs' horse** (a lovely piebald stallion - 200GP), two tired **carthorses** (30 GP each) and assorted **livestock** (three pigs, many piglets, four milch goats and a flock of chicken - 75 GP total).

A5 Garden of Silent Emperors

A ledge that overlooks the Feaster's animal paddock and barricades covered in brooding statues of long forgotten emperors. Since the ledge is well watered, convenient and open to the sky, the Feast Hall's residents have planted a kitchen garden amongst the ancient statues. A few rows of tomatoes, squash and melons grow here, cared for by **Voil the Lad**, **Scabbers** and **Bundles** but the majority of the plantings are taken up by **Trockley's** herb and pepper garden. This extensive collection of spices will impress the average chef, and contains a rare alchemical specter pepper plant, which will only grow when watered with human blood. The plant, its existing peppers and seeds are worth 1,800 GP, but will be hard to recognize unless an expert in alchemy, fine cuisine or necromancy examines them. **Trockley** will reveal the plant as his "hidden treasure" in exchange for escape for **Scabbers** and his if the cult is destroyed and he is captured. The statues are cruel

lipped and have the hollow mad eyes that have long marked the inbred Imperial line.

CULT TACTICS

CULT OF THE GOLDEN FEAST ORDER OF BATTLE

8 Laity (F0)
22 Feaster Guards (F2)
Captain Tubbs (F5)
Mad Yurta (A5)
7 Cursed Hounds
8 Golden Ones
5 Militant Priests (CL 4)
15 Ghouls
The Hierophant (CL 7)

The cult's militant guards, priests and abominations are far more willing to engage in open combat than the laity in the Feast Hall in. The Feasters are dedicated sadistic maniacs; they will retreat but not run, sacrifice individuals for the group and fight with cunning, bravery and cruelty. If confronted in the open the Feasters will drive a wave of **Cursed Hounds** and **Golden Ones** forward while the guard force rains arrows on their enemies. The priest will follow with a bodyguard of whimpering chained **Ghouls** casting their most powerful spells to target enemy casters and leaders. The cult is not one to turn from a fight, but when clearly overmatched they will retreat into their tunnels using disposable assets (**Ghouls**, **Cursed Hounds** and **Golden Ones**) to protect their leadership.

Attempts to negotiate with the cult may be successful, especially if the party is in a position of strength and appears as evil and depraved as the cultists. While the initial goal of the cultists is to massacre the Dust family, they also desire victims and willing recruits to ransack and finally take over the civilized area of the Road of Tombs.

In a drawn out conflict, the Golden Feast will use the laity as scouts and spies, and likely target an aggressive

force with several ambushes (hit and run arrow attacks, suicide ambushes by hounds and golden ones or nighttime ghoul raids) rather than allow themselves to be besieged.

Surprised within their tunnels the cult is less likely to present an orderly defense, and cannot use their monstrous assets effectively as they may run wild. The cult feels safe in its tunnels; but the human guards are alert and will eventually notice invaders, responding intelligently to intruders. The guards are reluctant to disturb their priests unless they lose half their number. The cult will make its final stand in their temple, though the **Hierophant** may try to escape.

D6	RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN AREAS A6 – A16
1	Pair of Feaster Guards (2) F2 [STR 14] AC 3[16], ATK 1 [+1 hit], DAM 1D10+1/1D8, MV 9, SV 14, (ochre painted garrison plate, two-handed sword, longbow, 30 arrows) Wandering from Area A8 for a romantic tryst will be more concerned with raising the alarm than survival.
2	Laity F0, AC9, ATK 1, DAM (1D4), MV 12, SV 16 1 in 6 chance it's Orphan Shalic with a bucket of stew. She will remain quite if ignored.
3	Golden Ones (1D2) HD 6 AC 14, ATK 3, DAM 2D4, 1D3, 1D8 MV 12, SV 11 * Will regenerate fully from injury in 1D4 turns – even ‘death’ with a successful save. Can track by smell. Tongues lolling and bored – will attack noisily. In addition to inhabitants of Area 12 .
4	Feaster Guards (1D6+1) F2 [STR 14] AC 3[16], ATK 1 [+1 hit], DAM 1D10+1/1D8, MV 9, SV 14, (ochre painted garrison plate, two-handed sword, longbow, 30 arrows) From Area A8 on daily business.
5	Priests (2) CL 4 [STR 13, WIS 16] AC 2 [17], ATK 1, Dam 1D6+1, MV 9, SV 14 (ochre painted garrison plate, shield, steel flail, bloody robes) Spells: <i>Protection from Good</i> , <i>Cure Light Wounds</i> , <i>Hold Person</i>
6	Leader (1D4) 1 – The Hierophant (Area A14) , 2 – Mad Yurta (Area A11) , 3 – Captain Tubbs (Area A9) 4 – Klutch (Area A4) Leaders will retreat from dangerous invaders and raise an alarm.

In case of an obviously superior force and overwhelming odds the Feasters will try to flee into the wilderness using their monstrous thralls to protect their retreat. The **Hierophant** and the other cult leaders are grudge holders and will make a pledge to their terrible diety to destory the party. Individual Feaster laity may surrender (especially Trockley and the children) but most cultists will choose death over captivity.

A6 – Guard Post

At the top of a stair carved into the raw red rock, and beyond a neatly carved archway is a small guard post. A waist high barricade allows the two (2) **Feaster Guards**, (See **Area A5**) four AC of cover from missile weapons Unlike the three guards with **Klutch** at the barricade below, these cultists will not hesitate to attack with their bows and by hurling the crate of twelve prepared firebomb (as flasks of oil) they have in their possession. One guard will flee to raise the alarm and return in three rounds with the guards from the barracks if the post is attacked by any large force.

A7 – Pool Room

A large chamber at the center of the Feaster’s tunnels, the pool room has upper and lower levels that serve very different purposes. The Room is a place of vile rituals for the Feaster Laity, the cult’s reservoir and the last defensible choke point protecting the Feaster temple. Three smoked red lanterns hang above the bridge casting a dim and dirty light over the entire room.

Bridge – Entering from Area A 6, a visitor will first see a huge statue, molded from the massif’s rock, that once depicted a female dancer, but which has now been defaced, it’s head crudely chiseled down to resemble a dog or other toothy beast, and anointed with dried black blood. Dirty hammocks hang from the statue, while bunks and sleeping pallets are scattered around it. The room serves as an auxiliary barracks for the **Feaster Guards** (See **Area A5**) and eight (8) of them inhabit this room. Like the guards in **Area A8**, these men and women are trained killers whose ascetic vows hold them back from the madness of their former lives as the worst sort of soldiers, bandits or murderers, and channel their drive for brutal violence and perverse cruelty into a

daily routine. The Feaster Guard practices a great deal of self-mortification and 1D6+4 of the guards will be in armor at all times. The guards have no treasure, and if captured most will prove to be violent psychotics, suffering from a variety of hallucinations and delusions.

The bridge itself is barricaded on the Southern side with thick timbers that will allow defenders to take cover while firing at any who approach from the underground stream. A second bridge, lighted with a few candles (**Area A 12**), is visible beyond a huge crumbling statue.

Dam – Below the bridge is an eight foot deep pool of clean black water filled by a spring and held on its northern side by a wood and clay dam. If ruptured the dam will force a deluge of water through the secret door of the Feast Hall's kitchen, and while it may drown everyone in the passage between it is unlikely to do permanent damage.

A gigantic statue, perhaps once depicting one of the Imperial saints (a pulchritudinous one), crumbles in the center of the pool, fractured and worn by time and the spring's gentle water.

Cannibal Shrine – Across the bridge from the guard encampment is a horrific jumble of bloody pillows and furniture scattered around a large cooking pot on a makeshift hearth of cracked red stone. This area serves as a secondary shrine for the torment, slaughter and consumption of the cult's victims and evidence of its grisly purpose is plain here. While many of the chairs and couches set in a half circle facing the bridge were once fine, they are currently scratched, broken and stained to the point of worthlessness.

Beyond the horrible shrine is a stone door carved with images of dancers now almost concealed beneath layers of encrusted dried blood that have been painted onto its surface.

A8 – Barracks

Barracks for twelve of the cult's twenty two guards, lit by a pair of oil lamps. Two pairs of bunks stand in each of the chamber's curtained alcoves. The curtains themselves are stained threadbare tapestries with

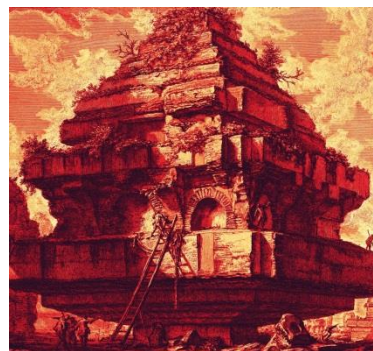
geometric designs. There are usually seven (7) **Feaster Guards** (See **Area A5**) here off duty sleeping, sitting on their bunk or meditating on the cold floor. 1D6 of the guards will be wearing their armor as a form of mortification even if they are surprised, and their weapons are in easy reach. Other than their equipment the ascetic cult guards have no treasure. A disturbing golden **figurine** (450 GP) of the hyena headed god of slaughter stands on a shelf near the door to **Area A 11**, flanked by a pair of fresh human skulls.

A9 – Priestess Militant's Shrine

This room was once a crypt chapel to allow the dead the ability to worship, but now serves as the quarters and office of **Captain Tubbs**, the 'Priestess Militant' who leads the Feaster guard force. An altar of the Imperial Cult remains, formed directly from the rock of the floor, and now defaced with a bone statue of the god of slaughter and numerous symbols in dried blood. The room's other furniture consists of a desk covered in hundreds of black and red candles, a bed and a soldier's tin chest. All the furnishings are splattered and encrusted with rotten gore, and handprints in dried blood stain the room's walls.

Tubbs keeps her armor and weapons in the chest along with a bit of personal treasure including a **purse** of 300 GP, a pearl and jade **necklace** (700 GP) and a set of finely engraved **golden knight's spurs** (200 GP) (see General Rumor 8).

The wall outside the trap room door is decorated in frescos, showing the funeral procession of a wealthy woman. The mourners carry golden vessels, caskets of gems and a distinctive crystal and gold sarcophagus. This sarcophagus' design is repeated in the shape of the sculpted stone door leading to **Area A 10**.



Captain Tubbs F5 (34 HP) [STR 18, CON 15, DEX 16, CHR 14] AC 2[18], ATK 1 [+2 hit], DAM 1D8+2/1D6, MV 9, SV 10, (Brass plated plate armor, shield, saber, two silvered tomahawks [80 GP])

Tubbs has been blessed by the God of Slaughter with a form of immortality. Unless her shriveled heart (**Area A14**) is destroyed her body will raise again from death with her full HP in 2D4 turns or as soon afterwards as it is no longer being watched. If her body is destroyed or too damaged to revive, it will melt into a bloody pool and Tubbs will revive near her heart.

Tubbs is a huge woman, nearly 7' tall, her mane of greyish brown hair matted into dreadlocks with blood and viscera. She is missing one of her front teeth, covered in scars and her eyes are always wild with deep madness. Despite her insanity and relative stupidity she is an inspiring commander and cunning in small until tactics.

A10 – The False Tomb

A false tomb, built as a trap for tomb raiders, and left unused by the Feasters. The walls of the room are frescoed with images of a stately Imperial burial, featuring a gold and crystal casket, sumptuous grave goods: silks, crystal vases, alabaster jars, golden furniture and bejeweled trinkets. At the far end room is another door that appears to have been covered in gold leaf and shaped like the crystal and gold sarcophagus of the frescos. The door is fake, a solid chunk of the wall sculpted to provide the illusion of a door. The entire room is a trap designed to lure robbers over the magical pit in the center of the room.

Sorcerer's Revenge – A pit trap outside the normal world of mechanical hinges or painted canvas stonework, the sorcerers of the old Empire created this trap to punish and capture tomb robbers. The 10' of floor at the center of the hall's 30' is enchanted to melt away when an intelligent warm-blooded creature stands at its center. Those caught by the trap will suddenly drop

through the floor as if through a spray of liquid, and fall into a 10' deep recess in the red rock (taking 1D6 damage). The trap's purpose isn't to kill, but to trap the robbers within, entombing them forever in the darkness, and within 10 seconds the immaterial rock above will reform (slicing any rope or wooden pole that passes through it and trapping any metal object).

The trap may be detected normally (there are tiny runes that will give a knowledgeable thief chills carved in the cracks of the floor's false tiles), or magically, but will be hard to disarm. Dispel magic (against a 6th level enchantment) will disarm the trap, but the floor will remain a 4' thick barrier between **Area A10** and anyone trapped below. Digging through the spongy red rock of the massif is also possible (either with or without disarming the trap) but it will take several days and make a great deal of noise unless magical aid (dig, passwall, rock to mud or stone to flesh) is used to speed the process.

Within the pit are an interesting collection of bones and ancient objects, some valuable. Amongst the remains of no less than eight robbers, the oldest from the early years of the Successor Empire and the newest a Feaster Guard are the following: Suit of yellow garrison plate, a long sword, several rusted weapons and decayed suits of leather armor, a heavy **square cut gold ring** (150 GP), an Imperial **grave mask** made of carved garnet (1,200 GP), 65 GP in **coins**, and a **Bonewhite Rapier** (1D8) the weapon is enchanted and allows the wielder to invoke the spell mirror image once per game session.

A11 – Kennels

Barking and growling are easily heard through the stone door to this chamber as it serves as the cult's kennels and prison. The room was once an ornate tomb, but the stone coffins within, and all of its inner partitions have been smashed and carried away. The tomb is transformed into a tall vault, lit by a single smoked red lamp swaying above a large table at its center, and filled with crude cages of giant dogs and a few cowed and huddled prisoners in a smaller cage at the rear of the room. A heavy door leads West with an obvious bar to keep it closed.

The kennels contain all seven (7) of the **Cursed Hounds** sacred to the Cult of the Golden Feast and its cadre of torturers, led by the assassin **Mad Yurta**. The hounds are always active, with massive jaws snapping amongst themselves and their brindled yellow hides rippling strange symbols. While the hounds appear to howl and bark, and they wear easily heard at the door, the room itself is strangely silent.

Mad Yurta (A5) [STR 16, INT 13, DEX 15] HP 22, AC 5[14], ATK 1 [+3 hit/Str and dual wield], DAM 1D6+2/1D4 MV 12, SV 14 *Abilities as a 5th level assassin and backstab at +7 hit for (1D6+3x3)+5 damage. Darkvision 80' (Infidel Doublet, Blood Drinking Blade, Short Sword, 6 throwing daggers).

Blood Drinking Blade – A straight razor edged short sword with a simple cross guard, this weapon has developed a bloodlust of its own after many years in the hands of lunatic killers. If it strikes a target the blade will rapidly drink blood from its victim, requiring a save vs. poison or suffer a cumulative -1 penalty to all rolls for the rest of the combat from blood loss.

Infidel Doublet – A heavy black leather doublet covered with numerous devotional figurines of the Imperial Cult sewn into it. The figurines are made from the ancient magical ceramic bonewhite and enormously durable. Each of the figurines is defaced in minor ways (mostly with painted slogans), but the figurines provide effective light armor [AC 5/14 – but encumbers as leather armor].

Cursed Hound (7) HD 4, AC 6 [13] ATK 1*, DAM 1D6+1, MV 18, SV 13 *The hounds ethereal howls can be heard for miles, but the air around each hound is silent, as the Cleric Spell Silence 15-foot radius.

Feaster Torturers (2 – Hild, Magnanimous Min) F2 [STR 14] AC 3[16], ATK 1 [+1 hit], DAM 1D10+1/1D8, MV 9, SV 14, (ochre painted garrison plate, two-handed sword, throwing axe, 5 daggers)

Sitting at the table, staring directly at the door is a cadaverous man with flat red eyes wearing a bloodstained leather apron, over a doublet covered in bonewhite figurines. Two yellow armored guards, a woman in a full helm and a smaller man with a handsome smiling face are rising from the benches as the party enters.

This is **Mad Yurta**, the hound master, chief torturer and assassin of the Cult of the Golden Feast. **Yurta** and his two favorites are more insane and antisocial than the rest of the Feasters and are unlikely to aid the guards in **Area A8** unless the alarm was raised. The torturers communicate only through gestures and can coordinate effectively even under the hound's silence effect.

Yurta and his helpers have a plan for invasion. **Yurta** will wave languorously at anyone entering in an effort to stall them while **Min** and **Hild** advance towards the door calmly. As soon as the guards are within melee range or the intruders begin to act aggressively, **Yurta** will fling a dagger at the lantern above, shattering it on a successful hit vs. AC 9[10]).

With the room plunged into darkness **Yurta** will release the **Cursed hounds** (round 2) and then move into a backstabbing position if possible, attacking with the hounds on round 4. Meanwhile the two guards will fight defensively, forgoing attacks to gain a bonus of +2 to AC. The hounds are less disturbed by the darkness than most humans, suffering only a -1 to hit vs. the normal -4. **Yurta** of course has been granted blood filled eyes that see in the dark by his cruel god.

Yurta's first target is any intruder that seems unaffected by the darkness, he then moves on to warriors, clerics, and finally magic users and thieves, always trying for a backstab attack. If the **Cursed Hounds** and torturers/guards are killed, **Yurta** suffers serious injury, or the fight appears to be going badly **Yurta** will flee

without concern. He will dash to the rear door, throw down the bar and vanish into the darkness beyond. **Yurta** has a plan even here, clinging to the underside of the bridge and only emerging if the intruders engage the **Golden Ones** in **Area A12**. Once the party is locked in combat **Yurta** will silently climb back onto the bridge (with appropriate bonuses to his move silently skill due to the distractions and noise of combat) and backstab the most easily slain target, preferably a cleric or wizard. **Yurta** will leap into the water below and splash off towards **Area A7** after his initial attack as he has no desire to deal with the **Golden Ones**.

Prisoners – Among the captives, locked together in a cage are a single zero-level matron kidnapped from the road's settlement, and three rakes (zero level humans) taken from the road. One rake has parents looking for him (See General Rumor 7). All four are deeply traumatized and have been brutalized to a single HP each.

A12 – The Golden Ones

Bridging the river 10' below is a stone archway, delicately carved with spires and flourishes. The railings of the bridge are studded with candles, but only a few still burn.

At the end of the bridge is a stone door, similar to others in the complex, but smudged and defaced with filthy handprints. If examined closely the handprints appear basically human, but slightly too large. Beyond is the wretched, pitch black lair of the **Golden Ones**.

The room was once a tomb for an Imperial magnate of some kind, but is barely recognizable as it is so strewn with filth and gnawed bones. A rickety coffin, likely dragged from a graveyard, a feces piled altar and a battered stone sarcophagus molded from the floor form the room's only furniture. The **Golden Ones** themselves, eight (8) of them, sit lean or lay about the room, their huge furred bodies covered in scars.

Golden One (8) HD 6 AC 6 [13], ATK 3, DAM 2D4, 1D3, 1D8 MV 12, SV11 "Will regenerate fully from injury in 1D4 turns – even 'death' with a successful save. Can track by smell.

Men and woman become blond beasts lustfully roving in search of spoils and victory. Golden Ones stand anywhere from 6' to 8' tall and are covered in shaggy golden fur, which barely conceals bulbous musculature. The heads of Golden Ones dispense with any notion that they might be human, being a twisted amalgamation of the leonine, hyenine and bovine. These monsters are divine (albeit the spawn of an evil and debased god) and heal at an unnatural rate, unless specific efforts to kill them are taken (beheading, incineration, drowning).

The horrors attack three times per round, by biting with their bone cracking jaws (2D4 damage), pummeling with their huge fists (1D8) and raking or stomping with clawed or hooved feet (1D3).

Golden Ones are constantly frenzied and natural hunters who will pursue their enemies if they are able, even tracking by smell if they lose sight of their prey.

When followers of the God of Slaughter have proven themselves truly dedicated, but unworthy of the priesthood, they are 'raised' into the deity's "true terrestrial representatives," monstrous **Golden Ones** trapped forever in the heightened state of a hunting carnivore at the very moment its plunges its teeth into the hot blood of its prey. **Golden Ones** know only a desire for slaughter and blood, and while they cannot be reasoned with sufficient injury may teach them fear, at least until they heal.

The **Golden Ones** don't allow other cult members in their room, so the victims that they seize and drag back home to devour leave their belongings among their gnawed bones. A small hoard of valuables, along with a varied collection of gnawed skulls, is crammed inside the stone

tomb, the lid of which can be moved by two strong humans. Inside the sarcophagus are 250 GP in scattered **coins**, a courtesan's **comb** in bone white, silver and alchemical stones that advertises the wearer's status (800 GP), a folded pearl composite pocket **fan**, (300 GP) a fine whitened steel **rapier** (200 GP).

A13 - Grand Temple of Slaughter

The slaughterhouse stink of this blood splattered chamber is obvious even in **Area 7**, but upon entering the true horror of the Feaster's practice becomes immediately apparent. This room was once the entry hall to the tombs of the Sorcerer General's concubines. The floor is a mosaic of black and red tile radiating outward from the steps that lead to **Area A14**, and decorative pillars, carved into the lithe forms of beautiful men and women, the representations of those entombed beyond, bisect the chamber. Garish **silver chains** sculpted to resemble garlands of flowers and festooned with eternal blue glowing lamps (12,000 GP for the entire collection) still light what was once a magnificent chamber.

Now the room has been given over to the violent and bloody worship of the Hyena Headed Lord of Slaughter. Black chains of crude iron are hammered into the sculpted pillars and end in the heavy collars of fifteen (15) grey skinned and emaciated men and women. The Feasters transform the most resilient of their victims into **Ghouls** through starvation and evil rituals, and then chain vile creatures here to clean the temple of gore after the cult's rituals. The **Ghouls'** chains cannot reach every corner of the room and its reek wafts from these gore caked nooks.

The **Ghouls'** chains are long enough to reach anyone entering the room and the horrible creatures will rush howling to attack, perhaps seeking an end to their own torments. This cacophony will sound the alarm, if it has not already been raised, unless magical efforts are made to prevent it, and any surviving priests will arrive from **Areas A15** and **A16** in 1D4 rounds.

Ghoul (15) HD 2 AC 6 [13], ATK 3, DAM 1D3x2 1D4*, MV 9, SV 16** *The bites of ghouls cause paralysis for 3D6 turns on a failed save. **undead, subject to Clerical turning and immune to mid effecting spells.

The Ghouls involuntarily created by the Cult Golden Feast still have a vague memory of their previous lives but are commanded to attack by their infernal hunger. Only the priests of the cult can control them by lashing them with long chain whips and calling their original names.

If the ghouls are turned, Feaster priests can reverse the effect with a successful turn attempt of their own.

A14 - Sanctum

The altar of slaughter lurks on this raised platform, having been converted from the sculpted sarcophagus of the chief concubine. Its beautiful marble is stained and encrusted with the blood of sacrifices, while an icon made from bones forms the altar's centerpiece and obscures the details of the concubine's empty, desecrated coffin. Also atop the altar are **four skulls**, cut into bowls and sealed with gold (800 GP total). Each bowl contains a number of dried chunks of meat that an Intelligence check or any sort of medical knowledge can identify as hearts. One of these belongs to **Captain Tubbs** and allows her to return to life. Tubbs will die if the heart is destroyed.

Around the altar a collection of plundered trade goods and contraband rots. While much of this treasure is decayed (a crate of rotten lobsters, brocades ruined by blood and water, wine that has long gone vinegar, a cage of starved, rainbow hued pet monkeys from far Vehissu, and bags of sacks of weevil ruined flour) some remains valuable: A crate of **steel needles** (500 GP), a lead foil wrapped **brick of narcotic/pain killer drugs** (1,200 GP), A tin of **smoked lens** for glasses (300 GP). These three items are all contraband, and will be seized if taken through the gates of the Capital.

A15 – Priest Sanguine

Beyond a thin marble door, carved to resemble a sleeping man with exquisite features is the private seclusion of the Cult of the Golden Feast's leader, the **Hierophant**, or Priest Sanguine. The room smells of a sweet incense and clotted blood, and contains a simple bed, a brass water pipe, a bone lectern with an anthropodermically bound scripture of the Lord of Slaughter (it will cause a loss of 1D4 points of Wisdom if read by a non-believer), a rack with several yellow robes, all stained rust red with blood, and several glass oil lamps.

In a small lacquered bone box near the water pipe are several **compressed disks** (200 GP) of some white substance. These disks are a powerful and sinister hallucinogen that will induce 1D6 hours of horrific bloody visions.

The **Hierophant** himself is most often found in this room (though he will join the rest of the cult in battle) meditating with his hookah, studying doctrine, sleeping or mumbling to himself.

The **Hierophant** is an unremarkable man, once a travelling priest of the Imperial Cult, with a body and faced marked by a lifetime of depravity and ascetic self-denial. He does not reveal in the evil he commits as many of Feasters do, but is wholly dedicated to drowning the corrupt world of the rotting Empire in its own blood and pain, a slaughter far cleaner than the slow death by starvation and decay that he has witnessed the Empire's decline force upon its subjects. As a reward he expects to save himself and his followers from the coming cataclysm. The **Hierophant** is not a tactician, he is a true believer, and will fight to the best of his ability, unless he believes his cult is about to be destroyed. If defeat seems certain the **Hierophant** will cast animate dead on any nearby bodies and then flee, to return later. He will use his other spells (including his blade barrier scroll) offensively.

The **Hierophant's** calm crabbed features are always hidden by the artifact of his cult, **The Mask of Pain**, a great golden helmet inlaid with ivory and blackened bone. The mask depicts a screaming bestial head,

something like that of one of the **Golden Ones** (see Treasures of Note below for details). Beneath his mask the **Hierophant** wears a blood soaked robe that conceals elaborate brass decorated plate armor.

The Hierophant (CL8) [STR 14 WIS 18] HP 30, AC 2[17], ATK 1 [+1 hit], DAM 1D6+1 MV 9, SV 9 'Darkvision 80' (plate armor, bone mace, shield, **Mask of Pain** (see Treasures of Note section). Scroll of Animate Dead (level 10), Scroll of Blade Barrier (level 14)

Spells: cure light wounds(2), darkness, hold person, silence 15' radius, cause disease, prayer, protection from good 10' radius, insect plague.

A16 – Underpriests Quarters

In contrast to **Area A15**, these chambers are a squalid wreck with bloody mattresses tossed on the floor, and filthy piles of pillows, rugs and hangings covered in dried blood. Bones have been balanced in a variety of odd piles, clearly intended to be decorative or as acts of lunatic devotion.

This chamber is home to the cult's five **Underpriests** (though two are priestesses, all five are sexless in their blood spattered ochre robes and shaved heads).

Priests (2) CL 4 [STR 13, WIS 16] AC 2 [17], ATK 1, Dam 1D6+1, MV 9, SV 14 (ochre painted garrison plate, shield, steel whip (flail), bloody robes)

Spells: Protection from Good, Cure Light Wounds, Hold Person

Secret Door – A small trapdoor in the floor, a disc of wood, much like a barrel lid with a blood soaked rope handle opens into a small, crudely carved chamber. The West wall of this chamber (barely big enough for three people to stand in) is a heavy blanket, painted on one side to resemble the cave wall. The blanket, which gleams like wet stone, but won't stand up to close examination, can easily be pushed aside.

AREA B – NECROMANCER'S REPOSE

These smoothly cut rock chambers were originally designed to be inhabited by caretakers and tomb guards, but were taken over many years ago by Potilius Vex an elderly necromancer somewhat faded in power. Vex died of old age a two years before the time of this adventure, but his body remains peacefully slumped on his sleeping couch and guarded by the necromancer's few minions and traps, but there is no organized force within **AREA B**. Vex was not an especially powerful or destructive sort and focused his studies on the reanimation of animals, an art that he gained some expertise in over his long life. The necromancer was well known during his life, especially by the thieves of the Capital who knew him as a man to sell corpses and sick animals to, and as a wizard who could provide reliable means of escape through his very temporary undead steeds. The Dust Family and Vex were old acquaintances, and lived in peaceful coexistence though they did not interact often. The Dust Family suspects Vex is dead or gone, but has not raided the necromancer's lair out of respect and fear of his magic. The Feasters have no idea of what's beyond the entrance to Vex's lair, and have been frightened off by the considerable legerdemain Vex used to make his home seem dangerous.

Random Encounters in **Areas B1 – B4** will be with Vex's Skeleton dog pack, consisting of six (6) **skeletal dogs**, painted red and with skulls filed with glowing magical embers. After these dogs are destroyed no more random encounters will occur.

Skeleton Dog (6) HD 1, AC 5[14], ATK 1, DAM 1D6 MV12, SV 16* The dogs are undead (as skeletons) and are immune to mind affecting spells and psychology, but susceptible to Clerical turning.

Area B – Entrances

Bone Grotto – A 25' wide grotto leading into the side of the massif, once carved into the shape of a gate flanked by statues and columns. The original carvings are rain worn and wind scoured, now only vague outlines. The reliefs carved on the wall are mostly lost, but close examination will indicate that they depicted robed guardsmen of some kind. More obvious are the weathered skulls of an ox and a horse set in niches where the statue's original heads have been neatly chipped away. A few pieces of ancient horse and cow dung are scattered about the grotto's corners, especially near the 10' wide corridor leading from its rear.

Necromancer's Stair – A smaller, seemingly natural entrance leads to a narrow stair, and hallway beyond. The walls and stairway are neatly carved from the stone to resemble cut blocks. In the center of the hallway is a curtain of human skulls dangling from a lattice of rusted chains. Approaching the curtain within 5' will cause one of the skulls (a random one each time) to speak. The skulls be relatively calm at first informing visitors that the 'dread master' is indisposed. If the party persists in approaching they will warn of the master's wrath and how the visitor's own bones will be used to create 'horrors'. The curtain is otherwise harmless, a modified version of the magic mouth spell.

Beyond the curtain is a decorative black iron gate, wrought in the form of thorn vines, locked with a sturdy but mundane padlock.

B1 – Paddock of Bones

An arched 10' tall passage, neatly graveled leads from the Bone Grotto and into a large open paddock. Niches along the walkway, seemingly carved at random heights contain bleached animal skulls, mostly horses and oxen. The last pair of niches, before the passage opens each contains a **human skeleton**, articulated with copper wire and holding a shovel. These **skeletons** are animate, but will do nothing unless animals are left along the passage or in the paddock, in which case they will clean up animal dung and smooth out the gravel of the passage after 1D4 turns. If attacked the **skeletons** will feebly defend themselves with their shovels.

Skeleton Grooms (2) – HD 1, AC 8 [11], ATK 1, DAM1D6 MV12, SV17*

*The skeletons are undead and are immune to mind affecting spells and psychology, but susceptible to Clerical turning.

The paddock itself is a large rough stone canyon, floored with neatly smoothed gray gravel and brightly lit by sunlight that streams 60' through a chimney in the porous rock to the sky above. A 4' tall fence of bones and wire, barbed with sharpened vertebra, spans the entry, with a simply latched gate allowing entrance.

A stone water trough is carved into the wall on the Southwestern corner of the paddock, filled with stagnant rainwater. Across from it a narrow path winds through a heaping pile of bones towards a broad stair leading upward into the rock. If examined the bones will all prove to those of domesticated animals, mostly horses and cattle, but with a few other stranger creatures mixed in. 1D4 turns of search will uncover the weathered four foot long **tusks of a small elephant**, worth 300 GP, while 1D6 turns of searching will reveal the large humanlike skull of a manticore. The **manticore's wicked teeth** are worth 600 GP to a sorcerer or collector of oddities.

The passage beyond the paddock is arched and has been rubbed smooth and leads to an iron portcullis wrought in the form of thorny vines. Flanking the gate are six niches, each containing a human skeleton, with head replaced with that of a horse or bull, and its bones a vibrant color. The two niches nearest the door contain vibrant red skeletons, their heads replaced with bull skulls, the other four skeleton are green and have horse skulls. When an intruder reaches the top of the stairs all six skeletons will step free of their niches, their fingers suddenly raised to point back down the stairs. If intruders advance on the skeleton line, the undeads' hands will begin to glow (red for the bull skeletons, and a sickly green for the others), as they crouch ready to leap. If attacked, or if intruders touch the metal portcullis all six skeletons will charge into melee. The creatures are simple animate skeletons, but their bones have been

painted bright colors and a minor enchantment cast on them to make their hands glow.

Skeleton Guards (2) – HD 1, AC 8 [11], ATK 1, DAM1D6 MV12, SV17*

*The skeletons are undead and are immune to mind affecting spells and psychology, but susceptible to Clerical turning. The skeleton Guards have been treated with powdered devil bone, which inhibits turning however, and must be turned as specters.

Once the skeletons have been destroyed the gate proves a mundane stoutly built iron gate, locked with a normal padlock.

B2- Laboratory

The front of this chamber, just beyond the twin gates, contains a **set of chairs and a table made from lacquered bones** (20 GP), carefully held together with small copper nails. A hammered **copper pitcher in the shape of a spiny gourd and a set of matching copper cups** (50 GP) set on the table. An alcove near the Southern gate holds a **glass fronted curio case** (50 GP) full of bones and mundane oddities such as oddly shaped pebbles, dried flowers and a large taxidermy trout. Near the case is **small wrought iron desk** (10 GP) containing numerous copies of blank form contracts for the exchanging 'sorcerous mounts' for various amounts of gold and pre-signed by PontiliusVex. Dead candles in a variety of colors stand on every surface, and clutter several wall sconces.

Bisecting the sitting area from the rest of the room is a huge set of aged **blue velvet curtains**, (300 GP), decorated with tiny crystals, the curtains are enormous, unwieldy and heavy, but can be easily removed from the brass rod they hang from. Pulling back the curtain activates a **programmed illusion** that Vex once paid a wandering illusionist to place on it. The illusion fills the laboratory beyond the curtain with black mists that quickly coagulate into a tall ghostly form in strange jagged black armor. The illusory guardian looks mournfully at the curtain, scanning its entire length with

glowing red eyes before beginning a patrol of the laboratory. Careful observation for two turns will spot the loop in the illusions actions, making it clear that the silent guardian's slow circuit around the chamber repeats itself identically. The illusion will dissipate if the words "master" and "begone" are uttered in the same sentence, and will reset after six turns (an hour).

Beyond the curtains is a laboratory, a large stone topped iron table covered in the huge bones of a small elephant (one of Pontilius Vex's long term projects was to raise an elephant skeleton), and piles of notes crammed haphazardly into a set of lizard skin folios. The notes are primarily basic research on a 5th level spell that would allow the animation of elephant (or other giant creature) bones as a servitor. The spell is on 1/2 done, but the notes will cut the cost and research time for such a spell in half. The other furniture in this laboratory appears cheaply knocked together from common wood and includes several tables, one holding a jury rigged alchemical set up that looks more dangerous than useful, a few stools and a large bookcase. The bookcase contains more folios (mostly horse hide) that have notes for the all the spells in Pontilius' spell book (See **Area B 3**) as well as a small collection of **common reference books on anatomy and sorcery** (250 GP). A glass jar on the bookcase contains the a bundle wound in sigil scribbled linen, a **Coward's Heart** (See Treasures of Note section)

The balcony is barely visible from the ground 10' below, an overhang and its naturalistic pillars concealing it. It contains little of interest except a few bright painted pots holding dead plants and dry dirt, but allows a great deal of natural light to stream into the room beyond.

B3- Living Space

This smooth stone chamber is decorated with poorly rendered murals of a rose briar, in faded but still garish colors. The windows are barred with decorative black iron grates. A large iron bed with dusty sheets and a **magically strengthened glass headboard** (400GP), decorated with an idyllic imperial market scene, dominate the room. There is also an ironbound travelling chest on one side of the bed, filled with sturdy work clothes, a single **silk shirt** (40 GP) and a patched black

robe. A similar black robe, in better condition is draped over the back of the chair.

A body rests in the bed, having rotted into the thick wool sheets. The body is still indefinable as that of an elderly man, with a long gray beard and lank gray hair. This is Pontilius Vex, who died peacefully in his sleep a year ago, shortly before the Feasters arrived at the Massif.

A heavy iron chair coved in faded cushions stands near a small iron table which displays a **black tome** on a polished wood stand and three glass domes containing strange objects.

The first dome contains a thighbone, covered in carved script that glows an unwholesome green. It is another piece of Vex's legerdemain, begin a worthless toy he liked to show off as a wand dread wand.

Undead Spider - The second glass case contains a large preserved spider. This case is a trap, as Vex raised the spider, only to discover it was uncontrollable and highly poisonous. While the spider, a hairy blue and black thing the size of a fist, appears dead and remains inert under the glass dome, when the case is removed it will spring into unnatural life, surprising on a 1-4. The spider's first attack will be a leap towards the nearest living creature and attack at a +4.

Undead Spider - HD 1/2, AC 4 [15], ATK 1*, DAM 1**, MV 12, SV 17***

*The spider leaps up to ten feet from target to target, gaining a +4 to hit when it uses this tactic.

** The spider's bite contains lethal necromantic poison that will kill anyone failing a save v. poison. Victims will rise as rage filled undead (ghouls or wights) in 1D12 hours after death.

The last case contains a pair of **gold rimmed spectacles** with black smoked lenses (20 GP). These spectacles are magical and while worn allow the wearer to grasp and manipulate the **black tome**.

Black Tome - The book on table, set in an ebony wood holder is Pontilius Vex's spellbook. It is protected by an

enchantment rendering it immaterial to any person not wear the **gold rimmed spectacles**, but is otherwise a normal spellbook containing the following magic-user spells:

1st Level – Read Magic, Detect Magic, Sleep, Magic Missile

2nd Level – Darkness 15' Radius, Magic Mouth (talking skull specifically), Phantasmal Force, Invisibility, Undead Mount

3rd Level – Dispel Magic, Suggestion, Hold Person,

5th Level – Animate Dead

Undead Mount

Spell Level: Magic-User, 2nd Level

Range: Touch

Duration: 12 hours (1 night)

This spell raises the remains of a draft or riding animal as an undead steed for a single night. The creature will be completely docile and runs tirelessly at base movement rate of 60, twice that of a horse. The undead mount can be ridden in combat, but is very fragile (1HD/AC 8 [11]) and cannot attack.

B4-Stores and Kitchen

Upon entry it becomes immediately clear that this area has been used as a store room and kitchen in the near

past, with barrels of dried apples, sacks of common grains, and hanging hams filling much of it. The wagon load of **supplies** is worth 100 GP despite being slightly stale. A small kitchen, containing a cast iron stove connected to an ancient stone flue, a counter and simple fountain filled with clear water take up the rest of the space. The residents of this room are also immediate obvious. Three **skeletal cats** (250 GP each) patrol the stores, much as living housecats would. The undead beasts have no real understanding of their state and spend most of their time slumped in various nest among the stacked supplies, looking for rodents to kill. All three cats will rise when the door open however, as they are curious creatures. Two are malicious and hateful, silently hissing at intruders with arched backs and barred fangs, but they aren't really aggressive and will run to hide amongst the supplies if threatened with loud noises. The third undead mouser retains a sweet disposition and will try to rub its boney face against intruders' legs. If it has a positive reaction roll (a +2 bonus to reaction should be granted if the characters coax it with clucking noises, pet it or otherwise behave in a friendly manner) the undead cat will attempt to follow them. The cats are all excellent mousers and any captured will fetch 250 GP as a useful addition to any storehouse or as a parlor oddity.

Skeletal Cat (3) HD ½, AC 5 [14], ATK 1, DAM 1D4, MV 12, SV 17**

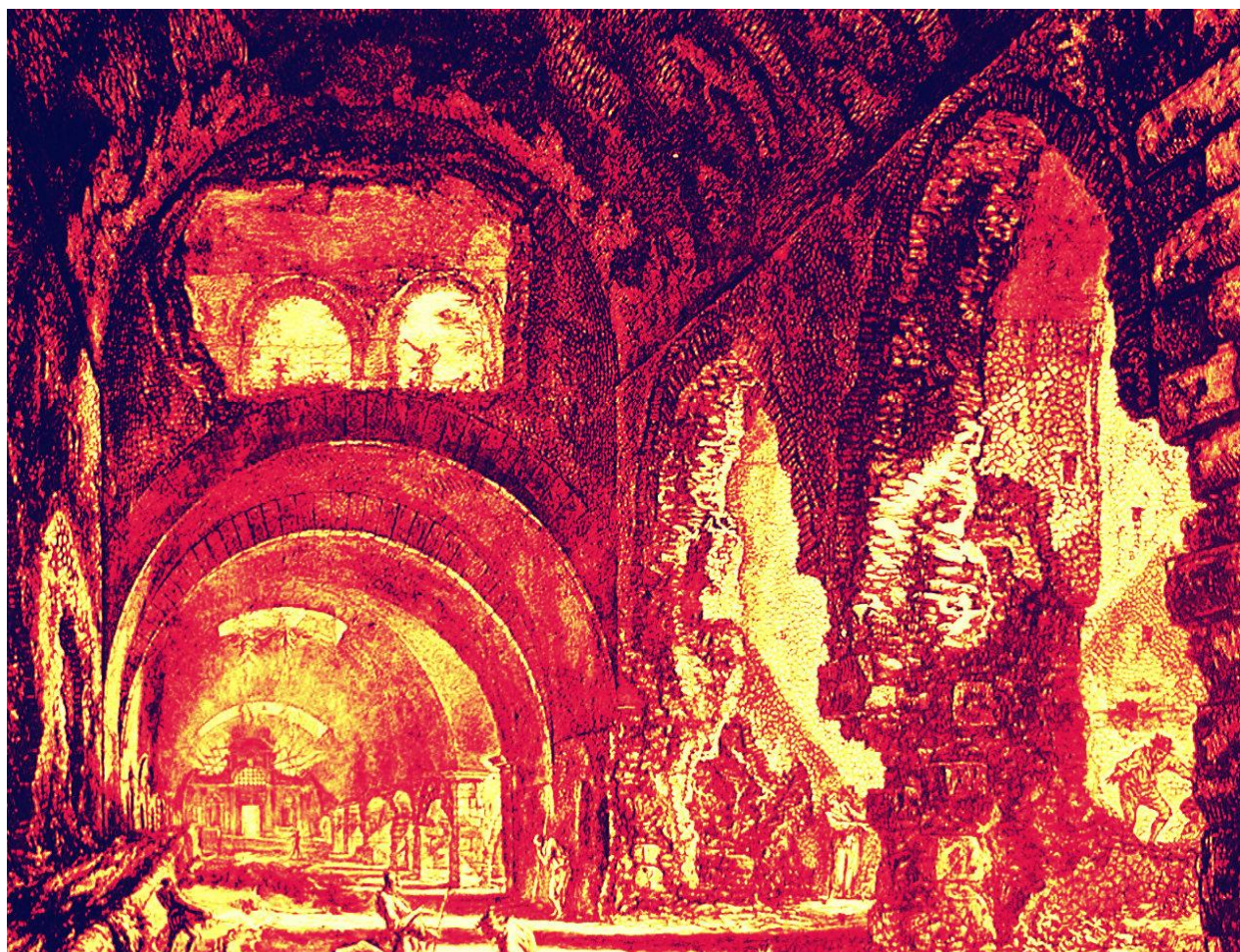
*The skeletons are undead and are immune to mind affecting spells and psychology, but susceptible to Clerical turning.

AREA C- CHAMBERS OF THE SLEEPING GOD

Magic formed from the red stone of the massif, this area was designed as a place for pilgrims to worship the now nameless sainted general who ordered the massif created. The stone is decorated in simple carvings of angular spirals and toothed lines of bas relief. A large shallow pool of water comes from the rock, passing through the face of the Pilgrim's Temple (**Area C1**). Within the rock the slumbering body of the general's bound servant, a yazata or titan, sleeps, waiting to awake

and do the bidding of the sorcerer general or his progenies. The slumbering god's uneasy dreams have filtered into the water of **Area C** giving the region an uncanny feeling and leaking into the minds of any who sleep there, and give the entire area an uncanny feel. Even the waking mind is deranged by the presence of the bound celestial titan, and on any random encounter check resulting in a 3 or 4 a random party member will experience one of the following disturbances.

1D8	MYSTERIOUS EFFECTS OF THE EMPYREAN TITAN'S TROUBLED SLUMBER
1	Shadows shift suddenly, spinning away from the light in unexpected directions.
2	The colors suddenly reverse, red becomes blue and black becomes white. The disorientation ends in 1D4 rounds.
3	A sense that an unknown number has been uttered, part of some count down, and that this number is important.
4	Afflicted is compelled to utter a long phrase in an unknown language. The language is Celestial and the afflicted is listed some of the infinite names of the Heavenly Thrones.
5	A flash of X-Ray vision, everyone around the character looks like skeletons.
6	The rocks sing in a haunting ballad about their torment at the hands of man and time.
7	A sudden strange taste fills the afflicted's mouth: sand, burnt fish, the color green, regret, thorns.
8	Burning pain and overwhelming paranoia cascade into the victims mind. It is over in a second, but leaves behind a sheen of cold sweat.



D8 RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE DREAM CAVES OF THE EMPYREAN TITAN	
1	<p>Golden Ones (1D4) A small pack of unhappily sniffing Golden Ones who are trying to track down Rheda the mad pilgrim by scent. They don't like being close to the slumbering celestial and in the past her ability to cast sanctuary has driven them off as they refuse to spend more than an hour or two within the range of the titan's thoughts. The Golden Ones will be delighted with any 'prey' but run far more easily than normal if injured or frightened.</p> <p>Golden One - HD 6 AC 6 [13], ATK 3, DAM 2D4, 1D3, 1D8 MV 12, SV11 "Will regenerate fully from injury in 1D4 turns - even 'death' with a successful save. Can track by smell.</p>
2	<p>Ash Geist - A shattered funerary urn and rests here with a haze of ash in the air above it. The ash hangs in a diffuse cloud, but should a living being come within striking distance (10') it will suddenly coalesce and spark into an ominous human shaped cloud of embers and hate that slashes with searing claws.</p> <p>Ash Geist - HD 4+1, AC 5*, ATK 2, DAM 1D8"/1D8", MV 10, SV 13 "Immune to normal weapons "The Geist's claws will ignite enemies if they fail a save vs. wands when struck. The fire will burn for 1D4 HP per round until extinguished by rolling on the floor or other reasonable means.</p>
3	<p>Dust Family Scout - A brown clad young man in a long scarf and wide hat with large brown feathers shoved in the band is moving cautiously along the tunnel or trail. This scout will hide if he spots the party without being seen (since he can't be surprised), flee if attacked, and claim to be a tomb robber in search of "a score" if hailed. The scout will try to direct the party downstream, to encounter the Feasters, but will warn them that he thinks the "good tombs" in that direction are haunted by dangerous creatures.</p> <p>Princely Dust, Poacher - (TH 2) [DEX 15] AC 7 [12] ATK 1 +1 hit at range, DAM 1D6/1D6, MV 12, SV 14 (Leather Armor, spear, short sword, shortbow bow, 30 arrows.)</p>
4	<p>Owlbear - A mated pair of black feathered owl bears that have recently been hunting from the ruins. They are aggressive like all their kind, but have also shared the titan's dreams of the celestial thrones. The creatures have become somewhat lawful in their actions and will stand guard over their territory, with hackles raised but will not attack unless there is demonic magic nearby or they are further provoked.</p> <p>Owlbears (2) - HD 5 HP 25, 30, AC 5 [14], ATK 3*, DAM 1D6x2/1D8, MV 12, SV12 "On a hit roll of 18+ owl bears hug or maul their prey for an additional 2D8 damage.</p>
5	<p>Mad Vermin - A commune of vermin, their tiny minds fully subsumed by the titan's dreams and the worship of the Celestial Thrones lairs here. The group is harmless and mixed, including mice, rats, insects, small birds and the odd bat or two. The creatures spend much of their time in prayer and worship, dancing in strange artificial looking formations and chirping with odd unnatural rhythms. They are also starving as the predators among them refuse to eat their fellow believers and all have given over much of their time to prayer. The vermin are harmless and will stoically allow themselves to be slain if attacked. If fed and transported to civilization the commune might be sold for 150GP as a novelty or circus attraction.</p>
6	<p>Mad Pilgrim - Rheda is a former lay sister of the Imperial Cult, who sought enlightenment by sleeping in the pilgrim's temple. The titan's dreams have driven her mad, and she will be cheerfully mumbling in celestial whenever she is encountered. Rheda is being hunted by the Feasters, but since the Golden Ones do not like entering Area C she has so far manage to hide. If threatened Rheda will cast protection from evil which has protected her long enough to run away in the past.</p> <p>Rheda (Lunatic) - CL 1 [DEX 14] AC 9 [10], ATK 1, DAM 1D2, MV 12, SV145 - ragged novice's robe, sack of dried fish</p>

Cl - Pilgrim's Temple

The rock of the massif is carved and sculpted into the façade of an ancient temple, with numerous windows and portals above a façade of graceful pillars. A stream leading from the temple fills a large pool on the south

side of the massif that impedes entrance. The pool is clear, sandy bottomed and no more than six feet deep at its center. It is home to schools of tiny sand colored fish.

A narrow channel bisects this airy temple, well lit during the day by the arched and decoratively carved

windows in its façade. The temple contains no furnishings, but pews, altars and devotional niches are molded directly from the stone.

The channel that crosses the temple's center is filled with a variety of magnificent and miraculous fish, with long feathery fins and glittering scales that shift through the spectrum with every change of light. These fish are an illusion and thus cannot be harmed or caught. However, the illusion is programmed to react in a life like manner to the presence of people in the temple, darting away from reaching hands and sudden shadows.

C2 – Ledge

A dusty ledge occasionally used by mystics as a place of seclusion so that they may fill their minds with the dreams of the sleeping celestial (**Area C5**). While it is currently unoccupied, a ragged lean-to cobbled from dry branches and a cold fire pit provides evidence of past visitors.

Sleeping in any of the **Area C** locations, especially after drinking any of the water from the pool in front of the temple or the stream winding through is (**Area C1**) will allow the dreams of the slumbering Empyrean Titan to subsume the sleeper's own. This is an unpleasant process as the titan's alien mind dreams of the ineffable glories of the hive like Celestial Thrones and of the wars against demons and men that it has waged. The titan dreams of immense battles and unleashing cosmic forces to shatter entire cities with lightning, fire and the endless legions of the ancient Empire. These dreams can be prophetic, but they can also tend to drive mortals mad. A dreamer must make a check against their wisdom to gain a chance to ask the titan's subconscious a single yes or no question, which it will answer with 100% accuracy. Regardless of success, the sleeper also needs to roll a save v. spells after sharing the creature's dreams or go mad. Subsequent nights of sleep in Area C will repeat the entire process, but the save v. spells is at a cumulative -1 per night.

Those driven insane by the titan's dreams will abandon their possessions and wander back towards civilization with the insatiable need to spread the word about what they now know of the Celestial Thrones. The insanity is

curable with a Cure Disease spell, but a strong impulse and fanatical devotion to the Celestial Thrones will remain.

C3 – Shrine Niche

Carved into the wall of this small chamber is a shrine to the Red Massif's Sorcerer General, and more well-known members of the Imperial pantheon. Devotional figures have been painted on the walls and are largely faded. All that remains of the statute that once stood here is a marble plinth. The walls are covered in pilgrims' prayers, written on scraps of dry parchment or fragments of poorly tanned skins and stuck to the walls with tar. The prayers are universally desperate, as would be expected from such a small and forgotten shrine.

The long hallway leading to this chamber contains a wall of funeral niches, each holding an egg like ceramic urn of ashes. These urns are the remains of servants and laborers and none contain either treasure or traps, but there are thousands of them here, and only a few have been broken over the millennia.

C4 – Tomb of the Defiant

A chamber of torment for the souls of the one hundred and thirteen sorcerers slain by the ancient general, a testament to his power and alleged sainthood. The chamber is a cage of ancient wards and iron bars, containing a huge pile of petrified bones. One hundred and thirteen skulls hang from the ceiling in baskets of chain beyond the bars. A plinth, molded from the stone of the floor stands before the cage and proclaims "Look upon the bones of the fallen and ask how the great, the dread, the mighty and the powerful have come so low. I am the answer to that question, for my wrath carries all before it." No signature is inscribed below this statement.

A careful examination of the bars will note that they are loose, the stone around them having decayed from water seepage. Attention to the room beyond the bars will indicate strange movements and unnatural eddies of dust among the ancient bones, it will also reveal hints of dust covered gold and jewels. The use of detection magic will show a howling concentration of necromancy

inside the cage, and even highlight vague humanoid figures moving amongst the bones.

Entering the cage (after jimmying away several bars) will allow the vengeful and insane spirits of the General's enemies to attack the intruders. Manifesting as a swarm of glowing ghostlight, cadaverous apparitions and even a few clattering petrified skeletons, these undead cannot be reasoned with and seek only to vent their rage. They cannot escape from the cage area however, trapped by the ancient wards, and will dematerialize again if there are no potential victims within their reach.

Spectres (2) - HD 6, AC 2 [17]*, ATK 1, DAM1D8**, MV 15/30 (fly), SV 9 *Immune to non-magical weapons **level drain (two levels)

Wraith (9) - HD 4, AC 4 [15], ATK 1, DAM1D6**, MV 9, SV 13 *Immune to normal weapons, ½ damage from silver weapons **level drain (one level)

Skeletal Wight (4) - HD 3, AC 5 [14]*, ATK 1, DAM1HP**, MV 8, SV 14 *Immune to normal weapons **level drain (one level)

If the undead are destroyed, treasure in the form of ancient jewelry is scattered amongst the bones: a handful of loose **emeralds** (1,200 GP), a **platinum rod** (800 GP) and a **mask** of fine golden chains (450 GP).

C5 – Slumbering God

The tunnels leading to this chamber are filled knee deep with water. After the first thirty feet from the entrance in **Area C1**, the darkness becomes absolute and the water is covered with a raft of purple bioluminescent algae resembling duckweed, that clings to those who wander in it (preventing them from surprising enemies until they clean it off and giving a ~40% chance to the hide in shadows skill). The carpet of strange plant life ends 30' from **Area A7**.

A passage almost concealed behind a natural pillar slants downward into the black water after 10' and leads

down for another 25' before emerging into a deep pool. The pool chamber is only half full of water, and its ceiling studded with patches of purple bioluminescent fungus that reveal the roof arching 30' above the water. Just below the water's surface is an enormous body, curled into a fetal position with skin like cold bronze. The great sleeping creature appears to be an androgynous human, completely bald and with regular features. Close examination of the colossus reveals that it is still alive, as its chest slowly rises and falls though no bubbles escape when it breathes. Lichens and moss like mushrooms grow on the creature's skin where it meets the water.

The giant is a yazata, one of the varieties of empyrean titans and a lesser servant of the Celestial thrones. Long ago the noble entity answered the call of one of the first sorcerer's of the Successor Empire and allowed itself to be bound to service. The creature fought for a thousand years, as the Empires' wars never slowed, until the ancestors of the Sorcerer king entombed in the massif reforged its vows and bound it to their family. The hubris of the General had the mighty weapon put into an ensorcelled sleep and buried with him.

Without a direct descendent of the unknown Sorcerer King to recite a lost and hidden prayer, the yazata, named "**Twelve Rainless Winters**" will remain sleeping and dreaming, beyond the power of mortal magic or science to move or wake. Attempting to harm the yazata is mostly futile as it will reflect magic 9 in 10 times, can only be harmed by magical means and is immune to even magical fire, lighting and poison damage. Injury will awake the creature in a towering and destructive rage, only if it does more than 25 points of damage in one round. The flooded chamber is around 60' tall allowing the titan to stand within, though its size prevents it from leaving Area C 5 (unless it casts earthquake, falling rocks can't harm it after all).

Should a descendent of the Sorcerer General utter the waking prayer over **Twelve Rainless Winters**, it will rise ready to serve, though all its actions must be justified as 'good' or 'within the law'. It is entirely possible that no descendants of the nameless sorcerer king remain, and should the party discover one and raise the titan they

will immediately become the target of various powerful factions seeking to seize the creature's power everywhere they go. If shocked from its rest by violence the titan will first kill all in the immediate area and then return by mystic gate to the Celestial Throne, considering its service complete. Empyrean Titans, like all Celestial beings, entirely lack free will and **Twelve Rainless Winters** is content to stand silently unless ordered by the Thrones or a master it is bound to. Similarly the yazata has no imagination and will follow orders in the simplest most direct way possible.

Twelve Rainless Winters (Empyrean Titan) HP 106
HD 22* AC -3[22]**, ATK 2 DAM 7D6/7D6***,
MV 21, SV 3****

*Regenerate 8 HP per Round, **Immune to non-magical attacks, immune to magical fire, lightning and poison damage ***Titan may breath a 30' x 60' long cone of force for 5D10 damage. Spell like abilities: *Sleep, Light, Dispel Magic, Mirror Image, Invisibility, Levitate* (at will) *Magic Missile, Lightning Bolt, Hold Person, Flesh to Stone* (5 times a day) *Quest, Earthquake, Cloudkill* (Once per Day) ****Titan will reflect injurious spells 90% of the time.

AREA D – COURT OF THE ROBBER BRIDE

This set of dry comfortable tombs once held the remains of bureaucrats and officials in the Sorcerer General's court, but was long about thoroughly looted by tomb robbers. About twenty years ago a band of highway robbers took over this portion of the Red Massif as a base, discovering one of the secret doors in The Maze by accident. Over time the band grew, eventually formed a simple society in the wilderness, and began calling itself the Road Dust Family, finally shortened to the Dust Family.

The Dust Family has never been an especially aggressive highway gang, more afraid of the Road Wardens and other dangers than dedicated to gaining wealth. Their nucleus was made up of peasants driven from their homes by a border skirmish between nobles

and they have never really outgrown the peasant's limited desires for safety and adequate food. In the past the Dust Family made agreements with certain smuggling groups to allow them free passage and attack their rivals in exchange for regular shipments of grain and beans, and had a cordial but distant relationship with Pontilius Vex. Despite their humble origins and limited ambition, the Dust family was and is a gang of cutthroats who have never hesitated to murder when it served their purposes or helped keep them free from the clutches of thief catchers, the urban syndicates or other road gangs.

As the first generation of children born into the gang began to come of age, one of the mother's (a former captive, who was never ransomed and eventually adopted into the gang) began to receive visions, and soon became a host for a Spirit of Crime. Now in her mid 40's **Chansibel Dust** has become the avatar for a Robber Bride, a manifestation of criminal mysticism, calling itself **Sister Dust**. **Sister Dust's** prophecy and powers keep the Dust Family safe and have allowed them to remain mysterious, unknown and well fed. **Chansibel's** daughter, **Sift Dust** has become leaders of the Family, fully supported by the other dust leaders (old **Gently** and his children **Donald** and **Dagmar**).

With the arrival of the Feasters, the Dust Family's life changed. Warned by **Sister Dust**, at least the bandits knew that the cultists were coming, and were able to hide. **Sister Dust** wasn't able to determine the exact goals of the cult, or its true nature, and several of the Dust Family, including three children, were some of the cult's first victims. The feud between the Dust's and the Feaster's became deadly at that point and won't end until one side is entirely destroyed. The cult doesn't know exactly where the Dust family hides, and suspects they only visit the massif from a hidden redoubt further along the road. Whatever success the Dust have had is entirely due to the Robber Bride's ability to limit contact between the groups.

The Dust's have retaliated, killing a fair number of hounds, and ambushing guards, priests and laity when they can. Once **Dagmar**, **Sift** and **Donald** even caught **Tubbs** along the road and murdered her, and they still

believe her dead. The Dusts also know of **Mad Yurta** and the **Hierophant** but fear them for their cruelty and power. The Robber Bride knows that the Dusts cannot stay at the Massif, but the bandits are reluctant to leave their hard won home.

In appearance the Dust family look much like one would expect hardscrabble bandits to look: unshaven faces, scars, scarves, sashes stuffed with daggers, mismatched clothing and a lot of fringed raw hide. Unlike many other highway gangs the Dusts equipment looks to be in good repair and of a fairly high quality thanks to **Moraly Dust's** lessons and the family's smuggler contacts. The Dust Family considers their colors to be brown and gray, and if one squints they almost manage to make this a uniform.

DUST FAMILY TACTICS

The Dust Family is secretive and frightened. They were never especially powerful, but they knew their limits and were growing in numbers and ability. It was only a matter of time before they could become a village like the Madams, strong enough to resist the urban bosses. The Dusts know they can't fight the magic and monsters of the cult, though they would have fair chance against its mortal adherents.

At this point the Dust's are trying to find allies. Since they can no longer guarantee the safety of the road their smuggler contacts have abandoned them and they are largely trapped in their tunnels. Efforts to reach the necromancer Vex have failed (they still don't know he's dead but suspect he fled the cult) The only advantage that the Dust have is superior intelligence, they know that their secret door can deliver a strike team into the center of the cult compound, but they also know this will only work once.

The Dust Family is willing to use the party to its ends, ideally without the party ever knowing of them, or

Honesty – Should magic or a lack of sympathy defeat the Fake Victim plan, Dagmar, Moraly and Gently will march boldly into the party's camp (assuming they are not at the Inn) under a white flag. With Dagmar talking the bandits will lay out the basic of their situation and

perhaps with some kind of agreement for the adventurers to provide magic and monster slaying expertise while the Dusts massacre the human cultists.

If the Madams discover the Dusts, and the Family is still fairly intact this meeting will end in an alliance and an eventual union of the communities with **Sister Dust** relocating her shrine to the Road of Tomb's civilized area, and her worshippers becoming something more like Road Wardens than outright bandits.

If faced with an invasion of their tunnels the Dust Family will respond intelligently, setting ambushes behind their barricade and using their wounded, led by **Gently**, to direct an escape of the Dust noncombatants through the secret door in **Area D8**. Individual room residents will congregate in **Area D1** prior to any invasion as **Sister Dust's** powers will warn the bandits of impending attack.

The Dust Family will avoid pitched battle, knowing that their strength are in ambush, hit and run tactics and assassination. If forced to flee their tunnels they will, though this is a last resort and they will do everything they can to return. The following are a sample of Dust Family Tactics:

Fake Victim – One of the Poachers, an affable rangy woman named **Prudence Dust** [DEX 14, CHR 15] will don a torn dress and take one of the Dust infants. She will approach the party along the Road once they have already visited the Inn but retreated or left. **Prudence** will introduce herself as a victim of a band of madmen who operate out of the inn and the caves beyond. She will claim the Feasters are a cannibal cult dedicated to evil and that she escaped their clutches with her baby. **Prudence** will claim that she was part of a tinker family captured only six days ago. She will also insist that her husband and older daughter (or any other combination of family members that seem likely to evoke sympathy) are still held be the madmen and plead for the party's help.

seek to enlist the party's aid in attacking the cult. The Dusts will suggest that the party launch a frontal attack on the inn and barricade while they use 'secret ways' to attack from within the massif. The Dusts don't know about the Golden One lair along their line of advance as

Sister Dust cannot adequately detect the soulless, semi-divine beings, and they likely be repulsed, unless the party's attack is very successful.

Traps- If forced into combat the Dusts will use their foreknowledge of their enemies' line of march to set traps. Simple and effective traps, such as deadfalls and small covered pits filled with spikes. These traps may not individually be especially effective but they will be numerous.

Full Ambush – The Dusts will turn a barricade, line of pits or natural narrowing of the road into a death trap. Starting with archery from all sides and with their heavily armored warriors ready to counter attack, this ambush is serious, but if outmatched the Dusts will retreat.

Retreat and Ambush – Allowing their enemies to think they have caught them by surprise, a small group of Dust Family warriors will flee with all appearance of panic. This is a ruse, and the bait group will lead their pursuers into an ambush and through a series of traps, before turning on them.

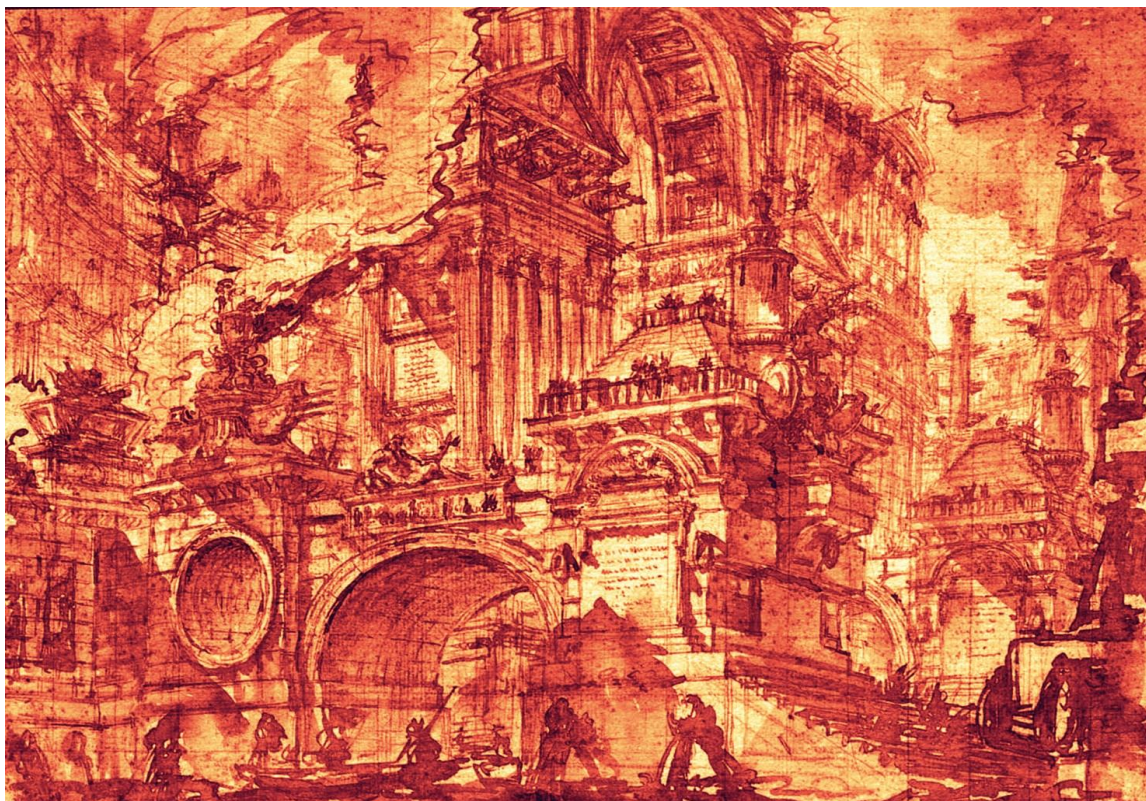
Archer Ambush – The first sign of this ambush is likely to be a shower of arrows from the trees or ruins. The archers will flee after a single barrage, and repeat their attack later if possible.

DUST FAMILY ORDER OF BATTLE

Chansibel (F0) [WIS 15, CHR 14] HP 2, AC 5[14], ATK 1, DAM 1D6 MV 12, SV 6 Possessed avatar of Sister Dust

Sister Dust (Robber Bride) HP 20 AC 3[16]*, ATK 1*, DAM 1D8, MV 12, SV 6 *An Immaterial Spirit, with the abilities of a 10th level thief (See Notable New Monster Section for details)

Avatar of the Robber Bride Sister Dust, Chansibel is a motherly figure in the clothing of a prosperous farmer. She smiles and tells comfortable homilies of rural wisdom to all she encounters. Sister Dust is another matter, a spirit of rebellion crime and anti-social communion she wishes to see an empire of misrule and the overthrow of all established order.



Sift Dust (TH 8) [STR 15, INT 17, DEX 14] HP 19, AC 7 [12] ATK 1 +2 hit melee[STR and dual wield]/+1 hit ranged, DAM 1D8+1/1D8 MV 12, SV 8 (Onyx studded leather armor [500 GP], silver rapier, falchion, silver dagger, composite bow, 30 arrow, 8 silver arrows)

Seventeen Years old, strong, wickedly intelligent and with the unthinking cruelty of a forest creature, Sift has the trust of the entire family due to her abilities as a planner and thinker. She has no goals beyond the survival and prosperity of the Family and her own freedom to do whatever she desires.

Gently Dust (TH 6) HP 16 [STR 15, INT 13, WIS 8, DEX 14] AC 7 [12] ATK 1 +1 hit, DAM 1D6+1/1D8 MV 12, SV 10 (Leather Armor embossed with grape bunches, spear, short sword, composite bow, 30 arrows.

Old Gently was once a farmer of vine swine, and still reminisces about his idyllic days grooming the great beasts and watching their symbiotic vines ripen to fruit. Driven from his flock by pointless war, Gently was a man of rage, which has cooled in the intervening twenty years. He is now sixty, hardened by the bandit's life and utterly without mercy, except to his family.

Morely Dust (F5) HP 35 [STR 16, CON 16] AC 2 [17] ATK 1+2 hit, DAM 1D8+2 MV 8, SV 10 (brown enameled plate mail, shield, longword (x2).

Morely is a fifty five year old warrior who walks with a bad limp. Morley was adopted into the family eighteen years ago and is a skilled swordswoman who was captured and grievously injured while acting as a bodyguard to an adventuring warlock. With her master dead Morley offered her services to the Dust Family as a weapons' trainer. She has been with them ever since but remains distant from the younger family members and broods on her failures to achieve greatness.

Donald Dust (F4) HP 24 [STR 16, CON 14] AC 3 [16] ATK 1+2 hit, DAM 1D8+2/1D8 MV 9, SV 11 (Banded Mail, Shield, Battle Axe, Long bow, 30 arrows, owlbear cloak [150 GP])

Almost as handsome as his sister, Donald will never be thought of as more than superficially attractive due to his harsh, cold and calculating personality. He is fanatically devoted to the family and a mystic whose belief in Sister Dust burns in his eyes. Donald's hands and arms are covered with horrible scars, the result of an attempt to grapple a young owlbear.

Dagmar Dust (F4) HP 13 [DEX 14, CHR 16, CON 6], AC 1 [18], ATK 1, DAM 1D8/1D6, MV 9, SV 11 (bonewhite splint mail [+1], rapier, light crossbow, five daggers, silver dagger, golden bangles and jewelry worth 700 GP)

Dagmar is the family's current beauty, a slim woman who looks every bit the burlesque hall bandit queen. She wears a good chunk of the Family's gold on her person and depends on her looks, flash, tenacity and charm to make up for her weak constitution, the result of a childhood disease.

8 Bandits (F2) [Boxer, Lundy, Christina, Fantom, Lullibelle, Heather, Polly, Queen] [STR 14, CON 13] AC 4 [15], ATK 1 [+1 hit], DAM 1D8+1/1D8, MV 9, SV 13 (chain mail, shield, long sword or battle axe, heavy crossbow, 30 bolts, dagger)

The blunt force of the Dust Family, these eight highwaymen and woman have shown an aptitude for melee combat and are equipped accordingly. All are well trained by Moraly and reasonably disciplined, knowing that they are expected to fight and even die to protect the Family's weaker missile troops.

10 Poachers (TH 2) [Dunce, Sandy, Sara, No Toe, Marx, Hobbe, Jaundice Tolly, Young Lundy, Owl, Grey Shirt] [DEX 15] AC 7 [12] ATK 1 +1 hit at range, DAM 1D6/1D6, MV 12, SV 14 (Leather Armor, spear, short sword, shortbow bow, 30 arrows.)

Skilled outdoorsmen and hunters many of these men and woman are related to each other and bare a family resemblance. They are devoted to their family, distrustful of outsiders and have little regard for human life.

DUST FAMILY NONCOMBATANTS

11 Family Members (F0), AC 9 [10], ATK 1, DAM 1D6/1D6 MV 12, SV 15 (short sword, shortbow, 10 arrows)

Some members of the family never learn more than rudimentary fighting skills, become injured or enfeebled with age. These adults still contribute and are valued members of the clan, acting craftspeople, maintaining the band's lair and teaching the young.

6 Children (F0) HP 1, AC 9 [10] ATK 0, DAM 0, MV 12, SV 16

The children of the Dust Family are shy and furtive things, ranging in age from infancy to about 12. They are largely left to themselves and attach themselves to various family members and learn skills with the understanding that in their mid-teens they will join the family business in one manner or another.

Area D Entrance

The entrance to the Dust Family's tunnels depends on concealment for external protection, and **Sister Dust's** ability to foresee attack and scout potential victims. Access to the tunnels is through a pair of secret doors, concealed in an ancient garden of statues. A large square block and a set of smooth niches create a garden of statuary, with eight statues depicting idealized tradesmen: an astronomer, mason, carpenter, smith (in the niches) and jeweler, hunter, fisherman and sigilwright (in the block). A larger lone statue of a farmer appears to have been added as an afterthought.

The Astronomer – The astronomer is a bearded man with a telescope over his shoulder and an astrolabe set in his hands. If the astrolabe is set to the current stars (easy enough for a wizard or educated cleric) the statue will slide into the earth to reveal a hidden entrance.

The Smith – The statue of the smith depicts a burly woman in a welding mask carrying a hammer in her

hands. The head of the hammer rotates on the handle (stiffly, it is not immediately obvious) to unlatch the secret door, causing the smith to sink into the ground.

D1 – Barricaded Living

A barricade of crates, tree trunks and the sheet metal bed of a wagon pierced by loopholes prevent easy access to this chamber. The barricade is 9' tall, blocking much of the 15' chamber, and has a fighting step built behind it. Fighting from the barricade grants full cover of +4 to AC and saving throws. Polearms, spears, buckets of rocks (save vs. wands or take 1D6 damage) and firebombs (as flask of oil) stacked on the fighting step.

Beyond the barricade is the main living area of the Dust Family, home to all of its **noncombatant Family Members, Children** and two of the older **Poachers** [Owl, Sandy] who prefer to live with their children close by. The room is filled with light from several oil lamps and numerous candles. Tables, rolled mattresses and various, chairs and tools for handicrafts fill the room.

D2 – Stores

A neat storeroom filled with smoked wild game, casks of ale, sacks of grain and boxes of military rations as well as other useful items such as rope, lamp oil and bolts of cloth. An unlit lamp rests in a sconce by the door.

The **supplies**, some obviously stolen from the merchant stamps on their cases, will fill three wagon loads and are worth 1,200 GP.

D3 – Moraly's Den

This somber tomb remains largely undefiled and is decorated with frescos of telescopes, astronomy and the night sky, meaning the walls are mostly a deep purplish black. It is home to the brooding sword mistress **Moraly**, who keeps a large dark sheeted bed with a locked steel case shoved beneath, an ebony **writing desk** (100 GP), matching **chair** (50 GP), and racks for her numerous long swords (8 of them), armor and other equipment. A battered pair of practice dummies completes the décor.

The case contains the hilt of a broken **golden hilt** of a long sword (150 GP) and four large **opals** (1,200 GP). The

desk is stuffed with papers, apparently a partially written treatise on swordsmanship.

D4 – Guards

This former tomb serves as an armory and guard quarters, filled with five bunks and numerous armor and weapon racks. A long table and several benches complete its furnishings, while an ill-fitting, damaged **crystal chandelier** (200 GP and rather fragile) packed with candles provides light.

While the room was once decorated in frescos of stone masonry and the plastic arts, tomb robbers destroyed much of the decoration long ago, and the rowdy Dust warriors that live here have finished their vandalism. Six (6) **Poachers** and Four (4) **Bandits** sleep here, mostly male, which may contribute to the chamber's locker room scent.

In addition to the guards equipment there are 4 polearms, a two handed sword, 6 hand axes, 3 short swords, 10 shortbows, 500 arrows, 200 bolts, a suit of ringmail and 3 suits of leather armor in crates and on shelves in this room. The highwaymen in this room keep their wealth on the table, in ten neat piles, as part of an endless card and dice game with rules known only to the Dust Family. There are 700 GP worth of **coins** and another 300 GP in small **decorative stones** among the piles.

D5 – Bakery

While the Dust's used to cook at campfires in the woods beyond the massif, since the arrival of the Feasters they have been forced to use this makeshift bakery and kitchen. A clay oven, filled with coals is relatively smokeless and cracks in this chamber's ceiling bleed off some of excess smoke, but the room is still hazy and the five (5) **Family Members** who work here wear scarfs around their mouths and noses to keep the smoke from their lungs. The bakery is lit by the glow of its ovens and a lamp next to the door.

D6 – Bachelorettes Quarters

This living chamber is shared by four (4) of the Dust Family **Bandits**, four woman who prefer to live together

and avoid the barracks environment of the guard post or the families in **Area D1**. The room reeks slightly of rose water as one of the four considers herself to have lady's tastes.

The former tomb is covered in frescos showing harvest and grain framing in bright colors that are still vibrant and with minimal damage. In addition to stands for the inhabitant's armor, and some overstuffed straw beds, a crate serving as a table (with a checked cloth) and three rustic chairs there are chests containing the **Bandit's** personal possessions, plain clothing, tools for armor maintenance and modest treasures (300 GP in mixed **coin**, and a very fancy silk and **whalebone corset** worth 150 GP).

As Secret Door – A simple latch that allows a chunk of the rear fresco to swivel backwards. The Dusts will use this door to send troops around take attackers in Area D1 from behind or as an escape route.

D7 – Captives

This stone door is barred from the outside and the room within lit only by a pair of candles. Three depressed looking youth in ragged black clothes sprawl on pallets on the floor and pretend to sleep [**Badman**, **Jenny Thirteen Fingers** and **Pookie**]. These three are captives of the Dust's, bravos from the syndicate of Boss Dixson (see Thieves' Rumor 5). The survivors of an investigative force massacred by the Dusts, these three are still alive as **Sister Dust** has recently forbidden the murder of fellow outlaws, over the strenuous objections of **Gently**. One of the three thieves (**Jenny**) is about ready to defect to the Dusts, but **Pookie** and **Badman** are holding out for rescue.

Syndicators – (TH2)HP 3,6,5 [DEX 14] AC 9 [10]
ATK 1 +1 hit at range, DAM 1D3, MV 12, SV 14

D8 – Escape Tunnel

A door, barred from the Western side, this door is made from iron banded hardwood, unlike the stone doors endemic to the massif. It is new construction and leads to the Dust's escape tunnel.

Secret Door – A secret door, clearly visible in **Area D8**, but well-constructed to blend into the cave wall from the other side, allows egress into the cave near **Area C1**. On the tunnel side the door is triggered by pulling a chain concealed in the stream, underneath a good sized rock.

D9 – Avatar's Den

This vaulted chamber was once a shrine and grave good store. Looted long before the Dust Family arrived, the room remains decorated with a vast fresco of rejoicing worshippers looking upward toward painted deities of the Imperial pantheon on the ceiling. The Dust family has defaced the gods on the ceiling by neatly painting black bars over their eyes but left the rest of the decoration untouched.

This chamber is used as an assembly hall and place of sacrifice to **Sister Dust**. Robber Brides demand their followers abandon or destroy their ill-gotten treasures in their goddess' name. This room provides testimony of that practice. Crates of burnt silk, smashed ceramics, broken wine bottles and defaced artworks are strewn about in intentional disarray. In this mess there are still items of value – A **casket of melted gold and silver jewelry** (700 GP), and a **huge soiled rug** that can be easily cleaned (1,800 GP).

This room is also the home of **Chansible** and **Sift**, who sleep on a well-made bed and velvet **saloon couch** (500 GP) in the rear of the room, partitioned by a pile of defaced mother of pearl screens. The women keep their clothing in a pair of identical military foot lockers near their beds. A glass and **alabaster lamp** (100 GP) rests near **Sift's** couch.

Secret Door – Careful and complete searching will discover that the eyes of one of the exhalant worshippers in the fresco can be depressed. Doing so will open a secret door, itself shaped like the outline of another worshipper in the fresco to conceal its presence.

D10 – True Shrine

Almost sterile, the frescos have been carefully peeled from the walls of this room and replaced with charcoal drawing of thievery, murder and crime.

A near finished statute is being chipped down from a white marble figure of a long forgotten empress. The new form depicts a strong featured woman wearing a ranger's leathers with a sword and bow. The face of the statue resembles **Chansible**.

This room is **Sister Dust's** secret shrine, still under construction by **Sift**. The Robber Bride will retreat here as the half-finished statue is **Sister Dust's** totem. Buried in a plastered over niche in the wall is a set of **two large diamonds** and a **huge ruby** (2,500, 3,000 and 5,000 GP) in a velvet bag with the symbol of an extinct noble house on it. These are **Sister Dust's** personal treasures and she will offer them if pursued here for the safety of her totem, herself and her surviving family. Only **Chansible** and **Sift** know of their location.

D11 – Leader's Chamber

Gently and his children share this former tomb, separated from the Den in **Area D9** by a heavy **brocade curtain** (150 GP) decorated with woven butterflies. The walls of their chamber are covered in frescos of smiths and metalworking. A large glass globe lamp has been hung from the ceiling with a rope stapled to the wall and its reservoir is filled with several flasks worth of oil.

Gently, **Dagmar** and **Donald** live in style compared to the other family members. Each has a heavy wooden bed with down stuffed quilts and pillows. Dagmar's section of the room is screened with a **silver and copper wire partition** (900 GP) and she also has a box of **expensive cosmetics** (100 GP). **Donald** doesn't keep valuable, sacrificing all his take to **Sister Dust**. He does keep a nice set of **dandy's eveningwear** (150 GP) in the wooden chest near his bed.

Gently's treasure is more prosaic. The old bandit stores a heavy iron strongbox beneath his bed, that is double locked and trapped with a vial on contact poison (save or die) that will break over the coins within if the chest is

forced. **Gently** keeps both keys around his neck. **Gently's** strongbox holds the clan's real treasure in ten leather envelopes. Five contain **negotiable promissory notes** drawn on five different Capital banks for 1,000 GP each, while the other five each contain 1,000 newly minted **platinum coins** (5,000 GP).

D12 – Trapped Chest

A low cliff (about 8') leads to a dry sandy ledge in the massif's side. Beyond is a small cave which contains several old looking barrels, crates and a large ironbound chest. The crates and barrels are clearly plunder from a trade wagon, though all are so old that the wood is dry and flimsy, impregnated with the ledge's red sand. Whatever contents they once held are long rotten, stolen or evaporated.

The chest alone looks solid and sound. It is locked, but can easily be picked (+10%) or pried open by force.

Pneumatic Launcher – Within the chest is an elaborately crafted pop out pneumatic weapon, a rack of brass tubes that when triggered will fill the cave in front of the chest with a hurricane of steel bolts. Anyone standing on the ledge will be struck at least once and must make a save vs. wands, and for every point they fail by are stuck by an additional bolt. Each bolt does 1D6 damage. After firing the launcher must be reset and reloaded manually. The chest is of course empty.

AREA E – THE SORCERER'S SEPULCHER

Climbing atop the massif (difficult because of overhangs) reveals a sunbaked expanse of tumbled walls and leaning columns. There are no real enclosed spaces, and the areas that looked like they might be buildings are solid blocks of extruded stone sculpted to resemble towers, temples and halls. The sun is hot on the bare rock, and scant grey lichens cover many surfaces, while wildflowers and grasses thrive in pockets of windblown dirt amongst the statutes of weeping mourners, somber priests dedicated to forgotten orders and stoic soldiers clad in antique armor. Eight boulevards, mere alleys between the towering monuments to the sorcerer

general's vainglory, lead to a huge solid rotunda at the massif's center. This building, its central pillar protected by a wall of spiraling pillars and friezes worn by rain is the tomb of the sorcerer king. Entombed seamlessly within the 30' diameter pillar of white marble, the naked and unadorned body of the general rests still imagining that the Empire is a great and eternal power. The pillar itself is covered in large letters the read "Here, my life's glory my testimony, my name eternal. Kneel in awe, weep in shame, for my greatness remains while yours must fade." The letters are inlaid in gold, and may be chipped free with several days of effort. The **letters** are worth 3,500 GP when melted down, but the gold itself is cursed and anyone taking them will develop intense paranoia and will attack companions in a murderous sleep. Eventually (1 year, after all others who know where the gold was obtained are dead) this curse will compel the thief to replace the gold in the Sorcerer General's tomb. The curse uses powerful ancient magic and may not be removed with a spell less powerful than a wish. Returning the gold will remove the curse but also cause a permanent loss of 1D6 points of Wisdom.



NEW MONSTER OF NOTE

ROBBER'S BRIDE

Hit Dice: 4+2

Armor Class: 3 (16) +special

Attack: 1 rend (1d8) +special

Move: 12

Saving Throw: 6

Special: Avatar, Immaterial, Thief Abilities, Prophecy

Alignment: Chaos

CL/XP: 8/800

Ecology

The Robbers' Bride is a nightmare of settled man, the keening memory of a kidnapped daughter and the shadow of a wife fled into the night. To the vagabond, the proscribed, the outcast and the criminal they are the manifestation of hopes and dreams. Robbers' Brides appear both as the motherly prophets of blood-soaked wilderness brigand bands and as the child saints of the urban underworld. These thieves' oracles been reported to hold court in the low dens of tomb robbers and self-proclaimed 'Adventures', where the murder and gold crazed vagabonds pay homage to them as voices of true prophecy.

The Brides are mysterious entities, the embodiments of contempt for the established order, the multipart goddesses of misrule or revolution, the prime movers of thieves' republics, assassin's dark goddesses and the desperate prayers on the lips of the hanged man. Even the staid pontiffs of law will admit that the ferocity of belief and numbers of believers dedicated to the bespoke spirits of inequity must have some effect, but what they may dismiss as diabolic or demonic influence is something more ~ a false god with real powers that relishes in its counterfeit nature.

When bands of thieves, robbers, vagabonds or exiles grow numerous or desperate without the succor of an

established god, they pray to luck, fortune and contingency, asking to be saved from ignominy and death. Thieves will sacrifice the choicest pickings of their endeavors on rude altars, or bury them in a familiar spot as a promise of future luck, and these devotions sometimes bear fruit in the form of a Robbers' Bride, an immaterial intelligence with the gift of prophecy and foresight that will either lurk about a shrine of infamy, or possess the body of the most devote to offer supernatural aide.

Brides' two forms are universally reported as feminine¹, even amongst the rare band of she-thieves, though they run the gamut of femininity, taking the appearance of caring matrons, defenseless girls, pragmatic tradeswomen, burly amazons, seductive courtesans, or even men in women's grab affecting traditionally female traits. The first, and perhaps natural, form of the Robbers' Bride is as a presence: a smell of stolen goods, a vague rag like shape of shadow, or a breeze that scratches at the thief-taker's eyes but caresses the pick-pocket's cheek. To its believers, and in the moment it materializes to attack, this presence is a ghostly representation of the domesticity and normality that the thief has abandoned, appearing as an idealized spectral version of the Bride's most recent avatar or totem. In combat this phantasm will appear far less pleasant with exaggerated limbs, twisted features and long bladed talons. More commonly the Bride adopts an avatar from among her loyal band of worshippers, possessing a human woman to act as the criminal group's queen and prophet.

While Robbers' Brides are all similar in their powers and strength their goals and interests vary based on the nature of the band that worships and births the phantasm. The petty goddess of a bandit's brotherhoods will be sanguinary and crude, while that of an assassin's cult is likely to be calculating, cruel and merciless. The Robbers' Brides worshipped by less violent criminals can

be reasoned with sometimes, and are often more tricksters than killers. Because of their varied personality and the varied appearances of their avatars, Robbers' Brides are known by other or individual names such as: Queens of Shadow, Phantasms of Infamy, Lady of Red Silence, Mother Felony, The Upright Wife or Baby Sister.

Tactics

Controllers and wise counselors of their followers, Robbers' Brides use their powers to find rich targets for banditry or theft, plan unexpected crimes, root out spies and predict efforts to capture their followers or thwart their plans. Robbers' Brides usually avoid direct combat, preferring schemes, trickery or an unexpected ambush, but they can and will fight if they must. When required Brides will lead their band and fight as best as the usually feeble form of their avatar allows. If their avatar is killed, the Robbers' Bride retreats to the sanctuary, altar, totem or idol its worshippers have created along with any surviving followers. If the pursued to this core of her domain, a Robbers' Bride will fight mercilessly, *backstabbing* from concealment and dematerializing quickly after each attack. If the Bride believes it cannot win a combat, or that attackers can be coopted or bribed it may plead for mercy, surrendering much of its wealth and offering to perform acts of true prophecy in exchange for allowing it and its followers to flee in safety.

Special Abilities and Powers

Avatar: The avatar chosen by a Robbers' Bride is rarely powerful herself, as the Robbers' Bride will select its avatar based on devotion rather than ability. Amongst settled bands of thieves or bandits, and especially amongst assassin's cults, avatars are often children raised from birth to believe in the Bride's power. Within the fanatical, lotus crazed, all male Brotherhood of the Red Grin this has produced a situation where the cult prophet is always a young boy, dressed and living as a girl. In other bands the Robbers' bride will chose its avatar from amongst captives or hostages, especially those who have come to identify with their captors.

Avatars will generally be 0-level humans or low level thieves, but the presence controlling them can manifest its powers through the avatar, granting preternatural nimbleness (+4 dexterity bonus to Armor Class) and the ability to use all Thief Class Abilities as a 10th level Thief (see below).

Immaterial: As a manifestation of collective will, the native form of a Robbers' Bride is immaterial, immune to all non-magical attacks, and also to spell attacks that depend on elemental intervention (fireball and lightning bolt, but not magic missile or hold monster). In order to attack the Robbers' Bride must materialize as it attacks, before fading out the next round. While material, Robber's Brides are still immune to normal weapons, but take damage from silver weapons and all magic.

The immaterial nature of the Robbers' Bride's also augment its ability to *Hide in Shadows*, allowing the Robbers' Bride to Hide (with a 75% chance of success) any round it is immaterial, even if it is in melee combat. The phantasmagoric figure simply fades away, with its bloody spectral claws disappearing last, and prepare another surprise *backstabbing* attack.

¹ *Adepts have theorized that the gendered nature of the Robbers' Bride is a reflection of the status of women within the patriarchal societies that the Bride's followers are outcast from or oppose, and that in a purely matriarchal society the Robbers' Bride would be a masculine presence.*

Thief Abilities: Robbers' Brides are manifestations of the hopes and desires of a band of criminals and their abilities reflect this. Both in immaterial form and when possessing an avatar a Robber's Bride can perform all Thief Class Abilities as a 10th level Thief, including *backstab*. In combat the entity will fade into and out of existence, trying to flank its attackers and *backstab* such as archers or wizards while avoiding those that can damage it. Given the Robbers' Bride's excellent *Listen* and *Move Silently* abilities, it is nearly impossible to sneak up on a Bride and the creature will scout groups invading its lair before attacking.

Read Languages	Read Magic	Backstab	Climb	Delicate Tasks	Listen	Hide in Shadows	Move Silently	Open Locks
Yes	90%	+4 hit/ x4 damage	94%	70%	5 in 6	75%	80%	75%

Prophecy: Brides act as oracles for their followers, and sometimes for others who offer them stolen goods as a sacrifice. The Robbers' Bride's power of prophecy is limited to the subject of criminal undertakings, but within this area it functions quite accurately. Mechanically the ability manifests as two separate powers. The first is the assistance it provides to the followers of the phantasm, who gain the ability to avoid and *anticipate surprise* (they may never be surprised)

and *predict attacks* by their enemies, gaining a +2 to all saves and initiative.

When prophecy is given to non-worshippers, the Robbers' Bride will whisper something cryptic which will bestow one of the following boons. The character need not understand the utterance and should not know the exact effect, but the prophecy itself always gives some sort of clue.

D8	SAMPLE UTTERANCE	EFFECT
1	"The key is understanding that every lock desires to be opened".	Mastery: Next skill check will succeed automatically
2	"Absence has its own sort of presence."	Prediction: The character will not be surprised next time surprise is indicated.
3	"The randomness of the world so perfect a pattern that a mere pattern cannot conceal itself within."	Secrets: Next secret door encountered will be glaringly obvious.
4	"It isn't enough to take gold and jewels to call oneself a thief, the upright man knows how to pick and choose."	Wealth: The next gemstone recovered or stolen will be worth 1D4 times it's listed value.
5	"The blade to the back is deadly, but it's deadly from a smiling friend."	Wit: For the remainder of the session any reaction roll will be at +1 for the character.
6	"All go into captivity eventually, but the upright man knows he will never stay captive."	Escape: The next time the character is imprisoned, charmed, held or restrained (including grappling) they will be able to easily escape.
7	"The difference between a warrior and a killer is not technique, it is purity of intent."	Murder: Next successful attack against a humanoid target will strike for x4 damage.
8	"You may not avoid the blade, but you must avoid the cut."	Survival: The next attack that would kill the PC instead misses.

TREASURES OF NOTE

THE MASK OF PAIN

This golden helmet closes with a set of hinges on the back of the skull. The face of the helmet is a mask its details brought out with thin inlays of blacked bone and ivory. The mask depicts a snarling man beast of

indeterminate nature and horrible countenance. Sacred to the Lord of Slaughter, the depraved demonic god of massacre, pointless murder and destructive violence, the Mask of Pain has three magical powers. The masks powers are activated by using the charges it contains, which may be refilled by pouring the life blood of an

innocent sacrifice into its maw. When discovered the Mask of Pain will have its maximum of twelve (12) charges.

Power 1 - Pain (two charges) The mask begins to recite words in the language of the underworld that cause all listeners excruciating pain. Any humanoid within 50' of the mask who is not dedicated to the Lord of Slaughter must save vs. spells or collapse for one round. Even after recovering from the initial shock, the mask's victims suffer a -1 to all rolls for physical task for the next 1d4 turns. Even those who save from the mask's stunning effect suffer this penalty as bone bending pain rockets through their nervous system.

Power 2 - Fear (one charge) The eyes of the mask open, revealing blasted vistas of endless war and savagery. Any who are within 20' of the mask and who do not rejoice in the doom that the Lord of Slaughter promises must save vs. spells or flee wildly for 2D6 rounds.

Power 3 - Roar (one charge) the mask produces a deafening roar that can bruise flesh and shatter glass. Treat this as an attack on any who are in a 30' long, 10' wide line in front of the mask wearer. All in the path of the roar's blast must save v. spells or suffer 1D6 points of damage. The roar will also disrupt spell casters for 1D4 rounds and shatter any non-magical glass object in its path.

COWARD'S HEART

The betrayal, abandonment or mistreatment of one of the Green Circle, the Bone Charmers, is rarely wise for their

torments are eternal and exquisitely cruel. Unlike most powers, necromancers need not lose the services of those who receive their greatest punishments, and often the utility of mortal servants is only enhanced by their deaths.

The Coward's Heart is a filthy bundle of stained rags scribbled with illegible sepia sigils, reeking of camphor, but also an artifact of necromantic revenge. Fabricated from the preserved heart a craven, when a sorcerer stitches the Coward's Heart into the chest of a corpse it will raise the body as a pusillanimous thrall. Undead servants created by the Heart are timid creatures, suffering from the same terrors and lack of resolve that afflicted the Heart's original owner. The very fear and timorousness that drove him during life prevents the donor's soul from abandoning the heart for the peace of death, and this stubborn attachment to the self makes the Heart a desirable arcane object. As long as the Heart is intact placing it into a new corpse will create a thrall, allowing the Heart's owner to quickly recreate a destroyed servant. Unfortunately, thralls created by the

Heart are so cowardly that they cannot undertake tasks that would be dangerous to a living person:

opening strange doors, testing potential traps, leading others into a new place or engaging in combat. Perhaps because of the limited utility of

Heart thralls, Coward's Hearts are most frequently found in the possession of weak necromancer, or even for sale as a memento mori. On rare occasions a Heart Thrall remains active after the

death of its master, and these piteous things skulk and scuttle at the edges of civilization, becoming increasingly afraid of discovery or enslavement.



Heart Thrall: HD1, AC 8[11] ATK 1 flailing (1d2), MV 12, SV 17, AL Chaos CL/XP A/5

Thralls may be destroyed easily by normal weapons, but there is a 5 in 6 chance that normal physical damage will not damage the Heart, allowing it to raise another. Fire and magical attacks will destroy the heart 4 in 6 times along with a Thrall, and if special efforts are made the Heart may be easily crushed or incinerated. Thralls are effectively completely loyal henchmen, capable of carrying a load, holding torches and standing watch while their master sleeps. They have normal undead immunities but may speak, though without a great deal of volition or intelligence, and are usually ordered not to as their frequent timid whining annoys most masters.