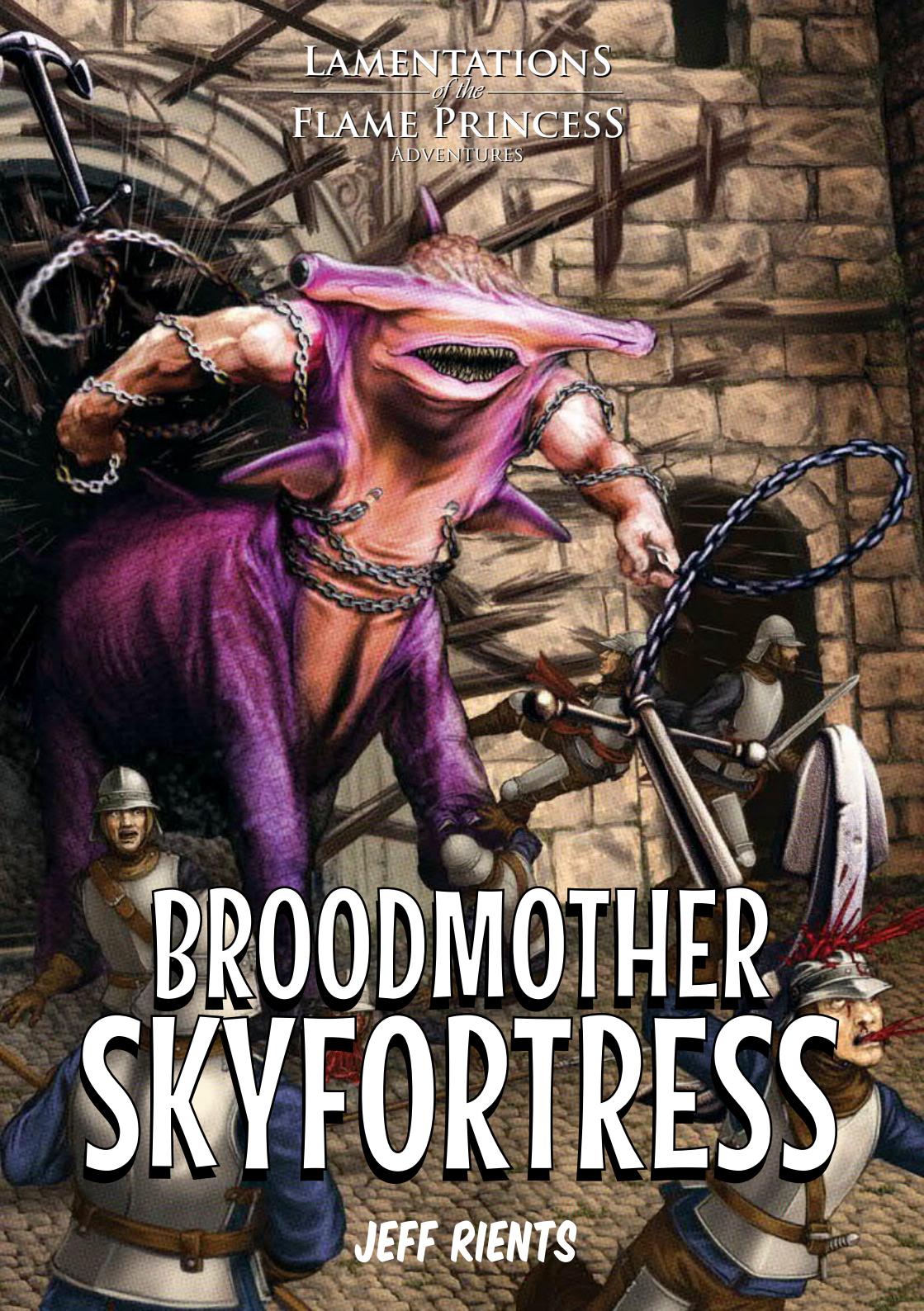


LAMENTATIONS  
*of the*  
FLAME PRINCESS  
ADVENTURES



# BROODMOTHER SKYFORTRESS

JEFF RIENTS

# BROODMOTHER SKYFORTRESS



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# AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION!

Howdy, my name is Jeff. Since time immemorial it has been the standard format in adventure modules to present themselves via an omniscient third person voice, as if you were receiving the gospel truth about the module, handed down on high from some gaming Sinai. The fact of the matter is that any adventure worth a darn is written by one or more mostly normal humans who are Referees just like you. So let's save our imaginations for the game table and not pretend that I am anything other than some guy sharing some adventure ideas.

In fact, we're not even going to pretend that I am presenting a complete, coherent adventure that's ready-to-go for your table. Anyone who claims that a published adventure is complete and ready for your group is full of crap, or at least they don't understand how a good module needs a talented reader at least as much as it needs a competent writer. You might think I'm sucking up to you or trying to lower the bar for my own work here, but I'm not. The fact of the matter is that I've seen plenty of good Referees make gold out of a crap module, but I'm not sure the inverse is doable; a great module can only carry a weak Referee so far.

Maybe at this moment you are despairing, "But Jeff, I'm one of those weak Referees you're talking about!" Fret not! First of all, you are probably a lot better at this than you think. Refereeing a role-playing game is a socially daring hobby for a variety of reasons and that leaves many, many Referees horribly self-conscious. I've been running games for over three decades (damn, I'm old!) and I still second guess myself and get stage fright and all that malarkey. You just gotta learn to ignore that part of your brain. That's your social programming trying to keep you mediocre.

And mediocrity is not what we're shooting for here. Let me lay a metaphor on you: imagine you are an astronaut. Remember when being an astronaut was the coolest job in the world? I sure do, but like I said above I'm getting old. Anyway, you're the astronaut and a successful session is you landing on the freaking Moon. With me so far? This module is your spacecraft and I'm Mission Control. This book exists solely to get you hopping craters and doing wheelies in a space buggy. I'll do everything in my power to advise and assist, but only you can take that giant leap for mankind, you dig? You're not

on your own here, but at the same time there's only so much the text and the author can get done for you. Your talent and preparation and audacity have to be in play as well.

Now let's get cracking at this ludicrous tale of a floating fortress, a monstrous giant-queen and her bratty, unstoppable children!

- Jeff Rients  
[jrients@gmail.com](mailto:jrients@gmail.com)

(Seriously, email me. Mission Control is always here to assist.)



[Publisher's Note: As this adventure is written for the LotFP Weird Fantasy Role-Playing system, it is on the silver standard where 1sp=1xp, and an unarmored human's base Armor rating is 12, which increases with better protection. Adjust as needed for your campaign.]

CHAPTER 1

# RUNNING BROODMOTHER SKYFORTRESS



One of the biggest mistakes Referees make is falling in love with their campaign setting. Maybe you've spent a lot of money on a big, sprawling product series with multiple boxed sets and hardbound books, investing hours and hours in parsing out that setting's official canon. Perhaps you've created a world from nothing, drawing upon your own favorite fantasy fictions but sketching out your own maps, developing your own cultures and recording your own histories. Or maybe like me you've selected a little piece of the real world in a certain time period and assumed magic was real back then, investing a lot of time and effort in researching the period in question. All these are legit ways of undergirding a campaign, as is the tried-and-true method of piecing together a campaign from whatever modules you run.

The problem with all those boxed sets, homebrew worlds and researched pseudo-histories is that we as Referees get it in our heads that a campaign setting is a fixed thing. It's not. We tend to treat campaign worlds as nouns, when in fact they are verbs. Let's go back to the origin of the word "campaign" for just a moment. Our ancestral historical miniatures enthusiasts and hex-and-counter wargamers (the original "grognards" who were grumbling about us role-playing whippersnappers as much as anything else) borrowed the term from actual military usage. We can, for example, talk about Hannibal's campaigns against Rome, or the Napoleonic campaigns. What we are describing here is a series of historical activities (battles, troop movements, truce negotiations, etc.) that end up changing the world. Hannibal's campaigning against Rome left an indelible mark on the history of this planet, yet sometimes we fantasy Referees tend to assume that whatever the players are up to will have little or no impact on the status quo of our fantasy world.

Or we make the opposite mistake and set the stakes too high, pitting the party against some cosmic threat that will destroy the universe if they fail. Then when they screw up near the end we flinch and pull out some *deus ex buttina*\* to try to keep the campaign from imploding. Sure, your precious setting is saved but now your players think you're lame because some glowing golden Chosen One NPC showed up and saved the day. That was their job, dammit!

(\*That's Latin for "I just pulled a god out of my butt to save this campaign. And also, I suck.")

For Broodmother Skyfortress I am proposing a middle ground between setting idolatry and the risk of outright campaign annihilation. The stakes of this adventure do not involve cosmic destruction or the unleashing of a horde of rampaging demons or anything so grand. But for this adventure to work, you as the Referee need to put something at risk, the way you know a poker player is serious when they push some chips into the center of the table. The players put their characters on the line every damn time they show up to play; it's only fair that once in a while you risk something besides the monsters and NPCs you specifically designed for the party to beat up.

What I am asking you to do is to look over your campaign map, pick out some interesting places and ask yourself the following question:

## **"WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A BUNCH OF GIANTS SHOWED UP HERE AND WRECKED UP THE PLACE?"**

If, like me, you are in love with your campaign setting then you may need to take a deep breath at this point - especially since only one wrecked place will not do the trick; for our purposes here you will really need five or six good campaign features ripe for demolition. Do yourself a favor and pick the places that make you ache when you contemplate their destruction. That genuine pain will carry through at the table and help you communicate the pathos of the loss of the Last Faerie Circle or the Blue Boar Inn or whatever. Ideally, your players will grok that this place wasn't built specifically to be knocked down; rather, Grim Fate has come to rest upon something even you, the Referee, thought might stand for the rest of time.

Once you have your list of victim places selected, explore the idea of loosing the Giants of the Skyfortress upon the location. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Can the location withstand attack by giantish bludgeons and hurled boulders? Will it be completely smashed or mostly damaged or relatively unscathed?**
- If the Giants attack by surprise at night, as is their wont, is there any possibility of survivors or would visitors find nothing but a collection of bloody smears?**
- What treasures might the Giants abscond with? Is there anything they wouldn't recognize as treasure that might be ignored or accidentally destroyed?**
- Will a Giant attack set off a panic, resulting in more destruction and anarchy than the Giants themselves can create? Will refugees flee to adjacent regions, causing additional problems (crime, destruction of crops, overcrowding, spread of disease)?**

Thorough answers to some of these questions will require you to first contemplate the options available in the Secrets of the Skybrood section later in the adventure. Initially, all you need to do is get in the habit of thinking about your campaign world as a place where change is the norm. And one of those changes is a bunch of Giants busting up your favorite little toys.

Once you have some ideas for places the Giants might pillage, look over your maps and decide on the order these places will be attacked. A simple way to do this would be to decide upon a general direction the wind tends to blow across the whole map, so that the easternmost location is targeted first, then the castle moves along to the closest target west of that starting point. Or whatever.

For smaller campaign settings you might need a more haphazard pattern with the Skyfortress zigzagging across the map, as the target locations need to be at least 50 to 100 miles apart. If you can space the targets out at least that much, then you can use rules for sailing ships and the wind charts (*LotFP Rules and Magic*, pages 43-44) for plotting out the Skyfortress's movements. Do yourself a favor and note down a place or two along each leg of the route where someone might have noticed a cloud with some structure sitting atop it.

Once you have a route planned out and a timeline of Giant attacks, you can place the PC party into that context. Figure out where the PCs will be malingering when the Skyfortress attacks its first target. It will take at least one day for every 48 miles between the party and the attack before they learn about the event; the speed at which a fast horse can carry a message. If the intervening terrain is rough and/or they are in a backwater area that doesn't receive news quickly, the delay could be much longer. Perhaps the second or third attack will have happened before the PCs are alerted to the menace of the Skyfortress. That's actually ideal, as it gives the party a trail of bloody breadcrumbs to follow.

At some point prior to tackling the Skyfortress themselves, the party will hopefully speak to a witness, someone who claims to be a witness, or at least someone who has heard about the attacks from someone else. Accurate reports will be hard to come by, however, for two reasons: These Giants are nocturnal predators so most eyewitness accounts will be traumatic narratives combining darkness, flickering shadows, blinding fire (if Giants go stomping about something is bound to catch fire), screams, bloodbaths, and only partially-viewed horrific monsters. I remember how crazy and contradictory news reports were on September 11th, 2001 when the terrorists brought down the World Trade Center. Now imagine for a moment if those attacks had happened at night, with no one catching it on film and no news media to quickly propagate the official story.

The other problem faced by any investigative PCs is that the Giants of the Skyfortress are completely alien to the mindset of a randomly-selected pseudo-medieval inhabitant of a typical fantasy faux Europe. Most peasants have probably never heard of elephants and unless they live on the coast they may only know sharks as some sort of bitey fish. They don't know what either animal looks like, so the idea that the Giants kinda look like the two animals put together doesn't make any sense. Eyewitness accounts will have trouble describing their at-

tackers as anything more specific than big monsters. That's why they are simply referred to as "Giants" throughout this text, and not some stupid name like the Skybrood or the Zarthekeen.

Here's a random table to give you some ideas for the sort of information that the PCs may acquire while tracking down the Skyfortress.

### RANDOM NEAR-ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GIANTS (1D12)

1	Reports of an anchor tearing up a tall building. (During raids the Giants use chains and anchors to secure the Skyfortress to the ground; one of them got loose and clipped the side of a church steeple, lighthouse, castle tower, etc.)
2	Reports of a smashed village. (Follow-up investigation will reveal elephant-like tracks among the ruins, as well as a grotesque amount of spilled blood.)
3	Reports of sharks seen swimming over the surface of a forest. (Follow-up investigation will reveal a trail of wreckage and elephant prints through the forest, leading either to a water source and/or a clutch of eggs - see #9 below.)
4	Reports of centaurs. (Vaguely humanoid torso attached to a four-legged body.)
5	Reports of sharkmen riding elephants. (This one can be traced back to an educated but slightly confused witness, perhaps a monk working on a bestiary or a wizard's apprentice.)
6	Reports of man-eating elephants. (See #5 above.)
7	Reports of a cloud with a dome atop it.
8	Reports of a cloud with a tail. (The same loose anchor that caused the trouble in #1 above.)
9	Reports of a formation of boulders appearing overnight. (These are actually eggs, which will hatch in 1d20 days, releasing 3d6 Hatchlings to menace the locals.)
10	Reports of spider men living in boulders. (Some poor bastard saw one or more eggs hatch.)
11	Reports of a malevolent cloud-monster.
12	Reports of a large sailing ship that somehow crashed into a cloud.

# GETTING UP TO THE SKYFORTRESS

There are times in the course of a good role-playing campaign when it is important as a Referee to have one's crap together. Like, if you spring a riddling sphinx on the players then you need to have some riddles and some solutions ready. But sometimes it is important that a Referee propose a problem to the players with no preconceived idea of the solution. Your players want to get to the Skyfortress. How the heck are they going to do that? Hell if I know. Don't worry, the players will figure something out.

Let your players come up with whatever cockamamie scheme they can dream up. Is there any bit of it that their characters would realize isn't feasible even if the players can't see it that way? Talk it out with the players. Once they have a plan that is not ridiculous on the face of it, try to set a chance for it to succeed. State the odds to the players and dare them to roll the dice.

I tend to allow nearly any slightly plausible plan to work on a roll of 1-2 on a 1d6 throw. A roll of 3 indicates a near-success that might be turned into a success with some additional quick thinking. Or maybe it means a success but with an additional complication. A roll of 6 would generally mean a disaster beyond mere failure. But that's just my dirt simple go-to system. Maybe you prefer something else involving different dice or maybe the plan fits a particular ability score and you want someone to roll 1d20, trying to get a number under that stat.

Really, any sort of randomization scheme will work as long as there's a chance for success and a chance for failure. If marginal successes and critical failure can also be included, so much the better. One thing you definitely DO NOT want to do is make it easy for them to get to the Skyfortress, unless they have some sort of resource they have earned in previous play like a flying carpet or a teleporter booth. And never feel obliged to permit the success of any scheme you think too far-fetched. It is your job to make those calls. This adventure only becomes better if the poor players screw up the first time and have to track the Skyfortress across miles of the Fire Swamp, fighting rodents of unusual size the whole way (or whatever).

Heck, maybe the party will chase the Skyfortress off the campaign map and you'll need to expand the scope of your milieu to continue the adventure. That would be one of the awesomest pains in the ass ever. And just because you're holding this module and want to run it doesn't mean the PCs ever have to get to the Skyfortress. The integrity of your campaign would be better served by assuming the Skyfortress is almost impossible for the party to reach and you need to be prepared for them to utterly fail. Unless of course you bought this module for a one-shot non-campaign situation, in which case just sell the players some magic beans and let them climb up to the map.



# WHY THE HECK ARE WE GOING TO THE SKYFORTRESS ANYWAY?

There's a certain kind of player type that I call the quarterback, even though I have no business making sports analogies. The basic idea is that if I snap the ball to a QB they will try their best to do something cool with it. If you've got a good quarterback in your group then motivation is rarely a problem. They'll want to go to a cloud castle for the same reason mountain climbers want to reach that summit: because it's there. They'll fight shark-faced elephant-footed abominations because that is what adventurers do. Give the quarterback the ball and often the rest of the group will play along.

However, some groups lack strong quarterbacks. Or the group's QB isn't in a position to bring the rest of the party along with him. I had this problem sometimes back when I was a kid. I'd be up for any old stupid adventure but I was too young for the rest of the table to take me seriously, so my quarterbacking was often in vain. Or maybe you've got that one guy who won't send his PC on a dangerous mission unless there is a clear motivation to do so. On the one hand that's kind of a stupid-ass thing to pull. Did that guy roll up Olórin the Orange, super awesome disco space wizard, just so he could not go on adventures? On the other hand, that's completely legit within the scope of the game. Why should Olórin stick his wizardy neck out just because Oaf Slaughterbeast wants to see what the inside of a cloud looks like?

So before you insert the Skyfortress into your campaign, you might give some thought as to what sort of bait you will use to lure your party to this particular doom. Probably the best way to go is for the players to discover that something they want — or someone they need to speak to — was in one of the places the Giants have already attacked. “Pluribus the Sage? Oh, yeah. He disappeared the same night his home village was flattened.” Something like that. Dropping some legends earlier in the campaign about secrets hidden in floating cloud castles ought to do the trick. Aim the carrot directly at the heart’s desire of your most reluctant player and you ought to be able to get the rest of the party along on sheer momentum. Of course, you’ll have to decide whether or not Merlin’s Grimoire or the Stone of Scone is really located in the Skyfortress and where it can be found.

If you go the route of giving the players a Macguffin to track down, do not be surprised if after acquiring Marsellus Wallace’s briefcase the party hightails it out of the Skyfortress never to return. That’s totally cool. Personally, I’d prefer for your players to stick around until they were murdered by all the monsters, but I respect anyone who can stick to the mission parameters and then get the hell out of Dodge.



# “YO, JEFF! WHAT IF I DON’T HAVE A CAMPAIGN YET?”

You kinda need one, my friend. You don't have to produce as serious a setting as some of the weirdos described above, what with expensive boxed sets or elaborate creations or methodical research. Here's a quick way to get your own campaign world up and running:

 **Using Google image search or something like that, find a map of someplace remote and interesting, but which your players probably aren't too familiar with. An island or a group of islands can be good choices, like the Falklands or Indonesia.**

 **Redraw the map (turn your version of the map sideways if you worry you'll be embarrassed when the players figure out you stole Ireland wholesale, and keep any little mistakes you make), with new place names (Port Stanley becomes the city of St. Stanislaw, for instance) and rescale it so that one end of the map to the other is maybe 300 to 500 miles.**

 **Add a big spooky forest, a foetid swamp and a smouldering volcano if they don't already appear on your map.**

 **Figure out where the biggest cathedral or temple will be located, note where the lonely towers of two or three obnoxious wizards can be found and think up three or four noble claimants to the empty throne of the realm. Place at least one infamous monster on the map (a fiery dragon's lair, the last known location of a troll who never stops eating, a vampire's castle, etc.). Note the few secret places where elves and dwarves might be found in numbers.**



**Place some weird stuff you can flesh out later as needed: standing stones, a haunted battlefield, a crashed flying saucer, a pyramid from a pre-human civilization, a lake that is frozen even as summer blazes around it, etc.**



**Detail the starting area. A classic beginning involves a cross-roads tavern and some spooky caves or a ruined castle. You need a place where the party gets drunk and sleeps it off as a counterpoint to the expeditions to loot the caves or castle. Another way to begin is with the party captured, either in the dungeon of some local jerkbutt lord or in the hold of a slaver ship that then wrecks in a storm.**

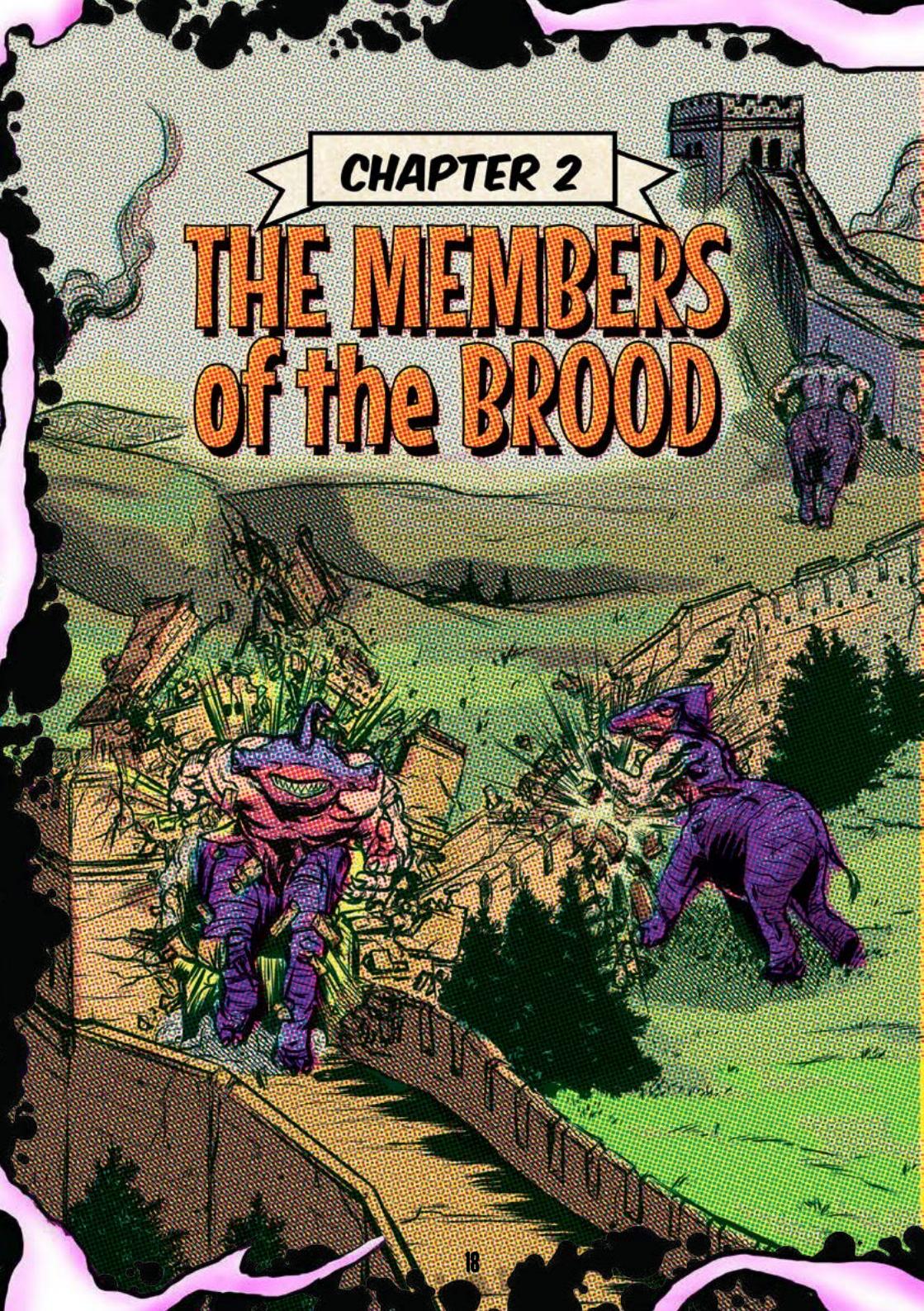


**Get some additional adventures and populate the countryside with them. You would not even believe the number of free adventures out there. The One Page Dungeon contest alone ([Google it](#)) provides years of material.**

Once you have all that, then go back and start thinking about how some of these places will look like after a Giant or three beats them up and takes their lunch money.

CHAPTER 2

# THE MEMBERS of the BROOD



Since only seven Giants inhabit the Skyfortress they can be individually distinguished. The names given are provisional. If the players come up with their own names, so much the better. Each individual Giant is given two hit point totals, one based on the classic stats for cloud-dwelling Giants and the other, larger amount, for the new Giant rules proposed in the Advanced Monster Stats section (page 86). For a more old-fashioned hack-n-slay sort of game, use the basic Monster Stats (page 84). Here's a summary of the advanced version, for quick reference.

## THE GIANTS

**Armor:** none, always hit

**Damage Reduction:** -5 points per strike

**Hit Points:** 20d8

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:** 120'

**Attack Bonus:** +10

**Attacks:**

**Bigass smash attack** for 4d6 damage (if any die comes up a 6, target knocked back  $1d6 \times 5$  feet, prone)

**Throw Boulder** (200' range) for 3d6 damage (may strike 2 adjacent foes, every hit smashes some piece of equipment)

**Bucking Bronco** (all in mêlée save versus Breath Weapon or take 2d6 damage)

**Save As:** 20th level Fighter

**Morale:** 10

## THE BROODMOTHER/BIG MOMMA (HP 80/160)

The Broodmother is the matriarch of the clan and the only adult female around these parts. What exactly the Broodmother looks like is an important decision you need to make before running this adventure. Like the queen of a beehive or ant colony (or the Slurm queen from that one episode of *Futurama*), her hindquarters are disproportionately larger than those of the other members of her species. She regularly squeezes out clutches of eggs that look like boulders as big around as a man is tall, out of which spring goo-covered hatchlings that chase people around like *Jurassic Park* velociraptors.

So when the party encounters the Broodmother you've got to think about your audience and how badly you want to gross them out. You could try to play it for quick laughs, mention she has a big butt and move on. Or you can linger on her bloated lower torso covered with taut veins and stretch marks, emphasizing her limited mobility and the smelly goo dripping from her throbbing, swollen cloaca. Yeah, I probably just grossed you out there (or maybe only after you looked up the word "cloaca"). Sorry about that. But LotFP has no Sanity score for Referees to assault with abstract numerical creepiness. If you want to get a reaction, sometimes you've got to go all the way down the rabbit hole.

Similarly, you need to decide if you want your particular version of the Broodmother to have mammarys or not. Your answer could range from "No way, that makes no sense! Sharks don't have boobs!" to "You know what would be funny? Big dangly udders on the elephant-body," to "Covered with tits like the Diana of Ephesus." Personally I lean toward the last option, or just a couple of oversized breasts constantly leaking some sort of pustulent greenish slime (or even actual green slime).

But again, that's for you to decide. I think it would make for a hell of an adventure to tune in on the ways our decadent Western culture makes childbirth and the female body taboo objects of veneration/revulsion. Or maybe I'm just a misogynist jerk with mommy issues.

Either way, you don't have to make my headtrip into your headtrip to run this module.





## THE SWORDMANIAC / OL' BEER BELLY (HP 70/140)

This guy is the biggest, meanest, stupidest specimen of the adult males, making him the nominal leader of any raiding party. Although possessing extraordinary musculature, years of bullying the Chain-monster, Vomitboy and the Runt (see below) for a larger share of the food and drink have left him too successful for his own good. He now sports a prodigiously protruding potbelly. And in the interest of gesturing towards some sort of gender fairness, you could give this guy a big, smelly wang, if you think it would help to properly traumatize the players. Just be smart and don't have the monster try to stick it into any of the members of the party. We live in a society where the odds that any of your players have been attacked by sword-wielding maniacs is relatively low, but the chances that someone at your table has been the victim of a sexual assault is much, much higher. Do yourself a favor and don't go there.

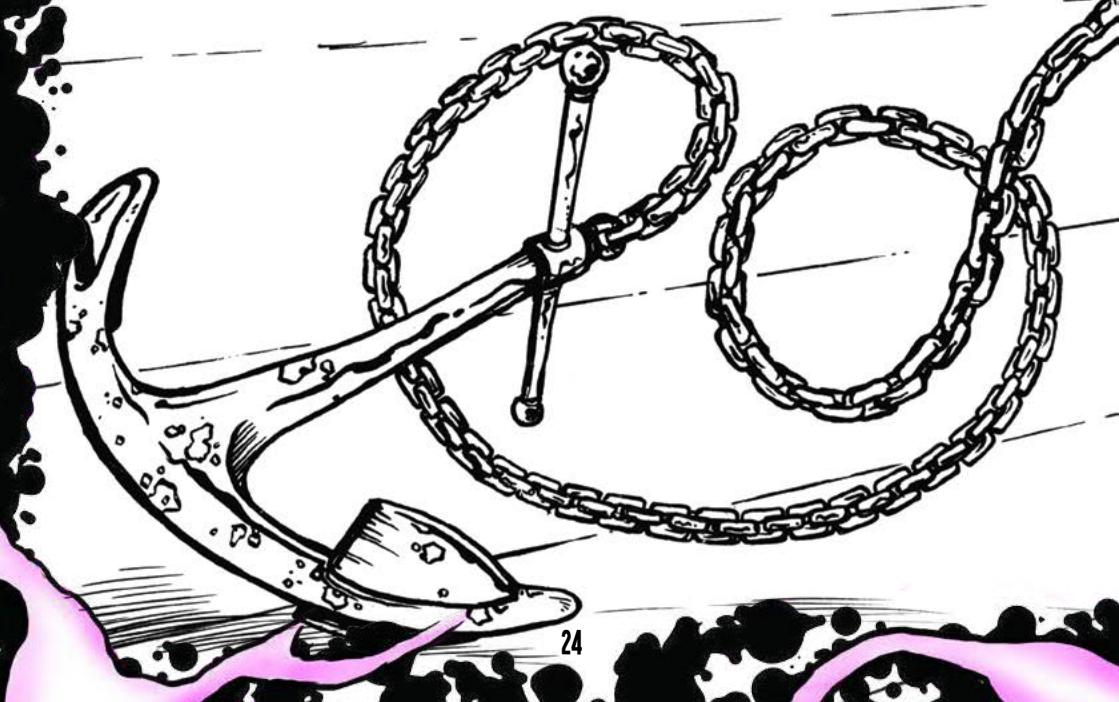
Speaking of swords, this fool carries around the **Sword of the Sky King**: A bigass bladed weapon of glittering blue metal that used to rest in the empty scabbard in the Throne Room (chamber #3), but which has served as the implement of office for the alpha male of the Giants for generations. Ol' Beer Belly here wields it in one hand, but a human could use it two-handed. It's heavier and longer than most two-handed swords and the grip is rather bigger than a human would like. Only a Fighter with a Strength and Dexterity both in excess of 12 may wield the Sword without penalty. All other characters would suffer a -2 on attack rolls. Damage rolls for normal characters would be on a d12 (Giants do their normal 4d6 basic attack damage).

The **Sword of the Sky King** dates back to an era when magic dominated the battlefield and it has been enchanted to counter spells common to those ancient times. The Sword negates any kind of healing magic: Wounds received from it must heal naturally or not at all, but neither can the owner be healed while wielding or wearing the blade. The blade also counters any Prismatic form of magic with an inky black aura that cuts through *Prismatic Walls* or blocks the effects of *Prismatic Rays*, *Color Rays*, etc. Anyone slain by the **Sword of the Sky King** cannot return as undead or be resurrected/raised without the direct intervention of a cosmically powerful god or demon.

## CHAINMONSTER/THE BRAINBEAST (HP 60/120)

This male Giant has two distinctive features: the chains criss-crossing his chest ending in a pair of anchors, and the throbbing, tumorous mass attached to his head. The hideous growth is actually some additional greymatter that's partially functional, making the Chainmonster the smartest of all the Giants, except perhaps for the Mad Maiden when she is possessed (see below). The Chainmonster is the only creature in the Skyfortress who is able to operate the Skydrive (chambers #5 and #6), though his understanding of its operation is extremely limited, merely allowing him to steer clear of large storms and avoid heading out to sea past sight of land. The Brainbeast also possesses the expertise to operate the great winches in area #14, which allow the Skyfortress to be anchored to the ground, at least when the wind isn't abnormally strong.

In combat the Chainmonster will swing his anchors wildly about himself. The long chains allow him to mêlée with foes up to thirty feet away. Although he couldn't pick Gandalf out of a police line-up, he's smart enough to target spellcasters after he sees someone cast a spell. He'll do his best to prevent the shiny lights hurting him twice. And generally the Brainbeast will learn from any encounter with the party. Fewer tricks will work on him than the others and few tricks will work on him more than once.







## VOMITBOY/ THE SLOBBERING MORON (HP 50/100)

Vomitboy is constantly ill. A thick layer of bluish, greenish mucousy filth coats Vomitboy's lips and dribbles down his chin. He's ridiculously easy to track thanks to the spittle trail and easy to detect due to his frequent coughing, which sounds a little bit like a chainsaw and jackhammer on their honeymoon night. Any saving throw made by Vomitboy against physical effects are at a -2 penalty. Like the Sword-maniac, Vomitboy is extremely stupid. He is also terribly naive. Damn near any sort of subterfuge will work on this poor, phlegmy schmuck.

If this guy is reduced to half hit points or if he suffers a single great injury (a fall, a lightning bolt in the face, whatever) then his weak stomach will discharge its contents. Randomly select someone in mêlée as a target of this puke attack. The attack roll will be at +10, with a hit indicating 2d6 damage plus a save versus Poison. Failure to save indicates that 1d6 items of equipment are damaged or destroyed by stomach acid. If a 6 is rolled the acid is intense enough that the character's face is also permanently burned, turning them into some *Phantom of the Opera* style freak. Vomitboy will not blow chunks as an attack form more than once a week.

Casting Cure Disease on Vomitboy or otherwise curing him will allow the caster to befriend him, turning this Giant against his fellows. To the best of his dim abilities Vomitboy will be particularly eager to aid in the overthrow of the males higher up the food chain (i.e. Sword-maniac and Chainmonster). However, he will not work against the Broodmother or the Mad Maiden, unless the latter starts up with the weird chanting.



## THE RUNT (HP 30/60)

Upon a successful Bushcraft roll or seeing the Runt side-by-side with another Giant, the party will realize that this creature is small, thin and sickly compared to other members of its species. It's still a full-on Giant for combat purposes, but compared to the others this guy is a twerp sitting at the bottom of the tribal hierarchy.

If encountered with any other Giant there's a 50% chance the Runt is being bullied when the PCs arrive.

Due to the Runt's tremendous reserves of resentment it will turn on any Giant that appears to be injured by the player characters, except for the Mad Maiden; she creeps him out enough that he will simply run away from her if she finds herself in trouble. Also, this resentment can work in the party's favor if they have access to enchantments like Charm Monster, as all saves against such spells will be at a -4 penalty.





## THE MAD MAIDEN (HP 45/90)

This young Giant appears as a shorter, less muscular member of her species. While still forming in her egg she became possessed by one of the Malevolences of the Angry Brain (p 88) and now she vacillates between lucid, normal giantish bloodthirsty brutality and confused visions of untold aeons. The bloody sigils found throughout the Skyfortress are her handiwork. Sometimes when she gets a-visioning she feels compelled to scrawl messages in elder runes, but they all come out as gobbledegook, further angering her possessing Malevolence.

### SPECIAL RULES

#### INITIAL ATTITUDE (1D6)

<b>1-4</b>	Normal, not possessed, hungry and stupid.
<b>5-6</b>	Possessed, easily surprised (4 in 6) due to unholy trance state and blasphemous grafitti.

**Possession in Combat** - If the Mad Maiden takes damage while in her normal frame of mind there is a 50% chance that the Malevolence seizes control of her nervous system. She will continue to fight while chanting in an eldritch language never before heard by human ears. Anyone who hears this chant for two or more rounds must save versus Magic or suffer the effects of a Confusion spell. If other Giants are present, there's a 1 in 6 chance per round they will join the chanting. There's no additional effect of a group chant (unless you want three or more chanters to summon Azathoth or something), it's just super-creepy.

**Death Complication** - 1d6 turns after the Mad Maiden's death a Malevolence will emerge from the remains of her brain.

**Broodmother Replacement** - If the Broodmother is killed, changes in local pheromone levels will trigger the Mad Maiden's metamorphosis into full-fledged adulthood. Over the course of a week she enters a ravenous frenzy, growing to almost double her starting weight (and hit points) until she physically resembles the Broodmother and takes over as leader of the tribe. During the transformation week she will rampage throughout the region surrounding the Skyfortress's landing site, devouring any living thing in her path. There's a 50% chance she eats one of the other tribe members during the week. During the transformation the possessing Malevolence will gain a stronger brainhold on this Giant, granting her an unholy level of intellect that will only make things worse for the lands below the Skyfortress.



## THE TERRIBLE TWINS (HP 65/130)

This woeful creature is a pair of conjoined twins (a.k.a. Siamese twins), hatched from the same egg and almost two separate Giants. Like the Broodmother above, you should put some forethought into how hideous you want this poor bugger to be. Here are six suggestions. If nothing else, roll a dang ol' d6 to pick one.



**1. Joined at Hip** - This is probably one of the least gross options. The Twins each have full bodies (two heads, eight legs, four arms) joined in the midsection of their lower torsos. Their inner arms (the arm closest to their twin) are likely to get in each other's way in combat, but with two heads they can easily make two attacks in a Round.

**2. Double Centaur** - One lower body, four legs, but a torso at each end. Does that mean one of them can look down and see poop coming out during pooping time? I dunno. Or does this poor misbegotten beast not have a butthole? That would make it the Angriest Giant Ever, I think. And if killed with a piercing weapon it will probably explode in a burst of pressurized fecal matter. Either way, sneaking up on this version of the Terrible Twins is going to be hard as hell, because it has crazy sideways shark eyes facing both front and back.

**3. Two Faces** - In this version the Terrible Twins look mostly like a normal Giant but with the addition of several tumorous lumps, one of which has an extra face. This extra face comes equipped with a partial brain of its own, just enough to be a nuisance. In fact, the second face will just not shut up. Ever. It babbles non-stop, much to the annoyance of the dominant face. This version of the Twins cannot surprise enemies, unless they are deaf.

**4. Two Heads Plus** - Two heads, three arms, five legs. The good news is that the extra leg guided by the extra head actually slows the Twins down, so that even a human in chainmail can outrun this monster as it literally trips over itself to get to you. The bad news is the second head gets an additional basic attack in mêlée.

**5. Flopping Grotesquerie** - All the parts are there for making a two-headed, four-armed, eight-legged Giant, but they're not attached in the correct configuration. Instead, the Twins take the shape of a haphazard horror-spider, with some arms doing the works of legs and vice versa. This Twin is best equipped for climbing, allowing it to negotiate anchor chains and walls at normal movement rates.

**6. Facefist Hate Machine** - This version of the Twins has a beefy arm and hand where its neck and head should be and two heads in lieu of hands at the end of its normally-placed arms. This version of the Twins cannot throw boulders, but instead of a single basic attack it can opt to make two bite attacks each Round for 2d6 damage each.

# FINAL NOTE ON THE INDIVIDUAL GIANTS

Does all this folderol about individualizing the Giants bring you down? Try not to sweat it. All these details are meant to allow you to create a maximum number of new, interesting situations with a minimum number of new monster types. By not statting up the Terrible Twins as an ettin or the Brainbeast as some sort of Chaingiant, you can always fall back to the basic monster stats when things get hectic during play. All the nitpicky individual rules above are supposed to help you. If they don't, just ignore them. That's what I do when I use someone else's module and it's too fiddly. The social tensions and odd behaviors of this twisted family of creeps is much more important than any specific game mechanic, as the former give the party some material to work with when confronting the Giant menace.







# STUFF YOU NEED TO WORK OUT BEFORE PLAY

An adventure is not a fixed thing. Between the idea in the author's head and what happens at the table there's a bunch of interme-diating steps: what the author writes, who buys the adventure, how they interpret the writing, how badly they fumble describing that interpretation to the players, whatever the damn dice screw up and the crazy ideas the players come up with. In short, using a published adventure is like reading directions to Albuquerque as a recipe for making mint chocolate cupcakes and somehow everyone in the kitchen ends up with herpes.

So let's not kid ourselves here. When I write something like "room 24 contains a big giantish sack containing 2,400 silver pieces and a half eaten horse" that crap is only gospel if you're crazy enough to take it as such. Some days I honestly don't understand why we all take such stuff so seriously just because it's printed in some dumb module. Anyways, Blessed Saint Gygax argues in the original DMG that every good Referee needs to tailor a published adventure to their specific campaign. Meanwhile, our fearless leader, James the Mad (publisher of this module and many other fine Lamentations of the Flame Princess Weird Fantasy Role-Playing products) double-dog dares you to run a published adventure with as few changes as possible.

Guess what? We're going to have our crap and eat it, too. This section is devoted to the totally canonical ways you can make your usage of this module non-canonical. You see, some of the key details in this here adventure exist in a state of flux. Like that sicko Schrödinger's undead cat-in-a-box, several parts of this adventure are in a superposition of states until you pick which one is true for your campaign. Before you run this adventure, go through each of these sections and pick out the option that works best for you. Which ones can you unleash on your players while keeping a straight face? Which options will give them the willies? What selections will best fit your already-established campaign or will best shake up the players' idea of how your campaign works?



## MAJOR ISSUE #1: WHAT IS UP WITH THESE DING DANG GIANTS, ANYWAY?

The Giants of the Skyfortress are not simply big humanoids. That's old hat. The elevator pitch for these weirdos is "giants made out of sharks and elephants", but what is that brief description meant to imply? In general, the design of the Giants is a bit like a centaur, if you used the front half of a shark and body of an elephant. Oh, and if sharks had big, muscular arms with wickedly-clawed hands. For more detail than that, pick one of the items below.

### CHECK ONE

- OPTION 1: SPACE ALIENS! (P.40)**
- OPTION 2: ANGELS! (P.42)**
- OPTION 3: MUTANTS! (P.44)**
- OPTION 4: SHARK-ELEPHANTS! (P.46)**

## OPTION #1 - SPACE ALIENS!

**The Giants are space aliens come to Earth. Although they are very large, muscular quadruped centaroids their overall aesthetic is more along the lines of the big, scary monsters in the Aliens films than any earthly lifeform. Don't be shy here. Add "...if sharks and elephants had been designed by H. R. Giger. Aieee!" to the end of that elevator-pitch-level description when you use it on the players.**

• **CONSEQUENCES #1:** Acid blood, baby! Anytime the characters manage to inflict more than one point of damage with a slashing weapon or more than five points with a puncturing weapon, enough acidic blood gushes out to endanger someone within mêlée range of the Giant. That poor sap (choose randomly if you have more than one possible victim) must save versus Breath Weapon or take 2d6 acid damage right to their stupid face.

• **PROTIP #1:** If someone complains that they rolled really close to a successful save, make sympathetic noises and reply "In that case you only take half damage." Then announce that their favorite sword/backpack full of gold/magic wand/nearby henchman was entirely destroyed by the rest of the acid.

• **CONSEQUENCES #2:** If these creeps are from outer space, where the crap is their spaceship? If the party can backtrack the movements of the cloud castle, they may just end up at a dungeon made out of a crashed flying saucer. Writing that is on you, not me. Good luck.

• **PROTIP #2:** Resist the urge to add facehuggers to the adventure. Instead, keep the PCs on their toes with the possibility that facehuggers could jump out at any second. That scurrying shape in the darkness may only be a rat, but how will they know? Your goal should be to get through the entire adventure with the party under the impression that facehuggers lurk somewhere on your wandering monster chart.



## OPTION #2 - ANGELS!

**The Giants are Abominations unto the Lord. They could be fallen angels or the descendants of fallen angels or maybe just the lice that crawl about God's cosmic beard. Either way, they have a mythological dimension to them.**

• **CONSEQUENCES #1:** As diabolic enemies of the universal forces of Law, the Giants are especially vulnerable to things like Holy Swords (if you use such things in your game) and Cleric spells like *Dispel Evil* and *Holy Word*. Similarly, the Giants are immune to fire and, depending on your campaign world, summoned demons might be loath to attack them.

• **CONSEQUENCES #2:** Feel free to decorate a few of the chambers in the Skyfortress to reflect a more heavy metal album cover look: moaning corpses dangling from meathooks, lots of flaming torches and braziers, giant-sized torture equipment, skullbats flapping their wings through the corridors, etc.

• **PROTIP:** You can trick out the hellish versions of the Giants with horns, red skin, barbed tails, etc., but keep in mind this will cause eyewitness reports to focus on the diabolic rather than the gigantic and outré. Also, DO NOT give them giant batwings on their backs. Gravity is one of the few forces that the PCs can employ against these bastards.

• **CONSEQUENCES #3:** The whole Skyfortress reeks of brimstone and visibility is reduced because of the all the hellsmoke filling the corridors. Surprise situations will greatly favor the Giants, as their eyes and ears are adjusted to this self-generating environment. Inside the Skyfortress, the Giants only have a 1 in 6 chance of being surprised and the PCs suffer from surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6.



### OPTION #3 - MUTANTS!

**The Giants are some sort of horrible Mutants. Their antecedents were less hideous, less gigantic, and possessed of a rich culture. Sure they were four-legged sharkpeople, but they had art and poetry and unfair taxation policies like every other civilized race.**

 **CONSEQUENCES #1:** Someone or something caused the degenerative transformation that led to the present gigantic, devolved state of affairs. Could that source of mutation still be at work? Perhaps the ancestors of the Giants started out as an adventuring party who explored the otherwise empty ruins of the Skyfortress, but the cloud floated out over the ocean and the party had to settle within its confines. A few generations later, the inhabitants of the joint are now full-blown monstrosities.

 **CONSEQUENCES #2:** Does this mean that prolonged exposure to the Skyfortress can affect the PCs? Sure, but location matters. We'll peg the Skydrive (chambers #5 and #6) as the source of the strange radiation. For every full twenty-four hours the party spends in the Skydrive chambers each party member must save versus Magic. Time spent in adjacent chambers calls for a similar save, but at a +4 bonus. Success means they lose one point of Intelligence and Wisdom but gain one point of either Strength or Constitution (50/50 chance). Failing to save results in the Intelligence and Wisdom loss with no gain. These stat losses cannot be healed while the victim is in the Skyfortress. At zero Intelligence or Wisdom (including, in this scenario, loss sustained from the Malevolences), the victim mutates into some sort of evolutionarily retrograde monster, like a bloodthirsty ape-man.

 **PROTIP:** Unless your campaign explicitly posits elves, dwarves and halflings as splinter races of humanity you should pick some devolved forms specifically for these peoples. Perhaps elves regress into plant monsters, halflings turn into squeaky little rat-things and dwarves become grumpy rocks. I dunno.



#### **OPTION #4 - SHARK-ELEPHANTS!**

**The Giants are literally sharks and elephants sewn together mad scientist style, with some over-sized muscular arms stitched on for good measure. These Frankensteinian creatures may also sport bolts in their necks or other bits of cyborg metal sticking out of them, as it pleases you. Personally, I'd give at least one Giant a big buzzsaw blade where one its hands should be. (You don't need to change the stats to do this).**



##### **CONSEQUENCES #1:** Clearly someone created these creatures.

You'll need to figure out who it was for your own campaign.

Are they still alive or long dead? If the latter, can their corpse be found and subjected to *Speak with Dead*? Did they leave a lab journal laying about so that some twisted PC can continue their experiments? Do you want to put the corpse and/or the journal right in the adventure, or use it as fodder for a future adventure?



**PROTIP:** Just because some crazy Doctor Frankenbean created the original shark-elephant-giants doesn't mean that the pack living in the Skyfortress have to be the same beasties. It would be creepy-weird-awesome if you assumed that the original stitched together cyborg beasts were capable of reproduction, the females laying eggs from which stitched-together, already-cyborgified young hatch. It doesn't make any sense and that's kinda the point. Sometimes the universe of *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* obeys rules that mere mortals cannot fathom.





## MAJOR ISSUE #2: WHO BUILT THIS CRAZY PLACE AND WHY?

The vast spaces and huge staircases of the Skyfortress suggest it was built by gigantic creatures, but the Giants currently lurking about had nothing to do with it. The humanoid skeletons found in the Throne Room (chamber #3) and the Crypt (chamber #10) are all that remains of the original builders. Here are some options for the identity of the dead and the purpose of their flying castle.

### CHECK ONE

- OPTION 1: TITANS! (P.50)**
- OPTION 2: ANGELS! (P.52)**
- OPTION 3: SPACE GODS! (P.54)**
- OPTION 4: REAL GODS! (P.56)**

## OPTION #1 - TITANS!

*The builders were Titans, the gigantic predecessors to the gods that now rule the campaign world. Most of them are long forgotten, their names obscured by centuries of lopsided retellings of the great war between the gods and the Titans. Few remain to sing the praises of the defeated. The Skyfortress is a splinter broken off from Olympus/Valhalla/whatever, the last bastion of the handful of survivors from that prehuman conflict.*

 **CONSEQUENCES #1:** The Angry Brain and the Malevolences will be especially hostile to Clerics of any deities involved in the original Gods/Titans conflict. Anyone displaying a holy symbol or invoking the names of the ancient gods will be subject to relentless Malevolence harassment. Of course you'll need to determine which gods in your campaign date back to that era and which do not.

 **CONSEQUENCES #2:** Any weapons recovered from the Titans, such as the **Sword of the Sky King** wielded by the alpha male Giant, will be capable of wounding and killing full-fledged deities. Just one such weapon entering general circulation ought to set off a secret Clerics' war with every temple seeking to secure it for their own faith's use.

 **PROTIP:** If you've switched campaign worlds in recent memory, you can have a lot of fun dressing up the skeletons of the Titans as the gods of previous campaigns. The gods of your past become the Titans of the present.



## **OPTION #2 - ANGELS!**

*The skeletons are the corpses of Angels, neither sinful ones who fell with Satan nor loyal Angels who sided with the Almighty during the War in Heaven. Rather, these entities were of a rarely mentioned third group who stood aloof from the conflict, unwilling to side with either faction. After the defeat of Satan's crew this third group was exiled from Heaven for their fickleness. Sent to Earth to do penance through good works, a handful built the Skyfortress as a sort of second heaven to serve as the base of their operations.*

 **PROTIP:** If you choose this option go pencil in that the giant skeletons in the Throne Room (room 3) and the Crypt (room #10) all have wings. Do it right now, before you forget it.

 **CONSEQUENCES #1:** What killed these Angels? The obvious direction to go here is that Satan didn't want these guys mucking up all his ill deeds on Earth, but how did he do it? A dastardly answer is some sort of diabolical disease that affects Angels only. If the PCs muck about with the skeleton on the throne, the Angry Brain, or any of the other corpses make sure your campaign notes reflect that the characters involved are now carriers of the Angel Plague. That should lead to interesting situations if they ever contact any other Angels, fallen or otherwise. Are the demons called up by the Summon spell Fallen Angels? If you use this option you need to decide that now.

 **CONSEQUENCES #2:** Since Satan's forces and the neutral Angels probably mixed it up a bit back in the day, the **Sword of the Sky King** (and any other ancient titanic weapon recovered) ought to be super-effective against the legions of the Fallen. Unsubstantial and otherwise invulnerable Fallen Angels could be wounded by such devices and those demons with physical bodies should suffer double damage.



### OPTION #3 - SPACE GODS!

The dead Giants were Proto Space Gods who failed to achieve apotheosis into Jack Kirby style armored cosmic sci-fi entities. The Skyfortress was an early phase in their attempts to reach the stars, the way the Wright Brothers were a crucial step towards the Space Shuttle. Perhaps other members of the race made the evolutionary leap and joined the outer space godhead, but the dregs of the Skyfortress never reached their full potential.

• **CONSEQUENCES #1:** The magic of the Skyfortress and objects like the **Sword of the Sky King** are Clarke's Law level technology-as-magic rather than enchantments. You'll need to decide for your own campaign whether that makes these items special or not. Maybe all the magic in your campaign is actually sufficiently advanced technology, like magic spells are operating system commands for a hyperspatial computer that controls a horde of nanobots. If you go the other way and assume that magic and technology are two ends of a spectrum, then you'll probably want to rewrite some of the magic stuff in the Skyfortress.

• **CONSEQUENCES #2:** Your campaign now encompasses outer space and one or more mysterious Space Gods. Before your PCs figure out a way to get up there, you might want to think about that a bit. Who or what dwell among the stars? Are we talking about George Lucas style space operatics or H.P. Lovecraft type horrors lurking in the void? Or both? And will those Space Gods ever come back to their home planet?

• **PROTIP:** You can easily set off a new arc of your campaign by tricking the PCs into activating some sort of beacon (perhaps the Skydrive can function as such) that summons the Space Gods back to Earth. Will the Space Gods attempt to usher in a new utopian age? Or will they burn the world down to start over again?



## OPTION #4 - REAL GODS!

**The huge skeletons lying about the Skyfortress are the Gods Themselves. Not just any gods, but the pantheon that serves as the main gods of your campaign. Like if you were running a Viking game the skeleton on the throne would be the corpse of Odin, one of the skeletons in the Crypt would have been clutching an oversized hammer, etc. Since their deaths Asgard/Heaven/Olympus has slowly crumbled until the Skyfortress is all that remains.**



**PROTIP:** If you're going with this option, go and pencil in some notes right now. Like next to the entry for the Angry Brain scribble in "skull has eyepatch = Odin" or some simple reminder like that.



**CONSEQUENCES #1:** If Zeus is the pile of bones lying in the corner, how the heck does my Cleric of Zeus cast spells? In certain older editions of the game, spells above second level require power from the divine to be cast, with first and second level spells working on faith alone. (Note that the latter always implied to me that any concept that a character could believe in could have a Cleric that cast up to second level spells. So a dude could be a Cleric of Mr. Spock, even though Spock is a fictional character and the Cleric in question knows it.) But seeing your patron deity's corpse can seriously knock the wind out of your sails. Perhaps a Cleric in that situation would lose their ability to cast first and second level spells while still accessing the mysterious power that permits them to use third level spells. And once you've got the Clerics in the party wondering where their magic comes from it won't be long before your Magic-Users and elves start to get curious, so you may want to think about the metaphysics of arcane spells as well.



**CONSEQUENCES #2:** How did the gods die? Did the Titans of old stage some sort of revanchist counterattack and now they secretly rule the Earth? Do the spiders lurking in the shadows of the Skyfortress carry a poison that is lethal to the gods?



# MINOR ISSUE: THE WRETCHES IN THE TUNNELS

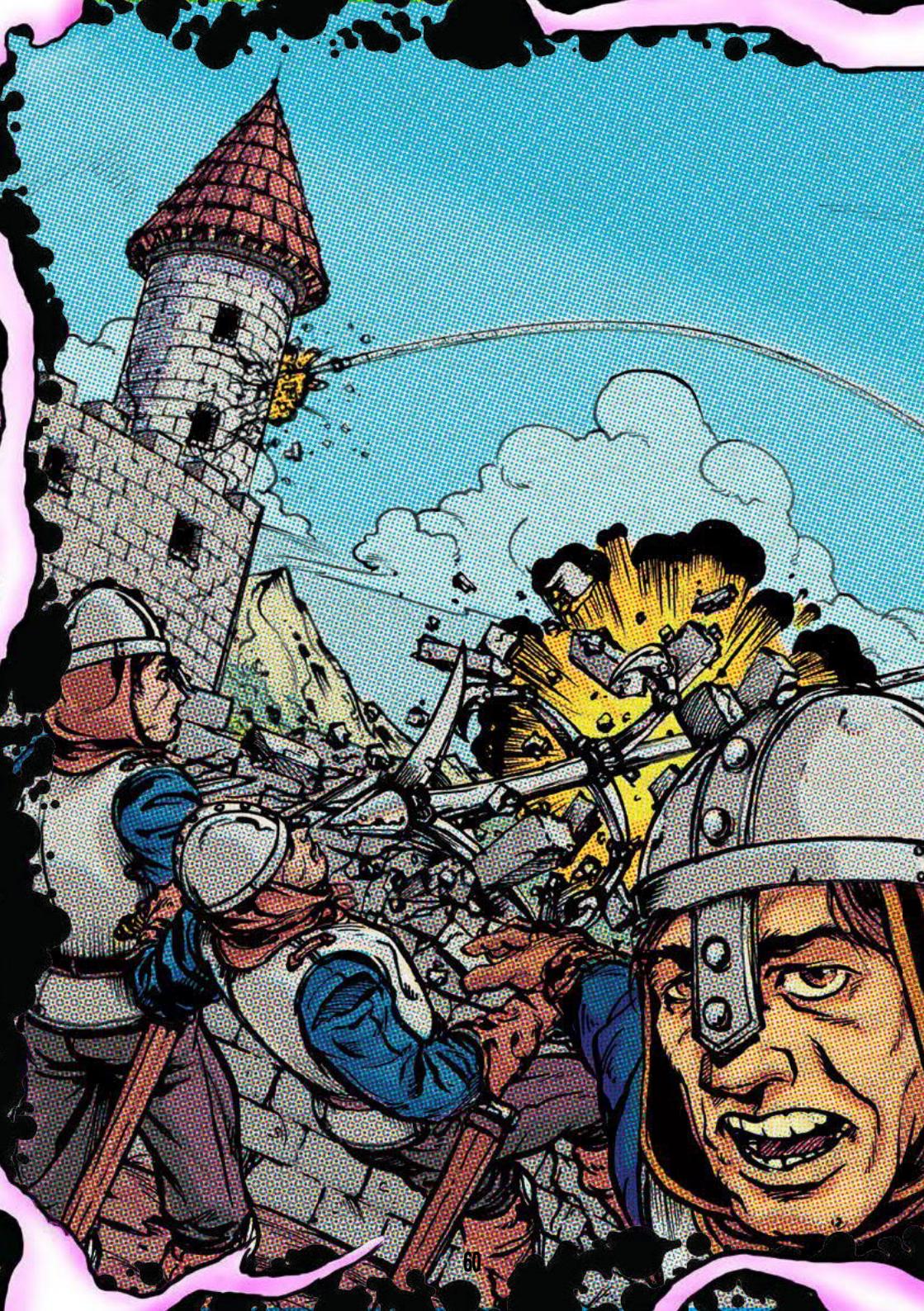
Just use this handy list to customize the poor bastards who eke out a meager existence in the tunnels below the Skyfortress.

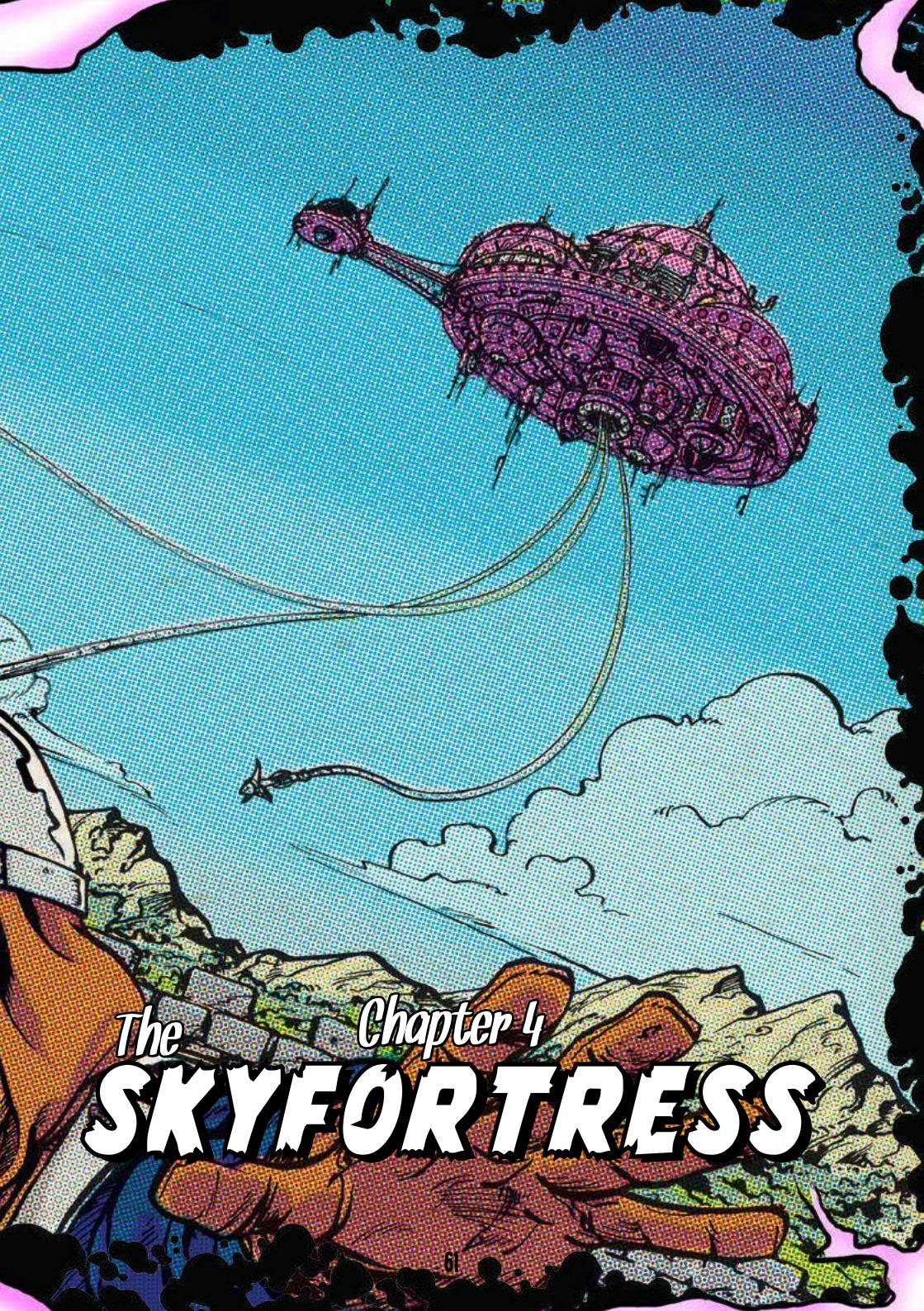
- Yes  No Do the Wretches speak the Common Tongue of the realm? (If No, they speak some degenerate patois.)
- Yes  No Do the Wretches use poison on their spear tips?  
If Yes, is it:
  - Deadly or
  - Sleep-Inducing
- Yes  No Are the Wretches humans?  
If No, what are they?
- Yes  No Are the Wretches cannibals?
- Yes  No Is the daughter of the chieftain a beautiful, virtuous maiden who will fall in love with the PC with the highest Charisma?
- Yes  No Do the Wretches have any booze?
- Yes  No If friendly contact is made, will the PCs be invited to join their clan?
- Yes  No Do the Wretches have anyone held prisoner? If Yes, who?

What sort of religion do these folk practice?

- They worship the Giants as angry demon-gods.
- The Wretches worship the cloud itself as their Earth/Sky Mother.
- They have some sort of cargo cult religion based upon a hot air balloon that crashed into the Skyfortress thirty years ago. (Where is the balloon now? Could the PCs repair and use it?)
- Their little idol looks suspiciously like a randomly-selected PC. He or she is probably some sort of crappy Chosen One.
- They believe the Malevolences are friendly spirits that just get carried away sometimes.
- The Wretches worship the giant skeletons laying about the place as their superpowered hero-ancestors.







The *Chapter 4*  
**SKYFORTRESS**

# MONSTER PLACEMENT RULES

With the exceptions of the Angry Brain in chamber #2 and eggs (i.e. potential Hatchlings) in room #4, none of the monsters are placed in fixed locales within the adventure. Prior to every expedition to the Skyfortress the monsters may be placed by the following random procedures.

**IMPORTANT:** You'll need to do this every time, before the PCs begin exploring the maps.

MONSTER	(ROLL)	LOCATION
<i>Broodmother</i>	1d4	1 = chamber #3, 2 = chamber #4, 3 = chamber #5, 4 = chamber #7.
<i>Chainmonster</i>	1d20	1 = chamber #1, 2 = chamber #2, etc. but 13+ = location #14, the Winches.
<i>All other Giants</i>	1d20	1 = chamber #1, 2 = chamber #2, etc.
<i>One Spider Swarm</i>	1d12	1 = chamber #1, 2 = chamber #2, etc.
<i>1d4 Malevolences in a single location</i>	1d12	1 = chamber #1, 2 = chamber #2, etc.

Finally, place two groups of Wretches (2d6 Wretches each) using the following chart:

(1D10)	LOCATION
1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9-10	Roll 1d20 for upper areas location

I suggest marking monster locations directly on the map in pencil, as the locations will change as play progresses. You may want to make extra copies of the map to avoid tearing up your original with excessive marking and erasing. If the party has the ability and motivation to make several expeditions in a single session you may want to roll up multiple placements, marking each with a different color. (Red for the first visit, blue for the second visit, etc.).

If the party is clever and heartless they will attempt to loot the Sky-fortress during one of the Giants' night-time raids. Roll on the chart below to see which members of the Brood go out on the raid.

The raiding party will return 3d6 Turns after they leave, carrying live-stock, barrels of ale, tied-up prisoners, and possibly other treasure as well.

### GIANT RAIDING PARTY (1D6)

<b>1-3</b>	Swordmaniac, Chainmonster, Vomitboy
<b>4</b>	as 1-3 above plus the Runt
<b>5</b>	as 1-3 above plus the Terrible Twins
<b>6</b>	as 1-3 above, plus both the Runt and the Terrible Twins

# WANDERING MONSTER AND RANDOM EVENTS CHARTS

Every two Turns or so there's a 2 in 6 chance of some new factor coming into play.

## OUTSIDE THE SKYFORTRESS (1D6)

1	A Giant outside moves inside (roll 1d12 for destination) or vice versa (roll 1d12+8 for exit).
2	Bad weather rolling in. As long as the Golden Obelisk (location #15) is operational nothing more than light rain or the occasional gusty wind will directly affect the Skyfortress.
3	Giantish roaring sounds emanate from inside the fortress.
4	A few dozens spiders are seen scuttling about the Ruins (location #16). Normally they are harmless there but if the party disturbs them there's a 2 in 6 chance that a colossal number of spiders pour out from the cracks and under the boulders, forming 1d4 Spider Swarms that rampage across the cloud surface for 1d6 Turns before dispersing.
5	Lightning strikes the Obelisk (location #15). Unless someone is in direct contact with it, there's no effect. Anyone touching the Obelisk takes 20d6 damage and is stunned for 1d6 rounds, save versus Magic for half damage.
6	Gust of Wind: Torches are extinguished and anyone near the edge of the cloud or the Stank Hole must roll their Dexterity score or less on 1d20 or fall. Assume that Wretches and Giants have Dexterity scores of 11, unless you'd rather roll them up on the spot.

## WITHIN THE DOMES (1D6)

1	More Hate From the Angry Brain: Add 1d4 Malevolences to a random area (roll 1d12 for location).
2	Move any monster already indoors into an adjacent location.
3	Randomly select a room (1d12 roll) and add either bloody runes on the walls (made by the Mad Maiden while she was tripping) or vomit on the floor (Vomitboy again). The Spiders (item 6 on this list) will tend to efface these additions to the decor.

## WITHIN THE DOMES (1D6) - CONT.

4	A strange blue glow erupts from the Skydrive (rooms #5 and #6), filling much of the complex with light for 1d6 Rounds. Those in the Skydrive chambers must save versus Paralysis or find themselves blinded for 2d6 Rounds (use the rules for darkness and invisibility on page 60 of the <i>LotFP Rules and Magic</i> book).
5	Lightning strikes the Obelisk (location #15). Unless someone is in direct contact with it, there's no effect. Anyone touching the Obelisk takes 20d6 damage and is stunned for 1d6 Rounds, save versus Magic for half damage.
6	The Spiders Strike: Roll 1d12 to fill a random chamber with cobwebs that must be hacked through or burnt away (either taking 1d4-1 Turns). It is 50% likely the party will be attacked by a Spider Swarm if they do not use fire. If the Spiders web up a room occupied with a Giant, note that the Giant is presently asleep, snug in a silky cocoon and ready to scare the bejesus out of the party when it pops out.

## THE TUNNELS BELOW (1D6)

1	Thumping sounds overhead as a Giant passes over the tunnel. Small particles of cloudstuff crumble from the ceiling. Relocate a Giant as necessary.
2	1d6 Wretches return to the tunnels after some outing. They enter via areas A, D, or H (equal chances for each).
3	The smell of cooking food will lead the party to either areas B or C (equal chances of each).
4	2d6 Wretches set an ambush for the party. If the number rolled is less than the size of the party, they will throw spears then retreat. (Ignore if they have been befriended.)
5	A few spiders are crawling along the tunnel ahead. Not enough are here to trigger a swarm or harm the party in any way.
6	Drips of dirty water from ceiling. Harmless, but someone might be spooked by a few drips on the face (particularly into the mouth, this stuff tastes nasty) or the sputtering sound as they land on a burning torch.

# INDOOR LOCATIONS

## 1. THE FOUNTAIN

A stony dragon's head spits cool, clean water into the fountain here. Unlike nearly every other fountain in every other dungeon ever, there's nothing going on here but a source of liquid refreshment. No monster in the pool. No treasure at the bottom. The water is not poisoned, acidic or enchanted in any way (unless you want otherwise.)

## 2. TROPHY ROOM

The walls of this room are decorated with the pelts, antlers and heads of a dozen unknown species of gigantic beasts. There's a whole stuffed tyrannosaurus, the head of a purple dragon on a plaque, the



antlers of an electro-moose, etc. On two tall (8' high) stone tables are arranged a bewildering variety of smaller trophies: a python with a scorpion stinger in its tail in a diorama fighting a lobster with a big human-like eyeball on a stalk, several sky-piranha in a mobile hanging from the ceiling, a three gallon jar of frothy protoplasmic goo labeled "Pickled Shoggoth" in an unknown tongue, and many others. Probably the most valuable piece in the collection is the whole skeleton of an apelike creature, only the skeleton is made of electrum-infused bone with three straight-razor style blades attached to each hand. In total, the electrum katana-ape is worth 750sp for its metal value and three or four times that much to the right collector.

One of the objects on one of the tables is a skull that appears to be human but is three times larger than normal. This is the skull of the Sky King, whose body sits on the throne in room #3. Inside the skull is the Angry Brain. Even though the rest of his body deteriorated millennia ago, the Sky King isn't quite done dying. To this day the shriveled, rotting black brain is thinking some very bitter subconscious thoughts about its own impending death. These thoughts are so powerful they manifest themselves as the Malevolences haunting the Skyfortress.

There are few clues to tell the party about the brain. The skull sits on a blackish stain, with a few fresh drops of thick, black blood directly under it. The Angry Brain will not object to its skull being handled. Even sloshing the brain around in the skull won't prompt a response. If the players attempt to crack open the skull to see what's inside or probe an eye hole then 2d6 Malevolences will materialize to attack. Undoubtedly the fastest way to dispatch them is to finish the job on the skull and murder the brain inside. One solid smashing or stabbing



attack will put the brain out of its misery. Once the Angry Brain is dead all Malevolences will be dispelled.

Wittingly or no, the party may opt to steal the skull with the Angry Brain still functional. With all the Malevolences it conjures in its wake, planting the skull somewhere would be a helluva way to disrupt an enemy city.

Any attempt to contact the Angry Brain through any sort of telepathic means results in the caster/psionicist experiencing all twenty Malevolent Visions (see the monster stats for the Malevolences, page 90) followed by their brain exploding. No save.

### **3. THRONE ROOM**

Sitting on a magnificent black granite throne on a raised dais is the skeletal corpse of the last king of the Skyfortress, looking badass even in death like that skeleton king near the beginning of the original *Conan the Barbarian* film. If you haven't seen that one do yourself a favor and check it out. The king's skull is currently in chamber #2, but that is not immediately obvious as a huge horned barbute-style great helm conceals its absence. Laying across the lap of the skeleton is a shriveled, empty scabbard of giant size. The Swordmaniac wields the sword that used to rest in that sheath.

Although the Giants make use of this room (and the filth in some parts of the chamber shows the Broodmother uses it regularly), the throne and corpse are considered taboo by the Giants. Past the original sacrilege of looting the sword they will not disturb this spooky guy.

If the players search the body of the dead king it will collapse into a pile of bones and dust. (Don't tell them of the lack of a skull unless they ask about it.) They will find he is wearing a massive ruby on a gold chain worth 10,000sp. So tempting is this jewel that all NPCs in the party will need to check morale or they will attempt to abscond with it at some strategic point. The titanic helmet is worth 200sp as a curiosity. Nothing else on the king holds any value.

If the Titan's skull from the Trophy Room (#2) is set upon the shoulders of the king (or added to the pile of his desecrated bones) he will regenerate back to life in 1d6 Rounds. The madness in his eyes will be obvious to all. The newly-resurrected Sky King will go on a rampage, slaying all intruders on his island. His initial priorities will be to retrieve his sword from the Swordmaniac and get back his ruby if necessary, but

he will not hesitate to casually slay others along his route.

No statistics are given here for the Sky King, as no one else in the adventure is in his league, the combined might of the PCs included.



**HE IS AN UNSTOPPABLE JUGGERNAUT OF DESTRUCTION, ABLE TO PHYSICALLY CRUSH ANYONE IN HIS WAY AND CAPABLE OF A WIDE VARIETY OF MAGICS.**

On any given Round he can automatically kill any one foe, unless he has turned his full attention towards a grouping of victims, in which case 1d6 foes are slain. He can breathe fire, shoot lasers from his eyes and crap lightning.

If a character immediately prostrates himself before the Sky King there's a 50% chance he or she will be ignored long enough to make a getaway. The only things that might stop the King are beheading him again with a Vorpal Blade (versus Armor 20) or magics of the genie wish variety. But basically if the Sky King is activated the adventure becomes all about who escapes and who dies.

#### **4. PRIMARY NEST**

The original function of this chamber has been completely obscured. The Broodmother spends a lot of time here. Her stench and foul excretions have turned this chamber into a den of pollution.

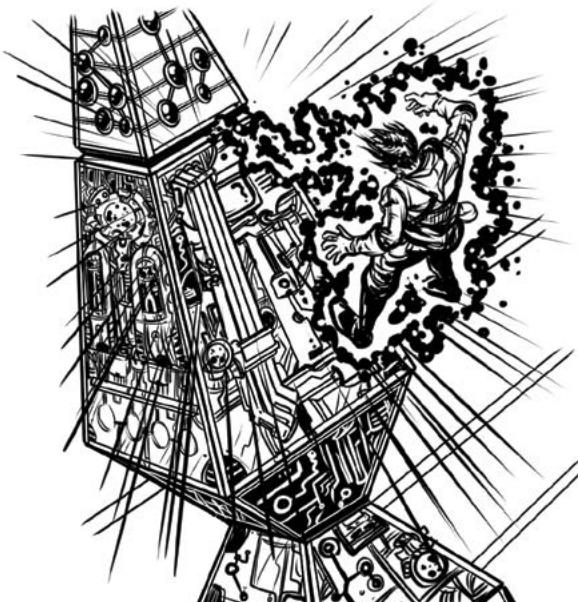
On any given expedition to the Skyfortress 2d6 eggs will be found here. These eggs resemble roundish boulders maybe five feet in diameter. Disturbing an egg results in a 1 in 6 chance of it hatching one Round later, releasing a ravenous Hatchling upon the party. Each egg that hatches effectively disturbs all the others, so reroll that 1 in 6 chance for all remaining eggs each time a new one hatches.

The Broodmother keeps one or two throwing boulders here at all times, which she will hurl at any Giant that annoys her just as readily as at intruders. These rocks are noticeably smaller than the eggs, but players may jump to the conclusion that the Broodmother throws her own offspring at foes.

#### **5. UPPER SKYDRIVE**

This circular chamber features an elaborately vaulted ceiling. In the center of the floor is a large (10' tall) needle-like four-sided pyramid of an unknown, glassy blue substance. The top third of the pyramid is marked with a grid of fine black lines, on which are twenty-five gems laid out apparently at random. Each face of the pyramid holds between 100sp and 500sp of gems. At any given time about half of the gems (3d6, say) are lit up with an internal glow.

This is the Skydrive, the combined engine and controls for the fortress. Each gem is either a control or gauge for the drive. Many of them can be rotated in place or slid along the gridlines. Doing so without any training is the equivalent of walking into the cabin of a jetliner



and flipping switches at random. Maybe you just turned on the 'No Smoking' light or maybe you just dumped all the fuel. The Chainmonster knows just enough about the Skydrive to steer it ineptly. The Runt has watched him on several occasions but would probably screw up the first time he tried the controls. The Mad Maiden is probably the best pilot in the tribe when she is possessed, but no one trusts her at the controls.

Confronted with this mysterious device, many players will either want to experiment with the controls or try to steal the gems. The unlit gems are relatively safe (1 in 6 chance of a mishap if moved or removed), while the glowing ones are almost certainly dangerous (5 in 6 chance of a mishap). If a mishap occurs roll on the table below.

#### RANDOM SKYDRIVE MISHAPS (1D6)

1	Skydrive shocks the operator for 2d6 electrical damage.
2	No obvious effect but Golden Obelisk (area #15) is deactivated. Reversing control turns it back on.
3	An explosion of bright blue light. Those in the Skydrive chambers must save versus Paralysis or find themselves blinded for 2d6 Turns (use the rules for darkness and invisibility on page 60 of the LotFP Rules and Magic book).
4	The whole cloud pitches to the side like an episode of original series <i>Star Trek</i> . Everyone must save versus Paralysis or be thrown to the floor for 1d6-1 damage. Potion bottles and the like have a 2 in 6 chance of shattering. Reversing the control rights the cloud, otherwise it stays off-kilter.

<b>5</b>	The pyramid starts making an ominous humming sound, ever gaining in pitch and volume. If the controls are not reversed in 6 Rounds a burst of energy explodes for 4d6 electrical damage to everyone in the room. There's also a 2 in 6 chance the antigravity goes out, as described below.
<b>6</b>	Antigravity deactivated. The cloud falls out of the sky, hitting the ground in one Round if it's close enough to be anchored, 1d4+1 Rounds if it is higher up in the sky. If the control is not reversed in time, which I think would be a bit tricky to pull off, everyone must save versus Poison or die in the ensuing crash. Anyone who saves still takes 2d6 damage and is knocked unconscious for 1d6 turns. All treasure and equipment is completely ruined in the crash.

## 6. LOWER SKYDRIVE

This low-ceilinged chamber (only 10' tall) is access to the bottom half of the Skydrive, i.e. there's a blue pyramid sticking out of the ceiling like in chamber #5, only it is shorter (5' tall) and more squat. The function of this room is maintenance and repair access, kind of like a Jeffries tube in *Star Trek* or the underside of the eleventh Doctor's TARDIS console. Most of the Giants can't fit in here; their bodies aren't really designed to crawl or squat like humanoids. The Runt and the Flopping Grotesquerie version of the Terrible Twins are the only giants who can squeeze into the chamber. If the random placement dice puts any other Giant here they are trying to get in from an adjacent area (#7 or #9). Perhaps something rolled in here; maybe an egg they were taking to the Cloudmarsh (area #17) got away from them or they are chasing a stray Wretch.

Playing around with the gems here (25 total, 100sp to 500sp value, 3d6 glow) is even more dangerous than in the Upper Skydrive chamber, more like opening up a jet engine in flight and tossing in a monkey wrench. If a gem is manipulated or removed use the Random Skydrive Mishaps table but roll two dice. If double ones come up then nothing happens. If double twos, threes, fours or fives are rolled then treat it as a single roll of that number. If double sixes come up the whole place explodes, everyone dies and everything is destroyed. Otherwise read the dice as two separate mishaps that occur simultaneously.

## 7. LARDER

The Chainmonster or some like-minded ancestor has equipped this room with sufficient dangling hooks and securing chains for the storage of meat both living and dead. Most of the food stored here will be in the form of carcasses or cattle, swine, sheep, etc., but mixed into the decor will be grisly bits of human remains. If the PCs seek a specific person presumed taken in a previous attack they will be here, but the odds are even they've already been butchered.

Additional live prisoners may be found here as well. Roll 1d6-1 for imprisoned victims, who will generally be young, old and/or sickly. The healthier snacks outran the Giants.

The three large barrels in one corner of the room will immediately draw the attention of the sort of player who really digs it when their PCs get sozzled. Unfortunately, the ale they contain has been contaminated with blood both bovine and human along with some chopped onion. These Giants have weird tastes in beverages.

This chamber would be a good place for the Referee to insert some sort of clue for further development in the campaign. Like a severed arm with a treasure map tattooed on it, for example.

## 8. GRAND BALCONY

The floor of this balcony is 30' above ground level, with a 7' high gridwork railing (it looks more like a fence to humans) with supporting columns. Any Giants here will avail themselves of the opportunity to hurl boulders at intruders. They even keep four reasonable throwing rocks here for just such purposes. The floor here gets slick after any rain, requiring Dexterity checks on 1d20 to stay on a firm footing during every Round of mêlée combat.

## 9. CRYPT ENTRANCE

This chamber probably once served as a shrine of sorts or perhaps a place of ancestor veneration, as the shattered remains of numerous small stone statues litter the floor along with the fragments of a pair of altars or tables. There's nothing of value here, as most everything has been ground under giantish feet for centuries. Laying near the entrance to chamber #10 are a pair of battered doors. These are the only doors in the complex, as the titans of yore used doorway technology for ceremonial purposes only.

## 10. THE CRYPT

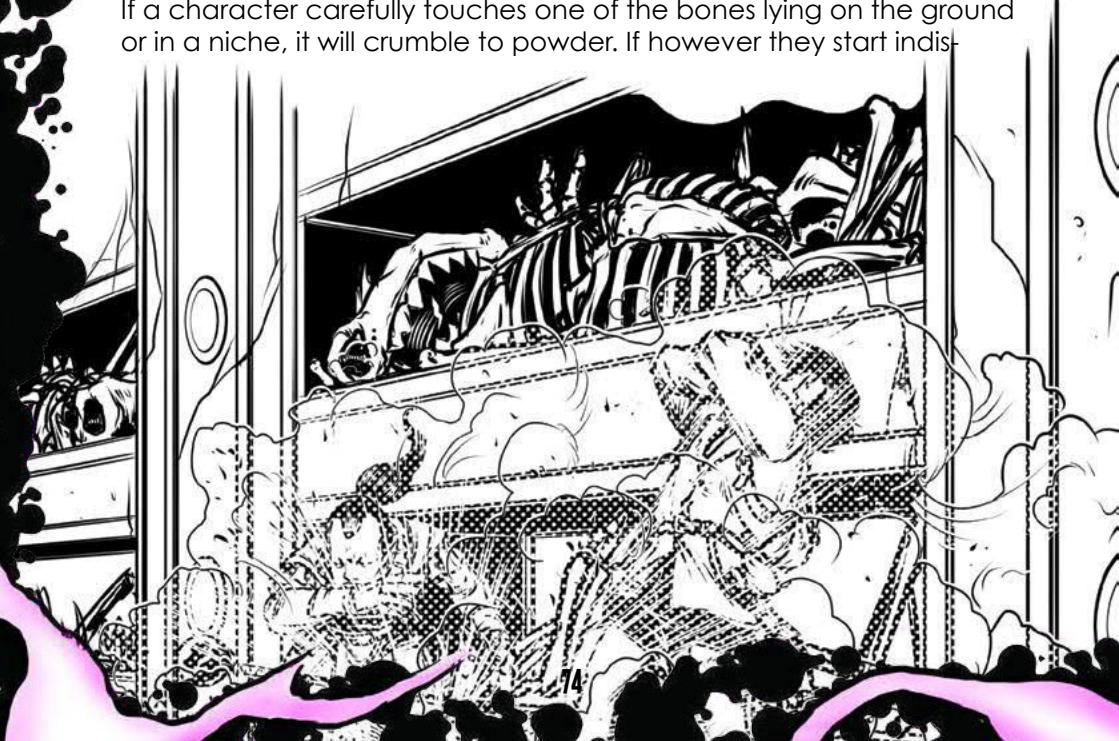
The walls of this room contain twelve niches large enough to hold a recumbent skeleton of titanic proportions. Ten of the niches are occupied with piles of bone on the same scale as the dead king in the Throne Room. The eleventh holds a pile of white dust. The twelfth niche was intended for the king, but he was too grumpy to crawl in there and lie down before dying.

**THIS MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO YOU, BUT THE ELEVEN SKELETONS HERE ARE NOT UNDEAD WAITING TO JUMP UP AND MURDER THE PCS.**

Instead of being undead, they are one step beyond death. No form of resurrection or reincarnation spell will work on these skeletons; neither will *Speak with Dead*. These skeletons have been lying here so long their ghosts have died of old age.

The skeletons may not be undead, but they're not exactly resting peacefully either. Rather than nicely assembled skeletons laid out respectfully, these corpses have endured centuries of desecration and grave robbing at the hands of previous generations of Giants. Thus their bones are now strewn hodgepodge about their respective niches, with a couple of giant femurs and whatnot lying on the ground.

If a character carefully touches one of the bones lying on the ground or in a niche, it will crumble to powder. If however they start indis-



criminally pawing through bones in search of treasure, the whole skeleton will burst into a cloud of powder 15' in diameter. All within the area of effect must save versus Poison. Success indicates they emerge from the cloud covered with bone dust, coughing and choking for one or two Rounds. Failure indicates they inhale enough small, sharp bits of bone to really tear up their mouth, esophagus, lungs, etc. The victim takes 2d6 damage and is incapacitated for 2d6 days, during which time they move at half rate and always lose initiative rolls in combat. And they spit up a lot of blood.

Most of the treasure here is long gone, looted and lost long before the PCs were born. However, one of the niches, a lower 'bunk', has an ancient map decoration inlaid on its ceiling as if for use by the dead Titan therein. The map depicts familiar continents of the planet in an unusual arrangement (for games set on Earth, it shows the world just after the break-up of Pangaea). Several out-of-scale pyramids appear on the map (one in Egypt?), which could serve as leads to further adventures. The map is made of semi-precious stones which if pried out would fill a small sack for about 2,000sp in loose stones. This map can only be found with a successful Search roll, unless there's a halfling in the party. The ceiling of the lower niche is at just the right height for a halfling to spot easily, no roll required.

## 11. THE RED COLUMNS

The reddish-brown columns along this chamber give the eyes a little respite from the continuous whiteness assaulting them in most of the rest of the Skyfortress. A few hundred spiders crawl across the ceiling, but not in sufficient density or hostility to constitute a Spider Swarm. If a swarm is placed here it will initially appear as if one of the columns is black instead of red, at least until that blanket of blackness starts creeping towards the party.



## 12. DAMAGED ROOM

A crumbled spot in the wall here provided access in and out of the fortress via an opening too small for most of the Giants. The Runt can squeeze through, taking an extra Round or two to get through, or if the Swordmaniac is sufficiently roused he can charge the hole and bust through, enlarging the exit to giant-sized. In the latter case there is a 50% chance the Swordmaniac will be stunned for 2d6 Rounds.

## OUTDOORS LOCATIONS

### 13. GREEN MESS

In the center of this weed-choked garden is a vine-covered black granite statue of a nude youth, standing almost 20' tall (the young man is 14' tall on a 5' pedestal). The statue was posed with one arm extended in a friendly greeting, which has broken off and lies nearby.

If the vegetation is cleared off, the sheer beauty and craftsmanship of the statue is breathtaking. The statue is probably worth tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands to the right buyer, but moving the statue would be a massive undertaking. A more practical form of pillaging would be to take the arm and find a buyer for that. Even by itself the arm requires at least two bearers to carry it. In a sufficiently cosmopolitan city the arm alone would fetch 2,500sp.

The garden contains additional statuary such as broken pillars, a winged horse, three graces (i.e. nude maidens), a lion and other classical images. These statues have no appreciable value due to their incomplete state and inferior quality stone. A fountain featuring cherubs pouring water-jugs into a basin has dried up completely.

### 14. GREAT WINCHES

Here at the edge of the cloud some ancestor of the Giants has constructed a giant mechanism similar in scale to a siege engine. This device allows the deployment of three huge ship anchors with several hundred feet of heavy chain, allowing the Skyfortress to be secured after it has been brought to a stop by use of the Skydrive (chambers #5 and #6). Of the current generation of Giants only the Chainmonster and the Runt know how to operate this machine. The Chainmonster won't let the Runt anywhere near it, but if the Chainmonster is taken out of commission the Runt has watched him enough times in the past to be able to fill in for his superior.

The anchors and chains could no doubt be resold to some naval interest for a few hundred silver pieces each, but the logistics involved would be a nightmare due to their immense weight.

## 15. GOLDEN OBELISK

As long as this tall needle of gold-plated cloudstuff remains in place the entire island is magically protected from most of the effects of bad weather, apart from light rain and gusty winds. Any lightning-type magic cast within sight of the Obelisk is drawn to it rather than the target, but anyone in physical contact with the Obelisk takes full damage from the lightning effects.

Scraping the gold off the Obelisk is possible if foolish. Each man-Turn of scraping yields 1d100 sp worth of gold, with 1,000sp total within easy reach and another 5,000sp above that. After such plundering roll a d6 and consult the chart below:

AMOUNT SCRAPED	ROLL RESULT
1-1000 sp	1 Obelisk disenchanted, 2-6 no effect
1,001 - 2,000 sp	1-2 Obelisk disenchanted, 3-6 no effect
2,001 - 3,000 sp	1-3 Obelisk disenchanted, 4-6 no effect
3,001 - 4,000 sp	1-4 Obelisk disenchanted, 5-6 no effect
4,001 - 5,000 sp	1-5 Obelisk disenchanted, 6 no effect
5,001+ sp	Obelisk disenchanted

If the Obelisk is disenchanted the next big storm the Skyfortress flies through will really wreck the place.

## 16. RUINS

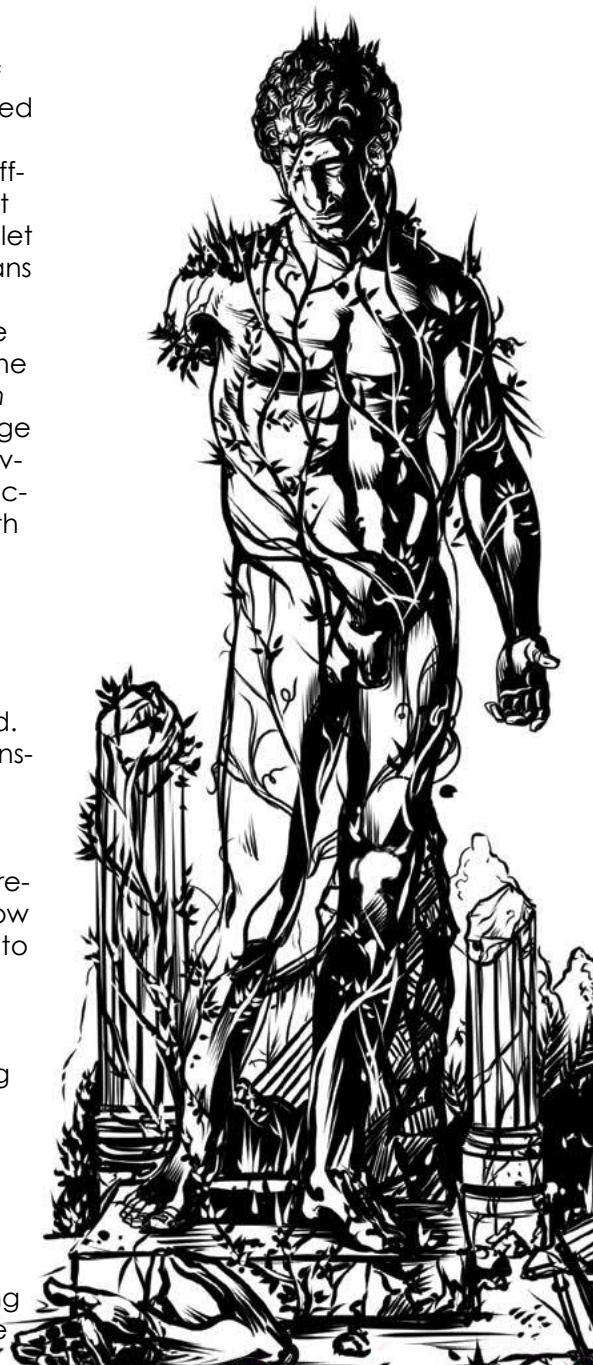
The scope of the rubble field here suggests that the Skyfortress once featured many additional buildings. Perhaps the structure standing today was only the "control palace" of the original construct. A careful survey by a character with adequate skill in Architecture or dwarven stonelore will reveal that some of the ruined buildings here are incomplete due to the cloudy foundations below them crumbling away.

Generally searching these ruins will not yield any treasure. However, successful Climb and Search rolls along the cloudcliff where the buildings are crumbled will reveal a treasure perched precariously in a nook of the cliff-side: a giant-sized gold ring that looks more like a smallish bracelet to human-sized folk. Demihumans and lithe humans could wear the ring around their wrist. While worn the ring/bracelet grants the owner the ability to cast Charm Monster once per day at a range of 100'. However, if the initial saving throw against the Charm succeeds all further encounters with monsters of that kind will be irrevocably hostile.

## 17. CLOUDMARSH

This section of the cloud is less stable than the rest of the island. Sometimes sections of it are transparently vaporous but at other times the area looks as safe as anywhere else (50/50 chance). In the latter case only proper precautions or a Search roll will allow the lead members of the party to avoid falling to their doom.

Any Giants found in this section of the Cloud will be transporting eggs one or two at a time (the Runt will be rolling his). When the Broodmother decides that a clutch is ready for distribution they are dropped through the cloud here during a close approach to the ground. Disturbing any of the eggs after they have



been schlepped by the Giants results in a 2 in 6 chance of a hungry Hatchling popping out to eat the PCs.

## **18. STANK HOLE**

This four foot wide hole straight through the cloud serves as a pretty convenient place for most of the Giants to vacate their bowels and bladders. The overpowering odor of the combined stains near the edge of the hole and along the walls of the shaft should make the situation obvious.

## **19. KING OF ALL APPLE TREES**

A vast, nearly dead tree grows here in the remarkable fluffy cloudstuff soil. From its hardest branch hangs a single shriveled apple, big as a man's fist and possessing a strange brassy hue. If the seeds of this apple are planted in good soil in a mild climate and given plenty of water, in 2d6 years the resulting trees will grow huge golden-hued apples as big as a man's head. Their flavor will be of unparalleled sweetness and delight. The owner of an orchard of such apples would no doubt be able to retire in wealth.

## **20. OVERGROWN GARDEN**

The neat rows and simple organization of the original design of this garden have been obscured by centuries of neglect. A successful Bushcraft rolls here allows the party to gather 1d6 days worth of food in the form of various knobby, bitter vegetables and sour berries. A Search roll reveals a small stone tablet (6" x 6" x 1") half-buried and concealed under thorny weeds. The tablet contains a copy of the



Magic-User spell *Growth of Plants*, which can be cast once from the tablet or transcribed to a spellbook. Either use causes the tablet to crumble to dust. Erosion has partially effaced the characters carved on the tablet, leading to a flaw in the spell. Each time the *Growth* spell is used there is a 1 in 6 chance the enchanted plants will animate as a 4 Hit Dice monster and attack the caster.

## TUNNEL LOCATIONS

All the tunnels are festooned with just enough phosphorescent fungus to give the player characters the impression that it is safe to go down there without torches or lanterns. They will be able to negotiate the tunnels without proper lighting, but the Wretches see much better under these conditions, granting them a great advantage against intruders.

### A. THE MOUSEHOLE

This crack in an interior wall of the Skyfortress is the only obvious way into the tunnels below. A full-sized human in heavy armor and with a backpack won't quite fit here, but most other characters can squeeze into the entrance. A slim halfling or typical elf can slip through easily.

### B. CAVE OF THE OLD WOMAN

Most of the Wretches eat and sleep in chamber C below, but a lone wise-woman figure lives here. Her collection of dried fungus and herbs barely fulfils the humble medical needs of her own community. They won't do much for the party unless some character is particularly skilled in their use. The Old Woman doesn't linger here any longer than any of the other Wretches; she's just as likely to be out and about as anyone else.

### C. THE GREAT SHROOM CAVERN

This large space serves as the primary living space for the tribe. The walls are lined with a variant phosphorescent fungi that is vaguely nutritious and rather fast growing. (Don't get too stressed out on the ecology of this place. This sort of detail is a figleaf to help maintain verisimilitude rather than a nod towards a 'realistic' floating cloud dungeon.) A small fire is usually burning here and 1d4 spears with cloudstuff spearheads can be found lying around the joint. A Bushcraft roll here will allow the party to identify a small number of psychedelic shrooms (1d12 doses). Finding such fare when randomly gobbling on mushrooms is unlikely (1 in 6 chance). Anyone tripping on

mushrooms must save versus Poison or roll on the Malevolent Visions chart, page 90. Whatever vision the tripper has will continue to haunt them in their dreams on and off for years.

## D. THE BOULDER PILE

The Giants maintain a large stockpile of throwing boulders here, covering a smallish (anyone bigger than a halfling must crouch or crawl) entrance to the tunnels. The Wretches have partially dug out the back of the pile, clearing enough space to form a small duck-blind kind of room. This small hollow could hold two people in cramped quarters and offers several peepholes into the chamber of Red Columns (location #11). From the chamber a simple Search roll will reveal the hidden space, but several large boulders will need to



be carefully removed to access the tunnels. Moving boulders haphazardly will certainly bring the top of the pile crashing down on the party for 2d6 damage apiece. Such a mishap can be avoided by a competent supervisor directing the work with use of the Architecture skill (or dwarf stonelore, for those not playing with LotFP rules).

## **E. CHAMBER OF THE ANCESTORS**

This chamber contains a neatly stacked pyramidal pile of several dozen human skulls. In flickering torchlight or the ambient phosphorescence of the tunnels the character with the lowest Wisdom score will be absolutely convinced that one or more of the skulls are watching the party. Should the pile of skulls be searched thoroughly, near the bottom of the stack the party will find a skull made of crystal. It has no magical properties (unless you want it to) but is worth 1,000 sp. Some interested parties might assume it has magical properties even if it doesn't.

It is one of the greatest honors a Wretch may receive from its people to have their skull enshrined here after death. If any party members befriend the Wretches prior to being slain, their skulls will be added to the stack if possible.

Casting any form of *Animate Dead* here will turn the pile into a single chittering undead horror.

## **F. THE CROSSROADS**

From this point the party should be able to hear the activities of at least one group of Wretches. However, the weird acoustics of this place ensure a 1 in 6 chance they will misread which direction the sounds are coming from.

## **G. THE POOL**

In this chamber dirty water drips from the ceiling into a shallow pool, about 18 inches at its deepest. This is the primary water supply for the Wretches. If it is poisoned they will have to rely on surreptitious trips to chamber #1 and the few hollow spaces in the Ruins that can effectively catch rainwater. The bottom of the pool is only semi-solid, so anyone wading into the deepest part will fall through and out of the cloud completely. The resulting hole will seal itself in 1d4-1 Rounds.

## **H. BELOW THE RUINS**

Underneath area #16 is a maze of partially filled and mostly cramped tunnels connected to the main complex under the Skyfortress. One

branch of this network leads up into the ruins, in a concealed spot hidden behind a slab of cloudstuff leaning against a crumbling wall. One passage here leads directly out the side of the cloud.

### LIKELY INITIAL ATTITUDE / BEHAVIOR DURING ONE OR TWO MONSTER SITUATIONS

	<b>BM</b>	<b>SM</b>	<b>CM</b>	<b>VB</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>BM</b>	Laying Eggs	Mating	Mating	Rejecting due to disgust	Bullying	Aggressive Displays	Maternal Rejection
<b>SM</b>	Mating	Eating	Aggressive Displays	Bullying	Bullying	Distrust	Bullying
<b>CM</b>	Mating	Aggressive Displays	Playing with Chains	Aggressive Displays	Bullying	Fascination	Fascination
<b>VB</b>	Rejecting due to disgust	Bullying	Aggressive Displays	Coughing, possibly vomiting	Bullying	Disgust	Mutual Loathing
<b>R</b>	Bullying	Bullying	Bullying	Bullying	Playing with rocks	Superstitious Fear	Bullying
<b>MM</b>	Aggressive Displays	Distrust	Fascination	Disgust	Superstitious Fear	Mumbling to Self	Fight over meal
<b>T</b>	Maternal Rejection	Bullying	Fascination	Mutual loathing	Bullying	Fight over meal	Arguing with self

**BM** = Broodmother, **SM** = Swordmaniac, **CM** = Chainmonster,  
**VB** = Vomitboy, **R** = Runt, **MM** = Mad Maiden, **T** = Twins



# MONSTER STATS

In a Boring Generic Fantasy Role-Playing Game the stats for the monsters haunting the Skyfortress would probably look something like this:

## THE GIANTS

**Armor:** 17

**Hit Points:** 10d8

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:** 120'

**Attack Bonus:** +10

**Attacks:** bigass smash attack for 4d6 damage or throw boulder (200' range) for 3d6 damage

**Save As:** 10th level Fighter

**Morale:** 10

## THE MALEVOLENCES

**Armor:** 15

**Hit Points:** 2d8

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:** 90', can float through keyholes, under doors, etc.

**Attack Bonus:** +2

**Attacks:** Insubstantial claw for 1d4 damage plus lose one point of Wisdom (Wisdom 0 = dead)

**Save As:** 1st level Fighter

**Morale:** 12

**Special:** These misty creeps are barely substantial and nearly invisible. They can only be struck by magical attacks. In nearly any situation they surprise foes on a 1-5 on a 1d6.

## THE SPIDERY SWARMS

**Armor:** 15

**Hit Points:** 4d8

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:**

30', can suddenly crawl out of cracks in walls, small holes, etc.

**Attack Bonus:** automatically hits all within the swarm (a 20' by 20' area or so)

**Attacks:** a thousand tiny bites doing 1d4 damage, half damage to anyone wearing armor

**Save As:** 0 level Fighter

**Morale:** 11

**Special:** Anyone running out of a swarm will take damage for 1d4-1 additional Rounds unless they jump into a lake or something like that. Weapons do no damage to swarms. Fire and cold based attacks are effective. Heavy smoke will drive them off. A Sleep spell will take out an entire swarm.

## THE WRETCHES

**Armor:** 12

**Hit Points:** 1d6

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:** 120'

**Attack Bonus:** 0

**Attacks:** some cruddy weapon for 1d6 damage

**Save As:** 0 level Fighter

**Morale:** 6

## THE HATCHLINGS

**Armor:** 15

**Hit Points:** 3d8

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:**

150'

**Attack Bonus:** +3

**Attacks:** bite for 1d6 damage

**Save As:** 2nd level Fighter

**Morale:** 9

Yep, those sure are some stats. But this is *Lamentations of the Flame Princess: Weird Fantasy Role-Playing* we're talking about here.

The goal of the Referee should be to wreck the players' expectations, plunging them into a chaotic nightmare world where not even the cruel pleasures of standardized stat blocks protect them from the yawning void of doom.

Just because all those other dungeon-rific role-playing games offer you catalogs of neatly standardized and sanitized monsters doesn't mean you have to fall for that trap here. So here's an alternative interpretation for each of these monsters, more in line with the goal of putting the fear of the gods into the party.



# ADVANCED MONSTER STATS

## THE GIANTS

The idea that a mere human or demi-human can harm one of these creatures is laughable. Some fantasy role-playing games might allow a high-level character to wrestle an angry Tyrannosaurus, but LotFP assumes that the player characters will be a bit more like the poor white-water rafters stuck in *Land of the Lost*. These big scary monsters are nigh-unstoppable killing machines; that is their whole deal. Like the protagonists in *Land of the Lost*, the only hope the PCs have is to avoid a direct confrontation. So let's start by making these bastards hard as fuck to kill.

**Armor:** None! Your players don't even have to roll to land a blow! Why would they? These creeps are almost certainly the biggest thing they've ever aimed a weapon at in anger.

**Hit Points:** Bad news here. 20d8 hit points. In LotFP terms that's nearly godlike. Which is fine, because one Giant loose in your hometown should seem like a visit from an angry Jehovah.

**Damage Reduction:** -5 points. This is going to be the thing that really cheeses off some of the players. Any time a blow lands (and obviously there will be a lot of them, since no attack rolls are required) the first 5 points of any attack don't count. You should be totally obvious about this. When any hit for less than 6 points lands, tell the player that they failed to penetrate the Giant's thick hide. Describe a 6 point blow as the merest scratch, barely drawing blood through deep layers of tough hide and thick fat.

Obviously you could attempt to simulate the Damage Reduction by assigning a really high Armor to the Giants. That's how the armor the PCs wear works, right? Sometimes you don't want the monsters to follow the same rules as the PCs. Call it Mechanical Alienation if you want a term for it. See the monster stats in the *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game for some good examples of this concept in action.

Note that the high hit points plus Damage Reduction of these creatures means that killing them using traditional combat methods is difficult. That doesn't mean they can't be killed. The players just need to come up with some nonconventional means of doing so. To adjudicate any crazy player schemes for offing the Giants you'll probably need to use rough guidelines like those described in the section Getting Up to the Skyfortress (page 12).

Meanwhile, the attacks for the Giants are different as well.

**Basic Attack:** +10 attack bonus, 4d6 damage. The damage can be increased by weapon use, as noted in the individual monster descriptions. If any damage die comes up a 6 or more, the target is knocked back  $1d6 \times 5$  feet and falls prone. Anyone in armor heavier than leather will take a whole Round to get back up.

**Thrown Boulder:** +10 attack bonus, 3d6 damage. One thrown boulder may attack two adjacent targets. Each time a boulder hits a foe some item of theirs will be crushed and broken. Look over the poor sap's character sheet and choose the item you think the player would most hate to lose. The player then selects an alternate item. You each then roll a d20, high number determining which item is wrecked. The possibility of losing their precious magic sword will scare more players than simple hit point damage.

**Bucking Bronco:** Save versus Breath Weapon or take 2d6 damage every Round you are in mêlée with a Giant, surprise segments excluded. You ever been near an angry or panicked animal of any size? They will flail around, not giving a crap about who they hurt. And most people, unless they have direct experience working with animals, have no idea how strong a cow or a mule is compared to them. And we're not talking here about a little ol' mule with an ornery streak. These creeps are 20' tall piles of hate.

## THE MALEVOLENCES

**Armor:** 15

**Hit Points:** 2d8

**Unencumbered Movement Rate:**

90', can float through keyholes, under doors, etc.

**Attack Bonus:** +2

**Attacks:** insubstantial claw for 1d4 damage plus lose one point of Wisdom (Wisdom 0 = dead), plus random malevolent vision if damage rolled = 4.

**Save As:** 1st level Fighter

**Morale:** 12

**Special:** These misty creeps are barely substantial and nearly invisible. They can only be struck by magical attacks. In nearly any situation they surprise foes on a 1-5 on 1d6.

The statistics listed above are based upon one classic version of the monster type known as Shadows, although I imagine Malevolences as more like hazy, amorphous mists rather than inky two-dimensional humanoid silhouettes.

**Immune to Normal Weapons:**

They don't have a lot of hit points, but neither steel nor fire will harm these incorporeal thought-beings. Magic weapons will harm them, as will weapons made of esoteric psychically-attuned materials like the Son of Satan's netharamium trident. Since magic weapons are less common in *LotFP: Weird Fantasy Role-Playing* than in other games, this is going to be a real problem

for the players. Once players figure out most of their weapons are useless against these creatures, the practical effect of this immunity will be that the party will flee from any Malevolences encountered, or else they will expend all their damage dealing spells like *Magic Missile* against these monsters. Demons called up by the *Summon* spell could also hurt these guys, if you so choose.

**Not Undead:** Since these creatures are born of the living, hating Angry Brain, they are not undead and thus cannot be *Turned* or otherwise affected by anti-undead magic. Note that this decision is clearly a Dick Move on my part. If you want your party's Clerics to be able to *Turn* the Malevolences, please feel free to cross out this part of the text.

**Bad Thoughts:** Since the Malevolences are made out of the eons-old hatreds of the Angry Brain, any attempt to use mind-reading magics like *ESP* will bounce back at the caster for 2d4 damage and the loss of 2 points of Wisdom.

**Ancient Visions:** Each time a Malevolence strikes a foe and rolls a 4 on a damage die, some of the Angry Brain's cosmic memories leak through into the mind of its victim. Roll on the Malevolent Visions table (p 90.) or make up some stuff better suited to the history and tone of your campaign.



## MALEVOLENT VISIONS (1D20)

1	A civilization of neutrino aura entities fighting the first war milliseconds after the Big Bang. The atomic matter in the later universe is not a natural phenomenon but rather the fallout of the genocidal anti-energy weapons used in that era.
2	A vast bat-winged demon made of starlight cracking open a black hole to scoop out and devour the singularity within.
3	An army of neanderthalish proto-grey aliens slaughtering cycloptic lava-beasts on the surface of a newly formed, still molten planet. The Greys build a castle out of the smoldering corpses of their victims.
4	A mutant tyrannosaurus rex with a glowing third eye is cast into a steaming lake, only to be torn to pieces by hideously fanged piranha-mermaids.
5	Atlantis sinking below the waves. Luxuriating elves on hover-barges sip golden wine from diamond goblets, laughing at the drowning humans below them.
6	Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion.
7	A wrathful three-headed Zeus throws a thunderbolt at an undead dragon and misses, shattering the sky like it was made out of blue glass.
8	Six hundred and sixty-six quasar galaxies rotate so that their polar emission jets converge onto a single point in space, opening a parsecs-wide gate to Hell and releasing a trillion demons upon an unsuspecting universe.
9	The final moments of Ragnarok Zero. Most of the Concept Avatars of Creation lay dead within the Glittering Tesseract, leaving only the tiny fragments of surviving Concepts we know today.
10	Fiery angels massacring stampeding dinosaurs as an angry comet lights up the sky.
11	An icy plain with a huge glowing spiral galaxy dominating the night sky overhead. One by one all the stars in the galaxy go nova, until the ice starts to melt, then boil away to steam. Finally, the sky is blinding white.

12	A thousand eyeless trilobites slowly devouring the flesh of a screaming warrior goddess bound with adamantine chains to a titanic obelisk of dark green stone.
13	Twin stargod fetuses in an amniotic sac of violet sparkling light. One twin devours the other as the stars themselves seem to shudder in horror.
14	A new solar system coalesces out of a cloud of interstellar gas. One of the bodies circling this newborn star is not a planet, but rather a vast pulsating heart of black demon flesh.
15	A moment of fourth dimensional vision. The insides of adjacent rooms or nearby containers become known, but it becomes impossible to ever again look at anyone else present during the vision without the horrific memory of their throbbing internal organs. Humans and the like can never be just "people" again, but some unconscious part of the mind will always think of them as absurd sacks of mobile meat.
16	A fairy feast in an idyllic glade, with elf-like creatures dancing and singing. The music and the beauty of the fairies is so exquisite as to move one to tears. Before the mind can take in even a tenth of the pure aesthetic joy displayed, a band of cavemen emerge from the forest and slaughter the fairies with rocks and sticks.
17	Amid cacophonic howls a giant tentacular horror gives bloody, slimy birth to an even more grotesque being. A few moments (eons?) later the afterbirth follows. Instead of a placenta, the far end of the umbilical cord leads to a beautiful hermaphroditic human covered in blood and black bile.
18	A gas giant with majestic Saturnian rings. The point of view passes through the rings to reveal that, instead of ice particles or asteroids, the rings are composed entirely of millions of headless skeletons.
19	A scaly hand writes titanic indecipherable runes upon the surface of an prehistoric ocean. The runes catch on fire, as does the hand, then the ocean. The ocean burns down.
20	Nth dimensional spiders weave webs out of infinitely long hyperstring threads. At each place on the web where two strings intersect a universe is born in the juncture.

## THE SPIDER SWARMS

Once these creatures have crawled onto the body of a victim, in addition to the damage they do every round they will begin spinning webs around them. This has no effect on the first Round, or at all if the victim runs out of the swarm area. (In the latter case, they still take damage for 1d4-1 Rounds as described on p. 84) But anyone damn foolish enough to just hang out in the swarm for more than one Round must save versus Paralysis every additional Round. Failure to save means they have been encased in sufficient webbery that they are all webbed up in a cocoon-like enclosure. Most victims of this attack-form are unable to free themselves or take any action but to scream for help. And if they scream, spiders will climb down their throat, inflicting double damage that Round. Anyone with a Strength of 16 or greater can free themselves in 2d4 Rounds, providing they live that long with the continuous damage and additional saving throws. Someone holding a dagger or knife at the time of entrapment can similarly escape; no other weapons afford the victim a chance to free themselves.

These webs are not particularly flammable, so pretty much the only aid others can provide is to pull out a dagger or knife and cut the victim out. Any other edged weapon will inflict half

damage on the victim. Either way, cutting a victim free only takes one Round, but obviously such an act could expose the rescuer to swarm attacks as well.

Note that the Spider Swarms and the Giants co-exist in a symbiotic relationship. The Giants are immune to their attacks (the bites can't penetrate their thick flesh) and the Spiders in turn feast on any parasites, bugs, etc. clinging to the hide of their hosts. The Spiders will often encase the Giants in web cocoons as they sleep, which the latter can easily slough off with their great strength.

## THE WRETCHES

Although generations of life among the Giants have transformed these people into inbred deformities with a dubious hillbilly culture, they are not complete idiots. The Wretches have survived in the shadows of the Giants through stealth and cunning, skills they will not hesitate to turn on the PCs should they take a disliking to them. These guys will avoid a stand-up fight whenever possible, instead choosing guerilla warfare-like tactics against the party. Make sure to re-read the rules for Surprise, Attacking from Behind, Cover, Aiming and Helpless Opponents prior to any encounter involving the Wretches, as they will not fight fair.

One last thing about the Wretches: they stink. In order to survive generations among the Spider Swarms they smear Giant dung on their skin. The Spiders avoid the stuff. Perhaps if the player characters make friendly contact they can learn this fabulous secret!

And don't forget to check out some of the options you selected for Minor Issues: The Wretches on page 58.

## THE HATCHLINGS

These creatures tend to bite the face or head of their victims. Anytime they score 4 or more points of damage from a single bite the victim is partially blinded from the gushing blood, suffering a -2 penalty on attack and Search rolls until someone can tend the wound for at least one Round. Such wounds have a 1 in 6 chance of leaving some sort of wicked scar unless healed magically.

The hatchlings barely appear in the adventure proper, but you should feel free to scatter some clutches of eggs along the path of destruction wreaked by the Skyfortress. What starts out as a report of mysterious boulders falling from the sky could end up as 2d6 or 3d6 eggs all hatching within about 24 hours of each other. The feeding frenzy that ensues will follow in the wake of Skyfortress attacks like the aftershocks of an earthquake.





THIS SECTION IS A BEST-OF FROM JEFF'S GAMEBLOG, WITH MANY ITEMS WRITTEN BEFORE LOTFP EXISTED. THEREFORE THIS SECTION REMAINS AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED AND REFEREES MUST CONVERT THESE ITEMS TO REGULAR LOTFP RULES. FOR EXAMPLE, JEFF USES THE GOLD STANDARD HERE, AND REFERENCES MANY "CLASSIC" FANTASY RPG MONSTERS AND SPELLS THAT ARE NOT IN LOTFP. ALTER AS DESIRED FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN'S ATMOSPHERE AND FLAVOR.

# WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION?

For when THAT GUY tries to derail the session by refusing to go into the damn dungeon.

## WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION? (1D12)

1	PC is obsessed with proving the existence of the Hollow World.
2	PC quests to retrieve bones of famous adventuring ancestor and re-inter them in family tomb.
3	PC has terrible but enticing dreams of sitting on the throne of a vast underworld kingdom.
4	PC owes d6 x 10,000 gp to Jabba the Hutt.
5	PC seeks vengeance against the Troll King.
6	Family member of PC afflicted with disease that can only be cured with the waters from a sacred subterranean spring.
7	PC haunted by visions of a beautiful witch/drow/princess/goth chick living on an island at the center of a vast underground lake.
8	PC seeks one segment of the <b>Rod of Seven Parts</b> . Must obtain all seven to save homeland from foretold doom.
9	Evil duplicate of PC (twin? simulacrum? clone?) has fled into the dungeon. One or the other must die before both go mad.
10	PC's true love has been trapped in amber and is on display in the trophy room of Lord Utterdark.
11	PC's parents imprisoned. Corrupt official will release them in exchange for the Star Ruby of Umman-Gorash.
12	PC quests for legendary sword (Fighter), archmage's spellbook (Magic-User), holy relic (Cleric), etc.

Want a boatload more random dungeon motivations? Paul Vermeren and Bret Woods expanded this table to 100 entries! Awesome! Here are the additional entries:

WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION? (1D100)	
<b>13</b>	PC is a naturalist studying dungeon-based ecologies.
<b>14</b>	PC is from another plane/reality/dimension and is looking for a way home.
<b>15</b>	PC was a hireling in the employ of a party that entered the dungeon days ago and has yet to return. Left to tend to their horses, the PC is waiting by the dungeon entrance, grumbling about back pay, when the PC party arrives.
<b>16</b>	PC seeks the subterranean River Lethe, hoping to forget a shameful past deed.
<b>17</b>	PC has lost everything they once held dear and has a suicidal death wish.
<b>18</b>	PC is a member of a tribe that considers surviving the dungeon a rite of passage.
<b>19</b>	PC has been outfitted with an unremovable, deadly device that magically transmits their every sensation to a decrepit immortal who craves the thrill of dungeon crawling. Immortal will spare the PC as long as they are entertained.
<b>20</b>	PC was double-dog dared to enter the dungeon.
<b>21</b>	PC was originally a member of the opposite sex and quests for a cure.
<b>22</b>	PC is doing research for an up-and-coming mad wizard who wants to construct the ultimate dungeon.
<b>23</b>	PC heard dungeon crawling was a growth industry and is in it for the money.
<b>24</b>	PC is on the run from the law, and figures they won't follow him/her into a dungeon.
<b>25</b>	PC is trying to impress a love interest.
<b>26</b>	PC is the descendant of a disgraced noble family and quests to restore its good name.
<b>27</b>	PC is a criminal sentenced to certain death in the dungeon.
<b>28</b>	PC is the illegitimate child of a great hero, now intent on proving him/herself to their deadbeat parent.

**WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION? (1D100) - CONT.**

<b>29</b>	PC was trained from birth by a bizarre dungeon-worshipping cult and sent as an offering to the great gods of the underworld.
<b>30</b>	PC just adores that gloomy dungeon ambience.
<b>31</b>	PC is obsessed with proving something called "Unified Dungeon Theory."
<b>32</b>	PC's crazy old uncle has filled PC's head with glamorous nonsense about dungeon crawling.
<b>33</b>	PC has terrifying dreams commanding them to awaken a sleeping god.
<b>34</b>	PC is the impressionable younger relative of another PC and follows them everywhere.
<b>35</b>	PC is the overprotective older relative of another PC.
<b>36</b>	PC was sent to act as bodyguard to another PC.
<b>37</b>	PC owed another PC a huge favor.
<b>38</b>	PC is the indentured servant of another PC.
<b>39</b>	PC is the slave of another PC. Whether the PC will remain so is another question.
<b>40</b>	PC is the devoted friend of another PC and didn't want them to go alone.
<b>41</b>	PC is driven to prove him/herself the strongest of all.
<b>42</b>	PC collects spores, molds and fungus and will go to any length to find new ones.
<b>43</b>	PC seeks blood/tooth/claw/eye of a monster found in the dungeon to sell to a witch/complete a ritual/create a magic potion/hawk on the black market.
<b>44</b>	PC wants to completely eradicate one type of monster found in the dungeon from the face of the earth.
<b>45</b>	PC is an aficionado of ancient wall carvings and wants to add rubbings from this dungeon to his/her collection.
<b>46</b>	PC lost a wager and must enter the dungeon as a result.
<b>47</b>	PC's beloved pet scampered into the dungeon.
<b>48</b>	PC was bullied/coerced/tricked/seduced into accompanying another PC into the dungeon.

## WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION? (1D100) - CONT.

49	PC is an adrenaline junkie looking for a rush.
50	PC is a jaded hedonist in search of new thrills.
51	PC shipwrecked nearby and needs to raise money quickly to repair ship
52	PC was forced to stop at this backwater world when his/her spaceship ran out of the magic items/gems/gold/other treasure it uses for fuel.
53	PC must spend a night in the dungeon in order to receive a promised inheritance.
54	PC has complex legal documents stating that the dungeon is technically located on his/her property and intends to claim it. Must evict the tenants first.
55	PC decides to enter the dungeon while extremely drunk. PC may sober up later and regret this decision.
56	PC has a thing for "underdark chicks/guys."
57	PC believes a cryptic journal that details his/her true family history lies within the bowels of the dungeon.
58	PC wants to prove that flumphs are not extinct.
59	PC really likes dragons, heard they tend to hang out in places like this.
60	PC loved one was violated by monsters from the dungeon, must be avenged.
61	PC is an amnesiac, believes the key to discovering his/her forgotten identity lies in the dungeon.
62	PC is searching for evidence of a lost race/civilization.
63	PC is a tomb robber, pure and simple.
64	PC loved one was kidnapped and taken to be villain's consort, and is held in the dungeon.
65	PC realizes that being an adventurer = dungeon crawling in this world and there's no way around it.
66	PC has been injected with a slow-acting poison, the antidote for which can be made from a lichen that grows only in the dungeon.
67	PC is a former henchman of the dungeon's main villain, and seeks to overthrow the villain.

## WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION? (1D100) - CONT.

68	PC secretly seeks to betray the PC party to the dungeon's main villain, whether out of own malice or because the villain holds the PC's loved one captive.
69	PC seeks to disprove the existence of the Hollow Earth.
70	PC is codependent and feels a need to do what everyone else is doing.
71	PC comes from peasant stock and refuses to live as his/her forebears have, and sees dungeon crawling as the quickest path to fame and fortune.
72	PC ex-adventurer grandfather's last request was for the PC to brave the dungeon.
73	PC was sent on a mission into the dungeon by his/her liege lord/chief-tain/king.
74	PC was expressly forbidden to enter the dungeon by superiors; lives to break rules.
75	PC was prophesied to undertake a journey into the dungeon, and who can dispute prophecy?
76	PC received divinely inspired knowledge that he/she was born in the Hollow World, and wishes to find his/her way home.
77	PC commanded to enter the dungeon by his/her master/mentor as a final test.
78	PC is trying to atone for a past misdeed or crime.
79	PC is agoraphobic and dungeon crawling is the most lucrative line of work available to him/her.
80	PC is sent to search the dungeon for a missing child.
81	PC would rather die in the depths of the dungeon than be branded the village coward.
82	PC never looks before he/she leaps; this sojourn is just the latest in a lengthy list of foolhardy endeavors.

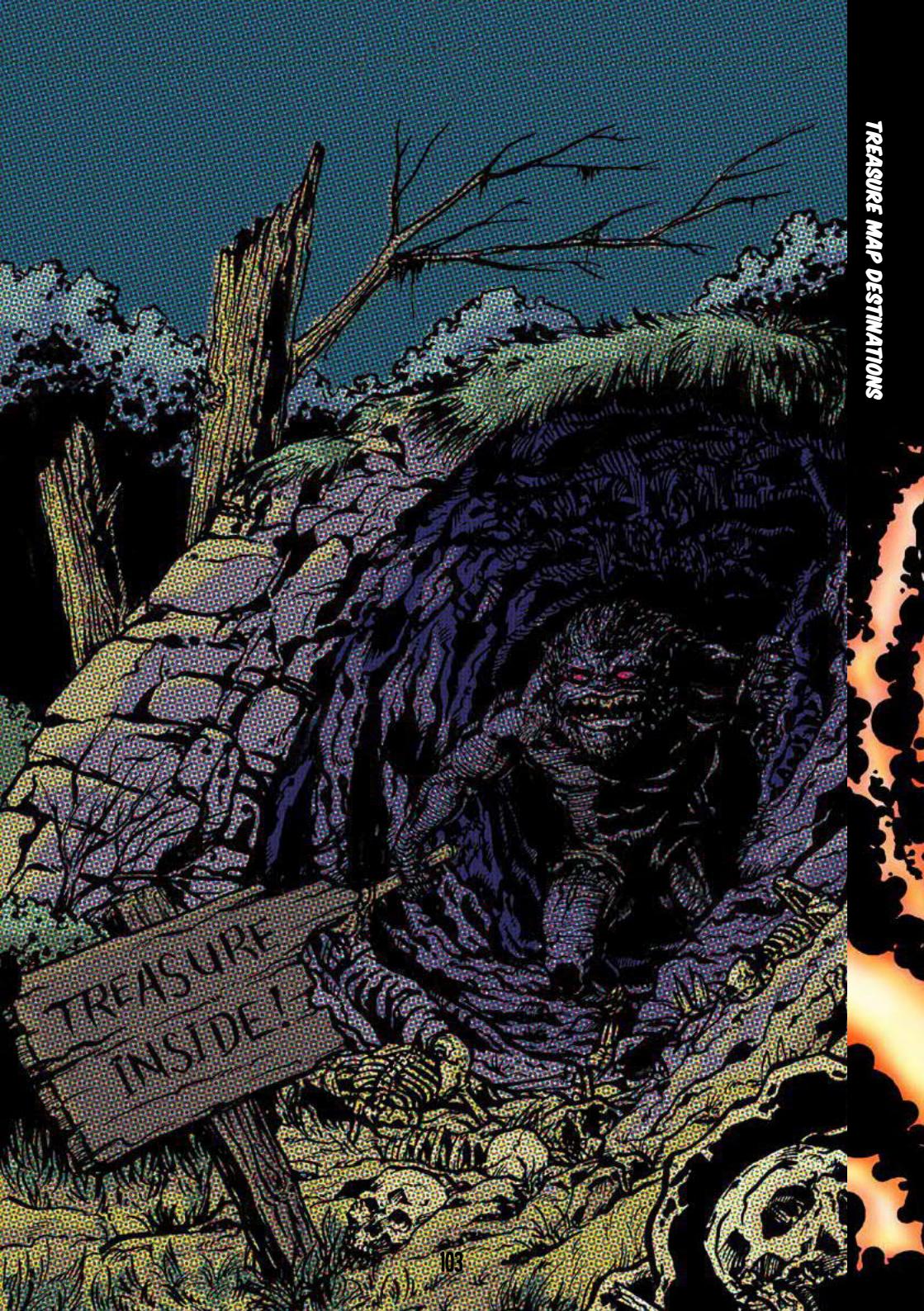
## WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION? (1D100) - CONT.

83	PC is a cartographer of the underdark.
84	PC is a painter of subterranean landscapes.
85	PC heard there were lasers down there.
86	PC is related to the main villain, intent on bringing him/her to justice.
87	PC is another PC's rival, sees the dungeon crawl as a game of one-upmanship.
88	PC is determined to complete the dungeon quest as holy pilgrimage.
89	PC has a pathological tendency to underestimate danger.
90	PC is actually a magically-created organism designed only for dungeon crawling.
91	PC was told by a fortune teller that he/she will die in sunlight, and goes underground in an attempt to live forever.
92	PC longs for immortality and scours dungeons in search of sympathetic lich/vampire/wight.
93	PC faces an unwanted arranged marriage, and wants to "live a little" before being forced to settle down.
94	PC is fleeing persecution.
95	PC is a spelunker looking to take his hobby to "the next level."
96	PC simply enjoys killing things and taking their stuff.
97	PC seeks the missing part that will allow him/her to activate Earth-shaker!
98	PC claims to be "from the future!" and insists he/she is ensuring that all goes according to his/her future's "history."
99	PC motivation to be determined by the player. Lucky you!
100	PC instantly ascends to godhood, roll a new PC.

## TREASURE MAP DESTINATIONS (1D20)

1	A previously unknown sub-level of the (nearest) dungeon.
2	Behind a secret door in an already-explored level of the (nearest) dungeon.
3	Deeper into the (nearest) dungeon than anyone has previously explored.
4	A previously unknown dungeon in the wilderness.
5	An island on a nearby lake.
6	An island far out at sea.
7	The barrow of a long dead king.
8	A village or town destroyed in a recent war
9	A hidden chamber in a nearby castle occupied by some Lord or Wizard.
10	The cellar of a popular inn.
11	A grave in a cemetery on the grounds of a mighty temple.
12	The bottom of a well in an otherwise unremarkable village.
13	Underneath the statue of a town's legendary founder.
14	The big city, to a block that burned in a large fire and was recently rebuilt.
15	A small cave complex in the wilderness that serves as the lair of some abominable man-eater.
16	A remote monastery devoted to Law but beset by invisible minions of a Loathsome Toad God of Chaos.
17	A ruined castle or town now occupied by a humanoid tribe.
18	A hilltop well-known as a gathering point for witches.
19	The site of a sunken ship.
20	The cozy burrow of an eccentric hobling.

## **TREASURE MAP DESTINATIONS**



# CAROUSING

Under these rules, once per session a PC may spend  $1d6 \times 100\text{gp}$  on ale and wenches, gaining experience points equal to the amount spent. Rolling a gold/experience point amount greater than the carouser's cash on hand results in the poor wretch owing money to various unsavory characters, unless the PC can borrow the difference from a party member.

In all cases carousers must save versus Poison to avoid over-indulgence in their vices. Failure indicates the need to roll on the table below.

## CAROUSING (1D20)

1	Make a fool of yourself in public. Gain no experience. Roll a Charisma check or gain a reputation in this town as a drunken lout.
2	Involved in a random brawl. Roll a Strength check or start the next adventure with a black eye and $1d3$ hit points short.
3	Minor misunderstanding with local authorities. Roll a Charisma check. Success indicates a fine of $2d6 \times 25\text{gp}$ . Failure (or inability to pay the fine) indicates $1d6$ days in the pokey.
4	Romantic entanglement. Roll Wisdom check to avoid nuptials. Otherwise 1-3 scorned lover, 4-6 angered parents.
5	Gambling losses. Roll the dice as if you caroused again to see how much you lose. (No additional experience for the second carousing roll.)
6	Gain a local reputation as the life of a party. Unless a Charisma check is failed, all future carousing in this burg costs double due to barflies and other parasites.
7	Insult a local person of rank. A successful Charisma check indicates the personage is amenable to some sort of apology and reparations.
8	You couldn't really see the rash in the candlelight. Roll a Constitution check to avoid venereal disease.
9	New tattoo. 1-3) it's actually pretty cool 4) it's lame 5) it could have been badass, but something is goofed up or misspelled 6) it says something insulting, crude or stupid in an unknown language.
10	Beaten and robbed. Lose all your personal effects and reduced to half hit points.

## CAROUSING (1D20) - CONT.

11	Gambling binge. Lose all your gold, gems, and jewelry. Roll a Wisdom check for each magic item in your possession. Failure indicates it's gone.
12	Hangover from hell. The first day of adventuring is at -2 to-hit and saves. Casters must roll an Intelligence check with each spell to avoid mishap.
13	Target of lewd advances turns out to be a witch. Save versus Magic or you're literally a swine.
14	One of us! One of us! You're not sure how it happened, but you've been initiated into some sort of secret society or weird cult. Did you really make out with an emu or was that just the drugs? Roll an Intelligence check to remember the signs and passes.
15	Invest all your spare cash (50% chance all gems and jewelry, too) in some smooth-tongued merchant's scheme. 1-4) it's bogus 5) it's bogus and Johnny Law thinks you're in on it 6) actual money making opportunity returns d% profits in 3d4 months.
16	Wake up stark naked in a random local temple. 1-3) the Clerics are majorly pissed off 4-6) they smile and thank you for stopping by.
17	Major misunderstanding with local authorities. Imprisoned until fines and bribes totaling $1d6 \times 1,000\text{gp}$ paid. All weapons, armor, and magic items confiscated.
18	Despite your best efforts, you fall head over heels for your latest dalliance. 75% chance your beloved is already married.
19	When in a drunken stupor you asked your god(s) to get you out of some stupid mess. Turns out they heard you! Now as repayment for saving your sorry ass, you're under the effects of a Quest spell.
20	The roof! The roof! The roof is on fire! Accidentally start a conflagration. Roll 1d6 twice. 1-2) burn down your favorite inn 3-4) some other den of ill repute is reduced to ash 5-6) a big chunk of town goes up in smoke. 1-2) no one knows it was you 3-4) your fellow carousers know you did it 5) someone else knows, perhaps a blackmailer 6) everybody knows.

Obviously, there are lots of ways these charts can be modified for your own campaign. In a large city the debauchery is much more efficient, doubling or perhaps even trebling the gold and experience. Criminals who are members of the local guild may add +2 to the roll, while their friends may add +1. Being mobbed-up gets you access to the best lotus powder, etc. Or you might designate special rules for specific dens of iniquity, like a dwarves' pub that's -2 on the save versus Poison due to the potency of dwarf liquor, but dwarves can roll a larger die for gold spent and experience earned.



For the last incarnation of my Wessex campaign an enterprising adventurer built his own tavern, which became a popular venue for PC shenanigans. For this tavern, called the Blue Rabbit, I extended the mishap chart to make it a d30 roll and allowed d8x100 gp/xp debauchery. Here's the extended chart:

### BLUE RABBIT CAROUSING MISHAPS EXPANSION

21	Lighthearted horseplay with bugbear bouncers. -1d4 hp at start of session.
22	Lengthy dalliance with one of the Dancing Girls from Beyond Time And Space. You ache in fifth dimensional parts of your anatomy you never even knew existed. -2 to-hit and mêlée damage next adventure.
23	The accordion playing of Taurus Hellsheart, the medieval juggalo, drives you temporarily mad. Your alignment and personality are inverted for the next session.
24	Owner Hugo the Bastard talks you into investing in the place. You spend up to 1d6 x 500gp but get a nice little certificate naming you in verbose French as (yet another) 10% owner of the establishment.
25	Wake up in another dimension. Carcosa? Fairytopia? New Jersey? You must play another character for one session while your original PC wanders lost through the multiverse.
26	Interminable theology discussion with Father Jack, the Drunkest Priest in Cornwall. -1d6 Intelligence or Wisdom (50/50 chance) for next session. If a spellcaster, you also lose your highest level spell slot, too.
27	Anger bugbear bouncers. -1d6 hp and random limb broken. 50% chance barred from the place.
28	Donate to local Satanist Blood Drive. Half hit points and -1d4 Constitution next session, but at least it's for a good cause.
29	Buy treasure map from mysterious robed figure for 1d6 x 100gp. 1 in 6 chance it's legit.
30	Random magic item replaced with note "Thanks for the loaner - EGG".

# THE LIVING DUNGEON

Do your players visit the same dungeon more than once? Roll 1d20 between expeditions to give your players something to think about.

## THE LIVING DUNGEON (1D20)

1	<b>New Monster In Town:</b> Pick a random level, roll a wandering monster, select an empty room as its new lair.
2	<b>I Collect Molds, Spores And Funguses:</b> Add 1d6 colonies of green slime, yellow mold, or shriekers to a random level.
3	<b>Mysterious Migrating Masonry:</b> A prominent dungeon feature such as a statue or archway is now found in a new location.
4	<b>Strange Bedfellows:</b> A lone monster now has a friend: a succubus takes a minotaur lover, a troll has ochre jelly dripping out its nose, an otyugh moves into another monster's latrine, etc.
5	<b>Partial Ceiling Collapse:</b> Either a room or 1d6 x 10 feet of corridor collapses on a random level.
6	<b>Partial Floor Collapse:</b> The floor gives way in a room or corridor of a random level, forming a natural chute to the level below.
7	<b>Partial Wall Collapse:</b> On a random level a section of 'pencil thin' wall collapses. If no such walls exist on the level indicated, add a previously unknown chamber or a whole new dungeon section.
8	<b>Flooding:</b> Water leaks into a room or corridor in a random level.
9	<b>Lava:</b> Every dungeon could use more lava.
10	<b>Tunneling Troublemakers:</b> An amber hulk or purple wyrm adds 2d12 x 10 feet of meandering tunnels to a random level. 50% chance of 1d6 roundish chambers, 50% chance of connecting to another level.

## THE LIVING DUNGEON (1D20) - CONT.

11	<b>Those Darn Kobolds:</b> Add 1d6 new simple traps to a random level.
12	<b>So Tough The Trolls Moved Out:</b> A random monster or monster group leaves their current lair, either moving to a new level or out of the dungeon entirely.
13	<b>Kilroy Was Here:</b> Add graffiti to a random level. Randomly select language. 1 in 6 chance the graffiti contains useful information.
14	<b>Finders Keepers:</b> An NPC party has successfully looted 1d6 rooms on a random level
15	<b>The Door Is A Jar:</b> A door on a random level is actually open! 10% chance it's a secret door.
16	<b>Squirmin' Vermin:</b> Add 1d6 groups of (normal or giant) rats, spiders, snakes, bats, lizards, beetles, etc. scattered about random levels.
17	<b>Hunkered In The Bunker:</b> Some monster or monster group is sick of PC incursions and seriously beefs up security.
18	<b>Hope You Brought A Canary:</b> A cloud of poisonous gas billows up from some lower level to occupy a random room or corridor. 2 in 6 chance it's invisible to the naked eye. 2 in 6 chance it's odorless.
19	<b>Should've Burnt The Bodies:</b> One monster (or 1d6 members of a monster group) killed on a previous expedition are now vengeful undead.
20	<b>Magic Portal:</b> A new magic portal opens up on a random level. Where does it lead and what might come out of it?

# TWENTY QUICK QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN SETTING

You can run a series of fantasy role-playing games with just some PCs and a dungeon. I think that's totally legit. But if you have a campaign setting, here are some things for you to think about. Better to muse on these before your players ask you, rather than finding yourself on the spot.

1. What is the deal with my Cleric's religion?
2. Where can we go to buy standard equipment?
3. Where can we go to get platemail custom fitted for this monster I just befriended?
4. Who is the mightiest wizard in the land?
5. Who is the greatest warrior in the land?
6. Who is the richest person in the land?
7. Where can we go to get some magical healing?
8. Where can we go to get cures for the following conditions: poison, disease, curses, level drains, lycanthropy, polymorph, alignment change, death, undeath?
9. Is there a magic guild my Magic-User belongs to or that I can join in order to get more spells?
10. Where can I find an alchemist, sage or other expert NPC?
11. Where can I hire mercenaries?
12. Is there any place on the map where swords are illegal, magic is outlawed, or any other notable hassles from Johnny Law?
13. Which way to the nearest tavern?
14. What monsters are terrorizing the countryside sufficiently that if I kill them I will become famous?
15. Are there any wars brewing I could go fight?
16. How about gladiatorial arenas complete with hard-won glory and fabulous cash prizes?
17. Are there any secret societies with sinister agendas I could join and/or fight?
18. What is there to eat around here?
19. Any legendary lost treasures I could be looking for?
20. Where is the nearest dragon or other monster with super mega loot?

Campaign worlds, whether published or just notes scrawled in some Referee's binder, contain a lot of material that most players honestly just don't give a crap about. That's entirely okay. Answer some of

these questions or others like them and you'll have yourself a campaign regular players can relate to.

Here's the way I answered these questions for the second incarnation of my Wessex campaign.

## **1. WHAT IS THE DEAL WITH MY CLERIC'S RELIGION?**

You're probably a medieval Catholic type Christian who is theoretically answerable to some bishop. A Jewish Cleric would work as well. Or you can play a Satanic anti-Cleric.

## **2. WHERE CAN WE GO TO BUY STANDARD EQUIPMENT?**

Enough adventurers are visiting the Caves of Myrddin area that the stuff on the official campaign price list is generally available, but you're also remote enough that the Referee may roll 1d6 to see how many days it takes you to get completely supplied. Merchants come through here, but not everything is available the day you want to purchase it.

## **3. WHERE CAN WE GO TO GET PLATEMAIL CUSTOM FITTED FOR THIS MONSTER I JUST BEFRIENDED?**

No dice. Platemail hasn't been invented yet. Chainmail custom made for a monster will probably require you to travel to Exonbury, some 90 miles to the east across some pretty treacherous countryside.

## **4. WHO IS THE MIGHTIEST WIZARD IN THE LAND?**

Didymus Ashlar, the Wizard of Wessex. By all reports he spends most of his time in the southwest corner of the map, well away from your starting area in Cornwall. But occasionally he shows up in the vicinity of the Caves of Myrddin, presumably searching for the same magical secrets that draw so many PC Magic-Users.

## **5. WHO IS THE GREATEST WARRIOR IN THE LAND?**

King Stephen is well known for personally kicking a good deal of ass. Two supporters of Empress Maude are also held in high esteem as fighters: her half-brother Robert, Earl of Gowan, and the so-called Scourge of the West, William de Mohun. But some people dismiss Robert of Gowan's personal prowess and attribute his success in combat to his magic sword Morglaien, which once belonged to the legendary Sir Tristan.

## **6. WHO IS THE RICHEST PERSON IN THE LAND?**

Henry of Blois, brother of King Stephen and a powerful Bishop. That cat is loaded. Chera of Wintoncester, a Jewish moneylender, is also noted for her wealth.

## **7. WHERE CAN WE GO TO GET SOME MAGICAL HEALING?**

There are no inns in the vicinity of the Caves of Myrddin. Most adventurers stay in an outbuilding on the grounds of the nearby Abbey of St. Emmet. A few of the brothers are Clerics of level 2 or higher. Cure Light Wounds and other first level Cleric spells are generally available for a 'donation' of 250gp.

## **8. WHERE CAN WE GO TO GET CURES FOR THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS: POISON, DISEASE, CURSE, LEVEL DRAIN, LYCANTHROPY, POLYMORPH, ALIGNMENT CHANGE, DEATH, UNDEATH?**

The Abbott can personally cure some of these things, with 'donations' of up to 1,000gp. Harder cases will be referred to the Bishop of Cornwall, whose seat is about 60 miles to the southeast.

## **9. IS THERE A MAGIC GUILD MY MAGIC-USER BELONGS TO OR THAT I CAN JOIN IN ORDER TO GET MORE SPELLS?**

The Invisible College of Thaumaturgy is a secret sixth college of the University of Christminster and serves as the closest thing to a Magic Guild in the setting. Any Magic-User that starts play knowing Latin can consider themselves a student of the Invisible College. Note that the journey from Cornwall to Christminster is not trivial. The route stretches across much of the campaign map.

## **10. WHERE CAN I FIND AN ALCHEMIST, SAGE OR OTHER EXPERT NPC?**

Possibly in Exonbury, previously mentioned. There are definitely sagacious and alchemical types at the University of Christminster. Abelard of Sulis is the foremost sage of the realm. Sulis is over 200 miles away, though closer than Christminster.

## **11. WHERE CAN I HIRE MERCENARIES?**

Small numbers of Welsh bowmen, Flemish crossbowmen and desperate untrained peasants are readily available for hire. Mustering larger numbers or locating other types of troops will require significant travel.

## 12. IS THERE ANY PLACE ON THE MAP WHERE SWORDS ARE ILLEGAL, MAGIC IS OUTLAWED OR ANY OTHER NOTABLE HASSLES FROM JOHNNY LAW?

The main issue is that spellcasting or being a spellcaster is not illegal, but Black Magic is a serious crime. Black Magic is defined as casting a spell intending to harm another.

## 13. WHICH WAY TO THE NEAREST TAVERN?

Bad news, my thirsty friend. The only taverns in the setting are left-overs from the old Roman road houses and the Roman construction crews never got this far in fake 12th century Cornwall. But you can find alehouses fairly easily. These are simply peasant hovels where the wife and daughters brew extra ale. You can only visit them when the weather is good, since all the seating consists of stools or benches set up outside in front of the place. But most peasant households brew their own ale, so flash a little gold and people will literally come a-running with a bucket of ale to sell you.

## 14. WHAT MONSTERS ARE TERRORIZING THE COUNTRY-SIDE SUFFICIENTLY THAT IF I KILL THEM I WILL BECOME FAMOUS?

Bodmin Moor is said to be haunted by some sort of cat monster, possibly an undead cat monster or a cat monster from Hell. Reports vary.

Also, the last known dragon in 12th century pseudo-England (which does an even better job of keeping Cornwall oppressed than the Normans) lairs somewhere in the dungeons below Castle Dundagel, which is literally right next to the Caves of Myrrdin.

## 15. ARE THERE ANY WARS BREWING I COULD GO FIGHT?

Besides the ongoing conflict between King Stephen and Empress Maude, lots of pettier conflicts are in the offing. Any land hex on the map could be in the middle of some level of warfare when visited.

## 16. HOW ABOUT GLADIATORIAL ARENAS COMPLETE WITH HARD-WON GLORY AND FABULOUS CASH PRIZES?

Not that you know of. Gladiatorial contests are condemned by the Church as pagan and barbaric.

## **17. ARE THERE ANY SECRET SOCIETIES WITH SINISTER AGENDAS I COULD JOIN AND/OR FIGHT?**

Much of the sinister agenda stuff seems to be going on right out in the open in these wicked days. Satan has his own underground (often literally so) church. Imagine Anton LaVey as a pope made of anti-matter and you have the gist of it.

## **18. WHAT IS THERE TO EAT AROUND HERE?**

Since you're staying at a monastery, probably lots of porridge and coarse bread with a tiny bit of meat. Fish on Fridays if not more often than that. Once you have some ready cash, poachers will no doubt sell you fresh-caught game at a mark-up.

## **19. ANY LEGENDARY LOST TREASURES I COULD BE LOOKING FOR?**

Due to the semi-historical nature of the campaign you can probably think of some yourself: Excalibur, the spellbooks of Merlin and Morgan le Fay, the Shield of Hercules, the Ark of the Covenant, etc., etc.

## **20. WHERE IS THE NEAREST DRAGON OR OTHER MONSTER WITH MAD FAT TREASURE?**

See question 14.





# OLD SCHOOLIN': HOW TO GET STARTED

Once upon a time on my blog, a commenter named Sam asked for some advice:

*"I was wondering if you could give some advice for a beginner looking to try out some classic D&D.*

*I started playing in 2nd edition (think Jeff Easley cover of a mounted warrior riding through a desert canyon) and have played plenty of 3.x, so I have absolutely no experience with this great stuff you keep talking about. What would be the best bang for my buck? What books do I need? Would love to know what you would recommend as a starting set."*

There's a lot of ways you can go starting some old school action and my answers here will only be one guy's opinions, but I'll take a shot at it. Here's my take on the four key components for embarking into the wondrous realm of kicking it old school.

## COMPONENT ONE: ATTITUDE

This is the key to the whole affair, really. If you nail this you could use lots of systems (including the 2nd edition AD&D Sam started with) to produce useful results. To get in the zone I recommend reading Matthew Finch's *Quick Primer for Old School Gaming*. It's free and wicked awesome. Not every grognard will agree with everything written there, but it's still great stuff. Get your players to read the Quick Primer if at all possible, so you're all on the same page. The number one lesson to learn here, in my opinion, is that whenever the rules, your notes, or a module are silent about something then it's you and your players' job to make something up. And most importantly, that sort of on-the-fly invention is meant to be the best part of the game. Try not to lose track of that whenever something comes up that isn't covered by the rules.

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## COMPONENT TWO: RULES

The rules you pick aren't as important as what you do with them, but there's three basic angles of attack in picking a ruleset. The hardcore choice is to go straight to the beginning, with the original 1974 version of *D&D*. While original copies are getting more and more expensive, electronic copies are available and as I write this a new reprint is in the works from Wizards of the Coast. But if you go *OD&D* you need to be prepared to do some extra work. You can't just skim over the rules and start playing right away without a lot of heartbreak. This is a work that requires attentive reading and active interpretation. I personally find that very rewarding, but if you are itching to play right away there are better options.

When I originally wrote this essay *Labyrinth Lord* was my pick for the best ready-to-rumble version of *D&D* currently in print. It's a retro-clone of Moldvay's near-perfect '81 Basic/Expert rules. Some purists will claim that the Golden Age of Old School was already dead by the time Moldvay's *D&D* rolled out, but personally I rank purity of essence a lot lower than making sure the rules rock the block. You can snag a free PDF version of *LL* at the Goblinoid Games website or buy a swank print version. I've got a softcover printed by Lulu.com and it is totally sweet.

Nowadays, I tend to recommend *LotFP*: *Weird Fantasy Role-Playing* instead of *Labyrinth Lord*. *LotFP* adds a gloss of weird horror to the game that I find very enriching. And I'm not just saying that because the author of *LotFP* is the publisher of this text. *Lamentations* is wicked awesome.

Now, if you or your players rankle at the idea that Elf and Dwarf are classes as well as races, then you probably remember the grand old days of Advanced *D&D*. For that sort of game minus a lot of the things that made *AD&D* so boggy-downy, give *OSRIC* a try. It's everything most players remember liking about *AD&D* in a single big book. Electronic copies are available as well.

The third route to go is to find a d20 game that imports some old school elements. I don't really recommend this route, but I mention it because you might have players still stuck on the d20 stuff. *Castles & Crusades* is one great d20 option. I personally dig the *C&C Collector's Edition* boxed set. The rules are slimmer than the full-blown hardbacks but it's an all-in-one affair with monsters, treasures, and a tiny little module. When running *C&C* try to keep in mind that the Attribute

Check rules are just one handy tool, not some universal resolution system meant to cover every situation. Another extremely cool d20 option is the *Microlite 20/Microlite 74/HardCore M20* family of tiny d20 rules.

That's probably more options than Sam wanted when he asked, so here's the short answer: *Labyrinth Lord* or *Lamentations of the Flame Princess*.

## **COMPONENT THREE: A DUNGEON**

I consider it axiomatic that D&D requires both dragons and dungeons, even if your rulebook doesn't have both of those words on the cover. And by dungeons I don't mean monster lairs with six or seven rooms all rationally designed with complete ecologies, I mean big honkin' crazy ass dungeons. Your absolute best bet is to design your own dungeon, perhaps using the random dungeon stocking charts in your rulebook of choice. If you want to start out with a prefab dungeon, here are some good options, organized by rule set.

OD&D offers several interesting options. Issue #2 of *Fight On!* Magazine has the first level of "The Darkness Beneath", a megadungeon that's being created as a collaborative effort. If you go with OD&D, you're pretty much going to want every issue of *Fight On!* anyway. And I wrote a little number called *Under Xylarthen's Tower* that might do you some good. It should be available for free with a Google search.

For *Labyrinth Lord* I recommend doing some digging over at the website [dragonsfoot.org](http://dragonsfoot.org). Dragonsfoot has some great stuff in its Classic D&D Downloads <http://www.dragonsfoot.org/cd/> section that ought to be highly compatible with LL.

# WANDERING MONSTERS

One of my favoritest mechanics in fantasy role-playing games is the wandering monster, where there's a chance (like 2 in 6 every three turns or something) that you get to roll on a little table of random creeps who show up to complicate the PCs' lives.

Wandering monsters combine two great elements of the gaming tradition: the stupid random die charts and weird monsters. (I know not everyone digs random charts, but who doesn't like monsters?) The random factor forces the Referee to think on his feet. What the hell is that troll doing on level three, if the nearest troll lair is on level five? Why is there a rednosed slithy tove in the dungeon at all? You don't always have to have an answer here, but for me half the fun of refereeing is riffing off of random crap like that.

Tom Moldvay's 1981 version of the original game did a great job putting nifty new game elements on the table because of all the human-type people that appear on his wandering monster charts. Why are there d8 Traders wandering level one? Are those the jerks who keep selling oil and poison to Tucker's Kobolds (look it up)? That Noble and his retinue you bumped into on level two, what the heck is his deal? He can't be up to any good.

And once you get talking about people, that leads directly into one of the greatest banes of old school dungeoners: the NPC party. In my experience few things rile a group of players more than the idea that some Referee-run goons might get to all the treasure first. On more than one occasion I've rolled up an NPC party and solo-run them through a dungeon between sessions. Talk about getting the players' goats. "Here's another room with nothing but hacked-up monsters and empty chests. What the hell is going on here? Who is stealing all our experience points and loot?" Also, wandering monsters help keep the players on their toes and the game moving at a brisk pace. Competent players will quickly realize that if the Referee is rolling wandering monsters every turn or two then they need to use their time wisely. Sure, you can search every stinking inch of the dungeon for secret doors, but how many wandering monster checks will the Referee make while you do it?

Here are a few things I try to keep in mind when designing a new wandering monster chart.

## PICK DICE WISELY

I don't want to hunt for special dice every time I need to dice up a wandering monster, so I pick what I'm sure to have at hand. For dungeonly dragonly games that usually means a 1d6 or 2d6 chart. For a more percentage-based game like *Encounter Critical* I might go with one or two ten-siders. And I try not to pick too many dice, so that I don't have to stop and add up results, but I often go with two or three dice. This gives me a nice bell curve type distribution. That way I can put the most common encounters in the middle of the chart and the rare weird stuff on the ends.

## IT'S OKAY TO REFERENCE OTHER CHARTS (SOMETIMES)

Often I will include an entry that references another wandering monster chart, just to expand the possible options. Like on a level 1 chart I might include "roll on the level 2 chart" or for a forest next to a mountain range each chart might give a small chance that you should instead roll on the other terrain chart. That way you occasionally get a mountain giant in the forest or forest-goblins wandering into the mountains. Occasionally I will put an entry on the chart like "Roll on the *Fiend Folio* charts instead," but I try not to overdo that as I don't want to flip through too many extra wandering monster charts or bring extra books to the game.

## NOT ALL ENTRIES HAVE TO BE MONSTERS

The original Traveller wilderness encounter charts included events on them like avalanches and blizzards. In dungeons I often add sound effects or odd smells to the chart, or events like a gust of wind that might blow out torches. Non-combat encounters with ordinary rats and snakes and such also appear on many of my dungeon charts. Things that players can interpret as omens also make interesting entries.

## NOT ALL ENTRIES HAVE TO MAKE SENSE

Sometimes I put a monster on a wandering monster chart specifically because it doesn't appear anywhere else in the adventure. I just want a small chance that a leprechaun shows up, you know? And one time I put the smell of freshly baked cookies on a dungeon chart, without there being any good reason for it. Dungeons are mysterious.

## KEYED ENCOUNTERS AND THE CHART SHOULD INTERACT

Say hex 1234 is deep inside the Forest of Doom and according to your key that hex contains a massive warg lair. It only makes sense to include wargs on your Forest of Doom wandering monster chart. For extra fun, I sometimes make a note on the wandering monster chart like "remove from chart if warg lair in hex 1234 cleared." Or maybe I'll note that the result "ogre" really means "ogre from room 23," in which case if the PCs kill a wandering ogre then room 23 becomes ogre-free. Another thing I sometimes do is put multiple examples of the same monster on a chart. Say level 2 is mostly devoted to a big-ass gnoll lair. I might make an entry for an alert and aggressive gnoll patrol, another for punk gnoll teenagers looking for trouble, and a third for some grumpy gnollwives heading to or from the local watering hole with big clay jugs.



# EXPLORATION

I've seen things you people wouldn't believe.  
Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion.  
I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the  
Tannhauser gate.

*All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain.  
Time to die.*

In addition to being one of the coolest lines ever to be uttered in a movie, Roy Batty's death speech at the end of *Blade Runner* speaks to me about the nature of adventurers. A good adventurer isn't just a corpse count and a treasure tally. Part of an adventurer's soul is wrapped up in the places they've been and the wonders they've beheld.

*Middle-Earth Role Playing* and its big brother *RoleMaster* have this rule whereby you earn 1 experience point for every mile travelled. Since it takes 10,000xp to make level 2 in those systems travel isn't the most efficient way to make your sorcerer's apprentice into the next Gandalf, but you could do it. I like the idea of XP earned for visiting new and exciting places, but I'm not sure I like a flat amount per mile. Here's an alternative idea.

Get out your campaign world map (and key if you've got one). If you don't already have a campaign world to set your fantasy adventures then I recommend starting with *Points of Light* and/or *Points of Light II*, but this method should work with any campaign setting. Okay, you've got the campaign map in front of you. Now imagine which of the places on the map are the coolest to visit. What places are breathtakingly beautiful? Which locations are desolate beyond imagination? What spots on the map have no mortals seen in generations? What places surge with magical energies or reek of unholiness?

Take your ideas and make a list of places from most awesome to least awesome. As an example, I'll give a quick look-over to the hex map in the center of Geoffrey McKinney's mind-rending *Carcosa*. The following places strike me as particularly nifty:

- » **Carcosa** (the haunted city in hex 1507 from which the setting derives its name)
- » **Mount Voormith'adreth** (Shub-Niggurath's lair in hex 0402)
- » **Crystal City of the Space Aliens** (hex 0604)
- » **The Shards in the Blighted Lands** (hex 2303)
- » **Lake Hali**
- » **Damned Isles**
- » **Thaggasoth Peaks**
- » **Yaglogthotep Forest**
- » **Icy Wastes**

There's plenty of other interesting places on that hex map. Geoffrey McKinney positively crams Carcosa full of eldritch doom. But for a small map, I think 6 to 12 places is probably sufficient. A larger map, like the *Wilderlands of High Fantasy* submaps, could maybe squeeze in 20 or 30 wondrous places, while a large campaign map (like Darlene's *World of Greyhawk* map) could easily hold a hundred such locations.

Next think about how much you want to award pure exploration in your campaign. I find these sorts of decisions hard to make in the abstract, so here's a line of thinking that might help: A newly minted PC decides to cross the campaign map to visit the top item on your list, how close should they be to 2nd level after such an achievement? Set aside any thought as to encounters along the way, we're talking here strictly about the effect of the experience of visiting the location. How changed will the PC be on their return from this fey place?

If I were to run Carcosa I definitely would want visiting the city of Carcosa itself to be a life-changing experience. So let's say I go overboard and establish a 2,000xp award for visiting the place. Once I have the top item set, I can eyeball the rest of the list:

- » **Carcosa City:** 2,000xp
- » **Mount Voormith'adreth:** 1,500xp
- » **Crystal City:** 1,000xp
- » **The Shards:** 500xp
- » **Lake Hali:** 250xp
- » **Damned Isles:** 200xp
- » **Thaggasoth Peaks:** 150xp
- » **Yaglogthotep Forest:** 100xp
- » **Icy Wastes:** 50xp

Obviously I just pulled those numbers out of my butt. If you want to keep the PCs focused on killing things and taking stuff or chasing Gandalf-imposed missions, then by all means cut all those awards way the hell down. But assuming you like the idea of PCs climbing a mountain just because it's there then I feel you should offer XP awards comparable to standard murder and pillage.

Now, we can glam up this simple chart quite a bit with a special rule for some of the items:

- » **Carcosa City:** 2,000xp but must spend one night in city
- » **Mount Voormith'adreth:** 1,500xp for the first human to climb to the peak, 0xp thereafter
- » **Crystal City:** 1,000xp but must enter the Dome
- » **The Shards:** 500xp
- » **Lake Hali:** 250xp if Carcosa City is viewed in the moonlight
- » **Damned Isles:** 200xp for first island visited, 100xp per island thereafter
- » **Thaggasoth Peaks:** 150xp if mountains crossed, double if it takes two hexes to get across
- » **Yaglogthotep Forest:** 100xp
- » **Icy Wastes:** 50xp, but 200xp for crossing hex 2210, "The Frigid Heart of the Wastes"

You can also do up special rules like "dwarves earn triple XP for any ocean voyage" or "followers of St. Salamander earn 1,000xp for praying at each of his Seven Shrines".

Additionally, you could establish XP awards for non-location based wonders:

- » **See a dragon fly overhead:** 100xp but 0xp if pooped upon
- » **Ride a dragon:** 500xp first time, half for each additional ride
- » **Dance with the fairies:** 300xp
- » **Watch a city burn:** 150xp
- » **Shipwrecked:** 100xp, but 0 if you sabotaged the vessel & etc.

Now to make this all work you need to keep in mind two important points. First, you have to share at least some items on this list with your player group. You can't create a feedback loop of action/encouragement if the players don't know what's going on. Hell, get them in on the ground floor. If you're using a well-known setting, enterprising players will be happy to suggest ideas. Creative ones will make crap up, to the betterment of your campaign.

Second, when the players accomplish one of these goals, sell it. Break out that over-the-top poetic voice and use those fifty cent words. Have rumors of the PCs' achievements get around, with peasants in the street whispering "There goes Lucas of the Amber Blade, he's the only man to ever cross the Shimmering Desert and return!" Most players eat that stuff up.

# MORE MORALE, PLEASE

I can't really pretend to be objective about the '81 D&D Basic Rules, edited by Tom Moldvay. They're the rules I started with and the gold standard to which I hold all other RPGs. On the other hand I'm not so myopic that I can't see why some people would prefer nine point alignment over Law/Neutral/Chaos, or a class system where an Elf can also be a Thief. Those are perfectly legit options on the broad spectrum of fantasy role-playing.

Unlike some old schoolers I'm also willing to acknowledge that some Wizards of the Coast era mechanics have merit. Feats or skills as done in the WotC third and fourth editions aren't deal-killers in my book. The overall third edition character generation system grinds my gears, but in isolation both 3rd edition skills and feats are decent mechanics. And sometimes I seriously consider switching to WotC threefold saves (Fort/Reflex/Will). Many newbies nowadays don't seem to grok the old save system and I think Reflex +4, Target 20 would suit many of them a crapload more. The single save method from Swords & Wizardry seems too simplistic for me, but I wouldn't turn up my nose at a game that used it.

But Moldvay's morale rules are probably the one D&D Basic mechanic I don't think anyone has ever topped. It's clearly labeled an optional rule and it only takes up half a page (Page B27 if you want to look it up yourself), but man that half-page packs quite a wallop. I'll summarize for folks who don't have a Basic D&D or *Labyrinth Lord*, the modern version, handy: Every monster has a morale score in their statblock, rated from 2 to 12. At the first casualty received in combat and at 50% casualties you roll 2d6. If you roll over the critter's morale score, the bad guys retreat, withdraw or surrender as adjudicated by the Referee.

I probably don't need to tell you how big a difference that simple rule can make in play. Far fewer fights are to the death. Smart PCs will boldly engage large groups of scaredy-cats, ganging up on one poor bastard in hopes of spooking the rest. And since 1gp = 1xp under Moldvay's rules, you still get most of your experience even if the Referee is a stingy bastard who holds back points on routed (as opposed to killed) foes. Personally I normally consider routed monsters as 'overcome,' which per page B22 means they're worth full XP, unless the baddies have a fall-back position nearby or an opportunity to regroup. Either way, the morale rules are a total game changer,

especially back when me and my group were all dumb kids and approached combat about as tactically as the aliens in *Space Invaders*.

In fact, I think the morale rules need to be used more than Moldvay indicates. I often make a morale check for lone monsters when they are first wounded, extrapolating that the initial hit is to single critters what the first man down is to groups. I also think that some monsters should be scared of things besides attrition. For monsters like orcs that have problems with sunlight, a Cleric using a surprise round to throw *Continual Light* might be enough to scare the bejesus out of them. And frankly, lycanthropes should run like hell the first time silver is on the playing field. The smart ones will strategically withdraw at the first sign of the stuff, while the dumb ones will be completely shocked that something actually hurt them and run home to their mommas. Similarly, an adventurer boldly brandishing a torch might be able to freak out an entire pack of trolls. In these cases I might not allow a morale check in the monsters' lair, but I treat a lot of wandering monsters as regular joes who happen to work for Chaos. What's their percentage in sticking around to face their one weakness?

And maybe weapons that grant a bonus versus certain monster types just hurt like hell. A **sword +1, +3 versus giants** may not seem like all that much when you're second level and staring down an 18' tall Viking neanderthal, but maybe it stings so bad that they just won't want to bother squishing you. Especially if the dude knows that the blade you are wielding was the weapon of choice of a long line of giant-slayers.

Heck, in a lowish magic campaign the party wizard might be able to force a morale check out of superstitious peasantry or bandits with a minor demonstration of eldritch badassery.

# THE AWESOME POWER OF THE 1ST LEVEL MAGIC USER

Some days I think the existence of spells like *Fireball* and *Wish* blind us to the simple fact that first level Magic-Users kick ass. Here are some brief thoughts on some spells commonly available to first level Magic-Users.

## DETECT MAGIC

Not every magic sword will glow like a lightsaber when drawn from its scabbard. That stick could be a magic wand or a conductor's baton. Is our ally *Cursed* or *Charmed* (see below)? You find a pool of water in the dungeon. Care to find out it's enchanted after you wade into it? Just a super useful spell.

## HOLD PORTAL

Knowing the bad guys can't get to you, even for a few turns, is golden in retreat situations. And you want to really mess some NPCs up? Lure them into a house, *Hold* the doors and set the joint on fire. Here's another one: a pit with a hatch is just more flooring while it's *Held*.

## READ MAGIC

Worthless scrap of paper or *Wish* scroll? Only the Magic-User knows for sure. The original version specifically mentions that this spell can be used on items. In many editions this spell is the gateway to real ultimate power; all other Magic-User spells flow from this source.

## PROTECTION FROM EVIL

Here's an easy way to really piss off an enchanted creature: stand in a doorway with this spell cast on yourself. The creature can't get past you to your non-protected allies, who can then leisurely ready their oil flasks, scrolls, etc. Heck, with six turns to work with, they might even be able to take an alternate route to the creature and attack it from behind.

## LIGHT

I think almost every Referee goes a lot easier on the subject of lighting than they should. I know I do. If we handled torches and lanterns in any realistic way, this would be one of the most popular spells ever. You ever try lighting a lantern without matches? How about making an accurate map by torchlight in a drafty catacomb? Or try climbing a ladder while holding a stick that is on fire. I think those tasks are

approximately one bajillion times harder than we usually adjudicate them. And even if you don't want to be a dick about lighting all the time, drop the party into a pool of water and all their normal light sources are suddenly useless.

## CHARM PERSON

The original version of this spell lasts until someone successfully casts *Dispel Magic* on the victim, possibly forever. Think about that for a minute. Under those rules if there is a single first level Magic-User in the campaign world then you pretty much can't trust anyone that might fail a save versus spells. Smart Magic-Users will probably pick one or two choice victims in any area. Charm too many and you run the risk of a random *Dispel* catching one.

## SLEEP

Get out any old module, the low level kind that comes with a base area like a small town. Look at some of the entries and ask yourself how many of the homes and businesses would be vulnerable to a single *Sleep* spell. That master burglar plaguing the area isn't a high level thief. Dude's a pipsqueak first level Magic-User who peeks in the window, throws *Sleep*, then casually makes off with the tea service and the jewelry box.

## SUMMON

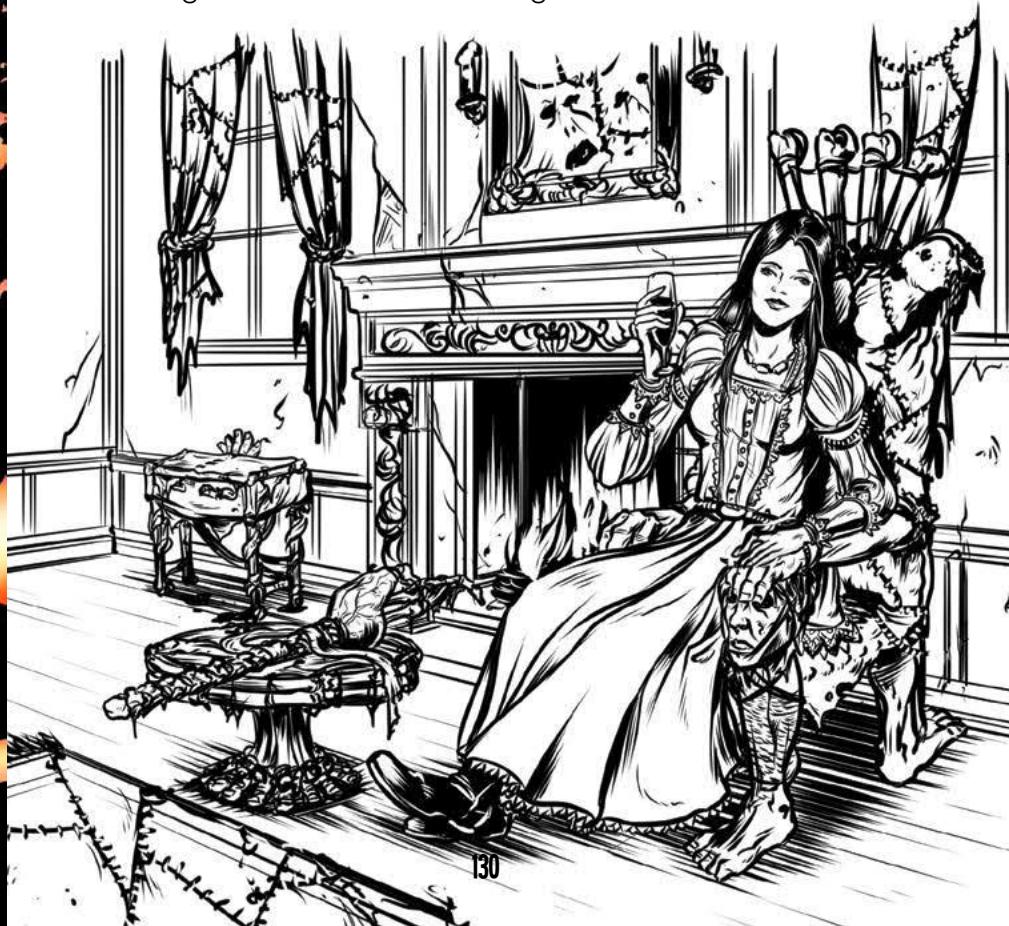
The addition of this new spell is one of the great advances in *Lamentations of the Flame Princess: Weird Fantasy Role-Playing*. I've had players who said that finding a copy was their Magic-User's number one priority and they would beg, borrow, steal or kill to get it. And it is no surprise why. With this spell you can call up a minion of Hell (albeit a fairly puny one) right at first level.

## READ LANGUAGES

I know the internet is full of awesome people who speak multiple languages, but I'm not one of them. I struggled with French in high school and college. At one point I could read well enough to fumble my way through Sartre and Voltaire, but I'm sure I've lost that and I never was sufficiently fluent to speak the tongue. I'm pretty sure I passed my final conversational exam because I was almost twice as big as the instructor and he was kind of a nervous little guy. Linguistics as a field fascinates me, but I just seem to have no talent for learning new languages. I can't whistle either but that doesn't bother me as much.

So *Read Languages* is pretty much a miracle effect to me. Athanasius Kircher, one of the awesomest geniuses to ever live, couldn't crack the code for Egyptian hieroglyphs. Minoan Linear A and Olmec and many other ancient scripts remain undeciphered to this day. But here's a spell that instantaneously allows you to read all of that stuff and the Greek and Roman classics and the original Bible texts and Nietzsche in the original German and all the other written works of humanity. Boom. One spell gets you access to any document put in front of you. If a magic wish fairy could give real-world Jeff access to a single first level spell, this would be at the top of the short list. It's a totally awesome spell and unlike *Burning Hands* it won't result in me going to jail for setting jerkasses on fire.

Of course, like the issues with the *Light* spell, *Read Languages* only helps if your Referee's world allows it to help. If this spell is going to count for anything, we need more rune-stones, love letters, diplomatic correspondence, road signs, inscriptions, etc. And they need to be in something besides the common tongue of the realm.



# PLUS ITEMS vs. PLUS SOMETHING OR BETTER CRITTERS

There's an obvious push-pull dynamic at work in a world where some monsters have defenses like "requires +2 or better magic weapons to harm" and many magic swords come with such bonuses. If you include fewer +X swords in your game then critters hit only by magic weapons suddenly become a lot harder to kill. But on the other hand, if every PC is packing +5 crap then that defense doesn't matter much. Personally, I think the ideal situation is a lot closer to the former than I've seen in many modules and campaigns. Life becomes a crapload more interesting for the PCs if their swords can't hurt the monster of the week. Of course the point of such an exercise is not to make the monster invincible; the PCs just have to come up with another way to defeat it. Here are a few ideas:

- » Drop something big and heavy on the monster, like when Luke kills the Rancor in *Return of the Jedi*.
- » Trap the monster. Shapechanging/sizechanging beings can be tricked into shrinking down and entering a bottle or box or something. Slap on the lid and Bob's your uncle. I hear crap like that happens to arrogant efreet all the time. Or maybe the PCs discover that the wight haunting the downs can be trapped in its own barrow by putting that stone slab back over the entrance and having a Lawful cleric *Bless* the seal.
- » Push/trip the monster so it falls into a bottomless pit. Hopefully "bottomless" doesn't turn out to actually mean "two levels down and now it's mad."
- » Carry more poison, acid, flasks of oil. Just don't be surprised when you stumble down a staircase and simultaneously melt, burst into flame, and die.
- » Find the MacGuffin that sustains the monster's existence in this world. Maybe a daemonic guardian will return to its home plane if you deface the magic runes carved into the stone plinth in room 32b. Or maybe all those undead on levels 4 and 5 will deactivate if you cast *Dispel Magic* on the necromantic orb on level 6.
- » Find out what the monster wants and give it to them. That rampaging roc may be a mother hen looking for a stolen egg. The giant who lives on Hangman's Hill would probably be a crapload less grumpy if you helped it woo the giantess in the next duchy over.

- » Turns out the spectre in the castle is the spirit of the king who died there. He'll bother the living no more if one of his descendants lays claim to the place. (Of course folks loyal to the current dynasty might not take a liking to that.) Alternately, the PCs could get by with wearing his livery and pretending to be his servants whenever he appears.
- » Stop being such a tightwad and drop some money on spell research. You may only use the spell *Dismiss Grotoblonx, Third Cousin of Demogorgon Twice Removed* once in the campaign, but if you whip up a spell that specific you know it's gonna get the job done.
- » Do what good *Call of Cthulhu* investigators do and try to find the monster's hidden weakness. Hit up sages, bards and local know-it-alls for rumors, legends and advice. Maybe the monster is allergic to zinc for some reason. Or maybe old wives' tales say the ghost can be killed with the same sword that killed him the first time. Maybe the clay golem can be destroyed by erasing one of the glyphs written across its forehead.
- » If you're brave enough, try talking to the monster to find out what its deal is. Maybe the dragon is just looking for his missing cup and might be talked into accepting a substitute treasure (of much greater value, of course) in exchange for not burning down the town. And some PC groups will gladly offer a local virgin to soothe a belligerent wyrm.

And while I'm always for killing monsters as a key component of a good game, sometimes you need to step back and ask yourself how badly you need to overcome this particular critter. Maybe the best course is to let sleeping tarrasques lie. Maybe the Plot Point treasure can be retrieved without a confrontation, via stealth or magic. Maybe you just need to get over this particular encounter and move on with your lives.

I don't think every session needs to hang on navigating these issues, but they certainly make a nice switch-up from swording orcs. Note that some players will never consider any of these options unless you make the critters obviously and completely immune to their weapons.

# SIMPLE STRENGTH AND DEXTERITY ALTERNATIVES

Once upon a time I used the version of D&D that was a thin blue-covered booklet edited by Dr. J. Eric Holmes, the so-called Blue Book or Holmes Edit of 1977. This creates an odd situation with weapon damage and Strength:

- » All weapons do d6 damage.
- » Strength does not modify mêlée damage.
- » Except an 18 Strength gives +2d4 damage in mêlée (as per the description for **Gauntlets of Ogre Power**, which grant the +2d4 and also specifies the wearer gains an 18 Strength).

That's rather clunky. It got me thinking about other ways of making Strength work. Here's what I came up with:

- » **Strength 12 or less** - all mêlée weapons do d6 damage
- » **Strength 13-15** - all mêlée weapons do d8 damage
- » **Strength 16-17** - all mêlée weapons do d10 damage
- » **Strength 18** - all mêlée weapons do d12 damage

It's simple and easy. You'd probably want to sneak in some modifier for small weapons like daggers and mighty two-handed weapons. A simple -2 or +2 to damage would work. Or you can shift die size, so that people of average or low Strength do d4 with daggers and d8 with giant axes, but what die size would you use for a Strength 18 maniac wielding a two-handed sword? Rolling a d20 in those circumstances seems like a bit much, but not everybody has a d14 or d16 in their dice collection.

Another alternative is to use better and worse dice. Roll two dice for light and heavy weapons, choosing the lower roll of the two for light weapons and the higher roll for heavy weapons. For example, a dagger in the hands of a Strength 11 character does the lesser of two different d6 rolls. A battle-axe in the hands of a Strength 16 character uses the best of two d10 throws.

Now, let's look at a rewrite of Dexterity. First up, clear your mind of any consideration of missile attacks or armor class bonuses. Instead, in Holmes Basic, Dexterity has one very important function: initiative. If you've got 3 points of Dexterity on a dude you will always go before

him in a normal combat round. If you're closer than that you're supposed to roll off with a d6. A natural consequence of this rule is that every monster needs a Dexterity score, which you are supposed to roll on 3d6 just like the PCs. Also, in practice this rule is cumbersome as heck.

Now, if I used individual initiative I'd probably go with something like this:

- » **Dexterity 12 or less** - roll d6 for initiative
- » **Dexterity 13-15** - roll d8 for initiative
- » **Dexterity 16-17** - roll d10 for initiative
- » **Dexterity 18** - roll d12 for initiative

But instead of the rules as written I use this simple-ish method: each side rolls d6, ties favor the PCs. Why do ties favor the PCs? Because resolving simultaneous action is a big pain in the ass and I'm a big ol' softie. I used to call for ties to be rerolled but one night years ago the reroll was a tie and the roll off for that was a tie and then we tied one more time and I just said "Fuck it! Take your turn!"

So instead of looking at this Dexterity/initiative as strictly when you can go, let's broaden the concept just a little bit. I'm particularly thinking about two types of action. The first is slow and fast weapons. One of the incongruities in the Holmes rules are that, by the book, daggers strike twice a round and two-handed weapons always strike last. I can't bring myself to use this rule in a world where all weapons do d6 damage. My players would all wield daggers and beat up people with any other type of mêlée weapon.

I just got done setting weapon damage by the Strength of the wielder, but I think there's room to modify that further. So now slowing down two-handed weapons and speeding up daggers makes a little more holistic sense to me.

The second type of action that I would consider tying to Dexterity/initiative is an action that I might generally refer to as "retrieve and deploy special device". Getting out and drinking a potion. Unrolling and reading a scroll. Pulling out, lighting and throwing a molotov cocktail. That sort of thing. I often suspect these sorts of operations should be bigger pains in the ass than I let fly in my games. Letting only higher Dexterity folks get away with instantaneous flaming oil lobs might work for me.

So putting these concerns all together, here's a draft alternative Dexterity chart.

- » **Dexterity 9 or less** - two-handed mêlée weapons only strike every other round
- » **Dexterity 10-12** - two-handed mêlée weapons always strike last; retrieve and deploy special devices every other round
- » **Dexterity 13-15** - retrieve and deploy special devices at the end of the round
- » **Dexterity 16-18** - retrieve and deploy special devices as normal actions; extra strike with dagger at end of round

There's no real reason you couldn't also follow the simple Holmes missile adjustments (Dexterity 9 or less, -1; Dexterity 13+, +1) but they don't do much for me. I don't like that missile weapons can get a to-hit adjustment and mêlée weapons can't.



# WESSEX HENCHMEN / HIRELING RULES

I love it when PCs make use of “redshirts” in my games, so I came up with this alternative to streamline the NPC recruitment process and make it better fit the campaign I was running.

To recruit you must be somewhere with an oversupply of manpower. Most towns and cities should do just fine, as will some villages. A town or city near a war front may already have every able-bodied person already conscripted into the army.

Each attempt at recruitment costs  $1d6 \times 100\text{gp}$  (as suggested in Holmes 1977 D&D) but this covers both the costs of the recruitment process and the initial cost of hiring the NPCs rolled below. If you come up short on cash (e.g. you roll a 5 and only have 423gp) subtract one from your d6 roll below for each 100gp or fraction thereof you are short.

## RECRUITMENT (1D6)

2 OR LESS	Hopeless Loser: 0 level forever, no particular skills
3	Likely Lad/Lass: 0 level, but at the end of every session survived roll 1d6; on a 1 they join a class
4	Specialist: roll 1d6, 1) cook/brewer 2) pack animal handler and packing expert 3) equipment maintenance and repair expert 4) herbalist/hedge doctor 5) horse tender 6) generally competent dogsbody
5	d6 mercenaries (in Wessex these will tend to be Welsh bowmen or Flemish crossbowmen)
6	1st level adventurer: roll 1d6, 1-2) Fighter 3) Magic-User 4) Thief 5) Cleric 6) Halfling

In general the PC will need to supply appropriate equipment, though mercenaries and adventurers have a 2 in 6 chance of possessing some basic gear and a hedge doctor will usually start with a supply of herbs and bandages.

Recruited first level adventurers will generally expect a half share of the treasure while mercenaries will expect cash bonuses when rendering extraordinary service, such as fighting horrible inhuman monsters. Past these requirements, henchmen and hirelings are paid on a quarterly basis. On each Quarter Day the employer must roll a new d6 x 100gp for each henchman/hireling and either pay them that much or dismiss the henchman/hireling from service. The traditional Quarter Days are Lady Day, Midsummer Day, Michaelmas and Christmas, which fall on March 25, June 24, September 29, and December 25.

If the date of recruitment is too close to an upcoming Quarter Day for the prospective employer's comfort, you can offer to hire the NPC on Cross-Quarter Day terms. The Cross-Quarter Days fall roughly in between the Quarter Days. They are Candlemas (February 2), May Day (May 1), Lammas (August 1), and All Saints Day (November 1). In order to hire on these terms the employer must roll a reaction check. An unfavorable result indicates that offer is refused and the PC is out the money spent on recruitment. If the offer is accepted, expect a lot of grumbling on Quarter Days when all the hireling's friends are getting paid, especially at Christmas.

Players generally run their hirelings but all the usual admonitions about abusing hirelings and the rules for hireling morale and loyalty still apply.

Obviously, your own campaign will have different specifications. Thinking ahead about what sort of mercenaries are common and when they expect pay can add color to your game.

# HOW TO AWESOME-UP YOUR PLAYERS

The following essay, one of my most popular blog posts, was written during the period when I was trying to make sense of the superheroics inherent in mid-to-high level D&D of the Wizards of the Coast varieties. Its application to old school gaming may be limited. I dunno.

Once upon a time I wrote that “[w]ith a cooperative GM you can buckle swashes without the mechanics holding your hand.” It occurred to me that I could explain what I meant by that statement and in the process throw out a sort of Referee’s advice/personal refereeing philosophy. Now what I’m about to lay on you won’t work for every campaign. Really, my comments are only applicable to the kind of game where kicking asses and taking names isn’t a job, it’s a calling. What I’m here trying to do is to outline how you as the Referee can empower the players to make the game a non-stop high-octane freak-out. (Now, with extra hyphenation!) Activating caffeine-fueled stream-of-consciousness testifyin’ mode...

## ALWAYS KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

Is that an old Bob Newhart line? My wife likes to bust out this phrase once in a while. Anyway, the Main Thing in an awesome-focused campaign is this: Your players are rock stars and they’re here to rock your house. In this paradigm your job is to be the roadie and the manager and all the other people who make the concert possible. This isn’t one of those analogies that can be stretched forever, instead just meditate on the simple fact that your job is to help your players rock out without getting in their way. Everything below builds from this foundation.

## GIVE THE PLAYERS THE SUN AND MAKE THEM FIGHT FOR THE MOON

What I mean is that you give the players almost everything they want and them put them through a thousand hells to get everything else. Put the PCs on the throne of Aquilonia, if that’s what they want, then have ten thousand angry Cimmerians invade, intent on burning their capital to the ground. Not because you’re a sadistic asshole, but because fighting off an army of Conans is one of the cool things kings get to do.

One good place to put this principle in play is at character generation. Even a guy like me, who likes robots and lasers in his D&D, occasionally gets on this funk where I consider trimming down the character build options to achieve some sort of artsy-fartsy effect. You know the drill. “I want to do something Arthurian, so no Asian-flavored classes in this campaign,” or “This is going to be all Conan-y with the swords and the sorcery, so no demi-humans in this campaign.” Although I truly, deeply understand the profound artistic reasons for such an approach, let me simply say: fuck that shit. We’re talking about D&D here. If you can’t fold themes and motifs into a game starring an elf ninja, a halfling bard, and two ill-tempered gnome wizards, then you should be writing bad fan fiction, not running actual games for real players. Just please don’t post your stories anywhere on the net where I might see them.

## **YOUR NPCs SUCK AND THEY ARE ALL GOING TO DIE**

Very few players show up to the table in order to soak in the glory of experiencing your skills as a thespian. Even fewer will ever show the awe and respect you want for your own personal Drizzt. Leave that stuff at home. Instead show up to the table with stats for people they can beat up. Similarly, you and your players will be a lot happier if you get into the zone of thinking about your campaign world as “that place the PCs are going to destroy and then remake in their own image.”

On a tangentially related note, I’ve never seen any good come from uber-powerful people sending the PCs on pissant missions. “If we don’t pick-up Elminster’s laundry from the Dry Cleaners of Doom then he might turn us into a toad” is never a sound way to structure an adventure. You’ll do better just frankly stating to the players “I wrote this dungeon. That’s tonight’s adventure,” and leaving it at that.

## **THE GAME IS NEITHER THE MECHANICS NOR THE RULES**

Don’t let the mechanics dictate anything they don’t have to. For example, Doug wanted a spiffy new magic sword. He had 120,000gp burning a hole in his pocket. (That’s a big pocket.) The 120,000gp disappears from his character sheet and the ubersword takes its place. The rules say Doug’s PC Angus has just purchased that sword. But Doug knows better. He knows the rules are there as a tool to support the game. So right in the middle of my hack-n-slash gamist pawn-stanced D&D game, Doug seizes directorial control and gets all narrative on our asses. “Angus is given an ancient ultimate sword by his homies in the church of Thor. He blows the 120k on the biggest

motherfucking party the City of Greyhawk has ever seen." Doug rocks. And I rock too, because I run a game where Doug feels comfortable wailing on his mind-guitar like that. This example goes right back to Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing, as Doug was very actively rocking when he did this, but my rocking right then was more of the wei wu wei method of rocking. Sometimes the Referee paints a picture, but sometimes he just sets up the canvas.

Here's an example that doesn't involve me high-fiving myself for doing nothing but sitting on my ass while my player does all the work. Once in a game where I was a player instead of the Referee, Gruul the Half-Orc had a bead drawn on one of the bad guys and loosed two feathered shafts into him. This dude only had 2 hit points left and Gruul hit him with two critical strikes. In some games those crit rolls would have been wasted. Any two arrows hitting would have iced that mofo. But Jon (the Referee) freaked my shit out when he then called for Jason (Gruul's player) to roll two to-hits against another foe standing directly behind the first. The shots hit and damage is tallied. Jon: "The first guy totally explodes and the arrows pass through him, into the second guy, who drops dead." Do you see what Jon did there? He went over and above the call of the mere rules to allow Jason's guy to totally kick ass. In-character this did much to cement Gruul's reputation in the party as a badass mofo with the bow. Out-of-character my appreciation of Jon's refereeing went up a big ol' notch.

## WHEN IN DOUBT, LET A PLAYER ROLL SOME DICE

If your Inner Magic 8-Ball isn't giving you anything to work with, sometimes you should pitch things back to the players in the form of requesting a die roll. If you can't make up your mind how to answer a question just break it down to a simple roll, clearly outline the stakes, and have a player roll it. This technique gets at least one player engaged in the game (making it a good thing to drop on an otherwise disengaged player), gets them rolling dice (which all decent right-thinking non-communist players love to do), and gives them ownership over a part of the game that isn't their character (thus empowering the player). And if the die roll yields a result unsatisfying to them, the blow is softened because they had a fair chance to get another result. It's not like you faked some roll behind a screen. Not that I'm against faking rolls behind a screen.

By the way, I break out a real Magic 8-Ball once in awhile. Just because I can. I like to take it to con games and keep it hidden in my bag until an unsuspecting player asks a Yes/No question that ought to be really important. You should see the looks on their faces when I let the 8-Ball answer.

# GRIMOIRES OF WESSEX

Spellbooks can be boring. We live in such a book-rich society, with the printing press and cheap paperbacks and libraries and bookstores, that we forget that once upon a time the proper reaction was probably more like holy crap! you own a book! The pre-Gutenberg codex was a work of art, requiring intensive labor to produce. In some instances they were literally chained to the desk where you would read them, in order to prevent theft of these valuable resources. For certain milieus a filthy adventurer owning a book is kinda like going over to your buddy's crappy studio apartment and seeing an original Picasso on the wall. Not utterly impossible, but it makes you want to ask impolite questions like "Is the rest of your stuff cheap junk because you spend all your money on your art obsession?" or "Hey, man, are you some kind of international art thief?"

That's why for my next go at my 12th century faux-England campaign I've decided that spellbooks are basically artifact-type objects rather than the user's manuals for arcane systems operators they tend to come off as. The *Call of Cthulhu* tome rules and Ed Greenwood's "Pages from the Mages" series in the old days of Dragon heavily influenced this decision, as did reading a couple of real historical grimoires, the problems surrounding the textual transmission of the works of Shakespeare, unearthed manuscripts like the Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi Library, and the enigma of the Voynich Manuscript.

So now I've got a spreadsheet I've been working on, with the goal that each spellbook can be treated as an individual object. Here are the current fields, with some comments:

» **Title(s)** - Many of these books have more than one name, which makes tracking them down a big ol' pain in the butt.

» **Language(s)** - I don't use Read Magic for spellbooks. Instead that spell "unlocks" scrolls and doubles as Identify for any magic item that has runes on it. I also make sure to give players of Magic-Users a list of common arcane languages.

» **Period** – Date of composition, if known.

» **Author** – If known.

» **Blasphemy** - Spellbooks aren't strictly how-to guides written in a vacuum. Each comes with a context that a canny reader can puzzle out. And since pretty much all wizards are cranks, heretics, pagans and/or crazies, this means that one or more passages or implications in a spellbook will offend the sensibilities of the strictly orthodox and

question the worldview of the open minded. The historical nature of my campaign makes this a lot easier to pull off effectively, I suspect. In a totally made-up world you're going to have to work hard to come up with a convincing blasphemy. In Wessex I can get away with things like "The Holy Spirit is a woman, God's wife and Christ's mother" or "Satan isn't a rebel, he's God's double agent." My only concern is that the World of Darkness probably ran this sort of stuff into the ground, making it completely uninteresting to Vampire fans. Not that I ever get a lot of hardcore gothpunks at my game table.

Reading a grimoire and using the spells within it will tend to warp the thought processes of the user until they become utterly convinced of the truth of the blasphemy. Those who use two or more grimoires will work out some sort of idiosyncratic hybrid opinion that synthesizes the revelations, no matter how contradictory or unrelated the individual blasphemies.

» **Spell 1, Spell 2, Spell 3, Spell 4, Spell 5, Spell 6** – In most campaigns I cap level advancement at 10th or 14th level. That means I can get away with a pretty short list of all spells available in play and grimoires that hold no more than six spells each. Just to make life rough for the PCs, *Fireball* will only be appearing in a single grimoire, which starts in the hands of one of the active NPC wizards.

Of course, with these sorts of grimoires in play, the Referee must be prepared for when a player wants to write a new spellbook incorporating their favorite spells from two or more grimoires.

Standard Magic-Users' spellbooks are akin to the lab journals of mad scientists and as such are barely comprehensible to even their authors. The spell *Read Magic* serves as an arcane bridge, connecting the scribblings in a spellbook, their authorial intent and the caster's mind. A grimoire is a spellbook that has been revised into a text understandable by a general audience. Anyone who can read the language(s) of the text may attempt to understand and use the spells contained therein.

Alternatively, the Referee may use the items in the table below for random spellbooks. Items 1 to 20 on the list are especially suited for starting Magic-Users, providing the four first level spells (*Read Magic* and three random spells) required by the LotFP rules. Simply roll 1d20 instead of 1d100 to assign a starting spellbook to a newly minted first level caster. NPC wizards can be assigned spells quickly by rolling 1d100 once or twice.

**01****Title(s):** *The Seven Demons of Magdalene, Book of the Magdalene***Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** 1st century AD**Author:** purportedly Mary Magdalene**Blasphemy:** Christ didn't cast demons out of Mary Magdalene, he taught her to invoke them.**Spells:** Read Magic, Summon, Magic Aura\*, Shield, Magic Mouth, ESP**02****Title(s):** *Works of Adamantius***Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** 2nd or 3rd century AD**Author:** unknown, quotes Church Father Origen at length**Blasphemy:** Jesus preached that all beings reincarnate up and down the great chain of being.**Spells:** Magic Missile, Read Magic, Charm Person, Unseen Servant, Locate Object\*, Wizard Lock**03****Title(s):** *Book of Ostanes of the Magi***Language(s):** Ancient Greek, translated from Ancient Persian**Period:** 4th century BC**Author:** Ostanes of Persia**Blasphemy:** Good and evil are evenly matched. In the end they will destroy each other and everything else.**Spells:** Light\*, Mending, Read Magic, Enlarge\*, Change Self, Magic Mouth**04****Title(s):** *The Blasphemies of Mu***Language(s):** Latin, translated from unknown original**Period:** recent translation of ancient original**Author:** Ymashmo, a pagan priest**Blasphemy:** The world, including all the gods, was created by invisible spiders. Under certain arcane conditions and/or weird states of mind you can see their blue-green webs holding the universe together.**Spells:** Shield, Bookspeak, Faerie Fire, Read Magic, Levitate, Phantasmal Force**05****Title(s):** *Grey Book of Felsina***Language(s):** Latin**Period:** very recently**Author:** Pietro Cemilo**Blasphemy:** Most of the work of creating the world was subcontracted out to a gang of dwarfs.**Spells:** Mending, Hold Portal, Read Magic, Magic Aura\*, Audible Glamer, Detect Invisible

**06**

**Title(s):** *Kitab Ustuqus al-Uss al-Thani*, "Second Book of the Elements of Foundation"

**Language(s):** Arabic

**Period:** ~8th century AD

**Author:** Jābir ibn Ḥayyān

**Blasphemy:** Yahweh was a powerful but non-divine giant until he slew the Great Serpent and drank its blood.

**Spells:** Message, Read Magic, Comprehend Languages\*, Floating Disc, Force of Forbiddment, Phantasmal Force

**07**

**Title(s):** *Kitab Sirr al-Khalīqa wa San`at al-Tabī`a*, "Book of the Secret of Creation and the Art of Nature"

**Language(s):** Arabic

**Period:** ~8th century AD

**Author:** unknown

**Blasphemy:** The Elohim of Genesis were six lesser spirits God created as proxies for the work of Creation.

**Spells:** Read Magic, Shield, Charm Person, Enlarge\*, Phantasmal Force, Knock

**08**

**Title(s):** *Oneirocritica*

**Language(s):** Ancient Persian, with a smattering of other more obscure characters and tongues and some marginalia in Ancient Greek

**Period:** 1st century BC

**Author:** Mithridates Megas, Sage-King of Ancient Persia

**Blasphemy:** A gate in the land of nightmares leads to Hell, while the gate from the land of pleasant dreams to Heaven has been barred for centuries.

**Spells:** Spider Climb, Read Magic, Mending, Shield, ESP, Wall of Fog

**09**

**Title(s):** *Sefer Raziel HaMalakh*, Book of the Angel Raziel

**Language(s):** Enochian, with lengthy Hebrew annotations

**Period:** 250-750 AD?

**Author:** purportedly Adam and/or the angel Raziel

**Blasphemy:** Adam was the first wizard, taught by Archangel Raziel. Contains secrets unknown to the other angels.

**Spells:** Charm Person, Summon, Read Magic, Hold Portal, Invisibility, Mirror Image

**10****Title(s):** Kabbalah of Saboath**Language(s):** an odd mixture of Ancient Hebrew and Ancient Greek**Period:** 1st century BC or AD**Author:** Abrasax Saboath, a Gnostic priest or an entity possessing a Gnostic priest**Blasphemy:** The Serpent reported accurately what would happen if the apple was eaten. God lied.**Spells:** Detect Magic, Hold Portal, Unseen Servant, Read Magic, Change Self, Knock**11****Title(s):** Sefer ha-Yashar, Book of the Upright, or Book of Jashar**Language(s):** Hebrew**Period:** unknown, but mentioned in the Old Testament (Joshua and Samuel)**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** The religious practice of the Samaritans are orthodox, post-Exile Judaism is a corruption.**Spells:** Magic Missile, Enlarge\*, Read Magic, Mending, ESP, Clairvoyance**12****Title(s):** Book of Beorht**Language(s):** Dubious Latin and gorgeous, poetic English in equal measure**Period:** fifth or sixth century AD**Author:** Beorht, the Green Man of Salis Plain**Blasphemy:** Heaven and its angels are made of metal, devils can be destroyed by rusting them.**Spells:** Hold Portal, Read Magic, Charm Person, Message, Speak with Animals, Hold Person**13****Title(s):** Sword of Moses**Language(s):** Ancient Hebrew**Period:** 1st-4th century AD**Author:** attributed to Moses**Blasphemy:** All of Moses's miracles were spells taught to him by Egyptian wizards.**Spells:** Read Magic, Spider Climb, Magic Missile, Detect Magic, Change Self, Detect Illusion

**14****Title(s):** Revelations of Saint Zvlkx, Apocalypse of Zvlkx**Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** 3rd or 4th century AD**Author:** St. Zvlkx**Blasphemy:** The corpses that left their graves during the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:52) still wander the world as the original undead.**Spells:** Magic Missile, Comprehend Languages\*, Detect Magic, Charm Person, Phantasmal Force, Haste\***15****Title(s):** Liber Mortuorum, Book of the Dead**Language(s):** Latin with a few key passages in Ancient Greek**Period:** 7th century AD**Author:** Simon of Sarum, wizard of Wessex**Blasphemy:** The increasing amount of noncorporeal undead in the world is due to the angel of death not being able to keep up with the number of people dying.**Spells:** Shield, Comprehend Languages\*, Read Magic, Spider Climb, Ray of Enfeeblement, Dispel Magic**16****Title(s):** Ravings of the Mad Cobbler of Mayence, Book of Stephen the Cobbler**Language(s):** Mostly Latin, but with some German**Period:** unknown**Author:** unknown, quoting Stephen the Cobbler at length**Blasphemy:** Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife, she fled to the south of France while pregnant with their son.**Spells:** Identify, Spider Climb, Magic Missile, Read Magic, Locate Object\*, Protection from Normal Missiles**17****Title(s):** Arzhang of Mani**Language(s):** Ancient Greek, translated from Syrian Aramaic**Period:** 1st century BC or AD**Author:** Manicheus and his apostles**Blasphemy:** God and Satan are equals; which will win the Cosmic War at the end of time depends who has the most souls on his side.**Spells:** Mending, Magic Missile, Read Magic, Unseen Servant, ESP, Suggestion

**18****Title(s):** Songs of *Tlön***Language(s):** Latin, translated from unknown tongue**Period:** unknown**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** Mirrors and copulation are abominable, since they both multiply the numbers of men.**Spells:** Sleep, Read Magic, Identify, Floating Disc, Knock, False Alignment**19****Title(s):** *The Book of Three***Language(s):** Welsh**Period:** unknown**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** God is Three, Satan is Three, Jesus is Three (as well as being a member of the Trinity), there are three co-existent Creations.**Spells:** Read Magic, Message, Mending, Magic Missile, Mirror Image, Water Breathing\***20****Title(s):** *Res Etruscae, The Etruscan Matter***Language(s):** Latin, with some Etruscan**Period:** 1st century AD**Author:** Marcus Verrius Flaccus**Blasphemy:** The Etruscans were Hebrews of the lost tribes. They carried the true flame of Judaism, not the ones who remained behind.**Spells:** Light\*, Read Magic, Bookspeak, Summon, Forget, Invisibility 10' Radius**21-22****Title(s):** *Testament of Morfedd, Book of Morfedd***Language(s):** an incoherent mixture of Latin and English**Period:** 8th or 9th century AD**Author:** Morfedd (a wizard of Wessex) and unknown commentator/biographer**Blasphemy:** The only difference between sorcery and religion is that a wizard binds himself by a contract he negotiated himself, rather than being subjected to a covenant agreed upon by his forefathers.**Spells:** Sleep, Mending, Summon, Ray of Enfeeblement, Detect Invisible, Web

## 23-24

**Title(s):** Lapis Starcharts of Nisaba

**Language(s):** Sumerian

**Period:** somewhere 4th - 2nd millenium BC

**Author:** unknown

**Blasphemy:** Indirectly argues that the two Great Lights of the 4th Day of Creation (Gen 1:14-15) are not the Sun and the Moon we know, but a Secret Sun and Hidden Moon.

**Spells:** Magic Aura\*, Bookspeak, Sleep, ESP, Phantasmal Force, Mirror Image

## 25-26

**Title(s):** Mathematics of Cham

**Language(s):** Enochian, with some explanations and footnotes in Hebrew

**Period:** just after the Flood

**Author:** Cham (Ham), son of Noah

**Blasphemy:** Adam was not Cain's father, Satan was.

**Spells:** Shield, Faerie Fire, Summon, Web, Detect Invisible, ESP

## 27-28

**Title(s):** Aquat Cthädingen

**Language(s):** mostly Latin, with some parts not translated from the original proto-Germanic original

**Period:** ~400AD, translation recent

**Author:** unknown

**Blasphemy:** God created all the creatures of the land but Satan created all the creatures of the sea first.

**Spells:** Sleep, Comprehend Languages\*, Magic Aura\*, Web, Forget, Magic Mouth

## 29-30

**Title(s):** Testament of Solomon

**Language(s):** Ancient Greek (translated from Hebrew?)

**Period:** Old Testament times

**Author:** King Solomon

**Blasphemy:** "You shall have no other gods before me" means it is okay to worship other gods, as long as that veneration is subordinate to Jehovah.

**Spells:** Feather Fall, Summon, Hold Portal, Magic Mouth, Change Self, Web

**31-32****Title(s):** Juvenalia of Augustine**Language(s):** Latin**Period:** 4th century AD**Author:** St Augustine**Blasphemy:** Angels aid Manicheans as readily as Christians.**Spells:** Spider Climb, Magic Aura\*, Mending, Web, Light-Continual\*, Speak with Animals**33-34****Title(s):** Secretum secretorum, The Book of the Secret of Secrets**Language(s):** Latin**Period:** 1120 AD**Author:** Unknown, translated by John of Seville**Blasphemy:** God is a wizard from another universe, he used a magic signet ring to make our Creation.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Magic Missile, Faerie Fire, Light-Continual\*, Knock, Phantasmal Force**35-36****Title(s):** Book of Skelos, Scrolls of Skelos**Language(s):** Atlantean, incomplete translation from the original with vast passages missing**Period:** unknown, extremely ancient**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** The first living thing in the world was an amorphous ooze that is mother to all earthly life. She still dwells in a certain underground chamber, creating more new life.**Spells:** Floating Disc, Shield, Summon, Speak with Animals, Stinking Cloud, Ray of Enfeeblement**37-38****Title(s):** Chronicles of the Kings of Canarre**Language(s):** Latin**Period:** unknown, but later than 800AD**Author:** Marotus du Lac**Blasphemy:** When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne emperor, all divine authority passed from the Papacy to the Carolingians.**Spells:** Detect Magic, Sleep, Mending, Light-Continual\*, Forget, Phantasmal Force

**39-40****Title(s):** 4th Book of Sanchuniathon**Language(s):** Ancient Greek, translated from Ancient Phoenician**Period:** before the fall of Troy**Author:** Sanchuniathon of Berytus, translating/interpreting secret inscriptions found on the columns of a ruined Ammonite temple**Blasphemy:** All gods/angels/etc are ghosts of past kings, heroes, princesses, etc.**Spells:** Sleep, Message, Detect Magic, Wall of Fog, Audible Glamer, Suggestion**41-42****Title(s):** Book of Sleep and Madness, Book of Miramon Lluagor**Language(s):** Latin**Period:** 5th or 6th century AD?**Author:** Miramon Lluagor of Poictesme**Blasphemy:** The Creation and Apocalypse narratives are lies. Time is disjointed, without beginning or end.**Spells:** Sleep, Comprehend Languages\*, Floating Disc, Locate Object\*, Change Self, Hold Person**43-44****Title(s):** Liber Loagaeth**Language(s):** Enochian, with a few notes in Latin**Period:** unknown**Author:** unknown, claims to be a transcription of various angelic revelations**Blasphemy:** Enoch eventually returned to Earth, where he works as a secret agent of God.**Spells:** Faerie Fire, Enlarge\*, Shield, Force of Forbiddment, Forget, Explosive Runes**45-46****Title(s):** Liber Silvestri, Book of Sylvester**Language(s):** Latin**Period:** 10th century AD**Author:** Pope Sylvester II**Blasphemy:** The Apocalypse and Second Coming have been delayed by a magical ritual performed annually since 666 AD.**Spells:** Detect Magic, Mending, Magic Missile, Mirror Image, Knock, Fireball

**47-48****Title(s):** Liber Eibonis, Book of Ivobon**Language(s):** original unknown, translated into Latin**Period:** ancient**Author:** Ibonus, an ancient wizard**Blasphemy:** A whole cycle of history predated the Garden of Eden, which like Noah's Ark was intended to be a do-over.**Spells:** Comprehend Languages\*, Bookspeak, Magic Aura\*, Speak with Animals, Locate Object\*, Hold Person**49-50****Title(s):** Book of Vathelos the Blind**Language(s):** Atlantean, translated from the original**Period:** unknown, extremely ancient**Author:** Vathelos the Blind, translated by Kulan Gath**Blasphemy:** If your ears are sensitive enough, you can still hear all of God's spoken words echoing through Creation.**Spells:** Summon, Faerie Fire, Magic Aura\*, Web, Detect Invisible, Army of One**51-52****Title(s):** Red Book of Aruman**Language(s):** Celtic translated from an older tongue**Period:** The Third Age**Author:** Aruman the Red with unknown commentator**Blasphemy:** The original wizards were angels in disguise; those who can cast spells have angelic blood in their veins.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Summon, Light\*, Wizard Lock, Force of Forbiddment, Protection from Normal Missiles**53-54****Title(s):** Liber Bokonus**Language(s):** Latin**Period:** unknown Author: St. Bokonus**Blasphemy:** Ice is the ultimate form of existence. Hell is icy and eventually the world freezes from the bottom up.**Spells:** Unseen Servant, Floating Disc, Enlarge\*, Audible Glamer, Mirror Image, Detect Illusion

**55-56****Title(s):** Secret Book of Artephius**Language(s):** Arabic**Period:** 1127 AD**Author:** Ibn ar-Tafiz (Artephius)**Blasphemy:** Adam and Eve were hermaphrodites and equals. Gender is a result of the Fall of Man.**Spells:** Detect Magic, Message, Mending, Magic Mouth, Invisibility 10' Radius, Creation-Minor**57-58****Title(s):** Red Book of Hajar**Language(s):** mostly Arabic, with untranslated passages in an unknown script**Period:** unknown**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** The Trinity is really three goddesses, mother/maiden/crone, those mentioned in the Satanic verses (Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat). Allah was their prophet and Christ the son of the Mother.**Spells:** Unseen Servant, Shield, Magic Missile, Speak with Animals, Suggestion, Creation-Minor**59-60****Title(s):** Testament of St. Carnamo**Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** first published 10th century AD, but original manuscript much older**Author:** the seer-saint-magus Carnamon**Blasphemy:** The pathetic universe we experience is an accidental side effect, the debris left over when two greater Creations collided.**Spells:** Sleep, Bookspeak, Detect Magic, Ray of Enfeeblement, Dispel Magic, Dig**61-62****Title(s):** Book of Simon Magus**Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** 1st century AD**Author:** Simon Magus**Blasphemy:** God sent many Christs at the same time. Jesus was one of them, but there were others whose words and deeds were equally divine.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Hold Portal, Summon, Levitation, Suggestion, Fly

**63-64**

**Title(s):** Sworn Book of Honorius, Liber Juratus, Liber Sacer, Liber Sacratus, Liber Consecratus

**Language(s):** Latin

**Period:** 7th century AD

**Author:** Honorius of Thebes, who may have been the same person as Pope Honorius

**Blasphemy:** The Apostle Paul also received dreams and visions from Satan.

**Spells:** Floating Disc, Charm Person, Shield, Levitate, Strange Waters II, Explosive Runes

**65-66**

**Title(s):** Book of Yod

**Language(s):** a combination of Ancient Greek and Coptic, translated from hieroglyphs

**Period:** pre-Exodus Egypt

**Author:** Khut-Nah, an Egyptian priest

**Blasphemy:** Devices like the Ark of the Covenant are machines for capturing entities, like the traps in Ghostbusters.

**Spells:** Sleep, Shield, Magic Aura\*, Invisibility, Gust of Wind, Explosive Runes

**67-68**

**Title(s):** The Heptateuch, The Suppressed Books of Moses

**Language(s):** Hebrew

**Period:** Old Testament times

**Author:** Moses

**Blasphemy:** Yahweh is just some desert genie that Abraham invoked and bound to his descendants.

**Spells:** Unseen Servant, Mending, Sleep, Forget, Dispel Magic, Contact Outer Sphere

**69-70**

**Title(s):** Prophecies of Myrddin Wilt

**Language(s):** an antiquated form of Celtic

**Period:** 5th or 6th century AD

**Author:** Merlin

**Blasphemy:** The Anti-Christ is already come, but by rejecting his ordained role the plans of both God and Satan were frustrated.

**Spells:** Faerie Fire, Identify, Feather Fall, Light-Continual\*, Gust of Wind, Fly

**71-72****Title(s):** Secret Gospel of Mark**Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** 1st century AD**Author:** attributed to the Apostle Mark**Blasphemy:** Jesus was a wizard and the apostles were his apprentices.**Spells:** Magic Missile, Message, Stinking Cloud, ESP, Water Breathing\*,

Suggestion

**73-74****Title(s):** Book of Merlin**Language(s):** unknown - appendix in Latin**Period:** 5th or 6th century AD**Author:** unknown - Merlin and his mentor Blaise are the most recent annotators**Blasphemy:** Hell is not below the world. Under the world is a second, upside-down world.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Message, Stinking Cloud, Light-Continual\*, Gaseous Form, Water Breathing\***75-76****Title(s):** The Enchiridion of Phinehas the Younger, Handbook of Phineas**Language(s):** a mishmash of Hebrew and Ancient Greek**Period:** sometime before the fall of Rome but after the destruction of the Temple**Author:** Phinehas the Younger**Blasphemy:** Peter did not inherit the leadership of the Church from Christ, St James the Just did. A secret order inside the Church seeks to undo the Petrine Papacy and maintains their own Shadow Pope.**Spells:** Sleep, Mending, Speak with Animals, Ray of Enfeeblement, Water Breathing\*, Secret Page**77-78****Title(s):** Book of Zanthu**Language(s):** Latin, translated from Arabic, translated from unknown original**Period:** recent translation of ancient original**Author:** Zanthu, a pagan priest**Blasphemy:** Seems to attribute the Deluge to Satan rather than God.**Spells:** Detect Magic, Hold Portal, ESP, Speak with Animals, Water Breathing\*, Invisibility 10' Radius

**79-80****Title(s):** *De Concubinis Retinendis, On the Retention of Concubines***Language(s):** Latin**Period:** late antiquity**Author:** Phutatorius**Blasphemy:** Suggests God and Joseph engaged in wife swapping whereby Joseph also impregnated God's wife.**Spells:** Charm Person, Sleep, Magic Mouth, Locate Object\*, Suggestion, False Alignment**81****Title(s):** *The Phanotika***Language(s):** Ancient Greek, translated from unknown original**Period:** unknown, translation centuries old but original much older**Author:** multiple unknown hands**Blasphemy:** Humankind is merely the most recent of many sentient races created by God to inhabit the earth. The others have all been banished to Hell, or perhaps merely underground.**Spells:** Comprehend Languages\*, Feather Fall, ESP, Detect Invisible, Howl of the Moon, Dispel Magic**82****Title(s):** *Lexicon Corsi***Language(s):** Greek, Hebrew and Arabic in equal parts**Period:** 8th or 9th century AD**Author:** Anon of Ibid**Blasphemy:** There are separate hells for Jews, Muslims and Christians.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Summon, Detect Invisible, Forget, Howl of the Moon, Dispel Magic**83****Title(s):** *Prognostications of Songecruyson, The Book of Useless Dreams***Language(s):** Latin**Period:** unknown**Author:** Songecruyson the Dreamer**Blasphemy:** Ezekiel's Wheel was God's true form. We are not created in his image.**Spells:** Spider Climb, Floating Disc, Knock, Forget, Secret Page, Suggestion**84****Title(s):** *The Talitha Koum, Book of the Daughter of Jairus***Language(s):** Latin, with a few passages in Aramaic**Period:** unknown**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** Jesus was a wizard and the Holy Ghost his familiar spirit.**Spells:** Message, Unseen Servant, Wizard Lock, Phantasmal Force, Army of One, Suggestion

**85****Title(s):** Svartebok of Cyprianus, Black Book of Cyprian**Language(s):** Danish translated from Ancient Greek**Period:** 3rd century AD**Author:** Saint Cyprian, Archbishop of Antioch**Blasphemy:** Baptism is a magic spell that can be performed by any wizard, not just ordained priests.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Ray of Enfeeblement, Strange Waters II, Wall of Fire, Stone Shape**86****Title(s):** The Book of Shadows, Ye Bok of Ye Art Magical**Language(s):** a mishmosh of inadequate English and ignorant Latin**Period:** ~1066 AD**Author:** Scire of Yuteny, Wessex wizard who lived around the time of the Conquest**Blasphemy:** The Lantern of Cartaphilus, a minor artifact, is really the Holy Grail in disguise.**Spells:** Sleep, Magic Aura\*, Levitate, Secret Page, Wizard Eye, Contact Outer Sphere**87****Title(s):** Liber Selbius, Codex de Selby**Language(s):** a strange dialect of Anglo-Norman intermixed with idiosyncratic Celtic**Period:** unknown**Author:** a visionary and/or madman named De Selby**Blasphemy:** Death by old age is not natural; people slowly succumb to poisoning by phlogiston, an invisible component of the air.**Spells:** Identify, Magic Missile, Phantasmal Force, Explosive Runes, Creation-Minor, Animate Dead**88****Title(s):** Kitab sîr al-asrâr, "Book of the science of government: on the good ordering of statecraft"**Language(s):** Arabic**Period:** 10th century AD**Author:** unknown, translated by Yahya ibn al-Bîtrîq**Blasphemy:** The Koran is full of traps. The Prophet heard angels sometimes, as he believed, but was also tricked by devils sometimes.**Spells:** Hold Portal, Identify, Mirror Image, False Alignment, Polymorph Self, Cloudkill

**89****Title(s):** Recitation of Esdras**Language(s):** Arabic with incomplete Latin translations and corrections in margins**Period:** unknown**Author:** the spirit of the prophet Ezra, compelled to appear and speak by necromancy, transcriber unknown**Blasphemy:** The Old Testament is woefully incomplete, 70 important scrolls were lost during the Babylonian captivity.**Spells:** Floating Disc, Comprehend Languages\*, Mirror Image, Invisibility 10' Radius, Growth of Plants, Cloudkill**90****Title(s):** Book of the Black Stone**Language(s):** Latin, translated from Arabic, translated from unknown inscriptions from certain black stone stelae found in an ancient African city**Period:** recent translation of ancient original**Author:** unknown**Blasphemy:** Cain founded the first human city on the ruins of a prehuman city.**Spells:** Charm Person, Faerie Fire, Wall of Fog, Speak with Dead, Mnemonic Enhancer, Secret Chest**91****Title(s):** Gayat al-Hakim, "The Aim of the Sage" or "The Goal of The Wise"**Language(s):** Arabic**Period:** 10th century AD**Author:** Al-Majriti, a great scholar**Blasphemy:** The religion of Moses incorporated Egyptian priestcraft; this corruption has been perpetrated in both Judaism and Christianity.**Spells:** Summon, Feather Fall, Force of Forbiment, Howl of the Moon, Mnemonic Enhancer, Cloudkill**92****Title(s):** The Picatrix, Gayat al-Hakim**Language(s):** Latin translated from the original Arabic**Period:** very recently**Author:** Al-Majriti, translator unknown (possibly John of Seville)**Blasphemy:** Moses received the Ten Commandments not on Mt. Sinai, but rather from atop the Great Pyramid.**Spells:** Feather Fall, Identify, Invisibility, Army of One, Confusion, Chaos

**93****Title(s):** *The Thaumaturgicon***Language(s):** Latin**Period:** unknown**Author:** Undle Nine-Fingers**Blasphemy:** Angels and demons are merely powerful faeries with good or ill intentions.**Spells:** *Magic Aura\**, *Sleep*, *Mirror Image*, *Suggestion*, *Polymorph Others*, *Feeblemind***94****Title(s):** *Libram of Murgen***Language(s):** Atlantean, with commentary in ancient Celtic**Period:** before Brutus of Troy, grandson of Aeneas, came to England**Author:** unknown, marginalia by the wizard Murgen**Blasphemy:** Adam was the second created man. The first is an abominable giant that lies at the bottom of the ocean, off the coast of Cornwall.**Spells:** *Comprehend Languages\**, *Unseen Servant*, *Invisibility*, *Army of One*, *Creation-Minor*, *Cloudkill***95****Title(s):** *First Book of King Magus***Language(s):** Ancient Hebrew**Period:** two centuries after the Deluge**Author:** Magus, Grandson of Noah**Blasphemy:** The first Noachic settlers to Britain after the Deluge found demi-human creatures already living there, with whom they intermarried.**Spells:** *Magic Missile*, *Charm Person*, *Stinking Cloud*, *Army of One*, *Wizard Eye*, *Passwall***96****Title(s):** *Mazhapha Einok, The Prophecy of Enoch***Language(s):** Enochian and Ancient Hebrew, with commentary in the margins in Ancient Greek**Period:** before the Deluge**Author:** Enoch**Blasphemy:** Very confusing but either Jesus visits the Earth three times instead of two (Christian interpretation) or else Adam returns to Earth in the end days as well (Jewish interpretation) or maybe Elijah was Adam and/or Jesus.**Spells:** *Magic Missile*, *Spider Climb*, *Web*, *Phantasmal Psychedelia*, *Mnemonic Enhancer*, *Wall of Iron*

**97****Title(s):** *De Operatione Daemonum***Language(s):** Greek**Period:** 11th century AD**Author:** Michael Psellus, the Stammering Monk**Blasphemy:** Cain, who killed his brother as a sacrifice to Satan, still lives, acting as a sort of Satanic Pope.**Spells:** Detect Magic, Floating Disc, Forget, Protection from Normal Missiles, Polymorph Self, Contact Outer Sphere**98****Title(s):** *Paradoxologia of Gorgias***Language(s):** Ancient Greek**Period:** 2nd century BC**Author:** unknown, quoting lost works of Gorgias at length**Blasphemy:** Argues the impossibility of objective reality, embracing a solipsistic egotism.**Spells:** Comprehend Languages\*, Unseen Servant, Change Self, Protection from Normal Missiles, Wall of Ice, Wall of Iron**99****Title(s):** *Al Azif***Language(s):** Arabic, with a few scribblings in Ancient Greek**Period:** 7th century AD**Author:** Abd Al-Azrad**Blasphemy:** God is blind and mindless, Creation is an accident.**Spells:** Summon, Force of Forbiddment, Phantasmal Psychedelia, Seven Gates, Contact Outer Sphere, Weird Vortex**00****Title(s):** *Lectus Olbione, The Herbal of Claudius***Language(s):** Latin**Period:** 1st century AD**Author:** the physician Scribonius Largus**Blasphemy:** Satan preserved his own dearest from the Flood by hiding them in an underwater city off the Cornish coast.**Spells:** Spider Climb, Speak with Animals, Howl of the Moon, Growth of Plants, Interposing Hand, Move Earth

# 3.PF

## Broodgiant

CR 12

XP 19,200

CE Huge aberration

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 11, flat-footed 27 (+6 armor, +3 **Dex**, +13 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 187 (15d8+120)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

**DR** 5/–

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +20 (2d6+13), 2 claws +20 (1d8+9)

**Ranged** rock +14 (2d6+13)

**Space** 15 ft., **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d8+13), rock throwing (140 ft.), trample (2d8+13, DC 26)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 29, **Dex** 16, **Con** 26, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +21 (+25 bull rush and Sunder); **CMD** 34 (38 vs. trip, 40 vs. bull rush and Sunder)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Sunder, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Intimidating Prowess, Power AttackB

**Skills** Climb +24, Intimidate +23, Perception +8, Survival +9

Languages Giant

**SQ** undersized weapons

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Undersized Weapons (Ex)** Although a broodgiant is Huge, its upper torso is the same size as that of a Large humanoid. As a result, they wield weapons as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size (Large for most broodgiants).

## Broodmother

**CR** 13

Variant broodgiant

**XP** 25,600

**Init** +1

### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 9, flat-footed 30 (+6 armor, +1 **Dex**, +16 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 217 (15d8+150)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

**DR** 10/–

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Ranged** rock +12 (2d6+13)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 29, **Dex** 12, **Con** 30, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

## The Swordmaniac

**CR** 14

**XP** 19,200

Broodgiant fighter 2

**CE** Huge aberration

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

### DEFENSE

**AC** 31, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+6 armor, +4 **Dex**, +13 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 232 (15d8+2d10+170)

**Fort** +18, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9; +1 vs. fear

**DR** 5/–; Immune healing magic, prismatic effects

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +24 (2d6+16), 2 claws +24 (1d8+9) or

Sword of the Sky King +28/+23/+18 (2d6+19/19-20)

**Ranged** rock +17 (2d6+16)

**Space** 15 ft., **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d8+16), rock throwing (140 ft.), trample (2d8+16, DC 29)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 33, **Dex** 18, **Con** 30, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +23 (+27 bull rush and Sunder); **CMD** 37 (41 vs. trip, 43 vs. bull rush and Sunder)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Sunder, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Intimidating Prowess, Power AttackB, Weapon

Focus (bastard sword)

**Skills** Climb +27, Intimidate +25, Perception +8, Survival +9

Languages Giant

**SQ** bravery +1, undersized weapons

#### **SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Undersized Weapons (Ex) Although a broodgiant is Huge, its upper torso is the same size as that of a Large humanoid. As a result, they wield weapons as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size (Large for most broodgiants).

### **The Sword of the Sky King** (minor artifact)

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 25th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 12 lb.

**Description:** This +3 Large bastard sword is from an age when magic dominated battlefields. Wounds dealt by the Sword of the Sky King cannot be healed by any magical effect. They must be healed naturally. This effect extends to the wielder, who cannot benefit from magical healing while in possession of the Sword of the Sky King. A victim slain by the weapon cannot be brought back with anything less than true resurrection.

Additionally, the Sword of the Sky King renders its wielder immune to all sorts of prismatic effects, including the spells color spray, prismatic sphere, prismatic spray and prismatic wall.

**Destruction:** Should the Sword of the Sky King be used to slay the reigning king of the Skyfortress, upon which its black sheen dulls to a dark grey and the blade cracks. At the beginning of the adventure, the Sky King is the Angry Brain in the Trophy Room (#7) and comparatively easy to slay. Should the Sky King be slain by other means, the mantle of kingship, as far as the sword is concerned, falls to whoever rules the Sky Fortress. At the beginning of the adventure, this is the Broodmother. It falls to the Referee to determine the order of succession from there onwards.

## Vomitboy

**CR** 12

Variant broodgiant

**XP** 19,200

### OFFENSE

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 10d8 acid damage, Reflex save DC 23 for half, usable once per week)

### STATISTICS

**SQ** upset tummy

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Upset Tummy (Ex) Vomitboy's breath weapon is a result of a noncontagious illness that only affects his kind. If cured with remove disease or a similar effect (DC 18), he loses the ability permanently. This **will** also raise Vomitboy's attitude towards the caster by two steps.

## The Runt

**CR** 12

Variant broodgiant

**XP** 19,200

### DEFENSE

Weakness charm effects

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Charm Weakness (Ex) The Runt is resentful towards his bullying clan-mates and has a -4 penalty against spells and effects of the charm subschool.

## The Mad Maiden

**CR** 12

Variant broodgiant

**XP** 19,200

### DEFENSE

Immune magic jar

### OFFENSE

**Special Attacks** death complication, possession in combat

### STATISTICS

**SQ** broodmother replacement, undersized weapons

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Broodmother Replacement (Ex) See page 15 for details.

Death Complication (Su) 1d6 minutes after the Mad Maiden's death, a malevolence **will** emerge from the remains of her brain.

Possession in Combat (Sp) See page 15 for details. The DC for the confusion effect is 18.

## The Terrible Twins

**CR** 12

The Pathfinder statistics for the six suggestions on pages 15-16. Otherwise, treat the Terrible Twins as an ordinary broodgiant.

The Terrible Twins are essentially treated as two separate giants, but joined at the hip as they are, they must always be adjacent to one another and occupy a 15-foot-by-30-foot area.

The double centaur has all-around vision and cannot be flanked. As written.

The two heads plus option has a speed of 25 feet and a second bite attack at the same attack bonus.

The flopping grotesquerie has a 60-foot climb speed.

The facefist hate machine loses rock throwing. It has only a single claw attack but two bite attacks. Its rend special attack changes as follows: rend (2 bites, 2d6+13)

## Malevolence

**CR** 9

**XP** 6,400

**CE** Medium aberration (incorporeal)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

### DEFENSE

**AC** 22, touch 22, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +7 **Dex**, +1 dodge)

**hp** 58 (9d8+18)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities bad thoughts, incorporeal

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** incorporeal touch +13 (1d8 Wisdom)

**Special Attacks** ancient visions, strength damage

### STATISTICS

**Str** –, **Dex** 24, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Dodge, Flyby Attack, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth)

**Skills** Fly +17, Perception +15, Stealth +22

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Ancient Visions** (Su) On a successful critical hit against a foe, a malevolence's mind leaks some of the Angry Brain's cosmic memories into the mind of its victim. See page 40 for the Malevolent Visions table.

**Bad Thoughts (Su)** A malevolence is made of the eons-old hatred of the Angry Brain. Anyone attempting to use mind-reading magic against a malevolence must roll a DC 18 **Will** save or take 2d4 points of damage and 2 points of Wisdom damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Wisdom Damage (Su)** A malevolence's touch deals 1d8 points of Wisdom damage to a living creature. This is a negative energy effect. A creature dies if this Wisdom damage equals or exceeds its actual Wisdom score.

## Fortress Spider Swarm

**CR 9**

**XP 6,400**

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; **Perception** +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 **Dex**, +4 size)

**hp** 120 (16d8+48)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; Immune mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

### OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** swarm (4d6 plus poison and distraction)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 21), webbery

### STATISTICS

**Str** 1, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** –, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** –; **CMD** –

**Skills** Climb +11, Perception +4; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception; uses Dexterity for Climb checks

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Swarm – injury; save **Fort** DC 21; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d4 **Str**; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Webbery (Ex)** The spiders are quick at spinning webs. Anyone standing for two consecutive rounds in the spiders' **space** must succeed at a DC 21 Reflex save or become entangled as the spiders weave a cocoon around them. The web may be escaped with a DC 21 Escape Artist check or burst with a DC 21 Strength check. Attempts to burst a web by those caught in it suffer a –4 penalty. The web may also be cut; it has 60 hit points, **DR** 5/–, and fire resistance 15.

For the wretches, use stats for ogrekin (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2).

# Broodgiant Hatchling

**CR** 10

**XP** 9,600

**CE** Medium aberration

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

## DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 11, flat-footed 27 (+6 armor, +3 **Dex**, +13 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 127 (15d8+60)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

**DR** 5/–

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +16 (1d8+7 plus bleed 1d6), 2 claws +16 (1d4+5)

**Ranged** rock +18 (1d8+7)

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d8+7), rock throwing (80 ft.)

## STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +17 (+21 bull rush and sunder); **CMD** 34 (38 vs. trip, 40 vs. bull rush and sunder)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Sunder, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Intimidating Prowess, Power AttackB

**Skills** Climb +20, Intimidate +23, Perception +8, Survival +9

Languages Giant

**SQ** undersized weapons

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Undersized Weapons (Ex)** Although a broodgiant hatchling is Medium, its upper torso is the same size as that of a Small humanoid. As a result, they wield weapons as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size (Small for most broodgiant hatchlings).

# Sky King

**CR** 25/MR 10

**CE** Large humanoid (giant, mythic)

**Init** +5/-15, dual initiative<sup>\*\*</sup>; Senses low-light vision; Perception +38

---

**AC** 46, touch 13, flat-footed 32 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +27 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 470 (34d8+318); fast healing 10

**Fort** +27, **Ref** +15, **Will** +21

**Defensive Abilities** backlash<sup>m</sup>, rock catching; DR 10/epic; Immune electricity, fire

---

**Speed** 50 ft., swim 40 ft. (35 ft., swim 30 ft. in armor)

**Melee** The Sword of the Sky King +48/+43/+38/+33 (2d8+36/17-20/×3) or 2 slams +41 (2d6+24)

**Special Attacks** always a chance<sup>m</sup>, breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 20d8 damage, Reflex DC 24 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds), clean blade<sup>m</sup>(ranged touch +29), lingering breath (2d8 fire, 10 rounds), mythic power (10/day, surge +1d12), perfect strike<sup>m</sup>

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th)

Constant—freedom of movement

2/day—control weather, levitate

1/day—call lightning (DC 20), chain lightning (DC 22)

---

**Str** 42, **Dex** 18, **Con** 24, **Int** 16, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +42; **CMD** 56

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave<sup>m</sup>, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus<sup>m</sup>, Greater Vital Strike, Greater Weapon Specialization (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword)<sup>m</sup>, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Sunder, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack<sup>m</sup>, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)<sup>m</sup>

**Skills** Acrobatics +32, Climb +20, Craft (weaponsmithing) +13, Intimidate +32, Perception +38, Perform (sing) +13, Sense Motive +36, Swim +36

**Languages** Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant

**SQ** powerful blows (slam)<sup>m</sup>, water breathing

**Combat Gear** masterwork breastplate

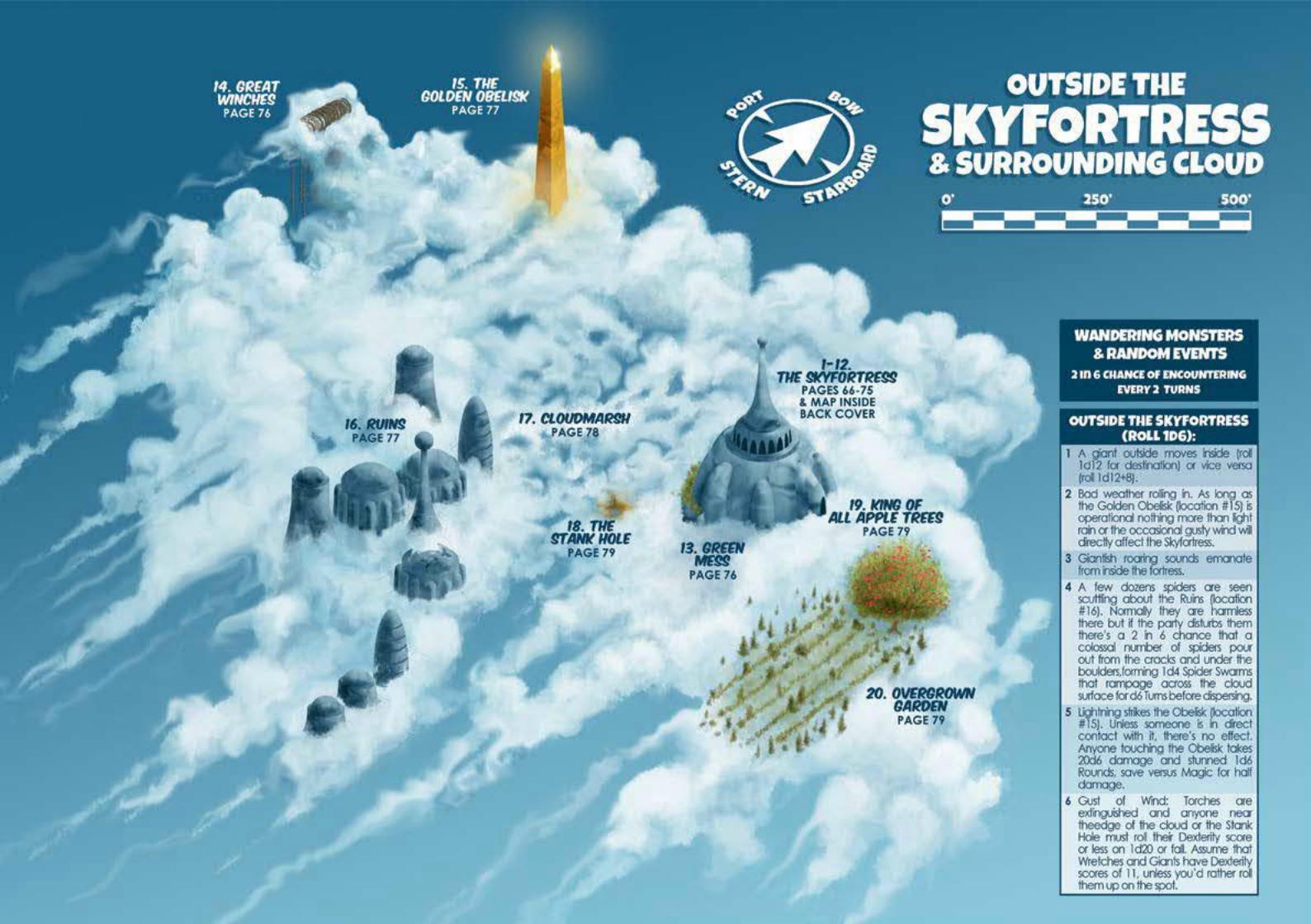
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**Always a Chance** (Ex) The Sky King does not automatically miss when rolling a 1 on an attack roll.

**Backlash** (Ex) Whenever an adjacent enemy confirms a critical hit against the Sky King, he also provokes an attack of opportunity from him.

**Clean Blade** (Ex) Whenever the Sky King scores a critical hit, as a free action he may make a ranged touch attack to fling the blood and gore at another opponent within 30 feet. If the touch attack hits, the foe is sickened for 10 rounds. If the touch attack is a critical hit, the foe is also blinded for the same duration. A blinded foe can spend a full-round action to remove the gore and end the blindness.

**Perfect Strike** (Ex) The Sky King can expend one use of mythic power as a standard action to deliver a perfect strike. A perfect strike attack is made using his full base attack bonus. If the attack hits, it deals double the normal amount of damage, and this damage bypasses all damage reduction and hardness. If the perfect strike is a critical hit, increase the critical multiplier for the attack by 1 (so a  $\times 2$  weapon deals  $\times 3$  damage). Damage that isn't multiplied on a critical hit isn't multiplied on a perfect strike.



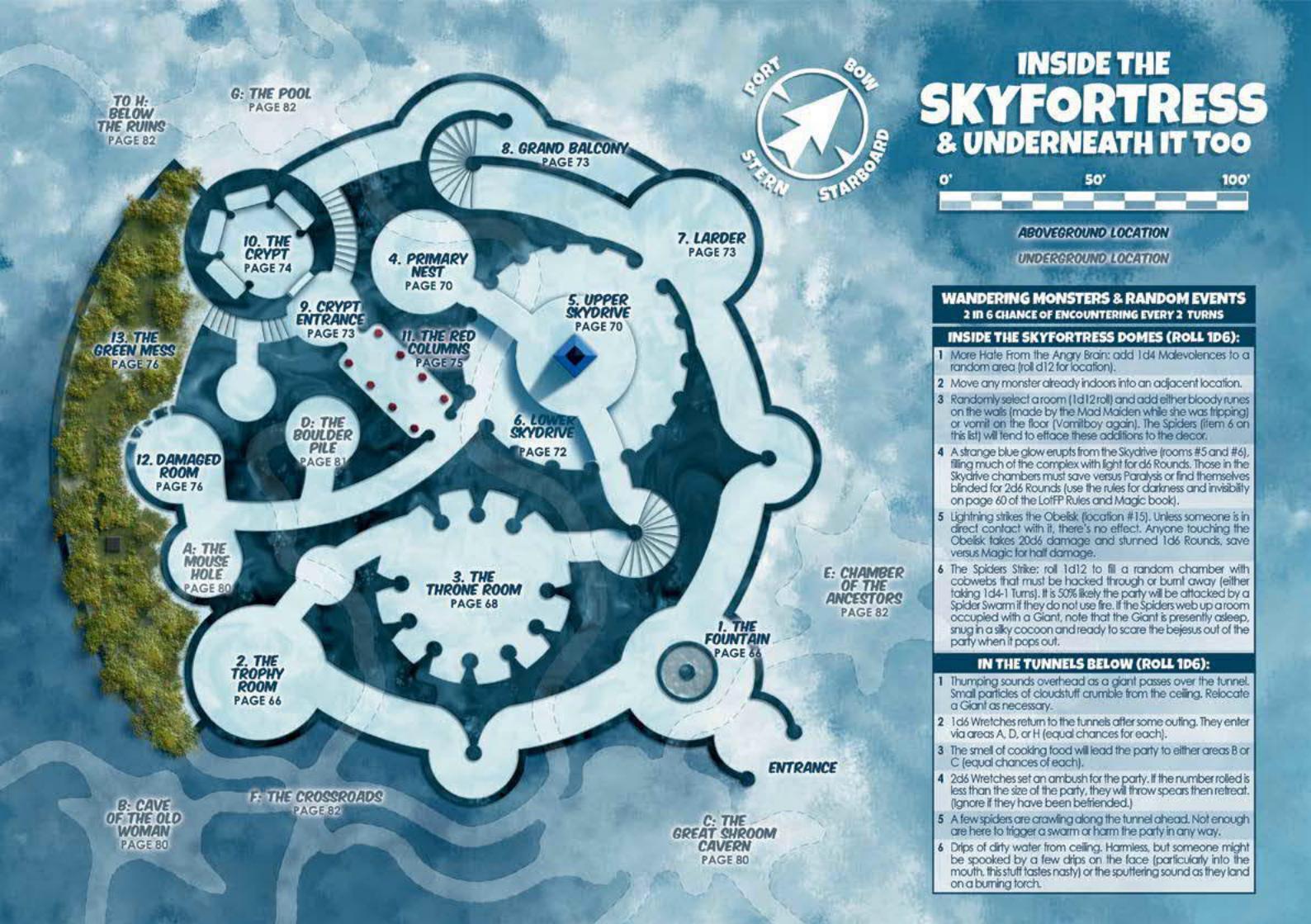
# OUTSIDE THE SKYFORTRESS & SURROUNDING CLOUD



**WANDERING MONSTERS & RANDOM EVENTS**  
2 IN 6 CHANCE OF ENCOUNTERING  
EVERY 2 TURNS

## OUTSIDE THE SKYFORTRESS (ROLL 1D6):

1. A giant outside moves inside (roll 1d12 for destination) or vice versa (roll 1d12+8).
2. Bad weather rolling in. As long as the Golden Obelisk (location #15) is operational nothing more than light rain or the occasional gusty wind will directly affect the Skyfortress.
3. Giantish roaring sounds emanate from inside the fortress.
4. A few dozen spiders are seen scuttling about the Ruins (location #16). Normally they are harmless there but if the party disturbs them there's a 2 in 6 chance that a colossal number of spiders pour out from the cracks and under the boulders, forming 1d4 Spider Swarms that rampage across the cloud surface for 1d4 turns before dispersing.
5. Lightning strikes the Obelisk (location #15). Unless someone is in direct contact with it, there's no effect. Anyone touching the Obelisk takes 2d6 damage and stunned 1d6 Rounds; save versus Magic for half damage.
6. Gust of Wind: Torches are extinguished and anyone near the edge of the cloud or the Stank Hole must roll their Dexterity score or less on 1d20 or fall. Assume that Wretches and Giants have Dexterity scores of 11, unless you'd rather roll them up on the spot.



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7. LARDER  
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# INSIDE THE SKYFORTRESS & UNDERNEATH IT TOO

0'

50'

100'

ABOVEGROUND LOCATION

UNDERGROUND LOCATION

## WANDERING MONSTERS & RANDOM EVENTS 2 IN 6 CHANCE OF ENCOUNTERING EVERY 2 TURNS

### INSIDE THE SKYFORTRESS DOMES (ROLL 1D6):

- 1 More Hate From the Angry Brain: add 1d4 Malevolences to a random area. (roll 1d12 for location).
- 2 Move any monster already indoors into an adjacent location.
- 3 Randomly select a room (1d12 roll) and add either bloody runes on the walls (made by the Mad Maiden while she was tripping) or vomit on the floor (Vanilboy again). The Spiders (item 6 on this list) will tend to efface these additions to the decor.
- 4 A strange blue glow erupts from the Skydrive (rooms #5 and #6), filling much of the complex with light for 6d Rounds. Those in the Skydrive chambers must save versus Paralysis or find themselves blinded for 2d6 Rounds (use the rules for darkness and invisibility on page 60 of the LoffP Rules and Magic book).
- 5 Lightning strikes the Obelisk (location #15). Unless someone is in direct contact with it, there's no effect. Anyone touching the Obelisk takes 20d6 damage and stunned 1d6 Rounds, save versus Magic for half damage.
- 6 The Spider Strike: roll 1d12 to fill a random chamber with cobwebs that must be hacked through or burnt away (either taking 1d4-1 Turns). It is 50% likely the party will be attacked by a Spider Swarm if they do not use fire. If the Spiders web up a room occupied with a Giant, note that the Giant is presently asleep, snug in a silky cocoon and ready to scare the bejesus out of the party when it pops out.

### IN THE TUNNELS BELOW (ROLL 1D6):

- 1 Thumping sounds overhead as a giant passes over the tunnel. Small particles of cloudstuff crumble from the ceiling. Relocate a Giant as necessary.
- 2 1d6 Wretches return to the tunnels after some outing. They enter via areas A, D, or H (equal chances for each).
- 3 The smell of cooking food will lead the party to either areas B or C (equal chances of each).
- 4 2d6 Wretches set an ambush for the party. If the number rolled is less than the size of the party, they will throw spears then retreat. (Ignore if they have been befuddled.)
- 5 A few spiders are crawling along the tunnel ahead. Not enough are here to trigger a swarm or harm the party in any way.
- 6 Drips of dirty water from ceiling. Harmless, but someone might be spooked by a few drips on the face (particularly into the mouth, this stuff tastes nasty) or the sputtering sound as they land on a burning torch.

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# BROODMOTHER SKYFORTRESS

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