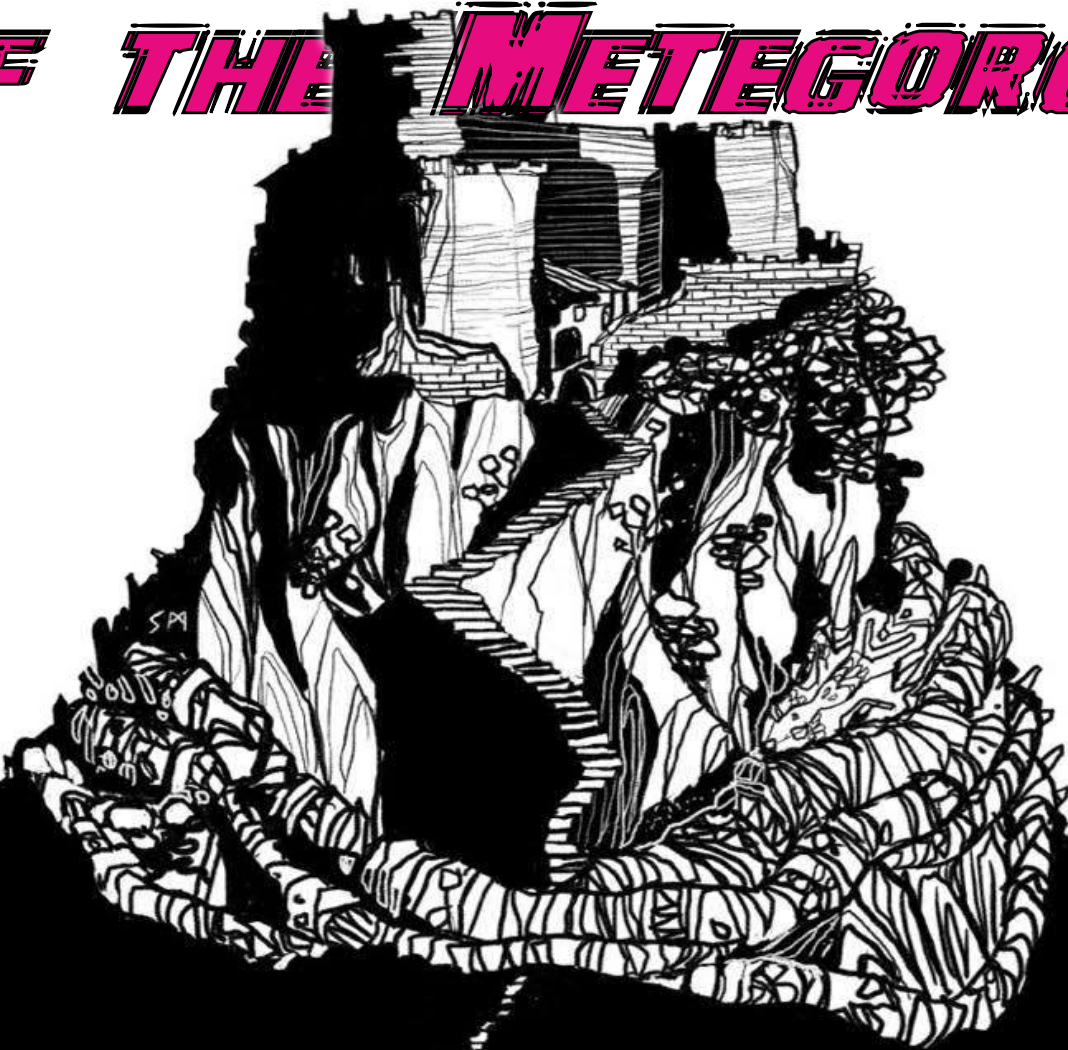


RUINOUS PALACE OF THE METEGORGOS



*An adventure of
moldering power,
monstrous fecundity,
and the cruelty of
petty gods...*

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*An Adventure for like whatever level you think is okay.
(I think around 1-3.) However, I'm not your
damn boss. Also, just use whichever Fantasy RPG.*

In Search of Games

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Introduction

The gods are cruel; this is well known.
The gods are jealous and petty: needy,
self-absorbed, and oh so powerful.

Long ago... no, longer than that... long,
long ago, there was a woman tied to a good
house. She believed she should have been
born a goddess.

She dared to speak such things aloud,
even under the jealous light of the yellow
eye.

Her boldness grew and grew with her
fecundity. She gave her husband -with
some little help- 100 sons.

The terrible gods took notice, and waited
with bated breath for the first hint of
unforgivable blasphemy.

Now, she has outlived more
children than you
will ever
see.



Intro...

She waddles within her wet, dark home, the skin of her swollen breasts and swollen belly purple with bruises. Metegorgos is overfull, leaking milk and children.

Tenderly, she caresses and cares, most maternally, for all of the objects and beings in her cold home. She birthed them, each and every one.

The awkward amphora, half full of wine: she brought it bloodily into this world. She nursed it up to its full size. She set it tenderly in the corner of the room. When she remembers, as she walks by, she tells the clay vessel how much she loves him.

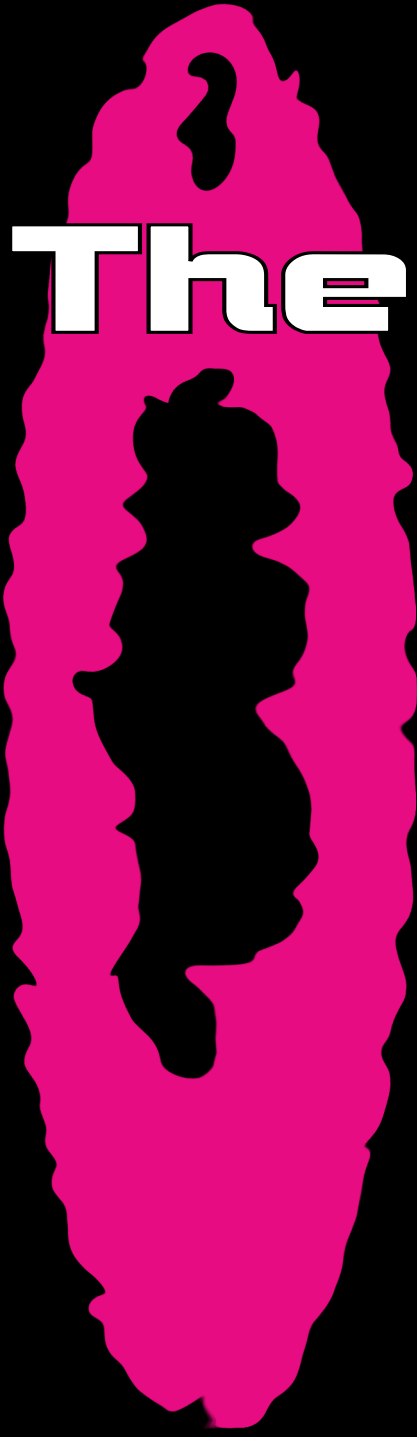
Now, imagine the love she holds for the children that can love her back?

The Dragon, her first born monstrosity, which she has given suck to for thousands of years? He loves her beyond sanity. He poorly adjusts to being weaned even as he learns his own great strength. Mutton is not mother's milk, but hot blood warms him nicely. Mostly, though, he sleeps and dreams of being useful.

Of course, her hair is curling snakes and terrible to behold, though mostly they sleep, as well.

Her home has no hearth. It is cold, and fire has been disinvited. The snakes sleep. She keeps what little warmth she has for her children alone.





The Woods

In the cruel heart, of the wide woods, waits her ancient palace.

Deeply green pine needles, almost black and almost blue, hang from drooping limbs. The mist is not constant, but comes often enough that nothing is dry. Beneath the wet, thick layers of needles wet black soil waits.

Footing here is unreliable at best. It is impossible to know what sudden stones lay barely beneath the loose leaves.

(Throughout the wood, moving at more than a quick walk requires DEX checks or Paralyzation Saves or however you normally handle that.)

Even worse, rumor long holds that restless dead wander the wood, despondently moaning their incoherent woes. Some stories say that the sad souls moan for their missing hearts.

Restless Dead

On those rare occasions in which Metegorgos has faced some real threat, she has awakened her snakes and turned to stone those who defied her. This happens uncommonly, in part because she has quite a few other deadly strengths. Mostly, though, fossilizing folks uses up what little warmth she has left, leaving her many children hungry.

When this happens, she has the statues destroyed. Some hours later, she will stillbirth walking dead in the same shapes as those destroyed.

Metegorgos despises these unwanted children and casts them into the wild. What little mind they have is selflessly devoted to her. This love quickly sours. Each time they come home, she spurns them mercilessly.

The Woods

And so, the undying corpses wander the heavy woods around her home, wailing, weebegone.

Sad Zombie

HD 2+2. AC 11. 1 attack: 1d6 icy rending hands. Move: wearily slow shambling. Special: Sad Zombies always attack last. Normal Clerical turning does not affect these creatures as the gods will not have their agents undo their great works. However, false love repels them as though they were turned (as simple as saying, "I love you.") Genuine affection buys the unquestioning loyalty of these creatures.

Encounters in the Piteous Woods - 1d6

Roll every 5 minutes or so, real time- it's a busy place. Roll additionally if anything noisy happens (i.e. combat, spell casting, beseeching the gods for healing.) Keep rolling until all the present zombies are slain, turned, crying, or all 25 zombies have shown up (see the Emo Zombie tracker.)

1. 2 Sad Zombies in tattered robes.
2. 3 Sad Zombies, naked.
3. 1 Sad Zombie in hoplite armor (AC 15, 200sp, no shield.)
4. 1 Sad Zombie wearing only a bishop's mitre (3sp).
5. One Sad Zombie is already there but stops fighting to sit and have a good cry. Treat as nothing if no other Zombies are around yet.
6. A horrible, guttural dirge can be heard off to the left. If the sound is followed, a dwarfish Sad Zombie is held by heavy ropes and rusting chains against a lonely oak tree. Judging by the tree growth around him, he has been there for a very long time. Periodically he sings his own funeral dirge. This result only happens once. Treat as nothing afterwards.

Time Spent in the Woods

With a successful Navigation (Bushcraft) roll it will take 1d20+30 minutes to find the palace in the heart of the woods, while failing the roll results in the search taking 1d20+60 minutes.



*Things a
Sad Zombie
might Rasping Groan:
"Love..." , "Mother!"
"Alone..." , "Ahhgg." , Etc...*

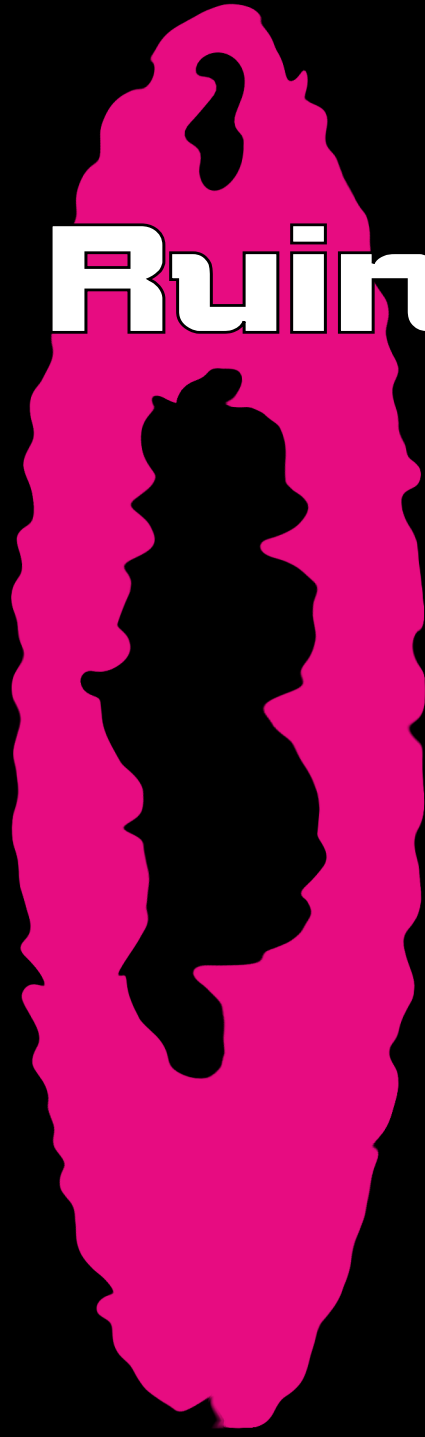
The Woods

THE DWARF'S FUNERAL SONG, ROUGHLY TRANSLATED:

- ❖ Here am I trapped, bright places far from the comfort of the dark.
- ❖ Open sky sits cruelly above me, I sit with no stones above me.
- ❖ Soft Earth will not take me, I cannot scatter through broken forest stones.
- ❖ I will die. I will ever be alone.
- ❖ Even the mountains must end?







Ruinous Palace

First, determine where Metegorgos is when the players enter her lair or cause a ruckus outside of it.

Roll 1d4:

- 1| Receiving Hall
- 2| Temple/Dressing-Room
- 3| Short Hallway
- 4| Bedchamber

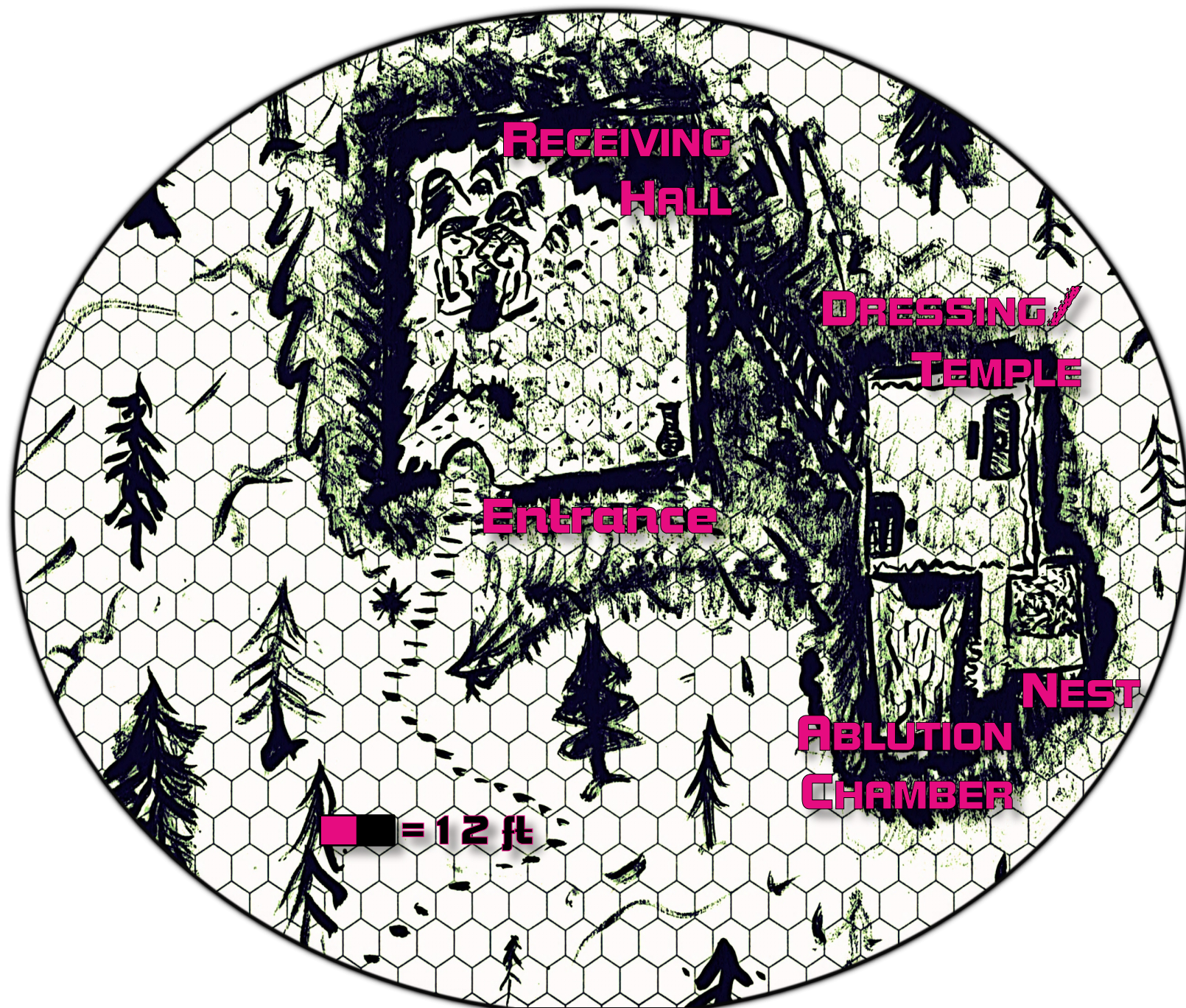
Second, be aware of the...

...CURSES IN EFFECT WITHIN THE PALACE

- ◇ Fire will not cross the threshold, nor burn within. Even supernatural flames are disallowed. (Unless, of course, the source is more powerful than old and petulant gods.)
- ◇ Only memories may be born in this place.
- ◇ Of her past, Metegorgos only recalls her downfall.
- ◇ Lest she be struck dead, Metegorgos may not leave her wretched home.

Further, be aware that all entities birthed of the Metegorgos can see without the need for light.

Ruinous Palace



Ruinous Palace

Outside

Metegorgos's home appears uninviting, little more than a gaping hole centered upon stony dilapidation. In the thick, misting woods, it might escape notice were it not for the legless dragon usually curled about it. The Obsidian Wyrms often sleeps with his shard-frilled head just to the right of the cracked marble stairs.

Roll 1d100. 1-75 the Dragon sleeps deeply. 76-90 the Dragon is off hunting. 91-100 the Dragon is fully awake and vigilant, warned by capricious dreams.

Should the players choose to stealth camp nearby, roll again at each dusk and every dawn.

The Obsidian Wyrms, aka Hungry Night Sky, Sable Death, etc.

HD 10+5. AC 16. 1 Attack: 1d20 bite and writhe. Move: when first awoken, it moves at 1/4 human speed for 1 minute and always attacks last in this state. For 1 minute longer, it moves at 1/2 human speed and can hover upwards at the rate of 1 foot per second. After that, it flies freely and moves like a streaking falcon. Special: wooden weapons do no appreciable damage against its literal obsidian scales. Any melee hit which does full damage results in the attacker taking 1d4 damage as unevenly stressed volcanic glass explodes outward.



Ruinous Palace

The Entrance

Layers of dirt, decay, and old growth top what is left of the building. It looks more like a yawning tomb than anything else. Worn and jagged steps lead up to the empty frame of what was once a very impressive door. The malachite facade has become little more than pale green gravel (worth about 1sp a handful, 2d10sp for a sack-full). Revealed bricks lean luridly outward like some tilting drunk.

Wafting from inside comes the haunting smell of vanilla juxtaposed with old decay.

During the day, a Sunstroke Daemon stands guard within a suspiciously bright puddle of light to the left of the door. At night, it sleeps inside within a half full amphora. (See What is Left of the Receiving Hall.)

Sunstroke Daemon, a being built of living EM energy

HD 2+2. AC made of raw sunshine. 2 Attacks: 1d12/1d12 blistering microwave claws or Special: continual light 1/rnd; loves to blind folks. Move: unhurried and sneering. Special: it cannot be harmed by non-magical means. Special: takes 1d12 damage from darkness and shadow type spells. Special: can be trapped via any opaque surface, assuming a light-tight seal.



Ruinous Palace

Metegorgos

HD 6+6. AC 12. 2 Attacks: 1d4+4/1d4+4 curved knives or Special Attack (see below). Move: surprisingly fast waddle.

Special Attacks:

Birth Needlefish in a 60' x 20' cone, dealing 2d10 damage. Save for half damage and those in chain or heavier armor only take half damage (example: a successful save in plate means no damage.) The fish die within a few minutes of impact.

Birth Orb of Thirst in a 20' radius sphere which lasts 10 minutes. All non-supernatural entities must save or become severely dehydrated. This does 1d10 damage for each round spent in the sphere and causes a -3 penalty to doing anything beyond drinking water while in the AoE.

Petrify Individual. Save or die. This action takes 2 rounds/12 seconds, during which both the Metegorgos and the Victim are held in place. The petrification always begins with the genitals, so stony castration is likely even with a successful save! 1d6 damage with a save on either

round results in the action being slowed, requiring Metegorgos and the Victim to remain in place while she continues her attempt. Successful saves on both rolls result in the hold being broken, while taking 3+ damage means you have stone genitalia and will likely die anyway the next time you need to urinate—septicemia kills more murderhobos a year than any other disease.



Ruinous Palace

What is Left of the Receiving Hall

It collapsed, a ways back and to the left of the door. A pillar still waits where it fell a thousand years ago. Daylight alone illuminates the room, barely hinting at the wreckage within. If viewed at night, even in strong moonlight, almost nothing can be discerned.

Is that an amphora in the corner, to the right?

Yes. At night the Sunstroke Daemon sleeps therein. It is half full of a very fine wine (100sp, 30sp just for the jug).

The shit smell, is it coming from over there? To the left and a ways in? Some huge hole in the floor, is it?

Yes. Three Excreta Daemons hover at the bottom of the crevice, three arcing masses of sticking tendrils propelling themselves surreally through the air, on sine wave flagella.

Excreta Daemons, giant terrifying cholera bacterium

HD 2. AC 12. 1 Attack: 1d6+ Special (see below) stick and burn (acidic mucilage), Move: has neutral buoyancy in air, manic bursts of sudden speed.

Special: On a successful attack it sticks to the victim. Save or shit yourself to death (takes about 30 seconds, one hell of a BM.) On a successful save you just shit yourself (-2 butt distraction penalty) while ripping it off causes 1d8 damage.

Are those figures slowly playing dice or just some odd shadows amongst the rubble?

Gnomi in Phrygian caps, all half turned to stone.

Deeply involved in a complicated dice game, they notice very little that is not very loud. Older lumps of vaguely humanoid stone can be seen beyond.

HD 2. AC 10. 1 Attack: 1d3 stone smack or Special (see below.) Move: Immobile and easily distracted.

Special:

The Fat One can turn Flesh to Stone, though it's only powerful enough to affect fingers or toes. 1d4 damage. -1 penalty to hit per lost finger.

Movement dropped by 25% per toe lost.

The Short One can Turn To and From Stone at will. Note that this guy is pretty cowardly.

The Tall One can summon gravelly mud with high velocity and launch it into faces. 1d4 damage. On a successful hit, character is blinded for a number rounds equal to the damage dealt.

Is that a stairway heading deeper within, halfway back and to the right?

Totes.

If Metegorgos is here, she will be squeezing her butter-yellow milk into the shithole.

Ruinous Palace

The Chthonic Temple and The Dressing Room

Narrow stairs recede into inky darkness. A rotting, waist-high table with patinaed bronze mirror (100sp) sit opposite a granite altar, atop which sits a golden idol (1,000sp). Neither incarnation has known the touch of light.

12 gold and ivory combs stand like dusty soldiers atop the shaking table (50 sp each).

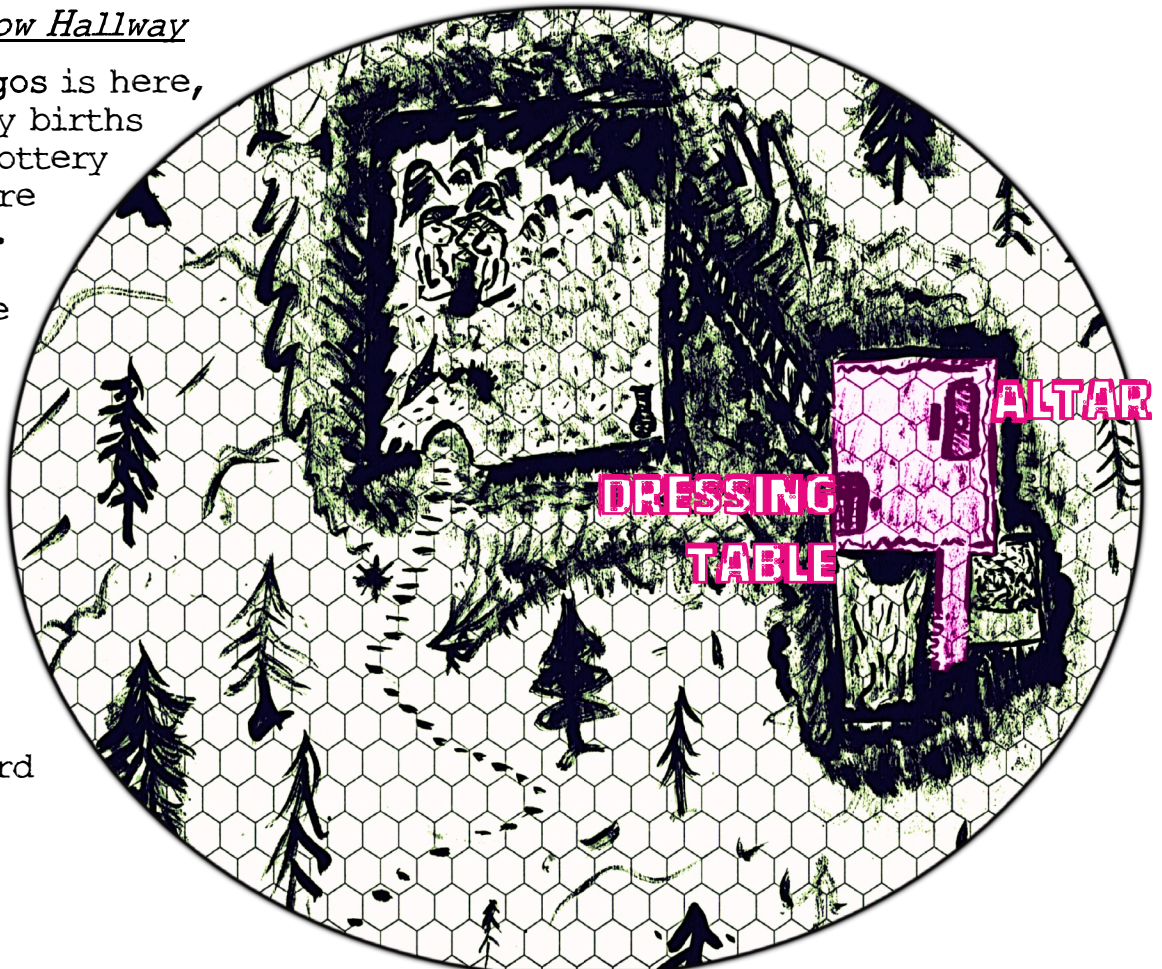
All of these items were birthed of Her, as were the molding tapestries spread across each wall.

If Metegorgos is here, she nurses and coos at the grateful golden idol.

Behind the southern and central tapestry lies a...

Short Narrow Hallway

If Metegorgos is here, she bloodily births shards of pottery onto the bare earth floor. Attempting to cross the shards quickly requires a DEX check or the character slips, taking 1d3 damage from the shards and risking weird infection.



Ruinous Palace

Ablution Chamber

The sound of roaring water crashes suspiciously from behind a too-white curtain. The curtain is woven asbestos, rare, fireproof, and valuable. 1,500sp if the right buyer can be found.

Past the stiff drapery, only six or so inches of brilliant grey and white soapstone remain.

One more step and you will plunge 6 feet straight down into fast, cold water. Don't worry- the bathing THUNDER HAGS (d4+6) will probably catch you.

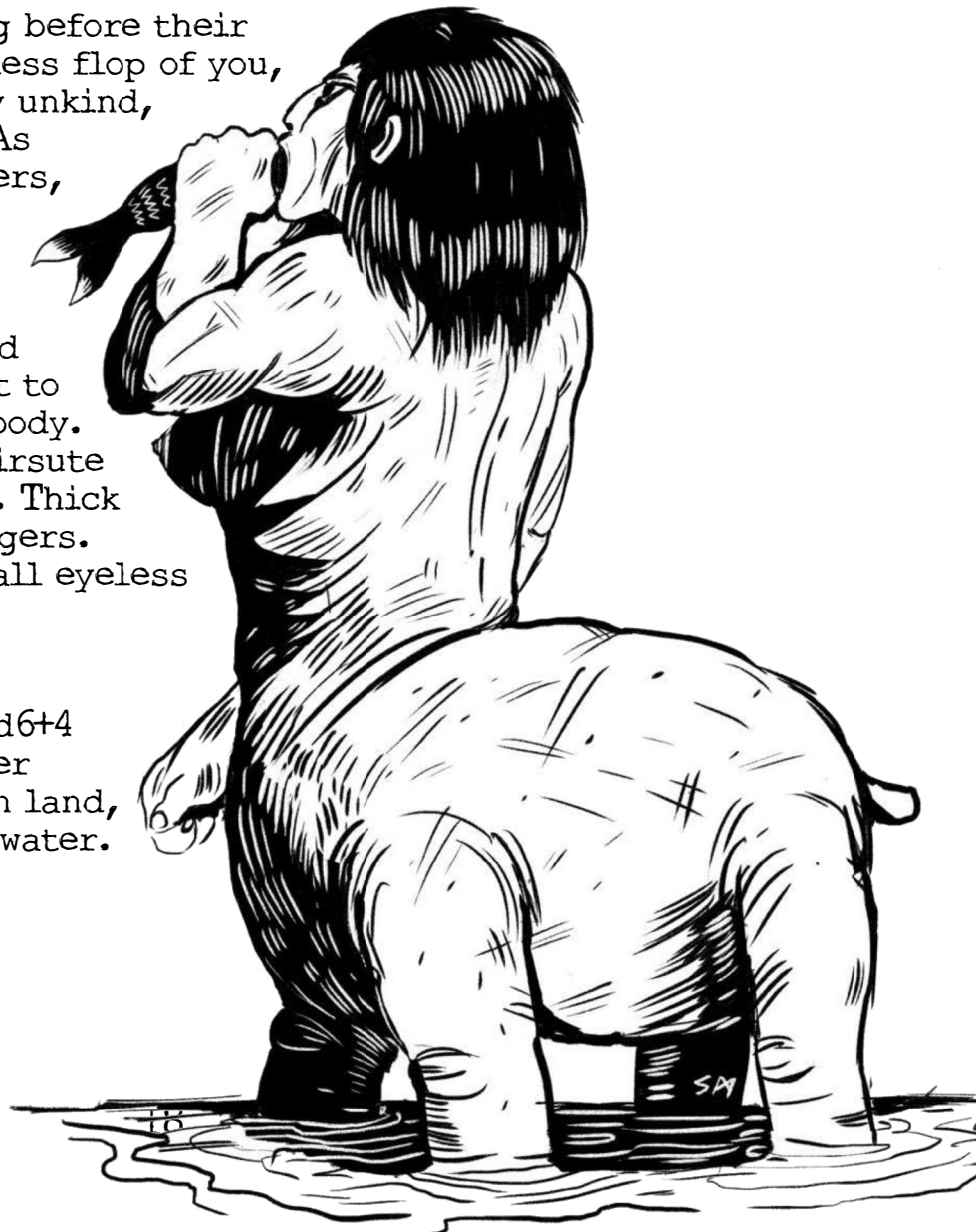
You will be treated like a threadbare doll.

Of course, it won't be long before their ministrations make a lifeless flop of you, anyway. They're not really unkind, just ignorant and bored. As Metegorgos's only daughters, they have long been neglected.

Their bodies begin at the ground, four huge wrinkled hippopotamus feet connect to a wrinkled hippopotamus body. The wide neck forms the hirsute torso of a powerful woman. Thick arms end in monstrous fingers. They often munch upon small eyeless fish.

THUNDER HAGS

HD 4+4. AC 16. 1 Attack. 1d6+4 stomp kick or 1d4+4 thunder punch. Move: ponderous on land, surprisingly quick in the water.



Ruinous Palace

Her Bedchamber

It once was an earth walled cellar, storing cheap wine in bulk for less than noble guests.

Now therein she sleeps. It is more a nest than a bed. Authentic scraps from her long and terrible past are woven into a decaying pallet of fabric and scales.

She does not know this, but the piteous state of her bed chamber has dissolved the curses upon her house. Fire could burn in this room, but does not. She could remember or dream of her own long distant happiness here.

She does not.

Should someone love her, she could even birth beautiful, human children again...

If she is here, she sleeps in fitful dreaming.

Magic Users and *Elves* can roll under their Wisdom to understand why this room feels so different from the rest. Clerics understand in an instant, though their gods may wish to prevent them from acting upon this knowledge.



Nothing's Ever Done

Aftermath

If the Obsidian Dragon and/or Metegorgos are slain, the PCs will run afoul of some very nasty druids. The Dragon, for the first time in centuries, provided a serious check to the quickly expanding human population. Also, in the form of perpetual thunder hag manure and corpses, the Metegorgos had been acting as a second sun for a very delicate subterranean ecosystem.

Their name is a howl, barely within the range of human vocal chords. They defend nature and despise human mores. Only two of them bear the burden of language.

The first of them is the Alpha, who knows 10 words that he may be guided by the Mouthpiece.

The Mouthpiece is hated. She learned the disgusting language of men so that the druids may be better equipped to fight their enemy. She is respected if never loved. Her advice is rarely unheeded by the Alpha, however, so long as it is given through the 10 words he understands.

10 Words:

Hunt. Wait. Quiet. Enemy. Soon. Food.

Not-food. Danger. Ahead. Behind.

The druids are bestial, filthy humans, as close to thoughtless nature as is possible. All but the Mouthpiece can shift into the shape of huge, wild dogs. There are 13 total, including the Mouthpiece.

Druid- Man Form

HD 2. AC 14. 1 Attack: 1d4 rock smash.

Move: fast, agile, excellent climbers (5 in 6)

Druid- Dog Form

HD 3. AC 15. 1 Attack: 1d8 bite or claw.

Move: frighteningly swift, like a sudden wind.



Why Go to the Ruinous Palace?

1. Old Gold to be Stolen from Old Places, **ALWAYS.**

2. Rumors of Supernatural Fecundity and Ruination. What wizard would not wish to study such?

3. Nearby communities are hemorrhaging Livestock. The Dragon learns to hunt and gather.

4. A forest Unmolested for centuries... could become a fortune in Timber.