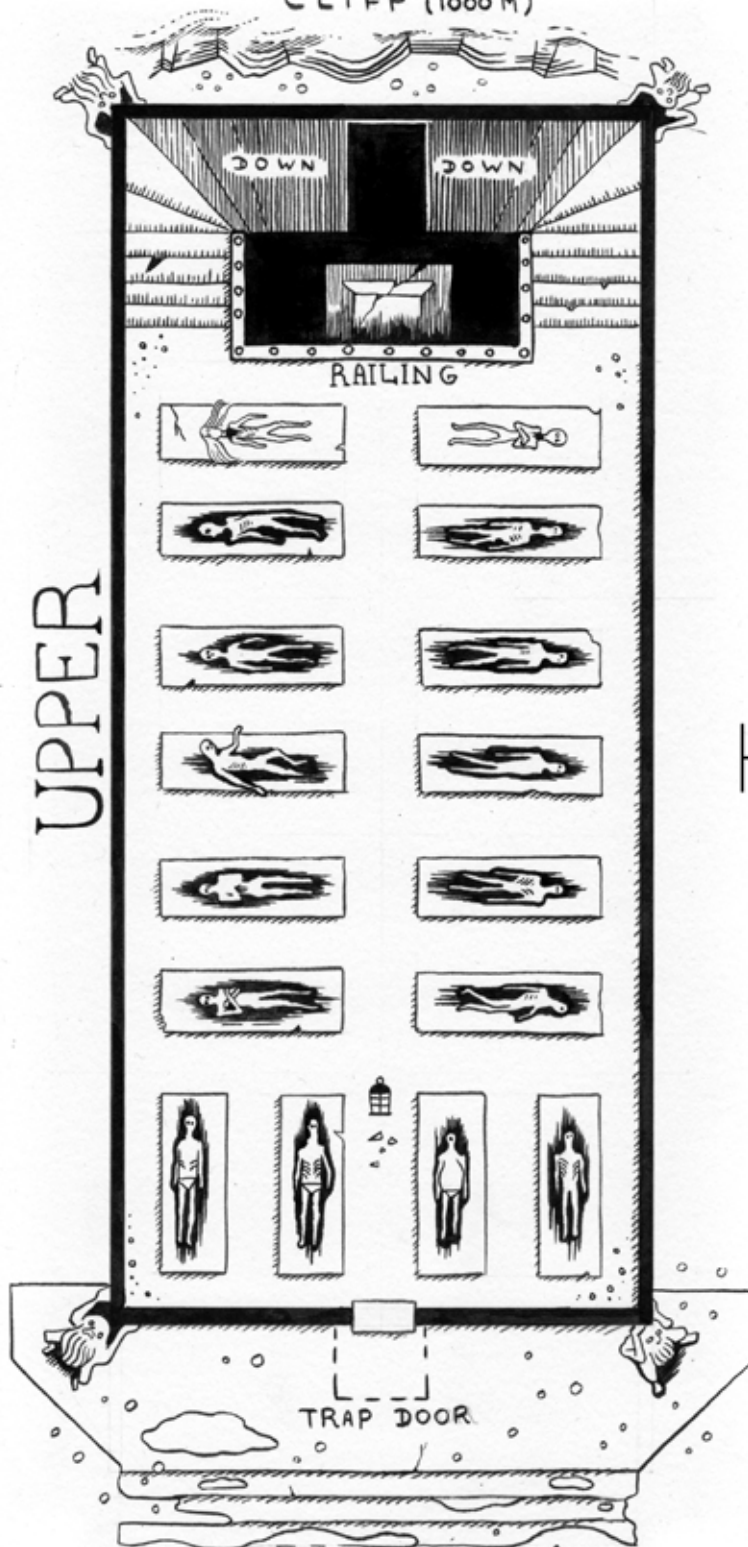


CRYPTS of INDORMANCY

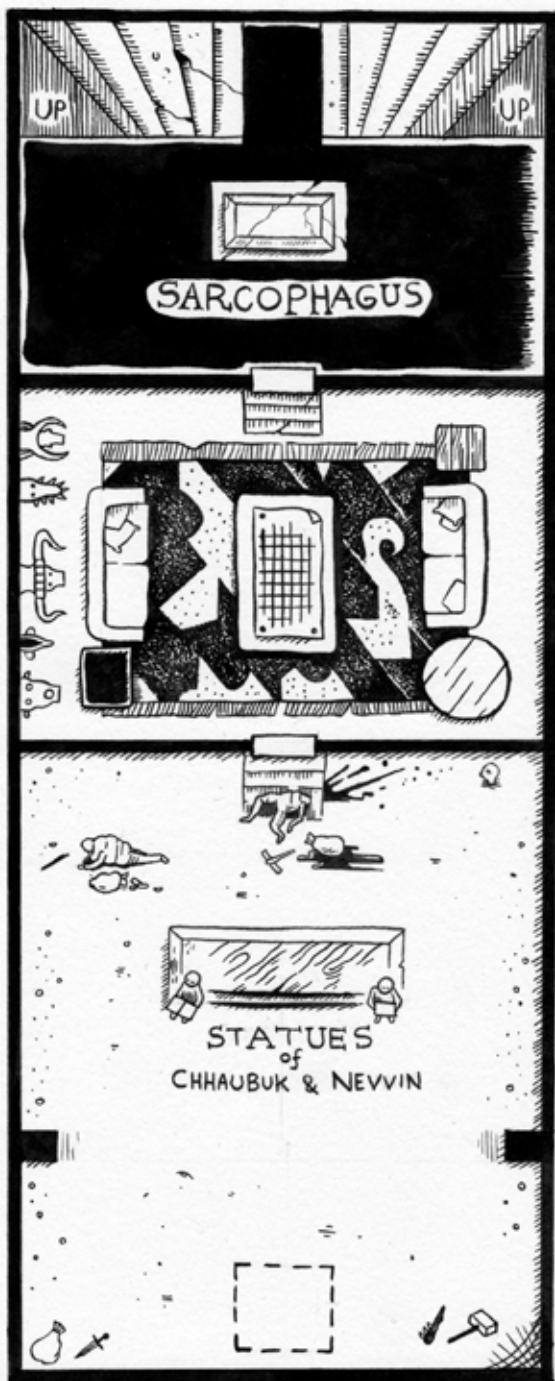
by Ezra Claverie



CLIFF (1000 M)



LOWER



CRYPTS
of
INDORMANCY

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Many Referees have let me learn at their tables, but a few stand out both for their skills and for their willingness to discuss the theory and practice of role-playing games: Tavis Allison, Matt Finch, Chris Grega, Tim Hutchings, Nick Mizer, Erol Otus, Sarah Richardson, Tim Stamps, and Tom Winker.

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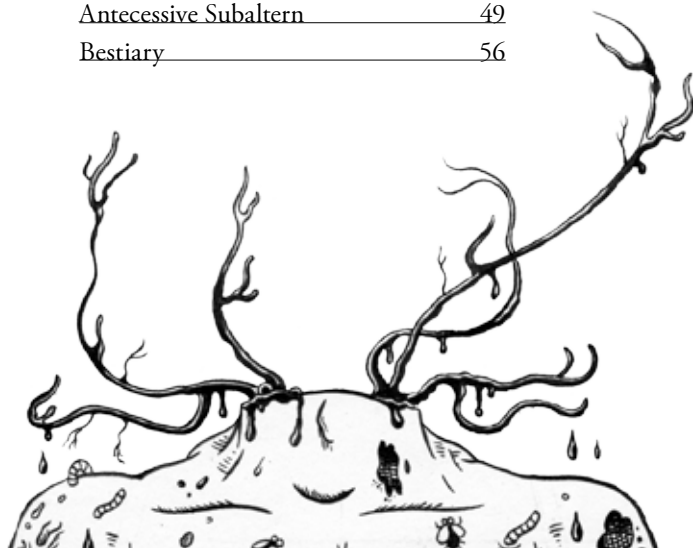
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Go The Referee

Crypts of Indormancy offers ecumenical compatibility with “old school” sword-and-sorcery role-playing games in their various editions. Instead of numeric Armor Class values, the statistic blocks for foes list the relevant armor types for the Referee to convert (e.g. “as chain mail”). Furthermore, stat blocks list both ascending Base Attack Bonus and descending THAC0. Finally, Saving Throws appear in both their elder five-type and their younger three-type versions (e.g. “Save vs. Paralysis (Reflex)”).

The scenario includes a number of optional house rules from the author’s homebrew setting, which the reader may use or ignore. That setting assumes only Elves and Humans as player character races. Optional cultural background and Experience Point awards offer roleplaying motivations and challenges.

Crypts presupposes little about the number and strength of the player characters, but it offers many hazards. The remote location of the tomb and the power of its inmates mean that casualties will probably run high. However, the scenario also contains mechanisms that canny players might use curb the mayhem, such as the limits on where foes will venture. Looters satisfied with a modest haul might escape.

The wilderness setting means that Referees should have little trouble placing the tomb among the mountains of their own campaigns. For this reason, this book contains no map of the surrounding wilderness and no wilderness encounter tables.

The tomb offers two points of entry: a mausoleum door and a pit trap before it. Because powerful magic wards the Mausoleum door, the numbering of rooms assumes entry by via the pit. Adventurers begin with one of the three passwords that grant safe access to parts of the crypts. A second password lies inside, carried there by an earlier looter; a third has been lost.

The tomb of Thuuz, Lord Nanifer, General of the Western Isle, O.P.E., functions as both a baited trap for treasure-hunters and as a resurrection-machine for the Elven warlord. A weaker or less experienced party may succeed in looting parts of the tomb without reviving him, then flee to warmer, healthier nights in the lowlands. Alternately, Thuuz or even the conspirators who built his tomb may become recurring figures in the campaign.

History

The humans who call themselves the Island People (or simply Islanders) resemble pre-modern Polynesians. They live in a patriarchal society organized into twelve matrilineal clans, subsisting by agriculture, aquaculture, and fishing. What few metal tools they have, they bought from Elven merchant adventurers, who resemble early modern Europeans.

The Twelve Clans inhabit an archipelago, with most of their population on the great West Island, a landmass of more than 750,000 square kilometers. An interior mountain range dominates its landscape; the highest peaks rise over 8,000 meters.

On a nameless ridge above the snowline lies the tomb of the general who effectively ruled the West Island during the Elves' colonial adventure some 1,400 years ago.

Metropolitan Elves remember Thuuz as the strategist who nearly brought order to the Colonies, before the uprising that the ageless Elves still call "the Recent War." The Island People drove out the Elves, but only with the help of the mysterious Turtle Folk, who seldom venture ashore. The Island People still curse Thuuz as "The Butcher of the West" for the tortures and massacres that his soldiers inflicted on the Twelve Clans.

A wizard of renown, Thuuz saw that the war went badly for the Elves, and he abhorred the thought of abandoning the "New Lands" to "naked, Yam-eating Savages that live and die in the Span of Beasts" (letter to Chaharg, Lady Voorkreadle, 17 Opal 1679 S.E.).

In his commitment to the pacification of the West Island for the Crown, he preferred the prospect of dying and rising as the living dead to departing this world before finishing this work. He made funeral arrangements accordingly. If he died before the West Island could be pacified, then his remains would be sealed in a tomb of his own design. This tomb would resurrect first his ghost and then his body. To keep necromancy out of civic life, Elven law denies legal and property rights to the deceased, so the revenant Thuuz would "live" only to complete the destined founding of an Elven nation upon the West Island.

Yet Thuuz did not fall in battle as he had hoped. Instead, he lived to see the combined forces of the Island People and the Turtle Folk drive back the Elves, then force them to sign a treaty that would restrict their rights on the West Island. This treaty abolished the Elven aristocracy's titles to land, indentured servants, and slaves, and it granted control of the remaining trade concessions to the Principal Trading Company, tool of the bourgeois merchant guilds. In a rage, Thuuz tried to organize a group of officers to stage a coup d'état.

Thuuz's own lieutenants assassinated him rather than openly defy the Crown. The conspirators then agreed to blame his death, falsely, on Islanders taking revenge on the former occupier. Thuuz died a hero, granted posthumous knighthood: Meritorious Servant, Order of the Principality of the Elves.

His lieutenants then approached Chhabuk, Thuuz's eldest son and the inheritor of the lordship, and Nevvin, Thuuz's eldest daughter and a newly graduated Magistra of Thaumaturgy (M.Th.). To Thuuz's heirs, the conspirators proposed a plan.

One of the General's lieutenants had begun the construction of a military observatory high in the mountains, so remote from populated lands that he expected that he could finish construction without interference before the treaty took effect. What if the conspirators modified the building's design and secretly interred Thuuz and his resurrection trap there? Moreover, what if they waited until their faction grew strong again, both in the officers' corps and in the Assembly of Peers, then leaked the information to the Twelve Clans about the location of Thuuz's tomb and the treasures buried with him?

Would not the Island People seek the tomb, motivated by greed, vindictiveness, or both? Would not the savages violate the tomb of their conqueror, looting his possessions to triumph in their huts or barter among their chiefs? Would not such outrages finally persuade the Assembly to permit the removal of the Islanders, a step that Thuuz had long urged?

Chhabuk, Lord Nanifer, spoke with downcast eyes: "Father, forgive us this indignity."

Magistra Nevvin considered. "Provided you allow me a hand in the design of this tomb," said she, "then yes. Yes to all."

The Clue

The player characters have come into possession of a rolled piece of *tapa* barkcloth that bears charcoal writing in Elvish. One side bears a cryptic phrase.

rest from your labors

The other side also bears Elvish characters, but these spell out unpunctuated words in the (unwritten) prestige dialect used by the priesthood of the Island People. They offer directions based on landmarks, using the ritual iconography and calendar of the Twelve Clans.

north of last pine pass follow the abandoned
traders path to the boulder in the shape of the termite

turn toward the place where sets the
lesser taro flower during the festival of maidens¹

on the far side of that mountain climb the
pinnacle that reticulated sunbeam would choose²

descend along the ridge that faces the eye of
listening yam in the season of its dawn rising³

above you sleep the bones and the trophies of
the butcher of the west

1. *Lesser Taro Flower*: a constellation.

2. *Reticulated Sunbeam*: legendary warrior known for striking down the second-strongest foe as a warning to the enemy leader.

3. *Listening Yam*: legendary warrior for whom the Twelve Clans named an eclipsing binary star.

Finding The Tomb

Last Pine Pass, the nearest permanent settlement to the tomb, sits in a valley with an elevation of 4,000 meters. A hundred Islander families eke out a living by farming in the treeless vale. Last Pine Pass sits more than 500 meters above the tree line for this part of the island, making its name a tiresome regional joke.

Guides

A party setting out from Last Pine Pass can use the written directions can find the tomb in a base of twenty days of trekking and climbing, but hiring a guide will reduce this and keep the adventurers safer. Local guides vary in expertise and availability.

Roll d12 and add the primary negotiator's Charisma modifier. A negotiator of a different Clan suffers a penalty of one, a negotiator not a member of the Twelve Clans suffers a penalty of two, and an Elf suffers a penalty of three.

1–5 inexperienced guide: reduce travel time by d6 days

6–8 average guide: reduce travel time by 2d4 days

9–10 Nine Frond, superior guide: reduce travel time by 2d8 days

11 or more: Last Feather, best guide in the valley: reduce travel time by 2d8+4 days

Each attempt to recruit a guide requires d4 days talking to farmers, buying rounds of beer at the market, calling on the village chief (with gifts of food and drink), and waiting for the return of guides away on other affairs.

Subsequent treks to and from the tomb will take only half as long as the initial expedition, now that the party knows the route.

Optional Rule:

The Twelve Clans of the Island People

Clans have overlapping social functions that combine elements of medieval fraternal orders, modern political parties, and British football hooligan firms.

Roll d12 for an Islander's clan affiliation, which follows the mother's line.

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1 Newt | 7 Puffin |
| 2 Owl | 8 Sea Snake |
| 3 Centipede | 9 Urchin |
| 4 Firefly | 10 Octopus |
| 5 Ant | 11 Nautilus |
| 6 Tortoise | 12 Stonefish |

Optional Rule: High Altitude

Beyond Last Pine Pass rises a massif where peaks tower 5,000 meters and higher. In the lower valleys flow rivers of glacial melt, opaque with powdered rock; in the upper valleys flow glaciers. Travelers must carry their own combustibles, for only moss, lichens, and hardy flowers grow among the moraine.

At this altitude, a night's sleep restores no Hit Points, and a full day's rest (i.e. no travel, with hot food and drink) restores only one. Thin air brings headaches and shortness of breath; hands and faces chap and bleed; feet numb, then blister.

Traveling without a highlander guide requires each lowlander to make a Bushcraft check each day: failure costs d3 Hit Points, less the adventurer's Constitution modifier.

Anyone thereby reduced to zero Hit Points has suffered hypothermia, aggravated by altitude, and must rest to be re-warmed, with hot food and drink, for a full day in order to function again (i.e. return to one Hit Point). Days and nights of such misery may send the adventurers back to Last Pine Pass.

The Couloir

The directions take the adventurers to a hanging glacier beneath a nameless mountain, neither visible from any permanent settlement. A couloir, varying in width from two to twelve meters, leads upward from the glacier, debouching into a cirque four hundred meters above.

With the help of a better-than-average guide (i.e. Nine Frond or Last Feather), a party can ascend the couloir in a mere four hours. Without such expertise, it takes eight hours, and each climber must succeed in a Strength or Dexterity check (equal or under on d20).

Failure indicates a fall. A fall requires a Save vs. Paralysis (Reflex); roped climbers gain a +4 to the roll and will not slide to the bottom of the couloir if they fail.

Success: lose d3 Hit Points to scrapes and bumps.

Failure: lose (d6 + 1) Hit Points or roll for Injury (see below).

Bypassing the couloir by establishing another route to the cirque takes d4 additional days, even with a guide.

Optional Rule: Injury

This mechanic allows Referees to simulate debilitating hurts. Certain hazards (e.g. falls) and attacks may inflict an Injury instead of reducing Hit Points.

The player rolls d20 and add the character's Constitution modifier to determine severity.

- 4 or lower: Crippling: lose d8 from one ability score, permanently. (Only the Heal spell or other powerful magic will mend.)
- 5 to 15: Serious: lose d6 from one ability, recovered at one point per month. (Cure Serious Wounds will mend.)
- 16 or higher: Minor: lose d4 from one Ability, recovered at one point per week. (Cure Light Wounds will mend.)

A healing spell on the injured party can either restore Hit Points or mend the Injury but not both. The Referee may let the player choose what ability suffers and narrate the Injury.

The Monument

Near the top of the couloir, on its north side, a white intrusion of pegmatite juts from the mountain, carved in the likeness of a skeletal figure squatting on a plinth. Anyone familiar with Elven sculpture recognizes the technique as only middling.

Passing this figure activates a phantasm: snow from the couloir above swirls down into a figure resembling the skeleton of a human infant some four meters long. It will crawl headfirst down the couloir, snapping toothless jaws.

The Montane Stillbirth

Armor Class: as an unarmored human (but only affected by spells or enchanted weapons)

Base Attack Bonus: +6 (THAC0: 14)

Damage: d12 (cold, contusion)

Hit Dice: 5

Hit Points: 20

Morale: 12

Movement: as a human

The phantasm causes only illusory damage, but anyone reduced to zero Hit Points automatically falls down the couloir (see above), causing real damage. Anyone struck by the Montane Stillbirth may Save vs. Magic (Will) to grasp this phantasm as illusory, thereby becoming immune to its attacks.

However, to anyone who has not yet had occasion to make this Saving Throw, and to anyone who has failed this Saving Throw, the Stillbirth continues to seem real. Where its jaws strike the living appear white patches that evoke both frost and mildew; these spread over armor, clothes, and flesh, bluing fingernails and lips. (To terrorize the players, instruct them to keep track of the number of rounds elapsed since the Stillbirth struck their characters.)



The Cirque

The couloir widens and the ground dips to form a natural amphitheater a hundred meters wide, filled with snow and moraine. Against the sky on the far side of the cirque rises the silhouette of the tomb.

The tomb consists of a flat-roofed mausoleum of basalt masonry on a foundation cut down into the living rock. It sits on the edge of a cliff; below its eastern wall, an escarpment drops away five hundred meters to an unnamed glacier.

A four-meter-wide staircase rises from the snow to the door of the Mausoleum. Wind scours the snow from the upper stairs and the Mausoleum entrance. Carved into the stonework on either side of the door appear faux windows, vertical slits with leaded glass in their centers. A similar pair of faux windows appears on each of the four walls of the Mausoleum.

At each the building's four corners, a colossal stone figure of a crouching, bearded, nude Dwarven slave, in chains, appears to support the roof on his shoulders. Any Elf, and any other character who rolls under his or her Intelligence on a d20, recognizes these figures as depictions of Dwarves, said to have retreated underground after the War Against the Dwarves some 3,000 years ago. In that war, which founded the Elven state, Thuuz Nanifer's father gained the epithet "Dwarf-Breaker" but lost his life.

If anyone steps onto the platform before the Mausoleum, the northwest statue will turn its head and speak, in a seismic Elvish bass: "Who disturbs the sleep of the General?"

If the addressee does not then utter the password (which the adventurers do not have), the southwest figure will turn its head to rumble in Dwarvish, "Vex not the heir of the Dwarf-Breaker." Once each has spoken, neither will stir again unless someone utters the now-lost password for the Mausoleum entrance.

The atlantes at the east (cliff) end of the tomb—ordinary statues—keep silent. None of the four statues will stir if attacked or defaced.

If the adventurers were somehow to utter the lost password for the entrance, then the northwest statue would animate fully, detach itself from the stonework to stand on the platform. It would then turn back and press a panel that its own body had concealed; this would raise the interior bar that holds the door shut, but without waking the Stertorous Recapitators (q.v.) inside the Mausoleum. However, without this password, visitors have no way of knowing of the existence of the panel behind the stone figure. (See "In the Mausoleum.")

The Mausoleum Door

The door of the Mausoleum, of ordinary width, appears carved from a single slab of basalt. It bears an inscription, in Elvish, at eye level: three stanzas from *The Dirge of Thuuz*, forgotten even by Thuuz's partisans due to its mediocrity (typical of Metropolitan occasional poetry). A non-Elf must stand within 1.5 meters of the door to read it.

214.

Yet onward came the Plastron'd Host, their Pikes
Nacreous, flashing with each Tortoise Step.
Axe bit Helm, Birds-of-War found Elven Eye'n,
And Blood-slick Hands let Steel meet crimson Surf.
Cried my Lord, Firstborn of the Dwarf-Breaker,

215.

"Knights of the Metropolis, and Magi,
And Yeomen pledg'd to War for Steadings free,
Fly not, for in the Tower, my Design
Has sped. From our scuted Captive I have
One true, abyssal Name by Science wrung:

216.

That Fiend they venerate by Fires at Sea,
Unnamable no more. A Hecatomb
Of Slaves prepare, to glut my Servitor
From Voids beyond the Night. The Queensport's Bane
Shall now our Savior turn. Victory, hail!"

At the Referee's discretion, an Elf who rolls his or her Intelligence or lower understands one or more historical allusions in *The Dirge of Thuuz*. (See "Elven Reticence," on the next page.)

The Mausoleum door appears designed to open inward; no hinges show on the outside. A combined Strength score of 24 can shift the door: it begins to grind slowly inward. However, when it has travelled three centimeters along its arc, it releases the catch of the trapdoor under the flagstones (see "The Trap," below).

Optional Rule: Elven Reticence

Among their own kind, Elves loathe to speak directly of Elves who have died. Among persons belonging to what they politely term “the perishing races,” most Elves refuse even to speak aloud the names of Elven dead. Instead they resort to euphemism and evasion.

Elves in the expedition to Thuuz’s tomb will therefore resist discussing Thuuz, Elven memorial practices, or eschatology with non-Elves.

To reflect this, every time an Elf gains some information about Thuuz (for example, the significance of images or epithets contained in the inscription from *The Dirge of Thuuz*) but refuses to share that information with non-Elves, the Elf character gains 250 bonus Experience Points. Each Elven character participating in the suppression gets the full award.



Temporizing Duplicator

Any spell cast directly upon the Mausoleum door, lintel, frame, or threshold will activate its Temporizing Duplicator. This device will absorb the energy of a spell cast upon the door, using it to conjure a Temporizing Duplicate of the caster.

The apparatus inheres in the door's fourth through seventh dimensions. Spells or similar magical effects that make hidden phenomena visible will allow casters to infer the Duplicator's presence where it intersects with the material world, provided casters do not direct those effects solely at the door. On the basis of such inferences, a Dispel Magic cast toward the extradimensional Duplicator (and not the door) will render the device inoperative for 12 minutes plus one minute per caster level. A more powerful spell of dismissal or exorcism (i.e. fourth level and above) will render the Duplicator permanently inoperative.

The Duplicator grants the molecules of door, lintel, frame, and threshold greater durability than normal matter. A force powerful enough to damage them would vaporize the tomb.

If someone casts a spell on the door, the Temporizing Duplicator reaches back into that caster's timeline 12d12 seconds, bringing forward a Temporizing Duplicate of the caster and anything he or she carried, copied down to the quantum level. The Referee should therefore keep track of the positions and activities of spellcasters near the Mausoleum, to better reconstruct the whereabouts and wherewhens of anyone duplicated.

The Temporizing Duplicate blinks into the space between the caster and the door, facing a random direction (roll d8 for compass heading), just before the spell would take effect. This duplication consumes the spell and spoils the casting. Duplication restores any Hit Points lost or spells cast during the intervening seconds, including the spell that activated the Duplicator.

Ask the players how they respond to the appearance of the Duplicate. This may require a roll for Initiative.

The author suggests that the Referee also ask the player of the spell-caster, whether publicly or privately, how that character might respond to the world seeming to skip several beats or to the sight of his or her doppelgänger. To keep the players guessing, the Referee might instead forgo asking suggestive questions and instead run the duplicate as an NPC until the original character begins to suffer the ill effects from Temporal Evaporation (see below).

The subatomic particles of original caster's body and belongings soon begin to pay their debt to the Temporizing Duplicate, evaporating into particles that transfer the caster's mass-energy backwards through time. Destroying the Temporizing Duplicator will not halt this process.

Temporal Evaporation: a Timeline in Minutes

0 to 60 seconds: no ill effects

Second minute: headache, nausea, and mild confusion: suffer -4 to all d20 rolls; the caster must succeed a Saving Throw vs. Magic (Will) to cast a spell. (The caster may try to hide this malaise.)

Third: Something like radiation sickness reduces the caster to one Hit Point. The caster cannot walk unaided and begins to bruise spontaneously. Hair falls out.

Fourth: The caster hemorrhages spontaneously; the skin blisters, as do the hard surfaces of any items duplicated. Cloth frays. A stench of ozone and strange chemicals chokes bystanders. Death comes during this minute.

Fifth: The corpse's skin and viscera dissolve, releasing blood and fat in a widening slick that boils without heat. Items of stone or metal skitter like ice on a griddle. By the end of this minute, the caster has evaporated, leaving trails in the dust where it flowed. No odor remains, for the molecules that constituted it have evaporated backwards through time.

At some point (the author suggests during the second minute), ask the player of the evaporating spell caster if he or she would like to run the TempORIZING Duplicate in addition to the original.

The Duplicate suffers no physical effects from the original's evaporation. It will live normally. Nothing done to the Duplicate affects the original.

If anyone else casts a spell on the Mausoleum door, it functions the same way.

However, if during his or her own Temporal Evaporation the original caster should cast any spell on the Mausoleum door, then the TempORIZING Duplicator temporarily overloads. The second spell also fails, but no second Duplicate appears. The door gives no outward sign (since the Duplicator's fifth through seventh dimensions act as its heat sink), but for the next 3d6 hours, the Duplicator remains inoperative, and spells cast against the door work normally.

The Trap

Anyone closely inspecting the flagstones before the door (e.g. by touch, magnifying glass, or artificial light) will notice that a two meter by two meter square of the flagstones appears cleaner of grit than the rest of the pavement. Anyone sounding the flagstones with some heavy object will notice that this area sounds more resonant than others.

The hinge of this trapdoor lies on the west side (toward the steps). Provided at least 50 kilograms rests upon the trapdoor while someone pushes on the Mausoleum door, the trap springs open.

Anyone on the panel or its edge must Save vs. Paralysis (Reflex) or fall, losing d6 Hit Points. Failing this Save by more than five results in an Injury (q.v.). Chains affixed to the free end of the trapdoor will immediately pull it back up into position with a boom; it locks until released again by pressure on the Mausoleum door.

The trapdoor opens above a chamber with a five-meter-high vaulted ceiling. On the trapdoor's underside, a panel of some exotic, non-corrosive metal (worth (2d6 x 100) Coins) holds the flagstones in place. Stone vaulting protects the trapdoor's hinge. The trapdoor as a whole, flagstones over metal, weighs 400 kilograms.

With a metal chisel, someone who climbed to the ceiling could disable the catch on the trapdoor in d4 hours. The counterweight mechanism for closing the trapdoor lies behind the masonry of the west wall; with adequate tools, exposing and disabling it would take 2d4 labor-hours. The metal of the counterweight mechanism and chains will fetch (d6 x 100) Coins.

1: The Antechamber

The air in this level remains below freezing day and night; breath turns to fog. Yet despite this cold, a hint of putrefaction hangs in the air.

On the floor of the Antechamber lies a thin layer of dust, smeared and printed by shod feet. In a corner lies a sack containing a waterskin, a bedroll, and 2d4 days of desiccated rations. A serrated war club (d8, ironwood carved with the iconography of the Owl Clan), an obsidian knife, and a wooden mallet lie nearby.

Frescoes, executed by a skilled muralist of the Elven Neoclassical school (sometimes disparaged as the “Misty Painters”), cover the walls. Foreigners looking at the paintings will know only the unbracketed information, but all Islanders, and any Elves who roll their Intelligence score or lower on a d20, will know the bracketed as well.

The south fresco depicts warriors of the Twelve Clans in various states of internecine warfare as well as surrender to Elven soldiers, whom the muralist has depicted setting fire to shrines of the Twelve Clans.

[This fresco shows infamous traitor Celestial Agate (“The Fratricide”) garroting his elder brother in return for Islander slaves from Thuuz. A corner depicts the famous story of band of Islander warriors trapped in a cave and resorting to cannibalism of the dead, but the artist has depicted them murdering each other for food. The Twelve Clans’ cosmology associates this wall’s direction, the south, with taboos governing eating and war.]

The west fresco depicts Elves torturing and executing Islander rebels by a variety of means: abacination, burning, impalement, pitchcapping, squassation, and all manner of dismemberments. The Elves leave the dead exposed to flies and carrion birds.

[The latter fresco shows contempt of the Twelve Clans’ rituals of cremation and two-step burial. The Twelve Clans’ cosmology associates this wall’s direction, the west, with funeral rites and the veneration of ancestors.]

The north fresco depicts leering Elven soldiers disporting among nude and exaggeratedly voluptuous Islander women and girls, who bathe the soldiers’ feet and help them undress. Enslaved Islander men, clad in loincloths [of the kind worn by boys who have not yet taken the tattoos of manhood], stand in waiting, holding platters of food and drink.

[The Twelve Clans' cosmology associates this wall's direction, the north, with taboos governing nudity and sexual propriety (which forbid sexual relations with Elves).]

The frescoes exceed even the worst stories from the Island People's lore of the occupation. Moreover, only three deeds carry a capital penalty among all the Twelve Clans—murder, cannibalism, and sexual relations between Elves and Island People—and these paintings depict all. The limner painted not to warn but to outrage, provoking Islander tomb raiders to rashness.

An archway opens into a hall to the east, the direction that Twelve Clans' cosmology associates with the patriarchy of chiefs. Among the Island People, visitors calling upon a chief approach his longhouse through a courtyard on its western side, a space where children and certain tabooed adults (e.g. pregnant women, men whose sons have married within the past month, and so on) may not enter. Foreigners must succeed an Architecture check to know this, but no Islander can mistake the position of this door as anything but an insult, in that it forces entrants to approach the remains of the Butcher as they would approach a chief of their own people.

On the floor on the north side of this archway sits the stub of a candle in a pool of congealed wax.

Optional Rule: The Twelve Clans and Their Taboos

Roll d12 for the strength of a given clan's taboo against some forbidden practice, object, or creature.

- 1–2 petty: broken often, with few consequences
- 3–5 minor: broken often, but with social or legal consequences
- 6–10 major: broken seldom, always with legal consequences
- 11–12 capital: broken rarely, forbidden on pain of death

A member of the Twelve Clans who defaces or destroys an Elven violation of his or her Clan's taboos gains 250 bonus Experience Points. Each Islander character participating in the execration gets the full award.

❧ The Western Courtyard

Across the center of this room stands a bench of white marble. At each end sits a life-sized statue, in black marble, of an Elven child reading an octavo book. These represent the deceased's twin children, Chhabuk and Nevvin, at age ten. Each wears fine clothing. The pages and spines of their books bear no writing.

Beyond the bench lie two corpses. Four steps rise to a wooden door, closed, upon which a white inlay seems to depict a recumbent figure.

On the walls, floor-to-ceiling frescoes depict outdoor, domestic scenes of the Western Courtyard of Lord Nanifer's house in the Metropolis of the Elves. On the north wall, guests dine in shaded groves, as liveried servants wait; on the south wall, adults play at cards while children, including the two represented by the statues, play at lawn games (darts, trucco, bowls). The ceiling, four meters high in this room, bears a trompe-l'oeil painting of the sky on a summer night, seen through boughs drooping under the weight of flowers.

If anyone tries to enter the eastern half of the room (i.e. crosses the line formed by the long axis of the bench), the statues animate. They children close and pocket their stone books, then approach the intruders, their steps grinding like millstones.

The girl will say, in Metropolitan Elvish, "The password, if you please."

Then, the boy will say, in still more peremptory Metropolitan, "None go beyond without the password."

The statues can say nothing else. If anyone tries to advance farther into the room, or if nobody replies during the following round with the correct password (which presently lies in the Crypt beyond), then the statues attack.

The Statues of Chhabuk and Nevvin

Armor Class: as an unarmored human (but see below)

Base Attack bonus: +4 (THAC0: 16)

Damage: see below

Hit Dice: 3 (150 kilograms each)

Hit Points: 15

Morale: 12

Movement: slow (half that of a human)

The statues consist of rigid stone that reshapes itself twenty-four times per second, such that their movements appear uncannily precise. The statues attack by grabbing, then crushing in subsequent rounds.

The initial grapple causes no damage. To break free, the captive must, on his or her turn, succeed in a Grapple check (i.e. opposed d20 combat roll) against the statue.

If the target fails to break the grapple, then on statue's next turn, it will squeeze. The victim must choose between losing d8 Hit Points or suffering an Injury (see "Optional Rule: Injury").

Weapons of ordinary wood or stone do not affect a statue's Hit Points, nor do piercing weapons. Metal slashing weapons cost it only one Hit Point, but on a miss by five or more, the stone blunts the metal by d3 damage (until repaired by a smith). Only bludgeoning weapons enchanted or made of metal cause full damage.

The statues have no minds to ensorcell with Sleep, Charm, Hold, or related spells.

Once roused, the statues will remain active as long as intruders remain anywhere in the Western Courtyard; they ignore intruders in the Antechamber and the Parlor. They will not leave the Western Courtyard, and they will always return to their reading if no living intruders remain within the room.

If anyone says to the statues, in Elvish, "Peace, my children," they will reply in unison, "Yes, Father," and return to their reading on the bench. They will then remain unresponsive for the next hour, at which time they reset. This password will only work twice more; after the third use, nothing will deactivate them.

The Bodies

Just beyond the bench lie the remains of a male Islander dressed in heavy mountaineer's clothing. Two pairs of child-sized handprints show where the statues caught him by the neck. Cold and altitude have mummified his flesh; his tattoos and the patterns of his clothing appear antiquated to Islanders, but Elves may remember the styles as current two centuries ago.

He carried forty meters of rope coiled around his waist. Beside him lie a spear, broken in two, a burnt-out torch, and an ordinary steel machete. Nearby lies a bag from which someone appears to have dumped ordinary goods, now scattered on the floor.

- a pair of woolen stockings
- five candles
- four torches, wrapped in oilskin
- a small, tin oil lamp (empty), wrapped in oilcloth
- a whetstone
- three days of rations
- four iron spikes
- chalk
- twenty meters of twine

Beside these items lies a broken spear-shaft, headless.

Four steps lead up to the wooden door at the far end of the room. On the steps lies the frozen, headless body of an Islander woman in heavy alpine clothing (over leather armor). Her blood, frozen in a cascade, has cemented her to the stairs beneath a fan-shaped spatter up the wall. She has lain dead for only a year, so that the cold and altitude have not yet mummified her flesh.

Her neck appears to have been severed by many cuts, not by a single stroke. Surrounding her body and up the stairs beyond, dozens of bare human footprints, in blood, have smeared the dust.

Against a wall lies an altitude-mummified head of an Islander man. This belonged to the Stertorous Recapitator (q.v.) who took the woman's head.

The woman wears a fat gold ring (worth 600 Coins). At her waist hangs a quiver of 24 crossbow bolts. A shoulder bag, tangled around her arm, contains the following:

- a silver ear-disc (worth 200 Coins) and a dagger of the finest Elven steel, with scabbard, worth ten times normal value (both looted from the dead man)
- 147 Coins
- dried rations (six days)
- a gourd of water that has frozen and burst
- an oilskin cloak
- flint and steel
- eight torches, wrapped in oilcloth
- a pouch containing a fine obsidian mirror (worth 350 Coins)
- a pair of bone dice
- a pouch containing plugs of chewing tobacco of the highest quality

Near her body lie a dual-headed Islander war club (d8, ebony, in the style and iconography of the Nautilus Clan) and two Islander blankets bundled around other goods. The first blanket surrounds two fine Metropolitan side-swords with scabbards (each 2d4 times normal value). The second blanket surrounds the Left Leg of the Brass Man (q.v.), seemingly cut from a life-sized, hollow brass statue (an uninspired piece of Metropolitan Post-Heroic sculpture). Corrosion suggests that someone cold-chiseled the leg from the statue more than fourteen centuries ago. Yet despite its apparent age, the statue appears to have depicted an Islander man whose ritual tattoos match the style now current among the Clan of the living Islander nearest to the Leg at the moment of its uncovering. (In the absence of Islanders, roll for Clan.) The Leg will fetch 3d100 coins from a collector of oddities.⁴

On the closed wooden door, mother-of-pearl inlays render a *gisant* figure: a gowned corpse lying in state on a bier surrounded by flowers. This door opens toward the next room; it has a latch, but no lock.

Optional Rule: Stolen Goods

Weapons, jewelry, home furnishings, and the like that once belonged to House Nanifer bear either the maker's mark of the artisan or an inscription dedicating the object to the client, enough to make a law-abiding buyer suspect theft.

Selling these goods to a fence who will ask no questions will reduce the looters' take by 2d4 x 10%.

4. *The Brass Man does not otherwise appear in this volume.*

❧ The Parlor

The stench of death grows stronger in this room that re-creates a parlor in house Nanifer, appointed with wood paneling and a parquet floor. On the north and south walls, paneling surrounds plaster rectangles on which appear trompe l'oeil frescoes: the south depicts a view from an upper-story bay window, looking down into gardens; the north, a view overlooking the Metropolis of the Elves.

A rug with a geometric pattern covers most of the floor; disturbances in the dust indicate that many items have been taken or moved. Many footprints, some bloody, lead through the room, both ways. On the upper walls hang hunting trophies: tusks, pelts, skulls, and claws.

The huge grappling-claws of a pair of Greater Dromaeosaurs (*Homoraptor occidentalis*) form the base of an oil lamp; the stained-glass hood depicts an Elven hunting party stalking a pair of the beasts. The lamp will fetch (2d4 x 500) Coins if recovered unbroken. (The Twelve Clans subject the Banded Tooth-Bird, as they call this predator, to a variety of taboos, and although they defend themselves against her, they never stalk her without ritual guidance from their priesthood.)

The cranium of a seemingly eyeless, colossal salamander (unknown to Elves and Islanders alike) forms the base of a glass-topped coffee table, worth (d6 x 1,000) Coins if the adventurers can get it down the mountain in one piece.

The Demon Lung

On the coffee table sits an apparatus that looks like a bulbous water pipe of glass, empty of both water and tobacco, small enough to hold in one hand. The unusually thick walls of its vase give the pipe heft.

Close inspection shows that its glass walls contain, sandwiched between them, a layer of fluid (a tincture of zinc bromide and the ground carapace of a cymothoid isopod). The neck between bowl and vase bears etchings in a swirling pattern suggestive of smoke and ocean waves, with an inscription in Dwarvish characters distorted to match: “demon lung.”

Any spell caster who rolls half of his or her Intelligence or less on d20 knows the purpose of a demon lung: to contain, in the vase where an ordinary pipe would contain water, an enslaved Adiabatic Hob (q.v. *In Thanatoptic Catacombs*, Melsonian Arts Council, forthcoming). One can thereby use the Hob to filter smoke from various familiar and arcane preparations, while the shielding liquid sandwiched in the walls of the vase protects the user from the captive's radiations. The Hob imbues the smoke with properties beyond the ordinary (including risks of habit), to be determined in consultation with the Referee.

Although not a Dwarven original, this Elven reproduction will still fetch (2d4 x 1,000) Coins from a knowledgeable buyer.



The Wargame Table

A single slab of hardwood forms the top of this standing-height table, nearly three meters long and half again as wide. Glass paperweights hold down sheets of folio paper that form a pictorial map showing strategic locations during the Elven occupation of the West Island: a hand-made territorial expansion for *The General's Command*, the definitive Elven game of military strategy. The map depicts such remote and dangerous locales as the Desalinization Complex, the Blistered Forest, the Thaumaturgiron, the Western Shipyard and Submarine Pens, and the abortive Eastern Villas.

At the western end of the table, drawers hold game pieces. Velvet sacks contain circular wooden chits in three shades of natural wood, as well as tokens painted with the insignias of Elven military units and the icons of the Twelve Clans' totems. (The latter show fine technique but fumble in the iconography.) Velvet-lined wood cases hold lead figurines, each type cast in various poses, and painted in startling detail. They depict the following military units.



- Cases 1 and 2: Elves
 - 10d10 mailed soldiers armed with pikes
 - 10d10 mailed soldiers with shields, crossbows, and swords
 - 10d10 mailed archers (longbow) with bucklers
 - 6d6 officers, variously armed
 - 3d6 wizards, wearing the various magistral and doctoral regalia of the Royal University for Natural and Unnatural Philosophy, the Metropolitan Institute of Conjury, and the Imperial Abnormal School
- Cases 3 and 4: Islanders
 - 5d100 warriors with spears and war-clubs, whose fumbling “tattoos” bespeak the painter’s ignorance of the iconography of the Twelve Clans
 - 2d100 priests in clownish postures that, to an Islander, evoke everything but the ritual blessings and war dances of the Twelve Clans
 - (Each of the categories of Islander figures above counts as a violation of the taboos of the Twelve Clans.)
- Cases 5: Turtle-Folk (figures twice as massive as the above)
 - 5d12 anthropomorphic turtles holding pikes or huge axes
 - 3d12 anthropomorphic turtles with fat cone snails on their wrists, in the manner of falconers
 - (Each of the categories of Turtle-Folk figures above counts as a violation of the taboos of the Twelve Clans, which forbid representing the Turtle-Folk in pictorial or plastic arts.)
- Case 6 contains 6d6 extra-large figures representing all manner of fearsome creatures, ranging from natural beasts to mythological or supernatural monsters. (d4+1 represent beings that the taboos of the Twelve Clans forbid mortals to depict.)

Each case and its figures will fetch (2d6 x 50) Coins. At the Referee’s discretion, if a player character searches, he or she can find a figure that approximates his or her own appearance in miniature (with some risk of caricature).

At the eastern end of the table, instead of drawers, lie open cubbies, which store rulers, measuring twines, dice, rolled maps depicting other territories, and a codex version of the first or “Rogue Army” edition of *The General’s Command* (anonymous; printed; illustrated with woodcuts; quarto). Few Elves still play this edition of the game in favor of the seventh or “Academy Codexes” developed to train officers in Her Majesty’s Service, but the vintage rulebook and other paraphernalia will fetch (d6 x 1,000) Coins to a collector. The table, another (d6 x 500) Coins.



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The Manuscript

Among the maps lies a battered leather case containing over a thousand handwritten pages, comprising Thuuz's first complete draft of *A Strategic History of the West Island*, extensively annotated by the author and the generals among whom he circulated the manuscript. A shortened edition of the first third of the manuscript saw print during Thuuz's lifetime, and officer cadets in the Crown Academy still read excerpts, although the Crown has paid the publisher to print no new editions (to avoid stirring revanchist sentiments).

Any reader of Elvish who has not already read the print edition (i.e. who rolls Intelligence or under on d20) and who dedicates a month to studying the manuscript will gain one point of Intelligence as well as a firm grasp of the subject matter. Once authenticated, the manuscript will fetch (3d6 x 1,000) Coins.

Other Furnishings:

- three rolled tapestries, each worth (d6 x 200) Coins
- a two-player Elven game with ironwood board and glass tokens, worth 500 Coins
- two divans, worth 500 Coins each
- two end tables, worth 200 Coins each
- a fine rug, worth only 100 Coins due to bloodstains

Four steps up lead to a closed wooden door in the east wall; latched but not locked, it opens toward the next room. Mother-of-pearl inlays depict a decaying corpse (a transi) lying on a funeral bier. Worms writhe in its flesh, between the beaks of feasting crows.

Beneath the rug and the wood parquet floor lies the room's true floor of basalt flagstones inlaid with esoteric symbols in lead, silver, and iridium (worth (d6 x 100) Coins if extracted over 2d6 labor-hours). These serve to manifest the Spectral Inoculator (q.v.). Among these symbols run wires that extend beneath the parquets and into the Crypt beyond, under the Crypt's flagstones, to connect the symbols to the sarcophagus.

Within the Parlor, hidden by the parquets, wires also run down through holes among the flagstones. These lead into the resurrection apparatus beneath the floor (discussed below, "The Sub-Crypt"). The first person to touch any of these wires discharges the same necrovoltic charge as touching the sarcophagus (q.v.).

At the Referee's discretion, a spell-caster who discovers this wiring before someone releases the necrovoltic charge will understand its danger and can take steps to safely void, sink, or exorcise that charge, thereby preventing the Vaporous Inoculator (q.v) from manifesting. The author leaves the details of such a deactivation to the Referee but suggests that it should entail either the aid of conjured spirits or the possibility of generating multiple Vaporous Inoculators.

4: The Crypt

Air heavy with the reek of putrefaction turns the stomach.

Bare human feet have tracked blood across the floor of this room and up twin staircases on its far side. This blood has dried, not frozen, for the air here circulates with that of the Mausoleum above, which the sun warms just above freezing. On the north staircase sprawls a human body.

A plain, rectangular sarcophagus of alabaster dominates the room's featureless black masonry (which otherwise duplicates the architecture of the true Nanifer family crypt, elsewhere).

Wiring laid beneath the basalt flagstones (worth (d4 x 50) Coins if pulled up) connects the sarcophagus to the resurrection apparatus beneath the floor of the Parlor. The first living person to touch the sarcophagus receives a necrovoltic shock costing d3 Hit Points; like a static electrical charge, it will pass through gloves or mittens. This discharge causes the Spectral Inoculator (q.v.) to manifest in the Parlor.

The Sarcophagus

Its lid consists of a slab ten centimeters thick, which requires a combined strength of 48 to shift without tools. Given at least one metal pry-bar, a combined strength of 24 can shift it. Shifting the lid awakens the Stertorous Recapitators upstairs in the Mausoleum, which will rise, arriving in the Crypt in three rounds.

At the west end of the sarcophagus, facing the Parlor, an inscription reads as follows.

“Where treads Thuuz, Lord Nanifer,
Knight of the Metropolis?
Where now, General of the Western Isle?
Where, your Games and Tournaments,
Your Toasts among brother Officers,
Your Songs, your Hunting-Parties?
All this, and your strong right Arm,
Has fallen to the Worm.
Your Justice alone remains.”

If anyone taps on the top and sides of the sarcophagus, its west end sounds hollow compared to the others, suggesting a panel only a finger or two thick. Close inspection reveals a hairline seam around this panel. Prying out the panel intact requires an hour of labor with metal tools and artificial light. Anyone removing the panel intact can do so without activating the trap inside.

On the inner side of this panel, metal straps (riveted to the stone) hold in place four 250-milliliter glass ampoules. Ampoules one and two contain a white mineral powder; tubes two and four contain a clear liquid.

Breaking the panel smashes (d3+1) ampoules, allowing their contents to mix, creating a cloud of toxic vapor affecting anyone within three meters. If anyone breaks the panel with wanton force (e.g. if a player uses a verb like *smash* or *obliterate* to narrate the action), then all four tubes break.

If two or three ampoules break, those affected must Save vs. Breath Weapon (Reflex) or lose 2d6 points of Constitution with corresponding loss of Hit Points. Anyone who makes the Save merely loses d4 Hit Points.

If all four ampoules break, then the vapor costs 4d6 Constitution for those who fail the Save, and d6 Hit Points for those who succeed.

Anyone reduced below three Constitution becomes delirious and incapacitated, coughing bloody foam for 24 hours; anyone reduced to zero Constitution dies. Lost Constitution returns at one point per day of rest.

If, after rough handling, any ampoules remain intact, careful wiggling can extricate them from the straps without breakage.

Removing the panel uncovers a niche where lies a book, *Maun Hevich and the Thieving Cousin* (anonymous; printed; illustrated with hand-tinted woodcuts; of the same dimensions as the books held by the statues in the Western Courtyard). This children's story tells of plucky Maun Hevich, daughter of a minor aristocrat, who finds her morals tested by a visiting cousin who likes to steal. Miss Maun learns that nobody respects a thief, not even the thief herself.

Inside the front cover appears a bookplate, "From the library of," under which the name "Miss Nevvin" appears in a child's laborious cursive. Another child, with a cruder hand, has crossed through this and written below, "Master Chhabuk, Lord Nanifer."

The book, in acceptable condition and far from rare, will fetch only (2d8 x 10) Coins to a collector for its age (or ten times that if the buyer can verify the autographs). Anyone who reads Elvish knows of the Maun Hevich books and has a three in eight chance of having either read or heard bedtime readings from this particular story.

Inside the Sarcophagus

Inside the sarcophagus proper lies no coffin but a desiccated male Elven corpse, former adjutant of Thuuz whom the betrayers of Thuuz believed would betray them. The corpse wears alpine clothing, with empty scabbards for sword and dagger on his belt; ropes bind wrists to ankles behind his back. Smears of dried blood show where he battered his head against the lid of the sarcophagus. He wears a gold ring, worth 700 Coins, bearing the inscription, “TO LT. GHEEVIS – EVER MAY HE SERVE OUR HOUSE.”

Anyone rapping carefully on the bottom panel of the sarcophagus will find that it sounds hollow, although thicker than the panel at the end of the sarcophagus.

Persons above have no way of operating the latch underneath that keeps this panel from swinging downward. A few blows from a hammer will break the panel of marble covering a door made of the same corrosion-resistant metal as the trapdoor above the Antechamber. The absence of hinges suggests that this one, too, opens downward.

With metal tools, breaking through this trapdoor or dismantling the stonework to remove it would take (d4 + 1) labor hours. The scrap metal will fetch 2d100 Coins.

Below the trapdoor, a ladder of iron rungs set into the wall leads downward to an alcove and the staircase to the Sub-Crypt (q.v.).

Explorers may wonder how this trapdoor, designed to open using hand-operated bolts below, now appears shut. Careful inspection of the underside and its three bolts reveals dozens of smudged handprints, apparently those of children; they seem to have pushed the panel upward into position and then shot the bolts. However, the top rungs of the ladder could not have accommodated so many, nor could children have lifted such a heavy door into place. Moreover, many of the prints appear on corners of the panel far from the ladder.

Inspection of the prints by strong light, especially with a magnifying glass, reveals them as crystallized upon surface layer of the metal, like fingerprints of metallic frost, faintly iridescent. If the inspector rolls his or her Wisdom or lower on a d20, he or she notices that the thumbs on these hands appear stunted, suggesting not children of the Elves or the Twelve Clans, but creatures dwarfed and apelike.

The trapdoor’s centuries in the necrovoltaic field of the resurrection apparatus have created an unexpected phenomenon connected with these crystalline prints. Anyone who perceives the prints directly makes quantum-perceptual contact, through time, with the Antecessive Subaltern (q.v.) that made them. This causes no ill effects, but the first such person who later casts any spell, no matter how much time intervenes, automatically conjures the particular Antecessive Subaltern that made the prints, in addition to casting (normally) whatever spell he or she had chosen.

The Decomposing Looter

Near the foot of the south staircase lies a heavy crossbow, discharged. Between the staircases lies a side-sword like those found in the bundle in the Western Courtyard.

In a bloodstain on the north staircase lies the headless, decomposing body of an Islander man, source of the odor. He wears mountaineer's clothing over a chainmail shirt. Although the body has lain here for over a year, it has decayed slowly because the room rises just above freezing for a few hours on a sunny day. Bloody footprints of bare human feet surround the body. Nearby lie a mummified arm and the pieces of a mummified human head, hacked apart.

Warn players that anyone rifling the corpse must Save vs. Poison (Fortitude) to avoid adding the odor of vomit to the odor of carrion. The man carried the following.

- in a leather purse
 - 129 Coins
 - a scrap of leather on which someone has burnt, with a hot stylus, in Elvish capitals, the words "PEACE MY CHILDREN"
 - two pipes, and a pouch containing three kinds of tobacco
 - a necklace of white jade beads, Elven workmanship, worth 400 Coins
- in a rucksack
 - seven torches
 - one flask of lamp oil
 - an iron skillet
 - four days of rations
 - a nearly-empty steel flask (worth 20 Coins) containing one last draught of Elven brandy
 - mittens and heavy scarf
 - and an ivory flute
- in a sack
 - paired amethyst bookends carved in the likeness of enslaved Dwarves holding up the books, worth 200 Coins each or 500 for the pair
 - a silver goblet, worth 500 Coins.

8: THE MAUSOLEUM

On either side of this long hall, eight low basalt slabs rise from the floor, and upon each lies the mummified corpse of a tall, sturdy Islander man, each now transformed into a Stertorous Recapitator (q.v.).

The sixteen corpses wear the loincloths traditionally worn by boys initiated into the youngest of the age grades of the Twelve Clans. (Until children become adept at controlling bladder and bowels, the Island People do not attire them below the waist.) The Clans taboo the wearing the clothing appropriate to a different age grade, making the garments on these corpses a humiliation even in death.

Their shriveled hands hold kitchen knives—cleavers, paring knives, chef's knives, and so on—dark with rust and other stains. The clan and age-grade tattoos on these bodies appear exotic due to their antiquity; anyone familiar with the Colonial era who also rolls Intelligence or lower on d20 recognizes the tattoos' iconography as current fourteen centuries ago.

A crossbow bolt juts from the chest of a body now wearing the head of the decapitated male adventurer lying on the Mausoleum staircase. From the chest of another bloom the splinters of a broken spear-shaft. Yet another wears the head of the decapitated female adventurer found in the Western Courtyard. Both heads appear fresh, eyes shut as if sleeping.

If anyone disturbs the Recapitators—by touching them or by casting any spell upon them—then all rise. The heads of the man and woman, which awaken grafted onto bodies whose limbs they cannot control, will cry in horror and confusion. The man will beg for help; the woman sobs, entreating Islanders to flee and save themselves.

The man's head has a silver tooth worth 50 Coins; the woman's, a gold-and-pearl earring worth 500 Coins.

A lantern lies broken on a blackened patch of floor between the westernmost pair of slabs.

At the west end of this room, a bar of stone holds shut the Mausoleum door. It will take a combined Strength of 16 or better to lift the bar and to drag open the door. Raising this bar triggers a catch that neutralizes the trapdoor, allowing persons exiting the Mausoleum to leave without springing the trap.

However, if anyone within the Mausoleum touches the bar, the Stertorous Recapitators awaken.

If the Mausoleum door stands open, then several Recapitators will move to clear any obstructions, then close it and lower the bar. Once they neutralize intruders in the Mausoleum, they will descend to the lower level to seek intruders there. After securing the tomb, they return toward their slabs, shutting interior doors behind them.

The Elvish password, "Rest from your labors," will cause them to return to their slabs, but this will work only three times. After that, nothing will appease them but the fresh heads of intruders.

❧ The Sub Crypt

This circular, vaulted chamber, its floor hewn into the living rock, sits directly below the Parlor. A staircase leads up to an alcove beneath the trapdoor that leads to the sarcophagus (q.v.).

The Machine

The device resembles an inverted pyramid some four meters high, pointing downward, its wider part having the same dimensions as the floor of the Parlor. The holes beneath the floor of the parlor lead into the collectors of the apparatus, which converts the vitality of the Diremptive Evasculators (q.v.) into energies that can bring Thuuz to a simulation of life. The machine terminates in a lattice-shaped metal emitter. This points downward toward the cinerary urn containing Thuuz's remains.

Any person with a grasp of n -dimensional vector calculus (such as a wizard of the Elven schools) who rolls his or her Intelligence or lower on d20 can, after some effort of visualization, recognize the lattice as evocative of the shadow of a five-dimensional tensegrity prism. However, any person who recognizes this pattern will also recall the necessity of using proper vision protection when observing it. A Saving Throw vs. Magic (Will) shall determine if he or she remembers in time.

One who makes the Save remembers to look away and avoid the sight, but one who fails immediately falls to calculating the vectors suggested by the lattice, losing all sense of time. Darkness will interrupt the effect; otherwise, if undisturbed, the gazer will continue staring until overtaken by death from thirst. Thereafter, for this person to avoid looking at the lattice, he or she must succeed a Saving Throw vs. Magic (Will) once per minute while in its suggestive presence.

Anyone with wizardly training who examines the inoperative machine for ten minutes or the operative machine for one minute, and who rolls also Intelligence or lower on d20, will recognize the design as reminiscent of the Necrolytic Reaction Pile at the Metropolitan Institute of Conjury. However, Thuuz has inverted that design to point *toward* mortal remains.

Given the proper tools, which would include ladders and a block and tackle, one could dismantle the apparatus in (2d20 x 4) labor hours, or a quarter of that time if one merely wanted strip it of valuable-looking parts or materials. And they do look valuable: not the only de-coagulative triodes and preon collimators but also

Crypts of Indormancy

the hardware connecting them comprise both familiar and exotic metals (e.g. holmium-yttrium crystals, subterranean orthostannates, and mantium-836). These components, brought down from the mountains undamaged, would bring (4d8 x 1,000). Stripped for only valuable metals, the machine yields a tenth of that.

If the Referee wants to flesh out the looters' descent, or if the players decide to revisit the tomb with bearers, then machine's heaviest component weighs 2d100 kilograms, its next heaviest half that, and so on.



The Cinerary Urn

On the floor beneath the machine sits an Elven cinerary urn of black ceramic, forty centimeters tall, weighing thirty kilograms. Its lid screws on.

The urn consists of eldritch ferrite, an inward-curving magnetic monopole. The field holds suspended within the urn a smaller vessel of monopolar ferrite, the ash capsule itself. The magnetic field of the latter points outward against the urn. Thuuz's executors mixed into the ceramic of this capsule the ashes of his skeleton.

This capsule serves as the non-conductive mounting for the enelechy invertors that will bombard Thuuz's remains with dark tachyons. This bombardment will enable Thuuz's mind to travel from the moment of his death, fourteen centuries ago, forward in time to the present; then, using the energy of the necrolytic pile, Thuuz will constitute a simulacrum of his body.

The urn, if recovered whole with the ash capsule, will fetch (2d4 x 500) Coins from a collector of ceramics or from a wizard or other philosopher.

The Wardrobe

This plain wardrobe came from one of the Nanifer guest rooms. Inside hang two of Thuuz's officer's uniforms, one field and one dress, a well-worn pair of boots, and male Elven toiletries of good quality.

A plain cotton sachet of herbs gathered from alien planets by inhuman means hangs among the clothing, and their not unpleasant fragrance will suffuse the room if anyone opens the wardrobe. Enchantments placed on these herbs coupled with sigils carved into the wood of the wardrobe generate a field that slows chemical reactions provided the sachet remains shut inside. Thuuz's clothing therefore looks as fresh as if had hung since only yesterday.

A living person shut inside will immediately experience dizziness and a feeling of smothering as the wardrobe's field disrupts normal metabolism. The Referee shall decide the effects on anyone forcibly trapped inside.

The sachet will bring (2d6 x 100) Coins from a wizard, alchemist, or apothecary, but it may contain the seeds or spores of invasive species (e.g. the Crepitating Speed-Teak) kept dormant by the cold, the altitude, or the enchantment of the wardrobe. Either uniform will fetch (2d6 x 500) from a collector; the wardrobe itself, (2d4 x 200).

On the floor of the wardrobe lie a plain leather traveling bag, a sword, and a letter folded into a Metropolitan Puzzle Purse (a letterfold used to keep letter contents private without resorting to the stuffiness of a waxen seal).

Resurrection

The first Diremptive Evasculator to enter the intake funnels below the floor of the Parlor activates the machine. It begins to hum, a sound that grows in volume and frequency as more Evasculators crawl to their doom. Into the Parlor rises a stench as of ketone-heavy blood on a stove lid.

In the sub-crypt, the emitter lattice glows purple, and coronal discharges of plasma lick downward toward the cinerary urn. Provided nobody interferes with the operation of the machine, then after 5d6 Evasculators enter, it generates a new body for Thuuz. (Alternately, the Referee may just set a target for how many Evasculators the machine must convert to resurrect Thuuz, keeping in mind that the average case of diremptive evasculaton produces six of the creatures.)

The hum shifts upward into a deafening whine that culminates in a thunderclap; this dies away with echoes that persist too long. The busbars within the machine melt, leaving it inoperative.

Among the fragments of the urn stands the resurrected Thuuz, naked, and only momentarily surprised, for his plan has worked.

Anyone touching the coronal discharges below the emitter lattice with something other than cold-forged iron must Save vs. Breath Weapon (Reflex). Success means that the person recoiled before the plasma discharged. Failure requires a roll of d8.

1–3 object singed: d4 points of damage

4–5 object scorched: 2d6 points of damage

6 object blasted: 3d12 points of damage

The Referee shall determine what range of ill effects one holding the object might suffer.

This premature discharge consumes the energy derived from 2d6 Evasculators, which no longer count toward the resurrection.

The Letter

A clear and sprightly hand has rendered the text.

father mine,

i grieve that i did not attend you at
the moment of your victory over that
sternest of generals, yet i trust that you
will forgive your bumblebee,

awaiting your return,
nevvin

Although the writer has used what appears to be ordinary black ink for the body of the letter, she has signed in her own blood; beside her signature she has applied her personal name-stamp in what seems a gesture of excessive formality for a letter from daughter to father. However, she compounded the ink of that stamp from her own blood and rare-earth metals, under particular astronomical circumstances, such that any competent wizard could use this letter to deliver a supernatural message in reply. (The author leaves the method to the Referee.)

The Bag

In the traveling bag lies a folded cloak, Thuuz's thumbled and tattered copy of *The Hantifrax Star Almanac* (sixteenmo; poor condition), a steel astrolabe, a wooden abacus, and a purse.

The purse contains (3d6 x 100) Coins, bars of precious metals worth a total of (3d6 x 1,000) Coins, and a velvet pouch.

The pouch contains a ring of dark, osmium-like metal, etched with symbols used in Elven thanato-tektology. It will fetch (2d4 x 500) Coins for its exotic workmanship alone.

By whispering the name of the Inhabitant imprisoned within the ring (known only to Thuuz, but at the Referee's discretion, discoverable through divination or research), a wizard wearing the ring gains +5 to d20 rolls related to his or her next Summoning (i.e. Saving Throws and Domination rolls). This power functions only once per day with no harmful side effects.

Speaking the Inhabitant's name a second time within a single rotation of the planet requires a Saving Throw versus Magic (Will). Success indicates a sore throat and laryngitis for the next 72 hours. Spells requiring verbal components automatically fail.

Failure of the Saving Throw causes the speaker's vocal cords to begin to disintegrate. The afflicted will lose 2d6 Constitution points (with a corresponding loss of Hit Points) at a rate of one per hour. At the end of the first hour, he or she can no longer speak intelligibly. If reduced below three Constitution, the afflicted becomes incapacitated. Provided someone tends the afflicted, he or she will not drown in blood and may recover one point of Constitution per day of rest. This ordeal permanently cripples the larynx, leaving it unable to generate resonant sound.

The Sword

In plain leather scabbard lies the Bane of Zerthun, the Dwarven spatha-type sword that Thuuz once wore, the same that Zerthun, Commander of the Third Legion, wore into battle against Thuuz's father. It has double fullers, an ivory grip, and a silver-inlaid guard and pommel; the blade bears a line from an anonymous Dwarven war poem, with each side bearing half of the line. (In the canons of Dwarven metallurgical poetics, the blade itself traditionally represents the medial caesura.) On one side, the blade reads, "for my nation"; on the other, "spills my blood." The ambiguity of *for* occurs in the original Dwarvish, as do the ambiguities of grammatical subject and object.

Any wielder not fortified through the performance of Dwarvish war-odes (now forgotten by all but a handful of veterans of the Ancient War) will fall under the spell of Bane of Zerthun: when a player character raises the sword against a foe, tell the player that in exchange for one Hit Point (representing luck and vigor, not bodily wholeness), the wielder can gain a bonus of two to hit and damage during that round of use.

If the player asks for further details of the exchange, refuse; demand an immediate decision on behalf of the Dead of the Third Legion. Tell the player, with contempt, that no Legionnaire questions strategy while on the battlefield.

If the player accepts this first exchange, then upon the next opportunity to use the sword—possibly the subsequent round—he or she must spend two Hit Points, gaining a bonus of three to hit and damage. This escalation continues until no foes remain unconquered.

To refuse the sword's compulsion toward recklessness or to break off combat before victory requires a successful Save vs. Magic (Will), as does giving up the sword, once one has used it in mortal combat. Thuuz knows the poems that neutralize the sword's compulsion, allowing him to use its power to trade any number of Hit Points for bonuses without escalating. However, the Referee must still announce how many Hit Points Thuuz commits. Thuuz recovers these points as he would damage from blessed or enchanted weapons (see below).

Optional Rule: The Referee Rolls Dice in the Open

Rolling dice in secret tempts the Referee to “fudge,” a polite euphemism often used by role-playing gamers for behavior that most would call “cheating” in other tabletop game settings.

If the Referee rattles dice behind a screen then announces results to his or her taste, then two different kinds of play obtain at the same table. In the first, most of the participants *play* a game governed by rules, with many outcomes determined by dice; in the second, one participant, the Referee, merely plays *at* a role-playing game. Like theatrical player inhabiting a role, the fudge-happy Referee mimes participating in a rule-governed game, possibly fooling even him- or herself.

Most defenders of rolling dice in secret argue that they reserve the right to veto dice in the service of something they call “the story.” A random wilderness encounter should not slay a heroic adventurer, they say, because this will disappoint players. (To this we might respond that if players want a game where they never lose their pieces, they should try *go*.)

Less often, defenders of fudging will say that a trap should not kill the one member of the party who holds the Special Whatsit necessary to defeat some villain or complete some task. They usually leave the reason unstated: because this will disappoint the Referee.

To both defenses I would respond that “the story” of what happens in an RPG session or series of sessions emerges at the table, from the interaction between preparation, improvisation, rules, and randomness. This interaction makes role-playing games distinct from scripted forms of play like historical reenactment, and we should therefore embrace it. If you want to control “the story,” then write a novel, a comic book, whatever. To veto the dice in favor of the Referee’s idea of how “the story” should unfold scrapes the living marrow out of this ritual, this medium, this social practice that we call the role-playing game. It reduces the dice to props instead of tools.

This is not to say that the Referee must cede control of the range of possibilities within of the game world. On the contrary, it makes thought and preparation all the more important, because once the Referee commits to parameters, then outcomes may occur that surprise everyone at the table, whether to their delight or (momentary) disappointment. A scenario designed such that the “wrong” result on a die roll will bring everything to a halt calls for better design, not fudging.

A good Referee first commits to stakes, then clearly defines for the players the possibilities that the dice can generate in a given roll, and finally abides by the result. To void that result reduces the Referee to that kid in the schoolyard who says, “But it turns out my force field was too strong for your lasers!” because he or she has already decided how the scene must end.

Thuuz, Lord Vanifer

Thuuz constitutes his new body from pseudo-baryons (mostly pentaquarks and hybrid mesons). It does not require sleep, food, or air. Provided he performs certain daily ritual meditations and avoids radiation hazards, it might last indefinitely.

Its flesh regenerates damage caused by ordinary material forces (e.g. weapons, flame) almost immediately. Blood or other tissue separated from the body dissolves into grayish strands of exotic matter that drift through the air like smoke. Thuuz regenerates vitality and damage lost to magic and to blessed or enchanted weapons more slowly, at a rate of only one Hit Point per day. His body will regenerate in this manner no matter how much abuse it suffers, provided he can spend one hour in meditation out of every twenty-four.

He cannot regenerate while under bombardment with positrons or while exposed to short wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation, including the ultraviolet in sunlight.

Thuuz has thirty-five Hit Points. Treat him as a 16th-level Magic-User. The preternatural strength of his pseudo-flesh grants him a Strength score of 20 (and a bonus of +4 to hit and damage in melee). The Referee must determine his repertoire of spells and determine which of them he can cast upon resurrection.

Depending on the circumstances in the tomb upon Thuuz's resurrection, he may wait for tomb-raiders to leave, or he may Summon supernatural help. If tomb raiders somehow block the trapdoor that leads upward from the sub-crypt, he will Summon a Magnetic Hypernaut (q.v.) to dismantle the apparatus so that he can ascend through the parlor floor.

Epilogue

If Thuuz escapes the tomb, the author leaves to the Referee the matter of what action he takes. Improvise in response to the outcome of the tomb raid and suggestions offered by your larger setting. Thuuz does not know the world he has come into and will need time to take his bearings. Use it.

Will he seek revenge against his betrayers? Some may have hidden, driven to reclusion by their fear of Thuuz's vengeance, while others may have grown complacent, confident that the General will not return.

What of the Revanchist movement? Will Thuuz aid their cause, or will he see in them as only a shadow of their conquering ambition? Will he recruit followers who deify him? How might undeath soften or harden his simulacrum of a heart? Will he attack the Twelve Clans wantonly, or has he malice only for Elves who have forsaken their mandate to civilize these islands?

And what of Chhabuk, Lord Nanifer, and Magistra Nevvin?



Antecessive Subaltern

At the Referee's discretion, conjuring an Antecessive Subaltern requires either a special variant of the Summoning spell or a higher-level spell.

Any spell-caster (Elven or Islander) who rolls half of his or her Intelligence score or lower on a d20 knows the following about this class of entity.

1. A Subaltern will obey a small number of commands from a wizard who knows how to conjure one. It will prompt the caster in a voice that only the caster can hear.
2. Elven law forbids the conjuration and use of Subalterns on private property without notarized written permission of the landowner. (Metropolitan legal codes define most of the world outside the Metropolis as "unclaimed" and therefore outside such statutory restrictions.)
3. Scholars debate the ontology of these beings. Some argue that Subalterns instantiate the living goodwill of some Power beyond mortal knowledge, while others argue that we should understand Subalterns as some higher-dimensional being, tools which mortals have learned how to use.

The priesthood of the Twelve Clans regards Subalterns as demonic, so that both the conjuring and the commandment of them violate the taboo against demonolatry.

One who conjures a Subaltern feels a prickling of the hairs on the back of the neck and hears his or her own voice address the caster in whatever language the caster spoke last. In a voice having the timbre of warm, even enthusiastic, conversation, but the volume of a whisper, the Subaltern speaks from just inside one ear or the other: "How can I help?"

No one else can hear this. At the Referee's discretion, a person not expecting the voice may react with a physical start (e.g. roll Wisdom or lower on a d20 or flinch away from the whisper).

The voice will say nothing more. If the caster gives the Subaltern a simple command, then the Subaltern will immediately earn its name. A Subaltern will perform d3 tasks; if it has a remaining task to offer, it will repeat its question. Silence after completing a task indicates that the Subaltern has departed.

Although immaterial, the Subaltern has 2d6 Hit Dice worth of mechanical force at its disposal. It can exert force instantaneously anywhere in the caster's line of sight for up to d100 minutes per command.

Executing a task against an unwilling target requires that the Subaltern roll to hit; on a miss, the caster must roll d12 on the Failed Task table (below).

The Subaltern understands when the caster addresses it; it will not execute a command addressed to another party. However, it has trouble following complex instructions.

“Simple” here indicates any task that the Referee believes that an attentive child of five years could carry out: lifting, carrying, pushing, opening, closing and fastening, putting things (solid or liquid) into containers, crushing things or picking up their pieces. “Things” can include living beings or parts thereof.

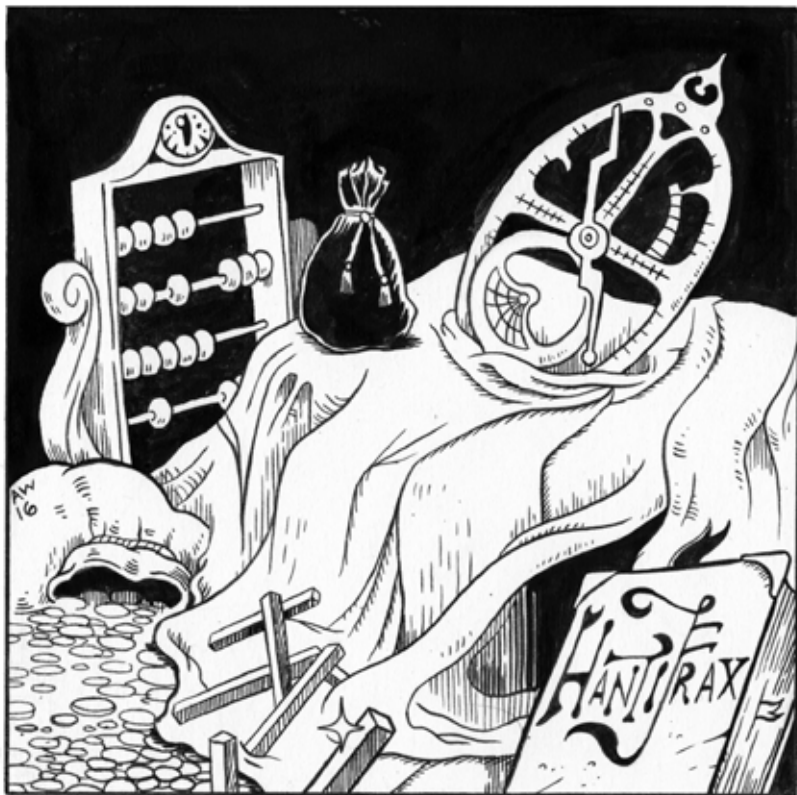
Any task beyond this simplicity requires that the player roll d12 on the Failed Task table, and that the Referee adjudicate the result.

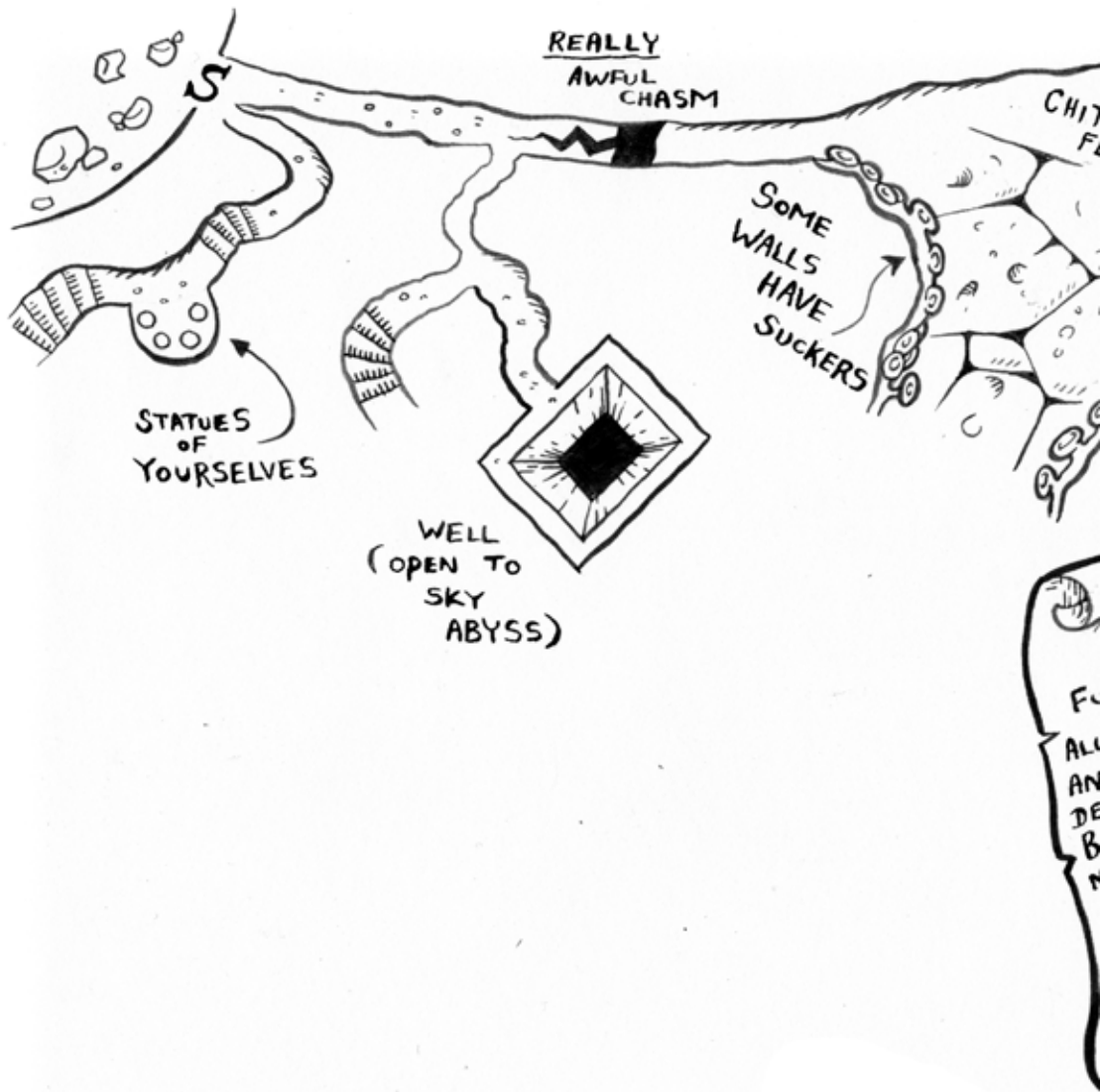
- 1–2 Wrong Verb: The Subaltern does the wrong deed to the right object.
- 3–4 Wrong Object: The Subaltern does the right deed to the wrong object.
- 5 Insufficient Force: The Subaltern fails to use its full power.
- 6 Aggressive Perfection: The Subaltern does the task badly, then immediately re-does it. Roll d8, then roll d20 for the number of zeroes to follow: this number represents how many times the Subaltern will attempt to perfect the task (unless given a new task, dispelled, or exorcised).
- 7 Wrong Verb & Wrong Object
- 8 Wrong Verb & Insufficient Force
- 9 Wrong Object & Insufficient Force
- 10 Aggressive Perfection & Wrong Verb
- 11 Aggressive Perfection & Wrong Object
- 12 Aggressive Perfection & Insufficient force

If the caster attempts to use the Subaltern against an unwilling target, prejudice these results favorably toward the target. For example, if the caster tells the Subaltern, “Pull that wretch’s head off,” the Subaltern may tear off the target’s belt (Wrong Object) or muss the target’s necklace and hair (Insufficient Force).

Anyone able to perceive normally invisible objects will see the Subaltern manifest against any surface that it touches as a swarm of flickering hands, paws, or other limbs. The Subaltern constructs this simulacrum by reaching backwards along the caster’s timeline to mimic the anatomy of his or her own ancestors or the beings that created those ancestors. This anatomy leaves prints on most metals.

To generate the number of years across which the Subaltern reaches, roll d12, then roll 3d6 for the number of zeroes following that number, then describe them in keeping with the (pre)history or cosmology of your game world.





At the Referee's option, one section of masonry in the Sub-Crypt looks more clumsily built than the others. Breaking through reveals a tunnel that leads deeper into the mountain, to a complex of vaults, spiral staircases, observatories, crystal caverns, tombs, Dwarven zip lines, eyries, more tunnels, ice flumes, shafts, underground dzongs, canals, ice caves, statueless plinths, tar pits, tar eyries, and fossilized spaceships. Begin drafting your sequel to *Crypts of Indormancy*, entitled *C2: Beneath the Beyond the Crypts of Indormancy*, but save some ideas for *C3: At War with the Crypts of Indormanc3-D* (pop-up book) and *C4: Entombing the Crypts: 4nal Indormancy*.

CONTINUOUS
LOOR

UNCONTAMINATED
WATER
SOURCE

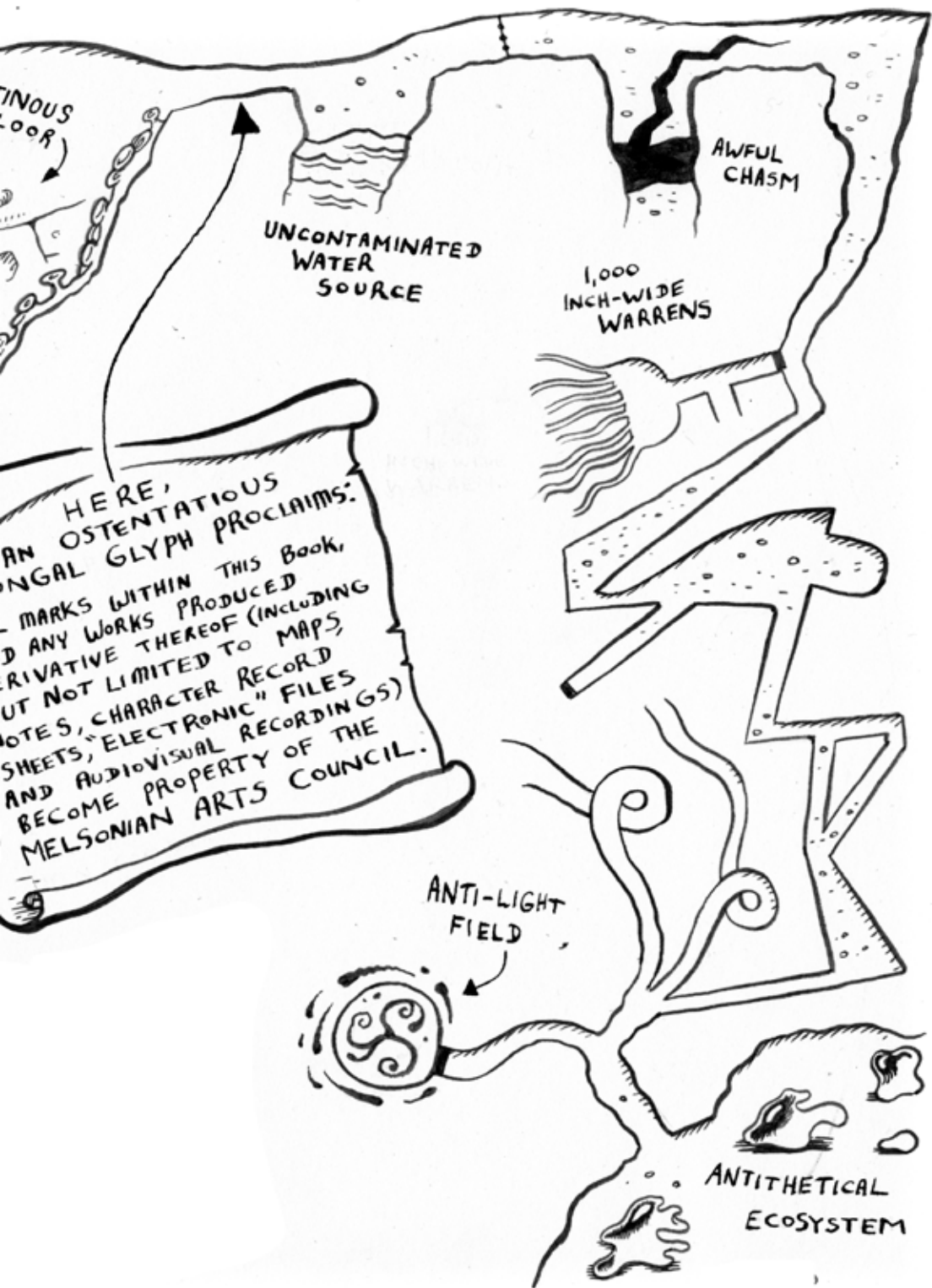
AWFUL
CHASM

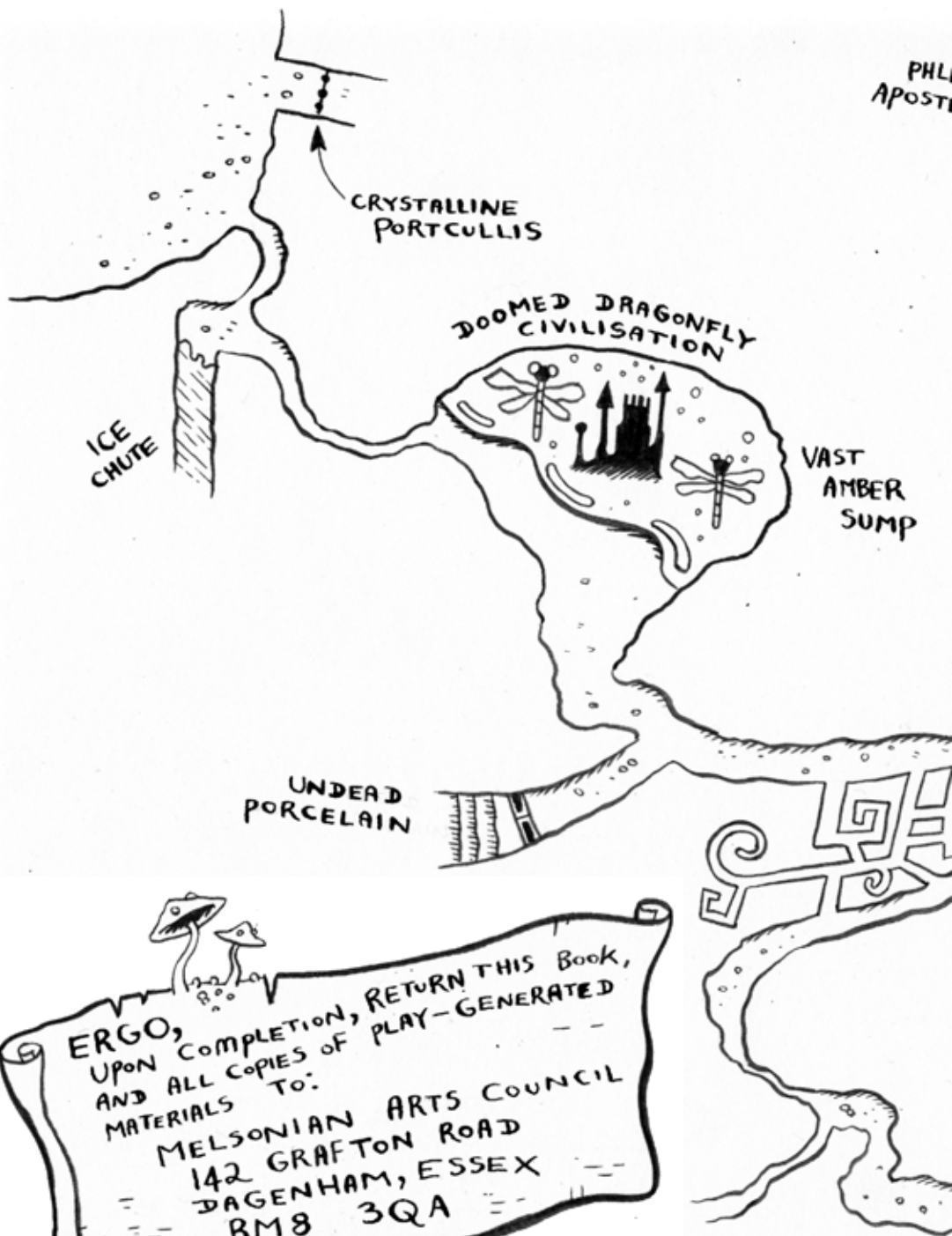
1,000
INCH-WIDE
WARRENS

HERE,
AN OSTENTATIOUS
NGAL GLYPH PROCLAIMS:
- MARKS WITHIN THIS BOOK,
D ANY WORKS PRODUCED
RIVATIVE THEREOF (INCLUDING
UT NOT LIMITED TO MAPS,
OTES, CHARACTER RECORD
SHEETS, "ELECTRONIC" FILES
AND AUDIOVISUAL RECORDINGS)
BECOME PROPERTY OF THE
MELSONIAN ARTS COUNCIL.

ANTI-LIGHT
FIELD

ANTITHETICAL
ECOSYSTEM





EGM
LES

PYRITE
SPIRE



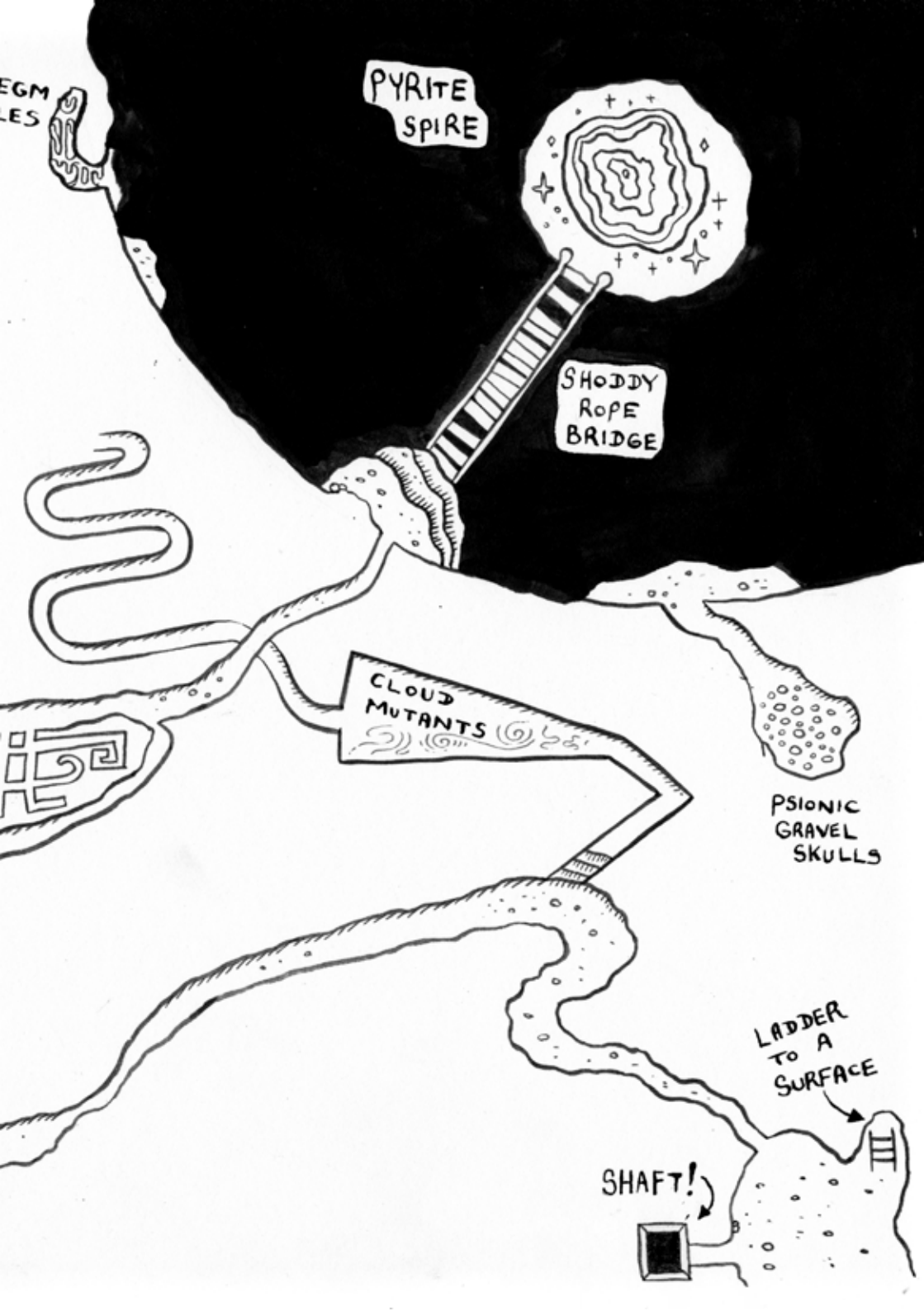
SHODDY
ROPE
BRIDGE

CLOUD
MUTANTS

PSIONIC
GRAVEL
SKULLS

LADDER
TO A
SURFACE

SHAFT!



Bestiary

DIREMPTIVE EVASCULATOR

Armor Class: as plate mail (from speed and smallness)

Base Attack Bonus: 0 (THAC0: 20)

Damage: possible Evasculatation (see below)

Hit Dice: ½

Hit Points: 2 (rubbery)

Morale: 12

Movement: fast (over short distances, like a squirrel)

Thuuz deliberately infected his body with etheric spores of a parasite with a three-part life cycle, one that requires an incorporeal vector to spread its spores, a host in which they can germinate, then a medium to which they return to spawn. The Spectral Inoculator serves as the vector, and intruders to the tomb serve as hosts for the parasite.

As the spores germinate and mature, a process that takes mere seconds, they commandeer the victim's blood and blood vessels. These flee the body as Diremptive Evasculators.

Their speed serves their haste to breed in ancestral spawning grounds or to die in the attempt. Although these grounds lie beneath a distant and alien sun, Thuuz, canny warlock, has embedded certain isotopes in the machinery of his resurrection apparatus, the spectral signature of which fool the Evasculators. They will mistake the intake funnels of the machine for their homeland.

Deceived, the Evasculators will rush to the Parlor floor and squeeze down between the wood parquets, exposing themselves to attack during the round that it takes each to wriggle through. Beneath the floor, they will enter the etherolytic blood-converters that mean their doom. The entry of the Evasculators activates the reaction pile, which then breaks down their bodies to power Thuuz's resurrection.

When the Inoculator touches a corporeal target that will serve as a host (any warm-blooded vertebrate), the target must Save vs. Poison (Fortitude). Success means no ill effects.

Failure means that the spores colonize some of the victim's blood vessels, which then exit: veins bulge, then erupt from the skin, as the Evasculators scuttle away on flailing, capillary limbs. Allow the player of the affected character to choose the site of the eruption. Alternatively, ask the players to quickly make a table of eight or twelve locations of eruption, and then use it to roll for any others.

The process has three phases and lasts for three rounds. Each new phase begins on the Evasculators' initiative turn.

- 1st: victim loses d3 Constitution and suffers great pain, but can still act.
- 2nd: victim loses another d3 Constitution, suffering excruciating pain and a -5 to all d20 rolls. Delicate skills and the casting of spells become impossible.
- 3rd: the victim loses another d3 Constitution and must also Save vs. Poison (Fortitude) or faint.

For every point of Constitution lost during eruption, one Diremptive Evasculator wriggles forth.

Lost consciousness returns after d20 minutes. Lost Constitution returns at the rate of one point per day of rest. Anyone reduced to zero Constitution by the eruption dies.

During the Evasculators' germination and eruption, the following spells will aid the victim.

- Cure Light Wounds spares the Constitution loss and prevents eruption during that round, without halting the process.
- Cure Serious Wounds, Dispel Magic, or Remove Curse both spares the Constitution loss that round and also halts the process.
- Heal halts the process and restores all lost Constitution.

If someone hinders its rush to spawn, an Evasculator will lash out with its sturdier, venous limbs, pricking the skin. Anyone struck must Save vs. Poison (Fortitude). Failure indicates that this Evasculator injects some of its contents into the victim, who then suffers his or her own case of diremptive evasculatation. Otherwise, the Evasculator will continue to fight until its way lies clear.

Any Evasculator prevented from reaching the etherolytic blood-converters will expire after 2d6 minutes, deflating in a pool of clots and plasma.

MAGNETIC HYPERNAUT

Armor Class: as chain mail

Base Attack Bonus: variable by Hit Dice

Damage: see below

Hit Dice: variable (by Summoning) or d8

1–3 one HD 4–5 two HD

6–7 three HD 8 2d4 HD

Hit Points: 5 per Hit Die

Morale: 9

Movement: fast (twice that of a human)

Beings from another universe send these autonomous probes into ours, but wizards sometimes pull them off course and commandeer them. A Magnetic Hypernaut manifests in our world as a ring torus, apparently made of liquid metals that swirl around the torus's poloidal axis. The torus constantly changes thickness and diameter, but its volume remains constant, about ten liters of metallic body per Hit Die. The Hypernaut floats above the ground, its axis constantly shifting.

An aurora, barely visible in daylight, surrounds it at a distance of three meters per Hit Die, as its fields cause translucent objects nearby (including human bodies) to glow as if lit from the inside. This effect causes no harm, but it renders the blood vessels in one's own retinas distractingly visible. Suffer a -2 penalty on any die roll requiring clear eyesight.

Magnetic Hypernauts can remotely manipulate metals, ferrous and non-. To wrest an item from an unwilling party, the Hypernaut must succeed an opposed melee attack, but for each of its Hit Dice it gains a +2 to its d20 roll. This constitutes the Hypernaut's action for that round.

A Hypernaut can defend itself by sending gusts of force that feel like the repulsion between like poles of two magnets. For every Hit Die of the Hypernaut, it can affect one human or corresponding mass of other creatures closely grouped. The gust provides actionless reaction: it does not push the Hypernaut back. (It uses another kind of force to move.)

Anyone struck must make a Save vs. Breath Weapon (Reflex), minus the HD of the Hypernaut. Success indicates that the victim can stand his or her ground, but may do nothing else this round. Failure indicates that the Hypernaut throws the victim back. For every HD, of the Hypernaut, the target of its force-gust suffers d4 damage and moves d3 meters in a straight line away from the Hypernaut. At the Referee's discretion, intervening obstacles will increase this damage.

Bringing a Hypernaut to zero Hit Points causes a breach in its seemingly liquid surface. The Hypernaut lists; into the breach the liquid mass of the Hypernaut now appears to drain. Its magnetic and auroral fields shrink with its bulk, until it vanishes with a mercurial slurp.

For every Hit Die of the Hypernaut, it also generates a field of powerfully directional magnetism one half meter in diameter. Any unattended metal object entering its field will be swept either up or down the toroidal surface of this field, and then into its vortex, falling into an orbit that threads through the open center of its torus.

For every Hit Die of the Hypernaut, an attack from a metallic weapon stands a 25% chance of failing, even on a successful hit, as this field deflects the weapon. An attacker wishing to draw a melee weapon back must roll under his or her Strength on a d20; otherwise, the vortex pulls it from the attacker's grip.

A person with metal objects on his or her person who comes within the Hypernaut's field (say, to attack) must Save vs. Breath Weapon (Reflex). Anyone wearing metal armor automatically fails.

Success indicates that the person either escapes or sheds enough metal to avoid being dragged in (player's choice), while failure means that the field drags the victim into the Hypernaut's vortex. A character swept into orbit loses d6 Hit Points or suffers an Injury each round (player's choice) due to buffeting through the torus and possibly collision with other metal objects already orbiting. If the victim succeeds in a Save vs. Paralysis (Reflex) on his or her turn in a subsequent round, that victim sheds enough metal to drop free.

A Hypernaut's field can accommodate one human-sized orbiter per Hit Die and remain airborne. Additional orbiters will drag it down; although it can expand the diameter of its torus to accommodate them, it cannot turn off its field. Hypernauts therefore avoid entanglements with metal-bearing creatures to prevent being grounded in a churn of flesh and iron.

Two or more Hypernauts can link to combine forces, forming a double torus, triple torus, and so on. Hypernauts so joined can combine HD for their gust effects.

Magic that allows communication across barriers of language or with otherworldly beings may, at the Referee's discretion, offer opportunities for player characters to converse with or gain knowledge from the beings that launch Magnetic Hypernauts.

SPECTRAL INOCULATOR

Armor Class: as an unarmored human

Base Attack Bonus: +6 (THAC0: 14) but ignores armor

Damage: Diremptive Evasculatation (q.v.)

Hit Dice: 5

Hit Points: not applicable

Morale: 12

Movement: as a human

This vaporous epigone of Thuuz comprises imperfect copies of the wizard's mind and memories taken some months before his death, when he recorded them into the apparatus for his tomb. Its touch inoculates the living with spores that will germinate into Diremptive Evasculators (q.v.).

If someone touches the sarcophagus or the wiring that connects it to the apparatus, the Inoculator will manifest somewhere in the tomb. Roll d8 for its location.

1 Antechamber

2 Western Courtyard

3 Parlor

4 Crypt

5 Mausoleum

6 Sub-Crypt

7–8 at the elbow of the person who prompted the manifestation

The Inoculator unconsciously seeks contact with the living, and upon manifesting it will proceed to the nearest living person within the tomb at walking speed. It passes through closed doors, pantomiming the act of opening them, then phasing through the solid matter.

It manifests in whatever appearance Thuuz would have thought appropriate for the setting, and this appearance changes as it moves through the tomb. For example, in the crypt, it will appear in mourning attire, as if to venerate the bones of House Nanifer (thereby embarrassing any Elves present), but if it crosses into the Parlor, its clothing will change to that of an aristocrat ready to entertain guests.

In a voice faint with distance, it will greet Elves in a manner befitting their social class, offering to aristocrats a bow and handshake (to men) or a kiss of the hand (to women) and, to commoners, the opportunity to kiss the Nanifer signet ring. Any rebuff will prompt the Inoculator's indignation and violence; it might swing a walking-stick at the shin of a commoner, and it might challenge to a duel an aristocratic man with a glove-slap. The Inoculator must make a hit roll, ignoring corporeal armor, to touch an unwilling target.

If the Inoculator finds living Islanders in this Elven building, it will demand “the reason for this intrusion and the name of your master.” Answers will confuse, then infuriate the Inoculator. If it encounters Islanders in the Parlor, it will call testily for servants, first Jorrad (Thuuz’s valet), then Lirvia (chief of the house staff). When no servants come, it will assume responsibility for handling the intruders and draw an ornamental sword from its belt.

Only to aristocratic Elven women will it offer no violence, though it may instead strike men that it perceives as their companions or servants. It will persist in attempting to touch the living, according to the social scripts Thuuz knew in life, for as long as the living remain in the tomb. It cannot form new long-term memories, so its oscillations between bonhomie and rage may repeat exchanges from moments just past.

A blow from any weapon Blessed by a priest will cause the Inoculator to dissipate; this will consume the power of the blessing. In 2d6 minutes the Inoculator will re-manifest. (A roll of seven or eight on the manifestation table now means that it appears at the elbow of the person who banished it.)

Smashing the sarcophagus or tearing up the wiring will not stop the Inoculator from manifesting. Once the machine discharges, the Inoculator will remain in the material world indefinitely.

Successful Turning dissipates the Inoculator for 2d6 minutes. An exorcism or a Turning unto destruction by a formidable priest will permanently destroy the Inoculator.

Even indirect sunlight causes the Inoculator unease, but direct sunlight causes its body to blur and emit violet sparks, costing it one Hit Die per round of exposure. Between dawn and dusk, it will not venture within three meters of the open Mausoleum door. Luring it out by night long enough to catch it out at sunrise will destroy the Inoculator.

STERTOROUS RECAPITATOR

Armor Class: as an unarmored human

Base Attack Bonus: +3 (THAC0: 17)

Damage: grapple or d6; see below

Hit Dice: 2

Hit Points: 8

Morale: 12

Movement: slow (half that of a human)

Necromancers summon these otherworldly spirits to possess the bodies of the dead, retarding the normal decay of flesh but not its desiccation. Its shriveled eyes do not see, so it requires no light.

A Recapitator seeks to trade its withered head for a fresh one as a warning to the living. Each therefore carries a knife.

Recapitators get their epithet for the deep, rattling breaths that they take, each like a dying person's last. They cannot surprise foes who can hear. They require no oxygen and breathe only to enable the heads they capture to utter articulate sounds. A group of Recapitators breathes randomly, and at different rates, until several seize on a single victim (see below); then, those collaborating fall into unison.

Recapitators always lose initiative. However, the uncanny sound of Recapitators breathing confuses and unnerves the living. Each round, the living must Save vs. Magic (Will): failure means that person has frozen momentarily, fixated on some detail—the creak of a hip, ribs showing through parchment skin, a spider cradling her egg sac beneath an eyelid. Against anyone who fails this Save, the Recapitators get to take a double action (and double movement) that round. That is, on their turn, the undead may act twice, but only against those who failed the Saving Throw. Those who make their Save find this as disorienting as those who fail.

They attack in groups, in two stages.

First, one or more Recapitators will grapple a single living target. The target gains Armor Class bonuses from Dexterity, but not from armor. Each Recapitator that wins its opposed check against the victim grants a cumulative +4 to the next Recapitator who attacks this victim. On his or her turn, the victim may break free by succeeding in a Grapple check (i.e. opposed d20 combat roll) against the Recapitators' d20 roll and cumulative bonus.

Second, once two or more Recapitators have grappled a victim, then on the next round (or on the next double action against this victim, as above), another Recapitator will set to work with its knife, automatically costing d6 Hit Points per round until the victim breaks the grapple.

If the victim reaches zero Hit Points, the Recapitators will spend the subsequent round severing and placing his or her head on one of their fellows. The old head falls away like a lizard's tail, while dried-out veins and sinews reach from the stump to knit the fresh head to the Recapitator.

The Recapitator's uncanny vitality now re-animates and preserves the severed head. *Its eyes do see:* the person just slain awakens to find his or her head grafted, helpless, to a walking cadaver. The victim neither feels anything below the neck nor can influence the Recapitator's movements; however, the creaking bellows of the Recapitator's chest lends the head breath enough to warn its fellows, lament its fate, or work magic that requires only verbal components. Let the player narrate the victim's response.

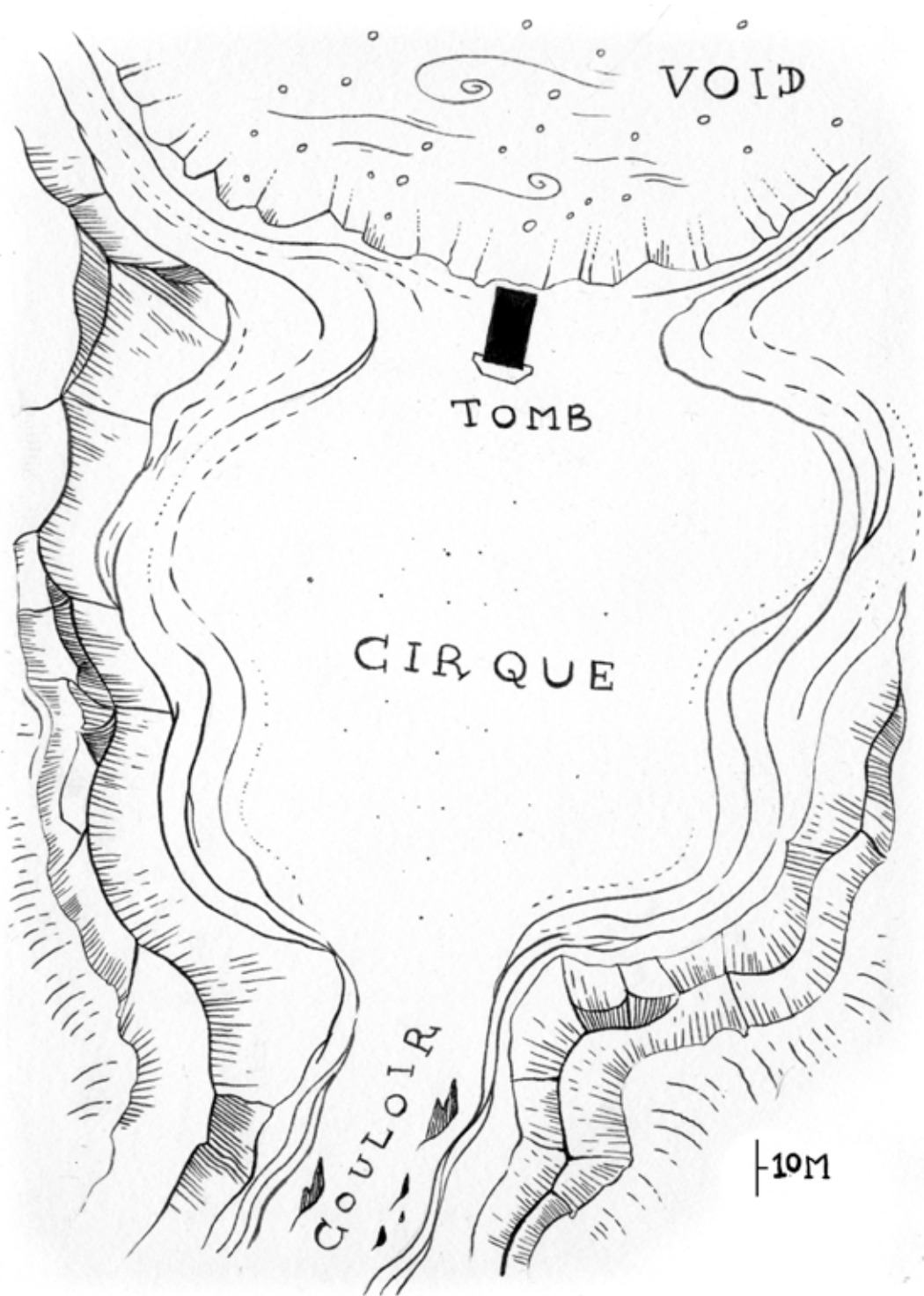
If the Recapitator becomes dormant, then the captive head loses consciousness. If the Recapitator discards that head favor of a fresher one, the previous "dies," permanently.

Weapons only affect the Hit Points of a Recapitator when the die lands in the upper half of the damage range (e.g. 4–6 on a d6). Fire and weapons blessed or enchanted cause normal damage. Severed limbs become useless; they do not remain animate.

Mind-affecting attacks—illusions, charm, and so on—have no effect on Stertorous Recapitators but can affect captive heads. Captive heads can be "slain" by blows that pierce or crush the skull, but these have no effect on the Recapitator's movements.

Sunlight costs Recapitators one Hit Point per minute of exposure, so they will not venture abroad by day.





SUB-CRYPT

LADDER

UP TO
SARCOPHAGUS
NICHE

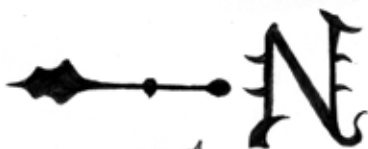
1M

ROBE

WARD

URN

PYRAMID ON
CEILING



CRYPTS of INDORMANCY

The tomb of Thuuz, Lord Nanifer, Elven General of the Western Isle, has been found. The Islanders he once exploited and terrorised would gladly hurl his bitter carcass back into the ocean. Others, hearing of an untouched crypt in the mountains, no doubt filled with all the pomp and pride of an aristocratic burial, arrive with less ideological motives for defilement.

Crypts of Indormancy is a location-based adventure possessing ecumenical compatibility with *Dungeons & Dragons* and its descendants. Appropriate for any number and level of players, all who enter the tomb of Thuuz without their wits ready will likely come undone. For Thuuz's heirs did not leave his bones helpless and unguarded.

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