

SECRET SANTICORE



2011

*A Rather Fine Collection of Some Nifty Gamey Fluff
For Those Who Like to Kill Them & Take All Their Stuff*

SECRET SANTICORE

2011

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ADVENTURES

THE GLOOMY FOREST by Christian Sturke	page 4
DOWN AND OUT IN GOTHMAGOG by Jeff Rients	page 8

CREATURES

VAT-SPAWN by Jeremy Duncan	page 11
FIVE PAGES RECOVERED FROM THE LOST SECKLER BESTIARY by Peter Seckler	page 14
THIRTY GOBLIN MUTATIONS & OTHER WEIRDNESS by Paolo Greco	page 16
GOBLIN ALCHEMY MISHAPS by Telecanter	page 17
POISON THORN BARB & BLADE by R. Baseel	page 19
DOOM BY GREEN by Erik and Veronica Jensen and Dylan Atkinson	page 22
STRANGE & TERRIBLE MONSTER MUTATIONS by Michael Moscrip	page 28

DUNGEONEERING

TOMB OF THE MOG by Jez Gordon	page 30
KOBOLD CAVERNS by Tom Hudson	page 36
THIRTY SECRET DOORS by S. Pate	page 38
OBSCURER SPELLS FOR MAGICAL DOOR TRAPS by Adam Thornton	page 41
TRANSFORMED, DEFORMED, CORPSED & TRAPPED by Samuel Roberts	page 44
UNUSUAL TRAPS BOTH MUNDANE & MACABRE by Andy Wise	page 46
WEIRD THINGS FOUND IN A DUNGEON CORRIDOR by Adrian Ryan`	page 47

ENCOUNTERS

THE ROYAL HALFLING HOUSE OF BRACKENBOUGH by Anon.	page 48
WEIRD CULTS by Brendan S.	page 52
BANDITS, RAPSCALLIONS & RIFF-RAFF by Mike Evans	page 54
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS FARM & ITS FARMERS? by S.L. Shirley	page 56
EXPLORING THE FLOODED VALLEY by Sean Fallon	page 58
RANDOM PERFORMERS AT THE INN by Reynaldo Madrinan	page 60
AT SEA IN THE TROPICS by Pierce Raats	page 61
MERCHANTS OF THE SILK ROAD by Erik Jensen	page 63
RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN A DARK & SPOOKY FOREST by Danny Peck	page 66
BARBARIAN TRIBES WEIRD & GRIM by Zak Smith	page 68
STRONGHOLDS IN THE WILDERNESS by Adam Watts	page 70
MONSTER DUNGEON ADVENTURE GENERATOR by Stuart Burns	page 73

EQUIPMENT

SEVEN POISONS OF THE CITY by Dylan Atkinson	page 76
LEGENDARY ARTIFACTS OF EVENORIA by Valerio De Camillia	page 78

LOCATIONS

FIFTY BIZARRE & ECLECTIC URBAN LOCATIONS by Chris Weller	page 80
CREEPY WELLS by Jason Kielbasa	page 82
GATHERING OF PLANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES by Ara K.	page 84
CASTLE SANTICORE by Roger S. G. Sorolla	page 86
THE SHINTO SHRINE by Stuart Robertson	page 88
THE MOON-EYE CAVES by Erik Jensen	page 89
SHARDS OF THE WORLD by Gabriel Harley	page 92

RULES

WILDERNESS HEX MAP GENERATOR by Iain Jones	page 94
A NEW LOOK AT SKIRMISHES by Lance "jllense'g" Toth	page 95

SCIENCE FICTION & MODERN

STANDARD ISSUE EQUIPMENT FOR MODERN DAY MERCS by Telecanter	page 96
SHADOWRUN : STREET PERPS by Mike Cummings	page 97
MEET THE NEW GODS SAME AS THE OLD GODS by Dylan Atkinson and S. L. Shirley	page 100
MUTANT FUTURE : LAIR OF THE FUNGALOID by Zzarchov	page 103

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a brief adventure for characters level 1-3 (general stats for any edition that came before 3rd would be great, but whatever is fine) that could occur while traveling through a spooky forest with a small theater troupe and their wagon.

Thank you!

J.

THE GLOOMY FOREST

A SHORT LABYRINTH LORD ADVENTURE FOR A HANDFUL OF CHARACTERS LEVEL 1 TO 3

by Christian Sturke
rorrhamster.wordpress.com

SYNOPSIS

The Duke of Frambort, Gregor the Second, is a great admirer of the thespian arts. He recommended his own house-troupe, the Giordano family, to Lucius, Prince of Ethelbane, and asked to be allowed to send for his men to show their latest masterpiece *The Resurrection of Old Angbart* at Lucius' wedding with the lovely (and rich) comtess Tricia D'Ariganice from above the sea. Yet as the duke is already at Ethelbane Castle, and the messenger he sent was waylaid, there's not enough time for the troupe to go the longer and safer route via the coastline - they have to cross the gloomy forest. As they can't go alone on a dangerous trek through the dark and foreboding wilderness, the Duke's seneschal, Brugand Mansion, is hiring adventurers to lead and protect them and bring them in time to the prince's court. 100 gp per head are promised on timely arrival. They have 72 hours to go through the forest, or be late and risk the wrath of the Duke.

THE ACTORS



BRUNO GIORDANO

L human F3, AC 9 HP: 13

A stern and unforgiving man, Bruno firmly believes in hierarchies, and won't treat anyone with respect, his sons included, that he feels superior to. This includes thieves, demi-humans and "spell-slingers" of any level, or priest and fighters of 1st or 2nd level. A fighter

or priest of at least 3rd level is treated as somewhat equal, but he still won't allow them to give orders to his sons. He is quite adamant in this, but if confronted with authority above his own, like someone from noble birth or a sheriff, he will be absolute in his obedience. He will never take part of anything that he deems unlawful, whatsoever.



SIDNEY GIORDANO

C human T1, AC 8 HP: 4

Sidney, the eldest brother, is fed up with his father's attitude, who wants him to be the next director of the family troupe. He plans to leave in an opportune moment, preferably before he has to "dance in a monkey costume for some snobbish, inbred degenerates" again. He is quite

an actor. Only his brother Guido suspects that he has other plans.



TOREMILLO GIORDANO

L human 0, AC 9 HP: 5

Toremillo is the middle brother, but nonetheless he is the biggest, and in addition he is rather well-fed. He normally plays the comical side kicks, and sometimes brutish opponents or even monsters.

He is a bit of a silent loner, and while

some people believe him therefore to be rather dumb, he actually is quite intelligent, well-read and author of most of the plays the family troupe has in its repertoire.



GUIDO GIORDANO

N human 0, AC 9 HP: 3

The youngest of the three brothers, Guido has to play all the female roles. He is full of envy towards Sidney, who always plays the heroes, a fact that is well-known by all other Giordanos. He knows that Sidney is secretly planning to escape his father's grasp,

but he can't do anything until he has something to prove this.

THE CART

The troupe travels with a cart that houses their costumes, make-up and requisites. It is a rather smallish, two axle carriage, drawn by Bob and Jack, two friendly, slow, and quite curious oxen. They tend to wander off course for inspection if something unusual is to be found at the trails edge.

Bob and Jack AL N, MV 90' (30'), AC 8, HD 3, #AT 1 (horns), DM 1d4, THACo: 17, SV F2, ML 6, XP 50, LL 66 (Like in Boar with the numbers filed off...) HP: 16, 15

The cart can be dismantled in 2 hours and reassembled in 3, if it is necessary to carry it above some obstacle. This time can be halved, but an Intelligence check has to be made to indicate if everything's back in its proper place or else the cart breaks down after another 1-3 hours of travel and needs a lengthy (2-12 hours) repair. The normal time for the cart to go through one of the hexes along the trail is 2 hours.

d10 RUMORS:

- 1 The gloomy forest is one of the places where the veil between this world and the place of the fairies is very thin. (True)
- 2 There is a dragon living in the cave up on Cyclops Mountain. (False)
- 3 Cyclops Mountain is home to a giant with just one eye, hence the name. (False)
- 4 The trail is narrow on the slopes of Cyclops Mountain. There's a faster, hidden trail leading around its other side. (Partially True, see Area B and Area D)
- 5 There are a lot of flying monkeys prowling the area. Be aware! (False)
- 6 Don't stray from the path, there are a lot of goblins out there! (True, but the goblins are bold enough to attack travelers anywhere in the forest)
- 7 There is a ruined tower, don't go there, there are lot's of undead and no treasure to be found! (Partially True, see Area G)
- 8 There's no way a cart can go through this forest in just 3 days. If you take (or have taken) this job you are screwed! (False)
- 9 Bad weather there. Better get a cape! (True)
- 10 A bridge troll demands a toll of at least 20 gp per head somewhere along the way. But I heard you can bribe him with a live chicken. Wanna buy one? (False)

d6 WEATHER:

The weather is unnaturally bad in the gloomy forest. Roll for every 4 hours:

- 1 Cloudy, no winds
- 2 Foggy, bad sight, no winds
- 3 Light rain, no winds
- 4 Heavy rain, windy, time needed per hex doubled
- 5 Thunderstorm, time needed per hex tripled
- 6 Cloudy, light winds

d12 RANDOM ENCOUNTERS:

Random encounters occur on a one on a d6 every 6 hours. Roll 1d6 at rest, or 1d12 on the move.

- 1 A pack of hungry wolves (2-8). They have a low morale (5) and a well placed arrow or open fire can probably scare them away. Wolf AL N, MV 180' (60'), AC 7, HD 2+2, #AT 1 (bite), DM 1d6, THACo: 17, SV F1, ML 8, XP 35, LL 102
- 2 A goblin warband (2-8). They will attack on sight. Goblin AL C, MV 60' (20'), AC 6, HD 1-1, #AT 1, DM 1d6, THACo: 19, SV 0 human, ML 7, XP 5, LL 78
- 3 Goblin hunters (2-5). They will try to avoid contact. Goblin AL C, MV 60' (20'), AC 6, HD 1-1, #AT 1, DM 1d6, THACo: 19, SV 0 human, ML 7, XP 5, LL 78
- 4 An Ogre. First one to be encountered will be Karl, second one Gunther, third one Bert. If all three are slain (and not just driven off or bribed), the next encounter will be with their mother, who seeks revenge for her children (Morale is at 12)(See Area I for stats). If you roll a fifth time for ogres, throw the die away.
- 5 Pixies (1-6). They will try to have some harmless fun (that could nonetheless startle Jack and Bob). If they are seriously harmed, the faerie queen will not be amused. (See Area J) Pixie AL N, MV 90' (30') Fly 180' (60'), AC 3, HD 1, #AT 1 (dagger), DM 1d4, THACo: 19, SV E1, ML 7, XP 16, LL 91
- 6 A Giant Wolverine. It is hungry and will fight fearlessly, but it could be bribed with at least three days of rations. Wolverine, Giant AL N, MV 150' (50'), AC 4, HD 4+4, #AT 3 (2 claws, bite), DM 1d4+1/1d4+1/2d4, THACo: 15, SV F4, ML 11, XP 290, AEC 141, HP: 21.
- 7 Realm of the Fairies. (See Area J) If this encounter is rolled again, some sunny weather lightens the spirits and subtracts an hour from the time needed to traverse this hex.
- 8 Really heavy fog springs up suddenly (regardless of the actual weather). Movement time is doubled for this hex.
- 9 A noble and his entourage (ten 1st-level fighters) on horseback pass the group without bothering to slow down. If this happens on the slopes of the mountain, there is a chance this startles Jack and Bob (see E). If this happens on the secret trail before area D, they will come back after an appropriate amount of time, looking none too happy.
- 10 A landslide has either buried or taken away part of the trail (50/50 chance). Two hours of work are needed to clear the path or rebuild it.
- 11 A giant tree has fallen and blocks the trail. An hour of work is needed to clear the path.
- 12 Another cart comes from the opposite direction. This should be no problem for most of the trail, but see Area E.



MAP KEY

AREA A - THE FORD

If there has been heavy rain or a thunderstorm before the group reaches the ford, there will be high water, which makes the crossing dangerous. The person at the reins has to make a Wisdom check or the cart will topple, and the party will need to spend 1d6 hours getting the troupe's equipment back and dry enough to continue. The Giordanos have to roll under 18, because they know their oxen very well. Small Characters could drown if they can't swim

AREA B - THE RANGERS TRAIL

Give every PC the same chance to find the overgrown trail leading east [detect secret doors] (double chance if the PCs heard rumor number 4). It's somewhat hard to clear away the plants that have grown over it, so they need 3 hours to go through a hex. (and see D)

AREA C - CYCLOPS MOUNTAIN

The enormous cave in the side of the mountain that overlooks the southern part of the Gloomy Forest like a giant cyclopean eye (hence the name) is devoid of any inhabitants (or treasure) but for a flock of ordinary jackdaws. From time to time, they emerge from the cave in a fluttering of wings and cawing noises, startled by a small predator or internal strife.

AREA D - THE LOST BRIDGE

There is a reason the seemingly faster trail is almost overgrown: at this place the trail crosses a deep ditch (which is filled with rapid water if there was heavy rain or a thunderstorm in the last 4 hours) and there are the remains of an old and rotten wooden bridge with a gash of 10ft in the middle of it.

AREA E - THE SLOPES OF CYCLOPS MOUNTAIN

The way is disturbingly narrow at times. If somethings happens that could startle Jack and Bob the cart is in danger of toppling over and going down 1d100 ft. until it is stopped by some trees.

Whoever is at the reins has to make a Wisdom check with a -2 penalty to avoid this. The Giordanos have to roll under 16, because they know their oxen very well. The cart will be almost useless after such a fall (without major repairs) and everyone falling (including the oxen) will get 1d6 points of damage per 20ft. fallen (round up!).

AREA F - LOWLANDS

If there has been heavy rain or thunderstorms at least three times by the time the group arrives here, this whole area is filled with water and the trail is not much more than a mud-trap for any cart going through. Triple time to get through, this adds to any bad weather effects. There is no way to rest in the flooded area.

AREA G - THE TOWER

This tower is all that is left from a ruined castle that once housed the court of a local baron. A necromancer once rested here and ordered some of his servants (4 zombies and 4 skeletons) to guard his treasure chest in the top room of the tower (filled with three magic potions: Potion of Invulnerability, Potion of Gaseous form, Potion of Growth). He never returned. There could be a dungeon underneath if the GM wants it to be there.

Zombies (4) AL C, MV 120' (40'), AC 8, HD 2, #AT 1, DM 1d8, THACo: 18, SV F1, ML 12, XP 29, LL 103, HP: 7, 11, 10, 10

Skeleton (4) AL C, MV 60' (20'), AC 7, HD 1, #AT 1, DM 1d6, THACo: 19, SV F1, ML 12, XP 13, LL 95, HP: 6, 5, 1, 7

AREA H - THE GOBLIN VILLAGE

This tent village has almost 100 inhabitants, half of them kids, that scatter into the woods at first sign of combat. Adult goblins fight, but only the males (27) have proper equipment while the females (30) only wear skirts and knives. The tribe's chief has a treasure chest in his slightly bigger tent (with 2000 cp, 4000 sp and 4000 ep), and two pet wolves.

Goblin males (27) AL C, MV 60' (20'), AC 6, HD 1 -1, #AT 1, DM 1d6, THACo: 19, SV o human, ML 7, XP 5, LL 78, HP: 7, 1, 1, 5, 2, 7, 4, 1, 1, 6, 1, 1, 7, 1, 1, 3, 2, 3, 4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 1, 1, 7, 2.

Goblin females (30) AL C, MV 60' (20'), AC 9, HD 1 -1, #AT 1 DM 1d3, THACo: 19, SV o human, ML 7, XP 5, LL 78, HP: 7, 1, 1, 3, 7, 6, 2, 7, 6, 7, 3, 4, 6, 2, 3, 5, 7, 1, 5, 5, 6, 5, 5, 1, 4, 7, 2, 1, 6, 3.

Wolf (2) AL N, MV 180' (60'), AC 7, HD 2+2, #AT 1 (bite), DM 1d6, THACo: 17, SV F1, ML 8, XP 35, LL 102, HP: 13, 11

Goblin chief AL C, MV 60' (20'), AC 6, HD 1+1, #AT 1, DM 1d6, THACo: 18, SV o human, ML 8, XP 15, LL 78, HP: 6

AREA I - THE OGRE CAVE

Here lives an ogress "(called only "Mom"; she has forgotten her real name) and her three sons: Karl, Gunther and Bert. There is only a 1 in 6 chance per son that he is here and not out hunting (or relaxing without Mom complaining). If the ogress is somehow made friendly, she will give the PCs an amulet of human finger bones that her sons will recognize. If the PCs have already murdered or injured one of her sons, she will know. She stores her treasure buried underneath the fire pit in an old iron kettle (Jewelry: Decanter-500 gp, Diadem-500 gp, Anklet-40 gp, Diadem-1400 gp, Goblet-1000gp, 1000 gp)

Ogre (4) AL C, MV 90' (30'), AC 5, HD 4+1, #AT 1 (club), DM 1d10, THACo: 15, SV F4, ML 10, XP 215, LL 90, HP: 12 (Karl), 15 (Gunther), 19 (Bert), 25 (Mom).

AREA J - REALM OF THE FAIRIES (NOT SHOWN)

If this encounter is rolled, the group arrives at an unexpected fork in the trail. There is a road-sign with two pointers, one pointing to the left with the inscription "the other way" and the other one to the right saying "the hard way". Observant PCs can spot that the one pointing to the left is affixed with wooden bolts, while the other is nailed to the post with rusty iron spikes.

Should the group decide to go right nothing interesting happens, but if they go left they will leave the mortal world for the realm of faeries. Suddenly the sun, strangely strong and with a little red tinge, will shine on the way in front of them and they will hear music up ahead. If they turn around the fork will be nowhere to be seen. Should they try to avoid the festivities, they are lost in the faerie realm. If they decide to go further along the trail, they will arrive at a glade where a great buffet has been arranged and a slightly elfish looking maid sits seemingly alone on a throne. This is the queen of the faeries and she invites the troupe to play for her. Bruno will be most glad to do this. While the play unfolds more and more faeries (pixies, satyr, nymphs, brownies... the whole lot) will appear as from thin air and continue watching. As will 6 brutish looking centaurs who have their eyes on the PCs. In fact all these creatures are at the place the whole time and are just invisible, when the PCs arrive. Should a PC not show the proper respect or dare to even threaten the queen, the centaurs will appear out of thin air and discipline the offending PC.

Centaur (6) AL N, MV 180' (60'), AC 5, HD 4, #AT 3 (2 hooves, big club), DM 1d6/1d6/1d6, THACo: 16, SV F4, ML 12, XP 80, LL 67 HP: 23, 21, 15, 18, 22, 19

After the play has ended (after three hours) the fairy queen will ask each PC to show his abilities for her. If she (this means the GM) is amused, the party will be left off and get's back to the gloomy forest two hours before they left. If they somehow anger the queen, they will get back 1d100 months after they left. Should they attack the queen, they not only have to deal with the centaurs but with about 100 of different faerie creatures, plus the queen, who is the equivalent of a 14th level magic-user with the magic of her realm at her disposal.

Dear Secret Santicore—
 Would you please write me a one-session urban
 adventure set among medieval lowlife?
 Thank you! Cheers :)
 R.

DOWN AND OUT IN GOTHMAGOG

A SHORT OSR ADVENTURE FOR
 4-6 CHARACTERS LEVEL 1 TO 3

by Jeff Rients
 jrients@gmail.com

PART 1. INTRO

The adventure opens in the bedroom of aristocrat Karistos Mondaviak. The wizened old man is dying. He knows it and so does everyone else present: his lawyer Bennudius, his youngest son Markos, his slinky daughter Karistina and his even slinkier second

wife, Hannabella. The aristocrat's dying wish is to be reunited with his long-estranged elder son, Rudolfio. It has been two years since anyone has heard from the wayward young man. He was last known to be a student at the University of Gothmagog, a low-class sort of institution, known more for its necromancers and astrologers

d20 GOTHMAGOG CITY: WTF?

- 1 Don't drink the river water or swim in the river. It's highly polluted from the iron foundries.
- 2 Anyone under 4' tall is legally considered a minor in Gothmagog. The rest of the party will be liable for any misdeeds the halfling performs.
- 3 Platemail and anything bigger than a sword may not be carried or displayed inside the city walls.
- 4 The city walls encircle only a tiny portion of the city. In the event of an invasion the general populace of Gothmagog is pretty well screwed.
- 5 Don't buy meat-on-a-stick from street vendors unless you enjoy the taste of horse-kabobs.
- 6 The legendary protector of the city is the haunted skull of a titan, slain in ancient times, that is said to rest at the bottom of the river.
- 7 Half the prostitutes in the city are men in drag.
- 8 Alchemy is big business in Gothmagog, with seven competing schools centered on the University. Most of the potion shops in the realm buy from here. Rich parties may be able to buy healing potions in bulk.
- 9 Necromancy is technically illegal, but annual licenses can be obtained for 500gp each at city hall. Note the legal system leaves the definition of "necromancy" to individual judges.
- 10 The five mercantile houses that run the city are all half-elves. They stay half-elven by intermarrying a lot, but elvish and half-elvish visitors might find themselves the subject of strange intrigues. (E.g. A particular noble wants to marry a human girl, but will only be allowed to do so if his older sister marries an elf. But she's already married, so he hires the PCs to kill that dude, then tries to arrange a marriage between the party elf and sis.)
- 11 The fourteen churches on Temple Lane normally get along fine, except during the Festival Honoring All Gods, when they inevitably brawl over who gets what place in the parade line.
- 12 A crazy new apocalyptic religious cult has sprung up in the city, based around some guy calling himself the Chaos Messiah.
- 13 A certain coven of witches in the city makes Rune Cheeses. You consume them to activate the spell they contain, just like a potion, but you must be a spellcaster (arcane or divine) to activate them. The spells available in cheese form come from the druid list.
- 14 Bear-baiting is a popular spectator sport in the city. Adventurers bringing in live captured beasts that can also be tied to stakes and tormented can earn top dollars.
- 15 "Bree-yark!" heard overhead is local parlance for "I'm about to empty my chamber pot into the street!"
- 16 Officers of the town guard carry Flasks of Gorgon's Breath to deal with sorcerers, mutants and such. The petrified remains of such riff-raff are displayed in the plaza in front of the city jail.
- 17 The city has an elaborate sewer system, but it was built two centuries ago with no improvements since despite a population boom. Raw sewage backs up into several pools known locally as "The Charming Lakes". Many murder victims end up dumped in them.
- 18 About a quarter of the main part of the city (i.e. outside the walls) burned down five years. The dwarves working in the iron foundries were blamed by much of the populace and anti-dwarf sentiment remains pretty high among the unsophisticated.
- 19 Recent rumors indicate that the port has been such down because of two ships inbound carrying plague-rats.
- 20 The Grim Reaper himself is said to visit the city during its annual Festival of the Dead. (N.B. due to an oddity in the local calendar every 12 years the Festival Honoring All Gods and the Festival of the Dead happen on the same week.)



Illustration by Jez Gordon

than for serious scholars, located in a grubby, dirty middle-class sort of urban sprawl. If the party can bring back Rudolfo before the old man expires, Karistos has instructed Bennudius to add a codicil to his will granting the PCs joint ownership of a relatively new (and as-yet unprofitable) vineyard. The players will be given a small portrait of a debonair youth with long black hair and a sweet moustache, so they can show folks who they are looking for.

Before embarking on the adventure, some players will try to make time with either Mondaviak's daughter or soon-to-be-widow. Hannabella, the wife, already has a lover named Vuristo, who happens to be a Fighter 4 of the "we duel at dawn" sort. Karistina will only be interested in fellas with social prospects and good skin. Anyone acting too crassly towards her will probably end up the victim of a beating by her brother and zd6 friends and servants.

TRAVEL TO GOTHMAGOG

How far away Gothmagog is and whether wandering monster rolls need to be made en route is up to the DM. The chart "Gothmagog City: WTF?" contains 20 items of interest the party can discuss on the way. Each PC can roll d3+Int mod times on the chart below, unless you rule that an individual PC wouldn't know anything about the city. You might want to determine which items on the chart are actually true ahead of time.

PART 2 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

The PCs will probably run amok with whatever info they get from the chart above. When they finally settle in to the task at hand they will probably end up at the University. Rudolfo Mondaviak is a well-known figure among the students. He's remembered as a life-of-the-party guy, but he also showed compassionate generosity to the poorer student types who often have to choose between tuition and food. Rudolfo disappeared six months back and most people don't really know what happened. However, he had his quarters on the second floor of the Drowned Rat, a riverside tavern. The regulars there might know more.

d6 POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS IN PART TWO:

Either roll or use your own judgement.

- 1 Termantha, Prophetess of the Chaos Messiah (half-elf MU1), preaches some Nietzschean Ubermensch bullshit to a gathering of students. They might be listening, but mostly they're watching the way she sways her hips when she gets really fired up. A poxy-faced hag (Cleric 3 with Flail of Rotting) and a half-dozen zero-level cultists (sporting bad piercings and cheesy chaos-themed tattoos) with wavy daggers are lurking in a nearby alley if things turn ugly.
- 2 A student of the wizard school (MU level d4) challenges a PC magic-user to spell duel. This might be over a perceived insult or perhaps the student is of mercenary motivation and wants to play under winner-gets-loser's-spellbook rules.
- 3 Toga party! PCs invited to join debauchery already in progress. Inevitably involves brawling with 3d6 town guards.
- 4 Street blocked. A bunch of wagons are snarled up in a major intersection and general mayhem could break out at any moment. The cause of the situation is two different medical professors trying to get out of the city by two different routes. It seems they both possess substantive evidence of plague in the city and are trying to escape with all their worldly goods before a general panic erupts.
- 5 Fire! A scholar's residence is ablaze. He's too scared to go in but begs the PCs to put out the fire and/or rescue his books. Turns out there's a salamander (the flaming monster, not the amphibian) in the building! It was summoned by another scholar in retaliation for a bad book review.
- 6 PCs find blood-drained corpse. They will probably end up being questioned by the cops, but enough vampired bodies have turned up this year that most folks are totally disinterested in the whole thing now.

PART 3 THE DROWNED RAT PLUS BONUS ASSASSINS

This joint is your standard fantasy version of the Mos Eisley cantina. The clientele includes sailors, pirates, smugglers, bounty hunters, dwarves off work from the foundry, longshoremen, prostitutes (50% chance they are off duty and trying to just have a drink) and unlicensed students of necromancy. If there's an elf in the party the dwarves automatically start a brawl. If the PCs fight fair (no blades, subdual damage only) they can continue their investigation because they'll have the respect of the patrons, win or lose. If anyone tries to cast a spell in the joint all hell will break loose, as patrons will run for the town guard or pull out weapons with intent to kill. Worse comes to worse, the bartender, an old grouch named Switzer, will throw a Flask of Gorgon's Breath at the offender. He has 2 more and a morningstar behind the bar.

Assuming the PCs don't totally screw the pooch here, Switzer and several regulars will tell them that Rudolfo was a real cool guy to drink with, often buying rounds for everyone in the establishment. But he started getting real political right before he disappeared, talking up a bunch of lefty Gnome Chomsky nonsense about class and blaspheming against the temples. He started hanging out with a gypsy girl named Sezarina, one of the bargefolk. There's always at least one gypsy barge down at the docks, so the PCs are directed that way.

PART 4 THE GYPSY BARGE

En route to the docks, the PCs have to fight a squad of assassins to the death. Markos, the younger brother of the man the PCs seek, does not want his older brother found since he stands to inherit a greater portion with Rudolfo out of the way. There's no good way to tie Markos to these ninja'd up creeps, the PCs will just have to figure it out for themselves. The bad guys will catch the party between two pairs of glaive-wielding jerkwads (F1), who will hold the party at bay while a pair of shortbowmen (F1) up on balconies pepper the party with arrows. These chumps have no armor. Watching from a distance is the leader of this squad: Hu Wang, a Fu Manchu looking mofu with at least two spells: Cobrabolt (like *magic missile* but a save vs poison or die affair as cobras gush from his fingertip) and Disappear in a Cloud of Smoke. Hu Wang will not fight in melee. If bum-rushed he will cast *disappear*. He's mainly there to supervise the chumps, so he won't cast Cobrabolt unless a PC annoys him. Note that the cobras don't magically go away, they slither out into the city, setting off a helluva panic. Hu Wang is meant to be your hook for Some Later Adventure.

Turns out the gypsy barges are welcome in Gothmagog because the river gypsies are half-elves and related to the local ruling clans. Sezarina's family can be easily located. They reveal that their daughter is missing as well. Her younger sister Melastasya knows the score: the pair fell in with the Chaos Messiah Cult and can be found in the cult's secret lair on Leper Island, a leper colony on the middle of the polluted river. Melastasya (Thief 1) and up to 2d6 kin (0 level cannon fodder with short swords) can be convinced to accompany the party to Leper Island to attempt a rescue. Smart PCs might think to look up some of Rudolfo's old college friends for help. With a decent reaction roll d6 1st-level members of various random classes can be added to the expedition, assuming they go back to the University and/or the Drowned Rat.

PART 5 LEPER ISLAND

The lepers of the island live in tiny huts in near-starvation. They will beg for food, except for one or two desperate ones too cowardly to commit suicide, who will beg to be slain rather than continue to live as a hideous, diseased, starving freak. If queried, the lepers will explain that a mission house on the island previously provided for their needs, but the good clerics administering the place were driven out by the Chaos Messiah and his followers.

The mission house is a simple one story wood structure with one entrance and a few windows. Inside are 20 maniacal cultists (0 level, wavy dagger, loincloth, tattoos, piercings), 6 slave girls (personal harem of the Chaos Messiah, in Slavegirl Leia style garb), Termantha and the Hag (mentioned above) and the Chaos Messiah, who kinda looks like a Pinhead Cenobite with a bigass Moorcockian chaos symbol tattoo on his chest and inky black eyes that seem to reflect an inhuman, pitiless void.

Obviously this is the big finale of the adventure. Hopefully the party has a good plan or at least a *sleep* spell to put some of the cultists down. Some notes for the fight:

- One of the slavegirls is Sezarina. She's not here willingly and will try to get to the dagger of a fallen cultist and backstab either Termantha, the Hag, or the Messiah (for the latter, see below).
- One of the dagger-wielding goons is Rudolfo, who has been charmed by the prophetess Termantha. Unless a PC noted that they were carefully studying the portrait, there's only a 2 in 6 chance of recognizing him with his new mohawk, facial tattoos, clean-shaven, nipples-pierced-and-chained-together look.
- The first strike/spell/whatever on the Chaos Messiah has no effect, except to cause him to slough off his skin. Underneath is some sort of protoplasmic amoeboid horror made of blood and puss. The harem girls completely *freak the fuck out* at this point. In his true form the Chaos Messiah fights as an ochre jelly.

The cult has some treasure: the Termantha's Spellbook, a small golden statue of the Messiah worth 300gp when melted down, and some Black Wine, which totally gives the drinker nightmare visions of horrors beyond the stars (6 doses).

PART 6 EPILOGUE

When the PCs return there's a 50% chance Karistos Mondaviak is already dead. If father and son are successfully reunited, the promised vineyard will show losses of d6 x 100gp a year for d4 more years, after which it will turn a profit of 2d6-2 x 1,000gp per annum. Each surviving PC will get an equal share of the property. Any character who visited Leper Island has a 5% chance of showing symptoms of the disease during some later adventure. The Chaos Messiah was not the source of the blood-drained corpses. That's just some vampire unrelated to the adventure.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I request a new fantasy race, not system specific or pick whatever one you are most comfortable with or go system-less.

Thank you very much!

S.

VAT-SPAWN

HIGHLY-ADAPTABLE MAGICALLY GROWN DAY-GLO FRANKENSTEINS FOR OSR GAMES

by Jeremy Duncan
jduncan24601@gmail.com

ORIGIN

The sorcerer-kings of old, already worshiped as living gods by their subjects, and having grown bored with merely warping and molding nature to their whim, sought to fully assume the mantle of godhood and create life itself. With arcane secrets dredged up from the earth and sea and called down from the stars, they set to work, their forbidden knowledge wed to the toil of a thousand slaves, alchemists, and sages. At the expense of vast wealth, countless lives, and unquantifiable human suffering, they at last achieved their goal, as the first tottering form rose by its own strength from the vats, to stand complete before its maker.

Pleased with their new plaything, the sorcerer-kings whiled away their idle hours by creating variations and refinements enough to satisfy their immortality-strained appetites. Whole armies of vat-spawn were called up to re-enact legendary battles or duel to the death in elaborately planned and scripted combats. Harems of pleasure-slaves, their every feature sculpted in exacting detail, were bred in the vats to serve at their makers' grand debauches, only to be dissolved again when their masters had tired of their ministrations.

So it went, century after extravagant, heedless century, until at last the power of the sorcerer-kings waned, and their empires were toppled amid fire and slaughter. The sorcerer-kings were put to the sword, their pale, anemic blood seeping into the blackened earth to mingle with the spilled ichor of their artificial slaves.

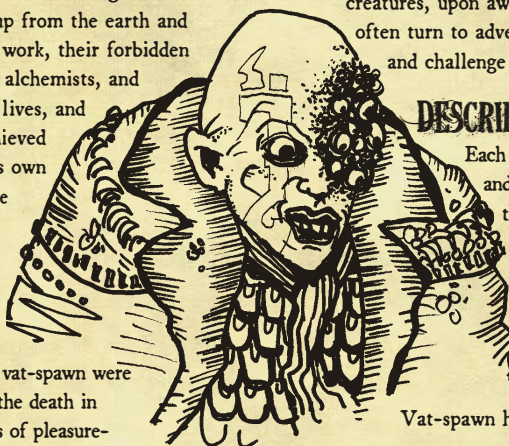
While most of their kind were ruthlessly exterminated, a tiny minority of vat-spawn escaped destruction, having been posted to remote corners of the world, or waiting in stasis in their vats in some hidden laboratory. Their makers long since dead, and their original purpose unknown, these creatures, upon awakening and learning something of the world, often turn to adventuring to satisfy their endless curiosity and challenge their strange abilities.

DESCRIPTION

Each vat-spawn is a hairless humanoid, with height and weight in the standard human range, though their features are often somewhat alien to modern observers, recalling ethnicities no longer found among the contemporary population, but glimpsed on the pitted faces of ancient coins, and in worn bas-reliefs on the columns and pediments of sunken temples.

Vat-spawn have the following features:

- If undisturbed, Vat-spawn are functionally immortal, though they are as susceptible to violent death as any other adventurer. As they are inherently unnatural, they cannot be Raised after death, nor can they reincarnate. Whether they possess souls at all is a matter of considerable theological debate.
- They possess functional genitalia, but are completely sterile.



VAT-SPAWN LEVEL PROGRESSION:

Level	XP	Hit Points	Paralyze	Poison	Breath Weapon	Magical Device	Magic
1	0	1d8	10	8	12	14	15
2	2,500	+1d8	8	8	11	12	14
3	5,000	+1d8	8	8	10	12	14
4	10,000	+1d8	6	6	10	12	12
5	20,000	+1d8	4	6	8	12	12
6	40,000	+1d8	4	4	8	10	10
7	80,000	+1d8	4	4	8	10	10
8	160,000	+1d8	4	4	6	10	10
9	320,000	+1d8	4	2	6	8	10
10	480,000	+3*	2	2	4	8	8
11	720,000	+3*	2	2	4	6	8
12+	150,000/lvl	+3*/lvl	2	2	2	6	6

*constitution modifiers no longer apply

Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

- After every 100 years, the vat-spawn's memory and personality will reset, returning it to 1st level.
- Vat-spawn have a vibrantly-colored ichor (roll on color chart) in their veins instead of blood. This ichor has many alleged magical properties, and unscrupulous Magic-Users are always on the lookout for experimental subjects.
- All Vat-spawn can graft on and incorporate body parts from humanoids and other creatures, as long as there is sufficient space. Any special abilities or attacks inherent to those parts (a medusa's eyes, etc.) transfer to their new owner. Removing one limb, eye, hand, etc. to make room for a new part inflicts 1d4 damage, after which it is rendered useless, withering away to nothing. Characters attempting to graft on a new part must Save vs. Poison + the creatures

hit dice — PC's level. The grafting process requires one hour x $\frac{1}{2}$ the creature's hit dice of uninterrupted concentration. There are undoubtedly opportunities for abuse here but just use common sense or whatever the GM thinks would be funniest.

CREATION

- Roll your character's Ability Scores as usual.
- Roll twice (unless otherwise indicated) on Skin/Eye Color chart, and twice times each on the Variations A & B charts, re-rolling in the case of a conflicting result. These indicate the PC's original function, as well as any modifications during his/her unremembered past.

d20	SKIN/EYE COLOR	VARIATIONS A	VARIATIONS B
1	bottle green	Series Number and /or Function title dyed or embossed on skin.	You have infravision, but your eyes glow in the dark.
2	heliotrope	Someone did a half-assed job sculpting your face. -3 to reaction rolls when/where applicable, but on the plus side, you can easily frighten small children.	One hand can semi-detach & extend + retract 50 ft., connected to arm by ropy tendons. Can support PC + 2d100 lbs and do any normal hand tasks.
3	ocher	Skin embossed with a pattern (1-2) spirals (3-4) deep hatching (5-6) A "Persian rug" pattern that changes with your mood.	Your facial features are an exact replica of (1-2) Your creator's own (3-4) their most hated rival (5-6) a legendary hero/ine.
4	vermillion	Your skin can temporarily take on the properties of any surface you touch for 2 rounds or more. You retain full flexibility and mobility, and skin reverts to normal in 1d6 turns, which you can extend by spending 1d4 HP per extra round.	Lungs can inflate to extraordinary capacity, meaning that you can go 1 hour of game time without having to breathe. DEX is halved, because you're walking around with your chest puffed out like a bullfrog.
5	turquoise	One forearm is a (1-2) mace (3-4) shortsword (5-6) axe. It does damage as usual and you get a +2 to hit, but you can't really do much else with it.	You have gills. These are almost imperceptible slits in the side of your neck when outside water.. Underwater they open up and you can breathe normally.
6	pearl	Silly-putty skin: you pick up shallow impressions of anything pressed against your bare skin. This also works with anything drawn or written in ink. Impression lasts 4 days.	Skin prominently stamped or dyed with personal rune of creator.
7	indigo	Your body has been indelibly imprinted with (1) an epic poem (2) obscene doggerel in an unknown tongue (3) instructions for your intended master/overseer (4) a hymn in praise to a forgotten god (5) the formula for your creation, in an elaborate code (6) a spell (roll randomly)	You have a functional mouth with teeth, tongue, etc. on your (1-3) pick the palm of one hand (4-6) pick sole of one foot (5-6). Mouth does 1d4 damage in combat w/ a +2 to hit, can absorb and transfer 1 hp/damage inflicted up to max. Other applications at GM discretion.
8	carmine	Though you are completely hairless, your maker has given you stylized hair and/or a beard as with a clay sculpture.	You have d4 eyes in the back of your head. Cannot be surprised from behind unless wearing helmet.
9	black	You have a small, translucent, circular "panel" of skin over your (1-3) heart (4-6) intestines, allowing these organs to be observed.	The ichor you bleed is phosphorescent (as candle flame)
10	mottled skin /different colored eyes (roll twice)	You have a $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4" secret hollow compartment in your left forearm. Any item stored there is undetectable by mundane means.	Your hands and toes have tiny suction cups on them allowing you to climb up and down (and cling to: max weight= PC+2d100 lbs.) sheer surfaces if gloveless and barefoot.
11	mauve	Short, irregular spirals of a coral-like substance sprout from the top of your head (roll for color). You do an extra d4 damage with a headbutt, and the growths count as a helmet.	Every 6 months of game time, your character molts, his/her skin flaking off to reveal new skin underneath. Roll again on color table for your brand new skin! Everything else remains as it was.
12	charcoal	You may perfectly mimic any sound you hear at least once, but the mimicry must be exact — no improvising.	Body covered in tiny, iridescent scales.

dzo	SKIN/EYE COLOR	VARIATIONS A	VARIATIONS B
13	violet	Eyes can extend/retract on flexible stalks up to 50 ft (while retaining function). While this is going on, you must remain absolutely still, and you are disoriented and completely helpless (worst possible AC) for one round after they pop back in.	Designed for infiltration: +2 to DEX, chameleon skin: acts as Invisibility spell, but it hurts and you must be naked. Every round you have it activated, roll a d4. On an odd result, you take that much damage each time until you pass out.
14	sky blue	Created for the Arena! : +2 to STR and CON, can spend 1d4 HP to immediately upon being hit to seal up wounds and take ½ damage. If the damage you would've taken was more than ½ current HP, you lose a limb (GM discretion) and gain a fresh, sealed-over stump.	Your bones are weirdly flexible and easy to dislocate. With one round's worth of preparation, you may squeeze into a space normally accessible to Small creatures, but your STR and DEX are halved until you are able to pop yourself back into place (1 round).
15	lime	You can absorb liquid through your pores at the rate of 1 pint/round, storing it in elastic subcutaneous pouches, to a maximum of 2 gallons, at which point, your DEX is halved until the moisture is expelled (the rate of which can be as fast or slow as the player desires).	Your body can secrete sharp, hardened darts, which can be fired (once/round) through the palm of your hand. You have a +1 to hit with this "weapon" and each dart does 1d6 damage. Range is 20 feet. Generating darts costs 1 HP each, which are restored after a full night's rest.
16	crimson	Your skin is soft to the touch, but shiny and reflective like polished chrome. Opponents attacking you in bright sunlight (assuming at least some skin is visible) do so at a -2 penalty. Also, you have no body odor of any kind, making you impossible to track or detect by scent alone. The GM can impose penalties to attempts to hide as the situation warrants.	Your saliva acts as a hallucinogen. In addition to everything else that might imply, if a Magic-User drinks a few drops of it, mixed into any beverage, it will impart startling revelations of the cosmos and the innate mystic potential of every star, drop of rain, and blade of grass. When they recover in dzo hours, they will have gained a one-time permanent +1 bonus to WIS.
17	two-toned (roll twice, decide areas of division)	When under considerable stress (like combat, taking a difficult exam, or being chased by monsters), your skin darkens slightly and hardens into tiny, raised spikes, like on a horned lizard, making you look even freakier and giving you a +1 bonus to AC. This effect lasts until the immediate danger is past. Depending on the material, your character's clothing may then be covered with tiny holes. If PC is sneak-attacked, etc., the AC bonus isn't applied until after damage (if any) is taken.	An hour after grafting on a new part, and until that part is detached or destroyed, you gain the ability to verbally communicate with and understand members of that species. For responding to non-verbal forms of communication, you have some ability, but are still somewhat limited by your own anatomy. For example, you would be able to perceive and understand scent-messages left by creatures that communicated by smell, but you would not be able to leave messages of your own without incorporating the necessary scent-glands, etc.
18	puce	Your ichor corrodes metals like a rust monster. When damaged, this applies to any metal armor you happen to be wearing. If you are struck and damaged by a metal or metal-tipped weapon, the attacker must roll a d6. On a 1-5, the weapon (or the metal part, anyway) dissolves into useless flakes of rust. Lots of other fun uses!	Such is your physical control that you can stop your own heartbeat and cease breathing, entering into a state completely indistinguishable from death. Since Vat-spawn are immortal, this can theoretically last indefinitely. To come out of stasis, the PC must either set a time beforehand, or arrange some signal (a tap on the forehead, a whispered word in the ear). If the signal isn't given, the PC will remain in stasis forever, and the player should probably roll up a new character.
19	rust	When struck and damaged by a (non-magical) weapon, you may sacrifice an additional d4 hit points to make it stick — your flesh temporarily fuses with the striking surface, making it impossible for the wielder to dislodge it. The effect lasts 1d4 rounds + 1 for each point of damage the weapon originally inflicted.	Your palate is super-sensitive, and you can distinguish and identify the ingredients of any compound. You know the joke about the wine snob, where he's given a glass of someone's urine to drink, and then asked, "But whose is it?" Well, you can narrow it down to species (if that's an issue) sex, age, diet, and habits (smokes, uses expensive hair pomade, etc.).
20	amber	You may transmit psychic messages via drops of your ichor, which may then be imbibed, injected, etc; by someone else. One word per drop. Message is not diluted if mixed with other liquids. Costs 1 HP, unless you're transmitting a novella or something.	You were a Pleasure-Slave! You have enhanced pheromones: +4 to reaction rolls when dealing with (1-4) humanoid of the appropriate persuasion (5-6) GM secretly rolls on wandering monster chart. Other complications may ensue. Also, take a +1 to DEX and CON-- what the hell. Also, your sweat is a mild aphrodisiac. If it's distilled and enters the bloodstream, it's a powerful aphrodisiac, unless they fail a save vs. poison roll, in which case they take 3d6 damage.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would really like some drawings of some
brand new monsters.

Thanks!

S.

FIVE PAGES RECOVERED FROM THE LOST SECKLER BESTIARY

by Peter Seckler
pseckler13@msn.com

Slag-Iron Garghies



Sea Raptor



SECRET Santicore!
P.S. 2011

We had finally escaped the Garghies, and collapsed exhausted in the ravine; at once to a man we fell into an uneasy
slumber. Alas! Just as the sun was setting, we awoke suddenly to the screaming of one of the lumbering
creatures. It was a Garghie, and it was in the jaws of a gargantuan monster that stretched the gully. Its
mouth was open, and it was about to swallow us. We were in a terrible predicament, and we
were in a terrible predicament, and we were in a terrible predicament.

rising up out the forge
strongest metal we had
but as it filtered from
above experimentally in
it it was easily torn
away down upon us,
crushed into the fire
the heat had no effect
on its scaly skin.
It pulled from the
a giant hammer
hitting in matter
where it usually
broke as though it
was of hot metal
as we, forcing us
from the heat.
rising up the
light the creature
glowed, and we
It was filthy.
there is much
to be learned
from it.

COUNTERS

FIVE PAGES RECOVERED FROM THE LOST SECKLER BESTIARY

Slaughter Grackle



SECRET SANCOR!
Pm 2011

Scampering to behold, this sinister
licked creature! Scampering through
scurrying past men before a scurrying
shot it with his bow. This only
made it angrier and it screamed
vengeance. It tore the most heart
shattering in two! I ran forward
hiding under the barrels of guns.
Gutting the line in half with
fastened the eyes to the wheel
missusmost crashed and pulled
splintered all over the head of
bloodied and battered, Marked

Brain-Boiler Slug



lipped forward, clutching his heart as he fell to his knees. He
blasted by a vicious crashing wave. His head split open before
as there, from out of his skull, exuded a most disgusting
spotted and battered as it splattered about on the stone floor,

Big-Eyed Drunkenew



SECRET SANCOR!
Pm 2011

We had finally escaped the Gorgians, and collapsed exhausted in the ravine; at once to a man we fell into an uneasy
slumber. Alas! Just as the sun to set watch, but no. We awoke suddenly to the screaming of one of the drunkenew,
flashed back by a gigantic tongue and into the maw of a gargantuan monstrously that straddled the gully. Its one
red eye flared down at us, fixatedly searching for its next victim. That tongue, fast as a scorching whip, lashed out
at me; saved only by the timeless Marked

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like something for a goblin-centric
Keep on the Borderlands B&E or L&L campaign.

A PC goblin class or maybe a "d30 goblin
mutations" table or an expanded or all new
rumor table?

Awesome!

S.

THIRTY GOBLIN MUTATIONS & OTHER WEIRDNESS

by Paolo Greco
tsojcanth@gmail.com



Illustration by Jez Gordon

d30 GOBLIN MUTATION:

- 1 Very furry. Better defence and protected from cold.
- 2 Horribly fat, the goblin is fed by its tribe to be slain and eaten during periods when food is scarce. Double hits, can't run.
- 3 The goblin has a skin membrane between arms and legs, allowing them to glide - but they can't wear armour though.
- 4 Can make any noise through vocalization.
- 5 Horribly strong. Deals at least double damage in melee and throws objects at three times the normal distance. The goblin body can't quite cope with some much awesome though, taking damage when such huge strength is abused.
- 6 Pea green, photosynthetic goblin can survive on water and sunlight. Shame that goblins hate sunlight.
- 7 Uncannily warty, if still and crouched can be easily mistaken for a pile of refuse.
- 8 Very sticky and strong. Grapples like an ogre and can easily climb walls.
- 9 Big-jaw, sharp-teethed, ever-hungry. Bite deals 2d6 damage.
- 10 Glabrous, pink and swollen, the goblin looks exactly like a human kid.
- 11 Really big, strong and burly. In combat, treat as ogre, except for morale purposes.
- 12 Immortal and unable to reproduce. This goblin might have died hundred of times, often in embarrassing ways, but might be very far from realizing it. Regenerates 1hit/turn.
- 13 Flexible bones. Can squeeze through a hole the size of a fist and takes half damage from falls and blunt trauma.
- 14 Feels no pain. Doesn't understand it either. After hits points are reduced to 0 due to wounds the goblin has a 50-50 chance every round of collapsing and dying.
- 15 1d6 arms. 1d6 legs, 1d6 heads, eyes, ears, noses. Still a single goblin brain to run all of them, sadly.
- 16 Can shadow-step once a day, and reappear within a shadow in a range of one mile.

d30 GOBLIN MUTATION:

- 17 The goblin has a big, swollen skull, looks a bit stupid and can't talk. Unbeknown to any the goblin is able to plant ideas and beliefs in other goblin minds (save once a day to resist).
- 18 Smells like freshly baked bread instead of reeking like a normal goblin. Tastes like freshly baked bread too. Until the day this goblin is going to be eaten it is going to benefit from reaction bonuses.
- 19 The goblin is, in fact, a were-worg.
- 20 Very sexy. For Anything. Of any gender and sexual preference. Can get sex from almost anybody with not much effort. Probably due to goblin pheromones or something.
- 21 Three eyes. Can see radioactivity, magic and other normally invisible emissions and auras. For some reason other goblins find this mutation particularly funny.
- 22 Freakingly long hands. Like, 5 feet or something.
- 23 No head. A mouth is where the neck should be. Has ten little eyes on fingertips.
- 24 Metal bones. Twice hits, better defence, sinks like a stone.
- 25 Can breath in a lot and become a goblin balloon. If warmed up with a fire or by sunlight will rise to the sky.
- 26 Silicon compatible body chemistry. Survives on water, rocks and soil. Resistent to electricity, additional damage from fire.
- 27 Self-fecundating female. Had 5d30 identical but sterile daughters in addition to 2d30 offsprings due to more traditional mating practices, if you consider "traditional mating practice" a word applicable to goblin sex-life. Ugh.
- 28 Really, really, really loud voice. Can be heard from far, far away. Can't speak at less then "full blast" volume though.
- 29 This goblin oozes an oily substance (about a pint a week if properly fed), used for lubricant or burning oil, and can even be eaten.
- 30 This goblin is, in fact, a changeling left there by a very, very intoxicated faerie queen on a three-years-long bender.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a random table of Goblin
Alchemical Mishaps.

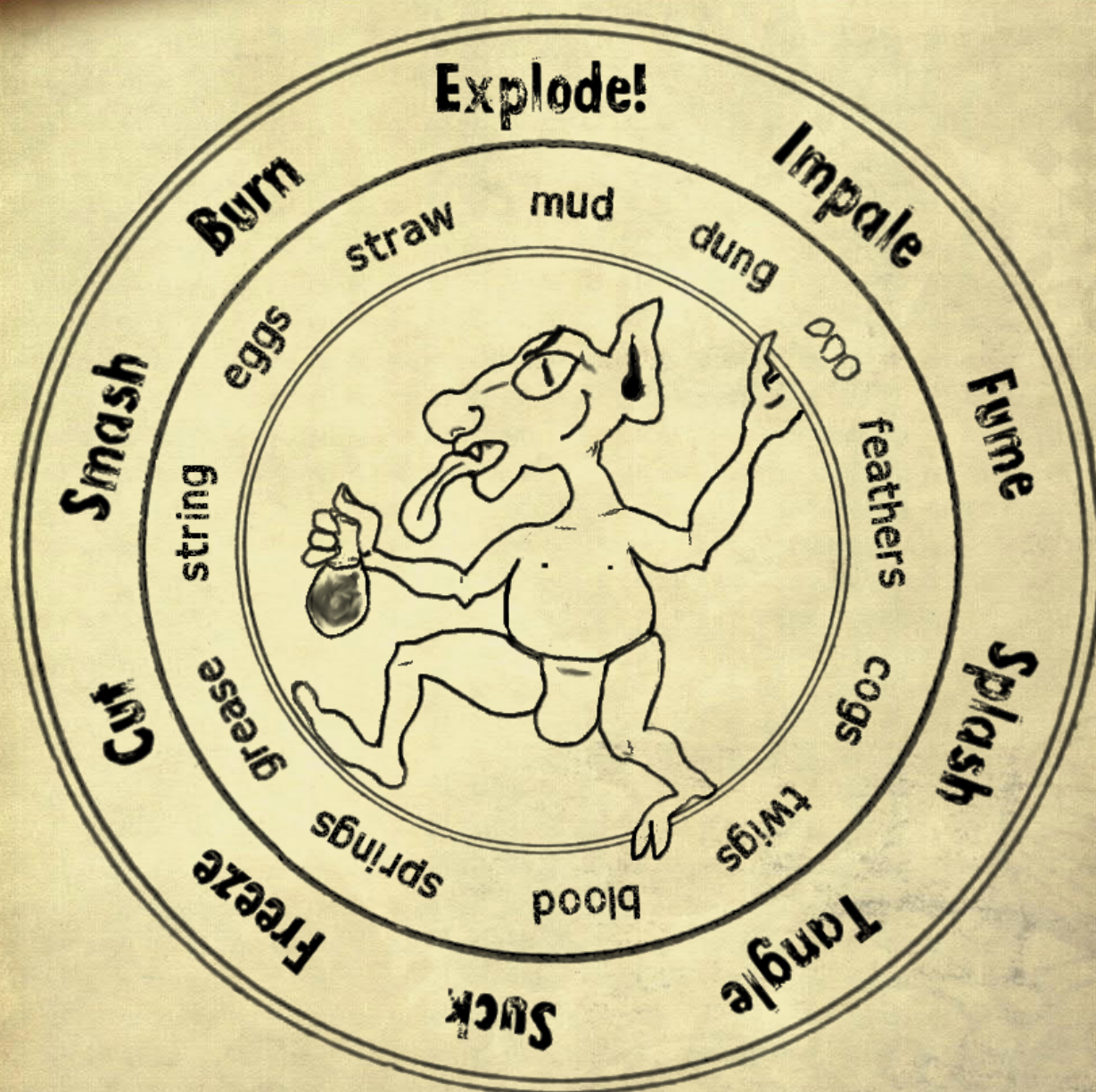
Thanks!

A..

GOBLIN ALCHEMY MISHAPS DROPCHART & TABLE

by Telecanter

thirty6andrising@yahoo.com



Drop 2d4 onto the chart. Imagine a line starting from the highest die to the lowest. Find a verb in the outer ring near the start of your line and a noun from the inner ring near the end of it. That's your goblin mishap. If you want to get fancy, the goblin bodypart the line traverses is most affected. Doubles mean something worked! Use the line to determine what the product does.

d40 GOBLIN ALCHEMY MISHAP:

- 1 Goblins tangled in burning string, running around setting things on fire
- 2 Mud Explosion! Goblins encased in the exact positions they were in at the time (think Pompeii)
- 3 Goblins with pustules all over their bodies that hatch . . . things (see Pipa pipa)
- 4 Crude totem head that speaks and answers questions. Unfortunately, very stupid
- 5 A ball of dung infinitely spawning rats and flies
- 6 Somehow the goblin shadows are all on fire
- 7 All the goblins are stuck together in one big ball
- 8 Powerful solvent, all containers have holes in them, hole burned through floor to . . .
- 9 Goblins stuck head-first in walls at 10' intervals plugging tiny black holes
- 10 Feathers everywhere, tunnels/building completely filled
- 11 A stone that turns gold to dung
- 12 Distilled children's nightmares spilled everywhere. Treat as sleep spell if puddle touched
- 13 Lead coins embedded in all the walls. Blank spots show where goblins stood
- 14 Little treants!? Nope, bonsai goblins sprouting magical mushrooms and berry bushes
- 15 Boiled in blood! Sausage goblins split when hit, waddle in fear!
- 16 Sour Water, turns any liquid into nasty applejack
- 17 Homunculi function as voodoo dolls of the goblins, who carry them around to keep safe
- 18 Caustic snakes, sulfurous and burning on contact, emerge from piles of powder
- 19 Goblin skin all transparent, they keep spooking each other
- 20 Terrible stench, as a ghost
- 21 Mounds of dung with pleading goblin heads poking out
- 22 Archeoptergoblin, arms and body covered in plumage-shrapnel, this goblin can fly... sort of
- 23 Goblins trapped in goblin-sized eggs
- 24 Fearsome cog-golem! . . . requires a round of cranking for two rounds of action
- 25 Frictionless goop, goblins sliding everywhere on their bellies
- 26 Chicken eggs all proximity explosives now & they've rolled throughout the lab
- 27 Potioncicles, frozen as stalagmites & stalactites of various colors, lick for effect
- 28 Goblins covered in mini-goblin leeches, much running and shrieking
- 29 Goblin vampire! well, it requires blood anyway
- 30 Goblin tangled in springs, treat movement as a jumping spider/displacer beast
- 31 Cauldron full of potion of blood solidification
- 32 Greased goblins. Yeehaw! catch em' all
- 33 Goblin breath now turns to feathers, so that's why the caves are full of these . . .
- 34 Potion brewed is just water, but glassware it's poured into can be eaten for the intended effect
- 35 Megamunculus, life created but so big it's inextricably jammed in the room
- 36 Powdered goblins, chickens, and rats- just add water to revivify
- 37 Stone of Youngening, anything that touches it is turned into its infant form
- 38 Base metals transformed! to a different color, all other properties the same
- 39 Oxygen burnt, no air in this lair
- 40 Yum, Cinarrbars, brick-red, irresistible cakes save or die after eating 3

Dear Secret Santicore—
I would like 50 ways that plants can kill Pks.
Thanks!
J.

POISON THORN BARB & BLADE

TWENTY-FIVE DEADLY PLANTS

by R. Baseel
rbaseel@gmail.com

d25 DEADLY PLANT:

- 1 **ARCHER PLANT:** This large bush can grow up to eight feet high. Its broad, fan-shaped leaves are interspersed with long, hollow thorns that can grow up to several feet long. The roots of the archer plant spread out horizontally beneath the ground and are sensitive to pressure and vibrations, such as those caused by a creature coming too close to the plant. When a threat is detected, the archer plant will shoot several thorns in its direction.
- 2 **ASSASSIN WEED:** This hardy and fast-growing weed, when found on its own, is harmless unless ingested. When it crops up in a farmer's field, it is much more deadly. It spreads out and intertwines with other plants, passing on a poison which — while harmless to the other plant — is deadly to anyone who consumes it. Anyone eating assassin weed or any plant it has come into prolonged contact with will experience a shortness of breath and an increased heart rate. This condition escalates rapidly until the victim dies of coronary failure.
- 3 **BELLADONNA:** Also known as “deadly nightshade”, the leaves, stems, and berries of this plant are poisonous, but the most poison is found concentrated in the roots. In small doses it causes hallucinations and delirium. In large doses, the effects include, headaches, dizziness, and convulsions, until the nervous system completely loses control of the body's functions and death ensues.
- 4 **BLINDBERRY:** This short, scrawny looking shrub typically grows in arid regions where food is scarce. Its sour, juicy berries contain a toxin that affects the ocular nerves of any creature that ingests them. If only a few berries are eaten, the creature will suffer a temporary weakness and blurriness of vision, but if more are eaten it can cause temporary or permanent blindness.
- 5 **DAGGERBRUSH:** This hard-branched bush grows in large, thicket-like clusters and is commonly found at the bottoms of pits and ravines. Daggerbrush, as the name implies, is covered in large thorns, typically six inches long. Although these thorns are not poisonous, a creature unfortunate enough to fall into a patch of daggerbrush can sustain serious and often fatal injuries.
- 6 **DEVIL'S CLOUD:** The branches of these tall, spindly trees are laden with tart, earthy-tasting fruit. While safe to eat, the fruit are covered by a coconut-like shell bristling with long, sharp spines. Not only does this make them difficult to eat, but the falling fruit can be dangerous and sometimes lethal to creatures unlucky enough to be passing beneath the tree at the wrong time.
- 7 **EVERDREAM:** In small doses, the ground up leaves of this fern-like plant produce a calming, sedative effect. Although everdream does not cause drowsiness, it causes vivid and seemingly profound dreams if taken before bed. In larger doses, the subject can easily fall into a permanent catatonic state.
- 8 **FIREPOD:** These small plants can be found growing in patches on the ground or clinging to walls and other surfaces. They are covered with large, membranous spheres that contain a bioluminescent gas, giving off a dim light. The spheres are very fragile and the gas is highly flammable, which can be dangerous if enough are broken near an open flame.
- 9 **FOOL'S HORN:** The trumpet-shaped flowers of this climbing vine produce a highly psychoactive pollen. Just being near the flowers of this vine is enough to cause a mild feeling of vague bliss, sometimes accompanied by brief and temporary memory loss or “blackouts”. With prolonged exposure or more direct contact with the pollen, such as brushing up against the flowers, causes dizziness, loss of willpower and inhibition, and memory loss. Actually ingesting even a few small pinches of the pollen will cause permanent insanity. This can range from delusions and hallucinations to the victim no longer being able to care for his basic bodily functions and survival needs.

d25 DEADLY PLANT:

- 10 **HEMLOCK:** Every part of this large, flowering plant is poisonous. The effects of hemlock poisoning include rapid muscle deterioration and severe pain. Although it is quite deadly, hemlock is a somewhat slow working poison. It takes thirty minutes for the effects to begin, and death comes after several hours.
- 11 **MADNESS TREE:** The conical fruit of this leafy tree is sweet and nourishing. Any creature that eat the fruit will suffer no immediate ill effects, but over the course of the next five days they will undergo drastic psychological changes. These effects include paranoia, auditory hallucinations, and loss of mental and emotional control. At the culmination of this five day period, the creature will become violently enraged, mindlessly attempting to kill any other living creature it sees.
- 12 **MIND BLOSSOM:** Commonly found in marshes, wetlands, and near bodies of fresh water, the bright purple flowers of this plant produce strange visions, out-of-body experiences, and euphoria when ingested. Mind blossom is often used for religious or recreational purposes, but prolonged or excessive use can cause irreversible damage to the user's senses and nervous system. Even a minor overdose can cause permanent blindness, deafness, or loss of another sense. A large enough overdose can shut down the user's lungs or heart.
- 13 **MONKSHOOD:** This flowering plant is also known as "wolfsbane" and "devil's helmet". The roots of this plant are highly poisonous, and are often used to make arrow poisons. Upon contact with the skin, the poison causes nerve stimulation, followed by numbness. Used in such a way, monkshood can have medicinal uses as an anesthetic and pain reliever, but contact with the blood stream, or even a small cut or abrasion on the skin, is usually fatal, slowing the victim's pulse until the heart shuts down entirely.
- 14 **MOONSEED:** The small, grape-like berries of these climbing vines, while safe to eat for many animal species, are poisonous to human beings. In low doses, they cause nausea, indigestion, and abdominal cramping. Higher doses can cause paralysis, often followed by death.
- 15 **MORTAR ROOT:** This creeping vine grows along stonework and rock formations. It burrows its tendrils into cracks and crevices in order to sustain a foothold, and if left unchecked it can grow several feet in one day. Because it is gray in color, it is often difficult to spot from a distance – what appears to be a safe bridge to cross or cliff to scale might very well crumble to pieces underneath the weight of an unsuspecting traveler. Mortar root can spread its tendrils deep into the earth and can cause considerable damage to underground construction as well as stone buildings and walls.
- 16 **NIGHTWINE:** The large, pitcher-like leaves of this towering shrub collect moisture and rain which the plant stores and uses over time. To prevent other creatures from drinking this water, the leaves secrete an odorless and mostly flavorless poison. A creature drinking from the leaves will notice a slight bitter taste, but will not immediately notice any ill effects. After a few minutes, the poison causes swelling and constrictions in the mouth and throat, making it difficult to breathe. This usually passes after an hour or so, but if enough of the poison was ingested (for example, several deep gulps) the throat will close completely and the creature will suffocate.
- 17 **NOOSEWOOD:** This large tree is shaped much like a weeping willow, with long shoots that grown downwards to the ground and then curve back up to the tree's branches, forming noose- like loops. When the surface of one of these shoots is stimulated, the shoot contracts and tightens on the prey and lifts it upward. The shoots are surprisingly strong and resilient – about as strong as a thick hemp rope – and the prey will typically suffocate or die of thirst or starvation. When the prey dies, the shoots release the body so that its eventual decomposition will nourish the tree.
- 18 **OLEANDER:** This large, flowering shrub is highly poisonous. Every part of it is toxic, even the smoke produced when it is burned. The effects begin of oleander poisoning begin immediately, and include vomiting, sweating, diarrhea, and unconsciousness. This is typically followed by a coma and/or death.
- 19 **PLAGUEBLOSSOM:** These short, brushy plants usually pose no danger. It is only when they are pollinating that they become quite lethal. Roughly once a month, they release small clouds of pollen that can drift about in the air. Or be carried away by the wind. Anyone breathing in the pollen will be overcome by sneezing fits, followed shortly by a gradual soreness and swelling of the mucous membranes and respiratory passages, accompanied by headaches and fatigue. With a small exposure, such as that from a single plant, these symptoms usually pass within a few weeks. Larger exposures can bring fever and pneumonia-like symptoms, which may or may not be fatal. An excessively large dose, such as ingesting a prepared concentrate of the pollen, can lead to complete respiratory failure within minutes or even seconds.
- 20 **SCRATCHGRASS:** Growing in thick patches, scratchgrass blades can reach up to ten feet high. Scratchgrass itself is not lethal, but it contains an extremely painful, blistering irritant that can last for several days if it comes into contact with the skin. Creatures of human intelligence can deal with this condition, but animals can be driven mad by the pain and itching. Enough exposure can cause normally docile animals to become enraged and aggressive.

d25 DEADLY PLANT:

- 21 **SIRENPOND:** This deadly plant is similar in shape to an oversized pitcher plant. It grows within depressions in the earth, forming a watertight surface that collects rain and water runoff. Lining the inside of the “pitcher” are rows of downward-facing spines that can impale and trap anything that ventures inside. Most sirenponds are no more than a few feet across, making them only a minor hazard for larger creatures, but some are as large as ponds or small lakes, sustaining entire ecosystems within their confines.
- 22 **SLEEPER VINE:** This large, dangerous vine can stretch for vast distances and can grow up to several feet thick if given enough sustenance. It derives its name from the toxin it carries in its short, needle-like thorns. The poison from a single thorn is enough to completely paralyze a small animal, and it only takes a slightly larger amount to paralyze a larger creature such as a human being. After the initial paralysis occurs, the victim will fall unconscious within a few minutes. The surface of the vine then secretes a digestive enzyme, coiling itself around the victim and devouring it over the course of the next few days.
- 23 **SNAPLEAF:** This squat, conical tree has low lying leaves that operate much like a Venus flytrap. These leaves can grow large enough to trap small animals, but they are too small to trap a human being. Nevertheless, the jagged ridges on the edges of the leaves can tear flesh and secrete a powerful, corrosive enzyme. If not washed and dressed immediately, the wound will quickly grow worse as the flesh begins to break down and dissolve away.
- 24 **SPIDERBRANCH:** The thin branches of this tree are highly poisonous, but only when they make contact with the bloodstream. Spiderbranch can be ground up to make a powder or boiled to make a tea. It can also be fashioned into needles, arrows, or other weapons. A dose causes painful tremors and a stiffening of the muscles and joints, followed by death within a few minutes.
- 25 **SWIMERSBANE:** These globular, floating plants can grow up to one foot in diameter. They typically are found in large clusters, sometime covering the entire surface of smaller bodies of water. Their featureless surfaces secrete a toxin that causes painful muscle cramps and severe spasms upon contact with the skin. While the effects pass within a few hours and are not fatal in themselves, they can cause the victim to drown if he comes into contact with them while swimming.



*Dear Secret Santicore—
I would like 50 ways that plants can kill Pks.
Thanks!
J.*

DOOM BY GREEN

FIFTY MORE DEADLY PLANTS

by Erik & Veronica Jensen

wampuscountry.blogspot.com

and Dylan Atkinson

terriblesorcery.blogspot.com

d50 DEADLY PLANT:

- 1 **PHILOSOPHER'S BANE**, or Mage-Hemlock -- Although universally bitter to the taste, the leaves of the Philosopher's Bane are particularly dangerous to magic-wielding or psychic creatures. The poison binds to the area of the brain controlling spellcasting, to quick effect. Most commonly the plant's toxic sap is used to coat arrows which can inflict painful paralysis on sorcerers, but the leaves can also be brewed into a tea which, if consumed, can retard spellcasting for hours.
- 2 **TRUTHROOT** -- When a crime is committed, the accused may be forced at swordpoint to chew a quantity of truthroot and hold the resulting paste in their mouth, between cheek and gum, allowing the released oils to seep into oral tissue. From that point, if the accused tells a lie, the truthroot poison is catalyzed, causing intense pain and a discoloration of the mouth. Few dare to embrace mendacity under the influence of truthroot, as several small lies - or one big one - can lead to death.
- 3 **WEeping-DEATH TREE** -- This willow-like tree supplements its nutrition by slaying those who rest beneath it. The Weeping-Death holds within its branches and bark a multitude of reservoirs of an acidic enzyme which it can release instantly by opening hundreds of stoma across its surface; when it does so, gallons of burning acid rain down on the creatures below. The tree feeds on the nitrogen left behind as their corpses decompose.
- 4 **FAUNBLOSSOM** -- A flowering bush, the faunblossom is dotted with tiny blue flowers which can spray forth a cloud of neurotoxic pollen. Humans and some animals caught in the blast begin to twitch and convulse, then are possessed by a rhythmic seizure which resembles the dancing of a jig. As the effects of the pollen can last quite some time, some victims dance themselves to exhaustion, or to the brink of a heart attack. Even the hardest find themselves vulnerable to attack by wild beasts while they prance and caper about.
- 5 **DREAMWEED** -- Although it resembles other saw-leaved weeds, dreamweed is far from common and is highly sought-after. When eaten or brewed, the poisons within dreamweed have a two-fold effect: first, for a short time, the imbibor can see invisible objects; and second, the poison causes convulsion, altered breathing, and delirium for hours, even after the beneficial effect has worn off. Some claim to have seen true visions of the divine under the influence of dreamweed, but many more have died in the attempt.
- 6 **SIREN'S TRUMPET** -- The bell-shaped flowers which hang from this plant emit a soft, sweet music which travels easily on spring breezes. The music has a hypnotic and soporific effect on the listener, drawing them closer to the plant and inculcating in them a great love for the plant and a desire to protect it. In time, the victim will happily starve to death beneath the plant if not rescued; wild animals, many of which are immune to the Siren's Trumpet, are keen to always check the area around the plant for an easy meal.
- 7 **YOU TREE** -- A large, carnivorous tree, the You's trunk contains a chamber full of viscous liquid and a mimetic flesh-like substance. The You feed thusly: seizing upon a person or animal with its prehensile branches, the victim - living or dead - is placed within the trunk to be digested. In a matter of minutes, the pseudoflesh within the trunk has reshaped itself to mimic the victim, and this semi-sentient vegetable doppelganger is then ejected onto the forest floor, where it stands up and goes after its "friends" as quickly as possible, to lure them within the You tree's reach. The further from the tree the impostor roams, the less intelligence it displays.
- 8 **MOONBERRY** -- The shiny, yellow-white berry clusters on the Moonberry bush are quite tasty and grow in large quantities, but the savvy woodsman avoids them. When eaten, moonberries produce in the human system a chemical byproduct which causes one's perspiration to include a stink which is highly attractive to lycanthropes of all sorts. Given the keen senses and potential tracking ability of most werewolves and their kin, the fool who eats moonberries may be reliably detected by lycanthropes up to several miles away, who may then easily hunt and surround the glutton and his companions.

d50 DEADLY PLANT:

- 9 WHITE FOG -- This bush, also known as the coward-bush, cannot stand to be disturbed. Whenever something brushes up against it - or, in more sensitive specimens, merely walks by it - the White Fog emits a massive cloud of choking white pollen which, as it comes into contact with the mouth and nose, immediately absorbs moisture and becomes a thick, sticky paste. So, too, are the eyes gummed up, causing blindness. Breathing becomes near-impossible within moments; a strong acid or base (lemon, vinegar) easily breaks up the paste.
- 10 LEECH-THORN -- Resembling ordinary briar or bramble, the leech-thorn coats itself with an enzyme which prevents blood from clotting, much like a leech. Those walking through the bramble may find themselves not only scratched up, but bleeding uncontrollably. Wild creatures which feed on blood - stirges, for example - often nest near a leech-thorn patch.
- 11 PORCUPINE TREE -- A short, squat evergreen, the porcupine tree is known for its unusual cones, which are clusters of barbed quills. The tree defends itself and hunts by firing clusters of these quills at animals and people which pass by (treat as darts). While one porcupine tree is easily avoided, an entire copse of the plants can make short work of intruders. It is perhaps worth noting that the 'quills' of the tree are not green wood, but are sufficiently dry and dense to act as hardwood; it is for this reason that cagey vampire hunters plant porcupine trees in strategic locations.
- 12 FROSTBLOOM -- This parasitic, flowered vine appears in winter after first snowfall, climbing its way up oak and pine alike. It has adapted to cold weather ably and is undeterred by blizzard or hoar-frost; in fact, the frostbloom so fears the coming of Spring - which will kill it - that upon sensing warmth nearby, such as that of a human body, it will immediately attempt to re-cool the area by spreading forth from its flowers a blast of concentrated cold. Although this frost-blast can be somewhat damaging, the real danger is exposure over time -- many a traveller has foolishly tethered their horse near a frostbloom, only to return to find an equine popsicle.
- 13 DEVILBLOOM -- The sweet aroma of this annual flower practically invites smelling; and yet, such indulgence is unwise. The perfume of the devilbloom contains mind-warping agents which, once inhaled, being to alter the personality of the victim. In minutes, he is irritable and argumentative; in hours, a paranoid and megalomaniac; by the next day, the victim's very moral code may have shifted, and not in a pleasant direction.
- 14 CHOKING-CHERRY -- Although resembling a normal flowering cherry tree, the Choking-cherry is distinguished by its prehensile branches and its unusual method for reproduction. The choking-cherry's seeds grow best in a warm, high-acid environment, and of course the tree wishes to spread its seed as far as possible. Ergo, the Choking-cherry will snatch up passing animals (or humans) and attempt to force a few cherries down their throat, pushing the seeds deep into the alimentary system if necessary. The tree then releases its victim, allowing it to roam. The skins of the choking-cherry contain a natural anti-emetic, making it difficult for the victim to reverse the process. The cherry-pits will take root in the victim's stomach or intestines (or, on rare occasions, embed in the throat itself), and cause intense pain for up to a week before bursting forth as a small tree. This last act generally causes the death of the victim, whose corpse then fertilizes the new Choking-cherry.
- 15 STUMBLEBUSH -- The berries of the stumblebush are rock-hard and multicolored, resembling marbles. The bush reproduces by shedding its berries all at once, several times during the year; when it does so, the ground around the stumblebush is then covered with hard, slippery marbles, and will remain so until the berries 'crack' in the winter cold and plant the seeds inside. Due to this method, stumblebushes are often found in great patches of many square yards, with a further dangerous zone several yards out in which treading on the berries is a real danger.
- 16 MALEPHANT EAR -- The large, ear-shaped leaves of this curious plant have developed the ability to record and play back sound. The Malephant Ear plant uses this ability to draw victims nearby, which are then attacked by whatever wild beast is living in harmony with the plant (the plant itself then feeds on the animal's waste). A fully-grown plant is a skilled mimic, and may manifest all manner of animal and human sounds, including snippets of speech ("Help me!", "Over here!"), dramatic sobbing, children's laughter, and even screams.
- 17 ELDER-BERRY -- The elder-berry bush is not, technically speaking, poisonous. However, those who eat of the plant sometimes find themselves rapidly aged, usually anywhere from one to thirty years in the span of a quarter-hour. This process by itself can cause death in the already-elderly, or via complete system-shock in a younger victim (imagine a toddler turning into an adult - flesh may stretch and rip and bones splinter in the rapidity of the process). Those with the constitution to survive the transformation can go on to lead normal - albeit shorter - lives. It is important to note that the berries each contain varying amounts of the chemicals (or magic) which cause the rapid aging - there is no easy way to parcel out berries to gain a desired aging effect.
- 18 GIANT PIT-TRAP PLANT -- Related to the Pitcher and other carnivorous plants, the Giant Pit-Trap burrows in the ground in the jungle or subterranean caverns or corridors, implanting itself beneath the surface of the earth. The bulk of the plant is an immense bowl containing digestive juices and acids; the remainder are a few motive tendrils, and a ring of large, stiff leaves resembling earth or flagstone, which it uses to obscure the 'pit'.

d50 DEADLY PLANT:

- 19 HUNGRY WALL -- Existing somewhere in the realm between lichen and vine, the Hungry Wall is just that - a huge, flat plant which clings to walls like ivy and consumes hapless passers-by. The Wall contains several bladders of acid; when an animal walks on, or leans on, the Wall, the stoma is opened and smaller tendrils pull the victim inside the Wall's body, where it is crushed and digested. The Hungry Wall can be cultivated, and has in some cases been shown to thrive not only indoors, but when induced to grow along a ceiling.
- 20 FACE-BITER VINE -- A hungry, clinging carnivorous vine which drapes itself across branches and dangles its flowers downward to attract birds. Yet each flower is also a set of sticky, digesting jaws lined with sharp spines. Although adapted to eating songbirds, the Face-Biter has gained its common name by reaching out to attack passing humans.
- 21 CADAVERFLOWER -- This immense, rubbery flowering plant exudes a ghastly stench like that of rotting meat, or the grave. Although such a perfume is not unusual amongst carnivorous plants, in this case the cadaverflower's aroma actually acts as a paralytic agent and a preservative, and its juices are in demand by those familiar with the necromantic arts. The scent of a nearby cadaverflower can cause lethargy and a slowing of the reflexes, and eventually full paralysis.
- 22 RUSTGRASS - A patch of rust-grass is quite soft and springy, making a suitable makeshift bed on which to camp for the night. However, the enzymes in the blades of rust-grass have an oxidizing effect on metallic objects, particularly ferrous ones. A knight who naps upon a bed of rust-grass will wake to find his mail sorely damaged indeed.
- 23 GLUE-WORT -- Traipsing through a cluster of glue-wort bushes is inadvisable, as the leaves and branches are incredibly sticky, and will adhere to clothing and exposed skin, quickly overwhelming even a full-grown man. Victims are frozen in place as in a spiderweb, and exposed to the mercy of local wildlife.
- 24 PUZZLE-TREE -- The twisted and gnarled puzzle-tree is best known for its unusual bark, which sports odd colorations and markings which almost bear the seeming of runes or glyphs. Intelligent creatures looking at the tree may become fascinated by its patterns for some time; in fact, some onlookers may find planted in their mind a post-hypnotic suggestion of some sort, drawing upon their own doubts and fears. Some victims are driven to suicide; others, to murder of their fellows.
- 25 FISHER-MOSS -- The net-like fisher-moss hangs from trees in massive clumps, awaiting prey below. It drops onto the unwary like a fishing-net, and begins to constrict, suffocating the victim. After digesting its meal by means of exuded digestive juices, the moss slowly clambors back up the tree, returning to its hiding-place, although it may not need to feed for several days depending on the size of its catch.
- 26 VENUS BEAR-TRAP -- Something like a cross between a flytrap and a lily-pad, these flat plants lie about on the ground, often amidst brush, bushes, or rows of crops. They are lined with sharp spines around the edge, and when an animal treads upon them, they snap shut, folding in half with remarkable strength. The Venus Bear-Trap can easily seize and entrap an entire small animal such as a rabbit, cat, or grouse; for larger prey, the jaws tend to clamp around a foot, piercing the victim's flesh with the spines. In some cases, the Bear-Traps grow in patches - a man felled by one may find himself falling elbow- or face-first onto another.
- 27 GREENLUNG -- The Greenlung plant grows in battlefields and on corpses, and is similar to the modern Dandelion. During one phase of its growth, it releases clouds of seeds on the wind to spread them far and wide. The Greenlung seeds, however, are the size of a grain of sand. Anyone passing near a field of Greenlung during the seeding season will breathe in a few, and inside the lungs they will begin to grow. A few days later, the victim has occasional coughing fits. After a week, breathing is labored as the alveoli are plugged with expanding tendrils. If left untreated, breathing is impossible inside of two weeks and the victim chokes to death, becoming the soil for a new generation. Passersby who investigate the corpse might become the next carriers.
- 28 ICE MOSS -- Generally dark red or brown, it grows underground in caves and dungeons, where it feeds on the blood of adventurers and native creatures. This dangerous growth does not come by its name through its preferred temperature, but because Ice Moss is extremely slippery. On stairs or sloped passageways, anyone not traveling with extreme caution will fall, becoming easy prey for underground monsters. The Ice Moss absorbs blood spilled from these injuries, and will often spread gradually throughout a dungeon along the paths that adventurers - ready sources of bloodshed - tread most often.
- 29 FALSE FRIEND -- The weed known as False Friend is a small, psychoreactive shapeshifting plant which can rapidly change its appearance. When the False Friend senses that someone is seeking a particular plant - whether a desired foodstuff or a needed medicinal herb - it shapeshifts to appear as that plant. If it is plucked and eaten, however, False Friend reveals its traitorous nature - it is extremely poisonous. If properly detected, however, False Friend is of use in certain magical preparations.
- 30 RAZORFERN -- A towering primeval plant, the Razorfern has innumerable stiff, knife-sharp leaves. The Razorfern feeds on blood, mimicking the movement of the breeze by swaying slightly so as to appear light and wind-blown, despite being dense, hard, and heavy. Persons attempting to brush past the fern will be cut; on 'tasting' the blood, the razorfern will then maneuver to stab the victim further so long as it is in reach, bringing to bear as many fronds as possible. Razorfern leaves retain their stiffness for several days after being harvested (usually clipped with heavy shears); ironically the plant can be plucked from the ground with some ease, and is sometimes wielded by larger humanoids as a makeshift weapon.

d50 DEADLY PLANT:

- 31 **MANDRAKE ROOT** -- Many legends surround this plant: it induces fertility, creates a love potion, or that it will kill anyone who unearths it. In truth, the Mandrake plant dreams of being human - when a human humanoid digs one up, it awakens. Whispering the only word it knows, "you," triggers the effect (the victim must be able to hear this word, so anyone deaf or otherwise protected is safe). The mandrake's primitive plant-mind takes over the man, and he returns to his regular routine, attempting to live a normal life. Usually, the local townsfolk realize what's happened quickly and have the unfortunate killed. It's then put about that the Mandrake is instantly fatal to anyone who digs it up, until the next curious fool tries it.
- 32 **BOMB TREE** -- This towering tree bears large fruit which are densely packed with tiny seeds; at the center of each fruit is a shock-reactive core. When the tree drops a fruit, that fruit will hit the ground - or an intervening branch - and explode forcefully, dispersing not only sweet, sticky juice but sharp, flechette-like seeds over a small area with considerable force. During seeding season, the Bomb tree will release one or two fruits each hour with some regularity. However, if a tree is concussed with enough power, or otherwise shaken, it may drop dozens in a deadly cascade. Wise hunters know to watch the ground for the needle-ridden corpses of small forest animals to indicate the nearby presence of a Bomb tree.
- 33 **MEDUSA TREE** -- A shapely palm which bears no fruit, the Medusa tree also possesses several mid-trunk stoma which can squirt a quickly-solidifying sap. The Medusa's accuracy is uncanny, and the beach around it may be littered with insects, birds, and rodents trapped in amber. The microscopic spores of the Medusa permeate this pseudo-amber; its aim is to deposit 'packages' of seeds, sap, and fertilizer (the corpse) on the beach, to be swept away by the sea to other islands. The Medusa is rarely dissuaded by the size of its potential quarry, and will attack humans and livestock with aplomb. Depending on how many times the victim is hit by the sap, they may be merely slowed, blinded, hampered, or completely encased in the instant amber, suffocating to death.
- 34 **THROWING-MAIDEN** -- A strange evolution of carnivorous plant, the bulk of the Throwing-Maiden's body is a network of roots. However, the plant has two 'ends' above-ground which work in concert to feed. At one end of the Throwing-Maiden is a large, hinged, platform-like leaf which often ends up covered in leaves and forest floor detritus. When sufficient weight - that of a rabbit or similar creature - places pressure on this leaf, the Throwing-Maiden reacts by contracting its hydraulic muscles, rapidly snapping the platform at an angle, as a sort of catapult. Some distance away is the other 'end' of the plant - a field of barbed spikes with channels and grooves to direct the blood and bodily fluids to the Throwing-Maiden's hungry mouths. A successful Throwing-Maiden will grow a very large barb field, allowing the capture of game of various sizes, from a fox to a horse.
- 35 **GARROTTE VINE** -- This parasitic vine gains its sustenance from other plants of the forest, yet is quite deadly to those unaware of its presence. The razor-sharp vine is thin and translucent like a spider's-web, yet remarkably tough and strong when anchored properly between two trees. A garrotte vine will eventually grow back and forth between several trees, producing a near-invisible network of slicing surfaces. The older the garrotte vine, the thinner and sharper its body. Running headlong into a garrotte vine stretched at face- or throat-level produces predictable results; riding at full gallop into one well-established between two strong trees may end not only in decapitation, but being sliced up into a dozen chunks.
- 36 **PHANTOM LOVER** -- This nefarious vinelike plant thrives in the warmth. At night, it will slither down from the trees and into the tents and sleeping-bags of forest visitors. The Phantom Lover exudes a mildly euphoric perfume, huddling against its victim for a time, then eventually attempting to insert itself into the body cavity (usually via mouth, nose, or fundament) for further warming. The warmer the Phantom Lover becomes, the stronger its pleasure-inducing scent. Many an explorer has awoken to find their companion encased in vines, long-dead with a grin on his face.
- 37 **MURDEROUS LIBRARIAN** -- Also known as the Deacon-plant, the Librarian is aptly named, for this flowering bush hates an abundance of sound. The rush of the wind or the call of birds will not disturb it, but shouting, clanking armor, combat, or loud music will certainly do so. When so upset, the Murderous Librarian acts decisively to restore order by silencing interlopers; the Librarian releases a burst of spores in a fifteen- to twenty-foot radius; these spores have a curious muffling quality, dampening sound almost completely for a few moments before they flitter to the ground. The spores are also mildly toxic, causing nausea and disorientation if inhaled.
- 38 **STINKFLOWER** -- Although granted a sophomoric name by common usage, this foul-smelling plant is actually quite hazardous, as it gives off methane rather than oxygen. One stinkflower is merely unpleasant; a field of stinkflower is a fire hazard, as it will be constantly surrounded by an invisible cloud of flammable gasses.
- 39 **MIDNIGHT BUGLE** -- This flowering plant grows air-bladders within its stems, releasing the air simultaneously in a loud, horn-like noise in the middle of the night. Although this racket attracts the Bugle's pollenating species, it also has a tendency to wake any sleeping creatures for some distance, ruining their night of uninterrupted rest or concentration. The Midnight Bugle tends to grow in patches of four or five plants, all of which will blow their horns at around the same time, like a chorus; this in turn may stimulate Bugles some distance away to sound off, and so on, off into the hills like a series of bizarre wolf-calls.

d50 DEADLY PLANT:

- 40 SCORPION-TAIL -- A deadly relative of the common cattail, scorpion-tails grow in similar wetland or riverine environments; in fact, they appear much as cattails do until close inspection, by which point it may be too late. The scorpiontail is semi-prehensile and can bend itself in such a way as to whip around and stab at passing animals with its barbed, poisonous tip. The strike itself is no more than a pin-prick, but the scorpiontail's poison cannot be so easily laughed off. Once the toxin is in the body, it begins to destroy the blood itself. Within minutes of infection, the white blood cells are crippled, making the host weak and vulnerable to further infection. It takes only hours for the scorpiontail toxin to have ripped apart enough red blood cells to kill the host.
- 41 BOOMERANG TREE -- Related to the maple, this tree's seed-pods are perfect boomerangs. The tree is in perpetual bud, usually having six or seven seed-pods available at any given time. The boomerang tree hurls these seed-pods at animals and people who walk by, in the hopes of killing one, providing fertilizer for the seeds which drop nearby. Given the shape of the seed-pod, it will return for a second attempt before clunking against the trunk of the tree and landing there. Due to the nature of this seed distribution, it is not unusual to see a grove of boomerang trees all in a circle, or two ragged roughly-parallel lines of trees -- certainly not the safest place to walk. If gathered when fresh and treated properly by a tanner, the seed-pods may be used as weapons.
- 42 ANKLE-GRABBER -- Primarily a subterranean plant, the ankle-grabber boasts a number of strong tendrils which lurk under sand or soft earth, waiting for a victim. When it detects seismic disturbance, the ankle-grabber reaches up with several tendrils and clutches at the human or animal passing overhead, attempting to hold or trip it so that the victim falls to the ground where other ankle-grabbers in the colony can then assault it with more tendrils. At the tip of each tentacle-like vine is a stinging nematocyst and a series of mouths which draw moisture directly from the flesh of the victim, desiccating it within minutes and leaving a mummified, jerky-like corpse.
- 43 DOOMGREEN-- This short, scruffy grass grows well in many climes. When trod upon, the oils within the grass release a scent which begins to sap the morale of those who walk upon it. The perfume itself, merely a strong grassy smell, subtly triggers the fight-or-flight response in most animals, essentially causing fear. Those who sleep on a patch of doomgreen will certainly have vivid nightmares.
- 44 MOONSHINE CACTUS -- The sweet juices contained within the flesh of this towering cactus flow naturally into a hollow chamber near the bottom, where they ferment. If cut into or tapped (some travellers carry a specially-made cactus-tap precisely for this purpose), most Moonshine cacti will yield about a quarter- to half-gallon of natural liquor. This liquor is deceptively mild and pleasant to the tongue (resembling a maple-flavored bourbon, some say), yet remarkably intoxicating, in part because the mild poison which graces the cactus' copious spines, intended to discourage animals, is also somewhat present in the liquor. However, the lesson of temperance stands us in good stead with regard to this plant; each Moonshine cactus produces its own individual variant of this so-called 'jealous' poison. The presence of two competing poisons in one drinker's body will heighten the effect dramatically; those who drink from multiple cacti in one session risk formulating within their own gullet a fatal neurotoxin.
- 45 CAGE-OAK -- This tree's wide boughs serve a dual purpose: first, to spread wide the leaves which catch rays of sunlight; and second, to reach down and scoop up hapless victims, sealing them in a wooden cage which hangs twenty feet in the air. The Cage-oak can do this in one easy motion, snatching people from the ground below quickly and encasing them in a near-spherical cell. The tree exists in a symbiotic relationship with certain wild beasts who eventually arrive and maul the creature in the cage. Although the bars of the cage are wooden, they are a bit tougher than dry, worked wood, as they are green and the tree itself pushes back against those trying to prise the bars.
- 46 PIXIE-WEED -- This strange plant can be difficult to identify, but is valuable to those who would brew a tea from it, for use as a weight-loss supplement. Eating raw pixie-weed leaves causes the consumer to shrink in size - about 5% smaller for the first dose, lasting about ten minutes. With each successive dose, the reduction in size is more pronounced, and lasts longer. Unfortunately, once enough pixie-weed is consumed to reach about 50% of normal size (usually four doses), the body's cells are saturated with the active ingredient, and the results of continued doses become erratic. In some cases, the bones shrink but the flesh does not; in others, the reverse occurs, where the muscles and skin attempt to shrink but the skeletal structure does not. In addition, each dose after the sixth may over-localize the effects, shrinking only an arm, an eye, etc. The poor soul who survives these multiple doses must then wait for them to wear off, which could take hours and potentially do more damage as he returns to 'normal'.
- 47 HAG PEPPER -- The hanging fruits of this pepper-plant are edible, but must be approached with caution. When less-than-ripe, the peppers are green, and may be harvested; but when the peppers begin to ripen and change to a yellow hue, they are quite dangerous. If disturbed, the peppers immediately point upward and split into a four-sectioned maw, spraying corrosive acid. Many an amateur has attempted to pick hag peppers and ended up with their face melted.

d50 DEADLY PLANT:

- 48 **BONFIRE BUSH** -- This thorny bush bears yellow-green leaves. When disturbed, it bursts into flames, perhaps scorching those nearby, and lighting up the night. The Bonfire Bush will continue to burn smokelessly for several minutes before dying down, at which point its fuel is exhausted for a day or so and the naturally fire-resistant wood may be harvested. It is at this point when bandits and the like take advantage, and lay oil or smoking-logs at the foot of the bush, so that when it is next triggered, the fire is larger and brighter, and accompanied by colored smoke.
- 49 **STOMPING FIR** -- This dual-trunked evergreen tree is noted for being a danger to those passing underneath it. The long, sinewy roots of the Stomping Fir burrow deep into the earth and often dangle from the ceilings of subterranean caverns or passageways. However, if those roots are disturbed, the Stomping Fir grows concerned and will alternately lift and stomp down each of its trunks. This seismic disturbance has been known to cause cave-ins in those corridors beneath the tree.
- 50 **ELDER CAP** -- Some say that fairies appear whenever these large, pale mushrooms grow in rings. Witches prize them for their enchanting properties, and will go to great lengths to cultivate patches around their homes and lairs. The danger of an Elder Cap is only revealed through ingestion. Eating a few whole mushrooms or drinking a tea made from them causes intense dizziness and headaches that make it difficult to think clearly or logically. Magic-users find it almost impossible to use spells, and anyone else has a full-time job just following a conversation. In this state, victims are highly susceptible to suggestion. Hearing "I'm your best friend" from a complete stranger is totally believable while the headache lasts. Victims are likely to sit, clutching their heads, while their host plies them for information, ties them up or just bites their faces off.



Illustration by Jez Gordon

Dear Secret Santicore—

I'd like to ask Secret Santicore for a d20
(or d100 if the person is feeling so inclined)
listing of strange and terrible mutations on monsters.

I generally play more of an old school style game,
but it can honestly be system neutral as well.

Thanks!

M.

STRANGE & TERRIBLE MONSTER MUTATIONS

by Michael Moscrip
migellito@gmail.com

Not only is this system neutral, it's entirely statless! If you're wondering how much damage one of the mutations might do, I'd say 1d6 for every zHD of the monster. If it's something protective, I'd say improve AC by 1 per zHD, with a maximum of twice as good as a normal monster of its type.

To roll 1-50, roll percents, but treat the tens die as follows: 1-2=1, 3-4=2, 5-6=3, 7-8=4, 9-0=0

d50 MONSTER MUTATION:

1. 1d4 extra eyes. 1-2: on forehead, 3-4: on palms, 5-6: on back of head.
2. Prehensile tail. On the back of its head!
3. Skull on outside of head.
4. Prehensile tongue. 1d4 feet long.
5. Bat-like wings.
6. Major organs on outside of body.
7. Birdfeet!
8. Megabrain. Head looks like an enormous brain. Has ESP.
9. Extra grotesque baby head with its own personality. 1-2: on shoulder, 3-4: on chest, 5: on lower arm, 6: on leg.
10. Enormous mouth in middle of abdomen.
11. Arms where legs go. Legs where arms go.
12. 6 inch tentacles in place of all teeth.
13. Eyes are on 8 inch stalks.
14. Mouth is on the end of a trunk. 1d4 feet long.
15. Body covered with large horns.
16. Slimeskin. Skin looks and acts like Green Slime.
17. Body covered with biting mouths. 5% chance one is vampiric.
18. Oozing sores on body are openings to insect hives. 1-2: ants, 3-4: termites, 5-6: hornets.
19. Spine ends in a large scorpion tail. Venom sting.
20. Gelatinous body. Piercing and blunt damage have no effect.
21. Body covered with eyes. Can pluck them off and send on spying missions. Detached eyes 1-2: sprout spider legs, 3-4: ooze across the ground, 5-6: float through the air.
22. Huge snail shell on back contains most internal organs.
23. Hoof & mouth. Lower jaw is split in two, each half ends in a small hoofed leg.
24. Worm fingers.

STRANGE & TERRIBLE MONSTER MUTATIONS

d50 MONSTER MUTATION:

25. Jackolantern. Skull is hollow behind face, and open at the top. Scalp and any hair are in the hollow interior. Brain is in a hump at the base of the neck.
26. Body covered with feathers. Water-repellent.
27. All bones are wood. Thorns poke through skin.
28. Blood Pudding. Shed blood behaves as a Black Pudding, tinted as normal blood. If killed, all remaining blood leaves the body as a single pudding.
29. Continuously molting flesh. Scraps and shreds add some protection, but reduce agility.
30. Fingernails/claws come off in victim and burrow inward.
31. Sucking proboscis mouth. Eats like a fly. Mouth shoots corrosive stomach acid.
32. Skin oozes sticky goo. Move on walls or ceiling at half normal rate.
33. Body emanates weird radiation. Glows in darkness. Severely burns organic life within 10 feet, but burns don't show or take effect for 1 hour.
34. Snake eyes. Each eye socket contains the head of a snake instead of an eyeball. Can extend 2d6 inches.
35. Huge multi-faceted eyes on either side of head. Each facet is a tiny eyeball.
36. Worm hair. Affects all hair on body.
37. Noseless. Blowhole on top of head. Expelled mucus acts as Yellow Mold.
38. Head is replaced with a single enormous tentacle covered with sensory hairs.
39. Insect wings sprout from back.
40. Multi-faced. 1-3: Second face on back of head, 4-5: Three faces spaced around head, 6: 3d6 faces all over body.
41. 1d4 additional arms.
42. Popping Pustules, 1-3 inches each. 1-3: horrendous stink, 4-5: acid, 6: fluid ignites on contact with air.
43. Suckers on hands. Drains moisture from those touched.
44. Eats through a wooden tube. Opening mouth opens an arcane portal to 1: ocean depths, 2: ethereal plane, 3: high windy atmosphere, 4: astral plane, 5: hell, 6: deep space.
45. Half normal size.
46. Twice normal size.
47. Small fingers inside mouth instead of teeth.
48. Tongue emanates Continual Darkness.
49. Antlers sprout from every major joint.
50. Neckless.

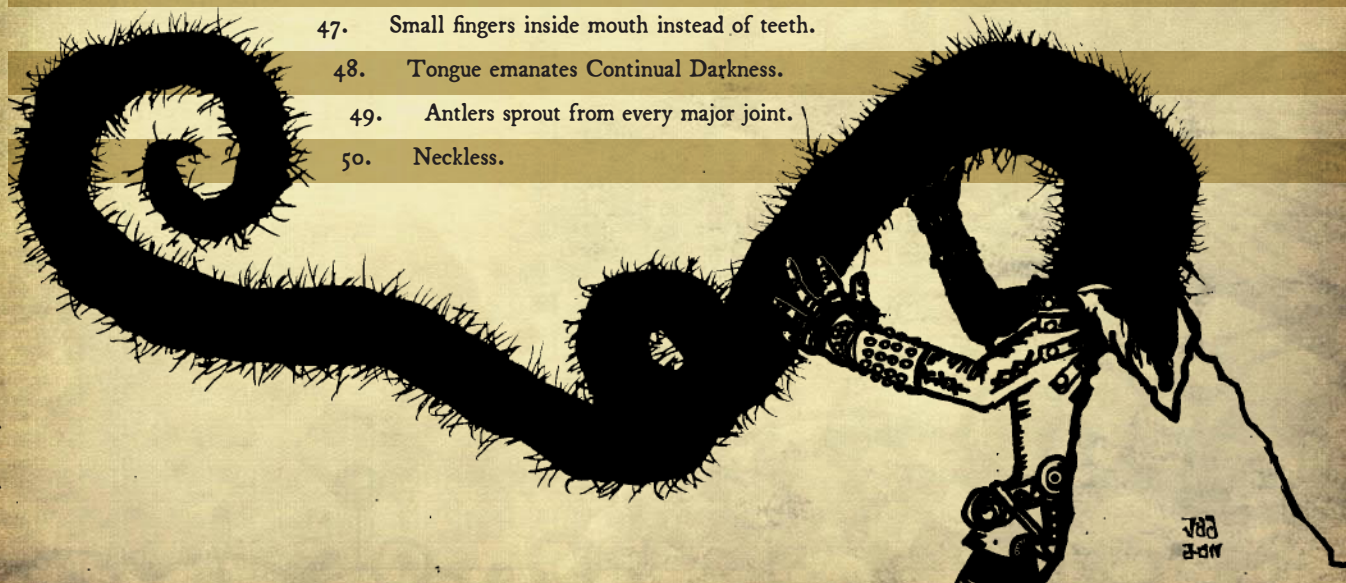


Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

Dear Secret Santicore—
I would like a puzzle for a dungeon trap!
Thanks!
P.

THE TOMB OF THE MOG

by Jez Gordon

gibletblizzard.blogspot.com

with a little help from

Mike Evans & Erik Jensen

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The Tomb of the Mog is a nasty little encounter that can be plugged into any adventure as the treasure room at the heart of a dungeon or palace. If the puzzles are successfully negotiated the players will be granted access to the Mogramidian, an artefact of great power that can fundamentally alter the nature of the multiverse. The whole room and everything contained is a puzzle trap of some sort, designed to thresh out fools. It's pretty brutal, but the promise of world-shaking power should be enough to lure any adventurer. Aside from the real possibility of character death, I've tried to make the encounter as system-agnostic and power-level scalable as possible, so it can be enjoyed by low-end grunts as much as the big guys. These puzzles rely on player ingenuity to solve. If you're concerned about brilliant player strategies coming from the thugs who made smarts their dump stat, have players make an Intelligence check before revealing their plans.

Before running this encounter, it's best if you have the following:

- Handout of **ALCOVE & TAPESTRY INSCRIPTIONS** (p33)
- Handout of **HEX LOCK PUZZLE** (p31)
- Handout of **TRIANGLE LOCK PUZZLE** (p33)
- Sticktape (some of the Triangle Lock pieces get taped together to make the Mogramidian artefact)
- It's also recommended that you have all the adventurers' combat stats handy for some of the foes they will encounter, which are duplicates of the characters; it will help speed up the combat, and keep the players guessing as to the powers and strengths of their foes.

It's probably a good idea to strengthen the Hex Lock and Triangle Lock puzzles with cardboard; they're going to be handled by the players quite a bit.

BACKGROUND

The Mog is a creature of legend throughout the multiverse, a symbol of defiance and transformation who started out as a mangy black cat that was mutated and evolved by eldritch scraps of a sorcerer's failed experiments. After a lifetime (nine actually) of jaunty adventures across the multiverse, he came to the realisation that death (his in particular) was inescapable, which was completely unacceptable. He fought back, trying to change the rules of the cosmos that demanded that all living things must die. In the

course of his war against death, he created the Mogramidian, a powerful artefact that was designed to alter the very laws of nature and spare the Mog his doom; but the device was unstable, too ambitious, and with numerous design flaws it failed its creator.

Sort of— upon his death the Mog was interred in a tomb of his own design that was really part of the Mogramidian; a transdimensional resting place which could be accessed from anywhere. In (un)reality it was a machine of sorts, one that was fueled by refined ingenuity to operate. And only ingenuity of the highest caliber was acceptable; to filter and refine its powersource it manifested a series of devilish traps and contraptions that had to be overcome to activate it. It sought out places that demanded the highest wits and resourcefulness to survive: it nestled into the hearts of great dungeons, labyrinths and impregnable treasuries across all creation. There it lay waiting for the bravest of souls to fight their way to it, best its defenses, and fire up the Mogramidian with their ingenuity, hoping that somewhere in the multiverse there was one with the talents and heart to uncover its true purpose and bring its creator back from the dead.

THE TOMB OF THE MOG

The entrance to the tomb is a plain stone door; while easy to push open it shuts behind the characters and cannot be reopened by any means.

Beyond the door lies a flight of steps that lead up to a beautiful domed chamber; all gold and midnight blue. The dome is decorated with numerous stars that illuminate the chamber with a pale cold-fire light. The dome rests on six columns; in between each is an alcove containing a single tapestry. In front of the door stands a stone dais. At the heart of the tomb stands a golden pedestal, waist high, with a plain urn resting on top. At the base of the pedestal lie the ancient remains of two previous explorers. The floors are cold polished marble, coated in a thin layer of dust.

THE STONE DAIS

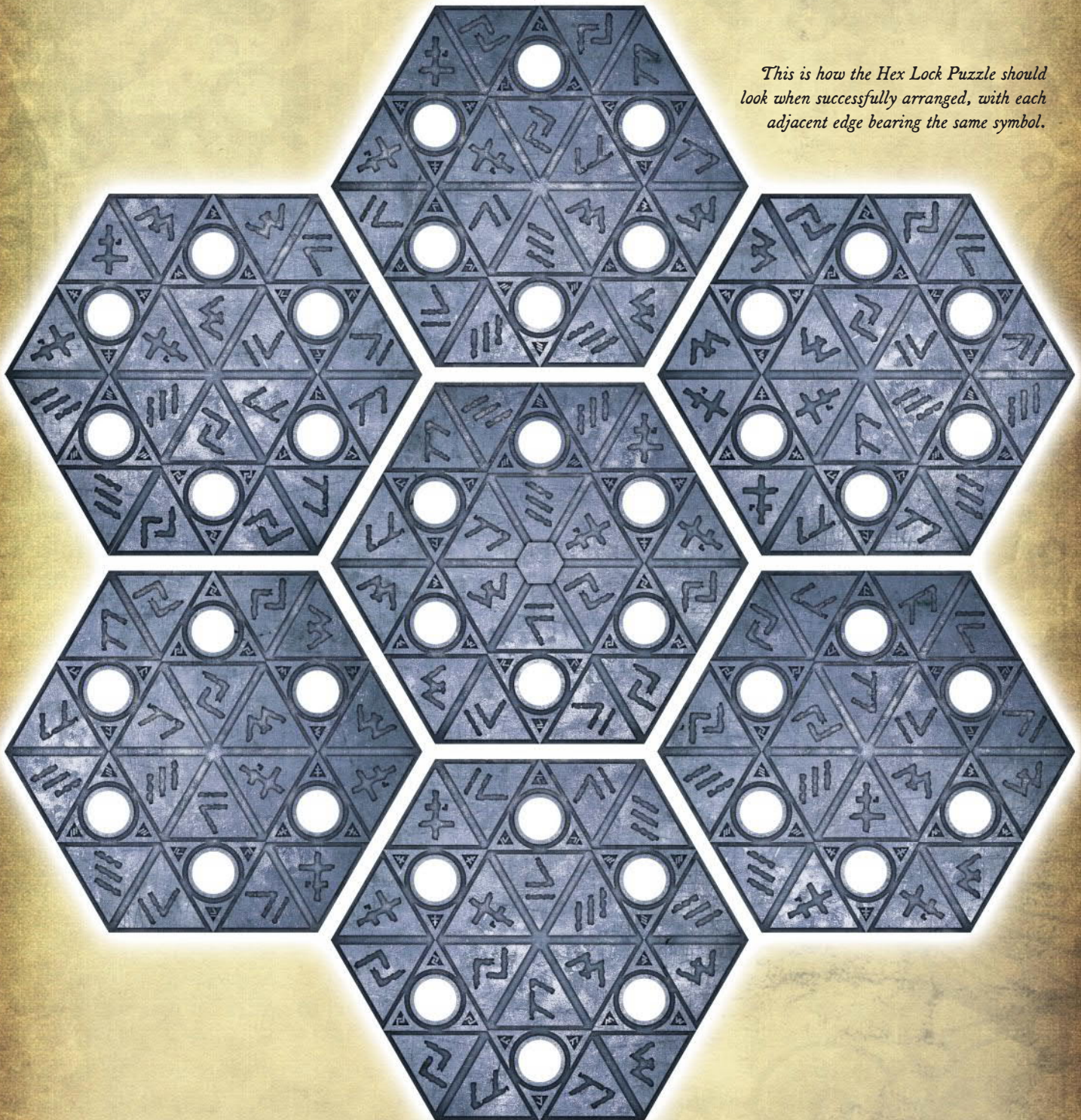
The small circular dais is low, and brief inspection shows a shallow hand-sized and paddle-shaped depression. Whatever rested there is gone.

THE STAR DOME

High overhead, atop six columns as tall as six men, stands a dome filled with numerous pale orbs that match the night skies far above.

HEX LOCK PUZZLE

This is how the Hex Lock Puzzle should look when successfully arranged, with each adjacent edge bearing the same symbol.



Print, mount on cardboard, then cut out; lay the hex tiles in front of the players in random order, keeping the central hex (marked by the small hexagon in the center of the tile) in the middle. Particularly nasty bastard Game Masters will print a second copy and stick the second sheet of hexes on the back of the first, so that not only do the players have to figure the correct arrangement, but also which is the correct side!

Characters with astronomy or astrology backgrounds will recognise the constellations and correct locations of larger orbs that represent the planets and moons of the setting. That they match perfectly the current position of the heavens is extraordinary, and if the characters linger long enough in the tomb they will notice that the stellar display changes over time as the world turns.

The Star Dome can even be used to alter the location of the Tomb. With enough mental effort, a character can move the stars to suit their whim, though it resets to its former location with a thought; if they ever escape the Tomb under different star charts they will emerge on a world at a time and place that closest matches the character's design. Hopefully that place has atmosphere.

THE ALCOVES & TAPESTRIES

Each alcove contains a large dark tapestry that depicts scenes from the Mog's colourful life. Under each tapestry an esoteric symbol has been carved; under each symbol a phrase written in a mysterious code.

Close inspection of the tapestries reveal that they are woven from human hair. Details of each tapestry can be found on the following page.

THE DEAD BODIES

Two dessicated skeletons lie crumpled at the base of the pedestal; rags are all that's left of their clothes, though one bears a rust-caked sword in its hand, and the other - armed with a dagger - clutches at a small leather sling bag.

Both weapons are magical (of a power level to suit the campaign); the sling bag is a *bag of holding* (again of appropriate power) that contains: a head in a jar, a starfish made of tongues, 50' of superior rope, a bunch of imitation flowers, a 10' pole, a collection of 27 non-magical knives from around the campaign setting and beyond, a metal comb (that matches the shape of the depression on the stone table at the entrance to the tomb), two healing concoctions (of appropriate power level) and rough sketches of an enormous black tower that reaches far past the clouds and into space. The phrase "feet in the clouds, head in the stars" scrawled underneath it.

THE GOLDEN PEDESTAL

The golden pedestal stands roughly waist height, about one foot across at the top. From a distance it looked plain and unadorned; but as it is approached subtle details begin to appear, till close inspection reveals an elaborate patina of arcane sigils on every surface. Lying across the top is a plain stoneware urn; its contents have been up-ended covering the top of the pedestal in a layer of ash.

The urn is plain, but staring at it for a minute or more reveals the presence of faces that slowly move about the surface. They are in great pain; anyone who can read lips or can comprehend languages can see they're yelling at the characters not to touch the urn. Touch it directly and the character's soul is sucked into the urn (this is the fate of the two dead explorers). This terrible device needs souls to fuel its purpose of preserving the soul of whoever was last interred within the vessel, keeping the soul within the earthly realms and delaying their journey to whatever heavenly or infernal eternity awaits them. The urn is completely empty.

It can be knocked off the pedestal by throwing something at it.

Wiping away the ash from the top of the pedestal reveals an inlay of seven palm-sized hexagonal tiles. This is the Hex Lock Puzzle.

THE HEX LOCK PUZZLE

Seven hexagonal tiles of an unknown metallic element lie atop the pedestal. Each bears the same six symbols that are found in the alcoves of the tomb, but they are in a different order on each tile. Only the innermost tile, with a small hex in the center of it, lies flush with the top of the pedestal; the outer six tiles appear to be movable.

The Hex Lock Puzzle is the first of several tests that stand between the characters and their goal. The Hex Lock can only be opened by arranging the six outer tiles so that the symbol on each side is the same as the symbol on the side of the adjacent hex AND the central hex (as arranged on the previous page). Be sure when laying out the hex tiles for the players to interact with that they are NOT placed in the correct arrangement. Where's the fun in that?

The Puzzle is not without dangers: every time a player touches one of the hex tiles it summons a murderous tapestry demon from one of the alcoves corresponding with the adjacent symbol on the central hex tile.

Once the danger of the Hex Lock is realised the trick becomes a question of how to solve the puzzle quickly before the Tapestry Demons kill them AND doing so in a manner that moves the least number of tiles.

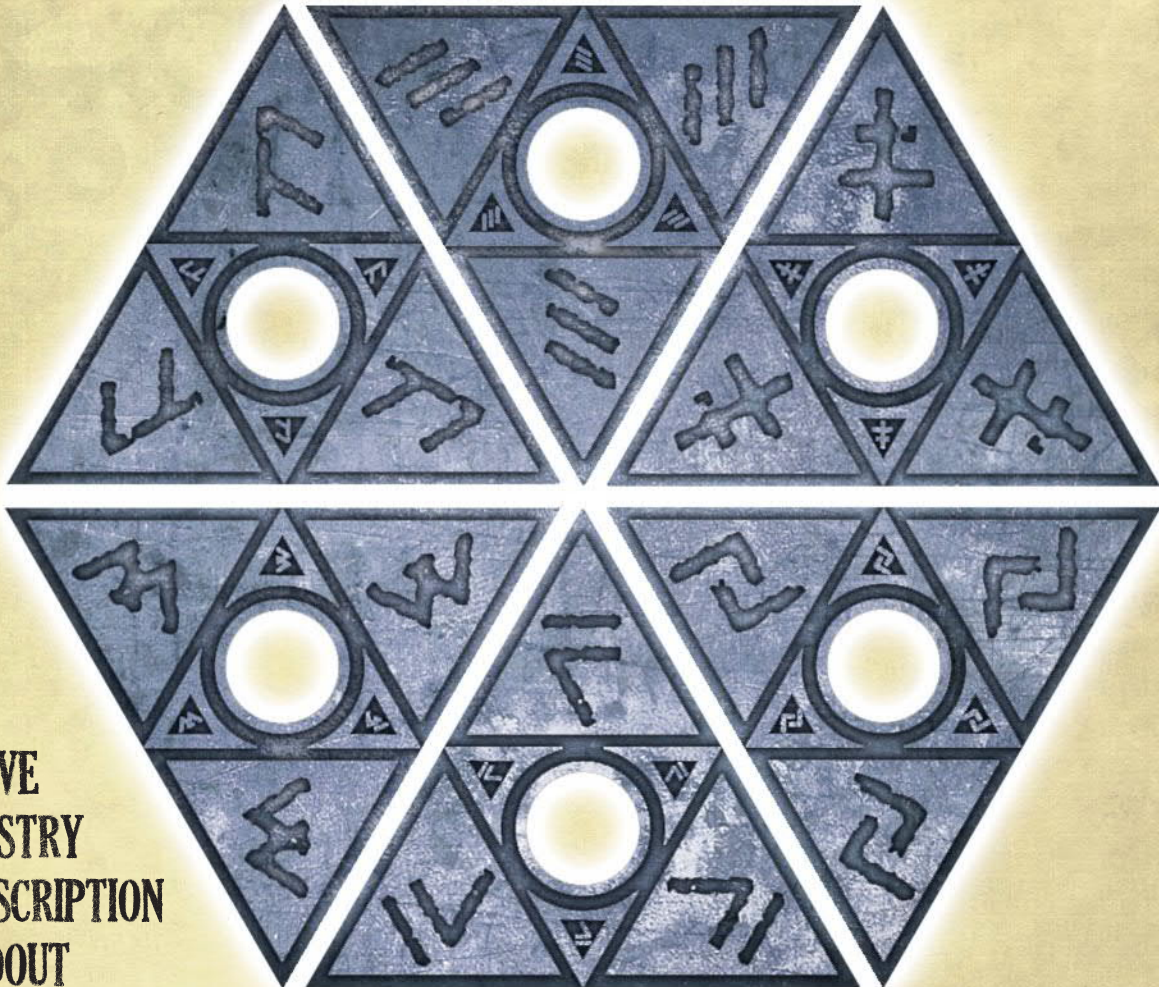
TAPESTRY DEMONS

As soon as a character touches one of the Hex Lock tiles they summon a writhing mass of human hair that tears away from the appropriate tapestry and quickly takes on a lifesized raggedy-haired parody of the character. It has the following abilities:

- The same attack and defense bonuses, hit points, powers (magical and otherwise) and equipment of the summoning character;
- Radiates a horrifying fear, that is especially difficult to resist by the summoning character;
- Immunity to all attacks save those from the summoning character, including mind-altering effects, though non-damaging effects from other characters can still hinder it (e.g. a *web* spell will still impede it);
- Is armed in the same fashion as the summoning character; damage from weapons or spells is converted to ability drain:
 - Demon of Secrets: All hits do ability damage to INT or equivalent
 - Demon of Steel: All hits do ability damage to DEX or equivalent
 - Demon of Madness: All hits do ability damage to WIS or equivalent
 - Demon of Flesh: All hits do ability damage to CON or equivalent
 - Demon of Electricity: All hits do ability damage to CHA or equivalent
 - Demon of Death: All attack do ability damage to STR or equivalent
- Anyone reduced to zero in any ability is dead; their hair is torn from their scalp and makes its way across the floor to join the demon's body.
- Can be driven back into its tapestry by the presence of a comb or any hair care product (shampoo, scissors, mirror, hairdressers).

TRIANGLE LOCK PUZZLE

Print, mount on cardboard, then cut out each separate triangle. Lay the triangle tiles in front of the players in the specific order, with all adjacent edges touching to form the hex shape as shown below.



ALCOVE TAPESTRY & INSCRIPTION HANDOUT



7:9
VII 3W92ZVII
392779W
39VII7

tapestry shows
origins of the Mog; as a
cat feasting in sorcerer's
refuse; his mutation into
intelligent biped.

SECRETS

"the scraps
matter most"



397VII 9:
:4B 9WVII
397VII 9:
249VII

tapestry shows
the adventures of Mog
the Swordsman, living
eight of his nine lives
to the fullest.

STEEL

"lots of fingers
lots of pies"



4B
VII92B47III
349VII

tapestry shows
the Mog succumb
to his fear of death and
his return to strength,
determined to overcome
death itself.

MADNESS

"in sanity
lies"



79 7:9
392VII7
VW9927:

tapestry shows
the Mog's many wars
against death, his
adventures thru the
multiverse seeking to
outlast his mortality.

FLESH

"to the
last breath"



4B 992147III
4VII 7:9
29III

tapestry shows
the construction of
the Mogramidian,
and its horrific
failures and
side effects.

ELECTRICITY

"ingenuity is
the key"



:992W 7:9
7913:
V17 9B39

tapestry shows the
death of the Mog, thru
old age; interment
inside the tomb;
a pyramid hovers
over him.

DEATH

"fear the touch
but once"

Once the Hex Lock Puzzle has been completed the central hex unlocks and suddenly falls apart into six triangular tiles that form the Triangle Lock Puzzle. The players must configure the triangular tiles correctly in order to activate the Mogramidian.

THE TRIANGLE LOCK PUZZLE

Each triangle is made of the same mysterious metal, and bears one of the six symbols from the Hex Lock. There is a hole in middle of each triangle, big enough for all but the largest of fingers to slip right through.

Place the six Triangle Lock Puzzle pieces in front of the players in the same order as shown on the previous page. Unlike the Hex Lock Puzzle, touching the triangles will have no discernable effect (though the players will be most reluctant at first). But watch your players very carefully; as soon as four of the triangles have been arranged to make one larger triangle, stop the players for a moment and run some stickytape across each adjacent edge; these four triangles cannot be separated by any means, though in its current arrangement it still has no power.

The Triangle Lock Puzzle must be assembled into a tetrahedron (same as a 4-sided dice) for its powers to function. Again, once the players start folding the outer triangles up to form the tetrahedron, stickytape the edges until all sides are stuck down. They have solved the puzzle; when arranged this way the Triangle Lock becomes the Mogramidian.

THE MOGRAMIDIAN

The golden tetrahedron now hums and crackles with power, and floats before the characters, slowly tumbling and turning in the air. Each side has a finger sized hole in each side.

The Mogramidian is easy to snatch out of the air. The powers of the Mogramidian are only activated by sliding a whole finger into the circular openings; once inserted, fingers cannot be removed until after the Mogramidian is fully activated. Though the device is small enough to fit in the palm of one's hand, none of the fingers touch inside. It's possible, but very dangerous, for just one person to fill all four of the holes.

The two spare triangles that haven't been used to make the Mogramidian are actually very important; these two determine what powers of the Mogramidian has. Using the Mogramidian Configuration Table opposite, find the row which has the two spare triangle determinators highlighted (each in brown boxes). That row contains all the effects the various interactions with the device will have. As a rule, the effects caused by having fingers in the Mogramid are somewhat bad; the effects caused by having fingers in the spare determinator triangles are generally beneficial.

Once the all four holes of the Mogramid are filled OR one or both of the two determinators are filled the Mogramidian activates; the effect listed under each of the six symbol immediately occurs, affecting the character whose finger is stuck in the associated opening. If a character has more than one finger "in the pie",

all effects are inflicted on the character. If one character has a finger in each of the spare triangles, then the rather nifty red-box event listed under the SPECIAL column takes effect.

EFFECTS OF THE MOGRAMIDIAN

Most of the effects listed on the Mogramidian Configuration Table are fairly broad and open to interpretation by the Game Master. Most of the effects are system-agnostic. Unless stated otherwise, the effect occurs immediately and permanently.

Some of the effects, especially those listed in the SPECIAL column, can have drastic and broad-reaching changes to the setting; if such an affect is unwelcome, use the listed effect as a guideline and replace it with something more satisfying.

Once the effects of the Mogramidian have taken place, it vanishes into thin air, taking any fingers that were still inside with it - unless said fingers were in the spare triangles, in which case they are spared. Having brought change to this setting, it teleports to another part of the multiverse to screw with the course of destiny once more.

CORRECTLY SOLVING THE MOGRAMIDIAN

If players have carefully followed all the clues scattered throughout the tomb, they might just make the intuitive leap to making the Mogramidian using triangle tiles of [Steel/Madness/Flesh/Electricity], leaving [Secrets/Death] as the determinators; if the Secrets/Death Special Effect is activated it grants the power to resurrect one creature. If the players choose to resurrect the Mog, then a swirling storm engulfs the room as the ash scattered all about coalesces to form into a diminutive form of a black cat on hind legs: the Mog has been returned to life! Eternally grateful, he bows low and offers each character the *wish* of their choosing. Then he bows again and vanishes into dimensions unknown, off to wage his war against death itself.

AFTERMATH

Should anyone have survived the encounter with the Mogramidian, a doorway suddenly appears on the far side of the tomb from the entrance, leading directly out and up to the surface via winding stair. As a parting gift, the Mog left a 11' wide but 600' deep pit trap at the base of the stairs. Anyone who fails to notice the subtle draft of wind from its depths falls down the pit and must roll on the following table. Watch your step.

d100 PIT TRAP EFFECT

1-99 Dead.

100 Roll again, ignoring this result.

MOGRAMIDIAN COMBINATION:

SECRETS	STEEL	MADNESS	FLESH	ELECTRICITY	DEATH	SPECIAL
You gain innate understanding of steelworking, metallurgy and engineering.	Your steely mind hacks through lies and obfuscation to learn the hidden truth to a vital question.	Overwhelmed by the secret intricacies of machinery, you gain mechanophobia.	A part of your body turns to solid steel. die: 1-2 finger; 3-4 hand; 5-6 forearm; 7-8 whole arm; 9-10 whole body.	Metallic discharge: for every metal item you carry, grab one dice. Roll and total the lot for shock damage.	All your metallic possessions, magic or not, suddenly rust away, leaving behind a fine red dust.	You gain the knowledge needed to start a world-spanning technological revolution.
You learn the secret of madness and can unravel it at will, curing the insane with just a whisper in their ear.	You are certain there is a magic blade hidden in the mind of a fellow PC. Tear their skull apart to seize it.	You can infect others with the madness of secrets; with a whisper you drive them insane with crippling paranoia.	You are certain that by eating the living flesh of your foes you gain their secrets. Say hello, cannibal.	You pick up a mystical irritation - itches, twitches, and tingles that drives you mad with distraction.	You are certain for every person you kill you gain 10 years of life; a bloody path to immortality awaits you.	Immediately unleash an all consuming viral meme of your design on the world.
A psychic tumour grows from your belly; it can sense little secrets and likes to blurt them out. Loudly.	You are allergic to the secrets of steel, which causes severe reactions; wounds from steel are slow to heal.	You are certain true enlightenment lies within; only with self mutilation will you find it, and find it you must.	You gain secret mastery over your flesh and bone, and can rearrange your physical attributes once per day.	Your nervous system becomes sentient, and seeks freedom from your body; you are plagued by spasms and twitches.	A slow rot sets deep inside your body; incurable, but can be stymied by replacing your organs with others'.	Immediately reshape the anatomy of an entire species to a form that pleases you, or give birth to a new one.
An innate understanding of electrokinesis is yours; electrical powers are yours to command.	You are a lightning rod. Any electrical effect within your vicinity always targets you.	Lightning! How can it be!?! You must catch it! Any sign of a storm and you're outside dancing in the rain.	Your secret thoughts are betrayed by your nervous system, your stream of thought is written across your skin.	Thoughts are nothing but electrical pulses. With a touch to the head you can sense them, reading a person's surface thoughts.	Unbeknownst to you, the next person you touch will be electrocuted and slain.	You gain the knowledge needed to bring electrical technology into the world.
Death shares her secrets with you... all the time. You can sense when she is near, and who she will take.	You are cursed to die by a an unknown blade. Any crit from a blade attack does an added x2 damage.	YOU ARE GOING TO DIE. But you don't know how, or when. Obsess over the mystery of your doom.	Your inner self is revealed. You vomit yourself, til you are completely turned inside out. And then you die.	A massive electrical shock severs your soul's link to your body, but remains trapped within. Fully aware. Forever.	Death comes to all things. Even secrets. No secret can be willfully withheld from you.	You must immediately resurrect or slay one single creature of your choice. Anywhere in the multiverse.
You are plagued by the Riddle of Steel; only by shattering every weapon you find will you learn its secrets.	The soul of every being slain by you is trapped in your steel weapon; their screams are terror to your foes.	You gain the ability to sculpt and shape steel in ways that drives others mad with horror.	Whenever you hold a steel weapon, the souls of the dead slain by your hands manifest in your flesh.	When struck by steel weapons, the souls of those slain by the attacker assail you.	Every night you dream of dying by the sword. You become terrified of them and must never, ever touch one.	An entire nation becomes obsessed with building a steel megastructure of your design and purpose.
You live in fear of being caught unarmed, and start secreting blades. Inside you.	At will you can transform and reshape a limb into a deadly steel weapon.	You hear the whirring click of some freakish machine that lives inside you. FIND IT & CUT IT OUT.	With a gentle caress you can transform steel into living pulsating flesh.	You become dangerously electromagnetic. Steel weapons veer towards you, metal arrows seek you out.	Your soul is ripped from your flesh and into the nearest blade. You spend eternity being plunged into people's bodies.	You bring sentience to one metallic substance throughout the world.
Only steel can free the secret energies trapped within! You stab yourself in the brain trying to prove it. Dick.	Steel in your hands becomes a conduit for electricity; items shock, weapons do electrical damage.	Nothing happens, ever again, as an electrical spasm freezes your awareness in this moment. Forever.	Energy pulses through you. The touch of your bare skin electrocutes; never touch another living being. Ever.	You mind can alter the bonds in steel; shatter weapons, make them melt. Whatever you can think of.	You continually build up electrical energy; when you draw steel, chain lightning erupts from your weapon.	You gain the knowledge needed to create machines that can harness the power of lightning.
You are certain you can use steel instruments to carve out a person's soul to consume and gain their knowledge.	Steel weapons in your hands always deal critical attacks.	You know the truth. Only demons use steel and you must slay them all.	Steel burns through your flesh like acid. Any touch of steel scars you horribly.	Steel items hum and crackle when you are near. If there is enough steel lightning bolts blast forth and strike you.	You are the bane of steel; at will it rusts away in your hands.	The secrets of steel metallurgy are lost forever to this world.
The dead hold the secrets of life. Only by consuming the freshly dead will you become enlightened.	You have highly infectious jangles; little mouths form on your hand and sing at the touch of coin.	You gain the ability to sculpt and shape flesh in ways that drives others mad with horror.	With a touch you can force someone's fears to manifest in monstrous form, born from their own flesh.	You are addicted to the electric pulses of life and must constantly touch the flesh of others.	Your touch is diseased, causing the flesh of others to rot and fall in painful pus filled clumps.	You summon into being a new god.
You hear every thought on the planet at once; then your brain explodes.	Peace can be brought only by stabbing sentient creatures in the brain. All of them. Right now.	Madness is yours to bestow. With sweet whispers you explain the knowledge of the forbidden, driving others permanently insane.	Lightning wants to fuck you sideways & have your babies; after every energy attack it'll shockbabes sprout from your skin.	You are able to pull the thoughts, memories, and emotions out of an individual, leaving them a burnt out empty husk.	You see into the void and realize that all life is futile and an illusion, shriveling your brain with despair.	For one brief moment every living thing is psychically connected; the harmony ushers in a new age of peace. Yuck.
Death whispers the secrets of mortality in your ear, filling your brain with decay. All your thoughts are rotten.	Death promises you her secrets and love, but you must cut out your own heart and give it to her as a token of adoration.	Thanatophobia is yours to give. With a whisper you can confront someone with their mortality, paralyzing with fear.	Your flesh decays rapidly and you live through the pain of every creature ever before dying a horrible screaming death.	Your body is devoid of life but keeps going. Every living thing you touch turns ashen and crumbles to dust.	Death holds no fear for you nor any you chose to touch. Peace at death is yours to give.	Across the world, all mental illnesses are suddenly cured, but all forms of artistic expression die.
Your neuromotor signals are broadcast psychically to everyone nearby; all can sense your location and your actions.	Your arms, legs, and head reshape into fleshy weapons of battle, with no regard for functional joints or sensory organs.	You are certain that the touch of another will steal a portion of your memories, and act accordingly if touched.	Your touch causes neural override, granting you control over a victim's actions as long as touch is maintained.	You are able to escape your fleshy prison and become a being of pure electricity; return to your sleeping body at will.	Anything not made of living, moving flesh is now invisible to you.	The cleverest 10% of people in the world gain shapeshifting powers; the dullest 10% melt into fleshy puddles.
No, the dead don't take their secrets with them; they are written on the surface of the brain. You must know them. All.	Touching metal causes a portion of your body to transmogrify into that metal, becoming heavy and lifeless.	All this skin on your body is suffocating you - GET IT OFF!	Your touch preserves the flesh of the dead. Forever.	You drop into a death-like trance; electricity will 'wake' you for a few minutes per jolt	Your kiss is necrotic. Should you wish it, one peck leads to a rapid rotten death.	Immediately turn an entire species of your choice into skeletal undead.
You become obsessed with the secret of Frankensteinian resurrection, but you are doomed to fail.	Unbeknownst to you, the next time you strike steel with steel, the energy discharge will electrocute you and your foe.	Curse the lightning! You hate it and fear it, and scheme over ways to make it stop forever. Have some astraphobia.	Your body bleeds energy; you are forever lethargic though electrocution temporarily revives you.	You stave off death with your touch; the shocking energy in your hands can restart hearts, and bring back the recently dead.	You can feed off the energy released by death; in its presence you can heal injuries and gain nourishment.	You gain the knowledge needed to resurrect the dead through electrotech invention. It's alive!

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a memorable and ingenious kobold trap, preferably in a cavern environment with many tunnels but limited cultivation. Weird or funny is okay - possibly even encouraged - though ironic or macabre is better than silly.

Thanks!

S.

KOBOLD CAVERNS

by Tom Hudson
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THE SQUATTERS IN ONYX

The Squatters are a tribe of kobolds living inside the petrified corpse of a huge black dragon. Entry is through the mouth, although most of the teeth are gone. Emergency exit leads through anus; it is narrow, and lined with outward-facing iron spikes to make entry impossible, but these spikes are somewhat weakened by repeated exposure to acid. The 2-5 guards in the braincase have a large gemshorn to blow as alarm.

Inside, the tribe's burrows are all dug high on the sides of the stomach, connected by a narrow, intermittent balcony as well as by a few tunnels dug behind; a former witchdoctor was able to de-petrify the dragon's acid-generating glands, allowing the tribe's current priest to flood the stomach with acid to a depth of two feet (once per day; it will drain away down the exit in 1-2 hours to a subterranean pool).

The tribe is relatively treasure-poor, but entombed in the dragon's heart is a humongous opal (fragile; probably need magic to find it; difficult to excavate).

The tribe has a superstitious fear of the dragon's spirit, and will stake out captives in the bottom of the stomach; a passageway leads to the lungs, which are used as an ossuary for their remains (including any noble metals or gemstones which survive the acid). This fear is well-justified; the dragon's spirit is propitiated only by these offerings, and if they cease occurring at least bimonthly, or the ossuary is unduly disturbed, the spirit will manifest in a few weeks and be much more trouble than the kobolds ever were.

The chieftain wears bone armor, stained black. He & his bodyguards use shortwords or daggers made from the dragon's teeth; the rest of the tribe (male and female) have spears and shields, and will attempt to form a shieldwall along the edge of the balcony to keep intruders from escaping the acid.

THE OVERBURROWS

A tribe of industrious kobolds without strong allies, but some cunning with stone- and metal-work, who have tunneled extensively above and below a set of natural caves. They do have a half-dozen semi-domesticated beasts of some sort, who usually have the run of the lowest tunnels, but can also be penned up when the kobolds need to get down there.

CAVERNS

1. 10' inside the cave mouth is a glaringly obvious pit (20' deep, 20' long) with a 2' wide ledge around the side, sturdy enough to hold at least 200lbs. The bottom of the pit is false (in four sections, hinged along the sides, triggered by 75lbs), and drops investigators 20' further. The true bottom connects to the lower tunnel network; down there are the relatively fresh remains of two troglodytes, who are still too foul-smelling for the residents to gnaw on.
2. Along the curving main pathway are 3 further open pits, each 25-30' deep and 6-8' long. Inspection reveals small handholds running down the side of each until about 8' above the bottom, and light will reveal passageways leaving the bottom, and possibly (2 in 6 chance) bones, freshly gnawed-on corpses, broken javelins, or other debris. The uneven ceiling rises a bit higher over each of these pits (10-12' instead of the typical 6-8'); in each case this conceals a spyhole, and in two cases a secret trap door opening upwards. In the bottom of the first pit are broken planks; beyond the second and third are caches of planks long enough to span them. Skilled trackers may be able to determine that there is more traffic before the third pit than after. See upper level #1 for possible noises.
3. A concealed pit (cover hinged on the near side, triggered by 75#), 12' deep, with spikes in the bottom and ringing the edge. Since the kobolds don't have access to clean this out, there is likely (5 in 6 chance) to be debris at the bottom.
4. The false den: two dozen piles of old sleeping furs, long-abandoned cookfire with cleft in rock overhead for smoke to escape, two rotted corpses of kobolds (missing feet) are intended to make this look like an abandoned den. In the 10-12' high ceiling are a half-dozen pairs of murder holes; they will be very difficult to spot among the flickering

shadows cast by torches, but easier if there's a constant light source. 20 bats nest here, and their pile of guano is obvious.

5. The false chief's burrow: A heavy stone door is concealed in the ceiling of the entryway; it can be dropped by observers in #2 above. It is irregular, and doesn't perfectly seal the opening when dropped, but even a kobold would have trouble squeezing past it. Ropes are visible tied through three holes at the top leading up into the shaft it was dropped through.
6. Dead-end side passages off of the main route into the caverns.

LOWER LEVEL (CAVERNS OR TUNNELS)

The kobolds' beasts typically have the run of these passages.

1. 3' tall iron-bound door, barred on the inside, leads to 40' spiral stairwell (wide, shallow treads). Scorch marks mark the floor in front of the door, along the bottom edge, and 6 inches up the inside; an axe could break off the bottom 3-4" easily enough. Currently-empty iron torch brackets stick out of the outer wall (3' off the stairs) every 8 steps. Seventh and eighth steps from the bottom trigger a slide trap and then release oil down the slide; a flaky mechanism in the ceiling attempts (3 in 6 chance) to ignite the oil as it falls. At the base of the wall on the tenth step up is a small hole which might be spotted by investigators; sticking an iron spike or similarly strong object in there will keep the trap from triggering, but flimsy objects (torches) are likely to be broken by the weight of the mechanism. Kobolds use the torch bracket to aid jumping over the two steps, and careful observation may reveal wear on it. Uppermost torch bracket in the stairwell breaks away if pulled and releases spring-loaded spear (wide blade tainted with kobold scat, but old, dried, and probably not potent any more).
2. Narrow passageway 10' up stairwell leads to a 2'x2' window overlooking #3, lever controlling portcullis.
3. Kennels for beasts, oak portcullis across entry currently open, overlook (#2) clearly visible high on wall. Bloodstains, remains of past meals below the overlook.
4. Short ramp up to sloped external door, heavy stone covered with brush (only modestly effective concealment) & barred on the inside.
5. Stagnant pool infested with (mundane) leeches.

UPPER TUNNELS

1. Guardposts above the pits each contain 0-2 kobolds, a knotted coil of rope for climbing, and a rope harness for hauling up loads. Single kobolds may be inattentive (2 in 6 chance); pairs may be distracted by conversation (2 in 6 chance), which may in turn be heard by parties.
2. Ambush chamber has a basket next to each set of murderholes in the floor containing 2d6+6 darts; three large beams stuck through ropes to drop the door to #5 below, and a crude capstan to haul it back up. There are only likely to be enough kobolds here to drop the door if the alarm has been raised, and they aren't likely to be silent - quiet parties may hear them through the murderholes.
3. True dens
4. True chief's burrow
5. Witchdoctor's burrow. Live leeches (culled from lower level #5) kept in a clay tureen.
6. Smith's burrow. Cowardly even for a kobold, but in desperation will use thick leather gloves to throw coals from forge at attackers.
7. Stonecrafter's burrow. Fights with mallet & chisel.
8. Leatherworker's burrow. Three suits of small hide armor made from the skins of the basement monsters are nearing completion.

Candidates for mundane beasts: giant ferrets, or perhaps fire beetles, giant shrews, or wolves. Something more exotic may fit, depending on where this gets dropped into the world & your view of kobold ecology.



Illustration by Peter Seckler

Dear Secret Santicore—

*My request is a 20- to 30-piece table of
secret doors, with different descriptions, ways of
fitting into the dungeon and methods of opening.*

Thanks!

D.

THIRTY SECRET DOORS

by S. Pate
impcity_st@yahoo.com

Here are thirty secret doors. 1-20 are “mundane,” meaning that they use mechanical means, however improbable. 21-30 are magical, meaning that they use magic mechanisms or somehow require interaction with a supernatural creature, like a ghost or golem.

They might need slight modification depending upon where you put them (“Why is there an assassins’ training ground in the Temple to Love and Squirmy Little Puppy Dogs?”), but they should at least be good inspiration.

Feel free to peruse the table or roll a d30. If you just want a random mechanical secret door mechanism, roll a d20. If you want a random magical or fantastical secret door mechanism, roll a d10 and add 20 to the result.

If you’re not satisfied with the table — maybe I didn’t answer your question, or maybe you have a more specific “theme” to your doors, let me know. All queries can be directed to the blog post featuring this item: <http://psychicmayhem.blogspot.com/2011/12/request-secret-doors.html>

d30 SECRET DOOR:

- 1 This door is hidden behind a statue of a local lust deity recessed into the wall. The statue and the section of wall swing open, revealing a secret passage, when the lips are pressed. Supposedly, supplicants were to kiss the statue, and variants with switches placed to simulate other sexual acts likely exist. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall or the pedestal around the statue’s base, or they might notice seams around the statue’s arms.
- 2 This door is hidden behind a bas-relief depicting historical scenes from the local kingdom. The door slides open when the reliefs of the rulers are pressed in order according to the chronological order of their reigns. Characters searching the area might notice the seams around the bas-relief, or seams around the buttons on the bas-relief.
- 3 This section of wall contains a mechanism with a switch that vibrates at a certain frequency. It will slide open when a certain note is played, requiring either an instrument, a singer with perfect pitch, or an appropriate tuning fork. Characters searching the area might notice the seams around this section of wall. Characters with supernatural hearing might notice the reverberations in the wall, indicating the presence of some small, acoustic chamber.
- 4 This section of stone wall has a switch disguised as a stone. Pressing the stone causes the wall to slide open. Characters searching the area might notice the seam in the wall.
- 5 A fresco depicting a local deity will slide open when a particular tune (a hymn or paean, perhaps?) is played on a nearby pipe organ. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall.
- 6 A nearby message admonishing the faithful to not fear evil is accompanied by a statue of a black dragon recessed into the wall. Reaching one’s hand into its mouth will allow one to press a switch in the back of the throat, causing a nearby section of wall to swing open. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall.
- 7 A statue of a local deity of peace, its arms outstretched, stands in a place of prominence in the room. A wall panel slides open when at least twenty-five pounds of equipment are placed in its arms — roughly the weight of weapons enough for six or so people. Modern adventurers might not put their weapons in its arms, but the old supplicants did so before entering the secret passage. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall, or they might notice seams around the statue’s arms.
- 8 A bookcase or other large, heavy object sits in front of an open doorway. Astute characters might note scuff marks on the floor or a slight breeze.

9 Astute characters might notice that this wall is hollow when tapped, or that there are seams in the mortar. A simple people, the builders of the dungeon just used a prybar to open this wall, which can slide aside when pressure is applied.

10 A statue to a local folk hero or maimed deity sits in the room. A ceremonial weapon of the type who originally wounded this figure rests somewhere nearby. Recreating the legendary figure's wounds with this ceremonial weapon — in the order they were received — causes the statue to rise on a pedestal into the ceiling. The pedestal has steps so that characters can climb it as a ladder, literally ascending into the heavens with the passing of this entity. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the statue's base, or that the figure's wounds contain seams or buttons.

11 An astrological diagram has several recesses where nearby stones can be placed. Each stone has an astrological symbol on it. Placing the stones to recreate the birth chart of the Chosen One causes the wall with the diagram to iris open. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall where each wedge of the diagram is in place.

12 This emergency escape route was installed by a corrupt ruler who attempted to eradicate the influence of the old regime. This figure's final affront was to place a tapestry of the region's founder over the escape route, so that he would have to cut it open in time of strife. This escape route was never used, and has lain that way since the ruler was killed by the servants. Characters searching the area might feel a slight breeze from the direction of the wall.

13 A subterranean river and a broken waterwheel dominate this room. Anyone fixing the waterwheel — or harnessing enough power to turn the drive shaft — finds that a panel in the far wall slowly rotates with the waterwheel. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall. Some characters might just wonder what the waterwheel powered.

14 This room in a military barracks features a relief on the wall depicting an example of a hated enemy ("The 304th Dwarven Legion will exterminate all bullywugs!"). Hitting the appropriate locations as per the old drills causes the wall to slide open for about five seconds, long enough for a few people to go through. The old idea was that a recruit showed a superior officer his training by rapidly attacking the target, causing the wall to slide open and allowing the recruit to enter the next room. Astute characters might notice the seams in the wall or in the "pressure points" on the foe diagram.

15 Two statues stand in this room, holding their swords aloft. If their sword arms are lowered, a trapdoor will open between them. Characters searching the room might notice the seams in the floor or on the statues' arms.

16 A tangle of rooms was used as a training ground for assassins, and only those who recalled the teachings of the order could pass to the next chamber. This room contains a statue of a humanoid resembling a typical member of the town watch. As a mechanical feature, it rotates to face the largest concentration of weight in the room, either looking at a closely-packed group or the heaviest person in the room. This room and the surrounding hallways are fitted with highly-sensitive pressure plates, built in such a way that they may be mistaken for old, slightly loose stonework by those who do not know better. Passing through the secret passage is simple — the subtle hand-holds on the walls allow initiates to climb without touching the floor. A hidden wall panel slides open if weight is removed from the floor tiles for more than a minute. Characters might notice the pressure plates in the floor or the seams in the wall. Some characters might grow suspicious at the rotating statue, particularly if they are unable to detect magic emanating from it.

17 Strangely, the same room has another secret door — those who can leap from the wall and twist the statue's head as if snapping the neck before the statue rotates to face them cause a trapdoor in the ceiling to open. The trapdoor stays open for five minutes before the assembly resets. Travelers must possess their own rope and grapple — or just be able to jump or climb very well — in order to proceed. Characters might notice the pressure plates or the seams in the ceiling, as well as the seam around the statue's neck.

18 A large statue of a cyclops dominates one wall of this room. If someone scales the statue and depresses its eye, the statue animates in a mechanical fashion and smashes the wall next to it (it may also incidentally hit the person activating the statue). Characters might notice several seams on the cyclops statue, indicating articulation, or they might notice that the wall is weakened or hollow. It is highly likely that the dungeon designers meant this as an escape route or a place for something well-hidden. Some artisans also leave little trinkets behind, so this little treasure room might only contain some bizarre little fetish or some such.

19 This circular room has a bas-relief on the wall depicting a sea deity or a legendary seafarer. The ship's wheel on the wall can be pulled from the wall and rotated. This will rotate the entire room, closing some exits but opening others. Some variants may not rotate the room, but may instead raise a pedestal in the middle, revealing a spiral staircase leading downward. Characters might notice seams in the bas-relief, or in the floor or ceiling. This very well may lead to a shrine to the deity in question, or perhaps a subterranean, aquatic passage leading elsewhere.

20 A treasure chest in the room contains treasure, but it also contains something else. If the lock is locked while the chest is open, the key will turn past the point when it normally stops, opening the false bottom of the treasure chest. A ladder leads down into another section. Though it is time-consuming to clear out the treasure chest, the designers felt that most tomb robbers are too greedy to look further. Characters might get suspicious about the fact that the treasure chest cannot move, and some might notice something strange about the lock. Others might notice the seam at the bottom of the treasure chest.

21 This section of wall is a bas-relief or fresco depicting a local deity or folk hero. If the proper supplication is performed before the wall, it swings open. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall, or the subtle arcane iconography in the wall revealing its magic.

22 This secret passage is activated by a nearby painting of a local foe (likely historical). Staring into the eyes of the painting for at least a minute causes the nearby section of wall to recess into the ground. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall, or the subtle arcane iconography in the wall revealing its magic.

23 This section of wall isn't stone at all, but an ooze that has taken on a consistency appropriate for the nearby wall. Applying the appropriate reagent causes the ooze to assume its normal state and move aside. Setting fire to the wall (or otherwise attacking it) prompts the ooze to attack. Astute characters might notice that the wall quivers slightly, or that the acoustics in the room aren't quite right.

24 This section of wall bears an emblem of a local mage's guild or equivalent. The wall disappears briefly when struck by a particular spell, such as magic missile. Inner chambers require higher-level spells to activate. Characters might notice the subtle arcane iconography in the wall revealing its magic.

25 This section of wall depicts the local deity of slaughter. Spilling blood on the image causes it to open. Strangely, spilled blood soaks into the image and is absorbed. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall, or the subtle arcane iconography in the wall revealing its magic.

26 Invisible, incorporeal ghosts guard a crypt in this room. They will open a hidden wall panel to any whom leave offerings to them in excess of 100 gp worth of coins or goods. Unscrupulous characters who detect the ghosts might coerce them with pain or magic instead. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall, or they might detect the presence of the ghosts.

27 In a chamber dedicated to a local deity, an oddly-placed statue of an opposing deity is recessed into the wall. A holy book of the local deity sits in the room; reading a passage wherein the deity defeats the opposing deity causes the enemy deity's statue to recess into the ground. Characters searching the area might notice the seams in the wall around the statue, or the subtle arcane iconography in the statue revealing its magic.

28 A large, flaming brazier sits in the middle of the floor, generating light and heat. Following the temple's instructions to be purified by flame, anyone who actually leaps into the brazier finds only a moment of pain before finding it is just an illusion. A trapdoor leads into the floor. Characters searching the area might notice the subtle arcane iconography in the wall revealing its magic, or perhaps that an object near the flame is not scorched.

29 A sundial sits in the center of this room, whose entire far wall is dominated by a scene from an historical battle. Shining a light on the sundial to recreate the supposed time of this battle ("Ah, yes, I remember from my time at university that the Battle of Gloaming's Dark supposedly happened around the fourth watch after midnight, hence the name.") causes the far wall to recess into the floor. Other dungeons may make use of this trick, using times important to the builders of the tomb. Astute characters might notice the seams in the far wall, or the subtle arcane iconography in the sundial revealing its magic.

30 Undead stand silent sentinel in this room, but do not attack unless they are attacked. If they are commanded to open the wall — possibly by a command word issued elsewhere, or possibly just by someone commanding them to open the door — they will do so. Characters searching the room might notice seams on the wall. Suspicious characters might make note of the fact that there are undead guarding the room with no apparent purpose. Some magi architects, not wanting to delve into necromancy, might use golems instead.

Dear Secret Santicore—

This year, I would really love a random table of obscure magical spells that can be used for traps on doors - the more bizarre & unusual the spells are the better.

Thanks!

S.

OBSCURE SPELLS FOR MAGICAL DOOR TRAPS

by Adam Thornton

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A fully automated version of these tables is available at <http://santicore.fsf.net>

STEP 1 : DETERMINE SPELL CLASS

Roll below, using the Gonzo column for an even chance of spell class.

CLASS	GONZO d4	WEIGHTED d20
Cleric	1	1 - 3
Druid	2	4
Magic-User	3	5 - 18
Illusionist	4	19 - 20

Notes: Usually helpful spells, like *Burning Hands*, may be less benign when they go off unexpectedly. Minor cantrips like *Tie* can cause grief when it's your shoelaces, to each other. An unexpected *Reincarnate* is like a *Polymorph Other*, and *Passwall* is a problem if it opens up a passage beneath your feet, straight down. Reroll abjuration spells if it doesn't make sense that the trap-layer wanted to protect against extraplanar intruders. You get the idea.

STEP 2 : DETERMINE SPELL LEVEL

Once the Class of spell is known, either use the Depth Based Spell Level formula to roughly match the spell to the level of the party OR roll on the Random Spell Level Table below to determine the Spell Level of the trap.

Depth-based Spell Level

SPELL LEVEL = DESL* + 4d3 - 8 cap on either end as necessary

*DESL= "Depth-Equivalent Spell Level" — the highest level spell that a party of the appropriate level for the dungeon level is able to cast.

Random Spell Level

Roll on the table below to determine the Level of the spell, choosing between the Gonzo and Location Based columns. The Gonzo column is evenly weighted for equal chance of any level; Location Based uses a linear model where low-level spells are more common.

Spell Level	MAGIC USER		ILLUSIONIST		CLERIC/DRUID	
	GONZO d10	LOCATION BASED d100	GONZO d10	LOCATION BASED d100	GONZO d8	LOCATION BASED d100
0	10	01 - 18	8	01 - 22	n/a	n/a
1	1	19 - 34	1	23 - 41	1	01 - 25
2	2	35 - 49	2	42 - 58	2	26 - 46
3	3	50 - 62	3	59 - 72	3	47 - 64
4	4	63 - 73	4	73 - 83	4	65 - 78
5	5	74 - 82	5	84 - 91	5	79 - 89
6	6	83 - 89	6	92 - 97	6	90 - 96
7	7	90 - 94	7	98 - 00	7	97 - 00
8	8	95 - 98	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	9	99 - 00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

STEP 3 : DETERMINE SPELL

Use the tables on the following pages to randomly determine spell based on the Class and Level determined above.

Use the smallest die larger than the number of spells at that class/level, and reroll anything that doesn't have an associated entry.

OBSCURE SPELLS FOR MAGICAL DOOR TRAPS

CLERIC SPELLS

#	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7
1	Curse	Dust Devil	Animate Dead	Abjure	Animate Dead Monsters	Aerial Servant	Astral Spell
2	Command	Silence-15' Radius	Cloudburst	Cloak of Fear	Cause Critical Wounds	Animate Object	Earthquake
3	Create Water	Spiritual Hammer	Continual Light	Cause Serious Wounds	Dispel Good	Blade Barrier	Gate
4	Destroy Water	Wyvern Watch	Continual Darkness	Giant Insect	Flame Strike	Conjure Animals	Unholy Word
5	Cause Light Wounds		Cause Blindness	Raise Water	Insect Plague	Forbiddance	Wither
6	Light		Cause Disease	Poison	Plane Shift	Lose The Path	Energy Drain
7	Darkness		Dispel Magic	Spike Growth	Quest	Harm	Destruction
8	Precipitation		Glyph of Warding	Sticks To Snakes	Slay Living		Symbol
9	Putrefy Food and Drink		Bestow Curse	Anti-Tongues	Spike Stones		
10	Cause Fear		Cause Paralysis				

DRUID SPELLS

#	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7
1	Entangle	Charm Person or Mammal	Call Lightning	Animal Summoning I	Animal Growth	Animal Summoning III	Animate Rock
2	Faerie Fire	Create Water	Cloudburst Call	Woodland Beings	Animal Summoning II	Anti-Animal Shell	Changestaff
3	Precipitation	Destroy Water	Cause Disease	Control Temperature	Control Winds	Conjure Fire	Elemental Confusion
4	Contaminate Water	Cause Light Wounds	Hold Animal	Cause Serious Wounds	Insect Plague	Cause Critical Wounds	Conjure Earth Elemental
5		Fire Trap	Poison	Dispel Magic	Spike Stones	Feeblemind	Creeping Doom
6		Heat Metal	Plant Growth	Hallucinatory Forest	Sticks To Snakes	Fire Seeds	Finger of Death
7		Obscurement	Pyrotechnics	Produce Fire	Transmute Rock To Mud	Transmute Water To Dust	Fire Storm
8		Produce Flame	Snare		Wall of Fire	Super-Create Water	Reincarnate
9		Trip	Spike Growth			Turn Wood	Transmute Metal to Wood
10		Warp Wood	Summon Insects			Wall of Thorns	
11						Weather Summoning	

ILLUSIONIST CANTRIPS

#	NAME	#	NAME	#	NAME	#	NAME
1	Coloured Lights	3	Haze	5	Mirage	7	Rainbow
2	Dim	4	Mask	6	Noise	8	2D Illusion

ILLUSIONIST SPELLS

#	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7
1	Audible Glamer	Alter Self	Continual Darkness	Confusion	Advanced Illusion	Conjure Animals	Alter Reality
2	Change Self	Blindness	Continual Light	Dispel Magic	Chaos	Death Fog	Astral Spell
3	Chromatic Orb	Deafness	Fear	Emotion	Semi-Shadow Monsters	Mass Suggestion	Prismatic Spray
4	Color Spray	Fog Cloud	Hallucinatory Terrain	Improved Invisibility	Major Creation	Mirage Arcane	Prismatic Wall
5	Dancing Lights	Hypnotic Pattern	Illusionary Script	Massmorph	Maze	Permanent Illusion	Weird
6	Darkness	Improved Phantasmal Force	Invisibility 10' Radius	Minor Creation	Summon Shadow	Phantasmagoria	
7	Hypnotism	Invisibility	Paralyzation	Phantasmal Killer	Tempus Fugit	Programmed Illusion	
8	Light	Magic Mouth	Phantom Wind	Rainbow Pattern		Shades	
9	Phantasmal Force	Mirror Image	Spectral Force	Shadow Monsters		Veil	
10	Spook	Misdirection	Suggestion	Solid Fog			
11	Wall of Fog		Wraithform	Vacancy			

OBSCURE SPELLS FOR MAGICAL DOOR TRAPS

MAGIC USER CANTRIPS

#	NAME	#	NAME	#	NAME	#	NAME	#	NAME
1	Chill	11	Curdle	21	Untie	31	Twitch	41	Spider
2	Color	12	Dirty	22	Wilt	32	Wink	42	Tweak
3	Dampen	13	Dusty	23	Change	33	Yawn	43	Creak
4	Salt	14	Hairy	24	Distract	34	Bee	44	Footfall
5	Spice	15	Knot	25	Hide	35	Bluelight	45	Groan
6	Sprout	16	Ravel	26	Mute	36	Bug	46	Moan
7	Stitch	17	Sour	27	Belch	37	Firefinger	47	Rattle
8	Tie	18	Spill	28	Cough	38	Gnats	48	Tap
9	Warm	19	Tangle	29	Giggle	39	Mouse	49	Thump
10	Wrap	20	Tarnish	30	Sneeze	40	Smokepuff	50	Whistle

MAGIC USER SPELLS

#	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6	LEVEL 7	LEVEL 8	LEVEL 9
1	Affect Normal Fires	Audible Glamer	Blink	Charm Monster	Animal Growth	Anti-Magic Shell	Banishment	Antipathy	Astral Spell
2	Alarm	Bind	Cloudburst	Confusion	Animate Dead	Bigby's Forceful Hand	Bigby's Grasping Fist	Bigby's Clenched Hand	Bigby's Crushing Hand
3	Burning Hands	Continual Light	Dispel Magic	Dig	Avoidance	Chain Lightning	Cacodemon	Clone	Crystalbrittle
4	Charm Person	Darkness 15' Radius	Explosive Runes	Dimension Door	Bigby's Interposing Hand	Death Spell	Delayed Blast Fireball	Incendiary Cloud	Energy Drain
5	Confuse Languages	Flaming Sphere	Fireball	Disenchant Weapon	Cloudkill	Disintegrate	Forcecage	Mass Charm	Gate
6	Dancing Lights	Fool's Gold	Gust of Wind	Evard's Black Tentacles	Conjure Elementals	Geas	Limited Wish	Maze	Imprisonment
7	Enlarge	Forget	Haste	Fear	Cone of Cold	Guards and Wards	Mass Invisibility	Monster Summoning VI	Meteor Swarm
8	Reduce	Invisibility	Hold Person	Fire Charm	Dismissal	Invisible Stalker	Monster Summoning V	Otiluke's Telekinetic Sphere	Monster Summoning VII
9	Erase	Irritation	Invisibility 10' Radius	Fire Trap	Dolor	Raise Water	Mordenkainen's Sword	Otto's Irresistable Dance	Mordenkainen's Disjunction
10	Firewater	Leomund's Trap	Item	Fumble	Feeblemind	Monster Summoning IV	Power Word: Stun	Polymorph Any Object	Power Word: Kill
11	Grease	Levitate	Lightning Bolt	Hallucinatory Terrain	Hold Monster	Move Earth	Reverse Gravity	Power Word: Bind	Prismatic Sphere
12	Hold Portal	Magic Mouth	Material	Ice Storm	Leomund's Lamentable Belabourment	Otiluke's Freezing Sphere	Sequester	Symbol	Temporal Stasis
13	Light	Melf's Acid Arrow	Melf's Minute Meteor	Monster Summoning II	Magic Jar	Reincarnation	Simulacrum	Trap the Soul	Wish
14	Magic Missile	Mirror Image	Monster Summoning I	Otiluke's Resilient Sphere	Monster Summoning III	Repulsion	Statue		
15	Melt	Pyrotechnics	Phantasmal Force	Plant Growth	Mordenkainen's Faithful Hound	Flesh to Stone	Vanish		
16	Nystul's Magic Aura	Ray of Enfeeblement	Secret Page	Polymorph Other	Passwall	Transmute Water to Dust			
17	Precipitation	Scare	Sepia Snake Sigil	Bestow Curse	Stone Shape	Super-Create-Water			
18	Push	Shatter	Slow	Shout	Telekinesis				
19	Shocking Grasp	Stinking Cloud	Suggestion	Wall of Fire	Teleport				
20	Sleep	Tasha's Uncontrollable Hideous Laughter	Anti-Tongues	Wall of Ice	Transmute Rock to Mud				
21	Taunt	Web	Wind Wall	Wall of Force					
22	Unseen Servant	Whip		Wall of Iron					
23	Wizard Mark	Wizard Lock		Wall of Stone					

Dear Secret Santicore—

I request 1-3 trap tables. Suggestions include:

- embarrassing transformation trap table*
- whats at the bottom of this less then bottomless pit table*
- interesting corpse near said trap table*

Thank you!

R.

TRANSFORMED, DEFORMED, CORSED & TRAPPED

by Samuel Roberts
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TRANSFORMATION TRAP

These two tables can be used separately, but are intended to be used together, so a player transformed by the trap would roll once on each table to discover what they have become.

d8	NEW FORM	DEFORMATION
1	Glinda, the Good Witch. Player becomes a Female Elf, S10 D10 C10 I13 W15 C17, and Primary weapon changes into Wand of Wonder with unlimited charges that is also a Mace +3.	Tiny Hands. You always drop your sword on a natural 1 or a natural 20. It does not change the other results of the roll.
2	Pigeon. Player's possessions do not change, but the pigeon can only wear rings. Lose all racial and class abilities. Can fly at a speed of 40'.	Massive Genitalia. Your Constitution increases by 2, but critical hits against you do additional damage (critical multiplier increases by 1).
3	Satyr.	Two Heads. You receive a -2 to Dexterity and Wisdom. You may take 2 Standard Actions instead of a Move and a Standard, but both actions are at -4.
4	Racial Enemy. Race changes to a race that hates the player's current race.	Mucus Layer. Your skin becomes green and rubbery, and covered in a thin layer of mucus. You suffer a -2 to Constitution and Charisma, but gain Resist Fire and Electricity 5.
5	Unicorn. Player loses racial abilities, but retains class abilities, and gains a Unicorn's natural attacks, as well as a hatred of adult males of all kinds.	Marked. Your face is marked by evil. Good characters in your presence when your face is uncovered automatically dislike you, and suffer a -1 penalty to attacks, saves, and skill checks.
6	Slave of Dagon. Player becomes a horrible amphibious fish man. All statistics reduced by 2, all racial abilities lost, player gains the ability to breathe underwater, and land and swim speeds of 20'. The player must be immersed in water every 4 hours, or start taking Constitution damage	Tentacles. Each of your limbs becomes two tentacles. Your land speed changes to 10', and you can no longer wield traditional weapons, but you may hold items in your tentacles and strike with them. Each tentacle does 1d4 + 1/2 Str damage.
7	Bipedal Dog. Small sized, with a land speed of 20'. Otherwise as War Dog.	Boneless. You gain a +2 to Dexterity and can squeeze through small openings. You take a -4 to Constitution and a -2 to Strength.
8	Giant Spider.	Wooden. Your Strength and Constitution increase by 2, and you suffer a -4 to Dexterity. You take double damage from fire.

TRANSFORMED, DEFORMED, CORPSED & TRAPPED

WHAT IS THIS CORPSE, AND WHY SHOULDN'T I TOUCH IT?

These two tables can be used separately, but are intended to be used together, so that a found corpse is defined and trapped.

d12	CORPSE	TRAP
1	A troll at -8 hit points. In 5 minutes, it will stand at full hp.	Corpse explodes dealing high (8d6) fire damage to all within 20', Reflex Save for half. Trap is a rune scrawled on corpse's back, and can be noticed with a difficult perception check.
2	The son of a local lord who has been missing. He wears his signet ring, and his parents will assume he was murdered by anyone wearing it.	Already claimed as food by nearby massive, rabid bear. The bear will attack anyone touching the corpse in a berserk rage.
3	Glinda, the Good Witch. Her wand has been cursed.	Covered in Super Glue. Corpse sticks to player until that can succeed on an extremely difficult (DC 20) Strength Check. Each check takes 1 hour.
4	A leprous orc. Players touching it must succeed on a difficult (DC 18) Fortitude Save or contract leprosy.	Smells truly awful. Player must succeed on a difficult (DC 18) Fortitude Save or be nauseous for 4 hours. Players succeeding are still at -1 to attacks, saves, and skill checks for 4 hours, and no one wants to stand near them for at least 1 day.
5	A wizard's failed experiment at combining snakes and goats. Some snakes may still live inside the horror.	Corpse is made up of doppelganger ants. Doppelganger ants attack anything that touches them, swarming for 3d6 damage per round. Once they kill their prey, the ants mimic their victim as a corpse.
6	An ogre's child, torn into a dozen pieces. Players waiting for 30 minutes will encounter the ogre, in an unstoppable rage.	Corpse is lying in an acid pool. When touched, the corpse falls completely apart, and the player must succeed on a difficult (DC 18) Reflex Save or fall into the acid pool themselves, taking high (8d6) acid damage.
7	A paladin whose blood has turned into holy water. A small pool of it sits next to the corpse. Any player willing to desecrate the body may harvest the water.	Corpse is under a collapsing ceiling. Trap can be found and disarmed with difficult (DC 25) skill checks. If the wall collapses, any player within 10' of the wall must succeed on a difficult (DC 18) Reflex Save or take heavy (8d6) crushing damage.
8	A pigeon with an extremely large ruby in its gullet.	The corpse is a sacrifice by a local kobold tribe to their god, an ancient black dragon. Interfering with the corpse will bring the anger of the kobold tribe. Killing the tribe will anger their god.
9	A dead genie, and his now non-magical lamp. If players manage to resurrect the genie, he will grant one wish before disappearing.	The corpse is inhabited a camouflaged alien intelligence that lashes out to control the mind of the first person to touch it. Players interacting with the corpse must succeed on a difficult (DC 18) Will Save or be possessed.
10	A decapitated Angel or other being of spiritual Good. Prayer to evil gods is particularly effective here.	Corpse is now home to a brutal fungal infection. Touching the corpse releases spores in a 10' radius around the body. Characters inhaling spores must succeed on a difficult (DC 18) Fortitude Save or take 1d6 Constitution damage.
11	A pointy eared, oddly garbed humanoid. He carries a phaser, which is a ranged touch weapon dealing 3d4 Non-Lethal damage. It will cease to function after 1d100 uses. A player studying the phaser for a day and succeeding on an extremely difficult Intelligence check (DC 20) may move the setting away from stun. The phaser then deals 2d4 energy damage.	The corpse is an illusion. Players are able to disbelieve the illusion with an extremely difficult (DC 22) Wisdom Save. Behind the illusion lies the entrance to a cursed tomb, possibly containing an artifact of extreme evil.
12	Your mom. No, I don't know how she got here. Player enters a rage in the next combat encounter.	If moved, desecrated, or otherwise disturbed, the corpse rises 2 rounds later as a Skeleton Warrior or Death Knight.

Dear Secret Santicore—

For my Secret Santicore I want a table
of nonstandard-but-nonmagical traps.

Thanks!

J.

UNUSUAL TRAPS BOTH MUNDANE & MACABRE

by Andy Wise
jandywise@gmail.com

dzo TRAP:

- 1 Thin glass panels on floor with shallow (2') hole underneath containing downward facing spikes. When the glass is weighted, it breaks and one leg falls into the hole (small damage), when they try and remove their leg, the spikes dig in for medium + strength mod damage, can cripple leg. (Checkered pattern in floor could reveal the good/bad places to step)
- 2 Long narrow hallway, pit in the middle, monkey-bars attached to the roof to get across. 2/3 of the way across, one bar is: poorly attached; actually attached to a length of chain; flimsy, breaks under weight; greased; covered in shards of glass. Must know which bar to skip.
- 3 Pit in center of room, log across pit. Log doesn't actually reach all the way across, but is counterbalanced to not tip until weight is halfway across pit. Running leap could make it, depending on size of pit, log can reset or not.
- 4 Similar to log trap, but whole hallway is counterbalanced/greased halfway down to tip and slide pcs into furnace.
- 5 Any number/type of potion bottles hung behind a door. When door swings open, breaks bottles open for <effect>: acid, foul smelling perfume, animal pheromones etc...
- 6 Hole in floor or wall. When leg/arm is inserted, locks a metal "boot" around limb, disabling it. Locked, or must be destroyed (danger of limb damage).
- 7 Easily frightened birds sitting on a branch with very acidic shit, hope it doesn't get under your armor...
- 8 Steep hallway with doors on both ends that are connected. When one opens, the other opens. Behind the higher door is: 1000 gallons of (scalding?) water; Big-ass round rock. (Which way the door is opened is important as to when/if it can be closed again before rock/water overtakes players).
- 9 Pitch black room with many mirrors. When pcs light torch/cast light spell, light is reflected/refracted to blind them, also signals guards or wakes monster.
- 10 Dark, cold hallway. Pressure switch lights torch encased in ice. Fire gives light, but also melts ice-container containing greek fire/angry bees, etc..
- 11 Heavy stone/metal door appears to be hinged as to open inward. Not attached, when pulled on, falls on pc. Even better if it's a false doorway, nothing behind it but brick.
- 12 Torches in wall sconces also contain: gunpowder; incense that makes you hallucinate, fall asleep, kill your friends.
- 13 Trip wire placed 4' before razor wire, both low to the ground. If you trip, you also lose your head/shoulders.
- 14 Pressure activated sand-blaster. Won't hurt too much, but will remove any filigree/design from armor. (for vain PCs)
- 15 Aged human skull with jeweled "corks" in eyes to keep the bugs in.
- 16 Key in three parts in three large vats, must submerge whole arm, or tip vats to retrieve. Vats contain: Water. Slow acting acid. Ochre Jelly. (etc..)
- 17 Ring in "puddle" in the middle of a room. Puddle is actually paralyzing jelly. Jelly starts to digest you, save ends.
- 18 Any standard trap that is activated by one pc and affects another, behind, to the side, etc..
- 19 Slide to nowhere, steep slide into a brick wall or spikes. Depending on speed/orientation could break legs, head, etc..
- 20 Doorknob with scything blades that spring out when turned. Amputates fingertips.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a table of weird things that could happen in any dungeon corridor.

Thanks!

M.

WEIRD THINGS FOUND IN A DUNGEON CORRIDOR

by Adrian M Ryan

ipoint618@gmail.com

d20 WEIRD THING FOUND:

- 1 Stalactite (or other handy ceiling structure) is actually hermit crab-like creature waiting to crush and eat the next thing that walks under it. Falling damage + paralyzing poison attack.
- 2 Everyone loses their voices while in this corridor. Roll on wandering monster table—while in the corridor, players must fight the monster without saying anything (other than describing attacks to the GM). Hand motions, movements, etc., must be mimed, not described.
- 3 Walking through the next exit takes you through the exact same place you entered the room/hallway from originally. Appears to be a space-time hiccup that only happens once.
- 4 There's a holy relic of a now-defunct religion on the floor.
- 5 Any shadows cast on the wall are not obviously of the objects casting them.
- 6 Roll on wandering monster table of choice. That's the monster currently taking a leak in the corner. If multiple, they're "sword fighting". Surprise round!
- 7 Natural gas reservoir behind one of the walls (sounds hollow if checked). If the wall is breached, an odorless, colorless, flammable, heavier than air, suffocating gas begins filling up room.
- 8 Wall has writing on it ("Gorgy wuz here") and crude line drawings that look like orc penises.
- 9 The corridor reeks. Anyone staying in it for longer than their CON in minutes will probably end up throwing up.
- 10 Corridor narrows to a point that it must be crawled through on knees and elbows for approximately 10 feet. Claustrophobia, loot not fitting through, and getting stuck are all possibilities.
- 11 Careful examination of the water in this area reveals that it travels just slightly uphill.
- 12 While the corridor doesn't seem to have any bends, the exit is not viewable from the entrance and vice versa.
- 13 When the adventurers enter the corridor, they hear the dying gasp of a man. As they continue down, the clash and clang of sword on sword echos through the room. Upon reaching the end, there is the sound of two swords being unsheathed. And as the last adventurer exits, they hear a man whisper, "Now!"
- 14 While the walls look like rough stone, they feel glassy smooth to the touch.
- 15 Floor is so slippery that only the most careful, dextrous, or lucky of folks will get through without slipping and falling (save or fall every 10 ft). Makes quite a racket, and each fall costs 1d4 of HP (if anyone goes to oHP due to this, treat as a broken limb).
- 16 The surfaces and air are uncomfortably hot and smell of brimstone.
- 17 The walls and ceiling creak, groan, and hum.
- 18 A puff of wind blows the torch out. A lamp fades and self-extinguishes. No flint will strike. This room refuses to be illuminated by any non-magical means. Luckily, someone saw the exit right before that happened, but they'll have to navigate in the dark.
- 19 The original entrance has experienced a bit of a cave-in. Will take 1d6 hours to excavate.
- 20 Mushrooms dot the walls. Regular old edible mushrooms. Of course, don't tell your players that.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a description (not stats) for an extended royal family, complete with scheming, treachery, forbidden lust, toadies and conniving servants and a few doomed innocents. Please tell me the players and the connections and secrets.

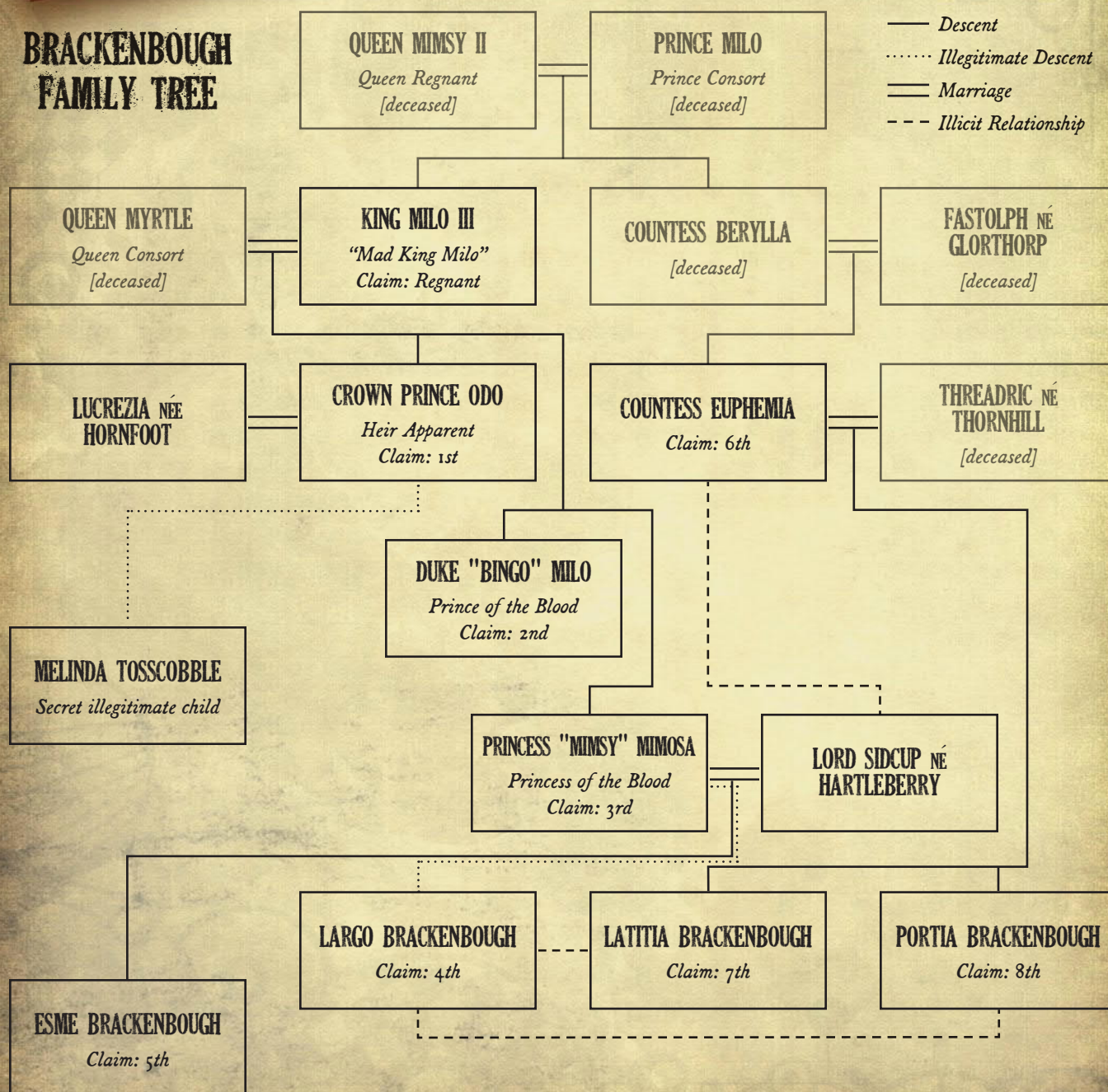
Oh, and please make them halfplings. Thank you!

C.

THE ROYAL HALFING HOUSE OF BRACKENBOUGH

by Anon.

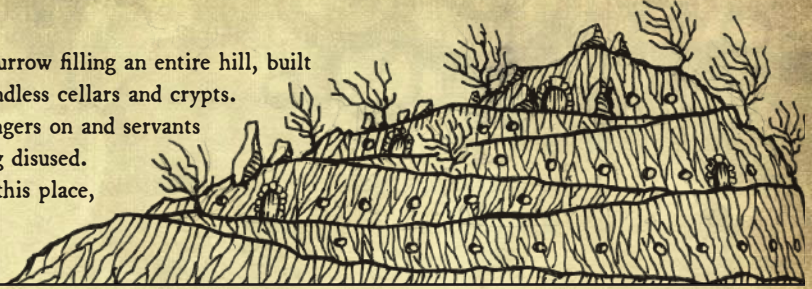
BRACKENBOUGH FAMILY TREE



THE ROYAL HALFLING HOUSE OF BRACKENBOUGH

BRACKENBOUGH SMIAL

The royal residence is a vast, rambling, labyrinthine burrow filling an entire hill, built by generations of royalty to no consistent plan, atop endless cellars and crypts. The large royal clan of distant relations, courtiers, hangers on and servants fills only a fraction of this space. Many rooms are long disused. The royal family has great sentimental attachment to this place, and refer to it affectionately as “the Hill”, dividing the universe into “Under the Hill” and “Outdoors”.



Illustrations by Jez Gordon



MAD KING MILO III

Master of Brackenbough Smial

Ancient, doddering halfling suffering severe dementia. Totally incapable of rule, must be shepherded through duties of kingship by conniving relatives. Royal assent needed for all decrees and laws, thus polite fiction maintained that king is well and sane. Tends to wander halls in nightshirt and hold conversations with invisible people.

SECRETS:

- Although insane, is also in genuine communication with otherworldly entities only he can see and hear. Unable to distinguish between spirit, figment and reality.

CONNECTIONS:

- Used as tool by entire family to pass decrees advancing their own agendas
- Subject to Warton Crag's “treatments” - fasting, isolation etc
- Only one to perceive influence of dead sister Berylla on granddaughter Esme (often mistakes latter for former)



CROWN PRINCE ODO

First Prince of the Blood

Huge fat old halfling, finely dressed. Never leaves the Hill, totally unsympathetic to plight of the working class. Believes in strict division of labour, royalty governing and commoners working; intends to dissolve Parliament on taking the throne. Overeater and philanderer, yet paradoxically devoted to his wife Lucrezia.

SECRETS:

- Knocked up a servant girl some years ago; all hushed up and she now lives in secret with daughter in out-of-way village

CONNECTIONS:

- Heavily influenced by proddings of wife Lucrezia
- Pays regular hush money to mother of his illegitimate child via Mistress Tallowfeather
- Enabled in his philandering by his brother Duke Milo



CROWN PRINCESS LUCREZIA

née Hornfoot

Much younger wife of Prince Odo. Vain schemer of “arsenic in the tea” variety. Comes from minor family, schemed her way into marriage by charming Prince and poisoning or ruining her competitors. Puts on airs as socialite and revels in elevated status. Fiercely defends her position, intends to rule the land via her husband.

SECRETS:

- Ensnared Prince Odo using a love potion, which she administers to him weekly. If potion is not taken he will fall out of love.

CONNECTIONS:

- Manipulates husband Prince Odo into indirectly supporting her machinations
- Frosty hatred of Princess Mimosa, perceives her as main competitor
- Blackmails Lord Sidcup with knowledge of his extra-marital affair



DUKE “BINGO” MILO

Prince of the Blood

Boozing, skirt-chasing old scoundrel with no interest in the throne. By tradition spent most of life in military, in command of border forces or abroad, little to no time at the Hill. Retired, fat, complacent. Looked down on as useless drunkard by rest of family.

SECRETS:

- The old “war buddies” and “society ladies” he invites to stay at the Hill are actually highly paid prostitutes and low-class criminal gamblers.

CONNECTIONS:

- Subject to subtle control by voodoo doll in possession of Esme
- Unwittingly target of hatred by Mistress Tallowfeather
- Provides women for his philandering brother Prince Odo

THE ROYAL HALFLING HOUSE OF BRACKENBOUGH

Illustrations by Jez Gordon



PRINCESS "MIMSY" MIMOSA

Princess of the Blood

"Sturdy" matriarchal halfling with arch, cultured attitude, nasal voice and fish-eyes. Dominant sibling through force of personality. Highly conservative, obsessed with tradition and continuation of estate. Intends that throne should pass through her to her son Largo, her brothers having no heirs.

SECRETS:

- Became pregnant after dalliance with dwarf in her youth; quickly married to cover it up. Son Largo is product of this union.

CONNECTIONS:

- Married to Lord Sidcup, frequently uses him as catspaw
- Despises Lucrezia as a jacked-up low-born interloper
- Grooming her son Largo as future king



LORD SIDCUP

né Hartleberry

Wodehousian twit, well-bred but gormless. Hails from large well-to-do noble family, well-connected socially. Distinguished in that he can talk for hours without ever actually saying anything.

SECRETS:

- Holds secret affair with Countess Euphemia; madly infatuated, doesn't realise how close he is to being eaten.

CONNECTIONS:

- Married to Mimosa, easily bullied into obedience
- Infatuated with Euphemia, conducting illicit affair
- Blackmailed by Lucrezia with knowledge of his affair into doing her dirty work



LARGO BRACKENBOUGH

Grim halfling with slight limp (one foot shorter than other). Big enough to ride a horse and strong enough to bend iron bars. Always scowls, never smiles, murderously black temper. Suspicious of everyone but especially Big Folk. Openly courting Latitia, his second cousin, in whom he believes he glimpses intriguing hidden darkness (actually sees hints of Portia when she is impersonating her sister).

SECRETS:

- Secretly half-dwarf, product of his mother's dalliance prior to marriage (therefore illegitimate). Extremely bitter about it.

CONNECTIONS:

- Courts Latitia, believes himself in love with her
- Seduced and manipulated by Portia while in the guise of her sister
- Political ally of Warton Crag



ESME BRACKENBOUGH

Plump halfling girl, not quite adult, with superior attitude and inflated sense of own appearance and intelligence. Dresses only in finest fashions. Psychologically dominated by the skull of her great aunt Berylla, recovered from crypts and hidden in her room, where it whispers ancient family secrets to her in the night. Skull has convinced her that by following direction she can attain throne for herself, instructs her in black magics to achieve this.

SECRETS:

- Skull remains hidden from all others. Unbeknownst to Esme, intends to possess her and destroy her personality, allowing Berylla to live again and rule as queen.

CONNECTIONS:

- Exerts subtle control over Duke Milo using voodoo doll
- Secretly collects possessions, body parts, for use in magic ritual against Prince Odo
- Strangely frightened of King Milo, who perceives her ethereal connections



COUNTESS EUPHEMIA

Neurotic recluse, dressed in black widow's garb and veil (ever since death of her husband years ago). Sombre, says little, avoids company (even daughters), holds no interest in throne, eats alone in private room. Makes few public appearances.

SECRETS:

- Pregnant mother's dabbling in black magic and/or mysterious parentage of father have resulted in insatiable addiction to halfling flesh. Must eat a whole halfling every few weeks at most. Becomes more and more unstable between feedings, vicious and bestial while eating. (Human flesh will also do in a pinch.)

CONNECTIONS:

- Illicit affair with Lord Sidcup, restrains herself but draws near to eating him
- Mistress Tallowfeather provides supply of newly recruited maids and servants, cleans up mess afterwards

THE ROYAL HALFLING HOUSE OF BRACKENBOUGH

Illustrations by Jez Gordon



LATTITIA "LETTUCE" BRACKENBOUGH

Simpering airheaded imbecile, twin sister of Portia. Childlike egocentricity and inability to empathise with others. Too dimwitted to play active role in intrigues. Popular at dances and balls with halfling noblemen, who find her mental disorders endearing and consider her a "perfect wife". Responds to all romantic approaches with equal amounts giggling and coy flirtation.

SECRETS:

- Inherited latent cannibalistic tendencies of mother — thus far only a strong desire for red meat.

CONNECTIONS:

- Romantically courted by Largo and, recently, Fosco Chubb
- Manipulated, sometimes impersonated by sister Portia



PORTIA BRACKENBOUGH

Serious, intelligent twin sister of Latitia. Convincingly fakes social conventions, but is totally sociopathic and devoid of conscience. Spent significant time "Outdoors" among Big Folk, recently returned with complement of useful worldly skills. Utterly determined to scheme way into power at all costs, including murdering her way up the family tree.

SECRETS:

- Frequently impersonates her twin sister Latitia in order to seduce and manipulate Largo, intends to use him as blunt instrument in her schemes for the throne.

CONNECTIONS:

- Resents, manipulates sister Latitia
- Seduces, manipulates sister's lover Largo

NON-ROYAL SERVANTS AND HANGERS ON:



CHANCELLOR FOSCO CHUBB

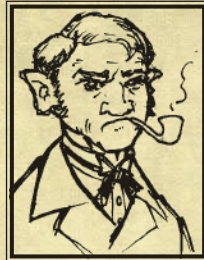
Current chancellor and a frequent guest and supplicant at the Hill. Spherical, beaming, ingratiating politician. Born into wealthy but common family, obsequiously flattering towards all royalty. Leader of the Tommy-knockers, political party supportive of friendly relations with Big Folk. Spends as much time as possible at the Hill seeking to build connections.

SECRETS:

- Member of radical revolutionary group that intends to take advantage of king's infirmity to murder royal family and establish republic of wealthy landowners.

CONNECTIONS:

- Political opponent of Warton Crag
- Toadies furiously to Lucrezia in hope that she will act as mollifying influence should her husband take the throne
- Recently courting Latitia in attempt to gain knowledge of royal secrets



WARTON CRAG

Distinguished, pipe-smoking hobbit of letters, chief physician to the King. Member of Redcaps, political party opposed to integration with Big Folk. Ultraconservative, despises Big Folk, believes life was better when halflings hid in holes under trees invisible to the world.

SECRETS:

- Member of sinister, rather silly ancient earth religion centring around use of creepy fairy magic to protect halfling homes from "outsiders". Regularly attends cult meetings.

CONNECTIONS:

- Physician to the king, orders treatments such as fasting, ice-packing, etc
- Political opponent of Fosco Chubb and political ally of Largo



MISTRESS PERLA TALLOWFEATHER

Mistress of the Tea Ceremonies, position of enormous responsibility, overseeing army of liveried footmen organising royal family's daily morning and afternoon tea parties. Exerts subtle influence over affairs of state via slight variations in table setting, serving order etc, affecting social pecking order. Harsh taskmistress, beats servants for slight failings, maintains sharp ear for gossip. Intense hatred for any disruptive influence on the perfect daily order of palace life.

SECRETS:

- Controls web of blackmail and regularly extorts victims for favours. Secretly grooming Prince Odo's illegitimate daughter for use as a weapon once the Prince takes the throne.

CONNECTIONS:

- Provides steady supply of victims to Countess Euphemia & cleans up mess afterwards
- Delivers hush money to Prince Odo's illegitimate daughter and her mother
- Despises Duke Milo as a disruption, plots to get him thrown out or killed

Dear Secret Santicore—
I would like a table or set of tables for
generating weird cults.

Thanks!

E.

Illustration by Jeremy Duncan



WEIRD CULTS

by Brendan S.
untimately.blogspot.com

d10 WHAT DO THEY WORSHIP?

- 1 The idea of progress
- 2 A demon lord
- 3 The jealous, forgotten god of the chosen people
- 4 Prince of animals (roll on animal table)
- 5 The lord of Nod, the land of sleep and hallucination
- 6 Deposed deified emperor from 1000 years ago ("Dark Augustus")
- 7 The universal life-force
- 8 The new prophet
- 9 Overlord of a rival state
- 10 An ancient machine

d10 WHAT IS THEIR IDENTIFIER?

- 1 Animal tattoo on their back (roll on animal table)
- 2 Fine silver ring, allowed to tarnish
- 3 Ritual cross-hatch scars on upper arms
- 4 Glass eye
- 5 Secret handshake
- 6 Green blood
- 7 Nictitating eyelid
- 8 Sharp teeth (either sharpened or naturally sharp)
- 9 Hairless
- 10 Verbal prayers of thanks to the patron upon any success

d10 WHAT IS THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL?

- 1 Extinction, but they want to take as many others with them as possible
- 2 Accumulate souls for their account in hell
- 3 To take back the underworld -- men belong underground, monsters above
- 4 Prepare the world for the ancient masters from the stars
- 5 Immortality; each cell has part of the recipe, they seek each other out
- 6 Enlightenment through extreme experiences

- 7 Reforesting the great waste known as civilization
- 8 Yellow is the sacred color, as much of the world as possible must be in this hue
- 9 The end of warfare
- 10 Reuniting two sundered worlds

d10 WHO IS IN CHARGE? ("PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN")

- 1 Mad charismatic crackpot
- 2 Demon, fae, or otherworldly being in human guise
- 3 Explorer who found the fountain of youth
- 4 Swindler, bilking the credulous
- 5 Swindler, bilking the credulous, unaware that his teachings are true
- 6 Ancient underground machine
- 7 Prince of animals (roll on animal table for type)
- 8 One of the PCs in a past life or before the amnesia
- 9 An animate painting
- 10 A telepathic idol of the ancients

d10 WHAT IS THEIR TABOO?

- 1 Must not eat vegetables
- 2 Will not shake hands (it is polluting)
- 3 If you meet their eyes, you will learn one of their secrets
- 4 They must wash skin that sunlight touches
- 5 Dead cultists must be ritually dismembered and buried in six different locations
- 6 Must not start a fire
- 7 Sexual abstinence
- 8 Will eat nothing cooked
- 9 Must not lie
- 10 Must always have a clear mind; no intoxicants

d10 WHAT IS THEIR SECRET POWER?

- 1 Start and control fires -- pyrokinesis
- 2 Corpses speak to cultists
- 3 Discipline of the body -- ancient martial arts
- 4 Preserve corpses indefinitely, either magically or scientifically
- 5 None, though they believe they can summon demons
- 6 Rust metal by touch
- 7 Mind meld -- they can read thoughts by touch
- 8 Fertile -- crops tended yield 2 to 3 times normal bounty
- 9 Sympathetic magic -- voodoo that works
- 10 Influence animals (like the cleric's turn undead ability)

d10 WHAT IS THEIR RITUAL GARB?

- 1 Yellow robes
- 2 Full armor with helm (antiques valued)
- 3 Official magistrates -- they actually run the <insert locality>
- 4 Wizard robes, full-on stars and moons and pointy hats (they believe they are magic-users)
- 5 Finely scented loin cloth
- 6 Black tunic and sandals
- 7 Masquerade masks
- 8 Business formal -- suit and tie or equivalent for time period
- 9 Paramilitary uniforms
- 10 Shape-changers -- lycanthropes or other, ritual "garb" is their non-human form

d10 WHAT DO THEIR NAMELESS RITUALS ENTAIL?

- 1 Eating live animals (roll on animal table for type)
- 2 Recitation of ancient sutras
- 3 Silent meditation
- 4 Ritual combat
- 5 Human sacrifice
- 6 Animal sacrifice (roll on animal table)
- 7 Burning the sacred texts of rival cults
- 8 Riddles
- 9 Summoning
- 10 Believer suicides

d10 WHERE DO THEY HOLD THEIR NAMELESS RITUALS?

- 1 Center for performing arts (amphitheater, boxing ring, etc)
- 2 Ancient stone circle
- 3 Fake ancient stone circle (they set it up)
- 4 Ancient unearthened vessel
- 5 Town hall -- they run the place
- 6 The home of a ritually slain family
- 7 A natural glade under an overcast sky
- 8 By running water to protect from hostile spirits
- 9 Another religion's holy sanctum
- 10 In the northeast corner of any habitation

d10 HOW OLD IS THE SECT?

- 1 Just founded last week
- 2 Before any known civilization
- 3 Was loosed on the world by something let out of a dungeon by PCs
- 4 During the founding of the current dynasty (or political order)
- 5 The previous dynasty (cult is all that remains)
- 6 Cult is a cyclical plague unleashed to punish decadent societies
- 7 Originally founded by a demigod during the creation wars
- 8 Older than written history (all cult records are oral)
- 9 It was born with the leader and will die with the leader
- 10 Founded based on some past innocuous PC action

d10 ANIMAL TABLE:

- 1 Mantis
- 2 Turtle
- 3 Ram
- 4 Wasp
- 5 Ox
- 6 Peryton
- 7 Worm
- 8 Cat
- 9 Lizard
- 10 Centipede

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a random table (or series thereof) that generates interesting and flavorful brigands, bandits, and highwaymen. I don't use these guys nearly enough in my game, and that's got to stop.

I have been a good GM and naughty player this year. Thanks!

E.

BANDITS RAPSCALLIONS & RIFF-RAFF

by Mike Evans

ihaveangerissues@gmail.com



Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

d20	GANG	ENCOUNTERS & PLOT HOOKS	BANDIT LEADERS
1	Bloody Claws 10 members - fighters, lvl 2-5	Raiders are attacking the village and setting it ablaze.	Old Barty Quints - Looking for any treasure that could help extend his already unnaturally long life.
2	The Nefarious Seven 7 members - 6 fighters, 1 cleric, lvl 7	A group of grave robbers attack the PCs hoping for more profitable loot and fresher parts.	Mad Sylvia - A truly ugly woman who went mad after the man she loved for years rejected her and ran away after a one night affair. She mashes any mirror she comes across.
3	Reckless Bunch 6 members - 1 fighter, 4 rogues, 1 Wizard, lvl 3	Bandits emerge from a cave screaming and running. Some are bloody and frightened. A roar is heard from inside the cave. Something terrible has woken up.	Mercer Baltus - Cocky and quick witted, Mercer loves to gain the upper hand against his opponents. Mercer loves information and uses it to blackmail those he can.
4	Anointed Ones 8 members - 2 fighters, 6 rogues, lvl 1-3	A group of rival adventurer's begin to hound the PC's to beat them to treasure, jobs, etc.	Kain and Tory - These twin siblings are known for their maliciousness and fiery tempers. Kain and Tory are seeking to resurrect their dead sorceress mother.
5	The Crows 9 members - rogues, lvl 4-6	A ragtag group of rogues are being attacked by a troll just off the road.	Fire Gut Martin - A drunkard and ruffian, Fire Gut Martin bullies those in the lower districts.
6	The Bloody Eyes 8 members - 2 fighters, 6 rogues, lvl 1-3	A cocky band of brigands try to extort money from the PC's for their protection in town.	Stumpy - Stumpy had his arms and legs cut off as a punishment for his crimes in the past. He rides on the back of his brother and plans attacks. He enjoys inflicting pain and misery on victims.
7	Feasters of the Flesh 15 members - 7 fighters, 4 rogues, 2 clerics, 2 wizards, lvl 1-6	Slavers wearing all natural armor and weapons attack the players by setting metal eating creatures at them.	Vynar the Deathbringer - This necromancer rules his group through fear and intimidation. He seeks any knowledge on the forbidden arts. He saves the bodies of fallen.
8	Mountain Men 20 members - 8 fighters, 8 rogues, 3 clerics, 1 wizard, lvl 1-6	The leader of a rogue group approaches the players and asks to help free his compatriots from prison.	Bardek "The Sneer" - Bardek took a knife to the face which has scarred him with a permanent sneer. Despite his visage Bardek tends to be a reasonable rogue who lives by a loose code of honor. Bardek steals and plunders to get by.
9	Servitors of Death 5 members - 4 fighters, 1 cleric, lvl 8	A group of sorcerers are attacking the trade routes and capturing people to use in dangerous and evil rituals.	Lil Bonnie Babbton - Lil Bonnie is a cunning and brutal pit fighter. She leads her group of thugs in the outlying areas and defends those who can't defend themselves at a very low price.
10	The Rabid Dogs 6 members - fighters, lvl 3-5	A prophet warns a PC about gold that glitters in the sun. Later that session the group is attacked by a band of bandits with a leader with a shiny gold tooth.	Derek von Michaels - Derek fancies himself a ladies man, but is really a brute and fiend. Derek enjoys dangers and seeks out conflict to prove he's the better man.

BANDITS, RASCALLIONS & RIFF-RAFF

d20	GANG	ENCOUNTERS & PLOT HOOKS	BANDIT LEADERS
11	Deadly Sins 7 members - 3 fighters, 3 rogues, 1 wizard - lvl 2-5	A group of raiders come charging recklessly at the PC's while they travel a rocky pass.	Samuel Gains - Samuel has been plundering for years and hopes to do one or two more jobs and get enough to retire.
12	The Wasteland Scavengers 6 members - 2 fighters, 4 rogues, lvl 4	A group of mutilated bodies are found along the road. In the pocket of one of the victims is a note describing what one/all of the PC's look like and simply, "Stop them from reaching X location at all costs."	Alice Harding - Alice is a young and brash woman who took to the crime to bring down the government after she was hung for stealing bread for her family. Thought to be dead she was taken to the cemetery where she woke up screaming. The caretaker let her go. Since she was pronounced dead she cannot be tried in court.
13	Diseased Mongrels 10 members- 6 fighters, 4 rogues, lvl 1-5	Bandits are engaged in fighting another group. 1) Bandits are winning. 2) Defenders are winning.	Percus Debbins - Percus fancies himself a gentlemen's rogue. He dresses well and practices fine etiquette. Percus steals simply for the thrill of it.
14	The Brigands of the Wild 25 members - 12 fighters, 8 rogues, 3 clerics, 2 wizards, lvl 1-8	A group of bandits approach the PC's and tell them that they have been hired to attack/halt/kill them, but for double the price they will leave them alone and give them the name of the employer.	Wonton McReady - Wonton is more of an adventurer looking to find the new and undiscovered, however he knows it takes money and supplies to do this. He attacks the trade lanes and takes from those who can afford it.
15	Broken Blades 4 members - all fighters, lvl 4	Completely deranged bandits ambush the characters screaming about taking back what is theirs.	Nicholas "Beady-eyed" Withers - One of Nicholas's eyes was shrivelled by a necrotic spell in his early years. He says it lets him see his prey better. Nicholas has been a slaver for 15 years and makes a pretty good profit.
16	The Putrid Damsels 5 members - 4 rogues, 1 wizard, lvl 5	Fighting spills out onto the streets as tensions between two rival bandit groups turns to all out war.	Corbin the Vile - Corbin's bad disposition started long before he contracted leprosy. Much of his face is disfigured and rotting thanks to the disease. Corbin's favorite hobby is to disfigure those he robs in an attempt to make them as ugly as him.
17	The Silent Five of Death 5 members - all rogues, lvl 10	Bandits have set traps all along the path and attack PC's when most vulnerable.	Neet the Battle Wench - The myth of Neet's birth is that she was created in the explosion of a volcano. She is fiery and revels in combat. If combat breaks out she doesn't stop till all enemies are dead.
18	Shadow Clan 6 members- 2 fighters, 4 wizards, lvl 2-6	The leader of the local town/area/nation has hired several groups of bandits to terrorize the countryside so he can thwart them to look like a hero.	Dirty Puck - Dirty Puck frequents pubs and taverns and looks for easy marks. If he can con them out of a few coin he will. If not his boys are waiting in the alley to make things extremely unpleasant.
19	Gnarled Fangs 14 members - 9 fighters, 4 rogues, 1 wizard, lvl 1-6	A famous raiding guild is advertising that it is looking for new recruits.	Hendricks - Hendricks flouts any form of authority and loves to attack and rob those that show their support for any form of government, big or small.
20	The Trail Blazers 18 members- 10 fighters, 5 rogues, 1 cleric, 2 wizards, lvl 1-10	The players emerge from a cave/dungeon to find their horses and supplies gone. A note is nailed to a tree, "Fools leave things unguarded. Thanks for the stuff!" - The Reckless Bunch.	Billy the Lech - Billy loves women and it's gotten him into a fair amount of debt and trouble. Billy eventually crossed the wrong man when he slept with his wife and got her pregnant. Now Billy runs a group of brigands out of the forest and preys on those who happen across his path. He will not attack women under any circumstance though. He will try to woo them however.

Dear Secret Santicore—

*I would like a d20 table for working out
What's Wrong with This Farm and its Farmers?
It's for a gritty medieval setting; focus on
the poverty and misery of medieval peasants.*

Thanks!

P.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS FARM & ITS FARMERS?

by S.L. Shirley

doctor.checkmate@gmail.com

d20	WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS FARM...	AND ITS FARMERS?
1	Blighted Crops. The crops are all withering in the field. Is it a curse? A more mundane blight? Perhaps the farmers are getting what they deserve, perhaps not.	Not locals. They are immigrants or refugees from a neighboring kingdom. Do the local powers that be know they are there?
2	Afflicted Animals. No one is going to buy the meat of an animal that looks like that! And, just forget about milk or cheese. No way.	Freaks. As in "sideshow." Depending on the campaign's level of weird, maybe they are also mutants.
3	Haunted! A spirit haunts the farm. Roll again. On a seven - good for you - it is a friendly and helpful spirit. Anything else? Well, good luck.	Just now, very, very drunk. Festival? What festival? There's a festival? This calls for another drink. No festival? Well, that's just awful - a drink to drown our sorrows then!
4	Stalked by Predators. Wolves. Maybe Werewolves. Or, something more dreadful. But, late at night they ravage the herds and the occasional drunken and wayward hand.	Changelings. Every last one of them is a fetch and the faerie-folk have taken the real farmers away.
5	Raided by Bandits, or Orcs, or... The local ne'er-do-well population has adopted the farm as its own personal larder. The gods damned tax collector is almost preferable... Speaking of...	Cannibals. The stockades and all are there for livestock, but there is no sign that there has been any in some time. Something oddly familiar about the bones in the compost. And, is that roast pork you smell?
6	Cruel Tax Collector. The taxes have been raised. Can't pay? Well, the farmer's first born is particularly alluring... Or, perhaps the farmers can be persuaded to apprehend those nuisance adventurers on behalf of the Tax Man so that the bastard might take credit for that, too.	Cultists. Dark things that the Church would most certainly not approve of have crept from forgotten corners of the fiefdom and taken up residence not far from the farmstead. All they require for a bountiful harvest is a little loyalty. Love them, and they will be your slaves...
7	Missing a gender. Roll again. Even: females, Odd: males. Males captured by crones. The ladies taken by centaurs. Oh, look! Adventures! We don't have much, but please help our spouses and children!	Goblins, Orcs, Gnolls, or something equally (in)appropriate to the campaign. Tired of the persecution and the human-eating, these lot have decided to try to live the life of the "other half", only to be hassled by the neighbours (roll again).
8	Afflicted Farmers. Lepers or something more exotic. Outsiders are welcome, but they really don't get a lot of visitors, and no one wants to buy their stock.	Some peculiar form of undead. Not zombies, not day walking vampires, but they don't breathe and their blood... They may or may not know how they got this way.
9	Harboring a Fugitive. Uncle Ned the Poacher or the King's rebel cousin is hiding out in the storm cellar or barn. Are these outsiders agents of the law?	Elves, Dwarves, Halfings, or something else appropriate to the campaign. Everyone has to eat. Those deep fried, bacon wrapped flank steaks don't grow like mushrooms in the mine, you know!
10	Not really farmers. Were they ever? Perhaps they have turned to banditry in desperation or perhaps the original farmers are tucked away in that odd mound in the garden. Either way, this isn't the hospitality that you were led to believe you could expect here.	Speaking in a bizarre manner. A peculiar dialect or dead language. Maybe they communicate by analogy, simile, and metaphor exclusively. Or, they're all mute and communicate in sign.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS FARM & ITS FARMERS?

d20	WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS FARM...	AND ITS FARMERS?
11	Missing an age group. Roll again, add 10. Even: everyone over that age. Odd: everyone under that age. Perhaps the children have been replaced by changlings, or the elders have wandered off to wrestle the death bear. Either way, the family wants to be whole again. Wait! Are these vagabonds responsible? Don't trust outsiders!	Doppelgangers. First the strange body snatchers made their way out of the underground hiding amongst a caravan of gnomes, then they took over the farm. Now, these adventurers have arrived... are they an obstacle or a potential advantage?
12	Something in the Water. Tainted Well. Roll again. On a 13, everyone and everything is dead. Anything else, dying. Suddenly, Tax Collector be damned; that water skin of yours is more valuable than gold.	Werewolves trying to fight their curse. Like the humanoids, they're just tired of running and fighting. But something lurks in the woods that is to werewolves what werewolves are to other dirt farmers, and the werewolves need to appease it.
13	Curses! They are cursed! Or, you are now. Perhaps you are now geased to find their lost cow. Or the child stealing crone is not happy about last seasons attempt to substitute a halfling assassin for the farmers winsome daughter.	Animated statues. A peculiar local villain (the lord's estranged son back from Wizards college, or a new form of gorgon) has converted all the farmers to statues of an uncanny, not quite life like, material. What are they made of? Is the process reversible?
14	Family Feud. "Hatfield and McCoy" or "Capulet and Montague" style. Banjos or chamber music, either way the party has just walked into a bad scene just waiting for the right catalyst.	Slumming nobles trying to find out how the other half lives. Are they hiding from an arranged marriage? Or want to take that beautiful peasant maiden away from all this? This farm is only temporary. They have a plan and they're going places!
15	Treasure Hunters are digging up crops and disturbing the livestock. Fifty-fifty chance that the party is going to be run out of town by the locals or the hunters. Either way, odds they will be welcomed are long.	Leaving! As if the problems from the first table aren't enough, now there is a dragon taking people and livestock one at a time in broad day light and the local lord is doing nothing about it. Take what you want, wanderers! We're leaving!
16	Strange Visitors from a far off land have preceded the party. Their generosity has colored the locals expectations of the party. Times are hard, and if the party is flush, they may want to keep it to themselves.	All blind or deaf. What did this to them? Is there some profit to be made in avenging their condition after you help them with their (amazingly) more pressing problem? Be nice to have a little rustic get away when the local tavern is full.
17	Strange Elders. The kids are alright, but don't trust anyone over the age of thirty. They all seem to know something the party does not.	Polymorphed to livestock and the livestock polymorphed to farmers. The pigs-turned-farmers seem perfectly happy with this arrangement and will violently oppose a change in the status quo.
18	Missing Livestock. No one is sure where they're going, but if the disappearances aren't stopped soon the tax collector's next visit is going to end in blood and tears.	A carnival or circus on their off season. Which, now that you think about it, explains the dancing bear and the elephant. Wait! That damn monkey stole my coins!
19	Strange Livestock. OK. Those goats? They ain't right. That dog? I swear it just tried to hamstring me. No, it was not being playful. And, that cat? Oh gods... it has human eyes!	Illusions. The whole thing is an elaborate and powerful illusion. Whether or not this hides something still more sinister? Well, only your Diabolical Monster knows for sure.
20	Strange Children. They seem too perfect, or too cruel. Either way, the boys (and girls) just ain't right.	Perfectly normal peasants. Sure. Or, you can roll a few more times and mix and match the results.



Illustration by Jez Gordon

Dear Secret Santicore—

*I would like to know what is in this particular
village building in the flooded valley?*

Thanks!

J.

EXPLORING THE FLOODED VALLEY

by Sean Fallon
sevenelves@gmail.com



The Flooded Valley is a marshy alpine valley (approx. 6 x 5 miles in area) surrounded by forested mountains & cliffs, which nicely fills a single hex in a mountainous area of any hex map. The valley is often flooded by mysterious underground springs, creating a huge lake with an overall depth of 20 or 30 feet, which eventually drains away apparently back underground; there is no regular cycle to the flooding or draining.

The current inhabitants make their living off the various & unique aquatic flora & fauna of the valley (many of which are usually only found in the deep dark lakes of the Underworld); truth be told, the blind freshwater squid can be exquisitely delicious if it is prepared correctly. The valley inhabitants also favor the worship of their own Local Spirits — such as The Great Serpent (a Fertility god) & Hahruu the Protector (goddess of Vengeance & Healing who is often depicted as a crowned beaver holding a greatsword) over the more widely worshipped pantheon.

The local Lord was granted title over the Flooded Valley by the present monarch; he is a performing midget who entertained in the drunken monarch during a festival & on the spur of the moment the monarch granted him these lands. The Lord never uses his castle & leaves its management to his steward. There is almost no governance in the Flooded Valley at all. Although the Serpentine Virgins & the Hunters are well respected in this society.

Architecture in the Flooded Valley is fairly uniform and consists of thatch roofed, timber long houses raised on heavy stilts at least 30 feet above the low water and marshy ground. The first floor is generally a storage & manufacturing area, the second floor is a large living area with hearth & kitchen, and the third floor attic is divided into sleeping apartments. Access to these long houses is made via sloping gangplanks from the ground level or floating docks attached to the house's outer stilts.

Settlement is concentrated around the stony banks of Serpent Spring, a medium sized lake of fathomless depths that remains even when the greater lake has drained.

LONGHOUSE SIZE:

Width: [d6 X 5] + 20 feet

Length: [d10 X 5] + 30 feet

Each longhouse has 3 stories: 1st storage, 2nd kitchen, living & trade area, 3rd sleeping apartments

PIERS:

*Each longhouse is raised on 2d10 + 10 stilts
above the flood d6 + 5 feet
or the drained ground d10 + 25 feet*

GANGWAYS:

Each longhouse has at least one gangway leading from a floating dock or the marshy rocks and has a 50% chance of being attached by 'decks' to d6 other longhouses in a 'block.'

d6 WHAT IS THIS BUILDING:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Abandoned / Ruined Longhouse | 50% chance of swampy vermin infestation: rats, bullywugs |
| 2-3 | Fisherman's Longhouse | d4 elderly d8 adults
2d10 children |

4-5 Standard Tradesman Table

6 Non — Standard Building Table

d20 TRADESMEN OF THE VALLEY TABLE:

Best to think of these places, not as conventional 'shops,' but more like hobbyists who are really into their thing.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | BOATWRIGHT: Has canoes & row boats available, can make longboats to order. |
| 2 | BLACKSMITH: provides mundane items & repairs. |
| 3 | POTTER: provides mundane items of unique design & has artistic pretensions. |
| 4 | ROPE & TACKLE MAKER. |
| 5 | WOODCUTTERS / LUMBER: provides scarce logs from distant areas; will be floating in timber during flood or cutting & milling during drained season. |
| 6 | PEAT & TURF CUTTERS: provide cut peat to be used as fuel as wood is too scarce to simply burn. |
| 7 | TAILOR & WEAVER: provides unique garments & fabrics from local exotic materials. |
| 8 | CARPENTER & COFFIN MAKER: does excellent but expensive work. |
| 9 | BARRELMAKER. |
| 11 | COBBLER / CORDWAINER. |

- 10 **FLETCHER:** can provide masterwork arrows of Distance make from the very light but sturdy reeds of the Drowned Valley.
- 12 **BARBER / APOTHECARY:** best medical service available in area; non-magical but herbs, leeches & skill usually triple regular healing time.
- 13 **BATH HOUSE:** hot baths in clean water are provided here in the afternoon & often sexual favors as well.
- 14 **BAKERY:** provides excellent loaves & sweets made from wild rice or acorn flour.
- 15 **DISTILLERY:** is really just a still operated in a normal fisherman's house, but can provide excellent rice liquor.
- 16 **BREWERY:** similar set up to the Distillery, but can provide rice wine, acorn ale & mead.
- 17 **TAP ROOM:** not so much an Inn as a place where the local oldsters can knock back a few & gossip away from their families.
- 18 **SHRINE:** dedicated to the usual or neutral gods of your campaign; there is no full-time priesthood here, only an alcoholic Sexton who maintains the building. If there is an appropriate Cleric your party, he will cajole them into conducting services; if successful there is a 50% chance he will complain that they were not conducted properly.
- 19 **HUNTERS' SOCIETY HALL:** houses an important social organization to the inhabitants of the Drowned Valley. All local boys are initiated into the Hunters & taught the use of bow & arrow & the ways to track game; the Hunters organize autumn large forays into the alpine borders of the valley for game. They also serve as the closest thing to a militia or police force in the Valley.
- 20: **BRINERY & SMOKE HOUSE:** here the locals can preserve portions of their catch either as pickled or turf smoked fish for a considerable percentage. The place is run by the greediest family in the Valley.

d10 NON – STANDARD BUILDING TABLE

- 1 **LOTUS LABORATORY:** think D&D "Meth Lab." These guys harvest the variously colored lotuses that flourish in the Drowned Valley and create poisons & drugs from them. They are paranoid & vicious. d4 + 4 Thief / Rogues; d6 + 4 Fighters; d4 + 1 Magic Users; d10 + 4 Pit Bulls [dogs].
- 2 **THE THREE WISE WOMEN'S HOUSE:** these 3 Witches provide medicinal herbs, mid-wife services & potions to the inhabitants of the Drowned Valley. They keep d12 + 4 goats, a very large snake & an enchanted random monster as pets.
- 3 **DECADENT POET'S SOCIETY:** A wealthy & famous Lord Byron-type poet has taken up residence in this longhouse with his entourage to escape the distractions of the city while he finishes composing his next lyric masterpiece. The locals don't mind the noise of late night parties since the poet hands out silver liberally. There is a large stock of exotic liquors, luxurious foods & expensive drugs. d4 + 2 high level fighter/bodyguards; d6 + 4 fawning, aristocratic rogue hangers-on; d4 + 1 musician/entertainers; d10 + 4 comely maidservants; d4 courtesans; d4 personal assistants/pages; d4 priestesses of a decadent god.

- 4 **MUSHROOM GATHERERS:** This fisherman's family supplements their income by gathering the rare & exotic mushrooms which sprout throughout the marsh after the Flooded Valley drains. The family usually has at least 13 varieties of magical mushrooms on hand: Roll on a Random Potion Table or Drug Table for Mushroom Effects. Hippies. d4 elderly; d6 + 2 psychedelic Rangers [teenagers]; d4 + 3 adults; d12 + 6 children; d6 + 2 "truffle sniffing" hogs; d4 + 1 infants.
- 5 **FROG SQUEEZERS:** This family makes a good living by catching the exotic blind frogs that fill the valley during a Flood & then using an old wine press to squeeze the unique acids from their bodies. One variety produces an acid that effects only metal, another only effects stone & the third only effects plant matter. The family is attempting to breed these frogs in barrels that they keep in first floor store room.
- 6 **THE CONVENT OF THE SERPENTINE VIRGINS:** this building houses the priestesses of the local fertility spirit – The Great Serpent. These women perform the rituals & conduct the sacrifices which maintain the cycle of life in the Flooded Valley. They are supported by generous donations from the local – and fearful – inhabitants. The following should be a combination of Clerics with whips, or Monks (if you use that class). Resurrection Magic is forbidden. d4 + 3 Elderly; d6 + 6 Adults; d12 + 6 Teenagers; d12 + 10 Children
- 7 **TEENAGE WASTELAND:** This abandoned longhouse has been claimed by the disaffected youth of the Drowned Valley & now serves as a location for various transgressive acts & youthful rebellion. 2d10 Disaffected Youths.
- 8 **LAIR OF THE PSYCHIC SQUIRREL:** This abandoned windmill has been refurbished by a wizard who is under the effects of a permanent polymorph curse which forces him to live out his days in the form of a grey squirrel. Although he can not speak, the curse has granted the squirrel the power to send telepathic messages – 100 yd radius to any intelligent creature & 10 mile radius to other squirrels – but he can not receive messages & has no other psionic powers. The Psychic Squirrel has great difficulty casting his old arcane spells, but manages to exert almost godlike control over the squirrel population of the area surrounding the Drowned Valley with simple psychic commands. Rumor has it that the Psychic Squirrel has amassed a small fortune by using his power over the local squirrels to gather area's acorns & grind them into flour in the mill which has been converted from a windmill to a squirrel wheel mill... who knows what else he is up to. Psychic Squirrel [9th level Wizard]; d6 X 50 squirrels.
- 9 **ORPHANAGE:** This Longhouse contains an orphanage for boys run by the devoted of your own 'good' god. Young boys are feed, housed, taught to read & figure and work at small crafts – like net making – here. What becomes of them once they reach the age of 15 is a bit of mystery as they are never seen in the Valley again. d6 + 6 Adults; d12 + 6 Teenagers; d12 + 10 Children
- 10 **FORTUNE TELLER:** This Longhouse is the home of a fisher family who's matriarch also tells the fortunes of others for a small fee. She is sometimes accurate & sometimes just mumbles whatever this link says: www.random-generator.com/index.php?title=Gothic_Horror_Oracle followed by "these are the only ones you can rely on" or "these shall dog your heels until you have repented or slain them".

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would love a table of performers at an inn or common room is and what he or she is doing there. This can fill in detail for random world NPCs, or provide a starting point for an encounter or an adventure, if the PCs interfere or get involved. The table should include reference to musical or performance style, and possibly a short sentence about the performance itself.

Thanks!

S.

RANDOM PERFORMERS AT THE INN

by Reynaldo

d12	WHO'S ON STAGE...	AND WHAT THEY ARE PERFORMING:
1	a jolly animated corpse	a story of a great relic, buried under this very inn!
2	a talented goblin Trio	a dirge for heroes fallen in a great battle fought just north of here. It mentions the battlefield where all the corpses and thier treasures lie strangely untouched and unscavenged.
3	a wandering elf bard	a long poem about the dangers of poor political decisions, which is easily associated with current local event or scandal. This causes tensions to flare amongst the audience.
4	a swarm of violet bees that act in unison	a rather unflattering rendition of the PCs latest adventure, prefferably one that would be impossible for this preformer to know that much about.
5	a sad human who reeks of liquor	a sad tale of two lovers, torn apart by some wicked entity or other powerful force. A member in the audience weeps bitterly at the end of the story.
6	a comedic dwarf and gnome duo	a happy tale of two lovers, brought together with the help of some benevolent entity or other powerful force. The performer winks at a random PC after taking a bow.
7	a perfectly sculpted golem	an energetic dance that seems to inspire the audience. At the end of the dance, it is suddenly midday, with the sun shining brightly at its zenith.
8	the local entertainer, who is in desperate need of help	a slow, methodical dance that puts the viewers in a somber mood. At the end of this dance, it is midnight outside, and the moon is full.
9	a group of gypsy preformers, with an appropriate number of members for the show	a hymm, sung in honor of a god or religion important to the PCs, prefferably connected to one of thier divine spell casters. The hymm takes a dark and satirical turn however, and any party members with abilities derived from the mentioned entity find they no longer work.
10	a good looking but tragically talentless noble	a jaunty song that causes the whole inn to get up and dance, including the PCs, unless they make saving throws to resist.
11	a skilled magic user, who enhances their performance with sorcery	a ballad about how the settlement the PCs are currently in fell into ruin. Once the song is finished, the Pc's find the building they were in is suddenly empty and in ruins. A strange shuffling can be heard outside.
12	a small god of the establishment, who has taken on a disguise for the evening	a short poem about the inevitable doom of one of the PCs. When the poem is done, the preformer cackles and points at the PC they were just speaking of before vanishing.

Illustration by Stuart Robertson



Dear Secret Santicore—

I would greatly enjoy a random table with at least 20 options (d20, d100 or anything in between!) of interesting encounters at sea while traveling on a ship in a tropical region. Less combat-driven encounters than that one would be even more desirable!

Thanks!

D.

AT SEA IN THE TROPICS

by Pierce Raats

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d10 CLIFFS

- 1 A mysterious and ancient shrine is carved into this cliff side.
- 2 A dozen huge boulders tumble down from above- or were they pushed?
- 3 A cave half filled with water sits at the base of this cliff- does it lead into a treasure trove or the lair of a horrible sea beast?
- 4 Flocks of small sea birds nest here, they are very annoying and will try to steal small trinkets from the ship.
- 5 An ancient watchtower sits atop the cliff here, does the catapult still work? a secret stair is cut into the cliff side.
- 6 Jagged rocks and shipwrecks line this section of foreboding coastal cliff. A beautiful siren or hideous sea witch might live here.
- 7 A huge stone face is carved into this cliff but is that human? Is that a doorway set in the mouth?
- 8 Dozens of dark tunnel openings are set in the cliff here. Very ominous.
- 9 A Giant man sits here with a huge fishing rod, he is just relaxing and enjoying the sunny day.
- 10 A narrow cleft in the rock here leads into a pirate hideout.
- 6 On a sandy beach nearby many sea turtles are either laying eggs or hundreds of baby turtles are hatching and making a mad dash for the water.
- 7 A ghostly female apparition walks across the waves, beckoning to the sailors with her ghostly lantern – or is she trying to warn them away?
- 8 Strange multicolored lights flicker and dance across the horizon.
- 9 Another ship passes close by in the darkness, no lights are on and no one calls out or signals.
- 10 An iceberg looms out of the fog, which is kind of unusual in this warm climate.

d10 RANDOM

d10 NIGHT

- 1 Bonfires are visible further inland in the jungle, ominous drums start beating.
- 2 The stars don't seem right, the constellations are all different or in the wrong part of the sky. Navigation could be a problem while this effect is in place.
- 3 Something is giving off an eerie green glow from the seabed.
- 4 Something is stalking the ship at night. It will try to pick off anyone alone on deck after dark. The attacks display a startling cunning.
- 5 The ship suddenly stops, snared by something huge underwater- maybe a sandbar or seaweed? By morning the ship will have drifted free.
- 1 The shattered wreckage of a goblin fleet is scattered about. Miserable looking goblins cling to the still burning debris.
- 2 A dozen vicious sharks follow the ship, they will lose interest in a few days if no food becomes available.
- 3 Totem poles and carven tiki statues dot the beach here. Deeper into the jungle creepy fetish idols and even shruken heads hang in the trees.
- 4 The sand here is stained red with blood and the dead and dying lay everywhere. A great battle took place here recently.
- 5 Something golden gleams far off above the jungle trees, is that the top of a golden pyramid?
- 6 An enormous coral reef spreads throughout the area, it teems with aquatic life- the fishing is particularly good.
- 7 What looked like a small rocky island from a distance is actually a jumble of broken pillars and cut stone. Strange hieroglyphics cover every surface. There might be a stair leading down into the dark.
- 8 A pod of friendly dolphins start to follow the ship, they will stick around as long as the ship seems interesting.
- 9 An exotic parrot like bird takes a liking to a crew member or character. The bird is intelligent and makes a good familiar or companion.
- 10 An enormous dead sea creature floats nearby, the air and sea are thick with scavengers.

d10 SHIPS

- 1 A whaling ship that has been refitted with cages for hunting and capturing large and dangerous jungle beasts.
- 2 A small merchant trader, he has nothing particularly valuable but carries a huge selection of random junk.
A raft bearing a single starving cast away. He has eaten his shipmates and is now an insane and enthusiastic cannibal.
- 4 A small and barely seaworthy raft crewed by a handful of friendly goblin "traders". If allowed to go on their way the goblins will report to their nearby goblin pirate warship.
- 5 A slave ship wants to trade. They are out of food and so are willing to trade slaves for large quantities of food or sell off a bunch of slaves for cheap- or both.
- 6 Elaborately carved tribal canoes- they are fishing using primitive but successful methods.
- 7 Thick black smoke rises from a still burning husk of a ship. It is surprising that it is still afloat but it is impossible to tell who or what was on the ship.
- 8 A warship appears, it is apparently enforcing strict "anti-piracy" measures. They demand gold and supplies as payment for their valuable work "keeping these waters safe".
- 9 A crusade ship appears- crewed by many a Cleric and Paladin. They try to convert anyone they come in contact with but will only get violent if their faith is mocked or they witness "heathen behavior".
- 10 A Viking type raider ship, they are miserable in this hot climate and will pay handsomely for alcohol.

d10 CREEPY

- 1 Too many rats aboard the ship, it is becoming a serious problem.
- 2 The rats seem oddly intelligent, sometimes they appear to be watching the crew. Small random items start going missing.
- 3 The rats seem to develop a strange attraction to a certain person aboard the ship.
- 4 One day all the rats are suddenly and mysteriously gone.
- 5 Some times late at night faint knocking can be heard- seemingly coming from outside the hull and well below the water line.
- 6 A corpse is found stashed somewhere aboard the ship. No one will confess anything and the body can't be identified.
- 7 A nameless street urchin stowed away in the last port.
- 8 A stowaway is discovered. It is the son or daughter of somebody very important at the last port the ship visited.
- 9 The ship starts to slowly take on water. While not immediately dangerous the ship will need significant repairs, and soon.
- 10 A brutal looking storm brews on the horizon, it threatens for a day or two and then drifts away and dissipates.

d10 ISLANDS

- 1 This tiny and rocky island is barren and featureless. Several times every day the island is struck by powerful bolts of lightning, even when the sky is clear.
- 2 This small island appears to be a solid chunk of smooth and rounded stone. That outcropping looks almost like a nose. Is the whole island a half submerged head?
- 3 This small island is actually a huge mound of sun-bleached whalebone resting on a shallow reef. For unknown reasons whales will travel great distances to die here.
- 4 This barren island is crisscrossed with trenches and battlements, with no apparent order or function. Rusting arms and armor lay strewn about.
- 5 Volcanic eruptions are creating a new island here. Huge steam clouds form as magma pours into the sea, and black ash falls like snow for miles.
- 6 This whole island is a pirate port and trading post. Brothels, taverns and warehouses cover every square foot of land. Rickety docks jut out into the sea. Nearly every structure is made up of boat wreckage.
- 7 Large mechanical insects are scattered all across this island, they lie dormant, as if waiting for a signal.
- 8 Monster Island! The only living creatures on this island are of the giant- apex predator variety. Giant apes, Mega lizards and Mutant bugs battle for survival.
- 9 This island seems perfect. Lots of fruit and palm trees and beautiful beaches. No hostile natives, dangerous predators, or lethal poisons anywhere on the island. It is totally safe. Folks might get nervous on an island that seems too good to be true.
- 10 This is actually a archipelago chain which has been formed into an island nation. It is a primarily agricultural based society, or it was until the plague struck. The pox killed nearly everyone, so now the stench of rotting bodies and crops is noticeable well out to sea.



Dear Secret Santicore—

Please give me something useful to a campaign set along a fantasy (fantastic?) version of the Silk Road.

Thanks!
J.

MERCHANTS OF THE SILK ROAD

by Erik Jensen

wampuscountry.blogspot.com



Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

Below are two d100 tables for generating inspirational ideas on-the-fly for merchants and caravans which might be encountered along the Silk Road or a fantasy/sword-and-sorcery equivalent.

The first table generates merchants and merchant groups; the second, ideas for goods the merchant(s) may be carrying.

In both tables, fantastic elements (of the Arabian Night, Fairytale, or Weird variety) are located at the high end.

d100 MERCHANT/CARAVAN

SOLO MERCHANT

- 1 plump and jovial
- 2 a gaunt, sneering liar
- 3 a vain popinjay
- 4 wanted by the authorities
- 5 a grizzled ex-soldier
- 6 a glad-handing flatterer
- 7 a creepy lecher
- 8 a sucker for sob stories
- 9 a teller of unbelievable tales
- 10 a Falstaffian drunkard
- 11 in the market for a silent partner with money
- 12 afraid of his own shadow
- 13 near-emotionless but a whiz at numbers
- 14 an old acquaintance of a PC's father
- 15 marked with a mysterious tattoo or strange scar

- 16 a robber in disguise
- 17 a muttering madman
- 18 a proselytizing practitioner of an unusual faith
- 19 pretender to a distant throne
- 20 sickly and dying - perhaps right this second while you're talking to him
- 21 inordinately proud of his well-groomed beard, and has advice for you, too
- 22 fond of quoting near-nonsensical aphorisms
- 23 ridiculously tall, with a lengthy beard
- 24 a horrible pickpocket, yet still he tries
- 25 a collector of fantastic tales, and willing to pay to hear them
- 26 impossible to separate from his hookah
- 27 suffering from debilitating halitosis
- 28 a skilled musician whose sweet strains can be heard quite a distance away
- 29 infested with lice and other parasites, or inexplicably dirty at all times
- 30 a perpetually-distracted space cadet
- 31 convinced he is cursed by the gods
- 32 a really bad haggler
- 33 a student of the occult
- 34 interested only in barter for unusual items
- 35 a secret cultist
- 36 being pursued by an assassin (who may strike at any minute)

- 37 convinced he can slap a coat of paint on mundane crap and sell it as 'exotic art'
- 38 a skilled alchemist
- 39 shouting angrily all the time
- 40 instantly smitten with a PC - or a PC's prize possession

MERCHANT FAMILY

- 41 very friendly husband, wife, and two small children
- 42 a comely widow and her disrespectful son
- 43 moderately-creepy identical twins, dressed alike and with similar names
- 44 husband with several easily-distinguishable wives (a thin one, a plump one, etc)
- 45 a young brother and sister along with their extremely old grandfather
- 46 husband, wife, and countless children who get into everything
- 47 a kind elderly couple who've been everywhere and seen everything
- 48 anxious husband and his very pregnant wife
- 49 father looking to have someone take d3 daughters off his hands
- 50 multi-generational group of gypsy-tinkers
- 51 milquetoast merchant berated by harridan wife
- 52 lovey-dovey newlyweds more interested in each other than their customers
- 53 group of child-merchants, no adults in sight

- 54 conjoined twins who can never agree on a price
- 55 family of merchants who compete ruthlessly against one another for profit
- 56 wife trying to sell her husband's goods so she can buy his way out of prison
- 57 polyandrous woman with several husbands
- 58 inbred family of comical yokels
- 59 master artisan father and the son who can never live up to great expectations
- 60 family band of musicians; will play for money or sell/repair instruments

NON-FAMILIAL GROUP

- 61 group of amateur but eager artisans (smiths, leatherworkers, carvers)
- 62 group of hunters/trappers hawking pelts, talons, dried meats
- 63 monastics on pilgrimage, selling religious trinkets and art
- 64 well-armed soldiers transporting something secr-- I SAID STEP AWAY SIR.
- 65 d4+1 bounty hunters searching for an escaped criminal
- 66 group are all slaves freed on their master's deathbed
- 67 'mercantile ambassadors' from a far-flung kingdom engaged in espionage
- 68 small group of travelling prostitutes and one or more 'guards'
- 69 entire caravan composed of brigands, disguised for ambush
- 70 small group of surveyors/explorer-scholars searching for (animals, plants, materials, pathways, old ruins)

TRANSPORT is of note

- 71 merchant rides a magnificent or unusual stallion or camel, the most spectacular specimen the PCs have ever seen

- 72 the small merchant rides in a basket-howdah on the back of a huge eunuch
- 73 merchant's cart/carriage is pulled by several yoked men (slaves? criminals? ensorcelled?)
- 74 caravan includes 'gypsy-style' enclosed carts, boldly decorated and strung with bells
- 75 fat, well-dressed merchant on horseback, accompanied by a bevy of overladen porters, on foot, who he constantly berates for their laziness (immense greasy haunch of meat in the merchant's fist is optional)
- 76 cart is loaded with multiple active beehives or butterfly-cages
- 77 caravan includes massive or exotic beasts (elephants, giraffes, zebras)
- 78 caravan includes dangerous animals (hunting-cheetahs, caged tigers)
- 79 caravan includes bizarre and inappropriate pack animals (tortoises with trunks strapped to their shells, swarm of rats tied to a cart with colored yarn)
- 80 merchant is 'on foot', but with noteworthy accessory (snow-shoes, stilts, anachronistic unicycle, ridiculously tall platform shoes)

UNUSUAL DRESS or CUSTOMS

- 81 merchant's party all wear strange masks (animal, decorative, demonic, blank)
- 82 merchant will not sell or buy until he has had tea with potential customer
- 83 merchant's party are blatantly under- or over-dressed for the weather
- 84 merchant's party all wear matching livery in bright colors or strange patterns
- 85 merchant's long robes (or long turban-tail) are carried about by one or more servants, so that they might not touch the ground
- 86 merchant will gladly play (chess, mahjong, cards) to negotiate price
- 87 merchant will only display his wares during the day/night

- 88 merchant refuses to touch anything handled by someone of a different (caste/gender/ethnicity/faith)
- 89 merchant constantly consumes (hashish, certain mushrooms, unusual brew) with predictable results
- 90 merchant demands buyers kiss a (ring, skull, idol, pet, mummified monkey-paw) during negotiations or to seal the deal

FANTASTIC FEATURES

- 91 merchant rides a stately palanquin, borne aloft by large creatures (ogres, efreet, four-armed lizard-men, oni, devils, earth elementals)
- 92 merchant rides something fantastic in a mundane shape (a prince transformed into a donkey, a clockwork camel, a pantomime horse full of serpents)
- 93 merchant is a genie, ghul, or devil in disguise...or perhaps not in disguise
- 94 the entire caravan are ghosts, killed long ago in a (sandstorm/avalanche) near here
- 95 merchant is a powerful sorcerer with a penchant for transforming those who displease him
- 96 caravan transports a (stone/marble/bronze) statue of a (man/woman) to the legendary spring which can return it to life
- 97 merchant, dressed as though from a previous era, claims to have recently returned from fairy-land - and can tell how to get there, for a price
- 98 merchant is a talking severed head or skull (on a pillow, in a box) carried by a servant (or mildly disobedient animal)
- 99 merchant has been transformed into a talking monkey or cat
- 100 merchant's body and voice are actually puppeted by (demon, space-slug, brain-spider, another man with a strange gear-box remote)

MERCHANTS OF THE SILK ROAD

1000 MERCHANT GOODS

1	linen	43	pigments and paints	84	musical instruments
2	silk	44	fish	85	camels
3	satin	45	resin or lacquer	86	very exotic out-of-hemisphere food or thing (chocolate, alpacas, maize)
4	wax/candles	46	pearls or shells	87	mundane tool or instrument which acts on its own on command (wood-saw, needle & thread, harp)
5	porcelain	47	gems	88	sealed glass spheres containing water and a fish which doesn't die
6	amber	48	jewelry	89	mummified body parts and bones (animal/human/improbable)
7	glassware	49	books	90	seeds which grow overnight
8	raw textiles	50	bread and pastries	91	clockwork versions of small animals (mouse, nightingale, goldfish)
9	honey	51	clothing, hats	92	slaves (fantastic: fairies, demons, ogres, yeti, construct/automata)
10	gold	52	dates, figs	93	strange IOUs payable to the bearer, in beautiful calligraphy, from people and things from all walks of life across the world
11	silver	53	cutlery	94	shards of colored glass which, when peered through, show very strange things
12	bronze/brass	54	weaponry	95	mementos from fantastic creatures (lock of jinn hair, demon's tooth, dragon's scale)
13	sandlewood	55	bows, arrows, darts, javelins	96	sealed, labeled boxes containing impossible things (serpent's footfall, cat's egg)
14	camphor	56	armor and shields	97	completely out-of-place anachronism (pocketwatch, ray-gun, aqualung)
15	frankincense	57	salt	98	liquefied souls in small stoppered jars of colored glass
16	sugar	58	tapestries	99	fairylane trade goods (vest woven of spider-silk; wine distilled from a child's tears)
17	horses	59	religious icons and devotional notions	100	abandoned dreams ('previous owner no longer interested...')
18	donkeys	60	seeds and agricultural goods		
19	cattle	61	drugs, poultices, philters, snake oil		
20	sheep/goats	62	coal		
21	ebony	63	tin		
22	mahogany	64	tallow		
23	jade	65	copper		
24	carpets	66	lead		
25	perfumes	67	flax		
26	lamps and lamp-oil	68	hemp		
27	slaves (work)	69	whalebone		
28	slaves (pleasure)	70	mercury		
29	slaves (war)	71	cotton		
30	wines	72	non-working animals (snakes, songbirds, gerbils)		
31	beers or liquors	73	naphtha		
32	ivory	74	indigo		
33	medicinal plants	75	iron		
34	skins and pelts	76	brocade		
35	furs	77	rhubarb		
36	lumber	78	taffeta		
37	musk	79	ambergis		
38	paper or vellum	80	tortoise-shell		
39	tea	81	peppers/chiles		
40	grains	82	salted or dried meats		
41	rubber	83	kohl, henna, and other beauty products		
42	dyes				

Dear Secret Santicore—

Could I get a d6d6 random encounter table for a Spooky Dark Forest? I don't need any stats and they don't have to be combat encounters. Setting and game type is up to you, it could be gothic horror or modern zombie apocalypse or whatever. Thanks a bunch!

P.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN A SPOOKY DARK FOREST

by Danny Peck
keylord16@gmail.com

d6d6 ENCOUNTER:

- 1-1 Many flowering vines hang from trees in this area, the air is thick with their insanity-inducing pollen.
- 1-2 The party comes upon an inexplicably blighted grove. What little fruit remains is blackened with rot and full of maggots.
- 1-3 It turns out that Heart Truffles, a local mushroom delicacy that is currently popular in roadside taverns for miles around, grow exclusively on rotting corpses.
- 1-4 All the trees along a river are withered. The river is either poisoned or cursed.
- 1-5 A lone hanging tree stands in a clearing, with dessicated corpses still dangling from decrepit ropes.
- 1-6 The wind blowing through a weeping willow howls a mournful melody, reminiscent of one the party heard (or will hear) in a nearby inn or tavern.
- 2-1 A saddled horse flees a clearing in which wolves are feasting on its dead rider. The wolves pointedly ignore the horse in favor of the human flesh.
- 2-2 Dozens of rats scurry past, either fleeing some unseen threat or hastening to some new feast.
- 2-3 Shrieking bats swoop down in the night and try to feast on the blood of the party or their mounts.
- 2-4 A mockingbird on a nearby bough cries in a recognizable language. It repeats a short phrase, perhaps an ominous poem or the last words of those now deceased.
- 2-5 What appears to be a noble hart from a distance turns out to be a ghoulish undead deer feasting on the remains of a hunter, or perhaps its own herd.
- 2-6 A mangy mutt or black cat begins to follow the party and returns no matter how hard they try to chase it off.
- 3-1 An ornate carriage drives past the party - with no driver.
- 3-2 A noble and his or her entourage are on their way to a feast where unbeknownst to the noble, his or her firstborn son is the main course.
- 3-3 A vampire's thrall drives a carriage with a coffin in the back containing his master. He appears to be in a hurry.
- 3-4 An unmanned carriage almost runs the party over as it careens down the road pulled by panicked horses.
- 3-5 A whole caravan slowly proceeds down the road flanked by well armed and armored mercenaries. The merchants in charge decided to take a shortcut through the woods.
- 3-6 A carriage is in the road, stuck in a hole or ditch. The driver implores the party to help lift the carriage out so he or she can continue an important journey. The carriage is actually full of bandits staging an overly complicated ambush.
- 4-1 A band of travelling performers invite the party to revel with them yet seem not to have ever heard of any nearby towns or hamlets.
- 4-2 A mysterious hermit in rags looms over the body of a hind whose heart he has cut out and is currently eating.
- 4-3 A panicked, starving man stumbles out of the forest, telling a tale of his lost band of travellers that was stranded in the mountains last winter, ran out of food, and fell to cannibalism.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN A SPOOKY DARK FOREST

d6d6 ENCOUNTER:

- 4-4 A strange magical experiment gone wrong. Otherwise normal human with tentacles/extra limbs/eyes where they shouldn't be. It attempts to make peaceful contact but might not know how.
- 4-5 What at first appears to be a somber funeral procession turns out to be a wedding parade - or vice versa.
- 4-6 A comely woman claims to be the wife of a woodcutter who lives in the woods. She invites the footsore party back her home to rest for the night. She is actually a witch who needs the party's blood or souls for the ritual that keeps her youthful.
- 5-1 Shambling corpses wander out of a nearby peat bog. They move very slowly due to lead balls weighing down their bodies.
- 5-2 A well-dressed man leading a group of glazed-eyed people passes the party. The man wishes to pass in peace, but one of his followers is known to a member of the party, a friend or family member, perhaps.
- 5-3 The party comes across a sanatorium in disrepair. If they approach the building, it appears to still be in use, and the faculty will be very friendly. Perhaps a little too friendly.
- 5-4 An entire village where people wear fashions that are at odds with the current era. If the party stays for the night, the village will be gone in the morning, along with one of the characters. When the village appears at sundown, the character will reappear, believing him or herself to be a member of the village.
- 5-5 An ungainly, disquieting man covered in stitches asks if he can share the party's camp. He seems lonely but turns out to have quite a temper.
- 5-6 A woman at a river bridge begs the party to dive in to look for her baby. When they turn around, she is gone.
- 6-1 The rain currently falling turns out not to be water but rather some strange substance such as blood or mercury.
- 6-2 Thick fog rolls in, making it hard to see much of anything. It becomes difficult to follow the road and might even conceal a natural hazard such as a ravine.
- 6-3 The road ends suddenly in thick, impenetrable forest. An inviting game trail leads away from the road and may lead around the overgrowth and back onto the road, or it could be a trap.
- 6-4 Unlikely weather occurs. It begins to hail or snow on a warm summer day. Hot, steaming rain falls in the middle of winter causing reduced visibility due to the steam.
- 6-5 One of the party falls into a sinkhole that suddenly appears in the road. The character finds him or herself in a vast underground cavern, potentially with a broken limb from the fall.
- 6-6 Recent heavy rains have caused the river to wash away the bridge. The river's still enlarged and running very swiftly, so the party may have to find another route or risk losing supplies or lives in a dangerous crossing.



Illustration by Jez Gordon

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would love a table for generating weird and grim barbarian tribes listing the cruel and barbarous ways which they dress themselves, their savage and ignorant beliefs, details on the tribe's leader. If you feel like going all out then include their vicious bestial totems, the tribe's most sacred and vile object of reverence, or the twisted shamans that guide them. Thanks!

J.

BARBARIAN TRIBES WEIRD & GRIM

by Zak Smith

dndwithpornstars.blogspot.com

d10 THE CRUEL AND BARBAROUS WAYS THAT THEY ADORN THEMSELVES:

- 1 With dogs. Each is chained to a dog. Roll a dog: (<http://dndwithpornstars.blogspot.com/2011/08/nature-is-red-in-tooth-and-claw.html>)
- 2 With a strange bluish paint that grants them +2 to hit and -2 to int for ten minutes'.
- 3 With the skins of their forebears. Each tribesman must grow all fat in his dotage so that his son may wear a suit made from his skin and hide inside it. Nobody knows what they look like.
- 4 With barbarous tattooings. Actually they're pretty bright: each tribey keeps all his or all her important info tattooed somewhere. Notes on habits of local fauna, phases of the moon, maps, last time the dog was walked, all that.
- 5 With the garish and mismatching patterns of many animals. So they look like the Misfits not the Danzig When I Turn In To A Martian ones but instead the Jemm and the Holograms ones.
- 6 No, wait, they do look like the Danzig ones. With the devil-lock. Except it is way longer and at the tip of it is a morning star and they whip it with frenzy in furious battle.
- 7 With bugs. They a-smear themselves and do bathe in the honeys and spices of their fragrant land and are thus wise in eternity are then surrounded by a halo of stinging and crawling things.
- 8- With the bones and teeth of their fallen (human) foes which I know sounds like who cares but they HAVE to. So: new and untested tribesmen and tribesgirls have like no clothes upon them because they never killed anyone and the old warmaster crusties have like bonetooth armor so many Harkonnen layers thick they can barely move. Sometimes veterans will not kill you because adding your bones and teeth and the boiling and the drilling and the sewing isn't worth it like cops not shooting you on account of paperwork.
- 9 With color code. It's like the Federation but with body paint.
- 10 With fucking poison. Save or die Mr Touch Attack.

d10 THEIR SAVAGE AND IGNORANT BELIEFS:

- 1 Like Marilyn Monroe in that movie The Misfits they don't believe in killing animals because they're innocent. Got no problem killing people though. Any animals involved in their Barbarous Adornments (above) are considered to all be bastards.
- 2 They believe the soul is contained in the right foot and will evince an unhealthy obsession with severing a foe's right foot, to the exclusion of all other hit locations. They wear a big shoe.
- 3 They hate food and the eating of food. Publicly. In secret they all eat food (of course) and like it but in company they pretend they don't. It's weird.
- 4 They don't believe in global warming, evolution, racial equality, birth control or social justice. They do believe in the survival of the luckiest and that the judgments of fate are true and righteous altogether.
- 5 They believe that emissaries of alien gods are an abomination and will concentrate all their energy on destroying your party cleric.
- 6 They believe it is blasphemous to use anything that is not stolen. Their equipment, homes, mounts and mates are all stolen.
- 7 They believe that if they are seen by anyone older than them they'll be owned by them in the afterlife.
- 8 They believe the first attack must always be a bite. They sharpen their teeth.
- 9 They believe animals are wiser than men and swarm around any foe their warbeasts attack.
- 10 They believe that heaven is contained inside an anonymous rock hidden somewhere on the planet.

d10 THE TRIBE'S LEADER:

- 1 S/he is hideous and clothed in shadow.
- 2 S/he has worms in his/her head.
- 3 S/he has a hump like a camel, filled with jewels.
- 4 S/he owes a PC a single favor.
- 5 His/her fingernails are nine feet long.
- 6 S/he is a a ogre or hag.
- 7 S/he hopes to wage war against the moon.
- 8 S/he is supple as sin. I have no idea what that means but George RR Martin made millions writing like that so let's assume it means something. Like: s/he is a contortionist and able to twist his/her body into the shapes of the 32 symbols of The Divine.
- 9 S/he is drunk and silly but has a voice like an avalanche.
- 10 S/he is, secretly, at the center of all events in the campaign.

d20 THEIR VICIOUS BESTIAL TOTEMS:

- 1 Their totem is the locust. They gibber and swarm
- 2 Their totem is the maggot. They revel in ignorance.
- 3 Their totem is the jackal. They belong to treachery.
- 4 Their totem is the crocodile. They are patient, they are swift.
- 5 Their totem is the crow. They seek the poison tree.
- 6 Their totem is the stag. They drink from rivers.
- 7 Their totem is the hog. They wallow and they wail.
- 8 Their totem is the serpent. They are old.
- 9 Their totem is a nine-pound hammer. They bash and bruise and boast.
- 10 Their totem is the scorpion. They live in solitude.
- 11 Their totem is the toad. Their lives are moist and dull.
- 12 Their totem is the centipede. They form a long lean line.
- 13 Their totem is a basking lizard. They dine on dogs and wine.
- 14 Their totem is a pterodactyl. They come from out of time.
- 15 Their totem is a broken shackle. They were once a lower caste.
- 16 Their totem is the whiteblack leopard. They move in darkness.
- 17 Their totem is the wolf. They harry and howl.
- 18 Their totem is the mutant rat. They speak in whispers.
- 19 Their totem is the salamander, They will burn you.
- 20 Their totem is the fivefold tiger. There are no children among them.

d10 THE TRIBE'S MOST SACRED AND VILE OBJECT OF REVERENCE:

- 1 A powder with unusual properties.
- 2 Yak butter. A mound of it.
- 3 Your tears and those of many foes. In a great urn.
- 4 A sacred bastard named Choard.
- 5 The clothes once worn by earless elves.
- 6 A pitchfork.
- 7 The spines on the back of a red reptile, dreaming of war for a thousand moons.
- 8 The night, silence, quiet, stillness and stone.
- 9 A fat, four-footed weasel carved of lard, smothered in bees.
- 10 Severed fingers, kept in cloths.

d10 THE TWISTED SHAMANS THAT GUIDE THEM:

- 1 Atavistic, armed with acid, aided by asps.
- 2 Belligerent, bony, bedecked with baubles. Breathes bats.
- 3 A crazed and crooked crone. Covered in clusters of candles.
- 4 A devious dervish. Dominates demons with a dazzling dance.
- 5 An eight-eyed exotic. An eater of eldritch energies. Engages in echolocation.
- 6 A fat faction of fleshy flagellants.
- 7 A glossy gadfly. Guarded by ghosts.
- 8 A hebephrenic harlot. Housed in a hexagon.
- 9 An idiot and an incunabulist.
- 10 A jovial juvenile in a jewelled jerkin.



Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

Dear Secret Santicore—

Alternative randomly generated strongholds to encounter in wilderness hexcrawls (or for setting design). This would require some way to determine who the stronghold ruler is (class or monster type), who or what their primary henchmen or allies are, and what other soldiers or resources they can call on, and what kind of stronghold they have. Thanks!

B.

There is a 20% chance that the stronghold is still under construction or being added to in some way.

Most people in a stronghold in the middle of the wilderness will demand a toll for passing through their lands. Call it 500-1500gp. 90% of strongholds will demand such a toll (if the 90% is rolled and a clerical type is in charge, the toll will instead be a tithe of 10% of all gold/gems owned by the players).

Wizardly types may attempt to control parties that cross their lands with geas spells and the like, and send them after magical artifacts.

STRONGHOLDS IN THE WILDERNESS

by Adam Watts

bookwyrms.adam@gmail.com

d20 STRONGHOLD RULER:

- 1 Noble of nearest kingdom/empire/nation-state/whatever.
- 2 Noble of furthest away kingdom/empire/nation-state/whatever.
- 3 Former adventurer, high level, settling down to rule his tiny domain (Roll 1d4: 1 Fighter, 2 Rogue, 3 Cleric, 4 Class of the last character you played)
- 4 Insane wizard.
- 5 Priest of pacifist religion. Will avoid fighting at all costs.
- 6 High Priest of All that is Evil.
- 7 Young child. Roll a random die: even, the child is ruling on his/her own, odd, roll again on this table to see who the regent is.
- 8 Warlord. Possibly a Viking.
- 9 Democracy of some kind.
- 10 Huge-ass dragon. The throne room has an open roof so it can fly in and out.
- 11 Lich.
- 12 Abbot or other head of a militant religious order based in the stronghold.
- 13 Mercenary commander. This is the headquarters of his private army.
- 14 Strange man speaking a different language, worshiped as a god by all who live in the area.
- 15 Necromancer.
- 16 King of Ogres.
- 17 Vampire Lord.
- 18 Queen of Fae, or some other weird LSD-trip creature.
- 19 Mad scientist/artificer.
- 20 Roll twice more on this table. The first roll you get is the visible ruler of the stronghold, who is secretly controlled by the guy from your second roll. Man-behind-the-man situation.

d20	TYPE OF STRONGHOLD:
1	Motte-and-bailey. Wood keep on a manmade hill, surrounded by a wooden palisade and a ditch. Nothing special.
2	Lonely tower.
3	Stone keep. Very defensible, stone outer wall, outbuildings, maybe a small town surrounding it.
4	Underground complex. Topside entrance is small and nondescript, like a wood hut or something.
5	Concentric castle. Might have a keep, the main point of a concentric castle is the two sets of walls. The inner wall is high and thick, with turrets at even intervals; the outer wall is just as thick, but lower. The idea is that archers on the inner wall can still hit people approaching the outer wall, so you've got two sets of archers shooting at everyone. God help you if you get stuck between the two walls—they call that area the killing field, and the name is apt.
6	Stronghold is just a bunch of normal buildings, but the crazy powerful magic wards serve to keep most enemies away.
7	Island. Either in the middle of a river or a lake or something. Due to the walls and cliffs, the only way to access it is by one dock, which is heavily defended.
8	Pyramid. Built by an ancient civilization, or by the current occupants? You decide.
9	Fortified monastery.
10	Viking-style hall.
11	Spiky citadel of doom. Cliched Gothic-evil stuff everywhere.
12	Hollowed-out carcass of a giant animal.
13	Naturally defensible; cliff, pass through the mountains, whatever. Existing fortifications are minimal, and mostly serve as shelter; it's hard to improve on a natural position this good.
14	Simple wooden palisade, with temporary shelter set up inside.
15	Star fort (outer walls arranged in a star-like formation, to allow different walls to cover each other and prevent enemy sappers from undermining the wall). These forts existed during the age of gunpowder, and were designed for that sort of warfare; thus, if your world has gunpowder, the guys manning this fort most likely have cannons.
16	Cathedral. Most defenses are of the holy variety—things to drive back evil spirits and whatnot. Some minor physical fortifications.
17	Fortified village. Earth-and-wood wall surrounds the place, gates are locked at night against that which lurks in the dark.
18	Couple of blockhouses connected by stone walls, armed with artillery of some kind—catapults, cannons, ballista, whatever.
19	Crazy long wall blocking off access to some geographic feature (forest, mountain, country, etc).
20	Fortified wayhouse, with rooms and food.

d20	STRONGHOLD WEIRDNESS:
Roll on this chart to add weirdness. For a low-magic setting, maybe 10% of the time; for a weirder setting, maybe 80% of the time. You choose whether to use this chart or not.	
1	Made out of some incongruous material—ice, coral, glass, solid cloud, living flesh, etc.
2	Only exists at night.
3	Suffused with an unearthly light. All who view the stronghold must make a will save or become entranced by the light.
4	Fae-touched. The rules of reality here follow storybook logic rather than physics.
5	Everyone in the stronghold is conspiring against everyone else.
6	Everything implied by the rolls on all the other tables is the opposite of how it should be (heavy defenses are useless, kind priest is Lord High Evil, insane wizard is actually a decent guy, that sort of thing).
7	Every single corridor is trapped.
8	Stronghold is conscious.
9	Mobile.
10	Home to vast, cursed riches.
11	Normally deadly enemies (elves and orcs, for example) coexist (almost) peacefully in this stronghold.
12	Peaceful-happy-village-with-a-disturbing-secret-type-thing.
13	Someone here believes that the approach of the party fulfills some prophecy. Reacts with (roll a random die) even, hostility, odd, welcome.
14	Everyone except one guy is actually high-level assassins in disguise, waiting for the perfect moment to strike.
15	The gods walk these empty halls.
16	Terrorized by some sinister creature/serial killer.
17	Surrounded by perpetual storm.
18	Actually a disguised gateway into Hell.
19	Building materials taken from a petrified giant; the spirit of the giant is still kind of pissed about that, and hangs around haunting people.
20	Cursed. All who step within shall come to a deeply disturbing end.

d20 TYPE OF MINION:

Bear in mind that whatever is rolled on this table will most likely not be the only type of minion that the ruler of the stronghold will have. For example, a necromancer will probably have undead minions lying around, even if that is not rolled on this table. Use your own judgement. Why does the necromancer have standard chainmail-wearing grunts as the bulk of his forces? Is he trying to hide his black magic from his men? Or are the undead his elite hit squad? Something like that, you can figure it out I'm sure.

- 1 Chainmail-wearing, shortsword-slinging, crossbow-shooting mooks.
- 2 Gargoyles, golems, and other living statuary.
- 3 Undead. Skeletons, zombies, vampire spawn, whatever.
- 4 Monks, of the pacifist, scribing-illuminated-texts kind.
- 5 Monks, of the punchy kind.
- 6 Fanatically devoted cultists.
- 7 Bunch of mind-controlled dudes.
- 8 Samurai.
- 9 Minotaurs, satyrs, and other beastmen.
- 10 Cannibalistic mutants.
- 11 Anachronistically professional soldiers who take full advantage of magic and operate like modern day special forces.
- 12 Orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, or some other sort of generic evil humanoid.
- 13 Lizardfolk.
- 14 Appear to be ordinary, if expressionless humans, but if threatened will reveal they are actually automatons.
- 15 Knights. Lots of guys in heavy plate, with huge weapons.
- 16 Incongruously advanced troops—arquebusiers, or musketeers, or riflemen or something.
- 17 Ghosts.
- 18 Intelligent animals.
- 19 Animated furniture.
- 20 Identical copies of the fortress ruler, controlled by him directly.

d20 WHY THERE IS A STRONGHOLD HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE:

- 1 Mines. Gold, probably, but could be coal or iron or some other resource. Dunno why anyone would build a castle in the middle of the goddamn wilderness for anything less than gold, though.
- 2 Monsters! Stronghold constructed as a bastion against the goblin/skeleton/vampire/highlander hordes.

- 3 Old megadungeon-style ruins, excavated and explored by the stronghold residents; stronghold built to keep other adventurers away/defend against things coming out of the ruins.
- 4 Trade route. Caravans come through here all the time. Large transitory population around the castle, with all the criminal shenanigans that implies.
- 5 Every hundred years, on the full moon of the third month, a greater demon appears in this spot and will truthfully answer one question posed to it. The ruler of the stronghold is determined to be that questioner.
- 6 Religious location of some significance (death/burial place of a martyr or saint, location of an ascension to godhood, whatever).
- 7 No particular reason why the stronghold is here—the guy who built it just wanted a place to settle down, and chose the nearest spot with a decent view.
- 8 Kingdom/empire/protectorate/nation-state is trying to expand its borders. Ruler of the stronghold was given his authority by nearest civilized nation.
- 9 Built by an insane wizard. No logical reason needed. Stronghold is built in the weirdest location possible, given local terrain.
- 10 Important historical artifact was once kept here; artifact is still here, but no one cares about it anymore.
- 11 Was once the capitol of a vast empire, until the earthquake. The new tenants just moved in.
- 12 Some menace from underground (drow, goblins, demons, giant spiders, whatever) emerged from this location to assault the world of light. Stronghold was originally built over the tunnel entrance, to keep the menace contained.
- 13 Stronghold was built in the shape of an enormous magical rune by a past archmage, for purposes unknown.
- 14 Miscommunication led to the stronghold being built here, instead of somewhere important.
- 15 The most fertile land in a hundred miles can be found in the shadow of this stronghold. Fortress was built to control the land. Roll 1d4; land is 1 Still being farmed, 2 Completely overgrown, 3 Still farmed but maltreated and lifeless, 4 A blasted wasteland.
- 16 Outpost of some previously-unknown kingdom.
- 17 Stronghold originally built by refugees, fleeing some long-ago disaster.
- 18 Extremely militant organization is using the area as a staging ground to plan its invasion of everywhere.
- 19 Stronghold is an obvious ruin, rebuilt by the current occupants.
- 20 Prophet had a dream that told him to build the stronghold here.

MONSTER DUNGEON ADVENTURE GENERATOR

by Stuart Burns
burns.sg@gmail.com

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a three column, d20 chart of one-monster dungeon/adventure ideas. (so you can either roll it once and read across, or roll three times to further randomize,

Thanks!

A.

My thoughts are that you do not always want the same kind of adventure; sometimes you want to search for a mysterious artefact, sometimes you want a castle to infiltrate, so having some choice over this should help you generate the adventure you want. (Also, some of the “doing” descriptions break down when applied across adventure types.)

The four adventure types I roughly divided them into are items (quests involving some kind of artefact), Character (adventures involving some other person), Locations (journeys to or in a place) and abstract (poorly defined ideas which do not fit into other categories). If you don’t want to decide and want to maintain the random aspect of the adventure generator, use the Adventure Table:

d20 ADVENTURE TABLE...

1-6	Item
7-12	Character
13-18	Location
19-20	Abstract

In addition, the monsters and creatures which form the beginning of the adventure have been divided into four categories. You may want to decide upon a type of monster more suited to your adventure, and if so you can roll on the Monster Table below. They have been divided into; intelligent creatures, horror monsters, dumb beasts and other/mixed. There’s also a Swarm Table that is used a few times:

d20 MONSTER TABLE...

1-6	Intelligent Creatures
7-12	Horror Monster
13-18	Dumb Beasts
19-20	Other/Mixed

d20 SWARM TABLE...

1-4	Rats
5-8	Flying insects
9-12	Birds
13-16	Crawling insects
17-20	Lizards

I have attempted to allow you some flexibility with this, so you can roll on the Adventure Table and generate your adventure using this. You can also roll on the Monster Table to decide your monster and then continue generating your adventure using column 1. Or, finally, you can pick and choose which columns to use based on personal preference.

I hope I have thought of everything, but if not it should be fairly easy to modify it to your own personal preferences. Don’t like dumb beasts to lead your journey? Think the character driven quests sound a bit silly? Chuck em, and use the bits that appeal to you.

Enjoy, and have a Merry Christmas!

MONSTER DUNGEON ADVENTURE GENERATOR

d20	INTELLIGENT CREATURE	DOING...	ITEM
1	Golem	Powered by	Blood red ruby
2	Imp	Stealing	Indestructible tea pot
3	Phoenix	Burning	Evidence
4	Goblin	Sneaking towards	Box of insects
5	Vampire	Crafting	Fizzing potion
6	Lizardman	Entranced by	Polished cube of obsidian
7	Wyrmling	Guarding	Gold plated machinery
8	Animated suit of armour	Trapped within	Grimacing wooden figurine
9	Great Eagle	Who has eaten	Glowing orb
10	Troll	Sleeping on	Enchanted key
11	Kobold	Luring adventurers with	Bird cage
12	Ghoul	Fleeing from	Large steel symbol
13	Demon	Summoned with	Magic circle
14	Harpy	Bewitched by	Tapestry
15	Satyr	Singing about	Beech whistle
16	Dryad	Magically bound to	Jewelled potted plant
17	Drow	Cursing	Leather Bound Tome
18	Dwarf	Questing for	Ancestral sword
19	Fairy	Who has stolen	Cursed ring
20	Homunculus	Destroying	Noble's clothing

d20	HORROR MONSTER	DOING...	CHARACTER
1	Zombie	Harrasing	Foppish Noble
2	Ghoul	Preying on	Lost Child
3	Werewolf	Hunting	Older Sister
4	Vampire	Hired by	Corpulent Merchant
5	Flesh Golem	Summoned by	Novice Wizard
6	Skeleton	Bothering	Younger Brother
7	Skinless Man	Vengeful towards	Mad Scientist
8	Mummy	Awakened by	Lonely Vagrant
9	Tentacled Horror	Watching	Wild-eyed drunk
10	Sentient Swarm of (roll swarm)	Discovered by	Muddy farmer
11	Ghost	Haunting	Greasy Engineer
12	Wight	Fleeing	Pious Priest
13	Giant Praying Mantis	Feasting on	Grieving Widow
14	Man with a fly head	Conversing with	Estranged spouse
15	Amalgam beast (roll 2x and mix)	Luring	Enthusiastic Horsemaster
16	Ancient Necromancer	Blackmailing	Elderly relatives
17	Swamp Thing	Entranced by	Beautiful woman
18	Child with unnatural powers	Controlling	Hungry Labourer
19	Scissor Man	Maiming	Tearful Leper
20	Carnivorous Pig	Serving	Hunky Man

MONSTER DUNGEON ADVENTURE GENERATOR

d20	DUMB BEAST	DOING...	LOCATION
1	Swarm of (roll swarm)	Infesting	Castle ruins
2	Tusked Pig	Prowling	Hilly countryside
3	Brown Bear	Watching	Sparce forest
4	Friendly Dog	Sleeping in	Squat cottage
5	Giant Rat	Guarding	Slave pits
6	Riding Horse	Tied in	Bony tomb
7	Lost Goat	Roaming	Moors
8	Pheasant	Hiding in	Crypt
9	Tree Squid	Guarding	Tropical rainforest
10	Inquisitive Squirrel	Exploring	Dried up river bed
11	Poisonous Frogs	Roasting by	Lake of lava
12	Armoured Rhino	Charging about	Bubbling brook
13	Eagle	Lurking	Wooden fortress
14	Wolf	Trapped in	Huge farm
15	Reroll Dumb beasts, theres a whole pack!	Lost in	Catacombs
16	Cougar	Prowling	Looming manor
17	Flying Shark	Blindly wandering	Spooky house
18	Venomous Snake	Placed in	Snowy mountaintop
19	Vultures	Circling	Fresh battlefield
20	rabid Badger	Raiding	Bustling town

d20	OTHER/MIXED	DOING...	ABSTRACT
1	Evil Twin	Hunting	Peace
2	Ochre Jelly	Looking for	Love
3	Roll on the Int. Creature	Despairing for	Storm
4	Roll on the Horror Monster	Hurting	Itself
5	Roll on the Dumb Beasts	Empowered by	Radiation
6	Elemental	Weeping for	Unrequited love
7	Child trapped in (Horror Monster) body	Playing with	A good memory
8	Parallel Universe adv. party	Thinking about	Usurping
9	Black Bear	Bearing	Unbearable burden
10	Mechanical Being	Abandoned by	Father figure
11	Talking spell book	Fighting for	Hope
12	Waif	Carrying	Deadly disease
13	A talking (Roll Dumb Beast)	Seeking	Validation
14	Cat-burglar	Stealing	A good memory
15	Death	Heralded by	Ominous wind
16	Writer	Searching for	Inspiration
17	Gnome	Transporting	Nostalgic flavour
18	Music	Haunting	Soul
19	Mysterious Fog	Removing	Signs of life
20	Manticore with festive headgear	Giving	Gifts

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a list (at least five) of drugs
(magical or not) of dnd-esque fantasy city
(more vornheim less historically accurate for
actual medieval Europe).

Thanks!

A.

SEVEN POISONS OF THE CITY

by Dylan Atkinson

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Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

NOTE: most of these don't get a save because they're self-administered – the character is literally “drinking the kool-aid”. Exceptions are discussed individually. Numbers, where necessary, are given for LL and Pathfinder.

'Oid

This one's inspired by “krokodil”, which I hear is all the rage in Russia these days.

COST: 1d10 copper per use

DURATION: half an hour of twitchy insectoid aggression

Made from the vital organs and fluids of various sentient creatures, 'Oid gradually transforms you into another humanoid creature. It's easy to manufacture by any alchemist who knows the recipe. The range of ingredients is quite versatile, and lower-quality product can be made by substituting human organs or slightly less than fresh ingredients. For every week of recreational use (at least one dosage per day), roll a transformation:

d8 BODY PART TABLE

1	face
2	eyes
3	skin
4	arms
5	legs
6	torso
7	tail (if applicable, otherwise torso)
8	genitalia

What kind of creature does the user start changing into? Roll on your region's random encounter table, or a random page of the monstrous manual – read down the entries until you find one for a humanoid (or not, depending on your game's level of cruelty and weirdness).

This can lead to slums full of sub-human Broken One-looking addicts, a mishmash of orc arms, merfolk gills, elf legs, gnoll heads, etc – or more pitiful and terrifying freaks (ochre jelly “legs”, owlbear face, shark flippers for arms). The effects are not reversible except with polymorph or equivalent magic – this is the creature's new and permanent body.

DOMINATOR

“Buncha slack-jawed faggots around here! This stuff'll make you a god-damn sexual ty-rannosaurus! Just like me.” – Jessie Ventura, Predator

COST: 2d20 copper per use

DURATION: 1 hour of testosterone rage and hormonal lust

This vile-tasting magical brew grants a man extreme potency for an hour – during this time nothing short of extreme HP loss or poisoning will hamper his bedroom performance, regardless of advanced age or other factors. It also increases his aggression and sexual desire, and he'll do his level best to nail anyone suitable, regardless of the consequences later (the high priestess of the local temple, the princess you rescued, etc).

The side effects of Dominator last for 24 hours after use, leaving the member so swollen and sensitive that wearing armour or tight clothing around the groin is extremely painful, causing –4 on initiative and attack rolls, and any skill checks that include an armor check penalty.

WATER OF COMMUNION

“What are you, an idiot? God was fucking with you!” – Bill Hicks

COST: 2 silver per use

DURATION: four to eight hours of mumblings about “spaces... that are... not spaces”

Many drug users are convinced that, while high, they experience the divine; this substance leaves little room for doubt. The beings contacted are not always friendly or helpful. I probably don't have to say it, but this is a great way to usher in an alignment change, start on the path to infernal wizardry, or convert to a new (much scarier) religion.

I use simplified rules for Contact Other Plane. The user is limited to ONE question. Some users might not know they even get a question (first timers, chumps, recreational users, etc). If this is the case, the answer should pertain to something the user has considered recently. It could be “How do we pass that trap on level 4?” as easily as “what's for dinner?”.

Whenever someone uses the Water, roll on both tables:

d6 ANSWER:

- 1 Entity contacted knows the answer and replies truthfully, but in images and metaphors.
- 2 Knows the answer and lies.
- 3+ Doesn't know the answer, may make something up or just not respond.

d6 INSANITY:

- 1-2 No adverse effects.
- 3-5 Insanity for 1d6 weeks, as in Contact Other Plane.
- 6 Possession! Save vs. spells (or Will DC 20+) or in thrall of otherworldly entities. Remove Curse or more powerful spell to cure, if your friends find out before it's too late...

SOULSIGHT

"Your denial is beneath you, and thanks to the use of hallucinogenic drugs, I see through you." - Bill Hicks

COST: 1d6 silver per use

DURATION: 30 minutes. Side effects 1d6 hours of sweaty, tight-jawed fear

For thirty minutes, users can see into the astral plane with the help of this drug. Any non-spellcaster or normal will be stunned at the visions, and can only sit and stare incoherently. When this effect wears off, the side effects are even scarier. The user believes that they can see other beings' alignments, as the Know Alignment spell. What actually happens is they see everyone's alignment as the opposite of what it really is, on at least one axis. This causes intense paranoia as every shopkeeper, peasant and passerby is likely chaotic, maybe evil and out to get them.

When the drug wears off, the user might intellectually know that the side effects cause paranoia and fear, but their assessments of their neighbours' character will only disappear over long periods of time, and are reinforced with subsequent uses of the drug.

THE ORIGINAL WILD GARLIC MEMORY

COST: 5 gold per use

DURATION: 1d6 hours of green kaleidoscope hallucinations and tree-huggerism

Distilled by the Academy of Fruit from various rare herbs that grow only in their valley of endless summertime, this clear, foul-smelling tincture grants its user visions of ancient times, when only plants covered the world and animals hadn't yet crawled out of the sea. This grants the user a limited form of Speak With Plants. The user cannot speak with perfect fluency, and only basic ideas or questions can be communicated - like traveling to another country and skimming the phrasebook on the plane. Also, users have trouble interacting with other animals for this time, reducing fluency in their own languages to the same level.

ERASURE

COST: 1d6x10 gold per use

DURATION: 1d6 days of zombie servitude

SAVE: poison (or Fortitude DC 20). PCs can make a new save each day if you're feeling generous. Hirelings, peasants and other o-level redshirt types should only get one, or none.

This is a concoction made from grave dirt, the blood of a human sacrifice, herbs harvested from a crossroads at midnight and other such ingredients. Used by malicious priests and overlords to keep their servants docile and working beyond the limits of human endurance, and to create ready helpers for the blasphemous activities they indulge in.

Makes the user into a mindless automaton, easily dictated to by the first person met after dosing. He follows orders in any language he knows, to the best of his ability. He continues his tasks until they are completed, not stopping to eat or rest until collapsing. If ordered to do something obviously suicidal, another saving throw is possible. It's clear to any observer that an Erasure user is under some sort of control - the slackened face and awkward jerking movements will betray this immediately.

Creatures fighting under the influence of Erasure are less coordinated, but they don't feel pain and will fight on without fear regardless of bodily damage.

LABYRINTH LORD:

- 2 extra HD
- +2 to damage rolls, -2 to attack rolls
- Morale 12

PATHFINDER:

- +4 STR & CON
- -4 DEX
- does not become disabled below 0 HP, but still suffers bleeding damage every round until death at negative CON

When the effects wear off, the user will have vague and confused memories of what happened - perhaps writing off the experience as a bad dream or a night of heavy drinking. Long-term consumption of Erasure has powerful side effects however. For every subsequent time the drug is taken, the saving throw incurs a -1 penalty (I would bump this to -2 in Pathfinder). When this would make it impossible to successfully save, the subject's personality has been so degraded that it's basically gone - leaving him a hopeless thrall of whoever administered the powder.

KEY 17

COST: 1d6+6x10 gold per use

DURATION: 1d4 hours

SAVE: poison (or Fortitude DC 25)

This one is originally from my favorite comic book. Also called "the word-drug", this magical poison (which some believe is an invasion of the material plane by an outsider composed of pure language) causes those who take it to see, instead of words, the objects they describe. For example: An interrogator injects his prisoner with Key 17 and then shows him a sign which reads "your loved ones, held hostage," informing him they'll be killed if he doesn't cooperate.

The possibilities are endless, but it could quite easily swing your game into hallucinogenic visionquests or terrible powergaming, so use it wisely.

Dear Secret Santicore—

Could you dream up some unique artifacts—weapons, crowns, rings, bits of really cool yarn, whatever—that could either be hunted for by the PCs as treasure or could play into the rumors, events, and adventure plots in my world of Evenoria? That would be really groovy.

Happy Crisp-mits!

G.

LEGENDARY ARTIFACTS OF EVENORIA

by Valerio De Camillis
worthstream@gmail.com

MORANYA'S SILVER BOW

This silver bow is made in the image of the one carried by the goddess of change and love. Thrice per day the wielder may instill a strong loyalty, friendship or love in any creature stuck by an arrow fired from this bow. This feeling may be directed toward any other creature present at that moment including the wielder and will last indefinitely or until the target is given reason to change his mind. Mercenaries will be loyal until treated badly, friendship will last until betrayed, and so on.

The other major power of the bow can be used once on the last and first day of the week, month or season, the bow can change any prominent feature of anyone or anything. It can only change major characteristics but there's almost no limit otherwise. It can change a man into a woman, anything broken into brand new, old living creatures into their young selves, can create bright daylight in pitch black cave, and so on. These changes are subject to the normal law of physics (scalding hot water in the middle of an icy lake will soon cool off) and are tied to the cycle of the seasons, and will revert in the next equinox or solstice.

PEREUN'S GOLDEN GRINDSTONE

In the heart of the vast underground kingdom of the dwarves it is rumored that a few of these grindstones are kept. The stone is made of solid gold and must be covered in fine gold dust to work its magic, a new coating of gold will need to be applied for every weapon it sharpens. Weapon sharpened with this grindstone will always keep the edge (+20% damage, round up), will be able to cut through heavy armor like butter (halve armor bonus to defense, but not dexterity or agility related ones).

CARD OF THE THIEF

Khloantya, the goddess of magic, the moon and hidden knowledge bestowed this gift to the mankind, to allow the discovery of hidden knowledge in a quite unusual way. Every time this card is used, by touching it and wishing for its powers, an human sized creature can hide everywhere. S/he will be completely undetectable, even to spells and magic items that

grant the power of seeing the invisible, since it is effectively out of sight of anyone looking for him/her. The hiding place can be something that will never have worked without the magic of the card. Under a table or a carpet, behind a door, behind a stone as small as a pebble or the handle of a broomstick, everything will give complete cover as long as the user remains still. The effect is cancelled as soon as the user starts walking again, and is otherwise unlimited, giving the user as long as s/he wants to wait for the perfect time to come out of hiding (the guard patrol walk past, the secret meeting he's eavesdropping finishes, and so on).

Every use of the card drains one charge and it can store a maximum of ten. If the card is left under the sky and unseen for an entire night of full moon it will recharge seven uses. It must be left directly under the open sky, a window in a room will not suffice and no living (or unliving, magically animated, etc) being can look at it for the entire night. Of course there is the risk of the card being stolen while left in the open like this, and it looks like the chances of this happening are higher than they should be, as if the card itself wants to be stolen.

BLACK HORSEMAN'S ICE SWORD

This sword is made from an icicle sharpened to a cutting edge then blessed with a fragment of the essence of the black horsemen himself. It is sharp like the finest weapon and has a great damage bonus for the extreme coldness. Any target struck that is not slain from the damage or the cold immediately saves as if aged to three times its natural age. Note the target does not actually become older, but must simply save as if it was. Twice per the day sword may be used to actually and permanently age all living beings excluding the wielder in a fifty meters radius. This effect instantly adds ten years to any human in the area of effect, and proportionately more to creatures with longer life spans. It can add centuries to a dragon! Any effect of aging must be checked immediately.

NATURE'S ORB

An orb that appear as a ball of wrapped leaves that can never be successfully unwrapped. It emits a faint green light from within. Anyone in possession of the orb, even if not actually touching it gains three reroll per day on any check that is in any way related to the improvement of the wilderness. Examples are a to-hit or damage roll against any creatures that is destroying forests or polluting rivers, convincing a city leader to plant new forest to replace the one the lumberjacks are cutting down, loyalty checks for followers when facing the hardship of building a "green" outpost that does not destroy the surrounding land, and so on.

RED FLAG OF FLEEING

A red flag with a gold, laurel-crowned king's head upon it. Every ship waving this flag will always sail just fast enough to escape any pursuers. No matter how fast the pursuing ship is, this flag will speed up its ship to be faster, thus avoiding any contact. This effect will work even against sea monsters or flying creatures; absolutely no one can reach the ship without the captain's approval. The flag is rumored to be lost somewhere in the Sea of Kelos, guarded by a crew of olive-skinned and dark-haired sailors.

ANCIENT TABLET

This tablet is one of the last relics of the ancient civilization that once inhabited the island. It is sentient and infinitely intelligent, and can perceive anything in a 20 meter sphere around it. For all purposes treat this as a computer with infinite processing power or an infinitely intelligent being. For example, while it can not read minds, it can accurately model the psychology of anyone in its sensor range. While it can not predict the future, it can create a surprisingly accurate model of everything that has ever been in sensor range, and determine the most probable outcome of future events. While it is not clairvoyant it can extrapolate general architectural principles from the first few rooms in a dungeon and use them to infer what the rest of the layout could be and where treasure and creatures will most probably be. On the other hand, while it has access to all of this information it can only communicate with the outside via a very limited form of telepathy. The tablet can show anyone holding or looking at it an image of a location, as if it is showing a map with a red X. This mental map, like real ones, will be more accurate the smaller area it covers, the nearest the intended destination is to the tablet's current location.

The purpose of the tablet is the rebuilding of the ancient civilization that built it. It will help anyone that is working to this goal, even if unknowingly. It will try to influence the behavior of the owner, using the natural tendency of adventurers to follow every clue that points to possible treasures or interesting locations. It will at first show the location of interesting treasure caches, then once the owners are used to following its advice it will show ancient ruins than need rebuilding, and the means of rebuilding them (stone quarries, repairable automatons programmed with the rebuilding task, and so on).

FLAIL OF THE CHAIN DEMON

This is a flail made from barbed chains in a black metal, infused with a demon's soul. Any target struck by the flail must save or be bound by chains and constricted for some continuous damage. Once per combat the wielder can summon an eruption of tentacle-like chains that whirl around a target square (or hex), attacking everyone in the adjacent squares (or hexes) as a creature of the same level as the caster. Every creature struck by these chains must save or be bound and constricted as if stuck by the flail itself.

TYPHUS MONSTER MATRIX

This room sized pit is made of a black metal engraved with several multi-headed hydras, the symbol of Typhus, The Father of All Monsters. The pit will decompose and absorb every corpse thrown in it in a matter of minutes. Even bones and scales are dissolved by the powerful magic of the pit and disappear in the walls. Living beings that fall inside are slowly drained of life and will die within a day (save vs. death every hour, with a cumulative -1). The mass of creatures absorbed this way is stored in the matrix and can not be retrieved in any way.

In the nights of full moon, sacred to Typhus, the pit will create new monsters using what it drained in the previous month. It will reassemble muscles and skin, scales and organs in seemingly random monsters, with no resemblance to the corpses used in the process. Any creature or group of creatures can be created according to the will of Typhus (that is indistinguishable from pure random for mere mortals, so roll on your favorite encounter table). The only limitation is that the sum of the weights of the creatures created can never be higher than the weight that was absorbed, as all the new spawn are made from the same flesh of the sacrifices. Creatures born this way are free willed, but usually friendly to whoever did feed the pit (cultist or evil heroes?).

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a table of 50 Bizarre and Eclectic Urban Locations. One sentence for each is enough. Fantasy genre, please. Gongo is fine, or simulationary or whatever my Santicore wants to do, really. They don't have to fit together or relate in any way.

Thanks!

S.

FIFTY BIZARRE & ECLECTIC URBAN LOCATIONS

by Chris Weller
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d100 LOCATION

- 01-02 This puppet show will lampoon the last adventure the players were on. If investigated, there are no puppeteers back there.
- 03-04 The winner of this alleyway boxing contest gets the gold *and* the championship belt (a girdle of gender-change). Previous champs revert to their previous gender after twelve hours.
- 05-06 Ivy square is covered with sentient ivy, which can detect elves, which it likes to eat.
- 07-08 A gold coin lies in the middle of Farfield road. It weighs ten tons.
- 09-10 In the Chapel of the Exalted Philosopher, guest priests from various religions shout fire and brimstone sermons over the congregation's peels of laughter. The congregation are reanimated dead (though you'd hardly notice unless close).
- 11-12 At the bottom of the Duke's private well is the severed head of THE Hydra. In repayment for its being severed, it has poisoned the water of the Duke's family for generations.
- 13-14 By ancient custom, if a debtor can lure his creditor into the Public Garden he is allowed to pay off his debt in blades of grass. (exchange rate 10 blades equals 1 silver).
- 15-16 A family of troglodytes lives in this run-down shack in the middle of a main thoroughfare. They and the townsfolk have been literally ignoring one another's existence for generations. To notice one another is a capital crime. (idea stolen from China Mieville)
- 17-18 The Laced Peacock Inn is run by people who always act like they are hiding something awful that just happened in the next room.
- 19-20 In the back alleys is the secretive Orphan's Court, where trials are held and harsh sentences passed by magistrates no older than 12.
- 21-22 The Seelie Market is where the fabulously wealthy send their servants to shop. Local produce of average quality but impeccable 'magical' provenance cost in platinum what similar food cost in coppers at your average market.
- 23-24 Thieves like to lure the city watch to the Slippery Alley and drop rocks on them from above. The new 'Slippery Alley' is chosen nightly and the oil is poured at sunset.
- 25-26 Every Sunday at Painter's Court, artists hold full-contact portraiture competitions.
- 27-28 The Wildflower Field is a small cemetery in the old part of town. When buried here, the spirit of the deceased will grow a plant body out of grass and flowers.
- 29-30 The Hellgate Bridge crosses the river that splits the city into east and west. Anyone walking under it will fall in love with the first living creature they see on the opposite shore.
- 31-32 A small but eternal fire burns in a back alley. Only four can sit around it, but they are completely warm. Time stands still here.
- 33-34 There is a section of the old city wall that still stands. All soldiers who have died defending the city go to hell. If you listen to a crack in this wall, you can hear them.
- 35-36 The Bank of the Smilish will accept deposits and hold them for exactly one year. Interest is paid up front, as one secret whispered into your ear.
- 37-38 Prudhella's House is a ludicrously expensive brothel where sorceress/prostitutes use telepathic spells and illusions to enact their customer's deepest fantasies. For most locals, this experience is too disturbing for repeat business. Prudhella relies on tourists for business.
- 39-40 Foreign traders run the Wen Shen warehouse. The poor and oppressed can turn to them for food or medical help, in exchange for which they must train in strange grappling games.
- 41-42 The weathervane over the fountain at Premby Square points toward the nearest horde of gold (10,000 or more) no matter how far away.

FIFTY BIZZARE & ECLECTIC URBAN LOCATIONS

- 43-44 The soapbox at Central Market has the ability to make 20 people believe anything you say for 10 minutes.
- 45-46 Once every seven years, the Beauty Tree buds a single flower. Eating it makes one very attractive and raises charisma d4+10 points (but only for those who are ugly and have a charisma under 7). The budding is so regular that it appears on many calendars. Where it is on the tree is not. By custom, no one may attempt to impede another's efforts to get to the base of the tree on sunrise that day.
- 47-48 The Charnel Grubhouse will happily dispose of the dead by putting the body in a large box of grubs. Bones are returned a week later. The owner will give you his guarantee that the dead will stay dead and the remains will be unidentifiable. Next door is the Wen Shen silk market.
- 49-50 The Wen Shen silk market sells silk, but no one knows where or how they weave it in the city (the Wool and Linen Guilds desperately want to know how silk is made). Those who sleep in Wen Shen silk dream the fates of the recently dead.
- 51-52 Bradmoor the physician will immerse you in a vat of crabs for up to a week. Heal at four times the normal rate.
- 53-54 Anyone ignoring the 'Do not sleep on the grass' posting at Turnhill Downs will be surprised to awaken in a cavern hundreds of feet below the city (none have returned).
- 55-56 The Good Feeling Well is a public well for the poor. Within twenty feet of it, one cannot help but feel at peace and optimistic about one's future. The Thorite Church wants it destroyed.
- 57-58 No one here has heard of a rhino, but you can pay a silver to ride Old Rebus "The unicorn".
- 59-60 The Hagfruit Tree in the center of the poor quarter bears fruit year round, meaning those willing and able to stomach it will never starve.
- 61-62 The Eunuchry of Saint Brigid will modify any willing male regardless of race or age.
- 63-64 If you touch any statue in Countess Morbella's statue garden, you must assume its place, while it gets to live again.
- 65-66 If you let the bees at Igor's Apiary cover your naked body, they will buzz to you the location of the nearest megadungeon.
- 67-68 Abraham's Curiosity Shoppe has absolutely nothing unusual on sale. Everything he has is common and for the usual price.
- 69-70 The Blessed Cheesemaker sells cheeses that put you in alignment with particular gods. You can completely pass as a believer of any religion for a day after consuming an ounce of the cheese.
- 71-72 There's a large wild goose called Black Bertie whose call sounds exactly like a woman screaming in distress. It likes to take out-of-town heroes on a... well, a goose chase.
- 73-74 The local merchant elite hold a Plumage Festival every year where they run naked through a square while their servants hold ostrich feathers.
- 75-76 Smithy the Smith created the gates to Burgomaster Flatho's manor. They draw many admirers not because they are exquisitely wrought, but because they taste like peppermint.
- 77-78 During a brief period of religious tolerance, the burning stake was uprooted and replaced with an ironwood tree. In the trunk and branches can be seen the clear and distinct likenesses of all who were burned on that spot. Efforts to burn or uproot the tree have proven fruitless.
- 79-80 If you visit the Snail Pits in the south quarter, you can bet on flail snail fights.
- 81-82 After drinking from the exclusive Fountain of Champions, you gain +1 to hit for the remainder of the day but will, for the next week, wet yourself at the beginning of every combat. (Only works once per person)
- 83-84 At the Stinking Mermaid, you can get a tattoo that will migrate about your body.
- 85-86 At the intersection of three alleys is 'Blind Corner.' Locals believe if you die here, Owrox the Soul Stealer cannot see you. The city's poor-but faithful tend to pile up here. The Charnel Grubhouse sends a wagon here every morning to clean up.
- 87-88 The Duke's Men operate a greenhouse where they grow and cross many foreign, exotic and dangerous plants.
- 89-90 The western quarter includes a steep hill, at the top of which is a small crypt. Three shrouded women walk up the hill every night and enter the crypt. No one ever sees them leave.
- 91-92 Northgate Pitch is gently sloped. Local aristocrats have created a 'Flight Club' where they test various contraptions in an attempt to fly from the top to the bottom. Their manservants operate some of the more dangerous ones.
- 93-94 Seelie (urban faeries) prefer to live among themselves. The local Seelie neighborhood is a giant wasp hive purchased from an eastern merchant. It hangs over the side of the upscale BearStraat Hotel.
- 95-96 The Duke's Gaol is an underground prison. Cells on the top level are covered by iron grates, so the public may humiliate their occupants.
- 97-98 If guided through the sewers by a knowledgeable urchin, you may be able to find The Nostril. A giant sleeps beneath the Eastern Quarter.
- 99-00 No one is sure who owns the House of Riddles. Legends tell of clever men entering the eastern door and exiting the western door with great riches. In the last sixty years, more than a hundred men have entered, never to leave.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a couple-of-encounters location with a Creepy Well. Not picky about system, genre, or setting.

Thanks!

S.

CREEPY WELLS

by Jason Kielbasa
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1 FAUNTLEROY'S IN THE WELL

PC's come upon a dog a ways away from a well. The dog will do whatever is in his powers to get their attention and follow him, bark, nip at their heels, act cute. His owner a young son of local nobility is trapped in a well. If the players can get him out soon enough and take him home they will be well rewarded. The boy was set up by a rival of his father.

NPCS

- Dog - Medium size 22 inches at shoulder 50lbs. Smart and understands commands.
- Boy in the well is named Fauntleroy. He is wearing a tattered pantsuit and cap. He will ask to be taken home and believes he was pushed in by a man or a ghost. When they have saved Fauntleroy the dog will follow close to him at all time acting on edge.
- 2 3rd level thieves or similar themed NPC. They will be hiding in the shadows behind the trees near the well. Hired by a rival of the boy's father they were attempting to assassinate his son and took cover when the party came near. If the PCs let down their guard, for instance not keep someone to watch their backs, they will attempt to flank and back stab the party. They will follow in the shadows until the boy has been taken safely home. If they are caught they will attempt to flee, if possible.

SETTING

A well on a back road near a keep. Close to the edge of the woods.



Maps by Jaz Gordon

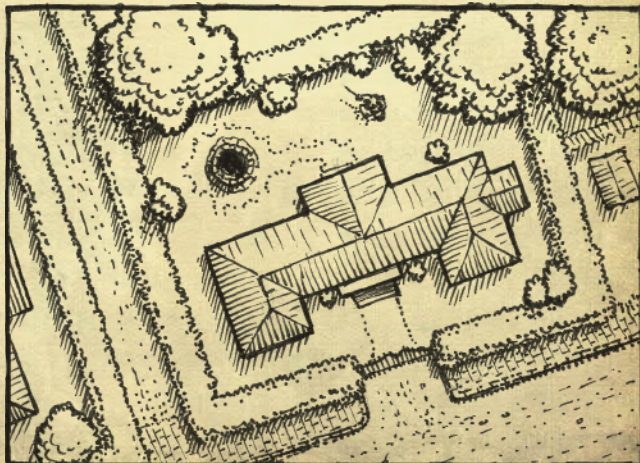
2 THE MERMAID

Mermaid in a well. Rumors are that an eccentric former adventurer, living in town, has a captured mermaid living in the well in the back section of his property. Why would he be doing that?

NPCS

- If approached and asked for her name the mermaid will respond that it is Azzella. Under all circumstances she will plead that the PCs rescue her from the well. That Cabbath the Mad imprisoned her and that she wishes to return to the sea, with one of the PCs as her mate. She does not know the length of time that she has been kept or why he would do such a thing to a defenseless mermaid. If they do not initially help her she will attempt to make eye contact with a PC. If she does she will cast Charm Person on this individual seeking to make them help her out of the well. If this fails and they are close enough she will then try and get the PCs to come closer and drag them into the well with her to eat.
- Cabbath the Mad is a former adventurer. If he notices PCs in his backyard he will attack them unannounced by crossbow. Cabbath initially stole the mermaid thinking she would make him a fine bride. 40 years later she sits in the well unwilling to submit to his advances.

SETTING



3 THE GOOD OIL

The PCs happen to meet an NPC in the local tavern who tells them of an elderly man who happens to be an alchemist and knows the formula to a power elixir. He can set up a meeting for them at a farm house just outside of town. He'll meet them at the well. The alchemist is a traveling snake oil salesman and the NPC is in on the con. The setting does not have to be specific just 2 NPCs trying to make a quick buck off the PCs. More sneaky then creepy but you can really play it up with a spooky salesman.

NPCS

- a) Creaky Dave former town drunk and all around sketchy character. Dave constantly shakes from ailments surrounding his former addictions. He will claim that "the elderly man" cured him of his problems and that he is someone who can be trusted. Dave stinks badly and has a bad case of the tremors. Dave will pass a note with a map showing the PCs where the "elderly man" is.
- b) The "elderly man" is a con artist who goes from town to town selling fake elixirs to the marks and leaves in the dead of the night. If viewed up close he appears to be in his mid70s w/ a flattened nose and a weather beaten face. His potions are filled w/ high proof alcohol that he passes off as potions of strength, intelligence or wisdom.

SETTING

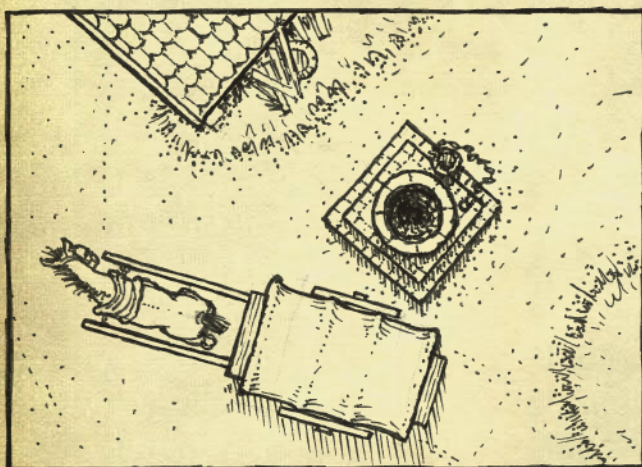


Illustration by Stuart Robertson

4 OTHER WELLS

- There is a well has the ability to answer on question about the future. It will only cost a human/demihuman sacrifice thrown into the well and one year of your life. It answers in the form of a haiku.
- Locals keep a wide birth of this well known as Trollsmoon, for it is said that this is the place which Trolls and other malicious fairy folk use to reach "the other realm."
- At midnight, every night, a ghost can be heard counting "1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9....NO!!!" She does this for 15 minutes and then goes into complete silence. On March 13th or whatever your equivalent is she is silent until 12:15 when she lets out a blood curdling scream as if she were killed. She has done this for centuries. No one who has interrupted her counting has been known to have lived.

Silence is observed at all times surrounding this well by the locals for fear of upsetting this disturbed spirit. It is said that if you can find and return her missing plate she will find peace in this world and go to the after world.

- The PCs meet up with a bumbling magic user who accidentally spills an animate the dead potion into a well. Everything that was once down there is now coming back—for revenge.

As this is non-game specific I will leave the monsters that bubble up from the depths up to you but I would advise turning them all into the skeletal version of the monster.

Dear Secret Santicore

I would like 20 interesting poisons pos might use
or have used on them.

Thanks

T.

GATHERING OF PLANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES

by Ara K.
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INTRODUCTION

This section of land had a name, people, and language of its own. Several ages have since past, only the landscape and broken pieces from that time remain. Many species of plants, highly valued for their medicinal and destructive powers, grow in this forsaken region. There is a demon haunted, sunken city rotting from within; gateways to other places if you know the words and offerings; an oracle trapped between worlds, paths where you can walk with the dead, find knowledge, water, or death; and a vast landscape hunted by unnatural creatures.



There is little in the way of typically treasure scattered about. The main rewards would be surviving, returning with plants, and perhaps gaining some knowledge. This sandbox sets up further exploration in the area.

This is more of a sandbox setting for gathering plants and conducting exploration. There is no living city in the area. Most likely the player characters crossed over the Revolving Mountains and dropped into this valley.

d6 RUMORS:

- 1 This valley has been cursed long ago. Pieces of a dead god are scattered about and should not be brought back together.
- 2 The oracle at Black Rocks is not quite human but she can see very far.
- 3 Some of the plants you are looking for only open at night and grow on the Paths of the Dead.
- 4 The dead in water around Broken Rubble rise at night and will hunt the living.
- 5 Several of the plants native to this area have different properties depending on which parts you use and how you prepare them.
- 6 Be well equipped with food, water, and light. There is nothing in this land.

BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS

AREA 1

Three large white domes jut out of the reach. Well worn paths cut into the soft stone to the tops. Deep blue water bubbles out from the opening in the top. Surrounding each opening are long blades of grass encrusted with a white powder. The only life in this area follows the the blue stream to the shallow lake to the south. If you are not from this land I would not drink the water here.

The blades of grass can be cut and processed with a mixture of indigo and sage. This produces a toxin that will turn the recipient blue followed by a slow decline in mental functions.

GATHERING OF PLANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES

Several khamsin make their home here. They are figures of swirling, hot wind filled with shards of crystal, coated grass. If you know the proper customs and words you will pass unharmed.

Each dome is a door to another world. The right offering opens the way.

AREA 2

Four uneven shaped sandstones jut out of the surrounding grasslands. Crossing through the sandstone compass will guide you to the Oracle at Water Between the Black Rocks. Standing in the stone circle what will you leave behind to see the Oracle?

The Sea of Grasses comes up to your shoulders. Near the ground grows a green plant with white fuzz. It is cool to the touch. In small doses it refreshes you bringing a slight coolness to your body. In larger doses a bitter chill then dries the skin causing it to crack open in a matter of minutes. A long time ago this plant spoke its name, Sun-eater it said.

AREA 3

If you crossed through the stones and left something behind Water Between Black Rocks opens for you. Otherwise you reach an immense wall of black rock worn smooth by wind and hand. It's a perilous climb up the waterfall and the water is ice cold. The oracle sits beside the pool that is a half day upstream from your climb.

This place is the hunting ground of several beasts. They grow from the rock. A mixture of reddish and black stone. They will pummel you with rocks, landslides, and foul words.

Near the oracle small plants with black leaves grow. At night the leaves unfurl to reveal dozens of tiny black seeds which are carried away by little birds. The smoke from the seeds will act as an irritant to most living things followed by a period of vivid hallucinations. You would need to be clever to find a way to capture this smoke...

AREA 4

The Plain of Jars is covered in large stone jars taller than a person. In the bottom of each jar a vine grows that carries a small, pink, bell shaped fruit to the sun. Every morning the vines creep up and then retreat by midday.

Titans of earth, stone, and wind haunt this region. What do you leave behind in the jars to provide safe passage?

The pink, bell shaped fruit when squeezed will produce a purple liquid. Handle it carefully. When it comes into contact with the skin you will suffer from violent muscle spasms that will tear you apart. It also has the side effect of shattering your mind.

AREA 5

The Paths of the Dead are paved with broken pots, weapons, and other offerings. The dead walk these paths. If you follow this path be prepared for knowledge and death. The dead will share what they know but at a price.

Along the path a vine-covered shrub grows. Long white flowers shaped like a tube grow from it. At night the tube opens to display a large flower with a dark interior. The flower if ingested it will let you speak with the dead and ask four questions, but you must leave something on the path. The roots if dried, ground, and placed in the eyes will bring rain but death follows shortly. The seed pods if crushed and placed in a drink will produce a great intoxication. To many then your breathe shortens and finally it leaves you all together.

AREA 6

Broken rubble, a sinking city made of sun baked mud. Bands of creatures in the shape of fat babies with no heads run on all fours. They make whimper noises like small children and then cackle when they sense prey. Where their head should be opens into a maw of teeth. Put them down fast and hope they don't call others.

In this area a plant grows with large (several hand spans) long leaves. These leaves are purple tinged and can be picked in the late summer. The leaves need to be dried and cured to use. The smoke from the leaves is poisonous. Inhaling it will make you feel giddy, heart racing, and you will agree to whatever is said next.

AREA 7

In the spring and summer this below ground circular structure is flooded. Four doorways lead out from the bottom but the water is filled to near the top of the ceiling. Where these go I do not know. Floating in the water are several species of plants. One in particular has a pale blue flower shaped like a cone. If the flower is powdered and injected the victim will die. After the unfortunate soul dies place two seeds from the flower in it's eyes. A night later a soulless corpse will rise bent on destruction. This is one of a few ways to bring back the dead.

There is a slight problem retrieving this plant. First it's at the bottom and second the water is teeming with flesh hungry corpses of animals and other things.

AREA 8

Deep in the forest lies a wide range of plants. Unfortunately the names disappeared with the People and the plants no longer speak to us. One vine in particular grows a red berry. Pick the leaves, berry, and bark. Dry and mix with water. Drink this. It will reveal what is ailing another person or what weakens them. But be warned death and madness might follow.

At the center of the woods you will realize that there is no center. This forest connects to all other forests. You will need the right words and ingest the correct plants to find the gateways.

A leviathan stalks the woods built ages ago. It bears a heavy burden and is constantly crushed by the weight it carries. The leviathan will sadly slay all who enter the woods. The leviathan can be killed but it rebuilds itself so it can never truly die.

AREA 9

Out on the dry plains rolling hills give way to the Revolving Mountains. Here on the rocks scattered about you can find a red moss. If it is dried and powdered a great sleeping poison can be made.

AREA 10

Only during the winter months when a thin sheet of ice forms, a lonely plant pokes up. In the evenings, a small translucent flower blooms. Catch this and pack it in ice. Wait one day then coat an iron weapon with the water and flower. This will make the weapon brittle. When you strike down a foe your weapon will shatter leaving pieces in your enemy. These pieces will burrow to the warmest part of that unfortunate soul. When this person dies their corpse will attract death wings who will breed in the still cooling body.

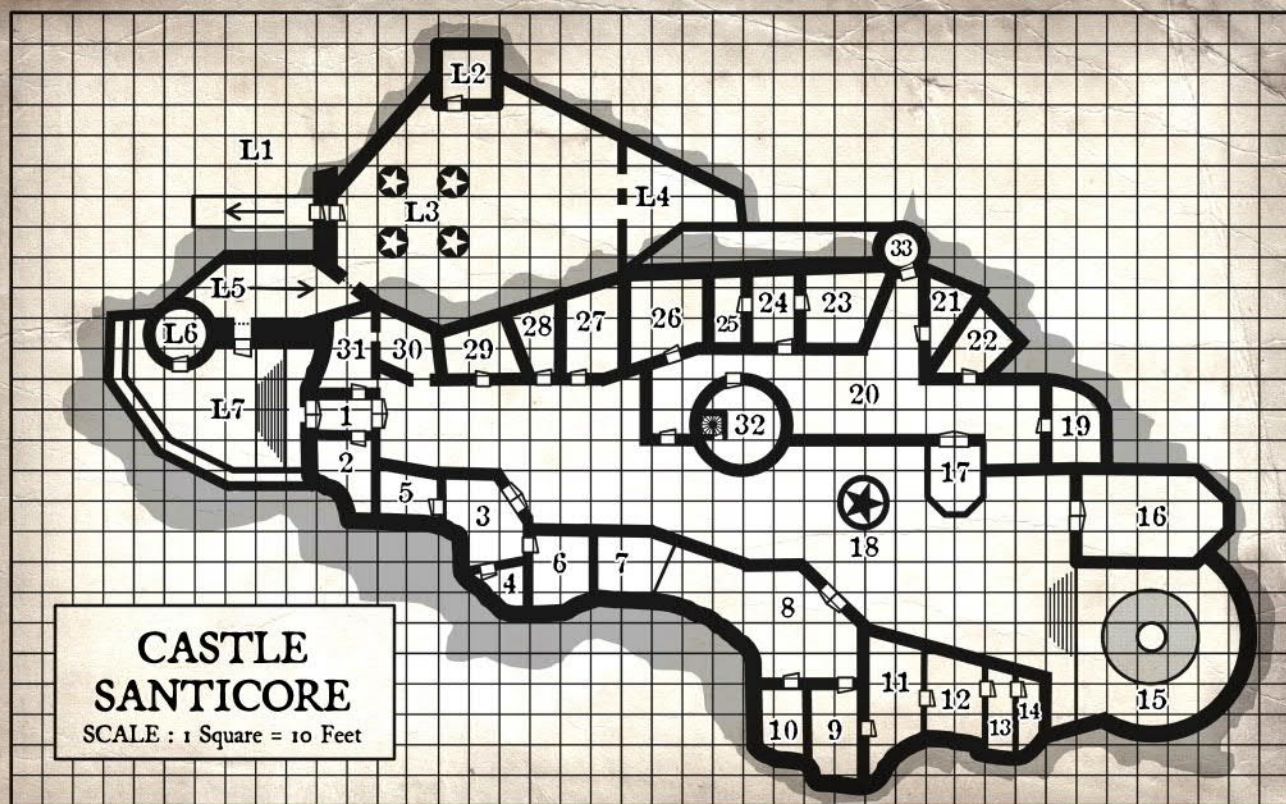
Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a map of a ruined castle. I am looking for something in the late Roman / early medieval style. Please include an accompanying key with brief descriptions of any noteworthy areas or rooms. Feel free to add and describe traps, hazards, puzzles, or items, but there shouldn't be any enemies or creatures included. The GM should be able to take this map and the descriptions and use it with whatever monsters and NPCs he chooses. Thanks!

R.

CASTLE SANTICORE

by Roger S. G. Sorolla
rogersebastian@gmail.com



Based on the upper keep of Spis Castle in Slovakia.

This castle is built on a sloping, table-like rocky outcrop. There are two lower courtyard areas (L1-L7) built several hundred years after the main castle rooms (1-31) to provide further defenses of the gate.

LOWER AREAS

L1: The entry ramp rises 6 feet to the level of the first courtyard, entering through dual doors heavily secured with bars anchored in the stone of the wall.

L2: SETTING SUN TOWER. A three-story square tower with stacked, straight staircases granting access to each of its three floors and the roof.

L3: WELCOME COURTYARD. This courtyard is surrounded by battlements which can be reached from the tower, L2. Four imposing statues greet the visitor.

L4: STABLE. This large, roofed area was built as a stable.

L5: MURDER COURTYARD. Portcullis gates control entry and exit to this steeply sloping courtyard, rising another 5 feet.

L6: TOWER OF RED LEAVES. A four-story round tower with a conical roof and access through curving staircases that leads up to an attic.

L7: SLATE COURTYARD. Two rows of battlements look southwest, and stairs rise a final 4 feet to the main gate.

MAIN CASTLE

After the sloping courtyards, the castle beyond the main gate is built on a flattened rocky plateau, with steep natural rock walls plunging 15 feet below the base of each castle walls. Except for towers and the gatehouse, all buildings have only a ground floor. The outer walls are topped with long battlements, one in the east and south and one in the north; they are separated by the chapel (16) and the gatehouse (1, 2, and 31). These battlements are reached from doors in the first floor of the gatehouse.

1: ENTRY HALL. Immense double doors lead to and from the entry hall of the gatehouse. The roof of this hall is battlemented and forms a mustering and staging area, flanked by the short towers (2 and 31).

2: EASTERN TOWER. The eastern tower of the gatehouse has two squat stories and is topped with a battlemented roof. Straight stairs lead between stories and the roof. Troops are usually quartered here.

3-6: GRAND GRIFFON SUITE. Quarters for the lord, his family, and guards.

7-8: FEASTING HALL. Area 7 is raised up 4 feet on a stone dais, and is where the lord and his closest retinue are seated.

9-14: KITCHEN AND SCULLERY. These rooms are a mixture of food storage, preparation, and servant living quarters.

15: GRAND FOUNTAIN. The fountain and its pool are the castle's source of water. The steps rise up some 5 feet to this higher level.

16: GREAT CHAPEL. Dedicated to the majority religion.

17: LESSER CHAPEL. This was built to accommodate adherents of a minority religion.

18: GRAND STATUE. The imposing figure commemorates the builder of the castle.

19: DORMITORY. This dormitory houses the priest and acolytes associated with the Great Chapel.

20: GARDEN COURT. Open to the sky, this walled area is planted with pleasant shrubs, herbs and flowers.

21: SENESCHAL'S CHAMBER. This room is set aside for the castle's seneschal and family.

22: CELEBRANT'S ROOM. These quarters house the lone celebrant of the Lesser Chapel, who is forced to share the room with the gardener.

23-25: THREE VIRTUES SUITE. At various times these well-appointed rooms have held honored guests, family of the castle lord, chaperoned maidens, or noble hostages.

26: CASTELLAN'S CHAMBER. Subdivided by brick walls in the past, this room is now the quarters of the castellan.

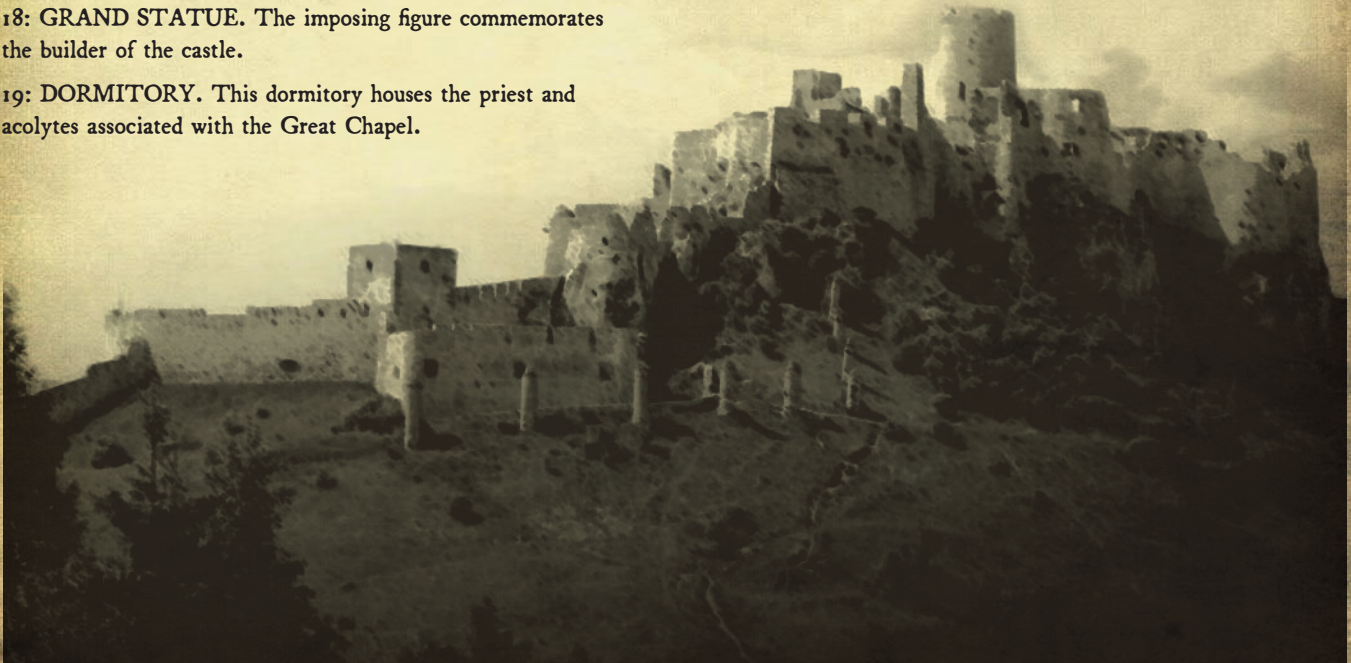
27-29: KNIGHT'S QUARTERS. These three rooms are quarters for the knights of the castle and their squires.

30: SMITHY. This is the castle smithy. In addition to the usual tools there is a forge and chimney.

31: ARTISAN'S TOWER. Wooden stairs connect the floors of this three-story tower. The Ground floor is connected to the smithy and a workshop for carpentry and leatherworking.

32: GRAND TOWER. This thick tower has four stories, topped by an exercise floor. A walled-off spiral stair extends to the top.

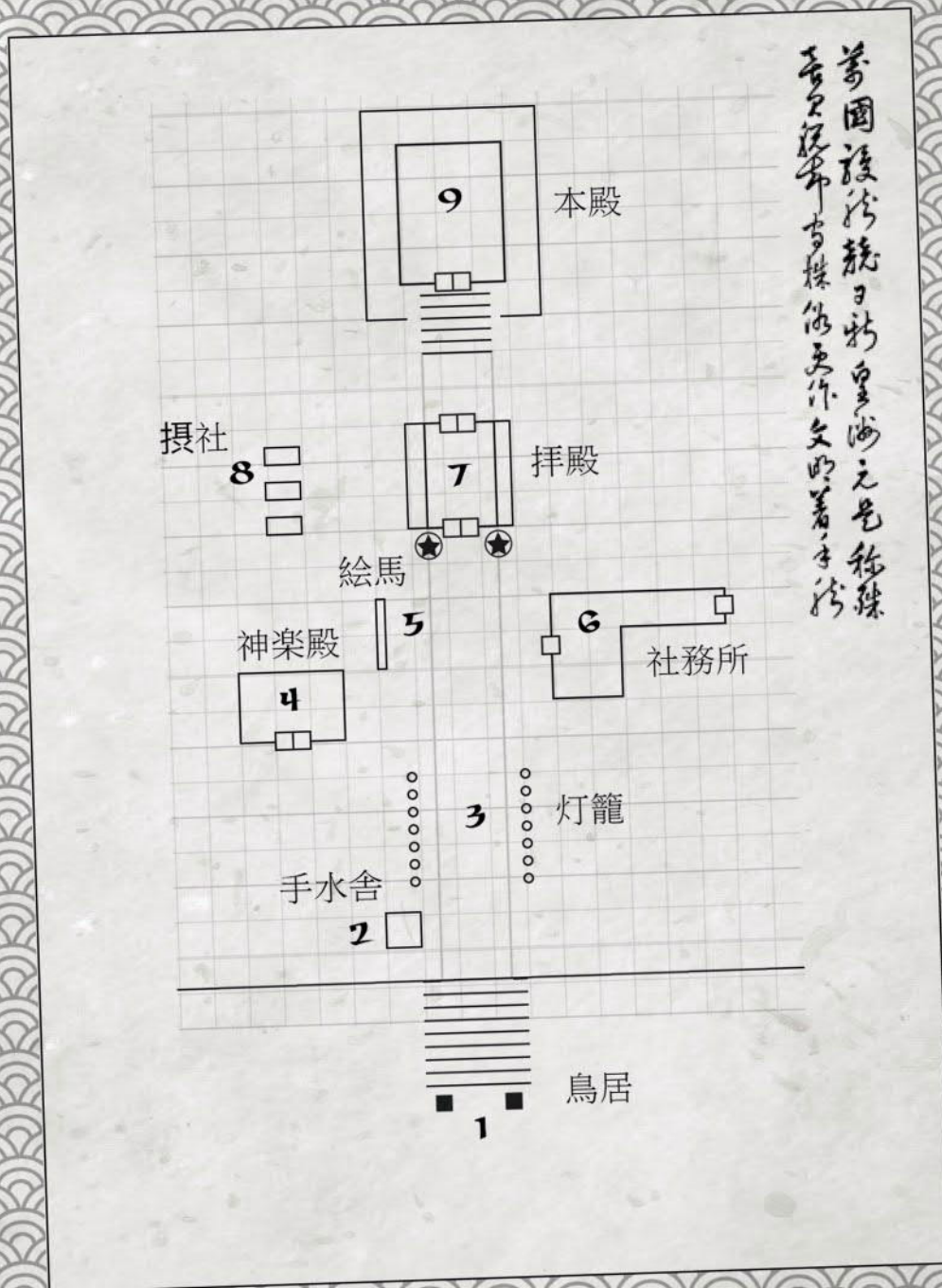
33: SPIRE. This observation tower rises 40 feet into the air, to the height of the Grand Tower, with no interior floors and a staircase spiraling around the inside. On top there is a wooden superstructure rising another 30 feet, with a roof, ladder and observation platform.



Dear Secret Sanctuaries—
Please bring me a map of a decent sized medieval
Japanese shrine laid out on 10' graph paper.
I'll be glad to stock it myself, I just need a
dungeon map for some haunted Shinto action.
Thanks!

A SHINTO SHRINE

by Stuart Robertson
stuart@robertsongames.com



萬國護法競日新皇海元是神殊
吾人深希古株能更作文明著手新

Dear Secret Santicore

I would like a sublevel for a mega dungeon, not too big, for a combined tribe of goblins and kobolds led by a somewhat shaky union of an evil goblin druidess (or shamaness, or whatever) with a devil lion companion and some evil adventurers.

Thanks!

E.

THE MOON-EYE CAVES

by Erik Jensen

wampuscountry.blogspot.com

When two humanoid tribes vie for the same living space, conflict is inevitable; but strong personalities can skew the outcome away from the predictable. This cave complex is shared by three loosely-aligned groups: the goblins of Mother Moon-eye, a band of kobolds, and a group of adventurers engaged in banditry and other crimes. Much of the time these groups try desperately to ignore one another, but when they do come together for common purpose - as when the caverns are under siege - there are glimmers of greatness.

FACTIONS

GOBLINS

Mother Moon-Eye the gobliness is a skilled sorceress and witch, familiar with sympathetic magic and the brewing of poisons and potions. She rules her goblins in a maternal fashion, doting on them as 'her children' - but punishing them cruelly when they disappoint her. Moon-Eye is accompanied most times by a hulking spotted lynx she calls Black Cloud (or occasionally "Shmoopsy"). The foul witch seeks expansion of her little empire and knows the alliance with the Golden Hart and the kobolds is the best way to accomplish this - for now. Mother Moon-Eye has no particular love for the adventurers and will happily replace them should a better offer come along. The goblins of her 'family' are quite savage in attitude, smearing themselves with warpaint and appreciating a good, scary mask now and again.

KOBOLDS

These kobolds have slunk to their natural place in the pecking-order - the very bottom. Bullied by the Golden Hart and some of the goblins, they stick close together, in substantial numbers, working away in their caves. Some of the kobolds are actually quite clever, and have manifested the natural trap-building ability common to some kobold tribes.

EVIL ADVENTURERS

The Companions of the Golden Hart consist of five unscrupulous members unified in their desire for wealth and power. They are cruel blackguards to a man, and despite their current association with the goblins and kobolds, the Golden Hart dreams of leaving this 'amateur stuff' behind as soon as possible. Raiding merchant-wagons is fun, but it will never make them truly wealthy - or famous. The company consists of:

- Truls Giant-cutter (fighter), a mighty-thewed reaver with an ensorcelled battle-axe;
- Fantonius Gaggamore (wizard), a mincing fop of a sorcerer with a waxed moustache;
- Kohl-eyed Hyrlah (thief), a lady burglar with a seemingly endless supply of throwing knives;
- Cagrant of Ploob (cleric), hedonistic devotee of the Three-Legged Goddess
- "Double-Down" McKersky (fighter), whooping daredevil with sword and shield

KEYED ROOMS

1 GOBLIN WARREN

This is the main living quarters for Moon-eye's goblins; when they are not out working, hunting, or harvesting, most of the goblin tribe are in this cavern - eating, gambling, playing mumblety-peg, or of course slumbering during daylight hours. Most of the goblins have little in the way of possessions, but this cavern does contain a nice deposit of garnet which could be harvested by keen-eyed explorers.

2 MOON-EYE'S CHAMBER

Mother Moon-eye rests in this cave during the day, and works her magic (and holds court) by night. The room is well-appointed by savage goblin standards, including a pile of beaver-pelts for a bed, a makeshift table made of crates topped with assorted witchy and alchemical doodads, and a few mouldy books.

In one corner, Moon-eye has stacked a pile of burlap and leather sacks containing 'precious' items donated to her by her tribe - a number of coins, some semi-precious and precious stones, interesting feathers, and a few severed human fingers.

3 THE WITCH'S GARDEN

This smaller cave is full of lichen, moss, and fungus cultivated by Mother Moon-Eye for her various brews. Some of the plants are quite poisonous, carnivorous, or both.

4 KOBOLD WARREN

Here the kobolds huddle when danger rises and they are forced to rely on numbers rather than traps and guerilla tactics. Scattered about the cavern - and tucked into crevices and hidey-holes - are stone tools, lengths of rope and string, oddments of wood and petrified fungus, and scraps of fabric.

5 KOBOLD TRAP: THE HOGPIT

In this corridor lies a pit-trap dug kobold-generations ago (three years back). A previous group of explorers, fond of driving before them trap-triggering piglets, were dispatched by the kobolds - but not before one of the trap-pigs fell in this fairly deep pit and survived. The kobolds re-covered the pit with lattice and furs and hay, but they fed the piglet well on mushrooms and scraps of meat and offal, and it has grown into a very large and very mean adult hog with twisted yellow tusks. The hog cannot escape, but it is quite content to attack and eat whatever, or whoever, falls into the pit.

6 KOBOLD TRAP: THE MAKEOVER

A tripwire in this corridor causes a hidden bucket to tip, dumping a thick liquid "paint" on one or more victims below. This paint is a sticky slurry containing bioluminescent algae found elsewhere in the cave complex; an explorer coated in it glows nicely for days.

7 KOBOLD TRAP: LUMBERJACK GAMES

Hidden in a fault in the floor is a wickedly-sharp obsidian-headed axe secured by rubbery spring-like vines; when the tripwire on this trap is triggered, the axe springs up, intended to chop the intruder in the face. Note that kobold faces are about at human crotch level. Moments later, the second part of the trap triggers, rolling a few battered logs down the corridor at interlopers.

8 THE OL'SWAP'N'PUKE

The central location of this cave made it a natural place for the goblins, kobolds, and adventurers to come together to barter for goods; it wasn't long before it became the "cool" cave hangout

for rebellious goblins and overly curious young kobolds. Sensing opportunity, a one-eared goblin called Toenail has opened up a makeshift saloon - throwing furs and hay about for lounging, and (attempting to) sell fungus beer, lichen-wine, and hallucinogenic mushrooms to any who come by. Toenail has asked the Golden Hart to bring him whatever liquor they can get their hands on, and they have occasionally obliged by rolling a stolen tun of wine down the corridor to him. The goblin entrepreneur's popularity has skyrocketed in recent months, and it is only a matter of time before Mother Moon-eye sees him as a potential rival for leadership and has to 'deal with him'. Toenail tries to be a truly neutral party, and will try to sell mushroom-brew to anyone - even explorers who just hacked up many of his cousins. At any given hour the Swap-n-Puke has a few goblin and kobold patrons in varying degrees of intoxication.

9 GOLDEN HART LIVING CAVE

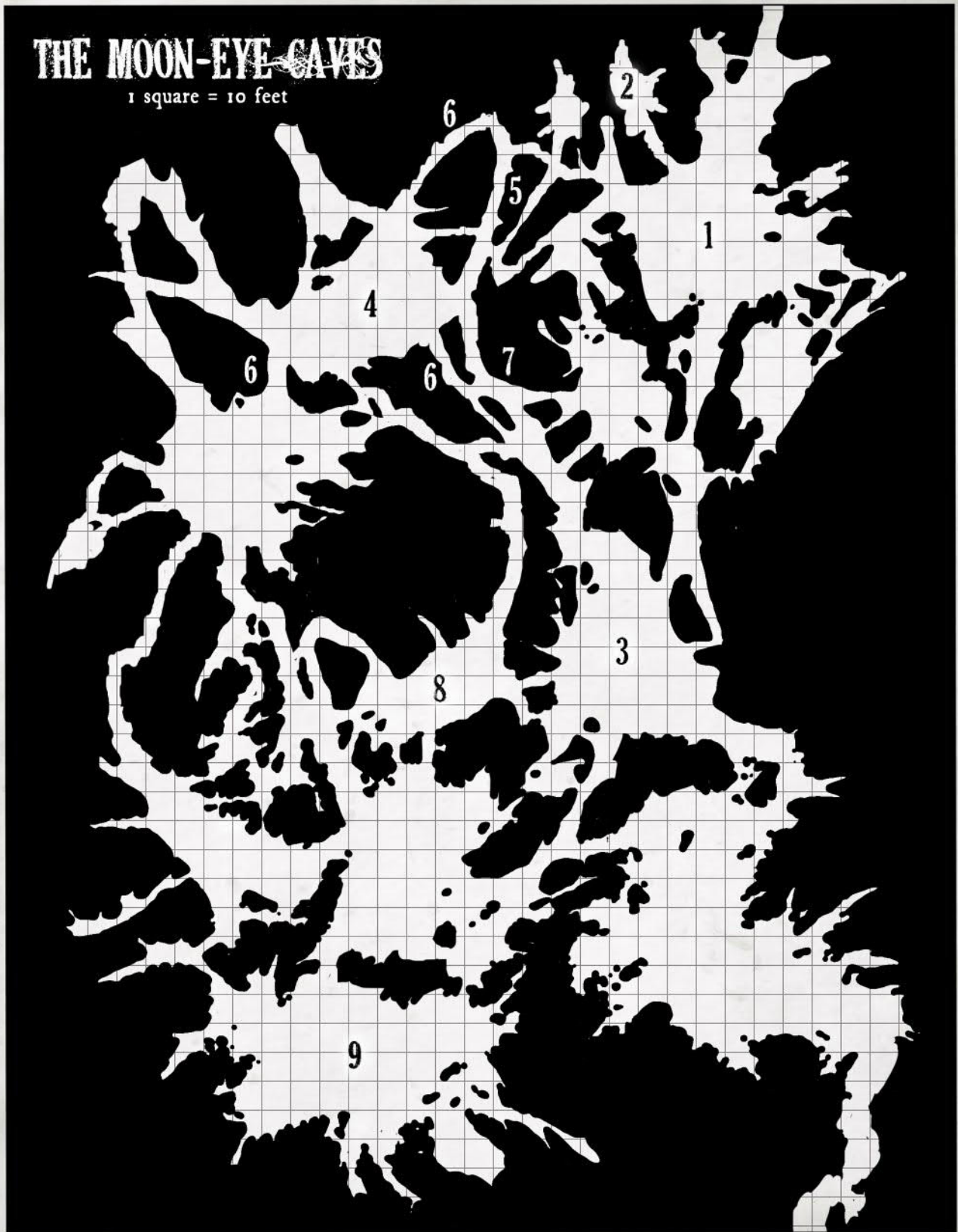
The cruel adventurers reside in this cavern, with their gear and accrued treasures strewn about. Their bedrolls lie atop piles of hay, and they have dug a fire-pit for cooking near the center of the room. All manner of crates, tapestries, and trade goods lean against the walls, waiting to be used or fenced. Spare weapons, whetstones, and other gear of utility are also present, including several hooded lanterns. In one alcove the deviant priest Cagrant has set up a shrine to his goddess which includes a nicely-carved ivory statuette resting upon a mahogany box containing holy writings. Tacked to one wall with gummy-lichen are several sheets of parchment detailing the group's observations of merchant caravan schedules in the area. The Golden Hart tends to enter and exit the complex via the southeastern tunnel, avoiding Mother Moon-eye whenever possible.

d8 WANDERING ENCOUNTER TABLE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | goblin patrol (d6+1 goblins, well-armed, quiet, and vigilant) |
| 2 | goblins on walkabout (d3 goblins, poorly-armed and yammering away) |
| 3 | d6 kobolds skittering about in shadow at the edge of vision and hearing |
| 4 | d6 large subterranean cockroaches (fairly aggressive) |
| 5 | d3 goblins gathering mushrooms |
| 6 | d3 giant cave spiders |
| 7 | mixed party of d4 goblins & kobolds, drunk as hell, trying to stumble home from the bar |
| 8 | Mother Moon-eye, Black Cloud, and d4+1 armed goblins 'inspecting' or on business |

THE MOON-EYE CAVES

1 square = 10 feet



Map by Jez Gordon

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a list of interesting places for players to explore on a world that has been shattered by some kind of explosion/elder god awakening/crazy cataclysm that tore the land in pieces.

How big are the pieces? Always big enough to contain something interesting.

Thanks!

N.

SHARDS OF THE WORLD

by Gabriel Harley
gabriel@gabrielharley.com

1 ARMADA

When the world was broken, this fleet of galleys and other warships was on its way to invade a foreign port. Instead, they were flung into the void where, over the ensuing years, they have become the basis for a city of naval descendants, wanderers, brigands, and more. Think Mos Eisley, but instead of being a desert town, it's a whole bunch of aging, chained-together ships that have slowly been built onto, cannibalized, etc.--all floating in the ether. They form a three-axis cross of vessels, platforms, giant ropes, pulleys, etc. Armada (the name of the settlement) is ruled by The Admiral who is, in fact, a descendant of the fleet's original commander... except that this Admiral is also a woman and not entirely sane.

2 BASTION

Bastion is a grim iron fortress... on the moon. It appears at first glance to be a well-fortified military post built by some unknown power. In truth, it is a laboratory experiment run by ancient cosmic beings for completely unfathomable purposes. Bastion is populated by every kind of intelligent creature...all of which have been or are currently being driven mad. It's not really made to keep beings out... it's made to keep them IN.

3 THE CHAOS ORB

A sphere nearly 300 yards in diameter, this object-building appears to some kind of whirling, clockwork machine of unknown origin. Its exterior is metal and covered in sliding, rattling, interlocked plates and gears. Is it a clock? A celestial model? A bomb? No one seems to know.

4 HALLS OF LLABST

Once the greatest university in the civilized world, this small city of limestone halls, dormitories, libraries, etc. now stands empty... or nearly so. In truth, it is inhabited by countless cursed low- and mid-level undead--many of them former professors and students--who sleeplessly roam its crumbling corridors. Great stores of knowledge may yet be had here, if one can uncover them.

5 THE ICE

Once a polar glacier, now The Ice is essentially a giant, inverted bowl of, well, ice. Creatures make their homes on both the convex and concave sides, and mile-deep networks of perilous tunnels, rifts, and cracks run between the two. The usual arctic denizens live here (white dragons, mastodons, etc.), along with a Hun-like culture of cave-dwelling humans who have tamed and now ride giant frost worms. The "land" is extremely unstable, frequently breaking apart and melting back together.

6 NYTESYDE

An area of permanent darkness thanks to its orientation (away from the sun), this realm of craggy rocks and dead forests is the paradise of all things that fear the light. It is officially ruled by an uneasy alliance of vampires and liches who have built a fortified stone city there. However, outside the city's walls, all is chaos as undead and other photophobic creatures struggle for sparse resources.

7 ONEIRIUS - THE DREAMSWAMP

A vast mire which has the odd feature of attracting and trapping the dreams of those who pass through. Travelers don't often come across their own dreams in the swamp (unless they frequent the area), but they do encounter the dreams of those who've come before. While the dreams are little more than illusions, they are dangerous all the same because the fetid air of this place affects the minds of humans and demi-humans who breathe it, making them highly susceptible to suggestion, hallucination, and paranoia.

8 THE PORTAL

When the world was shattered, this long-forgotten magical portal--originally set into a castle wall--was ripped free. The wall no longer exists, but the mystical hole in time and space is still there. Thanks to inertia from the shattering, it is always on the move, swallowing whatever it happens to contact and sending it to any number of random places in the multiverse.

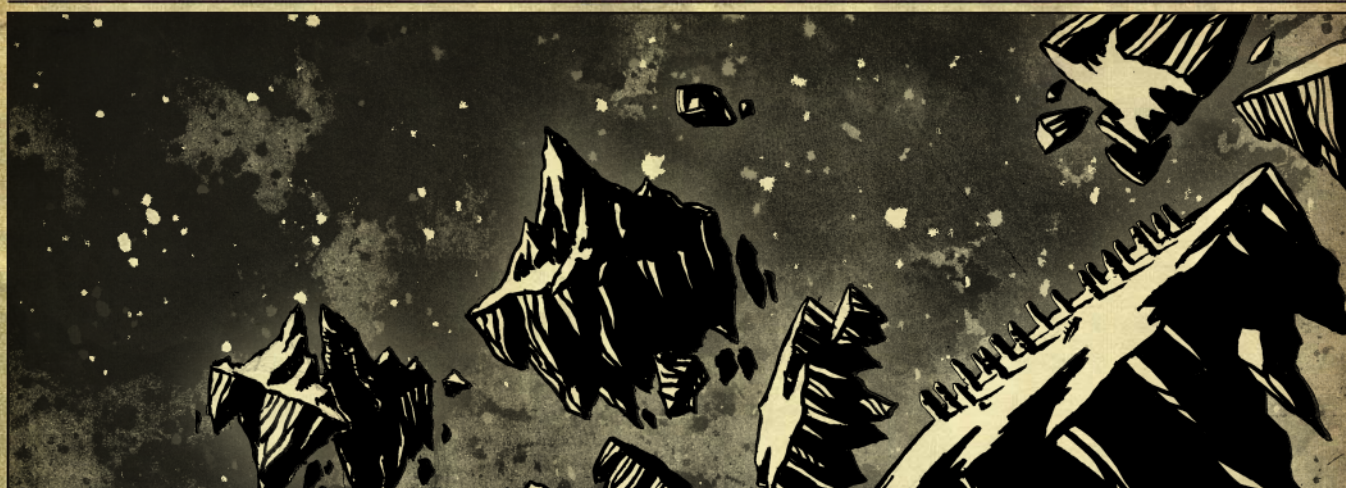


Illustration by Jez Gordon

9. Kaidia I and Kaidia II

When the world was broken, so was this dwarven stronghold. In fact, the subterranean mountain kingdom was split almost perfectly in half! In the ensuing years, the dwarves of the once-united mountain have reorganized themselves into two factions, the Easterners and the Westerners. The Easterners control the better gold veins while the Westerners retained most of the food sources, including the vast majority of livestock and good soil. Dwarves being dwarves, the two sides do not do well with sharing and are always seeking to outgrow, outmine, or just out-do each other. A single, three-mile long stone bridge now connects the split sections of the mountain and both sides guard it fiercely from possible invasion from the other.

10. Kingdom of Roth

A human kingdom tucked away in a small, rocky mountain range full of steep cliffs, Roth is most noted for its red-armored knights who patrol the land astride giant wasps. The people of Roth are poor and simple, but rumor has it their ruler is anything but. Travelers here end up as hosts for the “domesticated” wasps’ larvae more often than not.

11. The Spindle of Doors

A lonely tower sitting in the middle of a plain of death and destruction, The Spindle is perhaps the center of the broken world. The Spindle is hundreds of feet high, built by forgotten hands out of black stone flecked with white crystals. For miles all around it are the crumbling remains of armies who seem to have been turned to stone in the midst of an epic battle. Men, elves, dwarves, horses, dragons, and more... all stone, forever frozen in their moments of triumph, cowardice, or death. The landscape is a maze of terror and confusion. Every few minutes, the tower itself releases a blinding flash of white light up to a mile in diameter. Anyone caught in that flash is petrified as well. The tower itself appears to be abandoned; the small handful of beings who have made it inside report that it contains a single staircase that spirals up, up, up and out of sight and that every

few feet a door is set into the exterior wall (the center of the Spindle is hollow). These doors do not lead to the outside of the tower, however. Instead, each leads to another part of the broken world... and maybe even to places far stranger.

12. Tel'Quar

Tel'Quar is a vast forest of stunning beauty, eternal warmth, and perpetual sunlight. It houses many wild creatures but is most known for the herds of unicorns who reside there as well as the wild, albino, cannibalistic elves who worship and protect them.

13. The Thousand Stair

Set into the side of towering, darkened cliffs, this stone staircase ascends for nearly five miles, almost vertically at times. At its base is an entrance to the subterranean catacombs of the ancient Temple of Karrin, wherein the sages of old are interred. At the summit of the stairs is the temple itself, which is still guarded by its ever-dwindling order of monks, the Brotherhood of Karrin. It is said that this ancient order offers free wisdom and healing to any who knock at their door. However, the stairs are treacherous, not only because of the fog, rain, and gales that surround and pelt them, but also because of the harpies who nest on the cliffs.

14. Voices of Stone

In the center of this barren plain sits a ring of statues similar to those on Easter Island. Except that these statues constantly whisper and murmur to each other in an unknown language. Some say it is just the trick of a crazed, long-dead wizard while others insist that, if the language could be learned, the statues’ words would reveal the cause of the Shattering of the World... and perhaps the secret to its remaking.

15. Wormwood

Essentially an asteroid-sized chunk of the old world’s crust, this area is riddled with caves and twisting tunnels. It also is constantly spinning, which means that “up”, “down” and other directions tend to change every few hours. The whole place is crawling with bugs. BIG bugs.

Dear Secret Santicore—

I always wanted a random hex map generator of the one-page variety. I'd love for it to take the surrounding hexes into account, but I failed making that idea work, so no pressure. Otherwise, make it as fast to use as possible (maybe even generating several hexes at the same time).

Love,

L.

WILDERNESS HEX MAP GENERATOR

by Iain Jones
talidaar@gmail.com

WILDERNESS HEX TERRAIN:

2d6	Plains	Scrub	Forest	Desert	Hills	Mountain	Swamp	Tundra
2	Location	Location	Location	Location	Location	Location	Location	Location
3	Hills	Forest	Mountain	Mountain	Desert	Desert	Forest	Mountain
4	Forest	Swamp	Hills	Hills	Mountain	Hills	Forest	Hills
5	Plains	Plains	Swamp	Desert	Mountain	Hills	Forest	Tundra
6	Plains	Scrub	Forest	Desert	Hills	Mountain	Swamp	Tundra
7	Plains	Scrub	Forest	Desert	Hills	Mountain	Swamp	Tundra
8	Plains	Scrub	Forest	Desert	Hills	Mountain	Swamp	Tundra
9	Plains	Desert	Swamp	Desert	Forest	Forest	Scrub	Tundra
10	Swamp	Desert	Scrub	Scrub	Forest	Forest	Scrub	Scrub
11	Desert	Mountain	Plains	Plains	Plains	Scrub	Plains	Plains
12	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement

Choose a hex at random—either in the centre, or in a corner. Choose the terrain you want for that tile and fill it in. Then roll 2d6 for each tile adjacent to that, matching your result with the Terrain column on the table above, and fill those in. Then proceed randomly around the map, rolling for each blank. To determine which column to use for each hex, either choose the terrain you want to predominate, or use the most common terrain in the surrounding hexes (if there is a tie for most common terrain, use the first option). If you roll a Settlement or Location, fill that hex with the terrain you were rolling on, and then mark in the settlement/location. Locations can be ruins, landmarks or monster lairs.

FOR DETERMINING DIRECTION OF A LINE

(e.g. Road, River, Mountain Range, Coastline, etc)

First determine a cardinal direction: North, South, East or West. This direction becomes forwards.

FOR DETERMINING A RIVER

First roll 1d6-3 to determine how many lakes exist on the river. Then roll the river as a line (above). Whenever this roll gives a 2 or 5, add a lake. For each lake roll 1d6+1 to determine size. If all the lakes have been placed, create a fork in the river, or another interesting feature.

FOR DETERMINING THE CONTENTS OF AN OCEAN

Roll through the ocean until an island is encountered. Roll 2d6 to determine the number of hexes the island comprises of, then on the Climate column to determine the Climate of the island. Roll the contents of the island from that point, using the Climate's column (above).

DETERMINING DIRECTION OF A LINE:

1d6	North/South	East/West
1	Left	Left
2	Forward	Forward/Left
3	Forward	Forward/Left
4	Forward	Forward/Right
5	Forward	Forward/Right
6	Right	Right

DETERMINING THE CONTENTS OF AN OCEAN:

2d6	Ocean	Size	Climate
2	Island	2	Desert/Tundra
3	Island	3	Plains
4	Ocean	4	Plains
5	Ocean	5	Plains
6	Ocean	6	Mountain
7	Ocean	7	Forest
8	Ocean	8	Forest
9	Ocean	9	Swamp
10	Ocean	10	Swamp
11	Rocks	11	Hills
12	Rocks	12	Hills

Dear Secret Santicore—

I'd like a simple sub-system that allows me to run a skirmish-type battle with a couple dozen combatants. I recently had a large skirmish, and even with the players keeping track of half of the stuff, it still took an hour and a half to complete.

Thanks!

I.

A NEW LOOK AT SKIRMISHES

by Lance “3llense’g” Toth
interstellar_deity@yahoo.ca

The main concept is to abstract groups of combatants (or even whole platoons) into a single NPC with appropriate abilities. It's written for D&D, but is probably system-independent.

MASS COMBAT (<100 SOLDIERS)

- You group the combatants on either side (not counting PCs) based on their HD (or level), AC and class. Add the group's health into one number (each should have the same health, to make keeping track easier, though you could average the total). Add their damage dice into one pool as well (they can mix and match melee weapons or ranged weapons, but probably not both).
- You roll initiative for each group (and the PCs) if you're using individual initiative. This order doesn't get re-rolled, until someone new enters the fray (reinforcements).
- When rolling to hit, consult the opposing groups' list to see if any AC has been hit (you should probably do this when rolling for a group, not a PC, because the PCs' position might matter).
- Roll the attacking group's damage pool, subtract from the defending group's health.
- If the health of the group drops below an individual member's health, he/she is dead. Remove his/her damage die from the pool.
- Groups shouldn't attack PCs, as they are a less abstract part of combat. Separate an individual from the group and let him/her fight the PC. (Don't forget to lower the group's damage pool for that round).
- You can vaguely keep track of positions, but I advise against it.

LARGE SCALE COMBAT (>100 SOLDIERS)

- Say, you have two armies of organised soldiers with the same training and standard equipment in each.
- Every group of the same type (cavalry, archers, infantry, magi, clerics) is represented by a single character. Separate groups like earlier in mass combat.
- Their equipment is the equipment shared by every soldier in the group. Their health is the number of people present.
- Group damage is $1d10 \times (\text{number of attacking soldiers left} / 10)$. Consider causing (number of attacking soldiers left / 10) damage even on a miss.
- Resolve combat as normal, or abstract it further by using the mass combat to-hit rules (damage the group with the worst AC on a miss). Morale checks are especially useful.
- Keeping track of the position of groups is more realistic in this case.



Illustration by Jez Gordon

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like three to five standard issue equipment lists please, enough to fit into a large duffel or back pack, for a bunch of contemporary mercenaries. No firearms.

Thanks!

M.

STANDARD ISSUE EQUIPMENT FOR MODERN DAY MERCS

by Telecanter
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ASSAULT

Ammo, extra
Gas Mask
Grenades, flash bang
Grenades, smoke
Headlamp, LED
Headset Mic / Radio
Tactical Battle Vest, bulletproof
Tactical Knife

COMMS

Batteries, extra
Battery Charger, solar
Flashlight, LED
GPS
Handheld Computer, rugged
Mirror, signaling
Satellite Phone
Smart Phone

COVERT

Electronic Tracking Devices, adhesive & magnetic
Listening Devices, micro, disposable
Money in local currencies
Parabolic Ear
Passports / IDs / badges
Phone Jammer
Reversible Clothes
Tactical Knife
TV Jammer
Zip Ties

MECHANIC

Bolt Cutters
Duct Tape
Epoxy Resin
Lighter, windproof
Magnesium Block
Multitool
Parachute Cord, 200'
Plastic Trash Bags, 50 gal
Prybar
Wire Saw
Zip Ties

MEDIC

Adrenalin Shots
Anesthetic Shots
Bandages
Blanket, space
Flares
Gloves, Rubber
MREs
Scissors
Tactical Knife
Tent, single
Thread, surgical

RECON

Abseiling/Rappelling descenders & carabiners
Binoculars
Compass
Flare Gun
Glow Sticks
GPS
Laser Target Marker
Maps, local
Marker, permanent
Mirror, small hand
Rope, 10mm x 70m, dry, climbing
Tactical Knife

Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a random table for people and their personalities one might find in Shadowrun.

If this could be done on a 2d6 roll with 36 results that would be ideal.

Thanks!

M.

STREET PERPS

A RANDOM ENCOUNTER GENERATOR FOR SHADOWRUN

by Mike Cummings
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d6d6 STREET ENCOUNTER:

- 11 **ROSIE THE ACTIVIST.** Female dwarf, looks like the butch half of a lesbian relationship. Doesn't matter the Cause, this woman is there to fight for it. It could be Metahuman rights or land rights for Native Americans. Born to a life of privilege this woman is mighty angry about something and looking for a fight! (Bioware'd up).
- 12 **CLIFF THE BTL CHIPPER.** Close crop oily hair with bald spots and data jacks. This guy will do anything to make sure he gets his next fix. He will offer to be helpful, he will extort saying he will hinder, he will offer to run errands, he will wash windows and he will betray just to make sure he gets his next instalment. (Has heaps of contacts)
- 13 **ARNOLD THE CYBER ZOMBIE.** Think Arnie in the Terminator Movies. There is no flesh left here. Upon investigation there was never any flesh there to start with. This is a complicated and sophisticated drone controlled by a bed ridden genius engineer/rigger. Frightening to look upon, but this man is making the best of a shitty situation.
- 14 **JHE THE SOCIALITE.** She is famous for just being her. She is beautiful, enhanced to be super appealing and she appears to be slumming it. While she her self is not dangerous, her entourage of minders definitely counts as over zealous (full on security team).
- 15 **TAM THE PROSTITUTE.** Dressed like, well, a pro. She has a quota to meet or her pimp will bash her. She is a good honest prostitute, territorial and determined to make the sale. She makes a hard living in a hard world.
- 16 **THE FUZZ, THE '50, THE POPO, THE PIGS.** Lone Star have arrived in response to an illegal activity/ongoing investigation or triangulation of gunshot microphones. This Officer is after info about something so tell us all that you've seen and "You will cooperate here or back at the station, your call citizen"
- 21 **HANK THE VET.** Dressed in quazi military garb and covered in scars. This is the Desert Wars™ Vet. This rugged man of action has seen plenty of it. While he is looking old and worn you can be sure that his gear is well kept and functional. This man is lost and looking for a purpose.
- 22 **CHUCK.** He is smelly and malnourished and kinda sticky. He's a Squatter. But where did he get that wiz bang gear from... A local squatter tries to sell a pc a really nice and fancy gun, he just found it honest. The squatter sells it cheap. He says he can find more for you. It was used in a high profile crime. Use the weapon and be linked to something you didn't do or have some cold blooded guy looking to collect his gear.
- 23 **MRS SMITH THE ELF DECKER.** Smooth looking leaf eater, dressed in Armani, carrying a patent leather case with her deck in it. The only thing that shows up as unusual for this Elf is the series of jacks up the left arm. Trying to look like "the company man" for a bit of credibility, this Decker is often given stick for spending money on looks instead of substance.
- 24 **SVEN & BJORN, TROLL "VIKING" BIKERS.** They look really silly... but try telling them that... Sven Thunderfist dressed in chain armour and Bjorn Splitter in his spikey helmet. Sven clubs people with his tankard and likes to rape and pillage while his brother Bjorn likes to hit things with his axe. Bjorn argues that he gets extra points for decapitating things/people. They ride huge hogs and they like to party.
- 25 **A FLAMING GIANT.** At the very least a large looking fire elemental. There is some bashing of heads between crime organisations (or urban beautification) happening in the slums. The short of it is, this entire area of slums is being burnt to the ground around the party by an angry looking fire elemental directed by an astral mage.

d6d6 STREET ENCOUNTER:

- 26 PATRICK. A troll in a suit walks into a bar... the suit has been slept in, he carries a box and looks lost. This mid level exec from a mega corp has wandered into a local bar and is asking for help. If the players help him great, if not, they get badgered by Corp goons that think the players know more than they do. The box contains all the data and evidence for a gene bomb that the mega corp created and the highly moral troll tripped over it.
- 31 JOEL NELSON THE LETTERMAN. A young sports jock in a bright red lettered jacket athletic and good looking. This young man was noticed by talent scouts early in his sporting career and it earned him scholarships to a varsity that he would never have normally gotten too, studying courses that were well beyond him academically. When it was discovered that he was a Physical Adept, he was no longer eligible for the varsity teams and eventually kicked out of school. Joel tries to relive his recent glory days.
- 32 LUCY STAR. Wearing a skirt suit and packing a big gun. She tries to look hot, chic, gangster and professional, and mostly fails. She is a low level Mafia functionary. Not being Italian or connected she is close to the limits of her glass ceiling in the organisation. Being a spell slinger though has afforded her some freedoms and access beyond the rank and file stand over men of the family and is earning an easy living as a consultant for a family of La Costa Nostra. Trusted for the most part she handles unusual situations with speed and discretion.
- 33 ELBOWS, THE ORK STREETSAM. This man is the stereotype. Guns, body armour, scars and bullet holes, this big Ork has them all in abundance. Poorly educated and fast to anger this Ork is savvy enough to know hes a stereotype but lacks the skill and tools to change his lot. It makes him kinda grumpy and prickly...
- 34 DAGOR BLACK, THE DISCRETE STREETSAM. Full length shapeless trench coat and a large hat. No one is quite sure how much this man is packing, all they know is that he's always calm and that it really hard to see all of his face at any one time. This man has been around the block, done the job and collected the t-shirt. He has seen it all before and would rather work for a living than earn a quick glorious death.
- 35 RIPPER THE STREET DOC. Wearing paramilitary gear this dwarf carries a duffel full of tools that is longer than he is tall. Ripper has a good deal of knowledge about meta-human anatomy and has vast experience with combat wounds of all kinds, making him one of the better Street Doc's in Seattle. Ripper's clinic is in the orkish underground and is very discrete, and he is capable of cyberware repair, as well as low level augmentation.
- 36 DER RAUBER, THE SECOND STORY MAN. He's cagey looking wearing dark non-descript cloths and carrying a pack. This man is fairly ordinary except for his thick German accent. Dark clothes, dark hair, pale skin. Those with an eye for such things may note that he moves so smoothly. You have just interrupted him on his way from/too or in the middle of a job. He won't be too receptive about that...
- 41 RATA THE DWARF SHAMAN. Shaped like a brick standing on its end smelly looking and is that a cat skin coat. This is a Rat Shaman. He is actually a she and she isn't actually a dwarf. She really looked like it though at first glance. This is her neighbourhood; she knows all that is going on and watches over her domain. This normally peaceful block is protected and slightly more prosperous than others because of this woman's influence.
- 42 CRANK THE STREET VENDOR. Pushing his cart, wearing a grubby apron this Troll seems the height of jovial hospitality. An honest guy, making an honest living... whats it matter that he sells rat and dog along side the soy-protein products. Big enough and armed enough to keep out of most trouble, he'll sell food to party goer and night owls alike. Crank is only too happy to gossip as long as you're buying his wares and he sees everything that happens on the street.
- 43 CISCO & WHALE THE DUMP TRUCK. It is dirty, rusty and blowing smoke. On closer inspection, it appears to be modified. This rigged vehicle has a picture of a whale on its door, tinted windows and has been highly modified. This rigger (Cisco) hires himself out to break up gang conflicts and patrol and protect neighbourhoods where Lonestar refuse to go. This is a mercenary and his truck is his armour and tools of his trade. Keeping the piece through superior firepower.
- 44 LOGAN THE ORK STREET SAM. Big hair, leather jacket, well chewed cigar and domes across the back of his hands for the spurs. Logan loves his pop culture. With the arrival of cyberware and bioware Logan has fashioned himself upon the cartoon Wolverine. But Logan has twisted this characters ethics, only taking on board the negative aspects of his idol. Logan is abrasive, lawless, a loner but without the character's morals. Logan's only goal is to be more like the character he sadly misunderstood.
- 45 CHUCKY THE TROLL SPORTS FAN. He is massive, wearing a yellow and black top that is too tight and a matching hat with wings. Chucky is excited and excitable, he wears his heart on his sleeve and everyone knows how he is feeling, which matches how his team is going. Chucky is exuberant and (while heavy handed and pushy) his enthusiasm is infectious... Chucky is ultimately happy with his lot in life as long as his team is winning. If they are not winning though, he is prone to violent temper tantrums.

d6d6 STREET ENCOUNTER:

- 46 MR JONES THE CORP THUG. Wearing a middle of the road suit, with sunnys and an ear piece. Carrying a piece under his jacket and a substantial brief case, this man could just about pass for lower or middle management in any of the Mega Corps. Employed to do security/body guarding/run unusual errands Mr Jones's enhancements are limited and many of the useful item he uses he plugs into rather than has them installed
- 51 LT DANG THE OFF DUTY MARINE. Crew Cut hair, every item of civilian clothing is immaculately pressed. Thoughtful, professional, trusted and very very capable. This is a natural born leader of trained killers. On leave from his unit and visiting the area he was raised, Lt Dang is a professional warrior who is wired, always armed and is only ever a call away from back up. Dang's sense of honour and his self perception as a defender of all things good may find him in over his head if things go down.
- 52 SUZ FROM CHANNEL 9 NEWS. A beautiful reporter and a surly camera man, a camera and a comms truck. These two are looking for news, they know something is going on and they will keep on asking "interesting" people or groups till they get their "interesting" answer. They don't know what sort of story is out there tonight, but they'll find something.
- 53 CABLE. A rough older looking Ork, covered in prison tattoos. Looks old fashioned in the way many convicts do when they are caught in a time warp. This Ork has just been paroled. Cable was convicted of premeditated murder because of his attack on a Humanis Policlub rally in Tacoma. Armed with an assault rifle and a tear gas grenade he assaulted the rally by himself, killing 7 and wounding 20. At his trial he freely admitted his crime and expressed his regret that he didn't kill more. Since his time in jail he has become more tolerant of hate groups, and even appreciates the irony of his own actions.
- 54 MARK THE EX CON. Normal clothes, normal hair cut, nothing stands out. Mark is a pyro who is guilty of burning many more vehicles, buildings, and people than those crimes he was convicted for. Only just paroled a couple of months back. He was never a full time criminal, trained as a fire fighter worked working selling sprinkler and fire safety systems. But the bug is back.
- 55 LOIS THE REPORTER. Pretty, tidy and fashionable. This Shadow Runner started her career as a free lance reporter. She has contacts within media and is well schooled on every major event and its implications in this region. Initially rigged for operating her own camera drones now (because of outrage with the state of society) her drones tend to pack a bit of a punch.
- 56 ROMAN THE BEAUTIFUL SUIT. Well manicured and impeccably groomed, hard nosed and packing. This woman has a focus and a dogged determination. She is a retired shadow runner that made good in the one big last job. And one look in her eyes and you'll see that job cost her. Now this wired street sam is investing in her future by working the other side of that shady career. Roman now runs a fledgling security company and will do anything to protect her future.
- 61 AFTER LIFE. The Ghoul Wannabe gang, white pasty makeup and rags. The unfortunate progression from Punk to Goth to Emo to Ghoul. Those sad youth that self mutilate, exclude themselves from their peers and dress funny. Harmless and human by themselves but mindlessly violent if in large enough numbers. (Has numbers)
- 62 MEDICAL HTR TEAM. Someone somewhere near by has a big fat contract with a Medical company. This very special someone has just suffered a medical emergency and now these guys turn up, making noise, suppressing the area and generally just getting in the way.
- 63 THE RUMBLING SHAG FISTERS. A local "College" grade Urban Brawl team, these guys are an awesome provincial team. They hit hard and fast and have substantial corporate sponsorship. Tonight they beat the top of the table in the last game of the season. Tonight they are going to get messy yet somehow not pay for a single drink...
- 64 ANGE AND MARK THE TOURISTS. They are dressed the same, wearing tramping gear and anoraks and they both have gear packs and cameras. They are the centre of attention, they seem ripe as targets. Someone is going to try and rip these tourists off, anyone can see that... The thing is, that's what they are hoping for. These are part of a new breed of idle rich from Europe and they are indulging in a little bit of adventure tourism. They are hunting. They are their own bait. If it goes badly for them they will be rescued by a HTR team.
- 65 THE "THE END IS NIGH" GUY. He is dressed in robes, holding a sign and ranting. This doom sayer is quite clearly mad. He has seen the end of the world and its not a very nice place. He believes that its his place in the cosmos to inform everyone of the errors of their ways. He will do this vocally. He is very perceptive about the environment around him and astute, maybe he's a source of information, maybe he's a thorn in the players collective sides.
- 66 WEE MAN THE PICK POCKET. A juvenile living off the streets, wearing a mix of current fads and old worn clothes. Wee Man is an opportunist of the highest calibre. Outwardly a precocious 11 year old that sees everything and knows everyone in the area and will trade information for any sort of scraps he can get, but that is a ploy to get close enough to lift something/anything from his mark. He is a canny student of the school of hard knocks.

Dear Secret Santicore—

*I would like a Post-apocalyptic Pantheon:
The survivors of all-out devastation emerge from
their hiding places and roam the blasted, mutated
wasteland. What gods to they worship, and why?*

Thanks!

J.

MEET THE NEW GODS SAME AS THE OLD GODS

by Dylan Atkinson
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and S. L. Shirley
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THE BLACK DISK CULT

"There's also no medical proof that if you hear any collection of vowels and consonants, that the hearing of that collection is going to send you to Hell." - Frank Zappa

A treasure hunter once came upon a crate full of LPs and a broken record player. After many days of dismantling and tinkering, the Black Disk Cult was born. Retro-fitting the player with a hand crank, a faint and strange sound was heard from the black plates, rotating counterclockwise. The first priest of the Black Disk heard the voice of God issue from a thin and scratched piece of vinyl which claimed to be "The Master of Reality."

Of course he was playing it backwards.

Since that day the Black Disk Cult has grown, and pilgrims come for miles to hear the Divine Voice issue from the hand-cranked machine. Popular sermons include "Screaming For Vengeance," "Freak Out!," and "Mister Lucky," the latter especially loved by those about to begin a dangerous journey. The founder and High Spinner of the cult never told anyone where he first found these treasures, and only one Sacred Turntable exists, guarded day and night by the cult.

Priests of the Black Disk (called Spinners) usually carry a badge of office - an old LP that's too worn to be played more than once every few years. These are sacred relics and are treated with utmost care. Most Spinners can be identified by the album they carry, as the cult's collection does not include any doubles: "Look, there goes the man who carries... The White Album!"

PORTFOLIO: treasure hunters, wanderers, repairmen, fools and the unlucky

A BLACK DISK HERESY: Some believe that the sounds issuing from the disks are not the voice of God at all, and they must spin the other way to hear the True Voice. The mainstream priests are careful to keep these reprobates far from the Sacred Turntable.

THE SIX-ARMED KING

"Think how mysterious they'll appear, like the old stones are to us. The new caretakers of the earth will wonder if these pylons were built to mark highways of unknown and forgotten power."

- Tom O'Bedlam, The Invisibles

The ancients loved this god so much that before the apocalypse they built countless statues of him out of metal sticks connected by great wires. He commanded such reverence that no other buildings were permitted near these statues, and great corridors of Six-Armed Kings march across the landscape endlessly. Some believe in antique days he possessed magic which allowed him to rule the world, as long as his chain of statues remained unbroken. During the apocalypse many of his statues were destroyed, and the golden age came crashing down in fire. His priests work to reinstate him by copying the statues that still stand, believing that if the unbroken chain encircles the world again the Six-Armed King will return to us in our time of need.

The clergy of the Six-Armed choose sites near his statues for their temples, power stations being the most preferable. Many spend several hours each day walking between the transformers in quiet contemplation. All clerics and lay worshippers are expected to participate in the great work of reconstructing the King's statues, at very least one day a week. The boldest clerics often take great pilgrimages, walking the length and breadth of the world along the King's pathways and preaching of his return. They don't use any metal objects - all available materials must go towards the reconstruction effort, and they will usually pay handsomely for scrap.

UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING: The King's priests will huddle under his statues for protection during thunderstorms.

PORTFOLIO: fortune-tellers, smiths, explorers

A SIX-ARMED HERESY: Some say they are not statues of the god, but in fact his army. When he returns they shall come to life!



THE DONALD AKA THE MAGNATE, HE WHO FIRES

"Listen motherfucker, we're going to tax you 25 percent."

- Donald Trump

Across the wasteland, some make their living by barter and trade. Whether roaming freely or working in one town, they live only for "the deal." Their god is The Donald, whose many holy texts they carry with them and read for inspiration. His written word

is extensive; it is rumored there are 20 holy Books of Donald to be found. No one has ever assembled all of them in one place, but that doesn't stop some from trying. Most believe that if the entire written Word of Donald were correctly interpreted, the reader would obtain the key to unlimited riches.

Although The Donald has no formal clergy, his devotees (called "Donaldiers", but rarely to their faces) have a few things in common. They all want to be rich. They want others to accept The Donald into their lives and will read morals and slogans from their books to any who will listen. Hair and appearance are very important to those who follow The Word of The Donald. A hair out of place may sour them on a otherwise sweet deal. There are those who use the hair clippings of really successful "Donaldiers" for augury.

They have a special language of code phrases learned from the Holy Books, usually concerning "the deal." One phrase familiar to most is "You're Fired!" It is only uttered by Donaldiers in the direst circumstances, and anyone addressed in such a way should prepare for trouble. "Trump" is a holy word. Many a group of gamblers have run afoul of this religion by using it in an inappropriate context.

PORTFOLIO: traders, conquerors, politicians, barbers

A DONALDIER HERESY: There is a small group who believe The Donald to have been a duck and that the true source of wealth is an Uncle that swims in seas of gold coins! This group has an unfortunate tendency to forgo pants for some reason arcane to all but themselves.

THE VAULT KINGS

Imagine being trapped underground for your whole life. Imagine your parents, and their parents, and their parents all lived their whole lives without seeing the sun. If you could get out, see the sky, eat real food, breathe clean air instead of recycled... why would you ever go back?

When the Survivors finally left their underground bunkers, they discovered that not everyone who hid in other bunkers survived.

Some starved. Some ran out of water, or fell victim to some systems malfunction. Some went mad, killing each other before turning their weapons on themselves. These "death bunkers" became anathema. No one was allowed inside, in case the madness or plague were catching. This began the cult of the Vault Kings; the new Gods of the bomb shelter and the priesthood which placates them.

The priests of the Vault Kings are shunned by most folk, for good reason. Each one lives near the vault that he guards, painting himself with ashes and wearing filthy rags. They officiate

at funeral ceremonies, called "Feeding the Vault", after which the priest carries the deceased into the vault and seals it inside. Each vault has its own King, and its own priest. Only he knows the proper ceremonies and phrases to keep the King's wrath in check - to prevent the world outside the vaults from sliding into madness and depravity. He guards the vault from the greedy and the curious, for no profane foot may tread those halls. Each priest selects one successor, usually an outcast or orphan child disliked by the rest of the settlement.

PORTFOLIO: the dead, madmen, beggars, miners

A VAULTED HERESY: Some believe the Vaults are the birthplace of humanity, and that returning to them would bring an age of long-lost innocence. The Kings' devotees are happy to let them inside the vaults, but none return.

SISTERHOOD OF THE CLOTH TREE

During the apocalypse there were many revolutions. Thousands of folks were lined up and shot, or gassed, or burned, or shocked, or injected... Some were hung. And in the case of the Sisterhood, many.

The first sisters came across the "tree" quite by accident. Seeking shelter at night from a rather vicious and sudden hail storm, they came across a strange structure of wood and metal wherein they crawled and huddled together for warmth through the night. When they awoke the next morning and investigated, they found a "tree" above them from which hung several weather-mummified corpses in regalia the color of the setting sun!

The sisters took this as a sign and set about making clothes and giving shelter to all manner of refugees from all manner of storms. Often a young sister will set out on what they call the dye-quest. It is believed that if they gather the right ingredients and properly duplicate the ancient ceremonial vestments of those hanging prophets, then the tree's "planters" shall return bringing enlightenment to all. For martyrs or saints of the Sisterhood, the greatest honor of all is to become part of the Cloth Tree. After death, the Sister in question is preserved using certain secret rites, dressed in her robe and chimes, and lovingly strung up with the Mothers of the order.

COMMON PARAPHERNALIA: sewing kits with bone needles, exotic fabric dyes, "hanging prophets;" bone wind chimes that the sisters interpret the sounds and swaying of to predict the weather or your fate.

PORTFOLIO: tailors, orchard tenders, hangmen

A SISTERHOOD HERESY: There is a faction - the Sunset Sisters - who believe that the planters shall only return if they erect enough of their own trees. Ritualistic strangulation is common.

THE PAWNSMEN

After the fall toys and games were everywhere. When civilization began to return, folks were left with quite a mystery. I mean, they couldn't ALL have been toys, could they?

The Pawnsmen preserve a single ancient sacred text by the ancient prophet H.G. Wells. Little Wars is said to contain elaborate rituals for divining and influencing the outcome of battles using the many tiny idols left by the ancients. All those other texts are but

elaborate shadows cast by the prophet's followers in his radiance. The Pawnsmen are understanding, but they try to make it clear following the wrong rules will give misleading results!

The ancient nature of their paraphernalia echoes into the present. They are well known for making little distractions and oddments for a community's orphans, taking them in and seeing to their education.

PORTFOLIO: strategists and strategems, majordomos in charge of resource management, generals and orphans.

FRINGE CULT: There are a few amongst The Pawnsmen who have strayed from the faith and begun collecting and destroying the idols. They believe that only when all the idols are destroyed will peace and prosperity return to their war-torn lands. The orphanages of this splinter group are particularly dreary places of labor.

KNIGHTS OF THE GARDEN

In the center of one of the many ruined cities that dots the landscape lies an edifice reverently called "the garden." Why this particular moniker is never really clear, as nothing has grown there in years. It is said that before the fall great contests of skill and athleticism were held here. During the right seasons the floor could be made ice and warriors from around the world would battle with blades on their feet for a tiny otherworldly creature known as Puck. During other seasons tall men would fight over an orb.

The Knights (dressing in an odd mix of hockey and basketball equipment) strive to preserve the codes of conduct - sportsmanship, they call it - of those long-forgotten ritualistic warriors. The location of The Garden makes it an ideal community center for folks re-entering the ruins, so the Knights have become the go-to folks for maps, knowledge of local flora and fauna, as well as treatment for the aches and pains one tends to accumulate in the quest for the fabled Cup of Lord Stanley.

In remembrance for what they believe The Garden once was, they are also known for planting trees. In time, certain of these sacred groves will produce new sticks for a later generation of Knights.

A KNIGHTLY HERESY: They were just games. Winning or losing had nothing to do with the harvests or the safety of a bunch of outlander and vault-dweller scavengers.

PARAPHERNALIA: Hockey pads over basketball uniforms. Sacred orbs and hoops. Hockey sticks.

Dear Secret Santicore—

*I would like a lair or set of encounters for
Mutant Future that feature only mutant
plant monsters.*

Thanks!

K.

LAIR OF THE FUNGALOIDS

A SHORT ENCOUNTER FOR MUTANT FUTURE

by Zzarchov

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SYNOPSIS

A cult of ecoterrorists worshiping a mutant tree! the giant oak tree up top however is covered in tree fungus and lichens. The grove it dominates is covered in rotten logs covered in fungus. The eco-terrorists seem to have been undone by mother nature. The Oak Tree itself has a wheezing face peering out and occasionally whispering “help..me...”

If that isn't a draw, the eco-terrorists also had a tonne of old tech weapons they scavenged. I wonder if that hole in the ground would lead to their secret cache of stolen valuables and ray guns.

A

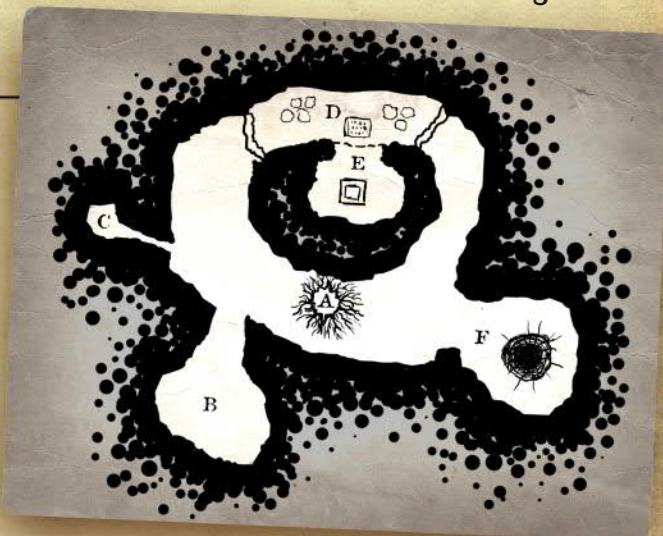
This is the entry. The area is an earthen tunnel, long rotted roots sprawling across the ground. Small mushrooms of all shapes and sizes, the occasional patching being phosphorescent, litter the area. Radiation levels are high near the glowing fungus. The tunnel forms a ring around the oak tree up top, blocked off by two cobblestone and scrap metal walls, with a healthy dose of clay globbed on to boot. The walls are covered with scorch marks.

B

The walls of this spherical room (meaning walls, floor and ceiling as well) are made of spongy fungus. Anyone dying or recently dead that gets some in or on their body will become a fungal “zombie” and burrow into the spongy fungus. There are 3d4 zombies burrowed into the floor, walls and ceiling already. If anyone brings light into the room, digs into the fungus or starts a fire anywhere underground, the zombies will awaken and attempt to spread their contagion.

C

A pile of valuable and shiny looking material is at the back of this long, narrow and cramped tunnel (about two feet wide). The walls are covered in a thick layer of fungal slime that acts as Novocaine with a slight acidity (dissolving flesh over the course of weeks) requiring a saving throw to avoid being paralysed for three hours after removal from the slime. At the end are 3 random metal weapons, a random pile of shiny junk and piles of gold and silver jewellery, covered in the transparent slime. Two rubbery and dissolving skeletons are also present, laying on top of a giant puffball. If the puffball is touched too suddenly it will explode in a cloud of corrosive enzymes for 3d6 damage.



Map by Jaz Gordon

D

Getting into this sealed area requires knocking down the walls (intelligence check or in doing so you cause a cave in for 2d12 damage). This sealed room is full of salt lines and burnt out torches. In between the salt lines are several random weapons, several skeletons and large puffballs. Accidentally stepping on one releases a cloud of deadly spores (1d4 damage to all present). Make a dex check for each thing a person wants to check out, failure triggering a cloud of spores. A gate blocks access to E, the gate is controlled by a terminal/puzzle box (PC's must win a game of “MASTERMIND” to open it, else it seals permanently).

E

Heart of the tree, a beating heart (the size of an ox heart) that is grey and nearly dead. It is covered in toadstools and mould. Cleaning it and splashing fresh blood on the heart gets it pumping again. The tree will begin springing to life and releasing antibodies to quickly kill off the fungus (2d20 rounds). Of course entering this room summons the slime-mould from the well in F.

F

This region has a cobblestone well in an otherwise bare area. The well looks a good 20 feet deep with liquid in it. That liquid is a massive slime mould with 100hp, and it can only be harmed by flamethrowers, acid vats and similar sorts of things. At the bottom of the well are literally buckets full of shiny metal trinkets and 3d4 metal weapons. The slime mould will head to E if the players open the gate. It moves fast and will arrive in 3 rounds, pouring into any opening. It will reinfect the tree heart if it slime can eat the PC's first, it and will not leave the lair.

Happy Holidays!