

The Maynooth Codex of Tabletop Adventures

A Treasury of TTRPG Scenarios and Monsters

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Introduction

Writing for Role-Playing Games: Narratives, Adventures, and Worldbuilding was a post-graduate class offered in the summer of 2024 by Maynooth University. Students immersed themselves in theory, design, and, most importantly, writing. The diversity of games that students were interested in speaks to the strength of the genre. Indeed, the existence of the class itself is a recognition of the importance and, dare we say, legitimacy of tabletop RPGs as a creative industry. As the works presented here demonstrate, tabletop RPGs offer a unique site to explore fundamental questions about society and human experience.

We and our students would like to thank the industry experts who volunteered their time to work with the class: Chris Doyle, Emmet Byrne, and Ciaran McGrath. We are also grateful for the support of our industry partners: Goodman Games, Cubicle 7 Games, and Black Shamrock.

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Critical Skills Programme, Maynooth University

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Hallow Hollow

by Gray Gately

A scenario for SPIRE: The City Must Fall



Introduction

Hallow Hollow is a short scenario that can be included as part of a longer campaign of *SPIRE: The City Must Fall*, or as a one-shot adventure. This scenario assumes that the reader is familiar with *SPIRE*, its setting and terminology, and the Resistance system used by the game.

Upon starting the scenario, the GM should read aloud (or paraphrase) the following text to the players.

Hallow Malwyn was a warrior-saint who fought against the initial invasion of Spire centuries ago, and was martyred in the name of the goddess. It is said that, as the final drops of his lifeblood trickled away, sprouts emerged from the soil beneath his dying body. Those sprouts swiftly became saplings, then grew taller and taller still, becoming towering trees that formed a grove to shelter the hallow's body from those who had slain him. The midwives raised you on stories of Malwyn's tenacity and grace, and those among the faithful still speak of Malwyn's fabled, hidden grove, buried somewhere in the verdant depths of the Garden District. As a child, you might even have believed in these tales. Maybe you still do?

Lately, however, word has begun spreading through the narrow and tangled streets of Spire – that the paradise that sprang up as Hallow Malwyn breathed his last survives, untouched and unspoiled by the years of oppression under the cruel reign of Spire's new masters. Lending credence to these rumours is the recent identification of a secluded grove located deep within the Garden District, shielded by a cluster of massive trees unlike any other seen in the city. Somebody up-Spire clearly seems to have taken an interest, because reports have indicated that the City Guard have been making lengthy incursions into the district, where they normally never dare to tread. Fortunately, if Amaranth has caught wind of this mysterious grove and its location, then the Ministry of Our Hidden Mistress already knows all about it.

Your cell has been tasked with infiltrating and reconnoitering the grove, locating the source of its apparently-miraculous properties, and either securing said source for the Ministry or destroying it before the aelfir can obtain it for themselves. The continued survival of the grove and any within it are of little concern to the Ministry, but the Council cannot be permitted to gain any sort of foothold within the drow-loyal territories of the Garden District; should it come

down to it, it would be better to see the grove burned to the ground than to have it fall into enemy hands.

What's Really Going On

Hallow Malwyn's legend is true. The divine power bestowed upon him by his glorious sacrifice, suffused with the strength of the collective belief in his tale among the faithful, has caused his lifeless carcass to swell like an overripe fruit. Two hundred years on, it's become a gnarled mass of mutated flesh and plant growth buried beneath the soil, scarcely recognisable as having once been a person: the Hollow Hallow. From this tumescent abomination, life springs forth – providing the source of the bountiful growth in the grove above. Few who dwell within the grove are aware of what's become of the hallowed corpse, save for a handful of people – the dryads – who've dedicated themselves to preserving the body of the hallow and the grove that spawned from it. Partly a cult and partly a punk gang, the dryads defend their territory from any and all who would attempt to harm or exploit the grove and its wonders.

Inside the grove lies a small but diverse array of people who either sought refuge from the outside world themselves, or are descended from those who found it. Together, they make up a self-subsisting community by the name of Hallow Hollow, and live off of the numerous bounties provided by the grove's natural wonders. While the dryads drive away most who come here, nobody is forbidden from leaving. What tales of the outside world that make their way through the thickets of trees, however, tend to border on horrific, and this discourages the vast majority of people from ever going outside the grove's boundaries. This is one of the few places in Spire, for instance, where all three of the Damnic goddess' aspects are worshipped openly and alongside each other without repression. The same goes for the Solar Pantheon, the Many, and a number of other faiths. This isn't to say that all of the villagers always get along, but the dryads do their best to make sure that disputes never spiral into outright conflict.

Unfortunately, events are conspiring to bring about Hallow Hollow's demise; somebody within the grove is feeding information to up-Spire contacts, with the intent of bringing the full fury of the City Guard down on the grove, and it's up to the players to figure out who. Finding out that there's a spy in the community in the first place will likely be their first task upon

arriving. Gathering clues on this mole's identity will form the bulk of this scenario. Following that, the players will decide what to do with the mole, with the inevitable assault of the City Guard on the grove ensuing shortly afterwards. The climax of the tale will vary depending on how prior events have played out, with the fate of Hallow Hollow and its inhabitants hinging on the party's actions.

The Setting

Hallow Hollow

Hallow Hollow is the community that has sprung up within Malwyn's Grove, where those seeking refuge from war, conflict, and oppression have found sanctuary. Founded by the dryads nearly two centuries ago, Hallow Hollow is now populated with a broad variety of people – drow, aelfir, humans, gnolls, and even some gutterkin. It is a small village made up of somewhere between one and two hundred people (with roughly half of that number being drow).

Sunlight is a rarity in Spire – especially so deep within the Garden District – but the trees of Malwyn's Grove grow tall and hearty all the same, and the luscious variety of fruits they bear form a core part of the village's diet. What's more, the local brewers use these fruits to create wine, cider, and multiple other beverages. In fact, any plant one can imagine seems



to flourish in the grove's soil, and many villagers have their own gardens that produce leafy greens and vegetables that can be found nowhere else in the district.

Map

Key:

1. Looking-Fir Trade	4. The Final Rest
2. Damnic Chapel	5. Harmvony Hall
3. Solar Shrine	6. The Fallen Apple

Locations

Here are a number of places and things within

Malwyn's Grove that the players can visit as part of this scenario:

- **The Fallen Apple:** The village tavern and bar, which serves a broad variety of locally-brewed beverages and hot meals. The lodgings upstairs are typically inhabited by newcomers to the grove whose houses haven't been built yet; visitors and other guests are understandably rare.
- **Looking-Fir Trade:** A small emporium run by a pair of conjoined twins named Holly and Hazel, where the villagers can exchange items of value for useful goods otherwise unavailable in the grove. Nobody really knows how the twins get their hands on the things they have on offer, and the two of them certainly aren't telling.
- **Damnic Chapel:** A plain-but-inviting site of worship for Damnou – the tripartite goddess of the drow. The chapel interior is lined with circular pews that radiate outwards from the central altar, where statues of all three Damnic aspects are situated.
- **Solar Shrine:** A smaller, open-air site of worship dedicated to the Solar Pantheon – taking the form of a pavilion with four pillars, each of which serves as a shrine to one of the deities. The pillars hold up a dome-shaped roof, the bottom of which is marked with the solar calendar.
- **Harmony Hall:** The community centre, where the entire settlement comes together in weekly assemblies to debate and organise how the village is run. Despite the name, there's rarely a time when the hall isn't filled with noise and people; even outside of the regular assemblies, the hall is used as a venue for performances, group dining, parties, and more.
- **The Final Rest:** A statue of Hallow Malwyn that stands tall atop a pedestal in the exact centre of the grove, said to mark the spot where his body fell all those years ago. The back of the pedestal hides a secret passage, known only to the dryads, that leads down to the Burial Grounds.
- **Burial Grounds:** A series of passages that wind their way deep under the grove. At their heart lies the remains of Hallow Malwyn – now a heaving mass of plant matter and viscera.

The Hollow Hallow

Whatever there once was of Hallow Malwyn is long gone; his soul has reincarnated (as is typical of hallows) and is now likely inhabiting some impoverished dark-farmer on the opposite side of the district, who spends their days laboriously stirring massive vats of algae and their nights dreaming of battles they never fought in. His soulless body, however, lives on, in its own way – the Hollow Hallow, in all its gruesome glory, is the source of the grove’s natural fecundity and splendour. Were the hallow to be destroyed in some way (eg. through copious amounts of fire, or by having the beating heart at its core removed), the flora of the grove would wither away and die – including the dryads.

The Hollow Hallow can be best described as a pulsating mass of organic material, consisting of everything from bone marrow to plant tissue. Swollen corpse-meat and fleshy rhizomes form the foundations of the grove’s tree roots, and it’s difficult to tell where the tumours end and the tubers begin. What’s more, it’s still spreading – two centuries after Malwyn’s demise, his body continues to grow, with no sign of slowing. The hallow’s rhizomes form a large underground network, and wherever they reach the surface, bountiful plant growth appears. If left unchecked, the Hollow Hallow might spread across the entire Garden District...eventually.

The Dryads

The dryads of Malwyn’s Grove are a gang, consisting mostly (but not exclusively) of drow, who have undergone a unique mutation after drinking the ichorous sap of the Hollow Hallow. This process irreversibly transforms their body – turning their veins into xylem and their skin into bark. They are the faithful followers of Hollow Malwyn, and style themselves after his iconic fashion: wearing dark greens, khakis and black; sporting elaborate hairstyles; and having a great deal of piercings. The dryads are a very exclusive group: only those who have sworn to defend the grove and the Hollow Hallow from any and all threats are permitted to partake of the transformation ritual, forever binding them to Malwyn’s Grove. For the dryads, defending Hallow Hollow from outsiders is not simply out of duty to those in their protection, or out of devotion to their hallow, but because they would perish were the grove to be destroyed. When a dryad does die – and they’re no less mortal than anyone else – their body transforms fully into a tree. Many of the older trees around the grove were once dryads, and can often be identified as such by the metal piercings embedded in their bark.

Although they founded the community and are

charged with its defence, the dryads tend not to position themselves as being “above” or superior to the other villagers of Hallow Hollow. They participate in the weekly assemblies, don’t talk over anybody else, and intervene in interpersonal conflicts only when they might harm the community at large. Despite this, there are those within the grove who dislike or even resent the power the dryads wield, as well as the secrecy with which they conduct themselves. Should the dryads ever overstep their bounds, the community could be quickly rent in twain.

Persons of Interest

June

Juniper (or “June”, as everyone calls them) is a gung-ho dryad with hair like willow branches and a face full of piercings. She was once a drow like any other, who fled into the depths of the Garden District to avoid being called for her durance. They lucked upon Malwyn’s Grove, quickly became enamoured with the place, and eventually joined the ranks of the dryads by drinking the sap of the Hollow Hallow. Together with her dryad comrades, she guards the grove from any predatory and malevolent outsiders.

June will be the first character the players meet as they attempt to infiltrate the grove at the start of the scenario, only to be caught and surrounded by a band of dryad enforcers. Fighting your way past them all could be tricky, and certainly wouldn’t make a good first impression on the grove’s residents. Should the party convince June and the other dryads of the virtue of their intentions towards Hallow Hollow, they’ll grudgingly step aside and permit entry. But don’t expect them to let their guard down – the dryads will be keeping a close eye on you as you move throughout the grove.

As the scenario progresses, June’s motivations remain true. Her devotion to the grove borders on fanatical, and she would sooner die than see her home destroyed or corrupted by outsiders. Hence, they’re most likely to throw their lot in with Dust’s plan to try and defend the grove from the City Guard’s assault.

Descriptors: Leaning against a wall with their arms folded, watching you intently; calling out to you from above, where she crouches on a branch like a cat; flexing their knuckles – which crack like snapping twigs – as they prepare to swing a punch.

Difficulty: 1, or 2 with their fellow dryads backing them up.

Resistance: 5

Equipment: A pair of knuckle dusters with the words “TREE” and “BRAT” (D3, Piercing)

Avesh

A loyal servant of Lombre. As is the case with many of Our Hidden Mistress' most faithful devotees, Avesh has been rewarded by having their identity wiped clean, in order to more easily assume false personas; *avesh* is an Old Desteran word used to describe the darkness between stars. In this way, they have taken on multiple roles throughout Hallow Hollow, with barely a handful of people aware of their true nature. Not even Avesh remembers what their face looks like beneath the mask and cowl – if they even have one anymore.

Avesh will make a strong ally should the party convince them of their devotion to the Ministry's cause: their various false identities have permeated almost every facet and faction within the grove's diverse community, with the exception of the highly-exclusive dryads (much to Avesh's frustration). With the information at their disposal, Avesh will guide the players throughout the grove and supply them with knowledge and expertise. Conversely, should the party disobey the Ministry's orders – such as by prioritising the safety of the grove and its inhabitants – Avesh (and their various "selves") will assuredly stand against them.

Descriptors: Popping up seemingly out of thin-air in yet another disguise; melting away back into the shadows as soon as your back is turned; rolling up their sleeve to reveal the mark of Lombre tattooed on their forearm.

Difficulty: 1, when not in disguise. Otherwise, 0.

Resistance: 7

Equipment: Twin sickles (D6, Piercing)

Covers

Avesh has many cover identities that assume various roles throughout Hallow Hollow. Despite the insular nature of the community, very few people are aware of their real identity, and even the ones who are have no idea how many of their "neighbours" are actually just Avesh in disguise. Here are just a few of Avesh's various personas:

- **Tobyn Ull**, a chatty barman who works in The Fallen Apple.
- **Yvon Esse**, an eager youth whose frequent attempts to join the dryads are always rejected.
- **Neyva Junn**, a gossipy spinster with her own vegetable garden and at least three cats.
- **Ferren Thon**, a pious old man who often attends the many prayer services in the local chapel.

- **Ultan Irick**, a former soldier who deserted his post at the frontlines of the war in the south.

Larryn Vess

A faithful servant of Limyé, who typically conducts the prayer services in the chapel, leads the community in songs of praise, and bakes delicious fruit pies for the congregants (as well as anybody else who'd enjoy a slice). She is also the mole who has been leaking information about the hidden grove to the Coalition; she attaches coded messages to her corvids, which fly all the way to the Cathedral of Our Glorious Lady, where the messages are collected by a collaborator among the clergy who funnels the information further up-Spire.

Like many drow who serve Limyé, Larryn wishes to crush any and all resistance to the aelfir regime – in this case, a self-sufficient, pluralist community that recognises no government. By having Malwyn's Grove destroyed, she hopes to strongly discourage the notion of opposing the will of the Council. The promise of a comfortable position in the Church of Our Glorious Lady waiting for her after Hallow Hollow's demise is merely a bonus. The loss of her friends and neighbours would be a tragedy, certainly, but a necessary one; as a servant of Our Glorious Lady, she feels she must prioritise the needs of the greater community (that is, the people of Spire) over those of the individuals (the people who love her).

Larryn keeps her true agenda well-hidden beneath an entirely-sincere persona of niceness and pleasantries; unearthing her treachery will be difficult without finding clear evidence. Additionally, the players could catch her in the act of delivering or receiving her coded messages – even were she to feign innocence, the idea of being in contact with people outside the grove would draw a great degree of suspicion from the more paranoid members of the community, were they to find out.

Descriptors: Feeding berries to a raven perched on her shoulder; sitting in a pew as she patiently listens to another congregant's tale of Our Glorious Lady; sneaking away after a prayer service, making for the woods on the grove's outskirts.

Difficulty: 0 – she is a preacher, not a fighter.

Resistance: 5

Equipment: Deceptively heavy book of prayers and hymns (D3, Brutal, Surprising)

Slowly-Fades-to-Dust

A zealous servant of Lekolé, Dust (or “Dusty” to his friends) is one of the rare aelfir who worships the most violent and vengeful of the Damnic goddess’ aspects. Having seen first-hand the cruelties inflicted on the drow by his own people, Dust fled Amaranth as a young man and sought refuge down-Spire. Although he eventually found a home in Hallow Hollow, he never forgot the injustices he had witnessed outside the grove – a fact that soon brought him to the altar of Our Crimson Vigil.

Dust is loud, brash, and ready for a scrap. He believes that Hallow Hollow – a community largely made up of non-combatants – can withstand a full-scale assault from the elite soldiers of the City Guard, and convincing him otherwise would be futile. That isn’t to say that defending the grove is impossible or pointless, but it *will* be difficult. Having been raised in a military family, Dust is familiar with some of the City Guard’s tactics, and is more than willing to coordinate the defence and even fight on the frontline if need be; should he have to give his life in protection of his community, he will have honoured both his goddess and his hallow.

Descriptors: Wearing his old mask, which has been painted over in the dark reds of Lekolé, about his neck; leaping up onto a table as he tries to rally the people to his violent and vengeful cause; kneeling in prayer at the foot of the Final Rest, heedless of the dryad trying to shoo him away.

Difficulty: 1

Resistance: 6

Equipment: A sharp stick he found lying on the ground (D3)

Holly and Hazel

A pair of identical twins who have been quite literally joined at the hip since birth. They are both dryads, but unlike many of their peers, Holly and Hazel spend their time manning the local trade emporium rather than guarding the grove from internal and external threats; their disability renders them largely incapable of things such as combat or even moving faster than a brisk walk. They’ve earned something of a reputation amongst the community – given enough time, they can get their hands on anything you need, so long as you don’t ask any questions about how or where they obtained it.

The fact of the matter is that the twins are affiliated with an underground smuggling ring that has ties to the Vermissian network – in return for supplying rare fruits and other valuables, Holly and Hazel are able to get ahold of goods that can’t ordinarily be found within the grove. The other dryads are largely aware

of this fact, but are generally willing to keep their ligneous noses out of the twins’ affairs in exchange for a steady supply of malak.

The twins’ shiftiness regarding the source of their supplies might draw the players’ suspicions towards them early on, but they aren’t guilty of anything besides smuggling (and occasionally skimming a bit off the top – just to keep the business up and running). What they *do* have is a way down into the Burial Grounds outside of the secret passage beneath the Final Rest; if the players need to sneak down there without the dryads noticing, the tunnels in the basement of Looking-Fir Trade are their best option. Crucially, they also have access to a hidden passageway leading out of the grove – something that could prove useful as events come to a head...

Other Characters

The Coalition

The Coalition are the villains of our piece – a trio of up-Spire plutocrats who’ve formed a temporary alliance for the sake of putting an end to Malwyn’s Grove. They don’t particularly like each other very much (or at all, really), but for the time being, their goals and interests have aligned towards the utter extermination of the grove and everyone in it.

- **Look-to-the-Sapphire-Skies**, an absentee landlord – like a great many of Spire’s richest aelfir – having inherited sizable properties from his dearly-departed aunt, Glance-at-the-Cerulean-Seas. Not satisfied with his already-immense wealth, Skies is looking to invest in a new array of aelfir plantations in the Garden District. Unfortunately, Malwyn’s Grove just so happens to be situated in the way of one such development, meaning that it’ll have to go.
- **Krysanth Shu**, a human business magnate who has almost entirely monopolised the fruit market in Spire’s upper districts through a combination of her phenomenal wealth, utter ruthlessness, and the peculiar tendency of her rivals to succumb to hemlock poisoning. The aelfir of Amaranth are obsessed with fruit, and its thanks to Krysanth that they can access it at a price that some might even say is quite reasonable; the last thing she’s going to tolerate is a bountiful grove, right in the heart of the city, where people can acquire the stuff for free.
- **Hears-the-Loathsome-Pulse**, a high-level administrator in the employ of the Bureau

of Development. Put simply, they detest the idea that the aelfir do not (and in fact, *cannot*) control every inch of Spire from the peaks of New Heaven all the way down to the depths of Derelictus. The Garden District, in particular, rankles Loathsome, and they'd gladly seize any opportunity to wipe out an enclave of rebels hiding within it.

Zanriel “Old Man Zan” Vosk

Much as is the case with the blood-witches of Heart, it's a common misconception that all drow midwives must be female. While it's certainly true that most of them tend to be women, there's an exception for every rule. This particular exception runs the hatchery in Hallow Hollow, where he tends to the egg-sacs, weaves the blankets, and sends the little ones off to bed with stories of Hallow Malwyn and other heroes of dark elven legend. To an entire generation of drow in the grove, “Old Man Zan” is their cool uncle, who'll gladly share a drink with them in the Fallen Apple and discuss their woes with them after the kids have gone to sleep. Also, his trendy shades hide a glassy, black pair of eyes, his salt-and-pepper beard hides a set of pincerlike mandibles, and his shabby trenchcoat hides an extra pair of arms.

Hahran

The matron of the Fallen Apple is a boisterous gnoll who fled the war in her homeland years ago, bringing her bartending skills and enthusiasm for hospitality with her. Having been warmly welcomed into Hallow Hollow, Hahran returns the favour by providing quality food and delicious beverages to anybody who sets foot in her tavern. She'd also be happy to allow the party to stay overnight in some spare rooms upstairs – it's been ages since the place had a new set of guests, and frankly, she's gotten a little bit bored of seeing the same faces day in and day out.

The Triumvirate

There are exactly three gutterkin living in Hallow Hollow, and they've concluded that they can accomplish far more by working together than separately. To this end, they have formed a political organisation known as the “Triumvirate” for the purpose of advancing gutterkin rights, welfare, and visibility within the grove – inspired by similar movements that have been making great strides elsewhere in Spire. The Triumvirate are frequent and vocal participants in the community's assemblies, despite the fact that only one of them is capable of

coherent speech.

- **Ruffles**, an overgrown owl who communicates primarily through unearthly screeches and frenetic flapping of wings.
- **Tumble**, a goblinoid creature who successfully learned verbal communication by listening to drow and human workers at the North Docks. She is still learning to read, however.
- **Slurp**, a toadlike humanoid with a massive tongue that perpetually hangs out of his mouth, leaving a heavy trail of saliva wherever he goes.

The Story

Beginning

At the start of the scenario, the players will have just entered the thick woods that encircle the grove. Not long after this, they'll find themselves surrounded by dryads, who emerge from the gloom with weapons drawn. June will lead the interrogation, demanding to know why the party has come here. It is up to the players how to approach this confrontation:

- A Compel roll could be used to convince the dryads of the party's integrity.
- A Deceive roll could be used to lie to the dryads about the party's true aims.
- A Sneak roll could be used to slip by the dryads after the party pretends to turn back.
- Some other method – let the players be creative!

The players are welcome to try and fight the dryads, but the GM should stress that the party is hopelessly outnumbered and in unfamiliar territory. Coming into conflict with the grove's guardians so early on will seriously impede the party's ability to navigate the grove later, so getting into a fight here and now is ill-advised.

Once the party does get past the dryads, they arrive in the village of Hallow Hollow. At this point, the players are free to explore the grove as they wish, although the dryads will be keeping an eye on them all the while.

Plot Threads

Avesh's Attention

As the party moves about the grove, they will inevitably draw the attention of Avesh in one or more of their many guises. After a player has met with at least one of Avesh's cover identities, the GM should

provide them with a secret note that their character finds on their person, with no clue as to how or when it got there. The note addresses them by name, and is marked with the all-too-familiar sigil of Our Hidden Mistress:

After nightfall, come to the first house to the west of the tavern. Knock three times on the side door; pause, then knock once again to be let in. I await you there.

Should one (or more) of the players follow these instructions to the letter, they will be able to meet with Avesh. Although they aren't a member of the Ministry themselves, Avesh is still faithful to the will of Lombre, and believes that assisting the party in their mission is the best way to serve Our Hidden Mistress. To that end, they will share their knowledge with the player characters – that somebody within the grove is leaking information up-Spire, which is the reason behind the City Guard's recent incursions into the Garden District. To support their claim, Avesh will provide the party with a coded note they uncovered. They haven't been able to fully decrypt the note yet, and hope that one of the ministers can.

Following this, Avesh will identify a number of key suspects:

- Larryn Vess, who has a flock of corvids that she could use to transmit messages in and out of the grove. She also has a habit of disappearing after her regular prayer services conclude.
- Slowly-Fades-To-Dust, who is a loud and disruptive presence within the community. Furthermore, he's an aelfir from Amaranth, and might not have entirely severed all of his connections to his previous life.
- Holly and Hazel, who clearly have some methods of moving things in and out of the grove undetected. Avesh doesn't believe that two dryads would sell out the grove they've been sworn to protect, but can't quite rule them out, either.

Notably, Avesh is not an objective source of information (despite what they themselves might believe), and has allowed some of their own preconceived notions and biases to colour their suspicions. For example, the two "priority" suspects they list are servants of the other two Damnic aspects, and Avesh bears some degree of animosity towards them for their apparent lack of piety towards Our Hidden Mistress. The players could pick up on this, if they wish, with an Investigate skill roll.

If asked about the "source" of the grove's power,

which the Ministry has asked the party to uncover, Avesh will say that the dryads are most likely the key, and that they have a secret passage somewhere within the grove that leads them to an underground base. Anything more on the subject, the players will need to find out for themselves.

Following their meeting with Avesh, the party are once again free to explore the grove, albeit this time with a better idea of what to look for. The players are not limited to the suspects Avesh has identified, and can follow up on any lead (and in any order) they wish.

Investigating Larryn

Larryn is the true culprit that Avesh has been searching for, and there are a number of methods through which the players can discover this. Attending one of her prayer services in the chapel will reveal nothing suspicious, but she will end the service by handing out blessing cards to every congregant. Should the party compare the handwriting on the cards to the coded note they received from Avesh (by making an Investigate roll, for example), they will find that they are a perfect match.

Covertly following Larryn's movements (such as with a Pursue or Sneak roll) after the service will allow the players to witness her sending a message out of the grove using a corvid. Confronting her immediately will only make her spin a convincing half-truth about contacting fellow worshippers of Our Glorious Mistress; exposing her as the mole will take more decisive evidence.

By breaking into her house, the players can not only uncover coded messages written in the same handwriting as the note Avesh gave them, but a sample cipher used to encrypt and decrypt said messages. With this, the players can read the coded message that Avesh couldn't decipher:

Secret passage inside statue.

Source of mutation lies beneath.

May Our Glorious Mistress light their way.

Investigating Dust

Regardless of which method the players use to investigate Slowly-Fades-To-Dust, they will unfailingly be drawn to one conclusion: he has no hidden agenda. Tailing him as he moves about his daily rituals will reveal nothing duplicitous or covert, snooping around his house will uncover nothing beyond his already-obvious devotion to Lekolé, and simply interrogating him directly will result in him being unflappably honest and straightforward.

Dust was raised in a society where a person's true face must be hidden at all times – both literally and metaphorically – and he has embraced his life down-Spire by rejecting that notion wholeheartedly. He desires nothing more or less than the total destruction of the current regime in Spire through violent and bloody insurrection, and has been trying desperately (and unsuccessfully) to convince the other villagers to join this cause for some time now.

Investigating the Twins

Should the party pay a visit to Looking-Fir Trade, they will be warmly greeted by Holly and Hazel both. Outsiders are rare indeed in Hallow Hollow, and they'll be more than happy to purchase any valuables the party are willing to sell them. They'd also be delighted to talk about the grove and its inhabitants, give directions, and make recommendations. Should this pleasant discussion turn to the topic of where and how their emporium obtains its goods, however, the twins will tactfully and skillfully steer the conversation elsewhere. To get to the bottom of this mystery, the players will need to get past the twins and move deeper into the building.

An ideal method would be for one or more player characters to enter the emporium and distract the twins while the rest of the party either sneaks behind the counter or breaks in through a window or back entrance. Alternatively, the party could wait until the twins leave, although this may take time the player characters can't afford to waste. Searching the living quarters will allow the players to find the twins' ledger, where they can learn about the various products the two have been moving in and out of the grove, as well as hints about the larger smuggling ring they are part of.

Most importantly, reaching the basement will allow the players to find the secret tunnels leading out of the grove, as well as the ones that connect to the Burial Grounds. And should the party attempt to evacuate the grove later on, these tunnels would be an ideal method of escape.

Burial Grounds

There are two methods of reaching the Burial Grounds – by the secret passage beneath the Final Rest, and via the tunnels under Looking-Fir Trade. The former method is much more difficult; the mechanism that opens the secret passage in the statue is known only to the dryads, but a difficult Investigate roll could enable a player to crack it. Alternatively, the players could Sneak in during the brief window of time when the passage lies open as the dryads enter or exit, or

persuade a dryad to open it for them (via whatever methods the party deems appropriate).

If the party navigates their way through the tunnels, they will come across the Hollow Hallow. The party are welcome to investigate this oddity, but they risk drawing too much attention; if they tarry too long or make too much commotion, the dryads will catch onto them. If caught and surrounded, the party must convince the dryads that they will keep the Hollow Hallow a secret (through a Compel or Deceive roll, for example). Otherwise, the dryads will attack.

Dryad Stats

Descriptors: Two pointed ears, tipped with metallic piercings, on either side of a shaved head covered in moss; slitting open a pulsating vine and swallowing down the sap that spills forth; grinning with timberly teeth as they advance on you.

Difficulty: 0, or 1 with their fellow dryads backing them up.

Resistance: 5

Equipment: Sharp branch (D3, Piercing)

Assembly

One of Hallow Hollow's regular weekly assemblies will be held on the evening of the party's second day in the grove. The players, as guests of the community, are invited to attend, with some restrictions on their participation. It is here that recent events within the grove will be discussed by the villagers, and the party will have the opportunity to reveal the identity of the mole to the community at large.

During the assembly, Avesh (in one of their guises) will reveal the existence of a spy within the grove, and usher forth the party to reveal their identity. The players may accuse any character they wish, but evidence of their claims will be demanded; the more dirt they have on the suspect, the less difficult it will be to persuade the other villagers of their guilt. A skill roll (or several) will likely be required, and the GM should use the follow examples as a guideline for determining the difficulty of the challenge:

- **Accusing Larryn – difficulty 2**
Larryn is an unassuming and beloved pillar of the community – she has more than a few people in her corner. Linking her to the coded messages will lower the difficulty by 1, and decrypting those messages will lower it by 1 more step.
- **Accusing Dust – difficulty 0**
Dust has already drawn a great deal of

attention to himself within the grove. Additionally, he's an aelfir from up-Spire in a down-Spire community made up largely of drow; hard evidence against him won't be hugely necessary to turn them against him.

- **Accusing the twins – difficulty 1**

Holly and Hazel are popular among the villagers, but they're undeniably suspicious. If the party has found the tunnels that lead outside the grove, the difficulty lowers by 1 step.

- **Accusing Avesh – difficulty 1**

The villagers will find it hard to believe that somebody like Avesh could have hidden right under their noses for so long. If the party can prove the link between Avesh's various guises (such as by revealing the tattoo of Our Hidden Mistress on their forearm), the difficulty lowers by 1 step.

- **Accusing somebody else – difficulty 2**

The party can identify any character within the grove they wish as the mole, but the lack of hard evidence will make their case difficult to believe.

Should the party succeed in turning the community against their chosen suspect, the suspect will be found guilty. Otherwise, the players will be accused of just trying to foment strife and discord. Just after the sentencing, however, a dryad scout barges in with an urgent report – the grove is surrounded by the City Guard, and they've brought elite weaponry. They'll be here soon, which means it's time for a decision to be made regarding the grove's future. The suspect, should they have been found guilty, will be accused of bringing the guards to the grove, and summarily executed. If not, the blame will be laid upon the party, and the villagers will demand they leave the grove immediately. Should the true culprit (Larryn) have escaped justice, she will slip away during the ensuing commotion and flee the grove. The GM can include her as an NPC again later in the campaign if they wish, or just have the Guard gun her down as she attempts to escape. Either way, she has departed this scenario for good.

Invasion

If the party have not been ejected from Hallow Hollow, they are permitted to participate in the assembly's final decision: to work together to defend the grove from the invaders, or to evacuate as many of the villagers as possible while the dryads remain behind. Dust spearheads the defence plan, while

Holly and Hazel push to evacuate the grove instead. The party can make a skill roll (such as Compel or Resist) to attempt to sway as many people within the community as they can to choose one option or the other, but there are those (such as the dryads) who won't leave either way.

Defending Hallow Hollow is the only way that the grove and the dryads can survive, but it's entirely possible that the party will fail and the grove is destroyed anyway, with massive casualties. The evacuation route will guarantee the grove's demise, but there's always a chance that the survivors could rebuild, and securing the core of the Hollow Hallow on their way out would mean fulfilling the Ministry's mission. It's up to the players to decide which way to go.

- **Defending the Grove**

Dust immediately sets about shoring up the grove's defences – building barricades, and providing weapons from his “personal stash”. If the party assists his efforts (such as by making a successful Fix roll), the difficulty of all skill rolls for the duration of the coming battle will be reduced by 1 step. Then, the fight to defend the grove will begin.

The vanguard of the assault is comprised of the Purifiers – elite aelfir guards linked to the Solar Church, who wield human-engineered weaponry and specialise in wiping out even the barest sniff of rebel activity with extreme prejudice. The Coalition have paid them a great deal of money to lead the City Guard into battle with their high-tech “Irruptors” – flame-spewing rifles made for eradicating anything that may stand in the way of the Purifiers' holy mission. Needless to say, the Purifiers will prove a deadly threat to the grove and its inhabitants if they aren't stopped, and quickly. The regular grunts of the City Guard are backing up the Purifiers in their assault on Hallow Hollow, but these guards are not hardened soldiers, and if the vanguard falls, they'll be quick to turn tail and retreat. In other words, if the players are able to take down all of the Purifiers (the exact number of which is up to the GM), the battle will be won and what's left of the grove will be saved.

There is an added complication, however; during the fight, Avesh will attempt to sneak down into the Burial Grounds and steal the core out from the Hollow Hallow, before

making their getaway. If successful, the grove will fall, and all of the dryads will perish – as will many more, with nobody to defend them. Thus, the party will need to split their focus: some will remain on the surface to repel the guards, while the rest pursue Avesh.

Purifier Stats

Descriptors: An ash-white shadow moving slowly and laboriously through the trees, like a spectre; flames reflecting off the pitiless, dark goggles embedded in their masks; breathing heavily and mechanically through their respirators as they aim the sputtering barrel of their weapon at you.

Difficulty: 1

Resistance: 7

Equipment: Irruptor (D6, Dangerous, Ongoing D3, Spread D3)

- **Evacuating the Grove**

Since the grove is surrounded, the twins offer the use of the tunnels beneath their emporium to spirit the villagers out of Hollow Hollow. Being dryads, they can't leave the grove themselves (and they unfortunately wouldn't be able to move quickly enough to escape, anyway), but they're willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the community's survival. The party can assist in the evacuation by making skill rolls (eg. Pursue or Sneak), with the difficulty of these rolls lowering by 1 step if the party found the tunnels beneath the emporium previously.

Meanwhile, Avesh is happy to get as many willing evacuees out of the grove as possible, but their real goal is getting their hands on the core of the Hollow Hollow; once enough people have escaped through the tunnels, Avesh will double back and make for the Burial Grounds. The party are free to follow them if they wish.

If the party *did* get ejected from the assembly, then there is only one path available to them:

- **Cast Out**

After the players have been kicked out, Avesh will leave the assembly to find them; they've discovered the truth of the Hollow Hollow, and they're not leaving without securing its power for the Ministry. Even if the players want to help defend the grove from the invaders, the villagers won't allow it, and will likely

treat the party as aggressors in turn. Thus, the players have little choice but to follow along with Avesh to steal the core of the Hollow Hollow and get out before the place is burned to cinders.

The Core

If the party reaches the Hollow Hollow instead of fleeing the grove, they will emerge at a confrontation. Avesh has carved into the putrid flesh of the hallowed corpse with the intent of stealing the beating core out from within and securing it for the Ministry. June has also arrived on the scene, and is trying to stop them. The players must choose to align with either Avesh or June, with the fate of the grove hanging in the balance. A fight is imminent, but it's possible for the party to defuse the situation with some effective skill rolls:

- Avesh is not beyond convincing, but is fixated on their task – the difficulty of any skill roll (eg. Compel or Resist) made to get them to stand down is 1. If the party successfully identified Larryn as the mole, the difficulty is lowered by 1 step, but if the party tried to accuse Avesh during the assembly, the difficulty increases by 1 step.
- June doesn't want to sacrifice herself or her people, but may be persuaded to give in with a skill roll (eg. Compel or Deceive) of difficulty 1. If the party swore before the dryads to protect the Hollow Hollow previously, the difficulty increases by 1 step, and if the party successfully convicted a suspect (regardless of their actual guilt) during the assembly, the difficulty decreases by 1 step.

Should Avesh be convinced to stand down, they will flee through the tunnels and escape the grove. What happens to them now is unknown – the GM can bring them back later in the campaign, should they wish. Afterwards, the party can continue the evacuation or defence of the grove, depending on their previous decisions. Note that, thanks to Larryn's efforts, the City Guard are aware of the Hollow Hollow's location; if the party cannot secure the core for themselves, or fend off the guards' assault, the Purifiers will destroy the Hollow Hollow with their cleansing fire. What's more, if the grove does fall, there's a good chance that the party will be captured or arrested, allowing the GM to set up another storyline involving the player characters being imprisoned (or worse besides).

Should the core be removed (perhaps through a successful Steal roll on the players' part), the Hollow Hollow will immediately begin to rot away, and June

will collapse, unmoving. The tunnels start trembling, as though caught in an earthquake, and the party must flee with Avesh. The grove may be doomed, but you've successfully completed your mission. It's time to leave.

Ending the Story

If the grove should fall, the GM should emphasise the tragedy and injustice of having lost this enclave against aelfir rule that, while certainly flawed, demonstrated another way Spire could be. Remind the players of the connections they made, of the lives now perished, and of the natural beauty that was burned to ash. The loss of Malwyn's Grove is a demoralising blow against the drow of the Garden District in particular, as the aelfir have now struck an unprecedented blow against a part of the city that has largely resisted them for so long. It won't be long before aelfir-owned plantations start popping up there like weeds.

If Avesh (with or without the party's help) managed to steal the core of the Hollow Hollow, they deliver it to the Ministry. Whether the party allied with Avesh or not, they still succeeded in their mission, impressing their superiors within the organisation. What the Ministry will do now with the core in their grasp is not for you low-level Ministers to know, but the GM should factor this important plot element into the later parts of their campaign.

Finally, if the grove survives, the GM should stress how momentous this victory is. The players went up against difficult odds in the name of saving a place and a people they had little obligation to protect, and while the cost might have been dear, they succeeded nonetheless. The Ministry will undoubtedly be displeased with the party's lack of regard for their orders, but it might just be possible to persuade them of the strategic (and propagandistic) value of the grove's survival. The City Guard might be back someday, and with greater numbers. But when they do return, Hollow Hollow will be ready for them.

Credits

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COMPATIBLE
WITH
SPIRE
THE CITY MUST FALL

n-Being

by Gray Gately

A creature compatible with *Heart: the City Beneath*



There exist many more spacial dimensions than the three we can perceive with the naked eye (and the handful more you can occasionally glimpse when drugged out of your wits on some of the more potent mind-altering substances that can be acquired in certain back alleys of Grist). Beyond the well-known and much-beloved x, y, and z-axes lie the far more confusing and esoteric q, r, and s-axes, and more besides – each one entirely orthogonal to the others. These higher dimensions may be difficult for our frail, mortal minds to fathom, but they are all very much inhabited. What's more, mathematicians theorise that there's likely no limit to the number of dimensions beyond our own – each of them containing further horrors to boggle the brain and melt the eyeballs. A drow philosopher once proclaimed that, just as a sphere would appear to be a circle when viewed from a flat, two-dimensional plane, an n-dimensional being could only be perceived as a three-dimensional cross-section when witnessed by us meagre 3-beings. Unfortunately, said philosopher's more level-headed friend was there to swiftly yank the bottle out of her grasp, and so we'll never know just how far that particular train of thought would have led her. All the same, she was correct in her predictive assessment of n-beings, whose forms when they do occasionally deign to grace our lower dimensions with their presence have often been described as “horrifying”, “agonising to look at”, and “uncomfortably fleshy”. Communicating with these higher entities is not impossible, but it *is* deeply confusing and frequently unpleasant. To top it all off, those who *do* manage to communicate with n-beings frequently characterise them as being deeply stuck-up and haughty – as though they view themselves as being superior to such low-dimensional folk as we. And perhaps they should; we may never totally and truly understand the consciousnesses or thought processes of higher-dimensional entities.

Names: You couldn't pronounce their names even if you wanted to, and would probably offend them if you tried.

Descriptors: Sidling in and out of view as they slowly approach your position in space, their form shimmering and pulsing like a scintillating scotoma; a collection of flesh in the vague shape of a screaming face that won't move out of your field of vision, no matter which way you turn your head; a strange limb that reaches out of thin air to grasp your hand in a firm shake (which feels remarkably like shoving your fingers into a warm cluster of entrails).

Motivation: Impossible to determine.

Difficulty: Risky – Just *looking* at it is hard enough, let alone trying to hurt it in any way.

Resistance: 9

Protection: 3

Resource: A 7-sphere (D10)

Equipment: A fleshly limb (D8, Degenerating)

Domains: Occult

Credits

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COMPATIBLE WITH
HEART
THE CITY
BENEATH

The Down Below

by Cameron Smith



A Setting and Introductory Adventure for Fantasy Role-Playing Games

There is an entire world beneath the city. It is a dim realm of endless, maze-like corridors; of slow-moving waterways; of the detritus, runoff, and all that is discarded from the Above. It is a living thing, a labyrinth pulsing with both foul waste and magical effluvia. This parasite on the underside of civilization is known by its denizens as The Down Below.

The Down Below is a setting for any fantasy or low-tech role-playing game. In the simplest terms, it is the sewer system beneath any city or settlement large enough to have one. You can easily drop it into an existing campaign for adventures away from the primary culture of your setting, or you could set an entire campaign here. It is a vast and mysterious place, with its own societies, laws, treasures, and challenges.

Presented here is an overview of the setting, with enough detail to attach it to the underside of any existing city in your game. It can easily be expanded and modified to fit your campaign world. As well as having its own distinct flavor, it is meant to be a twisted reflection of the society of The Above-whatever that is at your gaming table.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Down Below began as a mundane sewer system, much like any found beneath a city or other settlement. The original tunnels are therefore made for human-sized creatures. Most sewers are approximately 10' wide, with a 2' wide walkway on either side, and a 6' wide channel in the center down which water, sewage, and other runoff can flow. The depth of this channel can vary, but it is most often about 4' deep.

This is not to say that every bit of sewer is uniform in construction. Over the years, tunnels may have been widened, channels deepened, areas filled in with falling rocks or mud, or any of a number of other circumstances which might change the character of a given area. The measurements given are simply the default at the time of construction.

Since the initial construction of the sewer system, the Down Below has grown considerably. As the Above has grown and changed, new sewers have been constructed, older passages have been blocked off or simply forgotten, and the labyrinth of passages has become more complex.

The beasts and creatures which reside in the Down Below have dug tunnels, both above and below the surface of the water. There are dens and nests to be found in dark passages and dank corners. In addition, as intelligent beings took up residence in the sewers, they began to expand the tunnels to suit their needs. People who were outcasts, in hiding, or otherwise unable to participate in society Above made homes in the Down Below. Rooms for storage, living spaces, and chambers for diverse needs were carved out of the sides of the tunnels. Sewers were re-routed to suit their own ends, whether this was to allow them to live there long-term, to gain access to clean water, to make an escape route downstream where the sewers open into a running river, or any of a number of other purposes. The reasons for all of the changes are not remembered, so surface dwellers can often find the construction of the Down Below chaotic and bewildering.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

The Down Below is not a homogenous environment. It contains diverse areas, some of which can change rapidly. Overall, however, it is dim and wet almost everywhere. It is full of exotic and unpleasant smells, and everything is damp. The air is a stale miasma. The sewers collect runoff from the Above, including rainwater, sewage, bits of garbage and discarded food scraps, and even effluvia from magical and alchemical workshops, which is responsible for some of the mutations and stranger conditions to be found here.

Lighting

The Down Below is only dimly lit, primarily by daylight leaking through the occasional sewer grate or hole leading to the surface. Any surface dwellers who are exploring the Down Below will have to rely on other light sources to be able to see.

Open flame is generally not an option. Although there are areas of the Down Below which have good air flow, most will be still and stale, and full of gases which are flammable. Lighting a torch in such conditions is not a good idea! Any character who lights a torch, lantern, or other source of open flame risks an explosion. That character must make a Survival skill check upon ignition, and every 10 rounds thereafter. A failure means that flammable gases concentrated in the area have ignited. The character carrying the light source and anyone else within 20' must make a DC 10 Dex save or take 1d6 fire damage from the explosion. In addition, the light source will be extinguished.

The dwellers in the Down Below have either adjusted to the dark, and have Darkvision out to 60', or else have found alternate light sources. The two most common light sources in the Down Below are glowbugs and glow fungus.

Glowbugs are insects that can fit in the palm of one's hand. They are bioluminescent, and generate about as much light as a candle. Commonly, several glowbugs are gathered together and placed in a glass container or metal cage to form a lantern of sorts. They are common enough to be in constant supply, and if fed a diet of other, smaller bugs, can be kept alive in a lantern for many weeks. Alternatively, a character who is sufficiently familiar with the Down Below can search for a glowbug nest and collect 1d6 of the creatures. Searching requires a DC 12 Survival skill check.

Glow fungus is the most common light source in the Down Below. It was once normal fungus, but was altered by exposure to runoff from alchemical laboratories in the Above. It now grows high up on the damp stone walls of the sewers, providing a soft but constant illumination. It can be scraped off the walls where it grows and placed in a container where it will continue to glow for days. It is not quite as bright as glowbugs, but it is usually available in great enough quantities to provide a portable light source wherever one travels in the Down Below.

Disease

Pestilence and disease are endemic to the Down Below. The constant flow of sewage, garbage, food scraps, and everything else which can fall into a sewer means that the entire environment is rife with the threat of infection and infestation. The denizens of the Down Below have become inured to these conditions, developing immunities to all but the most exotic diseases.

Visitors, however, are susceptible to all manner of sickness and parasites. Any surface dwellers in the Down Below must make a DC 10 Con save each day, or contract a disease or be infected by a parasite. In addition, each time a surface dweller takes physical damage, they must make a DC 8 Con save or suffer the same fate. The save due to injury is only rolled a maximum of one time per encounter. Any character which fails this save gains a disease which has the following effects: the diseased character cannot regain hit points except by magical means, and they have disadvantage on any Strength checks and saving throws. This disease can be cured by the same means as any other.

DENIZENS OF THE DOWN BELOW

COMMON FOLK: Most intelligent humanoids who live in the Down Below are functionally identical to their surface-dwelling counterparts. The majority of these are humans, although halflings, dwarfs, and even the occasional elf can be found living here. Even if a population has existed in the sewers for generations, any changes are behavioral or cosmetic. The average commoner in the Down Below is the same in game terms as the inhabitants of any surface town.

Of course, life in the Down Below has its own unique flavor, so the professions one is likely to engage in are quite different. There are no farmers in the traditional sense. Likewise, teamsters, cattle drovers and the like do not exist in the Down Below in a way which surface dwellers would recognise. The money of the surface world has little value here. Instead, barter fuels the economy, with each person providing something of use, whether goods such as food or clothing, or services such as clearing a blocked flow or providing protection from the beasts which dwell in the muck.

Following is a partial list of professions unique to the Down Below.

Water merchants are necessary for any settlement. These individuals find sources of clean water, and sell it to others. The source might simply be a hole open to the sky, and buckets to collect rainwater. Alternatively, the source might be an underground stream, which flows into the Down Below at a place only the merchant or their family knows, and keeps well-guarded.

Scavengers are a common profession in the Down Below. These opportunists look for objects of value which have found their way into the sewers. This might be a tool or weapon the common folk cannot make for themselves, or scraps of wood, cloth or metal which can be used in the construction of dwellings and other shelters. What passes for housing in the Down Below is usually just whatever sticks, boards, tarps, old sails or other items can be fashioned into a tent or shack.

Tinkers often trade for the objects which the scavengers find. These talented individuals have an affinity for combining mere scraps into something more than the sum of its parts. Their skill is one of insight and engineering, perceiving potential where others see trash. There is rumoured to be something more to the craft of the best tinkers, though. Their creations are beyond the mere physical combination of disparate materials- something altogether more magical is created on their workbenches.

Florids ply their trade here as well. These individuals seek out fragrant plants, oils and unguents, and combine them into pleasant-smelling concoctions (Well, pleasant by the standards of sewer dwellers, anyway.) These can be used as perfumes, or to soak a rag wrapped around one’s face, or carried as a sachet. They are associated with wealth and even opulence in the Down Below, as the ability to counteract the array of foul odors is reserved for those whose more immediate needs have already been satisfied. Florids also trade in the more common sorts of potions and alchemical substances.

Fishermen are very common, even if fish are not. There are some fish in the sewers and waterways, but there are more often *other* things which live in the water. These range from the mundane- frogs, lizards, snakes and the like- to the uniquely otherworldly. Magical and alchemical spills into the gutters Above trickle into the sewer water, altering what lives there. The possible effects are almost unlimited, and many of the creatures fished out of the sludge are wholly unique. Some are good for eating, some might prove useful as a source for leather or bone, and still others have magical properties.

There are many other common professions as well. Rat catchers, fungus and algae farmers, subterranean navigators, raft builders and boatwrights, and others all live side-by-side in the dark and the wet. Only through cooperation can such a complex society thrive under such inhospitable conditions.

The following items are common to the Down Below. Their value is not listed in monetary terms, as coinage is not used in the sewers. Instead, their value is categorized as Low (L), Moderate (M), or High (H). This is only a guide, however, as conditions are changeable, and if there is a scarcity of a particular commodity- clean water during a long dry spell, for example- its trade value might be temporarily inflated. Most of these items are from the Above, either discarded or lost, washed down sewer grates and through gutters. Items manufactured in the Down Below exist as well, but these are often made from the items listed here- the natural resources of the Down Below are rather more limited than the Above.

Clean water (L)	Newspaper or book scraps (L)
Complete newspapers or books (H)	Clothing material scraps (L)
Complete items of clothing (M)	Lumber or heavy cloth scraps (L)
Lumber, large or complete (M)	Nails or other fasteners (M)
Rope or twine (L)	Hand tools such as hammers or trowels (M)
Small or simple weapons such as knives or clubs (L)	Complex weapons such as swords or maces (H)
Bottles and glass containers (M)	Complex tools or musical instruments (H)

Items which do not generally come from the Above are listed below. These are either native to the Down Below, or are products which can be made with minimal use of any surface items.

Algae, edible (L)	Fungus, edible (L)
Small edible animals- fish, frogs, rats, turtles, bugs and others (L)	Larger edible items like gator fillets or lizards (M)
Glow fungus (L)	Glowbugs (L)
Perfumes, oils, creams (M to H)	Alchemical compounds (M to H)

This is just an introduction. There are many other commodities and items unique to the Down Below.

The social structure of the Down Below extends far beyond the professions which exist there. People live full lives beneath the surface, and have homes, leisure time, and all the social constructs which are found Above. The influence of the surface dwellers is felt throughout the Down Below, albeit as a distorted reflection of the original.

Inns and taverns Above have drains and other connections to the sewers, so the noise of a crowded taproom and the music played there often reverberates through the vaults of the underground. The result is the existence of a musical tradition in the Down Below in which singers often mumble, or misheard lyrics are turned into sometimes whimsical, sometimes sinister new meanings. Musicians might play such instruments as the jug, the washboard bass, or just random objects used for percussion.

Gossip and news from the Above is also distorted, as the understanding of events is cobbled together

from overheard snippets of conversation, or the odd page from a book or newspaper which washes down a sewer. A common source of entertainment in the Down Below is to gather around someone who has collected bits of recent written material, who will read it out in dramatic fashion to a crowd eager to hear stories of the mysterious surface dwellers.

There is a general understanding that some people Above are in charge while others serve, and great deeds are accomplished by heroes, while ne'er-do-wells seek to rob or exploit the common person. The effect is that the denizens of the Down Below understand the Above to be quite grand, with the most dramatic events taking place daily, as the nobles direct the course of events from their mighty palaces.

Few people from the Down Below ever dare to venture above ground. The few who do recount stories of screaming locals running in fright, or pelting them with rocks and refuse. Even more frightening, the Above seems to go on forever, without an upper limit. The "Sky" has no top, and even seeing it unobstructed makes one feel like they might fall ever upward, never to be seen again. Indeed, there are those who have travelled to the Above and never returned, so surely they must have fallen into this "Sky".

Those who live upstream are generally regarded as wealthier and more important than those who live further downstream. Being upstream allows easier access to fresh water, and first pick of the detritus which falls into the sewers from Above. Some, who have access to sewer grates in the better part of the Above, style themselves as nobles, modelling their appearance and behaviour on those they can observe in the city. Of course, their understanding of society Above is imperfect, so the version of nobility they practice is a parody of those with actual wealth.

They fashion their clothing from the most brightly-coloured scraps they can find, which are invariably mismatched in both pattern and material. They cover themselves with perfumes traded from the flroids, and even fashion short stilts and platform shoes for themselves, so they don't have to get wet or dirty with the rest of the "bottom-feeders", as they derisively call the common folk of the Down Below.

Wearing stilts in a place with relatively low ceilings has its own challenges, but these are made up for by the benefits of being recognised as social superiors—at least in the minds of the stilt-walkers. There are some who are in awe of the luxury and superiority on display by those who can literally rise above the filth, but others see their habits as mere folly. These attitudes change from one settlement to another.

RAT FOLK AND THE RAT KING: There is a population of rat folk in the Down Below. These humans and other humanoids keep company with the numerous rats, giant rats, and mutated rats which live in the sewers. Through their close association, and due to the warping effect of the Down Below, many have taken on rat-like characteristics themselves. Sometimes they appear as fully human, though commonly draped in rat pelts worn as cloaks or other items of clothing. The hides of particularly tough rodents are tanned and made into armor. Others have been twisted into strange human-rat hybrids. Some have rodent-like teeth, elongated snouts, or other rat features such as tails or upright ears. At a distance, they might be mistaken for humans, but on closer inspection, they are clearly part rodent.

Much like their animal counterparts, the rat folk tend to gather in packs to scavenge and hunt. Any interactions they have with the other denizens of the Down Below are almost always unfriendly, and usually violent. While a lone rat folk is typically cowardly, in groups they are quite aggressive.

Their settlements are often hidden, and always fortified. Palisades of detritus, obstacles, and even traps for the unwary mark the boundary of their territories.

As much as they are aggressive towards other dwellers in the sewers, there is great cooperation between different tribes of rat folk. This is not due to their good nature, for they have none. Rather, it is out of fear for their leader, a semi-legendary figure known as the Rat King. This imposing figure is more often spoken about than actually seen, but he does make occasional appearances in order to impose his will. Sometimes that means exacting a tribute from the local population, sometimes it means the rat folk in an area will surge forth in order to claim more territory or valuable resources.

RAT FOLK

Medium Humanoid, Neutral Evil

Armor Class: 13 (leather or hide armor)

Hit Points: 8 (2d8)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 12 (+1) **INT** 12 (+1) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Dex +4, Con +2

Skills: Stealth +4

Senses: darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: common

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +1

Dagger: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage

Shortsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage

Shortbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Emerging from the shadows, you spy what at first glance seems to be a giant rat. Its hunched form slinks menacingly towards you. As it approaches, you recognize that it is, or once was, a human. It is now wearing rodent pelts as a cloak, and hisses and chitters as it brandishes a wicked looking knife.

MUCK MEN: A population of humans has become so mutated after living for generations in the Down Below that they have melded with the muck. They are physically very diverse, taking on characteristics which help them thrive in their underground environment. They can survive on trash and refuse, smell awful, and are shunned by more ‘regular’ folk, but are quite social. They live as a collective, comfortably after their own fashion. They only fight humans or other invaders to protect themselves, but they are deadly enemies of the Rat King. They are the hidden defenders of the Down Below, resisting the attempts of the rat folk to expand their own empire across the sewers and subterranean tunnels.

Muck men can blend into liquid/sludge surroundings and almost melt into them. They watch the Above from puddles and sewer drains, gleaning information about the city under which they live. They know they are not welcome Above, and are thought of as monsters whenever they are encountered by surface dwellers, but this doesn’t dampen their enthusiasm for surface culture.

MUCK MAN

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 8 (2d8)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR 13 (+1) **DEX** 12 (+1) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 10 (+0) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 7 (-2)

Saving Throws: Str +2, Con +5

Skills: Stealth +4 (increased to +6 in sewers)

Condition Immunities: disease, poison

Senses: darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

Languages: common

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +1

Club: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage

Shortsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage

A slurping sound can be heard at the approach of this vaguely humanoid figure. It has some features of a mollusk, some of a crustacean, and appears to be covered with a thin layer of brownish slime. As it begins to make burbling sounds, you are surprised to recognize that it is actually speech in the common tongue, and that it is not only intelligent, but quite sociable.

Infect: Muck Men can infect others, including PCs, making them into muck men. On a Critical Hit, the target must make a DC 12 Constitution save or be infected. Once infected, the character will begin to grow into a muck man himself. This condition can be cured by any means which will cure a disease, but any mutations gained are permanent.

After the first day, and the first failed Constitution save, roll on the chart below to see what mutation/condition is gained. The PC keeps rolling once a week until three mutations are gained, or until two successful saves are made in a row. If the character winds up with fewer than three total mutations, they are permanent, but the character does not fully become a muck man. Once three mutations are gained, the character fully becomes a muck man, and no further rolls are needed. At this point, the character can pass on the muck men condition to others!

Roll a D20 and consult the following table.

1-Turtle Shell: +3 AC, MV reduced to 20'

2-Light Sensitivity: Character's eyes increase to twice their normal size. -1 die on any actions in daylight or bright conditions.

3-Webbed Fingers/Toes: 30' Swim move, -1 Dex save penalty out of water

4-Jelly Bones: Take only half damage from bludgeoning, gain ability to fit into small spaces

5-Gills: Ability to breathe underwater. Still retains lungs for breathing above water.

6-Sticky Palms/Soles: Bonus of +6 to Climb checks, but only while hands/feet are uncovered

7-Frog Tongue: Ranged attack- 15' range, finesse attack. No damage, but can retrieve items up to 5 lbs.

8-Tentacles: Limbs replaced with tentacles. Objects can still be held, but any task requiring manual dexterity becomes very difficult. Movement reduced to 10' on land, but Swim speed of 30'. Bonus of +6 to Climb checks.

9-Venomous/Poisonous: Roll a die. On an odd result, the PC is venomous. Bite attack (1d4) piercing damage, plus DC [8 + proficiency bonus] Con save or take an additional 1d6 poison damage. On an even result, the PC becomes poisonous. When taking damage from a melee attack, attacker must make a DC [8 + proficiency bonus] Con save or take (1d4) poison damage.

10-Toadskin: exposure to PCs skin causes hallucinations. Any direct contact with the character's skin requires a DC 12 Con save. On failure, the other party suffers disadvantage on all actions for 1d6 turns. Immunity to Poison negates this effect.

11-Frog Legs: Legs become long and muscular, allowing character to leap up to 20' horizontally or 10' vertically. Swim speed of 30'. Feet become large and webbed.

12-Colorless/Transparent: PC becomes nearly invisible while naked, but organs remain visible. Bonus of +2 on Stealth checks, or +4 in water/sewer conditions.

13-Flounder: All bilateral features slowly move to one side of body. After total transformation, gain 30' Swim move, but regular move is reduced to 10'. Bonus of +2 to Stealth checks in water which is at least 1' deep.

14-Spiny Ridge: +1 AC, any creature which hits character with a melee attack must make a DC 10 Dex save or take 1d3 piercing damage from the spines.

15-Clamshell/Barnacle: +6 AC bonus, but base Move reduced to 0'.

16-Squid Ink: Character can squirt dark ink to cover their movement in water. A 10' cube volume of water is affected, becoming completely opaque for 1d4 rounds. If ink is ejected outside of water, it can be used as a ranged attack. Any target hit must make a DC [10 + proficiency bonus] Dex save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. This ability can be used up to two times per day.

17-Blowfish: Character can increase size by inflating with air or water. Normal humans can increase to approximately 7' spheres. Any clothing, armor or equipment does NOT enlarge with the wearer. Body is also covered with small spikes. Anything making a melee attack, or even touching the character while inflated, will automatically take 1d2 piercing damage for each attack, whether successful or not. It takes one action to inflate or deflate.

18-Slippery: Character gains +1 to all Dex saves, and a +1 bonus to any attempt to avoid being grappled, held or restrained. However, normal items become difficult to hold. After any attack action, character must make a DC 8 Dex save or drop whatever they were holding.

19-Starfish: Lost limbs will regrow, but the limb will also grow a new body! This process will take 1d6 days to complete. A new body will be completely independent, but will have all the same stats, skills and memories of the parent creature at the time of severing. Note that clothing and equipment is not regrown.

20-Angler Light: Character grows a protuberance on their forehead, which dangles a small, fleshy bulb. This bioluminescent appendage can be lit at will to provide illumination equal to a candle.

ADVENTURE- SEWER OF THE SCEPTER

This adventure is suitable for 4-6 characters of low level (1-3). The party is sent to retrieve an important scepter which was stolen from the Burgermeister, and is reported to have been sighted near the city's sewers. It will introduce the characters to the Down Below.

BACKGROUND

The city of Ausburg is on the fringes of the Empire. It is a moderately prosperous city, relying on its position at the mouth of the Great River to keep goods flowing through its port. The wealthy merchant guilds form an oligarchy which maintains order, though they rule more as crime bosses than political leaders. The head of the merchant guilds is the Burgermeister, appointed by the Empire from among the leading guild families. The current Burgermeister is Herr Lothar Finkschwebel, the ostentatious and arrogant patriarch of the Finkschwebel trade family.

Unknown to all but the Burgermeister's inner circle, his scepter of office was recently stolen. While only of moderate material value, its significance is great. With the next monthly meeting of the guild families in only a matter of days, the Burgermeister needs to have the scepter returned immediately. If he is seen to be without it, it will cause a minor scandal- one which the other families would be only too happy to take advantage of, showing the current Burgermeister to be incompetent, and presenting an opportunity for another family to take over the office.

The scepter was actually stolen by a tribe of sewer-dwelling **suckerfolk**, and is to be offered as a sacrifice to their god, to steal power from the hated surface-dwellers.

Their god is actually a **sewer angler**, and has attached the scepter to its appendage to use it as bait.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The party is already in the city of Ausburg when the scepter is stolen. The liveried staff of the Burgermeister are too conspicuous to carry out this task themselves without raising questions, so they seek to employ others to do the literal dirty work. The enthusiasm of the participants is not required, only their obedience. It is up to the GM to determine why the PCs are the ones chosen for this task. Following are a few ideas:

- One or more of the characters have been arrested for some minor, or even, fabricated

charge, such as public drunkenness. They are given the choice of facing harsh punishments, or performing this service.

- The characters are easily identifiable as adventurers, due to their mode of dress, exotic origins, or other telltale signs. Bruno, the Burgermeister's enforcer, offers to pay them a modest sum, and they can keep any other treasure they find. If this is not enough enticement, he is not above making threats.
- The characters come across a worried-looking elf wearing the recognizable green and yellow livery of the Burgermeister. He explains the situation, and that if they complete this task for him with swiftness and discretion, both he and the Burgermeister would be in their debt.

GENERAL FEATURES

The sewers are approximately 10 feet wide, with a narrow ledge on each side, and a 6-foot-wide channel in the center. The channel is filled with water, garbage, and other effluvia to a depth of about 2 feet. Dim lighting from naturally growing glow fungus allows limited visibility.

Tunnels other than sewers are narrower and more irregular, anywhere from 5 feet to 8 feet wide, and with a ceiling height of 6 feet, unless otherwise noted.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE:

The adventure begins when the characters agree to retrieve the missing scepter.

Bruno, the Burgermeister's retainer, brings you to a sewer grate close by the palace, but which is askew and partly in the street. He hooks the grate with a tool rather like a gaff, clearing enough space to fit a person.

"Well, in you go", he says.

AREA 1- SEWER ENTRANCE

Prying up a sewer grate, there is a drop of 8' to the bottom of the sewer.

There are deeper drainage holes at irregular intervals. If the characters are walking in the water, the lead character will have to make DC 10 Dex save once every 3 rounds to avoid falling in these drainage pits. Failure results in being submerged completely. This causes no damage to the character, but might have an effect on their clothing and any items they carry, as well as extinguishing any torches or lanterns.

As the sewer grate is scraped across the cobblestones to make an entrance, you are immediately aware of the dark and the smell. Lowering yourselves into the sewers, the presence of the surface world quickly recedes, to be replaced by foetid tunnels crusted with nitre, and dripping with condensation. As the light from above is blocked out, even though you are mere feet below familiar streets, it seems you are in an altogether different world.

If the party has any sources of open flame, they are likely to ignite the gases in the sewer. Refer to the **Lighting** section above for information on how this works. There should also be some other source of light available to the PCs. Glow fungus should be present on the walls and ceilings of most sewer tunnels, and the PCs can collect this to carry with them as a light source.

AREA 2- SCEPTER SIGHTING

After a few turns of exploring the sewer, the character with the highest passive perception will notice the scepter resting on a ledge 20' ahead. If the characters approach, the scepter falls into the slow-moving water and disappears.

You see something reflecting the dim light on the ledge a few yards ahead of you. That's it- the scepter! It appears as though this task will be easier than you expected. As you approach, however, the scepter is yanked into the water and carried away with the current.

NOTE: This is actually the lure of the **sewer angler**, drawing the characters further into its lair, where the water is deeper, and it has greater freedom of movement.

AREA 3- SUCKERFOLK SETTLEMENT

Crude huts of hide, sticks, canvas, and other scavenged materials are built into the sides of the sewers here, and extend across the central channel, partially damming the flow and deepening the water. The bottoms of the huts dangle into the water, slowly pushed back and forth by the movement of the flowing sludge.

Six **suckerfolk** are here. They will attack the party, trying to capture anyone they perceive as weak or easy prey, and attempting to drive off the rest. They are each armed with a club and a trident.

SUCKERFOLK

Medium Humanoid, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 10 (2d8+2)

Speed: 30 ft., Swim 40 ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 12 (+1) **INT** 10 (+0) **WIS** 11 (+0) **CHA** 10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Dex +4, Con +2

Senses: darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: common

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +1

Club: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage

Trident: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage

Dagger: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage

Net: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one target. *Hit:* Special

This bipedal aquatic humanoid has the head and body of a sucker fish. Its mouth droops off the front of its head, silently opening and closing as if searching for a morsel of food. Its feet make slapping sounds as its uneven gait carries it through the sewers, until it drops into the water and swims towards you with alarming speed.

The suckerfolk will attempt to extinguish any sort of flame or light source the characters have by grappling any character holding one and attempting to submerge them. Any character successfully grappled by a suckerfolk must make a DC11 Str save or be dragged beneath the water. Characters will take 1 HP of drowning damage on each round after the first. Another attempt at the Str save may be made each round. If successful, the character breaks the suckerfolk's grip and surfaces. If one or more characters are assisting, the attempt is made with advantage. If a character is held underwater for three consecutive rounds, they have been captured! The suckerfolk will flee through underwater tunnels to their shrine at Area 7.

The suckerfolk will not fight to the death, instead trying to escape through underwater passages once two of their number have been killed, even if they have not captured a character.

ROAMING ENCOUNTER- SUCKERFOLK RAIDING PARTY

Any time after the PCs first encounter the suckerfolk settlement, they are likely to run into a small raiding party. The game master can insert this encounter at any time.

The raiding party consists of three suckerfolk, two of whom are armed with tridents and clubs, and one who has a dagger and a net. They are aggressive, and will attack on sight. The suckerfolk with the net will attempt to entangle a party member, and the two others will attempt to subdue the victim with their clubs, attacking for non-lethal damage.

They are attempting to secure a sacrifice, and will do whatever is necessary to do so. If the fight goes poorly for them, they will flee rather than fighting to the death.

If they capture a PC, the PC will be present at Area 7, Shrine of the Fish God, below. If they flee, the suckerfolk will attempt to alert their fellows, and any survivors of the raiding party will also be present at the later encounter.

AREA 4- LASHER COLONY

The suckerfolk have dug a channel from the main sewer to create a separate area in which they can raise lashers as a food source. This small pool is connected to the main flow of water, but a net prevents lashers getting out, or anything larger getting in.

The center of this room is dug out to a greater depth than the rest of the sewers, and filled with slightly cleaner water. There is a fine net separating it from the main flow of the sewer. A narrow ledge runs around the entire edge of the room, and a few tools such as nets on poles and clay bowls are scattered along the ledge.

Any PC who enters the lasher enclosure will provoke an attack from the lasher swarm. The lashers will fight to the death, but cannot pursue beyond their enclosure unless the net barrier is damaged.

LASHER SWARM

Medium swarm of tiny creatures, unaligned

Like tiny lampreys, swarms of lashers attack their prey, whipping them with sharp, barbed tails and attaching themselves with their toothy mouths to feed on blood. Individually, they are merely unpleasant, but in large numbers they can cause significant damage and even kill large creatures. They are also considered a delicacy

by more civilized dwellers in the Down Below.

Armor Class: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 12 (4d6)

Speed: 0 ft., Swim 30 ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 12 (+1) **INT** 3 (+1)

WIS 8 (-1) **CHA** 2 (-4)

Saving Throws: Dex +3, Con +2

Damage Resistances: Bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Senses: darkvision 60ft., tremorsense 60', passive Perception 10

Languages: —

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +1

Bloodsuckers: The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature which has been previously damaged by it.

Swarm: The swarm can occupy another creature's space, and vice versa. The swarm can move through any space large enough for a tiny lasher. The swarm cannot regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target within the swarm's space. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

AREA 5- MUCK MEN ENCLAVE

The sewer leading to this area is more dimly lit than other tunnels. There is less glow fungus on the walls. The water is thicker and has a strong musty odor. There is what appears to be a settlement at the dead end, with a maze of impromptu shelters constructed from discarded bits of wood, canvas, and other materials. Some of the shelters have no floors, but open directly onto the sludge below. Many surfaces are covered with a thick slime.

As the PCs approach, two Muck Men drop into the water to hide. This area is a small outpost of the muck men in the area, housing ten of these humanoids. The back wall has a crack in it about 18" wide- too narrow for most to travel through, but large enough for the soft bodies of the muck men to squeeze through. On the far side is another set of sewer tunnels with more muck men settlements.

The muck men are not naturally aggressive, and will wait to see what the PCs do before attacking. If it appears they are merely curious, the muck men will hide until they are gone. However, if the PCs prove

to be intrusive, or start looting, the muck men will emerge to defend their homes.

They will not hold back, as they are very aware of the dangers other people pose- they have had frequent clashes with the suckerfolk, and are constantly in conflict with the rat folk. However, they are inclined to be more cooperative than the other more aggressive species. If the PCs give them the chance, the muck men are willing to let this be treated as a misunderstanding, and send the PCs on their way. They may even see them as possible allies from the surface world, or at the very least, useful tools in their battles with the suckerfolk in the area.

Allow the PCs to make perception or other checks as appropriate to overhear the muck men's conversation, and to interpret their actions as merely defending their homes. If the PCs still press the attack, the muck men will attempt to retreat through the crack in the wall to get to safety, and to gather reinforcements.

AREA 6- RAT FOLK AMBUSH

A scouting party of rat folk has stumbled across the party. They are naturally aggressive, and their policy towards strangers is to kill them, then see what they can loot from the bodies.

This party consists of three rat folk, each with a mutated rat held on a leash. As soon as the party is sighted, the rat folk will release their pets to attack, while they stay back and engage with shortbows. They will not fight to the death, and will flee as soon as one of them is killed. Their mutated rats, however, are expendable, so killing them will not affect the morale of the rat folk.

Shadows slide along the edges of this dark section of tunnel, accompanied by chittering and scratching sounds. The shadows rush towards you, and you see what looks like giant rats being goaded on by even larger, bipedal rodents.

MUTATED RAT

Small creature, unaligned

These relatives of sewer rats are about the size of a medium dog, covered with matted fur, with spiky growths of bone along their spine and flanks. They are highly aggressive, and will attack most other creatures on sight, with the exception of other rats or rat folk.

Armor Class: 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 6 (2d6)

Speed: 40 ft., Swim 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 12 (+1) **INT** 3 (+1)

WIS 12 (+1) **CHA** 2 (-4)

Saving Throws: Dex +3, Con +2

Senses: darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: —

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +1

Venomous: Any creature hit by the mutated rat's bite attack must make a DC 8 Con save or take 1 additional poison damage for the following 1d3 rounds.

Bone spikes: Any creature attempting a melee attack against the mutated rat must make a DC 8 Dex save or take 1d2 piercing damage from the bony growths along the mutated rat's spine and flanks.

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage

AREA 7- SHRINE OF THE FISH GOD

This large open area was originally meant to be an outflow for the sewers, but has been dammed up by the suckerfolk, and now serves as a shrine to their god. A stone slab sits in the middle of the chamber; covered in algae, and festooned with a variety of objects from the Above. On a smaller pedestal in front of the altar lies the object of your quest- the Burgermeister's scepter.

The "god" of the suckerfolk is actually a sewer angler. Any suckerfolk which escaped the earlier encounters with the party will be here, as well as any PCs who were captured. Captured PCs will be disarmed and bound with rope. Their weapons and any obvious valuables will be placed carefully on the altar.

The scepter (once again the sewer angler's lure) will be on a small pedestal near the center of the room. The suckerfolk will allow the PCs to enter, so that they can retrieve the bait, allowing the sewer angler to attack with surprise on the first round. With nowhere else to retreat to, and in the presence of their god, the suckerfolk will fight to the death. If the angler is killed, any remaining suckerfolk will flee. The PCs can retrieve the scepter, as well as other objects previously gathered.

Treasure: On the small pedestal is the Burgermeister's scepter, worth 200 gp. On the main altar is a leather pouch containing 120 gp and 45 sp, a matching pair of daggers in bejeweled sheaths worth 50 gp, a gold signet ring worth 5 gp, a magnifying glass worth 100 gp, and a small spyglass worth 500 gp.

SEWER ANGLER

Akin to the much smaller deep sea angler fish, this beast lurks in shallow water and dangles a lure to attract prey. The lure is an appendage with a sticky end, to which the sewer angler attaches found objects. Common objects include coins, anything shiny, and small animals- alive or dead.

Large Monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class: 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 26 (4d8+10)

Speed: 0 ft., Swim 30 ft.

STR 16 (+3) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 3 (-4)

WIS 11 (+0) **CHA** 4 (-3)

Saving Throws: Str +4, Con +5

Skills: Stealth +8 (in water only)

Condition Immunities: disease

Senses: darkvision 60ft., tremorsense 60', passive Perception 10

Languages: —

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 +3) piercing damage and target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the sewer angler cannot bite another target.

Swallow: The sewer angler makes a bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack succeeds, the target is swallowed and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded, restrained, and suffers the effects of suffocating (PHB 183).

Dangle Bait: The sewer angler has a flexible appendage on the front of its head which is 5 ft long, and has a sticky globule on the end. The sewer angler can spend one action to attach or release an item from this appendage. Any item which is attached can be dangled as bait by the sewer angler, in an attempt to attract prey. Shiny or luminous objects are preferred as they attract more attention, but anything up to 20 lbs can be attached and carried.

Any being attempting to interact with the bait directly, or which has not detected the sewer angler, is subject to surprise on the first attack of the sewer angler. The sewer angler attacks with advantage against any opponent who is surprised.

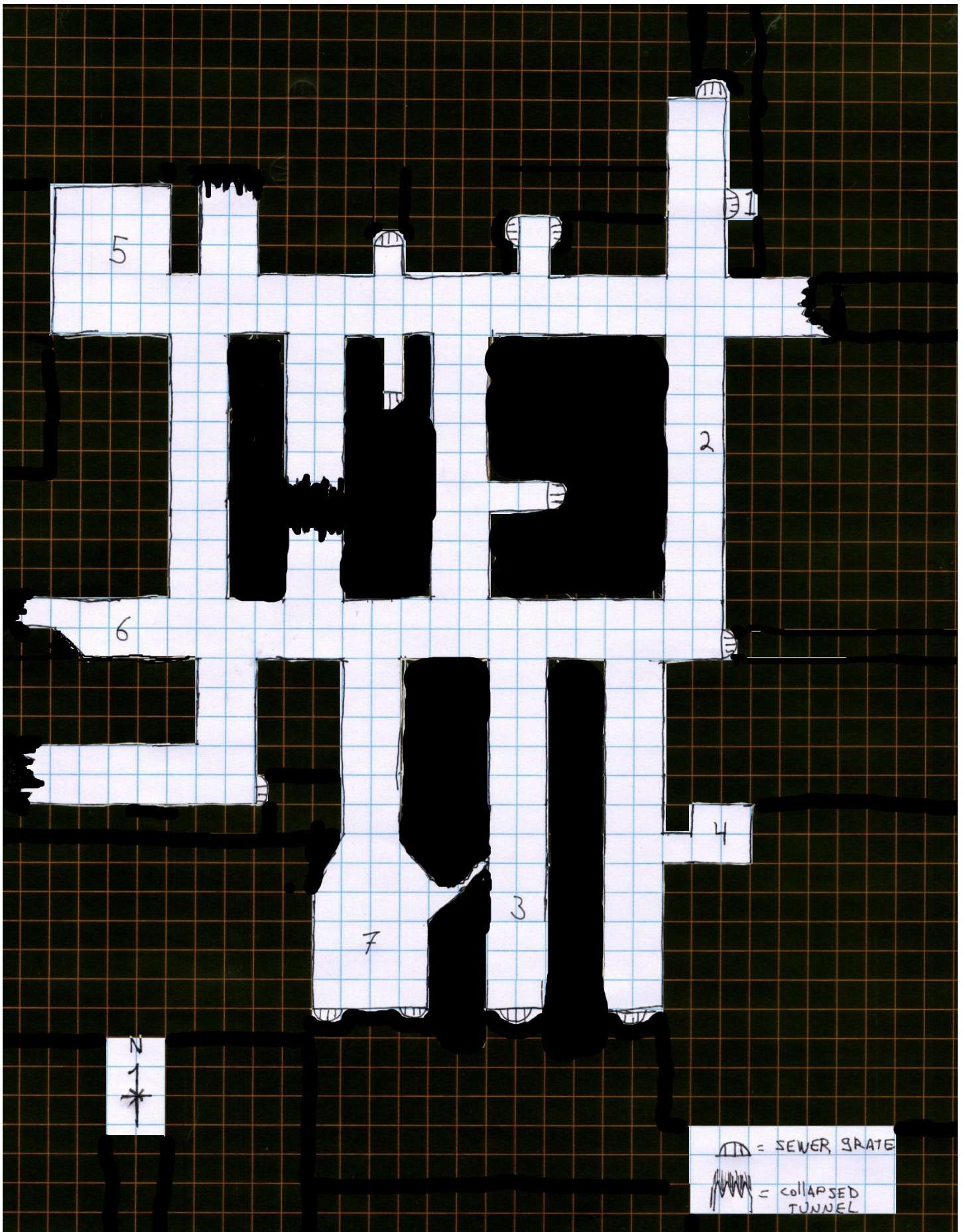
At first, all you notice is the lone gold coin, shining in the dim light. As you bend down to pick it up, it jerks away, and the nearby surface of the water is broken by a huge, flat shape. A slimy black head comes into view, as wide as the body behind it, and a mouth full of dagger-like teeth, large enough to swallow you whole, snaps shut.

Concluding the Adventure:

Once the PCs have retrieved the scepter, they can return to the surface if they choose. Of course, this might not be as easy as they expect! There are still plenty of creatures to encounter in the Down Below, and some might want the scepter for themselves, or might be interested in any of the other items the PCs carry.

Even if the PCs do return to the surface, the suckerfolk will remember them, and the PCs might find themselves with a new enemy who seeks revenge for destroying their god, or simply for invading their home.

If the players elect to stay in the Down Below, they might find themselves in the middle of a territorial conflict between any or all of the suckerfolk, rat folk, or muck men. With these three factions each controlling part of the Down Below, the PCs may find themselves having to ally with, or perform services for, at least one of the factions in order to gain access to any sewer grates or passages large enough for the party to use as an escape route.



The Plague of Ages

by Thomas Donlon



A Plague of Ages Lost

A sickness grips the land. Turquoise lesions sprout across the skin first, soon to be followed by searing pains in the intestines, a hacking cough that never loosens, and the rapid loss of both weight and the will to go on. The Ailment, as it's colloquially known, is nothing new; folk wisdom claims it first arose in the wilderness near the Kingdom of Misornock. In those days it was little more than an inconvenience that the royal doctors and holy men could easily alleviate. Knowledge of such cures died with the kingdom. In these desperate dying days, the quiet swampside town of Misornock is all that remains, and The Ailment ravages the land. Afflicted souls swarm the ruins of the old kingdom in search of some cure, even as the world around them spirals towards an inevitable end.

A Plague of Ages Lost - GM notes

This adventure uses the MORK BORG system and is designed with a party of 3+ in mind.

Core to the adventure is the mechanical framework of The Ailment as detailed below. PCs may start the adventure Afflicted (level 1) or may begin healthy and develop levels of The Ailment through the course of the adventure, at the discretion of your table.

GM Notes on Misornock, The Adventure, and The Cure

Players' prime motivation for being in Misornock is finding a cure, whether that is as an outsider travelling here after falling ill or a native sick to death of family and friends falling to The Ailment. Much like the world in which the game is played, sadly there is no catch-all cure for fixing everything, but through exploration players may find one of the viable methods of prolonging and improving their lives. There are two methods: Water and Food

Water from Saint Moornock's Well is said to hold special healing properties. This may have been true in the time of The Last King but nowadays the water's most unique property is that it's clean. That alone makes it an invaluable tool in fighting off worsening levels of Affliction. Warden Kasht is well aware of this and keeps as much of this clear water for himself, imprisoning any Afflicted who stumble across the Well's location. If confronted he admits that the water from the Holy Well has kept him healthy for years, but

that nowadays there would barely be enough to supply 10 Afflicted, let alone the whole town. He will cut a deal with willing PCs to live comfortably with him in the Gaol at adventure's end, ordering the execution of any who try to expose the truth.

The other "Cure" involves the completion of a ritual that was left incomplete with The Last King. The Kingdom of Misornock once held three sacred artefacts on which the cycle of rulership depended: The Throne of Stone was where a prospective king was ordained by the hand of Saint Moornock himself. Once crowned, the king's second in command was chosen by him and entrusted with Tenacity's Lance, with which they would protect the kingdom. By the end of the monarch's body was bequeathed to the care of the kingdom's coven of witches, who would feed the body to The Pot of Errfloweth. This royal blood, cold but empowered still by the restorative blessing of The Throne of Stone, would refill the Pot with a broth hearty enough to feed the next generation of citizens. Such was the king's oath, to serve his people forevermore, made good upon. The holder of Tenacity's Lance would then take up the mantle as the next King, and the cycle would begin anew.

The Last King broke this cycle beginning from his coronation. He was not the holder of Tenacity's Lance, for it had become lost in a tragic incident on the lakes during the prior king's reign. The Last King instead inherited the crown from his father, a not unheard of occurrence but atypical within Misornock. The Last King in his youth believed the barbaric, pseudo-cannibalistic practices of the past should come to a halt. Not for moral reasons mind, he simply didn't want to be eaten. His new organisations, the Order of Mercy and Culinarians, ousted the witches from their positions of power and supplanted them with royalist replacements, respectively. All that remains of those witches is The Pot of Errfloweth, at that time still brimming with soup from the previous king's sacrifice.

The Last King believed that any dead body would do to refill up the endless bowl from which his people drank. He was wrong. He died, was interred beneath The Abbey, where his kingdom's glory lies with him. Only his body, living or dead, will refill the Pot and feed the hungry. And only then can a new King be named, if your players so choose.

The Ailment

Each morning at dawn, when the GM is rolling for Miseries, PCs must make a Toughness or Presence test (their choice). The DR varies depending on the conditions in which the PC finds themselves:

Ailment Progression Base DR: 10 + the current number of Miseries

<i>No Food/Water:</i>	+2
<i>Well Fed & Hydrated:</i>	-2
<i>No Sleep:</i>	+2 per night
<i>Slept Inside:</i>	-2
<i>Infected:</i>	+2
<i>Slept Outside:</i>	+1
<i>Filthy Conditions:</i>	+1

Note: Players should not be made aware of the specific numeric modifiers for Ailment Progression but should be told what kinds of factors can make the roll more or less difficult.

Levels of Affliction

LEVEL 0 Healthy, or as healthy as can be expected for the end of the world

LEVEL 1 Turquoise lesions appear on the skin, incessantly itchy

LEVEL 2 Searing gut pains, test Toughness DR8 when eating or vomit, wasting food

LEVEL 3 Clouded irises, hazy focus, and a rancid odour of rot. Presence tests -1

LEVEL 4 Atrophied muscles, liquefaction of bone marrow. Strength tests -2

LEVEL 5 Shutdown of digestive functions, teeth crack and shatter. Can no longer eat

LEVEL 6 Cognitive degeneration, spiritual withering. Aggressive to all living beings

Map of Misornock



A: Town B: Castle Ruins C: Witches Hut D: Workhouse E: Abbey F: Well

The Town of Misornock

The cadaver of a market town, gutted by parasites. Here the sounds of commerce mingle with the moans of the dying. Unwashed masses lie in heaps around the town square.. Uniformed guards march among the sick, fishing out criminals and corpses. Everything is damp.

Rumours of a Cure

Misornock would have been abandoned long ago were it not for prevailing rumours of a cure to The Ailment somewhere near this wretched settlement. PCs may begin knowing one of the following rumoured cures. Additionally, PCs will hear the other rumours upon speaking to the dying denizens Misornock, with hope of finding their believed cure being the only thing keeping them here.

(1D6) Rumours of a Cure

1. Somewhere nearby, a holy well blessed by Saint Moornock is said to produce water that can cure any illness. A willow tree stands beside it, branches dipped to the water
2. A coven of hags out north on the Turlough laid a curse on Moornock, to drain people of strength for their own wicked needs. Killing them will stop the wretched syphoning
3. People never used to get so sick while the old Workhouse was lying destitute. Since its ovens fired up again, everyone seems to be dying quicker. They're the source of it
4. There's no ailment a bit of good blood can't fix. Drain the old stuff out, replace it with a clean batch. Take's practice though. That's why the Warden keeps arresting folks
5. It comes from the dead! In these end times they rise from their graves and seek to poison the living. The monks at the Abbey could have driven such sin back, long ago
6. The Last King spoke of such a plague in his time, borne of debauchery and destitution. He spoke too of having the only cure. He may have brought it to his grave
7. An exiled merchant from Grift is said to have discovered an alchemical cure to The Ailment. She demands a high price, but no medicine has yet proved as effective
8. The two-headed Basilisk known as He carved through the castle north of Misornock, blighting the earth. Rebuilding the great works of man to their glory will purify all

Points of Interest

- The Old Gaol
- Market Square
- The Hangman's Stoop
- Carmine's Cuts

The Hangman's Stoop: Run by local eccentric Mendoc Rockford, this tavern offers weary survivors a clean place to sleep for 3 silver per night. Mendock will check the teeth and eyes of everyone who rents a room to ascertain their Affliction level. Refuses service to anyone suspected to be at Level 5

Carmine's Cuts: Belinda Carmine runs the town's only barbers, specialising in delousing, light bloodletting, and dye jobs of dubious longevity. Practices new styles on the leftover heads from executions in the Gaol. Will cut any head for 3 silver, and for 30 she can be convinced to cut it off.

Market Square: Farmers, scrap merchants, con-artists, and craftsmen alike mingle in the town square. Silver buys comfort in this town and such ill afflicted souls can hope for little more. In addition to the standard equipment available to purchase by PCs, the market traders of Misornock offer the following goods:

For Sale:

- **Ailment Suppressant (50s)*** Ignore Ailment effects of current level for 1 day. 1 dose
- **Shovel (8s)** 1D4 damage
- **Exotic Spices (30s)** Pungent enough to mask most scents and flavours
- **Small Clay Pot (3s)** Holds 1 day's worth of water or food (not included)

The Old Gaol:

Looming large over the town square, the Old Gaol sits in silent judgement of the ramshackle town around it. The grey stone edifice bears some two dozen barred windows at its front, with smaller round towers flanking its corners. Black streaks seep from the window sills where echo the shrieks and cries of those interred within. The four story behemoth dominates the square. Guards spill forth from its gated mouth every hour, forever feeding it new inmates.

The Old Gaol is in a state of destitution within. The ground floors a mess of cages and filthy gallows, chopping blocks, and stretching racks. Public executions are commonplace. The floors above, for the most part, have caved in. Cells line each wall of these upper floors, accessed via rickety wooden platforms

and scaffolding. **Warden Kasht** patrols above with his retinue of armed guards. Any violent act witnessed within the Gaol will result in imprisonment and execution. **Lady Betty** sits atop a ruined bit of wall on the second floor when not actively engaged in executions or out retrieving water from the well. A young rat-like boy named Bryson has set up a simple stall at the rear of the building, selling the shoes of the dead for 2 silver per pair.

Warden Kasht - Lawman, Liar, Lover

A relative newcomer to Misornock, the narrow shouldered stern faced figure of Warden Kasht sought a cure for his Ailment in these lands, same as anyone. The difference being he actually found it, and has spent every waking moment since ensuring nobody else could. Little more than a lowly guard at the time, Kasht soon rose in the ranks at The Old Gaol by outliving his contemporaries. As Warden, he imposes strict and archaic rulings on the Afflicted of Misornock, sentencing for execution any who claim to have found Saint Moornock's well. His sole knowledge of its location, and the thin trickle of clean water it provides, has been keeping Kasht's condition stable all this time. Unbeknownst to the Warden, his lackadaisical lifestyle of creature comforts goes a long way in ensuring his continued stability. All of this is only possible thanks to the tireless support of his beloved executioner **Lady Betty**. Hers are the strong, ruthless hands that enact his peculiar wills upon the populace. Together they aim to ensure their own continued good health until the end of days, fed by the hard labour of the desperate afflicted in The Workhouse and kept safe within the impenetrable upper reaches of The Old Gaol.

Lady Betty

Lean and fearsome, built like a jaguar and twice as mean. Lady Betty towers above her victims, her wild eyes gleaming from her handsome hardened face as her twin blades drop

HP: 18 Morale: - Ragged Leathers -1D2

> **Executioner's Blades** 1D6

> **Special** attacks twice per round, once with each blade. When under half HP makes two Executioner's Blades attacks and one **Bite** 1d4 per round

The Ruined Castle

The ruined castle sags amidst shallow mounds and vast marshes. The gatehouse remains, as does much of the rear portion of the castle. Any pretence of defence fell away with the outer walls, their outline

all that remains to either side of the castle's still imposing facade. Throughout the surrounding swamp, jagged boulders that once were part of the castle lie like broken teeth. To approach this loathsome keep from the front one could almost be convinced it still stood strong. From the sides, however, it far closer resembles an open mouth screaming to the heavens.

PCs can spent an hour scavenging through the remains of the Ruined Castle:

D8 Scavenge the Castle Ruins

1. Nothing but old stones and dry bones
2. A chain shirt (light armour) almost entirely intact
3. A mostly intact skull of a man who served The Last King in life
4. 1d4 pieces of tarnished dinnerware (worth 1 silver each)
5. Roll random swamp event (1D12)
6. A rusted spike pierces your foot, become Infected
7. A weapon! Roll 1d4: 1: Femur 2: Dagger 3: Mace 4: Sword
8. The **Throne of Stone**

D12 Swamp Events, Roll Once Per Hex

1. Eerie, unnatural silence
2. A light misting rain begins to fall
3. Dark clouds open as heavy, humid rain cascades across the horizon
4. The earth begins to soften below you as you walk, sinking to your knees in mud
5. A wretched looking heron swoops down and pierces the water, comes up empty
6. 1D4 **Bog Bodies** grasp at your legs, dragging themselves from the muck
7. 2D4 **Bittersnipes** swarm the party
8. A child's voice calls out for help from a dense thicket of trees. Investigation uncovers only an effigy of twigs bound in hair
9. A **Witch Hunter** intercepts your group for interrogation, expects payment for keeping the swamps witch free
10. A merchant claiming to be a Turlough Witch beckons the party close. Selling 1 of the 6 items available from the **Witches Shop** at half price but does not know its effect

11. **The Great Spined Lurker** catches your scent.
Attacks

12. A trail of rotten breadcrumbs are found leading
in the direction of **The Witches Hut**

Bittersnipe

Vicious predatory birds with razor-like beaks, attack in swarms

HP: 1 Morale: 5 No Armour

(**Tiny:** Attacks and Defense are DR14)

> **Bite** 1D4

Witch Hunter

Loathsome opportunist in the late stages of The Ailment, dressed in a filthy black padded surcoat and a wide brimmed hat. The ruffled cravat around their neck is flecked with bile. Will attack a witch (anyone seen using Powers) on sight

HP: 8 Morale: 6 Padded Armour -1D2

(**Coward:** Roll for Morale if Witch Hunter witnesses a Power being used during combat)

> **Rapier** 1D6 + special

> **Special:** Blessed Blade - Test Toughness DR12 or all remaining uses of Powers for the day are expended

Bog Bodies

Undead preserved in the rich swamp earth, desperate for warmth. Wizen skin, no eyes. Drags their prey into the muck until they suffocate. Victims rise as Bog Bodies in 1D4 days

HP: 7 Morale: - No Armour

> **Claw** 1D4

> **Grapple** DR12 Strength test or be grappled

> **Smother** 1D4 damage per round on grappled target until grapple broken (DR12 Strength)

The Great Spined Lurker

Exoskeletal alligator riddled in protruding ribs and spines. These blade-like bones never stop growing.

HP: 15 Morale: 11 Razor Spines -D6

> **Bite/Spines** 1D6

> **Special:** Missing a melee attack against them means you strike a spine and take 1D4 damage

THE THRONE OF STONE

This 100 kg stone is engraved with the names of all former Kings of Misornock in a long dead language. Someone has daubed the word "LIES" in what might be red paint. When there is no current Monarch of Misornock, standing or sitting on The Throne of Stone while being crowned by a holy man marks you as Monarch of Misornock. Until your body is destroyed entirely (such as by being thrown into **The Pot of Errfloweth**, or doomsday) your corpse can be brought back to life by resting it on The Throne of Stone.

Witch's Hut

A little wooden hut is huddled among the drooping swamp willows, a thin line of smoke billowing from its chimney. The log-framed house is slightly raised on a foundation of stones, similar in size and shape to those of the castle. Little round windows are veiled by yellowed net curtains, yet the thin front door is slightly ajar. Through the crack some flickering firelight shines, casting odd shadows on the dishevelled herb garden which flanks the approach.

1. Outside The Hut

Pungent herbal aromas, a mix of fresh mint with the smell of wilting flowers

- **Herb Garden:** Bushels of spiky plants with heady scents. The herbs are indistinguishable from the weeds
- **Ornamental Wind Chime:** Made of sharp teeth, coins, and bits of skull, strung on braided hair
- **Heavy Oak Door:** Faint remnants of a red X painted on it. Slightly ajar, creaks loudly when opened

Pick herbs: The Turlough Witches grow their deadliest plants where thieves are most likely to fall prey. If picked, the herb withers to dust in the PC's hand, dealing 1d4 damage as they breathe in the olive-grey powder. For the next hour their peripheral vision trembles with hazy visions of spiny roots reaching for their eyes.

Knock: The Mother will answer the door cordially and invite PCs inside, no morale check required.

2. Front Room

Sweet tea brewing over a crackling fire, tinged with woodsmoke

- **Large Open Hearth:** Burning bright with a pot of tea hanging above, steaming
- **Dinner Table:** Three chairs, one place set. One thin bone picked clean on the plate
- **Component Shelves:** Laden with alchemical ingredients, vials, potion bottles, pickled samples of strange creatures, and various skulls. 1d4 instances of each item sold in the **Witches Shop** can be found here.

Witches Shop: The Turlough Witches will trade their cures and concoctions to those they are on speaking terms with. Aggressors, thieves, and proven liars get nothing. Sceptics, religious fanatics, and the chronically annoying are tolerated, but the actual effects of what they buy may differ from those advertised.

For Sale:

- **Black Poison (20s)** Toughness DR14 or 1d6 damage + blind for 1 hour. 3 doses.
- **Red Poison (20s)** Toughness DR14 or 1d10 damage. 3 doses.
- **Brown Poison (20s)** Toughness DR14 or stunned for 1d6 rounds. 3 doses.
- **Ailment Suppressant (50s)** Ignore Ailment effects of current level for 1 day. 1 dose
- **Healing Salve (40s)** Heal 1d6 HP. Toughness DR10 or future applications of Healing Salve deal 1d6 damage as a rash develops on the applied area. 2 doses
- **Pickled Punk (60s)** The preserved body of a ratlike creature with humanoid hands and feet, floating inside a mason jar. If removed from its jar the dead creature comes back to life and screams constantly until submerged in liquid.

3. Back Room

Creaking floorboards, each step awakening skittering bugs. Faint aroma of lavender

- **Four Poster Bed:** Big enough for a whole family with a canopy of moth-eaten silk veiling one side. Hidden trapdoor underneath, not locked
- **Dressing Table:** Drawers filled with clothes and one **Rat Skull Pendant** on a silver chain
- **Broom:** Well worn and entirely mundane. Has not been used here recently

- **South:** Door to Front Room
- **Down:** Hidden trapdoor to Ritual Basement

Move the bed: Creates a lot of noise but reveals the trapdoor to Ritual Basement

Lay in bed: A section of the straw mattress below the sheet is revealed to be hollowed out, allowing smaller PCs to slip through to the trapdoor below.

RAT SKULL PENDANT

A witch's gift is not a thing to be taken lightly, at all if it can be avoided, and certainly not without permission. The wearer gains enhanced senses for the sounds and odours made by rodents. Additionally, sleeping conditions no longer modify their Ailment Progress rolls, for better or worse. Removing, destroying, or dying while wearing the necklace alerts all Turlough Witches to the wearer's location

4. Ritual Basement

Dank and heady, thick air choked by the miasma from drying herbs and rotting flesh

- **Bubbling Cauldron:** Hanging from chains above a low fire, smoke billowing up to a simple flue above. Brickwork matches that of the upstairs hearth
- **Ritual Altar:** Covered in bones of countless swamp animals, one large humanoid skull at its centrepiece. Two unlit candles are placed in its eye sockets, a third candle burns in its open jaw while Theras Marroglade still lives
- **Scattered Bones:** Mostly human, all with distinctive dull bitemarks
- **Finger of Aramae:** Dagger (1d4 + 1 for each living Turlough Witch) made from the carved, gnarled fingerbones of coven founder Mother Aramae.

Drink from cauldron: An unctuous turquoise coloured concoction for aiding sleep. Heals 1d6 when drunk but softens the mind for slumber (-2 Presence for 1d4 hours)

Extinguish the candle: These yellowed candles burn with the lifespan of the coven's witches. The lone burning candle is one third the length of those unlit. Theras Marroglade will fall dead if this flame is extinguished, her candle no longer capable of taking a flame.

Lighting a candle: Searing pains wrack the body of the PC who lit the candle as the blood in their veins turns viscous and dark, their organs convulsing from shock. The inductee must test DR16 Toughness or take 2d6 damage (ignore armour) as the bewitchment ritual permanently alters their insides. Test is repeated every round until the PC either succeeds three times or is killed. A surviving female PC is considered a Turlough Witch and gains Powers common to all Turlough Witches. A surviving male PC is considered a Warlough, gaining one Turlough Witch Power of their choice. Warloughs do not add to the total number of living Turlough Witches, their candle flickering out once the ritual is complete.

Theras Marroglade - Witch, Alchemist, Saleswoman

Plucked from the poorhouse cradle by Mother Aramae, Theras was raised into the Turlough Coven from its formation. The first and so-far only Maiden of the coven, Theras was once a bright hearted practitioner of the arcane and alchemical under the guidance of Mother Aramae and an elder Crone. Both are long gone, the Crone to old age and Mother Aramae to a trend of Witch Hunting that spawned when the lake turned to the wretched swampland it is now. As the last surviving member, Mother Marroglade now seeks a new Crone and Maiden to revive her coven and finish what Aramae started: Draining the swamp of all its remaining water to drive those remaining townsfolk out of their homes and into her hunting ground. Penance for the slaying of Mother Aramae

Theras Marroglade will treat PCs with cautious contempt if met **outside the hut** or in her **front room**, willing to make honest trade with them until given a reason not to do so. If she catches PCs in the **back room** or **ritual basement** without her permission she will attack.

Theras Marroglade may task PCs she trusts (through repeated trade or cordial interactions) with the task of bringing her suitable replacements for her renewed coven. She is willing to pay 50 silver for a woman older than 60, and 50 silver for a girl younger than 20. Female PCs may be offered the role also. Inductees must perform the **Lighting a candle** ritual, though the Toughness test is reduced to DR12 when this ritual is performed with Theras Marroglade's guidance.

One day after the Turlough Coven is renewed to its full 3 members, PCs will awake to find the swampy marshland terrain north of town has completely dried out. Travel through this area is now done at normal pace. Revisiting the witch's hut after this, PCs will be

pointed in the direction of Hex XX which the witch says contains a tool used by "the last good human, until you lot came along that is". There PCs find the skeletal remains of a knight, the chest of which has been pierced by **Tenacity's Lance**

TENACITY'S LANCE

A mythic javelin crafted of slate grey metal with a bronze spearhead, forever slick with swamp water from its watery resting place (d6 damage)

Once Tenacity's Lance has hit a target, it will redirect itself towards that target every time it is thrown thereafter until their death.

Returns to the thrower's hand after impact, except on a critical where it pierces the target for an additional 1d8 damage and must be manually retrieved.

On a fumble it pierces the thrower on its return journey, marking them as the target it will redirect to when thrown.

The Workhouse

Hidden amidst trees on a well trod road some distance from decent eyes the cold grey brick building lays concealed. Surrounded on all sides by a low retaining wall, the Workhouse could almost be mistaken for any other grand residence at a glance. In looking longer, the distinguishing details emerge: its walls are too clean; its pathways too well-trodden; its windows too dark to be filled with glass; its chimney smoke too acrid to be borne of innocent flames.

1. Guardhouse By The Gate

Smokey air carries the sound of distant shouting from beyond the gate

- **Gatekeeper's Hut:** Wooden lean-to where **Gatekeeper Von** sits eyeing your approach
- **Wrought Iron Gate:** Painted black with spiked tops. Locked (Von has the key)
- **High Stone Wall:** Topped with barbed wire rolls, strewn with dead birds and old blood
- **East:** Wrought Iron Gate to Workhouse Yard

Gatekeeper Von

Clad in ochre cloth and an antiquated helm. Lazy but conflicted. Recently afflicted with The Ailment

himself and wants to know what they're doing to the sick inside. Has been told to only allow entry to the severely ill. Has never opened the gate for leaving workers.

HP: 5 Morale: 6 No Armour

> **Shortsword** 1D4

2. Workhouse Yard

Reeks of damp earth and vomit. Water sloshes onto stone somewhere in the distance

- **Handcarts:** Filled with soil, being shovelled into long troughs
- **Afflicted Workers (2D6):** Mixing large canisters of water into the troughs of earth. Buckets of the resulting clay are hefted inside by younger workers
- **Exhausted Bodies (1D8):** Probably dead, lying face down in the dirt. The others work around them
- **West:** Wrought Iron Gate to Guardhouse By The Gate
- **East:** Open door to Workhouse Floor

Afflicted Worker

Riddled in turquoise sores and wounds that won't heal

HP: Morale: 3 No Armour

> **Femur/Hammer/Trowel** 1D4

> **Infectious** On melee damage, test Toughness DR6 or increase Affliction level

2. Workhouse Floor

Stale air holds humid aromas of bile and infection. A cacophony of workers suffering

- **Workstations:** A dozen or so low tables where hunched workers shape clay into misshapen pots
- **Shattered Pottery:** Covers the floor, loose shards make swift movement difficult and walking without shoes extremely painful
- **Workhouse Foremen (1D4):** Marching between workstations examining work, aggressively questions any worker seen to be idle.
- **Wheeled Cart:** Covered in finished pieces for firing, a worker carts it into the Furnace Room

when full

- **West:** Open door to Workhouse Yard
- **North:** Steel door to Furnace Room
- **North:** Oak door to Refectory

Cause A Scene: Foremen who witness PCs acting outside the expected misery of the Workhouse regulars will order them to get back to work. Failure to comply with this demand will make them aggressive

Workhouse Foreman

Hired by Warden Kasht to keep the peace among the Afflicted

HP: 4 Morale: 5 Leather Armour -1D2

> **Whip** 1D2, on hit test Agility DR10 or drop one held weapon

3. Furnace Room

Eye-bleeding heat radiates throughout. The air feels thick enough to chew

- **Furnace:** Floor to ceiling of blackened steel with a twisted nest of pipework behind. The door swings open, an inferno roars beyond
- **Pallet of New Pots:** 4d8 freshly fired pots are arranged on a pallet. (refreshes daily)
- **1 Overworked Potter:** Badly burned, in the late stages of Affliction (2hp). Cares for nothing more than keeping the furnace fire burning
- **South:** Steel door to Workhouse Floor

Jump Into the Furnace: instant, painful death

Take a Pot: GM rolls 1d100. If the result is lower than that PCs Affliction Level + the number of Miseries that have befallen the world, they have found a **Generosity Pot**. Otherwise it is an **Atrocity Pot**. The difference cannot be discerned until something is placed within the pot

3. Refectory

Distant bubbling and a gentle stirring. Savoury scents waft throughout the large hall

- **Long Table:** Built to seat some fifty or more diners, though no places are set. A few spoons are scattered about
- **A Large Black Cauldron:** Elevated on a platform with stairs surrounding it. A few cracks and rusted spots are visible (note: this is **The Pot of Errfloweth**)
- **A Small Stove:** Over which **Culinarian Jandir Hoz** stirs a delicious smelling pot of stew. He greets the PCs warmly on entrance, offering them a fresh meal

Take The Pot of Errfloweth: Jandir Hoz, if he sees, will call for your death. All Foremen and Afflicted Workers become hostile alongside Jandir Hoz

Jandir Hoz - Culinarian, Optimist, Sculptor

Born in Misornock to farming folk, Jandir knows nothing better than the joy of feeding others. His proficiency in the kitchen encouraged his parents to sell him to the Culinarians, who took the young boy in and trained him in the sacred arts of making much out of very little edible material. In their heyday, long before Jandir's time, the Culinarians tended to The Pot of Errfloweth, forever stirring the rich unending soup within. Then, when they grew old and were no longer able to serve their fellow men, they added the last ingredient they could to the soup: themselves. In Jandir's time, however, the bottomless cauldron was cold and empty. The other Culinarians had tried in vain to refill it, one body at a time. Jandir Hoz was only a boy, and far too frightened to join his elders in their mass leap into the abyss. He still believes the flaw lies in the pot itself, battered as it is, and not the lack of ingredients.

A jovial sort, in spite of all things, Jandir Hoz gladly feeds anyone who comes through his doors. This generosity has attracted many Afflicted who are mistrusted by other employers. Jandir sells the pottery they make to buy enough food to feed them all, though this is rarely sufficient. What few **Generosity Pots** they produce furnishes the lion's share of the Culinarian's income, along with the proceeds from his own sculptures.

Jandir Hoz requests the party aid him in fixing **The Pot of Errfloweth**, so the poor and sick may be fed once more from its unending flow. Legend has it the pot was crafted of local soil, ashes, and water, each blessed by Saint Moornock. His workers have been tirelessly crafting miniature pots to find the perfect

balance of clay, ash, and water. They have had some success, but the resulting **Generosity Pots** are tough to replicate and highly prized. Jandir needs to get the balance right lest the clay that makes **Atrocity Pots** bespoil the sacred relic. He believes water drawn from **Saint Moornock's Well** would be sufficiently holy to attain consistent results.

For Sale:

- **Generosity Pot (250s)** When 1 day's worth of dried food is placed inside and the lid is closed, 2 days worth of dried food will be found inside next dawn
- **Attoricty Pot (2s)** When 1 day's worth of dried food is placed inside and the lid is closed, 1 day's worth of inedible rotten food will be found inside next dawn
- **Small Clay Pot (3s)** Holds 1 day's worth of water or food (included, free of charge)
- **Small Animal Sculpture (13s)** Cats, dogs, rats, worms, ravens, and bittersnipes available
- **Miniature Humanoid Sculpture (18s)** Can create a 10 inch clay model of any Saint or person Jandir Hoz has seen. Can create a less accurate model of anyone by description

Culinarian Jandir Hoz

Round of face and broad of build, he stands at a hefty 7ft. A filthy chainmail apron hangs loose over his swollen gut, though how much of that is flesh and how much is chain remains to be seen. Believes The Pot of Errfloweth can yet be fixed and will protect it with his life. Cannot be convinced to relinquish or relocate it

HP: 12 Morale: - Layers of Chainmail -1D6

> **Saint Jonún's Ladle** 1D6 + gut-wrenching nausea (Toughness tests -2 until PC eats)

> **Every Fourth Round Uses Power - Deliverance For The Insatiable** All creatures within 30 ft test Toughness DR10 or lose 1d4 max HP as the fat is drained from their bones. Caster regains lost HP equal to damage dealt

THE POT OF ERRFLOWETH

4 ft in diameter, in its empty state the Pot of Errfloweth is a bottomless pit from which nothing can escape. Jumping into the Pot without a means of

escaping results in inevitable death as you fall forever into a lightless abyss. Titling the Pot on its side or upside down does not cause any of the contents to spill out. When the living or dead body of The Last King is added to The Pot of Errfloweth, it becomes full with an acidic tasting but nutritious soup. This soup can be eaten by anyone regardless of Affliction level, considered Well Fed & Hydrated.. This soup will refresh for a generation, after which the Pot returns to its empty state until fed a Monarch of Misornock crowned on the **Throne of Stone**

The Ruined Abbey

The overgrown Abbey stands shaded among verdant pines, like an ornate censer amidst a slew of spears. The hollow where once there was a grand stained glass window now houses creeping vines and clinging ivy. The path to the Abbey's front door has been roughly cleared, with repurposed headstone fragments cobbling the path towards the entrance.

1a. Headstone Path

Ominous creaking of old stone underfoot, betrayed by the mild aroma of wildflowers

- **Path of Headstones:** Rough hewn path made of broken gravestones laid flat, elevating the path from the damp earth below
- **Desecrated Shrine:** Once contained a statue, now just shattered clay legs. A mural behind the legs depicts a crow nesting in a willow tree

Replace broken idol in shrine: Regardless of what is placed in the shrine to replace the broken statue, the PC who placed it there will regain one expended Omen. While the new idol remains, that PC can regain one Omen per day by invoking the grace of their idol.

1b. Abbey Interior

Wind whistles through the myriad of missing stones, rousing musty memories of old incense

- **Destitute Monks (1D6):** Knelt in prayer. One holds key to North door
- **Stone Caskets:** Eight stone caskets, unadorned but for the flecks of soil and plant roots still clinging to them from their exhumation. Still sealed
- **South:** Gated entrance to Headstone Path.

Gate is open and rusted beyond repair, the lock is long gone

- **North:** Iron door to The Last King's Crypt, locked

Open a Casket: Attempting to do so will aggravate surrounding **Destitute Monks** who will attack. DR16 Strength test to successfully pry open the lid. On opening, roll 1D6: 5-6 the skeleton within is adorned in bronze jewellery worth 40 silver; 3-4 the casket contains nothing but old bones and dust; 1-2 the **Risen Skeleton** within attacks the opener

1D6 Destitute Monks

Fanatical and desperately malnourished, they serve the Monarch's Pardoner by maintaining the illusion of a functioning abbey, however poorly. Will grant entrance to those who profess the glory of The Last King. Will also provide passage for anyone offering an uninfected corpse for "Internment".

HP: 8 Morale: 6 No Armour

> **Femur** 1D4

Risen Skeleton

Long dead and seeking to return to it with company

HP: 5 Morale: 8 No Armour

> **Cloying Grasp** 1D4

1c. Crypt of The Last King

Almost entirely intact, this part of the abbey is cold but dry, and smells of mould

- **Monument to The Last King:** A stone carving of The Last King as he would have laid on his deathbed. Weather and age has eroded the details of his face. There is a crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, and a large stone by his feet
- **Carved Inscription:** Reads "But blessed the best are those who know the throne"
- **Two Stone Statues of Warriors:** Flanking the monument on each side, each holding a bronze sword
- **South:** Iron door to the Abbey Interior
- **Down:** Secret passageway to the Catacombs Entrance

Touch the monument's crown/sceptre: A protection against thieves and the unwise, touching these stone depictions of the King's treasures causes the two stone statues of warriors to rotate inward, swinging their swords towards the intruder. Test Agility DR14 the first time this happens or take 1D8 damage. Subsequent triggers of this trap can be avoided with Agility DR10.

Touch the stone by its feet: A marker of the faithful, who would know the legend of the Throne of Stone. Touching this stone platform causes the monument to recess into the back wall revealing a passageway down to the Catacombs Entrance.

2a. Catacomb Entrance

Stale and dimly lit by flickering candlelight from niches inset in the walls

- **Woodcarving:** Carved on the north wall of the room, depicts a man coming off a boat, shaking hands with a hooded figure who points to the right where a large stone sits
- **Pile of Rotten Clothes:** Torn and musty, various antiquated styles
- **East:** Narrow Corridor to Grimy Chamber
- **West:** Passageway to The Ash Heap
- **Up:** Ladder to the Crypt of The Last King

2b. The Ash Heap

Dry and dusty. Wretchedly ashen as clouds of dust puff up from each step

- **Pile of Bodies:** Reduced to ash in parts, though none entirely
- **Silver Scroll Case:** Hanging from a chain in the corner of the room. Contains one **Unclean Scroll - Ashes Unto Ashes**
- **Ashen Amalgam:** Sleeps among the mutilated bodies, roused to wakedness upon hearing the rattle of a chain or if touched
- **East:** Passageway to Catacomb Entrance
- **North:** Hatch to Lab

Ashen Amalgam

A twisted homunculus birthed of fouled attempts at burning human bodies through magic. Composed of the contorted remains of a dozen bodies that just

wouldn't fully burn. Wakens only to feed, returns to sleep if fed a burning or burnt body. Cannot leave The Ash Heap

**HP: 16 Morale: - Cadaver
Carapace -1D2**

> **Cindered Claw** 1D6

> **Cloud of Corpse Dust** 1D4 to all PCs in room, Toughness DR12 to resist

> **When Ashen Amalgam takes damage**, portions of its body crumble to grey ash. The PC that hit it must Test Presence DR12 or be blinded by the cloud until the end of their next turn.

2c. Lab

Sulphurous with a tinge of formaldehyde. Dripping can be heard echoing

- **Deconstructed Coffins:** Lids repurposed as worktables, remaining timber hacked into pieces
- **3 Poorly Preserved Bodies:** Wrapped in rotting bandages, splayed out on the floor. Various empty bottles of preservative fluids lie scattered around them
- **Bucket of Dead Worms:** Sat among embalming tools, the bucket is near overflowing with the unmoving fleshy worms
- **North:** Locked door to Royal Grave (Pardoner has the key)
- **South:** Hatch down Ash Heap
- **East:** Crawl space that leads to the roof of the Long Corridor. A lever at the end of this crawlspace can reset the spike trap. Can exit down into the Long Corridor if the Spike Trap is up

Feel around in the bucket of worms: The PC feels a **Disembodied Left Hand** at the bottom of the bucket that grips them back. Removing the hand reveals the source of the movement: the few remaining worms wriggling within the hand.

2d. Grimy Chamber

Dry upturned coats the floor. Heady incense fills the air, masking the rot

- **Woodcarving:** Carved on the east wall of the room, depicts the man atop the stone with a crown on his head. A knight with a spear kneels to his right
- **Pile of Chains:** 20 ft of unbroken chain
- **5 Risen Skeletons:** In varying states of decomposition and deconstruction, are rebuilding themselves upon entry. Aggressive towards all non monks
- **North:** Archway leading to Long Corridor
- **West:** Narrow corridor to Catacomb Entrance

2e. Long Corridor

Distant creaking can be heard. The hall smells of old blood and oil

- **Flagstone Floor:** Jagged and pockmarked
- **Burial Niches:** Shelf-like inlets in the walls either side, packed with urns and skulls
- **North:** Archway leading to Ritual Crossing
- **South:** Archway leading to Grimy Chamber

Discover the spike trap: With sufficient light and a successful DR14 Presence test (from the PC with the highest Presence) evenly spaced holes can be spotted on the ceiling. 16 or higher on the Presence test reveals the raised flagstones halfway down the hallway

Trigger the spike trap: Stepping on the flagstones halfway down the hallway triggers long spikes to drop from the ceiling. PCs in the Long Corridor must test DR14 Agility to flee from the falling spikes or take 1D10 damage. PCs without armour are pinned in place by the spikes until the trap is reset

2e. Ritual Crossing

Writhing sounds echo from above. This place reeks of death

- **Woodcarving:** Carved on the north wall of the room, depicts a woman stirring a large pot from which an arm emerges. Emaciated figures hold bowls out to her. The hooded figure can be seen in the distance
- **East:** Gateway leading to Trench Grave of Saint Nix
- **West:** Stairs leading up to Royal Grave

2d. Trench Grave of Saint Nix

It almost sounds like whispering somewhere far off

- **Marble Statue of Saint Nix:** Patron of poverty, her hands cupped and arms outstretched. Investigation reveals the hollow in her hands is empty
- **The Trench Grave:** A pauper's grave, 6ft by 3ft of gravel covered soil. Wilted flowers and 15 silver pieces are scattered
- **West:** Gateway leading to Ritual Crossing

Steal from the grave: The hands on the statue close as a shrill scream pierces the thieves mind. They lose all silver pieces they are carrying. The statue's hands will not reopen

Place silver in the statue's hands, D4

1. The hands on the statue close and a thin smile appears on its face. Will not reopen
2. The donor's gut swells as a sickening satiation overtakes them. They do not need to eat for 1d4 days
3. Dry dust fills the donor's lungs. A coughing fit overtakes them
4. 2D6 silver pieces partially emerge from the donor's flesh. When unarmoured, these coins can be removed dealing 1 damage per coin

2f. Royal Grave

Writhing sounds surround as if the room was being digested

- **Ruined Woodcarving:** Carved on the south wall of the room, stained in blood and black ichor. All that can be seen is the hooded figure holding a crown by their side
- **Mound of Loose Earth:** Ever-moving from the wriggling of worms within
- **Mummified Body of The Last King:** Propped up against the mound of earth, almost standing. Worms stream into the stump where his left hand once was
- **The Monarch's Pardoner:** Knelt in prayer atop the mound of earth
- **East:** Stairs leading down to Ritual Crossing
- **South:** Locked door to Royal Grave (Pardoner has the key)

The Monarch's Pardoner

Thin and bony with a hunched posture and a serrated blade. Pale skin riddled with sores can be seen through gaps in his rotten bandages. His face is hidden beneath a grotesque mask

HP: 14 **Morale: -** **No Armour**

> **Serrated Blade** 1D4

> **Uses a Power every third round**

(automatically succeeds, D6):

1-2: *Unto the Earth Reborn*: Caster is swallowed into the earth, a **Risen Skeleton** surfacing in his place. Caster resurfaces at the beginning of his next turn

3-4: *Rot of the Grave Made Flesh*: One creature takes 1D4 damage as worms writhe beneath their skin. Ignores armour

5-6: *Foul Psychopomp*: Summon 1d4 **Risen Skeleton**

>If **The Monarch's Pardoner** dies his body is consumed by the worms, leaving only his Lab door key, his mask, and a book entitled Notes On Vermithurgy (1D2, contains a **scroll** of either *Unto the Earth Reborn* or *Rot of the Grave Made Flesh*)

The Pardoner's Tale

Monarch's Pardoner was a title of great honour in the life of The Last King. Equal parts soothsayer and healer, they tended to the royal family from birth. The masked man atop the pile of worms took up this title in the hopes of raising The Last King from his eternal slumber. He believes that the sickness which plagues the land is divine punishment for living without rulership for so long. The Monarch's Pardoner has experimented with necromantic and alchemical solutions for raising the dead, though neither have worked on The Last King. Driven to madness by his efforts and devotion, the Pardoner's latest attempt involves puppeteering his King through the burgeoning field of Vermithurgy: the arcane art of controlling worms and other detritivores.

The Last King

The inert husk cannot be raised from the dead by traditional means. Kings can only be healed by seating themselves once more upon the **Throne of Stone** on which their rulership was divinely ordained. If his feet are placed upon the **Throne of Stone** The Last King is roused to life once more, his soul forced back

into his body. The Last King will not attack any PC, wordlessly rising to begin his journey. A PC holding **Tenacity's Lance** will hear The Last King's voice in their mind, urging his stalwart knight to aid him in completing the ritual and explaining what it does. Unless guided, The Last King will roam the land in search of **The Pot of Errfloweth** but will not find it without the PCs assistance. Jandir Hoz, if still in possession of **The Pot of Errfloweth** will take some convincing but will not block The Last King's final sacrifice without good reason.

Saint Moornock's Well

St. Moornock's Well, innocuous and unmarked to those who would not know it, is far smaller than its legend suggests. Some 8ft across, a low circle of locally sourced stones stacked without mortar or any particular order. A lone stump of a roughly felled tree remains by the side of the well. No grass grows in a 10ft radius surrounding the mound. The air is still, and smells faintly of vinegar. The remnants of an old campfire lies some distance from the well, wherein was burnt what looks like the winch and pulley system once used to draw water.

Note: Each day **Lady Betty** visits the well to retrieve the full bottles of Well Water. Upon first finding the well, Lady Betty will arrive to collect in 2D6 x 15 minutes and attack on sight

1. Atop The Well

All is still, somewhere in the distance a crow caws

- **The Stump:** Of a once mighty weeping willow, hundreds of years old
- **The Firepit:** Not too fresh, but not nearly old enough. Maybe a week
- **The Well:** A stone circle supposedly blessed. It is a sheer drop down into its black depths, some 20 ft down
- **Down:** Sheer drop to the Basin of The Well. The fall could be lethal (d6)

2. Basin of The Well

The sound of a gentle trickle of water fills the cave like an auditorium. It is cold down here

- **The Source:** A thin stream of water leaking from a crack in the cave wall

- **A Bottle:** Resting by the source being filled directly, almost full
- **Up:** The surface some 30 ft up

Gather Water: Harvesting enough water to fill a bottle takes hours with the slow speed of the stream. One could leave a bottle, as others seemingly have, and return in a day or so to find it full. One bottle could be enough for two or maybe three people at most

WELL WATER

Water from Saint Moornock's well, said to have magical healing properties. Whether or not it does, the water is exceptionally clean. Upon consumption, PC is considered Hydrated and will take an additional -4DR to their next Affliction Progression roll

Webertal

by Finn Emerson Burns



INTRODUCTION

This is a setting and adventure for Dungeons and Dragons 5e. It can begin at level one and can serve as a good beginning for an adventuring party. In this document, you will find information on some key locations within Webertal and sample adventures. A Game Master will need to create some of their own adventures to make this a full campaign. The provided adventures are some suggestions to help create your campaign.

Welcome to Webertal, a dark Fey prison realm designed by the gods to banish and punish a corrupt warlock. Serafina Thorn has found a way to call mortals to her realm. She slowly guides and entraps them in her prison. The Fatespinner, as she has come to be known, now finds herself powerful enough to influence the realm. Without any hope of escape, she seeks to share her misery and steal the joy of anyone unlucky enough to fall into her web.

Webertal is a haunting island, cloaked in a ghostly fog that covers its dense forests and jagged mountain ranges. The scent of moss and earth permeates the land, while gnarled branches populate the surrounding landscape. Large webs shimmer with dew in the dying light, creating an otherworldly and eerie atmosphere for anyone who enters.

The island's rugged mountains rise from the earth, their peaks capped by swirling clouds that bleed into the surrounding fog. Valleys and hidden groves provide a home for mysterious creatures. The ever-present mist muffles sound, creating a lonely and eerie silence, broken only by the occasional rustle of leaves or the distant call of an unseen creature.

This land bears a terrible curse. Memories of life outside the island are slowly forgotten after spending time in Webertal. Webertal's residents find they have no recollection of their old lives, only ever knowing this plane as their home. The ruler, Serafina Thorn, is the only one who knows her origin, though this comes with one exception: she does not know the identity of her only child.

Note for the GM. For every day a player spends in Webertal, they must make an intelligence save of DC 8. Upon failure, they can decide on a memory that

their character will no longer remember from outside of the plane of Webertal. This is the case for all who enter the realm as its residents have no recollection of their lives **before** coming to Webertal. This is entirely up to the players and the GM to discuss to satisfy the plot and character arcs.

Serafina uses these memories to try and regain her sense of self. She is deeply saddened within her confines and wishes to feel some joy to numb her grief.

NOTABLE PEOPLE AND GROUPS

FATESPINNER SERAFINA THORN (SHE/HER)

Serafina is the reason for Webertal's existence. Once a warlock to the Spider Queen and Spinner of Fate (Arakthys), she became corrupt and defied the wishes of her god by attempting to change the course of fate. She now attempts to act in place of the god Arakthys by using her gifts to forge divinity. Through deep knowledge of the arcane and fate, she made her child immortal. This, of course, was an action that her patron, Arakthys, could not abide. Arakthys thus created Webertal, a prison for Serafina to be sealed away and erase the person she used to be. Once, Serafina was a loving mother. Now, she has been cursed to forget every detail of her child. Additionally, Arakthys decided that Serafina should lose herself. The longer she remains in Webertal, the more she resembles a spider.

Serafina is confined to her castle, the Bastion of Fate. She is forever trapped and unable to use her power. Originally, she was unable to leave an arcane circle in the basement. Over the course of hundreds of years, she slowly began to break free. Now, she wanders the lonely halls, alone and grieving. Bending the realm to her will, she reached out beyond the plane. She whispered in the ear of any mortal unfortunate enough to hear her. She began to lure them in with promises of forgetting their painful pasts. This was not exactly a lie. Soon, people forgot exactly how they had ended up in Webertal and established a society there. Serafina's power and capabilities grew when her victims began to worship her. The population has

only continued to grow, allowing her more power and reach, but little hope of escape.

Despite her successes, Serafina is still confined to a crumbling castle, the Bastion of Fate. She sees no way of regaining her former self. Serafina is, in short, miserable. Forever punished for her actions, she sees no path to redemption. She has lost the memories of her child and has little control over her existence. Serafina is acutely aware of these facts. Thus, she will do anything to control her territory and its people as its confined puppeteer. Serafina directly commands the realm's arachnids and any who have taken an oath in her name. She uses these to feed her power in the hopes of one day finding her lost child.

Serafina is, of course, the victim of this realm. She used her gifts to protect the ones she loved but as a result, became paranoid and controlling. Only ever wanting more, uses her gifts to control the fate of those around her. Serafina is fueled by grief and misery to create a society of conformity. She fully believes that nothing can cause more pain if she has complete control over everyone around her. Control, misery, and the hope that she will one day find her child are the threads that hold Serafina together.

Note to GM. Serafina will attempt to contact any powerful people who enter her realm. She will try to make a deal as she has done for Weavers and Seers. She will ask for their happiness in return for endless power. This path will only end in sorrow and is a very bad idea. Players will slowly lose their sense of self as she drains them of their memories and joy. Each morning, players who have made a deal with her will need to succeed on a DC12 wisdom save or be charmed by her for the day. If charmed, she will then have them investigate those she believes are acting against her and will wish for them to be punished.

This will, however, allow them to choose one memory from outside of Webertal that they can retain. This could be a memory that helps them hold on to who they were before entering the realm.

This pact can only be broken by visiting Silken Spire. Within the cathedral, a book can be found detailing a severing ritual. This will take a lot of resources and sacrifice to undertake.

THE WEAVERS

These are personally appointed trustees of the

Fatespinner. They answer solely to her and watch over each of Webertal's settlements, acting as mayor to ensure that inhabitants will stay forever. Within Webertal, the Weavers hold great authority. Weavers are heads of both civil affairs and the guard force. They each have complete control over the settlement they are assigned.

Due to having a pact with the Fatespinner, the weavers have been allowed to hold on to some of their most treasured memories from outside of the realm. This is also the case for Seers.

THE SEERS

These are the spiritual leaders of Webertal. They enforce the doctrine as instructed by the Fatespinner and ensure that her values and viewpoints are upheld. Along with delivering sermons, they may see people one-on-one to discuss matters of fate. They are blessed with the gift of foresight and are a highly valued member of the community on the grounds of advice or guidance.

ARAKTHYS

This is a god depicted as a Spinner of Fate. Taking the form of a giant spider, Arakthys is worshipped across the realms. Weaving great tapestries of past, present and future she seeks true balance in life. She grants power to those who align with her wishes, tasking them with ensuring that things happen as they should. She can grant gifts of foresight and creation to the worthy. Those who become her enemy, however, will face her wrath. She is strict with her values, cursing those who act against the strands that weave their story.

VALERIA (THEY/THEM)

Valeria is a tall and slender elven figure with medium-length crimson hair. There is a distinctive scar over their right eye. They carry a sheathed sword by their side with an owl familiar resting on their shoulder. They have been on the island of Webertal for what they believe to be eight years and have managed to keep their memories of the past. They are unsure as to why they have kept their mind for so long. They have been trying to find a way out for a long time and have been carrying out their own investigations across the island.

Valeria remembers a false life before coming to the island. They remember a time being a travelling mercenary across the realms. Having a background as a mercenary, they could be a potential ally to the party. They wish to help with any investigations on how to leave or free the island's inhabitants. They may be an important source of information for an adventuring party.

Note for the GM. There are some memories that Valeria has forgotten. This is because they are the child of the Fatespinner from before she fell to evil. Valeria has been in the realm ever since its creation, unknowingly attempting to free and reunite with their mother. Serafina equally does not remember her child, only that she had one and lost them. This unending grief is a part of her punishment from Arakthys. Clues to this can be found across the realm.

Due to a ritual performed by Serafina long ago, Valeria does not age. Once destined to die she has been made immortal by her mother. This was the pivotal moment leading to the downfall of Serafina.

SPIDERS

These are the footsoldiers of the Fatespinner. They are the physical embodiment of the memories that have been stolen. When killed, the memory is lost, releasing it to never return to its host. Any player who kills a spider in this realm must roll a **d100**. On a 1-40 they will see the memory that the spider held. Almost all of these are joyful memories of random inhabitants before they became trapped in the realm.

ABOUT WEBERTAL

RELIGION

Religion and state are intertwined in Webertal with the Fatespinner herself being the prime deity. Religion is a central part of culture here as it is strictly enforced among the residents.

As worship for the Fatespinner grows so too does her power. The ever-increasing population and structure of this realm have allowed the Fatespinner to slowly break free from her chains as her demand for worship increases.

ROLE OF THE FATSPINNER

The Fatespinner controls all aspects of Webertal. Having spent centuries at the core of this realm she has continued to grow in power. She is viewed as a Weaver of Fate, a being who can determine past, present and future. Residents view her as divine, able to either give them blessings or curse them to doom. They offer sacrifices and use her symbology throughout the island.

WEBERTAL AND THE CHURCH

Each settlement in Webertal has a church that is overseen by a Seer. Offerings and heavy worship are offered to the Fatespinner and attendance is required of everyone on the island. Those who are found to not be attending service will be severely punished. Worship takes place at **eight in the morning and eight in the evening daily**.

SYMBOLS AND WORSHIP

Symbols of the Fatespinner can be seen across the island. The imagery associated with her are spiders, webs, eyes and items created through fibre arts (weaving, embroidery, knitting, etc.). This imagery is an integral part of all structures and interiors across the island. Depictions of Serafina are prominent and aplenty to show devotion and as a reminder of the power structures within the island.

Prayer is an essential aspect of worship and players will become very familiar with praising the Fatespinner. The most common prayer is known as the Weaver's Plea and it goes as follows:

"O Fatespinner, Weaver of Destiny, guide our steps along the threads of fate. Grant us wisdom to see our paths, and strength to face what lies ahead. In your hands, we trust our future."

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

MILITARY INFLUENCE

The military of Webertal serves to guard the resources of the island and to protect their Queen. The Weavers are a council of elites that aid The Fatespinner in ruling over the island of Webertal. They are trained

fighters and each runs their own guard force within settlements.

GOVERNMENT PRESCENCE

There is a clear hierarchy among citizens, there are designated people in charge selected by the queen. A designated Weaver rules over each settlement. To gain social standing in Webertal, you must ally with the Fatespinner. This can be through deals and oaths of loyalty.

RULE OF LAW

Traditional laws are essentially non-existent in Webertal. Weavers have total authority and only need to answer to the Fatespinner. There is, however, a strong sense of values. There is a heavy emphasis on worship, devotion, humble living, and passivity in Webertal. Those who do not embrace these values are seen as outliers and will draw the attention (and ire) of those in the community. Every effort is made toward conformity within the model of religion in Webertal.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Within this island, it is expected that most people will fend for themselves. There is a strong sense of community among residents and many will help each other out. Much of this support comes from a place of trust and is often done quietly within homes and away from the eyes of the Fatespinner and the Weavers.

DIVERSITY

Gender and sexuality do not play a major role in this setting. All relationship types and gender identities are widely respected and recognised. Race varies quite greatly within the Isle of Webertal. People come from a range of backgrounds as they are victims of the Fatespinner from across the realms.

CLASS RELATIONS

There is a clear societal hierarchy in which Weavers have a large amount of political, capital and social power. They hold the highest authority besides the Fatespinner. Seers are leaders within the community of Webertal. They are financially comfortable and

hold social capital across the island. Any person who is viewed as being closer to the Fatespinner is seen to be among the upper class of the island. The remaining community struggles to divide resources and products to survive and prosper.

ECONOMY

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION, ECONOMIC STRENGTH, AND RESOURCES

Webertal is a small, isolated island community. There is no way to import any materials or products from any other community outside of the island. Due to this, there are only a handful of locations to circulate economic resources. There is quite a large gap in the wealth and there isn't much money to circulate. Resources are highly monitored and overseen by the Weavers.

There is a great amount of resource-sharing among towns. To obtain necessities, residents need an interconnected market. Prices are high, however, and many rely on subsistence farming or hunting in the woods. The island is primarily woodland which makes farming and foraging quite common. Many settlements appoint a group to gather food to be shared among the residents.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Crafts are a form of worship. Creating is celebrated, but also necessary. This is particularly seen through fibre arts such as knitting, crocheting, weaving, or sewing. There are festivals to celebrate the crafts and they are an art passed down through the generations.

LOCATIONS

Fog. Mists enshroud the island of Webertal acting as a force to trap people inside. Any who enters the mists must make a DC15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. The mists will not lead the players off the island, only growing thicker and seeming unending.

Planar travel. Any magical means of planar travel will fail. Players will be unable to use any spells to leave Webertal. This includes spells such as **teleport**, **plane shift** and even **wish**.

ELDERWOOD

Nestled deep within the heart of the foggy isle is the town of Elderwood. This secluded village is known for its decorated wooden buildings, intricately carved from the towering trees that enshroud the island. Carved into the structures within the grain of the wood are elaborate patterns resembling spider webs that shimmer softly in the never-ending twilight.

Lanterns crafted from glowing fungi and shaped like delicate spider webs illuminate the cobblestone streets, casting haunting yet welcoming glows through the mist. The air is filled with the eerie melodies of unseen creatures calling from the fog that traps all who come here.

The Silkstrand Inn. This tall and pointed two-story building emanates a warm glow. Passing by, residents can smell the comfort of a home-cooked meal.

This Inn welcomes all and is an important place for information and rest. Its interior is a comforting sight, it contains tapestries of tales and a fire in which to shed the stress of the day. This inn is run by Isaak (he/they) and Benjamin (he/him) Rosemheld. They are a married couple who try their best to care for their community. With a lack of resources, prices are quite high but they would be grateful for a helping hand in return for food and board.

Church. This imposing structure lies at the most central point of the town. It is adorned with stained glass and carvings of a spider-like deity. A vast amount of care and resources have gone into crafting this building. Its interior is filled to the brim with finery. Items crafted from gold, silver and platinum decorate the walls as tapestries show reverence and sacrifice to this deity. A shrine at the northernmost point depicts a figure who is half spider half humanoid. A carving at the base of the statue reads “The Fatespinner”. The priest of this church is named Seer Andrea Wilpert (she/her). Upon seeing newcomers she will require a donation towards the church. This is mandatory for any who enter the town.

SILKEN SPIRE

Silken Spire stands as a beacon of faith and devotion in the realm. Carved into the base of the towering mountain range it is a testament to both the resilience of its inhabitants and the enduring power of their faith.

The town’s architecture features stone bricks. Intricate carvings decorate the town, depicting tales of the

Fatespinner, while delicate arches and balconies offer panoramic views of the surrounding valley.

At the heart of Silken Spire stands the grand sanctuary and cathedral, The Cradle. The cathedral’s towering spires stretch above the mist, standing tall above the island. Windows of The Cradle depict eyes as if watching over any who come to this place.

The Widow’s Hearth Inn. Located on the main street, The Widow’s Hearth stands as a welcoming haven for travellers and locals alike. The tavern’s exterior, adorned with a weathered wooden sign bearing the image of a flickering hearth, hints at the warmth and comfort found within its stone walls. The atmosphere is quite alarming, as people always feel like they are being watched. A Seer maintains a small shrine in the back of this Inn. Conversations are quiet as prayers are said before meals. A Seer collects donations in rotation from the patrons of this inn. The owner is a blue tiefling named Alois Ritter (he/they). They craft beautiful and colourful drinks tailored to each who comes to their establishment.

The Cradle. This Cathedral stands as the checkpoint to the Widow’s Peak mountains. This is the religious centre of the island. It is a large network of interconnected buildings stretching across the width of the town. Here people come to worship and train in the name of the Fatespinner. Symbols of her adorn the grey stone brick walls creating a grand castle structure in her honour. Travellers are welcome here and may come to visit for guidance and healing. The Seers and Weavers here can help those in need and use **priest** or **cult fanatic** stats.

Weaver’s Gate. This tall platinum gate is the final barrier to the Widow’s Peak mountain range. Only Weavers and Seers are permitted past this point. To get through, players will either need to gain special permission to pass through or they may find a way to sneak through.

WIDOW’S PEAK

Stretching across the horizon, the mountain range known as Widow’s Peak dominates the landscape with its jagged peaks and shadowed valleys. Cloaked in mystery and intrigue, these mountains are said to be the domain of the Fatespinner.

Nestled within the cliffs are countless caverns, rumoured to be the dwelling places of the spiders that serve the Fatespinner. These arachnid guardians are said to spin intricate webs, detailing the threads of fate of those who reside on the island.

At the heart of Widow's Peak lies the sacred sanctum and home of the Fatespinner, The Bastion of Fate. Not many are sure what these hallowed halls contain as not one soul who has entered without an invitation has returned. The Weavers and Seers are the only ones permitted to tread this landscape. Those who enter must do so with caution or be prepared for a fight.

The Bastion of Fate. Located within the treacherous mountain range of Widow's Peak, the Bastion of Fate stands as a formidable fortress looming over all who wish to enter. This stronghold, carved from the dark stone of its surroundings, is a labyrinth, embodying the nature of its inhabitant, the Fatespinner. The Bastion itself is intricately adorned with delicate carvings, symbolising the threads of fate that the Fatespinner weaves. Its stone walls seal in the evil that walks within. A lonely prison within the mountains, isolated from all who reside below.

ADVENTURES

ELDERWOOD - BAD OMENS

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is set after an adventuring party attends one of the mandatory worship sessions in the town of Elderwood. It is suitable for a low-level party who is just beginning their adventure on the isle of Webertal.

AREA 1 - CHURCH

Following her sermon, the local Seer of the town Andrea Wilpert (she/her) will approach the party and welcome them to their community. She is gentle-natured and will offer to meet with them privately to help them settle into island life. She can explain the following basic information about Webertal:

- The Fatespinner reigns over the island and is a powerful being who deals with fate.
- We must be devoted to her to avoid being cursed.
- Weavers and Seers help to guide and protect the community. They are always here to help and are closest to the Fatespinner.
- Do not kill a spider, as they are the eyes and ears of the Fatespinner. They should be treated with respect and as a sign of good fortune.

After a welcoming conversation, she will state that the party seem like the adventuring type. She will admit

to being ashamed but needs to make a request of them. One of the people in the community, Torsten Wolff (he/him) is sick. He has lost himself and is believed to be cursed. He has become violent and will fight any who approaches him. Andrea will ask that they try to help him, even if it means death. The Seer will plead that harm should only come as a last resort. She will warn that Torsten is highly dangerous so the community has needed to imprison him. If the party can help and come back unscathed they will gain the respect of Andrea, as well as valuable holy symbols that can offer protection on their travels.

AREA 2 - BASEMENT

Behind the altar of the church descends a narrow winding staircase. Carved into the walls are webs with their centres shaped like eyes. Pupils move along with the adventurers as they descend beneath the town. Faintly, characters can hear the whispered murmuring of unintelligible strings of words.

Trap. This area is clouded in a shimmering purple fog. Players need to succeed on a **DC12 Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned and experience hallucinations of the Fatespinner. See the table below for hallucinations players may experience

Secret door. At the base of the steps, a brick stands out from the others. If players spot this, a concealed store room will be revealed containing a chest with a gold bar worth 200gp.

d4	Hallucinations
1	A swarm of spiders covering the walls and ceiling.
2	A voice whispering that she can tell them their future.
3	A shadowy figure of someone from their past.
4	A baby crying.

AREA 3 - WEAVER'S SANCTUM

This is a large octagonal chamber that has an altar at the centre. Its floor bears a large arcane circle. There is a thrumb of magic in the air, and characters can feel it almost as a second heartbeat. This room feels like an epicentre of power. If players investigate the spell circle carved into the floor they can learn that it can be used to cast commune. The altar contains idols of

worship to the Fatespinner.

Crawling across the ceiling is a **giant spider**. This spider is acting as the guardian of Torsten, placed there to ensure no one interferes with the hold the Fatespinner's curse has upon him. If players interact with the door to where Torsten has been sealed the spider will attack. Otherwise, it silently watches the party.

Door. The door to Torsten's prison has been enchanted with an arcane ward to keep him sealed inside. Players need to succeed on a **DC12 intelligence (arcana) check** or a **DC 15 dexterity or strength check** to open the door.

Note for the GM. This may be an opportune moment for the Fatespinner to contact the party once they have helped Torsten and are returning upstairs. She may offer a bargain to players that may align with her interests as she needs loyalty to grow in power and break free from her confines.

AREA 4 - TORSTEN'S PRISON

This is a small chamber containing a bed. On it, sits an emaciated drow who is whispering to himself and rocking back and forth. Twisting shadows surround him as if they are tormenting his every moment.

Torsten has been cursed by the Fatespinner and is currently being punished for blasphemy against her. He tried to rebel against the church of Webertal and became quite an outspoken advocate against her. To help bring him back to his senses, players can cast **lesser restoration** or **remove curse**. They can otherwise make a generous offering on the altar outside.

If players decide that Torsten is beyond helping and decide that death would be a better fate to befall him he uses **cult fanatic** stats.

CONCLUSION

Seer Andrea will be grateful for the help of the party and will heal any of their wounds if they are injured. She will give each of them a symbol of the Fatespinner made of silver worth 50gp to offer them protection on their travels.

If Torsten is still alive he can be an important source of information to a new adventuring party. He can part

with the following information:

- The Fatespinner is evil and is trapping all of those around her in dangerous deals that only serve her.
- Webertal is dangerous but no one has ever found a way to escape. All those who begin to investigate slowly forget what they are looking for.
- People will lose memories the longer they are on the island. Keep a journal of your cherished moments if you hope to keep them close, though you might soon forget those memories were once yours.
- The Fatespinner resides in Widow's Peak but to get there you need to go through Silken Spire.

Torsten is unable to join the party in their adventures but is very grateful for their help. He promises to be more careful from now on and will try to keep a low profile and out of trouble.

Note to GM. If the party visit him in the future, he will not recall them or any of these events. This is because the Fatespinner is wary of allies to any who oppose her and thus removes his memories of them.

SILKEN SPIRE - THE COLLECTOR

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in a large townhouse in the city of Silken Spire. It is suitable for mid-level adventurers as their adventures in Webertal continue. This city is the holy epicentre of the island with ancient artefacts and powerful items rumoured amongst those who search for power and treasures.

AREA 1 - THE WIDOW'S HEARTH INN

While in the town of Silken Spire, the best place for a warm meal is The Widow's Hearth Inn. This establishment acts as the centre of the community where many gather for a drink after a hard day. Worship is prominent at the inn, with religious rituals entwined in etiquette.

Everyone, even less pious residents, navigates this environment to find a way to unwind and speak among their community.

Any who spends time in this inn will hear of the recent

fortune of a local merchant named Phillip Ferber (he/they) who has been exclaiming with joy with his latest acquisition. With a taste for treasure, he has gained the nickname of **The Collector**.

Players can learn more about this magic item from those within the Inn. Residents know the following:

- It is a garment rumoured to have been created by the Fatespinner herself.
- The origins of the item are unknown but it will prove useful to any who are facing danger across the island.

AREA 2 - THE COLLECTOR'S ENTRYWAY

This large townhouse is well-kept and is a grand display of wealth. This house sits surrounded by a large garden with an array of delicate plants. It is a large two-story wooden home with a front and back entrance. Candlelight glows from the front room on the upper floor.

Doors. The doors to the house are locked. Players can either pick the lock with a successful **DC15 sleight of hand check** or by casting **knock**.

Butler. This house is maintained by a very dedicated butler, Irene Steiner (she/they). Players must succeed on a group **DC 14 stealth check** to traverse the house successfully.

AREA 3 - PRIVATE STUDY

This elegant study contains academic materials and dark wooden furniture to create the perfect working environment. This room has a desk, two bookshelves, a rug, and an armchair. Candles remain lit on the desk indicating that someone was recently here. Taxidermy wolves and eagles decorate the walls. They seem as if they are judging the character's actions.

Key. Upon investigating this room players will find a key to a vault in the drawer of the desk. This vault is located behind a bookshelf in this room with the keyhole being concealed within the spine of one of the books.

Butler is approaching. Once players enter this room, set a timer for **10 minutes**. When this has passed The Collector's butler will enter the room to clean and lock it as a part of their daily routine. If she encounters the players, she will attack and call for the town guards.

The butler, Irene, uses **mage** stats.

AREA 4 - HIDDEN VAULT

Once the key clicks into place, the bookshelf can be opened to reveal The Collector's Vault.

Treasure. It contains 10 gems worth 25gp each, **Eyes of Minute Seeing** and a cloak, resting on the shoulders of a mannequin. The cloak is beautiful and emanates a magical aura. It is known as the **Cloak of Arachnida**. It is a deep purple with shimmering silver webs embroidered delicately across it.

CONCLUSION

The items found in this adventure may prove useful while exploring the island of Webertal. If players are caught by the butler they may be apprehended by the guards and put into prison. The consequences of their actions are up to the discretion of the GM. If they are successful however they will be much better equipped for taking on the dangers of the realm.

WIDOW'S PEAK CAVERNS

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the mountainous caverns of Widow's Peak. It is suitable for mid-level characters as they ascend to meet with the Fatespinner in the Bastion of Fate. They may learn of these caves from any of the taverns across the island where they may hear of people disappearing in the mountains.

AREA 1 - ENTRANCE

The mountains of Widows Peak stretch on seemingly forever into the roiling mists of Webertal. The cave's entrance is bare before you gaping open and inviting you in. The air is heavy with the scent of earth and decay, mingling with a faint, sharp odour – the distinct smell of spider venom.

The faint skittering of spider legs on stone echoes from within, hinting at what lies ahead. The entrance beckons you forward, inviting you in, but lingering whispers at the back of your mind warn of the creatures that may await in the darkness beyond.

Webs. As players traverse these winding caverns they will need to periodically succeed on a **DC 10**

dexterity saving throw to avoid getting stuck in the webs that cover every surface.

AREA 2 - MIRRORED HALLS

As you venture deeper into the caverns, you stumble upon a crystalline chamber. These crystals illuminate the tunnels with prismatic light, casting colourful patterns across the stone.

Approaching the crystals, the characters notice something extraordinary: within the shimmering surfaces, their reflections shift to show them their past, present, and future selves.

Each step reveals new visions, making the chamber feel alive with the weight of memory and prophecy. Images reflect the characters' stories, showing all they have been through and all that is yet to come. Pain and joy dance in harmony as they see truths about themselves laid bare.

Crystals. As players make their way through this section of the caverns, have them describe their past, present, and future selves. What can they learn from seeing these visions? This is a good opportunity to share their backgrounds or show their hopes for the future. Maybe it is exactly what they wished for. Perhaps some characters do not have future reflections. Allow your players to describe what they think they would see.

AREA 3 - DEN OF THE GUARDIANS

After hours of traversing narrow and twisting caves, an open chamber lies before you. Spiders of all sizes skitter about as they carry gifts and food to the centre. Here lies their mother, their queen.

Sablefang. Some arachnids act as guardians of the Fatespinner. They are more powerful than regular spiders and are thinking and speaking creatures. They can be spotted across the realm, but they mainly reside near the peaks of the mountains. Sablefang collects memories of her prey and gifts the most prized ones to the Fatespinner. She keeps the remainder for herself. These memories take the form of cracked quartz crystals. She will attempt to trap the party who have come into her nest. She will use **4-6 Giant Spiders** to try to imprison the party while she retreats within the caves.

AREA 4 - TRAPPED BAIT

A small cavern behind the den contains several webbed cocoons. All are filled with desiccated corpses of various humanoids, except one. A single cocoon is swinging and moving - there is someone inside! Characters hear muffled cries for help.

Valeria. Valeria has been trapped by the spiders. Any blade can be used to free Valeria from this prison of webs. They will thank the party and ask for help to escape before they get noticed.

Treasure. Any who searches this cavern can find 200gp, 300sp and an **amulet of health** wrapped up with the various bodies.

CONCLUSION

Once the players have exited the caverns they are free to continue on their journey to the mountains peak or to return to any of the locations across Webertal.

If they have rescued Valeria, they will want to speak with the party once the group has reached safety. They will ask the party who they are and how they were brought to the island. They will explain their background and offer to help or join the party in their adventures.

The following is additional information that Valeria can share:

- Valeria believes that the Fatespinner and any who serve her are evil.
- They have a negative opinion of the Weavers and the Seers. While Valeria can acknowledge that they are victims of Webertal, they believe that their indifference toward their imprisonment is abhorrent.
- Webertal is covered in guardian spiders like Sablefang who obsessively serve the Fatespinner. They seem to see her as their mother and are extremely devoted to her.
- At times, these spiders will take people to drain them of their memories.
- The Fatespinner must have a use for these memories, though Valeria is not sure what that could be.
- The Fatespinner can be found in the Bastion of Fate. Evidence of how to free the island's victims may be found there.

BASTION OF FATE

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is suitable for the ending of this campaign. It acts as the final stand between the party and the Fatespinner. It will describe key locations in her palace and the perils that await within the hallowed halls. Within each room of this castle, players can read “*you ruined perfection*” carved somewhere into the walls.

AREA 1 - ENTRYWAY

Massive stone steps lead up to an enormous archway, flanked by statues of hooded figures holding intricately carved staffs, their faces obscured by time and mystery. This climb is long and exhausting as the large castle looms ahead. Heavy, ornate doors made of dark, polished wood stand at the top of the steps. They are reinforced with bands of gleaming silver that reflect the dying light of the surrounding area. The words “*Only the faithful may enter*” are carved into the doors.

Prayer. To enter the palace, players must recite the Weavers Plea. This should be a prayer they have heard many times before. It is stated during every sermon. If the players do not realise this, they can make a **DC10 intelligence (religion)** check. The prayer goes as follows:

“O Fatespinner, Weaver of Destiny, guide our steps along the threads of fate. Grant us wisdom to see our paths, and strength to face what lies ahead. In your hands, we trust our future.”

Only after this has been spoken will the doors open to the Bastion of Fate.

AREA 2 - TRAPPED HALLS

The walls are lined with ornate tapestries woven from threads of silver and gold, each one telling a part of a story. One tells of a young baby going missing, another of a young lady in reverence to an immortal deity. These tapestries seem almost alive, with the threads subtly shifting and changing as if recording new events or reflecting the presence of those who walk these hallowed halls. The faces in the tapestries slowly begin to resemble the characters currently walking the halls. The scenes morph to depict moments of their adventure.

Threads of Fate Trap. Golden threads are woven into intricate patterns along the floor, barely noticeable to the naked eye. When a character steps on a thread,

it glows and thrums with magical energy, wrapping around their limbs and attempting to ensnare them. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check allows the players to spot this trap. If triggered, the character must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw or be restrained by the threads. Escaping the threads requires a **DC 15 Strength or Dexterity** check.

Memory Mist Trap. As the party advances, a fine mist begins to seep from the floor tiles, filling the hallway. The mist has a sweet, comforting scent that causes a character to fall into a magical sleep, causing the victim to relive disorienting memories of their past. Characters must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw or become incapacitated for 1d4 rounds as they relive distant memories. Each round, they can attempt the saving throw again to break free from the trance.

Note to GM. If the party did not find Valeria earlier, they can be encountered here, as a victim of the Mist Trap. They seem to be unresponsive, lost in a haze of memories, but otherwise unharmed. Characters can speak to them after removing them from the mist.

AREA 3 - LIBRARY

This grand library is a testament to the knowledge and power of the Fatespinner. Dark mahogany bookshelves stretch as far as the eye can see, filled with ancient tomes bound in rich leather and embossed with beautiful arachnid imagery. Each shelf is meticulously organised. The sheer volume of knowledge contained within this library is almost unending. The scent of aged paper and a faint hint of incense lingers in the air.

Story of the Fatespinner. For players who have not yet learned the tale of Serafina Thorn, a book can be found here that contains her truth. It shows visible signs of age and significant wear and tear. Serafina is aware of the book and has read it countless times, but is never able to remember its contents. Anyone who is sworn to the Fatespinner is also unable to recall the contents of the text, the words vanishing from their mind as soon as they read them. This is a part of the punishment given to her by Arakthys.

This book currently lies open on a mahogany desk, inlaid with gold and mother of pearl. Characters easily spot it (no check required). **This text is important, especially if the players want to free the Fatespinner.** If they approach and choose to flick through, the GM can read the text below:

Dearest Seraphina,

Funny little things, spiders. Small, fragile creatures. Easily crushed beneath the boot. But capable of such artistry, such cunning. They are predators of utter sophistication. They do not waste their energy hunting, no. Spiders wait. They watch. They feel their prey come to them. They let their prey struggle, before finally consuming them.

Serafina Thorn, you thought you were the spider. You were given all the power in the great, vast world. And only one condition to meet: do not try to change the Web that entraps us all. Fate is the most perfect design. My perfect design. Mortals live and die trapped in the Weave I create. All have a purpose, no matter how brief. All will succumb.

You tried to pull the strings. Place yourself beyond the Web. And then, you tore it. Ripped a seam that cannot be undone. All for a darling little brat, whose short time was at an end. **You ruined perfection.**

Mistakes must be snipped away, you see. Lest the entire Web be ripped asunder. Dear, stupid, Serafina. I know you will read this. One hundred, one thousand times. But you will never remember these words.

And that precious little tear in the Web? You are cursed to have nothing left of them. Their eyes, their laugh, their trust in you, it all means nothing now. I have enclosed an image of them. Stare all you want, but the second you tear your eyes from the page, you will lose them once again. You are trapped in another of my creations, but from this, you will never escape. You thought you were the spider, my dear? No. You are the prey.

Now, and forever,

Arakthys

Following this letter, characters notice a charcoal sketch of a young person. They wear their hair long and have bright, intelligent eyes. They have a noticeable scar across their right eye. If the characters have met Valeria Vogel, they will recognise that this is an image of them.

AREA 4 - ARCANES BINDINGS

This is the room that once acted as the prison of the Fatespinner herself. The walls have carvings of

countless eyes, each pulsating with a dim, ghostly light. The eyes seem to follow the movements of anyone who enters, their gaze filled with curiosity and lingering power.

The centre of the room is dominated by a cracked, circular stone dais, where remnants of glowing runes still flicker faintly. These runes, now fractured and incomplete, hint at the powerful binding spell that once held the Fatespinner captive.

Scattered around the room are remnants of ritualistic objects: shattered crystals, worn-down candles, and fragments of symbols, all showing signs of a failed attempt to reinforce the Fatespinner's confinement. Countless heroes have tried this before and failed.

Arcane runes. With a successful **DC15 intelligence (arcana) check** players can gather that this room contains the fragmented remnants of a powerful binding spell. No regular mage would be able to achieve magic of such a high calibre. Although broken, with intense effort the spell may be repaired.

Secret treasure. Succeeding on a **DC18 wisdom (perception) check** reveals a loose cobblestone in the floor. Behind it lies a small wooden chest containing 800gp and a **deck of many things**. This deck of cards is purple with ornate gold decor depicting a spider amid its web.

Note to GM. Feel free to modify this deck to suit your table and the wishes of your players. It is a powerful item that can determine the fate of the adventuring party. Use this with caution and make sure to have fun.

AREA 5 - THRONE ROOM

This is a grand throne room with towering columns of polished obsidian that reach up to a ceiling adorned with a magnificent, enchanted mural. The mural depicts the cosmic wheel of fate, its spokes radiating outwards, each one representing a different thread of destiny.

Behind the throne, a grand, arched window stretches from floor to ceiling, offering a breathtaking view of the swirling mists of the island of Webertal. You see the towns in the distance as fog obscures the land.

Upon the crystalline throne sits the Fatespinner herself, a majestic and fearsome figure who embodies the essence of destiny. Her upper body is that of an elegant and regal elven woman, with piercing eyes that seem to see into the very souls of those who stand before her. Her long, flowing hair, dark as the night sky, cascades over her shoulders and merges seamlessly with her arachnid lower half.

Roleplaying Serafina. Serafina will do anything to gain more freedom and control, even if she knows it is evil. She wants to put her misery to an end but cannot see another way of doing it other than gaining more power and finally being free of her confines. She desperately seeks her lost child and former self, but Webertal is a hopeless place. If players are accompanied by Valeria, the Fatespinner will visibly have conflicted feelings about them.

Having Valeria present, along with the book, **Story of the Fatespinner**, will be enough physical evidence to have her remember her child.

CONCLUSION

This adventure can be concluded in several ways. Below are some examples of different ways that this encounter could play out. Feel free to modify this to fit your story.

Breaking her curse. Serafina has done a lot of wrong throughout her life. If she manages to remember her child she will break down, unable to bear the emotional weight of this reunion. To break her curse she must be willing to change her ways. She can continue to rule the realm, but instead, she fuels it with the unwanted memories of those who come to her.

Valeria will lose their immortality and begin to age at a normal rate. This will set the course of fate on the right path. The party will be celebrated and the inhabitants are eternally grateful to them.

Upon breaking her curse Serafina will be able to control the mists, now able to guide the players home when they wish to leave. She will grant them a single use of the **wish** spell.

Imprisonment. Players may decide that reinforcing the confines of Serafina is the right thing to do. They may use the broken spell circle in Area 4 to achieve this. Players will each need to sacrifice a magic item as a component of this spell along with a cherished memory as a sacrifice to Arakthys. Upon completing the spell Arakthys will reach out to the party and thank them for strengthening the bindings of her failure. She will grant them passage to their homes, along with an offering to become their godly patron as well as one use of the **wish** spell. Any lost memories will be returned to the party.

Combat. If the characters decide that Serafina must be defeated, she will try everything in her power to stop

them. Once she is defeated, her soul will be claimed by Arakthys. She will reach out to the party and explain that all of the victims will now be safe from the Fatespinner. She will thank the party for helping the inhabitants of the island. However, the islander's memories will not return having been lost with the life of Serafina. Arakthys will grant the players passage back to their homes and return any memories they might have lost.

Valeria will die minutes after Serafina, their life forces being intertwined. The immortality ritual centred on the Fatespinner. With her death, Valeria will now also lose their life.

The GM can use stats appropriate to the party's level but at her core, Serafina is a talented spellcaster. She is a powerful warlock using spells that can place the odds in her favour.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (1D6)

1. **Diary.** This is an intact diary found beneath some leaves or by a tree. As the pages progress you can see this person slowly losing their sense of identity until the final page is covered in the phrase: "*my name is...*"
2. **Roadside shrine.** Along the road players will spot a small shrine to the Fatespinner. If an offering is left, they will gain a blessing. This will be in the form of **advantage** on their next ability check or attack roll. Those who do not leave an offering will have **disadvantage**. To indicate this, these unfortunate characters continually find spiders crawling on their skin and hair until they make their next check or decide to go back and make an offering.
3. **The Child.** This young elf is looking for their mother who came to the island with them. The child is upset because they cannot remember their mother's name or appearance. They have a noticeable scar over their right eye and messy, crimson hair. The child will describe that they are fatally ill and will be gone soon, so they want to say goodbye to their mother. This is a hint to the origin of this plane. If players decide to try to help the child she will ask to take their hand. When she is touched she will turn into a mound of ash. This child is an illusion created by the realm, depicting a

younger version of Valeria.

4. **Giant guardian spiders.** These creatures make webs within the trees. Blending in with the shadows, they aim to capture adventurers and offer up their memories as sacrifices to the Fatespinner, who they see as their mother. They are intelligent, thinking creatures who only want to please their parent. They are weak to fire and will flee at the sight of a flame.
5. **The husk.** Characters hear gentle humming emerge from the treeline. If they go to the source, they will find a human boy, who appears to be in his late teens. He has short, tightly coiled hair, and is wandering, seemingly in circles. If approached, he will desperately throw himself upon the characters, asking them if they know who he is. His eyes are terror-stricken. He has lost all memories of himself, and cannot recall his name or where he comes from. All he remembers is the melody he hums. The boy will beg the party to allow him to accompany them. If the players escort him to the nearest town, Seers will gladly take him in and make him a loyal acolyte.
6. **Treasure bundle.** Characters can spot a tightly wrapped woven cloth. The pattern depicts intricate webbing, and the material is finely made. Inside, they find a silver locket, worth 10gp. When they open it, they notice a tiny portrait of a young elf, with a noticeable scar across their eye. The child looks to be quite sickly. Inscribed next to it are the words “*my little star*”. Along with this, the party finds a tattered doll. As soon as they touch it, the doll falls to pieces and a large spider crawls out.



Fig 1.1 Map by Finn Emerson Burns, 2024.

The Weeping Tree

by Finn Emerson Burns

This adventure is suitable for low-level characters **Levels 1 - 3 (for Dungeons & Dragons 5e)** who are travelling through a woodland area. The setting is a small remote village that small farms surround.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the town of Willowbrook, once a strong farming community they are now a scared and sparse population. They have been plagued by a spirit wandering their streets. Full of wrath she lashes out at any passers-by.

While exploring the town players may experience hauntings from this vengeful spirit. See the table below.

d4	Hauntings
1	Crying with no source.
2	Unexplained bloodstains in the town square.
3	An illusory stab wound.
4	A resident of the town lashing out.

AREA 1 - THE HOLLOW GROVE INN

The Hollow Grove Inn is a shell of what it once was. Worn furniture decorates this lonely establishment but any business is warmly welcomed. Not many come to the town anymore and many residents have left.

Description. The worn-down Hollow Grove Inn stands eerily quiet. Weathered wood shows time has not been kind to this village. Locals wander, avoiding outsiders, appearing wary and frightened.

Upon arrival, the exhausted Owner, Svenja will explain the tale of what has become of this town:

The Tale of Eliza:

- Ever since her death 10 years ago, the spirit of Eliza has been terrorising the town.
- Her spirit often attacks folks and she lashes out at anything close by.
- No one knows why she is angry but folks often see her crying in the streets at night.
- Those around her are influenced by her presence feeling her pain very intensely. The

locals are at a loss for what to do.

Svenja will plead with the party that if they can think of any way to help ease the effects of this spirit the town will be eternally grateful and could try to gather a reward. She offers advice to exercise caution when they see the spirit of Eliza.

AREA 2 - THE TOWN SQUARE

The main landmark of this town is a dead willow tree, looming over the village. It has been a long time since any leaves have grown. The wood blackened, the townsfolk see this tree as an omen of their fate. A dying tree for a dying town. Many leave offerings in an attempt to ease their struggles.

Description. At the centre of the town square stands a willow tree. Gnarled twisted branches reach toward the sky as if it is clawing for a way out. A sense of foreboding emanates from it as if the tree itself is sapping the vitality from the earth around it. At its base, you see rotting flowers, trinkets and gold as gifts. It seems this is the centre of the town.

Each night players will have an opportunity to meet with the spirit of Eliza. She is a disturbed soul with a deep pain in her eyes, still hurting from the circumstances of her death.

If meeting with her read the following description:

The spirit of Eliza stands before you, lingering in a state of perpetual sorrow and agony. Floating above the willow tree you see chains keeping her in place. She is unable to leave. Her pain radiates from her as tears fall, never seeming to stop.

After meeting with her players will need to make a **Wisdom save (DC 12)** to avoid experiencing nightmares that night. These nightmares are the tale of her murder. Any player experiencing these will feel the pain of Eliza as she did 10 years ago.

Players can learn the following information:

- She lived here once, happy as can be with her husband Victor.
- Once belonging to her father, they owned the large house atop the hill and planned to have children.

- On the night of their wedding anniversary, Victor brought her to this tree, where he proposed to her.
- Catching her off guard, he thanked her for everything she had given to him and he was excited about his new life.
- She was stabbed and killed by him, she was used for her money.
- This tree is now where her spirit is bound.

Eliza wishes for justice to be brought. She wants Victor to be out of his home, she is hurt that he used her for so long. She is unable to go to her home herself as this tree is the place where she died.

Treasure. If players investigate the scene they can find a silver locket belonging to Eliza worth 10gp.

AREA 3 - WILLOWBROOK MANOR

Willowbrook Manor is a large townhouse that is accompanied by a beautiful garden. In the dim light, you can see candles glowing in the windows. If players visit the home they will be greeted by Victor, a well-dressed elven man with neat brown hair.

If Eliza is mentioned to him he will visibly become tense and apprehensive, the conversation will become difficult. Players need to succeed on a **DC 14 Charisma (persuasion) check** to discuss his ex-wife with him.

Victor is pained by the past. He has managed thus far by avoiding what happened. If players can appeal to his emotions and offer reassurance, they can roll with **advantage**.

About Victor:

- Growing up he did not have much access to money so marrying Eliza was a blessing and an opportunity for a better life.
- He has maintained this home and kept it in good shape (an excuse to stay).
- Riches with Eliza were complicated. Their marriage was seen as more of a contract. It became clear to him that he was property and not much more.
- He did not have much standing with Eliza's family as he did not come from a rich background.
- He felt controlled by her and feared that it

would only get worse. He wanted something genuine, something she could not give.

CONCLUSION

Eliza will not allow Victor to remain in the Willowbrook household. She would like an outcome of either his death or banishment. Compromising on this will be difficult.

Victor would like this pain to come to a close. He does not regret what he has done but he will not lose his home without a fight. This can either be discussed through roleplay or a combat encounter.

Players can choose to either negotiate a verdict among the arguing couple or they can defeat either party to bring this story to a close.

Eliza uses the stats of a **Will-o'-Wisp** and Victor is an **Azer**.

Reward. Players can receive a signet ring of the Willowbrook family worth 100gp either as a thank you or upon defeating either side of the argument. Svenja will allow the party to stay free of charge for as long as they need.

A Collection of Wondrous Creatures



by Leigh Ryan

For use with *Dungeons & Dragons*

FERAL PIXIE

Once living as regular pixies, feral pixies have been corrupted by dark fey rituals to shape them into their new tortured form. They are taken by covens of hags from peaceful woodland glades, often in large groups. They are then kept confined in cages, starved of both food and sunlight, and imbued with corrupted arcane energy. This process twists the pixie's physical form beyond recognition. Its nails elongate into hooked claws, its teeth sharpen to needle points, its gut distends, and any trace of woodland colouration drains from its skin and fades to a pale grey-crimson. Any hair it once had falls out, and lengthy periods of time locked away in darkness have also caused its eyes to enlarge, now empty and unblinking. All semblance of the tiny whimsical prankster is gone forever, replaced by a grotesque amalgamation of flesh, magic, and hunger.

The feral pixie is most often found in or around the havens of its creators, having been released either as protection or simply to wreak havoc on the surrounding area. The process of converting the pixie leaves it with an insatiable hunger for flesh of any kind, replacing its original vegetarian diet. While one alone may not pose much threat to a seasoned adventurer, in groups they can be formidable foes. They frequently gather in large swarms, using what is left of their innate magic to conceal themselves and stalk any living creatures in their immediate territory. Once they have found suitable prey, they surround it on all sides, confusing and entangling it, and gnawing at its limbs to incapacitate it. Unable to escape, there is little more the creature can do to prevent itself from being devoured alive. Before long, all that is left are its bones, picked clean. The swarm's appetite is never suppressed, and they move on to search for their next victim, bellies still aching.

FERAL PIXIE

Tiny Fey, Neutral Evil

Armour Class: 15

Hit Points: 16 (3d4+9)

Speed: 20ft., fly 60ft.

STR 10 (+0) **DEX** 20 (+5) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 6 (-3)

WIS 12 (+1) **CHA** 9 (-1)

Saving Throws: Con +5

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities: fire, radiant.

Damage Resistances: poison.

Condition Immunities: charmed, frightened, poisoned.

Senses: darkvision 60ft.

Languages: Common, Sylvan

Challenge: Solo – 0 (10XP), Swarm – ½ (100XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Blood Frenzy: The feral pixie has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that does not have all its hit points.

Magic Resistance: The feral pixie has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

Spellcasting: The feral pixie casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Constitution as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: *invisibility*

1/day each: *confusion*, *entangle*, *fly*

A frantic buzzing of paper-thin wings rattles the sides of the birdcage. Razor sharp teeth gnaw at the bars, and the barely contained swarm follows your every move as you walk past. Stark white bones line the cage's floor, cracked open and devoid of marrow.

GIANT TUNDRA MOTH

In the farthest reaches of the frigid wastes, the giant tundra moth endures the relentless elements. Unlike its smaller cousins, this titanic insectoid is perfectly adapted to its icy environment. Food is always scarce here, so the moth relies on its speed and ferocity to be a fierce ambush predator. They lie in wait in snowbanks or dense boreal forests, pouncing on their prey once they get too close. Special glands at the base of the moth's proboscis allow it to secrete a viscous fluid which freezes on contact with the cold air, aiding in immobilising their prey. The giant tundra moth is especially drawn to heat and light, so carrying a torch or lighting a campfire when in one's territory is always a significant risk. A thick carapace coupled with a lining of dense snow-white fur helps to protect and camouflage the creature, as well as retain its body heat during the

harshest winter months, in which it hibernates in caves or underground burrows.

In the early spring it awakens to find a mate and lay its eggs, preferring locations such as hot springs or sheltered glades. The breeding pair of moths guard their brood fiercely, with the female keeping the eggs warm while the male gathers food. Once the young larvae hatch, the parents work tirelessly to keep them fed, working in shifts to hunt down any fresh meat they can find. Upon reaching maturity, the larvae will spin themselves into cocoons, preparing to transform into their adult form. The parent moths stand guard one final time, not leaving their nest, eating, or sleeping until it is time for their young to re-emerge. Finally, once the cocoons split and the young moths complete their metamorphosis, the parents' vigil ends, and their bodies provide their offspring a much-needed meal before they head out across the tundra to continue the life cycle anew.

GIANT TUNDRA MOTH

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armour Class: 14 (natural armour)

Hit Points: 47 (5d10 + 20)

Speed: 25 ft., fly 30ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 3 (-4) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 3 (-4)

Saving Throws: Constitution +6

Skills: Acrobatics +4, Survival +2

Damage Vulnerabilities: fire.

Damage Immunities: cold.

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: —

Challenge: 3 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Antennae: The giant tundra moth has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Snow Camouflage: The giant tundra moth has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Proboscis: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 +1) piercing damage.

Frost Breath (Recharge 6): The giant tundra moth exhales a 15-foot cone of cold air. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 20(8d4) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

REACTIONS

Powdery Wings (2/Day): When the giant tundra moth is hit with a melee attack, 20-foot radius cloud of fine powder is expelled from its beating wings. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

As you sit warming your hands by the glowing campfire, a loud crash comes through the icicle laden trees. A pair of gigantic wings beat, whipping the loose powder snow up into a blizzard. Through stinging eyes, you barely see the dark shape of a gargantuan beast hurtle towards you.

ROAD GOLEM

A road golem is a golem made from materials primarily used in construction or maintenance of roadways. This includes cobblestones, gravel, concrete, rebar, road signage and any other items that can be found on the roadside. This is all held together with magically imbued tar, and an elemental spirit is attuned to a central core within the mass of the golem. As with most golems, the road golem is created by a magic user to serve a specific purpose and follow their creator's every instruction. Unlike their rigid iron and stone counterparts, road golems tend to be more malleable in structure, having a limited ability to reshape their body at will according to their creator's needs. This lack of structural soundness does make them less resilient than other golem types, but they make up for it with their adaptability and aggressiveness in combat, as well as their less demanding creation process.

Road golems lend themselves well to urban environments, where the materials necessary in their creation are abundant. Every road golem looks unique with various different pieces of rubble and scrap jutting out of their body. The portion of them that is made up of tar is incredibly sticky, which leads to lots of debris being gathered up by the shambling construct as it moves, adding to its external protection. An additional effect of this is that any would-be attackers have the chance to get either their weapons or their own bodies stuck to the golem, or the golem can fling liquid tar at the attackers from a distance, hardening and encasing them. While you will not likely find the road golem in any of your standard golem tomes, scrolls with instructions on their creation can be found in the hands of many less reputable vendors.

Creating a road golem takes 30 days and requires 20,000 gp in materials.

ROAD GOLEM

Large Construct, Unaligned

Armour Class: 16 (natural armour)

Hit Points: 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR 22 (+6) **DEX** 9 (-1) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 3 (-4)

WIS 8 (-1) **CHA** 1 (-5)

Damage Immunities: poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite.

Condition Immunities: charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned.

Senses: darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages: understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge: 10 (5,900 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Adhesive: The golem adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the golem is also grappled by it (escape DC 16). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

Aversion of Fire: If the golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Immutable Form: The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance: The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons: The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The golem makes two Slam attacks.

Slam: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Petrifying Breath (Recharge 5-6): The golem spews petrifying tar in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

The bubbling black mass of rock and tar regards you lifelessly, dripping in the midday sun. Sticking from its back are a multitude of road signs, rebar, and jagged stones, shifting around slowly in its viscous form.

AIRGID AND ÓIR, THE TECHNOMANCER BARDS

Airgid (AR-gid) and Óir (OR) are a pair of robotic Warforged, one with a chassis made of a silvery-chrome material, and one of a gold material. They are humanoid in shape, but their facial features consist of little more than optical scanners and a pair of head implements on the side of their heads that look akin to large headphones with external speakers. They are both dressed in three-piece suits, white for Airgid and black for Óir. The two are inseparable, connected in tandem with auxiliary cables, and when they move, they do so in perfect synchronization. When speaking, they do not converse as most humanoids do, but instead have a pre-loaded list of sound bites that they use to mimic normal conversation, albeit to a limited extent. The two are never seen apart, and frequent the many bars, clubs, and venues of the area they find themselves in.

While their appearance may seem novel at first glance, they carry with them a sinister intent. They were constructed by the infamous cult leader Cullen Arcturus, they have no innate free will and do solely as instructed by their creator. They have one singular mission; to insert themselves in the music scene of a region, enthrall as many party goers as possible and either convert them through their hypnotic music, or dominate and kidnap those who they cannot convert for sacrifice by the cult. They do so using a magically modified set of DJ equipment. Using horrific infernal rituals, Cullen Arcturus imbued their decks with the vocal cords, heart, and soul of a Harpy Matriarch, allowing them to hypnotize any individual too weak willed to resist the mesmerizing pull of the harpy's melody. Even without their specialized gear they are formidable spell casters capable of defending themselves if the night turns sour. Their enchanting performances attract those seeking to dance into the early hours of the morning, but most do not realize until it is too late that it may be the last rave they ever attend.

AIRGID AND ÓIR, THE TECHNOMANCER BARDS

Medium humanoids (Warforged), Neutral Evil

Armour Class: 15 (integrated protection)

Hit Points: 142 (15d8 + 75)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR 13 (+1) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 20 (+5) **INT** 15 (+2) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 24 (+7)

Saving Throws: Constitution +9, Charisma +11

Skills: Deception +11, Perception +5, Performance +11, Persuasion +11,

Condition Immunities: charmed, deafened,

frightened, poisoned.

Damage Resistances: poison.

Senses: Passive Perception 15

Languages: common, telepathy 10ft. (with each other only)

Challenge: 11 (7,200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Special Equipment: Airgid and Óir have magically imbued DJ equipment which they use to activate their Amen Break, Arpeggio Wave, Concussive Bass Drop, Discordant Note and Luring Rhythm abilities. If separated from this equipment by any means, they may not use these abilities until they return to within 5 feet of it. As these are magical abilities using music, they are subject to the effects of the Silence spell if they are within its spell radius.

Constructed Resilience: Airgid and Óir do not need to eat, drink, or breathe, have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned, are immune to disease, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Inscrutable: Airgid and Óir are immune to any effect that would sense their emotions or read their thoughts, as well as any divination spell that they refuse. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain their intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Legendary Resistance (3/day): If Airgid and Óir fail a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

Two Heads: Airgid and Óir have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: Airgid and Óir make two Hand Crossbow attacks.

Hand Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Arpeggio Wave: *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (5d8) psychic damage.

Luring Rhythm (2/day): Airgid and Óir play a magical melody using their DJ decks. Every humanoid and giant within 300 feet of them that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. Airgid and Óir must take a bonus action on their subsequent turns to continue playing the song. They can stop playing it at any time. The song ends if Airgid and Óir are incapacitated.

While charmed by Airgid and Óir, a target is

incapacitated and ignores the songs of other creatures. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from Airgid and Óir, the target must move on its turn toward Airgid and Óir by the most direct route. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but before moving into damaging terrain, such as lava or a pit, and whenever it takes damage from a source other than Airgid and Óir, a target can repeat the saving throw. A creature can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it.

A target that successfully saves is immune to Airgid and Óir's song for the next 24 hours.

Spellcasting: Airgid and Óir cast one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At will: blade ward, mending, vicious mockery.

3/day each: earth tremor, healing word, thunderwave.

2/day each: confusion, enlarge/reduce, pyrotechnics, see invisibility.

1/day each: dominate person, mass healing word, slow.

REACTIONS

Discordant Note (2/day): When a spell with a verbal component is cast within 30 feet of Airgid and Óir, they unleash a single, unnerving note to counter the spell. This works the same as counterspell.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Airgid and Óir can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Airgid and Óir regain spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Cantrip: Airgid and Óir cast one cantrip.

Commander's Resolve: Airgid and Óir grant 10 temporary hit points to an ally of their choice within 120 feet of them.

Amen Break (costs 2 actions): Airgid and Óir slot an amen break into their playlist. Each of their allies within 15 feet of them that can hear it have advantage on their next attack roll, saving throw or ability check.

Concussive Bass Drop (costs 2 actions): Airgid and Óir crank the bass on their decks to the highest and line up an immense bass drop in their playlist. Each creature of their choice within 30 feet of them that can hear it must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 14 (4d6) force

damage, is knocked back 15 feet and falls prone as the overwhelming bass shakes them to their core. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and does not fall prone.

The lights dim over the dancefloor and a bright spotlight hits the DJ stand. The two figures stood behind it turn their dials in unison, and as the build-up begins to surge, every head in the club turns to face the stage. The lights flash aggressively as you feel your body brace for the ever-increasing arpeggio. As the bass unleashes and hits your chest, the stoic DJs' gaze meets yours.

