DESIGNED FOR USE WITH
OLD-SCHOOL ESSENTIALS

A Folklore Bestiary

Inspired by folk tales and superstitions

BY THE MERRY MUSHMEN

Vol.1

Want to play now?

Use the characters on this page and on page 158

A landslide throws the party into an underground river! They just manage to regain their footing on a beach leading into a dark tunnel (area 5, page 88). Good luck!

Apodemus the Inscrutable

2nd LEVEL GNOME

STR 7 INT 12 WIS 9
DEX 16 CON 10 CHA 11

AC 7 [12]
(Dex, ring of protection)

HP 4 (2d4)

THAC0 19 [0]

SV D7 W8 P9 B13 S10
(ring of protection)

Alignment Chaotic

Equipment
Staff, pickaxe, rations (7), robes with secret pockets, ring of protection +1, wand of magic detection (6 charges), spyglass, 10 stink bombs in an iron box, spellbook (1st: *Colour spray, Read magic, Spook).*

Quirk
Back from the dead:
ignored by undead with 1-2 HD; cannot be magically healed.

Algate of Kilmera

3rd LEVEL PALADIN

STR 13 INT 10 WIS 10
DEX 9 CON 14 CHA 13

AC 5 [14] (Chain)

HP 16 (3d8)

THAC0 19 [0]

SV D10 W11 P12 B13 S14

Alignment Lawful

Equipment
Handaxe +1, +2 vs undead, shortsword, rations (7), chainmail, surcoat with family crest (running winter rabbit), rope (50'), torches (5), tinder box, holy water (3 vials), lucky rabbit's foot (+4 to any roll once a day).

Quirk
Warrior lineage:
can invoke ancestors in combat, +4 to hit and damage until the end of the fight; loses 1d4 Wisdom points for 1d4 months every time.

Whistello

4thLEVEL THIEF

STR 9 INT 15 WIS 9
DEX 16 CON 8 CHA 10

AC 5 [14]
(Leather, Dex)

HP 9 (4d4 -4)

THAC0 19 [0]

SV D13 W14 P13 B16 S15

Alignment Neutral

Equipment
Silver dagger +1 (the pommel is a polished garnet which glows when a lycanthrope is within 60'), longbow (20 arrows), lantern, oil (2 flasks), leather armour, rations (7), small hammer, thieves' tools, tinder box, wineskin, wolfsbane, tiny homunculus in a matchbox *(when released, detects traps within a 30' radius, then returns to its box, grumbling; 1-in-6 chance after each use: it disappears forever, stealing 1 point of a random ability from its owner)*

Quirk
Shapechanger:
can polymorph into a small rat. Loses 1d100 XP per level every time.

In aphabetical order

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by hit dice

1/2	Angehead , Piot Chant
1	Arragouset, Cama & braca Cruse, Dybbuk, Green Children of Woolpit, Kabouter, kratt
2	Bukavac , Dahu People of the Holy City
3	Donestre, Höllenwagen, Wolf-Walkers of Osraige
4	Corpo-Seco, Gnole, Jiu Wei Hu, Lou Petassou, Mothman, Perelesnyk, Scucca
5	Gumberoo
6	Queen of the Fallow Field, Joan de l'Ors, Tartaro
7	Basajaun, Cephalophore, Rey d'Artus
8	Bad Patxi, Cuca, La Velue
9	Mapinguari
10	Gayant, Jack-In-Irons
15	Boitátá
12	Cuca
15	Boitátá
21	Hou Yi, Lou Carcolh
60	Serpent of Isaby

A Folklore Bestiary

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▸ From the **Basque Country** ⋄ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce ba-CHA-ya-oun*

Basajaun

They lived here long before we came. From them we stole the secrets of livestock and farming. These rustic giants, who roam mountains and forests and live in beautiful secret caves, are sometimes called the Wild Lords because they know the secrets of nature. Here are some true stories about them.

I - Bixente the shepherd was watching his flock near the Kakuetta gorges when he heard a call for help. He rushed through the thickets, only realising at the very last moment he was about to fall into a chasm. On the other side of it, a giant, happy with his prank, was holding his belly laughing. The next day, Bixente saw this same basajaun, for it was what the giant was, gesturing at him, pointing to the snowcapped top of the mountain in a concerned way. It is only thanks to this warning that Bixente's flock was saved from an imminent avalanche.

II - One day another shepherd named Peio saw a basajaun running down the mountain, overtaking him to chase two wolves away before they could attack his sheep.

III - The three Harosteguy brothers, woodcutters in the Iraty forest, had just gone to bed in their cabin when they heard coughing outside the door, which opened shortly afterwards with a loud crash. A basajaun came in and the brothers pretended to be asleep, as they knew they should. The basajaun came to inspect and sniff them, then sat down in front of the fireplace and finished the meat that was still stewing in the pot. He came back the next night and took a bag of salt, a barrel of flour, and a haunch of venison. Then again the next night, he finished the wine and took the eldest brother's clothes with him. Each time, the Harosteguys pretended to be asleep. The following year, when they came back after the winter snows had melted, they were surprised to find in front of the hut twelve steres of neatly piled wood along with a brand new, sharpened saw.

IV- The same adventure happened to the three Echeto brothers. When the basajaun came in, the youngest jumped under his bed, the middle brother screamed in fright, and the oldest brandished an axe. The basajaun shrugged at this threat, grabbed the man and cracked his head between his teeth like a nut.

He then took the still- screaming middle brother and sent him crashing through the ceiling. He tore the hut down, smashing walls and roof with his fists and head. Then he pissed on the corpses, spat on the beds, and strode back into the forest. The youngest brother pulled himself out of the rubble and ran back to his valley, which he never left again.

V - Oihana, a peasant girl from Banca, was kidnapped by a basajaun. As you well know, basajaun females are becoming increasingly rare, so he took Oihana as his wife. The giant treated her wonderfully, every day bringing her a gift from his larcenies and finds. He loved to sit in the sun next to her as she ran a gold comb through his hair. She gave him three children. The first two, stillborn, were buried by their father at the bottom of his cave. The third survived, and the basajaun was the happiest of fathers. It was then that Yulen the warrior, Oihana´s brother, finally found his sister and came to rescue her as her husband was away. But the giant had felt his presence (a basajaun always knows where everything and everyone is in his domain). He ran back just in time and forbid the brother and sister to leave his cave. Mad with anger, he threw himself at Yulen, who fought back as best he could. As he felt his end was near, Yulen remembered that his grandmother had told him that basajauns love to play games of wits. So he told his enemy the first riddle that came to his mind:

What has roots that no one sees,
Is taller than trees, up, up it goes,
and yet never grows?

The basajaun froze immediately and began to think. He scratched his head, muttered incorrect answers, laughed softly at his own stupidity, and finally sat down on a rock to think better. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Yulen grabbed his sword with both hands and stabbed the giant in the neck.

A year later, Oihana returned in secret with her son to the scene of the battle. Where the remains of her husband should have been, a large oak tree had grown.

VI- In the mountains above Larrau, the knight Uhart and his troops went on a great hunt. They killed deers, bears, boars, and wolves. On the third day they saw a furious basajaun running down the mountain leaning on a long walking stick. In spite of the spears, arrows, and swords, he slaughtered all the hunters. Their heads would be found in various places on the mountain for years to come. He spared the dogs, the horses, and the youngest of the hunters, only breaking all his limbs. This man would go on to open the first vegetarian inn in the kingdom. ◇

BASANDERE

They are the basajaun females. They are extremely rare (less than one female per ten males) and their numbers keep declining for reasons unknown. They rarely leave the vicinity of their den, spending most of their time in the sun brushing their hair while singing songs that attract nearby animals. They always avoid combat and are able to cast *Hold Person, Invisibility* and *Dimension Door* once a day.

BASAJAUN NAMES

Basajaun have names that only their relatives know. Shout the name of a basajaun in his domain, and he is compelled to come see who is calling him. Greet him by his name, and you get a bonus of 2 to your reaction roll.

Some names: *Artzajaun, Berrijaun, Gorrijaun, Bihotzunjaun, Indartsujaun, Azkarjaun, Amarrutsujaun, Nekatujaun, Garbalojaun, Haxerijaun, Nekazarijaun, Sumindujaun...*

BASAJAUN

10' tall humanoid. A silky mass of beard and hair covers his body, long arms and legs emerging from it. Where a face should be, one can see a long nose, two black, glittering eyes, a wide mouth and a missing chin. A basajaun travels across forests and mountains with a long stick that doubles as a formidable weapon. Close to the forces of nature, his ways and motives are largely incomprehensible to mere mortals.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 7* (31hp), **Att** 1 x weapon (2d8) or 2 x slap (1d8), **THAC0** 13 [+6], **MV** 240' (80'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12, **ML** 12, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 850, **NA** 1, **TT** E

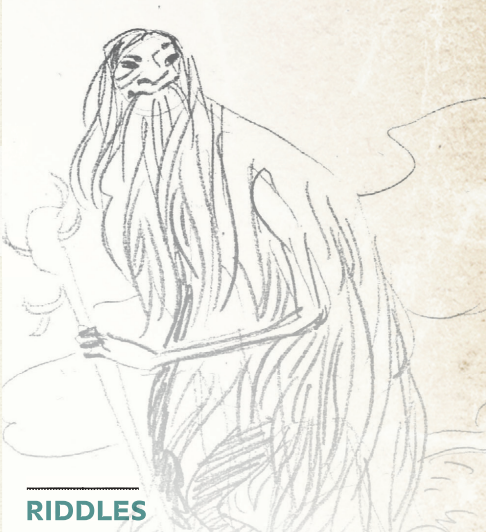
◆ **BASAJAUN'S KISS**
If a target is hit by both slaps in the same round, the basajaun grabs and bites their face for 2d8 automatic damage. Reroll and add the result of any die rolling an 8. Helmets halve this damage.

◆ **MOUNTAIN STAFF**
A basajaun uses his long walking stick like a pole to leap and run. Without it, his movement speed is halved. He can jump over obstacles 30ft long or 10ft high. This stick is also a weapon that he masters perfectly. In his hands a stick is never considered a *slow* weapon, and does 2d8 damage. On an unmodified 18-20 on the attack die, he can immediately make another attack.

◆ **WILD LORD**
- A basajaun understands the whispers of the wind and trees, the gurgle of streams, as well as the languages of small animals. He is always warned about avalanches, storms, or any other natural phenomenon.
- A basajaun is aware at all times of what is happening in his domain, and who is entering or leaving it (his domain covers a one-mile radius around his lair). Only an elf, gnome, or ranger of level 5 or higher can hope to go unnoticed (2-in-6 chance).
- A basajaun is never surprised in the wilderness .

◆ **SLUMBER**
A basajaun can decide to go into a deep sleep and take the form of a mossy rock. In this state, he recovers 1d8+2 hp per hour. However, he is reluctant to do so because he can only come out of this state once he has recovered all his hit points.

◆ **TARTAROS' ENEMIES**
All basajauns hate tartaros (see p. 22) and hunt them as soon as they are aware of their presence. They attack with a +4 bonus and if they succeed in a basajaun's kiss, they automatically bite out the tartaros' eye.



RIDDLES

It is a secret known to few: **basajauns are very fond of games.** They are also very bad at them. So the best way to calm an angry basajaun is to ask him a riddle or a charade. If he misses a save vs spells, he stops whatever he is doing and devotes all his energy to the riddle, plunging into an abyss of contentment and confusion. Only one attempt is possible per encounter. After 1d3 hours of intense consideration, the basajaun tries his best answer. For an easy riddle, there is a 2-in-6 chance he is right. His reflection is only interrupted if an aggressive act is committed against him or one of his relatives.

Playing riddles with a basajaun is a good way to get his sympathy, but be careful: a puzzle that is too easy or too abstruse (referee's discretion) has a good chance of finally making him angry...

BASAJAUN HAIR

- A mountain shepherd can weave a light and strong rope from a few strands.
- Wizards and other magic-users know how to make highly prized magic ropes from them which, for example, lengthen or shrink, knot and unknot, on a simple command word.
- Elves can make bowstrings from a single Basajaun hair that double the range of the weapon.

Do not let a basajaun catch you in possession of one of his hairs if he didn't give it to you himself!

NEW CHARACTER CLASS

HACHKOS

These 7' to 8' tall humanoids are the result of the union of a basajaun and a human woman. Hachkos bodies are covered with fur, but they retain a human appearance from their mother. They are usually loved by their fathers who raise them as true basajauns. As adults, hachkos often feel the need to explore the world of their human half. Some even become adventurers.

Requirement: Minimum CON 9
Prime Requisite: STR
Hit dice: d10
Maximum level: 6
Armour: any appropriate to size, shields
Weapons: any
Languages : Common, Basajaun, the secret language of one type of small animal of the forest.

• COMBAT
- Hachkos can use all weapons and all types of armour and shields appropriate to their size.
- Thanks to their fur, their armour class is 8 [11] when they aren't wearing any armour.
- In the hand of a hachko a quarterstaff is not considered a slow weapon. When rolling damage with it, the character rolls two dice (2d6) and keeps the best result.

• CHARM IMMUNITIES
Hachkos are immune to charm magic from sylvan creatures such as dryads, nixies, etc.

• HEALING
Gods do not care much for basajauns and their offspring. Clerical spells do not heal hachkos unless the spellcaster is a druid.

• WILDERNESS SPIRIT
- Hachkos can never become lost in the wilderness.
- Hachkos are never surprised in the wilderness.
- A party with a hachkos succeeds at foraging with a 4-in-6 chance.
- In the wilderness, a hachkos has a 4-in-6 chance of going unnoticed when sneaking up on a target.
- For each full day of complete rest in the wilderness, hachkos recover 1d6 hit points instead of 1d3.

• AFTER REACHING 6TH LEVEL
Hachkos hear the call of nature a little louder every day. At the end of each game session that brought them 1,000 XP or more, the player rolls 1d20. If the result is above the hachkos' Wisdom score, they must make a mark on their character sheet. When they have six marks, the hachkos, wherever they are, discard all their possessions, clothes included, and taking only their staff, walk to the nearest mountain, never to be heard of again.

Level	XP	HD	THACO	D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d10	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12
2	3,000	2d10	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12
3	6,000	3d10	19 [0]	8	9	10	13	12
4	12,000	4d10	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10
5	24,000	5d10	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10
6	48,000	6d10	17 [+2]	6	7	8	10	10

HOOKS

➢ The local basajaun has a good relationship with all the villages in the valleys around his domain. The elder of Irrubi, jealous of the success of the miraculous quince and black cherry orchards of neighbouring Larroso, has had some youths poach partridges at the limit of the basajaun's woods, instructing them to leave a green and black béret, typical to the inhabitants of Irrubi. Since then, the village is visited nightly by an angry basajaun who cuts down trees and tramples gathered fruit..

➢ The seven witches of Zugarramurdi need a very special ingredient for a very special potion (maybe the famed elixir of youth?). They will grant a wish to anyone who brings them a basajaun's staff.

➢ The party encounter a basajaun on a quest to find a cure for his wife Penxika, who's afflicted with the blue toes illness. Her body is slowly getting cold from the feet up. He carries her inside a box-bed strapped to his back. The giant is at a loss, too distraught to explain his quandry, and may indeed react violently if someone stops him from wandering aimlessly. But if Penxika can be woken from her weakness- induced slumber, she may be able to explain her condition. She believes she ate chili stew made with lamb that grazed on a hexed slope of the mountain.

➢ The Devil's wife lost her favourite cloak (the one she uses to turn into a gigantic harpy) playing checkers at Hurriskojaun the basajaun's house. She can share his name so a party of intrepid heroes can lure him away from his house and simultaneously steal the harpy cloak. The Devil's wife refuses to set foot on Hurriskojaun's domain as she doesn't want him to know she was the one taking the cloak. What she doesn't say is that the harpy cloak is sentient. Anyone using it (to fly away from the basajaun's domain for example) has to compete with the Queen of Birds to control their new form.

▸ From **Serbia** ⋄ by Kobayashi
◆ *Pronounce BOO-kavats.*

Bukavac

Said to live in the lakes and pools of Serbia, the bukavac is a mysterious amphibious beast. It is often found living in nests built in sunken ruins.

Fellow referees, feel free to use the text below as a handout for curious characters to discover.

Interrogation of an enemy soldier captured near the Iblis marsh

Our goal was to cut off the usurp... uh, I mean your King's supply route. The best way to do this was to sneak through the Iblis swamps: they were said to be impenetrable but the locals knew of a way through. One of the scouts disappeared a few hours after we entered the swamps. The captain told us it was a crocodile. Well, crocodiles don't let their victims float around for anyone to see. The sergeant got a beating for saying so, so I kept my mouth shut. The captain pushed us forward, we were to attack the enemy at dawn. We kept losing soldiers all the while, even after we'd decided to walk in as tight a formation as possible. Annisa, our best archer, was sucked into the water right next to me. Twelve of us – out of eighty soldiers! – made it out of those stinking swamps. And that's when you took us prisoners.

A villager's tale

I can still hear my mother's voice: *"Listen to this, son, as this might save your life."* She explained our village was built on sacred ground that kept the swamp creatures away. Our homes were under their protection as long as we kept our end of the bargain: don't follow the forbidden paths, don't rescue strangers, and send offerings at least once every moon. She gave me a pendant made from a stone taken from the ruined temple, *"that way they'll know you're one of us."* If I was to commit a crime, steal, cheat, or lie to the village's elders, they would take the pendant and send me into the swamp as punishment. I'd be allowed to come back should I survive the night. No one ever came back. Tonight I will guide the strangers into the swamps. They came to find treasure, as they always do. We keep those stories alive, so they keep coming. I have no grudge with them – one of the women was even nice to me – but they must die so my people can live in peace.

Report from the Royal Zoologist

The villagers' hospitality was a bit surprising. When dealing with peasants, I'm more used to suspicious looks or outright hostility (their offspring's accuracy when throwing dung is nothing short of uncanny). One of the Academy's historians had told me about nearby ruins that are somehow related to the bukavacs. As soon as I mentioned the creatures, I was met with a shrug.

"Aye, there may be dangerous animals out there, that's why you're here, right?" said one of the elders. Soon after, they added that they could provide me with a guide for my trek into the marsh. That's what always baffles me: the locals' compliance with these creatures. The bukavacs are no magicians, they cannot speak, and they do not offer much in exchange for the villagers' obedience. Perhaps an answer lies within the blue stone ruins that surround the village? As a precaution, I will avoid eating local food and stick to my rations. ◇

BUKAVAC

The bukavac is a six-legged monstrosity, as tall as a man, with ram-like horns on its head. It moves at an uncanny speed underwater and in total silence. Bukavacs only hunt at night and stay in their nests during the day. A nest is home to up to twelve adult individuals, and is usually located underwater near submerged ruins. No one has been able to ascertain exactly why.

AC 5 [14] (rubbery skin), **HD** 2 (8 hp),
Att 1 x grab (1d6) 4 x horns (1d3), **THAC0** 17 [+2],
MV 60' (20')/120' (40') underwater, **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14,
ML 6, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 25, **NA** 2d6, **TT** -

◆ **GRAB**
A successful attack allows the bukavac to pull its target underwater. The target must then succeed at a saving throw vs paralysis every round. One successful save means the character is keeping their head out of the water. Two successes in a row means they escaped. Two failed saves in a row means the character is drowning. A third failure means death.

◆ **SUPERSTITIOUS**
Bukavacs won't attack anyone visibly wearing a stone fragment from the nearby ruins. If the wearer takes any aggressive action against the bukavacs, no amount of stone will protect them.

WHAT LOOT FLOATS IN THE BUKAVAC'S DOMAIN?

1 ➢ Keys to a hidden room beneath the local church
2 ➢ The egg of a sea dragon
3 ➢ The body of a long disappeared royal zoologist
4 ➢ The dead body of one of the PC's double or is it the original?
5 ➢ The map of the nearby ruins engraved on a stone
6 ➢ A 'Rosetta stone' that would help translation of the script found in the local ruins
7 ➢ A portal to another plane
8 ➢ The eggs of the bukavacs
9 ➢ The coffers of the local tax collector
10 ➢ A long lost magic spear that allows its wielder to breathe underwater
11 ➢ A strange metallic object that unlocks the doors of an equally strange metal ship
12 ➢ A sacred relic belonging to the dominant religion in the area

WHAT DOES THE BUKAVACS' LAIR LOOK LIKE?

1 ➢ A submerged temple
2 ➢ The hollow shell of a giant turtle
3 ➢ A recently submerged dwarven mine
4 ➢ A flooded village
5 ➢ The lair of an underwater dragon
6 ➢ A giant's bronze cauldron, lost an eternity ago

WHY ARE THE BUKAVACS HERE?

1 ➢ They are descended from a supernatural, long-gone guardian of this place
2 ➢ The magic still present under the ruins is what drew them
3 ➢ A warlock summoned them but was burned at the stake before they could use them
4 ➢ They fell from the stars aboard a floating temple
5 ➢ They are philosophers from another plane studying the ruins
6 ➢ The whole land used to be theirs when it was all swamp

HOOKS

➢ The characters wake up in a now partly submerged inn. The village is flooding, and a whole nest of bukavacs attacks the unwary and already panicking inhabitants.

➢ Hunted out of their natural habitat, a nest of Bukavacs have now made a home in the sewers of the city. Rumours of a killer nicknamed the Strangler have started to circulate...

➢ The local mages guild wants to study bukavacs. 50gp will be paid for each live subject.

➢ The characters are turned into bukavacs and must escape the local baron's hunting parties and find a way to lift the curse. The answer lies in a submerged dungeon...

▸ From **Flanders, Belgium** ⋄ by Nicolas Dessaux
◆ *Pronounce KAH-bow-ter*

Kabouter

The Kabouters are shy, diminutive gnomes who dwell in the Low Countries, always out of sight from mundane people but never too far either. They love to drink, and will gladly help someone in need in exchange for some good abbey beer or interesting liquor.

Should I, mister, tell you the first time I met a kabouter? I was going to the fair in Kortrijk, or maybe in Oudenaarde? Anyway, it was shortly after I crossed the Leie, or was it the Scheldt? A river, anyway, with an old stone arch over the water. Cobbles were slippery after the rain. The sky was low with strange clouds reflecting into the quietness of the river, only troubled by small boats full of merchandise. My wheel cart was full of leather items I bought in Risjel, or was that in Roeslare? I do remember I spent days at the fair, drinking and trading. I'm pretty sure about crossing green pastures and marshes, dotted with the willows so common in that land of witches... Oh, I was speaking about kabouters, was I?

These people, you know, are a bit shy. Don't expect to see them easily, as there's a lot of places to hide, even in flat lands like ours. My old horse was tired, having pulled an even older cart all day long. The wheels creaked like a drunken cow playing the bagpipes. Perhaps the cart was overloaded with those linens I had, or did I say leather? Yes, shoes and gloves, belts and saddles, going to the fair. On that part of the road, cobbles are old enough to have seen queen Brunehaut ride to Doornik. I remember it was next to a windmill. I was listening to the melody of the wheels and the wings singing altogether, when I heard a sudden crash and was thrown to the road.

A wheel had broken on the cobbles. I got back to my feet as fast as I could, calling for the saints to aid me, or the Virgin, or most probably swearing by all their names. I called for help. I was alone on the road, my old horse was grazing, unconcerned... But no one would be on the

road as it was fairly late in the day. I looked around the horizon for church towers, hoping I could walk to a village, and saw Brokenhoek's, or possibly Knokke, too far for my old legs anyway. I sat on the broken cart to think about it, and all of a sudden I heard a little voice. It wasn't a kid's voice, nor a grown up's. "Perhaps you're in need of some help?" the voice asked.

I must say any help sounded like a godsend, so I accepted without hesitation, even if I couldn't see who was offering. As soon as I'd said yes, a kabouter appeared. He was sitting on my pile of merchandise, with his red cap and blue coat, smiling in his beard. I swear, mister! Slowly, he clambered over to the bottle of jenever I had next to my seat. Why did I get jenever? Probably to help against the cold and rain, or maybe I won it in a crossbow contest at the fair?

Anyway, the kabouter suggested a game: *"I will help you raise your cart and fix its wheel. Let's drink this bottle. If I fall drunk, you pay nothing for my help. If you fall drunk, you leave with your cart, but I can choose anything I need from it. Do you agree?"* I didn't really pause to think about the deal. The little fella was tiny, reaching to my knee. I couldn't lose. I accepted, unfortunately.

KABOUTER

Small humanoid, six inches under a pointy hat. They live quiet lives with their families in flat plains, gentle hills, or in the vicinity of wealthy merchant towns. The men always wear long beards. They rarely use weapons, relying on their plant magic when in danger

AC 7 [12], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1 weapon (1d4), **THACO** 19 [0], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 6, **AL** Neutral , **XP** 10, **NA** 2d6 (5d6), **TT** (see belongings table overleaf)

◆ **INNATE MAGIC**
Kabouters can cast *invisibility* and *purify food and water* at will, and *speak with plants* and *growth of plants* once per day each.

◆ **DRINK RESISTANCE**
Kabouters never suffer negative effects from alcohol, nor from any other drink, including potions and poisons.

He had a swig, then I had a swig. And again, and again. When the bottle was half empty, he smiled at me, then looked at the pile of clothes – or was it carpets? - in my cart. I tried to stand to go speak to my horse, but my legs wouldn't let me. So I kept drinking and, believe me mister, I'm pretty sure my horse was disapproving of my actions. I vaguely remember when the willows on the side of the road reached towards me with their long arms, and many other kabouters were there. I'm not sure what they did, but when I woke up in the morning, I was wearing a big, warm coat and a woollen blanket. My cart was as empty as the bottle of jenever, the wheel was fixed, and my horse looked at me like I was the king of fools.

That was the first time I met a kabouter. ◇

HOOKS

➢ Jacob Mooibeen, a wealthy bourgeois from the nearby city, bought a piece of marshy land from a ruined farming community. He plans to dry it and grow corn. But the workers he sent refuse to do their jobs, claiming the marsh is haunted. Mooibeen wants adventurers to investigate. A family of kabouters living there isn't enthused with the plan and refuses to move.

➢ The characters find Poortvliet, leader of a clan of kabouters in the vicinity, lying half dead across the road. He has escaped from the abode of Garlagamel, a mediocre sorcerer of nonetheless sinister reputation living in a forest cottage with six demonic cats. He has caught some twenty young kabouters in a magic net and he intends to distil them in an alembic of his own invention to produce the liquor of eternal youth.

➢ A lonely kabouter shows up as the characters are having breakfast before a perilous journey. Zoeten, as she is called, needs help to oust a gang of bugbears who took over her goodberry wine operation, forcibly hiring her family for miserly wages. She will follow the party and make a nuisance of herself until they agree to help.

➢ When the characters are in a tight spot, perhaps running from a monster or after falling into a trap, a friendly kabouter appears, offering to assist with their magic or a free sample of a juniper-flavoured healing brew. The price will be collected at the next dawn: each character will find a magic or otherwise important item missing.

FIVE KABOUTER FAMILIES

1. THE RODEWIJN FAMILY are merry drinkers and musicians, playing hurdy-gurdies and rumbelpots. They often invite themselves to feasts, joining the orchestra and eating impressive amounts of roasted chicory. Sometimes, they forget to give back silver plates and spoons. What would happen if they showed up to a diplomatic wedding, organised to bring peace between two warlords?

2. THE KVERSTOAJENIE FAMILY live quietly in a forgotten cave under a tulip field, once a motte-and-bailey castle. There, they practice the dark arts of alchemy and beer brewing. Every day, tulip farmer Jacob Mooibeen finds his scarecrow in a different place, as these kabouters dislike its looks. They would consider leaving it in peace in exchange for some unusual alchemical reagents.

3. Aldermen suspect a gang of smugglers is bringing jenever into town, costing the local treasury a lot of tax gold. They can't figure out how the alcohol enters the city walls, and smugglers seem to have a lot of fun each time they go through the the gates. It so happens that THE SMAKELIJKS, a family of kabouters are brewing jenever for an innkeeper in exchange for the right to live in her cave.

4. THE SCHRYF'TTADEKIRUP FAMILY have made their home in a crumbling watermill surrounded by willows. During a cold winter, food becomes scarce and they must cross the lake on their ice skates to steal beer, salted meat, and root vegetables from the nearby village. The people there are afraid they will starve if their stores keep being robbed... Could a solution be found for both sides?

5. THE FRÖILIKENJUL FAMILY lives in an old monastery. When a group of nuns wants to reclaim the place, the kabouters negotiate a series of challenges including a goatriding race, wooden skittles, copper parrot crossbow shooting, and alchemical drinking contests. As none of these fit the nuns' vows, they request the player characters as their champions.

WHERE TO FIND KABOUTERS?

1 ➢ In an abandoned limestone mining gallery, now a cosy home for a full tribe of kabouters

2 ➢ By an old watermill, in a canal covered with water lillies

3 ➢ Inside a wooden windmill sat on a hill

4 ➢ Under the roof of a large dovecote with colourful glazed tiles

5 ➢ Under a motte-and-bailey castle in such disrepair that it is barely visible in the marshy plain

6 ➢ At the side of a small and lonely chapel in a field

7 ➢ In the basement of a small house on the dam of a polder

8 ➢ In a hut abandoned by a family of peat diggers

20 BELONGINGS FROM A KABOUTER

1 ➢ An old alembic

2 ➢ A cauldron and a ladle

3 ➢ A hammer and a sickle

4 ➢ A pair of oversized boots, possibly magical

5 ➢ A lantern with a salamander living inside

6 ➢ A battered frying pan

7 ➢ Keys to a lost coffer

8 ➢ Large leather belt

9 ➢ A bicorne instead of a pointy hat

10 ➢ A pipe and some tobacco

11 ➢ A little pot containing unusual mushrooms

12 ➢ A pair of ice skates

13 ➢ A donkey's mandible

14 ➢ A military uniform, complete with golden epaulettes

15 ➢ A necklace with a golden sheep skin

16 ➢ A large, white ruff

17 ➢ A pet snake

18 ➢ A large bottle of jenever

19 ➢ A shovel

20 ➢ A Jokari ball

▸ From the **Basque Country** ⋄ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce TAR-taro*

Tartaro

The Tartaros are **one-eyed ogre** shepherds roaming the wild hills and mountains of the Pyrenees.

In the middle of winter, three weary warriors were returning home from war and were crossing an inhospitable mountain range. Mattin the archer had taken in a young whippoorwill he had found lying in the snow under his coat to warm it up. Pantxo and Manech, his companions in misfortune, were starving and wanted to eat the bird, so the three soldiers kept bickering until a cottage appeared under the moonlight. It was the first civilized shelter they had seen in days. As they entered and approached the fireplace, a guttural voice exclaimed: *«House shut!"* And all the doors, shutters, and windows closed at once.

From the bed in the back of the room rose a towering man: a barrel-like torso, muscular arms long enough to touch the ground, and a grotesque face bearing a thick-lipped smile revealing protruding teeth. But the most impressive thing was the single eye, round as a bullet, planted in the middle of the forehead. This was a tartaro, a cyclops-ogre, one of the many degenerate great-grandchildren of Polyphemus himself!

"Don't move, please" he said in a strangely mellifluous voice, and they obeyed despite their desire to flee. The ogre grabbed Manech, the chubbiest of the three, quickly snapped his neck, skewered him on an iron spike, and put him to roast in the fireplace.

"I'll eat you tomorrow" he said to the other two, *"Drink this sheep milk and settle down to sleep,"* and they obeyed, exhausted as they were and strangely appeased by the warm drink he served them.

The next morning, XXVII, for that was the name of the tartaro, confiscated their weapons, tied them by the neck with dog leashes, and took them with him to the pasture to watch his flock of sheep.

"I'm bored and hungry," said XXVII at the end of the day. *"Let's have a contest! Whoever throws a stone farther than me won't be eaten tonight!"* And without even getting up, he grabbed a rock as big as his head and threw it negligently. The rock passed over a small forest, bounced in a meadow and fell in the middle of a small lake two hundred cubits away. Mattin pretended to carefully select a stone at his feet while discreetly grabbing

the whippoorwill that was still sleeping under his coat. He whispered *"fly, fly as far as you can"* and miming a stone throw, released the bird that flew over the hills. XXVII, looked at the `stone´ soaring in the skies, speechless, and so totally stunned that he dropped both leashes. As night had now fallen, the two warriors ran away and hid behind a rock. Alas, soon a light as bright as the sun was searching every corner of the field. It was a ray of light emanating from the tartaro´s eye, and it let him see better than in broad daylight. He caught the soldiers in no time, and ate Pantxo in three bites. Then the ogre went back to his house with Mattin under his arm.

"You're the best stone-thrower I've ever seen," he said to the little warrior, *"and something tells me you're also the smartest. Here, take this gold ring as a reward. Now drink some sheep milk and sleep easy."* Then XXVII brought his sheep into the common room for the night, as wolves were roaming outside. He shuttered his house and went to bed. Mattin did not drink his milk, determined to stay awake, and when the tartaro began to snore, he grabbed the spit from the fireplace, climbed onto the ogre´s bed and stuck it into his eye. XXVII woke up with a scream and angrily ransacked the house, but was unable to find Mattin hidden among the sheep. In the early morning, the tartaro opened the door, stood with his legs apart, and brought out all his sheep one by one, carefully inspecting their backs with his hand. But Mattin had taken precautions: he had skinned a sheep during the night and clothed himself in its skin. As he went between XXVII´s legs, the fleece slipped and remained in the cyclop´s hand. Mattin ran away, *"Where are you? Where are you?"* shouted the blind tartaro. *"I am here! I am here!"* answered the golden ring that Mattin had on his finger! XXVII immediately went after Mattin, following the cursed ring´s voice. As much as the young man tried, it proved impossible to remove from his finger! It was then that the whippoorwill landed on Mattin´s shoulder and said in his ear: *"Cut your finger off and give it to me!"* And Mattin obeyed despite the pain. The bird took the finger and the ring away from Mattin, followed by the tartaro who ran after the ring´s *"I am here! I am here!"* Flying over a chasm close by, the whippoorwill dropped the finger. And after it fell XXVII. He was never heard of again. ◇

TARTARO

Grotesque, 9-foot humanoids of low to average intelligence with a single eye. Long muscular arms which they use to run (especially on steep terrain), large head, and short bowed legs. Expert at stone throwing. They roam remote mountain areas, where they raise sheep and sometimes trade milk and cheese with other mountain dwellers. Always hungry and particularly fond of human flesh. Dressed in animal hides and sheep fleece.

AC 5 [14] **HD** 6* (27hp), **Att** 1 x club (1d8+2) or 1 x rock (2d6), **THAC0** 14 [+5], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 8 (10 when defending a flock), **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 500, **NA** 1, **TT** F

- **ROCK THROWING EXPERT**
  Up to 150'. +2 to hit.
- **SLOW-WITTED**
  Can be tricked by clever characters.
- **GAMBLER**
  Proud of their strength and agility, they like to wager with other creatures and will rarely refuse a challenge, as long as the opponent appears to be worth the effort.
- **WEIRD POWERS**
  Each tartaro masters 1d3 of the following powers, which they can use once per day:

1- *Melifluous voice:* As *charm person* for 2d6 rounds on all creatures within 10' radius. Save vs spells allowed.

2- *Light Beam:* A ray of violently bright light cast from their eye for 1d6 turns. Range 300ft, allows to see as if in bright sunlight and to detect any invisible or hidden creatures. A creature caught in the ray that does not cover its eyes is blinded for the duration.

3- *Polymorph:* Takes human form for 1d6 hours (often a young, friendly looking shepherd). Usually used to attract lost travellers or to learn the secrets of cheese makers in the nearby valleys.

4- *Safe inside:* With a command word, close all the exits of their den until sunrise. (As per *wizard lock*, on all doors, windows, shutters, etc.)

5- *Belch of death:* A loud, malodorous burp in a 10' radius. Any creature caught loses 1d6 hp and must spend their next action to leave the area. With a save vs breath, half damage and no need to move.

6- *Frenzy:* The tartaro is under the effect of *haste* for 1d3 turns.

- **MAGICAL POSSESSIONS**
  Roll 1d6 once or twice on the table opposite.

WHO'S WHO

No one knows why tartaros have numbers for names. Many of them live in remote areas of the Pyrenees, and some of them are well known. Clarentius, a monk from Belloc Abbey has drafted an incomplete list:

V- lives under a waterfall and commands to the water spirits who reside there.

IX - has two heads and can never be surprised.

X - does not breed sheep but the best horses in the surrounding kingdoms.

XII - is in love with a shepherdess and has sworn to protect her flock.

XVIII- came down from the mountains and now travels the world on magic stilts.

XXI, XXII, XVI and **XLI** - are long dead. Their skulls adorn the entrance of the fortress of Gaston de Belzunce in Macaye and are said to whisper secrets at night.

XXVII- is said to be trapped at the bottom of a chasm and to feed on mushrooms, rainwater, and clumsy mountaineers.

XXXI - is twice as big as his fellows, and regularly walks out of a cave with his arms full of gold.

XXXIV- is undead.

XXXVI - lives in a gigantic hollow tree hiding the entrance to an underground palace.

XLIII- is a prisoner of Zaratazarat the Mage and works as his butler.

LII- lives in an isolated tower and owns a most coveted relic of Saint Ferminus.

LXIX - has been trapped in the ice at the bottom of a crevasse in the Taillon glacier for seventy and seven years. He will give his entire fortune to whoever can make the sun shine down there.

LXXI- has prophetic knowledge and will share it for the right price.

LXXIV- has an elephant trunk for a nose and can smell anything in a one-mile radius.

MAGICAL POSSESSIONS

Tartaros often trade milk and sheep cheese to the laminak (wild imps living deep in Pyrenean caves) in exchangefor useful magical trinkets. A tartaro worthy of the name always owns one or two of them. Here are some examples (1d6):

1. Leash of the Faithful Dog
Made of basajaun (see page 6) hair, indestructible, it grows to length indefinitely and can be retracted with a click of the tartaro's tongue.

2. Bowls of Good Sleep
Any liquid drunk from these clay bowls puts a character to sleep for 2d6 hours if they fail a save vs spells.

3. Staff of the Watchful Shepherd
A gnarled oak stick that can be extended at will to hit an enemy up to 30' away (damage 1d6+2, save vs paralysis or be stunned for 1d6 rounds).

The next three are cursed items that can only be taken off with a command word known only to the tartaro. They are usually given to prisoners.

4. Location Ring - A large gold ring with a mouth engraved on it. Answers *"I'm here!"* when the tartaro asks *"Where are you?"*

5. Boots of Safe Return - Magnificent red leather boots that, with a whistle from the tartaro, force their wearer to walk backwards to where they started.

6. Affectionate Cloak - A woollen cloak ideal in rainy and windy weather (as often in the Pyrenees). It wraps itself around its wearer to immobilize them on a sniff from the tartaro .

MORE TARTARO FACTS

➢ Tartaros live in **cosy houses** where a fire is always burning, carrying the smell of lamb roast or cheese fondue to lost travellers.

➢ If this isn't enough to **lure people** in, they regularly sow gold coins or small gems on the path to their abodes.

➢ Tartaros trade their cheese with the evil laminaks, the dark dwarves of the depths, and other malevolent inhabitants of the mountains. **They hoard treasure**, which they bury under their homes in large iron cauldrons. A tartaro's treasure usually contains 1d4+2 x 1000gp in coins and gems and 1d3 magic items (which their owners don't always understand the use or value of).

➢ **Female tartaros?** Nobody ever heard of any female tartaros. Some say that tartaros, once in their lives, mate with the standing stones found at the top of inaccessible peaks. A few years later, a new tartaro walks down from this peak and settles in a nearby valley.

HOOKS

➢ LXXI must be on the road for a few weeks to attend to his affairs. He offers a reward to the adventurers she has just caught to watch over her sheep, the finest in the region, during his absence. Upon hearing the news of LXXI's departure, most of the shepherds from the neighbouring valleys band together to steal the sheep.

➢ Zaratazarat the Mage is annoyed. His butler XLIII is homesick and has become completely useless. The wizard promises a handsome reward for a brand new (and less sensitive) tartaro.

➢ Old Woman Marisantzeko , a witch from Navarre, is enamoured with LXXIV. But the tartaro believes he's unworthy of anyone's love because of his deformity. The witch will grant a wish to anyone who can convince LXXIV to join her for a picnic.

➢ Bad Patxi (see p. 10) has promised to deliver a hundred silver bells for X's horses. He will make a magical weapon in exchange for delivering the bells and collecting the payment. X is notoriously avaricious, and it might be difficult to get the full sum from him.

Arragouset

Small humanoid faeries. Haunt seaside caves. Occasionally raid surrounding human villages whose men are known to behave badly.

On the west coast of the island of Guernsey was a narrow valley opening onto the ocean. It was called the Faerie Hollow. Since the beginning of time, faeries and gnomes vassal to the Faerie King Under the Waves had dwelt there. The most daring islanders used to bring a broken item that they could not repair (a family clock, a music box, a mechanical toy...). They left it at dusk along with a jar of honey milk. When they returned the next morning, they would often find the object as good as new.

One winter evening, farmer Letocq, passing by, saw a gnome with seaweed in his long white beard appear before him. The gnome unrolled a long scroll of parchment he was holding in his webbed hands, and said "*You pathetic and insignificant males of the village of Saint-André must leave your hovels this very night. We, the proud, handsome, and mighty arragousets, will come tomorrow to peacefully take possession of your wives and households. Any contravention of this ordinance will be punished by immediate and painful death. Thunder be our witness, the proclamation is made!*" The arragouset stamped his foot on the ground and a bolt of lightning shot down from the sky, sending him back to the faerie lands.

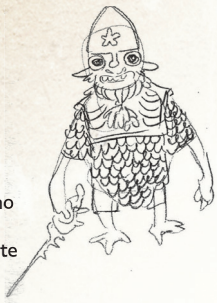
Letocq returned to the village in a hurry, warned the few stragglers still in the tavern, woke up the mayor, shouted at the sergeant-at-arms who was dozing at his post, and knocked at the doors of all his neighbours. But they all laughed at him. During the night, the farmer gathered his belongings and, leaving his wife and daughters fast asleep, set out on the road. When dawn came and everyone was starting their day and going about their business, three mournful trumpet calls were heard coming from behind the hill. And a few seconds later, an innumerable horde of arragousets in arms and shouting their terrible war song came down the hill. All wore conical mother-of-pearl helmets and mail coats of fish scales, and wielded enchanted blades fashioned from sharpened shells.

The villagers took up arms in haste but were soon overwhelmed. All grown men were slaughtered, impaled, slit, cut, or chopped into bits. The priest who came out of his church shouting curses and throwing holy water was carried away by a mass of screaming gnomes and crucified upside down on the signpost by the main road. The arragousets locked the women and children in a barn while they joyfully feasted on the bodies until the next morning. When the grim party was over, the arragousets drew a lottery to see who would settle in the village. The lucky winners took their new families to their houses and soon, as if nothing had happened, life in the village resumed its normal course.

Letocq returned a few years later to check up on his abandoned wife, who was now married to a jovial, paunchy arragouset. According to the former wife of Letocq, business in the village had never been better and the arragousets were proving to be gentle and caring husbands and fathers. The children, sons and daughters of the arragousets or of the men they had replaced, were raised right and well-educated. All in all, life in Saint-André had never been so good.

But after seven years and seven months, a call came from the Faerie King Under the Waves, and all the arragousets gathered their things. The farewells were heartbreaking as the arragousets set out to sea. To this day, no one knows to which new shore they sailed.

Over the years, however, it became clear that Saint André had retained some strange characteristics. The children of the village grew up to be the best and bravest people of the island, excelling at every craft and trade they set their mind to. And for centuries it was said that if a man ever harmed a woman or child in the village, he would disappear the next night. His dismembered, crab- eaten body would often be found on the other side of the island. ◇



CURSES

An arragouset who is attacked or who catches a mortal using violence on someone in their care will not hesitate to cast a curse. This curse can only be lifted by *remove curse* cast by a priest of a sea god, on a stormy night, and at sea. If you are cursed by an arragouset, save vs spell or you...

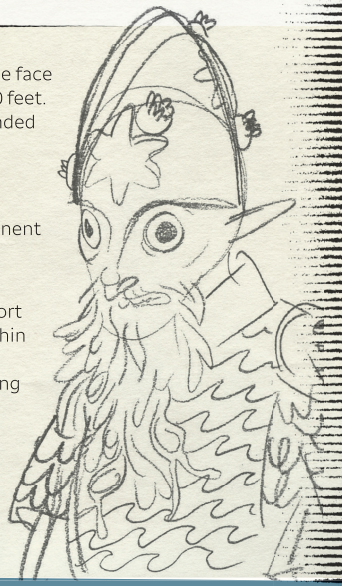
1	lose the use of vowels
2	can only walk backwards
3	can only sleep in the daytime
4	fart frogs
5	throw up every time you feel happy
6	have translucent skin
7	can see in the dark but not in the light
8	smell like rotting fish
9	can no longer drink water
10	always say the exact opposite of what you mean
11	have small tentacles for fingers
12	have a wriggling fishtail instead of a nose
13	lose experience instead of gaining it when vanquishing monsters
14	need to pee every turn
15	extinguish all flames within 9 feet by your presence alone
16	repeat everything you hear, like a parrot
17	lose a tooth every time you say yes or no, or 1 hit point when your teeth are all gone
18	must taste everything – and everyone – you kill
19	have your eyes on the back of your head
20	roll twice

ARRAGOUSET

3-foot paunchy faerie gnome with a long white beard braided with seaweed and webbed feet and hands. Arragousets colonise semi-submerged caves by the seashore, attracting more faeries over the years. When they are numerous enough, they may decide to raid a nearby human settlement, expelling the adult males and taking their place.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 1-1* **Att** 1 weapon (1d6 or by weapon) or Spit, **THACO** 17 [+1], **MV** 90' (30')
SV D8 W9 P10 B13 S12, **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 7
NA 1d4 (or 1d4x 50 when attacking a numan settlement), **TT** S

- **SPIT**
  Once per day, spits in the face of an opponent up to 10 feet. Save vs breath or be blinded for 1d6 turns.
- **CURSE**
  Once per day, can cast a minor curse on an opponent (see box left).
- **DIMENSION DOOR**
  Once per day, can teleport to a known location within 360 feet. Usually accompanied by lightning falling from the sky and striking the area where he is standing.



HOOKS

➢ The fishermen of the village of Criquetot are in trouble. A band of arragousets has just settled in a nearby cove. They must be removed before they decide, as they have been known to do, to expel the men of the village and take their place. The arragousets agree to move if the characters free their leader, captured by Zaratazarat the Mage.

➢ The women of the village of Criquetot are annoyed. Their husbands are lazy, brutal drunkards who spend their days in the tavern, send the children fishing in the muddy lagoon despite the invasion of giant jellyfish, and generally behave like tyrants. A cove on the opposite island is said to be home to a colony of arragousets. Would these brave adventurers go and inform them of the situation? The arragousets will be happy to help once they have dealt with the giant jellyfish infesting the lagoon, which they are terrified of.

➢ A lost and confused arragouset runs into the party. He was sent to investigate a settlement of elves who recently settled the coast nearby, but is unable to find it. His solemn oath of work ethics does not allow him to go back to the Faerie King Under the Waves empty handed, and he will grant a wish to anyone who can find the village. The 'settlement' is actually a military encampment of the Queendom Undying, a matriarchal society of half-elves who plan to raid the a rea for male slaves.

➢ The Exalted Chaplain of the Order of the Fiery Ire has heard that the women of Saint-Dalida are consorting with the sea devils who murdered their husbands. He is on his way there with a provision of holy lamp oil and a detachment of young acolytes: this will be a great field trip for them.

▸ From **Ukraine** ⋄ by Kobayashi
◆ *Pronounce PEH-reh-lesnyk*

Perelesnyk

Slavic folklore warns us about the perelesnyk, or fiery serpent: a creature that takes the form of a loved one you have wronged. It feeds on regrets and broken dreams and leaves only when you are reduced to a shell oof your former self.

Excerpt from the journal of renowned mage and adventurer Mithilesh Pipino.

I must have gone mad. He's supposed to be dead. The others told me the goblins hacked him to pieces as we were escaping the manor. Those bastards lied to me. They left Gildan behind to die just so they could get a bigger share. And yet there he was, in the tavern, smiling at me. What dark sorcery is this? It wasn't an illusion, it was Gildan in the flesh. The story of how he managed to escape from the clutches of the red order didn't make much sense but he was here, he was alive, my dear, dear Gildan. I didn't care how he made it, I was just happy he was with me.

Excerpt from the novel *The Lives and Trials of Klara Olearius, Rogue Extraordinaire: Chapter XIII, Lost Friends.*

Mithilesh had gone mad. I told him that Gildan died, that I saw a goblin cut his throat. He didn't believe me, said I left Gildan to die. So what? We delve into dangerous places to face dangerous creatures, and when things get ugly your best option is to run as fast as you can. Mithilesh loved Gildan more than he loved life. I didn't. He said that Gildan and him would buy a tavern and live happily ever after. Last time I heard of them, the tavern was destroyed in a fire, Mithilesh lost his grimoire and Gildan denounced him to the Golden Flame inquisitors as a practitioner of the dark arts. He was burned at the stake. Gildan stood there until the ashes got cold. A local drunkard said he saw him turn into a snake. Fool.

Teachings of Angelus Brewer, priest and monster-hunter of the Golden Flame

So many warriors, nobles and villagers come to me about this. *"How do we beat the perelesnyk?"* they ask. *"How can we kill this foul creature?", "Can you help us, your Holiness?"*... I tell them the answers lay within their hearts, that the fiery serpent is born from the void left by the departure of a loved one. *"It is your choice to let that void be filled by faith or despair"* I always say, *"Perelesnyks feed on despair. Fight them off with faith".*

I'm usually faced by blank stares. I then add *"Or you can smash their heads with the*

thrice-blessed mace of Saint Meiser", which never fails to trigger a round of applause. Let this remind you that the greatest quality of a monster-hunter is not courage: it is patience.

Letter handed by a former monster-hunter

My dear child, I knew I couldn't keep you from trying to learn the truth about your father. The man that was meant to be your father died long before your birth. Someone took his place. Someone who, as you know, was going to ruin my life and my family. But instead the creature gave me an unexpected and wonderful gift: you. He left me soon after, there was no more pain it could drain from me. I learned afterwards that your real father is what the village elders call a fiery serpent. That's what probably explains the unusual talent you developed as a child and led you to your current life. I hope you'll meet your father one day. ◇

PERELSNYK

In its original form a perelesnyk looks like a 30-foot long snake with a human face, bathed in blinding light. The perelesnyk only takes this form to escape through the air and start searching for a new victim. When in serpent form, the creature is unable to fight, it only seeks to fly away. After it dies, each scale of the snake bears the face of someone the creature impersonated.

AC 5 [14] (thick skin), **HD** 4* (18 hp),
Att 1 x any weapon it can use (1d6) **THAC0** 16 [+3],
MV 90' (30') / 300' (100') flying, **SV** D6 W7 P8 B8 S10,
ML 6, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 125, **NA** 1, **TT** -

◆ **BLINDING LIGHT**
When in serpent form, the light surrounding the perelesnyk gives a -4 penalty to all attack rolls made against it.

◆ **VISAGE OF LOVE**
The perelesnyk is able to become the exact copy of a deceased loved one. This isn't an illusion and cannot be dissipated.

◆ **LIGHTNING FAST**
When in snake form, the creature flies at an uncanny speed.

◆ **SPELL IMMUNITY**
Unaffected by shapeshifting, sleep, or charm spells.

What does the perelesnyk look like?

1	A circus acrobat
2	A foreign ambassador
3	A famous comedian
4	A cook
5	A fellow adventurer
6	A crusader returning home
7	A former instructor
8	A priest who healed the characters
9	The court jester
10	A former patron
11	The local barber-surgeon
12	An old nemesis

Who is the perelesnyk's next victim?

1	The town mayor
2	A country doctor
3	A jeweller
4	A card player
5	The king's buffoon
6	The thieves' guild leader
7	A knight errant
8	A playwright

HOOKS

➢ Mykola Yakovych Davydenko, a local nobleman saved the perelesnyk who fell in love with him. The Inquisition wants them both captured.

➢ Zynovijovych the magic-user murders their lovers hoping to catch a perelesnyk. The party may be the magic-user's target, or hired to investigate one of the murders.

➢ A perelesnyk has been enslaved and used as a spy by a cunning monarch. The characters must find the spy.

➢ One of the characters is the child of a fiery serpent. They learn of this by finding a wanted poster issued by the Inquisition.

RUMOURS about perelesnyks

1	Dust made of the original's bones reveals the fiery serpent's true appearance
2	A mirror blessed by a Lawful priest will show the perelesnyk's true form
3	Water from a holy mountain will definitely lock the fiery serpent in its current form
4	Playing a flute made of a dragon bone will hypnotize a perelesnyk
5	An arrow made from a live weeping willow is fatal to a perelesnyk
6	The tears of a great warrior will poison a fiery serpent
7	One can find a crystal that lights up in the presence of a perelesnyk
8	A dog trained by a goblin warlock only barks in the presence of a fiery serpent
9	A song can lure a perelesnyk and force it to take the appearance of someone of your choice
10	A thistle hung on a door will prevent a perelesnyk from entering
11	A painting representing the many faces taken by a fiery serpent will also show its latest incarnation
12	The bearer of Gorrek's Crown can see through the eyes of the closest perelesnyk

Cephalophore

Have you heard of those revenants who carry their head in their hands, and how their curse is related to the religious beliefs they held in life? Well, let me tell you how the first cephalophore came to be.

Never a child was born in such a pious family, in those dark times where the old faith was endangered. They kept him from the unbelievers and their sinister practices, taught him the Law and its subtle moral quandaries. Instead of children's stories, he read the scriptures in ancient languages. From the first days of his youth, he was destined to be a priest or a monk, a man with burning beliefs.

As such, he became a proselyte. Men and women who listened to his voice joined him in the faith, leaving their lives behind to follow him, until a community was gathered around him to settle in a remote place. But in those times, the Faithful were hunted down. They had to hide from unbeliever soldiers. Neighbours, friends, and even family would betray them.

Despite their many spies, the unbelievers could not find their settlement. So many times, they sent hunters to find him and his disciples. Some were bloodthirsty brigands, using terror and torture to get people to speak, rampaging around the countryside in search of signs of the pious. Others were even worse, savage beasts, unnatural monsters, and straight out of unspeakable nightmares prowling the night.

One morning, he awoke and told his disciples: "I cannot let you suffer in the name of our faith anymore. I brought you the Law, and you accepted it. But today, I made a choice. I am a danger for you here. My decision is made: I will walk as a pilgrim to where the scriptures were first revealed to the believers. And when I am back, you shall be freed from the unbelievers". They cried and wailed, and they asked him to stay with them, but he would not listen. They asked to come with him, but he bade them. As he departed, he instructed them to build more temples for the faithful to study the law.

On his pilgrimage, he could not help but making new converts, and the spies of the unbelievers quickly understood something was happening. They strengthened their efforts to find him, and they succeeded. They beat him with staves, to force him to betray the faith. He was hurt and bleeding, but he kept walking as a pilgrim. They threw him to the ground, and kicked him again and again. But he stood up and kept walking as a pilgrim.

So, when they saw they were unable to stop him, an unbeliever took her sword and cut off his head. Then, they rolled his body into a quickly dug grave and ran away, laughing and joking, proud of their crime. Soon, they would be carrying on their dirty work by tracking and killing the pious, one by one, beheading them without pity.

But, as the light of the moon touched his grave, he raised out of the bloodstained earth, his severed head in his hands, and again he

started walking as a pilgrim. He was the same, a man determined to carry on his pilgrimage, and not the same, as life, light, and compassion had left his body. He walked unsure of his path, ever straying from his pilgrimage to search out his killers and their heirs. He became the first cephalophore.

Then, it was time for the pious to walk out from their graves, spilling onto the land like a plague to the unbelievers. To this day they haunt the roads, revenants holding their heads as proof of a faith that even death cannot break. ◇

SYMBOLS

Cephalophores generally wear an object as a symbol of their past life or of their martyrdom.

It may happen these symbols are filled with some sinister magic (see below).

1 ➢ A bloody executioner's sword. **2** ➢ A rusty butcher's knife. **3** ➢ A rustic lumberjack's axe. **4** ➢ A bishop's cross and mitre. **5** ➢ A garland of flowers. **6** ➢ A broken walking stick. **7** ➢ A pilgrim's brooch. **8** ➢ Keys to a forgotten sacred place. **9** ➢ A broken seal. **10** ➢ A chivalric sword. **11** ➢ A heavy-bladed rapier. **12** ➢ Seven daggers.

SOME SINISTER MAGIC

If a character touches a cephalophore's symbol and fails a saving throw against death, they suffer the following effect until _blessed_ by a cleric.

1 ➢ **Blindness :** -4 to hit.

2 ➢ **Leprosy :** -1 in every ability score

3 ➢ **Blood flow :** -1d4 hp every day.

4 ➢ **Stigma :** -4 to saving throws.

5 ➢ **Scrofulla :** -1 to every die roll.

6 ➢ **Starving beggar:** must save vs spells to be able to eat.

CEPHALOPHORE

Undead appearing as living bodies bearing their head in their hands. Wear the sacerdotal clothes of a forgotten or forbidden cult. They walk as pilgrims of their faith and haunt the descendants of their killers for generations.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 7** (32hp), **Att** special (revenge), **THAC0** special (revenge), **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D6 W7 P9 B11 S9 (C9), **ML** 12, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 1 650, **NA** 1, **TT** O

◆ **MIGHT**
A successful save against paralysis is necessary to be able to first attack the cephalophore.

◆ **REVENGE**
When someone wounds the cephalophore with weapons or spells, they suffer the same amount of damage 1d6 rounds later.

◆ **CLERICAL SPELLS**
A cephalophore can cast spells as a 7th level cleric. They can use clerical spells on scrolls.

THE HUNTED HEIRS

Centuries later, hundreds of descendants of the first cephalophore killers are scattered across the country and beyond. Most of them heard about a curse upon their family, scary rumours about a beheaded saint seeking his revenge. Too many of them didn't take the stories seriously... until they found their fate at the hand of cephalophores.
The survivors taught their familes about their special lineage, and the inheritors of this curse always help each other without question. To know each other, they have a line tattooed around their necks. Faking these tattoos to enter the family is not uncommon, but it may lead to trouble if discovered – or when facing the cephalophores.

HOOKS

➢ Convicted of a crime, Viscountess Dorelea has been condemned to go on a pilgrimage to a remote sanctuary. Her rank lets her name someone (e.g. a player character) to go in her stead . The road is filled with trials and dangers re-enacting the life and death of a nearly forgotten martyr, who appears as a cephalophore. She can help the characters to find the sanctuary, but in return asks for help bringing holy justice to the descendant of her killers – the viscountess, of course.

➢ A strange scream of agony comes every night from the dungeons of Castle Fitzjansens. A cephalophore has been trapped there for a century. If freed, he will go on to murder Baron Burlapp, who resides in a nearby manor. The baron's bereaved daughter will accuse the Fitzjansens of the murder.

➢ The canons of Hallekerk Cathedral complain that the number of pilgrims decreases every year. Rumours among professional pilgrims say the holy road is haunted by an avenger saint.

➢ A cephalophore lost his severed head fighting a paladin. In despair, he haunts the land in search of the lady knight who took it. The mother superior of the Convent of Vorpaline wrongly suspects the revenant is looking for her, as she's a descendant of the cephalophore's murderer. She hires the party to help, but neglects to explain her fears.

▸ From **Gascony, France** ⋄ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce loo car-CAWL*

Lou Carcolh

Lou Carcolh was a **gargantuan snail** haunting the caves beneath the village of Hastingues, in southern France.

The village of Hastingues is built on a rocky promontory hiding a network of colossal caves and natural galleries. Well situated and spared from the hazards of the Hundred Years' War, it soon became a flourishing trade centre for its English founders. They drove away the few Neanderthals and goblins lingering in the caves and began to mine for ore. This was ill-advised, for it was after excavating a deep gallery that they released Lou Carcolh: a snail as big as a house, its body bristling with venomous hair, its shell harder than stone, its gaping mouth spitting out jets of corrosive saliva, and a crown of tentacles which caught half a dozen miners. The poor souls were swallowed before anyone could do anything. The survivors ran for their lives, collapsed the gallery behind them, and warned the burghers that the caves were now forbidden territory.

A few weeks later, the earth shook. The first disappearances were reported in the next few days. First it was a whole herd of cows. Then a shepherdess and her flock vanished from a meadow further east, and a family of cowherds living on an isolated farm was nowhere to be found. But the worst story was undoubtedly that of the Bayonne stagecoach, of which only an empty carcass was found: horses, coachmen, passengers... All had evaporated. The disappearances always took place at night and each time one could observe a slime trail as wide as a road, sparkling in the light, that led to the caves under Hastingues. It was now clear that the beast had gone through the cave-in and was on the loose.

The Chevalier Uhart and his men-at-arms from Bidache were sent for. The next night, they had already caught the beast in a clearing where a woodcutter and her family lived. The giant snail was on the roof of the cottage, methodically collapsing the walls. All who tried to escape were caught by a tentacle and gobbled up. The knight and his troops rushed forward. Armed with long spears, they tried to repel the monster, but it didn't seem to notice the pain

and half of the Chevalier's men were swallowed by the beast. Horrifyingly, the muffled screams of the victims could be heard struggling inside the monster's belly. Finally sated, Lou Carcolh turned around and headed back to the caves at his snail's pace, where it disappeared into the underground darkness.

It was decided that all the entrances to the caves should be collapsed over several dozen feet, which was done in a few days' work with the help of the mountain dwarves from the fortress of Karak Zuriza. Only a narrow passageway was left, closed by a grate. To prevent the monster from causing another earthquake, it was also decided that the beast would be fed regularly: a weekly meal of cows, pigs, sheep, repeat offenders, and lost travellers was thrown down into the cave through a well in the church.

For more than fifty years now, the beast has been peacefully living on these offerings. Its existence is carefully kept secret so as not to harm the duchy's reputation and (more importantly), its trade. But it is said that the beast has now tripled in size, and that one day its hunger will outgrow its diet. ◇

LOU CARCOLH

A gargantuan snail (100 feet long with an 80-foot shell). Its shell is as hard as the hardest rock and its body covered with bristles. It has eight tentacles around its head to catch prey and drop them into its mouth. No one knows where it comes from, nor whether it is the only one of its kind.

AC -2 [21], **HD** 21* (95 hp), **Att** 8 x tentacle (2d6 + grab) or breath, **THAC0** 5 [+14], **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** D2 W2 P2 B2 S4, **ML** 11 (6 in bright light), **AL** Neutral, **XP** 4 500, **NA** 1, **TT** -

◆ **TENTACLES**
Eight extensible tentacles, each one can attack up to 60'. On a successful attack, the target must save vs paralysis to avoid being grabbed. A grabbed victim fights with a -4 penalty, takes 1d6 damages each round from constriction, and ends into the monster's mouth after 1d4 rounds. (See *Into Lou Carcolh!* overleaf)

◆ **ATTACKING THE TENTACLES**
AC 2 [17], 12 hp (each has a separate hit points pool). If reduced to 0 hp, the tentacle retracts and can no longer attack. Tentacles regenerate 1d4 hp per 24 hours as long as the beast is alive. If all tentacles are retracted, Lou Carcolh retreats.

◆ **IMMUNITIES**
Mundane weapons only cause half damage. Unharmed by poison, fire, and acid. Immune to mind affecting or mind-reading spells.

◆ **FLIGHT FROM LIGHT**
In bright light (daylight or equivalent), Lou Carcolh's morale is reduced to 6.

◆ **STINGING BRISTLES**
Only a narrow area above Lou Carcolh's head is free of them, which no one has noticed until now (see area 7 page 35). For each mêlée attack on Lou Carcolh's body (other than with spears and polearms), the attacker takes 1d6 automatic damage. On a natural 1 on the attack roll, the attacker takes double damage and is impaled by the bristle. They attack with a -4 penalty until they pull themselves off, taking 2d6 automatic damage.

◆ **BREATH**
Three times per day: 90' cone of acidic and sticky slime. Target is covered in a sticky substance that destroys normal armour on the first round and causes 1d8 damage per round after that. Magical armour has a 1-in-6 per 'plus' of resisting every round until washed.

◆ **SHELL PROPERTIES**
Lou Carcolh's shell contains veins of alien metals which can be used to make magical weapons and armour. Properly cleaned and prepared (several days of work for a team of skilled workers), it can be sold for 2d6 x 10,000 gp.

HOOKS

➢ The parish priest is all praise for the geological wonders hidden in the gigantic caves beneath the village. As the characters are people of quality, he is willing to give them access through the well of his church.

➢ Zaratazarat the Mage knows Lou Carcolh's weak spot: a narrow area on top of its head that can only be reached through the belly of the beast itself. He is willing to provide advice and some means of protection, and promises the princely sum of 2,500gp (after deduction of the value of the aforementioned advice – anti-acidic and breathing spell scrolls are extra) if the party can bring the shell of the animal to his manse.

➢ The earth has shaken in Hastingues and the village is devastated. It is said that a titanic monster roams the countryside, leaving death and desolation in its path. The king calls upon the heroes of the kingdom. A duchy to whomever vanquishes the beast!

➢ Princess Mundaka is dying, the unknown disease that has consumed her for years is finally about to kill her. Albertalonimius the Wise knows of a remedy, but it can only be found in the liver of a mythical beast that is said to live, perhaps, under a village in the hills of Gascony...

INTO LOU

• **All corridors** are circular and 5' in diameter.
• All rooms are vaguely circular.
• Climbing **vertical** walls and steep slopes is relatively easy as long as characters have both hands free.
• All **interior surfaces** are spongy, slimy, and elastic. Mundane weapons do half damage against it. A weapon that hits an organic surface or part has a 2-in-6 chance of getting stuck and being absorbed in 1d6 rounds. A Strength check is allowed every round to extract it.
• Each **attack** against an organic part or surface triggers a shower of acidic saliva (see below) in a 9' radius around the offender.
• **Fire** does not cause any damage.
• **Shower of acidic saliva:** For each round of exposure, creatures in the area suffer 1d8 damage, the Armour Class of non-magical armour worsens by 1 point, and the damage dice of non magical weapons drop by 1 size (d12 becomes d10, d4 become d3, etc. A d2 weapon is destroyed). Save vs breath: half damage, and weapons and armour are unaffected. The shower lasts 3 rounds.
• **Stale air:** Every hour spent inside the beast without magical or artificial means of breathing requires a save vs. death. If failed: permanent loss of 1 point of Constitution.
• **Nervous node:**
- Each consisting of two gelatinous protrusions emitting electrical sparks.
- AC 4 [15], 15 hp, regenerates 1 hp per round. At 0 hp, it becomes necrotic and one tentacle dies permanently.
- Each time a metallic mêlée weapon hits, 2-in-6 chance of an electrical discharge (2d6 damage).

1- MOUTH

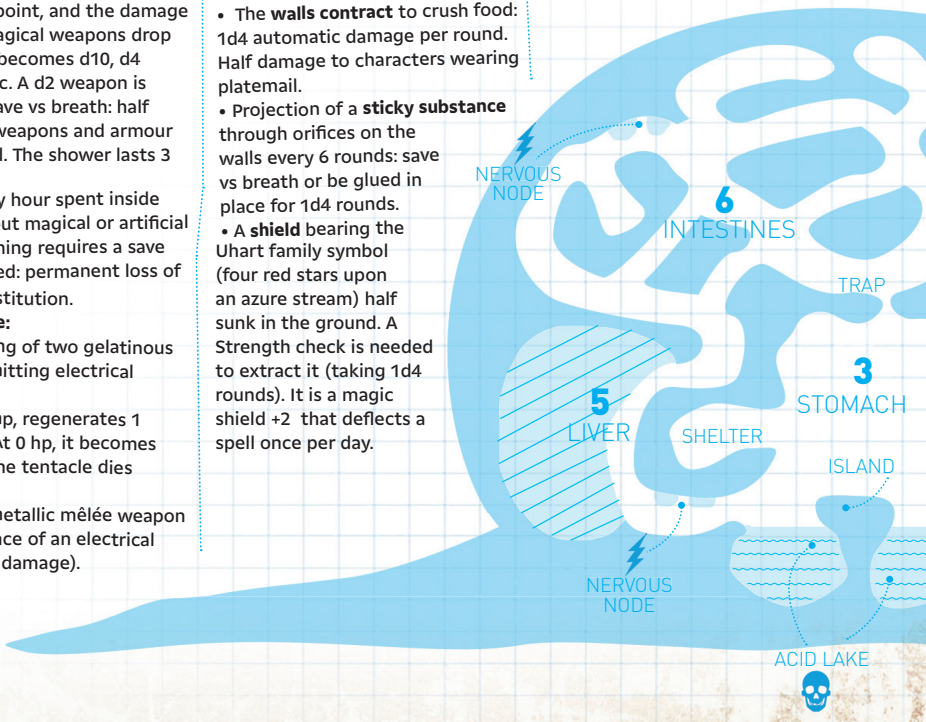
• Hermetically **sealed**. Only opens to let in new prey.
• Huge **tongue** bristling with blade-like teeth. Strikes anything that is not actively moving towards 2.
- Hits automatically for 1d8 damage (save vs breath for half damage).
- AC 4 [15], 15 hp. At 0 hp, the tongue retracts and disappears to reappear, fully regenerated, 2d6 rounds later.
- In its absence: 2-in-6 chance to retrieve a tooth from the ground which, properly crafted, would produce the blade of a weapon +2.
• On the ceiling, a **flap** opens and closes regularly: entrance to the corridor leading to the lung. Each character takes 1d3 rounds to escape through this exit.

2 - CROP

• The **walls contract** to crush food: 1d4 automatic damage per round. Half damage to characters wearing platemail.
• Projection of a **sticky substance** through orifices on the walls every 6 rounds: save vs breath or be glued in place for 1d4 rounds.
• A **shield** bearing the Uhart family symbol (four red stars upon an azure stream) half sunk in the ground. A Strength check is needed to extract it (taking 1d4 rounds). It is a magic shield +2 that deflects a spell once per day.

3 - STOMACH

• **Shower** of acidic saliva at the start of every turn.
• An **acid lake** is bubbling at the bottom of this large room. A narrow border allows one person to go around it in 2d4 rounds. Characters without the climbing skill have a 1-in-10 chance of falling (1-in-6 if wearing heavy armour or encumbered). Immediate, merciful death welcomes anyone who falls into the lake. Any item dropped is also lost within a few seconds.
• A **small island** in the middle of the lake (10' from the edge). A sitting **skeleton** in plate armour (+2, beautifully inlaid with gold) leaning on a two-handed sword stuck in the ground (+2, constantly producing light as per the spell, bearing the motto of House Uhart on the hilt: Impavidus!)



CARCOLH!

• Necrotised **shelter**: damaged part of the stomach (possibly the result of an area spell). No acid rain here. Can shelter 4 people. A dying **piot chant** (1hp, unconscious) (see p46), who came here to collect the liver substance to heal a member of his trio.

4 - LUNG

• One can find some crevices to shelter from the violent winds running through the place and rest. In one of them is the skeleton of a **dwarf**. She still wears a red rhodium ring engraved with a dragon's head (fireball once per day).
• 1-in-6 every hour: an **air elemental** (lesser) appears and attempts to drive out intruders immediately.
• Due to the regular influx of **carbon dioxide**, saving throws against stale air are made at -4.
• A **regular beating** can be heard on the ceiling: on the other side of the wall is the heart of the beast.
- Each blow inflicted here (AC 0 [19]) causes double damage directly to Lou Carcolh.
- Each 10 damage inflicted causes:
1-3: a violent cough that throws any creature inside the lung into 1 (Strength check to resist)
4-6: increased carbon dioxide production for the next 10 rounds. Save vs death each round or die if without breathing apparatus or spell.

5 - LIVER:

• An oily, **viscous substance** oozes from the walls and flows into the intestines, making the place extremely slippery.
- It takes 1d6 rounds to fill a vial with this material (equivalent to a potion of cure disease). A Dexterity check is needed every round to avoid slipping and spilling the contents of the vial.
• Every 10 rounds: a **tidal wave** of an oily substance ejects all intruders towards the intestines (6). Save vs breath to resist.

6 - Intestines:

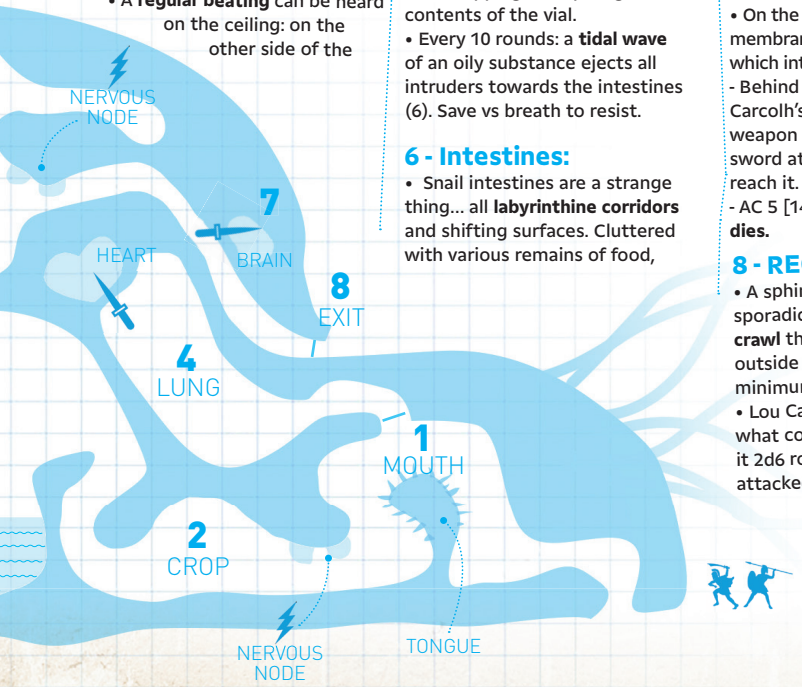
• Snail intestines are a strange thing... all **labyrinthine corridors** and shifting surfaces. Cluttered with various remains of food, bones of all sizes, and other indigestible materials.
• **Encounter every** turn on 1-in-6:
1-2-. Gas! Cloudkill for 1d6 rounds in this section.
3. Telepathic link with Lou Carcolh for a few seconds: a mind expanding experience.
4. 1d10 animalcules escape from the walls to feed off the party's blood (as stirges).
5. 1d3 monstrous microbiota (as gibbering mouthers) devouring the remains of a horse.
6. 3 gnomes in acid-proof diving suits removing undigested objects from the walls (their bag contains 1,347gp in gems and trinkets).
• **Trap:** 2-in-6 chance of a sphincter opening. Fall 18' below, taking 2d6 damage, to end up on the island in room 3.

7 - BRAIN

• On the ceiling: a gelatinous membrane 2' in diameter through which intermittent sparks can be seen.
- Behind this membrane is Lou Carcolh's brain. A long and sharp weapon (spear, polearm, two-handed sword at a push...) is needed to reach it.
- AC 5 [14], 20hp. At 0 hp, **the beast dies.**

8 - RECTUM/EXIT

• A sphincter opens and closes sporadically, allowing one person to **crawl** through. Entering from the outside requires colossal strength (21 minimum).
• Lou Carcolh doesn't usually care what comes out of his gut! It will take it 2d6 rounds to react unless directly attacked.



▸ From **Eastern European Jewish folklore**
◇ by Nicolas Dessaux
◆ *Pronounce DEE-buck*

Dybbuk

An undead spirit possessing dead bodies to mingle with mortals and further its devious plots.

It was a morning after Shabbat when I first met Bathsheba. Autumn was already well onto the road of winter in our northern lands. The diligence had left her on the side of the road, alone with her large trunk. Her silhouette was so small in her black dress, next to that heavy wooden box, you understand I had to help. I still hear my shy voice offering to drag her luggage. Obviously, it was an odd proposal. I am nothing of a strong man, and my clothes could tell anyone I was a poor yeshiva student.

She had a strange expression and I blushed – but it was too late. The way to the house she called home felt like an eternity because, while I enjoyed her quiet company, I had to stop every few yards to catch my breath. I can't say she cared a lot about my pain, but I liked looking at her porcelain face under her black hat, and a few times along the way she had a smile I couldn't understand. She told me, as it it were an excuse, she was in town to see her brother. The sound of her voice gave me butterflies and I couldn't answer her at all.

Every shutter of the house was closed, and I couldn't remember ever seeing them otherwise; but she had a key around her neck. I was a bit annoyed she didn't touch the mezuzah, but maybe she feared it was old, half-erased? It would have been rude to come in, so I politely pushed the trunk across the doorway and I took my leave without waiting for her thanks.

Some people in the shtetl had seen me with the box girl – and they made fun of me, making me blush redder than I did when I was with her. I just told my friends what I knew: she came to see her brother. I saw they were a bit suspicious. I remember an enigmatic sentence from the rabbi. Without raising an eye from the Book, he said: "I remember her brother. He was a righteous man before..." I would have loved to know more, but the sentence remained forever unfinished.

So, one morning, I gathered the courage to go back to her house. I was a bit puzzled by the fact she hadn't opened any of the shutters, but I didn't mind. I knocked at the door; she appeared quickly, ready to go for a walk. It was such a strange thing for me, walking arm in arm with a city lady. She wasn't talkative, but very polite. As I didn't know how I should behave, I just told her who owns which of the shops we passed by, and commented on the street names, like I was an improvised guide.

At times, she was listening very quietly: her eyes wide open, looking around her like someone searching for the exit of a crowded room. At other times, she was moving her head quickly, and the expression I'd seen the first day came back on her pale, beautiful face. She asked few questions, but they were always very specific, as if she already knew the town.

As we were saying goodbye, back at her house, I found the strength to ask, probably in a funny voice: "How's your brother?" With that face she made, she answered quietly: "Oh, he's still dead, you know." How could I understand? Don't imagine I was completely naive, despite my youth and shyness. I knew there was something wrong. I also knew how strongly attractive this wrongness was.

What saved me? Maybe the "before", in the rabbi's sentence. Since then, I faced many dangers and went on perilous adventures, but the dybbuk is the most dangerous demon I ever faced. ◇

DYBBUK

The dybbuk is a possession spirit. It doesn't have its own shape, but magical means could reveal a grey aura around the dead body it inhabits. However, the victim shows a small bloody hole on one toe, and its features are more and more twisted as the possession goes on.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 1* (4 hp), **Att** 1 x weapon (1d4), **THAC0** 19 [0], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 11, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 16 **NA** 1d4, **TT** L (sometimes O)

◆ **POSSESSION**
When alone in the dark with a living person, the dybbuk can possess them if they fail a saving throw vs death. During the day, the victim's personality becomes twisted and cruel, and their alignment becomes Lawful, but they are still in control of their body. At night, the dybbuk can use the body as they want until dawn. Meanwhile, the corpse the dybbuk was using returns to immobility and decay.

◆ **EXORCISM**
Killing the possessed body expels the sybbuk for only one night; the corpse can't be raised by any means. When a group of ten persons knows a prayer against the dybbuk, they can repel it for one year. The only way to permanently get rid of a dybbuk is by publicly forgiving its faults and crimes.

THE DYBBUK POSSESSES THE CORPSE OF A:

1. Sagacious bearded priest **2.** Cynical midwife **3.** Pious student in theology **4.** Young and mysterious widow **5.** Never-smiling smuggler **6.** Dishonoured maid **7.** Sunken-eyed ritual butcher **8.** Hypnotic opera dancer **9.** Disapointing taylor **10.** Not-so naive bride **11.** Pathetic drunken violin player **12.** Hairbuned, grumpy schoolteacher

GOAL

1. Fulfill a familial vengeance **2.** Escape another dybbuk **3.** Protect a forgotten place **4.** Trying new corpses **5.** Find components for an alchemical achievement **6.** Find another dybbuk, and their lover.

HOOKS

- After visiting the grave of his parents, a young prince suddenly changes. Diplomacy, politics, wedding plans... His advisors suspect a secret lover or a strange illness. Disguised as new servants, the characters are hired to discreetly solve the problem.
- Old Elen, the kind village wizard, has suddenly decided to take over the region! She is forcing the villagers of Zolipie to dig up graves and bring her the bones of their ancestors. What nefarious spell is she preparing?
- Bathsheba the box girl has been "living" in her brother's boarded up house for decades now. The town folk are convinced she's a witch, but they're too afraid to do anything. And she's always so nice and polite!
- A dybbuk possesses one of the party's friends just long enough to beg them for help. Its body was found as it was possessing someone (committing who knows what crime) and now it has been buried in consecrated ground. If freed, it swears it'll serve the characters for a year and a day.

▸ From the **Basque Country** ◇ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce pat-SHE*

Bad Patxi

Bad Patxi is a master blacksmith living a solitary life in the hills not far from Bilbao. His reputation is so terrifying that even the Devil threads carefully when walking by Patxi's house.

It is said that many years ago there lived in the Basque country, not far from Merry Mushmen headquarters and a few hills over from Bilbao, a blacksmith named Patxi Errementaria. He was known to lead a life full of vice and sin but as Patxi was the best blacksmith in the region, the king´s men were ordered to leave him alone. His dreadful reputation had even reached Hell, where demons had been fighting over who would get his soul . The winner showed up one day at Patxi´s house to take him with him to hell. The blacksmith first politely invited the demon to sit at the table and have lunch to build strength before their long journey. The demon gladly obliged, especially since Patxi was also known as a good cook. But when he finished eating and tried to get up, he discovered that Patxi had smeared his seat with sticky resin. The demon spent the next seven years there, tortured and humiliated by the blacksmith in many ways every day.

A second demon eventually descended upon Patxi´s home. The blacksmith first invited him to rest from the journey before setting off again, offering him a very comfortable bed with a first-class feather duvet. The demon was only too happy to take a nap, but discovered when he woke up that the mattress had also been covered with resin and that he, too, could not move...

Another seven years later, a third and final demon came to Patxi´s house. The blacksmith pretended to have accepted his fate, but just before they left he suggested that the demon climb the fig tree in the garden to get some juicy figs to eat on the way. The figs were magnificent and the demon was happy to comply. But this mag-ical fig tree was the very tree from which Patxi got the resin. As soon as the demon had caught the first branch, he too found himself stuck and trapped! During the years that followed, the children who passed by on the road threw stones at him every morning as they left for school, and every evening as they returned.

Patxi finally died of old age. Death came for him and took him straight to Hell. But the demons were now afraid and wanted nothing more to do with him, so they closed the gates of hell just before he arrived. He was finally brought to Heaven, but Saint Peter flatly refused to let him in. Out of shear weariness, Death brought Patxi back to his house and forgot about him. If one day in the hills you hear a hammer striking an anvil, beware of the blacksmith! And do not ever accept an invitation from Bad Patxi! ◇

BAD PATXI

Human blacksmith. Patxi hates everyone and everything but his forge, his hammer, and his fig tree. Bad Patxi is a truly evil person, but fortunately for all of us, he has no interest in the affairs of this world. He lives for his work, ever striving to perfect his techniques, craving the admiration and recognition it brings. To be allowed to live at the fringes of civilisation, he has no choice but to behave more or less properly..

AC 4 [15] (leather apron +2, ring of protection +1), **HD** 8** (36 hp), **Att** 1 x weapon (1d8 + 3) or 2 x fists (1d4 + 3), or resin toss ,**THAC0** 12 [+7], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B11 S12, **ML** 11, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 1 750, **NA** unique, **TT** See below

- **BEAR HUG**
  If a victim is hit by both fist attacks in the same round, Patxi hugs for an extra 2d8+3 automatic damage.
- **ILL WILL AURA**
  When seeing Patxi, a character must save vs spells or suffer the effects of the *cause fear* spell. Once the save is successful, the character is immune.
- **MALEVOLENT CHARM**
  As the *charm person* spell, once per day.
- **REGENERATION**
  As long as Patxi is within 300 feet of his forge, he regenerates 1hp per round.
- **FIRE IMMUNITY**
  Immune to mundane fire. Magical fire causes half damage.
- **RESIN TOSS**
  Patxi reaches into the pot he carries on his belt and hurls a glob of resin at a target within 30'. If the attack hits, the target always acts last in the round, their attack suffers a -4 modifier and their speed is halved.

BAD PATXI'S BELOVED HAMMER

MAIULA, gift of the wicked dwarves.

The handle is made of the finger bone of the first dragon, Erensuge, the head is a moonstone.

Magic hammer, +1, +3 vs Lawful creatures.
- *Cause disease, Curse* (1/day)
- Any person grasping the hammer must save versus death or change their alignment to Chaotic.

A MAGIC TREE

Patxi has a fig tree in his garden, which bears mouth watering, gorgeous looking fruit all year round. The tree also produces a magical resin.

➢ **Universal glue:** sticks anything to anything forever. Patxi sells it in tiny jars (3 doses) for a small fortune. When you say a command word (unique to each jar), the glue loses its properties and glued items are freed.

➢ **The tree itself is a trap.** One must save vs spells to resist eating upon seeing a fig for the first time, and save vs paralysis to avoid getting stuck to the tree when picking fruit. Stuck pilferers must wait until Patxi comes to release them (and most of them are never seen again).

➢ **The first time you eat a fig, roll 1d6**. *1-2:* Yum! Gain 1d6 x 100 XP. *3-4:* Yum! It's the best fruit ever. *5-6:* Yum! Lose 1d6 Constitution, and save vs death or die in agony.

BAD PATXI'S TREASURE

In a cache under the main furnace of his underground workshop (see opposite) lies Patxi's hoard, along with his masterpiece: the sentient sword Aidegatxo.

➢ 10,000gp in gold and silver ingots in a **trapped heavy chest** (6d6 electrical damage) which calls for help if it is not opened with the key Patxi wears around his neck.

➢ **Three bronze jars** set with rubies (500gp each). The first jar contains 5,225gp in gems of various sizes, the second jar 6,553gp in ancient coins, the third jar contains a trapped **fire elemental** (lesser) that attacks when the jar is opened.

➢ **AIDEGATXO** (sentient sword):
Triple-curved blade made of alien metal, finely engraved with scenes of storms on the mountains. Its handle is of titan bone, inlaid with gold and silver thread. It has a lightning shaped iridium guard and a pommel made from a piece of meteorite. It is kept in a long case of ebony and manticore leather.

- **Sword +2. INT 12, Ego 8, Speech** (Common), **AL Chaotic.**
  - Personality: sarcastic, intrusive, and passive aggressive.
  - +1d6 electrical damage.
  - Detect metal, detect gems.
  - Lighting bolt (as the 3rd level spell, 3/day).
  - Lawful creatures holding the sword take 2d6 electrical damage per round.

PATXI'S HOUSE

ON TOP OF A SMALL ROUND HILL.

Compact house of black stone (iron locked door, two loopholes for windows), in the shadow of the magic fig tree (in which is glued a depressed minor demon — shouts abuse), in the middle of a pretty garden(2 kratts - see p.90 - working in the vegetable garden) surrounded by a dry stone wall with a metal gate and a magic mouth which says, "*Run, you fools!*".

1. Spartan **main room**. On a chair: glued minor demon (almost dead, speaks incoherently).
2. Monastic **guest room**. In the bed: glued minor demon (having nightmares).
3. Iron door (actually a mimic. Asks for fresh figs to grant passage). Stifling heat emanating from a **well** (with a hundred rungs) leads to 4, 300' deeper.
4. From this point on, the heat makes metal armour uncomfortable (disadvantage to all rolls).
5. **Iron gate** (closed by a heavy chain). Opens onto a series of corridors and dangerous caves (leads out into the mountains two miles away).
6. Cluttered **storeroom** (tiny jars of glue and cans of fig preserve on the shelves, piles of iron ingots and various tools).
7. **Cell** (Locked door in the bars. A starving dwarf and two frightened mute children.) **Hellhound** on watch.
8. Huge **steel door** (carved with grimacing figures and deadly glyphs). Bell and peephole. Leads to the kingdom of the evil duergar.
9. Vertiginous **iron footbridge** (over a river of lava, 150' down). A duergar (has the key to the cells) with two hellhounds, whips a dwarf (carrying a basket of iron ingots across the bridge).
10. **Magnificent forge**. On a parapet (overlooking a lake of lava 150' down.) Bucket wheel (made of an unknown metal) powered by three chained children (watched by a duergar) pours lava into the main furnace.

Bad Patxi is here (sweating and banging on his anvil as 1d6 magminps are gawking in amazement).
Under the lava of the furnace and a heavy stone slab: Patxi's treasure **hoard**.

MAGMIMPS. Small (2') unpleasant winged creature made of magma

AC 6 [13], HD 2* (9 hp), **ATT** 1 x claw (1d4 + 2) or spit, **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 60' (20') / 90' (30') flying , **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 6, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 25, **NA** 1D6, **TT** -

Spit (3/day): blob of lava, 1d6 damage, range 9'.
Regeneration: recovers 2 hp per round by dipping into lava.

MINOR DEMON. Perverse, sadistic and quarrelsome, these are the bottom of the barrel of the demonic hordes and generally serve as messengers, scouts, or cannon fodder. They are sensitive to the same temptations that they like to provoke in humans (gluttony, sloth, envy, etc.), and can be rather easily tricked by clever opponents.

AC 6 [13], HD 3* (13 hp), **ATT** 1 x claw (1d6 + drain) or spit, **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 6, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 50, **NA** 1D6, **TT** -

Drain: save vs spells or lose 1 point of Wisdom. One lost point can be recovered after a full day's rest.
Teleport (2/day): as the 5th level magic-user spell.

HOOKS

- After a TPK, the Devil hires the dead characters to investigate the disappearance of three of his demons. They have six days, six hours, and six minutes to find the demons and bring them back to the safety of their native firepits. When this is done, the characters can return to the world of the living... until their next death.
- Two characters are unfortunately glued together and Patxi alone knows the word of power that would unstick them. He will give it to them if they first complete three tasks...
- A messenger angel falls to earth in a ball of heavenly heat, starting a small forest fire. They track the characters to beg for their help. Archangel Michael has heard of Patxi's miraculous workmanship and demands a new spear to slay dragons and explore dungeons with. Of course, no reputable soldier of God's army would deal with such a sinner, so the characters are tasked with convincing Bad Patxi to work for the right side, for once. In exchange, everyone involved will see their worst crime pardoned by Heaven.
- The fig tree is dying and Patxi can't stop crying. He has given up on his work. The town council of Bilbao asks the adventurers to find a solution, as the area will not be able to do without Bad Patxi's production for much longer.

▸ From **Suffolk, England** ◇ by James Holloway

The Green Children of Woolpit

From a world far away came the green children. Who knows when more will follow them?

They call the village "wolf pit," though there's no wolves there now. Haven't been any in a long time. But the pits are like the ones they used to use to trap wolves, right enough – great straight sides, and hard to come out of. Though that doesn't mean no one ever comes out of `em.

It was in King Stephen's time they were found. Two little ones, climbing out of the pit, a boy and a girl. She was a bit older than him, maybe. Hard to say. They didn't speak any English, just babbled nonsense, though it seemed they could understand each other. And they were green. Green as leaves in spring, from their skin to their eyes to their hair.

Folk took them to the big house, and brought them food, but they wouldn't eat it, though they were so hungry, the poor things, and wept so piteously. Until they were bringing in the beans, to hull them, you know, and they recognised them, begged for them, though not with words, all gesturing and pointing to their mouths and bellies. But when they got `em, what do you think? They opened up the stalks, not the pods, and when they couldn't find beans in there, how they wept again. But the cook, being a kind woman and clever, opened up the pods and took the beans out, and they ate them right up, raw. And it was weeks they ate nothing but beans until she could finally persuade `em that bread would do `em no harm.

And as they learned to eat our food, the green colour went out of `em, and they turned as pink as you or me. But the lad, he caught something, sickened, and he died. His sister, for so she turned out to be, she took a place working for Sir Richard, though I don't know that she ever took to it exactly. In the end she married a fellow from Lynn, and as far as I know her people live there still.

But she used to tell all kinds of stories about the place she came from. A place where the sun never shone but the night never fell, a place that was always twilight, and a river beyond, and a shining land beyond that. A place where if you listen you can hear the church bells ring in the world above. ◇

GREEN CHILDREN

The Green Children (or less-green adults) are normal humans with a few small differences. Only their unique colouration marks them out as different from those around them, and this gradually fades as they become acclimatised to the world that is now their home.

AC 9 [10], **HD** 1 (4hp), **Att** 1 × weapon (by weapon), **THAC0** 19[0], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D13 W14 P13 B16 S15, **ML** 7, **AL** any, **XP** 16, **NA** 1d4 (1d4), **TT** any

◆ **EXTRATERRESTRIAL BIOLOGY**
Unable to digest most earthly food except for legumes such as peas and beans. Each month that the green person is exposed to human food and drink, roll a save vs poison. On a successful save, the person can now digest a new food group. Each new food group diminishes the green tinge as the body digests earthly nutrients.

◆ **PROTECTIVE COLORATION**
Green skin and hair makes it easier to hide in bushes or undergrowth.

◆ **MAGICAL POTENTIAL**
Green children are capable of learning magic, although they have no magical tradition and must be taught it.

SAINT MARTIN'S LAND

The Green Children claimed to come from a place they called Saint Martin's Land. To hear them tell it, this place was cold and dimly lit, so much so that they were pained by the light and heat of eastern England, a region known for neither. Saint Martin's Land is (d6):

1. A region of the underworld, inhabited by the spirits of the dead who are not quite good enough to reach the shining city beyond the river. They are not supposed to be able to return to the world of the living, and they're definitely not supposed to have children with living humans. Every descendant of the young woman is an error that Hell will have to answer for.

2. The land of Faerie, which has always been close to the countryside. The fair folk avoid big cities because of their famous vulnerability to the sound of church bells. But now that the countryside wears a white robe of churches, and all of which have bells, the young people of faerie are being lured into the world above by the hypnotic sound.

3. A tale made up by a pair of shapeshifting spirits whose colour vision is different from that of humans and who therefore accidentally made themselves green without realising it. "Everyone in our country is green! Yeah... that's it!"

4. A country near the arctic circle, somehow connected to this one by a magical cavern that warps space and time. The magical cavern only connects to the wolf pit at certain times; both the portal on this end and the one in Saint Martin's Land sometimes open into other places.

5. A network of underground caves inhabited by the descendants of a heretical sect long ago driven into hiding by authorities loyal to reformist, centralising kings. The green girl spoke truly when she said her people were Christian, but local Christian authorities might not see it that way if they found out what her folk believe.

6. A colonised planet in the far future, lit by the dim light of an alien sun. The green children are genetically modified to produce most of their own food via photosynthesis. The reality-warp to medieval England (or your own setting) is an unanticipated side-effect of the technology used to transport colonists from a dying Earth to their new home. Perhaps they may decide that Earth's past is a better place to live than their dim, frigid outpost.

LEGACIES OF SAINT MARTIN'S LAND

Feasting cup: although the folk of Saint Martin's Land do not eat the same food as those of Earth, they still enjoy feasting. At times or places when a portal opens, passersby hear the sounds of laughter and music; following them, they find a brightly-lit feasting hall filled with green people enjoying a green meal and drinking green wine. The wine is lovely – maybe a bit tannic – but those who drink it must save vs spells or feel a sense of homesickness for Saint Martin's Land, even if they have never been there.

A farmer, on his way home from the fields, heard one of these feasts and went to see what the commotion was. The revellers offered him a drink, but instead of drinking from the gold goblet, he simply grabbed it and ran home. He evaded pursuit, made it to his home and eventually sold the beautiful cup, making a tidy sum of money. But now the cursed goblet has made its way to the royal court, inflicting all those who drink from it with a longing to reach Saint Martin's Land. If anyone can find a way to the realm, the king will reward them richly.

Stone hounds: there are flint mines not far from the wolf pit. Sometimes, when the miners crack open a particularly large nodule, there's an animal inside. Usually it's something small, like a toad. The biggest animals found inside these rocks are hounds.

Stone hounds are perfectly normal dogs, although they're a little funny-looking, with wrinkly skin and patchy hair. They smell unpleasant, although this gradually fades the more time they spend in the mortal world, eating mortal food. They have an uncanny ability to sniff out gateways to other realms, whether to Saint Martin's Land itself, the land of faerie, the land of the dead, or elsewhere: a character accompanied by a stone hound has a 4-in-6 chance of detecting such a portal. However, the hound's unpleasant odour can make the character easier to detect for creatures that hunt by scent.

ALIEN ANCESTRY?

One of the mysterious visitors to woolpit learned to eat human food, lost her green colour, learned English and gradually assimilated. She worked for a few years as a servant before marrying a man from the nearby town of Bishop's Lynn. Her descendants are alive today. Maybe you're one of them. Signs you might have some green-person in you:

1. A greenish tinge to hair and eyebrows, most notable in dim or flickering light.
2. You know nursery rhymes and lullabies, nonsense words your mother sang you, passed down from her mother and grandmother. Snippets of an otherworldly language.
3. Red meat tastes like paper to you; you can't see why everyone seems to like it so much.
4. The sound of church and temple bells lulls you into daydream: save vs spells or be gently enchanted for 1d6 rounds (or until someone snaps you out of it).
5. Your teeth came in early and you never lost your first set. Such lovely teeth, so even and bright.
6. Your middle and ring fingers are exactly the same length. This has no mechanical effect, but it's hard to find a pair of gloves that fit.
7. Dark-adapted eyes. You possess a limited form of infravision with a range of 30 feet. Beyond that, the images are too faint to be useful. You suffer a -1 penalty to hit in bright light (such as the noon sun or a similar intense glare).
8. There are gaps in the world, holes in its structure. Most people don't notice them, but when you're around them you feel a tingle, a sort of queasy silence. 2-in-6 chance of detecting magical portals or magically-concealed doors.
9. You can survive by eating something not normally edible by humans. Roll 1d6: **1** paper, **2** leather, **3** spoiled food, **4** fur, hair, and fingernails, **5** cloth, **6** bark.
10. Fiery temper. You are a little more rebellious and hot-tempered than the average human: +1 to save vs charm person.

HOOKS

- An old couple find a lost child wandering in the woods and decide to look after the poor thing. Something reminds you of that old story your grandmother told you, though. Is that child a little ... greenish?
- Time in the Realm of Faerie runs differently than in the mortal plane, so when an outraged band of faerie nobles crashes out of the wolf pit demanding to know where their niece and nephew are, no one is quite sure at first what they mean. Would hearing the story placate them? Or perhaps meeting their distant relatives?
- Two green children appear in a nearby village. Why, it's just like the old folk tale. How curious! Then an identical report comes in from another town. And another. And another.
- The green girl, now a normal adult, is living peacefully with her new husband when the authorities arrive. They have heard the story of the children and have decided they must be some kind of spies. Will the party turn her in, protect her, or try to get her past the patrols to the wolf pit that might lead to her long-lost home?

▸ From **Lorraine, France** ◇ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce Pee-AWT-chant*

Piot Chant

Peaceful faeries who live underground, the piot chants only meddle with the affairs of the mortals whose crops take over the woods. A curse makes them dangerous when the moon is dark.

Long before the arrival of men who disfigured the land with their axes and their ploughs and their wheat, the faeries, imps, and sylvan elves lived in harmony with the holy trees, the magical mounds, and the sentient streams. When faced with these intruders, some chose to simply disappear, some adapted and mingled with us mortals, and others decided to resist. The piot chants are part of the latter group. With their meagre means, they try to retake their land from civilization.

Not long ago, near the village of Niderhoff, there was a small inn in a forest where travellers from the mountains stopped on their way to Nancy or Saarbrücken. Its owner was named Fritz, and he was also a master gardener. He was proud to serve his flavourful cabbage stews, vegetable kebabs, pumpkin soups, and marrow squash gratins. But Fritz began to worry as his vegetables withered, failed to grow, or even simply disappeared during otherwise bountiful seasons. As a good, hard-working Christian, this predicament has been beyond him.

One night, he decided to hide in the tool shed at the entrance to his garden – a well-kept acre of land stretching behind the inn and up to the edge of the forest. Around midnight, he was startled awake by a series of fleeting whistles and an exchange of whispers. He glanced outside and, right in front of him, a whole row of carrots was sucked into the ground! To his left, his turnips were being thrown in the air and into the bushes! To his right, a currant bush was shaking, its fruit falling to the ground! Fritz crossed himself three times and spat over his shoulder to ward off evil. Then, on the other side of the garden, he saw three piot chants emerging from the ground: foot-tall skinny little imps, with human faces except for a long snout ending in two long incisors. They wore armour made of insect shells: oil beetle heads for helmets and coleopteran claws for spears and swords. One of them grabbed a flute from his belt and played three long chords: immediately a swarm of field mice rushed out of the forest to gnaw on Fritz's pumpkins. The second piot chant called a sea of slugs and caterpillars to attack the rows of cabbages. And the third? Fritz was shocked to watch him piss on his lettuces. His blood brought to a boil by such vandalism, he grabbed a pitchfork and rushed at the imps.

He just about skewered the first one, but it jumped into a hole and disappeared. He ran after the second one, but the piot chant ran off into the forest. Finally, he caught the third one, which was still buttoning

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his trousers and hadn't noticed anything. Fritz lifted it off the ground, but the piot chant, unimpressed said in a high pitched voice: *"Go back to bed, big man, and let me do my work!"* Instead, Fritz tried to strangle the imp, but it blew in his face before he ran out of breath. It was such a cold, stinging breath that Fritz let the piot chant go, howling in pain and holding his nose. The imp spat in his direction, flashed his buttocks at him, and before leaving, declaimed:

"Under the dark moon, come back I will,
Under the dark moon, finish I will!".

His nose still stinging awfully, Fritz went back inside to consult his calendar: the next new moon was three nights away. Luckily, a lansquenet named Otton was staying at the inn. He was a veteran who had fought as a mercenary in many wars in and around the Holy Empire. Fritz offered to let Otton stay, eat and drink for free for a month in exchange for his help. And when the new moon rose that night, Fritz and Otton were ready and waiting in the middle of the garden, watching the darkness grow around them. At about midnight, they were suddenly surrounded by noises. And it was not one, not two, not even three piot chants who appeared all around them, it was fifty, armed to the teeth, their insect armour gleaming, their furious eyes as red as the moon was dark. Otton show his crossbow, killing two piot chants. The faeries charged, and for a while he kept them away with his halberd. But he was soon outnumbered, the imps clinging to his heels and climbing on his back, and he fled into the forest. It is said that his screams resounded all night long and that the next day his dismembered and partially eaten remains were found all around Niderhoff.

As for Fritz, armed with a sickle and a wooden shield, he was now surrounded by piot chants, silently staring at him with their crimson eyes. One of them stepped forward, spoke a few words, and Fritz found himself paralysed. Another blew a cheerful tune into his flute and all the ants, spiders, and beetles in the garden crawled towards Fritz. It took them til the early hours of the morning to finish eating him. Since that dreadful morning, the inn has fallen into ruin and Fritz's vegetable garden has returned to the forest. ◇

PIOT CHANT

Nocturnal 1-2' tall imps, looking like scrawny humans except for a long snout and two mole-like incisors. They use insect claws and shells to make weapons and armour. Piot chants live in gallery networks they dig under pastoral lands, linking their communities together. They prey on crops that encroach on the forest, but try to not confront mortals directly, except when a vendetta is declared (see sidebar).

AC 3 [16] **HD** ½* (2hp), or 1 (4hp) under a dark moon,
Att 1 x insect pincer (1d4+1) or icy breath,
THAC0 19 [0], or 17 [+2] under a dark moon
MV 120' (40'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B13 S12,
ML 7, or 12 under a dark moon,
AL Neutral, or Chaotic under a dark moon,
XP 6, or 13 under a dark moon,
NA 1d3 x 3 (1d30), or 1d3 x 30 under a dark moon, **TT** S

◆ **ICY BREATH**
Once per day, a piot chant blows at an enemy in melee range, causing 1d6+1 damage. The target must save vs breath or drop everything and spend the next 1d4 rounds rubbing the affected area (usually their face).

◆ **PACK OF THREE**
The Piot chants are trained to work as a trio in all their activities. If they can stay together in combat, you can roll a single attack per group of three: roll two dice to attack and keep the best result, and double the damage.

◆ **LEADER**
In each trio of piot chants encountered, one is a leader with one of the following abilities, once per day (d4):
1- *hold Person*; 2- *bight* (reversed *bless*); 3- *cause fear*; 4- *curse*.

◆ **ENCHANTED FLUTE**
For each trio of piot chants encountered, one has an enchanted flute which, once a day, can summon 1d3 insect swarms, or 5d10 rats, or 1d2 crab spiders. The summoned monsters obey the flute player and disappear when the music stops.

◆ **CURSE OF THE DARK MOON**
Under a dark moon, piot chants become bloodthirsty killers. As they consider this as a shameful curse, piot chants tend to stay underground on those nights, apart from a few very exceptional occasions.

PIOT CHANT VENDETTA

If a character is unlucky enough to badly harm a piot chant, the vengeful imps will pursue them relentlessly across the world, following and spying on them from their vast network of galleries. Any time the character is around crops or fields during a dark moon night, there is a 2-in-6 chance that 3d6+3 bloodthirsty piot chants attack them. The only safe way to end this vendetta is to perform a great deed in the service of a faerie monarch, who will be able to intercede on the character's behalf.

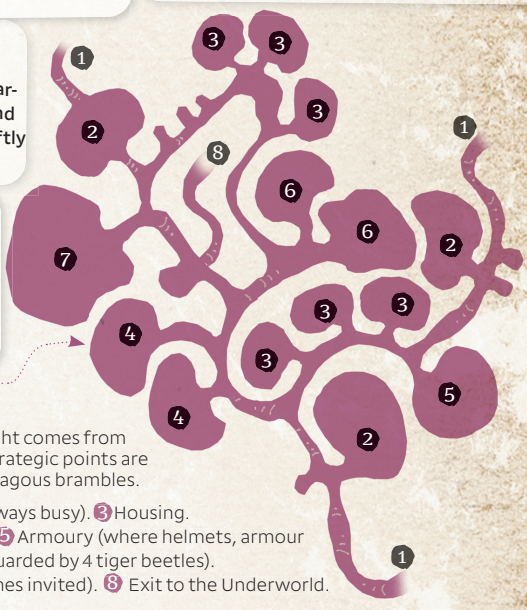
MORE PIOT CHANT FACTS

➢ On each winter solstice, the ambassadors of the wild elves of the Secret Undergrowth visit the nests of the piot chants in great ceremony. They give them seeds, the origin of which only they know. Planted in a layer of humus and fungus in the most protected rooms of the Piot chants' nests, each seed produces a phosphorescent bulbous plant in a few hours. From this, seven weeks later, a fully matured grown piot chant emerges, ready to join piot chant society.

➢ Piot chants rarely live longer than three years. When they feel their death is close, a piot chant lies down on the soft floor of the nursery, and intones a farewell song (a harmonious mixture of insect trilling, diphonic throat singing, and wind-in-the-leaves noises). Within a few hours of the song softly concluding, the piot chant sinks into the earth.

➢ The piot chants live in harmony with giant beetles. Tiger beetles guard their nurseries and escort their travels. Fire beetles are the pets and drudges of the piot chants and form long convoys during the great underworld migrations. Meeting a procession of piot chants on their way from one nest to another is a rare and grandiose sight.

➢ After recalcitrant gardeners, the worst enemies of the piot chant are giant weasels and rats who feast on the bulbs in their nurseries. Giant moles, on the other hand, are often valuable allies, helping them plan and build their habitats and inter-nest galleries.



A TYPICAL PIOT CHANT NEST

Corridors are generally 5' high, rooms a bit more. The only light comes from the wandering fire beetles. The entrances and most of the strategic points are trapped with poisoned stakes, animated roots, or antropophagous brambles.

❶ Exits to the world above. ❷ Guards and training rooms (always busy). ❸ Housing. ❹ Stores (mostly honey , wildberry nectar, and insect eggs). ❺ Armoury (where helmets, armour and blades are made by old piot chants). ❻ Nurseries (each guarded by 4 tiger beetles). ❼ Ceremonial hall (where the druids from above are sometimes invited). ❽ Exit to the Underworld.

HOOKS

➢ Characters have mortally wounded a piot chant and their vengeance has now pursued the party for too long... It so happens they have also learned Zaratazarat the Mage keeps three piot chants in his menagerie. Freeing them might allow the characters to negotiate.

➢ As the party camp by a ruined inn at the junction of two forest roads, not far from the village of Niderhoff, a ghost emerges from the mist. His name is Fritz and he was the owner of the place. He promises to reveal where he used to keep his gold if he is allowed to finally rest in peace. For this to happen, three piot chants must be nailed alive to the top of the crossroads signpost.

➢ Hildja Gargleheim, the dwarf craftswoman who makes the piot chants' flutes, has come down with a strange fever and somehow, this is affecting all the instruments she ever made. Piot chants are now summoning moutain lions, bears, and vultures that not only won't obey, but try to eat them! The characters are tasked to either cure Hildja or fix the flutes. Will they discover that the fever is actually a curse the King of kabbouters (see p. 14) who wanted to play a trick on his cousin the President of Piotchandom?

➢ For the first time in centuries, a brightblood moon is upon the land. The local witches and wisefolk are expecting a blood bath and possibly another cataclysmic war between mortals and faeries. Only the bravest of adventurers would step through the moonbeam portal to seek a way to prevent the brightblood moon, from the surface of the moon itself!

▸ From Brazil ◇ by Diogo Nogueira
◆ *Pronounce booy-tah-TAH*

Boitatà

A giant, sentient serpent on whose scales the history of the world is carved. It's legend was originally told by the Tupi-Guarani, a large tribe of indigenous people from Brazil.

It was one of the darkest nights the explorer had ever seen. If his people hadn't needed the secrets he was seeking so urgently, he would surely have postponed his search. He was looking for the boitatá. The mythical snake from the beginning of time, who guarded many secrets.

As the explorer approached the giant cavern where the boitatá was rumoured to dwell, he started feeling abject fear overcoming his mind. He'd heard many stories of those who came to the boitatá in search of knowledge and ended up becoming one of the creature's many meals. Carefully, he walked into the cave, holding in his hands the gifts his people had prepared for the ancient being. The tunnel was dark, but he could see some glimmer of light further ahead.

But the young man tripped and dropped one of the trinkets he was carrying. The clinking sound echoed down the passage and suddenly the light at the back of the cave turned into two balls of fire. As these flaming spheres grew in the darkness, he saw they were eyes. Flaming eyes, coming closer. The eyes of a giant serpent.

"*Whoooo arez youzzsss? Whatszz dozz youzz ssseeekzzz?*" The creature spoke with a deep voice that echoed on the cave walls. For a few heartbeats, the man couldn't talk. Fear paralysed him. But he knew if he didn't answer, it wouldn't be long before he was inside the monster's belly.

"I am Cauê, from the tribe up on the river. I brought you gifts, Ancient One."

"Yeszzz... Butz whatsz dozz youzz wantzzsss?" insisted the boitatá.

"I, I want a small piece of your knowledge. Just a small portion. My people are suffering from a terrible..."

"Ifs youzs wantsz knowledgeszzz, yousz willz needsz to offerzzsss more thanzz thisssszzz..." The serpent slithered forward so that its burning eyes were right in front of the young man. A bright flame jumped from them into the eyes of the explorer. He fell to the floor, screaming in pain. His faced charred, he was surprised to realise he could still see... A strange vision was forming in his mind. Images, sounds, smells, and even a sense of touch overwhelmed his brain. The explorer was seeing the boitatá's history, or part of it.

He saw the creature bursting out of its egg at the beginning of time, when everything was lava, rocks, and smoke. He saw it eating the eyes of an amorphous creature. He saw it eating the eyes of a giant fish. He saw it eating the eyes of many different creatures, from many different times, as the world around it changed and evolved. The explorer witnessed the end of the world, multiple times, and every time, only the boitatá remained alive, deep within its cave. It waited until life sprung up again, and the new inhabitants of the world soon came to visit the serpent, begging for knowledge. And every time, it ate their eyes in exchange.

He saw the boitatá inscribing on its scales the histories it learned from consuming the eyes of other beings. With each moulting, this gigantic library of scales was discarded and forgotten inside the creature's lair. And he understood that the only thing the boitatá cared about was devouring as many eyes as it could, absorbing the light from them into its own. He could feel the serpent's tongue slowly forcing its way into his eye sockets. He tried to stop it, but the serpent had coiled itself around him, an embrace that could crush his bones if the monster so desired. He was as powerless as he was blind.

The boitatá released him, blood dripping from where his eyes used to be, the answers he had come looking for clear in his mind. ◇

BOITATÀ

50' long serpent with emerald scales, a large head and huge flaming eyes. It delights in devouring the eyes of creatures, especially those it has never tasted

AC 3 [16], **HD** 15*** (70 hp), **Att** 1 x bite (6d6), 1 x constrict, or 1 x flame jet (3d8), **THAC0** 9 [+10], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D4 W5 P6 B5 S8 (15), **ML** 10, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 4 200, **NA** 0 (1), **TT** H

- **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY**
  Can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **KEEN SIGHT AND SMELL**
  Only surprised on a 1.
- **FLAME JET**
  30' long and 10' wide at the end. Can be used 5 times per day.
- **CONSTRICTION**
  Can wrap around a target within 10', inflicting 4d4 automatical damage immediatly and on each subsequent round. The target is immobilized and can only attempt to free themselves (Strength check with a -4 modifier once per round). Only one target can be constricted at a time.
- **SORCERY**
  Can cast spells as a 9th level magic-user. (usually *charm person, detect magic, sleep, detect invisible, invisibility, mirror image, clairvoyance, dispel magic, haste, confusion, polymorph self, feeblemind.*
- **NEAR INFINITE KNOWLEDGE**
  The creature knows the secrets and weaknesses of everyone it lays eyes upon.

WHAT DOES THE BOITATÁ WANT?

1	It has learned of a creature whose eyes it has never tasted and it wants a pair of them. Would you kindly go get those eyes?
2	It wants to die, as it has survived all the great disasters of the world, but it wants to do a few things before it goes. Would you help it cross these items off its cosmic bucket list?
3	It has heard of an ancient book brought to this world by a being from another dimension. It wants to possess the unique secrets within it. Will you get the book for it?
4	Someone entered the creature's caverns and stole its discarded moults. It wants them back at all costs. Will you help it get them back?
5	The creature saw in a new victim's eyes that there is ano ther one of its kind somewhere very far from here. It wants to find its kindred. Will you help find it?
6	The creature ate the eyes of a being that came from the future and saw its own death. Now it wants to prevent this from happening. Will you help?

WHAT IS THE BOITATÁ DOING?

1	It is about to pull out the eyes of a young person who came seeking the secret to someone's heart.
2	Carving the latest memories it acquired onto its scales. A meticulous task which requires concentration.
3	Sleeping restlessly in its cavern. Its body twitching every now and then as it dreams the dreams of ages.
4	Clearing the lair of all the gifts it received. Shoving valuable treasure into the corners of the cave.
5	Moulting. It is a painful and private process. Interrupting it would be suicidal.
6	Smoking a pipe while watching a stalactite grow, trying to empty its mind from the million million thoughts inside it. It just wants some silence.

WHY DO YOU SEEK THE BOITATÁ?

1	To learn about your past. Ask all the questions you could never ask the people who disappeared.
2	To recover the eyes of a loved one, so they can see again. They say the beast has all the eyes it has ever eaten in its magical belly.
3	To slay the demonic creature who has devoured the eyes of a loved one. They were tricked by the promises of forbidden knowledge, and now they blame the serpent.
4	To steal the discarded skins of the boitatá, as it contains the histories of eons. They would be very valuable to a sage or museum.
5	To collect tears from the creature's eyes. Legend says they can cure any illness.
6	To kill the monster. The gods keep trying to destroy it, but end up killing everyone else instead.

WHAT SECRETS CAN YOU FIND IN THE BOITATÁ'S MOULTS?

1	A powerful spell deemed to have been lost thousands of years ago. Sorcerers would pay handsomely for it.
2	The true name of a powerful supernatural entity. Knowing its name would give power over it.
3	The secret recipe of the magical cake one of the faerie queens is renowned for. Another queen, from another court, wants it.
4	What caused previous cataclysms. Studying them might help prevent the upcoming one.
5	The location of all the libraries and treasure halls of the ancient monarchs. A list of places to loot.
6	A copy of the Tome of Prophecies, written by the legendary Thousand-Eyed Prophet, who has vanished from existence.

WHAT OFFERINGS LIE FORGOTTEN IN THE BOITATÁ'S CAVERN?

1	A crown made of blood, given by the feared Blood King when he visited this plane.
2	A rare crystal rose, kept inside a glass case. The rose emits a prismatic light that reveals the beauty inside everyone.
3	A flute that shares its player's memories with everyone listening.
4	A pair of shoes that change shape, allowing the wearer to disguise their footprints.
5	A coat of fine mithral weave, made by a legendary dwarven smith. As light as a woollen coat, it protects like magical chain .
6	A 150-foot length of rope that can contract to 50' and expand back on a whim.
7	A spoon that conjures a spoonful of any food one can think of.
8	And elixir that rewinds time, allowing the drinker to become 1d20 years younger. They however lose all memories of the lost years.
9	A brazier that shows glimpses of the future of the person who lights it. Allow one die reroll after using it.
10	A pair of glasses that shows the astral plane superimposed on the material world. Prolonged use can cause hallucinations.

THE EYES OF THE BOITATÁ

The eyes of the ancient serpent have absorbed the light from the eyes of all its victims over the ages. If inserted in place of one's (missing) eyes, they confer various magical abilities.

- One eye can always see what the other eye sees, no matter where each one is in the multiverse.
- The user has infravision, and can discern the true form of everything they see, including seeing the invisible.
- The eyes can shoot a jet of flames a number of times per day equal to the character's level. The jet is a cone of 30' long and 10' wide at the end, causing 3d6 points of damage (save vs breath for half).
- The user can read any language or code ever created.
- Once per day, the character can close their eyes and get a glimpse of the future, allowing the player to reroll one die that day.

WHO IS SEEKING THE BOITATÁ?

1. Szalay, a wandering wizard, trying to complete the formula of a powerful, reality-altering spell their master never finished.
2. Yanderoh, a philosopher priest of the Three Fates, who wants to know about the time the gods walked on earth.
3. Farlea, a deposed warrior princess. She needs to learn what caused the coup and how to get her kingdom back.
4. Bastaroff, a merchant king, seeks the boitatá to learn about the origin of his people and their relation to the thirteen ebony obelisks spread around the world.
5. Aerith, an elven errant knight, seeking a way into the forest of the first elves, the legendary Varnir.
6. Mailea, high druid of the Emerald Jungle, seeks the secrets of The Great Mothers, and the rituals one needs to commune with them.
7. Zarthar, a warlock, who wants to perform a ritual to drain the boitatá's powers, effectively taking its place so they can continue researching ancient demonology.
8. Burnard, an orphan, who travelled from the capital in search for the truth about their past. However, not even the boitatá could answer their questions, and now the orphan and the serpent have become friends.
9. Elienest, a wandering bard. She wants to weave the most epic tales ever told into the world's best ballad and finally achieve the success she deserves.
10. Leukar, a failed knight, looking for the secret to overcome their self doubt and fulfil their destiny.
11. Niara, a mermaid, wants to learn about the lost civilisation of Atlantis, that once covered all seven seas, and is now completely forgotten by her people.
12. Maranis, a vampire lord, in search of a way to regain their soul and restore their mortality.

HOOKS

- A wizard has read about the infinite knowledge of the boitatá and wants to reverse engineer the process. They seek brave (or foolish) adventurers to bring the still burning eyes of the beast.
- Legends speak of the colossal hoard the boitatá keeps at its secret lair. Empresses, kings, wizards, and all sorts of powerful individuals have offered gifts to the beast since the beginning of time. Imagine how rich one would be if they managed to steal just a tiny fraction of this treasure?
- A king who has its eyes taken by the boitatá has grown to regret bargaining with the ancient serpent. The rewards to find the eyes in the boitatá's belly are hard to turn down.
- The boitatá wants to die. It is tired of witnessing billions of stupid mortals kill each other since the dawn of time. But it doesn't know how. It offers all the knowledge and treasure it possesses to whomever can kill it

▸ From **France, Italy, and Switzerland** ⋄ by Tolkraft
◆ *Pronounce DAH-ue*

Dahu

On the slopes of every French mountain lives a well-adapted creature, the dahu. Dahus are peaceful goat-like grazers, famous for having shorter legs on one side of their body, condemning them to walk on slopes in one direction, and never to turn back.

Well, thank you. I'm glad you are willing to help us hunt for dahus. Most travellers who have heard of these beasts think we try to make fun of them when we ask them to come hunting with us. But the truth is, without some help from strangers, there is next to no chance we can catch one.

Firstly, a dahu looks like a chamois, but slightly bulkier, with falling ears and a cow-like tail. And of course, they have shorter legs on one side, that's what they are famous for. It allows them to move with great ease on the slopes of even the steepest mountains, as long as they are on the right slope. Because of their legs, they cannot turn back. If they do, they fall downhill like rocks. There are two species: the left dahu, with shorter legs on its left side, who goes counter clockwise around a mountain, while the right dahu can only run clockwise. Even if they could theoretically breed together, the species' inability to turn around renders such mating impossible, so the two species meet with few interactions.

Most people believe dahus to be very rare and discreet, but that's not really the case. They live peacefully on their slope, moving grounds only when food becomes scarce or when they are frightened. Each step forward leading them to possible danger, they tend to be as gregarious as possible. A herd is led by an old female, accompanied by females and their young, juvenile males, and some older males. We are looking for such a herd, the larger the better. Adult males live solitarily for most of the year, but during the rut period at the end of the year, they become tense and aggressive, approaching herds to fight each other to attract unmated females. We avoid going to the mountain during the rut, because dahus are near-sighted, and males tend to attack any living creature and ram it down the slope, thinking it's a rival. As we can't see them, that's rather dangerous.

Because, well... dahus can't be seen. Well, by us at least. You'll see them just fine. To escape predators, dahus developed a unique magical ability: they are... very forgettable. Once you've seen a dahu, you will never be able to see one again in your lifetime, even if it is right in front of you. Lose it for a minute, and you won't be able to perceive dahus anymore! You can remember what they are like, but you could run right into a herd and have no idea why you've been knocked onto your butt and trampled by dozens of invisible hooves.

So, the first rule of dahu hunting is: keep your eyes on them! You can blink, turn your head, watch your step, but if you get distracted or let them leave your sight for

more than a moment, you'll be as useless as the rest of us during the hunt!

This is how it'll go down. You strangers will climb with old Jeannot here while we stay downhill with our sacks. Stay downwind, keep quiet, and move slowly: dahus have bad eyes, except to see quick movement. They can spot a running dog a mile away. Sneak as close as you can from behind the herd and call for them. I can't tell you what dahus sound like, it's been many years and I cannot hear them now. You'll have to listen by yourself and mimic it as best you can. Dahus are curious. They'll turn around, and because of their shorter legs, they'll tumble down the mountain right into our arms! Oh, one of you will have to stay with us to help catch them.

You can of course catch your own dahu if you can, but be careful not to pierce their skin: catch them in a sack like we do, tie them up, clobber them with a rock, choke them with your bare hands if you have to, but no spears or daggers if you want a magical pelt as a trophy! If all goes well, we'll catch a few dahus and each of you will get a wonderful cloak like this one.

Sorry? What do we get from this? A feast, of course! Dahu meat is wonderful, when seasoned well and cooked in red wine. Also, we love making new friends while hunting the most evasive prey in the land. Come on, it's time to go! ◇

DAHU

The dahu is a goat-like animal, highly adapted to life in high mountains. It is similar to a chamois (about 3 foot high), but bulkier, with some distinguishing features: longer horns, falling ears, a cow-like tail, and a vivid brown, white, and black coat pattern. Its legs are its most famous characteristic: they are shorter on one side.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 2 (9 hp), **Att** 1 x horns(1d6), **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 240' (80'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 5, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 20, **NA** 1d6 x 10, **TT** -

◆ **FORGETTABLE**
After an encounter with dahus, characters must save vs spells with a penalty of -4 or never be able to see, hear, or smell dahus again.

◆ **ONE-WAY RUNNER**
When given a reason to turn around (a call, some food, immediate danger...) a dahu must save vs paralysis to resist doing so. Otherwise, it falls down the slope for 1d3 rounds, at the end of which it can run away.

◆ **CHARGE**
In the first round of combat, when not in melee. Requires a clear run of at least 30 feet in front of it. Horns inflict double damage.

SPOILS FROM THE HUNT

Feast

Dahu flesh is a delicacy few have the chance to taste. One dahu provides enough meat to feed 10 people, who gain the following benefits for the next 12 hours:

- A +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls and a +1 bonus to moral.
- Heal 1d6+1 hit points
- Cured of all non magical disease and poisons
- Immunity to fear, hopelessness, and panic

A dahu cloak

Tradition dictates that the hunter who captured or killed a dahu gets to keep the pelt as a beautiful and warm cloak. If they managed to kill the animal without spilling its blood, the hide retains some of the dahu's magical abilities: while in the mountains, a dahu cloak camouflages its wearer so well that it borders invisibility (only 1-in-6 chance of being spotted).

A bezoar

Inquisitive players will wonder why mountaineers go through so much effort for a glorified goat stew and pelts they give away to strangers. In truth, the real treasure lies in the dahu's stomach: a small, oval stone called a bezoar.

It has exceptional healing properties when dissolved in wine or vinegar and drunk or applied to a wound. With some clever questioning or by closely watching the villagers who butcher the beasts, players might get a hint. A dahu has a 4-in-6 chance to have formed a bezoar in its gut. Roll to determine its colour and properties:

d12	
1-6	Grey bezoar: cures any poison. Worth 100gp to anyone adventurous.
7-9	Green bezoar: cures any disease. Worth 150gp to a healer or hedge mage.
10	Red bezoar: cures any form of paralysis. Worth to 300gp to a monster hunter.
11	White bezoar: reverses metamorphosis. Worth 750gp to an alchemist or witch.
12	Blue bezoar: removes any curse. Worth 1500gp to a priest or afflicted individual.

HOOKS

- The party is merely passing through a mountain village, when a local asks you if they would be interested in the most unique hunt ever. Literally a once in a lifetime opportunity!
- Someone the characters know has been poisoned! They learn through a scholar that dahu blood is the most effective antipoison ever (not everyone has accurate information). The nearest mountains are weeks away, so the victim will have to be carted there to have a chance a survival.
- While in the mountains, the adventurers stumble upon a lonely old hunter wearing odd-looking pelts. Under his hood, a huge scar where his right eye and ear used to be. Amédée is a dahu hunter who learned how to track the beasts by the signs of their absence: pebbles moving, grass being eaten, birds sitting in midair... He would welcome some help with the herd he's been following for days, as he believes other hunters are on on the same track: a couple of displacer beasts.
- Did you actually believe those villagers? You wouldn't be the first. Dahus are a myth and while most mountain folk use it to laugh at travellers, some will lead them on an invisible goat chase for darker purposes. Beware the dahu hunters! Or you might find yourself slipping into a hidden crevice to end up beaten, robbed, and possibly used as an offering to some mountain demon-god.

▸ From **Gascony, France** ⋄ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce CAH-mah-crüez, BRAH-cah-crüez*

Cama & Braca Cruse

The cama cruse is a disembodied, evil leg sporting an eye and a maw. We know about it from old stories coming from the Landes and Gascony regions of France. The braca cruse is its arm variation. The stories of the golden leg and Gluttonia are still told today, in different versions, to scare children. In Gascon, cama means leg, braca means arm, and cruse means raw.

Here are two strange stories whose origins swore they are true, both found in the archives of the Lords of Gramont in the tower of the town of Bidache.

Firstly - In the village of Brassempouy there lived a prosperous merchant called Guishen. He was very much in love with his wife, the graceful Maurie. Many were charmed by Maurie at the summer festivals, for she loved to dance and did so divinely. In September of the year 1472, Maurie was picking apples when she slipped off the ladder and broke her leg so badly that it had to be amputated. Even after she was healed, Maurie's spirits wouldn't recover,as giving up dancing was such a deeper wound. At great expense, Guischen had a golden mechanical leg made and brought from Florence in Italy. To everyone's surprise, Maurie was able to resume her crazy farandoles as if nothing had happened. She died of pneumonia eight years later and was buried in the cemetery of Gaujacq where she was originally from.

In the night that followed the burial, Ramuntxo, Guishen's Basque valet, dug up the body, stole the golden leg and ran off into the night. It is believed that he melted his booty into small ingots that he sold to the jewellers of Bayonne, before leaving for the city of Donostia, on the other side of the mountains, where he settled as a bourgeois.

In the days following the profanation, a monster started haunting the streets of Gaujacq at night. It is the Sieur Bonacié who saw it first while closing down his inn for the night. He saw a monstrous leg rushing at him from the other side of the square. It had an eye on its knee and a gaping mouth full of sharp teeth at the top of its thigh: a cama cruse! Bonacié only owed his salvation to an expeditious retreat. The following night, the leg was spotted in Brassempouy, where it devoured two children and a dog before resuming its journey. In Bayonne, it killed and devoured seven people in seven nights. The knight Gaston de Belzunce was summoned to track down the possessed leg. Sir Gaston and his men-at-arms cornered it in the marketplace and, with two swings of his sword, the knight killed it. It is said that Gaston saw it decay
before his very eyes, turning into dust which the wind quickly blew away.

The next night, it reappeared and ate two jewellers! Shortly afterwards the cama

cruse was found near Irun on the Spanish border, where it swallowed two soldiers of the watch. Finally, at the end of its macabre journey, in Donostia, it was seen breaking down the door of the house of the newly established Don Ramun-txo, who was heard screaming for a long while and was never seen again. This was also the last time this cama cruse murdered anyone.

Secondly - Arnaut and Guiraude, two poor peasants from the Landes, had a daughter named Gluttonia who was afflicted with a strange curse: if she didn't eat a large piece of red, juicy meat every morning, she would go into irrepressible fits of anger, breaking kitchen tools and furniture, biting the first person who came along, and only calming down at dusk.

One day when his purse didn't allow him to buy meat, Arnaut dug up a freshly buried corpse, cut out the ribs and a piece of buttock, and fed the macabre cuts to his daughter. The next night, two braca cruses came knocking at the door of the house: two filthy arms, an eye where the elbow should be, a slimy mouth instead of a shoulder. Guiraude, who had opened the door, was immediately strangled and devoured. Arnaut grabbed a sickle and fought like hell to protect his daughter. The two braca cruses fell down and immediately crumbled to dust. Arnaut gathered his belongings into his cart, and left immediately into the night. He was found dismembered a few days later, not far from the port of Capbreton, where he was probably hoping to get onto a boat. Of his daughter Gluttonia, only the bloody clothes were found. ◇

CAMA CRUSE & BRACA CRUSE

The cama cruse is a decomposing leg with an eye at the knee and a mouth full of sharp teeth at the top of the thigh from which a sharp, slimy tongue escapes. Similarly, the braca cruse in an arm with the eye at the elbow and the mouth at the shoulder. These horrors are born from the anger of a dead person whose body was desecrated shortly after their burial. They restlessly go in search of the culprit and all those who profited from the profanation, consuming whoever stands in their way.

AC 5 [12] **HD** 1+1** (5hp),
Cama cruse: Att 1 x kick (1d4+2 + trample) or 1 x bite (1d6),
Braca cruse: Att 1 x punch (1d4+2 + grab) or 1 x bite (1d6),
THAC0 18 [+1], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 12,
AL Chaotic, **XP** 23, **NA** see opposite, **TT** see opposite

◆ **AURA OF FEAR**
Anyone who sees a cama cruse or braca cruse for the first time must save vs spells or flee at maximum speed for 10 rounds, with a 50% chance of dropping any held items.

◆ **DEVOURER**
On a bite attack roll of 19-20, the cama cruse or braca cruse inflicts permanent damage (cannot be healed or recovered). They usually eat their dead victim in a few seconds and almost no remain is left.

◆ **TRAMPLE**
On a kick attack roll of 19-20, a cama cruse's opponent falls to the ground. The cama cruse can then immediately attack to trample with a bonus of +4 for 1d8+2 damage.

◆ **GRAB**
On a punch attack roll of 19-20, a braca cruse's opponent is grabbed. The target suffers a penalty of -2 to attack and AC, their movement is reduced by 50% and the braca cruse grabbing them has a +4 bonus to its next bite attack against them. A successful Dexterity or Strength roll is required to escape (as the character's only action for the round). A person grabbed by two braca cruses is immobilised and they escape roll is made with a penalty of -4.

◆ **INCARNATED**
• Immune to effects harmful to living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep).
• It disappears at sunrise and reincarnates at sundown.
• When a cama or braca cruse reaches zero hit points, it turns to dust and disappears in 1d6 rounds. It will reincarnate at the next sundown within a mile of the battle site, unless a Lawful priest pours holy water on its remains and recites a prayer before it disappears.

◆ **VENGEFUL**
The monster's targets are the desecrator of its former body and all those who have benefited from the crime in any way. It always knows the direction of the targets. It does not stop appearing until they are killed and consumed. If there are several targets, it hunts down the one with the fewer hit dice first. The hunt can last for years, leaving a trail of fear and death until the vengeance is complete.

REMAINS

When a cama cruse or braca cruse turns to dust and disappears, there is a **1-in-6** chance it leaves a small object behind. This item used to belong to one of the monster's former victims.

1	A medal of Saint Gabelius, patron saint of grave robbers. Fake gold
2	A silver, child's hairbrush. The name Antonina is engraved on its back
3	A dull penknife. The handle is made of whale bone and a treasure map is engraved on it
4	A fascinating green pearl. It's cursed. All rolls are done with a penalty of -1
5	A tiny golden goblet. Any liquid poured into it will taste like rum (1-3) or piss (4-6)
6	Two gold teeth
7	A lead soldier representing Gaston de Belzunce
8	A small brass compass
9	An ivory miniature of a dog. Put next to you before you fall asleep, it barks if someone comes within 30 feet
10	A meteorite shard in a small lead box. Glows in the dark like a torch but inflicts 1d4 damage per turn to anyone within 3 feet
11	A magic glass eye. Gouge out an eye and put it in the orbit, roll 1d6: 1-3: you have infravision; 4-6: you are just one-eyed
12	A harmonica. Play the song that is engraved on it, you attract a swarm of cockroaches
13	A tiny adamantine skull at the end of a chain of the same metal
14	Three bone arrowheads +1
15	A small silver crucifix. The crucified figure on it is a frog
16	A Hello Kitty keychain
17	A pink glass monocle that lets you see people as more beautiful than they really are
18	A basajaun ivory comb. Makes your hair soft and silky
19	Three AAA batteries
20	An antique porcelain cameo featuring a portrait of yourself

INCARNATION

If a body that was buried less than seven days ago is profaned, there is a 1D6% chance that a cama cruse or braca cruse appears the next night at sunset.

Modifiers:

- The body has been buried for less than 24 hours: +1%
- The deceased died a violent death: +1%
- The deceased was Chaotic: +1%
- The main reason for the desecration is greed: +1d6%

The monster appears within one mile of the grave and immediately hunts the desecrator. It disappears if it reaches zero hit points (see *Incarnated* entity) or at first light, to reappear at the next sunset. It disappears permanently once its task is complete or if properly eliminated (see *Incarnated* opposite).

Roll 1d20 for the first incarnation.
The entity consists of:

1-8	1 cama cruse
9-16	1 braca cruse
17	2 cama cruses
18	2 braca cruses
19	1 cama cruse + 1 braca cruse
20	2 cama cruses + 2 braca cruses

HOOKS

➢ Zaratazarat the Mage is annoyed. Since he took the head of his competitor, the late Borotoboros the Wizard, to make a Shrunken Head of Spell Storing, he has been harassed every night by a grotesque and monstrous leg. He asks the adventurers to get rid of it while he finishes working on his latest item of wonder (see *Zaratazarat's Manse* in *KNOCK!* #1).

➢ Are you brave, sturdy, and unafraid to work at night? The Guild of Body Snatchers and Tomb Robbers seeks bodyguards to ward off unnatural threats. Holy water and silver weapons provided.

➢ The famous cleric-for-hire, Slimane Qáyin is in need of assistants. He has been hunting devilish, disembodied limbs all across the country and cannot keep up. If they prove their worth, the new recruits will be sent in search of De Membrorum Mysteriis, a codex of necromancy which could be used to ward off cemeteries against the appearances of cama cruses and braca cruses.

➢ A character in the party has just bought a magnificent silver sword for a good price. Unfortunately, the sword was stolen from the tomb of the knight Aneir, Count of Marsan, whose wrath has taken the form of two braca cruses. The only way to get rid of these monsters (besides eliminating them in the right way) is to put the sword back in the grave at Lacataye Castle. Alas, not only is the castle on the other side of the mountains, but it has been taken over by Pantxo the Terrorific, a fearsome Basque bandit who leads a band of 30 bloodthirsty mercenaries.

▸ From **North Yorkshire, England**
◇ by Nobboc

Jack in Irons

A revenant ogre covered in chains and bearing many severed heads, haunting the nights of the high moors.

Once upon a time there was a young and ambitious priest called Galfridus who was abbot at Old Byland in the high moors of Yorkshire. And all was not as he wished: the winter had been particularly harsh, the previous summer especially rainy, and famine was settling in among the population. A disease was now decimating the sheep flocks, and to make matters worse, highwaymen were roaming the area.

As a result, people were reluctant to pay the tithe and no longer gave any credence to the blessings of Old Byland's monks. The nobles of the county and the elders of the church paid no attention to Galfridus. Even the quarterly fair at the abbey was deserted. The prestige of the abbot was at its lowest, and Galfridus' dreams of greatness were severely hampered.

But one day, on his way to Wass, a village north of the abbey's domain, he spotted the giant ogre said to live in the hills there. According to the locals, the monster wasn't very nasty. It was true that he regularly took his share from the flocks and he had probably eaten two or three lost shepherds, but nothing that made him the frightening monster that some of his fellows could be. Nevertheless, Galfridus thought he had found a way to restore his prestige.

In the weeks that followed, he said in every one of his sermons that if God and His saints had abandoned the high moors in

such a way, the fault must lay with this creature of the Devil, this remnant of ancient and evil times. The ogre had to be destroyed like the druids, the faeries, the black dogs, and all pagan spirits before it. So, Galfridus sent seven mercenaries from the northern highlands to capture the monster. Four died in the process, but the three survivors brought the ogre back fettered to a long, heavy chain of orichalque. The poor creature was tortured in public, under the direction of Galfridus himself, and forced to confess to imaginary crimes, and to deny his allegiance to Satan. Then he was thrown into one of the abbey's cisterns from which he was only brought out for the quarterly fairs, still in chains, as the main attraction. It was said that dipping a blade in the blood of the beast gave it magical properties for a whole year, so many people came from far and wide to prick the ogre with their sword, sax, or knife. The monster was then put back into its cistern until the next time and kept alive as best as possible.

And, whether it was luck or the result of the young abbot's actions, things were looking up for Old Byland Abbey. The crops that followed were bountiful, highwaymen were caught and hanged, births were numerous and diseases less frequent. Within a few years the abbey had regained its standing, and its income and influence were growing. Galfridus was once again a prominent member of the clergy, proud of his past and making plans for the future.

But fate must have had it in for the abbot! For six years later, a battle took place on the very grounds of the abbey. It pitted the king's army against rebel invaders from the north. And it was a gruesome massacre. The invaders won, razing the abbey and the surrounding villages to the ground before leaving. The area was now desolate and would remain so for many years. And of course, everyone had forgotten the ogre, chained to the bottom of his cistern, who died of hunger, grief, and anger. And so his soul, for he had one, was unable to find rest in death...

And ever since, no one ventures out into the high moors at night without fear. It is said that the ghost of the ogre, whose name was never known but who everyone now calls Jack, haunts the countryside. The lucky ones only hear the sound of his chains in the night and run away as far as they can. Others come face to face with the revenant, but few can retell their encounter. Jack-in-Irons is a gigantic, putrefied ogre followed by a mephitic mist. A head more porcine than human with two protruding tusks. Eyes blazing with a sickly green light, searching the darkness for prey. He is still in his chains, one end of which he wields like a whip. In the other hand, a huge studded club crushes all those who come within reach. In his chains hang several decaying heads, sometimes screaming, sometimes crying, which at the ogre's request yell bone-chilling curses. It is said that these are the heads of his captors and enemies whom he hunts down night after night.

The undead ogre appears at sunset and slowly walks across the deserted moor, through villages and farms, in search of his persecutors, screaming his anger until dawn. If one night on the high moors you hear the sound of chains in the distance, run, pray, and find shelter before it is too late. ◇

JACK-IN-IRONS

The putrefying manifestation of a 13-foot tall ogre, with a porcine head and protruding tusks, still wearing the chains that bound him in life. He wields a chain like a whip in one hand and a studded club in the other. He appears at sunset in the high moors and disappears at dawn.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 10** (45 hp), **Att** 1 x club (2d8) , 1 x chain (1d10 + whip), or stomp, or lament, **THAC0** 11 [+8], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D6 W7 P8 B8 S10, **ML** 12, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 3 700, **NA** 1, **TT** -

◆ **WHIP**

If Jack-in-Irons rolls 18-20 on his attack roll, the target is caught. The ogre immediately brings them to him and crushes them for 1d10 additional damage; if not wearing metal armour, save vs death or die.

◆ **STOMP**

When Jack-in-Irons stomps his foot, all creatures within 18 feet must save vs. breath or fall to the ground and skip their next action.

◆ **CURSING HEADS**

If jack-in-Irons loses half his hit points, the heads attached to his chains start a furious chorus and any creature within 60 feet must pass a save vs. spell or suffer one of the following effects (d6):
- 1-2: - 2 penalty to all saving throws
- 3-4: - 4 penalty to all attack rolls.
- 5: their highest ability is reduced by 1d6
- 6: all of the above

The effect is permanent as long as a *remove curse* spell has not been cast on the character.

◆ **JACK'S HIDEOUS LAMENT**

Once per night, Jack-in-Irons can let out a howl of infinite sadness. Any creature within half a mile must save vs spells or fall to the ground in tears, unable to do anything for 1d6+4 rounds.

◆ **UNDEAD**

• Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep).
• Can only be harmed by magical attacks.
• if killed (0hp), Jack disappears in a puff of green mist and reappears fully regenerated in the High Moors 2d6 nights later. At the place of his disappearance is left one of his mummified heads (see sidebar on next page).
• Jack-in-Irons is immortal and can only reach the afterlife and disappear forever if two conditions are met (see Hooks overleaf).

◆ **HOLY GROUND**

Jack may not come closer than 100 yards to a temple of a Lawful deity.

ENCOUNTER AND REACTION

Jack-In-irons wanders around with no apparent purpose and his reactions, although often violent, are unpredictable. For each encounter roll 1d12 on this table. Add 2 if a cleric of a Lawful deity or a paladin is present in the group.

1-2 ➢	Walks on
3-4 ➢	Howls and walks on
5-6 ➢	Howls, may attack
7-12 ➢	Attacks immediately

ORICHALQUE CHAIN

Jack-in-Irons' chain is a sacred relic brought back to Old Byland from Flanders by Viking raiders centuries ago and forged, it is said, by Saint Eloi himself. After each encounter with the ogre that resulted in a fight, there is a 1-in-6 chance of finding a loose link on the scene of the battle. A master smith named Gilbert in the village of Sowerby is rumoured to be able to forge a wonderful weapon with such a link, even if he doesn't know why or how:

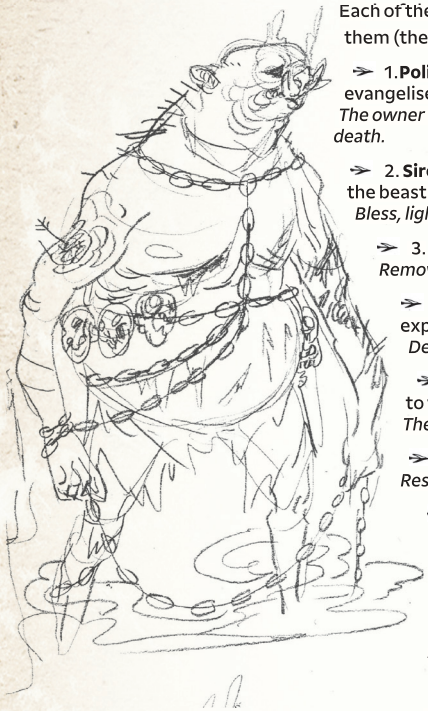
d12

1-8 ➢	weapon +1, +2 vs Ogres, *protection from evil* once per day
9-11 ➢	weapon +1, +2 vs Giants, *bless* once per day
12 ➢	weapon +1, +2 vs undead, *remove curse* once per day

MUMMIFIED HEADS

The heads Jack-in-Irons carries in his chains have naturally mummified. Each time Jack-in-Irons is vanquished and disappears, a head falls off and can be found at the scene of the fight.

The heads speak from time to time in a gibberish that is difficult to understand; they may give a hint from their life, utter a philosophical thought, answer a question asked earlier in an enigmatic way, weep over their misfortune, or howl out the pain of their disembodied souls. They then fall back into silence for an indefinite time.



Each of the heads brings a magical power to its new owner. Here are some of them (the spells and abilities are usable once per day):

➢ 1. **Poliomontes,** a Greek priest of the goddess Hecate, who came to evangelise the remote villages of Yorkshire.
The owner can animate a skeleton which obeys for 1d6 turns before returning to death.

➢ 2. **Sire Gaston de Belzunce,** who came from distant Aquitaine to defeat the beast in single combat.
Bless, light or protection from evil.

➢ 3. **Radulph of Horrabridge,** former Dean of Old Byland Abbey.
Remove fear, detect magic or silence.

➢ 4. **Rapidafiorus,** a sorcerer from the balkans, called in at great expense by the Lord Mayor of York to investigate the revenant.
Detect invisible, knock or levitate.

➢ 5. **Hawsiya,** witch of Dalby Forest, who tried to get Jack-in-Irons to work for her.
The owner can summon 3 hobgoblins knights who obey them for 1 turn.

➢ 6. **Gouen,** intendant of Old Byland Abbey.
Resist cold, cure light wounds or purify food and water.

➢ 7. ***Old Petr,*** a drunkard from the village of Wass who got lost at night while looking for his farm.
The bearer receives a bonus of +4 to all saving throws vs poison.

➢ 8. **Jehanne,** a shepherdess, to whom God Himself ordered to go and tame the beast.
The bearer transforms a mundane weapon into a magic weapon +1, +2 vs Chaos for 1d6 turns.

HOOKS

➢ There is only one way to offer eternal rest to Jack-in-irons: two quests must be accomplished. Or so said Wulfstan II, Archbishop of York, after a vision he received from the angels.
1) Retrieve the bones of the dead ogre from the abbey's cistern and bury them in the heart of Dalby Forest, a few days north, where the ogre's family vault is located. Alas, a clan of deep gnomes have dug their way into the cistern and taken the bones to fashion their sacred totem. It is in the centre of one of their caves, a few hundred feet under the abbey, guarded by trained killer giant spiders.
2) Bring the head of Abbot Galfridus to Jack-in-Irons. The prelate has fled to West Cumbria, not far from Scafell Pike, where he has become the leader of a group of cannibalistic monks who worship Jesus Putrefied (a rare heretic belief). Galfridus is now a raving old man who dreams of bloody crusades and rules over a temple under the mountain. The local pagan population reveres him as the Rotting Pope, and will defend him against any invader.

➢ The ghost of Poliomontes haunts the principality of Theodoros and prevents the population from sleeping. The sages believe that only the recovery of his head and its burial in consecrated ground will appease the ancient priest's soul. An embassy comes to Sir John de Gisburn, Bailiff of York, who promises a reward to whoever can recover the head.

➢ Night has fallen on the high moors and everyone is fearfully huddling inside. Alas, in the inn where our adventurers stopped, Old Jacob is missing. The last person to see him was Nob the stableman: he was going into the night armed with an old butchering knife and a jug of wine, shouting an old war song. Wagnus, the innkeeper and son-in-law of Old Jacob, offers a week's fare and lodging to those who bring him back. Is that the sound of chains in the distance?

▸ From **Cambridgeshire, England** ◇ by James Holloway
◆ *Pronounce SHUCK-ah*

Scucca

Sometimes called Old Shuck, this supernatural hound is said to come straight from Hell. But how come it sometimes helps lost travellers, then?

This is what my grandmother Alftruda told me:

"When there's mist on the fens, and no moon, you get lost. I've lived here all my life and I get lost. On a clear night you can still see the cathedral tower, even miles off. If you know the ways, then you can find your way clear. If you don't, worse luck to you. Hard to tell when a track leads to dry land and when it leads right into the water; harder to know which track leads home, they all snake around so much. Even an experienced fen woman like me can get lost.

Also, I might have had a few drinks. And I might have been taking a different way home than usual, seeing as how I might have been somewhere I wasn't supposed to be. You understand.

The point is, I was lost. Already been in the muck up to my knees, and the night was getting colder. I'd thought I'd be home by nightfall, and instead I'd be lucky to get back by dawn. There are dangerous things in the fens, you know. Robbers and other things. Then a little way ahead of me I saw something. Black as night against the mist, but with one eye, burning like a coal. My blood ran cold, but it just stood there and looked at me. And looked. And then it turned and walked into the mist, but just a little way, and it turned back to look at me, like it was asking if I was coming. So I followed.

Led me straight home, safe and sound, and when I looked around for it, it was gone. Never saw it again. But the pawprints it left were real enough. So if you hear tales of Black Shuck, just remember: he ain't as bad as he's made out to be."

This is what Peter the Carter told me:

"When there's mist on the fens, it can be hard enough to find your way in broad daylight, but the church tower is a sign. You can hear the tolling of the bell, and you can see the shadow of the spire. It's a safe place.

At least, that's what I thought until that morning. I was in church, like normal, when I smelled something, like burning wood or cloth, and I turned around to see the door swing open, smoldering. I only saw it for a moment, it moved so fast, but I swear it was just like a black dog, only bigger than any dog I ever saw, with one glowing red eye that threw off sparks as it ran past me. It raced up the aisle, its pawprints scorching the floor, and ran straight at the altar. Knocked the priest down with one swipe and the man next to him with a second. Then it stood still for a heartbeat – the only time I could get a good look at it – and it bayed. It was a low, horrible sound. It made me feel queasy somehow. Then it leapt up and crashed right through the Our Lady window and was out. We all ran outside, but when we got there there was nothing to see. If it wasn't for the dead men and those scorched pawprints, I'd think I dreamed it.

Folk call that monster Old Shuck, like he's just some dog. But I know what I saw. That thing murdered two men in the middle of their prayers. It's a fiend straight from Hell."

Everyone who lives in the fens of eastern England agrees that Black Shuck, or Old Shuck, is a giant black dog who appears and disappears uncannily. But no one can agree on whether Shuck is a monster or a helpful spirit. For everyone who tells a tale of being saved by the hound, there's someone who can point to the beast's pawprints burnt into a church door. In fact, there's no such creature as Black

Shuck. Instead, there are many different such creatures, all formed from the ghost of an earthly hound. Each has its own unique motivations and personality, although they have certain traits in common.

Bred to be helpers in life, the scucca still have something of this impulse. However, they are also creatures of Hell, and their demonic natures cannot abide when people call on other powers for aid. A human who suffers without calling on a higher power for aid may receive unexpected help from a scucca; a human who prays to the divine while in distress may become the monster's prey. ◇

SCUCCA AND THE LANTERN-MEN

The scucca is not the only spirit wandering the fens. Faint lights bob around shoulder-height along the lonely causeways and treacherous flats. Travellers who follow them find themselves in thick mud and dark water. These lights are carried by the lantern-men. Dark and silent are the lantern-men, creatures of the reed-bed and the mere's edge. Their keen ears hear any unusual sound, but they are especially drawn to whistling. Whistle and they will come to you. The locals know how to avoid them: when you see the lanterns, drop to the ground. Press your mouth in the muddy earth and close your eyes. When you can no longer hold your breath, look up; if luck is with you, the lantern-men will be gone. If you're near home, go inside if you can. Tie a horn to a broomstick or fishing pole and put it outside, then wait out the night. They will consume the horn but not come to your door. But whatever you do, do not follow the lights.

Like the scucca, the lantern-men lure people into danger in the difficult fen terrain. They also leave evidence of fire behind them – the horns folk leave to distract them are nothing but smouldering scraps when dawn comes. But no lantern-man ever helped a lost traveller find the right road, unless the right road leads to hell.

Ask anyone after a few drinks and they will tell you their theory: the lantern-men are ghosts of the monks from the ruined abbey (hex 109 p.70), embittered by their unjust deaths; or they are fiery spirits of the fens, tasked with bringing more souls to nourish the waters; or they are mortals, granted powers by ancient spirits who scucca oppose; or they are another of the scucca's trick, a way of luring travellers into danger without revealing itself.

SCUCCA

A large hound (3-ft tall) with hair so dark it could be made of night. It leaves burning tracks behind it and seems to be half-made of fire. It can appear to help or doom, no one really knows what motivates it.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 4* (18hp), **Att** 1 x bite (1d6), **THAC0** 16 [+3], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 10, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 125, **NA** 1, **TT** U

◆ **JUDGE OF SOULS**
The scucca can sense to what degree people are evil. It detects alignments (save vs spells to resist) and knows the latest sin or crime anyone it sees has committed, and against whom.

◆ **FLAMING TRAIL**
The scucca leaves a trail of burning paw prints behind it. If it intends to help, these prints can be a useful way to navigate to safety. If it intends harm, they may lead into water.

◆ **GRAB**
If the scucca hits with a bite attack, it may drag its target up to 20 feet instead of attacking on subsequent rounds. It often tries to drag its target away from other opponents, either toward water where it can drown its victim or toward a quiet spot where it can devour the prey at its leisure.

◆ **SPIRIT OFTHE FENS**
The scucca can move at full speed across marshy ground or shallow water, and at half speed through deep water.

HOOKS

➢ A youngster crept out of their family's home to meet their sweetheart, but never returned. Lured to the grave-mound at hex 33 (see overleaf) by imps, who know only a mortal can retrieve the magic copper shortsword in the ancient grave. The scucca's mournful baying echoes across the fens, calling for aid.

➢ Smugglers, outlaws and rebels hide out in the fens, kicking back a share of their spoils to local villagers and even the abbey. It's a good place to hide from the law, but when one of them goes missing with a sack of jewels, everyone starts to suspect everyone else. The scucca lured the smuggler off a causeway, where he drowned, and now the gold is sunk into the water – an offering to the fen spirits, or at least that's how they see it. And they're not willing to let it go without a fight.

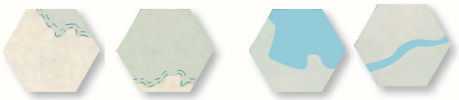
➢ The old kings still have some presence in the fens, last holdout of rebels against the new regime. A would-be monarch seeks treasure hunters to help find the ancient regalia of sainted princess Noble Strength, the mighty weapon of Riverback Tom, and the axe of the warrior who destroyed the witch's tower (hex 10). First problem: no one knows where the man or his axe went those many years ago. Second problem: how much do you trust a power-hungry pretender on a quest to collect royal loot?

➢ A man wanders the fens, looking for his lost dog. He means the scucca, which makes sense because he's the Devil. Despite being the author of lies and Prince of Darkness, he's also a dog lover and will reward anyone who helps him find his pet. Scucca is chasing around the fens luring people to their doom, helping people, attacking churches, and so on because he is a naughty boy.

Fantasy fens

1 HEX: 1 MILE

Farmland Marsh Streams, ponds and lakes



The fenland landscape of eastern England has its own folklore, heroes, and saints. Lots and lots of saints; the region is sometimes known as "the holy land of the English" because of the dense concentration of monasteries. The marshy terrain made the fens hard to navigate for outsiders, a fact taken advantage of by rebels during the 11th century. Eventually, most of the fens were drained to increase the amount of agricultural land available. This map of a legendary fen landscape includes tales from both before and after the drainage, as well as tales from regions of the fenland far outside the mapped area, without apology.

Travel in the fenlands is along winding tracks, occasionally flooded, or by flat-bottomed boats called *punts*. The few locations that are always above the water level are densely settled. Although this is a remote area, it is not a poor one; the monasteries are large landowners, and the wetlands are very productive, producing valuable commodities such as eels.

SCUCCA

HEX 1: There is no church or shrine in **the village of Fen's Edge**, just the ruin of an ancient stone cross. There was supposed to be a church, but it was never completed. The folk of the village say that the Devil lurks nearby in the fens, and that every morning when the builders of the church came to start work, they would find that whatever they had put up the previous day, he had taken down. Eventually they gave up and resigned themselves to making the long walk to a nearby village to pray. No one ever saw the Devil, though.

HEX 8 (to 10): **Causeway**. Created by an invading force to march their troops from River City to Eel Island. Partly collapsed, but still the quickest and safest way to get through the southern part of the fens.

HEX 10: Before the fall of Eel Island, the conqueror attempted to place a curse on the defenders. This site marks the **ruins of the tower** from which she attempted to weave her spells. Strange lights glimmer in its windows on moonless nights.

HEX 33: This small island is home to a **burial mound**, made by an ancient folk. More recently, it was the home of a saint, who dug a hole into the mound and lived there, contemplating God. Devils came to plague him, and although he resisted them and eventually died a saintly death, they say that the devils still linger. The soil of the mound is said to have miraculous curative properties. And who knows what treasures the ancient folk buried with their dead?

HEX 55: **Witch Ford**. It is commonly assumed that the name of this passage linking the eastern and western parts of the island is incorrectly spelled and that its origin is more likely to be the result of the abundance of wych-elm trees in the area than the existence of any witch. However, there is occasional mention of treacherous currents coming to life as travellers pass or murdering quicksands appearing and disappearing for no good reason. But this is hardly ignored and not discussed.
Knowing this, travellers who aren't in a hurry will take the long way through Harda's Home.

HEX 60: Tom was a strong lad, taller than any other man in the village, and when he got old he threw this great boulder into the air, asking to be buried where it landed. He was buried there, together with the cart axle he used to fight giants. **The axle** is a powerful weapon against these monsters, for those strong enough to swing it – but the marsh giants know it exists and are wary of those who seek it.

HEX 66: The folk of Eel Island are among the few people in the region with enough dry land to make much use of horses. As a result, Eel Island is one of the few places where toadmen can be found. These horse-cunning men and women wear the dried corpse of a toad, prepared according to certain traditional methods, on a string under their shirts, which grants them the power to speak to horses. One such fellow lives here, in Roadside Village, and can teach the rite if well persuaded.

HEX 84: The mighty **abbey** that sits at the heart of Eel Island's largest town is not as wealthy or powerful as it once was, but even at less than full strength it is still an important site. The sacred bones of many saints lie under its floor. The most important is Noble Strength, a queen who became a nun and ruled the island like a second kingdom. Her ghost haunts the abbey, unwilling to relinquish control over its community even in death.
The true source of her haunting is the coffin her body was placed in, dug up by the monks in River City to the south. This ancient relic was thought to be a fit resting place for an abbess-queen, but the coffin's magical energies keep her spirit active – and she's come to like being able to control her abbey.

HEX 103 (+ 104, 95, 85, 86): **This stretch of river**, just east of Eel Island, is home to the most abundant of the eels that give the place its name. A giant eel, decades old if not older, is sometimes seen coupling in the murky water. He never harms the abbey's monks, but everyone else had better watch themselves. Gold-Brave is his name.

HEX 109: This **old church** fell into ruin years ago, but the locals say that lights glimmer in its glassless windows at night, and that they can even hear the faint sound of song. Are these just the ghosts of long-gone monks, or could the lights have something to do with the mysterious **lantern-men** who haunt the fens?

▸ From **northern California, USA**
◇ by James Holloway

THE PEOPLE of the Holy City

Off a lonely road in the wooded hills outside a great city, travellers report seeing pale, silent figures watching them from the trees. Some say that these sinister folk aren't all bad: if you need revenge and have nowhere else to go, they may help you.

The road south of the city leads through the mountains toward outlying settlements. In daylight, there's nothing uncanny about it; it's even rather pretty, with the wooded hills casting cool shadows across the trail. Few travel this way other than foresters, merchants, and workers returning before dark falls from their jobs in the city. Those are always sure to return home by dark.

Most people who fear the road will tell you that they don't like the feeling of it. There's a sense of something on the edge of perception, perhaps, or an uncanny look to the empty windows of the rotting shacks one sometimes passes by. Nothing you could put your finger on. A few say that they've seen people along the road in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the night. Normal people, like you and me, but pale as the moon and perfectly silent, standing patiently by the roadside, just... watching.

No one knows someone who disappeared along the road, but everyone knows someone who knows someone who did. A friend of a friend, or someone who used to work with a cousin. A wagon driver whose wheel broke, a messenger who didn't realise how long the journey through the hills would take, a felon

fleeing the law. It was days before they found the body, what was left of it. Of course, there could be no connection. Probably bit by a snake or had a heart attack, and as for the state of the body, well... there are coyotes in the hills, and mountain lions.

Never saw a body look like that after a coyote got done with it, though. Even a mountain lion gets full eventually.

Back in the old days, there wasn't a single house all along the mountain road. If you broke a wheel or just felt like a rest, well, too bad for you. You had to keep going until you saw the water. But then some folk opened up an inn along the way. It was the only one, so they did pretty good business. Weather up there's not great at sometimes. They were odd people: very religious, very strict, but also very showy, like carnival folk. They'd sell you wine and then give you a tract that told you to stop drinking, condemn you for your materialism and then charge you over the odds for anything you bought. The whole place was covered with signs and placards, all about hell and salvation and the future and prophecies and who knows what. But eventually they got too successful; someone kinder and wealthier opened a better inn and the place slowly faded. They say their prophet took off with the cashbox and a few of the better-looking faithful, leaving the rest to shift for themselves. ◇

THE PEOPLE

The people of the Holy City (if that's who they are) are never seen during the day, and at night their pallid skin almost glows in the moonlight. Their eyes are set deep in dark, hollow sockets, and their irises are a pale red. They dress in clean but faded clothing that reflects the fashion of a previous generation. They are clearly human, but also clearly not humans like the rest of us – not so much because of their unusual appearance but because of their manner. They are silent and still, watching patiently. They speak only when they absolutely must, in soft, sad voices. They kill without mercy.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 2 (9hp),
Att 2 × claw (1d3), 1 × bite (1d3) or by weapon,
THAC0 18 [+1], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16,
ML 10, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 20, **NA** 1d6 (2d8), **TT** S

◆ **EERIE STILLNESS**
The people of the Holy City make no noise until they attack. They achieve surprise on a 1-3.

◆ **CURSED KILLERS**
The people of the Holy City are not undead, or at least not completely. They cannot be turned and are vulnerable to physical effects like charm or poison. However, they are immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep).

◆ **WEAPONS**
Use the weapons of a hunter, such as bows, slings, and knives, rather than military weapons such as swords or spears.

◆ **NO THRONE FOR THE DAMNED**
With their leader gone, the People of the Holy City have abandoned hierarchy, living without priests or rulers. However, the more experienced killers among them still have a certain unofficial status. Any group of five or more will include one 4HD veteran, armed with two hand axes or short swords.

There's no one there now, and the old signs are covered with moss and ivy. Who knows where the people went? They can't have gone far. Some say that the pale creatures that haunt the road through the hills are their descendants or their ghosts.

VENGEANCE CREEK

A few miles down the road, there's a little trail that heads off southeast. It goes nowhere, fading out in the woods near a few ruined shacks. Right before the end of the trail is an old stone bridge that crosses a creek. Here and there on the bridge, there are traces of carved names. Most of them have been scratched out. If someone wrongs you, go to the bridge when the full moon shines and carve their name on the stones. The folk of the Holy City will see to it that they receive what they deserve.

Should your name wind up on the bridge, expect to be pursued by silent, pallid vigilantes intent on carrying out an appropriate punishment according to their own strict (and gory) moral code.

The Holy City

Peeling paint, warped doors, faded signs. Once bright and colourful, the Holy City has been given over to the mist and mountain rain. Travellers pass by and chuckle a little at the ruin of what was supposed to be a utopia, but they don't stop. Why would they? And so they miss the humbler houses along the tree-shaded roads. Most are in ruins now, but a few still stand, overtaken by rot and leaf litter, warped wood listing crookedly.

1 THE ROADHOUSE

This was once the place where the Holy City welcomed travellers. Peeling paint, buckled roof, a few rooms still proof against the weather. The People carefully watch anyone who takes shelter in this ruin, but will not harm them – a vestigial memory of their old hospitality. Signs of their presence are visible as patterns in the detritus. A few items of value can be found among the wreckage, amounting to 2d4x10gp. Taking them incurs the anger of the People, who view this as a breach of trust.

2 RUINED HOUSES

Even more dilapidated than the roadhouse. The People make their homes here, establishing spartan living quarters in the least damaged rooms. At any time during the day, 1d6+1 of them are sleeping here, with at least one more on guard. In addition to the guard, the People have rigged simple traps and alarms. Tripwires set off tinkling brass bells; window sills have broken glass glued to them. Captives or People-in-training stay in the cellars of these houses, in dank holes furnished with rusted bedsteads and decorated with mouldering paintings in a horrid echo of hotel rooms.

3 WORKERS' HOUSES

The poorest members of the Holy City community lived here. These were unbelievers, people who did not adhere to the City's utopian faith but simply moved to the region to work. Their homes have been allowed to deteriorate almost completely. If the People have a treasure – such as their leader's stolen wealth or magic idol – they hide it here, away from the places they frequent.

4 THE HOUSE OF CONSOLATION

This was the residence and shrine of the People's leader, who took the title of the Great Consoler. Even though the Consoler is gone and their faith discredited, the People still use the House of Consolation for their rites of worship and sacrifice. The murals and billboards are in better repair than any other part of the Holy City; it might almost be a run-down house in a poor neighbourhood rather than a wreck. The interior features the same bright paint and optimistic religious messages, but caked in the accumulated gore of years. Bones and skulls line the bookshelves and mantelpiece, displayed as a proud grandmother might show off china figurines. At any time, there is a 25% chance that 1d3 of the People are in or around the House of Consolation. On nights of worship, the whole community is here with the exception of one or two unlucky individuals selected at random for guard duty. All will be armed, as their cruel ceremonies require the spilling of blood.

THE TREASURE OF THE HOLY CITY

1. The treasure was just that – the wealth of the faithful, bilked out of them over the years. Two iron-bound travelling trunks, full to bursting with gold coins, pearls, and precious stones. Caring nothing for earthly wealth, the faithful returned them to the ruins of the Holy City and hid them.

2. The folk didn't kill their errant leader, the Great Consoler, but only just. He managed to escape by abandoning the treasure, hastily burying it next to a rocky outcrop in the woods. Now an old man, he is willing to offer a share to anyone brave enough to go and retrieve his loot so that he can leave it to his children.

3. The donations given by the faithful weren't stolen – they were spent on acquiring an ancient and powerful artefact. However, the Consoler became possessed by the idol's spirit and left the city to begin carrying out their new master's mission in the outside world. Only the idol can stop their rampage, but the folk don't realise that. They don't want to give it up.

4. The inn at the Holy City made a reasonable amount of money, but the treasure isn't gold. It's a sacred text, the Historia Carnificis. This grisly codex explains how to use cannibalism to become immortal. Most of the Folk used an imperfect version of the ritual, resulting in their transformation into pallid ghouls. But their missing leader seems to have succeeded.

VENGEANCE OF THE HOLY CITY

1. The folk of the Holy City were cursed by the gods for their many blasphemies. They hunt and kill evildoers in hopes that if they slay enough, heaven will forgive them. Unfortunately, their sense of right and wrong is completely askew, so they rely on ordinary mortals to help them pick targets. Some believe that if they just kill a wicked enough person, their curse will finally be lifted – but who could be so evil?

2. The legend that says you have to erase your own name from the bridge (see overleaf) is not quite right. In fact, anyone can erase your name from the bridge; if someone cares enough about you to take that risk, then surely you can't be all bad – or so reason the people of the Holy City, anyway. That doesn't stop them from trying to kill anyone who tries erasing a name, of course. After all, devotion must be tested.

3. A small splinter group of the People have abandoned the idea of righteous killing and chosen to work as professional assassins. A discreet payment buried beneath a house in the Holy City itself, together with the name of the target, will buy their services. If the others found out, they would be furious.

4. Few people frivolously carve a name on the bridge in retaliation for a minor slight, because few people would take such a dangerous trip without a good reason. But every so often, a personal slight or a bad breakup inspires someone to do something really foolish. A cheating ex or bullying boss might find themselves hunted by the people of the Holy City with no idea why – or a jilted lover or humiliated employee might realise they've gone too far and want to erase the name.

5. The people of the Holy City kill and eat those who stray into their territory as a matter of necessity: no one can know where their lairs are, and it's a shame to let good meat go to waste. But when they kill someone whose name is carved on the bridge, they devour them ritualistically, believing that in doing so they are taking their victim's evil into themselves and out of the world, making it a better place.

6. Sometimes, the people of the Holy City discover that their target is just the right kind of evil – willing to do terrible harm, but not cruel or completely without conscience. When that happens, the target may simply disappear rather than being gruesomely cannibalised, as is the usual fate of the People's quarry.

SIGNS OF THE HOLY CITY

Overgrown with moss and ivy, these painted wooden placards lined the main road through the Holy City, advertising the cult's doctrines to travellers passing through.

1. *"Your proof of your great love for any one person can only be proven by first proving your great love for all people. Otherwise your love is fake love."*

2. *"Do not let Anger fill you, get Wisdom in its place. Holy City is the only place on earth to secure Wisdom."*

3. *"Look into the mirror and for sure you will see God dreaming."*

4. *"When you are dead you are plumb dead and only humanity lives on and only the HOLY CITY can prove this statement. Only purified minds and bodies go to HEAVEN."*

HOOKS

- Holy City-style cannibalistic murders start happening in a large city. Have the People moved their operation, or is this a splinter faction? If it is, how will the People respond?
- A remote location like the Holy City might seem like an ideal place to hole up for bandits or monsters who don't know the local folklore. Adventurers sent in to deal with them will discover an additional layer of complication – or a possible temporary ally.
- Captured by the People and about to be killed, a silver-tongued demagogue persuades them that he is in fact their new Great Consoler. He sets about using his new agents in a campaign that supposedly punishes the wicked but is actually intended to enrich him.

▸ From **Bigorre, France** ⋄ by Eric Nieuidan
◆ *Pronounce ee-ZAH-bee*

A titanic reptile, large enough to coil itself around mountain peaks. Weapons are of little use against it as it seems to have endless reserves of life force. It feeds by sucking in cattle and other animals.

The Serpent of Isaby

One summer day when I was a lad, my grandfather brought me to Hruodland's Breach. That's where Charlemagne's famous paladin was said to have failed to break his divine sword Deurandal as he lay dying, for fear of it falling into inhuman Basque hands. As I already knew the story of the battle at Roncesvalles in and out, my grandfather pointed at the church of the village we were passing through, and said it was once roofed with a giant serpent's skin. I of course asked how that had happened and he proceeded to tell me the story of the serpent of Isaby. I was young then and my memory of the story is more than dim. I have done my best to piece it together from the sources that are now available to me.

In the high valleys of Bigòrra, there was once a gigantic serpent. A survivor from an age of gods and wonders, the beast used to warm itself coiled around mountain peaks above the town of Argelèrs de Gasòst in the Lavedan valleys. Some elders of the time would insist it was the very serpent the princess Pirena, whom our great mountains are named after, gave birth to after an encounter with the demigod Eracles.

The serpent would sleep most of the year, sometimes a score of years at a time. It would then awake and feed. But when mountain goats weren't enough to satiate its stomach, the serpent would wait above pastures, its grey and brown scales blending in with the rocky slopes. When an unsuspecting herd passed by, the monster would open its gigantic mouth, breathe in with its gigantic lungs, and inhale beasts, dogs, and shepherds alike.

No one in the valleys below knew how to deal with such a beast. Arrows, crossbow bolts, and even bullets bounced of the slate-like scales of the serpent, who didn´t even acknowledge the attacks. It was thought that perhaps a blessed lance or sorcerer´s rod would make the monster flinch, but no one wanted to be the one to verify the theory. Word that the town was in dire need of help was sent far and wide. It even reached good Countess Alix in Montfort and the abbot of Sant Chuan de la Penya whose chalice was rumoured to have contained the blood of a holy prophet. But not a single troop of men-at-arms, not one errant knight, not even a drunk demon-fighting beggar monk came from either side of the mountains to challenge the serpent.

Back then like nowadays, the valleys of Lavedan weren´t affluent, and neither were their folk. They hadn´t much to offer to a beast slaying hero, and no young maiden or lad volunteered to be the prize on offer. So the beast kept preying on the creatures of the valleys, be they four or two-legged.

One autumn day, after a grazing season where the serpent had taken a lot from the folk, a young woman from the village of Arboish decided enough was enough. Perhaps she was in love with one of the shepherds who were swallowed that year. Perhaps she just wanted glory. Ferranda, for that was her name, was an apprentice blacksmith. With seven other youths from her valley, she came up with a plan. They would build a forge high up in the mountains, close to where the beast would lay in wait for its meals to pass by. All winter they toiled in secret, carrying tools and anvils and ingots on their backs, cutting trees and making charcoal, assembling the workshop from wood and stone and slate. In late spring they had set up a very respectable forge in a cave at the bottom of a crevice. They hadn´t told a soul, as anyone with an ounce of common sense would have told them to cease this hare-brained monster slaying scheme and thank the Heavens for the life they were allowed to keep.

Soon, the serpent was spotted sunning on the slopes of Hautacam, right on the path the herds would soon take on their way to their summer slopes. The eight friends went to work. They forged a seven-cubit long bar of iron and kept it on the coals until it glowed white like Lugarn the morning star on a winter morning. Then, Ferranda carried it up the slopes with her longest pair of tongs, walking without fear towards the serpent. And the hungry beast did what she expected. It breathed in, swallowing the white-hot iron bar, but not the tongs nor Ferranda, for the clever blacksmith had chained herself to her anvil. She was soon free to run away as the burning iron did what she intended: it set fire to the monster´s entrails! But the serpent was clever and instead of rolling and coiling and dying a painful death, it dipped its great mouth in a nearby lake (there were many lakes on those slopes in that time) and swallowed enough water to quench the fire. It belched a huge amount of steam and retreated into the bowels of the earth to sleep off the pain.

But a week later, the serpent came back to lie in wait for its food to pass by. Ferranda and one of the lads, a shepherd called Guiscard d´Estaing, went up to meet the beast, each carrying a white-hot iron bar seven cubits long. Again, the beast swallowed them, for if it was clever, it was also really hungry. It also swallowed Guiscard, who had thought it below himself to be chained to an anvil like a woman. Again, the serpent´s guts caught fire. And again, it doused the flames with great gulps of water from a mountain lake and went to sleep, for two weeks this time. Then, it came back, hungry as ever, to wait for a well deserved dinner of sheep, dogs, and shepherds.

This kept going for a while. Three, then four, then five, then six bars were swallowed by the monstrous snake, starting increasingly painful fires in its innards. But all were extinguished by increasing amounts of water, producing ever bigger clouds of steam. And most of the mountain lakes around were drained, leaving only the largest one, which

we call Isaby. Summer was over by then, and the sheep back to safety, but the serpent hadn't had any food except for a couple of great vultures who had flown too close. After six weeks recovery from swallowing six iron rods, it came down the slopes of Hautacam, crawling close to the village of Arbouish with its sheep, its cows, its horses, its dogs, and its people.

But Ferranda and her six remaining friends were ready with seven white-hot bars, seven pairs of tongs, and seven lengths of chains tied to seven anvils. As they expected, the serpent swallowed all seven bars trying to inhale the seven youths, setting another fire inside its belly. In more pain than ever before, the beast slithered to the lake of Isaby. It drank and drank and drank, and the lake, swollen by the autumnal rains, had just enough water to relieve the pain. But the steam produced by seven iron bars seven cubits long proved too much, and the serpent swelled and swelled until it exploded. Its skin came off its skeleton all in one piece and already cured. The bones themselves were bleached by the heat, and the cooked serpent meat drew vultures from their lofty nests for several weeks. As poor as they were in those times, the good, God-fearing Bigòrrans would never even taste the meat of the beast. They were practical people though, and so they found a use for the serpent's skin. They cut it in pieces and used it to roof their leaky churches. ◇

THE SERPENT OF ISABY

A dark grey reptile of titanic proportions (30 ft wide, 400 ft long), with scales as hard as rock and the ability to swallow its victims from a distance. It is possibly of divine origin, and no one has ever heard of another.

AC 0 [19], **HD** 60* (300hp), **Att** 1 x bite (3d10) or breathe in (see below), **THAC0** 5 [+14], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D2 W3 P4 B3 S6, **ML** 10, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 30 000, **NA** 1, **TT** H

◆ **CAMOUFLAGED SCALES**
When immobile in a rocky environment, the serpent of Isaby is invisible from more than 300 feet yards away. When closer, it has a 3-in-6 chance to surprise its victims.

◆ **BREATHE IN**
Cone 90ft long. Creatures up to the size of a horse must save vs breath with a -2 penalty to avoid being sucked into the serpent's mouth and swallowed. The victims take 4d10 damage from digestive acids each round. Short weapons may be used to attack from inside (AC 5 [14]).

◆ **NOT THAT CLEVER**
The serpent of Isaby has the cleverness of a very old beast that learns very slowly. Confronted with novel tactics or traps, it will repeatedly make the same mistakes.

◆ **SWALLOWED HOARD**
The serpent's treasure lies in its bowels in the form of all the riches its victims carried with them. Only metal items and gems can be found, as the rest was dissolved millennia ago.

THE CURSED CHURCHES OF LAVEDAN

One would think life would have become easier for the valleys of Lavedan after the monster's demise. One would be wrong. Fate likes to pile donkey droppings onto poor people's plates. The remains of the beast of Isaby have been put to good use: the scaly skin was on the roof of each and every church nearby, and a handful more had been built using the ribs and vertebrae. Only the skull, judged too devilish looking, had been disposed of, and the valleys were now festooned with remains of the serpent.

Whether the sight of such evil body parts angered the gods, or their mere presence attracted playful demons, it is not known. The fact is, bad luck started striking the common folk more and more often. The weather went as sour as the milk given by their cows. Farm animals became vicious, and wild beasts bold and aggressive. Even the people started fighting over the smallest things. And worse even, the holy miracles performed by priests turned out wrong half the time.

Anyone passing through the cursed valleys after the serpent was killed must make a saving throw versus spells every sunset or fall prey to the curse. Cursed individuals behave like their worst selves until the next nightfall, when they must save again. The obvious remedy to this curse is to destroy all remains of the serpent, burning down the churches and erecting new ones in their stead. Unless a pious individual could undertake a quest to placate the Angels and see the curse lifted?

EVENTS IN CURSED BIGÒRRA

1. A passing basajaun (see page 6) has bought the serpent's skull, hoping to impress a young washerwoman with it. A cadre of laminak, the gnomes of the deep is prodding the twenty-one oxen needed to drag the skull up the steep road to Urbasa.
2. An unseasonable hailstorm catches travellers unaware. They must seek cover or say goodbye to hats, helms, and possibly small familiars.
3. The nearby slopes to the village of Peirosa have been covered with pea soup like fog for weeks. Several flocks have come back without their shepherds. The villagers fear they fell down a crevice or were taken by devils.
4. The great vultures have come down from their peaks to circle over isolated farms. They have taken away some lambs and one toddler. Someone must quickly brave the icy slopes of Nèubielhe, the mountain of the old snow, to bring the child back.
5. Crusader Audilia of the Bleeding Hands has risen from her grave in the monastery of Sent-Savin. She leads a host of righteous monks, errant knights, and plain angry villagers in a rampage that will burn the cursed villages down.
6. The farmers of Ordins have turned to black magic to protect their village from wild beasts and even wilder neighbours. They must sacrifice a human every new moon, or the Devil will come and take all their souls.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FORGE

Ferranda and her friends knew in their hearts their victory over the monster was a sign from the King of Heaven. They swore an oath to keep their underground forge a secret, and to work so Bigòrra would be forever safe from the spawn of evil. Over decades, they have armed many a questing monk with miraculous fighting sticks, and made axe and spear-heads for monster slaying knights. Finding the forge in the maze of gullies and crevices of Hautacam requires piety as well as perseverance, unless one has met Zavièr Abbadia. An honorary Fellow of the Forge, Zavièr is a young peddler who stays at inns and travellers' camps, all the while looking for people whose righteous cause would need the Fellowship's talents. He will gladly guide such people to the forge to meet with the Holy Hammer (as Ferranda has taken to call herself).

Trouble is, their isolation has made this bunch of blacksmiths somewhat weird. They see a sign from the Angels in every passing partridge and the mark of the Beast in every tattoo. Who knows what they will make of the typical adventuring party? If they can be swayed however, they will make fine weapons and sturdy armour in record time – they never sleep once a job has started, finding their sustenance in prayer and blessed fortified wine.

The Fellows lack the training or expertise to craft soldier or knightly gear such as swords and war hammers, or tower shields and plate mail. Their weapons do not have any modifiers, but they are considered magical for the purpose of hitting creatures unaffected by mundane weapons. Their armour grants a +1 bonus to saving throws against spells and magical effects from Chaotic beings.

THE FELLOWSHIP'S FIGHTING STICK

Inspired by the Basque makila*, this 4-foot, iron shod walking stick hides a vicious blade inside its removable top handle. It can be used as a quarterstaff or short spear. When consecrated by the Holy Hammer, it is a weapon +1, +2 vs all types of fiends.

*Outright stolen, the Basque would say.

HOOKS

- The valley of Varètja has become a haunted wasteland. No one is pasturing cattle there as every single person and beast who went up there last summer never came down. Could a spawn of the serpent have hatched somehow, or has yet another devil-worshipping cult led the shepherds astray and sold the cattle for black candle money?
- Grandfather Gonçau's prize sheep need to cross the mountains in time for the spring fair at Boltanya, but it is too late to take the long way around the Lavedan. The party has been hired to escort the flock and told to look our for giant snakes hiding in the rocks.
- The great necromancer Pym the Gnome has heard the tale of the Serpent of Isaby. She would like to add its skeleton to her dancing ossuary and will pay handsomely for the location of all its bones so she can send her undead collectors to fetch them.
- It may be counterintuitive to think of the serpent of Isaby as a repository of knowledge, but the Great Isolde (a former apprentice and lover of Zaratazarat the Mage and now his bitter rival) believes the most ancient magical items are hidden inside the bowels of the serpent of Isaby, who collected them from their digested owners. She needs adventurers to deliver her Enchantment of Excruciating Exoneration, a laxative spell that should help the beast cast out these priceless artefacts. The spell must be cast on a living creature, so the party will have to find a way to feed Gripik, an uncooperative goat-headed goblin, to the great beast.

Höllenwagen

In eastern French villages, in the hazy streets of German towns, and in the Netherlands' countryside, everyone feared to hear the wheels of the Höllenwagen. Preying on those lost on the road or in city streets, this devilish chariot was said to kidnap them and bring them to Hell.

Testimony of a city guard, related to the events at the solstice festival, as recorded by Sister Odilia Hackeborn of the All-Seeing Eye

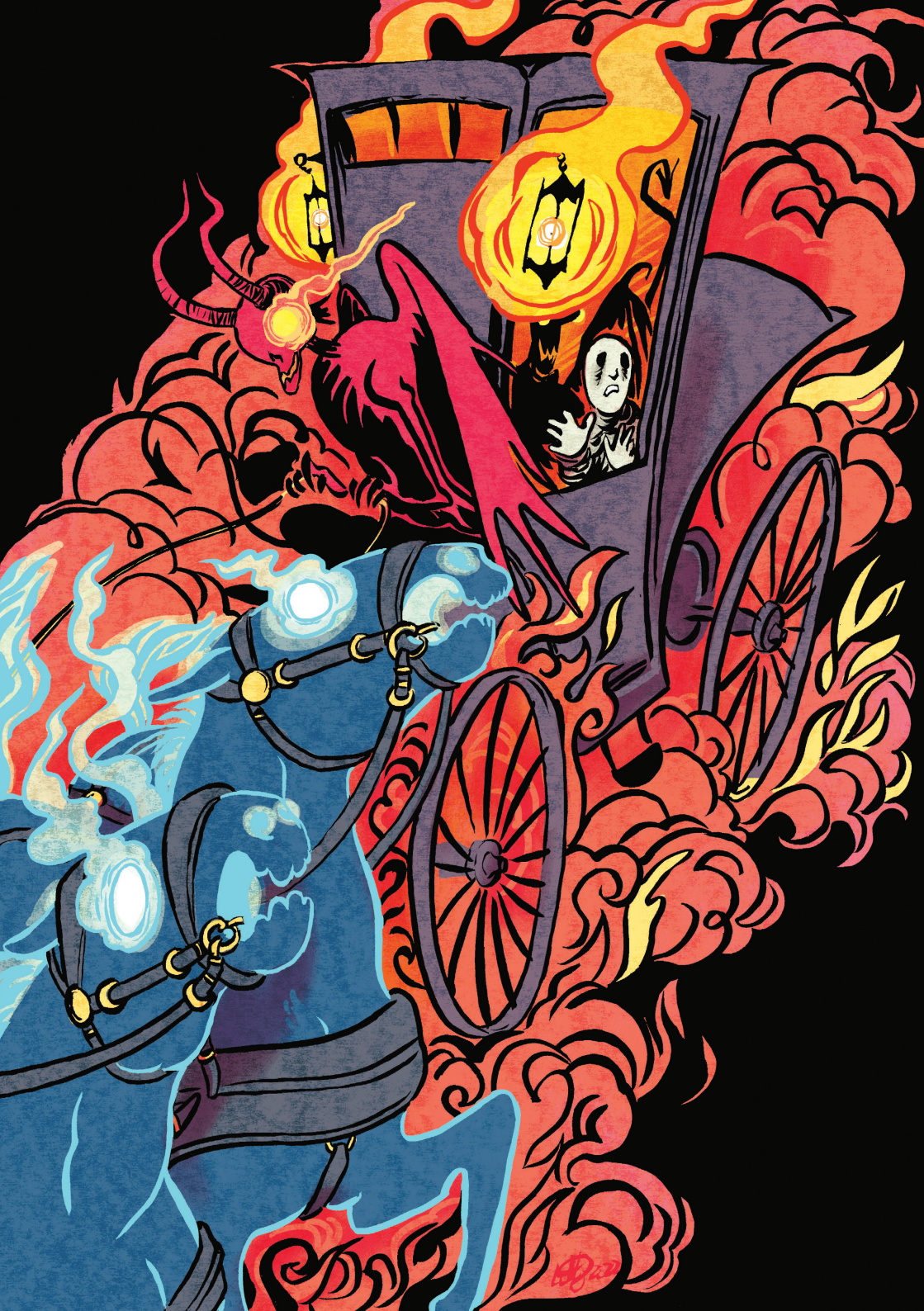
Well Sister, I've never seen anything like that and let me tell you I've seen all sorts of weird shit: I was the one who gave the torch to your abbess when she destroyed that vampire nest two years ago. We first had stories coming from merchants: people disappearing while on their way to the city. We'd been having trouble with a band of thieves, so we didn't pay much attention. That was for the baron's troops to deal with, city guards don't patrol the roads, yeah? We have enough crap to deal with here.

Can I have some wine please? So, as I was saying, people disappearing, it finally happened here: runaway kids, ale fiends, one of those adventurer types from out of town, so we didn't pay much attention. Then a poet disappeared, that gods-damned heretical piece of trash the mayor loved so much. So we had to double our patrols, that's when... *The witness asked for more wine at this point, I told him to wait, wine dulls memories as well as the pain. Make sure our novices keep in mind that our role is to record testimonies, not to comfort witnesses.*

So, uh, yeah, we were patrolling near the merchant quarter when we heard the cries, as we turned the street corner we saw the damn thing: a black wagon, surrounded by red mist that engulfed the street. The horses looked like ghosts, made of mist and fire and the coachman was a demon... On my soul, Sister! The goat horns, the dragon wings! Three more were trying to shove a screaming man into the wagon. A woman was trying to stop them. I knew them, the man was Gustav Aldinger, the brewer, and the woman was Jutta Kloos, an architect. One of the demons pushed her aside while the two others were shoving Gustav inside the wagon. We ran toward them, shouting holy prayers in case it would help. The coachman demon just laughed. Josef was the fastest; he tried to skewer one with his pike, and the demon cut him in half. The coachman cracked his whip and the wagon bolted past us. At the end of the street... I swear sister, it was a gate to Hell! Hundreds of demons were looking at me, laughing! The wagon disappeared into it. There's nothing we could have done.

Sister Odilia Hackeborn's report

This was the eighth and last appearance of what the populace now calls the Höllenwagen. Another plague sent by the gods, like last year's drought or this winter's blizzards. Compiling reports from other convents paints a different picture though, a picture which seem to have eluded local authorities, the fact that some disappearances allowed a third party to gain power: a merchant was rid of a competitor, a noble family of an unsuitable suitor and, as much as it pains me to write it, the clergy of an outspoken poet. In the Würtachsen county, a cabal of eight families was uncovered as they were about to summon a demon. A list of eight names, written



in blood, was found at the premises. During their interrogation the prisoners confessed trying to summon an unknown demon. Our methods again proved to be more effective than the cruder ones of the Inquisition. The Order of the All-Seeing Eye found out that the families learned of the ritual from a yet unidentified sorcerer. The rules were clear: the Höllenwagen must have eight unrelated targets and each target must be named by eight unrelated parties. The search for this sorcerer should be considered a priority for our Order.

Stopping the Höllenwagen seems difficult but not impossible. Compiling different testimonies allowed us to learn the following: the wagon is restricted to roads, the demons manning it never seem to have the same appearance but are vulnerable to blessed weapons. On one occasion, the wagon disappeared once all the demons were killed, leaving the victim behind. They were unfortunately kidnapped on the following night. Destroying the original target list might be enough to stop the Höllenwagen's rampage, a theory which remains to be proven however. ◇

WHAT DOES THE WAGON **LOOK LIKE**?

1. A peasant's wagon **2.** A war-wagon with lots of protruding spikes and blades **3.** A royal-looking coach **4.** A stage coach **5.** A two-tiered carriage **6.** A black stone mounted on four wheels

WHO **RIDES** THE WAGON?

1. Demons **1.** Goblins **3.** Orcs dressed as postal officers **4.** Skeletons **5.** Undead peasants **6.** Ghosts **7.** Berserkers **8.** Mummies **9.** Neanderthals **10.** Pirates **1.1** Gnolls **12.** Chaos dwarves

HÖLLENWAGEN

The Höllenwagen is a carriage manned by demons coming from another dimension (sometimes called Hell by the illiterate). Its appearance varies according to the culture of the place it is summoned in, as does the look of its demonic crew. One thing never changes though: the shroud of red mist that always seems to surround it and the ghostly appearance of the horses pulling it.

To avoid unnecessary headaches consider the Höllenwagen as a single monster, each demon being one of its 'appendages', all acting at the same time. To make things clearer, the referee can describe a tendril of red mist linking the demons to the wagon.

THE CREW

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3 (12 hp), **Att** 1 x mean looking weapon (1d6), **THAC0** 17 [+2], **MV** 60' (20'),
SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 12,
AL Chaotic, **XP** 25, **NA** 5, **TT** -

THE HÖLLENWAGEN

AC 9 [10], **HD** 12+3 (57hp), **Att** 1 x ram (1d6),
THAC0 15 [+4], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D6 W7 P8 B8 S10,
ML 12, **AL** *Chaotic*, **XP** 1 100, **NA** 1, **TT** -

◆ **CREW**
The crew's statistics do not change with their appearance, as they're just extensions of the Höllenwagen. They're immune to non-magical weapons. If killed, the Höllenwagen reverts to a mundane wagon, its unwilling passengers still inside.

◆ **GHOST HORSE**
Cannot attack or take damage. Regular horses unjustly sent to hell; might cooperate with someone able to help them.

◆ **THE HÖLLENWAGEN**
The wagon itself can only be damaged by blessed weapons and holy water. If destroyed, the Höllenwagen disappears, leaving its passengers behind.

WHO'S **INSIDE** THE WAGON?

1. A mad prince **2.** A tired assassin **3.** A runaway monk **4.** A mercenary captain **5.** A tax collector **6.** A duke elector **7.** A wanted witch **8.** A band of dwarves **9.** A famous cook **10.** An inquisitor **11.** The county's best armourer **12.** An unpopular queen **13.** A fellow adventurer **14.** A band of dungeon delvers **15.** A banned scientist **16.** A successful poet **17.** A defrocked priest **18.** A washed-out crusader **19.** An unconventional astronomer **20.** An amnesiac angel

HOOKS

Two hooks are pretty obvious: the characters become the target of the Höllenwagen, or they are led to it when investigating missing people. Classic and effective for sure, but let's consider the following options:

- One of the party's former enemies puts one of them on a list meant for the Höllenwagen. The characters learn of this at dawn and have until sunset to find the list and destroy it.
- The Höllenwagen's crew ask the party to help them capture an escapee demon posing as a mercenary captain.
- As a reward for helping a demon, the characters can ride the Höllenwagen for one night: they have until sunrise to bring eight targets (of their choice) back to Hell.
- Dead characters are given a Höllenwagen: if they capture enough souls they will come back to life.

▸ From **Pays de Loire, France** ⋄ by Nobboc
◆ *Pronounce La VEUH-lüe.*

La Velue

At the dawn of time, la Velue was already a deeply malicious beast. So much so that Noah himself refused to take her aboard his ark. Well, the wingless dragon survived the Flood. She is probably the last of her kind, and this doesn't do anything to lighten her mood.

In the market town of La Ferté, there was a young blacksmith named Célerin. He was a lovely young man: strong and handsome, polite and witty, brave and hard working, pious and respectful, kind and generous. He had everything going for him and all the girls (and some boys) were enamoured with him. But Célerin was pure of heart, looking for true love and he remained resolutely single. One day at dawn, while he was on his way to the workshop, a monstrous beast came out of the river, grabbed him with hooked claws and took him away into the water. According to the horrified witnesses, this beast was none other than the infamous Velue, the Shaggy Beast.

The beast was well known by the elders, who said she had been around since before the Flood. After a life of murder and massacre, she had decided many years ago to settle in a cave under a bridge on the Huisne river, a few days' journey further west. She was a horrid beast: a reptilian head with a barbed crest at the end of a caparisoned neck, an egg-shaped body as big as a house and covered with spikes like a porcupine (except on her snake-like tail) all of it an unhealthy, bright shade of green. For years, la Velue had been wreaking havoc throughout the region, destroying farms, scattering cattle, devouring travellers. In the end, the area had been declared forbidden by the king's men. Some believed the monster sometimes swam up the river, lurking in the reeds to spy on people for inscrutable purposes. The fact she abducted young Célerin proved that she went as far as La Ferté.

Whether la Velue had also fallen in love with the lad, or whether she only wished to deprive his admirers out of pure malice, she took him to her lair. Within the hour, the best folk of La Ferté had formed into a rescue party. They had just reached the entrance to la Velue's cave, when half of them were turned to ashes by her firey breath. Then the fell beast raised the waters of the river, drowning the other half and flooding the surrounding fields, for the water spirits obeyed her out of fear. The few survivors died quickly after that, pierced through by the spikes on la Velue's back, for she could project them with deadly precision from several dozen cubits.

Following this debacle, the good citizens of La Ferté decided to leave the blacksmith to his fate. But Adette, the cobbler's daughter, did not want to forget Célerin. She was also secretly in love with the young blacksmith, but being too shy and discreet, she had never managed to make herself noticed by him. So she decided to go to his rescue, armed only with her father's old sword.

She set off early in the morning, and a few hours down the road, she met a kabouter (see p.14) who was very annoyed because his right boot had a hole in it, making him walk with a limp.

Adette was of course wary of gnomes, as you never know what to expect with faeries. But her generous nature took over and she took the time to fix the kabouter's boot. The gnome thanked her warmly, and from his bag produced a magic shield, saying: *"It is dangerous to go alone. Take this. It will protect you from the beast's flames."* Without a question, Adette took the magic shield.

On the evening of the first day, as she prepared to sleep in a ditch, she heard a whining behind the hedge. It was a giant beaver, its leg caught in a steel trap. Adette was of course wary of beavers; they divert waterways and damage trees. But her empathetic nature took over and she set the beast free. To her amazement, the beaver thanked her warmly and said, *"Take three long hairs from my fur and fashion a crown for yourself. It will let you walk on water so floods aren't a concern to you."* Without a question, Adette made herself a crown.

The next day, the young woman reached the flooded area and got on easily thanks to the beaver's crown. She saw a snake who had taken refuge on top of a bush as it was afraid to jump into the water. Adette was wary of snakes, as sometimes they are the Devil in disguise. But her helpful nature took over and she carefully grabbed it and carried it to dry land. To her amazement, the snake thanked her warmly and said: *"There are no scales at the base of the beast's tail. It is even more fragile than mine when struck there. Remember this!"* Without a question, Adette took the snake's advice.

At noon on the third day, Adette lit a small fire to bake her bread. An old woman, who she knew to be a swamp witch, walked to her. Like all decent folk, Adette was wary of witches. But her charitable nature took over and she gave the old woman half of her bread. The witch thanked her warmly, then spat a green, sticky substance into her hands and offered it to her, saying: *"Coat yourself with this spittle and your skin will become tougher than the toughest armour"*. Without a question, Adette did as she was told.

The next day, Adette arrived at the entrance of la Velue's cave. The monster was puzzled to see Adette moving forward despite the water level. La Velue sneered and blew out her fiery breath. Sheltered behind her shield, Adette kept advancing. Angered, la Velue shot one, then two, then three of her spikes at the woman, but they all bounced off her as if her skin were made of iron. Suddenly afraid for her life, the beast turned around to take refuge in her cave. Adette leapt onto her back, found the base of la Velue's tail, and sliced it off with a single stroke of her sword! The monster screamed in pain. Losing a stream of blood, she plunged into the waters and disappeared. She was never seen again in the region.

Adette went into the cave and freed Célerin. She took him back to the village, and as expected, Célerin who knew he had finally found true love (or rather, that true love had found him), asked her to marry him. But Adette had something else in mind: she had found her true vocation. The next day, she left with a band of good-for-nothing adventurers who were passing through La Ferté.

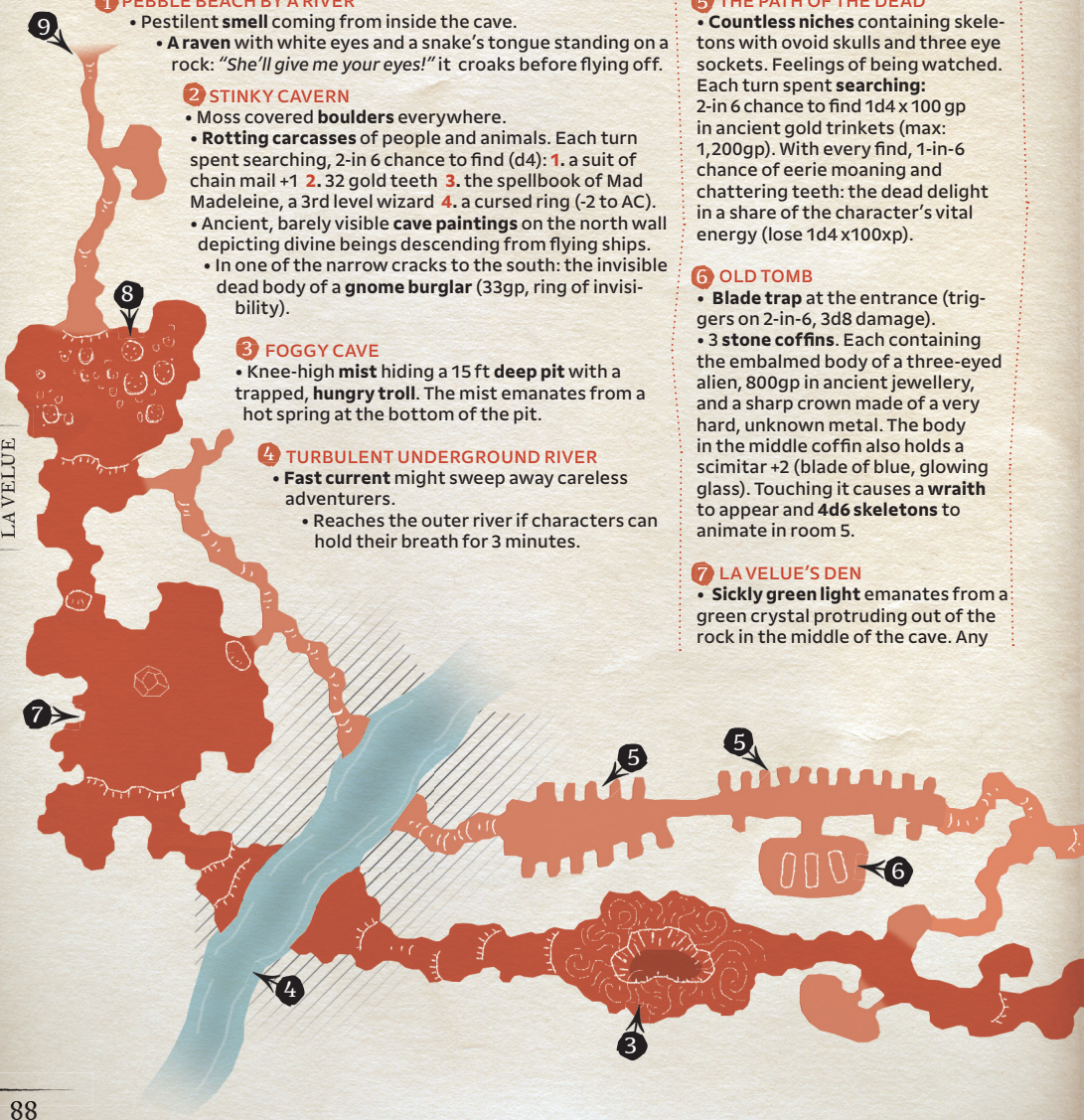
Last she was heard of, she was still plundering dungeons and killing dragons. ◇

HOOKS

- Célerin, the old bachelor blacksmith of La Ferté, is still in love with Adette who saved him in his youth. Last night he saw her in a dream: she had been captured by la Velue, who had returned and was now preparing to torture and devour her in revenge. Célerin would give everything he owns to those who rescue Adette!
- Zaratazarat the Mage thinks he knows la Velue's weak spot: a narrow area at the base of her neck. He gives this information and the location of her lair to the adventurers who will bring him an old grimoire that he knows is in the beast's hoard. Everything else they can keep.
- Traces left by a forgotten civilisation are said to be deep into this cave by the river. Bring some proof to Borotoboros the Wizard, he will reward you greatly.
- The legendary Adie Dragonslayer is opening a school to pass on her knowledge of monster hunting. She sends the adventurers to capture a young dragon so she can train her students. Unfortunately, this information is a trap set by La Velue; it leads to the lair of a much older dragon whose only egg was recently stolen. La Velue will be monitoring the encounter from the river, and will most probably be angry not to see Adie here.

LAIR OF THE SHAGGY BEAST

Due to her size, la Velue can not enter the **light red areas**. If la Velue uses her power of water control, the **areas surrounded by hatches** are completely immersed.
La Velue is present in the lair on 3-in-6. If she's here, 1-in-6 chance to meet her in every accessible room, or in 7 if not met before. If absent, 2-in-6 chance per hour she's back home, entering by 1 or 4.



1 PEBBLE BEACH BY A RIVER

- Pestilent **smell** coming from inside the cave.
- **A raven** with white eyes and a snake's tongue standing on a rock: *"She'll give me your eyes!"* it croaks before flying off.

2 STINKY CAVERN

- Moss covered **boulders** everywhere.
- **Rotting carcasses** of people and animals. Each turn spent searching, 2-in 6 chance to find (d4): **1.** a suit of chain mail +1 **2.** 32 gold teeth **3.** the spellbook of Mad Madeleine, a 3rd level wizard **4.** a cursed ring (-2 to AC).
- Ancient, barely visible **cave paintings** on the north wall depicting divine beings descending from flying ships.
- In one of the narrow cracks to the south: the invisible dead body of a **gnome burglar** (33gp, ring of invisibility).

3 FOGGY CAVE

- Knee-high **mist** hiding a 15 ft **deep pit** with a trapped, **hungry troll**. The mist emanates from a hot spring at the bottom of the pit.

4 TURBULENT UNDERGROUND RIVER

- **Fast current** might sweep away careless adventurers.
- Reaches the outer river if characters can hold their breath for 3 minutes.

5 THE PATH OF THE DEAD

- **Countless niches** containing skeletons with ovoid skulls and three eye sockets. Feelings of being watched. Each turn spent **searching:** 2-in 6 chance to find 1d4 x 100 gp in ancient gold trinkets (max: 1,200gp). With every find, 1-in-6 chance of eerie moaning and chattering teeth: the dead delight in a share of the character's vital energy (lose 1d4 x100xp).

6 OLD TOMB

- **Blade trap** at the entrance (triggers on 2-in-6, 3d8 damage).
- 3 **stone coffins**. Each containing the embalmed body of a three-eyed alien, 800gp in ancient jewellery, and a sharp crown made of a very hard, unknown metal. The body in the middle coffin also holds a scimitar +2 (blade of blue, glowing glass). Touching it causes a **wraith** to appear and **4d6 skeletons** to animate in room 5.

7 LA VELUE'S DEN

- **Sickly green light** emanates from a green crystal protruding out of the rock in the middle of the cave. Any

non-chaotic creature touching the crystal, or staying in the cave for an hour, must save vs death or permanently lose 1 CON.
• 2 **boulders** block access to 8 (1 full turn and a total STR of 22 to move one).
• Piles of **treasure** in the east part: 25,000gp in different coins, gems, jewellery, trinkets, gewgaws, silverware, baubles, etc; *Drums of panic* and *Helm of alignment changing*; grimoire in ancient Greek titled *Necronomicon*.
And a **3-foot high egg** la Velue stole from a green dragon nesting a few days upriver (will hatch in 1d4 weeks).

8 FUNGUS CAVE

• A **gnome called Evaramia**, wearing a gas mask and casting light with a lantern, is looking for her cousin Wilhelm (see room 2).
• Clusters of mushrooms of all sizes and colours. Walk slowly and carefully or 3-in-6 chance to create a cloud of **toxic spores** (d6: 1-2 *Cause Fear*, 3-4 *Sleep*, 5-6 *Cloudkill*).

9 PASSAGE UNDER THE OAK

• Between the roots of a large oak tree, home to a **harpy** called Aristomakhia (present on 2-in-6).
• Aristomakhia loves music more than she loves eating people. **She can be bribed** with songs or instruments.

LA VELUE, The shaggy Beast

An ancient, wicked creature, she's a clever, amphibious, wingless female dragon with giant green spikes covering her entire body, except for her long, serpentine tail. Certainly the only member of her species. She prefers to live in a cave by a river

AC 1 [18], **HD** 8** (31 hp), **Att** 2 x claws (1d6), 1 x bite (3d6), 1 x tail (special) or breath or spikes, **THAC0** 12 [+7], **MV** 90' (30') / 120' (40') Swimming, **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12, **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 1 750, **NA** 1, **TT** H

◆ **BREATH WEAPON**
90' long cone of fire. All caught in the area suffer damage equal to la Velue's current hit points (save vs breath for half).

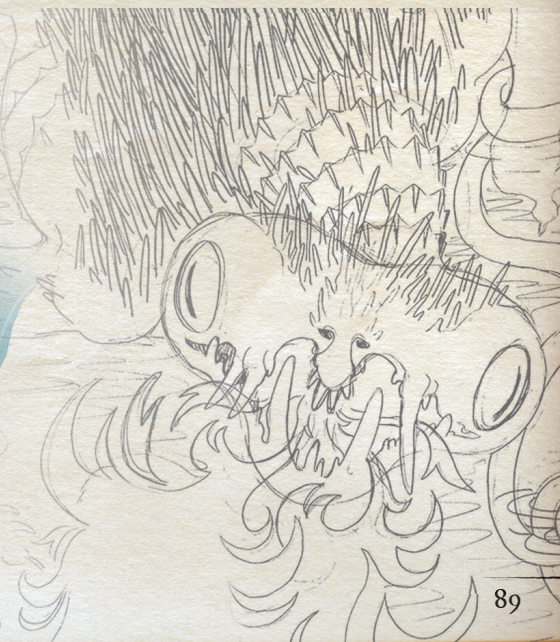
◆ **LANGUAGES**
Draconic, Common, Aramaean.

◆ **WATER MAGIC**
Once a week, la Velue can call for the waters of a river to flood the surrounding area (about one mile radius). The waters rise enough to risk drowning creatures and prevent movement by land.

◆ **SPIKES**
- As a ranged attack, la Velue can throw 3 spikes per round. Damage 1d8 + poison. Range: as crossbow. Poison: save or die.
- Each failed melee attack against la Velue deals 1d6 damage to the attacker.

◆ **TAIL**
- La Velue can attack anyone behind her with a tail whip. Damage 1d8.
- The base of her tail is unprotected. This is known to very few people, but to anyone who knows it and attacks from behind, her AC is 9 [10].

◆ **SLEEPING**
30% of the time.



Kratt

In Estonian folklore, the kratt was described as a construct made mostly of old household implements. It was usually used to steal various items for its owner but became dangerous when left without work, often turning against its creator.

Testimony from the Detelgen village trials records.

Of course your Honour, I remember that woman's words as if it were yesterday: "*Tired of working the fields? Rightly so, they're not even yours! But you can have what your master has. With only three drops of your blood I can build you a creature that will bring you all the riches it finds. It will always work and will never ask for food or money. Take back your life and take what is rightfully yours with your very own kratt!*". What was supposed to say your Honour? I have worked in the fields since I was 12 years old. My back is broken. My hands are sometimes so swollen I can't feel my children's faces. Of course I said yes. We all said yes!

Excerpt from infamous wizard Carla Cofkin's grimoire *Kratts: An Alchemist's Handbook*

The material used in the making of a kratt has, of course, an influence on its durability. There's a catch though, the sturdier the material, the more blood is needed to make it work. Your average peasant is more than happy to pay the usual "three drops" of blood but if you go beyond that, they'll soon run to the local priest. Once the kratt is ready, you can warn them about the fact that the construct needs to work: they have to give it things to do. If they don't, just remind them of the saying: "*demons and devils always find work for idle kratts*", These bumpkins seem to be receptive to that type of argument. I was contacted not long ago by a rival of our lamented duke who made me quite the offer to build kratts for the duke's peasants. The chaos that ensued allowed her to make her move and annex the duchy. This anecdote is not proferred to blow my own horn, of course. I just want to emphasise how more and more people know about the kratts — smart people already found a way to use them. You should find one as a patron as this will give you a modicum of protection against those damn priests (though some of them see the interest of using kratts against rival cults, and then pin the whole thing on some random peasant). ◇

Official warning issued by the King, to be read in all villages

Hear ye! Hear ye! Beware the kratt! By royal decree, the construction and use of the infernal contraption known as kratt is now forbidden! Possession or use of a kratt will be punished by a fine of one hundred gold crowns or serfdom for those unable to pay. Kratt building will be punished by death!

KRATT

Kratts are constructs made of disparate objects and materials. They are usually dog sized, bugt don't have a specific humanoid or animal form.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1* (4 hp), **Att** 1 x whatever pointy things protrude from the kratt (3d4), **THAC0** 18 [+1], **MV** 60' (20')/120' (40') flying, **SV** D14 W15 P16 B17 S18, **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 19 **NA** 1d3, **TT** -

- **FLIGHT.** Kratt's appendages can move at great speed, allowing it to fly up to 30 feet above ground.
- **IMMUNITY.** Unharmed by gas; unaffected by charm, hold, and sleep spells.

THE KRATT IS MADE OF

1. Farming tools 2. Bladed weapons 3. Blunt weapons 4. Music instruments 5. Black powder weapons 6. Bones of various origins

WHO COMMISSIONED THE KRATT?

1. A disgruntled farmer 2. A group of children 3. The village council 4. A bored noble 5. A vengeful widow 6. A jealous lover 7. An exiled prince 8. A defrocked priest 9. A local magistrate 10. A political prisoner 11. A burned-out pit fighter 12. A sorcerer's apprentice

THE KRATT JUST STOLE

1. A kid from a nearby village 2. A sacred calf 3. A murder weapon 4. A magic-user's spellbook or focus 5. A beer recipe 6. Battle plans 7. A wedding ring 8. Heretical texts 9. A family heirloom 10. A relic kept nearby 11. A treasure map 12. The weapon of a local hero

HOOKS

- Villagers offer a kratt to the characters as payment for a job well done.
- A demented sorcerer builds a giant kratt that they plan to use to raid a rival's tower. Guess who's inside that tower when it happens?
- After a kratt killed a whole family, the party must find its maker, the infamous Carla Cofkin, before the Inquisition does.
- The PCs are given access to a whole army of kratts, capable of leveling a town. What will they do with it?

jiu wei hu

The jiu wei hu are powerful fox spirits with the ability to shapeshift. They like to visit Chinese villages disguised as beautiful young people in order to devour the victims they seduce.

- From **Tang Dynasty China**
- by Jonathan Wyrmblood
- *Pronounce joo WAY hoo.*

In an age long past, there was a town located in the outskirts of China. In that town, there was an old, rich man who owned much of the surrounding land. He was known as Mister Zhou. His vast wealth, gained through hard work and parsimoniousness, was known throughout the village, to the point that families would send their daughters to marry him for the opportunity to inherit all of Mister Zhou's land and gold.

Mister Zhou knew that this was the reason those women came, so he refused all of them. Eventually, all of the villagers had been refused, and people stopped coming to his door, including the families of the women, who were resentful that they could not acquire Mister Zhou's wealth. Mister Zhou soon became very lonely, and stayed in his home all day, only leaving to buy his food, as he refused to pay servants to do work he could very well do himself.

On one rainy night, Mister Zhou heard a knock on his door. Upon opening the door, he found a woman more beautiful than all the other women in the village combined, even after being drenched completely in water. Mister Zhou swiftly invited her in, offering her food and clothes to warm her up. Enthralled by the woman's beauty, Mister Zhou decided that this woman would be the one he would marry. He asked her the next morning and the beautiful woman, taking a moment to ponder upon the decision, agreed.

The two lived peacefully for a while, enjoying each other's comfort, and Mister Zhou's love for the beautiful woman grew stronger and stronger. After a couple of weeks had passed, Mister Zhou suddenly became ill. Despite his protestations about unnecessary expenses, snake oil peddlers, and crooked surgeons, a doctor was brought in. The doctor tried all the medicines at his disposal but could not cure Mister Zhou's illness. Some people in the town told Mister Zhou that the woman must have poisoned him, but Mister Zhou thought they just wanted to get rid of his fiancée so that they could marry their daughters off to him and get his money when he died. So, the beautiful woman stayed by his side until he drew his last breath.

A few days later, the time came for the body to be removed. As Mister Zhou's neighbours entered the bedroom, they were stunned by the horrifying sight in front of them. Covered in blood and gore, the beautiful woman was gorging upon the corpse. Noticing the intruders, the woman transformed into a nine-tailed fox and dashed out of the doorway before anyone could stop her. The men followed after her, shouting for help as they chased her out of the village. As they were chasing after the devilish fox, they felt their memory slowly fogging up, until they stopped, wondering what they were doing standing in the middle of the road to the nearby forest.

A funeral was held for Mister Zhou, and the village went on with their days, none of them remembering a beautiful woman or a nine-tailed fox. The story doesn't say who inherited Mister Zhou's fortune. ◇

JIU WEI HU

The jiu wei hu is a silver fox spirit, half as tall as a man, with nine long tails behind it. However, the Jiu wei hu are often encountered in the form of a beautiful human or demihuman in their search of unsuspecting victims to lure and devour. While they can act benevolently, they are known as tricksters, and more often will act in their own best interests.

AC 5 [14] (9 [10] in human form), **HD** 4* (18hp), **Att** 1x bite (1d6) or 1 x weapon (in human form; as weapon + poison), **THAC0** 15 [+4], **MV** 150' (50'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 , **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 425, **NA** 1, **TT** -

- **SEDUCING PRESENCE**
  The jiu wei hu can charm (as per *charm person*) an individual who would be attracted to their physical form. If the saving throw vs spells is failed, the victim falls desperately in love with the jiu wei hu. This effect lasts until the victim or jiu wei hu dies, or if it is cast on someone else.
- **POISONER**
  Jiu wei hu aren't fighters, but they excel at poison brewing. They often carry daggers, throwing blades, and blowgun darts laced with various poisons (see sidebar). If they expect dangerous company, they set up poisoned traps.
- **SMALL AND SILENT**
  A jiu wei hu who doesn't want to be found is hard to track. In natural environments, they are unnoticed 75% of the time as long as they aren't moving.
- **SURPRISE**
  Because they are so quiet, jiu wei hu gain surprise on a 1-4.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A JIU WEI HU

- **Huli jing (2 HD):** A jiu wei hu does not begin its life as a true nine-tailed fox, but rather, as a huli jing, a single-tailed fox spirit. As they grow older, the huli jing grows new tails until they have nine. A huli jing doesn't have the ability to shapeshift. Once they reach fifty years of age, the huli jing acquire the ability to shapeshift into women, becoming a jiu wei hu.

- **Hundred year-old jiu wei hu (6 HD):** At the age of a hundred, a jiu wei hu is able to take the form of a young girl, a wise elder of any gender, or a handsome man.

- **Celestial fox (8 HD):** The few jiu wei hu who reach a thousand years are able to communicate with Heaven and, if judged worthy, ascend into celestial foxes. They become golden-furred servants of the gods, and their alignment changes to Lawful.

WHAT IS THE JIU WEI HU'S METHOD OF KILLING?

1 A knife to the throat 2 A magical, incurable poison
3 Drowning 4 Possessing the body through black magic
5 Siphoning life force 6 Strangulation

WHO IS THE JIU WEI HU'S CURRENT TARGET?

1 A greedy merchant who sells an assortment of silks and tapestries 2 A young peasant with a tragic backstory
3 A local bureaucrat that no one trusts 4 A successful wheat farmer with seven children, none with the same mother
5 A powerful aristocrat, perhaps the illegitimate daughter of an emperor 6 A travelling glee-man from a faraway land
7 A skilful blacksmith, renowned for his magical weaponry
8 A retired soldier, just looking to end her days in peace

NOT ALL JIU WEI HU ARE EVIL

While many jiu wei hu enjoy eating human flesh and seducing people, some act as village guardians and are revered for it. These creatures are referred to as *holy jiu wei hu*. They live under the rule of refraining from harming humans, unless someone needs to be taught a lesson.

THE NINE TAILS: POISONS OF THE JIU WEI HU

All poison effects are avoided with a successful saving throw. Antidotes exist, but they are either rare, obscure, or terribly expensive.

1. **Black cherry smoke.** A love potion in incense form. If it is breathed for 10 minutes, the victim falls in love with the first person they see. The effect lasts until the next new moon.
2. **Marble brew.** A blade poison that slowly paralyses muscles. The victim takes a cumulative -1 to all rolls every minute for 10 minutes, at which time they are paralysed for another hour.
3. **Serpent-bloom petal.** A deadly poison that kills in 1d4 minutes once it enters the bloodstream.
4. **Silvertongue.** A contact poison cosmetic, it makes the victim susceptible to suggestion (when asked to do something they wouldn't do, save to resist convincing) for 1d4 hours.
5. **Prodigality potion.** A sweet syrup that kills without mercy all financial sense in the victim for a week.
6. **Wine of avarice.** A bitter drink which makes it almost impossible to spend more than a handful of coppers at a time for a week.
7. **Sting of illusory conjuring.** A needle poison, it makes the victim create hallucinations of desirable things and people.
8. **Weakening willow.** A poison that, if touched to the skin, makes the victim's metabolism susceptible to other poisons (-4 to saving throws) for a day.
9. **Curse of slow isolation.** A blade poison that destroys one of the victim's senses (d6: 1. sight, 2. hearing, 3. smell, 4. touch, 5-6. taste) permanently. Saves after the first one get a cumulative +1 bonus, roll again if you get a sense that was destroyed already.

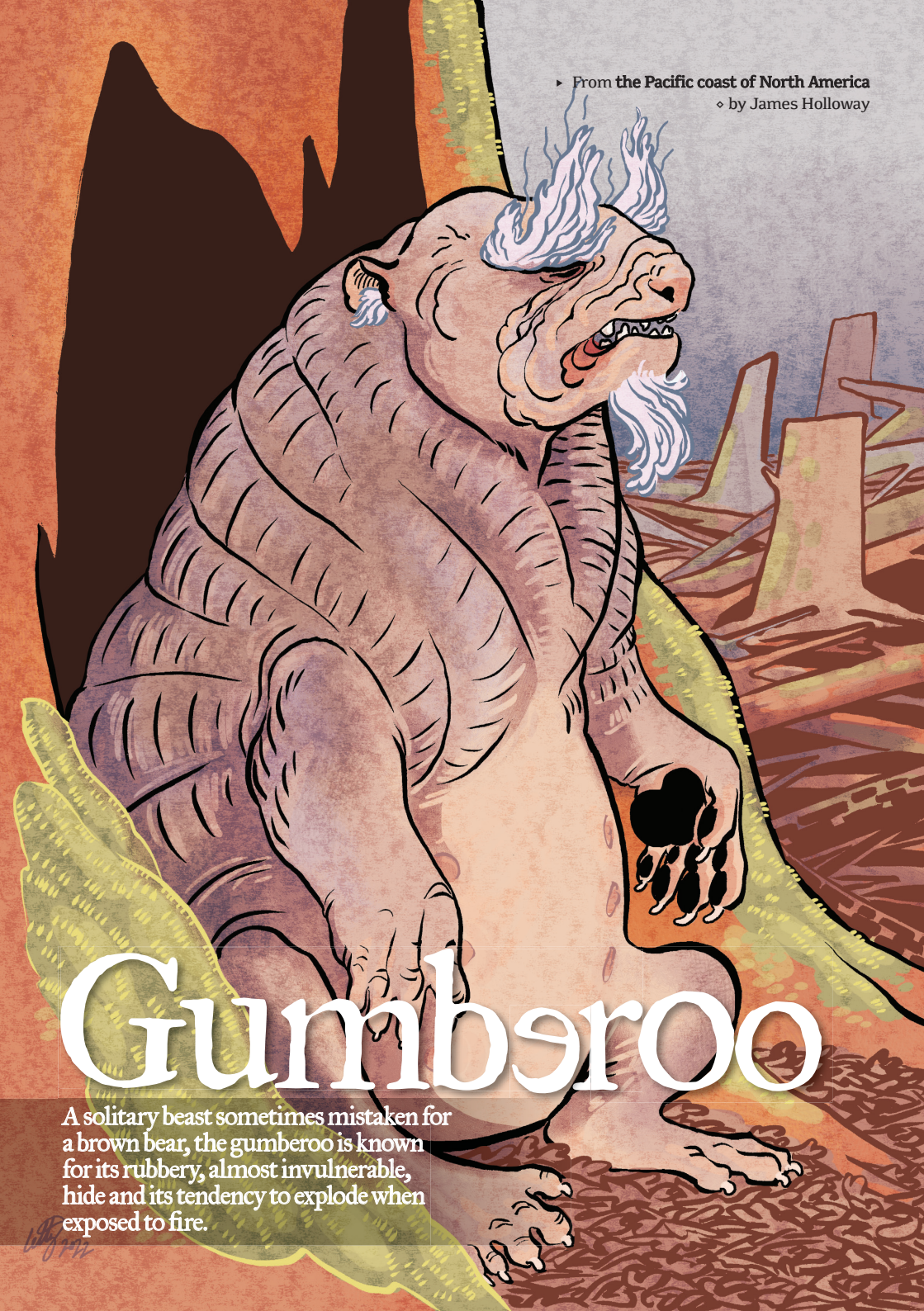
HOOKS

➢ During their travels, the adventuring party encounters a beautiful woman who seems to hold a great fondness for one of the characters in particular. Perhaps the woman is a hungry jiu wei hu looking for her next victim, or she could just be a normal person trying to escape from a marriage by finding a lover who will defend her from the mercenaries on her trail. Hope for the latter?

➢ Golden Flower is hiring adventurers to get her vengeance upon the jiu wei hu who murdered her husband in his sleep. The last sighting of the fox spirit was deep in the woods, and she will gladly guide the party as long as she is given the opportunity to deal the killing blow.

➢ The emperor is fixated on marrying a jiu wei hu he first noticed while she was escaping the palace after killing his top magistrate. He will give a large sum of gold to whoever can find her and bring her back to him. Most imperial officials would rather the nine-tailed fox was discreetly eliminated.

➢ The characters encounter a jiu wei hu in a magical foothold trap laid by a renowned monster slayer. In exchange for saving her, the jiu wei hu could offer to kill anyone of their choice within a fortnight. She would much rather get saved without having to promise anything, of course.



▸ From **the Pacific coast of North America**
◇ by James Holloway

Gumberoo

A solitary beast sometimes mistaken for a brown bear, the gumberoo is known for its rubbery, almost invulnerable, hide and its tendency to explode when exposed to fire.

The lumber trade is a lonely business, and a dangerous one at that. Out in the woods, miles from any town, working all day, and nothing to do at night but tell stories. No one could blame a lumberjack for starting to imagine things. But the gumberoo isn't one of those things – it's real. You can believe me, for I've seen it with my own eyes!

We'd been almost four weeks in camp and we were starting to get a little rowdy. The boss was making life hard, so me and two other fellows – Henk Lenkman was one of `em, and Bullseye Bill Brayman t'other – snuck out of camp and went off to a spot Henk knew next to a stream to have some drinks in peace and quiet. We were about three drinks in, or maybe three and a half, when we heard this rustling in the bushes and crackling in the branches, and then we heard something wheezing and snuffling.

We thought it might be a bear, and Bill got out his musket – carried that thing with him everywhere, he did – and peered into the dark, but all we could see was a big shadow. Well, it got closer, and as soon as it came into the firelight Bill took his shot.

Never was a better marksman than Bullseye Bill, even four and a half drinks in, and he hit that creature right in the neck, or at least where its neck should be, for it wasn't a bear after all, but a huge sort of oval thing, all smooth, but with a head like a shaved bear. When the bullet hit it, it didn't go through the skin, but just bounced off as fast as it came. Bounced right off and hit Henk in the leg. He fell over, hollering up a storm, and the creature came crashing toward us. I jumped back, but I tripped over the log I'd been sitting on and fell right in our campfire. Set my trouser leg on fire, and the tail of my shirt too.

Well, monster or no monster, I did what anyone who was on fire would do: I leapt to my feet and ran around screaming. I was sure I was dead, between the creature on the one hand and the fire on the other, but a peculiar thing happened. The beast reared up when I got close to it and ran off. Haven't seen it since.

Of course, when we talked about it back at camp we got bawled out. Boss said Bill was drunk and fooling around with his gun; shot Henk by accident. And after a while, folks even started to believe it. Even Henk and Bill. But I know what I saw.

The Gumberoo is a large territorial omnivore found in dense woodland habitats. An adult gumberoo is roughly the size of an adult brown bear. Because of its dark coloration, it is sometimes mistaken for a bear at a distance or in the dark, but closer inspection reveals many differences. For instance, the gumberoo is hairless except for some long, straggling beardlike hairs on the chin and large, bushy eyebrows. Gumberoos nest in the hollow bases of burned trees and emerge only to look for food. During these foraging expeditions, they eat as much as they can before returning to their lairs to digest.

The gumberoo's body is swathed in a layer of smooth, rubbery hide that provides excellent protection against attacks. This thick hide is so elastic that it can even reflect projectiles or attacks launched at the creature. One theory advanced for this unique ability is that the gumberoo's diet or habitat includes the resinous sap of a species similar to the rubber tree. Metabolizing this rubbery substance gives the creature its springy blubber.

One downside of this diet is that the gumberoo's layer of springy armour is highly flammable. Gumberoos avoid fire, but when caught by a forest fire or lightning strike they have been known to explode, often taking nearby creatures with them. This may explain the animal's solitary lifestyle, since a family group of gumberoos would be extremely vulnerable to chain reactions.

The people of the lumberwoods believe wholeheartedly in the gumberoo's invulnerability. In fact, it is still possible to hit the creature in vulnerable spots such as the mouth or eyes; it's just very difficult. ◇

LAVINIA MORTSAFE

The daughter of a wealthy industrialist from Back East, Lavinia Mortsafe has grown up on thrilling tales of the lumberwoods and the creatures that dwell in them. Naturally, this has turned into a desire to hunt and kill them. Despite having heard of the many risks, she is convinced that the folk of the region have simply not been shooting at the gumberoo with large enough guns. Lavinia is far too optimistic about her chances of hunting the gumberoo, but she is willing to pay well for guides and helpers on her expedition. She is cheerful, friendly, and keen to learn everything about the lumberwoods and their culture. The only downside is that she's completely wrong about her ability to harm the beast; the Lumberwoods Magnum Express will bounce its rounds harmlessly off the gumberoo's hide.

◆ **The Lumberwoods Magnum Express**

This massive hunting rifle combines a powerful powder charge and a heavy ball to bring down even the biggest targets, or at least that's what Lavinia Mortsafe thinks.

Damage 1d10, Missile (5'-80', 81'-160', 161-240'), Reload, Slow, Two-handed

The Magnum Express is a temperamental instrument. If it gets damp or is jostled or struck, roll 1d6 the next time it is inspected or fired.

1	The gun is damaged and will not fire until the user performs 1d3 hours of maintenance.
2	The gun is damaged and will suffer a -1 to hit until the user performs 1d3 hours of maintenance.
3-6	The gun is unharmed.

The Lumberwoods Magnum Express uses custom-made high-calibre ammunition. A box of 30 bullets costs 15gp.

GUMBEROO

A bear-like beast whose brown, rubbery skin is difficult to pierce, but also very flammable.

AC 2 [17], **HD** 5 (22hp), **Att** 1 x headbutt (1d6) or 1 x trample (2d6), **THAC0** 15 [+4], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 300, **NA** 1, TT U

◆ **RUBBERY HIDE**

An unsuccessful melee attack against the gumberoo rebounds against the attacker. Make a new attack roll using the attack value of a 1 HD monster. A missile attack that misses the gumberoo but would have hit a target with AC 7 [12] rebounds against a random target within range. As with a melee attack, make a new attack roll using the attack value of a 1 HD monster.

◆ **HIGHLY FLAMMABLE**

Every time a gumberoo takes damage from fire, it has 1-in-6 chance of exploding. The explosion kills the animal and causes 3d6 damage in a 10ft radius around it (save vs paralysation for half damage).

GUMBER-LUMBER RESIN

This sticky sap comes from a tree found deep in the lumberwoods and is a favorite food of the gumberoo. In its natural form, it is a thick, sticky resin that can be patiently spread with a stick or knife blade. If gently warmed, it becomes easier to work with and can be applied to a 10 x 10 foot area within one turn (requiring 10 pounds of resin). After another turn, the substance cures and becomes a thick, rubbery layer that bounces dropped objects or even creatures back upward with almost equal force. Lumberjacks sometimes use it to create comfortable mattresses for their tents, while adventurers use it to make pits or other dangerous areas safe.

GUMBEROO-HIDE ARMOUR

◆ The springy hide of the gumberoo is effective against all kinds of attacks. A suit of leather armour made from gumberoo hide counts as a suit of leather armour +1, although it is not magical. In addition, any attack made against the wearer rebounds against a randomly-selected creature if the attacker rolls a 1 or 2. In the case of a melee attack, the blow bounces toward a random adjacent creature, while a projectile ricochets toward a random creature in approximately the same direction as the shooter (ie the projectile will not bounce off and hit someone on the other side of the target). Make a new attack roll against the new target, using the attack value of a 1 hit die monster.

◆ The resin soaked into the hide makes gumberoo-hide armour flammable. A character wearing this armour takes an extra point of damage from all fire-based attacks. If the armour is exposed to fire for a prolonged period (1d4+1 rounds), the resin will combust, doing 1d6 damage to the wearer per round until extinguished (up to a maximum of 10 rounds). Once extinguished, it will have lost its armour bonus and elastic properties.

HOOKS

➢ Lumberjacks adopt adorable woodland creatures and take them home to their families, unaware that they are lost infant gumberoos. Guess where the party is spending the night when Ma Gumberoo comes looking for her pups?

➢ A legendary lost tome is said to be hidden in the lumberwoods. Unfortunately, its resting place is the den of a gumberoo. To make matters worse, angry locals are preparing to hunt the creature and blow it up.

➢ As settlements encroach on the lumberwoods, the loss of habitat sends curious gumberoos into newly-built towns, where they can explore in an environment every bit as flammable as – and with many more sources of flame than – their native forests.

➢ Ze Great Zinker, a goblin warlord, learns to tame (approximately, anyway) gumberoos, mounting howdahs on their backs and turning them into arrow—bouncing steeds for elite goblin raiders.

Angelhead

Angelic children heads with small feathered wings attached to them. Flutter in chuckling swarms. Friendly and moody as three-year-olds, and nasty when angered. Often summoned to protect baroque temples and romantic scenes.

In the inns and taverns of this grey suburb, she's known among the cutpurses and pilferers as Lady Angel. She dresses in what was once a fancy purple coat, the stink of cold tobacco and rancid ale following her everywhere she goes. Her broken silhouette, her nickname, her contorted smile, all were familiar to me. She was often heard rambling about angels and baby faces, as if she was seeing them around her. Had she been an angel-faced actress, fallen from grace after a love story with some aristocrat went sour? Unless she's an "angel maker", helping unfortunates ladies with unwanted pregnancies?

She knows a lot of secrets about this city, invaluable stuff for people like me. But after a few minutes of business talk, her dreamy smile comes back and so do the baby angels. I found it frustrating at the time. Like something prevented her to give advice about a possible burglary.

I was puzzled by the respect she enjoyed among the elders. Obviously, they knew something I ignored. Once, stupid young foreigners annoyed her; they never came back, even to reclaim their lost fingers. This made me want to know more about Lady Angel. She has those tiny scars on her hands and face that seem to have her in a lot of pain. The incredible amounts of beer she drinks dulls it, I think.

I was still young then, but I was also ambitious, looking for something bigger, a glorious job to show them all what I could do. There was this church, Our Lady of All Seven Splendours, which is still renowned among rubes for its gorgeous décor, and in our profession for never having been broken into. I spent some time there, taking account of the golden altars, bejewelled cups, and masterpiece paintings. It wasn't the oldest temple in the city, but it was built at a time when the architectural fad for showing off wealth was at its peak. Every inch of wood or stone was carved and painted with intricate, unexpected details.

While I was casing, I recorded everything about the floor plan, the windows, the doors, the halberdiers on duty, the dates and hours of ceremonies... But I didn't really take note of the angels. They were funny, rococo figures, these little winged heads,

showing up in paintings and bas relief. I never thought there could be a link with old Lady Angel.

The laws of the trade dictate that a plan must be put forward to an elder before the job. So, I met with Giuliano Gilded-Tips, a man I trusted and respected. But the day before I was to meet him, he showed up at the tavern I used to spend my evenings at. "I know what you're planning, son, and I can't really stop you from doing something stupid. Just let me tell you someone tried before you, and she failed." He glanced at Lady Angel, half asleep on a stool in front of her empty glass of ale. "It was years before you were born. She was the best of us. She inspired us to dare things we wouldn't have even been thinking about. She planned it well, she knew details we'd never have thought about. But she forgot to research the angels..." He never finished his sentence, exactly like Lady Angel does. He just went to her and touched her hand, as old lovers do, and walked away. ◇

ANGELHEAD

Cherub heads with wings behind their ears. They are tasked with guarding holy sites and works of art.

AC 5 [14], **HD** ½ (2hp), **Att** 1 x bite (1d4), **THAC0** 19 [0], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D14 W15 P16 B17 S18, **ML** 7, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 5, **NA** 3d6 (6d10), **TT** -

◆ **LIGHT**
Angelheads may generate light as will, as per the spell.

VARIANTS

1. **BATS:** small bat wings and vampire fangs. Wounds can only be healed by magic.
2. **CATS:** cute kitten faces. A swarm can use a *charm person* spell once a day.
3. **SKULLS:** grey feathers and skull faces. On maximum damage, they drain one level.
4. **RAINBOW:** coloured feathers and rainbow light spell effect.
5. **SNAKE:** cute medusa heads. On a hit, save against petrification or be turned to salt.
6. **FAUN:** baby faun head with horns. Makes underpants jokes.

ONE WITH THE ANGELS: THE WATCHER

Decades after the story above, Lady Angel still haunts the smoky taverns where the staff knows better than to deny her credit for her daily pints. You see, her encounter with the angelheads didn't only break her reason. It turned her into an angel watcher, a mostly undead creature whose role is to liaise with the world of the living. Only truly holy mortals can communicate and direct angelheads (meaning most priests have no contact with them). When the angelheads are instructed by their divine hierarchy to share a message or announcement with people at the temple they protect, there is rarely is anyone to receive it. This is why clever or powerful victims of the cherubs are turned into watchers.

A watcher keeps all their statistics, but loses any magical powers and spells that aren't divine in origin. They become undead for all intents and purposes other than turning; they can be turned by Chaotic clerics but never commanded. A watcher always sees an angel or other divine being, even if it is invisible or in disguise.

HOOKS

➢ Lady Goedenbrooken, a rich burgher from a merchant family, complains her beautiful religious painting has been stolen shortly after she bought it. No clue can be found, it is as if the painting flew away; a drunkard testifies he saw it flying on many little wings as he was resting on a bench in the middle of the night. It appears the painting was first stolen from a temple, sold to an art dealer, and then to the lady. Angelheads came to reclaim it because a character in the paintings is in love with another character from another painting in the church they protect.

➢ In a beautiful but half-ruined cathedral, the sculpted grave of a countess from a fallen dynasty is surrounded by carved roses and stone angel heads. During an eclipse, the grave turns into a bed, the countess wakes as a mummy, and the sneaky little angelheads fly out to avenge her and help her descendants rise back to power.

➢ A young novice called Clothilda has been tasked by her dying aunt (and the abbess of her convent) to bring a family heirloom back to their native village across the mountains. It is a silver statue of Saint Oophale adorned with many tiny, golden cherubs. Clothilda is escorted by Oldri, a warrior-nun, but she has a little gold to hire a few more bodyguards. Unknown to her, the angelheads in the relic do not want it to leave the hands of a holy person. They will relentlessly plague everyone involved until a fitting new owner is found. Clothilda could be it, if only she renounced her impossible (yet reciprocated) love for Oldri.

▸ From **county Kilkenny, Ireland** ⋄ by Eric Nieudan
◆ *Pronounce oss-OR-ee*

The folk known as the wolves of Ossory were skin-walkers, able to turn into wolves or possibly manifest their wolf-selves while their human bodies slept. Contrary to what priests will tell you, their abilities didn't come from the Devil..

The wolf-walkers of Osraige

There was once a holy monk who travelled through the deep forests of Hibernia. Back then, the island was a wilderness the knights of King John had only started taming. It was a place of gods and magic from before the time of humans, a place of talking beasts, peopled by wild folk whose humanity hadn't been ascertained yet. The monk feared not for his life – he knew a violent death at the hand of pagan monsters would be rewarded by his One God. His worry was that his time on this mortal plane would be ended early, while there was so much to do for the glory of Heaven.

The monk had gotten lost on his way to Troim from Ard Machae, and had found himself in the forest kingdom of Osraige. Ahead and by the side of the road, he noticed two furtive silhouettes. Their shaggy outlines were no good omen, so the monk took his silver-studded mace in hand and silently recited a magical prayer of protection.

"Stay your silvered hand, monk, we mean you no harm" came a raspy voice as two shaggy, red-eyed wolves stalked out of the shadow. *"We need your help. Our mother is dying, and she wants to confess her sins."*

The holy monk was not fooled by this sort of devilry. He first tried to ignore the monstrous beasts, confident his prayer would protect him, at least long enough for them to renounce and leave. The wolves did not block his way, but they followed him. They said they were followers of the Sacrificed Prophet like him, cursed to walk the earth as wolves for years at a time. The monk kept walking, but he was increasingly worried that he might be denying a dying woman entrance into the Kingdom of God. When the wolves asked *"Are not the people of Rome, where your Church rules from, descended from men who fed from the teat of a wolf?"* he relented. He followed the beasts deep into the forest and into a clearing. There, he found found a white she-wolf lain on a bed of moss. She whispered her thanks as he gave her the last rites.

But the holy monk had to know the source of this wolf-walking curse. The dying beast grinned in ominous wolf fashion. *"The curse has been in our blood since the time of our old king Laignech Fàelad, who was part man and part wolf. But the magic wore off. When I was a lass it was but stories, that and the habit of howling to frighten our enemies. But not long ago, the curse was revived..."*

"By whom? Who was the vicious hag who cursed your God-fearing people to live as stalking beasts of the woods?"

There was a racking cough, a trickle of blood, and the old wolf died without answering, turning back into the shape of a tattooed, white-haired woman. The monk vowed to discover the truth and punish the guilty, or to punish their heirs should they have been dragged to Hell already. It is not said if he ever found out the origin of the affliction of Osraige. We do know he became an archdeacon and a respected scholar, and it is from his writings we know this story. He told it before kings and queen, and even the Pope himself. It was often repeated abroad to warn the brave souls heading for the Hibernian colonies.

The truth, I will tell it to you, and you will understand why I believe the holy man simply omitted the ending of his tale. Maybe a hundred

years before his time, a missionary cleric had visited Osraige. He wanted to warn its folk away from witchcraft and devil-worshipping, and turn them to his One God. He had been received with curiosity, but also mockery. Hibernians are well known for never reacting seriously to the most dire of truths. I believe it is their way of dealing with the harshness of life. But the cleric did not get to know these folk before preaching at them. Grinning like wolves, they had started to howl at the cleric, who of course took umbrage at this welcome. He called on his divine power to teach these people a lesson. If they wanted to behave like beasts of the woods, then they would become wolves for a day and a night!

Had he bothered to ask about the kingdom he was in, he would have realised his temporary spell would instead give the people of Osraige their wolf-walking powers back for at least another dozen generations. This ill-informed missionary, the originator of the wolf-walking curse, was a Welshman priest called Pátraic. The man who became famous as Saint Patricius. But that part would not fit the story, right? ◇

WOLFSBANE AND MONKSHOOD

The purple flower known as wolfsbane in most realms is a well known way to protect oneself against werewolves. But the wolf-walking curse isn't lycanthropy. Hibernian wolf-folk aren't frightened by the poisonous herb, it is just more dangerous to them. Any creature consuming wolfsbane receives 2d6 damage unless they save vs poison. A wolf-walker takes an extra 2d6 damage regardless of the save.
Monkshood is a related plant with a darker, sometimes black flower. It is said to be a holy bloom, and is used by wolf-walker witches to fashion charms against magic. When harvested on the morning of the solstice and dried under a full moon, it can be put in a pouch, typically carried around one's neck.. The wearer receives +1 to their saving throws against magic, +2 if it is of divine nature. After every new moon, the charm has 1-in-6 chance of losing its potency.

WOLF-WALKERS

Wolf-walkers are humans who periodically turn to large, blue-grey wolves. They live in close-knit clans, hunting, gathering, or wolfing (raiding their neighbours). They are usually taken by their curse at the same time, at which point they leave their forest villages and live as wolves, rarely speaking to humanoids.

AC 6 [13] (9 [10] in human form), **HD** 3+1* (14hp),
Att 1 × bite (1d6) or 1 x weapon, **THAC0** 16[+3],
MV 180' (60') / 120' (40') in human form,
SV D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral,
XP 75, **NA** 1d20 (4d6), **TT** B

- **LANGUAGES**
  Wolf-walkers speak both the common tongue and the language of wolves and other canines regardless of their form.
- **FRIENDS TO WOLVES**
  When encountered, there is a 3-in-6 chance a pack of 2d6 regular wolves is close by, ready to help in 1d6 rounds.
- **WOLFSBANE SUCEPTIBILITY**
  Take double damage when ingesting the herb – see sidebar – but are not repelled by it.

WOLF-CLOAKS AND THE WOLFSPELL

If one knows the blood ritual to prevent a wolf-walker's body from reverting to its humanoid form after death, they can skin it to fashion a magical cloak. Carefully cured and inscribed in ogham runes, the cloak grants the power to cast the wolfspell once per week. Laying onto the ground with the cloak on top of them, they free their spirit from their body and send it to fill the wolf's skin, in essence becoming a wolf (with the stats and abilities of a wolf-walker) for an indefinite time.
Their humanoid body is left behind in a state of suspended animation, needing no food, water, or even air, and protected from the effects of time. Any damage received by the humanoid or lupine body, is also taken by the other. If either form drops to zero hit points, the character dies. Note that the wolf character doesn't have any kind of link to their body. If it is taken away and hidden, the character can potentially be trapped in their wolf-form for all eternity.

HOOKS

➢ The party spots a human toddler riding on the back of a gigantic wolf. The pack cannot take care of its uncursed daughter and begs the adventurers to escort her to relatives in a distant forest. They neglect to warn them about the ghostly hunters tracking them. What does the immortal warrior-queen Medb want with an uncursed wolf-walker child?

➢ The monk from the story, now an affluent archdeacon, has heard about hellish wolves terrorising the countryside. He offers a bounty in gold for each tattooed left hand brought back to him. Despite the presence of a clan of wolf-walkers in the forest, the beasts harassing the land are actually a group of bandits led by Túathal Whitemane, a master rogue and wolf-warrior, along with a large pack of dire wolves under his control. When he learns about the bounty, he conceives of a plan to abduct the archdeacon. Who will the characters side with?

➢ Geyran the Learned, a traveller and naturalist of no small reputation, and a friend of Zaratazarat the Mage, has read about the beast-men of the deep forest. She would like to meet wolf-walkers and ask them all sorts of uncomfortable questions. Perhaps also borrow a little blood and submit them to a few simple experiments. She pays handsomely to be guided across the forest. She expects the party to help convince the wolf-folk, and deal with any sanguine reactions to her scientific inquiries.

➢ Auz the Red, a former sea-raider, has contracted lycanthropy from a devillish shark. He has travelled to the land of wolf-walkers to learn from them how to tame the fish-beast inside him, but something has gone horribly wrong. He slaughtered most of the clan he was staying with. Now a near invincible wolf-shark-pirate abomination, he roams the woods in search of prey. Only the surviving wolf-folk know in what passage tomb the moonstone idol that can cure Auz can be found.

THE CURSE CYCLE

Depending on its ancestry and history, each clan of wolf-walkers is affected by the curse differently. Roll 2d6:

2 Mostly live as wolves. They can become humans at will but rarely chose to do so. **3-5** Become wolves for a whole year every seven years. **6-8** Turn into wolves every midwinter for 28 days. **9-11** Become wolves on the dawn of holy days for 1d6 days. **12** Only turn into wolves briefly (1d3 hours) when angered.

NEW CHARACTER CLASS

THE WOLF-WARRIOR

Wolf-warriors, or *luchthonn* (wolf-skins) in the Hibernian language, are those wolf-walkers who learn to master their curse with rigorous self discipline and ancestral blood magic.

Requirements: Minimum CON 9
Prime requisite: STR and WIS
Hit dice: 1d8
Maximum level: 14
Armour: Leather, shields
Weapons: Any
Language: Alignment, Common, the tongue of all wolves

• COMBAT
Wolf Warrior can use all weapons and leather armour and shields.

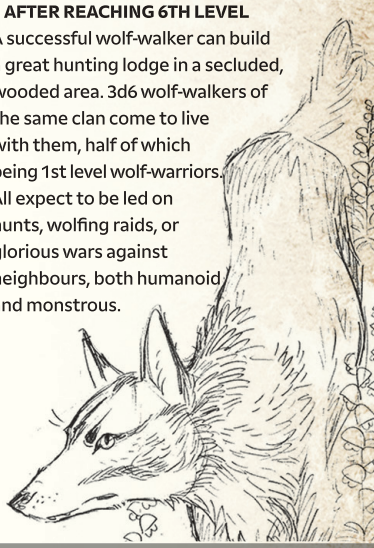
• LUPINE SENSES
Wolf-warriors have better senses than humanoids. They see in the dark (not as well as with infravision), hear noises on 2-in-6, and can track prey by its scent (4-in-6 chance if the trail is fresh, dropping to 1-in-6 in the worst possible conditions).

• WOLFSPELL
Wolf-warriors can cast the wolfspell (see opposite) using a regular wolf pelt. If they acquire a magical wolf-cloak however, their lupine form has the stats of a dire wolf. When they return to their body, they must sleep for a full day.

• CALL OF THE WILD
Once per day, a wolf-warrior can call on their wolf siblings for help (if there are any in the area). A number of wolves equal to the character's level arrive in 1d6 turns; they follow the rules for hirelings, returning to the wild at dawn.

• ANATHEMA TO THE DIVINE
When targeted by a spell cast by a cleric (or other non-druidic divine caster), the wolf-warrior must save vs spells or be cast out of their body. Their spirit can immediately inhabit a wolf pelt as per the wolfspell (see opposite) if there is one nearby. Otherwise, they become a wandering soul for 1d20 hours, at the end of which they re-enter their body (or pass into the afterlife if the body was destroyed or put behind magical wards).
If the saving throw is successful, the character resists any harmful effects (even if the spell doesn't allow for one).

• AFTER REACHING 6TH LEVEL
A successful wolf-walker can build a great hunting lodge in a secluded, wooded area. 3d6 wolf-walkers of the same clan come to live with them, half of which being 1st level wolf-warriors. All expect to be led on hunts, wolfing raids, or glorious wars against neighbours, both humanoid and monstrous.



Level	XP	HD	THACO	D	W	P	B	S
1	0	1d8	19 [0]	12	13	14	15	16
2	2,250	2d8	19 [0]	12	13	14	15	16
3	4,500	3d8	19 [0]	12	13	14	15	16
4	10,000	4d8	17 [+2]	10	11	12	13	14
5	20,000	5d8	17 [+2]	10	11	12	13	14
6	40,000	6d8	17 [+2]	10	11	12	13	14
7	90,000	7d8	14 [+5]	8	9	10	10	12
8	150,000	8d8	14 [+5]	8	9	10	10	12
9	300,000	9d8	14 [+5]	8	9	10	10	12
10	425,000	9d8+2*	12 [+7]	6	7	8	8	10
11	550,000	9d8+4*	12 [+7]	6	7	8	8	10
12	675,000	9d8+6*	12 [+7]	6	7	8	8	10
13	800,000	9d8+8*	10 [+9]	4	5	6	5	8
14	925,000	9d8+10*	10 [+9]	4	5	6	5	8

▸ From **Bigorre, France** ◇ by Eric Nieudan
◆ *Pronounce JOH-ahn-deuh-lorz*

Joan de l'Ors

From my native Pyrenees comes a legend known by many peoples around the world: the youth with the attributes of the Bear-God. If it is so common, it has to be true, right?

Joan grew up in a cave with a woman called Margòt and a bear for a father. The bear was nothing like the beasts you have seen dance at the end of a chain at the town market. He was an ancient sky spirit of the peak of Ardiden who, when local priests were busy preaching elsewhere, was called upon by the people of the surrounding valleys who needed better weather, better luck, or better children.

When he got old enough to understand, Joan's mother sat him down and told him she'd never consented to this life in the wilderness, and all she wanted was to go back to her family in the village of Aranhoet. The bear suspected this, which was why he rolled a boulder to seal the cave whenever he left his family to forage. Joan was only seven then, but he had inherited his father's strength. He pushed the boulder out and down the mountain, where it fell in a riverbed and created a new lake. Margòt and her son fled, and the bear never came after them.

Joan de l'Ors, or Jehan of the Bear as they would soon call him in the King's capital when recounting his adventures, was soon as tall and as hairy as a grown man. His phenomenal strength brought great renown to him and his family, but it also brought them woe and shame, for he could not always control it. His mother told him he should go seek his fortune after what transpired on the day of his first communion. Having inherited his father's allergy to the new religion, Joan had choked on the holy host. Running around in a panic as he couldn't dislodge it, he broke several pillars, collapsing half the church's roof on the other children.

So it was that Joan, barely a man yet already a giant, started on his adventures. It was a time of wonders then, and he met other youth with prodigious strength who decided to join him. There was Vire-Palet, who liked to hurl millstones like she had seen an ancient statue hurling a discus. There was Tord-Chêne, who enjoyed bending every oak tree he saw in two. And there was Porte-Canon, who carried on her shoulder the four-pounder cannon she'd picked up when escaping from an English frigate.

These four, sometimes with others whose names didn't make it to us, went on to have many adventures together. Their last one is the most famous. It

involves a castle hidden in a deep cave, a trio of princely siblings, and the Devil (or perhaps just an evil warlock, no one can agree on this part). The four friends had been invited to stay the night, but Joan had inherited his father's nose for maleficent magic and understood who their host was, so he trapped the fiend in his own latrines. Being adventurers, the four friends proceeded to explore the castle. They found no treasure there, but they uncovered a deep well leading into the Underworld. With the huge amount of rope adventurers always carry with them, down into the Underworld they went.

I can tell you're not the type of person who would be interested in the whole story of this week-long crawl in chaotic caves and lost dungeons. I'll just say that the four friends explored many, many dangerous places and fought many, many monsters. One by one, Joan's friends became too exhausted, too frightened, or too wounded to carry on. And one by one, they retraced their steps to the well, the rope, and the Devil's castle. Not Joan however, for he had inherited his father's stamina and determination. So it is that on his own he rescued three royal siblings who'd been kept in an Underworld gaol by an old hag who said she was the Devil's wife (but maybe she was deluded and just had a thing for evil warlocks).

Joan decided it was time to go back, so he brought the princes and princesses back to the well and sent them up the rope to the castle, where Vire-Palet, Tord-Chêne, and Porte-Canon had been waiting. What happened up there isn't known for sure. Most believe the three friends and the three rescued siblings immediately fell in love and, realising Joan de l'Ors would feel left out, decided to leave him down in the Underworld. So when they had pulled up all the treasure Joan had gathered for them, they didn't send the rope back down.

Joan was pondering what to do when the old hag who thought she was the Devil's wife caught up with him. She cackled at his misfortune, and then she offered to summon a flying mount for him. Joan had inherited his father's trusting nature, and so he accepted. Soon, he was flying through the caves of the Underworld, clinging to the neck feathers of a white eagle the size of a pack horse. But the hag's present was of course a trap. The white eagle needed to be fed meat to fly all the way to another entrance to the Underworld or it would devour its passenger. As the beast carried him through the bowels of the Earth, Joan rationed the cured hams he carried as snacks, but he ran out just as he could see an opening towards the surface, at the other end of a lake of lava. The white eagle needed more meat to cross it, or he would certainly eat the young man. And Joan couldn't just jump into the lava. Having inherited his father's practical frame of mind, he thought of a solution. With his folding knife, he cut out strips of his legs and fed them to the white eagle until they were out of the volcano and in the open air. And then he broke its neck and used its feathers to cushion his fall.

It is said Joan has been looking for his friends ever since. No one knows if he will forgive them their betrayal, or exact bloody revenge on them. If you ever meet him on your travels, make sure you know what he is up to before you ask him to join your party! ◇

JOAN DE L'ORS

Joan de l'Ors is a wandering demigod of almost impossible strength and comparatively little restraint. He will happily fight alongside anyone who convinces him of the worthiness of their cause, possibly creating more problems than he is solving.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 6+6** (30hp), **Att** 2 x fists (2d6) or 1x weapon (4d8, breaks on a 1), **THAC0** 13 [+6], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 950, **NA** 1, TT T

◆ **BLUNDERS OF STRENGTH**
Anything a mortal can attempt, Joan achieves on 5-in-6. Impossible feats only succeed on a 1-in-6. If a 6 is rolled, or a natural 1 on a mêlée attack, Joan breaks something, or hits the wrong target.

◆ **IMMUNITY TO PAIN**
Joan doesn't flinch when strips of his own flesh are taken away. Once per round, he ignores damage from one source.

MUSCLEBOUND WANDERERS

Strong youths like Joan de l'Ors and his friends are often found in folklore, so they should be found in our game worlds too. These characters are usually young and careless, relying on their brawn to carry them through adventures. Oftentimes, they are on the road in the hope of bringing enough riches back home to start a new life or win the affection of a paramour.

AC 8 [11], **HD** 3+3* (15hp), **Att** 2 x fists (1d6) or 1x weapon (1d12), **THAC0** 16[+3], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 10, **AL** any, **XP** 75, **NA** 1, **TT** S

Hiring a musclebound wanderer as a retainer is not impossible, as long as the sum of the player character's level and Charisma score is 21 or more. (You can decide to add +1 to their total for each memorable feat the party is known for).

NAMES: Steely Uriel, Lily Jawbreaker, Gaietan of the Giant-Feet, Little Artus, Suseta Strong, Alberta Lob-Rock, Anselm the Ox, Beñat Brisefer, Zefirina Leatherskin, Cannonball Clara.

MOTIVATION

Choose or roll for one of the goals below:

1	**Love.** They want to impress a special someone by vanquishing a dreaded monster.
2	**Gold.** They need a lot of it for a complicated plan that requires they pass themselves as an aristocrat.
3	**Family.** Their parents were convicted as spies and sent to the pirate-fighting galleys.
4	**Debt.** Their eldest brother lost the family's vineyard playing cards.
5	**Station.** They want to marry a young heir and can only ask for their hand if knighted for their prowess.
6	**Power.** They were told they would become the greatest wizard in the land if they could find the right wand.
7	**Revenge.** A powerful abbot took their family's land after their mother was burnt as a witch.
8	**Amusement.** They just like to tell sad stories to inspire sympathy (roll again).

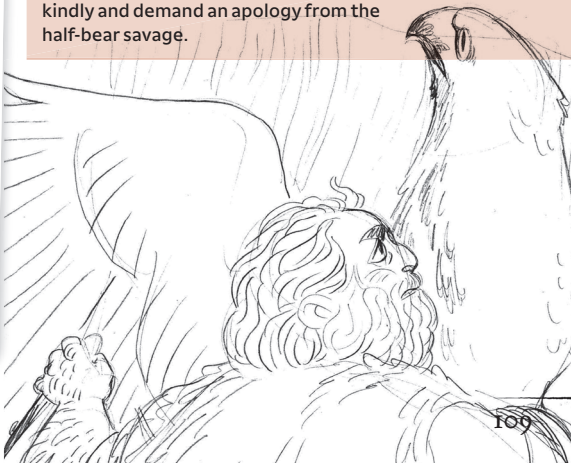
FAVOURITE TRICK

Choose or roll for one of the abilities below:

1	**Hurler.** Can throw boulders or other heavy objects up to 150' for 2d8 damage.
2	**Breaker.** Any non magical object (including walls, pillars, boats...) is destroyed on 3-in-6.
3	**Flexer.** When displaying their muscles, they gain +2 to reaction rolls.
4	**Sinew armour.** Tough skin gives them an AC of 3 [16].
5	**Muscle wizard.** They can cast 1d3+1 random 1st level spells but only if they punch the target.
6	**Huge weapon.** Fashioned especially for them, it deals 3d8 damage.
7	**Leaps and bounds.** Once per exploration turn, they can jump up to their movement distance.
8	**Unassuming.** They may be strong as an ogre, they aren't bigger than my great auntie.

HOOKS

- Joan de l'Ors wants to join the characters in their current quest. He suspects one of his former friends is to be found where they are going, or possibly associated with the villain they are opposing.
- An aged Porte-Canon is the last survivor among Joan's friends, and she is afraid for her family. She asks the characters to help her and her extended family (about twenty people) discreetly cross the country to a port town where they can book passage to the New World. But is Joan de l'Ors the real danger?
- The Bear-God is dying. It has been too long since anyone has called on him, and without believers he cannot sustain his immortality. Someone needs to take care of his magical demesne, however. Will the characters agree to tend to the sky-goats, grow the apples, and defend the mountain from the laminak, the dark gnomes of the forest? Or will they look for the god's long gone descendants, the Delors clan, who are said to have settled the plains of Briva-la-Galharda?
- Joan has heard the stories about of the supposedly divine archer called Hou Yi (see page 118). He asks the characters to find that liar, and bring proof that he is an impostor. If found, the archer will not take it kindly and demand an apology from the half-bear savage.



The Queen of the Fallow Field

The Queen is a nature spirit who inhabits the only uncultivated field of a village, giving boons and banes to any who encounter her.

In the Barony the rivers are fished, the hills grazed, and the land is ploughed. In the forests and woods, the rights of pannage (grazing pigs), estover (collecting firewood), agistment (grazing livestock) and turbary (cutting turf) are strictly controlled. Crop rotation is used to ensure that the soil is replenished, leaving fields fallow one year in three. Hardly a leaf or tiny mushroom escapes people's control of nature.

Little Gissing is a hamlet on the edge of the Baron's lands and here there is a special field left fallow every year. A low dry stone wall separates the small field from the ploughed lands on the village side, the only other boundary is the shadowy tree line of the Wild Forest that borders the Baron's demesne.

Every spring there is a festival to thank the Queen of the Fallow Field for her bounty. One of the children from the village is dressed how the peasants might see a queen. They place a circlet on their head, intertwined with wild flowers, crocuses (for Love), hellebore (for Magic), and aconite (for the Moon). The dress is white linen with scraps of lace at the hem, all that the peasants can afford. It is so very old and is cleaned and mended each year ready for the next. The child leads a parade into the field and sits on the last bale of straw from the harvest as their throne. The Queen speaks through the child and tells people what has pleased and displeased her, and what services she expects during the next year. How the Queen speaks is influenced by the child, and the Queen is always fond of this person – unless subsequently disappointed by them, in which case she hates them.

This is the only time anyone is allowed freely into the field. Anything that falls into the field during the year is property of the Queen and she will return it in exchange for a service. Anyone who dares enter the field during the year is sure to annoy the Queen and will only be released if they promise to serve for a year and a day.

I went to Little Gissing – mushrooming in the woods with my brother. We found some

lovely turkey tails, they make a tea which strengthens the lungs, and in a clearing at the edge of the woods, the biggest puffballs we had ever seen. We threw pebbles at them and squealed with delight as they exploded in clouds of purple smoke. But once our sport was finished, we went to pick up the pieces. They make a lovely treat dipped in egg and breadcrumbs and fried. As we bent down to pick up the mushrooms, the lady appeared in front of us – in daylight, but transparent like a ghost. We tried to run away but every time we left the field we found ourselves running back into it. And then my brother, who is younger than me, started to cry for our mother. So I scolded the lady. I didn't care for her smile or her manner.

"Let us go, you witch. We need to get home for our tea!"

"I will not let you go. And moreover, I will teach you some manners, common child."

I really didn't know what she meant by this. *"I might not be uncommon, but I'm not common."*

She laughed. *"As ill-schooled as you are ill-bred. I will teach you respect and your mother will thank me!"*

"Please lady," said my brother, *"We didn't mean no harm. Let us go home to mother. We're very sorry, I'm sure."*

"Ah, you child," she said, pointing at my brother, *"require less instruction – sing me one of your peasant ditties and you may be on your way."*

"Ditty?" said my brother. *"She means a song,"* and I nudged him. So he sang the one about the Queen, which ends *"She gave me a diamond as big as my shoe."* The lady laughed in delight and clapped her hands.

"Off you go child, back to mother." He turned and left but I could not move.

"And you, you miserable brat," and she looked right at me, *"You will make your mother proud and fetch me a diamond as big as a shoe."* So that's what I'm doing now. And I've only got three weeks left to find it. And if I don't, I'll be in real trouble. But I've got an idea, and I just need for it to freeze tonight, so we get those nice big icicles. ◇

QUEEN OF THE FALLOW FIELD

A powerful nature spirit who capriciously rules the last remaining untamed plot in the land. The Queen appears in her field as a translucent and often annoyed figure.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 6 (27hp), **Att** 1 x touch of winter (1d8), **THAC0** 14 [+5], **MV** 240' (60') flying, **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 1 400, **NA** 1, **TT** -

◆ **SPIRIT**
Immune to non-magical attacks, poison, and mind affecting spells.

◆ **CHARM ANIMALS**
Any animal within the field is automatically charmed to do the Queen's bidding. Animals who serve another get a saving throw vs spells to avoid this effect.

◆ **REGENERATION**
As long as the field exists, the Queen regenerates 3 hp per round.

◆ **TELEPORT**
The Queen can appear anywhere she likes in her field, and teleport at will, once per round as part of her movement.

◆ **ILLUSIONS**
Inside the field the Queen may cast *phantasmal force* three times a day.

◆ **TIED TO HER FIELD**
If the fallow field is destroyed, through fire or other disaster, the Queen retreats to the last living plant in the field. When this happens, crops in the area start to fail and the land slowly becomes unusable for agriculture. If the plant is kept alive and replanted, the crops will thrive again.

◆ **KEEP PROMISES**
As a spirit, the Queen cannot break promises and it is possible to trick her by clever interpretation of what she says. If she finds out she was tricked, her mood moves one step toward hates (see opposite).

REASON WHY YOU ENDED UP IN THE FALLOW FIELD:

1 – You found half a skeleton surrounded by gold coins at the edge of the forest and started to pick them up – unaware that you had entered the field.
2 – Your horse was frightened by something and threw you into the field.
3 – A nymph whose stream you defiled, accidentally or not, made you deliver a fish for the Queen's pond.
4 – On the way back from the inn, you needed a birthday present for your sweetheart and saw some strawberries in the field.
5 – You were practicing spells and accidentally cast *teleport*.
6 – The rest of your adventuring group threw you over the wall for a prank / because they'd had enough of you / because you'd drunk too much again / because your worst enemy paid them to.

ENCOUNTERING THE QUEEN

The Queen's appearance varies depending on her mood. She is usually female and might appear as old and regal, young and capricious, or mature and bored. A special reaction roll determines how she takes to the characters. Charisma modifiers only apply for elves and other fae related characters.

MOOD ROLL

2d6	Result
2-3	Hates
4-6	Dislikes
7-10	Neutral
11+	Likes

If a service is performed for the Queen, make a new reaction roll, with a modifier based on how well the service was performed. Consult the following table and add 1 for every like, subtract 1 for every dislike. A clever servant might consult others who have encountered the Queen to divine her reactions.

LIKES	DISLIKES
Surprises	Disappointment
Respect	Rudeness
Some cheekiness	Toadying
Novelty	Repetition
Obedience	Shirking
Promptness	Tardiness
Cleverness	Showing off
Gifts (max +2)	Being stolen from (-2 per infraction)
Repairs to domain	Damage to her domain (At least -2, more if damage is extensive)

SERVICES TO PERFORM, DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH THE QUEEN LIKES YOU:

Reaction	Dice to roll on Jobs table
Likes	1d6
Neutral	1d6+5
Dislikes	1d6+9
Hates	1d6+14

JOBS TABLE

Roll	Job
1-5 easy – to be done in a day	
1	Milk the goat that lives in the fallow field. You have to catch it first.
2	Stop a deer eating the flowers – but don't hurt it.
3	Dredge the pond for things which have fallen in.
4	Sing an entertaining song or tell a good story.
5	Return toys which have fallen into the field to the right children.
6-10 moderate – to be done in a week	
6	Get new lace for the Queen's dress.
7	Make a new gate for the field – it had better not squeak.
8	Persuade a good bard to come entertain the Queen and stay with her.
9	The Queen would like to see some bear cubs in the field. Fetch some pretty ones. Now.
10	Squirrels keep burying their nuts in the field. If the trees grow, the field will shrink. Do something about this.
11-15 challenging – to be done in a month	
11	Change all the yellow flowers to blue.
12	Install a new magical standing stone in the field, to replace the one stolen by bandits.
13	Find the druids who tricked the Queen and stole her badger. Return the badger and punish the thieves.
14	Stop the three-headed troll from coming into the field.
15	Get a real golden crown for the Queen.
16-20 impossible – to be done in a year and a day	
16	Empty the pond with a sieve.
17	Count the blades of grass in the field.
18	Spin the straw bale into gold.
19	Make bread from gemstones.
20	Catch the moon – it would make a nice ornament for the gate.

As with all faerie endeavours, there is usually a way to complete an impossible task by adhering to the letter rather than the intent of the task. For example, one might catch the reflection of the moon in a bucket of water or state that there will be no blades of grass in the field if it should catch fire. But let the players figure that out!

HOOKS

- The characters have been charged with finding Zirbaya the Minstrel Mistress who ended up in the field (see table opposite). They must conceive of a way to extract them from the Queen's presence as they are needed back home.
- A player character ends up in the field (see table opposite) and the rest of the party must help them perform their tasks.
- The Queen is captured in a spirit bottle by an evil cleric and forced into service. Her fallow field decays and the local farmers are powerless to stop the crops from failing. Adventurers are needed to find and return the Queen before it is too late.
- The Queen's previous home has long since become a desolate wasteland, haunted by undead and twisted monsters. The player characters find a tiny terrarium containing the mosses which are her last refuge. Or perhaps one of them was one of the children who spoke for the Queen and the moss is their heirloom. Is the party the people to replant the moss and protect it from attacks long enough for the land to be reborn? Even in this reduced state, the Queen retains some of her powers in proximity to the bottle.

▸ From **Brazil, inspired by Portuguese tales** ◇ by Diogo Nogueira
◆ *Pronounce KOO-cah*

Cuca

An ancient being who resembles a humanoid alligator with stringy grey hair, and sometimes takes the form of an old crone. Her sorcerous powers require the blood of the young.

When the night comes, and the bell tolls, it's time for children to sleep, or Cuca will devour even their toes. Appearing as an old crone with leathery skin and long unkempt grey hair, or as a bipedal crocodile with the same old woman's hair, Cuca always makes an impact on those who cross her path. Where she came from, no one knows or remembers. And, from time to time, they forget she exists until a child goes missing, or someone needs sorcery no mortal sorcerer can master. Then, they seek Cuca out, some wanting to bargain with her, some wanting to banish her once and for all, and a few seeking her to learn her arcane secrets.

For Cuca is also a powerful sorceress, capable of casting ancient spells and brewing potent concoctions. In fact, many seek her exactly because of that, seeking to subvert reality to their desires. But Cuca always charges a price for her services. A steep one.

A queen once asked for a beautiful voice, and had to bring the tongue of a young singer who was just starting their career in the royal court.

An ageing warrior wanted to have his strength back, and was asked for the arms of a young soldier who wanted to prove her worth.

And there was that dreadful man who wanted to be young again. He brought the head of his youngest son, unprompted.

Whether Cuca needs these offerings to perform her spells and prepare her potions is unknown. Nevertheless she never does anything for anyone without asking for these "exotic ingredients". And everyone knows she always delivers what she promises, although sometimes with some unfortunate side effects.

The queen got her beautiful voice, but only while singing. She sounded like a screaming duck the rest of the time, so avoided talking for the rest of her life.

The warrior got his strength back, but couldn't control it and killed his lover in an unfortunate embrace.

And the horrible father who murdered his own son to become young again? Well, he really found his twenties back. But every day he woke up a day younger, becoming a youth after a few years, then just a boy, and then a baby. He ultimately disappeared into thin air.

So beware Cuca and her powers. She may promise miracles, but she often delivers curses. And warn your children, and your friends' children, for the envy of their vain elders might spell their doom.

And their new home will be inside the belly of the old crone. ◇

What does Cuca want?

Cuca is a mysterious being, and her objectives are not always clear to us mere mortals. Roll on the table below if you want to make her a player in your campaign's faction game.

1. She is amassing a collection of organs and parts to craft herself a new body. She is only missing 1d3 parts (1d4: **1.** the head of a dreamer, **2.** the heart of a brave, **3.** the hands of an artist, **4.** the legs of a dancer).
2. She delights in corrupting vain mortals and wants to break apart the strongest relationships she can find. She approaches people with emptiness in their hearts and promises them whatever they think they need... as long they do this small little thing.
3. Cuca wants to become a goddess, so she is gathering a cult around her. More and more people join as she gives them her concoctions. The brews start weak, just samples, but as these desperate souls get a taste of their deepest wishes, they will do anything to get more. Now, higher powers are noticing Cuca's machinations.
4. Cuca wants revenge against the powers who restricted her shapechanging to an old crone and a giant alligator. She needs individuals to help her bind other powerful supernatural beings to silly animal forms. Payment will be in powerful magical gifts stolen from these spirits.
5. Someone cut Cuca's hair while she slept and now she is powerless and stuck in her alligator form. She seeks people to recover her hair so she can have her powers and knowledge back. She offers her invaluable concoctions in exchange.
6. Cuca is planning a grand ball to impress her alligator friends and rivals. She needs competent staff, not only to make sure everything is in order (food, guest list, entertainment, etc.), but that no uninvited guests interrupt her party.

CUCA

Appears as a large bipedial alligator with long grey hair (her fae form), or as a crone with leathery skin wearing local fokloric garments.

AC 1 [18], **HD** 8* (38hp), **Att** 2 x claw (1d6), 1 x bite (3d8), **THAC0** 12 [+7], **MV** 180' (60') swimming, **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12, **ML** 9, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 2 300, **NA** 1, **TT** F

- **LANGUAGES**
  Knows common, Chaotic, and has 50% chance of knowing any language.
- **SPELLS**
  3 × 1st level, 3 × 2nd level, 2 × 3rd level, 2 x 4th level (can choose from both arcane and divine spell lists).
- **CHANGE FORM**
  At will, takes 1 turn. As a crone, Cuca cannot use her bite attack, and her AC is 5 [14]. Her movement becomes 120' (40').
- **SWALLOW WHOLE**
  On a bite attack roll of 4 or more than the target's AC, it is swallowed (unless larger than a human). Inside Cuca's belly, they suffer 2d6 damage per round; they may attack with sharp weapons at -4 to hit; a body is digested in 6 turns after death.
- **MAGICAL CONCOCTIONS**
  Brews magical concoctions that generally relate to one's health or youth. However, Cuca often requires ingredients that will cost a young person's life, and the person seeking her services usually has to help obtain these. If that wasn't enough, the potion's benefits often come with a side effect as well (see below).

CUCA'S CONCOCTIONS

Cuca is a skilled alchemist able to prepare potions unlike any other. However, there's always a chance something does not go exactly as planned (10% chance of a faulty concoction).

1. ELIXIR OF YOUTHFUL VITALITY: Rejuvenates the drinker 5d6 years. Requires the still beating heart of a young relative or loved one. If faulty, the drinker becomes younger by 1d6 years every year until they disappear.

2. POTION OF ENDEARING VOICE: Anyone listening to the drinker sing must save vs spells or be mesmerized as long as the song lasts. Requires the freshly amputated tongue of a child related to or loved by the drinker. If faulty, the drinker becomes incapable of speaking without singing.

3. BALM OF SPRY STRENGTH: Gives the drinker a Strength score of 18. Requires the consumption of the muscular tissue from the arms of a young relative or loved one. A faulty balm make the user unable to control their strength, harming anyone who even has a handshake with them for 1d4 damage.

4. DROPLETS OF CHILDLIKE IMAGINATION: Provides the drinker with the creativity of a child while retaining all the knowledge and wisdom they acquired over the years. Each use lasts 2d6 hours, enough to create at least one masterpiece. Requires the brain juices of a young child. Faulty droplets cannot discern reality from their imagination, becoming trapped in their own stories.

5. DRAUGHT OF TODDLER ENERGY: The drinker has the vitality and enthusiasm of a three-year old. In game terms, the drinker does not need to rest or sleep for 1d3+1 days. Requires a gallon of toddler blood. Faulty draughts make the drinkers unable to sleep for 1d6 weeks afterwards, which makes recovering hit points and spell slots difficult, if at all possible.

6. POULTICE OF MEMORY: The drinker can remember conversation, text, facts, etc. they have experienced while under the effect of this poultice (one use lasts for 3d6 hours). Requires the still juicy eyes of a young person. A faulty concoction also brings back the nightmares the drinker had as a child (-2 to all saving throws until the magic is dispelled).

CUCA'S LAIR

Cuca's lair is located in a swampy area near a large town where some elderly sages may still know of her. To all others, she's a legend whispered in the night. It consists of a small cave with access to water by an underground river she uses to escape in case undesired guests insist on staying.

1 **ENTRANCE:** Decorated with the skulls of young humans and animals, as well as discarded alligator skins. It's not uncommon (3-in-6) for 2d4 alligators (as large crocodiles) to sun near the entrance.
They only attack if provoked.

2 **ROOM OF WORDS:** A spacious cave where Cuca has set up cushions, furs, and other comforts to make guests more at home. Most of these are dirty, ragged, or just plain old. People can sometimes be found here, waiting for an audience. They most probably feel uncomfortable sharing what they are doing here.

3 **ROOM OF MEALS:** The smell of rotten flesh is strong here. A smaller cave with a large blood-stained stone table and 4 crudely made stone chairs. Clay bowls, plates, and stone utensils are scattered around the table and on the floor. Chains are affixed to each corner of the table, and under it are stacked tools (saws, knives, axes...). On the walls, notes of different recipes to accommodate human organs. Cuca may be found here feeding (2-in-6 chance); she does not like to be interrupted.

4 **ROOM OF GIFTS:** A dusty room where Cuca stores the presents she received from potential patrons. Her monetary treasure is also kept here. Magic items and other objects Cuca uses are normally in area 7. This cave has also become the lair of a giant spider (a black widow), who has webs between piles of objects, hoping the mess in the room will help it catch prey.

5 **ROOM OF PREPARATIONS:** This is the largest cave in Cuca's lair. It is filled with crude shelves, tables, cauldrons, pots, bowls, and all sorts of utensils Cuca made herself to brew and store her concoctions and exotic ingredients. Anyone examining these objects realises what they are: a save vs death is needed to avoid a sense of dread (-2 to all attacks and saves in Cuca's lair – can be negated by a *bless* spell).

6 **ROOM OF MEDITATION:** A large but strangely empty room with symbols inscribed in blood on the walls. Cuca uses this room to commune with the entities who provide her powers, and to contact other supernatural beings with complex rituals. There's a 1-in-6 chance Cuca is in this room performing a ritual; interrupting her ends the communion, which makes her displeased. Characters making a saving throw to resist a spell cast by Cuca in this room need to roll the d20 twice and take the lower result.

7 **THE RESTING POOL:** If not met already somewhere else, Cuca is in this large cave with a stone beach and pool linked to the outside through an underwater tunnel. She usually stays here relaxing with her alligator friends and lovers. At any time, even when she is not here, the pool has visitors (**1d4: 1.** a giant crocodile, **2.** 2d6 large crocodiles, **3.** 2d20 crocodiles, **4.** a black hag).

HOOKS

➢ **Henrique the merchant is dying, but he refuses to hand it all down to his "lazy vagabond of a son." He seeks the services of Cuca, who requires the heart of his offspring as the main ingredient of the spell to cure him. All he needs to do is deliver the 14 year-old boy to her. Being too ill to do so, the merchant hires a group of adventurers to escort his son to a "diplomatic appointment" in a ruined manor, which appears as the luxurious summer home of a strange baroness (Cuca in disguise).**

➢ **A beloved relative of one of the characters is dying. Knowing about the capabilities of their adventuring friends, they ask for help. The party must seek Cuca and obtain one of those miraculous elixirs of life only she can brew. But will they be willing to pay the price?**

➢ **A town is experiencing frequent child disappearances and people whisper tales of Cuca in the cold night. However, Cuca has become a vegetarian and hasn't eaten a child in over five years. She needs the help of open-minded adventurers to figure out who or what is behind this before the townsfolk decide to hunt her down.**

➢ **As the party are passing through a forested area, an eight year-old kid comes running out of the woods screaming for help. They say a giant alligator witch wants to eat them. And then an old lady wearing ragged old clothes shows up, calling the kid's name, explaining her grandchild has had bad mushrooms. She is actually Cuca, just trying to have her lunch.**

▸ From **Shang Dynasty China**
◇ by Jonathan Wyrmblood
◆ *Pronounce HOE - ee*

Hou Yi

A legendary archer known throughout China, his divine strength and accuracy allows him to hit any target, even if that target is in the heavens.

Testimony from a local farmer:

"It started out as a normal day. I was riding my wagon into the city to sell my wares, when it suddenly became incredibly hot, like *really* hot. I was sweating buckets. It was so bad, my mule collapsed from the heat. I was about to curse the heavens for such weather and, looking up into the sky... I couldn't believe it: there were ten suns in the sky. Ten! Why were there so many? It's absurd! Anyways, the heat was starting to get to me, and the world was growing dark, which is strange because there were ten suns in the sky. But as I was blacking out, I saw a man on a hill ahead of me, aiming his bow towards the heavens. I don't know what he thought he was going to do, shoot the suns out of the sky? I passed out before I saw what happened, but when I woke up, there was only one sun in the sky. I thought it must have been a dream, a hallucination, a curse maybe? But everyone I've talked to also remembers the day of the ten suns. That's all I know, now can you please let me go? I finally saved enough to buy a new mule."

From the memoirs of Emperor Yao:

"On that day when ten suns shone in the sky, I pleaded to the gods, asking for a saviour, and that was when Hou Yi arrived. I knew of his exploits, of the many monsters he'd slain already. Seeing this as a sign, I tasked him with stopping the suns. I did not want him to kill them all, as I told him, but I knew that if he was unable to reason with the suns, he was fully capable of dealing with them. I and those who could still stand followed him out of the city and watched as he climbed up a tall hill. For some time, Hou Yi tried to speak to the suns, but they did not respond. When Hou Yi had enough of their silence, he grabbed an arrow, nocked it onto this beautiful bow of his, and fired. The sun he had aimed for turned into a bird made of fire and fell from the sky. The suns went into a frenzy, but Hou Yi continued firing, until only one sun was remaining in the sky. As he was grabbing another arrow to kill the last sun, I pleaded with him: 'Please, Lord Archer! Spare the last sun so that it may continue bringing light to this world!' The hero yielded, and with the situation resolved, we returned to the palace where we held a grand feast in Hou Yi's honour."

An entry from Hou Yi's personal journal:

"I do not know why I entered the palace that day, but I am glad I did. After the banquet, I was returning to my home when a bright golden light appeared before me. From the light, From the light, a voice thanked me for stopping the suns and told me that I would receive a gift from the gods for my actions. A small jade vial appeared before me, and when I asked the voice what it was, the light told me that it was an elixir of immortality so that I could ascend to the heavens and become a god. Then, as suddenly as the light had appeared, it disappeared, leaving me with the elixir. As I am writing this, I still do not know what to do with it as I still believe that there are more monsters to hunt and loved ones to protect. For the time being, I will hide it, until the day comes that I know what I will do with it." ◇

HOU YI

Hou Yi looks like any other man, but behind his ordinary appearance lies inhuman strength and unmatched archery skills. He is often tasked by world leaders and the divine to hunt down massive and dangerous monsters.

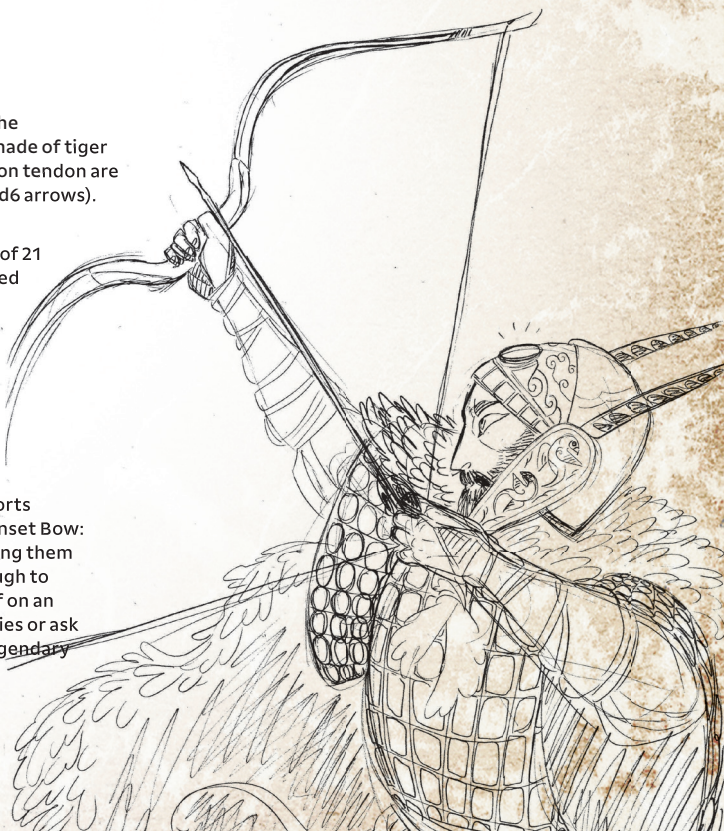
AC 0 [19], **HD** 21** (95hp), **Att** 1 x weapon (2d6), or 3 x sunset bow (2d8, see below), **THAC0** 5 [+14], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D2 W2 P2 B2 S2, **ML** 10, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 8 500 **NA** 1 **TT** -

- **NEVER MISSES**
  A missed roll with a range attack means a glancing hit, dealing 1d4 damage.
- **FATE'S GRACE**
  Hou Yi's armour class is always 0 [19] through a combination of armour, use of cover, artful dodging, and enormous amounts of luck. In situations where luck plays a factor, there is always at least a 2-in-6 chance things will turn in Hou Yi's favour.
- **STRONG AS TEN OXEN**
  Hou Yi is capable of legendary feats of strength. He succeeds at anything a mortal could attempt, while dead lifting a whole castle would work on 1-in-6. Be creative with what he can do, and also with the catastrophic consequences of his failures.

LUO RI GONG, THE SUNSET BOW

The legendary bow that shot down the extranumerous suns. The limbs are made of tiger bones and only arrows made of dragon tendon are sturdy enough for it (it comes with 2d6 arrows).

- Its damage is always 2d8.
- The archer must have a Strength of 21 to use it. Two persons with a combined Strength of 28 or more can work in tandem to shoot Luo Ri Gong if it is propped up against a protruding rock or strong tree.
- Luo Ri Gong always has enough range to hit anything the archer can see, regardless of the actual distance.
- A skilled archer can attempt all sorts of myth-level trick shots with the Sunset Bow: pin a giant to a mountain while keeping them alive, shoot enough arrows fast enough to blot out the sun, let agile friends surf on an arrow, etc. Assign reasonable penalties or ask for extra rolls, but remember that legendary feats are possible when wielding a legendary weapon.



WHAT MONSTER IS HOU YI HUNTING?

1. Lou Carcohl (see p.31)
2. XXXIV, the undead tartaro (see p. 18)
3. A celestial Fox (see p. 92)
4. The Boitatá (see p. 50)
5. Jack-in-Irons (see p. 62)
6. The serpent of Isaby (see p. 77)
7. A mapinguari (see p. 150)
8. The perelesnyk impersonating the Emperor (see p. 25)

WHERE DOES HOU YI HIDE HIS ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY?

1. Underneath the bed of a maid who's in love with him.
2. Behind a grand tapestry in a guest room of the imperial palace.
3. Amongst a collection of magical phials stored by a local alchemist.
4. Inside an ornate vase that was a gift from his beloved, late mother.

WHY IS HOU YI ON THE HUNT?

1. Heaven has ordered so. Or so believes Hou Yi, because he has actually been deceived by an evil sorcerer.
2. A body part of the creature is needed for the potion that could heal Hou Yi's ailing grandmother.
3. Hou Yi is retiring, but he wants to hunt down one last monster before he bestows his bow to someone worthy and starts a quiet (yet epic) life.
4. The monster killed one of Hou Yi's childhood friends. Now all he wants is vengeance, regardless of how many innocents are put into harm's way.
5. The bounty set on the creature is enough to build a school in his village. Unknown to him, the promised gold was stolen from a priest who wanted to fund a new orphanage two valleys over.
6. The death of the creature is one of many monsters that Hou Yi must kill in order to obtain unimaginable power from a god of darkness.

THE ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY

This potion only works on heroes of renown chosen by the Jade Emperor of Heaven. For anyone else, roll 1d6:

1. They disappear in a flash of golden light. Whether they have been turned into a god or merely transported to another plane is anyone's guess.
2. Their flesh melts away and they become a living, talking skeleton. They will, in theory, never die.
3. They turn to purple jade. Their statuesque new form is worth 10,000gp.
4. Their ageing process is reversed. Once they become a newborn again, they start growing normally again until they reach the precise age at which they took the elixir, at which time the rejuvenating process starts again. And again, for all eternity.
5. They are now immortal and impervious to death. They also become unable to kill anything or anyone directly, as no agent of death wants to deal with them.
6. Their ageing process is quickened. Every day, they age another year until eventually they die naturally, in a sort of unnatural way.

HOOKS

➢ A great monster is terrorizing the nearby towns, and anyone sent to kill it has never made it back alive. It has been rumoured that the legendary archer Hou Yi has taken residence in the nearby area but is currently mourning a lost friend. Someone needs to motivate him so he can stop the monster.

➢ Hou Yi's inhuman strength has become too much for his bow, snapping it into two. As most bows are too fragile for Hou Yi to use, he has commissioned Bad Patxi (see p. 38) to craft him a new one. Payment is covered, but a legendary weapon will require legendary materials, which the characters must acquire for him.

➢ The party has been tasked to hunt down a legendary beast, but as they set out the renowned archer enters. Hou Yi may offer to join the party (and try to take it over), or perhaps create a rival group to seek out the beast himself.

➢ Rumours have spread that Hou Yi has obtained an elixir of immortality. Zaratazarat the Mage will grant a wish to whomever brings it to him. Of course, all his enemies and rivals will attempt to stop that from happening.

▸ From **Point Pleasant, West Virginia, USA**
◇ by Steve Dempsey

Mothman

The Mothman, a chimera part man and part giant moth, is a flying harbinger of doom that feeds on the misery it portends.

Jenk Hole is a quiet farming village on the edge of the grasslands, near the Arnetta Forest. It is named for the lake which provides a ready source of catfish and eels to the villagers. Early one morning in the autumnal mist (a sign summer was truly gone) Elbanth was out on the lake, casting her nets. Ducks could be heard paddling and clucking out in the gloom. The godwits calling from the rushes, "No-you-don't", "No-you-don't", went suddenly silent. Even the slap of the lake against the coracle seemed muted. Two large eyes, fiery like lanterns swooped down at her. Elbanth screamed in fear and dropped her net into the water. Surely not a dragon this side of the Barrier Peaks! Whatever it was glided by in silence. Elbanth was shaken but she retrieved her net and sculled damply back to the village.

It turned out she was not the only one to have seen the creature. After the mist had cleared, a meeting was called at the Eel's Foot Inn and it was decided to consult the hermit in the forest. They had recognised the signs of barley rust three years ago and taught the villagers how to invoke Robigus to gain protection for the crop. This time the hermit performed an augury by chickens pecking at corn kernels distributed round a circle of strange letters. They confidently predicted that the "World will be turned upside-down." And when asked when, and what this meant, they said, "You will know it when you see it."

It wasn't much help but the villagers

decided to move everyone to the hills, just as the ground started to shake. On the far side of the lake a whole cliff collapsed. The waves did wash into the village but worse was to come. Great bubbles of greenish gas came out of the lake and rolled across the village. What livestock hadn't been moved slumped over and died. Birds fell. All the insects went quiet. High above the catastrophe, the swooping silhouette of Mothman drank it all in, and then it too was overcome and died.

But even after the gas had gone and people returned to Jenk Hole and got on with their lives, Elbanth couldn't get the image of Mothman out of her mind. Each night she dreamed of a dark caterpillar in the forest, and then of a shining chrysalis in a cave. She talked to her family but they just became scared of her. ◇

MOTHMAN'S DREAM LARVAE

When the terror is over, or the Mothman killed, one of the people who failed their save against fear starts to dream of an egg, then a caterpillar, and finally a chrysalis. Anyone who has the Mothman eggs in them suffers a -2 to reaction rolls as people sense something wrong about them. When the next disaster is looming, they start to dream about what is going to happen. At first quite cryptically but then in more and more graphic detail. They become fatigued through loss of sleep and eventually when the disaster is only a few days away, the chrysalis hatches, the host grows wings and becomes the Mothman, ready to begin the cycle again. It might take a month or years between disasters, but during an ongoing situation it takes only three nights. The night blossom of the Morpheus vine allows dreams to be shared by those inhaling the properly prepared incense of the same blossom.

Anyone with Mothman eggs in their dreams should roll on this table whenever they visit a new place. This is the disaster the Mothman will hatch out of their body for. Decide how soon it will happen according to your campaign's calendar.

MOTHMAN

Embodied spirit, harbinger of doom. Mothman has foreknowledge of disasters. He feeds on the fear that his presence creates. Mothman tactics are to scare lone villagers, and to pick up and drop anyone threatening. He doesn't aim to kill, preferring to injure and scare. He prefers not to land as he's not so mobile on foot.

AC 6 [13] in flight 4 [15], **HD** 4+4*** (22hp), **Att** 2 x claws (1d3) or returned missile (by weapon), **THAC0** 15 [+4], **MV** 60' (20') / 240' (80') flying, **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 500, **NA** 1, **TT** H

◆ **MOTH SENSES**
Mothman has excellent night vision and hearing. He is not attracted to bright lights.

◆ **DROP**
If a victim is hit by both claws in the same round, the Mothman grabs them, flies up and drops them for falling damage.

◆ **FEAR AURA**
People Mothman swoops by must save vs spell or suffer the effects of *cause fear.* They become aware that some unknown doom is impending and the Mothman gains 5 temporary hit points for each person affected. These fade after a night has passed.

◆ **RETURN TO SENDER**
The Mothman is very agile in flight, dodging spells and catching missiles fired at him. He can throw missiles back the next round.

◆ **DREAM LARVAE**
The Mothman reproduces by infecting the dreams of one of the victims of his fear aura (see sidebar).

Random disaster table

1d8	*Disaster (1d10)*
1	***Tornado.*** Tornado. 1-4. land, 5-8. sea, 9. rain of fish, 10. whisked off to another plane
2	***Flood.*** 1-2. spring thaw, 3-7. massive rains, 8-9. tsunami, 10. elemental plane of water leaking
3	***Heat.*** 1-4. drought, 5-8. fires, 9. comet, 10. demonic inferno
4	***Plague.*** 1-2. insects, 3-5. swamp fever, 6. rats, 7-8. undead hordes, 9. minor demons, 10. contagious curse
5	***Volcano.*** 1-6. land, 7-8. sea or lake, 9. pyroclastic flow, 10. outgassing
6	***Earthquake.*** 1-3. collapsing buildings, 4-6. landslides, 7-9. sinkholes, 10. invasion of the molefolk
7	***War.*** 1-2. invasion, 3-4. civil war, 5-6. religious, 7-8. independence, 9. guerrilla, 10. gorilla (giant)
8	***Creatures.*** 1. giant ants, 2. bugbears, 3. dragon, 4. tarrasque, 5. Mothman, 6. arragousets (p. 22), 7. fiery serpents (p. 25), 8-10. choose your own

Adventure

ELBANTH' S DREAM

The characters are standing back-to-back in the middle of a deserted village. The houses are in disrepair and beyond them the lake is covered in a thick mist. The other sides of the village lead on to grasslands to the east and a forest to the west. From the light, it is morning. But the sky is dark and they can see stars, but not the ones they expect. The smell of musty old books, lavender, and a faint tang of liquorice hangs in the air.

And then they remember. They're here to help Elbanth. Elbanth sought out cunning man Darmshan to help rid herself of the Mothman's curse. Damshan has burnt the blossoms of Morpheus vine and sent the party into Elbanth's dreams. They are all currently asleep in the backroom of Darmshan's abode, the scent of the blossoms heavy in the air.

Darmshan told them what he knows:

- The Mothman is now in chrysalis form, hidden somewhere in a dark place inside Elbanth's dream. It is never light there, so it is likely to be underground and there is the sound of water not very far away.
- They must first find Elbanth and protect her. She understands more of the dream than them and should be able to guide them. If there are things they need, Elbanth might know where to find them.
- Then, they must find the chrysalis and destroy it.
- They should not destroy things wantonly in the dream because they may cause permanent damage to Elbanth and themselves.
- Once the curse is broken, the dream will end.

Into the Dream

The land is supposed to be much like the waking world, but something is wrong. The village is deserted and Elbanth is nowhere to be found. Everything has been reversed. The lake is poisonous, the village is haunted, the ocean is raging and terrible. The forest threatens, the hills are dark and creepy, the mountains move. The stream is flowing up from the sea to the lake, the road is quicksand, the plains are predatory.

Hope is caught in the cave to be the first meal of the hatching Mothman. *Sleep* and *Cure wounds* spells have their descriptions and effects swapped in the dream world.

Village

Shadows of the people who once lived here, Elbanth's house contains a doll which always points towards Elbanth (who is running scared on the plains—see below). There are some boats on the lake shore.

Plains

Elbanth is out on the plains being chased by several land sharks (bulettes). She knows following the river to its source will lead to the Mothman.

Lake

The water is poisonous (1 damage per turn spent in it), fish are swimming in the mist.

Aggressive, floating giant bass

Encounters

1. Despairs (as 2d6 shadows) looking for victims to infect

2. Floating whale (as sperm whale, but flying) in danger on getting beached on a passing strand of mist

3. Memory hounds (as 1d3 blink dogs with human faces) wailing their past fears

4. Landsharks (as 1d4 bulettes) hungry for flesh

5. Machine nightmare (a bronze golem), looking to devour land and vegetation

6. Dream form Mothman (see overleaf) on the hunt

attempt to knock people into the water. There is a very slight current which can be followed to the stream which rushes up into the woods.

Waterfall

Going up in a boat requires Strength checks for 2 rowers and 1 tiller person to avoid overturning, at least 2 must succeed. Otherwise, Dexterity checks are needed to stay in the stream (1d4 damage from rocks) instead of being thrown out into the pool below (save vs paralysis to stay conscious).

The cave is behind the waterfall near the top, and more easily reached from above, but clumsy characters risk 1 to 3d6 damage depending on where they fall.

Cave

A fluttering of wings and a beating noise. A chrysalis hangs from the ceiling. Chitin juts out at strange angles. If attacked, it cracks and Mothman's dream form appears. If left alone, it starts to hatch as Elbanth transforms into a new Mothman. Whimpering in a corner at the back of the cave is a small child – the infant Elbanth! If given Elbanth's doll, the child is invigorated and screams at the chrysalis, confusing it and preventing 2 attacks per round, even down to zero.

MOTHMAN (DREAM FORM)

An amorphous ooze with caterpillar and moth limbs partially dissolved or formed. The ooze just lashes out at whatever is near it.

AC 4 [15] in flight 2 [17], **HD** 4+4** (22hp), **Att** claws (1d6), bite (1d4 + poison), wing buffet (1d4 + knockback 1d6 x 5'), **THAC0** 15 [+4], **MV** 30' (10'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 425, **NA** 1, **TT** H

◆ **IMMUNITIES**

Immune to mind control, charm, and sleep. Invigorated by lightning (regains hit points equal to the damage).

◆ **MULTI-LIMBED**

The ooze can attack 1d6 times per round with one of its three attacks chosen at random.

◆ **POISONOUS BITE**

Save versus poison or suffer one of the following conditions permanently:

Roll (1d6)	Condition
1	Mottephobia: Afraid of moths (as *cause fear*)
2	Mottemorphism: Start to become a moth, growing fur, enlarged eyes, and wing stubs
3	Mothivore: Can only gain sustenance from eating a bag of moths every day
4	Mottephilia: Love being near moths (save vs spells to resist collecting any they see)
5	Scary dreams (save vs spells after sleep or suffer -1 to d20 rolls for a day)
6	Alignment shifts slowly towards the darkest end of Chaotic

◆ **REGENERATION**

The mutagenic enzymes heal 5hp per round.

◆ **BURNS WELL**

The ooze is flammable and is completely consumed within two rounds. It tears itself apart and flings flaming parts at 1d6 targets, setting fire to them too (1d6 damage per round until extinguished). Any burns cause permanent psychic damage imparting a fear of moths and a permanent penalty on saves against fear equal to the number of dice offire damage taken.

HOOKS

➢ The Mothman has been sighted over the city of Phelaket and tensions are running high. Many people have fled, and others have taken advantage of the situation to loot empty houses. The Prince needs to know what the disaster is and would have the adventurers visit the blind seers in the mountains. It's a dangerous journey, but perhaps there's something else going on.

➢ On the way to the village of Steelmire, a dark and fearsome shape swoops down at the party – perhaps frightening a few. When they arrive in the village the locals shun them as bringers of bad news. When they finally talk to the party, and find out they were swooped at by something, the villagers maintain that this was over the parish line in Saltwood so it's not Steelmire's problem – but could the party leave anyway? If pressed they will say that the party was cursed by the Dark Swooper. What's going on? Is a village in danger and if so which one, and what from? And what of these strange dreams one character is having?

➢ Elbanth has become a hermit to avoid any disasters as she has learned what fate awaits her. It has been said that the antennae of a Mothman can be used to detect disasters and that it is possible to recover them from inside the dream of someone cursed by the Mothman.

➢ Zaratazarat the Mage has come up with a genius plan! Through judicious scrying and careful demon bribing, he has learned which upcoming catastrophe will attract the Mothman. He requires adventurers to show up there, let the disaster happen, localise the person infected with dream eggs using the reactive salve he designed, and bring them back before the larvae hatch. They could just capture the Mothman instead, but Zaratazarat doesn't trust ragged wanderers to do so without killing it, and he needs a living subject for his experiments in humanoid flight.

▸ From **Gascogne, France** ⋄ by Eric Nieudan
◆ *Pronounce REY-dar-tuess*

Rey d'Artus the Black King

The immortal, damned hunter Rey d'Artus was once a king who offended the gods. At the head of a host of dead trackers and flying hounds, he now hunts on stormy nights, happy to leave the trail of his ever elusive prey to chase after lost travellers.

From an appendix to the travelogues of Athanase Flöpp de Vance, ubiquitous wayfarer and Chair of Multimetaversology at the Dungeonville University of Planar Studies.

Many mountainous realms seem to be haunted by some sort of ghost hunt: from cowboy wraiths to Harelquin's mesnie to the faerie cavalcade. I can only assume that a lot of gods like to curse the mortals who cross them in the same manner. Or that people around the multiverse like to tell the same stories... After all I didn't stay long in most of these places to attest to their truthfulness. The story of Rey d'Artus however, I can confidently tell to you, my dear reader. Because I very nearly lost this life at the hands and jaws of the Black King's followers!

But let me start at the beginning. Long ago in the wilds you would now call southern France, there was a king who loved hunt-ing. His throne was far away, on an island covered in mists where game was good but cuisine wasn't something people would concern themselves with. So king Artus had a palace built in the marches of his empire: on the sun-kissed slopes of the Pyrenees, were the beasts were just as fierce and the cooks much more skilled. He spent as much time there as he could, hunting from dusk till dawn. He hunted so much that he started neglecting his duties, and nothing his queen or faithful knights could say made him change his mind. But a higher authority took umbrage of this neglect: he was repeatedly told by the palace's priest that even a king could not miss morning mass as often as he did. Unaware of Heaven's growing resentment, he had other warlords and monarchs join him in his wild

hunts, pulling them away from their own affairs of state.

And one day, Artus went too far. At the dawn of Maryam, Queen of Heaven's coronation day, one of the most sacred days of the year, he was too busy chasing after a boar to listen to the church bells, or even make the sign of the cross. And so the angels had enough of Artus' disrespect. The king was taken away from his life yet condemned never to die. To forever be a hunter, chasing across fields, forests, and skies after prey he could never catch.

And so the legend of the Black King was born. The story was far from my mind that summer night when I got lost on the way to Sent Pèr de Bigòrra. Dark clouds were gather-ing above, and I was more concerned with finding a roof before one of those torrential downpours the region is known for. But what caught me was much worse than rain and thunder. I heard horns calling in the distance. I heard dogs barking and hooves thumping. One doesn't survive so much travelling in so many worlds without a very acute sense of impeding danger. If I didn't want to be the quarry for this hunt, I had to run faster than I ever had. A pack of baying hounds was hot on my trail, and soon arrows and crossbow bolts were flying right by my head. It is when I heard gunshots that I decided to use an expensive charge of my verse-hopping device. What's a thousand gold in components when your life is in the balance? With a sonorous *zzzap!* I left Rey d'Artus to hunt someone younger.

The rest of this story I pieced together from the safety of the library of my esteemed friend Zaratazarat the mage. (To those who wonder how I was afforded access to a notoriously private collection of grimoires and anthologies, I will answer that I have naught to do with Zaratazarat's disappearance.) I now present to you the facts I have gathered about the hunt of the Black King Rey d'Artus:

Firstly, Rey d'Artus is never alone on his hunts. Along with his hounds, of which I'll say more later, the undying king is accompanied by his servants: veneurs, pages, trackers, falconers, valets, cooks, and the like. I could not ascertain if any of the king's magical and spiritual entourage have been damned along with him. Some authors propose that many a hunter whose soul was claimed by Hell is forced to follow Rey d'Artus by night, their day time torture made worse by this time spent on Earth.

Secondly, the hunt is never successful. Every animal it tracks, chases, and shoots at escapes somehow. Rey d'Artus has learned that the fiercest of beasts sometimes do damage to his followers before getting away. He himself wears scars from confronting bird-headed bears and thunder lizards. The only beast the king can catch or kill is the humblest of them all (and some say an agent of chthonian demons): the fly. But as proven by my own misadventure, Rey d'Artus has found a way around his punishment. When afforded the opportunity to, he will gladly hunt – and kill! – people, the only animal the gods did not intend to be eaten. This is why the good mountain folk of Gascogne warn strangers against walking alone on stormy nights. The hunt always favours isolated prey over groups, but there are stories of travellers whose coach broke a wheel and who were chased off the road by flying hounds. I would not risk wandering those roads at night again, even with a well-armed escort of crusader clerics.

Thirdly, the hounds. Some sources say they are fire-breathing horrors who crawled their way out of Tartarus to join the chase. Others say the pack commanded by the Black King's veneurs numbers a thousand and six hundred. I have read about greyhounds, alaunts, mastiffs, and some of these able to leap great distances, and run across water. They... Wait, is this barking I hear outside? Was this a horn calling?

I fear they have found my scent yet again. I leave these lines here as a warning, and as a plea for help. If you know how one can be rid of this curse, please write to the university who will forward to whatever pocket dimension I am hiding in, catching up on grading papers. ◇

More damned hunters

The myth of a wild hunt led by a sinning noble is widespread in the Pyrenees and beyond. What if Rey d'Artus were only one of many territorial hunters, doomed to share the night sky with each other?

➢ MASTER HUNTERS

1. Robert le Diable, a duke originally from far Normandia. The closest neighbour to Rey d'Artus, preying upon the Varossa valley. In recent decades, Robert has been disputing the village of Peirosa to Artus.
2. The barbarian king Alariks, sacker of Rome, who rides a six-legged horse that breathes disease.
3. The Castillan nun only known as the Red Abbess. She rides a camel and leads dead crusaders, one of them her lover.
4. Esteban de Garibay, a Basque priest and a natural philosopher. He has but one follower, his friend Father Mattin. Both have deadly shooting skills with their hunting muskets.
5. Xalamun, a giant sorcerer-king from a distant land. His hunt is comprised of demons driving hell hounds before them.
6. Sultana Shajar, who drove Christian armies out of her adopted land of Egypt. Her retinue is mostly women, expert with the sword and javelin, and painted wolves (wild dogs) clad in studded leather armour.

➢ RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HUNTERS

1. Stark hatred. Do battle regularly and seek ways to destroy each other.
2. Cordial relations. Visit each other once a year and trade hunting techniques.
3. Lovers. Platonically or otherwise. They would defy the gods for each other.
4. Bitter rivals. Compete on trophies and number of successful hunts.
5. Allies. They share a common goal but will betray each other when it is close.
6. False friends. One is sincere in their friendship, the other isn't.

➢ SINS AND WAYS TO ATONE FOR THEM

1. Left Easter Mass to go after their hounds who had sniffed a hare. Must capture all the hares in the land.
2. Had a secret tunnel built to the nearby convent to visit its abbesses. Must find all their descendants and convince them to take the veil.
3. Embraced the Cathar heresy. Must destroy all remaining knowledge of it, written or oral.
4. Refused hospitality to Jesus when he travelled incognito. Must find another prophet and serve them for a year and a day.
5. Boasted they could hunt seven days a week. Must ride seven times around the world, taking under seven years each time.
6. Made a pact with the Devil so they could write the most comprehensive treatise on the art of the hunt. Must burn all existing copies of it.

HOOKS

➢ Catarina d'Artémon (or a noble or hunter the party know) has died and been mistakenly condemned to serve in the hunt of Rey d'Artus. Her family wants her released. It so happens the witches of Iraty own a xylophone made with the bones of witch-hunting queen Jeanne d'Albret that will make all damned flee when played. The plan is simple: play it, chase the fleeing hunters, and capture Catarina before exorcising her. The question is, how can one convince the witches to loan their relic?

➢ Rey d'Artus' palace, in the forest above the town of Mirmande, has been avoided by locals for generations. Recently though, music and song were heard drifting down at night. Is the ruined palace a new ground for the faerie fair, or is the Black King back to take revenge on the pious villagers who disapproved of his ways? In either case, adventurers are required to investigate.

➢ The chevalier d'Urrutie, a famed hunter, suffered a fate similar to Rey d'Artus, except he was thrown down a pit that leads to a gate of Hell. Night after night, he fights off devils coming out to take him. Down from his prison, he calls on the party to find another damned hunter to swap his place with.

➢ The sword of Rey d'Artus, the legendary Caliburnus, is still in his possession. His old realm is being invaded, and the prophecy says it will be saved by a hero wielding Caliburnus. Can it be taken from the Black King long enough to save the land, or should one find a way to free him from his curse so he can do the work himself?

REY D'ARRTUS

Rey d'Artus appears as a hollow cheeked nobleman riding a foaming steed, a gyrfalcon on his gauntleted fist. His beautiful attire is worn out by lifetimes spent chasing prey, and even the crown on his head has grown dull. He is followed by a host of dead hunters and hawkers, along with a pack of hovering hounds.

AC 2 [17], **HD** 7** (31hp), **Att** 1 × boar spear or longsword (1d8+1), **THAC0** 12 [+7], **MV** 240' (80'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12, **ML** 10, **AL** C, **XP** 1 650, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** V

◆ **IMMORTAL**
While not undead, Rey d'Artus is incapable of finding rest. If killed, his body vanishes in smoke, leaving his possessions behind, and the hunt disperses. The Black King and his following appear again at the site of their demise on the next stormy night.

◆ **MAGIC WEAPONS**
Rey d'Artus has +1 weapons (including a sword, hunting knife, and returning spear) and plate armour, which stay behind when he dies. He will come looking for them, wherever they are.

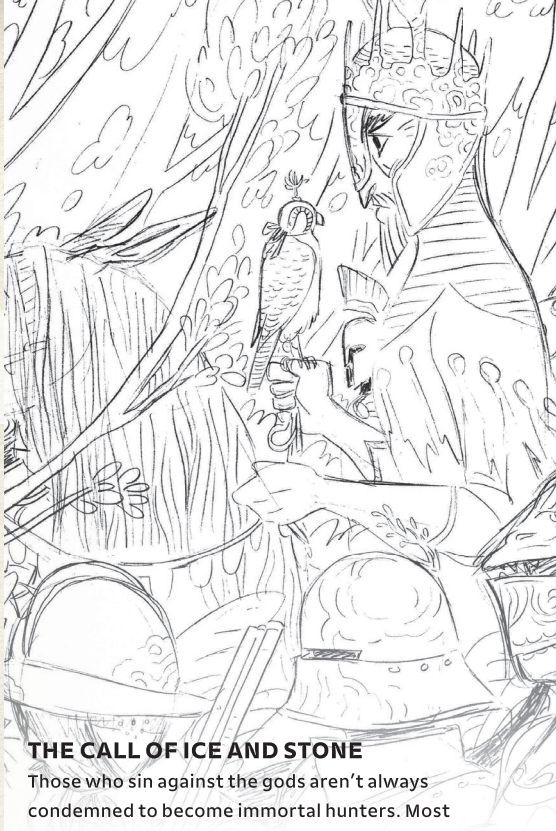
◆ **DIVINE CURSE**
A Lawful cleric can attempt to turn Rey d'Artus (as a vampire) and his hunters (as zombies), but not his hounds. The animals can enter holy ground (such as churches, temples or graveyards), while the rest of the hunt cannot.

◆ **DAMNED HUNTERS**
At any time, the Black King is followed by 2d6 dead hunters from all periods of history. Treat them as zombies with no initiative penalty and missile weapons (from longbows to muskets) which they shoot with deadly accuracy (+2 to hit).

◆ **NEAR INFINITE HOUNDS**
Rey d'Artus can call upon 1,600 hounds and hunting dogs of various types, lean runners, beefy attack dogs, swift terriers the size of a weasel, etc. Treat them as wolves who can fly at half their normal speed. The hunt has 3d6 hounds at any time. The Black King can blow his horn to call 3d6 more, who will show up in 1d12 rounds.

◆ **CALL OF ICE AND STONE**
In his hunting territory, Rey d'Artus has the power to animate the stones and ice blocks that were once mortals or monsters. The ritual takes a whole turn (see sidebar).

◆ **SCENT**
Rey d'Artus and his followers will always find their quarry, whatever the distance, across seas and realms, and even planes. The only difference is the time it will take them to track it down (1d3 to 1d100 days).



THE CALL OF ICE AND STONE

Those who sin against the gods aren't always condemned to become immortal hunters. Most of them are turned into large stones or, more rarely, glaciers. Once or twice, an entire village was drowned under a lake for its lack of faith or failure to show hospitality to a travelling goddess. As one of the oldest damned, Rey d'Artus has acquired the power to wake these sinners from their eternal sleep. He can do so once a year by addressing the stones. The most monstrous of them, the hydras and the harpies, take an even fiercer version of their original forms. Those who were mortals animate their stone or ice bodies, lurching after their new master (treat them as golems). Killing these monsters returns them to stone or ice, and they cannot be called upon for a century.

Friend referee, this is your chance to unleash giants or dinosaurs onto some defenceless village. Your party will need to look for Rey d'Artus, the only one who can turn them back to stone. Something he will only do when the village has made up for the slight, real or perceived, that triggered the Black King's ire in the first place.

▸ From: uncertain, first published in *the Book of Wonder* by Lord Dunsany
◇ by **Paolo Greco**
◇ pronounce: NOH-lz
Gnole
Silent and reclusive hunters, tentacled and tuber-shaped, hiding in a remote woodland, hoarding emeralds the size of your head.

Close to the edge of the world there is a woodland, eerily silent. In this woodland, where not even the most desperate faerie poacher dares to tread anymore, there is a narrow and lofty house. There is only one house in the woods: you cannot mistake it as the closest buildings are in a village just outside of the forest, its homes not even daring to have any window or door facing toward the sickly trees, its residents living in fear. Even if there were other houses in the woods (there are not), you'd easily identify the lean, high house: Swiss chalets inspired by the Victorian Gothic style are far between, and I guess there is only one that is ten floors tall. Still, in case you were uncertain, the green shutters and the flaking white paint job of the walls will definitely be enough to dispel any doubt. But I digress.

What makes these woods unique are the curious inhabitants: the lumpy Gnoles. First-hand descriptions of their physical aspects are few, and even those are scant: about 2 metres tall and grotesquely human-shaped, with a body like a lumpy tuber, Gnoles have red eyes faceted like perfectly cut rubies, and a long ribbony tongue coming from a mouth filled with too many fangs, and a whole lot of very, very strong tentacles. Despite lacking ears the Gnoles are sensitive to the faintest sound, allowing them to track prey throughout their wood of sick trees in order to satisfy their voracious appetite for fresh meat.

But of all the monsters and horrors and gripplis of Creation, why do we even bother about the reclusive Gnoles? Because of their gem eyes, which definitely demand a respectable price on the market? No, not worth it. Their multiple sets of gemstone eyes are their most precious possession, in part organ, heritage, pride, and memento. Taking them away would be the worst offense for a Gnole (from what we gather, as they cannot speak). Rather than stealing their ruby eyes, if you find yourself in the vertical, cramped house of the Gnoles you should go for the rest of the gem hoard. Because their homes have gems of many sizes scattered about as ornaments, from the tiny ones we usually mount in jewellery, to emeralds the size of your head.

The trick we learnt from the best burglar is, as always, go in unnoticed, make no noise whatsoever, take the single smallest emerald you see, and leave. The smallest you see, as No king would feel bad should you ransom them with even the smallest emerald from that towering, slim house. Gnoles may lack ears, but they can hear a vole moving a blade of grass. And if they hear you they will chase you down, latch onto you with their unyielding tentacles. Even if you are silent as snow falling at night, they will probaly have noticed you already, peering out of their sick trees, their scraggliness and malaise caused simply by being hollowed out by hungry Gnoles silently waiting for their quarry. And the quarry will make the only noise in the woods, screaming as they are dragged toward the fattening pens in the basement. ◇

THE TEN FLOORS OF THE GNOLES HOUSE

The floors of the House are linked by simple staircases. Usually 6d6 gnoles live in the house: 1d6 seniors, 2d6 adults, 3d6 young.

- **Ninth Floor,** Veranda: big windows, small tables, and easy chairs.
- **Eighth Floor,** Senior Gnoles Room: somewhat austere, this is where older gnoles come to rest.
- **Seventh Floor,** Adult Gnoles Room: split into separate chambers by removable panels.
- **Sixth Floor,** Young Gnoles Room: Many bunk beds for young gnoles, and many wooden toys.
- **Fifth Floor,** Lounge: windows seats, musical instruments, big pillows on the floor, and many blankets.
- **Fourth Floor,** Dining Room: a big communal table, chairs, and much rope.
- **Third Floor,** Kitchen. There is a cauldron with a locked lid. Who's inside the pot?
- **Second Floor,** Workshop: more a room to dump random stuff than a real workshop, the benches are heavy with junk.
- **First Floor,** Foyer: for light social activity and organisation as gnoles come back or leave the house.
- **Ground floor,** Vestibule: In this room, for every gnole in the house, there is a jacket hook. If the gnole is in the house the hook will sport a green jacket, and there will be a pair of shoes under the hook. If the gnole is outside there will be a pair of slippers, but no jacket.
- **Basement,** Fattening Pens: do you want to know?
- **Sub-Basement,** Root Cellar: for edible tubers only.

EMERALDS AND OTHER TREASURES

The House of the Gnoles is full of ornaments, and they are all gems, and a few of those gems are of disproportionate size. There are in order:

- Sets of Auxiliary Gnole's Eyes: A pair of red gems kept by a Gnole's bed or in the lounge. These are their most treasured and sacred property. Touching them is guaranteed to make gnoles go completely ballistic. One set per gnole. 100gp.
- Big Emeralds, but Not of Unreasonable Size: the best and possibly biggest emeralds you have ever seen before stepping in the House. 1d8 per 10 gnoles in the house. Roll on the Gem table (page reference), and multiply by 5.
- Giant Emeralds: As big as your head. Imagine a watermelon, but it's a gem. Inestimable, but maybe 100,000d3 pgold pieces. It will not yield XP until sold.

GREED REIGNS ETERNAL: THE CURSE OF THE GIANT EMERALDS

So they managed to escape from the House of the Gnoles with one (or more!) giant emeralds. What now? No one will give upwards of 100,000 gold in hard currency, and nobody has soluble assets worth as much.

In addition, as soon as the word gets around friends, family, acquaintances, creditors, debtors, henchmen, come knocking . Being fabulously wealthy will do wonders for the party's social life!

1. The local thieves guild definitely wants it, and will send (possibly in this order) collectors, burglars, and cutthroats. At some point other thieves guilds will get wind of it, and do the same. This might lead to guild wars, with the characters in the crossfire.
2. The local tax authority wants it. Or at least wants to profit incredibly from it. As a matter of fact, unless your characters are crowned heads, sumptuary laws forbid them from obtaining and detaining this kind of wealth! Expect the local taxmen and bailiffs, and in due time also the taxmen and bailiffs from a higher authority (for example the Emperor or the Pope). This might cause a political stushie or two.
3. Somehow the agents of a neighbouring king found out about the gem, and are literally sending raiders to get it, with the help of a court diviner to find their whereabouts. Of course the characters have no idea the army is coming for you, so that might be a bit of a surprise. The local ruler might also be a bit miffed that an army just invaded.
4. Effin' wizards, maaan! A few wizards (1d4+1) are each about to visit, as giant emeralds are great for giant magical experiments. In turn they will ask, first kindly, then less so, for the gem, and they will likely bear a grudge if it ends up with their not-so-esteemed colleagues. Of course, putting several cantankerous wizards in the same place with their respective overgrown egos is bound to cause a small catastrophe or five.

GNOLE

A tuber-shaped lumpy creature, vaguely humanoid, two meters tall. Its head sports two ruby-red faceted eyes, a mouth with too many sharp teeth and a long, ribbony tongue, and no ears. Where arms should be there are many, many tentacles.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 4+2** (20hp), **Att** 1 x tentacles (1d8), 1 x bite (1d8), **THAC0** 15 [+4], **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 375, **NA** 1d6, **TT** Emeralds

◆ **PROWLER**

Gnoles always move without making noise and, despite having no ears, have perfect hearing. In their silent woods they notice the softest noises within 100 metres. They surprise on 4-in-6 and are never surprised.

◆ **A MESS OF TENTACLES**

once a tentacle attack hits, the gnole latches onto the prey with a whole lot of tentacles, and deals tentacle and bite damage automatically every round. On their turn, the victim can save vs paralysis: if they succeed they can attack normally, but cannot escape the grasp of the gnole. Succeeding on three saving throws in a row tires the gnole, who retreats from combat. Failing three times in a row means that the gnole has the victim fully tentacled up, completely unable to escape or move, and ready to be dragged to the fattening pens.

HOOKS

Yes, these refer to gnolls, the familiar hyena-headed monsters. That's because no one knows about the gnoles yet...

➢ The party heard someone say the gnolls living in the woods have a big emerald. They said big as an apple, but to be honest an emerald would make their day regardless of its size.

➢ During a very-much-not-sober social occasion in a weird little village someone challenged the adventurers to walk into the House of the Gnolls. Nobody believed they'd be up for it, and were aghast when they said they'd do it. The party still have no idea why this is such a big deal.

➢ The Rope makers Guild wants people to investigate the disappearance of Mortensen, a rope trader. Apparently he went into some sort-of-nearby woods seeking business, and never made it back.

▸ From **Flanders, Belgium** ⋄ by Nicolas Dessaux
◆ *Pronounce GAH-yan*

Gayant

In the northern marshlands, city states field giants along with their regular troops. In times of peace, keeping them happy is a not easy, but the work and expenses pay for themselves when war comes. And war always comes in the North.

Your Grace,

As you asked, I travelled to the rebel cities of the northern marhslands, in order to inform you about their strengths and weakness. I am sorry, Madam, to say the rumours are true: they have giants. More precisely, they have official city giants they call gayants in their coarse, degenerate language.

These gayants are treated as city mascots. Small towns, even sometimes city borroughs can own one. Families of gayants are not unheard of: to strenghten alliances within their league, towns sometimes marry their gayants or send their cubs as gifts. I have heard that the large cities who lack a gayant family send adventurers into giant abodes to capture babies.

During a fair, I had the opportunity to approach a gayant. She was tall as two or three women, with a belly broad as a workhorse, dressed as the burghers do for the feast of Saint Cuthbert, in the colours of the city's arms. Some people spoke to her and she answered with a powerful voice, or laughed like a braying donkey. Most ignored her as she was peacefully walking among the fair tents.

Suddenly, trumpets sounded at the city gate. A full company of burgher militia in their ornate armour was arriving from a nearby town. Hundreds of crossbowmen and women, halberdiers, and even cavaliers; along with them was another gayant, holding under each arm a gigantic barrel of beer. The fairs in these parts sometimes attract companies from several of the surrounding towns.

It was obvious the gayants had already met several times, as they embraced and conversed in their crude dialect. Then they pierced one of the barrels and started drinking together. Some city officials, who often work as giant-tamers, started to worry, but the gayants rejected all talk of moderation.

My attention was caught by other aspects of the city, like the number of knightly urban castles, the size of the inner walls, the canals and any detail who could help your plans, Madam, so I am not quite sure how the brawl started. It transpires that the gayants had a complaint about the rudeness

of some foreigner and decided to chastise him in their own way. The crowd started trampling as one gayant was swiping tents and stalls with a cart she used as a weapon, while the other was throwing huge balls of cloth – and even, at one time. Some live sheep on the guards who attempted to calm them down.

It seems that large amounts of beer under the sun is the gayants' weakness. Finally, a city official, they call them *rewart* or peacekeepers, spoke to the gayants from the balcony of the city hall (the *breteche*, used to proclaim laws, prices, or calls to war). He had to dodge a few sacks of grain, but his speech about peace, friendship, and the moral values of citizenship had a mesmerising effect on the gigantic brawlers who finally ceased their rampage.

It is fortunate I had the opportunity to see how strong these creatures are, and also how obedient they can be when addressed by city leaders. Your Grace, I hope the above constitutes useful information.

In closing, I will add a small detail: it was my cart the giantess used a weapon. So, Madam, I dare ask of you the kindness of passing the attached invoice to your treasury so a poor yet patriotic merchant can reestablish his lost business.

Your humble servant,
Beatrys Plettinck

GAYANT

Officially sanctioned city giant (15' tall), used as a mascot during fairs and tournaments. Cities makes alliances by breeding their gayants or gifting them as cubs. Citizens take pride in their gayants and care for them, feeding them and keeping them in luxurious abodes. Sometimes, drunk gayants get into a facetious mood or devastating frenzy. During war times, they are used as living battle engines.

AC 14 [15], **HD** 10 (45hp), **Att** 1 giant-sized weapon (4d6), **THAC0** 11 [+8], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D6 W7 P8 B8 S10, **ML** 9, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 1 600, **NA** 1d2 (0), **TT** E

- **CITY MASCOT** +2 to morale when fighting within or for the city they were raised in.
- **HERITAGE** Cold, fire, and electricity do half damage, or no damage with a successful saving throw.
- **BATTLE GEAR** When fully equipped for battle, use a repeating ballista as a crossbow (damage 4d6, range 5'–160' / 161'–240' / 241'–480') and gain +2 to their AC due to their armour.

HOOKS

➢ The city is in a pickle. The prince's daughter is coming to inspect their troops, and the gayants refuse to leave the barracks until the barrels of genever that were promised to them after the last border skirmish are delivered. The problem is, no one on this side of the border is distilling genever anymore.

➢ A group of gayants, friends from different units, have deserted in the middle of the night. They fled to the southern marches, far enough to avoid pursuit and close enough to a high road that they can try their hand at this banditry business. Behind the relative a nonymity of leather masks, they politely, almost apologetically rob merchants and travellers.

➢ A gayant due to fight in a war between the city-states of Kiert and Ousdebeigh begs the party for help. He has been courting someone in the enemy town for two years and the betrothal was to take place next week. What if instead they have to kill each other on the battlefield?

➢ Gregoria Ghyrmostoft's gayant farm has lost all its cubs and is hiring help recapturing them. Gregoria suspects one of her farmhands, young Mithildia, to has been paid off by a competitor to arrange the escape. But soon, the region is plagued by groups of playful, angry children the size of ogres. Could this whole affair be an unfair competitive practice, perhaps a cover for some ambitious robbery or espionage attempt?

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A DOZEN GAYANTS TO MEET ON THE ROAD

1. **Godelieve.** She's a peaceful older gayant, mainly employed to carry cannons and load trebuchets.
2. **Jaak Ten-Arms.** A prize fighter who wins tournaments every autumn. His nickname comes from how quick his halberd jabs can be.
3. **Katelijn the Purple**. This fashion conscious gayant will never be caught dead in last year's outfit. Even her war hammer gets a new coat every season.
4. **Lady Lienjte.** The matriarch of a large family, all in the employ of the magical city of Breug. Some say she often weighs in on local politics.
5. **Old Ludolf.** This veteran isn't that old, but a wound to the back has forced them to go around in a war chariot pulled by three dozen oxen.
6. **Stofel II.** This handsome, moustachioed lad is the star of the Stofel Standard mercenary company. Clients pay extra to have him lead the charge.
7. **Little Luitgard.** At only 9 feet tall, they are a dwarf among gayants. They make up for it in cleverness and ambition, though.
8. **Seppe the Pious.** Dubbed a knight like his father and grandfather before him, he rides a behemoth into battle.
9. **Vaast the Younger and Waast the Elder.** Twins born minutes apart, they are rivals in everything and their bets are known to escalate quickly and devastatingly.
10. **Balte Van Der Kil.** Clad in black brocade and spiked leather, she fancies herself an assassin, a shadow, a ghost. No one is brave enough to tell her she's as subtle as a minotaur in a fairy mound.
11. **Golden Ghysebrecht.** The luckiest of all gayants: never hit by a stray arrow, never stepping in manure, always counting on their guiding star.
12. **Koert.** Unnoticeable among a group of gayants, this clever fellow has taught himself some magic while he was in the retinue of Zharat Azarat De Magiër.

THE SAD STORY OF
ORLANDO THE GAYANT FARMER

When Orlando Da Silva came to the northern marches he was a foreigner who had chanced on a good deal. Not many people wanted to have anything to do with him. Gathering all the gold he had managed to smuggle from his war-torn country, he had acquired a good breeding pair of gayants and he intended to sell the cubs and start on a farm.

A score years later, Orlando has a giant farm, but not the kind of giant farm you would expect in these parts. It is 'giant' due to its enormous size, reclaimed from previously unowned marshland, and because of the people who work it. Despite high demand, *senhor* Orlando has never sold not a single gayant. He grew too attached to them, and so did his wife Ottilie and their eight children. The thirteen gayants have been able to reclaim huge tracts of land and their prodigious strength was key in making them bear fruit. Gayants and humans form a big, hard-working family. They farm for most of what they need and sell the surplus at the market in the town of Ursele. It is far from the life Orlando imagined when he set out. It has less profit than expected and much more toil. But he is happy.

Happy is not how the Weaponmakers Guild is feeling these days. They consider the Da Silva farm to be setting a bad example for the people of the Marches, as the gayants are valuable military assets that should not be wasted on harvesting cabbages. They have lobbied the aldermen to make the use of gayants for civilian purposes illegal. They intend to arrest the criminals, seize the merchandise, and attempt to get a deed for the land as well.

Fortunately, the Da Silvas have friends at the town hall, and they have heard about the new law a few days before it is to be voted on. They are going to fight it, but they want to plan for a possible failure. This is where they need adventurers. Depending on the timing, and also on the skills the party advertises, they can ask them to:

- Help convince the town's aldermen that gayants should not be automatically employed for war
- Delay the new law from coming into effect
- Stop the soldiers and their gayants from raiding the farm
- Hide the thirteen gayants on riverboats and smuggle them out of the country
- Start a revolution

Of course, the characters do not have to worry about any expenses. They are welcome to stay at the farm for as long as they need, even after this whole business is settled.

▸ From **Dordogne, France** ⋄ by Steve Dempsey
◆ *Pronounce loo PAY-tah-ssoo*

Lou Petassou

Lou Pétassou is a raggedy spirit who carries in his tatters all the cares of the past year. The ritual of his capture and death allows communities to start the new year with a clean slate.

In the village of La Petite Renaudie, in the kingdom of France, an old wise woman created a mannikin using clay from the river and dust from the graveyard. Every time someone from the village expressed dissatisfaction at their lot, she took a scrap of cloth she had collected from the tip (a *pétas*, in the local dialect), and by candlelight whispered the complaint to the tatter before sewing onto the mannikin.

As the complaints grew, so did the doll, with its humped back and cruel twisted face, full of the petty hates and cares of the villagers. Having no time for idleness, the wise woman gave lou Pétassou a broom to sweep her house. At the new year, she cast the fully grown creature out into the woods, but it wouldn't leave without her broom. The wise woman approached the mayor of the village and explained that she knew a way to start the new year afresh, with none of the cares of the old one. The bravest of the villagers must go into the woods and capture the Pétassou, bring him back and the others must try him for his many crimes. She explained that you can hear him whispering the ills, even if his lips don't move. So this the villagers did, and afterwards, on a bare patch of ground behind the inn, they burned the creature. Then everyone went into the inn for some roast duck and walnut brandy. And it's true they did all feel better, less burdened by the past and closer to their neighbours. And the only payment the old woman would take was a new broom.

In the less fortunate village of Mensignac, a somewhat less cunning man also summoned lou Pétassou into being. The village baker had been arguing with the innkeeper about the price of wine and the price of bread. The graveyard was in disrepair and the wall fell down spilling bones into the road. The cunning man had assumed that the villagers would band together to put things in order before the dead took offence, or the Devil showed up (or worse... the local Bishop) but he was sadly mistaken. The innkeeper burned down the bakery, and the baker threw a dead crow in the inn's well. The children of the master builder played with the bones in the street, showing scant respect of the ancestors and the priest unleashed his two mastiffs which chased the children up and down the street, and then ran off and ate the bones. Misery piled on misery, viciousness on spitefulness, and soon there was no community at all. Just enemies hiding out in their houses, hoping they wouldn't be set alight next. Of course, lou Pétassou lapped this up and grew fat on the juicy rancour. It wasn't long, even though it wasn't yet spring, that everyone who could upped sticks and left the sorry place. Now everyone avoids Mensignac, never even mentioning the name, and the roads no longer go there. Not such a cunning old man, was he? ⋄

LOU PETASSOU

Embodied spirit of shame and hatred. Lou Pétassou feeds on petty squabbles and turns this back on the community.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 4*** (18hp), 2 x fists (1d3 + 2) or 1 x broom (1d6+2), **THAC0** 16 [+3], **MV** 150' (50'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 275, **NA** 1, **TT** none

◆ **IMMUNITIES**. Lou Pétassou is immune to damage from fire and magic unless he is tried first. He is also immune to mind controlling spells such as *charm person*.

◆ **INFRAVISON 120'.** Pétassou can also see who has the most shame in a group (ask your players!).

◆ **TACTICS**- Avoids large groups of people and seeks out isolated homesteads. He can sense vulnerability and is only surprised on a 1-in-6.

◆ **SPEAK THE TRUTH**. Pétassou knows what you did and isn't afraid to say so. He will call out your sins and cause you great embarrassment. Even gagged, his stare penetrates your soul and reveals your weakness to yourself. Save vs spells or suffer the effect of the cause fear spell. If a character fails a save, their player should describe their shame.

◆ **MAYHEM**. Pétassou also knows the petty enmities of a community. If he isn't gagged, he'll set neighbour against neighbour, mother against daughter, priest against parishioner. If held in a group of 10 or more and not gagged, one random fight per round breaks out between 1d3 of the group. In smaller groups, everyone must save vs spells or suffer the effect of a *confusion* spell with the following behaviour table. Reroll every round unless you previously got a 2 or 12 result.

2d6	Behaviour
2	Go off and sulk until you feel better in 1d10 rounds
3-5	Attack someone you have a beef with
6-8	Shout insults at someone
9-11	Attack someone who has a beef with you
12	Suddenly realise how stupid this all is and snap out of it. Immune to Mayhem for the rest of the day.

◆ **REGENERATION**. Unless tried and burned, regenerates 2hp per round. Even if reduced to dust, he will pop up somewhere else in the community.

◆ **SHAME IS MY SUSTENANCE**. For every villager who dies or leaves the village as a result of Pétassou's actions, he gains power. Each time this happens, do one of the following:

- decrease [increase] AC by 1
- reduce THAC0 [increase attack bonus] by 1
- increase HD by 1
- increase fist damage by 2
- reduce any saving throw by 1

HOOKS

➢ Travelling through the woods late one night the characters find a deserted village. Seemingly the inhabitants just upped and left, some in the middle of supper. There is evidence of fighting inside the houses and the innkeeper can be found stuffed inside a vat of beer with "Filanderer!" scrawled in blood on the barrel. A single child has managed to hide and stay safe from the Pétassou, but they know he is after them. The only way to defeat the monster is to capture it and have the child declare it guilty. Give the monster a suitable number of 'shame improvements' for the party level.

➢ The hamlet of Pouvezey has been destroyed by the Pétassou. This is terrible news as there is no longer any way of preventing its rampages. The party is charged by a nearby lord to find a person from Pouvezey and persuade them to sit in judgement of the beast. This may involve necromancy. And then of course, they also need to catch it. Give the Pétassou an unreasonable number of 'shame improvements' that the party need to mostly avoid it and be very clever. The last remaining villager, of course, is sure to attract the creature. The houses in Pouvezey have been ruined by the stalking Pétassou as it searched for victims. The livestock is all dead and rotting in the barns, fields, and down wells. Some of the dead are restless and hate the living for having abandoned them. At night they roam the area as zombies or more powerful undead, waylaying travellers. They ignore Pétassou, as he does them.

➢ In the city of Bellegarde, the dockers are unhappy. Trade has been affected by the war, business is slow, and piecework wages are down. A book of grievances has been collated and was going to be presented to the Lord – but it has been stolen. What would be the point of that? Well, it could be used to summon lou Pétassou! With only a few days to the new year, time is short to find the culprit and stop chaos being unleashed in the city.

➢ At a dwarven mining outpost in the Garrigues mountains, production has fallen drastically. Miners are often sullen but this lot won't even begrudge each other with a cursory "Hope you die in your sleep" when they clock off work. If only they would talk about their problems, then cunning old Kiggilda Irongrinder could summon the Pétassou and clear the air. Also, instead of just returning to their cells each night, they might drink a bit more in Kiggilda's Kavern, the local tavern.She's willing to pay, in gold, anyone who helps collect grievances.

Adventure

HARD TIMES IN HOMBURG

Passing through the village of Homburg, the characters find the villagers at loggerheads. Petty squabbles have spoiled everything and there is seemingly no hope for peace. Travellers now mostly avoid the village. A woman, Bragna, approaches the adventurers and asks them to organise a hunt for the Pétassou, to save the village. He is hiding out in the woods, near an abandoned (and haunted) house.

Homburg is a small village inhabited by ten families and their servants. They are all zero level folk unless specified. You may choose any race for them.

HOMBURG FAMILIES

1. Bernini: Extended family of 10, tenant farmers for the Pfaff. They are struggling.

2. Baujot: Family of 6, tenant farmers for the Pfaff. They are struggling.

3. Dapper: Cuncipert and their two kids Emme and Urtune. They run the Goat's Fool, a declining inn due to Cuncipert's unctuous and off-putting manner, and the weak beer. They are struggling and only the poor come here.

4. Casetto: Engelbert and his son Valbergur are the local herbalists. They are from the big city and have airs. They maintain the local shrine to the Goddess of Plenty. They are comfortable. Engelbert is a low level cleric.

5. Zingre: Philea and Wybur and their daughter young Wybur. They own the town trading post. It might be dirty and ill-kept but the prices are fair and they are well supplied with a range of goods for farmers and fisherfolk. They are comfortable.

6. Oberhofner: Extended family of 12, tenant farmers for a neighbouring noble. They are poor.

7. Pavenic: Tobar and Tobar and their six children Juna, Beleniss, Fleur, Hilith, Artyo, and Stallo are pig herders. Every morning they take their sounder out to the forest and return every night. With that and the sausage making there's plenty of work for the whole family. They are poor. They have seen light in the old Pfaff mansion and think it is will o' the wisps. They also know there are badgers in the forest, big ones.

8. Issorat: Karipos and Bragna, an elderly couple who have returned to Bragna's childhood village to run a tavern, the Frowning Warg. The service is a bit slow but they get the passing trade from the coastal road. Bragna's sister Gisla previously ran the tavern. They are comfortable. They have three servants, the Ansotegi family, Gudytha who serves, Anhaern who cooks, and their child Gargrom who runs the stables. Bragna is a wise woman, knowledgeable in cures and hedge magic. She made the Pétassou to calm the village down.

9. Kollias: Family of 4, tenant farmers. They are poor.

10. Pfaff: Belanor and Kaylessa are the head family and make decisions which affect the whole village. They have not yet been blessed by children. Belanor inherited the job from his uncle Max. They are major land owners and have several families of tenant farmers. They are rich and not well liked. They have a bevy of servants as well as a steward, Hiram Stemar. They have several outbuildings including a small lockup (for three people).

WHAT BRAGNA TELLS THE PARTY

- Tensions have been running high for some time so she made the Pétassou as a way of dispelling all the grievance.
- However, she couldn't get anyone to agree to hunt the Pétassou and now things are getting out of control.
- Several fights have broken out and the next one might be fatal.
- The Pétassou is hiding out in the woods somewhere. Possibly in the old abandoned house.
- The house is the ancestral home of the Pfaff family but they abandoned it to live in the village. There are rumours that it is haunted.
- No one goes in the forest now, except the Pavenics for pannage (releasing pigs in the forest to forage for food).

RANDOM EVENT TABLE

d6	Events
1	A fight breaks out, roll for protagonists (1d10 opposite) and reason (right)
2	The Pétassou stirs up trouble—roll for target family
3	Some travellers arrive at the inn (3)
4	A building is on fire, roll for target and arsonist (1d10 opposite) , and reason (right). Unless the fire is stopped quickly, 1d4-1 people die in the flames. Any remaining family members prepare to leave.
5	Someone takes exception to the PCs and their family attacks!
6	Mayor Pfaff forms a posse to arrest troublemakers

RANDOM REASON FOR ARGUMENT TABLE

d6	Reason for argument (d4)
1	**Wealth:** 1. undeserving poor 2. unearned rich hes 3. cheapskate 4. thieving
2	**Land:** 1. an inheritance 2. blocking access 3. stealing water 4. untended pastures
3	**Love**: 1. spurned 2. infidelity 3. jealousy 4. fear of commitment
4	**Overindulgence:** 1. drink 2. drugs 3. food 4. work
5	**Unkindness:** 1. racist 2. sexist 3. cruel 4. rumour monger
6	**Miscellaneous:** 1. loudness 2. oath breaker 3. religion 4. aggression

CHATTEL SYSTEM™, PEASANT-LEVEL MASS COMBAT RULES

If a fight breaks out between NPCs, use these rules to quickly determine the outcome. If the characters intervene, you may go to your more usual and detailed system.

Roll a d6 for each side with the following adjustments:

+1 per combatant, +1 for poor, +2 for comfortable, +3 for well off, +4 for rich, +1 for defending a location, +2 for magical aid.
Give NPC groups +1 to +3 in bonuses if they pick up any loot or weapons.

Result	Outcome*
1-3	Inflict one injury
4-6	Pick two from injury, treasure
7-10	Pick three from injury, treasure,
11-14	Pick four from injury, treasure, territory
15+	Pick five from injury, treasure, territory, magic (counts for two picks)

* you can pick the same result more than once

An NPC who takes two ***wounds*** is unable to fight. Three wounds kill them. A ***treasure*** is food, weapons, or produce. ***Territory*** is forcing back the enemy, taking part of a building, or destroying it.
Magic is gaining some special treasure from the other side: healing herbs, their shrine, a family heirloom (roll on your favourite random magical item table). This won't always be available.

Example:
Hiram Stemar leads 4 servants to defend the Pfaffs against an invasion by 8 members of the Bernini family, angry that the Pfaffs have put up the rent. Hiram gets 1d6+10, rolling 2+10=12, Berninis get 1d6+8 and rolls 6+8=14.
Hiram inflicts three injuries on the Berninis and forces them out of the house.
The Berninis steal weapons, a beloved collection of silver spoons, inflict one injury and burn down an outhouse. This doesn't seem like the end of the affair but perhaps both sides might need to rally some allies first.

Instead of standard morale ratings, use the values below, based on wealth:

Wealth	Morale
Struggling	8 (nothing to lose)
Poor	7
Comfortable	6
Well off	7
Rich	8 (entitled)

OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Lou Pétassou has no lair. He has no need of sleep but wanders about, stirring up spite where he can. He is less keen on the buccaneers however, because they have another problem – a ghost. And even Pétassou is wary of the netherworld.

ENCOUNTER TABLES

Grasslands

1. **Wary travellers** (2d4), worried about buccanee er attacks but scared to stay in Homburg
2. **Irate peasants** (2d6), tenant farmers from Homburg, reaction roll at -1
3. **Worried messenger**, carrying mail to the Pfaffs about their business affairs but scared of everything
4. **Buccaneer scout**, checking out likely targets. Will not hang around
5. **River boat** coming down from the city to the coast (carrying ironware and cheap tin-trays, 1d3+1 crew)
6. **Lou Pétassou** in the distance, scouting for victims (he doesn't stay and fight)

Woods (1d6, 1d6+1 in badger area)

1. **Pigs** (1d4), lost in the forest, happy if left to r root for food but angry if disturbed (as boars)
2. **The Pavenics** (1d6 + 1), looking for lost pigs, reaction roll at -1

3-4. **Lou Pétassou**, skulking about, surprises on a 1-3

5. **Buccaneer scout**, surprises on a 1-4 and runs back to the mansion. Knows to avoid badger tunnels
6. **Giant badger** (as a burrowing black bear), will retreat t if not in its territory (see *The Sett* below)
7. **Badger tunnels.** Characters have 1-in-6 chance of falling through the tunnels (1d4 fall damage). 2-in-6 chance of attracting 1d3 giant badgers (as burrowing black bears).

LOU PETASSOU

Grassland, dark thickets, ponds, farm land.

Woods, light undergrowth, then heavy and dark further in.

1. Homeburg. **2.** Bridge. **3.** Dead bridegroom
4. Red house: Haunted mansion, half ruined and home to buccaneers

The road leads from the city to the north, down to the coast in the south

River. A few boats use this route, although fewer with the buccaneers becoming a problem.

Giant badger sett area

THE SETT

Over the years the giant badgers have dug an extensive series of tunnels under the forest. Indeed, the poor Franco fell down one of these while walking in the house gardens to compose his wedding speech.

Anyone who enters the hex marqued 3 falls down the same hole as Franco and finds his remains. Dexterity check to avoid a sprained ankle (half move until rested). The groom's fine evening dress has rotted away, the shoes have been taken by badgers but his skull remains and clenched in his teeth is an expensive platinum wedding ring (400gp) for Frances. The tunnels are large enough that they can be walked down by a crouching human but every other turn, there is a 2-in-6 chance of encountering 1d3 giant badgers (as burrowing black bears). And there are plenty of badgers. They will defend their territory but are not interested in pursuit.

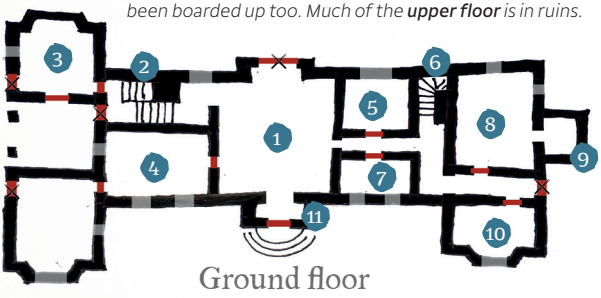
HAUNTED HOUSE

This is the former Pfaff mansion. Now abandoned, it hangs with weeds and mould. It is damp and would be slow to burn. A group of 6 buccaneers and their leader Frances (2nd level fighter), live here. They have coracles for raiding boats on the river.

The family was chased out of here many years ago by the ghost of Frances Pfaff. Her husband to be, Franco Bevons, disappeared on the eve of their wedding whilst out walking in the grounds, never to be seen again – he was taken by giant badgers (see The Sett). She pined away and now her spirit eternally awaits to dance at a ball with her husband, or in fact anyone clean – none of the buccaneers who now call this home will do. The ghost has possessed the buccaneer leader, also named Frances, who now acts like a lovelorn 19 year old much of the time. She may act coquettishly or nobly to any presentable character, depending on the reaction roll. If Frances is threatened with death the ghost will plead for her life. If her pleas go unheard and her host is killed, she will curse the killer with being forever unlucky in love. The ghost has no other powers.

The ghost can be charmed if anyone clean and polite dances with Frances, and laid to rest if the ring is put on her finger. The ring is currently in the badger sett. Frances knows roughly where Franco was last seen (in hex 3).

*A black X indicates blocked off entrances. **Windows** have been boarded up too. Much of the **upper floor** is in ruins.*



Ground floor

1. Great Hall. Overlooked by the balcony at 12. Decorated with garlands and candles. This is where most of the buccaneers sleep. Two paintings remain on the wall. A large one of a young woman and a small one of a young man which has been moved next to it (Frances and Franco). A broken harpsichord stands in one corner and the centre of the room has been cleared and swept for dancing.

2. Main staircase. Cluttered with broken boards and pigeon droppings. Leads up to a lookout to the west.

3. Chapel. Dilapidated but still consecrated. Small statue of the God of Wealth in a niche above the altar. Anyone stealing this will be cursed with bad luck (whenever something happens to a random player character, it happens to them) until they return it. Anyone making a donation of 1gp gets +2 to saving throws for the rest of the day.

4. Library. In a mess but there are still some precious volumes (history and ecology of the area, 150gp to a collector, heavy —1 000 coins — and easily damaged). Two random scrolls are hidden behind a bookcase, which is slightly askew. There is a stack of coracles, ropes and hooks in a corner that the buccaneers use to attack boats.

5. Booty room. 2,500sp and 5,000cp and miscellaneous wares taken from boats – many spoons, 40 iron ingots (worth 5 gp each, weigh 10 coins), and decorative mouldings for furniture (worth 500gp, weighing ten times that).

6. Servants' staircase. Leads up to the first floor and down to the cellar.

7. Music room. A harp with missing strings. Frances sometimes plays it, badly.

8. Kitchen. Where the buccaneers cook, but don't do the dishes.

9. Tower. A well at this level with a wooden cover. Rungs lead up via a trapdoor in the ceiling to 16.

10. Pantry. Where the buccaneers keep their food and hang their meat. There are some rabbits, the odd pig, whatever nuts and berries they have scrounged and an almost empty hogshead of brandy.

11. Entrance porch. Very solid big door, can be barred from the inside. It won't burn.

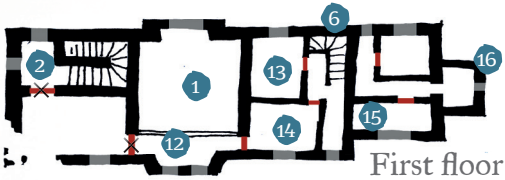
12. Balcony. Overlooks the great hall. There is usually a lookout here. Rotten chandelier above the hall, possibly still swingable from.

13. The leader's bedroom. Clearly the room of a young woman but in an advanced state of decay. Frances can often be found here brushing her hair at the broken mirror.

14. Bathroom. Enormous metal bath and a pump for fetching hot water from the kitchen. All there is in the bath now is some pondweed and a few frogs.

15. Previously the Red Room. the roof has caved in and it is inhabited by 3d10 bats, might warn the inhabitants if disturbed.

16. Tower. Trapdoor in the floor down to 9 and rungs leading up to a vantage point in the highest room in the building. An owl roosts here and hoots loudly if disturbed during the day.



First floor

▸ From **a medieval manuscript, *The Wonders of the East.***

◇ by James Holloway

Donestre

Rumoured to live on an island in the Red Sea, the donestre are psychic humanoids whose need for human flesh and great empathy are difficult to reconcile.

We were more than two weeks from Jeddah, just the start of a long trip to India, and we found there was a problem with the stores. Some swine of a merchant had sold us stuff that was already going bad, and if we were going to make the voyage we needed to resupply. So we stopped at one of those little islands. I don't know the name of it, but it wasn't far from Black Assarca.

We filled water jars at a stream running down from the beach and went looking for someone who would sell us food – or at least for some fruit we could pick. We hadn't gone far when some men approached, or perhaps I should say creatures. They had legs and feet like men and they were a good height, but from their waists up they had the appearance of soothsayers.

- Wait, soothsayers?

- I know! How strange, yes?

- Cousin Judah, what do you think a soothsayer looks like?

- Oh, you know: long, pointed muzzle, sharp teeth, bright eyes.

- You mean a dog?

- Not a dog, idiot! I know what a dog looks like! I'm telling you they looked like soothsayers!

- But I... the thing is...

- Yes?

- Please go on.

As I was saying, they were very strange-looking, but they spoke to us politely, and even called us by name. They told us about relatives and friends of ours they had met on other voyages. They knew about our supply troubles and they offered us a meal. The captain was a little unsure at first, but they whispered something to him and he seemed a little more convinced. While the crew was resupplying the ship, they took the captain and me and a few others up the hill to where they had a house. It was like a little hermitage up there, and they had us sit down and made us dinner.

As we chatted, they told us about our futures and our pasts: they told me that I would have a promotion in my work, which was nice. They drank wine, and of course the captain had none, but I had a little. After a while we laid down to sleep.

I woke in the night to relieve myself, and saw that the fire had burned down to embers and that most of the soothsayers were snoring quietly. But from nearby I could hear weeping.

It was the most sorrowful sound I ever heard. I was curious, so I went closer, moving quietly so as not to wake anyone else up. But when I got to the area outside the cave, I saw a horrible sight.

The leader of the soothsayers was crouching down, and the sand all around him was black with blood in the moonlight. A short distance away from him, all covered in blood, was the captain's body, arms and legs ripped off and the rest all torn to pieces. On the sand in front of the soothsayer was the captain's head, eyes staring vacantly. The leader was hunched over him, just crying, his tears bathing the poor murdered head. And when he looked around and saw me, he looked so regretful.

I ran for my life, of course, yelling my head off, and I was halfway down the mountain before the others were fully awake. I screamed at the crew to cast off and we got away from the shore just as they started to run out on the beach.

We had scanty meals for the next leg of our voyage, but we got there alive.

And I did get that promotion, I suppose! ◇

DONESTRE

The Donestre are part-human, part-beast creatures who inhabit an island in the Red Sea. They require the flesh of sentient beings to survive, but their highly-developed psychic capabilities make this a tragic experience for them.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3 (13hp), **Att** 1 × weapon (by weapon) or 1 x bite (1d4), **THAC0** 17 [+2], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 50, **NA** 1d4 (3d4), **TT** B

◆ **SOOTHSAYER**
Donestre can see the future (albeit imperfectly) and, as a result, are surprised only on a roll of 1. They use their knowledge of characters' futures to lull them into a false sense of security, and may offer information about other threats the characters face to do so.

◆ **TELEPATHIC POLYGLOT**
Donestre can speak all human and humanoid languages.

◆ **TERRIBLE REMORSE**
Donestre can sense the severing of potential futures every time they kill someone, and so they weep uncontrollably in the aftermath of a killing. During this time, their Morale drops to 6 and they suffer a -1 penalty on all to-hit rolls.

THE JEWEL TREE

According to the early medieval Old English text known as the Marvels of the East (or Wonders of the East), the donestre live on an island in the Red Sea. This sea falls under the rule of the people of Babylon, a "decent" people whose great wealth springs from the abundant supply of precious gems that grow in their jewel trees.

The donestre care nothing for the wealth of their victims: they kill for food, out of necessity, and in any event they have no shops where they could spend money. They do need to hide their victims' belongings, though, in order to avoid arousing suspicion. Some of these things they burn, but others they bury in hidden spots around the island.

When the donestre killed a merchant on his way from Babylon to India, they did not know that he was carrying with him a priceless treasure: the mature seed of a gem tree. Taking it for a normal jewel, they buried it in the ground. Over time, it began to sprout.

In the meantime, the merchant's business partners in India began to become anxious. When their associate did not appear, they wondered whether something had happened to him or if he had stolen the gem seed. They offer a reward to anyone who can find him and bring the "gems" he was carrying back to them (they prefer not to reveal the seed's nature, since they think that anyone they might hire will probably just steal it if they realise what it is). What the business partners do not realise is that the seed itself was stolen. The rulers of Babylon, eager to protect their monopoly, maintain strict control of the orchards and give out seeds only as a sign of immense favour. The theft has provoked them into sending out a team of agents to track down the perpetrator, bring them to justice, and recover the stolen seed.

The gem tree itself is similar to a pomegranate tree, about 20 feet tall with wide, spreading branches. Clusters of pearls and precious stones hang from its branches, tinkling gently when the breeze blows. Responsibly harvesting the tree once a month produces d6 rolls on your random gems table; picking too much will produce 2d6 rolls, but the tree will not produce ripe gems for 1d3 months. The specimen on the isle of the Donestre is immature and will not produce another seed for years. Even a mature tree has only a 1% chance of producing a new seed each month.

ORACULAR HEAD

The donestre dismember their victims before devouring them, but they save the head and never eat it. Instead, they weep remorsefully over it, bathing it in tears. A place that donestre have inhabited for a long period will accumulate a large collection of these heads, ranging from fresh to mummified.

Anointed with the tears of the donestre and exposed to the psychic waves of their divinatory powers, these heads gradually acquire their own prophetic abilities. They are much prized by wizards for their ability to tell the future. The heads speak in cryptic utterances, but there is wisdom to be found for the diligent sorcerer.

A magic-user with the correct knowledge can anoint such a head with arcane unguents and asperge it with alchemical preparations, making it possible to ask the head for predictions of the future. These ritual preparations require ingredients costing 2d4 × 1,000gp. Once the correct rites have been performed, the head opens its eyes and converses with the ritualist. Its predictions of the future should be accurate but shrouded in obscurity and allusion. Alternatively, allow the head to answer 1d3 yes-or-no questions about the future, similarly to a Commune spell. This ritual requires certain celestial conditions (such as a new moon), meaning that it can only be conducted once per month.

Depending on the length of time that the head has been exposed to the donestre's oracular power, it will have absorbed a greater or lesser amount of psychic energy. When the head is removed from the donestre lair, roll 1d6 and record the result without telling the players. This is the number of times the head can be used in the ritual before its energy is depleted. If players specify that they are looking for an older cranium, roll twice and use the higher result. When the energy from the head is exhausted, it crumbles to dust.

HELPFUL PROPHECIES

It can be hard to predict what player characters will do in the future. If you don't have any specific prophecies in store, roll on this table. The benefits in parentheses apply if the character acts upon the prediction.

1	A reckless foe will strike at you, but the blow will reveal an opening just about... here. (+1 to next to-hit roll against an enemy who has won initiative)
2	You will find a great feast hidden in the shadow of a stone, where the waters meet. (automatically succeed on the next foraging or hunting roll)
3	When lost, cast grass upon the wind and follow it. The breeze will lead you to what you seek. (reroll one failed losing direction roll)
4	You will encounter one who seems a foe; speak fair words to them and they may give you aid unlooked-for. (+1 to the next monster reaction roll)
5	An illness from an unknown source threatens; boil yarrow stalk in wine and drink it twice daily. It will help protect you. (+1 to the next save vs poison)
6	You will find great riches inside a chest that has no lock. (roll twice on the next treasure table and take the better result)
7	Someone you wish to hire wants friendship as much as gold. Buy them a drink and laugh at their jokes to win their loyalty. (+2 to the next retainer hiring reaction roll)
8	Someone you care about is tempted to betray you. Comfort or threaten them now to win their loyalty back. (+1 to the next loyalty roll)
9	You will face a foe with a hidden weakness. Anoint your arrowheads with the juice of the rowan berry. (+1 on the next damage roll using a missile weapon)
10	You face a threat from magic; say a prayer to the moon god to avert the evil. (+1 to the next save vs spells)

HOOKS

- Hearing of the donestre's miraculous abilities, the caliph demands one for his menagerie. The reward is great, but getting a creature that can see the future onto a ship could be tricky. The caliph doesn't know about the people-eating thing yet, either.
- One of the donestre claims that their anthropophagic diet is the result of an ancient curse, placed on them by long-forgotten gods as the price of their second sight. She proposes a pilgrimage to a ruined temple to placate the deity and break the curse.
- When the player characters arrive on the isle of the donestre, the creatures become fascinated by the fact that they cannot see their collective or individual futures. What could be causing this strange gap? The donestre don't care, because it's just so relaxing to be around someone whose fate you don't know.
- The donestre are supposed to accept the futures they see with resignation. But when one foretells his own murder, he offers some of the island's gems to adventurers if they remove the threat to his life. But does stopping a foretold killer mean interfering with the workings of destiny?

▸ From **Brazil (various traditions)** ◇ by Diogo Nogueira
◆ *Pronounce MAH-pin-gwa-ree*

Mapinguari

A towering humanoid with a single giant eye in its head and an enormous mouth filled with hundreds of sharp teeth on its belly. Its muscular body is covered in ragged red fur, and it has giant strong hands instead of feet.

Deep within the jungles of this world, you will find the most dangerous predators ever known. Serpents that could swallow an entire elephant at once. Panthers so agile and strong they could stalk and pounce on even the most attentive of knights. But none of them is as deadly and adept at devouring its prey as the mapinguari.

This creature is a primordial predator, born when the first jungle of the world was still growing. It towers above any man or woman. It is stronger than a gorilla. It is faster than any jaguar. And it hungers more than the largest alligator.

Its fur is as thick as that of a woolly mammoth. Its arms are capable of uprooting an entire tree with a single push. Its eye, which changes colour according to its mood, is sharper than an eagle's. Beware of the mapinguari when its eye is red, for it means it is only seeing the blood of its prey.

But what you will notice first, and the last thing you'll see, is the maw. Right where a belly button would be, the enormous mouth of the mapinguari can swallow any living thing, no matter its size. Some say a mapinguari swallowed a dozen giant sloths once, and then ate a horse as dessert.

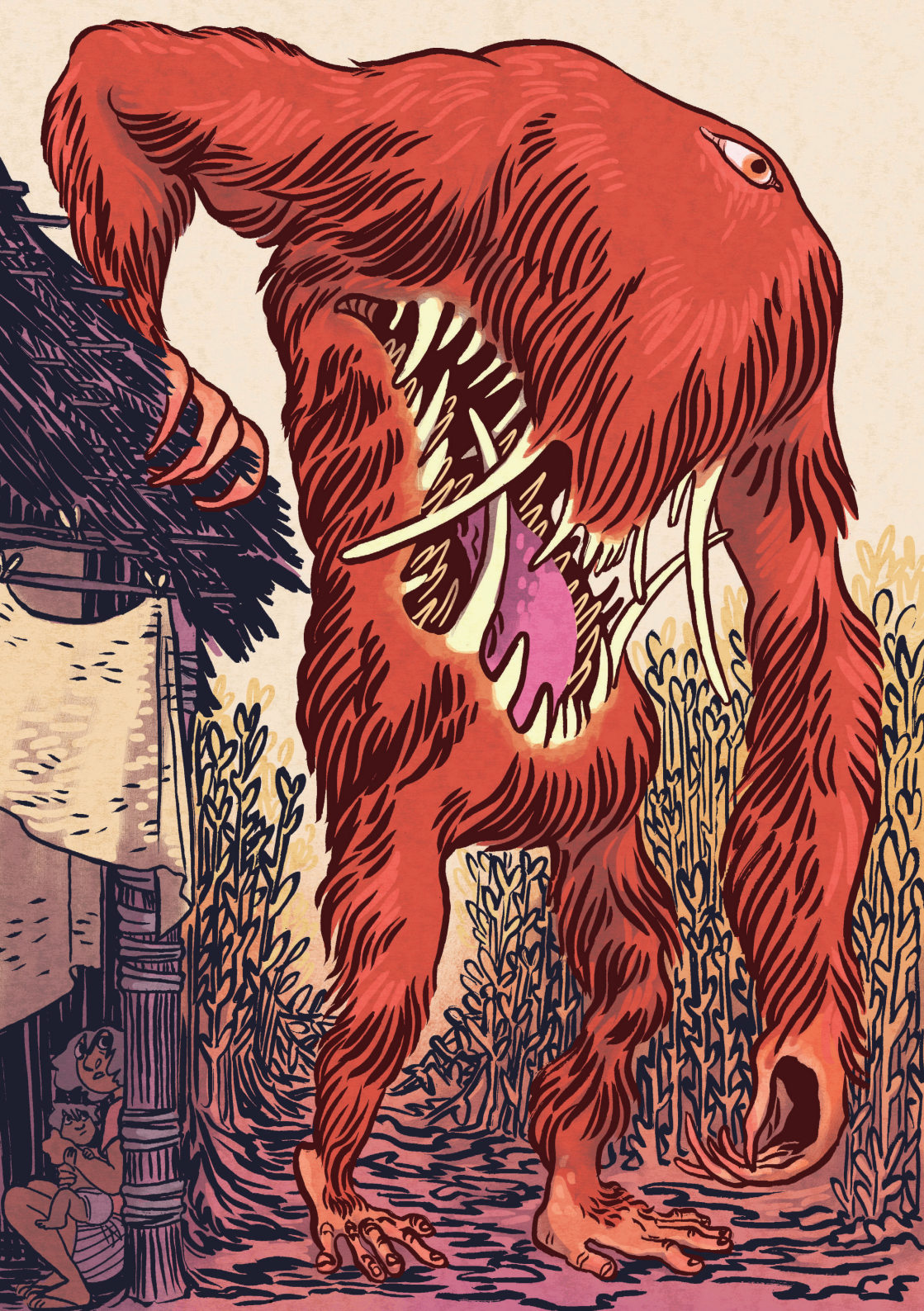
The mapinguari's jaw is garnered with twelve rows of teeth, each one as sharp as a dagger and as strong as steel. With a single bite, mapinguari slices a person in twelve parts, and soon nothing is left buta mass of flesh and bones.

But if you are lucky, and you somehow avoid the hundreds of teeth and manage to plunge directly into the beast's stomach, you might still see the light of day. For the belly of the mapinguari isn't like the belly of any other beast. It's almost like another world.

Over a huge precipice you will fall after you dodge the barbed tongues of the mapinguari. Falling for what will seem like minutes, you will end up stuck in the monster's esophagus. And then the crushing will start. Bone turns to mush, flesh turns to paste. But if you manage to slip by, you will plunge into the acidic pools of the mapinguari's stomach. And soon enough you will start to dissolve.

If this ever happens to you, your only hope is to carve your way out. Lucky for you, the beast's belly contains no small amount of weapons left by previous victims. Just act fast. Cut with all your strength, or your legs will melt and your journey will end.

Now you know. If you are ever out there hunting, beware of the beast you prey upon. Or, before you know it, the prey becomes the predator, and the mapinguari won't rest before it has you in its belly. ◇



THE TEETH OF THE MAPINGUARI

Mapinguari teeth are some of the sharpest objects in all of creation. Acquiring one of them is regarded as a high feat.

➢ A mapinguari always has 2d6 teeth that can be collected. Roll d20 for size: 1-12. dagger, 13-17. short sword, 18-19. longsword, 20. two-handed sword.

➢ The teeth are sharp and serrated, granting +1 to hit and damage once fashioned into a weapon.

➢ Additionally, if the damage die rolls its maximum value, it causes bleeding: on the next round, roll an additional d6 damage. On a 6, keep rolling the round after.

➢ A short sword made with a mapinguari tooth is an excellent parrying weapon because of its serrated blade. The wielder receives a +1 bonus to AC against melee attacks.

➢ Teeth the size of a longsword are sought by the most brutal warriors. When the wielder rolls a natural 20 on their attack roll, they can roll an additional d8 and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

MAPINGUARI

Large muscular humanoid with a single large eye in its small head. Covered in thick red fur, a huge maw in place of the belly button would be. Its nimble legs have strong hands in place of feet

AC 3 [16], **HD** 9*** (45hp), **Att** 2 × claw (2d6), 1 x bite (4d8), **THAC0** 11 [+8], **MV** 150' (50'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12, **ML** 10, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 3 700 , **NA** 1 , **TT** A

◆ **SURPRISE**
On a 1-4, due to stealth.

◆ **SWALLOW AND DIGEST**
A bite attack roll of 20, or 4 or more than their AC, indicates that a human-sized (or smaller) victim is swallowed. Then, the victim goes through a series of hazards, as the monster's metabolism pushes them along its digestive track.

1st round: In the creature's mouth, save vs breath to avoid 3d6 damage from rows of teeth.
2nd round: In the creature's oesophagus, roll to open doors to avoid being crushed for 2d4 damage.
3rd to 6th round: Falling into the stomach. Starting on the 4th round, suffer 1d8 damage from the acid.
7th to 9th round: Going through the intestines. Save vs spell or suffer 1d6 damage to a random physical ability score (Str, Dex or Con).
10th round: Expelled through the creature's rectum. Roll a d20 under Constitution or break 1d6 bones (represented as the same amount of damage distributed among Str, Dex, and Con. It takes a week for each lost point to return).

◆ **LEAP**
If cornered, can leap 20' and attack with its claws and bite.

◆ **ROAR**
May forego attacks to roar. Anyone within 50' must save vs death or become shaken, incurring -2 to all attacks and saves until the mapinguari is out of sight.

◆ **SLEEP**
After eating 10 hit dice worth of victims, must save vs paralysis every turn or sleep for 2d8 hours.

◆ **TREASURE IN THE BELLY**
The hoard of the mapinguari is stored inside its stomach.

HOOKS

➢ Young lord Gabriel fancies himself an expert hunter and wants to kill a mapinguari. Gabriel's father hires the party as 'retainers', insisting that he must be kept out of harm's way without injuring his (very inflated) pride.

➢ The local settlements are complaining about mapinguari attacks. It seems the monster has been driven out of its usual hunting grounds, but no one knows why... The truth is, a skilled, magic-using hunter has been hired to harvest mapinguari teeth. Lacking the firepower to kill such a beast, the hunter has lured it to a populated area, hoping to catch it asleep after a good meal of cattle and farmers.

➢ The great woodcutting business of the Red Kingdom has encroached on the primordial jungles where a mapinguari lives. Now, the beast is let loose on the kingdom and, unable to kill the beast, the royal wizard seeks adventurers to carefully lead the monster to a new habitat. Of course, no one has asked the people living there.

➢ Zaratazarat the Mage needs the magic ring he lent to his friend Lepticole Seven-Fingers, back. But Lepticole was eaten by a mapinguari and, according to the wizard's crystal ball, the ring is still with the creature.

INSIDE THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

During combat, **the metaphysical space inside a mapinguari** is compressed for swift digestion as the beast needs energy fast. However, once it is asleep, its internal organs relax into an expanded configuration, allowing the body to absorb whatever the mapinguari has eaten. When this happens, **the insides of the monster connect to the metaphysical dimension of myth, turning into a kind of meaty dreamland.**

If the characters can get to the mapinguari while it is already asleep, they can step through its giant maw and explore the space inside it. You are free to describe it any way you like, but do remember to make the party go through the stages of digestion, turning rounds into hours, or even days – as they explore this weird fleshy world. But who will they meet in there?

1 HUGHER THE HERMIT

Hidden in an unused organ that will one day develop to allow the digestion of vegetables, an old hermit lives in contemplation. They do not like company though: They moved here to avoid those boring conversations people insist on having.

AC 8 [11], **HD** 2 (8hp), **Att** staff (1d4), **THAC0** 19 [+0], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (9), **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 20, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** D

- **Knows the place:** given enough time, can find anything inside the mapinguari. But it takes 1d6 days, as they only go out of their "cave" when it is safe.

2 THE HUNGRY SWORD

A newly forged magic sword that was lost when its foolhardy wielder was devoured a couple of years ago. After a while, it began to absorb the properties of the mapinguari's digestive acids and to crave food.

The Hungry Sword: A magical +1 long sword that has a mouth full of sharp teeth in its pommel. If fed a full meal, it gains the ability to spit acid (20' long, 30' wide cone—5d6 damage, save vs breath for half). The sword can eat as much as a human normally can (three meals a day).

3 THE VERMIN DYNASTY

A colony of parasites has been living off scraps inside the mapinguari for a while. They are resistant to acid and can squeeze through cracks to find undigested food for their Queen. Once they see the characters, they consider them as such. Luckily, the Queen herself is quite the diplomat, and she may allow the party to leave and even help them if they strike up a deal (she is fond of poetry and pastries).

VERMIN SOLDIER - **AC** 6 [13], **HD** 3* (12hp), **Att** 1x spear (1d8), or 1x bite (1d6 + blood drain), **THAC0** 17 [+2], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, **ML** 8, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 50, **NA** 1d4+1 (2d20), **TT** -

- **Blood drain:** Recover hit points (half the damage dealt).

VERMIN QUEEN - **AC** 4 [15], **HD** 7* (25hp), **Att** 4x tentacles (1d6 + crushing), or 1x bite (4d6), **THAC0** 13 [+6], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12, **ML** 9, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 850, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** -

- **Crushing:** tentacles trap victim on a successful hit, doing 1d6 automatic damage per round.w

4 THE FAECES KNIGHT

The amount of magical things the mapinguari has swallowed over the years has caused some changes to its internal organs... A magic shield once wielded by a Knight of the Purple Vale has become stuck in the lower intestines. And because of this a great mass of faecal matter has accumulated. The shield's magic has given it sentience and the vague shape of a knight.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 5** (21hp), **Att** 2x slam (1d6+1 + disease), or 1x shield bash (1d8 + force push), **THAC0** 14 [+5], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 10, **AL** Lawful, **XP** 425, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** -

- **Disease:** a slam has a 1-in-6 chance of infecting the target (save versus poison). The disease has a 1-in-6 chance of being deadly (die in 1d6 days). Otherwise, the victim is sick and bedridden for a month.
- **Force push:** A shield bash attack roll of 20, or 4 or more than the target's AC, indicates that a human-sized (or smaller) victim is pushed back 1d6x10' and suffers 2d6 damage as they fall flat on the ground.
- **The Purple Shield:** A bloodstained kite shield with a purple flame painted on the front. Functions as a +1 shield, but it can float for 1d6+1 rounds after the wielder says "By the Purple Flame!" Additionally, it has the Force push ability described above, usable twice per day.

▸ From **Brazil** ⋄ by Diogo Nogueira

◆ *Pronounce KOOR-poo SEH-coo*

Corpo-Seco

Meaning "dried corpse", a corpo-seco is the rotting corpse of a person who was so evil, not even the lords of the Abyss would welcome their soul.

Corpo-Seco is incapable of dying, and keeps spreading its malevolence wherever it goes.

It had many names when it was alive. Corpo-Seco changed its name, identity, its whole self often to keep spreading evil unpunished. Not a single living soul remembers their true name, appearance, or the dreadful sound of its voice.

All that is known is that Corpo-Seco took the lives of a hundred people, hundreds of years ago. Attempt after attempt, Corpo-Seco's evil intellect would outsmart any rival or pursuer, always leading its opposition into the cruelest of traps. How six heroes gave their lives to kill Corpo-Seco, no one knows for sure. But many have their theories. These adventurers live in legend now, and their names change over time to suit the people telling the story. Now, some believe they had absolutely no plan, and that way they could be as unpredictable as possible, preventing Corpo-Seco from predicting their actions.

Others say that only their wizard knew the real plan, that she had worked out how they all would have to die to slay this horror. One of them had to be as evil as Corpo-Seco, intentionally leading trusting friends and loved ones to their death. The key was to outmonster the monster. Which one of these two theories is true, we will find out soon enough...

You see, the monster has returned. And Corpo-Seco keeps returning no matter how many people sacrifice themselves to vanquish it. That's because every plane of the afterlife refuses to receive Corpo-Seco in its domain. Its essence was rejected by paradises and hells alike. It is too much of a threat, either to the well being of the dead or to their lord's own malevolence. Having nowhere else to go, Corpo-Seco gladly climbs back into its rotten corpse, reanimating a decaying carcass that now reflects the horror it is inside.

Corpo-Seco goes on, deathless, roaming this world at random. Spreading evil any way it can. It cannot die. It cannot rest. Corpo-Seco can only feed the darkness that fuels its thoughts and actions, like a furnace that can never run out of wood to burn.

Some say it seeks a creature even fouler than it is, that could kill it and take their place as the worst creature on Earth, so it can finally rest. Others say its not truly immortal, that it can only keep doing what it does, compelled to terrorize the innocent for as long as it exists. What everyone knows, though, is that Corpo-Seco is never tiredand never stops. It keeps walking, limping towards its next foul deed.

So if you are out there, and you stumble upon a corpse, beware. It may not be what it looks like. Corpo-Seco is treacherous, but even though it's the most evil being to ever exist, it is not the most wise, or the most clever. You can maybe outsmart it. Or at least outrun it.

And that's your hope. ◇

Encounters

I - THE CROSSROADS OF DEATH

• **LOCATION:** Corpo-Seco usually chooses to set this trap at a crossroads, to give the illusion that victims have many paths to escape. The more, the better, as the victims will be able to see their companions die no matter where they choose to go.

• **What the characters see:** A pile of corpses in the center of the crossroads. Bloody tracks leading off on half of the other paths. The tracks disappear after a few yards. Where the tracks end is a single gold piece.

• **What they don't see:** Corpo-Seco is hidden among the corpses. Additionally, it laid out traps to torture passers-by or those who came looking for the people he killed. These can be discovered by quick thinking adventurers.

• **Hidden crossbows:** wires are connected to 20 crossbows hidden among the corpses. When Corpo-Seco pulls the trigger, make 20 attack rolls divided evenly between the characters present (THAC0 16 [+3], 1d6 damage).

• **Pit traps:** several are hidden around the crossroads. Every person moving more than 20 ft has a 1-in-6 chance of stumbling on one. They need to save vs breath to avoid falling 10' down onto spikes (1d8 damage).

• **Fire trap:** as a last resort, Corpo-Seco has poured oil all around the crossroads. If lit up, the flames inflict 1d6 points of damage per round to anyone in the area (allow a save vs breath to those who are on the outskirts and try to run away before the flames catch up to them). The fire burns for 2d6 rounds unless something is done to extinguish it.

• **CORPO-SECO TACTICS:** Corpo-Seco initially plays dead, waiting for the right moment to trigger the crossbow trap. After the initial shock and possibly first casualties, it reveals itself, pushing aside the other corpses in the most dramatic way possible. As people start running around, some will fall into the pit traps, and Corpo-Seco will try to finish them off with whatever weapons are nearby. Finally, or if things don't go well, the monster lights a torch and triggers the fire trap, burning all those left alive, including itself.

II - THE BLOODY CHAPEL

• **LOCATION:** Corpo-Seco often seeks small temples and chapels rarely frequented by people nearby. Forgotten gods, feared ones, or even forbidden and evil places of worship that are still in sight of the "good folk". Ideally, there are catacombs or a graveyard where Corpo-Seco can find corpses (otherwise it will kill a few locals).
What the characters see: Flickering lights and moving shadows. The main doors have been left ajar, while back entrances are locked, and the keys hidden. If the characters are the first to arrive, they don't see blood, just a few hooded figures moving slowly in the chapel.
What they don't see: The hooded figures are corpses tied to posts and ropes carefully arranged by Corpo-Seco, who is dressed as a priest with a wide brimmed hat. It makes the fake priests move like puppets, using his feet. Traps have been set inside to kill its victims.
• **Fungi infected corpses:** once disturbed, they release spore clouds (but only once per day). The strong smell of fungus is a clue that these are not normal corpses. The clouds of spores cover an area of 10' radius for 1d6 rounds. Anyone caught in one needs to make a save vs poison or suffer 1d8 points of damage. There are usually 2d6+2 trapped corpses spread around.
• **Spear traps:** Hidden near altars, shelves, tables, and other places in which objects of interest are found. These are crude traps though, and they are visible to anyone who takes a closer look. The spears thrust in a random direction (roll a d6 and pretend the object is a hex), and attacks (THAC0 16 [+3], 1d8 damage). The tips are poisoned (save vs poison or become slowed, as per the spell *slow* for 1d4 turns after 1d6 rounds).
• **Sleep incense:** in its priest disguise, Corpo-Seco walks around carrying a censer dispensing sleeping gas. Anyone within 20' radius must make a save vs breath or fall asleep for 1d6 turns. Before that, it takes a round, and at least one point of damage, to wake them. Corpo-Seco leaves sleeping victims to be dealt with after they awake near the bodies of their fallen companions.

CORPO-SECO TACTICS: It stays out of the characters' way, but does whatever it can to entice them to explore the location, interact with the "faithful" and to look closer at the "relics". After the action starts, it moves stealthily between the corpses, putting the survivors to sleep and picking off whoever is still standing.

CORPO SECCO

A dried corpse riddled with worms and diseases. The rotten eyes shed a scarlet luminescence that betrays the creature's inner malevolence.

AC 3 [16], **HD** 4*** (18hp), **Att** 2 × claw (1d4 + paralysis), 1 × bite (1d8 + parasites), **THAC0** 16 [+3], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14, **ML** 9, AL Chaotic, **XP** 575, **NA** 1, **TT** T

◆ **UNDEAD**
Makes no noise, until it attacks. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep). Immortal: Corpo-Seco cannot die. When it reaches 0hp it remains unconscious for 1d6 days and all its parts (no matter how small) start to slowly crawl to make it whole again.

◆ **REGENERATION**
3 rounds after being damaged, regains 3hp per round. Severed limbs reattach.

◆ **SURPRISE**
On a 1-4, when pretending to be just another corpse.

◆ **CARRION STENCH**
Those within 10' must save vs poison or suffer a –2 penalty to hit while in melee.

◆ **PARASITES**
Creatures hit by Corpo-Seco must save vs paralysis or become infected with parasites. Infected victims suffer 1d4 damage per day until they are healed with cure disease or similar magic.

◆ **MASTER OF THE DEAD**
Corpo-Seco can create undead, casting *animate dead* as a 10th level magic-user. He can also command undead as a 10th level cleric.

◆ **THE WORST**
Whenever Corpo-Seco is about to take an important action thar can affect the characters, the referee may ask: "What is be the worst thing Corpo-Seco could do to you now?" The players should give their best effort in answering the question (as long as everyone at the table is comfortable with the situation - I recommend using the TTRPG safety toolkit found at tinyurl.com/safeTrpg). Then, the referee picks the most evil idea.

HOOKS

➢ Baron Zegrann had his lover brutally murdered and believes it to be the work of Corpo-Seco! He wants this monster dead, or stopped. Or something! Pay is 10,000gp and the hand of his heir in marriage.

➢ Corpo-Seco has set up a House of Horrors in an abandoned manor. It is offering all the accumulated treasure inside to anyone who can come in through the front door and leave through the back. No one who entered the place has left yet.

➢ The necromancer only known as X needs a tissue sample of Corpo-Seco for one of their unspeakable experiments. They are paying 100gp per pound, 200gp if the flesh is still moving.. Where to find this subject? Well, have a few drinks in Assassin's Row and follow the rumours of the most gruesome murders.

➢ Corpo-Seco seeks heroes who can finally end its eternal pain. The last time someone "killed" it, it had a vision which seemed to indicate that the party are the ones who will finally be able to send it to rest. Is it telling the truth? Or is this another cruel trap of Corpo-Seco's design?

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Gerfo of Oyoulë

3rd LEVEL RANGER

STR 11 INT 8 WIS 9
DEX 14 CON 10 CHA 14

AC 4 [15]
(Dex, Chain)

HP 16 (3d8)

THAC0 19 [0]

SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16

Alignment Lawful

Equipment
Long bow, magic arrow (casts a random 1st level divine spell when hitting the target; 1-in-6 chance of being destroyed or lost), two-handed sword, short sword, chainmail, backpack, rations (7), waterskin filled with 5 doses of elfwine (no need to sleep for a day), rope (50'), grappling hook, torches (5), tinder box, collection of traps for all sorts of game, small sacks (3), purse (12gp and some dried berries).

Quirk
Spirit fletcher:
after an honourable kill, can fashion a ghost arrow using parts of the slain creature and 100gp worth of magical ingredients. Usable once, the arrow delivers one attack from the dead creature (referee chooses which attack, special or otherwise, when the arrow is shot).

Sarsa Wicca of Merisca

3rd LEVEL MAGIC USER

STR 5 INT 18 WIS 9
DEX 8 CON 10 CHA 8

AC 10 [9]
(Dex)

HP 7 (3d4)

THAC0 19 [0]

SV D13 W14 P13 B16 S15

Alignment Chaotic

Equipment
Silver daggers (3), backpack, rations (7), waterskin, pearl of the politician (on tongue piercing; *charm monster* 1/month) scroll of protection spellbook (1st: *detect magic, floating disc, magic missile, shield*)

Quirk
Friend to ghosts:
once per week, summon a restless, local spirit to use as a familiar for 1d20 hours. Sacrifice the familiar to cancel all damage taken in a single round.

Karadarak Palindromix

3rd LEVEL DWARF

STR 15 INT 9 WIS 7
DEX 14 CON 9 CHA 13

AC 2 [17]
(Plate, Dex)

HP 11 (3d8)

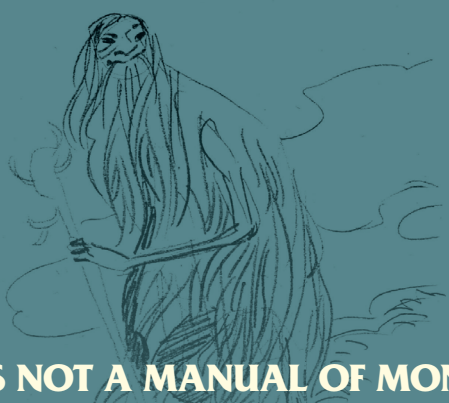
THAC0 19 [0]

SV D8 W9 P10 B13 S12

Alignment Lawful

Equipment
Battle axe, shortsword +1, +3 vs dwarves (yells *"Traitor"* and similar insults when used against non dwarves), plate mail of the ambassador (glamoured to look like fancy clothes), crossbow, case of 13 bolts and 5 silvered bolts, backpack, rations (3), rope (50'), cask of fine brandy, lantern (3 flasks of oil), telescopic pole (ironwood, 15'), steel mirror, hood of discernment (5-in-6 chance of detecting lies for 10 minutes, once a day), purse (12gp, yellow emerald worth 250gp).

Quirk
Unwelcome:
widely known as a foe to dwarfkind, reaction modifiers are reversed (positive with goblins, cave trolls, etc. and negative with dwarves and dwarf-friends).



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This book is bringing folklore creatures from three continents into the imaginary worlds they should never have left. Along with the stories they were borrowed from, each monster is presented with pages of material to help you drop it into your campaign: adventures, characters, lairs, hooks, rumours, random tables, you name it!

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