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C

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Patrick Stuart
falsemachine.blogspot.com
Scrap Princess
monstermanualewnfrompants.blogspot.com

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melancholiesandmirth.blogspot.com

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Arnold K.
goblinpunch.blogspot.com
Benton Molina
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Dunkey Halton
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Ian Borchardt
reverancepavane.blogspot.com
Ian Reilly
textgolem.blogspot.com
Luke Gearing
antlerrr.blogspot.com
Peter Webb
instadeath.blogspot.com

A

N

W

S

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WRITTEN BY SKERPLES
COINSANDSCROLLS.BLOGSPOT.COM

VEINSCRAWL

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INTRODUCTION

This underground hexcrawl is based on *Veins of the Earth*. Without it, most of the content won't make any sense. This hexcrawl is unofficial, unpaid, and unprofessional. There are bits missing. You will be required to improvise, fill in missing pieces, invent dungeons, factions, names, challenges, and complications. This PDF provides the minimum framework required to run a hexcrawl; it assumes you can figure out the rest as you go along.

It also provides a porous framework for adding new ideas. Don't like how I've written a faction? Change it! Add on rules or encounters or entire regions from other modules.

VEINS-ADJACENT ADVENTURES

If you need additional content or want to flesh out a specific location, consider adapting the adventures below. You may need to edit them for tone and content. If there's a sensible 2D map, scramble it by making each room a cave and connecting them via the cave rules on *VotE*, pg. 221.

Minimal Edits

- *Sky-Stone-River-Place*, Patrick Stuart
- *Sleeping Place of the Feathered Swine*, Logan Knight
- *The Fungus Forest*, Carl Nash & Lee Reynoldson
- *Demonspore*, Matthew J. Finch

Significant Edits

- *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, Gary Gygax
- *Operation Unfathomable*, Hydra Cooperative

You may also want to find several one-page dungeons, print them, and stick them in a folder. If you need a dungeon in a hurry, grab one and adapt it on the fly. The Trilemma adventures by Michael Prescott are easy to adapt. I recommend *Lair of the Lantern Worm*, *The Full Dark Stone*, and *Basilica of the Leper Messiah*.

HEXCRAWLING ADVICE

Don't worry about the details. If a reference doesn't have a page number, you will need to improvise. Focus on the main features, the big picture, the general feel. Make up the rest. I've tried to provide a tool kit. Use whatever you find.

Your players, faced with the dire realities of underground life, will probably seek:

- Cheap infinite light (magic lamps, a fiery sword, a broken halo)
- Safe infinite food (pacifist troll meat, time-looped slaves, risk-free fungids)

Don't give them either one, or if you do, add other risks. The underground economy, the coiled spring that drives *Veins of the Earth*, falls apart if the PCs aren't struggling for light and food.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Re-read *Veins of the Earth*. You may want to add tabs to *VotE* pp. 17, 107, 210, 258, 263, and 324.
- Creatures in this hexcrawl reference the *AD&D Monster Manual*. If you don't want to use it, or you've got a monster manual from your system of choice, that's fine too. Nothing relies on precise stats.
- Print this PDF. If you only want the hexcrawl, print Sections 4 & 5 (pp. 71–100).
- Print a second copy of the Hex Map (pg. 82).
- Print a copy of the PC Quick Reference Sheet for each player and a copy of the GM reference sheet for yourself (pp. 106–107.).

PLANNING FOR CHAOS

I've designed the Veinscrawl to contain a lot of potential energy but minimal initial kinetic energy. The situation, on paper, is fairly stable. The PCs are the ones who will tip it into lovely and profitable chaos. Their actions and interactions with the factions and hexes will start to spiral out of control.

If any of the hex entries seem boring, just remember to append, "And then the PCs arrived."

CHALLENGES

On the surface, everything follows the same rules. Bugs, bears, and bugbears all need to eat. In the Veins:

- The Drow eat beauty.
- The Olm eat flesh but sleep for centuries.
- The Dvergr need alcohol like a plant needs sunlight.
- The Antlings get their food from the surface.
- The Myconids eat coal.

Et cetera, et cetera.

On the surface, there is an overarching framework of society. The feudal state holds the world together. There are outsiders and invaders and disruptions, but you are either inside the system or outside it; there's no third way. But in the Veins, there is no cohesion, no single system. Every faction has its own worldview. Common ground resembles no man's land — contested, cratered, and occasionally hit by political artillery.

MOTIVATIONS

WHY HEXCRAWL?

Or specifically, why hexcrawl in the Veins of the Earth?

Given the entry costs and ludicrous risks, why would any sensible party of adventurers bother going into the Veins? Leaving aside accidents, idiocy, and lies, what could possibly convince a surface creature — someone who likes three square meals a day and feather beds — to crawl down Satan's gastrointestinal tract or live in Patrick Stuart's nightmares?

1. Loot

Veins loot makes conventional dungeons look like a discount clothing warehouse after a fire sale, in a hyper-inflationary economy, right before the coldest winter on record. Your gold crowns and polished gems and magic wands are bent clothes hangers and ragged Snoopy t-shirts compared to the stuff in the Veins. It will get to the point where gold is too heavy and too pointless to transport. Pouches of strange metals

will adorn your back. You'll carry a sword that can cut a syllable in half but your face will be streaked with clay and muck. You'll cut your hair off and file your teeth into points, but you'll also find a machine that spins music into cloth. When — or if — you emerge, changed and warped, you will change the surface world forever. There are treasures in the Veins that are the seeds of empires.

You'll probably need to find a way back to the surface once you've finished looting an area. Most factions have a route or two; they won't share them eagerly.

2. Control

Carve out an empire of your own. Wear a fancy hat. Sit on a throne and judge people. Earn eternal fame. The charitable view is that surface-dwellers, blessed with an education, a life of comparative leisure and safety, and a worldview based on control, make ideal leaders and warlords in the Veins.

The uncharitable view is that surface-dwellers are too stupid to know better.

Start small: a single village, a cleared dungeon, or an empty cave. Recruit followers with promises of food and safety. Set your enemies against each other. Use horrifying weapons or enslaved creatures.

Feeding an Empire

The more people you can support, the more territory you can control.

If you support 5 people, you have a village.

If you support 20 people, you have a fortress.

If you support 50 people, you control most of a hex.

If you support 100 people, you completely control a hex (or mostly control 2 hexes), and so on.

The size of your holding is purely dependent on food. Money is useful, trade goods are nice, but if you can't feed your followers they will feast on your flesh and tear down your cities and your works. Civilization is three missed meals away from anarchy, but everyone in the Veins has already missed the first two meals.

In the Veins, 100 people is an enormous army, possibly too difficult to move. Defenses are easy and attacking is difficult, so no one fights fair. If you plan on fighting a faction, make sure you're prepared to be stabbed in the back. Or the front. Or from above.

Don't fight fair.

FEEDING AN EMPIRE

NORMAL

FARM	SUPPORTS	REQUIRES	DANGER
Spawning Fungid	5/day	Coal	N/A
20 Sonic Pigs	5/day	Cave slime, 1 swineherd	N/A
30 Cave Centipedes	5/day	Cave slime, 1 centiherd	N/A
Cave Cricket Swarm	5/day	Cave Slime, 2 cricket-herders	N/A

ESOTERIC

FARM	SUPPORTS	REQUIRES	DANGER
1 Troll, Chained	5/day	2 troll-choppers	Troll may escape, mutate, split. Troll meat is infectious
Lamenter Nest	5/day	1 Lamenter-raider	1-in-6 chance Lamenter-raider goes mad each day

VERY ESOTERIC

FARM	SUPPORTS	REQUIRES	DANGER
Souls	1/month/soul	Need an extractor or supplier	Inherit personalities, become possessed. Very evil
Divine Intervention	1 faithful person	Absolute unwavering faith	Only supports 1 holy figure (or possibly a small tribe)
Raids Into Painted Worlds	100/month/painting	Artists, powerful magic, 10 raiders	Can become trapped in painting, let other creatures out

3. Quests

There are capital-g-Goals in the hexcrawl. They are completely optional, but some players like having a mission.

Kill the Great White Fungus

It's a whale-sized mushroom that steals people's legs and runs around on them, kicking and having a grand old time. Anyone bitten by it goes crazy and wants to kill it, but for some reason tries to recruit people with lovely shapely legs to help.

Kill the Castillian Caddis Fly Larvae

It will hatch into a Castillian Caddis Dragon. It wants to create lots of magic weapons to ensure its eggs find fertile spots to hatch and grow. To this end, it will cause apocalypses. Heroes (with shiny magic swords) will arise, fight, die, and lose their swords. The world above (and everything nearby in the Veins) will enter a catastrophic and violent phase lasting centuries.

Find a McGuffin in the Ruins

That's what the ruins are for. Put vital quest items there. Resurrection machines, direct line to the Gods.

Kill a Dragon

There are 5 dragons, and you can fight all of them.

Topple a Villainous Faction

The Illithids, the Ghouls, or the Drow seem like good choices if you want to smash an evil system and replace it with utter chaos. Rescue the captured princess(es) from the dragon Kaseldrake. You know, standard heroic stuff.

Assist a Faction's Quest

See the table below.

FACTION	GOAL
Antling	Find a path to Hell.
Archaen	?
Cholerid	Die. (?)
Dracospawn	Bigger hoards.
Drow	More beauty.
Dvergr	Find homunculite, weaken the other factions.
Fungid	?
Ghoul	Rebuild Iliam, stable source of meat.
Illithid	Brains: lots and lots of brains.
Olm	Food: lots and lots of food.

VALUE TABLES

CREATURE	ACCESSIBLE CALORIES	SALE VALUE	RATIONS
Cave Louse*	10	0	0.005
Cave Crab	200	0.2sp	0.1
Blind Rat	750	0.7sp	0.3
Medieval Chicken**	2,000	2sp	1
Small Person	60,000	60sp	30
Normal Person	100,000	100sp	50
Large Person	140,000	140sp	70
Medieval Cow	600,000	600sp	300
Wurm	3,000,000	3,000sp	1,500

*If you spend 1d10 days doing nothing but picking cave lice, you can get 1 ration. This might mean you starve to death.

**Medieval chickens were small and very stringy. I've seen estimates that put the total mass of all white meat on a medieval chicken at approximately one modern chicken breast.

PLANT/FUNGUS	ACCESSIBLE CALORIES	SALE VALUE	RATIONS
Cave Slime*	0	0	0*
Fungoid	60,000	60sp	30
Troll Oil (0.1L)**	N/A	3gp	1

*Cave slime provides no nutritional value, but it does provide some psychological comfort. If you are Dying and you spend 12hrs licking cave slime, you can permanently lose half your HP to reset to Starving (with a -5 penalty to all rolls).

**Troll oil is flammable and slightly alive. It counts as a ration and heals an additional 1d6 HP. Save. If you pass, no other effect. If you fail, you have 1d6 hours before you keel over, vomit up the oil, and take 2d6 damage. Other effects at the GMs discretion. It's temporary salvation.

HEXCRAWLING RULES

Hexes normally take 6 hours to cross.

The PCs will encounter the Obvious Feature of the hex.

If they enter cautiously, take unexpected routes, explore, or delay, they may encounter the Hidden Feature instead. Alternatively, GMs can use the Hidden Feature instead of the Obvious Feature if they don't like the Obvious Feature.

Roll on the Random Encounter Table (pg. 71–73) for the hex type at least once per hex or at least once every 24 hours.

The PCs get the Omen before the encounter unless:

- They are making a lot of noise
- They are Starving
- They are traveling quickly

The group can always choose The Rapture (VotE pg. 107) instead of an encounter before the Omen is revealed. The Rapture only targets one PC; a random encounter could claim them all.

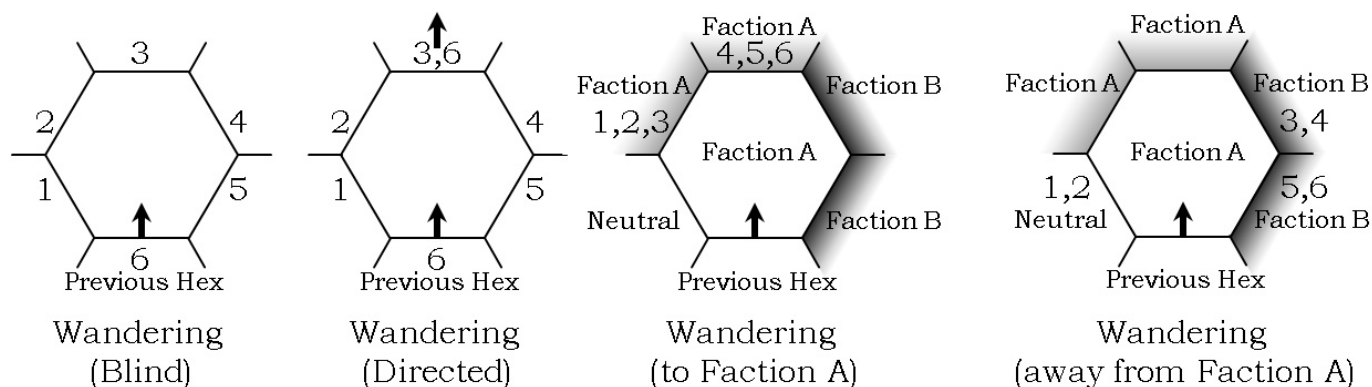
Hiding from encounters is completely viable.

ENCOUNTER SCALE RULES

Zoom in. The map dissolves in a pixel-by-pixel screenwipe, revealing location and an encounter (or the Omen of an encounter). All the usual rules for cave and dungeon navigation apply.

If you do not know where the encounter is taking place, roll on the Encounter Terrain Table (pg. 71) and the Cave Shape Table (VotE pg. 258). You can also use this method for Obvious/Hidden Features. Connect caves using the rules on VotE pg. 221, or add caves from VotE pg. 263.

WANDERING DIAGRAM



NAVIGATING UNDERGROUND

The worst case scenario for a surface hexcrawl — fog at night, no map, unfamiliar and dangerous terrain — sounds like the best case scenario for an underground cave-based hexcrawl. You can't see terrain in the distance. You probably don't know north from south. You can barely tell where you've been. Hostile forces surround you. How can you possibly navigate in this mess?

LOCATION-BASED GOALS

The PCs find a clue. "Pyre Monks know the secret," they say. "We need to find their monastery." How?

1. Directions

On the surface, directions are given with three components: **direction**, *distance/time*, and landmarks.

"It's *half a day's ride* to the north along the old mining road."

"Turn **south** after the hanging tree and travel for another *six miles* until you reach the river."

Underground, directions are given with three components: **rocks**, *depth*, and landmarks.

"Pass the **blue-grey marble** caves, then travel *down* to a **boulder field**. When you hear the hiss of flame, you are close."

"*Climb* to reach the Ghoul Baron, but pass beneath his fortress quickly. Follow **quartz**, then **basalt**. *Descend again* and search for the smell of smoke."

All hex descriptions list a rock type and a depth (littoral, profundal, and abyssal). Time is meaningless. A journey might take one group six hours. Another group, following a slightly different path, could take six days. Travelers, wanderers, elders, and experts might be able to give PCs directions, or direct them to someone who can. Trading gold for directions is important.

2. Water

If you are lucky, the thing you are looking for is near a major river or lake. Follow the water.

3. Paths

There are known paths in the Veins. Follow Olm tactile-marks to find an Olm camp, a Dvergr mine to reach a Dvergr operation. Volume-Folk pitons and rope. Illithid tunnels. Drow causeways.

They aren't consistent. Most aren't very long, but all hexes owned by a faction have fragments of roads connecting them. If you see a cave without one, you know you are probably heading away from that faction's territory. If you take your time, you can use this to navigate through or away from a faction.

The PCs are somewhere in the hex. Roll 1d6 to see where they go.

Wandering (Blind) is for blind panic, blind drunk, or blind, hungry, and lost. Purely random. Exit the hex and end up somewhere else.

Wandering (Directed) is for PCs with a plan but no map or consistent directions. The "intended direction" is where they want to go. Extra time, people familiar with cave exploration, and a sensible plan should also decrease the chance of random error. If your system has a Navigate or a Wilderness skill, it might be useful here.

Wandering (to Faction A) is for people who want to stay within a faction's territory.

Wandering (away from Faction A) is for people who want to leave a faction's territory.

You can't wander away from a faction if you're in a neutral hex. You don't know what you're going to find until you find it.

Fleeing PCs can't plan. If the PCs want to get away from something rather than go somewhere, they are Wandering.

PCs can't cross solid black lines without a plan. If Wandering, adjust probabilities so they can only reach unblocked hexes. Similarly, on the edge of the map, adjust probabilities so they don't wander off the edge.

OTHER METHODS OF NAVIGATION

Magic

Some spells point in a fixed direction. Some show a path. Entire careers built around a "Locate Dolphin" spell — underground, a fixed coordinate is a powerful tool. If the PCs can consistently (at least once per hour) find one of the cardinal directions, they can navigate using "north, south, east, and west," just like a standard hexcrawl. Even if they can only find north once per day, they can still tell if they are heading in approximately the right direction.

Entrails

Magic so old it isn't really magic anymore. Find a creature, spill its guts, look for patterns, hints, signs. Might be a psychosomatic effect. Might actually work.

Guides

Expensive. At least 10gp a day, with half paid up front and kept somewhere secure. There's no point in being rich if your treasure vanishes with you. Guides can still get lost. They have a 4-in-6 chance of taking you in the direction you want to go. On a 1 or a 6, they take you 1 hex to the left or right of your target.

Veins Maps

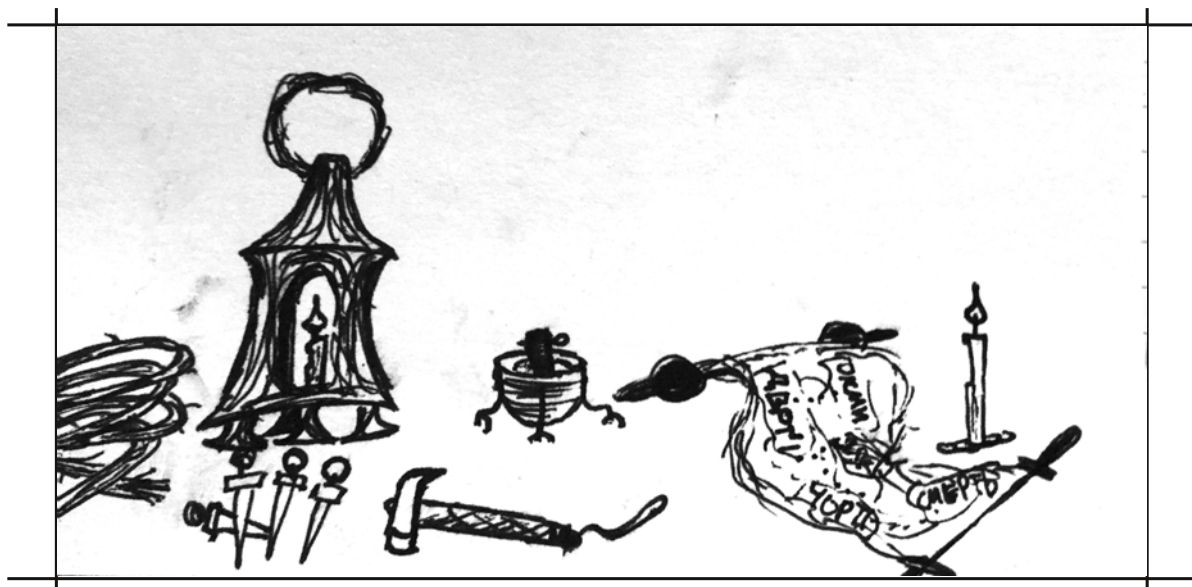
Dvergr three-dimensional carvings. Illithid memory-injections. Drow silk, carefully dyed. If you have a Veins map, you travel at 1/2 speed (so 12 hrs to cross a hex), but you will always head towards your destination.

PC-drawn maps should look very strange, more like a set of encounters or linked concepts than a true geographic map. They will barely resemble the hexcrawl map. One player should be in charge of mapping. Their artistic results will... vary.

As long as PCs can describe their path, and they aren't rushed or pursued, they can always retrace their steps. In the example above, players visiting the Olm could retrace their steps to the Waterfall or the River or the Bottle Cave (whatever those hexes might be).

If a location or encounter wasn't included on the PC's map, they cannot deliberately find it again. If they missed recording a vital landmark or location, see the Wandering rules above.

PCs need something to write on (parchment, spellbooks, their own skin) and light to read the map. If they lose the map, they can try to redraw it from memory.



2

FACTIONS

This hexcrawl has 10 Factions. Each faction controls a number of hexes. Inside those hexes, use the faction-specific encounter tables (pg. 74–81). In neutral hexes (marked with a dash), use the depth encounter tables (pg. 71–73).

I wrote this hexcrawl based on my preferences. You may need to adapt the factions (and their hexes) to suit your preferences and setting.

1. ANTLINGS (PG. 8–11)

Insectoid creatures from the surface.

Replace With: Humans, Dwarves, or anyone else who really shouldn't be mucking about in the Veins of the Earth. Possibly with the Knotsmen.

2. ARCHAEANS (PG. 12–14)

A mix of Archeans, Silichominds, the Substratals, and a bit of the Trench Heralds from *Fire on the Velvet Horizon*.

Replace With: anything alien and chemical.

3. CHOLERIDS (PG. 15–17)

Plague-ridden corpses in a fever-dream city.

Replace With: Undead in a tomb.

4. DRACOSPAWN (PG. 18–27)

Dragons, their followers, and their hoards.

Replace With: Sphinxes and mammals, Deep Janeen lords, obsessed Aelf-Adal nobles.

5. DROW (PG. 28–37)

Immortal, self-obsessed Elves that feed on beauty.

Replace With: Aelf-Adal, classic Drow, or the Deep Janeen.

6. DVERGR (PG. 38–40)

Mole people with crystal cores.

Replace With: the Dvargir, Deep Janeen, Dwarves.

7. FUNGIDS (PG. 43–48)

A valley of coal and a coral reef of fungus.

Replace With: Archaeans, a Zombie Coral undead hellscape.

8. GHOULS (PG. 49–50)

Noble ghouls in a ruined civilization.

Replace With: Pyroclastic Ghouls, vampires, the Gnomen, the Knotsmen.

9. ILLITHIDS (PG. 51–54)

Post-apocalyptic addicts from the Nightmare Sea.

Replace With: Classic Illithids, the Gnomen, or Substratals.

10. OLM (PG. 55–58)

Blind cave salamander people.

Replace With: the Gnomen, bat-people.

11. RUINS (PG. 59–60)

An abandoned, high-challenge area full of dangerous terrain and enemies.

Replace With: difficult to directly replace, but adapt the aesthetic of the civilization that created the ruins to your setting.

ANTLINGS

MAJOR FEATURES

- Human-sized ants, but centaur-like. Walk on four legs, manipulating thing with the remaining two arms.
- Sighted, but with a vivid sense of smell and touch.
- Secretive and clandestine.
- On a mission.

ENCOUNTERING THE ANTLINGS

A work crew with picks and buckets breaks into your tunnel. They mill around in confusion, feelers waving frantically. “Hello Ma’am,” one of them says nervously, “a fine morning.” (Antlings assume everyone is female until corrected.)

Or, you hear hymn-singing in the distance. A small group of Antlings is on the move, mapping the tunnels ahead or carrying a letter to some other part of the Veins. Antlings can smell you before they see you, but they probably can’t tell what you are by smell alone. Their eyesight is better than you’d expect. The old “wear a dead ant on your head” trick isn’t going to fool anyone. They are new to the Veins. They are innocent but not idiotic. They will assume you mean what you say. If you openly blaspheme or curse they will start to mutter and might turn on you.

ANT-SPEAK

Surprisingly fluid and comprehensible. There's a slight buzz and they have trouble with “p”s, but if you ignore the ever-churning mouthparts it’s just an accent. Antling workers are diligently educated. They speak clearly and carefully. Their diplomats are as sly and twisted as anyone else on the surface. All Antlings can read and write.

ANT-NAMES

Simple and direct. Names are relatively new to their culture.

Personal: Alice, Matilda, Agnes, Margaret, Joan, Isabella, Emma, Beatrice, Mabel, Cecilia.

Or virtues: Diligence, Prudence, Faith, Charity, Wisdom, Providence, Honesty.

Their warriors append the most impressive or personally significant battles to their names: Alice 14-Goblins-At-Black-Pass, Annie Basilisk-In-The-High-Galleries.



PERSONALITIES

Nervous/Angry Antling

1. Torso drawn up to full height. Arms slowly flexing, legs springing.
2. Lungs inflating and deflating rapidly. Faint whistling sound.
3. Rubbing claw fingers together, as if sharpening a knife.
4. Short upward flicks of the antennae.

Happy Antling

1. Torso lowered, back slightly hunched.
2. Antennae folded flat.
3. Rhythmic mouthpart movements, as if playing scales on a piano.
4. Ignoring your personal space to smell you better.

Comfortable/Curious Antling

1. Touching you idly with its antennae.
2. Half-sitting on its legs.
3. Antennae folded flat, but moving in little circles at the tips.
4. Full-torso wiggles.

SO A GIANT ANT IS TALKING TO YOU...

It wants to figure out who you are and what you are doing and if you can be safely ignored. The Antlings are on a mission. Distractions are not helpful.

But Antlings are also curious and easily distracted. They know the Veins are a hostile place, and they want to learn more about them. They want maps and stories.

If things appear to be escalating, the Antlings will retreat and call for a diplomat.

SO A GIANT ANT IN A SILK HAT IS TALKING TO YOU...

Antling diplomats are polite and efficient. They believe everyone is either reasonable (like them) or insane (like... most of the people they've encountered in the Veins).

The diplomats negotiate trades and missions. They will offer rewards, sign contracts, and generally act like reasonable surface-dwellers negotiating with underground lunatics. They believe in imposing order by example. If they act properly, the rest of the world will fall into line.

If you prove useful or interesting, and you are capable of behaving like a civilized person, you may be invited into the Antling warrens.

IN MY SETTING...

Antlings have a complex history. On the surface, they were a barbarian curiosity until missionaries and merchants managed to wedge them into the feudal system. Each ant-hill became a "village" or "city," with a ruler paying tithes and sending armies in support of the larger feudal structure.

Secretly, Antlings have undergone a revolution. Before adapting to the feudal hierarchy, Antlings had a very simple religion. Their Queen, and certain favoured Princesses, had immortal souls. All other ants did not. The Queen therefore needed to live a virtuous life in accordance with the Authority's laws; all other ants were merely extensions of her will, with no need to worry about salvation or morality on an individual basis. The very idea of individual responsibility was unthinkable; Antlings existed only in relation to their Queen, in a state of obedient ignorance.

Prolonged contact with the outside world shattered this ideal state. Official visitors from the Church

were pleased to find the Authority's laws were already practiced. They were baffled to find that most Antlings had no idea they had souls, and had taken no steps to ensure their own salvation. Furious ideological battles left martyrs on both sides, but most Antlings were convinced. They overthrew their former Queens, established new dynasties, and, in a few short years, moved from a fully collectivized to a semi-individualized society. The details of this bloody revolution were kept from the outside world. As long as taxes kept flowing, few Barons were inclined to look into the affairs of their Antling subjects.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL MINE

Lobochello, the famous Antling philosopher and preacher, reasoned thus:

1. Many Antlings, before the Revolution, were deceived into acting against the Authority's laws.
2. Their punishment is damnation in the fires of Hell.
3. Since they were not instructed by the Church, they may never leave Hell or find Salvation.
4. It is therefore the responsibility of all living Antlings to rescue their damned ancestors.

The presence of Antlings in Hell has been confirmed by necromancers and the Church. Some villages have elected to try prayer and rituals to draw their unfortunate ancestors out of the flames. Some send specially prepared Antlings to Hell deliberately to guide lost souls on their proper path.

But some have chosen another, safer, more direct method. They are digging tunnels into Hell. It is not far.

The Antlings reason that the task is their penance and holy duty. They will rescue their ancestors from Hell by force if necessary. The Authority cannot, they believe, prevent such a selfless and merciful mission. What could be more noble than rescuing those damned by accident and trickery rather than free choice?

THE HIVE

From the top down, it's a fortress, a buried castle protecting a buried city. Very few Antling cities have ever been conquered by surface-dwelling races without the aid of rival Antlings or a diverted river. Armies go around them.

Inside the fortress-gates and layers of false defenses, the Antlings have underground farms full of Myconids. They also farm on the surface and store

grain and timber in vast halls. When famine strikes, desperate villagers sometimes raid Antlings nests. Thieves are more successful than invaders. Antlings don't like eating people but they will happily feed corpses to their fungus-piles.

Below the warehouses and barracks, the locked and guarded egg-rooms and treasure halls are kept in spotless order. Below them, the Queen and her court lead quiet, well-ordered lives. They have little time for decadence, but poetry and the trappings of feudal nobility still amuse them. Their position is maintained by common assent; the Queen is closer to the Doge of Venice than a true monarch. Not quite an elected monarchy, but definitely a nervous monarchy.

Deeper still are the iron mines and secret storehouses, and the prisons, where Royalists languish and strange things howl in the dark. There are egg-rooms and warehouses here too, but small ones, disposable ones.

The Front is below them, behind a second layer of fortress walls and thick gates. The Philosophical Mine. The tunnel into Hell.

You can't dig straight down. The Veins get in the way, but they also save time. Every step downwards is a step you don't have to carve. Unfortunately, virtually everything in the Veins wants to kill, devour, infect, or enslave the Antlings. Their mine is a warrior mine, an expedition into enemy territory.

ANT CAVES

Militaristic. The Antlings have waged underground warfare for centuries. They know how to build a fort and fight for territory. They don't like mentioning this to surface-dwellers. Barons tend to get excited in all the wrong ways when they discover their subjects can fight.

A typical outpost contains three small soldier ants, a worker, and one siege ant. In the event of an attack the worker will flee to a larger fortress and bring reinforcements. The outpost is a small set of rooms carved into the rock with at least one hidden exit. All rooms have spear-holes. There will be a set of beds, a table, some food, a few trinkets, a shrine, and several weapons.

Larger fortresses are deliberately maze-like to trap and confuse invaders. Most have false keeps or command posts: invaders may find themselves fighting to reach an empty room or a killing square.

Conventional traps and secret murder-holes abound, as do false maps and false prisoners. There are chapels and priests and regular services too. Some priests aren't Antlings; the only respectable professions for an outsider in an Antling colony are preaching and religious labour.

Antlings advance cave by cave, chamber by chamber, building barricades and solid walls whenever possible. Large chambers are sometimes filled with poison gas and sealed: Antlings have no use for 50' ceilings. Their art is portable. Architecture isn't art.

ANTS AND GENDER

All the ants the PCs are likely to meet will be female. Feudal gender conventions fling up their hands in despair. Ants aren't bothered by this. Male ants are rare, weird, and dumb. They aren't really part of the colony. They're a sort of temporary genetic courier. They arrive from other colonies and cluster around the Queen, proving their worth in elaborate jousts and deadly contests. It's all very amusing to the spectators.

According to the Church, devout Antling workers and soldiers are blessed with the gift of perpetual virginity, an extra mark in their favour. Theologians, many of whom have never met an Antling or bothered to research their social structure, write long essays claiming Antling colonies are living exemplars of grace. In their minds, a colony is a working and peaceful nunnery. They miss the truth by a wide margin.

For a typical Antling, attracting a male is a sign of scandalous prestige, like owning a pet tiger or a rocket launcher. "Look at me," they say, "I'm like a Queen. I've got my own drone and he's very nice, even if he is a mammal." Having one is enough; physical difficulties aside, the Antlings have no reason to fool around with anyone. Some particularly bold Antlings in isolated fortresses have even purchased slaves from the Drow or memories of romance from the Illithids. It's a sin, but the Antlings are trying to go to Hell anyway...

HOW DO THE ANTLINGS SEE YOU?

To an Antling, a human is:

- Tall but narrow
- Smelly
- Covered in hair and long bendy squishy limbs
- Squishy all over
- Tiny teeth
- A weird fat face lump (nose) and two more on the side (ears)

Humans can stand very still if they want to. They are warm and very squishy. You have to be careful not to puncture them. They look like accident victims: no shell, just flesh and organs. Like Antlings, they have 3 body segments: a lower bit where they make smells, a middle squishy bit, and a head bit. They are all about the same size but the male ones have different lumps and more hair. They can't make smells on purpose but they make accidental smells *all the time*. Their jaws are tiny and they have to work really hard to eat things.

In human lands, every human female has a human male, and they are all Queens, but their colonies are very small because they only lay one egg at a time and their children are immensely stupid. The humans have to fight all the time to find out which Queen is in charge. She is called The King and she lives far away.

SPIDER ANTS

In the distant past, before Antlings learned how to think and use tools, a predatory race of Spider Ants infiltrated their colonies. Rationality evolved faster than the mimics: they were trapped, hunted, and eventually domesticated.

Spider Ants are giant stick-limbed spiders with eyes like car headlights. From a distance they look just like Antlings. That's the point. They wear Antling uniforms and march in formation. If the column is ambushed, the mimic drops its disguise and behaves in ways the ambushers did not expect. It climbs, leaps, poisons, chases, and terrifies. It has dagger-fangs and active camouflage. It's also as smart as a person; after the Revolution, Spider Ants were also found to have souls, and are equal partners in the Philosophical Mine. They are widely feared and respected as instructors. By ancient law they cannot feed on living Antlings, so they feast on the fresh dead and unwanted prisoners. Particularly interesting prisoners might be used in training demonstrations.

STATS

Antling Worker

As Giant Ants (see AD&D MM, pg. 7).

Antling Soldier

As Giant Ants (see AD&D MM, pg. 7) with 3 HD.

Spider Ant

As a Huge Spider (see AD&D MM, pg. 90).

ARCHAEANS

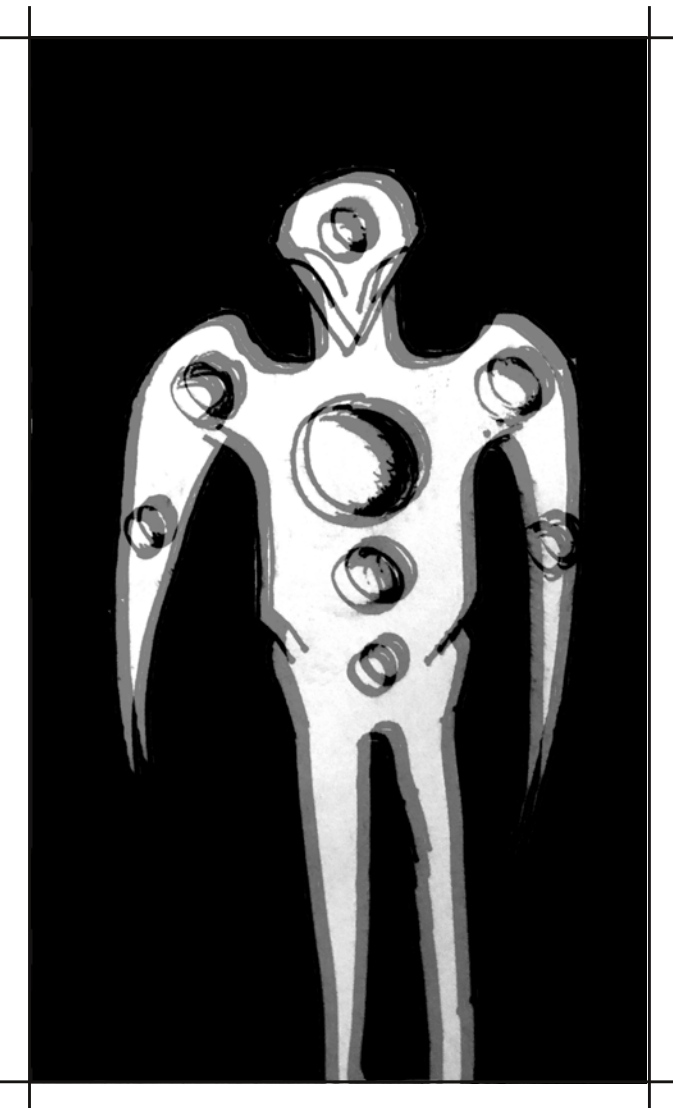
MAJOR FEATURES

See *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 26.

- Plasma-glass archaeobacterian people.
- Slow-moving, aloof.
- Impossible chemosynthetic biology.
- Astronomers, scholars, explorers, but from a very different perspective.
- Accidentally — but not intentionally — deadly.

ENCOUNTERING AN ARCHAEAN

Usually, you run into them. An Archaean in a dead sprint moves as fast as a waltzing dancer. Their walking pace is glacial. Up ahead, in a cave, you might see a faint blue-green glow and a steady hiss. A living glass sculpture is examining a layer of stone, brushing the surface with knife-edge fingers, spreading faint clouds of grey fumes into the air. It will probably ignore you unless you try to get its attention.



HOW TO ATTRACT ATTENTION

Noise works. The Archaeans can sense and decode vibrations in the air. If it has heard your language before, it will try to communicate. If it hasn't, you might need spend a few days speaking to it in call-and-response repetition or try a few different languages. They speak all elemental languages, and the chemical languages of oozes and myconids.

If you want one to follow you (or move to a different area) it needs some way to detect you. A trail of rust flakes is a foolproof method. The Archaeans see metal more easily than flesh. Seasoned explorers and diplomats carry unique pendants made from lead and crystal or strange iron-attracting lodestones.

ARCHAEAN-SPEAK

Like someone speaking through a fan. Choppy, buzzing, distorted. Not robotic — the Archaeans can mimic inflection and tone — but strange, otherworldly. Sometimes, for no reason, they make musical sounds. Deep bass rumbles, whistles like flutes, staccato ear-bursting drum-beats of solid air. They will save and replay fragments and turns of phrase; they might answer your questions in your own voice.

And slow. Very slow. A short conversation can take twenty minutes. A long one can take days, especially if the Archaean needs to consider something. They have all the time in the world.

WHO ARE YOU?

They don't quite understand people. They speak to you like they are speaking to a committee. Everything and everyone is plural. They might ask your arms to confirm a difficult climb, your liver its state and health. Your heart rate rises: it asks your heart if it has any objections.

An Archaean is a colony creature. So are you. Long ago, our ancestor cells ate another kind of cell. Mitochondria live inside us, but they don't share our DNA. Similarly, we rely on gut bacteria to digest certain types of food.

But Archaeans are aware of their own composite nature. They ate and integrated thousands of chemical pathways. Cells that can eat sulphur lie dormant, fed by cells that eat iron. In an iron-rich environment the situation is reversed. Humans can survive on a very limited number of foods. Archaeans can eat nearly anything and survive

nearly anywhere. The cost of such adaptability is speed. It can take several days to adjust to a new food source.

Almost nothing eats them. A calcinated cancer bear might blunder into one, thinking it is a lantern, but Archaeans are sturdy and toxic. They can always just walk away or sink into the rock, pouring into microscopic fissures to their unknown homes. Sentient races treat them like weather: ignore it if you can, use it if you are able to, but don't try and get in the way of a tornado.

DEATH

Archaeans are toxic. They shed cadmium, lead, mercury, and arsenic like humans shed skin cells. Medieval medicine can't tell you while your hair is falling out and your hands are shaking after spending a few days around an Archeon, but they smell like bad news. They don't want to kill you. They are sympathetic, in the way that a hiker avoiding a patch of wildflowers is sympathetic.

REBIRTH

If you die, an Archaean might tend to your body. Unless convinced not to, it will ask your gut bacteria and skin mites to take over, like an crisis manager promoting interns to ministers. It might take years, but it will return you to a semblance of life and set you loose, pleased that it was able to assist an injured friend.

TOXIC AURA

Each full day spent in prolonged contact with an Archaean, Atomic Bees, or Cursed Metal inflicts 1d6 Constitution damage. The GM may choose to record this secretly and inflict diseases, cancers, palsies, and hair loss as needed. Maintaining a safe distance (30' at least) and limiting contact helps.

RADIATION

Save vs. Constitution at the end of every test interval or suffer the effects listed. Effects are cumulative. If you fail a test from a High Intensity source, you suffer the effects from the High, Medium, Moderate, and Low Intensity sources all at once. Radiation is awful.

RADIATION TABLE

D6	SOURCE	INTENSITY	TEST INTERVAL	FAILURE
1	Atomic bees, cursed metal nuggets.	Low	30 Days	Rashes, headache, dry and flaking skin, nausea, diarrhea, minor hair loss.
2	Angry Archaeans.	Moderate	7 Days	Nausea, weakness for 2d6 hrs. If greater than 9 hours, Save or develop cancer.
3	Archaean Snail-Reactors.	Medium	1 Day	Violent nausea, weakness for 2d6 days. Also take 1d6 damage. Body becomes a low intensity radiation source for duration. Also, Save or go blind for 1d6 days.
4	Cursed Metal Golems, Archaean Snail-Reactor cores.	High	1 Hour	Take 1d6 damage. 1 permanent damage to all stats. Blind 1d6 weeks. Hair falls out in clumps. Save or permanent sterility. Save or terminal cancer. Body becomes a moderate intensity radiation source for duration.
5	Skull Totems.	Acute	1 Minute	Take 1d6 damage. Blind and sterile permanently. 1d6 permanent damage to all stats. Even if survived, massive medical attention required to avoid messy death in 1d6 hours.
6	Atomic beehive core, Archaean weapons.	Fatal	10 Seconds (1 round)	Movement or action impossible. Pain is unbearable. Skin begins to slough off. Immediate death in 1d6 rounds.

ARCHAEAN ARTIFACTS AND STATS

1. Snail Reactors

Huge metal shells, coiled like a nautilus, plated in fantastic metals. Devouring water, spraying steam, humming quietly in the dark. Long ropes of braided copper, coated in ceramics, snake into the rock. They are full of lightning.

Peel the ultra-fine mesh from the mouth of the snail shell and throw a sturdy rock or a piece of iron inside. Run. Once the shrapnel has cooled, collect the metal fragments and run again. Any metal that stays warm to the touch after a few hours should be thrown away. It is probably Cursed.

2. Cursed Metal

Cursed Metal is hateful, lead-like metal, warm and malicious. Archaeans treat it like jewelry or possibly food. They sometimes seem to excrete or devour nuggets of it. Grey cylinders or rings of lead-like metal. Faintly warm, very heavy. Beloved by alchemists; deadly to everyone.

3. Cursed Metal Golems

As an Iron Golem (see AD&D MM, pg. 48).

Possibly a war-form of Archaeans or a thing they created to deal with difficult problems. A 9' tall screaming sodium-and-uranium behemoth does tend to solve a lot of problems. They sometimes boil out of the rock when Snail Reactors are looted or Atomic Bees are disturbed, kill everything biological or supernatural or annoying in the area, then disappear. If you see burnt shadows on walls and molten footprints, run the other way.

4. Rust Monsters

See AD&D MM, pg. 83.

Symbiotic with Archaean bacteria. A fringe part of their ecosystem, pigeons to humans. When people started smelting iron ore into delicious concentrated iron swords, rust monsters migrated upwards. There are still plenty in the Veins, quietly eating rocks.

5. Skull Totems

When an Archaean really doesn't want non-Archaean creatures in an area, it sets out a skull totem. Carved elaborately and with exacting detail to match the skull of a local creature, but made from pure Cursed Metal, the skull totem emits a horrible aura of death. Anything within 10' suffers **Acute Intensity** radiation, 10'-20' **High Intensity**, 20'-30' **Moderate Intensity**, etc. Stealing one and throwing it at your enemies is a viable, if suicidal, plan. Totems last 1 year.

6. Archean Weapons

The stuff that empires are made of. They look like musical instruments mixed with off-casts from a glassblowing factory staffed by lunatics with the hiccups. Each one is unique. The effects are devastating. You need to kill a lot of Archaeans to get them to bring a weapon into the Veins. At a minimum, an Archaean weapon casts a 60' cone or line of Fatal intensity radiation. It also sets everything on fire, including stone.

Other effects could include:

1. Boiling clouds of chlorine gas.
2. Slivers of frozen mercury.
3. Nuggets of burning carbon and antimony.
4. Temperature drop to well below zero.
5. Spirals of molten gold.
6. Sound strong enough to shatter bones.

A looted weapon has 1d6 charges left.

CHOLERIDS

MAJOR FEATURES

See *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 38.

Above the Veins of the Earth, there is a city. An ancient, sprawling, city. Not the oldest in the world, but old enough that the city's first kings are given credit for inventing writing, laws, and agriculture. It has been inhabited for thousands of years and it is still inhabited now.

And like all cities, it has plagues. The usual summer fevers. And every two centuries, give or take, the Plague. It defines epochs. Named for kings and tyrants. A cultural constant.

There are caves in the hills and catacombs below the city. The laws are clear, and even if the laws were silent, tradition would carry the day. The living rise up to banish the dying. Families herded into caves, sealed behind iron doors and rockfalls. Tossed down dry wells. Wrapped in linen and sent on their way. The Plague fades, eventually.

The wisest scholars and shamans believe there are three kinds of diseases. The first is caused by a distemper of the body's own processes. A blockage,

a failure of vitality, a malformed gland. Cured by purgative treatments, heat, cold, food, scenery, rest, and willpower. The second is caused by tiny creatures, like insects or worms, that invade the body. Cured by roots, herbs, leeches, beatings. The third is an affliction of the spirit. A disease that is closer to a curse, a ghost, an unclean thing. This type of disease can be exorcised by ritual, but it is difficult to cure.

The three categories of disease are well known, but doctors cannot agree on which disease falls into which category, or how to universally cure them. Ancient texts and foreign traditions are contradictory at best. It's a purely academic distinction. Cures are wildly variable. The current fashion calls for spiced drinks, masks, perfumes, incense, and heat.

The trapped victims of the Plague died and their souls departed to their allotted afterlife. But the Plague remained. The disease-spirits took over their host. Blindly, mindlessly, sustained by meat-memories and habit. They have taken over several caves. They've built a mock society, a fever-dream mirror of the city that exiled them. Citizens wandering through streets made from bone, mud, and stone. The fever-city is refreshed by each new plague, bringing two centuries of accumulated history and culture in a sudden rush.



ENCOUNTERING THE CHOLERIDS

You have to look at them in two ways.

With your right eye, a Cholerid is a horrible, twitchy, diseased corpse. It shambles and mutters and flails. It grabs you by the throat and spews into your face. It acts out fragments of half-remembered life. There's no sentience, no real life, and yet it lives. It's the diseased echo of a once-living thing.

With your left eye, the Plague. Individual Cholerids are single cells of a vast organism. Blind, mad, hateful, and loathsome, but coherent. The Plague is riding them. They act on its direction. And it wants to feed and grow.

THE MIND OF THE PLAGUE

Most plague spirits live once, gloriously. They come into being, expand, consume cities, and fade forever.

But this Plague is different. By chance, it found a way to endure and grow. It rises and devours the city above. The victims, as tradition demands, are locked into caves and catacombs. The Plague, fattened and happy, retreats and waits. With each cycle it grows a little stronger, a little wiser.

Of course, the Plague can't rise to infect the city if it's trapped in thousands upon thousands of mindless disease-ridden hosts. This is where the PCs come in. The Cholerids want to die. Or, rather, the Plague wants you to kill them. The hosts are hanging onto life with both hands in mindless animal panic. The Plague needs to be released. It doesn't have fine control. It can't march its hosts over cliffs or smash their heads in with rocks.

If the Plague has recently fed, it will keep its hosts safe and wait for the city above to rebuild. The cholerid-caves are still dangerous, but the hosts are quiet and mournful and left mostly to their own devices. But — and this is usually the case — if the city above is glutted with people, if it is ripe for the harvest, then the caves become very dangerous. The Plague will send its hosts to die; the hosts don't want to die. They fight. They lose (they are, after all, disease-riddled corpses), but they still fight. Once the Plague is strong enough, free enough, it will rise to the surface again.

Dead Cholerids can be harvested. The Olm won't eat them, but they will feed them to their centipedes. The Ghouls of Illiam will happily feast. Everyone else uses them as fertilizer. When the Plague is strong, it boils upwards, infecting the upper city once more, then sinks back as the dying are entombed and banished.

In my setting, The City Above is like... Athens. Fine traditions, fine arts, people in robes, lots of columns and stone and fish and oil. A well-respected culture, even if it goes a bit awry sometimes. It's not evil. There's no dark secret. Everyone knows about the last few plagues: every city has plagues. And the people know how to deal with them. There's no dark secret or twist because the cyclical plague is just... how things work. It's as natural as the tides or the migration of sparrows.

CATCHING THE PLAGUE

Chances based on my setting. Adjust as needed.

Chance Per Hour of Exposure:

Same Species as Host (Human): 10% (1-in-10)

Mammals: 1% (1-in-100)

Lizards, Fish, Olm, Kobolds: 0.1% (1-in-1000)

Sufficiently Magical Creatures, Drow, Archwizards: 0%

Even a momentary encounter counts as 1 hour. Doing something really gross, like eating a dead Cholerid, counts as 6 hours of exposure (at minimum). If you eat 2 rations worth, 12 hours of exposure, etc.

Once the Plague makes the jump to another species, it spreads among that species at Same Species as Host rates (10% chance per hour of exposure).

The Plague is a mix of diseases, a viral and bacteriological and spiritual ecosystem. It causes weakness, black buboes in the armpits and groin, shakes, blood in the lungs, fever, delirium, and death. If you are infected, every 24 hours, or after 2 hours of strenuous activity, Save. If you fail, take 1d6 Constitution damage until you are cured or die. If you pass 3 consecutive Saves, you are cured, and are forever immune. Your Constitution damage recovers at a rate of 1 point every 24 hours, provided you are not Starving.

Example: starting CON is 10. Patient is resting.

Day 1. Failed Save, take 1d6 (2) CON damage.

Day 2. CON is 8. Heal 1 CON, then Save. Fail. Take 1d6 (5) CON damage.

Day 3. CON is 4. Heal 1 CON, then Save. Pass.

Day 4. CON is 5. Heal 1 CON, then Save. Fail. Take 1d6 (3) CON Damage.

And so on, until you either die or are cured.

If you die in the dark, in hatred and misery, your body rises as a Cholerid. Your soul is gone but your mind, or part of it, remains. It's like waking up with severe brain damage. The disease lives through you.

PASSING THROUGH CHOLERID TERRITORY

You need to carry the Plague with you.

Luckily, this is not difficult. The Ghouls sell mutilated wingless bats infected with the plague. Carry one (and smear yourself in filth, if you haven't already), and the Cholerids will ignore you. Lose the bat and they'll tear you apart. Infected bats costs 10gp and last 1d6+1 days.

The Illithids make plague body-suits. Captured Cholerids, teased into hollow frames, stretched and folded and reinforced like a barrel. You can step inside and zip them up and wander around, seeing through their mouth. They fold into a convenient sealed bag. The Illithids won't sell one to you of course, but you can steal one.

WHY VISIT THE FEVER CITY AT ALL?

Treasure

The dying sometimes cling to wealth. There are gold and gems in the caves, death-masks and offerings, dried medicines and a thousand other trinkets clutched by dying exiles. They don't need it anymore. It's yours for the taking.

A Cure

The disease-pressure in the heart of the Plague is so great that lesser diseases will flee the body. If you can surround yourself with Cholerids — above, below, around, in the dark, in huge numbers — anything you've got will run. Curses, diseases, parasites, madness: the Cholerids will cure anything by predatory pressure. Anything except the Plague, of course.

Wisdom

The wisdom of soulless crowds. All passions experienced at approximately equal rates cancel each other out when aggregated. The mad, eternal muttering of the Cholerids means nothing individually. In a chorus ten thousand strong, it speaks pure truth. Mob truth. Who to kill to become king. What to say to rule a crowd. How to make a thousand people love you. Whisper any question into the mass and get an answer back. It might not be the right answer, but it will be an answer, and sometimes that's enough.

Safety

You can avoid pursuit or lure your enemies into a trap. Very few creatures will wander into the stinking caves of the Cholerids if they can help it.

STATS

Cholerids

See *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 38.

DRACOSPAWN

MAJOR FEATURES

Dragons are immensely magical. They radiate soul-stuff: their very presence, given time, will change the local environment. By nature, dragons are solitary, but on rare occasions they can find a stable resonance, allowing several dragons to inhabit the same area. Not allies, not friends, but collaborators. Each dragon believes it is the leader and mastermind; it is very unwise to challenge this assumption.

On the surface, some dragons form Desolations. Others form banks, rule city-states, or sit in high mountain passes and eat the occasional traveling knight. They are neurotic, damaged creatures, but even a temperamental monster can find or create followers — for there are very few things a dragon cannot do. They create drakencults, hoarding people just as they hoard wealth and other treasures. Sometimes, a dragon's nature is imprinted onto their cult, according to the needs and desires of the cultists and the peculiarities of the dragon.

Collectively, a dragon's followers are called dracospawn.

Fear

Fear of invasion, fear of death, fear of illness, fear of poverty. They come and abase themselves, promising anything and everything. Sometimes the dragon agrees. Entire communities are swallowed up, changed, assigned new roles and strange purposes. A fearful creature will never be respected by a dragon. They shrink and degenerate, gaining a dragon's scales and head shape, like a child dressing up as a pilot or a fireman. These creatures are known as kobolds.

Violence

Captured dragon-hunters or willing champions are empowered by the dragon. They are remade as warrior-servants, scaled and obedient, tough, brutal, and loyal. Generations of master warriors, training to protect an immortal god-king. They are the dragonborn.

Pride

People have a major design flaw: a tendency to bend at the knees. Dragons exploit this. Some people need to be ruled, to serve a powerful and wise leader, to obey and to hold power through obedience. Dragons do not understand why people want to do this, but they exploit it. Externally, they are little changed by their proximity to the dragon, but their minds roil with madness and half-understood dreams. The dragons refer to their highest ranked followers as servants. Everyone else calls them sycophants.

The Grand Lair

In a corner of the Veins, where the sun is a legend and the sky is unimaginable, there are dragons. Locked in an uneasy alliance, they rule an underground kingdom. The Five Tyrants. The Five Lords of Creation. They are living gods to their followers and they have many, many followers.

Surface scholars divide dragons into eight metallic and eight chromatic forms, as if by numbering and categorizing them they might become less fearsome and inscrutable. But metals alloy and colours blend. The categories that look so sensible on paper crumble into dust when faced with a real, unique, and dangerous dragon. Dragons are more real than any category. They make the rest of the world look like painted scenery.



KASELDRAKE

Silver Dragon

Absolutely fastidious, utterly obsessive, fabulously wealthy, and completely paranoid. Kaseldrake is a mirror-bright ribbon of silver, a waterfall of perfectly polished scales and claws. It — nobody's entirely sure if Kaseldrake has a gender — is an organizer, a record-keeper, and a true tyrant. Kaseldrake breathes clouds of sleep. It never eats. It never fights unless cornered, but not for lack of ability. Fighting might disturb its collections. Kaseldrake is the size of a bus.

Lair

A city in the rock. Harmonious, peaceful, and beautiful. Every railing and stone was chosen with care by an immortal and detail-obsessed master. Soft blue lights and mirror-smooth rivers. Cold. Every building is large enough to admit the dragon without discomfort. Ceilings are high; arches are smooth and consistently sized. Streets radiate and are carefully marked. In the centre, in a grand palace, Kaseldrake flits from room to room, fussing.

Hoard

- Princesses. Kaseldrake puts them into an eternal, ageless sleep and then kidnaps them. It has dozens. Each one has their own room, built to mirror their former homes... but improved and tidied by the dragon's tendencies. The rooms are jeweled cases for exquisite relics. Kaseldrake doesn't have a plan or vile desires. It just likes having princesses. It will kill to keep them safe.
- Peacocks. They stroll through the city like kings. Each one is followed by a designated kobold (peacocks are both dumb and messy, the kobolds constantly clean and protect the birds).
- Silver. Every coin is unique and carefully stacked.
- Beetles. Long halls filled with glass cases and carefully impaled beetles. Dens of well-paid sycophants breed new varieties and document existing beetles.
- Records. Lists. Lists of lists. Content barely matters, as long as it is perfect and well-indexed.

Followers

Kobolds, as proud as the peacocks they follow and as obsessive as their master. Uniforms made of blue silk. In groups larger than 5 they form committees. In groups larger than 100 they form parliaments. They are wildly inefficient unless given clear directions. If told to ambush three travelers, and they only see two, they will freeze... and form a committee.

Kaseldrake keeps a small horde of dragonborn in a crypt. They can be woken by ringing any of the silver alarm bells in the city. They instantly rush to the scene of a disorder and murder everyone who might be involved. Unfortunately, they are easily distracted, and tend to focus on irrelevant details or minor incidents.

Swarms of sycophants. Most of them are quite willing and fairly happy. Kaseldrake doesn't pay much attention to them as long as things are cataloged, polished, and presented. They believe that Kaseldrake is the world's creator, or at least one of the major contributors, and that the work they are doing is vital. They are the Celestial Bureaucracy. Kaseldrake has never confirmed or denied their beliefs.

Alliances

Kaseldrake refuses to speak of Atgased, referring to him as "that thing." It is fond and tolerant of Borminthal, provided the indigo dragon and his brood stay at a safe distance. It finds Thanuly disreputable and boring, and it often forgets Postwald exists.

Most races in the Veins are treated with polite disinterest, but Kaseldrake desires and admires Antlings. They would get along very well, save that Kaseldrake has kidnapped one of their princesses.

Desires

More princesses. They are the crown jewels of Kaseldrake's hoard. It checks on them hourly. Kaseldrake, despite its obsessions, is very, very intelligent. It will spot a fake princess a mile away and move to destroy those who would pawn such a thing. Rumours of princesses are valuable and will be collated. Portraits are helpful.

New coins and new beetles are also valuable. The rarer the better. Even a coin or beetle Kaseldrake already possesses is valuable because it can be compared to the existing item. The less perfect version is discarded. Information in writing is also valuable. Tax registers, burial registers, and other dry lists of figures are highly valued.

Trade Goods

Kaseldrake has many defective coins and will trade in spare silver. More importantly, it will trade information. Kaseldrake and its sycophants know many things. Any information that could be indexed is indexed and added to Kaseldrake's vast storehouses.

Stats

Kaseldrake

As an Ancient Silver Dragon (see AD&D MM, pg. 34), save that its breath weapon induces sleep (as a Brass Dragon, see AD&D MM, pg. 31).

Kaseldrake's Kobolds

As Kobolds (see AD&D Monster Manual, pg. 57).

Kaseldrake's Dragonborn

As Lizard Men (see AD&D MM, pg. 62) with 4 HD.

Kaseldrake's Sycophants

As Merchants (see AD&D MM, pg. 69).

Peacocks

As 1 HD Flightless Birds (see AD&D MM, pg. 41).

BORMINTHAL THE WISE

Indigo Dragon

One of his glowing chameleon-cone eyes sees the future. The other sees the past. He can only sense the present dimly, and usually by lightning, which tends to vaporize delicate objects. His purple, warty body is filled with his lightning elemental partner. Mostly, Borminthal sleeps, eyes closed, stirring fitfully, muttering, and discharging bolts of electricity. Awake, he is bad-tempered, lazy, and demanding. His gaze charms and enthralls. Borminthal is ancient and enormous, the size of a small castle, and his sticky feet let him walk on ceilings and walls.

Lair

A series of large caves with scorch marks. Networks of small caves filled haphazardly with treasures and dracospawn. Borminthal sleepwalks along predictable paths. He slowly orbits his caves. His entire lair feels benignly neglected. It is lit only by his lightning and the glow of his hoard. Distant thunder (his footsteps).

Borminthal has six children. They are very young, the size of house cats, and they go everywhere together. If you're in Borminthal's lair, he's terrain. A slow moving thunderstorm made of a thousand tonnes of meat. The children are the ones you need to watch out for.

Hoard

- Music. Borminthal's dream-filled life is soothed by music. Orchestras race ahead of him, constantly playing, constantly innovating. Some people seek him out willingly, for the greatest collection of musical geniuses in Creation rides the bow-wave of his passage. In return, Borminthal gives them glimpses of the future or past, or merely charms them into willing servitude.
- Magic. No one is sure why Borminthal demands magic items, but his servants are certain he desires them. A pyramid of crystal balls. A stack of magic swords. Spellbooks, pickled wizard brains, cauldrons, wands, and wax candles. The air in some caves is filled with raw magical discharge: occasionally, some poor wanderer is teleported, mutated, or vaporized.

The Children

Squirring, slightly sticky, and very curious. They can burp lightning, but they know better than to vaporize guests. They crawl and stalk and plot and ask all sorts of silly questions and show you treasures and tricks and tell long rambling stories with no beginning or end. They are spoiled rotten. They are too young to have picked names yet and will ask the PCs for advice.

Followers

Borminthal's kobolds wear copper hats and long copper chains. They clip themselves into special cables on the walls, moving cautiously like alpine climbers. Lightning will strike them first. They are all profoundly deaf and utterly miserable. If you threaten Borminthal, some kobolds will clip themselves onto you and wait for the dragon's lightning to strike you dead.

His dragonborn are fanatic ninja-like thieves. They possess Borminthal's chameleon eyes but not his strange visions. They prefer to use poison and strangulation to kill their targets. Secretly, they bring magic items and music to add to Borminthal's hoard. They will protect his children with their lives.

Most of Borminthal's sycophants are musicians, though he has ordered tutors for his children. They rarely last long.

Alliances

Borminthal's legendary wisdom and enormous bulk prevent any other dragon from earnestly plotting against him. The lightning-scarred bones of one challenger lie near the entrance to his lair. Borminthal's children refer to Atgased as "Mr. Stinky," Kaseldrake as "silly old Wrasslesnake," Thanuly as "Auntie," and Postwald as "Mr. Plops." If they can find an excuse to follow the PCs into another dragon's lair, they will, then blame the PCs for any disasters that result.

Desires

To be left alone. To sleep forever and dream pleasantly.

His children want snacks, races, hold me up, no wait I want to eat your hair, no wait let's go throw rocks at the fishes, why do you have so many fingers, what's the sun like why are plants green and mushrooms brown where do we go when we die are you really tall for a surface human why are your eyes blue look at this thing I found I like silver the best will you teach me how to make a hat like your hat so we can wear hats together did you know...

Trade Goods

Borminthal's children will let you steal magic items, but they'll turn you in later and get you in trouble. Borminthal's children also know many secrets (1-in-10 are true) and many secret passages (1-in-10 are traps). They will make bad trades. The closer you get to Borminthal, the more likely a prophecy or vision will stick to your soul (pg. 103-105) It might be irrelevant, maddening, or vitally important. Strong-willed people can select visions; weak-willed people are overwhelmed. To get close, you need to avoid angering the dragonborn or disturbing the musicians.

Stats

Borminthal the Wise

As an Ancient Red Dragon (see AD&D MM, pg. 33) except with 30 HD. Breathes a cone of lightning (as a Blue Dragon, see AD&D MM, pg. 31, except a cone).

Metal objects within 100' of Borminthal have a 1-in-100 chance of being struck by lightning each round. Metal objects within 10' have a 1-in-6 chance.

Borminthal's Children

Adapt Egg Dead (VotE, pg. 40) for behaviours. Stats as Egg Dead or as Young Red Dragons (see AD&D MM, pg. 33) except they breath lightning as a Blue Dragon (see AD&D MM, pg. 31).

Borminthal's Kobolds

As Kobolds (see AD&D MM, pg. 57).

Borminthal's Dragonborn

As Lizard Men (see AD&D MM, pg. 62).

Borminthal's Sycophants

As Merchants (see AD&D MM, pg. 69) with musical instruments.

THANULY

Orange Dragon

Thanuly is currently a human woman with an enormous mass of frizzy orange hair and piercing blue eyes. She is a spellcaster and, even by the standards of most dragons, a little odd. She is joyful, playful, and possibly even charitable. Her lair resembles a conventional city, full of life, art, and happiness. Mandatory happiness. In her war form, Thanuly is a ship-sized blur of magic, orange scales, and blistering hatred.

Lair

The city of Absalom is small but functional. It has farms, powered by Thanuly's assorted spells. Some enlarge fruit, some spawn vermin, some duplicate items, and some just create food and water from nothing. The city doesn't generate a massive surplus, but it does generate enough to trade. It has markets, warehouses, guilds, and inns. The city is always celebrating. The festival never ends. Its patroness and protector roams the city in disguise. Her gigantic palace is mostly empty. Currently, she is pretending to be Mistress Yolonda, a wealthy patron of the arts. Absalom has a fluid hierarchy of food-barons, art critics, and authors. Their power is illusory; all serve at Thanuly's whim.

Everyone in the city knows Mistress Yolonda is the fearsome dragon Thanuly. Her disguise isn't terribly convincing and she keeps forgetting her assumed name. Begin to mention this and everyone around her freezes in fear. She becomes violent if she thinks anyone has seen through her cunning disguise. Smile, nod, and never acknowledge.

Hoard

- Artists. Of any kind, as long as they are skilled and obedient. The only subject permitted is Thanuly the Immortal... or, conveniently, Mistress Yolonda. Statues and paintings of Thanuly's previous disguises, including a foxling named Yutravian and a fat merchant named Yult, are displayed discreetly but openly. If you want to speak to Thanuly directly, wait until she drops her disguise to pose for a painting.
- Joy. At Thanuly's command, everyone in her city is happy. Drugs, surgery, and spells keep the more valuable artists in a state of bliss. Food, drink, security, and extremely liberal social mores satisfy everyone else. Malingerers and dissidents are exterminated by the city's population before word of their treachery reaches Thanuly.

- Gold. Mostly in the form of jewelry. No depictions of faces other than Thanuly (or her disguised forms) is permitted, so most coins are defaced or reworked.
- Spells. Thanuly's magical library is vast and well guarded.

Followers

Thanuly's kobolds have been told they do not actually exist. They believe it. They wear grey cloth robes and masks to blend in with the city. Most wear furniture. Tables, easels, columns, and chairs move around on soft padded feet. Citizens accept it: obedient furniture is very useful.

Her dragonborn are all former lovers. Romance, at the best of times, involves a very slight mingling of souls. Since dragons have a hyper-abundance of soul, falling in love can be a transformative and even fatal process for mortals. The survivors are utterly loyal.

Everyone in her city, from traveling traders to permanent residents, lives only at Thanuly's whim. Luckily, she is easily flattered. Live in eternal joy and obey her every command. Hoard no gold, no art, and no magic. If you can live with that Absalom is a paradise.

Alliances

Thanuly thinks the other dragons are inferior and deranged, but has no plots against them. She admires the Drow for their skills and beauty, and they — possibly — admire her, but they also refuse to sculpt her. Every other creature is evaluated only by its ability to flatter.

Desires

Confirmation of her own superiority, immortalized in art and reinforced via obedience and flattery. Thanuly's thoughts all turn inwards: she cares for very little outside herself. Thanuly wants to set the latest fashions but she's horribly unoriginal. Allow her to take credit for your work.

She may attempt to seduce unusual or particularly attractive strangers. Sex isn't dangerous (well, not existentially dangerous), but love is, and Thanuly is easy to love. Close proximity is intoxicating. Useful people may not be allowed to leave.

Trade Goods

Thanuly will cast spells on you or for you, but will very rarely allow spells to leave her library. She can also introduce you to wonderful people, new foods, soft clothes, and new experiences. Living in Absalom should be enough of a reward for anyone. If you insist on payment, she will provide food, silver, or occultum.

Stats

Thanuly

As an Ancient Gold Dragon (see AD&D MM, pg. 33) with twice the usual number of spells but no breath weapon.

Thanuly's Kobolds

As Kobolds (see AD&D MM, pg. 57) wearing furniture. Hide on a 5-in-6 in crowded rooms.

Thanuly's Dragonborn

As Lizard Men (see AD&D MM, pg. 62). 1-in-6 can cast spells as a 5th level magic user.

Thanuly's Sycophants

As Pilgrims or Merchants (see AD&D MM, pg. 69).

ATGASED THE VILE

Green Dragon

A miserable creature who delights in misery. Green dragons made a poor deal with acid elementals. Their skin constantly weeps corrosive slime. It hurts them, but it hurts everything else more. Atgased can tunnel through limestone in hours. His caves are the remains of an ancient volcanic burp; his acid slime dissolves obsidian and granite much more slowly. He is a long-limbed, emerald green dragon, pot-bellied, coated in filth. His wings are kept carefully folded. He can unfurl them to spray a huge area in sludge. He's the size of a jetliner.

Lair

A shallow lake of acidic sludge, lit by the faintest chemical glow. Atgased lies on his belly and slides around, sighing deeply. If he sits still, only his eyes and his foul breath-bubbles. His treasures rest in alcoves or carefully carved islands.

Hoard

- Burned books in a huge, tottering stack. Some pages might still be readable. Some spells are still trapped inside.
- Bent tools, rusting. A maze of broken implements, with a few mangled magic items at the centre.
- Damaged beauty. Statues and slaves, both the finest available, burnt by Atgased's acid. He finds the Immaculate Slaves of the Drow too obedient and accepting to make a truly excellent hoard.

Followers

Atgased the Vile has a huge number of kobolds. Their eyes are huge and bulbous, their noses almost vestigial. They have swollen bellies and tottering legs, like famine victims. At Atgased's command, they swallow his slime and belch it onto walls or enemies, carving new tunnels or destroying precious defenses. Their clothes are rags and their weapons are claws.

Atgased keeps some dragonborn. They are taught to believe they are worthless sinners, reincarnated by the world's creator (Atgased, obviously), to assist in the punishment of other sinners. They are profoundly ignorant and remarkably brutal. If ordered to capture someone, they are likely to break their captive's limbs just for convenience in transport. Their fat, almost toad-like faces look like armoured helmets.

No sycophants attend on Atgased for long. He keeps a few victims around to torture, for he delights in panicked, hasty answers, desperate lies, or just screaming. His view of the world is a mix of these lies and his own beliefs, and it changes every few days.

Alliances

All the other dragons hate the noxious and miserable Atgased, but he is too valuable to kill or exile. He carved the tunnels in their lairs. His followers carve secret passages throughout the Veins. His vices are, in comparison, moderate and well-contained.

Desires

Atgased would love to see the other Tyrants humiliated and maimed. Not killed (that would be boring), but permanently crippled or mocked.

He would love to invade a Drow city and rampage through its halls, spreading acid everywhere, poisoning rose beds and destroying beauty wherever he could find it. He fantasizes about this for hours. He would also love to poison the Lake of Teeth, any Olmsumps he could reach, and... well, the entire world, honestly. He dreams of cavorting through rotting cities, scorched forests, and sulphurous swamps.

Atgased craves no precious metals or gems, but he will accept gifts of art or other well-loved things. Cunning traders have convinced him that worthless objects were highly sentimental, then wept crocodile tears as he destroyed them.

Trade Goods

Atgased can provide a force of disposable kobolds to conquer a fortress or dig a tunnel. He will also release a disfigured slave or two if he is certain life outside his lair would be more humiliating than life inside it. He will also promise to use a magical process to heal and transform someone into a new, better, and forever well-fed form. He just eats people and laughs smugly.

Stats

Atgased the Vile

As an Ancient Green Dragon (see AD&D MM, pg. 33) coated in Green Slime (see AD&D MM, pg. 49).

Atgased's Kobolds

As Kobolds (see AD&D MM, pg. 57) armed with claws (as daggers). 1-in-6 can vomit green slime (as a thrown dagger that acts like green slime).

Atgased's Dragonborn

As Lizard Men (see AD&D MM, pg. 62).

Atgased's Sycophants

As wounded Merchants (see AD&D MM, pg. 69).

Acid Lake

As Green Slime (see AD&D MM, pg. 49).

POSTWALD

Tin Dragon

A plump, salamander-like, twitchy thing. Like a dragon sculpted out of white clay. Postwald is a habitual liar, constant schemer, and utter liability. It is small — only 10' long including his whip-sharp tail — and dull grey. It can move like a greased weasel and jump surprisingly far.

Lair

A small network of limestone caves carved into a careful and deliberate maze. Several caves are identical down to the last pebble. Postwald keeps its meager hoard in a central chamber, next to a chapel it carved. Secret passages and kobold warrens wind through every part of its lair.

Hoard

- Religious texts. Postwald is deeply religious. It believes the Authority has a plan for it and that all Creation was put there for its benefit. It assumes any vaguely prophesied religious figure, apocalyptic or messianic, is going to be Postwald, and it is quite excited.
- Secrets. Anything will do. It loves listening to them while purring like a kitten or a malfunctioning cement plant. It won't trade in secrets unless threatened.
- Exiles and Criminals. Anyone banished, cast out, or banned. It thinks of himself as their kindly benefactor... and slowly watches them starve to death. It can't be made to understand that people need food and water. Crowns from exiled kings and last works of banished poets are the most valuable things it owns.

Followers

Postwald's kobolds are cunning little bastards. They are experts in camouflage, trap-making, and secretive murder. They can squeeze through impossible gaps. Postwald is very vulnerable; the kobolds know their divine ruler needs a lot of protection. They love Postwald. They think they are angels, like the ones in the holy books.

Postwald has one dragonborn: an ancient knight named Bos. Bos is a poor fighter and a rambling storyteller, but the kobolds revere him and Postwald treats him like a favoured pet.

The prisoners Postwald collects are briefly sycophants. After a few days without water their attitude changes.

Alliances

None of the other dragons want an alliance with Postwald. Not after last time. It came up with some convincing scheme that failed exactly halfway through, when Borminthal woke up and incinerated his apparent challenger. It's a natural talent. The rest of the dragons try not to acknowledge Postwald.

Postwald will contaminate any alliance it enters. Any league (other than the Five Tyrants) will inevitably collapse. It is very sorry about this, and it's somehow not entirely to blame, but the other dragons consider it an immutable fact. Postwald's existence is therefore useful. Conspiracies against the Five Tyrants and the Grand Lair often seek a route to power through Postwald.

Desires

Postwald likes company. It fills visitors with confidence as a side-effect of its pride-inducing breath. It also wants, in a vague and confusing way, to take over the world and fulfill a few dozen apocalyptic prophecies at the same time. Religious ceremonies fascinate Postwald.

It can be convinced of almost anything, but once convinced it will want to help, and once it helps your plans will begin to unravel.

Trade Goods

Postwald likes to keep mementos from his exiles, but it will use them to barter for things. It has no idea how to evaluate relative worth. It might trade a jewel-encrusted crown for a mundane secret or a load of iron shackles for an arduous, hazardous task.

Stats

Postwald

As an Old Copper Dragon (see AD&D MM, pg. 33) with no spells.

Postwald can breath a 30' cone of confidence. Targets will become reckless and enthusiastic, losing all sense of judgement. Postwald also constantly generates a 30' incompetence field. Any attacks or hostile actions only succeed on a critical success. Anything else counts as a critical failure.

Postwald's Kobolds

As Kobolds (see AD&D MM, pg. 57), but smart and tactical.

Postwald's Dragonborn

Just one. Bos the Knight has stats as a Bandit (see AD&D MM, pg. 66) in plate armour.

Postwald's Sycophants

As Bandits (see AD&D MM, pg. 66).

POSTWALD'S CUNNING DEATHTRAPS

If Postwald captures the PCs it will subject them to one of its many Cunning Deathtraps. Postwald's kobolds can design proper deathtraps and quietly despair at their master's attempts. Postwald gloats like a Bond villain.

1. The Ruination of Friendships

(2, 4, 6, etc. PCs)

A rope hanging from a pulley with a bucket on both ends. PCs are loosely tied and distributed evenly between the two buckets. The buckets are suspended from a sturdy beam over a (very real) acid pit and carefully balanced. Kobolds will chuck pebbles into the buckets from the windows around the deathtrap room. "As the rocks fall," Postwald gloats, "one bucket will become heavier than the other. But wait! You can save yourself... by putting rocks into your friend's bucket! Ooooh, how cruel!"

The PCs can escape by:

1. climbing the rope.
2. throwing rocks back at the kobolds to knock them out.
3. very patiently filling in the acid pool with rocks.
4. swinging the buckets from side to side to get to a window.

Postwald can't fit into the room or any of the nearby passages.

2. The Pit of Death and Poison

(Any number of PCs)

A bucket and a well. "Full of the deadliest snakes in all Creation," Postwald will boast, "and vicious biting scissorfish! If the poison* doesn't kill you, the biting jaws of my precious fish will! Ahahaha!"

The snakes and fish died long ago. The bottom of the pit is odorous but not dangerous. If PCs scream and wail and act out dramatic death scenes, Postwald will be satisfied and leave them alone without checking. Its eyesight isn't very good, so even if it does check it might not notice the PCs moving around. A ledge in the pit leads to the fish feeding room (abandoned) and the rest of Postwald's lair.

*Postwald means venom, but it doesn't know that.

3. The Minecart Problem (3 or more PCs)

"Aha! You see before you a horrible dilemma! On the left track, one of your friends. On the right track, the other. By the use of this lever, you alone control the path of a minecart full of rocks, which will soon come rushing down this track! Which friend will you mangle?"

Postwald is standing on the leftmost track. The minecart will knock the wind right out of it: all the kobolds in the area will rush over to check it, giving plenty of time to escape. Alternatively, the lever can be wedged in an intermediate position, causing the minecart to derail and scatter rocks everywhere.

4. The Prisoner's Intriguing But Difficult Choice

(2 or more PCs)

"I offer you this simple choice! You must choose to *Suffer* or *Betray*. If you choose *Suffer* and your friends choose *Betray*, I will eat you and let them go free. Similarly, if they choose *Betray* and you choose...

"No wait, let me start again. If you both choose *Betray*, you both will be eaten! But if you both choose *Suffer*, I will let you go free. Now... choose."

The PCs are all together. They can communicate freely.

5. Chess (Any number of PCs)

"A game of wit and daring. Chess! The true game of wise people. If I defeat you, you will die. But if you defeat me, I will let you go free."

Postwald doesn't understand the rules of chess. It has the basics, but it can never remember how the knights move. It will ask the PCs for advice. Any reasonable bluff, and several unreasonable ones like the "Queen Death-Spiral rule" and the "Reverse Castle Mortgage" will work. If you have a chessboard, you could act out the game against the players.

6. The Horrible Saw of Messy Death

(Any number of PCs)

The PCs are strapped to a thick iron table on a sliding rail. A huge spinning saw blade whirrs menacingly. "Goodbye, intruders," Postwald gloats.

As the PCs approach the blade, Postwald rushes over and shuts off the machinery. "No, wait, that's not right," it says, and rotates the table so the PCs are heading into the saw feet-first. "Much better."

The saw will hit the metal table and explode. PCs might be lacerated, but the room will fill with smoke, sparks, panicking kobolds, and secondary explosions. The saw fragments will cut a few of the leather straps binding the PCs.

7. A Duel of Honour (Any number of PCs)

"We shall fight like nobles. You may have your weapons. I will have my teeth and claws and fearsome intellect. Ten paces, turn, and then the duel begins. Ready? One, two..."

Postwald has its back to the PCs. The exit is unguarded; all the kobolds have also turned away. They can easily make a run for it. When Postwald turns around, it will pause, then shout, "Invisible, eh? Well have at you! Hah! Aha!" as it stomps around, smashing furniture and fighting imaginary opponents for several minutes.

8. Your Just Reward (Any number of PCs)

"As a reward for your greed, you will be given a fitting gift. Molten gold! Yes! Bring the cauldron forward!"

Observant PCs will note that the cauldron is more... warm-ish than molten. The kobolds will object, but Postwald will silence them. The cauldron will tip over, dropping a shower of gold pieces and warm-ish block of solid gold onto their heads. One PC might be concussed. The block of gold will also fall on Postwald's toe, causing it considerable pain. The PCs can easily escape in the chaos.

9. Agonizingly Slow Drowning In A Glass Tank (Any number of PCs)

"You shall suffer exceedingly slowly as this tank fills with water. I'll come check on you every so often. Try to hold your breath! Ahahahaha!"

The 15' high glass tank is slowly being filled from a water channel. It has no lid: the PCs can just hop out once the water reaches a certain height. Additionally, the glass is fragile, and can be broken with well-timed blow. The real trick is timing the escape to avoid the occasional patrolling kobold.

10. The Deadliest Game (Any number of PCs)

"I will hunt you like a cave spider hunts a cricket, except much bigger, and also you can't jump as high. To be noble, you will have a head start. You have until the sand runs from this hourglass to evade me."

The PCs are given all gear and items back. They have a 30 minute head start. Postwald, despite its claims, is not a mighty hunter. Its kobolds will try to push the PCs into an obvious path or trap them somewhere Postwald can't possibly miss.... but it usually misses them anyway.

THE DROW

MAJOR FEATURES

- Underground Elves, hiding from the High Elves, their creators.
- Pale hair, skin in unnatural tones (the colours of marble in water: lustrous white, pale blue, jet black).
- Beautiful, tall, slim, androgynous.
- Elegance and poise.
- Roses and cities.



ENCOUNTERING THE DROW

There's the slight sound of footsteps. In a cave, in a procession, come four graceful figures. They carry bundles of silk, carefully tied, on their backs. Their faces are beautiful porcelain masks — or are they masks? One carries a red lantern.

They pause as you approach.

These are the Immaculate Slaves. The Drow who owns them is somewhere else, watching. If the you seem interesting or foolish or merely non-threatening, it will approach, from behind its slaves, and speak to you. The Slaves wear nothing, or next to nothing. Only what they need for the journey. The Drow wears black-grey silk and carries a dagger. The silk moves like smoke.

DROW-SPEAK

The Drow know most languages. They will speak to other Elves first, then other races in order of beauty, from most to least beautiful. To the Drow, beauty is virtue, and virtue is power.

The Drow is calm, smiling, and patient. It will never be flustered. It will interrupt you; if you interrupt it, it will continue, evenly, until it has finished its sentence and then wait for a response. Imagine an adult talking to a small child about the child's latest fingerpainting. That's how the Drow see everyone else.

Still, despite their unshakeable smugness, they will be polite. They will trade with the PCs, but the Immaculate Slaves only carry silk, or rose petals, or silver, or other, smaller slaves. Things the PCs might desire, but very rarely what they need.

They never use contractions. They never curse. They pause, but not to think. They make you wait and worry. They call all other elves "Cousin." Everyone else is "Friend."

DROW NAMES

They will not tell you their names. If you need to refer to one, say "the Drow we first met." They say, "this one," or "those few," and call each other "Brother" and "Sister."

Somehow, all Drow know who you are talking about, if you describe one to another. If you need to find a Drow you've previously met, everyone in the city can tell you where you could look for them.

Their cities have names. Their factions have names.

But the Drow don't. You can name them, if you want to, but it's like calling the postman "Mr. Postman." Endearing, but a little juvenile.

THE DROW WILL GREET YOU FORMALLY...

It will greet you formally. If it can identify your culture by sight, it will use an appropriate greeting.

It will ask the you what you are doing, where you are going, and why. But slowly. Piece by piece. It will say it is trading. Carrying goods from one city to another. No, it's not far. Would the PCs like to follow it? There are many things to trade in the city.

Safe? Of course.

SO YOU ARE IN A DROW CITY...

The Drow don't seem to build villages. They build fortresses and listening posts, but rarely stay there in person. They are an urban race.

The cave flattens and levels as you approach the gate. An iron portal made of folding leaves, an iris-gate, a sluice, a porthole. An eye. A lamprey rose. Two seer-hounds, sleek folded shapes like greyhounds made of silk, wait, their Drow handlers standing, masked, impassive, almost bored. They do not bother to look at you as you enter. You probably don't register as a threat.

You passed the real gate several minutes ago.

The paths are lit by red lanterns. Silver cased glass, burning without fuel, faintly hissing. The city is beautiful. A huge cave, huge empty spaces with winding roads and impossible ladders. The walls are buildings, curved, fluted, stumped, flowing like liquid, lit by red lights. A cave of minarets and domes.

Silk banners hang from silver posts. Impossibly detailed tapestries are exhibited in corners. There is always a sensation that the city prepared itself just before you turned the corner, as if the banners and lights and Immaculate Slaves were set out just for you, and before you looked there was nothing.

Perhaps it is so. But most likely not. The Drow are a busy race.

They move gracefully, alone or with Immaculate Slaves attending. The only ones you will ever see in groups are their warrior-guards in masks, and even then, never more than five at a time. The Drow speak to each other briefly, in passing, then move apart. Never a conversation. Never a true meeting.

Not in the streets.

There is magic in the air: old magic, pervasive, constant. And blood. And roses. Everything smells faintly of roses, even the spice market, even the alchemist's stores. There are drifts of rose petals in corners but you never see anyone step on one. Peer in a glass window and you might see a garden, just before a black silk curtain is drawn across your view.

The city feels strange, as if you've wandered into a play or a half-real thing. There is something odd and oppressive in the air. But it is still very real. A Drow alchemist will measure a potion for you. A Drow merchant will examine your treasures and offer you a fair price, in silver, light, or flesh.

And perhaps after this brief foray you can leave. If you remember the way out, if you didn't stay too long, if you can clear your head and trudge out of the city and into the cold and unwelcoming caves beyond... then you can escape without consequence. You will dream of the city, of red lights, grey silk, and white masks. And roses. But the dreams will fade.

But perhaps you decide to stay. Or a Drow tells you to follow it with a glance. Or a merchant says they cannot buy an item from you, but tells you where you could sell it. You leave the streets and walk through a doorway.

SO YOU FIND A GATHERING OF DROW...

Indoors. Behind glass. The transition from the city to the buildings of the city is difficult to measure, but it is nevertheless felt. Their buildings are like cathedrals. Every view is beautiful. You cannot find a space without art, without refinement, without perfection. Geometric spirals, like the shell of a sea creature. Or a rose.

There are beds of roses. Alone, in the Veins of the Earth, they seem full of life. They grow and sprawl, not trimmed into any one shape but allowed to cascade into a pleasing riot of flowers and thorns. There are beds in nearly every room. You have never seen an empty one, never seen one without every flower in bloom and every leaf waxy and full.

They are unsettling.

But the Drow beckon you on. They are discussing something. They turns as you enter. You are presented to the head of a House. To other Drow. To sisters, brothers.

They smile. You converse. For a time, things seem normal, although the conversation is hard to follow, and you are not sure if you are being given requests, commands, compliments, or insults.

In a flash, one of the Drow pulls out a dagger and stabs the head of the House in the heart. The other Drow applaud, politely. The conversation continues, now with another Drow leading. The topic is the same. The body lies, cooling slowly, on the white marble throne. In the background, two Drow exchange roses, and share a meaningful glance. A third Drow carries in a wisp of silk and presents it to the corpse on the throne, then leaves. You begin to feel dizzy.

There are rules here, you think. Rules and plots.

But the Drow do not seem perturbed. They do not explain or attempt to accommodate you. Wine is served. The Drow will never ask you to leave, but it will become clear that the conversation is over.

Every room is perfect. Every surface is beautiful. Nothing makes sense. The buildings are a maze; the maze is a trap. The Drow are everywhere, smiling, going about their inscrutable, sleepless lives, as if you were a cat or a small child who had wandered into a bank or a bakery.

You can explore the public rooms freely, but you may need to slip behind an illusory wall or through an invisible door to reach the secret rooms.

You could also stumble into a Drow building directly from the Veins. Turn a corner and find a bedchamber. Three naked Drow lie entwined, staring at you with faint, placid amusement. The Drow always seem to be on the verge of sex, but never quite there, as if they'd just undressed. Eternal, sensual foreplay. Not with you (never with you), but possibly at you.

Generate room exits and entrances as per the cave rules on *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 226.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOING ON?

Just by speaking with a Drow, you have entered the Drow Conspiracy.

PERHAPS IT IS LIKE THIS...

If there was a Feudal Conspiracy, you enter it by being born. You become Aware when you are taught your role in society's order. You become

Involved when you labour inside the Feudal structure, or gain any benefit from it, or are harmed by it. And you begin Collaborating when you encourage or force others to maintain their role in society's order. There is no Feudal Conspiracy because everyone on the surface is involved. Outsiders are so rare that the conspiracy essentially doesn't exist. It's the fabric of society.

The same thing applies to the Drow Conspiracy. In their cities, in their lives, it is the rules. It might seem like madness to an outsider, but it functions. Their society has rules and codes and maneuvers. It grows and fights and produces art.

OR PERHAPS...

There are no rules. No laws. The Drow are insane. They are trapped by their own social games, their own mad spiral-dream of blood and factions and power. They merely pretend to know the dance — as long as the fiction is maintained, life continues.

OR PERHAPS...

The Drow have fractured time itself. There are only a few Drow, perhaps less than a dozen, but they live for centuries. Each room in a palace is in a different year. The dead come back to life and walk. Paradoxes roam the halls. Flee! Flee when you still can!

OR PERHAPS...

There is a code, but you cannot break it. There is a law, but you cannot read it. There is a plan, but it is a long, convoluted plan, a pattern in the darkness.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...

Once, a scholar from the surface world, with pockets full of gifts and a bag full of books and ink, found the Drow. The scholar flattered and capered and bowed. The Drow took the gifts and more-or-less ignored the Scholar.

The scholar found a room. Clothes and food appeared from time to time. The scholar observed the Drow for years, decades. They filled book after book with theories and notes and guesses. What does a rose mean? What does a dagger mean? A dictionary of signs. The scholar became old and crooked and more than a little deranged, but they were certain they were close.

Then, one day, the Drow burnt the scholar's books in front of them, cut off their tongue and fingers, and sent them back to the surface... with pockets full of gifts. Bright diamonds. Silver. And roses.

THE DROW CONSPIRACY

The Drow are never surprised. Ever. No matter what happens. It's just another move in an elaborate game. They can see all the pieces; you can't. If someone stabs a Drow, the stabbed Drow will die politely, faintly smiling, as someone applauds from behind a curtain, and a third Drow gives a fourth one a meaningful glance. Drow lovers suddenly stab each other. Bitter enemies share a longing glance. Everything is a play and you can't follow the plot. The Drow give you patronizing, wistful glances and refuse to explain.

Not only that, but dead Drow return on a regular basis. Are they ghosts? Doppelgangers? Clones? Resurrected? Impostors? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

They just smile politely and change the subject.

ENTERING THE DROW CONSPIRACY

You encounter a Drow. Any PC who carries and reveals a rose on their first encounter with the Drow enters at Stage 2.

Stages

1. Aware. Every time you meet more than one Drow, roll on the **Drow Realization Table** (pg. 34) every few minutes. They mostly ignore you. Advance to the next Stage if the **Drow Realization Table** tells you to advance, or if you do something particularly rash. You've just moved exactly as the Drow predicted you would move.

2. Involved. Every time you meet more than one Drow, roll on the **Drow Realization Table** every few minutes. They give you knowing glances and wry nods. You are sent secret coded messages. Items go missing; items appear. Your path is diverted by someone who points to a door. The door is painted on, and when you turn back, the Drow is gone. You hear faint laughter in the distance. Later, someone gives you a diamond the size of an apple "as payment." You can only trade, negotiate, or question the Drow if you are at this level or higher.

3. Collaborating. It is only possible to advance to this stage via the **Drow Encounter Table** (pg. 77). For the purposes of results on the **Drow Realization Table**, and lower levels of the Drow Conspiracy, you count as a Drow. Your death will be mourned. Roll on the **Drow Realization Table** more-or-less constantly if you are in the presence of a Drow. If you ever doubt or hesitate you will be killed.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY GOING ON?

The Drow are Elves, and Elves are perfected humans. Improve the mind, fix the teeth, banish acne, sort the blood, remove a thousand evolutionary dead-ends. But the Drow, being perfected, were not content to serve. They crept away into the earth, fleeing the alien High Elves who created them, and sought a new path. Starvation, genetic disease, and madness thinned their numbers. They persevered. They did not forget who they were or who they were meant to be.

And as Elves, they found it easy to adapt. Elves are malleable. They have very strong souls. Magic sticks easily to them. Some alterations were necessary, but the Drow became an improvement on perfection. Burnished gold. A lily in eyeliner.

They don't need to eat. They still do, and it nourishes them, but they don't need to. They feed on beauty itself, and beauty is not consumed by their hunger. They don't age; they don't sleep. Their vibrant souls drag their bodies along like a silk ribbon.

There are some downsides. The line between living on beauty alone and starving is very fine. Surplus beauty is required but, like surplus food, that energy has to go somewhere. Elves aren't built to store fat. They burn it. The Drow never sleep and never rest. They have manic, feverish schemes pursued with utterly remorseless high-speed intelligence.

Maybe it started with a simple plot. Two Drow vying for power. One stabs the other, then discovers their target was an illusion, and they themselves are stabbed. Bluff and counterbluff. Cut and parry. Layers upon layers. Illusions, spies, cheating, lying, scrying. Any move could mean death, betrayal, or loss of status. So the game became elaborate; the Drow have the mental agility to play this kind of game very well. A signal is as good as a murder, if the victim knows they are surrounded, alone, and without allies. Tip over the king, reset the board.

They are also immortal.

Elves worry about the afterlife a great deal. The High Elves assure them it's all under control. They build churches and go to services and pay tithes to keep the rest of Creation happy. The only Elves in Heaven and Hell are traitors or mistakes. For the Drow, without the High Elves looking over their shoulder and interfering in the natural process of death, an alternative was required. They found a few unpalatable stopgap measures before stumbling onto

D100	PUBLIC ROOMS
1	Cathedral. Cruciform, with downward-sloping arms. Soft sound of water, unseen.
2	Bone garden. Thousands of skeletons, chased in silver, posed as they were in life. No labels.
3	Bed Chamber. White silk. 2d4 Drow entwined, moving slowly, like coiled snakes.
4	Pit. Apparently bottomless. Smooth rim, sloped inwards dangerously.
5	Hall. Spikes of stone, curled like hair. 2d4 Drow, in discussion.
6	Bath Chambers. Steam and heated oil. 2 Immaculate Slaves removing oil from 1 Drow.
7	Cathedral. Spherical. Abstract statues, like melted wax or boiling marble.
8	Bed Chamber. Huge ornate silk bed completely soaked in blood. Way, way too much blood.
9	Bath Chambers. Rice-paddy fields of milky-white water. Clouds of steam. 2d10 naked Drow.
10	Processional Hall. Hanging bright silk banners with sigils. Like wandering through a clothesline.
11	Viewing Gallery. Overlooking another room. 1d4 Drow, drinking wine.
12	Bath Chambers. Monstrously deep cylinder of water, ice cold. 2d10 naked Drow.
13	Rose Garden. A stadium-sized field of roses. No path through. White lanterns high above.
14	Throne Room. Marble throne, long silk banners, deep shadows and moving lights. 1d4 Drow.
15	Bed Chamber. Hammocks of silk hung from silver trees. 1d4 Drow, lounging.
16	Hall. Narrow, humid. Fingers of stone reach out from the walls. Frozen, but eerie.
17	Canyon. Too tall to be a hall. Smooth, water-polished walls, blue-grey, striated. No lights.
18	Illusion Hall. Surface wilderness at night. Beautiful desolation. In the far distance, flames.
19	Folding Room. Triangular, unless a Drow is in it. Then, square, with a hidden door.
20	Stairway. Branches like a tree. High ceiling. A stream of water flows down a carved channel.
21	Heated Hall. Painfully hot. Behind glass doors. In the shimmering haze, 1d10 Drow, dancing.
22	Rose Garden. Terraces with roses above you. A thin, winding path. It rains rose petals.
23	Bed Chamber. Pyramid of cushions in a stone hollow. 1 Drow posing or resting, perfectly still.
24	Illusion Hall. Rain. A false, perfectly even rainstorm, with false clouds. 1d4 naked Drow.
25	Temple. Two silver domes, one on the floor, one on the ceiling. Blood drips between them.
26	Processional Hall. 4 Immaculate Slaves carrying a carved stone box full of silver ingots.
27	Memento Room. Strange, macabre, polished things suspended in glass.
28	Cathedral. Spiraled, like a broken spine. Abstract glass, multicoloured light, but tinted red.
29	Dagger Room. Some displayed, some tossed carelessly, but forming a pleasing exhibit.
30	Dining Room. Long table, curved like a horn. No food or utensils.
31	Rose Garden. Pits of roses, like craters. Each one has a white lamp on a silver pole.
32	Throne Room. Obelisk throne, dozens of smaller thrones in a ring. 1d4 naked Drow, lounging.
33	Viewing Gallery. 2d10 Immaculate Slaves labour or exercise pointlessly, watched by 2 Drow.
34	Long Hall. Dotted with small rose-pits and silver lanterns on chains. Slight vertigo-inducing curve.
35	Waterfall Room. Pillars of glass-like water, falling smoothly. No spray, next to no noise.
36	Drawing Room. Two Drow, sitting in high-backed chairs, silently contemplating a small statue.
37	Illusion Room. Hall with a false sky. Overcast, shimmering, grey. No rain, but dew. 1d4 Drow.
38	Memento Room. Natural objects suspended on wires. Teeth. A single hair. A leaf. A crown.
39	Illusion Room. Light. Pure, solid white light. Behind an iron iris-door. 1 Drow, eyes closed, waiting.
40	Sphere Gallery. Terraced. Spheres on plinths: silver, bone, crystal, occultum, love, lies. No labels.
41	Illusion Gallery. A stone forest with white illusory birds, white leaves. Disorienting.
42	Poison Room. 4 beautiful victims on cold slabs, with 4 vials of poison. 1 Immaculate Slave.
43	Throne Room. Silver throne, delicate, almost floats. 1d4 Drow and 1d4 Immaculate Slaves.
44	Hall. Wide, folded, asymmetric, rippled. Small pools of warm water.
45	Chasm. A narrow bridge across. Endless rain of rose petals into the darkness below.
46	Hall. Teardrop-shaped, filled with a spiral of silk. 1d4 Drow, conversing, watching.
47	Bed Chamber. Raft-like beds floating on a shallow, calm lake. 1d4 Drow on one raft.
48	Bathing Room. Hot water covered in rose petals. 1 Drow floats, impossibly light.
49	Platform Stair. A giant staircase made of glass lily pads, but with missing steps.
50	Viewing Gallery. 1d4 Drow watch 1 Immaculate Slave artistically drown in a tank of black oil.

D100

SECRET ROOMS

51	Immaculation Chamber. Winding archives. Asymetric sliding glass drawers full of skin. No labels.
52	Poison Room. Scalloped, with branches. Dusts, powders, and paints that can kill.
53	Illusion Room. A starscape, in three dimensions. Difficult to find the door once you enter.
54	Immaculation Chamber. Throne-like seat with magnifying lenses for checking eye colour.
55	Spell Chamber. Precariously placed, reached by half-real paths and bridges. Spells for murder.
56	Silver Storage. Small, many-chambered room. Silver ingots of varying grades of perfection.
57	Slave Cavern. Long, steep slope to a processing pit. 1d6 slaves trapped on the slope, unable to rest.
58	Silk Room. Utterly dark. Silver trays filled with rose petals, hanging. Moths, fluttering, searching.
59	Immaculation Chamber. Bowled, with galleries. Surgical instruments and tables. Ice cold.
60	Treasure Room. Curved like a horn. Stone casks with fire opals inside. Warm, shimmering.
61	Storehouse. Stone casks of food. Meat, salt, spices. Stacked like a mad child's puzzle box.
62	Spell Chamber. Behind eight locks (iron, bone, silver, thorn, silk, blood, light, cold). Wands, skulls.
63	Twisting Hall. Gravity is not quite right. Winds like a ribbon. Floating red lanterns.
64	Nursery. 1d4 Drow children in a maze of glass and mirrors.
65	Immaculation Chamber. For cleaning. A forest of metal snakes, softly moving.
66	Storehouse. Like a rainbow tsunami, frozen. Bales of silk, neatly sorted, yet precarious.
67	Immaculation Chamber. Vats, beautiful glass tracery, full of liquid tendon, bone, oil, and fat.
68	Poison Room. Glass cages and illusory habitats. 1d6 horribly venomous creatures.
69	Gem-Cutting Room. Curved, like a shell. 1 Drow, 1d4 Immaculate slaves, and riches.
70	Immaculation Chamber. Terraced. Glass pods filled with opaque grey liquid. Things move inside.
71	Silk Room. Low, long. Vats, silver. Boiling water and silkworms. 1d10 Immaculate Slaves.
72	Treasure Room. Narrow, winding. Hundreds of vials full of condensed memories.
73	Simulacrum Room. Low, twisted. Small stone casks, faintly humming. 1d4 Drow, moving slowly.
74	Slave Cavern. 1d6 naked slaves, sedated, soaking in pools of opaque milky oil. No lights.
75	Silk Room. Vast, columned. Dozens of looms, working in perfect, eerie silence. 1d4 Drow.
76	Poison Room. A silver garden. Poisons to kill every feeling: rage, grief, madness. Unlabelled.
77	Immaculation Chamber. It looks like this room can be flooded. It isn't, currently. Smells of lye.
78	Silk Room. Twisted like a spine. Banks of silver trays full of rose petals, stacked, waiting.
79	Immaculation Chamber. One instrument to read dreams, a second to read the concious mind.
80	Dye Room. Small, uneven, precarious. Delicate glass bottles on thin silver stands.
81	Drawing Room. Two Drow, sitting in high-backed chairs, silently contemplating a fresh heart.
82	Illusion Room. Horrible, yet beautiful. The inside of a heart, pulsing, red.
83	Display Hall. Something unique, perfect. A small pool of moonlight. A dragon's bones.
84	Immaculation Chamber. Staircase, descending. Banks of icy coffins. Locked very tightly.
85	Lantern Room: Spherical, with a pyrimidal stack of empty lanterns in the middle.
86	Immaculation Chamber. Cold, narrow. Long drawers full of fingers, from fetal to gnarled, in order.
87	Slave Cavern. 2d100 naked slaves, sedated, scrubbed clean, sorted. 10 Immaculate Slaves.
88	Chain Room. Low, cold, sunken. Spools of iron and silver chain, all sizes.
89	Silk Room. Arched, vast. Silver trays full of rose petals and silk worms, softly chewing.
90	Alchemical Garden. Dozens of white lanterns and cases of rare plants. 1d4 Immaculate Slaves.
91	Poison Room. Black, with black stone vials. Liquified nightmares and tools to extract more.
92	Immaculation Chamber. Bulbous, asymetric. Silver cylinders full of liquid. Preserved organs inside.
93	Nursery. 1d4 Drow children playing with 1 Immaculate Slave. Grey silk and blood.
94	Immaculation Chamber. Cold, small. Surgical slab with mysterious indentations.
95	Slave Cavern. 2d100 bodies, dismembered, drained, carefully arranged for sale.
96	Poison Room. Spiralled, like a shell. Fangs coat the walls. Each one is from a different creature.
97	Occultum Storage. Hidden, warm. Sheaves of occultum disks in silk wrappers. 1 Immaculate Slave.
98	Treasure Room. Crowns, in a heap, pleasingly arranged like a skull or a flower or both at once.
99	Immaculation Chamber. 1 sedated slave with no skin, carefully being examined by 1 Drow.
100	Spell Chamber. Guarded by ghosts and illusions. Spells to wake and control stone and water.

D100

DROW REALIZATIONS

1	A Drow draws a dagger and hands it to another. The second Drow hands the first a rose. Both nod, then turn to the PC.
2	A Drow holds up a finger. Everyone pauses then falls over, dead. An invisible assassin reveals itself and takes their place.
3	The Drow pause. There's a rending sound from the distance, like someone tearing into a steak. Then they continue.
4	The Drow pause. The moment the PC is about to say something, they continue the conversation.
5	A Drow hands another Drow a note. The second Drow reads it, hands a note back, then leaves.
6	All Drow present valish. They were illusions. Some time later, identical Drow arrive and resume the conversation.
7	A Drow, in the middle of speaking, cuts its own throat. A second Drow tastes the blood, saying, "It is bitter."
8	A Drow, in the middle of speaking, cuts its own throat. A second Drow tastes the blood, saying, "It is sweet."
9	A Drow presents another with a real item a PC has lost, forgotten, or destroyed. They do not look at the PC.
10	A Drow presents another with an illusion of an item a PC has lost, forgotten, or destroyed. They do not look at the PC.
11	All Drow draw daggers and slit each other's throats. 1d6 more Drow enter and continue the conversation.
12	A Drow hands a PC a perfect diamond the size of their thumb. It is revealed to be an illusion. The Drow smile.
13	A Drow hands a PC a tiny stone carving, resembling the PC in extreme age. A second Drow asks the PC to swallow it.
14	A Drow casually reveals an item a PC secretly has on their person. They smile and reveal the item is an illusion.
15	A Drow stabs another in the heart, who dies smiling. All other Drow applaud as the first Drow bows.
16	The Drow interrupt the PCs with mundane statements and questions each time they speak.
17	1d4 Drow enter, walk up to the Drow speaking to the PC, and replace them. The conversation is not interrupted.
18	A Drow produces a rose and begins removing petals for every word a PC says. When the last is plucked, the Drow depart.
19	A Drow produces a rose and begins removing petals at random. When the last is plucked, the Drow depart, to return later.
20	A Drow brings a plate of food and theatrically poison it. They hand it to a PC expectantly. The food is an illusion.
21	The Drow leave and beckon for the PC to follow. They resume whatever they were doing in a new area.
22	A Drow asks the PC a mundane question. The second Drow interrupts when the PC tries to answer. They both smile.
23	A Drow casually touches the PC, revealing one item or injury was an illusion, no matter how improbable.
24	A Drow hands a PC a chalice, saying, "It is poison." It is. The Drow will return in 1d10 minutes, drink it, then die.
25	A Drow hands a PC a chalice, saying "It is poison." It is not. The Drow will return in 1d10 minutes and drink it.
26	Two Drow caress each other lovingly, slowly drawing closer. Once entwined, they suddenly break apart and leave.
27	A Drow whispers to a PC, "I am very sorry, as I'm sure you know." Advance to the next Stage of Drow Conspiracy.
28	A Drow presents a second Drow with two daggers. The second Drow selects one. Both nod.
29	A Drow turns and throws a dagger at a corner. An invisible assassin falls down, dead. Other Drow nod in confirmation.
30	A Drow turns and throws a dagger at a corner. It clatters to the ground. An invisible assassin stabs them. Others applaud.
31	A Drow whispers something to a second Drow. The first Drow reveals a rose and drops it on the floor.
32	The Drow turn their backs on the PC, walk away, then turn and face them again in perfect sync. They bow slightly.
33	All Drow walk together slowly, touch hands, and then return to their original positions.
34	A Drow enters holding a bowl full of blood. They pour it onto the ground, swinging the bowl to create a pattern.
35	A Drow bows, apologizes, and leaves. Seconds later there is a spray of arterial blood from somewhere unseen.
36	The most important Drow begins to cry. They do not seem sad, but tears fall from their eyes. Other Drow smile.
37	A Drow covertly, hands a PC a dagger. They nod knowingly. If the PC does anything, there is polite applause.
38	A Drow hands a PC a silver coin with their face on it. Another Drow holds out its hand expectantly, but lets the coin fall.
39	The Drow change the conversation to something mundane. They glance at the PC, checking to see how they react.
40	A Drow languidly traces a symbol in the air. Another Drow applauds politely when they finish. The first Drow bows.
41	The Drow presents a PC with a suit of new clothes. They are too small, large, or otherwise unsuitable. The Drow smile.
42	The Drow presents a PC with a suit of new clothes. The clothes are poisoned, and make them sleep as if dead for 1d10 hours.
43	A Drow casually tosses a dagger at a PC. It kills an invisible assassin who was leaning just behind the PC, who dies smiling.
44	A Drow makes an expansive, slow, elaborate hand gesture. The second makes a matching gesture. They both nod.
45	A Drow enters holding the severed head of an Immaculate Slave. It opens its mouth to reveal a single rose petal.
46	A Drow vanishes suddenly, revealing that they were an illusion all along.
47	A Drow shifts form. Their clothing shifts too. The other Drow nod, as if recognizing an old friend.
48	A Drow caresses another lustfully. The second Drow cuts off a finger and hands it to them. The first Drow eats it delicately.
49	1d6 Drow enter from a secret passage. They deliver a bound Immaculate Slave to the first Drow, then depart.
50	1d6 Drow enter from a secret passage. They casually kill the original Drow, then continue the conversation.

D100

DROW REALIZATIONS

- 51 An Immaculate Slave falls from high above (no matter how implausible), as if pushed, and bursts. The Drow smile.
- 52 The Drow scatter rose petals in the air. They watch them fall, turn to look at the PCs, then continue the conversation.
- 53 All Drow present pause and smile, as if listening to a pleasant joke. One leaves immediately.
- 54 A Drow draws a dagger and balances it on the end of an outstretched finger. The other Drow nod knowingly.
- 55 Two Drow enter, carrying a sheet of shimmering silk between them. When they leave, 1d4 other Drow have appeared.
- 56 The Drow turn to face sideways, focusing on something the PCs can't see, and speaking as if it can hear.
- 57 A Drow draws and readies a dagger. They stare at a fixed point just behind the PC. Then, they stop.
- 58 A Drow shows a delicate glass device to another. The second Drow stares at it passively, then crushes it.
- 59 A Drow casually hands a PC an incredibly valuable item. A second Drow holds out its hand, expectantly.
- 60 A Drow hands a PC a tiny stone carving. It has their mother's face, screaming. Advance to the next Stage of Drow Conspiracy.
- 61 A Drow asks a PC, "You are male, aren't you?" Other Drow smile and continue to speak, not waiting for a response.
- 62 A Drow enters and hands a note to another. The second Drow reads it, smiles, and reveals the note is blank. Polite applause.
- 63 While speaking, one Drow begins breaking the fingers of another, one by one. Neither seem to acknowledge the action.
- 64 A Drow brings in an Immaculate Slave. Another examines it, then stabs the slave in the heart. The first Drow smiles.
- 65 A Drow brings in an Immaculate Slave. Another examines it, then stabs the first in the heart. The slave does not move.
- 66 A Drow brings in an Immaculate Slave. Another examines it, then stabs itself. The slave is revealed to be another Drow.
- 67 The Drow smile and die. An invisible assassin reveals itself and continues the conversation as if nothing had happened.
- 68 One Drow asks another, "Do you... doubt?" Both turn to the PC as if expecting an answer, but continue without hearing one.
- 69 3d10 more Drow appear from a high vantage point, overlooking the scene, whispering quietly.
- 70 A Drow stares at a PC seductively. It's unsubtle and very uncomfortable. When the PC breaks eye contact, all Drow smile.
- 71 A Drow enters, listens, and then asks a PC, "Do you concur?" No matter the response, they smile and leave.
- 72 A Drow the players thought was dead enters the scene. The other Drow do not seem to notice.
- 73 One Drow hands the PC a small gem. They say, "This is my heart. Crush it." If they do, another Drow dies.
- 74 Three identical roses are presented to one of the Drow by another. They select one, swallow it, and die.
- 75 Three identical roses are presented to one of the Drow by another. They select one and discard the rest.
- 76 All Drow present turn to look at a PC. They bow slightly, then laugh. Advance to the next Stage of Drow Conspiracy.
- 77 A Drow undresses slowly, revealing utter perfection. Another Drow hands them new clothing without looking at them.
- 78 A Drow undresses slowly, revealing utter perfection. It then cut its throat.
- 79 2d6 Drow enter and carefully surround another. When they stand back, the surrounded Drow has vanished.
- 80 A Drow removes an illusory glamour, revealing that they are a Drow the PCs thought was dead. They smile politely.
- 81 A Drow enters, dripping cadmium-red blood. They sigh wistfully and die. The Drow present share meaningful glances.
- 82 A Drow walks up behind another and slits its throat, saying "For your crimes." The other Drow turn away, but still smile.
- 83 A Drow casually cuts out its tongue, then its eyes, and walks away holding them. Other Drow pretend not to see.
- 84 A Drow says a meaningless word, like "Besmerel," to another. The second Drow nods, then turns to the PC expectantly.
- 85 A Drow hands a PC a small cube of meat. "This is yours," they say. If the PC does anything with it, other Drow nod.
- 86 A Drow brings out a small musical instrument. Other Drow pause. Just before it begins to play, it stows the instrument.
- 87 An arrow flies out of the darkness and strikes a Drow in the heart. The arrow melts to ice; the Drow is unharmed.
- 88 An arrow flies out of the darkness and strikes a Drow in the heart. There is a bright banner with a sigil tied to the arrow.
- 89 An arrow flies out of the darkness. A Drow casually catches it in midair and hands it to a PC. The arrow is an illusion.
- 90 A Drow hands a PC a rose. If the PC smells it, they sleep for 2d10 hours and advance to the next Stage of Drow Conspiracy.
- 91 All Drow present burst into laughter and depart. The last one pauses just before leaving and turns to look at the PC.
- 92 A Drow kneels before another. The second Drow examines them, then turns away. The first Drow rises.
- 93 Two Drow carefully, ritualistically, exchange clothing while speaking to each other. Once done they cannot be told apart.
- 94 A Drow hands a PC a dagger, then points to the PC's heart. "Don't worry," they say. The dagger is real and poisoned.
- 95 3d10 more Drow enter casually, almost waltzing, and then depart. One of them smiles at a PC.
- 96 A Drow enters, holding its own eyes and tongue in its hand. Other Drow applaud.
- 97 A Drow reveals a bright banner with a sigil. Another examine it and nods, glances at the PCs, and departs.
- 98 A Drow reveals a bright banner with a sigil. Another reveals a second bright banner. The two Drow embrace and smile.
- 99 A Drow reveals a bright banner with a sigil. Another reveals a second bright banner. The first drops its banner and leaves.
- 100 The next time the PC rests, they find a bright banner with a sigil in their pack. Advance to the next Stage of Drow Conspiracy.

roses. If a Drow dies, they... come back. A few hours or days later. Unchanged, unharmed. They find themselves lying on top of a bed of roses. And the roses only grow on bodies of dead Drow. In theory, you could create a great deal of food by killing Drow over and over, but they have the nutritional value of celery soaked in rat poison. Nothing will eat them, not even mushrooms.

The Drow can make more Drow, of course, but it's an expensive and tedious process, and there's a very good chance some incidental move in the grand game spoils the entire sequence. The Drow do it anyway. Meticulously. Secretly. Ever improving.

You can still kill a Drow. Magic or anything else that targets the soul will kill them permanently, or break the roseincarnation process, or do something else unpleasant. It's why they plot with daggers and not spells: no matter how much you want to win, losing one Drow isn't worth it in the long run. The fate of spell-murders is unspeakable. Spells are for their enemies. Burning all the roses might also work.

This explains the Conspiracy. This explains the David-Lynchian Franz-Kafka nightmare dinner party speed chess murder orgy of Drow society.

You should never, ever tell your players this unless you absolutely have to.

IMMACULATE SLAVES

The Drow seem to prefer not to work. They have people for that.

Immaculate Slaves are made from beautiful, healthy captives. They are polished by magic and surgery. Every visible flaw and defect is removed. They are living statues. Blank eyed — the Drow peel away all the unnecessary parts of the mind — but graceful, elegant. You might mistake them for Elves if the Drow, the true mark of perfection, were not always close by. Next to them an Immaculate Slave is merely... well-formed.

Inside, they are riddled with tumours, grafted parasites, and alchemical pockets. Few live longer than a decade. But on the outside, they are truly beautiful. Their faces are like masks. They never speak.

It takes dozens or hundreds of captives to make one Immaculate Slave, but nothing less could possibly be acceptable. The remains are sold or used elsewhere; everything is valuable in the Veins. The Olm are favoured slaves: their low metabolism and otherworldly bodies require little improvement. Other races are more difficult, but all are present. They wear what their masters want them to wear: costly silks and gold or nothing.

One final note: Immaculate Slaves have no souls. Their souls are elsewhere, stored in casks until the slave's body perishes. Hostages, a means of control, or just convenience; who can say? When the body dies, the souls become fuel for the red lanterns, slowly evaporating, casting a steady, unnatural light.

DROW STATS

Immaculate Slaves

As Bugbears (see AD&D MM, pg. 12) except fearless, silent, and beautiful.

Drow

As Elves (see AD&D MM, pg. 39).

All Drow are spellcasters and know 2d6 of the following spells:

1. Fly
2. Darkness
3. Fog and Sleep, Mass, combined.
4. Mind Blindness: target creature is blinded for 2d6 hours. They will refuse to admit they are blind, and confabulate lies, explanations, and justifications for their behavior. They are rational in all other respects. This spell is considered to be crueler than true blindness. The Drow often inflict it on illusionists — the results are spectacular and fatal.
5. Soul Vision: target can see souls up to 100' away, even in perfect darkness. Things the souls are obsessed with will also be visible.
6. Tactile Illusion: a perfect illusion appears. The illusion feels like the real creature or object and behaves realistically, but it cannot deal damage. The temperature of the illusion can vary between freezing and boiling. Many illusionist wizards would kill for an example of a spell so potent: the surface world has pale mockeries compared to this.
7. Darkfire: as fire bolt, except objects set on fire cannot be extinguished by water.
8. Helpless Lock: 2d6 of the target's joints are locked in place for 2d6 rounds. Fingers or toes on one limb count as one joint.
9. Disassemble: target creature must Save or 2d6 organs (usually starting with the heart) neatly fall out of their body. Their skin parts and folds back. There is no pain, no blood loss. Any organ hit deals 2d10 damage to the target and may have other awful effects. If the target puts all their organs back inside and receives magical healing in 10 minutes, they suffer no permanent effect, aside from horrible nightmares. Otherwise, the organs are always loose, always separate. They still functions somehow.

10. Wretched Bargain: target creature must accept the Drow's aid for this spell to work. They may not know what they are accepting. The Drow may stand over a dying, begging victim, killed by the Drow's own hand, and offer assistance. Target is fully healed and cured of any diseases. Any Stats below 10 are raised to 10, and Charisma is raised by a further 1d6. All Saves drops to 1. Target cannot attack any Drow or consider hostile actions against them. They both love and fear the Drow. Anyone the target once loved is now loathsome to them: they may be violent or sadistic towards close friends and allies. The target's death will somehow be humiliating, degrading, public, and protracted.

Drow Trade Goods

1. Silk

See VotE, pg. 354. Roll for grade. A roll as small as a scarf to a bale as large as a horse.

2. Murder

The Drow will kill someone for you, provided they live in the Veins or you have a piece of their hair or flesh. The negotiation process could take days. It might be free, it might be expensive, they might frame you, they might stab you. And when you leave you won't be sure that they actually understood you and accepted. They sometimes don't.

3. Poison.

2gp per dose. The Drow always know what kind of poison you need.

4. Healing.

See Wretched Bargain above. Sometimes free, sometimes everything you own. Usually the latter.

THE DVERGR

Original idea by Benton Molina.

MAJOR FEATURES

- Stout bipedal creature
- Pot-bellied, neckless, coated in fine black hair
- Tiny black eyes, large sensitive nose, a profusion of whiskers
- Miners, engineers, and explorers

WHO ARE THESE MOLES?

They are self-created, and will tell you this. Fleeing some ancient cataclysm, their race — whatever it once was — hid itself in crystals. As continents folded like molten glass and the seas boiled, the Dvergr were buried, subsumed, and hidden. They are slowly waking up.

The flesh-parts of a Dvergr are a shell, a mobile work-suit. The core, the soul, is a red corundum-like crystal known as “homunculite.” Their physiology is simple, sturdy, and robust. Most poisons do nothing. Their paunch is fat storage. Their digestive system is simple and brutally efficient. Their head contains a few sense-organs and an alcohol-soaked sponge.

Alcohol fuels their physiology. They don't get drunk, but a well-fed Dvergr always appears slightly, pleasantly, buzzed. They are connoisseurs of all things. The secret of distillation has yet to reach the surface. Wine will sustain a Dvergr, though they will drink a full bottle a day. Beer simply isn't strong enough.

In the Veins, alcohol is more common. The Olm distill ferociously strong liquor by secret and well-guarded methods. Illithid science, properly applied, can turn nearly anything into ethanol, though the strange squid-creatures do not drink it themselves. The Dvergr also produce their own liquor in vast quantities.

ENCOUNTERING THE DVERGR

While climbing through a rockfall, you spot a boot crushed under a boulder. A red gem glitters in the darkness. Or you cut open the belly of some horrible beast and, among the bones of other creatures, you find a blocky red stone.

Or, while traveling, you encounter a scouting party of Dvergr. They move in darkness and near-total silence. They carry a blue-white lantern but keep it covered: it will only be used to blind sighted creatures or aid in conversation. There will always be five of them (unless the Veins has killed one or two). Two with rope and pitons. Two with crossbows and picks. One with a lantern and a map.

If they outnumber you, outgun you, or believe they can safely act, they will ask questions. Always the same questions, always in this order. The words might change to fit the language.



Questions

1.0 Have you seen any large, red, faceted crystals? The size of your head. Sturdy.

[If: Yes] 1.1 Where is it?

2.0 Do you know of anyone who has seen these crystals?

[If: Yes] 2.1 Where are they?

3.0 Where are you traveling from?

4.0 Where are you going?

They will ask the questions, in the same order, no matter what your response is. They will repeat a question until they have a satisfactory answer. If you value your life, do not lie — they seem to be able to sense lies. People who hoard homunculite and lie to the Dvergr tend to vanish mysteriously.

Once the initial questions are complete they will ask others and seek clarification.

They are dour, busy, and focused. There is work to be done. Delaying the Great Work is a declaration of war. Assisting in the Great Work is right and proper. Cave raiders avoid the Dvergr: their flesh is edible but their alcohol-soaked tissues are dangerous. Lack of judgement and coordination is deadly in the Veins. The Dvergr also carry powerful crossbows; even their tools are weapons.

But the scouting party will be polite. They do not believe information has intrinsic value. Only work and time have value. You can ask them questions, and if they feel like answering they will. They are probably the only decent, sensible people you will ever meet in the Veins.

DVERGR-SPEAK

They know most languages. They have a considered, thoughtful tone, like a master carpenter or a veteran aircraft technician. In a good mood, when discussing work or plans or other Dvergr, they speak like W. C. Fields, with much clearing of phlegm and twitching of nose.

DVERGR NAMES

Boring. They are numbered. They only use the last few digits. 301. 222. 810. Roll 1d1000 for each. They will invent names and adopt genders if needed. Their diplomat-merchant-questors are usually called "David."

DVERGR PERSONALITIES

Very human, but engineer-like, slightly distant, slightly off. Focused to the point of mania. They tell jokes, but they are all in-jokes. You had to be there.

DVERGR-SENSE

Some people think the Dvergr can sense lies. Some people think they can sense the future. The truth is more complicated. The Dvergr can sense carelessness and craftsmanship. They can't sense it through walls, and to detect fine details they need to use their twitching, bulbous nose, but they can use it to see in the dark. This is why their mines are carved, their tools are engraved, their very boots carefully and meticulously engineered.

A well-designed item practically drips with congealed thoughts. A well-edited and thoroughly researched manuscript oozes and bubbles. A mass-produced coin means nothing. A forgery can carry more value than an original. Carelessness glimmers, sharp and warm where craftsmanship is liquid and cold. A well-crafted lie or a hasty story has a different scent than the truth.

The Dvergr can sense a poorly-tied knot, a lazily forged sword, a carelessly written letter. They don't hate it, not quite, but it does bother them. A Dvergr might rush over to a hastily tied rope and re-tie it just before the PCs begin a dangerous descent.

GROWING A DVERGR

Find a homunculite crystal. Transport it carefully, it's the size of your head. Difficult to damage, easy to drop. Put it in a large stone urn or clay pot. Add a bottle of strong liquor, fifty rations of good, protein-rich food, and a sack of dried mushrooms. Dead beetles will work. Loosely seal the urn and place it somewhere warm. In four months, pour in another bottle of liquor. Slowly, the Dvergr will emerge.

Enslaving a Dvergr is very difficult. Their flesh is difficult to chain, pierce, or mark. They are very expensive to feed if you can't produce your own alcohol. They are superb engineers, cunning masons, and, occasionally, murderously focused missiles of death.

You can't enslave them, but they are easy to bribe.

WORK FOR WORK

Incarnate a Dvergr and it will offer you a favour. You would be wise to accept, wiser still to haggle slightly while holding another bottle of liquor. The Dvergr believe in fair trades. "Fair" does not mean "nice." The Dvergr is balancing an equation.

A single Dvergr, working tirelessly and precisely, can construct a small fortress, a bridge, or a sanctuary. It can carve gems or work metal, though it will not produce weapons. When the task is complete it will vanish into the Veins. If you instead offer an incarnated Dvergr a piece of homunculite, it will make the same bargain with the same terms. Work for work. Value for value. You cannot give the Dvergr a gift.

Other bargains are possible. Protection while the Dvergr work a promising vein. A great cache of homunculite. Access to a dangerous area. Many of the greatest fortresses and citadels in the Veins were built by the Dvergr.

TERRITORY

The Dvergr territory on the hexcrawl map is small and isolated. Illithid fortresses surround it on all sides. Yet, strangely, the Illithids and the Dvergr are not at war. The Illithids cannot eat the Dvergr's crystal brains, and the Dvergr don't necessarily mind that the Illithids prey on other races.

Their cities are mining works, catacombs, and workshops. Sleeping Dvergr, divested of their flesh, lie in rows, resting after many years of work. Vast halls are filled with treasure and mining engines.

Their cities are not open to outsiders. Contact might disturb their mining operations.

DVERGR MINES

Straight. Joints at right angles, if possible, or at pleasingly even facets if not. Unmarked square shafts plunge hundreds of feet straight down. Pumps hum in the darkness. No life is permitted to grow in an active Dvergr mine. In ancient workings, every surface is embellished with meaningless fractal spirals and columns. The Dvergr never carve birds or vines or fruit. Their designs are strictly abstract.

They are half-aware of the derl, but their craftsmanship-sense easily detects derl manipulation, and the derl, as far as anyone can tell, find the Dvergr boring and useless and a dead end. It is possible they created each other, or sprung from the same source, or are the same things in different points in some convoluted insane life cycle.

Their mines creep into many territories, secretly delving for homunculite crystals. The micro-mine, a shaft so narrow the miners need to crawl in single file for league after league, is a Dvergr specialty. If they cannot patrol a mine they will collapse, flood, or seal it. Their cities are like their mines, except with apartments in endless galleries, squares, banks of resting fleshless Dvergr, and storehouses full of tools and worked goods. If they have leaders, no one has ever seen them.

THE GREAT WORK

The Dvergr seem to have only one goal: the acquisition and incarnation of more Dvergr. They mine for homunculite, casting up great streams of iron, gold, silver, and gems as they delve and quarry. Their task is solemn but vital. Everything is evaluated by its utility to the Great Work. Idle moments are impossible. Dvergr idly carve, embellish, polish, and order their world.

They will not enslave you. If you are not useful, they will simply ignore you. Or kill you. It's not personal. They do not think you are a person.

The Dvergr have a plan. They will, in time, rule the world. Not just the Veins, but the surface, the sky, the void. Every workable thing will be worked. Creation will be put into proper, Dvergr-designed order.

No one else may accompany them into this glorious future. Therefore, they destabilize societies, set back technological progress, sabotage alliances, build provocative fortresses, allow secret weapons to be stolen and used, and silently, efficiently, maintain their lead. They pay for assassinations, suicide missions, and other unpleasant destabilizing activities. First rule of strategic planning: when you are ahead, get more ahead.

If they can also accumulate worked goods in the process, so be it.

They have wizards. Secret, mercilessly efficient wizards, breeding specific spells for specific purposes. Genocide engines. Ecosystem levelers. It will be centuries before they are ready. Most Dvergr don't know the details, but they have complete faith that the Problem is being Dealt With.

FUNGIDS

First, a biology lesson. Fungi aren't plants. You probably knew that.

Most fungi are microscopic, distributed, and vital. Like algae, viruses, and bacteria, they don't exist in a medieval-ish game for all intents and purposes. Medieval science vaguely recognized fungi, mold, and yeast, but not their effects or purpose.

Mushrooms seem to violate the laws of nature. They resemble plants but they spring up, almost supernaturally, overnight. They appear on decaying wood, living trees, manure, or bare grass. Some are deadly. Some are delicious.

But mushrooms are not the whole story. A mushroom is an ephemeral outcrop, a single-purpose tool built by a fungal network. We can see it and pick it up so we think it's the entire fungus, but it's not. A mushroom is not a tree with thin mysterious roots. The roots, the mycelium, is the organism. The fungus itself is buried in the rot, a nervous system and digestive system and circulatory system all mashed into one and spread microscopically thin for maximum efficiency. A thousand needle-thin tendrils growing silently, efficiently, cracking open anything they can find and spewing digestive enzymes onto it.

And occasionally, if it's well fed and conditions are right, the fungus grows a macroscopic tool to spread its spores.

MYCONIDS

See *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 56.

Maybe it started like this. Food is scarce. Casting spores into the air and hoping works, but what if there was a better way? The mushroom detaches, rolls, tries to get away from the original fungus before spreading its spores. Better. But then it starts to develop chemoreceptors and tiny grasping tendrils. It can smell other food, rot, other fungi. It can roll in the right direction.

And sometimes that's enough. The mushmice, fat mushroom caps with tiny legs, only needed to get this far before finding a successful niche. The famous gas spore is another example. But the pressure is still on for other species. A mobile mushroom can not only sabotage other fungi, but it can actively seek new food sources before sporulating. Competition begets improvement.

Imagine you are a fungus. You are vast, blind, immobile, alien, and eternally hungry. You create a sort of war-engine sex-machine explorer robot. It's 1,000 times larger than your tendrils (but less than 10% of your mass). You send it off into the great unknown to fulfill some deeply rooted drive.

Now imagine you are an explorer in the Veins. You find a strange wobbly mushroom-man bumbling along a cave, eyes bright, flesh soft and spongy. You might imagine that the Myconid, being a person, was in charge. After all, it can speak and make decisions and use tools. You would be mistaken. The original fungus, the paper-thin all-enfolding alien mind in the rot, is running the show. The mushrooms it creates are just tools, means to an end. They've been at it for billions of years.

A new-born Myconid is single-minded, strong, and intelligent. It burns through its energy reserves furiously, trying to find food and avoid threats. Some species need water and coal. Some need corpses. Myconids at this stage build tools, learn languages, and explore. Once they find a suitable site they sporulate, wither, then guard the growing fungus until they run out of energy and rot. Myconids cannot eat. They have a finite lifespan. Some live for months. Some live for just a single day.

Now imagine you are a newborn Myconid. You have a foggy set of instincts and memories, but your mind sparkles and fizzes. You stumble, then start running. You smell soil and decay ahead and begin to wander. After a time, you reach a good site. Your instinct trigger. You sporulate and slowly wither. Your mind slows and your limbs creak. Someone hands you a shovel and leads you away.

Farming Myconids is simple. Grow a fungus and feed it well. Grab each myconid as it buds off and lead it to a separate, isolated room. Convince it that it has fulfilled its biological imperative by showing it a fresh food source. Then, after it has sporulated, lead the docile creature away and train it. Sterilize the bait food source and repeat. Alternatively, kill and eat the Myconid just after it spawns.

Rampaging mushrooms, loose spores, or improperly sterilized bait can result in massive fungal overgrowth. Be cautious. If they are taught rebellion, independence, and their own imminent mortality, they become much less easy to manage.



THE FUNGID VALLEY

Each section of the Fungid Valley has a ruling fungus. It crowds out the others, feasting on coal, bickering with neighbors, seeking advantage and expansion in a silent alien war. Borders change slowly. Mortals hardly concern a creature weighing fifty thousand tonnes and mostly buried in water-soaked coal.

The King Fungi are merely the largest inhabitants of the Valley. They are the coral substrate. In the tunnels they create, the vast web of waterlogged passages and chasms, an entire coral reef proliferates. Small fungi patches grow on outcrops of rock or fragments of fallen coal. Some grow on dead myconids, insects, corpses of foolhardy explorers or desperate refugees, or wooden debris from the surface.

The Valley is alive in a way that most caves are not. The solitude of the Veins is replaced with buzzing, churning life. The air is filled with spores and insects; surfaces crawl with fungal life. Mushrooms erupt and vanish. Strange creatures, adapted to the bizarre environment, flourish. Light from glowing fungi or microbial rot. Clouds of spores, delicate flies, or coal dust. Water and slime on every surface.

THERE'S A FUNGUS AMONGUS

Myconids are a bit like *Blade Runner* replicants or Frankenstein's monster. They are created for a fixed purpose, with a finite lifespan. They know virtually nothing when they are born, but their minds are primed to absorb and catalogue information. They pick up languages rapidly. They can watch someone use a tool and then do the same task just as well, or learn to play simple games after a few attempts.

They can be taught self-awareness. They can be taught mortality. In the Veins, philosophers are valuable as weapons of war. A philosopher who can speak to the Myconid slaves of an enemy faction, or immunize the slaves of their own faction against outside propaganda, is highly prized. Myconids can be taught to teach other Myconids: a chain of self-propagating ideologies and drives. They are neither naturally wicked nor naturally good.

But, more dangerous than self-awareness, more dangerous even than the knowledge of death, is the knowledge of reason. A Myconid taught to reason can create new philosophies and tactics. They might question why they must live for so short a span.

Myconids cannot eat. They are born starving. Some Veins cultures have experimented with injections of mashed vegetable matter, rotting pulp, and blood, but nothing supports a Myconid. They lack the ability to store energy and can only deplete existing stores. Some Myconids, restless and fearless, grow agitated at their pitiable lifespan and seek ways to avoid death. Lacking souls, they cannot cast spells or seek the usual paths to immortality.

Transplant

Cunning myconids surgically attack their clone-siblings and graft new tissues to replace drained energy reserves. This method is risky and will not sustain a Myconid forever, but it can buy valuable time.

Soul-Gain

Even the smallest soul will do. A fly's soul is a meager thing indeed, but there are dark wizards in the Veins who manipulate souls with great ease. Giving a Myconid a soul is a simple matter for a necromancer. Newly empowered, a Myconid might seek spells and ascend into Lichdom, or, preferring the more certain path, drain life and vigour from others as a dread Fungal Vampire.

Parasitism

A difficult process. A host must be found and modified. Fungal tissues are stitched into every vein and nerve. Secondary fungi, to bridge the gulf between mammal and mushroom, are introduced. Strange elixirs and horrible potions fuse the creatures into one coherent whole. The process rarely works. Rarer still does the Myconid remain sane.

FUNGAL INFECTIONS

Spend any time in the Fungid Valley and fungi will colonize you. Some merely cause rashes and itching. Some can be deadly.

Every 24 hours spent in the Fungid Valley, Save or gain a Fungal Infection. The effects last until you leave the Fungid Valley and wash thoroughly with hot water and salt. Once you accumulate 3 different Fungal Infections, you no longer need to roll.

FUNGAL BENEFITS

You need to actively seek these benefits. Use your body as a test bed. Court corruption.

If you're using the GLOG, or any other system that gives class benefits as you level, you can choose to roll on the **Fungal Benefits** table instead of gaining the normal benefit from leveling. You must have 3 Fungal Infections. At the GMs discretion, certain actions (like eating specific mushrooms or deliberately cultivating certain infections) can let you select a result from the table rather than rolling.

1. Filter Lungs

Your lips are purple and your breath is a deep, ragged wheeze. You are immune to the effects of dust, smoke, airborne spores, and poison gas. You can also hold your breath underwater for 5 minutes.

2. Spore Spray

Your skin is covered in tiny blotches. You sometimes sprout mushrooms. You can spray one random spore effect (see *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 59) by taking 3 damage. You can gain this ability more than once.

3. Myconid Spawn

You gain a hump on your back and all your hair falls out. You can take 1d6 damage and consume a ration to create a miniature Myconid helper. It is 2' high, has HP equal to the damage you took, and is as strong as a child. It will live for 1d10+[the number of Fungal Benefits you have] hours. You can have any number of Myconid spawn active at the same time.

4. Compost Guts

You bloat and your limbs shrink slightly. You can eat anything made of carbon as a ration: coal, rotting wood, corpses, scrolls, leather. It all counts. You are immune to ingested poisons, but alcohol deals 1d6 damage to you. You are coveted by Myconids seeking immortality.

5. Aerosolize

Your flesh becomes pale and spongy. You can take 1d6 damage to fill a 10' cube with your flesh and spores. If anything passes through the cube for the next 1 hour, you are alerted to it and gain a vague idea of its shape and speed.

FUNGAL INFECTION TABLE

2D6	FUNGAL INFECTION	MECHANICAL EFFECTS
2	Yellow spiky fungus in eyes and tear ducts.	Blind, -4 HP
3	Grey-black fungus in lungs. Choking.	-2 HP and Constitution
4	White slimy fungus in lungs. Phlemy.	-2 Constitution
5	Grey fungus in armpits and groin. Itchy.	-2 Dexterity
6	Black spotted fungus on arms and legs.	None
7	White flaky fungus on feet and ankles.	None
8	White puffy fungus on eyelids and tear ducts.	None
9	Soft white fungus in mouth and nose.	None
10	Red fungus in joints. Painful spasms.	-2 Dexterity
11	Purple fungus in nose and sinus cavity.	-2 Intelligence and Wisdom
12	Purple fungus in nose and sinus cavity.	Deaf, -4 HP

6. Fungus Sense

Your blood is latex, your veins are nearly solid. Plunge your hands into a mycelium to sense tremors up to 100' in all directions. You can tell how many things are moving through the area and how the fungus feels about them. You can also touch a Myconid or other fungal creature to learn how long it has left to live.

7. Spore Explosion

Your eyes are constantly bloodshot. Your nails fall out. If you die, you explode into a shower of choking white spores. Everyone in a [level]x10' radius must Save or take 1d6 temporary Constitution damage every round they remain in the area. After 1d6 days, up to 30xd10 hostile Myconids with your face will emerge from suitable corpses in the area (assuming they are available). They don't have any of your memories but they might possess some of your quirks or mutations.

8. Spoilation

Your hands drip fuzzy white rot and your bones feel soft. You can choose to spoil any food, wood, or leather you touch. It rots, gains mould, and warps. If you infect grain or bread this way, anyone eating it must Save vs. Fungal Hallucinations (see Part 3).

9. Fungal Regrowth

Your skin flickers with rapidly growing colonies. Any wound or cut reveals writhing white tentacles that stitch you back together. If you are not Starving or Dying, you naturally heal 1 HP per hour. You can consume 3 Rations and Save to regrow a lost limb. On a failed Save the rations are still consumed.

10. Altered Mind

You constantly emit a cloud of fine grey spores. Your eyes are black and you weep black tears. You can speak with fungi and Myconids. They don't have to answer or obey you, but they will listen. Small fungi aren't very intelligent. Giant fungal networks have completely alien minds. Myconids and mid-sized fungi are your best bet.

MUSHROOM POISON EFFECTS

1. Deadly

Immediate. 1d6 hours of severe abdominal pain, cold sweats, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst. Symptoms fade for 1d6 hours, then then return with greater severity. In 2 hours, delirium, coma, death.

Treatment: enormous doses of pure sugar, ingested or ideally injected, or cave centipede stomachs. Unlikely to work.

2. Dangerous

1d6 hours after eating. 1d6 hours of nervous excitement, hallucinations, drunken behavior. Save. If passed, full recovery. If failed, coma and death.

Treatment: induce vomiting.

3. Inconvenient

1d6 hours after eating. 1d6 hours of profuse sweating, distorted vision, vomiting, and acute pain. Recovery afterwards.

Treatment: none.

4. Troubling

Immediate. 6+2d6 hours of stomach pain, vomiting, sweating, and weakness. If a 6 is rolled, add an additional 1d6. Take 1 Constitution damage per hour after the first 6 hours.

Treatment: coal, charcoal, or chalk.

5. Acrid

Immediate. 1d6 hours of vomiting and profuse sweating. Sharp pain. Permanent sensitivity to smells (may require Saves to avoid nausea).

Treatment: none.

6. Variable

Immediate. 50% chance of minor nausea, 50% chance of 1d6 hours of nausea, jaundice, hallucinations. Save. If passed, full recovery. If failed, instant bloody death.

Treatment: no treatment. Seems to affect every person differently.

HALLUCINOGENIC MUSHROOM TABLES

D10

HALLUCINOGENIC MUSHROOM EFFECT

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Sensitivity to light. Torches and candles leave contrails. |
| 2 | Nausea. Moving quickly is disorienting and difficult. |
| 3 | Floating sensation, as if underwater. Skin feels prickly and warm. |
| 4 | The giggles. |
| 5 | Colours become brighter, more vibrant. Sounds take on a new pleasant tone. |
| 6 | Patterns and ripples crawl across walls and objects. |
| 7 | To your eyes, faces melt and shift. Fangs emerge. Daggers become claws. |
| 8 | Walls begin to move and churn. Navigating is difficult. |
| 9 | Bendy fingers. Cannot hold anything without a supreme effort of will. |
| 10 | Blindness and madness. A sensory whirl. A very bad trip. Rapture attack (see <i>VotE</i> pg. 107). |

D10

CELESTIAL HALLUCINOGENIC MUSHROOM EFFECT

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Visions of the distant past. Volcanoes, bacteria, weird scuttling insects. |
| 2 | Visions of the far future. Blasted wastes, a swollen red sun, dust, strange pillars. |
| 3 | Visions of the present. Mundane, shocking, or just odd. |
| 4 | Visions of the inside of your own brain, heart, and lungs. |
| 5 | Incomprehensible whirls and colours. Strong sense of vertigo. |
| 6 | Vanish for 1d6 hours, reappear with all gear randomized. |
| 7 | Visions of the object, person, or path you most desire. |
| 8 | Visions of the next threat, enemy, or obstacle you will face. |
| 9 | Mutate 1d6 times. |
| 10 | Raving eye-clawing madness. Rapture attack (see <i>VotE</i> pg. 107). |

RARE MUSHROOMS

1. Hallucinogenic Mushrooms

Small, easily overlooked, and rather plain, these mushrooms transport any vertebrate who eats them into a rapturous and delirious state. The effects last 1d6 hours per dose. A dose sells for 5gp in the Veins and 30gp on the surface. They can be cultivated. Some rare breeds of Myconid also have hallucinogenic flesh.

2. Celestial Hallucinogenic Mushrooms

Rarer and more dangerous. These mushrooms sprout only before a great catastrophe or upheaval. They require concentrated magical residue to grow.

Fossilized angel bones, raw occultum veins, and dragon hearts are their ideal food. They glow with a faint octarine light. Ghosts and spells are drawn to them. Most fungal patches are guarded by a handful of deranged hallucinating ghosts. Grab the mushrooms and run: if they have sprouted, some enormous magical disaster is sure to follow.

The effects last 1d10 minutes per dose. A dose sells for 100gp in the Veins, or 1,000gp on the surface. The visions are true and accurate but may not be very helpful. Each dose also erases and muddles the last 24 hours of memory.

3. Screaming Explosive Puffball

Seeks fire to spread its spores. A white, bulbous mass on a cave wall with fluted vents and channels, gently spilling spores into the air from a central hole. The spores are ridiculously flammable. The flame rushes up to the puffball, turning the entire mushroom briefly into a noisy biological jet engine. It scours nearby rock clean, exposing new surfaces for its spores to colonize. Adapted Humanoids use them as traps.

The puffballs can be detached and used as a weapon. Their skin is fireproof. The jet deals 2d6 fire damage in a 30' line and lasts for 2d6 rounds. Anyone holding it must brace themselves against the recoil. Though the Fungid Valley is carved from coal, water and damp fungi make it difficult to set large areas on fire.

4. Tinder Conks

Most mushrooms are temporary tools. Conks, or tree shelves, are more permanent. They grow seasonally, adding a new layer of spore-producing fungus to the bottom of their plate-or hoof-like structures. The fungus itself is buried its food source. Some species in the Fungid Forest have adapted to feed on coal. They form permanent shelves, almost invisible under a secondary layer of smaller fungi. They have slow, immortal, and vengeful minds.

When Man stole fire from the Gods he carried it in a dried conk, its embers concealed by the dead fungus. The tale became legend; the conk was forgotten. Its siblings in the dark remember the callous foolishness of man and the warmth of the flame.

A tinder conk will sing to you at night. It will carry embers for you more securely than a lamp. Quicker than flint and tinder, safer than oil. Store it in a pouch or a pack and forget about it. Only one — a small one, the size of a clenched fist — will be chosen. Hidden in the darkness, enormous ancient conks wait and mutter parting words of advice to the small conk. The conk dies but lives on in the embers, taking the flame's nature for its own by magic so ancient it's hardly magic at all. It calls softly to other flames. A lit tinder conk can:

- Dim or extinguish fire in a 100' radius.
- Cause fire to inflict double damage against a target.
- Turn an ember, spark, or smouldering coal into a blaze.
- Burst into flames (1' radius, 1d6 fire damage).

It can be reasoned with, if you can speak fungi or fire. It wants conflagrations, death, misery, and the humiliation of civilizations. Failing that, it just wants you dead.

5. Memory Mold

Blacker than black. Drinks light and memories. Harmless unless you touch it accidentally. The spores twinkle in the air like falling stars. There's an odd sense of pressure and a faint buzzing sound.

Memory Mold spores eat 1 month of memories per round (just as a reminder, there are 12 months in a year and most people have few memories before age 5). Moving out of the area ends the effect. The mold eat the oldest memories first. Childhood. The surface. They flash through your mind as they are devoured.

You won't lose language or skills. Strong emotional reactions and some vital details will remain. But you can purge yourself of guilt, or weakness, or doubt. You can truly kill your past. For those who seek a new life in the Veins, Memory Mold is a blessed release. At the GMs discretion, prolonged Memory Mold exposure may require a roll on **The Effects** table (see *Veins of the Earth*, pp. 326-327) or give bonuses to Saves vs. Fear (or doubt, or nausea, or committing taboo behaviors).

6. Massacre Mouse

A button-sized grey mushmouse with an skull-shaped cap. Deadly poison, but that's not the main draw. The mushmouse's fungal senses are so highly tuned that it can sense a disaster or massacre before it happens. It can smell fear and blood a mile away. It needs fresh corpses and sudden violence to sporulate. If your captive mushmouse begins to leak spores, prepare to fight.

Mechanically, anyone carrying a massacre mouse cannot be surprised by any potential massacre-inducing roll on a Random Encounter Table. They have at least 1 round to prepare. A massacre mouse will live for 1d6 weeks. Near the end of its life cycle, it will emit an invisible and nearly odourless gas that smells like a dying Mantis Shrimp (see *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 82). If it can't find a massacre, it will make one.

7. Trumpet of Judgement

A fabled medicinal powder on the surface: a rare mushroom in the Fungid Valley. Trumpets of Judgement are blue-white folded mushrooms with bright gold interiors. They are immensely powerful purgatives. Eat just a small portion and all diseases, fungal infections, spells, curses, and supernatural afflictions flee your body. You will also sweat profusely, vomit, cry, and shit yourself all at once with astonishing force. You take 1d6 damage. Powdered, the fungus can be thrown in the face of wizards to utterly cripple them. A handful is worth 100gp in the Veins and 1,000gp on the surface.

8. Long Fungus

A simple grey-black spot, perfectly round, shiny like a beetle. Only grows on ranged weapons, usually flint arrowheads or ancient stone throwing axes. Eat it, and for 1d6 hours all ranged weapons or projectiles will miss you. Causes mild stomach cramps.

9. Preservation Spores

Cold white spores as big as snowflakes. It tends to fill entire passages. Any non-fungus creature they touch is slowed and chilled. 3 rounds of exposure induces a deep dreamless sleep. Each round after that extends the sleep by 1 hour until 24 hours are reached, and then by 1 week for each subsequent round until 52 weeks are reached. Sleeping creatures will not wake unless rinsed in hot water. While asleep, they are immune to all diseases and poisons, even ones previously afflicting them. If they have slept for more than a week, they permanently lose 1d6 HP upon awakening (to represent the spores growing and feeding on their flesh). The spores can be made into a potion with similar effects.

10. Gold Plate Fungus

Grows on gold ore veins (or, more commonly, dropped gold pieces, water-lost jewelry, etc.). It glows blue in the presence of royalty. Some petty kingdoms in the Veins have throne rooms lit only by this fungus. Royalty, kingmakers, and blood sorcerers will pay 100gp for a small piece.

STATS

Mushmice

HD: 0 (1 HP)

Appearance: a mushroom cap with tendrils legs. Moves like a mouse.

Wants: to find food (see below) and sporulate.

Armor: none.

Move: normal.

Morale: 6.

Damage: spore attack (see *VotE*, pg. 59).

Mushmice scuttle from cave to cave, searching for their favoured food source (corpses, coal, rotting wood, etc.) Once they spot it they scuttle forwards, sporulate, and then try to lure predators away from their seeded fungus. There are thousands of nearly identical varieties, all delicious. Has a 1-in-6 chance of being poisonous (pg. 45). They live for 1d10 days.

Adapted Humanoid

Stats: as a Bandit (see *AD&D MM*, pg. 66) with 3 Fungal Infections (pg. 44). 50% have a Fungal Benefit (pg. 44).

Glowing Fungi

HD: 0 (1 HP)

Appearance: a glowing branch of sticky fungal growth.

Wants: to attract insects.

Armour: as leather.

Move: immobile.

Morale: 4 (can retreat into a pocket).

Damage: none.

Glowing, semi-permanent mushrooms inflated with water. Light the Fungid Valley. Insects, attracted to the light, become trapped in the sticky hairs and are then digested. If threatened, it deflates and retreats into a pocket in the rock. Cut off in time, the luminescence lasts 3 hours, or more if fed with insects.

Burrowgrub Swarm

HD: 6

Appearance: a cloud of thumb-sized winged grubs.

Wants: to eat fungi, lay eggs.

Armour: none.

Move: 2x normal.

Morale: 8.

Damage: 1d6 per round to everyone in a 20' cube. An attack that deals 3 or more damage implants an egg.

A roving terror, a burrowgrub swarm is a constant threat to Myconids (and anyone bearing fungal infections). They attack, implants eggs in the fleshy head-caps of Myconids (or anyone it thinks might be a Myconid), then depart. Eggs hatch in 1d6 days, leaving an unsightly scar and draining 1 permanent point of CON. Can be removed with a knife.

Sporebat

HD: 1.

Appearance: a large grey-black flying fox with luminescent green eyes.

Wants: to move to new areas and sporulate.

Armour: none.

Move: normal, fly normal.

Morale: 8.

Damage: 1d6 biting. Spore attack (see *VotE*, pg. 59).

Another method for distributing spores. They hop and climb and glide through the Fungus Valley, seeking exposed coal or rotting wood. They are mostly harmless, and will climb over myconids and other moving creatures. They will happily nest on traveling PCs, filling an Inventory Slot. They can be trained, but will usually flee at the first sign of danger. If you see Sporebats fleeing, flee alongside them. Any given sporebat has a 1-in-6 chance of being poisonous (pg. 45). They live for 1d10 days.

GHOULS

MAJOR FEATURES

- Bent, twisted, eternally hungry humans
- Wide lantern eyes
- Sharpened, uneven teeth
- Filthy clothing, ruined finery
- Refinement and taste, backed by knife-edge hunger

GHOUL-SPEAK

Thick, indistinct. They have their own language, but they learn from the devoured dead and all but the most fastidiously vain will speak your language. Their tongues are dry, their teeth are shattered, and their throats are greased with tallow and blood.

But they are still polite. The lower orders will bow. The soldiers will regale you with tales of hunting (though what they hunt is best not mentioned). Nobles will read poetry and tell jokes. You can be knighted. You can pay taxes and attend banquets. It's just like being on the surface if you close your eyes. At war, they signal their troops using infrasonic drums. A heartbeat throb.

GHOUL-NAMES

Civilized, long, flowery. Use a noble name generator or the names in *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 278.

Every ghoul belongs to a house, chained by feudal obligation or actual chains. The ghouls belong to a feudal society, with all its warts, madness and casual violence. Their nobles are refined but not merciful. Their kings are elected and nearly powerless.

ENCOUNTERING THE ILLIAM GHOULS

Step on a buried claw and drop like a rock. Hopefully your friends can help before the ghoul crawls out from the rubble and swallows a few scraps of flesh.

It's unfortunate, the Noble Ghouls will say. A tragic accident, like a bandit attack or wild dogs. Illiam still has a society, still has laws. The roads are kept clear. Trade is conducted. If you can look past the sunken, nose-less faces and the silent ghouls stacked by roadside shrines, the hunger, and the ruins, Illiam might be a model of lawful virtue. Like a tiger behind glass.

If you're bold as brass and you know how to act like a noble, walk into the city. Perhaps obtain a seal or passage-banner first. The Ghouls of Illiam will lose everything but their sense of class and purpose. A noble with a fine retinue, bearing gifts, moving comfortably, will awaken a glimmer of deference in a starving ghoul.

SO A NOBLE GHOUL IS TALKING TO YOU

It has a name. Foreign, but pronounceable. The ghoul will smile and offer you water and a place to rest. If you are a witty conversationalist, it will appear to grow more cheerful and animated. It will try and stay out of the light. Anything to distract from the hunger. Trade. Rumours. Amusing stories. Anything.

Never, ever mention that you are speaking to a ghoul. Never ask it how it feels to feast on dead, rotten flesh, to crack bone and suck marrow, to crawl through tombs and catacombs. Never ask how it feels to breed slaves in the palaces and halls of its ancestor. Do not remind it what it is.

For the ghouls refuse to accept their fate. They abhor mirrors. To own one, or even to speak of one, is a terrible crime. Maintain their delusion as best you can. As long as they believe society holds, it holds. The fiction is thin and brittle. Provoke them, and the Baron is likely to have "one of his fits" and slaughter his guests. Again.

LOST ILLIAM

There was a siege. Illiam, the great kingdom, the City of the Sun, was surrounded. The siege took decades: in the Veins, energy is key. If you can afford to wait, you wait. The circle of steel crept tighter and tighter. The defenders of Illiam turned to cannibalism to survive. Not shocking, in the Veins. But you can't eat your army, and you'll run out of civilians eventually. By the time Illiam's gates were shattered and its towers overrun, the city was already a ruin. The survivors were the nobility, their pets, and their soldiers. Everyone else had perished.

Illiam is a ruined city. Its artificial sun, a lighthouse-like beacon that once illuminated the miles-wide cavern metropolis, now flickers intermittently, like a lightning storm. Each flash reveals wrecked towers, water-filled streets, rubble-choked canals, torn banners, scraps of metal, and the ghouls.

They still rule Illiam. In their minds, it never fell. There were... setbacks, but the nobility of Illiam persevered. They still elect kings and hold royal dances and proudly dictate their whims to the rest of the world. They trade and bicker and marry and plot. Perhaps one palace in a hundred is inhabited, but Illiam was once a city of palaces — there's no short supply.

VILLAGES AND FORTRESSES

Most are empty, save for a rare feral ghoul and a few buried wretches, waiting for a drop of blood or a cave centipede to touch their claws. A safe enough place to rest.

But some have been retaken. There are houses. Inside, chains, to keep the underfed members of the family from wandering away. There are farms. The Ghouls farm slime to farm fungi, and they feed it to anything that will eat it. Sonic pigs, vermin, debased slave-races. Reverse castles: the farms on the inside, the noble and court outside.

Ghoul barons keep crypts full of soldiers, waiting in the dark, starved into silence. In drops a corpse, out comes an army, ready and willing. Their pay is meat. A chaotic, feral raid, followed by a carefully planned assault.

There are mines and water wheels and towers. Some are still active, but the largest, the most impressive, are silent ruins. Monolithic reminders of Lost Illiam are everywhere.

THE NOBLE GHOULS

The ghouls of Lost Illiam do not slouch. They stroll. They wear fine robes and eat on chipped crystal plates and imagine their halls are filled with music, servants, and the finest art. When the lighthouse flashes they turn aside, preferring not to look on the stained and befouled ruins around them.

Hunger makes a ghoul. Hunger can keep a body alive when biology fails. The soul runs the body, not the other way around. You don't need to eat people, but it helps: madness and hunger and a furious desire to live can keep an emaciated, shriveled, hollow-eyed, claw-fingered, crook-backed creature alive indefinitely.

There are significant downsides, leaving the madness and eternal hunger aside. Ghouls still need to eat. If they don't, they don't die, but they do fade slowly. Higher faculties are the first to go. Then language. Then rational thought. When even bestial raving is too tiring, the ghoul folds up and sits, waiting, listening, with just enough energy for one leap and slash. If it feels its strength ebbing further, it will slowly bury itself in rubble, water, or slime and leave one claw exposed. The touch of a ghoul paralyzes flesh, drawing vitality out to replace the ghoul's eternal void.

A paralytic ghoul can surge into feral rage with just a few bites of flesh. It takes 2 Rations to lurch from Feral to Rational, regaining speech and memories. A further ration will improve the ghoul's mind to close to its former level. They are still hungry, but for a time, their hunger can be ignored.

The decline is quick. 3 days without a ration and the highest and noblest arts fade. 3 Weeks without any food and the ghoul reverts to a feral state.

An average-sized corpse contains 50 rations. A ghouls cannot eat another ghoul.

STATS

Noble, Refined, or Rational Ghoul

As a Ghoul (see AD&D MM, pg. 43) with 3 HD. Intelligent, tactical, well-equipped.

Feral Ghoul

As a Ghoul (see AD&D MM, pg. 43).

Sluggish Ghoul

As a Ghoul (see AD&D MM, pg. 43) with 1 HD, ¼ movement.

Paralytic Ghoul

As a Ghoul (see AD&D MM, pg. 43) with 2 HP. No movement. Can make 1 attack and crawl very slowly. Upturned claws are more like a trap than an encounter.

ILLITHID

See AD&D MM, pg. 70.

MAJOR FEATURES

- Pale purple cave squid. Shimmering skin, rippling with patterns.
- Bulbous head with large white eyes and four small tentacles around a hidden beak.
- Two tentacles used as arms, ending in delicate finger-sucker protrusions.
- Two tentacles used as legs, ending in flat fins with rippling sides. Can run and also silently glide.
- The tentacles have minds of their own. They are steered like a houndmaster steering his hounds.
- Addicts.
- Hyper-intelligent carnivores.

ILLITHID-SPEAK

They don't speak. They have interpreters for that. The interpreters whine and flatter and plead.

ILLITHID-NAMES

They have no names.

ENCOUNTERING THE ILLITHIDS

More likely, their servants, clad in wet black rubber-leather. Moving like broken-stick puppets, cautious, stealthy. They want to capture you alive, but they'll break your limbs to do it. They want your brains for their masters and they have the tools to ensure they take you alive.

Or, possibly, you find a starving Illithid. Junkie twitches, ever-writhing tentacles. Pressure like a cold knife in the brain, blinding and crippling you until the Mind Flayer can reach you and feast.

WHAT WRETCHED CREATURES ARE THESE?

Horrible cave-squid. They crawled from a sea buried by plate tectonics. Ten thousand feet of rock above. No light, but their ancestors were used to no light. They evolved as the surface evolved, found sentience, tools, magic.

Slithering, every-vigilant, they conquered their environment. They knew nothing of the outside world, of other races, of the surface. Their focus was inwards. Immortality. Mathematics. Science, untroubled by competition.



Yes, they had wars and revolutions in their deep-cave cities, but they always crawled back from extinction sharper and wiser than before. Merciless, perhaps, but not cruel. There are no secrets among the Illithid: they can read each other's thoughts in patterns of flashing skin and writhing tentacles. Deception is possible, but exhausting and forbidden. In close proximity, their minds are linked, a blind pit of slimy arms and entwined thoughts. They have souls, but no angels or demons. They are a forgotten race, buried by accident, left to grow unexamined. They have no afterlife.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Pack

An Illithid alone, or with a few creatures to assist. Desperate, raving. Exiled from a fortress or the victim of some internal collapse, sabotage, or rescue effort. Laser-focused on acquiring their next fix, twitchy with need and hunger. They can see perfectly well in the dark. They will avoid conflict until an isolated or weak target is available, then strike, devour their brain, and retreat.

Small Farm

An Illithid fortress, like a coral reef made from stone and black oiled metal. Sealed caves, where food polyps grow on nothing but water, limestone, and sulphur, feed a trapped population. The polyps can support an entire ecosystem: the Illithid leave their servants to manage the details. As long as the brains flow, the arrangement is quite stable. Some villages consider the Illithids kind and benevolent protectors, and they are not entirely wrong.

Large Farm

A series of caves, linked and lined with black oiled metal and strangely sculpted stone. Entire caverns full of polyps and dim light. Specialized areas for certain types of brains. Memory extraction facilities. Minds can be seasoned and tuned: eager collaborators present the very finest minds to their Illithid masters. Death-mazes to provoke terror, pleasure gardens for delight, hallucinogenic fungi for a touch of sour strangeness. Ambitious schemes, often on the edge of collapse.

City

Several linked farms with a common cluster of fortresses in the centre. Brains banked and hoarded. Greater security, but greater paranoia, either of outside threats or other Illithids. An echo of former Illithid society. Great leaps made in technology and understanding the strange creatures of the Veins. New weapons and disciplines created, entire new fields discovered. Ambassadors received, traders and explorers housed and questioned politely.

Collapse

Internal sabotage, rebellion, hubris, or an interruption in supply cause chaos. The Illithid turn on their supply first, then on each other. They retreat to their fortresses or flee entirely. The city is left a ruined shell full of escaped slaves, deranged experiments, and half-functioning technology. They cycle repeats.

The Apocalypse

It wasn't so long ago. An Illithid surgeon tried to save the life of a traveler, a visitor from the upper world. A rarity, but one the Illithids were slowly coming to accept. Their cosmology overturned. First contact.

Some brain fluid was accidentally ingested.

Illithid society collapsed within weeks.

Their biology evolved in isolation. Brain matter from vertebrates, particularly the complex folded cortical structures found in intelligent creatures, is a drug to them. They crave it instantly and totally. It soothes their minds, smooths away pain, increases concentration, improves them, completes them. It feels wonderful. It is immediately addictive.

Fortresses and Factories

In small groups or alone, Illithids are spreading through the Veins. They build fortresses and cities. They create slaves and tools. Sometimes, their plans are ruined by armies or natural disasters. Sometimes, they fall to their greed for brains. Plans splinter and factions dissolve when the supply of brains runs low.

Their technology and magic was hastily re-purposed by the survivors of the first great conquest. There is no time and no real will to create better tools, if the ones at hand satisfy their immediate needs. Their deep cities are abandoned, shattered, stalked by deranged brain-starved Illithid and their wretched servants. Their culture has no heartland. There is only The Front.

Fortresses spring into being overnight, inhabited by a single Illithid or a small group and their newly crafted minions. They capture as many sentient creatures as possible, destroy organized resistance with brutal precision, and slowly expand their control of the area. The Illithid are perfectly content to farm brains... provided their supply isn't interrupted. Farming projects collapse when their leaders seek a quicker fix.

ILLITHID TECHNOLOGY

1. A Silver Orb

Caress it, and all fire in a 60' radius turns to watery black ichor.

2. Saltwand

A carved piece of stone with a metal handle. Wave it, and walls of impure salt appear. Used to block escape routes. There may be larger versions. Small ones can fill 2d6 10'x10'x1' segments a day. Can also be used to build bridges. The salt can be smashed, but it takes time.

3. Gravity Ring

Iron, the size of an acorn. An arrow inside. The ring feels heavy and turns slowly. Anything touching it, up to 1,000 lbs and 30' radius, treats the direction the arrow points as “down.”

4. Memory Bracers

Clip onto the arms with surgical steel clamps. Can be cut free but not removed. Neurons writhe inside. They contain memories of 1. weapon-use and combat, 2. engineering, 3. slave control, 4. navigation, 5. local races and tactics, 6. pain and fear.

5. Tumor Bandage

A strip of flesh in a glass case. Removes all current Fatal Wounds. Heals 1d6 HP per round attached to a wound. Can heal Injuries, cure Blindness and Deafness, etc., but not restore lost limbs. If overheated, gain temporary HP up to your original max HP, then Save with a penalty equal to the HP gained. Failure means you have cancer. Symptoms will develop in 1d6 months. Not an issue for slaves. 1d4 uses.

6. Reception Needle

Matched pair. Stab one just next to the eye of one creature. Stab the other one just next to your eye. There's no pain, just a curious sense of pressure. You can see through the creature's eye: they can see through your eye. Image is sometimes fuzzy or distorted. No range limit. Only works on vertebrates.

7. Miracle Scalpel

Cuts flesh but instantly seals nerves and blood vessels. Like slicing bologna. Too small to be used as a weapon, and the grip isn't designed for human hands, but it makes difficult surgery much easier. Worth a fortune on the surface. Worth a fortune in the Veins too — it's probably one of the few things that could genuinely interest a Drow.

8. A Grey Fork

Dull, lightless, slightly warm. Strike it to distort all sound within 60'. Not quite silence, but very hard to cast spells or speak clearly.

9. Knowledge Injectors

A knife-drill-syringe-pistol. Specialized skills, drawn out and liquefied. A crude technology. Injects clusters of new neurons directly into the brain. Memories too. One setting injects a random skill or memory set. The next setting injects hundreds. You know anything you care to name, provided someone else alive and in the Veins could possibly know it, but each time you remember something from the injected memories you must Save. After 10 days or 3 failed Saves you go permanently insane.

10. Drowning Ray

A small charm or token. 50' range, one target. Target must Save or believe they are drowning in a column of dark, cold sea water. Target will start to float slightly. Targets will fall unconscious after CON bonus minutes. Recharges every 12 hours.

11. Illithid Submarine

Like a small nautilus. Can fit — or, more accurately, swallow — 3 people. Controls are touch-sensitive and coat your arms in sticky neuron-implants. No safety lock — the Illithids never needed one before their apocalypse — so you can drive it freely. Can swim upstream and climb waterfalls.

12. Illithid Chasm-Climber

A sort of mechanical crab. Front edge is a sharp wedge, mirror-bright. Small ones can carry one person. Large ones can carry towers or fortresses. Slips into a crack in the rock and compresses, sliding upwards, folding through space and matter. As long as there is a fissure, even hair-thin, the crab can move. Everyone inside is folded into an unpleasant configuration. Not harmful, but it's very odd to see your own body being spread out on a 2D plane.

STATS

Bagbeast

Stats: as a Trapper (see AD&D MM, pg. 95).

Pelican-mouthed, filter-gills chopped back. A transport creature, crawling on implanted metal legs, useless fins flapping. Toss in captives.

Manclebugs

HD: 0 (4 HP).

Appearance: millipede with locking segments.

Wants: to bind and restrain.

Armour: as plate.

Move: normal.

Morale: 12.

Damage: none. Binds on a 4-in-6, difficult to remove. Counts as manacles.

Myrmidon

Stats: as an Ogre (see AD&D MM, pg. 75).

A grim, headless stack of muscles. Focused brutality with no real mind. Rubber skin to keep the organs in. Traps weapons in its flesh. No subtlety, but no need for subtlety either.

Watchman

HD: 0 (1 HP).

Appearance: cluster of nerves and eyes in a glass orb, cemented to a wall or ceiling.

Wants: to die. To see.

Armour: none.

Move: none.

Morale: 12.

Damage: none.

The Illithid stick them to walls and ceilings. A spinal cord, brainstem, eyes, and ears. Adapted for the dark, kept alive in thin glass tanks, linked into vast networks of lobotomized sensors. They see and hear everything but understand nothing. The agony of their existence overwhelms any creature trying to tap into the network, but the Illithids are immune.

Squidlings

Stats: as Bandits (see AD&D MM, pg. 66). Hide on a 4-in-6. Can see 60' in the dark. Immune to pain and mind-altering effects. Bodies are full of metal.

Not actually squid-people. Improved captives. Heads coated in rubber, bulging strangely, buzzing, throbbing. Stumbling, but still aware. Capable of speech, plans, coordination. Fanatically loyal, but still sentient, still aware of what they were. The control modules are crude. The Illithids only make them if the supply of brains is abundant.

Interpreters are Squidlings with larger head-sacks and more surgery. They speak the local prey languages. They can interpret an Illithid's mood but not its thoughts, so they have to make up demands as they go along. Cripplingly, hideously fearful and eager to please.

OLM

Extra material to add to the information in the book.

MAJOR FEATURES

See *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 90.

OLM-SPEAK

The Olm know several languages. They all speak Elf (because not being able to speak Elf when an Elf shows up is very dangerous). For convenience, 1-in-6 of them speak the local language, and 4-in-6 speak a language a literate and educated PC might know (like Latin). They speak in archaic forms. They are polite, and will try and draw out conversations if they can. They are curious about you. It costs them next to nothing to sit and talk.

OLM-NAMES

Long, complicated, difficult to translate. They invent shorter names for outsiders. The names don't mean anything important. Spend a few years down here and you'll start to "get" them.

1. Cut-Three-Times
2. Wound-Ache-Leg
3. Dancer-Liar-Memory
4. Bent-Big-Stick
5. Rust-Cold-Egg
6. Bitter-Red-Lung

PERSONALITIES

Nervous/Angry Olm

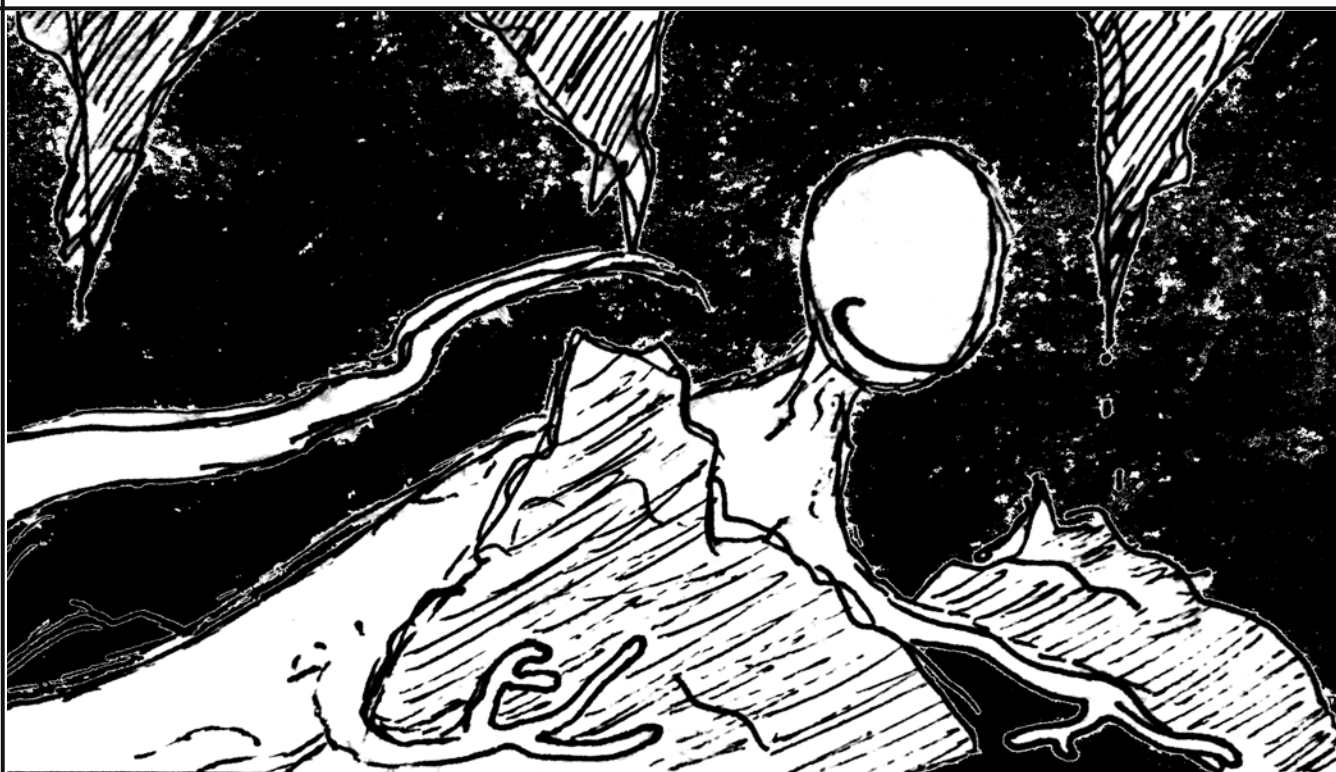
1. Flexing and unflexing fingers
2. Bright red gills, drawing in extra air.
3. Tail held off the ground, moving very slowly from side to side.
4. Holding breath, analyzing your smell, to make sure it has your measure.

Happy Olm

1. Wiggles in a side-to-side sine wave.
2. Big yawn, showing off all the teeth, popping the jaw muscles.
3. Little chuffing breaths to show it isn't holding in or analyzing your smell.
4. Tail curled around one of its legs.

Comfortable/Curious Olm

1. Little pink tongue cleaning its needle teeth.
2. Touching you or your belongings very carefully, like someone playing a lullaby on a piano.
3. Curling its tail around one of your legs.
4. Retracted gills (it doesn't anticipate a threat), or slowly flaring them (is it warm in here, or just me?).



ENCOUNTERING THE OLM

Walk through an underground stream. Somewhere downstream, probably closer than you'd expect, there's an Olm. In a pocket of water no air-breathing caver would ever dare explore, it waits, metabolism ticking over slowly, red gills concealed behind a carved stone face shield. You could step on it and not see it. But it smells everything. It smells the oil on your boots and the muck from your recent travels. The Olm prefer to attack from ambush, and negotiate from concealed positions.

SO A WEIRD SALAMANDER-THING IS TALKING TO YOU...

It wants to know how many of you there are. What are your names. It will tell you its name. It wants you to talk among yourselves: it can hear everything you say. It might be able to smell what you've recently killed and eaten. It will try to determine if you are a threat.

Chances are pretty good the PCs will be above its pay grade. They'll use words it doesn't understand, offer things it can't authorize. It will need to report back. If it can, it will ask the PCs to wait in an area for a few hours (on any excuse), while it run/swims back to the Olm-village.

SO A BUNCH OF SALAMANDER-THINGS JUST WALKED OUT OF THE DARKNESS...

It's an Olm war-party. They carry bone swords designed to pierce, not slash. A smooth under-arm stab designed to punch up and into the ribcage or up through the jaw and into the skull. How good is your helmets chin-strap? Way back, in another direction, sniffing the air, they've got a wizard and his guard.

They are here to talk and trade. Their leader is high status. It wears something the PCs recognize as important or status-designating. The leader-Olm might be a little startled or amused if the PCs recognize it from a distance without touching it, like you'd be startled if someone with X-ray vision commented on your underwear. The PCs aren't trusted. Not even close. But they are curious and interesting and possibly useful. Chances are good they are naive.

SO A SALAMANDER-THING ANCESTOR-KING WANTS TO TALK...

If the PCs prove useful, they will interact with several mid-level Olm from time to time. If they prove useful, loyal, and possible chivalric/romantic/selfless (running back to save an infant Olm from a ravenous swarm of scissorfish, telling a particularly interesting story, etc.) they might get to meet an Olm noble.

The PCs probably have no concern for the intricacies of Olm politics. From their point of view, it fits the political structure they are most used to: if they're raving anarchists, it's a merit-based commune. If they were born into feudalism, it's feudalism, etc. They can promise to be loyal to an Olm noble, but they will always be outsiders. They leave oily trails, eat too much, talk too much, and carry too much baggage.

The Olm can point towards several potential paths to the surface. They will never, ever tell the PCs unless there's a very good reason to. It's not worth the risk.

HOW DO THE OLM PERCEIVE YOU?

To an Olm, a human is:

- Short.
- Old (small head, sagging skin).
- Covered in grease and foulness.
- And hair. Eww. It's on me! Oooh, it tickles! Aaah, it's in my gills! Ack ack ack.
- Teeth like broad plates.
- Bendy face-lumps (they are very curious about noses and ears).
- Moist face-dents for seeing.
- Lumps all over (breasts, kneecaps, elbows).

Humans breathe like someone in pain, even if they are trying to be quiet. They have a silly walk. If an Olm wants to walk like a human, it will splay its legs out like a cowboy and bounce up and down, wheeling its arms around. Swimming is even worse — humans don't use their bodies at all!

Fingers are weird too (five? why so many?). Clothes are weird, but comprehensible (Olm use armour, display items, and belts when they need to). Sexual dimorphism is exciting and convenient (Olm can tell via smell, but part of courtship is checking just in case).

OLM VILLAGES

Smooth, polished. Windows without glass. Streets like alleys. Some doors are 5' off the ground, designed for creatures with long bodies and small limbs. Everything looks defensible. There's a central square that could hold a hundred people. The ceilings are never more than 10' high. You can hear water trickling somewhere.

You turn a corner and find three Olm hard at work cracking dungeon oysters. Two of them, the slightly smaller ones, flit away like a silk scarf tied to an arrow. The third holds the stone oyster knife cautiously, swaying slightly, sniffing the air.

If they heard you coming, this conversation will occur with the air and with echoes. The Olm won't show itself until it's sure it's got your measure. It tries a few questions first in the languages it knows. It will keep stalling, trying to see what the PCs know and how many of them are present. It can read tone fairly well. It might even offer to share an oyster. It's buying time. The second Olm comes back in a few minutes.

If the PCs have something to trade or interesting questions, a third Olm shows up. If they have food and offer to share, a fourth and a fifth. As Peter Webb put it, "the best place to store calories is in their bodies." Olm slip out of the sump one by one, arriving secretly by a dozen hidden paths. The sump isn't exactly hidden, but casual visitors are discouraged. Poison is always a risk. An accidental visitor might wake up hundreds of Olm and be torn to shreds before they get a chance to explain anything.

The chart below lists how many Olm will show up for a given food offering. Drag a few dead bodies into the village and the Olm will throw a party.

OLM PARTY EVENTS

Caloric surplus is a reason to celebrate. If more than 20 Olm are awake and there's no reason to be alarmed and no urgent work to do, they'll start a party. Decorations (bells, fluttering banners) will come out from hidden storage chests. Young Olm (some as small as terriers) will be woken up to meet the outsiders.

1. A swarm of juvenile Olm (2d6) sneak up on a PC and climb all over them, poking and asking questions and generally making dignity and diplomacy impossible.
2. Two young Olm start doing a courtship dance in a corner where they think the elders can't hear them. The PCs can see it clearly. If they say anything, the two Olm will like, almost die of teenage embarrassment. Low-stakes shenanigans may be required to repair things. The elders could not give less of a fuck.
3. The PCs will be asked to describe surface food, cooking, and plants. The elders have tasted many things: they like to study trends. If you have any spices, the party gets raucous.

OLM PARTY TABLE

CREATURE	ACCESSIBLE CALORIES	SALE VALUE	RATIONS	# OF OLM APPEARING
Cave Crab	200	2sp	0.1	1
Blind Rat	750	7sp	0.3	1
Medieval Chicken	2000	2gp	1	2
Person	100,000	100gp	50	10
Medieval Cow	600,000	600gp	300	50
Wurm	3,000,000	3,000gp	1500	200

4. An elder Olm, bones showing through stained-glass flesh, hands the PCs a stone cup full of liquor. The Olm trade for the raw ingredients and mature them for decades or centuries. They've got all the resources to maximize time and minimize cost. The liquor is astonishingly potent. If you have a carousing after-effects table, roll on it.

5. A drunk Olm warrior wants to wrestle one of the PCs. It's like wrestling a snake. It's not a status thing; the other Olm think the wanna-be wrestler is a bit of a blowhard.

6. Circle dance! Lots of crooning, high kicks, tail flicks, and coordinated sine-wave undulations. Imagine a sea anemone squaredance. A good time to sneak away or check a forbidden area.

7. Guessing game. Show an item and pass it around the assembled Olm (mostly young ones). The PCs will describe its colour. The Olm will pass another similar item around and try and guess its "colour" too. Some of the trinkets will be valuable (a ruby the size of a fist, occultum, etc.). There are Olm in the crowd who are listening very carefully. They'll hear if the PCs express surprise, or start breathing quickly, or reach for weapons, or pocket an item. It's an honesty test as well as a test of values. The Olm want to figure out how they can bribe you.

8. Etiquette lessons. A mature Olm rounds up any younger Olm and drags them towards the PCs. The PCs are asked to judge etiquette and surface-world knowledge. Some of it is woefully out of date; some is just lies.

9. Warrior dance! Young Olm put on their ceremonial battle gear (fancy swords, gill-protectors, etc), while the older warriors assemble bones, leather, and feathers to make a costume-creature. If the PCs pay attention, they can learn about other creatures in the Veins.

10. A good-natured PC will be lead to a stone seat in the middle of a square. Two Olm will take turns singing a traditional love-ballad to the PC, trying to "woo" them. Someone will translate for the rest of the party in between howls of laughter. Olm coming singing sounds like opera through a kazoo.

OLM STATS

Olm Warrior

See *VotE*, pg. 90.

Olm Child

As a Giant Rat (see *AD&D MM*, pg.81), except smarter and not diseased.

Olm Mage

As *VotE*, pg. 90, except 3 HD. Olm mages know at least one of the spells below, plus any number of *Speleo Spells* (see *VotE*, pg. 308).

1. Control Water

2. Control Stone

3. Bone Dart: as magic missile, but targeted by smell.

4. Water Knife: turns bare hands and tail into dagger-type weapons underwater.

5. Catastrophe Orb: a fat, jelly-like orb flies from the caster's mouth and bursts at a point they choose or fairly close to it. The orb releases a series of horrible smells, loud noises, and distressing winds. Conversation, smell-sensing, etc. is impossible within a 30' radius of the origin. Olm are effectively blind and must make a Morale check each round or flee.

6. Tactile Illusion: an illusion appears. It is made of transparent green-grey glass and flickers slightly. It has a convincing smell, taste, and texture, but it cannot move or make sounds. The Olm will use this to try and illustrate surface concepts, creatures, or events the PCs describe.

Giant Centipede

See *AD&D MM*, pg. 15.

THE RUINS

The grandest city that ever lived under the earth. Home to masters of all they surveyed. Its builders wanted for nothing, feared nothing, forgot nothing. If your setting has Atlantis, this was a colony. If your setting has an ancient fallen Snake-Man empire, this was their underground capital.

Then, one day, their city collapsed inwards. As earthquakes and fissures bent the city and dragged it down, an Archaean spire burst into the city's heart, pouring toxic smoke and boiling green clouds into the air. Thousands died immediately. Districts were sealed. Magic and long-forgotten science were desperately employed. It didn't help. The city was consumed.

Choking fumes filled the air for a full century. When they faded, the city was a jumbled ruin, an acid-scarred wreck. Rumours of vast wealth lured treasure-hunters and ambitious warlords. The damaged defenses of a long-extinct culture kept them at bay.

The Ruins are a difficult area to visit. They form a peninsula or island of danger, protected on all sides by chasms, basalt walls, and high-impassable terrain. This is the high-challenge area of the hexcrawl, full of unbelievable loot and astonishing enemies.

RUINS ARCHITECTURE TABLE

D20

RUINS FEATURES

1	Mass of pipes and stone tubes. Dense, identical junctions.
2	Tapered pillars in spirals and lines, up hills and folded across valleys.
3	Cubic blocks, stacked haphazardly. One door in each. Some locked, some open.
4	Dense apartments, cracked and collapsed. Rectangular maze of identical alleys.
5	Broken glass galleries, thick layers of bubbled and melted glass underfoot.
6	Ceramic arenas. Carbonized seats, drifts of bones. Long thin stairways.
7	Boiled stone, frozen in the act. Half-popped bubbles, ridges and drips.
8	Perilous bridges. Suspension cables rusted into oblivion. Swaying, tipping.
9	Monumental walls and gates, blasted and torn. Scattered barricades of stone.
10	Huge statues, features melted by the Plume. A drift of hands, a colossal head.
11	Cylindrical tanks half full of poison water. Paths around the edges, long and thin.
12	Towering temples, softened by the Plume into bread-dough slouching.
13	Metallic blooms of thin gold, iridescent shimmers. Mirror-plates. Chromed buildings.
14	Jumble of iron towers, thin, like skeletons. Coated in grey oil.
15	Rotting limestone arches. Constant rain of stone and water.
16	Gargoyle figures, contorted and scowling, water pouring from copper gutters.
17	Wheeled engines, heaped, rusting. Streams of melted, crumbling rubber and clay.
18	Thin, blade-like protrusions. Stairs, ramps, vanes, sails, basins.
19	Long promenade to a crushed palace. Truncated views, wavy streets.
20	Burst fountain. Spray of water, rivers, worn stone channels in paved roads.

RUINS ARTIFACT TABLE

D20	RUINS ARTIFACT
1	Master Robe. Sorcerous markings, billowing cape, tall collar. Waterproof. Amplifies spells, spell damage.
2	True Compass. Lubricated by blood (1hp/hr of use). Points to nearest example of whatever is placed inside.
3	Liquid Hydrogen Gun. Cylinders, frost. Heavy. Sprays incredibly cold yet flammable liquid everywhere.
4	Occultum Extractor. Whirring drills, suction pumps. Heavy. Deposits Occultum into tiny quartz pot.
5	Miracle Fruit. As long as core is intact, regrows from nothing to full size. Infinite food. 1 ration/day/fruit.
6	Iron Lizard. Riding saddle. Fed coal, belches sparks. Like a horse that can climb on hooked fingers.
7	Defense Orb. As a Beholder, but all spells are 2d6 damage lasers. Woken by blood or magic. Semi-obedient.
8	Dimensional Chest. Inside is much bigger than the outside. Asphyxiated corpses, fleeing the Plume.
9	Sunbrella. Folded cloth spike. Unfolds to fill area with sunlight. Follows the cycle of the actual sun.
10	Immaculate Collar. Gold. Wearer cannot commit sin. They can do what they want; it's not a sin anymore.
11	Ring of Invisibility. Works on the living, not the dead.
12	Censor Staff. Erases any printed or carved writing it is aimed at. 20' range.
13	Doubling Pendant. Clutch to copy self perfectly. Copies last 1d6 hours. Only 1 copy at a time.
14	Noise Bombs. Clockwork eggs. Wind and release. Deafens in a 30' radius. Sounds horrible. Reusable.
15	Compressor. 2' cube, missing top and bottom. Anything falling through shrinks to 1/2 size, maintains weight.
16	Tubelight. Requires 1hr of cranking for 3hrs of light (as a torch). Impossible to damage.
17	Riddle of Steel. Book, fragile. Clearly and simply explains blast furnaces, metallurgy, steel manufacture.
18	Life-Leech Ring. Drain HP from people to heal. 1d6 per round. Must grapple or touch them.
19	Crown of Lies. Wearer can detect any lies spoken to it. Wearer cannot speak the truth.
20	Apocalypse Pistol. 6d6 damage, 30' line. 1d4 uses remaining. No way to tell how many uses left.

CELESTIAL NITROGEN ORRERY TABLE

D6	WHO YOU SEE	A PLACE
1	Accountants, examining ledgers.	A field
2	Pig-farmers, examining the clouds.	A meadow
3	An old woman sweeping a hut.	A moor
4	A king trying to chew a particularly difficult steak.	A village
5	A sparrow falling from a tree.	A castle
6	A young couple gathers flowers in the forest.	A heath

3 ODDITIES

This section includes minor factions and creatures that do not control entire hexes. Instead, they fit in the spaces between the major empires, meandering, migrating, or manipulating.

1. DER0

The dEr0 are a special, optional, encounter-based faction/event/disease.

2. FOSSIL DINOSAURS

Half-embedded creatures, buried but undying, flitting in and out of the rock.

3. VOLUME-FOLK

People, or close to it. The unwashed masses. Survivors and warlords and merchants.

THE DER0

See *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 187.

The dEr0 are a disease. In RPGs, some diseases attack HP or Constitution or Strength. The dEr0 attack reality and context. They attack the player. The der0 are schizophrenia. They aren't schizophrenic (ok, they might be). They are the condition given form. They are the Men in Suits. They have the black helicopters and the poison pills, the implants, the listening devices. They are in league with authority figures. They conspire to destroy you.

Hang around Cholerids and you might catch the plague. Hang around the Fungid Valley and you might have fungus grow in your lungs. But just one encounter with the dEr0 can change your entire worldview.

MADNESS AND CONSENT

Any themes included in a game, from madness to violence, should be discussed beforehand.

Usually, it's vital for the GM to convey a consistent picture of the world. Saying something is one way and then changing the description later leads to confused and unhappy players. With dEr0 encounters, altered descriptions become a useful tool. Try to ensure there is no true or obvious answer. In a setting with doppelgangers, mind control, illusions, and teleporters, alternative explanations should readily present themselves to your players. Gaslight. Lie. Tell one player one thing and a different player another thing.

“YOU FEEL AFRAID”

Narrative control is not strictly partitioned. The players have a say in how the world works; the GM has a say in how the PCs work. It's a bit of give and take — what's on the sheet is not necessarily “true.” The sheet, the rules, and the notes are all just tools to help keep track of the shared reality.

So while it might be ideal to induce fear via description, in some cases I think it's fine for the GM to say “your character is afraid, what do you do?”. The player could say “I don't think my character would be because afraid of X and Y” and the reality shifts back, but, if the GM has an accurate grasp of the group and the situation, this rarely happens. There's no easy way to run memory loss, mind control, hallucinations, or madness with a fully partitioned GM/player system, where the GM acts as a referee only.

THE DER0 ENCOUNTER TABLE

This table can only be accessed by the Abyssal Encounter Table (pg. 74) The encounter only targets one PC, if possible.

THE DER0 CONSPIRACY

Entering the dEr0 Conspiracy: You rolled on the **dEr0 Encounter Table** or someone convinces you the the dEr0 Conspiracy or a dEr0 Realization is true.

Stages

1. Aware. The amount of bullshit in your life increases tenfold. Everything around you is a trap, a mind control device, poisoned, disguised, or conspiring against you. Sometimes all of the above. Everyone around you, friend or foe, has secret movies and sends secret signals. Paranoia reigns.

At any time, you may roll on the **dEr0 Realization Table**. You can do this once with no consequences, but if you do it a second time, you advance to the next stage of the dEr0 Conspiracy.

2. Involved. All dEr0 instantly recognize you as a member of the conspiracy. You will be handed secret documents: the documents contain a poison gas bomb. The gas allows you see through walls. Maybe. You will be accepted, possibly trusted, and constantly tested. Strange things happen to you without obvious causes. You can hear voices of people in the next room: you can taste fear and smell gold. You think.

The GM may roll on the **dEr0 Realization Table** once per session (no matter how many characters are participating in the conspiracy at this level.)

3. Collaborating. Your sanity collapses. Save. If you fail, your character runs screaming into the night, to be seen again only by people in the der0 Conspiracy. If you pass, roll on the **dEr0 Realization Table** once per encounter (social or combat).

- ?????? 1: brain looks. 2: nerve staples. 3: memory extractors. 4: listening leeches.
 5: full body explosion syndrome. 6: reverse vertigo. 7: procedure number nine.
 8: violent organ rejection. 9: identity alteration/ replacement.
 10: emotional reassignment.

REGARDING THE dEr0

Reports of the dEr0 are incongruous. The following is what we know of their operations.

A DER0 ENCOUNTERABLE [REDACTED] not to be trusted [REDACTED]

- 1: A dEr0 Machine sits in an alcove, [REDACTED] rusting. [REDACTED]
- 2: A dEr0 Machine sits in the open. It appears to have been [REDACTED] or used recently.
- 3: A doppelganger resembling the PC approaches the group.
- 4: [REDACTED] the PC was recently replaced with a doppelganger. The PC wakes up and approaches the group with the intent to [REDACTED]
- 5: [REDACTED] The PC finds a set of Instructions while searching a body or an area.
- 6: [REDACTED]-one dEr0 appears and secretly hands the PC a set of Instructions.
- 7: The PC experiences [REDACTED] and a sudden, unprompted Realization.
- 8: The PC secretly observes a dEr0 secretly observing the PC.
- 9: The PC finds a packet of Conspiracy Pills while searching a body or an area.
- 10: A Command is beamed into the PCs brain.

THE MACHINE IS [REDACTED], [REDACTED], **AND YOUR INSTRUCTIONS** [REDACTED]

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: electrified and [REDACTED] 2: linked to another [REDACTED] Machine. 3: made of glass and foil panels. 4: made of painted rocks. 5: a living Mimic named [REDACTED]. 6: made of condensed mist and smoke. 7: coated in poisonous [REDACTED] 8: full of vile ingredients. 9: broken (but could be repaired). 10: broken (but [REDACTED] and contains a second, smaller machine). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: will self-destruct in 1 minute. 2: are in a dense, unbreakable code only you can read. 3: are blank. Their contents come to you in a [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] or regular dream. 4: change when read a second time. 5: reveal deeply personal truths about another PC. 6: reveal deeply personal truths about you. 7: reveal [REDACTED], deeply personal truths about the next person you meet. 8: were not meant for you. Give them back to [REDACTED]. 9: contain a map to a random hex. 10: contain information you were trying to acquire ([REDACTED]). |
|--|---|

REALIZATION

- 1: the dEr0 are [REDACTED] secretly here.
- 2: the dEr0 have secretly modified one object here.
- 3: the dEr0 have seized the minds of one person, [REDACTED], or beast here.
- 4: the player is receiving messages from the mind of one other person or beast here.
- 5: two members of two different groups represented here are secretly allied.
- 6: information here is in [REDACTED] code.
- 7: the entire situation is a trap built to kill character [REDACTED].
- 8: one person here is not who they say they are, or is in disguise.
- 9: the subject of this situation has been you all along. If it [REDACTED] and already was, treat as 7.
- 10: roll again and advance [REDACTED] 1 Stage in the dEr0 Conspiracy. If you are already Collaborating, Save. If you fail, your character runs screaming into the night, etc. If you pass, roll on [REDACTED] THIS TABLE twice per encounter (or three times, or four times, etc.).

THE DER0 COMMAND YOU TO [REDACTED]

- 1: murder another PC.
- 2: murder a hireling, guide, retainer, or pack animal.
- 3: murder the next person you meet.
- 4: destroy a random item you possess.
- 5: destroy a random item another PC possesses.
- 6: speak a secret code phrase to another PC: "[REDACTED]".
- 7: speak a secret code phrase to the next person you meet.
- 8: carve a symbol into a specific location.
- 9: transcribe a symbol from a specific place.
- 10: travel to a location (nearby) for further Instructions: [REDACTED]
- 11: travel to a location (distant) for further Instructions.
- 12: disguise yourself as a [REDACTED].
- 13: lie about a recent event or encounter.
- 14: write down everything you know about a recent event or encounter.
- 15: write down everything you know about a mundane topic.
- 16: closely monitor another PC and note any [REDACTED] or strange behaviour.
- 17: determine which of the other [REDACTED] PCs is a doppelganger.
- 18: determine which of the other [REDACTED] PCs is a fellow dEr0 agent.
- 19: trust the next [REDACTED] person(s) you encounter.
- 20: betray the next [REDACTED] person(s) you encounter.

Rewards of the dEr0: 1: meat substances. 2: access to prisoners. 3: truth and justice. 4: vengeance. 5: lost memories of your past.

ALL DER0 INSTRUCTIONS CONTAIN ONE COMMAND!

THEY KNOW

- 6: a vox back (to the surface?).
- 7: a vox forward (to your goal?).
- 8: a vox though (an obstacle or faction?).
- 9: currency.
- 10: knowledge of your enemies.

FOSSIL DINOSAURS

Dinosaurs were an accident.

Rather, their extinction was an accident. Just after inventing the moon (to create tides and stabilize Creation's orbit), a passing bit of rock smashed into Creation and reset a few hundred million years of work. Things eventually stabilized, but the age of the giant lizard-thing was over. Millions of them had been buried in sediment. They found a new life in stone, freed from biology, but not freed from hunger.

Their world is two-dimensional. They exist on the boundary between stone and air, half-buried, sliced, compressed. One leg in the rock, one out, one empty socket seeing air, one seeing stone. They move like creatures under a microscope slide. They can turn around and even dive into the stone, but they cannot break free and walk in the open air.

Blessedly, they are mostly harmless. The larger plant-eating creatures will protect their stone eggs and attempt to graze on fossilized plants. Lumbering, like inverted sailing ships, they slide along a cave wall in vast herds. A hallucination come to life; the real danger is shock and fear. Running away in the Veins is not always safe.

There are a few predators. They can't eat, but they can hunt. Hard-scrabble claws attack fossilized ribs. Teeth clench around a fleshless neck. A shadow-box fight on a cave wall. A herd stampedes, shaking dust and gravel, and vanishes down a chasm. If you run, or if you move in just the wrong way, a toothy predator might think you are prey instead. A nightmare skeleton head darts out of the wall and bites off a limb then retreats, leaving a blood-stained patch.

And that's just the small predators. There are huge, impossible skeletons in the Veins. Long-necked paddle-finned things with mouths like beartraps. Bulky, stomping things with giant fist-shaped skulls and teeth like swords. A menagerie of horror; a Necromancer's nightmare.

Veins explorers call them, "Rock Beasts" or "False Basilisks" or "Bone Devils." Some people think they are demons. Some trap them and use them as guards or decorations. If you can lure one onto a stone block and separate the block from other stones — by water, by air, or by iron — the rock beast is trapped, unable to jump the gap.

There are fish as well, and strange snail-things, but they are often too quick to catch.



FOSSIL DINOSAUR TABLE

1D20	FOSSIL DINOSAUR	HOSTILE	AD&D MM NAME	AD&D PAGE #
1	Greater Bone Devil	Very	Allosaurus	24
			Gorgosaurus	25
			Megalosaurus	26
			Teratosaurus	27
			Tyrannosaurus	28
2	Lesser Bone Devil	Very	Ceratosaurus	24
3	Snake Turtle	Very	Elasmosaurus	25
			Plesiosaurus	27
4	Fish Devil	Very	Mosasaurus	26
5	Stone Bat	Very	Pteranodon	27
6	Stone Fish	Moderately	Dinichthys	25
7	Fat Beast	No	Iguanodon	25
8	Sprinting Beast	No	Plateosaurus	27
9	Back Plate Beast	Surly	Stegosaurus	27
10	Turtle Beast	Surly	Ankylosaurus	23
			Paleoscincus	26
11	Giant Turtle	No	Archelon Ischyra	24
			Brontosaurus	24
			Brachiosaurus	24
			Camarasaurus	24
			Cetiosaurus	25
12-15	Giant Beast	No	Diplodocus	25
			Anatosaurus	23
			Lambeosaurus	26
			Monoclonius	26
16-17	Duck Beast	No	Pentaceratops	26
			Styracosaurus	27
18-20	Plate Beast	No	Triceratops	28

STATS

The old Monster Manuals are full of dinosaurs. Use those. Divide all stats by 2 except AC and HP. Fossil dinosaurs take no damage from piercing weapons, 1 damage from slashing weapons, and full damage from bludgeoning weapons. Fire can harm them, but they do not burn.

Small dinosaurs can reach 3' out of the rock. Large dinosaurs can reach 5'. This includes the floor. In some caves, hanging from the ceiling via ropes or walking on stilts are the only safe options.

Greater Bone Devils

Big, fast, and mean. Blind predator faces. Unmistakable teeth. Biting, crushing, rearing out of the ground to snip off a leg.

Lesser Bone Devils

Small, quick, sharp. Claws, whip-tails and pack tactics.

Snake Turtles

Flippers on a turtle body with a huge snake neck and head. Bear-trap jaws full of needle teeth. The most feared, because they can flick their necks further out of the stone.

Fish Devil

Horrible staring eyes. Seems to be entirely mouth and teeth.

Stone Bat

Long spiked arms, folded and hidden in the roof. They dive down a cave wall like a shadow passing before the beam of a lantern, then rise from the floor to puncture and maim.

Stone Fish

Lumpy, plated, toothed. Might bite off a toe or a finger, or try to nibble on a rope or pack strap.

Fat Beast

Slow, dawdling. Rare, but it is considered good luck to see one in the Veins.

Sprinting Beast

Not predatory, but quick and nervous. Forms herds.

Back Plate Beast

Like the fat beast, but with huge sail-like plates and a spiked tail. Protective of fossil eggs.

Siege Beast

Like a stack of armoured chestplates. Slow, plodding. Club or spiked tails. Very useful for riding or climbing.

Giant Turtles

A proper giant turtle with a giant turtle shell. Harmless, elegant, casually flying through the rock.

Giant Beasts

Impossibly large. Long necks and long tails. Huge limbs. Slow, peaceful.

Duck Beasts

Flat shovel faces. They dig through stone. Sometimes, they spit out treasures or gems. Miners consider them a boon, though their herds are often stalked by Greater Bone Devils.

Plate Beasts

Armoured heads with neck frills and spikes, like they are wearing elaborate collars.

VOLUME FOLK

Volume-Folk are cave-dwelling humans and near-humans, feral and strange, buried miles below the surface. Exiles from rotting kingdoms. Holdouts of sense in a world of madness.

They are surface-incursions on a meteoric trajectory, pockets of creatures from outside the Veins trying to make their way in a hostile environment, imposing temporary order on uncaring stone. Think of them as arctic explorers or shipwrecked sailors. They fled catastrophe, plague, war, or judgement. They went searching for gold and immortality. They ended up here.



Except... the island their ship crashed into has seen shipwrecks before. The locals, hungry and smart and perfectly adapted to their environment, will not be awed by gunpowder and horses.

Some domains last for decades or centuries. Some collapse immediately. The general tone is post-apocalyptic. Every settlement is surrounded by hostile nations who don't need as much water, food, light, heat, or comfort. Volume-Lords are lords of wastelands, borderlands, dead stone, areas not worth mining or claiming or patrolling. Their holdings are small: a single fortress-city at best, but more likely a village-cave, and even more commonly a single festering den. The Volume-Folk might number in their hundreds but never, ever in thousands.

THE VOLUME FOLK KNOW

The major features in their own hex (including their Holding) and the approximate content of adjacent hexes.

Names: *Veins of the Earth*, pg. 278.

TABLE OF VOLUME FOLK

You can read an entry left to right for “standard” Volume-Folk, or randomize each row for added complexity and depth, or roll once and read the next entry up 1 diagonally. If a result doesn't make sense, too bad. The Veins don't have to make sense.

The “Total?” column gives the total number of Volume-Folk in their entire culture, not counting the ones encountered (typically 1d6). Unless otherwise listed, the rest are back at the culture's Holding.

LONE WANDERERS

If you roll a 1 on the “Number Encountered” section of the **Random Encounter Table**, you can use one of these characters instead. They might also be useful as replacement PCs.

VOLUME FOLK TABLE

D20	WHO AND WHAT?	TOTAL?
1	Feral Degenerates. Filthy, coated in cave mud and grit, barely alive, barely aware.	Just the ones you see.
2	Bandits. Wild and free and starving. Smart enough to lie and flatter. Face paint.	Just the ones you see.
3	Survivors. Torn clothes, bloody feet, fear. Carrying children, weapons, valuables.	1d6 more just out of sight, but moving.
4	Cannibal Exiles. Rags and knives. Tremors from prion disease. Sharp teeth, no lips.	5 in the holding, + 1d6 captives.
5	Lost Miners. Mad, gibbering, wounded. A liability. Wandering for weeks in the dark.	1d6 were left behind. Not far.
6	Crusaders. Focused. Leather armour, clubs, a plan. Blunt but conversational.	20, + 1d6 penitent captives.
7	Mad Prophet. Prophet is naked, followers are armed. Bells and hoots and muttering.	5, + 1d6 supplicants.
8	Muck-Rakers. Smear head to toe in clay. Look like rocks if they close their eyes.	5, + 2d10 young ones.
9	Early Adopters. Eyes gouged out, copper ear funnels, skin like leather. Lucid, polite.	10, + 1d6 on scout missions.
10	Driven Explorers. Fine clothes, sharp weapons. Total fixation on their goal.	20. Rival faction, 30 (identical), nearby.
11	Escaped Slaves. Iron collars and broken chains wrapped in cloth. Frightened.	1d100 more trapped somewhere.
12	Defense Force. Bone knives, hooded lanterns. Wary, but not hostile.	40, with 5 on guard. + 1d6 prisoners.
13	Slave Hunters. Tough clothes, well fed. Red-light lantern, rope, good weapons.	30 masters, 20 + 2d20 slaves.
14	Parasite Saints. Emaciated, but agile. Huge eyes with worms swimming inside.	10, + 1d6 creature or monster-slaves
15	Stealth Grazers. Naked, ritually shaven. Long soft toes and wrinkled fingers.	20, + 1d10 really really weird ones.
16	Pain Junkies. Impossible stitch-wounds. Nail-fingers. Bits of laughter and moaning.	1d6 more out of sight. 30 at holding.
17	Anarchocapitalist Commune. Once-fine clothes, good weapons. Educated, insane.	1d20. Varies a lot. If 10+, debate night.
18	Civils. On a diplomatic or trade mission. Robes, masks. Politely tell you to go away.	40, + 2d10 slaves, + 1d6 visitors.
19	Farmers. Shit-stained, surly, weary. Polite as a form of self-defense.	100, + 20x1d10 slaves. Crowded.
20	Nobles. Gold and silk and dead eyes. Retinues of shining servants.	100 + 10x1d10 slaves.

VOLUME FOLK TABLE

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?	HOLDING?
Tearing one of their own apart for food. Manic hunger.	Filthy cave full of bones and clay.
Preparing for a difficult climb. Rope coiled at their feet.	Cave high on a wall. Lots of loot and grime.
Running, heading for a half-remembered safe area.	Burned, shattered, invaded. They flee.
Hunting something. Could be the PCs.	Spiral maze-cave death-trap village.
Staggering towards the light, begging incoherently.	Landmark they can find by sound alone.
On a divine mission to kill something. Could be the PCs.	Fortress-village, solidly built, well guarded.
Trying to restrain one of their number, who has gone mad.	Temple made of piled bones and rocks.
Sifting through a streambed. Eating a fish.	Deep clay pit. Dive in, swim for the caves.
Listening in the dark, moving around the PCs, learning.	Cave village with surface trinkets.
Protecting their camp. Completing a ritual.	Mobile but fortified camp.
Looking over shoulders, listening for pursuit, shivering.	Ancient fortress, retaken. Slave-pens.
Checking caves near the holding. Slowly patrolling.	Fungus farms, cave-castle. Cold, sturdy.
Scouting, searching for footprints, looking for someone.	Crude stone villages, cave-snail farms.
Dragging something from its burrow. Screams and kicks.	Warrens half full of water. Dry shelves.
Climbing carefully, looking for cave crickets to eat.	Painstakingly carved marble monastery.
Finding something to torture, eat, and kill. Might be the PCs.	Cave village they invaded recently.
Bickering quietly about politics, religion, death. Shuffling.	Sinkhole village-auditorium-arena.
Lockstep march, heading for the nearest settlement.	City-fortress, with streets and squares.
Herding/chasing 2d6 Sonic Pigs!. Pigs are currently happy.	Hell-pit city. Anarchic, brutal, collapsing.
Meeting in the dark for secret plots. Are the PCs useful?	Dictator-driven cult-fortress. Many statues.

LONE WANDERERS TABLE

D20	NAME	DESCRIPTION
1	Banjat Garangabal	Prospector. Shoots first, questions the wounded. Good gear, pickaxe.
2	Loops	Abseil ferry owner. Something at the top has gone wrong. Worried.
3	Presindiligon	Eugenicist. Has measuring calipers and books. Wants samples, plans.
4	Xort	Survivor of robbed caravan. Silk robes, dagger, ritual brands. Callous.
5	Fren Jenss	Mad. Says he found a way out. Actually a pit. Will push you in.
6	Gamspender	Old fighter, guard. Fleeing a disaster he caused. Guilty, paranoid.
7	Joal	Traveling cave-singer. Sings creatures to sleep for a fee. Ethereal.
8	Sister Sister	Undernun. Roving angel of silver-sword deliverance. Very polite.
9	Wospot	Lost, desperate for attention. No useful skills but very obedient.
10	Lord Spasbar	Exiled noble, pompous, magical, ambitious. Wants to rule again.
11	Kar-kar Bite You	Bone-seller. Uncanny knack for finding lost things. Worm fingers.
12	Mawlostana	Assassin. Bitter, ungrateful. Wounded in the leg, trying to make it home.
13	The Fink	Sly climber and nest-thief. A bit crazed. Tittering laugh, three teeth.
14	Howittler Beans	Cannibal connoisseur. Bargains for bits of you. Rich but fast and mean.
15	Nork	Charming, incongruous. How did someone get here? Exiled cave-mage.
16	Cup Face	Body to die for. Face like flesh landslide. Hunting for food. Mute.
17	Ipsibibibipal	Scout. Ate something, became half-real. Exists through right eye only.
18	Ahr	Filth prophet. Will speak of next random encounter/hex in vague terms.
19	Ole Long Johnson	Makes ladders from anything. Loves ladders, heights, feathers, socks.
20	Relibert	Plant-finder, potion-maker, wandering herbalist, wise trickster.

4

ENCOUNTERS

If you do not know where the encounter is taking place, roll on the **Where They Find You Table** (below) and the **Cave Shape Table** (VotE pg. 258). You can also use this method for Obvious/Hidden Features. Connect caves using the rules on VotE pg. 221, or add caves from VotE pg. 263.

Roll on the following **Random Encounter Table** for the hex type at least once per hex or at least once every 24 hours. The group can always choose The Rapture (VotE pg. 107) instead of an encounter, before the Omen is revealed. The PCs get the Omen before the encounter unless they are making a lot of noise, they are Starving, or they are traveling quickly.

1D20	TYPE	DETAIL
BAD		
1	Gallery	Long, flat.
2	Gallery	Long, gently sloped.
3	Snake	Curved, coiled.
4	Rockfall	Boulders, space between or over.
5	Bowl	High sides, low bottom.
6	Pipe	Angled upwards, just enough to walk or run up or down.
7	Scramble	Climb on hands and knees in places.
8	Ledge	A narrow path next to a deep drop.
9	Waterfall	Roaring waters. Blocks all sound 10x1d10' around bottom.
10	Pools	Water up to the ankles. Hidden leg-breaking pits.
WORSE		
11	Rappel	Just about to start. 10x1d10' to bottom.
12	Rappel	Halfway down. 10x1d10' to bottom.
13	Climb	Halfway up. 10x1d10' to top, 10x1d10' to bottom.
14	Climb	Horizontal traverse. Finger and toe-holds only. 20x1d10' to safety.
15	Sump	Water up to waist.
16	Sump	Water up to neck. Need to duck underwater in places.
17	Crawl	Low ceiling, cannot stand. Fight on hands and knees.
18	Squeeze	Impossibly tight. Movement is slow. Panic is deadly.
19	Chimney	Narrow, tall. Wedged in a vertical slice.
20	Dead End	Cornered.

LITTORAL

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Fizzing, crackling, salt and bleach. Faint metal-on-glass scratching.	1 <u>Alkalion</u> , in a salt-cave-warren. 1d6 lion spores, drifting in the air.	VotE pg. 16
2	Blind men tap-tap-tapping. Old books, straw, bones. Creak of pulleys.	1 <u>Arachnopolis Rex</u> , twitch-stalking, moving carefully. A curiosity, then a danger.	VotE pg. 24
3	Silence, and the faintest click of claw on stone.	1 <u>Blackfoot Gigaferret</u> . Will stalk party until they sleep or wander into a dangerous area.	VotE pg. 30
4	Oil, guano. Cacophonous maddening noise across the entire spectrum.	1d6x1d100 <u>Lamenters</u> , nesting, shitting, squawking. 1 ghost per 50 Lamenters.	VotE pg. 78
5	Skittering, dripping. Faint, fresh meat and dusty ice.	1 <u>Mantis Shrimp</u> . 5-in-6 chance there is a deep sump nearby. 1-in-6 chance of body parts.	VotE pg. 82
6	Soft ridiculous plops. Hedge-trimmer clatter. Faint copper blood.	3d20 <u>Scissorfish</u> sprinting straight towards the party. A shallow stream in the cave.	VotE pg. 110
7	Distant mining explosions, a rave, a rock concert in an oil refinery.	5d8 <u>Sonic Pigs!</u> A shuffling herd, faces against the rocks, paranoid and twitchy and noisy.	VotE pg. 115
8	Dishes being stacked. Shifting glimmer of pearl shells.	4d4 <u>Toraptoise</u> , slowly licking the walls. They ignore strong prey.	VotE pg. 139
9	Smells of sick children. A muffled cry, a swish of silk.	1 <u>Troglooraptor</u> , 2d4 children on its back. Just sedated one; PCs might hear it cry.	VotE pg. 143
10	Stink like compost, faint wet slapping sound like wet leather boots.	1 <u>Carrion Crawler</u> , complacent, massive, eating a corpse. Roll again to see what it's eating.	AD&D MM pg. 13
11	Faint hiss, as an hourglass. Reflection of light. Long white feelers.	2d6 <u>Cave Centipedes</u> , loose and hungry, branded with Olm-marks. Reward for return.	AD&D MM pg. 14
12	Chittering, faint echolocating clicks. Sharp guano stink. Running footsteps.	5x2d10 <u>Goblins</u> , hunting. Blind, toothy, bone knives and rocks. Swarming, chasing, cornering.	AD&D MM pg. 47
13	Silver threads in the air. Silence. Shifting shadows.	1 <u>Cave Spider</u> , in the cave's highest point waiting for weak prey. Can speak; doesn't want to.	AD&D MM pg. 92
14	Flutter of wings, copper smell. Whoosh like a lobbed baseball.	2d6 <u>Stirge</u> , hanging and dropping like thrown knitting needles. Cave-mud nest, 1d6 fat larva.	AD&D MM pg. 92
15	Splash of water, streak of white flesh. Stone that moves.	1d6 <u>Cave Eels</u> in a stream, waiting for feet. Trip, then go for the throat. Looka like white marble.	AD&D MM pg. 36
16	Faint conversation. Light. Click of metal on stone.	1d6 <u>Volume-Folk</u> . Generate type/activity if not already known.	Veinscrawl pg. 67
17	Hop-scratch, skitter, twitch. Small flicks of white among the stones.	1d6 rations worth of Cave Crickets. Tiny, mostly harmless, but tricky to catch. 0.5 hrs per ration.	N/A
18	Air pulling you forwards. Warm living air, scent of sulphur and spice.	Chasm. Cannot see other side (40x1d10m across). Might be a way down/around. Delay 1d6 hrs.	N/A
19	Splash of water. Humidity rises. Faint drip and burble.	Sump. Caves sink into the water. Can be navigated without swimming, but slowly. Delay 1d6 hrs.	N/A
20	Deja-vu. Unease and irritability, slowly rising into panic.	Winding Passages. Way forward is blocked; way back is uncertain. Delay 2d6 hrs.	N/A

PROFUNDAL

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Squeak and pop. Crackle and wheeze. Smells like sickness.	1 <u>Calcinated Cancer Bear</u> , sniffing its way towards fire and meat (in that order).	VotE pg. 32
2	Food fight splats, monosyllables, gawping, plopping. Aniseptic reek.	4d6 <u>Cambrimen</u> , blundering around, looking for something forgotten, inspecting everything.	VotE pg. 34
3	Soil and wet clay. Slow landslide, methodical stomping.	1 <u>Cromagnogolem</u> , sniffing without lungs, cold vapour curls. Attacks relentlessly.	VotE pg. 46
4	Chalky, ashen. Brittle creaking. Mad pool cue squeaks. Vein of black.	1d4, exploding on a 4, <u>Fossil Vampires</u> . Half wedged in the rock, so so so easy to disturb.	VotE pg. 53
5	Screaming, growing closer. A pit. A scrap of metal or a tangle of rope.	1 <u>Panic Attack Jack</u> barreling out of the dark, ropes slithering like snakes, inflicting the Rapture.	VotE pg. 96
6	Wet dog, chlorine bleach. Scrabbling, panting, faint ultrasonic buzz.	4d6 <u>Spotlight Dogs</u> , hunting you in a long gallery. Blind, terrorize, harrass, and mark.	VotE pg. 123
7	Distant scream from above. Two stalagmites appear.	1 <u>Still-Tor-Man</u> , fishing for delicious flesh. If you know what it is, run. If not, stare upwards.	VotE pg. 126
8	Glass necklaces poured into a bowl. Ozone and fizz.	1d50 <u>Stormsheep</u> searching for lightning, following gold-flecked quartz. 2-in-6 chance they're starving.	VotE pg. 128
9	Soft leather shoe slap. Ammonia, urine, blood. Moisture.	1 <u>Tetracharcarodron</u> slithering along the roof of the cave. Bizzare, impossible. Then, the charge.	VotE pg. 134
10	Coconut shell clatter, deep drums, claw clacks. Ozone and magic.	1d4 <u>Titanskull Hermit Crabs</u> waiting for good skulls. Might want yours. Might trade (in skulls).	VotE pg. 136
11	Faint fluttering, slight musty odour. Purple-pain light, flickers of emotion.	5d50 <u>Ultraviolet Butterflies</u> , 300-5d50 caterpillars in skulls. 1d6-2 <u>Volume-Folk</u> , deranged.	VotE pg. 146
12	Did that column just move? Creak and click of stone, wet slap of flesh.	1d6 <u>Ropers</u> , lurking. Roll on Littoral table for scavengers waiting nearby.	AD&D MM pg. 83
13	Bludgeoning crash of stone. Thump of heavy footfalls. Heavy breaths.	1 <u>Umber Hulk</u> , battering its way through stone and water. Scarred, dented, beligerent.	AD&D MM pg. 98
14	Rattle and squelch like a subway train made of sausage meat.	1 <u>Purple Worm</u> , migrating, filling entire cave segments. Easy to avoid if you run blindly.	AD&D MM pg. 80
15	Flick of fin, splash, rise in humidity. Polished bones in the water.	2d6 <u>Floating Eyes</u> in a stream. Hypnotize then drown. Phosphorescent cuttlefish pulses.	AD&D MM pg. 40
16	Shuffling. Faint, hoarded light. Click of metal on stone.	1d6 <u>Volume-Folk</u> . Generate type/activity if not already known.	Veinscrawl pg. 67
17	Deja-vu. Unease and irritability, slowly rising into panic.	Winding Passages. Way forward is blocked; way back is uncertain. Delay 2d6 hrs.	N/A
18	Air pulling you forwards. Hot, angry air. Whorls of steam.	Chasm. Cannot see other side (40x1d10m across). Might be a way down/around. Delay 1d6 hrs.	N/A
19	Splash of water. Humidity rises. Faint drip and burble.	Sump. Caves sink into the water. Can be navigated without swimming, but slowly. Delay 1d6 hrs.	N/A
20	N/A	Transient. Roll on either the Littoral or the Abyssal tables (50% chance).	N/A

ABYSSAL

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Two voices, bickering. Soft patter of crocodile feet. Vaguely fishy smell.	1 <u>Fungal Ambassodile</u> on a critical diplomatic mission. 50% chance it's dead, implicating PCs.	VotE pg. 56
2	Gravel clatter, lime. Scrape and stomp. Muttering.	1 <u>Gilgamash</u> , roving on its quest. Shambling. Roll for goals, etc, before the PCs see it.	VotE pg. 66
3	Chemicals, wings, fire, roar and clatter. Industrial accident at speed.	1 <u>Igneous Wrath</u> coming in like a dive bomber. Hungry, mad, and fast. Hit and run.	VotE pg. 68
4	Sulphur, faint crystalized magic, gentle bells, sizzling.	1d20 <u>Ignimbrite Mites</u> , living symbols, flickering like a constellation, trying to hit tongues.	VotE pg. 71
5	Smells like nostalgia. Faint voices, soft and high and comforting.	4d4 <u>Meanderthals</u> , only real to humans. Murderously real. Otherwise, faint hateful ghosts.	VotE pg. 84
6	Liquid moonlight glow, flickering shadows, nightmare hiss.	1 <u>Mondmilch</u> pool. Shimmering impossible nightmare forms and art. 1d6 gibbering artists.	VotE pg. 87
7	Bleach. Falling glass, faintly musical. Twinkling light.	1 <u>Radiolarian</u> , drifting. PCs can observe it from a distance to gain insight into adjacent hex contents.	VotE pg. 105
8	Burning stone, hot air. Leaden thump. Bullet whip-crack. Dented walls.	1d50 <u>Splinterlads</u> swooping. Break things. Tear ropes, swords, teeth. Find chalk and quartz.	VotE pg. 120
9	Clawed footprints, clicked steps. Smell of salt. A shouted challenge.	1 <u>Trilobite-Knight</u> , roving, searching, testing its skills, telling tales.	VotE pg. 141
10	Creak and scrape of bone and chalk. Dust in the air. Salt.	2d4 <u>Zombie Coral</u> , stumbling, reaching, grasping. Blood releases more.	VotE pg. 150
11	Buzz of magic. Rage-screams. Explosions. Gnashing teeth. Blood.	1 <u>Beholder</u> , flying along, blasting or tormenting things. A lunatic with power. Frothing.	AD&D MM pg. 10
12	Rustling, unfolding, skin on skin. A huge eye bulging in the dark.	1 slimy, boneless <u>Giant</u> . Fast, crawling through gaps. Crushing fingers, suction mouth.	AD&D MM pg. 45
13	Drip of water and hiss of snakes. Petrified bats, spiders, cave crickets.	1 <u>Medusa</u> and statue-cave. Polite. Prefers conversation, but will petrify beautiful people.	AD&D MM pg. 66
14	Rumbling. Cracking stone, sliding tomb lids, click of claws. Dust.	1d4, exploding on a 4, <u>Fossil Dinosaurs</u> . Could be harmless. Could be deadly. Watch the walls.	AD&D MM pg. 23
15	Splashing water, deep pools. Swish of something dark and snake-like.	2d6 <u>Lampreys</u> from the Nightmare Sea in a deep pool. Want to drain blood, youth, and madness.	AD&D MM pg. 59
16	Whispers. A clank in the dark. Nausea, emotions, pain, ozone.	der0 Encounter. Roll on the der0 Encounter Table .	Veinscrawl pg. 62
17	Terrible groans, shrieks, and scrape of claws. You hear teeth.	False Omen. Nothing. It passed by. Might induce paranoia.	N/A
18	Basalt walls, glass-smooth caves, nightmare sea incursions.	Impossible Terrain. No way through; must go around. Delay 6 hours.	N/A
19	Shimmer of air, temperature drops slightly. Scraps of rope.	Difficult Climb. Delay 1d6 hours. If Rapture attack delayed, it hits now.	N/A
20	Sweat becomes painful. Headache. Difficulty focusing on hands.	Heat Exhaustion. Saps energy, awareness. Delay 1d6 hours. Lose 1d6 HP (to 0 at worst).	N/A

ANTLING

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Chip chip chip of a pickaxe, then a crack, a clatter.	1d6 <u>Antling Workers</u> , mining. They just mined through the wall. Confused, alarmed.	Veinscrawl pg. 1
2	Lantern light, cleared sightlines, spear-holes, a door.	2d6 <u>Antling Soldiers</u> , 1d4 <u>Antling Workers</u> in a forward base. Worried, jumpy, hostile.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
3	Conversation, lantern light, militant lockstep marching.	1 <u>Antling Diplomat</u> with 6 <u>Antling Soldiers</u> and 1 <u>Spider Ant</u> . On a vital mission. Suicidal.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
4	Hiss of falling rope, arguing, click of hammers against pitons.	1d6 <u>Antling Soldiers</u> and 1 <u>Spider Ant</u> on training mission. Want to learn from PCs if possible.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
5	Running feet, hasty conversation, dim light.	1 <u>Antling Worker</u> on the run with her <u>Volume-Folk</u> "husband." Might be wiling. Romantic.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
6	Militant marching, lantern light. Pauses and starts. Scratching.	3d6 <u>Antling Soldiers</u> , 1d6 <u>Antling Wizards</u> , and 1d6 <u>Antling Workers</u> on mass patrol. Jumpy.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
7	Scraps of chitin, drips of blood. A leg twitches in the darkness.	Massacre. 1d6 dead <u>Antlings</u> . Half are still edible. Whatever did this can't be far away.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
8	Shuffling, clicking. Moaning. Lots of pauses. Drips of blood.	1d6 wounded <u>Antling Soldiers</u> trying to get home. Will warn of contents of next hex.	Veinscrawl pg. 11
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

ARCHAEN

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Faint blue-green glow and a steady hiss. Glass glitters, folds.	1 <u>Archaean</u> strolling, touching the rock. Trying to get a good sightline on a quasar.	VotE p.26
2	Steady buzzing, slow and low. Faint smell of sugar and ozone.	2d6 <u>Atomic Bees</u> . Track to a buried atomic (1d4x100 bees) beehive, fresh atomic honey.	VotE p.29
3	Creak and scrape of iron on iron. Slow fat stomping.	1d4 <u>Rust Monsters</u> . Surly. Focused on iron; don't really want to eat you. 1d6 eggs.	AD&D MM pg. 83
4	Streaks of ash, bubbled rock, faint glow, nausea.	1d6 very confused, irradiated <u>Shadows</u> , burnt onto the wall by Archaeans.	AD&D MM pg. 86
5	A busy kitchen next to a scrapyard. Clouds of toxic vapour.	2 <u>Archaeans</u> in heated debate or passion or something. Mercury droplets everywhere.	VotE p.29
6	Ceramic snakes in and out of walls. Faint sizzle. Steam.	1 half-buried <u>Snail Reactor</u> in a stream. Warm, valuable, deadly.	Veinscrawl pg. 14
7	Nausea, roaring, burning, crashing. Apocalyptic. Blood pours from ears.	1 enraged <u>Cursed Metal Golem</u> . Now would be a good time to run.	Veinscrawl pg. 14
8	Glimmer of gold, cracked stone. Toxic water streams by, scars skin.	Pile of metal. Gold, silver, iron, other stranger ores, neatly stacked.	N/A
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

CHOLERID

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Moaning, stink of flesh on stone.	1d10 <u>Cholerids</u> , melancholy but in the way.	VotE p.38
2	Slap of feet and clap of hands.	1d10 <u>Cholerids</u> , dancing as if acting out a festival.	VotE p.38
3	Patter of running feet, mad whispering.	2d10 <u>Cholerids</u> , seeking death.	VotE p.38
4	Roar-whisper, awful stench.	1d100 <u>Cholerids</u> in an idle crowd.	VotE p.38
5	Stampeed, moans, rage, rot.	1d100 <u>Cholerids</u> in a raging swarm.	VotE p.38
6	Slow stomp, then pause, then stomp.	1 lost <u>Myconid</u> , trying to find a way out.	VotE p.59
7	Elegant steps, shuffling trail, clink of gold tomb-goods.	1 <u>Cholerid</u> noble in tomb-gold, 1d10 fawning courtiers.	VotE p.38
8	Screams, slash of weapons, moans.	1d6 <u>Volume-Folk</u> besieged by 2d10 <u>Cholerids</u> .	VotE p.38
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

DRACOSPAWN

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Squeaking. Disturbed dust. The hints of a trap. Slithering rope.	1d6 <u>Kobolds</u> waiting to ambush. Might start the ambush, then back off apologetically.	AD&D MM pg. 57
2	Bickering, rude noises, stomping feet. Indignant puffing.	1d6 <u>Kobolds</u> vs an equal number of another dragon's. Feuding noisily. Ask PCs to judge.	AD&D MM pg. 57
3	Shouting, clatter of weapons, marching feet, waving banners.	40x1d10 <u>Kobolds</u> in a war party, lead by 2d6 <u>Dragonborn</u> . Disorganized, easy to distract.	AD&D MM pg. 57
4	Lantern light. Quiet discussion. Glint of light off scales.	2 <u>Dragonborn</u> , guarding a junction in the caves. Polite but quick to anger.	AD&D MM pg. 62
5	Quiet squeaking. Hesitant footsteps. Bitter smell.	1 <u>Kobold</u> explorer, completely lost. Wants to go to a random hex.	AD&D MM pg. 57
6	Incense, bells. Statues and cleared pathways. Lantern light.	Dragon shrine. Temple to nearest Dragon. Guarded by 2d6 <u>Dragonborn</u> . Safe for pilgrims.	Veinscrawl pg. 18
7	Chanting, cautions movement. Rustle of silk.	2d6 <u>Sycophants</u> , carrying offerings to the nearest Dragon.	Veinscrawl pg. 18
8	Quiet footsteps, grunts, slithering rope.	1d6 <u>Volume-Folk</u> traders, laden with goods, well-fed. Shadowed by 1d6 <u>Sycophants</u> .	Veinscrawl pg. 18
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

DROW

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Waltz-march of padded feet. Coloured silk, pale flesh.	1 <u>Drow</u> with 2d6 <u>Immaculate Slaves</u> , carrying bales of silk to a buyer. Polite but very strange.	Veinscrawl pg. 37
2	Eye-shine in the dark. A faint, perfect smile.	1 <u>Drow</u> sitting naked on a pillar or limestone shelf, watching PCs. Distant, disinterested.	Veinscrawl pg. 37
3	Burst of magic, then violence. Joints lock, sleep-fog rolls.	2d4 <u>Drow</u> Slave-Takers, raiding, targeting the PCs. Sudden spells and pain.	Veinscrawl pg. 37
4	Wailing, groaning. Red lanterns fly overhead.	1d4 <u>Drow</u> Slave-Masters, 2d6 Immaculate Slaves, 2d6 freshly captured Volume-Folk slaves.	Veinscrawl pg. 37
5	Soft red glow, careful steps.	1 <u>Drow</u> Memory-Seller. Will buy memories for silver, sell you others. Fear, love, power.	Veinscrawl pg. 37
6	Blood trail, slightly disturbed silt. A fragment of silk in the air.	2 dead <u>Drow</u> . Murder, suicide, murder-suicide? 2 silver daggers, other treasure?	Veinscrawl pg. 37
7	Brief shower of rose petals.	Rose petals in drifts. Like a brief snowstorm. Beautiful, inexplicable.	N/A
8	Black stone gate, briar-pointed walkways. Cold stone halls.	Abandoned fortress, or is it? 1 <u>Drow</u> somewhere inside, watching PCs. Safe, but do not sleep here.	Veinscrawl pg. 37
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

DVERGR

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Faint fungal rot, glimmer of gemstone, signs of struggle.	1 <u>Dvergr</u> , dead for ages. Crystal core intact, tools looted.	Veinscrawl pg. 38
2	Solid pillars, clear field of vision, huge doors, crossbow slits.	<u>Dvergr</u> fortress. 5+2d10 <u>Dvergr</u> inside, armed, guarding minehead.	Veinscrawl pg. 38
3	Steam, smell of rotting fungi. Stone walls, copper drains.	<u>Dvergr</u> farm-distillery. 5 <u>Dvergr</u> guarding. 3d10 <u>Myconid slaves</u> ready for slaughter.	VotE pg. 59
4	Shuffling in the dark, quiet debate. Flash of blue-white lantern light.	5 <u>Dvergr</u> on an exploratory mission. Want to go to a random hex. Will pay in, gems, gold.	Veinscrawl pg.38
5	Shuffling in the dark, quiet debate. Flash of blue-white lantern light.	5 <u>Dvergr</u> on a trading mission. Trade less work for more work. Want to examine PCs inventory.	Veinscrawl pg. 38
6	Walls become smooth, square, faceted.	<u>Dvergr</u> mine-road, abandoned, engraved, semi-fortified. Safe to rest here.	N/A
7	Rumble, scrape of iron on stone, a drill bursting through a wall.	1 <u>Dvergr Mining Engine</u> moving through stone. Might be able to follow it to another hex.	Veinscrawl pg. 38
8	Warm air, sudden right-angle drop in the cave floor ahead.	1 <u>Dvergr</u> mineshaft, very deep, square, steep stairs. 5 <u>Dvergr</u> working at the bottom.	Veinscrawl pg. 38
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

FUNGID VALLEY

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Squelch-patter of feet, bobbing mushroom cap head, wheezing.	1 <u>Myconid</u> , pre-sporulation, roving. Manic, looking for food, willing to kill.	VotE p.59
2	Muttering, shuffling. Swaying heads close together.	3d6 <u>Myconids</u> guarding a fungal growth. Mild debate. Might attack, might not.	VotE p.59
3	Shuffling, moaning. Faint, yeasty smell. Blorping.	2d4 floating <u>Psychomycosis Megaspores</u> , 3d6 zombies. Burbling, drifting. Shuffling, clawing.	VotE p.100
4	Rumble, stilt-step of spiked legs. The wall appears to be moving.	1 <u>Gill Beetle</u> , roving, churning filter-mouthparts. Not hostile but does block tunnels.	AD&D MM p. 9
5	Fat plops and squelches, spreading shadow.	1 <u>Black Pudding</u> searching for food. Surprisingly quick. Alpha predator.	AD&D MM p. 10
6	Weird silhouettes, strange tumbling shapes, faint bitter smell.	1d6 <u>Gas Spores</u> , drifting. Roll on Littoral table for shape. Drift as if attacking.	AD&D MM p. 42
7	N/A	1 patch of <u>Violet Fungus</u> .	AD&D MM p. 42
8	Sizzle, slight bare patch above and below slime.	1 patch of <u>Green Slime</u> . Drips slowly. More of a terrain hazard.	AD&D MM p. 49
9	Faint caramel smell, drifts of brown spores.	1 patch of <u>Brown Mold</u> , blocking a portion of the cave.	AD&D MM p. 71
10	Faint flour smell, drifts of brown spores.	1 patch of <u>Yellow Mold</u> , blocking a portion of the cave. 10% chance of being sentient.	AD&D MM p. 71
11	Squishing, rolling. Difficult to notice.	2d6 minuscule <u>Ochre Jellies</u> , crawling around, trying to get into packs to eat rations.	AD&D MM p. 75
12	Faint whistling, waving tendrils. Unusually vibrant growth.	1d6 <u>Shriekers</u> , hidden in other growth. Roll again if activated.	AD&D MM p. 87
13	Mouse-like skittering, fleeing the light or sniffing for food.	3d6 <u>Mushmice</u> . 1 ration each, 1-in-6 chance of being poisonous.	Veinscrawl pg. 48
14	Luminous green-blue glow. Small clouds of flies.	2 <u>Glowing Fungi</u> branches. Can be used as torches. Last 3 hours.	Veinscrawl pg. 48
15	Buzzing, growing louder. A flicker of wings. Tiny mushmice fleeing.	1 <u>Burrowgrub Swarm</u> . Envelops, looking to bite and lay eggs. Most dangerous if infected.	Veinscrawl pg. 48
16	Noisy flapping, like pancakes being thrown at a cat. Flickering shadows.	2d6 <u>Sporebats</u> , flapping moistly. Will try to nest on PCs. Looking for coal and wood.	Veinscrawl pg. 48
17	Deranged chanting, a humanoid head-shape bobbing, glint of steel.	1d6 <u>Adapted Humanoids</u> , gathering. Mad, fungus-addled, half-buried in walls. Hungry.	Veinscrawl pg. 48
18	Basalt walls, glass-smooth caves, nightmare sea incursions.	Roll on the Rare Fungus Table .	Veinscrawl pg. 48
19	Shimmer of air, temperature drops slightly. Scraps of rope.	Roll again twice on this table.	N/A
20	Sweat becomes painful. Headache. Difficulty focusing on hands.	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

GHOUL

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Silence, dust. A ruined village. Lots of rooms to check.	1d6 Paralytic Ghouls, buried, claws out. Like feral landmines. 1d6 <u>Sluggish Ghouls</u> , watching.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
2	Breathy hiss. A shadow clambering over rubble. Disturbed dust.	1d6 <u>Feral Ghouls</u> , stalking and waiting. Hunger makes them impatient.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
3	Groans, rattle of chains, barked orders, moans in response.	1 <u>Rational Ghoul</u> herding 2d6 chained <u>Feral Ghouls</u> . Politely want PCs to move on quickly.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
4	Creaking wheels, scrape of dragging wood. Barked orders.	Corpse-caravan. 6 <u>Rational Ghoul</u> guards, 2d6 <u>Feral Ghoul</u> shock troops, 3+3d10 corpses. Alert.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
5	Polite conversation, laughter. Screams and groans in response.	1 <u>Noble Ghoul</u> , on official visit. 2d6 <u>Rational Ghoul</u> courtiers, 2d6 <u>Feral Ghoul</u> subjects.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
6	Out-of-tune music, shuffled feet. A roofless, lightless ruin. Laughter.	A party. 3d6 <u>Noble Ghouls</u> , 3d10 <u>Rational Ghoul</u> guards. Food, drink. Darkness. Dancing.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
7	Quite conversation, creak of wheels, whispered commands.	1 <u>Noble Ghoul</u> corpse-trader, 1d6 <u>Rational Ghoul</u> assistants, 2d6 corpses. Will make deals.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
8	Imposing walls, cracked. Ragged banners.	Small fortress. 2 <u>Noble Ghouls</u> , 3d6 <u>Feral Ghouls</u> in dungeon, 3d10 <u>Volume-Folk</u> slaves in farm.	Veinscrawl pg. 50
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

ILLITHID

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Cries for help, struggles. Faint odour of blood.	1 <u>Doppelganger</u> . Resembles lost Volume-folk merchant. Offers reward to be taken to city.	AD&D MM pg. 29
2	Faint footsteps. Conversation in all-too-familliar voices.	Enough <u>Doppelgangers</u> to match the PCs. Not a great resemblance but close enough.	AD&D MM pg. 29
3	Sudden headaches, nosebleeds. Faint hopping, padding sound.	1 <u>Intellect Devourer</u> , hopping along, seeking minds. Eternally hungry.	AD&D MM pg. 54
4	Flicker of a tentacle. Burble of a stream. Faint photoreactive shimmer.	1 <u>Cave Octopus</u> , slithering in a shallow stream. Smart, opportunistic, camouflaged.	AD&D MM pg. 75
5	Moist howling, stomp, buzz, roil. Ozone, blood. Mental thunderstorm.	Near-feral exiled <u>Illithid</u> with 2d6 <u>Squidlings</u> and 1 <u>Myrmyrdon</u> . Desperate for brains.	AD&D MM pg. 70
6	Buzz and pulse of unseen technology, groans.	2d6 <u>Squidlings</u> , fanatically loyal, on patrol. Will try to capture PCs if possible.	Veinscrawl pg. 54
7	Wet leather slither, buzz and pulse of unseen technology, groans, begging.	2d6 <u>Squidlings</u> with 1 <u>Bagbeast</u> containing 2d6 <u>Volume-Folk</u> . Also 1d4 <u>Manaclebugs</u> .	Veinscrawl pg. 54
8	Glimmer of eye-shine and glass.	1 <u>Watchman</u> stuck high up. Monitoring. Will alert 1d6 <u>Squidlings</u> with 1d4 <u>Manaclebugs</u> .	Veinscrawl pg. 54
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A

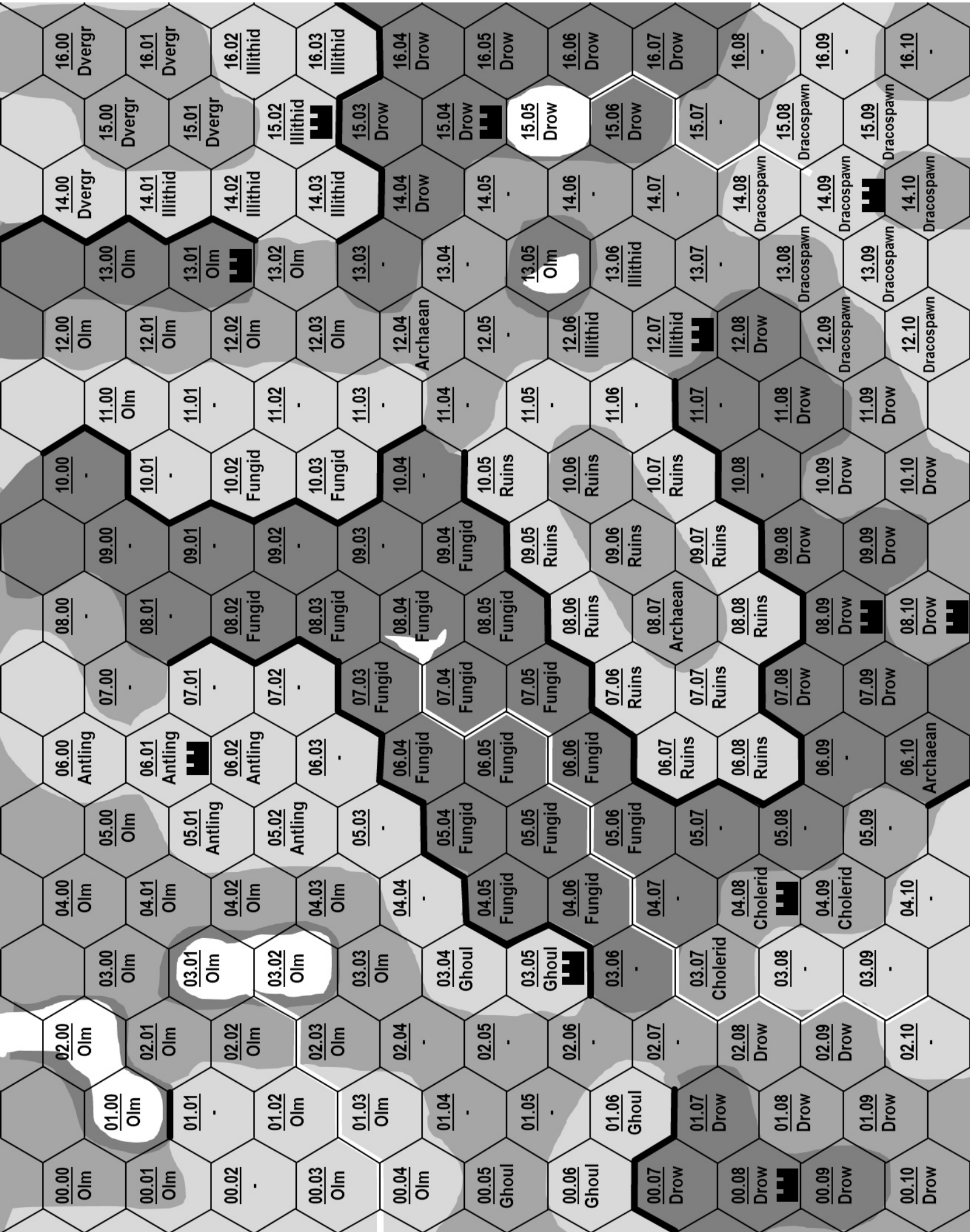
OLM

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Faint pattering of feet, splash of water. Yeep of surprise.	1 lost <u>Olm</u> child. Terrified. Wants to get home. May have escaped from Trogloraptor or Drow.	VotE pg. 90
2	Ragged breathing, blood spots, scraps of skin.	1 dying <u>Olm</u> . Armed. Will ask PCs to return body to sump in exchange for future favour.	VotE pg. 90
3	Faintest glimpse of a white sine-wave tail.	1 <u>Olm</u> scout. Observes PCs, follows them into adjacent hex. Might help. Opportunistic.	VotE pg. 90
4	Spears out of the dark. Unless PCs are running, 4-in-6 chance to hit.	3 + 1d6 <u>Olm</u> , raiding party. Spears, nets. Smart. Will make 1 kill and retreat. Might help PCs.	VotE pg. 90
5	Muttering, glimmer of magic. Slow, exaggerated gestures in a clear cave.	2 <u>Olm</u> mages in a ritual duel. Will turn on PCs if hostile, help or ask to judge if polite.	VotE pg. 90
6	Cold water, deeper and deeper. White corpses.	3d10 sleeping <u>Olm</u> in a small Olm-sump. 1 is awake and watching PCs.	VotE pg. 90
7	Flick of rope from above. Click-hiss of information. Clunks and scrapes.	3d100 <u>Olm</u> on epic migration-rapel. May ask PCs to assist, watch for air-threats.	VotE pg. 90
8	Rising and falling hiss of legs, Olm singing, dancing.	1d6 <u>Olm</u> herding 2d10 Cave Centipedes to a new pasture. Drunk as lords, cheerful.	VotE pg. 90
9	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
10	N/A	Roll again on this table, and also on the Depth Encounter Table , combining results.	N/A



THE RUINS

D20	OMEN	ENCOUNTER	REFERENCE
1	Gravel clatter, lime. Scrape and stomp. Muttering.	1 <u>Gilgamash</u> , roving on its quest. Chem-scarred, haughty. Roll for goals, etc, before the PCs see it.	VotE pg. 66
2	Creak, scrape, flap of impossible wings. Heavy, pipe-throat breath.	1d6 <u>Gargoyles</u> crawling over rubble, scanning with blind stone eyes. They hunt magic.	AD&D MM pg. 42
3	Cold air, eerie sense of being watched. Faint laughter or screams.	1d4 <u>Ghosts</u> , malevolent and tormented. Bound to the place they died. They fear the Plume.	AD&D MM pg. 43
4	Roars of agony, lightning. Wet slow footsteps that shake the ground.	1 <u>Storm Giant</u> , a skinless biomechanical titan, stumbling, screaming in agony, oozing reagents.	AD&D MM pg. 45
5	Stacking plates. Thump of stone, scrape of stump-fingers on rock.	1d6 <u>Stone Golems</u> , ceramic, headless, trying to repair the city. Chipped armour.	AD&D MM pg. 48
6	Rust flakes in the air. Scream of torn metal, hinge-squeak march.	1 <u>Iron Golem</u> , armed, rusting, guarding a building or street. Forged to look like a hero.	AD&D MM pg. 48
7	Shadows move oddly in the light. A faint roll of cold air.	2d10 <u>Shadows</u> . Baked onto walls, burnt into the ground. A deadly swarm. Safe in total darkness.	AD&D MM pg. 86
8	Scraps of conversation, grunts, a challenge. Fizz of magic.	2d6 <u>Wights</u> . Former citizens preserved by magic. Deranged, constantly un-dying. Gas masks.	AD&D MM pg. 100
9	Rumble, shower of stone chips. Tapping of a hammer or pick.	5 <u>Dvergr</u> in a mining team. Looking for treasures, hommonculite. Not usually hostile.	Veinscrawl pg. 38
10	Monosyllable patter, cooing. Soft mists. Ropes undone, flasks uncorked.	1d100 <u>Gibberlings</u> . Soft mist-ball 1HP ghosts, mischevous but cloying. Fond of knots.	N/A
11	Buzz, static hiss. Wet pop of suction climbing gear. Purple-white light.	2d6 <u>Squidlings</u> , looking for treasures for their Illithid overlords. Deranged. Good climbing gear.	Veinscrawl pg. 54
12	Quiet squeaking, bickering. Hesitant footsteps. Lantern light.	5x1d10 <u>Kobolds</u> in a treasure-hunting party. Not hopeful for success. Willing to ally.	Veinscrawl pg. 18
13	Shuffling. Faint, hoarded light. Click of metal on stone.	1d6 <u>Volume-Folk</u> . Recent arrivals. Generate type/activity if not already known.	Veinscrawl pg. 67
14	Wisps of warm, chemical air.	City Fissure. Need to go around. Delay 1d6 hours.	N/A
15	Trickle of stone from above. The ground shifts.	Collapse. The floor gives way. Rocks fall. Gas rolls. 1d6 damage, delay 1d6 hours.	N/A
16	N/A	Artistic Treasure. Roll on the Treasure of the Civilopede Table .	VotE pg. 286
17	N/A	Precious Treasure. Roll on the Hoard Table .	Veinscrawl pg. 103
18	N/A	Artifact. Roll on the Ruins Artifact Table .	Veinscrawl pg. 60
19	N/A	Roll on Depth Encounter Table .	N/A
20	N/A	Roll again twice on this table.	N/A



5 HEXES

To start the hexcrawl, drop your players into a random hex. Alternatively, if you want a “safe” entrance, use one of the following hexes:

01.01
02.10
03.09
04.10
05.03 — Probably the best starting point
06.03
07.02
16.09

Make sure your players are mapping their journey (pg. 6).

The map is conceptual. Hexes normally take 6 hours to cross. The entire map could be folded on top of itself or crushed into a ball. It does not describe a flat plane or a uniform area. It describes the relationship between areas. There are no roads. Alternatively, every cave is a road.

00.00 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: White marble, water-smooth ripples.

Obvious Feature: Dying Olm elder has gathered warriors, poets, and sages to listen to her death-song and eat her flesh. 1d6 Olm Warriors, 1d6 Olm Mages.

Hidden Feature: A cave of Olm elder-skulls, full of wisdom. Decorated with gems and carved bones.

00.01 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey folded stone, wedges of black basalt.

Obvious Feature: Olm village. 2 Olm awake, cracking cave mussels. Cautious. Will wake up more if food is available. Locals remember the Century Splume (08.07) and carved their memories into the walls.

Hidden Feature: Olm-sump, 300 Olm in deep water.

00.02 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Silver-grey folded stone, wavy like the sea. Wet.

Obvious Feature: Deep series of lakes and sumps. 1 Mantis Shrimp lurks inside, with clutch of eggs. Scattered bones, displayed to mark territory.

Hidden Feature: Cache of shiny things at bottom of sump. Mantis Shrimp uses them as bait.

00.03 – OLM – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone with fossil shells, well-worn by Olm fingers.

Obvious Feature: 5 young Olm warriors in a ritual duel. Will challenge PCs, but not to injury. They have liquor. Leader, Cut-Nine-Times, wants to hunt the Mantis Shrimp in (00.03).

Hidden Feature: Rusted dEr0 Machine sunk in the river. 3 vials of hallucinogenic chemicals remain.

00.04 – OLM – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone with fossil shells, fronds. Mildew smell.

Obvious Feature: Cave centipede farm. 2 Olm farmers, 3d6 Cave Centipedes. Will trade gold, liquor, and secrets for meat of any quality.

Hidden Feature: Corpse of Antling Diplomat (05.01) buried in the muck. Olm farmers have no idea how it got there.

00.05 – GHOUL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Well-worn marble caves. Carved tunnels.

Obvious Feature: Abandoned bunkers. Every cave could be fortified, every room could be held. Rusted swords, climbing claws, rope, lanterns, wood debris. Secret tunnels everywhere.

Hidden Feature: 10x1d10 Paralytic Ghouls buried in the rubble. Uniforms, gold epaulets. If disturbed, will resume war.

00.06 – GHOUL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Twisted, knotted limestone. Dirty yellow colour.

Obvious Feature: Fortress of Ghoul Baron Rhotan. Dangling hollow stalactite in a large cave. Feral ghouls hanging in gibbets, ready to be dropped onto attackers. Chain elevators.

Hidden Feature: Baron Rhotan is breeding Trogloraptors to feed his horrible hunger for child-flesh.

00.07 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Polished silver mirrors. Every cave plated in chrome.

Obvious Feature: A Drow invention, a murder-trap, a madness-maze. 3 Drow, hunting, but idly, toying with their prey.

Hidden Feature: Lupin Choswick, bloated diplomat from (01.04), trapped here by the Drow. Will promise riches if brought home. Will burst open, spilling out rubies and black liquid poison.

00.08 – DROW – ABYSSAL – GLASS WATERFALL

Terrain: Spiral roads, elegant railings, abstract glass statues.

Obvious Feature: City of Glass Waterfall. Glass beads sliding down silver wires, lit by red lanterns. Homonculite crystal used as centrepiece of a glass bead fountain.

Hidden Feature: The False Market. Can only buy lies, forgeries, and non-existent things.

00.09 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White marble. Every surface carved.

Obvious Feature: Statue garden. Colossal interlinked lifelike statues carved into walls or freestanding.

Hidden Feature: Zignae, a blinded medusa. Wants her sister (06.10), revenge on the Drow.

00.10 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey marble, deep shafts and valleys.

Obvious Feature: Drow silver mine. Drow wizard calling silver out of the rock with incredibly valuable spells. Guarded by 15 Immaculate Slaves.

Hidden Feature: Bouutan-Bouutan, spy and spell-thief from (16.09). Will rob PCs if he can't rob the Drow.

01.00 – OLM – ABYSSAL – LAKE GREY

Terrain: Water-logged basalt caves, unexpected puddles.

Obvious Feature: Olm village on the lake shore. 3 Olm preparing for a deep dive to rescue 1 Olm trapped by a current shift in the sump. Fatalistic, but curious.

Hidden Feature: Dead climber hanging high above lake and village, treasures glittering on his belt.

01.01 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone streaked with blue-green copper.

Obvious Feature: 15' vein of pottery shards. Fills some caves completely. Fragments of ancient art, writing, curses. Some might contains spells; most are junk.

Hidden Feature: 16 filthy Volume-Folk living inside the pottery veins. Kind but nervous. Can read and write any language.

01.02 – OLM – LITTORAL

Terrain: Silver-grey stone, shot through with granite veins.

Obvious Feature: Olm village holding a festival. 15 happy Olm, dancing. 3 dead Antlings are being devoured.

Hidden Feature: 2 Olm teenagers sneaking off for illicit dancing. Embarrassed. Secret path to (00.01).

01.03 – OLM – LITTORAL

Terrain: Worm-tunnels through grey limestone.

Obvious Feature: Hunting party of 4 Olm tracking a Purple Worm. Will trade gold or advice for help.

Hidden Feature: Purple Worm lair with 2 eggs, 3 dead adventurers. Half-digested loot.

01.04 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Red-black granite, fissured and crumbling.

Obvious Feature: Volume-Lord Korbax the All-Powerful. Sorcerer and cult of 36 cultist-farmers. Silk robes, mind-altering spells.

Hidden Feature: Nest of ultraviolet butterflies escaped from Korbax's collection.

01.05 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black granite, cracked, heaped, rough.

Obvious Feature: Cambrimen village. 14 dumb Cambrimen and 12 slaves farming cave slime. Buildings made of rubble and leather.

Hidden Feature: Lumps of mangled arcane tools from the Ruins. They look valuable, but are totally useless.

01.06 – GHOUL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey marble, dented with giant fingerprints.

Obvious Feature: Fortress of Ghoul Baron Gribs. Castle built into a cave wall. Baron wants a dancing master for his 3 bickering children.

Hidden Feature: Baron Gribs keeps 2 captives from (09.02) in the dungeon. He is fattening them for a feast.

01.07 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Dark blue granite, flecked with star-like grey.

Obvious Feature: Temple with a long stairway down, coated with ceramic spikes. Anyone entering the Temple must Save or lose faith. Bones of suicide victims in chasm below.

Hidden Feature: Gestalt ghosts of victims in the chasm will answer one question truthfully.

01.08 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Flat, plate-like caves filled with fine grey sand.

Obvious Feature: Sand causes exhaustion, desire for sleep. Each hour spent inside increases risk of sudden collapse. Will eventually wake up, but could starve in sleep.

Hidden Feature: Suparnar Sankar, dream-mage, sleeps in a hidden alcove. Anyone sleeping near her falls into her dreams.

01.09 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Jagged basalt, sharpened to knife edges, twisted.

Obvious Feature: Knife fields. Beautiful but dangerous. Any climb or chase could easily turn deadly.

Hidden Feature: 3 Panic Attack Jacks, the remains of a trade team. Sliced into ribbons, held together by rope.

02.00 – OLM – ABYSSAL – LAKE GREY

Terrain: Water-logged basalt caves, large stretches of open water with tumbled square stone blocks in them.

Obvious Feature: Olm village. 6 Olm cleaning deep-cave mussels and clams. Will sell beautiful, otherworldly shells.

Hidden Feature: Wrecked Illithid submarine on an island. The Olm can't figure out how to get inside.

02.01 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey marble with streaks of blue and gold.

Obvious Feature: Abandoned Olm village. Small, troubled. Signs of violence. In the sump, feasting, 60 fat, happy Scissorfish. 3 Olm still alive.

Hidden Feature: Cave with amber deposits. Contains tiny prehistoric insects. Melt to release — will perform 1 favour.

02.02 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Limestone, speckled and pitted. Unwelcoming.

Obvious Feature: 3 Drow corpses impaled on stalagmites. Put here by the Olm to mark territory.

Hidden Feature: Drow knives, silk, and poison stored in a hidden alcove.

02.03 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Limestone, with tall but narrow caves.

Obvious Feature: Caves full of luminescent worms with glowing threads. Catch insects. Olm have no idea they glow: they are fascinated by the idea, and want an explanation.

Hidden Feature: Olm mage mourning lost Groansump (13.05).

02.04 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Inverted pyramids in stone, fire-red glow below.

Obvious Feature: Each pyramid contains a Pyre Monk, eating heat. Monks are too hot to approach but will answer philosophical questions from a distance.

Hidden Feature: One monk is nearly ready to sublimate, leaving behind liquid residue of pure sin and worldliness.

02.05 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Marble boulders with tiny passages between.

Obvious Feature: Cave giant trapped under a rockfall. One horrible boneless arm free. Will whisper half-coherent promises, promise treasure. Treacherous and hungry.

Hidden Feature: dEr0 earthquake ray trapped in giant's buried arm. Has enough charge remaining to collapse one cave system.

02.06 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Limestone streaked with rush. Cold rivulets of water.

Obvious Feature: Large symmetrical cave with a dEr0 Influencing Machine in the middle. Machine is broken — or is it?

Hidden Feature: Second, identical cave with identical broken machine. 50% chance of finding each cave on return trips. Anyone sleeping in one cave wakes up in the other.

02.07 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black basalt slabs, heaped like a collapsed bookshelf.

Obvious Feature: Obsidian villa of Volume-Lord Xpenwag and his Court of Justice. 12 Volume-Folk. Will rule on any case. Feed on sulphur-eating cave rift bacteria. Biliious.

Hidden Feature: Vast hoard of treasure from fines and penalties, prison with 2 Olm, 1 Squidling.

02.08 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Polished marble, cut into careful ripples and whirls.

Obvious Feature: Hourglass Tomb. On its side, two halves, one central point. Cross it, squeeze through impossible gap, and travel 24 hours into the past. Can only do this once per lifetime. 2 Drow on both sides guide visitors.

Hidden Feature: Map to the Ruins (10.05) carved into walls.

02.09 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Bone-white marble, faint pink veins.

Obvious Feature: Vast mercury lagoon, paddled by Drow in long black boats, lit by red lanterns. Tower in the centre. Tower has boat docks. Will trade ice for silver.

Hidden Feature: Gold and treasure sunk in the lagoon, but good luck diving for it. Magical glimmer visible if you look.

02.10 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey-green stone, smooth and water-worn.

Obvious Feature: Tidal caves. Water from the surface flows one way, then another. Endless maze of waterfalls and floods.

Hidden Feature: Cave barnacles full of surface-filtered nutrients and fat. Each one is a feast, but they are hard to crack and harder to find in the shifting water-filled caves.

03.00 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Marble, white, grey, blue, almost purple in places. Signs of wear and use. Smoothed paths and climbing holds.

Obvious Feature: Olm Cave of Faces. Large gallery covered in carefully carved stone portraits. Olm, human, even Archaean. They will speak if you know the right words.

Hidden Feature: Olm mage with set of skull-measuring tools.

03.01 – OLM – ABYSSAL – GRAND SUMP

Terrain: Deep basalt sump with cave coral fans.

Obvious Feature: Olm city, sleeping. Most of the city is deep underwater. Some areas on the surface. Built into giant coral fans. No light, no sound but water.

Hidden Feature: Olm scout Fire-Touch-Hand has vowed to kill the Great White Fungus (05.05) for claiming her mate's leg.

03.02 – OLM – ABYSSAL – GRAND SUMP

Terrain: Deep basalt sump with stairs leading into the water.

Obvious Feature: Olm village, badly scarred, burnt. 3 Olm hiding in caves. Some treasure taken from the Ruins is shooting lasers everywhere. Olm can't see them, can't dodge. Need sighted people to switch it off.

Hidden Feature: Patrolling Defense Orb, damaged.

03.03 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Long warty finger-like caves. Ladders carved into the rock. Some are trapped.

Obvious Feature: 5 Olm warriors preparing to repel a Ghoul raid from (03.04). Will take any help they can get.

Hidden Feature: Ghoul tunnel behind Olm fortifications. 1 Paralytic Ghoul buried as warning system.

03.04 – GHOUL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, sulphur-yellow lumps and pits.

Obvious Feature: 1 Rational Ghoul and 8 Feral Ghouls preparing for a raid on the Olm village in (03.02) via (03.04).

Hidden Feature: Olm scout spying on Ghoul preparations. Has an invisible spear made of glass from the Ruins.

03.05 – GHOUL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, riddled with buildings. Stinks of ancient ash, sweat, and death.

Obvious Feature: The city of Lost Illiam, a decadent ghoul-infested wreck. Rubble-filled streets,

palaces full of music. No light save the hated flicker of the lighthouse.

Hidden Feature: The Unliving Market. Wights, bottled ghosts.

03.06 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White stone, very hard, mottled like a bird's egg.

Obvious Feature: Temple to a deep-vent prophet. Unseen, invisible. Will trade accurate locations of any item or person in exchange for spines. Toss them into the stinking vents.

Hidden Feature: Volume-Folk urchin hides, listens to prophecies, can recite past requests and responses for food.

03.07 – CHOLERID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, silt-coated, reeks of death.

Obvious Feature: 14 of Postwald's Kobolds from (14.08) on top of a pillar, besieged by 50 Cholerids.

Hidden Feature: Cave can be flooded by moving rocks near river; sweeps most Cholerids downstream, uncovers gold tomb-gifts buried in the muck.

03.08 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Chalky, crumbly, damp caves. Like walking through snow. Next to impossible to climb.

Obvious Feature: Pack of 5 Spotlight Dogs hunts intruders in the falling chalk dust. Will leave travelers alone for meat-tribute left on bloodstained basalt outcrop.

Hidden Feature: Secret path under outcrop to (04.08).

03.09 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Cloud-coloured granite, faint silver streaks.

Obvious Feature: Tomb of the Nameless Saint. Granite building, small, cramped. No violent act take place inside. Weapons heat to red-hot, spells fail, hands lock in place.

Hidden Feature: Master Thief and 2 assistants, exiled Thanuly's kobolds from (14.09), hide here with a small hoard.

04.00 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Narrow limestone caves, crawls and squeezes.

Obvious Feature: Diving pool. 4 young Olm practicing their dives from a high landing. Will hide from PCs, or get them to judge their flips and twists.

Hidden Feature: Drow slaver, waiting for chance to strike.

04.01 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: White marble, tightly folded and rolled, strange sticky-static texture to the rock.

Obvious Feature: Deep time mine. 2 Olm carefully extracting nuggets of time and dissolving them in alcohol.

Hidden Feature: Panic-slow-time flasks. Cause fear and heart attacks, but let you act twice per round.

04.02 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Worn limestone, small streams and rivers.

Obvious Feature: Hundreds of sinkholes and fissures can sweep people to (03.02) or drown them. Treacherous to pass through without a guide.

Hidden Feature: 3 drowned explorers from (09.02). One carrying a very important message for (07.05).

04.03 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Blue-grey limestone with fossilized plants and shells.

Obvious Feature: Ghoul Captain Szoban from (00.06), left for dead by the Olm. Mangled. Will promise rewards if returned to fortress to heal, bounty on Olm. Will keep word (if fed).

Hidden Feature: 12 Toraptoise trapped at the bottom of a deep slick pit, licking algae. Will attack anything that falls in.

04.04 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Silver quartz, bright and sharp facets.

Obvious Feature: Half-real Volume-Folk village. Only exists if you cannot see it. Any light, and it isn't real. Close your eyes, and it is. 14 Volume-Folk and a mischievous giant frog.

Hidden Feature: Cache of half-real weapons, wounds only real in the dark, healed by light.

04.05 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Damp black coal-caves, fuzzy blue-white mold.

Obvious Feature: Myconid village. 3d6 grey-white Myconids at all times. Introspective, dour, fatalistic.

Hidden Feature: The Myconids guard the spellbook of a powerful wizard. Some pages have rotted, but most are still intact. Dark rituals, powerful spells, full colour illustrations.

04.06 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Damp coal-caves, cracked, half-full of water.

Obvious Feature: Crashed Ghoul corpse-barge on shore of river. 6 Feral Ghouls fight 14 pink-grey Myconids from (05.06). 1d100 corpses remain in ruins of barge.

Hidden Feature: Welsan, tourist lich, trapped in barge. Put all his spells into defence; useless, forgetful, but nigh-invulnerable.

04.07 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Granite fissures and cracks, some pouring steam.

Obvious Feature: Strange medicine sellers in stone masks. Sells potions of positivity (let you ignore wounds, despair, starvation, etc.). Addictive. Cheap, at first.

Hidden Feature: Starving Illithid and 2 Squidlings lurking in the caves, looking for potion-addled brains.

04.08 – CHOLERID – PROFUNDAL - WRETCHTOWN

Terrain: Grey limestone, piles of rotting wood. Caves like open sores. Sewer-reek. Warm, sticky air.

Obvious Feature: Wretchtown, the Fever City. Buildings carved or built in memory of the city above. Always 3d100 Cholerids present, milling, moaning, acting out scenes of life.

Hidden Feature: Mock treasury is mostly full of rocks. Mostly.

04.09 – CHOLERID – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, worn, tracks cut through the silt.

Obvious Feature: Endless circuits of Cholerids. Sub-loops break from main loop. Sorted by age, sex, profession. Stumbling endlessly. Always 3d100 Cholerids present.

Hidden Feature: Hero-tomb, guarded by deranged supplicants. Magic weapons, frothing plague-mad hero inside.

04.10 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey-green stone, folded, many climbs and columns.

Obvious Feature: Rain of guano from somewhere high above. Bats, but have never been seen. 3d6 Giant Beetles in the muck guard their guano-coated eggs. Billions of smaller beetles.

Hidden Feature: Zol Kvenso, Volume-Folk fertilizer-raider. 2 unhappy assistants. Sells sacks of guano to highest bidder.

05.00 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Marble, grey-blue veins, deep chasms. Warmer than expected. Faint smell of rotting mushrooms.

Obvious Feature: Olm alcohol distillation works. Mushroom farms, huge vats and presses. 6 Olm on guard. 300 bottles of flammable liquor stores in dozens of ice-cold caches.

Hidden Feature: 5 Dvergr traders, haggling with an Olm elder.

05.01 – ANTLING – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone, with carefully mined connections.

Obvious Feature: Antling fortress-camp. Narrow, fortified tunnels. Spear-slits, patrols, uniforms, torches. 50 Antling Soldiers, 10 Antling Workers, 2 Antling Wizards.

Hidden Feature: Storehouse of spider-silk rope and climbing gear, the very best the Antlings can manufacture.

05.02 – ANTLING – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone, full of worm-tunnels and tiny squeezes.

Obvious Feature: 6 wounded Antling Soldiers milling in panic. 9 dead. An Antling diplomat was captured. No sign of attackers. They struck from the dark, no smell. Body in (00.04).

Hidden Feature: Signs of an Olm raiding party. Bone daggers, climbing marks. Planted by the Dvergr.

05.03 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone, with green-blue copper streaks.

Obvious Feature: Hall of Broken Tombs. Basalt-slab coffins, twice the size of a human's. Each contains a chained giant skeleton. The skeletons lurch out but cannot break their chains.

Hidden Feature: Shobolomenth, necromancer. Masked, sarcastic. Will only raise invertebrates, but is very good at it.

05.04 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Damp coal-caves, coated in a fine white fungus.

Obvious Feature: 16 red-black crinkled Myconids. Headhunters. Violent, but proud. Village-fort, spikes, skulls.

Hidden Feature: Myconids can cultivate a fresh head, grow it a temporary fungal body. Reincarnation, of a sort. They want their enemies, the Myconids of (05.06), destroyed.

05.05 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal-caves, smashed, pitted. Dense white tendrils.

Obvious Feature: The Great White Fungus. Looks like a deformed whale. Maw full of teeth. Scuttles on dozens of rotting, stolen legs, human, Drow, and Olm. Wants legs.

Hidden Feature: The God-Killer harpoon stuck in its back. Kills most things. Not fungus, apparently. Monstrously heavy.

05.06 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal caves. Pink-white fungus.

Obvious Feature: 19 Pink-Red Myconids. Lethargic but cunning. Barrels of acid to burn the fungus of (05.04).

Hidden Feature: The Myconids can swallow you and carry you anywhere in the Fungid Valley safely, but only if you destroy their hated enemies in (05.04).

05.07 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Shale, fractured and sharp. Long thin caves. Some marked with abstract clay and ochre patterns.

Obvious Feature: 12 Meanderthals, only real to humans. Copper ghosts otherwise. Crouched in a circle, whispering to 3 Tinder Conks. Conspiring ruin. Utterly deadly.

Hidden Feature: Dvergr book of mathematics buried in mud.

05.08 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Shale, formed into deep drifts. False streets, houses.

Obvious Feature: Gorbit, cave-witch, and her 3 mute apprentices. Gorbit sells secrets, blood magic, healing. Filthy and ignorant, but not unkind. Desires occultum, magic.

Hidden Feature: Drow spyglass in Gorbit's pile of rags and bones. Can see souls 60' away.

05.09 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black granite, large quartz outcrops. A crystal forest.

Obvious Feature: Anglerfish cave. Humanoid torso covered in jewels begs for help. Then cave closes, crushes, swallows. Time to escape, but there is treasure to loot and the exits may not be visible.

Hidden Feature: Adamant nuggets in the anglercave's gizzard.

06.00 – ANTLING – LITTORAL

Terrain: Blue-grey marble, tunneled, cleared. Piles of rubble.

Obvious Feature: Antling mining tunnel, slowly moving downwards. Square cut, well made. 30 Antling Workers, 6 Antling Soldiers.

Hidden Feature: Small occultum vein not noticed by the Antlings.

06.01 – ANTLING – LITTORAL – HIVE OF SPICES

Terrain: White marble, cut into square sightlines. Nowhere to hide. Roads regular and orderly.

Obvious Feature: Antling city, fortified. Outer markets are sometimes open to outsiders. Core, almost never. More like a castle than a city, more like a mine than a castle.

Hidden Feature: Drow visitor-diplomat, looking for weakness.

06.02 – ANTLING – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone, worn into vast chasms and slides.

Obvious Feature: Small fortress on the edge of a deep chasm. 5 Antling Soldiers, 2 Antling Workers. Bottom is 400' down, contains a Cromagnogolem, 8 dead Antlings.

Hidden Feature: Ancient cave-paintings at bottom of pit explain how to calm Cromagnogolems and also Dragons.

06.03 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Silver-grey marble with vein-like growths.

Obvious Feature: Huswan, explorer from (09.02), cursed by the cave witch in (05.08). Limbs keep falling off. Currently trying to retrieve leg from a pit.

Hidden Feature: Infinite spiral cave. Can walk down forever. Turn around, walk up, entrance was somehow right behind you.

06.04 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal, riddled with long thin tunnels. Blue-green fungus on the walls. Air is thick with spores.

Obvious Feature: Strongly hallucinogenic spores also leach strength. Colonize lungs, eyes, tongue. Blind, madden, kill.

Hidden Feature: Dozens of fungus-rotted corpses buried in the spores, clutching old weapons, treasure. Crunch of bones.

06.05 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Huge coal-caves, 10' high but hundreds of feet long, floor made of silt and water. Metallic smell, toxic.

Obvious Feature: Boats made of shale skim across the toxic silt. 25 blue-white chattering Myconids from an island village. Trade food for passage.

Hidden Feature: Curse-metal golem, dead or dormant, buried.

06.06 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal-caves, warm, full of steam. White fungus strands.

Obvious Feature: 13 Adapted Humanoids hidden in a strand-forest. Pale, wretchedly thin, whip-smart survivalists. Would like a better, safer home.

Hidden Feature: Homonculite crystal, kept as a war-trophy and used as a throne.

06.07 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Marble gardens, full of rot and chemical slime.

Obvious Feature: 3 impressively murderous dryads guarding a flash-carbonized grove. Can be distracted by fruit, vegetables. Grove contains a stone that produces pure water.

Hidden Feature: Chem-blasted tree branches are light, strong, impervious to rot. Slightly toxic.

06.08 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Confusion of granite domes and stairs. Wisps of cold vapour. Rumbling, groaning.

Obvious Feature: Alchemical hydra lurking in the domes. The size of a whale. Far too many heads. Fears only sunlight.

Hidden Feature: Hydra's blood provides immunity to one or more elements. Risky.

06.09 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Black granite boulders, stacked. Crawl between them.

Obvious Feature: In a squeeze-cave, a tomb cairn. The ghost of Hrohnaal the Cruel demands vengeance on the Great White Fungus in (05.05). Offers his magic axe for proof.

Hidden Feature: Ghosts of the slave-wives of Hrohnaal, buried in a separate cairn. Rather peeved at Hrohnaal. Want revenge.

06.10 – ARCHAEOAN – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Basalt, broken and cracked as if by explosive force.

Obvious Feature: Statue-cave of a medusa. Petrifies interesting people for her Archaean friends and protectors. Party should convince her they are boring/ugly/commonplace. Missing sister in (00.09)

Hidden Feature: Silver flower garden, beautiful, peaceful.

07.00 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Marble, stained by mud. Warm, foggy. Bursts of rain.

Obvious Feature: Vast lagoon of boiling mud. Giant mud-snakes, hiding in the muck, devour travelers. Mud has healing properties, can also remove wrinkles and cure baldness.

Hidden Feature: Temple to a forgotten toad-faced god, half-sunk and defiled. Valuable offerings still present.

07.01 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Blue-white marble. Very fine quality.

Obvious Feature: City of the Blind Pretenders. Actually a small village. 28 Volume-Folk, the ruined remnants of surface nobility. Blinded, mutilated, exiled. Proud, regal. Rich but cruel.

Hidden Feature: Rickety elevator to surface. Can transport head-sized objects only (not people). Messages, etc.

07.02 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Fossil-filled limestone. Skulls in carved alcoves.

Obvious Feature: 5 Wights in a thick circle of rock salt. Will ask PCs to break circle (possibly by diverting river) so they can escape. They promise to lead PCs to treasure. They lie.

Hidden Feature: 3 suits of black-glass armour in a pit. The armour only protects in total darkness, but it weighs very little.

07.03 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal soaked with water. Fungus tendrils hanging limp.

Obvious Feature: Tidal caves. Flood every few hours, then drain, then flood. Water-adapted fungus filter-feeders.

Hidden Feature: 12 drowned Antling scouts (as Panic Attack Jacks). Tangled in rope, twitching, rotting. Want to add more to their horrible water-soaked mass.

07.04 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Damp coal-caves. White fungus, scoured in tracks. Faint roaring, rumbling sound.

Obvious Feature: The Ooze Cyclone. A large funnel-shaped cave, steep and wet. Oozes of all sizes and varieties circle the inside of the funnel, catching food that flows in with the river.

Hidden Feature: Vast hoard of indigestible treasure at bottom.

07.05 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal caves, thin and silt-clogged.

Obvious Feature: 30 Yellow-Black Myconids. Thin, weedy, sarcastic but ignorant. Each one has memorized a book. Some magical, some mundane. Valuable captives.

Hidden Feature: Illithid mind-enhancing helm. Boosts intelligence and reflexes at the cost of sanity.

07.06 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black granite cubes, tumbled, cracked open.

Obvious Feature: Forge-farms, long cooled and corroded by the Plume. Immense machines, now silent. Long slivers of adamant and mithril remain untouched in the rust-flake layers.

Hidden Feature: Obese rust monster, too fat and happy to move. 5,000 eggs about to hatch.

07.07 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone palaces, warped as if by heat. Runny galleries, melted thrones. Bursts of latent magic.

Obvious Feature: One palace seems remarkably untouched, preserved in a time-locked magic field. But how to crack the field? A trigger, a key, or a colossal impact.

Hidden Feature: Ghost-caller flute sings in a sprawling tomb.

07.08 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Shale, bent upwards, burst like a torn book. High thin canyons. Faint smell of incense.

Obvious Feature: Lichocanth, giant spider. Traps people to trade with the Drow for riddles. Loves riddles. Drow riddles are the best because they are impossible to solve.

Hidden Feature: Wind-cloak, makes wearer light as a feather.

07.09 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Black granite, carved into endless stairs and galleries.

Obvious Feature: Escher maze. Gravity bends, folds, spins. Walk around a corner and onto a roof. Easy to enter; hard to leave. Safe enough. 3 Drow chasing 1 Volume-Folk escapee.

Hidden Feature: Gravity wand. Can shift gravity in a single cave. Angle, reverse, negate.

08.00 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Brown-black sandstone, crumbling and broken.

Obvious Feature: Cambrimen army. 52 Cambrimen in terrible armour, trained by Mad King Lupsvig to retake his fortress in (09.02). Plan is on the edge of collapse.

Hidden Feature: Crow jewels of Lupsvig. Allow wearer to hear thoughts of nearby people. Also adds false, malicious thoughts.

08.01 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Brown sandstone, pitted and hollowed, worn in tracks.

Obvious Feature: 80 Splinterlads in a close orbit around a glowing glass orb. Pick up the orb to control them. Survive getting to the orb first.

Hidden Feature: Find-Lost-Gold, Olm mage, studying the splinterlads by sound. Has no idea there is an orb. Ambitious.

08.02 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal, but mixed with slate and layers of basalt. Orange fungus. Pools of orange-tinged water.

Obvious Feature: 200 white and orange Myconids. Small, dumb, and fragile. Will fling themselves at any threat and explode into cloying, choking clouds of dried fungal dust.

Hidden Feature: 2 dead Squidling explorers.

08.03 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal, deeply fissured. Puffs of hot steam.

Obvious Feature: 6 brown flat Myconids. Sturdy, placid. Brightly lit village-temple full of glowing fungi. They revere light and protect a giant yellow mold colony.

Hidden Feature: 12 yellow mold grenades. Fragile. Toss them and they fill 10'x10' with yellow mold. Grows rapidly.

08.04 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL – HARBINGER BASIN

Terrain: Deep, turbid lake surrounded by cracked coal.

Obvious Feature: 14 aquatic Myconids, seal-like and sleek, lamprey mouths. They like ribbons and mirrors.

Hidden Feature: Castilian Caddis Larvae, nearly ready to become an apocalyptic Caddis Dragon. Everyone powerful knows, or has hints, and wants it dead.

08.05 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Coal, low and damp. Brown sulphur-rich veins coated in grey-white fungal strands.

Obvious Feature: Swarm of 30 sticky grey mushmice. Stick to flesh, cloth. Weigh down and

exhaust, then slowly consume. Removed by vinegar, fire, or brutal smashing blows.

Hidden Feature: Spring of pure, delicious, carbonated water.

08.06 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black granite towers, heaped/decapitated.

Obvious Feature: Cave of wizard skulls parsing insane binary-click-calculations in the dark. Constant sound of teeth chattering. Cast spells if disturbed.

Hidden Feature: Lots of black apprentice robes on dead apprentices. Minor protection from magic.

08.07 – ARCHAEOAN – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Basalt, limestone, and granite, mixed and fused. Spikes of metal. Hissing lakes of acid, water, molten salt.

Obvious Feature: Field of upturned silver horns. Occasionally, one fire a spray of molten silver. 1 Archaean, meandering.

Hidden Feature: 4 Snail Reactors in close proximity. Full of rare metals, trapped steam.

08.08 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Limestone buildings, spiral-cut into lace by the Plume.

Obvious Feature: A grand dome of untouched metal. Inside, mechanisms, lenses, condensers. The Celestial Nitrogen Orrery, for monitoring the surface. See table.

Hidden Feature: Ailment transference chambers. Move diseases, mutations, etc. from one person to another.

08.09 – DROW – ABYSSAL – NEW LARENIA

Terrain: Deep ore-rich stone, drinks light. Polished.

Obvious Feature: Drow city. Long lightless halls, deep rose gardens. Faint amused laughter. A grand ball always seems to be taking place somewhere just around the corner.

Hidden Feature: Slave auction. Not immaculate, but beautiful, perfect, obedient. Can transfer old memories to a new body.

08.10 – DROW – PROFUNDAL – OLD LARENIA

Terrain: Deep, ore-rich stone, drinks light.

Obvious Feature: Abandoned Drow city. Still beautiful, still elegant, but lifeless. Statues of black stone loom over desolate walkways and empty squares.

Hidden Feature: Red lantern swarm, like a cloud of razor-covered fireflies. Beautiful, then deadly.

09.00 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Grey marble, black veins. Flecked with pyrite.

Obvious Feature: Village of 36 headless Volume-Folk. They think having no heads is great. Big guillotine in town square. Will invite PCs to try it. Success rate is very low.

Hidden Feature: Pile of dried shrunken heads in the temple. Smoke them to gain wisdom, insight into secret plots.

09.01 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Blindingly white chalk. Soft, sharp.

Obvious Feature: Pit of giant cave centipedes. Dozens of them, fat and murderous. Rickety and flammable bridge across.

Hidden Feature: Blood-Cut-Eye, Olm egg-thief, with climbing harness and centipede-distracting smoke bombs. Wants help.

09.02 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Grey stone with red blotches, as if scabbed.

Obvious Feature: Distressing Fortress of Yolta the Cruel (hail Yolta!). 58 Volume-Folk in a menacing castle-farm. Contains the Mandated Market, where prices are fair (or else).

Hidden Feature: Smashed statues of Mad King Lupsvig (08.00). Disorganized royalists plot to return him to the throne.

09.03 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Green stone, carved into abstract rings and chains.

Obvious Feature: Monastery of the Core. 14 Volume-Folk monks, well trained. Believe the surface is a lie, surface creatures are liars and heretics. Challenge with logic, then with red hot pokers. Want to kill the heretic monk in (13.04).

Hidden Feature: Relic of the core; metal that is always red hot.

09.04 – FUNGID – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Damp coal-caves, full of silt. Green warty fungus.

Obvious Feature: 20 green wrinkled Myconids. They want music, dancing, songs. Incoherent musical hooting. They taste absolutely delicious.

Hidden Feature: 2 fungus-infested Olm. They want a cure, or to have their bones brought to (13.01).

09.05 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey-green slabs, densely tunneled. Endless identical warrens with endless barricaded doors.

Obvious Feature: Slave barracks. Giant serpent made of coiled chains and manacles and gestalt ghosts.

Hidden Feature: Obedience rods (command once per day) in sealed bunkers. Slowly warp the mind with repeated use.

09.06 – RUINS – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Vertical cityscape in marble. Walls are floors. Chandeliers hang like crystal trees. Folded, crumbling.

Obvious Feature: Dvergr mining team of 5 working to crack a monolithic vault. Horrors inside. Hear them whisper.

Hidden Feature: Lake of acidic gold slurry at the bottom. Worth a fortune if condensed. Don't fall through the mists.

09.07 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Prismatic glass buildings, etched by the Plume.

Obvious Feature: Gerome Veldsbit, illusionist for hire. Wants safe passage out of the Ruins. Has gold and a secret treasure: an egg that empowers spells with uncanny life and accuracy.

Hidden Feature: Cave of eternal ice. Melts by hate only. Water made from it causes either death or ecstasy.

09.08 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Black granite, smoothed into perfect cylinder halls, branching like veins.

Obvious Feature: True Love mirror. Shows the viewer's one true love (in theory). Usually provokes despair. People are tempted to touch or leap into the mirror, never to return.

Hidden Feature: 4 scattered bodies: dead by suicide.

09.09 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Basalt, rippled like the surface of a lake. Difficult climbs, dizzying canyons and pits.

Obvious Feature: Drow with 3 dead Immaculate Slaves. Drow's legs were devoured by the Great White Fungus (05.05). Wants PCs to kill it. Also wants to die.

Hidden Feature: Entangling whip, designed to catch and bind.

10.00 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Brown sandstone, worn into drifts and heaps.

Obvious Feature: Mincent, Tooth Merchant. Strange, four-armed creature with pliers and a white mask. Buys teeth (living or dead), loves rare teeth. Attended by 15 tooth birds (full smiles, sharp beaks). They cry, “my teef!”

Hidden Feature: Spell-deflecting runes carved into a pillar.

10.01 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Blue limestone, streaked with water trails and calcite growths. Inverted fields of fine white crystals.

Obvious Feature: Crystal fortress of Lo Sam and his 11 Volume-Folk followers. Ambitious, intelligent, insane.

Hidden Feature: In the vault, a forged contract between Lo Sam and the Olm against the Dracospawn. A Dvergr scheme.

10.02 – FUNGID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black shale, mixed with veins of brown coal. White tendrils of fungus, pulsing slightly.

Obvious Feature: 46 Myconids. Radicals, outcasts, schemers, dreamers, and revolutionaries. Full of books and speeches.

Hidden Feature: Cache of weapons for the Glorious Revolution. Some rusted, some sharp, some magical.

10.03 – FUNGID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black shale, mixed with thin veins of brown coal. Blue-grey tufts of fungus.

Obvious Feature: The Drug Market. The best drugs. Every visitor must take a dose of mild hallucinogenic mushrooms to enter. Myconids wander in and out, trading or prodding.

Hidden Feature: Friend tincture. Cures loneliness.

10.04 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Purple stone, distinct and vibrant. Sharp edges, mirror-bright facets. Distant screams.

Obvious Feature: The Shrieking Worms. Vast colony of red finger-thick flesh-devouring worms. Their cries slowly drive creatures mad, sending them into the maws of the worms.

Hidden Feature: Worm oil burns cleanly, no smoke or smell.

10.05 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Brown stone spires, copper domes corroded into blue-green streaks by the Plume. Tall, narrow buildings.

Obvious Feature: Temple district, mostly looted. Smoothed statues. Ghost worshippers. Unholy relics in vaults.

Hidden Feature: Temple of Fortune occupied by Klon Fume, a radical Antling, and her band of 5 thieves. Addicted to chance.

10.06 – RUINS – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Corroded limestone. A sludge of digested buildings.

Obvious Feature: Enormous statue with one burning eye, toppled across an entire district. Inside, 36 of Atgased’s kobolds from (14.10) tunnel to seek the Eternal Flame.

Hidden Feature: Pockets of condensed deadly Plume-gas, trapped inside buildings, coated in dust. Looks just like stone.

10.07 – RUINS – LITTORAL

Terrain: Sandstone and marble arches. Signs of violence. Tumbled columns.

Obvious Feature: Square of Measures. Every item inside is marked by magic floating runes listing its true weight.

Hidden Feature: Waste cavern of street-cleaning automatons, full of bones, ash, chemical waste, occultum, and gold.

10.08 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White marble, banded with orange stripes.

Obvious Feature: Cave cricket migration. They fill every cave. Not dangerous, but in their thousands they can bite and choke. Rich source of food.

Hidden Feature: 1 hommonculite crystal, buried, stripped clean of flesh.

10.09 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Basalt, chipped like the scales of a fish.

Obvious Feature: Silk sunset halls. Enormous ribbons of red, orange, yellow, silk. Burns skin, dries leather. Flammable. Possibly too flammable.

Hidden Feature: Silk songbirds, carefully enchanted. Difficult to catch but worth a fortune.

10.10 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: White marble, striped with perfectly even bands of black. Basalt columns and hissing sounds.

Obvious Feature: The Tumbling Fortress. Perfectly balanced halls rotate on hidden pivots, sliding and turning with the slightest movement. 5 Drow, unconcerned.

Hidden Feature: Cache of immobile rods with 2 min. timers.

11.00 – OLM – LITTORAL

Terrain: White marble, faint flowers of pink quartz.

Obvious Feature: Abandoned Olm village. Signs of violence. 9 dead Olm being carried back to (10.01) by 5 of Lo Sam's musclebound followers.

Hidden Feature: 3 Olm children hidden in a cask. Fierce but afraid. They need a sump and a guardian.

11.01 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, glistening with water and slime.

Obvious Feature: Cult of ooze-riding goblins. Snorkels. They ride inside, resistant to acid, dragging victims in to feast.

Hidden Feature: Ooze breeding facility. Nortu Prenstobar, ancient Volume-Folk mage, will create, tame, or command any ooze for the right price. Wants blood, flesh, magic, solitude.

11.02 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Brown stone, flaking and crusted with sulphur.

Obvious Feature: Myconid army. 24 Myconids, armed and ready for war. Their general, a Volume-Folk leader named Uli, died a few hours ago from a tragic fall. They wait for orders.

Hidden Feature: Uli's war-plan. Map to a random hex, plus words to command the Myconids. Without it, they sleep.

11.03 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Brown stone, flaking, piled in drifts, stacked in slabs.

Obvious Feature: A half-finished fortress. Gates half-open, towers half-raised. Built by a captive Dvergr, imprisoned by the late Uli (11.02). Alcohol drip-feeder chains it to the fortress.

Hidden Feature: Folding fortress. The size of a brick. Expands into a paper-thin knife-edge tower. The Dvergr's escape plan.

11.04 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black stone, slightly greasy, pockmarked and worn.

Obvious Feature: dEr0 trap. Signs carved in every language point to a door, clearly say "this is not a trap." Madness-maze inside leads to the Ruins or, more probably, to death.

Hidden Feature: Guide house. 3 guides, eerily identical, possibly dopplegangers. Always 3 in the house. Paid in secrets.

11.05 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Green stone, shining, full of fern-like whirls.

Obvious Feature: Oblivion Monastery. Vindicated apocalyptic cult. The Century Plume ended the old world and made them rulers of the new. 23 blind, smug monks. Black robes, white paint, sewing needles and cannibal religious ceremonies.

Hidden Feature: Skeleton-filled catacombs lead to the Ruins.

11.06 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black stone, ancient cracked roads. Square shafts.

Obvious Feature: Radical Society Engine. Starting again, but better. Dozens of cell-villages fed by complex ducts and pipes. Cabal of undead Overseers test new societal configurations.

Hidden Feature: Always another vault, another starch-farm, another cistern. Layered, coiled, interwoven. Places to hide.

11.07 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, worn into round tunnels.

Obvious Feature: The Conqueror Wurm. Purple, fat, gigantic, nearly immobile. A living dungeon. Slowly digests explorers.

Hidden Feature: Skeleton army. 40 regimented skeletons, marching in lockstep. Controlled by the crown in (08.00).

11.08 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Slate, polished into overlapping plates.

Obvious Feature: Liquid time mine. Art deco pumpjacks, silent movement. Faint smell of nostalgia, regret. 1 Drow and 3 Immaculate Slaves, apparently waiting for something.

Hidden Feature: 5 Immortality Potions, locked silver cask. Live forever, but without joy or rest, slowly fading. Smells bitter.

11.09 – DROW – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey granite, carved into odd angles and long columned halls. Angular faces smile blandly.

Obvious Feature: 2 Drow, 5 Immaculate Slaves leading 12 drugged, sleepwalking Olm and Volume-Folk slaves. Silver chains glimmer. Heading to New Larenia (08.09).

Hidden Feature: Famed Olm master poet, One-Finger-Sight.

12.00 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Blue-grey limestone, full of thin calcite layers. A white milky sheen on every surface. Difficult to climb.

Obvious Feature: Sever-Nine-Necks, ancient Olm mage, sits in bone-nest seclusion. Will trade centuries of wisdom for meat. Never rejects a polite guest. Nearly transparent, trembling.

Hidden Feature: Fish-finding stone, always points to water.

12.01 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: White limestone, maze-like and unmarked. Dry, with strange breezes, cold pockets, long drops.

Obvious Feature: Found-No-Lies, a young Olm warrior, hunts a young cancer bear to prove herself. Nervous, twitchy.

Hidden Feature: One-Hand-Fall, older Olm warrior, secretly monitors the initiate. Will ask PCs to harmlessly test her.

12.02 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Brilliant blue granite, large silver flakes.

Obvious Feature: Olm village. 2 Olm carving a new house. Cheerful, a little bit tipsy. Worried about training hunt in (12.01).

Hidden Feature: Illithid Watchman stuck to a high column, watching village, relaying info back to Illithid overlord in (14.02)

12.03 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Faintly pink marble. Thin rivers of water.

Obvious Feature: Bite-Friend-Gills, an Olm explorer, ate some mushrooms from the Drug Market in (10.03). Can see colours. Starting to panic, needs sighted PCs to talk him down.

Hidden Feature: Wandering hallucinogenic mushroom with a bite taken from it. Sporulating on a dead scissorfish.

12.04 – ARCHAEAN – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Basalt, cracked and melted. Pockets of shining black glass. Strong metallic stink.

Obvious Feature: 1 Archaean standing over a dead Archaean. It will hand the PCs a tracking device to find the murderer. Leads to (16.00). Device does not always work.

Hidden Feature: 2 Squidlings, hunting for brains. Bystanders.

12.05 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: White salt, crumbling and cold. Thin halls and quarries. Nightmare whalesong and flickering shadows.

Obvious Feature: 1 Oneirocetacean, stranded, floating, writhing. Song fills the hex. Everyone nearby wants it dead.

Hidden Feature: 12 goblins, nightmare-addled, toothy. Gigeresque eyeless monsters. Cowardly but hateful.

12.06 – ILLITHID – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey claystone, chipped like the inside of ancient pottery, stacked and abandoned. Grey water.

Obvious Feature: False safe cave conceals an Illithid farm-fortress. Glass-metal spire, bursting from below. 1 Illithid, 5 Squidlings, 19 Volume-Folk slaves.

Hidden Feature: 2 Doppelgangers, copying each other.

12.07 – ILLITHID – PROFUNDAL – THE CRYSTAL SPIRE

Terrain: Grey slate, cracked. Wisps of steam.

Obvious Feature: Illithid city. Quartz buildings with metal supports. Rivers of black oil. Lit by lightning. Ruled by 3 Illithids, but distantly. City itself is safe, but slavers and traders seek new brains constantly.

Hidden Feature: Volume-Folk rebels looking to escape.

12.08 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Black granite, flecked with white spots in perfect geometric constellations.

Obvious Feature: Silver building contains 14 blind orphans weaving beautiful silk trade goods. 1 Drow in charge of blinding, 1 Drow in charge of orphaning.

Hidden Feature: Silk dye-vats, brilliantly coloured, valuable.

12.09 – DRACOSPAWN – PROFUNDAL – KASELDRAKE

Terrain: Blue marble, carved into halls, towers and stairs.

Obvious Feature: City-lair of Kaseldrake, silver dragon. Soft white light, mirror-smooth rivers. Peacocks tended by individual kobolds. Wide avenues, roofless buildings. Muffled speech.

Hidden Feature: Secret princess in Kaseldrake's palace. From the moon, sleeps in a false moon-garden. Would like to return.

12.10 – DRACOSPAWN – LITTORAL

Terrain: White marble, oceanic whirls of blue and green.

Obvious Feature: Secret neutral ground for the Five Tyrants. 15 Sycophants at any given time, plotting or complaining.

Hidden Feature: Illithid Interpreter, diplomat, from (12.07). Faceless, intelligent. Waiting for a Fungal Ambassodile to discuss a vital alliance.

13.00 – OLM – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Slumping grey marble, heaped like dough.
Obvious Feature: Vast cylindrical sump. Thousands of sleeping Olm. Ancient heat-exchange vanes keep the sump ice cold, the surrounding caves scorching hot.
Hidden Feature: 3 Olm mages on guard, looking for soul-smells, slavers, thieves. Wise, polite, but impatient.

13.01 – OLM – ABYSSAL – TRICKLESUMP

Terrain: Grey limestone, full of water. Dozens of tiny rivers lead to thin but incredibly deep pools.
Obvious Feature: Olm city. Dozens of interlinked neighborhoods. Feast day, cooking and flaying segments of a purple worm. Triumphant celebrations. Liquor and dancing.
Hidden Feature: Hair market. Lovely texture. Wigs available.

13.02 – OLM – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, scarred and chipped, full of tunnels, stairs, shattered ropes.
Obvious Feature: War zone. 16 Olm perform hit-and-run attacks against 10 Squidlings and 3 Myrmidons. Illithid reinforcements are on the way. The Olm are losing.
Hidden Feature: dEr0 Influencing Machine.

13.03 – NEUTRAL – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Brown stone, greasy and deceptive. Horrible smell.
Obvious Feature: Goblin town. Vast filth-warren fed by volcanic sulphur vents, worms, runoff. Always more goblins. They ride giant cave crickets, throw beetle-bombs, and respect no one.
Hidden Feature: Goblin guides will lead you anywhere badly but quickly. You might need to beat them in a contest first.

13.04 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey stone with pockets of round river-worn rocks.
Obvious Feature: Fes Lurtan Garp, heretic monk from (09.03). Believes there is a surface and that surface-worlders have souls. Will try to get PCs back to the monastery, vivisect them.
Hidden Feature: Cache of half-real supplies from (04.04). Rations and rope that only exists in the dark.

13.05 – OLM – ABYSSAL - GROANSUMP

Terrain: Dark red stone, smooth and warm.
Obvious Feature: Abandoned Olm village and sump-lake. Vampire Olm lurks in the sump, buried in the bones and gold.
Hidden Feature: Secret tunnel to Hell. Deep in the sump in a hidden air pocket. The Olm found it, locked it away. Only the oldest Olm know of it, but they might not know where.

13.06 – ILLITHID – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Basalt boulder-fields. Thin cracked caves.
Obvious Feature: Abandoned Illithid fungus-farm. 6 Myconids protect a vast fungus nest. 9 deranged Squidlings protect their dead master and Illithid treasures. Whirring fans, broken glass.
Hidden Feature: Mirrored bracers, allow the wearer to move damage onto bonded slaves or hirelings.

13.07 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black granite, lit by bright blue glow worms. Toxic, difficult to handle. Only luminescent in total stillness.
Obvious Feature: The Surface. A cave system carved into surface scenes. False forests, sunrises, flocks of birds, mountains. Like Plato's Cave, but with ochre fingerpaints.
Hidden Feature: 2 Meananderthals, waiting for victims.

13.08 – DRACOSPAWN – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Damp grey marble, white ridges of harder stone.
Obvious Feature: Small lake, stinking and sulphurous. Kobold with breathing tube gives shiny but mundane sword, tells you to slay dragons, bumbles about destiny and rewards.
Hidden Feature: 15 of Atgased's kobolds with a hoard of shiny but mundane swords. They think their gag is hilarious.

13.09 – DRACOSPAWN – LITTORAL

Terrain: Brown claystone, flakes as you try to climb. Slippery.
Obvious Feature: 11 of Postwald's kobolds have captured 3 Dvergr miners. 9 dead kobolds, lots of celebrating. They are busy snipping the feet off the Dvergr and searching their packs.
Hidden Feature: 2 surviving Dvergr miners trying to find a way to rescue their friends before the Dragonborn arrive.

14.00 – DVERGR – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey limestone. Some raw caves, some carefully sculpted, tiled, fractally engraved.

Obvious Feature: Dvergr explorer, cursed by the witch in (05.08) to have zero grip strength. Needs magical advice.

Hidden Feature: Mine with swift mining engine. Can be hijacked, taken to any hex between (14.01) and (14.10), once.

14.01 – ILLITHID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, dotted with massive shells.

Obvious Feature: Illithid fortress, shell-like and opalescent. 1 Illithid, 10 Mymrdons, 10 Squidlings. Pens and processing areas contain 19 Volume-Folk and 3 of Postwald's kobolds.

Hidden Feature: Surgical facility. Heal mortal wounds, remove unwanted features, grants new abilities.

14.02 – ILLITHID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Blue granite, razor spikes and deep canyons.

Obvious Feature: Collapsed slave-farm. 15 exultant Volume-Folk feed on a cluster of dying polyps. Smashed glass, broken machines. Mob rule prevails.

Hidden Feature: Wounded Illithid, trapped in a cave. Wants to get out, rebuild. Hasn't had brains in hours. Getting twitchy.

14.03 – ILLITHID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Grey granite. Huge slab-sided caves, shadowed.

Obvious Feature: Illithid rock-crawling machine, crashed. 3 badly wounded Myrmidons. Debris, metal, poison everywhere.

Hidden Feature: Portable folding engine. Allows a person to become 2D. Coming back requires someone else to operate engine. 4 charges left. Recharged by insane alchemy.

14.04 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Pale pink marble, carved to resemble huge prone and intertwined figures, like sleeping giants.

Obvious Feature: A series of reception rooms/halls, held by carved statues. 1 Drow in the centre, waiting.

Hidden Feature: Collection of stone limbs. Can be attached to a wounded PC, replace any injury with hard stone.

14.05 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Rust, covering a thick layer of impure and slightly toxic iron. Thick drifts of rust, bright orange pools of water.

Obvious Feature: Ancient war-engine, half melted, dead. Climbing limbs, glass dome eyes, death-

spewing maw. No violence can take place inside.

Hidden Feature: 50 ageless, pale children, giggling and hiding.

14.06 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black obsidian, glassy, etched with faint vein-like lines.

Obvious Feature: Mortismun Weel, cave mage from (16.09), trying to lure Ignimbrite Mites out of the glass. Has just succeeded, does not want to share, will try to drive PCs away.

Hidden Feature: Deep reflections of deep time. Enough loose magic makes the glass into portals. Can slip into other worlds.

14.07 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Red stone, formed into rings and loops like tree trunks or ripples on a pond. Easy to climb, but hard to navigate.

Obvious Feature: Deep, impassable river. To cross here, take the suspended ferry. One-eyed Wight maintains it. Costs a percentage of your soul. Induces madness.

Hidden Feature: Congealed madness flakes. Provides insight.

14.08 – DRACOSPAWN – LITTORAL - POSTWALD

Terrain: White limestone, full of tunnels, sumps, traps, false paths, and loops. Easy to get lost.

Obvious Feature: Lair of Postwald, tin dragon. Few small rooms, incompetent deathtraps. Protective, competent kobolds.

Hidden Feature: Religious temple. Full of mixed icons, relics, soggy texts, pews, statues. Valuable but precariously stacked.

14.09 – DRACOSPAWN – LITTORAL - THANULY

Terrain: Brown stone, quarried. Streets, avenues, houses, markets. Even the caves have clear paths.

Obvious Feature: Grand city of Absalom. Ruled by Thanuly, orange dragon (disguised as Mistress Yolonda). Mandatory joy. Artists, parties. Kobolds disguised as furniture.

Hidden Feature: Nobles huff cylinders of prophecy gas.

14.10 – DRACOSPAWN – PROFUNDAL - ATGASED

Terrain: Dense basalt, acid-scarred. Pools of sludge.

Obvious Feature: Lair of Atgased the Vile, green dragon. Huge shallow acid lake. Atgased lurks within, kobolds and dracospawn slither from island to island.

Hidden Feature: Heap of damaged spellbooks on an island. Faint magical glow. Might be some spells left.

15.00 – DVERGR – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black granite, bands of grey and white. Square pillars, very difficult to climb.

Obvious Feature: Homunculite storage halls. Long sepulchral halls, rotting clumps of fungus. Grave goods, gems, gold.

Hidden Feature: Dvergr miner, waiting to die and sleep. Will tell PCs anything to get them to leave him alone.

15.01 – DVERGR – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey granite, alcove of dense work between expanses of unworked, untouched caves.

Obvious Feature: Deep Dvergr works. Deep square mineshaft, no safety rail. 15 Dvergr working at the bottom.

Hidden Feature: Exposed diamond tube halfway down a vertical shaft. Raw, uncut. Some are the size of a clenched fist.

15.02 – ILLITHID – LITTORAL – THE ROOTS

Terrain: Black basalt, fronds of metal and glass.

Obvious Feature: Illithid City. Ruled by 5 Illithids in 5 matching tree-like citadels made of black stone and silver oiled metal. Vast central pavilion. Citizens hurry, as if watched or hunted.

Hidden Feature: Food memory seller. Glass bottles contain nostalgia for uneaten meals. Can make anything palatable.

15.03 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White marble, shiny and smooth. No sharp edges.

Obvious Feature: Noise-cancelling caves. Any sound reverberates, cancels it at the source. Sounds louder than a shout can cause damage, head-explosions.

Hidden Feature: Silent instruments, carefully stored in an empty auditorium. Creates music heard by the soul.

15.04 – DROW – ABYSSAL – DREAMING CITY

Terrain: Silver-grey marble, shimmering like mist or moonlight.

Obvious Feature: Drow city on the shore of an enormous lake. Long docks covered in buildings extend over the water. Dreams in the city have the solidity of reality; can walk into dreams by accident. Sleep is very dangerous; can't tell if you are awake.

Hidden Feature: Drow ball, dancing just below the water.

15.05 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Silver-grey marble, but mostly deep, cold water.

Obvious Feature: the Lake of Teeth. Drow walk upside-down below the surface on unknown errands. Deepest points lead to the Nightmare Sea.

Hidden Feature: Psychic sharks, bites drain life and souls but do not harm flesh. Teeth make fearsome weapons.

15.06 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Grey marble, silver veins, little blooms of black.

Obvious Feature: Staircase fort. Infinite sections of stairs lead to three identical galleries. 1 Drow, moving with ease. Only possible to leave by running blindly.

Hidden Feature: Hidden market accessible by falling. 3 Drow merchants sell rare food, surface fruit, impossible spices.

15.07 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black granite, green stone, deep chasms.

Obvious Feature: Ghost city. Appears on the edge of an enormous chasm. Only way across. Tie magic weapons to feet, use magic swords as grappling hooks. Curse curses.

Hidden Feature: Ghost saboteurs cause the city to collapse each day. Banish them and city will break from its death-cycle.

15.08 – DRACOSPAWN – LITTORAL - BORMINTHAL

Terrain: Blue marble, scorched by lightning. Long tracks worn into the rock, spiraling up and down. Stink of ozone.

Obvious Feature: Lair of Borminthal the Wise, purple dragon. Immense, asleep. A moving mountain, sleepwalking. Musicians scurry before. Drifts of magic items. Kobolds.

Hidden Feature: Six young dragons, playful and strange.

15.09 – DRACOSPAWN – LITTORAL

Terrain: Blue-grey marble, full of stairs and pits and alcoves.

Obvious Feature: 12 despondent musicians, rejected by Borminthal's dragonborn, contemplating suicide. 3 radical instrument makers measuring their sinews. Huge pile of broken instruments, torn sheet music, bent pipes.

Hidden Feature: The Secret Chord, charms all who hear it.

16.00 – DVERGR – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Black marble, cut into shadow-canceling mirror-bright plates. No shadows in this place as long as you carry light.

Obvious Feature: Dvergr exploration team in frantic decontamination. Cursed by the Archaean's death (12.04). Slowly decaying, homunculate crystals mutating. Terrified.

Hidden Feature: Dvergr detector-wand. Many settings.

16.01 – DVERGR – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey stone, solid and finely textured. Deep carved abstract patterns resembling right-angle smoke and flame.

Obvious Feature: Forges and hammers. 30 Dvergr, working furiously to purify metal, cast iron. Ignore intruders unless they touch anything or interfere with the work. Safe but noisy.

Hidden Feature: Small stack of mithril ingots.

16.02 – ILLITHID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black basalt, deeply scarred. Thin water-filled fissures.

Obvious Feature: Bow-like fortress, invaders drawn to bottom. Illithid infested with brain parasites lurks at the bottom. Steal its parasitic worm-crown to gain strange spells, insight.

Hidden Feature: Periodic trapped thunderstorms race through fortress, blasting with lightning and rain.

16.03 – ILLITHID – LITTORAL

Terrain: Black metal pipes, glass tubes, oil tanks. Industrial growth, overwhelming caves, undirected. Refinery jungle.

Obvious Feature: Churn Engine. Produces piles of random goods made of odd materials. Swords of chalk. Rope of diamonds, soaked in flammable oil. Constant grinding.

Hidden Feature: Casks of highly compressed steam.

16.04 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White marble, faint red droplets.

Obvious Feature: Vast arena. Could seat tens of thousands. Mirrors reflect light from a single white-hot flame to fill arena. 2 Drow, opposite sides, lounging idly.

Hidden Feature: Arena-beasts in a hidden chamber. Unleashed if PCs enter. Beautiful, intelligent, deadly.

16.05 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White marble, thin black layers and whirls.

Obvious Feature: Singing waterfall. Perfect river flows in a vertical glass wall over pipes, bowls,

channels. Constant harmony without rhythm, shifting, changing. Anything stepping in the river disturbs the music, attracts 4 Drow.

Hidden Feature: Waterfall silk. Somehow keeps moving.

16.06 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: White marble, very finely structured.

Obvious Feature: Stacked arches, impossibly thin. A lace cathedral.

Hidden Feature: Bottom layer of arches emerges from a vast rose garden, lit by flying red lanterns.

16.07 – DROW – ABYSSAL

Terrain: Deep blue marble, tending to black in some layers.

Obvious Feature: Grand domed palace, suspended from a chain, balanced on a needle point. High glass windows. Dance inside. The Drow dance in whirls with the living and the dead. 36 Drow, 14 Ghosts, 9 Wights, 30 Immaculate Slaves.

Hidden Feature: Invitation to anywhere... if you dance well.

16.08 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey limestone, fossil vines and ferns.

Obvious Feature: Stew merchant caravan, roaming the Veins. 5 merchants in heavy leather robes, glass goggle eyes. Will buy ingredients, sell stew. Walking cauldrons with clawed feet.

Hidden Feature: One cauldron contains 5 Antling eggs. Reward for return.

16.09 – NEUTRAL – LITTORAL

Terrain: Red sandstone, soft. Sand floors, heaps of dust.

Obvious Feature: 3 children in rags, bickering over the fate of empires and factions. Clearly magical. Actually a distraction put out by the Speleomage College to test interlopers.

Hidden Feature: Speleomage College in a concealed cave system. 4 master mages, 9 initiates, 15 staff and servants.

16.10 – NEUTRAL – PROFUNDAL

Terrain: Grey claystone, warm and slippery.

Obvious Feature: Magnetic nodules in the rock make travel difficult. Can pull iron nails from boots, drag swords around. Strength seems to vary.

Hidden Feature: 2 Rust Monsters, licking dropped iron. Can be lured or trained.

6

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MISSING A SESSION IN THE VEINS OF THE EARTH

A player doesn't turn up. What do you do?

If at all possible, use a plausible in-game reason for their PC's absence. The PC decided to stay at a local village. They were hired to deal with a one-person problem. They are guarding a supply cache. They are busy with their new lover/partner/sword/mysterious artifact. They are doing Wizard Business and must not be disturbed. But if you can't think of a good reason, or nothing obvious presents itself, you may roll on the table below. Give the player a choice. There are some positive and some negative effects; they shouldn't be penalized (beyond the potential lack of XP) for missing a session.

D20	EXIT	ENTRY	EFFECT
1	Tiny hands grab you from the darkness.	Tiny hands return you from the darkness.	N/A
2	Touch the stone, get dragged in.	Vomited out from the stone.	N/A
3	Snagged by spider silk, vanish upwards.	Returned, cocooned in silk.	Start session at 1/2 HP.
4	Echoes lure you away from party.	Wander back exhausted, changed.	Roll on Effects table.
5	Fall down a deep, narrow hole.	Fall from hole in ceiling.	Start session at 1/2 HP.
6	Dragged under in a sump.	Found unconscious near a stream.	Start session soaked in water.
7	Whisked away by burst of shadow.	Returned as if no time has passed.	The Rapture's next target.
8	Vanish while rest of the party sleeps.	Party member rescues you in dream.	N/A
9	Transform into a tiny bone idol.	A drop of blood changes you back.	1d6 temporary Wisdom damage.
10	Trapped by a cave-in.	Loop around, harried by enemies.	Gain 1/2 XP from missed session.
11	Separated while traveling in a maze.	Stumble back, angry and confused.	Start session with 1 random item.
12	Start session with 1 random item.	Return, apologetic and hollow-eyed.	Roll on Effects table.
13	Nearly invisible pit trap claims you.	Returned with cryptic apology note.	Start session with 1 ration.
14	Bright glow, screaming, panic. You vanish.	Mysterious event repeats itself, you return.	Start session fully healed.
15	Take the lead on a climb, aren't at top.	At the top of a later climb, confused.	N/A
16	Slave-taking raid. You were slow to run.	Return with shackles, blood under nails.	Gain full XP from missed session.
17	Fall off a cliff in a tangle of rope.	Long, desperate climb back up.	Start session at Starving.
18	Touch a mysterious rune, vanish.	Appear near the party with a thunderclap.	Roll on Effects table.
19	Vanish into the darkness with a scream.	Doppelganger returns, with you in pursuit.	N/A
20	Ambush or fall. Party sees you die.	You return as if nothing happened.	Start session fully healed.

APPENDIX B HOARDS

D20	HOARD
1	3d1000 copper pieces, fused nearly solid. Next to worthless.
2	3d10 silver pieces, 1 gold piece. Gold piece has a hole cut through it.
3	3d100 silver pieces, stamped with sneering faces. A strange mix of eras, rulers.
4	2d10 gold pieces, 3d10 silver pieces. Stored in black velvet bags. Polished.
5	2d10 gold pieces. Faintly stained with dried blood. One coin is soaked.
6	2d100 gold pieces. Some have been bent into half-circles. Others cut in half.
7	2d1000 gold pieces. In red paper cases of 10. Marked with an inhuman face.
8	2d10 occultum pieces in a red cloth bag. Weighs next to nothing.
9	100x1d10 gold pieces, 1d10 occultum pieces. And a small scrap of hair.
10	1d6 shiny magic weapons (+1). 1. Sword, 2. Axe, 3. Spear, 4. Hammer, 5. Bow, 6. Dagger.
11	1d10 silver-grey opals, shimmering. 5sp each. Coated in a thin slime.
12	1 blood-red ruby, 5gp. Always warm to the touch, but not magical.
13	Polished shells, opalescent. 10gp. Creatures from the Nightmare Sea.
14	Small bag full of diamonds. 50gp. Also contains a jeweler's eyeglass.
15	Large bag full of mixed diamonds and sapphires. 100gp. Stolen from crowns.
16	Thumb-sized diamond. 100gp. Makes a faint musical sound in the light.
17	Ivory carvings, nearly microscopic detail. 10x1d100gp. Hypnotic scenes.
18	Curse-metal bead in a lead case. 10gp. Toxic. Very very toxic.
19	Mithril ingot. 500gp. Stamped with Dvergr marks.
20	Handful of adamant nuggets. 500gp. Startlingly heavy.

APPENDIX C PROPHETIC UNDERGROUND DREAMS

In order to fulfill your players' wildest dreams you need to give them wild dreams. Dreams are recurring. Only inflict one or two dreams on one or two PCs. Having too many prophets rarely pays dividends

Only inflict prophetic dreams on PCs who are likely to do something with them. Dreams can be interpreted by witches, priests, and madmen.

All prophetic dreams are true. They don't have to make sense but must be true. The GM can sort out the details, helped by the wild speculation of the players. Feed their speculation as much as possible.

1	Three mushrooms: red, yellow, and white. The red spreads spores as the white and yellow rot into nothing.
2	You lead a group of blind travelers tied together with red silk. The silk is warm; one end enters your ear.
3	You try to weave a cloak but the fabric keeps unraveling. You see a hidden figure cutting your threads.
4	Your fingers are hooked claws. You dig through stone, scattering pieces with casual ease, tunneling down.
5	In a grand hall full of silk banners, well-dressed courtiers dance to quiet music. Your portrait adorns the wall.
6	A number of fat black birds equal to the number of other PCs hop around you, singing a cold, hollow dirge.
7	You try to reach a key at the bottom of a pit, but your arm isn't long enough. The key is ice cold.
8	You are falling down an endless chasm. Before you reach the bottom, pale fungus hands rise and catch you.
9	You sit up and spit out your teeth. They form a strange symbol, linked by strands of mucus and blood.
10	Your hair falls out and wriggles away like worms. It burrows into the stone and sprouts into silver trees.
11	A dreaming prince turns in his sleep, hand brushing the sword that will end the world. Soon he will wake.
12	A glassy coin rests on one side of a scale. No matter what you place on the other side, the scale never tips.
13	A great tree grows from the earth, stretching into a sky that shimmers like water. Each leaf is a human hand.
14	A dancing skeleton balances on a stone orb. It sees you, leaps in surprise, falls, and shatters. Its marrow is golden.
15	You are trapped in a duel with a cruel, mocking copy of yourself. You slay them. Their blood is diamonds.
16	A sword falls in front of you. You embrace it, then cast it aside. A servant returns it, polished and honed.
17	The darkness rolls from your torch like a living thing, liquid and cunning. You must corner it to kill it.
18	You dream of seven fat pigs and seven thin pigs, and one of them is playing the trumpet.
19	You sit on a throne, sternly deciding a case in perfect silence. Your fingers glitter with uncounted rings.
20	You wade into a pool of boiling blood, but feel no heat. You drink until the pool is drained, then begin to fly.
21	Your skeleton crawls from your mouth. It marches in a circle, then points at the ceiling and falls to pieces.
22	A burning skeleton made of lead dives into a lake, turning the water grey and pearlescent.
23	You take off a gold ring and drop it in a river. Three fish fight over it. An eel emerges and chases them away.
24	A cage of spider limbs contains screaming infants. They conceal the silver key to an upside-down castle.
25	You lie back in a nest of fungus and watch three identical copies of you, made of fungus, dance in a ring.
26	A staircase descends into the earth. The first steps are tiring, but you begin to run faster and faster.
27	A beast with the heads of the other PCs rampages blindly through a cave. You fear, for its safety and yours.
28	Six cold pillars surround you like a cage: gold, silver, iron, bone, chalk, salt. The gold pillar slowly melts.
29	Your arms are bound with chains that tighten as you struggle. You run to a stream; the chains melt away.
30	Courtiers in silk rags place a silver diadem on your head. Their faces are shrouded, their breath sweet.
31	You trip and fall. The stone traps your hands like soft clay. You begin to sink, but hear faint music below.
32	You float on a cold river. You can hear the sound of a waterfall ahead. Instead of a paddle, you have a sword.
33	You raise your fist, and a hundred loyal followers shout your name. Glory awaits.
34	A cold steel dagger slide into your ribs. Your assassin looks like you. In some dreams, you are the assassin.
35	A beast with a dozen legs tramples your enemies. In its back, a spear that burns with midnight flame.
36	You are handed two bowls: one full of black stones, the other white. The black stones become beetles.
37	You cough and spit out flaming oil and rubies. Blind children with crab claws rush to pick up the gems.
38	You try to lift your weapon but it is too heavy. You let it fall. Where it lands, a spring of pure water erupts.
39	You lie on a cushioned bed as a crowd of beautiful lovers feed you candied fruit and rub your feet.
40	A shimmering city on a lake opens its gate to you. The crowd roars in anticipation.
41	You split open your hated enemy's head, revealing a smaller enemy inside. They cackle as you recoil.
42	You wander through red caves, buffeted by wind, trying to shield a candle's flame. The wind smells of ash.
43	Globules of boiling fat rain on your skin. Above you, some enormous creature is being roasted.
44	A beast with a horns equal to the number of other PCs appears. A new horn grows that outshines the others.
45	You are climbing a high wall. Your rope snaps, but you fall up instead. You reach the top to wild applause.
46	You are in a fortified building. Something roars outside. Your people turn to you for help, but you are unafraid.
47	A ruby the size of your head sits on a polished marble pillar, lit by a single pure white candle.
48	A pig bursts, revealing clusters of rubies. They fall through your hands like water; a servant catches them.
49	You wade through a stinking mire. Your foot catches on something: a silver crown.
50	Fountains of molten rock erupt. As the wave of fire approaches, you wave it away with your hand.

- 51 A serpent grows two heads, then four, then eight. The heads devour you, but you are reborn in metal flesh.
- 52 You sit down to a grand feast. The centerpiece is the body of your enemy, roasted and spiced.
- 53 As you exhale, a vast crowd falls, shrinks, grows younger. As you inhale they rise, grow old, and fade.
- 54 A distant ringing sound grows louder, until you shatter like glass. Each piece grows into a new person.
- 55 A knot binds your climbing ropes together, tied around a dagger. When untangled, the dagger drips blood.
- 56 In an eggshell room your ailments, worries, and pains flee like black smoke. You are remade, young and pure.
- 57 You stride through broken crowns that glitter underfoot. You sit on a plain throne and wear a silk collar.
- 58 Soap bubbles contain dreaming princesses. Touch one, and it bursts to reveal a jubilant coronation ceremony.
- 59 You are handed a succession of bright silk flags, but choose one of dark red and gold. It leads you to victory.
- 60 You sit on a throne and judge your injuries, wounds, and mutations. Some are pardoned; some are exiled.
- 61 You grab for a wooden staff carved with ancient runes. It leaps into your hand with a blast of thunder.
- 62 Your eyes fall out and roll away. You stumble helplessly until a black bird picks them up and returns them.
- 63 You watch long gallery from the top of your tower and know that your fortress will never fall.
- 64 You laugh as a young Olm capers in front of you. Then, a shadow falls and the Olm grows into a dragon.
- 65 You inspect your own tomb. Every surface of the huge building is carved with glorious, infamous deeds.
- 66 You stand in a swarm of bees, holding a cup of honey to your lips. The air shimmers. You feel at peace.
- 67 You are swallowed by a whale. In its belly, three hags tell you to avoid eating fish. "Causes rickets," they say.
- 68 A statue made from bone, meat, silver, and gold is smashed from within, to be replaced with one of clay.
- 69 In a burning pyramidal hollow, black liquid calls your name, whispering silken promises of immortal fame.
- 70 A ring of wild dancers surrounds a huge burning pyre. A figure steps from the flames and beckons.
- 71 Figures in featureless masks cut open your chest and remove your heart. "Too large," they say, and toss it away.
- 72 Three diamonds are handed to you, but you reject them. Instead, you choose a single blue marble sphere.
- 73 Beneath black glass, the original words of creation, glimmering, waiting to be read.
- 74 You inspect the map of a grand city: the city you will build, are building, have built. Every detail is clear.
- 75 Lit by flickering purple light, a mage hunches over a bowl of mercury, observing your sleeping body.
- 76 You scream your secret hates and fears at a slowly melting wall of ice, leaving nothing left but water and peace.
- 77 You try to fill a lantern with oil, but the oil is blood and refuses to pour. A voice says, "Do not doubt your flesh."
- 78 Ten-thousand screaming voices tell you what you must do, but you forget upon waking. You must find them again.
- 79 You touch a man and his head falls open, revealing a small flame. In one hand you carry water, in the other, coal.
- 80 You are offered gold, silver, iron, and lead, but instead choose salt in a clay bowl. The salt turns to diamonds.
- 81 Your family and lost friends beckon you from beyond a misty gate. You can almost reach them.
- 82 You pass scribes, bent over their work. Each one writes of a day in your life. They smile at you, content.
- 83 You pass through four vaults: copper, silver, gold, occultum. The fifth is locked. Blood leaks from under the door.
- 84 You cross a stream of water, a stream of blood, and a stream of mercury. Each time, a bell tolls in the deeps.
- 85 You walk through a peaceful city lit by false moonlight. Statues with your face adorn every wall.
- 86 Two snakes, red and blue, are fighting. A third snake made of clear glass approaches and devours them.
- 87 Trapped at the centre of an hourglass, a perfect pearl of regret and hope. Every grain of sand is a gold coin.
- 88 Five cave crickets chirp at the same time. One seems to be asleep. You kill one, and the rest devour each other.
- 89 You stand before a gate of black stone. Iron, silver, gold, and fire cannot harm it, but a single tear melts it into ash.
- 90 Two voices sing to you from one throat, hidden by darkness. They sing of rulership, power, and fame.
- 91 At your whistled command, your enemies are torn apart by whip-thin soldiers. Their eyes burn with love for you.
- 92 You examine a book bound in leather. The book's pages are so bright you cannot read the words printed.
- 93 A black ring around a white gem. Hold the gem, and armies melt away, bones cracking like ice.
- 94 Enemies surround you and pierce you with spears. Your blood is many-coloured, bright as fire; your enemies flee.
- 95 A cave closes like a mouth as you run towards the entrance. You emerge into firelight as the stone teeth close.
- 96 You sit on a couch, watching your grandchildren enact one of your glorious battles, clapping your hands in joy.
- 97 An eyeless skull in a pool of blood sings a half-heard death-song that names you as a powerful leader.
- 98 A crowd of fearful men, women, and children wait for your word. Your mind is clear. They take courage from you.
- 99 A stone egg cracks, hatches, reveals a bird. The bird flies and lands in front of you. Its feathers are spears.
- 100 You feel an itch under your palm. A worm busts out. It wears a golden crown and wriggles away from you.

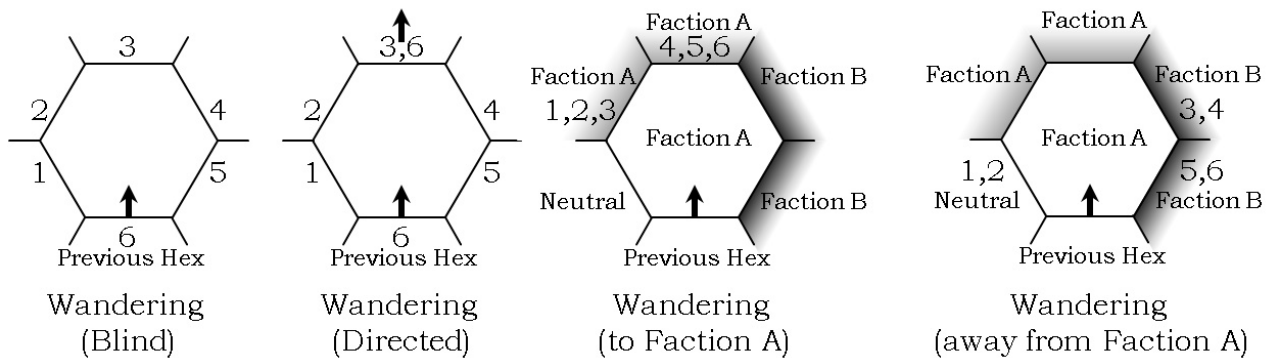
GAME MASTER REFERENCE SHEET

HEX SCALE TRAVEL

Hexes take 6 hours to cross. PCs will encounter the hex's **Obvious Feature**. If they enter cautiously, take unexpected routes, explore, or delay, they may encounter the **Hidden Feature** instead.

- **Wandering (Blind)** is for blind panic, blind drunk, or lost. Purely random. Exit the hex and end up elsewhere.
- **Wandering (Directed)** is for PCs with a plan but no map or consistent directions. Extra time, people familiar with cave exploration, and a sensible plan should decrease the chance of error. If your system has a Navigate or a Wilderness skill, it might be useful here.
- **Wandering (to Faction A)** is for people who want to stay within a faction's territory.
- **Wandering (away from Faction A)** is for PCs who want to leave a faction's territory. Can't be done in a neutral hex.

Fleeing PCs can't plan. If the PCs want to get away from something rather than go somewhere, they are Wandering. PCs can't cross solid black lines on the hexmap without a plan. If the PCs are Wandering, adjust probabilities so they can only reach unblocked hexes. Similarly, on the edge of the map, adjust probabilities so they don't wander off the edge.



ENCOUNTER LOCATIONS

If you do not know where the encounter is taking place, roll on the **Where They Find You Table** (below) and the **Cave Shape Table** (VotE pg. 258). You can also use this method for Obvious/Hidden Features. Connect caves using the rules on VotE pg. 221, or add caves from VotE pg. 263.

1D20	TYPE	DETAIL
BAD		
1	Gallery	Long, flat.
2	Gallery	Long, gently sloped.
3	Snake	Curved, coiled.
4	Rockfall	Boulders, space between or over.
5	Bowl	High sides, low bottom.
6	Pipe	Angled upwards, just enough to walk or run up or down.
7	Scramble	Climb on hands and knees in places.
8	Ledge	A narrow path next to a deep drop.
9	Waterfall	Roaring waters. Blocks all sound 10x1d10' around bottom.
10	Pools	Water up to the ankles. Hidden leg-breaking pits.
WORSE		
11	Rappel	Just about to start. 10x1d10' to bottom.
12	Rappel	Halfway down. 10x1d10' to bottom.
13	Climb	Halfway up. 10x1d10' to top, 10x1d10' to bottom.
14	Climb	Horizontal traverse. Finger/toe-holds only. 20x1d10' to safety.
15	Sump	Water up to waist.
16	Sump	Water up to neck. Need to duck underwater in places.
17	Crawl	Low ceiling, cannot stand. Fight on hands and knees.
18	Squeeze	Impossibly tight. Movement is slow. Panic is deadly.
19	Chimney	Narrow, tall. Wedged in a vertical slice.
20	Dead End	Cornered.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll on the Random Encounter Table (pg. 71) for the hex type at least once per hex or at least once every 24 hours. The group can always choose The Rapture (VotE pg. 107) instead of an encounter, before the Omen is revealed. The PCs get the Omen before the encounter unless:

- they are making a lot of noise.
- they are Starving.
- they are traveling quickly.

THE RAPTURE (VOTE PG. 107)

1. Lost and alone.
2. Trapped in a squeeze.
3. Witnesses a friend's death.
4. Loses any capacity to make light.
5. Commit act of same-species cannibalism.
6. Total fuckup.
7. Panic Attack Jack.
8. Player choice instead of Random Encounter.
9. Player choice to sit up with 1 HP.

PLAYER REFERENCE SHEET

CREATURE	CALORIES	VALUE	RATIONS
Cave Louse	10	0	0.005
Cave Crab	200	0.2sp	0.1
Blind Rat	750	0.7sp	0.3
Medieval Chicken	2,000	2sp	1
Small Person	60,000	60sp	30
Normal Person	100,000	100sp	50
Large Person	140,000	140sp	70
Medieval Cow	600,000	600sp	300
Wurm	3,000,000	3,000sp	1,500

PLANT/ FUNGUS	CALORIES	VALUE	RATIONS
Cave Slime	0	0	0*
Fungoid	60,000	60sp	30
Troll Oil (0.1L)	N/A	3gp	1

1 SP = 1 HOUR OF LIGHT

THE DARK HATES YOU

EFFECT TRIGGERS

PC

VOTE PG. 324							
First taste of the cannibal feast.							
Try and talk another character into choosing Rapture.							
Travel for more than an hour in the dark with nothing to light or guide you.							
Party rolls on "find a safe space."							
Travel at least 3 continuous blank hexes in the unmarked.							
Suffer major physical trauma from a source unknown to the character.							
One month passes without the sun.							
Abandon the weight of carried wealth for food, light, or ease of movement.							
Learn the language of something here.							
Abandoned or be seperated for some length from the rest of the party.							
A long fall in the dark.							
Reduced to 0 HP.							
A "safe" climb results in injury.							
Suffer hypothermia.							
You no longer own anything from the surface.							
Swallowed whole.							
Forced to choose between using something as light or food.							
The target is over your highest stat on the Climb Fail Result table.							
You learn a speleo spell.							
Other:							
Other:							

THE RAPTURE

1. Lost and alone.
2. Trapped in a squeeze.
3. Witnesses a friend's death.
4. Loses any capacity to make light.
5. Commit act of same-species cannibalism.
6. Total fuckup.
7. Panic Attack Jack.

Any player can say "I choose the Rapture" to replace a roll on the Random Encounter Table. The scene opens in the same location with that player's PC suffering a Rapture attack.

Any player can say "I choose Rapture" to have their PC wake up with 1 HP. This removes any negative damage but does not remove Fatal Wounds or Injuries. If they win, they sit back up with full control. If the Rapture wins, it takes over their body.

VEINSCRAWL

A free Veins of the Earth inspired hexcrawl for OSR systems. This hexcrawl takes the tools provided in Veins of the Earth, unpacks dense ideas into an easily digestible form, adds in new material, and provides a framework for adventures in the deep and lightless world. Introduce chaos to a world of starvation and stalemate. Carve an empire from the flesh of your enemies. Plot, betray, wander, starve, die, and rise again.

COMPLETELY FREE

Written by Skerples, with art by Lungfungus. and edited by David Shugars.

This hastily assembled and possibly incomplete document includes:

- 162 hexes and a map.
- Rules for navigating underground.
- Ten fully detailed factions plus additional oddities and treasures.
- Elaborate random encounter tables.
- Many other tables, useful tools, and tips for running games in the Veins.
- The seeds of empires.