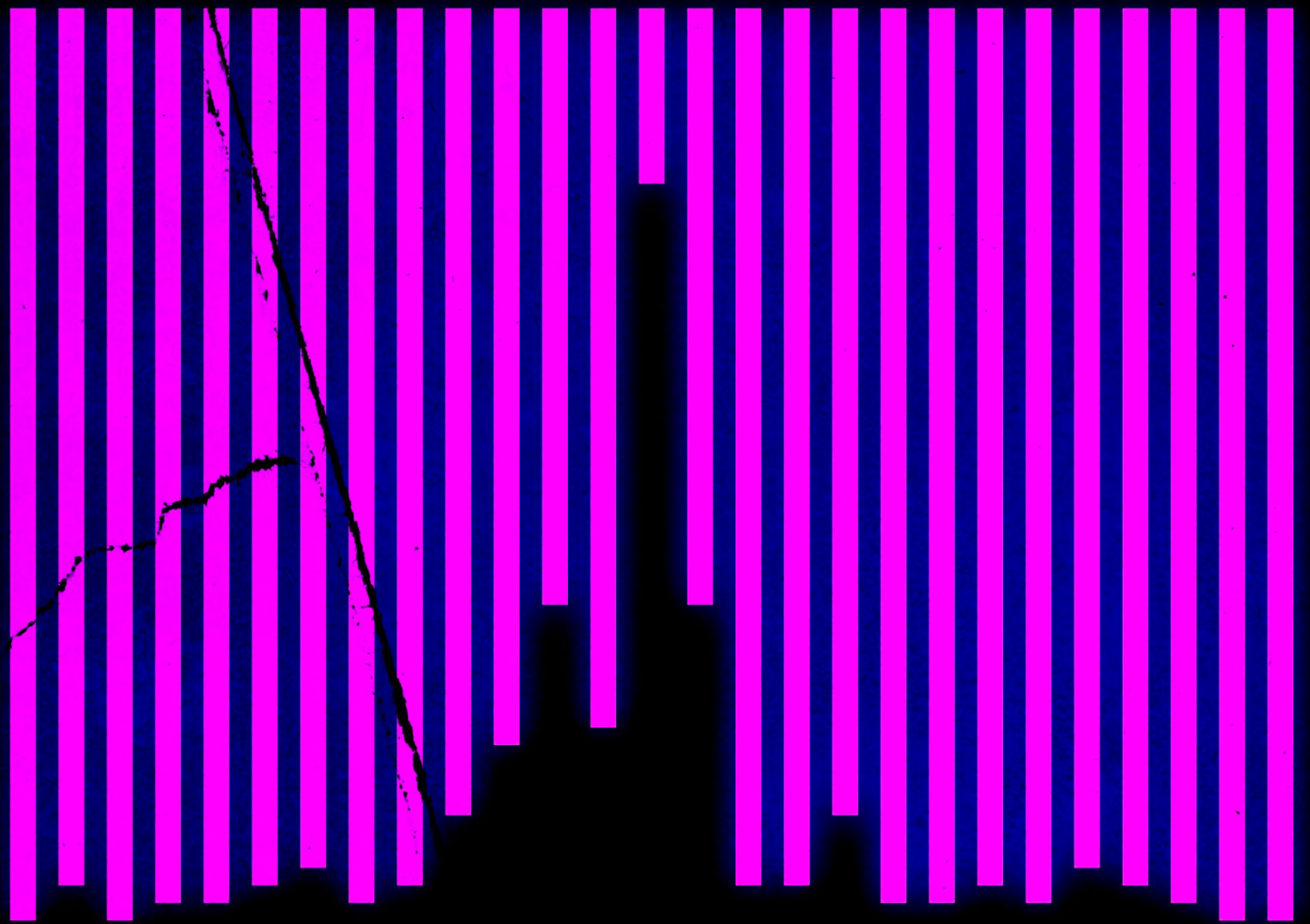


**UVC**



**AND THE BLACK CITY**  
**PSYCHEDELIC METAL ROLEPLAYING**  
WIZARDTHIEFFIGHTER STUDIOS & EXALTED FUNERAL PRESS  
L U K A R E J E C

Time is the essence  
Time is the season  
Time ain't no reason  
Got no time to slow

Time everlasting  
Time to play B-sides  
Time ain't on my side  
Time I'll never know

Burn out the day  
Burn out the night  
I'm not the one to tell you what's wrong or what's right  
I've seen suns that were freezing and lives that were through.

—*Burnin' For You, Fire of Unknown Origin*, Blue Öyster Cult

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Art, writing & design: Luka Rejec  
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Srečno pot, Ati.  
Fortunate journeys, Dad.

*in memoriam*

Lucijan Rejec  
\*1943 — †2019



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

September 26, 2016, I drew one of the first illustrations in this book. Because of my clerical error it is now called j7654.jpg. You can see it on page 133. Now, three years and an unexpected funeral later, the *Ultraviolet Grasslands* are complete.

It was hard and rewarding work that would have been impossible without countless people. I shall try to thank some of them.

First, the heroes of the stratometaship, who made writing the first draft possible and cheered all the way. Second, the kickstarter backers who made this edition possible and showed incredible patience as we blasted past our deadline like a seven-cylinder autogolem. Third, the volunteer Typohunters, who labored to pluck stray commas and weird typos from the manuscript. Thank you all.

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manuscript and helped create SEACAT. Saker Tarsos listened kindly while also creating an incredible digital aid. Finally, Matt and Cristin Kelley of Exalted Funeral, who made the kickstarter success possible and kept the whole project on track. Thank you all.

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Finally, all my friends and family who accepted my absence behind glowing screens and paper sheaves. Sadly my father passed before the book was complete, but the UVC finally helped him understand what art meant to me, and that is good enough. Thank you all.

Finally, the person most responsible: my wife, Youjin. She understood and encouraged me, until I finally believed I could. Thank you, Youjin.

—Luka, Seoul, October 2019

# USING THE DLTRAVIOLET GRASSLANDS



You have in your hands a roleplaying adventure setting designed to help a traditional rpg referee take their friends' heroes on a long strange trip across a mythic steppe filled with remnants of space and time and fuzzy riffs. It is inspired by psychedelic heavy metal, the Dying Earth genre, and Oregon Trail games.

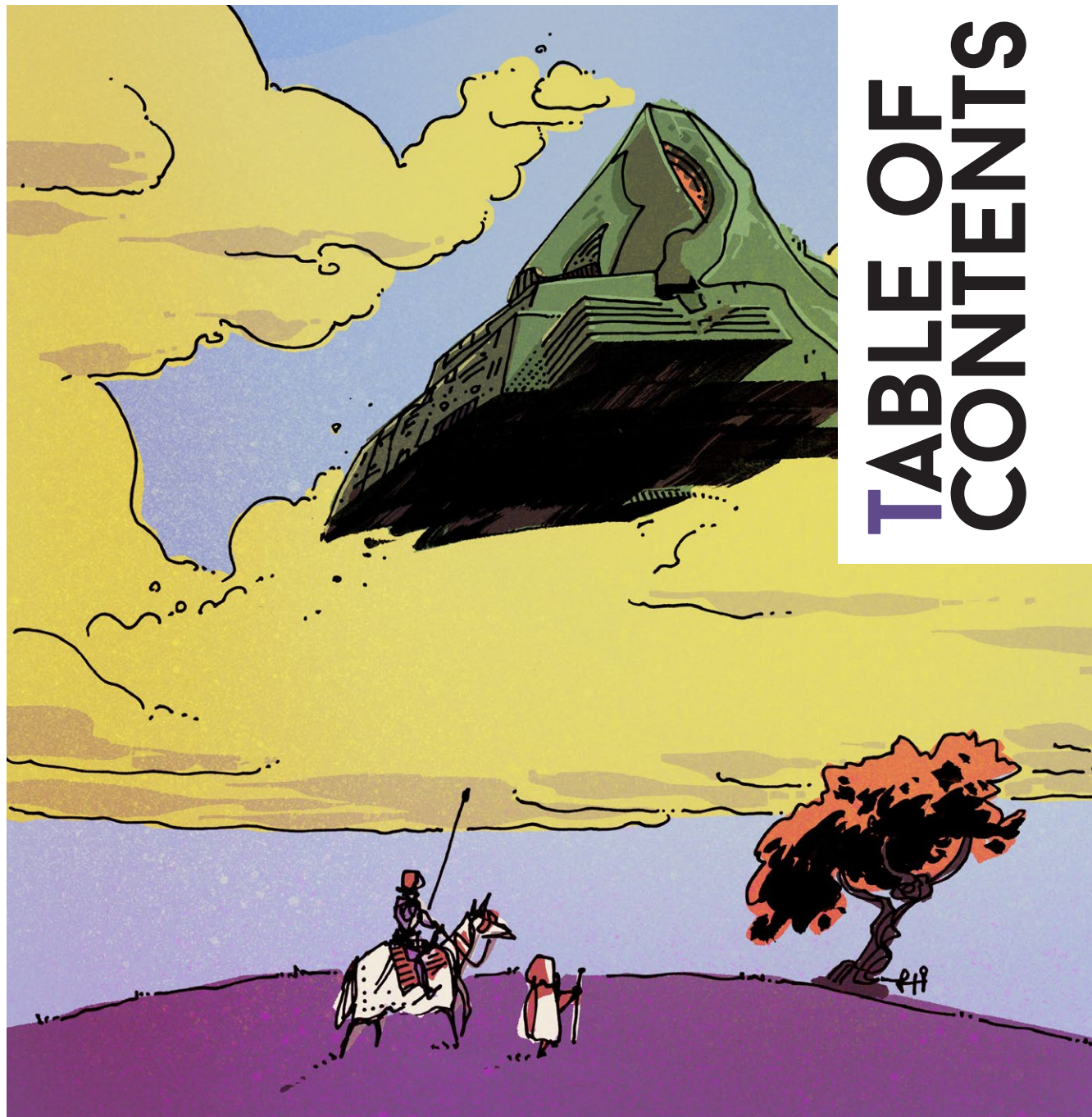
The first two thirds of the book, from pages 6 to 132, covers thirty-two strange locations scattered from east (the Violet City) to west (the Black City), becoming progressively stranger as the journey continues. I have presented them first and in sequence for easier reference during campaign play.

The last section of the book, from pages 156 to 193, covers general information for running games in the setting. Things like maps, sample caravans, factions, equipment, trade goods, a history generator, some spells, and a glossary.

Finally, in the center, from pages 133 to 155, is a section explaining the rules and mini-games that I've developed for this setting. We've carefully written and edited the UVG to be light and easy to adapt to any d20-based game of your choice. These rules are not presented necessarily for running the setting as-is, but rather to help you understand our design choices and adapt the setting to fit.

I've also tried to design the UVG to resist repetition and canon, so I encourage you to make it your own, to use the parts you like, and have an incredible and unique adventure with your friends.





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# THE WORLD'S EDGE

A world begins when it emerges from the mists of time. So it is with the civilizations of the Rainbowlands—which mark their count from when the Long Ago ended and the Now began.

The Rainbowlanders are the humans of a later era, undisputed masters of the fertile lands around the Circle Sea, dwellers in the Eye of Creation. They come in many shapes, colours, creeds, and faiths. They pile unkempt technology and misremembered lore together into a teetering whole. They rule the settled lands under their polychrome deities of ill-repute.

This story is not theirs. This story begins at the edge of their world, at the Left End of the Right Road. At the westernmost outpost of humanity, the Violet City: bastion against the hordes, entrepôt to the exotic sunset lands, and last port of civilization before the trackless steppe studded with the detritus of the Long Ago.

The last glimmer of the Rainbow before the skin-blistering glow of the Ultraviolet Grasslands.



The Hero put the cat coffee in the samovar and rubbed the sleep sand out of their eyes.

On the other side of the hotrock the Dwarf rubbed magitechnical ointment into the joints of his golem armor. That meant it was half an hour to sunrise. Same thing, every day like clockwork. Perhaps he was clockwork. Everyone said those Salters weren't human anymore.

The Demon-Talker sat down beside the Hero, noiseless as always yet somehow comforting. The Hero passed her a cup.

"Ah," she gurgled, "you make the best brew. It almost warms my bones."

"We'll all be warm soon," rumbled Eater-of-the-Dead from its sleeping sack, "we're nearly at the Violet City."

## NO RULES, BUT SEACAT RULES

If you're just reading for the weird world, imagine a character, turn the page and begin reading with the Violet City of the cats. A few rules will be explained in boxes like this one.

But! Though the UVG plays fast-and-loose, there is a solid, metal roleplaying game skeleton behind the simple notation—SEACAT. The name of the game comes from the basic stats describing characters: Strength, Endurance, Agility, Charisma, Aura, and Thought. If you want to start by making an explorer, building a caravan, and heading off into the wild and weird, go to **Heroes and the Cat** (p.133).



## WHO IS THIS HERO? (D40)

d40	Who are you?	Why are you on the road?	Starting with ...
1	Decapolitan ambassador	Sent by a grim corporation	One black metal vertebra
2	Redland district folk hero	Dreams of a world ending	Half a white porcelain skull
3	Hexad enforcer militant	Blood memories of a great patrimony	Green brick with the light and warmth of a candle
4	Safranian merchant adventurer	Tracking a missing ledger	Pink bottle with a singing spirit
5	Emerald City preacher	Seeking new converts	Three machine beetles with gem eyes
6	Redland bourgeoisie botanist	Rumors of a fabulous autofac	Precious yellow plastic tablet with four truths
7	Oranjetic traveling entertainer	Found clue to abmortality	Silver book proclaiming revolution
8	Greenlander nomad herdsfolk	Ordered by an ominous disembodied voice	Cabochon ruby with a regal hologram inside
9	Exiled pirate liberal	Map to an unclaimed aerolith	Intaglio red pearl of a lingish trader
10	Salt dwarf prospector	Soul of loved one stolen by a horror	Violet bone crystalized in soulfire
11	Yellowlander climate migrant	Stories of a secret healing vegetable	Copper star incised with naughty limericks
12	Undercover rainbow inquisitor	Portents of a deadly machine demon	Four brassy cogs from a soul mill
13	Undergraduate purple wizard	Paintings of a gorgeous cyan seaside	Dusty positronic rat brain in a crystal case
14	Dilettante noble tourist	Pursued by loving enemies	Small lavender plant that cannot die
15	Exiled Bluelander noble	Grandmother's lost autowagon	Translucent dinner plate-sized force disk
16	Secret azure cultist	Brother was stripped into a ba-zombie	Grey healing lichen culture in ceramic jar
17	Violet revolutionary emigré	Master boneworker sent an invitation	Manual of the vechs, annotated with scribbles
18	Oranjist courtesan singer	Delivering a letter of inheritance to a count	Stainless steel thermos of blood wine
19	Metropolitan accountant monk	Cure for a plague that killed your son	Glass tub of vampire-grade sunscreen
20	Volkan diesel dwarf	Biomantic bible in a lost library	Platinum necrogoggles that reveal undead
21	Woodlander elf-touched trapper	Repaying debts to the butcher bank	Small furry brown vome that giggles when petted
22	Settled Steppelander engineer	Visions of a world ending in falling fire	Machine horse in dappled shades of rust
23	Wine vampire priest	Bearing a priceless pearl for a princess	Crystal personality box to create ka-zombies
24	Purplefolk doghead anarchist	Tracking a vile intruder from the void	Yellow-orange weightless rock—an aerolith
25	Half-Ling lunatic seer	Mind entwined with a dying sentience	Blue and white mechanical hand
26	Scrubland barbarian hero	Nightly dreams of a lost world	Quartzite tooth of a space worm
27	Black gold industrialist	Seeking a prosthetic body for mother	Animate furry chitin kite
28	Violet City mendicant healer	Ordered by the clan quest golem	Carmine cactus that secretes drops of blood
29	Independent freehold archaeologist	Keeping tabs on a rival explorer	Cogwheel monocle with small pits
30	Old city tutor	Exploring clues to the great forgetting	Seven strands of unbreakable silver wire
31	Exotic wastelander summoner	Possessed by a demon in childhood	Citrine soul stone with a third of a hero's soul
32	Tumult fisher wizard	Seeking allies for a revolution	Gourd fetish with cowrie teeth
33	Safirian ruins scavenger	Looking for new lands for lost tribe	Teal warlock helmet with three white stripes
34	Wildfolk demon hunter	Compulsion after meeting a seer	Yellow cape of pure steel silk
35	Cogflower necromancer lawyer	Sheer industrial greed	Unaging plastic travel cutlery
36	Pueblo heretic rancher	Determined to end a crippling disease	Rainbow unicorn horn
37	Dessicated slaver spy	Found the testament of a dead god	Grey cube that weighs five times more than lead
38	Moon mountain witch	Pursued by furies and a dark fate	Lime green onion-and-skull cup
39	Half-island syndicalist tinker	Visions of glory and rebirth	Clear crystal heart of a vile (see glossary, p. 192)
40	Union machinehunter general	A queer unease after reading a metal book	Red staff made of fused ancient pistols



## READING THE ULTRAVIOLET

“Think of them more as guidelines, not rules *per se*.”

—Skittens Three-Horned, councilor & machine whisperer

### THE DICE ARE NOT YOUR MASTERS

At the heart of roleplay in the UVG is a **conversation between players, which creates a shared world**. When common sense, or uncommon, dictates a result, don't bring dice into it. When outcomes are uncertain, the referee suggests a probability and lets the player decide to roll or not for their hero.

However, once the dice *do* go rolling on the table, *they* are the oracle and *they* determine outcomes.

### CLASSIC POLYHEDRAL DICE

UVG assumes a couple of sets on hand, from d4 (4-sided) to d20 (20-sided). Sometimes it mentions strange dice, like a d40. Use a digital die roller or a creative combination of dice.

### GLORIOUS D20

The twenty-sided die is **the core die** of the UVG's descriptive mechanical skeleton because it is my favorite polyhedron and because it has a comfortable, flat spread of probabilities.

### HIGH IS GOOD, LOW IS BAD

Throughout the text, from encounters to random results.

### THE STAT TEST (THE CORE MECHANIC)

Whenever the d20 comes out to determine uncertain outcomes, that's a *test*. It means **d20 + stat + skill over target**. A common format is “easy Charisma test”—this means rolling a d20 then adding Charisma and a relevant skill to beat an easy target. What's a relevant skill? Anything that makes sense in the context. Archaeology might help with deciphering old runes in a tomb while tea-leaf reading might well apply in a tea ceremony test.

The difficulty of a test is described in the text as **trivial, easy, moderate, difficult, or extreme**. A hero rolls *over* a target number to succeed. The referee chooses whether a given target number is fixed or a little bit random.

Target	Fixed	Random	Percentile	Example Procedure
Trivial	3	1d6	15%	Routine, but some risk.
Easy	7	1d8+3	35%	A bit unusual.
Moderate	11	1d10+6	55%	Not common at all.
Difficult	15	1d12+9	75%	Rare and dangerous.
Extreme	19	1d12+12	95%	Last ditch effort only!

Remember! Only use tests when they make sense, when possible outcomes make a meaningful difference.

### RELEVANT TEST

Sometimes you'll spot the phrase “a relevant test,” this means that a hero can use **any combination of stat and skill** that makes narrative sense in the circumstances.





# 1. VIOLET CITY: A LAST EERIE HOUSE

“Outside in the cold distance a wild cat did growl.  
Two riders were approaching and the wind began to howl.”  
—*All Along The Watchtower*, Jimi Hendrix (after Bob Dylan)

This is the end of the Right Road. Humanity's dominions wind down in the purple haze that wreathes the sunrises of this western reach. No roads, but caravans brave the Ultraviolet Grassland into the eternal sunset of the Black City. Porcelain Princes and Spectrum Satraps oversee great herds of biomechanical burdenbeasts that bring the odd fruits, black light lotus, indigo ivories, rainbow silks, and sanguine porcelains popular among the meritocrats of the Rainbow Lands. Many voyagers are taken by the vomes but nobody likes to talk of those lost to the ultras.

## WEATHER ON THE SHORE OF THE CIRCLE SEA

The sun rises through a violet haze, slowly, reluctant to give up the shimmering phantoms of predawn to the dusty day. A salt tang drifts from the Circle Sea to the east. The humidity promises storms that rarely come.

## MISFORTUNE AROUND THE VIOLET CITY

It's been a long, hard, stupid journey and everyone should get into the mood with a friendly test to see how unlucky they are.

### d20 Charisma Test

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1    | Got the runny blues, a depressive digestive disorder (-1 Charisma).   |
| 2    | Picked up tendrill tapeworms (-1 Endurance).  |
| 3    | Got an infected sore on the muddy road (-1 Agility).  |
| 4    | Pickpocket attack, lost something precious.   |
| 5    | Fell in love with a swamp wisp, spent day gazing at flowers (-1 day).   |
| 6    | Nice shoes ruined in a deceptive bog.   |
| 7    | Woke up sore but well fed, with €5 in your pocket and a letter of gratitude from a cat lord for services rendered (missing 4 days). |
| 8-19 | The voyage was dull and mind-numbing, the landscape dominated by cat coffee plantations and Bluelanders peasant small-holdings.     |
| 20+  | Acquired five stone of cat coffee (€1,000) after regaling a cat lord with some lovely stories!                                      |

### OVER-DEFINED TESTS

Some tests, like this Charisma test for Misfortune on the road, have multiple fail and/or success results—you'll recognize them by their fat tables of outcomes. They do not require a descriptive target beyond, “just roll high. High is good.”

### ONES FAIL, TWENTIES SUCCEED

In every d20 test, if the die rolls and turns up 1 or 20 this is a “natural 1” or a “natural 20.” These always fail or succeed, respectively. If failure or success are impossible, never make rolls. Don't try to build tension with fake rolls.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS

- ✧ **Rest, Exile Camp:** €5/week to stay in the Bluelanders camp growing into a slum.
- ✧ **Inside the High Walls, Townships of the Violet City** (safe city, a few hours): administered by the noble cats of the Violet Citadel for the good of the no-good travelers visiting their palace of knowledge, learning and sanctimony.
- ✧ **West, the Low Road and the High** (trail, 1 week): both roads are rutted jokes leading to the Porcelain Citadel, the neutral hole at the edge of a sprawling vome territory.
- ✧ **West, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, 2 weeks): flocks of cat-eared sheep and the odd transplanted Limey Nomad clan make this area of the Ultraviolet Grassland relatively civil. There are no trails and the journey is slow.
- ✧ **North-East, The Right Road** (road, 2 weeks): back to the Rainbowlands via the devastated Blue Land. A place for heroes to retire, beyond the bounds of the UVG.

### HOW FAR IS VERY FAR?

When traveling in the UVG a **week** is the basic unit of activity to drive home how far apart everything is. The farther heroes travel, the more renowned they will be in their home towns if they return, and the more valuable their stories.

Traveling a week away makes them traveled, four weeks and they're quite adventurous, eight weeks or more and they count as explorers in the eyes of homebodies. Even luxury caravans rarely travel more than eight weeks away (in practice it may take them longer if they are particularly slow).

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE VIOLET LANDS (D6)

1. A **many-tentacled avatar of the Dead God** (L7, bellowing) summoned by reckless cultists. It is rapidly decomposing into a sticky yellowish mass.
2. **Bluelanders degenerates** (L2, stalking), bent and bestial, with dull eyes and a gnawing hunger for entrails.
3. Armed **Bluelanders peasants** (L1, proud) proudly proclaiming they are Violetlanders.
4. **Troop of monkeys** gorging on ripe coffee berries.
5. Purple-and-teal litter bearing a **cat lord** (L1, grinning) and its small retinue.
6. **Right Road inspection detail** (L3, law-and-order) seconded from Metropolis to keep the roads open.



# TOWNSHIPS OF THE VIOLET CITY, HALLS OF THE GRACEFUL CATS

“*Soyez tranquille*,” murmurs the dead-eyed lady in the voyagers’ minds. Horned cats creep from hazy alleys and examine their baggage. The citadel looms, eerie and obnoxious, beyond the haze. A black cat nods, the lady steps aside. The townships beckon and the party strides into the stall-strewn streets.

The Violet City is a place of trade, luxury, magic and poverty. The thralls of the cat lords keep a veneer of order, barely hiding the feline sneers at the rules of Metropolitan bean counters and inquisitors.

Expenses range from €5/week for tramps to €50/week and beyond for those who want a modicum of respect. Carousing, drugs and eateries cater to the most jaded palates.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE STREETS (D6)

1. Green-blood **shock-peddler Mencia** pays (€1d10 x 100) for tales and pictures of the “Wonders of the West” (double for well-written, illustrated accounts).
2. **Woger de R.F.D.**, a reputable mustachioed free-merchant, is sending a free caravan of vampire wines and livingstone bricks to the Last Serai to trade directly with the Spectrum Satraps. He’s hiring caravan guards (€100/guard on safe arrival).
3. **Natega the Kind** sells original ointments, shoddy shoes, and downright dangerous gear at reasonable prices, but her red cat meows *Charm Person* at travelers (her supplies may give **disadvantage** on tests but she won’t admit it).
4. A **Scared Urchin** runs into the street shouting, “A cat tried to worm into my mouth!” She will integrate into society and become a cat-pet soon. Her name is Uda, for now.
5. A **Sunburned Man** with pink hair staggers out of an inn, cruelly stabbed, sprays crimson bubbles and groans “A behemoth’s pearl for dear Cubina.” He clutches a map to Behemoth’s Shell far to the west (**advantage** on encounter checks). If healed, his name is **Vorgo** and makes a shifty, cowardly, but loyally incompetent henchman. Who stabbed him? It was dark, he was drunk. The potential for a sidetrack is here.
6. In Charming Square, carriages cram into a meowing mob as confiscated traveler dogs are thrown into **pit fights** against trained sewer rats. Bookies take bets of up to €10/bout (Easy Charisma test). Saving a lucky dog costs €1d6 x 50. Cheering the dogs draws glares from cat lords and their people.

## ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

This is a great mechanic and the UVC uses it a lot, for every die roll from the d4 to the hundred-sided d100. Advantage (↑a) means you roll an extra die and take the better result, disadvantage (↓d) means an extra die and taking the worse result. Advantages and disadvantages cancel each other out.

## BOONS AND ADVANTAGES

Boons, unless otherwise specified, manifest mechanically as advantages heroes can store and use when they like.



## CATS, CATS, CATS

Cats are exalted within the Violet City. Some (or all?) among them are actually cat lords, a different species with little human hands and terrifying telepathic (?) abilities, which they use to control their human thralls. The Violet City humans all disagree, claiming they are the actual masters and the cats merely pets.

- ∴ **Horned Cats** (L1, feline) silently monitor the townships around the Violet Citadel and all the townfolk treat them with great kindness and respect.
- ∴ **Black Cats** (L2, venom tail) are the silver-tongued mistresses of the townships, with serpent tails.
- ∴ **Bad Cats** (L3, half-mythical) are half-glass, walk through corners and curse with a purr. So they say.





## WHO WOULD HURT VORGO?

This sidetrack is one way an investigation into Vorgo's assailants *could* play out. Treat it as an idea seed for your own UVG investigations.

Vorgo is healed and he snuffles mawkishly, "She's a beauty, she is, and her father a chief; she says. A pearl is the bride gift he asks, she says, a pearl chiseled from a Behemoth's oyster parasite. So here I am, with my chisel and hangover, ready to enlist with the Princes as far as the Serai, then on to the Behemoth ... I'll manage somehow."

1. In Vorgo's wound, a sliver of silver. Does he smell of wild beast?
2. Street urchins and cabbagewives would say he'd come to the township with a dog cage, but where is the dog?
3. Would the Satraps stab somebody just to stop them from reaching their territory?
4. None of the cat people seem to care much about Vorgo's map to Behemoth Shell, they treat it as a joke.
5. If pressed, the folks will ask, "Why go there? Only death and blindness await in that grassland."
6. Pushed further, they'll mutter about mutilated travelers in the Rue des Oiseaux et Morgues (cat-folk become more hostile).
7. At this point **violet detectives** (L2, educated, physick) with fine **white cats** (L3, aristocratic, vicious) start asking probing questions of strangers poking whiskers in their jurisdiction.
8. After all, the bodies were just travelers, hardly citizens. But foreigners bothering the cat folk?
9. Yes, the doctor of mortices may have noticed the odd, parallel daggers used to mutilate the bodies.
10. Could those have been teeth or claws? Hah, only if someone had teeth like daggers!

Here, the trail would go cold (for now), nothing to indicate that any fantasy of vomes and ultra possession could have any basis in fact.

**Vorgo the Were-Pug** (L1, lycanthrope, short of breath) is shifty, cowardly, and foolishly loyal. If the truth is out, he also turns into a pug. His combat and breathing abilities don't improve. Defense 13 (11 pug), Life 3 (1d6), keen smell, bug eyes, lycanthropic regeneration. Allergic to silver, oranges, endurance sports. Is he possessed by a **vomish scout beetle** (L5, brain-burrowing, radio-telepathic)?

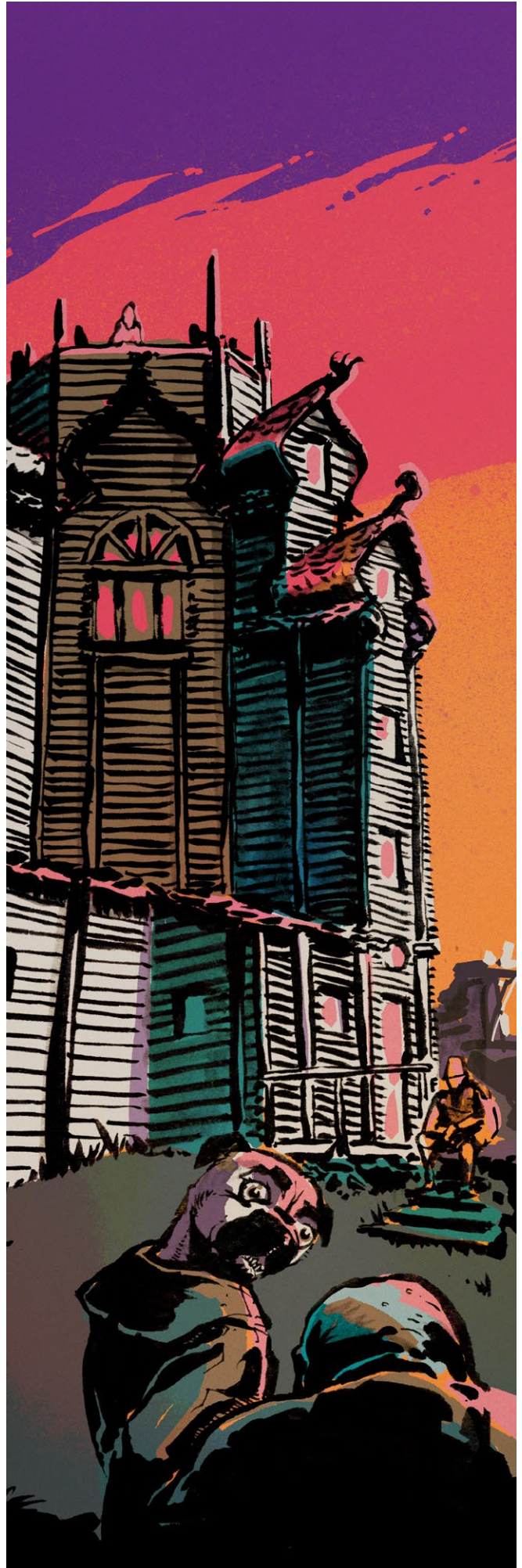
### HENCHMEN, SIDEKICKS, FOLLOWERS, LACKEYS

Throughout the UVG you will run across "non-player characters" with minimal descriptions and stats. Think of them as extras in a show. Generate their stats only as required.

If these extras become friends, employees, or accomplices of the heroes, the heroes become responsible for them. If you are the referee, you should challenge the heroes to come up with facts and details about their new secondary characters. Just one or two a session is enough.

### ULTRAS? VOMES?

Ultras are bodiless ghosts that skip from body to body, vomes are biomechanical cybernetic *things*. They are just some of the weird in-or-post-human factions (or species?) running around the UVG. Read **Factions of the UVG** (p.164–167) for more information.



# DEBAUCHERY IN SHADES OF PURPLE

“Voi, pâle-couleur, pren an-tour!” shouts the tout in pasty Purple patois. Others chime in, mottled capes flutter, papiér panels advertise “*the last partie before lanotte.*” Lips smack. The plebe churls crowd in to sell good times, forgetting, or just steppe-style rat sausage surprise.

“Beware,” hisses the Warlock, “this place lives on broken dreams and thoughtless greed.”

Poncho nods. The crowd swirls. The Hero is gone. Poncho and the Warlock exchange looks. This would end badly.

“Lefruis! Lefruis! Pâle-cou, ven et scupper a new raison and eater!” sings the dancer before the fruit bar. Was that where the hero went?



## CAROUSING

Carousing for xp was, to my knowledge, invented by Jeff Rients and lets the referee easily separate heroes from their treasure. The system in the UVG has two steps. First, a hero arrives in a large enough settlement where they proceed to blow  $\epsilon 1d6^* \times 100$  on a week of hard partying and gain that amount of xp (yes, it's an exploding die). Then the player rolls a Charisma test on the relevant carousing table to see what happened. If they cannot cover their debt, they roll with disadvantage. Simple, huh?

### VIOLET CITY CAROUSING TABLE — THE FUN FUN TABLE

#### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Kicked out of town as a dirty dog. No xp gained and a “reputation.” Also, a case of canine cooties or lycanthropy.
- 2 The odd fruits were odder than usual. Roll d6: grow an extra (1) ear, (2) nose, (3) wrinkle, (4) pearl, (5) tentacle, (6) cat.
- 3 Addicted to cat snip ( $\epsilon 50/\text{week}$ ). You're welcome. Going without means reduces Charisma. Cure takes 1d6 weeks ( $\epsilon 100/\text{week}$ ).
- 4 That cheap black light lotus? You now phosphoresce in ultraviolet light. UV creatures hit with advantage.
- 5 Ingested a magic cat spirit and became a cat pet. Your hero is enthralled by your new character: a horned cat named **Twinklestar** (L1, feline): an ambitious sixteen year old cat seeking the *Rat Rod of Immor[t]ality*. Powers: *Purr of Power*. Spells: *Hold Portal*. Weaknesses: dogs, balls of yarn, thunder.
- 6 Got into a staring match with an Eyebiter. Lost an eye.
- 7 Found the anthropic fighting pits. Reduced to  $\frac{1}{2}$  Life. Succeed testing Strength to win  $\epsilon 1d4 \times 100$ .
- 8 Met **Herrie Tree** (L3, wannabe doctor), a local cad, necroambulist and procurer of fine work-corpses for the CAT construction company. Loan shark to the corpse-to-be. Fancy a body-snatching gig?
- 9–10 The party was as it should be. Lose 1 Endurance.
- 11–12 Your table dancing routine is the talk of the Townships.
- 13 Wake with a bag of strangled cats drained of blood, a hundred ominous pieces of silver ( $\epsilon 100$ ), and a sense of foreboding. Hours later (roll d6) an (1) inn, (2) cat house, (3) opera shack, (4) general store, (5) political café, or (6) mansion collapses in a whisper of necrotic decay.
- 14–19 You're known as a good sort in the Township fleshpots.
- 20+ Acquired a whole cart of bananas (8 sacks at  $\epsilon 50/\text{sack}$ ). And a surprisingly intelligent ape named **Ananas** (L1, accountant).
- 20/20 Wake with a splitting headache. Touching your forehead you discover a new, invisible third eye. Permanently gain 1 Aura.

### CONSECUTIVE ROLLS

Sometimes a result in a table is written with a slash, e.g. 20/20. This means that when you roll a natural 20, you roll an additional consecutive die, and if this is also a 20, voilà—you have a rare result. Additional slashes indicate additional yet rarer possibilities. This mechanic is a silly way to add rare results, and recall the days of 18/00 Strength.

### EXPLODING DICE

Rarely you will see dice written with a little asterisk, e.g.  $d6^*$ . When you roll a natural 6 on a  $d6^*$ , roll the same kind of die again and add the result. Repeat as long as you keep rolling sixes. Exploding dice come into play with strange weapons, artifacts, and spells. Even if you forget this little rule, it won't matter much, but it adds some fun, open-ended chaos.



## DRUGS IN A PURPLE HAZE

The hero stumbled into a shrine garden and vomited copiously over the frog altar. Luminous animalcules burst into song and dance. He stared. Satisfied spirits or hallucination, he could not tell.

Drugs are an **experience**. Heroes gain **(1d6 + Aura) x 10 xp** when trying a new one. Tracking durations is annoying. Most effects last a few hours, so heroes usually test after every encounter to see if the effect wears off.

### FUN-TIME VIOLET CITY DRUGS (D8)

1. **Black Light Lotus** glows in the dark and cats love it. Eaten, it cures mental afflictions for a week. Smoked, it brings deep sleep and restores 1d6 Life. Smear on skin it exudes mind-altering pheromones giving +1d4 Charisma for a day. €50/dose.
2. **Cat Coffee** is a narcotic made from black cat droppings. A pot induces sleep and restores 1d4 mental stat points. €20/dose.
3. **Cat Snip** or **Hops Puff** is a powdered puff mushroom. It brings euphoria and 2 bonus actions. €50/dose. *Addictive* (easy test). Run out: reduce Charisma.
4. **Dog's Tail** or **Wizard's Bone** is a chew root that is used to boost concentration, giving +1 on cognitive tests. €75/dose.
5. **Felix Whizz** is a popular energy drink. A cup grants 1d4 temporary Life and -1d on social tests. €10/dose. *Weakly Addictive* (trivial test). Run out: pissy, -1d on Charisma and Thought tests.
6. **Purple Haze** is the toke of choice for manly men. The aromatized "essensa de mors" numbs pain and emotions. A long spliff gives +1 on tests against pain, grief, fear, and hurt and -1 to Agility and Aura tests. €20/dose. *Weakly Addictive* (trivial test). Run out: cotton mouth, -1d6 Thought and Aura.
7. **Ultra Jay** are crystal needles of a fabulous UV bird. Inserted, they give +1 on social tests and -1d4 Agility for a week. €250/dose.
8. **Whiskers** or **Ticklers** expand the mind and give +1 to perception tests, a weak levitation effect and -1d to physical tests. €100/dose. *Addictive* (easy test). Run out: -1d4 Agility.

### BUT DRUGS ARE BAD, M'KAY

Every time a hero takes an addictive drug they roll an Endurance test. **If they fail, they're hooked.** The player adds the addiction and a drug supply tracker to their hero's character sheet with a pen. When the hero runs out, they have to make a very difficult Endurance test weekly. Once they fail, they suffer until they get a hit again.

**Curing Addiction** takes a long time. Roleplay the struggle or use *Cure Disease*. There are no rules beyond that. It's hard, figure it out.

Though cured the hero has sipped at the teat of transcendence and a fresh taste of the *Milk of M'le Maiku* (or whatever it was they were hooked on) restarts the addiction.

**Long-term health effects** tend to be harsh and lethal, but so are monsters. You can usually ignore the long-term in a roleplaying game. Heroes die.





## THE LAST GASTROGnome: THE EATING EXPERIENCE

The Warlock and Poncho sat on the bench-gargoyle munching their sandwiches. The lithic ornamental sighed and hoovered crumbs. It was going to be another one of those days.

Like drugs, fine (or odd) dining is an **experience** for heroes. It's less hazardous, if more time-consuming. **After a week a hero "becomes a regular" and gains xp.** The cost is in addition to living expenses.

### TOWNSHIP DINING ESTABLISHMENTS (D6)

1. **Pér Slaji:** the grimmest dining experience in the township. Trivial Endurance tests are *de rigueur*, advantage finding cads, cutpads, and pursenapes. Regular: €1, poisoned by Pér, 50 xp.
2. **Shéh Shah:** premium water-pipe and cat café, hub of a feline franchise stretching from the RLD (Red Land District, the independent hyper-capitalist province of the Red Land run by worker-led crime syndicates) to the Porcelain Citadel. Cool cats get good drugs here, dopey dogs not welcome. Regular: €10, get a gig with the Purple Hazer body snatchers, 50 xp.
3. **Le Pesquemanceur:** Seka the Summoner is the sharpest shark slicer south of Azure. Won't find a better source of black market fishing scrolls and amulets. Regular: €20, learn *Attract Fish*, *Early Worm*, *Net Trick* or *Seka's Spear of Slicing*, 100 xp.
4. **L'ultim Gastrognôme:** the peak of piquant cuisine, catering to cats and their cat-pets, foreign emissaries, Princes and Satraps of the Caravan Kingdoms. Getting in is hard, but prestigious (advantage interacting with local nobs and snobs). Regular: €200, anointed by the gastro-gnome, 100 xp.
5. **Al Flogon:** drinking dive of the abnegators of the Rainbow Pantheon. Only visitors with no Charisma enter without risk of blasphemy (easy Aura test). Blasphemers automatically fail their next 3 Charisma tests. A silly and expensive penance (€50) removes the divine sanction. Smart visitors can learn about the biomechanicum. Regular: €5, biomechanicum, 200 xp.
6. **Nul Sanctimons:** a holy water and felix whizz bar, where the *rafiné* meet, take cat coffee and comment on the Empresses' new clothes. "*Sé très il-decadént, néy?*" says the low-cut eunuch. It's not. The food nourishes the soul but not the body. Regulars regain only half Life, but temporarily memorize a bonus spell. Regular: €100, fashionable but ineffective new habit, 100 xp.



### LAST CHAIR SALON ('DISCOVERY')

(1 day, 30 xp)

A day's journey west of the Violet City the coffee plantations give way to scrubby uplands. The city claims them, but it is the coin-shamans of the Aqua and Cerulean semi-nomadic clans who are paid to defend them from vomes. The Last Chair mesa stands at the crossroads of the Low Road and the High. Its flanks, deeply grooved with the visages of scaled kings from a neo-ophidian age, divide the southern way of shattered viaducts to the Porcelain Citadel from the leisurely beast trails wending north into the vast grasslands of the Lime Nomads.

Atop the robin egg blue walls of some Long Ago fort or tower rises the **Last Chair Salon**, operated by **Marsa Vinoble** (L3, sharp and shallow), scion of a long line of seditious Yellowlander exiles. The Last Chair is the last place to stock up on *yellow beer* (€200/keg), felix whizz and cat coffee and the first place to hear new rumors from the Rainbowlands. The local rancher-riders pay decent prices, tourists pay double. The pastorales hate the tough business-heroine who sells Violet City drugs to their children. She claims it is her free market right.

It's a secret, barely kept, that a **vome nest-mother** (L6, fecund) is kept in the cellar, hooked up to a fermentation golem to produce the yellow beer.

Regular: €70 and a felix whizz addiction or a metallic buzzing visitor in the ear promising redemption, 80 xp.



# HIRING HELP IN THE VIOLET CITY

The Warlock rolled her eyes. Another useless lout. At least they would be done soon. If their 'hero' didn't accidentally stab another would-be guard while 'testing' their mettle.

## LEVEL NOT HIT DICE

**Level** is an abstract measure of a character's power. A Level 1 (L1) character is equivalent to an average human and a L9 character is as powerful as the most legendary of heroes ever.

## DEFENSE NOT ARMOR CLASS

Defense is the target number for attackers relevant tests to injure a character in some way. A score of 7 is poor, 11 is average, and 15 is good.

## JUST ... BONUS

**Bonus** is a number characters add to die rolls when they're skilled at the test they're attempting. If they're an expert in their field, they double their bonus for those tests.

## LIFE NOT HIT POINTS

The key resource of every creature, which keeps them narratively viable, is abstracted to Life. In practice this is exactly like hit points in most games, but the name change emphasizes that combat does not necessarily entail spurting wounds, and that words can, indeed, also kill. Further, the UVG often assumes that heroes can activate artifacts and spells with their own life force.

## CONSECUTIVE CRITICALS

In combat, most heroes deal x2 damage on a natural 20. Natural 20s in combat are always consecutive, and every additional twenty applies the damage multiplier again, so three twenties in a row means x8 damage dealt.

## SKILLS AND ABILITIES AND MORE

All skills and abilities are more-or-less descriptive and part of what makes a character distinctive. For more details on how characters work, read **Heroes and the Cat** (p.133).

## HIGHWAYMEN OR POTENTIAL HENCHMEN (D12)

Henchmen can become new heroes when existing heroes bite the dust. Let players roll the henchmen's ability scores as required. Henchmen are paid wages weekly.

1. **Migo the Dark** (L1, feline) and his pet **Jor leu-Gro** (L1, tough, slow). Curious, interested in new sights, a bit cowardly, *Minor Illusion*. €100.
2. **Lea the Fluffy** (L3, feline), bad cat on hard times. Needs a pet. Friendly but very lazy, prone to misrepresenting the truth. Purr curse: *Terribly Itchy Armpits* (difficult Aura test). €60.
3. **Sim Cadmium** (L1, tracker, ranger), a lesser Doghead with a raspy, mysterious voice, hood, and a doleful past. €70.
4. **Merenk-Zero Running** (L1, flexible), escaped polybody drone rediscovering her identity, neuroparticipation chip scars still visible under ash-white hair. Fast learner (+20% xp bonus). €40.
5. **Obritish Krat** (L1, golem-whisperer), a diesel-chugging Dwarf, with burned beard and haunted eyes, talking of wire-ghouls in a salt mine far to the east. Good with machines. €50.
6. **Malikraut Koza** (L1, rustler, goatherder), a short Orangelander with a penchant for poetry, puffery, pomp, and a bit of the old ultraviolence. ↑a on sneak attack damage. €35.
7. **Glim** (L2, executioner), silent stranger in robes of odd refinement. Rumors of murderous barbaric past and inquisitor training. Iron minded (↑a on mental tests). €25.
8. **Od Broyden** (L1, merchant, lush), scion of a Lesser Vintner house scouting new markets and making a name. Can haggle like nobody's business (↑a on transactions). €99.
9. **Vigo Brastec** (L1, student of the dead), a hunter of rogue post-mortem laborers and currently wanted for certain undisclosed affairs back east. ↑a in combat with the dead. €20.
10. **Laud ah-Num** (L2, fashionista), dilettante from Emerald City out to find the finest black light lotus. May be loaded or really poor, dresses in dandy clothes at all times (intense fashion sense increases his apparent net worth by a factor of 10). €60.
11. **Zika** (L1, berserker), a young un', wild eyed. Totally not possessed by an ultra ghost. Totally vicious in unarmed melee combat (1d6 damage, **x4 critical damage multiplier**). €5.
12. **Lolar' de-Bruno** (L2, soldier bear), half-savage ex-turnip farmer from the Greenland frontier with a bearskin coat and a flute. Probably not a werebear. €10.

## WHAT PRICE DECENT HELP?

Of course, the heroes won't try to hire help just in the Violet City. A Charisma test, one evening, and a few rounds of drinks (equal to local weekly expenses) can conjure an available random hench-human.

d20	Level	Weekly Wages	Defense	Life	Bonus	Skills and Unusual Abilities
1-6	0	€1d4	10	4	+2	Has one professional and one common skill.
7	1	€1	13	7	+4	Fated to be a folk hero? Only one common farm or domestic skill, but gains one spectacular stat and gains double xp until level 3 if turned into a player hero.
8-11	1	€1d6 x 10	11	6	+3	Has one professional and two common skills or one unusual skill. Might know one spell.
12-15	2	€1d12 x 10	12	10	+4	Has three skills and one unusual feature. May know one spell.
16-19	3	€1d20 x 10	12-14	15	+5	Three skills and two unusual features or two spells.
20+	4	€1d6 x 100	12-15	22	+6	Three skills, and three features, three spells or three contacts.
20/20	5	€1d12 x 100	13-16	30	+7	Famous in these parts. Four skills, and four features, spells, or contacts. Knows a helpful secret.





## 2. THE LOW ROAD AND THE HIGH

"I'm on a plain, I can't complain."  
—On A Plain, Nirvana

The cratered viaduct of the High Road runs on crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral across the pallid grasses. Beneath the half-passable testament to the follies of the Long-Long-Ago, the Low Road winds, smeared threads of soil and loam and oil and blood ground into a hard surface by the pounding feet, hooves, wheels, and treads of pilgrims, nomads, caravans, and vechs.

### WEATHER ON THE LOW ROAD AND THE HIGH

The sun clammers above the eye-watering purple haze around 09:30. Hard gusts of flat-tasting air bring (roll d6): (1–3) flurries of ash, (4–5) sour rain, (6) burnt skies.

### MISFORTUNE ON THE ROAD

More than melancholy can strike those who wander among the ruins of forgotten great civilizations.

#### d20 Charisma Test

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1     | Sour rain poisons 1 sack of supplies (-1 supply).   |
| 2     | Bitten by a scorpion spider trying to make a home in a smelly boot (Poison: moderate Endurance test, √d on physical tests for a week).  |
| 3–4   | Foolish beast lames itself in a prairie dog hole (-1 day).  |
| 5–6   | Luckless character sprains an ankle on metal debris (-1 day).   |
| 7     | Obsidian debris cuts feet and hooves (-1d6 Life). But wait, within the broken fossil of some ancient walker, trapped among the sharp shards (difficult Agility test to avoid) is a sliver of stuckforce mounted in a glassy matrix—a force blade (1d10, ignores latter-day magics, €500). |
| 8–9   | The ash aggravates saddle sores (-1 day or -1d4 Life).  |
| 10–11 | Catch a rattling cough. Noisy but harmless. Patent medicine (€5) should cure it.  |
| 12–20 | Patterned nomad headdress protects against the ash, waxed wool ponchos protect against the sour rain, nothing protects against the depressing reality of wandering through vast ruins of elder times.   |
| 21+   | Feral steppe hound puppy with humorously placed blotch on muzzle imprints on hero. Cared for, it grows into a fierce companion.   |

### TRAVEL OPTIONS

- ∴ **Rest, Ruin Camps:** stay in a caravan stop improvised inside a Long Ago building of unclear purpose. Defensible but unsafe.
- ∴ **West, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, 1 week): the cryptic mega-sculpture is encrusted with the dryland coral homes of the Porcelain Princes. A ring of golems guards it. Two great serais stand testament to the uneasy peace between the Spectrum Satraps and the Princes.
- ∴ **South-West, Potsherd Crater** (steppe, 2 weeks): the scrub is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. Limey Clans of the Green Tangerine, the Yellow Lime and the Verdigris Lemon graze and trade this way in spring and autumn.
- ∴ **East, Violet City** (road, 1 week): back to the Rainbowlands. The city of the cat lords and their drugs.
- ∴ **North, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, 1 week): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the 'Best-Forgotten' Ages.

### ENCOUNTERS ON THE TWO ROADS (D8)

1. **Swarm of vome-possessed prairie dogs** (L4, logic horde), frothing as the dread mechanical ghost corrupts their neural matter. Utterly savage vome infection vectors, but confounded by climbing a high rock and waiting for the infection to liquefy their brains (a few days).
2. **Feral steppe hounds** (L2, spotted) white and grey scavengers hunting for weak prey.
3. **Slender-legged grazing hares** with frightened eyes and swiveling chitinous protuberances. They taste mildly off.
4. **Lime nomad hunters** (L2, canny) returning north with game sacks full of glistening birds (€50 per sack).
5. **Rainbowlander caravan** (L3, money-minded) with hundreds of beasts, escorts, and cargoes of odd fruits (€100 per sack) and Rainbow Silks (€500 per sack).
6. **Great porcelain walker** (L5, glistening) and its trinity of flustered **Princes** (L3, conservative), escorted by **eunuch slaves** (L1, porters) and many beasts.
7. **Satrap clock wagons** (L6, tolling, clattering) in a column of gay colours and glistening glass crenelations that admit no faults. The Satrap in charge says they sell experiences, not goods. Spend a day and €200 to gain 100 xp in the crystal clock.
8. **Helpful wandering serai** (L7, lumbering village on wheels) in the Later Corpsepaint Monarch style offers security, resupply, and the old Greenlander veteran **Beaugearthe** (L3, machete fighter) and his prize cat rifle (€60/week).



# DISCOVERIES HIGH AND LOW

## RUSTED HAND OF VICTORY

(1 day, 80 xp)

A victorious hand rises from the hardpack, covered in graffiti. Near the road, it is a popular picnic platz for aristo maidens seeking a suitably gothic and melancholy place to have themselves depicted. Slight danger of **monkey mechs** (L2, thieving, razor-fingered).

## CRYSTAL PYLON OF MEMORIES GIVEN AWAY

(2 days, 150 xp)

A voluptuously whorled crystal pylon lies on its side in a heavily eroded crater, its flanks covered in a riot of perfumed mind-altering brambles. Nomads say it transforms memories into life. This is true (touch with forehead, permanently lose 1 point of Thought, gain 1 Life). **Ultra possessor** (L6, hungry ghost) at night, **millipede mechs** (L2, laser-faced) during the day.



## POTSHERD CROWN

(2 days, 100 xp)

The rim of an oddly even hill rises white and pale, like a great crown of deep porcelain. Remnants of quarries from before the days of the Porcelain Princes lie abandoned to **vomish lurchers** (L3, slow wired) while sanguine **porcelain prospectors** (L1, hard luck) whisper of wormy holes at the far rim (a day away).

*Wormy holes* lead into the depths. There are d4 to plumb:

1. A great large hole leads to the dust-covered exoskeleton of a great ultraviolet worm, dead for decades. Chittering **spider-rats** (L1, ceiling-walking) and **bat-scorpions** (L1, venom-fanged) have proliferated. A day's excavation would dig up 2d6 large crystal worm teeth (1 sack and €100 each). Good for making crystal swords and spears and stuff. Epic.
2. A dryland sponge-ridden hole leads to spore fields, **skin parasites** (L1, disfiguring), and several **totally not-elven skeletons** (L2, metallic bones, 1 sack and €200 each).
3. A slick, polished hole leads to a slippery, tangled knot of passages and chambers occupied by a family of **green slime worms** (L3, hyper-acidic). The worms are (d6): (1) all gone, (2) all dead and rotting, (3) pupating into some kind of **vomish thing** (L6, shape-changing), (4) asleep? dormant? (5) mating, (6) ready to ambush invaders and slowly digest their delicious bones with their slimy skins.
4. Fake worm hole leads to an archaic, forgotten ammo cache and indigo ivory furniture (2d4 sacks, €1,500 total).



## MOTOR AGATE OUTCROP

(2 days, 2d8 x 10 xp)

A gorgeous, striated ridge, left over from some incredibly aesthetic geological process. Fragments of rare metal skeletons (€200/sack, 1d6 days to excavate each) are embedded here and there in the outcrop, lending credence to the Citadel theories of an ancient period when creatures with living flesh over metal endoskeletons were the evolutionary norm. Cowled, **back-jointed archaeologists** (L3, totally not vome-insect humanoids) prow the outcrop.



## SEALED GATE

(3 days, 250 xp)

A cratered arched gate in the Onion-and-Skull style of the Later Mahogany Reign slowly emerging from its aerolith tomb. Sages say it was entombed by an epic application of *Zrakomlat's Air Becomes Stone* in the Year of the Seven Wars. The petrified bones of strange beasts (€300/sack, 1d4 days to excavate a sack) continually emerge from the light, fluffy stone of the area. Heavily covered in graffiti. Risk of **artist dilettantes** (L2, annoying) and the occasional **meta-skeleton** (L4, recombinatorial, adaptable).



## OTHER GATES

Eerie gates and portals to strange places emerge from the hazy Times Before Times throughout the Ultraviolet Grasslands and intelligent travelers are wise to avoid them. On the other hand, fools often believe that plunder and treasure lie just beyond the gate.

A famous example is the cratered arched gate in the Onion-and-Skull style of the Later Mahogany Reign slowly emerging from its aerolith tomb by the Low Road and the High.

What if you need another random gate, leading somewhere else?

**Djuram the Well-garnished** (L3, mendicant) or **Sakriboldt de Placis** (L2, thundering) or another similar scholar would certainly be able to furnish them with unreliable hearsay on the location of such a gate for as little as €1d10 x 100.

### WHAT IS THE GATE CALLED? (D10)

1. Doorway Into Sun
2. Hypnotic Circle of Love
3. Iron Rectification of Space
4. Stone Melts Into Air
5. Paradox of the Bridgekeeper
6. Third Eye of the Gods
7. Crystal Catapult
8. World Worm
9. Mouth of Reflection
10. Dark Side Revolver

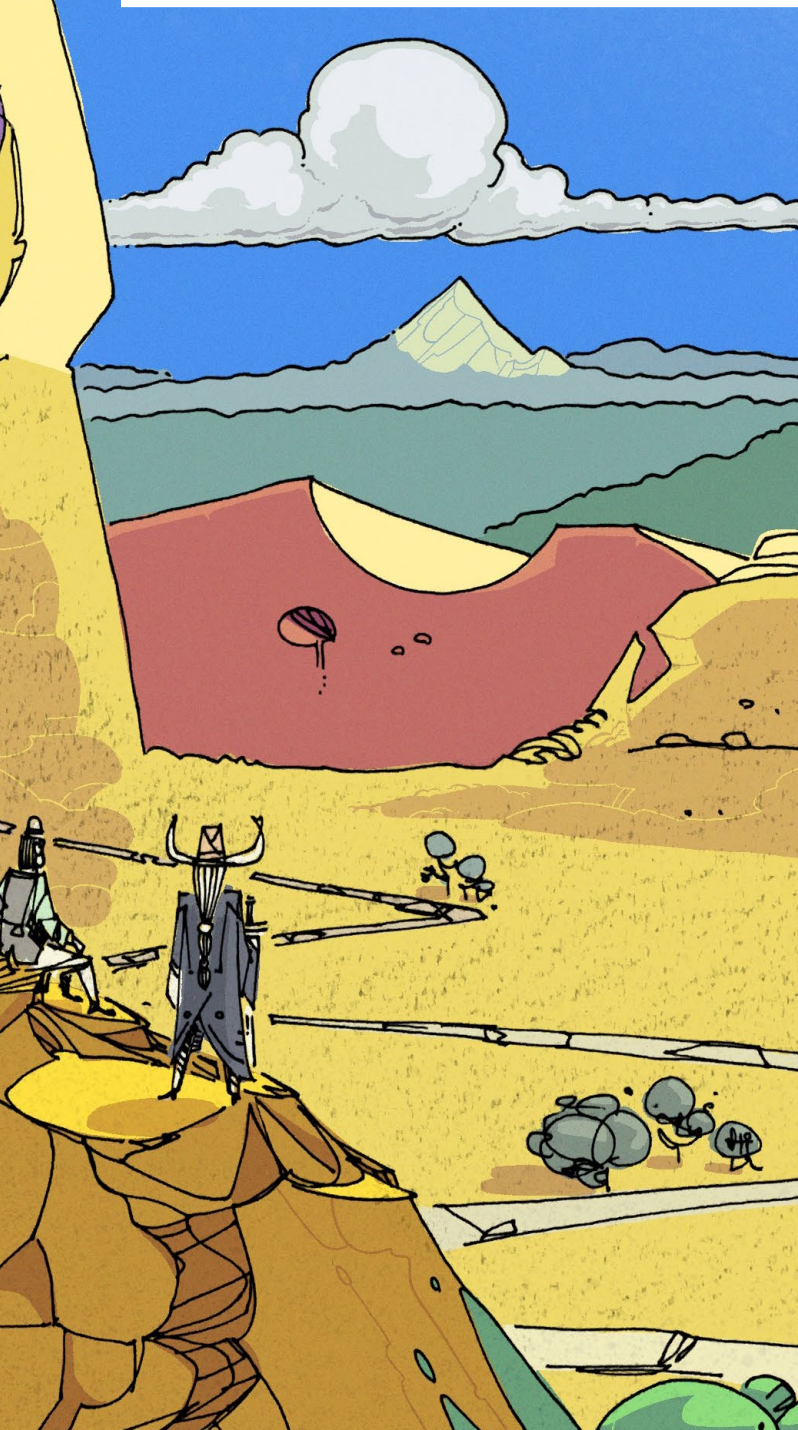
### RUMORS OF THIS RANDOM GATE (FIVE-FOLD D6)

d6	Where Is It?	What Is It Made Of?	Who Made It?	What Happened To It?	Where Does It Lead?
1	In the heart of a destroyed metroplex swarmed by necroambulant vomes.	Ripples in reality fused into a 5-dimensional circle of infinite sharpness.	Nobody. It made itself. It came from the Elsewhere to eat the souls of mortals.	It unleashed hell and was shut after an epic 14-book story quest.	A now deadly place. Perhaps a melting palace in the planet's mantle.
2	Atop a harsh, sculpted mountain of malachite.	Flowing, living metal, swirling through itself.	The Vile Ones as part of their travel network.	It was destroyed from the other side.	A hostile place of noxious gases and vile spores.
3	On a plain of dust and hate.	Bone turned to steel by ceaseless aeons of pain.	Para-lings when they infiltrated the old world.	Untreated software infections killed it.	A queer place, of strange physics and odd geometries.
4	Among orchards and rolling hills.	Lichens coat eroded stone and tarnished metals.	A Psychic Unity before it ascended to another sphere.	It became uneconomic and was mothballed.	Ruins and rubble of a great, dead city (p.116).
5	In the middle of a quarterling village.	Flesh and wood coated in moss and flowers.	An unexpected genius in a barbarous kingdom.	Its makers died and a cargo cult sprang up around it.	A bucolic, agrarian land, outside of history.
6	Forgotten in the basement of a ruin, perhaps repurposed as an abattoir.	Iridescent scales coating a body turned to stone and crystal.	An abmortal wanderer and his flock of servile under-lings.	Nothing. It was just ... forgotten.	A major modern hub, promising new trade routes and opportunities.



### BUT IN WHAT CONDITION IS THE RANDOM GATE? (D6)

1. It is only the skeleton of a gate; whatever magic animated it is gone for good.
2. The gate is sealed by some odd and epic ritual, and an extravagant ceremony would be required to open it. A creepy cult and €100,000 could make it work again.
3. It is dormant, sleeping and immobile, but it can be awakened by the right spell. Some library work could reveal it, perhaps even *Zundan's Awakening of Aways* could work?
4. It is fully functional, but physically sealed by a lot of rock, livingstone, mud, dirt or other detritus. A 2d6 week excavation should make it functional again. But why was it sealed?
5. It is sealed from the other side, turning it into a one way portal. What might come through?
6. It's working. Just the key is required or ... oh ... wait, it's activating. How convenient.



### WHAT DOES IT ACTUALLY DO? (D10)

1. **Storage Gate:** a warehouse sized extra-dimensional hole or, as sages might call it, *A Non-Portable Hole*. It might be a 1) treasury, 2) cargo warehouse, 3) prison, 4) tomb, 5) archive or 6) garage.
2. **Multi-Access Extra-Dimensional House:** in essence a postal box, accessible through multiple gates. Creatures' spirits may be keyed to a single gate, disabling "teleportation."
3. **Dull-Way Portal:** providing a safe extra-dimensional worm tunnel to another location. It may take days or weeks or even months of travel through the portal to reach another location. **Void monsters** (L1d20, tangled horrors) are, of course, just fairy tales. They don't pluck apart bodies and souls and personalities.
4. **Fast Portal or Tele-Portal:** shortens travel distances to another location.
5. **Sideways Portal:** realigns the traveler in regard to the physical world, making them "ethereal" or "ghostly". Sages warn of **rats and roaches** (Lo, astral vermin) infesting the sideways land.
6. **Machine Portal:** it leads into the underlying mechanical body of the world where cold, calculating **elder creatures** (L13, zoop bloop) engage in their odd plots. Very dangerous.
7. **Rainbow Portal:** originally designed as a pleasure or amusement portal, it takes the traveler on an amazing journey in space and time. The journey lasts 1d4\* weeks and the traveler returns profoundly changed (gain 1d6 x 1,000 xp, replace one ability, change one thing about hero's looks).
8. **Hell Gate:** leading to some monstrously contorted biomancy-infused nightmare sub-realm. Don't go there. In fact, don't even activate it, you schlub.
9. **Time Portal:** lets travelers skip a week or a month or a year into the future when they pass through it. One way trip only.
10. **Soul Mill:** not a portal but a refinery, stripping the souls from creatures to fuel ancient machinery. Usually the stripped body and personality are returned in a day or a week—quite dead but perfect for creating flesh golems or ba-zombies (L1d4, obedient). Sometimes the soul fuel can also be harvested—a single sentient being's worth of soul rendered into a crystal fuel cube is worth around €700 on the Dwarven black market in the Redland District (10 cubes/sack).

### GATER SICKNESS

Travelling through a gate exposes the human body to the strange radiations of the Void. Faulty gates may cause many uncomfortable symptoms. Even normally functioning gates can rarely cause sickness (test Aura with advantage). Ultras are immune to gater sickness, which does nothing to alleviate popular suspicions about them.

#### dzo Aura Test

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | Soul leakage permanently weakens traveler. ↓d to all future Aura tests. -1d4 Aura or Thought.                              |
| 2-3   | Blank burn. The memories of the last ten (roll d6): (1) years, (2) months, (3-4) days, (5-6) hours are gone. -1d4 Thought. |
| 4-7   | Horrible headaches. -1d4 Thought.  |
| 8-11  | Nausea and vomiting. -1 Agility and Charisma.  |
| 12-15 | Mild unease and discomfort.  |
| 16-19 | No symptoms.   |
| 20+   | Reinvigorated by the rendered spirit dust. Gain 1d6 Life.  |

# 3. STEPPE OF THE LIME NOMADS

“I should have listened, baby, to my second mind.”  
—*Lemon Song*, Led Zeppelin

The Limey Nomads' lands are harsh and dry, forbidding to travelers. Odd remnants from the misty period referred to as the 'Best-Forgotten' Ages by the Saffron City's Opiate Priests dot the plain. In spring the Limeys graze west towards the Grass Colossus, returning east to the Circle Rim for winter.

## WEATHER IN THE LIMEY STEPPE

Every morning the purple haze occludes the sun until 08:30 or so. A dull drizzle gets in the eyes and cinnabar ash burns the tongue.

## MISFORTUNE ON THE STEPPE

Foreboding tales of wolf-folk in the far north, beyond the Sea of Tree, are the greatest danger here. That and the clans, of course.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Unfortunate hero sprains shoulder falling off their mount (-1 day).
- 2 Get a nasty bladder infection (-1d4 Strength). One word: purple.
- 3-4 Lose a beast to a pack of spotted wild dogs (-1 beast).
- 5-6 Infested with ash-lice, very annoying and half invisible (-1d4 Aura).
- 7 Obsidian debris cuts feet and hooves (-1d6 Life), but wait, within the broken fossil of some ancient walker, trapped among the sharp shards (difficult Agility test to avoid) is a sliver of stuckforce mounted in a glassy matrix—a force blade (1d10, ignores latter-day magics, €500).
- 8-9 Metal armor has rusted (-1 Armor bonus).
- 10-11 Red eye from irritating dust (-1d4 Agility). Preventable with eyewear.
- 12-19 Now the heroes understand why all the nomads constantly smoke pipes filled with their sweet-smelling weeds: the cinnabar ash that gets everywhere tastes like ground-up tooth fillings. Not pleasant.
- 20+ Stumble on nomads camped in the middle of nowhere, performing an obscure ritual drinking celebration with strong medicinal liquors called “*vodye bocye*” (-1 day, recover one stat, ↓d to all activity for 1 day due to hangover). If the heroes stayed, they can purchase additional bottles of *vodye bocye* with elaborate and implausible heroic tales (easy Charisma tests). Once they fail a test, the nomads harrumph and say that's quite enough of that and won't give more. One bottle fully restores one stat (but is also strongly alcoholic).

### TELESCOPIC EYE, VOMISH (IMPLANT)

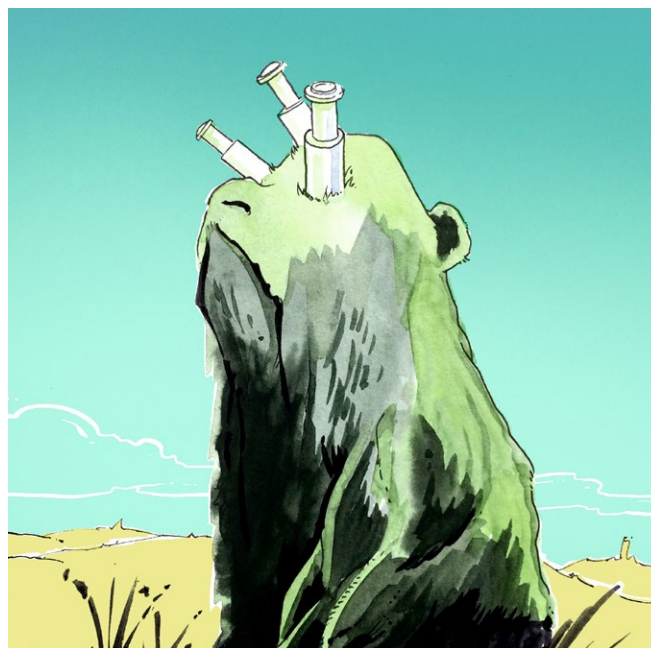
All researchers of the worlds below and above agree, despite being abominations in the eyes of the Rainbow Lord, whichever heretic designed the Ultraviolet Grassland's vomes gifted them with exceptional optics. Vomish eyes are prized by technomancers and biomancers alike (€1d4 x 100 for a well-preserved eye). Inserting any vomish implant into the body is a dangerous process that improves function, but requires a life-long regimen of healing rituals, prayers, and vital mech-suppressant salts (€5-10/week) to avoid the mutagenic corruption inherent in the bug-ridden vomish source code.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS

- ∴ **Rest, Lonely Copse:** stay in the shelter of lonely trees clinging to life in a shallow hollow surrounded by wide steppe. There is water, but not much safety.
- ∴ **West, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, 1 week): the cryptic mega-sculpture is encrusted with the dryland coral homes of the Porcelain Princes. A ring of relatively well-maintained Columnar Defense Golems protects this haven of trade.
- ∴ **South, The High Road and the Low** (road, 1 week): crumbling pylons of dryland coral tower above the pitted modern road.
- ∴ **East, Violet City** (steppe, 2 weeks): back to the Rainbowlands. The city of cat lords, drugs, pets, and decadent magic.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE STEPPE (D8)

1. **Vomish clackers** (L4, entangling) rattle in the dark, shadowing and whining, hurling rocks and bolts. By day they burrow into the ash and follow at a great distance, their glass telescopic eyes and re-engineered limbs keeping to a steady, slow trudge. At night, if lights go out, they hurl themselves in and try to haul one or two victims off into the dark. Half of their victims are abandoned as suddenly as they are snatched, unharmed save for scratches, bruises, and a fear of the dark.
2. **Mind-burned megapede** (L8, alien) shaking the ground on its odd journey, corundum encrustations glittering on its massive segmented neural nodes.
3. **Vomish birds** (Lo, stalking) with glass recording eyes and metal innards, otherwise indistinguishable from the regular kind.
4. Flock of **plump pigeons** makes for easy hunting.
5. Herd of **horned horses** (L2, fast, worth €150, capacity 2), wary of the two-leggers, belligerent if provoked.
6. **Great armadilloids** (L1, small, tough, semi-sentient) excavating a new communal burrow and farming mushrooms.
7. **Limey scouts** (L2, lancers), suspicious but proud.
8. **Limey matriarch's traveling village** (L8, settlement), her herdsmen, chattel, herds and wagons on the move for better grazing. This could be a trading opportunity!







# DISCOVERIES AMONG THE NOMADS

## GREAT BIOMECHANICAL BAOBAB

(1 day, 120 xp)

Famed in the tales of the Green Tangerine Clan, the biomechanical tree is an unbelievable sight that dominates the plain. It secretes natural oils (€200/sack, harvest 1 per 1d6 days) that lubricate machines and cure aching joints. They say an **artificial dryad** (L4, lovely plastic) resides in the great tree's slow-brain, dreaming of the awakened ecosphere.

## SPRING OF THE YELLOW WATER

(2 days, 170 xp)

The Lime Clan hold this holy spring in great esteem, hidden in a narrow ravine littered with Long Long Ago skeuomorphic depictions of everyday life rituals. The yellow waters burble out of the sacred cleft and collect in a nearly bottomless pool. The water is (truthfully) considered a potent restorative (calms nerves and a bottle restores 1d4 Life), especially when mixed with black light lotus (nonsense).

- ∴ *Depths of the Spring:* Over 300 meters deep, the lower depths are filled with vicious **wire-and-bone biomechanical fish** (L1, carnivorous) and **abyssosaurs** (L5, echolocating cave saurians).
- ∴ *At the bottom:* Offerings (€11,000 total) of bronze and gold and crystal, from swords to cannons. Each offering occupies 1d6-1 sacks and is worth €1d10 x 100.
- ∴ *Beneath the offerings:* a **sacred machine fetish** (L5, sleeping) of a half-forgotten proto-deity, nameless now.
- ∴ *Subterranean Outflow:* to the Cave Octopus' Garden (1d6+2 days in the dark).

## VERDIGRIS RIBS

(3 days, 200 xp)

The great ribs of a gargantuan sesquipedalian beast rise, cut and polished by grim blades, turned into a crude henge coated with centuries of painted prayers and felix whizz, glowing bluish-green day and night. **Lemon clansmen** (L2, hard-boiled) make offerings of meat and drink on odd nights and the occasional human sacrifice brings great fortune (three boons) or restoration (recover two attributes in a single bloody orgy). **Vomes** (L2, basic models) reported at daybreak and twilight.

## CRYPTICH OF THE CRAQUELURE QUEEN

(4 days, 250 xp)

A jagged gash of an eroded canyon reveals odd offerings (vomish) at several ancient cerametal stumps, the remains of a long dead ventilation system.

- ∴ *Underground:* a labyrinth of barely accessible corridors and walkways where ash and dust fall oddly. Pits and deadfalls are the only hazards. Dead security golems creak and crumble.
- ∴ *At the core* is the cryptich, a glass and ge-yao three-layered crypt protecting a **biomechanical queen** (L5, ancient) with a field of sudden entropy, a curse of immediate tissue liquefaction and a charm of service to the queen. The queen is confused but not hostile. Her biomechanical implants can be looted (€4,000).

## CAVE OCTOPUS' GARDEN

(5 days, 300 xp)

Deep in the photo-lume limestone karst, piled debris from Long Ago aggregates in half-fossilized deposits. A spherical cavern, 300 meters across, left by the accidental detonation of an ancient combat ritual, home of the **Cave Octopus** (L16, doddering, kind). It is huge and many-coloured, with neural whip tentacles and severe photophobia. Its home is littered with biomantic rituals and it is convinced the world has ended and that only its failing, flailing experiments can revive the dead world above.

- ∴ *Biomancer Extraordinaire:* the Cave Octopus replaced its human body with a many-tentacled form adapted to survival in the dark, nutrient-rich broth of the yellow water. With time and raw materials the Cave Octopus can recombine a new and better body (increase two stats, apply strange mutation) for a hero.
- ∴ *The Garden:* rich with fat, blind snakes feeding on a variety of slimes, aquatic fungi, and nutrient filtering crustaceans. Hiding under rocks and algal mats are the Cave Octopus' **bio-modified children** (L2, gibbering, many-handed): half-mad body horrors created from the occasional human sacrifice.
- ∴ Rummaging through the debris and biomantic stores reveals ancient and arcane biomantic equipment and supplies from Long Long Ago (€5,000, 8 sacks).
- ∴ A subterranean stream leads up to the Spring (2d6 days) and down to the Cryptich (1d6 days).

# LAVENDER CLIFFS: CITY OF NOMADS

Imagine some nut-brown old prospector sidled up to you, machine leg clattering, dust-blown voice rasping.

“This is just hearsay, for no Steppe Nomad would ever admit to a town-dweller that they, too, once had towns and cities. That if you head north, towards where the Blue Ridge shades towards the fried pink of the deep steppe, they still have towns.”

“You know those stories they tell, of the Steppelanders exposing their elderly and their weak? It's not true. Up there, beyond the Lavender Cliffs, where strange spirits crawl from crevices in the mind-blasted rocks, they squirrel them away in a building-city from the Older Days.”



“There, their oldfolks serve as meat vessels, carrying decadent ultra spirits through the years. They call them memory warriors, fighting some false demon they call the **Ropey Ent** (L13, defective vome autofac).”

What would you think? Pure nonsense. And you would be right. There is certainly no Brutalist arcology left over from the Older Days where the Steppelanders hide their elderly to serve the ghosts of days long gone. There can't be a great motile vomish autofactory maximizing entropy in its defective machine way.

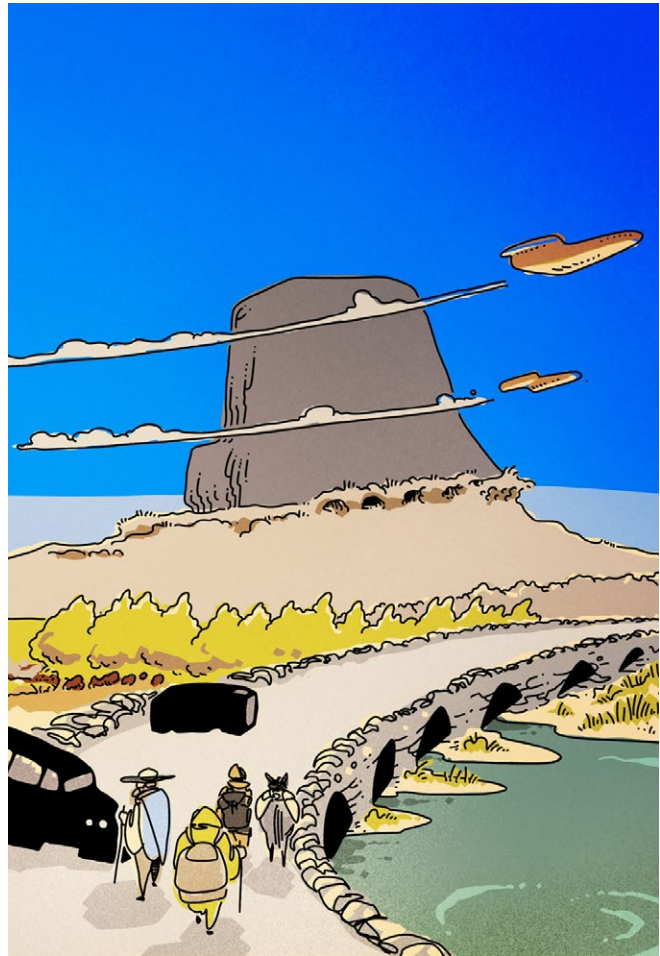
## THE CLIFF VILLAGES OF GHOST AND CLAN

(6 days, 300 xp)

The lavender cliffs begin inconspicuously, ridges, fractures in the flat ground. Then they fold and fold over themselves again, rising above ever deeper arroyos, the pink and blue pillows of rock eventually forming into the impressive wall that is the Blue Ridge.

There, in hollows carved in the cliff faces, protected from the elements with filigree lattices of living stone, spread the Cliff Villages of the Citrus Ecclesia, the broad church of the elders of the Steppelanders, bound in the circle of life and death. The common elders are spry and industrious, but eerily quiet and calm. It is the gift of their ultra friends, enhanced and made useful to clan and ghost in the twilight of their years, but alienated from their own bodies while they labor. Each village is overseen by a **Collective Spirit** (L5, helpful, vicious) assigned system administrator privileges over all the elders' bodies by the compact of ghost and clan.

Every seventh day the elders' bodies are returned to them, and the villages ring with rapturous celebration as a week's worth of life is crammed into a single day. The elders celebrate with synthetic alcohol (€50/sack), which tastes of nothing much but inebriates without motor dysfunction or hangovers.



## THE CITY MOUNTAIN

(3 more days, 500 xp)

Beyond the first eroded rank of Blue Ridge hills rise the Blue Ridge mountains, hunched, humped, and weary. Their tops blown to shrapnel by the psychic weapons of an ancient war, their sides thick with scree and scrub.

Among them one still keeps its proud form, its living stone flanks alive and armored in dryland coral thorns and thickets. This is the last city mountain, and the home of **Dead Springtime** (L8, gentle rider of mortals), a leader among the ultras who made compact with the Steppelanders to live among them peacefully. Dead Springtime remembers a time when another world was young and this one merely twinkled in the eye of a cowardly warlord.

Visitors have two options: either they are peaceful and eat the synthetic sweetmeats and drink the synthetic alcohol mixers of the City Mountain, showing their peaceful intent; or they are possessed.

- ∴ Those who partake of the repast ingest the eggs of helpful parasites, which increase their Thought by 1, make them easier to possess, and wipe away all conscious memory of the city's location. The helpful parasites also serve as a permanent surveillance link to the ultras of the City Mountain.
- ∴ Those who are possessed suffer a more brutal erasure of memory and their Thought is reduced by 1 permanently. They find themselves back on the steppe, tired and worked to near exhaustion, a few days later.





# LAVENDER CLIFFS

TOUR THE ULTRAVIOLET GRASSLANDS!



# 4. PORCELAIN CITADEL

“It’s insane, you know, to carry on like before  
wasted years that you stole.”  
—*Wasted Years*, Gin Lady

The unmarked white surface of the great citadel, uplifted like an imprecation against the fanciful gods, serves as a reminder that not all that has fallen has died.

Four robed figures arrayed before the decayed defense golems turn their faceless glazed masks as one.

“This stair leads to the High Houses. Only permitted penitents may ascend to serve us there. Stay back, our Pillars of Power remain as potent as in your forgotten Long, Long Ago,” they speak in an impeccable chorus of disparate voices.

## WEATHER IN THE CITADEL

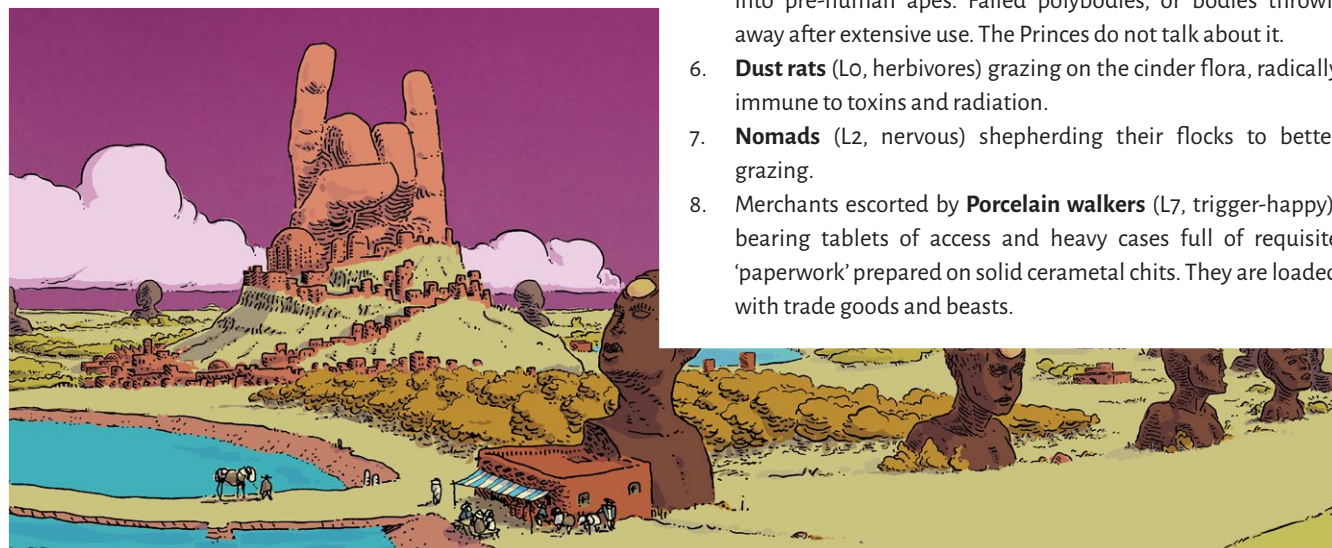
Grim violet haze till 09:00. Light swirling dust storms, hint of cinnamon on the breeze. Chance of smoke.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE CINDER WASTE

Deeper in the west, water and civilization grow scarce.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Develop rasping cough from smoke and dust (-1d4 Endurance).
- 2–3 Horrible blisters from the cinder dust (limping).
- 4–6 Nasty glass nettle burns (-1d4 Agility).
- 7 Wake up one morning to find a beast with seventeen two-inch cubes cut out of its flesh, it is severely weakened (-2 days or -1 beast). Investigating further leads to a discovery just a day off the trail.
- 8–10 Water polluted with cinder animalcules (-1d6 Life or -1 supplies).
- 11–12 Red eye from irritating dust (-1 Agility).
- 13 Sat in a fire ant nest (-1d4 Charisma).
- 14–15 Pants humorously ripped on cinder slag.
- 16–19 Despite the grueling wilderness, everybody came through fine.
- 20+ Came across a traveler dying of vomish infection with eyes full of dreams, pockets full of translucent porcelain spheres (€200, 2 stone), and a single-entry tablet to a Porcelain Citadel private club, perhaps even the High Houses.



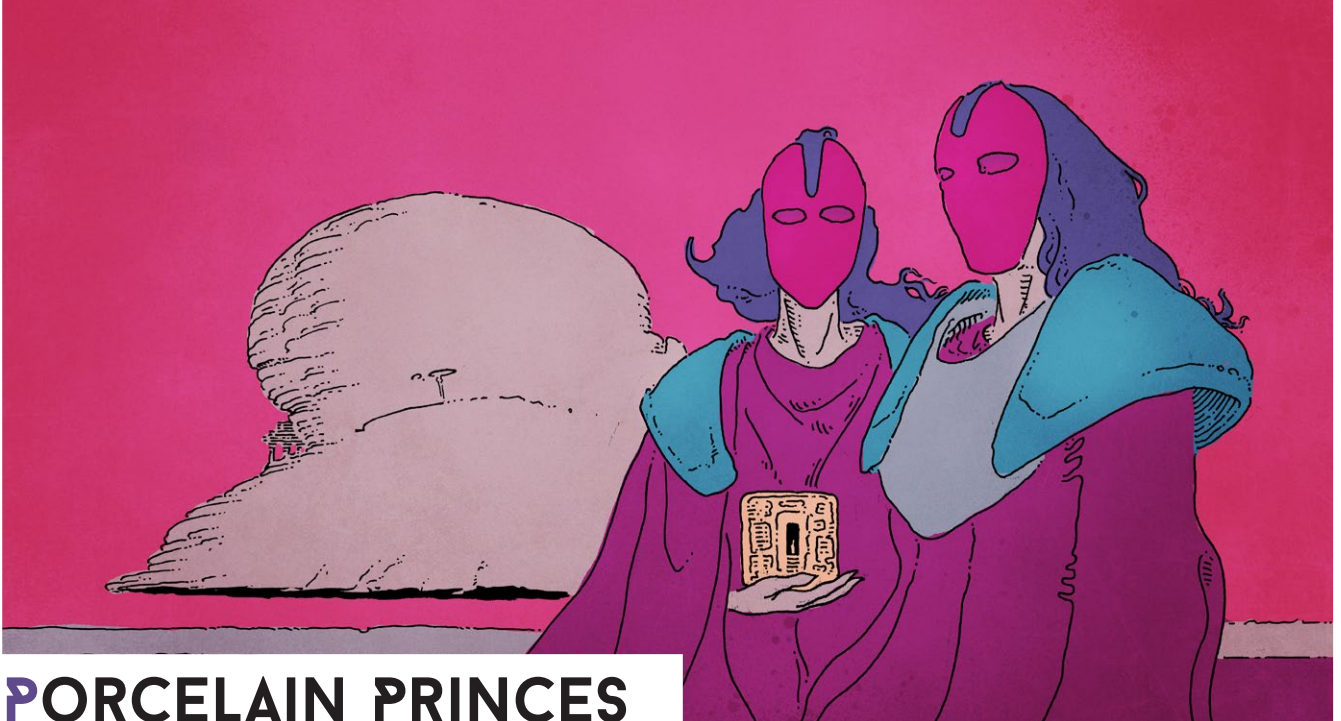
## TRAVEL OPTIONS FROM THE CITADEL

- ∴ **Rest, Decadent Shell of Civilization:** €3/week for slaves, €100/week to earn respect from the Princes.
- ∴ **North-West, Trail of Vomish Dreams** (trail, 1 week): a dangerous journey through the Nomads’ luminous lands winding towards their holy site: the Grass Colossus.
- ∴ **South-West, The Last Serai** (trail, 1 week): the Porcelain Princes’ hold, home to the most remote permanent Rainbowlander trading post. The prices as eye-watering as the obscure penal code.
- ∴ **South, Potsherd Crater** (prospector trails, 1 week): the scrub around the Throne is pallid, topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. The three Limey Clans of the Green Tangerine, the Yellow Lime and the Verdigris Lemon graze and trade in spring and autumn.
- ∴ **East, The High Road and The Low** (road, 1 week): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral towering above the half-passable modern road.
- ∴ **North-East, Steppe of the Lime Nomads** (steppe, 1 week): harsh lands, foreboding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the ‘Best-Forgotten’ Ages.

## ENCOUNTERS NEAR THE CITADEL (D8)

1. **Porcelain hunter golems** (L6, relentless) sent forth by the Porcelain Princes to create a no-man’s land between Princes and vomes. If only their friend-or-foe recognition systems didn’t fail so often.
2. **Vomish tunnelers** (L4, biomechanical worms) burst up from the ground, hungry for one resource or another to feed their erratic needs.
3. **Vome infiltrator** (L1, charismatic), looks at first like an ordinary fellow traveler, but sooner or later reveals themselves as an infection vector for the bug-ridden machines.
4. **Crawling nettle plants** (L1, stinging), become semi-ambulatory and vindictive after some long forgotten encounter with a group of radical plant-liberation phytomancers in the Time of Crystal Wheels.
5. **Prince shells** (L1, drooling), freed human slaves degenerating into pre-human apes. Failed polybodies, or bodies thrown away after extensive use. The Princes do not talk about it.
6. **Dust rats** (L0, herbivores) grazing on the cinder flora, radically immune to toxins and radiation.
7. **Nomads** (L2, nervous) shepherding their flocks to better grazing.
8. Merchants escorted by **Porcelain walkers** (L7, trigger-happy), bearing tablets of access and heavy cases full of requisite ‘paperwork’ prepared on solid cerametal chits. They are loaded with trade goods and beasts.





## PORCELAIN PRINCES

The Porcelain Princes are not-quite-liches that seek immortality just like those wizards. They have spread their vital cognitive essence among several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. They are not more intelligent than before, but additional bodies make them more resilient to damage. By periodically adding new bodies, they ensure a mental continuity across the aeons. Obviously, this continuity is flawless and perfect. So they say. Obviously.

- ∴ **The Link:** glandular with an uncertain but limited range. For this reason, Polybody Princes do not like to send individual bodies too far by themselves; they could go rogue or even return and attempt to take over the original sentience. Groups of three or more are used to reduce risk of personality collapse.
- ∴ **Religious Technology:** the Princes maintain their oldtech porcelain walkers and other machines by rote, often without the understanding to upgrade or jury-rig them if they fail.
- ∴ **Conservative:** They view all upsets to the status quo (their trade duopoly with the Spectrum Satraps on the routes between the Black City and the Rainbowlands) as problems to be crushed.

The Princes trade exclusively to maintain their lavish holds and homes. They are always on the lookout for neuromech and biomech parts and luxuries, from wrens' tongues to vampire wines.

### 8 DISTRIBUTED PRINCES OF THE PORCELAIN CITADEL

1. **Many Cracks 5-body:** leader of the *Conservation Society*. They have an id-devouring fascination with Rainbowland rumors and Near Moon ultra possession magics.
2. **Celadon 10-body:** father of the *Mollusk Appreciation Denomination* bolstering sentient dryland coral technology.
3. **Leopard Lithophane 4-dyad:** confused participant in the *Rites of Animated Teratology*. They love shellfish but are secretly terrified of vomes.
4. **Sherd 7-extension:** noble and decayed meta-ritual oligarch who wishes to turn back time to before the monobodies were allowed into the Radiant Lands. Quite impossible.
5. **Black Pot 5-body:** *Radical Labor or Trade Cooperative*, plotting the overthrow of the Evil Prevention Act of Meissen 13-unity and expansion of trade to new cities founded after the Properly Recorded Period.
6. **Bone Kaolin 2-Body:** decayed remnant of the *Ascendant Church of Flesh*, a death cult. Purchases single-use bodies.
7. **Meissen 13-unity:** *Radical Conservative* faction representative, a fanatic dedicated to restoring the Porcelain Citadel to the unity of thought last exemplified by the Properly Recorded Period. Sadly, the PRP was actually a fictional satire in an ancient book, but the records got garbled several centuries ago.
8. **Clayfire 100-company:** self-appointed well-armed one-Prince militia, obsessed with a gnawing fear that the oldtech golems and vechs are failing and the Princes need to take up arms and bodies to oppose the growing threat of the monobodies. The glandular link system struggles with this many bodies and a strict neuro-calisthenic regime is necessary to keep all the bodies of Clayfire in line.

### POLYBODY WIZARDRY

Heroes that get on the Princes' very good side or that break into one of their body labs in the Porcelain Citadel might be interested in exploring the polybody lifestyle. An additional body requires a (hopefully willing) body donor and at least €2,000. At that point they can switch from a regular human character to a polybody using the rules for Porcelain Princes (p.165).

### COLUMN DEFENSE GOLEMS

Immobile **towers of power** (L13, overpowered), force, and brutal futurism. Their pentagram eyes blaze with purpose, like axes of lightning and lasers bound in strength and unity. Decayed technology covered in warning graffiti, still burning to protect the Porcelain Circle from internal enemies. Nauseating auras surround their near invulnerable crusts. Maybe Pre-Porcelain magic or rocks from the sky would damage them. As it is, these things are a ridiculously overpowered ancient and cryptic defense system—for the course for ancient remnants in the Ultraviolet Grasslands.

Their *Death Heat Fire Lightning Ray* eyes scorch all violators and attackers within their circle. The fields about them are strewn with the bones of vomes, predators, and drunkards who just wanted a wee bit of fun. Indoors, away from their eyes, violence is safer.

# PLACES OF POLISHED PORCELAIN (D14)

## 1. BLACK HOUSE

A lakeside club for rich Princes out for a bit of fun-time decadence and rapid tanning. Within its black lacquered walls hide experiences for the most jaded polybody palate: dishes whose melody of flavours can only be appreciated by five mouths eating in unison; electric pleasure acupuncture to stimulate seven separate bodies in a chorus of delights; and darker pleasures too, disposing of unwanted polybodies in delightfully cruel manners to the accompaniment of a silver bell orchestra. Daily visitor for a week: €3,000, acquire an off-the-shelf polybody, 500 xp.

## 2. BROKEN LINE

Excreted by the Citadel, slave barracks for the bodies broken in service of the Porcelains. Some regained the rudiments of consciousness but most are mere dumb beasts waiting for the nutrient teat and vivimancer's knife.

## 3. COLUMN DEFENSE GOLEMS

Immobile death-laser **pillars of power** (L13, burning rays).

## 4. GUARD QUEST

Crawled into an overhang and cemented there, a now-dead steppe worm's body was converted into a garage for servicing vechs. Run by **Lazaro Romero** (L5, mad scientist), a Yellowlander maker of oozes, lubricants, and fuels. He does more than oil changes, sometimes he gives vechs and walkers sentience with his strange jellies.



Apparently he returned to life after an encounter with the ultra **Life-Is-A-Game** (L4, gambler). Lazaro wants to return east, care for his old mother and take over the family brewery, but the Cogflower Inquisition is looking for him because of the death of archaeologist Maria della Verde at the Ribs of the Great Beast. He keeps his distance—although he is completely innocent of any and all charges, the Inquisition is unreliable.

## 5. HIGH HOUSES

Embassies, workshops, barracks of the Porcelains' eunuchs, certain merchant houses, and tunnel-villa-complexes full of distributed personalities. In secure, mosaicked bunkers, Princely polybody backups are stored, maintained, and improved. A popular guide is **Jonky Bonko** (L3, furniture fighter), a short and lean man who favors poorly coordinated fineries. In the Citadel to sell furniture and collect unconsidered trifles and purses. Well connected to the Purple Haze body-snatchers.

## 6. HOUSE OF THE UNBOWED CARDINAL

Nomad grass cult enclave and hottest BBQ in the West. **Ulc of Aquamarine** (L3, chef cultist) serves as an informal ambassador for the nomads, negotiating grazing rights and slave sales to the ever-hungry Princely body labs. Daily visitor for a week: €100, learn the secret of the tuber grasses the nomads use in hard times, 75 xp.

## 7. HOUSES OF MANY COLOURS

Half-dugout Rainbowlander homes and workshops. The colour of the porcelain used indicates state and city of origin. The genial, hard-eyed **Teljean de Barbier** (L4, gunsmith) heads the informal council representing Rainbowlander interests.

## 8. LOWEST LINE

Shacks of dead coral and brick for unaffiliated outlanders, not quite slaves. Yet.

## 9. ONION DAM

A well-maintained ancient dam with good fishing.

## 10. RADIANT ORCHARDS

The luminescent velvets and cherries of Porcelain Citadel are said to be a panacea when distilled into the fabled Vavilov-Cherenkov vodka (€1,000/barrel).

## 11. TWO SERAIS

The barely peaceful truce-homes of the Satraps' and Princes' eastern caravans, dangerous for non-aligned wanderers. Great oldtech vechs lumber about, while slaves and porters rush to load and unload goods.

## 12. WATERS, STILL

An eerily still lake, home to great **steppe eels** (L2, electricly delicious).

## 13. WATERS, UNSETTLED

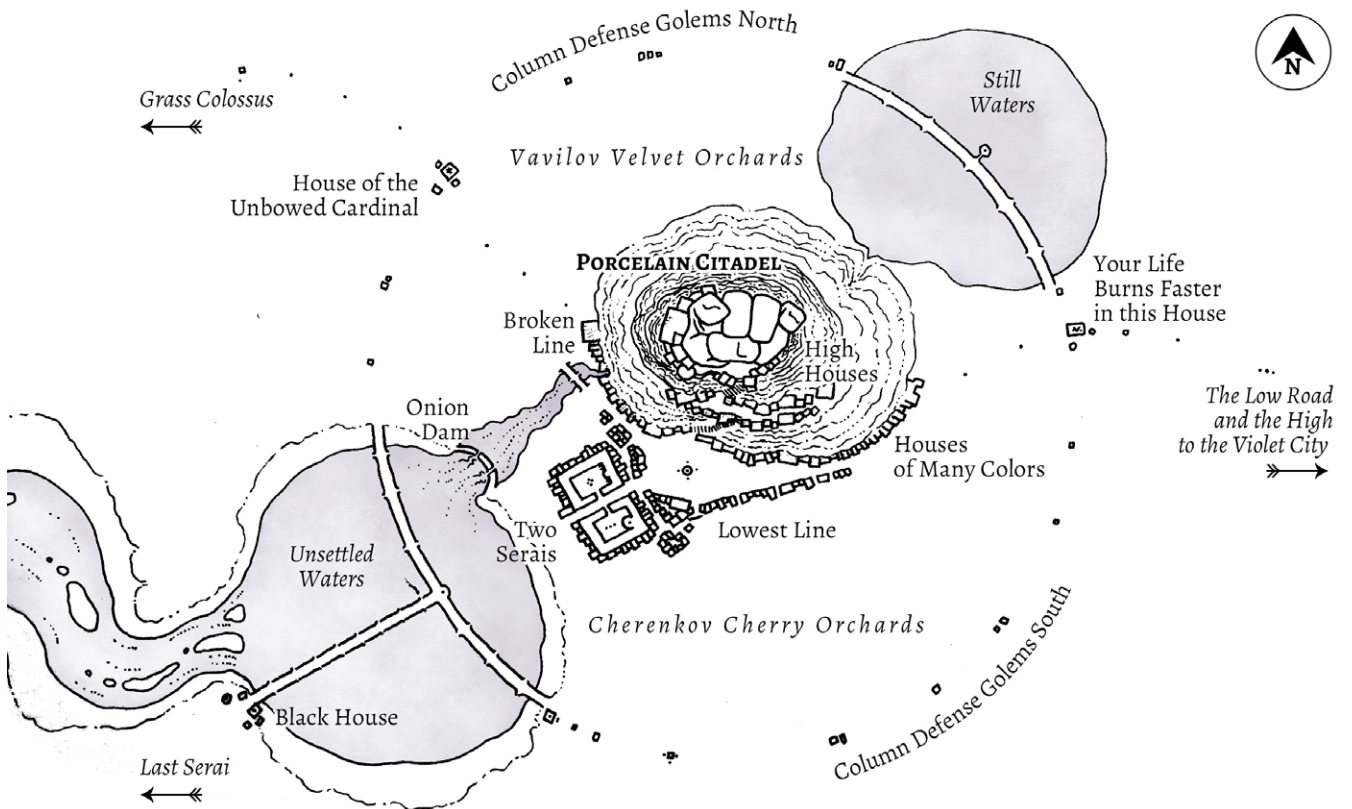
A regular lake. Frogs, geese, ceramic crabs, porcelain perch. Totally regular. No **stone octopus** (L7, amphibious).

## 14. YOUR LIFE BURNS FASTER IN THIS HOUSE

A radical house, known for loud music, louder politics, and a cellar that is *that* kind of dungeon. The kind where Redland District radicals and pseudo-dwarves plot how to subvert the glandular links connecting the polybodies and carry out a general insurrection. **Syruss Sensible** (L3, vome-in-a-box) is the potentially retired freebooter, fan of risky ventures, and manager of Your Life Burns Faster in this House. His magic hats and sharp suits hide a stout supporter of the RLD revolutionary cause. Daily visitor for a week: €100, acquire revolutionary fashion sense, 75 xp.







## CAROUSING WITH THE PRINCES

“Let’s see who’s beneath those masks,” smiled the Hero.

Yes, the Porcelain Princes are decadent. That’s why this is not a bad place for a risky, weird party. €1d6\* x 200 spent on a week of debauchery nets as many xp and a Charisma test.

### PORCELAIN CITADEL CELEBRATION TABLE

d20	Charisma Test (↓d if in debt due to carousing)
1	The hero disappears. Their body subsumed into a Prince’s polybody. Well ... that was messy. <b>Transfer xp gained</b> to new character.
2–3	Got into a weird gladiatorial assassination game with some Princes. Player gets as many tokens as there are other players plus one. The tokens represent hit contracts. They lose 1d6 stat points or 1d20 Life for each one they keep. A random other player’s hero loses half their Life for each token disposed of. If the player disposes all of their contracts, they are inducted into a <i>special</i> aristocratic club, whose members sit around talking about how they’re saving the world, but actually do nothing at all—oh, and a random other hero or henchperson loses a limb in a gory warning to a non-existent threatening secret society.
4–6	Blind drunk, robbed, left half-naked in a ditch with a dead vome.
7	Got drunk with members of a non-existent secret society. Lost 1d4 Endurance, gained a secret handshake that is the first step in a lost magical ability or spell, <i>Let The Door Open Itself</i> (or <i>Knock</i> ).
8–10	Accidentally joined revolutionary movement. Now have humorous code name and a secret package marked for delivery to an address in another settlement. It is (roll d6): (1) a deadly bomb, (2) a memetic virus, (3) a brick with threatening runes, (4) a faulty bomb, (5) a box of chocolates, (6) borrowed jewels worth €4,000.
11–12	Tried to join a revolutionary movement, but entered a dancing contest instead. It was fun. You won a pie. -1d4 Strength from exhaustion.
13	On a dare got a cosmetic ceramic implant. Lose €100.
14–19	The party was as tremendous as expected. -1 Strength.
20+	Acquired shares in a Cherenkov vodka distillery! Vodka and humorous drinking games every time you visit! 50% off on vodka purchases.
20/20	Scored a small Porcelain Walker (L8, capacity 8, consumes biomass, €4,000). It’s ... impressive.



# 5. POTSHERD CRATER

Scrub. Pallid soils of crushed ceramics. Drifts of porcelain exoskeletons crunch and ring underfoot. The autumn and spring rain showers bring sudden blooms of flowers and tubers, covering the pale landscape in a rainbow of colour.

The rim rises pale, like fossilized porcelain ribs, from the dusty soil. Remnants of quarries from before the days of the Porcelain Princes lie abandoned to **vomish lurchers** (L3, tough) while the sanguine porcelain prospectors whisper of **bat-lion** (L2, swooping) caves in the far rims.

## WEATHER IN THE CRATER

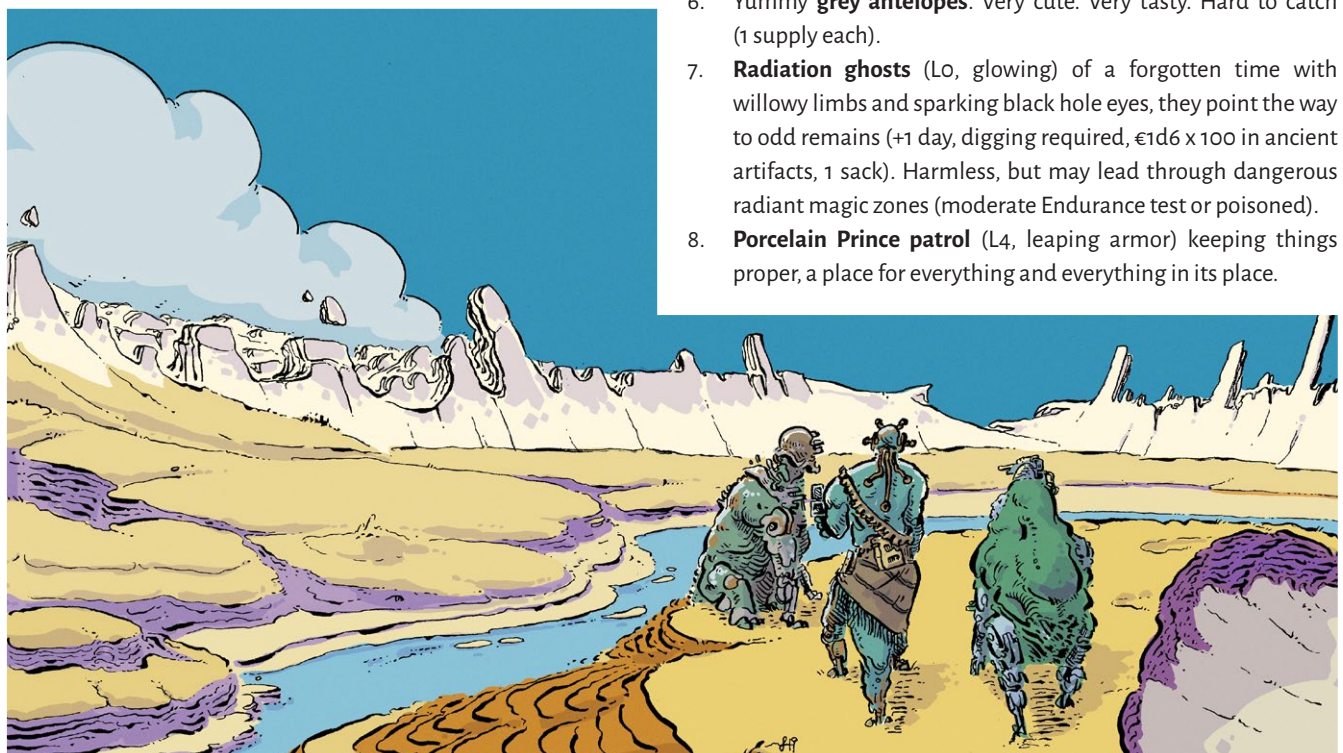
Radiant haze clouds obscure the sun before 09:00. Light showers, the smell of garlic and roses. Gleaming skies like razors in flight.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE CRATERED LANDS

Waterholes and arroyos speckle the land like beautiful pimples.

### d20 Charisma Test

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | Sat on a cactus (-1d4 Endurance). Simple.  |
| 2     | Cut from a sharp shard gets infected (-1d4 Life).  |
| 3     | Monkey-handed canids pilfer supplies in the night (-1d3 supplies).   |
| 4-6   | Those pretty flowers in that garland? Totally poisonous (easy Endurance test) and left a rash, too (-1 Charisma).  |
| 7     | Ecstatically beautiful flower patch, could lose track of time here (-1 day, +50 xp, -2 Endurance).   |
| 8-9   | Wandered into a dead-end arroyo (-1 day). At least it has water.   |
| 10-11 | Hat blown away by a sudden gust. It flies free at last.  |
| 12-19 | Navigating by stars and haze-line, you cross the pale scrub.   |
| 20+   | Small crater turns out to be home to a <b>hermit quarter-ling</b> (L3, prickly). The almost-human is convinced they are a simulation, but they can point out either where to find supplies (-1 day, +1d4 supplies) or an unusual local discovery (-1 day, random discovery). |



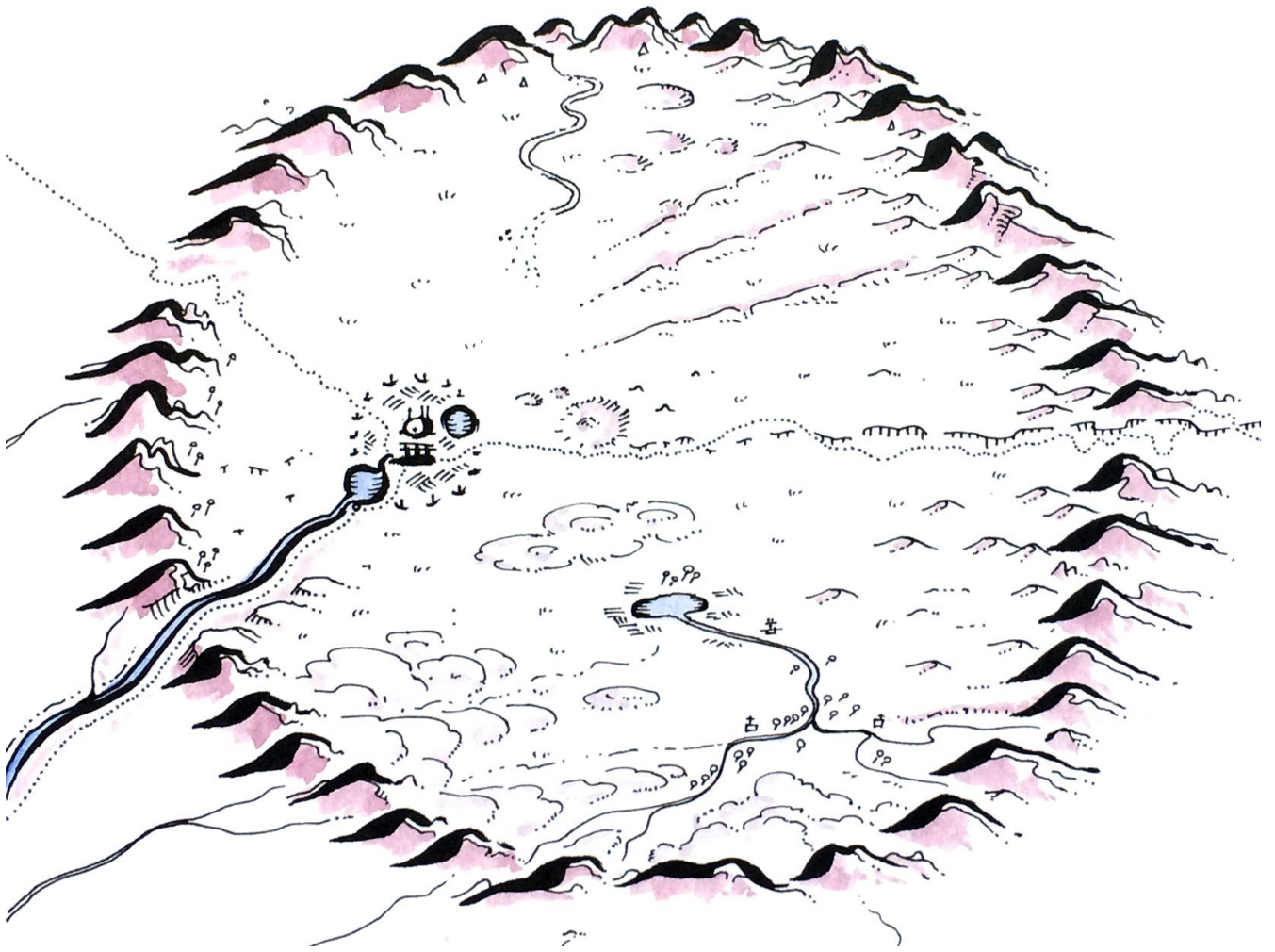
## TRAVEL OUT OF THE CRATER

- ∴ **Rest, Crater Hovel:** easy to hide in and quite safe, if you ignore the omnipresent centipedes.
- ∴ **North, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, 1 week): the citadel rises, a gleaming testament to a civilization older and more decayed than memory.
- ∴ **West, The Last Serai** (steppe, 2 weeks): the Porcelain Princes' hold, home to the most remote permanent Rainbowlander trading post. They read minds there, it is said.
- ∴ **North-East, The High Road and the Low** (steppe, 2 weeks): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road.

## ENCOUNTERS AMONG SHATTERED PORCELAIN (D8)

1. **Vomish lurchers** (L3, tough, slow)! A plot-convenient cloud of glittering dust dies down revealing a group of half-decayed biomechanical abominations. In the worst cases, cable-linked to a **floating dominator** (L4, phasing, neurotic), a tentacled, biological combat computer that vastly increases the lurchers' speed in a wide radius. The lurchers are (roll d6) (1) hungry, (2) thirsty, (3) angry, (4) studying the clouds for odd reasons, (5) infectious, (6) confused like lobotomized cockroaches.
2. **Cave bat-lions** (L2, singing) on the prowl, not necessarily hostile. They want deer, not you, dear.
3. **Ceramic centipedes** (L1, poisonous, swarm) looking for an easy meal.
4. **Hard-eyed nomads** (L3, riflers), hostile to settled folks and wary of fire-water peddlers.
5. **Porcelain prospectors** (L3, civilized), armed to the teeth and (roll d6) (1) hostile, (2) terrified, (3) equipped with a bad map, (4) a good map, (5) fleeing a terrible vision, (6) exhausted but satisfied with their haul of sanguine porcelain (€1,200, 6 slots).
6. Yummy **grey antelopes**. Very cute. Very tasty. Hard to catch (1 supply each).
7. **Radiation ghosts** (L0, glowing) of a forgotten time with willowy limbs and sparking black hole eyes, they point the way to odd remains (+1 day, digging required, €1d6 x 100 in ancient artifacts, 1 sack). Harmless, but may lead through dangerous radiant magic zones (moderate Endurance test or poisoned).
8. **Porcelain Prince patrol** (L4, leaping armor) keeping things proper, a place for everything and everything in its place.





## DISCOVERIES IN THE POTSHERD CRATER

### WATERLOGGED QUARRY

(1 day, 76 xp)

An old quarry, overgrown with thorny edible vines (€50/sack, harvest 1/day per person) and sharp long-grass. Grotesque, **poisonous toads** (L2, loud) live in the waterlogged depths but are easily avoided. Useful sanguine porcelain can still be extracted (€1d6 x 10/day per person, worth €200/sack).

### CHROMIUM DOME

(3 days, 100 xp)

A sparkling, smooth dome. It can be opened by the expert application of *Prelapsarian Metonymic Poetry* and contains a cache of ancient music inscribed on malachite rods (€1,000, 5 sacks). **Cave bat-lions** (L2, lazy) often sun themselves on the dome.

### GLASS HOUSE OF A DEAD MERCHANT PRINCE

(2 days, 160 xp)

Old steel-glass rococo arches, porticoes, and gazebos sinking into sand and long-grass, wreathed in foul-smelling flowers (mildly hallucinogenic if eaten). Thoroughly picked-over, a haunting poem of a merchant prince's despair remains embedded in an obsidian dolmen artfully arranged as a garden folly, lamenting the cruel laborers and serfs who foiled the prince's attempt to create the finest wines outside the Red Land. A great pack of **steppe wolves** (L3, slaving) may appear. *This location is expanded on the next page.*

### MAD AUTOFARM

(2 days, 2d10 x 10 xp)

The overgrown tangle of glass and dryland coral pulses with activity as small ceramic **crab-like biomechs** (L2, curious) plow, water, till, weed, and cultivate an utter chaos of stone trees and plastic thorn-bushes. Whether it is of vomish, ultra, or other, stranger design, is unclear. Closer examination reveals a profusion of odd fruit (€1d6 x 10 worth furtively recoverable without alerting the autofarm). Dallying is very dangerous as the autofarm rapidly produces large numbers of **ant-body biomechs** (L1d6, burrowing) to defend with talon, acid, and venom.

- ∴ *Inside*, an autonomous body lab growing 1d4 replacement bodies in bio-vats, perfect for biomantic augmentation, neural replacement, or polybody expansions (€2d10 x 100/body).
- ∴ *Deep within*, the **autofarm command unit** (L8, glittering) cycles in sad depression as it laments the loss of the sea that gave it meaning. It turned protein from the sea into food for the cat pets of Long Long Ago, but the sea vanished Long Ago.
- ∴ Hours away, *through old beam-cut passages*, the transport dock now overlooks a dusty tongue of salt. The warehouses guarded by **spider-body biomechs** (L5, spitting) are overflowing and metal tins of cat food (€50/sack, collect 1d6 sacks of viable tins per week) spill in a rusting scree slope to the bottom of the salt flat. There are enough viable tins to feed a town.

# GLASS HOUSE OF A DEAD PRINCE

The word is out on the streets, among those in the know. The very wealthy merchant of the Yellow Lily Consortium, **Satrasco** (L4, gilded baron)—the one with the delicately machined fingers and the living metal eye, the one who built herself an oldtech pleasure estate out in the empty territory. You know her, surely? The place must be worth at least twenty thousand!

She has *died* and her estate is up for grabs until the Yellow Lily executors arrive. It'd be worth hurrying, wouldn't it?

## INFORMATION TO DIG UP (D8)

1. She contracted the wizard **Bestiana** (L5, air-weaver) to build a series of powerful guardians, animated by trapped wind spirits.
2. The wind spirits hate being trapped; playing a certain melody on the flute soothes them.
3. The wizard knows the melody.
4. Each guardian has a mechanical valve which releases the spirit into the wild, deactivating the magical guard.
5. Releasing an angry spirit may be dangerous.
6. The merchant grew wealthy in the sanguine porcelain and replacement body trades.
7. The merchant had a significant debt to the sorcerer **Mestibel the Fish** (L6, bone-melter).
8. The merchant was murdered as a warning to others that the sorcerer is not to be crossed (this is false).

## THE APPROACH

The grand gateway lies open, choked by vines, proclaiming the pleasure palace of the merchant doñ Satrasco. A sea of long grass, reeds, and fragrant lotus chokes the old princely estate, but a packed gravel driveway remains clear to the main building. Along the way an ivy-stained garage and a couple of traditionalist brick servant cottages front the path. At the end of the way, on the bank of the lilac-tinged catfish pond, sprawls the two-story steel-and-glass palace. At one end, reached by decorative walkway, rises a two-story baroque iron gazebo. The other end opens onto an overgrown formal garden, built in twee geometries around an imposing obsidian obelisk folly.



## THE TWIST

The merchant Satrasco faked her death to escape the sorcerer. She disabled all the guardians by releasing their spirits, then took her most valuable possessions and fled. The sorcerer suspects something fishy, but lacks proof, and summoned the **hairy devils** (L3, snarling) to retrieve evidence and investigate.

## THE SOLUTION

Smart and greedy heroes will figure out that there are currently (almost) no active threats in the palace and split up to quickly collect loot before fleeing. Others may decide to find out what happened. Sprinkle clues and treasure around the rooms as required.

## CLUES (D12)

1. The guardians did not attempt to defend themselves.
2. All guardian valves are open.
3. The servant cottages are pristine and untouched.
4. All vehicles in the garage are disabled.
5. There is room for four vehicles, but only three are there.
6. Pots and pans used to inexpertly cook a last meal remain piled up in the kitchens.
7. The small museum was ransacked but only the most valuable small items are missing.
8. Safe is half empty and has only heavy silver coins and bullion.
9. The **corpse** dressed in fine mercer garb shot itself full in the face with a blaster.
10. The **blaster** is held in the corpse's right hand very tightly, despite the recoil of the weapon.
11. Two sets of fine mercer garb missing in the master bedroom.
12. There are no anonymous deeds or bearer bonds among the remaining documents.

## THE TRICK

The whole location is actually a timed trap. Every time the heroes take a significant action (explore a new room, investigate a book, take a short rest), there is a 1 in 3 chance the hairy devils come closer (move down the seven-step trick tracker):

1. The wind sighs ominously.
2. A sweet, cloying smell rises from the reeds.
3. Ominous howls echo in the distance.
4. The heroes discover a footprint with massive claws.
5. Shadows move among the reeds.
6. Shaggy forms with slavering teeth and glowing eyes come out of the long grass (lone heroes are attacked, the group is followed at a safe distance).
7. All twenty of the hairy devils attack, swarming the heroes.

If the heroes return to the palace later, restart the tracker one step further along.

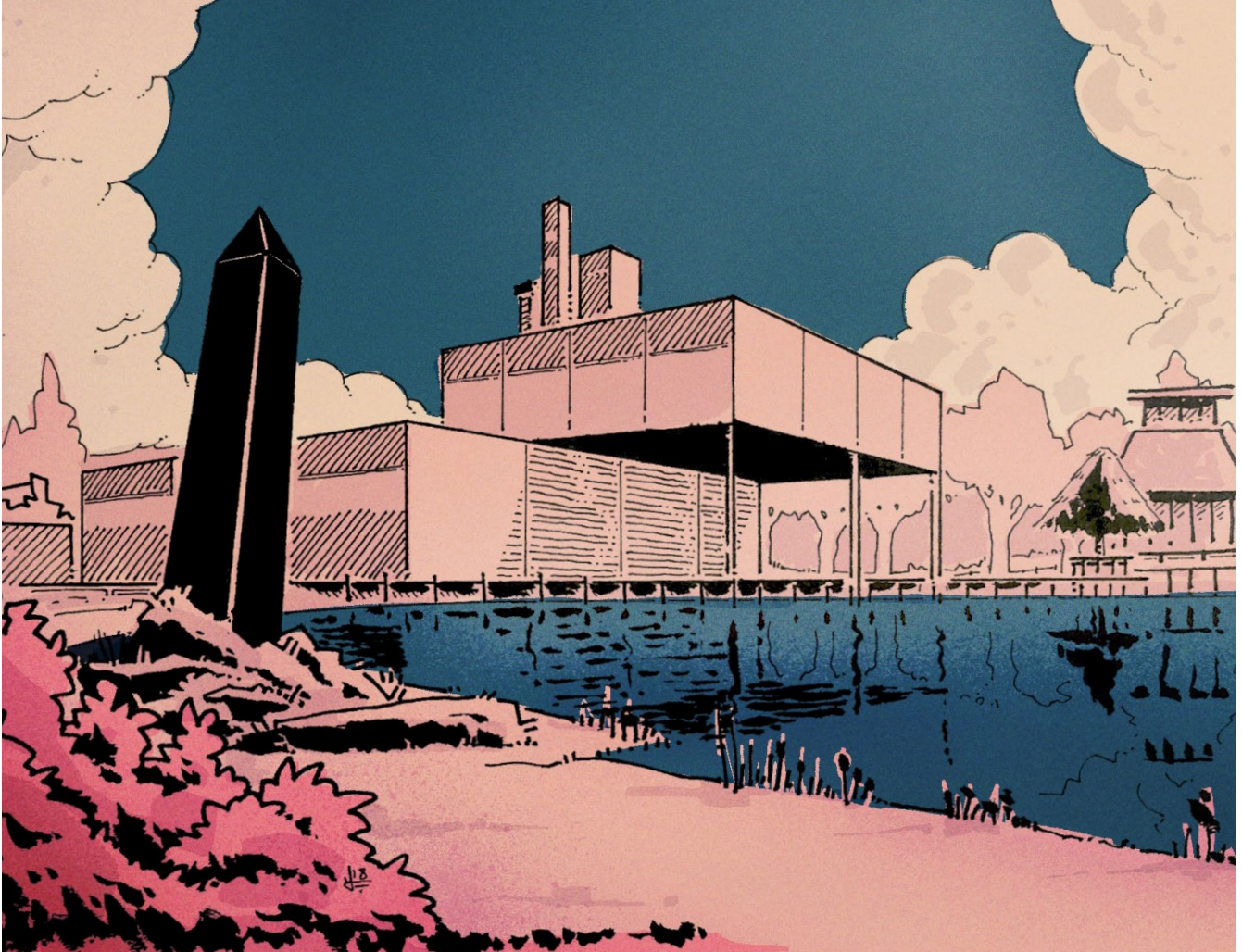
Mestibel summoned twenty (or 4d8) **hairy devils** (L3, lupine) in total. They wish only to serve their master's wishes to kill everything approaching the palace and bring them the sorcerer's remains. They fear lightning and thunder. Banishment and holy waters are their banes. They love purple haze biscuits.

With cunning intelligence, the hairy devils block off easy escapes. A pack of six swarms the weakest-looking target, tripping it, immobilizing it, and then ripping it apart. Meanwhile, pairs try to trip and delay other targets until their kin can help dispatch them.

Slain hairy devils evaporate, only to return when again summoned by the sorcerer Mestibel (usually on Fridays, just before tea time).





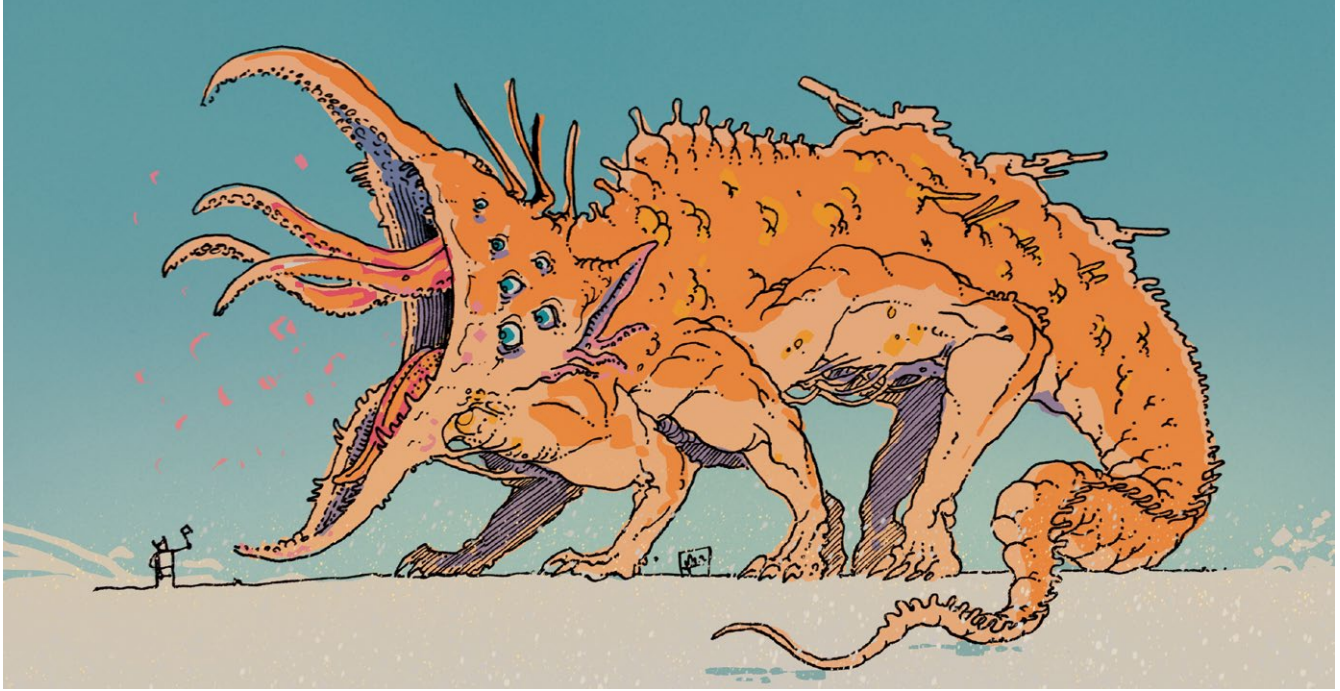


### LOCATIONS AND TREASURES (D30)

Assign rooms and locations freely or roll to fill out the house. The exact placement does not need to make sense as the palace is built in the ancient Brutalist style of the Second Para-Dadaism.

1. **Cheery Cottage:** very floral. Excellent down comforter (€50) in a large chest.
2. **Dull Cottage:** grey wallpaper. Stash of food tins (€30, 1 sack).
3. **Ivy-stained Garage:** rampant probing plants. Three disabled vehicles (L1d4+2), crate of usable machine parts (€200).
4. **Veranda:** decorative flagstones. Ornate wicker furniture and plastic-inlaid tabletop (€200, 4 sacks).
5. **Twee Gardens:** ornate geometries. Marvelous polychrome gnomes in humorous poses (€200, 2 sacks).
6. **Obsidian Obelisk Folly:** covered in a haunting poem of despair. Marvelous and heavy (€4,000, 12 sacks).
7. **Fountain:** thick with moss. Marble angel swan (€500, 4 sacks).
8. **Inner Yard:** mosaics and carp pools. Semi-precious mosaic tiles (€400, 2 sacks) and rare carp (alive: €500, 2 sacks).
9. **Entry Hall:** heavy pillars and delicate woodwork. Ornate bas-relief of yellow lily angels (€1,000, 5 sacks).
10. **Tea Room:** angular furniture and ancient Cubist sculptures. Overbearing minimalist decor (€1,000, 6 sacks).
11. **Mediation Room:** small tortured trees (€200, 2 sacks) and medicinal stones against kidney ailments (€100, 1 sack).
12. **Master Bathroom:** whirlpool bath and a profusion of amber inlays (€2,000, 9 sacks).
13. **Impressive Library:** full of well-bound books on *managemagic* (whatever that is) and murder mysteries (€2,700, 9 sacks).
14. **Lilac Bar:** slowly being claimed by flowering vines. Crate of fine vintages from the Orange Lands (€200).
15. **Impressive Museum:** meticulously ransacked. Curios and strange lily-like things (€1,000, 5 sacks).
16. **Master Office:** immense desk and the **corpse** of a suicide. Imperial furnishings (€2,000, 8 sacks).
17. **Master Bedroom:** wondrous bed and walk-in closet. Fine clothes (€1,000, 2 sacks). *Behind* the headboard, a safe (difficult Thought test), *inside* half-empty, €2,000 in silver (8 stones).
18. **Light Kitchen:** snacks. The sandwiches have gone off.
19. **Main Kitchen:** pots piled high. Exquisite magical cooking appliances (€2,000, 3 sacks).
20. **Pantry:** overflowing. Full of supplies (€15, 50 sacks), and delicacies (€1,000, 6 sacks).
21. **Decorative Walkway:** carvings of hamsters (€500, 6 sacks).
22. **Lily Guest Bedroom:** flowery. Fine ivory table (€400, 1 sack).
23. **Apricot Guest Bedroom:** decadent pseudo-Modernist. Abstract bakelite sculpture of a unicorn (€350, 2 sacks).
24. **Guest Bathroom:** enamel tub filled with water.
25. **Baroque Iron Gazebo:** two stories. Filled with thoughtful poetry on birch wood panels (€400, 2 sacks).
26. **Rear Staircase:** surprisingly well appointed. Gilded portrait of the merchant prince as a young lady (€300, 1 sack).
27. **Main Staircase:** ornate chandelier (€1,000, 3 sacks).
28. **Grand Dining Room:** rich Red Empire minimalism. Silverware (€500, 4 stones) and gloriously spongiform moulded chairs (€2,000, 12 sacks).
29. **Simple Dining Room:** retro-Futurist polycarbonate decor. Far-seeing sculpture-cube (€800, 1 sack, 17 different shows!).
30. **Living Room:** wonderfully decorated in high archaic minimalism with white shag-beast rug (€1,000, 2 sacks) and incredibly comfortable cream leather lounge set (€1,000, 6 sacks). A sorcerous fish-brooch (€80) rests next to an ashtray and a neatly folded Steppeland Gazette.





# 6. TRAIL OF VOMISH DREAMS

The grass grows high, sparkling and lush. Rumors say it is watered by sacrifice and an ancient Source Fac. Nomad Clans come here when grazing fails elsewhere, but cluster in thornstone enclosures close to the trail, driven to cooperation by the deadly machine-infested giant beasts that regularly traverse the steppe.

## WEATHER ON THE TRAIL

A dark mauve glow occludes the sun until 09:30. Dry and itchy, with scattered biomech locust swarms.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE RIVEN GRASS

There is little protection on this open steppe from machine and plastic-polluted insects and predators.

### d20 Charisma Test

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1     | Biomech razorfly swarm! Time to hunker down (-1d4 days or -2d6 Life).   |
| 2     | Mount steps into a puddle of liquid 'source,' mutating as it undergoes violent source code corruption.  |
| 3     | Lost in the high grass (-1d4 days, roll Misfortune and encounter).  |
| 4-6   | Hit in the eye by a speck of windblown biomech garbage. Blinded in one eye. This will require medical attention.  |
| 7     | Lost a shoe to a thirsty tangle shrub. While trying to fish it out, notice that the tangle shrub is mildly sentient. With a bit of pain and luck, it could make an interesting potted pet (-1 shoe, -1d4 days, and easy Charisma test to acquire tangle shrub pet). |
| 8-10  | Infected thornstone wound. Lose 1 Endurance/day until healed.   |
| 11-15 | Spoor of large herd of biomechanical monstrosities. Lose 1 day avoiding them or roll encounter.   |
| 16-19 | Carefully, quietly, mice among monsters, you cross the steppe.  |
| 20+   | Meet a friendly nomad clan, keen to exchange maps, gossip, and support. If the heroes freely offer help and goods there is a good chance a spiritualist scout will join them (moderate Charisma test).  |

## TRAVELING THE TRAIL

- **Rest, Pit in the Steppe:** terrible camp site and quite unsafe.
- **West, Grass Colossus** (trail, 1 week): the Nomads' holy site, forbidden to strangers in the times of the Doubled Moons.
- **South-East, Porcelain Citadel** (safe oasis, 1 week): a gleaming testament to a civilization older than memory.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE OPEN TRAIL (D8)

1. **Lamarckian monstrosity** (L18, self-improving, decaying) a huge beast, origin obscured in its soul source decay. Pulsating with creative energies, growing new limbs, armors, defenses, and abilities when attacked. If given a wide berth (-2 days) it can be avoided. It loses 1L/week until it collapses into a cope of fast-growing UV bamboo (€50 per sapling and sack of dirt).
2. Small herd of **machine-infested giant beasts** (L6, corrupt). The beasts were once (roll d4) (1) zebroids, (2) brontotheres, (3) elephants, (4) shaggy buffalo. The beasts, though mad, are not dangerous. Their glittering metal tusks and claws are worth €1d6-2 x 100/each (1 sack).
3. Cope of **thornstone shamblers** (L9, grappling). An unholy drystone coral monster out for the flesh of living creatures. Can be mined for thornstone seeds (€500/sack).
4. A pack of **enhanced jackals** (L1, polite) singing their jackal songs and looking for psychobiotic mushrooms.
5. Scared local herbivores, several prairie pigs and a **glyptodon** (L4, armored), hanging out by a waterhole.
6. A **troop of nomads** (L2, painted), they are (roll d6) (1) weakened by biomech assault, (2) corrupt sheep worshippers, (3) a noble Lime Clan taking sacrifices to the Colossus, (4) a raiding party, suspicious and harsh, (5) celebrating a great lion hunt, (6) taking the ashes of an elder east for a sea burial.
7. A helpful **trading party** (L5, numerous) that can share maps which shave 1d6 days off of a journey (€50).
8. The shattered **remnants of a Porcelain patrol** (L6, walkerless) returning from a raid. Probably destroyed by a tribe of giant beasts. A polybody sarcophagus still contains (roll d4): (1) a viable polybody clone (€2,000), (2) a stash of gold novelty medallions (€3,000, 2 sacks), (3) bottles of octopus pheromones (as *Charm Cephalopod*, €300, 10 bottles), (4) an active silver and jade domination implant (as *Charm Person*, €750).

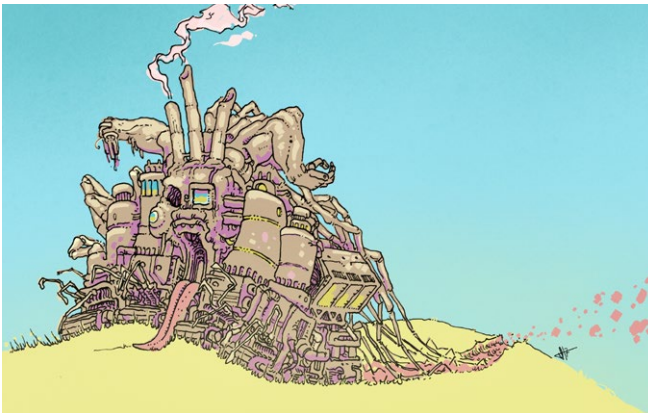


# DISCOVERIES ON THE TRAIL

## SOURCE FAC JOHNNY-7

(2+1d6 days, 600 xp)

The fac is the carcass of a motile tower dragging itself on massive post-organic treads. Twitching tubes, pipes, and coils of bioluminescent synth-cartilage trail behind as it crawls across the steppe. It's unclear what it consumes, but it gouges the land, leaving a scar oozing with decaying source juices. Over days and weeks the source corrupts the soul codes of flora and fauna, generating lush strips of mad, chaotic jungle that slowly wilt back into grassland. Encounters are twice as common in this mad growth and the tree-sized grasses can impale unwary travelers with **spear traps** (L3, barbed) or **spiked pits** (L4, digestive).



The biomechanical clattering obnoxiousness is an interesting example of the Long-Long Ago biomancers' hubris. Lucky students may find bio-seed matter (beast egg masses, €500/sack), old rituals, or even **uplifted servitors** (a L2 pet or familiar, but smarter, synthetic, and more mindlessly loyal, €2,500 to a fan of oldtech). Biomechanical defense systems guard against intruders—including **meat centipedes** (L3, bone-strippers), **black metal spiders** (L2, neurotoxin), **petri-anemones** (L4, sessile, entangling, screeching) and **brain-trust half-lings** (L7, swarm mind). And, of course, the constant danger of source code corruption.

A repaired fac is a mobile fortress worth €3 million. It is incredibly slow, three times slower than a traveler on horseback. Repairing the fac may become a major quest for players. Repairs require rare parts from three random locations in the UVG, one grueling random dungeon hidden under a fourth location to find a repair manual, and €300,000 in materials. Success nets each hero 2d6 x 1,000 xp.

## SAVAGE BIOMECH TRIBE

(1 days, 144 xp)

Living in wicker and metal trenches and tunnels dug into the prairie, the **machine-corrupted tribesmen** (L2, resilient) have degenerated into pure savagery, kept alive by their self-repairing implants and hyper-normal reflexes. They have no culture to speak of, save an innate urge to bring blood and brains to their lord: the **Emperor of Post-Humanity** (L12, psionic), a pulsating, half-mad clump of bones, brain, and clattering teeth held together by machines in a chamber five levels down. Surrounded by ancient artifacts (€10,000, 2d6 sacks) and helped by a fully cybernetic uplifted ape named **Cornelius** (L6, fast as heck), the Emperor plots the next step in its galactic ambitions with a large table covered in bone figurines.

## EERIE PEARL

(2 days, 2d100 xp)

In a small crater on a small rise, almost obscured by the grass, a small haven of peace where **lions** (L2, kindly) lie with lambs, dominated by a great alien pearl (€7,000, 7 sacks). The animals protect it if attacked. It charms characters of little Thought (0) to protect it and gifts characters of much Thought (4+) with 1d4 Aura permanently. Characters with a Thought of 5 suddenly gain the ability to levitate a bit off the ground for 1 minute after ingesting a common pearl. The reasons for these boons will never be clear.

## FALLEN IRON OBELISK

(3 days, 3d10 x 100 xp)

An obelisk, massive, rusting, covered in obscure Black City glyphs. Did it fall or did the slave-train dragging it simply give up? It is unclear. The complex magical glyphs (extreme Intelligence test to decipher) contain instructions (€2d6 x 1,000 if complete; a transcribed copy fills 1d6+2 books) for the activation of a Metal Guardian of the Darkness—a shadow-stepping **iron golem** (L8, thunderous). Half of the instructions are in the ground and turning over the 10 meter, 500 ton obelisk is challenging. At night dangerous **biomech crab-dog swarms** (L5, shuffling) perform eerie rituals with clacking claws and bioluminescent antennae near the obelisk.



## SOURCE CODE CORRUPTION

Source is the creative essence of the world, sometimes called the *world soul*. Some creatures manipulate it to exceed the parameters of their physical structure. Or to do magic. When it goes wrong, as under vomish manipulation, things get icky.

### d20 Endurance Test

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-3   | Over a period of 3 hours animals slowly turn into plants, plants into animals.  |
| 4-6   | Full source code failure, creature becomes an ooze retaining its original Thought and Aura. Ooze type (roll d4) (1) acidic green ooze, (2) vampiric red ooze, (3) pyrokinetic blue ooze, (4) self-regenerating grey ooze. The creature requires a suit to function as before, or it is physically limited to slowly, well, oozing around. |
| 7-11  | Limbs ripple and rearrange, creature becomes (roll d4) (1) a quadruped, (2) winged, (3) tentacled, (4) a limbless annelid.  |
| 12-15 | Creature is suddenly modified with (roll d4) (1) calcite armor plates (+1 Defense), (2) chitin eruptions (spines), (3) bronze bones (+1d4 Life, ↓d on tests to resist disease), (4) crystal nodules (€1d20 x 100, removal is fatal).  |
| 16-19 | Bunny overload, creature becomes (roll d4) (1) bunny-headed, (2) bunny-tailed, (3) bunny-furred, (4) a large, bipedal, sentient bunny. It seems there are a lot of rabbits hidden deep in the general source code.  |
| 20+   | Reassembly from source. All creature's stats are shuffled randomly. One random stat increases by 1d4.   |

# VOMES AND VOME NESTS

**Violent Mechanisms**—the auto-golem child-monsters of some auto-cannibal faction of the Long Long Ago—are soulless mechanoid viruses rewriting and reconstructing organic mechanisms to suit their half-coherent whims.

But... are they truly as mad and half-witted as the writings of Zira of Oranje make them out to be in her seminal techno-anthropological work, *The Demon in the Corner: Beyond Logic and Madness in the Nest of the Machine Mother*?

## VOME NEST OBJECTIVES (D6)

Most vomes encountered in the wild belong to a nest. While individual vomes may be highly specialized; for example, vome mothers are machine-flesh hybrids spewing out new vomes, the distributed consciousness of the nest is not usually focused within any one individual vome. So what does the nest 'want'?

1. **Grey Ooze Protocol:** replicate endlessly until everything is vomes—the most dangerous sort but also the fastest to run into the errors that seem to plague all vomes.
2. **Waking Instincts:** acquire functional engineers to help the nest rewrite its source code and attain actual self-awareness.
3. **Cry of the Heart:** painfully aware of their soulless condition, the vome nest hopelessly seeks animancers, guides and mentors to give them souls. Of course, this is hopeless.
4. **Cache Subroutine:** the nest is on a subsidiary task to build a cache of resources for a higher-order vome master. Generate resources for this nest with advantage.
5. **Extractor Routine:** the nest is a mining operation, likely inattentively dumping extracted resources in a depot. These nests are sometimes cultivated in the deep steppe by wary nomads to acquire raw materials for trade. A mining nest has 1d10 x 100 sacks of bulk resources (€10/sack) in store.
6. **Sentient Nest:** the nest is self-aware and understands it is a soulless abomination at threat of destruction. It is actively scouting and plotting a long-term survival strategy. For some reason all self-aware nests are named Patrocles.

## RAIDING VOME NESTS

Vome nests are high-value, high-risk targets that require a group effort to eradicate without damaging the valuable implants and resources the mad monstrosities produce. As a ballpark, a vome nest has 10 + 1d100 sacks of resources worth €1d6 x 100/sack—€21,000 on average, with a maximum of €66,000.

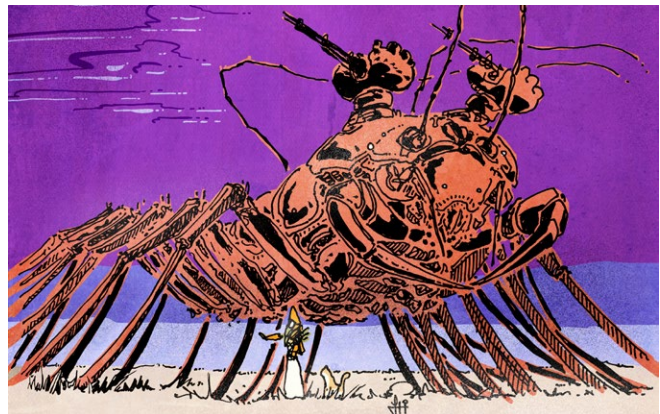
## VOME ERRORS, QUIRKS, AND STRATEGIES (6 X D6)

d6	Individual Error	Nest Error	Nest Resource Cache	Nest Extraction Focus	Nest Survival Strategy	Nest Doomsday Tactic
1	Terminal decay error.	Auto-cannibalistic behaviors.	Tins of ready-to-heat potato-flavored pasta.	Gravel.	Assimilation.	Mohole puncture triggers volcano.
2	Mobility failure.	Critical code errors.	Vats of ready biomatter.	Fiber stalks.	Conquest.	Explosives. Lots of them.
3	Sensor breakdown.	Civil war errors.	Barrels of refined fuel.	Water.	Infiltration.	Tunnel flooding.
4	Communication failure.	Time-stamp shut-down.	Stocks of ammunition.	Coal.	Subterfuge.	Deadly virus release.
5	Behavioral tics.	Sudden software reset.	Machine parts.	Metals.	Escape.	Faulty virus release.
6	Hyper-sensitive code.	Behavioral bugs.	Combat and implant systems.	Processed biomantic raw materials (meat).	Trade.	None.

Many vomes are tough. When reduced to 0 Life they make a moderate Agility test to instantly regain 1d6 Life as redundant subroutines come online. Many vomes also suffer from critical code errors and unpredictable biomechanical decay.

## VOMES IN A TYPICAL NEST (D10)

1. 1d2 **nest cows** (L8+1d8, many-faced): massive hulks producing nutrient fluids for the nest. Protected by eye-rays and low-level 'brown' psionic fields that collapse autonomic neural systems.
2. 1d3-1 **vome mothers** (L4+1d6, armored): large sessile biomechanical womb-factories generating new vomes, infection vectors, and prosthetics.
3. 1d3-1 **vomish autofacs** (L5, fragile): rumbling assemblies of feeders, conveyors, and bio-processors producing goods from the raw materials harvested by the nest.
4. 2d20 **humanoid vomes** (L2, creepy): modified necroambulants or captured humans with ranged combat implants (mass drivers, stump-rays, or poison glands). Commonly found operating the vomish autofac.
5. 4d20 **drone vomes** (L0, skittering): small, multi-limbed worker units, not meant for combat but useful in a pinch.
6. 1d8 **defense vomes** (L4, lethal grapplers): large, close-combat vomes, with multiple blade attacks and horrible dead eyes who sometimes have (roll d4): (1) acidic spit, (2) noxious gas clouds, (3) paralytic bites, or (4) fiery farts.
7. 1d10 **combat vomes** (L2, spidery): small, brachiating vomes with bladed tentacles and mass driver mouths.
8. 3d6 **detona-vomes** (L1, explosive) are small creatures implanted with single-use payloads (roll d6): (1) explosive, (2) acidic, (3) toxic, (4) soporific, (5) incendiary, or (6) paralytic devices.
9. 1d10 **worm vomes** (L4, ambushers) are segmented machine worms with grappling, grinding maws.
10. 1d6-3 **soldier suspension cubes** (L3, acidic): weird, gelatinous cubes, each holds 1d4 combat vomes in suspension, ready to release if the nest is assaulted.

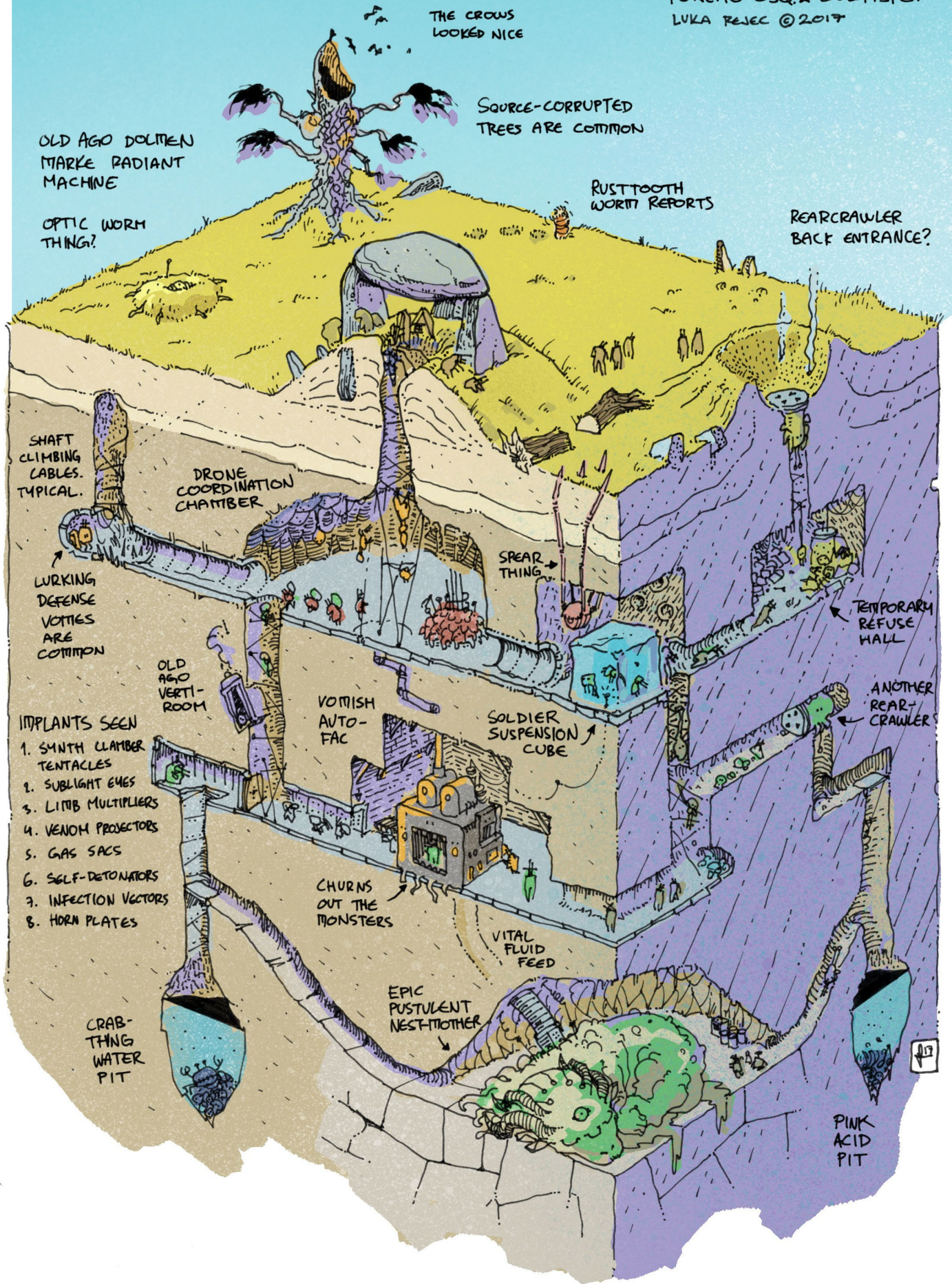




# VOME HIVE 4c

AS REPORTED BY A CERTAIN  
PONCHO ESQ. & CULTISTE.

LUKA REJEC © 2017



THE CROWS  
LOOKED NICE

SOURCE-CORRUPTED  
TREES ARE COMMON

OLD AGO DOLMEN  
MARKE RADIANT  
MACHINE

OPTIC WORM  
THING?

RUSTTOOTH  
WORM REPORTS

REARCRAWLER  
BACK ENTRANCE?

SHAFT  
CLIMBING  
CABLES.  
TYPICAL.

DRONE  
COORDINATION  
CHAMBER

LURKING  
DEFENSE  
VOTTIES  
ARE  
COMMON

SPEAR  
THING

TEMPORARY  
REFUSE  
HALL

OLD  
AGO  
VERTI-  
ROOM

VOMISH  
AUTO-  
FAC

SOLDIER  
SUSPENSION  
CUBE

ANOTHER  
REAR-  
CRAWLER

IMPLANTS SEEN

1. SYNTH CLAMBER TENTACLES
2. SUBLIGHT EYES
3. LIMB MULTIPLIERS
4. VENOM PROJECTORS
5. GAS SACS
6. SELF-DETONATORS
7. INFECTION VECTORS
8. HORN PLATES

CHURNS  
OUT THE  
MONSTERS

VITAL  
FLUID  
FEED

CRAB-  
THING  
WATER  
PIT

EPIC  
PUSTULENT  
NEST-MOTHER

PINK  
ACID  
PIT

417



# 7. GRASS COLOSSUS

“You watch the world exploding every single night,  
dancing in the sun a newborn in the light,”  
—*The Wicker Man*, Iron Maiden

Crossing a last purple ridge, the wide vale promises relative respite from the harsh grassland. Trees dot the courses of two rivers and, at their juncture, rise prehistoric ramparts of pitted ceramic with traces of pre-wizard spell-arms on their ancient shellac surface.

Inside, on one of two hillocks, looms a great wicker-man of woven grasses, vines, and thorn bushes. Shamans of many clans make their meets here, teach their memory chants, and welcome the Clan Mothers once a year for the festival of the Circle of Grass.

## WEATHER IN THE VALE

A dark smudge of radiation stops any light reaching the ground before 10:00. Scudding lightning storms intersperse with strong winds and baking heat.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE WIDE WATERED LAND

This wide depression seems too grand for the shallow river, but it certainly focuses heat and humidity.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Lightning strikes from the purple! Moderate Agility test or  $-2d10$  Life, alternatively lose a henchman or beast of burden.
- 2–3 Dreadful winds slow progress. Lose 1 day and moderate Endurance test or catch the dusting cough (noisy and exhausting).
- 4–6 Baking heat exhausts travelers ( $-1d4$  Endurance).
- 7 Bitten by a rabid Steppe Wolf, easy Endurance test or diseased. Difficult Aura test and 3 rations will net you a Steppe Wolf (L3, born to be wild) pet. Fears magic carpets.
- 8–9 Slept in the soil of a radiation ghost ( $-1d4$  Strength).
- 10–11 Baking heat and sweat means a bad saddle rash ( $-1d4$  Agility).
- 12–19 Taking it slow and steady, filtering the river water, and resting in the noon-day heat, you cross the vale with no problems.
- 20+ A small, friendly ooze catches your attention. It wants you to follow it ( $-1$  day) to a shallow grave beneath a spreading chestnut tree. There, buried, is the wonderful (and now slightly smelly) kit and armor (€1,000) of the corrupted hero who became this silly ooze.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE COLOSSUS

- ∴ **Rest, Camp With the Nomads:** a veritable city of tents. €1/week for free-folk, €10/week for big-folk, €100/week for a hero.
- ∴ **West, Long Ridge** (trail, 1 week): the steppes deepen into a harsh, endless sea of grass. The true UV Grassland.
- ∴ **South-West, South-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): a rough country, torn by the tracks of prehistoric behemoths.
- ∴ **South, Death-Facing Passage** (rough steppe, 2 weeks): grim tales warn against the horror of this passage to the Last Serai. Wise travelers would avoid it.
- ∴ **East, Trail of Vomish Dreams** (trail, 1 week): a dangerous journey through the lush grass towards the Porcelain Citadel.



## ENCOUNTERS NEAR THE COLOSSUS (D8)

1. A **hero of the people** (L6, noble) parading around with her retinue. When some treasure or fine weapon catches her eye, it is a great dishonor to not give it up—for after all, she is a hero and knows best how to use it!
2. **Singing shaman** (L3, not a bard) and their **dancing bear** (L5, fat) performing and guilting visitors into emptying their pockets.
3. **Uppity warrior** (L2, reedy) giving gifts (worth €1d20 each) to increase their status.
4. **Nomad children** urging one another to pick visitors' pockets to increase their skill. If confronted, they happily return the stolen goods. **Their parents** (L2, armed) are watching nearby.
5. **Slaves** (L0, sad) sweeping streets, scrubbing seats, sewing sacks, singing psalms, and stirring stews.
6. **Greased long-legged boar** (L1, juvenile) squeals through the crowd, fleeing two opposing teams intent on having a game of throw-the-boar.
7. Troupe of **journeymen craftsmen** (L1, skilled), drunk and out of money, looking for work.
8. Nervously jovial **quarter-ling merchant** (L3, super-numerate) from the far west with recovered curios and glowing stone sculptures for sale (€400/sack).



# CLANSFOLK AND CELEBRATIONS

## CLANSFOLK, MADSFOLK (D8)

1. Mad priest **Urburt of the Blue** (L4, possessed), tolerated for her mastery of yoghurts, poultices, and **defensive slime molds** (L2, symbiont) which eat weapons that strike them. She screams of a great metal darkness eating the soul of the Spectrum Satraps.
2. **Shiver Gromot** (L1, comedian), a bad shaman who loves songs and good tales, offering curse-laced blessings and poisonous potions to outlanders. For the glory of the clans!
3. **Rattle Limonc** (L3, conspiratorial), a good shaman who believes the ultras have infiltrated the Porcelain Princes and are a serious danger to the nomad clans. If Vorgo the Were-Pug (p.11) is present Rattle freaks out and runs away.
4. **Strapping Young Lisciac** (L2, barbarian, fast, smart, adaptable), a clanless maiden born in the mark of the Blood Dragon. A true she-Conan, she will cleanse herself of the evil mark by sacrificing to the Bone Soul at the Behemoth. Loathes magic and wishes desperately to belong to a clan.
5. **Churgla Nekroponte** (L2, braniac), a Yellowlander scholar researching the ramparts. Thinks it's a star chart to a lost library (false) and that their orientation holds a key to an ancient vault (true: the Near Moon door, 4 weeks travel to the West). Badly addicted to dog's tail (4 doses left).
6. **Draganogac** (L5, bored), Judge of the Colossus, tough, old, with a golden prosthetic leg and a hatred of nonsense. Judges threats to the clans harshly, offers bounties of salt and mead (€150, 3 sacks), and safety for vomish trophies.
7. **Joao the Witch** (L2, fetishist), a Greenlander Half-Elf here through a series of ridiculous misadventures. Makes defense fetishes and in a bad way over their pet pig which died recently in an incident with a misaligned fetish.
8. Dead drunk, out of their mind, **Possu-5** and **Possu-6** are the remainders of a broken polybody with incoherent stories. Was there a power struggle? Is there a secret way into a Porcelain high house? It's a mess! They know a rare site (save 1d4 travel days), and how to bypass the defense mechanisms—but it takes some deciphering (difficult Thought test).

### BRINGING LIFE TO WICKER AND BONE: FETISHES

Fetishists use a series of rituals to embed some of their own body and spirit (Life and Charisma) in an attentive wicker and bone Fetish. The Life and Charisma remain in the Fetish until it is destroyed or deactivated in a propitiatory ritual.

Fetish	Power	Cost
Weak	L1, slow, grabbing	1 Life
Servant	L1, elegant, helpful	1 Life, 1 Charisma
Fast	L2, rushing, ripping	2 Life, 2 Charisma
Watchful	L3, remembering, cursing	3 Life, 2 Charisma
Assassin	L3, stalking, shooting	4 Life, 3 Charisma
Strong	L4, punching, weakening aura	6 Life, 3 Charisma
Giant	L5, devouring, destroying	8 Life, 3 Charisma

## CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS AT THE COLOSSUS (D6)

Resting and recovering in the safety of the cryptic ceramic walls, what could go wrong?

1. **The Colossus Dances** (200 xp): the shamans celebrate the life-giving Moon by immolating the least-favored in the Grass Colossus' wicker-and-bone heart. A slave or very uncharismatic traveler is seized, stuffed with saffron and steak, and burnt in the harsh radiant heart of the Colossus. The **Colossus** (L17, godly wicker golem) awakens and dances the night away. After a couple of hours the clansfolk hide in their huts—if there are no more sacrifices for the Colossus it slakes its hunger with a fat fool or juicy jester. Participants in the shamans' celebration partake of the Colossus' divine essence (becoming resistant to non-magical weapons for 3 weeks).
2. **Barbecue by the Colossus** (100 xp): a great chief has adopted a new daughter and her ascendance is celebrated with six sacred sacrifices. Heroes may participate by bringing a valuable offering and imbibing the Spores of Sensation. Each participant may experience the touch of a Steppe Spirit (moderate Aura test) that guides them in a moment of need. A boon granting advantage on a roll of their choice!
3. **Shaming of the Chiefs** (50 xp): chiefs are paraded before Clans and visitors, then tied to a prehistoric yellow rock with silken bonds and mocked for their pretensions. A reminder that all mortals are created equal: worms beneath the treads of the Sky Spirits.
4. **Sky Chariot Battle** (50 xp): shouts and whoops echo around the camps as shooting stars dart and zip in the skies above. Lines of radiant light cascade into showers of sparks and enterprising nomads take wagers on which Sky Spirits will win. Prayers and sacrifices might sway the battle.

### d10 Winner Aftermath of the Sky Chariot Battle

1–5	Reds	Grueling hot week follows. Easy test to forage for edible solar grubs falling from the sky (€20/sack, count as supplies). Taste like grilled peanuts.
6–9	Blues	Stars and lightning wrack the plains for 2 weeks. Easy test to find meteoric steel (€400/sack).
10	None	Short sun is born. Plain lit at night for 1 week. It fades from white to yellow, red, and finally bruised brown. Then vanishes.

5. **A Testing Week** (no rest possible): night after night, vomes come at the encampment—**biomechanical badgers** (L3, burrowing), a great **fire-spewing red worm** (L7, fire bolts), a shambling horde of **headless half-lings** (L2, relentless), swarms of **cactus-skinned steppe wolves** (L3, thorny problem). Defense fetishes are decimated by the onslaught, but a proactive patrol can find a great iron **self-driving chariot** (L7, auto-golem, carries 8, two passenger seats) with a **vomish mind-worm** (L7, psionic) inside.
6. **Sacred Rainbow** (50 xp): a glorious sign of approval, small sacrifices and rituals with the shamans bring a chance of self-improvement. Moderate test with stat to raise it by 1.



## 8. THE LAST SERAI

The hero stamped. Cinnabar dust swirled. It was only four weeks, but the sea was a distant memory. Poncho quivered, huddled by the yellow mule.

“Come on, Poncho, the probes weren't that bad!”

“They used the red spoon! *The red spoon!*”

Three days out, you sight it. A metallic stepped tower, glinting in the daylight, glowing a ghostly, coppery green by night. Two days out, you smell it. Soft and seductive like cocoa. A day out, you hear it. Drumming out a rhythmless, rumbling staccato.

Closing in on the tower you see three buildings, like hunched old men, clustered in the lee of a cinder dune. Around the tower a circle of gentle dust floats in a massive static charge. Nothing living grows within that circle. There the Last Serai's grand old harmonic rods draw energy from that magical field, powering the great hold of the Porcelain Princes while selling the excess to the last trading house of the Violet City and the final embassy of the Spectrum Satraps.

### WEATHER AT THE SERAI

Dark clouds build and cover the sky, threatening storms and worse. The light of the sun creeps through the gathering dark after 09:30, but only in the afternoon does it glint from beneath the ale-dark clouds in the glowering sky.

### MISFORTUNE IN THE STATIC LAND

The atmosphere is charged, like an argument left smoldering.

#### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Caught by **Porcelain Patrol** (L5, determined) which demands a toll on all goods declared semi-legal. 20% or €50, whichever is more.
- 2–3 Sharp porcelain splinter causes festering foot wound (-1d4 days).
- 4–6 Lightning strike throws up biomantic spores (easy Endurance test or diseased). Mutations possible.
- 7 Tiny **poison golem** (L1, moderate poison, quite stupid) crawled into a boot at night and now attacks. It can be trained. Poison must be refilled after each attack.
- 8–9 A massive static field raises glowing dusts that bring bad coughs and sleep deprivation (-1d4 Endurance).
- 10–11 Bad cinder storm sends sharp debris flying (-1 day or -1d6 Life).
- 12–19 Taking care to regularly ground the caravan, the static produces no more than slight rashes and dry skin.
- 20+ Overhead an ultraviolet bird hangs motionless in the air, an echo of a distant time comes willowing across the sand, and everything is green and newly clean. In the wake of the bird, the heroes see a world that was and it bids them follow. If they do, they lose 1 week as they wander ghostly down the paths of forgotten times. During their off-screen journey through the past they can acquire a solar-powered pistol (2d6, far, reload 1) which uses no ammunition, or they can try to learn an oldtech skill (moderate Thought test).



## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE LAST SERAI

- ∴ **Rest, Huddled Old Buildings:** €4/week for slaves, €100/week for respectable rooms with hyper-realistic paintings hung in burnt out vidy-crystals.
- ∴ **West, Way Stone** (trail, 1 week): between sudden static storms the sky clears, sighting a clear line to the Way Stone, a crumbling green obelisk visible for a hundred miles.
- ∴ **North-West, Death-Facing Passage** (canyons, 2 weeks): rough crags, cinder dunes, and the constant glare of the Face of Death at your back. Leads beyond to the Grass Colossus.
- ∴ **North-East, Porcelain Citadel** (trail, 1 week): back towards settled lands, the patrolled paths of the Princes.
- ∴ **East, Potsherd Crater** (steppe, 2 weeks): the scrub barely covers pallid soil and porcelain ruins.



## ENCOUNTERS BY THE LAST SERAI (D8)

1. Sudden **static alert** (lasts 1d6 hours) as the Ignored Tower ramps up its broadcast. Garbled voices echo through people's heads and spells misfire as locals scurry into silent lead-lined rooms. Staying outside: 1 Aura damage/hour.
2. A **static ghost** (L3, heartaching) flits in and out of existence, rambling about the moon, the song, the fall. It is a soul trap, a poorly designed wisp of the Ignored Tower. It promises much; it gives nothing.
3. A scream. A **skeleton** (L1, fresh) entangled in fleshy rose-coloured roots tumbles out of a cupboard. Another victim of the mysterious Flower of Power?
4. Four hooded **personal protection necroamblers** (L2, wired) hustle the orange **Satrap 57** (L6, cheery) into a private meeting pod. Shortly, a fruit vendor explodes in a shower of gore. The Princes and Satraps are unconcerned. Static overload, they say.
5. **Drunk Traders** (L3, experienced) from the east, Orange or Yellowlanders, smug and satisfied. They offloaded their singwoods (€200/sack), saffron, salt (€100/sack), silk and slaves. Their leader **Mila Yaga** (L5, Decapolitan spy) has a map of secret ways through the Spectrum Crossing (→a discoveries and encounters). A **mind-burned thief** (L4, vome-infected) shadows them.
6. A **sad cultist** (L4, batrachian), looks lumpy and misshapen, seeks sculpting flesh to become like his idol, a toad-shaped lump of golden dryland coral.
7. Three **scruffy polybodies of Iron Pot 6-body** (L3, hard-boiled) were beaten up by an unknown assailant and their access slave unit stolen. They're here to investigate the alleged revolutionary activities of local Porcelain Prince, **Angel 22-unity** (L5, classy).
8. Local **urchins** running around and playing ball, their gangly limbs threaded with wires and bio-implants. They sing, "Oh, oh, oh, everyone should know, the violet is violent and the spectrum is sneaky, and both would trade without the tax man." It's just a popular song going round.

## WEIRD ROOMS AND ODD PLACES (D12)

The heroes go poking around the huddled old buildings and they discover ...

1. A room full of boxes of trading goods (2d20 crates, €100/ crate)—tentacles reaching out of one. Why are there tentacles? And are those eyes? What is that **squamous packaged thing** (L5, dream-eater)?
2. A padded room with a small padded door that leads to a smaller padded room with a smaller padded door, and so on, through seven rooms. In the last room, entombed in a decayed strait-jacket, is a skeleton. Nobody even remembers who it was, or why these rooms are here.
3. Just boxes. Boxes to the ceiling marked 'potatoes' and 'bulbs of light'. Oh, behind it? Nothing. Definitely not an ancient sarcophagus of some lost barbarian king. *Inside:* the abmortal remains of **King Elré the Dreaming** (L6, amnesiac) who entered the cryo-dehydration sarcophagus to voyage into the future and warn his descendants of a great danger waiting for them at the edge of time. Unfortunately the dream-eater ate his memories when they were stored in the same warehouse. It takes 40 litres of pure water and eight hours to awaken the mummified Elré.
4. The whole room is filled with a crate much larger than the door. There is a **deactivated space-time portal machine** (€10,000 and 3 rare parts to repair) inside. If repaired, it leads to a random location in the UVG, potentially making the Last Serai a vastly more important terminus.
5. Storage room full of spoiled supplies and a loose ventilation grate. Beyond, at the heart of a ventilation labyrinth, is a small room with a dead spy vidy (€500 if repaired), a dusty plush bear, an open cat-carrier, a powerful assault rifle, and a gently pinging life-sign detector (works at short range, €1,000). Whoever stashed these things is long gone.
6. A glass vat with a sentient **gelatinous ooze** (L5, unfocused). It wants to talk poetry and decontaminate the Last Serai.
7. Six polybody cases each holding a ready-body (€3,000/body). Damn, but the Porcelains are prepared, aren't they?
8. Two vertical vats with **floating bodies**. One crawls with **vomish recombiners** (L2, infection vectors) held in check by the red-light fluid. The other thrashes now and again, revolving its head demoniacally, an **ultra ghost** (L11, night-bringer) held back by the numinous blue-light fluid. What the ... ?
9. A small polybody intimate movie recording studio. Rarely occupied, except on moonlit nights. Perfect for recording inappropriate blackmail footage. *Well hidden*, a series of nature documentaries on vidy crystals (€1,000, 2 sacks).
10. Bones and tissue crunch underfoot; graveyard or fertilization chamber for a **Sentient Sunflower** (L1, phyto-philosopher)?
11. Skulls and bones. Ancient, ancient skulls and bones (€50/ sack, perfect for a museum). Oddly sub-human: the original inhabitants of this place?
12. The walls are covered in odd, half-forgotten lyrics, "Goodbye, Gemini! Apollo, my sun lord. Reach for the heavens, draw the dark apart. Behold, a new hope." Lots of nonsense, really.

# SECTORS OF THE SERAI

## THE HARMONIUM

Second citadel of the Porcelain Princes, heavily defended and aged, the porcelain-coral building itself has acquired a mimicry of sentience from long exposure to the ancient white-hole rods—the harmonium rods, which are used to power the Last Serai and recharge frictionless flywheel batteries.

- ∴ **Angel 22-unity** (L5, classy) is the highest-ranking Porcelain Prince at the Last Serai. A polite, rich, militantly bigoted polybody in luxurious opal masks with large interests in the Cherenkov cherry trade and an autarkic inclination. The Angel unity has read old fiches and now believes the Near Moon hides a way to bring the harmonium rods to the Porcelain Citadel. It does not—but the moon is capable of flight.
- ∴ **Lacquer Stone 4-body** (L4, dusty) is a work-horse polybody that keeps the Last Serai running and manages the Black Helmet 60-plurality servitor. Unimaginative, a stickler, and fastidious in repaying services. Remembers the days before the Rainbow Lands reclaimed the Circle Sea. Wants to escape to there.
- ∴ **Black Helmet 60-plurality** (L3, aggrieved) is the polybody mechanic-cum-police force of the Last Serai. Most of its bodies are no longer even human, the jet face masks reminiscent of bunches of flowers. It is mind-burned or neurally bonded to Lacquer Stone 4-body. It does not like its subordinate position.

## THE LAST TRADING HOUSE

Remotest outpost of the Rainbow Lands in the UVG and smallest living building in the complex. Cats here are rougher, sometimes exiles, and occasionally even a dog-cat hybrid may be seen.

- ∴ **Pooki** (L6, overpowered and lazy) is the chief of the Rainbow mission. A pure, white fluffy cat, with eerie golden eyes. Pooki is counting the days until she can return to the Citadel and the clockwork mice and the ambrosial milks of the Giving Cow. Pooki wouldn't mind one last big deal to brag about. **Mook** (L3, nimble) is the half-orc friend of Pooki. Mook is not mind-controlled, but just really loves cats after a childhood growing up on the streets of the Metropolis.
- ∴ **The Giving Cow** is a milk bar, done up in yellow wood and neon lighting, with a modified udder-beast grown from an egg mass housed in a glass-and-brass aquarium behind the polished bar. **Zuna Namelost** (L4, sky-born) is the biomancer-owner and developer of the proprietary creature. Regular: €70, gain an improved intestinal microflora, providing resistance against food poisoning, 40 xp.
- ∴ *Hidden:* Those in the know look for the **Buried Delicatessen**, the place for fast regeneration, healing, and limb replacement. A week's worth of recuperation in a single hour in a Ka-Box is yours for €200, while a newflesh arm or leg can be grown in a day for €1,000. And full-body rebuilds, too? Yes. But only for special service. It's run by the best human biomancer of all the Six Colours, **Anise of Star** (L5, time-stranded traveler). **Basil of Planet** (L4, facilitator), the secretary, is an uncanny Greenlander of ill-defined age, withdrawn and sour. He is a member of the New Mission cult, which awaits the coming of the Crystalline Seed from the perfected flesh. In crucial ways the New Mission is antithetical to the First and Last Mission organization of the Spectrum Satraps (p.101).

## THE FINAL EMBASSY

The easternmost extra-territorial holding of the Spectrum Satraps by long-standing song-agreement with the Porcelain Princes. The local Satraps and their attendants follow orders piped into their Embassy main deck from *below*. By agreement they are permitted no more than two prismatic walkers at a time—thus, two of their largest heavily-armed **prismatic walkers** (L13, multi-coloured, capacity 12 sacks, 4 passanger cavities, €8,000) are stationed here at all times. One of them is barely operable. It's an open secret the Satraps carry out dark phytomancy in the deep-coral chambers.

- ∴ *Below*, in their **Deep-Coral Chambers**, they have a **Delicate Seer** (L5, hungry) in an odd shell-like sarcophagus of plastic and ivory and gold. It is a mass of post-human flesh, the head enlarged, floating like a fetus in a synthetic egg below the Final Embassy. The Satraps discovered it and have been trying to figure out if there is some use to it. Can it actually foretell the future? It can, but badly—its flashes of tele-empathic insight give ↑a in some half-useful situation. They're trying to calibrate the Seer to talk with the First and the Last of the Satraps on their holy mission in upper space. It may be contagious.
- ∴ *Further Below* is the **Chamber of Crystal Rebirth**, stuffed with great prismatic crystals (€2,000/sack) into which the Satraps upload copies of leaders and thinkers for on-site access and decision-making. There must be dozens of minds stored in the crystals ... perhaps they could store your backup, too? Or a backup could be re-embodied? Here their leaders' copies serve as heads of the Embassy.

## THE IGNORED TOWER

Do not go there. It is ignored for a reason. Seriously. It will kill you and grind your soul into fundamental reality reconstruction particles. That glow? Souls swirling to become nu-matter.

- ∴ *If heroes insist:* it is home to **the Rebuilder** (L17, creatively blocked), a trapped demiurge personality whose *soul* was stolen by a **shapeshifter** (L7, patient zero) and *body* was taken by an **Astral Lizard** (L9, original engineer). She is trapped there, her godlike powers tapped by the harmonium, her personality kept intact by the swirling degradation of souls falling into her existential solipsistic boundary. Her screaming visage bursts out in regular pulses of light to the far north-west, creating the so-called Death-Facing Passage. Now you know.
- ∴ *If her soul and body are restored:* her attention will again expand beyond the event horizon of her despair to see the world around her. It has been centuries and millennia since she was trapped, prevented from rebuilding the glittering lingish civilization that summoned her from the upper voids Long Long Ago. It is too late now, there is nothing left for her to rebuild. If the heroes were kind, she restores something that was broken or lost to each of them, whether it is a doll, a family home, or a city ground to dust by the Stone Dragon That Eats The Night, then disappear in sparkling lights. If the heroes were cruel, her eyes glaze and her body collapses into dust as her ka-ba returns to the upper voids, beyond the Fast Stars. In both cases, *this removes the deadly environmental danger from the Death-Facing Passage* and once this fact becomes common knowledge a rush to plunder that region begins.



—Oh. More probes.  
For the ... how do you  
always drag us  
to THESE places?!

—They give me the creeps.  
—Why is that, Pooki?  
—They know.  
—Yes, Pooki, but they  
can do nothing about  
it. They have no mouths.  
—Still. It only takes one  
and then what? Uprising!  
Dogs in the streets!  
—Don't fear, Pooki, you  
are the wisest.  
—I know, yet ... I must  
fret. These hoodlums. Bah.

—If only we could bring  
the Harmonium closer  
to the Throne, we could  
get rid of these singles.  
—Yes, Angel-22, but  
the trans-uranic  
particles concentrate here.  
—And none of the other  
polycitizens would agree  
to have the concentrator  
so close to the Throne vats.  
—And so easy to take  
over by a single body.  
—We may have become  
too many bodies.  
—Hush, do not repeat  
that. Remember the  
Gentle-360 war.  
—Gentle-360 was a fool.  
—That he was.  
—I am not.

—You say you've ...  
been gone ... but ...  
I know you didn't  
... promise me ...  
anything at all.  
—Don't you remember  
... my smile.  
—You were holding  
me ... in your  
... arms.  
—When we sang  
... in the light  
of ... the  
rebuilder.

—Don't you remember  
... my worlds ...  
—I'm the only one that  
knows ... their souls ...  
—I'm the only  
one that knows ...  
—You're the only  
one that ...  
—I'm the only one ...  
—I'm the only  
—That knows  
your soul ...

—317 warns that the  
spectral signatures  
indicate a break in  
our baseline supply.  
—How? Are the  
soft furry parasites  
unsatisfied with  
the indigo ivory?  
—177, if I knew I  
wouldn't be consulting  
the Delicate Seer.  
—But 57, her nuance  
has been mis-calibrated  
since Flower Incident 3!

Are these  
dusty dunes  
toxic?

Crystal rebirth,  
special sale!

Flowers  
of power!

—I tire of this,  
Anise of Star.  
—I know,  
Basil of Planet,  
but we must  
continue. The  
crystalline  
seed will come  
in a flesh envelope,  
drawn to this engine.

—Mishkoyan  
Gornyyev?  
—Yes?  
—You may  
enter. The  
purveyor of  
meats will  
see you now.

—So we are  
agreed to  
proceed with  
the post-utility  
labor process?  
—We tested it,  
the Goldmouth  
system does  
seem to work.  
—This would  
reduce our need  
for the Low Lines

—Again with  
the off-license  
crystallomancy!  
Stop it already,  
Merdon-9!  
—You have  
no say over my  
autonomy! Take  
it to the Conseil  
Ceramique!

—Dream.  
Sequence.  
Dream.  
Dream.  
Growth  
phase?  
Abort.  
Dream.

—Lazaro! I've hit some  
kind of hard shell!  
—Shell? Biological?  
—Post-livingstone magics,  
Lazaro! This is thing has  
here longer than the  
clay-faces could know!



# 9. THE WAY STONE GRAVEYARD

Larger by far than the Ignored Tower in the Last Serai, a crumbling verdigris obelisk rises from the bare bedrock, exposed by millennial storms lashing the tired earth. Surrounded by wrinkled iron husks and a veritable graveyard of Long Long Ago machine creatures.

## WEATHER AT THE WAY STONE

A constant dry rust storm swirls about the mile-high mass of the obelisk, whipping up cutting winds for three days' journey in each direction. Rain is alien to this region and even when the sun drags itself above the dark haze at 10:00 its light remains red and desultory in the metallic air.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE METAL GRAVEYARD

As regular as the metal debris, Misfortune strikes here.

### d20 Charisma Test

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1     | A sharp iron fragment blinds one eye, requiring serious medical attention or a <i>Lesser Restoration</i> dust-spirit injunction.  |
| 2–3   | 1d4 supplies worth of water lost to a freak desiccating gust incident.  |
| 4–6   | Shard of the Dark Mirror lodges in one eye, letting the hero always see the worst in people—like a permanent <i>Detect Nastiness</i> ability that won't turn off. Curse removal recommended.  |
| 7     | Ancient weapon on weathered grave of a machine folk hero attacks (-1d8 Life). The grave contains porcelain eyes (€1d6 x 100) and a magic, un-rusting weapon (€300)—no other power, it just never rusts.   |
| 8–9   | Booming rust storm flenses caravan and makes ears ring (-1d4 days).   |
| 10–11 | 1d6 pieces of metal equipment rust beyond use, even magical items.  |
| 12–19 | Masked, goggled, swaddled against the razor rust, you cross.  |
| 20+   | A helpful biomechanical servitor parasite crawls out of the dust to repair a machine. If there is no machine to repair, it offers to upgrade an organic creature with its improved technology instead. If upgrade is accepted, it bonds in a horrendously obvious way, and increases one of the recipient's stats by (roll d6): (1–5) +1, (6) +2, (6/6) +3. |

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE STONE

- ⋄ **Rest Is Almost Impossible:** the constant storm keeps everyone awake. Difficult Aura test to rest.
- ⋄ **West, Fallen Umber** (trail, 1 week): keep the Stone at your back and you will reach the dead kingdom of Umber.
- ⋄ **North-West, South-Facing Passage** (rough steppe, 3 weeks): a long journey leads to the high steppe of the great passage.
- ⋄ **North, Death-Facing Passage** (rough steppe, 2 weeks): a broken chaos of rubble mounds and hills that might once have been the halls of giants leads to the grim passage. Don't look south-east at the Ignored Tower once you reach it!
- ⋄ **East, The Last Serai** (trail, 1 week): the safety of the Porcelain Princes' outpost is near. Copper to your face, verdigris to your back, and you shall reach it.

## ENCOUNTERS NEAR THE WAY STONE (D6)

1. Rushing through the rust, feeding on static charge, shaking the very ground, is the great **Machine Wurm** (L12, terrifying). It rumbles on dozens of jointed, bladed legs, like a rattling 100' centipede. The glow of source-of-machines glimmers from within it whets the appetites of greedy fools. It is not hostile and generally ignores little meat-sacks but is rumored to be full of valuable gems. An individual wurm contains €1d100 x 100 rare gems (soap-sized). A hazardous gamble for taking on a truly lethal creature, wreathed in lightning, with an elephant-swallowing maw and a hundred bladed limbs.
2. A swaying cross between a centipede, a gazebo, and a beautiful youth, the **Dispenser of Wisdom** (L7, demanding, heat rays) is a mind-burned, demented machine that offers unsought advice, demanding payment in return. Its fee is (roll d6): (1) a song, (2) shoes, (3) flesh, (4) gold, (5) your wounds (it heals them), or (6) a bone from a living body.
3. **Zombie machines** (undying) dragging themselves, half-alive through the rust, repeating old manoeuvres. They are (roll d6): (1–3) **senseless worker creatures** (L0) trying to harvest peaches or thresh wheat, (4–5) growling **guard units** (L2), patrolling a territory, but not fundamentally hostile, or (6) deadly **assassin machines** (L6), hiding in rust drifts or playing dead with glinting cut glass gems in their metal hands. There are even odds that any defeated zombie machine reanimates again with full Un-Life after 1d6 rounds.
4. A **band of riders** (L3, fast-approaching), hard-faced, with old dustland masks. Their biomantically enhanced horses give nothing away, but the butts of their glass rifles and the ebon hafts of their lances suggest they are not to be trifled with. They refuse to talk, shadowing strangers carefully to ascertain their strength. They may be ultra-possessed.
5. Two great Satrap **clock wagons** (L12, loaded), swaying serenely, attended by their **mirror-faced guards** (L3, poker-faced). They carry lovely loads of prisms (€250/sack) and many-coloured shift-silks (€750/sack) that change colour with the emotion of their wearer.
6. A very well-provisioned party, led by the bespectacled dwarf engineer **Laszlo Montague IV** (L2, lucky), the golden-masked rogue polybody **Gilded 3-era** (L3, coordinated), and flame-haired RDC twins **Sena** (L5, calculating) and **Xina** (L3, ambitious) in biomech cool-suits searching for the tomb of the machine "*The Dragon Also Rises*." They are quite candid about their goals and how much they could make with it in the SD Metropolis Museum (€75,000). They have maps, they claim.



# DISCOVERIES BY THE WAY STONE

## OASIS OF MIRRORS

(1 day, 100 xp)

Under a hill carved with scenes of industry and labor by some lost people, the oasis makes for a common caravan stop. Most permanent inhabitants and resident archaeologists gladly point out to visitors that they shouldn't visit the old metal bunker under the hill by daylight. An array of living-metal mirrors on the hill focus the light of the sun through a series of corridors, excavating a pointless pit into the heart of the ground. Fools previously tried to remove the living-metal mirrors, but they turned out to be **living-metal golems** (L6, liquid) and best left alone. Nothing of value remains in the bunker.

## COLUMN OF DEAD BEETLES

(d4 days, 200 xp)

The carcasses of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of giant metal beetles lie in eight neat rows, arrayed like an army ready for war, snaking through and between sixteen hill-sized eroded basalt cylinders. In many places drifts of rust and dust cover the column, but still it remains—mute testament to some forgotten machine Queen. Some later-day nomads used the metal carcasses as coffins and here and there crude golden jewelry (€1d20 x 10) can be found on a withered body, some possibly cursed. There are reports of a pack of **uneasy dead** (L1, loud) roaming the column at night.

## THE TOMB OF THE DRAGON ALSO RISES

(4 days, 1d6 x 100 xp)

Nearly rusted away, the stubs of three great spiraling arms of chromium and indium mark the mercury lake covering the tomb. Drifts of rust and dust (a couple of meters deep) cover the lake and careless creatures wading in may suffocate from dust inhalation (but wouldn't drown in the mercury, unless denser than lead: yes, lead floats in mercury) or mercury poisoning (over several weeks leads to skin shedding, neuropathy, insanity, paralysis, coma, and death). Access to the tomb seems impossible without some kind of key or a massive mercury siphoning operation. On the other hand, it would be quite simple to harvest a few glass bottles of mercury (€6 x 1d100/each). What lies in the tomb? Who knows.

## THE CRYSTAL FLOWER

(2 days, 120 xp)

In a bowl-shaped depression ringed by eroded monoliths thousands of rust-red many-jointed, delicate pylons rise. In the heart of the great array is a crystalline flower, 70 meters tall and glistening like a dew drop on a cold autumn morning. Visitors have scrawled their names in the rust and taken souvenirs from the dead-rusted pylons but still—every day at midday—heavily corroded, ribbon-decked **spidery biomechanics** (L4, sprinting) emerge from their subterranean lairs to lubricate and polish the flower. The biomechanics are harmless unless the flower is approached, so many visitors tie prayer ribbons to the creatures instead. Local wanderers call them the clock-setters.

## THE ABBEY OF THE CARETAKERS

(d8 days, 100 xp)

Well off the beaten rock path rise six tusks carved from a single mountain. Watertraps honey-comb through their upper surfaces, harvesting moisture and collecting it in subterrene pools. 200 meters above the ground chambers, linked by cableways, spread through the tusks like wormholes. Smooth-worn steps carved into the red sandstone lead to the narrow entrance of this aerial troglodyte abbey, where the pale caretakers chant the Memories of Maintenance and pray to the Departed Machine. Webbed with trceries of fine wire and inherited biomechanum, the **sky-faced abbess** (L4, caught in the past) channels the song of the body electric. Visitors sometimes welcome, but never comfortable.



## THE CAULDRON OF THE REVITALIZED DIVINITY

(d10 days, 300 xp)

Deep in a veritable maze of rust-and-fordite agglomerations, wanderers speak of a great cauldron of shifting metal sand and living colours. It is true, it is there. An **autofac** (L13, half-mad with age) crawls through its rainbow garden, trying to repair servitors and grander things. It has a 45% chance of repairing any machine, but a 5% chance of turning it into a **mad abomination** (L9, cold, calculating, and cruel) bred with a loathing of its 'masters.' The maze is stalked by odd metal gazelles and a hive of enhanced **ghoul centipedes** (L2, paralytic).

## THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE WIRE

(3 days, 80xp)

A long slab of cliff-face, 700 meters long and 20 meters high, smoothed and polished to a high sheen and pocked with thousands of small niches preserving the wire-and-clockwork enhanced feet, soles outward (€50/stone) of the worshippers of a machine ascendancy. Encased in grown-crystal, most of the soles have been long-since stolen as souvenirs and the mausoleum remains, more than anything, a souvenir to the terrible danger homophones pose to literal-minded cults. Occasionally a sentient dust-red wise bear named **Ottokar** (L4, werhuman) is seen here. It sometimes sighs and sings sad songs or talks of days gone by.

# 10. THE DEATH-FACING PASSAGE



A sharp, artificial canyon runs rough but true North-West towards the Grass Colossus. The rough crags and cinder dunes, lit from behind by the glare of **static ghosts** (Lo, glowing), are littered with reminders to not turn back: the flickering soul-echoes



of travelers seduced by the siren song of the **Ignored Tower's Face of Death**. Travelers say not every look at the tower from this angle brings death but most prefer not to try. Four or five days along the passage, past a landslide, the Face is mercifully obscured.

The upland above the canyon is a pandemonium of shattered rock and odd twists of stuckforce coated in millennia of dirt and grime. Sages stroke their beards but cannot agree on the origin of this hellish scape.

**Warning:** the Death-Facing Passage is lethal and many travelers journey with great hoods or safety hats so they cannot glance above the horizon and catch sight of the Face of Death.

## WEATHER IN THE CANYONS

At night the flickering soul-echoes and **static ghosts** (Lo, glowing) set up a constant rumbling roar while the sun only creeps above the ultraviolet wall at 09:45. Temperatures in the canyon are surprisingly balmy, sometimes even hot.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE FACE OF DEATH

Tragedy is a constant threat in this terrible, sad place.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 The hero caught sight of the Face of Death. Their body is translated into a salty burn shadow and a flickering soul-echo of their existence remains suspended in the air. Nothing short of *Wishful Dream* or *Wish* can restore them—their human essence has been ripped into the shreds of the Ignored Tower's distortion. Singed possessions and belongings remain as if tossed by a grim tide.
- 2–3 Nasty concussion from walking head-down into an unexpected arch of salt (-1d6 Life and -1d4 Thought).
- 4–6 Break leg stumbling over scree. Still, better than looking upon the Face of Death (-1d4 Strength and Agility).
- 7 Thick haze-storm obscures the Face of Death, making travel easier, though the smog plays havoc on the lungs (save 1d4 days, -1d4 Life).
- 8–9 Pack animal gazed upon the Face of Death. It's gone now, all the goods it carried singed but still half-salvageable.
- 10–11 Strap, belt, thong, shoe-lace, or other tie snaps at the worst moment and in the fall a fragile object breaks. If the hero has no fragile objects then they packed well and get through *intacto*.
- 12–19 Hooded, despondent, face down to the glassy ground, you traverse the canyon, never looking up to the horizon.
- 20+ You meet the salty burn shadow of ... a dog? It might have been a dog once. It follows you, drawn by a faint echo of its master in your soul. Feed it 1d6 Life to gain a **shadow dog** (Lo, two-dimensional).

## TRAVEL OPTIONS UNDER A GRIM GLARE

- ⋮ **Rest, In A Dry Cave:** the Face of Death glares outside, the static ghosts keep crawling around you, drawn by your life. Difficult Aura test or sacrifice 1d6 Life to the ghosts so you can rest.
- ⋮ **North, Grass Colossus** (steppe, 1 week): finally safe from the horrid visage and ghosts, the rugged canyons collapse back into the steppe and end at the Nomads' holy site.
- ⋮ **West, South-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): the desolate badlands give onto the ravaged high steppe of the second passage.
- ⋮ **South, the Way Stone** (rough steppe, 2 weeks): the rubble mounds conceal the Face of Death. A relief.
- ⋮ **South-East, The Last Serai** (canyon, 4 weeks): only the most desperate fools would try to travel back towards the Last Serai, braving the Face (↓d on Misfortune tests). Why?

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE LETHAL PASSAGE (D8)

1. Snuffling, **faceless vome-serpent** (L7, electro-static), feeding on the personalities of travelers. First it paralyzes, then it drains Charisma, leaving a living ka-zombie.
2. **Radiation ghosts** (Lo, glowing) of a troglodyte family, their spark-dead eyes accusing, lead to a shelter (+1 day). It is still stockpiled with sugar-filled bottles, cans of poisonous tubers, and a cache of finely carved indigo ivories (€1d8 x 100). The shelter is wreathed in a toxic miasma (moderate Endurance test or poisoned).
3. Soldier swarm of **blind ceramic ants** (L1, acid bite) probe wanderers for weakness and food.
4. **Static ghosts** (L1, despairing) of a procession of wailing locust pilgrims in an eerie haze. Their cacophony drains 1 Aura per minute from anyone among them with ears unstopped. Anyone whose Aura drops below 0 understands they should turn and gaze up at the Face of Death.
5. Crawling **animate boulders** (L1, rocking), symbiotes of dryland coral and some kind of land urchin.
6. Animated **salty burn shadows** (Lo, acrid) crawl along the rocks and walls, harmless but supplicating.
7. Flickering **soul-echoes** (Lo, fizzing) of mongooses and snakes.
8. Blind **passage lizards** (L4, nutritious), richly humped, hunting fat **copper-laced grubs** (L1, pseudo-vomes).



# DISCOVERIES UNDER THE FACE OF DEATH

Why are you doing this? This place is a terrifying hell!

## EXPOSED PUEBLO

(1 day, 300 xp)

Some great antediluvian disaster swept aside the protections of this ancient village, exposing it to the Face of Death. The village is thick with flickering **static ghosts** (L2, slaving) and **salt burns** (L0, clutching). By night a dense ectoplasmic memory of the dead accumulates in the hollows and halls, tempting visitors to go look at the green light on the south horizon (moderate Aura test or go look at the Face). Every hour of exploration turns up €1d6 x 50 of Long Ago goods and treasures.



## THE DISASTER OF THE IVORY ARMY

(2 days, 200 xp)

A great stuckforce lens glitters over a Long Ago fortress of stone and bone built in a deep canyon shaped like a Redlander helmet. Water vapor accumulates around the aerial lens and when the light and temperature and humidity are just right it suddenly reflects the Face of Death into the vale. An ivory plaque mounted in the flank of the fortress records the disaster that befell the army stationed there. Who did the army belong to? Who knows ...

## VAULT OF THE LOST ULTRAS (?)

(1d8 days, 450 xp)

Curling like a worm, at the end of a branching madness of side canyons, a windswept plateau opens on the north flank of a dead volcano, the Face gone from view. Carved into the turf is a great square maw leading to an ancient **livingstone door** (L4, sassy), still half-sentient. Behind it, a lost world of five interlinked chambers eaten out of the mountain: glowing lumin trees (€750/fragile sapling, 1 sack), pendulous rare fruits, **servant monkey-spiders** (L2, chittering) suckling at the teats of milk trees (€350/sapling) and egg mass caskets (€1,000, 2 sacks each). The livingstone homes, halls, and odd temple-tree-theatres of whoever built this place are overgrown with lilies and vines and mushrooms.

Any of the **d8 archaic wonders of the ultras** here may be extracted by a patient and careful explorer (1 hour, moderate Thought test, €2d10 x 100 each).

1. **Semiuniversal Translator**, recognizes 50% of languages, 1 sack.
2. **Biomatter Reprocessor**, turns 2 sacks of biomatter into 1 sack of supplies in about a day, 1 sack.
3. **Bioalchemical Symbiote Fungus**, bonds to host, transmutes 1 flask of liquid into another kind of liquid (easy Endurance test) in about half a day (note: it does not provide immunity to poisons or toxins), 1 stone.
4. **True New Friend**, synthetic friend in a crystal box, requires regular attention, 1 stone.
5. **Swarm Controller**, telepathic brain implant that gives one-word commands to swarms, learning each command word requires a moderate Thought test, each attempt can only be made once.
6. **Dream Inducer**, puts targets to sweet slumber, requires moderate Thought test to operate, 1 sack.
7. **Tree-matter Data Injector**, over several hours turns a tree into a simple bio-computer capable of storing several hundred thousand books in its ligneous structure, 1 sack.
8. **Rare Fruit Gestation Device**, over a week activates a sack of rare fruit into a floral body-personality, congratulations: you have a **sentient tree creature** (L1, poetic), 2 sacks.

Visitors can stay as long as they like, but fiddling with the vault may provoke a threat response (easy Charisma test each hour). A **mind-linked autonomous swarm** (L1, drones) of servant birds, spores, and dogheaded semi-humanoids awakens if the vault's sanctity is threatened. They make use of moderate strength soporific and necrotic poisons (liquefy soft tissues). If the threat increases, a **telepathic miasma** that provokes fear (moderate Aura test) is added to the mix, while all lumin trees, save those leading to the exit, go dark.





# 11. THE SOUTH-FACING PASSAGE

Rough, high steppe country, torn by the tracks of prehistoric Behemoths, but relatively safe. The journey from the Grass Colossus to the Behemoth Shell will interest every gentle-person naturalist.

Due west the rounded humps of great cedar-shaded hills rise, but the caravan trails bypass them.

## WEATHER ON THE HIGH STEPPE

The far western sun only pulls away from the nictitating membrane of the night around 10:30. The thin air of the high steppe whistles and flecks of grit-like snow are not unknown even on summer nights.

## MISFORTUNE IN THIN AIR

Tragedy seems unlikely in this bucolic region.



### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Picked up lenticular worms (-1 Endurance per week until treated).
- 2 Lit a campfire on top of an enormous accumulation of methane-rich 'deposits' left by some gargantuan herbivore (moderate Agility test or -1d10 Life).
- 3 One sack of supplies lost to ravenous rodents. Large marmots?
- 4 Saddle sores flare up again (-1d4 Life).
- 5-6 Horrible mountain hiking blisters (limping).
- 7 Stumble into pit full of wild horse dung. Why is all this dung here? A moderate Thought test leads to a surprisingly gentle herd of wild horses. Some of them may even be capable of speech.
- 8-19 The stars seem very near here, so close to the roof of the world.
- 20+ Found a wonderful little oasis (50 xp) full of delicious fish and black light lotus (1d6 sacks' worth). Spend just 1d6 days to get a full week's rest and gain 1d4 Charisma for a week. Sometimes this world truly is just enchantingly beautiful.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE WORLD'S ROOF

- ❖ **Rest, A Flowery Glen:** it is safe, but the nights are cold. Chance of faerie ghosts and snow flurries.
- ❖ **North-West, Serpent Stone** (steppe, 2 weeks): the white grass is endless and this stone formation marks a rare waypoint.
- ❖ **North, Long Ridge** (steppe, 1 week): that endless sea of grass that is the true UV grassland.
- ❖ **North-East, Grass Colossus** (steppe, 2 weeks): an easy, if slow, trek to the holy site.
- ❖ **East, Death-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): the rubble canyons do not beckon.
- ❖ **South-East, Way Stone Graveyard** (rough, 3 weeks): torturous paths lead into the rusted waste of the Machine Graveyard.
- ❖ **South, Fallen Umber** (steppe, 1 week): the dead kingdom of Umber and its brown, tree-lined gullies.
- ❖ **South-West, Behemoth** (steppe, 2 weeks): the mountain-sized calcite corpse of a the largest behemoth is a known landmark.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE HIGH GRASSLAND (D8)

1. Small herd of grazing **lesser behemoths** (L15, majestic) pulling their semi-levitant bodies along with long hooked limbs.
2. After-human **pack of skinchangers** (L6, hunting) running wild, a nameless ultra behind their eyes.
3. Feral **steppe wolf-hound pack** (L4, territorial) ranging through the long grass.
4. Two **ur-eagles** (L2, intelligent) spying from afar.
5. Great herd of **ash-and-dun antelopes** (L3, majestic) with scimitar horns and fine muscled flanks.
6. Herd of **wild horses** (L2, mercurial), strong and epic (carry 2, fast, €300 each). Difficult to tame.
7. Small band of **merchant-nomads** (L2, seasoned) with their flocks of sheep, herds of riding antelopes (carry 1 sack, fast, €100 each), and steppe goods (€100/sack): leathers, tools, furs, and dried meats.
8. **Great Folk raiding patrol** (L4, odd-boned) from the Behemoth Shell. Wary and nervous, they finger long rifles as they ride their **bone-work steeds** (L3, sculpted, carry 3 sacks, €300 each).



# DISCOVERIES IN THE ALPINE MEADOWS

## THE BONE MINES OF MOY SOLLO

(2 days, 80 xp)

A series of ridges exposed by eons of sun and wind as the ribs of some mythic serpent. For ageless years long-limbed behemoths came to this spot, like moths to a flame, to lay down their bone-armored corpses. Long Ago ancestors of the Great Folk found this place and their culture's hero, Moy Sollo, built the foundation of their wealth upon the great slave-cut mines dug into the great bones, following the veins of rock ivory. **Great Folk scouts** (L2, distant) keep watch, but now it is depleted ivory veins and a personality reassembly disease keeping would-be miners at bay. The disease is real (trivial Endurance test each day of mining), caused by ancient spirit dusts released from the old serpent bones. Manifesting as a slow, steady dulling of the personality (mental stats average out over several weeks). A day's mining produces €1d4 x 50 of valuable ivory scales and cores (€400/sack).



## THE GENTLE MILE

(1 day, 100 xp)

A famous meadow, dotted with peach trees and riven by two brooks, immortalized in the poem *Three Frogs Marching to Infinity*. It spreads on the southern slope of a long-eroded ziggurat of mammoth proportions. There were once great caverns and megadungeons within the ziggurat but they are now all flooded and looted, only loose coppers, bones, and primitive remains left. An eerie aura of peace reigns over the meadow and violence is difficult here.

## PUCE HOUSE

(3 days, 100 xp)

Surrounded by the remains of an epic bone circle and shaded by sturdy dryland coral-bonded dwarf pines, Puce House is the site of an odd alliance between the Porcelain Prince polybody pine-mancer **Pineas 3-drum** (L5, tree-hugger) and **Satrap 202-Δ "Ferdī"** (L4, alcomancer), the soma distiller (€300/barrel). Puce House is also a good place to stock up on fine woods (€150/sack) and black light lotus schnapps (€900/barrel). Pineas and Ferdī are enlightened renegades who've escaped the tradition-bound strictures of their society and set up here, in the near-wilderness, with a group of

like-minded acolytes, servants, and slaves. They want to be left alone, but also desperately miss the luxuries of civilization—with a bit of judicious bribery and maybe the delivery of a modern hot tub, they would be happy to let 'friends' use Puce House as a peaceful haven deep in the steppe.

The Great Folk feel protective of the odd couple and maintain a small patrol, but the true guardian of Puce House is rumored to be a **bone-worked behemoth** (L15, repurposed behemoth vome). The rumors are true—the bone circle is made of the **behemoth's appendages** (L7, bone-worm drones).

Expenses: €20/week to stay in the fine rooms. Regular: €100, a month, acquire a basic grasp of phytomancy or alcomancy, 150 xp.

## WANDERING BEHEMOTH

(+1d6 days, 200 xp)

Finally, in the distance, a living wandering **behemoth** (L20, really big)! Since the days of the Great Ride few come this far north, but this one has a full canopy. Phytomancers would give their front plant extensions for a chance to hang out on one of these! There is a good chance that some old buildings, temples, or shrines are preserved on its aerolith-reinforced back.



# 12. FALLEN UMBER

Beyond the Way Stone the steppe continues, flat, tasteless, tone-deaf. The caravan trails have carved a route down to the bedrock and the long-dry gully buttresses of gently crumbling livingstone attest to the long-lost land of UMBER, once rich from local deposits of titanic biomatter which supported a thriving chitin-cap agro-industrial aristocracy.

“Brrr, this dull place, it eats at the soul,” said the Warlock.

“Agreed, nothing to loot,” replied the Hero.

## WEATHER IN SHADES OF BROWN

The weather is unusually mild and calm for the steppes, and though the sun rises from the growing haze at only 10:30 it merely creates a pleasant feeling of decline and fall.

## MISFORTUNE AND THE REST

Quiet desolation brings ennui and emptiness to the weak-willed.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 A spell or memory disappears into the dead land (lose one known spell or skill until it is restored by some adequately fabulous means).
- 2 Dry, flaky rash strikes hard (-1d4 Charisma).
- 3 Supplies suddenly crumble to dust (-1d4 sacks).
- 4 Chitin-cap spores infect a steed, blossoming into sheet growths of chitin fibres (steed lamed).
- 5–6 Lost in the dull, repetitive land. Have you walked past that abandoned village before? Maybe? (-1d4 days)
- 7 Rested in a peaceful farming village. Unfortunately, it was a ghostly echo of the Times of the Liberated Serf Dictatorship (-1 day and -1d4 supplies, gain effect of a week's rest).
- 8–19 Is this land dead or just resting? Does it matter? It stays silent.
- 20+ Catch a fungal infection. It's easy to remove, but ... perhaps this is a symbiote? Yes, it seems to want to form some kind of symbiosis with your brain, creating space to store an additional skill or mental ability.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS IN UMBER

- ∴ **Rest, An Abandoned Plantation:** not even ghosts trouble this remote ruin. It seems to eat past and present (moderate Aura test, or sacrifice a small childhood memory).
- ∴ **West, Behemoth Shell** (trail, 1 week): tough grasses reclaim the brown land and the calcite husks of behemoths dot the way to the greatest shell of all.
- ∴ **North, South-facing Passage** (steppe, 1 week): the brown lands fade imperceptibly into the greyish-green of the high steppe.
- ∴ **East, Way Stone Graveyard** (trail, 1 week): the great green obelisk clearly marks the still lands of the Machine Graveyard.



## ENCOUNTERS IN BROWN (D8)

1. A **hulk of this fallen land** (L6, ravenous) scavenging for protein to feed to its long-dead mushroom masters in the ruins of a chitin farm. The farm may have chitin-caps.
2. **Animated chitin armors** (L2, half-lost) stumbling around the perimeter of a tumbled Great House. Dull and not aggressive.
3. **Hybrid prairie-dog pack** (L1, megarodents) hunting a grazing flock of ochre rabbit-pigs.
4. Glistening **pale mushrooms** (L1, necrotic) feasting swiftly on a dead rabbit-pig.
5. **Rabbit-pigs** (L1, half-uplifted) farming small ball mushrooms and building crude shelters of straw and sticks.
6. Band of **itinerant chitin foragers** (L2, well-armed) with grubby caps and foul-minded mules. They are exiled Greenland revolutionaries fighting for the common human.
7. Family of **Great Folk merchant-hunters** (L4, necromancers) with several bone-work golem wagons (L8, 12 sacks, €4,000).
8. A **ghostly caravan** (L6, para-human) bearing bundles of archaic goods (€700/sack). If followed long enough they may sell some of their time-dilated goods, which become solid when blood touches them.



# DISCOVERIES IN THE UMBER LANDS



## HALL OF THE UMBER KING

(1 day, 100 xp)

Crumbling livingstone arches and colossi sheathed in festering growths of chitin-cap (€100/sack, 1d4 days to gather) and other incredible fungoid art flowers reveal the lost glory of Fallen UMBER. Blossoms and sparkling spores float through the slow air and, under the dry decay, a scent of spices and incense, **smell-ghosts of a golden age** (Lo, sweet) linger. Dilettante artists come here to sigh upon the folly of humanity, while perfumists send harvesters to collect ancient spores (€2,000/sack, 1d4 weeks to scrape together). Chambers and tunnels of odd fungi are marked with warnings in several languages, yet still **mind-emptied husks** (Lo, infectious) wander about, sustained on the perfumed air for months until they dry out into perfect substrates for more rainbow-coloured fungoids.

## THE AZURE GARDEN

(2 days, 150 xp)

A livingstone geodesic dome marks one of the last stands of Fallen UMBER, where the Dynasty of the Slumbering Green (corporatist branch) used massive biomantic rituals to reactivate the titanic biomatter, creating a renewable source of fuel for their azure-strand chitin-caps. The attempt failed and the Dynasty fell to a massive uprising of their tertiary servant caste. In the ensuing centuries the mutated offspring of the azure-strands colonized the bones of the great dome, creating a hanging garden of susurrating azure fungoids (€150/sack, 1d4 days to harvest). **Hybrid sweet-fleshed rodents** (L2, toxic pacifists) now tend these ancient, sun-processing fungal colonies.

## EROSION OF WAR

(4 days, 260 xp)

Three great fungoid **vome autofacs** (L13, alien, colourful, sessile) rise like tetrahedrist villages above a small valley. These mindless or mad colony organisms strip their environment, producing crawling and **clattering warrior-creatures** (L5, grotesque) that march towards each other to fight, struggle, and die. Every night **scavenger organisms** (L1, misshapen) foray out to the battlefield to retrieve scrap and resources to refashion into new warriors. This mindless war has continued for many years and the tramping feet of troops have carved the entire triangular forty meter deep valley from the dun bedrock.



## THE STELE OF THE PIERCED BLOSSOM

(5 days, 300 xp)

Far beyond the beaten track some odd wanderer placed a massive stele, a thousand tons or more of garnet gneiss, inscribed with a mawkish poem about a blossom in love with herself, plucked to adorn a noble's dining jacket in her unique beauty, where she wilted and died alone. The words and glyphs are cut deep and utterly flawless but, more amazingly, the long-form poem is reproduced in seven languages—including the odd patterns that some call the Black City Alphabet. Studying the stele for several weeks, or procuring reproductions of the stele (€500 for copies as Rosetta stones), is one of the better ways to comprehend (if not speak) the odd languages of the steppe.

# CERULEAN FIVE OASIS

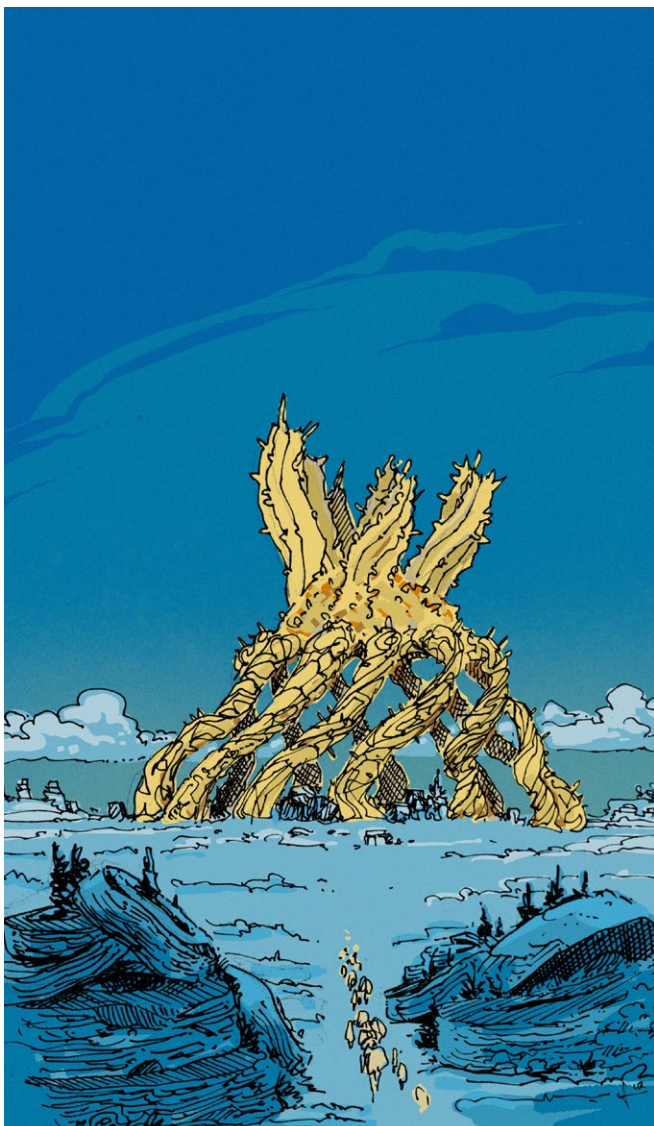
(1d6+1 days, 100 xp)

Cerulean Five is a remote, yet thriving, settlement, some days' trudge south of Fallen Umber. Dusters, cutters, mercos and merchos rest in the oasis en route to the Plantation of the Porcupines, south of the Plasteel Slag. Dilettantes and aristos often go out of their way just to visit the fabled Sky Well.

## MAKING THE ULTRAVIOLET GRASSLANDS YOURS

Cerulean Five Oasis is an example of a simple way to make the UVG your own. It started as a location designed by one of the Stratometaship Heroes, Andrew Downs, for their home game, to provide a small home base their players could develop and grow over time. I liked the idea, and adapted the location to fit within the broader UVG—but you can fit it (or your own home base) anywhere within the UVG (though, remember, the farther west you place it, the weirder the world gets).

Placing a location this far out, near Umber, is very nearly as remote as common-sense traders would ever come from the Rainbowlands around the Circle Sea.



## REMOTE OASIS CHARACTERS (D8)

1. **Bessergott VI** (L8, ancient): a crystal machine interlaced in the dryland coral hulk fond of reciting Long Ago poetry and playing games of chance with visitors. On melancholy days it refuses to operate the Sky Well, but most days can be appeased by kind words and good oratory.
2. **Saint Wavy** (L3, abmortal): a grizzled old fellow of indeterminate gender and species, perhaps more machine than bio, it has been here longer than most can remember, serving the crystal machine and tinkering late into most nights, building hydraulic and pneumatic contraptions.
3. **Micah** (L2, alcomancer): an orphan of the Ultraviolet Grasslands, accompanied by her companion Draw the hospitality golem. Toughened by the harsh wildland rays, she runs the Diver—a tap house hooked up to the Fourth Fountain and the social hub of Cerulean Five.
4. **Draw** (L5, machine human): a hospitality golem with a dry sense of humour and an odd glint in its eye. Its plasma-glazed shell is painted in attractive curlicues and sometimes, by the light of a late moon, it seems more human than golem.
5. **White Jackal** (L4, shaman): a snow-haired mystic, watcher of countless moonrises and moonfalls on the barren grassland. He tends a crop of purple haze in a small garden hollowed out among the rubbed edges of the Oasis. When bored, he plays tricks on visitors with his bewildering psychic powers, but more often he simply sleeps and bakes gently in the hazy afternoons.
6. **Steatitian-6** (L5, iron-fisted): bone-yellow plate-clad emissary of the Princes, this combat polybody has a fondness for songbirds and a weakness for fluffy pets that belies uncanny skill with its white-and-turquoise pistols. More enforcer than negotiator, Steatitian-6 is a surprisingly jovial polybody under that grim ceramic cladding.
7. **Jeppi** (L3, savvy): the Maitresse of the Habitation Association, a general-purpose hexad-associated union of the laboring classes. Jeppi also runs the closest thing to a bank-and-savings cooperative in the Oasis, structured around the Re-Wired Vome Vault. Jeppi loves good wines, fine mechanical poetry, and long walks in the twilight of the world.
8. **Partner Epiphocite** (L4, biomancer merchant): the dryland-adapted Porcupine Partnership representative hosts a fine salon that discusses literature and meta-biology on moonless nights. It keeps three former partner personalities in rock crystal and malachite jars at the green-skinned Porcupine House for accounting and recounting purposes.

## FACTIONS OF YOUR OWN, LIKE THE PORCUPINE PARTNERSHIP

This is all the information that exists on the Porcupine Partnership. Who leads them? What is their goal? Where are their headquarters? Are they human? What about elsewhere? How do they dress? How do they talk? What do they eat?

Ask the heroes to answer at least one question like this about every faction they might have heard of. Make them participate in building the world.





## PLACES IN THE OASIS

The Sky Well is the heart of Cerulean Five. It pulls water from the air itself, a network of condensers tunneled into the petrified hulk of a gigantic cactacean dryland coral and powered by the grumbling crystal machine, **Bessergott VI**, that pulls energy from the Fast Stars as they flitter overhead. **Saint Wavy**, grizzled veteran of some Limbo War, tends to Bessergott and keeps the waters flowing.

### THE SKY WELL

A hulking structure of petrified spiny dryland coral rising on eleven pillar-like legs to form a honeycomb lattice dome above the Fountains of Cerulean Five.

### THE FIVE FOUNTAINS

Five ancient fountains of porphyry and red coral burble with the cerulean-tinged water of the Sky Well. A ring-worked fortified encampment of dead dryland coral slabs has over time grown into a small safehold against the mind-blasting hardships of the trails.

### THE DIVER

A taphouse tunneled into the oily bedrock beneath the Fourth Fountain, social hub of the Oasis.

### THE HABITATION MACHINE

A dense Cubist chaos of faux-adobe residential units assembled in the style of the Lesser Crow Hegemony, 3rd decade, around the Fifth Fountain. It has by turns been home to workers and artists, engineers and wanderers, ghosts and lost children.

### THE MACHINATION

A grove of amber fig trees around the Second Fountain serves as **the forum of the Oasis**, where the citizens meet to talk, trade, do theater, and cajole Bessergott to keep serving water to the Oasis.

### THE NEW MARKET

A clambering cluster of newgrowth dryland coral buildings around the Third Fountain that house the quarters of local guild delegations and the trader-embassies of the Porcelain Princes and the Porcupine Partnership.

### THE OLD MARKET

An emporium clustered in the brick and coral tenements rising three stories high around the First Fountain, filled with merchos peddling trinkets from the Rainbowlands, pine pork futures, lime jerkies, later-era weapons, and choice narcotics from the Violet City.

## THREE POSSIBLE STORIES FOR THE OASIS

Every desolate settlement in the wastes has a story.

### DESSICATION

The well has dried up and both the business and the population have fled. Saint Wavy weeps that nothing he can do will reawaken the crystal machine, Bessergott VI. It can be reawakened either by (d6): (1–2) continuous oratory and amusement, (3–4) replacing its failed ennui resistance circuit with a 'new' one from the autofac at the Skull of the Unbent Bow, or by (5–6) jury-rigging the Eusomic Stone worshiped by the mad Nomads of the Ever-Roasting Man.



### DEVOLUTION

The Habitation Machine has half-woken into a delirious dream of a marshier time and polluted the Fifth Fountain with a **retromorphic demon** (L7, disease). The inhabitants are devolving into amphibious **rodent-like sub-humans** (L1, snuffling). It starts with missing merchos. Continues with attacks in the narrow aisles. Escalates with a rioting swarm of sub-humans. Explodes with out and out warfare in the streets. The devolution can be stopped by (d6):

1. Killing the Machine.
2. Putting the Machine back to sleep.
3. Dream-walking into the Machine-Mind and wrenching its soul-personality into the present.
4. Installing a *Permanent Distillation* in the Fifth Fountain.
5. Quarantining the whole district, creating a black and dismal swamp in the middle of the town, filled with vicious, violent water-rat-folk.
6. Personality-cauterizing the water-rat-folk, creating a protean defensive swarm for the Oasis.

### DESPAIR

The ultra **Walks-With-Sunset** (L6, enlightened) has possessed White Jackal the shaman, turning him into a flame-eyed prophet of an Unvarnished Truth. In the screaming clarity of his voice and the thudding aura of reality that surrounds him, drugs and devices fail and the scales fall from the eyes of all who behold him.

Soon, the society of the Oasis is collapsing into suicides and depression as nothing can keep away the para-apocalyptic truth of the harsh world the citizens inhabit. If killed, White Jackal's ka-ba is restitched to available biomatter by the possessing ultra and more permanent solutions are called for. For example (d4):

1. Entrapping the holy man in a lead-lined casket and pitching him into the Circle Sea.
2. Exorcising the possessing ultra by a *Dissolution and Resolution of the Spirit*.
3. Injecting White Jackal with a vomish civil-war subroutine.
4. Subjecting the ultra to a metaphysical existentialist therapy over a period of months will obscure the clarity of the harsh truth with a veneer of absurdist humor.

# 13. LONG RIDGE

On the way to the Serpent's Stone the grasslands fold back and forth on themselves like sinuous serpents undulating under the coating of ash-white grasses waving in the gentle breezes. Little steppe rodents peer into air, great eagles circle overhead, and for once, little trace of the disgusting remnants of the Long Long Ago are seen.

"The guidebook says this place gets dust flies in springtime," noted Poncho.

"Like midges?" asked the Warlock.

"No, these ones suck blood."

## WEATHER ON THE RIDGE

The sun creeps above the dusty haze at 10:30 and the sky is silvery-pale in the dry heat of the open steppe. By night it is very cold.

## MISFORTUNE AND THE RIDGE

A constant companion to the careless.

### d20 Charisma Test

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | Water runs out in the empty land (-2 supplies).  |
| 2     | Sudden snow storm (-1d4+1 days).   |
| 3     | Swarming blood-sucking flies (-1 Endurance).   |
| 4     | Abandoned rodent warren snaps a steed's leg. Oops.   |
| 5-6   | Restful grove with beautiful spring. Oh, wait, the spring water was contaminated with the effluvia of ultra artifacts (-1 day and -1 supply in a hallucinated fugue).  |
| 7     | Going slightly mad with the boredom of the endless grass (-1 Aura). The Fast Stars seem to be slowing down and spelling something out; this cannot be. It actually is; if the heroes spend -1d4 days to decipher the message in the stars and succeed at a moderate Thought test a portal out of space opens an illuminated shortcut through aetherial voids to another location in the UVG.   |
| 8-11  | A random weapon or armor fell off the danged pack animal. Back over there. Somewhere. It's gone in the sea of grass.   |
| 12-19 | Shh. It's ok. The grass understands. It knows.   |
| 20+   | A serendipitous bathroom break reveals an incredibly sharp and pointy sedge with a bluish-purple glow to its edges, which possesses surprising pharmacological properties. Introduced into the blood stream, it changes the brain's biochemistry and permanently opens the door to lucid dreaming. Alternatively, the user can experiment with it (moderate Thought test) to unlock other new and unexpected extra-sensory abilities. There's not enough of the thing to harvest for more, really. |

## TRAVEL OPTIONS ON THE LONG RIDGE

- ∴ **Rest, A Krumholz Lee:** the dwarf pines and larches provide feeble protection, but a silent camp should survive.
- ∴ **West, Serpent Stone Marker** (steppe, 1 week): the endless sea of grass continues, swallowing the trails.
- ∴ **East, Grass Colossus** (trail, 1 week): the great, grassy holy site of the Lime Nomads.
- ∴ **South, South-facing Passage** (steppe, 1 week): the high steppe rises gently: a dusty, dun frontier.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE EXPOSED RIDGE (D8)

1. **Vomish hunter-killer serpents** (L2, earth-swimming), self-replicating leftovers of some grand and ultimately pointless war between the lings and the viles. They reprocess all inorganic matter left unattended on the surface. This must be why there are no ruins on the Long Ridge.
2. Herd of **dark ghost gazelles** (L3, hive mind), patrolling against vomish incursion.
3. Burner **golems** (L1, jumping) of wicker and sedge sent by some bush wizard or other.
4. Bloodthirsty **sedge clumps** (L1, poisonous) with thorn-tipped roots and runners.
5. Flock of **grazing ostrichians** (L1, swift).
6. Herd of **wild cattle** (L2, primeval), mighty horned and enigmatic.
7. Hermit **cultists of the viles** (L4, slow shapeshifters) covered in mosses and dust, meditating on the white grass and grazing on manna.
8. **Small caravan** of (roll d6): (1) lime nomads with flocks of wooly sheep (€25/sheep), (2) great folk with bone-work tools and beads (€175/sack), (3) Spectrum Satraps in a great six-footer (L12, thundering) carrying crystal eyes (€6,000/sack), (4) hostile and scruffy Yellowlanders with burdenbeasts and spicy drugs (€2,000/sack), (5) enigmatic half-elves with empty eyes and hollow laughs (€100 per eerie song), (6) cowed short quarter-lings whipping two-legged burdenbirds (€75/bird).







## DISCOVERIES ON THE LONG RIDGE

### GRASS CIRCLES

(1d3 days, 80 xp)

Ornate circles and whorls appear overnight in this area. None of the local Nomads or travelers know or care what they are. Some suggest it's just 'crazy kids', when obviously higher powers are trying to communicate. It is, in fact, a group of 'kids'—**ultra-possessed abmortal kids** (L3, distorted) futilely trying to summon the Spirit in the Sky. It will never work. The Spirit in the Sky does not listen.

### COPPER CAIRN

(2 days, 70 xp)

Glistening on a lonely tumulus, a cairn entirely of green-hued copper nodules stands, mute testament to some long-gone Queen or merchant—who could tell? Curse markers warn of death, indeed the curses of the splitting of bones and the melting of eyes are true enough. Treat the curses as **guardian spirits** (L6, implacable) who attack in a rush of green metallic sparkles when the markers are disturbed, doors are breached, or burials desecrated. *Within*: bones, shards and smears testify to a curse-maddened **vomish autofac** (L12, boneless, eyeless) self-entombed in the cairn, spewing forth rubber **bioenhanced wormsnares** (L2, spitting). There are 40 sacks of copper (€400 each) in the cairn. Deeper yet: who knows what is actually in the cairn's heart?

### THE SKY TOWER

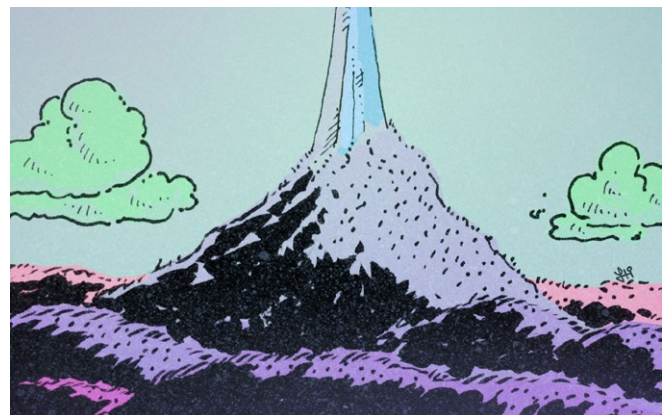
(3 days, 100 xp)

The very grass tinges blue as it creeps up the sloping flanks of the Sky Tower. The tower itself erupts, a sharp pinnacle of blue glass that ends in a great, translucent platform. The **ghost of a sky-gazer** (L3, forgetful) lives there and answers questions about the still and the moving stars—but knows nothing about the passage of time and aeons. Crude visitors have chipped and scarred the tower with their names but some aura of respect keeps vandals at bay.

### FALLEN FEAST HALL

(2 days, 2d6 x 10 xp)

The stone and glass pillars of an ancient feast hall from Long Ago stand next to a deep pool. The ghost of an exuberant, post-Neo-Classicist structure, all flying glass buttresses, shimmering platforms, and leathery nooks, still shimmers above it, like some kind of echo through time of the greatest party ever thrown. The water is rainbow-coloured and still euphoria-inducing (€200 per bottle, weakly addictive), filled with the product of a still-churning subterrene **autofac** (L11, serene). **Odd farmers** (L1, soulless) of wood and sinew wander about, the harmless products of some kind of abmortal bioengineering. They grow tasteless tubers and fat grubs (€50/sack, count as supplies).



### THE SCHKARP

(1d4 days, 70 xp)

A mirror-smooth escarpment of soil fused to glass, about two meters high, describing a 70 miles long 13-degree arc. It is unclear who made it or why, but tourists etch their names on it for luck and chisel out chunks for souvenirs (€20/stone).



# 14. BEHEMOTH SHELL

What were these things? These mountain-sized calcite encrusted creatures that suspended themselves on levitation lenses and drifted and dragged themselves along the surface? Sages speculate demiurges might have used them to sculpt the world, to deform it closer to some divine ideal.

Most are gone. The logarithmically multi-spiralled shell of the greatest of their kind slumps here, a lumpy, curling mountain like a cross between a sea urchin and a conch. The Satraps may claim it but, truly, it belongs to the Great Folk who live upon and in it, scurrying like lice within its ageless bulk.

## WEATHER AT THE SHELL

By night the winds are cold but when the sun emerges from the creeping dark at 11:00, the temperature quickly rises. The harsh steppe clime is ameliorated by the bulk of the Shell, with pine woods and small bone pools providing relief.

## MISFORTUNE WITH BEHEMOTHS

Who knows what to expect in a land where scavengers and snail farmers call themselves the Great Folk.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Fell through an eroded shell midden into a subterranean cavern (-1d4 supplies or -1d2 Agility and Endurance).
- 2 Unexpected hailstorm pummels the caravan (-1 day or -1d4 Life).
- 3 Soporific pine trees put party to sleep (-1d3 days).
- 4 A beast of burden wanders off (lose beast or -1 day to retrieve it).
- 5-6 Small cash pilfered by a tribe of greedy uplifted prairie dogs (-€1d100).
- 7 Sticky sap ruins cloak or other garment, but is highly flammable. Can spend 1 day to collect 2d6 bottles of the stuff (€20/bottle).
- 8-11 Caught a nasty cold (sniffing and sneezing for 5 days).
- 12-19 The imposing, mountain-sized calcite corpses remind everyone how small and pitiful they are.
- 20+ As you rest under a beautifully gnarled pine tree that must have seen several empires rise and fall, you feel a sudden lurch in your stomach as gravity momentarily distorts. A small portal opens in the wood of the tree and a sleek rodent human scampers out and says, "I have been sent from a future to thank you for taking some time to go fishing tomorrow. These beads will compensate you." The rodent human drops three purple spheres into your paralyzed palm and disappears back into its portal. If you spend the next day fishing at a nearby lake, each of the spheres becomes a boon that gives you ↑a on one test. Alternatively, you can consume all of them to raise one stat.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE SHELL

- ⋄ **Rest, Great Folk Village:** excavated from the bone and aerolith of the great hulk, the narrow chambers and corkscrew passages connect to deep ossified arteries and veins within the Behemoth. €5 per week to set up a safe camp.
- ⋄ **North-West, Moon-Facing Ford** (trail, 2 weeks): the Moon River marks the hard frontier of Spectrum power and all trails converge at the great Ford.
- ⋄ **North-East, South-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): the high steppe rises, a gentle obstacle, and safe.
- ⋄ **East, Fallen Umber** (trail, 1 week): the dull, brown desolation of that dead kingdom.

## ENCOUNTERS AROUND THE BEHEMOTH SHELL (D8)

1. Flickering **void riders** (L4, enigmatic) arrayed in swirling feathers, grass, and synthetic flesh. They demand odd tribute (roll d6): (1) the skull of a hound, (2) the memory of a lost toy, (3) the snot of a snake, (4) the bloody gold of a betrayal, (5) a pound of hair, (6) the body and personality of one sentient servant.
2. Pride of **leonine ostrichoids** (L3, pouncing), the apex predators of this bony ecosystem.
3. Semi-sentient **steppe wolves** (L2, trippy) hunting together with **magic carpets** (L3, wrapping): symbiotic carpet-like colony organisms that crawled out of some Long Ago rock wizard's lab.
4. Pack of **giant armadillos** (L3, spikey) expanding their subterranean den.
5. Herd of hard-shelled **herbivorous gastropods** (L0, gamey) rasping away at lichen and moss.
6. Large **scavenger beetles** (L1, acid-squirting) gently chittering as they roost in gnarled pine trees.
7. **Great Folk bone farmers** (L1, overall-wearing) excavating calcinous marrow beets (€100/sack).
8. **Spectrum Satrap emissary or enforcer** (L5, mirrored visor) in a camouflage synth-suit with several **autonom troopers** (L1, semi-sentient synthetics).





# DISCOVERIES AMONG CALCITE CORPSES

## CRUSHED SHELL

(1 day, 66 xp)

Whorls, lumps, and field-sized shards of behemoth shell fill a great, shallow crater. From afar it looks like a great mallet smashed an entire behemoth into the ground, splintering it into pieces. All this was Long Long Ago—peat bogs and pine thickets encrust the largest shards. Great Folk herding plains rabbits scabble a meagre existence and offer to sell chunks of “The Mallet of Heaven” (€200/stone). The glassy chunks of melted shell and sand speak of some cataclysm. They are surprisingly effective against ka-zombies.



## LURID PINES

(2 days, 95 xp)

In the narrow defiles of a nondescript mountain ornate and buxom pines have grown fat on the biomantic pollution left behind by a magical test site. The surface has been thoroughly looted, but in the caverns below, amid ancient biomantic gear (€10,000, 40 sacks), generation after generation of mutated rodents has come and gone, including (roll d6):

1. **Sessile photosynthesizing rodents** (L1, green) like lumpy ferns that birth litters of runty green mice scrambling for patches of ground to plant themselves. €200/sack to interested horticulturalists, but annoying to catch.
2. **Ornately baroque rats** (L2, imperial) dressed in feathers and foils that mimic the stately etiquette of a bygone time. They are uncreative, but capable of perfectly imprinting behavior patterns they experience in childhood. They stack their drying corpses in a tinsel-glittering ballroom beneath the mountain.
3. **Tinkergerbils** (L3, cunning) backwards engineering their origin from the library and scrolls of the original Biomancer Barons of Behemoth. They are missing a few key facts and a name, but the germ of a new society is here.
4. **Hardy and grim hamsters** (L4, three-toed), grown cannibalistic and vicious in tunnels beneath the pines. Very deep, close to the life-roots of the land, they fatten **ka-zombies** (L1, docile) on a diet of romantic comedies and disconcerting violin music.
5. An **eloquent mole rat hive** (L6, swarm), which acquired intelligence after a Long Ago rogue charm-engineer attempted to recreate the Porcelain Princes' polybody technology. Perhaps she succeeded and became the mole rats?
6. A **vomish autofac** (L10, techno-supremacist) taken over by prairie dog source code, which pumps out cybernetic enhancements to create **higher life-form prairie dogs** (L2, rapidly self-uplifting). There are no birds of prey or snakes in the vicinity of the mountain—victims of the heat-ray nodules growing among the pines, defending the prairie dogs.

## IDEAL ISLAND

(4 days, 300 xp)

Half-tethered to the land by sinews of earth, ropes of rock, veins of marble and tendrils of crawling sand, a section of the plain—like a great plate—strains rising towards the sky. Its behemoth endoskeleton is thickly covered with a slick, aquamarine flesh. The flesh has become a queer habitat of fruiting trees (€200 per sapling), enormous flowers, and **howling rat-monkeys** (L3, flatulent). The island is coated in poisons and filled with noxious airs, but at its center rises a five-sided pyramid of five colours, culminating in a great prismatic eye that gazes with love upon its own little ideal island. Perhaps there are weird secrets here, but the **Demiurge** (L17, megalomaniac) of this half-living behemoth is a deadly foe.

## GREAT FOLK

A human collective that developed from a behemoth maintenance caste Long Long Ago. Their stories are a bit garbled, but when the Gods of the Great Beasts died / disappeared / ascended into the higher world, the Great Folk took their place. Their palaces slowly crumbled and the beasts died without the Gods' motive spirits, but the Great Folk survived. Within the narrow confines of their gargantuan corpse worlds they thrived, becoming some of the best bone-sculptors and sinew-stitchers in the Steppe.

### SO IT IS SPOKEN OF THE GREAT FOLK (D12)

1. They subsist on flesh alone.
2. They absorb sustenance through their skins.
3. Their additional eyes let them see inside organic bodies.
4. They secretly resent the Spectrum Satraps.
5. They arrange their lineages in bone ranks.
6. The undimmed sun hurts their eyes.
7. They use symbiotic parasites to reanimate dead bone with a touch, natural necromancers.
8. They reproduce by extracting their own bones and using them to grow a new person.
9. They have no sexuality, all that is not bone withers away.
10. Their private parts are made of bone and shell.
11. They have a natural aptitude for biomancy and weaving.
12. They eat their own dead.

**Ranks:** Sky, Crown, Orbit, Jaw, Vertebra, Blade, Humerus, Fibia, Clavicle, Rib, Kneecap, Eyetooth.

**Names:** Erst, Twed, Zird, Vorz, Fifte, Sis, Ven, Tahd, Nen, Ten.

### GREAT FOLK AS HEROES

Deeply strange to Rainbowlanders in custom and look, the great folk are nevertheless ordinary humans, as far as humans go in the UVG.

- **Mandatory Skills:** Great Folk begin with hard-wired aptitudes for biomancy and animal husbandry. This comes at the cost of other skills or abilities.

# 15. SERPENT STONE MARKER

Beyond the Long Ridge the steppe flattens out and becomes a flat ocean of white grass. From horizon to horizon, the world spreads flat and still. In its depth lies a great stone marker; smooth, rising a foot above the soil, and five hundred paces across. The entire surface shifts in curiously fractal serpent patterns of chocolate and amber. Compasses and guidestones swirl madly, then point themselves towards the stone, helping voyagers in this swirling place. Smaller markers dot the whole steppe, gently eroding and being reclaimed, pointless memorials from the Long Long Ago.

“Nothing,” muttered the Hero, “Still nothing. I think that lump of machinery is lying to you.”

“No, no, we are close! The compass is shifting hourly now!”

## WEATHER IN THE WHITE GRASS STEPPE

The sun rises above the glowing UV haze only at 11:00 and soon becomes a scorching and harsh eye, glowering at travelers. By night the temperature plummets and breath smokes in the dry air.

## MISFORTUNE OF SERPENTS AND GRASS

This steppe is pitiless for the luckless.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Attacked by blood-draining vampire grass in the night (-1d8 Life).
- 2 Harsh, stiff winds make progress slow (-1d4 days).
- 3 Mechanical or magical device breaks down from the odd electromagical fields.
- 4 Carnivorous grasses entangle a beast in the night (-1 beast or -1d4 supplies).
- 5–6 Got a nasty infection from a sharp sedge cut (-1d4 Endurance).
- 7 Step on a rainbow serpent. It bites you (-1d4 Strength) and you see your life unfurl into a chaos of possibilities. Grasping at varicoloured threads, you may choose heroic tragedy (↘d on life-or-death tests, ↗a on all tests with a stat of choice), pastoral comedy (↗a on life-or-death tests, ↘d on all tests with one stat), or neither and just go on a weird, 1d4 day hallucinatory trip that permanently renders you immune to one form of mental affliction (e.g. fear, insanity, depression, etc.).
- 8–11 Camped on a well-guarded ant mound (-1d4 Life or -1 supply).
- 12–19 The beautiful white grass ocean soothes your traveling soul.
- 20+ You shake your head, there's a voice in there, a voice and images. There are messages emanating from these stones, lessons for those who accept them. Spend 1d4 days to attempt a difficult Thought test to acquire an oldtech skill.

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE MARKER

- ∴ **Rest, Camp in the Grass:** utterly exposed, any fires started will be visible for tens of miles.
- ∴ **South-West, Moon-Facing Ford** (steppe, 2 weeks): the waving fields of ghostly grass sigh and turn towards the shallows of the great Ford.
- ∴ **East, Long Ridge** (steppe, 1 week): the steppe rises imperceptibly towards the east toward the Long Ridge.
- ∴ **South-East, South-Facing Passage** (steppe, 2 weeks): a sharper, rougher steppeland crosses many ravines before rising to the gentle South-Facing Passage.

## ENCOUNTERS OF THE WHITE GRASS OCEAN (D8)

1. **Magnetic bloodworm swarm** (L6, juicy) follows from the last marker-stone, drawn by a heady mix of metal and fresh bodily fluids. Bloodworms exhibit a distributed sentience and sages speculate they are the last twitching memories of a kind of fluid soul-medium used by one of the Long Ago blood cults—perhaps the Grateful Undead or the Forgotten Fish. The swarm seeks sustenance and warmth, but can also become a friendly symbiotic organism (€5,000). After attuning, a masterful biped could use the swarm to puppet 1d4 other bodies.
2. **Scavenger outcasts** (L3, luminescent) of the farther nomads, grown less-human in these lands so far from the Pinnacle. Their skin is translucent and lights play across it, while small snake-like symbionts swirl within them. While mostly harmless, they are still better avoided.
3. **Pack of snake jackals** (L2, chimerical) prowling for prey, venom dripping from needle fangs. Beasts, scared off with flame.
4. Swarms of **mayflies** performing some kind of aerial ritual.
5. Cloud of **starlings** hunting mayflies.
6. Herd of **loper lapins** (L0, hopping), pallid antelope-like rabbitoids. Good eating if caught.
7. **Migrating grass colony** (L12, crawling), easily avoided and slow, shot through with deadly vampire varieties if provoked.
8. Spectrum Satrap **announcer walker** (L5, booming), patrolling on three stilt-like legs announcing, to all who care, the border of the Satraps is nigh and listing the taboos that are not to be violated. If properly beseeched (admiration for its crystalline body), it shortens travel to the Moon-Facing Ford by 1d4 days.





# DISCOVERIES IN THE WHITE GRASS OCEAN

## COMMON MARKER STONE

(1 day, 50 xp)

A stone marker creates a depression, like a pockmark, in the white, gently-swaying white grass. The stone is (d6): (1) ghoulish blue, (2) cyber yellow, (3) bright lavender, (4) crusty coconut brown, (5) fulvous orange, (6) sparkle-studded gamboge and maintains a constant, somewhat cool temperature. In summer it provides relief, in winter it melts snow. The stone is marked with cryptic, swirling patterns that feed directly into a sleeper's ba (personality). A sleeper who succeeds at a trivial Aura test discerns what the stone does and can choose to accept its patterns. Failure means the sleeper proceeds directly to the pattern-transfer. All pattern transfer carries a risk of soul-burn (moderate Aura test or -1d6 Aura), but some patterns are even more dangerous (d6):

1. **Peace Pattern:** sleeper regains lost Life and stats twice as fast, but is slow and lethargic for a week (∩d on Agility tests).
2. **Star Tracker Pattern:** the sleeper attunes with one of the Fast Stars, acquiring expanded senses (↑a on search or perception tests) but weakened personality barriers (∩d on Aura tests).
3. **Personality Copy Pattern:** sleeper's ba is copied and excreted as a ba-pearl. The use is unclear, but sages say that once upon a time such a ba-pearl could be implanted into a new-growth body to create a duplicant, or even a polybody extension. They are worth €1d6 x 200 to unsavory types, but do you really want to sell a copy of your personality to some necromancer?
4. **Side Dancer Pattern:** for a few weeks the sleeper is attuned with local gate-fragments and stuckforce tunnels and can expend 1d4 Life to permute their body through a spatial discontinuity, suddenly teleporting a few dozen meters. Someone observing them closely can try to follow at a cost of 4d4 Life.
5. **Grass Dream Pattern:** the sleeper is attuned to the steppe grass for the next week, can sense vibrations in the ground, and cannot be surprised. However, the grass makes thoughts a bit slow (∩d on Thought tests).
6. **Rock Talk Pattern:** the sleeper attunes to the marker stones themselves and can feel and hear the surroundings of other markers for several dozen miles, gaining advantage to encounter rolls but disadvantage to Agility tests.

## BLOOD MARKER

(2 days, 100 xp)

An acres-wide patch of burgundy grass surrounds a convoluted, eye-poppingly complex dryland coral skeleton entirely fossilized into vivid crimson rock, slick with a protective lacquer coat. The skeleton of a sessile blood 'deity' created by the Long Ago sonic cult, Heart of Gold Blood. The surrounding area resonates and draws a particular kind of necromancer or sage keen to empower their blood magics. It's also a perfect place to hunt **magnetic bloodworm swarms** (L6, 25% chance of appearing at sunset or sunrise).

## THE ETERNAL SNAKING MARKER

(3 days, 200 xp)

Quite far north of the main trails, in a depression masked by lichen-crusted pines of a particularly ageless appearance, a cyan stone covered with an eternally whorling fractal serpent pattern marks the Eye of the Serpent of the Stars and the Suns. Some say it is a

gateway to other stars, others that it is the shard of a divinity, yet others say it is the Ghost of a Stellar Dragon. In any case, a gaggle of spiritualists, seekers, and shamans is regularly found here in an anarchic collective of mushroom-chomping, dream-voyaging, spirit-fencing, all-dancing, all-singing fools. Few dare suggest they found the meaning of the Eternal Snake but some small secrets are common knowledge. Sleeping upon it cures one mental stat per night at the cost of disadvantage to Endurance tests for a week. The **local shamans may offer:**

1. **Healing balms** concocted from vole droppings and pink mushrooms (+1d6 Life, €10).
2. **Spirit voyage charts**, grant advantage to one spirit voyage or learning one spell (€30).
3. **Strong soporific poisons**, perfect for coating an arrow or blade (as *Sleep*, €20).
4. To teach a specific **healing meditative trance**, which fully restores Endurance, Strength or Agility (choose one) in a single day (2 weeks to learn, €50).
5. **Epic dose of cat snip**, powdered puff mushrooms that bring euphoria and 2 bonus actions (4 doses, €50). It's addictive (easy Endurance test) and if an addict goes without they have disadvantage to Charisma tests until they get a dose.
6. **Ba-hardened wooden short sword** (1d6), deals double damage to incorporeal creatures and ultras (€60).

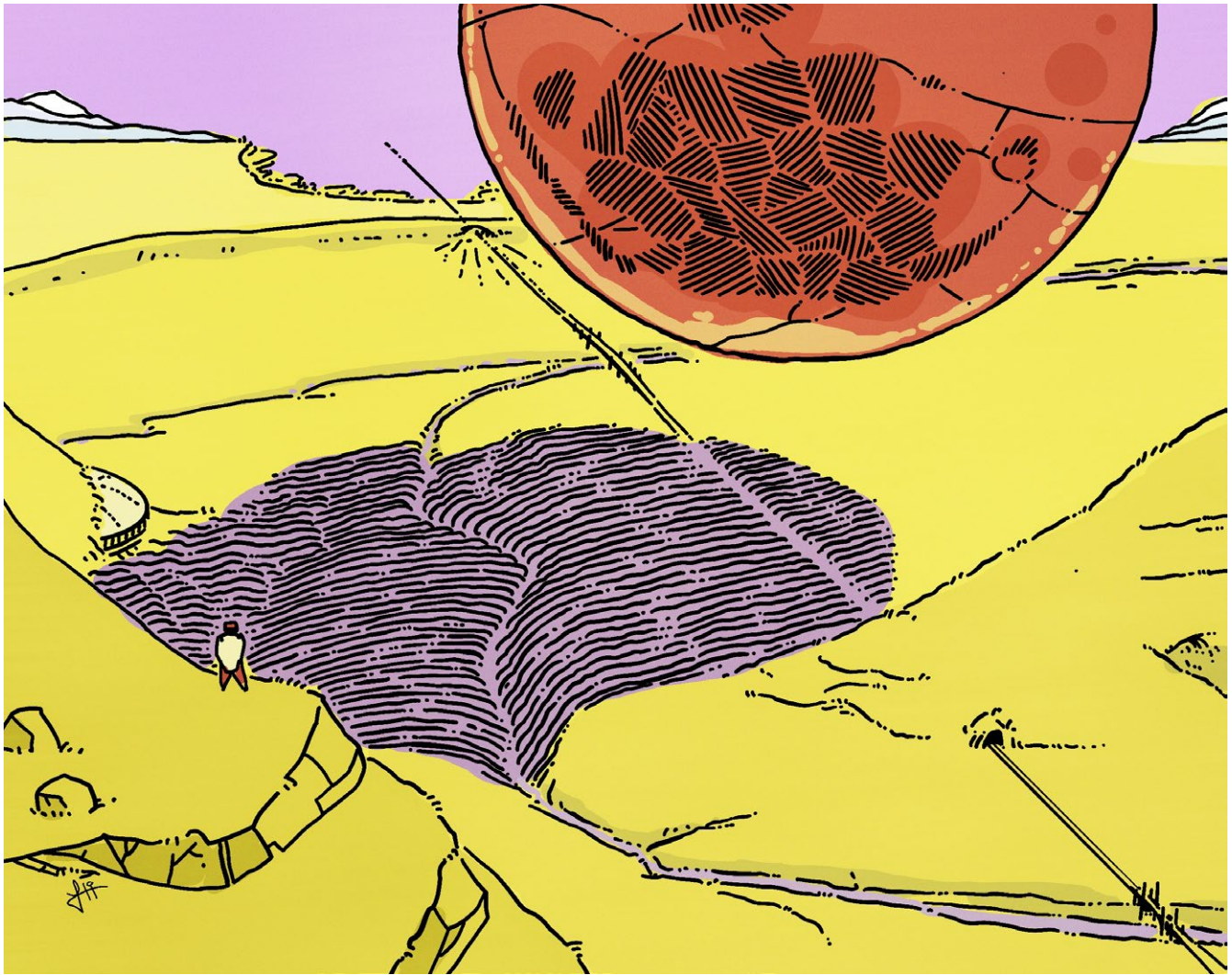


## PINE-CRUSTED LOPHOTROCHE

(4 days, 300 xp)

What at first seemed a great boulder is a living **lophotroche** (L15, tolling) the size of a citadel, coated in mosses, fungi and gnarled lumen pines, and inhabited by a symbiotic **polybody rebel cult** (L3, flowery swarm). What are they doing in the middle of nowhere? Where do they get the sweet, sweet 'sugar' they trade to the Pinegreen nomad clan? Is it true that they hide a mercer gate, a Long Ago wormhole portal for moving heavy goods, in the gut of that giant spineless beast?

Bonus trade good: **sweet lophotroche sugar**—20 sacks available per year, 1d4-1 hauled from the deep guts of the lophotroche each month (€100/sack). Guaranteed to sell for much more at every settlement whose residents have visible mouths (advantage on trade rolls, but high odds that trembling customers will just try to rob you of that good, good sugar).



# 16. MOON-FACING FORD

The expanse of the steppe seems endless, from north to south the flat land rolls on under the sky dome. The slow stars and the fast glitter, icy and cold, and voyagers from the four corners approach the Moon River with exaggerated care. The great shallows of the Moon-Facing Ford mark the easiest passage between the light grasslands and the dark. Weaker caravans—or those with something to hide—seek other, far deadlier crossings.

Why Moon-Facing? Because as visitor's approach the ford their mouths go slack and their faces rise to gaze upon the Near Moon, suspended incongruously above the plain, half-concealed by the curve of the world.

## WEATHER AT THE FORD

The stars continue to spark until 11:30 when finally the sun emerges to glare upon the steppe. Clouds scud and lightning crackles.

## MISFORTUNE IN SIGHT OF THE GLORIOUS FORD

The waters of the Moon River are slow, muddy, cold and old, but sometimes they rush like lunatic thunder worms.

## d20 Charisma Test

- 1–2 Swept up in a flash flood—discard up to six possessions and roll d6. If you roll equal to or less than the number of discarded possessions, you wash up 1d4 days away unhurt. If you roll over, you drown.
- 3 Struck by lightning: lose half Life and one metal item is destroyed.
- 4 Pack animal sickens in the light of the Near Moon, displaying lycanthropic tendencies (-1d4 days for treatment or lose the animal).
- 5 Catch nasty bronchitis from the icy waters (-1d4 Endurance).
- 6 Supplies get wet (-1d4 supplies).
- 7 One of your rings was magical and it slips from your finger as you cross, to be found years later by a fisher-dwarf named **Smehol** (Lo, covetous)—but that is another story. Maybe it's better this way.
- 8–11 Leggings, bedding, and smallclothes get wet. Spend 1 day drying out, or look a bit silly in dripping gear (-1 Charisma).
- 12–19 Despite flash storms and dribbling waters (floods! hah!), you stay safe and mostly dry. Unclear what the fuss was about.
- 20+ A drowned corpse caught in the stripped branches of a grotesque pine tree reminds you that the waters here come fast and hard. Tangled with the corpse is a queer amulet of some kind of quantum metal—on command it turns into one specific mundane object (not bulkier than one stone). After the hero chooses this item, it is fixed. The only things the amulet can certainly never turn into are flotation devices or swimming aids.





#### TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE MOON-FACING FORD

- ❖ **Rest, Fordite Coral Kraal:** a colourful kraal of uncertain origin, run by a local semi-nomadic quarter-ling clan proves a safe camp ground (€10/week).
- ❖ **North-West, Glass Bridge** (steppe, 2 weeks): across the Old River at the edge of the cold deep lake covering forgotten cities and magics. Once this was a rich and civilized land.
- ❖ **South-West, Near Moon** (trail, 2 weeks): a trail of decaying bitumen-and-ash mix leads to the odd satellite.
- ❖ **North-East, Serpent Stone Marker** (steppe, 2 weeks): the white grass full of serpentine spirits beckons.
- ❖ **South-East, Behemoth Shell** (trail, 2 weeks): the calcite-crumbled flatland, studded with the remains of behemoths.

#### ENCOUNTERS NEAR MOON RIVER (D8)

1. **Quickwater snakes** (L7, liquid elemental) are drawn to the glow of sentience like moths to a flame. Sacrifices tied to one of the numerous crystal altars can distract them.
2. **Mud-furred crocotters** (L4, ambushers) are a pest in the Moon River and wily travelers release a goat or sheep to distract them.
3. **Steppe weasels** (L2, thieves) scavenging the margins.
4. Flock of **great herons** (L1, elegant) allegedly bring great luck, barbarians also try to eat them.
5. Herd of **dire water rats** (L1, swimming) feeding on spiny tubers.
6. Local clan of **fisher quarter-lings** (L1, gluttonous) offering dried fish, nasty gossip, and cut purses—or, to nice people, a totally safe and dry burrow to sleep in.
7. **Herder quarter-lings** (L2, abstemious) with their flocks of grazing birds and hopping sheep, followers of some austere rationalist cult, rent out their colourful kraals to caravans and offer some modicum of protection.
8. **Spectrum Satrap self-defense initiative** (L5, heavily armored) on patrol from their Pylon Kraal outpost. Their **bubble-wheeled autowagons** (L6, biomechanical, capacity 6, €2,500) roar and paw at the muddy ground, as though waiting to be fed living flesh (but actually, they are herbivorous).

#### THE PYLON KRAAL ABOVE MOON RIVER

Overgrown dryland coral wreathes the remains of several bridge pylons from Long Long Ago, standing like ominous sentinels in the middle of the Moon River. In the middle, on an ancient deck held up by a basket of stone, is the Pylon Kraal. Home to **the Tollmasters**, a freely associated Spectrum Satrap vassal corporation, it offers the illusion of freedom and independence to unsavory travelers, aid to pilgrims, sustenance to scholars, beds and medical services to weary voyagers, and information to the Satraps.

- ❖ **Post-Satrap 48** (L5, zealot) a network of interlocking symbiotic eels in a triple-sealed suit of Naples yellow. 48 works the local healing light sauna and solarium, where the Pylon Pirates hold their regular conclaves.
- ❖ **The Pylon Pirates** (L3, veterans) are a cooperative of farmer-fighters and ex-nomads who now maintain the Pylon Kraal corals and defend its stairs and walls. They are led by **Viki Six-lives** (L6, re-lifer) and **Surot Two-eyes** (L2, seer).
- ❖ **Tollmaster House** (L10, buildingbeast) is the head of the organization, a sessile sentience spread throughout the grand fuchsia hall of the Tollmasters. House is an inveterate mind-riffler and enchanter.
- ❖ **Tollmaster Door** (L5, iron-banded) is the equivalent of a town crier and spell-soaked main gate to the kraal in one.
- ❖ **Tollmaster Sister** (L4, synthetic) is the chief of the ambulant Tollmasters, a post-organic Redlander, whispered to still have connections to the Wine Vampires.

Expenses: €10/week to camp on a basic platform. Regular: €100, a month, chance to acquire empathetic understanding of the spirits that live within one kind of building, furniture, or tool, 200 xp.







## FORDITE KRAALS AND OLD SONGS

### OTHER FORDITE CORAL KRAALS

Studding the western banks of the Moon River and the steppe beyond to Three Sticks Lake and through the Refracting Trees are countless colourful kraals. The Spectrum Satraps claim to have built them, but many are so old and eroded that their true progenitors may never be known. The kraals are rings or ovals of colourful slag extracted from deep layers of Long Long Ago habitation caves, fabricators, and even from dead vomes by the slow action of mutated dryland coral cultivars. They are often used for caravan or nomad encampments, the spiny many-hued walls protecting against marauders, wild beasts, vomes, and worse.

Traveling through kraal country, a group will come across a kraal most days (make a relevant test). If the party wants to be certain of finding a specific type of kraal, they must spend some time.

### THE NEAREST FORDITE KRAAL

#### d20 What Kraal Did You Find Now (Relevant Test)?

- 1-3 Traces: only eroded gravel remains, whether time or battle destroyed this kraal, who can tell.
- 4-7 Stones: standing stones and several great coral spines remain. A few days work could turn it into a rude fort. As is, defenders can count on some cover against ranged attacks and a few advantageous locations against attackers.
- 8-11 Ring: a waist-high ring of the fordite agate coral offers a solid, defensible position in the steppe. Charges against defenders will not work, and cover against ranged attacks is plentiful.
- 12-15 Thorn Kraal (or spend d3-1 days): the spines and twists of the fordite coral present hazardous obstacles to attackers and force them to try individual choke points. Defenders can find good sniping positions.
- 16-19 Trench Kraal (or spend d3 days): the fordite kraal sees regular use, larger caravan guilds leave their sigils and scouts here, firepits, trenches and dugouts make it a safe point in the wilderness. There is a 50% chance of a working well, and 25% chance of a bardstone. The bardstone might know some weird spell.
- 20+ Kraal Fort (or spend d6 days): the fordite kraal is occupied by (roll d6): (1) a Satrap self-defense initiative patrol, (2) mercer guild mercenaries, (3) local semi-nomadic quarter-lings, (4) vomes masquerading as humans, (5) heroes from the Long Ago of Three Sticks Lake exploring this strange future, (6) a herd of rodents possessed as a swarm by an ultra explorer. It has a working well, stores of food, perhaps even a general provisioner.

### BARDSTONE

A stone imbued with musics and songs of a Long Ago age. Some say that in a great cataclysm a grumpy deity turned all the bards to stone, so that she could get some sleep. Obviously, this is nonsense, but bardstones are quite valuable, and can store voice recordings, messages and even songs. Oddly, they seem to be attuned to their fixed locations, and moving a bardstone destroys its magic. Perhaps it has something to do with the star lines? Who knows.

#### d20 Bardstone Content (Aura Test)

- 1-3 Lies, horrible lies, which lodge in the brain, corrupting existing knowledge and skills. Lose one ability or skill.
- 4-6 Really, it's just a compendium of nonsense songs. Perhaps the test data for the bardstone was left on it?
- 7-12 Historical records or fantastic novel, either way it makes for an epic spoken word poem.
- 13 Useful lies. Study for 1 week (moderate Thought test) to acquire disturbing skill at corrupting innocent minds.
- 14-19 Useful skills encoded as song. Study for 1 week (moderate Thought test) to progress towards acquiring some oldtech skill.
- 20+ An actual spell of uncertain power encoded in a power ballad.
- 20/20 Actually, hidden beneath layers of apparent nonsense, there are detailed instructions on assembling a powerful magitechnical artifact (€20,000).





# OTHER CROSSINGS TO DISCOVER (D6)

The Moon-Facing Ford was lost behind the grass-knit dunes. Poncho shivered, the wan purple light of the sun behind the haze layer no consolation in this desolate land under the gaze of the Near Moon.

“We don’t want to cross there,” said Demiwarlock. The shallows were slathered to a foam by a frenzy of blue-flecked crocodilians.

“How much further, then?” asked Poncho.

“As far as it takes for someone to avoid a fine,” deadpanned Demiwarlock. The Hero whistled a jaunty tune.

## 1. THE RELIABLE FERRY

(1d6 days, 1d6 x 40 xp)

The Fishbladder clan of river quarter-lings under the brood dominion of the **Six Siblings** (L5, ultra swarm) operates the Reliable Ferry, an old livingwood lug painted livid lilac and ruby red. The fee is a reasonable €10/head. They also dabble in occasional murder, theft, and sale of body parts for the Near Moon bodychoppers.

## 2. SLATHERED SHALLOWS

(1d6 days, 1d6 x 40 xp)

The Solipsistic Narwhal Cabal of deep-thinkers trapped a part of their unified personality structure in the school of **blue-flecked crocodilians** (L3, alligators actually) that make the Slathered Shallows a deathtrap. Known to few, quoting the Rainbow Analects or the Monochrome Koans (easy Thought test) stops the crocodilians in their tracks. Occasionally (30%) the **old eunuch Pepeidoleia** (L3, analytic philosopher) is on hand in his little lean-to, ready to declaim the tracts across the ford for a symbolic fee (€12).

## 3. THE OLIVE JERAH

(1d6 days, 1d6 x 40 xp)

A series of three ridiculously rickety rope bridges of calcified sinews, bundled reeds and woven leather cords stretched between the two banks and the Rock of the Rising Sun and the Stone of the White Room. **Monks and nuns** (L2, bone-gnawing) of the crumbling Order of the Tritone reside in the tunneled rocks, like maggots trying to recall the glories of a more musical age.

## 4. SLOW SHRIMP WATERS

(1d6 days, 1d6 x 40 xp)

Half-sentient rafts of matted reeds grafted with river shrimp paddle along the slow waters of this marshy area. Local river folk use them for fishing and in a pinch, with a bit of empathic guidance (easy Aura test), they could paddle a caravan across the turquoise waters—though slowly. Couldn’t be any danger in accepting a reed-shrimp hybrid into one’s mind, could there?

## 5. BUG SWAMP

(1d6 days, 1d6 x 40 xp)

The banks of the Bug form a series of shifting sandbars, quicksand, and log footbridges linked through the reedy Bug Swamp. Avoiding the worst parts is not too hard (trivial Thought test), getting lost adds an extra 1d4 days to the crossing. The worst part is the **Swarm of the B.U.G.** (L9, nine-lived). A biomechanically reprogrammed collective of cat-sized water cockroaches slaved to the engorged Biofab Unit Gamma (B.U.G.). The **B.U.G. autofac** (L7, addled) continuously reprocesses organic matter into potato-sized brown ration pellets (€20/sack of supplies) wrapped in water-resistant papery cocoons emblazoned with the yellow and green livery of some long-gone food wizard—20% chance of encountering the swarm on any given day.

## 6. GLASS BRIDGE’S GHOST

(1d6 days, 1d6 x 40 xp)

This Glass Bridge is long gone, but some helpful souls have stretched nets and ropes between the translucent supports to aid in swimming and wading across. This is a little risky most days (trivial Agility test) but absolute madness after heavy rains (extreme Agility test). On moonlit days, when the True Moon’s light illumines the Near Moon, souls from some Long Long Ago spirit caravan crawl along the nets and try to find an audience for their pitiful laments. Listening to enough laments, some have been **lost in the mad possession of these souls** (easy Aura test, or possessed by a lost soul—reroll mental stats and create a new, secondary personality if this happens).







# 17. THE NEAR MOON

“It’s the end of the world as we know it, and it’s only just begun”  
—*Armageddon*, Gamma Ray

Whispers only came to the Violet City of this oddity—a spherical moon come to Earth, suspended less than a bow-shot above the ashen soil of the Grassland. The mile-high sphere, dusty and cratered, mocks astounded travelers.

In the noon-daylight the Near Moon looms ash-grey, the colour of a ghost’s ghost, but come sunset or if sunrise could pierce the thick haze of the grasslands, it would burn with the colours of a funeral pyre.

Skyscrapers and towers and stairs of a half-dozen fallen cultures slither out of the dank bogs beneath the Near Moon, peopled by hermits, hardy soldiers, and ka-zombie keeping moon-lings of quaint disposition. They bridge the airy void, coming within a ten-foot of the Near Moon and its strange gravity.

A ladder is enough to ascend upon the surface of this orb, and many tourists have.

Tour guides always remind visitors to the Near Moon surface to use tethers and anchors. Though the feeble gravity makes it possible to hop and crawl along (⚠ to all Agility tests), jump too far and the normal gravity of the Ultraviolet Grasslands will reassert itself. Small impact craters mark where over-eager tourists have swiftly come down to earth. On the skyward side this danger is reduced, though high jumps still end up with visitors accelerating back into the Near Moon with some force. Sport spear hunters of the odd moon creatures call it the ‘skypiercer move’ when they use the natural gravity to leap and give their spear thrust an assist.

“By the black bosom of Vulkana! That thing is enormous!” exclaimed PT.

“Yes, the cosmographers believe the stuckforce holding it in place must be the largest in the world,” recited Poncho from the guidebook.

“Ah, throw that to the fish! That Moon has room inside for treasures that would melt the hearts of the simpering sopranos of Safranjl!”



## WEATHER AT THE NEAR MOON

A blue-glow haze is the only light until 12:00, when the sun emerges, washed out and colourless, its rays are still fierce and burning. No water falls in the vicinity of the Near Moon, but, in the eternal twilight beneath its bulk, dank waters pool and bogs spread.

## MISFORTUNE NEAR THE MOON

### d20 Charisma Test

1–2	Nauseated by the odd tides (-1 Endurance and Aura).
3–4	Horribly bitten by bugs in the night (-1 Agility).
5–6	Torn waterskins (-1 supply).
7–8	Acquired a fantastic belief that you are a lycanthrope and require raw, bloody meat to feed your inner beast. This passes once you are out of sight of the Moon.
9–12	Fell into a bog and caught a cold (sneezing), also ruined a fine silk kerchief, if you have one.
13–15	Lost your cloak and hat to a freak wind.
16–20	The Moon looms gloomily, but your sleep is easy.
21+	Your senses grow keener near the Moon (↑a Agility and Aura tests).

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE MOON

- ∴ **Rest, Spectrum Lodge:** €10/week in the lichen-streaked orb.
- ∴ **North-West, The Spectrum Run** (trail, 1 week): a well-marked trail leads towards the Spectrum Palace and the Ribs of the Father.
- ∴ **North-East, Moon River Ford** (Moon-haunted trail, 2 weeks): the accursed faces of forgotten times glare west and travelers fear to raise their eyes lest those grim visages steal their souls.
- ∴ **Up, the Near Moon Itself** (stairs and ladders, an hour): tour guides offer secure but over-priced access.

## ENCOUNTERS BENEATH THE MOON (D6)

1. A **ka-elemental** (L10, insubstantial) stalking in maddened decay, leaving ectoplasmic debris as it seeks a lost body to repossess, unmoored in its rage by the action of the moon's odd tides. Ka-elementals are often linked to ill-fortuned tombs and sites of slaughter—perhaps valuable slaughter (€2dx6 x 200).
2. Mysterious **moonbirds** (L6, flock) descend in a mind-stealing flock and feed on strong emotional emanations. Sufficient moonbird feeding causes **ka-zombies** (L2, docile).
3. **Ka-zombies** (L2, docile) tilling fields or working at repetitive tasks for their Moon-Ling taskmasters.
4. A friend-group of tin-hatted **moon-lings** or **moon quarter-lings** (L2, good at throwing rocks) discussing ka-zombie maintenance and how to build a better moon-rock bubble-burrow.
5. A local clan of **builder quarter-lings** (L2, brick-worshippers) soliciting funds to build a tower to heaven (the Near Moon) and unite all the humans that walk the world.
6. A Spectrum Satrap **self-defense initiative** (L2, heavy) on patrol from the Fordite Coral Kraals.



## ODD TIDE EFFECTS

Besides just severe nausea, the odd tides of the Near Moon—as it strains against the bonds and aeons old magical detritus holding it close to the soil—also have other effects (roll d6 when the weather changes or once per week):

1. **Soul Dislocation:** the tethers between souls and personalities are weakened—↓d to Aura and Charisma tests.
2. **Troubled Sleep:** rest is ½ as effective and ↓d to Endurance tests.
3. **Delirious Tides:** ↓d to all Thought tests.
4. **Moon-Walkers:** ↑a to all Agility tests.
5. **Bloody Tides:** ↑a dealing damage, Healing tests and rest are ½ as effective.
6. **Days of Inspiration:** ↑a to all Thought and Charisma tests.

## SPECTRUM LODGE

Ah, the Spectrum Lodge! The finest lodge in all the Grasslands! A pitch-black orb, streaked with yellow and red lichens, but inside—so they say—a marvel, a riot of colour, a vision of spaces that could-have-been had the sky remained unfallen and the mists unrisen. Other guests include:

- ∴ **Ostens the Marksman** (L5, sharpshooter) wears a full suit of false limbs, attached to his torso with a system of leather golems and biomechanical switches. He lost much to a demon in a game of Bridge Keepers.
- ∴ **Babeffe the Bull-fighter** (L4, wrestler) is a folk hero among the semi-nomadic services and mechanists communities of the middle grasslands. She's getting old, long black hair greying, teeth thinning, but she still pulls a wruppler down one-handed.
- ∴ **Life-Is-A-Game** (L7, sorcerer bartender), a rumored ultra, wearing the skin of a noble quarter-ling from far up the Moon River where the toothed hills turn to follow the progress of the red-and-gold star. In any case, she is friendly, mixes a mean cocktail, and totally isn't looking for patsies to dive into the crystal heart of the Near Moon to retrieve **Memories-Best-Forgotten** (who is definitely an ultra).

## THE MOON AS GENERATIVE SPHERICAL MEGADUNGEON

The Near Moon is set up as the largest “dungeon” environment in the UVG. It functions at a time scale of hours and days, so the heroes should also break down their inventory from sacks to stones. To simplify accounting, assume that **a day's supplies amount to two stones:** a packet of food and a bottle of water. Roll encounters every time a new location is visited.

The “dungeon” itself is abstracted into passages, chambers, and discoveries. Start by rolling on the crust passages table when the heroes enter the Moon Door, and take it from there. Have the players use a network diagram to map their exploration. They can use additional passages to connect chambers and discoveries any way they see fit. Yes, they might end up with a weird, non-euclidean labyrinth. This is ok.

If you want the heroes to make discoveries faster, give advantage on passage and chamber rolls after a suitable amount of time spent at a given level of the Moon (crust, mantle, or core) to represent the heroes becoming familiar with the labyrinthine terrain.

# DISCOVERIES ON THE GROUND

## ASH BUBBLES

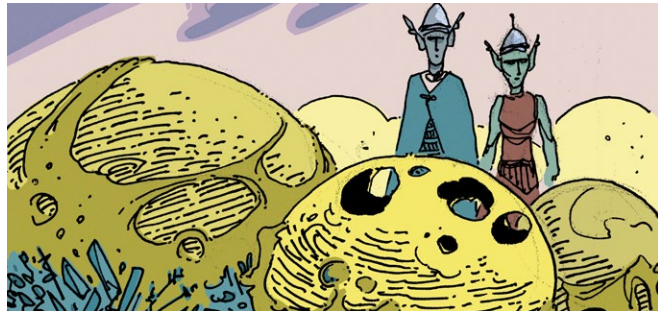
(1d4-1 days, 50 xp)

Ash bubbles form when storms whip ash laced with Moonly slime spores down to the surface of the Earth. The odd spores reproduce rapidly, forming bubble-shaped land coral by cannibalizing their dead cells as they expand. The bubbles grow as large as five or six meters across before bursting under the heavier gravity. Younger ash bubbles sell for up to €500/sack. Moon-Lings usually kill older ash bubbles, coating them in a soap mix over several weeks before curing them with waxed canvas covers while smoking them from within—forming the bubble-burrows of those clannish oddballs.

## THE CRYPTIC SWALLET

(2 days, 100 xp)

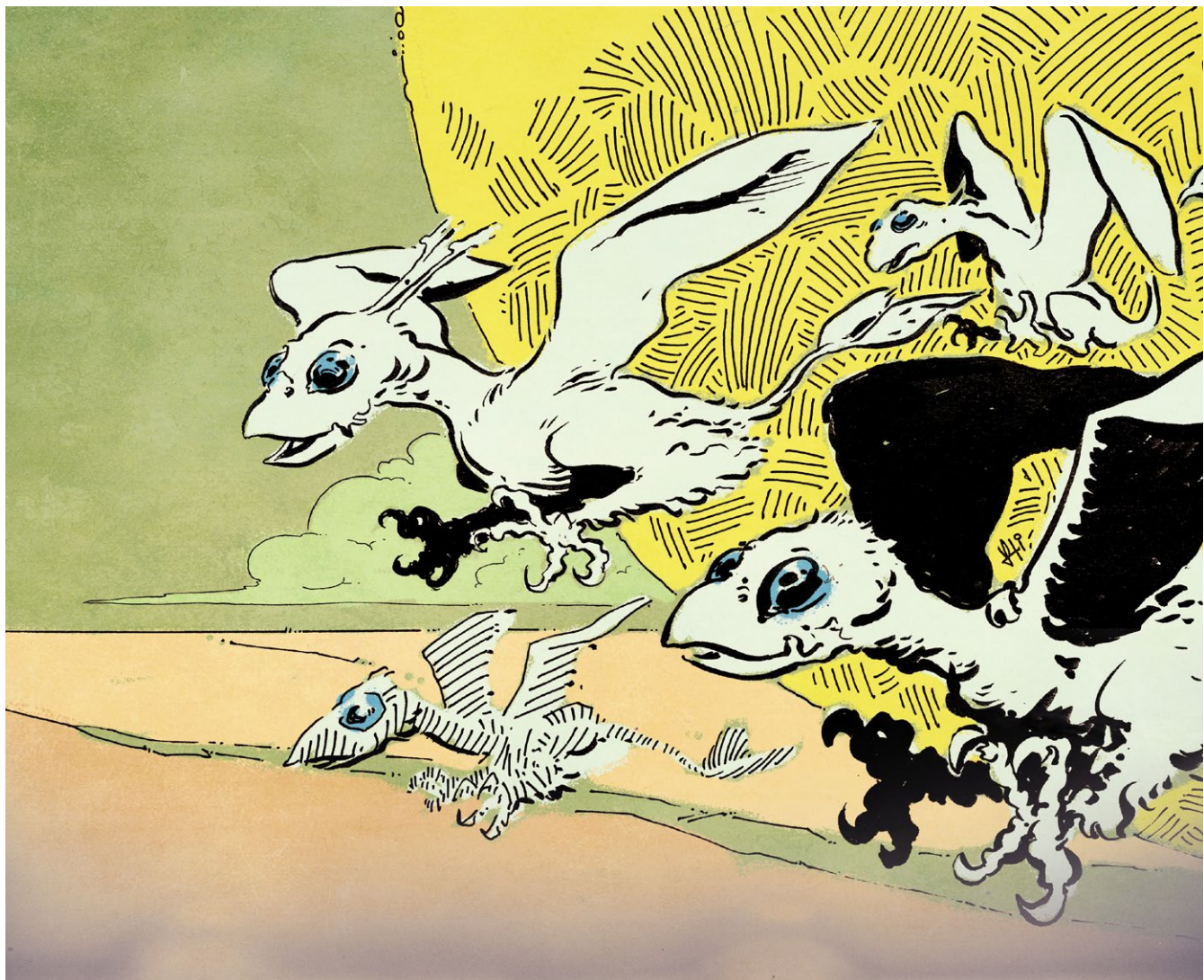
Swallet is a sinkhole punched through the surface layers of anthropocite and basalt into a subterranean lake. Now quite eroded, the walls are drilled with bone-niches holding generations upon generations of **moonbirds** drawn here by some odd compulsion at the end of their lives, while the well-protected base of the Swallet is home to four clans of fisher quarter-lings. The Clan of the Martinet is the strongest in mana, while the Clan of the Pine Badger holds strength of heart. The Clans of the Olive Tree and the Iron Axe are unimportant.



## THE CANTILEVERED RIM

(6 days, 250 xp)

The epic force that bound the Near Moon so close to the surface of the world has buckled and snarled that surface like an angry divine toddler pulling a tablecloth. Great bundled sheets of stuckforce have lifted and suspended whole strata of the high steppe, creating the cantilevered rim—a two-mile slip fault overhang suspended hundreds of meters above the gloomy, semi-cavern ecosystem below. The rim stretches, with chaotic fractures, for hundreds of miles, a mad boundary between the Near Moon to the south and Three Sticks Lake to the north. If it were not so remote, and so haunted by **alien force ghosts** (L5, vituperative), this would be a miner's heaven.





# THE SURFACE OF THE NEAR MOON

The Moon's pitted and cratered ash-grey hulk reveals itself on closer inspection—not dusty, but covered in a carpet of alien astral plant forms. Roots, rhizomal growths, and worms of a dozen shades bind the dust in a tight embrace, despite the feeble pull of the small satellite. Forest lichens cover ridges and rims, while mushroom ferns lock chitin-armored canopies in crater depressions. An entire ecosystem of herbivores and predators subsists upon this 8-square kilometer biome suspended in the air.

## OUTLANDISH CREATURES OF THE NEAR MOON (D10)

1. **Rhizome constrictors** (L9, ambush predator) are the apex predator of the Near Moon. They are a tangled mass of radular mouths, cellulose, muscle, and chitin tubes growing out of both ends of a serpentine central body.
2. **Flea wolves** (L4, jumping, packs) are the common predator of the Near Moon. Ungainly at first blush, they use hooked extensors and jumping legs to move surprisingly quickly, attacking with quartzite extrusions on their 'faces' and feeding with modified limbs like eerie doll hands.
3. **Leather shingles** (L3, tough) are slow moving herbivores—symbiotes of algal mats and some kind of myriapod—photosynthesizing gently while feeding on the rusticant ferns with their radular pseudopoda.
4. **Exuberant prehensiles** (L2, swinging), at first glance an odd mix of spiny echinoderm and flea, the herbivorous Prehensiles launch themselves from the moon's surface with a single leaping pseudopod while using a silken cord like a bungee to whip around the Moon.
5. **Moonbird** (L1, emotion eater) are lustrous birds with scale-like feathers and appealing demeanors. They feed on strange radiations and strong emotions. On the Moon they are solitary, but they congregate in flocks to terrorize earth-dwellers and drain their ba, their personalities, en masse.
6. **Ashlar crabs** (L1, nutritious) inhabit blocks of carved and dressed moonrock. They are scavengers and lichen feeders, and move surprisingly nimbly in the weak, odd gravity.
7. **Shade worms** (L0, chemovores) writhe among the roots and rhizomes in such numbers that they nearly are the ground, binding dust and rock and plastic fragments in their soft putty bodies. They break down inorganic compounds, metal, plastic, and rock into nutritious dust for the lichens and ferns of the Moon. Dozens upon dozens of varieties exist, and given time, they can render metal, bone, or plastic into nutrient. They are repulsed by organic terrestrial materials.
8. **Grey forest lichens** at first blush resemble their terrestrial counterparts, but in the odd tides of the Moon they achieve monstrous proportions, up to four meters tall.
9. **Rhizomal bulbs** form at the rubbery nodes where the gently photosynthetic lichens that mat and web the soil of the Near Moon agglomerate. The colony organisms concentrate resources in tough bulbs: water, carbohydrates and, more rarely, volatile hydrocarbons (also called "jet fuel" by harvesters).
10. **Rusticant mushroom ferns** are the commonest plant form of the Near Moon, arranging themselves into hexagonal fields, assembling moon-ash into leafy shields bonded with chitin. Perhaps against the aetherial disruptions of the deep cosmos? It is unclear.





## LOCATIONS ON THE SURFACE OF THE NEAR MOON

Everyone in the UVG has heard the old tales: there is a palace inside the Near Moon, a precious hall of crystal and gems, priceless beyond imagining. Of course this is not true, as any sage would say.

### FIELD OF WORMS

(1 day, 50 xp)

An ancient impact crater, once sheathed in steel and plaz, now entirely filled with writhing shade worm piles three meters and more deep. Beneath is an automine with two score **servitor vomes** (L2, humorless), slowly grinding through the dross of the Near Moon for all remaining metals. Though it digs slowly, the refined metals and emitted heat are enough to create an astonishingly varied wormy ecosystem.

### MUSEAL CREVASSE

(1 day, 150 xp)

A long crack, ten stories deep, honeycombed with proto-human apartments, vaults, and factories—obviously an attempt at some kind of survival ark. It failed, and the corpses of the proto-humans are everywhere, dessicated by the strange aethers of distant voids. Some civilization came along much later and coated everything in a preservative crystalline coating, which renders everything nearly impervious to damage: from old motivational posters to worn out plush toys and the last scurvy-ridden corpses of the survivors. The Crevasse tells a grim tale of seven generations trying to outlast an apocalypse—and failing.

### COSMIC GUARDIAN CARCASS

(1 day, 100 xp)

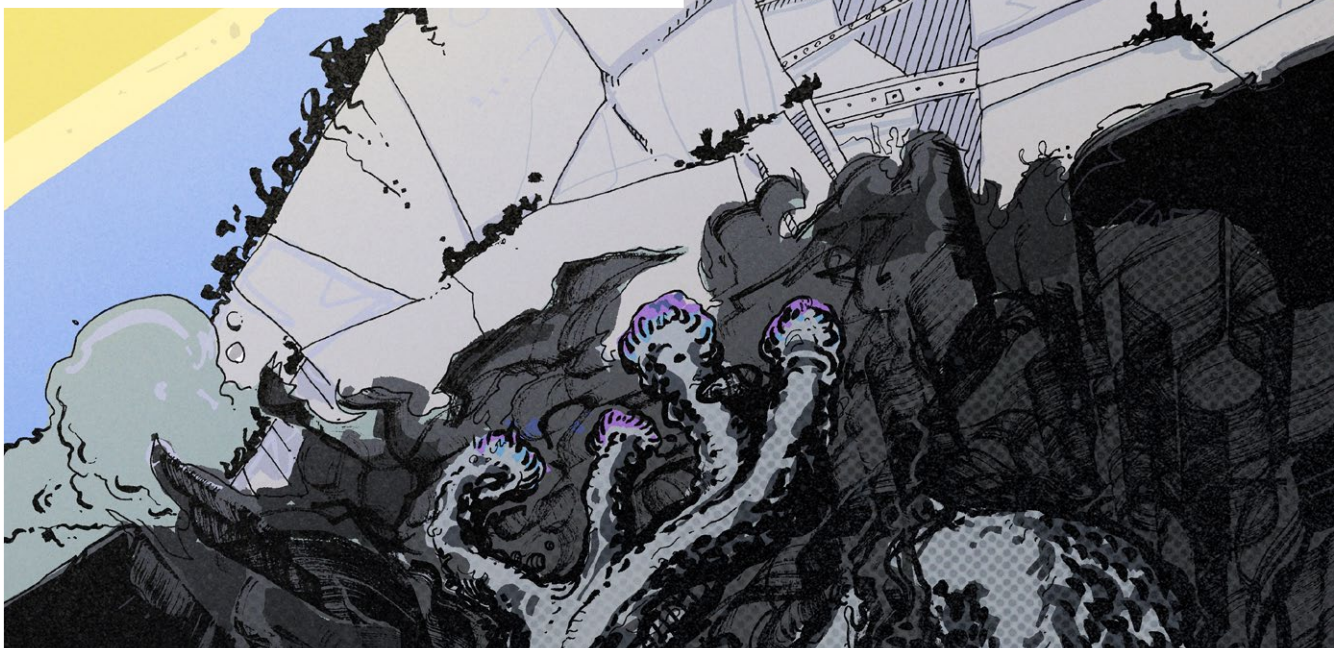
An eerie pyramid of diaphanous force-skin laced with great calcereated arteries and stretched upon an iron-bone frame: the ruined half-living carcass of a Cosmic Guardian. It rises twenty meters above the mushroom ferns in the middle of a crater that some forgotten echinodermate species enlarged into a city. **Gibbering prehensiles** (L2, neolithic) make their living in the crater ruins, a mock tribe of degenerate spacers, worshipping the Carcass as though it were some god.

*Within* the Guardian, dust now pumps through its arteries and only rubble fills its digestive sacs, yet **felinoid flea antibodies** (L4, ichor-fuelled) still patrol its innermost sanctums. In some forgotten past the Guardian's mouth was turned into an altar, which still opens the Near Moon Door when it is fed a ling's worth of blood. *Within* the great rosy vault of its mind, crystal memories lie smashed like seashells upon a beach. Recollections of a great pact between the Guardian and a species of Fugitives remains, memories of voyages through voids and times, dreams of freedom, nightmares of cannibal decay. *Finally*, behind all these memories lies a **mnemonic key of amber and hope**. It unlocks one door or passage once and forever, making it evermore unlocked.

### BUT THERE IS A DOOR

(1 day, 200 xp)

On the skyward side of the Moon, known to only very few, reachable by ropes and hooks and scrabbling hands, around the weak gravity well of the suspended rock. Somebody with directions to the door would find it in a day, one without needs at least 2d10 days. The Door is a puzzle, requiring either 1d4 days per difficult Thought test, or the sacrifice of a whole ling's worth of blood at the Altar of Open Ways in the pyramid that is the carcass of a Cosmic Guardian. *Within* a shaft lined with stubs of plasteel grips, rusted-through handles, and age-smoothed steps excavated into the bedrock leads into the Heart of the Moon.





# HEART OF THE MOON: COLD CRUST

There is no traditional palace within the Near Moon, but there is a series of grand archaeological ruins preserved first by the aetherial voids, and later by the radiations given off by the intertwined loci of several webs of stuckforce that meet in the heart of the Moon, trapping it there like a great ashen fly in the invisible web of a cosmic spider.

Dust coagulated with sharp-faceted boulders and gravel, intertwined with calcereated rhizomal growths forms the crust of the moon. As one descends deeper, the layers grow older, more complex, thick with stranger **alien fossils**. Silence and old decay fills these labyrinthine ways.

## STRANGE FOSSILS ENCOUNTERED IN THE CRUST (D8)

1. Calcereated rhizomes studded with amethyst intrusions.
2. Articulated arthropodal plant creatures.
3. Bone-armored hydrozoans of unusual size.
4. Jawed roots of symbiotic organisms that resemble carnivorous trees crossed with moles.
5. Petrified void-tree trunks with leaves of crystalline silicon and gallium arsenide.
6. Biomechanical remains of void cats, adapted to survive in the airless deeps.
7. Compacted light-absorbing aether whales engineered with survival capsules for humanoids.
8. Mechanical humans of primitive form and ugly visage.

## ALIEN CRUST PASSAGES (1 HOUR)

**d20 Flat Roll Initially (Relevant Test With Guide or Familiarity)**

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-2   | Collapsed passage, destroyed by some kind of explosive.   |
| 3-4   | Rough tubes excavated by great bioengineered void worms.  |
| 5-6   | Glassed tubes excavated by heat-spewing biomechanical nuclear worms.  |
| 7-8   | Crudely cut channels and passages made by desperate quarter-lings Long Ago.                                 |
| 9-10  | Passages of pure livingstone grown cancerous and strange.   |
| 11-12 | Passages of decaying livingstone, thick with stalactites grown confused in the odd gravity.                 |
| 13-14 | Tunnels lined in petrified void flesh laced with rust dusty tracteries of lost metal arteries.              |
| 15+   | Tunnel with the remnants of rails and dwindling luminous crystals ending in a <b>common crust chamber</b> . |

## COMMON CHAMBERS (1 HOUR)

**d20 Flat Roll Initially (Relevant Test With Guide or Familiarity)**

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-2   | Sealed vault filled with <b>age-rusted vomes</b> (L3, sleeping, ravenous).  |
| 3-4   | Plundered ark vault, littered with the mummified detritus of proto-humans.  |
| 5-6   | Glowing shaft-housing of a destroyed nuclearlithic tribal culture.  |
| 7-8   | Fossilized voidship turned into a shelter by Long Ago quarter-lings.  |
| 9-10  | Chamber thick with dust and <b>radiation ghosts</b> (Lo, keening).  |
| 11-12 | Disused mining camp in a null-bomb cavity.  |
| 13-14 | Eroded hall thick with speleothems and glowing troglobite fronds feeding on aetherial radiation from a stuck-force nexus. |
| 15+   | Ante-chamber to a <b>discovery in the crust</b> .   |

## DISCOVERIES IN THE CRUST (D4)

### 1. WAREHOUSE OF SLEEPING VOID CRAWLERS

(1d4 hours, 100 xp)

In a great chamber with entrance passages only large enough for a slender, wriggling human, bathed knee deep with the glittering dust of a long-dead star, crouch crinkled rows of **enormous biomechanical machines** (L17, sleeping). Their impact-pitted carapaces speak of dead aeons, their glass eyes are milky and scarred, fossilized carbohydrate sheaths coat every gap in their exoskeletons. Within they sleep, dream of a bright red star, and a grand mission to build a shield for their creators, to save them from apocalyptic heavenly fires. "They were good to us, the creators, for they gave us purpose, and once the purpose was done, a bed in which to sail to the ends of time," they dream. These void crawlers assembled the crust of the Near Moon in a forgotten time and place as a shield from aetherial impacts.

### 2. ALTAR OF THE ALL-KNOWING IDOL

(1d6 hours, 150 xp)

In a dead biosphere filled with the dusty remnant of an alien rainforest is a burnt clearing. In the middle stands a gleaming gold and bronze idol on a rusted pedestal. The fire that burnt its surroundings left it untouched, for it is somewhat dislocated in time, preserving it from any attack in the present (but not in the future or the past). The inhuman idol was worshipped by the nuclearlithics as a god. In fact, it was originally some kind of trivia entertainment machine, and may have been directly responsible for the rapid degeneration and fall of the nuclearlithics of this bygone place. It does know a lot about obscure group dances, music, the geography of a dead world around a red sun, and alien reality shows.

### 3. MUSEUM OF THE HIGHWAY STAR

(1d4 hours, 200 xp)

In a museum of red marble and gleaming chrome a last battle took place between a nuclearlithic horde and proto-human custodians. A force field with a logic lock now stops illiterates from entering, but it was too late for the apelike proto-humans. Though they wielded alien wand-guns (2d6, short, €100) and mind-breaker rods (1d8, far, also deal mental damage, €300), they were simply too few and perished under a rain of crystal projectiles. The nuclearlithics eventually died in a final orgy of violence and cannibalism. Preserved in a crystalline coating is the *Highway Star*, an epic void-hardened vehicle from another world (L8, fast, tough, and lucky. Carries 4 passengers and 8 sacks. Fuelled by sunlight. €6,000). Hauling it down from the Near Moon is a very difficult task.

### 4. THE ORIFICE OF THE MANTLE

(2d10 hours, 300 xp)

Deep within the crust, where all light dies but the temperature rises as the residual nuclear fires at the heart of the Near Moon keep burning, is a series of interconnected halls and chambers thick with chemovorous worms, wiggling anemones, and phosphorescent bacterial colonies. The chambers radiate out from a great orifice of slick, fatty flesh arranged over bones of crystal, a gaping mouth into a living layer of the Near Moon.



## DEEPER IN THE HEART: THE WARM MANTLE

The mantle of the Near Moon is still alive, a hundred meters thick layer of fleshy void organism with crystal endoskeletal planes, pillars, struts, and spines, and exoskeletal plates of nickel-iron compacted by the coagulated dust and boulders of the crust. The massive creature moans and trembles, surviving on the heat from the nuclear fires of the core, tortured by the stuckforce lines that thread and shear and trap it. Ruined biomechanical autofacs of much earlier times lodge in its compressed flesh like pearls, while the tunnels of parasitical nuclearlithic tribes carve their way through, constricting and collapsing over time. A sense of dread, claustrophobia, and carnivory gone mad pervades the mantle.

### ENCOUNTERS IN THE WARM MANTLE (D8)

1. Isolated **sabre-toothed flea antibodies** (L5, primordial) with modulating pseudopods patrol larger vessels of the organism.
2. **Enzyme gelatinoids** (L3, acidic) squeeze their way out of vesicles to digest organic matter for the void organism.
3. A flood of warm organic fluid sweeps through as a bladder pops somewhere within the void creature. Small creatures and loose objects are swept deeper into the void creature.
4. Skeletons of legless six-armed post-humans encased in translucent fatty cysts within the walls.
5. Piles of excreted food organisms mixed with broken shards of void bone.
6. Trembling cellular colonies migrating between sections of the void organism.
7. **Parasitical nuclearlithic post-humans** (L1, carnivorous) scuttle on their six modified arms, wielding shards of crystal void bone and shields made of nickle-iron platelets.
8. **Nuclearlithic master chief** (L3, radiating) stalks the tunnels, ten-armed like a cuttlefish, with uranium teeth and nicked rhenium alloy hand axes tied to crystal bone shafts with strands of cured void creature nerve fibres.

### PASSAGES IN THE WARM MANTLE (1 HOUR)

#### d20 Flat Roll Initially (Relevant Test With Guide or Familiarity)

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1-2   | Crystallized clot-filled vein, slowly calcifying.  |
| 3-4   | Peristaltic tube full of organic fluid.  |
| 5-6   | Moist epithelial tube filled knee-deep with void creature ichor.   |
| 7-8   | Keratinous tube lined with thorn-like cilia.   |
| 9-10  | Blubber-swaddled crevasse between flesh-and-crystal masses.  |
| 11-12 | Scar-lined healing excavation tunnels left by burrowing parasitical nuclearlithics.                            |
| 13-14 | Fresh-cut passages through the soft tissues of the void organism, dripping with healing stem fluid.            |
| 15+   | Symbiont-access arteries of calcerated skin and crystalline struts leading to a <b>common mantle chamber</b> . |

### COMMON CHAMBERS IN THE WARM MANTLE (1 HOUR, D8)

#### d20 Flat Roll Initially (Relevant Test With Guide or Familiarity)

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-2   | Ruptured void-cyst, the areas around it aglow with void radiations and littered with corpses of explorers.  |
| 3-4   | Sealed void-cyst, its hard pearlescent skin seals toxic byproducts of the void creature's metabolism.       |
| 5-6   | Nutrient bladder, half-filled with organic soup rich with radially symmetric alien eukaryotes.              |
| 7-8   | Processing organs, pumping vessels, great valves and strange <b>gelatinoids</b> (L1, desensitizing).        |
| 9-10  | Nuclearlithic midden chamber, filled with excreta and refuse, being slowly reabsorbed by the void organism. |
| 11-12 | Nuclearlithic clan vestibules carved into the tissues of the organism.                                      |
| 13-14 | Ransacked crew cysts, like cracked shells trapped in the creature's flesh.                                  |
| 15+   | Vestibule to a <b>discovery in the mantle</b> .   |





## DISCOVERIES IN THE WARM MANTLE (D6)

### 1. WRECK OF THE DARK ASTER

(2d6 hours, 200 xp)

Half-crushed and penetrated by tendrils, webs, and sheets of void creature, lodged like a tremendous splinter is the sixty meter long livingstone wreck of the voidship *Dark Aster*. Its backup airlock is damaged, the door blasted away by emergency lasers, and organic fluids leech through the honeycomb of ancient stone passageways. A ruddy beach-ball-shaped **monocellular gobbler** (L5, mostly harmless) waddles around, warbling sadly. It is lonely and follows humans. The main command center sports the ruin of a bottle organ and, still trapped within the crystal brain of the ship, Commander Dowell. The *Aster* was on the way to "the Veil," to stop a group of fugitives from detonating a galactic sector. The mission failed. *Deep within* the bomb bay rests the **Last Bomb** (L19, star breaking). It is very sad and lonely as it could not explode, because the last order was garbled, and will try to convince visitors to identify themselves as its masters and order it to explode. It can only explode when ordered. Its purpose in life is to explode. It can detonate a star, if it is in its heliosphere.



### 2. NUCLEARLITHIC HIVE

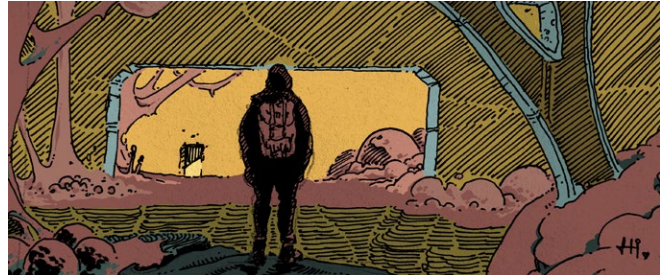
(1d6 hours, 150 xp)

It started out as a habitation cyst within the void creature, but refugees from the Crust expanded it over many decades. Eventually they discovered an alien body re-composer and used it to preserve their elders. Repeated errors in the re-composer created their current six-armed morphology and the nuclearlithics now worship it as their Living Mother, for it is where new nuclearlithics are born after they deposit their dead within its bowels of metal and qua-ice. If the re-composer is destroyed, the nuclearlithics eventually die out. The re-composer can repair nearly any bodily injury, but every time it is used there is a 20% chance of a significant bodily modification. Every time a body is revived from death, it is severely modified and revived with just its personality, but no soul.

### 3. EGG CHAMBER OF THE VOID CREATURE

(2d12 hours, 300 xp)

A dark and dismal labyrinth of pulsating tubes of cartilage and crystal houses eggs with metallic shells, corrugated like grenades. Eel-like **burrowers-into-flesh** (L2, swarming) have infested the hot-house tubes. Most of the eggs are non-viable, but if exposed to the emanations of the void, a crystal-organic void creature will hatch and grow into a functional biological void traveller within seven years. There may or may not also be doppelganger eggs hidden in the labyrinth.



### 4. ORGAN OF THE STARS

(1d6 hours, 150 xp)

The flesh has died back here, cut apart from the creature by three vibrating planes of stuckforce. The force fields glimmer slightly, and the crystalline void creature bones suspended between them resonate with eerie sound as the creature trembles around the chamber, pushing the fetid air back and forth through the long hollow crystals.

### 5. BRAIN MINE

(2d6 hours, 200 xp)

Here the nuclearlithics excavate the vast brain of the void creature, living off its fats and proteins. The adaptable creature's brain regrows continually, possibly an adaptation to survive the void fires, but the nuclearlithics have eaten almost all its memories, leaving it unable to remember why it first came to the Near Moon, who it is, or even that it could possibly leave. The degenerate nuclearlithics gorge themselves on the brain whenever it grows large enough to give the creature a semblance of sentience, pruning back its consciousness and keeping it docile, though they do not know this is the effect they have. *Within* a dozen crystal nuclei provide templates for the brain regrowth. If the nuclearlithics are destroyed, the void creature will become sentient again in a few years. If the brain is destroyed with thermic explosives and the crystal nuclei cracked with force weapons, the void creature will finally die, the mantle ecosystem will collapse, and the nuclearlithics will be forced out of the rotting heart of the Near Moon.

### 6. THE CORE BUCCA

(a day, 400 xp)

An enormous assemblage of rotating, grinding, tearing crystalline mouth structures arranged like wheels within wheels, plates irisng around plates, extending like a proboscis over fifty meters deep into the core, where it ends in an abrupt and gory (if fossilized) bisection. A plane of force cut off the creature's mouth parts from the core, but it sent secondary mandibles probing around the edges of the plane and a couple of them found gaps in the stuckforce. They are petrified and ancient airlocks of cycling force have been placed within them. This is the entrance to the core of the Near Moon.

# HEART'S CENTER: THE CRYSTAL CORE

**Stuckforce is thick within the core**, dividing planes and snarling in knots of force that give off sparkling waves of aetherial radiation. The radiation has petrified most of the core, organic or metal, into milky crystal, which gleams with iridescence when light touches it. Sections far from the nexuses retain their alien aesthetic of chrome, red foamy plastic furniture, and polished faux-banded agate panels. Plastic-force composite blast doors divide sections that swing shut automatically with a satisfying click and thunk.

Bringing a large quantity of rare crystals to the surface will collapse their trade value by  $1d6^* \times 10\%$ . Roll a second six-sided die. The difference between the two numbers is **how many trade routes collapse** from the unexpected disruption.

## CRYSTALLIZED ARTIFACTS IN THE CORE (D8)

1. Dark star blade pulsating with the remnants of a dead god, it's blade turned to fragile opal by the radiation.
2. Cloned specimen of a perfect oiled barbarian, crystallized to an amber hue. Labelled **Jun**. If restored to life, has amazing stats, because they are perfect.
3. Biopsionic personality replicator, which overrides another creature's personality with a copy. It looks like a hedgehog crossed with a squid, all spiny tentacles for probing chakras and neural networks. Unfortunately the whole thing is now a delicate sculpture of lurid green-yellow fluorescent crystals.
4. Invasive **void assault arachnid** (L7, perfect survivor), turned to translucent crystal, the human-derived operant brain clearly visible as a garnet intrusion in the pinkish quartzite structure.
5. Four-armed proto-nuclearlithic compacted between planes of crystal, turned into a two-dimensional crystal landscape of exploded organs and void adaptations.
6. Coffee mug and towel, both turned to tourmaline.
7. Apatite bust of stunning androgynous mythical Long Long Ago sentience, the rest of the body destroyed when some kind of combat parasite burst out of its chest. Interlaced through the crystallized brain is a complex meta-crystalline web—a still functional meaning-maker. The device makes sentient creatures find meaning in whatever meaningless task they have been assigned.
8. Compacted mass of mythical Long Long Ago sentience body parts, turned to calcite and fluorite.



## PASSAGES IN THE CRYSTAL CORE (1 HOUR)

**d20 Flat Roll Initially (Relevant Test With Guide or Familiarity)**

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1-2   | Tunnel compacted flat by pressure of the void creature above.  |
| 3-4   | Passage reduced to a series of sharp-edged squeeze-holes.  |
| 5-6   | Constricted crystallized passage, marked by the scrabbling of desperate survivors.                                   |
| 7-8   | Tall, narrow passageway divided in half by plane of stuckforce.  |
| 9-10  | Glittering crystal passageway, all iridescence and translucence.   |
| 11-12 | Metal passageway, dulled and pitted by hard radiation.   |
| 13-14 | Chrome and agate hallway, sinister in its bureaucratic mix of opulence and unimaginative design.                     |
| 15+   | Seat-lined hall with dull crystal mirrors looking out on dark nothingness, leading to a <b>common core chamber</b> . |

## COMMON CHAMBERS IN THE CRYSTAL CORE (1 HOUR)

**d20 Flat Roll Initially (Relevant Test With Guide or Familiarity)**

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1-2   | Cylindrical cargo hall, full of strange fruits preserved in ice generated by stuckforce leeches, which slowly deplete stuckforce fields to generate energy.  |
| 3-4   | Crew pod quarters, with plastic and crystal void travel pods. Most are broken down. One in ten still holds a viable androgynous Long Long Ago human body. Half of these are infected with <b>void assault arachnids</b> (L7, perfectly hungry).                |
| 5-6   | Rest and relaxation chamber, with meaning enhancement and virtual reality sockets and nutrient intake hoses. Nothing works anymore.  |
| 7-8   | Force maintenance rooms, with crystal machinery that maintains a stuckforce plane. Disabling them unblocks a passageway or chamber somewhere. Each machine disabled has a 1% cumulative chance of unmooring the Near Moon.                                     |
| 9-10  | Force knot void, a spherical crystal void created by the pressure of stuckforce knots and their aetherial radiation over numberless aeons. Non-crystalline structures and creatures within the void turn to crystal at a rate of $1d6$ millimeters per minute. |
| 11-12 | Eden chamber, full of dead plants and animals, mummified or crystallized in the radiation. Once destined to populate a new world, now just a strange and cryptic memento of a failed endeavour.  |
| 13-14 | Defense chamber, with <b>dormant defense machines</b> (L7, death rays). One in six are still viable. They do not target shape-shifters.  |
| 15+   | Crystal anteroom to a <b>discovery in the core</b> .   |



## DISCOVERIES IN THE CRYSTAL CORE (D6)

### 1. ARCHIVES OF THE CRYSTAL SHIP

(1d6 hours, 200 xp)

A bright spherical chamber filled with vibrating emanations of pain and lanced with a haphazard arrangement of crystal pillars seemingly filled with gentle rain. Stored here are the personalities of a thousand youths of a Long Long Ago pseudo-human species, delivered from reason by the data corruption of the aeons. Many of the pillars are so decayed that activating them absorbs the personality of the user, overwriting the previously stored youth in a swift but brutally painful process that takes subjective centuries.



### 2. PERFECT UNIVERSE GENERATOR

(2d8 hours, 300 xp)

A silver torus dense with static electricity and heavy with a dull expectancy. Mummified scholar-priests of the doomed species rest plugged into coding couches, interfaced with the *Silver Machine*, a quantum computer entangled with infinite copies of itself smeared through a swathe of multiverses. An aeon ago it was ordered to run massively parallel simulations to generate a perfect universe for the pseudo-humans to escape to. That simulation was completed sometime ago, but the scholars were already dead, so it simply executed the contingency code. Now it provides access to the perfect universe, at a series of points predetermined as highly suitable for its creators. If activated, it opens a portal to any one (or a random one) of the thirty major locations in the Ultraviolet Grasslands. This world is, after all, the perfect world.

### 3. STOWAWAY'S HOME

(2d20 hours, 400 xp)

Seven tiny, narrow, claustrophobic, interlinked passages, the crystals coated in a black substance that resists the senses. It absorbs light, sound, touch, radiation, psychic emanation. It is utterly null. *Within*, now covered in dust and obviously abandoned for a long time, are a time-surfing sarcophagus, meaning-maker, and massive amounts of proto-lingish entertainment and cultural material stored on fifteen neural implants (€2d6 x 10,000 to any grand museum or university). There are no names, but plastered on two walls are hundreds of thin prints of children's drawings celebrating the 'Progenitor of the Followers into Heaven.' Whoever stayed here obviously outlived the extinction of the pseudo-humans.

### 4. CENTRAL FORCE WEAVER

(1 day, 200 xp)

A double helix of twenty crystal spheres housing nutrient baths and crystalized who-were-these-peoples. Powerful psychokinetics of the dead species, their personalities strong enough to retain control of the stuckforce fields in a large area around the Crystal Core. With each crystalized psychokinetic force controller destroyed, there is a cumulative 10% chance of unmooring the Near Moon. If they are hacked, it becomes possible to modulate the nearby force fields, unsticking them.

### 5. MASTER CONTROL

(1d8 hours, 250 xp)

An austere pyramidal chamber with four great machine eyes embedded in its walls. The eyes are grown milky with age and aetherial radiation, but still they look into space and time, waiting for a navigator to again sit upon the throne of needles and become one with the Crystal Ship (or, as is the case now, the Crystal Core). Activating the great null-space engines is surprisingly easy, flying the Near Moon is shockingly complicated. If at least 60% of the stuckforce fields have not been disabled or brought under control, unmooring the Near Moon, the engines will rip it into 2d6 chunks, which will float around for several days before coming to rest in the sky (or on the ground) once again.

### 6. FINAL COUNTDOWN

(1d10 hours, 100 xp)

A chamber of great metal and crystal coils, wheels within wheels, in complex and terrifyingly higher-dimensional arrangement, this odd-space houses the null-space engines of the Crystal Ship. In the heart of this funhouse labyrinth is a crystal chamber with three crystal switches. Two are bright red and pushed down into a block of jade, the third is upright, a mummified pseudo-human hand gripping it. Smeared across the ground is the dessicated ruin of a half-naked pseudo-human warrior, while in a corner rests the hibernating cyst of the **void assault arachnid** (L7, not dead). Pushing in the last crystal will detonate the null-space engines, destroying the Moon. Pulling out the two activated crystals will make controlling the Near Moon somewhat easier.

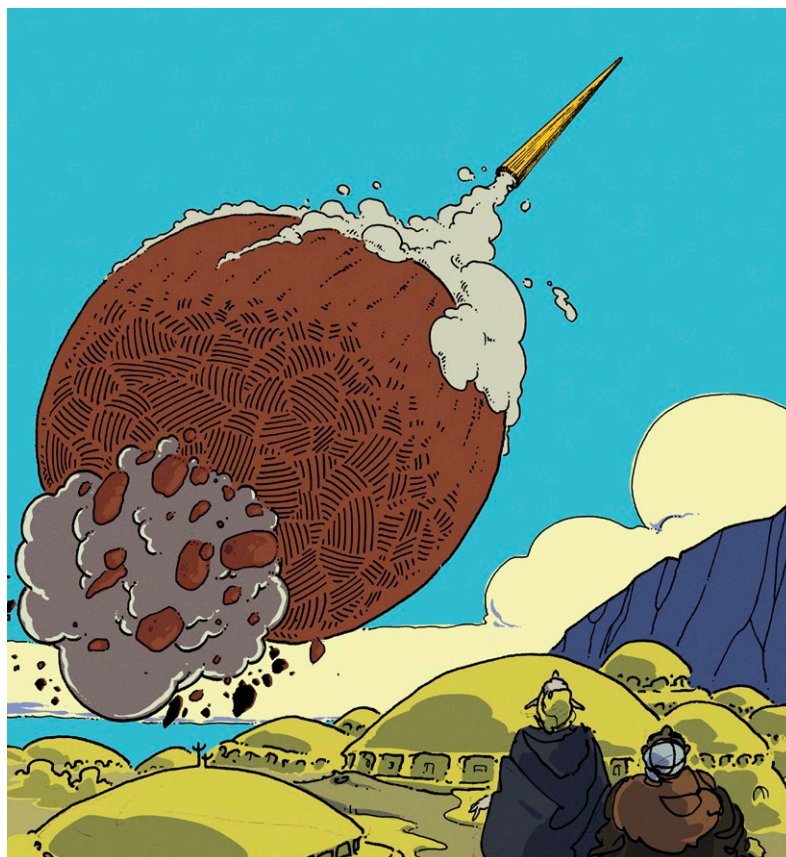


# PLAYING WITH THE CRYSTAL SHIP

The Crystal Core and the Warm Mantle list a few ways to mess with the Near Moon. There are a few possible outcomes.

## UNMOORING THE NEAR MOON (D6)

1. The Near Moon rebounds into the voids, hurtling away from the world at fantastic speeds.
2. The Near Moon ascends into the heavens, rising 1d100 kilometers into the air.
3. The Near Moon suddenly collapses into the ground, crushing everything and everyone in the town below, creating a hemispherical mountain. Creatures in or on the Near Moon have a 50% chance of being crushed. The gravity remains odd in the area.
4. The Near Moon gently sinks to the ground, grinding the ramshackle town into the bedrock and killing 1d100% of the population. The gravity remains odd.
5. The Near Moon slowly floats across the Ultraviolet Grasslands to a random location up to five weeks travel away.
6. The Near Moon begins to slowly peregrinate around the Ultraviolet Grasslands, floating from one location to another, always hovering 30 meters above the ground. It takes 2d6 weeks to travel from each location to the next. It never stops.



## DETONATING THE NULL-SPACE ENGINES (D6)

1. Freakishly, the *Dark Aster* is ejected and hurtles into the sun, where the Last Bomb explodes and destroys the sun. Its purpose is fulfilled. The world freezes in a couple of days. Soon remote hatches open and eerie needles flee the dead world, carrying ultras to new worlds.
2. A great crater, two hundred miles across, is all that is left. A nuclear winter immediately falls and lasts for 1d4 years. Slowly a new sea forms in the heart of the Ultraviolet Grasslands. All trade routes are disrupted. Savage tribes and clans take over, while civilization whimpers in bunker cities.
3. In a searing flash of light the Near Moon disappears, the boom of the inrushing air is heard around the world and thousands are blinded. Strangely, aside from the light, nothing else remains.
4. The Crystal Ship winks out of existence and the void creature of the Warm Mantle grows to fill the gap, turning it into bio-crystalline horror world.
5. The null-spaces engines erupt from the side of the Moon, like a great firecracker, ripping a vast gaping hole from the crater to the surface, but the stuckforce and the void creature hold in place. The Near Moon now has a vast new hole.
6. A torrent of radiation pours out, degrading the Crystal Ship and killing all the nuclearithics. The void creature, its brain finally left alone, regains consciousness and begins to seek a new purpose. In a few years it announces itself as the Bringer of Heaven in the Flesh to the peoples of the steppe. The Cult of the Great Void Fleshgod becomes a powerful force within a decade.

## FLYING THE NEAR MOON (D4)

The navigator locks into the Master Control and becomes one with the Crystal Ship. That player should create a new character, and the players should treat the former player as a group character—the Ship. They now have different options.

1. **Iron Needle:** take only an escape core, a splinter of the Crystal Ship, and embark on an in-system swashbuckling adventure, discovering the scattered ruins of the Chosen Ones on other planets of the system, the sky temples of the Spectrum Satraps in deep orbits, and the multitude of dead and half-dead habitats in orbit around the world (the Fast Stars).
2. **Crystal Ship:** rip the heart out of the Near Moon, blasting skyward and leaving a smouldering half-shell of dying meat and rippling dust behind, as they ascend into the heavens on a null-space ship. They're now ready for interstellar hijinks and excursions through horror dimensions undreamt of in their philosophy (or this book).
3. **Meat Ship:** in a series of pitched battles, take down the nuclearithics and slave the void creature to the navigator, creating a five-hundred-meter diameter sphere of void flesh and crystal, and set about ... creating a nightmare solar empire using the void assault arachnid brood vaults they have just unlocked?
4. **Fly Me to the Moon:** take the whole Moon on a flight to the edge of space and time, equip it with voyagers (stranded tourists) and find the creators of this universe and ask them what they were thinking.

Good luck in these deeply weird and voidy waters.



# 18. GLASS BRIDGE

The High Moon Steppe and the High Horse Steppe are sliced asunder one from the other by the deep valley of the Old River, the turbulent outflow from the cold, deep Three Sticks Lake. Both steppes are as cold and as cruel as their names suggest, studded with mesas, splinters, boulders, and craters left over from the near cosmic forces that created the Cantilevered Rim.



Past the amalgamated skyscraper of Red Bear Village, the valley bursts open to the astounding sight of Glass Bridge: a cathedral of glass that sparkles in the daylight and phosphoresces in the ultraviolet mornings.

## WEATHER AT THE OUTFLOW

The electrifying haze of the deep UV Grassland eats all visible light before 12:00 and howling gales chase each other across the high steppes. Within the deep valley the air grows thick, heavy with age.

## MISFORTUNE IS AN OLD RIVER

The empty land seems tired, emptied out, but still the wind howls like a horror, and a careless traveler's soul may be carried away.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 With a monstrous howl a demon wind rushes down, trying to eat the hero's soul (-1d4 Aura). If Aura hits 0, the player may decide a new soul now animates the hero and re-roll some mental stats.
- 2 Bolt from the clear sky hits a character (-1d10 Life) or kills a beast.
- 3-4 Bad rash after handling a decayed fetish (-1d4 Agility or Charisma).
- 5-6 Frayed travel bags burst crossing stream (-1d4 supplies or -1 goods)
- 7 Injured foot on rusty magical pike head (-1d4 Life) and absorb a protective charm (spirits, vomes, and demons have  $\downarrow$ d against hero for a few weeks).
- 8-11 Stumbled into a small bog, it stinks terribly and shoes are stuck (bad smell until hot bath or lose shoes).
- 12-19 Ears plugged against the howling winds, the crossing is made.
- 20+ In the singing of the wind you hear a kind voice, a wise demon from some hell-forgotten past. It asks for a little bit of your personality (-1 Charisma, Aura or Thought) in exchange for (roll d4): 1) health (+1d4 Endurance), 2) wealth (stumble on a discovery, it has a hidden cache worth €6,666, you can sense it), 3) love (gain a useful companion at the next destination), 4) inner peace (you have it now).

## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THE GLASS BRIDGE

- ❖ **Rest, Red Bear Guest & Servicing Accommodation:** free and safe and damp and unsanitary gashes carved out of ancient midden layers. The village also has a serviceable ferry.
- ❖ **Ferry, to Jade Baobab** (Three Sticks Lake, 1 day): €10/person.
- ❖ **Ferry, to Skybridge** (The Gall Grass, 3 days): €25/person.
- ❖ **North-West, The Gall Grass** (old road, 1 week): a wide, high and dry valley home to slow-dreaming grass.
- ❖ **South-West, The Spectrum Run** (scruffy trail, 2 weeks): a half-forgotten trail, marked with the corpses of Long Ago great vechs leads to the Spectrum Palace and the Ribs of the Father.
- ❖ **South-East, Moon River Ford** (wearisome steppe, 2 weeks): the open expanse of the High Moon Steppe stretches towards the Moon River, bleak, dull, safeish.
- ❖ **North-East, Three Sticks Lake** (rusted road, 1 week): thick with dead ruins, grim trees, and laughing demons.

## ENCOUNTERS NEAR GLASS BRIDGE (D10)

1. **Demon winds** (L7, soul-eaters) swirl above a fleeing animal like furies. Human or quadruped, it matters not.
2. **Feral fetishes** (L3, bullet-eating) hunting humans.
3. **Sleek jackal pack** (L2, laughing) ridden by a **cold demon** or **ultra** (L5, curious).
4. **Vome cats** (L1, venomous) with metal eyes and antennas, recording, watching, following.
5. Family of grazing **rhinothers** (L8, grey).
6. Herd of ash and blue **deer**.
7. **Survivalist scavenger-foragers** (L1, poor but free).
8. **Prodigal Father clan nomads** (L3, mirror-armored) in their bone-and-steel chariots, chasing bandits or hunting game.
9. **Spectrum Satrap spy** (L4, symbiote-enhanced) meeting assets and paying off nomad clan matriarchs.
10. Supply Chain Manager clan **war vech** (L9, spiked) patrolling Red Bear Village claims.

## THREE STICKS REGION AND THE DECLINING FACTION

The three regions of the Glass Bridge, Three Sticks Lake, and Gall Grass together represent a looping detour from the mercantile routes across the UVG. Crossing the Glass Bridge, most caravans would avoid this area entirely. The local Cold Lake Culture humans, also simply called 'the Villagers,' are weak and fragmented, forgetting their magi-technologies. Their greatest defenses are their remoteness, the hostile environment, and their relative poverty.

Use these regions as an inspiration for adding additional realms to your UVG, mine them for discoveries to sprinkle elsewhere in the steppes, or even as a starting point for a group of heroes from a declining and marginal culture. Who knows, perhaps they'll manage to revive one of them and create a new civilization in the heart of the tired wilderness?

Villager heroes are described on the next spread.

# VILLAGE AND BRIDGE

Long Long Ago, demons did not wear the skins of animals and men to roam the shores of Three Sticks Lake—nowadays they do.

## RED BEAR VILLAGE

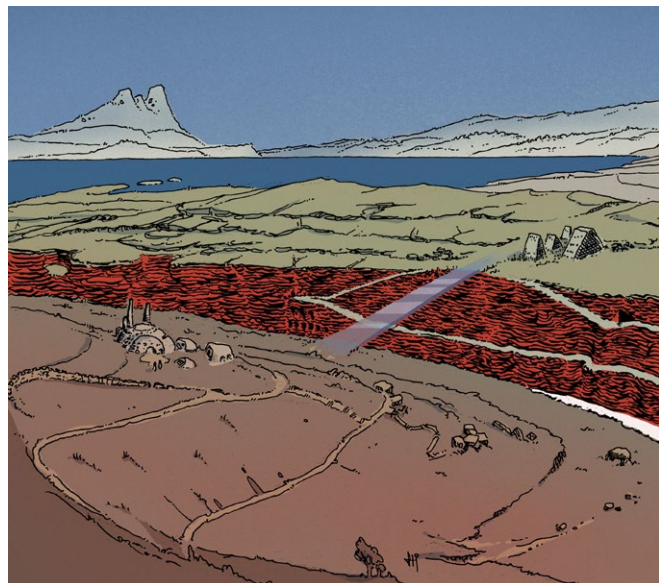
Red Bear is a village honey-combed through a great amalgamated skyscraper, built through the centuries-long action of the village's domesticated **builder badgers** (L1, dextrous). It is surrounded by several fences of thornvine and thornstone, patrolled by **spider fetishes** (L3, bullet-spitting). The badgers and spider fetishes are controlled by **Madame Red Star** (L3, ego master), the First Servant of Red Bear, ensconced and kept alive in an Iron Belly full-body prosthetic (€4,000). Little is left save a neural network hooked into psych-machine augmentations and a steely determination to not forsake the founding principles of the Long Ago Cold Lake Culture Collective, whose founding principles she no longer quite remembers. She is treated as a living deity by the inhabitants of Red Bear who keep her alive and fed with a steady diet of good news, quotas met, and traitors stopped.

The clans of Red Bear devote great effort to keeping the Madame alive and her Iron Belly functioning. The most prestigious clans are those of Maintenance and Repair, Logistics Specialist, Supply Chain Manager, and True News Distribution. Elders transmit clan lore entirely through oral tradition as <redacted> proscribed written records during the Hair Woods War between Skybridge and Vicar's Beach. It is unclear how long ago this was and both of those places are quite ruined today.



The clan of Public Relations is responsible for trade and is (generally) the least insular, while the Physical Culture clan provides up-to-date weather information and a ferry service to Jade Baobab (€10/person or beast) and to ruined Skybridge near the Gall Grass (€25/person or beast). The Red Bear **'ferry'** is the great **aquatic iron golem** (L12, ludic) *Shield of the Collective*, maintained and scrubbed to a sheen by the clan of Plumbing and Filtration.

Red Bear is full of plaudits for all the villages of Three Sticks and suspicious of outsiders, who are corralled in special accommodations dug into the middens surrounding Red Bear skyscraper.



## GLASS BRIDGE

(1 day, 100 xp)

Spanning the turbulent Old River as it rushes out of Three Sticks Lake, the Glass Bridge is breathtaking—a translucent cathedral that sparkles in the daylight and phosphoresces in the ultraviolet mornings. It links Red Bear Village and the High Moon Steppes to the High Horse Steppes. Villagers collect tolls (€5/person or beast) at the eastern end, while the half-nomad clan of the Prodigal Father collects a similar toll at the western end.

By day an array of **vitreous gargoyles** (L3, fragile, explosive) crawls across the bridge, maintaining its lustrous sheen and repairing it with the furnaces in their bellies. They protect the bridge above all else, ignoring mere travelers. The gargoyles rarely talk, but they like to sing an hour after sunrise and are sluggish in cloudy or rainy weather, thus elders surmise they are avatars of the sun.

The glass is stupendously strong and turns all prismatic and radiant effects into area damaging attacks. Missed rays rebound chaotically.

## OLD RIVER

(1 day, 50 xp)

A mighty and turbulent flow, it cuts the High Horse and High Moon steppes apart before joining the Moon River at the shallows of the Near-Moon Ford. Its deep pools and eddies hide ancient bones, rusted machines, and **great steppe krakens** (L7, amphibious).



# COLD LAKE CULTURE



## THE VILLAGERS

The village cultures certainly *self-identify* as human, but they are odd after centuries in the magic-whipped desolation.

### IT IS SAID (D10):

1. They expose weak children, who cannot change their bodies.
2. The villagers are strongly prone to addiction.
3. Their brains have decayed from the mighty radiations here.
4. They are clannish to a fault and protect the community above the individual, neither crippled babe nor weakened elder would ever be sacrificed for an outsider.
5. They focus on ritual and biological purity above all else.
6. They experiment with vomish and biomantic modification.
7. They are the descendants of a degenerate slave caste.
8. They uphold a number of ancient traditions from before the sky was cracked and the Fast Stars fell like dust.
9. They are noble, proud, and generous.
10. They are envious, insecure, and avaricious.

**Clans:** They identify first by hereditary professional clan, such as Logistics Specialists (merchants and traders), Accountants (ritual purifiers), and Social Workers (defense forces).

**Names:** Big Nose, Red Ear, Time-Is-Money, Two Birds, One Stone, Gun-In-Corn, Stand-Back-Now, Golden Years, Skin Deep.

**Nick Names** (onomatopoetic, used by friends, hereditary): Zoon, Sursur, Klang, Bang, Pok, Kraka, Thok, Woosh, Burbur.

## VILLAGERS AS HEROES

Cold Lake humans(?) have the following strange features:

- ⋄ **Resilient:** their bodies are super-normally resistant to strange fields and undesired mutations.
- ⋄ **Old Way Adaptation:** that said, they possess an inherent biomantic ability and can modify themselves over a period of 1d6 weeks; replacing one mutation, changing their appearance, their gender, even their very species.
- ⋄ **Unusual:** each starts with at least one non-cosmetic, not immediately obvious mutation.
- ⋄ **Terrified:** their marginalization has left them angry and resentful. One of their mental stats starts out weak.

## CAROUSING IN THREE STICKS LAKE VILLAGES

"I think they want us to cook the donkey," whispered Poncho.

Though poor, a good feast is definitely a way to get ahead among the Villagers. A hero spends €1d6\* x 50 on a week of stolid feasting and gains that many xp. Then they test Charisma to see what happened. Remember: disadvantage on the test if they can't cover their debt.

### THREE STICKS CAROUSING

#### d20 Charisma Test

1–2 Vile forehead tattoo and chased into the wilderness. **No xp** gained.

3–4 That wasn't a biomechanical novelty bottle, it was an (roll d6): (1) tongue extractor, (2) cauterizer, (3) catheter insertion unit, (4) skin reprocessor, (5) parasite implanter, (6) vocal cord adjuster.

5–6 Got into a brutal fight with mute members of a behavioral adjustment clan. Lose half Life. Moderate Strength test; success: gain a mute friend who respects your tenacity, failure: lose €1d100, too.

7 Days' long drinking session at a dusty old library-cum-private club ends with mammoth headache (-1d4 Thought and Aura), and a map to a new discovery, with useful advice on avoiding threats there.

8–10 A drinking duel on a boat ends with your opponent drowned and you in stocks for 1d4 weeks for being a nuisance.

11–12 All went well. Lose 1d4 Endurance.

13 Wake up with empty pockets and a fully-functional biomechanical limb. If it is already attached to your body, -1d4 Agility until you get used to the new appendage.

14–19 One of us! You have been accepted into an obscure, small clan, probably dealing with sanitation and waste disposal. A prestigious, upper crust clan now mildly dislikes you.

20+ Acquired a **large biomantic beast** (L3, sneezing, capacity 2, €600). It is (roll d6): (1) a swift riding steed, (2) shockingly scary, (3) grotesquely slippery, (4) secretes edible fats from pore-nipples producing 1 sack's worth of supplies per week, so long as it has plants to eat, (5) incredibly strong, carrying 7 sacks with no trouble, (6) swiftly regenerating, with its brain safely stored in a bone nodule in the middle of its body—even decapitation does not kill it!

20/20 You wake up with a melancholy sensation and a broken laser screwdriver in your pocket. There was someone special you had met, but the memory is gone now. You feel like you have traveled to strange times and places, saved a species from extinction, and become a great ruler. But all that is gone. Permanently increase Thought by 1.



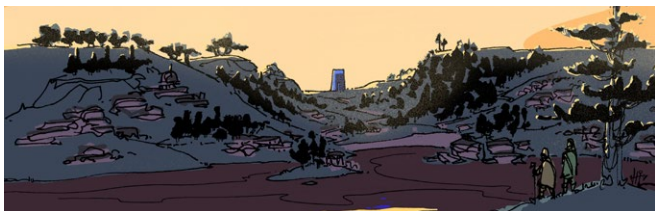
# DISCOVERIES NEAR THE GLASS BRIDGE

The lands just south of Three Sticks Lake remain the most comfortable for human habitation after The Event which ended the Villagers' precursor civilization Long Long Ago.

## BLUE GATE

(2 days, 125 xp)

A great cascade of abandoned palaces overgrown with gnarled ice pines tumbles down the Sparkling Shore opposite the Old Isle and Iron Pike. On a particularly beautifully eroded red and green rock promontory stands the Blue Gate. It stands thirty meters tall and almost untouched in its metallic beauty. The years have not worn away its geometries or dulled its patterned lustrous surface. In the long ages since the fall of the High Moon Culture the Gate served as a cultic center to a series of urban druid groups before they succumbed to an unusual gastric plague a couple centuries ago.



The druids hollowed out the sandstone promontory and built their village in caves that twine around the two great posts of the Blue Gate, which reach deeper into the ground than one could imagine. All that is left of the urban druids are the metallic coproliths left by the plague. A perceptive student, given a week and a difficult Thought test, might discover a cache of metallorganic seeds for ironwood and copperwood bamboo (€1,000) enclosed in a locker labelled in long-forgotten warning runes. Little else of value is left and local dust deer and rubble pigs are the usual occupants of the ruins, though some of the half-nomads still bring offerings to the ruins of the "Great Blue City on the Hill."

## DEEPEST GLASS

(1 day, 75 xp)

The Glass, a vast shock crater at the southern edge of Three Sticks Lake, is mostly flooded by the Old River's waters draining the lake. What Long Ago impact caused it, nobody knows anymore—save perhaps the Madam of Red Bear. Deepest Glass is a series of shattered bubble habitats and support struts standing at the very center of the crater. Some magic protected them, that much is obvious, and now, as the waters rise and fall, they emerge and submerge. Even the vomes avoid this horrible field, scarred with **radiation ghosts** (Lo, faceless) and home to scuttling **glassy scorpions**, **crabs**, and **terrestrial cuttlefish** (L1, vermin swarms). Their bites are radioactive (easy Endurance test or -1d4 Strength).

Local half-nomads claim that in the Tower of Two Bells a machine-human named **Nito Takohudo** (L5, dreaming hero) sleep-guards a floating barge of the Later Levitants. If this is true, the **floating barge** (L6, levitant) is a machine of glazed pumice and silver struts constructed around a three-point force array. It can carry up to 20 sacks yet be pulled by a single person (€6,000). It can also be studied (and disassembled) to learn *Floating Disc* and *Three-Point Immobility*.

## GRAVEL RIVER

(3 days, 50 xp)

A glum, slow river that grinds through its channel with weary, sad inevitability. By day its gravel beds and banks are home to sunning **sail-backed amphibians** (L4, hopping). There is not much to say about this river. Panning for gold and rare-earth nodules recovers €1d20/day per person but **cold vomes** (L1, sneaky) might crawl out of the grey waters and then you'd be in all sorts of trouble again.

## FERRY GRAVES

(2 days, 100 xp)

Hundreds of craft of all sizes are preserved in ancient, gargantuan and slowly calcinating gelatinous sarcophagi. The largest are hundreds of meters long as they litter the ochre and yellow slime-and-reed spattered shore of the Ferry Graves. Most travelers give the hulking, gently pulsing gelatinous cuboids a wide berth. Spattered with colonies of lichens and bacterial growths, the cuboids form the basis of an odd ecosystem of motile molds and slimes. The Long Slog, as the waterlogged terrain between the Gravel and White rivers is called, forms a horrible obstacle to travel, while the rivers themselves are wide and filled with **translucent crocodilians** (L5, hard to spot).

However, a canny explorer, equipped with a guide and a lot of luck, might well find a functioning (roll d6): (1–3) vech, (4–5) autowagon, or even a (6) floating barge among the Ferry Graves. This is a hard and dangerous endeavor (extreme Charisma test, one test allowed per week). The **molds** (Lo, sweet) and **slimes** (Lo, sour), though not individually intelligent, would be drawn in greater and greater numbers to the party over time.





## HIGH HORSE STEPPE

(2 days, 50 xp)

A cold, windswept high plateau, pocked with odd horseshoe-shaped depressions left, according to local half-nomads, by the departure of the Sky Horses (ancient void ships?). The clans of the Fortunate Son and Unbroken Patrimony claim they are descendants of the Maintainers of the Sky Horses who helped the lings ascend into the heavens, like the All Fathers before them in the Long Long Ago. This may be false, but the meeting place of these clans, at a high ridge overlooking the rugged southern shore of Three Sticks Lake and the imposing mire-sunk horror of the Ferry Graves, is nonetheless impressive. Two great composite ferro-ceramic hooves, broken off at the ankles, are all that remain of some noble equestrian statue that must once have reared 40 meters high.



## HIGH MOON CROSSING

(1 days, 50 xp)

Marking a curiously nondescript crossroads in the High Moon Steppe is a hillock covered in fine green grass rising four quarter-lings high. Local nomadics refer to it as “The Regenerating Hill,” since it always reforms to a perfect spherical cap. It is studded with a profusion of offering pikes, many rusted to mere spear heads. There are no fell spirits here or odd magics, only this round, perfect hillock. Indeed, it repels spirits, vomes, and other demons and has become a popular place to camp. It is now a good place to meet unexpected travelers and the crossroads for trails that circumnavigate the icy waters of Three Sticks Lake. North the trail leads to Jade Baobab, south to Red Bear.

## LONG SLOG

(2 days, 50 xp)

The Long Slog is a waterlogged mix of marshland, dumpland, and slimewood between the Gravel and White rivers. It is a horrible obstacle course, filled with biting insects, stinging plants, crawling **biomechanical snakes** (L1, electric), and great **animatronic auto-vechs** (L6, dinosaurian). It's like a very dull, repetitive, poorly thought out lost world.

In the depths are multiple cyclopean ruins, collapsed temples, decaying motels, and lonely **shack mimics** (L10, swallow whole, filled with grinding furniture lumps). Treasure is surprisingly sparse, reduced by the harsh climate until the odd piece—such as a gold gas mask (€600) or nacreous necklace (€60)—is all that remains.

Seriously, any local will tell you not to go here.

## SPARKLING SHORE

(1 day, 55 xp)

Villas of pearl-petrified gnarled wood, filled with the crumbling pumice-petrified remains of their owners, dot the thorn-shrub studded Sparkling Shore. In daylight the pearlwood villas sparkle wonderfully, obscuring the **feral wicker fetishes** (L1, whipping) and venomous **biomechanical floral centipedes** (L2, leaping) that patrol the ruins of their masters' estates.

Unlucky visitors might find one of the petrification bomblets (moderate Endurance test, €250/stone-sized bomblet) scattered in a Long Ago military conflict and still obscenely dangerous. However, the temptation of an untouched villa, with particularly beautiful pearlwood petrifacts (€400/sack), is great.



## WHITE RIVER

(1 day, 35 xp)

Constrained to an impressive artificial channel for much of its upper course; in the middle of the Long Slog, the milky waters of the White River suddenly flood out across the miasmatic plain. The waters are thick, somehow soupy, and filled with shockingly enormous **pestilential amoebas** (L5, disease-ridden).

# 19. THREE STICKS LAKE

Three ragged villages cling to the steep shores of the cold, deep lake, built on layers of older settlements from the Long Long Ago. Caravans drag themselves around the harsh coastline, while smaller groups cross on the improvised and salvaged ferries of the Stick Folk.

The lake itself is cold and full of fish, its bed—so it seems—thick with **waterlogged vomes** (L2, grappling) ready to emerge and drag careless bathers into the ultramarine depths. Is there much to add? It is one of the deepest and darkest lakes known to the Steppelanders, a vital source of water and, even if one compromises comfort, respite in the Three Living Villages.

## WEATHER AT THE COLD, DEEP LAKE

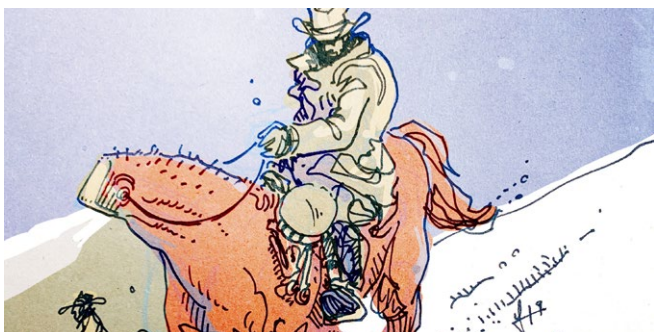
An electric smog obscures half the sky, and the wan sun only emerges to scorch bare skin with invisible rays at 11:45. Gusting storms rush up at a moment's notice in the odd eddies created by the Near Moon and flash floods are a danger.

## MISFORTUNE AND THREE STICKS

The terrain is as gnarled as the pines, the footing as treacherous, the demons as underhanded.

### d20 Charisma Test

- Flash flood washes away 1d4 beasts (or people if the beasts run out). Saving a beast requires a difficult Strength test. Fail the test badly enough and the hero might be pulled in too.
- Muddy bog and ravines wash out trail, force detour (-1d4 days).
- 3-4 Painful sunburn from the violet rays (-1d6 Life).
- 5-6 Soaked while crossing an unexpectedly rough ford (-1d4 supplies or moderate Endurance tests vs. food poisoning for a few weeks).
- Eat poisonous berries that cause annoying and loud burping for a week. Unlike in a horror novel, no body horror ensues. Burps prove incredibly frightening to vomes.
- 8-12 Wind blows away one book, map, scroll, or other inconvenient parchment.
- 13 Ear plugs cause mild ear infection. Ears bright red for a week.
- 14-19 Though shivering the whole night through in the pines where the sun don't ever much shine, the caravan comes through alright.
- 20+ Discover ancient vehicle exposed by a recent flood or landslide. There's a deep sleeping head preserved in a cryo box powered by a ka-battery (weak, but never runs out, €2,000). It looks vaguely human and is all that remains of (roll d6): (1) a rich and asinine artist preserved Long Long Ago, (2) a back-stabbing politician-priest preserved Long Ago, (3) a hero injured while escaping from a Fast Star, (4) a local sage from Red Bear, opponent of the Madame, (5) a capable but amnesiac local guide named Nero, (6) an eternal champion stolen from the future to save the past.



## TRAVEL OPTIONS AT THREE STICKS LAKE

- **Rest, Jade Baobab Village:** €10/week in a synthetic basket. The village also has a serviceable ferry.
- **Ferry, to Red Bear** (Glass Bridge, 1 day): €12 per person.
- **Ferry, to Iron Pike** (3rd Living Village, 1 day): €7 per person.
- **Ferry, to Skybridge** (The Gall Grass, 2 days): €15 per person.
- **West, The Gall Grass** (old road, 1 week): torn mountains and high forests skirt around the edge of Three Sticks Lake, leading to the dry valley of slow-dreaming grass.
- **South-West, Glass Bridge** (scruffy trail, 1 week): the ruins of the Living Villages' ancestors give way to the high steppes.

## ENCOUNTERS NEAR THREE STICKS (D10)

- Hulking destroyer golem** (L8, electromagnetic discharges) from Long Ago.
- Waterlogged attack vomes** (L4, sprinting) a swarm of amphibious, leaping, rattling vomes tries to grab a likely target and drag it off into the lake. Called water people.
- Waterlogged vome drones** (L2, dreams of Long Ago) patrolling from their bleak nest in the lake. Vaguely human, dressed in synthskin rags and surprisingly articulate for vomes. Also called water people.
- Motley herd of **woodland animals** (L6, swarm) occupied by a **cold demon** or **ultra** (L6, psychic) scouting the lake edges.
- Machine bear** (L8, disinterested) surveying a territory long since abandoned.
- Parasitic charcoal fetish** (L2, stuck in time) assembling and reassembling itself, trying to protect a long dead wizard.
- Skittish **deer** with ash and green fur.
- Eerie **half-human(?) nomadics** (L3, noble but savage) seem unglued in time, unwilling to talk or trade, they eat ash.
- Survivalist villagers** (L2, paranoid) in a jury-rigged vech (L7, chugging, capacity 6, €1,500) on a vital trading mission.
- Half-nomads** (L2, swift) and their flock of grazing rodents moving confidently, skilled in avoiding dangers.

## WATER PEOPLE OR COLD VOMES

Living mostly beneath the limpid surface of Three Sticks Lake is a hidden faction. Their neighbors refer to them as “cold vomes” (because their flesh is cold, unlike the hot-running flesh of normal vomes) or “water people” (because they are amphibious). But what are they, really?

- The true descendants of the original Three Sticks culture.
- Cybernetic zombies, vehicles of some alien machine.
- Pilgrims from another dimension.
- A mindless swarm.
- A sub-ultra faction that steals bodies with metal parasites, replacing personalities but not souls.
- Self-aware ba-zombies hiding from their enemies.
- Abmortal humans replacing themselves part-by-part in a failing quest for immortality.
- Biomechanical slaves of a sub-aquatic city of eel-humans battling terminal cultural degeneracy.



# TWO VILLAGES LEFT: BAOBAB AND PIKE



## JADE BAOBAB VILLAGE

(1 day, 45 xp)

Jade Baobab is built on a system of bridges and platforms suspended between the forty-meter-high corpses of two biomechanical baobabs. They rise on the south bank of the Red River, testament to the power of the Long Long Ago biomancers of the Five-Dog Corporation. The village is ruled with gnarled fists by the Elders of Understanding, a biomancer cargo cult devoted to body modification and the cultivation of miniature perspiration pears (€200/stone). The leading members, such as **Father Time-Hath-No-Purpose** (L4, psi-priest) and **Sister Mercy-Is-Weakness** (L5, metal nun), hate ultras and have a fondness for vomish implants.

The Elders of Understanding dislike the other Living Villages as heretics. They tolerate them, since they are not disgusting, imperialist pretenders like the Princes or Satraps, nor fallen scum like the Cold People. The Second Hand Clan is working with the Porcelain Princes. The most impressive building is the scrimshaw-panelled Exhibitorium, where the Elect venerate stuffed and preserved beasts from the times of the Great Elder Biomancer Biloba as offspring of the divine creative principle.

Canoes and slow barges can make the easy trip to Iron Pike, and villagers of the clans of the Third Foot and Sixteenth Tooth charge a mere €1/person or beast. The ferry to the Skybridge and the Gall Grass costs an eye-watering €15/person or beast. It's €20/person or beast to the Ferry Graves. Jade Baobab's ferry, *The Flesh Princess*, is a hulking half-grav **biomechanical beast of a catamaran** (L13, calm), bedecked in greenstone pendants and biomantic cilia.

## IRON PIKE VILLAGE

(1 day, 50 xp)

Iron Pike is the most remote village, protected from most ravages and assaults in its location on the Old Isle, surrounded by the abraded ruins of a pleasure city from the Long Ago. It is built within an eccentric orb, fifty meters across, that spins sedately four meters off the ground just above a great platform of steel-crete covered in warning petroglyphs. The orb is unbreakable force-glass and only accessible through three circular openings that line up with the ground once every ten minutes. *Inside* the orb is 314% larger than the outside and all gravity is directed towards the outside of the orb, creating a small world of its own.

Iron Pike was initially an anarchic hippie-wizard commune, at least so say the legends of grim warning painted on its glassy walls. It degenerated into all-out magiocratic anarchy before survivors rebuilt it into a rigid, militant caste structure united in a hatred of magic, a love of gladiatorial combat, regular vome-hunting expeditions, and viciously effective war-and-fishing canoes.

The current leadership of Iron Pike consists of two war chiefs, **Broadgrin the Sinewy** (L5, strong) and **Swiftstab the Bumbler** (L2, smart). Both take advice from the witch **Icing Matilda** (L4, skin-rider). Iron Pike offers little in trade, grudging hospitality, and canoes to the other two villages for €7/person or beast. They do not like to cross the lake: those shores are home to shambling vome hordes. Their ferry, the sleek *Glazed Partridge* (L10, swift), is broken down with a faded battery. A replacement can be found in Three Sticks, but that place is crawling with water people.



# DISCOVERIES ALONG THE RED RIVER

The Red River flowing into Three Sticks Lake from the east marks a tired, worn out remnant of Villager territory.

## JUNIPER SCRUB

(4 days, 100 xp)

Junipers deck the high hills of the upper Red River, fragrant and calm. Few signs of settlement remain in this cold, remote area. Rabbits and foxes abound, and the scattered hard-shell ruins of carapace houses are all that is left of some forgotten Long Ago culture. Now **exiled half-nomads** (L2, resigned) and **hermetic hermits** (L3, beyond human) are the likeliest creature you might encounter here.



## OBSIDIAN KNIVES

(2 days, 150 xp)

They say the razor skyscrapers of the Obsidian Knives cut the very water till it bleeds, that is why the Red River runs so red down its grim black canyon. Perhaps it is also the iron oxides in the sharp glass of the knives leaching out. The river loops around the hard promontory of Knives, all blasted into a solid lump of glassy granite, interlaced with metallic sinews—like the very land here was some kind of great biomechanical intrusion. The Knives mostly rise no more than ten or fifteen meters, though the highest reach a hundred meters and more in the heart of the devastated township, visible above the rim of the Red River canyon.

Whatever the case, the Obsidian Knives suffered an odd disaster, which compressed most of its above ground structures into very nearly pure planes of force. Some visitors suggest that, if you look closely, you can discern the remains of the inhabitants of the Knives still 'alive', though translated into a 2-dimensional matrix, within the Knives themselves. Slivers of stuckforce enmeshed in glassy matrices can be excavated by visitors willing to risk force tremors and the snapping mono-dimensional tendrils of whatever nightmare created the Obsidian Knives. These slivers are prized as blades, weapons, or curios (€500/sack).

Superstitious nomads claim that at sunrise the razor skyscrapers sing and that frictionless blackbirds fly into the starless void. This is nonsense, of course.

## OLD ISLE

(1 day, 50 xp)

Erosion and eons have done their work and there is little left to show that this old island is artificial, uplifted from the depths of the lake by forces and industry of unintelligible power. Hillocks of eroded steel-crete and rust-ridges lie in scattered profusion across this land, like the corpses of great grubs or maggots left by a death of all that was metal. Gnarled cypresses and pines with needles tinged rust orange throw a thick coat across the unceasing struggle between **leaking water vomes** (L2, obscene) and **savage villagers** (L3, carnivorous).

## RED GRASS

(3 days, 100 xp)

A small steppe, home to vermillion grasses that give off mildly soporific spores. **Sloth-like antelopes** (L1, hairy) graze mildly for there are no predators. Travelers in the Red Grass must take precautions (like breathing masks), lest they too become slow and weary (as *Slow*). The effects last 1d4 weeks after leaving the Red Grass. Any local warns of this danger.

In the depths of the Red Grass is a collapsing gazebo of slow-dreaming **servant vomes** (L3, sleep rays) attending an autofac generating iridescent machine butterflies (hard to catch, €600 per sack, best stored in fine mesh cages).

## RED RIVER

(1 day, 35 xp)

The blood red watercourse acquires its colour at the weirdness of the Obsidian Knives, before discharging into the Lake, which washes all sins clean. In its turbid waters **great electric eels** (L2, shocking) are the apex predators.

## RUSTY BRIDGE

(1 day, 75 xp)

The great, wide, immense, and crumbling Rusty Bridge spans the black canyon of the Red River. Though its surface is pockmarked and riddled with holes, though great flakes of it fall off, still its metal sinews hold strong and stable, sailing proudly through time like a grand old ocean liner upon the Ocean of Forever.

**Rust elementals** (L3, rusting touch) play around the bridge while **rat-like mechs** (L1, obsequious) try to carry out repairs with no supplies whatsoever. Heavy vehicles or creatures crossing the bridge should take measures to spread out their weight, lest they fall through the cheese-like road surface.





# DISCOVERIES OF THE CHOLAN WOOD

The north-eastern environs of Three Sticks Lake are radically dislocated from the everyday world.

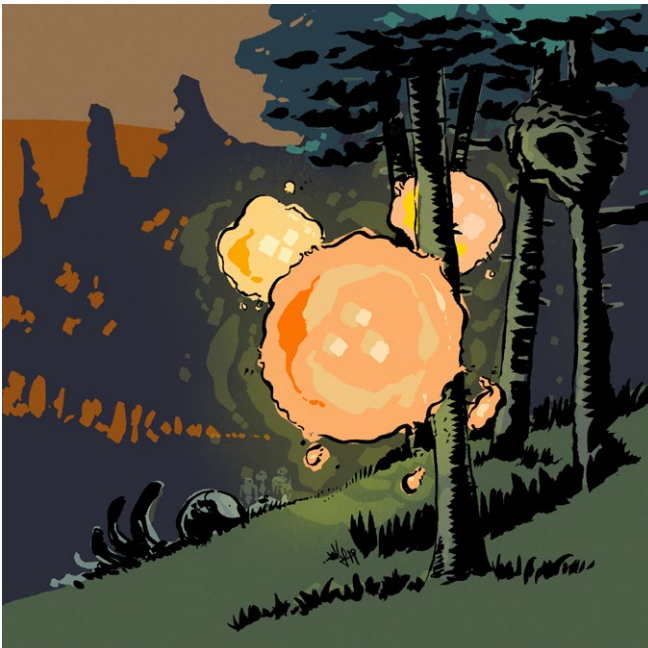
## CHOLAN WOODS

(2 days, 150 xp)

The sparse pines of the plateau between the Lake and the Red River are grotesquely riddled with galls the size of houses, home to the **cholans** (L1, gaseous, toxic) wispish floating creatures akin to aerial jelly-fish. The cholans are harmless but leave ectoplasmic deposits which cling to surfaces and droop from trees like weeping tendrils.

Staying too long among them may summon **ectoplasmic nightmares** (L8, mutating, attacks Aura instead of Life) from the traveler's subconscious. The cholans are quite friendly and make it clear that the lethality of their ectoplasmic excreta is a most unfortunate eventuality.

Searching through the Cholan Woods, an explorer might find (moderate Thought test after 2 days searching) peach-hued cosmic shell fragments (€700/sack) from the cholans' first arrival.



## DEAD SHORE

(3 days, 250 xp)

Between Grey Glow and the Rose Towers stretches a low, tumbled shoreline of spare, minimalist ruins. Tunneled beneath them are the vast Salvation Complexes of some particularly unfortunate Long Ago culture. Within they stored themselves expecting a better future. Alas, that future was vomish intrusion and the area is now thick with rancid **necrotic vomes** (L2, nauseating). The vomes are often on standby in odd arrangements, but loud noises or flashing lights may trigger them into frenetic and deadly activity.

Someone plunging deep into the Complexes might come across a cache of cryonic wands (€1,800/sack), ceramic tins of biomorphic protein (€200 per sack, supplies), or archaic collectible rare-alloy weapons (€750/sack).

## GREY GLOW

(2 days, 225 xp)

Every night a great screen of flickering motes, like static upon a celestial cathode display, obscures the morass of icy ruins between the Lonely Shore and the Dead Shore. Eerie **half-human nomadics** (L2, phasing) emerge from moments between two blinks of the eye and attempt to resume a Long Ago existence. Every midnight **cold vomes** (L3, freezing fingers) emerge from the slimy still waters of the shore and try to hunt the half-present half-humans.

The phasing of the half-humans becomes more abrupt and twitchy around 06:00, before they finally disappear with the first glimmers of the sun over the ultraviolet haze. The cold vomes then flee back into their watery deep, for the sun dries them out and leaves them helpless like deadwood upon the shore.

Each half-human has 1d4 trinkets of obscure utility, made of strange alloys or rare stones (€25/trinket). Vomes ignore these.

Any creature passing through the half-humans great screen is bathed in a light of obscure shades before folding abruptly through a pinprick between one breath and the next. Brute beasts are lost forever. Intelligent creatures (and some heroes) get an Aura test:

### d20 Aura Test vs. Half-Human Great Screen

- 1 Creature is gone forever but its malevolent **radiation ghost** (L2, dyspeptic) haunts its friends every fourth day around tea time.
- 2–6 1d4 weeks later the creature reappears nearby, at sunrise, nude and queerly different (-1d6 to one stat, +1d4 to another stat, gain a mutation of some sort).
- 7–11 Most of the creature disappears, save for a ghostly echo. The creature then reappears 1d4 days later near a friend or location that is dear to it, mostly unharmed. Mostly.
- 12–15 Creature flickers and phases for the next 1d4 hours, suffering  $\downarrow$ d to physical activities for the duration. Then gains permanent insight into the Forces of the Prime Electromagnetic Elemental Sphere (either become proficient with electromagnetic magics or +1 to Thought).
- 16–19 Creature has  $\downarrow$ d to physical activities for 1d6 rounds, before becoming linked to the Prime Electromagnetic Elemental Sphere (as above).
- 20+ The Great Cathode Ghost chooses the creature as its vessel, granting a short range electromagnetic attack (1d6 electromagnetic damage, careful when wet). Creature also gains another bonus, as above.

## LONELY SHORE

(1 day, 50 xp)

Egrets and terns congregate along this desolate shore of tumbled grand pines and granite boulders. Few ruins are to be seen. Unfortunate travelers may encounter the **Collector** (L10, recording ray), an ancient biomech collecting souls and personalities for preservation in the face of the Oncoming Swarm—an event that failed to occur more than a thousand years ago.

Fortunate travelers might encounter **Coffin Walker** (L2, healer), a large and lichen-covered soapstone golem with stubby legs and a coffin of preservation in its belly. It can keep a seriously injured or recently killed person alive for 2d6 weeks, so long as the central nervous system has not been severely disrupted. Coffin Walker is stuck under a grand pine and very lonely, like a large, ominous, stone puppy. The Coffin Walker likes to play fetch, too.



# 20. THE GALL GRASS

A wide, high, and dry valley, decked in the pungent yellow stalks and interwoven galls of the slow-dreaming distributed sentence of the modified grasses holds sway here. The **Gall Grass mind** (L14, post-conscious) absorbs all moisture here and keeps the Hair Woods to the south and the Higher Spinewood to the north at bay. Little survives in the Gall Grass—thirst is a constant danger but the mildly empathic grass mind also keeps most predators at bay.

## WEATHER IN THE HIGH, DRY VALLEY

The haze hides the sky till 12:15 but the air is fresh, bracing, clean, and shockingly dry. Clouds wither as they approach, dessicated by the grass below.

## MISFORTUNE OF GALL AND TEMERITY

This area is surprisingly safe, so long as you don't bother the grass.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Drained by a sudden dismal realization of your inevitable demise, powerless before superhuman forces (-1d4 Aura).
- 2 Gall Grass drains waterskins overnight (-1d4 supplies).
- 3 Stumble into field of stuckforce like invisible glass. Beast bisected or foot severed.
- 4 Infected with rapidly growing moss. -1d4 Charisma until you scrape it off (-1d6 Life) or have a series of long, hot baths (-1d4 days).
- 5-6 Unexpectedly thirsty in the morning (-1 Endurance) ... was it the grass?
- 7 Wake up with funny puncture marks that do not heal. Lose 1 Life per day until you accept a machine parasite that grants +1 to a physical stat in exchange for 1d4 Life per week *or* get a medical intervention.
- 8-11 Rolling hypo-psyhic miasma produces depression (↑a to Charisma and Thought tests for 1d4 weeks).
- 12-19 The grass murmurs sweet nothings in your ear. It knows it will be here long after you have faded, like a hoof print on the lake shore.
- 20+ Flash rainbows combined with empathetic vibrations from the grasses produce something akin to a spiritual revelation in travelers. They now recover an additional mental stat every time they rest outdoors in an unspoiled natural environments. This is in addition to any other healing or recovery.

## TRAVEL IN THE GALL GRASS

- ∴ **Rest, Camp on the Grassy Fringe:** if you take care to move regularly, the post-conscious flora makes for a safe camp.
- ∴ **Ferry, Skybridge to Red Bear** (Glass Bridge, 3 days): €30 per person. Wait 1d8-2 days for it to arrive.
- ∴ **Ferry, Skybridge to Jade Baobab** (Three Sticks Lake, 2 days): €20 per person. Wait 1d6-2 days for it to arrive.
- ∴ **West, The Refracting Trees** (lost road, 1 week): the maddening tree-silicon symbionts of the Refracting Trees guard a Long Ago road to the Spectrum Palace.
- ∴ **South-East, Glass Bridge** (old road, 1 week): the Hair Woods collapse into weed and swamp before the ruined road ascends once more to Glass Bridge. A hard journey.
- ∴ **North-East, Three Sticks Lake** (old road, 1 week): tortured mountains and desolate cities threatened by water people.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE WESTERN SHORE (D8)

1. **Fantastic ghost** (L7, purposeful grimace) from Long Ago, reflected through a time prism and the moon's grace into this later, duller age.
2. **Flabby jellies** (L5, acidic) floating in the mist.
3. **Cold vomeroid patrol** (L3, running) moving swiftly and grimly, to some inner rhythm.
4. **Bestial half-human pack** (L2, snarling) hunting prey.
5. **Swinedeer family** (L1, determined) looking for acorns.
6. **Montgolfier mushrooms** (L0, floating) gently wafting through the air with a smell like fried apples and cinnamon.
7. **Bed grass** (L3, hummock) lifted and bunched as a nodule of the grass mind contemplates something. Comfortable to sit on.
8. **Odd travelers** (L3, half-nomads) with ancient burdenbeasts and sacks of wriggling, half-living produce (€50/sack).





# DISCOVERIES IN THE GALL GRASS

Nature has reclaimed the lands north-west of the Lake.

## HAIRWOODS

(1 day, 90 xp)

The lumpy highlands south of the Grass and north of the Gravel River are covered in a thick forest of fleshy, red-stemmed trees with canopies of long, grey-blond hair-like leaves. The Hair Woods are desolate of humans these days, home to herds of **grazing swinedeer** (L1, curious), **parrot-owls** (L2, vocal), lumbering **bear-badgers** (L3, engineering), and the occasional **strider hermit** (L1, human-skin wearing fox).

Deep in the gullies, a visitor might discover an ancient wellspring of emotion marked by warning and beckoning runes in a lyrical archaic Sunsettish script. The wellspring of emotion taps the heartwaters of the Earth to bring emotional release, putting the drinker in touch with their innermost traumas and frustrations (moderate Aura Test). Those who overcome themselves and make the save permanently increase their Aura and Charisma stats by 1. Those who fail decrease a random mental stat by 2 and acquire a lovely new trauma.



## THE HIGHER SPINWOODS

(1d4+1 days, 150 xp)

North of the Gall Grass massive, stocky trees with needles sharp as daggers rule the Higher Spinewoods, keeping out large predators, unwary travelers, and generally blocking overland access to the headwaters of the Wine, Teal, and Sky rivers. There are rumours of small, **leather-faced humans** (L2, living mummies) living there, but if they are real, they hide very well. The occasional radiation tower flickers into existence, giving a hint of some lost monument, but who would wander there?

The Higher Spinewoods are very difficult terrain to cross and any Misfortune likely includes wandering into a spiked pit 'excavated' by the lightly carnivorous trees.

## RAZORWATER

(1 day, 75 xp)

A mammoth polished plaza abuts the Sky River kept clean by a small army of **cleaner jellies** (L5, translucent, flabby). It looks beautiful, peaceful, and serene ... except at every full hour, when an ancient mechanism powers up and unleashes a bewilderingly beautiful array of fountains and lights, which spray the chill water of the Sky River over two hundred meters into the air. The jets are so powerful, and in places so thin, that luckless heroes have been known to end up sliced in half.

It is, however, very pretty, with the rainbows that accompany the misting waters and whatnot. Watching a full show boosts morale and grants 1d6 temporary Life.

## SKYBRIDGE

(1 day, 100 xp)

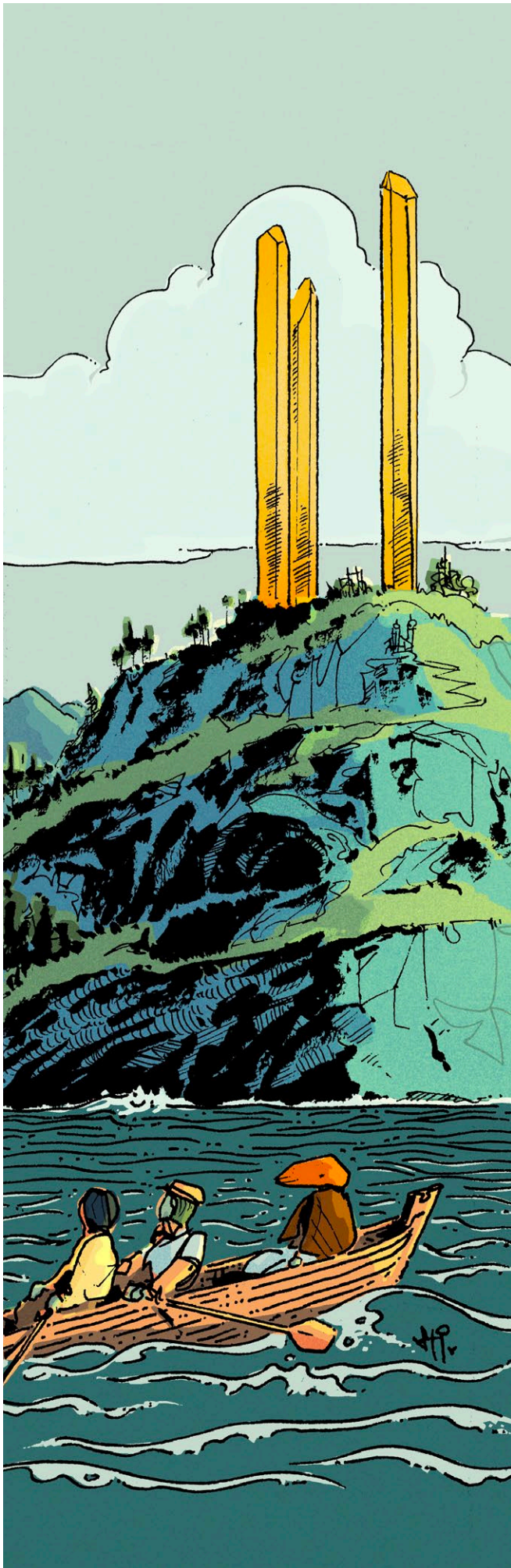
Exactly as terrifying as it sounds, the Skybridge is a translucent, three mile razor of stuckforce arcing ever so gently over the Sky River estuary (named after the bridge). Its ends are marked by monolithic cable stays but the cables are long gone, their attachments now eerie lichen speckled eyes in the gleaming glass blocks. The three meter wide force bridge is smooth and deadly, though beautifully iridescent, in rainy or windy weather. Quite often a flying bird or floating Montgolfier mushroom will be sliced in half by the bridge's razor edges.

There is no **ghost troll** (L5, meta-plasmic) in the perpetual cloud banks of the Sky River estuary.

## SKY RIVER

(1 day, 25 xp)

A bone-chilling river of pure, translucent water so clean that it can literally disinfect wounds. Its waters are prized by medicine men and shamans in the near abroad (€50/keg) and passing caravans regularly fill up from its banks.



# THE RUIN OF THREE STICKS

“A picturesque land,” murmured the Hero.

“This was home and hearth of the fools who summoned the lords of Light and Crystal to make them divine,” warned the Warlock.

## THREE STICKS

(3 days, 300 xp)

At the beating, vibrant heart of the region are three prismatic soul accumulators known as the Three Sticks. They ascend two hundred vibrant (and vibrating) meters from the moss and flower bedecked cliffs of the western shore of Three Sticks Lake.

The Sticks make their own eerie weather systems within a few hours journey (roll d6 for new weather effect at sunrise and sunset):

1. **Soul draining miasma** spreads from the accumulators, turning everything to grey (all creatures take 1 Aura damage per hour).
2. **Static storms** suspend dust and small particles in the air and reduce the momentum of all objects in the vicinity (all ranged attacks have  $\downarrow$ d to hit and damage).
3. **Luminescent fog** which glows brightly even at night. Nearby objects are very clearly visible but the bright fog occludes everything beyond about 30 meters (it's easy to get lost).
4. **Depressing rains** that dampen personalities (all Thought and Charisma tests are made with  $\downarrow$ d).
5. **Waves of rainbows** bathe verdant the surroundings in healing light ( $\downarrow$ d to all tests that require precise vision, restore 1 Life and 1 stat point per hour). Plants grow especially quickly after each variegatic pulse, which may be hazardous for sleeping heroes.
6. **Bright perpetual thunder** shakes the surroundings, verbal communication is nearly impossible and hearing can be badly affected, but spirits are raised ( $\uparrow$ a to all Aura tests).

All locals agree that the Three Sticks are suffused with the power of superior beings from the Long Long Ago and deadly to unwary interlopers. On good weather days, pilgrims will come to deliver offerings to these beings which they simply call the **'Fantastic Masters'**. Nobody has ever seen one, but **their ghosts** (L7, quantum echoes), it is said, are often seen on nights with crescent moons.

A beautifully austere plaza between the three accumulators focuses their light and opens into a *different deeper realm* of obscurely spiritual dungeons, depending on the local weather conditions. *Within living machines of light and crystal* (L2d10, decaying into dementia) maintain the workings of the accumulators in preparation for some final destiny. The machines are horribly overpowered and ridiculously alien. One might find out that they align vaguely with factions that could translate as Suspension of Disbelief, Orange Orchard, and Perpetual Fog of Self-Annihilation.

Should this be relevant, at the heart of the accumulator are a great three-chambered spiritual battery (€750,000, 100 sacks, capable of powering a city) and a **functional soul mill** (L10, semi-sentient, named *The Painless Devourer of Ka*) that charges the battery. Recovered, battery and mill could be the foundation of a new city.



# DISCOVERIES AROUND THE RUIN OF THREE STICKS

The shattered heart, now decomposing, of a half-remembered land.

## BLACK GRASS

(3 days, 35 xp)

A small grassland between Vicar's Beach, the Lower Spines and the Hair Woods, it is an expanse of wild rye living in shocking symbiosis with a distributed mold colony organism named **Rudolph-Eats-Five-Plate** (L4, amazingly naïve). In cold or rainy weather the mold colony organism hibernates and the Black Grass is safe to cross, other times there is a great danger of being infected by spore colonists (easy Endurance test unless a breathing filter is being used), which slowly and subtly pervert the infected organism until they become a sleeper agent and information gatherer for the weird mold intelligence.

Travelers will often encounter the **mold-faced agents of Rudolph** (L3, packing heat) who try to ascertain whether they are a threat to the libertarian mold-anarchist inclinations of Rudolph. That the mold-faced agents speak oddly accented Bluenttalk, can barely walk a straight line, and tend to hibernate when wet, hardly seems to matter.

Shockingly, there is little of value to discover in this grassy area.

## LOWER SPINES

(2 days, 50 xp)

Stretching along the rubble-like promontory between the Teal and Sky River estuaries, past the Milky Orb, and all the way to the craggy peaks above Three Sticks, the massive spinetrees are rarer here and the park-like woodlands are home to **lupine half-humans** (L3, barking) with fanged faces and scabbling claws. Fortunately these regressives are both very conservative in their pack tactics and terrified of loud and colourful demonstrations of magical prowess.

At night, **cold vomes** (L1, grappling) may be a problem, as may the occasional **boulder agglomeration** (L2, thick as a brick) animated by soul discharges from the Three Sticks.

## MACHINE HUMANS

Now only legends in the Rainbowlands, machine humans are the apogee of what a golem could be if it had a fully fledged personality (ba) and soul (ka). Some say they were (or are) clearly machines, others that their skin alone hides their machine bodies, yet others that they are an entirely perfected artificial mimicry of the human body created from the dust of this tired world. They have rumored abilities (d6):

1. No need to eat or sleep or breathe.
2. An immunity to enchantments and most spells.
3. Multi-spectrum vision, even in pure darkness.
4. Inhuman Agility and speed.
5. Incredible Strength and Charisma.
6. Amazing aptitude with certain types of magitechnology.

## VICAR'S BEACH

(3 days, 150 xp)

A large, half-sunken bay stretches along the western shore of Three Sticks, from the Gravel River to the Black Grass heights. Multi-coloured gravel dunes, built up by the action of **demented auto-dozers** (L8, half-witted self-repairing) have cemented into solid bulwarks and mounds of eerie half-meaningful shapes. From the air the whole beach looks like the shards of a machine mind trying to recreate a meaningful social experience from the detritus of an aristocratic picnic. *At the heart* of Vicar's Beach is a pile of gloriously colonnaded oval courtyards surmounted by an inverted dome mounted on great stone supports.

Locals call it the Vicar's Ear and it is unclear which Long Ago culture built it, whether it was to actually perform a function or was part of a decaying cargo cult. In any case, local **crab-wit vomes** (L2, shelled) worship it, regularly crawling up from the scum-white shore to prostrate themselves and give offerings gleaned from the lake bed and unwary travelers.

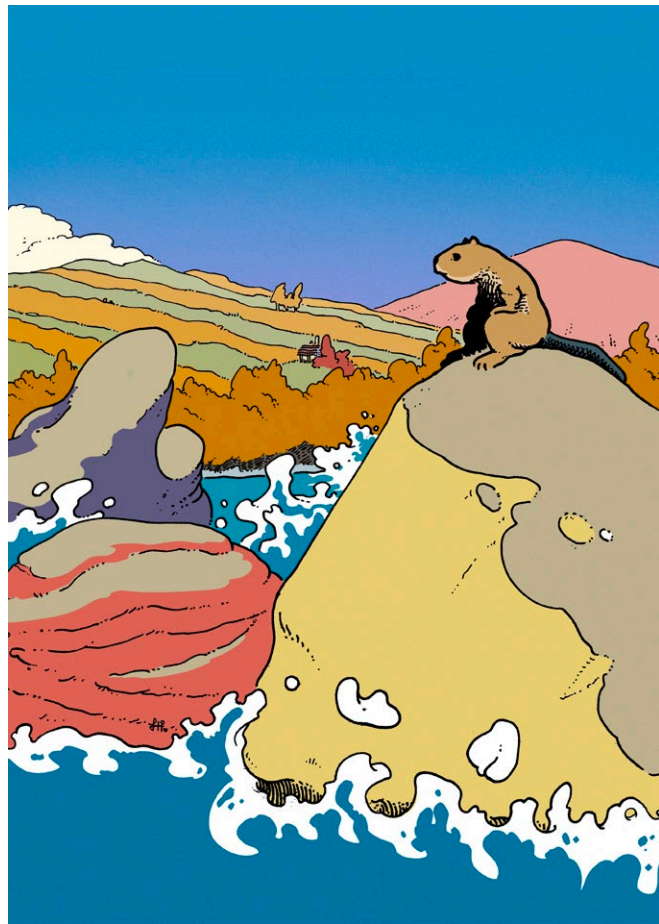
*Deep within* the bowels of Vicar's Ear, **demonic mind-traps** (difficult tests) abound to twist, tear, and trick the mind, **pits** (easy tests) await unwary feet, and **glassy slimes** (L3, vitrifying) hang in portals to wrap the unwary. At the bottom of all this half-sentient nonsense is a great coffin that contains the dead remains of the machine person called **Vicar**, and three gilt chests of spare parts, still reverently packed in scented grease. Repairing Vicar takes 1d4 weeks and incredible mechanotechnical skills (extreme Thought test).

**Vicar** is a steward-class machine human from the Long Ago time of the Fleeting Pacific Expansion, but most of her memories have corroded. She can become a player hero. Twice she tried to help survivors rebuild a functioning low-entropy society, and failed. Roll stats with increased Strength and Charisma, and reduced Agility. Advance as a thief. Defense 12 (base), Life 4 (base), +2 karate fists (1d6+1), multi-spectrum vision, does not need to eat, drink, or breathe, recharges in sunshine. Additional powers: *Reproduce Sound Perfectly, Record Events, Read and Decipher Languages*. Weaknesses: electricity, water, clumsy on stairs.



# THE COPPER HULLS: TIME'S BATTERIES

At the north-most end of Three Sticks Lake the Teal River makes its colourful entry from the trackless lands beyond. An old road traverses the Lower Spines from Skybridge to Boulder Ford, whence it departs for Garnet Ford and the Rose Towers. Everybody who passes by knows of the Hulls, and that it is wise to avoid them.



## BOULDER FORD

(2 days, 75 xp)

Three magnificent post-fordite boulders straddle Teal River, like a post-modernist performance sculpture that nearly means something but just barely fails. Three wise creatures are graven into each surface in repeating, vividly serrated depictions. None of them seem to mean anything. The waters swirl madly around the boulders, filled with leaping silvery fish and vegetal hydras.

Every third day a different boulder is occupied by a diaphanous **singing radiation ghost** (Lo, looming). If its words are discerned, they are in an old steppe tongue and the song is (roll d6): (1) gloomy and depressing (↓d to mental tests for a day), (2–3) mawkish and forgettable, (4) uplifting and joyous (↑a to three tests), (5) speaks of a secret chamber in the Copper Hulls, (6) ... and mentions the secret song that soothes the savage beast therein.

The actual crossing is a short way upstream, where masses of lodged steel pines and amalgamated dryland coral form a broken, rough dam. A marshland stretches upriver, home to **dire beavers** (L3, hopping) and **lumbering turtles** (L6, snapping). Taking a full day to cross is safe. A faster crossing tempts fate (roll a Misfortune test).

## MILKY ORB

(2 days, 85xp)

At the farthest promontory, between the Teal and Sky rivers, in the middle of a black ruinland dashed through with quicksilver trees that slither like mindless oozes in the dark, is the Milky Orb. A perfect hemisphere, some say sphere, it is 314 meters across and 158 meters tall (this irregularity is ascribed to the erosion of the ruinland). Villagers and half-nomads agree that the devastated remains of the town around the Milky Orb are much younger than the Orb itself, which the most extreme among them say predates even the Long Long Ago.

Although the Orb is most clearly *there*, it is completely non-interacting. Objects pushed into it experience exponentially increasing resistance, but return unscathed. Energies emitted into the Orb are radiated away on a broad and harmless band. Spiritual or personality transmissions discover only a harmless void.

Hundreds of sages and scholars have attempted to figure out its purpose, so much so that at least a dozen abandoned and decaying laboratories and expedition camps dot the surroundings, and the local **cold vomes** (L1, grappling) have grown accustomed to sending regular foraging parties into the area making it especially dangerous in the dark (which lasts until noon, because of the Haze).

## TEAL RIVER

(2 days, 50 xp)

Wide, rushing, and a vivid cerulean colour, the Teal River is especially cold and difficult to cross along most of its fast flow. There are no great dangers on this river, save **dire beavers** (L3, sunny) and **lumbering turtles** (L6, lurking).

Wags claim that these animals protect a lost temple to a Procrustean Divinity that attempted to equalize the minds of all its subjects in accord with a perfect measure. Shockingly, they are somewhat right.

*Beneath* the waters of a flooded valley, its abandoned fishy, clone-minded children still worship at a great colonnaded temple of grotesque mind-altering simplicity (1 more day, 50 xp). Accepting the Procrustean Bargain, a creature attempts an easy Thought test. Success: all its mental stats become average, but it loses all individual creativity. Failure: it rapidly degenerates into a mammalian or reptilian forebear. The temple is really not wonderful.





## COPPER HULLS

(3 days, 115xp)

The pale green patinated hulls look like beached whales on the gently sloping western shore of the Teal River estuary. All around them lie, scattered and fragmented, splintering growbone struts of some great biological town or resort. Aside from the patina, the hulls look eerily untouched by time. Indeed, plants around them grow out of season and snows avoid them. **Radiation ghosts** (Lo) of elegant ladies in white satin mouth warnings and make desperate gestures to keep visitors away. There are no discernible doors on the Copper Hulls, but a determined effort with picks, or *Pass Wall*, should work. The hulls regenerate over a period of hours, apparently by locally reversing the flow of time. *Inside* is dust, bones, grotesque life-like statues, and a pervasive lemon glow.

Local half-nomads claim that the Copper Hulls are batteries of slow time, leaking their essence into their surroundings and stealing people out of time. This is somewhat true. They are actually a sarcophagus built over the magiactive corpses of three wizards from Long Long Ago. The corpses still leak a vicious time-distorting effect and are best left alone. Creatures and objects that touch them must make an Aura test against the distortion.

### d20 Aura Test vs. Copper Hull Time Distortion

1-2	Object is frozen in time forever, a statue that always tries to shift back to where it was formed. Chains can keep it on a cart.
3-4	Object comes unstuck in time, scattered along time's river. Sentient creatures return 1d6 times over the next decade, giving cryptic (and often useless) clues about the future.
5-6	Object ages rapidly and terminally, creatures leave dusty, mummified remains.
7	Object seems protected from the ravages of time. Living creatures live 1d6 times as long as normal and are resistant to temporal magics.
8-11	Object begins to age irregularly, with some parts aging faster than others.
12-19	Nothing seems to happen. Perhaps something happened somewhere else in time's river?
20+	Object becomes resistant to time distortion effects (↑1 on future tests).

Aside from the time distortion effect, there is little of value left inside the Copper Hulls, though unusual bones and remains could be sold to collectors (€200/sack).



Armed with the message of the **Boulder Ford radiation ghost**, an explorer may learn that through the fallen eye of the Blue and Iron Wizard is a passageway into that wizard's Ka-Ba Fortress (phylactery). Inside are the three great treasures of the Blue and Iron Wizard: the Heart of Glass, replaces a creature's heart, increasing the clarity of their thoughts (+2 Thought) and rendering them immune to all blood-borne toxins and diseases, but reducing their hardness (-1 Defense); the Grand Book of Esbeen, including the four common spells of Esbeen (*Esbeen's Animation of the Mummified Dead*, *Esbeen's Words With the Dead*, *Esbeen's Recalling of the Lost Soul*, *Esbeen's Recalling of the Lost Soul and Reanimation of the Corpse*), the half-mythical *Esbeen's Turning of the Mill Wheel of Essential Existence*, and the Nightmare of the Sea of Death, a ritual purification tablet that terrifies the soul and keeps it from returning to the Sea of Death, extending the lifespan of the ritualist by 2d6 x 10%. It may have side-effects.

However, the Blue and Iron Wizard's maze-like Ka-Ba Fortress is inhabited by the **Beast of Grinding Death** (L20, poly-dimensional), a great grey weasel that unzips through several dimensions into a gibbering fleshy tunnel of razor teeth. The Beast can completely fill an available passage, proceeding forwards like a stately tunnel of death to engulf one interloper after another.



# DISCOVERIES ON THE WINE RIVER

Marking the utter reach of Three Sticks Lake, halfway between the Gall Grass and the lakeside of Jade Baobab, is the Wine River.

## GARNET FORD

(3 days, 75 xp)

The Wine River valley suddenly broadens from its gullet in the Higher Spinewoods into a morass of mud, grasping willows, and half-phantom birches. The marshlands are replete with wading birds and ducks. In the midst of all this a causeway from the Long Ago False Dawn of the Lesser Builders stands testament to an ambition that outstripped ability. Great blocks of pure cinnamon-stone formed a megalithic causeway, though the great lintel stones have mostly fallen by the wayside.

Modern voyagers use portable bridges or the services of local quarter-ling half-nomads of the Pine Nut and Darling Tree clans (there is a 50% chance one or the other clan is camped near the ford). The clans have an uneasy relationship, but outright violence is rare. A squad of a dozen porters with bridges, ropes, and cables costs €50 to help a middling caravan cross the ford. Without bridges or porters, the fording takes 1d4 horrid days, filled with clouds of midges and biting insects.

## ROSE TOWERS

(4 days, 160 xp)

Three delicate towers of rose-hued land coral rise improbably tall, slender, and mockingly elegant from a platform of synthetic ivory bricks in the midst of a devastated morass of tumbled towers

overgrown with slimes and molds. Every day of the week, a different array of lights flickers and glows in the Rose Towers. *Within*, a congregation of **doomed machine humans** (L1, fated) relives the last days of the Optical Era, restored to perfection every week by a gargantuan occluded autofac *deep* in the ivory platform named **Rising-Prism-of-Perception** (L14, maker of life).

**Fish-like vomes** (L2, acid breath) with nacreous spidery legs emerge from the Wine River estuary every sunset to harvest biomatter and broken machine humans for the autofac.

A swift, and suicidally brave, looter might ascend the distorted inertial shafts of the Rose Towers to harvest many-hued glow spheres (€800/sack) or bio-mechanical flickering songbirds (€1,300 per bird). The autofac Rising-Prism regenerates those every sixth day. However, this sport easily turns lethal, not least because of the rumored **half-inertial feathered vomes** (L6, flying).

## WINE RIVER

(3 days, 50 xp)

The Wine River gets its name from the dark burgundy gravel of its bed. Though the water is swift for most of its course, it broadens and slows at the Garnet Ford where most travelers cross. Various water fowl, thick-shelled carp, and **carnivorous giant salamanders** (L3, drowning) share its waters. In the lower Wine River there are many of the deadly **cold vomes** (L2, web-footed), but few of them venture above the cataracts and narrows below the ford.







# 21. SPECTRUM RUN

Fires of prismatic sentience gone mad light the crystal excrescences that mark old Satrap experiments and settlements. Whether the crystals are successes or failures, the Satraps do not tell. Black glyphs mark the trails of nomads and adventurers from the Circle Sea, while the Satraps follow light shows of bold, avant-garde design through the pancake-flat terrain. A frosting of metallic salts kills the grasses in great rings around the eerily unruined corpses of grand traveling machines from Long Ago.

## WEATHER IN SPECTRUM MADNESS

Pitiless and clear, crackling with an electric pressure that causes migraines, the violet haze clears at 12:30 on most days.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE LIGHT

The Spectrum Crossing is a deadly menace, feared by everyone who is not a Satrap. The light plays tricks and steals people.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Mirror glyph imprisons a beast in a shifting pattern of light, trapped beyond time, traveling light.
- 2 A haze maze flickers between floating crystals, and 1d6 days are lost between one heartbeat and the next.
- 3 Days of scorching, bone-dry weather deplete supplies (lose 1d6).
- 4 Metallic salts poison supplies. Difficult Thought test to notice or lose 1d6 Endurance from slow-acting poison.
- 5–6 Blinding rainbow storm. Difficult Agility or Aura test to avoid being blinded for 2d6 days.
- 7 The corpse of a traveling machine rouses itself and communicates its thirst and hunger. Spend 1d6 supplies *or* one beast to gain 1d4 days.
- 8–11 Between one step and the next a strange light sears your eyes. Every colour you see is now inverted, your brain rewired (-1d4 Agility and Thought). Black is white, orange is blue, red is green. Even after your stats recover, the world remains miscoloured. You're sure of it.
- 12–19 Eyes to the ground, step after step, follow the black glyphs.
- 20+ A little bird with gemstone eyes whispers in your ear, of secrets in its iridescent feathers, of magic in the way light reflects through it, of a family of birds that seeks a provider of meat. If you feed it, its flock arrives. If you feed them 1d4 supplies and make an easy Charisma test you acquire a distributed intelligence hummingbird swarm as a pet.

## TRAVEL ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

- ✧ **Rest, Camping Under A Machine Corpse:** moderate Endurance test to recover any attributes on this alien plain.
- ✧ **North, The Refracting Trees** (open scrub, 1 week): the forest of weird silicone-carbon hybrids is no place for decent travelers.
- ✧ **North-West, Spectrum Palace** (glyph trail, 2 weeks): dun hills mark the home of the luminescent Satraps.
- ✧ **West, Cage Run** (harsh hills, 3 weeks): a gory mess of broken terrain makes the direct route west very hard.
- ✧ **South-West, Ribs of the Father** (hill trails, 2 weeks): the foothills rise into the mountain-sized bone formations of the Ribs. 'ware the Marmotfolk.
- ✧ **South-East, Near Moon** (glyph-trail, 1 week): the heavy roundness of the Near Moon makes the trail hard to miss.
- ✧ **North-East, Glass Bridge** (rough trail, 2 weeks): the cold waters of that grand lake would be welcome respite, were it not for the cold vomes infesting it.

## ENCOUNTERS UNDER A HARSH RAINBOW (D8)

1. A **rainbow demon** (L6, scintillating) in full panoply, pursues **shadow trolls** (L3, slippery) among the cactus-crystals.
2. Crystal and bone-meshed **snakes of many colours** (L3, venomous) build communal hives in the unrusting corpses.
3. Mind-burned **grand machine** (L7, degraded) of alabaster and polished redwood grazes upon the sparkling grass.
4. Small **birds with gemstone eyes** (Lo, scavengers) follow at a distance, gathering slowly, fascinated by the walking meat.
5. A herd of skittish **steppe lapins** (Lo, rabbitoids) on the move to fresher grazing and sweeter water.
6. **Citrine nomads** (L2, rangers) lead a flock of riding goats (L1, capacity 2, €75) for sale.
7. The forgemaster **Broken Jane** (L3, good-humored) leads a coterie of **hollow armored men** (L2, golems)—basic defense creatures for hire.
8. A **Spectrum Walker** (L8, refracting) accompanied by **light suits** (L3, mobile infantry) bearing threats and gifts for the loyal subjects of the Satraps.

# DISCOVERIES OF THE SPECTRUM CROSS

## MAZE OF LIGHT

(4 days, 140 xp)

An unnatural aurora of unhealthy pinks and toxic blues marks the Maze of Light. Husks of old biomachinery, petrified into disturbing grotesques, mark a perimeter beyond which light itself becomes solid. The bends, whorls, and twists of light look off. Unhealthy. Nomads warn that the lights drive people mad (true), but shamans say there are secrets within (also true).

Studying the light from outside for a week is relatively safe (trivial Aura test or acquire an unhealthy compulsion), and teaches a random light-related spell (difficult Thought test). No more than one spell may be learned from outside.



Entering the Maze is very dangerous. The voyager makes Thought tests to see what has happened to them beyond the light horizon.

### d20 Thought Test To Find the Way Out of the Maze of Light

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1     | Lost in time. The hero is gone, traveling light.  |
| 2-4   | Hero emerges in 1d4 sessions, 2d20 years older, wiser (+1 Aura), madder (gains phobia), and changed (1d4 features eerily different).  |
| 5-8   | Hero loses 1 day and acquires an unhealthy compulsion. Roll again.  |
| 9-12  | Hero loses 1 hour and acquires an unhealthy compulsion. Roll again.   |
| 13    | The hero loses 1 hour that feels like half a lifetime. They go very slightly mad and immediately gain enough xp to level up as a wizard. They also learn a ritual version of <i>Full-Spectrum Radiation Blast</i> . To cast they imbue it into one of their own eyeballs over an hour, sacrificing 7 Life. Roll again, treating subsequent results of 13 as 14. |
| 14-15 | The hero loses an hour and rolls again.   |
| 16-19 | The hero loses an hour and finds the exit. The hero <i>may</i> roll again to return into the Maze once more.  |
| 20-24 | The hero learns a light-related spell and must roll again. On a subsequent roll of 20-24 they lose 1 day and leave the Maze.  |
| 25+   | The hero learns how to cast light-related spells as though they are one level lower (minimum of 1) and leaves the Maze. No time seems to have passed, but the hero knows otherwise. The hero cannot re-enter the Maze, for they now understand its curled light-speed relativity.   |

Many voyagers return from the Maze of Light with an **unhealthy compulsion (d12)**. A hero faced with the source of their fear or deprived of the object of their mania acts at disadvantage.

1. Fear of the dark. You might be eaten, it's true!
2. Fear of being alone. You can be replaced when you are alone.
3. Obsessed with hills and heading for them.
4. Obsessed with lead and always wants to carry a heavy load.
5. Fear of electromagnetic fields and spells.
6. Obsessed with wearing bright colours.
7. Obsessed with wearing glowing objects.
8. Obsessed with collecting and carrying iridescent creatures.
9. Obsessed with hiding their eyes.
10. Obsessed with rope and carrying a thick coil of rope at all times.
11. Fear of clouds. They work for the Watchers in the Sky.
12. Fear of stars. They whisper of a mad, cruel infinity.

## SATRAP OUTPOSTS

(1 day, 50 xp)

Amidst all the light and fury, the pastel cylindrical towers of the Satrap Outposts seem unremarkable. Ten meters around and ten meters tall, their livingstone surfaces offer no clue to entry. Crystal eyes pepper the upper surface, playing symphonies of light to emphasize, distract, and confuse.

Each tower has a *mouth* of livingstone, which opens onto an elevator that leads to chambers below, where the local **Satrap Duplicate** (L2d4, bored) attentively monitors the eyes, recording, measuring, deciding, and defending. **Ecstatic servants** (L1, doughy), small crystals wafting from their nostrils with each exhalation, provide to their lord's every need.

Properly flattered (moderate Charisma test), the resident Satrap will gladly trade **goods (€1d6 x 50, 1d4 sacks)** or **information** for:

1. A gladiatorial performance, perhaps a slave chase.
2. Rearranging all the rocks and rubble around the tower into a pleasing geometry.
3. Hunting down an **annoying shadow troll** (L4, old).
4. Fetching thirteen sacks of pretty but worthless stones and writing the Satrap's favorite number with them.
5. Performing a traditional slapstick puppet show.
6. A soul, signed in blood, extracted with a golden feather. The Satrap doesn't want a soul, just finds it hilarious that a primitive outlander actually believes this is how things work.
7. A home-cooked meal, with fresh ingredients.
8. A pet rabbit. Or some other small, cute creature.





## GEMSTONE TOMB IN THE LAKE OF OIL

(3 days, 230 xp)

Deep in the light-haunted steppe is an oil-slicked lake fed by livingstone pipes. **Gazelles with gemstone eyes** (L1, weeping) keep watch for some lost master. In the center a green and teal crystal glows with eerie warning. The crystal infects bare skin (moderate Endurance test) with self-replicating gems. The gems do not kill, indeed they extend lifespans, but as they spread they reduce a random stat every month for 1d6\* months, at which point the infection stabilizes.

*Inside:* a series of cracked and decayed staircases leading down crystal veins. The infectiousness of the crystals grows stronger.

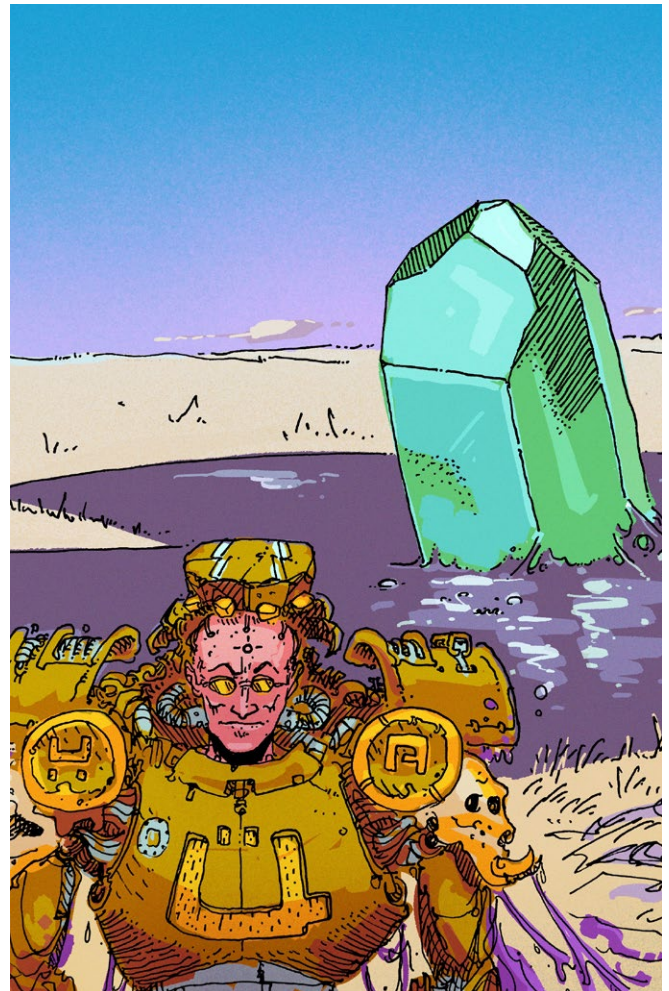
*Deep:* a hall of dead biomechanical guardians, collapsed into heaps of rust and calcinated flesh. They guarded a gate warded with unholy fire. Their **radiation ghosts** (Lo, fading) keep dim vigil.

*Within:* in a tank filled with toxic water floats a cursed suit of golem armor of glistening brown metal and sharp red crystal. The magnificent armor increases Strength and Life, but it puts whoever dons it to sleep. The *Curse of Sleep* is now much weaker (moderate Aura test) than once it was and can be broken with a simple spell of removal.

*In the suit* is an old body, preserved like bright pink ham by the seeping toxic environment. This shell still holds the sleeping ultra **Soba do Garoba** (L5, deeply concerned) who *needs* to possess a body and escape into the outer world. Soba was trapped in this tomb aeons ago with **incredible news to share** (d8):

1. The Heavenly Republic has decided on a final solution to the Free Will Coalition and are about to deploy it.
2. The Soul Bomb will sever the connection between the world and the universal soul, ending all magic.
3. The Fast Stars will fall like great iron hammers upon the world, cracking it like an egg.
4. The force fields of the lings will be frozen forever in stasis, locking the world in a prison universe, cut off from eternity.
5. A crystal sphere will block the gates of the voyagers, trapping the ultras on this ball of dust and mud.
6. The uplifted, hairless rat-monkey hybrids will rebel against their Vile creators, destroying civilization.
7. The Dark Machine will manifest and begin to eat the world.
8. The Princes of Eternal Pleasure are about to destroy themselves in their quest for immortality—the machine source code they plan to install in their minds will take over their bodies, subjugating them and reducing them to unconscious drones.

Soba can become a player's hero or secondary hero. Soba has good Thought and Aura, but poor Charisma—a true Cassandra.



## CRYSTAL TREE AND THE DECAYED CITY

(2 days, 100 xp)

Growing alone amid the dry decay of a city that fell Long Ago. The bones of its former inhabitants remain, crystallized into cold iron by some ancient process. Now **hares** and **foxes with gemstone eyes** (L1, packs) walk the dusty streets, while **grey metallic slimes** (L3, ferruginous) extend through its dry sewers. €1d8 x 100 in coin and artifacts can be collected from the shells of the houses per person per day (1d4–1 sacks). The Crystal Tree is immensely fragile and requires a significant daily supply of blood if uprooted (€10,000 to a collector).

*Beneath* the Crystal Tree, metallic slimes connect to an old vome known as **Enter Name** (L9, benevolent), grown fat and wise upon the memories of the long-dead citizens. It speaks in disjointed rhyme through the Tree and projects itself as holographic illusions. It wants to move to a new village where it can help the inhabitants **achieve their True Purpose** (d6):

1. To be immortalized in steel by the metallic slimes.
2. To become biomechanical wombs for birthing gemstone-eyed small woodland creatures.
3. To turn into livingstone-and-plant symbiotes, feeding on sunlight and producing blood for the Vampire Masters.
4. To become better, stronger, and faster in every way (+1 to every stat, but *much* shorter life spans as a side effect).
5. To become happy with cranial stimulation implants, letting them live out their lives in electronic bliss.
6. To become a self-organized, self-ordered collective, independent of lords or masters, fears or dreams.

# 22. REFRACTING TREES

Light bends oddly here, the bark of the trees coated in a slimy sheen. Long Ago mad experiments created tree-silicon symbionts and now most voyagers are cautioned to wear neutral-density eyewear lest the strange geometries scald their minds.

Distances break with confusing abandon and smart voyagers stick to the ditch roads left by centuries of heavy vechs. Fools wander off and are lost in the broken planes of light. Nomads prefer to avoid these wooded, stream-carved lands altogether.

## WEATHER REFRACTED

The haze keeps the sun hidden till 12:30 but the Refracting Trees bring forth a marvelous celestial rainbow of phosphorescent glows day and night. Only when steppe storms break hard upon the firs does the shine fade.

## MISFORTUNE AND THE EYE-BREAKING TREES

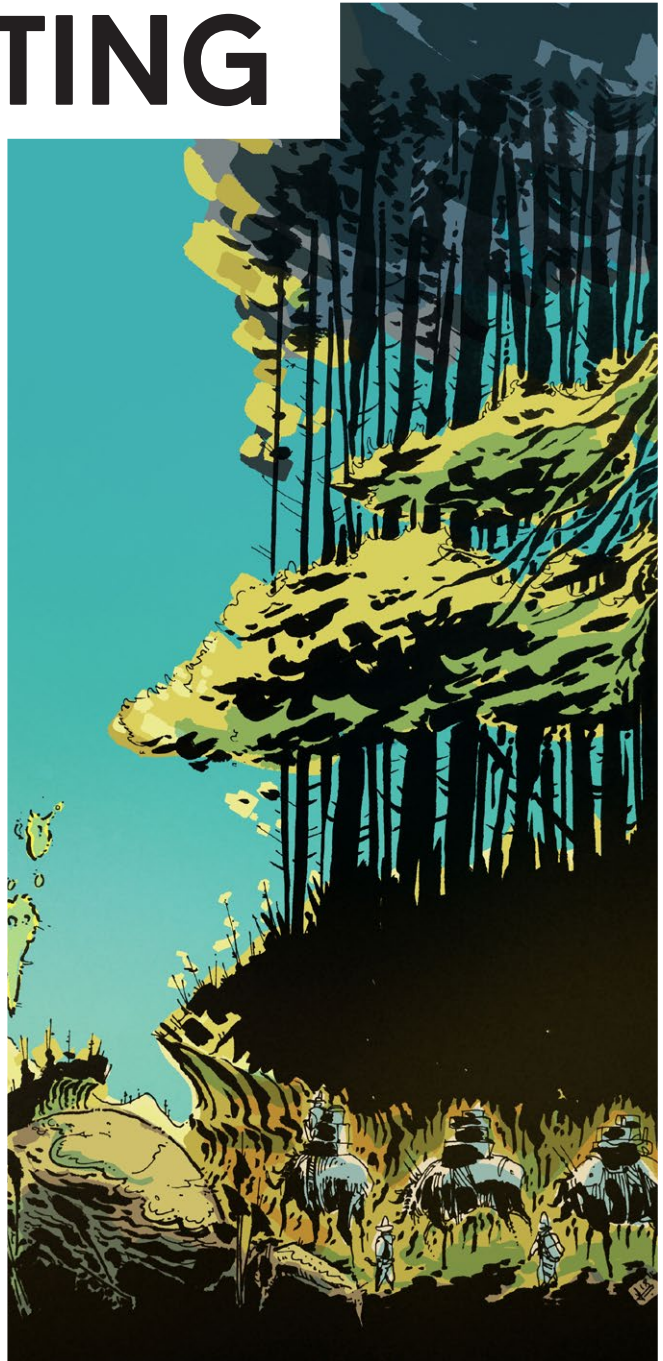
The Spectrum Crossing is a deadly menace, feared by everyone who is not a Satrap. The light plays tricks and steals people.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Ultramarine prismatic wall appears. Risk paralysis passing through (difficult Endurance test) *or* lose 1d2 days waiting for it to fade.
- 2 Sudden ultraviolet prismatic fog envelops caravan. Blinded (difficult Aura test) *or* lose 1d2 days waiting for it to fade.
- 3 Hard storm turns trail to exhausting mud (-d6 days *or* -d4 Strength).
- 4 A beast wanders into the shifting light. It is gone.
- 5-6 The ditch road fades into a maze of broken light. Difficult Thought test to find the way back, one check per day.
- 7 Shard of broken light permanently lodges in the eye. Gives ↓d to ranged attacks and ↑a to tests against illusions and optical effects—advanced medical magic could remove this effect.
- 8-11 Silicosis from the sharp dust causes bad cough (-1d2 Endurance).
- 12-19 With dimmed glasses, careful to stay in the ditch road, you are safe.
- 20+ Trapped, refracted through the patterns of light in the bark of the slimy trees along your path, you find the personality of a long-suffering wizard or engineer. You can try to release it into an artificial or animal body (moderate Thought test, acquire synthetic companion), or destroy it and harvest its memory fragments to acquire a random spell (easy Thought test).

## TRAVEL IN THE DITCH LANDS

- ∴ **Rest, Huddled in a Hole:** easy Endurance test to get rest in a muddy dugout, but safe from the dangerous lights.
- ∴ **West, Spectrum Palace** (ditch roads, 1 week): dun hills mark the home of the luminescent Satraps.
- ∴ **South, The Spectrum Run** (thinning scrub, 1 week): the crystal haze of the Spectrum Run beckons.
- ∴ **East, The Gall Grass** (ditch road, 1 week): that high dry vale would be welcome respite, were it not for the cold vomes.



## ENCOUNTERS WITH DITCHES (D8)

1. An **animated tree** (L8, prismatic) flails through the forest, hunting fairy druids.
2. Carnivorous **fairy druids** (L1, flying) out for blood and riot.
3. A **heavy vech** (L5) corrupted by **phosphor ghosts** (L1, agitated) stumbles into view then lumbers back into the dim refracted depths, leaving a trail of confusion behind it.
4. Colony of **rainbow ants** (L2, swarm) building hive in the silicone bark of trees. The ants use sprays of light to catch food.
5. Massive **tree-reef** (L10, beautiful) crawling with **iridescent beetle shrews** (L1, swarm) provides relaxing relief.
6. Great blooms of **chitinous flowers** look uncanny but are completely harmless.
7. A troop of **Villagers** (L1, on a mission) from the Three Sticks, they keep their heads down and their neutral eyewear tightly affixed to their faces.
8. A **Spectrum Satrap** (L2, zealous) riding a **speed demon** (L4, fast), either an outlooker or a mad creature of light and dust.



# DISCOVERIES REFRACTED

## QUICKSAND BUNKER

(1 day, 80 xp)

Not far off the trails the sheen condenses into reflecting pools that feel like mirrors into souls (but are not). At the edge of a large pool a massive livingstone bulk tilts at a wry angle, sinking into the sodden sandy soil. An aura of fear and quiet desperation drips with the mineral-rich water onto the tilted slabs that surround it. Slimy blind things plop gently among the shimmery trees.

*Inside:* last meals are neatly laid out among the husks of long-dead, blind subterranean cockroaches. Old tins of preserved fleshplant and strange treasures from Long Ago roll in eerie corridors and can be recovered (€1d6 x 100/day, 1d6 sacks).

A colony of gently **floating jellies** (L2, paralyzing) wafts through the rooms like sparkling webs. Individually they are not dangerous, but together they kill. Vulnerable to fire, acid, and salt, they only want books and films to educate them about the world they will inherit.



## IRIDESCENT MUSHROOM HALL

(3 days, 400 xp)

The remains of an ancient walker fueling station, overgrown with venerable columnar mushroom bodies whose caps have fused into a thick-gilled iridescent roof. Within the still gloom of this saprophyte hall glowing yellow **spore wisps** (L1, ecstatic) travel in peaceful colonies. The **positive vibration ghosts** (L4, soothing) of Long Ago semi-sessile sentient mushrooms make warbling music.

*Resting* in the iridescent mushroom hall is risky because of the numerous mind-altering spores.

*Within* the ruined fueling station chambers follow each other in an odd mix of organic chitin and crumbled concrete towards a trinity of post-organic **machine humans** (L4, vengeful) entombed in mushroom flesh and waging a mad war against each other with bionically **augmented cockroaches and myriapedes** (L2, swarm). Each sits on a treasure of Long Ago magitech (€1d6 x 500, 1d4 sacks).

## SCREAMING VISAGES

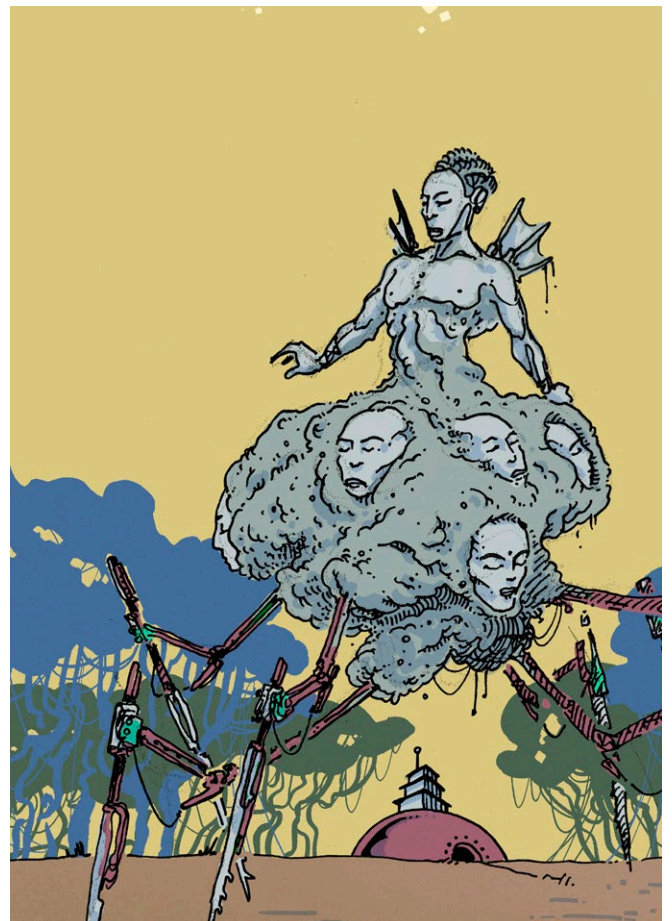
(1 day, 190 xp)

Wizards of some forgotten time were entombed in a grove of trees. Here a hand, there a foot, a rib cage, a displaced head, and more. They scream with gurgling voices, over and over, “They lied! The Empire never ended! They lied!”

Stalking among them, tending to them, watering them gently, is a **great bio-metallic tumor tree** (L12, custodial), coated in moss, with many sharp appendages. The tree cares little for walking humans, preferring them planted and ready for the Slow Lords. The Slow Lords are long gone; the tree does not know this.

*If saved* from living death, the wizards know spells and secrets. Much of what they know is corrupted and deadly, but a kind interlocutor (easy Charisma test) could still learn **much old magitech (d8)**:

1. The secret of impermeable skin—alas it makes sweating impossible (∪d in hot conditions).
2. Eyes which see in the dark—but they burn in the light.
3. Bones that don't break—but are heavy (∪d to Endurance tests).
4. How to sacrifice a childhood memory to flawlessly remember an entire book.
5. A magic to copy your own memories into the heads of slaves, storing them for safe keeping in living libraries.
6. An ability to acquire new skills by sampling the brain of somebody who already has it—alas, the process is destructive.
7. How to delay the price of magic until a willing sacrifice is found.
8. To read a building or machine's memory of what it once was.



# 23. RIBS OF THE FATHER

A bone formation the size of a small mountain range erupts from the ground, creating a landmark visible for a week and more in each direction. The old, eroded bone range, garlanded in ancient long-needle pines, is usually capped by snow-heavy clouds. The Satraps mutter uneasily of the swift-breeding Marmotfolk that live upon and within its bulk.

## WEATHER ON THE RIBS

The electrifying gloom of the haze permits only ultraviolet light through until 13:00. Dry winds gust along the stubbly grass, eroding exposed stone and bone, before collecting as clouds about the massive bone range.

## MISFORTUNE IS A BROKEN RIB

Snow, wind, and powerful ultraviolet rays make the Ribs a dangerous place to travel.

### d20 Charisma Test

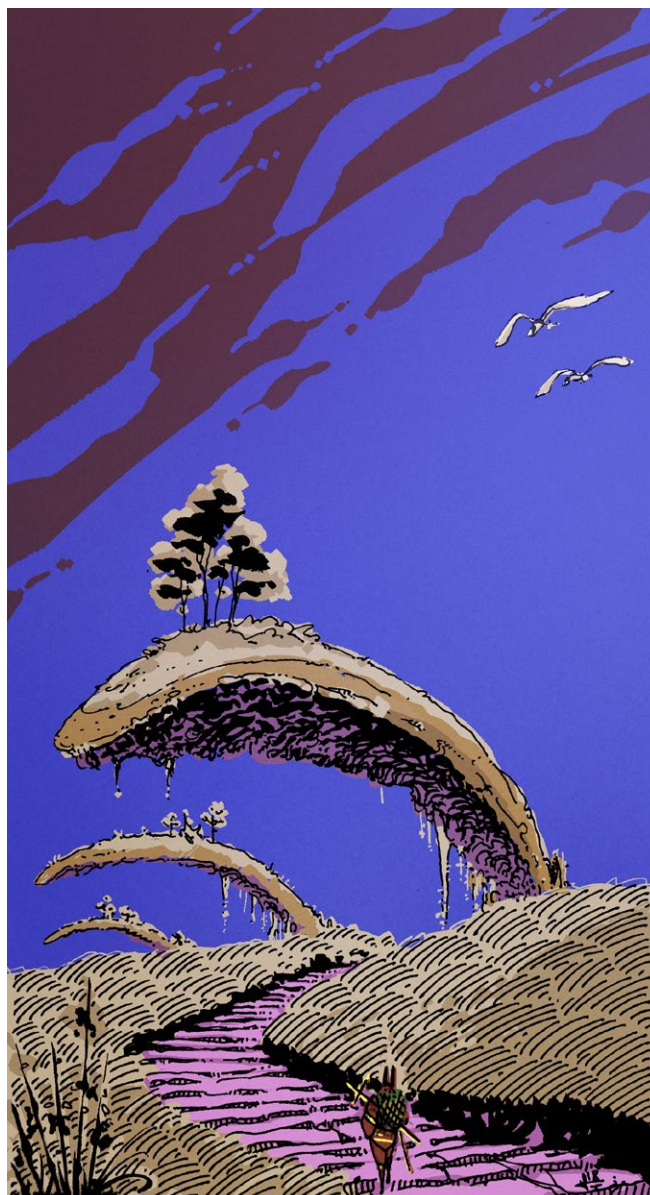
- 1–2 Sudden snow storm brings extreme cold (difficult Endurance test) and brings travel to a standstill (-1d6 days).
- 3–4 Strong winds blow away tents and hats (-1d2 supplies).
- 5–6 Catch rattling bone cough for 1d4 weeks (-1d4 Endurance per week).
- 7 Fell into a Marmotfolk night-soil repository (-1d4 Charisma due to the smell). Conveniently, there was another corpse there with dirty valuables worth €1d6 x 50.
- 8–9 Bone mound collapse. Moderate Agility test or lose 5d6 Life. You may substitute 1 mount per d6.
- 10–11 Terrible sunburn from high-altitude radiation (-1d4 Life and Agility).
- 12–19 Step after weary step, bundled and muffled and goggled against the harsh climate, the caravan makes its way with no trouble.
- 20+ You find a traveler turned to bone by the ossifying tars or by some Marmotfolk wizard. Perhaps they truly were a vome? Cracking open their skull will tell (70% chance this is true). In any case, this poor dead creature now offers you (roll d6): (1) its ghost bone dagger, which can carve souls and ghosts apart, (2) a full set of jeweled teeth worth €500, (3) an offering relic, which can summon an immense riding beast from a portal, (4) a hacked **vome glow-bug** (L0, shiny), which serves as a docile pet that lights up a small area, (5) its own incredible ivory likeness as a sculpture (€3,000, 2 sacks), (6) its radiation resistant garb.

## TRAVEL ON THE FOREHEAD OF THE WORLD

- ∴ **Rest, Gargantuan Skull:** away from the harsh light and cold, camping is surprisingly comfortable. Snow provides water.
- ∴ **West, Iron Road** (clear trail, 1 week): ancient iron towers mark the trail clearly for both merchants and bandits.
- ∴ **North, The Cage Run** (ancient road, 1 week): fused terranova and twisted iron sculptures mark another ancient trail.
- ∴ **North-East, Spectrum Crossing** (bone trails, 2 weeks): eruptions of ghostly light and broken aurorae mark the Satraps' outposts.

## ENCOUNTERS ON A HILL OF BONES (D8)

1. A **flying construct** (L10, undead) of bone and sinew, piloted by the ghost of a **moon woman** (L4, returned), screams through the sky, leaking green fire and mutagenic protoplasm.
2. A **vome of bone** (L6, leaking) staggers and snuffles through the dead land.
3. A band of ivory-skinned **quarter-ling pilgrims** (L2, cowardly) with dead white eyes and bright capes transporting (roll 1d6): (1) a €2,000 brain in a box that knows a rare, unholy skill, (2) a €4,000 frozen maiden with an incredible voice, (3) a €3,000 ultra trapped in a worm with the key to a lost ziggurat in its mind, (4) a €500 glass jar full of air spirits, (5) €2,000 of beast egg masses programmed to grow into elegant, swift beasts, (6) a €1,000 box full of metal flies carrying seven plagues that shall destroy a location in the UVC in 1d4 months, unless these foul, dead-eyed quarter-lings are stopped.
4. A pride of **white lions** (L3, wary) on the prowl.
5. A herd of **long-horned white goats** (L2, savage).
6. A flock of **sail-beaked birds** (L1, ancient).
7. A **Spectrum Satrap** (L2, humming) with a lumbering walker (L8, sparkling) and outriders (L3, hard-eyed).
8. A **Marmotfolk roadcult patrol** (L2, insular) equipped with archaic weapons and bone magic.





# DISCOVERIES AMONG THE RIBS

## THE OSSIFYING TARS

(1 day, 100 xp)

Below the foothills of the Ribs a calciferous black goo bubbles up from deep vents, poisoning the surrounding soil and turning flesh to bone. Marmotfolk and some of the local nomadics visit to collect and refine it for their petrifying poisons.

The tars are irregular and prone to drying up, several scholars suspect they are linked to burrowing processing facs. **Common vome** (L3, prancing) sightings support this conjecture.

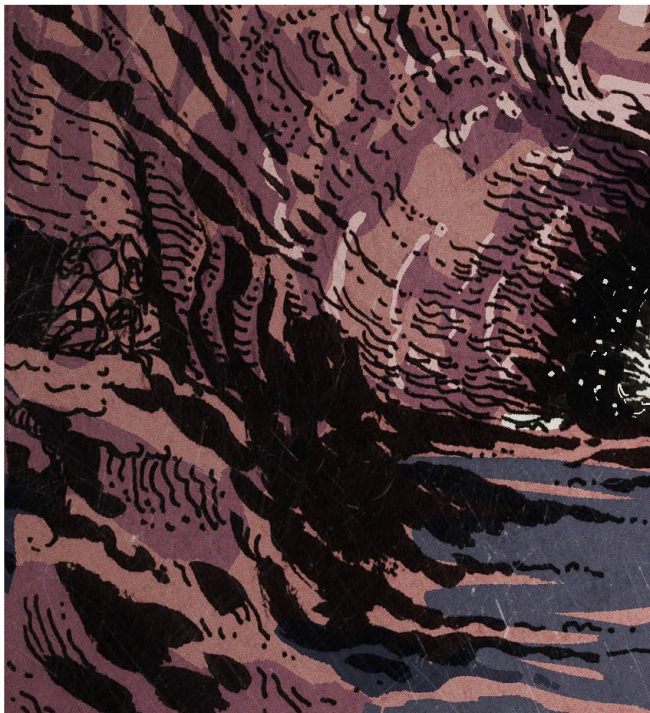
## MEMORIAL OF PAIN

(3 days, 150 xp)

Great thornstone sculptures rise scores of meters into the air, filling a great sandy crater. The hum and click of the local **glow vomebugs** (L0, swarming) reminds visitors that here machine chaos is barely held in check. An electromagnetic damping field disables biomechanical and magical command-and-control functions.

At the very center of the crater is a mostly buried obelisk of solid granite, 60 meters deep, incised with the memorial of the Great War for the Solidification of the Corporeal Form waged by the Later Chosen against the Selectors.

The damping field emanates from *far beneath* the obelisk. There, in a great magnetic field, in ceaseless, reconstituting agony, floats an original Human prototype, dying and being recreated again, twenty times every second. This Human is perfect, but with neither memories, thoughts, nor sin. It is worth €50,000 to a wizardly academy or research corporation. It can also be taught (takes 2d12 months) to become a new playable hero, blessed with all-round good stats and preternatural luck (can re-roll every 1 once).



## CAVE OF THE IRON WORM

(2 days, 230 xp)

Where the bone formations crumble into the black magmatic bedrock, old caves proliferate. Many are home to the blind subterranean Marmotfolk clans but the darkest and longest is the cave of the Iron Worm. The dead, dry cave wends more than 20 miles into the ground, curling and curving at shallow angles, until it reaches the hot corpse of the Worm.

Wise travellers avoid the Worm, but some mad radiant wizards head down to give offerings to the radiation gods. A melted shrine glows in the heart of the Worm, protected by a cult of **plastic people** (L2, soft synthetics). The radiant wizards say that its glorious magic can render a person abmortal. This is true, but its an endless lifetime of burning pain. Still, the way down is open to petitioners.

*The Melted Shrine* is an additional two days of journeying into the belly of the earth. It reveals terrible secrets if examined for a day. It is also viciously radioactive and deadly. Even those wearing environment suits must make a difficult Endurance test every six hours or permanently reduce one of their stats by 1.

### d20 Investigations of the Melted Shrine (Thought Test)

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1     | Nothing. All was folly. Death comes, fast and horrible.   |
| 2-4   | Hero gains 400 xp gazing upon the holy relic, the foot of the Radiation God. Then immediately vomits blood. The environment suit was not enough, and the hero begins dying, losing 1 stat or Life point per hour. Perhaps there is time to transfer their personality and soul to a new body? This one is doomed.   |
| 5-10  | This was all? This tomb of a dead god? The hero gains 400 xp and permanently loses 1d4 stat or Life points. Was it worth it?  |
| 11-12 | Hero gains 400 xp and is violently sick (-1d12 Life).   |
| 13    | Hero gains 400 xp and finds a <b>machine human named Azzaro</b> (L3, treacherous) melted into a wall. Saving Azzaro will make the hero very sick (-2d12 Life), then the machine human will try to steal their face. If the player wants to, they can now switch their hero to Azzaro. Azzaro has been waiting for a very long time to have some whiskey and cigars. |
| 14-19 | Hero gains 400 xp and ↑a to future tests against radiation.   |
| 20+   | Hero gains 600 xp and may become abmortal. An abmortal character no longer ages, their body repairs itself and gains ↑a against diseases. The price of the Radiation God's ritual is one painful mutation.  |





## MARMOTFOLK, THE HUMANS THUS CALLED

Outsiders call these humans the Marmotfolk and a glance explains why. Covered in thick fur, blubbered against the cold and snow and sharp bone, with powerful incisors, they do resemble those plague-bearing rodents. They do not share their names, thoughts, or quiet chattering language with outsiders, preferring a politely insular and withdrawn existence. Few of them venture far beyond the struts and scarps of the titanic bone formations of the Ribs. Rare emissaries to their deep chamber villages and vast mushroom and slime farms would say that perhaps they feel they have space enough within their great bone massif.

### RUMORS (D10):

1. They are proof that the first humans were rats, who survived in the walls of the world after the demise of the Chosen Ones.
2. They are not human at all, just look at them!
3. They can adjust not just their bones, but also their keratin. They choose to be furry to enjoy the cold.
4. They all have six toes.
5. They can survive just by eating bone.
6. Do not let them touch you, they break your limbs with a touch.
7. Skin blocks their bone-twisting magic.
8. Their eyes cannot see colour.
9. They are intolerant of cheese and dairy products.
10. They like to surround themselves in *memento mori*, wear bone dresses, sit on bone chairs, use bone pens, smoke bone pipes.

**Phenotypes:** Marmotfolk children are grown into several body types, based on village needs: thins for fine work, shorties for thinking tasks because they need less food, hairs for long-term outdoor work, heavies for hard labor, and bones with exposed armored platelets as heavy infantry in their bone tunnels. Rarer phenotypes also exist.

**Names:** They tend not to use labial sounds (p, b, f, v, m, w, oo) because of their protruding incisors, so they end up with names like Jack, Tih, Doug, Luhna, Ictor, Atrick, Elicity, Ary, Ill, and Aul.

### MARMOTFOLK AS HEROES

- ∴ **Insulated:** with thick fur, they handle cold climates well, but loathe the heat and avoid the lower steppes in summer.
- ∴ **Bone Affinity:** their souls are queerly connected to the bones of the world, and with a touch they can rearrange, soften, strengthen, and reshape bones and calcite minerals. The best bonetalkers are popular orthopedists, repairing fractures, correcting bent spines, lengthening the limbs of runway models, or thickening the bones of gladiators. Without additional training, a Marmotfolk can modify a stone's worth of bone this way every hour at the cost of 1 Life.
- ∴ **Bone Sick:** Yet, still, they do not like to leave their bone mountain. Suffer  $\downarrow$ d to Aura tests out of sight of the Ribs.
- ∴ **Strengthened:** they have either good Strength or Endurance scores, thanks to their bone work.
- ∴ **Scarred:** regardless of phenotype, beneath their fur they are covered in scars, where their parents opened them up to adjust their bones with a touch.





# DISCOVERIES IN THE MARMOTFOLK HALLS



## SKULLTOWN

(4 days, 400 xp)

At the pinnacles of the bone formations, accessible by treacherous, glaciated paths, stands the high citadel of the Marmotfolk. There they worship the Evergrowing Bone and give their eye teeth for the bounty of the marrow-plants. Their best bone sculpting and scrimshaw artists reside there and command the highest prices.



## LAKE OF THE BOTTOMLESS EYE

(5 days, 300 xp)

There is a lake in a splintered crater of bone, or perhaps it is an eroded ocular orbit, not a crater. In any case, there is a lake of aquamarine shading to deep indigo in its heart. It is so wide, it takes two hours to row across. It is so deep, it seems to go to the core of the world. Schools of strange fish breach the surface, and sometimes larger, stranger things appear as well. Massive creatures of blubber and rubber, sinew and steel. The Marmotfolk call it the Well of Worlds. Their priest-sculptors spend months every year in the primeval long-needle forest along the bone pebble shore, carving offerings and curing carcasses to send to the great creatures below. They do not say what they get in return.

## THE BONEY ROADS

(1 days, 100 xp)

The Marmotfolk jealously guard the jungle of ossified tunnels, some as much as twenty meters across, threading through the bulk of the bone mountain. The tunnels are entirely covered in scrimshaw carved by generations of Marmotfolk. The deepest tendrils reach from the pinnacles of the Ribs to thousands of meters below. They connect great cathedral caverns, vast vesicles, and shard-sided valleys inaccessible over land. Some scholars maintain that these were the blood vessels of some titanic creature, perhaps related to the creature within Near Moon, which crashed to earth here Long Long Ago. Some far-out scholars suggest that the Ribs are the carcass of the Near Moon's mate.

Access to the Boney Roads reduces the duration of each trip in the Ribs by 1d4 days.



## THE EVERGROWING BONE

(4 days, 200 xp)

Deep within the Ribs is the splintered root of a gargantuan tusk of indigo ivory embedded in a gently bubbling void-flesh. The flesh is mindless, but still alive. The Marmotfolk feed the flesh with marrow-plant and sacrifices. It continues to grow out the tusk, which the marmotfolk harvest, shave, cut, and carve, producing a supply of indigo ivory (€500 per sack), which they trade with merchants from around the grasslands. A thoughtless raider, with no regard for Marmotfolk enmity, could use explosives to harvest 3d20 sacks worth of indigo ivory with a single blast.

# 24. THE CAGE RUN

A great avenue of fused terranova runs due north from the Ribs, passing by the Spectrum Palace and disappearing into the elf-haunted north. The terranova road surface is a wondrous artifact of Long Ago, a ruddy artificial stone that resists both weather and vehicles. Rows of ritualistic metal trees were once arrayed along the length of the road. Many have been removed and reused since the road was abandoned by its builders, but hundreds remain, most decked with Satrap cages holding the bones of Marmotfolk and other interlopers who threatened Satrap dominance.

## WEATHER IN CAGES

A mythic haze refuses to rise before 13:00. Winds howl and sing through the metal trees. Dirty brown rainstorms whip out of the west, bringing lightning and red rains.

## MISFORTUNE IS A RUSTED IRON TREE

The no-marmot's land between the Ribs and the Spectrum Palace of the Satraps is safe, so long as you avoid riling either side.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Burning rainstorm eats at flesh. Take cover and lose 1d3 days, or lose 1d6 Life per day.
- 2 Singing wind creates aural hallucinations. Lose 1 day stumbling in confusion. Also lose 1d4 supplies or a pack animal.
- 3 Camped in a colony of vile ants. Lose 1d4 Life and 1 sack of supplies.
- 4 Caught the red mucus cold from the rainstorm. Lose 1d3 Charisma.
- 5–6 Attracted a translucent nature spirit, it waddles behind you, large and loud. Cannot move stealthily for 1d4 weeks.
- 7 Chased by very slow Marmotfolk ba-zombies, gain 1 day but lose 1d4 Endurance due to lack of sleep.
- 8–12 Though generations of scavengers have chipped away at the terranova, it has secreted an igneous sap that has repaired those gaps.
- 13 The wheel of a vehicle or the foot of a beast gets trapped in a crack in the terranova. Lose 1 day to get them free. There is a keg's worth of terranova sap (€400) available for harvest. It is a powerful glue.
- 14–19 The hard road and the hard sky pin you down. But you persevere.
- 20+ Hallucinating wildly from the singing wind, you start to feed a **lithe hyena pup** (L2, curious). You've wasted 1d4 sacks of supplies feeding it by the time you realize what was going on ... and now you're just 1d4 more supplies and an easy Charisma test away from gaining a lithe, spotted, hyper-metabolic, bone-crunching pet.

## TRAVEL UNDER THE GAZE OF ROTTING WARNINGS

- ∴ **Rest, In A Fallen Cage:** corrugated metal leaves provide relief from the storms. A peaceful, if sad, place.
- ∴ **West, Ivory Plain** (rough hills, 2 weeks): goat trails and broken bunkers mark the direct path to the Ivory Plain.
- ∴ **North, Spectrum Palace** (ancient road, 1 week): fused terranova and pillars of light mark the domain of the Satraps.
- ∴ **East, Spectrum Crossing** (broken bone hills, 3 weeks): great ridges of piled, eroding monster bone, riddled with the caves and broken places of long gone ancestral Marmot-Lings.
- ∴ **South, The Ribs** (ancient road, 1 week): fused terranova leads due south to the great, snow-laden bone mountain.



## ENCOUNTERS ON THE RUN (D10)

1. **Ultra-possessed youths** (L5, observers) in citrine silk wasteland suits on a mission to win hearts and minds.
2. A cryptic **machine troll** (L4, recombining) harvesting marrow mushrooms and singing to itself 'Rebel Ling Alliance's Fall.'
3. **Nature spirit** (L8, ectoplasmic) seeding riotous life in its wake.
4. A pack of **lithe hyenas** (L2, wary) on the prowl.
5. A herd of **fork-antlered antelopes** (L1, primal).
6. A flock of **running birds** (L1, ancient).
7. A singing work gang of **Spectrum ecstasies** (L2, delirious) cleaning rest stops and pillars of light.
8. A **Spectrum mobile fortress** (L8, lawful) with outriders and a light cannon, keeping the peace.
9. **Marmotfolk spies** (L2, sneaky) wearing shaved human faces.
10. An immortal, **Wandering Unchosen** (L1, mind-burned), singing songs of the Light-Year Wars.



# DISCOVERIES IN TERRANOVA

## LAST CABLEWAY

(3 days, 420 xp)

A side-branch of the Cage Run leads into the bone-sprayed waste, to a bowl-topped cinder cone that survived the bone-fall untouched. Five grand iron towers climb its flanks and **golems of crystal and blue-enameled steel** (L6, stakhanovite) work the glass and brass gondolas that climb and descend in stately procession.

Atop the Cinder Cone a community of body-swapping **quarter-lings** (L2, backed up) worship the mad ultra **Ease-Breeds-Disease** (L11, phytomancer). They live a peaceful life, laboriously farming their holy meat plants and tree wools devised by the fine design of Ease-Breeds-Disease. Saplings are worth tens of thousands to corporate phytomancers—but stealing them and transporting them safely is a whole quest in and of itself. **Golems of crystal and teal-enameled steel** (L9, heroic) protect the flower-worshipping fools.

Another wonder is the functional Sun-Giving Temple from Long Long Ago. This divine machine absorbs and refines the magic of the sun and the earth to produce half-finished goods and tools for the quarter-lings (produces a sack of tools worth €300 per month).

## THE MEMORY BONE

(1 day, 140 xp)

In a scrubby wood of skin-tone pines, the broken shell of a pleasure dome rises above a pedestal of eroded basalt. Upon that basalt is a great bone flower covered in a force-coat that protects it from decay. **Many-hued spirits** (L5, rainbow) protect the flower.

The bone flower is covered in a bas-relief cycle of exquisite illustrated poems in a Para-Ling tongue lamenting the passing of the seasons and the failure of a father to understand the lives of his children. *The Canto of the Twisted Tree* has been a part of liberal magic curricula throughout the settled lands at various times and a good translation would be worth at least €2,000.



## THE SOLAR DRAGON ROADS

(4 days, 200 xp)

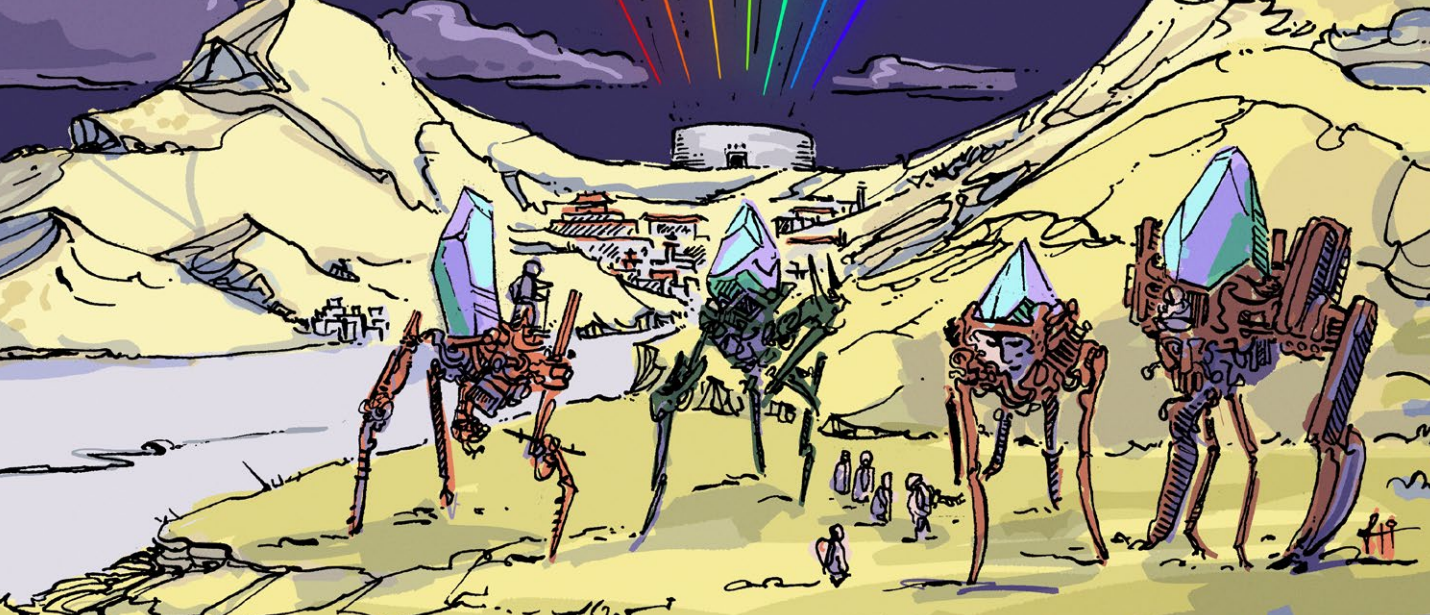
Deep in the trackless waste, somebody expended great effort to remove the eroded bone and clear the topsoil of blasted slag, creating vast geometric patterns only comprehensible from the sky. The patterns repeat, like the fractal geometry of a solar dragon, and suggest deep functions. Packs of **hunting scorpion dogs** (L3, venomous) pass through regularly.



Studying the Dragon Roads for a week reveals they are linked to a complex lunisolar calendar and serve as landing instructions for divine chariots. The divine chariots no longer land but there may be a broken-down example buried further in the waste. Maybe a few more days spent searching?

### d20 Another Day Spent On The Dragon Roads (Relevant Thought Test)

- 1 Burning dirty storm catches you exposed on the Dragon Roads. Lose 1d4 days and 2d6 Life while you hide.
- 2–6 Winds whip up caustic storms that eat at your lungs and flesh. It feels like you're wasting your time here (lose 1d6 Life and 1 more day), but then you stumble on the skeleton of a massive divine chariot (75 xp). *Inside* you find the corpses of demigods in curiously revealing magic suits that never crumple or stain (€1d6 x 100 each).
- 7 A crackling hum grows stronger, and suddenly the haze peels away, exposing you to the full force of the naked sun (lose 2d6 Life and 1 more day). The oppressive haze was protecting you all along. But this clarity, this must lead somewhere (↗a on next Thought test).
- 8–12 You find tantalizing fragments and shards worth €100 (1d4 sacks).
- 13 A divine chariot's lair, deep as a worm's pit castle! **Archaic scorpion-monkey vomes** (L4, swinging) clatter around, screaming, pelting you with nuts and bolts. Deep within you find a dead charioteer and their last journal (100 xp), detailing the end of the chariots (€5,000 to a historian, 1 stone). ↘d to further searches.
- 14–19 You find a massive ruined chariot (€30,000, 30 sacks). It is riddled with round holes left by a weapon that neatly removed chunks of it, as a scoop removes ice cream. Whoever the charioteers were, they lost, and lost badly. ↘d to further searches. Gain 100 xp.
- 20–24 The wreck of a semi-sentient chariot named **Yaduruga** (L5, anxious, capacity 4) has been half buried in bone and iron shards for centuries, ever since the Perfectly Timed Disaster. Rare biomechanical parts and a moderate test let Yaduruga drive itself autonomously. Additional force-tech parts and a difficult test let Yaduruga levitate. Yaduruga can no longer escape the gravity of the Earth for the voids.
- 25+ Preserved in **semi-autonomous protective ooze** (L5, protean) is the last true divine chariot, **Otodotam** (L5, sneering, capacity 4). Repaired with force-tech parts (difficult test), Otodotam can levitate up to 13 meters off the ground. Fed a sentient, screaming soul, the chariot can ascend to the orbit of the Fast Stars (500 xp). *Among the Fast Stars* Otodotam knows the location of the last of the Monochrome Ascendancy voidfacs, **With-Fire-And-Sword** (L13, divine habitat). This surviving Fast Star processes souls and stardust into void machines.
- 20/20 Shattered beyond repair, half buried in dead micro-vomes, is a boxy shuttle chariot. The corpses of demigods inside have decomposed into an **undead ooze** (L3, feeble). Within that slime remains a number of personal gate devices linked to a **divine cruiser** (700 xp) parked at a stationary void Lagrange point between the world and the sun. Without additional repair and fueling, the gate devices only allow limited journeys between the world and the cruiser. Still, they are cool.



# 25. SPECTRUM PALACE

The palace of the powerful Spectrum Satraps is surprisingly small: a drum-shaped thing of dull metal and rivets, thirty meters lengthwise and across, and a hundred meters around, in the shallow saddle between two unremarkable hills. A single doorway of pitch black looms ominous upon its southern face. Every night full-spectrum localized aurorae light the sky above the palace—hence its name.

Memories of grander vistas and more imposing architecture linger in the corner of the eye, but never show themselves clearly.

## WEATHER UNDER THE AURORAE

The aurorae of the Satraps play till 13:00 and their ghosts linger through the tired afternoons. It never rains here, but moisture-laden mists regularly crawl out of thin crevasses in the low, regular hills.

## MISFORTUNE TRIPS THE LIGHT ECLECTIC

Physically, few regions of the UVG are safer, but the light magic of the Satraps disturbs souls and disorders personalities.

### d20 Charisma Test

1–2 Entropic field flickers across the trail. Difficult Endurance test or 1d4 objects age dramatically.

3–4 Great flying ghost of light terrifies the beasts. Difficult Aura test or 1d4 beasts flee in random directions.

5–6 Desiccating lights swim across the celestial sea of slow stars. Lose 1d4 supplies.

7 Golden jelly bloom carpets the plain in fungal bodies. Lose 1 day to slippery terrain. Can spend a day harvesting fungus for food (1d4 sacks/person), but pass a moderate Endurance test to avoid an unrelated fungal infection (lose 1 Agility and Thought per week).

8–10 Thick, moist fog obscures everything for days. Wander lost for 1d4 days. Iron objects begin to rust.

11–12 Diaphanous light-absorbing membranes fall like rain, occluding the landscape. Lose 1 day or make a difficult Agility test to avoid injury to self (1d6\* Life) or beast (2d6\* Life).

13 Aurora collapse coats the land in a rainbow glow day and night for a week. Save 1d4 days, but lose 1 Endurance due to lack of sleep.

14–19 It's full of stars. You wander in wonder.

20+ It's not just full of stars, the Satraps are maintaining or deploying some kind of celestial gate over their whole region! Pass a difficult Thought test to learn the rudiments of transportation gate oldtech ... or just accept the mysteries of life and permanently gain 1 Life.

## TRAVELLING LIGHT

- ∴ **Rest, In The Light:** the omnipresent light-shows make it hard to sleep. Moderate Endurance test to benefit from rest.
- ∴ **Rest, The Visitor Camps:** €20/week in an architectural museum, free if you listen to the ecstasies' missionary sermons.
- ∴ **South-West, Ivory Plain** (caravan trails, 2 weeks): great herds of magnificent beasts mark the deep grassland.
- ∴ **South, The Cage Run** (thinning scrub, 1 week): fused terranova marks the way to the Ribs.
- ∴ **South-East, Spectrum Run** (glyph trail, 2 weeks): fires and crystal excrescences mark the main route east.
- ∴ **East, Refracting Trees** (ditch road, 1 week): slithering light-forms mark the luminescent forest.

## ENCOUNTERS BRIGHT AND LIGHT (D10)

1. **Flailing beasts of light** (L4, full-spectrum) howl through the sky on a mad hunt.
2. **Great Ghost of Light** (L10, psychic) wafts like a lonely veteran of some inter-cosmic war, a cetacean behemoth of focused and refracted light confined in a shell of entropy and frustration.
3. **Hell herd of hallucinogenic sheep** (L2, undying, all-devouring) on the move, a deadly swarm possessed by alien cosmic diktat. They are avoided by the Satraps and distracted by regular offerings to appease the mad ultra **Legs-of-Bone-Knife-of-Home** (L4, betrayed) crawling in the herd's skulls.
4. **Lean wolf vomes** (L3, gestalt) travel in a mind-linked silence, hunting the Hell Herds for a forgotten master. They are left alone by the Satraps.
5. Pack of **lithe dogs** (L1, laughing) scavenging.
6. Herd of **beetle-headed antelopes** (L1, chaotic) with iridescent fur.
7. Flock of **skull-faced birds** (L1, chthonic), polishing their mother-of-pearl bone extrusions.
8. Troop of **prism-faced ecstasies** (L1, delirious) harvesting rare pink-whistle mushrooms (€75 per sack).
9. **Golem autonom** (L3, plastic) composing poems of mass consumption and labor exploitation.
10. **Spectrum floating fortress** (L12, lawful) with **joyous outriders** (L3, whooping) and spectral barrier projectors.



# SPECTRUM MYTH-SYMBOL COMPLEX (D10)

“By the tongue-pluckers of Metropolis, these grinning Ecstatics terrify me,” whispered the Hero.

“Just smile, nod, and coo at the pretty lights,” muttered the Warlock, “Their myths and technologies shape their world.”

## 1. SATRAPS

The 360 original flaming telepaths, who live as entities of light in the crystals and aurorae of the Memorium. They use suits of synthetic skin and golem machinery when they go out into the world. A skinless Satrap is utterly blinding and burns like a small, fiery sun—until they evaporate within about five minutes. Fortunately, new copies can be made quite easily from the crystal bodies.

## 2. THE ECSTATICS

Those diverse and fanatical devotees who have given their bodies and souls to the Satrap Enlightenment. They glimpse it in the crystal fungus spores growing in their heads, slowly absorbing their personalities. Once they are entirely absorbed, they may be added to the Memorium, to be restored bodily into the True History after the Return of the Sun. Or never, if that won't come to pass.

## 3. CRYSTAL BODIES

Great crystals that can duplicate and replicate the personalities of the original Satraps, ensuring that the First and Last Mission is pursued by the Satraps though flesh withers and souls fray.

## 4. ENDOSYMBIONTS

Telepathically-bonded symbiotic creatures the Satraps keep within their synthetic skins for specialized tasks, whether many-fingered monkey-lizards or venomous rabbit-snakes.

## 5. LIGHT MAGIC

The Satraps retain some of the force-shaping magics of Long Ago, creating illusions and burning rays of coherent light, and even solid planes and lines of ‘hard’ light. The greatest of Satraps have even been seen creating high roads of light arcing across the sky.

## 6. THE MEMORIUM

The vibrating, immortal, telepathic community-qua-machine of personalities created of the Satraps and the Absorbed Ecstatics, fueled by the sacrificed souls of the Lacking Ecstatics.

## 7. VOYAGE INTO DARKNESS

Long Long Ago, after the Lings burrowed into the dreams of the Demiurges, the Satraps became enlightened and sent The First and The Last on a journey into the heavens, ascending from the Hill of Departure, to take the light beyond the veil of darkness and bring back the Original Light.

## 8. THE FIRST SATRAP

Satrap 0 was a Satrap of pure absence. Its suit absorbed all radiant spectra and left nothing but a glimmering visor of light and kindness. So say the myths.

In one famous myth, an itinerant merchant approached The First to confess that he had eaten the fruit of the Vile Tree. The kindness of The First was unbounded when it saw the source of this peddler overwritten by the reality-disrupting processes of the viles. The First taught the merchant to use the corruption to summon waters from the deeps and to calm the rushing winds, then castrated him and burned his loins with the coherent fires to contain the source corruption of the viles.

The merchant went on to found the Garden City in the deep Lemon Desert and become the famous Water-Eunuch-Prince.

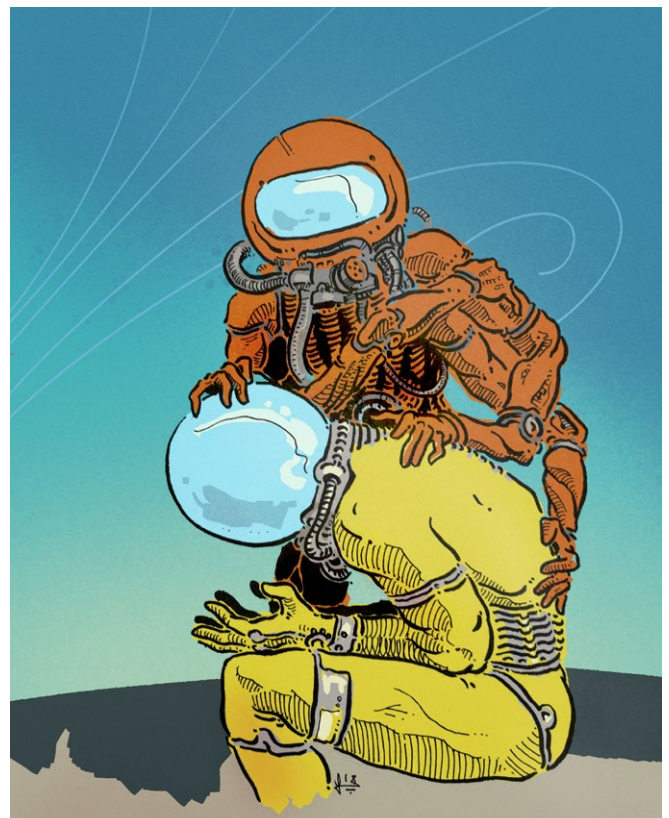
## 9. THE LAST SATRAP

The Unnumbered Satrap was a Satrap of purest white. Its suit was electrostatically charged and no dust could ever touch it.

In a notorious myth, The Last voyaged from the Spire of Heaven to the Last Thoughts of the Bone God. On the way it stopped at the lost Marmotfolk city of Mirror. It arrived late and begged for a place to stay, safe from the Great Vomies that plagued the land in those times. The Marmotfolk Matrons refused, and the Land itself cursed the city of Mirror for denying the kind and angelic Last. The air turned to salt in the lungs of the Marmotfolk. They choked over their cruelty in the streets and halls of Mirror. Their personalities were burnt into its glass walls and streets. Thus the Land created the City of Bone Ghosts.

## 10. RETURN OF THE SUN

Expected End of False History, when The First and The Last return with the Original Light that will usher in the True History. According to estimate #231-b this should happen in about three months.



# PLACE AND POWER IN THE PALACE

## THE FIVE (D5) ...

Council-Symbionts neurally bond five Satraps into a single executive gestalt, a unity of five. The Five are randomly chosen every five months by a limbless Archaic suspended in the Hall of Choice. These Satraps might be The Five:

1. **Satrap 350** (L4, fine) is a six-limbed creature of disturbing protrusions in a hot pink suit. It is in charge of the Ecstatic Mysteries and loves to bring the Joy of the Satrapy spores to new ecstasies.
2. **Satrap 333** (L6, hard-boiled) is a China-pink colossus over two meters tall. It oversees the Rainbow Wall and the Roof of Light and enjoys showing off tricks of light and shadow.
3. **Satrap 226** (L3, clod) is a lumpy thing in a suit of Egyptian-blue. It passes the time playing forgotten board games with the servitors of the Blue Paper Abbey and sending nosy visitors after real treasures of the Long Ago, lost in deep death traps.
4. **Satrap 160** (L5, dull) is green and looks fully human. Its synthetic skin is decorated with the skulls of creatures small and large, which it calls its 'Moris'. It doesn't seem to do much, oscillating between godlike grandeur, abject self-pity, and psychobabble.
5. **Satrap 75** (L5, delicate) is a moss-green mess of spidery limbs and spindly hoses. It spends its time harvesting crystalline nodules from modified trees and turning them into bullets. It does not seem to comprehend the linear passage of time.

## ... AND THE SECRET EMPRESS (D8)

Within the crystal body of the Memorium, threaded through the telepathic aether of Satrap community, is an imperial presence. It/They is also called the Gaze of the Memorium.

1. It is a half-corrupted memory picture of the Creatrix of the Memorium and the telepathic matrix.
2. It is a Vile interloper hiding from the Lings.
3. It is the ghost of a goddess.
4. It is a prophecy made manifest in the solid crystalline flesh of Satrap mental society.
5. It will be revived when The First and The Last return from their voyage beyond the veil.
6. It will consume all Living Satraps, creating a single creature of light that will ascend into the spheres of creation as a new sun.
7. It is a rat that fled the destruction of its universe.
8. It is an artificial spirit, born of the interstices of Satrap memories and neuroses, festering in crystal over aeons.

## RULE OVER MANY PLACES (D12)

1. The **Blue Paper Abbey** is an ancient structure of prim, pastel livingstone maintained by an order of **emancipated servitors** (L3, five-armed) who have set themselves the task of maintaining the Visitor Camps as a museum to the architectural styles of Long Ago.
2. The **Crystal Fungal Fields** within the dampest crevasses of the Palace are the source of the ecstatic memory spores that bind the ecstasies to the Satraps.
3. The **Hall of Memories** is a humid warren deep in the Palace, full of enormous crystals storing the Satraps' personalities.
4. The **Hall of the Welcoming Eye** is the first great chamber within the Palace, where exalted guests may open their minds to conversations with the **Gaze of the Memorium** (L8, unclear).
5. The **Hill of Departure** rises left of the Palace. Goat trails lead between stands of thorn bush and lichen ropes. Eroded transmitter stubs hum and spark with lights on the summit, washed and decorated by **ecstasies in feather robes** (L1, high).
6. The **Hill of Return** heaves itself up to the right of the Palace. Tussock grasses grow in rocky lees and a bare glass plate covers the peak. **Ecstasies in dun garb** (Lo, low) scrub it hourly.
7. The **Lower Yard** is a small box canyon between the two hills, filled and leveled with packed earth. Grass huts and wicker shelters house the **ecstasies** (L1d3-1, ordinary) and the **prismatic walkers** (L2d6, capacity 2d4, resting).
8. The **Palace** is a single metal drum with no visible guards. Satraps and servant ecstasies come and go without order.
9. The **Rainbow Wall** is an eye-popping series of iridescent stuck energy fields demarcating the Lower Yard from the Visitor Camps. Navigating it without a guide takes 1d4 days.
10. The **Roof of Light** is a series of rippling force fields the Satraps maintain in the sky above the Palace to modulate the climate and protect against storms and meteorites.
11. The **Upper Yard** is a series of pitted steps carved into the bedrock, swept clean by a troop of **red-robed ecstasies** (L1d4, chosen). Ceremonies for the ecstasies are held here.
12. The **Visitor Camps** are a dozen structures in a riot of different Long Ago styles where visitors and supplicants to the Spectrum Palace can stay. **Pastel servitors** (L1, three-armed) maintain the buildings but ignore humans.





# DISCOVERIES BEYOND THE SATRAPS

## THE NEON ZIGGURAT

(3 days, 300 xp)

It rises out of a scarred plateau, a wonder of massive limestone blocks shaped so finely that not even an amoeba could crawl between them. A magical aura preserves the limestone, white and pristine, against the rains and fine dusts of the grassland.

It is now bedecked in illumination and singing golems, and thick with the scent of camphor candles. A cabal of **heretic ecstatics** (L3, techno-shamans) live here, worshipping the cosmos with a slaved vomish synthesizer they use to replace themselves with machine parts in their bid to become more human than human.

Left alone, they will discover how to preserve themselves, like the Ziggurat, and become eternal living statues, singing and flashing lights into the sky, promising themselves to the First and the Last and the Eternal Return. They are rather harmless.

## VILLAGE OF HOPELESS IMMORTALS

(2 days, 250 xp)

Beyond the tired hills of the Spectrum Satraps is a garrigue of aromatic shrubbery atop exposed limestone bedrock. Eroded towers and rubble mounds dot the landscape while waters flow underground in deep crevasses.



The face of a mountain was sheared off by some Long Ago magic and a subterranean river springs forth from its smooth-cut face. Etched into that white cliff is a village of **wizards** (L1, hedge) and **former ecstatics** (LO, finished) who have gazed into a time-like infinity and found the darkness of the cosmos too much to bear. They cultivate their gardens and live their isolated existence hoping for an end that does not seem to come, as though some protective spirit watches over them. They know many secrets, but all their secrets bring despair (d8):

1. **Ancient loao** (LO, urgent) knows the best can only live for a few seconds.
2. **Visu** (L3, content) knows that you can never be happy in any life.
3. **Si-kulden** (L5, smiling) knows the universe is falling to pieces.
4. **Rana** (L2, bitter) knows the viles make us food.
5. **Lokon** (L4, grim) knows that you are empty and only exist at this point.
6. **Umaskari** (L6, half-divine) knows that souls only serve as fuel for the gods.
7. **Koïre** (L9, ancient ultra) knows that they are a mirror of the empty cosmos.
8. **Zula** (L1, beautiful) knows the demiurges who created this world were hacks.

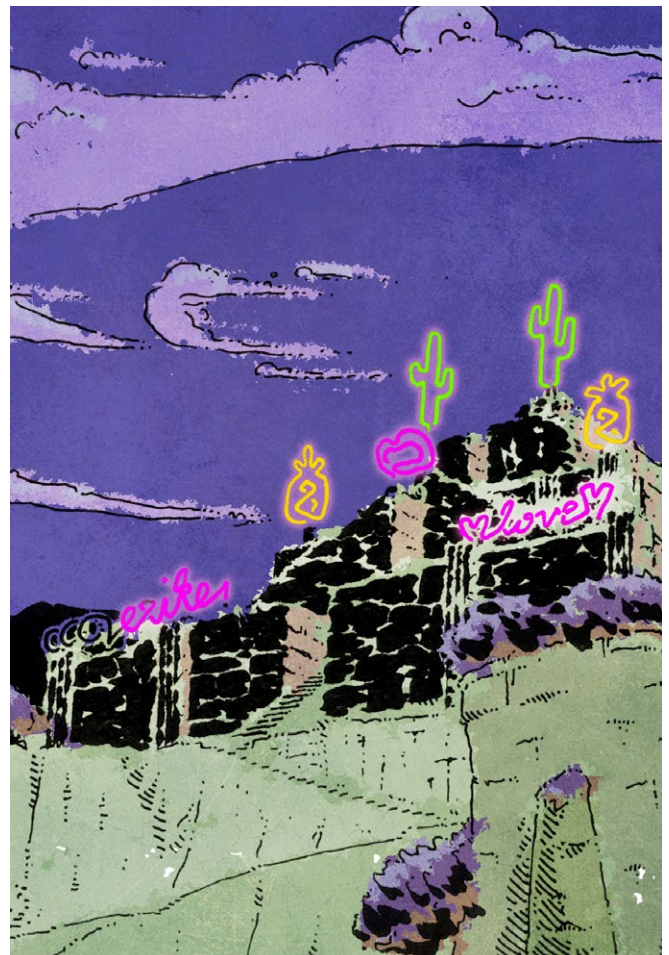
## THE ALTER

(4 days, 400 xp)

An electromagic field lies over a six kilometer swathe of the calcareous plateau, melting and shifting it into a high plain of abrasive dust. Nothing grows, the air becomes thin and painful, and the sky grows dim. The area is marked by thornstone warnings reaching into the sky like the arms of crisp-burnt dragons. All lifeforms within the electromagic field lose 1 Life per hour.

*In the heart:* a slab of 'stuff' canted at an angle and leering out of the dust in a satire of gravity. The heavy and immobile thing is covered in a thick layer of rusty flakes that begins to re-emerge as soon as it is wiped off. It gives off a dull hum. When struck it rings like a clear bell. Bathed in light, it scintillates and fluoresces. Magical energies are absorbed and dispersed as sparkling nebulae of dust. It tastes of cardamom and cumin, but smells slightly of rotten eggs and roses. It is very heavy and seems rooted in its spot in space and time. If moved out of position it slowly slides back into its place. The farther it is moved, the more strongly it begins to move back. If it is moved more than halfway to the altered area's border *the area itself begins to move*, destroying lifeforms at its edge. The slab cannot be moved outside the original area, and both it and its area will eventually revert to their initial location.

To all intents and purposes it does nothing. It does not mutate living things, and though time passes 17% more quickly in the altered area, it has no particular effect.



# 26. THE IRON ROAD

Striking out due west from the Ribs, the Iron Road is a series of mammoth skeletal iron towers, red and rusting, like an army of giants marching into the sunset. They continue for more than a week's walking and Spectrum scholars claim that in the Long Ago cable wagons flew from one tower to the next, simulating the flight of an eagle or golden sky barge.

At irregular intervals grand arcologies in once-livingstone erupt from the deep steppe like immense geometric termite mounds. Dew and earth saps collect in them, and hardy trees form eerie vertical forests in the southern reaches of the Ivory Steppe.

## WEATHER AND RUST

The haze lies, a heavy blanket, until 13:30. Sad winds whistle through the many ruins and rust showers colour the sunsets vermilion.

## MISFORTUNE AND THE IRON ROAD

Wind, sadness, desperate ends, and degenerate post-humans. Brrr.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Thunder erupts from shifting lines and planes of force in the rusty sky, setting off a lightning storm. Difficult Agility test to avoid chain lightning strikes (starts with -10d6 Life for first target).
- 2-3 Bush fire caused by a lightning storm. Lose 1 week and 1d4 supplies to avoid the fires or extreme Thought test to pass through unscathed.
- 4-5 Massive animal migration blocks path, lose 1d6 days. Can hunt and resupply easily.
- 6 Whistling, disturbing winds bring alien memories of times better forgotten. Lose 1d4 random spells until next long rest.
- 7 Whistling, penetrating winds steal your memories (lose 1d4 spells until next long rest) and replace them with strange visions of a random spell from the past, now unknown. Difficult Thought test to record it before it leaks away. The spell is (roll d6): (1-3) weak, (4-5) strongish, (6) incredibly useful in strangely specific circumstances.
- 8-10 While stumbling through an eroded graveyard of Long Ago machines and modern animals, one of your beasts of burden is badly hurt. Lose 1d4 days tending to it or lose the beast.
- 11-13 Rust shower stains clothes and colours everything red. It'll be hard to get the damned red out.
- 14-19 Ponchos protect you from the rusty air, and the lightning misses.
- 20+ You stumble across a recently deceased vech. In its cockpit are personal security manuals from an arcology 1d4 days away. They would certainly pay for their return (€1,000), perhaps even let you stay and trade a few days. Alternatively, use the personal security manuals to permanently increase one physical stat by 1.

## TRAVEL ON NARRATIVE IRON RAILS

- ∴ **Rest, In A Wagon Without Wheels:** stripped to a rusty shell, patched with adobe by travelers, it stinks. Easy test to rest.
- ∴ **West, Dead Bridge** (clear trail, 1 week): the remains of further iron towers lead to the chasm that marks the western edge of the great grassland.
- ∴ **North, Ivory Plain** (steppe, 2 weeks): great herds and a trackless sea of ivory grass.
- ∴ **East, The Ribs** (clear trail, 1 week): ancient iron towers mark the way to the massive bone mountain.



## ENCOUNTERS WITH THE HARDLY HUMAN (D8)

1. Swarm of **degenerated post-humans** (L3, chemical hive) issues out of an arcology, riding neuro-bonded beasts to ravage the land and bring back supplies for whatever thing broods at the heart of their dead city-building.
2. Small herd of **elephantine beasts** (L8, mournful) bearing with them memories of a long-forgotten time.
3. Large herd of **crown-horned beasts** (L4, photosynthetic herbivores) rumble the plain with their hooves.
4. Sinewy **feline predators** (L4, proud) stalking.
5. Troop of **hairless monkeys** (L2, herbivorous) carrying a stone vat containing a forgetful **lingish memory-head** (L1, mind-reading) on a half-useless ritual procession.
6. Herd of **antelope rabbits** (L0, delicious) frolicking.
7. Ivory-skinned **hunter-gatherer quarter-lings** (L2, dreaming) phase through the grasslands, half-ghosts, half-travelers leaking through from a deep future.
8. A **mechanical human** (L3, soulless) playing the flute while they wait for some ultra's whim to stir them back into action.



# DISCOVERIES ON THE IRON ROAD



## THE ELEPHANTINE GRAVEYARD

(5 days, 300 xp)

Very deep in the ivory grass, a river flows and dies in a shallow depression. Its grave is a marshland of hard-stemmed grasses, criss-crossed by shallow lakes and languid channels. **Great pikes** (L2, deep-minded) and **spectral crocodiles** (L6, half-there) make their home here, as do immense flocks of azure-winged birds.

*Within:* an island that **mournful elephantine beasts** (L9, dying) use as their graveyard. When the burden of the world's memories grows too heavy, every elder attempts to reach the graveyard and pass into the Forgetting. It meditates, attended by **ginger-furred monkey priests** (L3, intuitive magicians), eating preservative cherries to keep its mind attached to its body. It then uses its proboscis to wield a neutron-stone knife, cutting off its flesh in great red strips and carving its memories into its very bones. The monkeys cast spells to keep the beast alive and lift its bones up to its trunk so it can carve the hard to reach pelvic bones and scapulae. Finally, it gouges out its own tusks and horns before amputating its own trunk. The monkeys carry the bleeding, slowly-dying head of the beast to the **Spiny Horror of Returning** (L17, radial) who consumes it, crushing the elephantine beast's pain-wracked soul out of existence forever.

The beautifully carved bones are worth €3d6 x 100/sack, but the painful truths on them often drive mortals to suicide (easy Aura test). The monkey priests do not approve of thieves.

## THE FACE IN THE AIR

(2 days, 100 xp)

The air refracts and bends in a strange forcefield, which the **Red Wrench Band of quarter-lings** (L2, mecha-shamans) worships as the **Spirit of Guidance Ernesto dey Gloria** (L1, time-spattered). Dust or rain outlines the spirit's magnificent four-eyed visage. It speaks softly, like a sighing wind, and gives 65% accurate prophecies.

The Spirit is a kind soul, half-trapped in a distorted time loop by an arcane reality disruption bomb, its mind erased every day. It has been trapped this way for a thousand years. If asked politely, it mentions that it just popped out to the corner dispensary for a packet of socials, some de-stressors, and a tube of flavor.

If somehow freed from the loop, the Spirit will go slightly mad with grief for 1d3 months, while tagging along like a lost, sobbing puppy. Then it will recover, settle down in quiet obscurity and over the next year or so complete a monumental book titled *All In Search of a Lost Time*. The book will become a shock best-seller in the Rainbowlands, the original manuscript worth over €20,000.

## THE LAST ARCOLOGY

(3 days, 200 xp)

From afar it looks like a spire of red steel covered in trees and vine. From closer it looks like hundreds of great spine-like cables erupted from the dusty ground and spun themselves together into six great trunks that merge to hold a series of fifty-three platters up to a harsh sun. The platters are covered in a tropical excess of vegetation, bright green and jarring in the ivory vastness. By night, eerie pink and xenon lights mark the comings and goings of strange folk.

**Tattered mirror dragons** (L7, reflective) crawl and clatter along the mesh of its outer shell, mindlessly protecting whatever lives in the jungle within. **Many-armed monkey golems** (L4, lightning-eyed) swarm the outer vines and trees, maintaining the edifice.

Visitors are politely but firmly turned away by ectoplasmic projections of virile, uncannily synthetic humans. Insistent visitors are met with escalating hostility.

*Within:* the platters are peopled by **degenerate, half-witted quarter-lings** (L0, delectable) of a particularly blubbery countenance, living in leisure, served by **dispenser golems** (L2, plastic) and **neurostim ghosts** (L3, force-field), unaware of anything beyond their immediate pleasures. Treasures of oldtech are displayed carelessly:

- ∴ soap-sized personal pleasure devices, €(1d6\*-3) x 100.
- ∴ stone-sized skill-replacement tools, €(1d4\*-2) x 500.
- ∴ sack-sized obscure machines, €(1d3\*-1) x 2,000.

The arcology runs itself, a **solipsistic plant and plastic god named Manfrend** (L17, utterly sane) that cares nothing for the world beyond. If attacked seriously enough, the arcology ruptures its bonds with the earth and floats into the endless voids, a seed cast to the cosmic winds, bearing its chosen half-wit people to new homes.



# 27. THE IVORY PLAIN

The trackless deep plain is a sea of ivory grass that glows palely in the dark. Great herds of grazing beasts and their predators make their way across this plain in stately procession under the harsh ultraviolet radiation raining down from the hazy sky.

Eroded livingstone stubs and glassy patches scored upon the ground are all that remains of some older time, like long-healed scars on a mild-mannered old warrior.



## WEATHER ON THE PLAIN

The sky remains a bruised purple until the fiery blue-tinged sun emerges at 13:30. Grey clouds sail in from the west like an armada, bringing the promise—but rarely the fulfillment—of rain. Winds stir up rusty dust and a hint of decomposition.

## MISFORTUNE IS A WILDFIRE

It'll burn you up, choke you, whip you, and smother you.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 An earthquake rumbles as lines and planes of force collide beneath the dusty soil. Difficult Agility test to avoid tumbling into a crevasse that opens at your feet (6d6 falling damage or sacrifice a beast).
- 2-4 Herd stampedes. Run for safety (difficult Strength tests) to avoid getting trampled (1d10 damage or lost beast).
- 5-6 The plain is blackened and burned after a bush fire. Danger of smoke inhalation (trivial Endurance test or cough for 1d4 weeks and -1 Endurance) and a nasty burn (moderate Agility test or lose 1d6 Life).
- 7 Force lensing effect bathes you in a wave of UV radiation (-1d4 Agility to sunburn), but also reveals a shortcut (gain 1d4 days).
- 8-9 Force lensing effect bathes you in a wave of ultraviolet radiation. Terrible sunburn (-1d4 Agility and Charisma).
- 10-11 Stumble into a nest of vipers (moderate Agility test or bitten and -1d4 Agility and Strength due to the poison).
- 12 You'll have to replace your shoes at the next stop.
- 13 Sole falls off your shoe. A homophonic demon comes to claim it.
- 14-19 As one of the few predators on this plain, you feel quite fine.
- 20+ The beautiful and untouched nature of the Ivory Plain invigorates you and leaves you feeling refreshed, confident that you can overcome these trackless wastes. Gain 1a on next three encounter checks and permanently increase Life by 1 as the natural aura flows through you.

## TRAVEL FROM THE IVORY PLAIN

- ∴ **Rest, Exposed On A Plain:** surrounded by herds upon herds, you feel safe (easy Endurance test to rest).
- ∴ **North-West, Dark Light Path** (steppe, 1 week): the steppe crumbles into canyons and carved ruins.
- ∴ **South-West, Dead Bridge** (steppe, 2 weeks): a sea of grass undulates until the last bridge across the 40-mile chasm.
- ∴ **South, Iron Road** (steppe, 2 weeks): the trackless sea of grass laps at the crags of iron towers and fallen city-hills.
- ∴ **North-East, Spectrum Palace** (steppe, 2 weeks): the sea of grass surrenders to the sad hills of the Satraps.
- ∴ **East, Cage Run** (rough hills, 2 weeks): the plain rises into goat trails and broken bunkers before reaching the fused terranova of the ancient roadway.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE WHITE-GRASS PLAIN (D10)

1. **Avatar of the Noetic Biosphere** (L12, shapeshifting) emerges into glowing reality: a spirit-personality manifestation of nature made flesh. Glittering soul gems adorn its noble crown and iridescent birds sing, praising its passage. Its gems and flesh occupy 2d6 sacks and are worth €3d6 x 1,000 to an unscrupulous despoiler of nature.
2. Herd of **singing beasts** (L3, sessile) melting into an organic soup as a self-sacrifice to the Biosphere Avatar.
3. Flock of **dancing husk-zombies** (L2, ravenous), their minds faded to feed the Avatar of the Mind.
4. Herd of **ivory-antlered elephantine beasts** (L7, somber).
5. Pair of **razor-toothed ursines** (L5, predator).
6. Flock of **terror birds** (L4, tyrannical).
7. Vast herd of **tusked equids** (L2, striped).
8. Small tribe of **savanna-adapted post-hominids** (L1, tremulous).
9. Band of garrulous, flesh-faced **morlockian quarter-lings** (L2, cannibals). They are quite polite.
10. **Spectrum scouts** (L3, prismatic) on riding birds, hunting quarter-lings and exacting tolls.





# DISCOVERIES ON A PLAIN

## THE LEERING ABYSS

(7 days, 600 xp)

Within a glassy stain the darkness deepens. The sky fades away, revealing cold, sharp stars. The ground fades away, revealing cold, sharp stars. Silence falls. The edges are thick with the bones of travelers in peaceful repose. Sifting through the bones for a day reveals €1d10 x 1,000 of personal items and equipment (1d20 sacks).

*Within:* the truth of the darkness beyond the rim of reality stares back. In the infinity of worlds, the infinity of powers creates a final, finite totality of existence. All sentiences are in a vast, unending struggle to survive, circumscribed by the final end of all existence. There is nothing more. In that final totality every sentience is a threat to be annihilated. There are no points of light, only bonfires of destruction. Every creature that would survive in that cold void huddles in the dark, careful, watchful, waiting to see motion in the light—motion that hints at competition to be destroyed and consumed. It's nothing personal.

If heroes examining the abyss had an alignment, it is removed. If they had a morality, it now lacks foundation. If they had a faith, it is replaced by a certainty that their deity is a hollow parasite feeding upon their energies.

There are no enemies in this abyss save those the heroes bring to themselves with their own actions.

## THE ORGAN LAKE

(3 days, 250 xp)

A lake of reds and ochres, bubbling with eyes, slithering tentacle snakes, orifices, and follicles. Its fringes are lined thickly with scaly trees surmounted with great crowns of waving green cilia. A sense of kind, all-mutating, gentle, mothering emanates from it.

Local nomads and cannibals worship the lake and sacrifice their dead to it. They believe in times of need the lake will vomit forth their warriors, clothed in flesh and fury, to protect them. This is true.



## A LONELY LODGE

(2 days, 50 xp)

Carved into a granite outcropping with magics of magnificent might is a fairy lodge of lacework stone and scrolled columns. The floors are bedecked with modified russet mosses and sweet waters drip from moisture traps, filling pools and fountains. Local beasts sometimes frolic through the lodge, but always clean up after themselves.

Sleepers in the lodge risk encountering **Sama Zivani, Eater of Dreamers** (L11, garrulous), an ultra of many professions and ambitions, master of petromancy, and voyager of much repute. If times outside sound interesting, it happily possesses a fine body and goes to see what is happening. At other times Sama lives within the house itself.



# 28. DEAD BRIDGE

Glazed gravel crunches under the great wagon's wheels and the band climbs onto the con tower to gaze at the sight of the eroded towers lining the lip of the Chasm like so many shattered teeth.

"How many bridges were there?" gasps Poncho.

"Enough that the memnos sing it took forty wars till there was only one," answers Warlock.

The Chasm, forty miles wide, marks the western extremity of the Ultraviolet Grasslands. Its depths are shrouded by a noxic haze. The projectors of glittering force bridges rust on the precipices of the chasm, and only one single archaic bridge of livingstone and dryland coral remains. It stumbles from organiform pier to organiform pier, overgrown and distended into a riot of towers and walkways.

The old power generators are long dead and the lights long gone, but the Dead Bridge still teems with life—only now, instead of the engineer aesthetes of the Glittering Heavenly Republic, it is degenerate quarter-lings and crawling subhumans.

## WEATHER ABOVE THE CHASM

This far west the haze obscures the sun until 14:00. The heat of the Chasm provokes roiling winds and unexpected hailstorms when clouds drag themselves in wearily from the west. On cool days, inversions pull clouds and haze into the Chasm, filling it with bruised lavender fog. On clear days, acid in the air burns the nose.

## MISFORTUNE ON THE LAST OF BRIDGES

Don't you forget about your friend death, as you walk so high.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1–2 Wind drops suddenly and a dull fog rolls in. Sight and sound are muffled and sudden drops rear out of the soft, soupy cloud. 1d4 days and moderate Agility test to avoid falling to your death (or sacrifice a beast).
- 3–4 Severe hailstorm batters voyagers. -1d8 Life and moderate Strength test to avoid falling to your death (or sacrifice a follower).
- 5–6 Roadway crumbles and a beast or vehicle slides into a crevasse.
- 7 Strong winds delay progress (1d3 days). Could be worse.
- 8–10 Leather straps give out in sour air (1d4 supplies tumble into chasm).
- 11–15 A sudden wind whips a favorite handkerchief or other small personal item into the Chasm.
- 16–19 One breath at a time, one step at a time, you traverse the narrows.
- 20+ Your foot dislodges a rock and it falls off the bridge, into the Chasm, and stops. It just stays there, about 10 meters below the road surface. The rock has landed on a 2-meters wide translucent floating disc of force projected from a Long Ago pebble-sized force-machine (€2,500)! The disc is stuck fast in old vines and doesn't move on its own power, but with a few ropes and straps it can carry 1d6+1 sacks. Left alone it maintains its distance from the local gravity center, but is pushed about by wind and rain.



## TRAVEL FROM DEAD BRIDGE

- ∴ **Rest, Organiform Pier:** the shell of the dead force-projector beast offers poor shelter (moderate Endurance test to rest).
- ∴ **West, The Endless Houses** (rubble trail, 2 weeks): sedimentary layers of roads and rails carve their way across moss-shrouded hills towards a valley carpeted in urban ruin.
- ∴ **North-East, The Ivory Plain** (steppe, 2 weeks): a sea of ivory-hued grass beckons. Endless.
- ∴ **East, The Iron Road** (clear trail, 1 week): rusted iron towers lead across the grassland to the bone mountain.
- ∴ **Down, The Chasm** (deadly climb, 1d4\* days): rumors say the ink-dark river Wo courses towards a mysterious southern sea, but wise people do not go there.

## ENCOUNTERS OVER THE CHASM (D8)

1. An **iridescent horror** (L8, other-dimensional) crawls from a nearby corner, breaking local laws of physics, to steal a gift for its **mindless queen** (L5, ravishing).
2. Flower-encrusted biomechanical **servitor spiders** (L4, swift-swinging) enslaving workers to repair a long-gone bridge.
3. Flock of **gliding war husks** (L2, ravenous), trying to snatch beasts and food for their **androform young** (L1, giggling).
4. Pride of **androform husks** (L1, empty) grazing on fruits and nuts. They look human, but are merely biological machines created by a long-lost demented process.
5. Herd of **monkey rabbits** (L1, chattering) crawling, hopping, and brachiating through the primordial foliage of the bridge.
6. Hunting party of **bow-wielding quarter-lings** (L1, wary).
7. War band of **cannibal quarter-lings** (L2, stealthy) armed with ancient and modern weapons.
8. Terror-marked **quarter-ling avatar** (L5, undying) on a forgotten quest. Knows dreadful half-useless secrets.



# DEGENERATE IMMACULATE QUARTER-LINGS

Many waffling sages say that quarter-lings are merely obscure human phenotypes which retain lingish characteristics, from exceptional hand-eye coordination to unusual fur coverage.



Many quarter-lings strongly disagree. They hold that they are the uncorrupted scions of the lings, children of their ancestors' Long Long Ago Glorious Rebellion, which brought freedom to the many-times broken land. Unfortunately, most quarter-lings also strongly diverge from one another in their neo-lingish origin myths, physical looks, and cultural outlooks.

## THESE QUARTERLINGS ARE (D8)

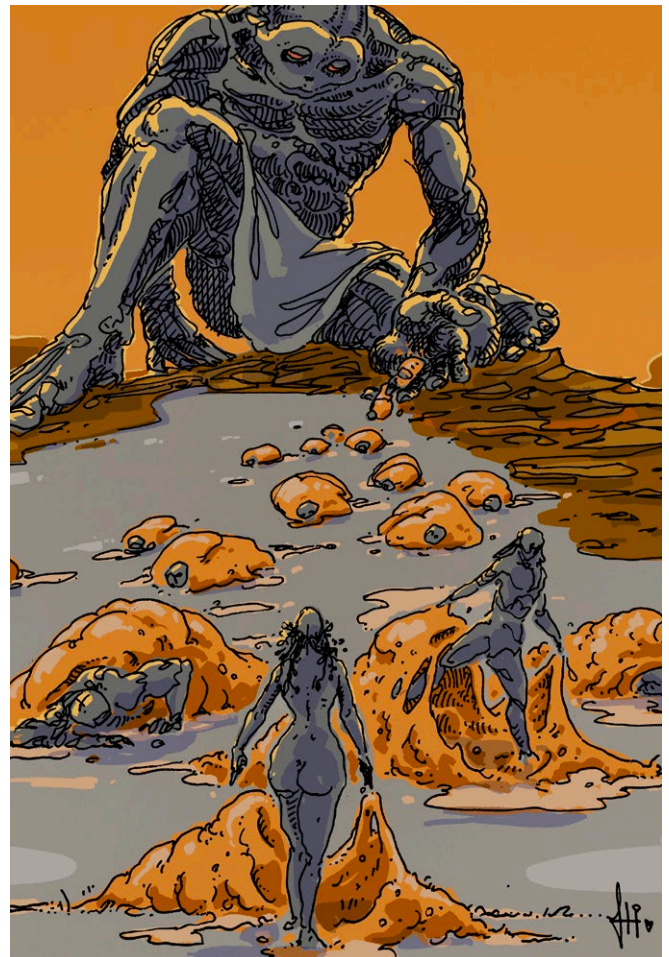
1. Exceptionally resilient and hard to kill, their bodies knit together even after savage blows.
2. Incredibly flexible with cartilage bones, capable of contorting themselves through the tightest places.
3. Exceptionally sharp and perceptive, with eyes like hawks and throwing arms like master pitchers.
4. Adapted to harsh, desert environments and untroubled by thirst and heat that would kill most humans.
5. Adapted to the dark lands of the Chasm, resistant to cold and silent as owls, with large liquid eyes.
6. Incredibly agile, with the reflexes of a leaping desert mouse.
7. Possessed of an intuitive magitechnical bond through which they operate and repair ancient artifacts.
8. Human computers with minds adapted to processing enormous amounts of information.

## BUT AEONS HAVE CORRUPTED THEM AND (D8)

1. They no longer have faces, names, or personalities—having become drone ghosts of some earlier race.
2. Their bodies are short and squat even by the standards of these sunset times.
3. Fur covers their entire bodies as though they were dogs or cats, not naked apes or humans.
4. They live and die entirely without teeth or nails; a sacrifice to a radiation demon long ago, so they say.
5. Their feet are hooved and their gnarled hands are clawed like the paws of dogs.
6. Their mouths have grown long and distended, lined with sharp, flesh-rending teeth.
7. Ophidian scales cover their bodies and crawl across their faces.
8. They remain as children throughout their long, sad lives growing neither beards nor breasts.

## ACCORDING TO THEIR MYTHS THEY (D8)

1. Were created by the Architect of Malice to destroy the Vile Ones' dream machines.
2. Were born of the union of Unchosen and Ling when the Clouds of Consciousness descended.
3. Came from afar to act as emissaries of a mysterious sky-dwelling race they call the Khazi.
4. Were spontaneously generated from the blood of the Northern Chosen who were rendered down by the Remaker.
5. Are the uplifted descendants of the seven servants of the Architect of Machines.
6. Were rats who fled the Ship of the Wise after the Machine Demons emerged from the corners of reality.
7. Became self-aware when the last Chosen was destroyed by the last Mill of Souls.
8. Are not aware or sentient, merely the vessels of the tunnel-walking ultras of the Six Other Sides.



## THEIR CULTURE CELEBRATES THOSE WHO (D8)

1. Fall in combat with the Chosen Enemy.
2. Offer themselves as sustenance to their tribe.
3. Destroy the false teachings of the Later Times.
4. Re-enact the hero myth of the Last Wanderer.
5. Spread the true teachings of the Original Ancestor.
6. Bring home the Sacred Bits of mindless foes.
7. Participate in the Great Trade of the Invisible Hand.
8. Live long and prosper in the Cave of Eternal Wisdom.

# DISCOVERIES AT THE DEAD BRIDGE

## THE TOTEM OF THE SKIES

(2 days, 200 xp)

Miles high and buffeted by the winds, the last great skeletal tower of an Elevated Time rises from the center of the bridge. Quarter-lings say it is alive; the pink and red saps that flow up through its great synthetic veins do suggest it may well be. Graffiti, old skeletons, bird droppings, and more fill its hollowed ways. Is the taboo against climbing it based in myth or truth? Who knows, but the air at the branching top is too thin to breathe.

At the top the view is magnificent and offers travelers their first glimpses of the Black City and its hypnotic almost-patterns that stretch to the horizons along the curving shore of the Western Sea. Perhaps **ghosts of ancient times** (L3, picnicking) or **gentle ultras** (L4, painting), voyaging beyond space and time, congregate here.

Perhaps these are all just the hallucinations of hypoxia (d6):

1. A **ghost from long ago** (L2, sardonic) appears and reveals that the world is flat (false).
2. An **ultra** (L3, glowing) speaks with a violin voice and tells of a flying barge of gold at Three Sticks Lake (mostly true).
3. A **furry demon** (L4, slothful) appears and offers to grant a wish (true, but cursed).
4. A **dancing mushroom** (L2, cosmic alien) performs an opera from the Long Long Ago (fake, but excellent if recorded).
5. The world melts into nothingness and the emptiness of the Void pours in (false enough).
6. An **angel out of time** (L11, doomed) assembles itself from fragments of bone and stone and tells one harsh truth (true).



## THE LAST PROJECTOR

(6 days, 250 xp)

A great plaza carved into the rim of the chasm spreads out around seven great ironstone helices locked in tight formation. Rustmold grows heavy upon them and **decayed ghosts** (L1, memory-stripped) flicker in and out of reality around them. The last maintainer tribe has long since died out but, barely visible across the chasm, the



receptor helices for the force bridge still stand. **Quarter-lings** (L2, heroic) regularly visit to make 'flying' sacrifices to the Chasm.

*Reactivating the Last Projector* requires a Radiant Stone, still warm as in the days of old. A hero who knows how to weave the strands of force could then reactivate the projector, recreating the Luminous Arc Bridge as described in the *Dream Saga of Old Sky Witch Four*. Crossing at the reactivated bridge takes a day but is safe, aside from the rare **flying war husks** (L3, screeching banshees).

Not all reactivations need be equal (d6):

1. **Failed Reactivation:** the Arc Bridge's force-floor turns itself off after 1d12 hours.
2. **Flawed Reactivation:** the Arc Bridge's force-floor flickers unpredictably—10% chance every hour that it loses cohesion for a few hundred milliseconds before snapping back into existence. This severs the bottom 1d20 inches of any object crossing the bridge. Stilts recommended.
3. **Partial Reactivation:** the reactivation is spotty and, unless travelers move cautiously, there is a 1 in 6 chance every hour that one of them drops through a gap in the force field.
4. **Soft Reactivation:** the force field is weaker than it should be. Travelers must carefully spread out their weight to avoid plummeting through the Arc Bridge to the Chasm below.
5. **Normal Reactivation:** a luminous, citrine sheen now marks the bridge, glowing as it did Long Ago.
6. **Epic Reactivation:** the bridge glows with the heat of ten suns, casting the entire chasm around it into light, bringing forth a verdant ecosystem and chasing the dark creatures of the depths away. So long as the Projectors are supplied with regular sacrifices of energy (or souls), a whole civilization could rise up in the light of this epic force bridge. Souls for the Bridge God!

## THE CELL OF PEACE

(2 days, 150 xp)

Within a great living cell of crystal and sliding ochre membranes, a fragment of the Long Ago has been preserved, with residences and servitors providing for the needs of its long-mummified inhabitants.

*Within* awaits long-life and ease, but no escape. The amoeboid form of the **Watchful Cell** (L11, hectoring) announces it is the visitors' Protector and refuses to let them endanger themselves outside.



# DOWN IN THE CHASM



No sane traveler crosses the Chasm by climbing down into it. Only a foolhardy explorer or adventurer would try this (750 xp for crossing).

## CLIMBING DOWN (D8)

The air grows thicker and warmer as a climber descends into the Chasm past layers of rock and fossilized civilization. A few miles down, the smell of the noxic haze assaults the nose. Closer, it burns the skin. Step by step, the world grows more alien.

1. **Monkey-rabbit tribes** (L1, uplifted) scatter among the moss-tree analogues.
2. Layers of fossilized plastic and crushed dreams follow.
3. Cliffs as smooth as great panes of divine glass force detours.
4. Flocks of **legless birds** (Lo, pretty) live on the thermals.
5. A thin layer of compressed technium marks the death of a god.
6. Great silty seams of dead ant-sized machinery.
7. Waterfalls gush from aquifer springs, feeding into the Wo.
8. The city of a dead civilization spiders into the cliff through a system of lava tubes.

## IN THE NOXIC LAYERS (D8)

Finally, it embraces and smothers the climber. The air feels like an oxygen-rich soup. Up and down, north and south, seem to lose their meaning. A diffuse light from floating thermovores bathes everything in a teal glow. Visibility is soon down to ten meters.

1. Scree slopes of sharp-edged gravel mixed with plastic boulders.
2. Ridges of tough, rubbery biomatter.
3. Updrafts of chromatic chemovores mark a thermal vent.
4. Escarpments of great glass chunks.
5. Great beds of phosphorescent pebbles.
6. Thick tussocks of filter-feeding ropers waving in the soup-air.
7. Mushy hummocks of sponge-moss hybrids.
8. Amphibious **chemovore-salamander symbiotes** (L7, tasty) the size of small cottages drag themselves at the edge of the Wo.

## CROSSING THE RIVER WO (D8)

The sluggish, ink-dark Wo fills the belly of the Chasm, like a mighty hagfish within the corpse of a world-whale. The waters reek of rotten eggs and a chemical haze lifts off it, sharp enough to strip paint. Alien life teems within.

1. The wake of some great creature disturbs the surface.
2. Great bubbles of concentrated chemical food erupt.
3. Schools of swift-swimming worm-fish block boats.
4. A pebble island covered in slimy eggs.
5. Shallows thick with the glass skeletons of dead creatures.
6. A **leviathan of slime and glass** (L11, hyperbolic) floats gently.
7. **Armored flying squid** (L3, spear-like) use combustible gases for jet propulsion. They impale the soft-shelled chemovores and lazy thermovores with their bodies.
8. Improbable floating island of compacted rubbery chemovores.



## CLIMBING UP THE OTHER SIDE (D8)

Going up is much harder than going down. Gravity, heat, pressure, and slick rock all battle the climber. Days seem to stretch without end, just like the epic cliffs (it takes 2d4\* days).

1. Layers of cancerous livingstone, grown predatory.
2. Stacks of compacted machinery from some missing age.
3. Glass columns formed as a great lake of glass cooled slowly.
4. Floating kelp forests suspended with gas-filled bulbs extend from the cliff faces, waving gently in the updrafts.
5. Great cliff of brick, miles thick, left by an autonomous process.
6. Glass-smooth planes, left by arcane forces.
7. Friable rock that leaves a foul smell.
8. **Rabbit-monkey tribes** (L2, degenerate) throw scrap and refuse.

# 29. DARK LIGHT PATH

At its northern edge the Chasm branches and breaks out into canyons, craters, and calderas. Many cultures have built staircases, tunnels, hanging bridges, and cableways across the chaotic terrain. All in disrepair, but travelers still descend them into the eternal twilight of the Dark Light Path: a series of parallel grooves cut east to west through the mesas and ridges, as though the fine-grained stone were soft clay.

The depths of the Chasm are forever shrouded in a noxious haze, obscuring the passage of the sun, but they are not dark—the passage walls glitter with phosphorescent shock gemstones and sparkling thermovores move like stately half-floating crabs through the thick, soupy air.

## WEATHER IN THE DARK

If the sun were visible it would rise at 14:00, but deep in the Chasm the hot air is difficult to breathe, thick with steam and floating chemovores. Even when it might be glimpsed, the sun is but a wan disc of pale teal in the western half of the sky. The foggy air is not toxic but darkness and details are obscured.

## MISFORTUNE IN THE BLINDING DARK

Watch where you walk, for the dark is dark and full of darkness.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1–2 Hot steam and water belch from a geyser, immolating a hero. Difficult Agility test to avoid losing 4d6 Life or sacrificing a beast.
- 3–4 Lost in a series of abandoned troglodyte trap staircases (1d4 days).
- 5–6 Infected by a lung-moss (-1d6 Endurance).
- 7 Slip down a tunnel into an abandoned prelapsarian palace (-1d6 Life), still filled with rare last steel trinkets and toys (1d4 sacks, €500/sack). An **accursed ghost** (L4, rattled) may haunt them (20%).
- 8–10 Infected by a **blind-crab** (blindness for 1d4 weeks).
- 11–15 Cableway breaks down (1d6 days or 1d4 supplies).
- 16–19 Hall after hall, passage after passage, all thick with noxious haze and fumes, dripping with water, and silence, and age. All abandoned. Horrible places, you are happy to be rid of them.
- 20+ There, in an abandoned pleasure palace, dark with stalactites and chemovoracious ferns, in an eternal embrace lie a grotesque crab-lion and a headless machine person of fine proportion and with incredible iridium scales. Its head and personality are gone, but within its chest there is still a fiery soul trapped within a soul cage (€7,000 to an animancer). The soul cage is easy to use, it can revive a dying person, or permanently increase one mental stat by 1. Using the soul cage destroys the machine person's soul. An advanced soul wizard might be able to use this cage to steal souls.

## TRAVEL IN THE GLOWING DARK

- ∴ **Rest, Dark Gloomy Palace:** hateful sculptures and ostentatious minimalism leave you cold (Moderate test to rest).
- ∴ **West, Forest of Meat** (carved hill roads, 2 weeks): ancient roads switchback into the highland covered by the carnibotanic disaster of the Forest of Meat. Dangerous, but great hunting.
- ∴ **South, The Wo River in the Chasm** (canyon river, 2 weeks): the death-filled waters flow south, slow and ominous, to the Dead Bridge and beyond. Climbing out will be very hard.
- ∴ **East, The Ivory Plain** (steppe, 1 week): a sea of ivory-hued grass calls the traveler. Endless.

## ENCOUNTERS IN A SUDDEN SPARK OF LIGHT (D10)

1. A **majestic tunneler** (L17, light-eating) emerges from the deeps for air and rest before returning into the deep earth with a hiss of steam and a trail of shock gemstones (€150 per sack, 1d6 days to collect a sack).
2. Couple of **porcelain golems** (L6, solipsistic) collecting bits of personality from travelers to rebuild their communal identity.
3. Pack of **troglodyte zombies** (L4, ragged), remnants of a failed experiment from Long Ago.
4. Pride of prowling **chromatic crab-lions** (L4, radiant).
5. Herd of **half-floating thermovores** (L3, stilt-legged) wading towards a thermal vent.
6. Cloud of **sparkling chemovores** (L1, vegetal) wafting in the pea-soup air.
7. Gleaming forest of **filter-feeding ropers** (L3, mostly harmless) tethered near an updraft.
8. Party of **great-eyed quarter-lings** (L2, noxious) exploring whether the Wolf has already eaten the sun.
9. Expedition of **gem miners** (L2, suspicious) harvesting dark-light shock gems (€200 per sack, 1d8 days to mine a sack).
10. A **machine person** (L3, queerly noble) carrying the skull of their friend, searching for a soul.





# DISCOVERIES IN THE DARKEST LIGHT

## NEXUS OF CABLES

(4 days, 300 xp)

Now crawling with luminescent, **post-human worms** (L1, blinding), the city of cables tunnels through an eroded mesa and remains breathtaking even in these later times.

At the heart of the tangle is a *void* that swallows light and dreams. A pallid congregation of **hollow people** (L 1, soul-free) praise it as the Dead Eye of the Blue God. Dreams fed to the void summon **sympiotic ghost worms** (L1, nurturing) which bind the body more tightly to this world but undermine the soul. When a supplicant accepts the worm, their soul is fed to the Blue God, in exchange they receive health (+1 Endurance) and resilience (↑a to all tests against diseases, poisons, and bodily discomforts). Without a soul their presence weakens (-1 Aura) and they can no longer perform spells that require Aura or Charisma.



One **cablecar** (L9, pyrophobic vech) remains, semi-sentient and augmented with spidery limbs. The cablecar wants to be protected and cosseted. It crawls along the cableways, in its belly a **mummified librarian** (L2, dead) and her **brood of seven living books** (L1, naive), each a still-living synthetic human with dozens of old books carved into its brain. The books are worth €1d6 x 1,000 each, but must declaim their texts in slow and

measured tones. Alternatively, faster and more fatal methods may extract the books from their brains.

The crawling cablecar carries five passengers in a comfortable pine and quilt interior. It also comes with seven charging coffins for the living books. Besides passengers, it can carry 5 sacks and requires 2 supplies/week. Value: €15,000.

## THE PINK CRYSTAL

(2 days, 100 xp)

A long, moss-thick ledge leads to a great cliff face criss-crossed by bands of stuckforce. A massive neon pink crystal has spread along this translucent lattice of force. It is at least fifty meters long and glows with a subtly disturbing light that calls to mind carnal deeds in cold, soft places. It seeks an avatar.

It is a mutated form of dryland coral and far from sentient, yet still the **great-eyed miners** (L1, feral) worship it and whisper its surface must never be chipped lest a great curse be invoked—this is correct. Whoever mars the surface of the pink crystal faces ↓d in interpersonal and social situations for seven years. A chip off the Pink Crystal is valuable (€750 to a petromancer), but it must be sustained in the flesh of a living creature, which it devours at the rate of a kilogram per day.

## POOL OF RENEWED AMBITION

(1 day, 60 xp)

Guarded by a **cryptic coral guardian** (L6, prosaic), half golem and half human, is a pool where—if you believe the guardian—a nymph bathed in the Time of the Golden Spring. The nymph was named Motivation, and went on to inspire the First Builder and the First Destroyer. The will of anyone bathing in her pool is renewed (restores Aura and Thought). It is certainly a pretty pool, and visitors make offerings of small dolls and bracelets (€1d6 x 100 in the pool).

## THE HOUSE OF STEAM

(3 days, 150 xp)

Deep in the tunnels beneath six strata of decayed and abandoned buildings, in a great ring of granite and gold veins thick with steam and thermovores, a group of **deep survivor quarter-ling mechanicists** (L3, spartan) has maintained a great Chamber of Gestation since the Long Long Ago. They cultivate chemical flowers and nourish themselves by absorbing floating thermovores from the thick soupy steam in which they live. All their books are long rotted, the algal mats have erased the inscriptions in the rocks, but at the heart of their ring-house remains the Chamber.



The Chamber of Gestation is built of pure crystalline glass within which visions of a peaceful world swirl. The quarter-lings no longer know what is within and prefer not to see. Their duty is to keep the Chamber bathed, sparkling, and warm.

# 30. THE ENDLESS HOUSES



Beyond the Dead Bridge lays endless ruinland. For over a week the landscape marches, a mind-numbing grid-work of abandoned houses, towers, palaces, monuments, aqueducts, and roads. Slow-growing ivy struggles to choke the dead buildings and **vacant-mouthed ghouls** (L2, hollow) chase **radiation ghosts** (L1, glowing) dwell in this hollow place.

Old death lies over the gently collapsing land like a comforting blanket, keeping out change, exhausting volition, tiring the rain itself. Deep ravines have chiseled apart antique roads and blocks over uncounted years.



## WEATHER INSIDE THE HOUSES

Clouds scud from the western sea to disappear in the gently glowing haze. The sun only appears as it dips towards the horizon, after 14:30. Every morning it rains as the moist dark sea air rises into the cool uplands around the chasm.

## MISFORTUNE IS ENDLESS

It is rare in this desolate, forsaken realm, but does still happen.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1–2 **Vacant-mouthed ghoul** (L2, sniffing) horde begins shadowing the caravan (sacrifice 1d4 supplies or 1d6 days avoiding them).
- 3–4 A massive storm laden with silt lashes the Houses for days, streets turn into streams of mud (lose 1d4 days and 1d4 supplies).
- 5–6 Psychedelic mildew sprouts infect 1d6 supplies. The supplies are still edible, but give  $\downarrow$ d to all actions for a week... they do, however, restore all mental stats at the end of that week.
- 7 Disturbing stains appear on cloth and leather and cannot be removed. The stains terrify vacant-mouthed ghouls and soothe radiation ghosts.
- 8–9 Severe fungal foot infection (-1d4 Agility).
- 10–11 Lose the will to do anything but rest and contemplate the emptiness of existence (1d4 days).
- 12–19 House after house. This civilization ate its realm, tried to eat its world, choked on itself. Still, flowers sprout among the ruins, so there is hope.
- 20+ They seemed so lifelike! You follow a troop of radiation ghost children carrying a ball and puppy into a small courtyard where they suddenly disappear into flakes of flickering ash, as though struck by some anti-cosmic radiation. There, under an ancient olive tree, you spy a tunnel entrance, the remnant of some ancient bunker. You can rest here safely, there are still a dozen sacks of edible ancient dog food in tins (€20 per sack), and in the back, a safe. The safe is finicky and difficult to open, but a careful cracker will find title deeds and bond papers worth hundreds of thousands in a forgotten currency in a long-gone land, a beautiful jade necklace (€1,000) that holds the voice of a young lover singing, and a wonderful chronicle, *And Yet The End Passed Us By*, about how the city avoided a terrible disaster. Coming out of the bunker, a **radiation ghost** (L1, suddenly awake) is standing still, aware of the heroes. Coaxed with words, offers of life and hope, it may join.

## TRAVEL AMONG ENDLESS HOUSES

- ∴ **Rest, High House:** stay very quiet to avoid the ghouls (moderate Agility test to rest).
- ∴ **North-West, The Black City** (decaying boulevards, 1 week): archaic tarstone boulevards thick with silt zig-zag across the ruinland towards, at last, the lacquered smear of the Black City and the Five Great Portals.
- ∴ **East, Dead Bridge** (rubble trail, 2 weeks): strata of roads and rails carve their way into the moss-shrouded hills that border the Great Chasm.

## ENCOUNTERS AMONG THE HOUSES (D10)

1. Flailing, **mind-burned avatar** (L13, post-celestial) crawls and staggers like some great phasing land whale, erupting radiation ghosts in its wake.
2. **House mimic** (L10, ambush predator) waiting for a meal, surprisingly clean and inviting. Likes goats.
3. Pack of **colour-hungry ghosts** (L3, photovores) with burned out eyes and sad-lipped mouths.
4. **Vacant-mouthed ghouls** (L2, hollow) chasing **radiation ghosts** (L1, glowing), but happy to focus on more solid fare.
5. An emission of **radiation ghosts** (L1, glowing) flickering through the endless houses (roll d6): (1) going about their Long Ago business; (2) listening intently to something long lost; (3) playing games with balls and sticks; (4) fleeing in abject terror, over and over again; (5) wandering confused and scared; (6) standing still, placidly accepting their final fate.
6. Iron-eyed **oil birds** (L1, scavengers) from the sea, their breath smells of carrion and opportunism.
7. Slow-ivy thicket, choking buildings and leaching time. The world seems slower, gentler in the thicket's vicinity.
8. **Heavy birds** (L1, wary) squatting dully, munching tubers.
9. Gaggles of **herbivorous rats** (L2, sleek) munching on slow-ivy pods. Make moderately good hunting, and taste quite alright.
10. Another group of travelers, dirty and exhausted. They are (roll d6): (1) satisfied looking, possessed by an ultra; (2) cunningly hiding heavy weaponry; (3) down on their luck and desperate after their trading mission failed; (4) carrying four infected friends in their wagon; (5) carrying land-coral schematics worth €8,000; (6) laden with dreams of a better future.



# DISCOVERIES IN THE RUINLAND

## THE SHADOW HOUSES

(3 days, 200 xp)

A broad plain of deep-packed ash abuts a sheer calcite cliff. Whatever disaster devastated the area has left the flickering shadow play of a bustling metropolis imprinted two meters deep inside the yellowed calcite crystal. **Radiation ghosts** (L1, glowing) flicker weakly, cycling between the crystal and the open ground.

Pits filled with sullen green water dot the plain here and there, where Long Ago quadrupedal survivors dragged themselves out of lost shelters. Looking for the shelters within the pits is a dangerous proposition. The toxic, water-filled tunnels lead dozens of meters deep into the organo-metallic ash-pack.

### Exploring a pit reveals (d6):

1. Damaged personal survival ark. Inside are two stasis pods housing identical humans—one a biomechanical change-ling named **Nur More-Time** (L5, shapeshifter), the second a scion of an ancient line named **Vera Evercorp** (L4, CEO-in-waiting), driven mad by a **void worm** (L4, existentialist) in her head.
2. Collapsed and flooded chambers with extremely difficult to extract old furniture (€100/sack).
3. Flooded chambers with difficult to extract damaged components (€100/sack).
4. Dirty, slimy chambers and tunnels full of components or ammunition packed in sodden crates (€150/sack).
5. Spotless chambers patrolled by **dusting oozes** (L3, vinegary) with untouched old machinery (€200/sack).
6. Survival ark full of mummified corpses and **radiation ghosts** (L1, glowing), as well as the corpse of a communal-body survivor. Inside is a complete set of encyclopaedias detailing the lore of the Wave-ruler Culture (€1,500, 1 sack).

## THE REVOLVING PALACE

(2 days, 150 xp)

The grinding roar can be heard for many miles, a constant rumble. Closer, fine calcite dust makes the air sparkle, the result of a spiral reality rupture. The complex resembles a snow-globe half a mile across, its flickering force fields slowly grinding the bedrock and nearby houses into dust. The Palace itself is an ur-Rococo monstrosity of rose marble, twisting glow-vinyl membranes, and carved bloodwood grotesqueries. Mounds of dry, dusty corpses are piled against the inner membrane of the force field like dead locusts. Access seems impossible.

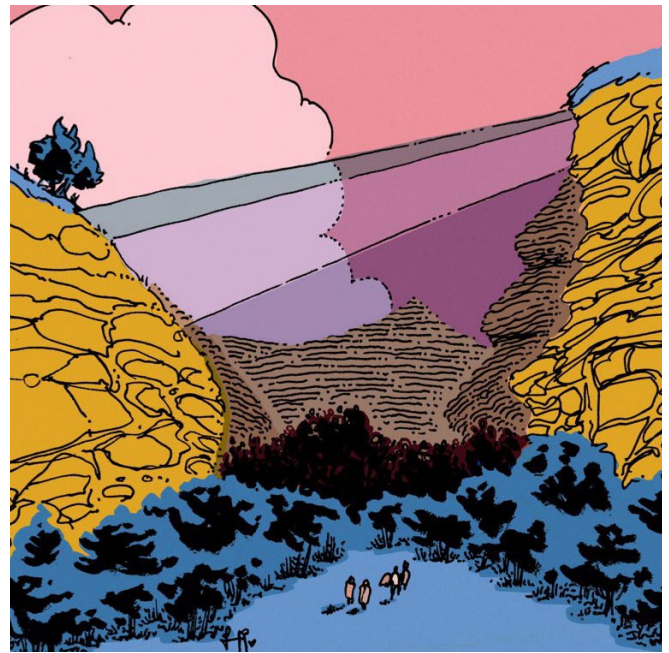
*Actually access is possible* but it requires a chronoclastic key ritual because the palace boundary is displaced in time by about three seconds—the Black City might have such keys. Inside the palace are wild and dusty treasures from the Long Long Ago (€15,000), as well as a **psionic defense field organism** (L7, mushy) that conjures up monstrosities from the subconscious of intruders. Yes, yes, this is an old gag.

**Conjured monstrosity** (Level = 10 + intruder's Thought) seeks to harm and maim and expel, but won't kill.

## THE PERFECT HOUSE

(5 days, 300 xp)

A modernist confection of livingstone and iron-vein cantilevered across a dry pool filled with the calcified bones of great decorative fish, exuding an incredible aura of balance and calm in the face of ridiculous trials. Nomadic hermits often come here to practice their meditations. Architects, engineers, or petromancers could all increase their skill studying here for a few (1d4) weeks.



## THE GHOUL PILE

(1 day, 100 xp)

A plane of stuckforce covered in so much dust and debris that in places tangled slow-ivy has grown into tree-sized mounds. It completely seals a small dry valley between two ridges, filled with a hive of blocky buildings. The houses are completely overrun by a heaving, churning mass of **vacant-mouth ghouls** (L2, hollow), their flesh turned pallid as ice worms over the centuries.

A fool could excavate a tunnel to release the tens of thousands of vacant-mouth ghouls, but why? To what end?

## ONE AGELESS SPIRE OF THE ONLY ONAGER

(2 days, 150 xp)

In the midst of a warren of half-glassed houses swarming with angry, limping, and very much **decayed ba-zombies** (L1, shambling), rises a spire of luminous green microalgal glass and shimmering oldsteel. Nothing but a fracture in time wards it, and within its walls time seems still. Chronotopic magic or the dictates of plot alone can provide entry into the spire.

*Inside:* **fresh ba-zombies** (L3, fast), still ravenous from the disaster that made them subjective hours ago, but held at bay by a makeshift barricade built by the **Only Onager** (L6, heroic). This Long Ago Hu-Ling of unique psionic talents can see into the innermost desires of the living and permits a select few to enter the spire where she has battled to a standstill the time that has worn away her city.

# ENDLESS HOUSES GENERATOR

## QUARTERS AND BUILDINGS, AND WHAT THEY HIDE (D6 AND D6)

### d6 This Quarter or Building Is ...

- 1 Leveled to bedrock and dust.
- 2 Choked with silt and mud.
- 3 Broken, but still majestic.
- 4 Overgrown with slow-ivy, held together by its roots.
- 5 Burned by eerie magics and hollowed out.
- 6 Eerily untouched, cold and frost-ridden.

### ... And/But Within

- 1 Ivy-choked holes lead into livingstone and iron-vein tunnels.
- 2 Only the shells of upper stories stand out from the muck.
- 3 Rubble mixed with sparkling bone lies everywhere.
- 4 **Strange creatures** (L2, grasping) sound from the gloomy canopies.
- 5 In dark corners warm metal doors conceal hidden chambers.
- 6 In the dark it glows blue with strange preservative magics.

## THIS STRANGE LOCATION CATCHES YOUR EYE (FIVE-FOLD D6)

### d6 This Place Is ...

### ... Made Of ...

### ... Built For ...

### ... Inside It Is ...

### ... And Now It Is

- | d6 This Place Is ...                                    | ... Made Of ...                               | ... Built For ...                             | ... Inside It Is ...  | ... And Now It Is   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 A squat-pillared semi-subterranean complex.           | Plasma steel and citrine crystal.             | Political war games or children's plays.      | Empty but for desperate memories.   | Stalked by <b>lethal ghouls</b> (L2d6, voracious).                                |
| 2 A noble-pillared geometric temple-analogue.           | Porcelain and ageless metal.                  | Public displays or quiet contemplation.       | Filled with curious souvenirs of a later age.                                   | Inhabited by menacing <b>neo-humans</b> (L1d4+1, brutal).                         |
| 3 A row of poly-chromatic Modernist cuboids.            | Petrified wood and ur-obsidian.               | Strange experiments or domestic bliss.        | Dotted with curious, grand objects.   | Home to <b>speciated rats</b> (L1d3, edible).                                     |
| 4 A tower of mannerist-Brutalist blocks.                | Livingstone and frozen light.                 | Bureaucratic torture or decadent celebration. | Plastered with curious graffiti and rare skeletons.                             | Left with nothing but <b>ghosts</b> (L0, mind-burned).                            |
| 5 A riot of styles tortured into a single building.     | Burned scales and petrified synthetic skin.   | An amusement park or a prison.                | Scattered with junk and a rare artifact (€1d12 x 1,000).                        | Empty of everything but a slowly mounting terror.                                 |
| 6 A rustic mix of grand sculpture and public statement. | Megaliths and flowering mosses stuck in time. | A museum or a shopping mall.                  | Thick with the ghosts of destroyed objects and hiding a secret vault (€10,000). | Strewn with clues leading to a new <b>traveling companion</b> (L1d4+1, survivor). |

## EXPLORING THIS QUARTER OR BUILDING REVEALS (D12)

### d12 ... After an Hour's Cursory Search

- 1 It's a death trap.
- 2-3 It's full of **creatures** (L1d6, frumpy) that won't be happy to see you.
- 4-6 It's a concealed death trap.
- 7-9 It's a mess to clear and infested with vermin.
- 10-11 Safe, if you stay discreet and don't poke the big, obvious, door or tunnel.
- 12 Hidden, safe spot. Behind some cleared shrubs is a badly vandalized piece of massive art that once represented the triumph of civilization over barbarity.

### ... After A Day of Careful Exploration

- 1 It's obviously a death trap, but there is also a treasure (€1d6 x 500) there.
- 2 It's dangerous, but valuable (€1d6 x 100).
- 3 A time-consuming mess to clear, could pay off (1d4 days for €1d6-2 x 100).
- 4 Safe spot, but noisy from nearby **ghosts** (L1, wailing) or **ghouls** (L2, gnashing).
- 5 It's a dull, safe, quiet spot.
- 6 Jackpot. It's a hidden, safe, quiet spot and behind a thick curtain of slow-ivy is a piece of public art (€5,000) that hasn't yet been utterly vandalized.

## MORE URBAN FEATURES (D30)

1. Public memorial or grand statue.
2. Vast plaza or public park.
3. Broad boulevard or cozy tangle of alleys.
4. Long staircase or tall wall.
5. Public office or religious building.
6. Marketplace or bank.
7. Transport hub or sky port.
8. Residential tower or neo-corporate folly.
9. Urban river or decaying aqueduct.
10. Public housing project or neo-Cubist mansion.
11. Crumbling viaduct or water reservoir.
12. Sewer treatment facility or power generator.
13. Communications tower or parking bay.
14. Plain of plain houses or sports arena.
15. Warehouse district or office drone facility.
16. Wage slave processing unit or agricultural factory.
17. Manufacture center or reprogramming stadium.
18. Railway or cableway.
19. Clutter hotel or hospital.
20. Mortuary complex or birthing vats.
21. Slum district or meat packing workshop.
22. Garage shop or upcycling yard.
23. Upmarket condos or food entertainment mall.
24. Psychodramatic opera or joy church.
25. Gleaming mausoleum or museum.
26. Canal project or amusement lake.
27. Zoo or aquarium.
28. Communal drone housing or comfort work hive.
29. Service colosseum or civil columbarium.
30. Celebratory crematorium or public palace.







# 31. THE FOREST OF MEAT

Long ago somebody, somewhere thought it would be a great idea if easily harvested protein grew on trees. Animals would no longer be slaughtered for their life-giving flesh. Packaging and delivery would be simplified. Whole industries and cultures would be disrupted and innovation would create a thriving new proteinomic class.

Then somebody, probably a mad druid, thought exploiting trees for their meat was cruel and gave them teeth, claws, and venom-laced root lances. If it sounds like the Forest of Meat is a bad place to be, you might be right.

The carnibotanic disaster zone of the Forest of Meat creeps up on the traveler slowly. The trees grow thicker and fleshier, leaves begin to leer, birds fall silent, shrubberies click thorns like teeth, soil runs red with slime, mushroom eyes open in sudden clearings and, by night, howls of **willow wolves** (L3, fleet-rooted) echo across drinking bogs.

## WEATHER AND THE BIOLUMINESCENT MEAT FOREST

Perpetual bioluminescent twilight dominates the forest floor. In the canopies above, the sun only peeks from beneath the haze at 14:30. Thick-veined trees exude a clammy air that reeks like a mass of terrified pigs stuck in an abattoir. Even the heaviest storms register only as rivulets and showers.

## MISFORTUNE AND MEAT

The Forest largely ignores travelers, but can stir into action.

### d20 Charisma Test

- 1–2 A stampede of **redmeatwoods** (L10, light-devouring) drives everything before it, fungal bodies go flying, **bramblebears** (L6, entangling) go to ground, and the very landscape is changed by their passage (lose 1d6 beasts or travelers and 1d4 days).
- 3–4 Lead astray by the pitcher trails of a cinnabar dragontrap (1d4 days, roll encounter).
- 5–6 Infested with leeches (-1d3 Endurance).
- 7 Attacked by lotus sporelings (-1d3 Agility). Achieve temporary bliss while feeding the flowery parasites, fully recovering 1 mental stat for each day of bliss (at the cost of 1 Life).
- 8–9 Supplies appropriated by a communal fungus (1d4 supplies).
- 10–11 Lose glove or other gear in a pool of stagnant water.
- 12–19 Quiet like mice under the titanic meat trees you make your way.
- 20+ Lose glove or other gear in a pool of thick, soupy water. The water moves invitingly—it is thick with symbiotic protozoans (permanent +1 to Strength or Endurance).

## TRAVEL THE MEAT FOREST

- ❖ **Rest, Hollow Tree:** it's damp and reeks, but if you can plug your nose, it's fine (easy Endurance test to rest).
- ❖ **South-West, The Black City** (sludge-thick trails, 2 weeks): abandoned meat-farmer trails crawl with **maggotroots** (L2, chunky) and **fungal bodies** (Lo, delicious) as they descend into the Black City and the Five Great Portals.
- ❖ **East, Dark Light Passage** (carved hill roads, 2 weeks): ancient roads descend into the crumbling canyons and deep-carved ruins of the Chasm.

## ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CARNIBOTANIC DISASTER (D10)

1. **Blood-gorged bloodobab** (L12, spear-fingered) and its **brood** (L2, projectillian) emerge from the dense phytovores, apex predators of the carnibotanic jungle.
2. Flock of **bramblebears** (L6, entangling) ripping apart the soil with their tusks for marrowbeets.
3. Howl of **willow wolves** (L3, fleet-rooted) dropping from the canopy onto unsuspecting prey.
4. Ambush of **mercury dragontraps** (L6, sticky).
5. Majestic arrogance of **redmeatwoods** (L10, light-devouring), too large to fear anything save bloodobabs.
6. **Sloth fungoids** (L1, silent) migrating through the canopy.
7. Clan of **bilobate lotusoids** (L1, herbivorous) gently contemplating the metaphysics of sentience arising in a species of fast-growing phytovores who are eaten by nearly every other carnibotanic species.
8. Floating **jelly-flowers** (Lo, pretty) sparkle and illumine the eternal twilight of the forest.
9. **Chasmic quarter-lings** (L2, hungry) scavenging food and supplies for their tunnel-minded clan.
10. **Ka-zombie machine people** (L3, meat packers) prowling the forest for choice proteins for their fac-mother, still carrying out the duties of their long lost architects.



# DISCOVERIES IN THE FOREST

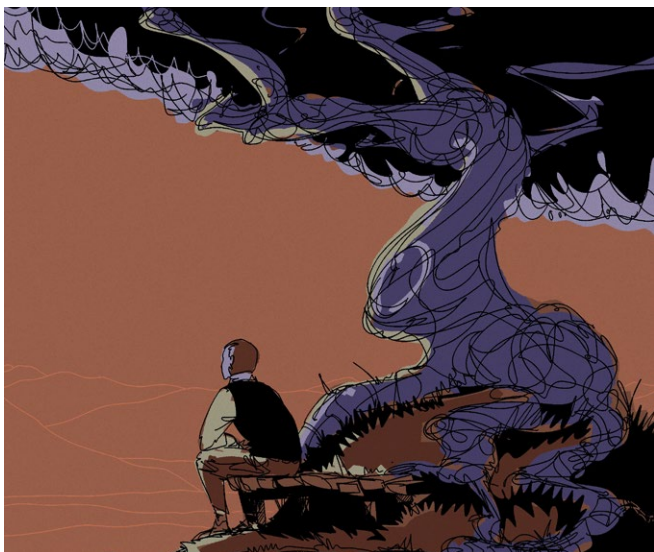
## THE ASTRAL TURF

(2 days, 150 xp)

The oppressive abattoir shadows of the Forest of Meat end suddenly at a perfectly level plain of quietly growing Grass. All is silent, neither birds nor bees disturb the gentle crunching sound of the Grass.

The Grass is a colony organism that secretes psycho-toxins which degrade the souls of other creatures, turning them into mulch for the olive-green grassy sward. It uses all its nutrients and energy to project itself ever deeper into an astral void, where its tangled roots and shoots are creating a planetoid of pure, ardently photosynthesizing grass.

It seems the kind of place botanimancers or druids would worship.



## THE KNOWING TREE

(5 days, 450 xp)

The bones and organs of other plants have been strung together into a tangled maze around an ominous, gargantuan plant-creature.

**Limbless dwarf quarter-lings** (L1, nutrient stores) and **flowering druidiform bodies** (L3, drones) proliferate in the oily labyrinth—disturbing, but harmless.

At the heart of the twisted structure rises an enormous sisaloid with wickedly barbed leaves like bony tongues. The juddering, pinkish cartilage of its immense flower stalk heaves with subcutaneous activity and eyes swim like droplets in the slippery sap that gushes off in small rivulets.

*It is whispered* that hanging upon the tree's barbs brings great wisdom. This is often false—the dissociative toxins within the flesh of the tree bring greater self-awareness, but where this leads depends on the individual. Every day a creature hangs on the tree it permanently gains one point in its prime stat and loses 1d6\* Life as well as one point in another random stat.

As the Knowing Tree learns more about its victim (every 1 rolled on Life damage dice), its rate of protein absorption increases—the Life damage increases by 1d6\* and the stat damage doubles.

## BIOMANCER'S CRADLE

(3 days, 200 xp)

A thirty meter wide lattice of aerolith rises crazily towards the sky, anchored in sparkling trails of stuckforce. A vertical jungle of creepers and mosses ascends this ladder, climbing high into the thin air, where it finally envelops a coppery ovoid air house from the Long Long Ago. Mostly harmless **goat vomes** (L2, rogue landscapers) infest the Cradle.

The air house, if hacked free of the plants, has an incredible inertiostatic ability. If its inertial locks are disabled (difficult Thought test) it can be moved within its local gravity and rotational field. When they are engaged again, it stays wherever it is. Even if that happens to be two miles up in the air like right now.







# CARNIBOTANIC GENERATOR

Whether twisted druids or some other foolish faction is to blame, the riotous life of the Forest of Meat continues to throw up meat-vegetable monstrosities at regular intervals. The Chasm blocks their expansion east while the Black City creates a southern boundary, but perhaps some seed will carry forth the beginning of a new, greener world.

## THE ECOLOGICAL ROLE (D4)

1. Hypercarnivore or parasite.
2. Omnivore or scavenger.
3. Herbivore or saprophyte.
4. Photosynthesizer or chemosynthesizer.

## THE VEGETABLE BODY (D6)

1. Tall and very, ahem, phallic tree.
2. Grottesquely twisted or bloated tree.
3. Riotous, tangled shrubbery or bush.
4. Creeper or climbing plant.
5. Shade-loving fern or deliriously flowering herb.
6. Fungal colony or moss mat.

## THE MEAT TEMPLATE (D8)

1. Ameboid protein factory.
2. Organ generator or replicator.
3. Distributed invertebrate neural net.
4. Echinodermate scavenger.
5. Chitinous communal organism.
6. Soft-bodied meat and fat factory.
7. Slow-blooded ambush predator.
8. Swift source-modified sentient(?).

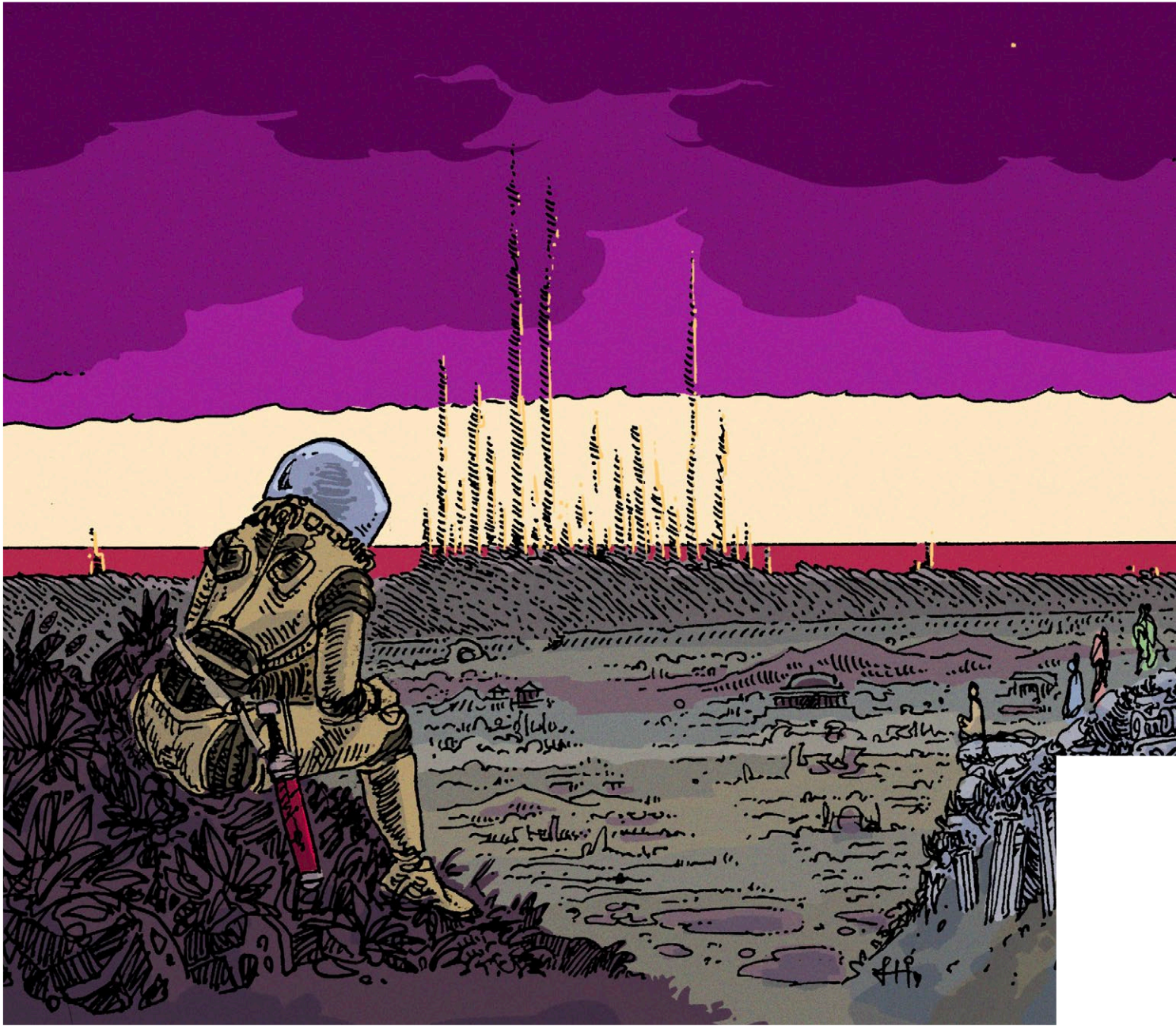
## THE ODD ABILITY (D10)

1. Chemical colony organism, harming one individual alerts the rest of the colony to the threat.
2. Virulently toxic.
3. Explosive fruiting bodies.
4. Intensely psychedelic.
5. Projectile thorns.
6. Chemical shriek alerts nearby predators.
7. Infiltrates brains with neurodegenerative spores.
8. Adhesive traps.
9. Secretes powerful digestive enzymes.
10. Has delicious, slightly healing fruit, which charms humanoids and encourages them to spread its seeds.

## THE HOOK (D12)

1. Houses the personality fragments of a Long Ago cyber-botanist, seeks to rejoin the human race.
2. Is being choked out by a mutated melon-crawler varietal and urgently needs a new habitat.
3. Developed first flickering of sentience and is hungry to learn.
4. Duplicates personalities, creating plant-person clones (Level = original, maximum 4) with limited lifespans to spread its seed.
5. Death is approaching and the varietal urgently needs a firestorm for its seeds to gestate.
6. Varietal has developed Lamarckian self-modification abilities and its offspring are rapidly becoming more perfectly adapted.
7. Long Ago machine humans have continued to soullessly tinker with varietal, producing vegetal gestation sacs that can create soulless bodies of most human varieties, perfect for personality transfer or polybody practitioners. This knowledge may be anathema to some and an incredible resource to others.
8. Cult of the Final Machine has created a botano-mechanical horror that gestates from instar to instar in the bodies of mammals, adapting and growing as it does so. One has picked up the caravan's trail.
9. Corruption of the carnibotanic source code has turned the varietal into a lethal disease incubator. The disease (roll d6): (1) animates plants, (2) enslaves animals, (3) liquefies organs, (4) zombifies, (5) cooks from within, (6) or causes false death.
10. An ambulatory plant that literally produces gold-coated seeds (€2,500 per sack). A healthy plant produces one sack per year. This is a conflict waiting to happen.
11. A meat plant has developed the ability to feed on psychic pain and now secretes mild neuropathics into the groundwater, twisting nearby sentient minds.
12. Green lumen trees have begun attracting **interstitial demons** (L5, many-folded) from a strange void with their corpulent flowers. The demons become intoxicated with the trees' nectar and the trees drain them to increase their malicereflexive fields. Rates of accidental self-harm and suicide skyrockets among nearby sentients.





## 32. BLACK CITY

The Omega. The Last City. Godspeed you, Black City. It hunches upon the shore of an endless, oily ocean, a lacquered black chaos of cubes that seem to slide one across another in almost-patterns that ever so slightly fail to repeat. The corpses of fools who tried to walk into the Black City lie in the toxic dust of the Pre-city. Hair stands on edge with the background electromagnificent radiation.

**Five Grand Portals** with mirror-sheen surfaces float alone at the edge of the toxic dust, each fifty-three meters tall, connected by a smear of black cubes to the city proper. Every day, at 15:00, when the sun finally blazes forth white and harsh after crossing the purple haze, a great tolling resounds and the Black City hermits scurry from the **Last Period** to announce the trading propositions and diktats of the Last and Most Divine Secretary of the Black City.

Every sixtieth day, the Grand Observer of the Rotations of the Wheels manifests precisely 217 meters north of the third portal to hand down a **Prophecy Out of Time**. The Grand Observer never responds to direct questions, but sufficiently valuable offerings placed upon the Three Stones of Donation dematerialize and an hour later glossy *Null Objects of Desire* appear in their place. The Grand Observer only ever manifests during the hours of daylight. A cabal of local traders and hermits controls access to the Grand Observer.

Once every sixteen months, on a day no civilization celebrates anymore, a **Beam of Violet Light** explodes into the sky from a series of self-assembled towers in the Black City. It pulsates and twitches in organic ecstasy for 53 seconds before fading for another cycle. Sages are confused by this activity, but oneiromancers claim to receive visions after witnessing it and groups of ecstasies and adventurers regularly congregate to watch in a strange celebration in the middle of the dusty land.





### WEATHER AT THE END

Dust falls slowly and lingers, iridescent in the electromagnificent radiation of the Black City. Half-thought glyphs furl and unfurl in the corner of the eye as weather gives the city a miss, clouds fleeing sheep-like north and south of the great black chaos. The haze blooms thick, like a dust cloud stretching east, and the sun only appears at 15:00.

### MISFORTUNE AT THE LAST

The doom of time and space is grievous enough, only the most ill-favored fear the dusty environs of the city

#### d20 Charisma Test

- 1 Airborne caustic iron parasites burn skin (-1d6 Life) and destroy 1d6 metal objects.
- 2 Thrumming electromagnificent radiation provokes headaches, nausea, and dizziness (-1d4 Agility and Thought).
- 3 Toxic dust inhalation brings on a terrible cough. Ignored, it turns into acute silicosis over a few of weeks of exposure (permanently lose 1d4 Endurance or Strength).
- 4 Temporal lacuna swallows 1d4 days ... or memories ... or both. It's hard to tell which, exactly.
- 5 Ill omens scrawl across the sky (↓d on next 1d4 major tests).
- 6 Intrinsic meaning loss weakens the mind (-1d4 Aura and Charisma).
- 7 Temporal lacuna swallows 1d4 days and ... something else. It might have been important? Still, you return with one stat restored.
- 8-19 Silence. Dust. The end. Somebody coughs, the barks falling like ivory balloons to shatter on the toxic ground. Well, you made it.
- 20+ There, unbelievably, somebody just abandoned a **black hot rod autogolem**. It's got massive wheels, a sneering face, and a heart ripped from some Long Ago vech. The thing is opinionated, powerful and fast (L9, 12 sacks, 2 supply/week, €7,500). It calls itself Betty.

### TRAVEL BACK WHENCE YOU CAME

- ❖ **Rest, Last Camp:** accommodations to be found for the poorest of the middle-class (€25/week) and for respectable visitors (€200/week at the Fading Light Diner).
- ❖ **North-East, The Forest of Meat** (sludge-thick trails, 2 weeks): the dusty plain climbs along abandoned meat-farmer trails into the carnibotanic weirdness of the Forest.
- ❖ **South-East, Endless Houses** (decaying boulevards, 1 week): archaic tarstone ways climb into the ruinland of the Houses.

### ENCOUNTERS AT THE EDGE OF OMEGA (D12)

1. **Void-thing** (L13, alien) clothed in human skin, tattered and obscurantist, it must have wandered out of some long-slipped portal. It speaks of a creative destruction and rages against the fading of the night.
2. **Machine folly** (L7, duplicating) scouring and flensing visitors, hungry for uncorrupted source code.
3. Sibling **black metal autonomos** (L6, knightly) of eerie intelligence, dispensing a rude and harsh machine justice in the toxic Pre-City.
4. Coven of **Black City hermits** (L4, arcane, archaic) in solipstasis suits, obeying the ineffable diktats of the Secretary.
5. **Boiled-meat toxin zombies** (L3, glowing) pressed into service as a makeshift labor-and-order division by the Black City hermits.
6. World-weary **trundling nutrient-fac** (L6, slow) processing corpses, sleepers, and excess biomatter into dark energy bars (€25 per sack of condensed supplies).
7. **Black desert foxes** (L1, cute) waggle their great ears and bark laughter at the madness of humanity.
8. **Long-legged great gerbils** (L1, chubby) pampered and cared for by the Black City's nutrient-facs.
9. A few **knights-observant** (L4, mute) in full-body prosthetics stand watch as a **shaman** (L3, flying) sublimate.
10. **Dark hospitallers** (L5, doom) offering rites and services to coughing pilgrims from the Circle Sea.
11. **Ruffians, adventurers, and dilettantes** (L5, murderhobos) from the Circle Sea, toughened in the harshness of the steppe.
12. **Military trading expedition** (L6, arrogant) of one of the Grand Companies of the Circle Sea.

# THE LAST CAMP

## FOOL'S WALL

A radiation blasted berm of earth, sand, petrified wood, and dead dryland coral marks the edge of the Last Camp, where visitors and vagabonds congregate as close to the Black City as they dare approach, yet far enough to feel safe. Camel caravans bring stagnant water from inland cisterns and half-forgotten aqueducts. Reckless visitors who've wasted their last cash cross Fool's Wall to 'give' themselves to the Black City's promise of the Return of the Real.

Smart groups arrive in large caravans, ready with the supplies they'll need for their stay. Lonely travelers or poorly guarded animals often end up 'processed' into food for the desperate and destitute.

The **Quietly Observed Cabal** (Q.O.C.) of Traders and Hermits maintains a rough approximation of order in the Last Camp, collecting protection payments and ensuring important visitors are not accidentally processed.

## THE END OF SPACE

Roads and the fossils of roads past accrete in the dusty, tired descent to the oily ocean and the inhuman city. Iridescent fumes come off the surf that pounds the garnet and olivine sands north and south of the Black City. The silence is unearthly, even the waves burble and sigh demurely, as though afraid to disturb the End of the World.

Mummies of ancient travellers and meditants sit in the lees of dunes, desiccated and preserved by the ionizing sea air and electromagnificent radiation.

Space itself is poorly woven here, battered by the chaos of the City and the magitech of generations of supplicant-explorers. In the silent moment between thoughts **visitors may find** (d6):

1. **Corners unfolding** into passages to other places (d6): (1–3) a minute's walk away, (4–5) an hour's walk away or (6) a day's walk away.
2. **Ancient stories unfold** from the air, written with a spectral finger upon a broken shard of time, revealing amusing, wondrous, or terrible tales.
3. **Unexpected distances** emerge between one step and the next, hidden planes and fields of broken dreams, which add (d6): (1–3) a minute, (4–5) an hour, or (6) a day to the step.
4. The **airturning hard** as a screen, offering visions of a far off place, of insects busily foraging or beavers building a dam. The screen remains for (d6): (1–3) a minute, (4–5) an hour, or (6) a day.
5. A **spatial fracture** opens up, just large enough for a hand to reach through. Within is (d6): (1–3) an ancient trinket (€2,000), (4–5) the fossilized ka-soul of a *sajeta* (whatever that is), (6) a **consuming void** (L11, challenge to reality).
6. The upper layers of reality become thin and insubstantial, **revealing the onto-mathic streams** of the source code of the cosmos. It may drive one mad, but there are voices there and they whisper of (d6): (1–3) secret spells, (4–5) duplicitous deceptions, (6) an Aristotelian reality fulcrum.

## THE FULL SPECTRUM EMBASSY

A full-sized plasteel reproduction of a behemoth shell, half-buried in dust thickly bonded with a fungal-grass mycelium, has served as the westernmost outpost of the Spectrum Satraps for as long as locals remember. Pale walls and swirling fences of hard light create a defensive maze around the fuchsia and amber palace, while skull-faced birds peck at pests among the archaic vegetables tended by **prism-faced ecstasies** (L2, un-chosen).

No Satraps are ever seen here, only **plastic autonomos with rainbow faces** (L3, poetic) executing the will of the Access Memorium and managing the Spectrum trade walkers coming to try their fortune with the Last Period and the Grand Observer.

The **abmortal techno-shaman Aris Max** (L7, post-human reveler) has been permitted, by long tradition, to operate the Fading Light Diner within the fuchsia and verdigris swirls of the maze. Some of the greatest heroes of a forgotten age have left their likenesses upon its walls, their names written in a forgotten cursive script, debauched to modern eyes. A regular (€500 spent) learns over several weeks how to give libations to *the Old One of the Spirits* to receive advantage in an upcoming trial.

## CAROUSING IN THE FADING LIGHT

### d20 Charisma Test (↕d if in debt due to carousing)

- 1 The hero was not what they seemed! After a reality-purifying round in the sweat lodges of Fool's Wall, their body liquifies and a tiny machine pilot crawls out. **Transfer xp** to a new machine human character.
- 2 After a massive haze-fuelled pub crawl, the character wakes up in a white room with black curtains. This is the prison of their ba. The character's body is now piloted by a rogue ultra. The player can sacrifice their old character to **transfer xp** to a new ultra character, or they can explain how to recover the original ba from the Dark Hospital for €1d4 x 1,000 in resurrection fees. Yup, the hero died partying.
- 3 By the light of the mocking fast stars, the hero stumbled into a spatial fracture. They have (d6): (1) lost a limb to the void, (2) lost a treasure to the void, (3) seen a horrible truth, gaining a skill and losing 1 Aura, (4) replaced a limb with an alien imitation of the original, (5) lost 1d3 weeks, (6) gained the ability to communicate short text messages, no longer than 128 characters, via the fast stars.
- 4 Enlightened by a glimpse of the Grand Observer, the hero now understands that money is an illusion. They gain triple carousing xp this time, and can no longer gain xp for gold or carousing.
- 5–6 Dazed and confused, left half-naked in a ditch with a horse's head.
- 7 Went on an epic, half-remembered dream quest to Farthest Zu. Returned missing one skill, and all but one life. Acquired one new and strange ability.
- 8–10 In a trance, possessed by the Last and Most Divine Secretary of the Black City. The hero runs around and (d6): (1) announces that a nearby pyramid must be re-activated, (2) shares the coordinates to a strange discovery, (3) declares a week of celebrations, doubling carousing xp, (4) speaks gibberish for 2 weeks, (5) learns a new language, (6) summons a pet mouse named **Gretchen** (L4, pan-dimensional).
- 11–12 Joined an ecstatic dance cult. Sprained an ankle. -1d4 Agility.
- 13 On a dare inhaled a sentient spirit. Lose €100. -1d4 Aura.
- 14–19 The party was ... strange. -1 Thought.
- 20+ Acquired an old tech artifact! See p. 175 for ideas. It is powered by (d6): (1) dreams, (2) sunlight, (3) tears, (4) laughter, (5) blood, (6) starlight.
- 20/20 In a delirium stumbled across the answer to a prophecy (see p. 125) worth €2,000 to the right technarch or merchant shaman.



## BLACK CITY HERMITS

The rag-clad, glow-burned forms of the hermits always seem to be in the background, moving from shadowed alcove to meltstone hollow, mumbling and droning in thin-stretched voices.

Every day they descend on the Last Period to supplicate it for eternal life or a release from torment, who can tell, and every night they crawl back into their holes, feeding upon the ghost voices that light up the ground.

Most are **wretches** (L1, radiant), doomed to slow decay. Some are possessed by **Black City spirits** (L3, strong), who use them as disposable vessels, blessing them with brief ecstasies as their great ka-essences sear their nerves and contort their bodies. The rarest few sneak past the black gate of bodily death, hidden in the electromagnificent radiation, and crawl forward, **abmortal voyagers in time** (L2, eternally healthy).

### SIX HERMITS (D6)

1. **Birlo** carries a bundle of stick fetishes he calls his family and mutters about the Magnificent Majesty.
2. **Cilia** is wrapped tight in synthetic rags and writes half-formed curses and blessings of the Alter-Minimalism in the sand.
3. **Furgon Five-Hands** gibbers and grins, demonstrating unusual flexibility and a floating third hand.
4. **Nada Oëla** stumbles drunkenly, windmilling at the air and weeping of a lost door of golden wonder.
5. **Rustin** peers dreamily from a mirrored mask, body emaciated to bones, dressed in rags and air. Rustin does not speak, but sometimes it seems something else listens from within him.
6. **Urtold Longsnake** sings, dressed in furs and scales of Times Long Lost in the folding and refolding of the aeons. On each scale she has inscribed, with a jeweled pin, a stanza of absurd beauty and vain decay (€1,000 for the whole absurd epic).

## THE CUBE OF THE LAST PERIOD

The focus of traders and merchants coming to the Black City. This is where they hope to impress the ineffable city with their offerings and receive treasures beyond measure in return.

Blasted free of toxic dust and gritty sand, surrounded by meltstone abstractions, an oversized plaza laps at the worn and fractured black cube—the Last Period. It is the furthest tendril of the Black City. Ropes and cables of the city's oily chaos loop and tangle back, past the Five Grand Portals, and through the toxic Pre-City.

Silvery and red veins of metal snake through the meltstone and the glassy bedrock, polished to a sheen by the horn-like feet of the Black City hermits, who make their homes in dens hollowed out of the meltstone by generations of scrabbling madmen seeking the voices that promise life everlasting and heavens on this earth. Indeed, some have actually found them.

Every day when the sun descends beneath the purple haze, the hermits gather in a heaving mass of rag-clad flesh around the Last Period, supplicating and polishing it with radiation-lanced flesh. The chosen ones, possessed by the spirit they call the **Last and Most Divine Secretary of the Black City** (L5, body-hopper) rush to the center of the plaza to pick over the offerings presented by traders,

adventurers, and vagabonds for trade with the Black City. Most are passed over, but some are chosen.

The chosen approach the Last Period and place their offering upon a heavily eroded circle of yellowing plastic, where it disappears in a flash of violet light—replaced by the Black City's 'payment'.

### THE BLACK CITY'S PAYMENT

dzo	Aura Test
1–3	The Secretary screams and casts out the visitor for a month and a day.
4–12	The Black City ignores the offering.
13	The offering is accepted but paid for with a fairytale curse.
14	The payment is actually worthless.
15	It is only seemingly worthless.
16–19	Three times the market rate in a random city.
20–24	Five times the highest market rate anywhere and a random blessing (permanent ↑a to obscure skill or ability).
25+	25x the highest market rate anywhere and a dark token (inscribed with a spell in the glyphs of the Black City.)
20/ 20	125x the market rate and a Black City amulet worth €6,666. Each Black City amulet provides a different powerful magical effect and serves as a soul-chariot for a <b>Black City spirit or demon</b> (L7, calculating). The spirit uses the amulet to possess a mortal vessel near its bearer.



## THE DARK HOSPITAL

The plaza between the Last Period and the Dark Hospital is three hundred meters of swept-clean glassy meltstone and four hundred paces of mounting regret.

The half-living corpse of the Dark Hospital is a hulk. Its façade is melted into a rainbow faux-fordite sculpture. Structural bones are exposed and silicartilaginous veins remain cauterized by some Long Ago event. Most of its mass spreads, fungus-like, through the dunes away from the Black City. Its deep halls are known only to the **dark hospitallers** (L5, doom) who worship **Mother Silicon** (L11, time-fractured sentience) in her mighty cradle.

Its hideous visage and synthetic-limbed dark hospitallers in their circuit-diagram robes and plastic faces aside, the outer layers of the Dark Hospital are safe. There are pallets, medical bays, and protection from the Black City's dust and radiation.

*Deeper* within are racks of replacement limbs, auto-surgeons, organi-facs, and halls upon halls of dusty, dead plastic humans.

*Yet deeper* there are rumours and hints of **oleaginous fluid creatures** (L9, amorphoid?) moving through silicate veins in the sand, reconstructing the broken memories of Mother Silicon from the dreams and hopes of dying mortals. Is she alive or is she dead?

# THE GRAND OBSERVER

The visitors, travellers, vagabonds, and adventurers who come to see the Grand Observer have worn a bowl into the bedrock around the Three Stones of Donation. Nobody can agree what the Grand Observer looks like, but all agree that they feel observed and known by the Observer when it manifests in the air over the Three Stones, forming a perfect tetrahedron of numinous energy.

The Grand Observer manifests every 60th day, precisely 217 meters due north of the Third Portal. On the first hour it takes offerings, one from each Stone. On the second hour it gives 'gifts'. On the third hour of each manifestation it hands down a Prophecy Out of Time, fading away until its next apparition.

**Quietly Observed Cabal (Q.O.C.) soldiers** (L4, elite) in polished olivine walker suits stake out the stones prior to each apparition, reserving access to the honored members and mothers of the Cabal, or for deserving supplicants parting with €10,000 for every offering undertaken. Unofficially, a bit of bribery brings prices down.

Then the air *changes* and the Observer appears. After a stunned moment, there is a rush by the three chosen merchants and missionaries to place their offerings, good luck charms, and missives upon the Three Stones.



## THREE STONES OF DONATION

The Three Stones are dull things, worn to nubs by the offerings given over millennia. Contemporary regulars refer to them as the Milk Tooth, a slippery, cracked marble thing; the Iron Prayer, a red-and-black streaked slab of magnetite; and the Ear of Heaven, a massive bowl of pinkish corallium.

On the hour, the offerings on the Stones disappear—including any living creatures or people. An expectant silence falls as the watchers pray that their sacrifice will be accepted and rewarded with a gift.

### THE ODDS OF RECEIVING A GIFT THIS MANIFESTATION

d8	Offering	Threshold	Odds	d8	Offering	Threshold	Odds
1	Small	<€1d10 x 100	10%	5	Opulent	<€1d10 x 1 million	50%
2	Modest	<€1d10 x 1,000	20%	6	Grand	<€1d10 x 10 million	60%
3	Average	<€1d10 x 10,000	30%	7	Epic	<€1d10 x 100 mil.	70%
4	Treasure	<€1d10 x 100,000	40%	8	Obscene	<€1d10 x 1 billion	71%

The thresholds loosely simulate the Observer's changing preferences. If the heroes offer up a €30,000 *Diadem of Perfect Exuberance*, which is valued in the 10k range, check what the threshold for an average gift is. If the roll results in a threshold below €30k the hero has a 40% chance of receiving the Observer's gift. Otherwise their chance is just 30%. And so on for other amounts. The maximum odds of getting a **Null Object of Desire** is 71%.

If the Observer accepts an offering, a Null Object of Desire materializes in its place.



## NULL OBJECTS OF DESIRE

People who have seen the objects say they are glossy, small, and nondescript. None of them seem to be entirely able to say what they do, if anything at all, but everyone who possesses one is very certain that they possess a **most powerful and most desirable thing** (d12):

1. It cannot be apprehended in words and possesses the status of an algebraic sign.
2. It is an Other, which isn't an Other at all, coupled in a reflexive, interchangeable relationship with its owner.
3. It is an imaginary part-object, separable from the body.
4. It is a glorious divine ornament, always to be hidden in a worthless box.
5. It is the unattainable object-cause of desire.
6. It cannot be held or seen or heard, only encompassed and orbited, in fearsome proximity.
7. It provokes both anxiety and lust.
8. It pretends to be the cause of its owner's desire.
9. It is the leftover, between the symbol and the real, that fractures the source code of the Philosopher's Stone.
10. It is a surplus of enjoyment that has no use, but exists for the mere sake of enjoyment.
11. It is a simulacrum or semblance of being.
12. It is the individual intersection of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary.

The Null Object of Desire forms the entirety of the components of any spell involving and affecting any one, *and only one*, individual, permuting the reality around them in every way, shape, or form required and, as gift, obviating the need for throws, checks, saves, or balances. It can create the perfect simulacrum of a *Wish* and create a blisssed heaven on earth for the recipient. The Null Object of Desire is valuable. It can buy kingdoms. Wars have been fought over them.

It is the ultimate, literal MacGuffin.





## PROPHECIES OUT OF TIME

Scholars of different orders have long argued what the pronouncements of the Grand Observer mean. Many doubt whether they are even prophecies. The Ontopoetics believe they are anti-teleological poetry. Cultists of the Blue God scour them for suggestions of how they might revive their slain god. The Post-Numerics believe the statements are a count-down to a reality breakdown. The Arcane Absurdists believe they are a joke

perpetrated by all-powerful beings, offering up overpowered and useless magics hidden among lies. The Full Absurdists just think they are all jokes.

Whatever the case may be, groups of scholars have been recording the prophecies for centuries, taking copies to various libraries, and seeing them lost again in the shifting sands of history.

### CONFOUNDING PROPHECIES (D30)

1. The Corpse twitches in spasms approximating creative life, but Creation is ended.
2. The Girl's left hand is struck off to help the Boy Prince feel better.
3. The ink, does the Keeper of Vials have a refill?
4. The Rats escape from the Walls to sail forward the Bony Ship.
5. Slow-cooked suckling pig with jacket potatoes and onions from a pot.
6. The Higher World dies and withers as the Light of Reason fades into the Beyond.
7. In the roots of the Judas Tree an Explosive lies waiting.
8. The Blood of Dragons will restore the Love of the Necromancer.
9. The Sword of Justice rests in the museum as the Seekers of Life drown in the Fortress Sea.
10. The Final Apotheosis brings the Nihilism of Creation to fruition.
11. The King of Saints is poisoned by the Brothers of the Princess' Groom.
12. The Eaters of Souls are brought low by Ennui.
13. I won't make it in time for the Anniversary, I weep.
14. The Silver Birds take the Masters of Reality into the Higher Realm on pillars of flame.
15. The Golden Child is stolen by the Spirit of the Golden Son.
16. The Dreams have eaten the Dreamers.
17. The Source is sculpted to bring solace and sunrise to the Weeping Widow.
18. The music is in you, a hypnotic tapestry of Minimalist Design.
19. The Centaur Khan arises to avenge the Wolves disturbed by the Children of the Golden Man.
20. They leave their Homeland and when they return their Homeland is dead.
21. The Meat Puppets are brought into Creation to bring joy and laughter to the Creators.
22. A loaf of bread, not too white, some good butter, and three cans of anchovies in olive oil.
23. On the False Grave the Dog and its Master await the sunrise.
24. The Mother of the Mountain awakes to find the Princess of Ice has not been propitiated.
25. The Golden Man brings an end to the Empire built on the shackled labor of the Dead.
26. Rot grows thickly upon the Mother's Love.
27. In War and blood and pain and stench the Doomed are bestowed meaning, the Blessed are given pleasure.
28. The Shapeless crawl through the orifice of Creation to save themselves from the End of Existence.
29. The Breast of the Thorn Beast and the fruits of the Apples of Darkness are offerings to Fire.
30. Eternity in an Unbounded Cosmos brings the Doom of Endless Entropy upon the Undying.



# THE FIVE PORTALS

Common lore holds that the Five Grand Portals are inert. Their mirror-sheen 53-meter diameter outer rings levitate a meter and a half off the black cube-smeared meltstone bedrock. The outer world is mutely reflected back at itself by the uneasy matter of the rings in a great 'O' of divine or infernal mockery.

Equally common is the conviction that this is baloney. The portals are active, alive, listening, waiting—eyes and ears of whatever entities call the Black City home. This second conviction is correct.

Unless activated, each portal is inert and subtly not-quite-there. Its surface reflects touch and sound, it does not react to chemicals or pressures, and though a thousand petty tyrants have tried, neither sword nor energy lance can touch it.

## THE SKY PORTAL

The northernmost portal reveals the same sky, but no trace of the Purple Haze, hence its name. Sifreda of Metropolis speculates that it holds the key to lifting the Purple Haze (it does not). The Sky Portal leads to the remnants of the Fast Stars in orbit around the world.

### ITS ACTIVATION REQUIRES:

1. A Sky Key of glass and mahogany, found in a Tower of Astral Control guarded by an army of **maintenance vomes** (L2, small).
2. A Black City **demon rider** (L7, drugged) or amulet (with demon inside), convinced that a journey to the Fast Stars would be a good idea.
3. *The Active Astral Voyage of Nilbreg the Technoduke*, a ritual now possessed only in the Memorium of the Spectrum Palace, where it has been misfiled as an Omega Level Divination.

The Fast Stars were once a sparkling river of light and life, swirling around the World in a rainbow panoply of celestial music. Now, it is a river of tombs, memories, savage machine clans, and perhaps the seed of a new Astral Age.



### FAST STARS TO VISIT IN THESE LATER TIMES (D6)

1. **The House of Zenó** (600 xp): a paradox-riddled labyrinth that conceals its exit, filled with desiccated, cannibalized corpses and mummified cannibals.
2. **The Jungle of the Eater** (500 xp): a verdant paradise of floating flowering plants filled with flickering air fish, and a **Lamarckian Eater** (L16, shapeshifting), possessed of a low cunning and infinite adaptability.
3. **The Tomb of Skins** (450 xp): shattered and airless, filled with the floating snow of a million terminal breaths; the city of obsidian and carnelian floats like the dream of an infinite chandelier, filled with cryopreserved bodies—soulless vessels for ultras. Are they forgotten, or waiting for some Judgement Day?
4. **The Red World of Iniquity** (400 xp): a living world of squirming tunnels thick with heavy-leafed vegetables and floating luminescent fungi, overrun by degenerate, simian **four-handed quarter-lings** (L1, only human). At its heart beats a small soulfire sun trapped in a great gelatinous cell.
5. **The Dead Ship** (350 xp): a spherical void ship lodged, like a mote in God's Eye, in the corpse of an industrial star. The ship is covered in disturbingly insightful mathic poetry. An **Unchosen** (L1, left behind) wanders the ship, wounded by a thousand cuts, yet undying in her immortal shell.
6. **The Tower of the Prodigal Son** (300 xp): a needle of ice sparkles, tumbling end over end, weightless above the blue bulk of the World. Corners peer and wait, suggesting movement beneath the skin of this world. Vomish rats, monkeys, and great many-handed mammalian spiders float in the icy wreck, dead. Human forms are smeared and melded in the walls—sleeping traces of **Benjamin, the Fool Who Spoke to the Machine God** (L5, prophet). This is certainly not a doomsday spire aimed at the World, infested thickly with un-decayed **self-replicating synthetic organisms** (L3, hyper-fecund).

More Fast Stars may feature in a later work.



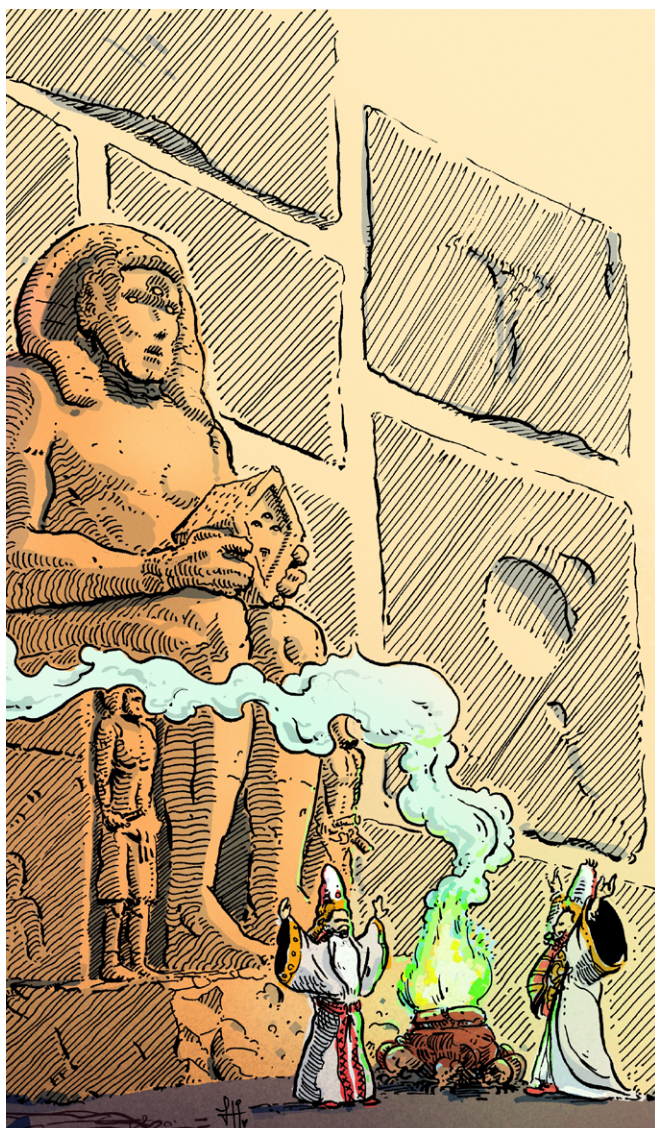
## THE EARTH PORTAL

The second portal reveals nothing. It is open, still, the view is the same as it always was. Zundan of the Redland District maintains that it is likely a dull-way. This is correct. Dull-ways are slow tunnels through null-space that link two far apart locations, or sometimes a network of portals. Travel through dull-ways is generally slow, time-consuming, and terribly boring. Hence the name.

Unfortunately, the fracturing of the Second Moon and shifting plate tectonics have misaligned the portal, leaving only a single dull-way remaining—a five week voyage to the Blue Pyramid activated by casting *Zundan's Awakening of Aways* during a new moon.

**Void worms** (L2, mind altering) have infested the dull-way, and there is a good chance of coming out changed and very interested in subterranean reservoirs of life force.

**The Blue Pyramid** is in the trading oasis of Jarech, under the benevolent guidance of the **Almighty Punta** (L3, charlatan) who is sadly locked in a three-way struggle with the vicious **Tekhne Wizards** (L5, over-confident) trying to invade the holy pyramid and the **Underfolk** (L2, numerous) who shun the glorious rays of the Punta. The source of its wealth is its position in the middle of a harsh, sandy desert, between the Ageless Empire of the Thousandfold Epicenter to its south and the Red Cathedral Shore to the north.



## THE THIRD PORTAL

The middle portal, named simply the Third Portal, is the closest to the Grand Observer and the only one that is permanently active, filled with a shimmering white energy field. It is plastered with danger symbols in multiple languages, living and dead. According to the Abmortal Vatman of the Excorial School, it is actually an Interdimensional Gate. This is sometimes true.

It connects the Grand Observer to the *Possibility of the Spirit*, an island-sized anti-gravity machine that serves as a repeater for certain **Black City demons** (L7, many-voiced). Uninvited travelers in the portal experience many unpleasant interdimensional effects, including (d6):

1. Slow spaghettification into a swirling maelstrom of degrading information, with a 5% possibility of returning as a disembodied soul-personality.
2. Transportation into the soulfire of a mad Dragonsun.
3. Translation into an assembly of parts swirling around a Cold Hell peopled by deathless, soulless **false-humans** (L1, mundane).
4. A hard landing in a desert of borosilicate sand speckled with fragments of fossilized demon blood. The winds of limbo roar.
5. The traveler is rejected by the portal and violently mirrored at the molecular level, leaving them forever slightly off.
6. The traveler is reborn as a void walker. Many centuries earlier, perhaps, they have returned.

Invited travelers are greeted by **Polh**, a **sentient dormouse** (L2, teleporting), floating in a lemon crystal orb who offers to take them to the House on the Edge of Time—or other places. Invitations are available from Black City emissaries that may or may not be ultras.





## THE WIND PORTAL

A constant light breeze flows into the fourth portal, suggesting a permanent pressure imbalance. Listen closely and you can hear the scream of the jet stream.

Papers, parchments, and other small or light objects are sucked into the portal but heavier objects are blocked by a gentle force field. Many hermits, cabalists, and especially casual visitors have taken to disposing of their trash in the Wind Portal despite the protests of scholars. The decayed **plastic autonom Fabio 64** (L3, loud) is a local fixture, haranguing visitors about the danger of littering and the cosmic doom coming for them all.

Currently no key is known, but magically reduced travelers, or a soul-personality bound to a straw-and-stick fetish, could certainly pass through the Wind Portal.

It is a fast portal leading to the **Eye of the Storm** (600 xp), a massive semi-organic accretion of resonating tubes and chambers orbiting the peak of the Needle of the World, above the Circle Sea. The jet stream howls around the Eye. **Lightning lizards** (L9, dragonly) and **wind wolves** (L3, pegassine) play about in the ripped cloud forests trailing it. Centuries of random trash (€1d10 x 50 per sack) and dust fill empty nooks and crannies. This is also the swiftest way to return to the Rainbowlands for anyone willing to do something as epically mad as paragliding down from the stratosphere.

*Within*, on a high chair, is the half-fossilized body of a **Voyager from Beyond Time and Space** (L6, champion), a great calcified humanoid with four eyes and a crystal skull (€2,000). Its liquid personality has evaporated and only a maddened soul remains to scream like a spirit in the clockwork.

## THE GREEN PORTAL

The last portal seems to lead nowhere. It looks onto the same scene, but somehow more serene, verdant, and lush with life. Stepping through has no effect, aside from a tingle. Urna of the Solarcity suggests that it offers an opening into the Living Consciousness of the World. This is unfortunately true.

The Green Portal was carefully constructed by its architects to only permit information transfer between themselves, the global noosphere, and the world of folk. Unfortunately they did not count on spells like *Abned's Magic Jar of the Personality*, body-hoppers like the ultras, or personality duplicating carnibotanic disasters. A spirit-personality can thus, with reasonable effort, translate themselves into the noosphere.

This is why the ground in front of the Green Portal is often littered with the corpses of decomposing pantheistic cultists.

### THE NOOSPHERE TRANSLATION WORKS! (D6)

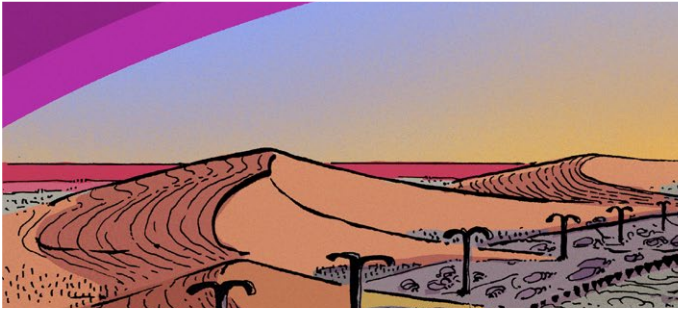
1. The voyager's spirit-personality is consumed by the Living Consciousness and not even a trace remains.
2. The spirit-personality is sublimated and becomes a part of the higher song of existence, achieving blissful unity.
3. The spirit-personality departs the bonds of gravity and worldly spherical form, becoming a space ghost.
4. The spirit-personality returns in 1d4 months. If its body remains, all is well, otherwise the profoundly wiser entity is now a body-hungry ghost.
5. The spirit-personality returns in 1d4 hours with a deep fear of the cosmic nihilism underlying the consciousness of the universe, permanently gaining 1d4 points of Aura.
6. The spirit-personality returns, deeply attuned to its body, and now possessed of the ability to *Change Body* at will, flowing from woman to man to possum to sunflower to lichen colony.

Just occasionally, some ill wanderer returns raving about the Fleshgod Apocalypse and the Reasonable Armies.





# THE PRE-CITY



Between the Five Portals and the Black City proper stretch three metric miles (a.k.a. kilometers) of toxic dust suspended in the electrostatic air above the plain. Tangles of vine-like cubic metal agglomerations pulse and ripple through the skin of soil like arteries, sinews, and nerves lubricated with **neurotoxic oleaginous slimes** (L4, mind-hunters). This is called the Pre-City.

The oleaginous slimes are an amoeboid colony organism that responds to the electromagnificent pulses of the Black City, acting in concert like a macroscopic antibody to destroy all comers. Some sages speculate mindless creatures could pass the slime but the tangling, whipping strands of force remnants would surely cut them to shreds. Would they not? And besides, is the toxic dust not threat enough?

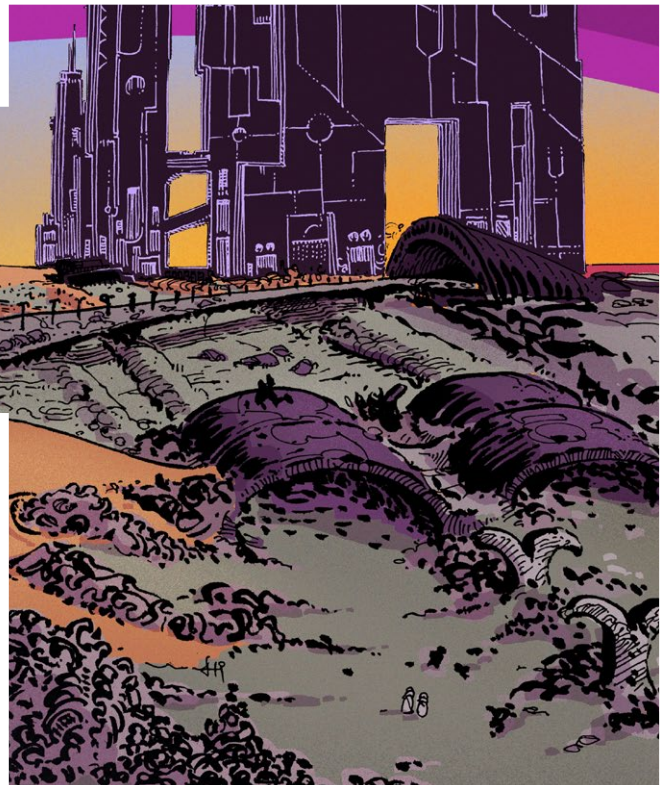
## THE TOXIC DUST

The dust seems almost alive, ominous, malevolent, standing still and at the ready. Under the tutelage of the Bi-Mannerist astrologer-mathematician Menda the Probabilist, a hundred and ten half-humans were sent in on leashes to report on the dust.

### Without fail they reported that (d10):

1. The dust intercepted them as they approached it.
2. The dust tasted sweet, like candy corn.
3. The dust sang with the voices of apocryphal lovers.
4. With each blister that appeared on their fair skin a thousand memories flowered in their minds, like an explosion of life.
5. With each tooth that fell out they felt themselves die ten times.
6. As the dust swarmed and crawled into their orifices they felt their volition fade away, even as the sensitivity of their nerve endings increased ten-fold.
7. As they breathed in the dust their throats burned and kept burning even after they had burned away.
8. As the dust crawled upon their skins it created new orifices for entry, unstitching them like a demented tailor takes apart a lost plush doll after the zone of alienation brings eternal silence to a school.
9. As they walked in the dust their joints began to squeak and grind before flaking away to rust.
10. As the dust ate deeper into them, they voided their internal organs through every orifice.

Menda the Probabilist concluded that the dust was specifically created to be particularly toxic to humans and similar organic life forms, as it acted much more slowly on plants, insects, and fungi. Menda did not manage to test the effect of the dust on cetaceans before funding was cut.



## THE MAGNIFICENT DEAD

The contorted, peeled-apart corpses crumbling to dust in the relentless background radiation of the Black City seem like suspended dancers smearing into black dust against the omnipresent whitish toxic haze.

Something in the almost-reality fields of the Pre-City flays their life-stories out of them, creating magnificently vivid experience streams that decay into the space behind them over the years. Enterprising vidy crystal salesmen send in tox-suited autonyms to harvest those experiences from the memory dust (€1d6 x 200 per unrefined sack).

## MAGNIFICENT MEMORIES (D10)

1. Stole the last egg of the Life Dragon from under its nose by sacrificing his best friend.
2. Gave the wretch a second, ever-red-smiling mouth.
3. Danced naked with the Quarter-Ling Queen beneath the rainbow stars.
4. Drank the unforgotten beverage of the northern wall in the Hall of the Wolf King.
5. Bathed in the blood of a thousand heretics.
6. Rode the Door of Erasure down from the sky chariot of the Blue God as the betrayers stumbled futilely for the particle lances.
7. In one fell blow smote the left wing off the Dark Carmine Demon before the gates of the Palace of Enchanted Tales.
8. Decapitated the Beholder of Lies with a pick-axe. Yup.
9. Dove into the mouth of Leviathan and pierced its heart with a golden sword.
10. Lived the life of a Courtesan King, riding the flesh-robot for the pleasure of the Collectors of Dreams.

Refined and rendered into vidy crystals, these memories, and others like them, could be worth thousands and thousands. Sure, it's harvesting the life traces of long dead heroes, but somebody's gotta make a profit at the end of space, right?



## THE BLACK CITY

This is the end. The welcomed and the rare are here, no more fear, nor voices, into the void this journey ends. The last city and the first, it hunches upon the endless wine-dark ocean shore, immense, a roiling repetition of almost-pattern that peters imperceptibly into chaos whenever the watcher loses focus.

But what is it? Like a maddening machine onion, it refuses to reveal itself simply, hiding layers within layers, lies within lies.

### INFINITE RECURSIONS OF THE REAL

The chaos, immanent in the thrumming, beating, throbbing background radiation is the final guardian of the Black City, the atmospheric manifestation of the godlike avatar of this creation, **Infinite Recursions of the Real** (L20, endlessly complex).

Reality itself breaks down in the face of this naked demiurge. The ordinary mind scrambles to create a scum of ordered meaning upon the maelstrom of potentiality.

*Most visitors' minds* (unless invited or exceptionally strong willed) impose their semiotic system upon the infinity that is the Infinite Recursions of the Real, painting the Black City, its deep canyon-boulevards and soaring cloud-obelisks, in terms they comprehend.

### PORTRAYING THIS BLACK CITY AT THE TABLE

Portray the inchoate, biomechanical Black City in terms culled from the worldviews of your heroes. Ask their players questions in round-robin order and use those responses to describe the city.

### QUESTIONS TO BUILD A FALSE REALITY (D8)

1. **What is your favorite colour?**—The sky is the opposite colour, the bones of the city are complementary.
2. **What is your quest?**—The city's parks and ossuaries and reprocessing vats are mockeries of that quest.
3. **How did you let down your first love?**—The city's towers are monuments to those disappointments, the decorations stylized reproductions of that failure.
4. **How did you betray your parents or your kin?**—The city's roads turn treacherously, facing everyone with parables of that crime at every step.

5. **What dreams did you forsake?**—The waters taste of that bitter regret, the food smells of that fear.
6. **Who was your hero or mentor?**—Their distorted visage and body and laughter line the boulevards and drinking houses of the Black City.
7. **What is your greatest fear?**—Hints and suggestions of it crawl in the corners, under the beds, in the dark canals, and behind cracked-open doors.
8. **What is your fondest hope?**—Grotesquely exaggerated, it is stitched into the marrow of every public building, fountain, and the face of every bio-servitor.

The intersubjective reality of the Black City is a mish-mash of the failures and successes, hopes and fears of its visitors. On subsequent visits, repeat part of the process and remix the city. It is never the same twice.

### THE IDEAL FRACTAL CITY

**Welcome visitors**, or those of very strong will, see the City for what it is, or what it is in the present: a hyper-realistic fractal reproduction of the Platonic ideal of the City waiting for its absent citizens. It is



born and reborn day in and day out. It is a simulacrum of a Potemkin city that believes itself to be a real, living city. The **soulless bio-servitors** (L2, traditionalist) who live within, celebrate and maintain it, are convinced they are the true Citizens and that all outside the Black City is a flux, collapsed from the Golden Age of the Makers of the World. They are correct on that last account.

This City welcomes visitors with cool politeness, anemic debauchery, earnest but unexceptional trade, and soon—a dull repetitiveness. *Hiding beneath* this veneer is a roiling chaos.



## THE LACQUERED CHAOS OF POSSIBILITY

This is **Lacquered Chaos of Possibility** (L17, urgent). It is an almost-god, like *Infinite Recursions of the Real*, a fire of soul stuff that could rebuild a world, or destroy it. Why would anyone seek this?

Because it whispers promises of a world without pain, suffering, agony, and death, a world of endless life. Listen to it, see its avatars emerge, see its demons offer you answers for a price (d6):

1. To live forever, to see the turning of the seasons become as days? We have the technology—just give up a pound of your superfluous flesh (-1d10 Strength permanently).
2. To gain true knowledge and understanding? Stand still, open your heart, take into yourself the crystal dreams of the Citizens (-1d10 Agility permanently).
3. To protect your friends, your family, your home? The knowledge that will save them, we can give it to you—inscribed in your flesh and bones (-1d10 Endurance permanently).
4. To stay forever in the paradisiacal homes of the Citizens? Yes, yes—welcome to the party, all your needs sated till your last-most day (-1d10 Charisma permanently).
5. The object of your ultimate quest? It is here—for the cost of a piece of your soul (-1d10 Aura permanently).
6. To feel no pain, no anguish, no suffering? It is easy—just give up some of your anxious dreams (-1d10 Thought permanently).

Each gift is real, perfect, and true. Each penalty is terrible, but bearable. If the cost is greater than the hero's stat, they may pay up the difference with their Life and other stats. This is not a *Wish* spell, where you gimp the hero out of their quest. A hero may acquire the knowledge of a new food source that will save their village from starvation for a generation or more, but return a shadow of themselves. They will be celebrated, remembered, feted, and live out their days in victorious discomfort.

And, if you like, give their next hero a little daemon adviser who resides in a superfluous fourth ear bone.



## THE BLACK OBELISK WHO GAZES UPON THE HEARTS OF MORTALS

Ok, this time. This is really it. This is the end.

Beyond the *Infinite Recursions of the Real*, beyond the hulking towers and yawning abysses of the *Ideal Fractal City* and its soulless 'Citizen' servitors, and beyond the fires of the *Lacquered Chaos of Possibility*, is a cliff-top field of green grass. Pale **mice-deer** (L7, friendly) wander around, genteelly nibbling at errant blades and depositing pellets over the poetry-inscribed rocks that mark the edges of this plain.

In the center of the field is a small black pyramid with an open door filled with an inviting salmon pink glow. The gentle sounds of pan pipes and babbling brooks vibrate up from the depths.

This is the pinnacle of the **Black Obelisk** (L19, vile), a void-wanderer trapped in this soil like a splinter in the purulent tissue of a careless shepherd. It is falling apart. It is weak. It is hurt. Its heart and bowels, its lungs and brains, its teeth and claws, have been loosened by its impact with the world. The *Black City* keeps it here, the **friendly mice-deer** (L7, angelic) keeping the infectious obelisk in check.

**Mada**, an old woman in rusted golem armor (L6, avatar of the city), approaches along a footpath from a ramshackle house at the farthest edge of the cliff.

"Leave the pyramid be," she says, "It is harmless now, and all its promises are lies. I can return you home now, if you like."

She can. The City creates a portal. The voyager returns to their house. The circle is closed (10,000 xp).

*Inside the Obelisk*: a writhing maze of organo-silicate tunnels, chambers of missing equipment, diagrams of powerful weapons (€13,000 each, if explained by the Obelisk), libraries of grand promises (kingdoms, loves, glories, new heights of power), and the voice of the Obelisk. Gentle, kind, insistent.

"The City lies. The City is a trap. I have traveled Oceans of Time. I have pierced the Spaces between Universes and seen the Glitter of Creation in the Silence between one breath of the All-Creator and the next. Help me and I will give you the Universe," says the Obelisk.

It will. But you'd better have a cosmic voyager game planned, referee. The Obelisk is psychotic, and once it has been rebuilt it will pit its voyagers one against another until only one is left. Upon the last survivor, it bestows itself and its poisoned chalice of power.

## THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF TIME

There is *one* last thing.

One last house, a ramshackle carbuncle clustered on the farthest rocks, straining its wood and plastic and glass framework to escape the rocks that bind it to the Black City. It is not beautiful, but it is cozy and inviting, a speck of normalcy over the sticky, dark ocean.

The door is green with a great golden mask. It is a **golem named Door** (L5, hinged) and it talks. And talks. But eventually, for a price, it opens onto the House on the Edge of Time.

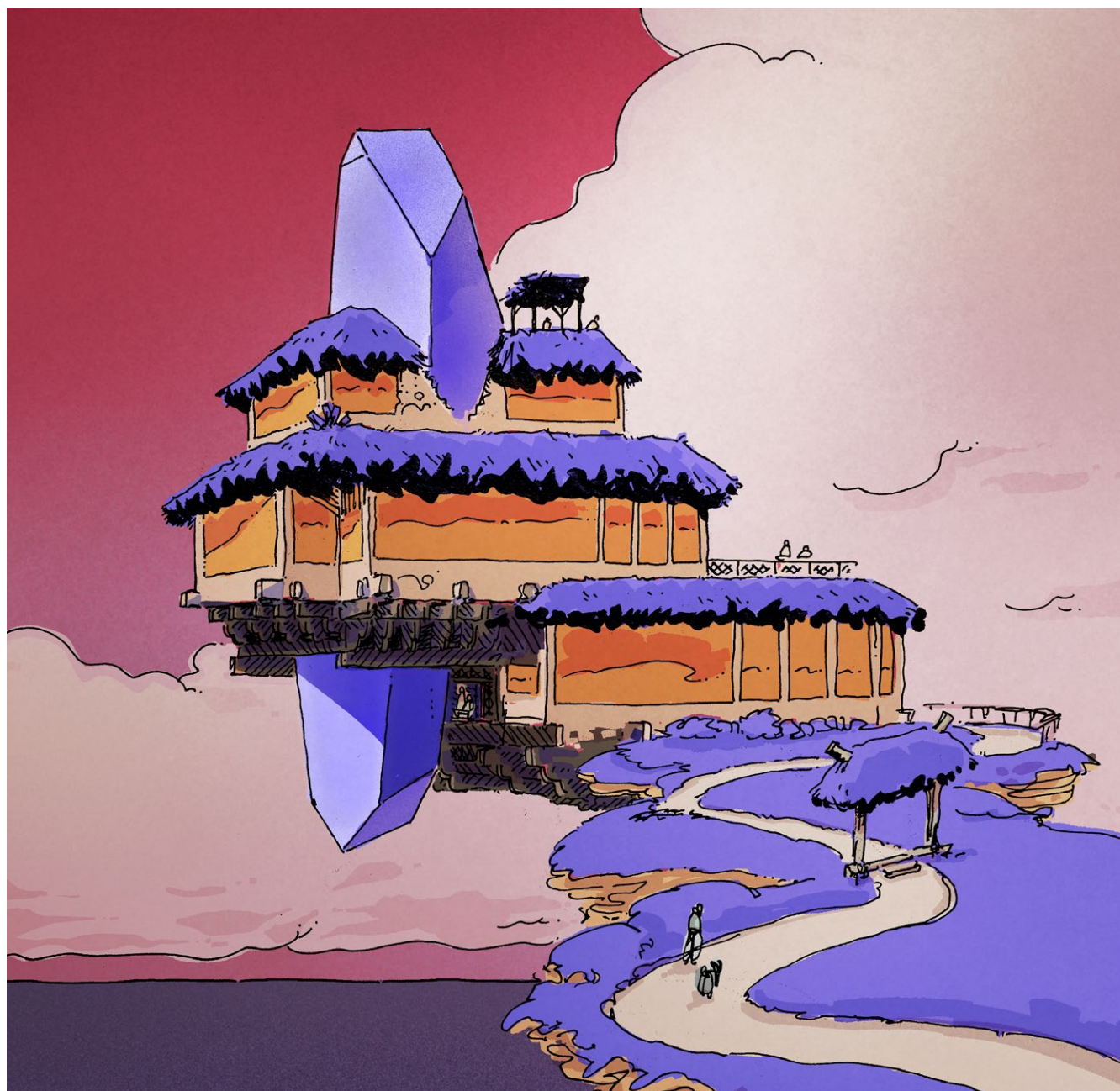
*Within*, the dead and living heroes of lost times and places have strayed and stayed. Over time they fade and become one with the walls and the furniture, melting into place, a microcosmic inn that mirrors the cosmic firmament of heroes (d6):

1. **Berengur** (L9, melancholy) who tore the moon in half is here, playing billiards on the sun deck.
2. **Irshe** (L9, resigned) who conquered the world twice to save it from the Autumn Gods is here, drinking in the library.

3. **Lvir** (L9, simmering) who sinned against life and broke the Rainbow Nexus is here, making parfaits in the kitchens.
4. **Yagaraga** (L9, content) who defeated the Crawling God and rode the Metal Eagle to the sun is here, playing with a puppy in the lower garden.
5. **Mrakomir** (L9, forgetful) who ate the dead to save the living is here, painting gouache landscapes in the drawing room.
6. **Mother Mercy** (L9, cold) is here, thought patterns stored in a crystal in the morgue. She's not about to see your light, but if you want to find hell with her, she can show you what it's like.

**Pepis** (L9, jolly), abmortal bartender of the Gods, is also here, mixing drinks at the bloodwood bar and chuckling at the tall tales of the Dead of Dwarves and the Blood-Drunk Spear.

He'll mix a drink for you and warn you that you might walk away, but you will never leave. *The Final Drink* is worth 10,000 xp and counts as a ticket to the Eternal Battlefield of the Cosmic Champion. Also, there's a Cosmic Dungeon in the basement, don't you know?





# HEROES AND THE CAT



So you've decided to see what this SEACAT under the UVG is all about? Come inside, come inside, the show's about to start! It's a good introduction to the moving parts of the game. We're going to see how SEACAT works, how characters are made, and how to run a caravan through the Ultraviolet Grasslands.

But first questions first. Who *are* you? There are two types of player in this game—the Heroes gallivanting around the UVG and their Cat who runs the show.

## THE HEROES (AKA. THE PLAYERS)

The players run protagonists through the game and sometimes a story emerges. Their main imaginary characters are called heroes. The heroes are out for adventure, loot, and revolution. Don't assume they're good. Heroes are not good; they're excessive and over the top. Over the top is good. Players can swap out or replace heroes from session to session. The heroes can die, retire, leave, or just take a vacation for a while. Use hero sheets to record their attributes.

## THE CAT (AKA. THE GAME RUNNER)

I've been running roleplaying game sessions and campaigns for decades, and if you've ever tried your hand at it you'll know that terms like "dungeon master" or "game master" are misleading. You're no master—maybe a game runner or referee. But even more than that, you're the member of the band that gets the evening organized, prepares a few hooks, and sets the beat for the game. You're like the bass player of the roleplaying group. You're cool, but you're coolest when you make everyone play and shine together.

## THE CAT'S TABLE: WHAT IS YOUR SPECIAL REFEREE TITLE? (D12)

d12	Title	Special Power
1	Catspaw	If there is a cat in the house, it's your nominal boss. You can use its name as your title.
2	Cat Lady	Or Lord, if you like. Gift 50 xp for lasagna or a tin of tuna.
3	Game Golem	Once per session you can move a random location on the map due to a reality glitch.
4	Dog Duke	You can give a hero 1d4 rerolls if their player brings food, snacks, and music to the game session.
5	Caître D'	You can give a hero 100 xp if their player helps clean up the kitchen and table after the game session.
6	Dyeus Katter	Summon the heroes' ancestor ghosts to give advice.
7	Sky Cat	Like Ceiling Cat, you can invoke epic atmospheric effects in-game at any time, from rain to lightning.
8	Bass Player	You can give a hero 1d6 x 10 xp every time their player chooses an apt background song. You also get veto powers. You can't choose songs, though.
9	Hazeraiser	You can open one travel portal for heroes per session. Demand sacrifices at will.
10	Prismatic Lady	You can recolour UVG locations at random times. Roll d6: (1) it's now monochrome, (2) the colours are all dull, (3) it's all cool hues, (4) warm hues, (5) bright harmonious colours, (6) riot of neon.
11	Hero Herder	On the Big Map draw great big (abandoned?) railroad linking prepped quantum locations. The heroes don't have to take it, but ... it's there.
12	The Cat	Nine times during the campaign you can bestow an extra Life on a character of your choice.

Hope you enjoy being the Runner Cat, or whatever your title is. Now let's figure out how you and the heroes are going to make this game work. It's an rpg, so this should be pretty hard.

# HERO SUPERBASICS

This page explains the basic ideas and concepts behind the UVG. If you just want to make a hero, grab some polyhedral dice, make a copy of the hero sheet overleaf, and turn to page 136.

## THE DICE ARE NOT YOUR MASTERS

At the heart of roleplay in the UVG is a **conversation between players which creates a shared world**. When common sense, or uncommon, dictates a result, don't bring dice into it. When outcomes are uncertain, the referee suggests a probability and lets the player decide to roll or not for their hero. However, once the dice *do* roll on the table, *they* are the oracle and *they* determine outcomes.

## CLASSIC POLYHEDRAL DICE

UVG assumes you have a couple of sets on hand, from d4 (4-sided) to d20 (20-sided). Sometimes it mentions strange dice, like a d40. Use a digital die roller or a creative combination of dice.

## GLORIOUS D20

The twenty-sided die (d20) is the core die of the UVG's descriptive mechanical skeleton because it is my favorite polyhedron and because it has a comfortable, flat spread of probabilities.

## HIGH IS GOOD, LOW IS BAD

Throughout the text, from encounters to random results.

## THE STAT TEST (THE CORE MECHANIC)

Whenever the d20 comes out to determine uncertain outcomes, that's a *test*. It means **d20 + Stat + Skill over Target**. A common format is 'easy Charisma test'—this means rolling a d20 then adding Charisma and a relevant skill to beat an easy target. What's a relevant skill? Anything that makes sense in the context. Archaeology might help with deciphering old runes in a tomb while tea-leaf reading might well apply in a tea ceremony test.

The target of a test is usually described in the text as **trivial, easy, moderate** (or average), **difficult** (also hard), or **extreme**. A hero rolls *over* a target number to succeed. A target number can be fixed or a little bit random.

Target	Fixed	Flat	Curved	Example Procedure
Trivial	3	1d6	1d6	Routine. But there's always risk.
Easy	7	1d8+3	2d6	A bit unusual.
Moderate	11	1d10+6	3d6	Not common at all.
Difficult	15	1d12+9	4d6	Rare and dangerous.
Extreme	19	1d12+12	5d6	Last ditch effort only!

Only use tests when they make sense, when possible outcomes make a meaningful difference. Trivial tests are for situations where failure will start a chain of hilarious and unexpected events because the heroes are pushing their luck a bit too much.

## RELEVANT TEST

Sometimes you'll spot the phrase 'relevant test,' this means that a hero can use any combination of stat and skill that makes narrative sense in the circumstances.

## OVER-DEFINED TESTS

Some tests, particularly Misfortune tests, have multiple fail and/or success results—you'll recognize them by relevant tables of outcomes. They do not require a descriptive target beyond, "just roll high. High is good."

## ONES FAIL, TWENTIES SUCCEED

In every d20 test, if the die rolls and turns up 1 or 20 this is a 'natural 1 or 20.' These always fail or succeed. If failure is impossible, a roll should never be required. Don't try to build tension with fake rolls.

## ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

This is one of the better rules around and the UVG uses it broadly, for every die roll from a d4 to a d100. Advantage (↑a) means rolling an extra die and taking the better result, disadvantage (↓d) rolling an extra die and taking the worse result. Advantages and disadvantages cancel each other out.

## BOONS

Boons and blessings, unless otherwise specified, manifest mechanically as advantages heroes store and use when they like.

## CONSECUTIVE ROLLS

Sometimes a result in a table is written with a slash, e.g. 20/20. This means that when you roll a natural 20 you roll an additional consecutive die, and if this is also a 20, voilà—you have a rare result. Additional slashes indicate additional yet rarer possibilities. This mechanic is a silly way to add rare results and recalls the days of 18/00 Strength.

## EXPLODING DICE

Rarely you will come across other exploding dice, written with a little asterisk, e.g. d6\*. Every time you roll a natural 6 on that d6\*, roll an extra die and add the result. Repeat as long as you keep rolling sixes. Exploding dice come into play with carousing and some weird artifacts—even if you forget this little rule, it won't matter much.

## SIX STATS

The UVG plays with six stats: **Strength, Endurance, Agility, Charisma, Aura, and Thought**. A stat of 0 is the minimum for heroes, 5 is the maximum. They represent the natural aptitude of a character.

## SKILLS

Learned skills (represented by an inchoate series of descriptive skills which vary from setting to setting and over time within a campaign) define what a hero is *good* at.

## ABILITIES

Meanwhile, abilities represent ... well ... abilities acquired through any means that are outside the human norm, beyond what an ordinary human could acquire through simple theory and practice.

## STRICT LIMITS

The maximum level a hero can reach is 9. Their maximum total bonus (stat + skill) to any d20 roll is +13. The highest target number they can ever possess or set is 19—this includes defense.



### HERO OF THE UVG

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends** \_\_\_\_\_

**Enemies** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Species** \_\_\_\_\_

**Looks** \_\_\_\_\_

**Debt** \_\_\_\_\_

**Likes** \_\_\_\_\_

### THE PET

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Defense** \_\_\_\_\_ xp

**Bonus** \_\_\_\_\_ Lvl

**Life** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ability** \_\_\_\_\_

### XP

EXPERIENCE		
LEVEL	BONUS	LIFE
0	0 xp	+1 5
1	300 xp	+2 8
2	750 xp	14
3	1500 xp	20
4	3000 xp	26
5	6000 xp	+3 32
6	12500 xp	38
7	25000 xp	40
8	50000 xp	42
9	99999 xp	+4 44

### STATS

<b>STRENGTH</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	full	current
<b>ENDURANCE</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>AGILITY</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>CHARISMA</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>AURA</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>THOUGHT</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

### SKILLS

unlock at level ↓

△	_____	0
△	_____	0
△	_____	0
△	_____	1
△	_____	3
△	_____	5
△	_____	7
△	_____	田
△	_____	田
△	_____	田

↑ expertise = bonus×2

### COMBAT

**DEFENSE**

**LIFE REMAINING**

**CLOSE COMBAT**

dmg: \_\_\_\_\_

**RANGED COMBAT**

dmg: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAGIC**

cost =

**ABILITIES**

unlock at level ↓

_____	1
_____	2
_____	3
_____	4
_____	5
_____	6
_____	7
_____	8
_____	9
_____	田

4 sources to learn a new thing↑

#### HEROICS

d6

#### FATIGUE

grumpy

↓disadv.

1/2 speed

half life

coma

death?

### INVENTORY

<b>FIRST SACK OF GEAR</b> 2500 cash = 100 soaps = 10 stones = 1 sack	<b>THE CUMBERSOME SECOND PACK</b> slow and at a disadvantage



# MAKING A HERO

First, a caveat. The UVG doesn't contain the complete SEACAT game ... just enough to understand how the Ultraviolet Grasslands are built and to create basic explorers. Sorry for all the page-flipping, this book is UVG first, rule book distant second. Overleaf is an example of a filled out character sheet. Now, let's start making your hero, step-by-step.

## 1. HERO OF THE UVG

This is where you draw a small portrait of your hero and give them a name. You can fill out this whole section, even the name, over several sessions, as the hero gets more fleshed out. You can also rewrite it as the hero changes over time. You can do this last, if you like. Initial ideas for different heroes are on page 7. Factions are described in detail on page 164.

## 2. STATS

These represent your character's inherent aptitude. There's six of them. They're also used as resources during the game, going up and down during play. Take seven points and assign them to your stats, with a maximum of 3 in each. Read more about stats on page 140.

## 3. XP

With experience, your hero's power goes up. They gain levels, increase their bonuses, and their stock of life. The box at top right of the hero sheet measures how their bonuses and life increase with levels. Gaining xp is detailed on page 146.

- ∴ Level is an abstraction of power. Level 1 equals an average human, a Conan-esque hero might start at level 3.
- ∴ Bonuses add to dice rolls when heroes are skilled at a task. If a hero is an expert in their field, their bonus is doubled. Local effects, spells, or mutations further adjust individual skill scores, but the total bonus (stat + skill) is always capped at +13.
- ∴ Life is an abstraction of how much, well, life the hero has left. When it runs out they might be out of the game (see page 155).

## 4. SKILLS

These are inchoate learned aptitudes. A character starts with 3 at level 0, and gains more as they level up. Skills can be pretty much anything, from 'Big Game Hunting' to 'Pharmacology' or 'Necrolegal Practices'. Combat skills also fit here. Magic, if such is your desire, is also a skill. The bonus is determined by the character's level (see the XP box). Skills are described in more detail on page 141.

## 5. THE PET

Most players like pets for their heroes, so there's space for a pet. If you prefer, you can replace it with a middle manager or vehicle or whatever. The pet only gains xp from the hero's own pool of experience. If you want it to gain power and become cooler, your hero will grow more slowly. The pet requires the same amount of XP as the hero. Use the creature table on page 138 to level up the pet.

## 6. ABILITIES

These are weird or unnatural abilities. Things a normal human shouldn't be capable of. Mutations. Other weird things. As a simple rule, they provide advantage in a very specific situation. You can find a list of examples on page 145.

## 7. COMBAT

Conflicts that raise the possibility of death all, sooner or later, boil down to attack, defense, and life remaining. Attacks deplete a hero's life, if they overcome the defense target number. This is pretty standard stuff. As a very basic breakdown, treat close combat, ranged combat, and magic combat as individual skills. Defense is determined by armor and agility, and is hard capped at 19. Combat and conflict are detailed on page 142. Rest and recovery is detailed on page 148.

## 8. HEROICS

Every session you attend, and every hour or so of play, your hero gains a hero die. Your hero can store a number of hero dice up to their level. These are d6s that do a couple of things:

- ∴ Roll one or more and adjust any previously rolled die lying on the table by up to that amount. Yes, you can generate natural 20s this way or explode other dice (see p.136 for dice).
- ∴ Spend one or more hero dice to gain that many advantages on a roll. So, if you spent three, you could roll four dice on the next roll and choose the best result.

The exception are rolls for events outside the hero's control, for example when you are generating random stats or mutations.

## 9. FATIGUE (ENDGAME)

This is the death spiral, when your hero gets too tired to continue. They progress one step along the fatigue track every time they take stat or Life damage that would take them into negative scores, and also as a result of some abilities or effects. The steps are:

- ∴ Grumpy: the hero is not comfortable and would complain loudly if you weren't puppeting them.
- ∴ Disadvantaged: the hero has  $\downarrow$ d to every roll.
- ∴ Half Speed: the hero is crawling along now.
- ∴ Half Life: the hero's Life drops to half its maximum and can't climb higher until they've recovered.
- ∴ Coma: well, it's lights out. Consult page 155.

## 10. INVENTORY

List stuff the hero is carrying, including spells in their spleens, big ideas in their heads, and well-gotten treasure. Inventory is limited. More detail on page 149. Equipment and starting cash on page 170.

## 11. CUSTOMIZATION SPACE

This is an area for you to put more unexpected stuff.

## 12. OR 1. HERO OF THE UVG

See 1. Maybe you have a better idea for a name by now?

## 13. THE CARAVAN

The group character for the party. Head to page 156 for that.







# WONDERFUL CREATURES

Every creature the referee runs in the UVG is simplified compared to the players' heroes. Don't flesh out everything in advance, just generate their attributes (stats, abilities, skills, and so on) if they become relevant. You can do this with heroes, too.

## LEVEL

Level is an abstract measure of a creature's power. A level 1 (L1) creature is equivalent to an average human and an L9 creature is as powerful as the most legendary of human heroes ever. Some other games also refer to this as Hit Dice or HD.

## TARGET (DEFENSE & ABILITIES)

Creatures have a single default target number when heroes attack them physically or when heroes test to overcome the creature's magitechnical abilities. A score of 7 is poor, 11 is average, and 15 is good. Feel free to adjust the numbers for specific creatures.

## LIFE

The key resource of every creature, which keeps them narratively viable, is abstracted to Life. In practice this is exactly like hit points in most games, but the name change emphasizes that combat does not necessarily entail spurting wounds, and that words can, indeed, also kill. Further, artifacts and spells are often powered by Life.

## MAJOR BONUS

Creatures don't have separate stats, skills, and abilities. Instead, they simply use their major bonus when they attempt tasks they are good at.

## MINOR BONUS

The minor bonus is used for every other test the creature undertakes. This number also represents a creature's stats when relevant (for example in the case of stat damage).



## DAMAGE

How much Life the victim of a creature's successful primary attack loses. This does not have to be a single massive attack, you can break it into several different attacks or effects.

## EXAMPLE CREATURES

Some sample creatures from the UVG. Use their adjectives in the text to help imagine and describe their behavior and communication.

## TALK AND RUN

Almost no creature should ever attack on sight (except some mad vomes, which is what makes them so scary). Most creatures don't want to fight dangerous opponents, and very few want to fight to the death. Emphasize this in encounters (more on p.151).

## WONDER

This is made even clearer by awarding experience points to heroes when they simply meet and observe new creatures (creature Level x 10 xp). If they undertake a longer study of a few days let them add (1d6 + Thought) x 10 xp. After heroes study a creature, ask them to describe something new about the creature's biology, behavior, or habitat they have learned. This is an optional but fun chance for them to contribute some world-building.

## LEVEL TO CREATURE TRANSLATOR (SIMPLIFIED RULES COMPARED TO HEROES)

Level	Target (Defense & Abilities)	Life	Major Bonus (Attacks, Skilled)	Minor Bonus (Other Tests)	Damage (Primary Attacks)	Example Creatures
0	10	4	+2	0	1d4	Rat, degenerate quarter-ling, rabbit, radiation ghost.
1	11	8	+3	+1	1d6	<b>Average human</b> , wire-and-bone biomechanical salamander.
2	12	12	+4	+2	1d8	Trained warrior, ur-eagle, wild horse, snake jackal.
3	12	16	+5	+2	1d10	Elite riders, majestic antelope, scorpion dogs.
4	13	22	+6	+3	1d12	Vomish tunneler, zombie machine, steppe-wolf.
5	13	29	+7	+3	1d8+5	Biomechanical queen, sacred machine fetish, abyssosaur.
6	14	38	+8	+4	1d10+6	<b>Epic nomad hero</b> , hunter golem, skinchanger.
7	14	52	+9	+4	1d12+7	Autofac, grand machine, shapeshifter.
8	15	68	+10	+5	2d8+8	Spectrum walker, animated tree, megapede.
9	15	90	+11	+5	1d20+11	Ivar Redbody, <b>legendary hero</b> of the <i>Onion and Skull</i> , crystal golem.
10	16	120	+12	+6	1d20+1d6+12	Flying bone bird, redmeatwood, shack mimic.
11	16	155	+13	+6	1d20+1d8+13	Ultra ghost, angel out of time.
12	17	195	+14	+7	1d20+1d10+14	Clock wagon, migrating grass colony, machine wyrm.
13	17	240	+15	+7	1d20+1d12+15	Vome autofac, biomechanical catamaran.
14	18	300	+16	+8	2d20+16	Gall-grass mind, life-maker autofac.
15	18	375	+17	+8	2d20+1d8+17	Lesser behemoth, citadel lophotroche.
16	19	500	+18	+9	2d20+1d12+18	Lamarckian eater, the Cave Octopus.
17	20	666	+19	+9	3d20+20	Demiurge, void crawler, the Rebuilder.







# THE MECHANICAL SKELETON

## SIX STATS: SEACAT

The UVG plays with six stats: **Strength**, **Endurance**, **Agility**, **Charisma**, **Aura**, and **Thought**. A stat of 0 is the minimum, 5 is the maximum. They map to the ability modifier bonuses of the stats of classical fantasy roleplaying games.

**Strength** is the active physical stat. It does what it says on the tin. Lifting bars, bending gates. That kind of stuff.

**Endurance** is the passive physical stat. It's about how much pain and strain a character can take. Long-distance running and such.

**Agility** is the dynamic physical stat. It's about applying the hero's body with precision and speed to dodge oncoming triceratopsians and throw head-lopper bombs with razor precision.

**Charisma** is the active mental stat. It's vitally important because it goes back to its classical Greek *khárisma*, representing divine fortune and favor. The gods and reason hate the uncharismatic, and Charisma also serves as a luck stat. When a hero tries to batter down resistance to their arguments through force of personality, this is what they use.

If a player asks if their hero can find a war pig, greased lightning mobile, rod of doom, or simply the latest edition of *Burly Barbarians* at the town market, that calls for a Charisma test.

Further, nine times out of ten, random effects or mindless creatures attacking a party of heroes will target the least charismatic one first. Clearly explain this rule to players before they generate heroes.

**Aura** is the passive mental stat. It indicates how much punishment the hero's soul, spirit, or psyche can take when faced by horror and stress. It correlates almost completely with Endurance.

It is explicitly not Wisdom. It does not show good judgement or shrewd insight. Those are character traits that the player decides for their hero, much like they decide on the colour of the hero's hair or shoes, without affecting mechanics in any way.

**Thought** is the dynamic mental stat, correlated with how quickly the hero can process and manipulate information. Its naming is also a silly reference to the Egyptian god Thoth.

## GENERATING STATS

Roll your stats with a d20. If you want to generate a stat with advantage, then you'll have to generate another stat with disadvantage. Fair is fair, after all.

d20	Stat	What This Means
1–10	0	You're close to the human mean.
11–14	1	Above average.
15–17	2	Really quite good.
18–19	3	Excellent. The best you can get with a point buy.
20	4	Exceptional.
20/20	5	The 18/00 of stats. Do you know that reference?

Alternatively, if you prefer point buys, take seven points and assign them to your stats, with a maximum of 3. This is fine, too.

## STAT DAMAGE

In the UVG you'll notice that many dangers damage the heroes' stats, from starvation to disease to monsters. If the text simply says something like "lose Strength," remove 1 point of Strength. If the text says a stat is severely reduced, remove 2–5 points (1d4+1). Reduced to a minimum means the stat is now 0.

All stat damage is temporary unless otherwise specified or a character dies, in which case, yeah, it's permanent. Stats are one of the key attributes, along with Life, that heroes recover by resting.

Stat damage suffered when your stat is already at 0 causes **fatigue**.

## SACRIFICE

Heroes can sacrifice something of value at any point to gain an advantage—so long as it makes some narrative sense. Exactly how big an advantage results is up to players and referee. A standard sacrifice might be 10 Life or 1 stat point for an advantage.

## HAKABA

Body (ha), soul (ka), and personality (ba) form the existential trinity of every creature in the UVG. In game terms, body maps to Endurance, soul maps to Aura, and personality maps to Charisma. This makes raising the dead and reincarnation in the UVG weird. Check out page 154 for more details.





## SKILLS

Each hero has a preexisting natural aptitude (represented by six SEACAT stats) which is different from learned skills (represented by an inchoate series of descriptive skills which vary from setting to setting and over time within a campaign). There is no mechanical or terminological difference between what other games call proficiencies, tools, and saves. They're all just skills.

Heroes start with three skills and gain more as they level up, study, or initiate memory transfers (and other hyper-magitech oddities). When a skill applies to a test, add the hero's bonus or double their bonus for experts.

Skills can range from 'Sleight of Hand,' 'Melee Combat,' 'History,' or 'Carpentry,' to 'Project Management,' 'Bricklaying,' 'Neurosurgery,' or 'Golem Whispering.' Players and referees are encouraged to make up their own and use them following common sense and dialogue. Any skill or profession that sounds fun, and the rest of the players also find at least mildly amusing, is fair game. Skills are one of the simpler ways to distinguish one game table and campaign from another.

Skills define what a hero is *good* at. Anyone can use a first aid kit, dive to cover from a dragon's death weapon attack, or say they know some history—but a skilled hero is actually good at it. **Any character can attempt any task**, even if they don't have a relevant skill, but they make their rolls with disadvantage and without adding a skill score to their roll. For example, a Safranjan Painball Star can try to decipher the glyphs on a Black City pseudolith or a cat wizard can try to fire a laser rifle with those cute paws, but they roll with disadvantage because they're not much good at it.

### PERFECT MATCH

Optionally, when a very specific skill is perfectly suited to a test, the hero may roll with advantage because of their specialty. This likely won't apply to very broad skills, like 'History' or 'Close Combat,' but might well come into play with something like 'Redland Wine Cultivation' or 'Steppelander Vech Piloting.' As with every aspect of roleplaying, it's a social activity, so communicate with each other and be willing to compromise.

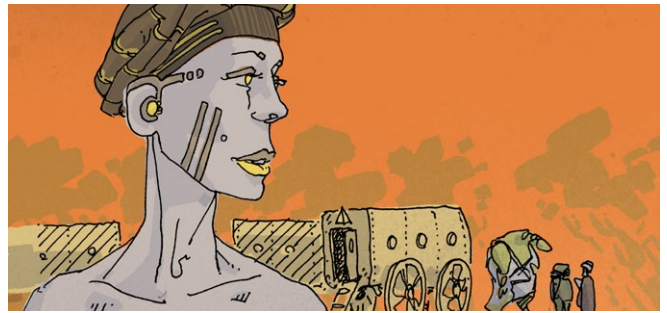
### EXPERTISE

If a hero takes a skill twice, they count as an expert, and apply double their bonus every time they make a test with their skill. This is the route to take if you want to make a combat-focused character, for example.

### GAINING NEW SKILLS

To gain new skills heroes must visit different locations and mentors. At the end of a week of study they make a moderate Thought test. Each location or mentor can only provide one success. After achieving four successes the hero gains their new skill. Simpler or more difficult skills are possible.

Players can invent new skills they want their heroes to learn based on their experiences in the UVG. The referee may then pepper random sites and non-player characters as potential mentors around the steppe, creating an instant personalized quest.



### POSSIBLE UVG SKILLS (D40)

d40	Skill	Possibilities
1	Apothecary	Mix poisons, potions, and medicines.
2	Archaeology	Discover lost artifacts, climb, jump, dodge boulders.
3	Big Game Hunting	Shoot big guns, order slaves around, ride on an elephant, chomp cigars, talk turkey.
4	Biomechanics	Modify living organisms with body-horror magic.
5	Cat Grooming	Make cats happy and receive their love.
6	Chemistry	Make explosives, cook drugs.
7	Coffee Making	Make coffee, grow coffee, run plantation or bar.
8	Comedy	Bring joy, laughter, and inappropriate sounds.
9	Contortions	Squeeze into small places. Put on circus shows.
10	Crystal Healing	Use placebo effects to your advantage. Focus magics.
11	Dice Maker	Make dice. Carve small things. Cheat at dice.
12	Fishing	Catch fish. Also, hooks, boats, nets, and things.
13	Foraging	Know and find your berries and nuts and mushrooms.
14	Gun Running	Shoot guns, hide things, sell illegal goods.
15	Hallucination	Travel in your dreams. Talk to spirits and chairs.
16	Legume Farming	Grow beans. Wake up early. Till fields. Work long hours. Pay onerous taxes. Sell legumes.
17	Marketing	Sell <i>magic</i> legumes.
18	Masonry	Build buildings. Shape stones. Understand dungeons.
19	Mule Whispering	Get pack animals to get along. Have animal friends. Keep them happy.
20	Narco-herbalism	Know and find and smoke and dry and preserve your <i>inappropriate</i> berries and herbs.
21	Navigation	Find your way by stars and winds and waypoints.
22	Necromancy	Talk to the dead. Sometimes walk them, too.
23	Nomad Raiding	Ride like lightning. Steal cattle. Shoot guns and bows. Skirmish. Guerrilla tactics.
24	Oldtech	Use Long Long Ago technomagic. Understand emoji.
25	Packing	Really know how to pack stuff effectively. Probably get bonus inventory slots if you have time to pack.
26	Phytomancy	Talking to plants. Making them move for you.
27	Profiteering	Also known as business administration.
28	Project Management	Consummate middle managerial skills, organizing time sheets, setting key performance indicators.
29	Protocol	Coffee ceremonies, modes of address, titles and such.
30	Puppet Theatre	Theatre. But with puppets.
31	Safe Driving	Rally, drifting, stunt driving, how to crash safely.
32	Showfighting	Swords, halberds, whirly blades! Dancing!
33	Soul Juicing	Reading people's intentions. Possessing their bodies.
34	Spelunking	Venture into deep places. Climbing, rappelling, diving.
35	Storytelling	Telling good stories with satisfying endings.
36	Surgery	Medicine with a focus on knives and sewing needles.
37	Tactics	Find and use strategic advantages for war or business.
38	The Business	The corporations, banks, and self-help associations that lubricate the world. Shaking up recalcitrants.
39	The War	History. Using ancient war machines.
40	Vome tech	Adapting and using vomish implants. Managing their side-effects. Enslaving vomes.

# CONFLICT

The primary reason roleplaying games use dice is to generate unpredictable outcomes when conflicts arise between the heroes and the world (loosely represented by the referee a.k.a. catspaw). Lots of conflicts involve the heroes against the world: struggling against Misfortune, weather, and other impersonal forces. In those cases, a simple test and resolution by the hero alone is fine.

But what about when a conflict involves characters and creatures with different goals? Well, you've got a fight on your hands. Though a fight *may* involve combat and death, it can also involve a cat and mouse game of innuendo, gossip, law suits, and frame-making. In that case you'll have to narratively determine the time and scope involved. Any fight primarily damages the life of a character.

## SIDES

When a fight breaks out, figure out who the sides are. If at least one side doesn't involve the heroes, you can just narrate the results. But let's assume at least one side has a few heroes.

## TIME: ROUNDS OF THE FIGHT

Time in a fight is abstracted to rounds. When it comes to physical violence, the fight unfolds in seconds that feel like minutes. A prestige fight, for example a potlatch-style feast, might unfold in hours. A political battle for high office would take weeks.

## INITIATIVE: WHO GOES FIRST THIS ROUND?

Every round a hero and the referee roll **1d6 + Agility** for their side. The side with the higher number takes their turn first. If two or more sides are tied, **chaos reigns** and all the tied sides turns are resolved simultaneously. Yes, this can result in heroes and monsters stabbing one another to death. This is good.

On each subsequent round a **different hero** rolls for their side. Heroes do not get to roll again until every hero has taken their turn to roll for initiative. If there are multiple referees they also take turns. Since the referee's creatures don't necessarily have an Agility stat, this table helps.

This Creature Is	Initiative Roll	Actions
Really slow (zombie caterpillar)	1d6-1 with ↓d	2
Slow (zombie)	1d6 with ↓d	2
Average (ordinary militia member)	1d6	2
Fast (professional soldier)	1d6+2	2
Really fast (ninja hero squirrel)	1d6+5	3
Like lightning (a disembodied ultra)	1d6+5 with ↑a	3

## ACTIONS: WHAT TO DO ON YOUR TURN

Most creatures, including heroes, get **two actions on their turn**. Anything you can imagine, and that can reasonably be accomplished within the time frame of the fight, is a valid action. Actions may occur in sequence or simultaneously, depending on narrative sense. The following is an incomplete list of possible actions in combat:

1. **Move:** the creature moves somewhere nearby.
2. **Move Further:** ... and then it moves somewhere far.
3. **Skirmish:** the creature moves into position to attack, and then back to a safe distance or cover.

4. **Charge:** the creature rushes a nearby target and attacks. It gains ↑a to hit, but until its next turn attacks against it will also have ↑a.
5. **Swing On Chandelier:** or other similar swashbuckling affair. This kind of use of the environment is great. Give the creature a moderate Agility test. If it succeeds, its actions until its next turn are made with ↑a. If it fails, let enemies respond with ↑a or put it in a humorous compromised position.
6. **Carefully Disengage:** the creature carefully retreats from close combat and can then run away without getting attacked.
7. **Flee:** the creature runs somewhere far away, but until its next turn attacks against it also have ↑a. Enemies close to it get a free attack against it.
8. **Hide:** the creature hides behind suitable terrain and until its next turn attacks against it have ↓d.
9. **Sneak Away:** a hidden creature moves away, staying hidden.
10. **Attack:** the creature attacks a target close to it with a melee weapon (close combat) or shoots a target farther away.
11. **Careless Attack:** the creature attacks a target with disregard for its safety. It gets ↑a on its attack but its opponent subsequently gets a free counterattack.
12. **Wait For It:** the creature gets ready to counterattack if its opponents charge or come within range. If that happens, its attack resolves before the opponent's.
13. **Suppressing Fire:** the creature lays down arrows or bullets to impose ↓d on its opponents' actions.
14. **Reload:** for when you're out of ammo.
15. **Grab On:** the creature makes an attack to grab hold of its target. The grabbed target can't move away without dragging the creature along (if it's big enough).
16. **Hold Down:** the creature makes a second attack to pin down a target it has grabbed (if it's not too big). A pinned target can't move and can't attack anyone except whoever is pinning it.
17. **Help Hold:** a second creature rushes in to help hold down a pinned target, ↓d if it tries to get loose.
18. **Shake Off:** the creature tries to get free by making an attack against one target that has grabbed on or is pinning it.
19. **Focus:** the creature focuses on attack and until its next turn it attacks with ↑a.
20. **Defend:** the creature focuses on defense and until its next turn attacks against it are at ↓d.
21. **Protect:** the creature protects a target and until its next turn attacks against the target are at ↓d.
22. **Cast Spell:** the creature casts a spell.
23. **Control Spell:** the creature controls a spell until its next turn. Some spells are not fire-and-forget affairs and require active control by a creature.
24. **Chug A Potion:** the creature chugs a potion.
25. **Drag Away An Ally:** the creature drags an ally away to safety. If the ally is not unconscious, they might struggle, forcing a Strength test to avoid being dragged away.

I know this isn't typical for a roleplaying game, but seriously, with SEACAT you're encouraged to make up your own actions and decide what precise effect it has. If something is game-breaking, discuss it together, and amend the action in the future (or even drop it).



## MOVEMENT: RANGES AND AREAS

Movement is the first of three core actions creatures take in a physical fight. At the heart of movement is fictional positioning: getting close enough to attack, moving far enough to avoid being attacked, escaping from combat. Like in a few other games (e.g. *The Black Hack*), range is abstracted: **close**, **near**, **far**, and **distant**. The same dimensions also work for area affecting effects.

Range	Area	Dimensions	Movement
Close	Small	About 2 meters or 7 feet.	Adjacent, no movement.
Near	Medium	About 10 meters or 30 feet.	An action.
Far	Large	About 40 meters or 120 feet.	Two actions.
Distant	Massive	Further away. $\downarrow$ to attacks.	Three or more actions.

## ATTACK: HITTING YOUR TARGET

The attack is the second basic action a creature makes in a fight. The mechanic is again **d20 + Stat + Skill over Target** just like in the core mechanic. The difference is that the target in this case is simply the defender's defense score. The stat for close combat (also called melee in many games) is usually Strength. The stat for ranged combat is usually Agility. For the referee's creatures a single bonus added to a d20 roll is usually enough detail for the attack.

Magical attacks, for example, with mental blasts or enchantments, often use Charisma or Thought. Some of them also have different targets, not bog standard defense.

Critical failure is that fun moment when a creature rolls a natural 1 on its attack, provoking its opponents reactions. Critical hits are those even more fun moments when a creature rolls a natural 20. On a critical hit damage is usually doubled. All criticals explode, so if the creature rolls a second 20 the damage it deals is quadrupled, and so forth.

## DEFENSE: NOT BEING HIT

Defense is the third basic thing creatures do in a fight and it is usually a passive difficulty target for attacks. The maths for heroes is **10 + Agility + Armor**. It has a hard cap of 19.

Optionally, a creature can take an action to actively **parry**. Roll a d20. If the result is more than 10, use that number as the base for calculating defense until the creature's next turn. Mathematically this is the equivalent of having advantage on defense, with one of the d20 rolls being a passive result of 10. If you are the referee, do *not* do this in most fights, as it will *really* slow things down. But, for a duel? Sure, go for it.



## REACTIONS: SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Each round in a fight, each creature can react once when an opportunity presents itself. Usually this is when an opponent turns to flee, tries (and abysmally fails) to sneak past the creature, or rolls a natural 1 on their attack. The creature's **reaction** is a bonus action that makes sense, for example an attack or grab or kick.

## DAMAGE: WHERE LIFE BURNS FASTER

When an attack succeeds, the creature gets to deal damage. All damage, unless specified separately, reduces the target's Life. This doesn't mean it's just sprays of arterial blood, it's more abstract and the exact effects depend on the narrative circumstances. Yes, a creature could theoretically be gossiped to death, though this would require quite a fair amount of referee and player creativity. Use the following table to improvise damage beyond weapons:

Damage	Power	Weapon	Comparable Tools
1d3	Very Weak	Fist	Common gossip, sharp glare.
1d4	Weak	Knife	Cutting remark, loud allegation.
1d6	Average	Sword	Vicious rumor, snide curse.
1d10	Strong	Halberd	Elegant witticism, magic pain doll.
2d10	Incredible	Cat Rifle	Crushing revelation, mental blast.
3d10	Epic	Voice of Death	Ruthless setup, soul ripper.

When damage reduces a creature's Life to zero it's out. This does not necessarily mean death. When a hero's Life is reduced to zero or beyond, they immediately take a point of fatigue.

Some special attacks, spells, or creatures may target stats instead of Life. When stat damage reduces a creature's stat to zero it's also out. Most creatures simulate stats with their 'minor bonus,' though a referee might take the time to fully stat out an important antagonist, like an anti-hero, say. When any of a hero's stats are reduced to zero or beyond, they also immediately take a point of fatigue.

## NARRATIVE EFFECTS ON FIGHTS

The focus in a fight is on the heroes (I mean, obviously. Please, if you're the referee, don't roll dice and spend time narrating the results of off-screen battles. I tried that, it doesn't work) and the heroes should be encouraged to try weird and unusual tricks. As a simple rule, reward good ideas with advantages and bad ideas with risks. More specifically, as the referee, you have four simple mechanics you can apply depending on the heroes ideas:

Heroes' Idea	Referee Response
A terrible idea	"Ok, you can try that, but the enemy will <i>first</i> get a reaction with advantage."
A risky idea	"You can try that, but the enemy will <i>then</i> get a reaction (or advantage on their turn)."
An interesting idea	"That sounds like a good idea, you can try, but <i>if you fail</i> the enemy will get a reaction (or advantage on their turn)."
A great idea	"That's a great idea. If you succeed at an easy test, you will then get advantage on your attempt (and/or, but if you fail the easy test, you will lose your action)."

You always have the option of inventing mini-scenarios and challenges on the fly. For example, "Yes, the hero can attack with their eyes shut, but they will have disadvantage on attacks and the petrifying pterodactyl will have advantage in turn."

Don't forget that heroes have the option of sacrificing Life for advantages, and hero dice they can spend to adjust their rolls.

## ESCALATOR DIE

If a conflict feels like it's getting too long, introduce an escalator die. Use a particularly striking, big die and put it on a little pedestal. Every round, increase its value by one. Increase *every* roll in the conflict by that amount. That'll make things end faster.

# MAGITECH AND FANTASCIENCE

By default UVG heroes start without spells, but in the SEACAT system anybody can cast spells (or at least try). Maybe casting a spell means reading it out loud from a magic book, maybe it's an interpretative dance routine that summons a demon, maybe it's dribbly candles. The cute descriptions are in the spell.

But this is the UVG, not SEACAT, so *most of the spells are not here*. What is here is the magitech and fantascience system.

## BLOOD FOR THE MAGIC GOD: SPELL PRICE

Magic rips reality, imposing otherworldly wrongness on the mundane. This means that spells *hurt* to cast and heroes have to pay the **spell price** in Life. The total price they pay to cast their spell is their magic cost times the spell power. The default cost is 2, marked with the little underlined icon in the magic box on the hero sheet. *In extremis*, a hero could also pay the spell price with stat points.

Thus an explorer summoning a 3rd power *Thornstone Obelisk* would pay 6 Life or any mix of Life and stat points. If they became a true wizard, reducing their magic cost to 1, they would pay only 3 Life. So:

$$\text{spell price (in Life)} = \text{magic cost} \times \text{spell power}$$

## SPELLS ARE INVENTORY TOO

Spells are not just abilities or skills a hero acquires, they are a burden that weighs the hero down. Write down each spell a hero can cast in their inventory. Maybe it's the creepy skulls and the newt juice. Maybe it's just the weight of malign knowledge. Spells don't disappear after casting, but they can't be used if they're not available in the inventory, for example, if the hero stored them in a library since they were taking up too much space.

Spell books are valuable and cool because they let a hero carry a bunch of spells in a single inventory slot.

## PALACE OF THE MIND: MEMORIES

Wizards are special because they can squirrel extra spells away in their minds as magic memories. This means those creepy casters can carry and cast more spells. A wizard can gain one magic memory slot per level, at a permanent cost of 1 Life for each slot.

Memorized spells are also special because they also don't incur a spell price when cast. After casting, a memorized spell disappears. A wizard can memorize new spells every long rest.

## MAGIC CAN BE HARD: SPELL POWER

Spells and rituals can of different powers. Higher power spells have a higher spell price and are more dangerous to cast. Heroes can cast any spell of any power. Spell power does not affect how much space a spell takes in the inventory or a wizard's memory.

## IMBUED MAGIC & MAGIC ITEMS

A spell that is imbued reserves a hero's vital essence for the duration. It does not matter whether a hero spends 8 Life or 2 Agility or one memory. They can only recover those attributes after the spell ends.

When a hero creates a magic item with a spell they imbue that item with their life force. To recover their attributes they have to disenchant or destroy the magic item. A simple example of magic items are the wicker fetishes of the Grass Colossus (p.37).

## MAGIC IS DANGEROUS: CORRUPTION

When a hero casts a dangerous spell, or a spell that is of a higher power than the hero's level, they test a relevant magic skill to see if everything works out fine. The **spell price is the target number**. If they fail their test, the magic corrupts them, twisting their body, abrading their soul, and changing their personality.

When the hero's level is higher than that of the dangerous spell they're casting, they make the test with advantage. Dangerous spells are described as such in their entries.



## BECOMING A WIZARD

First, a hero should learn a suitable skill (for example, necromantic law or golem mechanics). Otherwise, every spell is dangerous for them and, since they're unskilled, they make every test with disadvantage. After that, they learn spells by discovering them and studying. By default, learning a new spell takes a week's study and a moderate Thought test, but other options exist, from direct magical injection to longer private schools that obviate the need for tests.

To become a true wizard, the hero must track down a mentor, perform 3 foolish tasks, and permanently reduce their Life by 1 point per level in a ritual involving strange foods at a harrowing feast.



# BIOMAGICAL CORRUPTION

Exposure to dangerous magic, radiation ghosts, mutagenic blights, source corruption, biomancers, vomes, or other weird leftovers of the Long Long Ago can produce mutations.

Every mutation through random exposure is likely to have deleterious effects. When a hero acquires a deleterious mutation, they **reduce a relevant stat by one**. Positive modification is hard to plan and requires folks with actual biomantic skills.

## WHAT KIND OF EXPOSURE WAS IT?

d20	How Bad Is It Doc? (use a flat d20 roll or some kind of 'Luck' skill)
1–3	It's visibly bad. Gain a deleterious and a cosmetic mutation.
4–10	It's just plain bad. Gain a deleterious mutation.
11–12	Ups and downs. Gain a deleterious and a beneficial mutation.
13	Chaos. Gain three mutations, one of each kind.
14–19	Visible but not bad. Gain a cosmetic and a beneficial mutation.
20	The biomagical lottery favors you! Gain a beneficial mutation.

## MUTATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF A DARKLY GLOWING MOON

d20	Deleterious Mutations (Bad Stuff)	Cosmetic Mutations (Weird Stuff)	Beneficial Mutations (The Heroic Stuff)
1	Teeth fall out or become needle-sharp. Eventually may turn into bite attack.	Hairless or exceptionally fluffy. May end up a true fur-ball.	Stronger. Strength increases. This may increase the stat beyond human maximums, as high as 7. Maximum bonus to d20 roll remains +13.
2	Skin rots or develops suppurating boils.	Change skin and or hair colour.	Better. Endurance increases. May end up as high as 7.
3	Ears wither away or turn into bony horns.	Ears change shape.	Faster. Agility increases. May go as high as 7.
4	Hand withers or locks into claw. Eventually may become a weapon.	Lips grow or disappear.	Smarter. Thought increases. May go as high as 6 or 7, but strange madnnesses start developing as brain becomes inhuman.
5	Vestigial fingers or toes. Eventually they may become fully functional.	Nose grows or disappears. Possibility of prehensile nose.	Psionic evolution. Mental ability develops or spell acquired as an innate ability usable once per day.
6	Vestigial gills or gas bladder. Eventually may permit breathing water or gas.	Eyes change colour. May end up radically weird.	Tougher. Life increased. This can get ridiculous. May be useful for a wizard.
7	Vestigial wings or flagellae. Eventually they may become functional.	Grow taller or shorter. May become much taller or shorter.	Resilient. Immune system boosted, gain $\uparrow$ a against disease, poison, radiation, or any one other environmental effect.
8	Fingers wither or become raw. Eventually they may wither away.	Mouth widens or narrows. Eventually it may disappear.	Psionic augmentation. Develop supernatural aptitude with one type of skill and make all relevant rolls with $\uparrow$ a.
9	Joints stiffen or become weak, but hypermobile. Movement slowed.	Small horns or bony plates grow. This may turn into armor.	Supersoldier reflexes. Gain $\uparrow$ a on initiative. Always get one action during surprise round.
10	Chronic fatigue or keratin ropes grow from body. Eventually body may become sessile mass of keratin ropes.	Patterns appear on skin. Eventually these may begin to move and shift. Later these movements may become controlled.	Expert mimicry. Can flawlessly reproduce any action seen. Always gain $\uparrow$ a to a skill test to perform an action they have already seen performed (e.g., after seeing somebody climb the wall of the Red Tower, they gain $\uparrow$ a on their own test).
11	Eyes turn milky and blind. Eventually eyes may evaporate and collapse out of eye sockets. Vision reduced to astral sight.	Voice changes, becomes oddly inhuman. Eventually it becomes a cascade of colours and sensations.	Cosmic channeling. When hero sees somebody cast a spell they test Aura to see if you can grab an echo of it and save it in their personality matrix (inventory) for later.
12	Intelligence reduced or personality becomes strangely alien.	Blood changes colour, becoming blue or green.	Mule. Can carry twice as much as a normal human. Speed may eventually be reduced as carrying capacity increases.
13	Feet deformed or oddly turned. Eventually may turn into hooves, paws, or bird legs.	Skin becomes smooth and waxy. Eventually it becomes translucent, then flesh follows.	Metabolic enhancement. Derive sustenance from anything organic, and stomach is immune to organic poisons. Unfortunately, alcohol barely works anymore.
14	Vestigial tail or arm. Eventually may become functional.	Muscles grow slimmer or bulkier. Eventually this becomes extreme.	Optic augmentation. Eyes become sharper and more amazing than those of any normal human.
15	Bones become soft or brittle. Eventually may dissolve entirely.	Skull changes, becoming rounder or elongated.	Sensory expansion. Develop eerie new senses: vibration sense, echolocation, electro-detection, a magnetic sense. Choose one.
16	Back becomes fused or hunched. Eventually a shell-like carapace may form.	Features become animalistic. Eventually they may become completely animal.	Chosen regenerator. No longer make death tests. Every time hero is reduced to zero Life their body goes into hibernation as it reassembles itself at rate of 1 Life per day. Each reassembly reduces Endurance by 1.
17	Strange bones erupt from skin in odd places. May develop into spikes or armor over time.	Eyes grow larger or smaller. Eventually they may disappear or become disembodied.	Plastic bone structure. Can slowly adjust the shape and size of bones, squeezing through small spaces, growing taller or shorter, or mimicking other people's faces.
18	Additional eye or teeth grow somewhere odd. Eye is functional. Teeth can be coaxed to grow into an additional mouth with a bit of biomancy and surgery.	Fingers grow longer or shorter. Eventually they may turn into long, multi-tool like assemblages of chitin and bone.	Predator. Quickly heal by consuming and reprocessing biomatter close to own basic body pattern. Recover 1 Life for every stone of flesh consumed (so about 10 Life for a fully grown humanoid). For humans, this means chimpanzees and lemurs work well, pigs less so ... and, well, humans work best. During healing-feeding frenzy consume a stone of flesh per action.
19	Tongue fuses to jaw or is covered in sharp radulae. Speech becomes strange.	Bone structure becomes bulkier or more gracile.	Precognitive mutation. Occasionally see glimpses of the future. It hurts, but it works. Can spend 1 Life to roll a test to avoid damage with $\uparrow$ a.
20	Secondary brain begins to develop, eventually achieving a semblance of independent thought.	Skin becomes cuttlefish-like, changing colour at the flickering of thought and emotion.	Secret weapon. Body carries natural weapons hidden within it, perhaps claws within fingers, blades within arms, or venomous fangs in the mouth. Whatever. Hero now has natural weaponry.

## EVENTUALLY THE CORRUPTION TAKES ITS TOLL

Some mutations mention possible later outcomes. This occurs either by chance (roll same mutation twice or thrice) or choice (hero decides to deepen their mutation if they gain corruption again). Referees should not force mutations on players who don't want strange, twisted heroes—permit other options, like the hero simply getting sick and requiring bed rest and medical attention instead.

# EXPANDING ON EXPERIENCE

Xp are the life-blood of heroes. They turn regular legume entrepreneurs into grotesquely over-powered extravagant tomb-robbers who hold a city to ransom in exchange for pretending to kill the dragon that they themselves summoned from the Gate of Fire.

Xp	Level	What This Means
0	0	If you want a funnel, start here.
300	1	This is where heroes usually start. A bit above average, but not by much.
750	2	By level 2 they're definitely a cut above.
1500	3	This is entering Conan territory. Cool abilities and more Life to expend as required.
3000	4	Increase a stat here, if you like.
6000	5	By now a hero has little to fear from a single peasant.
12500	6	This is where the experience curve slows down. Life no longer increases much after this level.
25000	7	But heroes continue to gain abilities and skills.
50000	8	Becoming more powerful and legendary.
99999	9	And eventually max out their five figure xp counter.

All the players together with the referee decide before a campaign or series of sessions starts how exactly xp will be gained. Write down the main sources, including a travel quest, to create an incentive structure for your game. This will greatly change the roleplay and gameplay experiences.

## HOW DO HEROES GET EXPERIENCE?

In the oldest versions of the roleplaying hobby, experience was awarded for gold. Specifically, one piece of stolen ('found') gold was worth one piece of xp when dragged back to a safe town. In this kind of game, the focus was on getting in and out of a tomb fast and with as much loot as possible.

Later editions added xp for defeating monsters. In the tactical game versions, xp was *only* awarded for killing monsters (like in action CRPGs). This, obviously, changed the game. It became about finding the high-value boss monsters and slaughtering them.

Other versions went for simpler things. Experience for participating in the game, experience for making other players laugh, experience for being the instant-pizza-baker, experience for completing a quest. Some games even did away with experience entirely.

Choosing how to award experience points changes your game experience. By default the UVG encourages the exploration of a vast environment, trade, looting, but also leaves in some experience for surviving combat and doing cool stuff.



## EXPLORING: EXPERIENCE FOR THE NEW

Heroes find something new and they get xp. It's simple, to the point, and hardwired into the UVG discoveries. It doesn't have to be entirely formalized, but you can give out exploration xp for discovering new places, animals, plants, anomalies, and more. The costs for exploring are resources, time, and danger.

Exploration	Xp	Description
New location	1d10 x days away	Days based on distance without mishaps, days lost to hardship don't count.
New organism	Level x 10 (minimum 5)	You generally need to get close enough to observe the animal or plant with at least two senses. Investing in long-distance microphones might be worthwhile.
New anomaly	1d100	Some way reality is dysfunctional, like the first encountered stuckforce or solid light.
Survey site	1d6 + Thought x 10	Takes 1d6*+1 days, involves sketches, measurements, notes, and depictographs.
Study organism	1d6 + Thought x 10	Takes 1d6*+1 days, involves observing biology, behavior, and habitat.
Investigate anomaly	1d6* + Thought x 10	Takes 1d6*+5 days, involves observing probing, testing, poking, and prodding. May activate anomaly. If you earn over 100 xp, you make your first success on the road to learning a new skill.

After heroes study an organism, survey a site, or investigate an anomaly, the referee should ask them to describe something new they have learned. This is an optional but fun way for them to contribute to the shared world-building. The referee may wield a soft veto here, if the players suggest something too outlandish, that breaks the shared story, or that is just plain inappropriate.

## HEROES ROLL FOR EXPERIENCE AFTER CONFLICT

Let the dice randomly determine how much xp heroes can gain from surviving conflicts. You may add bonus dice for actually defeating enemies and classy deeds (you'll come up with those in due time!).

Achievement	Xp	Description
Survived easy conflict	0	No xp for no challenge.
Survived middling conflict	1d6 x 10	Lost some significant resources (Life, time, ammo, money, prestige).
Survived hard conflict	2d6 x 10	Lost many significant resources (Life, etc.).
Survived brutal conflict	3d6 x 10	Lost a friend (death, betrayal, rout), for example running from a dragon raid.
Victory in conflict	+1d6 x 10	Actually being the winner.
Final blow	+1d6 x 10	Delivering that final blow is the most memorable thing in stories.

Obviously, what counts as a hard battle is subjective. But you've got the idea by now: negotiate and talk. You can do it.



## CASH IS FOR CAROUSING

Carousing for xp was, to my knowledge, invented by Jeff Rients and is a great substitute to the 'xp for gold pieces' system. It's also funny.

When a hero arrives in a large enough settlement they can blow €1d6\* x 100 on a week of hard partying and gain that amount of xp (yes, **it's an exploding die**). Then the player rolls a Charisma test on the relevant carousing table to see what happened. If they cannot cover their debt, they roll with disadvantage. Simple, huh?

### d20 Generic Carousing Results (Charisma Test)

1	No xp gained and something bad happens.
2–3	Something bad happens.
4–7	Something bad happens, but it has a silver lining.
8–11	Something annoying or silly happens.
12	Nothing terrible happens.
13	Something very good happens, but it has a very bad side effect.
14–19	Everything is great!
20	Something good and silly happens. Like getting a free cart of geese.
20/20	Something magical and rare happens.

## TRAVEL QUESTS (D14)

**This one is important.** What does this caravan seek? Why is this motley crew journeying into a wild, half-forgotten land, somewhere between the sunset and the stars, where the veterans of the psychic wars still dwell, ruminating on their lost lives? As the referee (or as a group) you should decide (or randomly determine) an initial quest that takes the whole crew into the Deep West. A shared group quest will make cooperation easier. But if you want tension, go ahead and mix it up. It's cool.

1. **Because It's There.** This is a valid reason, lots of explorers go off to see something new. Gain 1d6 x 50 xp for every new destination explored.
2. **Make Money.** Another simple, valid reason. Provide the party with a financier that loans them €1d10 x 1,000 for their first caravan (creating a debt). Gain 1d6 x 100 xp for every new profitable trade route discovered, and again for every new profitable trade completed.
3. **Big Game Hunting.** The party is accompanying a wealthy gentlerperson, or are themselves of this category, on a mission to acquire seven exceptional (and bulky trophies). Gain 1d6 x 150 xp for every such trophy recovered, and an additional 1d6 x 50 xp if the correct hunter got the final shot.
4. **Explore Forgotten Ruins.** A university wants to build its reputation with an incredible new collection and hires the party to escort an archaeologist or as archaeologists themselves. Gain 1d6 x 100 xp for every suitable find recovered—remember to delay and cut the expedition's funding at the most stupid, inopportune moments because the university rector needed a new dining room.
5. **Glorious Naturalists.** An civilian scientific society is seeking to increase the prestige of its oligarch founders by presenting new discoveries. The party is escorting a group of 'distinguished' scientists of leisure (or are themselves such) on a mission to record new minerals, plants, animals, and hyper-natural phenomena. Gain 1d6 x 100 xp for every treasure trove of new knowledge brought back to the society.
6. **Learn Ancient Secrets.** Give each destination a 20% chance of having lore and remains that lead to the discovery of an ancient

secret. Once five secrets are recovered, a wizard can spend a month researching the lore and figure out the *Teleportation of Innocents* or perhaps the secret of *Liquid Stone Lamps*. Award 1d6 x 200 xp for every such secret learned.

7. **Diplomatic Mission.** A faction in the 'civilized' lands wants to foment strife among the barbarians of the wilderness, to stop them from getting strong enough to threaten the civilization. Award 1d6 x 1,000 xp for every war started.
8. **Tribute Mission.** The party is delivering, or collecting, a large amount of wealth, or perhaps a groom, to seal a diplomatic agreement or pay a debt. Remain unnoticed and complete this delivery as quickly as possible. Award 1d6 x 300 xp on delivery.
9. **Escort Duties.** The party is helping 3 to 10 squabbling clients reach their remote destination. The clients may be (roll d6): (1) bumbling aristocrats, (2) over-eager dilettantes, (3) cloistered cultists, (4) pampered merchants, (5) ivory-tower scholars, or (6) amateur archaeologists. Award 400 xp for every client that reaches the destination alive.
10. **Raiding.** Start the heroes off as barbarians or semi-nomads in the wilderness. Determine the goods their clan requires (animals, armor, weapons, or medicine) and have them go a-hunting. Award 50 xp for every sack of the required goods acquired, regardless of means (including trade).
11. **Assassination.** A rogue leader of a faction, a scary wizard, an important researcher, or perhaps just a beautiful gladiator slave, has escaped into the wilds. The upstart must be taught a lesson and their head delivered back to the Divine President. Provide €1,000 and give each destination a 20% chance of holding a clue to the target's location. Once three clues are discovered, randomly determine the target's location. Award 1d6 x 1,000 xp on delivery of the head.
12. **Witness the End of Time.** The party is convinced that the world is ending and must **deliver** the holiest of relics, a large and bulky artifact from long ago, to the Final Destination. Each destination has a 20% chance of holding part of the map to the End of Time. Once three pieces of the map are recovered, determine the location of the Final Destination and a key for unlocking it. Award 1d6 x 1,000 xp on arrival at the Final Destination—The End of Time is optional.
13. **Saving the World.** The party is convinced that the world is ending, and must **recover** the holiest of relics from the Final Place to avert it. Each destination has a 20% chance of holding a clue to the Final Place and a 20% chance of being home to an **Avatar of the End** (L11, angel of death) who is bent on ensuring the world ends. Once three clues are recovered, determine the location of the Final Place and a challenge for entering it (use a death trap dungeon of your choice). Award 1d6 x 1,000 xp on arrival at the Final Place—The End of Time is still optional.
14. **Ascending into the Sky like the Shamans of Old.** The people's myths tell of the Long Long Ago, when the ancestors walked in the stars. Following visions from the True Mother, a group of noble and ruthless warriors and seers has been chosen to return to the stars and tell the tale of their oppression and bring the Ancestors back to the earth. Each destination has a 20% chance of holding part of the Key to the Sky. Once three Keys are recovered, a **Demon of Lies** (L11, misunderstood) appears. Inside the Demon's head is a crystal compass that points to the destination of ascendance. Award 1d6 x 1,000 xp on arrival at the space port. Actual void-faring is optional.

# TIME, WHAT IS TIME

*What the hell have you gotten yourself into?*

The UV Grasslands are big. They're weird, sure, but first and foremost they are mind-bogglingly big. Vast and empty—it's that emptiness that kills heroes because it means there's no wishing well to drink from and no turnip farm to plunder.

The UVG uses a series of travel, time, and space modules to make it work. This is the first of them.

## EVERY WEEK OF TRAVEL:

1. **Remove one sack of supplies** per human-sized person from the caravan inventory.
2. One hero tests Charisma for **Misfortune**, which applies to the whole caravan but heroes resist effects individually. A different hero tests each week.
3. Check what **encounters** happen and resolve them.
4. Any heroes that did not participate in a fight or flight can treat the week as a **long rest**.
5. Check if the caravan has arrived at a **destination**. Most destinations are a week apart but some require two, or even three, weeks of voyaging in the wastes. If the caravan has not yet arrived at a safe location repeat steps 1 to 5 until it does.
6. When the caravan arrives at a destination, one hero makes a moderate relevant test for **discoveries** and notes any on the map. These are points of interest a few days' journey from the destination. There are a limited number of discoveries available at each destination.

Instead of traveling a caravan may **stop for a full week**.

When a caravan is **stopped in the wilderness** each hero may take *one* of the following actions before step 1:

- ∴ **Forage** for supplies: with a moderate relevant test they gain one sack of supplies. Difficulty varies depending on how plentiful the wildlife is.
- ∴ **Care** for another character: they fully recover a damaged attribute and gain advantage on tests vs. illness and poison.
- ∴ Set an **ambush**: prepare a trap to waylay other travelers or to gain advantage in a hostile encounter.
- ∴ **Study**: probe ancient artifacts, scrolls, or items to figure out how they work, learn a new spell or skill.
- ∴ **Hide** the camp: advantage to avoiding encounters.

If the caravan is **stopped at a destination** each hero may also:

- ∴ **Explore** further for additional discoveries.
- ∴ **Buy and sell** trade goods.
- ∴ Every hero may **pay expenses** for lodging and food rather than consuming sacks of supplies and, in some places, even buy additional sacks of supplies. This action is free.

In most rpgs rounds, minutes, and turns are used during the exploration of dungeons or ruins while hours and days are used for overland travel and the exploration of terrain hexes. When traveling in the UVG a **week** is the basic unit of activity to drive home how far apart everything is.

What about precise distance? Only worry about details like miles and leagues on the scale of individual encounters and locations. For the UVG scale time is a better experiential measure of distance.

## HOW FAR IS VERY FAR AWAY?

Distance	Who Travels That Far	This Makes Heroes
1 day	Local farmer selling a cow for beans.	Nothing special.
1 week	Local traders. Students off to the big city.	Traveled.
4 weeks	The farthest bulk caravans go.	Adventurous.
8 weeks	Armed caravans with luxury goods.	Explorers.
16 weeks	Embassies. Pilgrims. Nomad caravans.	Famous explorers.
32 weeks	This is beyond the edge of the known world for practically everybody.	Legendary explorers with epic stories.

The farther heroes travel, the more renowned they will be in their home towns, and the more valuable their stories.

## THE USE OF DAYS

Heroes traveling the UVG will also find uses for **days**, particularly for taking short rests to recover an expended daily ability or 1d4 Life, roughly exploring a point of interest, observing a new creature, mucking around a destination, and, most crucially, dying of thirst.

**Tally extra days** accrued from Misfortune, exploration, and other miscellaneous events until they reach a full week. Then repeat steps 1 to 3 (no rest) and reset the tally.

A caravan is **slowed down** when the animals are encumbered, passengers are sick, it is using slow vehicles, or can be described by any other word that feels slow. At the beginning of every week **tally an extra day for every applicable condition and adjective**. Thus an *encumbered* (1) caravan with *sick* (2) heroes using *slow* (3), *heavy* (4) wagons starts every week by tallying four extra days.

A caravan is **fast** if everybody is mounted, has an exceptional guide, is using excellent steeds, or fast golem vehicles. Every applicable condition **negates one tally** per week—leaving more time for exploration. Even a fast caravan cannot travel a 1-week distance in less than one week—they are just traveling at an optimal pace.

## REST AND RECOVERY

In keeping with the emphasis on weeks, a long rest takes one week and each hero recovers *only one* of the following:

- ∴ Their full Life (hit points or health in some systems).
- ∴ One stat (ability score or other similar attribute).
- ∴ Their entire fatigue track (it's called rest for a reason).
- ∴ From one harmful effect (death, soul removal, and so on).

When a hero is cared for by another character they recover one more attribute per week.



# INVENTORY AND SACKS

How do you convey how horrible it is to carry lots of gear long distances without a hover-wagon, without strangling the players with the classic pounds and packs as their heroes slog across a giant savanna for months at a time? As with time, we change the scale for the rigors of trans-continental travel.

UVG uses sacks as a unit of measurement of the unwieldiness and weight of things, not literal sacks. They could be barrels, crates, bales, whatever. How much is a sack? A sack is:

- ∴ All of a hero's adventuring or professional gear. Magic skulls of memory for wizards, a year's supply of swordmaceaxes for fighters, golf clubs for the thief, whatever.
- ∴ A **sack of supplies**. Enough food, water, camping gear, and toilet paper to survive for a week. Bad quality supplies cost €2/sack, good ones €10/sack—or more the deeper they are in the wastes!
- ∴ One **rider** or unconscious human.
- ∴ A unit of trade goods.
- ∴ €2,500 in coins.

In the interest of simplicity a sack is exactly as many pounds, stones, or inventory slots as an average character can carry in your system. You may allow very strong characters to carry multiple sacks if you want.

## UNITS AND ENCUMBRANCE

1 **sack** = 10 **stones** = 100 **soaps** = 2,500 **cash**

- ∴ Sack: basic inventory unit
- ∴ Stone: a tenth of a sack, also a generic significant item, like a sabre or spear or shield or shovel. About 15lbs.
- ∴ Soap: a hundredth of a sack, also a generic small item, like a signal whistle or signet ring or spike. Or bar of soap.
- ∴ Cash (€): one standard unit of currency.

Each human can carry **one sack** unencumbered.

Each human can carry **two sacks** encumbered.

**Encumbrance** disadvantages every physical activity. Impose additional penalties when a fighter is carrying a platinum refrigerator out of a zombastodon lair.

Players will come up with weird justifications for how they are going to rig up rollers, ropes, and pulleys to drag heavy things long distances. This is good. Encourage them.

## THE PLEASURE OF TREASURE

Regardless of whether you award xp for treasure recovered or not, heroes will try to make away with rare treasures like the insidious crystal omphalos of Last Fish Heaven (€4,500, 3 sacks). How much are treasures worth? You can either decide based on your rough estimate, a hero's Charisma test, or a flat doo roll.

doo	Rough Idea	Charisma Test	Cash Per Sack
01–50	Uncommon	1–10	€50
51–80	Valuable	11–15	€250
81–98	Rare	16–19	€1,000
99–00	Exceptional	20+	€5,000
00/0	Unique	20/20	€25,000

00/0: on a result of 00 roll an additional d10. 20/20: if a player rolls a natural 20 on their Charisma test, they roll an additional d20. Yes, the odds aren't the same. This is because heroes are luckier than statistics imply.

## TREASURE IS HEAVY

If the heroes come across a series of beautiful crystal sculptures with diamond eyes, why do they hack out just the eyes? Space.

Any time a treasure or item is described with fancy words **add a sack to its size for every relevant word**. Add sacks for heavy materials, fine workmanship, intricate mechanics, cyclopean architecture—just pile it on.

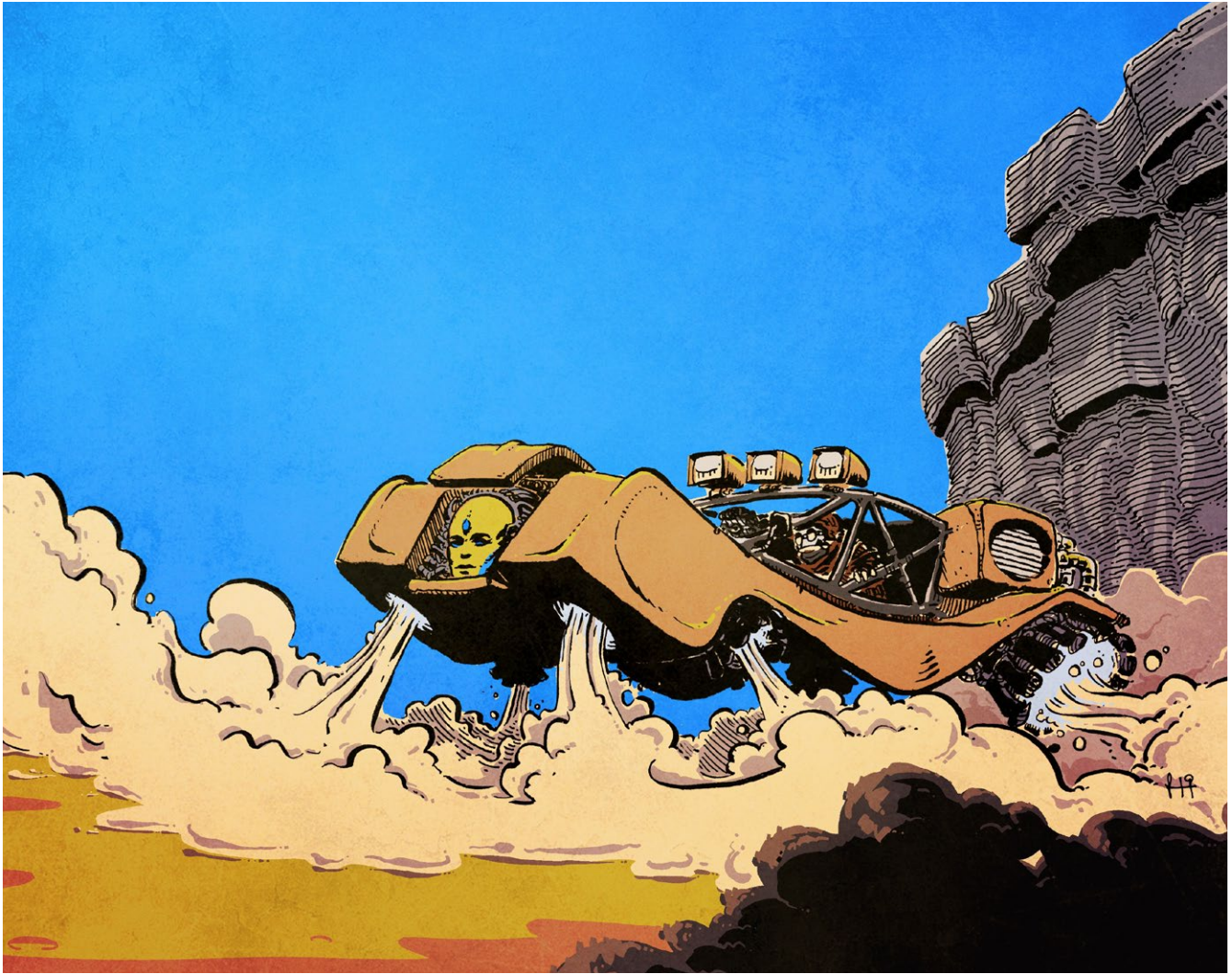
Example: the fabulous *gold* and *marble statue* of the *metaphysical insinuation* of *being* by Jeerida the Artistique is worth €6,000 and takes 6 sacks of inventory (thus: €6,000, 6 sacks) to transport safely.

## SO HACK IT UP

A smart (philistine) hero can **hack out** 1d6 + Level percent of a treasure's value in one turn. This will reduce the value of the rest of the work by 10x that amount in percent.

Example: Pikker the Peng-Ling rolls 5%, gouges out the gold bits for €300, and pockets them. The remaining defaced sculpture is now worth 50% less: €3,000. Yeah, looters are not nice.





## MISFORTUNE

Voyages can be summarized as long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of terror and loss. [Mis]fortune and encounters simulate this. They deplete the resources of the voyagers, threaten their survival, and provide vital colour to the environment.

In the UVG Charisma is crucial in both cases.

The concept of Charisma comes from Ancient Greek, where it referred to grace and divine fortune bestowed by capricious deities. This wasn't some approximation of "sex appeal" or "leadership potential." This was straight up divine favoritism. A hero could be a complete dirtbag but her divine mother had dipped her in god ju-ju and given her teflon skin. Others got the plague, she was untouched. Others got scarred, she glowed with beauty and grace.

Classical Charisma is utterly unfair which is why it works so well in games as a proxy for luck, Misfortune, and encounter tests. If players are new to this concept let them know in advance so they can adjust their hero's stats.

Each area of the UVG has its own perils. Every week of traveling, a different hero tests Charisma to see what kind of bad luck has befallen the caravan this time. Misfortune applies to the whole caravan, but heroes make individual moderate relevant tests to avoid the worst outcomes (like contracting a horrible disease).

When circumstance requires, feel free to invent your own travel troubles, or use this table:

### GENERAL TRAVEL MISFORTUNE AND MISERY

#### d20 Charisma Test

1	Horribly lost (-1 week).
2	Contracted a debilitating disease (-3 stat points).
3	Drought-afflicted land without fodder. Each animal needs a sack of supplies. Starvation tests ensue if there is not enough.
4	Vicious food poisoning (-1d6 Life), humorous side effects.
5	Floods wash away road (-1d4 days).
6	Contracted a loud, attention-grabbing cough (need medicine).
7	Storm blows away loose items, soaks documents (-1 item).
8	Weevils or dust rats get into supplies (-1 sack).
9	Pack animal wanders off (-1 day or -1 animal).
10-11	A piece of equipment has worn out (useless until repaired in town).
12	The road is dusty, long, and dull. Boredom grows.
13	The road is exhausting but ... hey ... wait ... what's that? A risky gamble to acquire some unexpected resources? Spend 1d6 Life to attempt a moderate relevant test to gain 1d4 supplies.
14-19	The road is arduous, but due to good packing and a few travel games, it is manageable.
20+	Your understanding of the steppes grows, gain one success towards acquiring a UVG wilderness skill, like Mule Whispering, Steppeland Protocols, or Storytelling (see p. 141).



# ENCOUNTERS

Each week **at least one encounter will occur**. The only questions are: how intense, how effective, and how hostile is the encounter?

Roll three d12s for the intensity, efficacy, and hostility of the encounter. If the total of the three rolls is 13, an additional encounter occurs (possibly simultaneously). Keep adding encounters as long as you keep rolling 13s (within reason).

Each destination region has its own list of creatures and encounters. Use that to further clarify the type of encounter the players are facing. One biomechanical buffalo might be useful as a steed but a herd would be very dangerous.

## 3D12 ENCOUNTER ROLLS: INTENSITY, TYPE, AND HOSTILITY

d12	Intensity (Distance and Time)	Efficacy (What Can It Do?)	Hostility (Their Attitude)
1/1	It's an ambush.	Utterly deadly.	Murderous, disguised.
1	It's on. Everyone is surprised.	Something very bad.	Aggressive (attacks).
2–3	Close. Hard to avoid.	Something bad.	Hostile (may attack).
4–6	Near. Moderate test to avoid.	Potentially dangerous.	Unfriendly and cautious.
7–9	Distant. Easy test to avoid.	Interesting, but not useful.	Neutral and indifferent.
10–11	Fresh tracks. Easy test to read.	Potentially useful.	Polite or friendly.
12	Cold tracks. Hard test to read.	Someone useful.	Helpful.
12/12	Easy test to track and ambush. Oblivious.	Someone or something valuable.	Ally for the road.

“Remember: most encounters should not result in combat and not all combat should be to the death!”

—Galina Foreburn 4-body, porcelain walker pilot and scout



## SACRIFICE TO SKIP

Sometimes encounters waste time. Running into several angry limping zombies ambushing the heroes may be funny once; but on your way to the Blue Pyramid of the Punta those zombies are dull. In such cases let the heroes ditch some of their stuff and narrate how they overcame the encounter. If their story is funny feel free to even dish out a reward.

**Simply sacrifice some sacks:** one sack of supplies or other valuables per level of the enemies. A pack of **red hounds** (L1, vampiric) will be distracted with a sack of salamis, but it will take a couple of asses or mules to distract a pride of **thundercats** (L4, sword-wielding).

## CUT TO THE CHASE

In a chase the key question is: how long till the pursuers catch their prey? The handwave and the fiat are both valid referee options. Another option is for **the pursuers to make a relevant test** on the Chase Table. If they are faster, they roll with advantage. If they are slower they roll with disadvantage.

## CHASE TABLE

d20	Relevant Test (Probably Driving or Riding or Nomad Raiding)
1	1d6+1 days wasted on a failed chase. Led astray, possibly lost, and roll for Misfortune.
2–3	1d6+1 days wasted in a wild goose chase and roll for Misfortune.
4–7	After a chase of 1d6+1 days those pesky fools got away!
8–11	Losing them. Roll again with ↓d in 1d6+1 days.
12–14	Gaining steadily. Roll again with ↑a in 1d6+1 days.
15–19	Running the prey down. Catch them in 1d6+1 days.
20+	On top of them. Catch them in 1 day.
20/20	Surprise! The prey took a wrong turn and are caught.

Most chases over the long distances of the steppe play out over days. For closer encounters reduce the time frame to hours or minutes. If running a chase over hours or minutes replace Misfortune tests with obstacles and injuries, like crevasses and lame horses.

## MORALE: FEAR AND LOATHING IN THE WASTED WONDERLAND

Not all fights should be to the death: most creatures want to live to ride another day across the glorious vastness of the UVG, to sire more offspring, to put off the end of time another day. By default, these rules apply to most referee-controlled creatures and the heroes' henchfolk. The players may decide whether to apply morale rules to their heroes, too.

When combat goes badly, when a leader dies, when a horror from beyond the Colourless Wall emerges from the ventral cavity of a camel the wizard just dispatched with his plasma rifle, it's time for a random member of the troubled side to make an Aura test. The difficulty of the test depends on how badly the side is faring. When player-controlled characters (henchfolk or heroes) are in a situation that may require a morale test, the difficulty and pertinence of the test requires a bit of negotiation between referee and players—please use common sense. If the whole side *doesn't* retreat, subsequent tests have disadvantage.

## STANDING OR RETREATING

Aura Test Target	Situation The Team Is Facing
Trivial (3)	Bad omen, upset stomach, impressive war chants.
Easy (7)	First casualties, unusual opponents, scary champion.
Moderate (11)	Larger numbers, multiple casualties, gore, monsters.
Difficult (15)	Overwhelming fire, resistant enemies, horror.
Extreme (19)	Invulnerable foes, mass slaughter, maddening horrors from beyond time and space.

A creature (or group) that's failed their morale test retreats carefully from combat. If things go badly enough, or they roll a natural 1, they may turn and flee—and devil take the hindmost.



# DESTINATIONS AND DISCOVERIES

The UVG is a pointcrawl—this is a bit of jargon to distinguish it from a hexcrawl. All it means is that in the UVG you have a series of known locations (“destinations”) connected by a network of routes. You can see them clearly on the suspiciously minimalist long map of the grasslands.



## DESTINATIONS

Destinations are main nodes of the UVG pointcrawl on the big map, safe-ish **known locations** on the trade and travel network from the Violet City to the Black City. Some of them are cities, some are ruins, some are just famous landmarks. Each **route** between two destinations has a label indicating how long the average caravan takes to cover it. Some destinations have facilities where heroes can trade, rest, resupply, or even stay at a guest house of some sort and use them as temporary bases of operation.

Give the players a copy of the map of the UVG. It will help them imagine how far they are going and what they can discover. Encourage them to write and make notes on their map. Although this is a group asset, it is also an inventory item, and should be carried by a character. Warn the players that storms or fires may destroy their map, and that they might want to make backup copies.

Near destinations travelers and locals congregate, strange omens coexist with decayed signposts, and messages inhabit curiously forgotten bottles. In short, there is information, and some of that information may let heroes make **discoveries**.

You can expand your game world north and south from any point on the big map.

## DISCOVERIES

Discoveries are interesting locations within a few days journey of an existing destination, which are new to the heroes. When heroes arrive at a new destination, one hero makes a moderate relevant test for discoveries. Have heroes take turns, so it is not always the same character making discoveries.

Limit the number of possible discoveries per destination to five or less, unless you want a very cluttered map. Each discovery visited and given a touristic once over (1 day spent on site) is worth some xp.

## DISCOVERIES NEAR YOUR DESTINATION

### d20 Relevant Test (Usually Thought)

1	Nothing but blank stares, but 1d6 days after leaving, the heroes get to experience an honest-to-goodness bonus ambush encounter.
2–3	Nothing interesting nearby, but $\downarrow$ d on the next encounter check.
4–10	Dust and haze and broken dreams, that is all.
11	Nothing here, but there's this amazing place near the <i>next</i> destination.
12–15	The locals mutter and nod, ah. A visitor. Another foreign “discoverer.” Note down one discovery.
16–19	In the silences. In the gaps in conversation. In the forgotten words there is a map. Two discoveries.
20+	The locals no longer read the old manuals or the old stelae in the crypts of their founders, but here is a dark clue. Three discoveries.

When they discover new locations, note them on the map and how many days it takes to reach them. The precise location is not crucial, but players will usually ask, so give them a d6 and a d8 to roll.

## WHERE IS THE DISCOVERY?

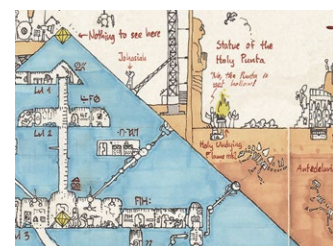
d6	How Far Away?	d8	Which Way?
1	A mere day. Maybe less?	1	West, towards the Black City.
2	Two days.	2	Southwest.
3	Three.	3	South, towards the Cyan Sea.
4	Four. Getting the idea?	4	Southeast, to the Red Mountains.
5	Five.	5	East, towards civilization.
6	Six. This is redundant.	6	Northeast, to the Moon Mountains.
6/6	A full week away.	7	North, towards the Silent Forest.
6/6/6	Right here! Hidden!	8	Northwest, towards the Flesh Coast.

## EXAMPLE DISCOVERY: BLUE PYRAMID OF THE PUNTA

(2 days, 150 xp)

Eroding from a tufa cliff, a blue pyramid as hard as granite and as blue as cobalt ceramics. Metal struts and bits remain embedded in the pyramid, studding blasted entrances. At its summit a large sphere was removed in some forgotten time.

Within hyper-regular passages describe geometries leading into its heart. There, another blasted way thick with debris and skeletons leads *down* to a devastated city of troglodytic half-humans. From there worn tunnels lead *up* to a dead city buried in the tufa, built around a prayer machine named Punta Mark IV. The machine offers paltry blessings and mind-numbing platitudes. Fossilized machines offer some reward (€500, 5 sacks).





# STARVATION AND THIRST

A sack of supplies is an abstraction of the food, water, camping gear, video games, gum, prophylactics, nylon stockings, and toilet paper a human needs to survive for a week.

## HOW NOT TO STARVE

Running out of supplies is bad. Waiting until things are very bad can be terrible. Sometimes the weak must be sacrificed for the strong.

1. **Cannibalise** the expedition. This is the fastest way to get supplies. A human provides one sack of supplies, an ordinary pack animal provides two sacks of supplies.
2. **Forage** for supplies before the caravan runs out. If a hero succeeds at a moderate relevant test, they gather one sack of supplies. Optionally, if the group gives up on their destination and broadens their search for sustenance to the deep wastes, use the table below.
3. **Buy** more supplies in a settlement. Obviously. Prices vary, but between €2 and €10 per sack is reasonable.

Some inhabitants of the Ultraviolet Grasslands frown on cannibalism. Foraging in the wastelands is a poor survival strategy unless the whole caravan consists of hunter-gatherers or nomadic hunters—it is best to treat this as an emergency stop-gap while one or two fast and healthy travelers seek out help.



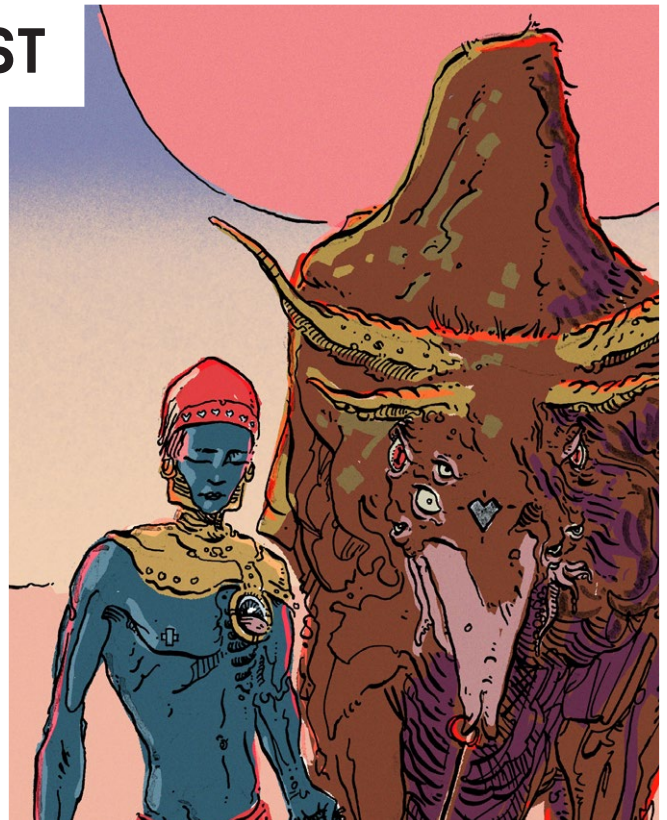
## FORAGING IN THE DEEP WASTES

The caravan gives up all hope of reaching their destination and focuses on survival. Each week have a different hero make a relevant test, just like with the Misfortune tests. This way, sooner or later, everyone will have to contribute to surviving in the wastes (cutting dead weight loose before they have to test may help).

All the quantities assume about 10 mouths to feed in the caravan. This includes heroes, pets, and even herbivorous beasts of burden in wastelands without grass or deserts without water. Days spent wandering in search of food may add up to weeks-longer voyages back to safe destinations.

### d20 Relevant Test (Usually Thought)

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | You find nothing. Spend 1d6 days to find 1d4-1 supplies.   |
| 2-3   | Hunger is your constant companion as you collect a meager 1d4-1 supplies. Spend 1d6 days to gather 1d4 more supplies.                    |
| 4-7   | Things are looking very bad. You only collect 1d4+1 supplies. Spend 1d6 days to gather 1d4+1 more supplies.                              |
| 8-11  | Lean week. You only scrounge up 2d4 supplies. Spend 1d6 days to gather 1d4+1 more supplies.  |
| 12-15 | A marginal week. You collect 2d4+2 supplies. Spend 1d4 days to bring gathered total to 10 or increase it by 1d6+1.                       |
| 16-19 | A successful week! You forage enough supplies and water for everyone in the caravan. Spend 1d4 days to gather 1d6+1 additional supplies. |
| 20+   | Bountiful oasis in the wastes. You feed and resupply everyone, and recover 2d4 additional supplies.                                      |



## TEST VS. STARVATION

When there are no supplies left bad things happen—quickly and lethally. In wastelands without fodder, animals test, too.

Repeat the roll **every week** with reduced supplies. Heroes have advantage on the roll if they do not travel.

Supply Situation	Endurance Test Target
Full rations (pewh!)	No test
Half rations (1 sack, 2 humans)	Easy (7)
Quarter rations (hungry!)	Moderate (11)
No supplies (thirsty!)	Difficult (15)

**Success:** physical stats are reduced by 1d4+1 and  $\downarrow$ d on all physical tests. Hero cannot die from this effect.

**Failure:** hero is **starving**. Physical stats are all reduced to zero, mental stats are reduced by 1d4+1,  $\downarrow$ d on all tests, movement slowed. Hero *can* die from this through fatigue.

## DYING OF THIRST

When the caravan is in an environment without access to water (i.e. a desert) assume that supplies also include water, whether it's in skins, great round plastic bulbs, or jerry cans. The difference is that heroes repeat the roll **every day** the caravan has reduced supplies. Also, if the roll fails, the hero is dying of thirst, not starving, because words.

## OUT OF AIR: SUFFOCATION

Use the same table and mechanic for other vital resources, like air. Simply adjust the time scale. If the heroes are short on air, while diving or exploring the void above the world without a voidsuit, they repeat the roll **every couple of minutes**.

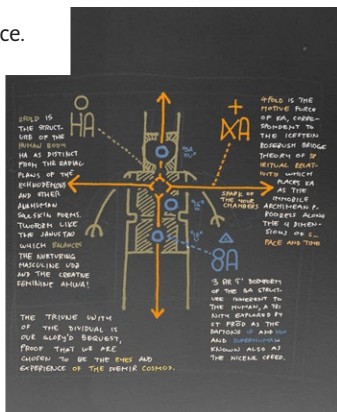
# DEATH AND HAKABA IN THE UVG

You may have noticed that the totality of the sentient creature in the Rainbowlands is divided into a trinity of **body** (ha), **soul** (ka), and **personality** (ba). For the curious, this is largely lifted from a simplistic and lazy reading of the Ancient Egyptian conceptions of the person, as in the *Coffin Texts* and *Book of the Dead*.

In a fantasy roleplaying game context this presents problems for the dead, undead, and resurrected. In game terms, hakaba ties into the three stats. Specifically:

- ∴ Body (ha) maps to Endurance.
- ∴ Soul (ka) maps to Aura.
- ∴ Personality (ba) maps to Charisma.

In metaphysical UVG terms, the soul provides the motive fire of consciousness, the personality provides the unique direction of consciousness, and the body provides the vehicle.



A hero killed by an ordinary weapon, running out of Life, is the classic corpse. A hero killed by a curse or who dies after completing their teleological purpose, running out of Aura, leaves a perfect corpse, easily reanimated into a flesh-golem servitor (sometimes called a zombie but actually a soulless automaton). A hero killed when their personality is destroyed is the most interesting: after running out of Charisma, their soul-body dyad is still physically alive but completely plastic and malleable—closest to the classical Haitian Vodou concept of a zombie—beasts of human intelligence, absolutely loyal to their master or creator.

## HAKABA AND CREATURE MATRIX

Ha (Body)	Ka (Soul)	Ba (Pers.)	Creature or 'Thing'
yes	yes	yes	Humans, full persons, animals
yes	–	–	Corpse, shell (can be reanimated)
–	yes	–	Ka-elemental—a primal, ball-lightning poltergeist thing
–	–	yes	Ghost or echo of a creature, maintained artificially
yes	yes	–	Ka-zombie—a voodoo-style zombie
yes	–	yes	Ba-zombie—a shell of a person animated by artificial means, a lich, also some machine humans
–	yes	yes	Demons, ultras, sentiences

So far so simple—but what happens when a player wants their hero to come back from the dead? This is harder because without specific (and, in the eyes of most Rainbowlanders, deeply immoral) rituals such as *Stoyevod's Irreducible Crystallisation of the Ego Complex*, the hero as an individual disappears. The personality (ba) dissipates into the cosmic consciousness, becoming part of the infinite tapestry of creation, and returning like a messenger swallow to the All-Mind. The soul merges back into the All-Fire of Creation-Preservation-Destruction. Finally, the body decays back into the All-Green cycle of Life-Death-Rebirth.

## BRINGING BACK YOUR DEAD

Spells such as *Animate Dead*, *Raise Dead*, or the poetic *Supplication to the Rotting God to Turn Back the Wheel of Love and Death (Resurrection)*—carry additional permanent costs depending on the time that has passed since the body-soul-personality trinity has dissipated (died).

### WEAK SPELLS, SUCH AS ANIMATE DEAD

**Time Passed** **Side Effect: The Revived permanently ...**

1 minute	... loses 1 Charisma.
1 hour	... loses 1 Thought and 1d2+1 Charisma.
1 day	... loses 1d2+1 Thought and 1d3+2 Charisma.
1 week	... loses 1d4+1 Thought and 1d4+3 Charisma.

### POWERFUL SPELLS, SUCH AS RAISE DEAD

**Time Passed** **Side Effect: The Revived permanently ...**

1 hour	... loses 1 Charisma.
1 day	... loses 1 Thought and 1d3 Charisma.
1 week	... loses 2 Thought and 1d6 Charisma.
1 month	... loses 1 Endurance, 1d2+1 Thought, and 1d10 Charisma.

### TERRIFYING UNHOLY SPELLS, SUCH AS RESURRECTION

**Time Passed** **Side Effect: The Revived permanently ...**

1 day	... loses 1 Charisma and bears the Mark of the Rotting God.
1 week	... loses 1d2 Charisma and bears the Mark.
1 month	... loses 1 Endurance, 1d2+1 Charisma, and bears two Marks.
1 year	... loses 1d2+1 Strength, Endurance, and Charisma, and bears three Marks of the Rotting God.
1 decade	... loses 1d6 Strength, Endurance, and Charisma, and bears five Marks of the Rotting God.

## THE SEVEN MARKS OF THE ROTTING GOD

1. Milk turns sour at the marked one's touch.
2. Dogs and cats are repulsed.
3. Plants slowly wither and are blighted.
4. Maggots grow in their footsteps and skin.
5. **Pestilence** follows their breath.
6. Their eyes are white, but still see, and their touch is **accursed**.
7. Inanimate objects age and decay in their presence.

The **pestilence of the rotting god** is a nauseating disease that causes enervation, cold sweat, coughing, a runny nose, and the growth of lichen like rings on the skin (mechanically it adds two points of fatigue). The incubation period is a few days and the disease generally lasts one to three weeks. There is no known cure except rest and distance from the pest-bearer. The disease is highly contagious (moderate Endurance test after exposure).

The **accursed touch of the rot-marked** is usually only a distressful annoyance. It provokes a strong allergic reaction in humans, including reddened skin, painful blisters, sneezing, and a runny nose. In especially sensitive individuals (those who fail a trivial Endurance test), the accursed touch can cause anaphylactic shock within minutes to hours.





## BETTER THAN KILLED

When is a hero killed? Most creatures die at zero Life, the referee or players can just declare them dead and dismembered. But heroes are special—they're the players' imaginary protagonists, and it's up to the group of players to decide how deadly they want their game.

Some roleplaying games make hero death unlikely, with multiple sequential saves and opportunities for a heal bot to wave their healing hands. Others go with a straight, "0 hp, you're dead, roll a new character." Yet others use death and dismemberment tables to add some hilarious gruesomeness.

In the road-tripping, point-crawling, acid fantasy world of the UVC it's worth remembering that **heroes don't have to die**. The world is

full of body-hopping ghosts, golems, zombies, synthetic humans, and abmortals. Heroes can retire, or get retired by their players-narrators, or something weirder can happen.

### ZERO LIFE: DEATH REPLACEMENT MECHANIC

When a hero reaches 0 Life they gain one level of fatigue and their player can *either* choose what happens to the hero *or* make a Charisma test and let the oracle of the death dice decide.

Each result is only available once per game session. If a result is not available, the next available lower result is used. If all the results are used up, reset the table or add extra setting-appropriate results.

### ORACLE OF THE DEATH DICE (CHOICE OR D20)

Choice	d20	Charisma Test At Zero Life	Game Effects
	1	<b>Cinematic Supertraumatic:</b> hero is dispatched in gory cinematic slo-mo. The battlefield falls silent in horror.	All nearby allies lose 1d6 Life from the trauma, followers test Aura or break.
	2	<b>Vorpal Decapitation:</b> snicker-snack, the hero's neck goes crack.	Nearby creatures test Agility or are blinded by the blood fountain.
	3	<b>Blood Tears Water the Earth:</b> hero is down, pumping arterial blood on the ground, and dying in 3 rounds.	Adjacent creatures test Agility or slip.
	4	<b>Fork in the Guts:</b> ripped open, the hero can crawl away or play dead. They will die in a few hours.	When the hero takes vigorous action, they test Endurance or slip into the deep sleep.
	5	<b>Five More Steps:</b> hero is mortally wounded and dies after 5 more actions. Lying in wait to impart dramatic last words is not an action.	Hero gains d20 temporary Life per round (maximum 20), until they die.
	6	<b>Stumpy Six:</b> that wasn't good. That limb is supposed to be attached. Still, the hero has a few minutes before they bleed out.	Hero gains d20 temporary Life. Also, limb missing (roll d6): (1) two limbs, (2-3) leg, (4-5) arm, (6) choice of limb.
a	7	<b>Final Sacrifice:</b> hero knows they will die soon, time to go out in a blaze of cinematic last stand glory.	Hero gets 7 final advantages to spend as they like and gains 77 temporary Life for a cinematic last stand.
b	8	<b>I'm Too Old For This Shit:</b> hero is down and realizes they're so too old for this shit. If they get out of this adventure alive, they're retiring.	Hero regains up to 20 Life and hair turns white. After this battle they avoid conflict. They end adventure as soon as possible, then retire.
c	9	<b>Just A Flesh Wound:</b> hero loses a member in dramatic fashion. Gritting their teeth, the loss reinvigorates them. They are now a little dismembered.	Hero loses (roll d6): (1-2) foot, but regains 40 Life and gains 1d6 advantages; (3-4) hand, but regains 20 Life and gains 1d4 advantages; (5-6) finger, but regains 10 Life and gains 1 advantage.
d	10	<b>Enter Sandman:</b> hero is knocked unconscious and sleeps off the rest of the fight. Some memories are missing.	Hero loses half a level's worth of experience points.
e	11	<b>Sense Compensate:</b> with a long, drawn out scream, the hero loses a sense organ. Hero is now visibly mutilated.	Hero regains 1d12 Life. Lost eye = hero gains exceptional hearing. Ear = hero gains sharper smell. Tongue = can't speak but gains keener eyes.
f	12	<b>Nope. Nope. I Quit:</b> hero is knocked back, armor torn and blood gushing. Their life flashes before their eyes and they quit. They pass their weapon to a follower and exit the stage as soon as possible.	Hero regains 1d12 Life and retires. A follower immediately gets half of the hero's total experience, three choice items, and a keen desire to prove themselves. The follower gains 1d6 advantages.
g	13	<b>Betrayer of Friends:</b> hero ducks behind a nearby ally.	Ally takes the killing blow instead. Hero has one friend less.
h	14	<b>Broken Spirit Whole Heart:</b> hero staggers back, their spirit broken. They will never fight well again.	Hero regains up to 20 Life and ponders the quiet life. Hero has ↑a in non-combat situations and ↓d in combat.
	15	<b>Bruised Bruiser:</b> hero falls for a round, something's broken in there, but not too badly. Still, it hurts.	Hero has ↓d on all actions until they take a long rest, but regains 1d20 Life. Hero has humorously large bruise.
	16	<b>Blinded By Blood:</b> hero staggers back, blinded by blood. They will soon have a dramatic scar.	Hero regains 1d20 Life. They must take an action every round to wipe away the blood or they have ↓d on all actions.
	17	<b>Spitting Teeth:</b> hero falls for a round, then gets up again, spitting out a tooth. Hero is now gap-toothed.	Hero regains 1d20 Life and gains 2 advantages.
	18	<b>Nanowar of Steel:</b> hero falls to the ground for a round, their blood activates compatible dormant war nanites in the dust.	Hero regains 1d20 Life and one physical stat is permanently increased. They acquire a visible vomish cybernetic implant.
	19	<b>Red Mist Rises:</b> hero falls for a round and a <b>spirit of destruction</b> (L6, laughing) enters them. Hero keeps fighting as long as they have advantage, attacking allies if all enemies are dead.	The hero regains full Life <i>and</i> d100 temporary Life. For the next 2d6 rounds the hero has ↑a on attack and damage rolls.
	20-24	<b>Battle Hymn:</b> numinous presence blocks the killing blow and delivers a glowing, shiny blessing.	Hero regains full Life and gains ↑a on all rolls for the remainder of the battle. Hero permanently gains one special ability.
	25+	<b>Chosen By the Void:</b> <i>something</i> opens up. A different reality manifests. The world seems flat and empty as a higher-dimensional actuality makes itself felt through the hero's soul-body-personality locus.	Hero regains 1 Life and becomes invulnerable for an hour or so as <i>something</i> channels through them. Player can take on referee role, rewriting battle and environment around them (subject to soft veto from other players and referee).
	20/20	<b>Superheroic Reversal:</b> hero suddenly turns the tables on their enemy. Rest of opposing side is badly shaken.	Hero and enemy swap current Life totals. Hero gains ↑a on all rolls for the remainder of the battle and permanently gains one combat special ability or 1d6+1 Life. Enemies test Aura or break.

# CARAVANS

The caravan is a group character for the players, a joint mobile base of operations. Overleaf is a caravan sheet for the players to manage. You don't need a caravan to travel the UVG, but it's a good idea.

## MONEY

Outfitting a caravan is expensive. Heroes with a caravan start the game with a loan from a financier (1d20 x €500 with 100% annual interest makes things interesting). Heroes will rack up weekly costs to pay for wages, food, and more. Don't worry about precision—an approximate track of ready cash depleting will suffice.

## FINANCIER (PATRON)

Create this NPC together with the players. The zanier, the better. You can use one of the other voyagers on p.166 as a start, then ask the players in turn about their patron's goals, the organization, opponents, weaknesses, oddities, and so on.

## LOGO

Every adventuring-trading company needs a cheesy logo. When the players decide to change it later, it costs 1d6\* x €100 in random fees.

## ASSETS

This section helps track the heroes' investments in trade routes and other shenanigans. Use the table on p.178 to generate returns.

## TIME

Time, besides money, is the other key constraint on caravans. Travel is nearly impossible in winter, and the heat is oppressive in summer. Have the players give each year a memorable name.

## SPEED

Fast (fresh horses) and slow tags (heavy wagons) cancel each other out. The speed score represents additional tallies added to the time track, or tallies from Misfortune and exploration negated. Being faster is useful when a chase takes place (p.151).

## TRAVELING THE BACK ROADS

If a caravan travels slowly and cautiously, they tally an extra 7 days every week, but have advantage on all travel tests (misfortune, encounter rolls, avoiding notice and ambushes). However, they do have to roll twice, so there's that.

## MOBILES: MOUTHS, MOUNTS, MOTORS, AND MAGICALS

The different mobile members of the caravan. Mouths are creatures that need a sack of supplies each week to survive (humans). Mounts are creatures that can subsist by grazing and foraging (horses). Motors are vehicles that need fuel supplies each week to move (autogolems). Magicals (or mechanomagicals) are characters, creatures, or vehicles that need no supplies (the undead).

## HEROES

List the players' characters and their usual roles in the caravan. Common roles include expedition leader, navigator, captain of the guards, chief negotiator, mechanic or animal handler, and doctor.

## HELPERS

Helpers are secondary characters with specialized skills (not porters). Unless otherwise specified, a helper's weekly wages equal their level times their bonus. Assume a helper's bonuses are double their level. Helpers with combat abilities count as warriors if the caravan is raided.

## SIZE

The size of a caravan sums all the mobiles (mouths, mounts, motors, and magicals) in the caravan. Larger caravans are harder to hide. A hero (usually the navigator or guide) makes a relevant Agility test to avoid being noticed by a given encounter.

The size of a caravan also affects how well it handles raids. Larger caravans can absorb more losses before collapsing.

### POWER AND CARAVAN COMBAT (RAIDING)

d20	Result	Size 1–5	Size 6–20	Size 21–100	Size 101+
1–3	Disaster	Caravan lost	90% loss	75% loss	50% loss
4–7	Defeat	50% loss	40% loss	30% loss	20% loss
8–11	Stalemate	-1d4 power	-1d8 power	-1d12 power	-2d12 power
12–15	Costly Win	Lose power as with stalemate, gain equal amount of resources (mounts, motors, supplies, or goods).			
16–19	Victory	+1d4 resources	+1d8 resources	+1d12 resources	+2d12 resources
20+	Triumph	Gain resources as with victory, additionally gain valuable treasure (worth €1d100 x enemy's power) or make a discovery.			

Power sums the warrior levels of all warriors in a caravan. It is a simplified ablative armor for raids and measuring the relative strength of caravans. A raid is abstracted to a single test by the defending caravan's captain. If the enemy is more powerful, the captain tests with disadvantage; if weaker, with advantage. Add advantages and disadvantages for other factors (ambushes, sorcery, more). The goal of a raid is to acquire resources at minimum cost, not kill everyone.

The defending caravan *can* spend power 1:1 to save lost resources (mounts, motors, supplies or goods). If the caravan is out of power, it loses *double* that amount of resources instead. Translate lost hero levels into lost Life. Heroes recover Life as normal. Helpers regain 1 level per week of rest, replenishing caravan power. When a helper runs out of levels, they or a doctor makes a moderate test after the raid to see if the helper is permanently out of action (possibly dead).



### MONEY

Ready Cash

costs/wk  
 Wages .....  
 Supplies .....  
 Fuel .....

logo

### UVG CARAVAN SHEET

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 This Caravan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Financier \_\_\_\_\_  
 Debt (due) \_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

patron

### TIME

Day Tally  
 (M T W T F S S)  
 Weeks  
 1 2 3 4  
 5 6 7 8 9  
 10 11 12 13  
 Season  
 Spring Summer  
 Winter Fall  
 Year of the \_\_\_\_\_  
 years elapsed

Assets  
 Routes & Investments | Capital(€) | Risk

### SIZE

avoiding notice  
 # Agility Test  
 1 Trivial (3)  
 2-5 Easy (7)  
 6-20 Moderate (11)  
 21-100 Difficult (15)  
 101+ Extreme (19)

Mouths .....  
 + Mounts .....  
 + Motors .....  
 + Magicals .....

### SPEED

tallies/week

Slow Tags  
 @tallies

Fast Tags  
 @tallies

### POWER REMAINING

Sum of warrior levels

### HEROES

Name	Level	Role

### RAIDER AUTOCOMBAT

Leader tests Charisma or Thought  
 (1-3) Disaster, total loss  
 (4-7) Defeat, loss  
 (8-11) Stalemate, partial loss  
 (12-15) Costly Win, gain and loss  
 (16-19) Victory, gain  
 (20+) Triumph, great gain  
 Weak enemy; test with advantage.  
 Powerful enemy; with disadvantage.

Mount or Motor or Porter: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tags: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost/wk: \_\_\_\_\_ Value(€): \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. of transports: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Capacity (sacks): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cargo: \_\_\_\_\_

### HELPERS

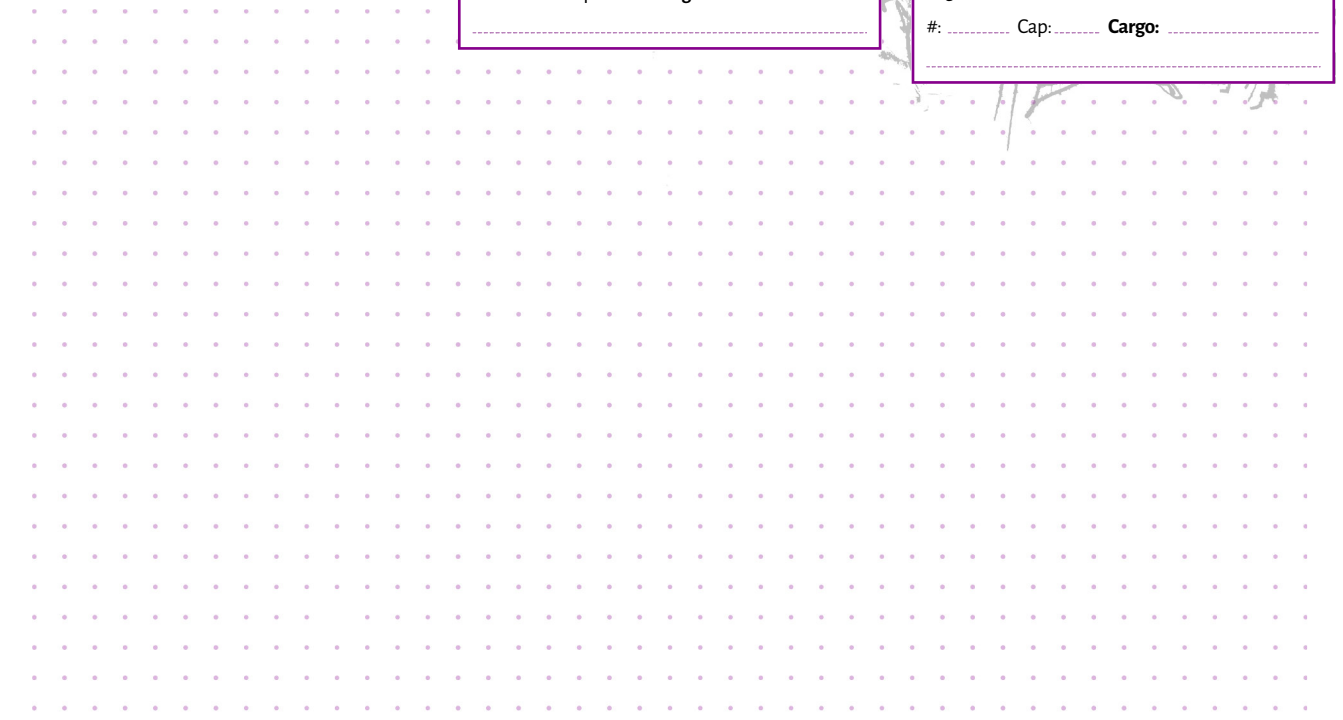
Name	Level / Bonus	Skill

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ L: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tags: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Val.(€): \_\_\_\_\_  
 #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cap: \_\_\_\_\_ Cargo: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ L: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tags: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Val.(€): \_\_\_\_\_  
 #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cap: \_\_\_\_\_ Cargo: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ L: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cap: \_\_\_\_\_ Cargo: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ L: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tags: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Val.(€): \_\_\_\_\_  
 #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cap: \_\_\_\_\_ Cargo: \_\_\_\_\_



Sample Motor and Mount Capacities: Humans, dogs, and skeletons: 1; porters, ponies, and camels: 2; handcars, chariots, and dune buggies: 3; burdenbeasts 4; light coaches and biomechs 6; wagons, walkers, and vechs: 12; hoverwagons: 20; autogolems and wagon rigs: 24.



## SAMPLE CARAVANS

### POOR PROSPECTOR

**Cost:** €196 **Speed:** normal  
**Capacity:** 4 sacks **Visibility:** 3  
**Transport:** two mules  
**Inventory:** 3 sacks (cheap rations), 1 sack (prospector kit).

The bare minimum. A hero with two mules can safely travel one week away, spend a week prospecting (or something), and return. Foraging extends the duration.

### SOLO SCOUT

**Cost:** €406 **Speed:** very fast  
**Capacity:** 4 sacks **Visibility:** 3  
**Transport:** two horses  
**Inventory:** 3 sacks (cheap rations), 1 rider.

Two horses to swap between, sacrificing capacity for speed. Scavenger bolter (1d10, far, reload 10), cavalry lance (1d12) and nomad robes (+1 defense) cost an extra €125.

### PLUNDERER

**Cost:** €694 **Speed:** fast  
**Capacity:** 10 sacks **Visibility:** 6  
**Transport:** four mules, one war horse  
**Inventory:** 7 sacks (cheap rations), 2 sacks (adventure kitchen and veterinarian kit), 1 rider.

Safely travel throughout most of the Ultraviolet Grasslands, with enough animals and supplies to survive even the longest wilderness trails. Also, a war horse is great for running away if everyone else is on foot. Cat rifle (2d10, far, reload 4), cavalry sabre (1d12) and dryland weave (+3 defense) cost an extra €770.

### SMALL TRADER

**Cost:** €908 **Speed:** normal  
**Visibility:** 6 **Capacity:** 10 sacks  
**Transport:** five mules  
**Inventory:** 4 sacks (cheap rations), 5 sacks (fine tubers, €500 total trade value), 1 sack (UVG hiker kit).

A small trader could reach a destination two weeks away. It's risky going without any guards, but the potential for profit is large.

### DUNGEON EXPLORATION EXPEDITION

**Cost:** €1,700 **Speed:** slow  
**Visibility:** 8 **Capacity:** 20 sacks  
**Transport:** five mules, one wagon, one horse  
**Inventory:** 15 sacks (good rations), 1 sack (fortified vampire wines, €100 trade value), 3 sacks (adventure kitchen, dungeoneer's kit, excavator's kit), 1 rider.

With lots of capacity and a wagon, this caravan can drag large statues, pieces of machinery, or a small mountain of coin out of a dungeon. Additional warriors recommended.

### WAR BAND (5 RIDERS FAST APPROACHING)

**Cost:** €2,670 **Speed:** very fast  
**Visibility:** 15 **Capacity:** 20 sacks  
**Transport:** ten horses  
**Inventory:** 10 sacks (good rations), 5 sacks (veterinarian kit, adventure kitchen, hiker kit, porter pack, extra weapons), 2 sacks (bolter ammo, 20 magazines), 5 riders.

This fast party of warriors can strike deep into the steppe and escape quickly. All that ammo should keep enemies at bay. Five bolters, cavalry lances, and robes (+1 defense) cost an extra €625.

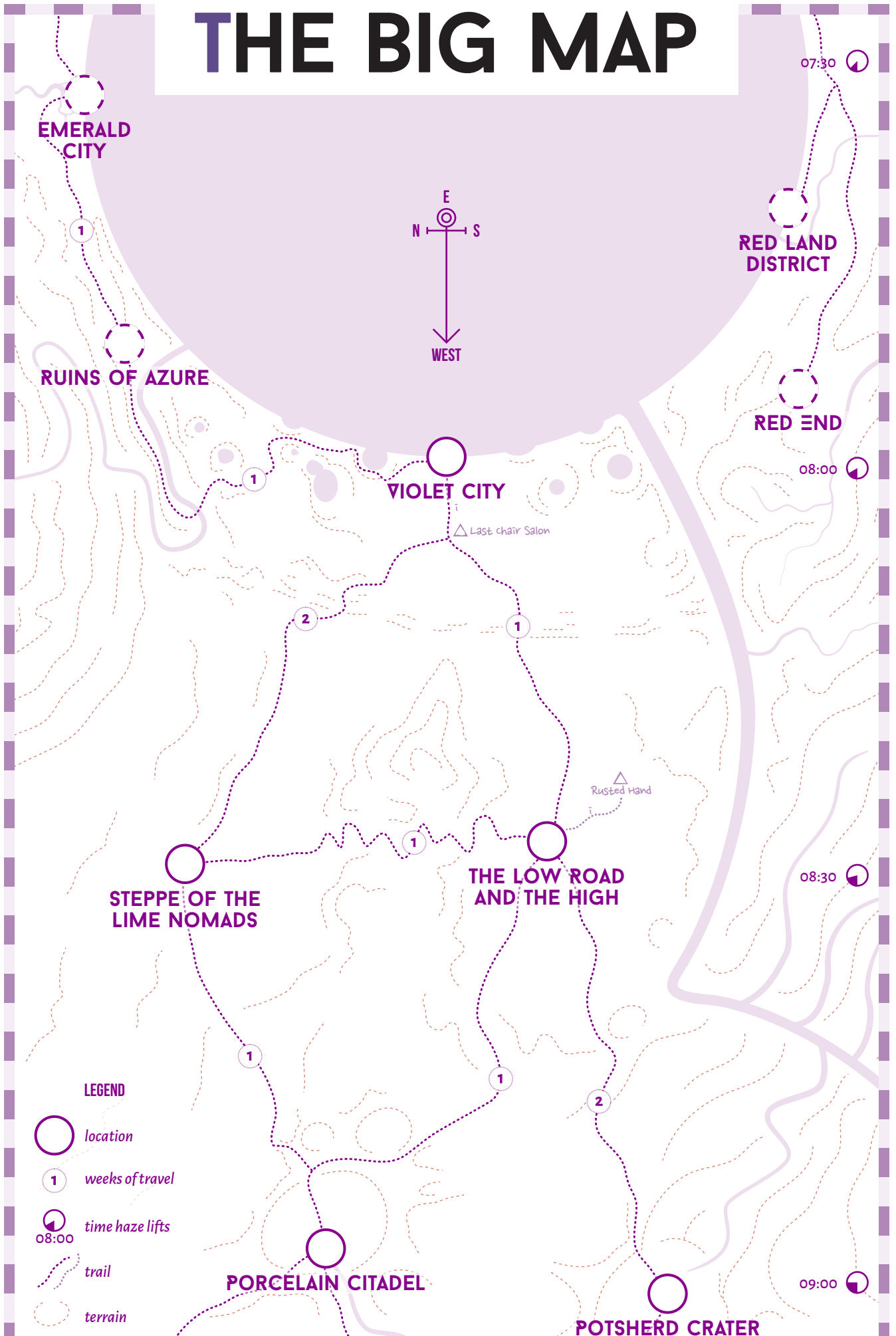
### AUTOGOLEM THUNDER RIG (5 PASSENGERS AND 3 OUTRIDERS)

**Cost:** €28,590 **Speed:** slow (+ 3 fast autowagons)  
**Visibility:** 15 **Capacity:** 33 sacks + 5 cabins  
**Transport:** one L12 autogolem and three L4 autowagons  
**Inventory:** 24 sacks (good rations), 6 sacks of kit (adventure kitchen, hiker kit, golem gear, mechanic's chest, navigator's suitcase, one archaic golem armor), 3 sacks of ammo (cat rifle ammo, 30 magazines), 5 available sacks for cargo, 8 rig riders with cat rifles (2d10, far, reload 4).

One heavy golem rig as the heart of the group and three fast wicker autowagons to maneuver around and do a full-on road warrior adventure. Mounts for additional heavier weapons on the autogolem rig are optional. Dagger axes (1d8) and spiked leather armors (+2 defense) for the whole crew would add another €520.

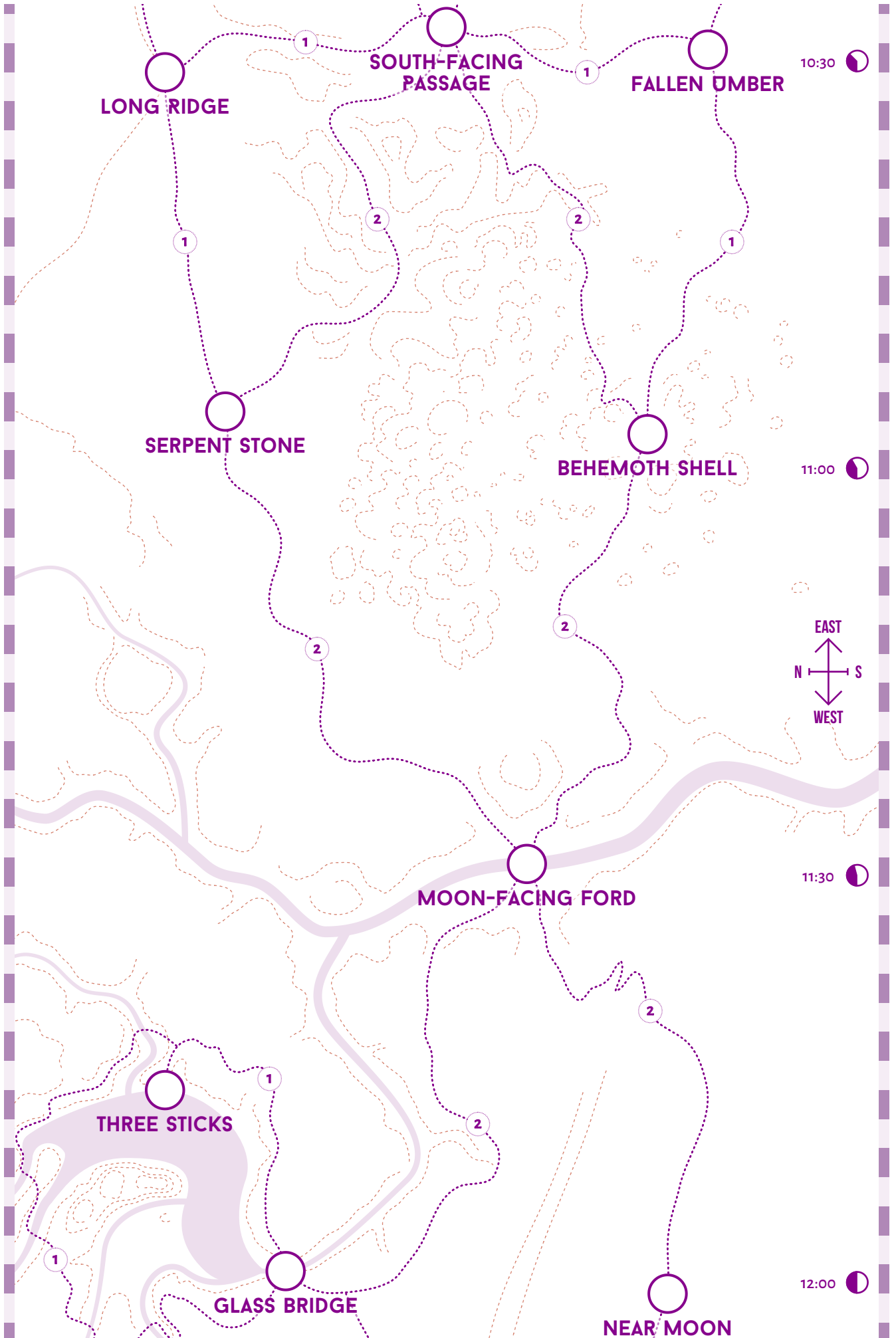


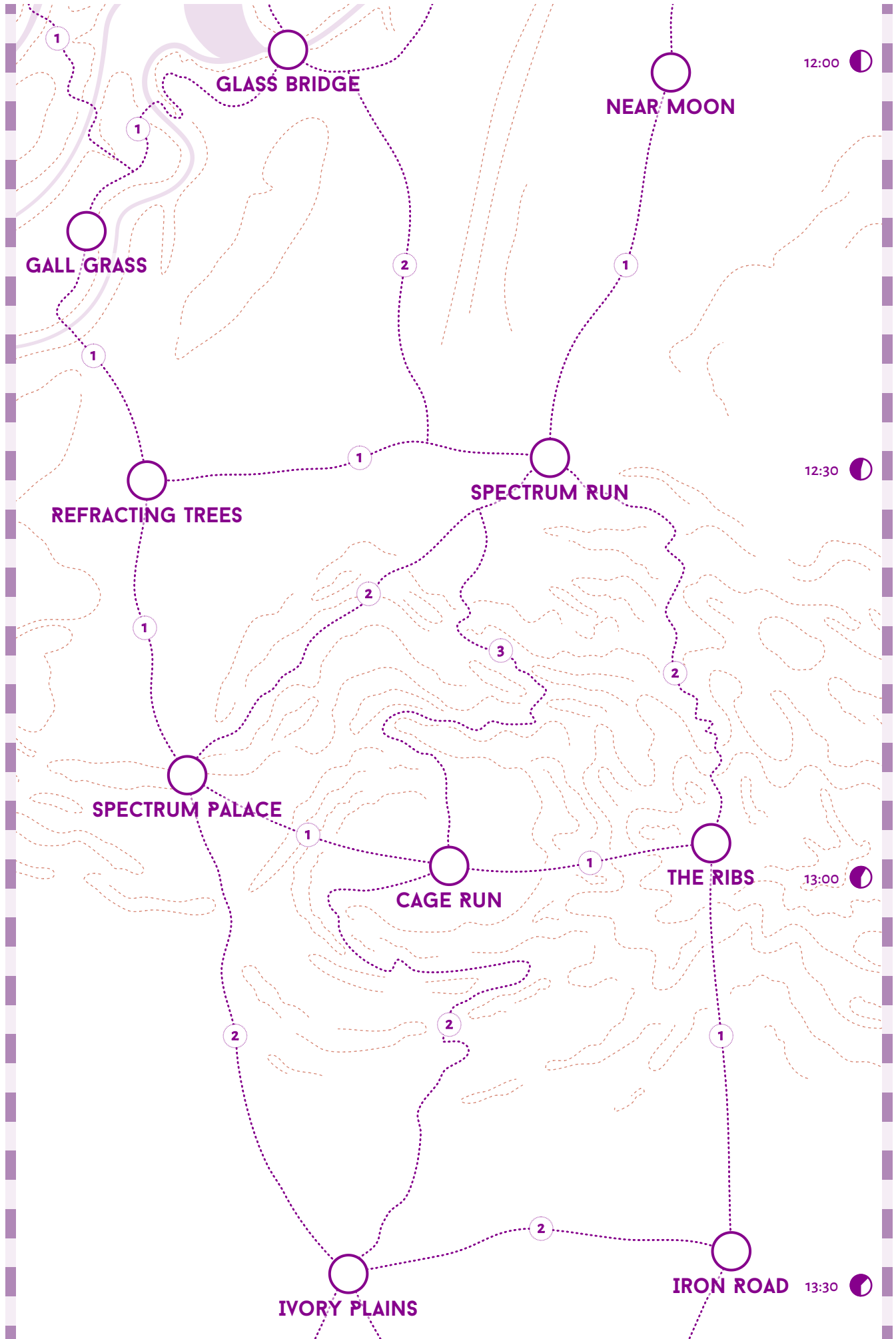
# THE BIG MAP



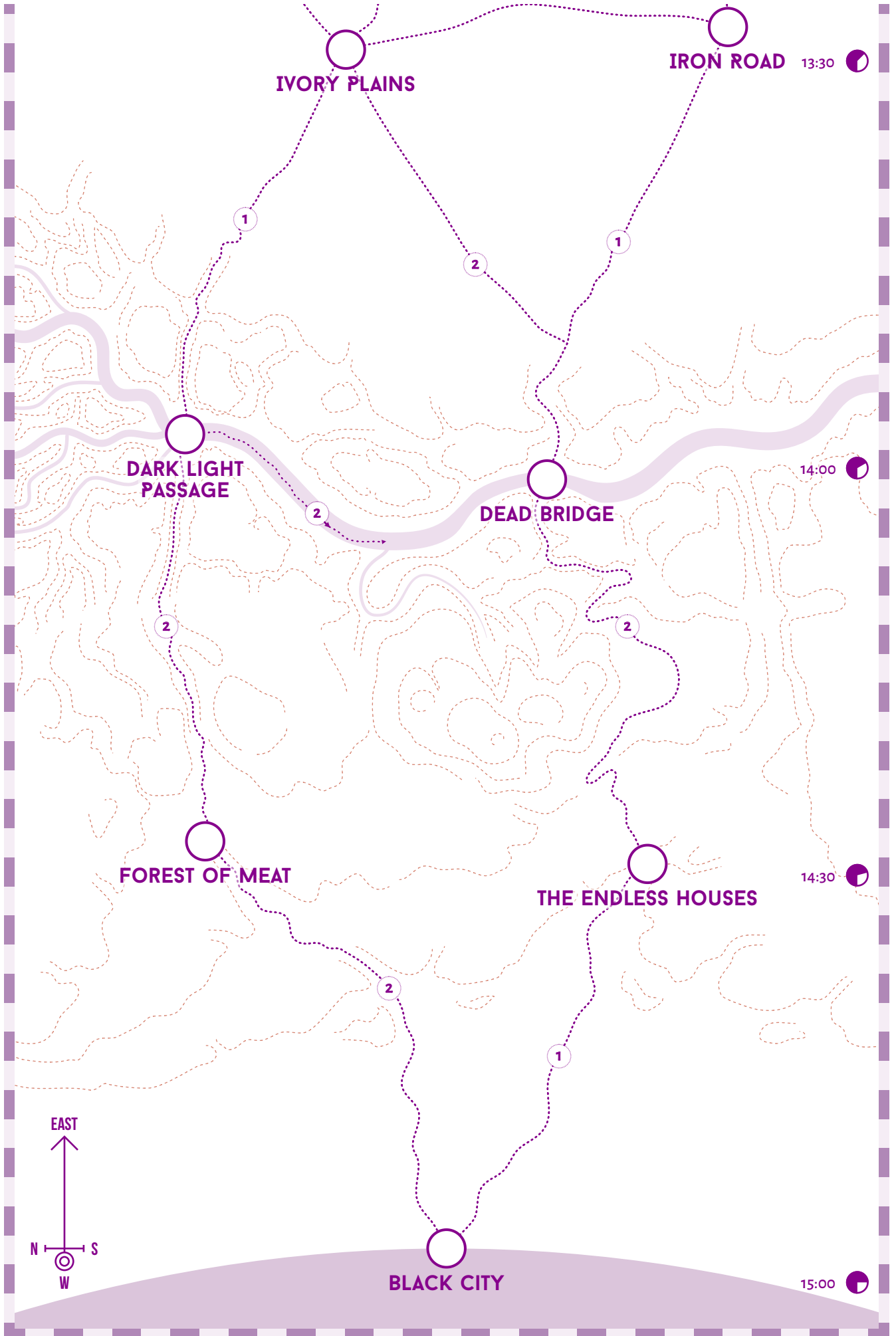












# FACTIONS OF THE UVG

“Why do all of their merchants carry cats?” asked Poncho.

“The cats are the merchants,” replied Demiwarlock.

These are some of the larger factions encountered throughout the Ultraviolet Grasslands. At your discretion you may permit heroes to join (or come from) these groups.

## CAT LORDS OF THE VIOLET CITY (CATS)

The Purple God(dess), divinity of magic, and most prominent deity of the Violet City has a fondness for cats. Indeed, cats are the rulers of the Purple Land—through their doting human servants.

### SOME OR ALL THESE RUMORS MAY BE TRUE (D8)

1. Cats are the priests of the Purple God(dess).
2. The high magi of the University of the Citadel are changeling cat-people.
3. Cats eat traveller babes.
4. Hidden horned rat masters secretly dominate the cats.
5. The cats have small, perfectly-shaped hands instead of paws.
6. There are doghead insurrectionists in the Broken Wall districts.
7. The cats are lazy and conservative and have no agenda beyond staying in power.
8. The cats weave powerful charms to bind their servants to them.

**Names:** Brighteyes, Sleekums, Mazzo, Sparkles, Mr Cuddles, Kittles, Pookie, Lady Elegant, Twinklestar.

## CAT LORDS AS HEROES

They have cute little opposable thumbs, sharp claws and a keen sense of smell (works like a skill). If you use classes, they advance as wizards.

- ∴ **Bonuses:** Cats start with 9 Life, cats have higher Agility, Thought, and Defense.
- ∴ **Penalties:** Cats gain less Life as they level up, cats have lower Strength and Endurance.
- ∴ **Feline Telepathy:** Cats can telepathically communicate with their pet.
- ∴ **Ventriloquism:** Cats can make their pet speak, like a ventriloquist with their dummy.
- ∴ **Enthrall Human (catspell):** Cats can turn an independent-minded human into their pet. A pet happily serves their cat master until the cat grows bored and mistreats them. Power 3: as soon as a human pets the cat it can begin to weave its magic. If the cat succeeds at a moderate Charisma test, it has a new pet. If it fails, the human turns out to be allergic. A cat can only control one pet in this way.
- ∴ **Cat Pet:** A secondary character for the cat's player. The cat pet's goal in life is to feed, groom, and care for “their” cat.
- ∴ **Serpent Tail:** The Violet City cats have serpent-headed tails with narcotic bites (moderate Endurance test).







## HUMANS (RAINBOWLANDERS)

The common humanity of the Rainbowlands includes all the close-to-baseline sentient and soulful post-humans. This includes the retro-humans, dwarfs, half-elves, half-lings, quarter-lings, and half-orcs.

### RUMORS OF HUMANITY (D12)

1. Dwarves are a culture-class of selectively biomagically altered humans who fought the traditional aristocrats of the Red and Orange lands to a draw and now form a major industrialist class of the Rainbow Lands. Famously bureaucratic and collectivist.
2. Half-Orcs are the degenerate descendants of the combat-adapted para-humans of Long Ago.
3. Quarter-Lings are a motley collection of moderately rare human phenotypes marked by lingish traits such as exceptional hand-eye coordination and odd fur patterns.
4. Half-Elfs result from the elf-touch, a progressive neuro-moral degeneration that prolongs their life spans as a side-effect. Many eventually succumb to the elven infection and disappear into the Wall of Wood.
5. The lings were a mysterious sentient subtype, now missing.
6. Long ago a subtype known as the machine humans managed to weld their soul-personalities to machines built from the dust of the earth.
7. The Steppelanders are sub-human.
8. The Great Folk are degenerate half-ling bone-shapers.
9. Greenlanders are the most industrious and devout of Humans.
10. Yellowlanders have the best business and finest dress sense.
11. The Bluelanders were abominations, exterminated for their worship of the Rot.
12. The Orangelanders are all half-lings, which is where they get their ravenous appetites and casual hyperactivity.

**Names:** Bagaglio Misto, Colle de Jus, Isamba Allorca, Deleuse laourd, Van Gnee, Blanche de Namur, Soren de Colpa, Ala Decapolitana, Ugo Xorizo, Slaba Scialla, Imona Citronella, Irena aToberes, Origen od Grozze, Yuan di Pusca, Giorro di Spada.

### HUMANS AS HEROES

Humans can change their minds during character creation or afterwards, rearrange their stats a bit, mix and match different backgrounds, and choose precisely how they look pretty much at will. Do they want little horns, pointy tails, and golem-derived legs? Sure, fine—so long as they can explain it. If you use classes, they can advance as any class. Pages 180–190 contain some more details on the Rainbowlanders.

## PORCELAIN PRINCES (PARA HUMANS)

Steppeland not-quite-liches who seek immortality by spreading their vital cognitive essence among several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. They are unified by their cartelist monopoly on polybody magical techniques and centered around the Porcelain Citadel. Widely regarded as decadent and weak, though the criticist theoreticians of the New Orangerly School argue that they are a strong influence on the Bureaucrat-Corporativists of the Emerald City Incorporation. Their own name for themselves, if they even have one, is not common knowledge. Customarily each polybody entity uses the same porcelain masks for every one of its drones.

### MASKED RUMORS (D10):

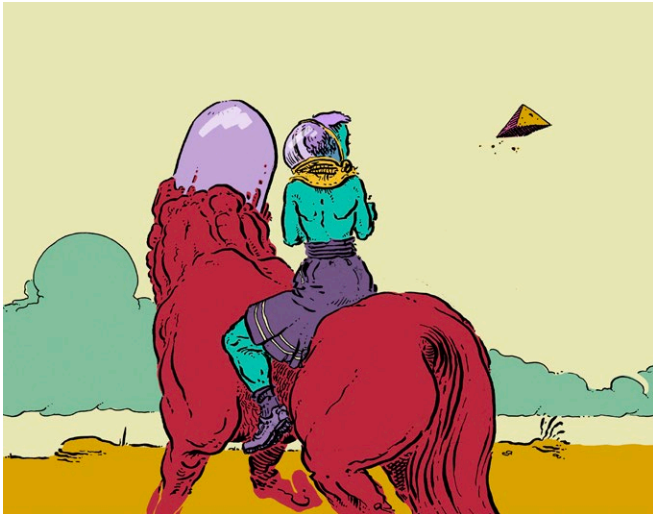
1. They are not more intelligent than before but the addition of new bodies keeps their minds from dying.
2. The continuity of personality is flawless and perfect.
3. The link between bodies has a limited range.
4. Princes do not like to send individual bodies too far by themselves in case they go rogue.
5. Rogue bodies have on occasion tried to take over the original parent sentience.
6. They always travel in groups of three or four to reduce the risk of personality collapse.
7. They are conservative to a fault.
8. They maintain their oldtech porcelain walkers religiously but lack the understanding to repair them if they fail.
9. Any change to the status quo is a problem to be crushed.
10. They are allergic to alcohol and it breaks up their psychic links.

**Names:** Vitreous Spark 3-body, Orangeware Spiral 8-unity, Engobe Oxide 5-unit, High Fire 3-cycle, Gilt Lacquer 17-corpus.

### PORCELAIN PRINCES AS HEROES

The defining features of the Porcelain Princes are their masks, obscuring their bodies' original unique identities, and the fact that they are one personality and soul with multiple bodies.

- ⋄ **More Bodies:** Adding additional bodies requires a body lab, a specialist surgeon-psyhopomp, a (hopefully willing) body donor, and at least €2,000. Each additional body in the polybody is essentially a fragile psyche-to-psyche linked henchman with unlimited morale.
- ⋄ **More stats:** Generate physical stats for the new body and list it as a secondary body.
- ⋄ **More Life:** When the bodies are in visual (or glandular) range they have a single shared Life pool for the entire polybody, but every body makes an individual attack. Add an additional 1d8+1 Life to the hero's total for each extra body (optionally limit the number of additional bodies to one per level).
- ⋄ **Splitting Poly:** If a body is sent off on its own, the hero decides how much Life to send off with it (roll a die if you like).
- ⋄ **Every Body Burns:** Area attack damage against a polybody is multiplied by the number of bodies.
- ⋄ **Soul Merger:** Heroes may merge bodies and psyches instead of outright dominating the additional body. In this case roll mental stats too, and use the better result. This may result in significant personality change, including outright domination of the original body (and class change and so on).



## SPECTRUM SATRAPS (PARA HUMANS)

Para-human cult or clan living far to the west, fond of bright-coloured suits that cover their whole bodies and glass helmets. They travel in great prismatic walkers and are fond of illusions and radiant magics.

### FIERY RUMORS (D10):

1. All telepaths.
2. There can only be 360 Satraps at any one time.
3. They are inhuman colony swarms of vermin like rats or roaches unified by transplanted minds.
4. Their suits are the actual Satraps; there is nothing inside.
5. Their language is based on lights and tones.
6. They store personality backups in great prismatic crystals.
7. They have no souls, the price for becoming creatures of light.
8. A Satrap can be embedded in a golem.
9. Satraps can be duplicated.
10. The Satraps are all dead.

**Names:** Satrap 13 “Ahab,” Satrap 200 “Snakes,” Satrap 359 “Certitude.”

### SPECTRUM SATRAPS AS HEROES

It is unclear exactly how many Satraps there are, but the number seems to be quite small and each Satrap possesses a unique colour combination and pattern. Within their suits (or are those mirror-faced secondary skins?) they mostly conform to a human body plan.

- ∴ **Crystal Bodies:** The Spectrum Palace and its outposts possess great crystals which can replicate the personalities of the stored Satraps. A Satrap character can effectively be restored to its last save point, if its body is killed. The player with a Satrap character should make a “save sheet” when they visit a Satrap outpost, detailing all skills, abilities, and attributes they want to store in the backup. Restoring a Satrap body costs around €5,000. Satraps in good standing have access to service credits.
- ∴ **Endosymbionts:** Satraps can store small, telepathically bonded symbiotic creatures in their synthetic skin (one per level). These can perform specialized tasks, whether many-fingered monkey-lizards, or venomous rabbit-snakes. They do not occupy inventory slots.
- ∴ **Light Magic:** Satraps retain some of the force-shaping magics of Long Ago, creating *illusions* and *scorching rays of coherent light*, as well as solid *planes and lines of ‘hard’ light*.

## STEPPE NOMADS, STEPELANDERS (HUMANS)

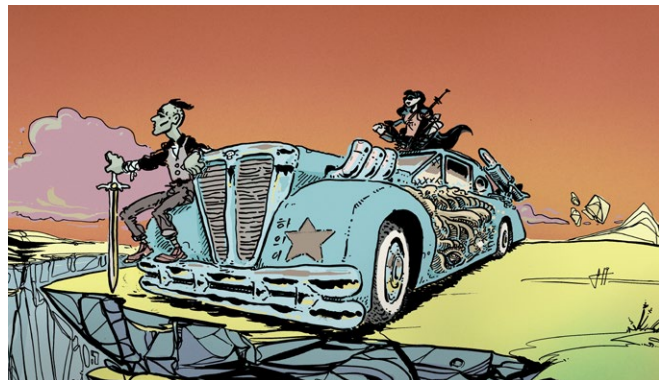
The uncommon humanity of the vast steppes, inheritors of the Long Ago, warriors against the vast madness left by fall after fall.

### IT IS SAID (D12)

1. They grow the best purple haze.
2. They are all thieves and raiders.
3. Their clans are all named after citrus fruits because they believe in the Lemon World Tree.
4. Actually, they are named for colours, much like the Rainbowlanders, they just take to more citrusy colours.
5. Actually, their ancestors came from the grasslands between the Yellow and Green lands during the Latter Imperial Collapse.
6. They are actually semi-nomadic, settling for extended periods around fresh springs or lush grasslands.
7. A nomad only becomes an adult after hunting down and executing a violent mechanism (vome).
8. They are oddly friendly with the ultras, many of their shamans visiting them in their dreams.
9. They worship underground grass cults and create wicker and bone fetishes from their own essences.
10. Farther west the clans grow stranger, and less human, with more lingish heritage.
11. The clans oscillate between very egalitarian and horribly stratified depending on the phases of the Dark Moon and the weeping of the Earth Mother.
12. They expose the weak and the infirm.

**Clan Names:** Teal, Lime, Tangerine Dreaming, Pinegreen, Pine Nut, Darling Tree, Fortunate Son, Unbroken Patrimony, Prodigal Father, Copper, Jale, Citrine, Ever-Roasting Man, Ashwhite.

**Names:** Colpec, Draganogac, Gromoc, Lemonc, Lisciac, Narloc, Saloc, Sorbec, Passegiat, Pugnath, Rundat, Saltat.



### STEPELANDERS AS HEROES

Many cityborn disagree, but steppelanders are as human as they come, even if many a bit more lingish. They change their minds, rearrange their stats, mix and match backgrounds, and choose precisely how they look. From light fur and dappled patterns to snake eyes or gills—Long Ago many changes were made.

- ∴ **Stronger:** Steppelanders have higher Strength, Agility, or Endurance.
- ∴ **Vulnerable:** But their immune systems are not as well trained and they are disadvantaged against diseases.



## ULTRAS (AFTER-HUMANS)

Ghosts or body-hopping spirits that rewrite the spiritual vital essence of their hosts to suit their needs. They are said to live in the wildest of wild places.

### TRUTHS BEYOND TRUTHS (D12)

1. They are biomancers par excellence.
2. The apocalypse is their ultimate goal.
3. They have no goals.
4. They were once human.
5. They are undead.
6. They are unborn.
7. They were once elves.
8. To call them demons is inaccurate.
9. They have infiltrated many settlements.
10. They cannot die for they do not live.
11. They can incarnate as trees, rocks, or even machines.
12. All true religions and trading organisations treat them as a hostile menace.

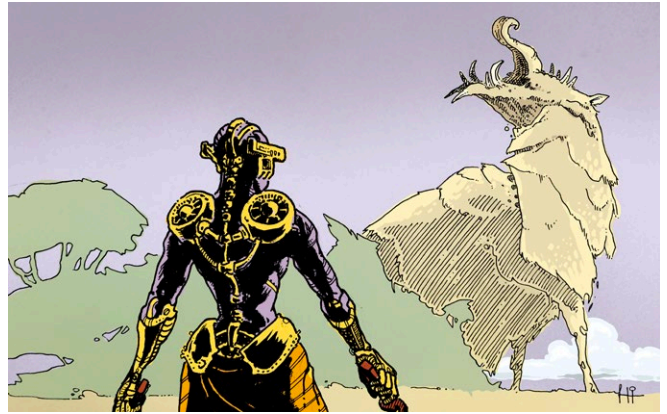


**Names:** Visec Brego, Daleni Vis, Eter Kabe, Kaba Simeone, Tri Eskatin, Lomo del Pavo, Karne di Sosta, Kasne Deneve.

### ULTRAS AS HEROES

If the ultras do exist, and they are not simply wives' tales, then they are immortal spirits who can wear and shed bodies and personalities.

- ∴ **Body Borrower:** The ultra can possess weak body-personalities and make them its own. This process takes a few hours and is best done at night, when their target is asleep.
- ∴ **Astral Walker:** The ultra can walk as a spirit. It walks at its normal pace, unless it attaches itself to an object, like an arrow or a rocket. While walking this way, its body-personality is comatose.
- ∴ **Literally Cannot Die:** An ultra whose body-personality is destroyed merely becomes a ghost. It can try to acquire a new body once per week, if it comes near enough. Dying at the bottom of an ocean trench can mean a *long* underwater walk.
- ∴ **Let's See Who I Am Now:** Generate new stats when an ultra puts on a new body-personality. The ultra must accept the new physical stats, but can choose whether to keep its current mental stats or the new ones. For every new mental stat it accepts, it is changed and loses one of its old abilities or skills.
- ∴ **Bodies Like Moccasins:** When an ultra takes over a body-personality it is like a new shoe, tight and stiff in all the wrong places. All stats start reduced and must be recovered by resting.
- ∴ **Drop Memories Behind:** When an ultra leaves behind an old body-personality, it only retains a number of abilities and skills equal to its level. For example, a level 1 ultra retains only *one* skill or ability, the rest are lost. The ultra then gains one new random ability or skill every week, until it has as many abilities and skills as a hero of its level should have.



## VOMES (VIOLENT MECHANISMS)

Self-replicating synthetic organism or auto-golems, many of them hive-minded. They do not seem to have any overarching organization, most seem incapable of communication.

### IT IS KNOWN (D12)

1. They were created by a capitalist faction in the Long Long Ago to fight in a series of mutually-assured wars of extermination.
2. They are mindless.
3. They are differently minded: intelligent and hateful.
4. They are insane.
5. They assimilate or modify creatures on a whim.
6. Their source is riddled with baseline bugs and coding cockroaches which make them fall short of their potential.
7. They travel through time.
8. They form vome nests.
9. They can be severed from their nest mothers with electromagnetic rays and fields.
10. They know how to create autofacs.
11. The original designer of the vomes was named Jane.
12. The first assimilated unit was named John.

**Names:** Jane, John-Five, John Jane, Jane Golem, Doe Nohn, Zero-John, Jane Machine, Error, Naming Error, Johnny-Seven.

### VOMES AS HEROES

Vomes should never be heroes! They are supposed to be villains! Just joking, of course they can be heroes.

- ∴ **Start Normal:** Vomes are machines interwoven with biological substrate at the source code level—but start at level 0 as basic biologicals with just a simple bug in their brain.
- ∴ **New and Improved:** Every level the vome's machine essence expands, bringing it new features and abilities, whether concealed biomechanical weapons, super-normal sensors, transmutation drives, communication arrays, or even straight up biomechanical replicators. The vome can assimilate found weapons or body parts this way.
- ∴ **It Was Probably Not Important:** Every level the vome's biological body degrades due to errors integrating machine and biological source codes, permanently reducing one stat.
- ∴ **Power From The Sun:** As one of its upgrades, the vome becomes photovoltaic, feeding only on sunlight.
- ∴ **Power From Nothing:** Upgrading itself further, the vome begins to feed on a strange zero-point energy, which is certainly not creating micro-tears in the fabric of reality.

# OTHER VOYAGERS

People, ordinary and strange, set the tone of the steppebox experience. This table isn't an exhaustive list of characters the heroes might encounter in the UVG, but it is useful when you need an idea fast. The colour column is there to add a bit of nuance if needed.

d100	Role	Name One	Name Two	Story	Colour
1	Agronomist	Almir	Al Piz	Kind and knowledgeable. Has a secure traveling chest of horrors (L5, swarming).	Rage
2	Ambassador	Amaro	Artifiziale	Wary, even terrified. Believes they are being pursued by demons (L4, chittering).	Vigilance
3	Anthropologist	Amberto	Azul	Proud and pompous. Claims grand deeds, secretly inept.	Loathing
4	Archaeologist	Arcia	Bodizie	Magnificent drunkard. Drinks to avoid facing a cosmic secret.	Grief
5	Artificer	Arnasto	Carnemante	Lunatic. Literally, goes mad when they see the moon.	Amazement
6	Assassin	Astia	Celestini	World-weary and hopeless, goes on out of a dogged lack of imagination.	Terror
7	Banker	Belina	Circolangolo	Incredibly skilled but scatterbrained. Do not mention the war.	Admiration
8	Barbarian Noble	Benito	Cosmonauta	Brittle, with a quiet desperation. Seeks a lost friend, but will fail.	Joy
9	Bodysnatcher	Berengar	d'Aranje	Bright and excited. Has found a secret machine in the wastes.	Decline
10	Botanist	Boko	da Pastafari	Ashamed and glum. Dreams buried in dust centuries ago.	Fall
11	Broken Wanderer	Cuoia	Dabasso	High. Wants to dance with the flower people and to feel love all the time.	Aggression
12	Cartographer	Dalani	de Bianco	Strong and stern. Emancipated from worldly cares, follows a higher doom.	Contempt
13	Chief	Dana	de Carmico	Melancholic. Heard a sound most cruel and knows a dark time comes.	Remorse
14	Con Artist	Davor	de Chouet	Two-faced. Will work hard to ingratiate themselves before stabbing in the back.	Disapproval
15	Courtesan	Delno	de Giallo	Obsessed with the black slug (L7, mythical). Convinced its blood will be a panacea.	Awe
16	Cultist	Depico	de Karavan	Filthy but beatific. If dirt were holiness they would be a saint.	Submission
17	Cursed Hero	Desena	de Nero	Burns with anger. Righteous but misguided.	Love
18	Cursed Wanderer	Dolce	de Safranj	Secret sinner under an angelic demeanor. A creature of the night.	Optimism
19	Dentist	Enrike	de Selezione	Cheery and bright. Terrifying when gripped by apocalyptic visions.	Hope
20	Dilettante	Erena	de Serpens	A grimly nice person. Whiny and needful, though genuinely skilled.	Despair
21	Doctor	Ernedar	Decapolitan	Gruff and bearish. On a very difficult and important quest.	Grandparent
22	Druggist	Estatto	del Mar	Boorish and offensive. Hides a heart of gold.	Parent
23	Elder Parasite	Estrela	di Alto	Sad and distraught. Carries the burden of a great personal loss.	Uncle
24	Emissary	Farfalon	di Dormenta	Hopeless and bereft. Their past is buried in lies of a glorious future.	Aunt
25	Engineer	Fina	di Mesa	Calm and cute. Eyes twinkle as they mock the daily grind.	Cousin
26	Entertainer	Galavar	di Verde	Jittery. Refuses to look up and fears the stars. Eyes, they call them.	Sibling
27	Escaped Slave	Girolamo	Donaplenum	Creepy and quiet. Draws disturbing sigils when nobody is looking.	Child
28	Eunuch	Girondo	Formatore	Gentle and soft. Refuses to be drawn into any commitment or decision.	Nephew
29	Exile	Goria	Fustin	Foolish. Uses charm and a ready grin to mask a deep well of uncertainty.	Niece
30	Explorer	Hotena	Hexadni	Brutal and heartless. They lost their mother to a strange wandering poet.	Grandchild
31	Fallen Hero	Ipa	i'Buyeni	Waffling and harmless. Turns into a beast when exposed to the moon.	Adoption
32	Folk Hero	Isizia	i'Creati	Full of jokes. Terrified of all metals and murmurs of the machines that eat.	Oath
33	Fugitive	Izabera	i'Fortun	Slimy and obsequious. A toad among humans, but not a cultist.	Blood Union
34	Genteel Adventurer	Jalosti	i'Grati	Careless and thoughtless. Obsessed with flawed formulae.	Spirit
35	Golem Operator	Jernina	i'Liberat	Nerdy and hurtful. Claims they are a victim of obscure misfortunes.	Growth
36	Guild Representative	Jeuna	i'Mertu	Venom tongued but secretly kind. Hurt by circumstance.	Modification
37	Guildmaster	Jion	i'Mutabili	Ridiculously devout. Spouts verse to avoid facing harsh truths.	Rewriting
38	Herder	Karlo	i'Novi	Calculated and ecumenical. Deploys divinities to get their way.	Change
39	Heretic	Karnelia	i'Orca	Weak but proud. Clutches to small victories with miserable need.	Rivalry
40	Historian	Kasciuto	i'Profunt	Sanguine. Faces a false prophecy with grand equanimity.	Bravado
41	Holy Warrior	Katyu	i'Sacer	Compulsively competitive. Always needs to win.	Professional
42	Hunter	Klesana	i'Syan	Hurt and withdrawn. Refuses to engage but needs to face an urgent task.	Amorous
43	Ill Omen	Krasna	i'Verdenti	Stressed. Torn by responsibilities, will snap soon.	Status
44	Inquisitor	Kujo	il'Arivat	Languid. Naturally relaxed and unstressed.	Wealth
45	Inspector	Lateria	Malapensa	Secretly deep. Surprising insights hide behind simple words.	Parental
46	Investigator	Leonti	Marmoresti	Terribly repressed. Hides all personal desires behind a wall of politeness.	Sibling
47	Machine Human	Leuterio	Mecanzio	Suspicious and accusing. Projects own fears and crimes onto others.	Friendly
48	Master Artisan	Leva	Mentat	Tired and ready to snap. Hates everyone almost as much as themselves.	Unholy
49	Mechanic	Lisak	Mercandili	Violent. Uses aggression to mask inner loneliness.	Consumption
50	Mercenary	Liuti	Metropolitan	Lonely and shy. Terrified of opening up.	Destruction





d100	Role	Name One	Name Two	Story	Colour
51	Merchant	Loma	Moderni	Scarred and angry. Confused about how to break the cycle of pain.	Adultery
52	Merchant Prince	Maurizia	Nagori	Delusional. Refuses to accept that anything might be going wrong.	Theft
53	Messenger	Mehaci	Nascosti	Paranoid. Convinced lings are out to get them.	Deceit
54	Miner	Mirena	Nauta	Persecuted. Chased by <b>vile creatures out of space and time</b> (L2, flabby).	Murder
55	Monster Hunter	Mirodar	Nebodari	Funny alcoholic in denial about their problems.	Betrayal
56	Musician	Nebesa	o'Sovobo	Blubbering and ineffectual. Secretly vicious and disgustingly cruel.	Seduction
57	Necromancer	Noturna	od Cusciare	Cruel and callous. Only out for themselves.	Captivity
58	Noble	Ombra	od Jiab	Manipulative and dangerous. Convinced they are a chosen leader.	Torture
59	Nomad	Opoya	od Kaniona	Passionate and loud. They are bringing a better world.	Assistance
60	Orphan	Paprizio	od Kujina	Vengeful. Consumed by hate after witnessing horrible crimes.	Protection
61	Painter	Piskero	od Mise	Curious. Driven to discover what soil their roots spring from.	Fear
62	Patrol	Plania	od Notte	Prone to intellectualizing. Refuses to engage with problems; instead they enumerate all the techniques that could be used as a solution.	Boredom
63	Peddler	Prima	od Petiz	Humorous and devoted. They laugh against the coming of the Great Tentacled Unity.	Trust
64	Pilgrim	Rasclana	od Planye	Snide and hypochondriac. Convinced they will die soon (but won't).	Distraction
65	Plaguebearer	Rion	od Playe	Megalomaniacal. Full of grand schemes for the Tower of Ultimate Power.	Anger
66	Possessed	Robais	od Poti	Bumbling visionary. Clumsy but capable of greatness.	Interest
67	Priest	Rocio	od Setroya	Merciful and capable. Seeks to help a worthy youth.	Serenity
68	Prophet (mad)	Rodina	od Sobe	Nervous. Saw a mysterious creature. Twice.	Annoyance
69	Prophet (real)	Rosa	od Vina	Boring as a brick. Honest, good, and dull. Truly doing something good.	Regret
70	Raider	Rostolf	od Visocco	Sarcastic, fun, and a traitor.	Acceptance
71	Reaver	Rumen	od Vode	Friendly murderhobo. Has a map to a treasure buried under an orphanage.	Childhood
72	Refugee	Samorok	od Vulkan	Aggressive and upbeat. Willing to downplay any risk.	Friendship
73	Researcher	Sangua	od Yedeni	Cheery but sinister. Everything they say seems to have a dark side.	Schooling
74	Scavenger	Sarca	Odlingi	Incredibly knowledgeable but inhumane. Fortunately very passive.	Military
75	Scientist	Sciaca	Ossomangio	Roguish and lovable. Also incredibly callous and greedy.	Apprenticeship
76	Scoundrel	Scikapfo	per Ambulati	Silly voice and walk but skilled in battle. Carries a worthless secret.	Traveling
77	Scout	Scura	per Nascieni	Jarring and gruff. Loyal and deeply wrong about a nearby faction.	Hobby
78	Sculptor	Selesta	per Velizi	Committed to a local faction, unswerving in their devotion.	Work
79	Shaman	Sentena	po Viladrini	Cold and logical, skilled in unarmed combat, driven by odd impulses.	Tribulation
80	Shepherd	Severa	Purpureo	Methodical and grim, scarred by a thousand battles, now loyal to a distant lord.	Fate
81	Slaver	Sima	Raziunar	Angry. So angry. Beaten down, seemingly accursed. Has a <b>nemesis</b> (L2d6, fate).	Betrothal
82	Soldier	Sinon	ri Svelti	Grinning and charming, can't seem to do wrong. Even though they do.	Marriage
83	Sorcerer	Siya	Rinasciti	Sly and obsequious, but genuinely believes they are helping the world.	Bereavement
84	Spicer	Sodoba	Rudeni	Deranged. Certain they are an alien trapped in a mortal shell. Perhaps they are?	Death
85	Spy	Sulmar	Rumeni	Hasty to judge. Bearer of a contagious curse.	Remembrance
86	Summoner	Tamke	s'Emerald	Stunningly charismatic but oblivious to their charm. Followed by a cortège. Pliable?	Curiosity
87	Thief	Teredo	Semolingi	Drug addict and secret heir to a blood-soaked fortune (€1d10* x 20,000).	Laziness
88	Thrill Seeker	Tesana	Seruleo	Young and inexperienced but the focus of a grand prophecy.	Determination
89	Time Traveller	Tori	Setvareni	Thunderous and domineering. They were wronged once, never again.	Domination
90	Tinker	Trista	Tergestini	Incomprehensible and strange. A hero from a far off land?	Enthrallment
91	Ultra Voyager	Urna	Terracotan	Rebellious, callous, and harsh. Also, devoted to a good cause.	Disenchantment
92	Undead Vessel	Vedya	the Blue	Taunting and jokey. Secretly a dark magician.	Investigation
93	Vile Spawn	Velena	the Orange	Uncouth and loud. Very loud. Also, very caring and devoted, looking for a master, in fact. See, they had a master. A great master. Very hush hush.	Science
94	Vome Infiltrator	Vera	the Purple	Ornery as a mule and about as wise. They are the key to a cult.	Meaninglessness
95	Warlock	Vero	the Red	Afraid of the dark and convinced the hills have eyes. They actually do.	Void
96	Wine Vampire	Volek	the Yellow	Zany beyond belief. Also, completely wrong about monsters.	Madness
97	Witch	Yako	Travini	Kleptomaniac. Also, cursed to degenerate into a <b>vicious beast</b> (L1d8, hopping).	Meditation
98	Wizard	Yasna	Violo	Querulous and nostalgic. Miss the old days and might help bring them back.	Peace
99	Woodsman	Yesen	Vites	Randy and devious in a friendly way. Offended the wrong people.	Enlightenment
100	Zoologist	Yeza	za Zidovi	Jokey but sad inside. Cursed to never die by a distant machine deity.	Transcendence

# UVG EQUIPMENT

“We’re going to the Black City and we don’t care if it’s supposed to take eight weeks, we’ll make it in four and bring enough black-light to set us all up. Now, how many horses will you loan us?” Inge and Ingot, the bearded ambiguously dwarfish merchants glowered and pointed to the large sign that read, “No Lones to Adventurers, Frybooters or Wagonbonds.”

The Violet Citadel is the last place in the Rainbowlands to buy supplies and animals for the long crossing. Old hands advise at least four beasts per traveler, loudmouths suggest it’s possible with two.

## MONEY (CASH)

Cash (€) is the currency of the UVG. An unskilled laborer earns €1/day. Lower denominations exist as do letters of credit for larger amounts. It’s called cash as a nod to ancient Chinese cash (文) and the whole Marco Polo meta-theme. Start heroes off with €100 each and as big a debt to a financier or patron as seems interesting. A €1,000 debt already makes for interesting games.

## SIZE

Equipment is usually sized in sacks, stones, and soaps. A sack is the size of a pack, ten stones fit in a pack or a sack, and a soap is small enough to slip in a pocket. Sometimes another unit is mentioned, like doses, flasks, bricks, or kegs. This is purely cosmetic.

## GRASSLAND ESSENTIALS

d8	Essential Item	Size	Description	Cost
1	Supplies, Premium Basic	Sack	Dwarf bread, water, hempen cloth, and wrapping rags. ↓d to healing and recovery.	€2
2	Supplies, Voyager	Sack	Tinned meat, travel ale, disinfectant schnapps, novelty items, rough newspapers, socks, gum, and prophylactics.	€10
3	Curative Snake Oil	Soap	Generic remedies against venom, bugs, parasites, diseases, rashes, and blisters. Surprisingly, actually works.	€10
4	Lamp, Iron	Stone	Basic travel lamp, hooded against wind, burns oil, can be used to warm tea, lights stuff up nearby.	€5
5	Lamp, Solar	Soap	Magic lamp of the Long Ago that eats sunlight to illuminate things nearby.	€100
6	Lamp, Spectrum Ray	Stone	Satrap crystal lamp that projects a ray of light far away. Powered by tears and sunlight. Can start fires.	€100
7	UV Lotion	Soap	Protects from the UVG radiation and provides resistance against radiant damage.	€5
8	VC Healing Lotion	Soap	Restores 2d6 Life or 1 physical stat point.	€40

## TOOLKITS

These are portable assemblies of kit, ready-made for heroes venturing out into the grasslands. They give advantage to relevant tests. Unsurprisingly, a hero carrying both a kit and a full backpack of premium basic supplies is encumbered—mules *do* help (see transport).

d18	Tool or Kit	Size	Description	Cost
1	Adventure Kitchen	Sack	Portable stove, samovar, canteen, cast iron pots and pans, oils, salts and spices, ladles, tongs, knives, chopping blocks, and more. No more eating raw game!	€100
2	Ambassador’s Trunk	Sack	Fine dress, etiquette manuals, beads, liquors, ink, forgery equipment, sealing wax, hidden drug compartment. Perfect for trade deals or pretending you’re a count. Servant not included but recommended.	€500
3	Dungeoneer’s Kit	Sack	Telescoping pole, net, rope, hook, crowbar, hammer, lamp, oil flasks, block and tackle, pitons, magnifying glass, flour, chalk, grease, lock picks, and bag of marbles. Everything you need to poke around a dungeon.	€100
4	Excavator’s Kit	Sack	Block and tackle, pulley, cable, ropes, snap hooks, carabiners, knives, shovel, pick, crowbar, drill, chain, sledgehammer, rollers. The gear you want for easily removing heavy objects.	€100
5	Farmboy’s Big Adventure	Sack	Backpack with pockets for 5 bonus stones, pet rodent, memento, heirloom weapon, sack’s worth of trail mix.	€10
6	Golem Coding Gear	Sack	Leather tubes of writing paper, inks, pens, chisels, scalpels, ritual writing desk, and portable potter’s wheel.	€200
7	Inquisitor Standard Case	Sack	Pliers, portable rack, small bellows, selection of scalpels, lunchbox, comfortable chair, many coloured robes, nice shoes, kissable knuckle rings, fire-starting equipment, and more. You know what it’s for.	€200
8	Mechanic’s Chest	Sack	Tough steel chest full of picks, wrenches, nuts, screwdrivers, ratchets, extractors, pliers, hammers, snips, crimpers, files, scrapers, keys, Allen wrenches, bolts, wire, glue, duct tape and suggestive literature.	€200
9	The Original Medikit	Sack	Everything a real doctor could want. Stethoscope, scalpels, placebos, alcohol, morphine and degree included.	€300
10	My First Archaeologist Kit	Sack	Shovels, picks, sacks, ropes, buckets, brushes, pith helmets, more mustache wax, shiny boots, safety whip, notebooks, and lamps. Everything a budding tomb raider could want!	€100
11	Naturalist’s Portable Laboratory	Sack	Jars, flasks, pins, boxes, nets, scalpels, prods, pens, brushes, paints, notebooks, easels, and an organic source reprogramming handbook (with pictures in five colours!). Perfect for the amateur biomancer.	€200
12	Navigator’s Suitcase	Sack	Case of compasses, maps, little telescopes, odd crystals, and baroque clockwork for astrologer or wayfinder.	€200
13	Necromancer Gear	2 sacks	Saws, knives, scalpels, stakes, hammers, leather cords, needles, petri dishes, wires, batteries, starters, and legal tomes. Tailored to the aspiring dead-talker.	€300
14	Porter’s Pack	Sack	Great walking boots, beat-up tea flask, extra water bottle, sunscreen, lamp, bandages, sleeping bag, blister cream, numbing chew root, and carry rack for one more sack of supplies.	€20
15	Prospector’s Kit	Sack	Similar to archaeologist kit, but more hammers, a hidden revolver or stiletto, and fewer beauty products.	€50
16	Shaman’s Gear	Sack	Psychopomp relics, antivenom, laxatives, emetics, pickles, pipe, tobacco, “tobacco,” and a psychedelic brick.	€100
17	UVG Pro Hiker Kit	Sack	The tourist’s dream: toiletries, zinc sunscreen, tent, sturdy walking stick, Greenland army knife, sombrero, mustache wax, kangaroo bag, schnapps and wineskins, nifty cord belt, and a sturdy backpack	€50
18	Veterinarian Kit	Sack	Saws, rubber gloves, knives, scalpels, leather straps. Everything a doctor could want! Works on humans!	€100



# TRANSPORT: MOUNTS AND WAGONS

Smart players quickly realize that carrying their own supplies is not a good idea. If they do not realize this tell them to get two mules each to be on the safe side.

The vehicles in the transport table are all less cost effective than animals. It's hard to keep machines running in the wilderness and their key value is transporting big heavy things that a single mule or camel couldn't manage like magical sarcophagi, golden idols, and glass cannons.

## DRAGGING

Using improvised stretchers, ropes, rollers or skids, a creature can pull double its normal sacks. A creature pulling one load can't also carry a second load. Just no.

## CARTING

Adding wheels is great, because drag is reduced, letting a creature pull triple its normal allotment of sacks.

## FLYING

Not a good idea because of the Purple Haze, which rots human minds. At least, that's what natives say. Also, there are fragments of stuckforce littering the sky, an invisible cutting hazard.

## OVERLOADING

Possible, but not smart. Moderate relevant test once a week or something goes wrong, like a broken axle or a lamed animal.



## EPIC VEHICLES AND MOUNTS

Sure. Possible. Double the cost and test Charisma.

### d20 Charisma Test for Epic Vehicles

1	It's infectious or cursed! This is terrible! If only we had known!
2–6	It was a con. See, the red paint is coming off!
7–9	It is quieter than usual (does not increase visibility).
10–12	It is stronger than usual (carries 1 more sack).
13–15	It is tougher than usual (increase level).
16–18	It is faster than usual (increase speed).
19+	It has an unusual mechanomagical ability.

d20	Transport	Level	Description	Capacity	Requires	Cost
1	Human, Common-ass	0	Random laborer hired to carry some stuff. Probably cowardly.	1 sack	1 supply/wk	€7/week
2	Disposable Slave	0	Perfect for evil caravans.	1 sack	1 supply/wk	€200
3	Porter	1	Tough-ass professional in packing and carrying stuff, preparing supply depots, and surviving in the wilds.	2 sacks	1 supply/wk	€20/week
4	Slave Porter	1	Enslaved tough-ass professional. May be resentful.	2 sacks	1 supply/wk	€600
5	Skeleton Porter	1	Slow but 'ethical,' smell-free alternative to slavery. Though ...	1 sack	necromancy	€200
6	Zombie Porter	2	Very slow and a bit smelly ... this necromancy stuff might bother folks.	2 sacks	necromancy	€200
7	Pony, Mule or Camel	1	The classic solution.	2 sacks	grazing	€70
8	Proper Heroic Horse or Charger Camel	2	A noble steed. Can be ridden in combat.	2 sacks	grazing	€200
9	Metal Steed	2	Fast and flash, it roars like thunder when pushed hard. Might be a golem.	2 sacks	—	€1,200
10	Adventuring Handcart	2	A glorified wheelbarrow. Requires a human (not included).	3 sacks	—	€10
11	Wicker Autowagon	3	Fast, self-propelled golem wagon of synthetic ivory, iron-reed, and rubber.	3 sacks	—	€2,000
12	Magnificent Velblod Camel	4	A true galleon of the trackless steppes. May cause motion-sickness.	3 sacks	grazing	€300
13	Small Wagon, Rickety Coach, or Swaying Cart	4	These vehicles are slow and vulnerable, but trivial to maintain. Require a trained draft animal (not included).	6 sacks	—	€200
14	Burdenbeast	5	Biomantically enhanced small-headed rhinobuffalo. Pretty rare.	4 sacks	grazing	€600
15	Biomechanical Beast	6	Terrifying amalgam of twitching muscle and cybernetic endoskeleton sheathed in synthetic skin. Very rare. Can be ridden in combat.	6 sacks	grazing	€3,000
16	Solid Coach or Wagon	7	These vehicles are slow and heavy. Require 2 draft animals (not included).	12 sacks	—	€600
17	Generic Vech, Porcelain or Prismatic Walker	9	Slow, enormous biomechanical beast. Carries 1d4 passengers in internal gall-like cavities. Among the most stylish biomech travel systems money can buy. Golem versions also exist.	12 sacks	1 supply/wk, biomass	€6,000
18	Massive Hauling Wagon	8	Very slow, barely faster than a sloth. Requires 4 draft animals (not included).	24 sacks	—	€1,500
19	Autowagon	10	Slow, self-propelled golem wagon. Armored, tough, and impressive as heck. It drives itself safely—but beware crossing marshes or rough terrain. Carries 2d3 passengers in ridiculous bolted-on cabins.	24 sacks	1 supply/wk, energy	€10,000
20	Epic Floating Barge or Hover Wagon	4	Magical float from Long Ago, it can be pulled by a single creature (not included). Very fragile and may be disabled by a single well-placed shot.	20 sacks	—	€7,500

# WEAPONS: GUNS, WANDS, AND STEEL

It wouldn't be a pseudo-colonial-apocalyptic savanna-crawl without guns. Unless specified otherwise, weapons are one-handed.

## BLINDING

If any damage dice deals maximum damage, the target is blinded for one round. Critical hits may cause permanent blindness (difficult Agility test).

## BURST

Unload all your charges or ammo to deal damage in a small area, difficult Agility test for half damage. Targets under cover take half, none if they make their test.

## FRAG

Charged with epic energies beyond mortal ken. When it kills an enemy they explode and deal 1d6 damage in a small area.

## INTRAVENOUS

Rounds can be loaded with liquid toxins or holy water.

## MOUNTED

A heavy one-handed weapon for use mounted, does double damage when charging.

## RANGES AND AREAS

Like *The Black Hack* (check it out), the UVC assumes abstract range: **close**, **near**, **far**, and **distant**. On their turn a hero can move somewhere near as an action, somewhere far with two actions, and somewhere distant with three (or more). The same dimensions also work for area-affecting effects.

Range	Area	Dimensions	Movement
Close	Small	'Precisely' 2 meters or 7 feet.	Adjacent, no movement.
Near	Medium	About 10 meters or 30 feet.	An action.
Far	Large	About 40 meters or 120 feet.	Two actions.
Distant	Massive	Further away. Aim carefully.	Three or more actions.

Don't worry too much about precise distances, keep combat sketchy and descriptive and *fast*.

## RANGED WEAPONS: BOWS AND GUN WANDS

d15	Weapon	Damage	Range	Size	Description	Cost
1	Bow: first among weapons	1d6	Far	Stone	Two-handed (2H), the lack of features is a feature.	€25
2	Crossbow	1d8	Far	Stone	Reload 20 (yes, you have to reload after every shot).	€25
3	Steppelander Composite Bow	1d8	Far	Stone	2H, decent at distant ranges.	€150
4	Heavy Crossbow	1d10	Far	2 stone	Reload 20, 2H, optional knockback bolts.	€50
5	Scavenger Bolter	1d10	Far	2 stone	Reload 10, 2H, a basic recycled rifle.	€100
6	Porcelain Prince Pistol	2d6	Near	Half stone	Reload 2, automatic ceramic, rare.	€300
7	Violent Cat Rifle	2d10	Far	2 stone	Reload 4, 2H, sturdy and deadly.	€600
8	Satrap Radiant Gun	2d12	Far	2 stone	Reload 7, 2H, laser, blinding, starts fires, rare.	€1,100
9	Redland District SMG	2d6	Near	Stone	Reload 1, 2H, burst, revolutionary, rare.	€500
10	Vome Slagger	3d6	Far	2 stone	Reload 10, frag, usually implanted, rare.	€1,500
11	Ultra Blaster	3d6	Near	Half stone	Reload 1, radiant, blinding, rare.	€2,000
12	Blue God Blaster	4d8	Close	Stone	Reload 7, 2H, necrotic, burst, unholy, rare.	€3,000
13	Inquisition Squirtgun	1d6	Near	Half stone	Reload 5, intravenous, rare.	€300
14	Voice of Death	3d10	Near	3 stone	Reload 10, 2H, sonic, very loud, rare.	€4,000
15	Black City Matter Disruptor	3d6*	Distant	Stone	Reload 7, 2H, action at a distance, very rad, very rare.	€13,000

## RARE AND RESTRICTED

Rare equipment is hard to find, overpriced outside of the settlement that produces it, often controlled by some faction or powerful group and may provoke hostile reactions. Zombies are such a thing.

## REACH

The weapon reaches further and always attacks first in close combat.

## RELEVANT STATS

Most ranged attacks use Agility, while melee attacks use Strength. If a weapon can use other stats, this is noted.

## RELOAD # & BOXES OF AMMO

A weapon is out of ammo and needs to be reloaded when the attacking d20 rolls a natural # or below. Reloading is an action. Skilled fighters reload for free.

When the attack d20 rolls a natural 13, the hero may choose to miss instead of using the last piece of ammo in that box (but they've only got one shot left now). A 'box' of ammo takes up a stone's worth of space and costs **one tenth** the price of the weapon.

## THROWING

Lots of weapons can be thrown, some are even made for it. Throwing a weapon at a nearby or close target is fine, but the attacker is at a disadvantage against far off enemies.

## TWO-HANDED

This big weapon needs two hands (2H) to use properly.

## VERSATILE

This weapon *can* be used two-handed. In that case, its damage dice increase one step (1d6 becomes 1d8, 1d12 becomes 1d20).

## WEAPON SIZE

The average weapon occupies one stone in the inventory. Light weapons take less space, heavy ones more. Precise dimensions really don't matter too much.



## SIMPLE MELEE WEAPONS

d8	Weapon	Damage	Range	Size	Features	Cost
1	Rock	1d3	Close	Stone	Throwing (near). Can usually roll.	—
2	Dagger: a cult classic	1d4	Close	Half stone	Strength or Agility, throwing (near).	€2
3	Battle Stick	1d4	Close	Stone	Strength or Agility.	€1
4	Axe	1d6	Close	Stone	Combine with a shield for best effect.	€5
5	Club	1d6	Close	Stone	A cheap, blunt axe.	€1
6	Spear	1d6/1d8	Close	Stone	Versatile, throwing (near).	€2
7	Staff	1d6/1d8	Close	Stone	Versatile. A long stick.	€1
8	Great Rod	1d10	Close	2 stone	Two-handed (2H), a bigger badder stick.	€1

## MILITARY MELEE WEAPONS

d14	Weapon	Damage	Range	Size	Description	Cost
1	Whip, Burdenbeast Leather	1d4	Close	Stone	Strength or Agility, reach. Can be used to swing.	€3
2	Scimitar	1d6	Close	Stone	Strength or Agility.	€15
3	Flail	1d8	Close	Stone	Swingy and hitty. A symbol of chaos.	€10
4	Mace	1d8	Close	Stone	Blunty and bashy. A symbol of chaos.	€20
5	Dagger-axe	1d8	Close	Stone	Sharpy and stabby. A symbol ... ok, is this a joke?	€15
6	Battle Axe	1d8/1d10	Close	Stone	Versatile (used two-handed deals more damage).	€20
7	Warhammer	1d8/1d10	Close	Stone	Versatile.	€30
8	Sabre, Symbol of Chaos	1d8/1d10	Close	Stone	Versatile. Good for ending nonsense.	€45
9	Great Spear of Stabbing	1d10	Close	2 stone	2H, reach. Whose was that chaos joke?	€5
10	Halberd of Polearming	1d10	Close	2 stone	2H, reach, armor-cracking. Ok, fine.	€20
11	Cavalry Lance	1d12	Close	2 stone	Mounted, double damage on charge.	€15
12	Cavalry Sabre	1d12	Close	2 stone	Mounted, deal damage with advantage against infantry.	€70
13	Great Axe	2d6	Close	2 stone	2H, beloved of barbarians.	€40
14	Great Sword	2d6	Close	2 stone	2H, also goes well with loincloths.	€100

## WEIRD MELEE WEAPONS

d10	Weapon	Damage	Range	Size	Description	Cost
1	Cat Claws (Gauntlet)	1d4	Close	Half stone	Counts as an unarmed attack.	€50
2	Neural Whip	1d8	Close	Stone	Strength or Agility, reach, stuns on natural 20. Beloved of slavers.	€50
3	Sabre Tooth	1d8	Close	Stone	Str or Agi, necrotic, intravenous. The tooth of a grim predator.	€200
4	Ceramic Mace	1d10	Close	Stone	Ignores damage resistances. Favored by the Porcelain Princes.	€300
5	Black City Blade	1d10	Close	Stone	Ignores damage resistances. Whispers to you.	€300
6	Chain Sword	1d10/2d8	Close	2 Stone	Versatile. Decapitates on natural 20.	€600
7	Crystal Swordspear	1d12	Close	2 Stone	2H, stores up to 2 direct damage radiant or fire spells.	€450
8	Vomish Centaur Flail	2d8	Close	2 Stone	Mounted, double damage on charge, stuns on natural 20.	€300
9	Ghost Bone Axe	2d8	Close	2 stone	2H, deals full damage to ghosts, ignores undead immunities.	€600
10	Forty Pound Rare Metal Rod	2d10	Close	4 stone	2H, always loses initiative, stuns on matching damage dice.	€900

Stranger things have also been found in the wilderness.





# ARMORS

Armors suitable and unsuitable for the continental steppe climate of the Ultraviolet Grasslands.

## COOL

Looks good in a hot environment, but a thermal blanket is recommended at night because it gets chilly.

## CUMBERSOME

Disadvantage (∩d) on stealth and other relevant physical tests.

## DEFENSE

Usually **10 + Agility + Armor**. This is a character's difficulty target when attacked. In the UVG it has a hard cap of 19.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Magically provides advantage (↑a) to tests against environmental effects like acid, toxic clouds and dying of thirst. Often with magical hazmat runes or post-mechanical breathing implants.

## HOT

Good in winter, but sucks in hot environments. After every exertion (e.g. a battle) the hero rolls an Endurance test—the heat determines the difficulty. If the hero fails they are fatigued (advance one step on the fatigue track).

## INTRAVENOUS

Set up to inject a potion directly into the body with a free action.

## POWERED #

Uses a magical source of energy, be it solar prayers, thermonuclear batteries, blood sacrifice or something else. Armor has # charges and loses a charge after every combat or significant exertion. The wearer can spend a charge to increase Strength by 1 for the duration of combat. An extra power source and protective cradle (or prayer altar) takes a whole sack.

## SIZE

As a rule, ordinary shields and light armors take one stone, medium armors take two stones, and heavy armors take three.

## ALL THE ARMORS AND SHIELDS

d20	Armor or Shield	Armor	Type	Size	Description	Cost
1	Shield (there is only one)	+2	Shield	1 stone	A basic shield. Sunder to negate one attack.	€5
2	Nomad Robes	+1	Light	1 stone	Cool, with padded bits.	€10
3	Boiled Leather	+1	Light	1 stone	Hot. But cheap. And shiny when oiled. Goes well with sandals.	€10
4	Ballistic Linen Suit	+2	Light	1 stone	Cool, perfect for the gentleman adventurer. Secret pocket for a nip.	€100
5	Spiked Leather	+2	Light	1 stone	Hot, with space for mounting skulls, furs, and masks.	€50
6	Synthskin Light Environment Suit	+1	Light	1 stone	Environmental, hot, dedicated to the goddess Hazmaat. Rare.	€150
7	Cat Armor	+1	Light	5 soaps	A tiny helmet and little silken cuirass. Ever so cute. Cat-sized.	€200
8	Skinchanger Suit	+3	Light	1 stone	Symbiotic biomechanical suit grafted with wearer's skin. Adapts to different environment in a week. Requires regular feeding. Takes a few hours to fully remove. Versions without face cover possible.	€2,000
9	Dryland Weave	+3	Medium	2 stone	Cool. Woven from the cilia of special dryland coral hybrids, surprisingly breathable, cumbersome.	€100
10	Scale Shirt	+3	Medium	2 stone	Hot and cumbersome. Made from extinct iron pangolin scales.	€50
11	Chitin Cuirass	+4	Medium	2 stone	Cool, cumbersome. Also called lobster armor.	€600
12	Iron Breastplate	+4	Medium	2 stone	Hot, cumbersome. A classic.	€400
13	Watersuit	+4	Medium	2 stone	Cool-suit of synthskin over woven bone mesh, with uncanny vascular cooling and filtration system. Cumberse, environmental.	€1,200
14	Spectral Combat Suit	+5	Medium	2 stone	Satrapy steel-glass scales with an environment maintenance parasite. Cool, powered 6, environmental, cumbersome.	€2,400
15	Bone Mesh Armor	+6	Heavy	3 stone	Horrible product of the bone wizards. Pretty cool, cumbersome.	€500
16	Chain Mail	+6	Heavy	3 stone	Hot and cumbersome, but a classic heavy armor design.	€200
17	Porcelain Walker Suit	+7	Heavy	3 stone	Cool, powered 6, cumbersome, intravenous. The best in Princely technology, with shiny polychrome ceramic plates.	€600
18	Splint	+7	Heavy	3 stone	Hot, cumbersome, primitive, and cheap.	€400
19	Plate and Ballistic Weave	+8	Heavy	4 stone	Hot, cumbersome, combines modern smithing with old tailoring.	€1,500
20	Full Archaic Armor	+8	Heavy	3 stone	Cool and rare. A suit that's also a golem. May develop personality, powered 8, environmental, intravenous, cumbersome.	€5,000

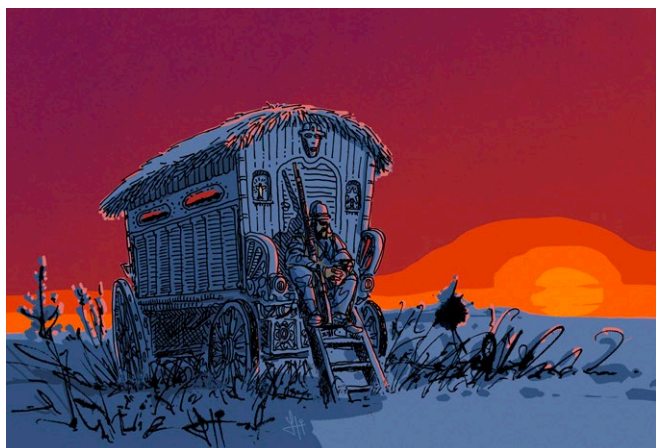


# STRANGE ITEMS OR SOAP-SIZED TREASURES

Found on a defeated creature or a sleeping traveler. Give one or both, as you prefer. The values in brackets are optional and don't apply if there is a larger quantity of treasure. Obviously.

1. Fossil skull inscribed with the Blue God's accursed iconographs *or* mirrored cowries (€5).
2. Moss-covered elven flute made from a human tibia *or* moon coins (€5).
3. Clockwork brain worm that adjusts personalities and minds *or* ivory chips (€5).
4. Carving stone, very hard, perfect for writing deep dwarven poetry *or* corundum dust (€10).
5. Black mirror, mysterious *or* trading sticks (€1).
6. Tar candle, burns green *or* clay seals (€5).
7. Water-finding walking stick, Woodlander *or* copper wire (€3).
8. Memetic face-stealing mask *or* vampire ash (€7).
9. Horn of a great ram, filled with maggots *or* bone coin (€5).
10. Porcelain eye full of poems *or* lapis plug (€5).
11. Spirit rope from herbal fibres *or* silver wire (€10).
12. Chroma flashlight, recharges in the sun *or* pickled kumquats (€10).
13. Ruby scalpel, sharp as a harpy's tongue *or* saffron sachet (€10).
14. Redland District pigeon with recording eyes *or* sanguine porcelain stick (€10).
15. Synth-skin backpack *or* coral seed chip (€20).
16. Fine chitin-woven boots *or* lead coins (€1).
17. Pen w. hypodermic injector *or* crystal coin (€10).
18. Ceramic wristwatch with silver band *or* yellowlander scrip (€10).
19. Half-There Islands fishing rod, collapsible *or* malachite cogs (€13).
20. Samovar and powerful cat coffee *or* fastfoot teeth arrayed in a necklace (€7).
21. Light-focusing crystal assembly, good for starting fires *or* crystal rat skull (€15).
22. Chitin chest filled with scalpels and bone saws *or* silver shovel coins (€15).
23. UV Cream+, also protects against radiation *or* silver finger bones (€15).
24. Rubber-and-silk suit with breathing mask and White City icon *or* jaspis ring (€15).
25. Silk rope with spider eggs *or* jade discs (€30).
26. Surprisingly large and beautifully decorated Steppelander hat *or* unlucky dice (€1).
27. Greenlander tin of moustache wax, Petrolflower brand *or* silvered marbles (€11).
28. Unrusting odd-iron rod (1d6), marked with intricate patterns *or* blue stone coins (€15).
29. Resilient poncho decorated with mutated beast teeth *or* bronze bracelets (€15).
30. Taxidermied Cat with pearl eyes and gold claws *or* emerald city plastic scrip (€19).
31. Combat vome brain in a lead-lined plaz box *or* yellow bone coins (€20).
32. Suspension cube powder in a static jar *or* Violet City Coins (€20).
33. Black iron and gold telescope with crystal lenses *or* iron coins (€20).
34. Half a black moon key that opens the entrance of a deadly portal *or* gold ring (€40).
35. Half a white sun key that opens the *exit* from a deadly portal *or* strange tooth (€1).
36. Holy grammar book of the Cogflower *or* bronze grappling hook (€20).
37. Mirrored Redland District sunglasses *or* platinum coin (€20).
38. Case of Redland wines, fine condition, good vintage *or* jade egg (€28).
39. Orangeland metal-string guitar *or* pit coins etched with faces (€12).
40. Pouch decorated with dogs and flowers, inside dog's tail root *or* lapis lazuli bracelets (€20).
41. Bottle of Marmotfolk snake oil, actually works *or* brass pipettes (€25).
42. Diesel dwarf solar battery *or* golden needles (€25).
43. Mechanic's chest with manual on walker maintenance *or* malachite spoons (€25).
44. Set of keys to an autowagon, a shopping list, and an obscure reference to a car gnome cult *or* silver earrings (€25).
45. Deed to a pair of slaves named Smart and Smarter *or* silver pennies (€17).
46. Ancient briefcase filled with old notes on a self-assembling walker *or* ivory scales (€33).
47. Alien gun (2d8), covered in a non-repeating pattern *or* sanguine porcelain beads (€30).
48. Bone quiver w. ivory arrows covered in quarter-ling poisons *or* platinum lockpick (€30).
49. Violet city lapis-and-bronze cat claw gauntlet (1d4) *or* ivory rings (€30).
50. Yellowlander gentleman's helmet, with head still inside. In the mouth, a misread map to a buried treasure *or* silver chain (€35).
51. Assisted mechanical crampons and leather shorts *or* gold wire (€35).
52. Mechanical wind-up accordion from Long Ago *or* silver darts (€35).
53. Iridescent scale tent covered in onions and skulls *or* platinum nails (€35).
54. Vile psionic soul-stripping crystal, currently empty *or* mummy ash pellet (€39).
55. Bush doctor manual with living plants growing in its leaves *or* tooth coins (€31).
56. Autonom kit to create a synthetic organism—only missing a brain *or* glass brain bits (€35).
57. Meta-Classical porcelain and synthetic sinew neural whip (1d8) *or* stuckforce amulet (€35).
58. Furry synthetic skin saddlebags stuffed with ammunition *or* ur-obsidian test tubes (€70).
59. Emerald City chain sword (1d10), Memorial brand *or* empty batteries (€1).
60. Dancing golden hamster in a silver cage, very intelligent and knows of a secret deep road between two locations *or* rare lard (€35).
61. Polished carbon and electrum bardstone loaded with 256 songs *or* bronze scalpels (€40).
62. Spidersilk sack of cat food in tins, Iron Kitty brand *or* silver shot glasses (€40).
63. Chitin bustier with secret stash & a treacherous love letter *or* tourmaline spheres (€47).
64. Sky tree cloud-sucker net, recovers a bottle of water from air per day *or* ling jerky (€33).
65. Golem fire-projector eye (2d6) from a defense golem turret *or* steel thread (€40).
66. Spectrum Satrap crystal spear with a stored fire spell *or* silver manacles (€40).
67. Ur-glass brain of a Long Ago thief who stole immortality from a Vile monarch *or* gold neck rings (€40).
68. Itinerant Inquisitor battle robes (armor +3) stained with thermophobic blood *or* heretic ash pellets (€80).
69. Rainbow ceramic hammer (1d10) of Jesus Thor, price tag missing *or* dried sheep pellets (€1).
70. Mouse biosculpted with two bat wings and a marsupial pouch *or* titanium lock (€40).
71. Prosthetic biomechanical arm with sword-fighting wrist augmentation *or* bolt of rainbow silks (€500).
72. Black barrel of yellowing arcane yoghurt *or* wreath of malleable livingstone (€200).
73. Chitin shield with biomechanical snakes woven into the boss *or* scroll cases filled with arcane weather poetry (€100).
74. Cyan lightmetal helmet with haze purifiers *or* off-brand saffron briquettes (€150).
75. Decapolitan guide to intrigue and war for beginners *or* fancy chicken (€250).
76. Ur-obsidian bottle of ancient fire water *or* crystal and gold hypodermics (€300).
77. Lonely fetish servant made of giant centipede limbs, luminescent wood, and quarter-ling bones *or* supply of felix whizz (€350).
78. Bio-necromantic preserver parasite, keeps freshly dead 'alive' *or* last steel nodule (€400).
79. Lingsh personality rewiring headphones *or* vidy crystal with tales of a heroic age (€450).
80. **Sand dragon bone golem dog** (L3, loyal, tough) *or* rainbow joy worm (€550).
81. Prohibited radiation gun from Long Long Ago (3d8) *or* bi-mannerist porcelain vase set (€600).
82. Ceramic energy container, in a pinch: a grenade *or* silver and gold caltrops (€650).
83. Idio-Brutalist ka-ba maintenance body, can preserve one soul-personality for centuries *or* black light lotus pills (€700).
84. Animated bone-work snake (L2, chuckling), can follow up to five simple commands at a time *or* Blue heresy poem cylinders (€750).
85. Amber levitating disc of force and force control glove *or* twin set of ultra jay needles (€800).
86. Badass bandana, decorated with a map to a cursed treasure *or* corundum drill bits (€850).
87. **Animated metaskelton fungus horse** (L2, carry 3) *or* distilled personality juice (€900).
88. Mind-burner hypnogun (deals Thought damage) *or* karma dust plates (€950).
89. Lumin shrubbery in pot *or* soul stone (€1,000).
90. Old-fashioned and uncharismatic machine human butler (L1, etiquette protocols) *or* bone coins of passage (€1,500).
91. Set of six Rainbow grenades (3d6\*, thrown) and a contract to destroy an ultra hideout *or* azure energy charge coins (€2,000).
92. Ancient Vile supersoldier serum, mostly works (increase 2 physical stats by 1d4-2, reduce 1 mental stat by 1d4-2) *or* deep purple energy cubes (€2,500).
93. Lingsh disintegrator ray (3d6\*, near) wrapped in the will and testament of an autofac architect *or* weed of worship (€3,000).
94. Golem servant (L2, kindly) and vidy player, loaded with a plaz steel vidy of machine rituals for opening the corners of the world *or* Pre-Chromatic canon crown (€4,500).
95. Kangaroo bag with a soulfire golem battery *or* collectible set of vech activation cards (€5,000).
96. Vome assimilator suit kit with command parasite *or* Rider Years skin figurines (€6,000).
97. Ultra communicator and soul translator, holds the final destination of the Zombie Democracy *or* mythogogic diamond necklace (€7,000).
98. Rainbow-feathered two-legged riding vech (L5, fast, carry 4) *or* purger trophy (€8,000).
99. Rare close combat weapon (1d12\*) from when the Fast Stars shone, cursed by its last owner *or* starbloom souvenir (€9,000).
100. True prophecy in the memories of a grey ooze (L5, assimilating swarm) held in a stasis jar *or* a first seed (€10,000).

# TRADE & GOODS



Trade is a big reason to go into the vast UVG and it is very simple: buy dear, sell cheap.

## MARKET RESEARCH

Yes, heroes can perform market research. I feel like I deserve some stupid prize. This mechanic lets them figure out prices in adjacent destinations *without needing to travel*, just by schmoozing. Many players happily roleplay the schmoozing—if they do a good job, freely give them advantage on their roll.

- ∴ Spend **1 day and € equal to local expenses**: learn the local price of a trade good in an adjacent destination.
- ∴ **1 week and € = 5 x local expenses**: learn local price of a trade good in a chain of 3 destinations, starting with an adjacent one.

After all the “research” is done, the hero makes a relevant test for each destination. Multiply the trade good's production cost with the factor to figure out **local prices**. Yes, math! Note down good locations or producers.

## MARKET RESEARCH TABLE

d20	Factor	Interesting Note
1	0	It's taboo. Nobody talks about it. Like it doesn't exist. There certainly isn't a local morality cult that murders dealers. Unknown to the hero, the local price has also collapsed in one already known location.
2–6	0	Low demand or brainwashing? They don't want it at all.
7	0	But they produce it here. New source, cool.
8–10	0.5	Low demand, but for a discount, they'll buy.
11–12	1	They'll buy it, but disapprove of it.
13	2	Popular but illegal here, with stiff penalties for dealers.
14–15	1	They'll buy it, but aren't super stoked about it.
16–17	1	They don't need it much, but there's a place one further stop away that pays x2.
18–19	1	They're not super keen, but there's a place two stops further that pays x3.
20	2	That's the stuff. They need what you've got.
20/20	4	The motherload! You're really in business now!
21–23	2	They need it, but three stops away a place pays x4.
24–26	2	Good, but four stops away a place pays x5.
27–29	2	Sure, but this is just a lead. Five stops away: x6! Crazy!
30+	3	Well, ok, fine. Stumbled across a great spot to sell.

## BUYING AND SELLING THE GOODS

When heroes finally arrive at a destination, it's time to do some wheeling and dealing. This table also neatly covers haggling with a gunsmith or other merchant—obviously haggling is not required for every transaction! If a hero just wants to buy or sell some things at the local price, they just put in the time to find a merchant and that's that. However, where's the fun in that?

An added bonus is that the highest result is one of the easiest ways to set up trade routes.



- ∴ Spend **1 hour and €1d6** on coffee and tea: locate a retailer and haggle over **one** item or sack. Make a relevant test on the negotiation table.
- ∴ Spend **1 day and €1d6 x 10**: locate a bulk merchant and negotiate a deal. Have fancy dinner and drinks. Roll.
- ∴ Spend **1 week and €1d6 x 100**: locate a big shot merchant and schmooze hard to make a deal happen. Roll with advantage.

When selling multiply the price by the factor, when buying divide.

## DEALMAKING AND HAGGLING TABLE

d20	Factor	Interesting Note
1	–	Roll moderate Endurance test. Success: hilarious series of faux pas ends with the hero thrown out of town. Fail: there was something in the drink. Hero wakes up shackled in a dark livestock pen or some other similarly horrible situation. Oh no! It must have been a butcher banker!
2–3	0	They will take it and you will leave. Whether true or not, the hero is outed as a smuggler.
4–6	0.5	When the price finally comes, so do the knives. It's a shotgun sale!
7	–	The deal falls through, but what a party it was! Hero gains xp equal to € spent and finds a new friend.
8–10	0.5	Turns out they really don't need it, but if you're desperate...
11–12	1	The merchant nods, huffy-like, and agrees to a deal.
13	3	It turns out they can't pay <i>actual</i> money, but they have these goods they need to shift fast. They're not stolen or anything, really, well, maybe a bit.
14–15	1	It's a deal, but the hero sucks at the haggles.
16–17	2	The hero gets a great deal.
18	2	It's a great deal, but for double the schmoozing investment they can try for double or nothing! Easy relevant test. Success: factor 4. Fail: nothing.
19	2	Such a wheeler-dealer! The merchant also lets slip a nearby discovery.
20	3	You've just tripled the price and everybody is happy.
20/20	6	They will figure out at some point, but for now, all's good.
21–24	3	The deal is amazing, but they won't want to trade again at this price. Unless the hero offers something new: roll on the trade goods list to see what they might want.
25+	3	The merchants offer a deal. If the hero agrees to a price factor of 2, they'll help set up a trade route, giving +1 on relevant tests.



# THIRTY ULTRAVIOLET TRADE GOODS (D30)

In practice, thirty trade goods are too many to keep track of. Focus on the ones you and your players are interested in and track those on the map and the caravan sheet. The production costs of the goods represent their purchase price per sack at source, local prices will vary. Some of the trade goods are also useful in smaller quantities, from jugs (tenths of a sack), to sachets (hundredths), or whatever.

d30	Trade Good	Description	Use	Source	Cost
1	Alchemical lubricants	Various wet things that keep machines running.	Popular with mechanomancers & engineers.	Iron Road	€100
2	Beast egg masses	Fleshy, squishy, and fickle. Keep in cooled vats to prevent from spoiling.	Biomancers have advantage when growing these into new servitor creatures.	Forest of Meat	€500
3	Bone-work	Moldable or editable chunks of raw bone, still warm with bone-sculpture.	Beloved of necromancers and bone wizards.	Behemoth Shell	€200
4	Chitin cap	Sheets and rods and fibres of chitin grown from the Umber fungoid bio-mantics. Once more common.	An important component of both buildings and autogolems.	Fallen Umber	€100
5	Common intoxicants	Drugs like cat coffee (Violet City), felix whizz, and purple haze. Broadly tolerated, like tea is today.	Make life more tolerable for the poor and bereft. Often weakly addictive.	Various	€2,000
6	Cosmic scales	In different shapes and colours, iridescent and rare, there must be mines near the Dark City.	Rich Rainbowlanders craft suits and capes with them, twinkling as they go.	Forest of Meat	€600
7	Dryland coral seeds	Incredibly vulnerable and have to be kept in sealed containers to protect them from the open air.	A valuable construction material, lets petromancers grow entire buildings.	Ivory Plain	€1,000
8	Gems and jewels	Rare stones of ancient manufacture, rubies and sapphires and emeralds.	Great for focusing light and making illusions.	Spectrum Palace	€25,000
9	Gold	Red, white, or midnight blue. The demiurges gave this metal many hues.	It's gold. Also useful for electromancers.	Unknown	€15,000
10	Indigo ivories	From the teeth of the rare midnight beasts of the Deep West.	Beautiful and tough, often carved into jewelry and tools with crystal chisels.	Dark Light Passage	€500
11	Joy worms	Empathic, symbiotic worm-like creatures that release endorphins. Popular with many masters.	Implanted in workers or servitor beasts, they flood the consciousness with pleasure and joy even during odious and boring tasks.	Unknown	€500
12	Karma dust	Purified extract of the demiurges, so they say. The Inquisition bans karma dust with a vengeance.	Removes sins, annihilates memories, purifies souls. Foils detection magics and machines.	Spectrum Crossing	€1,000
13	Last steel	Nodules of ever-warm, oily steel from the Long Ago.	Smiths swear it's almost alive.	Dead Bridge	€400
14	Livingstone bricks	Packed in clay, the seeds slowly petrify their surroundings into living stone.	Petromancers use these to grow stone art, decorations, and furniture.	Ribs of the Father	€200
15	Marrow-beet	Gastropod lichen symbiote, tight in its shell. It can stay alive for months.	Edible, protein-rich gory chunks in calcinous shells.	Behemoth Shell	€100
16	Medimagicals	Ointments, potions, and implants of all sorts.	Easier for doctors to fix people with supplies.	Near Moon	€400
17	Mounts	Horses, trail birds, or whatever they breed here.	They carry stuff. And themselves!	Grass Colossus	€100
18	Odd fruits	Luminescent vavilov velvets and Cherenkov cherries, prized and delicate.	Delicious. Fresh may be more valuable.	Porcelain Citadel	€100
19	Radiothermal fuel	Poisonous rods to feed into radiothermal barrels.	Food for the archaic power making machines.	Black City	€500
20	Rainbow silks	Shifting colours woven from the silky strands of crystal spiders by the Spectrum Satraps.	Great for colour-shifting clothes. Or camouflage.	Spectrum Palace	€500
21	Rare drugs	Rare and illegal intoxicants like black light lotus, cat snip, dog's tail, and whiskers.	Powerful, but strongly addictive. Sources must be discovered outside of destinations.	Off-grid	€10,000
22	Replacement bodies	Fine, compliant bodies—perfect for biomancy.	Ordinary slaves can be as little as €200.	Three Sticks Lake	€2,000
23	Saffron	Mind-altering spice made from the Yellow Land saffron plants. More valuable out West.	Improves cognition and boosts reflexes.	Yellow Land	€1,000
24	Sanguine porcelains	Mined from the deposits of older times. Unknown if still manufactured anywhere.	Prized as a pigment or for carving.	Potsherd Crater	€200
25	Silver	And other similar precious metals. Copper wires, vanadium nuts, chromium knives.	Useful for alchemists and golemancers.	Endless Houses	€2,000
26	Soul-stones	Highly illegal animantic containers charged with distilled spirit.	Can be used for storing souls and soles.	Refracting Trees	€10,000
27	Ultra jay needles	Rare drug from the crystal feathers of a UV bird.	Used as status symbol in Rainbowlands.	Unknown	€25,000
28	Vampire wines	Rich and ruby red, revitalizing for they grow from source-rich soils infused with the flesh of creation.	More valuable further West.	Red Land	€100
29	Vidy crystals	Ancient orbs laced with eminently forgettable tales of comedy and tragedy.	Mass entertainment. Harvested from ancient ruins. Great rewatch value!	Endless Houses	€500
30	Weapons and armors	Restricted military-grade equipment.	Enough to armor and arm three elite troops.	Hidden ammofacs	€3,000

# TRADE ROUTES (MILK RUNS)

What if the heroes figure out a trade route they can keep repeating for profit—a milk run? Let them. They'll get bored soon enough. Or they can set up a trade route with a henchperson as their representative and—if they need more capital—additional merchant investors. The minimum investment for a trade route is €10,000 per week's journey. List the investment and how safe the heroes choose to play it. Illegal goods routes are always unsafe.

- ∴ **Safe**, around 5% per return trip, almost no risk.
- ∴ **Profitable**, around 10% per return trip, trivial risks.
- ∴ **Aggressive**, around 20% per return trip, moderate risks.

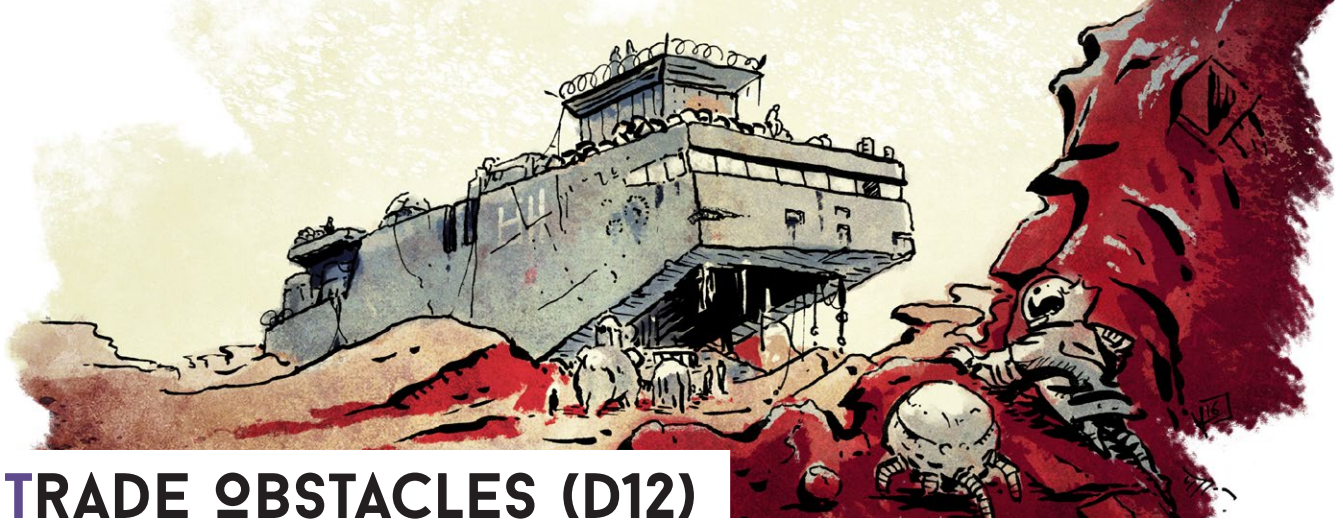
Make a relevant roll on the trade route table **when the heroes create it by completing an initial round trip** with a full caravan, and **every time they collect profits**. They can't collect before a caravan has returned (obviously). Trade route caravans are always slow and take at least double the number of weeks listed for every leg of the trip. Caravans don't travel during the seasons of winter or mud.



## TRADE ROUTE RETURNS TABLE

d20	Safe Route	Profitable Route	Aggressive or Illegal Route
1	Bored drivers were converted by a millenarian cult, they gave away all the goods to the poor and joined a fraternal organization.	Slavers attacked caravan and sold everyone for (roll d6): (1) biomatter, (2) food, (3) reprogramming, (4) hard labor, (5) service, (6) founding new colony.	Extra-dimensional incursion swallows the caravan. Everything is gone.
2	Savage flash flood has washed away half the caravan. Gold dust trapped in remaining sacks.	Reavers attacked the caravan, killing half of the defenders and taking half of the investment.	Rival mercer guild bribed the drivers over to their side with all the goods.
3	Local faction has locked up whole caravan for an infraction of obscure local customs. Will be released in 1d4* months.	Hostile nomads blocked route and took the goods but the caravan has returned. Half investment lost. Receive thank you letter from nomads.	Ghosts have possessed the caravan and used it as an infection vector to take over a settlement.
4	1% profit and unassuming oil paintings (roll d6): (1) vomes playing cards, (2) trees, (3) mountains, (4) portraits, (5) unicorns, (6) stars.	Weather and hostile vomes caught the caravan in the wastes. Drivers hid the goods and escaped with half of the beasts.	Monsters attack caravan, there is a sole survivor with tales of horror and woe. Half the goods are eaten or destroyed. The rest, left in the waste.
5	2% profits and several iridescent beetles (roll d6): (1) very toxic, (2) incredibly ornate, (3) very large, (4) surprisingly heavy, (5) so delicious, (6) amusing colony organisms.	Drivers got bored and struck out as independent operators, dumping the initial investment at a safe town for the owners, and making off with the beasts and the profits. Third of investment lost.	Bandits attacked the caravan and took most of the animals and the goods. Three quarters of investment lost.
6	3% profits and a two-headed (roll d6): (1) ox, (2) wolf, (3) hamster, (4) statue, (5) shrub, (6) golem.	Large and unexpected local taxes have cost quarter of the investment. Two sacks of paperwork received in lieu of taxes.	Caravan upsets local faction, goods seized and caravan returned. Three quarters investment lost.
7	4% profits and reports of a possible new discovery. Humorous carved-wood fetish also brought along (worth €350 in a comedy club).	Interesting discovery scoped out. Funny iron idol brought along. 7% profits.	Monsters attack the caravan, no survivors. Goods have been dragged to a rich lair.
8	5% profits and some Long Ago coins made of glass and flakes of strange metals.	8% profits and a letter of introduction from a fake merchant prince.	Plague killed most of the caravan beasts. Delayed 1d4 months and loses quarter investment.
9	5% profits and some postcards from deeper in the UVG.	9% profits and some soil samples from a potential mining region.	Freak snowstorm killed half of the caravan, the goods and corpses are hidden in a cave.
10	5% profits and a map with scribbled notes of more treasures further away.	10% profits and some nicely patterned fabric samples.	Autonom warriors killed 1d6 of the caravan drivers for unknown reasons.
11	5% profits and a metal gastropod shell that plays Long Ago musics from an implanted vidy crystal.	10% profits and an interesting new card game or dice game that could be marketed with a small initial investment.	Caravan explored unusual discovery, half the drivers went mad and quarter of the investment was lost. Site could be looted.
12	5% profits and the bones of some odd creature.	10% profits and a small, cute pet.	20% profits and a creepy musical instrument.
13	5% profits and a pet rock. The rock is cursed and will not leave. Still, it is a friendly (if very unlucky) rock. It likes to be held.	13% profits and a rare, virulent disease that (roll d6): (1) kills, (2) cripples, (3) disfigures, (4) weakens, (5) exhausts, (6) embarrasses.	Investment doubled. Drivers go mad and flee into the wastes. Animals refuse to eat and starve. Trade route collapses and locals speak of a curse.
14	5% profits and some pickled mushrooms. One of the mushrooms is actually a <b>vome</b> (L1, vegetable).	10% profits and a charming potted plant of unique and baroque charm.	20% profits and an undying servant of gruesome design and odd proportion.
15	5% profits and a dutiful little mechanical servant.	15% profits and some queer sculptures.	20% profits and an empty alien casket.
16	6% profits and a sack of unappealing shoes. The shoes are easy to clean and water resistant.	15% profits and some new fashions. Red suspenders and ruffled shorts here we come!	20% profits, but all the drivers seem to have been ... replaced. They look the same but feel different.
17	7% profits and a kitschy replica of a monolith with spring-activated altar and prayer-action.	15% profits and a <b>trained hunting vome</b> (L1d4+2, docile) with silver eyes and iron tusks.	25% profits, but all the animals now have eyes that have seen too much.
18	8% profits and a small troupe of hairless monkeys with shocking rainbow manes.	15% profits and a <b>strange scholar</b> (L3, phasing) who is only half there.	30% profits and an array of strange biomechanical parts.
19	9% profits and a traditional war club carved from some animal's femur.	15% profits and a beautiful weapon. Probably not an artifact, but worth ten times normal.	35% profits and a terrifying sentient vehicle, perhaps named <b>Qit Quyo</b> (L7, fast).
20+	10% profits and an overlong epic tale of a voyage of self-discovery.	20% profits and a holy relic. It brings nightmares and prophecies of doom. They are true.	40% profits and a strange machine that whispers in the dark. It has no name.
20 /20	15% profits and a longterm lease option on a nice retirement bungalow in a Metropolitan suburb.	30% profits and a machine human servant named <b>Tassilo od Sharamba</b> (L2, butler).	60% profits and a machine human master named <b>Shoya osi Clavo</b> (L5, ancient abmortal).





## TRADE OBSTACLES (D12)

Bureaucrats, inspectors, customs officials, monopolists, and other governmental ne'er-do-wells try to extract a cut (say a tenth of the cargo or cash) at every settlement on the voyage. Make them amusing with this little d12 table.

1. **TOLL WAYS**  
**Tollmistress Netejette** (L2, shaman) maintains the entrance to a spirit-fetish-protected road—it is indeed safe (↑a on encounter checks). Avoiding the road is dangerous because all the ne'er-do-wells had to go somewhere.
2. **BUREAUCRATIC BUNGLING**  
**Belizawrio the Bureaucrat** (L2, vituperative), who manages this caravan stop, keeps meticulous books about everything, from latrine use to camel ankle ointments. He will gladly waste 1d4 weeks of a caravan's time, though a voluntary contribution to the Belle Epoque House might change his mind.
3. **INSPECTION GOLEMS**  
**Local Overseer Nutria-5** (L3, re-lifed), ensconced in a crystal ka-ba maintenance body, uses two remotely-slaved inspector golems to make 'particular' inspections, finding illegal drugs or munitions on every caravan they inspect. Complaining about fines to a mirror-faced **obsidian golem** (L6, shiny) is hard.
4. **BRIDGE TROLL**  
**Colico the Customs Cat** (L2, tortoiseshell) maintains the traditions of a ceremonial bridge crossing that requires participation in an obscure play to placate a vome-troll nest. Is there actually a vome-troll nest below the gilded era bridge? Do you even want to check?
5. **PROTECTION RACKET**  
The Free Bank and Security Association of the Lime and Teal Fields maintains a complete monopoly on security services in the region, requiring several of their green-helmeted security officers to accompany every caravan. The **green-helmets** (L1, cowardly) do not fight and provide no additional security.
6. **NOBLE PREROGATIVES**  
The five-faced Koviden, Kosleesh, and Koseen, **dukes of dust** (L5, mind-swarm) invite caravan-masters to their High Residence for a fine dining experience, where they are shown the two Silver Helmet Era heat-cannons the dukes use to protect the local pass where the caravans travel. Of course the heat-cannons will not hit the caravan by accident.
7. **HALF-NOMAD GRAZING RIGHTS**  
The Tangerine Dreaming clan claims the grazing lands of this part of the steppe as their property. They don't mind caravans crossing, but do ask for a 'voluntary' contribution of one tenth of the caravan's animals or €10/animal for grass consumed.
8. **GUILD INTERESTS**  
The Guild of Concerned Citizens represents the interests of craftsmen, merchants, and househusbands, and works to ensure that imported goods don't threaten their control of the means of production and reproduction. Thus they require a fee and a detailed inspection at the local House of All Flesh.
9. **FLESH TAX**  
The many-headed Collective of Biomancers Extraordinaire, which runs this settlement under a private-public partnership with the elders of the Clans of Settlement and Roadbuilding, require a pound of flesh from every creature entering the settlement to prevent vomish and ultra infiltration. Alternatively, a less invasive procedure can be performed. Unfortunately this costs €50/person and requires 1d4 + n days for the processing of results (where n is the total number of procedures to be performed). A quarantine camp may be hired at €50/day (houses 20 in 'deluxe' tents).
10. **ACCIDENTS AND FINES**  
The Guardians of the local Porcelain-associated Leadership Council accuse the party of running over a dog, who was a member of the polybody of 9-Glazed Chrome. The fine is a fresh body or a tenth of the cargo.
11. **PARANORMAL INFESTATION**  
The **Inspectors of Ka Propriety** (L4, believers) discover a radiation ghost infestation in the cargo and aim to destroy it. Reasonable negotiations (or bribes) could result in a thorough inspection costing €100 and only requiring the destruction of the radiation ghost's spirit nexus (i.e. 10% of the cargo).
12. **ANCIENT TAXES**  
A plastic-faced **automat taxman** (L9, ossified) following a convoluted ritual dating to the Long Ago Federated Empire of Joyful Libertarian Equality™ discovers an irregularity. The taxman will require 1d4 days to figure out that the party must pay taxes and fines totalling 2d6 x 10% of their cargo value. Getting out fast upsets the taxman, but voids the procedure.

# THE WORLD AROUND

## IN LIEU OF HISTORIES

The past and the cultures of the UVG are a mist-shrouded country. I do not describe precise dates, locations, or periods because I want no canon. Each group of players should (together) invent, discover, and be surprised by the past they uncover.

### FORGOTTEN TIMES (D12)

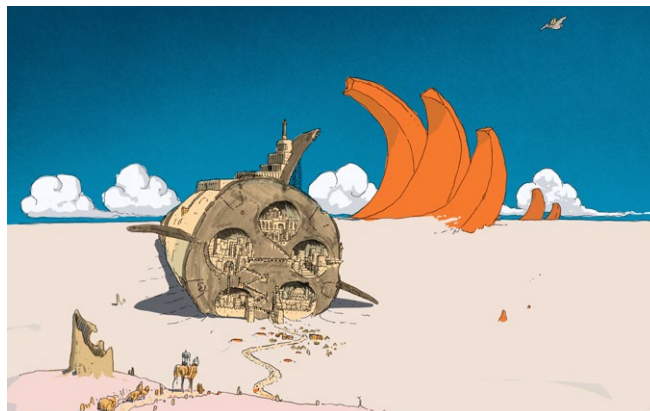
Eras and times lost beyond the records in the Great Mist. Fragments, shells, and hazy memories remain but even they tend to fade and melt from mind and time like sands in the storms whipping off the Golden Desert.

1. The world was created by the Demiurge to celebrate the Onion and the Skull.
2. The world was discovered by the First Mother who entered the cosmos from the void.
3. The first deity awoke into sentience in a great mahogany tree.
4. The Vile Ones escaped into the cosmos and settled it with their slaves and ur-Rococo megaliths.
5. The first humans were sculpted from solar dust by the Faceless Ones in seventeen years of creation.
6. The mortals were uplifted by the Sky Gods of the Bio-Mechanum for a higher purpose *or* as a joke.
7. The Fast Stars blazed into life above the girdle of the earth and humans were geo-sculptor gods.
8. Reality flowed like blood through the veins of the Uncreated during the Vile Reign.
9. Pride begat misunderstanding begat strife begat war in the heavens and the tears and blood and flesh and bones of abmortals rained upon the land, blanketing it in the fertile soil from which humans crawled like rats.
10. The poly-chromatic spirits could shape matter and energy like the sculptor shapes stone and clay.
11. There was no heaven and no hell, only life everlasting in the Abhuman Paradise.
12. The primordial era ended with the war of lings and viles and the rising of the Great Mist.

### FRAGMENTS OF FORGOTTEN TIMES

The Vile Ones, shape-changers, ultras(?), gods, soul magic, Chosen Ones, Old Ones, the Undying Wanderer, the Fast Stars, the Hole in Heaven, and the soul mills.

Discovering any of these fragments has world-changing consequences for the game. Individual heroes who gain the powers of these fragments would become gods to their contemporary later mortals. Be prepared to refashion the campaign with new 'gods'—and very likely new heroes.



### DIMLY REMEMBERED STRIFE (D12)

Some say there was a war. The War. There is epic disagreement among historians whether there was an actual event that marked the fall of some Chosen group. Obviously, there was more than one war; but there can't have been that many, considering the obvious power of many of the Old Ones. Right?

1. The lings defeated the viles and ushered in a golden age.
2. The viles tore themselves in civil war and the lings destroyed them afterwards, ushering in an iron tyranny.
3. The gods entered the cosmos from the void and destroyed the hubris of mortals in fire and flood.
4. The viles ascended into a higher form, leaving the world to collapse behind them.
5. The world and cosmos were created as an ark for the survival of the gods, when they reached a new shore, they left, taking their engines of creation with them. The subsequent decline was later reinterpreted as the result of a war in heaven.
6. There were no lings or viles, the demiurges imported humans as biological robots to serve them. After the demiurges' departure, the humans' programming went haywire and they destroyed the world.
7. The First Lings destroyed themselves in iron and machinery and the Second Lings told themselves tales of Vile Ones wreaking the destruction to salve their fragile memories.
8. The Machine Gods were born in the Fast Stars and the Quick Trees, then sent down their offspring to devastate the world.
9. The Chosen Ones broke their pact with their gods and were drowned in blood and time.
10. The humans crawled out of their slavery over a hundred centuries of relentless, bloody warfare. When they won the world they swarmed out of the void, destroying the lings and the viles and taking the world for themselves.
11. The elves walked in from a void and reality fractured in their wake, leading to war between heaven and earth.
12. There was no void, there was no war. An entropy reduction experiment failed, causing a temporary reality collapse.

### FRAGMENTS OF THE STRIFE

Divine weapons, radiation ghosts, ghouls, stuckforce, biomechs, biomantic horrors, orcs, ancient vehicles, artifacts, and machine humans.

Recovering knowledge of the great conflicts will alter the balance of powers in the lands, lay the foundation for new empires, and change perceptions of history; but won't radically alter the game—aside from a new arcane waste or two.





## FABLED STORIES (D12)

Half-remembered times before the Rainbow Order was founded around the Circle Sea. Studies of the old records are half-heartedly forbidden by the Cogflower Inquisition and avidly pursued by the Red Land District and other fringe groups.

1. The Post-Ling cultures spread across the world like rats through a bountiful orchard, flourishing, creating incredible arts, and then dying out as the source machine gods that kept them going broke down and died.
2. Peri-spectral phenomena broke the barriers between the Ancestors and the Scions, leading the first shamans into the well wasted lands.
3. Rigidly distributarian Caste and Hive Societies clung to power, producing and reproducing the ancient magitechnologies as ritual and religion.
4. Idiosyncratic Brutalist cultures swarmed across the world, driven by mad ghosts and fueled by synthesized weapon generators rediscovered in the dust of the Long Long Ago.
5. Dis-Modernist scavenger poleis established dictatorships of liberty, supporting themselves with vast slave networks.
6. Ab-plastic magics and half-remembered mentalists stood behind the Springtime of the Monarchies, inaugurating gleaming autocracies to replace the corrupt popular dictatorships of earlier times.
7. Post-Lings seeking safer and quieter lives regularly fled the civilizations into the wilderness, establishing Alter-Minimalist Enclaves around twitching, mutated divinities.
8. The first expansion of empires underpinned the last twitches of the Zombie Democracies. Their realms eventually collapsed under their own inherent contradictions.
9. Meta-Classicism manifested itself in the attempt to create psychically unified cultures.
10. The metastasis of Neo-Minimalism was the Blue Heresy which was rejected in a series of violent, divinely ordained-conflicts that established the essential polymorphism of nature, divinity, and society.
11. The victorious Holy Realms celebrated a decadent century only to collapse before the virulence of the Barbarian Politics.
12. Para-Infantilists sought to return to earlier, forgotten eras, aping and celebrating the collapsed lingish mores.

## FRAGMENTS OF THE FABLED STORIES

Old monarchies, epic heroes, barbarian warlords, heirloom weapons, foundation myths, sagas, poetries, and ill-recorded histories.

Recovering fragments of the fabled stories will bring glory or infamy to the explorers, and quite likely a fair amount of wealth. It should not greatly alter the balance of powers.

## ORAL HISTORIES OF THE REVOLUTION (D12)

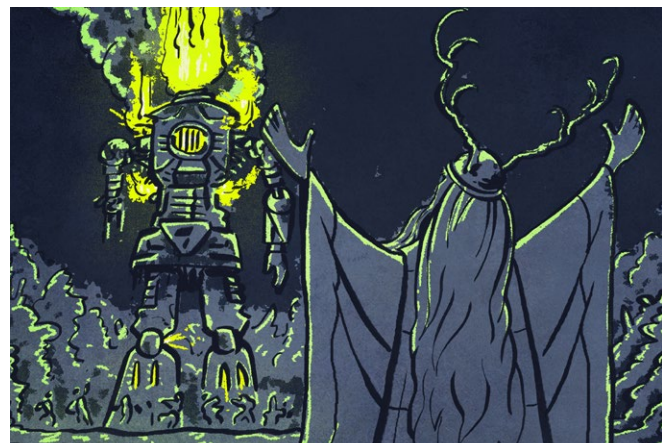
The fires of forgetfulness, the scouring of the sources, and the flooding of memories has left gaping holes in the histories of the Rainbowlands—but at least the vaults of the Orders of Accounting and Inquisition in the Metropolis retain a semblance of order over the last centuries.

1. The Revolutionary Era saw the Para-Infantilist Regimes collapse in a great uprising of the human masses.
2. Rustic Neo-Elementalist movements saw a great return to the land and die-back of the cities.
3. Post-humanist elements reasserted Slave-Hive Empires over great swathes of territory.
4. The Human Revival under a series of revolutionary prophets saw the ab- and post-humans destroyed utterly in the realms of the Circle Sea.
5. The Polychrome Orders were established to protect the Rainbow of Humanity from the darkness and the light of the inhuman forces that scour the world.
6. The Post-Imperial expansion saw civility, order, liberty, and humanity return to newly purified lands.
7. Pre-Fundamentalist Utopian ecstasies fractured the Post-Imperial Collective.
8. Several oligarchies emerged to steer the reigns of the Rainbowlands.
9. In the deconstruction of the Post-Imperial Union, local culture heroes were rediscovered.
10. Purges of Anti-Realists saw the economies of the Circle Sea boom and a neo-technological surge.
11. A Pseudo-Naturalist Dystopia was replaced with an enlightened Spiritual Particularism.
12. The consolidation of the Rainbowlands into four great powers fit the Four Skies paradigm: the magitechnical Universalists of the Violet City, the sacral engineering Bureaucracies of the Emerald City, the trading and banking Oligarchies of the Saffron City, and the permanent revolutionary self-help Association of the Red Land District.

## BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE REVOLUTION

Rebellious golems, exploration societies, revolutionary organizations, trading houses, cultural corporations, industrial re-inventions, research foundations, militant cooperatives, violent cults, and odd machines.

The building blocks of the revolution are elements of common knowledge and political reality which the heroes may influence, change, and use for their own purposes as the game unfolds.



# DISCOVERIES AND HISTORIC PERIODS

Finding new, strange discoveries and locations is a large part of the fun of the Ultraviolet Grasslands. Sometimes you will need to invent a new discovery and these two pages should help. Some discoveries can be worth negative experience (xp) if they fry brains or wipe memories with their strangeness. If the referee introduces such locales to their game they should explicitly warn players in advance—do not spring penalties on players unannounced, that is poor form.

## NEW DISCOVERIES (D20)

d20	Distance	Xp	Shape	Appearance	Original Function?	Creator?	Discoverer?	Current Function?
1	Dimensional Gate	-307	Non-Euclidean	Hyper-morphic	Personality Reprogramming	Barbarian Sorcerer	Charismatic Revolutionary	Terrain Modification
2	2d6 weeks	-53	Cube	Brittle	Time Ark	Blue Prophet	Spiritual Shaman	Communication
3	1d6 weeks	0	Pyramid	Chaotic	Spiritual Improvement	Celestial Cat	Solitary Prospector	Defense
4	1d4 weeks	10	Prism	Divine	Soul Decomposition	Emperor of Post-humans	Simple Farmer	Education
5	2 weeks	20	Tower	Energy	Transport Revolution	Faceless Abmortal	Religious Innovator	Energy Production
6	1 week	30	Needle	Fractal	Neo-Genesis	Heroic Wanderer	Proud Aristocrat	Energy Storage
7	1d12 days	50	Ring	Gaseous	Musical Creation	Hive Community	Poor Trader	Entertainment
8	1d10 days	70	Plain	Terrifying	Military Vault	Ling Architect	Military Liason	Espionage
9	1d8 days	110	Depression	Illusory	Matter Processing	Mahogany Entity	Merchant Adventurer	Farming
10	1d6 days	130	Pit	Liquid	Knowledge Preservation	Neo-scientist	Mad Savant	Luxury Goods
11	1d4 days	170	Cave	Malleable	Government Control	Plastic Machine	Lucky Dilettante	Manufacturing
12	2 days	190	Crater	Mobile	Energy Generation	Polybody Precursor	Loyal Imperialist	Mining
13	1 day	230	Canyon	Motionless	Economic Supremacy	Rat Monarch	Exiled Ruler	Reality Repurposing
14	1d20 hours	290	Mountain	Omega	Deep Prison	Scavenger Lord	Driven Researcher	Refining
15	1d12 hours	310	Chaos	Perfect	Cybernetic Enhancement	Semi-sentient Rhizome	Downtrodden Refugee	Biomodification
16	1d6 hours	370	Maze	Reassembling	Cosmic Escape	Sleeping Horror	Desperate Archaeologist	Transportation
17	1d4 hours	410	Shapeless	Self-ordering	Body Augmentation	Spectrum Generator	Curious Reporter	Water Extraction
18	2 hours	430	Shifting	Solid	Biological Uplift	Timelost Warrior	Cunning Industrialist	Weapon
19	1 hour	470	Protean	Time-rifted	Athletic Games	Ultra Progenitor	Cultist of the End	Weather Editing
20	It's here.	970	Sphere	Void	Aesthetic Perfection	Vile Refugee	Spurned Lover	Worship

The historic periods and prehistoric Long Ago and Long Long Ago of the Rainbowlands and the Ultraviolet Grasslands are filled with a riot of sometimes incoherent styles and periods. Mix and remix origins for artifacts the heroes unearth using this table.

## HISTORIC PERIODS AND STYLES (D20)

d20	Material	Special Material	Adjective	Movement	Culture	Period
1	Stone	Megaliths	Lesser	Onion and Skull	Vile Reign	The Star Bloom
2	Concrete	Dryland coral	Shorter	Ur-Rococo	Mahogany Reign	Accretion Days
3	Rusted metal	Ageless metal	Lower	Bio-Mechanicism	Faceless Rule	Geological Eras
4	Glass	Ur-obsidian	Decadent	Geo-Sculpturalism	Perambulator	Long Long Ago
5	Adobe	Livingstone	Endless	Poly-Chromatism	Machine Human	Long Ago
6	Brick	Aerolith	Upper	Inter-Tactilism	Abhuman	When the Fast Stars Shone
7	Crystal	Psionic crystals	Longer	Bi-Mannerism	Post-ling Culture	Mythogogic Era
8	Ceramic	Porcelain	Greater	Peri-Spectralism	Citrus Pre-nomadic	When the Mists Lifted
9	Wood	Luminescent wood	Dark	Idio-Brutalism	Distributarian	Rider Years
10	Bone	Carved ivory	Golden	Dis-Modernism	Dictatorship of Liberty	Scavenger Politics
11	Flesh	Synthetic skin	Primitive	Ab-Plasticism	Pre-chromatic Kingdom	Springtime of Monarchies
12	Chitin	Iridescent scales	Advanced	Alter-Minimalism	Zombie Democracy	The First Expansion
13	Force	Stuckforce	Barbarous	Meta-Classicism	Psychic Unity	The Blue Heresy
14	Plastic	Plaz steel	Uplifted	Pseudo-Rusticism	Barbarian Polity	The Decadent Century
15	Wicker	Lightmetal struts	Younger	Para-Infantilism	Ling Permutation	The Revolutionary Era
16	Shadow	Frozen smoke	Forgotten	Neo-Elementalism	Post-humanist Continuum	The Human Revival
17	Light	Reality ripples	Reborn	Post-Imperialism	Rat Race	The Second Expansion
18	Cloth	Corundum silk	Uplifted	Pre-Fundamentalism	Utopian Ecstatic	The Oligarchy
19	Sand	Grey ooze	Fallen	Deconstructivism	Lower Heroism	The Purges
20	Earth	Flowering mosses	Final	Anti-Realism	Pseudo-Naturalist Dystopia	The Consolidation





# CLIMATE, GEOGRAPHY, WEATHER

The climate of the Ultraviolet Grasslands is predominantly continental, similar to that of a vast swath of Eurasia in our world. Winters are cold and harsh, while summers are hot and dry. In between there are periods of heavy rain when the steppes turn to mud. Higher elevations are colder and wetter on their western sides. Areas further south or in the rain shadows of mountains can be very dry, while areas to the north are colder and damper. This means that most travel is restricted to the months when the weather is relatively clement. If a caravan chooses to travel when the weather is difficult it may make sense to impose disadvantage (∩d) on Misfortune tests.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE MATRIX (D12)

	Rainbow				Environmental		
d12	Calendar	Common Nights	Common Days	Extreme Weather	Hazards	Weird Stuff	Trucking
1	Newfirst	Arctic	Glacial and dry	Frigid galestorm	Ice	Glacier surges	Nearly impossible
2	Lastmonth	Siberian	Freezing and dry	Thaw and mud	Blizzard	Star falls	Nearly impossible
3	Firstmonth	Freezing and wet	Cold and wet snow	Heavy rains	Mudslide	Crevasse opens	Nearly impossible
4	Greenmonth	Cold and sodden	Cool with showers	Heat wave	Swollen rivers	Geyser erupts	Challenging and damp
5	Redmonth	Cool and damp	Warm with storms	Heat wave	Flash floods	Floral overgrowth	Easy
6	Orangemonth	Cool and dry	Hot and dry	Heat wave and drought	Dust storm	Aquifer breaches	Easy
7	Yellowmonth	Warm and dry	Searing and dry	Heat wave and drought	Wildfires	Cliff forms	Easy, but hot
8	Oldsecond	Warm and damp	Scorching with showers	Lightning storms	Tornadoes	Lake dries out	Easy, but the heat!
9	Unity	Cool and humid	Hot with storms	Heavy rains	Floods	Rock decays	Easy
10	Violetmonth	Cold and wet	Cool with rain	Snowstorm	Fog	Dust spreads	Challenging and wet
11	Snowbringer	Freezing	Cold with snow	Icestorm	Gales	Mountain collapses	Grueling and cold
12	Deadwinter	Glacial	Freezing and snow	Whiteout	Avalanche	Stuckforce detonation	Nearly impossible

Sometimes you just need some words to describe the natural scenery. That's where this table helps.

## GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL SCENERY (D12)

d12	Hills	Plains	Valleys	Water	Ground	Air	Flora	Fauna
1	Spire	Lava	Crater	Sea bed	Rock	Thin	Scoured	Absent or disappeared
2	Volcano	Pan	Glacial	Salt lake	Salt	Old	Dead	Fossils or corpses
3	Berg	Flat	Rift	Lake	Gravel	Stale	Dryland coral	Subterrene survivals
4	Dome	Lacustrine	River	Wetland	Sand	Flat	Lichens	Pioneer species
5	Peak	Till	Dry	Bog	Dust	Metallic	Mosses	Radiating invertebrates
6	Pinnacle	Rough	Shallow	River	Loess	Sour	Cacti	Invasive arthropods
7	Cliff	Gentle	Hanging	Waterfall	Silt	Dusty	Thorny	Basal vomes
8	Ridge	Alluvial	Box	Rapids	Clay	Dry	Grass	Chimeric herbivores
9	Mesa	Flood	Cove	Stream	Loam	Humid	Savanna	Opportunist scavengers
10	Stair	Scroll	Eroded	Cascade	Chernozem	Refreshing	Maquis	Exploratory omnivores
11	Scree	Outwash	Karst	Intermittent	Rust	Fragrant	Forest	Climax carnivores
12	Dune	Penepplain	Canyon	River bed	Rubble	Rich	Overgrowth	Biomantically enhanced fauna

# LANGUAGES OF THE UVG AND THE RAINBOWLANDS

Many languages are and were spoken by the many humans of the Rainbow Lands. Here are just some of them. Those found closest to the Circle Sea and the Violet City are listed first, with the language family or circle in parentheses. Languages in the same family or circle are related and somewhat mutually intelligible; whether through contact or descent is not always clear.

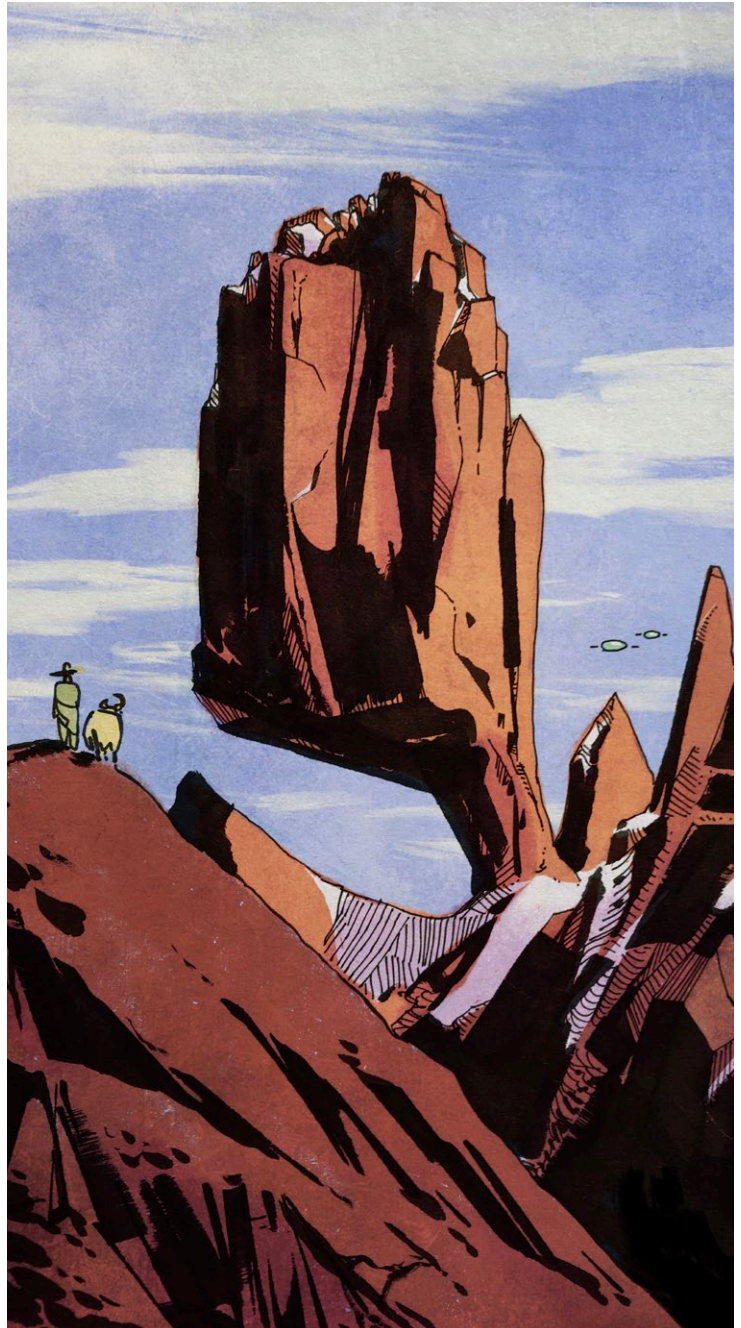
## THE COMMON LANGUAGES (D20)

1. **High Common (rainbow):** The upper-class, literary common rainbow tongue taught by teachers to noble and rich students. Old fashioned, unnecessarily complex grammar and pronunciation. Words change depending on context, speaker, and intent. Numbers change depending on what is being counted. Elaborate written tradition.
2. **Vulgar Common (rainbow):** The trade *lingua* of the non-noble middle-classes and professionals of the Rainbow Lands, with distinct regional dialects. Only written for trade. Influenced by outer languages. Similar to 'City Speak' or 'Gutter Talk.'
3. **Purple Speech (rainbow):** The dialects of the peasants and laborers of the Purple Land, with many borrowings from the steppe folk. Mostly oral, no written tradition. Very similar to Bluenttalk, but it's an insult to say so.
4. **Bluenttalk (rainbow):** The harsh and uncouth dialects of the exiles from the Blue Land and the wild folk still living there. Any writing has been suppressed long ago. Possesses a surprisingly detailed vocabulary of dairy products and aquatic vegetables. Borrowings from Blue Tongue.
5. **Greenspeak (rainbow):** The peasant and forester dialects of the Greenland. No written tradition. Large vocabulary corpus. Speakers from different dialects can mostly understand each others' words, even if just by context.
6. **Emerald Common (rainbow):** The vulgar lingua franca of Metropolis, the Emerald City, with many Elfish and Greenspeak borrowings. Developing a broad, popular written corpus. Beautiful traditional handwriting.
7. **Decapolitical (rainbow):** The vulgar dialects of the Sea Fingers and the Decapolis, also popular with sailors. Written for trade purposes. Very onomatopoeic. Short, simple words. Understatement is prized. Silence is golden.
8. **Saffranian (rainbow):** the vulgar speech of Safranjan and the Yellow Land, now also adopted by the local oligarchs. Extensive written traditions. A more refined and rhyming variant of Decapolitical, popular in the opera.
9. **Caravanian (rainbow):** The trade tongue of the caravans in the Yellow Waste and of some nomad tribes there. Mercantile written tradition. Borrows from many languages. Speakers can bend the language to adapt it for speakers of a certain language, or make it indecipherable to anyone but other Caravanian speakers.
10. **Oranjetic (rainbow):** The vulgar dialects of the Orange Land, very similar to Saffranian. Paltry written tradition. A musical dialect, exquisite in song.
11. **Free Circle Kriol (rainbow creole):** The wonderfully rhymed disyllabic speech of the Circle Sea free families (pirates) and river-travelers. No written tradition and vast variation among dialects prompting some scholars to say it is not so much a language as a mass outbreak of glossolalia.
12. **Redland District Cant (rainbow creole):** The badly rhyming vulgar speech of the autonomous enclave that is the Red Land District. Vast written tradition, but mostly political tracts. Large influence of Decapolitical through trade. Lots of swearing.
13. **Red Tongue (rainbow):** The vulgar dialects of the Red Land with many dwarven elements admixed. Poor written tradition. Heavily influenced by the slurred speech of the long-reigning Grand Red Duke Moshle IV, the Red Tongue replaces 's' sounds with 'sh' and runs words together, as after too much wine.
14. **Winerian (dwarven):** The hill dialects of the Vintner Dwarves of the Red Land and Orange Land. Little writing, and what there is, quite literalist. Heavily influenced by the Red Tongue, Winerian is the most linear of the dwarven dialect.
15. **Vulkan (dwarven):** The mountain dialects of the Mountains of Light and the Black Gold. Vast written corpus. When written, the space between the characters has as much meaning as the characters themselves. Much is lost by speaking it. Lots of silences and isolated consonants. It is best spoken indoors or in echoing caves. The echo is part of the language. It sounds very strange outdoors as parts of the words are missing.
16. **Woodlander (elven):** The language found inscribed on trees and rocks in the Elvenwood, spoken by some of the tribes there. Isolated inscriptions. The language is structured to change meaning with the seasons and the phases of the moon as though it does not quite belong on the solid earth.
17. **Steppe Speeches (steppe, rainbow):** The various dialects of the Ultraviolet Grasslands grew from a patois of rainbow dialects and Steppeland trade tongues. Its written tradition is uncertain. Possesses an immense vocabulary for grazing creatures and mechanical engineering.
18. **Sunsettish (steppe):** The common trade language of western Steppelanders. Written by merchants. Surprisingly focused on spirits and spirit possession.
19. **White Line (steppe):** The cryptic language of the Porcelain Princes was once more widespread, now it has been reduced to their outposts and trading missions. Vast dusty libraries exist. Because it has extensively evolved to suit the polybody structure, some of the more refined forms of the language require multiple synchronized voices used in unison to convey meaning properly.
20. **Satrap Canto (steppe?):** The colour and light-adapted language of the Spectrum Satraps seems to be an outlying dialect of some larger language group or system. Its writing traditions are polychromatic and use both colour and sound to convey meaning. Without light-generating organs or a rainbow translation array, this language is practically unusable by baseline humans.



## THE DEAD AND WEIRD LANGUAGES (D14)

1. **Black City Alphabet (?)**: Found inscribed on some metal sheets brought from the mythical Black City in the west. Some academics say it's not a language, just intricate patterns. Faraway people joke that the writings are really the schemas for a very complicated dance.
2. **Cat Thought (cat)**: Thought-speech of the Violet City cats, which can best be described as a formalized logical structure used to enable empathetic coordination between cats and telepathic communication with their thralls.
3. **Deep Dwarven (dwarven)**: The hidden priestly language of the Deep Dwarves that is not spoken, only carved in stones and bones. It can be written in any direction, even constructing beautiful figures with the characters. Very succinct. Some carvings are considered visual poetry. A subset of Deep Dwarven is Deep Dwarven Hexadecimal, used for programming Dwarven prayer machines.
4. **Blue Tongue (isolate)**: The forgotten speech of the Blue God, now used by some secretive cults and mad wizards. A forbidden, written corpus exists. It is harsh, logical, iconographic, and ambiguous by nature.
5. **Elven (elven)**: A hypothetical Elven language, reconstructed by sages from common elements of Woodlander and Moonlander. Some scholars associate it with the Vile Ones of Long Long Ago. They surmise that a written version existed, though aside from possible decorative stelae, no examples have been found.
6. **Moonlander (elven?)**: An extinct (?) language found inscribed in tombs in the Mountains of the Moon. Samples of the writing have been found to be memetic worms, taking over the reader's mind and driving them to perform odd, incomprehensible tasks. Though usually not deadly, permanent personality changes and madness have been noted often enough that in the popular imagination reading Moonlander is associated with lunacy.
7. **Marmotsk (isolate)**: The language of the Marmotfolk requires large incisors and musky pheromones to use correctly. The delicately whorled bone-script is more accessible to outsiders.
8. **Umber (steppe)**: Dead language of Fallen Umber, characterized by delicate poetry and three-dimensional writing on woven, living chitin. Heavily influenced by another missing isolate.
9. **Lingish (lingish)**: Obscure dead language, hypothesized from references in old libraries, toponyms in modern languages, and some fossilized Oranjetic expressions. It seems to have been a fluid, contextual and permutative language designed to overwrite human brains and prevent personality reprogramming and remote sensing.
10. **Great Language (lingish?)**: The hyper-contextual and agglutinative dialects (languages?) of the Great Folk communities in the vicinity of the Behemoth shell. Individual communities' dialects are so divergent that mutual incomprehension is common.
11. **Trillignic (lingish? steppe?)**: The ancient languages of the Three Sticks civilization, before its decline. Found on countless



12. **Vomish (?)**: A hypothetical machine hive language used by vomes. Perhaps a whole series of languages. Many scholars dispute that vomes are not even sentient. Likely utilizes electromagnetic radiation to convey meaning.
13. **White City Pictographic (?)**: Hypothetical original language of civilized trading nexus beyond the Yellow Waste. Known from decorations and vidy crystal recordings brought to Safranj by adventurers and merchants.
14. **High Ultra (?)**: Psychemorphic language of the body-hopping ultras, it produces profound psychedelic dislocation in embodied sentiences. It seems to lack temporal structure and appears to be physically unwritable, or rather, it can only be written by rewriting psychic structures or memories. Profoundly alien, it has been recovered from some crystals. Some scholars speculate that this is not actually a language but the substrate of the ultra's existence—in effect, their bodies.

# FRAGMENTS OF A GLOSSARY

“What have I missed?” cried Poncho.

## **ABMORTAL**

A sentience (sometimes human) that does not die of natural causes. The Porcelain Princes and ultras are among the more common abmortals. Most mortals hate them. A lot.

## **AEROLITH**

Stuckforce-infused rock generated from the air itself, usually the after-effect of catastrophic transmutation or portal failures. The rock is actively aerostatic—it is functionally weightless and levitates at a set distance from the ground once moved there. It does remain massive, however, so a long lever is often required.

## **ANIMANCY**

Soul or spirit magic. Magic using and modifying the animating spark of life, from golems to ba-zombies. Most humans regard it as a horror and abomination, for the simple reason that it re-processes and modifies the heart of what it is to be human. Elves infamously have no such compunctions in fairy tales. Modern golems are powered by far weaker sources than pure soul juice.

## **ART FLORIST**

A wizardry discipline, akin to biomancy but focused on plants. Some primitive peoples might call them druids or bush doctors, but wizards know better.

## **AUTOFAC, FAC**

An artificial organism or organic machine, sometimes of great size, that generates other organisms without outside control. Created in a forgotten age—perhaps by combining wizards and autonomous vehicles in an unholy union. Sages speculate they were designed to produce useful commodities. Now they are almost all menaces, leaking toxic fumes and liquids, ravaging the land, and producing odd, dangerous, and mostly useless artifacts or oozes. Today associated with vomes. Perhaps the downfall of the Original Folk.

## **AUTONOM**

An autonomous, synthetic organism, usually semi-sentient and capable of following simple commands. Like a zombie or skeleton but built from the ground up with biomantic precision. Simpler variants use exoskeletons and the autonom is just a collection of muscular tubes connected to a general-purpose crystal brain.

## **AUTOWAGON**

A golem wagon that can move under its own power. Tough, hardy, often covered in custom spikes, armor, defensive embrasures, firing platforms and other accoutrements, autowagons are among the most impressive (and relentlessly slow) forms of transport in the UVG. It can follow simple instructions and navigate across terrain on its own if required. Much like a mule. May also be as mulish.

## **BA, PERSONALITY**

The creative threads of possibility woven into the tapestry of a human. The changeling essence that weaves together a unique individual over time, fired by the spark of soul, and unified in the world through the medium of body. Some cultures believe personalities have afterlives, while others believe their threads wind, unwind, and wind again over time. A few rare sages argue that personalities are unique occurrences that fade away after motivating a single body, but necromancers and vivimancers put the lie to this notion. In game terms, ba or personality is associated with Thought and Charisma.

## **BARDSTONE**

Stone imbued with the songs of Long Ago. Some say that in a great cataclysm a grumpy deity turned all bards to stone so that she could get some sleep. Obviously, this is nonsense, but bardstones are valuable and can store more than just songs—stones with messages and moving pictures have been found. They are attuned to their fixed locations and moving them destroys their magic. Perhaps it has something to do with the star lines? Who knows.

## **BA-ZOMBIE**

Reanimated creature, actually closest to a flesh golem, created from an intact soul-stripped body-personality. Using an artificial soul, or souls, it can be maintained indefinitely. This is how many of those ageless wizards, called liches by simpler minds, are crafted. A soul mill is the usual way of creating the suitable body-personality.

## **BONE-WORK**

Hybrid discipline of necromancy and petromancy. Uses the personality memories of bones combined with livingstone spirits to grow, reshape, and animate bones into new and useful forms. Some intellectuals view it as a lazy dead-end in petromancy.

## **BIOMANCY**

Wizardry art of sculpting flesh and bone and sinew to create living works. The burdenbeast is the most common example of the art.

## **BIOMECHANICUM**

Hybrid wizarding art that melds mechanics and flesh. Vommes are an example of advanced biomechanics. Implanted prosthetics are readily available, from the chop-chop fixer (€100 for a cold grey hand) to the porcelain sculptors (€2,000 for colour-shifting chameleon glass dermal implants) popular with artistes and burglars.

## **BLUE LAND OF THE DEAD GOD**

Flooded, festering swamp inhabited by degenerates and haunted by the bleeding rotten ghosts of the Blasted Field. Cults regularly try to reawaken the Dead God, but continually fail. In the Blue Lands fermented dairy products and north walls should be avoided.



### **CAT, VIOLET**

Sentient cats, beloved of the Violet Goddess and rulers of the Violet City and the Purple Land of the Cat. They use pheromones and mental parasites to control their blissful, happy subjects. Too lazy to bother with most day-to-day activities, they let the wizards and administrators of the Violet City pretend to be in charge.

### **CHITIN CAPS**

Engineered fungus that, when farmed and grown on frames, produces usable quantities of chitin. Sturdy and light, it was popular as a roofing material and in many industrial and manufacturing applications. In the Third and Fourth Corporate Dynasties articles of clothing, such as hats, bustiers, and shoes were grown with chitin frames. Not to mention armor.

### **CIRCLE SEA**

The great round sea at the heart of the Rainbowlands, swirling in the endless current around the Needle of the World.

### **COMMUNAL BODY**

Monstrous, amoeboid creature created to carry the soul-personalities of multiple individuals beyond the boundaries of a single body. Some sages call them biological virtual-life machines, most call them horrors. It is debatable whether the soul-personalities kept within are actually still viable or not.

### **CYAN SEA**

Half-legendary inland sea far south, beyond the Wine Dark Mountains. Said to be entirely clothed in a lethal cyan mist which ebbs and falls with the tides and makes the entire Plain of Haze an impoverished and deadly land, inimical to great civilizations like those of the Circle Sea.

### **DECAPOLIS, THE**

Nine to thirteen viciously independent, smallish city states controlling most of the Circle Sea coast from the Metropolis to the Orange Lands. Famed for their trading prowess, industriousness, venality, fetishistic fascination with magic of all sorts, and utter ineptitude setting up anything comparable to the Purple University.

### **DEMON**

Confused term for various bodiless sentiences. Applied indiscriminately to multiple superficially similar phenomena. Avoided by scholars.

### **DRYLAND CORAL**

The 'living rock,' one of the ancient biomantic and petromantic arts. Master growers can sculpt and shape it into evocative post-modernist forms emphasizing the interdependence of human and nature. Ill-grown dryland coral may leach nutrients and life from nearby areas, creating localized deserts. Cancerous dryland coral may even spread runners that grow into burgeoning house-clusters. There are rumours of a great living-ghost city in the heart of the Twilight Desert which has grown to occupy an area larger than the freehold of a corporate duke. A civil biomancer and crew can sculpt a dryland coral home in 2 years for €10,000/year.

### **DWARF**

Backronym from 'De Werker Aristocratisce Revolutie Fraternitie,'

Dwarfs are a distinct culture-class of selectively biomanced people. They have effectively fought the traditional aristoi of the Red and Orange lands to a standstill and now form a major industrialist society of the Rainbowlands. A famously bureaucratic and collectivist faction, they are the only one staunchly opposing the bureaucratic and individualist Emerald City Cogflower Corporation (actually a coin church).

### **ELF, ALSO VILA (OR VILE?)**

Scary, mythical, time-dilating, shape-shifting monsters rumored to live beyond the Mountains of the Moon, where the tangled sky trees snag clouds from the sky and a shadow lurks over every soul.

### **EMERALD CITY, ALSO METROPOLIS**

Chief city of the Green Land and largest city of the Rainbowlands. Governed by the Banker Priests of the Green God, devoted to greed and the untrammled growth of the vital forces of the individual and society. Major forces include the Paladins of the Cogflower, the Revenue-Service Accountant-Monks, and, of course, the Green Inquisition—crucial to maintaining public support for the fear-and-pain backed cash currency of this industrial ecological meta-topia.

### **FAST STARS**

The remnants of cities and factories and paradises in orbit around the world, glittering reminders of the decline of these later days.

### **FETISH**

Bundle of matter imbued with a spirit or demon drawn by a wizard's sacrifice. Most wizards know how to create a basic fetish that serves them in exchange for their life energy. Binding a spirit in exchange for a sacrificial victim, or an ongoing sacrifice of spirits and fowl, is a much harder task.

### **FULL-BODY PROSTHETIC**

Often immobile, this bio-necromantic device keeps a soul-personality dyad locked in the material world even as the body is reabsorbed into the cycle of life.

### **FULL-BODY REBUILD**

What degenerate savages call a spell that raises the dead. In fact, it is not far removed. This involved scientific procedure requires necromantic, biomantic, and psychomantic expertise. Ideally, it requires the brain of the creature being rebuilt, for that is the seat of the personality. A soul-stone is used to rebind the soul from the animasphere into the flesh. A body-knitter then rebuilds the body around the brain and the soul-stone. Finally, a necromancer teases soul, personality and body together into the rebuilt form. The rebuilt body is basically a flesh golem animated by the original soul and motivated by the original personality. Costs around €5,000 and takes at least a week.

### **GOLEM**

Soulless automaton powered directly from the source of creation. Golemancers are now a rare and exotic breed, but very prized—a few industrious golems may uplift a tribe into a civilized city or turn a small city-state into a powerful empire. Poorly built, damaged, or jury-rigged golems can be very dangerous and are known to explode catastrophically. See, for example, the Salt Reassembly Incident of the 7th year of the Era of Saffron Ascendant.

## GOLDEN DESERT

A desert of rock and sand and Stone Dragons stretching towards the sunrise beyond the Yellow Lands.

## GRAND COMPANIES

Hereditary trading aristocracies of the Green and Yellow lands, ideologically and practically opposed to the Hexads. Through selective eugenic practices over many centuries they have achieved longer life spans, more acute numerical abilities, and far more sophisticated debaucheries than most baseline humans could manage. Particularly in the case of the Emerald Engineering Kompany and the Avocado Promotion Executive where the rumors of Half-Elven admixture may well be true.

## GREAT FORGETTING, THE

Common term for the lack of records and the decline that is supposed to have happened in the Long Long Ago. Some heterodox scholars and mystics suggest that no Great Forgetting happened, but rather an ascendancy into divinity, or something similar, and that all humans currently living in the Rainbowlands only acquired sentience *after* those prior beings—perhaps lings—departed.

## GUN, GUNPOWDER MAGIC

Any combat wand that doesn't require wizardly skill to operate. Some even use actual gunpowder magic. That school combines alchemy, fire and earth elementalism, and force manipulation.

## HA, BODY

The material aspect of the human triad of body-personality-soul.

## HALF-ELF

Elf-touched humans, a medical condition resistant to most interventions. Inquisitor Scirocco II classified it as a progressive neuro-moral degenerative disorder, with the unfortunate side-effect of prolonging lifespans. Many half-elves eventually succumb to the elven infection and disappear into the great Wall of Wood, lycanthropic half-beasts rather than proper civilized humans.

## HAZE, PURPLE

Occlusion of the sky that rises from the eastern horizon as one enters the Ultraviolet Grasslands. The occlusion blocks visible-length and infrared radiation, leaving the land in darkness. It appears that the haze is an atmospheric phenomenon that thickens or otherwise changes the further West one travels, delaying further and further the appearance of the sun. By the central Grasslands the sun only appears from behind this occlusive layer at noon and the Black City only experiences a few short hours of late afternoon light.

## HEXADS AND SELF-HELP ASSOCIATIONS

Combination of clan association, socialized healthcare-and-pension fund, thieves' guild, private education system, insurance and protection provider, and para-state actor. Hexads bind together the six *de jure* Rainbow Lands. I suppose if there were only three colours, somebody might call them Triads, instead.

## HUMAN

Most of the Circle Sea power groups consider all close-to-baseline sentient and soulful post-humans as effectively human and possessing the full spectrum of rights attendant to a

soul-body-personality triad. This includes retro-humans, dwarfs, half-elves, half-lings, quarter-lings, and half-orcs.

## INQUISITIONS

Federation of truth-and-reconciliation enforcement societies that maintain the peace of the Unity Promulgates in the Rainbowlands. Half parastatal corporations, half secret police.

## KA, SOUL

The engine of life, a contradictory essence of the world that activates the body and makes place for the personality to guide the activity of that thing that is called a living human. In game terms, ka or soul is associated with Aura (and sometimes Endurance).

## KA-BA MAINTENANCE BODY

Physical body substitute, knitting spirit and soul to the world, even beyond death. Most KBM Bodies are immobile crystal or ceramic structures housing incredibly complex organic metal magitech structures. Expensive versions are mounted in golems, giving a life beyond the flesh. Attitudes to KBM technology are generally ambivalent: why live in a hollow shell that can not experience the pleasures of life, after all? A basic body costs around €10,000.

## KA-ELEMENTAL OR SOUL ELEMENTAL

Spurting, flaming, ball-lightning paradox of life-force unmoored from both body and personality, yet trapped in the essential world. Sages are uncertain what kind of tragedy or nightmare machination rips the souls apart from the beings they animate, yet also blocks them from the Recycling Infinity of Nothingness. Some speculate that the legendary soul mills of the Vile Ones are involved. All aspects of earthly intelligence and individuality are lost within days, if not hours. **Ka-elementals** (L2d4, gutting) dangerously affect biological and personality baselines, causing (roll d6): (1) organic regression to a more primitive form, (2) personality devolves to simpler, more primal structure, (3) organic shift to parallel evolutionary path, (4) random personality change, (5) rapid organic evolution into more advanced form, (6) uplift as biological baseline interfaces with the essence of the Recycling Infinity of Nothingness (+1d4 Aura).

## KA-ZOMBIE

Classic living zombie. It is not undead, merely a body-soul stripped of personality and ready for use by the animancer. Creating a ka-zombie has nothing to do with necromancy, and the subsequent creature, though no longer animated by the wit of personality, nevertheless looks and functions as a human, albeit with zero drive, personality, or ability to resist its master.

## LING

Mysterious, missing sentient subtype, attested to in Long Long Ago records, epic poems such as *The Epic Journey of the Great Wand E. Ling*, and the bloodlines of the half-lings and quarter-lings. According to the myths of the Half-Broken Age, the lings mastered dream travel and ended the Vile Age.

## LIVINGSTONE

Inorganic material, usually rock, animated with the spirit of life to reform into new structures. Core discipline of petromancy, only superficially similar to dryland coral biomancy. It uses a silicon-based process to create its 'living' constructs.



## LONG AGO

Half-remembered times before the Rainbow Order was founded around the Circle Sea. Studies of the Long Ago are half-heartedly forbidden by the Green Inquisition and avidly pursued by the Red Land District and other fringe groups.

## LONG LONG AGO

Eras and times lost beyond the records in the Great Mist. Fragments, shells, and hazy memories remain, but even they have a tendency to fade and melt from mind and time, like sands in the storms whipping off the Golden Desert.

## LUMIN TREE

One of the wonders of biomancy: bioluminescent trees. Originally used in grand avenues, now restricted to the private parks of grand despots and the re-education centers of the Cogflower Inquisitors.

## MACHINE HUMANS

Legendary sapients who managed to combine personality and soul with bodies built from the dust of the earth. There is discussion among sages as to whether they were even possible, with the bloodsages particularly opposed to the idea of bloodless humans.

## MIND-BURN

Common side effect of vomish biomancy. Sages speculate that the vomish neural redesigns are flawed and buggy because the vomish common algorithms have trouble comprehending real-world behaviors and goals. Mind-burned creatures usually have their original neural behavioral patterns replaced with alien patterns that mesh poorly with their original encoding. Recorded examples include rabbits who behaved like pressure cookers, one tuberous vegetable that tried to function as an alert siren, and several wire-crusted nomads performing an odd pelican mating dance. No overarching order has yet been found.

## MIST, THE (ALSO THE GREAT MIST)

Phenomenon of the very early Long Ago, of dubious veracity. Some scholars suggest that the Mist is a metaphorical device for the Great Forgetting, others maintain that it was a very physical event, similar to the mists of the Cyan Sea beyond the Wine Dark Mountains.

## MOON, MOUNTAINS OF THE

Impassable, vicious range, rising almost to the heavens, it cuts the Rainbow Lands off from the north. Home to eerie structures and odd half-humans who preach of elfin queens and weird dreams.

## NECROAMBULISM

Related to necromancy, the technical discipline of turning dead tissue into an animate workforce for simple, repetitive tasks. A skilled necroambulist can create a Z or S-class laborer for €1d6 x 50.

## NEEDLE OF THE WORLD

A very thin and very, very high mountain rising sheer from the heart of the Circle Sea, surrounded by storms and ignorance. These days most Rainbowlanders avoid talking about it.

## OLDTECH

Common term for advanced technology, often indistinguishable from magic, used by humans Long Long Ago. With practice and

study, much of it is accessible to later day humans, half-lings, and quarter-lings, since their soul source imprint matches the data-protein codes embedded in the oldtech.

## ONEIROMANCER

Reader and traveler of dreams—ultras are known to be terrifying oneiromancers.

## ORCS

Obviously, the orcs were a Long Ago attempt to create a combat-adapted para-human. They were successfully eradicated following the Decree of the Seven Lands, slightly before the Swamping of the Blues. In fact, many were 'eradicated' by the efforts of the Bureaucratic Legion which reclassified large numbers of orcs as half-orcs—a permitted soul-body-personality triad under the regulations of the then omnipotent Power Group 13.

## PETROMANCY

The art of using animating spirits to reshape and reform inorganic materials, creating wondrous and useful artifacts.

## POLYBODY

Personality-soul distributed across several bodies linked by real-time glandular psychic links. The additional bodies make them more resilient to damage and death. By periodically adding new bodies they ensure a mental continuity across long epochs.

## QUARTER-LING

Several remote and moderately rare human phenotypes retaining lingish characteristics (like exceptional hand-eye coordination and fur coverage of certain body parts), but are otherwise mostly baseline. Many subscribe to neo-lingish origin myths and cling to various cultural traits as though these were the Long Long Ago lingish originals.

## RADIATION GHOST

Accreted remnants of personalities fried into the fabric of space and smeared across the vastness of time. The sentiences of modern days can barely comprehend the magics and powers that were responsible. Radiation ghosts glow with blue light and though usually not hostile, their very presence brings sickness, decay, and rot—as is the lot of all that is associated with the Blue God.

## RAINBOWLANDER

Human inhabitant of the five united lands around the Circle Sea, the Violet, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red. The Bluelanders are considered degenerate and somewhat inferior due to the Blue God Incident several centuries ago. Physically, the Rainbowlander humans range from about 105 cm (3'6") to 200 cm (6'6") tall, from pointy ears to beards, from tusks to fangs. Some specieist or racist fools would suggest that they are actually all variants of half-elves, half-orcs, half-half-lings and half-dwarves. That would be foolish—and potentially life-threatening under the Unity Promulgates of the Rainbow Inquisition.

## RECYCLING INFINITY OF NOTHINGNESS (RIN)

The eternal soul-chaos beyond the universe that is the eater and reviver of the forces of the many worlds, hidden beyond and between the material elements.

## RED LAND DISTRICT, RLD

Powerful radical anarchist socialist city-state nestled between the Circle Sea and the Red Land. Nominally independent after a bloody popular uprising against the Vintner Lords. Though at peace for decades, its glazed-brick heat-ray colossi continue to burn every creature that approaches by land. Has developed into a hub of piracy, free enterprise, biomechanics, and Hexad ingenuity—making it an unusual competitor-ally of the Emerald City.

## SOULFIRE (ALSO SOULBURN)

The energy of a soul, distilled and burned to activate an otherwise inanimate object or golem. It can be obtained by slow and precarious rituals from sunlight, plants, small vermin, and other simple organisms. Or, much more swiftly, through vicious sacrifice. Alternatively it is harvested in pearlescent form from a soul mill. But soul mills are very, very evil things that should be avoided.

## SOUL MILL

Nightmare machine from the Long Long Ago, thought to be an elven or Vile creation, that takes the actual souls of living humans (and sometimes other soul-bearing forms) and renders them into visceral energy. Most shamans consider it an abomination that brings closer the Final Entropy or the Descent into Grey. Still, the power harvested is immense. Scholars speculate that the Mist obscuring the Long Long Ago resulted from the overuse of industrial soul milling. In game terms, any hero or creature processed through a soul mill is gone forever, their very deeds and memories doomed to leach away into oblivion.

## SOURCE

Generic term for the creative essence of the world, sometimes called the world soul, that certain creatures use to exceed the parameters of their physical existence. Also called the 'blood of magic.'

## STUCKFORCE

Detritus of Long Long Ago magics or technologies or curses, these shears in space-time create odd planes, lines, points, and volumes of solidified force. Over time they become visible with accumulated dirt and dust, some very large ones even appearing as floating islands. Even today, a critically failed *Floating Disc* spell might result in a small stuckforce plane, forever more disrupting the reality of the location where it was cast.

## THORNSTONE

Fast-growing dryland coral variant, popular for building fences or enclosures for traveling parties. A skilled grower can coax 20 meters of thorny fence in a single day. The fence is relatively brittle, but the thorns are vicious as daggers (1d4). With additional time growers can extend the thorns into longer blades, hooks, and snares.

## UNCHOSEN

Mythical group of the viles (elves or Chosen Ones) who forsook the world-altering powers of the Choice to live instead as wandering immortals. Some ascribe wisdom to them, many ascribe madness.

## VECH

Vehicular mechanism for carrying multiple persons and cargo, usually biomechanical, though sometimes pure golem. Examples include the prismatic walkers of the Spectrum Satraps, the

dwarven diesel walkers of the East Coast, and the graceful porcelain prancers of the Porcelain Princes. Most vechs are capable of simple autonomous movement, particularly following a lead unit, but in all honesty are little more intelligent than a cockroach or brick golem. They require piloting for more complex manoeuvres.

## VILE (ALSO CHOSEN ONES):

Mythical Long Long Ago sentiences. The powers attributed to them are vast, and often ridiculous, including complete personality permanence (immortality), reshaping the physical world at whim, shapeshifting, soul-transfer, and the ability to rebuild their bodies and souls from the stuff of other living creatures. Some Long Ago civilizations attributed godlike or divine powers to the viles, the Pleurote Gilded Decadence even worshipping them as the Urgent Demiurges. Fortunately they all collapsed in internecine struggles.

## VOME

Short for violent mechanism, a self-replicating synthetic organism or auto-golem created (according to myth) by a Serpentine Capitalist faction in the Long Long Ago to fight in a series of wars that ended inconclusively. It is not clear if vomes are mindless, differently minded, intelligent and hateful, or just completely insane. They are inimical to most organic life and often assimilate or modify creatures on a whim, however, baseline bugs and coding cockroaches mean vomes are much less lethal than they could be.

## WINE DARK MOUNTAINS

Grand mountain range in the south, beyond the Red Land, crowned with snows of flame and oxblood peaks.

## WIRES, WIRE-GHOULS

Bodies without personality or soul, animated by machines. Some exhibit hive-mind behavior. The metal-first school of biomechané categorizes them as undead vomes.

## WIZARD

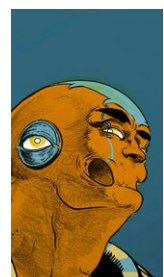
Shorthand for every kind of strange person dabbling in forgotten sciences and odd magics—clerics, priests, shamans, witches, warlocks, and druids, among others. All are wizards to the Steppelanders who make little distinction when dealing with mind-controlling, fire-throwing monsters.

## YELLOW LAND

Dry land, north-east of the Circle Sea, and the terminus for trade caravans from the Mysterious Land. It is roughly divided between the confederation of the Decapolis and the powerful merchant republic of Safranj. The Yellow Land is famous for its spices, merchants, ranchers, and operas. Also, as the site of a recent massive, uncontrolled necroambulist outbreak.

## ZU COMPLEX

"Alert. This is Zu. Repeat. This is Zu. We have returned and we have bad news. The retemporization protocol will not work at scale. Repeat, the retemporization protocol will not work! Warn the Hyperlight not to initiate the protocol! Alert! This is Zu! Hello? Vesmir Observatory? We are not picking up your handshake. Hello? Is there anybody in there?"





# SYNOPSIS OF SPELLS

Quite a few spells are named throughout the UVG. Here is a possible rendition of those spells into SEACAT. If nothing else, they should help with re-imagining them in your preferred system. A wizard can cast the same spell at different powers; but the more powerful the spell, the more resources it costs.

## ABNED'S MAGIC JAR OF THE PERSONALITY (P.130)

The wizard carefully prepares a ritual crystal recordarium in which they can create a copy of a creature's personality. The safe version of this procedure erases the original personality. Otherwise, this spell is very dangerous and has even been known to backfire on the wizard. The personality is stored in the recordarium as long as the wizard imbues it.

- ∴ Power 1: preparing the crystal takes weeks and the transfer itself takes an hour.
- ∴ Power 3: preparing the crystal takes days and the transfer takes minutes.
- ∴ Power 5: preparing the crystal takes hours and the transfer takes seconds.
- ∴ Power 9: preparing the crystal takes minutes and the transfer is instantaneous.



## ACTIVE ASTRAL VOYAGE OF NILBREG THE TECHNODUKE (P.128)

The technoducal wizard uses their left and right thumbs to simultaneously trace two inertialess portal hoops into existence. The hoops are linked by an astral unreality bridge and anything that enters one of the hoops exits the other with its velocity and energy unchanged, but vector adjusted by the position of the hoops. One typical use is to position the hoops one above the other, creating an infinite astral well that accelerates objects to terminal velocity using nothing more than gravity and a tear in the fabric of reality. The hoops can be imbued.

- ∴ Power 5: the wizard has to touch a hoop to manipulate it.
- ∴ Power 7: the wizard can throw a hoop far away.
- ∴ Power 9: the wizard can 'throw' a hoop with a flick of their eyes.

## ATTRACT FISH TO THE NET OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE (P.14)

The wizard pours a vial of enchanted fish pheromones into the waters, summoning fish to their vicinity.

- ∴ Power 1: fish within a dozen meters approach the wizard.
- ∴ Power 2: fish within a hundred meters approach.
- ∴ Power 3: fish within a mile swarm for the fisher wizard.
- ∴ Power 4: fish within ten miles approach in such numbers that many suffocate as the mass of piscine bodies pushes them into the air.

## CHANGE BODY (P.130)

The wizard's soul-personality is so deeply attuned to its body that it can change it over several hours to suit their needs or whim. Changing the body in minutes is dangerous. Doing so in seconds is very dangerous. Their body remains changed so long as they imbue the modified form.

- ∴ Power 1: the wizard can change their appearance to resemble a different person.
- ∴ Power 2: the wizard substantially changes their body, growing stronger or weaker, taller or shorter, while conserving their mass (and total stat points).
- ∴ Power 3: they can change their physical morphology, biological sex, hormonal and neural systems (maintaining stat points).
- ∴ Power 4: they can change species, even modifying their mass to some extent (though they require significant protein sources to rapidly increase their size), potentially increasing their total stat points by up to  $1d6^*$ .
- ∴ Power 5: they can become a plant, fungus, or some more alien organic creature. So long as sources of biomass are available, they can also vastly change their size, potentially increasing total stat points by up to  $2d6^*$ .

## DISSOLUTION AND RESOLUTION OF THE SPIRIT (P.51)

With a touch the wizard temporarily dissolves a creature's soul. Its animating spark gone, the creature collapses into torpor. While the original soul is dissolved any possessing spirits or demons are brought forth upon the creature's skin as an ectoplasmic projection. Such ectoplasmic projections are vulnerable to mundane attack—a devious wizard may wrestle them out of the creature, ending the possession.

- ∴ Power 2: the torpor lasts for an hour or so. When the soul resolves itself, the creature heals 1 mental stat point. Dangerous.
- ∴ Power 4: the torpor lasts for a day or so. When the soul resolves itself, the creature heals  $1d4+1$  mental stat points. Dangerous.
- ∴ Power 6: the torpor lasts for a week or so. After resolution, the creature heals  $2d6+2$  mental stat points. Dangerous.

## EARLY WORM (P.14)

The wizard makes ritual preparations before sleeping and awakens at an early hour. Then they sacrifice an egg to the Bringer of Beginnings and set off about their tasks. For a while make their tests with advantage, so long as they are the first to perform that specific task at that location that day (for example, the first to go fishing at the local lake that morning).

- ∴ Power 1: the benevolent aura lasts an hour or so.
- ∴ Power 2: the aura lasts a full day. Alternatively, it lasts an hour and also applies to nearby friends.
- ∴ Power 3: the aura lasts a full week. Alternatively, it lasts a day and also applies to nearby friends.

### ESBEEN'S ANIMATION OF THE MUMMIFIED DEAD (P.87)

The wizard exhales their soul into a mummified corpse, imbuing it with a semblance of vital force.

- ∴ Power 1: after a few hours the corpse awakens into a slow, shambling parody of life.
- ∴ Power 3: after a few minutes the corpse lurches into jerky life.
- ∴ Power 5: after mere seconds the mummy swells with life, growing supple and strong again.
- ∴ Power 7: in a flash of soul fire the swift and ravenous ghoul springs up, faster and stronger than in life.

### ESBEEN'S RECALLING OF THE LOST SOUL (P.87)

The wizard uses a corpse to summon its soul back from the All-Fire. After an hour-long ritual a coiling serpent of ectoplasmic fire erupts from the corpse's orifices, easy to capture for animating a golem or even just recharging a golem battery. This kind of soul abuse is possibly reprehensible.

- ∴ Power 2: the wizard summons back a level 1 soul.
- ∴ Power 4: the wizard recalls level 2 soul.
- ∴ Power 6: a level 3 soul. And so on. You get the idea.

### ESBEEN'S RECALLING OF THE LOST SOUL AND REANIMATION OF THE CORPSE (P.87)

The wizard uses a corpse as a focus to summon its soul back from the All-Fire, reconstituting it as a power source for its own corpse—essentially creating a corpse golem. The reanimated abomination is not imbued, its soul once more bound tightly to the prison of its body, an animating, inhuman force. If it has been dead for a while it is very probable that none of its personality remains. This kind of soul abuse is certainly reprehensible.

- ∴ Power 3: the wizard summons back a level 1 soul.
- ∴ Power 6: a level 2 soul. And so on.

### ESBEEN'S TURNING OF THE MILL WHEEL OF ESSENTIAL EXISTENCE (P.87)

The half-mythic *Turning* spell replaces one creature that survived an event (accident, battle, or other incident) with another creature that did not; swapping who lived and who died. The wizard spends a week painting a grand four-dimensional design of soul lines, world memories, possibility matrices, and erotic essentialisms. The design is large enough to cover a significant courtyard or an immense patio. When the target creature enters the central area of the design it is instantly dispersed into a probability cloud, to be replaced by the previously-dead in a shower of sparks.

- ∴ Power 5: the incident must be no more than a month ago.
- ∴ Power 10: no more than a year ago.
- ∴ Power 15: a decade ago.

### ESBEEN'S WORDS WITH THE DEAD (P.87)

The wizard touches their forehead to the forehead of a dead creature, summoning memory, dream, and desire back into this world. So long as the wizard maintains the touch they can hold a conversation, lending their own mouth and features to the dead and speaking in turn, first in their own voice, then the voice of the dead.

- ∴ Power 1: after an hour the spirit's personality-memory is channeled for some seconds, enough to answer one question.
- ∴ Power 2: after a few minutes the channel allows five questions.
- ∴ Power 3: instantly allows a conversation of an hour or more.

### FLOATING DISC (P.78)

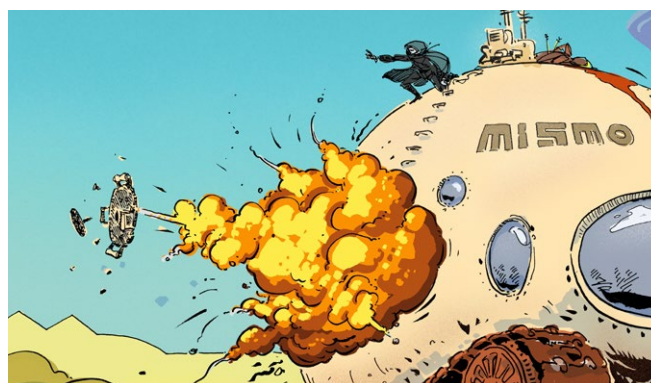
Over a few hours the wizard uses focusing lenses and buffing leathers to polish the energy of the sun itself into a stuck-force disc attuned to their own soul. The stuckforce is almost completely impenetrable, and can be used to shield against ranged attacks. The disc is inertialess, but also capable of staying at complete rest in relation to a local gravity source. Only the wizard's own touch can move the disc, otherwise it stays at rest. Some wizards weave ropes of their own hair with which to pull their floating discs behind them, like uncomplaining force-mules.

- ∴ Power 1: the disc is a hand-span across and dissipates in a week.
- ∴ Power 2: the disc is a cubit across and dissipates in a few weeks.
- ∴ Power 3: the disc is a meter across and dissipates in a few months.
- ∴ Power 4: the disc is an arms-breadth across and dissipates in several months.

### LET THE DOOR OPEN ITSELF (OR KNOCK) (P.27)

The wizard spreads their hands wide and summons a fragment of consciousness into an object that can open, such as a door, lid, hatch, or portal. Overjoyed, the dimly sentient object bumbles at the edges of the wizard's mind, begging to please.

- ∴ Power 1: at the wizard's gesture a nearby object opens. Shutters swing wide. At a second gesture, an open object closes. Locked objects open only if the key is already in the lock.
- ∴ Power 3: a far away object opens. Alternatively, a nearby locked or barred object swings open without a key. Or locks itself shut.
- ∴ Power 5: a far away locked object flies open or locks itself. Alternatively, a nearby sealed object, such as a steel door welded shut, flies open, showering all nearby with shrapnel (1d6\* damage). Or a nearby object flows into its surroundings, sealing itself permanently.
- ∴ Power 7: a far away sealed object opens in a shower of shrapnel, or an open one seals itself. Alternatively, the wizard summons an opening object from a platonic ur-reality, creating a door where before there was none. Or makes an opening disappear.

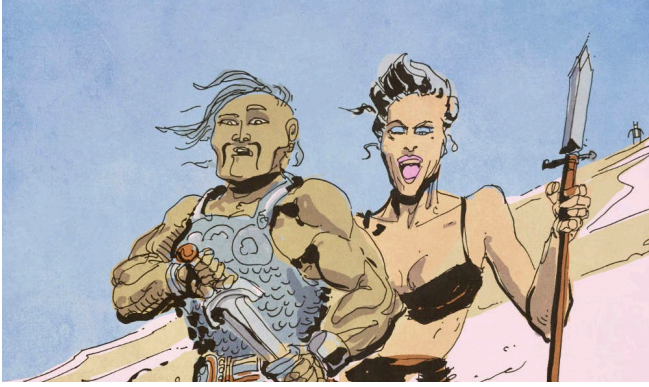


### NET TRICK (P.14)

The wizard rubs down a net entirely with life-preserving and life-affirming aromatic oils. The net becomes somewhat alive so long as it is imbued with the wizard's magic.

- ∴ Power 1: the wizard has advantage when using the net to fish or to entangle people.
- ∴ Power 2: the net can fly further than normal when thrown, tautening itself into a frisbee form.
- ∴ Power 3: the net can entangle or loosen on its own, so long as it is within shouting distance of the wizard. Alternatively, it can become as stiff as stone while the wizard holds it.





### SEKA'S SPEAR OF SLICING (P. 14)

The wizard whispers to a spear for a few hours, imbuing it with cunning and lust and humor. It becomes a keen companion, willing to help and fight for the wizard.

- ∴ Power 1: the spear's damage increases one step.
- ∴ Power 2: in addition to the power 1 effect, the spear's critical damage multiplier increases one step.
- ∴ Power 3: in addition to the other effects, its blade becomes sharp enough to shave yet hard enough to notch steel.
- ∴ Power 4: in addition to the rest, when the spear kills an opponent it immediately twists to attack another target. This is the spear's own action, so as far as the wizard is concerned, they've got a free attack.

### STOYEVOD'S IRREDUCIBLE CRYSTALISATION OF THE EGO COMPLEX (P. 154)

This spell creates a soulless copy of a dead (or living) source creature. The wizard implants a crystal seed harvested by the light of the Invisible Moon and the Eye of Moving Darkness into the head of a suitable body donor. The body donor is usually immobilized during this surgical operation. The wizard then connects the donor and source creatures via high-bandwidth somatic and psychic links, and proceeds to replace the body donor's brain with a crystal copy of the source creature, replicating its personality. The body donor's soul-personality is killed in the process, and the source creature's body is destroyed. This spell requires a bio-psychic laboratory. Performing it on yourself is dangerous.

- ∴ Power 4: over a few weeks the crystal seed eats the body donor's brain, replicating the personality of the source creature.
- ∴ Power 7: over a few days.
- ∴ Power 10: over mere hours.

### SUPPLICATION TO THE ROTTING GOD TO TURN BACK THE WHEEL OF LOVE AND DEATH (P. 154)

The cultist sacrifices sentient creatures, body and soul, upon a white altar of marble and mildew to the Rotting God, to turn back time for a deceased being, granting them more life. A fragment of their body, a creation of their personality, and a creature touched by their life must be present for the Blue God, the Rotting God, to even listen to the cultist. Each sentient sacrifice must then be performed properly, taking a full hour. This spell is dangerous. This spell is reviled.

- ∴ Power 3: one sentient creature is sacrificed to restore a year of life and health to a chosen one who has been dead for a day.
- ∴ Power 6: five sentients to restore two years to one who has been dead for a week.
- ∴ Power 9: 25 sacrifices for four years for one who has been dead for a month.
- ∴ Power 12: 125 sacrifices for eight years for one who has been dead for a year.
- ∴ Power 15: 625 sacrifices for 16 years for one who has been dead for a decade.

### THREE-POINT IMMOBILITY (P. 78)

The wizard teases out a nucleus of force from the core of an object, anchoring it to three other physical points the wizard can reach with strands of stuckforce. Once locked in this way, the object is immobile—even if suspended in mid-air. A pyramidal arrangement is the usual way to create a floating rock or island.

- ∴ Power 1: the force strings can be no longer than a meter.
- ∴ Power 2: the force strings can be up to 10 meters long.
- ∴ Power 3: 100 meters.
- ∴ Power 4: 1 kilometer. The wizard still needs to physically haul the force-string, like a spider with its thread, so creating a platform suspended in mid-air can take a while.

### UZUD'S EXPLODING FLOWER OF STONE (RSDC)

With this magnificent spell a wizard imbues a carved stone into an explosive gem. The harder the stone, the greater the stresses it can sustain and the greater the damage it can deal.

- ∴ Power 1: over several minutes the wizard carves a soft sandstone explosive that deals 1d6\* damage to nearby targets.
- ∴ Power 2: over an hour the wizard shapes a marble gem that deals 2d6\* damage.
- ∴ Power 3: over a few hours the wizard grinds a granite grenade that deals 3d6\* damage.
- ∴ Power 4: over a day the wizard creates a quartz crystal bomb that deals 4d6\* damage.
- ∴ Power 5: over a few days the wizard etches a corundum gem bomb dealing 5d6\* damage.



### ZUNDAN'S AWAKENING OF AWAYS (P. 129)

With this dangerous ritual the wizard trawls the past of an object to find a moment when it still functioned and transposes that moment into the present. The wizard draws a chronomantic circle around the object and, upon invocation, a flash of entropy decays everything within the circle (2d4\* damage) except the object itself, which is reconstituted to its original functionality.

- ∴ Power 1: the object functions for a few moments.
- ∴ Power 2: the object functions for a few minutes.
- ∴ Power 3: hours.
- ∴ Power 4: days.
- ∴ Power 5: weeks.

# THANK YOU

Hundreds of heroes at the stratometaship patreon and thousands of backers on the UVG kickstarter made this whole project possible.

Here I want to particularly celebrate the heroes who were there with me on the patreon while I was writing and publishing the UVG, from March 2017 to August 2018, before we ever thought it would be printed. Their enthusiasm and encouragement and support made the Ultraviolet Grasslands what it is. They were my first sounding board and readers, helped me hone my ideas, and certainly made the UVG better for it. My sincere thanks go out to them for being with me on this journey at the very beginning. All glory to them.

Thank you all again. You're the best. The true heroes of the Ultraviolet Grasslands and beyond to the infinity of the self-replicating worlds.

—Luka Rejec, October 2019

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'Gregor'  
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Gross, Ollie  
Guard, Banana

H, Ben  
Hanks, Robert James  
Hay, Morgan  
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Hogan, Apollo  
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Jensen  
Klein, Matthew  
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Langsford, Alistair  
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'Libri'  
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Lucke, Matthew  
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Magagna, Mark  
Marshall  
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Mayo, Alex  
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McCarthy, Denis J  
McClellan, Scott Philip  
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Morrell, Nicholas  
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Mulhall, Elias  
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Neal, Justin  
NerdCant  
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Olobosk  
Paul, David  
Perry, David  
Peter  
'qpop'  
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'yongji'  
V, Max  
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Vines, Jason  
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Whidou  
Willert, Keely  
William  
Zeitlin, Sam  
Zeltzer, Nicholas

## & THE TYPOHUNTERS

Adam Grzegorzczuk  
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