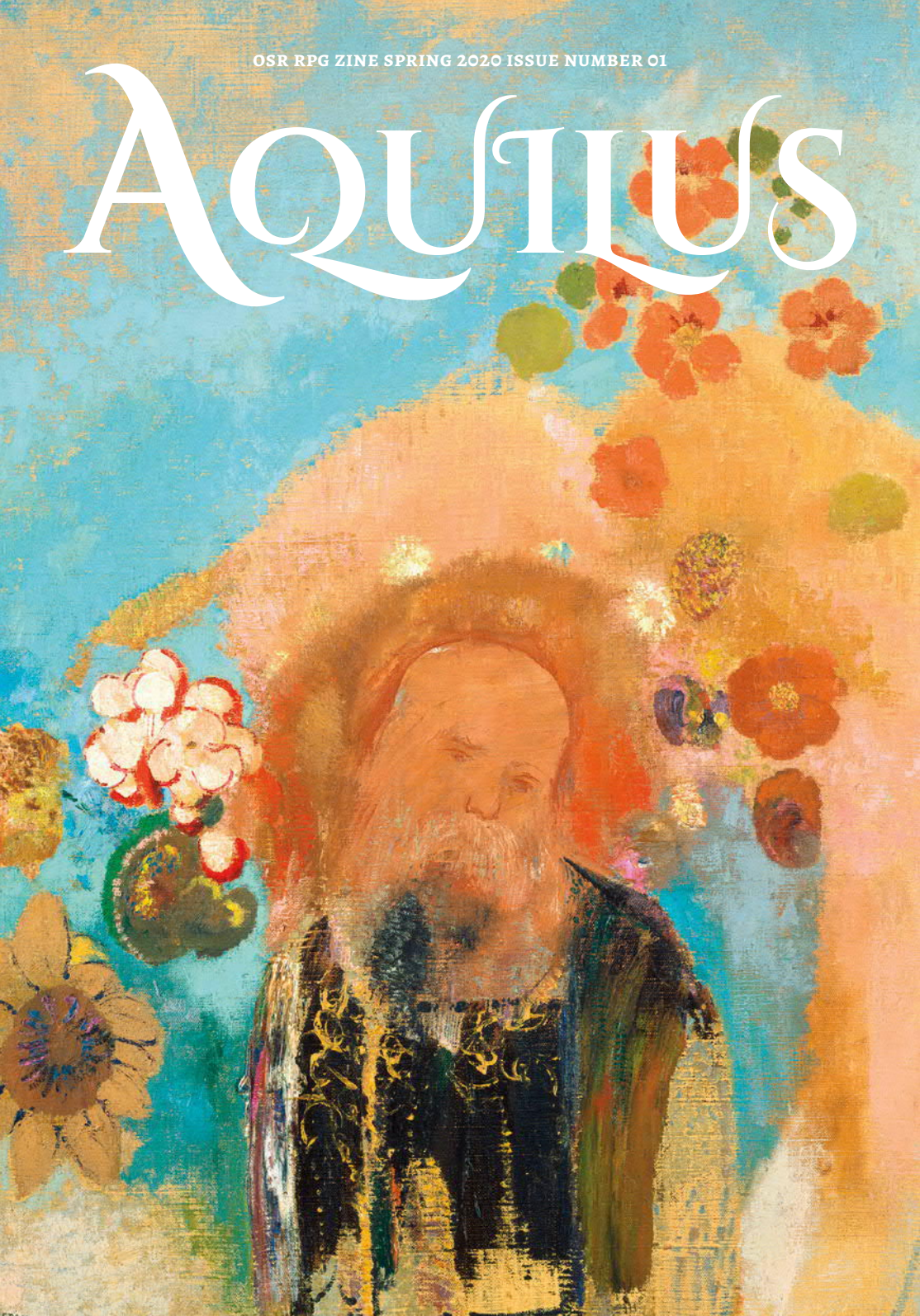


OSR RPG ZINE SPRING 2020 ISSUE NUMBER 01

# AQUUS





# AQUILUS

OSR RPG ZINE SPRING 2020 ISSUE NUMBER 01

**IDEAS FOR USE WITH TRADITIONAL ROLE-PLAYING GAMES  
& THEIR MODERN EDITIONS**

**CONCEPT, WRITING & LAYOUT**

Vasili Kaliman

**INSPIRATION**

Gary Gygax, M.A.R. Barker, Marc Miller, Moldvay Cook B/X,  
H.P. Lovecraft, the Cryo Chamber music label.

**ART**

Cover: Evocation Of Roussel, 1912 by Odilon Redon (1840–1916).

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Typeset in Manuale, Roboto, Roberta, Euclid, Losta Mosta & Alegreya.

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# WELCOME TO AQUILUS

My return to role-playing games after a two-decade pause was via the OSR, the various modern interpretations of original rulesets. Upon re-entry, I discovered thriving online communities dedicated to older-style RPGs in the form of blogs, podcasts, forums, and even a new branch of scholarship focused on the history of the hobby. This not only reignited my interest with vigor, but also illuminated exceptional material I was unaware of, such as M. A. R. Barker's lavishly textured world of *Tékumel* from *Empire of the Petal Throne*, the depth of which was revelatory.

In 2015, I aspired to write a fantasy setting and commenced working on *Aquilus*. Rather than pursue traditional RPG world-building methods such as committing to a genre, designing maps, historical timelines, etc., I would keep these details vague and instead attempt to convey mood and atmosphere. I still don't know what *Aquilus* is yet, but one word to describe it's ambiance is *hallucinogenic* — much like the painting on the cover of this issue.

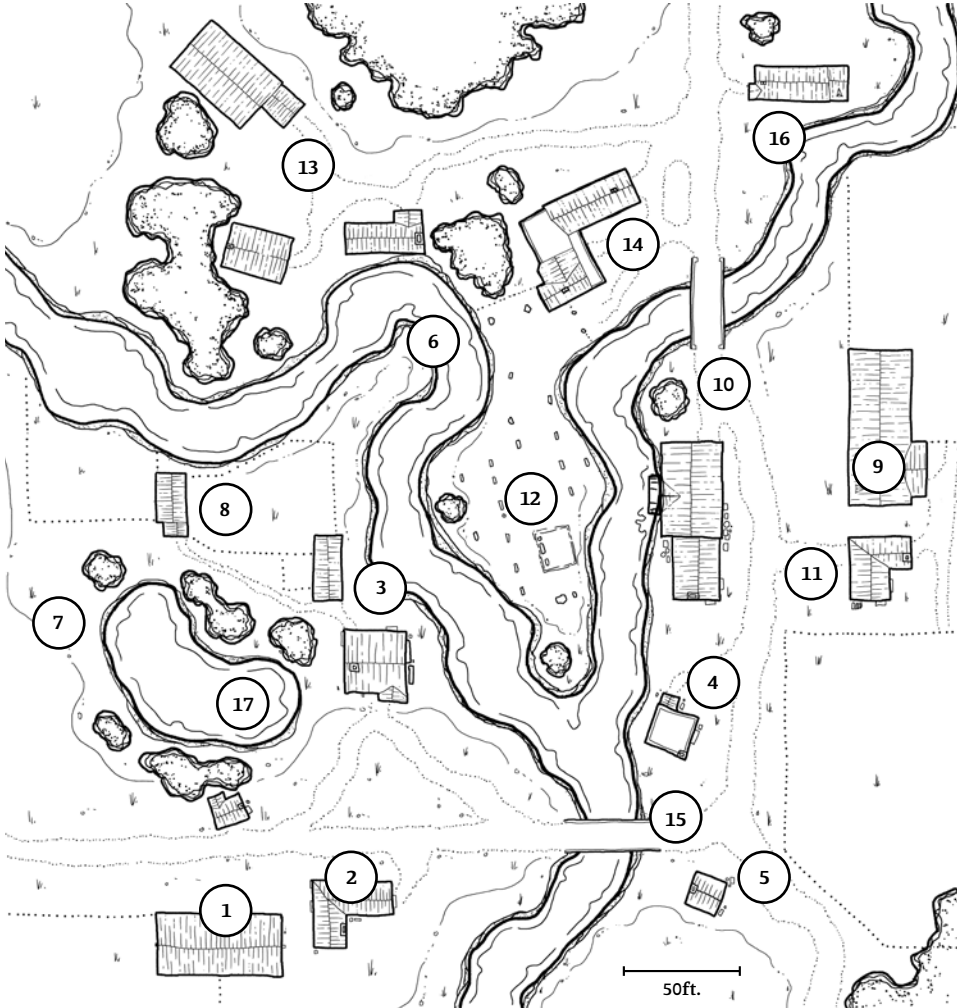
By 2019, I'd written nearly a thousand pages of notes and began considering the most suitable method to organize these ideas into a coherent form. My initial plans were to develop an iteration of a traditional hexcrawl and campaign book. As I began venturing down that path, I realized not only did it exceed my abilities to produce a publication of such scope, I also felt it wasn't the most contemporaneous way to present what I wanted to convey. That's why this zine exists.

In each issue, I will detail a location in the realm of *Aquilus* with a map and information on keyed elements. Every issue will also include original material such as random tables, magic items, spells, beasts, and other ideas directly relating to the location or greater setting. The informality of a zine will give me the latitude to experiment and allow this world to unfold in unexpected ways. As I write further issues, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of *Aquilus* and surprise myself with the unexpected in the process.

A suggestion is to make *Aquilus* a human-centric setting in terms of character classes and the general populace. Other traditional RPG race/classes such as dwarves, gnomes, halflings, and elves probably exist, but rather than make them available as player options, assume they are uncommon to enhance their mystique — perhaps use them as NPCs instead. But it's ultimately your game, so adjust whatever works for you. On a final note, this is made to be played using original edition rules, although I have utilized some material found in 1e (such as classes, magic items, spells, etc.), and have treated AC 9 as unarmored.

I hope you enjoy the inaugural issue and encourage referees and players to find inspiration from ideas within to use in your own games.

— Vasili Kaliman, May 2020



# Ager Sonus

- Ager Sonus is a small settlement located in Aquilus.
- Drop this as an interlude into your existing campaign, or use it within an expansive Aquilus campaign as the setting unfolds in subsequent issues.
- Use random tables in this issue to create hooks and further develop the fiction.

## 1. The Alchemist

Here lives an **alchemist** who spends his time producing explosive substances and observing a magical pool of water. The surface of the pool reveals random events in time and space.

His writing desk is covered with parchments and journals. He is seeking the answer to an unsolvable riddle.

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**Alchemist:** druid 2nd level, AC 7 [12], hp 8, war hammer (1d4+1).

**Spells:** entangle, faerie fire, warp wood.

**Inventory:** leather armor, feathered cap, low hard boots, cloak, leather backpack, mistletoe, bone dice, small mirror, iron rations (9 days), waterskin, small iron box, torch (2), 50 ft rope.

**Treasure:** a red garnet (80gp), a magnificent glass jar of perfume (150gp), a scroll case made of silver with brass endcaps and decorated with 8 amethyst gems (243gp), a gold-colored decanter of wine (32gp), a crystal that creates a tiny flame when rubbed (34gp), roll for **1 book** (page 22).

**Magic items:** potion of treasure finding, ring of charisma, roll for **1 magic item** (pages 24-25).

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## 2. The Sister

Within this eccentrically decorated home is a **sorceress** who has been in a state of suspended animation for one thousand years as the result of a curse. It is rumored she is last in a long line of casters who descended from the most influential astrologer to ever reside in Aquilus.

She is being looked over by her loving and melancholic **sister**, who is waiting for the sorceress to awaken. If the PCs enter their home, the sister will attempt to strike a bargain, offering them great treasure to locate an item that may help the sorceress rise from her slumber.

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**Sorceress:** magic-user 7th level, AC 6 [13], hp 22, no weapons.

**The Sister:** (see page 32).

**Treasure:** a delightful small journal filled with love poetry and bound in animal skin (130gp), a lovely ceremonial dagger (250gp), unique musical chimes (105gp), a marvelous glass jar of perfume (119gp), an odd glass hemisphere that constantly repeats words in an unknown language (50gp).

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### 3. The Candle

A giant candle is embedded in the ground. Every evening, the villagers light the candle and complete a ritual.

Flames reach 6 ft high, hot wax drips down the side, the area is filled with a refreshing fragrance, and multi-colored glimmering shards of light float gently on the air currents. The wick is composed of gold and worth 800gp if stripped from the wax.

Extinguishing the flame will call forth 1d4 **vapor spirits** to emerge from the wisps of smoke and attack. Any PCs within a 10 ft range risk breathing in vapor and must make a save vs breath at or be choked, after which the vapor will depart from the PCs mouth as a nauseating, oily black residue.

At times, vapor spirits appear solid, usually when they are about to strike victims. PCs may roll an attack vs AC to ward them off by swinging a weapon or similar object, but weapons do no damage to them. The referee may choose to have other things (such as magic-based attacks) affect them.

If somehow slain, a vapor spirit emits a burst of flash-fire that inflicts 1 point of damage to everyone within 10 ft.

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**Vapor Spirits (1d4):** AC 7 [12], HD 2+2, hp 12, choke (save vs breath at per round, or suffer 1d3 points of damage per round and STR drain). STR drain: lose 1 STR per round unless a save is made, if reduced to 0 hp or 0 STR victim dies of suffocation.

**Special:** immune to cold, charm, hold and other mental-based attacks.

**Treasure** (hidden under soil at the candle's base): lapis lazuli (9gp), 2d4 gems worth 1d50gp each, a comb of silver (100gp), a brass device with circular plates that rotate and click (75gp).

**Magic items:** dagger +1, incense of meditation (3 cones).

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### 4. The Crypt

Here stands an aged crypt made of carved quartz. The area around the structure is intensely cold and frost clings to the door.

A lineage of notable landowners lay to rest within. Rumors tell that a terrible creature sleeps beneath. Residents from several villages came here decades ago to seal the crypt and entrances to caverns below.

Mysterious sigils are carved on the sides. PCs of the magical classes will have a 50% chance of recognizing the carvings depict raising of the dead. Should the PCs dare to unseal the crypt, roll on the table below.

#### D8 What's under the crypt?

- 1 A colossally sized cocoon. Something is moving around inside and excreting a wretched, pungent substance.
- 2 A celestial plane, that fills the PCs with a sense of peace.
- 3 Countless sculptures of beings that aren't human.
- 4 Four balls of hovering light, giving off a lurid, green glow each equivalent to a torch. Anyone touching the light can mentally command the four globes to fly around with them for 1d4 hours.
- 5 A vast underground lake that glows. A boat and ferryman awaiting the party.
- 6 Alien machinery.
- 7 A small urn filled with light blue dust. Any villagers that have accompanied the party flee in terror.
- 8 A faded mosaic covers the floor, with depictions of the afterlife.







## 5. The Tattooist

Here lives a **blind tattooist**. If the PCs are outside his home, he will come out to greet them. He lives with a host of exotic, small pets with four legs and wings.

On close inspection, the PCs will notice his face is covered in fine tattoos that seem to move. He tells the party he originated from a city made of light, that is a few weeks travel from Ager Sonus.

In a corner of his exquisite garden is a private burial ground with three headstones.

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**Blind Tattooist:** thief 3rd level, AC 8 [11], hp 10, dagger (1d4) or sling (1d4+1, 8 bullets).

**Inventory:** studded leather armor, feathered cap, high soft boots, leather backpack; thief tools, iron rations (8 days), waterskin, hooded lantern (3 oil), 50 ft rope.

**Treasure:** a green spinel gem (68gp), a superb axe blade made of mithril with 3 gems (jasper) decorating the blade (435gp), a fine musical horn (44gp), roll for **1 book** (page 22).

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## 6. The Riverbed

A crystal clear, shallow section of the river. Close observation reveals the riverbed is not sand or rock, but packed skulls of countless humans. 1d6 skulls appear to be made of jade and 1d6 of gold. The PCs have an 80% chance of noticing the skulls from the river's edge.

The skulls are cursed, and PCs that remove them from the riverbed will suffer -2 on all attacks and saves whilst in their possession. If they are taken out of Ager Sonus, they will transform back to worthless human bone.

1d10+2 **river scouts** are sitting around the skulls, closely resembling them and blending in. These creatures are small, measuring 1 ft long, with a hard exoskeleton and multiple legs. They have slimy skin and numerous eyes.

River scouts are artificially grown in farms, then sold to serve as spies and news gatherers. They use the vast river systems and waterways in Aquilus to discreetly travel from place to place. Some groups including faction members, researchers, and information merchants even have their eyes extracted and replaced with an artificially grown organic substance, that provides them the ability to see through the creature's eyes.

River scouts have a 90% chance of camouflaging themselves within any environment. Primarily water-dwellers, they can survive on land for up to 2 hours per day. There is a 10% chance PCs will recognize the creatures are present. They will attack if PCs enter the water to retrieve skulls.

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**River Scouts (1d10+2):** AC 5 [14], HD 1, hp 4, noxious spray (special) and spines (1d4).

**Special:** surprises on 1-4 if not detected; attacks using a noxious, liquid spray with range of 5 ft that stuns victim for a 2 rounds, save vs poison to avoid, effects are cumulative; will then attempt to attack with spines on next round; stunned victims can neither move nor take action.

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## 7. The Bloated Mass

A bloated mass of protoplasm of indeterminate type oozes from a crack in the ground. A strong dagger thrust into the thing's mass will release a stream of pale, thick, blue liquid (about a gallon) before the wound seals itself several minutes later. Villagers come to collect fluid in jars, to use as food and burn as lantern oil.

On any visit, 4d4 villagers will be present. The odorless fluid has a pungent taste, and a cup full will provide all of a person's nutritional needs for a day.

## 8. The Forger

Here dwells a **forger** who specializes in blackmail and translation of rare languages. He claims to have been resurrected. Small amounts of water boil at his touch.

Examination of his home will reveal several lexicons, scrolls, manuals, tablets, books, and codexes scattered throughout. He has several prayer rugs on the floor.

Further investigation under the rugs will uncover a secret trapdoor. Opening the door will expose a wooden staircase leading down into darkness.

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**Forger:** assassin 5th level, AC 4 [15], hp 21, battle axe +1 (1d8+1).

**Inventory:** studded leather armor, small shield, low soft boots, belt, leather backpack, hooded lantern (5 oil), leather parchment case.

**Treasure:** a stunning pendant of gold and gems (2,000gp), golden yellow topaz (200gp), an unbreakable glass pyramid filled with what appears to be ice or snow (64gp), roll for **2 books** (page 22).

**Magic items:** battle axe +1, poison potion (save vs poison or die), leather armor +1, potion of fire breath.

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## 9. The Tavern

A tavern and lodge where PCs may stay for the evening. Aside from warm meals and bedding, the **tavern owner** offers the PCs some special items:

- figs at 50gp each. Eating one fig immediately substitutes a full night's rest for the recovery of hit points, but will not do so again until the eater rests normally for 1 night.
- dried tea at 25gp per dose. A brewed cup reduces maximum hit points by 1d4 for 1d6 hours, but grants 180 ft infravision for the same amount of time.
- blue apples at 25gp each. One apple counts as a full day's ration.

If PCs lodge here overnight, they realize late the following day that several mundane items are missing from their belongings.

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**Tavern Owner:** fighter 5th level, AC 4 [15], hp 28, heavy flail (1d6+2) or sling (20 stones, 1d4+1).

**Inventory:** chain mail armor, medium shield, great helm, large sack, small silver mirror, 50 foot rope, tan fur boots, dark-red belt with a platinum buckle (50gp), white pants, white tunic, 321gp.

**Treasure:** an exquisite musical lute (418gp), a glass bottle of hippogriff pepper worth 143gp to an herbalist, a splendid decorative dagger made of mithril where handle is decorated with 6 golden pearls (207gp, 1d4 damage), a marvelous green-colored decanter of Riverfolk blood worth 158gp to an alchemist, a magnificent diary titled *The Manual of Aquilus* (75gp).

**Magic items:** oil of slipperiness, roll for **1 magic item** (pages 24-25).

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## 10. The Children

A gathering of  $1d4+4$  villagers singing in high-pitched voices. The sound condenses in the air as multi-colored, floating objects. Children in the village play with the objects, that evaporate after a few minutes, leaving behind a fine mist.

## 11. The Singing Flames

Outside this structure is an area of hard black ground, with web-like cracks permeating it. It is slippery due to an oil-like substance, and movement per round is limited to a very minimum. Periodically, small flames will burst from the ground and begin pleasantly singing to visitors in an unrecognizable language. Singing Flames are found all over Aquilus.

## 12. The Auction

A gathering of  $1d10+10$  people, where magical herbs are auctioned to the highest bidder. The auctioneer standing on a raised wooden box in the center of the crowd is a deceptive **confidence trickster**. His herbs are fraudulent and without magical properties.

He will attempt to deceive the PCs and offer goods at low price. There is a 30% chance that any potions purchased by the PCs will be poisonous, which if ingested will require a save vs poison or suffer  $1d6$  points of damage.

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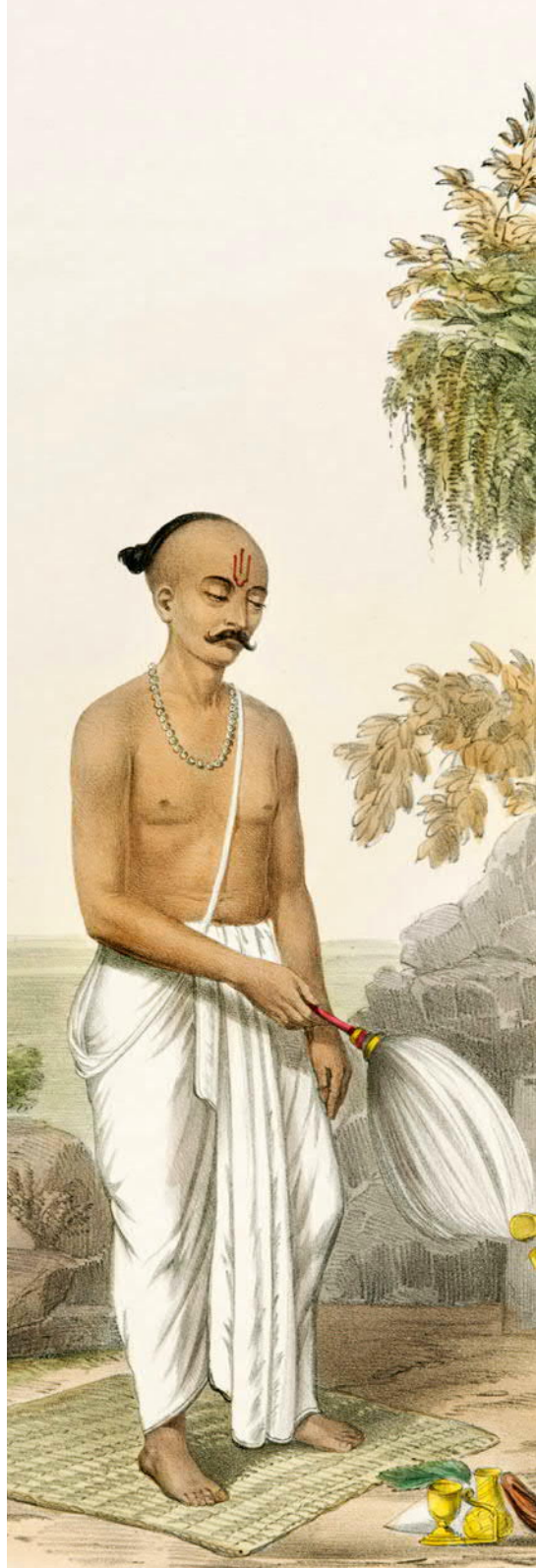
**Confidence Trickster:** illusionist 4th level, AC 7 [12], hp 12, dagger (1d4) or dart (1d3).

**Spells:** read illusionist magic, blindness, gaze reflection; change self, ventriloquism, magic mouth.

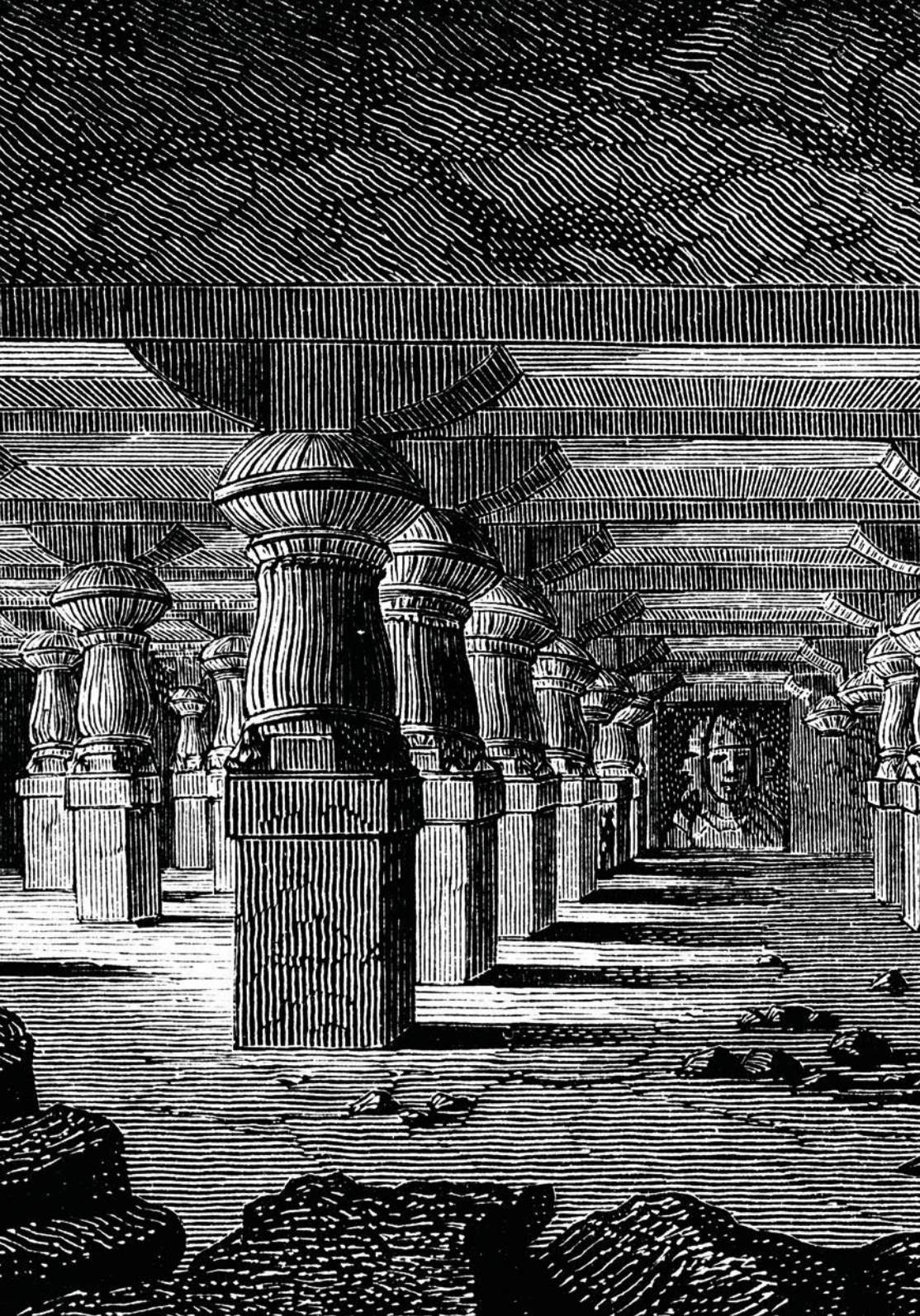
**Inventory:** robe, silver dagger, low hard boots, cloak, leather backpack, iron rations (5 days), waterskin.

**Treasure:** three shoes meant for a non-human creature (178gp), a jar of green serum with a sweet smell (15gp).

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### 13. The Riverfolk

Here reside 1d8+6 **Riverfolk** (see page 35). They are tall humanoids, malformed and mutated. They communicate by making deep, moaning sounds to each other.

Riverfolk are scavengers, making a living from protoplasmic fog they collect by stretching sheets between staves to catch it every morning. The sodden cloth is scraped and squeezed to yield a viscous yellow fluid that is collected in covered earthen jars before the sunlight can degrade it.

After another day passes, the protoplasm can be inhaled from bottles. It has a different effect for everyone consuming it.

#### D10 What are the effects of consuming protoplasm?

- 1 Quickens the mind, adding +2 to initiative for 1d4 rounds.
- 2 +2 to save vs mind-affecting spells for 1d4 turns.
- 3 Faeces become highly nutritious for the next day, and can be stored for a week before becoming foul.
- 4 Tongue swells up to twice its normal size and the user cannot speak for 1d4+4 hours.
- 5 +2 to AC against ranged attacks for 1d8 rounds.
- 6 Heals minor wounds.
- 7 Nausea and vomiting, take 1d4 damage.
- 8 The PCs eyes glow with the strength of candle light for the next day.
- 10 Save vs poison or die.

The protoplasm also reduces blood flow. If subsequent doses are taken during the same day, roll save vs poison. A failed save indicates the user suffers 1 point of damage, the dose has no effect, nor does natural healing occur that night. Each jar has 2 doses and worth 80gp.

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**Riverfolk (1d8+6):** AC 5 [14], HD 3, hp 8 each, claw (1d4 and 25% chance of disease).

**Special:** (see page 35).

**Inventory** (in lair): Riverfolk bones in the form of shrines, jars full of the eyes of beasts immersed in protoplasm, filthy rags with equal parts blood and old food on it, stolen liquor, 100lb of fine wax and carving tools, a tattooing kit with many different colored inks, maps with hand-written locations, narrow wooden box containing forty rolls of quality smoking leaf, dirty children's toys, jars of mold and fungi, buried fetuses of aborted Riverfolk, 1d00gp and 1d100sp in a sealed urn of terracotta encrusted by salts and difficult to discern from the uneven floor.

**Treasure** (in lair): a jar of gold human teeth (350gp), a selection of musical instruments made of rare metals (250gp), silver prayer beads (110gp), a stone mask of a priest inlaid with jade (1800gp), 1d4 scrolls containing annotated histories of settled enclaves in Aquilus housed in a glorious horn case (325gp).

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## 14. The Scholars

Here reside a group of 1d4+3 **scholars** led by a **high mage**. They live as recluses, involved in deep study of the history of Aquilus, reaching back thousands of years. They are completely hairless and phobic about light.

The scholars and their mage are wary of visitors and will be hesitant to welcome them into their home. Only charismatic PCs could convince them to enter. If the PCs succeed, they will demand a 10gp tribute from each member of the party to advance their studies.

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**Scholars (1d4+3):** druids 1st level, AC 7 [12], hp 2 (each), staff (1d4).

**Spells:** Each know detect magic and purify water.

**High Mage:** cleric 4th level, AC 2 [17], hp 21, heavy war hammer (1d6+1).

**Spells:** command, remove fear, sanctuary, protection from evil, resist fire, slow poison.

**Inventory:** shield +1, banded mail armor, low soft boots, iron holy symbol, holy water, iron rations (9 days), bread, bottle of ale, empty flask, bone dice, flint & steel, fishing net, rope (40 ft), waterskin (3 each), small silver mirror, 10gp.

**Treasure:** a large green cloth pouch of unique coins with symbols (worth a total of 146gp), a mug made of steel with 10 gems (amethyst) set around the top (180gp), a pair of shoes that produce sound and light with each step (175gp), various maps, an assortment of **1d6 books** (page 22).

**Magic items:** 1d3 magic items hidden in the study. Roll 1d4: **1)** rod of cancellation (1d20 charges); **2)** wand of detecting minerals and metals (1d6 charges); **3)** oil of etherealness; **4)** potion of delusion; **5)** scroll of protection; **6)** ring of water walking.

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## 15. The Bridge

Here is a time-worn bridge over the river, constructed from one solid piece of carved stone. This can be crossed by PCs without incident during daylight. They should exercise caution in the early evening however, as 1d8+2 **river orbs** regularly gather here at dusk and feed throughout the night.

River orbs are bulbous, semi-transparent creatures that levitate over rivers in Aquilus, with long, tube-like feeding tails dangling into the water below. They thrive on the excrement of Riverfolk (*see encounter area 13 and page 35*) floating in the water, pulling up liquid and nutrients through their tail and into their bodies. They communicate with each other in a language composed of physical tail movements. Their feeding-tail can also be used as a weapon, piercing victims for 1d4 points of damage.

Should any PCs attempt to cross the bridge once the sun has set, river orbs will not hesitate to attack those who disrupt their feeding. Villagers avoid the bridge at night.

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**River Orbs (1d8+2):** 7 [12], HD 1, hp 4, tail pierce (1d4 and special).

**Special:** victims pierced by tail must roll save vs poison or be stunned for 2 rounds, with hits and saves at -2; slain orbs explode in a caustic liquid spray affecting everyone in a 10' radius, victims make save vs breath or take further 1d4 points of damage, those that make a save will wretch and gag for the next 1d4 rounds, during which they make attacks at -2; once first blood is drawn from a PC, the entire pack of orbs descend into a frenzy, attacking twice every 3 rounds and gaining 1 bonus to AC.

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## 16. The Vivisectionist

Beside this bend of the river lives a charming **vivisectionist**, who enjoys cutting people up to see how they function.

She has deep-sea blue eyes but no eyelids, and must constantly wipe her tear ducts to keep them clean. She has a tattoo on her neck that is recognized by one of the PCs as a sigil of chaos.

Immersing any wooden object into the river here will change it into a spear or arrow when dipped into it and pulled out. Animal life is unaffected.

An exiled caster, she will offer the PCs **1d3 magical elixirs** for sale (*see table on right*). The price for each dose is d20+100gp.

**Vivisectionist:** druid 4th level, AC 9 [11], hp 6, scimitar at +2 (1d6+2) or 2 x dagger at +1 (1d4+1/1d4+1).

**Spells:** pass without trace, shillelagh, speak with animals, feign death, pyrotechnics.

**Inventory:** studded leather armor, scimitar, dagger, mistletoe, blanket, backpack, bread, bottle of ale, candle, bell, garlic, torch, bullseye lantern, wolfsbane, tent, black thigh boots, purple short pants, dark-purple feathered hat, black doublet, and a small pouch.

**Treasure:** a gorgeous large red rug with a dark green design (150gp), a morning star ball made of adamant with 3 gems (fire opal) decorating the ball (84gp), a set of silverware (200gp), a strange journal bound in red animal skin with a silver colored symbol on the front, similar to her tattoo (100gp), two magnets that become one thousand times heavier when put together (65gp).

**Magic items:** dust of illusion, hat of disguise, roll for **2 magic items** (*pages 24-25*).

### D10 What magical elixirs are offered for sale by the vivisectionist?

- 1 Breath can extinguish fires, up to but not including dragon fire.
- 2 A blade coated with this will cut no flesh for one week.
- 3 Make whole one burnt object by dousing.
- 4 Glues a magic caster's mouth shut from sunrise to sunset.
- 5 Dribbled on earth, generates quicksand.
- 6 Added to a liquid, instant boiling.
- 7 Reacts with air, creating dense green fog 100 cubic ft for 1d4 hours. All rolls at -2 inside.
- 8 Telekinesis for objects smaller than your skull, last 1d4 turns.
- 9 Poured on a plant, instantly grows to maturity.
- 10 Immediately and permanently weld two metal items together.

## 17. The Pond

If a damaged PC bathes in this pond, they will heal one HD for each turn. There is a 50% risk of being mutated each turn, roll for **1 mutation** (*page 23*).

If a recently deceased PC is submerged in the pond for three turns, there is a 30% chance they will be revived and restored to 1 HD. In addition, they will gain **2 mutations** (*page 23*).



# GOSSIP

## D16 What kinds of things are overheard in Ager Sonus?

- 1 Beggars in the village peddle a powder they claim eliminates the soul from the body, allowing it to roam independently.
- 2 A local musician is rumored to resurrect people by playing their instrument. It can kill people too.
- 3 A child missing for years was seen running through the village late one night.
- 4 A fountain spouting water that heals all sickness has erupted from the ground nearby. It is attracting unwanted visitors.
- 5 Glands of a dangerous beast in the area can be made into a very addictive and valuable narcotic. Dead specimens bring a good price.
- 6 A local cult is due to perform a great ritual at an astrologically appropriate time in 1d4 days.
- 7 At night, ghostly lights flare and fade deep beneath the surface of a nearby lake. Rumor holds that a massive structure used for war slumbers here.
- 8 Several months ago, a beautiful white tower appeared nearby. It has no visible means of entry and it's heavily warded against all forms of magic.
- 9 Some residents can generate phosphorescent light at will from their bodies.
- 10 Within the village lives a man who can often be found drinking at the tavern. He claims to have mastered the art of reversing time.
- 11 There is sprawling underworld under Aquilus.
- 12 Children in a nearby village have all been turned to stone.
- 13 A map has been found by a villager showing locations of three ancient cities.
- 14 At night, everybody has the same recurring dream.
- 15 The mists whisper secrets at midnight if you venture into them alone.
- 16 Women in the village have been giving birth to otherworldly creatures. The women are killed immediately afterwards and fed to the newborn.

# EVENTS

## D16 What kinds of things happen in Ager Sonus?

- 1 1d10+10 villagers walk by in single file. Many weep openly, speaking of missing friends or kin.
- 2 A thick fog materializes. Anyone within takes a -2 penalty to all combat rolls. The fog lasts 1d10+5 minutes.
- 3 A long lost expedition returns out of the wilderness, not knowing they have been gone for decade.
- 4 High up in the sky at least 1000 ft, 1d3 sailing ships fly in close formation. Oars can be seen falling from the side, cutting through the air in unison.
- 5 1d4+2 armed cultists (AC 6 [13], hp 9 each, short sword at 1d4 damage) are passing through the village. They are checking everyone's papers and will question any visitors who don't reside here.
- 6 1d4 winged creatures fly overhead at 1d100+200 ft. They each carry a rider.
- 7 Bells start ringing loudly. Villagers are screaming and running to shelter.
- 8 The village crier delivers an important message.
- 9 A funeral procession.
- 10 A scraggly man comes up to the PCs and offers the ability of lucid dreaming at a bargain price. He takes out a bottle containing a purple mist swirling inside.
- 11 Dark clouds hover low overhead and a heavy rain and green, glowing pearls fall. Within minutes, the village is seemingly deserted as everyone seeks cover. A terrifying sound of a beast is heard nearby.
- 12 A dazzling meteor shower lights the sky in a rain of fire. That evening, the residents light great sacrificial bonfires to celebrate, in which animals and criminals are immolated.
- 13 A lost person who can't recall their identity. One of the PCs knew this person from their past and was certain they were dead.
- 14 A group of 1d4 gaunt villagers in tattered clothes walk up to the PCs and offer something for sale. They have holy symbols in their eyes instead of pupils.
- 15 1d4+2 balls of light suddenly hover in the air above the PCs. They give off a lurid, green glow and then disappear into thin air.
- 16 An elderly local mistakes a PC for a distant relative, scolds them for not visiting more often, and invites them to dinner.







# TOMES

## D16 What unique books are in Ager Sonus' private libraries?

- 1 An incomplete history of the future.
- 2 A volume consisting of a childlike representation with several brightly colored pictures of various recipes to prepare the dead for resurrection.
- 3 A book dealing with mathematics, the study of probabilities, numerical patterns and the like, that apparently shapes the world and everything in it. There are practical instruction in creating order through prayer.
- 4 A small book contains the diary of an explorer, detailing his many journeys up a major river. Included are some rough sketch maps of various locales.
- 5 Descriptions of great artifacts used by the dawn age peoples of Aquilus and their operation.
- 6 A short book with lurid pictures depicting foul cultists in the midst of their blasphemous rites.
- 7 An account of an adventurer entering and escaping the underworld in Aquilus. There are several maps inside, many unfinished.
- 8 Treatise on a long lost kingdom smothered by the woods.
- 9 Reading from this book creates a link with an ancient being through dreams.
- 10 Copies of ancient maps from fallen, elder or lost civilizations. The maps depict features or locations omitted from more recent maps.
- 11 A book detailing that when the stars are right, certain otherworldly creatures are said to slip into Aquilus from elsewhere. This book details a creature composed of nothing but strange colors, and contains a spell designed to call it. The spell requires hard-to-find components.
- 12 The future predictions of a historian of Aquilus who lived two centuries ago. His predictions continue on for another four thousand years.
- 13 A book on evil creatures that can live among society undetected. It warns of the perils of failing to be ever-vigilant against the threat they pose.
- 14 A book on research into several new spells, many dealing with astral travel.
- 15 An untitled bestiary listing harvestable components and magical uses of numerous creatures.
- 16 A battered, untitled treatise discussing spell-enhancing diagrams that work on mysterious principles, never before encountered by the PCs.

# METAMORPHOSIS

## D16 What happens to PCs when bathing in the pond? (page 17)

- 1 Their body is covered in painful, irritating boils that leak fluids and are prone to infection. Now only one hit point heals naturally every two days.
- 2 Their body generates a cold, softly glowing light at night.
- 3 Their mental state and behavioral patterns can now be mapped to the moon and stars. As the stars migrate across the heavens, they influence the PCs biological state, increasing or decreasing certain abilities.
- 4 Once per day for 1d10 turns, the PC can separate into two identical beings, both with the same mind. These two bodies may act independently. Hit points are not increased and any damage one being suffers is suffered by the other.
- 5 Youth. De-age 2d10 years for the next 1d4 weeks.
- 6 Once per week, the PC can distill a vial of their blood into a potion to heal 1d4 hp.
- 7 A clone of the PC grows out of their stomach falls off in 1d6 days. It grows to maturity in 1D8+4 months.
- 8 They becomes strangely beautiful, unnaturally so, increasing CHA by +2.
- 9 They no longer have pulse or life aura, but are clearly not dead.
- 10 They can lock eyes with a small creature, that must save vs paralysis or be hypnotized.
- 11 An innocent was murdered in the lake and the act has left its psychic impression in the water. The PC is beset by nightmares of drowning the next morning, and suffers -1 to all rolls for that day.
- 12 Save vs spells or the PC is confused for 1d6+1 hours, -2 penalty to hits and saves.
- 13 They can make eye contact with someone and know their worst fear.
- 14 They can make objects translucent by touching them. The larger the object, the longer it takes.
- 15 Dreams leak once a week. They can attract entities that feed upon them.
- 16 Their blood becomes invisible.

# ARCANA

## ARTIFACTS, DEVICES & OTHER ODDITIES. ROLL D20



### 1. Jar of Life

A jar formed of translucent material. Organic matter, such as a severed limb, small creature or plant, placed inside remains alive until removed regardless of any conditions.

### 2. Crown of Eyes

When activated, the crystal spheres separate from the crown and fly around the wearer at immediate range for an hour. The wearer can see anything the crystal spheres see.

### 3. Drum of Travel

When beaten, this drum summons several beasts for the drummer's travel needs. The drum may be used once per week and summons one beast for every turn spent drumming. The maximum number of beasts summoned is 1d6. The beasts will not fight, and can they travel at full normal movement. They disappear at night.

### 4. Dust of Forgetfulness

When thrown at a living creature, the dust causes the victim to forget everything that happened to them during the last day. After one week, the lost memories will be restored.

### 5. Essence Extractor

Extracts the consciousness of a pacified or willing being to be stored within. The consciousness can be injected into still-warm body of a dead being, giving them a new vessel to inhabit.

### 6. Guiding Light

When this candle is lit, it directs a beam of light 50 ft in length in the direction the holder must go to reach whatever goal is on their mind. Lasts for 6 hours.

### 7. Potion of Location

Drinker dreams the location of something they lost or misplaced.

**8. Ice Pipe**

When smoking this pipe using a particular strain of tobacco, any smoke exhaled will be of sub-zero temperature. It will deal 1d4 points of damage to a living target. Target must be within a 3 ft range.

**9. Initiative Dust**

Snorted through the nose, the dust creates paranoid hyper-vigilance. It reduces sleep requirements, accelerates the aging process, creates constant perspiration, and adds +2 to initiative rolls. Lasts for 1 turn.

**10. Lamp of Eternal Light**

These magic lamps are made of crude bronze. They are set with red glass beads that give out a dim red light, the strength of two candles. They will burn for eternity and cannot be extinguished.

**11. Light Gloves**

The user's hands are sheathed in gloves made of solid light for one hour. The user can touch or handle dangerous substances.

**12. Lute of Finding**

If this lute is played by a skilled musician, they will see a glowing trail appear, that leads to the subject of the song. If they stop playing the trail will vanish.

**13. Necklace of Fate**

The wearer of this necklace has a general feeling they are safe. The opposite is, in fact, the case. Any time something bad happens to the group, the wearer of this necklace bears the brunt of the misfortune.

**14. Purifying Incense**

A stick of this incense will purify the air and allow a PC to smell emotions within 30 ft. It is 70% accurate and burns for about 20 minutes.

**15. Rod of Terror**

Hitting this rod against a metal object will cause anyone who hears the sound to save vs spells at -2, or flee or cower in terror for 1d10 rounds. After being struck, the rod will continue to softly vibrate and may not be used again for d12+12 hours.

**16. Staff of Abundance**

When the wielder strikes the ground with the staff and expends a charge, the staff will create food and fresh water, enough to feed up to 12 people for one day. 6 charges.

**17. Thought Amulet**

A character who successfully activates this ability may send a brief mental message to the mind of any intelligent creature within 360 ft. They do not need to see the target to use this ability, though they do need to have a general sense of their location. This message cannot be more than one short sentence.

**18. Tobacco of Accelerated Healing**

When smoking this strain of tobacco, the PC gains no additional benefit from magical healing, but instead, their natural healing rate is doubled for the next twenty-four hours.

**19. Yesterglass**

When held before the user's face, this panel allows the user to see the last major activity that occurred in the area, even if it was years or centuries earlier. The effect lasts for one minute per use. 10 charges.

**20. Protoplasmic Gel**

A jar of gel made by the Riverfolk. It can dissolve any material at the rate of 1 inch per round. It has two uses and lasts for 1 hour.





# LOCALS

## D10 Who are the people living here?

- 1 Grave digger. Is a compulsive liar. Nearby cult wants them dead.
- 2 Fortune teller. Constantly smokes a narcotic. Is harboring a criminal.
- 3 Actor. Collects souls and keeps them in a bottle for their own amusement.
- 4 Mathematician. White pupils. Has learned how to commune with the dead.
- 5 Ex-smuggler. Missing facial features. Beloved by all villagers.
- 6 Herbalist. Fears to touch the ground. Procures human sacrifices for a local cults.
- 7 Scribe. Absurdly tall. Is thought to be a miracle worker.
- 8 Envoy. Thinks humans are disgusting. Can interpret dreams.
- 9 Patron. Decrepit and immobile. Is planning a mass-suicide.
- 10 Retired explorer. Smells awful. Wants body parts to create undead slaves .

## D10 What are their customs?

- 1 Physicians write holy prayers onto scrolls, that their patients must ingest to get better.
- 2 The ownership and use of mirrors is heretical and punishable by death. Mirrors are believed to create souls, that is a duty of gods alone.
- 3 Certain children trade eyes with their parents as a rite of passage.
- 4 A thriving marketplace exists for luminous plants.
- 5 Every family feeds and grooms a hideous four-legged creature that lives in their home.
- 6 Parent never name their third child. They are drowned in the lake when born.
- 7 The human women of the village breast feed the Riverfolk children until age two.
- 8 The wealthy throw gold coins on the street to watch the poor fight over them.
- 9 Villagers must pierce their tongues with a communal wooden spike at age ten.
- 10 Some residents choose to stop aging by ingesting sap from a very poisonous plant. It instantly kills most people, and chances of survival are very slim.

# SEARCH THE BODY

## 2D12 What trinkets are found when searching victims?

- 2 A blob of clay that takes on various mysterious shapes when left alone.
- 3 A small metal container that makes a loud but brief, shrill tone when opened.
- 4 A collection of letters all written in the same hand. They are undated, but describe events that happened a thousand years ago.
- 5 A needle and ink kit for inscribing tattoos in a variety of colors.
- 6 A vial of oil that heats any skin it's rubbed on for an hour.
- 7 A shard of glass that changes color depending on how it is held up to light.
- 8 A vial of liquid that releases droplets of light every 50 ft. The droplets stay dark for one day, then crack with light and become visible for five days.
- 9 Lenses that allow the wearer to see various invisible energies.
- 10 An object that has no function, but vibrates in a way that suggests it could be used for distributing extreme pain.
- 11 An object that hears up to ten seconds of sound, and repeats it at a vastly increased volume on command. 1d10 charges.
- 12 A compass that points to the nearest source of fresh water.
- 13 A two-headed humanoid fetus in a glass jar.
- 14 A small green crystal that shatters easily but then instantly reforms.
- 15 A silver ring set with an eye gem. It occasionally blinks.
- 16 A ring that reduces the wearer's sense of touch.
- 17 A large key. Some of its teeth appear to have been modified with a file.
- 18 A note written in a complex cipher.
- 19 A wooden three-dimensional puzzle.
- 20 A metal triangle that frightens off small animals with its presence.
- 21 A jar containing live insects made of pure light.
- 22 A rare, clear crystal prism that glows when used to cast spells.
- 23 Two glass hemispheres riddled with holes that fit together neatly.
- 24 A spyglass that allows the viewer to see great distance.



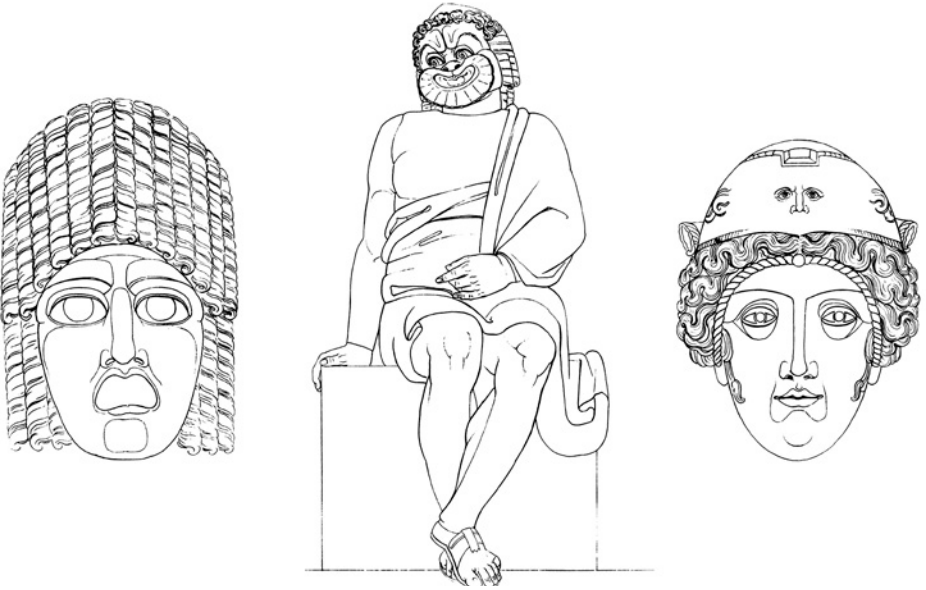




# CLIQUEES

## D20 What do villagers say about nearby cults and factions?

- 1 They are controlled by a sentient artifact that manipulates them to its own end. Their leader knows the answer to almost every question posed to them.
- 2 Their temple is near a dark and fog-shrouded swamp of glowing vegetation and breeding grounds of beasts. They have their tongues cut out and do not speak. Their leader has opened a portal to another plane.
- 3 They worship an immaculately carved statue near their temple, located deep within overgrown woods. They hybridize with non-humans. New members must drink poison and save vs death as an initiation ritual.
- 4 They suffer from persistent sickness and their children have birth defects. Their leader is a ruthless killer, who members would die for.
- 5 They are reformists with new ideas for control. They have groups of street children throughout the land in their employ as spies. Their temple is known for its stunning architecture and music.
- 6 They are a charity that helps desperate travelers, feeding the hungry and bringing food and water convoys to the needy. They deliberately expose themselves to mutagens.
- 7 They are starving, miserable beggars who are facing certain death. They take care to avoid sharp objects. They bleed an unknown substance.
- 8 They worship an overlord who awakens from cryonic sleep every decade to give new orders. Once per week, they must go to a specific shrine or sacred place.
- 9 They are working on plans for the reincarnation of a long-dead entity. One member has fled with important pieces of information and is being hunted. The leader is a great artist.
- 10 They are wealthy, thrill-seekers from powerful families. They practice intense anonymity and wear masks in public. Their leader is a mind reader.
- 11 They worship a monolith that causes past-life flashbacks. They travel on winged beasts. Some of the members are shape-changers.
- 12 They bury magical items and artifacts with the honored dead. Some of the cultists are members of an extraterrestrial race. A trader in the village has deceived the cult without realizing their true nature.



- 13 They are grave robbers who deal with local holy people to scare the town folk to pay for protection. They speak to each other in a language they have invented. The leader has mastered the art of time travel.
- 14 They are former assassins. They possess an artifact that alters life and accelerates evolution. Their temple is heavily guarded.
- 15 An evil wind has brought a plague to their temple. They avoid moonlight and can discern a voice that doesn't belong to one of their members.
- 16 They are an apocalypse cult that worship star gods. They have been murdering local farmers after they exposed their leader's past. Members meet once a month at the store-house of a local merchant and drink each other's blood.
- 17 They are the last remnants of a once-widespread faith. Their practices involve self-mutilation and sacrifices of newborn.
- 18 They have been seen digging up ancient graves and crypts, where they found mysterious tablets. Their leader is a great healer.
- 19 They carry news and letters across the land. There are tunnels under their temple that lead to secret places.
- 20 They use mysticism, astrology, and narcotics to make outrageous claims about the future, that many believe. Deep within their temple is the greatest library in Aquilus, filled with forbidden tomes.

# THE SISTER

The Sister is a being of extraordinary, otherworldly beauty, possibly not even human. She is well-spoken, small and slender and fluent in almost every ancient language ever spoken in Aquilus. She offers rumors (*page 19*) in exchange for poetry and prose. The villagers say she has been taking care of her sleeping sister for one thousand years.

Illusionist 9th level

**STR** 9 **DEX** 17 **CON** 12 **INT** 17 **WIS** 16 **CHA** 19

**AC** 5 [14] **HP** 31 **ATT** 2 x dagger at +2 (1d4+2/1d4+2) **ML** 10 **AL** Lawful **MV** 120' (30')

**DEATH** 13 **WANDS** 9 **STONE** 11 **BREATH** 13 **MAGIC** 10

**SPELLS** change self, wall of fog, audible glamour, detect illusion, light, fog cloud, whispering wind, alter self, wraithform, phantom steed, vacancy, dispel magic, dispel exhaustion.

## SPECIAL

- The Sister is swift, striking with a magical dagger made of river water. She has two attacks per round at +2 and inflicts 1d4+2 points of damage. Only she can use this weapon, it turns to simple water if removed from her grasp.
- Once per day, she can sing with a disturbing, high-pitched shrill, forcing up to 6 HD of victims to save versus spells. On a failed save, the victims will fall into a trance for 1d4 rounds. Victims can be commanded to perform any non-suicidal act, including attacking their own allies.
- Once per day, she can sing one of the most beautiful and moving lyrics ever written, after which she can cast heal, affecting up to 6 HD of creatures who listened to the song. This ability does not work on evil-aligned creatures. Against those, instead of heal, her song inflicts 1d4 points of damage with no save.

### D6 What's her motivation?

- 1 Revenge
- 2 To find love
- 3 Pleasure
- 4 Immortality
- 5 To find adventure
- 6 Past trauma

### D6 What's her spice?

- 1 Will only wear clothes of recently deceased villagers
- 2 Exploits weaknesses
- 3 Has a peculiar fondness for PCs that are injured
- 4 Expert at vanishing from sight
- 5 Fears the afterworld
- 6 Resorts to violence to solve problems







# RIVERFOLK

Riverfolk dwell on riverbanks that pass through settlements, feeding on immaterial energies in the water. Rivers in Aquilus accumulate the residual dreams of inhabitants, which are extracted at black lab refineries, then sold as costly tinctures to the affluent. These creatures are drawn to locations where humans dream regularly, which in turn keeps them content and docile. They can become violent should the residents stop dreaming entirely.

Lean and standing 6 to 7 ft tall, Riverfolk resemble nothing so much as a skeleton shrouded in a blanket of skin. They emit a flowery, spicy, sweet odor, and are often hooded in cloaks to mask their unattractive faces. They communicate through a perplexing mixture of groans, body language, pheromones, and variations in skin pigmentation that are usually imperceptible to most people. They have an unintelligible religion, the expression of which is drawing complex geometrical patterns on the ground. Legend has it Riverfolk once ruled over vast kingdoms, before being enslaved by many other races.

The populace tolerate living with Riverfolk, as they have developed the proficiency to formulate a yellow protoplasmic gel that is manufactured from the morning fog. The gel is a psychotropic substance with varying effects depending on who ingests it, that almost all residents become addicted to.

**AC** 5 [14] **HD** 3 (Leader 5) **ATT** 1 x claw (1d4 and 25% of disease) **ML** 9 **AL** Chaotic  
**MV** 120' (40') **DEATH** 13 **WANDS** 9 **STONE** 13 **BREATH** 9 **MAGIC** 14

## DISEASE

- Under the hard nails of Riverfolk is a filthy layer of mucus, excrement, and dirt. Any victims hit by their claw have a 25% chance of contracting a disease with no save.
- After 1d6 turns, those diseased will suffer 1 point of damage per turn and one point of lost STR per hour until the victim is at 10% of their original hit points and STR.
- Victims will suffer from nightmares so vivid, they will be unable to get restful sleep for the course of the disease (cannot recover lost hit points or memorize spells).
- The disease runs its course in 1d6 days, during which the victim cannot heal by naturally or magical means.

## SPECIAL

- Riverfolk have natural psychic abilities, that can be used as per the spells descriptions. They can utilize one of the following abilities, once per day: charm person (druid 2nd level), suggestion (magic-user 3rd level). Their mental abilities are weak however, and saves by victims are made at +2.
- Riverfolk secrete a captivating scent that is extremely pleasant and appeals to most species. If intimidated, they can discharge a considerable amount of the scent that is strong enough to affect victims within a 60 ft range. Those in range must save vs poison or approach Riverfolk close enough to engage in melee.

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