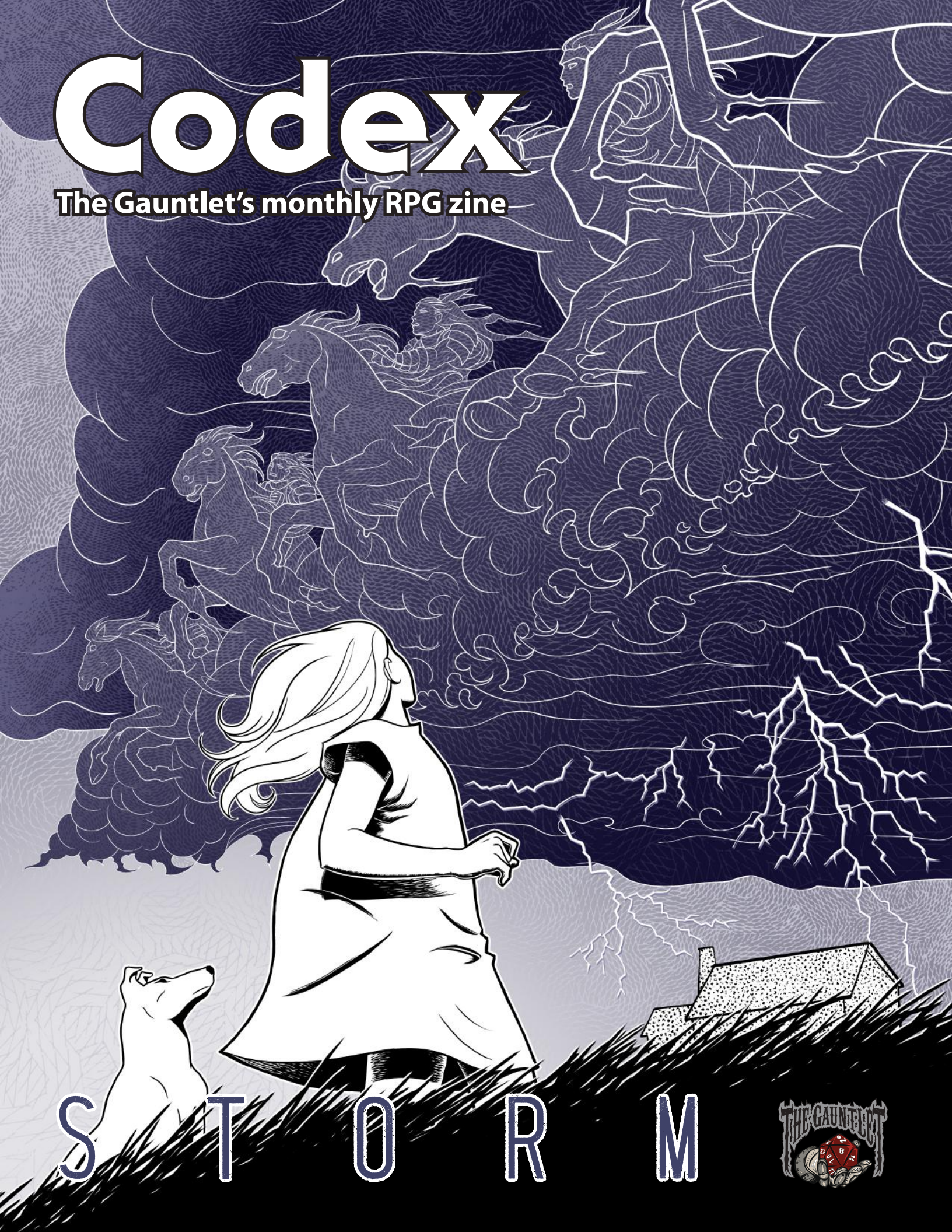


Codex

The Gauntlet's monthly RPG zine



S T O R M



To the Halls of the Storm Lord



A Macchiato Monsters Module by Kyle Thompson

Illustrated by Toma Feizo Gas

To the Halls of the Storm Lord

*Dark and sorcerous clouds gather above
the high peaks of Shathurazan.*

The dukes assemble.

A stranger offers counsel.

The Fairweather Company is created to pacify the storm.

A host of adventurers is summoned to form its ranks.

The great mountain is scaled.

The outsider watches, and she waits...

To the Halls of the Storm Lord is a dungeon crawl module for *Macchiato Monsters* with character funnel elements. The player characters are members of the hastily assembled Fairweather Company, who have been promised honor and treasure if they can complete three objectives:

1. Climb the mountain.
2. Locate the source of the storm.
3. End the storm.

The PCs are, in fact, unwitting pawns in the war between the fearsome Giants and the cunning Gods.

The Storm Lord Armmundr (He/Him), one of the mightiest of the Giants, has rammed his sky fortress into the Dwarven hold built into Shathurazan, and is using the Dwarves' Planar Gate to summon forth the storm threatening the nearby lands. He plans to use the storm's energies to forge a god-slaying spear, but the duration of his labours will devastate the area.

In response, Uglahildr (She/Her), Valkyrie in service to the Gods, travelled in disguise to the area and plotted to create the Fairweather Company as her battle host. She knows very well what is causing the storm, and that the adventurers stand little chance in defeating the Storm Lord and his followers on their own strength. However, Uglahildr is testing the Fairweather Company rabble's fighting courage, so that she might form from their number a host of Einherjar—undying warrior-thralls of the Gods. With these warriors at her side, she plans to attack Armmundr and put an end to the storm.

Weather table

Roll a dR12. On 1–3, the die is stepped down as usual. However, the travellers get a break on the maximum result, and the risk die goes up by one type.

On a 1–7, the weather forces the party to hunker down. If you hunker down, spend your rations for the day, and roll to see if the weather passes. The required duration of the ascent is increased by one day. **The party can check CON at disadvantage to press on.** Characters who fail at pressing on take an additional complication.

1	Thundersnow, near zero visibility, cold, and lightning. Save or take d8 damage.
2	Whiteout conditions, visibility extremely limited.
3	Hurricane force winds, rest impossible.
4	Extreme cold. Characters must save or take d4 damage.
5	Severe hail storm. Characters out of shelter take d6 damage.
6	Ice storm, movement extremely dangerous without equipment.
7	Blizzard.
8	Hail fog, visibility low, rest impossible in open areas.
9	Snow glare, visibility very difficult in open areas.
10	Wet downbursts, movement very difficult, unpredictable effects.
11	Rain storm.
12	Wind storm.

*Special Thanks: Eric Nieudan, Michael Boykin, Sean Nittner, Shane Liebling
Playtesters: Ary Ramsey, Blake Ryan, Brendan Allison, Luke Wade*

Uglahildr

Appears in many guises, manipulates events to her advantage, drives a hard bargain, fearless and cunning.

Forms: Uglahildr is a magical being from beyond the mortal realm. To suit her purpose as a servant of the Gods, she was created with the ability to shift forms. She may shift these forms at will so long as she is not preoccupied or engaged.

Aurora Elemental

A creature of dreams, hallucinations, and nightmares. Shimmering in the night skies above, the Elemental grants mortals visions into realms beyond their ken.

HD 3, grants visions, insubstantial, vast, enlightenment d10, morale dR10

Battle Maiden

A warrior of striking beauty. Her armour was crafted by divine master smiths and is as black as darkest night. Her spear, the Eldfuglinn, is said to have been crafted from a tooth of the Fenris Wolf itself and burns with the terrifying light of the sun.

HD 4, armour dR10, The Eldfuglinn Spear 2d12, morale dR12

Young Oracle

A young girl with tawny skin. Her eyes shift with the colours of the aurora. She wears a cloak of snowy owl feathers and holds in her hand a branch of the birch tree. The Young Oracle speaks prophecy and floats effortlessly a meter off the ground.

HD 3, armour dR4, grappling d4, Unworldly Presence (check wIS or become her thrall), morale dR10

Einherjar

When a PC dies in battle (not to a trap, poison, or falling, etc.), Uglahildr will revive them as an Einherjar. She will get 3 hold over them, which she can spend to revive them from death or compel them to do something for her. These hold are in addition to Uglahildr bringing the PC back initially.

An Einherjar gains 3 levels upon transition and no longer requires rest or provisions. However, they can also no longer gain levels. This transition makes their hit dice more comparable to the Giants.

When the PC becomes an Einherjar, the player must describe a memory Uglahildr takes from them with their mortality.

When Uglahildr spends a hold to compel a PC, she removes an additional memory. The character may choose to resist with wIS.

- + On a Fumble, the character loses a trait (player chooses) and replaces it with one representing their progressive transformation into an Einherjar. If they only have Einherjar traits remaining, add an additional trait of particular severity.
- + If they concede or fail the roll, the Referee states the task Uglahildr assigns to the PC and it becomes a Goal for the party. Fulfilling the Goal advances the level of all PCs, except the Einherjar (who cannot level).

The Slopes of Shathurazan

In former times, the Dwarves of Shathur-dum carved out their fortress gates high atop the slopes of Mt. Shathurazan, and built a great highway to facilitate commerce with those who lived below. Since the Dwarves rejected contact with outsiders and turned towards their experimentation with Planar Gates, the highway has fallen into ruin and disuse.

Arnmundr's storms have ravaged the paths and vegetation of the mountain faces, and its ascent will not be easy. The ascent takes three days (modified by weather conditions). During the ascent, the PCs will face encounters twice per day and once per night, rolling dR12 on the Encounter table below.

If the PCs follow the road to Shathur-dum, they will find its entrance after they have passed the Fellfield and travelled for the required period of time.

Mountainside Scenes

- + A copse of alpine larch.
- + A boulder covered in moss and dusted with fresh fallen snow.
- + A squirrel carrying a large pine cone.
- + A pair of white-tailed deer hiding in the mouth of a gorge.
- + A fallen statue of a Dwarf and human shaking hands.
- + A buckle in the road revealing strati of ancient Dwarven earthwork.
- + The sun setting behind a sharp-backed arete.

Locations

Fulun-zigil Fellfield

A daunting mass of scree covers the remains of the old Dwarven highway after an enormous landslide. The Fellfield is rocky, rough, overgrown, and unstable, making its traversal slow going.

The tops of ruined Dwarven battlements protrude from the scree. Significant excavation will reveal that the battlements once concealed an ancient lava tube running to the heart of Shathur-dum. In the shattered ruins may be found 1d4 Dwarven remains along with 1d4

Dwarvencraft melee weapons and armour.

The party may spot Uglahildr watching them at a distance from across the Fellfield.

Encounters

Roll on this table, then check encounter table for Reaction (*Macchiato Monsters* p.23).

1-3	Roll dR twice, mixing the results.
4	Avalanche or rock slide, either above or underneath the party. Characters must save or take d12 damage.
5	A storm sorcerer. Bestows the "gift" of lightning. HD 5, armour dR8, lightning bolts d10, otherworldly howls, morale dR10.
6	A rogue storm elemental manifests as a sharp local change in weather. HD 3, insubstantial, concussive gust 2d4, morale dR6.
7	d4 Eotenbucca, giant and terrible goats of Shathurazan. HD 3, charge 2d8, hooves d8, morale dR8.
8	Uglahildr. As per manifested form (see earlier).
9	d4 Great Rock Serpents. HD 3, bite 2d6, constricting 4d6, morale dR6.
10	d8 Dwarven Refugees. HD 2, armour dR8, Dwarvencraft axes and hammers d8, crossbows dR8, morale dR6.
11	d4 Fairweather Company adventurers. HD 1, armour dR6, melee weapons d6, morale dR4.
12	d6 Elven travellers. HD 2, armour dR8, Elvencraft longswords d8, morale dR8.

The Hold of Shathur-dum

The Dwarves of Shathur-dum swore a century ago to close their gates to the outside world. Yet within their halls they constructed a wonder—a gateway to the planes beyond. By traversing this gateway, the Dwarves continued their traditions of commerce and exchanged their great craft works for the riches of the multiverse. However, the tremendous impact of Arnmundr's sky fortress ruined all of this.

Within Shathur-dum can be found many creatures, including Dwarven residents now at war or subjugated, planar visitors and rogues, and Hearmar invaders sent at the behest of Arnmundr to conquer the fortress. The interior is a warren of factional battles and intrigues, and the party must be cautious in how it approaches those within.

In narrow passageways, the raw elemental forces conjured at the behest of Arnmundr can strike the unwary with sudden and deadly force.

Access

Entry to the Hold can either be gained from the buried lava tube leading from the Fulun-zigil Fellfield (to the Storeroom), or from the main gate at the top of Shathurazan, leading to a location of the Referee's choosing.

Factions

The Stalwarts

While Arnmundr's assault quickly overcame Shathur-dum's defences, there are still those who hope to cling to their liberty long enough for the Storm Lord to leave. These Dwarven stalwarts have rallied around the Song Master Mahal (They/Them), and are using their familiarity with the fortress' passageways and stockholds to stay one step ahead of the Hearmar.

The Hearmar

The Hearmar are stoat-folk, led by their prince Depchasis (He/Him). They have agreed to help Arnmundr infiltrate

the narrow passageways of Shathur-dum, so they may claim it as a warren for themselves. They follow the distasteful practice of using their foes' corpses to insulate their warrens, which makes them despised by most sapient creatures.

Amongst the Hold's Halls

- + A dead Dwarven scholar, crushed to death in his chambers by a fallen bookshelf.
- + A geothermally heated bathhouse, now home to a scared toad-man visitor.
- + A dark mine shaft leading to the veins of the earth.
- + A water reservoir—deep beyond reckoning and perfectly still.
- + A caved-in armoury.
- + A gaping hole to the fortress exterior, opening out onto a sheer cliff face.

Locations

The Planar Gate

At the heart of the fortress is the Planar Gate, a massive cast iron ring suspended above a pool of quicksilver. The gate is currently wide open, spewing forth the storms of a far and terrible plane into this world.

There are three entrances to the gate room: One leading to the Foundry, another to the Storeroom, and a final one leading to the Reception Hall. All passages to the gate chamber were sealed by massive iron blast doors, however the reception hall door was forced open by Arnmundr in his assault on Shathur-dum.

The two closed blast doors can be opened by operating large gear mechanisms next to them, handled by bronze automata the Dwarves constructed as gatekeepers.

Entering the gate room is itself an ordeal, as the tremendous storms emanating from it are forced down the approaching hallway, creating a powerful wind tunnel.

Zirak: The chief engineer Zirak (He/Him) is hiding in the control chamber protected by magical wards and

thick iron doors. He can communicate with PCs through the shelter walls by magical means.

Arnmundr has blackmailed Zirak, threatening to destroy the portal and trap his husband, Kibil, in the realms beyond unless he keeps the gate open until the spear is complete.

The Storeroom

Crates, chests, vaults, and barrels rise far above the heads of visitors in the Storeroom of Shathur-dum. The wealth of the planes has been assembled in these halls and has formed a magnificent mess. Barrels and crates lie split open on the ground, their exotic fragrances mixing all together.

There are exits from the Storeroom into the lava tube to Fulun-zigil, the hallways of the Hold, and to the blast door leading into the Planar Gate.

Assume the Storeroom contains any form of non-perishable food and drink you can imagine. When in the Storeroom, each player may name a food or drink they wish to find, and roll with WIS. The amount the PCs get is proportional to their roll outcome.

The Foundry

The Foundry of Shathur-dum was even at the height of its operation an elaborate maze of catwalks, workstations, giant tools, and towering furnaces. This was a place of great works known throughout the planes for its industrial majesty.

The impact of Arnmundr's fortress was so great it dislodged the colossal crucible at the Foundry's heart from its frame, and spilt its contents violently across the floor and works, dooming its operators.

In solidified pools of metal can be found not only the incinerated remains of Dwarven workers, but also their automata who helped work the foundry—some of whom remain alert and conscious of their plight.

There are exits from the Foundry to the hallways of the Hold and to the blast door leading to the Planar Gate.

Amongst the ruins can be found ingots of myth metal worth DR6, a masterwork mould worth Gold d10, and Dwarvencraft melee weapons, tools, and armour.

The Reception Hall

Song has always been important to the inhabitants of Shathur-dum. Their Reception Hall is built inside a natural cavern, carved and modified to ease visitors with sound, shape, and colour.

However, it is not a place at ease.

Arnmundr's fortress collided directly with the hall, and has reduced it to ruins. The giant and his Hearmar retinue entered the fortress from this point, overcoming and killing its defenders, and forcing their way into the gate chamber beyond.

The gate chamber is now open to the Reception Hall, and the storms issuing forth from it have only compounded



Arnmundr's Sky Fortress

the terrible devastation. Everywhere lie bodies, rubble, and the detritus of the stormy planes, all opening out onto the Storm Lord's fortress.

From the hall it is possible to access both the Planar Gate and Arnmundr's fortress.

Encounters

Roll on this table, then check encounter table for Reaction (*Macchiato Monsters* p.23).

1-3	Roll dR twice, mixing the results.
4	Depchasis the Hearmar prince (<i>HD 2, armour d10, two-handed falx d10, lithe, ferocious, morale dR10</i>) and d8 elite guards (<i>HD 2, armour dR8, Hearmar Degenknife d8, lithe, disciplined, morale dR10</i>).
5	d6 Dwarven battle automata (<i>HD 3, armour d12, big metallic fists d8, solid, strange, clockwork, morale d12</i>).
6	A rogue storm elemental, dangerous in enclosed spaces (<i>HD3, insubstantial, concussive gust 2d4, morale dR6</i>).
7	Uglahildr. As per manifested form (see earlier).
8	d4 Hearmar scouts (<i>HD 1, armour dR6, Hearmar Degenknife d8, lithe, sneaky, morale dR8</i>) with d4 Dwarven auxiliaries (<i>HD 2, armour dR8, Dwarven axes and hammers d8, crossbows dR8, morale d4</i>).
9	Song Master Mahal (<i>HD 2, armour dR8, Kibilinbar, ancestral hammer d10, inspiring, weary, morale dR10</i>) and d6 Dwarven stalwarts (see below).
10	d8 Dwarven Stalwarts (<i>HD 2, armour dR8, Dwarven axes and hammers d8, crossbows dR8, morale dR8</i>).
11	d4 Fairweather Company adventurers (<i>HD 1, armour dR6, melee weapons d6, morale d4</i>).
12	Uglahildr. As per manifested form (See earlier). Step up the Reaction dR.

Should they choose to cross over to the sky fortress from the Reception Hall, the party will find the Storm Lord Arnmundr at work in his throne room, forging his god slaying spear. To resolve the party's confrontation with Arnmundr, describe a few vignettes from The Approach, then use The Confrontation procedure.

The Approach

1. Six imposing pillars inscribed with the names of the giant progenitors, murdered by the gods.
2. An aerie built into a lower level of the Fortress, filled with giant hawks feasting upon the carcass of an Eotenbucca.
3. A giant woman sitting in an empty room, illuminated by lightning and banging ominously on an enormous drum.
4. An armory full of titanic weapons, chained to their racks with black iron.

Arnmundr

Arnmundr the Storm Lord is among the eldest of the giants. He is a bold leader, and single-minded in his pursuit of revenge against the Gods for the murder of the first generation of giants, whose corpses they used to fashion the present world.

The Confrontation

After describing the party's approach to Arnmundr's throne room, use the following procedure to play out their confrontation with the Storm Lord.

1. Clarify the party's **goals** in confronting Arnmundr. If there is a goal from the start of the session that feels no longer relevant, resolve or change it.
2. Decide on whether the party's approach to Arnmundr is **social, deceptive, forceful, or murderous**. If it is not clear, put it to a vote.
3. The party and Arnmundr both get risk dice to model the conflict. Answer the following questions to decide on the scale of the party risk die (**starting at dR6**):

- ✦ Is Uglahildr supporting the party in their goals? +2 steps.
 - ✦ Are there any Einherjar in the party? +1 step.
 - ✦ Are the sum levels and HD of the party greater than 8? +1 step.
 - ✦ Is the weather risk die at dr4? -1 step.
 - ✦ Is the party united in their goals? +1 step.
 - ✦ Is more than one character at less than half their maximum HP? -1 step.
 - ✦ Is the Planar Gate closed? +1 step.
 - ✦ Is Arnmundr accompanied by allies? -1 step.
 - ✦ Is the party accompanied by followers +1 step.
4. Now the conflict begins. **Each round**, Arnmundr and the party roll their respective risk dice (Arnmundr's begins at dr8).
- ✦ On a 1–3 the risk die is stepped down.
 - ✦ For each round, whichever side has the lowest result takes a **complication** from the list below, and the other side narrates how the complication occurs. Free play continues from there until the action beat is resolved and the next round begins or the conflict ends.
5. After **each round**, the referee asks, "still do you persist?" **The players then vote** whether or not to abandon their efforts.
- ✦ **If the vote is unanimous**, the party gets a +1 to their roll result on the next round.
 - ✦ **If the vote is not unanimous**, the referee marks down a Discord Point.
6. The first side whose risk die steps belows dr4 is defeated. If the losing side has the higher die roll in the final round, they **roll with advantage in the concluding roll**.

Complications

1. Their weakness is revealed.
2. They take a blow.
3. The environment works against them.
4. Their enemies are reinforced.
5. Their allies desert them.
6. Their advance is rebuffed.

Conclusion

If the party defeats Arnmundr, a player rolls to decide the outcome of the confrontation. The party starts with a d10, stepped down one level for every Discord Point they have.

- ✦ On a 6+, the party succeeds in all their declared goals. Narrate how.
- ✦ On a 4–5, the party succeeds at one goal decided by the referee. Narrate how.
- ✦ On a 1–3, the party fails in their goals. Narrate how.

If the party retreats from the conflict, roll 1d6. On a 4–6, they succeed at one goal. On a 1–3, they fail in their goals. Narrate the aftermath.

If the party is defeated, roll 1d6. On a 5–6, they manage to barely escape the situation. On a 1–4, it's the worst result. Describe the terrible aftermath.

THE RUBBLE OF CHIRHOMINAR'S SANCTUM

by *Maria Rivera*

Illustrated by *Fonny Gray*

CUSTOM MOVE: *What the Hell Happened Here?*

When you *inspect the wreckage of Chirhominar's Sanctum*, roll+WIS.

- On a 10+, tell the GM a detail about what happened.
- On a 7-9, ask the GM a detail about what happened.
- On a 6-, some of the magical residue left behind gets on you. The GM determines the effect of the residue.

MAGIC ITEMS FOUND IN THE RUINS

Blue Scroll of Reparation

1 use, 0 wgt.

When you *throw this thick, white scroll at a ruined building*, it unfurls, takes on a blue color, and covers the area. Roll+CHA.

- On a 10+, the building rebuilds itself as it was before in an instant.
- On a 7-9, the building is rebuilt, but something is off. The GM will tell you what.
- On a 6-, it's rebuilt, but it takes a long time, probably not in your lifetime.

DEATH RAY

3 charges, 1 wgt.

This is exactly what you think it is. When you *activate the **DEATH RAY***, roll+INT.

- On a 10+, you disintegrate a specified target's entire being, even their soul.
- On a 7-9, there is some distinguishing evidence that might implicate you.
- On a 6-, well... you just used a **DEATH RAY**. Be prepared for the worst.

Framed Gale

0 wgt.

At first it appears to be a small blank portrait, but when you *whisper the true name of the North Wind to it*, it expands and a strong wind pulls you in. When you *go through the portrait*, roll+WIS.

- On a 10+, you arrive safely in a location of your choice.
- On a 7-9, you either arrive at a place you don't want to be in, or you land hard, your choice.
- On a 6-, both of the 7-9 options happen.

Lightning Rod

A classic magic item, this ten-foot rod draws any form of magical or non-magical lightning to it. When it holds electrical charge, it may be used to power other magical artifacts, such as the **DEATH RAY**, with a simple ritual.

A MONSTER ATTRACTED TO THIS MAGIC STUFF: *Vejigante*

Colorful giant creatures, *Vejigantes* are native to this part of the world. They are amorphous beasts, save for their heads, which have large horns, and a beak with sharp teeth. They carry cow bladders which they use to catch spells and fling them back at the original caster. *Instinct*: to prey on wanderers

Tags: group, large, close, reach, near, magical, forceful, intelligent, terrifying, amorphous

Special Qualities: Wings, Unreal Colors

Magical Cow Bladder

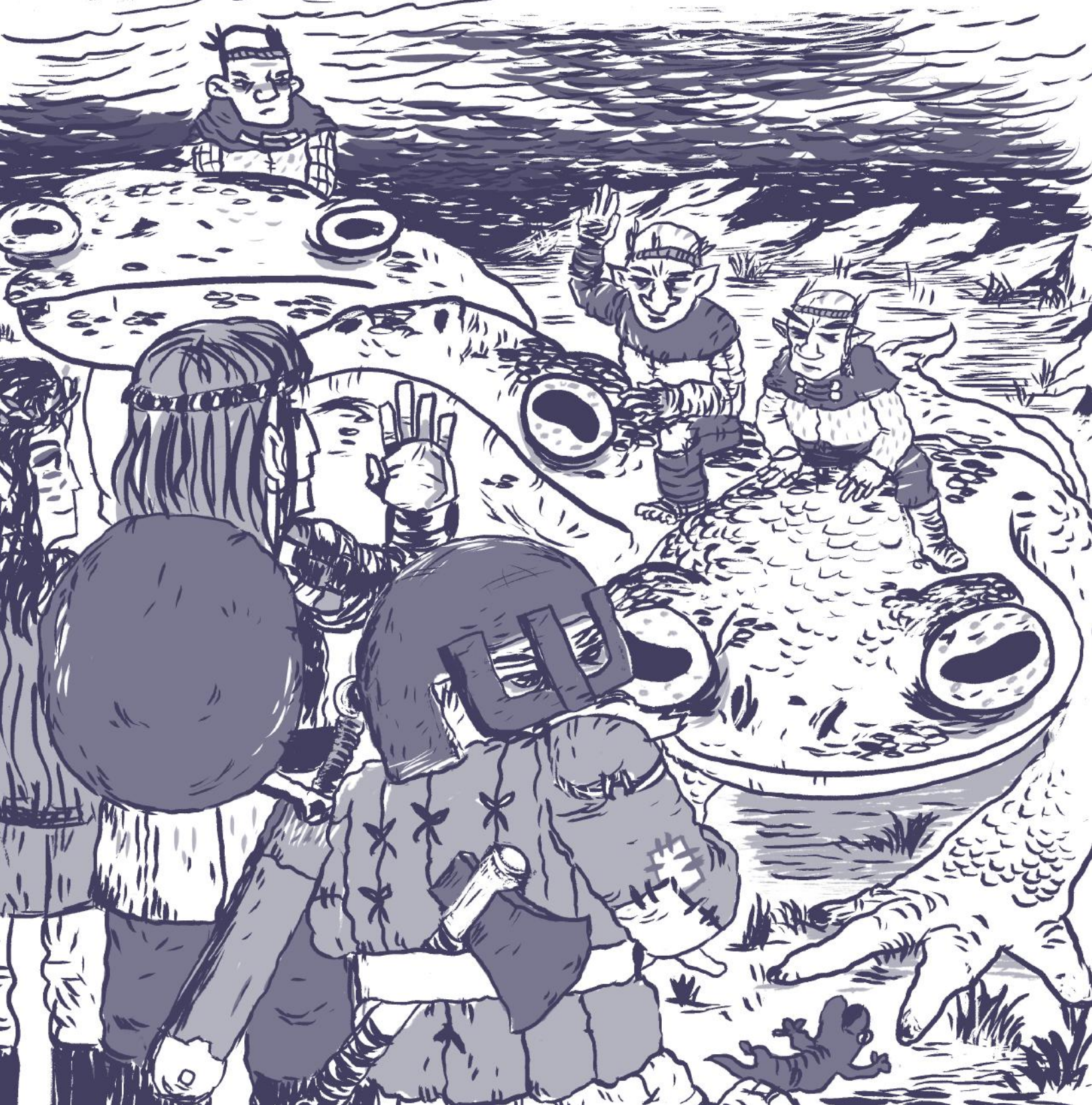
(*d8+3 damage*) 13 HP 2 Armor

- Stalk a wanderer
- Store a cast spell in its cow bladder
- Cast a stored spell



THE SUB-GOTHI OF STORMS, OR, LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE

BY AARON KING - ILLUSTRATED BY SEAN POPPE



PRELUDE

Bella Thomasina, famed dancer and rumored spy, found religion and proclaimed herself Sub-Gothi of the Ominous Cloud Bank. She's close to consecrating her new church of the tempest goddess; all she needs is a relic from her goddess's lover, the Affectionate Southern Wind. However, foreign powers and the Pope of Storms are wary of her ascent, so she's hiring agents. She approaches the player characters (PCs) in disguise and tells them the following:

- The Affectionate Southern Wind gave her life for the tempest goddess in a battle against the Ooze Primordial and his army of bog mummy necromancers.
- Some part of the Southern Wind's essence was spirited away and entombed by one of said necromancers. He built a deadly dungeon around her.
- Bella has an ancient, vague clay tablet inscribed with a map to the dungeon. The landscape has changed since the map was made, but it should lead to the general vicinity.
- In addition to salvage rights to the dungeon, Bella gives the PCs travel money and promises additional riches if they return with a relic. They'll also be favored by the church of the tempest, equivalent to the Shelter the Faithful background feature of D&D 5E's Acolyte.
- Bella needs plausible deniability, and asks the PCs not reveal they're working for her. If they do so, her promises are null and void.

BELLA

Bella has a light accent that she's trying to hide. She generally believes in *realpolitik* and will do just about anything to get what she

wants. However, she also loves beauty and thinks it's more likely to bloom when people are content and happy. She'll compliment the PCs on their looks or attractive items they carry. Her movements are precise. She dresses in simple clothes with expensive accents: fur trim, simple jewelry, etc. Her skin is light brown, and her hair jumps out in short, tight curls.

TRAVEL

The route to the necromancer's dungeon leads the PCs through a desert. However, environmental dangers are few due to what locals call the Fertile Triangle—a stretch of watering holes, oases, and mudflats that convene on the PCs' target. Isn't that strangely convenient?

THE PEOPLE OF THE BROAD FEET

Locals know the Fertile Triangle is the result of regular small storms that blow through the area, reach the PCs' target, and then return along the route they came from. Those most knowledgeable about these storms are the People of the Broad Feet, a confederation of gnomish tribes who roam the area. Their name comes from the large lizards they ride, whose splayed, webbed feet allow them to run easily across both mud and sand. Each tribe prides itself on their lizard lineage; some have variegated scales, newtlike plumage, horns, vestigial wings, and so on. Regular inter-tribe marriages keep the genetics of both gnome and lizard from becoming too inbred.

Gnomes begin watching the PCs as soon as they enter the desert or the Fertile Triangle. They're plainly visible and pose no threat—as long as the PCs don't endanger the water. After a few nights, a group will approach the PCs to trade.

They're only fluent in Gnomish and Dwarven, but if none of the PCs speak those languages, the gnomes invite them in broken Common to their home where they have a translator.

The exact makeup of a gnome home is up to you. They value hunting, tailoring, non-fatal combat, chosen families, and insult poetry. Their lizards switch sex through their lives, so the gnomes see gender and sexuality as fluid, and they generally place no implicit value on any expression of either. Every tribe has a tempest cleric that speaks Primordial, and a family of trader-diplomats who speak Common. Note that these are guidelines, and each tribe will also have members who oppose or subvert these generalities. Match the level of detail you give the gnomes to the PCs' level of interest.

What the gnomes know:

- Storms move in vaguely straight lines through the Fertile Triangle, stop over the nearby village of Mirekirk, and then retrace their approach.
- Mirekirk practices agriculture and is self-sustaining due in part to some strange technology they own.
- Mirekirk lies roughly on the spot marked on the PCs' map, but there's no dungeon there.
- The gnomes can lead the PCs to Mirekirk, granting them two benefits from the ranger's Natural Explorer trait: they aren't slowed by difficult terrain, and they can't become sot except by magical means. Depending on how interactions go, the gnomes might demand a fee for these services—maybe 10 gold, or assistance in a dangerous hunt (giant trapdoor spiders!).

Gnome names: Squamate, Cham, Dragon, Gekkota, Kerat, Tegu, Lightning, Gray Cloud, Raindrop, Shifting Sand, Lagoon, Medjool, Deglet, Zahdi, Noor.

Gnome stats: If you need stats for the gnomes, use some of the Nonplayer Characters from 5E's *Monster Manual*: **scouts**, **priests**, **druids**, **gladiators**, and **veterans**. Their lizards can be statted as **giant lizards**, **giant toads**, and **giant weasels**.



CUMULO-PILGRIMS

The other group the PCs are likely to encounter is the storms themselves. Unknown to most, the storms are actually storm elementals on a pilgrimage to the Affectionate Southern Wind—one of the most powerful of their kind. Usually, the storms don't deign to communicate with non-elementals. However, one particular group of pilgrims needs fleshy assistance, and they happen to be traveling with a djinni who can translate.

On sighting the PCs, the djinni swoops down. His name is Badiat al-Jamal. He's hard of hearing from traveling with booming storms, so he's not great at modulating his volume, and he needs the PCs to speak up. He tells the PCs that a young storm was just now cloud-napped by a sappy mud being and taken into Mirekirk. If the PCs can rescue the young storm, the djinni will give them a gift. Some options:

- a figurine of wondrous power who is addicted to incense.
- a flying carpet.
- a limited wish (perhaps impacted by his bad hearing).

He can also tell them about the pilgrimage and the Southern Wind. If the PCs try to track down the young storm, see “Mud Dungeon” below.

What Badiat knows:

- The Affectionate Southern Wind was an “archomental,” an elemental nearly as powerful as a god. According to djinni history, she was betrayed by her lover, the tempest goddess, who feared the Southern Wind would impinge upon her sphere of power.
- The Southern Wind was dispersed in the battle with the Ooze Primordial, but her heart was sealed in a magical amphora. It may take her a thousand years to reconstitute herself, but she will assuredly do it.
- The amphora is not in a dungeon; it’s held by a statue in a nearby village.

Storm stats: The storm elementals are like **air elementals**, but replace their *whirlwind* ability with the *lightning bolt* (recharge 4-6). They can also cast *thunderwave* at first level at will. The djinni is a **djinni**.

MIREKIRK

It’s a village built on and from a mud dungeon. When the Affectionate Southern Wind’s heart was imprisoned, the storm elementals started traveling there for worship, and their constant rains eroded the muddy dungeon walls. The earth was made fertile, so people settled there, growing wheat, cotton, lemons, figs, and more. It’s a small village, less than 1,000 people. The buildings are made of baked and glazed mud bricks. Many have artful touches of colored glass, carved wood, or bright paint. At the center is a 30 foot statue of the

tempest goddess holding an amphora up to the sky; inside that amphora is the Affectionate Southern Wind’s heart. However, this isn’t common knowledge. Most of the citizens don’t know why they’re the epicenter of so many prayerful rainstorms.

Can the PCs find the kidnapped storm elemental without scaring everyone? Villagers might recall seeing a slumping form disappear at the base of the statue.

Points of interest include:

MARSHA THE BUTCHER

A half-orc who processes the farmers’ livestock. She’s repurposed a swinging blade trap from when Mirekirk was a dungeon. With the flip of a few switches, she can resize it for goats, oxen, or giant sandsnakes, delivering instant death and precise filets. She may ask outsiders to collect 50 gold owed to her by the Explosive Meridian Cafe.

THE EXPLOSIVE MERIDIAN CAFE

Another repurposed trap. A family of stripe-skinned, ram-horned tieflings cook food around jets of roaring flame, acrobatically jumping through the fire. They are Zahra, Elif, Osman, Little Sultan, and Abraham Meridian. They specialize in “flame-kissed” kebabs and brew a thick beer flavored with melon. They haven’t paid Marsha because the meat they bought was rotted by an efreeti curse. However, Marsha doesn’t believe this excuse at all. Can the PCs find proof either way? Do they care? Can you make them care?

ETTA’S TAPESTRIES

Etta is an ancient elven woman with dark, wrinkled skin and yellow eyes. She was once famed for her tapestries, but no one has seen

her weaving for a long time; only dyeing. This is because she has arthritis, so she made a deal with an efreeti who comes at night and weaves at supernatural speed. In return, the efreeti has taken Etta's sense of taste. Is this the genie who ruined the Meridian's meat? Was it on purpose? Or was it the spirit in the Mud Dungeon? Will people find out that Etta isn't weaving the tapestries she sells?

THE REPRESENTATIVE CIRCLE

The governing council of Mirekirk is made up of elected officials from the major sectors of society: farmers, merchants, mothers, beggars, entertainers, and animals. They are:

- Griep, female goliath monk, head of a large barley farm/brewery, representing farmers.
- Long Walden, male tabaxi rogue, wannabe importer/exporter, representing merchants.
- Amandla Shockhead, female human paladin, mother of three, representing mothers.
- Tom the Lucky, male gnome rogue, missing many fingers after a botched attempt at drunken self-service at the Explosive Meridian, representing beggars.
- Falteen, NB human bard, poet and town crier, representing entertainers.
- Wallace the Ox, a plain old ox, representing animals (mostly a figurehead position).

Current debate centers around production and complacency. Griep and Walden think the townsfolk could work harder. Griep believes this at a spiritual level: the ease with which crops grow has made people lazy. Walden, however, wants to get the town past sustenance level so he can trade the surplus.

Amandla and Falteen are happy with how things are. Amandla believes the ease of day-to-day life means they can focus on social issues. Falteen and the entertainers like that people don't have to work long days; it means they can spend time consuming art.

Tom is unsure who to side with, but the PCs could probably sway him to either side if they get involved. As a backup plan, Long Walden has a scroll of awaken and will use it on Wallace, bribe the ox to side with him, and declare it a miracle.

MUD DUNGEON

Beneath the central statue is a muddy cave complex. The mud is animated by the dissolved consciousness of Huldremose Frei, the necromancer servant of the Ooze Primordial who absconded with the Southern Wind's heart. She constructed a vast and dangerous dungeon to hold the heart centuries ago. However, most of the dungeon is now the village of Mirekirk. This small cave, originally a secret tomb for Frei, is all that's left.

Mud covers the floors, sometimes up to 1 foot deep. At any moment, three sludging, humanoid ooze elementals slurp around the small complex. In 5E, you can treat them as **gelatinous cubes** with the following changes:

- they don't have the Ooze Cube or Transparent qualities.
- they deal bludgeoning instead of acid damage.
- their AC is 10, and they have 40 hit points.

When an ooze elemental is defeated, it sinks back into the mud on the floor. It will reconstitute itself in 20 minutes.

THE GHOST OF FREI

In the rear chamber is what initially appears to be a blank wall. However, it isn't stone like the rest of the cave; it's moist and sweats mud. It's one foot thick and easy to pass through. On the other side, Frei's body lies amidst bolts of expensive cloth, intricate iron jewelry, and

weapons, all dirty and rusted. When anyone enters, Frei's spirit appears above her bog-puckered corpse. In 5E, she can be a **specter** or **wraith** with the spellcasting abilities of a **warlock**.

She's initially hostile to any intruders, but it's not difficult to talk her down. If reduced to half her hit points, she begs for peace and offers the PCs a rusted iron cage with a miniature storm roiling inside: the baby storm elemental. She also offers the one unsullied object in her tomb—a scroll of conjure elemental. Her memories are as pickled and worn as her body. If she's killed, the ooze elementals dissolve for good.

What PCs can learn from Frei:

- She believes she can return her body to life if she combines the four elements. Mud is water and earth, so she captured the storm for wind and fire. This is absolutely wrong, but it didn't keep her from trying.
- The Affectionate Southern Wind was never betrayed by the tempest goddess; it only appeared so because of the bog warlocks' plotting. She doesn't remember any of the details, though.
- The villagers of Mirekirk ruined her beautiful dungeon and turned it into habitable land.

If she's still alive when the PCs leave her chamber, she'll call up all the mud in the tunnels to fill the passage outside her room. The PCs will have a hard time navigating and are potentially in danger of suffocation. Constitution and Perception checks might be called for, and the ooze elementals might have regenerated.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs still plan on taking the amphora, it's easy enough under cover of darkness. The most difficult part is climbing the rain-slick marble statue and descending with the large, heavy jug. If the jug is removed, the storms stop visiting. Over the next few months, Mirekirk dries out and stops producing crops.

If people in Mirekirk learn about the Southern Wind's heart, most of them will militarize in an effort to protect it. However, Long Walden attempts to steal the amphora and plant it on the PCs. He accuses them of stealing it and uses the resulting furor as another reason to start a trading caravan: to learn more about these outsiders who would steal the source of their livelihood.

If the PCs return to Bella empty-handed, she can't complete her temple. She spends her fortune trying to find a substitute for the Affectionate Southern Wind and will likely become an enemy to the PCs. She might send spies and storm templars after them. If the PCs explain their decision with heart-rending beauty, she may forgive them enough to only order them on escalatingly dangerous missions to find a foundation for her temple—possibly even stealing one from a different church.

If the PCs earn a wish from Badiat the djinni, they might be able to wish for a happy ending for everyone.

If the amphora is ever broken, a monstrous storm will erupt for two full days. Villagers are wounded and killed. Floods occur. And then it dissipates, returning to the Elemental Chaos. Mirekirk becomes dry.

—A—
MURDER
—IN—
**PORT
TAM**

*A Race against
Time and Tide for
The Black Hack*

*By Richard Ruane
Art by Jesse Ross*



A MURDER IN PORT TAM

Beneath the town of Port Tam, between the northern banks of the Larma River and the southern cliffs of Mount Caz, is a gateway to the Underworld. It is not the only such gateway, but it is protected by the Ona—three goddesses of the Underworld—and their priests. Thus, the world sends deceased warlords, monarchs, and demigods here where the temple's magic ensures the dead will rest quietly.

While the funeral of a queen is the typical business of Port Tam, the burial of Queen Vashniah has brought the town to a standstill. She was the daughter of the Ona themselves and a name that made her enemies tremble. The skies have been heavy with black clouds since her funeral began days ago. The funeral ends tonight, and her royal household is hosting a final banquet in her honor.

For Vashniah's house, tonight also marks a significant anniversary: twenty years ago, Vashniah stopped her cruel consort, Oerthex, from sacrificing their three children to the demons of the Abyss to gain immortality. Instead, she rescued her children and threw him into the Abyssal chasm in their place. He has survived in those chasms as an archdevil's minion. But tonight, on this anniversary, the Abyssal lords have allowed him to crawl free from his hellish prison to claim the Queen and her children for themselves.

CHARACTERS

Oerthex. Oerthex is only a minor demon, but he has this one chance to prove himself to the Abyssal court. He must murder his adult children and their companions, consume their souls, tear through the gates of the Underworld, and drag Vashniah to the Abyss. Oerthex is an ethereal spirit with no body of his own, but he may attempt to possess a limited number of the living or dead over the course of this night. Any person he possesses gains 3 HD and makes 3 attacks per round (2d6 with a weapon or 2d4 if improvising or unarmed).

Consuming Souls. If Oerthex kills a member of the royal house or a PC opposing him, he may forgo one attack that round (or use an action afterward) to touch them, consuming their souls and gaining 1 HD. He must gain at least 6 HD to rip through the

Underworld's gates.

Possession. Six times tonight, Oerthex may use his action to possess a nearby body (living or dead), rerolling his hit points and transferring previous damage to his former host. Characters may make a CHA check to avoid being possessed, and make the check again each time Oerthex attacks or is attacked. If his host is exorcised or killed, Oerthex immediately chooses a new target. Once Oerthex has consumed one soul, the faces and eyes of his hosts will glow with a demonic light.

Magic & Immunities. Oerthex can cast the spells *Darkvision*, *Charm Person*, and *Hold Person*. His hosts cannot be charmed or put to sleep.

Zombies. Oerthex may use an action to turn corpses into zombies (1 HD, 1d4 bite) that follow his commands. He can control as many zombies as he has hit dice.

Royal Family. The members of the Vashniah's royal house are her children with Oerthex and their own closest attendants: the scholarly Prince Elbio and his austere fiancée, General Fennbarrin; Crown Princess Imogen and her snobbish squires, Iles and Izina; and the rakish Prince Zahir and his haughty spouses, Hatto and Ubalda. The mysterious Loverna, Vashniah's widow, is also with the household. Each member has 1d8 hit points and has come to the banquet unarmed.

Attendees. Other banquet attendees include Vashniah's aristocratic friends and adversaries and Port Tam locals who've been paid to serve as guards and mourners. Attendees generally have 1 HD and, except for the guards who wear gambesons and carry halberds (1d8 damage), most are unarmed (1d3 improvised damage).

BEFORE THE FEAST

PCs may want to spend time learning about the family before the feast. The story of Vashniah and Oerthex is well known, and the GM may decide that scholarly characters have already heard it. It should also be easy to learn the names and reputations of the royal house.

The characters may also meet (or may already know) Dinaz, a young servant of Vashniah's family. To anyone meeting him on his morning errands, Dinaz will seem

A MURDER IN PORT TAM

friendly, dutiful, and shy. Anyone meeting him in the afternoon, though, will find him changed: gregarious, assertive, impish, and flirtatious.

It should be easy for PCs to gain work as guards, entertainers, or paid mourners at Vashniah's funeral banquet.

THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD'S FINAL FEAST

The funeral feast will be at The Wolf's Dirge, a sizable inn some distance from the temple. Worldly characters may find the funeral feast slightly more reserved than the raucous orgies for which Vashniah's court was famous, but it will still be a decadent occasion. As the PCs might already suspect, Oerthex has possessed Dinaz, who now has 1d4 doses of scasyth, a deadly magical poison. Scasyth victims seem ecstatically intoxicated for 1d6 minutes before dying. Only magic, such as the *Neutralize Poison* spell, can neutralize scasyth.

Characters specifically watching Dinaz without distractions will see him poison Prince Zahir's food. Those in a good position to see the high table (or working as guards) can check WIS to see the same. Once spotted, they can make a CHA check to stop Prince Zahir from eating it. If Oerthex has more than one dose and is successful at poisoning one plate, he will try to poison other members of the royal house.

When Dinaz is caught, Oerthex will change bodies. If Dinaz survives, he will scream, remembering everything Oerthex forced him to do. As soon as Oerthex consumes at least one soul, the eyes and face of any body he possesses will glow with Abyssal fire. Oerthex will flee The Wolf's Dirge once he has 6 HD.

CHASE MECHANICS

As soon as Oerthex flees, the chase begins. During the chase, the GM should track points for Oerthex, indicating his progress toward and through the temple, and the party, recording their progress toward the temple and the gate as follows:

- Reaching the temple requires 5 points.
- Reaching the Underworld Gate beneath the temple requires either 9 points or two random encounters

in the temple.

- If the scores tie or if the party's score exceeds Oerthex's, they meet during the next random encounter.

The party should have no trouble seeing Oerthex flee the banquet. The party should check DEX and if the majority succeed, give Oerthex only 1 point. If not, give Oerthex 2 points. If the party is not at the feast, they will still notice flooding, hear screams, and see a demonically glowing figure running away, so Oerthex begins with 3 points.

A STORMY CHASE THROUGH THE STREETS

Once Oerthex's ghost flees the hall, the Ona become aware of his presence and are overwhelmed with divine grief. Forgetting the town, they try to stop Oerthex by destroying everything around him. The black clouds burst, and the Larma River surges, flooding the town with 1' of water, adding 1' each time the GM rolls a random encounter. The town is uneven, so some areas will be affected more than others. At the same time, tremors shake the mountain above the town.

The streets of Port Tam are narrow and twisting. As the party chases Oerthex, roll 1d6 on the table on the next page until they reach the temple. As Oerthex races through town, his destination should become clear.

THE TEMPLE CHASE

No matter how many points they have, when the party reaches the temple, they must climb the stairs. The temple is a four-story ziggurat-like structure whose only visible entrance is from the top. Any character climbing its 1000 stairs must make a CON check. For each party member who succeeds at the check, give the party 1 point. For each party member who fails the check, give Oerthex 1 point.

If the party still does not have 9 points on entering the temple, they must navigate its hallways, secret passages, monastic cells, and sacristies. Roll 1d4 two times before they reach the gate.

Once the party has 9 points, priests help them descend the temple to find the bronze gate. If the party and

A MURDER IN PORT TAM

Encounters in the Streets of Port Tam

- 1 Hungry Zombies.** The party encounters zombies equal to Oerthex's HD (1 HD, 1d4 bite damage). Oerthex gains 1 point for each round the party spends in combat. If the party does not fight, the zombies attack screaming bystanders.
- 2 Minor Avalanche.** Rocks fall into the flooding streets. Characters should check DEX to find cover or take 1d8 damage. If Oerthex is in the streets, he takes 1d8 damage. If the majority of the party succeed, give them 2 points. If not, give Oerthex 1 point.
- 3 Unmoored Barge.** As the river surges, an unmoored barge flows toward the party. Characters should check STR or collide with the barge for 1d6 damage. If half the party succeeds, give them 1 point for each foot of water in town. If not, give Oerthex the same points.
- 4 Flooded Streets.** Characters must carefully wade through flooded streets. For each character carrying more than half their strength score or wearing more than 4 AP, give Oerthex 1 point. If all characters don't have or give up the excess armor and equipment, the party gains 1 point for each foot of flooding.
- 5 Trapped Soothsayer.** A woman is trying to free her soothsaying younger lover from a collapsed building. If the party stops to help, the soothsayer will give them advice: give Oerthex 1 point for each foot of flooding, but immediately increase the party's points to five.
- 6 Looters.** The characters meet 2d4 looters (1 HD, daggers for 1d6 damage) who will try to take their belongings. If they engage the looters for more than one round, give Oerthex 1 point for each foot of flooding. If the pcs escape them by the end of one round, give them 1 point for each foot of flooding.

Oerthex both have 9 points, they meet him in front of the gate. If Oerthex has more points, they find the gate ripped open (see below). If the party has more points, they automatically have the initiative when Oerthex arrives.

OPENING THE UNDERWORLD GATE

If Oerthex beats the party to the Underworld Gate, he will rip it open and enter. If they meet him there, he will try to use his actions to rip the gate open before stepping into the gray mists beyond.

If the party follows him into the gray mists, each party member will need to check WIS or CON, whichever is worse, or succumb to the mists. If they reach the gate

Encounters in the Temple

- 1 Fallen Idol.** A large fertility idol has overturned on high priest Gilban. If the characters stop to assist him, give Oerthex 1 point. If they ignore him, he curses their impiety. Each character must check CHA or have disadvantage on their next check or attack.
- 2 Temple Tremors.** As the mountain shakes, so does the temple. Characters must make a DEX check to find cover or take 1d10 damage. Oerthex also takes 1d10 damage. The side that takes the least total damage gains 1 point.
- 3 Secret Door.** The descending stairs are behind a secret door. One party member (but only one) may make a WIS check to find the hidden passage. If they succeed, give them 1 point. If they fail, a priest shows them the door, but Oerthex gains 1 point.
- 4 Undead Guardians.** 2d4 mellified undead temple guardians are confused, accosting any strangers they see. Each has 3 Hit Die, attacking twice with glaives for 1d10 damage. If the party cannot calm them, Oerthex gains 1 point for each round the party spends in combat.

after Oerthex, they should add 1 to the roll for each point by which Oerthex beat them. Characters who fail the roll must immediately roll on the Out of Action table and suffer those effects. On walking through the mists, they will find themselves in Vashniah's burial chamber where Oerthex is preparing to decapitate her.

If the party waits for Oerthex to emerge, he will exit after 1d6 minutes with all damage healed and 3 additional HD. His goal will be to take Vashniah's head and jump into the surging river to escape before the dawn.

FIN

If Oerthex defeats or escapes the characters and takes Vashniah's head with him, the grieving Ona will abandon the temple and town. After a week's time, vengeful undead will begin to make their way out of the Underworld Gate to trouble the world above.

If the characters stop Oerthex, the priests of the temple and the surviving royal household members will award the characters mundane treasures worth significant coin (2d4 hundred each if you need a number). One or more may offer the party their patronage, providing them with healing, funding, and steady work.

Three Dozen Unnatural Weather Phenomena

• FELLOW-CITIZEN, BEWARE THE HERETIC SPIDERSNOW OF CRADDOOM: Tiny white spiders descend from the slipstream on tiny locomotive threads to whisper LIES about the Triumvirate in good citizens' ears. Thought to be the transformed ashes of the MAD EXECUTED HERETIC, Blue Shane. Good and true citizens must block ears with wax and wear HOBNAIL BOOTS with which to stomp and nullify the HERETIC SPIDERSNOW.

• The deep purple clouds of Pryn-gur have a strange lensing effect which allows glimpses of far away places or even other times. Astronomers camp out here, monitoring them with telescopes on behalf of the empress. Occasionally, when they hang low to the ground, it is possible to step through the cloud to the place or time it reveals.

• When the wind blows strong from the west, it carries with it a creeping cloud. The curling puffs of flammable gas roll toward the city, and we extinguish every flame. No light, no heat, no cigarettes, no cars, no guns. We breathe through masks and cuddle together in the freezing darkness. And we survive, until the East wind returns.

• Up on High Chalk, in Wexham county, on the first day of spring, the winds briskly drop lost letters across the hills. Folk stand with nets and hope for word from lost loves and missing family, secret knowledge from departed masters, or just the chance for a good stickybeak. The High Chalk post run is said to be the last duty a postman must perform before moving on to the next world.

• There is a house in the eye of supercell Callista. Small and ramshackle, true, but there you will find a thing you did not know you needed so very desperately. Don't go there looking for something, though. You won't find it there, and you will never find it at all.

• The Cloud Giants of Cathay prepare May fireworks in the event of a solar eclipse to scare the shadow away. Back on the ground, this manifests as "color thunder," which is what giant-sized fireworks look like to serfs on the ground.

• The City of Morrin-Ank is known for two things. Its ancient, labyrinthine prison complex and its monthly rain of metallic keys. The city jailers refuse to talk about the cause of the strange weather, but some have begun to wonder who or what is shackled in the last cell in the deepest part of the dungeon, trying to escape.

• If you're enjoying particularly excellent weather, look around you. Your friends might be experiencing slightly different weather. A breeze on one and a hot day on another could indicate you've slipped through the veil to Avurron where the weather is always perfect for each individual.

• The weather on St. Luke's Island is determined by lottery. Every night the residents fill out a survey card detailing the weather throughout the day, and one is randomly chosen to be true. Nobody knows where the cards come from, who picks them up, or how they influence the weather.

• The reverse rain is pooling upwards from the ground before flying into the sky, shooting up from the surface of lakes and rivers. Even your sweat is drawn to the strange clouds above. It leaves the land dry and drums against leaves of trees, the edges of roofs, before floating up again.

☐☐ Among the child graves of St. Muriel, you often see ball lightning zipping between the markers and hear the laughter of children. It is said that those who have yet to fully pass are given these “toys” to help calm them for the journey. Woe to any who disturb their play.

☐☐ In the mountains of Unlak, there is somewhere a portal to the realm of the Ocean King. Squalls that blow off the peaks here sometimes carry raindrops of salt water. Apart from being terrible for local crops, these raindrops act as miniature scrying pools for the King. If you carry that water—in a bowl, in your hair and clothes—he can see you. And if you know the way, you can contact him the same way.

☐☐ In the deep mines of the dwarfs, craftsmen seek to pit the elemental forces of earth and fire against each other, while engineers seek to shackle and control the elemental forces of air and water. Sometimes these spirits break free and what might be inconvenient weather to the outside world can be devastating for the those trapped with it underground.

☐☐ The first fire tornado was an accident. The second was a coincidence. But by the third time we figured out that the twisters were actively seeking fires and engulfing them. This is why being a fireman is so important, and you must keep your lures hot during storm season.

☐☐ The hot air of the southeasterly “Winds of Change” will swirl around any, engulfing them in the heady scent of foreign spices and food. When swept up, you experience visions and whispers of possible futures; great for fortune tellers, fortune seekers, and those dissatisfied with their current lot. One thing is certain: a town caught by these winds is never the same again.

☐☐ The weather in Asimlus is nearly always beautiful—partly cloudy skies with warm temperatures and a wonderful cooling breeze. But occasionally the breeze cannot be found, and the clouds descend upon the town, blanketing it in a thick fog that the sun cannot penetrate. People go missing whenever this happens, but the citizens of Asimlus never fear the descending clouds they dub “Heaven’s Will.”

☐☐ The umami plains are a constant churn of winds, blowing hot then cold. Damnedest thing though, all sorts of edible plants grow here, so chefs often test their skill by allowing the breeze to season their dishes.

☐☐ Under certain astronomical alignments, the gray storm rolls from the Great Wastes. As it passes, it pulls water and the unsanctified dead into it through the still air.

☐☐ Sometimes mere beasts achieve enlightenment. Most enjoy their enlightened status on earth, but some become conceited and try to enter heaven. In the aftermath of such attempted ascensions, flesh from that animal, torn asunder by angry gods, will rain down on earth. If eaten before it spoils, the residual essence of heaven imbued in the flesh cures all wounds and ailments.

☐☐ The Crescent Sea is known for startlingly high tides and devastating storm surges. Its coast is dotted with ghost towns on stilts that travelers use to protect themselves from the elements. The houses cannot save them from the walking-sharks who ride in with the surf.

☐☐ The moisture in the air around here is acidic—I mean like melt-your-face-off acidic. It’s ok, drink from a well or stream and it gets diluted. But when it rains or gets so much as a little misty, you’d better stay indoors. In the mornings we stay off the grass—the dew will burn your feet to uselessness before you know it.

☐☐ Everyone who’s ever walked through the Grey Valley tells you about the cold drizzle that follows you all the way. Not everyone tells you that once you enter the drizzle, you start hearing the voice of someone long gone from your life, or that after a couple of hours that same person walks by your side telling you all the ways you let them down in the past, and will only leave you alone once you’re completely dry again. Shamans say it’s the manifestation of a strong spirit that died after being betrayed by their best friend.

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- ☐☐☐ On certain days, when the city lights reflect strongly on a thin, high cloud cover, and the moonlight strikes the river just at the right angle, you can see the vague outlines of a different city overlapping your own. You cannot cross over, but there are rumours about two people communicating by poi fire dances.
- ☐☐☐ Rimelightning? You's not want to mess with it. See that "ice sculpture" up on the steeple? They's the last fool tried to capture some in one of them dynamo bottles I see you fondling.
- ☐☐☐ The smug Cyclone Titan sits victorious at the center of the ruined Ultramart, a vortex of discounted consumer goods twisting through the air around her.
- ☐☐☐ If you find yourself at Fournemothe Mountain Cove in spring, try to stay long enough to experience a Greenfall. The little valley is pelted for three days and three nights by a rain that bursts instantly into small flora—grasses, flowers, climbing vines, pea shoots—leaving the village blanketed in verdancy. Indoors, the locals celebrate and prepare for the long work of reaping the strange harvest and mending roofs straining under the insinuation of ivy. Many a coat or hat sown with moss speaks to jubilant sprints between the cover of houses. The area's witches generally agree the rain to be composed of minuscule plant spirits, but they remain unsure what the valley has done to merit this annual migration.
- ☐☐☐ After a rainstorm there is always a rainbow. Sometimes, a rainbow cloud hides in this rainbow, raining down divine peaches and longevity pears from the celestial gardens.
- ☐☐☐ In the city of Dis, Fly Rain is common—billions of flies pouring down and consuming the flesh of the damned. Devil and damned alike suspect the death of Beelzebub is to blame, but no one is certain.
- ☐☐☐ The town was blessed so that only the sinful would suffer burns from the sun. Sucks about the whole "born with sin" thing.
- ☐☐☐ Once every generation, a mighty hurricane coincides with a strangely long tide, and the brave and foolhardy can walk on wet sand straight into Atlantis.
- ☐☐☐ The Rosemoon only comes when the air is cool and dry, and all three Sisters hang in the sky. The night bursts with soft pink light bright enough to see by, lasting for an hour or so. All sorts of legends and superstitions accrue, but the Regent assures all citizens it is a mundane atmospheric phenomenon.
- ☐☐☐ Every sailor on the Great Lakes knows of the Witch of November, but few know of the Saint. When the Witch's waves threaten every ship, the little children see Marguerite's face on the crest. The Sainted surge may save the innocent, but the Witch will take Her due. In November, the Lakes bring orphans to the coast of Quebec.
- ☐☐☐ The Noonday Witch is the eternal hurricane of the equatorial plains of the planet Bizdiñ. Following the same path daily, shaped by the same landforms year after year, the daring Weathermen in their thousand-form airships chart the storm's zephyrs, gusts, raincurtains, and lighting forests like boatmen navigating river rapids. The peasant pharmaciennes claim the Witch to be the manifest grief of the goddess Gaia, the Lost Mother.
- ☐☐☐ A gentle breeze lifts up the entire town like a leaf in the wind. The breeze may respond to music, ritual, or bargaining.
- ☐☐☐ The smotherfog is a strange sulphurous mist that appears in volcanic regions and laces around neck and throat before filling the lungs, smothering people. It feels like hands around your throat...
- ☐☐☐ The frost on the ground looks like broken glass because it is. Perceptive people get an augury via reflection after being cut.

CODEx

KEEPERS

Aaron, Keeper of the Child Upon Whom We Dare Not Look
Jesse Abelman, Keeper of the Moon's First Memory
Rob Abrazado, Keeper of the Purple Falsehood
Quentin Acord, Keeper of the Word that Binds and Blinds
Joaquin Aguirrezabalaga, Keeper of the Blood of Lursiss
Vendevogel Alain, Keeper of the Omegatherion of Fasar
Alan, Keeper of the Wanting Widows of Thon the Promiscuous
John Alexander, Keeper of the Child Whose Face is a Mirror
Zach Alexander, Keeper of the Weeping Cells
Brendan Allison, Keeper of the Child Who Creeps and Crawls
Bryen Alperin, Keeper of the Sibylline Grimoire
Erik Amundsen, Keeper of Pages Touched but Unread
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Christian Svalander, Keeper of the Hidden Vortex

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