

WEIRD TALES OF SWORDS AND SORCERY

June 2021

# SAPPHRON

\$3

N. MASYK'S

*NEWEST ADVENTURE!*


An  
**UNCONQUERED**  
hexcrawl

in an age  
**UNDREAMED**  
OF!

A forgotten  
treasure...

A Mother of  
**HORRORS!**

**DOOMCRAWL No. 1**



**Petrified Forest**, ancient cedars turned to stone, an unbroken circle atop a windswept heath. The gravesite and great triumph of Yurimor'garakii, the Boar God, who slew the Flaxen Consort in the throes of their death-squeals. Great ivory tusks jut forth from the center of the ring; twin spears eternally dripping with a bright arterial ichor.

**Flaxen Fields**, a sea of pale blue blooms in the lowlands, hills rolling like great waves. Red-robed servants of Mother Gomazz once toiled these fields in the Time Before. Their bones were left to bleach beneath the suns.

**Sanguine Pools**, brackish and bubbling alkali-oases amidst the xeric scrubland. One in every three pools is said to possess miraculous healing properties; the rest are all lethal. Seen from above, they form a trail towards the Body of the Mother, like bloody footprints.

**Body of the Mother**, a dusky-hued hillock nestled within a sheltered valley, stained red with the blood of the Mother.

# SAFFRON

*"... South of where the river meets the sea, south past where the red clay oozes blood-like underfoot, to Gomazzi, the Yellow Flats; rich in soil, dry in summer, clear skies and thick tangles of cedar groves and endless fields of flax and crocus, either more precious than gold or jewels..."*

*SAFFRON words and layout by N. Masyk. With thanks to Micah Anderson, Ian Woolley, Guilherme Gontijo and Jared Sinclair.*

*in loving memory of Daniel Dumile AKA MF DOOM.*

# ENCOUNTERS

2. **Sandwurm.** Massive antediluvian horrors from a best-left-forgotten Long Ago. Can swallow an entire caravan whole.
3. **Nomads.** Silk-swathed caravans of migrant travelers. Travel by night; by day they cunningly conceal themselves in collapsible camouflage yurts.
4. **Red oryx.** Herds of encarmine antelopes. The thunder of their hooves can be heard for miles around. Migrate from water-source to water-source in single file, to hide their numbers.
5. **Were-apes.** Well-armed mercenaries mounted on lowlander steeds. Bought and paid for by the satraps to seek plunder, but their loyalty lies only in the highest bidder.
6. **Hooded crow.** Three-eyed corvids that seek out and jealously guard ancient knowledge. Known to possess powerful magicks.
7. **Burn-shadow.** Flickering outlines, the ghostly remains of where terrible God-Weapons were fired in the Long Ago. Often bound by some unfinished business in this life.
8. **Plant-ling.** Cerulean-skinned cyclopes that hide in the dank places where the loam is rich and black. Fiercely territorial.
9. **Qutrub.** Garnet-skinned half-hyenas. Highly communal, dwelling in small family groups wherever there is water and shade. Laughter can be heard for miles and miles.
10. **Gomazzi cultist.** Red-robed servants of Mother Gomazz. Carry out blasphemous fertility rituals beneath the Blood Moon.
11. **Martian lion.** Six-legged felid carnivores prowl the rocky uplands. Ruddy fur camouflages well against the crocus-blooms.
12. **Rabisu.** Black-eyed lurkers at the margins; cave entrances, riverbanks, where hill becomes lowland. Blood-suckers, looking flush and radiant after a feed, emaciated otherwise.

**2**

Remains of a farming village. A mad hermit is all that remains, now, tending to a single, ancient aurochs.

**3**

A great cloud of dust atop a distant hill. The thunder of hooves as a column of mounted were-ape mercenaries approach, bearing the banner of an avaricious satrap.

**4**

A mountain crawled, or scuttled. A slumbering sandwurm, rumbling the earth with its dreams. Reeks of bile and rot.

**5**

A bower hidden in the crocus blooms. A woven arch of grass, dyed red with saffron, berries, and blood. Underneath, various treasures are gathered; copper and clay, red feathers garnets, and red fruits.

**6**

Marshes clustered around the bronze bones of some titanic mechanoform. The sorcery that once gave the construct life has seeped into the waters, causing the local flora and fauna to grow corpulent and bioluminescent.

**7**

Miraculously intact lingish village. The inhabitants are friendly and accommodating, but their speech and garb is archaic and outdated. In the morning they are gone, and only empty ruins remain.

Ling-sized pools of bubbling mud. Soothing, healing properties. 50% chance the pools are occupied.

Colony of lurid yellow moths living amidst a tiny cedar grove. The pollen induces drowsiness.

**8**

**10**

Some vagary of the local climate; a cold snap, a blizzard from a clear sky. Rime-spirits flutter between the snowdrifts.

**11**

Abandoned bandit hideout. Treasure, clothes, and even food remains out, as if awaiting their return. No sign of the bandits.

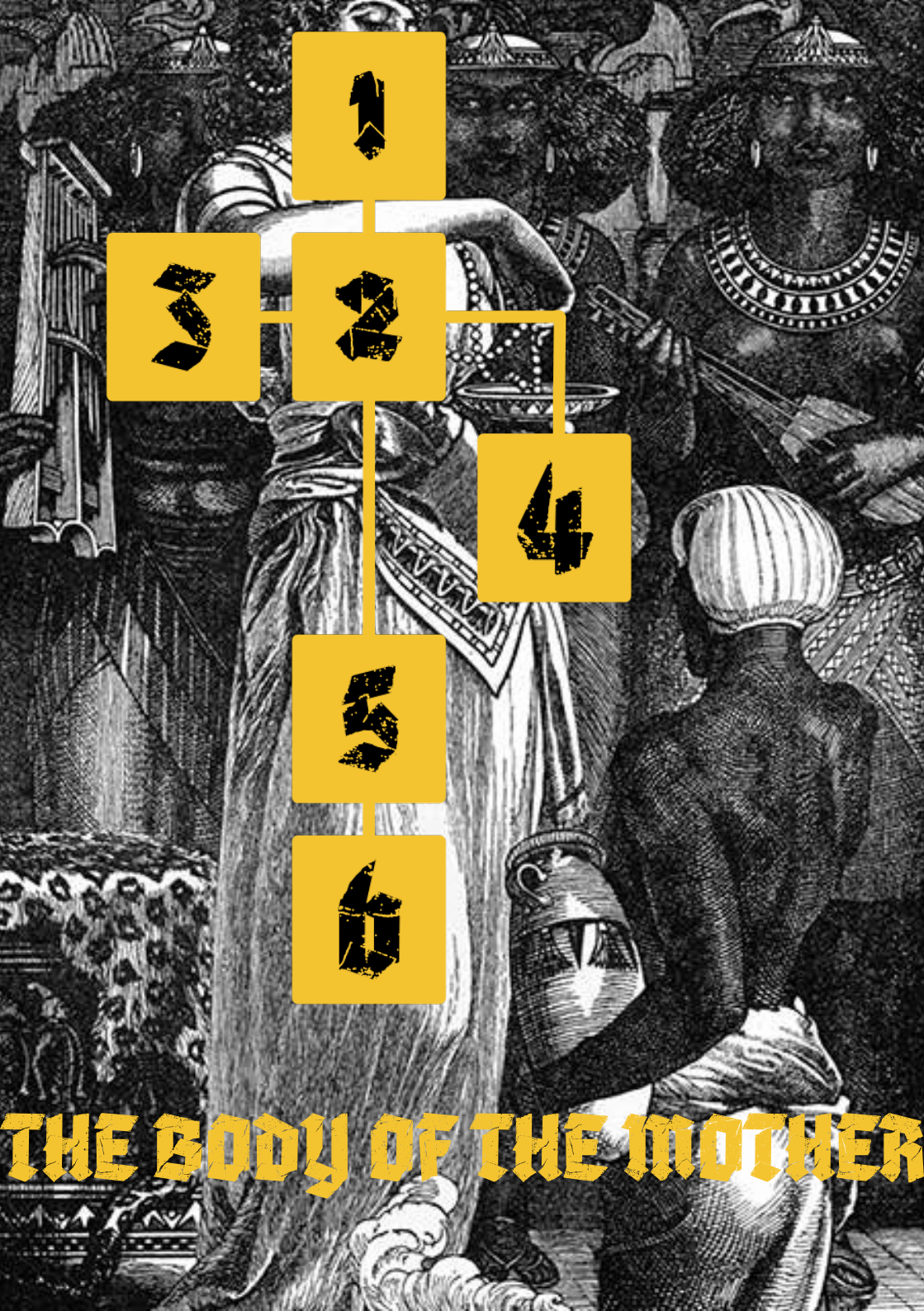
**9**

**HEXES**

**206**

Rust-colored moss collects amidst the rocky lowlands. A powerful hallucinogenic.

**12**



1

3

2

4

5

6

**THE BODY OF THE MOTHER**

# LOCATIONS

1. **Mouth.** Full lips carved into the mountainside; pink granite, to simulate the blush of desire. A small grove of stunted trees lies just outside, strange and overripe stonefruit that same shade of pink. An offering of the fruit-pits parts the lips.
2. **Neck.** Network of narrow passageways that slope at a downward angle. Numerous fleshy portals open and close seemingly at random, separating would-be treasure-hunters. A portal opened does not necessarily lead to the same passage as it did before.
3. **Arm.** Curved maze-like passageway terminating in a circular bedchamber. Lavish and ostentatious, adorned with flax-flower carvings in gold leaf. 1d6 random Treasures are within the Consort's bedchamber. Diaphanous silk curtains and the heady musk of an ambrosial perfume. The very air is thick with sexual desire.
4. **Heart.** Three steadily-pulsing chambers. Filled with a viscous red sludge. One chamber is always empty, one chamber full, one chamber half-full. Valves direct the flow between chambers. Each chamber contains a single random Treasure.
5. **Ribs.** Scything bone-swords curve upwards to a fathomless ceiling. An ancient feast-hall, where the Mother entertained her vast legions in the Time Before. An ornate sarcophagi lies beneath each "rib," one-in-six containing a slumbering Rabisu or a random Treasure.
6. **Belly.** Cavernous worship-room. Slick walls, a moist and spongy floor; a pool of warm, red sludge in the center. Generations of Flaxen Consorts once graced this chamber to lovingly massage the feet of the Mother. There are no Treasures to be found here. The pool in the center beckons; there can always be a new Mother Gomazzi.

## DWELLERS

2. **Gomazzi cultist:** *HD 1, AV 0.* Congregate in groups of 6, the sacred number of their dead God. 25% chance to carry a random Treasure.
3. **Nomads:** *HD 1, AV 0.* Family groups of 2d20. Random Treasure for trade.
4. **Plant-ling:** *HD 1, AV 2.* Vulnerable to fire. Single eye, but functionally blind; finds prey through tracking vibrations in the ground.
5. **Rabisu:** *HD 9, AV 4.* Unaffected by non-silver weapons. Can transform into a cloud of gas, a bat, or a wolf at will.
6. **Were-apes:** *HD 4, AV 1.* Exceedingly militant; follows a strict chain of command. 25% chance to be carrying a random Treasure.
7. **Burn-shadow:** *HD 1, AV 0.* Immune to physical attacks. Touch corrodes metal. 25% chance to know the location of a random Treasure.
8. **Hooded crow:** *HD 2, AV 0.* Knows a random Word of Creation and/or possesses a random Treasure.
9. **Sandwurm:** *HD 19, AV 12.* As well fight a hurricane. Can be seen from a hex away. 1d6 random Treasures in their gullet.
10. **Qutrub:** *HD 3, AV 1.* Vulnerable to silver. Haunts graveyards, recovers 1d6 Will when it eats a corpse. 25% chance to possess a random Treasure.
11. **Red oryx:** *HD 1, AV 1.* Garnet eyes. Entrails used in fertility rituals.
12. **Carmine lion:** *HD 3, AV 0.* Attracted to the scent of blood. Will pursue prey for up to 3 hexes.

## TREASURES

2. **Pouch of corundum dust.** Abrasive; cleans & clears off nearly anything, uncovering what is concealed or corroded. Leaves a slight reddish tinge behind.
3. **Satrap inquisitor battle-robos.** Ornate ceremonial armor of interwoven gold tiles; surprisingly functional. AV 6.
4. **Face-thieving mask.** Expressionless porcelain exterior; when worn, replaces the face of the wearer with whomever wore it last. Permanent, requires a day's sustained sunlight to "recharge."
5. **Alzabo-chitin bustier.** Striking crimson; lifts and separates. Purely ornamental, with little practical value. AV 1.
6. **Spirit rope.** 20 meters in length and able to support nearly any length. Invisible save for in direct moonlight, where it reflects a faint reddish glow. Easily lost.
7. **Drinking-gourd of carmine liquor.** HOLLOWED-out gourd. The liquor within is distilled from the fruit that grows in secluded valleys. Powerful aphrodisiac and restorative.
8. **Stack of Time Before scrip.** Strange strips of papyrus bearing ancient seals and the faces of forgotten monarchs. Once valued as a form of currency.
9. **Saffron sigma bulbs.** Medicinal spice with a variety of alleged benefits, including as an aphrodisiac and as menstrual cramp relief.
10. **Sanguine construct blueprints.** Bloodstone tablet inscribed with blueprints on how to build, activate and maintain a blood-powered biomechanical construct. Blueprints for the control rod are implied to be inscribed on a separate tablet (not included).
11. **Half of a blood moon key.** Crescent soapstone amulet; one half of a keystone used in Gomazzi fertility rituals. Writing on the amulet suggests the key-fragments are kept apart for a reason.
12. **Sacrificial ax stained with blood.** Double-headed ax with blades representing the phase of the moon; one waxing, one waning. Impossibly ancient, yet as sharp as the day it was forged. Two-handed, Close, explodes on a 4+.