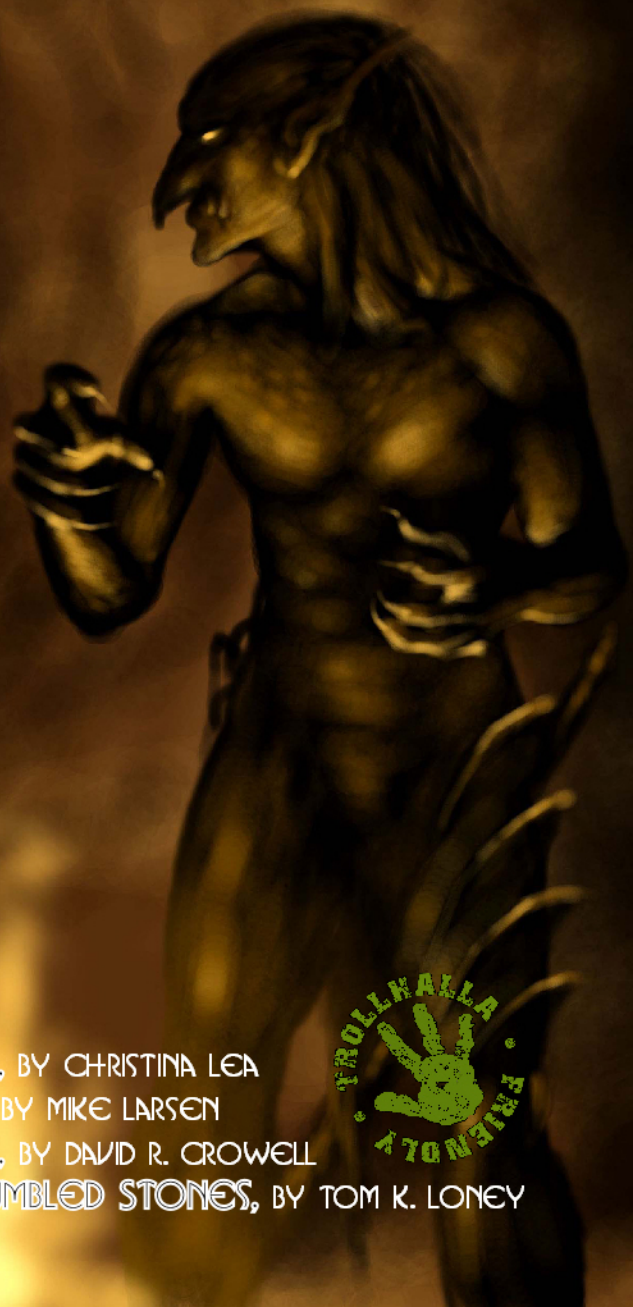


SUMMER-FALL 2010



# ELDER TUNNELS

## HALLOWEEN SPECIAL



### INSIDE:

THE EPHEMERA FURNACE, BY CHRISTINA LEA

RESURRECTION MISSIONS, BY MIKE LARSEN

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER, BY DAVID R. CROWELL

TROUBLE AMONG THE TUMBLED STONES, BY TOM K. LONEY





# ELDER TUNNELS

## SUMMER-FALL 2010

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# Introduction

“Well, good evening. I’m so glad you could join me. Please, come in and dry yourself off; quite a thunder storm we’re having, isn’t it? Go on, take a seat over there near the fireplace and warm yourself up. Mr Igor will take your coat upstairs. Now, now, Igor. Don’t lick our guest’s hand; just do your job.

Thank you again for paying me a visit. It gets very lonely in this large, creaking mansion. What’s wrong? Oh, that. Pay no attention to that. The walls tend to bleed every once in a while; you get used to it. I see that you are shaking. Please, there is no reason to be afraid. What sound? I assure you, that was merely the wind and not a recently deceased body that has returned to the realm of the living and is running its gnarled fingers down the cellar door.

Anyway, I hope you are settled now, because I have a surprise for you. In my hands I hold an ancient tome that I recently found when putting a few items into storage. Yes, the cover does slightly resemble a chillingly contorted grin, doesn’t it? Ah well, ‘never judge a book by its cover’ is what I always say. Of course, being bound in flesh and inked in blood, it’s probably fair to say that this isn’t *Pride and Prejudice*.

So, let’s take a look at it together. Are you sitting comfortably? Yes, well, you *are* sitting in an old electric chair, so I don’t suppose you’ll be all that comfortable, but bear with me. Within these pages lurk horrifying adventures by a group of ghoulish writers. ‘The Ephemera Furnace’ by the sinister Christina Lea will chill you with a tale of disembodied limbs and groaning zombies. The murderous Mike Larsen will thrust you through hellish portals into the horrifying abyss of his dark mind in ‘Resurrection Missions.’ ‘The Farmer’s Daughter’ by the twisted David Crowell will give you nightmares of scarecrows, cattle mutilations, and things that go bump in the night. Finally, in ‘Trouble among the Tumbled Stones,’ the foul Tom K. Loney will take you on a terrible journey to a place where travellers have been vanishing mysteriously. Could this be the work of bandits, or is something more disturbing afoot on the road to Grimhaven?

Listen, there’s no point in trying to escape now. I’ve locked the doors. Just come back to your seat and I’ll begin. It’s going to be quite a night.”

*Mr Scott Malthouse*





# The Ephemera Furnace

by Christina Lea



Christopher Lee Rowan

There's not much left of the Fiefdom of Trentrask. From miles away, the traveler can see a column of thick gray smoke rising over the forest, sparkling and refracting the light of the setting sun in odd ways. A little closer, it is apparent that the nearby village is empty and many of the fields have been abandoned. Finally, the castle itself, once a proud stone fortress with bright flags and streamers, is gone. Only a quarry remains, worked well into the night by gaunt peasants overseen by lantern-bearing foremen.

Around the quarry, a veritable city of tents has taken root, although two less transitory structures remain. The first is an ugly brick building on the edge of the quarry, looped and penetrated by metallic tubes and dominated by a towering smokestack. The other is a low wooden side-building attached to the brick one.

The player characters could be arriving here for any number of reasons. They may have been sent by a former ally of Magnus or one of his neighbors to find out what is happening. They may have heard of the obsessive quarrying operation and come to find out if there's some opportunity into which they could insert themselves. It's even possible that you had dropped this location into your game world and they wandered in here at random. The story doesn't require any particular set-up to work, although it does assume that the players are members of the common (human-like) kindreds. An assortment of knuckle-dragging ogres, trolls, or other monsters found shambling into the camp would probably be attacked on sight as a defensive measure.

### **Magnus's Tent**

So well-appointed that one could almost forget that it isn't a real house, this tent is where Magnus entertains guests and holds court. It contains a simple wooden throne, a dining table for ten, a desk and chair, three large wooden chests shod with iron, and thick rugs. Don't mention it unless someone asks, but there is no bed here because, in his current state, Magnus doesn't sleep. Two of the wooden trunks contain clothes, while the third contains his personal treasures (roll twice on the random treasure table in the T&T rulebook). Two soldiers (each MR 15 with 10 pt armor) guard the entrance.

### **The Ephemera Furnace**

The brick building with the smokestack is Abramaty's ephemera furnace. Inside is a clanging, whooshing chaos of churning gears, random blasts of hot air, and tooth-rattling thrums of nostalgia. This device magically deconstructs any material, even stone, and extracts kremm from the emotional energy invested in the objects fed to it.





Although always running, it only really works by the command of Abrammatyn, who can use it either to fuel his own magic use or to store kremm in crystal receptacles that look like partially melted glass figurines. There will be 2d (DARO applicable) of these crystals with 10 points of kremm each stored here at any given time. Once used, the crystals crumble into white sand. Five peasants (MR 5 each) work in the furnace and two zombies (MR 10 each) guard the inner works. There also are two human soldiers (MR 15 each, 10 pt armor) at the front door. The zombies will only let humans bearing the Trentrask seal pass without confrontation.

### Laboratory

This low wooden building adjoining the furnace is stocked with a gruesome array of meticulously separated and stored body parts. The sandy remnants of several drained kremm crystals are held in special receptacles connected to the operating tables. A room full of skreel pens still holds three breeding pairs of the creatures. Abrammatyn has had no trouble using his machines and alchemical treatments to animate corpses into undead servants, but he has so far had no luck in creating a truly living long-term body for Magnus. The laboratory is guarded outside by two soldiers, but none of Magnus's living subjects are allowed within. Inside are 2d zombies, inert except when Abrammatyn has them performing some specific task, but ready to attack any intruders.

## EXPLORING THE CAMP

Whatever brought them here, the player characters will no doubt want to have a look around. Although armed guards (each MR 15 with 7 pt armor) are posted all about the camp, the delvers will find little impediment to their explorations unless they try to enter a tent. Anyone causing trouble will find ten of these guards upon them, to be followed shortly by another twenty as reinforcements arrive.

Soldiers and peasants alike will generally be willing to talk with the player characters, although in somewhat guarded tones. Roll a hidden 2nd lvl SR Ch on behalf of any character asking questions. Successful SRs roll 1d on the "Good Information" table, while failures roll on the "Bad Information" one. Multiple instances of the same result can be rephrased, re-rolled, or even replaced with your own information, as you prefer. Once the initial roll has been made, be sure to let the conversation evolve naturally from there. Don't just have random peasants wander by, deliver info-bytes, and move on. And you should, of course, feel free to discard this random element entirely and deliver whatever mix of information works for you if the method given here seems too mechanistic.



**Good Information**

- 1 This used to be a prosperous land before Magnus became obsessed with dismantling his castle.
- 2 Sir Magnus started wearing a mask after he came back from the campaigns across the sea. That's when his unsavory advisor first appeared as well.
- 3 The weather has been strange ever since that furnace started up. The clouds don't look right.
- 4 A lot of people have been disappearing around here lately. Everybody says they ran away, but I'm not so sure.
- 5 Sir Magnus has been acting more and more agitated lately. Whatever he's digging for, I don't think he's found it.
- 6 I saw Sir Magnus's hand under the gauntlet once and it was made of wood, but somehow he can still make it move.

**Bad Information**

- 1 A friend of mine keeps seeing Abramatyng traveling back and forth across the border with armfuls of scrolls. Maybe he's a spy.
- 2 I've heard about a cult with a secret initiation ritual that involves wearing a silver mask. They say if you give up your face and your worldly possessions, you can gain incredible magical powers.
- 3 I like turtles.
- 4 This whole operation is just a big distraction. Magnus found a rich gold vein somewhere near here and doesn't want anyone else to know.
- 5 I think Sir Magnus is long gone. We're taking orders from a puppet animated by that slinker Abramatyng.
- 6 What they make in that factory is little shiny voodoo dolls. I saw Abramatyng crush one in his hand right before young Binkly got sick and died. If you find one, be careful with it. Somebody could get killed.

**MEETING MAGNUS**

Magnus is eager to meet the characters, so, even if they don't seek him out, he will find them. When Magnus and a player character begin to converse, Abramatyng will interrupt the initial speaker and whisper to Magnus about "treatments." After a tense moment of staring inscrutably at Abramatyng, Magnus will invite the group to an evening meal in his tent, promising to tell them everything they want to know and more. He and Abramatyng will then retire to the laboratory, where Abramatyng will experiment with different methods of putting several recently stolen

arms and legs under Magnus's mental control. None of this will work, even when he scales down to fingers and toes, so the two will return to the tent shortly after sundown.

If the players show up for dinner, or if some other quiet meeting is arranged, Magnus will put off inquiries with placating generalizations such as: "I only do what must be done for my people, as you will soon understand. First, however, I would know more of my guests. Please, tell me of your exploits." Abrammatyn will also be there, and he will occasionally interrupt Magnus with a snickering remark or snidely muttered correction.

Remember, as the encounter progresses, that Magnus's mask denies him the luxury of facial expression. Make a point of describing his moods through body language, possibly even throwing in reminders about his voice "grating behind his expressionless mask" or mentioning "twisted reflections in the curves of his eternally frozen scowl." He will, of course, not partake of any food, but don't mention this unless someone asks. If confronted with this fact, Magnus will reply that he always eats alone because of his skin condition, and he won't say anything more about it.

Magnus has invited the heroes here because Abrammatyn has determined that they are exceptional people, with spirits that might be powerful enough to infuse his crude creations with true life. In talking up their valor, however, Abrammatyn has unwittingly reminded Magnus of the brave knight he used to be. Magnus now wants to assure himself that his victims deserve what he is about to do to them, so he's trying to find out what kind of adventurers they are: true heroes or just another band of roguish tomb-robbers.

Magnus will judge the players through the romanticized memories of his old martial code of honor. He will hold them up to fairy tale standards of dragon-slaying, maiden-rescuing knights. If he is convinced that they are good people but fall short of this standard, he will remain conflicted. If the players make it obvious that they are really just amoral treasure-hunters, his resolve will be set and he will wholeheartedly throw himself into Abrammatyn's scheme.

If the players manage to convince Magnus that they truly live up to his knightly standards and aren't just trying to con him (your call entirely), he will sit silently for a moment and stare at the table, then turn to Abrammatyn and say, quietly at first, but slowly building in intensity: "These are the souls you would consume to save me? These noble warriors, these heroes should be fed to your unholy machine for—*for* WHAT?" A slow, clanging chuckle will echo from behind Magnus's mask and gradually collapse into a choked sob. If nothing stops him, he will



tear off his helmet, screaming. His armor will collapse as the scree that held him together scurry away, leaving his brain to shrivel into an oily, blackened lump on the ground.

If this happens, you can pretty much skip the “Things Fall Apart” section and go right into “Run for Your Life.” Abrammatyn will either fight or attempt to flee, depending on his opinion of the party. Flip a coin or roll the dice for a 50/50 chance if you don't want to decide.

Regardless of what occurred this day, a soft, steady rain will begin early in the evening and continue until well past dawn. The water, contaminated by the post-magical smoke from the furnace, will sparkle when held to the light, and it will taste like salt. If Magnus hasn't already pulled his own head off, he will offer the characters a tent for the night.

**THINGS FALL APART**

During this phase, Abrammatyn and his disguised zombies will begin stalking the player characters in an attempt to subdue them, chop them up, and use them to build truly living reanimated bodies. If Magnus has convinced himself that the players are scum, or if the meeting with him never occurred, then he will take part in the stalking. However, if Magnus is conflicted after meeting with the players, Abrammatyn will not have told him of this endeavor.

Abramatyn will take any opportunity to cast spells like Breaker Breaker and Befuddle from hiding (or from behind Magnus, if necessary). He will also do his best to separate the party with mirages if he has not already been spotted. Roll 1d to determine how many of the party members Abrammatyn believes he needs to capture, with any number greater than the total party size indicating that the whole party will suffice. If he is able to capture the required number without being spotted, he will take them back to his laboratory and begin vivisectioning them. If Magnus is ambivalent, he might turn on Abrammatyn and help the player characters at this point. Let each captured character roll a 4th lvl SR Lk or Ch. It only takes one success for Magnus to decide to help.

There are several ways this phase can end. If the characters are all captured or killed, that—obviously—pretty much wraps up the whole thing. In order to activate the “Run for Your Life” phase, one of the following needs to occur:

- \* The death of Magnus
- \* The death of Abrammatyn
- \* The destruction of the ephemera furnace
- \* The destruction of several unused kremm crystals
- \* A mood for mayhem in the GM.

## RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

Whatever the trigger-event for this phase is, it will release enough magic to catalyze the post-kremm particles raining down from the clouds and unleash the energy Abrammatyn has been storing. If it has not already been destroyed, the first victim of this energy will be the ephemera furnace. The rain will intensify into a violent thunderstorm, and all of the disembodied parts in the laboratory will come to life. And, just to show that we can Tunnel Hack with the best of 'em, here's another random table:

### 2d Result

- 2 1 vicerax, 1 headrusher, 1 righty puppeteer
- 3 1 righty puppeteer, 2 zombies, 1 headrusher
- 4 2d zombies, 1 nosferatoo
- 5 2d+1 nosferatoos
- 6 1d+3 nosferatoos
- 7 Sudden gust of wind: 3rd lvl SR Sp to avoid being knocked down
- 8 1 lefty puppeteer, 2 zombies
- 9 1 righty puppeteer, 1 lefty puppeteer, 1 vicerax
- 10 Lightning strike: 3rd lvl SR Lk to avoid, 6d damage to everyone who fails
- 11 1d villagers and 1 soldier who are willing to help
- 12 Distracted by a witch on a flying bicycle: lose one action

Keep rolling every turn until they've seen the witch twice or you feel like they've had enough. At this point the storm will abate, but they'll still have to finish off or escape from any creatures they're already fighting with. If Abrammatyn has not been killed, the players will briefly see him crouching over a fallen Magnus and cackling before both fade away.

## WRAP-UP

If the adventure proceeds all the way to the "Run for Your Life" phase, there won't be much left of the camp, the furnace, the laboratory, or anything else. There's not much reason for there to be any kind of treasure, but if you really want to hand out some gold, you could let the players find some items that were blasted out of various storage trunks by the storm.



## MONSTERS

### Vicerax

MR 50 (6d+25)

*Special Damage:* 3/double damage

*Special Abilities:* Moves by flying

*Description:* The vicerax is a hovering mass of intestines, blood vessels, and other internal organs. It wields an array of sharp instruments (cleavers, scalpels, knives, whatever) in its gory tentacles.

### Puppeteer, Lefty

MR 40 (5d+20)

In 15

Ch 20

Wiz 73

*Special Abilities:* Glue You

*Description:* The lefty puppeteer is a large human hand (left) sitting on top of a roughly humanoid framework like the head on a human body. Its "body" is made up of pieces of wood, armor, or other debris stitched together by fine cord or, possibly, tendons.

### Puppeteer, Righty

MR 40 (5d+20)

In 15

Ch 20

Wiz 73

*Special Abilities:* Spirit Mastery

*Description:* The righty puppeteer is a large human hand (right) sitting on top of a roughly humanoid framework like the head on a human body. Its "body" is made up of pieces of wood, armor, or other debris stitched together by fine cord or, possibly, tendons.

### Nosferatoo

MR 30 (4d+15)

*Special Damage:* 2/Oh Go Away (automatic on a single target)

*Description:* The nosferatoo looks somewhat like a giant centipede. Its body is a long spinal cord with "legs" made of human fingers and toes, each tipped with a hooked yellow claw. If the special damage effect is achieved, this means the nosferatoo has run up the delver's leg and is clinging to his or her torso. 3rd lvl SR St to detach. If the creature is detached, the "Oh Go Away" effect ends on the next turn.

### Headrusher

MR 20 (3d+10)

In 72

Ch 30

Wiz 50

*Special Abilities:* Firestorm of Protest, Befuddle, Dum-Dum, Dem Bones Gonna Rise

*Description:* The headrusher is three heads melded together at the back, hovering and spinning so quickly that it's hard to even make out the faces. Each head is constantly screaming. Every now and then, a snippet of language, usually concerning some detail of a player character's past or loved ones, seems to slip through the cacophony. A headrusher usually tries to stay out of range of hand-to-hand attacks and prefers to keep some pawn or other between it and its opponent.

**Skreel**

MR 5 (1d+3)

*Special Damage:* 1/poison, 1d+3 Dx damage (heals just like Con damage)

*Description:* Skreel are long, snake-like creatures with heads like those of water moccasins and rudimentary arms and legs. Skreel are prized by necromancers because they are linked by short-range telepathic fields. It would take hundreds of thousands of their tiny reptilian brains to amount to anything like a sentient mind, but what they can do is serve as a collective host for partially embodied spirits, often living inside dead or completely artificial bodies and functioning as muscles and sinews for their hosts' arcanelly invigorated nervous systems.

**Sir Alonzo Magnus of Trentrask, Fallen Human Knight**

**5th level warrior**

In 15            St 52  
Lk 16            Con 20  
Ch 14            Dx 21  
Wiz 20          Sp 16

*Combat Adds:* +57

*Weapons and Armor:*

Broadsword, 3d+4; Plate armor, 18 pts (doubled to 36)

*Special Abilities:* Immune to Spite damage, Sleep, Hold

*Description:* Sir Alonzo was a great man in life (hence the surname). Ten years ago, he fell in battle defending his comrades. It should have ended there, but his priests

had other ideas. Calling up questionable powers that were not as alien to their daily worship as many believers would like to think, they held Alonzo's spirit at the edge of oblivion and magically fortified his brain so that it could survive while they re-built his body. Spirits originally summoned only for information merged and took shape as the pitiless wraith known as Abrammatyn. As this demonic spirit called upon them to perform more and more horrific rituals, the priests either left or were dissected for the cause. Sir Alonzo's castle was dismantled to fuel Abrammatyn's monstrous ephemera furnace, which, according to the demon, was the only way to obtain enough kremm to support their experiments.

Sir Alonzo now introduces himself only as Magnus, and he wears his armor at all times. This is because, despite years of striving, his resurrection is still a work in progress. The handsome silver mask welded to his helmet is, in fact, the only face he has. Within, his body is a cedar framework skeleton bound together by silk ropes and animated by skreel sinews. All that remains of his old body are his brain and eyes, kept moist in a transparent bladder behind his mask and cradled in the coils of a pair of skreel symbiotes. His magically generated voice is harsh and has a steely edge from echoing in



his helmet, but sounds, for the most part, human.

Magnus is fully aware of the horror of his situation, and it is only his great strength of will that has kept him sane. His frustration and festering resentment at the imperious demands of his dark advisor are beginning to wear on him, however.

**Abramatyn**

**Demonic spirit**

In 35                      St 12  
 Lk 26                      Con 20  
 Ch 16                      Dx 25  
 Wiz 50                    Sp 16

Combat Adds: +18, Chilling  
 Touch: 2d (plus adds) Wiz damage

(0 Wiz = unconscious)

*Special Abilities:*

- \* Immune to Sleep, Charm, and Death magic
- \* Only harmed by magic weapons and spells (for this purpose, any weapon with any spell cast upon it counts as magic)
- \* If he is in the ephemera furnace and it is running, Abrammatyn's Wizardry score never goes down, no matter how many spells he casts, and he has 1d6 kremm crystals from the furnace with him

*Spells:* All 1st level, Mirage, Smog, Breaker Breaker, ESP

*Description:* Abrammatyn resembles a gaunt man in a dark, hooded robe. When looked upon directly, his face is craggy and sardonic,

with stringy black hair hanging around it. From other angles or in dim light, however, only an empty hood is visible.

Abramatyn was conjured by Magnus's priests to help them restore him to life. He has used this position to turn the man's castle into a work camp dominated by a quarry pit, a laboratory of horrors, and a great black furnace. Whether the spirit could have accomplished his tasks by less rapacious means is uncertain. He doesn't particularly care if he accomplishes his stated goal as long as the pursuit of it enables him to twist and torment the souls of living beings.

# Resurrection Missions

by Mike Larsen



Jeff Freels

*A trio of scenarios for the recently deceased...*

**A** hero awakens with sudden memories of being severely—maybe fatally—wounded. He moves his hands to those injuries and finds only torn clothing or dented armor. His urge to cry out is stifled by the realization that the scene around him is radically quieter than the violence and carnage that filled his senses moments before. Indeed, it's not only quieter; it's silent. Dead silent, as a matter of fact...

As the PC's perception moves beyond his immediate area, he will start to hear muffled sounds from several other heroes—heroes who are likewise just entering consciousness and experiencing the same confused sensation. These characters may or may not already know each other. Regardless, they are now here together in this strange place. "Funny," each will be thinking to himself. "That's funny. I thought I was a goner."

As the heroes start to compose themselves, the GM should encourage any starting dialogue among the PCs that they may wish to have. The GM should reward the players for getting into the role-playing swing of things early, offering APs for any special drama here. Then, the darkness around the group, which was unnoticed moments before, will lighten just a touch...

...And in the corner of the room they will see a tall humanoid with goat legs and ram horns. His skin is gray, though his golden eyes glow, illuminating the area in front of him. Behind him, the thorny vines of rose bushes move ever so slightly, without any flowers to decorate their miniscule struggles.

"I am Dirge, Lord of the Abyss," the man will say flatly. "And, yes. You *did* die just seconds ago.

"But I have a proposition for you," he will add, with a wry smile. "All your efforts elsewhere have failed to save your day, it would seem. And here you are in my Abyss, standing before me. I am not sure how long you wish to stay, but if you help me with a little task" (or two, or three, at the GM's discretion), "life again can be your dream."

## RESURRECTION MISSION #1

### Take-Away

*Spoken by Dirge, Lord of the Abyss:*

*I need you to acquire a few pages of the Book of Strenan: pages 15 and 16, to be exact. This book is displayed in the library of the wizard Brifillious the Green. It's his most prized possession, but never mind that. Once you have the pages in hand, I will open a portal for your return. Don't worry about sneaking in; I have that well-handled.*



When the players accept this mission, Dirge opens a portal for them. Looking through this gateway, they see in the distance a large gray tower surrounded by trees.

Upon passing through the portal, the group should notice that they have become peculiarly dressed and are lacking their weaponry. In addition, the trees, birds, insects, and other elements of the natural landscape are much larger than usual. Give other clues until the players realize that their characters have become marionettes, roughly 10 to 12 inches high.

After the initial shock has worn off, the adventurers are likely to make their way to the tower, which is still clearly in view. As they near this destination, they will notice a large number of marionettes—at least 20 in this area alone—milling about the tower. Many are walking around aimlessly and bumping into each other, while others are entering the tower through a hole cut into its large wooden door. If the adventurers try to interact with the other marionettes, the puppets will be unresponsive to everything they try.

### **Inside the Tower**

If the group enters through the hole in the main door, they find themselves in a foyer that gives way to a short hallway. The tower has very few furnishings, but what it lacks in tables and chairs it makes up for in marionettes; at least 30 to 40 of the animated puppets are wandering about in the foyer and hall. At the end of the hallway is the library, in which another ten marionettes can be found. As speculated, taking pride of place in the room is a large book supported by a pedestal, which is flanked by a tall stool. If the characters start to climb the stool, the marionettes (MR 15) will turn their attention to them.

The players now will have to fight their way to the book. Not only will the ten marionettes in the library begin to slug at them, grappling with them and trying to pull them off the chair, but, alerted by the noise, the horde outside the library door will come to join in the fray. It is likely that one adventurer will make it up the stool while the others duke it out with the marionettes. Any delver attempting to read any portion of the book will see only an indecipherable script.

As soon as a character reaches the book and obtains the specified pages—not the entire tome, mind you—the portal reopens. Upon walking through the portal, which closes behind them, the characters will find themselves back in the Abyss, where Dirge will appropriate the pages, thank them for a job well done, and prepare to return their spirits back to their bodies, wherever they may be.

**RESURRECTION MISSION #2****Smash and Delay**

Spoken by Dirge, Lord of the Abyss:

*I need a few brave souls to ambush a carriage transporting Ricardo Loomestra, the Bandit King of Khazan. He is on his way to see Krotter, the Troll Chieftain of Swilter Swamp. Loomestra has been warring with Krotter for quite some time and now wants to make peace. I simply cannot have that. No war means no new souls for me! Do you understand?*

*So, what you need to do for me is to delay the carriage as long as possible. If you feel the need to kill everyone, that's fine too, I suppose, but Ricardo had best not show up on time for this meeting. I need the war to continue indefinitely.*

If the adventurers accept this mission, Dirge will open up a portal to a heavily wooded area. Once on the other side, they will notice that they have been turned into demon-like creatures the size of dwarves, with fully functional wings as tall as they are. (GM: Do not tell the players, but the wings are of use only to those who were flying creatures prior to this transformation. Others who try to fly should find the attempt a hindrance rather than a help.) After the initial shock has worn off from this minor setback, so to speak, the heroes must make a successful 2nd lvl SR In to hear a carriage coming their way.

Soon—and we hope the characters are properly hiding—they will see a horse-drawn carriage driven by a knight and accompanied by four additional armored knights on horseback. The carriage curtains are closed. (GM: Give the knights MRs of 35, scaled up or down to match the characters' levels.) The carriage's passenger, Ricardo, will not emerge to fight unless the characters go after him. If they manage to get to the door to open it and look inside, they will see an older gentleman with a well-trimmed beard and mustache, about 5'6" and a little overweight, dressed in clothes fit for a king of his wealth. His ornate longsword sports a large emerald on the hilt, and, should the adventurers have a chance to see it out of its scabbard, they may notice a battle scene etched on the blade. He has an MR of 62, should they choose to initiate an attack on his person.

Please note: During this trip to the other side of the portal, any magic-wielding players in the group should be limited to two first-level spells of the GM's choosing. (A slight catch—he he.) And as for the warrior types among the adventurers, they have no weapons (besides their claws). The rocks and branches in the immediate area will have to do.



All the adventurers need to accomplish is to delay the carriage however they see fit. This is best accomplished by disabling it. Once they have achieved their goal, the portal back to the Abyss will reopen so that the characters may return to Dirge to be thanked and sent back to their bodies.

## RESURRECTION MISSION #3

### Guard and Swat

*Spoken by Dirge, Lord of the Abyss:*

*Have I got the Labor for you, it seems. Grimelda, the Witch of Lomdress Forest, has asked for assistance from me. This is where you come in: she seems to have a slight problem with some crows raiding her blood ruby garden. All you need to do is defend the garden until she returns at sundown. What say you?*

After the characters agree, Dirge opens a portal to Grimelda's home, a small and simple but well-made brown and gray stone house with a thatched roof, on the edge of Lomdress Forest. After passing through the portal, the characters will find themselves standing in a medium-sized garden. The looming forest appears to go on for quite a way and is so dense that not a single ray of light filters through its canopy. The garden, in contrast, is laid out in four neatly spaced rows, each about 50 feet long. It is full of lush, green plants around four feet high and topped with pretty red flowers.

Upon closer inspection, the heroes will notice that the flowers are in fact small, dark red rubies the size of peas, arranged in clusters like grapes. They also will notice that they themselves have become scarecrows stuffed with straw.

And not only that, but there is a large group of crows coming their way.

But worry not, fearless scarecrows, for there are plenty of large sticks and rocks in the area for you to use.

The crows' main mission is to pilfer the rubies. However, if the adventurers attack them, about half will stop what they are doing to assail the characters, while the others will continue to steal jewels. The birds' attacks will take the form of pecking, raking at, and trying to pull apart the scarecrows.

The crows each have an MR of 15. The magic-wielding players are again restrained to two first-level spells of the GM's choosing, and, as before, the characters will not have their weapons.



If one of a scarecrow's appendages gets pulled off, there is no damage to the character's Con. However, the appendage then becomes unusable unless the character has the sewing skill and proper tools with which to fix the malady (in addition to an appropriate span of time).

If the group manages to fight off the crows until sundown and to keep the garden intact (well, let's say manage to preserve at least 50% of the crop), Dirge will open a portal back to the Abyss for them, where he will thank them and send them on their merry way back to their bodies.

### **CLOSING THE LID**

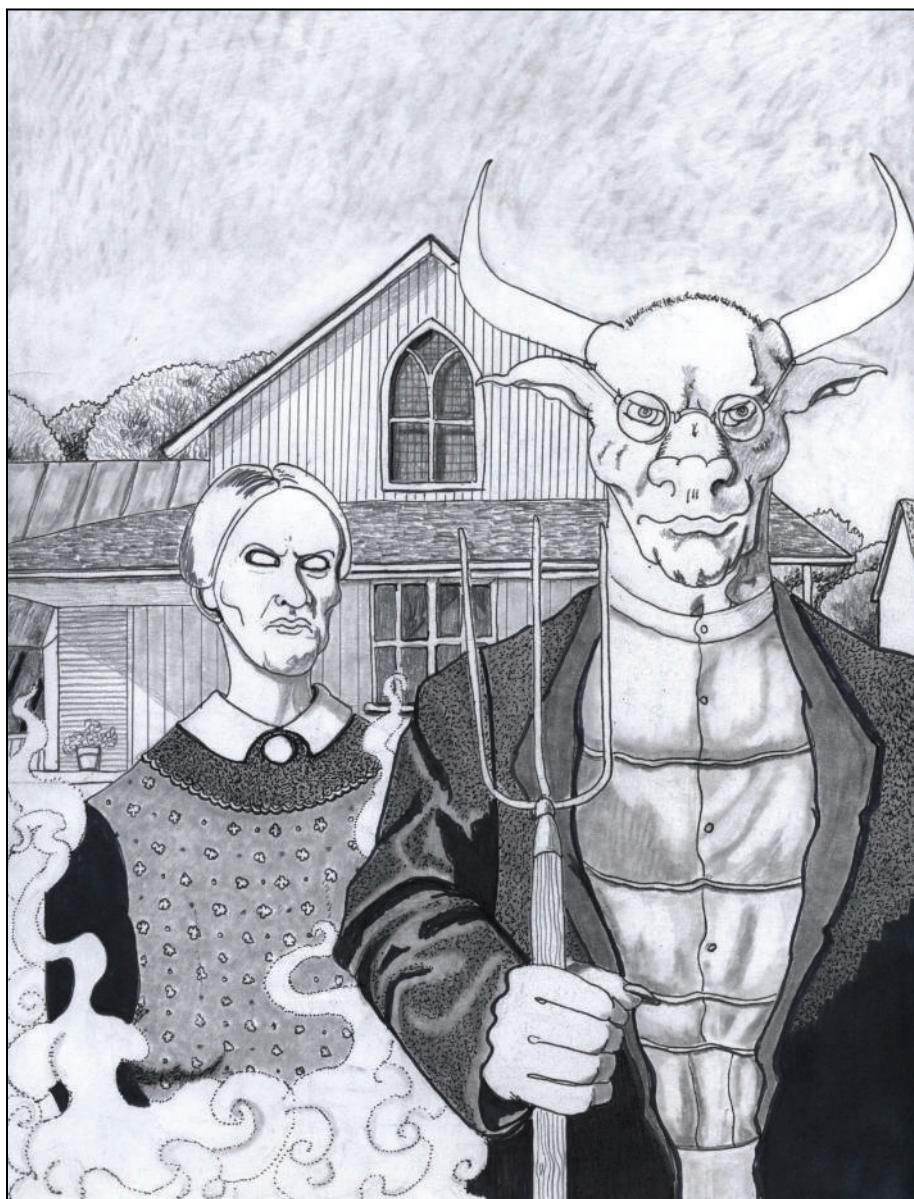
After completing the mission or missions assigned by Dirge, the heroes—those who have survived his drudgery—will find themselves awakening from strange dreams, each as injured as before, but with three remaining Con points and 1700 additional AP. The combats in which they were engaged prior to passing out will have ended or moved farther away. And, though things are rough, the heroes are indeed still breathing.





# The Farmer's Daughter

by David Crowell



Christopher Lee Rowan

*A solo adventure for T&T 7-plus*

The late afternoon sunlight slants across the fields in a golden haze. You had hoped to make it to the village by nightfall, but it is clear that too many miles yet remain before you. The prospect of a night in the open is not a bad one. It is a pleasant day, and though the evening will doubtless bring a nip to the air, your cloak is thick and warm. It is more the recollection of your recent supper and breakfast of half raw, half charred rations that causes your steps to lighten when you spy the farm in the distance. If nothing else, it should offer a warm pallet of straw in the barn, and if you are lucky you will be able to trade a bit of labor for two hot meals and a little company.

As you draw nearer the farm, you see that it is a well-tended place. Stone walls in good repair enclose neat fields of crops ripening toward harvest. An orchard offers the temptation of sweet fruit and hints at pie or cobbler to come. The buildings are roofed with fresh thatch and brightly whitewashed.

You strike out on the lane that leads to the farmyard and jauntily stride past the vegetable garden, where rows of cabbages and pumpkins drowse under the watchful gaze of a scarecrow on a post. The lowing of cattle from the barn suggests that it is milking time. Hens cluck and scratch for morsels on the ground, and a cock crows from the ridgepole. A pig grunts contentedly in its sty, and a horse neighs a nickered greeting. Ducks quack happily from a small pond.

You pause at the pump and water trough to sluice off the dust of the road in the icy water, then climb the steps to the farmhouse door.

The heavy wooden door has no knocker, but it stands open in welcome. You halloo the house, and from within a cheery woman's voice orders you to "Come on in dear, help yourself to a cuppa from the kettle on the fire. Himself'll be in from the barn shortly when he finishes chores. I'm just finishing the supper. Pay no mind to Puss; if he gives you any trouble just toss him outside." The farmwife either has eyes that can see through walls or knows her cat well, for even as she speaks a large black feline is twining himself about your legs and purring loudly.

Remembering your manners, you stand your boots next to the others by the door and cross the wide floorboards to the fireplace. A black iron kettle hangs above the coals on a wrought iron crane. The smell of mulled cider wafts enticingly. You grab a horn beaker from the mantel and dip up a refreshing cup of the warm, spiced brew. Go to 1.

1 Looking around, you take in the large main room of the farmhouse. The walls have been plastered and whitewashed, and the floor is covered in sweet rushes. Several large windows let in the light; the shutters are wide open and fastened back while the warmth of summer lingers. A pair of pewter candle sconces hold wax tapers.



The room is simply furnished. A large, rough-hewn table with benches is the dominating feature. The table is set with horn spoons and wooden trenchers. A rocking chair with a sewing basket beside it is drawn up beneath one of the windows. Two doorways lead out from the back of the common room. One clearly leads to the kitchen; the other has a curtain hung across it. A staircase climbs one wall to the floor above.

You may explore the house at 31, go outside to look around at 42, or remain in the common room and wait at 40.

**2** You turn to follow the girl, who has already passed out of sight. You walk to the door of her room, which now stands slightly ajar. Peeping in, you see no sign of the girl, only a set of wet footprints in the dust leading from the door to the bed.

You may return to your room to ask Jake about her at 24 or go outside to investigate at 36.

**3** You sling the shovel over your shoulder and exit the garden of horrors, taking care to latch the gate securely behind you. If you have the bones, you may go to 13 to bury them and try to lay to rest the spirit that haunts this farm. Otherwise, you may go to the barn at 27 for a sack, the pond at 32 to look for the bones, or the stable at 33 to take a horse and flee.

**4** The minotaur slowly sags to the barn floor. Gingerly you reach over his steaming corpse and grab the sack you came for. Turning swiftly, you make your way from the barn. You may fetch the shovel from the garden at 37; look for the bones in the duck pond at 32; or, if you have both bones and shovel, bury the bones at 13.

**5** You climb the stairs to the second level, carefully stepping to the outside so they don't creak.

You find yourself on a small landing. In front of you is an alcove of shelves that hold folded clothing. To the right is a door. To your left is another door, with a third to your left and slightly behind you. To investigate the alcove, go to 44; the door on the left is at 35; the door to the right is at 29; and the door to the rear is at 41. You may also creep back downstairs to 1.

**6** The last of the shambling corpses collapses at your feet. You hear the moans and groans as others try to work their way free from the soil, but you have defeated them for now. To take the shovel and leave, go to 3. To stay and fight more zombies, return to 30.

**7** You come to yourself lying on the lumpiest mattress you have ever known. Opening your eyes, your first thought is of prison bars. Slowly you come to the awareness that the bars are the interlaced branches of a tree. You roll over and determine that the lumps beneath you were wind-fallen apples. Surely this was not the most comfortable bed you could have chosen. The tree is one of several in an orchard long since let go. Tumbled stones are all that remain to mark a small farm. At least you will have breakfast to start you on your way.

The End

**8** In the main room, the table is soon set with five places and the food passed around, each person helping himself to a healthy portion.

"Hello stranger, I'm Farmer Vincent and this is Jake. You'll be staying the night of course." The big man's voice booms with cheer and heartiness.

The fare is simple but plentiful and well prepared. You find yourself relaxed and enjoying the company of these earthy country folk.

You notice the empty place remaining at the table and make some small remark about it. There is an awkward pause in conversation; then the Missus says, "Oh, that'll be for little Becca. Likely she'll be along shortly. Might be out playing or might still be up in her room asleep. Poor mite was feeling a bit peaked this afternoon."

Soon after this, the meal is cleared and the dishes washed and put away. The family begins preparing for bed. "We mostly go to bed with the sun," says Vincent, "candles being dear and all. Early to bed and early to wake. Jake, you'll be ready for that pasture fence in the morning?"

"Sure 'nuff will," returns Jake. He turns to you: "You'll be bunkin' down with me. Hope you don't mind a bit of snorin'. That ole cat purrs and snores something wicked all night long he does, fit to wake the dead."

"As long as he doesn't have fleas," you reply and follow the family up to bed.

Your mattress is comfortable, and soon, despite the cat's promised purring and snoring, you are sound asleep.

Something wakes you in the dark. A sound. A knocking or a soft cry. It seems to come from downstairs. You may investigate at 10 or roll back to sleep at 21.

**9** You pass into the kitchen, where a waft of flavorful steam greets your entry. The Missus, a large rotund woman in a once-white apron, is busily stirring and seasoning several pots on a large iron cook-stove. She good-naturedly waves off your offers to help. "I've got it just fine; you

just sit a spell and rest yourself. Now let me tell you about what happened last week over to Blanchard's place..." She keeps up a mostly one-sided running commentary on the local gossip as she bustles back and forth.

As you are beginning to have trouble following the thread of second cousins once removed to either side, you hear a pair of men entering. "Mmmm, something sure smells fine! Is that the speckled hen? Worthless critter, never did lay an egg that wasn't scrambled."

"Aha, that'll be Himself and Jake wanting their supper." The Missus begins bustling back and forth from the kitchen, bearing steaming platters and dishes of good, wholesome country fare. You note fresh bread, roast chicken, soup, and more. Go to 8.

**10** You rise from your bed and make your way downstairs, fumbling a bit in the unfamiliar house. The sound seems to come from the front door. You hear a scratching knock and a mewling cry. Your first thought is of the cat, but Puss is upstairs sleeping on Jake's chest. If you open the door, go to 12; if you want to wake one of the family first, go to 19.

**11** The twisting, twining, lashing, clubbing roots and branches of the tree are too much for you. You find yourself being overcome. Your last thought is of the irony of a tree pruning you. Then you feel a wrenching tear followed by darkness. Go to 7.

**12** You cautiously edge the door open. On the doorstep stands a young girl. She is wearing a white nightgown, and her brown eyes look enormous in her pale face. She doesn't speak, but slowly walks past you up the stairs.

You may follow her to 2 or return to your room at 24.

**13** Shovel in hand, you head into the orchard to begin the sad task of digging a pitifully small grave. The gnarled limbs and branches of the trees writhe overhead, and the roots reach up, grasping for your ankles to trip you.

Laying down your sad bundle, you place the shovel and begin to dig. Barely has the shovel begun to sink into the ground when something deals you a heavy buffet across the shoulders. Whirling around to find out who struck you, you see no one there. "Must have been the wind," you think, then realize that the air is calm and still.

Suddenly a branch lashes down at you! The tree itself is attacking you.

The evil tree's MR is 290. If you defeat it, go to 25. If it defeats you, go to 11.

**14** If only the beast would stop lowing and mooing in your ear. Surely the dead have earned a little peace?

Somehow, you never pictured the afterlife as smelling quite so much like cow dung. You slowly roll over and open your eyes. Staring back at you is a large, brown orb. "Moo," says your erstwhile bedmate. You seem to have wakened in a cow byre.

Brushing the worst of the straw and manure from your clothing, you stand and stagger out of the barn. It is early yet; perhaps you can creep off before anyone sees you in this sorry state.

The End

**15** You return to your mattress, resolute that no spooky stories are going to keep you from a night's rest. You drift into an uneasy sleep. You dream that a great snake slithers into the room and loops its crushing coils around you. Breath comes harder and harder for you. Make a 2nd lvl SR St to wriggle free of the snake's coils. If you fail, you slip from consciousness and begin your journey into the snake's belly. Go to 26. If you succeed, go to 16.

**16** You struggle against the weight of the snake. It writhes and hisses, then sinks its claws into your hand. Claws? Snakes don't have claws. But cats do! What you thought was a snake is old Puss, who seems to have chosen your chest to curl up on for the night. The snake was just a dream.

You may resume your sleep at 39, go outside to lay the spirit to rest at 20, or steal a horse from the stable and flee at 33.

**17** The kelpie drags you deeper into the depths as your lungs slowly fill with water and consciousness fades to black. Go to 43.

**18** You slowly become aware of the cold and damp. Groping around you in the chill mists of morning, you feel loose soil and shredded and tattered...cabbages? You are lying in the remains of a weedy and overgrown garden. Standing up and looking around you reveals the remains of cabbage heads smashed to bits. A few falling-in buildings show that this was once a small farmstead, but now it is tended only by the crows. Stiffly you resume your journey, wondering at the events of the previous night.

The End



**19** The only one you can even partially rouse is Jake. He tells you firmly that there is no one outside and that you should ignore the noise and go back to bed. You consider his advice, but the cry comes again. You see by the twitch of his face that Jake heard it as well.

“Someone is out there,” you insist.

“No one,” Jake says in a forceful tone.

“But we both heard it. What if it's Becca?” you ask, remembering the little girl who was absent from the supper table.

“It ain't Becca, and there is no way I am opening that door,” says Jake, in what is clearly fearful resolution. He rolls over and begins to snore loudly and forcefully.

You may follow Jake's advice and return to bed at 21 or go and investigate the door at 12.

**20** You step outside, anxious to complete your task and help a lonely spirit find rest. You may start by fetching the shovel from the garden at 37 or a sack from the barn at 27, or by looking for the bones in the duck pond at 32.

**21** You roll over, putting the sound from your mind. Soon your snores join with those of the cat and Jake. In the morning you have a hearty breakfast of porridge, eggs, and country ham before resuming your journey.

The End

**22** You fight hard, but the tide of clutching, wormy fingers, grasping bones, and gnashing teeth is too strong. Inexorably, you are overcome by the zombies. You feel yourself being dragged into the ground to join their macabre crop. Go to 18.

**23** You cautiously pull back the curtain to reveal a small alcove with a wooden trapdoor in the floor. You may lift the trap at 38 or return to the main room at 1.

**24** You shake Jake to rouse him, but he doggedly snores on. “Look, Jake,” you say, certain that he is feigning sleep. “I want to know who that little girl outside is. She didn't speak, and it's too late at night for a girl her age to be out wandering.”



"So you saw her, did you? Well, that was Becca. I wouldn't mention it to Vincent and the Missus if I were you. They tend to be rather overprotective of their little girl. See, Becca wasn't at supper because she couldn't be. Becca drowned in the duck pond five years ago. Her folks couldn't abide the thought of their baby bein' dead so they keep her alive in memory. That's why her room hasn't been touched since that day and they still set a place for her at table every meal. They just tell folks she's out playing or upstairs feeling poorly. Anyone who finds out their secret meets a quiet end out here, usually as ham and sausages.

"Don't hold that against Vincent and the Missus. They're really just picking up after their little girl. She's the one what does the disappearing. They just clean up what's left.

"Only way to lift the curse would be if someone was able to give her bones a decent burial. Gotta be someone who isn't from here, though. We've all tried and it didn't do no good. There's a shovel in the garden you can use, and most any piece of ground will do. Just take a sack from the barn to carry the bones in, and good luck to yah."

You may accept the task of laying the ghost to rest at 20, take a horse from the stables and flee at 33, or try to go back to sleep at 15.

**25** Taking shovel in hand, you resume the forlorn task of digging a lonely grave beneath the gnarled branches of the apple trees. When you judge the hole deep enough, you tenderly place the bones in and cover them with earth. You ponder the appropriate words to say. In the end you settle for a simple "Rest easy, Becca," and hope that suffices.

Your task complete, you may take a horse from the stable at 33 or return to your room in the house at 45.

**26** Your last memory is of a great snake slowly crushing you in its coils. You still feel their grip around you, imprisoning your limbs. It is no longer dark, to which the light beating against your eyelids gives testimony. You slowly pry your eyes open and see, not the inside of a snake as you had been expecting, but patches of sky showing through gaps in the roof and walls of an old barn where you must have taken shelter last night. Trying to move, you find yourself pinned but quickly realize that this is because you are wrapped and tangled in an old rope that had been tossed in the corner. Wriggling free of the musty coils, you gather your possessions and resume your travels.

The End



**27** The barn is a looming hulk of shadows in the night. You find your way in through the main door, but the inside is black as pitch. Feeling your way with hands stretched before you, blundering about, you run into a warm, hairy wall. A lowing puts your heart back in your chest. It is just one of the cows. You step back and fumble for a flint to strike a light. Soon you have coaxed a small flame to life in a lantern. Aided by its flickering glow, you look around for a sack or bag in which to carry the bones. There, that looks like one hanging on the edge of that stall next to the pitchfork. You are reaching over to grab it when the bull in the stall lets out a tremendous bellow and lunges to his feet, seizing the pitchfork in his huge hands. That's no bull! It's a minotaur, and it's after blood. Nostrils flaring, horns and pitchfork tines gleaming, it advances on you. Its MR is 245. If you slay it, go to 4; if it slays you, go to 34.

**28** The body of the kelpie slips into the murky depths. Your lungs strain for breath as you struggle to the surface. Gaspung, you crawl onto the bank but then slowly slip into unconsciousness. Go to 43.

**29** You open the door and are looking into a bedroom furnished with a large bed, two small chests, and a mirror on the wall. Clearly this is the master bedroom, where the farmer and his wife sleep. Investigation of the room turns up a few small personal trinkets but nothing of obvious value. To investigate the door on the left, go to 35; the alcove, 44; or the door to the rear, 41. You may also creep back downstairs to 1.

**30** The zombies are MR 50, just shambling risen corpses. Every five turns that you remain in the garden fighting, another zombie pulls itself free from the earth and joins the fray. There are ten zombies total, should you really wish to fight them all.

If you defeat all the zombies currently free from the ground, go to 6. If you are defeated by the zombies, go to 22.

**31** Your curiosity gets the better of you. Seeing as you are already in your stocking feet, you figure you will be quiet—surely there's no harm in just taking a tiny peek around. You may climb the stairs at 5, look behind the curtain at 23, or enter the kitchen at 9.

**32** The duck pond seems less inviting by moonlight. The water is a sullen black, and the bottom is a quagmire of stinking mud. Shuddering, you begin the sad task of groping about in the muck for bones. It seems

that every third "bone" you find is really a stick or a rock. Eventually you have collected a sorry pile that you hope will suffice to appease the vengeful spirit that haunts this forlorn place. You gather the bones up in a small bundle and make your way to the orchard, thinking that beneath the apple trees would be a pleasant place to be buried.

If you do not have a shovel, you can get one from the garden at 37. If you have a shovel, you may bury the bones at 13.

**33** You cross the farmyard in the pale moonlight. The branches of the trees in the orchard writhe and clutch like bony fingers against the sky. The horses stamp and bite at you. Finally, you manage to saddle a large black and leap on its back. No sooner does the horse feel your weight in the saddle than it takes off like a thunderbolt, with you clinging to its mane for dear life. Its hooves strike sparks as it gallops. Flames flicker from its nostrils, and its eyes glow with a hellish light.

The horse rushes on into the night, responding to neither reins nor spur. Ahead of you stretches a vast sheet of water. Without pause, the animal dashes forward. Curiously, it raises no splash as it slips beneath the water. Cold, murky liquid fills your mouth and nose. You struggle to break free of your mount, which seems to be changing and shifting form beneath you. Hoofs and mane are replaced by fins, fur gives way to a creeping coat of scales, and its neck lengthens and stretches a mouth full of needle teeth around at you. You have mounted not an ordinary horse, but the dreaded kelpie.

The kelpie's MR is 120, and you need to make a 1st lvl SR Con each combat turn or lose 1d6 hits in drowning damage.

If you lose, go to 17. If you win, go to 28.

**34** The tines of the pitchfork sink deep into you. The minotaur flings you in the air like a bundle of straw, then catches and tosses you with its horns. You fade into a black and red agony. Go to 14.

**35** The door opens into a small, sparsely furnished room. There is a bed, a chair, and a small chest. A look around turns up nothing of significant value or interest. This appears to be the room of a hired hand or older son. To investigate the alcove, go to 44; the door to the right, 29; the door to the rear, 41. You may also creep back downstairs to 1.

**36** On the doorstep, you see a pair of muddy footprints the size a young girl would leave. You are able to follow them for a short distance

in the direction of the duck pond before you lose the trail. Uncertain what this means, you decide to return to your room and ask Jake why the girl would be out so late at night. Go to 24.

**37** You cross the shadowed barnyard and let yourself through the gate into the garden. You spy the shovel stuck in the ground amidst the cabbages. Walking over to grab it, you hear an odd, moaning groan. Looking down to locate the source of the sound, you notice that the cabbages are thrashing about wildly. The heads of cabbage are not vegetables; they are actual heads!

Rotting teeth snap and gnash at your ankles, sunken eyes roll wildly, and that moaning fills the air.

Grabbing the shovel, you turn to leave this garden of horrors. The soil around the cabbage beds is churning; something is digging its way up. Dirty, root-bound fingers thrust through the soil. The first head has grown a neck and shoulders, and the creature slowly pulls itself free of the ground.

You can fight the emerging zombies at 30 or flee the garden to the barn at 27, the pond at 32, or the stable at 33 to take a horse and escape this hellish nightmare.

**38** Upon lifting the trap, a musty, moldy smell rises to greet you. Clearly you have found the family root cellar. It is too dark to see anything below other than the vague outlines of shelves packed with jars of fluid with amorphous shapes and lumps floating in them. You decide it is not worth venturing in without a light, and you close the trap. You return to the common room at 1.

**39** You wake to find yourself lying amid the foundation stones of an old farmhouse. There is no sign of other habitation for miles. Was last night nothing but a dream? You are inclined to think so, until a small flutter catches your eye. Bending down, you find a small cloth doll caught in the stones by your feet. Strangely, although it was a dry night, the doll is sopping wet.

The End

**40** You do not wait alone for long. Soon the Missus begins bustling back and forth from the kitchen bearing steaming platters and dishes of good, wholesome country fare. You note fresh bread, roast chicken, soup, and more. She good-naturedly waves off your offers to help. "I've

got it just fine, you just sit a spell and rest yourself. Now let me tell you about what happened last week over to Blanchard's place..." She keeps up a mostly one-sided running commentary on the local gossip as she bustles back and forth.

As you are beginning to have trouble following the thread of second cousins once removed to either side, you hear a pair of men entering. "Mmmm, something sure smells fine! Is that the speckled hen? Worthless critter, never did lay an egg that wasn't scrambled." Go to 8.

**41** The hinges of this door creak as though from disuse. You are looking into what is obviously the room of a young girl. A rag doll lies atop the patchwork quilt on the bed, a small vase of dried and faded flowers rests on a small shelf, and several small toys are scattered on the floor. The room obviously has not been entered for some time, as a coating of dust lies like a shroud over everything. To investigate the door on the left, go to 35; the door to the right, 29. You may also creep back downstairs to 1.

**42** Stuffing your feet back into your boots, you step outside for a better look around the farm.

The farm yard is neat and tidy. The chickens peck contentedly at the ground, seemingly oblivious to the dark-stained block and the axe stuck in it, just waiting for a fresh taste of poultry. A farmhand carrying a bucket crosses the yard and heads into the stable.

The garden is planted in orderly rows and raised beds. You pick out tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, pumpkins, and plump heads of cabbage. There are also a number of plants that you don't know. Most seem to be some sort of greens, or perhaps root crops.

In a sty built of split rails lounges a sow the size of a small elephant. As you approach, she lurches to her feet and lumbers to the fence, grunting eagerly. "She hopes you brought her summat to eat," says the farmhand, appearing behind your shoulder. "She's specially fond of eggs, just slurps 'em down, shell and all. Ain't that right, Pig?" he asks, giving her a fond scratch between her flopping ears.

"Jake," he says, offering a callused hand to shake. "Farmer Vincent should be finished with the cows shortly; then we'll all sit down to supper. The Missus is a good cook; she'll put some meat on your bones, that's for sure. Nobody gets up from *her* table hungry."

Sure enough, a burly man with a pair of buckets on a shoulder yoke steps out of the barn. He and Jake pause at the pump for a quick wash and then enter the house for supper, lining their boots up by the door. Go to 8.



**43** A foul stench fills your nostrils, your mouth feels like something died there a long time ago, and there is a sharp, tugging pain in your ear. You groan and slowly crack open your eyes. A huge, baleful golden orb is gazing at you. Something jabs you in the ear again and you hear a frustrated-sounding "Quack!"

"Quack!?" That isn't what demons from the Pit are supposed to say. Could this mean you aren't dead after all? You slowly turn your head and see that a large, white duck has mistaken your ear for a tasty snack. Groaning and creaking in every muscle, you slowly stagger to your feet. Looking around, you see the moorland stretching out in all directions. There is no sign of the small farm where you stopped for the night. Looking more closely reveals a set of hoof prints entering the pond and, strangely, the marks of a small pair of bare feet coming out.

In the clear light of day, you decide that the best thing to do is to put the events of the day behind you. With a shrug, you resume your journey.

The End

**44** The alcove clearly serves as the linen closet. You find neatly pressed sheets, pillow cases, towels, and clothing for two men of different sizes, a woman, and a little girl. There are also extra blankets of fine home-spun wool. To investigate the door on the left, go to 35; the door to the right, 29; the door to the rear, 41. You may also creep back downstairs to 1.

**45** "Is it done then?" asks Jake as you take your place again in bed.

"Aye," you reply, "and not such an easy task at that. May she find peace now at last."

With a feeling of satisfaction, you drift into sleep.

In the morning you wake to cries of distress from the family. Going down to find out what is happening, you discover that the farm is a shambles. The prize bull lies slaughtered in the barn, the cabbage bed in the garden has been dug up and the cabbages smashed, and one of the apple trees in the orchard lies chopped to flinders.

You think it wise not to mention your nocturnal adventures but are puzzled by how different things look in the light of day. You would be inclined to dismiss the whole as the workings of nightmare if it weren't for the rag doll you find tangled amidst the splinters of the apple tree. Despite the dry weather, the small toy is sodden.

The End





# Trouble among the Tumbled Stones



Mike Hartlieb

by Tom K. Loney

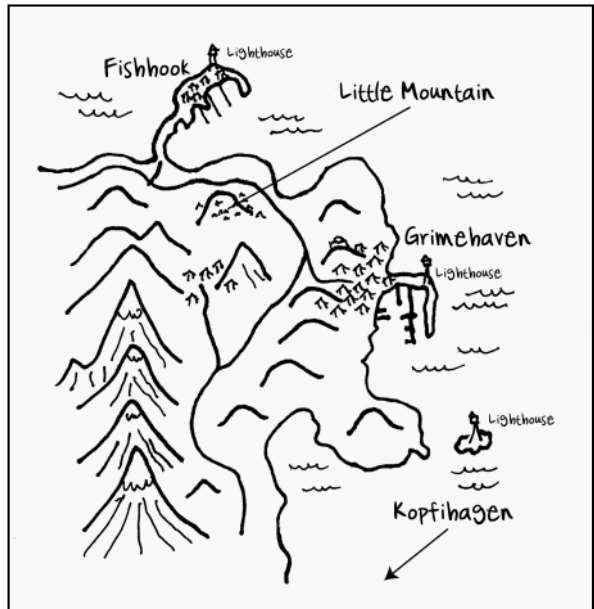


## I. INTRODUCTION

On Kopfhagen Island of the Westerlees, the road between the city of Grimehaven and the fishing village of Fishhook has had some recent troubles. Travelers have recounted harrowing tales of outrunning masked bandits who, when they came close enough, reeked of the foulest of funks. Magistrates of the Great Temple of the city-state have received reports that a number of people last known to be traveling that route have gone missing over the past few weeks.

The Priests of the God of Enlightenment (of Justice, Art, Order, et al.) have decided to commission a band of delvers and charge them with the task of getting to bottom of things. This means bringing perpetrators to justice, discovering the whereabouts of the missing people, and—most importantly—stopping the disruption of commerce-bearing traffic.

In addition to any plunder that the adventurers come across (except, of course, for “Major Religious Artifacts of Cultural Significance,” as defined in the Code of Kopy the Great), the Magistrates are willing to pay four hundred additional Slivers (silver), one hundred upon accepting the charge and the rest at the quest’s completion. If any adventurer fails to return, the departed hero’s share of the take will be distributed in accordance with his or her wishes.



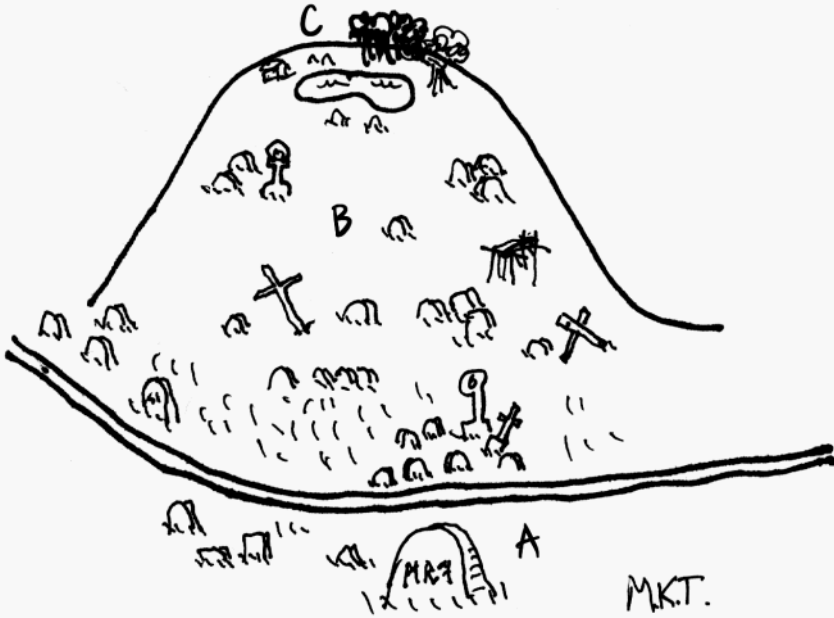
### The Scoop

The Bat-Winged Fiend has been laboring to release itself from the Nether-Realms of the Great Underneath, depths even farther below than the Big Dark. Its cultists have been abducting those who pass by the Little Mountain burial grounds and using them as blood sacrifices to further this effort.

The ghouls of the area, cursed by the God of the Dead with losing their ability to speak their former tongues for being degenerate and desecrating dead bodies, have actually been trying to help the travel-

ers whom they have been chasing away. The ghouls' leader, Orcneas, knows that people disappearing around his domain means trouble-makers from the big city snooping around his neck of the woods.

## The Little Mountain Burial Grounds



### II. HANGING OUT IN CEMETERIES

The Little Mountain burial grounds have been used as a final resting place for more than a few centuries. Over the years, various cultures have practiced a diverse array of passing-on rituals, from burial, to cremation, to Sky Burial, and the list goes on. Of course, as the number of cadavers has increased, so have those who seek to benefit from them. This includes grave robbers and another more unseemly ilk—the eaters of the dead, the ghouls.

Now, this cemetery has not had to suffer the pillagers of the departed for long, because of the inordinate number of degenerate individuals who have turned into ghouls. You see, most of the members of the Island of Kopfihagen's darker cults have been cannibals up until recent days. And this has meant more than a few cursed to living out

their later years damned as ghouls. And the more ghouls around, the fewer grave-robbers...well, at least *surviving* grave robbers.

**On Being a Ghoul**

Ghouls are the deviants of any kindred who, for whatever reason, develop a passion for cannibalism. At first they find their Wiz stat increased by 4d for as many days, which can be helpful in casting spells. However, each time a character does this, his Ch drops by 2d3. This is mostly because of a weird smell that permeates his environs: a smell of something that just isn't right. Once the Ch score hits the negative numbers, permanent mutations occur. These may include the development of a dog-like snout (advantageous for rending the sweet flesh of cadavers) or ghoulishly bad breath. Each time a character again partakes of the forbidden fruit of sentient flesh, additional mutations develop and the temporary Wiz increase continues. However, while the mutations are permanent, the spell-casting points are not.

**Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart, roll 2d6**

- 3-9 Dog-Face: 2d plus Combat Adds Bite attack
- 10 Ghoul Breathe: 3rd lvl SR Con for smellier to avoid incapacitation
- 11 Coffin-Defacing Claws: 4d plus Combat Adds attack
- 12 GM/Player special: make it up and deal with it
- 13+ Roll 3d and subtract the total from Ch
- 25+ Appear 20 years younger: all Ch effects negated
- 100+ Plus 1,000 Wiz points

**Notes on Ghoul Communication**

As ghouls are cursed with the inability to speak their native language, most live a very frustrating after-life, able to understand a number of those around them but never able to speak. Those who know a foreign language can communicate when they find others who speak the same tongue. However, traveling to an area where a ghoul's second language is more prevalent occurs only rarely, primarily because most people find it rather disturbing to see ghouls taking a jaunt through their towns.

The more astute ghouls will form languages of their own, usually involving grunts, growls, hand signals, and bites (when all else fails), in order to form cohesive bands. This makes for some rather idiosyncratic dialects throughout the greater ghoul world. In addition to speaking their own bands' particular cants, those of influence within the ghoul bands often adopt a common trade language that they speak among other elites.

### **The Ghoul King**

The current king of the ghouls has been the big man on the block for about 40 years now, and his sensibilities as a merchant from Grimehaven have made him a very cautious sort. He calls himself Orcneas, and among his minions he claims that he is the avatar of the god by the same name. And though he is cursed with the inability to speak his native language, he knows many other languages with which to compensate. In dealing with the outside world, his major problem (believe me, there are others) is finding the appropriate audience, one that includes enough foreigners who speak languages that he knows fluently.

### **Roadside Encounters**

How about some Tunnel Hack charts? As the party moves through the area, the GM should make d2 rolls for encounters in each of the following locations.

#### **The Roadside, roll d6**

- 1-3 Nothing
- 4 d6 Neophyte Black-Winged Fiend Cultists, MR 40 (5d+20), Booty Table A
- 5 d3 Unsupervised Ghouls, MR 80 (9d+40), Ghoul Breathe, Booty Table B
- 6 d6 Orcneas's Ghouls on Patrol, MR 100. See Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities. *If the party tries to communicate, the ghouls will take them to the Throne of Gnawed Bones (see Section III, below).*

#### **Tumbled Stones (A), roll 2d3**

- 3 Nothing
- 4 d6 Neophyte Black-Winged Fiend Cultists, MR 40 (5d+20), Booty Table A
- 5 d3 Unsupervised Ghouls, MR 80 (9d+40), Ghoul Breathe, Booty Table B
- 6 d6 Orcneas's Patrol Ghouls, MR 100, see Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities. *If the party tries to communicate, the ghouls will take them to the Throne of Gnawed Bones (see Section III, below).*
- 7 Hungry Ghost, MR 60, Wiz 40, Hold That Pose (HTP), Take That You Fiend (TTYF), Oh-Go-Away (OGA). Cannot be hurt by physical attacks. For each point of damage it inflicts, it gains an MR point.
- 8 2d3+4 Neophyte Black-Winged Fiend Cultists, MR 60 (7d+30), Booty Table B

- 9+ 2d6 Orcneas's Patrol Ghouls, MR 100, see Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities. *If the party tries to communicate, the ghouls will take them to the Throne of Gnawed Bones (see Section III, below).* Booty Table B.

**The Hillside (B), roll 2d3**

- 3 d6 Orcneas's Patrol Ghouls, MR 100, see Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities. *If the party tries to communicate, the ghouls will take them to the Throne of Gnawed Bones (see Section III, below).*
- 4 d6 Neophyte Black-Winged Fiend Cultists, MR 40 (5d+20), Booty Table A
- 5 d3 Unsupervised Ghouls, MR 80 (9d+40), Ghoul Breathe, Booty Table B
- 6 d3 Zombies, MR 50, can only be hurt on 4s, 5s, and 6s on rolled damage dice because of their undead condition
- 7 Hungry Ghost, MR 60, Wiz 40, HTP, TTYF, OGA. Cannot be hurt by physical attacks. For each point of damage it inflicts, it gains an MR point.
- 8 2d3+4 Neophyte Black-Winged Fiend Cultists, MR 60 (7d+30), Booty Table B
- 9+ 2d6 Orcneas's Patrol Ghouls, MR 100, see Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities. *If the party tries to communicate, the ghouls will take them to the Throne of Gnawed Bones (see Section III, below).* Booty Table B.

**The Summit (C), roll 2d6**

- 3–11 2d3 Orcneas's Patrol Ghouls, MR 100, see Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities. *If the party tries to communicate, the ghouls will take them to the Throne of Gnawed Bones (see Section III, below).* Booty Table B.
- 12+ The Banshee, MR 120, Wiz 100, In 24. Can cast the "screaming" TTYF up to 4th level, as a Wizard. Booty Table A.

**III. THE THRONE OF GNAWED BONES**

Once the PCs stop trying to kill every undead creature in front of them, the GM should have ghouls escort the party from the open graveyard into a mausoleum so covered in moss that it would be unnoticeable without a guide. Once in the chamber of this one-time gravesite, the group will be led through a rather large arrangement of tunnels and cavernous halls to an underground chamber that might

resemble a royal court if it weren't so dank and degraded. And if the throne at the far end of the place weren't made up of bones (mostly human-sized but of various kindred). Torches fed on animal oils and mildewed cloths provide an ill cast throughout the chamber, as well as bothersome smoke.

Gathered around the hall are more than a few score of ghouls of various shapes and degrees of degradation. Some are newly normal looking, except maybe for red-stained cheeks and chattering teeth. Others, barely resembling anything humanoid, sport canine snouts, hunched backs, bony claws, and eyes like a candle's flickering flame. On the throne is a ghoul who still sits as a man would, though his face is more akin to a bulldog's than a human's. He wears the clothing that a well-to-do merchant in Grimehaven might, though it is a little tattered and torn here and there. This is Orcneas.

**Orcneas, King of the Little Mountain Ghouls**

**3rd level Ghoul Wizard, male**

In 21	St 24
Lk 14	Con 32
Ch -35	Dx 17
Wiz 104/30	Sp 25

Combat Adds: +32

Special Abilities: Dog-Face attack, 2d plus Adds; Coffin-Tearing Claws, 4d plus Adds; Ghoul Breathe; 1st-3rd lvl Spells. Knows eight different languages, including Grimehaven Ghoul.

Orcneas will try a number of languages to start communicating with the delvers. (In my own campaign this meant the ghoul-king found Isuni a mutual match, as opposed to his native Skandi, the Trade language of Nedergard and the Westerlees.) The GM should handle this problem as appropriate for his campaign, but the point of this scene is for the ghouls to explain that they have *not* been attacking travelers along the road that goes past their home.

While they are not sure who is committing the assaults, they have noticed more than a few people from Grimehaven skulking about their graveyards. And these maroon-robed individuals are not afraid of a few ghouls. Often employing spells and aided by dark fiends against the ghouls that they encounter, the interlopers actually have the Little Mountain ghouls worried. The ghouls will aid the party in their search if the PCs do not object.

Of course if everything goes south, the GM can handle a very large combat situation involving 4d ghouls (MR 100, see Over-Eating Cannibalism Chart for special abilities for each of them). 2d more ghouls will

show up every d6 combat turns until as many as 400 have been defeated. And, lest we forget, Orcneas himself will be involved. The pillage from this epic conflict should be from *Booty Table B*.

### IV. DID YOU SEE THAT?

The befriending ghouls, if any, guide the party through all of the burial grounds, with no encounter rolls required. The group will see nothing unusual except maybe a fleeting ghost here and there. At a large fountain surrounded by various elaborate mausoleums, the ghouls will stop and express that there usually is a water-spirit in the spot, but that now there is nothing. This will cause them some unease and distress. Daybreak will be fast approaching, so any ghoul guides will bid adieu until the darker hours return. The characters will find a small copse of trees, free of gravestones and other burial site markings, where they can rest and take shelter from the rays of the day.

In the middle of the day, one character or all of the PCs, depending on the GM's whim, will be awoken by the sounds of a horse-drawn cart approaching from a small trail between the burial sites. Aboard it are five black-clad humans dressed in typical Grimehaven fashion. If the observer stays back, he or she will see the group get out at a marking stone that has been fashioned into an obelisk. There the group will light red and black candles as part of some sort of ceremony of mourning, presumably. Then, after an hour or so, the group will leave.

A 1st lvl SR In will have the observing PC notice that only four of the mourners get back into the vehicle. Where the fifth one is, the PC, or even the whole group of adventurers, will have no clue. The cart will start to pull away and lurch toward the main road. In no time at all it will be gone.

If the party should engage the mourners before they leave, it will be met by four very hostile cultists of the Bat-Winged Fiend and one poor victim of a Spirit Mastery Spell.

#### **4 Black-Winged Fiend Cultists**

MR 60 (7d+30)

*Spells:* Each knows TTYF at In 16 and will use the spell at the start of combat

*Booty Table B*

After the mourners leave, or if they are killed, any delvers who move to the gravesite where the group was will notice a growing hum that increases in loudness the closer they get. At the spot where the candles



were lit, the noise will be almost deafening. If a delver reaches for the candles or just beyond them, everyone within a stone's throw will suffer d3 Con damage from an unseen bolt of negative energy.

Everyone stricken will, for a split second, see a vision of the group of mourners laughing maniacally. Everything else will seem normal except for the very loud humming, which is still present. Anyone examining closer will be able to determine that the area around the obelisk has been affected by a Mirage Spell.

Looking beyond the Mirage scene, the characters will be stunned, this time just figuratively, to see the obelisk in a totally different light. The monument is reversed from the white marble to a black onyx, and a red glow is emanating from the ground. The sky over the gravestone's area is a roiling storm front in which the blackness of the clouds is broken only by flashes of lightning.

On the obelisk are words scrawled in Skandi, or whatever the Trade language is for the campaign, written in fresh blood:

*Let this sacrifice be worthy of you,  
Oh darkest of lords.  
And unto the darkest night let all unfold.  
Upon thy ebon skin we shall behold,  
Let it take our breaths away,  
As your bat-wings extend  
Then the red moon shall extinguish the day,  
There must simply flow or mold  
And all beneath its sway.*

This discordant verse should provide as many questions as it answers.

Just beyond the monument lie the remains of the missing fifth member of the morning's party. His chest is caved in from where something drew out his still-beating heart. Now the organ lies in a heap in a tarnished bronze dish at the base of the obelisk. Its freshness stands in stark contrast to the dryness and decay of the handful of others beneath it.

As the party looks around the site, they will find the area of the Mirage Spell to be 13 steps by 13 steps, pretty much in a perfect square around the defiled grave. And, while there is daylight, they will find nothing else.

## V. WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN, AGAIN

If the party has befriended the ghouls of Orcneas, it likely will return to the area where the ghouls last left the party. If the adventurers share





the events and discoveries of the daytime hours with them, the smartest of the ghouls there will decide that Orcneas might like to hear the things described for himself. If the group is willing, a ghoul underling will be sent back and the ghoul king will come along himself.

Stepping back into the Mirage after sunset will cost all who do so d3 more Con points. And they will be twitching for a few minutes. The scene won't really have changed, except that the light from the ground will glow red, and the adventurers will feel a strange heat from its emanations. Its warm rays dry the skin before it can sweat. The sky above now is darker and the strikes of lightning even more brilliant in their firing.

If Orcneas is there, he will read the inscription, stroke his rather canine chin, and look contemplative. Upon being asked his thoughts, he will state: "I have heard references to bat-winged (pronounced 'wing-eDD') things attached to a very dark and primal being known as the Bat-Winged Fiend ('winged' pronounced normally in this case). This fiend was once a god of the dead as well as of the underworld. He was banished into the farther depths of the cosmos when he became corrupt and started blurring the lines between the living and the dead. He is truly something to be feared by all who seek to exist peaceably."

At face value, the group will not find anything worth notice besides the gory details described earlier. However, an Oh-There-It-Is Spell will reveal the outlines of the door to a secret passage at the base of the obelisk, beneath the brass bowl with the hearts in it. The adventurers may notice a number of small stones scattered about the perimeter of the door. Three that are vaguely triangular in shape point to a common azimuth, where a latch can be found. The opening of the passage requires a particular placement, in a specific order, of the twenty scattered stones. The outline of the door is flat on the ground, and the sides face north, south, east, and west. As with most sinister magic, counter-clockwise is the key. Whichever side the moon is on, most likely the east side, is where the placing of the pebbles should begin: two pebbles on the moonward side; then four on the next, counter-clockwise; six opposite the side the moon is on; and, finally, eight along the last edge.

For those players unwilling to solve this puzzle, a 4th lvl SR In or Roguery Talent will allow the party to figure out the cipher that releases the secret door's mystic locks.

The secret door lifts upward, then flips to one side and plops itself onto the ground beside its opening. From this opening, a steamy, red haze rises upward in thick, heavy, rolling billows of mist. The PCs will not be able to ignore the rather heavy stench of sulfur.

It is from here that the plot thickens.



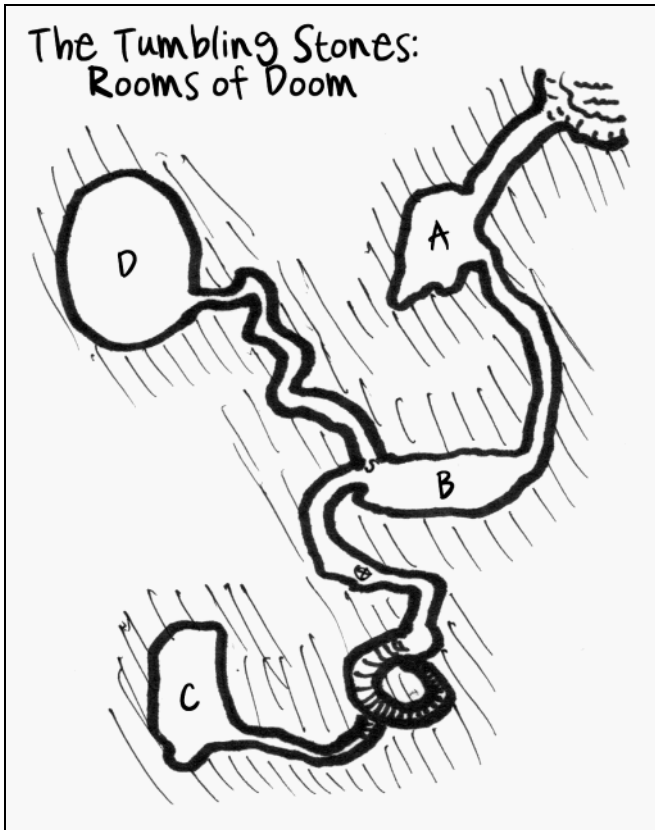
## VI. ROOMS OF DOOM

The characters will begin a long descent into Little Mountain's subterranean environs. The entrance to the next sequence in this adventure is not an easy climb by any means. The shaft presenting itself to the party is a narrow, straight drop that goes on for as far as the eye can see. If someone thinks to drop a torch, it will fall for a dozen seconds, land, and then suddenly go dark. A few seconds later, a "swish" sound will emerge.

Hopefully the PCs have a bit more than the "50' of rope" specified in popular rules-books in their rucksacks at this point.

Whatever the length of rope, it will fall short of the distance required. As the delvers descend, they will find that the narrow, rectangular shaft eventually expands abruptly into a cavernous space. Breezes suddenly start to caress their brows and elsewhere, and a feeling of sheer smallness envelops them. A rhythmic sound from below laps at their feet and eardrums like waves upon a small shore.

Each adventurer must make a 1st lvl SR Lk to release himself from the



rope and land in the water below without any damage. Those who fail will take d3 Con damage.

Standing in waist deep water, with a rope dangling just above their grasps, the party members are now at the bottom of the shaft.

Around them is a vast cavern, over three bowshots both in width and length. The water is a dank, cold mixture containing mud and minerals, draining from the cemetery above. So, in addition to being soaked to the bone, the group will be treated to additional un-

pleasant odors—probably more bad smells than any of them ever thought possible.

Moving in any direction, the delvers will find that the water becomes shallower until they reach a shore of sorts. Further along the shore are the entrances to rooms A and B, but things are not going to be as easy as simply walking along the water's edge. About where the X is marked on the GM's map there is a trap, which is undetectable despite how hard the PCs may be searching the area.

When the first person steps on the trap, the floor of the cavern in that area will start to tip to the right. This large block of stone, suspended on an axis in a hollow under the cavern floor, will spin in a clockwise fashion, slowly, but very heavily, until a weight similar to that of an adult human's body is wedged between it and the edge of the floor. If the adventurer first stepping on it isn't lucky enough, that wedge could very well be him. A 3rd lvl SR Sp is required to leap free from the lethal area of the spinning stone, or the character will suffer 3d Con damage for d3 rounds before becoming wedged in place, ironically stopping the motion.

A character who has stepped on the trap must decide which way to move. Backward will send him, or her, into the group behind. Forward, and the character will land in an ungraceful manner, but unharmed. To the left will send the character into the rolling floor, requiring a 4th lvl SR Sp to avoid the crushing trap. A leap to the right will suddenly reveal that the wall there is nothing more than canvas. Beyond the canvas is a drop the height of three people's tallness leading to 6d worth of sharpened, but rusty, spikes (3d+1 each). A 5th lvl SR Dx will mean that the surprised PC is able to grasp the lip of the cavern floor abutting the trap rather than plummeting down.

This hanging character is not out of the woods, though. The rolling floor will crush his fingers without a successful 2nd lvl SR Lk. The immediate pain from the crushed fingers will cause d6 damage to Con and Dx, and the resulting fall will lead to the spikes mentioned above.

Once the trap has been initiated, it is up to the GM and the players as to how they get past the obstacle.

## Room A

This room contains the bodies of eight travelers, all bound at their hands and feet and in an advanced stage of decay. But not decayed enough to make it unclear that their hearts have been pulled out of their chests. At the far end is a statue of a demonic figure with very large bat-like wings, sitting on a throne and looking rather self-satisfied. Beside a bronze bowl full of burnt hearts at the feet of the statue is a black wooden box secured with an intricate lock. The adventurer must succeed on a 3rd lvl SR Dx to open it without being hit by a poisonous



dart. Upon a failed SR, the poison will immediately paralyze the non-dominant hand of stricken delver, who must then make a 3rd lvl SR Con every game day to avoid suffering the paralysis of an area of the body. Each time an area becomes paralyzed, the poisoned character will lose three points from Sp or Dx. If a Healing Feeling is not cast after a month, the heart will be the affected body part, and that, of course, kills the PC.

Anyone moving to the center of the room will see something out of the corner of an eye, but upon going to look will find nothing there. The character will continue to see nothing there until he or she turns to go back. Standing at the edges of the room are the shades of the hapless sacrificial victims, who do not realize that they have passed on. While they do not mean the delvers harm, they appear in glimpses to the living as they did in their last moments of life: namely screaming, with blood spurting from their chests.

Any PCs still in the doorway outside of the room will see only a darkening mist, which will turn into an obscuring cloud when any people in front of them turn back. Moving into the room, they will see the spirits out of the corner of an eye as did the previous PCs.

Each PC who sees the ghosts will require a 2nd lvl SR In to avoid screaming and wanting to flee. Any screaming will scare the departed souls, as they do not see themselves or each other. They themselves will start to scream and flee too. This banshee wailing will last for d3+3 rounds, causing any living being within earshot d2 Con damage as well as bleeding from the ears each round. As the ghosts will move throughout the complex, there will be a chance, upon a failed Lk roll, that the delvers will run into d3 of them each turn thereafter.

If one or more characters manage to stay calm, and to keep everyone around them calm, including the dead, they will be able, with a 1st lvl SR Ch, to explain to the victims that they are deceased and should be moving on. The charmed spirits will smile and "touch" the comforter with d3 more Con points than have been taken away. These points are added to the character's permanent Con.

Getting the party from Room A to B should not be too tough. The GM should take into account any frightened ghosts from Room A, having the PCs make the appropriate SRs and working out any encounters.

## Room B

The entrance to this room is a heavy wooden door with brick and mortar around its frame. This rather urbane doorway contrasts sharply with the bedrock walls and sandy path of the corridor. At either side of the door are two holders supporting empty glass bulbs.



Any spell, such as Detect Magic or Will-o-Wisp, will ignite the glass bulbs into a near-maddening strobe-light effect. With brilliant flashes set off from each other by just barely a heartbeat, the scene is usually very well lit, punctuated by sudden beat-long intense darkness. This flashing will disrupt anybody with Cat-Eyes or other night vision. For those with conventional eyes, the dark moments will be very dark, even if they possess their own source of illumination (2nd lvl SR Lk to see, aided by a torch or Will-o-Wisp). A discharge of cool mist from beneath the door will add to the general strangeness of things, but it is harmless dry ice vapor.

The door itself will remain locked until any magic is used, at which point, a few moments after the strobe lights and mist have started, it will open slowly.

This room is a large, roughly circular area with a very high ceiling. The walls are lined with the strobe lights as well. At the far end from the door is another statue of the bat-winged demon. It is even larger than the one in Room A, but this time it is only the bust, which happens to be as tall as an adult human, with a hobb sitting on its shoulders. The demon's eyes have just a glint of red, and mist is flowing from its mouth. At the center of the room are three wooden boxes shaped like local coffins.

Moving into the center of the room, the brave adventurers will note that the coffins are latched. Upon closer inspection, the sounds of scratching and slight banging will be heard. Opening the coffins should be an easy task, a 1st lvl SR St or In. Two of the coffins hold attractive human females and the third an elf male, who might be said to be as pretty as the other two. They are all bound at their wrists and ankles and gagged.

In the coffins is where the traps lie. Upon the cutting of any bindings, including the gags, the strobe lights will switch off and a hurricane whoosh of carbon dioxide mist will rush out from the statue, leaving the area in complete darkness. To cast a Will-o-Wisp Spell will take two rounds. It will take two heartbeats, d3 rounds, for anyone with Cat-Eyes or something similar to see again. It will take d2 rounds for a PC to strike a match, and a further d3 to relight any extinguished light source.

During this confusion, the three people from the coffins will free themselves—after all, they *are* vampires. They were held in place only by a very strong continuous Befuddlement Spell, which was deactivated by the disturbance to the binding material. Freeing themselves will take only two rounds. For as many rounds as it takes for Cat-Eyes to adjust or light to return, they will have a free attack on up to three characters. The first three characters who fail a 4th lvl SR Lk are their targets. Less than three and the GM may divide the attacks as he sees fit. Each vampire strike will be 2d+40—their hands plus Combat Adds.

One vampire will cry out joyously before lunging: "The Bat-Winged Fiend won't make a dinner of me! But you're just in time for mine!"

### **3 En Vogue Cliché Vampires**

MR 80 (9d+40), Wiz 40

Spells: Spirit Mastery at 62; the vampires can cast this spell and still fight in the upcoming round

Booty Table B

Note: Because of the vampires' preternatural quickness, each delver fighting against them must make a 2nd lvl SR Sp (melee) or Dx (spell or missile) to attack each round.

Any time three ones are rolled for a vampire during combat, it is assumed that a single character was bitten during the melee. That PC must make a 1st lvl SR Con to avoid losing one Con point per day, and his St will be halved during daylight hours until he is dead. Of course, he will arise within three nights of his death as a vampire and become the property of the GM. This illness can be lifted by a Healing Feeling Spell if cast before the bitten dies.

The statue, its eyes made of two glowing rubies, will continue to fill the chamber and hallway with dry ice mist the whole time the combat is going on. It will also exude an extreme cold that will be felt by anyone coming near. Any flesh touching it will take damage each round during which the contact continues. The damage starts at d3, then increases to d3+d3, then to d3+2d3, then to d3+3d3, and so on—remember DARO and TARO rules, GM.

Metal-gloved hands will undergo the effect described above as well, but after 2d3 rounds the metal will freeze solid. This lump of ice around the delver's arm will immediately cause d6 Con damage, with a further d3 accruing each turn the ice remains there.

Anybody who touches the statue with a padded glove of cloth or leather accumulates points each round during which the statue is touched. One point for the first round, two for the second, three for the third, and so on. After 2d rounds, the fabric will be useless and frozen stiff. If the PC tries to continue to use it, a lump of ice will appear around his or her arm. See the notes above as to how to handle it.

Anybody attempting to remove the eyes must make a single SR plus d2 more 3rd lvl SRs Dx to do so successfully. Each round that this takes, damage as described above will accrue. The rubies will continue to glow. If touched by the flesh of any sentient being, one will dissolve into the skin. The touching adventurer's eyes will turn red, and a permanent Cat-Eyes will be placed on him. His overall Ch will be reduced by 2d as well.

With a 1st lvl SR In or Roguery Talent, the delvers will be able to find a large trapdoor to the left of the statue. Its latch can be disabled with a 2nd lvl SR Dx. But if the opener does not look for traps or make a 4th lvl SR In, a 5th lvl SR Sp is required to avoid the metal spikes that shoot out of the floor. If failed, the opener and anyone standing directly by the trapdoor will take 3d+1 (a common spear) damage, armor applicable.

### Room C

Beneath the trapdoor is a spiral staircase that leads to Room C. When the light that the party is carrying hits the opening at the bottom of the stairs, a large flock of bats will erupt around them, moving steadily up the passage. Despite the intensity of the moment, only a 1st lvl SR In is required for the adventurers to realize that holding still is their best option. Adventurers who fail will have to suffer a gaggle of the critters fluttering around their heads for an extra d3 rounds.

The room at the bottom of the staircase resembles a wine cellar. It is about three bow shots long, less than a shot wide, and rectangular in shape. Along its walls are three racks of large wooden barrels, and sizeable cobwebs cover every free space. A distinct, almost overpowering odor of mildew fills the air.

Looking around, it will appear as though no one has trod through this room in about a century. However, when someone steps forward, the whole scene will change.

Everything described above is an illusion wrought by a Mirage Spell. The person stepping forward is in for a surprise due to the breaking of this fourth wall, so to speak. Falling down a step about a stride in depth, the player must make a 1st lvl SR Lk, with failure resulting in the taking of 3d in damage.

After all the fuss above, the room is essentially the same, except that the barrels, shelves, and cobwebs have disappeared. Even the smell has—mostly—abated. Along the walls are lighting fixtures with glass bulbs that can be lit with a simple Will-o-Wisp and will stay on for about thirty days.

At first glance, there is not much else here. However, an Oh-There-It-Is-Spell will outline 32 places on the ground that are as long as an adult human stands and just a little wider than a human's shoulders. If the party digs around the indicated spots, they will find these areas to be shallow graves. In the spots the PCs examine, they will find bodies of various kindred that populate Grimehaven (Booty Table A).

On the wall at the far end of room is an upside-down star within a circle. Yes, a pentagram. There are no seams or hidden latches, but anyone who digs away the packed soil of the wall will find what can be described as a small grandfather clock with its face turned away from

the viewer. Any sort of Detect Magic will indicate that the item is intensely magic but not much more. Upon being turned around, the clock—which is stuck in place—will reveal a face with 13 numerals rather than the expected 12.

It will take a 2nd lvl SR Dx to remove the tightly wedged timepiece from its resting place. And it's heavy: about 45 weight units. For each round that it is carried, the carrier must make a 3rd lvl SR Sp to avoid tilting it. If the clock tips, the minute hand, which of course is resting at one minute before 13 o'clock, will move to the 13th hour and begin chiming. Upon hearing the chimes and horrible workings, all in the room must make a 3rd lvl SR Con or suffer the permanent loss of d2 In points.

***The Crowley Clock, an Artifact of Instant Nefarious Necromancy***

Wiz 900, Lk 1000

Weight: 45 units

*Description:* A must-have for the necromancer who has everything, this venerable antique timepiece raises masses of cadavers in a given area as a zombie horde.

Once the clock is working, the bodies buried throughout the room will begin to stir. Those in the graves opened by the party will be the first to rise. During each combat turn thereafter, 2d (remember the DARO rule) additional zombies will claw themselves from the ground, looking for a bite to eat. If the party decides to stand and fight, there is a very good chance that after a few combat rounds they will find themselves overwhelmed. If the group makes a hasty exit, all of the zombies already out of the ground, plus some 4d more, will wander out of the room after them.

***Ready-Made Zombies: Just Add Kremm***

MR 40 each (5d+20)

*Notes:* Anyone stricken with Spite damage will be considered bitten. *Zombie Bite:* The victim must make a 3rd lvl SR Con every game day to avoid losing d3 Lk points. Once the PC's Lk reaches zero, he or she will effectively become a zombie, craving brains. For each brain eaten, the zombie will gain one Lk point back for the period from sunrise until sunset. A Healing Feeling Spell will cure the afflicted.

*Booty Table A*

**Room D**

The passage to this room alternates between a sloping earthen path and carved stone steps. Astute observers will notice that the air is moving. It is a long, long passage. Every now and then the PCs will hear



the sounds of the surface world, such as birds awakening just before the dawn, beyond the crags and shadows of the ceiling.

If the zombies from Room C are pursuing the party, they will stop just before getting to Room D. The mob of decaying bits and pieces will stand at the threshold, swaying and occasionally moaning.

This room is a large, domed cavern, which may or may not have been constructed by other than natural means. In the sands of the floor is a specially crafted spiral about as wide as person's arm. The delvers will notice that their footprints on the floor are immediately erased as the spiral reforms itself.

Any characters who proceed to the center without following the spiral will be teleported back into Room B by a Blow-Me-To Spell. A character who instead follows the spiral path will notice scraps of paper every few paces. Upon picking the scraps up, dusting them off, and reading them, bits like the following will be seen:

It is with full and blackest heart, that I give myself to you  
O most powerful and abysmal Lord.

So swear I,  
Silas Scuttleworth

*I pledge my soul to you as long as you get rid of my damnable  
father-in-law, oh Bat-Winged Fiend.*

*So swear I  
Dilbert, the Diligent*

From the Desk of Sally Saphira

- ✓ Buy fish, eggs, butter, wagon wheel
  - ✓ Pick up the cloak from the wash lady
  - ✓ Sell soul to Bat-Winged Fiend to achieve ultimate power to dominate world
  - ✓ Let dogs out before bed
  - ✓ Write mom
- Need new socks!

*I'll give you my soul, Bat-Winged Fiend, as long as I get  
to kill people for blood sacrifice.*

*Hugs and Kisses,  
Hugo the fish-monger*



There will be 66 of these notes. Any PCs who are from the Grimehaven area, including the village of Fishhook, will have heard of many of the names. They may even know a few of the note-writers personally. This is where initiates to the cult of the Black-Winged Fiend begin their cultist activities by promising their souls, in writing, to the demon prince.

Once a character reaches the center of the spiral, a slight hum will be heard. An Oh-There-It-Is Spell will show the outlines of a secret door directly above the spiral's heart. Any other magic will suddenly cause all of the adventurers to fall toward the ceiling, taking d6 worth of damage each. The delvers will find themselves walking on the ceiling. Looking at their previous location, they will see the floor beneath...err, above them...changing before their eyes. The words "GET OUT" will become apparent.

The zombies in the doorway will then be able to enter the room. They will wander around staring hungrily at the characters on the ceiling.

A 3rd lvl SR St will be required to open the secret panel on the roof. Once opened, it will fall toward the floor, and, with a 4th lvl SR Lk on the opener's part, the heavy piece will crush d3 zombies. Beyond the panel is a shaft going straight down, err up, for about the length of a bowshot. The problem is that, in the shaft, gravity is totally normal. Anyone trying to move from the ceiling into the shaft will require a 3rd lvl SR Sp to adjust to the shifting gravity before commencing the hard task of climbing the sheer expanse. Two more 3rd lvl SRs are required for someone to rock-climb their way up.

Anybody falling will take 2d worth of damage and have to deal with any zombies milling about the room below.

## VII. THAT'S A WRAP

The shaft will indeed lead back to the surface world, and the sun will just be rising. The characters will emerge from an abandoned mining shaft atop a hill, a few hours' walk from the burial grounds, close to the village of Fishhook.

Hopefully the party will have garnered that it is the secret cult of the Bat-Winged Fiend that is behind the disappearances. If they picked up the notes in Room D, they also have a record of all 66 of its members who live in the Grimehaven area. If this scenario is part of a larger campaign, the GM should feel free to send the PCs out to capture these members and bring them to trial. Alternatively, the Priests of the God of Enlightenment could thank the surviving members of the group profusely and get to work on the problem themselves.

Surviving the scenario is worth 2,000 Adventure Points.



Any cases of vampirism will have to be dealt with, and paid for, before wrapping up the session.

## BOOTY TABLES

### Plain Old Pillage, roll d6

- 1–4 1 day's worth foodstuffs and 2d3 Silver Pieces (DARO)
- 5 d3 gold pieces
- 6 A decent weapon; see rule book for listings

### Booty Table A, roll 2d

- 3–8 3d gold pieces (TARO)
- 9 2d3 (DARO) decent weapons; see rule book for listings
- 10 d3 days' worth foodstuffs and 2d6 gold pieces (DARO)
- 11 A magic item; see charts
- 12 3d gold pieces (TARO) and a magic item; see charts
- 13+ Roll on Booty Table B

### Booty Table B, roll 2d

1st lvl SR In for finder to discover the item's identity

- 3–5 **Jabberwocky Fur Bag**  
Looks like a regular sack, but spend 2 Wiz pts and the carrier can hold a whole elephant in there, with a bulge or a pound of effort.
- 6 **d3 Heartstring Arrows**  
Will ignore target's armor.
- 7 **Nodding Gem**  
Holder may cast the spell Ghostly Going regardless of Type. Note spellcasting rules and Wiz costs apply.
- 8 **Jack-O-Lantern Scabbard**  
This sheath can hold up to a broadsword. It will increase the bladed weapon's damage by d6 after sunset.
- 9 **Spider On Your Head Helm**  
Shaped to resemble a large spider, this headpiece doubles the effectiveness of the wearer's armor after sunset.
- 10 **Stone Skull**  
This sculpture will allow the holder to cast the spell Mystic Visions, though the attribute requirements remain.
- 11 **Hellhound Fur Cloak**  
1 point armor; resists all flame, though not molten substances.
- 12 A bag of **Dem Bones Gonna Rise Powder**  
2d uses' worth of the material.
- 13+ Roll once more on Booty Table B and once on the Magic Item complex.



**Magic Item Creation**

*The GM will decide specific weapons, jewelry, or clothing*

**Form, roll d6**

- 1-2 Weapon, must be in hand
- 3-4 Jewelry, must be worn
- 5 Potion, once drunk the item is gone
- 6 Clothing, must be worn

**Effect, roll d6**

- 1-2 Raise Stat
- 3-4 Elemental Effect
- 5-6 Cast Spell Ability

**Raise Stat, roll 2d**

*Attribute will be raised by d3*

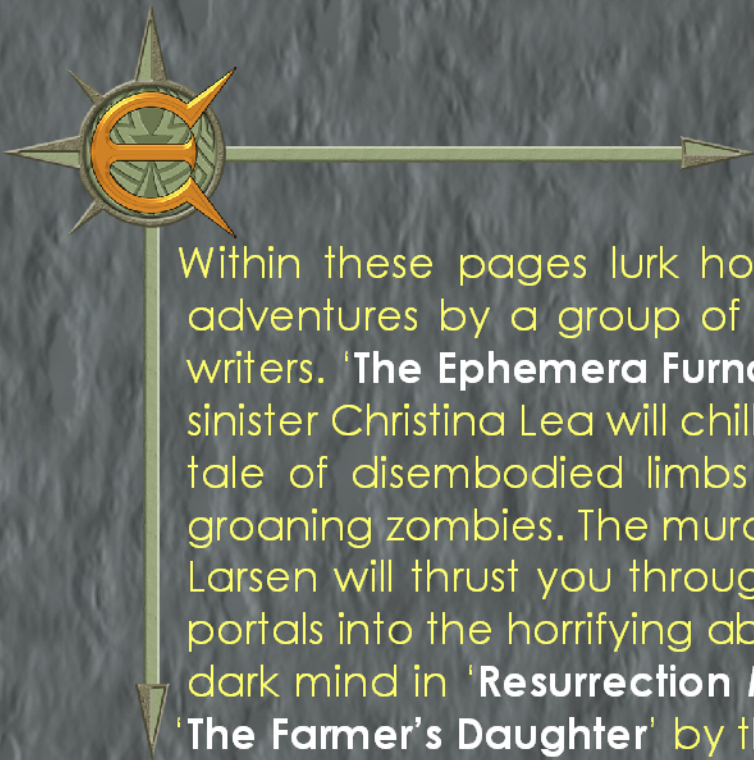
- 3 St
- 4 Con
- 5 Dx
- 6 Sp
- 7 In
- 8 Wiz
- 9 Lk
- 10 Ch
- 11 St and Con
- 12 In and Wiz
- 13+ Lk and two more Attributes

**Elemental Effect, roll d6**

- 1 Fire Immunity (does not apply to molten substances or burning oils)
- 2 Can breathe underwater
- 3 Can hold breath for up to an hour
- 4 2-point stone-skin armor
- 5 Roll twice
- 6 Can cast Summon Water and Summon Fire Spells

**Cast Spell, roll 2d**

The result is the level of the spell that can be cast. The GM will decide what spell and what limitations the magic item has.



Within these pages lurk horrifying adventures by a group of ghoulish writers. **'The Ephemera Furnace'** by the sinister Christina Lea will chill you with a tale of disembodied limbs and groaning zombies. The murderous Mike Larsen will thrust you through hellish portals into the horrifying abyss of his dark mind in **'Resurrection Missions.'**

**'The Farmer's Daughter'** by the twisted David Crowell will give you nightmares of scarecrows, cattle mutilations, and things that go bump in the night. Finally, in **'Trouble among the Tumbled Stones,'** the foul Tom K. Loney will take you on a terrible journey to a place where travellers have been vanishing mysteriously. Could this be the work of bandits, or is something more disturbing afoot on the road to Grimehaven?



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