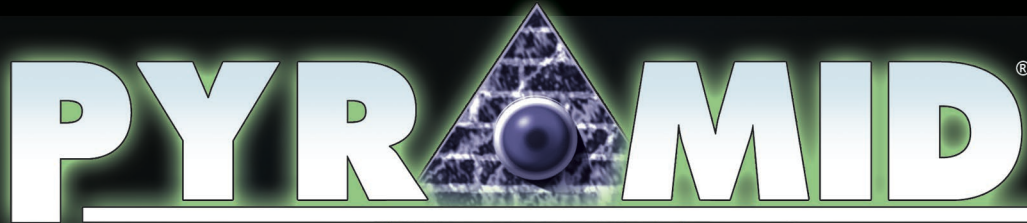


# PYRAMID<sup>®</sup>



Issue 3/118 August '18

## The Fantasy Trip<sup>™</sup>

## DUNGEON FANTASY<sup>™</sup>

POWERED BY CURPS



### ISTVAN'S HOLE

David L. Pulver

### THE SHIELD-BEARER

Sean Punch

### THE 60-MINUTE HEROES

Steven Marsh

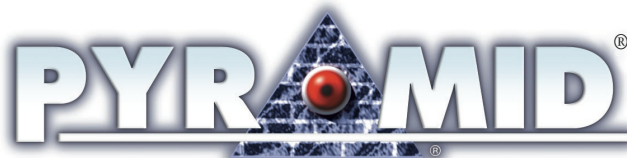
### IT'S AN ENCOUNTER!

Christopher R. Rice

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2718

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### ARTICLE COLORS

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

*Pale Blue:* In This Issue

*Brown:* In Every Issue

*Green:* Columnist

*Dark Blue:* **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game**

*Orange:* **The Fantasy Trip**

*Purple:* Systemless Features

#### COVER ART

*Brandon Moore*

#### CARTOGRAPHY

*Steven Marsh and Nikola Vrtis*

#### INTERIOR ART

*Denis Loubet and Nikola Vrtis,  
with Alex Fernandez and Dan Willems*

Getting together with friends, exploring new places, and returning home with loot . . . what could be better than that? With this month's issue of *Pyramid*, we're looking at *two* classics: the **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game**, and – currently on Kickstarter – **The Fantasy Trip**. We've got support for *both*, in some surprising ways!

Sometimes the best offense is a good defense . . . especially when you're *The Shield-Bearer!* **Dungeon Fantasy** architect Sean Punch brings a new profession – the shield-bearer – to your tomb-touring heroes. Protect allies, bash heads, and hurl your shield at unsuspecting enemies! This feature includes new traits, rules, and options for your shield-wielder, plus a sample character and tips for using these possibilities with **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**.

It's a quick challenge to spice up your dungeon-delving heroes' lives . . . it's a delivery system for a key piece of information . . . *It's an Encounter!* **Dungeon Fantasy Traps** co-author Christopher R. Rice offers an assortment of flavorful tables that can be used individually or collectively to craft a memorable random encounter. Designed for the **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game**, this article has enough systemless goodness to be equally inspirational for **The Fantasy Trip** adventures.

Worlds collide, and the heroes might not make it out alive when they venture forth to explore *Istvan's Hole*. Acclaimed author David L. Pulver delivers an old-school adventure suitable for both the **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game** and **The Fantasy Trip**, converting various **Dungeon Fantasy** monsters for use in **TFT** . . . and vice versa! Can the heroes survive the plethora of perils and emerge from the opal mines triumphant? Includes an overview map of the mine.

When things go differently than planned, suddenly the dungeon explorers become *The 60-Minute Heroes*. This adventure outline presents an intriguing dilemma and a ticking clock. Although designed for **The Fantasy Trip** (including a complete, ready-to-use megahex-based dungeon map), it's generic and accessible enough to be useful for **Dungeon Fantasy** fans or any fantasy gamer.

This issue wraps up with a Random Thought Table that looks at old-school fantasy through the eye of modern-day video games. With this issue, the call of classic fantasy is louder than ever!

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON  
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH  
The Fantasy Trip Line Editor ■  
GUY MCLIMORE

GURPS Project Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH

Executive Editor ■ MIRANDA HORNER  
Production Artist & Prepress Checker ■  
NIKOLA VRTIS

Page Design ■ PHIL REED  
& JUSTIN DE WITT

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## WELCOME TO THE DUNGEON!

As I type these words, the Kickstarter for *The Fantasy Trip* is blazing through its various stretch goals. (According to my cyber-gnomes, pointing your browser to [kck.st/2uUXocg](http://kck.st/2uUXocg) should get you to the right page.) We at *Pyramid* have always been fans of old-school crypt-crawling fantasy fun, and so we felt this was a good time to get behind the excitement with our own celebratory salute to dungeon fantasy.

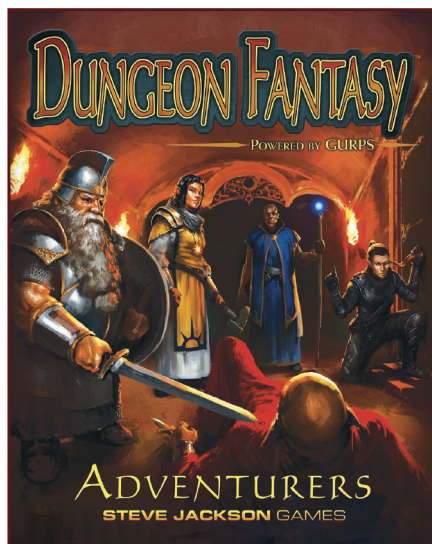
So this issue is a bit different, in that it's designed for both fans of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* (which is, of course, Powered by *GURPS*) and fans (old and forthcoming) of *The Fantasy Trip*.

Mind you, the new version of *The Fantasy Trip* (*TFT*) doesn't even *exist* yet. Fortunately, it's designed to be super-accessible. So, for example, the adventure written by Your Humble Editor (pp. 34-37) should be eminently readable even without a lick of experience with *TFT*, and GMs should feel comfortable perusing it for inspiration, adapting it to your own campaigns, and whetting your appetite for what *TFT* has to offer.

The amazing thing about the gaming hobby is that each part informs every other. I still use supplements, magazines, and resources from games that are 30 years old. (I have a particular soft spot for the old *Role Aids* line from Mayfair.) And I've adapted tons of great ideas from modern games to use in other areas. This innovative spirit is what keeps gaming fresh, and gives you an excuse to go through your library, explore those wondrous gaming Kickstarters, and exchange ideas with all your gaming friends, new and wizened.

## WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW!

Speaking of exchanging ideas, what did you think of our quasi-experimental issue? Did it spark your interest . . . along with your torch as you gather your henchmen to go clear out that tomb? Or was there something different you wish we'd found in our travels? Let us know, via a private message to our chin-stroking sages at [pyramid@sjgames.com](mailto:pyramid@sjgames.com), or publicly at the talkative tavern that meets online at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com).



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# THE SHIELD-BEARER

BY SEAN PUNCH

In the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, shields are practically the definition of defense. Not that delvers are unaware that you can bash and rush opponents with them – many adventurers add pointy bits for that very reason. But most regard shields as just an adjunct to weapon use.

Veteran warriors know better. In expert hands, the right shield is a respectable all-around weapon, as valuable for offense as for defense. And not just up close: Shields can protect allies and even make ranged attacks! It's just that few fighters take the time to learn this art – the way of the *shield-bearer*.

## SHIELD-BEARER

You resemble the knight in that you're a front-line fighter who favors a shield (and possibly armor), but you've made it your mission to learn to use that shield to maximum effect. You consider protecting allies a priority, whether that means blocking for them or hurling a shield at a foe sneaking up on them. While you favor bucklers (that's *how* you hurl the thing!), you've learned to work around their limitations. All of which necessitates a specialized fighting style.

**Attributes:** ST 13 [30]; DX 14 [80]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 13 [30].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [-15]; Basic Move 6 [0].

**Advantages:** Enhanced Block 2 [10]; Hold the Line [1]; Sacrificial Block [1]; Shield Familiarity 1 [1]; Shield Mastery 1 [15]; Shield-Wall Training [1]; Weapon Bond (Starting shield) [1]; and Weapon Master (Shields) [25]. • A further 60 points chosen from among:

ST +1 to +6 [10/level]	Hard to Subdue [2/level]
DX +1 to +3 [20/level]	High Pain Threshold [10]
HT +1 to +6 [10/level]	Luck [15]
HP +1 to +4 [2/level]	or Extraordinary Luck [30]
Basic Speed +1.00	Peripheral Vision [15]
or +2.00 [20/level]	Rapid Healing [5]
Basic Move +1 to +6 [5/level]	Recovery [10]
Born War-Leader 1-4 [5/level]	Shield Familiarity 2-3
Combat Reflexes [15]	[1/level]
Enhanced Block 3-6 [5/level]	Shield Mastery 2-3 [15/level]
Extra Attack 1 or 2 [25/level]	Signature Gear [1/item]
Fearlessness [2/level] or	Striking ST 1 or 2 [5 or 10]
Unfazeable [15]	Trademark Move [1/move]
Fit [5] or Very Fit [15]	Weapon Bond
Hard to Kill [2/level]	(A second shield) [1]

*If you carry a shield, attach a spike.  
It'll come in handy sooner than you think.*

– *Grükuk Kzaash, Knight*

**Disadvantages:** Sense of Duty (Adventuring Companions) [-5] and Vow (Always fight with at least one shield in hand) [-5].  
• -25 points chosen from among these traits:

Bad Temper [-10*]	Honesty [-10*]
Bloodlust [-10*]	Impulsiveness [-10*]
Chummy [-5] or	Obsession (Finding
Gregarious [-10]	a fabled shield) [-5*]
Code of Honor (Soldier's or	Overconfidence [-5*]
Chivalry) [-10 or -15]	Selfless [-5*]
Compulsive Carousing [-5*]	Stubbornness [-5*]
Compulsive Vowing [-5*]	Wounded [-5]
Greed [-15*]	

**Skills:** One of these melee weapon skills (as backup):

Axe/Mace-14 [2]	Knife-15 [2]
Broadsword-14 [2]	Shortsword-14 [2]
Flail-13 [2]	Spear-14 [2]

• All of these skills:

Armory (Melee Weapons)-10 [2]	Shield (Buckler)-18† [12]
Boxing-14 [2] or Brawling-15 [2]	Sumo Wrestling-14 [2]
Connoisseur (Weapons)-10 [2]	or Wrestling-14 [2]
Immovable Stance-14† [4]	Tactics-10 [4]
Leadership-10 [2]	Thrown Weapon
Push-14† [4]	(Shield)-16† [4]

• Five of these skills:

Armory (Body Armor)-9 [1]	Hiking-12 [1]
Carousing-13 [1]	Intimidation-9 [1]
Climbing-13 [1]	Observation-9 [1]
Fast-Draw (any)-14 [1]	Riding (Horse)-13 [1]
First Aid-10 [1]	Savoir-Faire-10 [1]
Forced Entry-14 [1]	Scrounging-10 [1]
Gambling-9 [1]	Stealth-13 [1]
Gesture-10 [1]	Strategy-8 [1]
Heraldry-9 [1]	Streetwise-9 [1]

\* Multiplied for self-control number; see *Adventurers*, p. 55.

† Shield-bearers may opt to divert advantage points to these four shield-related skills, at the usual four points per skill level.

### Customization Notes

Shield-bearers are defined mainly by their distribution of advantage points. Quite a few favor defense, buying Combat Reflexes, Peripheral Vision (to be unassailable from all sides), and further levels of Enhanced Block and/or Shield Mastery. The consummate “living shield” focuses on absorbing punishment by virtue of HT, HP, Fit, Hard to Kill, Hard to Subdue, High Pain Threshold, Rapid Healing, and Recovery. For warriors who consider offense the best defense, ST and Striking ST are obvious – but don’t overlook extreme Basic Move for deadly shield rushes, or Extra Attack for raining down bashes (doubtless with a bladed, spiked dwarven shield). And any type might spearhead an adventuring party, adding Born War-Leader, Fearlessness, or Unfazeable.

Disadvantages often mirror these choices. Defenders and living shields customarily exhibit some of Impulsiveness (leaping into harm’s way), Overconfidence (unconcerned about being in harm’s way), Stubbornness (refusing to move out of harm’s way), and Wounded (enough said). Attackers are often belligerent types who possess Bad Temper, Bloodlust, and Overconfidence. Leaders and the more self-sacrificing living shields are arguably the most complex, being team players with traits like Chummy, Code of Honor, Compulsive Carousing, and Selfless. As delvers, any of these shield-bearers might have generalized Greed or a specific Obsession with a fabled (and *valuable*) shield.

Skills commonly reflect origins. Shield-bearers who learned their métier protecting officers on the battlefield may be skilled at First Aid, Hiking, and the soldierly pastimes of Carousing, Gambling, and Scrounging. Chivalrous beginnings are more likely to lead to Armory, Heraldry, Riding, Savoir-Faire, and Strategy. And career treasure-hunters go for the usual stuff: Climbing, First Aid, Forced Entry, Gesture, Observation, Stealth, etc. The melee weapon skill is a personal choice, but Knife is best for those who rush into close combat, while when you’re the god of blocking, Axe/Mace and Flail are worth the tradeoff of higher damage for no parry after attacking. Even two-shield fighters (p. 6) have a weapon skill as backup – nobody starts out fighting that way.

Any shield-bearer might also opt to sacrifice a few advantage points for better combat skills. Immovable Stance and Thrown Weapon (Shield) are one-note – improving Shield is usually better. Push is worth considering, though, as each level translates directly into more shoving power.

Like all warriors, shield-bearers should consider trading quirk points for money for better gear. There’s no upper limit on how good a shield (or two!) can be. If planning to *throw* a pet shield, consider defining it as Signature Gear to encourage the GM to give it back.

## SPECIAL SHIELD-BEARER TRAITS

The shield-bearer can improve Basic Move to up to +6 over its figured value (to aid in shield rushes), have an unprecedented Enhanced Block 6, buy several special combat advantages, and learn three remarkable skills.

### Hold the Line

1 point

*Prerequisites:* Sacrificial Block and Shield-Wall Training.

You can use a block defense to protect an ally standing *anywhere* within one yard of you – behind (as Sacrificial Block), beside (as Shield-Wall Training), in front (hooking your shield around from behind), or even above or below – as long as the attack is one that can be blocked. If you haven’t retreated this turn, you may sacrifice your retreat to step into range of the person you’re defending; this doesn’t give +1 for retreating. Add the DB of *your* shield, not your friend’s, to your Block roll.

### Sacrificial Block

1 point

This is identical to the knight ability of the same name; see *Adventurers*, p. 28.

### Shield Familiarity

1 point/level

*Prerequisite:* Shield-Wall Training and Weapon Master (Shields).

You move your shield like a natural extension of your body, instinctively positioning it where it won’t inconvenience you. Each level (maximum three) lets you ignore -1 of the penalty a shield gives to attack and DX rolls in close combat (*Exploits*, p. 51).

### Shield Mastery

15 points/level

This is similar to the knight ability of the same name (see *Adventurers*, p. 29), except that the shield-bearer may buy up to *three* levels! Each level gives +1 to shield DB when blocking or dodging ranged threats, and DR 2 vs. large-area attacks from in front while holding a shield, to a maximum of +3 to DB and +6 to DR.

### Shield-Wall Training

1 point

This is identical to the knight ability of the same name; see *Adventurers*, p. 29.

## Weapon Master (Shields)

25 points

This is Weapon Master (*Adventurers*, p. 54) with all manner of shields: whatever the size, be they strapped on or bucklers, and regardless of add-ons and modifiers. Owing to the specialized nature the “weapons” covered, its effects differ somewhat:

- Adds +1 *per die* to basic thrust or swing damage when using a shield as a weapon – to bash *or* rush – if you know Shield or Shield (Buckler) at DX+1, rising to +2 per die at DX+2 or better!
- Halves the penalty for a Rapid Strike (*Exploits*, p. 38) when making shield bashes.
- Enables multiple blocks, at a cumulative -3 per block past the first. All these blocks benefit from Enhanced Block and special shield-bearer advantages.
- Allows use of specially constructed *large* shields with the Shield (Buckler) skill, meaning you can ready them with one Ready maneuver and drop them as a free action.\*
- Allows shield rushes with bucklers.\*
- Enables hurled shield attacks with Thrown Weapon (Shield). Use this skill – not Shield or Shield (Buckler) – to

### TWO-SHIELD FIGHTING

Shield-bearers may go “full shield,” using a shield in either hand. When doing so, the following rules apply:

*No Double-Dipping:* The DB of multiple shields is *never* cumulative for any purpose. Only the DB of the *best* ready shield adds to defense rolls – including blocks made with the shield with the lower DB. Only the DB of the *largest* shield gives penalties in close combat (reduced for Shield Familiarity, p. 5). Likewise, Shield Mastery (p. 5) adds its DR vs. large-area attacks once, no matter how many shields you have.

*Block Around the Clock Tonight:* Either shield can block, as long as it’s ready. Penalties for multiple blocks accumulate separately for each hand. By alternating hands, you can block twice at no penalty, twice more at -3, and so on. All these blocks benefit from Enhanced Block and special shield-bearer advantages.

*Throwing a Bash:* Either shield can be used to bash or rush – or be thrown – as long as it’s ready. Declare which shield you’re using and refer to its statistics for the attack; the other shield has no effect on this.

*All-Around Champion:* You have *two* shield sides, so you can block any attack except one from the rear. When blocking attacks from side hexes, the standard -2 applies unless you have Peripheral Vision, and you have to use the shield on the same side, applying its DB (even if it isn’t the best) and current penalty for multiple blocks. If you make a Wild Swing at someone in a side hex, you must use the shield on that side.

*Look Ma, Both Hands!* Push, Shield, Shield (Buckler), and Thrown Weapon (Shield) are “ambidextrous” skills. There’s never any penalty to attack or defend for the “off” hand.

calculate a per-die damage bonus: +1 at DX+1, +2 at DX+2 or better.

• Permits you to learn the martial artist’s Immovable Stance and Push skills without needing Trained by a Master – but these work only when wielding a shield.

\* Yes, these benefits remove all the drawbacks of bucklers.

## Shield-Bearer Skills

Thanks to Weapon Master (Shields), a shield-bearer can learn three special skills.

### Immovable Stance

see *Adventurers*, p. 32

Represents instinctively turning the shield toward and leaning into an attack – it has nothing to do with that *chi* mumbo-jumbo. Offers its usual benefits, provided the shield-bearer has a ready shield (any size or type) *and* the knockback or fall being resisted is caused by an attack the warrior *could have* blocked, even if a block failed or wasn’t attempted. Inapplicable against effects that don’t allow a block or any defense at all, or when not suitably equipped and ready.

### Push

see *Adventurers*, p. 33

Lets the shield-bearer deliver a shield bash (not a rush or throw) that does knockback *instead of* damage. Works as described for the Push skill, but requires a ready shield. The attack roll is against Push, not Shield. Weapon Master (Shields) adds its per-die bonus, figured from Shield skill, *before* doubling the result; e.g., with ST 13 and Push-14, you’d use swing 2d, and +2 per die for Shield at DX+2 would mean rolling 2d+4 and doubling it.

### Thrown Weapon (Shield)

see *Adventurers*, p. 91

This new Thrown Weapon specialty has no default. It allows hurling a shield – of any kind – for damage. Weapon Master (Shields) bonuses apply, and are based on this skill.

## CHOOSING THE PERFECT SHIELD

In front of every successful shield-bearer is a shield, sometimes *two* shields (see *Two-Shield Fighting*, above). Factoring in the shield-bearer’s special advantages, the *Shield Table* (*Adventurers*, p. 107) looks like this:

**DB: Defense Bonus**, the bonus the shield gives to *all* of your active defenses against attacks from the front or shield side. Against *ranged* attacks, increase this by your level of Shield Mastery (p. 5). The listed DB is also a bonus to shield-rush damage (*Exploits*, p. 40) and a penalty to DX in close combat (*Exploits*, p. 51) – though Shield Familiarity (p. 5) can offset the latter.

**Cost:** The shield’s price, in \$.

**Weight:** The shield’s weight, in pounds. Everything here is substantially wooden, and ruined in seconds equal to its weight if it catches fire.

Every well-organized adventuring company needs someone to defend those who lack a warrior's training. It is rumored that there are shield masters who put even knights to shame in that role, though I have yet to meet such a worthy.

– Sir Yvor Gryffyn, Knight

Shield	DB	Cost	Weight	Notes
<b>SHIELD (DX-4 or other Shield at -2)</b>				
Small Shield	1	\$40	8	[1, 2]
Medium Shield	2	\$60	15	[1, 2]
Large Shield	3	\$90	25	[1, 2]

### Notes

[1] Also available as a *buckler*. You can ready a buckler with one Ready maneuver, drop it as a free action, and *throw* it without special preparation – but it fully occupies one hand and can be dropped. Use Shield (Buckler) skill instead of Shield skill. No effect on statistics.

[2] Can be used offensively for a Feint, shield bash (*Melee Attacks*, below), shield rush (*Exploits*, p. 40), or thrown shield attack (*Ranged Attacks*, below).

### Add-Ons

These changes apply *before* shield modifiers (below and *Adventurers*, p. 107), which adjust the cost and weight of the shield plus any additions.

*Alternate Grips*: Allows the same shield to work with Shield (meaning you can hold something in your shield hand or avoid a dropped shield) and Shield (Buckler) (which lets you

drop the shield quickly and throw it more easily). Changing grips takes Ready maneuvers equal to shield DB. +\$20, +2 lbs.

*Blunt Spike*: Gives +1 to crushing damage with a shield *bash* or *rush*, though not to thrown shield attacks or swung attacks with a bladed edge. +\$20, +5 lbs.

*Sharp Spike*: Longer and slimmer than the blunt spike, with which it's mutually exclusive. Provides the same bonus and converts *bash* or *rush* damage type to *impaling*. +\$50, +3 lbs.

### Shield Modifiers

All modifiers on p. 107 of *Adventurers* are available. **Balanced** adds +1 to Thrown Weapon (Shield) skill as well as Shield skill. **Dwarven** and **meteoric** shields give +1 to damage with *all* shield attacks – bashes, rushes, and throws – and this is cumulative with the +1 for either kind of spike when making a bash or rush. As well, a new modifier is available:

**Bladed**: The shield's rim – customarily metal – is sharpened into a blade. This gives the wielder an alternative shield bash that inflicts swing-2 *cutting* damage (the shield can still bash for crushing damage, if desired), and makes the shield's thrown attack cutting. Cutting damage gets the usual +1 for a **dwarven** or **meteoric** shield, and is also at +1 for an **orichalcum** shield, as all-metal shields hold a *real* edge. Spikes never affect cutting damage. +0.5 CF.

### Melee Attacks

The table below summarizes shield *bashes*. Shield *rushes* (*Exploits*, p. 40) receive a damage bonus equal to DB, another +1 if **dwarven** or **meteoric**, and a further +1 with a spike, but are never affected by the **bladed** modifier. Rush damage

is crushing for most shields, impaling for those with sharp spikes. Weapon Master (Shields) adds its per-die bonus to bashes *and* rushes.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
<b>SHIELD (ANY) (DX-4)</b>							
Shield Bash	thr cr	1	No	var.	var.	–	[1]
Shield Bash w. Blunt Spike	thr+1 cr	1	No	+\$20	+5 lbs.	–	[1]
Shield Bash w. Sharp Spike	thr+1 imp	1	No	+\$50	+3 lbs.	–	[1]
Shield Bash, Bladed	sw-2 cut	1	No	var.	var.	–	[2]

### Notes

[1] Crushing or impaling damage is +1 if shield is **dwarven** or **meteoric**, but never affected by being bladed.

[2] Cutting damage is +1 if shield is **dwarven**, **meteoric**, or **orichalcum**, but never affected by spikes.

### Ranged Attacks

Thanks to Weapon Master (Shields), a shield-bearer can hurl a shield a considerable distance, for respectable damage – though *large* shields, and hefty dwarven or meteoric ones, require high ST. A ready buckler can be thrown without

special preparation; a standard, strapped-on shield requires Ready maneuvers equal to its DB to prepare to throw. Most shield-bearers prefer bucklers for this reason.

*Damage:* Add +1 to *crushing* damage if the shield is **dwarven** or **meteoric**. Change damage to *cutting* if it is **bladed** – and add +1 to cutting damage if the shield is **dwarven**, **meteoric**, or **orichalcum**. In all cases, Weapon Master (Shields) adds +1 *per die* to basic thrust if you know Thrown Weapon (Shield) at DX+1, or +2 per die at DX+2 or better.

*Range:* Hefty **dwarven** and **meteoric** shields can't be thrown as far. Range becomes  $\times 1/\times 1.5$  if *small*,  $\times 0.5/\times 1$  if *medium*, or a mere  $\times 0.25/\times 0.5$  if *large*.

*Weight:* Adjust this normally if the shield is **dwarven**, **fine**, **meteoric**, or **orichalcum**.

*Cost:* Adjust as usual for shield modifiers.

*ST:* Add +2 to the ST required to throw a **dwarven** or **meteoric** shield.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	Cost	ST	Bulk
<b>THROWN WEAPON (SHIELD) (No default)</b>									
Shield, Small	thr+2 cr	1	$\times 1.5/\times 2.5$	8	1	T(1)	\$40	11	-4
Shield, Medium	thr+3 cr	1	$\times 1/\times 1.5$	15	1	T(1)	\$60	13	-5
Shield, Large	thr+4 cr	1	$\times 0.5/\times 1$	25	1	T(1)	\$90	15	-6

## MAKING SHIELD-BEARERS USEFUL

The shield-bearer is a front-line fighter who focuses on defense. Avoid having every opponent use attacks that obviate shields. Provide opportunities to show off by blocking multiple attacks, especially ranged ones, along with chances to save swamped allies by blocking for them. It's tricky to make a shield-bearer valuable out of combat, but letting the delver intercept *traps* and so on for associates is a start. Needless to say, the loot they crave is *shields* – especially nicely made magical ones.

## SHIELD-BEARERS IN GURPS

This 250-point template is intended for the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, but it's fine for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* with some clarifications of traits not fully defined in this article:

*Sacrificial Block:* Combat power-up from *Pyramid* #3/61: *Way of the Warrior*, p. 4.

*Savoir-Faire:* Means the High Society specialty.

*Shield Mastery:* Knight power-up from *Dungeon Fantasy* 11, p. 29.

*Shield-Wall Training:* Combat power-up from *Dungeon Fantasy* 11, p. 12.

*Signature Gear:* This doesn't buy gear; it "insures" a bought item of any value. Replace with the standard "Signature Gear [Varies]."

*Stubbornness:* Gains a self-control roll. Replace "[ $-5^*$ ]" with "[ $-5$ ]."

*Trademark Move:* Perk suggested on p. 27 of *Dungeon Fantasy* 2.

## SAMPLE CHARACTER

For a ready-to-play shield-bearer, see p. 9.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. He has written or developed some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and contributed regularly to *Pyramid*. Lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, he designed the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango.

**GURPS** Fourth Edition



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# GRUNTAR

## 247-point Half-Ogre Shield-Bearer

Gruntar's life story is typical of that of countless half-ogres: Somebody noticed him about to be run out of town as a savage, thought "That brute would make a great meat shield!", and recruited him. In this case, though, the recruiter made the error of thinking out loud. Gruntar had always wanted to fit in, and came to the conclusion that he could do so by quite literally serving as a living bulwark. He snatched up a couple of shields and embarked on a career of getting between his captain and anything dangerous.

During his stint in "the army" (actually the house guard of an obscure baron), Gruntar learned to be civil and a model soldier – both within the limits of his intellect and short temper. He also picked up a lot of half-baked ideas about tactics and military thinking. When his captain retired, he was discharged and took his skills on the road.

Gruntar's tactics are predictable but fairly effective: He enters battle with his large shield Lefty and small shield Righty in their respective hands. Both are masses of spiky, razor-edged dwarven steel. He's surprisingly swift – capable of using shield rushes to great effect – but prefers to stand his ground defending his group's leader. Should the situation demand it, he'll hurl Righty and pull his axe, but he'll never willingly let go of Lefty. On the defense, he's downright scary, blocking at 19 factoring in his DB 3, and alternating hands for 19, 19, 16, 16, 13, 13, and so on without retreating an inch; add +1 for Shield Mastery if the attacks are ranged.

Gruntar has traded three quirk points for money – mostly to afford his extremely nice shields! The other two bought more Fearlessness, because it wouldn't do for a stalwart defender to cower in fear.

**ST** 17 [70]; **DX** 14 [80]; **IQ** 9 [-20]; **HT** 14 [40].  
Damage 1d+2/3d-1; BL 58 lbs.; HP 17 [0]; Will 9 [0];  
Per 9 [0]; FP 14 [0].  
Basic Speed 7.00 [0]; Basic Move 10 [15]; Move 8.  
Dodge 9; Parry 10 (Axe); Block 16\*.

### Advantages

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Enhanced Block 3 [15]    | Shield-Wall Training [1]     |
| Fearlessness 2 [4]       | Signature Gear (Lefty) [1]   |
| Hold the Line [1]        | Signature Gear (Righty) [1]  |
| Night Vision 3 [3]       | Tough Skin 1 [3]             |
| Sacrificial Block [1]    | Weapon Bond (Lefty) [1]      |
| Shield Familiarity 3 [3] | Weapon Bond (Righty) [1]     |
| Shield Mastery 1 [15]    | Weapon Master (Shields) [25] |

### Disadvantages and Quirks

- Appearance (Ugly) [-8]
- Bad Temper (12) [-10]
- Chummy [-5]
- Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]
- Sense of Duty (Adventuring Companions) [-5]
- Social Stigma (Savage) [-10]
- Vow (Always fight with at least one shield in hand) [-5]
- Always picks *somebody* as "the cap'n," and defends that person. [-1]
- Good about holding formation, unless enraged. [-1]
- Never throws Lefty. [-1]
- Speaks in badly understood military terminology to sound smart. [-1]
- Would do almost anything to be accepted in polite company. [-1]

### Skills

- |                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Armory (Melee Weapons)-9 [2] | Leadership-9 [2]      |
| Axe/Mace-14 [2]              | Push-14 [4]           |
| Brawling-15 [2]              | Shield                |
| Carousing-14 [1]             | (Buckler)-18/20† [12] |
| Connoisseur (Weapons)-9 [2]  | Stealth-13 [1]        |
| Forced Entry-14 [1]          | Sumo Wrestling-14 [2] |
| Hiking-13 [1]                | Tactics-9 [4]         |
| Immovable Stance-14 [4]      | Thrown Weapon         |
| Intimidation-8 [1]           | (Shield)-16/18† [4]   |

*F flank left! Advance  
to da rear! Deploy  
reserves! Cover us wit'  
arrows! Hut hut hut!*

– Gruntar,  
Shield-Bearer

\* Includes +3 for Enhanced Block.

† Use higher skill for Lefty and Righty (+1 for balanced, +1 for Weapon Bond).

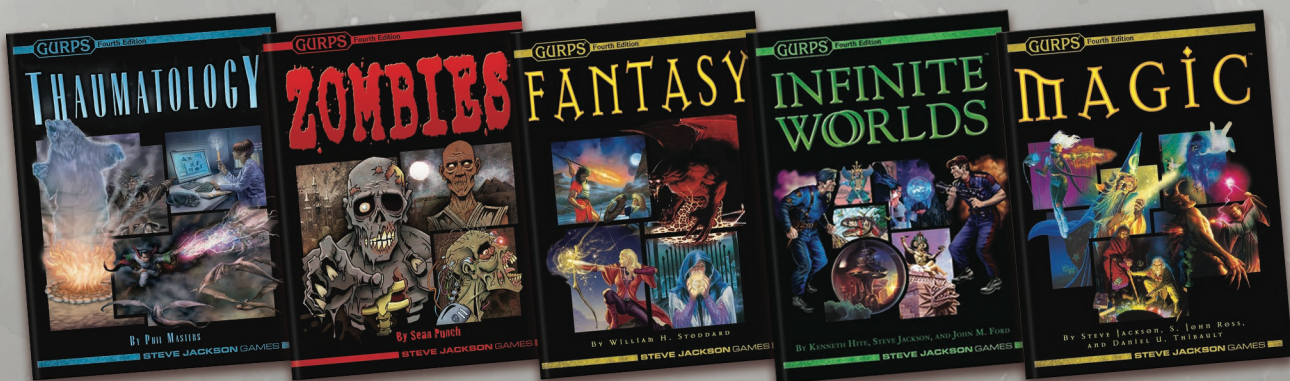
### Equipment

- \$2,500, 109.62 lbs. (Light encumbrance)
- Axe. 3d+1 cut (reach 1). \$50, 4 lbs.
- Canteen, Full. 1 quart water. \$10, 3 lbs.
- Clothing. \$0, 2 lbs.
- Coins. 3 silver, 18 copper. \$78, 0.42 lb.
- Large Buckler w. Sharp Spike, Balanced, Bladed, Dwarven ("Lefty"). DB 3; 1d+6 imp (reach 1) *or* 3d+4 cut (reach 1). Shield rush at Move 8: 1d+11 imp. \$1,330, 56 lbs.
- Light Leather Armor, Suit. DR 1 (total DR 2). \$150, 18 lbs.
- Personal Basics. \$5, 1 lb.
- Pouch. Holds rations. \$10, 0.2 lb.
- Rations, 6 meals. \$12, 3 lbs.
- Small Buckler w. Sharp Spike, Balanced, Bladed, Dwarven ("Righty"). DB 1; 1d+6 imp (reach 1) *or* 3d+4 cut (reach 1). Shield rush at Move 8: 1d+9 imp.
- Thrown: 1d+7 cut, Acc 1, Range 17/25, Shots T(1), Bulk -4. \$855, 22 lbs.

### Gruntar in GURPS

Gruntar's Tough Skin is Damage Resistance (Tough Skin, -40%), renamed; to interpret his other abilities, see p. 8. His gear comes from the *DFRPG*. If using the *Basic Set*, his light leather armor (DR 1) becomes a leather jacket, leather pants, leather cap, cloth gloves, and shoes (all DR 1). Per pp. B283-284, that's \$177, 9 lbs.; he spends \$27 more (he has enough) but carries 9 lbs. less (which doesn't change his encumbrance). Ignore the coin denominations but keep their \$ value. Shield-rush damage is four points higher in the *DFRPG*, as thrust-2, +4 for Move 8, gives a base 1d+4, while *GURPS* starts from collision damage for HP 17 and Move 8, for a base 1d.

Any adventure you can imagine . . .



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# IT'S AN ENCOUNTER!

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

The *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* offers a self-contained ruleset any fantasy adventure you can imagine, but sometimes, the GM could use a little help creating interesting scenarios on the fly. This article offers an

encounter-generation system based on a series of tables and prompts. Let the system help you design quick meetings between the delving party and NPCs. You also get random encounter tables for monsters by terrain.

## WHAT IS AN ENCOUNTER?

In game terms, an encounter comprises three things: the acting party, the reacting party, and the circumstances. The *reacting* party is the group that responds to the situation or circumstance that the *acting* party finds itself in. The reacting party does *not* have to be the PCs! It's not only possible but probable that the PCs are the ones dealing with a group reacting to *their* presence.

*Example:* Goblin scouts come across a delving party asleep in the goblins' cave. Though the PCs aren't doing anything much right now, they're still the ones who've put themselves in the goblins' way; this means they're the "acting party" here, and the goblins will *react* according to how they feel about these trespassers. If the GM were setting up a different scenario, with the goblin scouts serving an invading army, it's more likely the PCs would be reacting to *goblins* showing up unexpectedly.

Generally, who's acting and who's reacting is something the GM decides and keeps in mind so encounters have variety. If the PCs are *always* being chased around by NPCs – always the ones reacting to NPCs showing up in their lives – the game

may feel like a railroad. If the players are *always* the ones making the plans (acting on others), they might become discontented with a world that has no "life" outside of reacting to their characters.

*Circumstances*, in this usage, are environmental or social conditions with an impersonal effect (in the form of modifiers to rolls) on PCs and NPCs alike. This includes the setting (e.g., a rubble-strewn cavern, with penalties to DX) and the time (e.g., at night, with penalties to Vision rolls, or on a holiday, with celebrating crowds and penalties to movement). Circumstances can be independent of the acting and reacting parties, or integral to them. For example, when the circumstances include a temple of the mole-people (-2 to DX rolls because normal humans are stooping in the halls), some mole-guards are probably going to be reacting to uninvited delvers . . .

## RANDOM VS. "SET" ENCOUNTERS

A GM designing adventures (perhaps using *It's a Quest!* from *Pyramid* #3/104: *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*) might create some predetermined encounters to make a loose plot, and fill in the rest of the time with a table of random encounters. The random encounters make the adventure more dynamic and help the GM when the players decide to deviate from the straightest path. However, random encounters rarely offer any substantial reward, whether in treasure, character points, or plot-related information. If the GM decides that a random encounter should also further the adventure's main story, then they should make a separate list of clues or needed items. The GM then inserts something adventure-related into the random encounter when it comes up.

### Using the System With The Fantasy Trip

Anyone playing *The Fantasy Trip* can use most of the information in this article to randomly create encounters for that game. To keep the conversion simple, apply any modifiers listed in *Random Encounter Generator* (pp. 12-15) to actions that the GM decides, use the range modifiers specified in *The Fantasy Trip* rules, and ignore anything else that doesn't make sense. *The Fantasy Trip* GMs will need to create their own random monster encounter tables, but everyone can take advantage of the systemless pregenerated random encounters (pp. 20-21).

While you can have an adventure with a delving party going from random encounter to random encounter, it's more sustainable and it builds up the campaign world if the GM adds *some* structure to the game.

## HEX-CRAWLING

Hex-crawling is a popular style of play in roleplaying games, focusing on unlinked adventures/encounters instead of set pieces (or at least favoring random encounters). A particularly ambitious GM might even populate an entire map

### Rolling Dice

Most tables here call for simple rolls: 1d or 2d. However, some ask for multiple results (e.g., "Roll 1d, 1d"). In the latter case, rather than adding dice together, roll one die at a time for each comma-delineated range. For example, "2, 4-5" means a roll of 2 on the first die, and then a roll of 4 or 5 on the second die.

with multiple full-length adventures, none of which depends on experiencing another adventure first! A hex-crawl is essentially a "sandbox" campaign, where the GM provides several possible adventures/encounters ahead of time and places them on a map, often one the protagonists have in-game. The PCs may then explore the area in whatever way they wish. Sandbox play is sometimes called "open world" or "free roam" in video games. (For a more in-depth information on sandbox-style campaigns, see p. 18 of *Pyramid* #3/104.)

Hex-crawling can be especially fun if the players are both cooperative and driven, with the understanding that the GM may not have pregenerated encounters for *everything* they want to do. The longer the campaign progresses, the more work the GM can put into the local area and the more places a PC group can explore. Further, if the delvers stay roughly in the same area, the growing details and complexity encourage a richer roleplaying experience.

The tables in this article are perfect for populating areas with multiple encounter seeds without working the GM to burnout, trying to plan for every eventuality. They're even more helpful for improv GMs, accustomed to flying by the seat of their pants!

# RANDOM ENCOUNTER GENERATOR

Random encounters have been part of tabletop roleplaying games (and many video games!) since the very beginning. The problem with random encounters is that you need a random encounter table – something you can roll on and let the dice decide what happens. No such tables are included with the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* – GMs are expected to make their own, according to their individual campaign desires. (A blank record sheet for keeping track of wandering monsters and random traps is on p. 111 of *Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*.) Although this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it can lead to extra prep time for GMs, which can lead to a delayed start of the campaign or a frazzled GM. The following tables are meant to cut down on the time needed to prepare an area for hex-crawls (above), augment an already-created adventure, or just help fill time when needed.

The GM still needs to fill in details appropriate to the adventure. The table entries are meant as jumping-off points, but they provide the GM with inspiration and help keep the game moving when their players take an unexpected turn or as a way to fill out an adventure.

To determine how often an encounter occurs, see *Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*, p. 85.

*The stories that sell aren't about following maps to promised prizes. People crave twists – the thrill of the unexpected. Paying for such a tale is like betting on dice.*

– Jag Fairchild, Bard

## TYPE

Roll 1d, 1d on this table to determine *what* the PCs encounter.

Roll	Type	Example
1-2, 1-2	Settlement	A small, hidden village in a forested area.
1-2, 3-4	Stronghold/Castle	A well-defended keep on a nation's borderlands.
1-2, 5-6	Ruins/Remains	The remains of a building, monster, village, etc.
3-4, 1-2	Monster* (alone or in a group)	A dragon out hunting.
3-4, 3-4	Obstacle	An impassible river with a damaged rope bridge.
3-4, 5-6	Person (alone or in a group)	A villager on their way to a city to sell a bumper crop.
5-6, 1-2	Object/Vehicle/Mount	A wagon without its owner.
5-6, 3-4	Adventurers	A party of experienced delvers.
5-6, 5-6	Special! Reroll twice and combine logically. Ignore further rolls of this type.	A hidden village for retired gnome adventurers: "Gnome Country for Old Folks."

\* See pp. 15-19 for a series of tables to determine what type of monster.

## INITIAL REACTION

Use this table if a creature or person is present; if not, skip to the next one. The GM may decide to use a reaction roll with *no* modifiers instead of this table; see *Exploits*, p. 12. Otherwise, roll 1d to determine the initial intentions of what is encountered.

Roll	Reaction	Possible Effect	Example
1	Helpful	The encountered wants to help the PCs in some way.	A villager offering a quicker and safer path to a destination.
2	Wary	The encountered may be willing to help the PCs. Make a reaction roll based on what the delvers offer; see <i>Exploits</i> , p. 12.	A fellow adventurer who may agree to help the PCs for money or rewards.
3-4	Neutral	The encountered is ambivalent toward the PCs.	A merchant selling healing potions.
5	Unfriendly	The encountered wants to be left alone or dislikes the PCs.	A wizard in his tower.
6	Hostile!	The encountered initiates combat!	A hungry pack of dire wolves.

## MOTIVATION

Use this table to give a reason for a creature or person to be where they are. Fine-tune the motivation with the result from *Initial Reaction*. For places or things, use the ideas as inspiration for describing the mood permeating the encounter. Roll 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d.

Roll	Motivation	The Encountered Being . . .
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Ill Intent/Malevolent	Bears ill will toward the PCs. This could stem from coercion, blackmail, or being misinformed as much as malice, greed, or just plain bloodthirsty. If the result from <i>Initial Reaction</i> (above) is anything except “hostile,” then the ill will is not insurmountable. (Thus, the party may be able to talk their way out of violence, or run away without being pursued.)
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Curiosity	Is curious about the PCs and may talk, bargain, or negotiate with them. Combined with a negative result from <i>Initial Reaction</i> (above), this could indicate an NPC who wants to learn something from, spy on, or otherwise gather information on the PCs for dubious purposes.
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Impressed/Envious	Is impressed by or envious of the PCs, or something they’ve done in the past.
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Stalking/Hunting	Is stalking or hunting the PCs for some reason. A helpful stalker might be an overeager fan who wants to share in the glory even though it might kill him; a hostile stalker wants the PCs dead or hurt for some reason.
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Being Attacked	Is being attacked, hassled, or otherwise harassed by a <i>third</i> party. Roll the other group separately; getting this result again might mean a comedy of errors!
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Deranged	Is crazy. Maybe the encountered likes how the PCs smell or perhaps the sky showered invisible skulls on them until they attacked the PCs.
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Teaching	Wants to teach the PCs something. Hostile teachers are possible. Pai Mei from <i>Kill Bill</i> is a prime example, and malicious faeries “educating” mortals are a classic fantasy trope.
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	On a Mission/Task/Errand	Has been tasked with a specific mission or job of vital importance (at least to that person). An adventurer might be on a rescue mission, or a villager may be traveling to sell their wares. This can even apply to settlements (a village in charge of keeping a bridge open and defended) or objects (a sacred rock that prevents undead from entering the area, but can be despoiled by an evil cleric or similar).
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Bored/Jaded	Is bored and following the PCs because they live exciting lives.
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Weird	Has Weirdness Magnet ( <i>Adventurers</i> , p. 67) and has attracted the PCs into its orbit (a mutual effect, if one of the PCs also has Weirdness Magnet). Maybe they’re a pointy-hat-wearing wizard with a funny name and the inability to properly cast a fireball without bat guano, or a delver who has been cursed to “live in interesting times” – and what’s more interesting than adventurers? Regardless of intent, their very presence is strange. Play it up!
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Lost	Is lost and trying to make their way back to familiar surroundings. Helpful ones are trying to assist others with their own problems along the way! A classic trope for a knight-errant.
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Criminal	Is a criminal or has criminal intentions. This roll can indicate bandits, those on the run from the law (innocent or not), etc.

## Motivation (Continued)

Roll	Motivation	The Encountered Being . . .
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Merchant	Is trying to sell, buy, or trade goods, services, or other commodities. This can also represent a merchant caravan hauling goods from one place to another.
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Looking for a Fight	Is looking for a fight, a duel, or some other form of combat between themselves and the PCs. This does not have to be to the death! Little John challenged Robin Hood to a fight, but never wanted to kill the rogue.
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Revenge/Vendetta	Is looking for revenge or otherwise has a vendetta. This may be directed toward the PCs or (more likely) someone or something else.
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Multiple Reasons!	Reroll and combine the results; ignore further rolls of this result.

## DISTANCE

Roll 1d on the following table to determine the distance at which the PCs and the encountered start from one another. Each band of range also has an associated range penalty for **Vision** rolls to spot the other or attack them with a ranged weapon or ability. Assume that **Vision** rolls receive +10 for being “in plain sight” unless the encountered or the PCs are

*specifically* using **Stealth** and moving at a reduced rate for doing so.

This only sets the *starting* distance! Either side may close the distance in the usual ways. The table simply allows the GM to give relevant combat information to the players to start the encounter and quells arguments over whether they can be peppered from a distance by the elven scout.

Roll	Range Band	Starting Range	Range Penalty	Description
1	Close	0-5 yards	0 to -2	Can touch encountered, at least some of the time.
2	Short	6-20 yards	-3 to -6	Can talk to encountered, or toss things at them.
3-4	Medium	21-100 yards	-7 to -10	Can only shout at encountered.*
5	Long	101-500 yards	-11 to -14	Encountered is out of earshot.*
6	Extreme	501+ yards	-15 or worse	Encountered is difficult or impossible to see or attack.*

\* Need ranged weapons to attack the encountered.

## RANDOM MANA AND SANCTITY

With the right spells, wizards, clerics, and bards can be disproportionately effective during encounters. This can be reigned in by their need for mana (for wizards and bards) and sanctity (for clerics). Therefore, the mana or sanctity level of an area can turn the tide of any encounter. Roll 3d for each.

Roll	Level	Effect
3-5	Very High	Every second, automatically recover all personal FP spent. Failures are treated as critical failures; critical failures nullify abilities until penance is paid (for sanctity) or cause spectacular disasters (for mana).
6-7	High	Those with Recover Energy have enhanced recovery rates ( <i>Spells</i> , pp. 5, 7).
8-13	Normal	No additional effect.
14-15	Low	Spells are cast at -5 for all purposes, and Recover Energy does not function.
16-18	No	Spells cannot be used, and ongoing spells end immediately.

## TERRAIN

If the local terrain isn't predetermined, roll 1d, 1d and consult this table.

Roll	Terrain	Roll	Terrain
1, 1-3	Arctic/Tundra	4, 1-3	Swampland
1, 4-6	Desert	4, 4-6	Underground
2, 1-3	Island/Beach	5, 1-3	Jungle
2, 4-6	Plains	5, 4-6	Watery
3, 1-3	Mountains	6, 1-3	Urban
3, 4-6	Woodlands	6, 4-6	Special*

\* Reroll for base terrain (rerolling *this* result if it comes up again), and then proceed to the *Special Terrain Feature Table*, below.

### Special Terrain Feature Table

Roll 1d, 1d, 1d. If the encounter type was “Ruins/Remains” or “Stronghold/Castle” and you roll the same feature here, then the place is much larger than the average such structure.

Roll	Additional Feature
1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Ruins
1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Wizard Tower/Keep/Academy
1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Temple/Sacred Grove
1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Portal/Gate to Another Dimension
4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Stronghold/Castle
4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Fantastic <i>Natural</i> Location (e.g., volcano)
4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Location of Supernatural Significance*
4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Graveyard/Tomb/Burial Place

\* Roll for *Random Mana and Sanctity*, above.

## WEATHER CONDITIONS

Not all combats, much less all meetings, take place in perfectly ideal weather. Roll 3d on this table to determine the current weather and any associated penalties.

Roll	Weather	Effect
3-5	Perfect	The wind is at the travelers' back or in their sails, and the terrain's usual misery abates – say, a dry day in jungle terrain, or a warm, snowstorm-free one in arctic. Add 10% to travel speed. All Survival and Tracking rolls that day are at +1. Skill rolls for <i>aimed</i> ranged attacks get +1.
6-7	Near Perfect	As for Perfect, but a little less so. Add 5% to travel speed and give +1 to either Survival <i>or</i> Tracking rolls. No effect on ranged attacks.
8-11	Passable	As bad or as fair as usual for the terrain. No effect on attacks or travel speed or skills.
12-13	Bad	Rain or snow in most terrain, extra rain in jungle, light snowstorm in arctic, sandstorms in desert, etc. Subtract 50% from travel speed. Survival and Tracking rolls that day are at -1.
14-15	Very Bad	As for Bad, but much worse. Subtract 75% from travel speed. Ranged attacks are at -1, while aimed ranged attacks are at -2.
16-18	Dire	As for Very Bad, but something or someone hates the party. Subtract 75% from travel speed. Survival and Tracking rolls that day are at -2. Ranged attacks are at -2, while aimed ranged attacks are at -3.

## TIME

Delvers don't necessarily get to choose the times of their engagements. If the GM has not decided when an encounter occurs, roll 3d on the following table. Don't forget to add Vision penalties according to the current level of light (see *Exploits*, p. 9 and back cover, and *Spells*, p. 45).

Roll	Time	Effect
3-5	Dawn	The hours right before, during, or right after sunrise. This gives a -1 on all <b>Vision</b> , melee, and ranged attack rolls.
6-7	Morning	Any time after the sun has fully risen, but before it has reached its zenith. This has no effect on rolls.
8-11	Afternoon	Any time after the sun has reached its zenith, but before it has set. This has no effect on rolls.
12-13	Evening/Dusk	The hours right before, during, or right after sunset. This gives a -1 on all <b>Vision</b> , melee, and ranged attack rolls.
14-15	Night	Any time after the sun has fully set, but before midnight. This gives at <i>least</i> -3 on all <b>Vision</b> , melee, and ranged attack rolls.
16-18	Early Hours	Any time after midnight, but before dawn. This gives at <i>least</i> -5 on all <b>Vision</b> , melee, and ranged attack rolls.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There is no set format for describing encounters. Once the major details are determined, the GM combines them into a description of the event. Write the description on an index card, keep it in a word-processing document, or whatever will make it easy to pull out the right extra encounter at the right time. As encounters are used, mark them in some way, adding any notes as to what happened so that the encounter can be better integrated in the future. If the GM wants to select designed encounters randomly, roll 1d and then count from

the top (of the stack or page) until the result is reached. Skip any previously used events. See pp. 20-21 for a table of pre-designed encounters.

*Example:* The encountered being is a very bored large acid dragon. Given that he lives in a leech-infested swamp, he doesn't get many visitors. He offers to tell the PCs the location of a fabulous treasure just inside the heart of his swampy home, if they agree to split it with him.

# RANDOM MONSTER ENCOUNTER TABLES

Use the following tables for random wilderness encounters. These tables have multiple entries for many of the monsters – the same critter can be found in lots of places! See *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters* for creature statistics.

Typically, only one creature is encountered, but some entries have alternate suggestions. The GM should adjust the number and balance the encounter using the guidelines on *Exploits*, pp. 85-86. Monsters will take advantage of any special features of their location, if possible.

## Arctic/Tundra Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1, 1-3	Acid Spider	
1, 4-6	Large Cold Dragon	
2, 1-3	Medium Cold Dragon	
2, 4-6	Small Cold Dragon	
3, 1-3	Earth Elemental	
3, 4-6	Frost Snake	
4, 1-3	Giant Spider	[1]
4, 4-6	Mold	[2]
5, 1-3	Fungus	[3]
5, 4-6	Ice Weasel	
6, 1-3	Ice Wyrn	
6, 4-6	White Pudding	

### Notes

[1] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[2] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

### Monsters.

[3] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of *Monsters*.

## Humanoid Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d for the type of humanoid encountered. For everyone except trolls and vampires, multiply the number of active, combat-capable delvers by two to determine how many creatures are present. For vampires and trolls, the number of them appearing is instead equal to *half* the number of delvers.

Roll	Result	Notes
1, 1-3	Troll	
1, 4-6	Goblin Shaman	[1]
2, 1-3	Goblin Warrior	
2, 4-6	Hobgoblin Warrior	
3, 1-3	Orc Warrior	
3, 4-6	Orc Spellcaster	[1]
4, 1-3	Orc Leader	[2]
4, 4-6	Orc War Party	[3]
5, 1-3	Werewolf	
5, 4-6	Vampire	
6, 1-3	Wildman	
6, 4-6	Throttlar	

### Notes

[1] Each individual is accompanied by at least 1d warriors of the same type.

[2] Each individual is accompanied by 1d-1 (minimum 1) shamans or spellcasters, each with 1d warriors; all members of the party are of the same type.

[3] One orc leader, 1d orc spellcasters, 1d-2 (minimum 1) orc engineers, and 3d orc warriors.

*Deserts good! No rain or nasty wet swamps. Miao Miao approve!*

– Miao Miao, Swashbuckler

## Desert Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Lizard Man	
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Air Elemental	
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Horde Pygmy	
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Obsidian Jaguar	
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Giant Ape	
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Humanoid	[1]
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Fire Elemental	
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Giant Viper	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Karkadann Bull and 1d Karkadann	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Minotaur	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Giant Rat	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Dinoman Hunting Party	[2]
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Flesh-Eating Ape	
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Bear	
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Triger	
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Karkadann	
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Giant Spider	[3]
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Dire Wolf Pack	[4]
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Dinoman	
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Foul Bat	
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Dire Wolf	
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Mold	[5]
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Ogre	
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Foul Bat Swarm	[6]
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Fungus	[7]
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Swarm	[8]
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Brown Pudding	
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Dinoman War Party	[9]
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Skeleton	
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Acid Spider	
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Lion	
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Earth Elemental	

### Notes

[1] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (above) to determine the type.

[2] 3d dinomen and dinoman hero.

[3] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[4] 2d wolves and an alpha wolf. Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[5] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

### Monsters.

[6] 3d bats and a leader.

[7] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of

### Monsters.

[8] Use the *Swarms Random Encounter Table* (p. 17) to determine the type.

[9] 3d dinomen, one dinoman leader, and 1d/2 dinoman heroes.



## Extradimensional Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result
1, 1-2	Peshkali
1, 3-4	Toxifier
1, 5-6	as-Sharak (Vayu)
2, 1-2	as-Sharak (Prithvi)
2, 3-4	Sword Spirit
2, 5-6	Void Brute
3, 1-2	Demon from Between the Stars
3, 3-4	Doomchild
3, 5-6	as-Sharak (Agni)
4, 1-2	Eye of Death
4, 3-4	Demon from Between the Stars Spellcaster
4, 5-6	Mindwarper
5, 1-2	Hellhound
5, 3-4	Watcher at the Edge of Time
5, 5-6	Demon of Old
6, 1-2	as-Sharak (Akasha)
6, 3-4	Sphere of Madness
6, 5-6	as-Sharak (Jala)

## Island/Beach or Water Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1	Aquatic Giant Snake	[1]
2	Air Elemental	
3	as-Sharak (Jala)	
4	Electric Jelly	
5	Leaping Leech	
6	Water Elemental	

### Notes

[1] Roll 1d for type: 1-3, constrictor; 4-5, viper.

## Jungle Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1, 1-2	Humanoid	[1]
1, 3-4	Mold	[2]
1, 5-6	Giant Ape	
2, 1-2	Obsidian Jaguar	
2, 3-4	Leaping Leech	
2, 5-6	Acid Spider	
3, 1-2	Giant Spider	[3]
3, 3-4	Karkadann Bull and 1d Karkadann	
3, 5-6	Giant Ape (Silverback)	
4, 1-2	Lion	
4, 3-4	Green Pudding	
4, 5-6	Giant Snake	[4]
5, 1-2	Horde Pygmy	
5, 3-4	Karkadann	
5, 5-6	Tiger	

Roll	Result	Notes
6, 1-2	Fungus	[5]
6, 3-4	Slugbeast	
6, 5-6	Ciuaclá	

### Notes

[1] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (p. 16) to determine the type.

[2] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

### Monsters.

[3] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[4] Roll 1d for type: 1-3, constrictor; 4-5, viper.

[5] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of

### Monsters.

## Swarms Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Roll	Result
1, 1-3	Army Ants	4, 1-3	Fire Ants
1, 4-6	Bats	4, 4-6	Hornets or Wasps
2, 1-3	Bees	5, 1-3	Mosquitoes
2, 4-6	Birds	5, 4-6	Piranha
3, 1-6	Centipedes, Scorpions, or Spiders	6, 1-3	Rats
		6, 4-6	Small Snakes

## Mountains Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1, 1-2	Small Fire Dragon	
1, 3-4	Medium Fire Dragon	
1, 5-6	Lion	
2, 1-2	Slorn	
2, 3-4	Karkadann	
2, 5-6	Gryphon	
3, 1-2	Humanoid	[1]
3, 3-4	Giant Spider	[2]
3, 5-6	Mold	[3]
4, 1-2	Fungus	[4]
4, 3-4	Gargoyle	
4, 5-6	Earth Elemental	
5, 1-2	Air Elemental	
5, 3-4	Cave Bear	
5, 5-6	as-Sharak (Vayu)	
6, 1-2	as-Sharak (Prithvi)	
6, 3-4	Acid Spider	
6, 5-6	Large Fire Dragon	

### Notes

[1] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (p. 16) to determine the type.

[2] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[3] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

### Monsters.

[4] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of

### Monsters.

## Plains Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Zombie	
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Werewolf	
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Lion Pride	[1]
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Draug	
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Triger	
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Giant Spider	[2]
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Foul Bat	
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Crushroom	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Bugbear	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Mold	[3]
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Horde Zombie	
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Ogre	
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Giant Rat	
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Fungus	[4]
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Bear	
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Minotaur	
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Lion	
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Sword Spirit	
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Karkadann	
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Dire Wolf	
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Karkadann Bull and 1d Karkadann	
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Giant Viper	
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Dire Wolf Pack	[5]
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Humanoid	[6]
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Gryphon	
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Flesh-Eating Ape	
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Swarm	[7]
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Air Elemental	
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Giant Rat	
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	Foul Bat Swarm	[8]
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	Acid Spider	
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Earth Elemental	

### Notes

[1] 2d lions.

[2] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[3] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

### Monsters.

[4] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of

### Monsters.

[5] 2d wolves and an alpha dire wolf.

[6] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (p. 16) to determine the type.

[7] Use the *Swarms Random Encounter Table* (p. 17) to determine the type.

[8] 3d bats and a leader.

*Ah, open plains: Long sightlines  
and no cover. May the best archer  
win!*

– *Llandor the Gray, Scout*

*The deadliest dangers of  
swampland are disease and poison.  
Most of the monsters there are either  
venomous or plague-carriers. Many  
are both. Foraging is a terrible idea,  
and do not drink the water.*

– *Sister Miriam Suntemple,  
Cleric*

## Swampland Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1-2, 1-2, 1-2	Spore Cloud	[1]
1-2, 1-2, 3-4	Medium Acid Dragon	
1-2, 1-2, 5-6	Toxifier	
1-2, 3-4, 1-2	Giant Spider	[2]
1-2, 3-4, 3-4	Leaping Leech	
1-2, 3-4, 5-6	Giant Viper	
1-2, 5-6, 1-2	Lizard Man	
1-2, 5-6, 3-4	Mold	[3]
1-2, 5-6, 5-6	Giant Constrictor	
3-4, 1-2, 1-2	Air Elemental	
3-4, 1-2, 3-4	Dinoman Hunting Party	[4]
3-4, 1-2, 5-6	Small Acid Dragon	
3-4, 3-4, 1-2	Obsidian Jaguar	
3-4, 3-4, 3-4	Fungus	[5]
3-4, 3-4, 5-6	Electric Jelly	
3-4, 5-6, 1-2	Medium Poison Dragon	
3-4, 5-6, 3-4	Gryphon	
3-4, 5-6, 5-6	Horde Pygmy	
5-6, 1-2, 1-2	Crushroom	
5-6, 1-2, 3-4	Small Poison Dragon	
5-6, 1-2, 5-6	Dinoman	
5-6, 3-4, 1-2	Large Poison Dragon	
5-6, 3-4, 3-4	Large Acid Dragon	
5-6, 3-4, 5-6	Green Pudding	
5-6, 5-6, 1-2	Dinoman War Party	[6]
5-6, 5-6, 3-4	Acid Spider	
5-6, 5-6, 5-6	Humanoid	[7]

### Notes

[1] Roll for the type of spore cloud using the table on p. 53 of *Monsters*.

[2] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[3] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

### Monsters.

[4] 3d dinomen and dinoman hero.

[5] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of

### Monsters.

[6] 3d dinomen, one dinoman leader, and 1d/2 dinoman heroes.

[7] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (p. 16) to determine the type.

## Underground Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1, 1-2, 1-2	Gargoyle	
1, 1-2, 3-4	Mindwarper	
1, 1-2, 5-6	Dinoman War Party	[1]
1, 3-4, 1-2	Eye of Death	
1, 3-4, 3-4	Gladiator Ape	
1, 3-4, 5-6	Jelly	
1, 5-6, 1-2	Toxifier	
1, 5-6, 3-4	Skeleton	
1, 5-6, 5-6	Humanoid	[2]
2, 1-2, 1-2	Erupting Slime	
2, 1-2, 3-4	Corpse Golem	
2, 1-2, 5-6	Horrid Skull	
2, 3-4, 1-2	Bronze Spider	
2, 3-4, 3-4	Stone Golem	
2, 3-4, 5-6	Horde Zombie	
2, 5-6, 1-2	Lich	
2, 5-6, 3-4	Ogre	
2, 5-6, 5-6	Demon from Between the Stars Spellcaster	
3, 1-2, 1-2	Specter	
3, 1-2, 3-4	Fungus	[3]
3, 1-2, 5-6	as-Sharak (Prithvi)	
3, 3-4, 1-2	Medium Dragon	[4]
3, 3-4, 3-4	Minotaur	
3, 3-4, 5-6	Peshkali	
3, 5-6, 1-2	as-Sharak (Jala)	
3, 5-6, 3-4	Undead Slime	
3, 5-6, 5-6	Flaming Skull	
4, 1-2, 1-2	Bugbear	
4, 1-2, 3-4	as-Sharak (Agni)	
4, 1-2, 5-6	Siege Beast	
4, 3-4, 1-2	Lizard Man	
4, 3-4, 3-4	Ooze	
4, 3-4, 5-6	Draug	
4, 5-6, 1-2	Pudding	[5]
4, 5-6, 3-4	Mold	[6]
4, 5-6, 5-6	Crushroom	
5, 1-2, 1-2	Golem-Armor Swordsman	
5, 1-2, 3-4	Doomchild	
5, 1-2, 5-6	Spirit Guardian	
5, 3-4, 1-2	Dinoman Hunting Party	[7]
5, 3-4, 3-4	Slime	
5, 3-4, 5-6	Large Dragon	[4]
5, 5-6, 1-2	as-Sharak (Vayu)	
5, 5-6, 3-4	Giant Spider	[8]
5, 5-6, 5-6	Zombie	
6, 1-2, 1-2	Sword Spirit	
6, 1-2, 3-4	Dinoman	
6, 1-2, 5-6	Swarm	[9]
6, 3-4, 1-2	Demon of Old	
6, 3-4, 3-4	Slorn	
6, 3-4, 5-6	Rock Mite	
6, 5-6, 1-2	as-Sharak (Akasha)	
6, 5-6, 3-4	Small Dragon	[4]
6, 5-6, 5-6	Demon from Between the Stars	

## Notes

[1] 3d dinomen, one dinoman leader, and 1d/2 dinoman heroes.

[2] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (p. 16) to determine the type.

[3] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of *Monsters*.

[4] Roll 1d to determine the type: 1, acid; 2-3, fire; 4-5, poison; 6, cold.

[5] Roll 1d to determine the type: 1, brown; 2, gray; 3, green; 4, black; 5, red; 6, white.

[6] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of *Monsters*.

[7] 3d dinomen and dinoman hero.

[8] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[9] Use the *Swarms Random Encounter Table* (p. 17) to determine the type.

## Woodlands Random Encounter Table

Roll 1d, 1d, 1d.

Roll	Result	Notes
1, 1-3, 1-3	Dire Wolf Pack	[1]
1, 1-3, 4-6	Flesh-Eating Ape	
1, 4-6, 1-3	Foul Bat Swarm	[2]
1, 4-6, 4-6	Ogre	
2, 1-3, 1-3	Cave Bear	
2, 1-3, 4-6	Werewolf	
2, 4-6, 1-3	Karkadann	
2, 4-6, 4-6	Lion	
3, 1-3, 1-3	Bear	
3, 1-3, 4-6	Giant Spider	[3]
3, 4-6, 1-3	Karkadann Bull and 1d Karkadann	
3, 4-6, 4-6	Air Elemental	
4, 1-3, 1-3	Acid Spider	
4, 1-3, 4-6	Mold	[4]
4, 4-6, 1-3	Giant Ape	
4, 4-6, 4-6	Humanoid	[5]
5, 1-3, 1-3	Sword Spirit	
5, 1-3, 4-6	Giant Rat	
5, 4-6, 1-3	Foul Bat	
5, 4-6, 4-6	Dire Wolf	
6, 1-3, 1-3	Fungus	[6]
6, 1-3, 4-6	Triger	
6, 4-6, 1-3	Swarm	[7]
6, 4-6, 4-6	Gryphon	

## Notes

[1] 2d wolves and an alpha wolf.

[2] 3d bats and a leader.

[3] Roll 1d for size: 1-2, big; 3-4, huge; and 5-6, humongous.

[4] Roll for the type of mold using the table on p. 43 of

*Monsters*.

[5] Use the *Humanoid Random Encounter Table* (p. 16) to determine the type.

[6] Roll for the type of fungus using the table on p. 29 of

*Monsters*.

[7] Use the *Swarms Random Encounter Table* (p. 17) to determine the type.

# PREGENERATED RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters are randomly generated to allow quick use during gameplay, and can be mostly reproduced from the above random tables, plus a bit of GM creativity. Roll 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d, 1d.

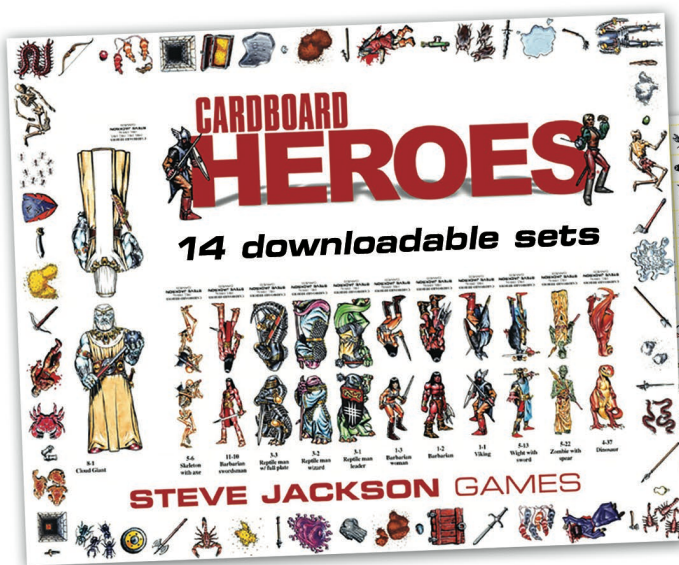
<i>Roll</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	A simple merchant, headed the other way by cart, selling dried rations and camping gear. Can provide details of the way ahead, but only if the PCs don't haggle too much.
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	A cairn by the side of the road, raised ages ago to worship a forgotten god. Its stones seem to catch the light just before dawn, and retain it just after sunset. It feels peaceful, yet aloof.
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	A copse of tall, shady trees by the road, offering shelter from sun and rain. The breeze is somehow magnified there, and time seems to stand still. Something always smells off, though.
1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	A cracked and crumbling bridge over a raging river. It doesn't look like it can support more than one average-sized person at a time. There are trees on the banks that could conceal many dangers.
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	A dizzying pass through the mountains, with areas where one has to shuffle along a narrow ledge over a sheer cliff face. No one can hide or fight here, and if another party approaches, someone has to back up.
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	An arid plain, cracked like a giant mosaic. Just walking throws up clouds of dust, making it hard to see the way ahead. Normal-sized enemies are easily concealed.
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	A hateful band of religious fanatics who accuse the PCs of violating their law. They'll gladly die in combat, and attack with fists, rocks, walking sticks, and eating knives. They also have robes, icons of the faith, and tiny holy books.
1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	A large village (4d buildings), squatting on both sides of the road. The people immediately mob passersby with their wares – fighting with one another over “their customers.” Interfering makes things worse.
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	A long, narrow valley between two rocky mountains, the way occasionally interrupted by large rocks that slid down some time ago. Rock falls still rumble down, causing a massive danger to any below. Sometimes they have help.
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	A manor house, held by a noble who controls 1d small villages. His knights are well-meaning, but ordered to bring all travelers for questioning, as they may be agents of their lord's rival.
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	A medium-sized, independent farming village (3d buildings). The villagers are a little too friendly, worship an unfamiliar nature goddess, and really want the PCs to stay for the harvest.
1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	A much nicer stretch of road, with stone edges and carefully tended grass. It goes on for some distance, but no other buildings can be seen nearby, nor any workers who might pluck out weeds.
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	A swampy area, boiling with rot and overgrowth. The air is humid and full of strange sounds, the vegetation and noise conceal many things, and the ground is damp and uncertain.
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	A ruined temple, on a hill overlooking the road. It was raised to one of the old gods, and abandoned when he fell from favor. None tarry there for long.
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	A small caravan of farmers (1d carts), headed to market. They're suspicious of everyone – even those who offer to buy their wares – but open up if warned of road hazards.
1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	A small cluster of crude, one-room shacks, a little off the path. They're squatted in by beggars who may have useful travel information in exchange for food and coin.
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	A small town (6d buildings) dealing with swarms of large, stinging insects of unknown provenance. The townspeople suspect foul sorcery, but the creatures are just wasps that hibernate for centuries and wake up really angry.
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	A small, unclear path through a bubbling tar pit. The heat is oppressive, and the fumes make it hard to breathe. No one can hide here, unless they're <i>in</i> the tar!
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	A tiny village (2d buildings) of hospitable farmers and/or shepherds, dependent on a nearby noble's protection. Their protector's soldiers don't like armed strangers, and may start a fight if encountered.
4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	A tiny village (2d buildings) that is completely deserted. Its people vanished just days ago (live flocks roam around and healthy crops are in the fields, but food spoils on tables or is charred in pots on cold fires), but there are no signs of violence.
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	A tunnel through a hill, dug ages ago by unknown hands. There are no side chambers, but it does have a considerable bend – concealing the other side. People could hide in ambush there.

Roll	Encounter
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	An abandoned hut, some distance from the road. It has nothing inside, but the roof is sturdy enough to take a downpour. Sleeping there causes odd dreams of times gone past.
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	An angry mob who just <i>know</i> the PCs are the ones who stole their sheep. Will try to surprise and subdue them rather than kill. If defeated, they prove embarrassed and sorry, and will plead for help, but can't offer much.
4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	Brutal press-gangers, rounding up fit-looking travelers to go fight in the wars. Will fight until death, as fleeing their duty will see them executed. They have decent money, armor, and weapons.
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 1-3	Foul and uncaring slavers, searching for new acquisitions. Will flee if pressed too hard, and have a cage on wheels with 2d victims packed into it like preserved fish.
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3, 4-6	Greedy and envious bullies who think the PCs are laden with treasure. Like any bully, they give up if defeated. They have a sizable stash from more-successful ambushes.
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 1-3	Hungry and desperate soldiers returning from war, who agreed with each other to attack the next party they encountered. They'll fight to the death rather than starve another day, and have nothing.
4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6, 4-6	Sadistic thugs who want to hurt others, and lay clever ambushes. Might fight to the death, depending on how masochistic they are. They don't have much, as they spend "winnings" quickly.
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 1-3	Slimy tax collectors, eager to shake the PCs down for road tolls. Will run if opposed, but when next encountered will have (1d per two PCs) enforcers along and a score to settle. All carry small, locked strongboxes full of coin.
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3, 4-6	The traveling emporium of Plinko the Magnificent, smalltime wizard and seller of various esoteric and minor magical items. The PCs are going his way, and he'd really love an escort. Steep discounts available for doing so (though his prices are already high to begin with!).
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 1-3	A small memorial made of sticks and twine, and a freshly dug grave. If the adventurers go a robbin', the grave is empty.
4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6, 4-6	A well-groomed dog sitting by the side of the path. It stands and barks when the party approaches and walks off, looking back frequently as if to encourage them to follow.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice knows it's both a trap, a threat, and a quest – now he knows there's going to be an encounter in there somewhere. What will he know next? From Portsmouth, Virginia, he's spinning words and whimsy into gold. Of course, if he's not writing about *GURPS*, he's blogging about it. Visit his site "Ravens N' Pennies" ([www.ravenspennies.com](http://www.ravenspennies.com)) for more *GURPS* goodies. He's the

co-author of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic* and *Dungeon Fantasy Traps*. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group (the Headhunters); Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix"; Kyle "Zuljita" Norton; Christopher "Ternas" Dorr; Matt Riggsby; and J. Edward Tremlett, for being most excellent sounding boards.



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# EIDETIC MEMORY

## ISTVAN'S HOLE

BY DAVID L. PULVER

This is a dungeon adventure for both the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game (DF)* and *The Fantasy Trip (TFT)*. It is mainly intended for beginning characters, but has a few powerful monsters to challenge the unwary.

Due to differences in the relative value of “dollars” between *Dungeon Fantasy* and *The Fantasy Trip*, treasure is listed in terms of coins (“20 silvers”) rather than dollar values. Because this is set in a mine, delvers could walk away with a lot of loot, so the GM might want to have a plan for siphoning off most of the gains.

### BACKGROUND

The Howling Hills are a dry, dusty borderland populated by close-mouthed hill folk, trolls, gargoyles, wolves, and brigands. A few hardy villages also dot the land. Along the old Giant’s Highway is one such hamlet, the former estate of Vylok, now known as Istvan’s Hole.

The Vylok family may have started out as brigands, but one rose in the service of a local baron and was granted arms and a title. A former mercenary soldier, Istvan Vylok was known for his skill at arms and his greed. He exercised both traits when a tenant farmer dug a well on Lightning Tree Hill, on the edge of Istvan’s land, and found opals. Word of the strike attracted other prospectors who began sinking shafts into the hillside, but Istvan smelled profit and sent his men to take possession of the opal mine. Soon, all the independent prospectors were either working for him or hanged.

Over the next several years, Istvan grew rich as the sound of pickaxes echoed on and under Lightning Tree Hill through the hot, dusty days. The hillside was soon honeycombed with mineshafts and tunnels. As the upper levels of the mine began to play out, Istvan imported experts to drive shafts deeper and he bought powerful solvents and blasting compounds from alchemists. By these arts, he opened up the lower galleries, natural caves in whose walls were embedded wondrous things: opalized fossils of

ancient plants and sea-creatures, glittering like jewels! Istvan called in expert jewelers and goldsmiths to work with fine chisels to carefully remove the find.

But the new deep galleries had not just opened up a path to new treasures. Over the next several days, miners vanished one by one. Rumors began spreading that something evil had been awakened in the lower galleries, that they were cursed. The miners grew nervous. Then eight miners and Istvan’s best goldsmith vanished at the same time from one of the lower galleries. They’d been working to extract a valuable opalized fossil. Now all that was left were discarded tools and ominous bloodstains. Panic spread like wildfire, and miners working in the shafts dropped their equipment and fled.

Fearing a threat to his livelihood, Istvan stirred himself. He assembled his retinue of a dozen men-at-arms and crossbowmen, augmented by pickaxe-equipped miners and torchbearers, and descended into the lowest levels of the mine. No one knows what happened next, but for several minutes, battle cries and shouts were heard from deep below. Then terrible screams drifted up from the mineshafts, followed by a more ominous silence. One miner staggered out of the mine, dying and covered in blood, face hideously mangled. Before he died he said four words: “The hungry shadow lives . . .”

Lord Istvan never returned, but he was survived by his wife Isobel, their infant twins, and a few loyal servants. However, Istvan’s name was feared, not loved. Rabble-

rousing villagers and miners cried that the family was accursed, and that the “hungry shadow” (whatever it was) was an instrument of divine vengeance for the landowner’s greed – and one that might escape the mine and attack the village if any vestiges of the Vylok family remained. A fear-crazed mob (mostly former miners) barricaded the

mineshafts, then plundered Istvan’s manor. One story says the mob found Lady Isobel, stripped her of jewels, and threw her down the mineshaft as a sacrifice to appease the monsters below! Others say the victim was a maid or nurse wearing her clothes, and Isobel herself fled the village in disguise with her infant children, barely escaping with their lives.

*What are we waiting for? The  
gems in that mine need rescuing!*

– Ælin Rock-Talker, Druid

After thoroughly ransacking the manor and drinking away the contents of Istvan's wine cellar, the miners burned the place and the majority scattered into the hills with their loot.

It's now 17 years since the mine was abandoned. Istvan's Hole, no longer prosperous, is a shadow of its old self. The hamlet's remaining commerce is centered around an inn and the few farms that remain. The old manor, Opal House, has been picked clean by villagers, who have even removed its stones for their own buildings.

The opal mine's shafts are still feared and avoided. Some of the more daring villagers prospect for leftover opals in the mine's tailings or around the edge of the hills, but the mine itself is shunned. Some superstitious villagers leave offerings on the hillside "to the spirits of the Hungry Shadow" in the hopes that they will stay put and never assail the village. What spirit or horror that may be, no one knows – but there is talk that rats, bears, trolls, or other creatures who care nothing for such legends may now nest in the caves and tunnels. Every so often, a party of adventurers dares these threats in the hopes of picking up the opals left behind by the miners' panicked flight. The local inn is said to have been purchased by one such adventurer. Some return with rough semiprecious stones, and others precious opals. Others delve deeper still . . . and fail to return at all.

## THE ROAD TO ISTVAN'S HOLE

The Giant's Road is an old highway paved with great slabs of stone; it's said that giants built it long ago. Maybe that's true, maybe not. Certainly these hills were troll and giant country once . . . But if you go east down the Giant's Road until it crosses Wolf's Ford, you'll see low hills from the mist, and before the first of those hills, drifting smoke from chimneys (and, at night) a few lights. That's the tiny hamlet of Istvan's Hole.

Since the opal mine closed, the hamlet has shrunk to little more than a roadside inn, a windmill, and a cluster of farms that huddle together near the hillside, scratching a living out of the soil and grazing goats on the hill. On a low mound of earth stands the foundations of a burned-out ruin: Opal House, the former lord's small mansion. Behind it looms Lightning Tree Hill. A gravel track, Opal Road, runs from the main road up the hill to the abandoned mines.

### Silvercross Inn

The inn is a sturdy stone building with a wooden stable attached. Despite the ramshackle nature of the hamlet, it appears surprisingly prosperous. Its sign is black with a silver tau cross. A big bearskin hangs in the common room. Above the bar is a mirror decorated with semiprecious opals; it resembles a glittering eye staring at visitors.

The Silvercross is a layover for traders, messengers, and travelers using the two roads. Its patrons include the occasional adventurer willing to dare the labyrinth under the mines. Sometimes a large group of pilgrims or merchants (or bandits or horse thieves) traveling down the Giant's Road rent all of the inn's rooms. More typically, it's all but deserted, especially early in the day, providing a bed to the occasional messenger, tinker, mercenary, or

peddler journeying through the borderlands. In afternoons and evenings, at least one to three local farmers or crafters are usually drinking here.

### The Owner and the Employees

The innkeeper and bartender is Baltza Blackwind, a slim-but-wiry man in his 50s, with white hair and a short beard. He limps with the help of a black walnut walking stick whose tip is a shimmering crocodile head carved from black opal. He is well-dressed, with semiprecious stones as buttons on his vest and impressive hat. He is proud of his inn and eager to welcome travelers (provided they are a courteous). When he was a decade younger, he says, he used to be an adventurer; he especially welcomes those who are. He likes to tell stories of his exploits. He says he's a local man, but his voice is educated, though with a hill-country accent. He makes an excellent blackberry wine.

In the kitchen is Shari, his wife and the inn's cook, a thin woman in her 40s with pale skin and long black hair. She wears a dress with full skirts and lots of lace. She has opal earrings and silver jewelry, and a thin, secret smile she rarely shows. She says little, but makes an excellent mushroom soup, her specialty. When not cooking, she can be seen in the corner of the kitchen, whittling wooden dolls with a razor-sharp obsidian knife and humming to herself, or knitting clothes for them. She has no children.

Two others work at Silvercross. Valgrim is a muscular bouncer with a scarred face (a former brigand, now reformed; he used to hunt gargoyles for their gallbladders, which some alchemists use in potions). Riza, a new hire, is a dour young ranger who sometimes helps as bartender, but is mainly the inn's stablehand. Riza sometimes can be found practicing archery on the village green and sometimes training what passes for the local militia. (The previous stable boy was apparently a thief who stole a mule and ran away.)

## LAST HEIR OF VYLOK?

If the wife or children of Istvan Vylok survived, they might wish to return to the village to raid the mines and to seek vengeance against the "hungry shadow" or the mob's leaders. Such an heir might seek to hire adventurers as assistance. Or maybe one of the protagonists is a distant relative (or the wife, son, or daughter, if they're the right age) of Lord Istvan?

Alternatively, perhaps the Vylok heirs are indeed returning, but the bad blood of Lord Istvan continues to tell. The heirs have used the intervening decades to raise a nasty force of mercenaries and intend to re-impose their rule on the village by force and then reopen the mine. They don't know exactly who was in the mob that burned the mansion, and don't really care – any rebel peasants who stand in their way will be punished! Perhaps the locals might want to hire the party to protect them against the greedy heirs.

It's also possible that a con artist may simply *claim* to be the heir to Istvan . . .

## Baltza's Tale

Not only is Baltza the innkeeper of the Silvercross Inn, he's also a former adventurer (as he boasts) and wizard (something he keeps a bit quiet).

Several years ago, Baltza was the sole survivor of an expedition into the mine. He returned with enough treasure to buy the village inn. He sometimes still ventures into the dungeon (he says), and will tell his tale to anyone who buys enough drinks or rents a room:

*There were four of us: myself, the halfling Mira Lightfingers, Durindor the Dwarf, and Sigmund Strongblade, plus a few villagers we hired as torchbearers. We were a tough bunch who'd raided many a labyrinth. We'd heard the tales of the old alchemist's mine and the black death that lived within it. Took the road up the hill. Found ruined outbuildings. Killed a giant bear nesting near the entrance and followed the old mine deeper into the hill. Lots of empty corridors and abandoned mine tools. Long galleries and caves, with clouds of vampire bats. Then we crossed a broken bridge over an underground pool, and found a chamber lined with what we thought were statues, and past it some piles of slag – and the glitter of opals!*

*Well, we were sifting through the slag for more when Durindor shouted that the statues were coming to life. They were gargoyles, winged monsters with faces like demons and skin like stone. I can still hear Mira scream as a big gargoyle carried her off and then plopped her down a mineshaft! Never even heard her hit bottom.*

*We fought hard, but in the end, Sigmund and I were the only survivors and my leg wasn't in great shape. On the way out, Sigmund fell in a pit filled with deadly slime. Eventually, I made it out, dragging my bum leg. I had a fortune in gems, but I'd lost more: my best friends. So I married a local girl and founded this tavern, so every day I could drink a toast to the memories of my comrades, lost in the dark of the mine.*

Nice story. A bit polished. Also a lie . . .

Here's what *really* happened. Baltza is indeed a retired adventurer, but he's also a Judas goat, in league with one of the factions located within the dungeon . . . and a man who sold out his own comrades.

The initial part of the story is true. His group did indeed encounter some gargoyles, bears, and slimes, but what finished them off was an encounter with the same "hungry shadows" who had destroyed Istvan and his miners years before: a band of people who seemed to be made of living darkness, and the horrific shadow-serpent they worshiped. Baltza, a scholar, heard the shadow folk's leader calling orders to his

followers, and recognized their language from an old book he'd once read: the darkness-folk were Shadowights, a rare subterranean race. Recalling some Shadowspeech from his studies, Baltza managed to call a truce with the Shadowights and make a deal. His injured comrades thought he was negotiating to trade some of the opals they'd found for safe passage. Instead, he was selling them out. When his fellow adventurers dropped their guard, he helped the Shadowights seize them, taking them as sacrifices for their chthonic deity.

Baltza later learned the Shadowights were guardians of an ancient temple to a monster-god of darkness, which the mining operation had disturbed several years before. But now the Shadowights craved certain things they could not find in their mines. In the past, they had sometimes ventured out of the mines in moonless nights to steal from humans, taking coveted items, babes, and animals, but it was always risky, and they feared to be caught away from their caverns, despising even the dim light of moon or stars.

Baltza returned to the village with some treasure from the mines. He used it to buy the old village inn from its ailing owner and recondition it. He has also continued to traffic with the Shadowights in secret, trading them iron tools and weapons . . . and human beings. The latter are solitary travelers staying at his inn. In exchange, the Shadowights give him opals or rare fungi that grow only in the darkness. To aid this exchange, they have dug a tunnel under the inn that connects to the dungeons (see *T. Secret Tunnel*, p. 29).

See p. 31 for Baltza's statistics.

## VISITING THE OPAL MINES

Whether or not they're deceived by Baltza the innkeeper, adventurers may decide to visit the old opal mines. They are easy to find – they're only a few minutes walk uphill from the hamlet. A dusty gravel road winds its way up the slopes of the butte, a brooding presence that overlooks the tiny village. The hillside is rocky, strewn with boulders, scrub grass, and bushes.

Three-quarters of the way up the hill, the road terminates at a 15'-wide entrance cut into the hillside and shored up by wood braces (see *A. Mine Entrance*, p. 25). Although the road stops here, a narrower path ascends to the top of the hill.

The top of the hill is mostly barren, but there is a dead lightning-struck walnut tree, a few piles of rock, and a stone shed. (See *C. Chamber With Mineshaft*, p. 25.) The shed's heavy ironbound doors show signs of having been chained shut. The rusty chains have been smashed open and now hang loosely by the doors, which are unlocked.

A careful search of the hilltop turns up two low mounds of slag and tailings (just dirt and rock removed to dig the shafts). The farthest of these mounds is adjacent to a heavy boulder (one ton), which if moved or bypassed reveals a second mineshaft (see *D. Chamber With Blocked Mineshaft*, p. 25). The other, concealed by bushes in the shadow of the tree, is next to a narrow ventilation shaft (see *B. Chimney Cave*, p. 25).

Spending a lot of time on the hill may result in encounters from local wildlife. Every four hours in the open, there's a 1 in 6 chance of meeting a wolf, bear, or the like.

### BALTZA'S TREACHERY

Baltza seems to be friendly and talkative, but is actually greedy and two-faced. He prefers treachery to open combat. He fakes a limp. Baltza has installed secret trapdoors and spy holes in one of his inn's rooms, which he will rent to travelers. His larder contains several doses of sleeping potion made from the hallucinogenic mushrooms that his Shadowight friends grow underground (**TFT**: 4/ST; **DF**: HT-3 or fall into a 2d hour hallucination-filled sleep), which he will instruct his wife to mix with mushroom soup or blackberry wine.



## Map of the Mines

The mine extends across hundreds of yards, but most of this is narrow horizontal tunnels. See p. 32 for the map.

*Location Hexes:* Each of these is an irregular cave, accessed via a tunnel. Unless noted, they're about 12 yards wide and 20 yards long. (In *TFT*, assume they're about the size of a standard *Melee* map, or three megahexes by five megahexes).

*Tunnel Lines:* The lines on the map indicate rough-hewn tunnels, about four yards (one megahex) wide, with the indicated length. Each hex not designated as a location is 16 yards wide (four megahexes in *TFT* scale).

## Modifying the Locations

The first time the party enters the labyrinth, use the locations as listed below. If the party leaves foes alive but plans to return for later expeditions, the GM should adjust fixed encounters appropriately. For instance, the Shadowights (pp. 29-30) may shore up defenses, set traps, or place guards. Less-organized monsters or wild beasts might move into the lairs of monsters the protagonists have killed. Any dungeon denizens may eat or scavenge bodies or treasures that were left.

A group moving quickly may not encounter random monsters, but parties that stop to rest, treat wounds, make detailed maps, etc. may run into nuisance creatures such as rats or slimes at the GM's discretion. (Assume a 1 in 6 chance every 10 minutes of a pack of rats, bats, oozing green slime, or other minor nuisance coming into the area). A group making significant noise next to a monster's lair or guard post might, at the GM's option, trigger a response from whomever lives nearby.

## Mining Tools

Adventurers need special tools to extract precious gems and clear debris. Fortunately, the miners left a lot of equipment during their hasty retreat. Pickaxes are required to break up rock, while small hammers and chisels are needed for prying out gems. Shovels aren't essential, but digging takes four times as long without one.

### A. Mine Entrance

This is the main entrance to the opal mine, as described on p. 24. It was reopened by adventurers in recent years. It is a worked stone chamber which runs about 45', sloping gently into the hillside. Tunnels lead away into the dark.

In the mine are two piles of loose slag and tailings (each about 3' high and 6' wide). One has an abandoned and damaged pickaxe sticking out of it.

On one wall near the entrance is an elegant inscription, in the local human language and dated (the date is 20 years ago):

*I, Istvan Vyllok, in my 30th year as Lord Vyllok, open and dedicate this mine.*

*I praise the just Gods who granted my noble house the earth's radiant treasures.*

Below that is more text, scratched on the wall by rough chisels or blades in four different crude scripts:

*We toil underground, the hammers we pound, the opals are found, we toil under . . .*

*You worked us like dogs; you died like one.*

*The rats and shadows are eating your guts now, you fat greedy bastard.*

*Where are your opals now, Istvan?*

Behind one of the piles, on all fours so it isn't visible, a sleepy but fierce bear is enjoying a meal. It has some viscera (from an unwary giant rat) that it is gnawing on. It doesn't want to be disturbed. It might rise up from behind the rocks while adventurers are reading the inscriptions . . .

*Statistics:* See *Bear* in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, pp. 16-17, or *Bears* in *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth*.

### B. Chimney Cave

This cave is ordinary enough, except that fresh air wafts down from a hole in the ceiling. Someone in the mine during the day can see a narrow circle of daylight on the floor. The chimney is a rough-hewn ventilation shaft that extends vertically 30' up to the top of the hill, opening beside the old dead tree. The shaft is a tight fit, just under a yard wide, with no stair or handholds, but someone could rappel down it with a rope.

The shaft is sometimes used by bats. Roll 1d: on a 5-6, a flock of bats is present in the cave. The bats are more a nuisance than harmful.

### C. Chamber With Mineshaft

This is an actual chamber rather than a cave, hewed out of the rock by Istvan's miners. The room has been picked clean by adventurers, but they left some markings on the walls:

*Sigmund Spellsword was here!*

*Not any more.*

There are also some unreadable claw marks or scratches.

There's a hole in the ceiling leading to a shaft 9' wide and 30' long that connects to the stone shed on the hilltop. If the shed's door (see p. 24) is open, a faint bit of daylight will shine through the shaft; otherwise, it's dark here. There are no stairs, but handholds are cut into the rock (every 3' or so).

In the rear of the cave are a discarded hammer (2.5 lbs.) and chisel (0.75 lb.).

### D. Chamber With Blocked Mineshaft

This chamber has partially finished walls and a rough rocky floor. There's a heap of dirt, shattered rock debris, and chunks of earth and sod in the middle of the room (the result of boulders being pushed down it when the shaft was sealed).

In one corner is a wheelbarrow filled with pulverized rock. Taking five minutes to search the rock tailings (and a roll - *TFT*: 3/IQ; *DF*: Perception) unearths a white opal worth three silvers.

Looking up reveals an 8'-wide shaft in the ceiling. This leads to the sealed mine entrance on the hillside; it's blocked by a one-ton boulder (unless delvers have removed it). If the boulder is moved, daylight shines through the shaft.

### E. Rat Cave

A small cave holds a giant rats' nest. The nest is filled with bones, rat droppings, and rats the size of poodles! There are five giant rats here.

*Statistics:* See *Giant Rat* in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, pp. 30-31. In *TFT*, each rat has ST 8, DX 10, IQ 6, MA 10 and bite for 1d-2. If bitten, make a 3/ST roll or contract a disease; lose 1 ST/day until you make a 4/ST save, receive treatment by a Physicker, or a healing potion cures you.

## F. Spider Gallery

A yard-wide spider web crosses this cave horizontally. The web hangs 3' off the ground. A huge spider, 4' across, lurks in the webbing here.

In the center of the cave, hanging from the ceiling, are two webbing-masses. It's impossible to see what's in them without cutting them open. One contains a dead giant rat, desiccated (its insides having been sucked out). The other contains a suffocated gargoyle. The gargoyle wears a ring with an opal worth 25 silvers.

A second spider also lives here (the first one's mate), but it is out hunting.

*Statistics:* See *Huge Spider* in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, p. 32 or *Giant Spider* in *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth*.

## G. Damp Gallery

The central third of this cave dips down and is flooded with a stagnant pond covered with greenish scum (harmless). A rickety bridge made of wooden planks crosses the chamber.

The pond is 4' deep. Nyznix – a frightened, wet, and hungry young Shadowight scout – hides from trolls in the water. She had been pursued by a pair of trolls who ambushed her and killed her fellow scout, Vilza. She is breathing through her blowgun tube. She lost the trolls but thinks (correctly) that they are still in the vicinity. Should she hear noises of fighting suggesting the trolls might have been killed, she will try to slip away.

Nyznix does not speak the human tongue, so communication may be difficult (unless the delvers have “persuaded” Baltza the Innkeeper to come with them). Nyznix may give her name and speak a few other words (“Sgrig?” which means “trolls,” and “Vilza,” the name of her dead friend). If she is captured or chased, she will try to lure unfriendly surface dwellers into an ambush (she's aware of the location most of the other creatures living here). She then makes her way back to the Shadowight guard post (p. 27) and warns them of the intrusion.

*Statistics:* Use *Shadowights*, pp. 29-30, for Nyznix.

## H. Troll Den

This cave has six piles of rubble, each about 5' high and 3' wide, scattered about it, giving several places to hide. A mated pair of big, ugly green-skinned brutes are picking through this cave, hunting for prey. They're from the nearby hills and wandered into the mine entrance several weeks ago. They've been eating the denizens, including the Shadowights and spiders. They're now searching for a Shadowight who escaped their ambush (Nyznix; see *G. Damp Gallery*, above, for more about her).

One of the trolls has a crude sack. Inside is a 3'-long spider leg (from a prior kill), what appears to be the solid-black silhouette of a human leg and kidney, a mushroom gas bomb, and an obsidian knife (see *Shadowights*, pp. 29-30, for details

on the equipment). The body parts are quite solid (and drip with black, bloodlike ichor). They belonged to Nyznix's friend Vilza, saved to eat later (“yum, sweetmeats”). The shadowy body parts may puzzle the delvers if they've never seen or heard about a Shadowight, since the remains are, visually speaking, solid *darkness*.

*Statistics:* See the standard *Troll* in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, pp. 57-58. See *Troll* in *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth*; these trolls both have ST 30, DX 10, IQ 11, MA 8, 2d damage with its claws. Each regenerates 1 hit per turn (except fire).



## I. Pillared Pool

The two entrances to this large, high-ceilinged cave are the only parts that are dry. The rest of the cave is entirely flooded by murky water. The flooded area is three yards deep and nine yards across, easily deep enough to drown in should someone fall in while wearing armor or be unable to swim. However, it can be bridged: five stone pillars visibly rise out of the pool, two yards apart and each a yard in diameter. (In *TFT*, there's one in the center of each megahex running through the chamber.) The pillars are slippery with pond scum, and are a few inches above the water. A bridge once stood on the pillars, but it has long since rotted away. A delver can leap from pillar to pillar with regular movement, but a successful roll (*TFT*: 3/DX, *DF*: DX or Jumping) is needed each time to avoid slipping off a stone and falling into the water.

A corner of the upper cave has a rocky niche 12' off the ground. Crouched in the niche and blending with the stone is a gargoyle (roll to spot – *TFT*: 4/IQ; *DF*: Perception-2) armed with an obsidian-tipped spear and a couple of rocks it can drop. The gargoyle is waiting in ambush for any prey, hoping to swoop down while it is unbalanced on the crossing-stones.

At the bottom of the pool are miscellaneous bones of several dead rats, a human skeleton, and a rusty shortsword with an opal in its pommel (worth 18 silvers).

*Statistics:* See *Gargoyle* in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, pp. 29-30. See *Gargoyle* in *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth*; they have ST 16, DX 11, IQ 8, talents Pole Weapons and Thrown Weapons, and speak their own language, the local human language, and that of the Shadowights.

## J. Lower Mineshaft

The tunnel here is scorched and pitted, as if by an explosion. A gaping, blasted hole in the rock is a mineshaft that descends 30' down to *Q. Opal Gallery* (p. 29). Handholds are cut into the rock every few feet. A 25'-long rope is attached to an iron piton driven into the rock, and extends down the shaft.

## K. Guard Post

The cave has a large pile of slag in the center (forming a mound about three yards across and a few yards high). Two humanoid shapes composed of living darkness (wearing skimpy black silk robes and wielding obsidian weapons) are hiding in the shadows here. They're alert for human adventurers or troublesome trolls and gargoyles.

They are Shadowight guards (Zika and Pezwib). Pezwib has a brass bell (0.25 lb., 4 silvers) in her hand. In the event of major trouble, Zika holds off intruders while the other rings the bell to give warning, and then both will retreat. If the opposing party is small or injured, the Shadowights try to stalk and backstab intruders, then report back. If the party captured the Shadowight scout, they may try to rescue her, or if she seems friendly with the delvers, negotiate, which likely means sign language until the Shadowights bring in the priest (who can speak with humans) or unless the adventurers have the innkeeper with them.

## L. Shadowight Quarters

The cave is the quarters of the Shadowight guards and scouts. Four shadowy shapes are chattering to each other while seated at a crude wooden table, beside a stone well. Plates of food and cups of water are on the table. A brass bell (bought from the innkeeper; 0.25 lb., 4 silvers) hangs from a chain attached by an iron spike to the ceiling. Over the well is a winch with a bucket. Beside the well are two spare buckets and a low table, which holds a basket of food and two drinking mugs. The basket holds a dozen edible mushrooms and a handful of juicy cave-grubs. On another table is a flask of local blackberry wine, a cauldron of mushroom soup (with a ladle), and a fresh apple pie (with a kitchen knife in it, ready to cut it). The drinking cups are human pottery of local manufacture (each 0.125 lb.). Adventurers may recognize the flavors as those of the local inn – clues that point to Baltza's trade.

In another area of the quarters are beds with thin sheets on them. Wooden chests holding spare clothes, sandals, and personal basics are at the foot of each bed.

The leader of this group of off-duty temple guards is Ghudvi. There is no treasure, but unless alerted, the guards are having breakfast (if not, the adventurers find four abandoned breakfasts on the larger table).

The well has a stone cover (20 lbs.). The shaft drops 15' and the bottom of the well has 5' of water. At the bottom of the well are three silver and seven copper coins.

## M. Collapsed Tunnel

The room is filled with rubble where a cave-in occurred during an old mining operation. Buried under a ton of rubble are two crushed human skeletons with broken miner's

picks and hammers. Combing through the debris (roll to search – **TFT**: 4/IQ; **DF**: Perception-4) for an hour may turn up an opal worth 36 silvers.

## N. Shadowight Cells and Mushroom Patch

This is a stone corridor lined with doors, three on one side, two on the other. The central tunnel has an earthy floor that smells rather ripe. Growing spaced along the tunnel are a few dozen foot-high fungi (14 edible mushrooms; six are hallucinogenic mushrooms with effects as per mushroom gas bomb – see p. 30).

Each doorway leads into a small cell, about four yards across. The cells are the meditation and sleeping quarters of the Shadowight acolytes, who often spend time praying in their rooms. Each cell has a simple bed, a thin sheet, a washbasin, an iron bucket, a small table or desk, a few personal items, and a small wooden chest (4 lbs.) with a spare robe, sandals, and personal basics. Assume two of the cells (1 and 5) are occupied by one or two Shadowights acolytes each; the rest of the company are guarding the temple or scouting.

*Cell 1:* A mirror of silver and polished obsidian hangs on the wall (2 lbs., 75 silvers). There's also a basket of small apples, a wooden plate with a chunk of bread and a small pot of blackberry jam, and a steel comb (0.1 lb.).

*Cell 2:* On the table is a 3"-long obsidian figurine shaped like a crocodile-headed serpent (0.1 lb., 23 silvers). If presented to the Apep, it might eat someone else first.

*Cell 3:* This is the chamber of the temple's priestess, the Mistress of the Hungry Dark. She may be here, or more likely, in the temple (see *O. Temple of the Hungry Dark*, below). On the bed is a fluffy silk pillow stuffed with gryphon feathers (1 lb., 10 silvers). In the chest is a small bottle containing a sweet-smelling purple liquid (a minor healing potion; 6 silvers); a spare black silk robe (of human manufacture) with a pocket holding a carved bone flute (1 lb., 40 silvers); and a black velvet blindfold (neg. weight, 1 silver). The flute is actually magical: if a dirge is played (requires a Musical Instrument skill roll in *Dungeon Fantasy*, or Bard talent in *The Fantasy Trip*) over a relatively fresh corpse (no more than three days dead), its ghost will answer one question; this costs energy (**TFT**: 3 ST; **DF**: 3 FP) and can only ever be done once per person.

*Cell 4:* In the chest, a wooden box contains chunks of candied ginger (0.25 lb.). Hanging from a hook on the wall is a trophy taken from a fallen human warrior (too heavy for the wight to lift): a broadsword of fine quality enchanted to do +1 damage.

*Cell 5:* On the table is a bowl of mushroom soup flavored with leeks, a fresh loaf of bread, and a blowpipe with three darts.

*Statistics:* See *Shadowights*, pp. 29-30.

## O. Temple of the Hungry Dark

A short flight of steps ascends to a dais. In front of it is a black stone block (3' high, 6' long, and 2' wide) – an altar. The stone altar-block has iron rings set in each corner. Thick chains and manacles dangle from them. Some of the rust on the chains is dry blood.

Coiled about the altar (not necessarily visible unless the delvers shine light in that direction) is a circular area of deeper darkness three yards across, which no light will penetrate. This is, in fact, a coiled monster that radiates its own magical shadow. In dim light, it appears as an impenetrable shadow; in total darkness, it is invisible! If illuminated, or when foes enter the room, it uncoils, the darkness rearing up like a pillar of living shadow, and then rushes forward – a dark wave a yard wide and several yards long.

The thing cloaked in darkness is in fact an Apep, an enormous serpent with a crocodile-like head. This particular tenacious terror was discovered in the stygian depths by the powerful grandmother of Burzarina, the present Mistress of the Hungry Dark and a Shadowight wizard-priest. In exchange for regular offerings of food, it does not kill the Shadowights and has even been enticed to help with particularly large incursions (such as the miners). The Shadowights consider the Apep to be a sacred beast, a living avatar of their dark god.

The Apep attacks anything that's not a Shadowight (unless it hasn't eaten in a long time). It particularly hates fire users but does not fear them; it will try to eat them first.

This Apep is long-lived. It is probably good for another century or so of darkling life, if not longer. Age has also made it cunning. It tends to use hit-and-run tactics. After killing a victim, it tries to retreat down an unlit corridor, only to later double back and strike again, perhaps while foes are healing wounds or busy with other tasks.

The temple and altar block are used by the Shadowight priest; sacrificial victims for the Apep are chained here. During the ritual, the priest makes non-fatal cuts (1-2 points injury) in the victim's body while chanting a litany dedicating their soul to the "hungry darkness." Other Shadowights solemnly watch. The Shadowights then retreat, and the smell of blood awakens the Apep shadow-serpent, who rises up from its corner to feast upon the victim.

If the Apep dies, its darkness dissolves, revealing the crocodile snake. Its scales are black and dark green, and its eyes and tongue are red. The Apep has little interest in treasure, but around its neck (invisible in the darkness) is a leather collar studded with a beautiful set of black opals (0.1 lb., 100 silvers).

A small alcove lies to one side of the altar, concealed by a black silk curtain. This is the Mistress of the Hungry Dark's antechamber; she's probably here unless the GM would rather have her sleeping in her room (cell 3) or by the altar conducting a ritual. Iron hooks on the wall hold an extra set of manacles, a key (fits any of the manacles), and a wooden box. The box contains a small, ornate obsidian knife (used in the rituals; 0.5 lb., 7 silvers) and four shadow candles (each 2 oz., 10 silvers). The candles appear to be of ordinary tallow, but do not burn with flame. Instead, they are "lit" by being rubbed with ash from a cold fire or by being doused with water taken from an underground well or stream. Once activated, the

shadow candle radiates a two-yard circle of darkness as it "burns" down for 10 minutes.

*Statistics:* See *Apep*, p. 29, and *Shadowights*, pp. 29-30.

## *P. Chasm of Bones*

This large cave has a stinking pile of crushed bones and droppings. It is where the Apep excretes the remains of creatures it has eaten. The Shadowight acolytes clean out the Apep's temple (above) every so often, tossing the gnawed bones and unwanted items from sacrificial victims into the pit below.

In the center is a deep pit (three yards across) that drops 30' down. Anyone entering the pit discovers another cavernous chamber. At the base are the broken bones of perhaps 20 people (mostly humans; some unarmored, others in armor), at least three gargoyles, and one mangled corpse in the remains of full plate (the late Sir Istvan). All are mostly skeletal and in poor shape, having been gnawed or eaten by the Apep and fed upon by passing dungeon scavengers and monsters.

These days, the Shadowights know enough to trade any captured human armor and weapons (mostly too heavy for them to use) to the innkeeper, but during their first battle for the mines, they just chucked any corpses and gear that was too heavy for them. As a result, there's some useful stuff.

- All of the clothing and most of the chainmail or leather is gone or torn up, but there's enough bits of armor to assemble a full suit of plate armor and four suits of mail (**TFT:** chainmail; **DF:** light mail).

- There's a scattering of broken weapons plus two bastard swords, a military hammer (**TFT:** great hammer; **DF:** fine warhammer), 21 pickaxes (each 8 lbs.), and eight shovels (each 6 lbs.).

- Carefully rooting around at the bottom also reveals a gold-studded billon belt buckle (0.1 lb., 10 silvers).

- Some additional searching turns up 12 copper coins, two gold coins, four silver coins, several links of rusted metal (bits of mail), and a gold ring (0.5 lb., 15 gold). The ring is shaped like a rabbit's head and gives the bearer an immediate health boost (**TFT:** 3d ST; **DF:** 3d HP) if they ever drop below zero in the relevant characteristic. It only works once per person, and melts into slag after seven uses; two have been expended.

There aren't any gems, because of the pit's denizens: two rock mites. These mineral-eating creatures look like headless stone pygmies with lumpy and egg-shaped torsos. The Shadowights imprisoned them down here to keep them from eating the opals, feeding them occasionally on low-grade stones. They swarm any visitors, hoping to find precious gems on their bodies to devour and quite likely eating the entire person in the process.

*Statistics:* See *Rock Mite*, p. 31.

*Warrior! Yeah, you! Kill that . . . thing. It's eating all the treasure!*

*– Hap Badapple, Thief*

## Q. Opal Gallery

Shining a light around this gallery reveals occasional glimmers of rainbow color scattered about the rock walls: precious opals!

This area was being actively worked by Istvan's miners at the time of the massacre, and several opals were in the process of being dug out when the Apep appeared and the miners fled or died. The Shadowights consider the gems sacred, but will mine a few loose stones to buy the pretty or tasty things they enjoy from the innkeeper.

The following opals are partly exposed in the surface of the rock matrix. All the better ones have been mined by others who have come through here.

- Six 1-carat opals worth four silvers each.
- Two 2-carat opals worth 10 silvers each.
- One 4-carat opal worth 28 silvers each.
- One 7-carat opal worth 67 silvers.
- One beautiful opalized fossil of an ancient shelled creature (e.g., an ammonite) worth 200 silvers.

It takes a minute to chip out each opal with a chisel. For the fossil, it takes a full hour and a successful roll to do so, without damaging it and halving its value. (To safely remove the fossil – **TFT**: 3/DX if you have Goldsmith talent, 4/DX if you don't; **DF**: DX-5 or DX-based Prospecting roll.)

A few days' worth of hard work mining may (or may not) uncover other precious opals.

## R. Narrow Tunnel

This tunnel is very narrow, only 3' wide and 3' high. Humans would need to crawl on all fours in single file. A successful roll (**TFT**: 3/IQ; **DF**: a Smell roll) will notice a slight smell of ozone that increases as the person moves down the shaft.

## S. Silver Slime Nest

This is a small cave (measuring four by eight yards). What appears to be a pillow-sized blob of liquid mercury is oozing about on a bed of tarnished silver objects. This is a silver slime, caressing a cache of items it has looted, mostly from corpses thrown into the connected pit (see *P. Chasm of Bones*, p. 28). It slowly corrodes such objects, initially tarnishing them, then eventually (over years) eating them away.

Its current pile contains a dagger (0.25 lb.), two arrowheads (each 0.1 lb.), electrum earrings (neg. weight, 17 silvers), a silver-backed mirror (1 lb., 4 silvers), a finger bone with a silver ring set with a black opal (0.2 lb., 50 silvers, or 33 for the opal alone), and seven silver coins. At the bottom of the pile is a blob of silver and other metals fused together; they might once have been several coins, a silver helm, and some jewelry. The mass weighs about 1 lb. and is worth 40 silvers if cleaned up.

## T. Secret Tunnel

This long, narrow tunnel (only one yard wide and two yards high) was excavated over many years. It runs through soft soil, from a secret door in the cellar of the Silvercross Inn to the guard post (p. 27), sloping gradually down.

# MONSTERS

These are generic statistics for creatures. The adventure entries describe any variations.

## Apep

This creature is a cloud of darkness one yard wide and six yards long. Inside the cloud (for those who can see through magical darkness) is an 18'-long serpent with the head of a crocodile and a very hungry disposition.

Apeps are intelligent magical beings associated with gods and spirits of elemental darkness. They try to get the home-ground advantage, attacking where there are darkness penalties.

### Dungeon Fantasy Apep

<b>ST:</b> 40	<b>HP:</b> 40	<b>Speed:</b> 5.50
<b>DX:</b> 11	<b>Will:</b> 12	<b>Move:</b> 3
<b>IQ:</b> 8	<b>Per:</b> 10	
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 12	<b>SM:</b> +2
<b>Dodge:</b> 11	<b>Parry:</b> N/A	<b>DR:</b> 4

**Bite (11):** 4d cutting. Reach C, 1.

**Traits:** Dark Vision; Enhanced Dodge 3; Invisibility (In darkness only; Always On); Mute; Nictitating Membrane 3; Vermiform.

**Skills:** Brawling-11; Stealth-12.

**Class:** Divine Servitor.

**Notes:** Regular spells cost triple due to its SM!

### TFT Apep

This Apep has ST 40, DX 11, IQ 8. Its scales stop 3 hits, and it bites for 2d damage. Its serpentine grace and darkness field make it -7 to be hit (-3 if the attacker can see in the dark). See *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth* for additional details.

## Shadowights

Shadowights are a subterranean race who appear as humans but composed of "solid shadow." They are not two-dimensional or insubstantial. They are vulnerable to light but can see perfectly in total darkness. They live in dark tunnels and labyrinths, and use human-like tools, clothing (usually black), and weapons. Some are mages or priests, preferring shadow and darkness magic. Some worship sinister underworld deities that demand sacrifices of surface dwellers.

Shadowights often fight those who enter their underground dwellings without permission and take what they regard as theirs (gems, fossils, mushrooms, etc.). They prefer ambush tactics that rely on the darkness, such as backstabbing or firing hails of arrows from darkness. They first target anyone bearing torches, lanterns, etc. or using light spells.

While certain Shadowights may live in large communities with significant technology, many are fairly primitive. These may value trade items acquired from human, enjoying manufactured goods (black silks are especially prized), cooked food (which their allergy to fire makes difficult), and wines.

Any Shadowight who has a mushroom gas bomb also carries one dose of the anti-toxin. The bombs are worth 30 silvers and weigh 1 lb.

## Dungeon Fantasy Shadowights

In a fight, Shadowights use their Chameleon ability, which grants them an effective Stealth skill of 17 even when moving. Against foes who can't ignore at least -5 in darkness penalties, they may attempt *Backstabbing* (*Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*, pp. 57-58) repeatedly (much as a Demon from *Between the Stars*; see *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, pp. 19-20). This requires a Move maneuver accompanied by a successful Stealth roll at -5 (effectively Stealth 12); the turn after, they can strike from behind at +4.

Some Shadowights are mage-acolytes, specializing in spells of darkness and shadow. Burzarina, Mistress of the Hungry Dark (their wizard-priest), has IQ 13, Magery 2, Herb Lore-15, Leadership-12, and Theology-11, and knows several spells, including Armor-14, Blackout-15, Blur-15, Continual Light-14 (this and Light are used to discipline other Shadowights!), Darkness-15, Light-14, and Missile Shield-14. She speaks her race's language, the local human language (learned from Baltza), and that of the gargoyles. She has a magical staff inlaid with obsidian and tipped by a carved black opal that stores six energy points and can also deliver 1d burning damage to anything it touches. She also has four doses of mushroom gas anti-toxin.

<b>ST:</b> 9	<b>HP:</b> 9	<b>Speed:</b> 5.50
<b>DX:</b> 11	<b>Will:</b> 10	<b>Move:</b> 5
<b>IQ:</b> 9	<b>Per:</b> 10	
<b>HT:</b> 10	<b>FP:</b> 9	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 8	<b>Parry:</b> 8	<b>DR:</b> 0

**Large, Magical Obsidian Knives (12):** 1d-1 impaling or 1d-2 cutting (but break as cheap weapons).

**Mushroom Gas Bomb (13):** Gas grenade. Acc 0, Range 22, shatters on striking anything with DR 3+, such as armor or the ground. The fumes affect a two-yard radius. Living beings who breathe them must roll HT-4 or sleep for 16-HT hours (minimum one hour) and suffer strange hallucinogenic fever dreams.

**Traits:** Chameleon 5 (Only in darkness); Dark Vision (see notes); Vulnerability (Burning x2); Weakness (Sunlight, 1d HP per minute).

**Skills:** Blowpipe-11; Knife-12; Stealth-12\*; Throwing-13.

**Class:** Mundane.

**Note:** This version of Dark Vision allows sight without penalty in total darkness, but imposes vision and combat penalties in any light: a penalty of (10 minus darkness penalty). Thus, in light conditions that would give a human a -2 darkness penalty, the Shadowight suffers -8, but in light that would give a human -8, the Shadowight takes a mere -2. The creature is at -10 in full daylight, but takes no penalty in total darkness.

\* In the dark, this becomes 17 if moving or 22 if motionless.

## TFT Shadowights

See *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth* for general statistics. The particular Shadowights are as follows.

*Acolytes, Guards, and Scouts:* ST 8, DX 10, IQ 9, MA 10. Armed with fine obsidian daggers (+1 damage, but break on a 17-18). Their talents include Blowgun, Climbing, Knife, Silent Movement, and Thrown Weapons.

*Burzarina, Mistress of the Hungry Dark:* She has ST 8, DX 11, IQ 13, MA 10. Her talents are Priest and Naturalist. She speaks her race's language, the local human language (learned from Baltza), and Gargoyle. She has the following spells: Staff II, Darkness, Image, Blur, Reverse Missiles, 3-hex Shadow, and Summon Apep. Her wizard's staff is inlaid with obsidian and tipped by a carved black opal and holds six points of mana. She carries a knife and mushroom gas bomb, but prefers to use her magic to support her followers.

## TFT Mushroom Gas Bombs

Thrown, and explodes as per *Gas Bombs* in *The Fantasy Trip: Advanced Melee*. The fumes affect one megahex. Living beings who breathe them must roll 4 dice against ST or sleep for 16-ST hours (minimum one hour) and suffer strange hallucinogenic fever dreams.

*This civilization is widely considered lost. Now they are found, but seem uninterested in exchanging lore. From what I have gleaned, a little flame should change their minds. If not, we shall confirm their extinction.*

– Zephyra, Wizard

## Silver Slime

Resembling a blob of liquid mercury, this electrical creature is unrelated to other slimes. It eats silver (first tarnishing it, then very slowly dissolving it). It uses lightning bolts to defend itself, and probably senses the electrical signals of living things.

## Dungeon Fantasy Silver Slime

Silver slime is hard to hurt. It divides penetrating damage received by 2 if impaling or by 5 if piercing, thanks to Homogeneous. It also resists electricity. It can extend a pseudopod to carry things, and will cart off small silver objects it finds to its lair.

<b>ST:</b> 15	<b>HP:</b> 30	<b>Speed:</b> 6.00
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 12	<b>Move:</b> 3
<b>IQ:</b> 6	<b>Per:</b> 12	
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 12	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> N/A	<b>DR:</b> 9

**Corrosion (14):** 1 point (affects silver only).

**Lightning Bolt (14):** 1d to 3d burning damage. Each die of damage costs the creature 1 FP.

**Traits:** 360° Vision; Detect (Nervous Systems; Silver); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Sleep; DR 10 vs. electricity only; High Pain Threshold; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Invertebrate; No Blood; No Eyes; No Head; No Neck; Pressure Support; Sealed; Slithers; Uncontrollable Appetite (6) (Silver); Unfazeable; Wild Animal.

**Skills:** Brawling-14; Innate Attack-14.

**Class:** Dire Animal.

### TFT Silver Slime

The slime has ST 15, DX 12, IQ 6, MA 6. It can throw lightning (as per the spell) and is affected only by fire, acid, and explosions. See *Slimes* in *The Fantasy Trip: In the Labyrinth* for additional details.



### Rock Mite

These mineral-eating creatures resemble headless stone pygmies with lumpy and egg-shaped torsos. A rock mite uses its hands to convey chunks of rock to a furnace-like "mouth" near the top front of its torso. This jagged maw is filled with a magma-like substance that melts down the mite's mineral-rich meals. They swarm anyone who disturbs them or is seen carrying gems.

### Dungeon Fantasy Rock Mites

See *Rock Mites* in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters*, p. 47.

### TFT Rock Mites

Rock mites have ST 15, DX 10, IQ 0 (they are mindless automatons), and MA 8. They attack only in HTH, doing 2d damage as they grab their foes (or their foe's limbs) and shove them into their volcanic maws! If a foe is immune to fire damage, they use their clawed hands to do 1d-2 damage instead. Their rocky skin stops 4 hits. They are brittle; any blunt weapons such as maces or clubs inflict twice as much damage. They are immune to fire damage (fire hexes, fireballs,

etc.) and gas. As they are mindless, they can't be controlled or influenced, and are unaffected by illusions. Rock mites may be related, vaguely, to gargoyles . . .

### Baltza the Innkeeper

His clothing and the gems on it are worth 100 silvers. His room is better furnished than the guest rooms, with a nice feather bed, table, desk, and two intricately carved chairs (12 lbs., 90 silvers). On the table is a shadow candle (see *O. Temple of the Hungry Dark*, pp. 27-28).

A bookcase holds a shelf of thick tomes, including scholarly works on natural philosophy and regional history (such as *Vortenghast's Natural History of the Known World and Subterranean and Chthonic Races*). The books are annotated by the innkeeper's own observations written in a spidery hand. Collectively, the volumes are worth 50 silvers. In *Dungeon Fantasy*, they also provide +2 to Hidden Lore (Lost Civilizations).

He has a strongbox with 30 silver coins, 100 copper coins, and a four-carat opal worth 56 silvers. However, most of the wealth from opal smuggling and trading with the Shadowights goes to improving his inn.

### Dungeon Fantasy Baltza

**ST** 11; **DX** 11; **IQ** 13; **HT** 12.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11; Will 12; Per 13; FP 12. Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 9. 5'6"; 175 lbs.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Charisma 1; Chummy.

**Skills:** Acting-13; Bartender-13; Brawling-12; Carousing-13; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-13; Herb Lore-11; Hidden Lore (Lost Civilizations)-15; Merchant-12; Naturalist-11; Poisons-12; Shortsword-13.

**Languages:** In addition to the local human language, he speaks accented Shadowspeech.

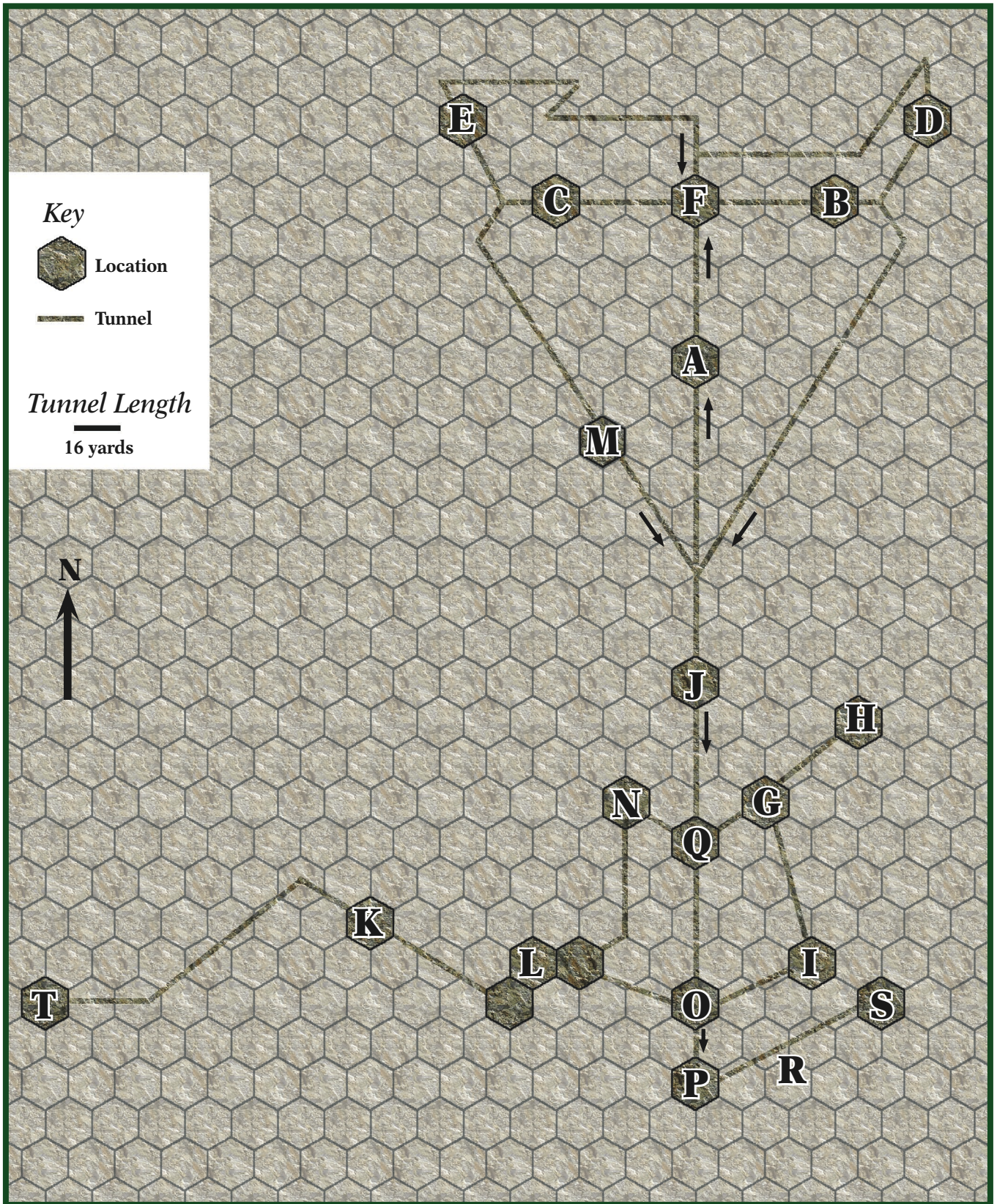
**Notes:** If forced to fight, he uses his walking stick as a light club; it does +1 damage.

### TFT Baltza

Baltza has ST 11, DX 10; IQ 13. He has these talents: Business Sense, Literacy, Mimic, Naturalist, Recognize Value, Scholar, Sword; he speaks the local human language and the Shadowight language. He can use his walking stick as a club, though he sometimes carries a shortsword.

## ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid science-fiction fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.



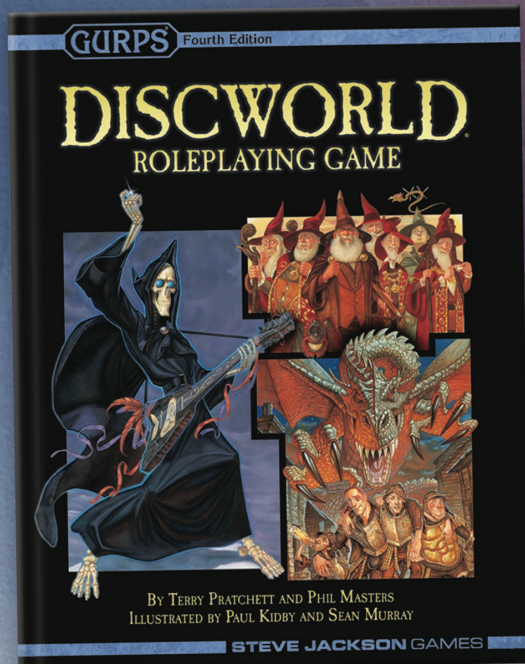
## MAP OF THE OPAL MINES

Scale: 1 non-location hex = 16 yards (four megahexes). 1 location hex = about 12 yards wide and 20 yards long (or one *Melee* map, which is three megahexes by five megahexes).

Small arrows indicate the direction of the slope.



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# THE 60-MINUTE HEROES

BY STEVEN MARSH

The tiny island “kingdom” of Mómonus has a problem. According to its seers, the volcano that shares their island is showing all the signs that it’s about to erupt in less than a day. However, through the use of a crystal ball, they have discovered that this volcano should have some kind of method for dealing with the crisis. That salvation – if it indeed exists – should be within a dungeon located near the volcano’s unstable base, less than a day’s journey away. Their scrying efforts did indicate that it should be fairly straightforward to stop the eruption, but it’s still a task best served by heroes (such as the PCs – how they get to Mómonus is at the GM’s discretion). Unfortunately, a freak tremor destroyed their crystal ball before their seers could learn more.

The people of Mómonus offer 100 gold pieces per hero if they resolve the problem.

## WHAT’S GOING ON

The volcano that Mómonus was built near was once used by the Mnoren to amass geothermal power. (To what ends, exactly, is unknowable unless the GM thinks of something clever . . . but the Mnoren are no longer around to ask.)

Unfortunately, the volcano has been gathering its energy for a long time . . . and its storage facilities are tapped out. The tremors the volcano is creating are due to the facilities’ capacity being exceeded. Left unresolved, the island will explode!

The good news is that redirecting that energy so it no longer endangers Mómonus will be fairly trivial (see *The Hook*, below, and 3. *The Control Room*, p. 35). The bad news is that

it will redirect the energy *inward* and *downward* . . . destroying the facility in the process.

## THE HOOK

This is a “save the kingdom” adventure with a difference. It appears to be a timed adventure, where the heroes have a day to save the kingdom. In fact, that’ll be easy. However, once they do that, they’ll have *one hour* to loot as much of the dungeon as they want before it explodes. They can choose to call it a day and head home, or they can push their luck. There’s nothing keeping the heroes in a soon-to-be deathtrap outside of their own curiosity and avarice.

## THE MAP

The map on p. 37 uses the standard hexes of *The Fantasy Trip* (1 hex equals 4 feet). However, it should work fine at most alternate scales, such as that of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* (1 hex equals 1 yard). The borders of the 7-hex circular megahexes are denoted with red lines. If you have *The Fantasy Trip* megahex tiles, you can construct different areas, disassembling previous areas for parts if the heroes move to new sections of the dungeon. Alternatively, you can draw out your own version of this map on large hex paper or gaming mats; *The Fantasy Trip* is designed to be quick and easy!

There is no labyrinth map provided. Instead, use the megahexes as shown if you need to calculate large-scale movement, effects, or time-keeping, ignoring the single-hex “fillers.”

## TREMORS

Every 10 minutes of dungeon time, roll 1 die to see what the effect of random tremors are.

Roll	Effect
------	--------

1	Minor tremor; if in battle, roll 3 dice vs. DX to hold onto your weapon.
2	Roll 2 dice vs. DX or else suffer 2 dice damage from falling rocks.
3-4	Roll 3 dice vs. DX or else suffer 3 dice damage from falling rocks.
5-6	No effect.

## THE DUNGEON

All areas of this dungeon are irregular in shape and dimension, but similar enough in appearance. Unless otherwise noted or the GM wants to mix things up, assume that ceiling height varies between 10’ and 20’.

There aren’t “rooms” per se in this dungeon, so much as assorted chambers that either were used as part of the infrastructure for energy accumulation, or are storage chambers repurposed to serve as dwelling places for the current residents.

Unless specified otherwise in the area description, doors are unremarkable and locked on a roll of 1-2 on one die (3 dice to unlock for a Thief or Master Thief, or 6 dice for anyone else).

## 1. The Entrance

Anyone rolling IQ on 4 dice (3 dice with Alertness) notices that this area has little to no traffic. Most of what astute observers find goes further in to the east, although the (scant) freshest tracks go west.

## 2. Scorpion Lair

This area contains three 1' scorpions. They're not immediately hostile, but any reaction roll is at -2.

Also, an *incoming* one-way passage comes in from area 10. Owing to the tilting mechanism that dumps adventurers from 10 here, that room is extremely difficult to find (IQ roll on 6 dice, but treat it as a trap), and impossible to open on this side. However, those who *do* spot it might have a valuable edge if the group decides to push their luck.

## 3. The Control Room

This area contains a large wall of levers and seeming mirrors along the eastern wall. It also houses a 4-hex dragon, whose stats are as normal except its IQ is only 13. (He skulked in here when he was a 1-hex hatchling; shortly after he arrived, a rock hit his head after a tremor, keeping him from realizing his intellectual potential. He's subsisted on random entities that have ventured into this cave, and eventually grew too large to leave.) Thinking (correctly) the heroes want to interfere with his devices, he will be hostile. He has 61 gold pieces in this room.

Once the heroes deal with the dragon, they can inspect the device. The mirrors clearly show a cross section of the island with the volcano, glowing red (it's going to blow!). Treat it as a "trap" to figure out what it does (3 dice) and how to "disarm" it (3 dice).

Assuming the heroes succeed, they will see the picture change; the danger of the volcano will be redirected *downward* . . . and the indicator that seemed to show the island would *blow up* is now showing that the *volcano* will, instead. An IQ roll on 3 dice reveals that the adventurers have one hour to leave the volcano. There is nothing keeping the heroes from doing exactly that.

However, deactivating the explosive force also opens the (previously hidden, sealed, and impossible to open) entrance to area 4. In that hallway is a glittering object. If the heroes inspect it, they see a large gold disc (worth 10 gold) with three bar-shaped indents. This "amulet" seems to glow with a magical energy and urges the bearer further into the dungeon (see 9. *Emergency Chamber*, below, for its use and what is needed to complete it).

## 4. Slime Time

This chamber slopes upward. The entirety of the outside chambers (areas 4-12) are all about 30' *above* areas 1-3. (This becomes important in 10. *Wight Chamber*, below.)

This room contains one green slime, lurking in wait.

## 5. The Chamber of Lies

An infusion of noxious gas has turned this entire chamber into a paranoid hallucinatory nightmare for those who need to breathe. *All* rolls to find traps (on 3 dice) always "succeed" (make up increasingly ludicrous traps); all rolls to *disarm*

traps *always fail*. (A critical success at finding traps reveals what's going on here, while a critical failure at disarming indicates the person trying hurts themselves.)

In a corner of this room is a healing potion.

## 6. Spider Cavern

This chamber has 22 spiders. Strewn throughout this area are 87 copper pieces and six gold pieces, but it's probably not worth the time to find them.

## 7. Rotating Room

This circular chamber was originally designed to hold objects of value. Its primary defenses have eroded in the intervening centuries, but one nuisance effect remains.

Another piece of the amulet – a gold bar that serves as a side of a triangle in the center of the round piece from area 3 – is in the middle of the room. The entrance to this area can rotate from the northeast to the west as needed . . . but it only rotates opposite to where the heroes are. (If the heroes try to enter this room from the west, the entryway is in the northeast, and vice versa.) Enterprising heroes might try to use mechanical means to wedge the device into position (treat it as a 5 dice trap to "disarm"), but the easiest way to get in the center is to split up the party and approach it from *both* sides, at which point it will give up and settle into one of its two positions.

## 8. Salamander Lair

This area contains a salamander (fire elemental, ST 15), unwittingly "summoned" when the countdown sequence began. (The energy differential brought it into being.) It will seek to kill the heroes.

## 9. Emergency Chamber

This vault can only be opened and entered with the completed four-part amulet (see areas 3, 7, 10, and 12; a picture is on p. 36). It contains what was supposed to be the failsafe for this facility: a ring that grants wishes. The ring has been used in the past, but it still has two wishes.

## 10. Wight Chamber

This area has three wights. They were once human guards for this chamber, but they died here long ago.

Clever heroes might be able to avoid them, but that requires stealth and possibly time the heroes don't have.

Although the wights *are* violent, at the GM's discretion they *may* be able to be reasoned with. The most likely tack to take is to note that whatever they were guarding is long gone. (Conversely, if the heroes reveal that they've unwittingly engaged a self-destruct mechanism, then the wights attack, enraged.)

A part of the amulet – another gold bar – is in the northwest section of this area, in a simple wooden box that also contains 37 gold.

As noted in 2. *Scorpion Lair* (above), a one-way "trap door" of sorts – a pivoting stone floor – leads to area 2. From this room, the door is 3 dice to detect it and 3 dice to discern what it does and (if the heroes have been mapping) where it goes. It *can* be forced to remain open from this side. (This may prove a valuable shortcut, if the heroes are trying to escape.)

## 11. Room of Pits

This area contains over a dozen covered spiked pits, as marked on the map (p. 37). They aren't difficult to deal with (3 dice to find, 3 dice to disarm, covers 1 hex, does 4 dice damage), but doing so exhaustively would run the heroes out of time. (It takes at least 120 lbs. to trigger the trap, so the goblins in area 12 haven't noticed them.)

## 12. Goblin Cave

This chamber contains eight goblins, who got trapped in the facility during one of the random periods that the chamber between 3 and 4 opened to release pressure. (They know their way around the pits to the north and reset them as needed.)

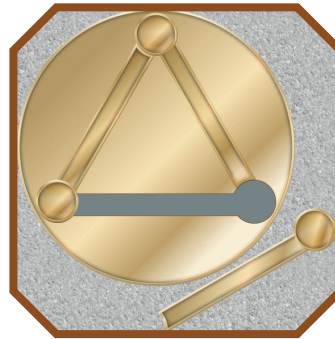
They aren't necessarily hostile; roll for reaction, with +1 if the heroes speak their language, and another +1 if the heroes can somehow convey the idea that this volcano is going to explode. (*If you stay here, you will die* is a powerful diplomatic tack.) If the reaction is good or great, up to half the goblins are willing to accompany the heroes on their quest, provided they're reassured that they're not in immediate danger. (It's okay to lie.)

One of the goblins has a piece of the amulet (another gold bar). She won't think to mention it (she doesn't know its import), but she will relinquish it if asked whether she's seen such an item. She'll also give it up if killed.

## ESCAPE . . . OR NOT?

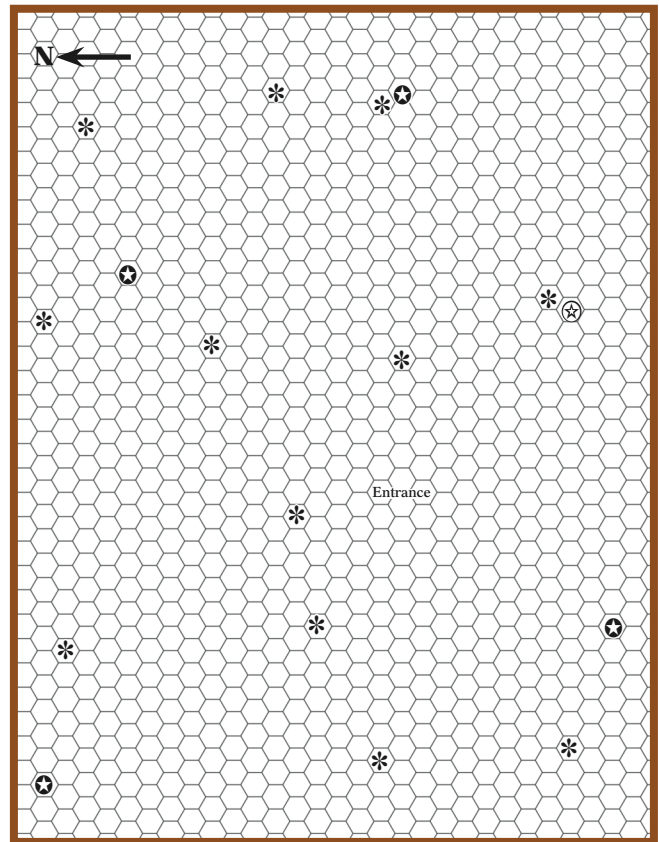
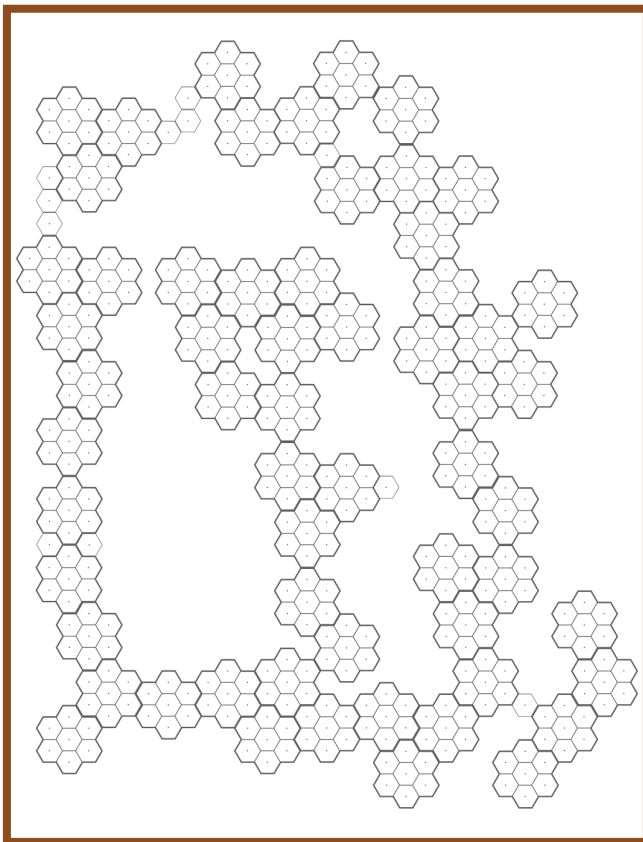
If the heroes don't go through the dungeon beyond area 3, they can retire with their promised money (100 gold per hero). Enterprising GMs might repurpose the rest of the dungeon for a future encounter . . . although rewards (especially the ring of wishes) should be toned down if there isn't a time limit.

Otherwise, this adventure hinges on the time limit (720 turns before boom). There's nothing keeping the heroes from leaving whenever they want, and they probably want to cut corners and avoid conflict when possible. But, conversely, if the heroes are blazing through and in danger of not even worrying about the time limit, it'd be entirely permissible to throw additional encounters or complications at them to make the players sweat.



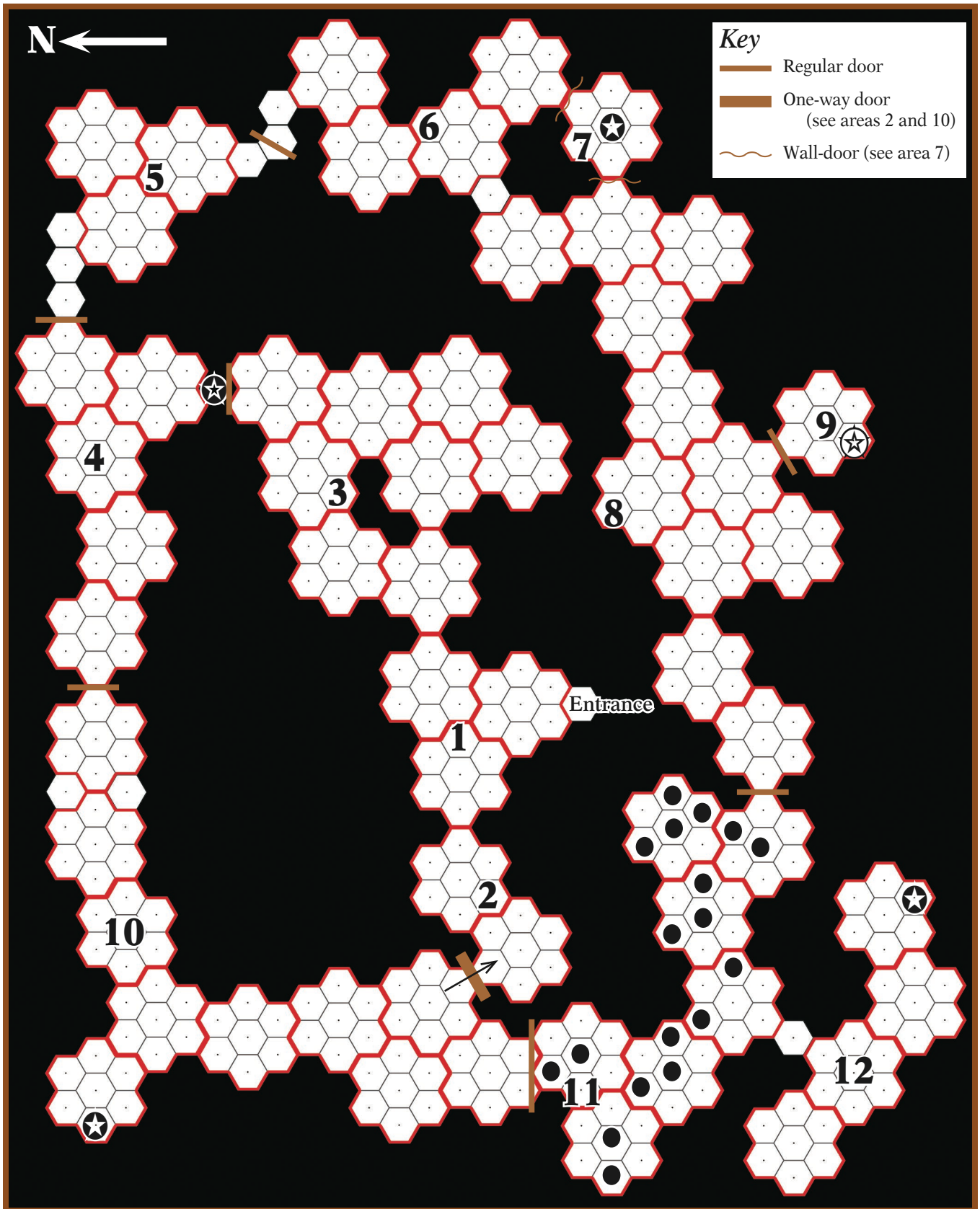
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more about Steven Marsh, see Random Thought Table, pp. 38-39.



### Map of the Volcano Complex (Player Versions)

Here are two possible player maps. The left one depicts a full map of the dungeon *without* points of interest, while the right one shows *just* the points of interest without the surrounding map (see p. 39 for details on using these). The adventure does not assume either one is used, but you can supply one or the other if you think it would enhance the fun for the players. (Obviously, don't give both!)



## MAP OF THE VOLCANO COMPLEX (GM VERSION)

Scale: 1 hex = 4 feet.  
Red borders denote megahexes; see p. 34 for more information.

# RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

## FANTASY DUNGEONS VIA DIGITAL CITIES

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

In my (admittedly limited) free time, I've been playing a lot of the video game *Batman: Arkham City* lately. In it, you play the titular character Theodore ("The") Batman, a mild-mannered businessman who punches people dressed as clowns.

Although there isn't obvious connective tissue between *Arkham City* and the two fantasy games this issue is devoted to, my mind kept chewing on certain aspects of *Arkham City*, and how they might be applied to *The Fantasy Trip* and the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. And I'm sure my subconscious wasn't feeding me these ideas just because it wanted to encourage me to keep on playing.

### CHOICES MATTER

I would argue that one of the most essential elements of any non-trivial game is having meaningful choices. Once you get beyond games that are basically self-playing – like *Candy Land*, *War*, *Snakes & Ladders*, and those roll-a-die board games that come in coloring books – the element that makes them desirable is the notion that what you have to do is actually worth deciding.

In *Arkham City*, you'll come across a lot of random mooks that you have to decide when and how to engage. When you do so, you have a number of options: wading directly into the fight, sneaking up behind them, swooping in from above . . . and even bursting from *underneath* criminals or *through* walls, if the environment permits it.

The mechanics of good fantasy-fighting games (including the two we're talking about this month) allow for a fair number of choices during combat: attacks, parries, dodges, movement, and so on.

But the opportunities for interactions to enter into or continue combat are up to the GM to provide . . . and the players to look for and exploit.

This doesn't mean that each adventure needs to include a half-dozen ways for heroes to engage or continue a fight. But it can greatly spice up a dungeon to offer the occasional

option, even ones as simple as providing two entrances into a room, having obvious tiers in a room that allow enterprising heroes to get *above* or *below* the action, or allowing for the possibility of skipping the encounter entirely.

In a similar way, the enterprising GM should do what's possible to ensure that the players *know* they have options, and to encourage the players to come up with their *own* schemes. This doesn't mean that every crazy plan needs to be granted absolute superiority over run-of-the-mill "dash in and attack." But it would certainly be a workable solution if (say) the GM erred on the side of at least a +1 bonus for a proposed course of action that sounds novel and could result in a diverting moment for the heroes. (The GM who wanted to limit this somewhat could allow only one such a bonus per hero per encounter.)

*Explore! Find my challenges!*

– *The Riddler*, in *Batman: Arkham City*

### FILLING IN THE BLANKS IS FUN

Another aspect of video gaming I enjoy that was rekindled by my trip to Gotham City was the notion of filling in the blanks.

When you start *Arkham City*, you're presented with various map bits, upgrade paths, sections of lore, and the like that are blank. As you progress, you start filling in the pieces, acquiring background segments and upgrades. Other video games – such as the classic *Baldur's Gate* series – are even more direct about "coloring in" the map as you progress.

Having encountered this technique in tabletop gaming, I'm reminded that it's immensely satisfying to "fill in" the pieces. Here are some ways that you might accomplish this.

## Player Maps

Arguably the most common version of this technique, player maps are generally incomplete (or even inaccurate) versions of the GM's map, with sections missing or lacking details. The map gives the players an idea of how the dungeon is laid out, while still preserving some mystery. See p. 36 in *The 60-Minute Heroes* for an example of a player map.

## Just the Encounters

Imagine the inverse of the player map: a blank page that shows *just* the non-random encounters the heroes are likely to have. (See p. 36 for an example of how an encounters-only map looks for *The 60-Minute Heroes*.) In this case, the map probably needs one or two small details to let the players get their bearings (what the scale is, where they start, etc.); the GM can either provide that with the map, or let the heroes figure it out themselves. ("Gee, I'm guessing the encounter marked with the skull might be those skeletons we fought.")

The nice thing about these maps is that they give the player something to aspire to. ("How do we get to that treasure chest?") It may also be a good method to allow for hidden doors or secrets, in a way that isn't annoying to players and doesn't result in them moving their heroes at an absolute snail's pace as they explore *every* hex. (I talk a bit more about this technique in my Random Thought Table for *Pyramid* #3/95: *Overland Adventures*, p. 38.)

Another advantage of both styles of maps – the traditional player maps and the inverted "just the encounters" map – is that they give the heroes a true edge when it comes to resource management (always an important part of most classic dungeon-crawling campaigns).

## THE KEYS ARE . . . KEY?

A technique that is super-common in video games but seems significantly rarer in tabletop games is having rooms or areas that only open up with the right key.

It's a fun technique in video games, as areas that were previously closed suddenly become open to the player. (There's an entire genre of games – "Metroidvania" – that draw on the inspiration of the *Metroid* and *Castlevania* games to start out relatively constrained, and then have more and more of the world opened as new abilities and unlocks are acquired.)

It makes sense why this isn't a feature of tabletop games. As mentioned earlier, a sense of freedom is vital to most RPGs, and it can seem especially jarring to have a door that no thief can unlock, no barbarian can smash open, no wizard can . . . wiz?

It's a fair point, but it's also a cool opportunity that can be pretty fun if used carefully.

- *Justify the lock.* Folks are more likely to accept that only the Lone Key hidden in the dungeon can unlock this door if the "door" is actually a cool-looking, rune-inscribed solid metal monolith . . . something that'll inspire heroes to go, "Yep; we're not getting in *that* way with a boot kick." In a similar way, the players are more likely not to bash their head

against a lock – thinking that they're expected to lockpick or manhandle the door open – if it seems obvious that the door or lock is special (even if it's otherwise a nondescript room). So if the heroes go to inspect a door, it might be worthwhile to say something like, "The lock on this door looks like a tiny metal dragon's head; it seems quite intricate, and you're not sure if you can unlock it." Later, when the heroes find a key that has a tiny dragon on it, they'll have the thrill of having the pieces fall together.

- *Allow the lockpick.* If you make it at least *feasible* to pick the lock or kick down the door, the players are more likely to forgive it if they're unable to do so (because their dice rolls just aren't good enough). Even if it's assigned a ludicrously high penalty, at least the players know that they had a *chance* when they fail, or they know they could bash down the door if they were willing to spend the next six hours (and however-many random encounters) dealing with the obstacle. And if they succeed? Well, nothing says they have to acquire any special equipment, lore, or info about what lies beyond that room; all of that stuff may've been with the key . . .

## Keep the action moving!

### "The Six Parts of Greg's MacGuffin"

A way to do a "key" that isn't a key is to have the heroes collecting something that will further a goal. For example, "you need to locate the three ingredients of this formula" or "you need to convince these five tribes to unite against this larger threat."

The pieces of this MacGuffin don't need to all be uniform, either. For example, it can be very effective to break down the elements of an adventure to "find the formula, then find the three ingredients of the formula, then find the one person who is most able to assemble those ingredients." And each of those elements can form its own subquest.

This often has the benefit of breaking down a larger adventure into something smaller and more bite-sized. (Again, this technique is *very* common in video games.) "Defeat the Scorpion Queen" is kind of unsatisfying if spread out over multiple game nights without forward progress toward that goal. But it can be really useful to look back and say, "Okay . . . we've determined the *location* of the Scorpion Queen, the *weakness* of the Scorpion Queen, the *protection* we need from the Scorpion Queen, and – as a bonus – we found a weapon that'll be particularly effective."

By keeping the action moving, you can make a tabletop game that's at least as exciting as any video game . . . and doesn't result in your thumbs hurting after an evening's play.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 18 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife (Nikola Vrtis) and their son.

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