

# Reliquary

Issue 2



Scourge Books



# Reliquary

## Issue 2

**I**n the distance, candles have been lit. Congregations have started to walk the path and they have plowed their own for others to find. The trails are just beginning to wind and the darkness has found its way to many places around this world. This is no doubt part of the greater purpose I mentioned in the previous issue.

Carve your paths. Light the candles and breathe life into your Altar. Witness a new era come to be as more leave the shackles of the overpriced and timorous gri-moires behind. It is your Altar. The rituals are yours to master.

### From the Dark Past

Many miles lead toward a tribe of primordials with a passion for violence.

### Liberation Caps

A fungus with the ability to reward or punish those willing to take the chance at enlightenment.

### The Hungry End

A gluttonous beast poses as a child amongst villagers that protect him with their lives.

**Reliquary is a TTRPG zine with a focus on system neutral material that can be converted to fit any setting.**

**Written and Illustrated by Scourge**

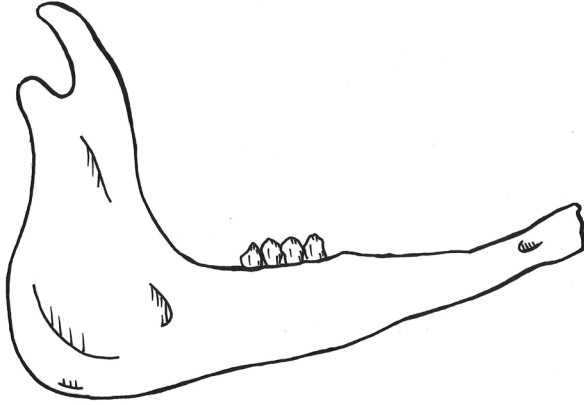
**Illustrations on pages 8 and 21 by Anto Arutunian**

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# From the Dark Past



## Overview

The town of Rustbend has been ransacked by a tribe of primordial humanoids. Entire families have been slaughtered, all of the livestock has been stolen or killed, and a woman has been taken to a cavern in the mountains. The party has the option of pursuing the attackers to their dwelling located many miles away.

## Investigating the Attacks

In order to avoid railroading the players toward the cavern there should be small parts of stories told by NPCs that conflict with one another. The point isn't to throw the players off of the trail or waste time bickering over which path to take, it is only meant to get the discussion going. It should feel as if they came to this conclusion on their own. Depending on how you are presenting this, you can allow them to get sidetracked or correct it with the more trustworthy NPCs stressing their mistake. Which could also raise the question of how they know so much about the tribe.

## Rustbend

Rustbend is a recently established town on the outskirts of a forest and had a population of 34 before the attack. The economy is centered around farming. It is common for travelers to pass through and many make their stay at the local inn for some time before moving on.

The attack has left most of the buildings in piles of ash and coal and the majority of the population dead. Entire families have been murdered in terribly brutal ways. Animals fared no better. Sheep and goats have been decapitated and left to rot. The horses that could not be stolen were killed with volleys of arrows and spears.

Most of the townsfolk are rummaging through burnt down buildings or

**collecting the dead.** The entire town is distraught, although most of them are relieved to see the travelers.

**The first to speak with the party** would most likely be an aging drunk named **Marney**. He is covered in sweat and **pushing a wheel barrow with the bodies of two of his three mastiffs towards the cemetery.** They have multiple stab wounds and their heads have been bludgeoned to pulp.

**His tale of the events is somewhat shaky** as he was inebriated when the attack took place. **Marney will first explain that his third dog chased after the “inbreds” to the East.**

*He knows:*

- *The attack occurred sometime at night.*
- *Their language consisted of grunts and howls.*
- *They used bows, spears, and weapons made of bone. The fletching on their arrows are unlike any he has seen.*
- *He believes they came from the mountains to the North, but isn't sure.*
- *Senga, a local seamstress and the wife of Sheriff Biggs, was kidnapped as the tribe rode off.*
- *They should seek the priest for more information on what can be done.*

## The Church

**F**ire has ravaged the foyer of the building, but appears to have not taken off well enough to do considerable damage. The altar has been smashed and the pews have been thrown into two piles on the East and West of the room. The stained glass windows have been busted out from within. The tithe box has been torn apart and emptied across the floor.

**Catherine**, a middle-aged woman that volunteers at the church, is **picking**

**up the currency and collecting it into a leather bag.** When she notices the party she will attempt to hide the streams of tears rolling down her face, brush the black stains from her dress, and welcome the guests to Rustbend. She will immediately collapse and sob uncontrollably.

With a **Charisma/Social Check of 12** she will gain control of her emotions and apologize for her rudeness. **Failing this Check** will cause her to dismiss herself.

*She knows:*

- *A few of the farmers spotted the tribe riding horses on the edges of Rustbend the day before.*
- *The farms were attacked first. The flames were spotted by Sheriff Biggs. By the time they could react another group attacked the town from the East.*
- *The Priest, Father Brennan, sent a rider westward to seek aid from Gaalsburg, a town two days ride from Rustbend.*
- *Senga was carried off during the attack.*
- *Those wanting to help should speak with the priest. He is digging graves in the cemetery.*

## The Cemetery

**F**ather Brennan is leaning against a shovel wiping the sweat from his brow as the party approaches. He is in his late 50s. He carries a somber demeanor and speaks in short sentences, although he is welcoming to their inquiry. He has two graves dug and is slowly working on the third. The cemetery is relatively empty and surrounds a large oak tree.

*He knows:*

- *The attackers belong to a tribe of primordials that live in the mountains to the East.*
- *They were obviously after the livestock of the farms and presumably*

*attacked the town out of curiosity.*

- *The men of the town attempted to stop them, but were outnumbered.*

- *The description of the attackers is vague and changes depending on who you ask. They were barely clothed and there were too many to count. Their hair was matted with what looked like dried blood. The bodies indicate they were biting chunks of flesh from their victims.*

- *If any of the attackers were killed during the fight, their bodies were carried off by the tribe.*

- *He sent a rider westward to seek aid from Gaalsburg, a town two days ride from Rustbend.*

He warns the party of the dangers in bringing justice to the tribe. In addition, he advises them to stock up on supplies at the inn and tell the owner he sent them. He may promise the party a small reward if it is requested.

## The Inn

The bodies of the dead are laid out on the first floor of the inn and covered in blood stained sheets. There are 13 bodies of men, women, and children, all murdered in horrible ways.

**The Innkeep is named Garllan.** He is a feeble man with a small frame carrying both sadness and anger over the death of his close friend and enforcer **Roch**.

**Any attempts to recruit him on the journey will be turned down with the excuse of being needed in town.**

Two women are sitting at the bar taking shots of whiskey between fits of tears. Their names are **Maria** and **Adelia**. Their dresses are tattered and stained with blood and dirt. If they are approached they will tell horrifying accounts of the attack, but otherwise

they will remain to themselves and avoid eye contact.

*They know:*

- *Their children and husbands were killed in the attack.*

- *They escaped to the inn where Roch held the tribe back before taking an arrow to the throat.*

- *There are rumors of the tribe living in the Eastern Mountains, but Marney is convinced they came from the North. Marney is a drunk and should be ignored.*

## The Jailhouse

The sheriff has been crucified on the floor of the jailhouse with knives and spikes. His clothes have been stripped from his body and his shirt has been stuffed into his mouth. His deputy is dead against the wall with his head cleaved in two. Chairs and tables have been tossed at random.

A young boy, **Alexander**, is attempting to free the Sheriff's body from the spikes. There are small pools of red and green vomit surrounding the corpse. **As the party enters**, he will begin to puke again.

He will explain that he is the son of Sheriff Biggs and Senga. Any further details would be hard to pull from him unless someone helps with his father and the deputy. Before the party leaves town he will ask to go with them. **He has flat stats, an AC of 12, and 1 Hit Dice.**

*He knows:*

- *He watched the tribe flee to the East with his mother. He threw a hatchet into the back of one of the riders. The largest of the attackers stopped and picked up his fallen comrade.*

- *He knows the way to the cavern well, and was told long ago to never go near the mountains by Father Brennan.*

# The Farms

The three farms are located about 3/4 of a mile from town on plots several acres wide. Every building has been completely burned to the ground. Bodies of decapitated cattle, goats, and horses have been mutilated and scattered around the yards. Their heads have been stuck on fence posts and their eyes have been ripped out. Flies swarm the area around them. Entire families were either butchered or burned alive. The areas around their missing limbs have signs of multiple strikes. **An Intelligence of 9 or a background in anthropology** would lead one to believe this is an act of cannibalism. There is little to discover other than the unbridled horror of the attacks. A few of the corpses have been crucified on the cabin and barn floors similar to Sheriff Biggs.

# The Pursuit

The party should be well provisioned before leaving Rustbend. The trip towards the mountain is a race against time and against the elements. **The destination is 105 miles away. It would take an average horse rider two days to complete the journey. Experienced travelers can hike 20-35 miles in a day.** Keeping track of time and distance traveled will be important during this phase of the scenario. **Take notice of hours spent resting, eating, and traveling as the following tables will affect their journey.**

This is of course optional depending on your style. Rounding up, combining the rolls into one, streamlining, or bypassing this section are all optional.

It is vital the party reaches their destination as quickly as possible. **Senga will lose 1 limb for every two days** it takes, starting with her legs. If they are on foot it will take them a minimum of three days to reach her. By then she will have already lost a limb to the cannibals. If they are quick they will have the chance to rescue her before she is completely butchered and eaten.

**Roll on the Weather, Navigation, and Encounter Tables every morning.** It is up to the DM when the effects take place and how long they last.

**At the end of every day,** randomly select a player to roll a **d10**. In the event that a **1 or 3** is rolled, have another randomly selected player roll on the **Hazard Table** and do not disclose the effects to them right away. A chance at a Saving Throw can be given to avoid these effects. The effects will occur the next day at a time chosen by the DM.

**Along the journey, the players will come across Marney's lost mastiff.** It has been gutted and hung spread eagle in the branches of a dead hickory tree. Its eyes have been plucked out by vultures and crown of rosemary has been placed on its head.

As they draw close to the mountain more animals will be found left in this fashion. **Within 20 miles of the cavern** effigies of human skeletons will populate the trails looking down on the party from the trees. Cairns made of skulls and bones will show the way to the trail that leads to the cavern.





# Weather

d20	Effect
1-8	Clear. -4 to Nav. Roll on the Enc Table once every 8 hours.
9-13	Cloudy. +0 to Navigation Roll.
14-17	Light Precipitation. +2 to Nav. -2 to Enc.
18-20	Heavy Precipitation. +4 To Nav. -4 to Enc.

# Navigation

d20	Effect
1-8	Tracks found. +20 Miles Traveled
9-13	Trail found. +10 Miles Traveled
14-17	Trail lost. -10 Miles Traveled
18-20	Bearing lost. -20 Miles Traveled

# Encounter

d12	Effect
1-3	None.
4-9	Small Game. Deer, Rabbits, etc.
10	Travelers or Bandits
11-12	Large Predatory Game. Bear, Mountain Lion, etc.

# Hazard

*Roll a d10. In the event a 1 or 3 is rolled, roll on the table below.*

d4	Effect
1	None
2	A randomly selected character has taken a fall and sprained their ankle. They travel at half speed on foot for two days.
3	A randomly selected character has taken a fall and broken their leg. They require crutches to travel or must be carried. They travel at half speed.
4	A snake bites a randomly selected character. 1d4 Poison Damage and -1 to all checks. If medical attention is not available, make a Poison/Constitution Saving Throw or die within 6 hours. Every two hours until death, they will take an additional -2 to all checks.



ANTO'8

# The Mountain

The Mountain can be seen for miles before it is reached. It is covered in foliage and at its peak is a large black boulder. The cavern is at the end of a trail that winds up the mountain for four miles. Cairns of bones guide the path. The trees along the trail have been decorated with dead animals and tribesmen in various states of decomposition. During the ascent, encounters with a few of the primordials would be difficult to avoid.

## Primordial Tribe

13 AC  
1 to 3 Hit Dice  
+1 Str, +1 Dex, -2 Int

Cow Jaw/Antler  
1d6

Poison Dart  
1d4 +2 Poison

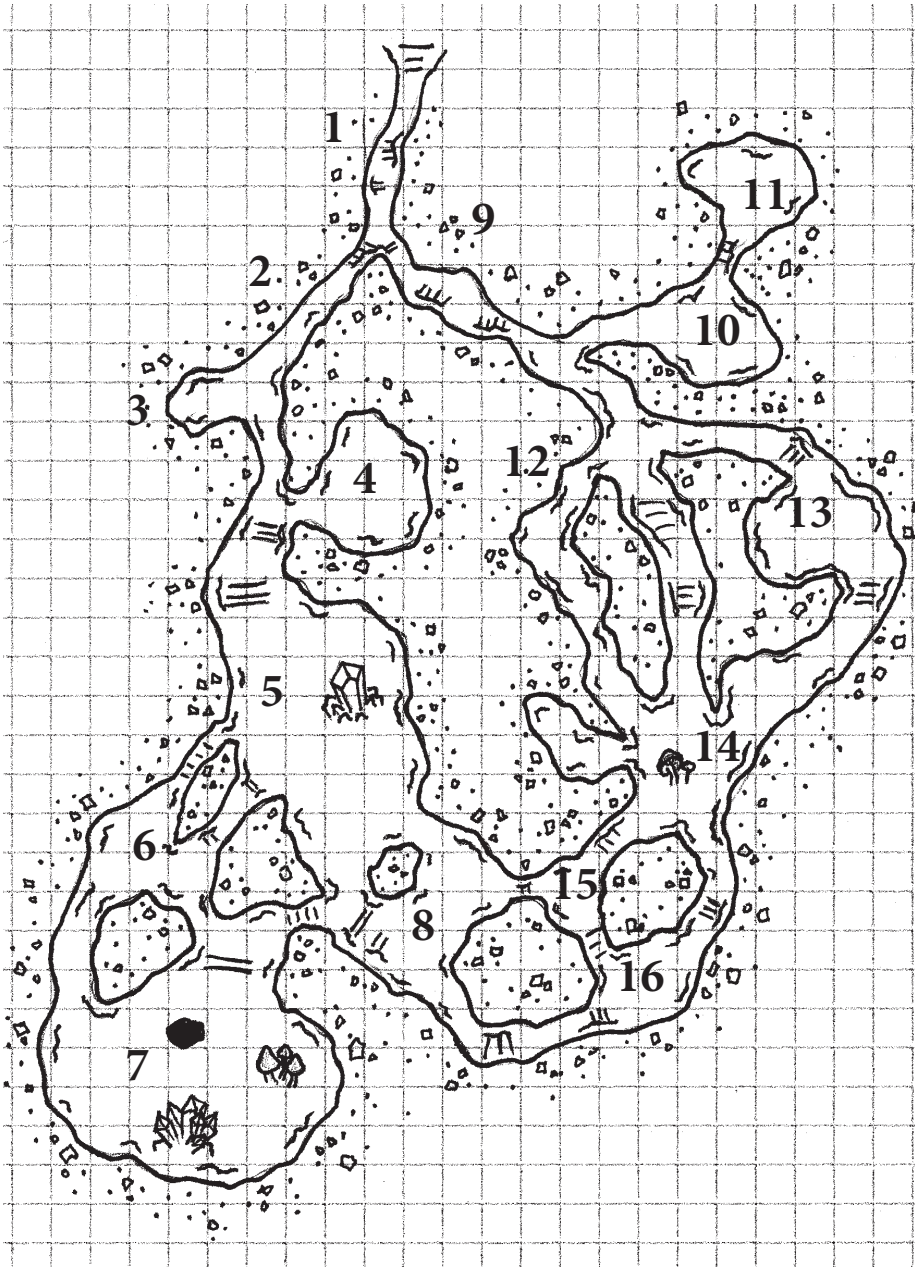
Short Bow  
1d6 +3 Poison

Spear  
1d8 +3 Poison

The tribe is made up of men, women, and children that are a step behind in evolution. They resemble Cro-Magnons and Neanderthals. Their weapons and armor are made of bones, rocks, and wood. Each primordial carries one of the weapons listed above. The majority of their fighting is done at a distance and they prefer an unfair fight. There are 20-35 of them total. They are scattered on the mountain, inside the cavern, and hiding along the trail.

## The Cavern

The entrance to the cavern is flanked by large skull cairns, human skeletons pinned to the mountainside, and bodies of animals hung in trees. Symbols and markings have been painted in blood on large stones that surround the area. It would seem that the area has been occupied for years. There are multiple paths which split and join once more. **The room descriptions are written as if the condition of the scenario has yet to reach the climax of the exploration. Adjustments will need to be made as the rooms are explored and the overall situation changes.**



1

The smell of the damp rocks and mildew covers up a slight odor of decay. **The hallway is tight** and difficult to move through quickly. A handful of **raw sapphires, human teeth, and two copper pieces** are scattered on the ground. The ceiling is roughly 6' tall. The dirt steps are framed in with human bones. Echoes of water dripping and a few grunts can be heard. Any noise made will echo throughout the cavern. At the fork there is a **small dagger** resting in the eye socket of a deer skull.

2

Fire light can be seen dancing in the distance of **Room 3**. A few **silver pieces** litter the ground. If the party takes this path first, two **Primordials** will attack from the opposite corridor.

3

The ceiling in this room is only 4' tall. A small fire is burning inside a pit of stones. **A dog's heart** is skewered on a stick and cooking over the flames. There is a small pile of wood roughly split and broken against the wall.

4

There are four small beds made of leaves and grass. Animal and human skulls have been fashioned into bowls and cups. One cup is full of human blood. **Seven small raw quartz crystals** are laid out in a circle in the middle of the room.

5

Large steps mark the path up to this room. The ceiling is 15' tall. Massive crystal formations make up most of the Eastern portion of the room. Twelve beds made of leaves and grass are laid out on the floor. **A human forearm** is sitting in one of the beds. It has been cooked and has chunks bitten out of it. It appears to have been left in haste.

**Once the entire party is in the room, Senga will cry out for help. Immediately after her screams,** they will be attacked from the North and South corridors by **six Primordials**.

6

The passage here is covered in broken bones and mildew. The air smells more damp and the echoes of water are louder. Dim light from the fire in **Room 7** makes its way through the halls. **Senga can be heard clearly in Room 7**. Her situation would typically not be far from dire at this point.

7

Senga is tied upside down to a large formation of quartz crystals to the South. Small streams of water trickle into a **large pit in the middle of the room**. The drop is 400' of slick and narrow walls. A large bed has been made of leaves and grass surrounded by human skulls next to the crystal formation. A fire burns in the Southwest corner of the room. A 3' diameter natural chimney is at the peak of the 20' ceiling.

**Mushrooms known as Liberation Caps** can be found growing throughout the room. Extended details on them can

be found on page 15.

The **Alpha of the tribe** is standing next to Senga. He is armed with a spear and a horse skull. He grunts and spits unintelligibly as **1d6 Primordials** surround the party in an attempt to move them towards the pit.

## Primordial Alpha

15 AC  
3-5 Hit Dice  
+2 Str, +2 Dex, -1 Int

Horse Skull  
1d8

Spear  
1d8 +3 Poison

The Alpha stands 6'6" tall and weighs approximately 220 lbs. He is much larger and obviously stronger than the rest of the tribe. He taunts his opponents with quick sharp grunts and hisses.

## Senga

9 AC  
1/2 Hit Dice  
-2 Str, -2 Dex

Unarmed

Senga is **unable to walk** and she will **lose consciousness** a few moments after she is freed. If she is to be rescued, **she must be carried**. Her stats will flatten out once she has eaten and rested for a few days. **If she has lost limbs** she will need medical attention or her wounds will become infected.

She has small lacerations on her face and neck and her head is swollen with knots in several places. Her clothes are

torn and stained with blood. She has experienced brutality in ways most never imagine. This will affect her for the rest of her life.

## 8

A small group of beds and a fire-pit lay in the North and South portions respectively. Skulls and bones litter the area. **A small group of Primordials may attack here.**

## 9

Sounds of shuffling movement can be heard. **If Senga is still alive**, her quiet sobs echo throughout the chambers. **Two Primordials** are waiting to attack around the corner leading to **Room 10**.

## 10

Two elderly **Primordials** armed with **Poison Darts** are sitting against the walls. There are large stones in a circle that appear to make this a small gathering room. A large fire can be seen in **Room 11**.

## 11

The fire pit is used to cook the majority of the tribe's food. A small natural chimney allows the smoke to clear. There are several horse and goat legs strung over the flames with sticks and rope made of green bark. There are **flint knives, spears, arrows, raw sapphires, raw quartz crystals, and copper pieces** on a large flat stone in the center of the room.

## 12

The three hallways are similar. There is air is now rank with fungal growth. The ceiling of the hallway leading to **Room 13** slowly drops to 3' in height at the top of the steep stair set.

A few **Primordials** will attempt to lock the party into the hallways and attack from the front and back.

## 13

The steps into this area are steep and slick with moisture. The head of a horse is impaled on a spear and held upright with rocks in the center of the room. Around it are the heads of people that have recently fallen victim to the tribe.

## 14

Five **Primordials** will attack with ranged weapons from **Rooms 15 and 16**.

**Plague Cap Mushrooms** grow throughout this area. They can be harvested for their poisonous qualities, although doing so is extremely dangerous and potentially fatal. **Poison Save or Die** if they are eaten.

## 15

Cries from **Senga** can be heard in **Room 7**. An unclothed **Primordial** without arms sits in a corner rocking back and forth. Her eyes have been burned out and her tongue has been

removed. If she hears the party she will crawl on her stomach towards them with awful screams. If she gets close enough, she will bite at their ankles. There are **50 Silver pieces, 130 Copper pieces, and 2 Raw Amethysts scattered on the ground.**

## 16

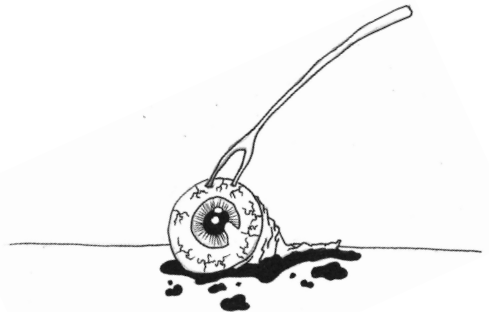
A group of **10 Primordial Children** are attempting to hide. They are armed with short spears and jawbones of goats. If they are threatened they will attack, but will escape as soon as possible.

## Making the Escape

The remaining **Primordials** are hidden along the trail and waiting to attack. The amount of confrontations will differ from game to game. It would be plausible that the tribe has been intimidated into avoiding further fights.

Likewise, it would extend this story arc if they were followed by a few undetected tribe members.

It is possible that the tribe's **horses** may be found **tied to trees just off of the trail**. The **Pursuit Tables** may be used once again for the journey back, but if



you wish to forgo the possible calamities, rolling a **d4** or **d6** can give you the total days it takes to reach Rustbend.

## Returning to Rustbend

There are a number of situations that have either improved or worsened since the party was last here. Possibilities can include:

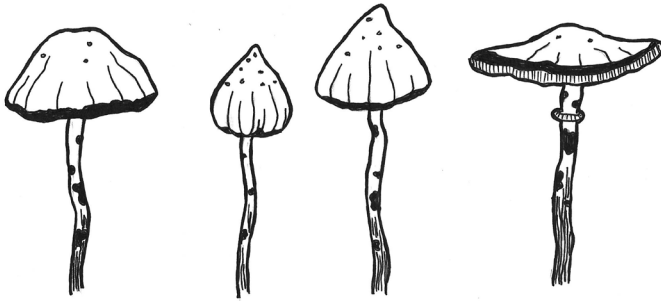
- Father Brennan has hung himself. An entry in his journal tells of his discovery of the Primordials months ago. He sent mercenaries in secret to clear the tribe. Upon failure they tracked them back to Rustbend where they planned their attack.
- The boy sent to retrieve help has not returned. His horse was found dead and without a saddle 5 miles from town the day before.
- If the party has any of the gems, crystals, or fungi appraised or inspected word will spread and some locals will seek out the cavern on their own.
- Help has arrived and the people of Rustbend are sifting through the ashes of their town. Their dead have been buried and some have made plans to move.
- The entire town has been torched to the ground. Those that were alive are now dead or missing.
- A traveling merchant has arrived in town and is selling fungi, crystals, and gems similar to those found in the cavern.
- A group of outlaws has killed the remaining survivors, and masquerades as travelers just passing through when the party arrives. They blame the last attack on the tribe, but the wounds of the newly slain victims gives clues to other causes.

However the scenario concludes, there are many ways to extend the arc into several branches. Most of this is up to the party to decide which way they would like to turn and what their next move will be.





# Liberation Caps



**L**iberation Caps (aka Illumination Caps) are mushrooms that grow in wet areas with little sunlight. They have psychedelic and magical uses, but must be respected as a dangerous and often disastrous means of acquiring wisdom and knowledge.

The cap shape changes during the growth cycle as it fans away from the stem. Juvenile specimens have few spots on the stem and dozens of small black dots on the cap. As the specimen matures the caps lose their black dots. The caps range from light brown to a deep purple with dark black spotting on the white stems.

## Harvesting, Storing and Ingesting

**P**roperly harvesting, drying, and storing Liberation Caps is difficult. The caps must be stored in a breathable material such as cheese cloth until they can be dried. As soon as possible they must be laid out in the sun, next to a fire, or dehydrated with smoke. If they are not properly dried within a day of being harvested they will begin to rot. Once dried, they will be good for up to four weeks. Further preservation can be achieved by salting and storing them in an airtight container such as heavy glass.

The caps are eaten or made into a tea. They smell mildly of honey and have a sweet exterior, but once bitten they emit a strong bitter taste. Within 20 minutes to an hour the effects will begin to take hold. **The effects will last 2d8 hours. After the hallucinations have worn off, the character will carry whatever permanent effects with them and become exhausted and dehydrated for 2d6 hours. Effects are rolled with a d6.**

# Effects

1

**Everything is as it should be.** An overwhelming sense of euphoria takes over you. You have an epiphany that Good and Evil are merely an illusion. There is no right or wrong. Love and hate are two sides of the same coin. Acts of kindness and violence are one with each other. Any desire, anger, doubt, or fear is due to the world's separation from its natural state. Your alignment permanently shifts to **True Neutral** until a major event dictates otherwise. Any close relationships you have are shrugged from the pedestal your old self placed them on. Any enemies you have made are forgiven. You permanently gain **1d6** to your **Wisdom and Charisma Scores**.

2

**Down on Your Knees.** You have found the meaning of life hidden within religious symbolism. For the entire trip you bear witness to the truth and light that exists within all creation, and in effect “give the glory to God”. Every plant and animal is a piece of the holiness. Every breath is a merciful gift. Your eventual death is an honor, for you will one day walk with angels on golden roads.

Until a major event or discovery compels you otherwise, you will lay down your weapons and armor, give all of your possessions to the poor, and spend the rest of your days peacefully spreading these revelations to the world until old age or martyrdom takes you.

3

**The Call of the Void.** Everything around you is rank with stagnation. Your life is simply a boring existence that dulls the senses. Looking back on your life you come to the realization that it has been bleak regardless of your experiences. Any sense of accomplishment is lost. Any inclination to strive onward is forgotten. The lure of death and complete absence of safety compel you towards taking your life for a chance to finally be free. You dream of tasting that final breath of air.

The knife on your hip, the edge of a cliff, or the river current calls you. Dark shadows infect your mind with a promise only the Void can produce in full. You must make a **Paralyze/Wisdom Saving Throw** or you fall victim to the Call of the Void, attempting suicide in a fashion that your immediate surroundings provide. If you succeed you are fully embraced with the emptiness of the Void. If you fail you permanently lose **1d6** of your **Wisdom Score** and suffer a bout with depression for **2d6** months.

4

**Nailed to the Tree.** You crucify yourself to the nearest tree taking **1d10+5 Damage**. The branches and lines of the bark lay out the mysteries of the world before you as you bleed out beneath a dark sky for nine days and nights. During this time you will be unable to eat, drink, or sleep. **When you awaken, you will have learned a language of your choice.**

# 5

**Out of Body Experience.** Your spirit is freed from the prison of your flesh as you assume an ethereal form. You are free to roam the world and witness anything you wish. You have until the effects wear off to journey beyond all boundaries and distances. No walls or doors can keep you, none can see or hear you, and you are unable to interact in any way with your surroundings. Although what you witness seems real enough, you know it is possible that it is merely a hallucination.

# 6

**A Glimpse into the Past.** Waves of your former lives from time forgotten crash over you. You witness the violence and love your spirit left behind with each lifetime throughout the ages. Every second that passes brings years that fly by, and you recall each moment that was forgotten through reincarnation.

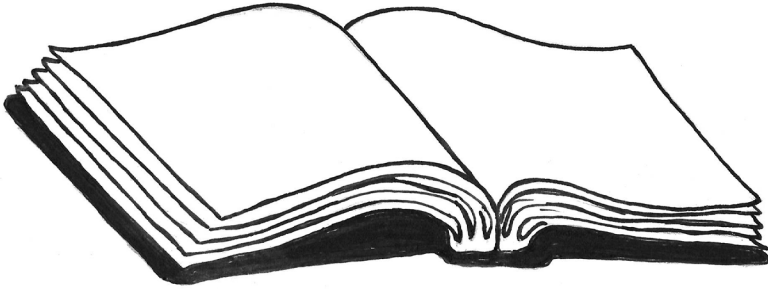
Every fit of laughter and tears. Every moment of intimacy. Every oath. Every broken bone. Every death.

The joy of family and friends fills your heart and lungs with love, but ultimately misery consumes you just as death must consume all of life and rebirth it from the Void.

You relive the anguish of losing your children, friends, parents, and lovers throughout every incarnation. The pain is monumental as it hits you all at once. Your spirit begins to thrash within your body. Make a **Magic/Intelligence Saving Throw** or **permanently lose 1d4 of your Intelligence and Wisdom Scores and suffer 2d4 weeks of depression.** If successful **permanently gain 1d4 to your Constitution and Intelligence Scores.**



# The Hungry End



## Overview

The village of Luctus appears welcoming of guests and takes the party in as one of their own. The only child of the village carries a strangeness about him as the rest of the villagers age rapidly. As the party mingles with the locals they to begin to age and the mysteries of Luctus begin to reveal themselves in carnivorous ways.

## Luctus

What began as a logging camp quickly flourished into a small village and became known as Luctus decades ago. Not many travelers make it out this far, but those who have tell of the community's unending hospitality and welcoming spirit. **The 25 or so villagers** treat one another like family and have little infighting or strife. One large factor for this unity is the local parish led by **Father Hastings**, who preaches largely about compassion, forgiveness, and kindness. Some who have returned from Luctus often radiate with a revived spirit and tell of the “wonderful community”, even though their health has suffered somewhere along the journey.

Some reputable travelers have visited Luctus just to hear his sermons. But with every positive rumor there is negative that follows closely behind. Some have claimed the teachings of Father Hastings to be sacrilegious, and a few have heard that the entire village of Luctus is a cult centered around strange behaviors and customs.

**Reasons for visiting could vary**, but the main attraction in traveling so far out of the way could be the interest in the teachings of Father Hastings. This could be out of curiosity and soul searching, or it could be that this congregation is seen as blasphemous and should be investigated further. The party could easily pass by a traveler that has recently visited Luctus that vocalizes a strong opinion of the village.

Luctus is laid out simply with humble dirt floor shacks as well as intricate homes and business that surround a grand longhall. There is one artisan for each common trade. **Obscure items will double in rarity**, but any common food or item would be

plentiful and given freely in some cases. Alcohol and other forms of inebriates would be very hard to find, however if one looks hard enough they could find **anesthetics**, from all parts of the world, stored in the **Chapel Safe**. **Livestock and vegetables appear to be community owned**. **Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are held for the entire village in the longhall daily**.

## A Sermon from Father Hastings

**O**n Wednesday and Saturday mornings, Father Hastings will give lengthy sermons in the **Chapel**. They will mostly be about the importance of community building and love for one another, but also about the love and devotion everyone must have for the child. **Everyone that listens to his sermon will age 1d20 years and must make a Magic Saving Throw or take a permanent loss of 1d4 to their Constitution Score.**

*“We must live with absolute compassion and love for one another, but also live according to the Angel’s teachings. His divine light is our refuge in a world surrounded by darkness. His mercy is great, but he takes what he must. Those that pass in the next few days are in luck, for death is not the end. You will join those that have passed before you and help fuel the fires of the child’s light.”*

Father Hastings will then ask those willing to give themselves unto the everlasting light of the Child to step forward. Two or three will walk forward to be cloaked in white ceremonial robes and led out of the chapel as the congregation joins together in hymns.

## The Child and the Anathema

**T**he Child appears to be around 12 years old and is dressed poorly. He would most likely be followed by several people. Every person in the village refers to him as their son just as he refers to everyone as his parents. He has no name. His mannerisms could be described as eccentric. Awkward eye contact, strange inflections in speech, and standing much too close are common behaviors. **If there are any older members in the party**, he will become obsessed with getting to know them and attempt to spend as much time as possible with them. He may bite them lightly on the arm or leg and run off laughing hysterically. **Even the slightest backhanded comment or rudeness towards the child will be met with aggravation and possibly hostility from the entire village.**

**As the party first comes into contact with the Child (and every hour there after)** they must make a **Magic Saving Throw against aging**. **Upon Failure**, roll 1d20 to determine how many years a character ages over the next hour. They most likely would not be able to notice unless it is significant or seen by their companions.

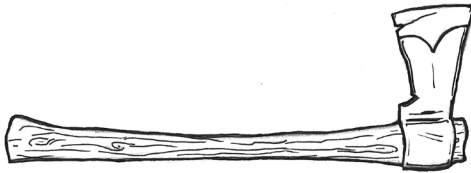
**If a member of the party reaches 55 years old**, the entire village will attempt to separate the member from the party and take them to the **Feeding Grounds**. If they are not diplomatically persuaded, the entire village will erupt around them and the

Anathema will reveal itself.

**The Child is worshiped as an angel by the villagers.** Those that come into his presence will age at extraordinary rates. As each day passes the villagers will age rapidly and be taken to the Feeding Grounds. The Child will visit the two buildings often and begin to collect blood stains on his face, hands, and clothing over the course of a week. As the child eats more and more he will begin to swell abnormally in the torso. Eventually leading to the destruction of its disguise as it breaks apart and begins the early stages of decay.

**Likewise, it is possible to catch the child commanding a villager to provide him with food,** at which point the villager will either produce a chunk of human flesh from their pockets or carve one fresh from their body.

As his torso has stretched beyond its capacity it will become impossible for the Anathema within to conceal itself any longer and will attack all guests of the village. The villagers will have no surprised reactions once the Anathema is unveiled from the suit of flesh, but will instead join in the mayhem.



## Anathema

AC 15

3 to 6 Hit Dice

+2 Str, +1 Dex, +2 Wis, -2 Int

Attacks with Magic deal half damage.

### Bite

1d12

Once a character has been bitten they must make a Paralyze/Dexterity Saving Throw or be eaten.

### Claws

1d10

The Anathema is cloaked in a suit of organic flesh. As the skin is stretched and breaking down, it will begin to tear and turn a dull yellow. Its veins will appear swollen and run black with dead blood cells. Its mouth is filled with large fangs that move independently of each other. As the creature eats, it will force its meal down whole with the use of its fangs and arms. In combat, the Anathema will charge hard into its opponent as its decaying head flops around at the top of its bulbous body. It is surprisingly quick and nimble having the ability to **attack** an opponent **twice per round**.



# The Villagers

AC 12

1 to 3 Hit Dice

-1Dex, -1 Con

## Pitchfork/Shovel/Hoe

(Reach)

1d6

## Great Mattock

(Two Handed)

1d10

## Hammer/Common Axe

1d6

Modestly dressed as any other typical religious community, the population of Luctus carries themselves with friendly faces and an outgoing demeanor. There is no personal property amongst them, and they are willing to share anything they have with guests within reason. However, these guests are expected to remain reverent during their stay. If anyone does not respect the Child they will defend him to the death in an attack that will most likely be led by Father Hastings.

## The Elderly and The Feeding Grounds

Two of the buildings in the village are unmarked and have recently had their windows boarded shut from the outside. The oak doors are tightly chained to the door frame and held secure with a common padlock. The doors have chipped from attempts to open the door from inside. **There are two keys.** One is **carried by Father Hastings around his neck**, and the other is **carried by the Child**.

Inside are those who have willingly given themselves to the light of the Child and those that have fallen victim to the Anathema's curse of aging. Their withering has left them too weak to fight off the village as they throw the unwilling sacrifices into what is essentially a pantry for the Anathema.

## Conclusion

Obviously any conclusion to this scenario will vary game to game. A background or deeper meaning behind the existence of the cult and the Anathema was intentionally left out. Not everything needs to make sense or be explained in full. At the end of the scenario, the less the players understand about Luctus the more everyone is able to fill in the gaps with their own assumptions.



# Notes

# Notes



