

The Gongfarmer's Almanac:

A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

Written, Illustrated, and Produced by
the DCC RPG G+ Community



RULES & CAMPAIGN MISCELLANY - PART 1
VOLUME 4 OF FIVE BOOKLETS

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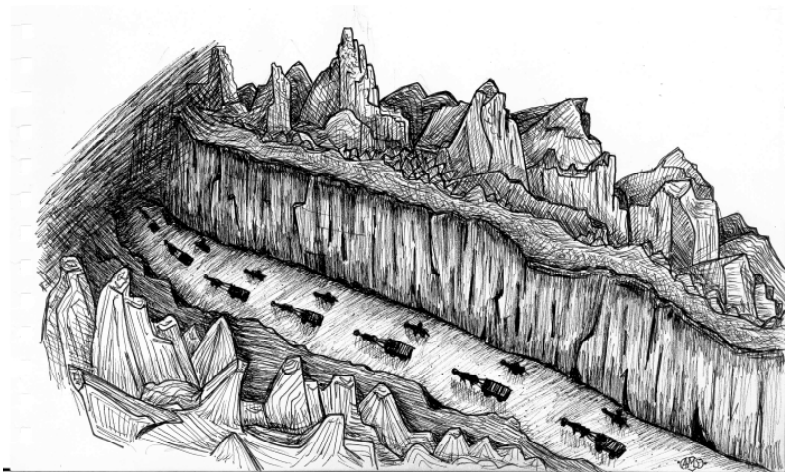
-- BLACK BLOOD PASS --
A MINI-GAZETTEER
BY ROY SNYDER



AS TAKEN FROM THE ACCOUNTS OF THE PRIVATEER LUUKAS THE MADD; MENTIONING'S, NOTES, AND WORDS OF CAUTION REGARDING THE REGION. DOCUMENTED IN CONCURRENCE TO MUNICIPAL CODE 7B-Z.004 - QUEENS BROW ARCHIVAL BUREAU, CARTOGRAPHY DIVISION, OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC STATISTICS.

OVERVIEW -

BEST KNOWN FOR THE ONLY PASSABLE TERRAIN TO CROSS THE DIVIDE OF THE PERILOUS GROL-NAC AND NYLETAK MOUNTAIN RANGES; LIES A 247 LEAGUE HIGHWAY THAT TWISTS AND TURNS THROUGH WHAT AT SOME POINTS ARE 4 MILE HIGH SHEER CLIFF FACES, AND 2 HORSE WIDE GAPS. STILL AN INVALUABLE STRATEGIC POINT OF CONTROL; THE GREATER REGION HAS BECOME RENOWN SINCE THE DREAD LORD, THE DEMI-LICH RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR* TOOK CONTROL OF THE ANCIENT FORTRESS THAT CONTROLS THE PASS: THE FANG. NOW, FOR THE PAST SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS, LITTLE OF THE COLOR SPECTRUM IS SAID TO COME TO THE REGION. FEW WITH LIFE-FORCE TAKE BREATH WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE DEMI-LICH; IN THESE SHEER PEAKS, SYSTEM OF SHATTERED GORGES, AND THE TWISTED CHASM GRAND ARMIES MARCH AROUND FOR WEEKS ON END TO AVOID... A REALM OF CERTAIN DOOM.



* REF TO APPENDIX 9

GEOGRAPHIC POINTS OF INTEREST -

THE FANG: ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED AS AN IMPENETRABLE FORTRESS TO GUARD THE PASS, IT WAS DESIGNED TO HOUSE THE LOYAL OFFICERS TO CONTROL THE ORIGINAL PASS FROM ABOVE AND BELOW. NOW OCCUPIED BY THE DEMI-LICH, THE TOWER ABOVE HANGS FROM THE ROCK FORMATIONS, WHILE THE OVER-REACHING BUTTE KEEP LIES BELOW.

ONCE KNOWN FOR THEIR DEVOUT BELIEFS OF AID AND ACTS OF BRAVERY, THE LOYAL OFFICERS RODE WYVERNS FROM DENS IN FORTRESS ABOVE; AND TREMENDOUS ARMORED STEEDS BELOW. NOW, HUNDREDS REMAIN IN SKELETAL UNLIFE; STILL PREPARED TO RIDE IN COMMAND OF THE DREAD LORD. OVER THE HUNDREDS OF YEARS THIS FORTRESS HAS BORN HOME TO THE UNSPEAKABLE ACTS ITS UN-LIVING TENANT HAS PERFORMED; BEARING THE FORTRESS ITSELF TO TRANSMOGRIFY MORE SO TO RESEMBLE A MASSIVE FANG, BATHED IN ULTRAVIOLET ENERGY... DRAINING LIFE TO FUEL THE FOCAL POINT OF THE DREAD LORD.

FOREVER PEAK: THE HIGHEST PEAK OF THE REGION, THIS JUTTING ROCK TOWERS FAR OVER THE REST. FOR ENDLESS GENERATIONS IN THE PAST, IT WAS SOJOURN TO MANY ASPIRING WIZARD ABLE TO GAZE INTO THE AETHER FROM IT'S FORMIDABLE PEAK. NOW ADJACENT TO THE ROCK FORMATIONS THAT FORM THE FOUNDATION OF THE FANG; DEEP WITHIN WAS THE ORIGINAL FALL BACK POINT FOR THE LOYAL OFFICERS GARRISONED THERE. WITHIN, THE PEAK IS SAID TO HOUSE THE ZEILGEVER, A DEVICE DESIGNED TO DESTROY THE PASS BY THE LOYAL OFFICERS IF ALL WAS LOST... AN UNTHINKABLE, SCORCHED EARTH, LAST STRIKE, IN WHICH NONE SURVIVE. HIDDEN FROM THE VIEW OF EVIL, THIS RUMORED DEVICE IS SAID TO COME FROM THE STARS THEMSELVES.

THE MONITOR: 190 LEAGUES ABOVE, THIS MASSIVE CLOCKWORK PLATFORM STATION WAS PLACED IN GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT BY ACT OF RITUAL MAGICKS AND PRECISE ENGINEERING DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FANG. THEREIN, THE VARIOUS LENSES AND ANTENNA RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE COMPLICATED ENCHANTED CLOCKWORK SYSTEMS LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE FORTRESS.

WHILE ONCE A BENIGN CREATION MEANT TO ALERT TRAVELERS IN NEED AND WHERE REINFORCEMENTS MAY BE NEEDED; IT IS NOW A TWISTED SYSTEM OF SCRYING AND TRANSPORT FOR THE GREYS, AGENT SPIES OF THE DEMI-LICH.

MARKERS: THE ORIGINAL ENGINEERS OF THE HIGHWAY PLACED THESE MEGALITHIC LEAGUE MARKERS TO ASSIST IN TRAVEL. FOR EVERY 10 LEAGUES, LIES A HOSTEL (RANDOMLY DETERMINED CONDITION, ROLL 1D100 TO DETERMINE % GRADE OF HOSPITABLENESS). IF THE STRUCTURE IS ABOVE A 76% GRADE, IT SHELTERS TRAVELERS FROM BEING NOTICED DURING THE NIGHT. HOSTELS BETWEEN 22 & 75% INCUR RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE AS LISTED BELOW. THOSE HOSTELS RATED 21% AND WORSE INCUR A RANDOMLY DETERMINED ENCOUNTER COMPRISING 3D14 HD TOTAL OF UNDEAD IN THE NIGHT IF UTILIZED. UNDEAD TABLES MAY BE CREATED BY THE JUDGE, OR CHOSEN FROM THE TABLE BELOW.

ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONALITIES OF NOTE -

BELLOD: POP 1,457: FORMERLY THE COMMUNE VILLAGE OF A LOST ORDER OF MONKS, BUILT INTO THE SIDE OF THE CHASM WALL. ONCE, THE VILLAGE SUPPLIED ALL THE NEEDS OF THE LOYAL OFFICERS GARRISONED AT THE FANG. KNOWN FOR THEIR SKILL IN THE CRAFTING OF BLADES AND ARMOR, THEIR PRESENCE WAS KEY. NOW ONLY THE SPECTERS, PHANTOMS AND SHADES OF THE MONKS REMAIN; CONTINUING THEIR TRADES IN UN-LIFE IN SERVICE TO THE DEMI-LICH. OCCASIONALLY, A GHOSTLY ARMED CARAVAN CAN BE SEEN DELIVERING SUPPLIES TO THE THRALLS AND ALLIES OF THE DREAD LORD.

CAVERNS OF BYEK'GTT: POP 5,666: STRETCHING BENEATH IN INCALCULABLE DIRECTIONS IS THIS TROGLODYTE SETTLEMENT. THE BYEK'GTT CLAIM ALL THEY FIND IN THEIR UNDER-DOMAIN, AND GUARD THE UNDER-PASSES FROM INTRUDERS INTO THE OVERLAND. LEAD BY GOMD THE BLACK, A RUTHLESS DESPOT BOUND IN CONTRACT TO THE DEMI-LICH. IT IS SAID THE DRONING CHANTS CAN BE HEARD IN ALL DIRECTIONS, AS THE WITCHES OF THE CLAN CEASELESSLY ATTEMPT TO RESURRECT THE LIVING AVATAR OF THE TROGLODYTE GOD.



TALES OF CONCERN -

WHEN MAKING THE COMPLETELY UNADVISED JOURNEY THROUGH THIS HORRIBLE REALM, ONE MAY EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER (ROLL 1D7/5 HOURS OF TRAVEL, IF A "1", ROLL 1D16 ON TABLE BELOW):

1. **GREYS:** AGENTS OF THE DREAD LORD LAY IN WAIT, WHO HAVE PREPARED AN AMBUSH TO OBSERVE THE INTENTIONS OF TRESPASSERS; WHILE THEY STAY OUT OF SIGHT (DC 14 INT TO SPOT) 2D5 HIDE, AND ATTACK IF APPROACHED. (ROLL 1D4: 1. A DOLL LAYS ACROSS A PARALYTIC MINE, RANGE 30' DC 13 FORT SAVE TO RESIST 2D5 ROUNDS OF PARALYZATION 2. A LEPER BEGS FOR HELP, WHOM EXPLODES IN A SHOWER BLOOD IF TOUCHED, BLINDING ALL IN 30' FOR 2D5 ROUNDS 3. A SHINING KNIGHT PLEDGES FEALTY, ONLY TO TURN ON THE PARTY WHEN GUARD IS DROPPED 4. ZOMBIFIED VERSIONS OF THE PARENTS OF EACH PARTY MEMBER SHAMBLE FORTH, ATTEMPTING TO HUG AND BITE THEIR CHILDREN)
2. **MAGNETIC WAVES:** FOR THE NEXT 2D5 LEAGUES, RARE EARTH DEPOSITS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO PASS. MOVEMENT REDUCED BY 5 TIMES IF ATTEMPTING TO POSSESS ANY METALLIC ITEMS, REPRESENTING THE TIME TAKEN TO AVAIL. 20% CHANCE PER HOUR IN THIS ZONE THAT A RANDOM ITEM IS PERMANENTLY AFFIXED TO CHASM WALL.
3. **WYVERNS:** STRIKING OUT FROM THEIR PENS IN THE FANG; 2D3 OF THE WINGED BEASTS PATROL OVERHEAD, STRIKING SPOTTED TRESPASSERS FROM ABOVE.

4. **LORD OLAR DOUGAL:** THIS 7HD CHAMPION CAVALIER MAKES HIS WAY ATTEMPTING TO ASSIST TRAVELERS WHO PROVE WORTHY; BY USE OF HIS RING OF UN-LIFE AND PHASE ARMOR.
5. **TROGLODYTE PATROL:** 3D14 HEAVILY ARMED TROGLODYTES APPEAR FROM HIDDEN CAVES, LEAD BY A CLAN LIEUTENANT.
6. **RADIATION ZONE:** THIS 5 LEAGUE ZONE IS AFFECTED BY THE MONITORING STATION IN ORBIT. ALL LIVING MATTER MUST MAKE DC 14 FORT SAVE OR TAKE 1D5 STA DAMAGE PER DAY REMAINING IN ZONE.
7. **LOYAL OFFICERS:** THESE UNDEAD REMNANTS OF THE FORMER CAVALIERS OF THE FANG ARREST THE LIVING, KILLING THOSE WHO RESIST. MOUNTED UPON ARMORED SKELETAL STEEDS, 5D7 OF THESE 5HD SKELETONS (PG. 426 DCCRPG, +5 TO ALL STATS) DON PLATE MAIL AND TATTERED BANNERS FROM THEIR FORMER CALLING.
8. **WIGHTS:** UN-HOLY STATUES REST IN DOZENS OF ALCOVES ALONG THIS STRETCH; THE FAVORITE HAUNT OF 2D7 WIGHTS.
9. **LOST:** THE PARTY LEAD MUST MAKE 4 SUCCESSIVE, SUCCESSFUL DC 15 INT CHECKS TO NAVIGATE THIS SEEMINGLY ENDLESS SYSTEM OF TWISTS AND TURNS. EACH FAILURE COSTS THE TRAVELERS 2 HOURS IN ILLOGICAL WRONG TURNS AND PERILOUSLY PERCHED DEAD ENDS.
10. **ILLUSORY OASIS:** DC 18 WILL SAVE TO RESIST BEING DRAWN INTO AN INVITING ROAD HOUSE; WHERE ILLUSIONS ROB YOU OF YOUR SECRETS. HOURLY SAVES TO BREAK ILLUSION, WHERE A MAD-HOUSE OF TERROR UNWINDS UPON YOU.
11. **WILL-O-WISPS:** THE PATH AHEAD IS BLOCKED BY 2D7 OF THESE ORBS, MOVING BETWEEN PEAKS.
12. **SWIRLING PORTAL:** AN IVORY-EBON STRIPED, SPIRALING PORTAL OFFERS TO BRING THE PARTY TO THE FANG TO CHALLENGE THE DEMI-LICH. AN AGENT OF OPPOSITION, IF DENIED, STEPS FORTH TO ATTACK: QOXOQ, TYPE IV DEMON (PG. 401 DCCRPG)

13. **CRASH SITE:** THIS PARTIALLY BURNING NON-FUNCTIONAL METALLIC CRAFT IS FILLED WITH 4D5 ALIEN GHOULS (PG. 414 DCCRPG, +1HD & +3 AC DUE TO ALIEN GENOME/TECH).
14. **GHOSTLY ARMS SHIPMENT:** GUARDED BY 4D7 LOYAL OFFICERS, AND LEAD BY THE PHANTOMS AND SHADES BEARING THE PRIDE OF BELLOD; THIS CARAVAN CONTAINS WEAPONS AND ARMOR INTENDED FOR THE BONE CRUSHER GOBLINS OF GORL-NAC.



15. **EERIE SILENCE:** A MADDENING, DEAFENING SILENCE EXISTS HERE FOR 1D5 LEAGUES. FOR EVERY HOUR WITHIN THIS ZONE, REDUCE ACTION DIE BY ONE FOR 2D3 HOURS PER FAILURE (DC 14 FORT SAVE TO RESIST).
16. **AVALANCHE:** REVEALS BURIAL ENTRANCE IN CHASM WALL CONTAINING 1D5 MUMMIES (PG. 422 DCCRPG). LEAVING BURIAL CHAMBER UNSANCTIFIED CREATES A STALKER OF THE DOOMED (VISIT SPELLBURN.COM/DUNGEON-DENIZENS FOR DETAILS AND STATISTICS).

THRALL'S CURSE: IF A LIVING, SENTIENT BEING FINDS ITS WAY OUT OF THE PASS WITH THEIR OWN BREATH; THEY TAKE WITH THEM THE SEEDS OF A CURSE. A SILENT KNOWING CHOICE ENTERS THE MIND OF THE VICTIM: SUBMIT TO WILL OF THE DEMI-LICH AS AN AGENT ABROAD, OR RESIST. THOSE WHO SUBMIT, CHANGE ALIGNMENT TO CHAOS; AND ARE COMPELLED AT RANDOM CHOICE MOMENTS TO LEAD OTHERS BACK TO THE PASS. THOSE WHO RESIST MUST SUCCEED IN 3 SUCCESSIVE CHALLENGES IN AS MANY DAYS (DAY 1 DC13 WILL TO RESIST, DAY 2 DC14, DAY 3 DC15) OR PERMANENTLY LOSE A PIECE OF THEIR SOUL. THIS LOST PIECE BECOMES A NEW GREY WITHIN THE PASS, THE VICTIM NOW LOSING ALL COLOR; TAKING 1D3 PERMANENT STAMINA DAMAGE. THE VICTIM ALWAYS KNOWS THE LOCATION OF THE GREY, AND MAY QUEST TO DESTROY IT; OR HAVE THE CURSE REMOVED BY A LAW ALIGNED CLERIC OF 6HD OR HIGHER. A REMOVED CURSE DESTROYS THE GREY COPY IN THE PASS.

DENIZENS OF CAUTION -

IT IS RUMORED THAT THE DREAD LORD OF THE CHASM HAS EYES EVERYWHERE:

GREY: INIT +4; ATK +6 CHROMATIC DRAIN; AC 13; HD 4D7;
MV FLY 60; ACT 1D24; SP UN-DEAD TRAITS, IMMUNE TO NON-MAGICAL WEAPONS, MITOSIS, FADE; SV FORT +4, REF +3, WILL +7; AL C.

AGENTS OF THE DEMI-LICH, THESE UN-LIVING FORMS COMPRISE THAT SLIVER OF A SOUL EACH HAS TO GIVE UP TO BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE PASS UN-CURSED. INCORPOREAL, GREYS CAN PASS THROUGH SOLID MATTER, ARE UNHARMED BY NON-MAGICAL WEAPONS AND MAY FLY. WHILE FLYING, THEY MUST BE WITHIN 15' OF A SOLID SURFACE. IF THE MONITORING STATION IS OPERATIONAL, THEY MAY FADE TO THE FANG BY USE OF AN ACTION DIE. EVER UN-LIVING THEY ARE IMMUNE TO ANY MENTAL EFFECTS, COLD DAMAGE, SLEEP, CHARM, AND PARALYSIS SPELLS.

THESE GREY FORMS RESEMBLE THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THE REALM, STILL BREATHING ELSEWHERE. CHIEFLY SPIES, AND ZEALOUSLY SUBSERVIENT, THEY SEEK TO DRAW THE LIFE-FORCE FROM THE LIVING IF SO PRESSED INTO COMBAT. THOSE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE SUBJECT TO IT, SILVER EYES FLASH TO THE FACE AS IT SEEKS TO DRAIN THE "COLOR" FROM ITS VICTIM (WILL SAVE TO RESIST, ELSE LOOSE 1D3 LUCK PERMANENTLY FOR EVERY 3 POINTS THE SAVING THROW WAS MISSED, ROUNDED DOWN: 3D3 LUCK IF SAVE MISSED BY 10).

GREYS WHO GATHER 5 LUCK POINTS MAY DUPLICATE THEMSELVES BY MITOSIS AS A FREE ACTION, CREATING A DUPLICATE GREY AT FULL HEALTH. IF ONE IS ABLE TO DESTROY ALL FORMS RESEMBLING A SURVIVOR, THAT SURVIVOR WHERE THEY MAY EXIST MUST MAKE A DC14 FORT SAVE TO REGAIN WHAT IS LOST, ELSE REMAIN COLOR-LESS AND SUFFER 1D3 STA DAMAGE.



THE DREAD LORD:



IT IS SAID THAT WITHIN THE INNER SANCTUM OF THIS UNHOLY PLACE, **RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR'S** CENTER OF POWER EXISTS IN ITS OWN SPACE-TIME, ACCESSIBLE ONLY FROM WITHIN THE FANG. THERE, HIS FOCAL POINT OF CONTROLLING THIS DOMAIN LIES WITHIN A PLATINUM PENTAGRAM: A PILLAR OF SKULLS FROM EVERYONE WHO DEFIED HIM IN THE FUTURE, PAST AND PRESENT. THE PILLAR GLOWS AN ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT, AND THE EYES OF EVERY SKULL THE VISION OF POTENTIAL TOMORROWS.

RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR, DEMILICH: INIT +7; ATK CLAW +8 MELEE (1D8+1) AND/OR NAWA-TA, SOUL PHYLACTERY MEDALLION +12 RANGED AND/OR WAND OF A THOUSAND PUNISHMENTS +12 RANGED SPECIAL AND/OR SP; AC 15; HD 12D10; HP 108; MV 35; ACT 2D24, 1D16; SP UN-DEAD TRAITS, SPELLS, ANIMATE/COMMAND UN-DEAD, DIMENSIONAL PORTAL, ETHEREAL VISAGE, CONTROL FAMILIAR; SV FORT +6, REF +7, WILL +8; AL C.

SPECIAL ABILITIES -

SPELLS: RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR'S REPERTOIRE OF SPELLS IS RENOWN. THE JUDGE CAN SELECT ANY SPELL KNOWN TO EXIST FOR YOUR ENCOUNTER TO A COUNT OF 21 UNIQUE SPELLS MEMORIZED BY THE DEMILICH THAT DAY. HIS SPELL CHECK IS +12, AND CL IS 10 FOR PURPOSES OF COUNTERSPELL, ETC. CONSIDER HIM TO HAVE A POOL OF 35 POINTS SPELLBURN, FOR EVERY 5 POINTS USED, REDUCE HIS FORT & REF SAVES BY 1 EACH.

ANIMATE, COMMAND UN-DEAD: RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR CAN CREATE, COMMAND, AND ENSLAVE UN-DEAD BEINGS AT A RANGE OF 500'. WITH THE USE OF HIS FOCAL POINT, THIS POWER CAN BE EXTENDED ELSEWHERE INDIRECTLY. LIVING CREATURES THAT DIE WITHIN THIS RANGE CAN BE ANIMATED AND TURNED INTO AN UN-DEAD CREATURE DEPENDING ON ITS HIT DICE. CREATURES CREATED MAY BE TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT CONTINGENT ON THE RESULTS. CREATURES OR SENTIENT UN-DEAD CAN BE CONTROLLED, OR POTENTIALLY PERMANENTLY DOMINATED. USE THE TURN UN-DEAD TABLE AND INVERT THE RESULTS TO DETERMINE THE PERMANENCE OF THE CREATION, COMMAND, OR CONTROL OF SENTIENT UN-DEAD CREATURES WITH AN ACTION DIE OF 1D24+12.

DIMENSIONAL PORTAL: PLANE-WALKING IN HIS MORTAL LIVING DAYS HAS EXTENDED TO NEW DOORS, AS RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR CAN CREATE A PORTAL AND STEP THROUGH IT TO A RANDOM LOCATION WITHIN 200'. THE RANDOM LOCATION IS DETERMINED ON AN X, Y, Z COORDINATE DEPENDENT ON THE CLOSEST OPEN LOCATION WITH A SOLID FLOOR, USING 2 SETS OF PERCENTILE DICE PER COORDINATE FROM A CONSTANT TO DETERMINE LOCATION. A DC15 ON A 1D24+12 ACTION DIE CHECK CAN PERMIT HIM TO CREATE THE PORTAL ANYWHERE HE KNOWS WITHIN THAT DISTANCE. FUMBLE CAUSES THE ABILITY TO BE LOST FOR THE DAY, REQUIRING 3 POINTS SPELLBURN TO USE AGAIN POST-FUMBLE. THIS ABILITY ACTS AS BOTH A SPELLCASTING ACTION, AND A MOVEMENT ACTION.

ETHEREAL VISAGE: WITH ONE ACTION OR AS A REACTION WHEN HIS PHYSICAL FORM IS CLOSE TO DEATH; THE DEMILICH MAY TRANSMUTE HIMSELF INTO AN ETHEREAL FORM FOR 15 ROUNDS. WHILE IN THIS FORM, HE CAN ONLY BE HARMED BY SPELL DAMAGING EFFECTS, AND RESTRAINED BY CLEARLY TYPED CONSTRAINTS EFFECTING INCORPOREAL BEINGS. WHILE IN THIS FORM, HE MAY CAST SPELLS BUT AT ONLY ON A 1D16+8 ACTION DIE; AND CANNOT USE OBJECTS SUCH AS HIS WAND. HE HAS A FLY 40' MOVE, CAN PASS THROUGH ANY SOLID AND IS ONLY BLOCKED BY LEAD AND SILVER SUBSTANCES. THIS IS A DC 15 ABILITY, ACTION DIE 1D24+12. FOR EVERY 5 POINTS ABOVE 15 CLEARED, THIS ABILITY LASTS ANOTHER 15 ROUNDS (E.G. 26 SPELL CHECK = 45 ROUNDS). IF ATTACKED WITH LAW BASED HOLY WATER IN THIS FORM, A DC20 WILL SAVE IS REQUIRED OR HE REVERTS TO PHYSICAL FORM.

CONTROL FAMILIAR: IN ADDITION TO NORMAL FAMILIAR ABILITIES LISTED PER THE TYPED SPELL; ON A FREE ACTION, THE DEMILICH MAY PSYCHICALLY CONTROL REKYR THE NAHTANOJ. HE CAN CONTROL HIM, AND UTILIZE HIS SENSES WITHIN 5 MILES; OR ANYWHERE THROUGH HIS FOCAL POINT AS LONG AS HE REMAINS WITHIN THE PENTAGRAM.

NAWA-TA, SOUL PHYLACTERY MEDALLION: DEVOTING TWO DC 15 SPELLCHECKS IN ONE ROUND, RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR MAY ATTEMPT TO SNATCH THE SOUL AWAY FROM A SENTIENT BEING, STORING IT WITHIN HIS SOUL PHYLACTERY MEDALLION: NAWA-TA. THE EFFECT TAKES PLACE THE NEXT ROUND, OR ON THE 3RD ACTION DIE IF AVAILABLE. WITHIN 70', A CONE OF THICK WHITE SMOKE FIRES FROM THE CENTER OF THE MEDALLION AT THE INTENDED TARGET. THE THICK SMOKE MAKES LIMITED VISIBILITY ONLY POSSIBLE TO ADJACENT TARGETS WITHIN THE CONE EFFECT. THE TARGET MUST MAKE TWO SUCCESSIVE WILL SAVES, ONE AT DC 12, THEN ONE AT DC 15. IF YOU FAIL THE FIRST OR BOTH, YOU HAVE LOST YOUR SOUL. THE VICTIM'S BODY FAILS TO WISH TO LIVE AFTER 1D4 ROUNDS UNLESS RELEASED FROM NAWA-TA. IF A SENTIENT BEING DIES WITHIN THE PRESENCE OF HIM, HE MAY ONLY NEED ONE ACTION TO ATTEMPT TO SNATCH THE SOUL, REQUIRING A DC15 SPELLCHECK. WITH EACH SOUL THE MEDALLION STORES, HE GAINS +2 TO HIS SPELLCHECK, AND A MAGICAL BONUS TO HIS ARMOR CLASS.

IF HE HAPPENS TO CAPTURE THE SOUL OF A WIZARD, THIS BONUS IS DOUBLED. WITH A DC13 SPELLCHECK, HE CAN CONSUME ALL THE SOULS IN HIS MEDALLION AND HEAL TO FULL HEALTH.

WAND OF A THOUSAND PUNISHMENTS: THIS WAND, CRAFTED BY RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR HIMSELF WAS CREATED FROM THE SPINE OF THE OFFSPRING OF A DAEMON AND A UNICORN - AN EXPERIMENT THAT WAS DISASTROUS, AND SUCCESSFUL IN ITS OWN RIGHT. USE OF THE WAND REQUIRES A SUCCESSFUL CLASSIC INTELLIGENCE CHECK OF A 5TH LEVEL OR HIGHER WIZARD, OR DC15 THIEF "USE SCROLL" TO ACTIVATE EACH ROUND. FAILURE TO ACTIVATE THE WAND RENDERS IT INOPERABLE FOR 1D9 DAYS, AND A CRITICAL FUMBLE DESTROYS THE WAND - CAUSING A PHLOGISTON DISTURBANCE (CASTER IS FORCED TO CAST A SPELL VS. A SPELL ON CHART BELOW, JUDGE ROLLS FOR WAND'S SPELL CHECK+CL7+5) THEN EXPLODES FOR 5D7 POINTS OF DAMAGE CREATING A RIP IN SPACE TIME. THE WAND ITSELF HAS A SPELL CHECK OF 19, PLUS THE CASTER'S LEVEL, AND INT BONUS. IF THE BEARER HAS A 15 OR HIGHER INTELLIGENCE, HE CAN CHOOSE THE SPELL BELOW, OTHERWISE ROLL 1D5 PER USE:

1. FLAMING HANDS
2. MAGIC MISSILE
3. SCORCHING RAY
4. FIREBALL
5. LIGHTNING BOLT

A CRITICAL SUCCESS IN ACTIVATING THE WAND BESTOWS UN-DEAD HENCHMEN PERMANENTLY LOYAL TO THE BEARER IN ADDITION TO THE SPELLCASTING, ROLL 1D3:

1. 1D7 JUJU ZOMBIES
2. 1D5 GHAST
3. 1D3 WIGHTS

THE UN-DEAD ARE EITHER CREATED FROM NEARBY REMAINS, OR ARE THE CLOSEST CONVENIENT CREATURE TELEPORTED TO THE BEARERS LOCATION. THEY APPEAR AND ACT THE NEXT ROUND, SURROUNDING THE CASTER IF POSSIBLE, WITH ELITE MORALE.

WHILE THE BEARER HAS THE WAND IN HIS POSSESSION, THE UN-DEAD CAN BE PSYCHICALLY COMMANDED AS A FREE ACTION. IF THE WAND IS HELD BY ANOTHER, OR IS MORE THAN 5' AWAY FROM THE BEARER FOR MORE THAN 2 ROUNDS, ROLL 1D100:

- 1-20 THE UN-DEAD SUDDENLY VANISH, LEAVING BEHIND PERMANENTLY BURNED SHADOWS FROM WHERE THEY STOOD.
- 21-25 THE UN-DEAD ARE DESTROYED IN AN EXPLOSION OF POSITIVE ENERGY. ADJACENT TARGETS TAKE 3D6 DAMAGE: LAW CHARACTERS NO DAMAGE, NEUTRAL HALF, CHAOS FULL; DC15 WILL FOR HALF, POST ALIGNMENT DETERMINATION.
- 26-37 THE UN-DEAD EXPLODE, CAUSING 2D6 DAMAGE TO ALL ADJACENT TARGETS. DC10 STA CHECK FOR HALF.
- 38-40 THE UN-DEAD IMplode, PULLING ANYONE ADJACENT TO EACH CREATURE INTO THE 9 HELLS. DC15 AGI CHECK OR BE PULLED IN.
- 41-58 THE UN-DEAD REMAIN, UNLOYAL TO ANYONE, ACTING NEXT ROUND PER JUDGE'S DETERMINATION.
- 58-69 THE UN-DEAD REMAIN, LOYAL TO THE ORIGINAL BEARER OF THE WAND AT TIME OF BESTOWMENT.
- 70-73 THE UN-DEAD REMAIN, LOYAL TO WHOEVER BEARS THE WAND.
- 74-80 THE UN-DEAD REMAIN, TURNED TO STONE. BEARER GAINS CORRUPTION; ROLL 1D3: 1. MINOR, 2. MAJOR, 3. GREATER.
- 81-84 ARRIVAL. THE UN-DEAD REMAIN, AND AN ANGEL ARRIVES AND STARTS TO FIGHT THE CREATURES. PARTY MUST CHOOSE SIDES. IF THE ANGEL WINS, IT BESTOWS THE PARTY BOONS PER JUDGE'S DISCRETION. IF THE UN-DEAD WIN, THEY BECOME LOYAL TO THE ORIGINAL BEARER OF THE WAND AND THOSE

PRESENT AT THE TIME OF BESTOWMENT. A WRAITH APPEARS, PLEDGING FEALTY TO THE CHAMPION OF THE UN-DEAD.

85-90 CONTEST. A DEMON ARRIVES AND OFFERS THE BEARER 50 SMOLDERING GOLD COINS PER REMAINING UN-DEAD. THE DEMON IS TRUE TO HIS WORD AND PAYS IF ACCEPTED, IF DENIED HE FIGHTS THE BEARER AND ALLIES FOR THE UN-DEAD DISAPPEARING BEFORE THE FINAL DEATH BLOW IF DEFEATED, CURSING THE PARTY. THE BEARER AND ALLIES MAKE A MORTAL ENEMY.

91-98 IF THE ORIGINAL BEARER OF THE WAND BESTOWED UN-DEAD IS STILL OF MORTAL LIFE, HE MUST MAKE A DC 15 WILL SAVE OR BE TRANSMOGRIFIED INTO A WRAITH. ALL OBJECTS AT TIME OF FAIL TURN INTO ETHEREAL VARIANTS AND ARE SUBJECT TO THOSE EFFECTS PER JUDGE'S DISCRETION.

99-100 SPECIAL, THE JUDGE'S DISCRETION ON THE EVENT.

IN THE END DAYS OF THE NOW DEMILICH'S RESEARCH FOR ETERNAL UNLIFE, HE FOLLOWED SOME OF THE RESEARCH SET OUT IN ONE OF SEZREKAN'S LABORATORIES, DEEP IN THE DARK JUNGLE OF HAJZOT. THERE AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, HE CROSSED PATHS WITH THE KING OF THE REALM, THE LION OF LIONS: REKYR THE NAHTANOJ. ON THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH OF HIS 666TH YEAR, THE KING OF THE DARK JUNGLE MAY FEEL IT WAS CONTESTED WHO SOUGHT OUT WHOM. HOWEVER, ON THAT DAY, THE PAIR WERE BONDED BY FAMILIAR MAGICKS SEALING THE BOND THE LION QUESTED FOR, BONDING THEM TO HIS ETERNAL MASTER: RJ'NIMAJNEB~YOR. THE LION WILL FIGHT TO THE DEATH TO DEFEND HIS MASTER, AND USES CUNNING AND GUILLE TO DEFEND HIM USING GUERILLA TACTICS IF POSSIBLE.

REKYR THE NAHTANOJ, CORRUPTED LION FAMILIAR: INIT +7; ATK BITE +8 MELEE (2D5+2) AND/OR CLAW +8 MELEE (1D8+2) AND/OR SP; AC; HD 6D8; HP 42; MV 60; ACT 2D20; SP EDRITCH ROAR, COUNTENANCE OF THE DARK JUNGLE; SV FORT +7, REF +9, WILL +6; AL C.

SPECIAL ABILITIES -

ELDRITCH ROAR: THIS MENACING, DEAFENING ROAR THAT DISCOMBOBULATES THE SENSES IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS MIGHTY LION. ALL NON-ALLIES WITHIN 100' RADIUS DC 15 FORT SAVE OR BE SUBJECT TO THE INTENSE BLAST OF SOUND. FAILURE RESULTS IN -4 TO ALL ROLLS, CAUSING DEAFNESS FOR 1D4 HOURS.

COUNTENANCE OF THE DARK JUNGLE: MEETING THE GAZE OF THE DARK KING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LEGEND WELL HEADED. IF REKYR THE NAHTANOJ IS ABLE TO LOCK EYES WITH AN OPPONENT WITHIN 40', HE CAN ATTEMPT PSYCHIC DOMINATION. THE OPPONENT MUST MAKE A DC 13 WILL SAVE OR BECOME DOMINATED, UNABLE TO ACT, FROZEN IN FEAR. FOR EVERY POINT THAT THE VICTIM MISSES HIS CHECK, IS HOW MANY ROUNDS THIS DOMINATION REMAINS IN EFFECT. IF MISSED BY MORE THAN 5 POINTS, HE CAN COMMAND YOU TO DO A SIMPLE ACTION (DROP YOUR WEAPON, LIE DOWN, ETC).

THANKS TO

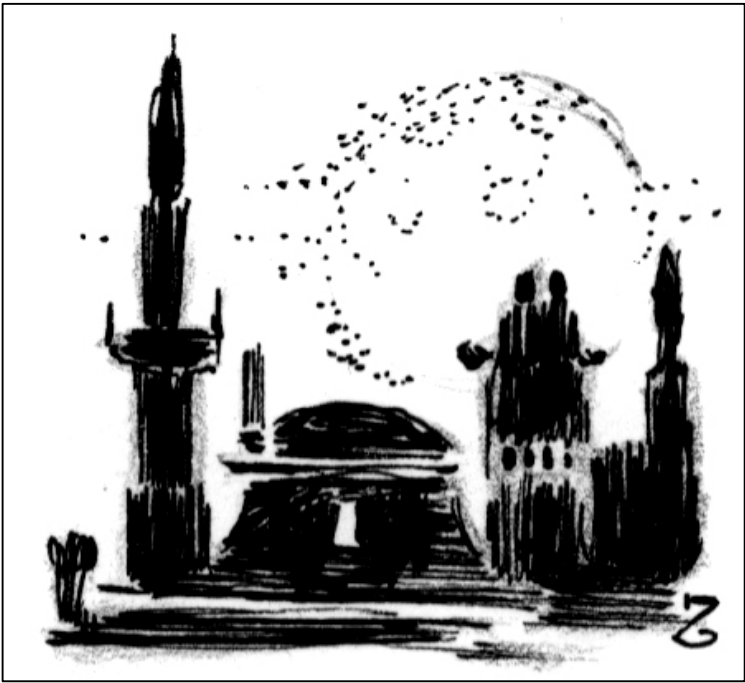
KEVIN WOJCIECHOWSKI

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

**ERICK WUJCIK
1951 - 2008**

Chirumancy

By James MacGeorge



Sometimes, the Gods cannot save you.

Even Clerics, despite their best efforts, cannot always put back what man has torn asunder. Even the best of men can be left bleeding and dying, crying for someone to save them. It is times like these when those who don't know better call upon the dark art of Chirumancy.

Damned souls all, Chirurgeons can be found haunting the back alleys of fallen cities and tumbledown shacks in cursed woods, offering their services for a pittance. Their services come cheap because each patient represents an opportunity for them to expand their weird knowledge of life, and push the boundaries of both the possible and ethical. Masters of the arts of dark surgery and carcinogen injection, limb transplants, and skinshaping, they'll put an adventurer back together, but the cost often goes beyond the coin.

Their methods are terrifying - wounds sealed with carcinomas, lost limbs replaced with the spare parts from corpses, with no guarantee that the donor was willing, or even human. Their patients will be healed, but over time, they become unrecognizable.

Many realize too late that the Chirurgeon's cure can prove just as fatal as the wounds they heal.

When visiting a Chirurgeon, the patient will be healed 1d6 hit points for every level they possess (1d4 for zero level characters). However, they also roll 1d3 per hit point healed on the following chart, with a +1 for every time they have previously used a Chirurgeon's services. If the result of this second roll is equal to or greater than double the first roll, add another d3 to the total.

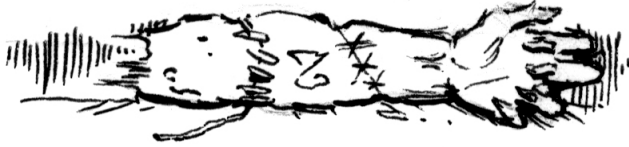


- 1 Chronic incontinence - in any stressful situation, such as combat, there is a 1 in 10 chance that the character will lose control of their bladder.
- 2 Persistent Cough, -1 Stamina for 1d3 weeks.
- 3 Persistent hoarseness, -1 to any check involving social interaction for 1d2 weeks.
- 4 Fever, -1 Strength and Stamina for 1d4 days.

- 5 Jaundice, -1 to to any check involving social interaction and -1 to Stamina for 1d3 weeks.
- 6 Fatigue, -2 Stamina for 2d4 days.
- 7 Chronic headaches -2 to Intelligence for 1d6 hours.
- 8 Easy bruising - the blood vessels have been damaged. Take an extra 1d3 points of damage from blunt attacks.
- 9 Tooth loss - every time the character rests, there is a 1 in 10 chance they will lose a tooth. After 6 teeth are lost, there is a cumulative -1 penalty to social interaction checks for each additional tooth lost.
- 10 Bleeding Gums - character's gums bleed constantly, causing automatic failure of any social interaction checks.
- 11 Bleeding sores - sores last for 1d4 days, and reduce hit points by 1.
- 12 Cyst Outbreak - numerous cysts form, causing permanent 1d6 loss of Personality.
- 13 Periodic Blindness - Any critical failure has the added effect of blindness for 1d6 turns.
- 14 Vomiting Blood - Any critical failure has the added effect of vomiting blood, loss of 1d4 Stamina for 1d6 turns.
- 15 Brittle Bones - any attack that hits for maximum damage breaks a bone, causing loss of 1d4 points of Strength and Agility.
- 16 Hemiparesis - In stressful situations, such as combat, there is a 1 in 10 chance that one half of the body becomes paralyzed - 1/2 Agility for 1d4 rounds (rounded down).

- 17 Ataxia - In stressful situations, such as combat, there is a 1 in 10 chance that balance is severely disrupted along with severe incoordination - 1/4 Agility for 1d4 rounds (rounded down).
- 18 Dementia - in any situation where a character is required to remember something, there is a cumulative 1 in 100 chance that the character will not be able to recall the information.
- 19 Seizures - A roll of Natural 2 on any skill or attribute roll results in seizures - immobilized for 1d2 turns.
- 20 Macrocephaly - head swells with fluid -1 Agility, Intelligence and social interaction checks.
- 21 Squamous cell carcinoma - skin becomes red, scaly and inflexible: -1 Agility, -3 to social interaction checks.
- 22 Bone tumor - lose 1d3 points per month from Strength, see Tumor Chart below.
- 23 Lung Tumor - lose 1d3 points per month from Stamina, see Tumor Chart below.
- 24 Brain Tumor - lose 1d3 points per month from each attribute, see Tumor Chart below.
- 25 Tumor Outbreak - 1d3 tumors, see Tumor Chart below.
- 26 Roll 1d4 on random body part chart.
- 27 Roll 1d6 on random body part chart.
- 28 Roll 1d8 on random body part chart.
- 29 Roll 1d10 on random body part chart.

30+ Roll 2d6 on random body part chart, major infection - 1/2 Strength and Stamina permanently.



Random Body Part Replacement Chart:

- 1 Human Arm.
- 2 Human Leg.
- 3 Human Arm, wrong side (2nd left arm, etc) -1 Agility.
- 4 Dwarven Arm - +1 Strength, -1 Agility (if character is a dwarf, it is replaced with a human arm -1 Strength).
- 5 Dwarven Leg -2 Agility (if the character is a human, it is replaced with a human leg - same result).
- 6 Lizardman Arm -1 Personality, +1 Agility.
- 7 Lizardman Leg -1 Agility, + 1 Strength.
- 8 Insectoid Limb - roll 1d4, that limb is replaced, + 1 Agility, -4 Personality.
- 9 Antennae replace eyes -4 Personality, + 1 Agility
- 10 Tail, -2 Agility for 1d6 weeks, then +1 Agility thereafter.
- 11 Transplant rejection - 1 randomly determined limb is gone, permanently.

12 Brain transplant, character is now 1 Human 2. Elf
3 Dwarf 4 Lizardman 5 Insectoid 6 Brain Damage -
reroll, Intelligence reduced by half. Reroll all
stats except Intelligence using 3d5 instead of
3d6. Other than that, this change is cosmetic in
nature, and does not affect any racial attributes
the character possessed before the transplant.

Tumor Chart - for each tumor received, there is a
cumulative chance of death, resolved once per
game session. Roll for each tumor upon discovery
to determine its size:

- 1 T1 - 1% chance of death per session;
- 2 T2 - 2% chance of death per session;
- 3 T3 - 3% chance of death per session;
- 4 T4 - 4% chance of death per session;

At the end of each session, total up the percentages
for all tumors, and roll percentile dice to see
if the tumor is ultimately fatal.

The Crawling Castle of Grumblethorn and Other Architectural Horrors

By Tim Callahan

Perhaps the manor house is under attack by deranged beasts, or maybe the tower is haunted by the ghosts of extradimensional wizards, or the dungeon - surely the dungeon - is riddled with speaking bones and troubled oozes. But when you're pulling together your Dungeon Crawl Classics campaign or improvising your one-shot, sometimes you need more than those traditional locations to terrorize the PCs. Sometimes you need a Crawling Castle of Grumblethorn. Or a Defiling Dome of Blacksmere. Or a Weeping Hut of Hexageddon. As you see fit.

Judges who throw caution (and funky dice) to the wind will want to roll randomly for each column of Table TCCoG-AH to discover what unique architectural horror emerges from the landscape just over the next ridge. Other Judges may want to craft their own structures out of the options below. Depending on how evocative the result, additional development may or may not be needed. Some Judges will, of course, want to map everything out. Others may want to let the structure emerge more organically from play. Whatever the result, you may warn your players: this ain't the borderlands, and that's no humble keep. They won't heed your warnings anyway.



Table TCCoG-AH

Roll 1d7 on each column

	What?	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
1	Crawling	Castle	of Grumblethorn	Occasionally this structure transforms, the main doorway turns into a mouth, its front-facing windows turn into eyes, and the structure transforms into a massive giant covered with architectural detail and thirsts for the blood of wizards. It smells them from miles away and strides toward the largest spellcasting contingent in the area. Due to the magical gyroscopic nature of its interior, no one inside any of its rooms can feel the movement of the structure. Note that there is a 20% chance the structure will transform in this way before the PCs approach, and a 50% chance if the PCs are inside. Increase this number by 10% for each wizard or cleric (or equivalent spellcaster) in the party.	The third room the PCs enter is covered with magical writings, all across the walls, floor, and ceiling. If <i>read magic</i> is cast, the spellcaster can use the writings in the room as if it were a scroll with 1d3 random level 1 wizard spells, 1d3 random level 2 wizard spells, and 1 random level 3 wizard spell. The spells can only be cast from inside the room. Any attempt to copy the spells into a spellbook (or the equivalent) will result in the spell being cast against the scribing spellcaster in any way the Judge deems appropriate, with the Judge rolling as if with a +8 spell check.

Table TCCoG-AH (con't)

Roll 1d7 on each column

	What?	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
2	Growing	Keep	of Slitherstone	<p>The ancient magicks that crafted this structure imbued it with a demonic defense system, with sigils in the walls that act as demon spawning portals. Each room entered has a 25% chance of containing one of these portals, regardless of whatever else is in the room. If a portal is present, 2d5 glimmering spider demons (that appear encrusted with gemstones) emerge at the start of every turn that a living presence is detected in the room.</p> <p>Gemstone Spider Demon: Init +2; Atk bite +2 (1d5 plus special) or webspinning +1 (special); AC 13; HD 3d8; MV 30'; Act d20; SP bite attack drains an additional 1d5 HP and 1d5 Strength points from victim unless a DC 10 Fort save is made, webspinning attack turns the victim into a marionette under the control of the demon unless a Will save vs. the attack roll is made; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; AL L. Note: the "gemstones" of the spider demon skin turn to dust if they are taken out of the structure, and the spider demons die instantly if transported outside of the structure.</p>	<p>On the wall opposite the entryway, a large oval frame hangs, covered by a ratty blanket. If the blanket is removed, a bloodshot eyeball begins to protrude from the oval frame, and anyone looking toward it must make a DC 16 Will save or become affected in one of the following ways (determined randomly via a d4 roll for each victim): (1) paralyzed for 2d8 turns, (2) permanently turned into an ivory statue, (3) permanently shrunk to 50% of normal size (all equipment included), and all physical attributes reduced by half - rounded down - as well, (4) rainbow-hued bat-wings emerge from the character's back, offering no flying ability but permanently increasing Will saves by +2 and permanently decreasing AC by -2.</p>

Table TCCoG-AH (con't)

Roll 1d7 on each column

	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
3	Defiling Tower	of Hexageddon	<p>When the first PC in a party makes contact with the exterior of the structure or enters through any open portal, the sentient structure immediately contacts that PC - and only that PC - to ask for assistance. The structure feasts on necrotic energy and if a dozen undead are "fed" into its open door, the PC will be rewarded with a boon with a cost: whenever the PC touches a magical item, it will double in power, but the item can never leave the PCs hand again unless the magic in the item is <i>dispelled</i>.</p>	<p>The first time a character touches an interior wall (while searching for secret doors, or traps, or otherwise) a loose stone block or wood panel falls away, revealing a 2' tall red-and-orange-striped coral imp, curled into a fetal position. The imp is extremely lazy and narcissistic but will become the loyal guardian familiar of any PC who shows any kindness towards it. It will attack any PC or creature who attempts to harm it, or its master.</p> <p>Coral Imp: Init +2 (or as master); Atk claws +1 (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d6; HP 11; MV 40'; Act d20; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will -1; AL C. Note: any "master" it adopts gains 11 HP when it becomes a familiar, but if the imp dies, the master loses 22 HP.</p>

Table TCCoG-AH (con't)

Roll 1d7 on each column

	What?	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
4	Tunneling	Hut	of Crystalgrim	<p>This structure is a construct of Azi Dahaka, mimicking the divine being's presence on the material plane. In addition to whatever features the structure has, the power of Azi Dahaka manifests in this way: in each room the PCs enter, the structure attacks the PCs with the next successive <i>invoke</i> patron result from the Azi Dahaka listing on page 370 of the DCC Core Rulebook. Thus, the first room that's entered would attack the PCs with the 12-13 result, and the next room would attack with the 14-17 result, etc. The "caster" is the structure itself, and the Judge makes all decisions about targets, etc. The structure's motivation is to repel intruders, and if any characters survive past the 32+ room result on the <i>invoke</i> patron table, the PC with the highest combined Intelligence + current Hit Points gains <i>Patron Bond</i> (and <i>Invoke Patron</i>) with Azi Dahaka, even if the PC is not a spellcaster.</p>	<p>Vines dotted with blue-green barbed leaves cover the interior walls of this structure. Some rooms near the entrances and exits appear overgrown, while the vine density is less intense in rooms deeper inside the structure. The vines are illusory, remnants of enchantments that act as a kind of nervous system for this structure. Incidental contact with the vines will yield no effect, but if any character intentionally interacts with the vines by touch (even if wearing gloves) the character will take 1d8 damage and gain a Greater Corruption: Roll 1d10 on the Greater Corruption Table on page 119 of the DCC Core Rulebook. In addition, the contact with its enchanted nervous system will cause the structure to shake violently, and anyone standing must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid falling to the ground.</p>

Table TCCoG-AH (con't)

Roll 1d7 on each column

	What?	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
5	Hovering	Pyramid	of Penitence	<p>This structure was built with corrupted divine magic, and the souls of great warriors of the past enchant the beams and stones that hold up the walls. The souls cannot communicate, but any warrior or dwarf (or fighting-type class) will feel immediately energized as they walk inside. They immediately gain one additional level (increase their XP to the minimum to reach the next level), but at a cost. For every turn they spend inside the structure, they must make a Will save vs. DC 10 or lose 1d16 HP. If they reach 0 HP within this structure, there is no chance for magical healing or rolling the body after that. Instead, their souls merge with those of the great warriors of the past, trapped in these very walls.</p>	<p>Inside the "belly" of the structure hangs a rusted metal cage. Inside the cage rests a unicorn. A beautiful white unicorn with a sparkling golden horn. The tears of the unicorn drip like tiny rainbows onto the cold stone floor below its cage. If set free (DC 20 lockpicking check or 12 or more damage to the lock with a single blow), the unicorn will attack the character who freed it with unyielding ferocity. Then it will attempt to flee to return to its beloved queen and attack anyone that stands in its way.</p> <p>Savage Unicorn: Init +5; Atk horn +5 (2d12 plus curse of lost love); AC 14; HD 6d8; HP 32; MV 60'; Act d20; SP Curse of Lost Love - page 438 in the DCC Core Rulebook - imparts any surviving victim of a horn attack with a compulsion to return the unicorn, living or dead, to the queen of the adjacent kingdom; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.</p>

Table TCCoG-AH (con't)

Roll 1d7 on each column

What?	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
6 Weeping	Barracks	of Tomesworthy	<p>There are only three exterior doors on this structure. Three entrances. When any PC or creature enters through one of the doors, he immediately <i>teleports</i> out of the exterior door to his left. The only way to enter the structure is for two living things to enter at least two doors simultaneously. The <i>teleporting</i> enchantment will continue to work as normal, and may only be bypassed by two or more entrances activating simultaneously. The effect <i>also</i> works when attempting to leave the structure, <i>teleporting</i> any characters back inside the entrance to his left unless two or more exits are activated simultaneously.</p>	<p>Each room of the structure seems to act as a conduit to the spirit realm, where previously slain enemies of the PCs can communicate, one-per-room. This manifests as statements that echo through the room - statements that reveal information the slain enemies may have had that the PCs did not or perhaps statements of how the enemies met their demise. The spirit channel is one-way only, with the PCs able to hear the ramblings of their enemies, but they cannot ask questions that will be answered, except by coincidence. For the first statement that the PCs hear in a room, a DC 5 Will save is required or the PC take 1d6 psychic damage.</p>

Table TCCoG-AH (con't)

Roll 1d7 on each column

	What?	What?	Where?	What's one Unusual Thing about It?	What's another Unusual Thing about It?
7	Screaming	Dome	of Blacksmere	<p>In the center of the interior of the structure, in whatever the Judge deems the "heart" of the construction, a mosaic decorates the floor. The mosaic depicts an enormous gaping, sharp-toothed mouth. Any character standing in the center of the mosaic can mentally transform the shape of the exterior structure into any form he wishes by making a DC 10 Will save. Failure on the Will save results in the character gaining 1d4 Minor Corruption effects and permanently losing 1d6 Stamina points.</p>	<p>The materials of this structure flake away like chunks of fist-sized dandruff - it may be bits of wood, or brick, or stone or whatever seems appropriate for its construction - and anyone who takes a bite of one of the chunks gains 1d8 additional HP for the rest of the day. A second bite of one of the chunks that day causes terrible vomiting without any HP gain and unless a DC 15 Fort save is made, the character loses 2d10 HP.</p>

The Grove

By Gabriel Meister and Jonathan Perkel



The dim light up ahead barely filters through the thick forest growth, but it's better than nothing, so you hack away at the last of the stubborn branches and choking vines. You emerge into a roughly circular clearing, wiping the sweat and grime from your face, and you think to yourself: can this be real?

The clearing is approximately 100 feet in diameter, felted with manicured grass. At its center is a small cluster of what appear to be fruit-bearing trees. Sunlight beams down and birds chirp softly as a gentle breeze rustles through the clearing. This seems strange, as you could have sworn it was pissing rain just a moment ago. Suddenly, you feel very, very hungry, and you walk toward...**The Grove.**

Care for a piece of strange fruit? (Roll 1d24)

Roll	Result
1	Snake-eyes. This tree bears firm, cuboidal, ivory-colored fruit, with one black dot in the center of each side. There are 3d6 fruit on any given tree. When picked, the picker painfully loses one point of Strength, Agility, Stamina, Personality, or Intelligence (roll 1d5 to determine). If the picker eats the fruit, he falls into a deep slumber for 1d5 turns and regains the lost point upon awakening. If someone else eats the picked fruit, he (instead of the picker) gains the point that the picker lost. No more than 3 total ability score points can be gained (or regained) by any individual, regardless of the number of fruits picked or eaten.
2	Acmefruit. A spherical, jet black fruit about the size of a volleyball, with a long white stem. Each fruit has runes on its side that dimly glow "TNT" in white letters. When dried, the stem can be lit and the fruit tossed at a target, causing damage equal to that of a fireball (3d6). If the lit fruit isn't tossed within 1 round...
3	Metsus. Mirrored spherical "seeds," roughly 1 inch in diameter, with a fragile shell. Each sphere is filled with a sticky, powdery pollen that clings to flesh and causes 1 hit point of damage per round until washed off with water. Useful as projectile weapons if kept intact.

- 4 **Durians.** A spiky, incredibly tough outer shell protects a creamy flesh that tastes as close to putrescent human flesh as imaginable. Ah, durians... revolting, but harmless.
-
- 5 **Tastyfruit.** The fruit on each of these trees is different: a peach here, a plum there, a pomegranate, an orange, a pineapple, a kiwi, etc. Every fruit tastes twice as good as the last one consumed. Each piece restores 1d3 hit points, up to a maximum of 5 restored hit points. Any roll that would restore 6 or more cumulative hit points causes a debilitating bout of diarrhea that lasts for 1d6 turns.
-
- 6 **Stickyplums.** Round, indigo-colored fruit that fits nicely in the palm of the picker's hand... and does not come off. At least, not without a successful DC 15 Strength check (although now it's probably stuck to the other hand, or the hand of a would-be rescuer). While the fruit is in hand, the picker cannot do anything else with said hand.
-
- 7 **Fortunefruit.** Each fruit resembles a flat, folded beige seed pouch that can be cracked open by hand. Inside is a tiny folded parchment with a prescient message for the character on the front and a string of two-digit numbers on the back. The message on the front has a 50% chance of accurately predicting something important that will happen to the character within the next 24 hours.
-
- 8 **Cherries.** Ruby red, juicy, delicious. Why are they here? Who cares?
-
- 9 **Ropefruit.** Yellow, spherical fruit that, upon close inspection, appears to be a tightly-wound ball of thick, golden thread. Once picked, the fruit can be unraveled by its stem into a slender 50' cord with twice the tensile strength of normal rope.

10 **Dragonfruit.** With its funky skin of prickly vermilion dragon scales, this mildly sweet fruit bears a creamy pulp peppered with crunchy, sesame-sized black seeds and with a strong cinnamon aftertaste. Tasting the flesh enables the picker to breathe flame at an opponent as if casting Scorching Ray with a spell check of 16. If the picker does not breathe flame within 1d3 rounds after tasting this fruit, the flame manifests internally (and goutts from all upper orifices) for 1d8 damage.

11 **Critterberries.** Small, lumpy, brownish-green berries with fur reminiscent of kiwifruit. Each one feels a little bit squirmy. Trying to bite into one causes it to transform (with an audible "pop!") into one of five miniscule mammals. Roll 1d5: 1, pygmy possum; 2, shrew mole; 3, tiny jerboa; 4, Etruscan shrew; 5, bumblebee bat. They make great pets (or rations).

12 **Grapefruit.** Just regular ol' ruby red grapefruit.

13 **Chameleonges.** These fruit are the same size, weight, texture, and flavor as ordinary juice oranges, but each one is a different color than all the others, seeds, skin, and all. Consuming a chameleonge changes the color of certain body parts to the fruit's color for 1d4 days. Roll 1d12: 1-2, hair, fingernails, and toenails; 3, irises; 4-5, hands and feet; 6-8, face, neck, and scalp; 9-10, genitals; 11-12, buttocks. Where face, neck, and scalp, genitals, or buttocks are affected, the character loses 1 point of Personality but gains 1 point of Luck for the duration of the change.

14 **Edisons.** Tough, transparent, nearly colorless globes with black squiggles threaded throughout. Inedible; biting into one is like munching on a beholder's eyeball. When darkness falls, each fruit glows with a ghostly, white light that illuminates

everything faintly within a 5' radius. The effect lasts until the fruit begins to spoil, about 2 or 3 days.

15 **Burnies.** Elongated, fleshy fruit with a tough purple rind similar to miniature eggplants. Sweet but intolerably spicy, reminiscent of the hottest ghost pepper. Good in very small doses for seasoning stew, or dried and ground into powder. Otherwise innocuous.

16 **Raspberries.** The only strange thing about these raspberries is that they are the size of apples.

17 **Galarums.** Red, bell-shaped fruit with white streaks. Touching a single fruit causes it to ring like a dinner bell. Touching two of them induces a clamorous chain reaction: they both ring, then another, and another, until every fruit on the tree is clanging cacophonously. Each character in the Grove must make a DC 12 Fort save or suffer disorientation and severe tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and lose 1 point of Agility, for 1d8 turns. This noise may also attract unwanted attention...

18 **Tomatoes.** Ripe and tasty. (For the record, tomatoes are a fruit.)

19 **Pusberries.** Small clusters of cherry-sized yellow berries, firm to the touch, that smell as sweet as spun sugar but taste like a soiled bandage from inside a costermonger's boot. After one bite, the picker is unable to consume or even smell food for 24 hours without vomiting (consequent risk of dehydration), and is no longer a big fan of fruit in general.

20 **Pears.** Just regular pears.

21 **Fruitloops.** Firm, doughnut-shaped fruit with waxy blue skin and flesh the texture and color of bananas. Incredibly nourishing and restorative; however, there is absolutely no way to leave the Grove with this fruit. Any of it. Including if it's still in the character's digestive tract.

22 **Cronenberries.** Each branch of these trees is covered with tough thorns and ends in peach-colored globules, hanging loosely. The globules smell like recently soured milk. Tugging one causes the tree to rustle and sigh. Trying to pluck one elicits a piercing shriek, as the tree swats at the character with two enormous thorny branches for 1d4 damage. The "fruit" cannot be removed from the tree without a fight.

23 **Fapples.** The fruit of this tree has the appearance of delicious, ripe, red apples. Upon closer examination, the "fruit" is made of the same tough bark that covers the tree's trunk, with deceptively misleading pigmentation. Inedible.

24 **Necktarings.** Looks and tastes like nectarines, but when one of these fruits is picked, somewhere, somehow, someone's neck is broken. This fact remains unknown to the picker until later that night, when the gruesome image of each death he caused haunts him vividly in his dreams.



Killtackleball
DCC Rules for Pell-Mell Teamball Sports
By Marc Bruner

Each year on the high desert plains of Urearth, the Centaurs pause in their ever-war with the savage Vulturemen and meet at the sacred oasis to sing of their victories, mourn their lost companions, and clash in the ancient game of "Bolo". This is the origin of Killtackleball, a sport of prowess, determination, and luck, often with dangerous results.



Overview

Killtackleball is a bruising game of physical mayhem played between two teams that usually ends with drunken song and bitter toasts made over the corpses of slain friends. The rules are simple: two sides face off on a wide, flat pitch - typically composed of grass, rocks, trees, creeks, or giant mushroom forests - and attempt to move the ball to the opposite end of the field and score. Score is kept by whatever method is agreed upon, but is abstracted in these rules and represented by the current momentum die controlled by each team. The momentum die is a new tool inspired by the core rulebook spellduel rules using the dice chain to track the relative strength of each team, and ultimately deciding the winner.

The match is played in a series of turns, the start of each turn being marked by a scrum for initial control of the ball. During play, opposing teams use whatever they can to carry, kick, or punch the ball across their opponent's goal line, thereby winning the turn and resetting the field. Play continues until one team has dominated the game and claims victory!

Rules of Play

- * Play starts with the ball placed in the middle of the pitch with opposing teams lined up on either side. The ball can be any agreed upon generally easily carried object. Traditional balls include: inflated animal bladders, coconut husks, and the dried and cured head of a Vultureman - beak optional.
- * Teams can be composed of any number of players, evenly matched or otherwise, and they can use any part of their bodies to move the ball. Weapons are not allowed; however, each team rolls on the random equipment table to see what gear they managed to scrounge up after a night of preparatory carousing.

- * Each team is given a momentum die to determine possession after the scrum. The default starting die is a d20.
- * At the start of the scrum, each team rolls the momentum die and compares the results on the scrum table. It is the Judge's discretion on who makes the rolls for the team. The roll is for initial possession only, after the scrum, the ball will likely change hands multiple times during the course of the turn!
- * Play during the turn proceeds with initiative rolls and follow normal DCC combat rules. Players can take actions, cast spells, declare mighty deeds, etc., to do whatever it takes to move, or block movement of the ball to the other side of the field. Special note: obvious spellcasting and outright killing of other players is generally frowned upon, and may turn players from both teams against the offending player if discovered. Ghostly possession is, of course, allowed.
- * The turn ends once the ball has crossed a goal line in the possession of a player from the opposing team. The scoring team automatically moves their momentum die one die up the dice chain for the next turn, whereas the losing side has to make a Will SV (DC decided by the Judge based on the results of the play) to avoid moving down one die. For example, after the first turn, the winning team will have a d24 momentum die for the next scrum, whereas the losing team will either retain the d20 or move down to a d16, depending on whether they made their save.

- * The game ends when the difference in the rolled momentum die result is so large that one team dominates the other completely, as indicated on the scrum table result. Alternatively, other methods can be used at the Judge's discretion, e.g. assigning and keeping track of an actual score, a time limit, when the ball is removed from play by ferrets, etc.

Random Equipment Table

Each side should roll a d30 for starting equipment and reference the table below. If desired, each individual player can be rolled for, though this is only recommended for smaller teams. Players are free to get creative with the actual use of the equipment during play, with the Judge making the final ruling on the result in game-play terms:

d30	Equipment	d30	Equipment
1	A leg of cooked meat (as club)	16	Fly-whisks
2	Zorro-style masks	17	Buckets
3	Hockey sticks	18	Nothing - team always goes "skins"
4	Flags	19	Chalk
5	Sacks	20	Small tube of vultureman-grease paint
6	Conch	21	Treasure map with an "X" on the opponent's goal line
7	Small pouch of sand	22	Painted gourd filled with olive oil
8	Brooms	23	1 lb cheese
9	Necklaces made of shells	24	Leather shoes w/nails driven through the soles
10	A sheaf of poems	25	Bottle of fireflies
11	Small hand mirror	26	Flasks of dyed

			sugar-water
12	Centaurs	27	Reliquary filled with bones
13	Klezmer instruments	28	Slightly deflated ball
14	Cheering squad	29	Picnic lunch
15	Shuttlecock	30	Roll on the table twice, taking both results

Scrum Table

At the start of each turn, teams roll the momentum die and the Judge references the table below, comparing the result of the higher roll to the lower roll. The difference between the results determines which row of results applies to each team, the team with the higher roll using the second column and the team with the lower roll using the last column.

- * A result of "1" on the momentum die is an automatic fumble. In addition to the result on the scrum table, the team's momentum die is reduced by one on the dice chain with no save.

- * A result of "20" on the momentum die is a critical hit. In addition to the result on the scrum table, the team automatically wins initiative during the subsequent turn. This also applies to achieving the maximum result on dice higher on the dice chain, i.e. a "24" on a d24 and a "30" on a d30. There are no critical results for momentum die lower than d20.



Diff. Team with High Roll

Tie No team can wrest control of the ball out of the tangled heaving mass. Roll on the Face-off table below.

<5 Straining for control of the ball, your team manages to grab it off the ground before the other team can reach it. Start the turn with possession; roll initiative as normal.

<10 A strong performance! Start with possession; +2 to your player's initiative rolls for this turn.

<15 Your team manages to get the upper hand on the other team and easily seizes the ball. Start with possession; +4 to your player's initiative rolls for this turn.

<20 With a huge surge, your team easily pushes the other team back, trampling on the unlucky ones who couldn't get out of the way. Start with possession; +4 to your player's initiative rolls for this turn.

20+ The team dominates the scrum utterly and completely, winning the ball and brushing aside their panting, exhausted opponents to claim a final goal! Game ends.

Team with Low Roll

No team can wrest control of the ball out of the tangled heaving mass. Roll on the Face-off table below.

The ball was inches away, but snatched up by the other team before you could secure it! Start the turn with the other team in possession of the ball; roll initiative as normal.

Start the turn with the other team in possession of the ball; roll initiative as normal.

The other team is clearly playing dirty with some below the belt kicks. Next time you see a referee... Start the turn with the other team in possession of the ball; roll initiative as normal; each player makes a DC10 Ref SV or takes 1d3 bruising damage.

So tired, so, so tired. maybe you'll just rest on this nice spot of soft grass here for a bit. Start the turn with the other team in possession of the ball; roll initiative as normal; each player makes a DC10 Fort SV or is knocked unconscious for this turn

They won this match, but by the gods there will be others. Buy the first round of drinks, grab a dripping slice of roasted Vultureman, and plot your revenge...

Face-off Table

If the scrum results in a Face-off, roll d11 and reference the table below.

d11

What happens?

- 1 Play is interrupted by a piercing cry as 2d4 Vulturemen swoop in to attack!
- 2 A champion stands forth from one side and bellows out a challenge to the other team to single combat.
- 3 A pair of ferrets sneaks out of the scrum attempting to steal the ball.
- 4 Blood frenzy. The game is forgotten by hot-tempered players who immediately attack the nearest opponent. DC 12 Will SV to resist.
- 5 With a sudden "POP!" a Type III demon appears out of thin air wearing a striped uniform and carrying a whistle.
- 6 Another team shows up and charges into the match. Roll again for a three-way scrum (one high and two low results).
- 7 The ground opens up and swallows the ball, revealing a network of subterranean caverns below the pitch.
- 8 Opposing gods have taken an interest in the result, and secretly possess a player from each side.
- 9 A line of small forest animals stare unnervingly from the sidelines, each gripping a small sharpened stick.
- 10 A nude dwarf with an ankle-length beard interrupts play by running out onto the pitch.
- 11 As the teams heave and push to wrest control, the ball cracks open, revealing a small fuzzy dinosaur.



Vulturemen: Init +2; Atk claw +3 melee (1d6) or beak +1 melee (1d4) or grab +0 melee (see below); AC 12; HD 1d8; MV 20' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP grab (with a successful grapple, carry off opponent, has to be smaller than human-sized; up to three vultureman can attempt to grab the same opponent to carry off larger creatures - up to horse-sized); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

Acknowledgements

- * Tim Callahan, for coming up with the Killtackleball name suggestion.
- * The Metal Gods, for coming up with a die (d11) so awesome, it needed to be included somehow.



Mighty Deeds of Arms - Spear

By R. S. Tilton

(An excerpt from the upcoming Clearspring Gazette by R. S. Tilton)

Mighty Deeds of Arms: The Spear (melee)

In combat, the spear is a versatile weapon, able to perform in many surprising ways, in addition to being able to impale a target. When using a spear, a character that hasn't declared a Deed may automatically roll on the spear table.

Die Roll Result

- 3 The spear's length plays a role in keeping the opponent at a distance. He receives a +1 bonus to AC for the next round.
- 4 The spear impales the target in a non-vital organ; this causes exceptional pain and will cause an additional 1d3 damage when the weapon is removed. While the weapon is impaling the target, they suffer a -1d penalty to attack the spear holder, and a -2d penalty to attack his allies.
- 5 The spear impales the target in a vital organ, causing exceptional pain and will cause an additional 1d6 damage when the weapon is removed. While the weapon is impaling the target, they suffer a -1d penalty to attack the spear holder; and a -2d penalty to attack others.
- 6 The spear is used in a flurry of rapid strikes, driving the target back 10 feet, and causing 2d4 additional damage.
- 7 The spear impales the target's head or chest, causing 2d10 additional damage as well as double the penalties from result #5. The spear is lodged deeply in the target and takes 1d4 rounds to remove.



Mighty Deeds of Arms: The Spear (thrown)

When thrown, the spear can cause heavy damage as it comes down from the heavens gaining speed and momentum.

Die Roll	Result
3	The spear hits with a metal rending power; armor and shields lose 1 point of protection (-1 AC) from the damage caused.
4	The spear pins the target in place as it impales a leg or foot to the earth.
5	The spear drives through the target's torso pinning it to the ground, nearby structure or tree, causing an additional 1d6 damage.
6	The spear drives through the target and strikes another behind it. This causes normal damage to both targets and an additional 1d6 damage to the initial target.
7	As above however the targets are pinned to each other, and both take the additional 1d6 damage.





Mighty Deeds of Arms: The Harpoon

The harpoon comes with 50 feet of light but durable rope. The weapon features a wickedly barbed spearhead, allowing the weapon to sink into the target and to pull them toward the thrower. Typically used in hunting whales, the harpoon is attached to a longboat via a stout metal ring at the butt end of the spear.

Die Roll	Result
3	The harpoon hits, but the barb tears out of the wound, leaving the target bleeding. Lose 1 additional hit point for 1d4 rounds.
4	The harpoon impales the target, causing an additional 1d4 points of damage when reeled in. The target may attempt to tear free with an opposed STR test.
5	The harpoon impales the target, causing an additional 1d4 points of damage when reeled in. The target may attempt to tear free with an opposed STR test at -1d.
6	The harpoon impales the target lodging in a bone, causing an additional 1d6 points of damage when reeled in and knocking the target to the ground. The target may attempt to tear free with an opposed STR test at -2d.
7	The harpoon impales the target lodging in a bone, causing an additional 1d6 points of damage when reeled in and knocking the target to the ground. The target may attempt to tear free with an opposed STR test at -3d.

(These tables have not been extensively playtested and feedback would be great. Contact me at epicrpgblog@gmail.com with comments and suggestions.)

Tales of Travels, Trials, & Chance Meetings

These tales operate as a storytelling interlude in between adventures. The purpose is to inject some additional flavor for each character with some direction by both the player and the Judge. The Judge should have their players roll on the Chance Meetings table and then on the Travels & Trials table. The players will need to weave a story using elements from both of their results. The Judge should interrupt the tale to provide one boon and one detriment that fits into the story the player is telling. There are no limits to where the story goes or what form a boon or detriment takes, though a Judge should take care to limit the power of these things and dial back any features that could derail future storylines.

Step 1. Each player rolls on the Chance Meetings table

- 1 Wizard afflicted with terrible corruption
- 2 Halfling merchant with an interesting offer
- 3 Constable of lazy demeanor but high born connections
- 4 Elven sailor with a nearly mutinous crew
- 5 Ogre of unusually high intelligence and benevolent nature
- 6 Child possessed by a demon
- 7 Cleric who has fallen and is searching for a new faith
- 8 Dwarf minstrel possessing a mystical third eye
- 9 Warrior who will not die though covered in wounds that will not heal
- 10 Dog that communicates with its voice in your head
- 11 Bartender who is a long-dead walking skeleton performing his job for eternity
- 12 Halfling alchemist who always lacks the proper ingredient to finish his mix
- 13 Elf whose feet never touch the ground
- 14 Blacksmith who fashions replacement body parts
- 15 Someone who is reportedly present at the scene of every major calamity in the realm
- 16 Metal statue that moves and speaks as a human and claims to be from the stars
- 17 Wizard who is constantly out of focus for all who gaze upon him
- 18 Thief who will only talk to puppets
- 19 Giant that ceaselessly weeps and is consoled only by your voice
20. Fortune teller who divines from severed heads



Step 2. Each player rolls on the Travels & Trials table

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Round trip passage on a ship that sails to a forgotten land | 12 Descend into the hollowed out trunk of a giant tree that grew into the earth instead of above it |
| 2 Journey to your home village | 13 Fall into a cavernous wasp hive and then brought to the queen |
| 3 Unwarranted banishment from a region in which you travel | 14 Take up residence in a tomb to convince people that it's haunted |
| 4 Long period of sensory deprivation in a deep dark cave | 15 Hide a dangerous artifact that cannot be destroyed |
| 5 Rise to the highest ranks of the gladiator class | 16 Find your way out of a loop in time that has you live the same day over and over |
| 6 Stumble upon an unfamiliar race in a barren landscape | 17 Get rid of the ghost of one of your slain opponents that is haunting you |
| 7 Deep study of the fringe practices of your art | 18 Rejoin your other self after being split into multiple existences |
| 8 Hired to find a very important missing person | 19 Return to your body after being trapped in an animal form |
| 9 Sleep so deep you travel across dimensional planes | 20 Banish a being made of pure light |
| 10 Assist farmers in a region where sentient plants make seasonal harvests deadly | |
| 11 Become first mate on a ship that sails off the edge of the horizon and into the stars | |

Step 3. The player weaves a story using the results of the previous rolls

The players should take time to figure out a way to combine these elements into a story that fits the personality and actions of their character. No rolls need to be made during this process and the Judge is allowed to negate any aspect of the narrative that could upset the power balance or derail the campaign. Set a reasonable time limit and each player takes turns putting their character through a story of their creation.

Step 4. The Judge provides a boon and a detriment based on the story being told

A boon might be an item they receive, an ally, or a skill that they pick up and can call upon any time it's appropriate in the future. A detriment might be a curse, an enemy, or a bad reputation that follows them.

A Judge should throw boons and detriments in as they appear in the story as an interruption or complication for the player to work out in their narrative. Boons and detriments can also be revealed at the end of the story or even saved for a surprise in their next adventure. .

The Dryad's Tree

*In which the Cautious Marauders seek
to fulfill the commandments of
The Portal Under the Stars*

By Mike Loew

In the shadows of the ancient trees, the band ranked up in precise martial formation: warriors Old Huffy and Lars in the first rank; clerics Rabelais and Porkins in the second, centered to support all those who would believe in them; and finally fragile Tyson and Donal at the rear, giving full range to their hostile elven magic. Halfling Drek hid behind the warriors, the counterpuncher, while thieving Cheeem skulked far behind, the backstabber. They advanced through the moonlit forest.

At the tip of the spear, their runty guide Queebo flitted through the foliage. The branches grew lower as the path narrowed, and the spear struggled to keep its edge. The band straggled after their goblin trailblazer into a tight labyrinth of turns, through a dizzying bend, and then...

They broke free from the thickets into the moonshade of a most colossal oak, soaring high above all others in its own vast glade. The dark vault of its foliage filled the night sky. At its mighty base the tree radiated six great roots that arched overhead like the buttresses of a cathedral, then descended into the earth. Each root-bridge was at least a hundred feet long and thick enough for two men to walk abreast.

Queebo and his burglars crept to a gnarled fence of living wood that encircled the majestic tree. The tendrils of the fence had grown into ornamental shapes and were festooned with floral bouquets. They crouched for cover behind the dainty perimeter.

Lars the woodcutter clicked his tongue. "Those old roots are slick with moss and hard as stone. There's no wood to be taken from them that would burn," he whispered.

"If you wish to steal kindling from the Dryad's tree, you must hurry up a root, then climb the trunk. There drier branches grow plentifully twenty feet up," said Queebo. He tugged a finely-crafted archery glove onto his hand, emblazoned with golden thread, and gripped his shortbow. "I hope you have a plan," grumbled the yellow-skinned forest-stalker.

"Time to get high," said Lars, producing a plump shrooman steak from his sack. "Anybody else?"

"I am with you, generous lumberman!" exclaimed Rabelais Rotundus. "My only regret is that I have no wine to share, as I have quaffed it all in my devotions." Lars passed his portly comrade a shroomsteak. The warrior of the woods and the cleric of Borrach wolfed down the rubbery, fungoid flesh.

"Hm, not getting anything yet," Rabelais muttered. Lars didn't hear him, as he was fascinated by a similar sensation of the infinite calm he had felt after inhaling the shrooman's spore-mist. However, this time his ribs were not being crushed. It felt amazing.

Lars took one more mental step beyond his sea of calm into an infinite field of living information. He had reached the peak of shrooman evolution. The crystalline lattice of geometric gemstones that underlay the universe unfurled before his eyes as his highest self was revealed!

"Bah," snorted Cheem at the grinning woodcutter and Rabelais, sucking disconsolately at his teeth. "While you degenerates stuff your swollen cheeks, eet eez Cheem who will gain our prize!" he boasted.

The jester removed his black silk pajamas, folded them neatly, and hung them on the decorative fence. He smeared mud over his pale, nude body, then attached clumps of moss to his head and nethers. Two bent twigs he tucked behind his ears, protruding like horns through his moss-wig. Cheem hunched his back and contorted his knees repulsively, and his satyr's disguise was complete.

"Watch and learn, baboons! Ha-HA." Strange, bold Cheem hopped the fence and snuck through the shadows,

simultaneously mimicking the crook-legged gait of a satyr with startling verisimilitude.

"This is not maintaining proper formation!" hissed Queebo.

Cheem's comrades held their breath as the thief silently pranced from shadow to shadow, slowly making his way up a gnarled root. All was quiet but for a gentle song in the air—a pretty melody by a feminine voice that seemed to trill from the tree itself. Watching and waiting with the others, Rabelais felt a tingle in his toes.



Cheem's satirical charade through the shadows carried him all the way up the root and to the trunk, only a short climb to their goal. Nothing moved but for the masquerading Cheem. The thin-armed thief began to climb the mighty oak... but crashed down in a tumble, unable to pull himself up.

Rabelais felt his toe-tingle growing into warmth, a red glow rising through his feet and up his calves. The disembodied voice still sang her lullaby. Cheem

attempted to climb the trunk once more, placing his hands more carefully... but lost his grip and fell again, smashing down in a tangle of disappointment!

Now the warmth climbed from Rabelais' calves into his thighs, and from there into the fundament of his spine, where a spiral energy began to generate. Weakling Cheeem once more struggled to climb the trunk, scrabbling at its knobby handholds... but tumbled down a third time, a portrait of abject failure!

"Enough!" roared Rabelais. The burgeoning cleric in his burgundy toga stood tall. The shrooman flesh had finally metabolized in Rabelais' capacious gut, unleashing the courage of generations of rogues. The ecstatic madness of Borrach coursed through his veins. Rabelais sprang over the fence, spine a-spiral, both arms held aloft. "I wait for no man! Borrach has set me free!"

To the horror of all present, especially Cheeem, Rabelais stomped forward to explode the mantle of silence, bellowing praise to his drunken god. Drek dove at his knees to stop him, but was rebuffed. Porkins lunged at his waist, but was shaken off with a spin. Old Huffy tried to tackle Rabelais, but was rudely stiff-armed away. The cleric of Borrach could not be stopped! With his comrades sprawled behind him in the leaves, Rabelais trundled up a root-bridge, oblivious to Cheeem's frantic pantomimes for him to retreat.

"GO BACK," mouthed Cheeem in a silent howl. The lilting song stopped in mid-melody, then warped into a piercing shriek. The Dryad emerged from her elder oak, her sapling limbs ripping free from the bark. The pale green body of the sylvan guardian stretched forth, eight feet long, her sinewy musculature barbed with thorns. She writhed in fury high above them, black eyes slitted with hate for the men gripping swords and axes.

Cheeem, a muddy, mossy, near-naked wretch, cowered at the base of her tree. Rabelais galumphed up a root-bridge, ululating in ecstasy. Behind him, Lars leapt onto the same root, his great axe glittering on his back. The Dryad's semi-human face twisted in

contempt. Then she saw Queebo, attempting to hide behind the fence.



"Queeeeeeeee-bo!" Her voice creaked with rage from her wooden lungs. "Foul, hunchbacked, dismal-dreaming bandit! You will... not steal... from me... again!" The Dryad threw forth her claw-branched hands. A cloud of buzzing pixies with dragonfly wings flew out from the soft glow behind her tree, drawing back tiny needles on miniature bows.

From the root-bridge, Lars tossed a chunk of shrooman down to Porkins. "Munch that!" barked Lars at his sober comrade. Brimming with psychedelic vitality, Lars zoomed up the root with startling speed, running right past Rabelais. The Dryad twisted her hands into an eldritch gesture. A whip of wood curled down from the branches and lashed at Lars, but the sharp tendril glanced off the woodcutter's armored chest. Laughing with manic glee, Lars hurled his hand-axe at a floating pixie, obliterating it.

Under his vow of humility to obey any command, Porkins dutifully chewed the shroomsteak that Lars had tossed him. However, he did not experience the ecstasy of Lars and Rabelais. His mind grew dark and cloudy, and his focus shifted downward. The uplifting earth magic of the shroomen could not break Porkins' meditations on the abyssal horror of his sunken god.

Lars dipped and dodged through the Dryad's slashing branches. More pixie archers emerged. Cringing Cheeem tried to secrete himself into a fold in the trunk, but the hovering pixies saw all. They peppered his muddy skin with white needles, and Cheeem collapsed into slumber.



Back by the dainty fence, Tyson Ballywicke attempted several spells to aid his comrades, but failed utterly at each one. Wobbling under the weight of his own inadequacy, the milquetoast house-elf felt his strength leave him. A thunderclap resounded inside Tyson's flap-ears, and the dark countenance of his master Sezrekan filled his inner vision.

"Atrocious technique! It is time to prove your questionable worth to me, chandler!" scowled the Old Master. "Retrieve my lost relic, the other half of the Rulership Rod! Reunite it, and offer it up to my glory!" Sezrekan set Tyson's mind ablaze with a view of a crumbling castle atop a burning sea, where lay the occult object of his desire.

The Dryad wove her bristling hands, bewitching more branches to flay the marauders. Unperturbed, Rabelais pulled out his shortbow, licked an arrow for luck, and fired. With shocking accuracy, the shaft pierced both of the Dryad's hands in mid-conjuration! She screeched in pain and vexation. With her palms pinned together by the iron-tipped arrow, the Dryad could no longer weave arcane gestures, crippling the use of her branch-mastery.

Slow and quiet, Drek the halfling had snuck up along a back root. There he found a bulbous, glowing hive growing from the rear of the trunk. Its papery shell split open, spilling more light, and a pixie emerged through the glistening aperture. It pulled itself free with tiny arms, thrummed its wings, then broke off a curved, vestigial bone from its coccyx. The pixie strung a tendon on its bone-bow and buzzed at Drek, producing a needle from its quivered forearms.

Drek stomped through a spritz of bony needles, prickling his leathery face and arms. Their soporific effect had flattened syphilitic Cheem, but the pixie venom was easily absorbed by the hardy vagrant. With great stamina and without mercy, Drek gashed open the bulging hive with his twin short swords. Larval pixies tumbled out, their insectoid wings coated with amniotic sap.

Lars reached the trunk, stepped over sleeping Cheem, and shroomanically climbed toward their precious wood. He clambered into the lowest branches and began to snap them off. Fuming above him, the desperate root-witch tried to charm his mind. The Dryad sang her enchantments, hoping to seduce the dynamic woodcutter against his allies, but could not find a grip on Lars' roiling brain. The mind of Rabelais was

equally on fire, and she found no love in the heart of Drek.

Watching from afar with eagle eyes, Old Huffy coolly raised his longbow. A moonbeam glimmered off his arrowhead. He shot the Dryad through the neck, stifling her song. She looked down coldly, her hands clasped together by Rabelais' arrow, as if in prayer. Her slender green body tumbled to the forest floor, silent forevermore.

Lars looked down upon the fallen nymph. For a wide-eyed moment that pierced the frenzy of his intoxication, he felt pity, and shame, and that a great mistake had been made. Then he was enthralled by the sight of thousands of leaves falling all around him like a rain of green teardrops.

Through the whispering downfall Lars slid down the trunk, clutching an armful of the Dryad's wood. He could almost feel the bark trembling with misery. Behind the fence, Donal Frolanger sent in a conjured hawk to steal a few twigs of his own, after all of that trouble. "*That's so Donal,*" thought Tyson.

The grieving boughs overhead swayed and shook, shedding masses of foliage. Drek slapped Cheeem awake. The creaking wood and rustling leaves melded into a thunderous voice that spoke from all around them.

"*YOU. KILLED. MY. BRIDE.*"

The gargantuan tree awoke. Dozens of knotty eyeballs blinked open across its crusty bark. A jagged black hole spread across its trunk like a mournful mouth, exhaling a bitter stench of anguish. Its titanic roots quivered, one ripping free from the sod.

Lars, Rabelais, and Cheeem fled for their lives down another root, stomping upon furious wooden eyes. Queebo burst up from behind the ornamental fence, where the rest of the band hunched in dread.

"Jump the fence! Escape the bounding circle!" hollered Queebo.

The wood-burglars vaulted over the fence, kicking aside its bouquets, now blackened and withered. Only halfling Drek lagged behind, half-numb from pixie venom, pumping his stumpy legs as fast as he could.



"Haul your hindquarters, halfling!" shouted Rabelais.

Drek leapt off the root-bridge and rolled across the leaves. The moonlight faded swiftly around him. Drek looked up—the freed root descended like a gigantic clawed foot, drowning him in its swiftly growing shadow.

Drek scuttled to the fence, coiled his thick legs, and leapt with all his might. It wasn't enough. There was no way he could have cleared the fence—if Lars hadn't tossed his stolen wood into Porkins' arms, drawn his battleaxe, and chopped through the fence at waist-height, a moment before Drek sailed over his hacking steel and through the splintered gap.

The huge foot of the arboreal giant slammed down just behind the charmed halfling, dealing massive damage to naught but an unlucky anthill. Bursting with avaricious joy, the band of thieves scattered into the night.

*An excerpt from a novel in progress,
"The Cautious Marauders."*

Dungeon Crawl Classics Character Record Sheet



Level Exp. Points
Equipment and Notes

Occupation Class

Languages

Alignment

Strength

Personality

Agility

Luck

Stamina

Intelligence

Lucky Roll

Fort Reflex Will

Combat!

weapon in hand



armor worn

Fumble Die Check Pen.

Action Dice

Crit table + Die

Hit Points Speed

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Crit table + Die

Hit Points Speed

Credits

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