

PHYLACTERY



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PHYLACTERY

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WELCOME BACK!

This here lil' Judy you're holding in your hands is The Phylactery 2, a Kickstarted zine funded once again by the OSR community. Just like the first issue, this one is full of all sorts of weird ideas, plot threads and things you can plug directly into your home table. We're big fans of the old school but it's not our sacred cow – the rule of cool always wins over the rules as written 'round these parts. This is your game of course, so we want you take what works for you and ditch the rest!

This issue of The Phylactery is dedicated to my favorite Game Master of all time, who sadly is no longer with us – my old friend Rob Hosier of Kansas City, MO. Rob moved to our little town in Arkansas when I was just discovering 1E AD&D and was the catalyst for so much of what I love about gaming today. His adventures were grand and truly insane, really setting my imagination along down a path that literally leads to the zine you're holding in your hands right now. Whether it was were-panther assassin-wizards riding on the backs of summoned wind walkers or crusty kobold mercenaries armed with modern weapons and guerilla tactics or teetering lattice dungeons built onto the side of a windswept cliff, his games were always guaranteed to be a wild ride and (most importantly) just pure, plain fun.

His imagination was brought to life week after week and you'd do almost anything not to skip a game. There truly was no telling what you'd miss if you did. There was a tangible excitement in the air when we played in those campaigns because nothing was seemingly off limits! While one game might bring a near total party kill at the hands of an astral-plane dwelling god-mouth, another might reveal undreamed of riches from the subterranean depths of a fungus-lich. Those games were over the top – a real wild ride for the players who gathered in the living room week after week to sling dice, drink ridiculous amounts of Mt Dew and brave the lunacy of his campaign.

Sadly, Rob left us in 2012, gone to that great mead-hall in the sky. What he left behind for all of us that belled up to his table week after week are countless good times, lots of laughs and unforgettable memories... what more can a Game Master ask for?

- Levi

THE SKULLSTAFF OF STELOS

"There are horrors beyond life's edge that we do not suspect, and once in a while man's evil prying calls them just within our range..."

– H.P. Lovecraft, *The Thing on the Doorstep*



Originally crafted by the dread necromancer Stelos “the Breathstealer”, this long, gnarled staff of twisted wood is topped with a charred, horned skull the size of a clenched, gauntleted fist. The shaft is smooth and worn, feeling slightly cool to the touch.

The *skullstaff of stelos* was lost for many hundreds of winters, after Stelos’ power-hungry apprentices fell to bickering over it following his untimely (and quite grisly) demise. Finally it was his fawning daughter – a wicked priestess of the leper-god – who wrested the evil relic from their machinations, murdering them to the last and seizing it for herself. She herself was slain by adventurers in the ruins of an ancient temple in the southern marshes, and from

there the *skullstaff of stelos* vanished. Only recently has it resurfaced, in the hands of a powerful undead lizardman witch-doctor who has his eyes set on the merciless slaughter and conquest of the nearby borderland settlements.

The *skullstaff of stelos* has many terrible powers, the foremost of which is allowing the wielder to command undead as if they were a 10th level evil cleric. If the wielder is already an evil cleric, they command undead as if they were 4 levels higher. The user may also utilize the following powers, one at a time – *animate dead* 3/day; *cause disease* 2/day; *fear* 2/day; and *finger of death* 1/day. In addition, the wielder may *speak with dead* at will, asking up to 10 questions a day.

Predictably, the *skullstaff of stelos* has an unfortunate side effect on those who wield it, slowly transforming them into an undead creature over time. While those who are powerful can stave off this effect for awhile, the artifact subtly wears away at its user, draining them of vitality and life until all that remains is an undead husk with a burning hatred for all living things. In addition, the wielder labors under a potent delusion, unable to recognize the changes happening to them. Creatures of lower hit dice are eventually transformed into wights, though more powerful beings often become wraiths or even liches, if their spellcasting prowess so allows.

TWELVE THINGS A MAGIC MOUTH WOULD SAY

"So, uhhhh.... kinda chatty for dungeon dressin' aint ya?"

Magic mouths are... well... mouthy. Oftentimes, there's no telling what they're going to say, who put them there or what their original purpose was. The magic can linger on for centuries until some poor fool adventurer trips it up. Whispering in the dark? Could be a *magic mouth*. Curses from beyond ye olde ancient portal? Yep, might be a *magic mouth*. Proclamations to go no further or face the wrath of the dead? Oh yeah – definitely a *magic mouth*.

Roll 1d12 or simply choose:

1. *Go back. There is nothing for you here. Only cold, lingering death and certain doom. Go back, lest your bones litter these halls like the ones who came before. Go back.... go back.*
2. *Stand fast ye sons of iron and mithral! Your axes will feast on orcish blood until they thirst no more!*
3. *Who is it that dares come before me, not on his knees in supplication but boldly on his feet? Who is it that begs to join the worms and corpses that feed the blood of the earth? Kneel infidel, or be struck down before my might!*
4. *The way ahead is broken... take the south passage to the glittering halls. Heed not the...*
5. *Before your heart explodes and your bones are jerked from your skin to dance before me, your mouth shall fill with plague flies and the terrible beating of great wings in your ears will drown out your screams!*
6. *You miserable creatures of soft flesh and brittle bone never cease to amuse me.*
7. *Numerous magic mouths activate in the room, unseen unless a detect magic or similar effect is being used. They speak in a susurrus of whispered murmurs and half-spoken phrases that are completely incomprehensible to the characters. After a few minutes, the voices trail off into nothingness.*
8. *You have chosen poorly, mortal... now you will learn that there are things far more dreadful than death!*
9. *Hail the rise of the bloodstained moon! The time for sacrificial death has come! Within these halls the way of the Faceless One shall reign unchecked!*
10. *The time has come for your faithless blood to stain the altar of the Worm-King! The Faceless Prophet awaits... come to the Great Maw!*
11. *Turn the frog's head to the north until the water in the fountain comes to a stop. Only then will you be able to reach the stairs leading down to...*
12. *Why have you come? To let your blood run hot onto the altar of the great beast? Come then, mortals... and SEE!*

STRANGE THINGS THAT LIVE UNDERGROUND AND OTHER WEIRD CRITTERS

"Searchers after horror haunt strange, far places." – H.P. Lovecraft

Perils of all kind await those who dare the sunless lands beneath our feet. What squamous, gelatinous horrors lurk deep underneath the lands of men? What eldritch mysteries lay undisturbed and forgotten in places that have never seen the sun? Adventurers both brave and foolish have always delved into the deepest recesses of the earth to seek their fortune and glory... but for every hero who returns with gold and magic, there are twenty others who find death at the hands of the deepearth's sinister and utterly alien dangers.

Here are eight of them!

1. **1d3 Faceless Prophets** – Unlike most inhabitants of the deepearth, these nameless, mold-eating whisperers in the dark roam about the depths of the earth in search of the deeper mysteries of existence. If the characters are not immediately hostile, one or more faceless prophets may approach them (50% chance or up to the Game Master's discretion) and murmur a rumor of the Game Master's choice. If attacked, they will defend themselves and attempt to flee at the earliest opportunity.

Faceless Prophets – Neutral, AC 7, MV 12"; ATKS 1, DMG 1-6 (shortsword) or 1-8 (crossbow), HD 3; SA/SD immune to sight-based and gaze attacks, spell-like abilities – *darkness 15' radius, invisibility, locate person* at will

2. The deadly **Froglodyte** lurks in the cavern beyond! A subhuman beast that combines all of the worst qualities of a giant venomous frog with that of an ogre, this knuckle-dragging, flabby-mouthed, sub-human monster greedily gobbles up anything its size or smaller that it comes across. It often lurks near pools of cave water hoping that subterranean creatures will stop

by to sate their thirst. When they do... it attacks!

Froglodyte – Chaotic Neutral, AC 3, MV 15"; ATKS 3, DMG 1-6/1-6/2-8, HD 6; SA/SD amphibious, leap up to 30'; rend (if both claw attacks hit, the creature can do an additional 2-8 dmg), MR 25% (in the water)

3. **2d4 Shroud Spiders** – Another subterranean horror that no one knows quite where they came from, these creatures love to lurk on ledges and steep caves, attacking from the darkness by complete



surprise. Shroud spiders mix all of the worst characteristics of giant spiders and undead shadows. They have learned to set upon only a few victims at a time, using pack tactics and their strength-draining bite to overcome larger or more powerful foes.

Shroud Spiders – Chaotic Evil, AC 4, MV 3"/12", ATKS 1, DMG 1-8 + strength drain (1 point with each hit), HD 4+4; SA/SD strength drain (as a shadow), +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold attacks, undead immunities



4. **2d3 Ooze Cultists of the Slime-Lord** – Garbed in filthy yellow robes and bearing melted features, these faceless heretics roam the tunnels of the upper underdark looking for captives. Those

unfortunate souls captured by them do not live long as they are either transformed into mindless gelatinous horrors or fed to quivering carnivorous jellies in great-slime farms deep within the earth. There is a 50% chance they will have a mobile ooze or pudding of some sort with them, fully under their control.

Ooze Cultists of the Slime-Lord – Chaotic Evil, AC 5, MV 12", ATKS 1, DMG 1-6 (mace), HD 5; SA/SD spells (as a 5th level evil cleric), *summon ochre jelly* 1/day

5. **Necromantic Fallout** – A horrible magical experiment that was cast aside and forgotten, composed of oozing black flesh that warps and churns before the characters' eyes! Any living creature within 20' of it loses 1d2 hit points a round as this

hateful creature that should not be leeches away their life force. If this eldritch catastrophe should touch one of the characters, it drains 3d4 points of damage away, adding it to its own hit point total. Healing spells damage it and a *chant* spell intoned by a good-aligned cleric drives it away.

Necromantic Fallout - Neutral, AC 7, MV 9", ATKS 1, DMG 3-12, HD 5; SA/SD *zone of life drain* (1-2 hit points/round), half damage from slashing weapons, immune to bludgeoning weapons, cold, lightning and *cause wounds* spells

6. **1d4 Albino Worm Priests** – Pale and hateful, these evil beings congregate in dank, dark voids worshiping the great, wriggling worms deep within the earth. They try to interpret the will

of these massive beings (quite unsuccessfully) and will try and capture sentient beings rather than slay them outright. Anyone enslaved by the horrid worm priests is stripped of all possessions and tossed headlong into a pit... food for the white worms of the deep!

Albino Worm Priests – Chaotic Evil, AC 6, MV 12", ATKS 1, DMG 1-6 (mace) or capture (net), HD 4; SA/SD spells (as a 4th level evil cleric), *summon purple worm* (only works 20% of the time)

7. An **Undead Gut-Pile!** - A pale, worm-like creature of monstrous size was slain, gutted and devoured here long ago, but through some horrible arcane accident or magical calamity, the creature's steaming gut-pile gained a limited undead sentience and slithered off into the depths. It now haunts the tunnels and lightless vaults beneath the earth, having grown both bold and strong on a steady diet of grimlocks, troglodytes and the occasional lost traveler. It attacks immediately and does so until it is destroyed.

Undead Gut-Pile
– Neutral Evil, AC 6, MV 9", ATKS 1, DMG 3-12, HD 6; SA/SD half damage from bludgeoning weapons, undead immunities

8. **Worm Polyps from the Void Beyond** – These large, pale green sacs hang heavy and groaning, like moldy parasites from the towering mushrooms of a fungal forest - an obvious fungal incursion of strange

fruiting bodies. When a living creature of medium size or larger draws near (within 5' or less), the swollen polyp explodes, showering everyone within 20' with hundreds of carnivorous green worms. These tiny creatures are treated like the character had been struck by a son of kyuss 3 times, forcing multiple saving throws. Anyone slain by this effect is transformed into a son of kyuss!

Worm Polyps from the Void Beyond - Neutral, AC 9, MV 0", ATKS 1, DMG shower of worms, HD 1; SA/SD shower of worms (causes



everyone within a 20' radius to make a save vs poison for 3 consecutive rounds; failure indicates that one of the worms burrows into the victim's brain in 1d4 rounds; if not stopped, the victim dies and then rises as a son of kyuss); see the son of kyuss for more information.

OF LONGSTRIDERS AND GIANT KILLERS – RENOWNED RANGERS OF THE UNTAMED NORTH

“Lonely men are we, rangers of the wild, hunters – but hunters ever of the servants of the enemy...” – J.R.R. Tolkien

HELKA “RED-SPEAR”

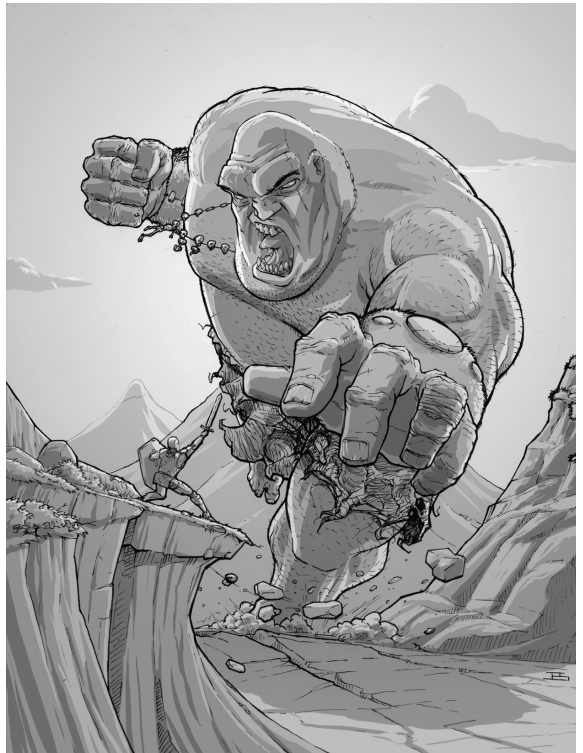
Orphaned by a giant raid at a young age, Helka survived on her own in the wilds of the north for more than two months before she was discovered by the legendary warrior Skode Gold-Eye. The old warrior took her in and raised her through his twilight years, where she became a skilled tracker and veteran of dozens of battles by the time she came of age. Helka ranged all over the hinterlands of the north for more than 25 winters, doing all she could to stop the steady onslaught of orcs, ogres and giants before disappearing into the uncharted wilds.

Dragon-bone Spear – While Helka may have disappeared long ago in her quest to quell the frost giants of the far north, her fabled dragon-bone spearhead was recovered by adventurers at the Rift of Howling Ice, the site of her probable demise. This expertly-carved bone spearhead can be modified by a skilled craftsman and will act as a *spear* +2.

LANGLAR “GREENSHADOW”

An expert woodsman, tracker and strategist of no small skill, this famed half elf ranger is known as perhaps the best marksman with a longbow in the entire north. He gained his epithet for his ability to stealthily appear and disappear into the wilderness without trace. He has a great knowledge of the hidden paths and secret ways around the north like no other. In conjunction with a handful of other likeminded rangers, druids and frontiersmen, Langlar watches the deep passes and gateways to the wild hinterlands for any sort of activity that could threaten the civilized lands to the south.

The Greenbow – Langlar is in possession of no fewer than a dozen special



bowstrings, gifted to him by the elves of his mother's homeland many winters ago. While these are very precious to him, he has been known to give them to other servants of the north on rare occasions. If a longbow is strung with one of these, it immediately adds a +1 bonus to hit to the bow. This bonus cannot exceed +3, but the bow strings are extremely resilient, lasting three times as long as normal varieties of their kind.

BELKEN "STORMBREAKER"

A skilled tracker known to range far and wide throughout the wilderlands of the frozen north, Belken's deeds are legendary, even amongst other rangers and adventurers. He was known to wield a *hammer of thunderbolts* to disastrous effect in his battles with the many evils prevalent in the north and to have a strange affinity to crows and ravens of all sorts. It was not uncommon for a tribe of orcs on the move to see a flock of crows fly overhead, only to be strafed with bolts of lightning moments later as Belken moved in to finish his grim work.

The Counsel of Crows – In life, Belken possessed a light silver torc that he always wore around his neck and after his death it was passed down to other rangers of the north. The torc is simply made and sturdy, otherwise unadorned aside from an etching of ravens taking flight. This was a gift from the witch-women of the Gwirach, who were indebted to Belken after he rescued several of their number from an attack by a remorhaz. When worn and pressed slightly to the throat, it allows the wearer to *speak with animals*, but only to crows, ravens and carrion birds.



ロンギング

No one is quite sure from whence Longbeard originally came, only that he has been somehow gifted with extraordinarily long life and has been in the trackless wilderness of the north for more than 150 winters. As his name implies, he has an unusually long, thick and bushy beard (some 8 feet long by one fellow ranger's estimation), which frames a dour and almost wooden face that has seen season after season pass before its eyes. Longbeard has been known to come seemingly out of nowhere to rescue good folk in need, only to disappear without need of thanks or a single word of comment. He is highly skilled with both bow and axe, using woodland sniper tactics to take his foes by surprise before moving in to make short work of those left.

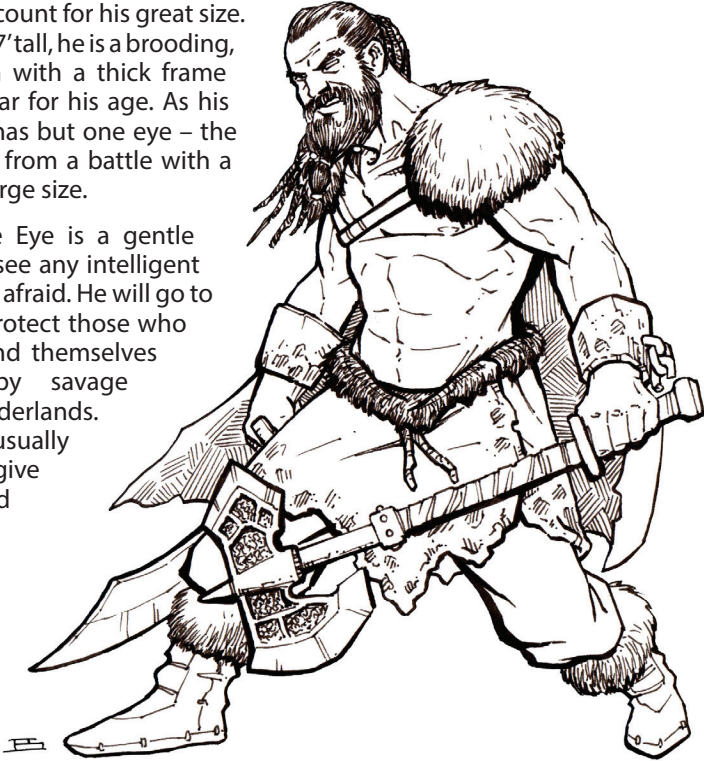
Blessing of the Korred King – Longbeard has a close relationship with the wild folk known as the korred, having aided them many times in the past in their battles with those trespassing into their sacred territory. The king of the korred laid a special blessing on Longbeard that always keeps his beard long and full, providing warmth to him in the winter. An unexpected benefit of this magical charm was that, once a year, Longbeard can harvest a handful of the long locks from his voluminous beard that will then magically lengthen and weave together to form a *rope of climbing*. The rope lasts for a full year before falling apart. From time to time, Longbeard will gift a true servant of the north with one of these strange but special gifts.

OLE ONE EYE

An anomaly amongst his fellow longstriders and rangers, Ole One-Eye is said to have a bit of giant blood in him, which would certainly account for his great size. Standing just over 7' tall, he is a brooding, wiry-bearded man with a thick frame that is still muscular for his age. As his name implies, he has but one eye – the unfortunate result from a battle with a yeti of unusually large size.

Inwardly, Ole One Eye is a gentle soul and hates to see any intelligent creature hunted or afraid. He will go to great lengths to protect those who become lost or find themselves being stalked by savage monsters in the wilderlands.

While his size is usually enough to give those who would do him harm pause, he is more than capable of bringing violence to bear if need be. The long-handled heavy axe that he wields inflicts



twice the damage that a normal-sized one does, allowing him to make short work of the many orcs, hobgoblins and ogres that plague the north.

True North – Ole One Eye wears a simple-looking eye patch made of winter wolf hide to cover the ragged hole where his left eye used to be. This eye patch carries with a simple magical blessing which allows the wearer to be able to always locate true north, no matter where they may be standing.

MAGIC ARMORS AND WEAPONS OF LEGEND

*"Treasures are not won by care and forethought
but by swift slaying and reckless attack."* – Michael Moorcock

THE ALABASTER ARMOR OF ST SALDRIC THE BLESSED

Sacred to the followers of the god of justice, this elaborate set of platemail is engraved with angelic faces and religious symbols holy to that faith. The armor gets its name from its unusual, stark white color and is not actually made from alabaster. The left gauntlet of the armor does not share this hue, being both plain and unadorned to symbolize the one-handed nature of the god of justice.

The *alabaster armor of st saldric the blessed* has a storied history, having not only been worn by the famous paladin for who it is named, but by many other well known knights during its long history. Before achieving sainthood, Sir Saldric roamed the lands between the great seas – both civilized and wild

– dispensing even-handed justice wherever the whims of fate took him. He finally met his demise at the hands of summoned demons as he singlehandedly razed a secret underground temple dedicated to the god of murder. His steadfast devotion to his cause earned him sainthood after his death and mobilized a crusade against evil in the region that lasted for more than twenty winters.

This *platemail +2* is significantly lighter and easier to move about in than other armors of its kind. In addition to this most welcome property, it has the ability to function as a *ring of spell turning 3/day*.

Local Lore – The temple of the god of justice has been desecrated, its attendant clerics slain and the *alabaster armor of st saldric the blessed* has been stolen! A taunting message left behind by the bloody priests of the murder-god clearly spells out who is responsible. Several knights and crusaders of renown have gone to the old ruined black keep in the hills to bring justice to the murderers, but only the young cleric Olothir has returned, bearing tales of butchery from the shadows, pitfalls filled with captive beasts and waiting death traps for any who dare come.

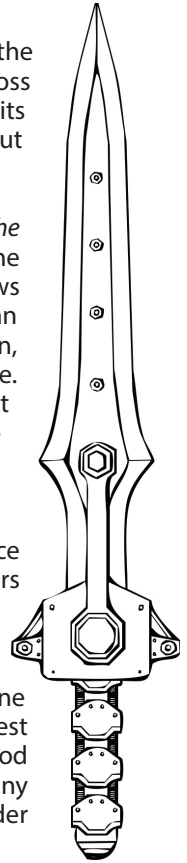


GATESEEKER

An old blade dating back to the days when witch-kings ruled the northern lands and elvenkind still held mighty arboreal courts across a world unsettled by men, *Gatseeker* is highly sought after for its potent magical properties. The location of the sword is unknown, but speculations run rampant to where it might actually lay.

This magnificently crafted *longsword +2* also acts as a *sword of the planes*. It is capable of detecting magical *gates* within 60' of the wielder and if such an eldritch portal is detected, the sword allows them to see it even if it is *invisible* or otherwise naked to the human eye. *Gatseeker* is also capable of permanently closing an open, active *gate* by touching the blade to the portal 50% of the time. Each time this ability is used, there is a 5% cumulative chance that the sword will shatter and become non-magical after closing the gate. This detrimental effect is unknown to the wielder and rolled secretly by the Game Master.

Local Lore – For more than a hundred winters the final resting place of *Gatseeker* has eluded plundering adventurers, treasure seekers and curious sages across the civilized lands of men. Some have postulated that it lies beneath the ruins of shattered Nethra, gripped in death by some long dead sorcerer-king. Others say that it is hidden away deep in Nuorn, the land of the hags. One adventurer claims he saw it at the heart of Nettlewood, in a grisly nest of hundreds of giant spiders. Another claims that it was on the good ship *Luck of the Draw* when it sunk off of Peli's Point. The truth to any of these speculations is up for debate, with each claim being grander than the last.



THE SCREAMING SCEPTER OF DUN-THAROS

Once seen as the staff of office in the Chernobogian-ruled city of old Dun-Tharos (before that city's utter destruction at the hands of mammoth-mounted northern invaders led by the mysterious witches known as the Gwirach), this powerful weapon is a *rod of lordly might* that is both chaotic evil in alignment and intent. Sacred to the dread faith of Chernobog, they will do anything in their power to find and reclaim this powerful weapon.

In addition to the alignment properties of the *screaming scepter of dun-tharos*, the weapon is rechargeable, which makes it different from most varieties of the *rod of lordly might*. If a sentient living being of 5 or more hit dice is slain by the weapon, the visage on the head of the rod will scream aloud in a bloodcurdling shriek, bestowing the scepter with a single charge. The rod has a maximum of 20 charges.

Local Lore – While many chroniclers of the such things believe that the scepter lies somewhere in the old ruins of Dun-Tharos (which, to this day, have been reduced to a sparsely-settled hinterland of small hovels, sheep-tending farms and scattered blocks of old, carved stone), the truth is unknown. An apostate priest of the dread god Chernobog insists that it resides in the hands of a great, stag-antlered huntsman who commands a hell-born pack of the dread hounds of chernobog (detailed on page 44), but his ravings have been dismissed as madness by the core faith.

SHE RIDES ON THE WIND - BABA YAGA, HAG QUEEN OF THE NORTH!

"I knew a man once – he lived in a house near the woods and each night the Baba Yaga would fly into his kitchen to count his spoons... and the man would hide in a closet and bite a rag to keep from screaming." – Mike Mignola, The Baba Yaga

The Grandmother of Witches. The Old Crone in the Hut. The Mother of Monsters. Many are the names and titles given to the venerable hag Baba Yaga over the centuries. That she has birthed countless horrors and perpetuated the spread of evil in the north is undeniable, though she seems to have a broader plan that only she can foresee. There are times when she could easily crush the folk of the north but chooses to stay her hand. Other times she secretly works against those in her service, laying traps and obstacles that cause them to fail. Her goals and ambitions are unknowable and she seems to like it this way. She remains detached and aloof, sometimes spending years away from the mortal plane in unknown pursuits.

BABA YAGA (THE OLD CRONE)

Frequency: Unique

No. Appearing: 1

Armor Class: -3

Move: 15"

Hit Points: 145

% In Lair: 0%

Treasure Type: Carried

No. of Attacks: 2

Damage/Attacks: 3-18

Special Attacks: See below

Special Defenses: See below

Magic Resistance: 85%

Intelligence: Supra-Genius

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Size: L (8' tall)

Possessions: *Broom of flying, baba yaga's mortar and pestle, crone's brew (many doses), girdle of wailing children, hag-mother's mantle, iron flask, urn of holding.*

Tall but hunched over with age, Baba Yaga has long, spindly arms that are tattooed with fading eldritch runes that do nothing to betray the great strength she possesses. Her gnarled hands end in long, iron-hard claws that are capable of tearing even the most veteran warrior to shreds. Cold black eyes ringed with a cruel red glare glow above a long, warty nose and a hideous face framed in long, filthy hair. She wears a long, tattered shawl and a necklace hung with many bones and odd trinkets.

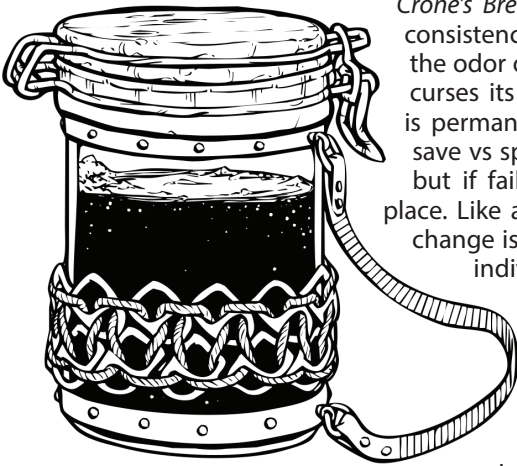
Baba Yaga has all of the spells and abilities of 20th level magic-user, with the added ability of being able to draw spells from the druid spell list, conforming to the same levels. In addition, she can add any cleric spells that she finds on *scrolls* or other sources to her permanent spell list, thus being able to prepare and add them to her daily roster of spells if she so chooses. Which cleric spells she has is left completely up to the Game Master. The Hag Queen has a number of other potent abilities at her command. She regenerates like a troll and can only be hit by silver or magical weapons. If both of her physical attacks hit, she may also rend and tear her victim for 4-24

points of damage, literally ripping them into pieces. Baba Yaga radiates *fear* in a 30' radius and any creature laying eyes on her must save vs magic or be stricken with weakness, losing half of their strength points for 1-6 turns. She can suppress this fear effect if she so chooses. She can *polymorph* into any woodland creature ranging from small to large size and has permanent *tongues* and *speak with monsters* effects in place. She may detect *lie*, *detect magic*, *know alignment* and *read magic* at will. Finally, when a creature is slain by Baba Yaga and she has the opportunity to consume a portion of its body, she can prevent that creature from being raised, resurrected or restored to life. Only a full *wish* or intervention by a deity can counter this effect. When this occurs, Baba Yaga heals up to 10 hit points per hit die of the creature consumed.



In addition to her infamous *baba yaga's dancing hut*, she also typically carries the following magical items with her:

Baba Yaga's Mortar and Pestle – These over-sized but simple looking items are often used by the grandmother of witches when she travels away from her hut on the mortal plane. The mortar can fit up to 3 medium creatures or 1 large creature comfortably, flying at high speeds for an unlimited amount of times a day. The pestle can be used as a +3 *club* that does double damage against creatures from the prime material plane if the need should arise.



Crone's Brew – A horrific mixture with the consistency of mucus, the color of pus and the odor of rotting flesh, this magical brew curses its imbiber so that their alignment is permanently changed to chaotic evil. A *save vs spell* is allowed to resist its effects, but if failed the alignment change takes place. Like a *helm of opposite alignment*, the change is both mental and moral, and the individual thoroughly enjoys his new outlook.

The Girdle of Wailing Children – This simple-looking belt is a magical garment of the most grisly sort, being fashioned from the very thing it takes its name from.

If one takes a closer look at it, tiny scalps and hands can be seen hanging from it like trophies. If the wearer is evil-aligned, it grants a +2 bonus to armor class and saving throws. Furthermore, all spells cast by the wearer are saved at with a -2 penalty, but only if the victim is good-aligned. Any character of good alignment that wears the belt is affected as if they had worn a *robe of powerlessness*.

Hag-Mother's Mantle – This old, tattered-looking shawl is fashioned in an older style, its fringes sweeping the ground and fit with a deep, concealing hood. Despite its ragged appearance, it is a potent item of arcane power. The *hag-mother's mantle* provides a +5 bonus to armor class and allows the wearer to utilize *path without trace* at will. If anyone other than Baba Yaga should attempt to wear it, it acts as a *rug of smothering*.

Urn of Holding – This item appears as a large, earthenware jar, crudely painted, which flies and gnats always seem to buzz about and light upon. It acts as both a *bag of holding* of the largest size and a *heward's handy haversack*.

10 WAYWARD ODDFELLOWS YOU MIGHT MEET ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT AT OLD MAN RUMPLE'S

"I mean, what is prison, really, except a good bar without the booze?"
– John Waters

The taverns and roadside stops of the north are notorious for the brand of adventurous folk that they attract. Old Man Rumble's is no different. A popular stop along the oft-dangerous road that dead-ends into the unchecked wilderness of the hinterlands, its well known as a place where allegiances are forged, wanted men can hide out and whispers of lost treasure and great adventure get told endlessly around the roaring hearth. Who knows what daring or unscrupulous folk might be there on any given night?

Roll 1d10 or just choose one you like

1. **Durnor "the Old Hawk"**

A retired soldier, ex-gladiator and one-time adventurer of minor local fame, he loves to roam the taverns and alehouses of the north recounting his days as a monster hunter and sharing stories about his days abroad. He is a shameless drunk but if sobered up (no easy feat!) this weathered, hawk-nosed veteran knows much about exotic creatures, tribes of humanoids and the infamous dungeons of the north.

2. **Wagonmaster Horthal**

Experienced, trusted and not one to give his trust easily, this wizened caravan master only has a few more runs along the open routes before he can retire and kick his feet up for good. He is very aware of this too, sizing up anyone or any situation in advance, fearful that they might deprive him of the life he's worked so long to attain. He's willing to hire enterprising adventurers for work as they skirt the wilder parts of the north, but he keeps a close eye on everyone.

3. **Nick Dandy, Conjuror at Large**

Loud of mouth and boisterous of deed, this brightly-robed, charismatic wizard from the south loves a good tall tale or recounting of heroic deeds... especially if he is at the center of it! He can often be found tossing dice at a back table or drinking himself into a stupor with other local adventurers. From time to time he is known to hire out his services to enterprising expeditions into the hinterlands, but only if the cut of seized treasure and probable chances of success are both in his favor.

4. **Duhn Hillgauntlet**

The youngest son of a minor noble family known for its adventurous scions, this swarthy, handsome aristocrat-turned-crafty-tomb-plunderer loves being on the open road and never knowing what the next day may bring. He is always up for a foray into whatever old crypt or forgotten tomb is making the local rounds. He is known to possess a *horn of valhalla*, which has saved him certain doom more than once.

5. Dulgeth

Formerly a minor mageling of little consequence, he became so enamored with death and evil that he elected to become a priest of the rotting god. Friendly and sociable to those in power, he keeps a close eye on the wealthy class, members of rival faiths and other enterprising folk of the north. He thinks nothing of betrayal and murder should it benefit him or if someone has become no longer useful in his schemes. Outwardly, he is known as a minor aristocrat and wizard, keeping his true faith and goals a secret.

6. Ham "Greatbelly"

A ridiculously fat halfling given more to throwing back endless tankards of ale and sharp-tongued puns than his true calling as a broker of underground goods, exotic treasures and rare magics. He is a shrewd negotiator and there's not a tavern in the north that doesn't hold at least a half dozen men who either owe Ham a favor or have been bought so many drinks by him over the years as to make them unshakably loyal. A great ally to have... but a cunning enemy should you cross him.

7. Farngoth "the Fearless"

A boisterous former showman and circus strongman who turned to a brief life of adventuring, he retired after an unfortunate owlbear wrestling accident left him with a gruesome limp. He spends his days gambling, dueling blindfolded, arm-wrestling his "civilized" lizardman companion and pursuing any drinking game of chance that crosses his path.

8. Hlundor

A wealthy moneylender who prefers to "slum it" amongst the seedier bars and taverns of the city, spending his off days among

those of questionable character. He is an eccentric fop of sorts (complete with many-ringed hands and perfumed beard!), willing to thoughtlessly throw coin at whatever amuses him, as the wild stories and exotic harems he frequents also attest to. He thinks of himself as untouchable, but nevertheless loves to tempt fate. Hlundor is always accompanied by 1d3+2 armed bodyguards (2nd level human fighters).

9. Durp

A failed *clone* spell that end up living despite all odds, Durp is a small, hunchbacked fellow with large eyes and hairy, ape-like hands who stays hidden under tattered clothes and a wind-shredded cloak. He is cunning and shrewd, but looks up to those who show him genuine kindness. He is well known amongst the tavern-keepers and ale-pourers of the north's taverns as harmless and somewhat pathetic, but is quite capable at getting into places others want to stay locked up.

10. Kelhara

Red of hair and sullen of temper, this lithe warrior-woman from the western isles is only recently arrived, waiting patiently night after night at Old Man Rumble's. Her only companions are a rapier and dirk, worn at her belt and ready to silence the mouth of the next drunken braggart to try and lay a hand on her. She was seen speaking in hushed tones to a hooded, one-eyed dwarf several nights ago and in no language known to the men of the north. Her business – and what she awaits – is a mystery.

SECRETS FROM THE LICH'S CRYPT - A WHOLE BUNCHA WEIRD OLE CRAP IN A DEAD WIZARD'S LAB

"Casting his shadow, weaving his spell. Funny clothes, tinkling bell."
– Black Sabbath, *The Wizard*

ELIXIR OF CURDLED SWARMS

Known by users of magic to be brewed only in the foulest temples of the slime god by its horrible, faceless worshipers, these disgusting draughts are an utter abomination in the civilized lands of men.

The drinker of an *elixir of curdled swarms* is immediately wracked by convulsing tremors and pain that courses through their entire body, dealing 1d4 points of damage and giving them a -2 penalty to their armor class for 1d3 rounds. At the end of the round, the imbiber forcibly vomits forth 1d3 ochre jellies that are under its complete control. The ochre jellies may take action on the following round and persist for 10 turns before melting away into nothingness.



Lich's Lore – A secret temple to the demon god of oozes was recently uncovered beneath a finely-appointed villa in the city's southern district. The dwelling's original inhabitants had all disappeared and a trail of gelatinous sludge led to many cellars and sub-levels below, finally revealing the forbidden shrine. Though many curious and terrible red stains marked the altar, the only thing that was left behind by those who once worshipped here was a very old and ornate bottle, sealed with a wax stamp of unknown origin... and a message scrawled in blood upon the wall that read "*Come.... and SEE!*". A natural tunnel that led further into the depths has (as of yet) remained unexplored.

GLOOM DUST

Much has been written of the legendary Ul-Dis (the infamous "city of witches") and the dreaded necromancers who once dwelled there, but its legacy lives on in the many magical relics and formulas that depraved folk left behind. One such magical item is *gloom dust*.

This black powder is chalky to the touch and smells vaguely of the open grave. It has two effects, both of which occur simultaneously. If thrown into the air, it fills an area equal to 15' and creates a magical darkness equal to that of the spell *darkness* 15'. Anyone caught inside this darkness must also make a save vs poison or become weakened, incurring a -2 penalty to their strength.

Any creature slain while under the effects of *gloom dust* will rise as a shadow within 1d2 days unless the body is *blessed* by a good-aligned cleric of at least 5th level.

Lich's Lore – The ruins of an old burned church in the hills is said by locals to be haunted, some of who have reported the odor of burning timber and ash before being confronted by the unquiet spirits of the restless dead. A wizard known to the characters has recently uncovered the ancient formula for creating *gloom dust* and asks (hires) them to go the ruined church to collect ash from the charred stones there. Unfortunately, in order for the ash to retain any hope of magical potency, it must be collected at night...

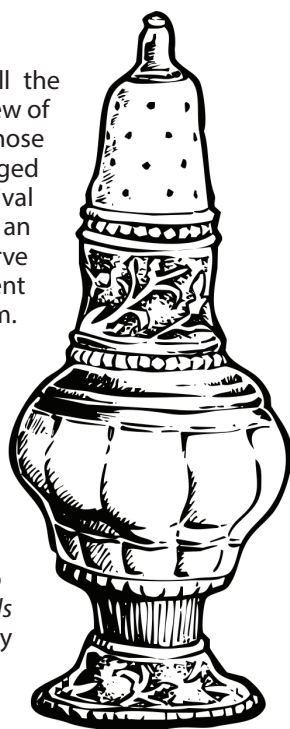
THE OSSUARY OF VARAAK-DOS

Many are the dark secrets and fell sorceries that fill the hidden tombs of witch kings of the uncharted north. Few of these were more wicked or had a burning hatred of those that walked the sunlit world more than the hell-pledged warlock Varagak-dos. When he was murdered by a rival sorcerer, his still-smoking remains were placed into an enchanted magical urn and his spirit was forced to serve the one who held it – a final insult to one who had spent his long, unnatural life despising all of those around him.

The *ossuary of varagak-dos* is a chipped ceramic urn roughly 2' high and painted with faded images detailing the wicked life of the evil being inside. Whoever holds the urn can command the rage-filled spirit inside to come forth and attack a living creature once per day. When this is done, the air is filled with unearthly screams and a sickly purplish light emanates from the urn. The spirit of Varagak-dos attempts to consume its victim, acting as an *inflict critical wounds* spell. The victim can attempt to save vs spell to take only half damage.

Every time the *ossuary of varagak-dos* is used, there is a 1% cumulative chance that the spirit instead turns on the one commanding it.

Lich's Lore – The *ossuary of varagak-dos* has been out of the hands of evil for many decades, locked deep within the vaults of a temple dedicated to the god of justice... until recently. After a daring dead-of-night raid on the temple by a group of evil wizards and their summoned mezzodaemon allies, the treasury was torn asunder and the *ossuary* stolen. The surviving priests of the temple are offering great rewards for the return of the *ossuary of varagak-dos*, along with seeing an even-handed justice levied against those who murdered their brothers in cold blood.



SHROUD OF THE BLACK HOUR

Originally worn by a powerful *dusanu* (also known as “rot fiends”) and subsequently gifted to the high priest of the leper-god, this tattered, moth-eaten black cloak is shot through with dozens of holes and reeks of a freshly-opened tomb. Candles, torches and other small sources of light visibly flicker and dim when the one wearing the cloak draws near.

When donned by a creature of evil alignment, the cloak offers up a +1 to armor class and saving throws for the one wearing it. If worn by an evil creature who also worships the leper-god, this bonus increases to +2. In addition, the *shroud of the black hour* acts as a *periapt of proof against disease* with the added effect that while the wearer is completely unaffected from the harmful, in-game effects of a disease, if the affliction has any sort of physical aspect it will still affect the wearer. For instance, if the wearer is affected by leprosy, his body will still slowly rot away but he will be unaffected in any sort of in-game manner.

Any good aligned creature who dons this accursed shroud suffers a -2 penalty to all saving throws and must save vs spell or be affected by *cause disease*.

Lich's Lore – Rumors have come out of the frozen north, carried by a haggard ranger named Durlan, that a horde of undead have erupted from deep in earth, led by a masked prophet of the leper-god who calls himself “The Shambling King”. He is said to be carried on a litter of human bones and to cause famine with a wave of his boned claw. He wears the *shroud of the black hour* in service to his dreaded god.

ROD OF KEENING DEATH

Said to have been plucked from the limbs of the World-Tree and used to stir the cauldron of the grandmother of witches, the *rod of keening death* was fashioned by Baba Yaga herself and given over to one of her favored daughters, the frost-witch Agnatha. The rod has changed hands dozens of times since, always seeming to return to the possession of the monstrous witches of the north.

This long wooden rod is banded in cold iron and topped with the intricately carved visage of a snarling, monstrous head akin to that of a harpy. It is fashioned so that the wielder may blow through a cleverly disguised chamber in the back of the head to create a shrill whistling sound. When blown through, the eyes of the terrible visage glow green with a spectral light. This dread keening is unearthly and terrible, producing one of three possible effects, each usable once a day. The effects are as follows:

- *Fear*
- *Acts as a horn of blasting*
- *Cause serious wounds*

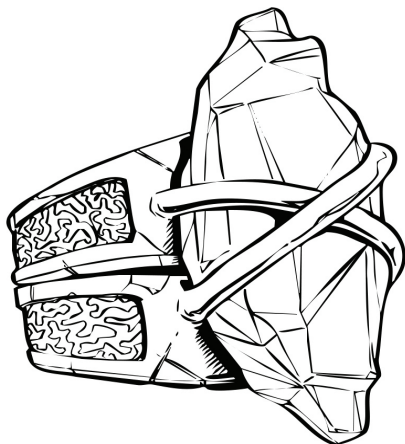
The *rod of keening death* has one drawback – there is a 1% cumulative chance that every time it is used it will attract the attention of 1d2+1 hags (the exact type is determined by the Game Master and should conform to the varieties that might be found nearby). The hags will seek to slay the possessor of the rod and take the dreaded item back with them to their lairs.

Lich's Lore – A coven of powerful hags in the northern hinterlands was recently slain by adventurers who brought the dreaded *rod of keening death* back with them as part of the seized treasure from the lair of those terrible witches. The item was

traded to a one-eyed, battle-scarred wizard known as Grimwand, who recognized it as a device of fell powers and eldritch evil. Grimwand seeks to hire armed adventurers to help him take it to a special place in the deep boreal wilds so that it can be destroyed... lest it fall back into the clutches of evil.

RING OF ELDRITCH MIGHT

This magical ring was worn for many winters by the famed battle-wizard Ulorn "of the Tempest-Blood" (who, as his name would imply, was said to have the blood of storm giants coursing through his veins), known just as much for his imposing physical size (a full seven feet tall!) as he was for his mastery of magic. Ulorn was famed for hurling *lightning bolts* and calling down sheets of lightning to obliterate his many foes, but met an untimely end in an attempt to win the hoard of the great white dragon Wfrlegsamin. The *ring of eldritch might* is one of many treasures that still lies in the lair of the ancient frost wyrm.



The ring is an extremely potent tool for wizards of all varieties. First, it acts as a *ring of wizardry*, doubling the base spell capacity of all 1st – 2nd level spells. It also allows the user to recall one spell of 3rd level each day, as a *pearl of power*. Finally, the *ring of eldritch might* imposes a -1 saving throw penalty against any spell cast by the wearer.

Lich's Lore – The glacial cave-lair of Wfrlegsamin still remains un-plundered, with tales swirling in every frontier tavern and border-town inn of the riches to be had should one be able to defeat the great beast who dwells within. The free-wheeling adventurer Wyvernjack claims to know the way to the great beast's lair but has sworn it off as certain death awaiting anyone who dares approach.

MORE FORBIDDEN DEMON CULTS OF THE OUTER VOID

"What is light... without... DARKNESS!?" – Legend

THOGGA-SHULD, OF THE SIX AND NINE DESPAIRS

A being of nightmares and utter hopelessness, Thogga-Shuld is a tall, gaunt humanoid-looking creature with a bent, spined back and a vaguely human face, though it lacks ears or a nose. It has bony, kangaroo-like legs that end in over-sized hooves and long, gangly arms that end in wicked-looking claws. Its eyes are empty pits of darkness with no iris or pupil.

A demon that thrives on anguish and despair, Thogga-Shuld is worshipped primarily by decadent cults existing on the fringes of society and monstrous beings from the Plane of Shadow. From time to time, it sends its human worshippers one of these shadowy, nightmarish creatures as a boon, but just as often the monster will devour those cultists who seek to bend it to their will. As a being that feeds on distress and fear, Thogga-Shuld's motives are impenetrable beyond its need to spread dejection and sow discord.

Fun Demon Cult Fact!

The Waking Death of Thogga-Shuld is a potent curse inflicted by the cult's insane priests that locks its victim into a perpetual, waking nightmare. The afflicted can neither sleep peacefully or find solace in its waking hours, stumbling about until they are eventually reduced to a gibbering shell of their former selves, hopelessly mad. Such unfortunate beings eventually die from sleep deprivation after a few weeks of extended agony, their souls harvested by Thogga-Shuld and its minions.

MLUUG, THE BLOATED ONE

Towering over 15' tall and swaddled in layer upon layer of putrescent, yellowing fat that discolors into grayish-black flesh in its greasy creases, this disgusting being is a stumbling mountain of meat and bone that somehow walks upright. It is accompanied by a foul, unwashed stench that reeks from a distance, often heralding its approach. Its eyes are rolled back into its head and its jaw hangs slack and loose.

An insatiable demon that revels in gluttony, decadence and – to a lesser extent – greed, this stinking, corpulent being is capable of feasting on nearly anything... and will do so if given the slightest opportunity! Anything its size or smaller exists only to be eaten.



Fun Demon Cult Fact!

Some sages that study such horrible things believe that Mluug was once a minor demon of no importance known as a nupperibo. The creature is said to have fell afoul of a *gate* or magical anomaly that led it deep into the astral plane where it floated along harmlessly before beaching onto the body of a dead god. Over centuries, this creature's endless hunger allowed it to gnaw away at the fallen deity's physical form, until finally it emerged from its cannibalistic chrysalis as a greater demon.

VARKOLAAK, LORD OF THE SIGHTLESS VOID

Astride a giant, leprous vulture he comes, swathed in white linens speckled with the dung of those who have soiled themselves on the field of battle. He wears a crown of gold and a pale ivory mask set with a perpetual frown. A spark of flame sputters above his head – a grim, tell-tale reminder of the exalted halo of heavenly light he once wore. In battle, he wields a simple-looking golden rod that causes a rictus paralyzation in any living creature it strikes.



Varkolaak delights in tormenting mortals and perpetuating their fall from grace – mirroring his own timeless failures. He is a heartless, pitiless being who hates paladins, angels and other servants of the purest good more than anything else. Orchestrating the seduction and fall of these sorts of beings brings him immense pleasure and he will often send one (or more) of his 99 succubi to do so if he sees a promising opening.

Fun Demon Cult Fact!

Varkolaak was once a monavic deva who belonged to the divine host of the Seven Heavens but was cast down for betrayal and treachery that led to the death of seven of his kin. Cast into the Abyss, he would arise eons later as the lord of the Sightless Void – a dizzying, windswept abyss that is said to have no bottom.

HALI OAKENSPEAR, WANDERING CLERIC OF THE LUCK GODDESS

"Even the best of luck has its storms."

Exceptionally beautiful, with dark brown hair, a kind expression and an easy smile, this middle-aged woman has a calm demeanor in the face of battle that reveal her to be an experienced veteran of many conflicts. Out on the open road, she wears a fine set of chainmail armor and carries both a mace and shield emblazoned with her coat of arms – a hand flipping a coin.

Born to simple farmer folk, Hali fell into the service of the luck goddess more or less by accident, being rescued from local bandits by a wandering priest who used her spells to drive off Hali's attackers. From that moment forward, Hali devoted herself entirely to the faith of the luck goddess and vowed to be a force for good, protecting others as she herself had been sheltered and kept safe by her patron's grace. She has traveled from one end of the known lands to the other, righting wrongs, spreading good fortune and living the life of a free-willed adventurer. Occasionally she joins others who are like-minded in her pursuits but she is just as comfortable making her own way in the world.



HALI OAKENSPEAR

Human Female

8th level Cleric of the Luck Goddess

Chaotic Good

AC 2, HD 8, HP 39

STR	INT	WIS	DEX	CON	CHA
11	14	17	14	13	16

+2 chainmail, +1 shield, zealotbane, coin of the luck goddess

Zealotbane – Thought to have been

crafted by elves to oppose the evil gods gaining influence in human lands, this +1 footman's mace, +3 vs evil clerics found its way into the lands of men and is now carried by Hali. Its added bonus is effective against evil-aligned clerics of all types.

Coin of the Luck Goddess – Fashioned from gold and always shiny no matter what the conditions around it may be, this coin acts as a stone of good luck in the hands of a cleric of the luck goddess.

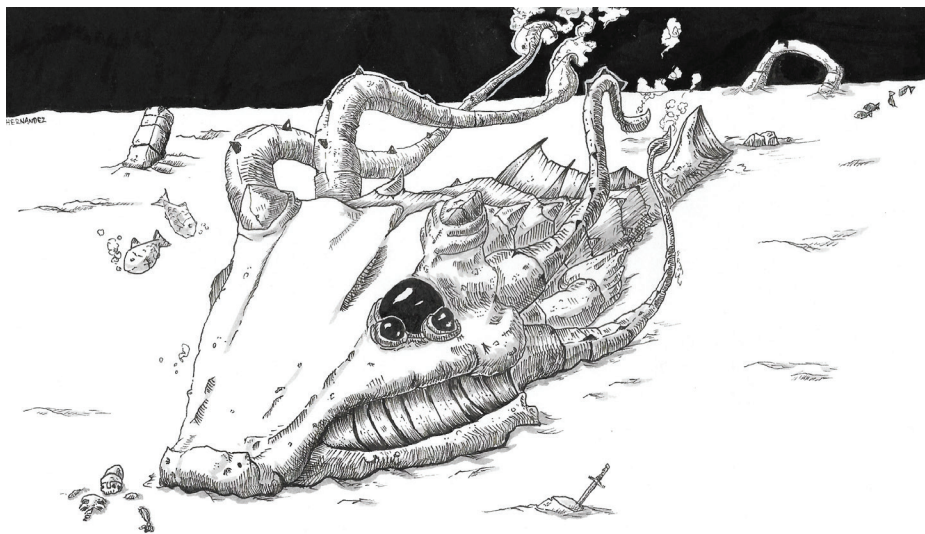
BROOD-HIVE OF THE SLIME GOD

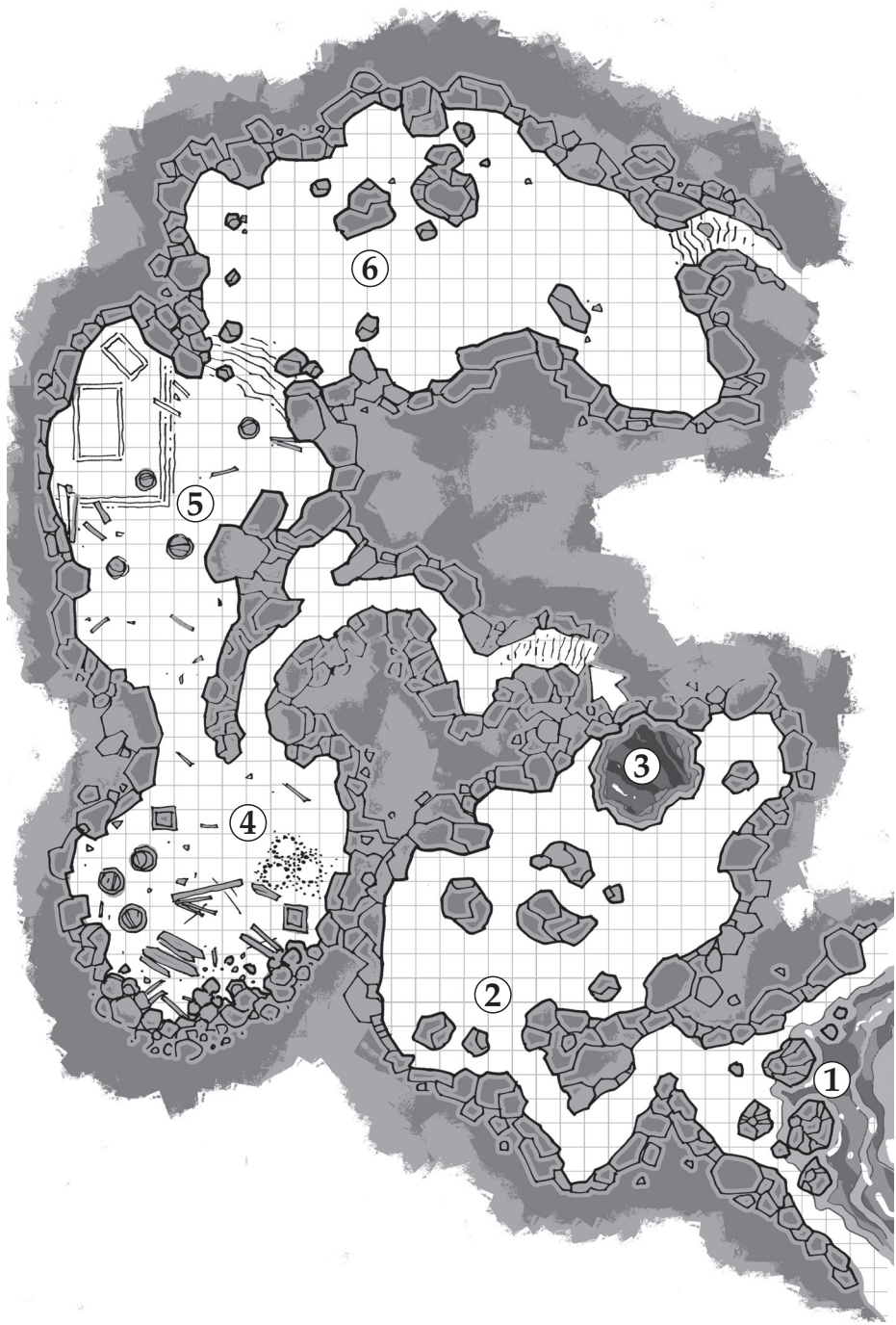
A ruined underwater temple lost to man! A cruel alien sovereign of eldritch might and emotionless evil! Haunting dreams that plague men and drive them to madness! Can your characters uncover a catastrophic conspiracy by a star-stranded alien slime god from a long-dead planet or will they be forever doomed to languish as slaves in an ooze-covered watery hell?

This scenario takes characters deep within a shunned sea-side cave to confront an ages-old terror from beyond the stars, pitting them against a lone aboleth that has made its way here through some thinning in the veil between our world... and the other. Like all creatures of its kind, the memories of this hateful being are timeless, as each aboleth passes its genetic memory down to the next in an unending procession of perfect, inherited recollection. This eidetic echo never allows them to forget the insults or slights made against them. This particular aboleth – a monstrous being known as Ulgglogathaa – remembers well the days when man and elf drove

its kind from the surface. Now the time has come for this horrific beast to take its revenge, as it plans to enslave everyone in the town of Parley Point on its way towards a repulsive plan of long-overdue vengeance!

The adventure begins in or near the small fishing village of Urtag's Horn, a seaside hamlet residing on a coastal spit of land that juts out into the nearby sea. The folk of Urtag's Horn are almost all fishermen and know little of the world except the roll of the tide, the smell of fish and (most importantly) keeping to themselves. It is a simple place with few surprises or changes from the daily routine.





Recently, some sort of madness has swept through Urtag's Horn, and the modest clergy at the seaside temple have found themselves completely unprepared for it. Local men have complained of horrible dreams and restless sleep, which comes to almost always be followed by complete lunacy after a few days. Some have even gone missing in the night, presumed to have wandered off into the nearby wilderness or walked into the sea. Hushed whispers of witchcraft and old pirate curses are making the rounds through market stall and tavern table, while every day the notoriously insular inhabitants of Urtag's Horn become a little bit more unhinged and suspicious of outsiders.

This morning, a local man thought to have drowned when his boat capsized off of Parley Point wandered into town after being gone for more than three weeks, soaked to the bone and covered in a curious, disgusting slime. Mad and babbling incoherently, he was taken to the local temple and given a sedative by the priests. When he awoke, he recounted a story of *"a terrible thing that 'aint of this world... a livin' and a breathin' and a plottin' down in that old cave off of Parley Point... and it means to do us all the worst kind of harm"*. Shortly after telling his tale, the man resumed his incoherent ranting and passed out. Hours later he was found dead, having thrown himself head-first from the third story window of the chapel. Local folk know Parley Point to be a place best avoided, and neither this man's sudden death or the disappearance of local fisherman as of late has helped its reputation.

The temple's leaders either directly hire the characters to investigate (and hopefully put a stop to) this unspeakable danger or offer to trade them healing and magical favors for their assistance. The characters might also know someone in Urtag's Horn who

has been affected by this madness or may lose a henchman or follower to the bizarre affliction as they pass through. If all else fails, rumors of unclaimed pirate treasure in a seaside cave at Parley Point have persisted for more than a century, though those who investigate it tend to never return.

The clergy offers up what meager assistance they can muster – a *potion of water breathing* (with a duration of 2d4 hours) for each character and an offer to cure any current wounds, curses or diseases. They have no one to send with the party, as they are overburdened already with taking care of the steadily declining townsfolk as they succumb to lunacy. If pressed, they will offer up a reward of no more than 750 gp – all they have – if the characters will put a stop to the plague of madness emanating from Parley Point.

Getting to Parley Point and the coastal cave that has come to be persistently avoided by local folks is easy enough. As the trade road veers north, a smaller, overgrown trail heads south towards the sea, straight for Parley Point. It is a fairly abandoned stretch of land and the characters should have little trouble navigating it.

I. THE SHUNNED CAVE AT PARLEY POINT

The tide goes in. The tide goes out. Time to find out what fear is all about.

This sea-side cave is situated on a seemingly-abandoned swathe of rocky beach, several miles from Urtag's Horn. It is a fell place that has a long reputation of being shunned by locals and avoided by caravan masters with any common sense. As mentioned earlier, those who come here with dreams of lost pirate treasure are often never heard from again.

The rocks directly outside the cave entrance are caked with a thick,



mucous-like sludge and nearby pools of tidal water are fouled and dank. A musty smell pervades the entire area, giving it an overall unwholesome and corrupted feel. The ooze and slime are an indicator of the aboleth's presence, but unless the characters have previous experience with these particular horrors, there's no way for them to ascertain the slime's origin without the use of magic.

The entrance to the cave yawns wide, disappearing into darkness. A ranger or skilled tracker can deduce that a scattering of fresh tracks lead in and out of the opening, belonging to both humanoids and some sort of three-toed man-sized creature with webbed feet.

2. OUTER CHAMBERS

Even almost dead men tell no tales.

At high tide, these caverns fill with water (making them impassable without the means to breathe and move underwater, such as a *potion of water breathing*), but at low-tide they are navigable by foot. Just as the entryway was coated with an unidentifiable slimy muck, so too is the interior of these caves. It appears that even the swell of the tides isn't enough

to completely clear this bizarre, frothy ooze away. At the very back of the chamber lies a large, roughly circular tidal pool that leads downwards into darkness, similarly caked with slime.

3d4 haggard-looking, slime-covered fisherman – locals who have all fallen under the magical sway of *Ulgglogathaa* – are huddled together in this room. Their eyes are distant and their expressions are blank as they clutch rusted weapons and wear filthy, soaked waistcoats. When they lay eyes on the characters, one of them will make a dash to the back of the room to jump into the **Entry Pool** while the others rise from their crouched positions as one, moving forward in perfect unison to attack.

The fisherman look starved and vacant-eyed. If observed closely, they can be seen to murmur “help me” and “save us” in gurgling, watery tones. Despite these pleas for help, they savagely attack the characters, doing so until destroyed or rendered incapable of doing so.

If the lone fisherman who dashed to the back of the chamber is successful in his escape, he dives into the entry pool, swimming down to alert his master in

the **Brood Chamber of the Slime God.**

If the bodies of the fisherman are searched, each one of them is revealed to have strange, pinkish-colored gills on their necks. This is a direct effect of exposure to the aboleth's slime, which has transformed these simple folk into amphibious creatures.

Aboleth Slaves (Former Humans)

Neutral, AC 10, MV 12", ATKS 1, DMG 1-6, HD 1-4 hit points; armed with gaff hooks, clubs and simple weapons.

3. ENTRY POOL

In the very back of the **Outer Chambers**, a water-filled tunnel leads straight down into darkness. The tunnel is at sea level, but the rest of the cavern fills up during high tide.

4. LAIR OF THE GIANT MORAY EELS

The sea... has an appetite!

A series of wide tunnels and broad caverns are chained together, forming what would be a rather serene underwater ecosystem if it weren't for the gelatinous mucous that floats about in the water and clings to the rocks. A quick look around reveals that numerous locations in this underwater area show signs of development, obviously having been worked on with hand-held tools of some sort. The construction appears largely unfinished and to have been abandoned long ago. In the central chamber, 1d3 giant moray eels lair inside of tube-like crevices on the cave's rocky floor. Like everything else at Parley Point, they are under the influence of Ulgglogathaa and will attack those who trespass while leaving the aboleth's slaves alone. They will fight to the death.

Giant Moray Eels

Neutral, AC 6, MV 9", ATKS 1, DMG 3-18, HD 5.

5 - THE RUINED TEMPLE

Just when you thought it was safe to

go back into the giant evil underwater trench.

The unfinished tunnels open up into a well-lit subterranean cavern that cradles the crumbling ruins of what must have once been a grand temple to some sort of magnificent underwater deity. Drifting globes of pale, gibbous light float about in the water around the characters, illuminating the entire area. These are simple *continual light* spells, having persisted since the days when this temple was inhabited by its original worshipers. Majestic arches and finely-worked pillars fill the room, resplendent with images of sea-life from across the ocean. Numerous statues lie toppled, broken into near-unidentifiable pieces scattered across the floor of the cavern. A massive, barnacle-covered altar dominates one corner, resplendent with sculpted images of fearsome-looking sea creatures such as octopi, sharks and some sort of man-fish hybrid creature. A large archway gapes wide on the west wall, disappearing into darkness. A fine layer of silt lies over everything.

The drifting *continual light* globes can be collected and carried elsewhere in the caves, though they will slowly lose their magic if taken from the sea-side cave or its deeper caverns.

The altar appears to have been left undisturbed for some time, as barnacles and all sorts of sea-life cling to it. In truth, this is a very old lingering enchantment that draws sea life to the altar, which has resulted in it being covered with barnacles, starfish and other small creatures now that the temple has been forgotten. In days of old, the sea-priests who resided here would summon schools of fish and mighty sea creatures from the deeper caverns, but as time has passed and the enchantment has waned, there is little but this curious side effect left to indicate that it was once used in this fashion. A *detect magic* or similar spell reveals a slight aura of

both enchantment and summoning.

If one of the fisherman escaped from the **Outer Caverns** and fled through this area to alert Ulgglogathaa in the **Brood-Hive of the Slime God**, then they will notice that the silt has been slightly disturbed, indicating that something recently passed through this area in a hurry.

6. BROOD-HIVE OF THE SLIME GOD

There's a million fish in the sea... and one ancient slime-monster.

This cavern serves as the lair of the abominable aboleth Ulgglogathaa, who recently came here through a natural "thinning between the boundaries of worlds" with a small group of blind skum slaves. This repellent beast seethes with hatred from minute-to-minute, never letting go of its utter contempt for those who drove its kin from dominance millennia ago. It is determined to subjugate this upstart race of humans that have laid claim to a world once ruled by aboleth-kind.

The entrance tunnel to the cavern gently slopes down some 20', lit by the same drifting globes of light from **The Ruined Temple**, before plunging into sudden darkness. The tunnel opens up into a large subterranean cavern where Ulgglogathaa resides.

The first thing Ulgglogathaa will do is dispatch his skum servitors to attack any intruders before slapping its huge tail on the floor of the cavern. This causes all of the silt – which seemingly covers everything - to fill the chamber in an instant, acting as a *darkness* spell. Once the intruders are blinded and engaged by the skum, the aboleth attacks using its tentacles and mighty tail. Any obvious warrior-type of character will be the first to be targeted by Ulgglogathaa's *enslave* ability and ordered to protect the aboleth. Ulgglogathaa will make generous use of its magical abilities, showing no quarter.

If reduced to less than 25 hit points,

Ulgglogathaa will attempt to parley with the characters, telling them to take the pirate treasure and any enslaved fishermen that still remain behind. It will further make a promise to leave the inhabitants of Parley Point alone. Obviously, the creature is corrupt, thoroughly evil and will absolutely not keep its word, but it will attempt to appeal to characters, especially if they are also heavily wounded.

The floor of the cavern is littered with bits of cast off armor and bones of all varieties. In a far corner, 3d6 bulbous, pale, unfertilized eggs are festooned to the side of the underwater cavern. This is the literal "brood hive" of this monstrous beast and the eggs only need the attention of another aboleth to fertilize and grow. Ulgglogathaa hopes to grow powerful enough to summon others of his kind here to serve it and fertilize these eggs.

The aboleth has brought the treasure from the ancient temple here, along with the rumored pirate treasure of Parley Point brought to it by its slaves and skum attendants. This treasure is kept inside a shallow depression near the southern end of the cave, covered in a layer of disgusting slime. The treasure consists of 404 cp, 7037 sp, 3371 gp, 5 finely-cut amethysts (125 gp each), 2 polished chunks of exotic coral (100 gp each), 4 large pearls (100 gp each), a expertly-carved seahorse with tourmaline eyes (245 gp), a *shield* +2, a *scroll* inscribed on the back of a large turtle shell (*beacon of hope, locate creature*) and a clear blue *gem of seeing* that the aboleth mistook for common treasure.

Ulgglogathaa the Aboleth

Lawful Evil, AC 4, MV 3"/18", ATKS 4, DMG 1-6 (X4), HD 8, SA/SD *enslave*, illusions, slime.

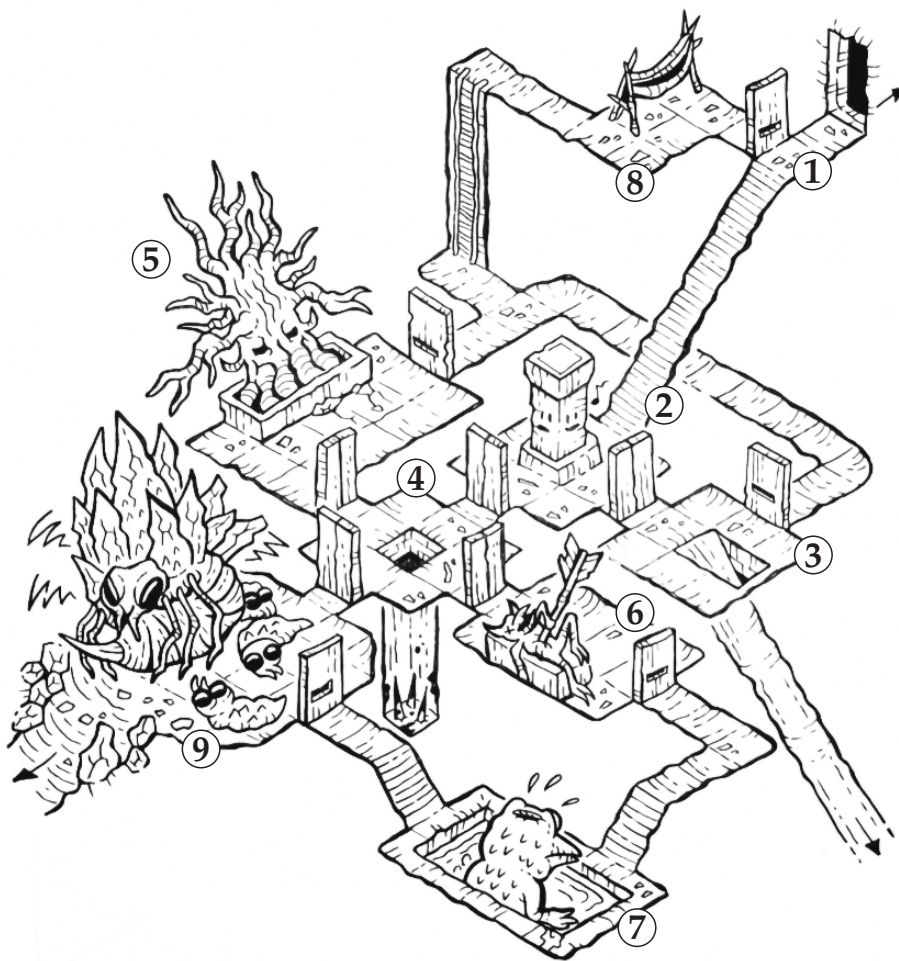
Blind Skum Servants

Chaotic Evil (enslaved), AC 6, MV 9"/18", ATKS 1, DMG 2-7, HD 2+2, SA/SD amphibious.

GRINDHOUSE DEEP CRAWL #1

*"There are older and fouler things than orcs, in the deep places of the world."
- J.R.R. Tolkien, Fellowship of the Ring*

Not all dungeons are created equal and not all of them need to be a mega-complex full of wizard towers and intricate microcosms with a long and storied history. Some places are just mysterious, self-contained deepcrawls! Echoes from a time long past? The overambitious project of a weird wizard? Abandoned temple? It doesn't really matter where it came from – the ole place is under new management now. So here you have it, the first of many subterranean delves suitable for just about any out of the way locale. These descriptions are quick and dirty, with many details left for the Game Master to fill in.



1. ENTRANCE

The entranceway appears to have once sported a door but it seems to have been wrenched free by some great force, leaving behind twisted, rusting hinges and a yawning portal into darkness. On either side of the vacant doorway, large claw marks gouge the stone walls in long grooves.

Inside, a short hallway terminates into stairs which lead down into the darkness. There is a stout-looking wooden door on the right wall. The door is locked, barred from the opposite side by a log (see **The Chill Lair of the Skunk Ape**.)

A low, howling moan erupts intermittently from the bottom of the stairs – a side effect from the **Howling Shrine**.

2. BEHOLD THE HOWLING SHRINE!

A massive, square-cut stone pillar dominates this chamber. On each side of the pillar, an aristocratic, aquiline-nosed face has been carved, mouth agape as if caught in mid-scream. Each face measures roughly seven feet in length from top to bottom. A low but steady moan escapes from cleverly cut flues inside the mouths of each face - the result of winds from the surface being guided here by concealed pipes inside the pillar.

A hidden trigger inside one of the mouths causes the pillar to turn counter clockwise and can be detected in the usual manner. As the pillar locks into position, the moaning stops but 3' diameter holes are revealed and slide open inside the mouth of each face. After only a single round, an **undead demon-hornet swarm** will erupt from each mouth, filling the room. Vision is obscured in the area, limiting it to 5 feet. Those caught in the swarm take 2d4 damage each round they remain inside the room as the demonic insect plague bites and stings them. The swarm is impervious to physical attacks, but can be driven off with heavy smoke or destroyed by magical fire, lightning or cold. They can also be turned by a good aligned cleric as if they were a wight.

If the swarm is driven away or destroyed, coins and gems can be seen to glitter inside the carved mouths of the pillar. In all, 335 gp, 212 sp, 140 cp, 3 small tourmalines (50 gp each), an oval-cut sapphire (350 gp) and a polished amethyst (200 gp) is there for the taking.

There is a door to the immediate left as well as on the far wall, both of which are unlocked.

Undead Demon-Hornet Swarm - Neutral, AC 5, MV 18", ATKS 1, DMG 2-8, HD 3, SA/SD immune to physical attacks, treat as undead

3. A DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

A square-cut hole in the floor (5' on each side) is set with a ramp that drops downward into darkness.

The ramp is actually a chute leading down to an entirely new level or to a subterranean cavern in the deepearth (Game Master's choice). Anyone traversing it must make a save vs poison or tumble head over heels down the chute, taking 2d6 damage when they reach the bottom.

Predictably, danger lurks at the bottom of the chute:

1. 1d2 **carrion crawlers**, finishing up what's left of a nest of grimlocks who became too bold in their exploration. These monsters are greedy and attempt to swarm over the characters rather than being content with their current meal.

Carrion Crawler - Neutral, AC 3/7, MV 12", ATKS 8, DMG paralysis, HD 3+1; SA/SD paralysis

2. Gelatinous Blend-o-Rama! The chute dumps the characters into a massive **gelatinous cube**. Unfortunately, this monster has been purposefully filled with magically animated swords that have been enchanted to attack should a creature of medium size or larger be absorbed by their host. If this occurs, the swords attack the creature caught inside the gelatinous cube for 1d4+1 rounds before the magic dissipates.

Gelatinous Cube Full of Animated Swords - Neutral, AC 8, MV 6", ATKS 6 (*animated swords*), DMG 1-8, HD 4; SA/SD paralysis if touched, surprise on 1-3, *animated swords*

3. The bottom of the chute is filled with shallow, murky water on top of which a disgusting green scum clings. The muck is nonmagical and offers no danger in a traditional sense, but the whole mess causes anyone who has landed in it to stink horribly. Even if the sludge is scraped off, the characters continue to stink for the next 2d6 hours, resulting in all wandering monster checks being doubled.
4. The chute empties into a staging ground for 2d6 **ghouls** who lair deep underneath the surface but scramble up the chute after nightfall to roam the countryside in search of fresh victims. They were just about to go upstairs for a bite to eat...

Ghouls - Chaotic Evil, AC 6, MV 9", ATKS 3, DMG 1-3/1-3/1-6, HD 2; SA/SD paralysis, undead immunities

5. A hazy greenish-gray mist hangs over a fungus-filled corpse garden inhabited by 2d6 **murdershrooms** (see page 42). The entire chamber is filled with towering mushrooms, quivering molds and fruiting bodies of all shapes and sizes. The chute acts as a feeding tube that deposits fresh victims into the rot-pit - fertilizer for the evil mushroom men who inhabit it.

Murdershrooms - Chaotic Evil, AC 6, MV 9", ATKS 1, DMG 1-8, HD 5; SA/SD hallucinatory spores, poison skin; MR 30%

6. The chute empties the characters into a small cavern where a unique magical singularity has given birth to an interdimensional tapeworm that eats spells. At the far end of the cavern, the floor becomes soft and changes in color, banded with splotches of purple, pink and mauve. If the ground is probed, poked or tread heavily upon, it summons the attention of the giant monster, who bursts forth in a shower of blood and chunks of flesh to devour anything and everything in the room. The **giant interdimensional tapeworm** has all the stats of a purple worm that has 100% magic resistance and can *plane shift* at will.

Giant Interdimensional Tapeworm - Neutral, AC 6, MV 9", ATKS 1 and 1, DMG 2-24 and 2-8, HD 15; SA/SD *plane shift* at will, swallow whole, poison stinger (save or die); MR 100%

4. WHAT LURKS DOWN THE SHAFT?

This chamber is dominated by a large, square-cut shaft that descends down into darkness. The hole drops roughly 30' before opening up into a room of the same size and dimensions below. The floor of the chamber is filled with scattered debris and junk, most of which is just rusted iron bits and cast off garbage. The refuse is inhabited by (roll 1d6):

1. The scattered detritus here is all that is left of a large treasure hoard that was eaten away by magical, sub-dimensional mites that transform precious metals into globs of useless iron as it passes through their tiny bodies. Anyone crawling down to investigate disturbs the colony and quickly becomes infested. The mites are naked to the human eye (although *true seeing* will reveal them for what they truly are) and cause no outward bodily harm. Unfortunately, anyone infected has all of their precious metals rendered completely worthless within 1d4 days.
2. The debris is caked in a greenish-black mold that thrives on metal but is harmless to almost all living creatures. If the mold is inhaled by a magic user however (or anyone who prepares their spells in the same manner as a magic user), it will eat up their memorized spells in the similar fashion to an **obliviax** (memory moss).
Obliviax Mold – Save vs spells or the mold will steal all of the creature's memories from the last 24 hours (including memorized spells). It can try to steal from one creature per round and will continue to do so until it is successful.
3. The garbage covering the floor hides 1d3 otyugh polyps – ripe, disgusting sacs of fleshy goo that each house a wriggling, veiny **baby otyugh**. If disturbed, the sac will split open and disgorge its slimy contents on the floor. The otyughs are not immediately hostile and can even be befriended if one has the food enough to nourish them. If taken away from the room, they not only burden their new caretakers with an ungodly odor and an insatiable hunger but will also quickly grow to maturity in 2d4 weeks. If not fed regularly they will eventually either wander off for better fare or attempt to devour their liberators.
Baby Otyugh - Neutral, AC 5, MV 6", ATKS 3, DMG 1-4/1-4/2-5, HD 3, SA/SD disease, never surprised
4. While the junk tossed about the chamber holds nothing of real interest, the air in this dank room is rife with airborne spores from a hardy strain of dungeon mold. The spores will give any cleric (or paladin capable of using *cure* spells) a temporary immunity to level drain and fear effects from undead. Unfortunately, the spores have a debilitating side effect that will cause any healing spell cast by the infected to function at the nadir of its effect. The effects (good and bad) last 1d6 days.
5. Scattered among the filth and junk of this room are several long, thin bones pitted with age and decay. Occasional strips of moldy white fur cling to them here and there. Whatever this creature was has long been forgotten, but a horrible infestation of proto-ethereal fleas still lingers here. Anyone touching or even nudging the bones with a sword disturbs their rest and will

become infested. The fleas bite and crawl, imposing a -1 on all attack rolls to hit for as long as they infest the character. Only a *remove disease* or its equal will rid the infected character.

6. A sub-planar consortium of super-intelligent, dimensional-shifting **giant rats** use this room as a connective junction between two planes, where they barter tiny bits of seemingly worthless junk from across a thousand worlds to those willing to pay for it. The rats prefer to go about their business unhindered but if approached or attacked they attempt to reach out to characters telepathically. They may even offer up some sort of trade with the characters or attempt to convince them to perform a mission! If truly

threatened, they simply disappear into the ether.

Giant Brain Rats - Neutral, AC 7, MV 12", ATKS 1, DMG 1-3, HD 1-4 hit points, SA/SD *etherealness, telepathy, hive-mind*

5. THE BIZARRE FATE OF PREFECT THRIM

Both doors to this chamber are unlocked and operated by an unseen internal mechanism of stone cogs and chains that allow the heavy stone doors to open almost effortlessly. The doors are engraved with the image of a floating chalice above a radiant sun – the symbol of the Prefect Thrim, the goodly but long-dead cleric who was interred here long ago.

Inside the chamber, what appears to have once been a stately crypt now lies



cracked open, shattered from the inside out. The lid of the sarcophagus is buckled, strewn in chunks across the floor. A twisted mass of vegetation grows outward from the crypt, its vines snaking up the wall and across the ceiling. The vines are covered in bizarre, yam-like vegetables of an orange hue that dangle freely, easily plucked. Whatever it was that once reposed inside the crypt was overtaken long ago by this rampant surge of foliage.

The remains of Prefect Thrim were consumed long ago by an isolated strain of carnivorous subterranean creeper. All that remains now is an immobile, semi-intelligent plant that has gained a limited sentience and still thinks it's human! While it cannot move or interact with the characters in any physical way, it can be communicated with telepathically. The plant still retains some of Prefect Thrim's memories and may be able to answer questions if the characters are capable of speaking with it.

The orange vegetables that hang from the creeping plant are edible and quite nourishing. There are 8 vegetables in all and eating one mimics one of the spells that the plant knew in life. If a character eats one of the weird yams, they gain the ability to cast a corresponding spell once, but it must be within the next 24 hours. If a character eats more than one of these strange vegetables, they will become extremely ill, take 1d8 damage and lose any benefit from having eaten the yam. If this damage slays the character, their remains will slowly transform into a dungeon creeper just like this one in 2d4 days.

Roll 1d8 to determine what effect a particular yam has:

1 – *Cure Light Wounds*

5 – *Cure Disease*

2 – *Detect Magic*

6 – *Speak with Plants*

3 – *Find Traps*

7 – *Neutralize Poison*

4 – *Speak with Dead*

8 – *Divination*

6. ALAS, THE SKUNK-APE DONE BEEN SKEWERED!

This room is dominated by a square-cut stone altar, upon which a large, hairy humanoid beast has been trussed and lanced through the chest in a most gruesome fashion. The creature would probably have stood over seven feet tall had it stood upright, a bizarre mixture of primate, wolf and rodent with mangy black fur. If examined, a long white stripe of fur runs from the crest of its head all the way to the back of the creature's tail, like that of a skunk. Its hands and feet were bound with chains before its demise. An old but slightly pungent odor still permeates the chamber and old stains (presumably blood and skunk-ape ichor) mar both the altar and floor.

This is the remains of a wandering skunk-ape that had taken up residence in this old ruin for a time, slowly feasting upon the giant wasp larvae in **area 9**, along with the occasional adventurer or wayward traveler that stumbled into the ruin. It became a bit lazy (and fat from its many easy meals) in its day to day existence, eventually falling prey to a small group of alchemists who killed it so that its scent glands could be harvested for some diabolical concoction. The unscrupulous alchemists took what they needed from the skunk ape's mangy corpse and then left it here to rot. Over time, the conditions within the dungeon led to the partial mummification of its corpse.

While there is nothing of value to be had in this room, an old danger still lurks – a small nest of 5d4 stubborn **rot grubs** have remained behind to chow down on the last bits of the skunk ape's dried flesh. Unless characters go poking around inside or underneath the skunk ape's remains, they have nothing to fear. If they do, then the rot grubs scurry forth to attack. These small creatures viciously burrow into any living flesh nearby.

Rot Grubs - Neutral, AC 9, MV 1", ATKS 0, DMG Nil, HD 1 hit point, SA/SD burrow into living flesh; victim must apply open flame to the wound (1d6 dmg) or have a *cure disease* spell cast upon them – otherwise the rot grubs burrow into the host's heart and kill them within 1d3 turns.

7. THE DEMON-FROG'S FANE

Wide stairs descend down into this chamber. The walls here are slick with condensation and slimy, subterranean lichen. A fearsome-looking idol dominates the room, half-submerged in a pool of murky, dank water. The idol represents a squat, bloated frog-like monster with a wide head, a flabby mouth and deep, sunken eyes. It is carved to appear as if it is squatting, with its long, webbed claws draped over its knees. Its mouth sports jagged teeth. A cursory examination also reveals a deep, circular bowl in the top of its head. This opening is carefully cut and smooth to the touch.

In times long past, the idol was a profane altar to a horrible frog-demon worshiped by a subhuman cult of fanatics. They delighted in bringing sacrifices to the altar in the name of their terrible god. While the cultists are long dead and the worship of this foul entity has faded into memory, the magical enchantments of the altar still linger.

If a character bears no wounds (which means to say, is at full hit points, having taken no damage) they may approach the altar and enter the dank pool around it with no ill effect. The idol seemingly does nothing. However, if a character is wounded (having taken any damage or at less than full hit points) and they approach within 5' of the idol, the ancient magic of the altar activates. The idol's enchantment halts characters dead in their tracks for 3 rounds (under all of the criteria for a *hold monster* spell) and begins draining them of blood! Each round they are immobilized, the idol does 2d6 points of damage to the affected character. After 3 rounds, the idol abruptly stops its vampiric feast and releases all who are affected by the paralysis. A hideous gurgling sound emanates from the altar as the circular bowl in the top of the idol's head fills with blood. The idol's eyes flash red, bestowing a boon onto those who were affected. Roll 1d6 to determine this dark gift:

- 1. The Devil-Frog's Boon.** *Bless*, but only for evil-aligned characters. Those of good alignment are instead inflicted with a *curse*! Both effects persist for the next 2d6 hours and the affected characters are outlined with a faint dark nimbus that gives off a weird, spectral illumination like a blacklight.
- 2. Ask and You Shall Receive.** The idol croaks out a terrible laugh, beseeching the characters to ask it any one question, as they have paid for knowledge with blood. It will answer one question as if a *divination* spell had been cast.
- 3. For Whom the Bell Tolls.** A bell tolls somewhere in the deep. A *remove curse* effect washes over the characters but the Game Master must also roll for wandering monsters drawn by the sound of the bell.

4. **They Buzz... They Kill!** The idol is displeased by this meager offering, croaking loudly with rage. An *insect plague* erupts from its mouth. If the characters are all good-aligned, there is a 25% chance that this is instead a *creeping doom* spell!
5. **Strength of the Swamp.** All praise the great demon frog! For the next 6 hours, any character previously affected by the idol's magic acts as if they are under the effects of a *potion of heroism*.
6. **A Blessing in Blood.** The idol erupts with hideous, croaking laughter. Any character previously affected by the idol's magic receives a permanent +1 to all saving throws. However, if the affected characters should ever slay a frog of any sort (including giant frogs, bullywugs and other amphibian, frog-like monsters), this boon immediately disappears to be replaced by a -1 penalty to saving throws forever after.

8. CHILL LAIR OF THE SKUNK APE

This area contains little more than an odd-looking shanty of sorts, composed of bundled limbs and a peeling, leather-like canvas that has been stretched between them. Nestled inside are a half-dozen dried and cracked giant wasp larvae (taken from **area 9**), the gooey contents long ago feasted upon. Bits of old fur and a few gnawed bones litter the floor of this chamber. An opening on one wall reveals a short hallway that leads to a ladder leading down. A wooden door leading to the **Entrance** rests on the opposite wall.

This is where the ravenous skunk ape (whose remains lie in **area 6**) once made its lair. The strange hide stretched between the logs is actually an old, dried up otyugh polyp from **area 4** that the skunk ape used for a hammock.

9. THEY NEST!

This chamber is the lair of 1d4+2 giant wasps who have made their nest here, away from the dangers of the surface. The room has two old but stout wooden doors, both of which are locked and can be picked by those with the skill to do so. The southwestern corner of the room is semi-collapsed to reveal a huge tunnel burrowed from outside. The tunnel is roughly 8' wide and 10' high. If followed, the tunnel leads steadily upwards for more than a hundred feet before opening up into the bottom of an old sinkhole clogged with fallen timber and dead leaves. The opening is just big enough for a giant wasp to fly in and out of. Any dwarf or gnome character can determine that the tunnel is fairly stable just by glancing at it.

The chamber is dominated by the wasp's disgusting nest, which is constructed from loose debris and bits of wood sealed together from their disgusting enzymes. The floor of the room is scattered with the remains of past meals, picked clean by the wasps. The nest also contains 2d4+1 wasp larvae who are too small and helpless to put up any sort of fight. They each have an armor class of 9 and 1 hit point, but attacking them will drive the giant wasps into a frenzy that gives the wasps a +1 to hit and damage. The Skunk Ape that once laired **area 8** considered that giant wasp larvae a delicacy and would often sneak into the nest to steal them when the wasps were gone.

Scattered about the floor and the nest is some small amount of treasure amounting to 88 gp, 76 sp, 51 cp (spilling forth haphazardly from a rotting cloth sack), a drinking horn fashioned from polished bone and gilded with silver (25 gp), a cracked scroll tube containing a single magical *scroll* (*minor globe of invulnerability*), 2 shortswords of common make and a torn and badly stained leather saddlebag containing two terribly water damaged ledgers, 4 quills and a satin bag containing 8 identical-looking pearls (50 gp each), one of which is a *pearl of wisdom*.

Giant Wasps - Neutral, AC 4, MV 6"/21", ATKS 2, DMG 2-8/1-4, HD 4; SA/SD poison (save or paralysis, followed by death)



IT CAME FROM SPAWN VAT X!

A seaside wizard's tower has exploded in a thunderous shower of half-melted stone and roaring flame, leaving a rain of curious pale ashes over the entire village of Cull's Cove! All that remains behind is a smoldering ruin lit up against the night sky. Something moves about in the rubble and an unearthly shriek echoes across the wharf. What lurks within the wreck of the old conjurer's abode?

The wizard Tulorn, a local conjurer of spells and societal recluse has lived out on a rocky spit on the west point of Cull's Cove for many winters. Beloved by the locals for the many good-natured miracles he has performed for the town over the years (including slaying a murderous scrag that snatched away a young child three winters ago), Tulorn nevertheless has preferred solitude and immersing himself deeply into his studies of all things sorcerous and arcane. Recently, the wizard has been experimenting with creating life by magically melding the traits and bodies of disparate creatures together. To achieve this end, he fashioned several spawn vats, growing his amalgamated monsters in the seclusion of his crooked,

oceanside tower.

Unfortunately, something has gone horribly awry and the spawn vats have exploded, killing not only Tulorn but completely obliterating his tower in the magical catastrophe that followed. Only one of the wizard's patchwork monsters remains behind – a dreaded **lobsterilla**! Howling in pain and confusion, this newly-born creature knows nothing of the outer world and defies the very laws of nature by its existence. It cannot be stopped! It can't be reasoned with!

If the characters investigate the ruins of the tower quickly, they will find the lobsterilla still on the grounds, wandering about in confusion. If some time passes before the wreckage is searched, the lobsterilla will have either gone directly into Cull's Cove on a rampage or escaped into the sea to nurse any wounds it incurred in the explosion. From here, the Game Master can either have the characters confront the beast in the cobblestoned streets of the town or have them search for the creature before it emerges from the sea to feed on the local populace.

Can the characters end the insatiable, chest-beating, lobster-clawed menace that CAME FROM SPAWN VAT X!!!!?

Lobsterilla - Neutral, AC4, MV 12", ATKS 2, DMG 2-8 (claws), HD 5+5; SA/SD amphibious, rending (if both claws hit, the lobsterilla rends its foe for an additional 2-8 dmg



HERE THERE BE MONSTERS!

"To all the monsters in my nursery – may you never leave me alone"
– Guillermo del Toro

SODDEN BASTARDS

Frequency: Rare

No. Appearing: 2-24

Armor Class: 6

Move: 9"

Hit Dice: 2

% In Lair: 50%

Treasure Type: B, T

No. Of Attacks: 3

Damage/Attacks: 1-3/1-3/1-6

Special Attacks: *Fear*

Special Defenses: See below

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Low

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Size: Medium

Sodden bastards are unfortunate souls who were lost at sea or drowned directly by the hand of the goddess of ill-fortune and bad luck (or her worshipers). They are usually found aboard shipwrecks, but sometimes come stumbling out of the tide or clamber aboard ships, ready to feed on any flesh they can find... be it live or dead!

The transformation into such a hideous and depraved creature utterly destroys the mind, but leaves a sodden bastard with a vicious cunning. They attack using pack tactics when they can and love to swarm over their foes if they outnumber them. Sodden bastards attack by clawing and biting opponents, tearing them to shreds and then devouring the remains. The mere sight of a sodden bastard is enough to instill fear into creatures of 5 HD or less and

those that lay eyes on one must save or flee in panic.

These wicked creatures are unaffected by *sleep* and *charm* spells, but they can be turned by clerics. A magic circle of *protection from evil* will keep them at bay, though they may gurgle and sputter maliciously from the circle's perimeter.

Description: Foul, pale and bloated, a sodden bastard only barely resembles the person they were in life. Their bodies are waterlogged and swollen, carrying with them both the musty stench of the dead and the sea. Their clothing has been reduced to tatters, festooned with seaweed, barnacles and briny flotsam of the deep. Their eyes burn with a burning, supernatural hunger.



MURDERSHROOM

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 1-12

Armor Class: 6

Move: 9"

Hit Dice: 5

% In Lair: 70%

Treasure Type: S (X2)

No. Of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attacks:
1-8

Special Attacks:
Hallucinatory
spores

Special Defenses:
Poison skin

Magic Resistance: 30%

Intelligence: Low

Alignment:
Chaotic Evil

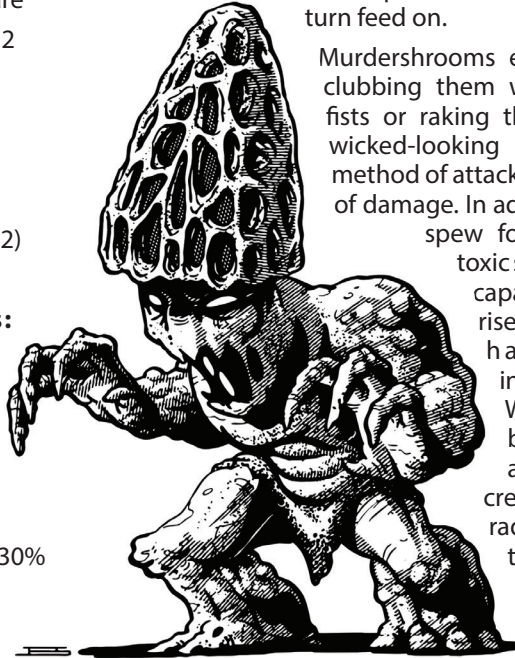
Size: Medium

On very rare occasions, energies from a magical *gate* to the lower planes or residual magical fallout from a demon summoning gone wrong will seep into the earth, wreaking all sorts of mayhem on the natural surroundings. When this happens near an underground colony of fungus, it can sometimes result in murdershrooms. Some wise old sages have also posited that murdershrooms are the result of forced magical crossbreeding with demons, but the truth to this matter (if any) is unknown.

These fungal horrors are only found underground, as they abhor the light of the surface world. They almost never venture out onto the surface and when they do it is only under the cover of complete darkness. They prefer moist subterranean environments over dry caves and lifeless tunnels, sometimes tending a "corpse garden" with the

bodies of their slain foes for both environmental comfort and to attract weaker predators that they can in turn feed on.

Murdershrooms engage foes by clubbing them with their large fists or raking them with long, wicked-looking claws. Either method of attack does 1-8 points of damage. In addition, they can spew forth a cloud of toxic spores which are capable of giving rise to terrible hallucinations in their victims. When this cloud billows forth it affects all living creatures in a 10' radius, causing them to be wracked with visions of horror and madness



unless they make a save vs poison. Hallucinating creatures react as follows:

01-10 Fall to their knees, crying and screaming.

11-15 Gibber madly, staring at things that aren't there.

16-18 Flee madly into a random direction, tormented by unseen horrors.

19-20 Attack the nearest creature.

In addition, murdershrooms have poisonous skin. Merely touching one with bare skin deals 1-2 points of damage.

Description: Vaguely humanoid in form, a murdershroom resembles an upright, walking toadstool. Its flesh is bloated, ranging in color from a light purple to a deep crimson red. Their skin is covered in knobby bumps and protrusions and their eyes glow menacingly with a flickering hatred.

FLENSING HOG (DEATH SWINE)

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 2-8

Armor Class: 6

Move: 12"

Hit Dice: 7

% In Lair: Nil

Treasure Type: Nil

No. Of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attacks: 3-18

Special Attacks: Flensing

Special Defenses: See Below

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Animal

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Size: Large (5' at the shoulder)

No one is quite sure who or what created these vile creatures, but they have spread to a handful of primitive forests, wild hinterlands and desolate places where men have not yet conquered nature. Some believe that they slipped between the metaphysical boundaries between worlds where the barriers are the thinnest. Others say they were purposefully brought here by deranged summoners and priests worshipping great, ancient beings gibbering in the dark. Whatever the truth may be, they have become a horrible blight on the few regions they inhabit.

A flensing hog (also known as death swine amongst the common folk), is a very aggressive predator that usually attacks anything of its size or smaller immediately upon sight. If it thinks a creature can be eaten, it will set its sights upon it. Its main method of attack is with its flensing tongue, a disgusting appendage which unfurls



out of the beast's head to literally strip the flesh from its opponent. Each time the flensing hog lands a blow, its tongue deals 3-18 points of damage and reduces the creature's charisma by -1. If a creature is reduced to 0 charisma or loses all of its hit points, it is skinned alive and killed instantly. The flensing hog gobbles up its tasty delicacy and then takes its time devouring the remainder of its foe.

These diabolical creatures fight until the death and will continue to fight for 1-4 melee rounds after being reduced to 0 to -10 hit points. If reduced to -11 hit points or below, they perish immediately.

Description: Large and brutish, these vile beasts have the body and upper torso of a giant warthog, but that is where any correlation to a creature of the natural world ends. Between its shoulder blades is a massive, circular mouth filled with gnashing teeth surrounded by yellowed tusks. When it prepares to attack, a long, muscular appendage ending in several razor-sharp, bony points unfurls, literally flaying the skin from its foe. This appendage is pulpy, veiny and altogether disgusting in every sense of the word.

DREAD HOUND OF CHERNOBOG

Frequency: Very Rare

No. Appearing: 1-4 (or 4-16, if led by a huntsman)

Armor Class: 4

Move: 15"

Hit Dice: 4-7

% In Lair: 0%

Treasure Type: Incidental

No. Of Attacks: 1

Damage/Attacks: 2-8

Special Attacks: Breath weapon, *howl of weakness*

Special Defenses: Silver or magic weapon to hit, *dimension door*

Magic Resistance: 20%

Intelligence: Low

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Size: Large (5' at the shoulder)

Seen only in the service to powerful clerics of the dark god Chernobog or in the company of a evil huntsman, these enormous black hounds are far more intelligent than any normal canine and have an almost supernatural ability to pursue even the most evasive quarry. Their senses are keen and they are not easily fooled, leading most mortal folk to believe that once they have someone's scent, they will never give up pursuit. They gladly devour any warm-blooded prey but reserve a special love for halfling and gnome flesh.

The dread hound of chernobog can unleash a soul-splitting howl heard for miles. Any creature within 60' of the hound must save vs spells or be stricken with weakness, taking a -2 penalty to all attack and damage rolls. Furthermore, these creatures can only be struck by silver and magical weapons. In addition to these fell boons, the dread hound of chernobog can see *invisible* creatures and may utilize *dimension door* 1/day. They usually reserve this latter ability to circle around behind opponents or to flank a spellcaster who believes he is sufficiently protected. Finally, they may breath fire on an opponent who is no further than 10' distance, causing 1 hit point of damage for each hit die they possess (save for half).

Occasionally, these monsters are found in the service of a powerful evil creature such as an anti-paladin, night hag or lich. Under these circumstances, they enjoy cooperating with such beings in order to wreak havoc or perpetuate wickedness across the land. It should go without saying that the kind of beings who would hunt with a dread hound of chernobog are not subject to the weakness caused by their awful howl.

Description: Dread hounds of chernobog appear as huge, shaggy canines of jet black coloration. Their eyes glow like red hot coals behind a furrowed, snarling brow. Their legs and feet appear to bear armor that is slicked with blood, but this is only the disgusting hide of the creature beneath its fur. From time to time, smoke curls from between their fangs or snout.



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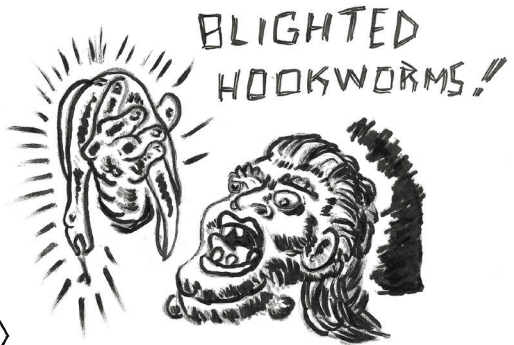
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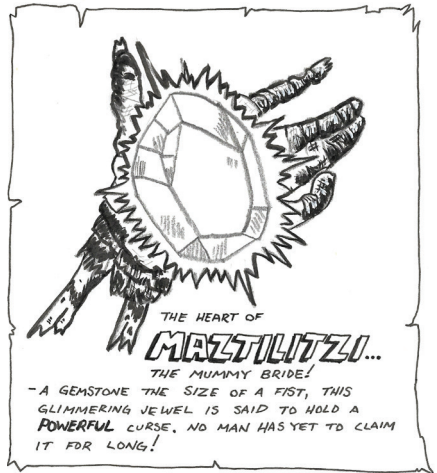


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