

RED MOON MEDICINE SHOW PRESENTS:

VACANT RITUAL ASSEMBLY

AN OSR ZINE - ISSUE #5 - WINTER 2015



INTRODUCING

Welcome to *VRA*#5. This will be the last issue of the zine for the immediate future. I do have plans to continue at some point (Winter 2016 at the earliest), but for the moment I'm going to take a break, build up material, and work on some other, bigger projects. This first volume has been both a joy and a pain to produce, but the feedback and camaraderie I've received from readers has made it very fulfilling overall. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the zine so far has been that it provided an opportunity for me to meet and work with Sean Poppe, whose illustrations fit so easily and naturally with my imagination. His work has appeared in every issue and if there is a *VRA* MVP award, it goes to him hands down. I count myself extremely lucky to have had the chance to work with so many talented writers and illustrators over the course of *VRA*'s initial life cycle. My endless thanks to *everyone* who contributed life to this project in one way or another. I hope you enjoy the issue. I've tried to pack in as much useful stuff as I could. And, as always, thank you for your kind support.

CONTENTS

The **Evangelism** section (pg 2) is yet another accounting of inspirational material.

Koster's Knob (pg 3-7) A while back I saw a piece on Judd Karlman's blog, *The Githyanki Diaspora*, which awesomely combined a traditional Tolkienesque hobbit shire with elements drawn from *Willow*. I asked him to replicate something similar here and he did a wonderful job. You'll note that Koster's Knob is intended to connect directly to the Dragon Trench region presented in *VRA*#3. I'm planning to use both in conjunction in an upcoming beginners' campaign that I'm running.

Weedwise Wizarding (pg 8) examines some of the Knob's more popular strains of pipeweed.

The Ritualist (pgs 9-12) Kathryn Jenkins brings us a new "deal-with-the-devil" character class for *LotFP*.

Unholy Inversion of Hope (pgs 13-14) This article outlines the precepts of the primary psuedo-Catholic religion in my campaign.

The Sineater Wolves (pgs 15-16) appeared in my campaign when my PCs were trekking around Zak Smith's *Red and Pleasant Land*. Call me simple, but I wanted a faction of playable werewolves to *Underworld* it up with Voivodja's vampiric natives.

On the Raggi (pgs 17-21) is an interview I conducted with James Raggi, the father of the Flame Princess.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

My primary campaign group has split into two. We were pretty commonly running games with 8-10 players and decided it would be more fun to divide the group so everyone could have a little more agency and referee attention. Group A (The Pembrooktonshire Chapter) has gone into the realm of Faery to rescue the daughter of one of the PCs who was taken as a changeling. My Faery realm has so far been influenced by Tolkien's *The Smith of Wootan Major*, Lady Gregory's books of Irish folklore, and Faraenyl from *Beyond Countless Doorways* by Malhavoc Press. Group B (The Walfismeer Chapter) is exploring the coastline of Walfismeer, playtesting material for my upcoming setting book *The Driftwood Verses*. They're still getting their feet wet, but have so far bounty-hunted a fugitive poacher and taken to the sea to transport their quarry to a major city to claim the reward on him. A third branch of the campaign is likely to open up in 2016 as we're putting together an introductory game for my young son and some of my wife's co-workers.

LEGAL CRAP

© 2016 by Red Moon Medicine Show

This product is an independent production by Red Moon Medicine Show and is not affiliated with Lamentations of the Flame Princess. Lamentations of the Flame Princess is a registered trademark owned by James Edward Raggi IV.

EVANGELISM

FICTION

The Wine-Dark Sea by Robert Aickman - I received this book as a Christmas gift and Aickman has since become one of my favorite authors of weird fiction. He hits on exactly the sort of subtle, sensual stories that I dig the most. I'm very excited to explore the rest of his work in the coming year. If you like the style of weirdness presented in this zine and our other publications, you will very likely love Aickman's work.

RPG STUFF

The Whispering Vault by Mike Nystul (1993) - Aside from *LotFP*, *The Whispering Vault* is my other RPG obsession at the moment. Just search for "Whispering Vault" over on Lulu.

CREDITS

Writing and Design by
Clint Krause

Additional Writing/Design by
Judd Karlman (pgs 3-7)
Kathryn Jenkins (pgs 9-12)

Illustrations by
Jeremy Duncan (Cover)
Aaron Hamric (pg 13)
Olli Hihnala (pgs 19-20)
Sean Poppe (pgs 3-6)
Xolis (pg 8)

Interviewee
James Raggi IV

Published by
Red Moon Medicine Show
www.redmoonmedicineshow.com

KOSTER'S KNOB

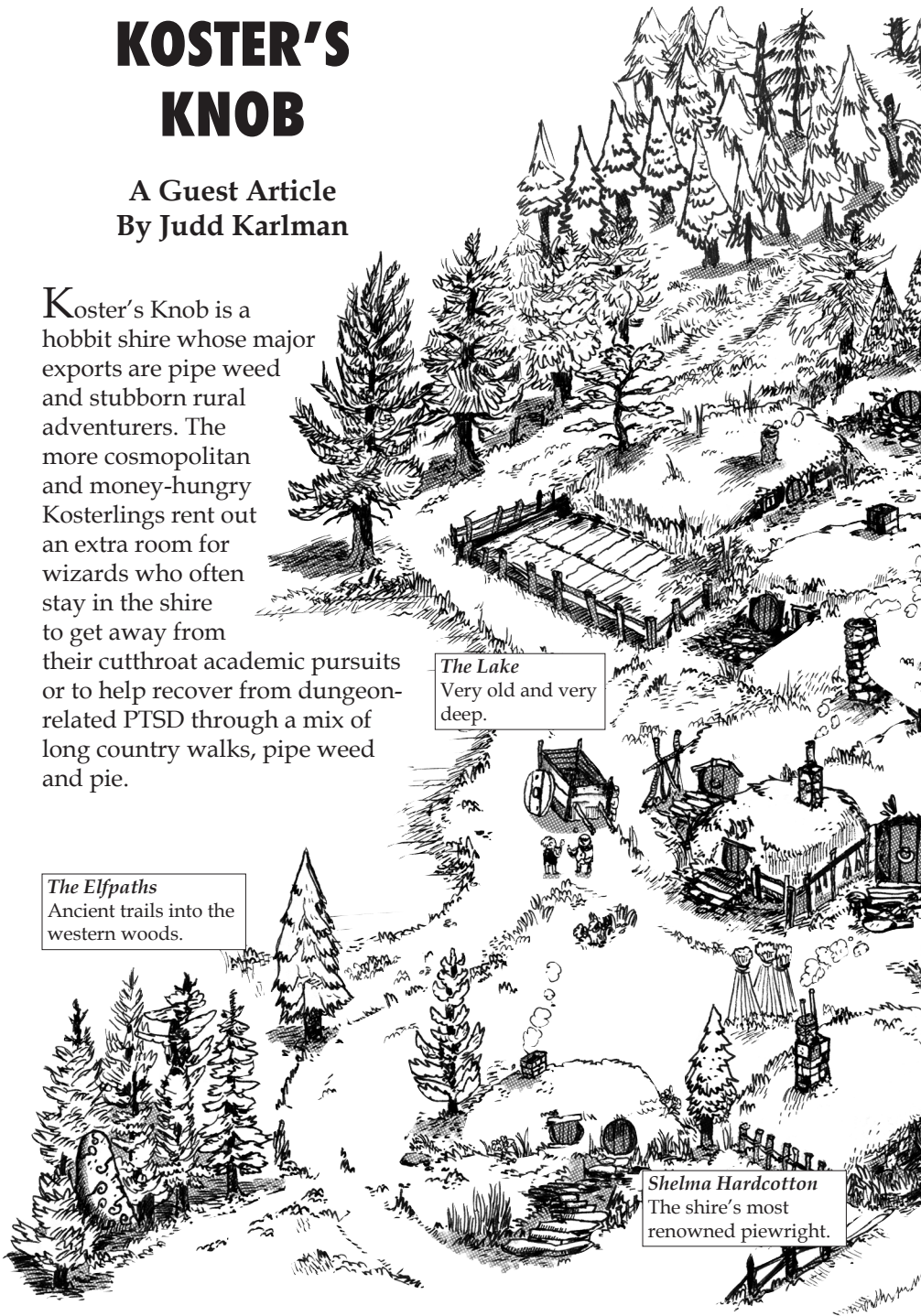
A Guest Article
By Judd Karlman


Koster's Knob is a hobbit shire whose major exports are pipe weed and stubborn rural adventurers. The more cosmopolitan and money-hungry Kosterlings rent out an extra room for wizards who often stay in the shire to get away from their cutthroat academic pursuits or to help recover from dungeon-related PTSD through a mix of long country walks, pipe weed and pie.

The Elfpaths
Ancient trails into the western woods.

The Lake
Very old and very deep.

Shelma Hardcotton
The shire's most renowned piewright.





Crow Hill

The birds feast on the wicked and the scorned.

The Crossroads

Marks the way to the tall world.

The Sheriff's Office

Seat of law and order in the shire.

The Knob

Home to the shire's most prominent citizens.

The Weed Fields

The source of the shire's valuable pipeweed crop. Haunted by uneasy feelings.



LOCAL LEXICON

Kosterling: Halfling who was born and raised in Koster's Knob and never left because why in all the tall hells would ya want to leave?

Kosterback: This is what you call a Halfling who went abroad, had an adventure and has returned with odd, foreign ideas, arcane curses and the rumors of treasure hidden in their cupboards. It can be good or bad, depending on the context. Kosterbacks have to be back for 30 years before they can run for Mayor; no Kosterback has ever won such an election.

Knob: Local parlance for a wizard who settles down in Koster's Knob and refuses to leave.

"She's a Kosterback and knows her way around blades and is steadfast when the sling bullets fly; deputize her if yer smart."

"She's a no good Kosterback with a head-full-o ideas spawned from licking fountains of the immortal elves, whose ideas work great as long as you are immortal and filled to the tits with puiissance."

POINTS OF INTEREST FROM 3 POINTS OF VIEW

The Knob

Kosterling: "The majestic seat of our shire's power, where the mayor lives while serving and where former mayors live once they retire. The most prestigious sheriffs are allowed to retire there too; it was built by a fine Kosterback whose full riches are still buried deep in its most secret halls."

Kosterback: "It is a grassy hill that is a bit higher than all of the other grassy hills around here, filled with the most opinionated Kosterlings in all of the Shire."

Knob: "An adorable and quaint hill, where the elders dispense their homespun wisdom and often share their finest pipe weed if you pay them proper respects."

The Lake

Kosterling: "It is deep, dark and not to be trusted. Some leisurely fishing from the shore is fine but going out on a boat is courting disaster and ruin."

Kosterback: "Adventurers are one thing but boaters are quite another. At least adventures can lead to riches. Boating just leads to drowned relatives - or so aunt and uncle Kosterlings will tell ya."

Knob: "Sometimes I row out, stare at the sky and chill."

Last time something big bumped the boat but maybe that was just the weed fucking with my head."

The Crossroads

Kosterling: "It is a good place to get news so we know what is coming."

Kosterback: "You can almost smell civilization from here."

Knob: "They say the relaxation we accrue in the shire starts to erode as soon as we hit the crossroads."

The Elfpaths

Kosterling: "If you want trouble fast, that is the way. Nothing good ever came to Koster's Knob over them elfpaths."

Kosterback: "If you want adventure fast, that is the way. Nothing good ever came to anyone who died with regrets."

Knob: "These are trails the elves use when they travel to their secret bays and havens."

Crow Hill

Kosterling: "Sherriff Dorcas Crow started this practice, locking up criminals where folk can see 'em. It is a fine way to deter wrongdoing."

Kosterback: "Dorcas Crow was a terror and was known for sticking foreigners and Kosterbacks into cages for minor infractions. Crow Hill is the worst of shire life. She's still alive and she stands by her decision."

Knob: "Crow Hill is a sign that shire-folk have both steel and hatred in them that many overlook due to their pipe weed and pastries."

The Weed Fields

Kosterling: "These fields have always been wrong, ever since the family that owned it, whose name was lost, brought some foreign arcane evil back to our shire."

Kosterback: "Naturally, the old timers say it is a foreign evil. It could just be that the wrong family member died on Crow Hill and their family haunts these fields to this day."

Knob: "No, I won't go there. I didn't come to the shire for adventure! I came for the weed and the sweets!"

Sherriff's Office

Kosterling: "Part shack, part lean-to with a good view of Crow Hill - a sign of the kind of down-home go-getter the sherriff needs to be."

Kosterback: "They treat the law better than a shack with a leaky roof outside of the Knob. I tell my relatives that and they say that is why the tall world is a lawless mess."

Knob: "What is that shack? I never gave it much thought, really."



THE MAYOR

The mayor of Koster's Knob is elected by local Kosterlings and stays on for 20 year terms. The Sheriff is appointed by the mayor.

The latest mayor, Liz Kosterknob, isn't the first woman to hold the position but it is rare enough that folks can count the lady-mayors on the hand of their's that is missing the most fingers, if you catch my drift.

Mayor Kosterknob has appointed a young Kosterback by name of Dale Devonspickle. Dale was gone for ten years but he left at an unusually young age, young enough that a former sheriff considered him a runaway and unsuccessfully tried to track him down. As with all Kosterbacks, Dale exists amidst a maelstrom of rumors that float around him like pipe smoke after dinner. The most scandalous of the rumors are that he spent some of his time away in a prison and that he spawned some tall children out there somewhere.

KOSTERLING Armor 12, Move 120', HD 1, HP 4, Pitchfork 1d6 damage OR Thrown stone 1d3 damage, Morale 5

KOSTERLING SHERRIFF
Armor 14, Move 120', HD 2, HP 10, Shortsword d6 damage OR Sling d4 damage, Morale 8

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (d8)

- 1: Stoned wizard and a young hobbit guide
- 2: Distrustful Kosterlings
- 3: Stoned Kosterlings who want to know your tale
- 4: Busy Kosterling, on an errand, running late
- 5: Orc running away after having lost its eye to Kosterling rangers' sling bullets
- 6: Dungeon-shocked wizard, on their way in to rest up and recoup
- 7: Wraith looking for a Kosterback who brought trouble back upon the Knob
- 8: Your favorite Monster

CROW HILL CRIMINALS (d6)

- 1: Kosterling
- 2: Kosterback
- 3: Knob Wizard
- 4: Knob Ranger
- 5: Goblin Trespasser
- 6: Something Weird

SOMETHING WEIRD (d4)

- 1: Crab-Man
- 2: Were-raven
- 3: Devil-baby
- 4: Moss-animated skeleton

WEEDWISE WIZARDING



It is widely known in the tall world that Koster's Knob produces the very finest pipe weed in the land. The Kosterlings harvest at least a dozen fine strains. The plant is enjoyed across the realm, but especially so by wizardfolk, who claim the weed provides them a more complete connection with their art as well as a relief from the mental burden of their spells.

Standard pipe weed can be purchased at a rate of 2sp per dose. Its effect is typical, stoned euphoria, but it has no mechanical ramifications. There are, however, a variety of strains available in Koster's Knob which are both more expensive and have more direct mechanical effects. These are catalogued below:

NEW SKILL: PIPE ARTS

This skill is only available to Magic Users. Its base skill level is equal to the character's Wisdom modifier. The character can spend one turn (10 minutes) smoking a pipe weed of his or her choice (any strain will do) and forgetting spells that have been prepared for the day. For each spell forgotten, the Magic User recovers HP equal to the spell level multiplied by his or her Pipe Arts skill level.



Violet Wander, 6sp/dose
The user enters a calm, contemplative state for 1d3 hours at the end of which they have a 1% chance of gaining a point of Wisdom.



Honey Dream, 4sp/dose
Smoking this strain results in extremely restorative rest and a voracious appetite. User doubles natural healing rate and required food intake for the day.



Sweet Gully, 4sp/dose
User gains 1d4 Wisdom for 1d3 hours. Any resulting increase in Wisdom modifier can be applied to the *Pipe Arts* skill described above.

THE RITUALIST

A new *LotFP* Class
By Kathryn Jenkins

Magic Users have instant powerful spells that require little effort to cast. This class challenges the player's reliance on instant spells and gives the party some extra flavour when dealing with magic.

For pseudo-historical systems like *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* I like to view magic as a terrifying taboo; it is illegal, dangerous and the consequences of being discovered outside of the party are key to role-playing smart and building tension. This class plays on that taboo; reminiscent of the black magic witches and hags in old tales and religious depiction of magic as the work of spiritual horrors.

With this class, the whole party will have an involvement in the ritualist's spells. This class uses pin dollies to inflict pain, potions and powders, amulets, and, more importantly, rituals to cast spells. This role is a support class with a tinge of the old style witches. This class will encourage the looting of not just gold but monster bones, rare gems and useful foliage for use in dangerous spells.

The ritualist starts off much like a magic user, however they have no spell slots, they have one spell

a day which they must roll for. Additionally, they can cast as many spells as they want through the day but they must *sell their soul* each time. See **Soul Selling**. Their power as they grow in level increases significantly but so does the cost, moving from just physical ingredients to the souls of the dead or hard-to-come-by artefacts.

The cost and availability of items is down to discussion between the player and the game master, but remember, it is quite unfavourable to make items completely unavailable to a player, thus limiting their class spells, and players should always be rewarded for their ingenuity.

The ritualist could be a learned scholar, a witch huddled in a hut in the woods, an alchemist from the 14th century with a burning desire to create gold, or they could be an 18th century voodoo queen from New Orleans. The ritualist is varied, there is no storyline they are restricted to.

All ritualists have entered into a pact. They agree to give a piece of their soul to a demon, dark god or spirit of the player's choosing. This creature has dominion over them and may occasionally request favours through vivid dreams or strange bloody notes etched into trees. The ritualist must use pieces of their soul for higher level spells. The more soul the creature receives, the more power they have over them.

SOUL SELLING

When a spell requires soul selling, the caster must save vs magic or lose 1 HP or ability point (player's choice) permanently. A character cannot sell more than half their HP in a day. If the player, when selling their soul, rolls a 1 then they must make a save vs magic, or else the demon, dark god or spirit they sell their soul to can reach from the otherworld take their body for themselves for 1d20 hours. At the end of this possession they must make a further save vs. magic, to avoid being possessed forever or for a further 1d20 hours (1-3 D6 for eternal possession, 4-6 for 1d20 possession).

The spells below are an idea of what you kind of spells you can craft. This class is customisable for your game and suits someone who likes to talk about their spells rather than just use a magic missile. All spells require Soul Selling, except for the ritualist's daily spell.

EXAMPLE SPELLS

Amulet Of Strength

Ingredients: Cord of any material. A piece of silver, bronze or gold. Blood of the wearer. An animal's tooth, fur, hair, or scale.

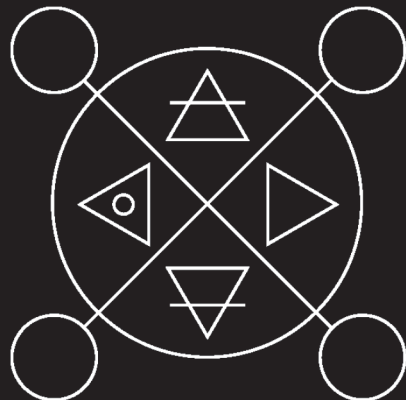
The ritualist spends five minutes in deep concentration fashioning a primitive necklace. They smear the blood of the wearer on the amulet and bind the animal part to the metal. Suddenly, the animal

part seems to fuse with the metal. Only the one who gave their blood may wear the amulet of strength. This amulet gives the wearer +1d6 damage to their successful melee attacks. If the wearer forgets to remove the amulet by the end of the day, they will think they are the animal used to make the amulet for the entire evening and will not be able to rest. The amulet lasts 12 hours.

Pin Dolly of Deflect Wounds

Ingredients: A human figurine; can be crudely made from straw or a marble statuette. Two cords of fabric. Hair of the beneficiary.

The ritualist will create the figurine and they will plait the rope and hair around the pin dolly's neck. The ritualist will then tie a piece of string around their or the intended beneficiary of the spell's finger. The Pin Dolly of Deflect Wounds will allow the beneficiary to deflect one successful hit back into the pin dolly. The pin dolly will mimic the effect e.g. if they are hit with a flaming branch, the pin dolly will burn whereas the beneficiary of the spell will feel no effect.



Ritual of Resurrection

Ingredients: Piece of soul from each party member, blood, hair, flesh and bone from each party member, chalk/marketing material, a plucked flower for each person involved, the corpse.

As long as there is an intact corpse available the ritualist may perform a Ritual of Resurrection to bring the player character back to life. This is an incredibly high cost spell. The ritualist gathers together the body of the fallen; these can be in pieces as long as nothing is missing. They prepare a ritual circle with chalk. On the north, east, south and west point they place a piece of bone, a piece of hair, blood and a flower picked by each of the party members involved, plus one for the deceased. The ritualist calls upon the netherworld and each party member spills their blood within the circle over the corpse, chanting their name. All must make a successful save vs. magic as they begin, if someone fails, then this will automatically cause a Summon. The ritualist must then make a separate save vs. magic, to see if they are able to coax the dead soul from underworld back into their body. If the party are successful, they will sacrifice a fraction of their permanent HP. E.g. if 3 members are involved, they will sacrifice a 3rd of their permanent HP. They will all lose a piece of their soul to the ritualist's chosen god/demon/spirit. The deceased will rise but they will lose -3 Charisma.

Skin Ouija Board

Ingredients: Carving tool, blood of caster, body to use as a board. You carve a Ouija board into your own skin or on a nearby corpse.


The corpse must be humanoid, your own living flesh, or a member of the party. This allows you to then communicate with the dead. You must make a successful save vs. magic to contact the other side, and you will need a ring like object or pebble to use as your communicator when it passes over words. If you make a successful save vs. magic, you can ask the undead any question you desire, however, it can only be one and depending on who you have contacted, depends on the answer. If you are contacting a specific deceased individual, then you must make a further save vs. magic, if you fail any of your saves you take 1d6 damage per level as the spirit strikes you down for your disrespect.

Pin Dolly of Pain

Ingredients: Drop of ritualist blood, flesh of an enemy, a human figurine.



All you need is the flesh of a fallen enemy or animal, freshly removed. As you craft your pin dolly you sew the flesh into its body and chant your devotions to the other world. You rub the pin dolly against your face to warm the flesh and you pour the your own blood onto its sewn mouth as a tribute.







Once during battle you can select an enemy and mutilate the pin dolly. The pin dolly does 1d6 damage per level (e.g. Level 3 will be 3d6) as long as the monster fails its save vs. magic. Whatever you do to the pin dolly, happens to the victim. If you try to decapitate the pin dolly, this may not decapitate the foe but it will hurt. The Pin Dolly can only be used once.

Truth Concoction




Ingredients: Eye of a Mythical Serpent (e.g. a gorgon), a daffodil, a mortar and pestle, the Ritualists blood, a piece of the "Questioned Party."





The ritualist creates a concoction. The green liquid that forms smells disgusting; like the contents of someone's stomach. The potion seems to bubble and occasionally a plume of dark smoke writhes up in protest of its capture. You can inject or have someone consume it. They are then compelled to speak only the truth for 2d8 rounds.

Armour of the Dead

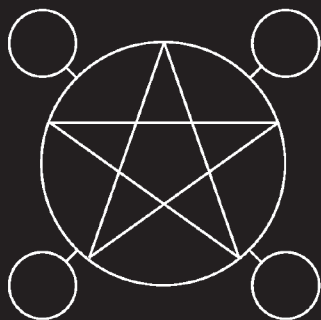


Ingredients: Humanoid bones, the stronger the better. Leather straps/ Rope/Binding material.



The ritualist carves a symbol of their chosen spirit, god or demon into the bones and then once on their chest or neck. They slather the bones in the blood, attach the bindings to the bones and strap them to themselves. They reach through the spirit realm and graft the dead souls of the bones onto your body as an armour. Make a Save Vs. Magic to see if you

are successful in communicating with the dead. If not, nothing happens. You gain 1d6 to your AC, and if the bones are from a magic user, one of their spells, if this is successful. If a specialist, two points temporarily in a skill of your choice, if a warrior, you are able to open doors more easily (2 points in open doors). The armour lasts for 2d6 hours then falls away. You can occasionally hear the voices of the dead.



Wall of Flesh

Ingredients: Flesh of the dead.

You take out the flesh of the dead and you slam it down on the ground. You call upon your spirit, demon or god to lend you the dead flesh of the fallen. From the ground, vines of fleshy tendrils twist and writhe in agony from the bones of the earth. These fleshy worms then bind together to form a thick wall of pale and dark flesh. When this is hacked, it bleeds and the wall pulsates in agony. You can feel the pain, but you do not take the damage. The wall lasts for 1d8 turns and can block a large area. You can hear the screams of the wall in your head, pleading with you to release it from its new and horrifying duty.

UNHOLY INVERSION OF HOPE

*"Stoke the pyres, ye faithful throng,
that our burning world may light
the path for the return of our fallen
father."* - Lector Phage

The Synod serves as my campaign world's primary grimdark, monotheistic stand-in for the Catholic Church. It is a complex organization, full of schisms and grey moralities.



Lector Phage addresses the throng

THE LITANY

The Litany is the Synod's sacred text. It is a massive, seemingly endless scroll channeled by Lector Phage and interpreted by the Lectorate, who are the only ones permitted to read it (it is written in the channeler's own coded language known as "Phagian"). The Litany's tenants are basically this: God is dead. When the mortal races discovered the secrets of magic they became decadent, like gods unto themselves, corrupting God's creation beyond all repair. When he could no longer bear the corruption of his world he cast himself into the Gnawing Void. Now he drifts eternally through the void, dead, but waiting for his

creation to be cleansed that he may return once more to reign. The practical effect of the Litany's teachings is that it makes the Synod and deeply anti-magic organization and, in it's more fringe sects, a powerful cult that literally wants to set the world on fire so that God can find his way back home.

THE LECTORATE

Lector Phage is the Supreme Arch-Prophet of the Synod. At any given time, there are six other Lectors who are personally appointed by Phage. While it holds no direct political power, the Lectorate is extremely influential in the King's court.

THE GRIGORIA

The Grigoria are quasi-angellic beings who were once mortal women, but who so impressed God (before his suicide) with their beauty and grace that they were empowered by his divine favor. These guides are revered by the Synod as the highest divinities that exist in God's absence, a living echo of his divine power. The faithful raise shrines and utter prayers to call upon their favor. There are many Grigoria, but the most commonly call upon are:

Kasia, the Teacher of Men

A beautiful scholar. Watcher of wisdom and learning.

Kara, the Enfeebled

A perpetually ill layabout. Watcher of the mortal curse of infirmity.

Kyrami, the Fallen

A poet and painter. Fell from God's will when she pursued the love of a mortal. Watcher of creative endeavors and renegades.

Kyren, the Sea Runner

A graceful sea maiden. Watcher of the deep.

Krissa, the Lady of Blades

The blade mother, clad in knives. Watcher of war.

I've not yet had the need to stat up a Grigoria for my game, but when I do, I'll probably use Mateo Diaz Torres's *Advanced Angelology* entry from his blog *gloomtrain*.



THE FLAGRIFIX

The Flagrifax (shown above) is the holy symbol of the Synod. The upper circle represents the earth ablaze. The lower circle represents the Gnawing Void where God awaits the fiery beacon of a world in flames. Flagrifaxes are generally made of iron or silver and are often large enough to be wielded as a weapon. Before battle, the faithful often dowse the symbol in burning oil to further intimidate sinners and heretics.

THE TEMPLARS

The Templars are the original guardians of the Lectors. Equal parts cleric and knight, these agents of God are rightly feared as the inquisitorial arm of the Lectorate. Even the Lectors themselves fear falling out of favor with the Templars, who have been responsible for deposing more than a few of those they deemed corrupt or inept.

THE SINEATER WOLVES

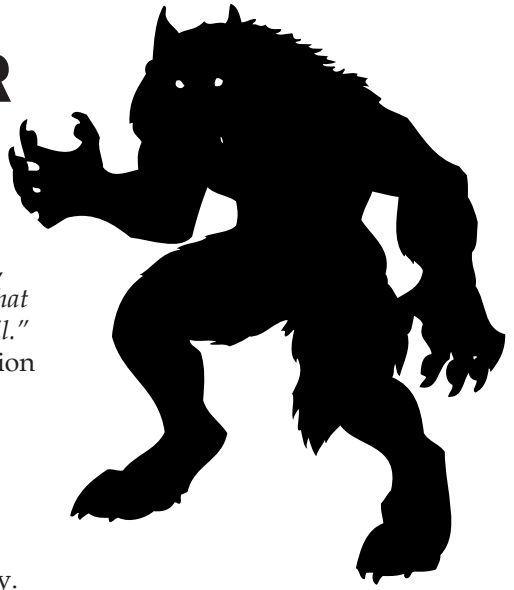
"Lost god guide thy snout, that the pure of heart may avoid thy hunger, that the wicked may feel thy fang, that thy howl be the death knell of all evil."

- Sineater Benediction

The Sineater Wolves are a heretical order of Synod monks whose desire to cleanse all sin from the world has led them to abandon their humanity and embrace the curse of lycanthropy.

The order was founded by Brother Samuel Gogan who was bitten and cursed by a werewolf during the 3rd Conflagration. In his shame, Gogan ascended Mount Moldovan with the intent to throw himself off, but just before he leapt, Gogan claims that he received a divine vision which inspired him to instead embrace the curse and use his bestial strength to combat the forces of evil in the world.

Brother Gogan was quickly excommunicated for his heretical ideas, but he felt driven to a higher purpose. He began to pass the curse to other excommunicants whose desire to cleanse the world was stronger than their loyalty to the Synod's bureaucratic sanction. Gogan came to call his order "sineaters" and established hidden outposts in remote and embattled areas of the world where they could set upon their righteous, hungry work.



SINEATER WOLF Armor 15, Move 180', HD 4, HP 24, 2x Claw 1d8 damage, Morale 10 *Suffers double damage from silver weapons.

New members of the order must be selected by established members. Before the initiation is performed, the candidate must spend a full moon cycle in isolated meditation, learning the mental discipline required to "harness the wolf." At the end of this period, the initiate is brought before the order and ritually bitten upon the wrist by his or her sponsor. The initiate suffers 1d8 damage from the bite. If they survive, they automatically acquire the curse of lycanthropy. Upon completion of the ritual, the candidate is considered a full member of the order, a brother or sister of the wolf, and presented with a distinctive silver sword which serves both as a mark of rank in the order and as an effective weapon against supernatural evil.

THE WOLF MOTHER

Unbeknownst to many, the curse of lycanthropy is caused by an imprisoned demon, the Wolfmother. She is the mother of all wolves and in ancient days was the scourge of the mortal races. The Wolfmother was eventually defeated and imprisoned in a remote mountain, where she remains hungry and longing for freedom. When a victim of lycanthropy takes on the form of a werewolf, he or she is temporarily summoning the essence of this trapped demon, giving her a taste of freedom, and feeding her everhungry maw.

THE SCHISM

Recently, a pack of Sineaters unwittingly established an outpost on the very mountain where the Wolfmother is imprisoned. Their proximity to the god led them to abandon their Sineater oaths and give in fully to their inner hunger (werewolves who come close to the wolfmother must make a Save vs Magic or fall under the full control of the entity). They began to ravage local villages, devouring their fill and expanding their number. After hearing of these atrocities, Brother Grogan has called for the remaining members of the order to set upon the renegades and end their wanton feast. And so, the war of the wolves has begun . . .

LYCANTHROPY RULES

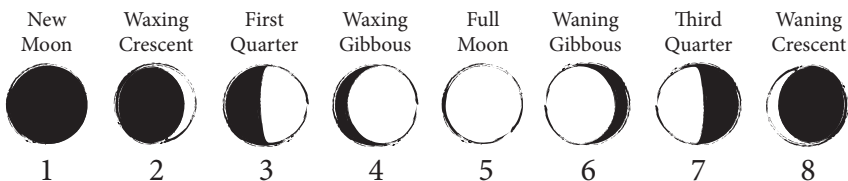
The first time a character is damaged by a Lycanthrope they must succeed at a Save vs Magic or acquire the curse of lycanthropy.

Once the curse is acquired the first transformation occurs during the next full moon at which time the following effects occur:

- You automatically shift into werewolf form when the full moon rises. You can shift intentionally by spending 1 round and succeeding at a Save vs Magic. If you suffer damage you must succeed at a Save vs Magic or shift unintentionally.
- Gain "Canine" as a known language.
- Suffer double damage from silver weapons

While in werewolf form . . .

- Double your maximum and current Hit Points.
- Gain 2 claw attacks per round that inflict 1d8 damage each.
- Gain +4 Strength, +4 Dexterity, and +4 Constitution
- Add 60' to you movement rate
- You can attempt a Save vs Magic to shift back into human form. If you fail, you cannot try again until you kill and eat a human or demihuman.





ON THE RAGGI

I figured that before I close down the first volume of the zine I ought to have a few words with the man whose game I'm most directly supporting, *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* creator James Raggi. James has been interviewed a lot, so please forgive me if my questions leaned toward my own interests and away from some of the more generally available info that's out there already.

CK: What's the state of the union for LotFP? What's going well? What's sucking? Where are things going?

JR: The state of LotFP is as it's always been. A million things in the works by a million different

people, and little by little, drip by drip, they get finished and released.

CK: You've mentioned a number of rules changes for the new printing of the *Rules & Magic* book, can you give me a rundown of the major ones?

JR: This is still a-ways away, and at this point I'm not even sure this is going to be a new thing for *Rules & Magic* or just a new rules appendix on a new magic system book. The major points: Getting rid of Clerics and demi-humans. Change the attribute modifiers so that none of them influence combat. Changing the spell system so that all spells are first level (and therefore potentially accessible to any starting Magic-User) and scale in power with the caster.

CK: I greatly enjoyed your early modules, which had interesting



takes on traditional “D&D fantasy” stuff. While I also like the real world/historical stuff you’ve been doing lately, I’m curious if you have any plans or inclination to go back to traditional fantasy at any point. Are there any modules from the *DFD*, *HotG*, *TGG*-era that remain unpublished?

JR: It’s a crowded field, “D&D fantasy,” especially since 5e has recaptured a lot of traditionalists.

The only things that were finished but unpublished were a couple adventures for an owls supplement from a couple years back. The idea was for 10 different designers to each design a new adventure relating to the owls from *Monolith*. Only Michael Curtis (turning in a *Mutant Future* adventure), Robin Laws (turning in a *Drama System* series pitch), and Zak (*D&D*) completed their things. Zak’s using his thing in

a future *LotFP* project, and the other two are pretty much in limbo right now since without the larger concept, it really makes no sense for me to release *Mutant Future* or *Hillfolk* material.

CK: What’s your take on the various zines (such as this one) and 3rd-party projects that have sprung up around *LotFP*?

JR: Excellent! I probably have a rather narrow view of what *LotFP* is, and I try to make sure everybody writing for me at the very least doesn’t break that idea, even if it’s now focused on it. It’s my ass and one bad big project and it’s all over, and there are only so many resources to sink into projects, so I figure go with what I believe in so if it all goes tits up and I don’t have to deal with the shame of ever failing because of a thing I didn’t really believe in.

So other people publishing *LotFP* stuff is great, because it shows the game can be more than what I think it is, lets people really work different ideas without butting heads with me or getting caught behind somebody else in a production queue or what have you.

CK: What's the craziest accusation or criticism that's been leveled against *LotFP* or you as a publisher?

JR: That the more "interesting" content in *LotFP* might put someone off of RPGs altogether. Tonight, I'm not going to the show but the band Pussy Regurgitation is playing. They've got songs like "Poo Pumped Pop Idol" and "Erotic Urinary Odour." I'll bet the quality of the music matches the quality of the titles. But even so, can you even imagine somebody listening to that and then saying they're never listening to music again? Or watching A Serbian Film and deciding movies just aren't their thing? Reading any novel and not liking it and therefore rejecting every other novel that exists or ever will exist? The entire concept is absurd on the face of it and only encourages the most bland and cowardly creative concepts in whatever medium one works and I'll have none of it.

And frankly if anyone does behave like that we're all better off for their absence.

CK: What's your opinion on the state of the "mainstream" RPG industry? *Pathfinder*, *Fantasy Flight*, etc . . .

JR: The more boring and generally crowd-pleasing they are, the better it is for me. They create and pursue large general audiences, keep game stores stocking RPGs, and so they've created a marketplace where I get to be the freakshow in the corner being experimental and/or naughty and/or cool in comparison.

CK: What's the typical writing session like for you?

JR: Usually it's a pencil and notebook to get sketches and keywords and ideas down, then doing some "real" writing (sentences and structure etc.) to solidify the idea in my head, then play to determine what needs better explanation, then patching up.

CK: What's going on in your campaign right now?

JR: I haven't played for a bit but I'll be getting back into things early in the new year to try out the potential new rules and the adventures *Covered in Sick* and *You're Fucked Now* (working title, hopefully I'll have something more clever after playing it).

CK: I know for a while you were running with a pretty large game group. What's your preference on group size/number of players?

JR: 6-7 players a session, with a bit of a rotating player base. When I have small groups with regular attendance, I run into too much standard procedure and less surprise and I end up creating adventures to challenge the group instead of more freely creating and then discovering what happens.

CK: Do you play anything aside from *LotFP* these days?

JR: Tabletop? Not really.

CK: What are you listening to, music-wise?

JR: Just got the new Jess and the Ancient Ones album today, along with the reissues of Dødheimsgard's and Immolation's first albums. Recently also picked up Malady's debut, a few Sammal albums, and the absolutely monumental Mirror debut. If a mix of Dio-era Sabbath, Dianno-era Maiden, and Deep Purple Mk 2 sounds good to you, you need to be all over that one.

CK: What was the best horror film you saw this year?

JR: It probably doesn't count but that *Jessica Jones* series was the most fucked thing that I've seen in quite some time. It's just hell. *The Visit* (Shyamalan's) was actually pretty good. *What We Become*, *The Pool*, *The Corpse of Anna Fritz* were pretty good. I'm probably forgetting a bunch . . .

CK: I remember a while back on G+, you mentioned being a listener of *Coast to Coast AM*. Do you have an opinion on George Nooray's handling of the show?

JR: It's shit. My heydey with the show was over ten years ago. My favorite C2C format is when some nutcase is on talking about something that's almost plausible. Bigfoot. Alien encounters. Secret government conspiracy. Giants of the Solomon Islands. The guests will have their shit together and their delusions will be well-thought-out. But that never happens anymore. It's all angels and numerology and New Age soft-brain horseshit while George hawks emergency food supplies and paranormal dating services.

CK: Are there any fortean topics that you're particularly fond of?

JR: I like things that don't rely on the supernatural, things that I could be wrong about. Like Bigfoot, what are the chances that there are large hairy creatures running around the woods at this point? Absolutely none. But... BUT... it's just plausible enough that they could exist. And if some hunter finally bags one or if one wanders out onto a road and gets hit by a car and a news outlet more credible than the Weekly World News presents the story... then the world doesn't change, there's just one more unusual thing (that used to be) in it. Same with the Loch Ness Monster, things like that.

None of those things are any stranger to me than a platypus, and I have no actual investment in their existence or lack thereof so they're fun to think about. Spending a weekend Bigfoot hunting or visiting Loch Ness hoping to see a dinosaur could still be fun trips even though you're never going to see anything. Beats LARPing, anyway. It's when people get obsessive that I'm glad I only read about them and don't actually have to spend time around these people.

CK: You're a rare bird among RPG creators because *LotFP* is your full-time gig. Can you walk me through your typical workday?

JR: I have no typical workday. Because my "office" is in the living room of a two-room apartment, I pretty much have to work around my wife's work schedule because not a lot gets done when she's around. And she doesn't keep regular hours.

It also greatly depends whether I'm writing, or editing, or doing art assignments, or dealing with the printer, or if there's a new release and I have to process orders, or do the monthly bookkeeping, dealing with publicity, or travel arrangements for conventions (nine on the schedule for 2016, yikes!), etc.

The only constant is if I'm being at all productive, there's some really loud music on at the time. My mind works on two levels at

all times, my "what I'm doing now" and "what I'm thinking about now" and I need to distract myself in order to focus. The first RPG book I ever finished was written during Finnish and Swedish classes because my mind just wanders. Popcorn or other refreshments is there to control distraction during a movie, etc. So during work, the loud music acts to control the distraction control.

CK: Are you in this for the long haul? Does *LotFP* continue until you die? Or do you feel like you'll eventually move on to something else?

JR: It better continue until I die. I started the company because I didn't have any other way to make money . . .

WHAT'S NEXT?

Although this is the last issue of *Vacant Ritual Assembly* for the time being, I've got a shitload of projects planned for 2016. First up is *The Driftwood Verses*, a gloomy, nautical campaign setting that's something like *Moby Dick* meets *Dark Sun*. Keep an eye out for a *Driftwood Verses* Kickstarter sometime in the first half of the year!



Huzzah!

At long last!

The Official Dolmenwood Zine!

WORMSKIN



Available in
print or pdf at

RPGNOW

The Stygian Garden of Abelia Prem™

The Stygian Garden of Abelia Prem is an eerie, location-based adventure module for low-level characters. It's directly compatible with *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* and more broadly compatible with a huge selection of OSR rule sets.

Explore the abandoned estate of Abelia Prem, an eccentric noblewoman who spent the last years of her life searching for a subterranean rose reputed to have power over life and death.

"*The anachronism . . . it burns.*"
- Some dickhead reviewer

Highlights Include:

- Multiple sessions worth of deadly adventure
- New monsters, appendix of magical plants
- Cover by George Cotronis
- Interior Art by Marcin Sciolny
- Maps by Todd Gamble
- Written by Clint Krause
- 30 pages — \$10 Print, \$5 PDF

Don't Walk in Winter Wood™

Don't Walk in Winter Wood is a storytelling game of folkloric fear. Players take on the roles of hapless villagers who must enter a legend-haunted forest and uncover their sinister secrets. The game uses simple rules and a unique narrative style to help you create spooky stories with your friends.

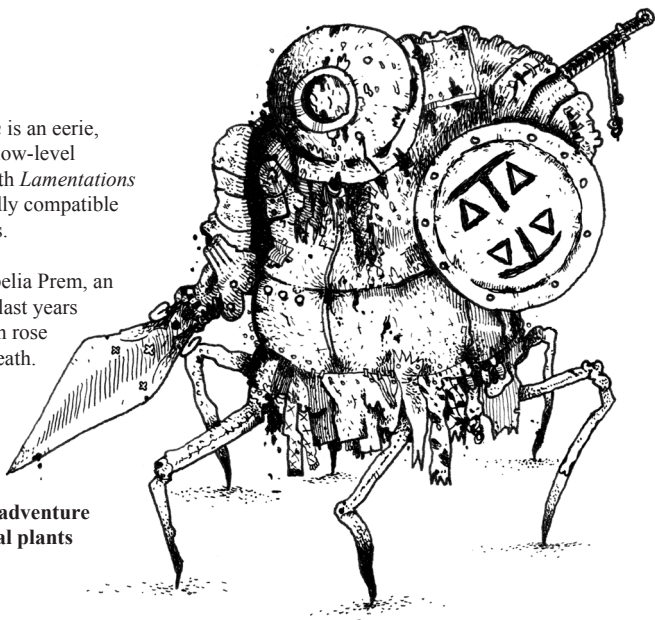
Highlights Include:

- Art by George Cotronis
- Map by Todd Gamble
- Written by Clint Krause
- 44 pages — \$5 PDF

Red Moon Medicine Show®
734 Foucher St, New Orleans, LA 70115

**Not available at hobby shops
because they generally suck balls!**

Red Moon Medicine Show is not actually a registered trademark. This ad is an homage to the wonderful Palladium Books *Dragon Magazine* ads of the mid-90s. Buy our shit at redmoonmedicineshow.com



The Driftwood Verses™

-- Coming Soon

The Driftwood Verses is a dark, nautical campaign setting for *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* and other OSR games. It's like a combination of *Moby Dick*, *Dark Sun*, and the computer game *Sunless Sea*.

Highlights Include:

- Cover by George Cotronis
- Interior Art by Sean Poppe
- Written by Clint Krause
- Page count and price TBD

Vacant Ritual Assembly™

Vacant Ritual Assembly is an OSR zine. Directly compatible with *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* but easily adaptable to other OSR games. Each issue has 22 pages of content, directly inspired by my own quasi-weekly *LotFP* campaign.

Highlights Include:

- Dark fantasy adventures, NPCs, and locations
- Art by Sean Poppe, Jeremy Duncan, and more!
- Written by Clint Krause
- 22 pages — \$4 Print, \$2 PDF



RED MOON
Medicine Show

First Printing

100 / 100

\$4
DEAD TREE
or \$2.00 PDF