

SPRIGS & KINDLING



Volume 5 | October 2025

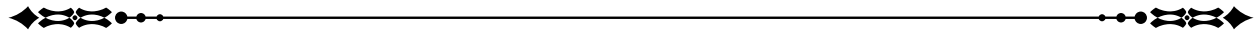


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SPRIGS & KINDLING

A Carved From Brindlewood Community Fanzine

Volume 5 Oct 2025



Editor-In-Chief

Amanda Mullins

Theme:

Trophy

Chief Layout Artist

Alexander Thomas Guy Coursolle

Chief Copy Editor

Rebecca Hall

Deputy Editor

J. Carter

Layout Artist

Arthur Wells

Editing/Layout

Valentin Gerber, Jack Hargreaves,
Chaotic Jamgochian, Mike Martens,
Nicolas Ronvel, Jesse Ross,
Brian Sago, Michael Van Vleet

Editor's Note

Trick or Treat! I know we normally do a Carved from Brindlewood theme but this Halloween we're going with the desperation and dread that is Trophy. We hope you enjoy these bits of new lore, and new incursions for you to bring to your table! I hope your characters all get ruined!

Our next volume we're back to CfB and it is themed around Endings and Beginnings, which is sufficiently vague to really let the imagination run wild!

Keep being weird!

Amanda Mullins

Editor-in-Chief



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Contributors

Amanita, Rafa Arruda, P.K. Ashur,
Sarah Bolling, Darren Brockes, Eric Brunsell,
Megan Caldwell, Sara Campos-Silvius, J. Carter,
Chai, Benjamin Cowley, Jim Crocker, Rafal Cupial,
dión (isle in the heavens), Josh Domanski,
Michael Dürr, E., Leigh Eldridge,
Charlie Etheridge-Nunn, Pat Eyler,
Mike Ferdinando, Rob Fletcher, Jeremy Gaines,
Valentin Gerber, Rebecca Hall, Jack Hargreaves,
Aaron Hollander, hurmly, Lisa Imbryk,
Chaotic Jamgochian, Rachael Jamison ,
Igor Juraszewski, Alexander Kerber (kagozaiku),
Kuroda, Llama, lovelyzoo, Kevin Macku,
Ben Mansky, Mike Martens, Gabe McCormick,
Warren McDonald, Michael, Mike, Natalia Montgomery,
Josh Mueller, Amanda Mullins, Drew Murter,
Bartosz N (bartosso), J Evan Parks, Levi Phipps,
Lon Prater, Daniel Qualls, Tristan Real,
Raymond Rich, Nicolas Ronvel, Rory of Ynn,
Jesse Ross, Brian Sago, salty, Alexi Sargeant,
slvrrrrrby, James Smith, Clint Smith,
Arkadiusz Stefański, Sean Tibbitts,
Mads C Turley, Michael Van Vleet,
Niklaas Warda, Wawoozle, Arthur Wells,
Whiletruefork, Bartłomiej Zwolinski



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Happy Halloween!

The Halloween season is a special time of year for me. There's the obvious reason, since my love of monsters is—at this point—pretty well-documented. There's the less-obvious-unless-you-know-me reason, since October is my birthday month and I always use the occasion to reflect on the past year. And then there's the Trophy reason.

Seven years ago this month, I submitted my first draft of *Trophy Dark* (then just called Trophy) to Jason Cordova. Less than two months later, it would be published in the Gauntlet's digital zine, Codex, and my life would get pointed in an entirely new direction. That 15-page entry (well, 13 pages plus some art and a poem) went on to inspire over 20 other pieces just within future issues of Codex.

Even from the time of my submission, I felt good about Trophy and what it was trying to do as a game, and my early playtests made me hopeful that it would find an audience. But never in my wildest dreams did I think Trophy would birth such a vibrant and terrifyingly imaginative community.

Gaming zines—especially those run by people with an infectious enthusiasm for the hobby (hi, Amanda and Jason!)—have this way of fostering cultures of creativity. The experimental and ephemeral nature of the medium gives permission to take risks and be bold. This issue of Sprigs & Kindling is no exception.



In the following pages you can...

- Explore the glass forests and faceless statues in the frozen lands north of the Kalduhr.
- Channel your treasure hunters' Drives to create juicy Devil's Bargains they can't refuse.
- Find yourself marooned in the oppressive strangeness of an alien world.
- Take a trip over the garden wall to visit Saint Amberlaine.
- And so, so much more.

I feel like a kid who just got home from trick-or-treating, and I'm sitting in awe at the basket of goodies I've just dumped out in front of me. Halloween is the best—not just for the monsters, and not just for the treats, but because it's the time of year when we all get to pretend to be someone else for a little bit. And if that isn't what makes TTRPGs so special, then I don't know what is.

Jesse Ross
October 2025

GM FEATURE

With Gabe McCormick

Lightweight Module Conversions for *Trophy Gold*

One of my favorite parts of *Trophy Gold* is its simplicity. Monsters have one stat. The whole game only has four rolls. And even with the beautiful crowdfunded edition, the original 14-page version from Codex: Gold works for running a great game. That simplicity is elegant and that elegance makes space for a huge range of tragic storytelling.

One of the promises of the original Codex: Gold release was module conversion. That version contains two fully converted OSR modules: “Tomb of the Serpent Kings” and “The Ruined Abbey of St. Clewd”. Both are excellent and completely hold up. This style of conversion is also a lot of prep work. As much as I love *Trophy Gold*, I don’t typically want to do the thorough prep required to fully convert a module. Instead, I prefer to convert by feel. I call these Lightweight Conversions.

This approach to conversion comes from experience with the game and understanding tacitly what works and what doesn’t. *Trophy Gold* co-author and Gauntlet Publishing founder Jason Cordova has also discussed a similar approach he refers to as ‘on-the-fly conversion’ on the Fear of a Black Dragon podcast. (“[The Wet Grampa](#)” episode is a good example.) My hope is that by walking readers through a Lightweight Conversion, it will help others quickly get a compelling *Trophy Gold* incursion to the table.

Note: This article assumes that you already know or have access to the rules of [Trophy Gold](#).

What do I actually need?

Part of doing a lightweight conversion is investing the minimum effort required to get to the table effectively. Your comfort with improvisation and familiarity with the system will help define what counts as ‘minimal’.

At minimum you will need Set Goals, Monsters, Treasure, and Traps. If the module is any good, the rest should be there for you. If you need to create more than these four things, the module likely isn’t robust enough to use for *Trophy Gold*.

While not required, you will probably want to run 2-4 published incursions before trying a Lightweight Conversion of your own so that you know how the system works, especially how to recognize a good set goal.

“I prefer to convert by feel. I call these Lightweight Conversions.”

The Big Ideas

On Theme

Trophy Gold makes a strong argument for having a focused theme. A well-written module may not explicitly state its theme, but it needs to have one for an effective conversion.

You don't need to spend time naming a theme, but you do need to think about what themes you want to highlight through play. If you're having trouble naming a theme or themes, just think about why this module seemed fun and focus on bringing that part out during play.

Building Sets

Sets are the skeleton of the Incursion and your set goals should reinforce the theme. Every set has a goal and that goal is explicitly the reason the Treasure Hunters are there, and helps provide focus for play.

Verbs drive set goals in a powerful way. Words like find, explore, search or discover lead to exploration. Defeat, convince, battle, undermine, all lead to interactions and conflicts. When designing a set goal, consider the type of play you want to see in that set. And remember that the Treasure Hunters can always spend tokens.

Geography is often useful for defining the boundaries of a set. A classic dungeon crawl can often provide one set outside the dungeon and then you can use 1 set per floor or region. This is an useful approach and perfectly suited to a modest dungeon crawl like the excellent [“Bruja, the Beast, and the Barrow”](#) - It breaks down to three sets, almost entirely geographic, creating a clean, single-session Incursion.

You can also think of sets thematically. “Huntsman’s Manor” in the *Trophy Gold* book has sets of varied geographical size and scope. Each one highlights what is important to that area in their design and their goal.

The Overgrown Gardens and the Hedge Maze lack a defined space and their set goals of “enter the manor” and “reach the center of the maze” each examine the named theme “pursuit.” The sets for the North hand South Wings cover many rooms while the Feast Hall is a single space.

Sets are a unit of story, not space. When you convert your module, think about where the thematic, conceptual, or narrative breaks feel logical.

“Sets are the skeleton of the Incursion and your set goals should reinforce the theme”

Generating Monsters

An existing module likely has a name and description for any included monsters. Use those ones. Since *Trophy Gold* has the players name the monsters during play, whatever name you give them is just a placeholder until the Treasure Hunters make a Bestiary entry. It can be helpful to provide a name that gives you tips about how you intend to play them. “Zombie” is perfectly fine. “Animated corpse hungry for brains” will give you something tangible while playing.

The only stat a monster needs is Endurance. The Codex: Gold rules have basic guidance on setting a monster’s endurance, so start there. You can often just set a number and move on. You can also think of it in terms of how the Monster fits into the fiction or the type of experience you want to create.

You could spend some time with Anydice to determine how difficult each point of Endurance is, but that’s probably more work than you’ll want to do for a Lightweight Conversion. Generally speaking, 1 point increase in Endurance is a big step up in difficulty. The higher you get, the bigger the step up.

Habits, Defenses, and Weakness don’t necessarily need to be pre-defined with a lightweight conversion. Habits (guidance about how to play the monster) can be defined at the table. Most of you Monsters in a lightweight conversion don’t need Defences or Weaknesses. Defenses and Weaknesses add a layer of complexity that can be compelling and meaningful. In a Lightweight Conversion, let your players inform the Defenses and Weakness through their questions and improves them as feels logical.

What is this Monster's role in the story?

Is this an inconsequential foe, barely worth the effort or risk of fighting?

6 or lower.



Is this a grunt or a group of minions that provides some challenge, but not much?

Probably a 7.

Is this a solid challenge?
Perhaps a champion or dangerous solo monster?

An 8 or 9.



Is this a dangerous foe that could reasonably kill one or more Treasure Hunters?

A 10.

Is this an epic opponent likely to kill all the Treasure Hunters without strategy, luck, or aid?

11, 12



Is this a rare, named, godlike entity who cannot be defeated without assistance and/or careful preparation?

13+.



Polishing Treasure

Treasure balance is important insofar as you are concerned about whether the Treasure Hunters actually achieve their burdens at the end. If you are inserting a converted module into a campaign this matters a great deal more. Ask yourself how you want the incursion to feel. Do you want the incursion to feel easy? Put in lots of high value treasure. If you want the Treasure Hunters to struggle to meet their burdens, be stingy. This does not need to be strictly defined and players can find Treasure through Hunt Tokens as well.

Treasure Hunters typically have 3-5 burdens and will want more than that when they return to town. A treasure worth 1 gold is standard. 2 is uncommon. Above 2 should be quite rare. A treasure worth 5 or more should be truly exceptional and possibly come with strings attached.

Generally speaking Trophy supports high risk, high reward themes where higher value treasures are deeper in the incursion or locked behind dangerous challenges. In rare cases you can also play against expectation and put a high value treasure out in the open. It will likely breed great suspicion.

The treasure tables at the end of [Trophy Loom](#) are excellent for inspiration.

Setting Traps

Traps in Trophy are not limited to traditional spike traps, snares, or falling rocks. *Trophy Gold* identifies traps as "things in the set that can harm the Treasure Hunters." Only prepare specific traps that are meaningful to the module you are running. This could be a set piece Monster, a trapped piece of treasure, or a key environmental hazard. One per set is typically sufficient and others can be improvised.

Worked Example: Beneath Those Feathered Bears

Module Selection

Beneath Those Feathered Bears is a 2-page pamphlet hexcrawl written by Max Lander. I chose it because Max is great and I like his work, I think that bears are fun, it's short and can be completed in a single session, and I haven't converted a hexcrawl before.

Feathered Bears is pay what you want on [Max's Itch page](#). I encourage you to grab a copy and follow along. With Max's permission, I am also including a copy with my notes scrawled over it at the end of this piece.

At a high level *Feathered Bears* is a solid module for conversion. The setting and content are clear and as a wilderness exploration, is already has some *Trophy Gold* themes going for it. The pamphlet is missing a few things (notably treasure) but none of those things make it impossible to convert. Most importantly, it looks like a fun time.

Step 1: Prep

I always start by printing out the module. I find it's much easier to write directly on the page than to annotate a PDF or write separate notes. As an added bonus, I will have all of my notes in once place when I'm actually running the game.

Start by reading the whole module. When you divide it into sets, you'll want to have the big picture in mind. You will probably end up making cuts, so you want to know how those cuts will affect the whole.

As you read the module, look for themes. An obvious theme for this conversion might be Bears, but *Trophy Gold* loves *folk religion*, so let's go in that direction, or *worship*, or *rituals*. While there are no specific rules that reference theme, the theme will help you design set goals and generally keep things focused. When in doubt, go back to the theme.

Step 2: Sets

Start broad before working on details. First look for set breaks and how they might support the theme. Your available play time is also an important factor here. I find that you can do at most 3 sets in a single 3-4 hour session and the pace tends to slow as players become more proficient with the system.

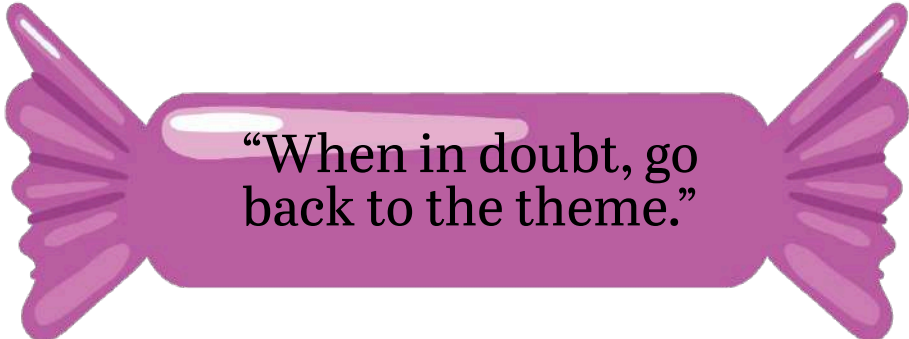
For *Feathered Bears* we'll need to work with the hexes, but we want to keep in mind that sets are narrative tools, not maps. The simplest approach is to have one hex equal one set. The hexes are distinct enough that this would work. However, six sets will require a minimum of two sessions and probably three if you and/or the players are new to *Trophy Gold*. Consider reducing and/or combining hexes into a single Set to reduce play time.

Set 1: Mudden Proper (Hex 1)

Mudden is a town outside the rest of the hexcrawl so it's logical to make it a set geographically and thematically. While we only have a brief description of things, Max has let us know that there are cultural events and class conflict. Set goals could dig into either of these themes and you may want to embellish the opening to highlight this option.

Set Goal: Choose whether you will support the bear gods, or align with the hunters who seek to end the bear gods. (Not every treasure hunter needs to make the same choice.)

The introductory text sets up this difference of opinion about the bear gods, and *Trophy Gold* is designed to emphasize conflict between Treasure Hunters. Hopefully this set goal will tell us something about each Treasure Hunter's views in a way that can be pulled at later on. It also provides a something that the GM can call back to throughout the game.



“When in doubt, go back to the theme.”

Set 2: The Woods (Hexes 2, 3, and 4)

This is where you can take advantage of how *Trophy Gold's* design approach applies to physical spaces. Again: a set is a unit of story, not geography. Agata's Hut, The Flux, and the Mirrored Spring are all in the woods, and all have opportunities for compelling scenes related to worship or folk religion.

Set Goal: Learn what the people of the woods want from the Bear Gods.

When possible, opt for simple, easy-to-remember set goals. It will be easier for everyone at the table, and when you use a more evocative or complex set goal, those will stand out.

Bonus Set Goals

If you split the forest into one set per hex:

Agata's Hut - Share a meal with Agata

The Flux - Participate in the theatre production.

The Mirrored Spring - Make an offering befitting your purpose.

Set 3: The Caves and the Den (Hexes 5 and 6)

We have a mini dungeon here so let's take advantage of that to address a core interest of *Trophy Gold*. The special rule about the caves also gives the GM an opportunity to separate the Treasure Hunters and/or to have something terrible enter the cave system.

Set Goal: Safely navigate the caves and honor, confront, or slay the Bear Gods as befits your goals.

The module spends a full sixth of its real estate defining the Bear Gods. We have to see them at some point. This set goal also does double duty and is an example of using a more complex goal. If you are splitting the hexes, you could just as easily split the set goal.

This set goal intentionally leaves opening what happens when the Treasure Hunters actually meet the bear gods and helps call back to the first set where they had to pick a side. If you wanted to narrow the narrative further, you could choose a more specific goal like "speak with the Bear Gods", "make a request of the Bear Gods", or even "defeat the Bear Gods".

Subtle word choice can have a great deal of impact here. "Defeat the Bear Gods" and "fight the Bear Gods" are different set goals and will inspire different types of play. The language you use is a great opportunity to signpost the kind of experience you want your players to have.

Step 3: Monsters, Traps, and Treasure

In practice, I do these all at the same time as I work through the module, but they are separated for the sake of clarity.

Monsters

Max has a small corner of the pamphlet listing "Creatures of the Woods" for us to work with. Not all of these need to be monsters but they have great evocative names.

Normally I would only write an Endurance number next to a monster description or stat block. Below I include a couple of my thoughts.

Monster	Description	Stat
Cannibal Deer	Scary but not an extreme threat	Endurance 7 (8 for a group of deer)
Tree Top Hag	Hags should be dangerous as individuals and terrifying as a coven of three	Endurance 9 or 11 for the coven
Will-O-Wisp and Rainbow Pixie	Perhaps harmless as individuals but it takes a cloud of them to be dangerous	Endurance 7
Mud Saskwatch	Makes me think this is the only one so it should stand out	Endurance 10
Swamp Ent	Quite powerful but slow. Weakness: Treasure Hunters can run away at any time by sacrificing 1 Hunt token	Endurance 10
Dusk Unicorn	Mysterious and glorious. Maybe they can't even fight it?	Endurance 13 Make a whole side quest to figure it out?

Traps

I tend to keep traps fairly minimal and let the course of play determine what is dangerous. The “what could go wrong” portion of a Risk Roll can do a lot of work for you. For *Feathered Bears* any of the creatures can make for good dangers. The performance in The Flux is already set up as an excellent trap. The Mirrored Spring is positioned as a benefit, but you could certainly do the reverse and punish any Treasure Hunter who steals an offering with a mirrored curse. The Caves have an excellent built in trap: “become lost and emerge in a random hex”. All in all, the module has what you need for traps. If you need additional inspiration the list of “encounters of the woods” has even more and any of them could be dropped in as needed.

Treasure

Feathered Bears has no specific treasure listed in it so let's go back to the theme and make a quick list of ideas. These ideas should be thought of as memory aids or inspiration to support you during play. For a single session, six to eight ideas is typically enough. All you need is enough for one session, then if you have additional sessions, you can think up more treasures between sessions. Also remember that you can always ask players what they find and they will come up with something great..

We selected folk religion as our theme so we need treasures that help emphasise worship or maybe things that could be used in rituals.

TREASURES

- A clay bear figurine (1g)
- A Bear God Feather (3g but will probably curse you)
- Rare herbs (1g)
- Flowers from a Flowered Rhino (2g)
- Polished semi-precious stones (1g)
- A small pouch of silver (1g)

Closing

This ended up being a lot of words for what is, in practice, a fairly quick task. If you are a reasonably practiced Trophy GM you can divide the module into sets, write up some set goals and assign monster endurance on-the-fly. Simple modules can become Lightweight Conversions in under thirty minutes.

I do think this method can also work for longer modules. *Trophy Gold* has so much simplicity and flexibility that it is actually quite difficult to mess it up. As long as you follow the rules, the gameplay itself will do a great deal of work to help link ideas together.

If you have run a couple sessions of *Trophy Gold* and have a sense of how the game works, I recommend starting with a short module and trying it out in a short one or two session game. Simple set goals are fine and if there is no expectation of a campaign, there is little harm in experimenting. Just make a few notes and play to find out what happens.

Gabe is an educator and game facilitator based in greater Boston. You can find his other games work at <https://gmccormick.itch.io/>

HOW TO USE THIS ADVENTURE

This pamphlet is meant to be a small packet of inspiration. There are no answers, no plots, no plans, no defined path. There are characters and circumstances and strange happenings and some rad bears for you to chop up, use, hack and manipulate in whatever way feels fun for your game. You could drop the Hazel Wood down as a fun rumour for you running campaign, or take the bears as characters to play in a different scenario altogether. This is also why there are no stats of any variety, adapt it to your system of choice as you wish.

Have fun, stay weird.

WHY DO YOU SEEK THE BEAR GODS?

1. A lover has asked you to retrieve a feather as an expressions of your affections
2. Rumour says wearing their hides grants you dominion over The Hazel Wood (this is a lie)
3. The feathers, when used as quills, allow the author to write the truth
4. The fog calls to you through the voice of a lost loved one.
5. The influence of the Bear Gods has benefitted you greatly and you wish to repay them, but first, you have to find them.
6. You're a noble and it is your duty to help rid the Hazel Wood of it's intruders.
7. You've lost something of immense personal value and need their help to get it back.
8. Their effect on the woods has fundamental changed it's inhabitants in strange and unique ways. You seek a change yourself.
9. Their chaos hurt you, you wish them harm.
10. You're gay.

fun alternate drives for a 1-shot

HUGE BOAR

GAMES

*Annotations by Gabe for
Sprigs & Kindling Vol 5*

THE GODS

Do Table

1. CRACKED GRIN

Crackedgrin is the largest of the Bear Gods. Overprotective and blunt, she will safeguard any of the other gods and provide safe harbour for any creature of the forest. She is hesitant to initiate violence but not due to lack of capability. Her feathers are deep reds + purples, scar through the left side of her face gives her an unnerving smile.

2. CHORUS

Chorus appears as a different form each time they are seen, their size, shape and colouring are ever in flux. Chorus is the truest embodiment of chaos and cannot be counted on to respond the same twice. When Chorus appears, roll twice for their current demeanor.

1. Altruistic 2. Aggressive 3. Deceitful 4. Shy 5. Defensive 6. Generous 7. Suspicious 8. Rude 9. Kind 10. Aloof 11. Impartial 12. Regal 13. Pessimistic 14. Calm 15. Grave 16. Audacious 17. Joyous 18. Gentle 19. Impatient 20. Affable

3. MUDQUILL

Mudquill is the embodiment of youth. They are playful, impetuous and tricky, often speaking in riddles and questions. They take joy in mystery and the discomfort mortals have in not-knowing. They will almost always answer questions but will never give a clear or fully truthful answer. Their feathers are matted down with muck, silt and flora. They will disappear into the Wood if threatened.

4. DUSTFINGERS

Dustfingers is always curious about everything. The players, their wants, maybe even what their insides look like. A compelling mystery will always bring Dustfingers to your side. Dustfingers feathers are singed and bent.

5. VAIOR

Upon first meeting, appears to be shy and reclusive. In reality he is a hopeless romantic, believes unwaveringly that love is the answer. Will tell endless romantic tales of forest romance and the sacrifices required to show devotion. Entranced by sultry and sordid rumours. His feathers are pale pink, and shimmer only in moonlight.

6. THE WHOLE COUNCIL



INTRO

BENEATH THOSE FEATHERED BEARS

A family of Bear Gods have taken the land, swathed in feathers, bright and brilliant in colour. And while they are glorious and majestic in look, they are still gods, and prone to toying with the lives and livelihoods of mortal beings. Not malicious, or hateful, but lawless and wild; the bear gods have made their influence known, bringing with them a fog blanketing The Hazel Wood, and it's singular town, Mudden, in their chaos magic.

Many of the residents of Mudden, the youth mostly, welcome the influence of the bear gods, welcome the change to a historically unchanging town. They wander boldly into the woods in search of adventure and escapades (and more than a few, of strange romances). But there are many, hunters and lords, who wish to see routine restored and the gods removed, motivated, in no small part, by the lure of the Bear Gods power.

2 sides to work w/

[51]: Choose to support the Bear Gods or the hunters. ← not all same
← can change after set

THE HAZEL WOOD

use randomly or for moments

1. **MUDDEN PRIPER.** Mudden is small and eccentric town, known for its festivals and cultural events. The nobility of Mudden is constantly at odds with its populace, seeing them less as artists and creatives and more as high maintenance and demanding workers.

2. **AGATA'S HUT.** The witches of the wood have always been at peace with changing ways, and as such see the Bear Gods as welcome friends. Players who are aligned with the hunters will be met with extreme hostility. Otherwise Agata will offer to help the players in whatever way she can: small spells or charms, healing, rest, directions (next hex contains a bear god)

3. **THE FLUX.** A makeshift amphitheatre in the ruins of an old keep. The youth of the town run a subversive and underground theatre troupe and mount their productions here. Currently on program is an experimental piece combining protest poetry, ancient texts and ritual summonings. D6 to see what they summon:

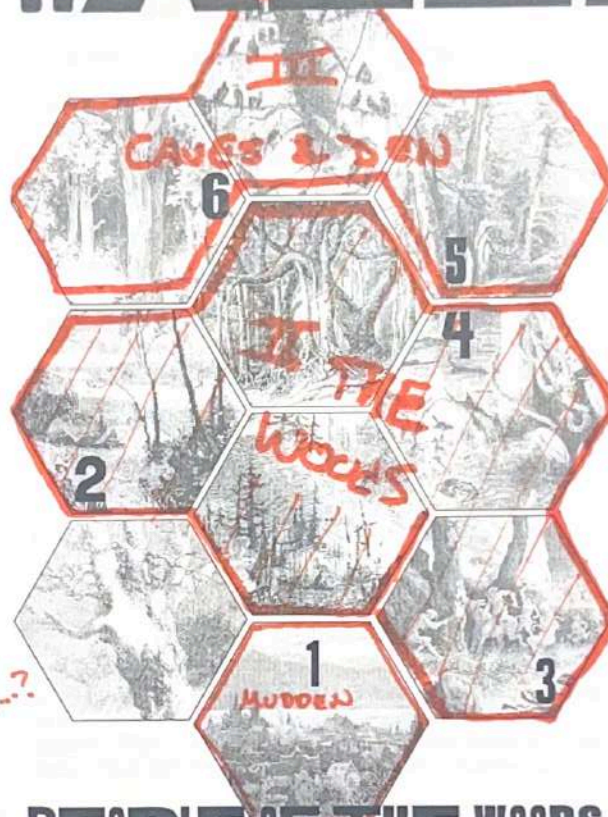
1. Bear God
2. Half a chaos demon, location of other half unknown. Halves movement is dependant on the other.
3. Retired witch from a few villages over
4. A fey spirit who considers themselves an expert in theatre
5. A woodland creature, but of the wrong size.
6. Flame

4. **THE MIRRRED SPRING.** When viewed from above the water of the spring reflects back the scene above. Along the river floor are all manner of discarded items; coins, rusted weapons, keepsakes, disintegrated papers and books. Any offering left here will result in a buff of matching type, the next day. For example an offering of rations might result in d6 rations appearing in the characters pack the next morning.

5. **THE CAVES.** The caves are an interconnected network that span the entirety of The Hazel Wood. They are as well populated by adventurous youth engaging in reckless hedonism and forbidden trysts as they are with vile creatures and forgotten demons. Anyone entering the cave will become lost and emerge in a random hex.

6. **THE DENS.** The dens of the bear gods are hidden deep within the Hazel Wood. A series of caverns dug into the side of a large hill, each corridor decorated in a different but equally committed aesthetic. At any given time 3 Gods are present, engaging in activities befitting their personalities.

[53]: Safely navigate the caves and honor, confront, or slay the Bear Gods as befits your goals.



PEOPLE OF THE WOODS

- Sir Manard Heymon, Bringer of Clarity and Seer of the Beyond, twelfth of his name, generous Duke of Mudden (He/they) (all lies except for dukedom). Will stop at nothing to rid the Hazel Wood of the bear gods and return the law of the land. Has secret lover he meets in the woods who may be a god in disguise.
- Theo Moc (None) Currently Manager of The Flux. Organizing a rebellion and planning to storm the town to take the nobles out by force.
- Gnel (they/them) A messenger of the bear gods. Is always able to find their way in the forest. Will follow the party whether wanted or not.
- Mirielis of the Mountains (she/they) Famous Knight, legends of their prowess in battles are know to all. Currently in the employ of the noble family, but wishes to retire to a cabin far from Mudden. Faints at the sight of the blood. ♥

ENCOUNTERS OF THE WOODS

1. Lovers engaging in a tryst.
2. Hunters hot on the trail of a bear god, the next ^{set} will contain a bear god. If you dispose of the hunters the next bear god you meet will respond positively to you. If the hunters beat the players in a fight they will leave them to rot without their possessions.
3. The travelling merchant of The Woods, They trade only in unique items and claim to have a bear feather but will only exchange it for a favour. ♥
4. The fog is thick here. Apparitions and figments appear everywhere. Navigation is impossible. Next movement is random.
5. A crew of hunters has set up a camp here. They have resources and tools and weapons, and probably also hate in their hearts. Maybe so do the players.
6. The thick woods clear around a small pond. Colourful creatures drink and relax here. At the bottom of the pond is a ancient staff wrapped in thick cloth. It's magics can never be fully known.
7. A person stands alone, confused and disoriented, seemingly having just woken up and found themselves in this place. They are torn about their allegiances in the conflict of the woods, their noble duties at odds with their hearts desire.
8. A few minor lords have taken it upon themselves to enter the Hazel Wood and confront the Gods. They will try to hire the party to align with them with whatever currency they think most likely to work.
9. Thick smoke forms billows out from the trunk of a massive tree and forms into the shapes of beasts. Some of them are solid.
10. Bear God(s) - Roll on the table of gods.

CREATURES OF THE WOODS

Swamp Ent. Seed Troll. Hairless Fawn. Mud Saskwatch. Marsh Banshee. Ghost Dinosaur. Giant Spider. Tree Top Hag. Will-O-Wisp. Rainbow Pixie. Overgrown Sprite. Luminous Werewolf. Nocturnal Nymph. Winged Goblin. Flowered Rhino. Cedar Rabbit. Sprouted Lizard. Cannibal Deer. Rotten Elk. Dusk Unicorn.

7-8 orc/goblin 11- real tough
9-10 solo baddie 12 the worst



P.K. Ashur



Khaldur Loves You

by Rafal Cupial

Art credit: **Bag**

The attempt to weave together the rules and mechanical systems of a game with the fiction they generate is what I call synergistic play.

Sometimes this means justifying mechanics within the fiction itself (why does a Monster yield potentially less Gold the lower its final Endurance? → Maybe because its body is mangled, and it's harder to carve anything of value from its remains?). Sometimes it means adjusting the formal system so it reflects the shifting fiction better (can I rule that everyone's Ruin drops by 1 after a night of rest in the sanctuary of the Sisters, during the Incursion?).

When you play truly synergistically, every rule transforms the fiction, every roll generates a narrative you could never have produced through freeform storytelling alone.

The particular synergistic frame for Trophy Gold I describe here allowed me to heighten the gravitas of our table's play. It made players feel that their choices had weight in the fiction of the game rather than being mere flavor. It created tension in the evolving relationship between the characters and the forest.

And most of all - it transformed Rituals into moments of genuine terror and awe: shattering events that deeply reshaped the fictional situation, pulsed with the Incursion's symbolic Theme, and unveiled the hidden corners of the treasure hunters' psyche.

Let's start with the fictional reframe, to better justify the systems of the game:

In my set up, Khaldur is a sentient, intelligent, mystical realm that:

1. Probes the minds of treasure hunters and manifests their hidden obsessions, fears, dreams, desires, joys, and sorrows.
2. Yearns to absorb them completely, to fold them into its structures absolutely.
3. Whispers at the edges of perception, forever tempting them with promises of dark power and deep transformation.

Next, the mechanical reframe, to align with the new fiction of the game:

I propose that the core of play should be governed by old-school principles of fictional positioning. That the Risk Roll should be treated less as a Scene Oracle or Writers' Room moment, and more as the point where control of the fiction slips - and we negotiate position and stakes. **And that the Dark Die should be tied only to Khaldur's broken sorcery.**

As long as the characters solve problems through positioning and playing the fiction, they retain control. But when uncontrollable risk enters the situation - the Risk Roll is triggered. Its consequences are diegetic. **We do not add a Dark Die for the risk of body, mind, or spirit.**

A broken leg, a lost item, humiliation, an unwelcome attention... even the death of a character - these are all diegetic consequences. They change the treasure hunters' situation, hinder their progress, sometimes even make further challenges impossible.

In theory, in Trophy Gold a character can die because of fictional positioning. In practice, in my experience, death is effectively gated by Ruin: a character is safe until their clock fills to six...

But since in this new approach the Dark Die is tied solely to Khaldur, no matter the level of risk, a baseline Risk Roll always draws only from the Light Dice pool. Now it never carries the possibility of ticking up Ruin at the start.

If the core of the game is old-school positioning, and the baseline Risk Roll never invokes the Dark Die unless foul magic is in play - then inevitably, Ruin rises far less often. Which means: players have more control over their characters' survival. Which means: clever play keeps characters alive longer. Which means: players grow more attached to them.

Which means: when the Dark Die finally enters the pool, its presence carries far more weight, uniqueness, and stakes. Just as in OSR one often avoids combat - because as long as you're playing through positioning you control the fiction, but once you step into combat procedure, the roulette spins and your life belongs to the dice - so here, as long as you avoid Khaldur's magic, you're at least safe from the randomness of Ruin.

But the Whisper of Khaldur is ever-present, tugging at the edges of perception with its promises of transformation. If a player dislikes the outcome of a Risk Roll, they may choose to open themselves to the forest's foul magic. Add a Dark Die, reroll, and risk its dominance.

The more a character embraces the magic, the greater their chances of success - and the greater their risk of being consumed. Synergy at work.

Regardless of the result, the resolution must bear the stain of the forest's influence. How exactly did Khaldur help you achieve your goal? How does the curse of the forest manifest in your failure? Perhaps the complication itself arises from its interference. This is the perfect moment to draw on Incursion Moments and to reincorporate the Theme.

And what if the characters are cornered in the fiction, trapped with no way out through gear or skill - when they stare death in the face? Then the Ritual becomes their only chance to survive, offering something overwhelmingly powerful, something unattainable by any other means... Something absolutely dangerous...

The Ritual lets players drastically rewrite the fictional situation, it lets characters claw themselves out of despair. This is when we open the full Writers' Room Approach, unleash wild creativity, uncanny consequences, Faustian Devil Bargains.

A Ritual can, for a heartbeat, change the very logic of the world. It gives a player the chance to dazzle the table with a breathtaking description, to pour impossible color into the fiction. Above all - it reveals the innermost psyche of the treasure hunter.

I treat Rituals as the manifestation of the treasure hunters' desires, obsessions, fears, dreams, griefs - a psychic expression of their Jungian shadow. In resolving them, I often ask the player:

"Describe how you prepare for the Ritual - show how it reflects your character's personality and current state of their soul." Or: "Tell us how the Ritual fulfills your goal - show us what the sorcery reveals about your character's hidden wounds."

And what happens if their Ruin rises? In this approach, Ruin signifies nothing but integration with Khaldur - being changed by the cursed space. Every time Ruin increases, the character always gains a Condition, and that Condition is always a cursed, magical manifestation tied to the Incursion's symbolism. Here, Trophy Dark is the best direct inspiration.

Synergistically, this makes sense: the character's magic asserts itself, helping them achieve their goals while escalating their risk of utter dissolution - whether through the Condition's intensification or the birth of a new one.

By contrast, the situation where a character has the Condition "Broken Leg" yet sprints away from a monster, and the GM throws in a Dark Die "because of the Condition" - makes no sense from a synergistic standpoint: That would mean the broken leg actually makes their sprinting mechanically more likely to succeed...

Connecting the Dark Die only to Khaldur's power justifies so many mechanical elements of Trophy Gold in fiction, for example:

-> Combat Rolls include Dark Dice because Monsters are the purest, most violent manifestations of Khaldur. If you're fighting ordinary folk, resolve it through positioning, a single Risk Roll, or a quick series of them.

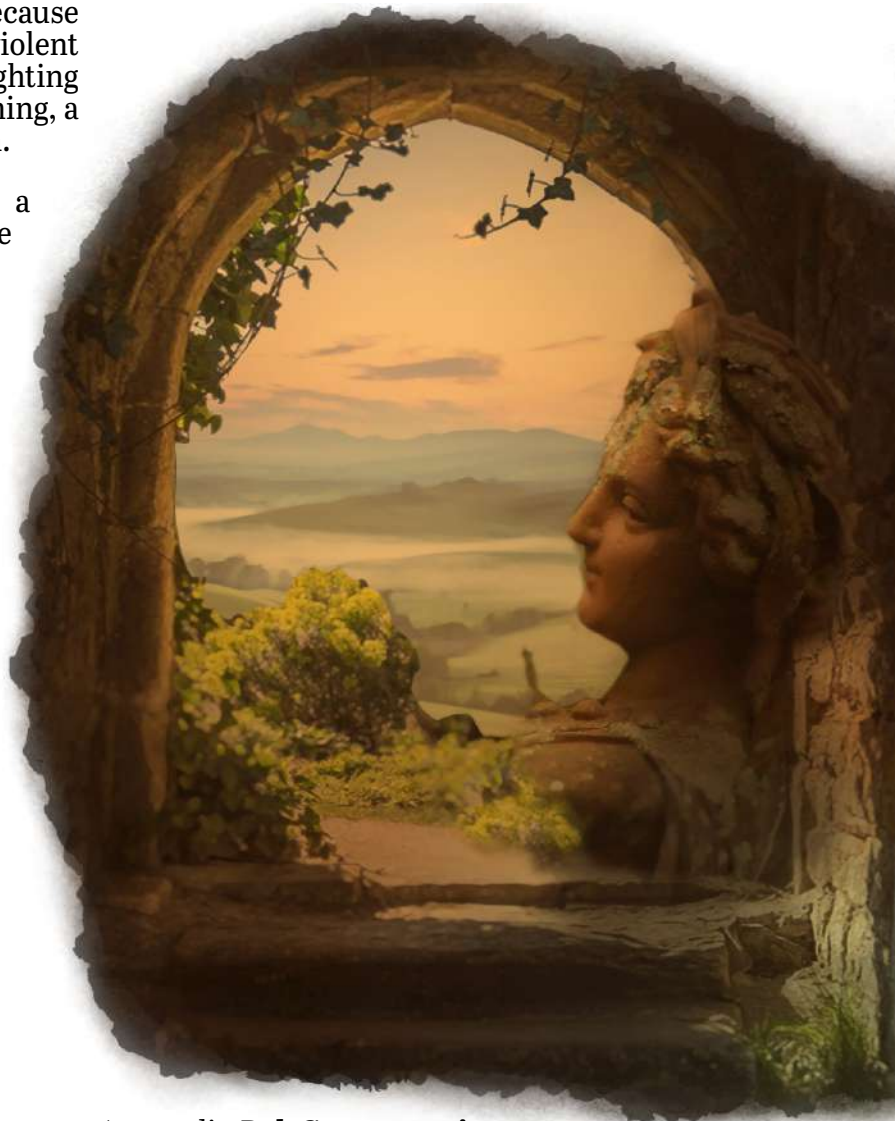
-> Ruin decreases when you rest in a Household, and magical Conditions fade exactly because you are far from Khaldur - its grip on you weakens.

A synergistic approach binds fiction and mechanics even tighter: by reframing the fictional situation (Khaldur is a sentient realm that wants to manifest through you), by shifting the mechanical rules (the Dark Die and Ruin are tied solely to dark magic), and by rethinking ludic approaches to game challenges (most of the fiction we resolve through positioning).

Trophy Gold, being such an open and minimalist system, almost begs for a dose of synergism. The techniques above let me both raise the gravitas of the fiction at the table and dramatically heighten the stakes of Rituals. They also generated fascinating stories of being tempted by Khaldur's power - always just within reach.

And you? How would you synergize Trophy to your own ends? How might we justify the Hunt Roll in fiction? What exactly are Hunt Tokens in the diegesis? What might they be tied to in the world of the game? Why do we add a die for Equipment or a Skill if the Hunt Rolls resolution is in the end detached from the character's activity?

Khaldur is waiting for your answer.



Art credit: **Bob Greyvenstein**

WARE THE WITCH

Sean
Tibbitts



'Ware the Witch: A Tale of the Kalduhr

By Sean Tibbitts

“Be careful,” the old woman told us as we stood up from the public house’s table.

“We’re always careful,” Kenet said dismissively, turning away.

“Careful of what?” the greenie said, a note of anxiety in his voice.

“This is the Kalduhr Forest,” the old woman replied. “It doesn’t want any of us here, you lot least of all. But most especially, in these parts, you must ’ware the Witch.”

“The Witch of Nevask,” I said helpfully. “You’ve heard the tales, haven’t you, Greenie?”

“But Relda, those are just stories.” The greenie turned to the old proprietress again. “What news do you have of the Witch, good woman?”

She laughed, then coughed. “News? All we have, even here, are stories. A friend of a friend’s child, lured into the witchwood, never to be heard of again. The cattle in the town down the road, cursed with the bloating sickness. A cousin twice removed who stumbled across a trove of peppermint in the forest, and didn’t realize it was the Witch’s garden until he found himself transformed into a boar. Many have seen her hut lumbering about on its stilts far off in the distance in the forest, and I myself have seen the Witch flying above the trees on her giant sway-wing crane.”

“Have you really?” the serving woman said from behind me. “I didn’t know that.”

I had had my eye on her all through dinner. Kenet would have called her bony, but I thought her slimness attractive. And her hands looked soft, not like my own sword-callused palms.

“And what is your name, sweet thing?” I asked her.

She gave me a wry look. “Names are precious and dangerous out here,” she said. “Tell you what. Stop by on your way back, and I’ll give you my name to take back to the big city with you.”

Kenet snickered behind his hand, and when I glared at him, he just shouldered his heavy pack and said, “It’s time to be off.”

I had been a merchant’s guard for over a decade at that point, and I had known Kenet for most of that time. He was a watchman in Fort Duhryn, where I was based, and he heard a lot of good gossip as he moved about the town. He had an itch, an itch to better his lot in life, and occasionally he came to me with the perfect get-rich-quick scheme. These schemes usually depended more on my involvement and expertise than on his, and he always got surly when I asked him how we would split the earnings. They never amounted to anything in the end, anyway.

But this time it was different. There was a kind of fever on him when he tracked me down at the Wretched Raven, his words coming out almost faster than he could spit them at me.

He sat down across from me at my table.

"Relda, I'm so glad I found you. Yesterday I heard the most amazing story from Gora the Adventurer herself! Well, not from her lips. But from Tychert One-Foot, who heard her tell it in person at the House of Fecund Delights."

"Gora is a liar and a confabulator, Kenet," I said, rolling my eyes. "You know that as well as I."

"Tychert says—"

"Tychert will say anything if he thinks it'll get him a coin or two."

Kenet glared at me. "Will you listen? Gora has found the source of the Nevask River. It lies in the north of the Kalduhr, in the mountains at the edge of the world. Apparently there is an untouched city there, in a hidden valley, full of treasures beyond imagining. Tychert said Gora showed her listeners a ruby the size of an ostridge egg. Think of it, Relda! With just one such ruby, our fortunes would be made!"

I stared at him, thinking of all the debts I had accumulated over the past couple years. Even a normal-sized ruby would change my fortune and get the creditors off my back. Finally, however, I shook my head. "How do you know this isn't a swindle? Gora lies like breathing."

Kenet smiled and played his trump card. "Blind Uthir was with her on this trip, and he says she is telling the truth."

This shut me up. Blind Uthir was not actually blind, and he was generally respected in Fort Duhren. After a few more minutes thinking of everything I could buy with a ruby as big as an ostridge egg, I agreed to accompany him. It would mean going into even more debt between the two of us to outfit ourselves with the proper cold-weather gear for when we got to the mountains, but I figured that was an investment in future earnings.

I had my doubts when he showed up with a

young, gawky boy who I immediately nicknamed "Greenie," but our spirits were high when we set out from Fort Duhren and began trekking into the forest.

The road had seemed wide and comfortable up to the public house, but beyond the waystation it narrowed. The paving stones sometimes vanished beneath the soil, or were covered with undergrowth, and sometimes the road seemed to disappear altogether.

Kenet and I were hacking our way through a stand of saplings, in the direction we *thought* the road lay, when we heard the greenie's voice behind us, calling out in fear.

We turned and he was nowhere to be found.

"Shit," Kenet said. "He was my sister's nephew-in-law. What am I going to tell her?"

"Hush," I said, holding up a hand.

He shook his head, but he went silent.

In the stillness, we could hear the buzz of insects in the sultry air, the chirrup of birds from the trees, the scamper of something small in a nearby thicket. And then there was another cry, almost muffled, from off the path.

We pushed through the screen of branches and found the greenie, half engulfed by the hungry roots of a strangler fig. One root was cutting into his throat, and his face was going from red to grey.

"Quick!" Kenet said, and he drew his sword. Wedging it next to the greenie's neck, he severed the root, which fell away. The agonized inrush of air into the greenie's lungs was piercing.

"Are you all right?" I asked him.

He nodded shakily. And then he screamed.

"What the—?" I said. Then I noticed the sap that gushed from the wounded root was steaming and boiling as it touched his flesh. In an instant the skin and tendons of his throat had dissolved and the blood rushed out to curdle and blacken where it mixed with the sap.

"No!" Kenet cried, lunging to hold the greenie's blood in, to patch up his tattered, seared flesh, to—who knows what he was thinking, or if he was thinking. A moment later and his hands were dissolving in turn, his mouth a perfect rictus as he screamed and screamed and screamed.

I was done. This was no jaunt through the pine barrens, guarding a merchant caravan. This forest really didn't want us here, and with the greenie dead and Kenet without the use of his hands, I felt it best to head back to Fort Duhrin. But I soon realized that I didn't know the way back. Usually I have an infallible sense of direction, no matter the situation, but here in the Kalduhr I was all turned around.

Kenet followed me, stumbling along, his useless, melted hands held protectively near his chest. His pained breathing wheezed in and out, in and out behind me.

I made a fire that evening, when dusk had fallen and I could no longer see the way. I had to feed Kenet, tearing off sections of jerky and popping them into his mouth.

"His name was Eben," Kenet said quietly a little while later.

"What?"

"My sister's nephew-in-law. His name was Eben."

"Oh," I said. "I didn't know."

"You never asked. You just always called him 'Greenie.'" His eyes pierced me angrily. "As if you're so experienced. You'd never been in the Kalduhr before either."

I looked away. "I thought—I thought it would be like the other delves I've been on."

"But it isn't," Kenet said.

"No. It's not."

There was silence.

"Go to sleep, Relda," Kenet said at last. He kicked his bedroll out into a semblance of order and flung himself down on it, letting out a pained grunt as his hands brushed the blankets.

"I'm going to keep watch," I said.

"Suit yourself. This forest is going to kill us regardless." He rolled over to face away from me.

"Good night," I whispered, but it was so soft I doubt he heard.

I woke suddenly in the dark of the early morning, still leaning against the trunk of the tree I had sat under a few hours before. I hadn't meant to fall asleep.

There was someone crouched by the fire, wrapped in a dark cloak, their hair a cloud of black curls around their head. Their hands were buried to the wrists in the coals, and eerie green flames caressed their forearms. I didn't speak a word or move a muscle, but they turned to look at me. It was the face of the serving woman at the waystation from the day before. She laughed at me, and the laughter transformed her features into something unearthly and piercingly beautiful. Then, all at once, she disappeared. A blackbird took flight from where she had been, and was immediately lost in the canopy overhead.

I started awake, this time for real. The fire was cold and dark, and I couldn't even see Kenet in his bedroll on the other side of the clearing. I clutched my sword and watched until dawn.

The next day, I helped Kenet get up and relieve himself—both of us pretending as hard as we could that it wasn't happening—and then we set out once again. We were arguing about which way to go when an arrow whizzed past Kenet's head and embedded itself in the trunk of a tree with a resonant thunk. We dove off the path as a small group of bandits boiled out of the undergrowth, shouting and firing off more arrows.

I saw an arrow take Kenet in the back. Blood leapt from his mouth and he crumpled to the ground, skidding a few inches in the dirt. I ran.

They chased me for what felt like miles, always just a few steps behind. Fortunately they seemed to have run out of ammunition, so there were no more arrows. But they were all wielding ugly, rust-spotted swords and axes, which would put an end to me just as quickly if they caught me.

The river appeared between one step and the next, a foaming torrent of water at least fifty feet wide. Turn and face the bandits, or brave the whitewater? It was the thought that the bandits might not kill me immediately that made my choice for me. I dropped my pack and my sword belt and kicked off my boots and then waded out into the current.

The bandits shouted in disbelief as they saw me enter the river. One of them threw his axe, but it flew wide and sliced into the water several feet away.

"You fool," the bandit leader said. "She's as good as dead. The Nevask is impassable."

I was doing fairly well until I got a third of the way across. The water was up to my waist, and all it took was a single missed step for it to sweep me off my feet. I heard the bandits jeering as the river closed over my head.

I woke in stages: first to my aching body, then to a strange warmth, and finally to the smell of spices and cooking food. I opened my eyes. I was lying in a featherbed in what looked like a small cottage. A fire danced in a generous hearth that covered half of one wall, a cauldron suspended over the flames. Above me, bunches of herbs and flowers hung from the rafters.

"Don't get up," a woman's voice said. "You are lucky the river let you go at all. You broke several bones, including your head, and you swallowed a gallon of water. And yet you are alive."

I opened my mouth, but the movement sent a dagger of pain through my eye and I only managed to make a raspy whimper.

The woman chuckled and I heard her move closer. I recognized that laugh from somewhere, I thought dimly.

"You're a hardy one," she said, sounding almost approving. "And quick-thinking. Those bandits would have made a meal of you if you hadn't braved the river."

"You—who—"

"Haven't you heard that names have power in the Kalduhr?" she said. "I won't ask yours, and you should not ask mine."

I could see her in the firelight now: a dark-cloaked shape with a cloud of curly hair. She looked to be in her early forties, maybe, but she bore a strong resemblance to the serving woman at the waystation public house. And to the woman from my dream the other night, stirring the bones of our fire with her bare hands.

"Do I know you?" I croaked out.

"I doubt it," she said, smiling. "Very few people know me. I keep to myself and I like it like that. Now, sleep. Your body needs to heal and it needs rest while it does so."

A tide of exhaustion overtook me then, and I slid away into slumber.

I had strange dreams that night, dreams of being rocked to sleep by a giant with bells in its hair, and other dreams where my flesh was dissolving like the greenie's throat and Kenet's hands had done. When I woke, however, the sun was shining in through the cottage windows and the world seemed cheerful and bright for the first time since I had set out from Fort Duhrin.

My rescuer came inside then, a black cartwheel hat on her head. She saw me and her eyes lit up. "You're awake at last. How do you feel?" She took off the wide-brimmed hat and hung it on a hook by the front door. She doffed the dark, velvety cloak as well, and without it I could see that she was sturdy rather than slim. And yet there was something about her that attracted me even more than the young, slender serving maid she so resembled.

"I'm feeling...well," I said, surprised. "I hardly ache at all."

"That's because you've been recuperating for a week," the woman said. "You slept so deeply I was almost worried." She gave me an admonishing look. "You must still stay in bed for now. Your bones are mending, but even with my poultices it will take some time before you can get up."

"Aye aye, ma'am," I said, giving an abortive salute with the arm that hurt the least.

She laughed again. I liked her laugh, I decided.

"I was wondering about something," I said tentatively.

"Yes?"

"We're in the Kalduhr, right?"

She nodded.

"Isn't it dangerous? I've been told the forest hates people and tries to kill them. It killed—" I swallowed. "It killed someone I was traveling with. Killed them horribly, right in front of me. And then there are worse dangers, like the Witch of Nevask."

She looked completely serious for the first time. "I get along pretty well with the forest, because I'm not here to plunder it. And the Witch—" She shrugged. "The Witch is not a danger to me."

"How?" I gasped. "All the stories—"

"—are stories," the woman said. "The Witch is no more dangerous than the forest if you understand her and stay out of her way." Her face darkened. "Trust me, those punished by the Witch got what they deserved."

What they deserved? I thought. From everything I had heard, the Witch was unpredictable and quick to anger, although she seemed to have a soft spot for children. That would hardly cause her to spare this woman, however. Or me.

"Here," the woman said, as if the subject were closed. "I have a draught for you to drink." She poured an evil-smelling brew into a wooden cup and brought it over. The odor was indescribable—mushroomy, sharp, and fetid all at once. She crooked an eyebrow when I just held the cup and grimaced at it. "Hold your nose if it makes it go down easier," she said.

I did so, but even without the smell the taste almost made me gag. A second later, though, I gasped as a pleasant heat radiated through my body from my stomach. It was almost like I could feel the potion working, healing me, knitting up my bones and flesh.

"The Kalduhr offers many gifts to its favored few," she said obscurely, taking the cup back. "Now try to sleep some more. I'll check on you again in a few hours."

With the warmth of the draught in me, I didn't think I would be able to nod off, but I did doze for a while. I woke when I heard voices from outside. Or rather, the woman's voice, speaking to someone who did not respond.

"It has been a long time since we had a visitor, hasn't it, Kolya?" I thought I heard

her say. "And even longer since I—well, it does no good to talk of that. But she does remind me of her so."

There was a squawk then, and the creak of saddle leather, and a tremendous flutter of wings and feathers. A shadow darkened the window for a moment, as if a large bird had passed before it. And then silence.

That evening my rescuer came back inside, her hands and knees stained with dirt.

"Were you digging in the earth?" I asked as she washed her hands in a basin.

"Yes," she said, looking surprised. "That's right, you haven't seen my garden. Well, maybe when you're better." She sounded a bit evasive.

"Will you stay and talk to me for a while?" I said. I had been feeling a mounting sense of impatience at being bedbound, and was afraid she was going to turn and leave me alone with my thoughts again.

"Of course. Better than that, I was going to do some reading. Would you like me to read to you?"

"I didn't—" I shut my mouth. It had never occurred to me that people who lived in the middle of the forest could read, but it would be horribly rude to say so. "I mean, that would be lovely."

She gave me a sideways smile as if she understood my unspoken thought, but all she did was fetch down a stack of books from a shelf in the corner.

"This is what I was going to read," she said, holding up a tome intricately decorated with silhouettes of flowers and herbs. "It's about...gardening, I suppose you could say. But it can be a bit dry, so we'll save that for later. How about this one?" She held up a book that looked like a novel. "The King's Wayward Daughter. I got it off a merchant who passed by the forest a few months ago, but I never actually read it."

"Yes please," I said.

She pulled a chair up next to the bed and began. Her voice as she read was low and husky but perfectly clear. She turned the pages gently, almost reverently, as if the book were a creature that was as impossibly precious as it was fragile. I was paying so much attention to her that I had trouble following the plot, which—from what little I

caught—would have shocked the goodwives of Fort Duhrin with its forthrightness.

After what seemed like an endless dreamy couple of hours, she stopped. "How are you feeling? I don't want to tire you out too much."

"I'm fine," I said. "I've been enjoying the sound of your voice." And then I heard what I said and blushed.

She laughed. "It can be hard to follow such a twisty plot when you're in your sickbed. Now, if you don't mind, I'm going to switch to the other book. I'm happy to read it aloud to you for as long as you can stay awake."

"Thank you," I said.

She smiled and patted my hand where it was resting on the coverlet. "My pleasure."

I fell asleep to the sound of her voice as she read about the differences between docks and sorrels. My hand tingled where she had touched it, and in my dreams she touched me other places, and the tingle followed her touch even there.

When I woke, I felt better than I had in years, as if I had spent my time in that cottage aging backwards. I sat up gingerly, but there were no warning pangs or spasms in my limbs or head, so I drew back the coverlet and swung my legs over the side of the bed. I hadn't realized I was naked, or that I had gotten so skinny. My body must have consumed my muscles in order to heal, I thought.

I stood, swaying slightly on my feet, and made my way around the room at a shuffle. There was the bookshelf with its row of books, there another shelf packed with bottles of what looked like herbal tinctures and decoctions, here a rack crammed full of spices, there a table loom with part of a rug woven on it, and here a trunk under the window that was locked with an expensive-looking lock.

I remembered then that I was naked and I went to the coat hook and pulled down her dark cloak. I rubbed a fold of the cloth between my fingers, but I couldn't figure out what kind of fabric it was. From some angles it looked like it was woven of feathers, but from others it looked like impossibly fine threads that were darker than any black I had ever seen.

At that second I heard the doorknob rattle and I threw the cloak on, pulling it around me to cover my nakedness.

The door swung open, revealing my rescuer. Over her shoulder I could see a riotous garden with all kinds of flowers and herbs and vegetables and other growing things. She raised an eyebrow when she saw me. "It looks good on you," she said, coming in and shutting the door. "If you're up and about, though, I'll give you back your own clothes. Unless you prefer the cloak?"

"No," I said awkwardly. "It's lovely, but my own clothes will do nicely." As soon as she had arrived, I began to notice how sensuous the fine weave of the cloak felt against my bare skin. I tried not to imagine her hands caressing me the way the fabric was: gently, lightly, and all over. The tingle from my dreams the previous night returned, and I shivered.

She went to the trunk, unlocked it, and pulled out my clothing and what was left of my gear—all of which was clean and in good order—and then turned her back as I took off the cloak and dressed. How strange to think that she must have undressed me and cared for me while I was naked and unconscious, and now she was allowing me

my modesty. I wanted her eyes on me; I wanted her to see how hard my nipples had become under the twin caress of the cloak and her gaze; I wanted her hot hands on me; I wanted, I wanted, I wanted. But I said nothing.

When I was decent, I cleared my throat. "If you can point me in the direction of civilization, I would be most grateful," I said.

She turned and gave me a crooked smile that did not look mirthful at all. "Are you that eager to leave me?"

"No," I said, my voice gone strangely raspy. I cleared my throat again. "I seem to have spent most of my time in your house asleep, but somehow it has been one of the highlights of my life. As if every care or burden has fallen from my shoulders. And I owe you an enormous debt for saving my life and ministering to me."

"Let us not speak of debts right now," she said. "Let us speak instead of desires." Her voice was low and warm and she stepped toward me until our breasts were nearly touching. "I know you desire certain things." She took my hand, and I gasped. She continued, "It has been so long for me, but I, too, have desires." She laid a hand on the side of my face, and it was as if my skin caught fire under her touch.

I heard my breath hissing between my teeth as I leaned forward and pressed my lips to hers. She kissed me back, her mouth tasting of peppermint and clove.

I don't remember taking our clothes off, but a short while later we were on the featherbed and her hand was between my thighs and my hand was on her breast and I thought I would die of pleasure.

"Touch me," she gasped. "Please." And I urged her on, first with my fingers and then with my lips and tongue, her slickness dripping down my chin, until she cried out and spasmed from head to toe.

Some hours later, when we were worn out from giving each other pleasure, we slept in each other's arms, burrowing into the featherbed like two vixens in their den. I had feverish dreams of walking through the Kalduhr accompanied by an animal that was sometimes a cat and sometimes a rabbit, both with lambent black fur and bright green eyes.

I was the first to wake. It seemed to be the middle of the night, but as usual the hearth cast flickering light and shadows throughout the cottage. I sat up and looked at the woman where she slept, her hair a midnight tangle on the pillows, her dark nipples standing out against her lighter brown skin. How had I ever thought her merely sturdy, and not beautiful? She looked younger in sleep than awake as well, as if the innocence of slumber erased the years from her face. I frowned. She truly did look like the serving woman at the waystation public house in this light.

I got up, still naked but now unashamed, and pushed open the front door. The ground seemed a long way off, and I realized the cottage was on stilts. There was a ladder in front of me, and I climbed down and went out into the garden. This deep in the forest there could be no one to see my nakedness.

The light of the moon illuminated the yard, washing out the colors but outlining each drop of dew, each stamen and pistil, each leaf with silver.

I walked from one end of the garden to the other, smelling flowers and touching the leaves of each plant. Until I came to a section that was just peppermint. I knit my brow. There was something I was forgetting, something about the Kalduhr and peppermint. I heard a sleepy squawk behind me and turned to see the largest sway-wing crane I have ever heard of standing up from beside the house, a saddle on its back. And in that moment I knew.

The woman appeared in the doorway ten feet above me and watched me put the evidence together.

Who is known for cultivating peppermint in a garden deep in the forest? Who keeps a giant sway-wing crane as a pet and a steed? and who lives in a stilt hut that roams the Kalduhr as she wills?

I ran. I heard the woman—the Witch—crying out behind me, telling me to stop, to come back, to allow her to explain. I did not stop and I did not look back. Who knew what kind of trap this all had been, what kind of punishment waited for me if I did.

The Witch's garden melded seamlessly with the forest, with no wall or fence, and one second I was surrounded by peppermint and the next I was sprinting between the great old trees of the Kalduhr. The breath shuddered in my lungs, and a stitch was gathering in my side, but I ran on.

When I broke out of the trees I heard someone call me.

"Relda!"

It was as if I had never heard my own name before. So much meaning was contained in that one word: it was like a magic spell that meant me. I felt its power seize me. My mind went blank, my muscles froze and I fell painfully to the ground, unable to move or even twitch.

There was a windstorm of flapping wings and the sway-wing crane landed nearby. The Witch slid off its back. She hurried over and bent down as if to touch me, but she pulled back her hand at the last moment.

"Relda," she said again. "I'm so sorry. I meant for you to leave without ever knowing who I was."

This time the sound of my name freed my muscles, but I still felt slow and muzzy as if I had been drugged. I sat up.

"How—" I managed. "My name."

"I've been watching you," she whispered. "Your companion was incautious at the public house, and I was listening." She peered at me from under her mass of sleep-tousled hair. "I'm sorry for using your name

like this." She pointed in the direction I had been running. "In a few seconds you would have fallen back into the Nevask. I had to do something."

"You," I said. "The Witch."

"Yes," she said simply.

"Why?" My words failed me. Even I didn't know what that "why" meant.

"Because you remind me of someone who was very dear to me, from a very, very long time ago," the Witch said. "Because I could tell you were attracted to me. Because—because I wanted you, too."

"Who? From long ago?"

"It was in another age of the world," the Witch said. "I was in love with a strapping young woman much like you. And the two of us came to the Kalduhr, looking for fame and fortune." She shivered. "The forest is hungry. And angry. And back then I didn't realize what the price would be for becoming who I am."

The spell, or whatever it was, seemed to be fading, and with it my terror and anger. "This isn't a trap?" I mumbled. "You aren't going to change me into a boar?"

"A boar?" she said. "Why would I turn you into a boar? It's not like you despoiled my garden." Seeing my expression, she sighed and shook her head. "No, it's not a trap, and I'm not going to do something horrible to you."

I sat there for a long moment, thinking about how she had apparently fished me out of the Nevask and cared for me for who knew how long while I lay unconscious in her bed. About her reading to me to keep me company, to keep me from going stir-crazy. About the potions she had brewed for me, the meals she had cooked for me, and—not least—the pleasure she had brought me, that we had brought each other, just a short while ago.

"I can't stay," I said.

She looked immeasurably sad. "I know."

"I want to." And when I said it out loud, I realized it was true.

"You would be welcome. But it would also be good to get my bed back." And she laughed.

"I can visit," I said. "And we could share the bed, like tonight."

"I would love that." She stood and extended a hand to me. "Meanwhile, why don't you come back to the house until daybreak? I can give you directions that will guide you back to Fort Duhrin—and a token that will guide you from Fort Duhrin back to me, if you should desire, in the future."

The next morning we stood in her garden and made our goodbyes. We were both blinking back tears as I turned to go.

"Wait," I said, turning back to her. "The token. You said—"

"Oh yes." And she leaned in close and whispered a word in my ear. A spell that meant her. Her name. "You won't be able to tell that to anyone else," she warned. "But if you ever want to find me again, just stand by the Nevask in the shade of the Kalduhr and say it. And I will come to you." She hugged me. "Safe travels. Until we meet again."

"Until we meet again," I repeated, squeezing her tight. And then I turned and walked away.

When I arrived back at Fort Duhrin, clothes hanging off of my body, a full three months after I left, there were endless questions and even an inquest into the deaths of Eben and Kenet. It turns out Kenet's brother-in-law is a magistrate. Another thing it never occurred to me to ask about.

When the inquest was over, and the deaths were ruled misadventure, my creditors descended on me. I would have spent the rest of my life in penury or debtor's prison, had my landlady not knocked on my door one evening holding a package, beautifully wrapped in paper covered in hand-drawn pictures of flowers, herbs, and other plant life. When I opened it, the interior exhaled a breath of peppermint and clove. Inside was a gem-encrusted goblet and a note that read, "Came across this in the forest at one point. I had a presentiment that you might need something like this on your return, empty-handed as it was. Until we meet again." It was signed with a sketch of a crane flying above a lightning-struck tree.

The goblet immediately satisfied all of my debts and then some. In the end I was allowed to pick my life back up where I had left it, before Kenet had convinced me to try striking it rich in the Kalduhr, before Eben and Kenet died, before I met the Witch. I spent most of my time working as a merchant's guard again, traveling between Fort Duhryn and neighboring cities and population centers. But I turned down anything that would keep me too long or make me travel too far from the forest.

A long, busy year later, I said goodbye to my friends and family in Fort Duhryn and followed the Nevask River from Kormoran's Wheel into the Kalduhr, with nothing but my clothes, my sword, and a light pack. People laughed at me, but I knew where I was going.

Once I was sure I was in the forest proper, I set down my pack and laid out a picnic under a tree. When all was in readiness, I tilted my head back and whispered the Witch's name. It seemed to leave my lips and flutter away on the wind.

And I sat down on the picnic blanket, in the shadow of the great old trees, on the banks of the river, and waited for my lover to find me.



transmogrification

By Sara
Campos-Silvius

SHIPMATES SEARCH FOR THE CREATURE. FRANTIC. PANICKED.

ME CALM. QUIET. SLIP INTO SECLUDED AREA.

LANTERN SWAYS ON HOOK. SICKLY DIM LIGHT FLAME WEARY.

REACH POCKET. RAT, SMALL, STILL LOOKS

DEAD.

BUT KNOW BETTER.

KNOW WHAT LIES ~~WITHIN~~

STROKE ONE KILL RAT. STROKE TWO. SLICE THROATBELLY

~~INSIDE~~

WORM EXPOSED. UNDULATES. VIOLENT.

ME ALIVE

NEW HOST

WORM LATCHES HAND BARE FLESH. BURROWS SKIN

NO SCREAMING

INSTEAD, BEGIN RECITING

WORDS OF BEAST RITUAL

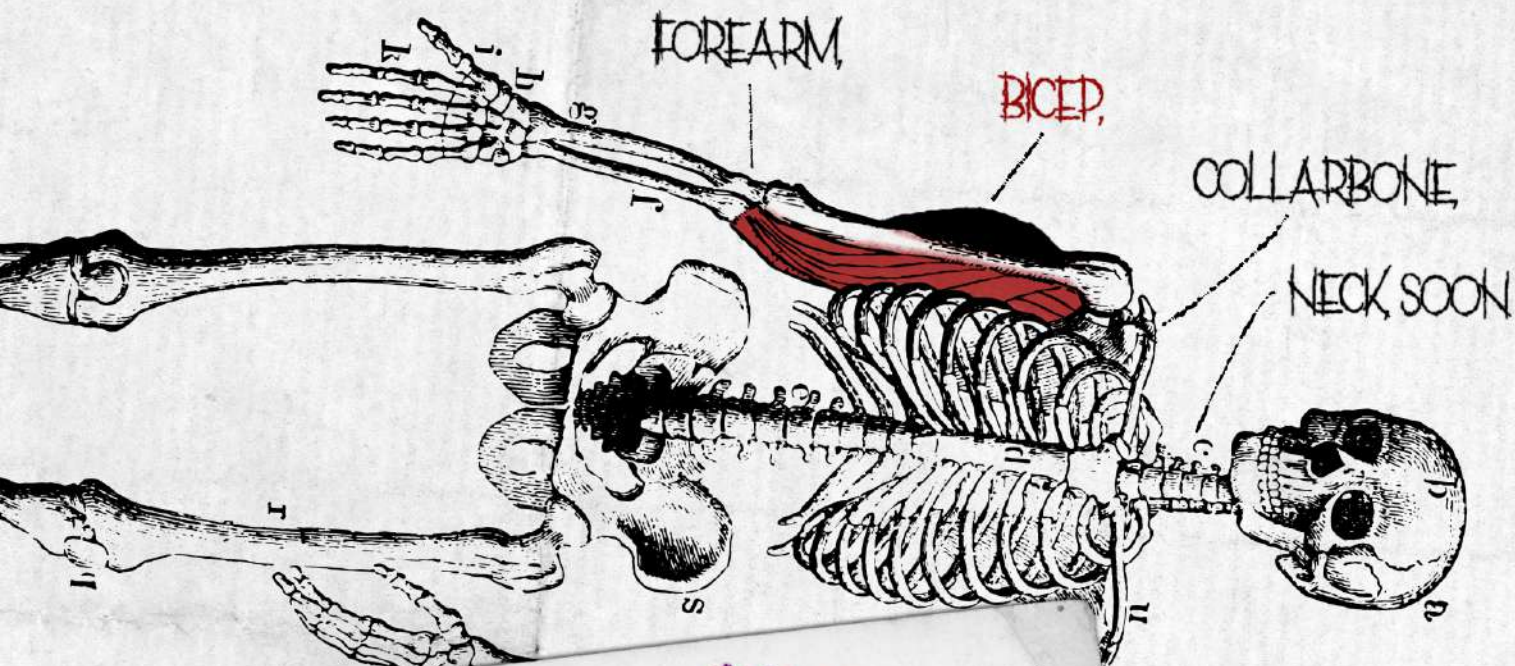
SOON, I WILL BE NOT FULLY IT.

I WILL BE NOT FULLY SELF.

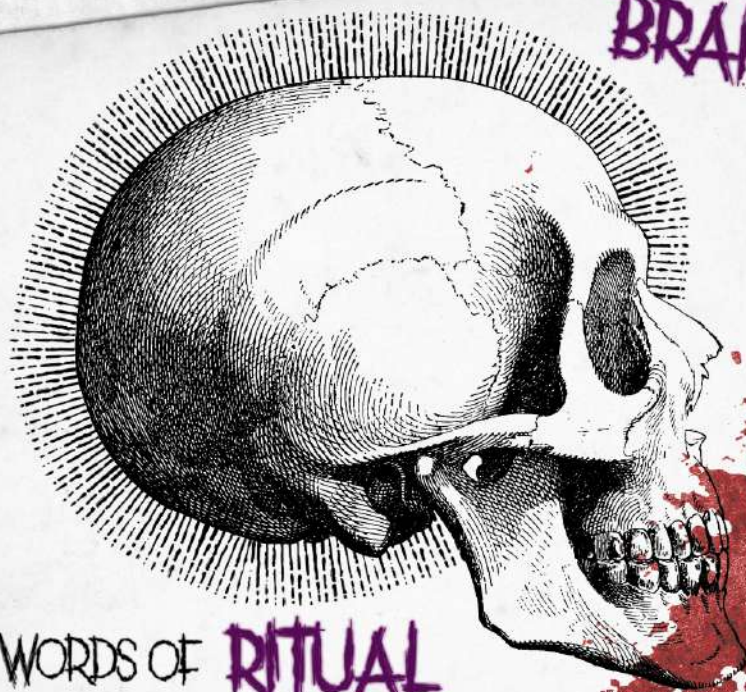
I WILL BE SOMETHING UTTERLY, GLORIOUSLY NEW.

WRIGGLING

PROTRUSION
UNDER SKIN



BRAIN



WORDS OF **RITUAL**

SPILL FORTH, STEADY, SUN-WOUNDED
SALT-CHAPPED LIPS

FINAL WORD SPOKEN
PROTRUSION DISAPPEARS

WAIT

30
40
50
60
31

NOW IS THE TIME FOR SCREAMING

AGONY

SPINE EXTENDS NEW VERTEBRAE POPULATE

SKIN STRETCHING TORTURE

'SUDDEN ELASTIC BENEVOLENCE

COLUMN EXTRUDES FOUR NEW

ARACHNID LEGS

TWITCHING PRESIDENT

ACID BLOOD

IN VEINS

SEARING

COMPLETENESS

HUMAN EYELIDS

BLINK

BLINK

NEW MEMBRANES

TEETH, ONCE SMOOTH

WEAK SQUARE

SMALL PLAQUE-

COVERED LOOSE

DECAYING

NOW STEADY

JAGGED

ELONGATED

POWER

BLINK

SHIFT

AIR

YES, NEW, AND

DELIGHT IN NEWFOUND

BUT SOMETHING FAMILIAR

ONLY NOW AMPLIFIED. STRONGER

LIPS CURL

HUNGER WONDER WHERE SHIPMATES WENT...



Baso, the Company of Salt and Iron

Art: [Hurmlly](#) / **Campfire Story:** *Amanda Mullins*

I used to make swords. Good ones, too. Blades that could sing through the air, slice clean as a thought. But the man who made them? He was dull steel, left out to rust. No fire in the forge of him. So I left that life behind. Took to work that didn't ask for inspiration, just a strong arm and a willingness to break a few laws.

That's how I ended up in those woods, the night the beast came. This isn't a ghost story, but it's about a haunting anyway.

There were five of us, and one prize—Lord Naganeh's secret son. We took him easy enough, soft thing that he was, barely an adult. Barely struggled, we joked he wanted to be caught. We made camp, set our plans. Ransom would arrive quick; his father would pay. We'd be rich by week's end.

But come midnight, something found us.

It came with no warning, no sound beyond the wind shifting the trees. The first man's throat was opened before he even reached for his knife. The second? Gone in the dark with a scream that cut off too soon. We fired blind into the trees, but it did no good. By the time it came for me, I was the only one left standing.

The boy—no, the young man—was still there, huddled in the dirt, tiger eyes wide, frightened and wet in the firelight, holding out a knife toward the darkness, arm shaking. I saw him, and something in me moved. I stepped between him and the thing in the dark.

I don't remember the fight. Just the heat of blood, the sting of claws, the weight of a body I could barely lift as I dragged him to safety. In the end, it left us. Maybe it had its fill. Maybe it didn't want me. Maybe it knew something I didn't, even then.

We spent the night close, the way men do when they've seen something too big to hold alone. He shook in my arms, his fingers clutching the rough fabric of my coat. His lips were soft, and his fingers even softer. Not a single callous, never had a hard day in his life. Until today.

I told him it would be alright, that I'd protect him always. Lied to him with my whole heart.

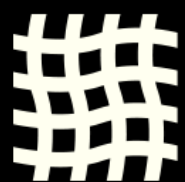
Come morning, I took him home. I left him in the arms of his father's men, turned my back on the gold they would have paid me for his return. I think I imagined his young kitten-eyes pleaded for me to stay. I knew I could never buy the kind of life he deserved.

And now, I see his eyes when I close my own. Wide and dark, shining like they did in the firelight. Like they did in the morning sun. Like they do when they haunt my dreams, every damned night. I don't even know if I'd recognize him if I saw him again. He probably wouldn't recognize me.

I never was a rich man. Never was a particularly good man, either. But that night, with him beside me, I think I almost was.



Brian Sago



TROPHY LOOM



Roll Tables

from the s&k community

Treasures d666 Roll Table

Roll	Treasure	Contributor	Roll	Treasure	Contributor
	A necklace of pale pink stone that looks exactly like an earthworm consuming its own tail.	Jim Crocker		A shimmering, moth-eaten sheet of the finest, lightest cloth you've ever touched. It floats as if on unseen currents.	dión // isle in the heavens
	A golden tooth the size of a child's head. Something rattles inside.	dión // isle in the heavens		A pair of delicate silver anklettes, at their center a serrated animal fang the size of a pinkie finger.	Levi Phipps
	A bronze key that never fits any lock, until you dream of one.	Josh Mueller		A pair of six-sided dice made from deer bone always rolling fours.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber
	Chewing gum that never loses its flavor.	Chai		A cloak of autumn leaves.	Rory of Ynn
	An immaculate, peerless diamond locked in the grasp of a filthy, severed hand.	Drew Murter		A set of small white chessmen carved from the upper horn of a bicorn. One of the rooks is cracked and a thin odorless oily substance is forever seeping out of it.	Whiletruefork
	A clay bottle of liquid explosives with a burning fuse. The fuse remains permanently lit, but never burns down.	Llama		A pair of scissors that can't cut paper, but can cut rock.	Chai
	A tarnished silver quill spindle, its tip stained with blood.	Arthur Wells		A silk cloth protecting an exquisitely engraved poison needle.	James Smith
	A rusty hammer. Gripping its handle, you feel an excited heartbeat.	dión // isle in the heavens		Three iron nails. A fourth sticks out of the ground and can't be removed by any means.	dión // isle in the heavens
	A friendship bracelet made from shrunken heads.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber		A torc that appears to be made of gold, seemingly sized for a child's neck or a very thick wrist. No matter what, it is always either too large or too small to actually wear.	Sean Tibbitts
	King Baldur's long lost favourite finger in brine.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber		A wooden bowl with an interior steel inlay of a three-word message in a forgotten language.	Josh Mueller
	A phial of ancestral perfume, belonging to a seeker who famously died... in flagrante delicto cum monstrum.	salty		A false eye, made of wood and covered in gold leaf, found in the skull of a seven-foot-tall priestess.	Sean Tibbitts
	A leatherbound tome, in it the story of the life of the one who found it, up to the point of finding the book.	Wawoozle		A damaged, gyroscopic map used by travelers of the Tween Paths. When balanced on a finger a thin, threadlike beam of light shoots ahead of the user.	Arthur Wells
	A shriveled index finger, crudely severed. The nail is elegantly pointed and made of pure gold.	James Smith		A volume of "Poems in Praise of Slimes," widely banned due to a quarto of erotic passages that had barely-disguised references to a certain royal family.	Michael Van Vleet
	A human skull with a third eyehole on its back. You feel it shifting in your hand when somebody watches you.	dión // isle in the heavens		A trinket you remember having lost on your last hunt.	dión // isle in the heavens
	A bottle of poison drawn from the fangs of one of the Children of the Serpent Queen.	McWarmaker / Warren McDonald		A grapple hook made from a human spine.	Eric Brunsell
	A fine leather eyepatch embroidered with a silver star.	Michael Dürr		A deck of small cards, each with portraits of elderly men with notes and numbers of Old Kalduhri.	Levi Phipps
	A small book filled with many maps leading to treasure. Some of them are accurate.	McWarmaker / Warren McDonald		The deed to a tin mine that is only slightly haunted.	Jim Crocker
	A replica of the original insect encased in amber.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber		A shell that looks like the face of a dead relative.	Megan Caldwell

Roll	Treasure	Contributor	Roll	Treasure	Contributor
	A snakeskin whip, the handle is carved from the wood of a cursed tree in the Kalduhr and inlaid with rubies.	Amanda Mullins		A child's marble, inside which a tiny storm rages, lightning flashing silently.	Josh Mueller
	A coin that always lands on its edge.	dión // isle in the heavens		A neatly carved antler shaped like a chicken's foot. A charm of onyx feathers dangles from a string bound to the stump.	dión // isle in the heavens
	The iridescent carapace shell of a beetle vivid in mind numbing colors.	Wawoozle		A sealed scroll tube. Inside is a letter, clearly written in one of the players' handwriting, desperately imploring themselves not to open the scroll tube.	Whiletruefork
	A jar of Big Time Mustard with its trademark label featuring a beetle carrying a jar of mustard, forming a recursive image of beetles and jars. Releases in batches of 20, highly in demand from gourmands.	Michael Van Vleet		A large, fat beetle clutching a dessicated human eyeball, preserved in a hunk of amber.	Jim Crocker
	A tattered scarf. When wrapped around the injury of someone else, it speeds healing.	Josh Mueller		Vellum with incantations in the Vinca-language presumably stolen from the Moss-Covered Archives.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber
	A figurine of a dog sitting on its hind legs. If you hold it in your hand, it will grow warm to the touch and you can hear what sounds like a dog panting happily.	Sean Tibbitts		A hollowed out turtle shell stuffed with gold coins.	Drew Murter
	A hamper containing a rotten picnic lunch. A wedding ring is hidden inside a small vase filled with withered flowers.	James Smith		A man-sized carapace covered in fool's gold.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber
	A pair of six-sided dice. Whenever death is mentioned, their next roll will be two 1's.	Llama		A music box made of lacquered cherry wood. The spinning figurine within is a pair of Kyanite Sparrows, locked in... battle? dance?	Levi Phipps
	A spool of copper thread. Stitches made with it glow like embers in the dark.	dión // isle in the heavens		An amulet fashioned from a gemstone and sinews. Crude, but captivating.	lovelyzoo
	An apple, absolutely indistinguishable from any other apple.	Arthur Wells		A hand-drawn map detailing the lower levels of the Tower of Shedding, an infamous prison complex.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber
	A book of erotica written in an ancient language, with skillfully lurid illustrations.	Mike Ferdinando		The tangled, metallic cores of two shooting stars which once collided mid-descent.	Llama
	A clockwork parakeet in a simple cage.	Eric Brunsell		A monkey paw, gilded in gold.	Eric Brunsell
	An artfully illuminated parchment depicting your violent death in graphic detail.	dión // isle in the heavens		A silver locket, a basset hound stamped on its cover..	Levi Phipps
	A pair of silk slippers that displaces the sound of your footsteps by 20 feet.	Eric Brunsell		A rattle made of the bones and teeth of a famous pious person, whose name is engraved on it.	Nicolas Ronvel
	A rusted spoon which makes everything eaten from it delicious and free from spoil and disease, but which itself has a horrible texture.	J.Carter		The lost proof to Zallallaz the arch-magister's Final Theorem, long thought unsolvable.	Jim Crocker
	A solid gold cherry with a regular cherry pit.	Rebecca Hall		A bronze amulet in the shape of the roach of irony.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber
	Bottled screams of a siren torn apart by the waves.	Megan Caldwell		A ram-shaped broach, the horns made of cut rubies.	Levi Phipps
	A contract which obliges a secret society to perform one favour for the bearer.	lovelyzoo		A hollowed out egg intricately painted.	Eric Brunsell

Roll	Treasure	Contributor	Roll	Treasure	Contributor
	A glass marble with swirling, moving colors inside.	Wawoozle		A twisted and mummified creature with the top half of a shark and the bottom half of a squid.	James Smith
	Religious paraphernalia concerning Sosk, saint of arthropods and mulch.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber		A golden ring with a cats-eye gem. its fittings invoke rose petals and ivy.	Levi Phipps
	An otherwise mundane-looking chocolate cordial that when eaten will cause the taster to weep intermittently for several days at its exquisite flavors.	Jim Crocker		A pair of exquisitely carved bone dice, stained red.	Eric Brunsell
	A wax casket filled with creamy, white jelly. It smells faintly of sour honey.	Arthur Wells		A scrimshaw gyroscope, its edges lined with delicate geometric shapes.	Levi Phipps
	A galleon in a bottle. Some of its rigging looks like made of gold. Its rusty nameplate says "ERRV Doris - a ship that should never put out to sea".	Igor Juraszewski		A funereal urn containing freshly milled wheat.	Rebecca Hall
	The recipe book of Syr Laine the Ferocious.	Levi Phipps		A coin, the face's eye have been crudely scratched over with Xs.	Pat Eyler
	A puzzle box that releases a large and venomous scorpion when solved.	James Smith		A jar with the pickled remains of a saint.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber
	A fruit jar filled with fresh tadpole jelly.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber		A left-handed lute.	Jim Crocker
	A leather pouch filled with hundreds of bee leg joints.	Llama		The skull of a little bird, if you press your ear on it you can hear the sad melodic song of the bird.	Wawoozle
	A gold coated chrysalis, insignia of the Children of the Scarlet Bud.	kagozaiku // Alexander Kerber		An ivory statue of a Saint or Hero.	Levi Phipps
	An ornate hand mirror. The person holding the mirror is not reflected.	Josh Mueller		A shriveled human tongue sewn into a marionette's head.	Pat Eyler
	Polished amber orb with an ancient fairy trapped inside.	Amanda Mullins		A dried flower, its petals still damp with morning dew, no matter how much time passes.	Josh Mueller
	A sealed urn, embossed in gold and sapphires.	Amanda Mullins		A black candle inset with a blood diamond.	Eric Brunsell
	A stone tablet depicting the war with the giants.	Levi Phipps		A broken mirror fragment with silver edges. At night, if illuminated with candlelight, it allows one to see through solid surfaces it is placed against.	Rafa Arruda
	A trowel and bucket, full of kid's playsand. Inside, a map that leads to another bucket.	Jeremy Gaines		A dying Asterite, still glowing, trapped in blue amber.	Arthur Wells
	A floral-patterend silk scarf stitched with gold thread.	Mike Ferdinando		A sling of woven silk, with a bag of fingerbones.	Pat Eyler
	A set of 3 intricately carved ivory hair pins.	Eric Brunsell		The corpses of several friendly NPCs introduced to the party along the way to the treasure.	Whiletruefork
	A complete service of tarnished but serviceabe midcentury silver flatwear missing only the ladel.	Jim Crocker		A weapon sheath or holster, magically fitting and maintaining any weapon. Moans every time it is used.	Llama

Roll	Treasure	Contributor	Roll	Treasure	Contributor
	A fancy pair of pants from a bygone age, perfectly tailored to you. When you try to take them off, you only ever find another, fancier pair of pants underneath..	Drew Murter		Evidence that the King of Ambaret worships an ancient and profane idol.	James Smith
	A jar of bile, in which floats three runic stones.	Nicolas Ronvel		A golden bell in a small cage. It tolls three times at midnight. Twice the next day. Then, only once..	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	A music box that opens to always reveal a tiny figure of the person who opened it, spinning endlessly, to the song they most expect to hear.	Lisa Imbryk		A Tarot deck featuring animals with human faces.	Clint Smith
	A crow mask. The beak is in ebony. The feathers are from the softest black silk. The eyes... are living eyes.	Nicolas Ronvel		Parchment with a painting of a woman standing on a wolf skin rug. She has red hair and wears all white.	Rebecca Hall
	A cracked hourglass slowly leaking time.	Daniel Qualls		A pair of small, bloodstained mirrors. A hand covered in fresh human blood can reach into one and emerge from the other, regardless of the distance separating the mirrors.	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	A highly-detailed scrimshaw of two of the Sisters engaged in lewd acts.	Jim Crocker		A spherical cat of uniform density and unpleasant disposition.	Whiletruefork
	An empty leather pouch that jingles as if half full of coins.	Daniel Qualls		A lamp with a genie inside. There's only two wishes left..	Amanda Mullins
	A small slip of paper containing a detailed account of the reader's death. The paper and all memory of it vanish after reading.	Mike		A lamp with a genie inside that mistakenly believes there's only two wishes left.	Llama
	A small heart-shaped piece of broken red glass.	Daniel Qualls		A lamp with two genies inside. There's only one wish left, and they can't agree on who gets to grant it.	Llama
	A flute which always plays the same song.	Wawoozle		A small lantern that offers no heat, but perpetually stays lit. The flame dancing within is an eerie, unnatural color.	Drew Murter
	A knife rack designed like a Southern Crick Toad, which births its young from its back. Each knife handle has a cute amphibian face but some find the rack, when emptied, off-putting.	Michael		An onyx comb that sings in the wind. Those who hear its song dream of Old Kalduhr's final days the following night.	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	A jewel encrusted silk veil.	Eric Brunsell		A small pot of honey, tasting of flowers that don't exist in your world .	Rebecca Hall
	An IOU note from a money-lender in the Scoundrel's Quarter.	Amanda Mullins		A leather and steel harness for a sled dog, embroidered in silver thread with the name Sundance. The buckles are always cold to the touch.	Lisa Imbryk
	Just a simple silver ring.. or is it?	Rebecca Hall		A sea-shell in which a melody can be heard, the tune changes at each new moon.	Nicolas Ronvel
	A set of brass tools in an oiled leather satchel designed for carving human heads.	James Smith		A monstrous skull made of gold with sharp teeth of gleaming obsidian..	James Smith
	A box of tea that makes anyone drinking it go through a second, more violent puberty.	Llama		A rose-tinted monocle.	Jim Crocker
	A tarnished pewter pendant shaped like a crescent moon on a rotten leather cord.	Daniel Qualls		Ring with sigil indicating membership to the Rose Club, an unpopular collection of upper-class twits whose clubhouse burned down years ago. Now subject to ironic appreciation.	Michael Van Vleet
	A bottle of wine from a famous vineyard of an exceptional vintage.	Mike Ferdinando		A small chest that has built as a portable altar to Saint Exodias of the Leviathan.	Arthur Wells

Roll	Treasure	Contributor	Roll	Treasure	Contributor
	One of a pair of clam shells that allow noise to travel between the two. The other sounds like it's in a chicken coop somewhere.	Raymond Rich		The scale of an ancient black dragon, the size of a massive double door.	Llama
	A coin that is always hot to the touch. It grows hotter when its bearer desires an object in view.	Aaron Hollander		Silver pieces, embossed with the head of a usurper Queen.	lovelyzoo
	A huge rug made from the hide and fur of a dead monster.	Jim Crocker		A bone that appears to be a human rib, but is much too long.	Rebecca Hall
	A jade statuette of a viper in mid-strike.	Eric Brunsell		An ornate oil lamp, shutters can be adjusted to cast intricate shadows on nearby walls.	lovelyzoo
	A normal deck of playing cards made useless on account of all of the Possums have been removed.	Whiletruefork		An ever-wet fountain pen that writes only in a bloodlike ink. At night, the ink glitters with stars shaped into a new and terrible constellation.	Mike
	Rare herbs, prized by a cook of some renown.	lovelyzoo		A toy soldier made of metal wire and human bones.	Clint Smith
	A gold necklace featuring a small hourglass. Any iron it touches rusts to the point of brittle uselessness within the next hour.	Llama		A magnifying glass that detects faeborn. Truth is in the eyes.	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	A bushel of perfectly ripe peaches, plump and fragrant.	Arthur Wells		An elaborate wooden mask that bleeds from the eye sockets when worn.	Ben Mansky
	A silver bust of the crow-god, Asvraith.	Clint Smith		A copper mobius strip with a never ending tale inscribed on it.	Eric Brunsell
	A love letter, addressed to the person who most recently touched it, written by the person who most recently died within the presence of the letter.	Josh Mueller		Bundle of thin metal rods with sharpened tips, pouch of white mallow cubes, and+ jar of sweet dipping sauce. The jar's lid is made of hammered platinum worth d6 x 3 gold.	Lon Prater
	A really good stick, shaped like a sword. You can hit it against stuff and it won't break.	Michael Van Vleet		A violin with a gold inlay, the gilded carvings are of creeping vines caressing animal skulls.	Levi Phipps
	The shedded skin of a snake, a text written on the inside.	Wawoozle		A fist-sized, mishappen lump of gold, covered in tiny, intricately detailed mouths.	Benjamin Cowley
	A pair of dice entirely made from amethysts. All sides have 6 pips painted in liquid gold..	Amanda Mullins		An ancient clay tablet containing the tale of a person long ago dealing with your exact problem. The bottom part is missing.	Llama
	A glass bottle with a dead fairy inside. It no longer has any healing properties.	Drew Murter		A circular glass bottle filled with living fog..	Jack
	A drab wool cloak with inner pockets, but some of the pockets actually have their own pockets.	Daniel Qualls		A silvery potion that induces a short burst of inspired eloquence followed by muteness for an unknown period.	James Smith
	A stoppered bottle containing the last breath of a long-dead king.	Jim Crocker		the golden signet ring of the king of ambaret.	Wawoozle
	A smoking pipe carved from dark wood in the shape of a sleeping dragon.	Daniel Qualls		An intricate jade reliquary shaped like a hand; something sloshes inside.	Aaron Hollander
	A silver coin with a queen's profile for heads, and a winged heart for tails.	Daniel Qualls		An gold ermine stole.	Jack

Roll	Treasure	Contributor	Roll	Treasure	Contributor
	A wrench that is always precisely the right size.	Lisa Imbryk		A bottle labeled Cure for All Ailments—inside, only clear water.	Josh Mueller
	A silver statue of a snake that seems to be facing belly-up no matter how it is turned.	Llama		The regurgitation of a rock dove. Rumoured to cure an obscure ailment.	lovelyzoo
	A fragrance, irresistible to a lover.	lovelyzoo		A silver candle holder in the shape of a child's skull.	Eric Brunsell
	A mummified hand clutching a gold coin.	Eric Brunsell		The fingernail of a Saint.	Amanda Mullins
	A glass bottle filled with cloudy water and a grimfly larva. It's fat grubby body throbs with hunger.	Jack		A pair of comfortable self-tying boots. When you act contrary to your true feelings, the shoelaces tie themselves together.	Llama
	A golden amulet encasing a goat's eye suspended in a verdegris amber.	Levi Phipps		A magical black-bladed stiletto with a green jewel on its pommel. The jewel glows brightly whenever a creature within 20 feet wishes its owner harm.	Mike Ferdinando
	An exquisitely carved wooden effigy of a dragon.	lovelyzoo		An awkwardly knitted scarf, probably someone's very first project.	Lisa Imbryk
	A mechanical mouse that can be wound up and released. It runs away from the nearest danger until it winds down.	Aaron Hollander		An amphora painted with a simplistic fish motif. Anyone drinking from it gains gills on their neck..	Eric Brunsell
	A ragged map that appears to trace a path from the forest to your home. At the bottom of the parchment, in what appears to be blood, something wrote "soon."	Drew Murter		A gold plated statue of Mumi, holding a fife. Music is heard in the distance when you stare at it too long.	Amanda Mullins
	A small but dense stone that we can only describe as a bone magnet.	Mike Martens		A bowl of warm paella, but every ingredient has the color of blood.	Rebecca Hall
	A compass that always points to this spot, engraved with a grim warning.	Mike Martens		A rusty knife. It cannot pierce flesh or bone, but it cuts through rope cleanly every time.	Josh Mueller
	A small pouch of extremely stale aniseed candy chews in the Northern style (fish-shaped, salty, smoked, aggressively licorice-y).	Whiletruefork		A Bambola - a small toy in the shape of a human being made of porcelain.	Michael Dürr
	The diadem of the Spider-Queen.	Amanda Mullins		A heartfelt and romantic love letter containing a poem. Only at the end is it revealed it is written to the statue of an ethically dubious historical character.	Llama
	An ornate ocarina that only traitors and murderers can play. For anyone else, it makes no sound.	Bartosz N (bartosso)		A green carven snake amulet that turns into a real venomous snake when its runes are spoken out loud.	James Smith
	A little statuette of a forgotten saint.	Wawoozle		The mummified remains of a little mouse.	Wawoozle
	The toy you abandoned when you decided to become an adult.	Mike Martens		Harmonica, the more ruin you have the more shrill the notes become.	Tristan Real
	A vial of parasitic spores with hallucinatory effects.	Mike Martens		A standing mirror that shows any of the people reflected within as making out.	Llama
	A box of neverending tissues. When someone nearby is sad, a tissue gently floats up to their face.	Llama		An oil lamp that never goes out.	Rebecca Hall

Character Names d66 Roll Table

Roll	Name	Contributor	Roll	Name	Contributor
	Taemin	Michael Dürr		Lennox	Kuroda
	Dnophos	Amanda Mullins		Grathe	J Evan Parks
	Halinka	Levi Phipps		Goff	Nicolas Ronvel
	Matabi	Kuroda		Zalan	dión // isle in the heavens
	Heiva	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Cleguer	Nicolas Ronvel
	Algethi	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Koop	J Evan Parks
	Doppel	E.		Trishan	Arthur Wells
	Yvern	dión // isle in the heavens		Zadar	Levi
	Katla	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Remi	Kuroda
	Ebirah	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Ascadeo	lovelyzoo
	Taldod	Arthur Wells		Donnchadh	Tristan Real
	Hevel	J Evan Parks		Sareb	Arthur Wells
	Kterea	Amanda Mullins		Qethoo	dión // isle in the heavens
	Kor'losket	Nicolas Ronvel		Catamor	Nicolas Ronvel
	Madrigal	Rafa Arruda		Illimiki	lovelyzoo
	Gotall	Arthur Wells		Thorian	Levi Phipps
	Riall	E.		Berwyn	Jack
	Varath	lovelyzoo		Setanta	Tristan Real

Equipment d66 Roll Table

Roll	Item	Contributor	Roll	Item	Contributor
	An intricate puzzle box	Amanda Mullins		A sharp pair of gardening shears	Amanda Mullins
	A brass candelabra	Levi Phipps		A handkerchief intricately embroidered with golden thread	Rachael Jamison
	Bottled lightning	Drew Murter		An unhatched snake egg housed within a bird's skull	Drew Murter
	Bottle of Aged Wine	Kuroda		A rusty iron prybar	Daniel Qualls
	A handful of grain	lovelyzoo		50 feet of silken rope	Levi Phipps
	Assorted Spices	dión // isle in the heavens		A small jug for medicinal purposes	Daniel Qualls
	Bird whistle	Kuroda		A pound of salted butter	Nicolas Ronvel
	A jar of unnaturally coloured honey	Leigh Eldridge		A leather punch and length of cord	Daniel Qualls
	Paints in various colors	J Evan Parks		Collection of star charts	Drew Murter
	A small bag of clay marbles, all red except for one that is yellow	Daniel Qualls		A handful of bright blue mushrooms	Leigh Eldridge
	A human spleen, well preserved	Drew Murter		Experimental fireworks (1 use)	Aaron Hollander
	A small hammer/hatchet tool	Daniel Qualls		A tiny oar	lovelyzoo
	A bandolier of enchanted bells	James Smith		Bag of rune stones	dión // isle in the heavens
	500 nails	Levi Phipps		An intact skin shed from a large venomous snake	Rachael Jamison
	The fingerbone of a long dead witch	Amanda Mullins		Handpainted omen cards	Amanda Mullins
	Three tankards	lovelyzoo		Woven fishing net	Daniel Qualls
	A jar of living leeches	Nicolas Ronvel		A wizened severed wizard head that glares balefully	James Smith
	A sprig of wolfsbane	Leigh Eldridge		An onyx seeing-orb	Levi Phipps

Rituals d66 Roll Table

Roll	Ritual	Effect	Contributor	Roll	Ritual	Effect	Contributor
	Love	Bring the secret desires of a person to surface.	Chaotic Jamgochian		Dessicate	Drain the moisture from a creature or object	James Smith
	Genie	Grant a wish (with an unexpected consequence).	Amanda Mullins		Echo	Briefly leave your body behind to explore this moment in time	Kevin Macku
	Feast	Spread a tablecloth to create a delicious meal for several people; you cannot eat it.	Chaotic Jamgochian		Tear	Pitch-black drops rip through the ground below you	dión // isle in the heavens
	Wrath	Destroy a structure or crowd.	Levi Phipps		Howl	Utter an unearthly call to which wild creatures within earshot are compelled to respond.	Aaron Hollander
	Parley	Open a door to a temporary pocket dimension.	Arthur Wells		Sin-Eating	Consume the burden of another: take their Ruin or Condition onto yourself.	Amanda Mullins
	Purr	Emit a reassuring sound, calming everything in the immediate vicinity.	lovelyzoo		Timber	Fell a tree.	lovelyzoo
	Levity	Turn a mood from sad or angry to cheerful.	Levi Phipps		Frog	Grab something with your tongue and ingest it, putting back later when you need it.	Nicolas Ronvel
	Ooze	Drop a barrel's worth of slime onto a target.	Drew Murter		Doors	Compels a target such that they must answer the next two questions they are asked with one lie and one truth	Whiletruefork
	Art	Make a piece of art come to life.	Amanda Mullins		Moonlight	Make something invisible except when under the moonlight.	Nicolas Ronvel
	Pyramid	Grains of sand fall from above, gradually forming a pyramid.	lovelyzoo		Schedule	Compel a creature to meet with you at a time and place of your choosing	Michael Dürr
	Granite	Make a one-yard-cube equivalent of matter as unbreakable as granite.	Nicolas Ronvel		Rot	Wither a structure into a derelict shape	Arthur Wells
	Gas	Blow a foul wind with flammable properties.	J Evan Parks		Spoil	Turn food rotten.	lovelyzoo
	Overworld	Craft a window on a perfect world overlapping our own.	James Smith		Meander	Cause a path to twist and turn aimlessly, leading the follower in circles.	James Smith
	Moat	Dig a trench that fills itself with freezing water.	Levi Phipps		Fog	Fill a small space with intoxicating smoke.	Drew Murter
	Alchemy	Turn something metal into fool's gold.	Amanda Mullins		Melody	Hum a melody to somebody who will now speak in that tune.	Nicolas Ronvel
	Lead	Allow others access to higher places by descending the same distance.	dión // isle in the heavens		Swell	Extend the effect of a ritual to an additional target by mirroring another hunter's ritual	Arthur Wells
	Double	Sacrifice your flesh and blood to create an exact duplicate of yourself.	jack		Rend	Tear something irreplaceable apart to render something or someone to pieces.	jack
	Ink	Make all that is said written on the subject of the ritual.	Nicolas Ronvel		Geas	Place an Obligation or Prohibition on someone, if broken has harsh consequences	Tristan Real

Backgrounds d66 Roll Table

Roll	Background	Skill	Contributor	Roll	Background	Skill	Contributor
	Arrogant Falconer	<i>scouting</i>	Drew Murter		Lonesome Ravenmaster	<i>birds</i>	Sarah Bolling
	Exhausted Mathematician	<i>analysis</i>	Amanda Mullins		Discharged Soldier	<i>solitude</i>	Levi Phipps
	Debased Vassal	<i>dutifulness</i>	Jack		Framed Acolyte	<i>prayer</i>	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	Crestfallen Hermit	<i>persistence</i>	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Sadistic Healer	<i>pain</i>	Amanda Mullins
	Guileless Stone Carver	<i>chiseling</i>	lovelyzoo		Imprisoned Tyrant	<i>domination</i>	James Smith
	Censured Orator	<i>dissent</i>	Arthur Wells		Ashamed Beastbitten	<i>chains</i>	Levi Phipps
	Wandering Prophet	<i>dreams</i>	Levi Phipps		Overzealous Actor	<i>pantomime</i>	Drew Murter
	Spiritual Musician	<i>experimentation</i>	Aaron Hollander		Cynical Archer	<i>distance</i>	Sarah Bolling
	Cursed Wrecker	<i>lure</i>	Nicolas Ronvel		Desperate Banker	<i>gambling</i>	Aaron Hollander
	Defrauded Scholar	<i>confidence</i>	Levi Phipps		Mischievous Lamplighter	<i>illumination</i>	Amanda Mullins
	Sentimental Taxidermist	<i>preservation</i>	Sarah Bolling		Submissive Servant	<i>placation</i>	Natalia Montgomery
	Ruinous Gardener	<i>death</i>	Drew Murter		Crumbling Manikin	<i>decay</i>	Levi Phipps
	Caustic Wheelwright	<i>woodworking</i>	lovelyzoo		Dissolute Noble	<i>indulgence</i>	E.
	Failed Inventor	<i>inspiration</i>	E.		Scarred Gardener	<i>plants</i>	Nicolas Ronvel
	Heuristic Alchemist	<i>trial</i>	J Evan Parks		Fearless Gambler	<i>risk</i>	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	Proud Faeborn	<i>presentation</i>	Levi Phipps		Deluded Confectioner	<i>delight</i>	Drew Murter
	Accomplished Seamstress	<i>sewing</i>	Amanda Mullins		Self-important Somelier	<i>palate</i>	James Smith
	Heartbroken Jester	<i>japery</i>	Michael Van Vleet		Crowned Pretender	<i>presence</i>	dión // isle in the heavens

Occupations d66 Roll Table

Roll	Occupation	Skills	Contributor	Roll	Occupation	Skills	Contributor
	Town Crier	information, communication, speed	Amanda Mullins		Turtle	patience, armor, water	Levi Phipps
	Abomination	chaos, strength, transformation	Jack		Harpy	passion, harmony, avoidance	Kevin Macku
	Goat	screams, curiosity, agility	Michael Dürr		Thespian	mimicry, memory, presence	Bartosz N (bartosso)
	Chandler	light, wax, devotion	Sarah Bolling		Bard	song, lore, seduction	Sarah Bolling
	Fungus Farmer	decay, foraging, hiding	Drew Murter		Raven	caution, mimicry, play	dión // isle in the heavens
	Gravekeeper	spirits, vermin, construction	Levi Phipps		Hexer	curses, hatred, symbols	Kuroda
	Scryer	empathy, divination, trickery	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Executioner	decapitation, drowning, carcasses	lovelyzoo
	Rider	commands, dueling, speed	Kuroda		Magpie	imitate, sorrow, steal	Nicolas Ronvel
	Farrier	beasts, metal, balance	Levi Phipps		Dreamwalker	sleep, symbols, terror	Michael Van Vleet
	Bailiff	justice, appraisal, subservience	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Scarecrow	masks, vigilance, fire	Drew Murter
	Falcon	discernment, celerity, patience	Bartosz N (bartosso)		Astrologer	personality, constellations, geometry	lovelyzoo
	Elephant	strength, trumpets, memory	Drew Murter		Paragon	presence, coordination, virtue	Levi Phipps
	Conduit	elements, focus, presence	Levi Phipps		Corsair	discovery, stealing, water	Kuroda
	Spy	observation, infiltration, secrets	Amanda Mullins		Cobbler	leather, footwear, fashion	lovelyzoo
	Scrivener	ink, duplication, dissent	Sarah Bolling		Embalmer	disguise, autopsy, calm	Nicolas Ronvel
	Miller	grain, gears, grinding	lovelyzoo		Portraitist	keen eye, patience, art	Natalia Montgomery
	Roofer	tumble, spy, repair	Nicolas Ronvel		Blood-drinker	rituals, bloodletting, tasting	James Smith
	Scapulomancer	divination, bones, patterns	James Smith		Blackguard	ferocity, darkness, strength	Levi Phipps

Meditations for a Darkened Room

By P.K. Ashur and Raymond Rich

For your consideration: a collection of horror cliches and tropes, from the spine chilling to the seemingly mundane, organized into a D66 table for use before or during play. Sparks for *Trophy Dark* scenarios, plot synopses for horror media found in the setting, or perhaps a key component of the forthcoming *Tales from the Tomb*.

1 1	A warning carved into a wall.	5 1	A lichen-covered well, hastily-sealed.
1 2	Life-changing wealth protected by "nothing more than superstitious nonsense."	5 2	A well-appointed room untouched by time.
1 3	A stranger's frantic rambling includes a dire warning about a seemingly unremarkable location.	5 3	Strangers forced to share space for survival.
1 4	A wager with dire consequences, recklessly accepted.	5 4	A place where secret desires can be purchased.
1 5	An ancient tapestry depicting a horrible scene from the present.	5 5	A sprawling house with a name and sinister history.
2 1	A strangely specific promise made to a loved one with dire consequences if broken.	5 6	A lonesome roadside pub littered with patrons speaking in hushed whispers
2 2	The sound of children's laughter.	6 1	Depraved acts seen through the eyes of another while dreaming.
2 3	An unexpected knock at the door.	6 2	An ancient manuscript bound in human flesh.
2 4	A locked trunk with movement coming from within.	6 3	Lonely ghosts conspire against the living.
2 5	The shuffling of something growing ever closer.	6 4	Vengeance from beyond the grave.
2 6	A musical instrument that, when played, has a supernatural effect.	6 5	Waking up in an unfamiliar body.
3 1	Sounds from a music box distantly heard that elicit a painful memory.	6 6	The touch of an unseen hand.
3 2	A child old beyond their years.	6 7	A vampire hiding in plain sight.
3 3	Unnatural aging, either growing older or younger, initially welcome.	6 8	An unnatural and pursuant fog.
3 4	A neglected doll found sitting in an unusual location.	6 9	A predator suddenly realizes they are, in fact, the prey.
3 5	An ostracized teen embraced by the supernatural.	6 10	An unexpected initiation into a coven or clique.
3 6	A child's irrational fears manifested.	6 11	A hopeless amount of vermin in a single, ravenous swarm.
3 7	A handmade moppet hanging from a tree.	6 12	The relentless pursuit by a former lover.

Trophy Drives and Devil's Bargains

By Discord's @lovelyzoo

Trophy's Drives offer a tempting glimpse into the game's setting, while their intentional ambiguity offers creative space for a table to make that setting their own. However, new players can find themselves at a loss as to how to bring their inventions into play. Thankfully though, there is a mechanic that naturally allows for the expression of Drives: the Devil's Bargain.

Simply put, a Drive can serve as inspiration for the Devil's Bargain, with the added bonus that the two readily complement each other. To see this, bear in mind the circumstances of the Bargain, a bonus die is awarded to the Risk Roll when the Bargain is accepted. As such, the content of the Bargain should not affect the outcome of the Risk Roll itself, otherwise the Bargain overrides the Risk Roll. Instead, the Bargain should be chosen to be orthogonal to the Risk Roll.

By design, the Risk Roll adjudicates immediate fictional threats - leaping the chasm, evading a monster, deceiving a guardian and the like. Conversely, Drives define the longest term goal that a character has, an outcome that is hoped for in the far future. Thus, a Devil's Bargain inspired by a Drive will almost certainly not impinge upon the stakes of the associated Risk Roll.

Additionally, the Devil's Bargain should contain a penalty of some sort, so that the decision to take it or not poses a dilemma to the player. Typically this will take the form of a plot twist that threatens the character directly or otherwise raises the fictional stakes. Any challenge to the Drive will achieve these ends, since they (the Drives) explain the character's presence in the story.

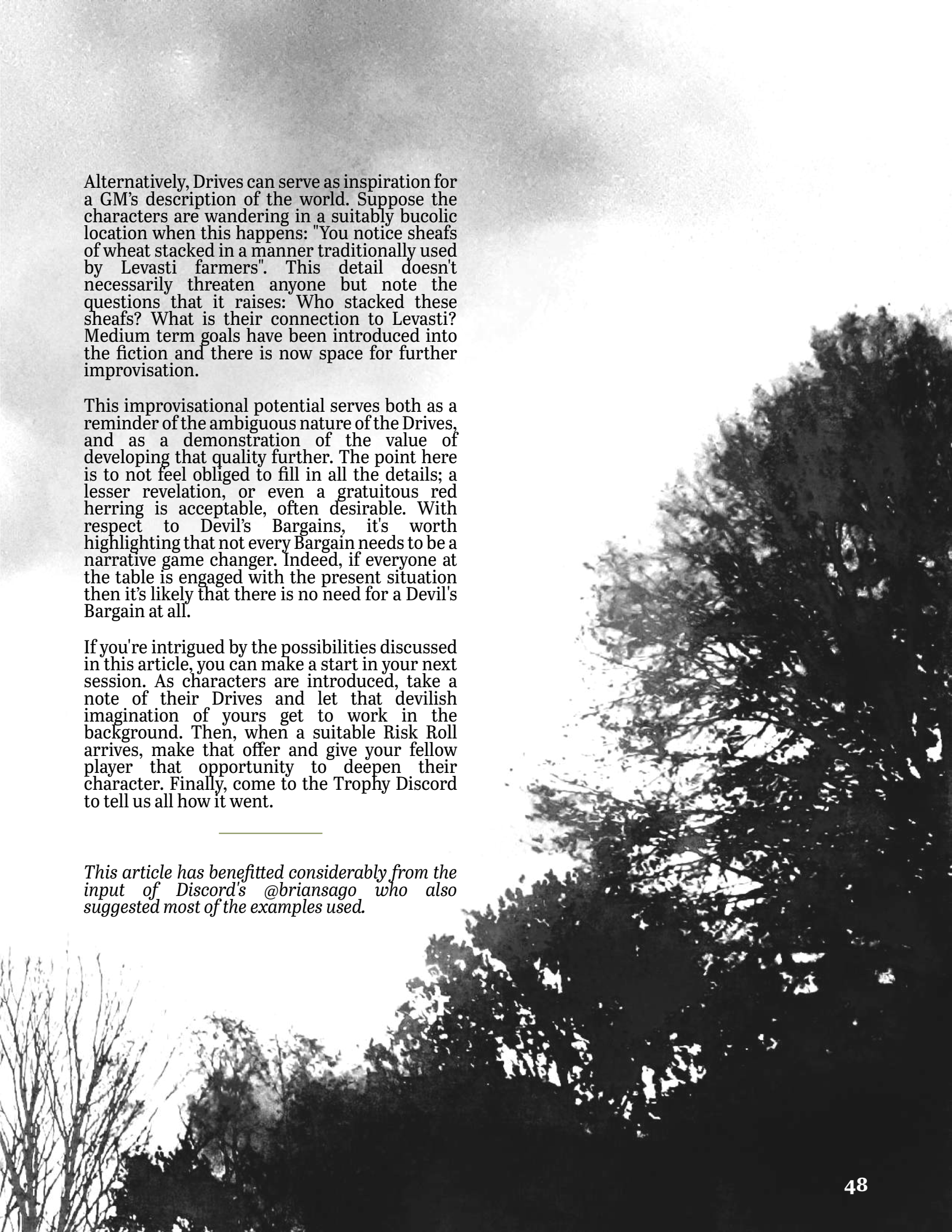
As an example of what these Devil's Bargains can look like in play, consider the Drive *"Establish an estate in the Levasti countryside"*. The majority of incursions take place far from Levasti, so, at first glance, this drive might seem impossibly remote from the current situation. However, a Devil's Bargain like this: *"No matter what happens, The Lich threatens to curse the Levasti countryside"*, can occur anywhere within the Trophy world where a suitable antagonist is present.

This Bargain threatens the countryside and, by extension, the character. Since it's not immediately pertinent, the table could ignore the curse for now. In the context of a Trophy Gold campaign though, there is now significant motivation for a subsequent session.

The issue can be made more direct with the Bargain: *"No matter what happens, the brigands in the tavern note the Levasti knots tied in your belt, and their eyes rove to the 'Wanted, dead or alive: Levasti spies.' poster nailed to the wall. Take the condition: Brigands tailing you"*. The immediacy of the Bandit's pursuit especially lends itself to a Trophy Dark session where pressure on the Driven character ratchets up as the Rings progress.

Possibly the most direct attack on a character, short of an increase in Ruin, can be attained via Trophy Gold's inventory: *"No matter what happens, a pickpocket recognizes the Levasti knots you have used to secure your backpack, and knows how to loosen them. Choose an item that is now stolen."* In this case, the Bargain is especially succinct, containing as it does its own resolution.





Alternatively, Drives can serve as inspiration for a GM's description of the world. Suppose the characters are wandering in a suitably bucolic location when this happens: "You notice sheafs of wheat stacked in a manner traditionally used by Levasti farmers". This detail doesn't necessarily threaten anyone but note the questions that it raises: Who stacked these sheafs? What is their connection to Levasti? Medium term goals have been introduced into the fiction and there is now space for further improvisation.

This improvisational potential serves both as a reminder of the ambiguous nature of the Drives, and as a demonstration of the value of developing that quality further. The point here is to not feel obliged to fill in all the details; a lesser revelation, or even a gratuitous red herring is acceptable, often desirable. With respect to Devil's Bargains, it's worth highlighting that not every Bargain needs to be a narrative game changer. Indeed, if everyone at the table is engaged with the present situation then it's likely that there is no need for a Devil's Bargain at all.

If you're intrigued by the possibilities discussed in this article, you can make a start in your next session. As characters are introduced, take a note of their Drives and let that devilish imagination of yours get to work in the background. Then, when a suitable Risk Roll arrives, make that offer and give your fellow player that opportunity to deepen their character. Finally, come to the Trophy Discord to tell us all how it went.

This article has benefitted considerably from the input of Discord's @briansago who also suggested most of the examples used.



Gather No Moss

Alternate Campaign Sheets for Trophy Gold by Raymond Rich

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Alternate Campaign Sheets for Trophy Gold by Raymond Rich

Campaign Sheets allow your Trophy Gold game to expand beyond incursions and connect the characters to the larger world through personal relationships, recurring locations, treasured items, and skill training. Trophy Gold presents the Hearthfire Campaign Sheet which effectively models the return to civilization from a delve into haunted ruins and strange wilds. What follows are a trio of Campaign Sheets for different campaign concepts, notably a traveling carnival, a seafaring vessel, and a merchant caravan. Rather than a base of operations, per se, each provides a mobile community whose travels and travails can serve as respite between incursions or a source of adventure in their own right. Before utilizing any Campaign Sheet, check with your GM to ensure it aligns with the campaign concept.

MIRTHLIGHT

Mirthlight is perhaps the most unusual of the three Campaign Sheets to follow as it presupposes the treasure hunters are also members of a traveling carnival troupe. Obviously, some Background and Occupation options will make more sense than others, but players and GMs are encouraged to think expansively about the setting and what similar woes and/or aspirations would drive one to become both a treasure hunter and a carry. It is assumed that none of the treasure hunters are the carnival owner such that the GM can send it wherever treasure and trouble may be found.

TRADEWIND

Tradewind puts the treasure hunters on a seafaring ship with the wind at their backs and storm clouds on the horizon. Whether or not this is a pirate or merchant vessel or something else entirely is left to individual groups, but in keeping with the desperation of treasure hunters, a ragtag group of scoundrels is assumed. In a similar sense as with *Mirthlight*, this campaign concept assumes the ship's captain is not a treasure hunter, though an obsessive treasure hunter willing to run the ship aground in obsessive pursuit of the elusive "White Whale" of their Drive can be an a fun and memorable finale to the campaign.

TRAILBLAZER

Trailblazer puts the treasure hunters on the road with a merchant caravan. GMs using this Campaign Sheet can influence the proceedings with the choice of incursions, contrasting a sense of exploration and discovery with the horrors accepted if not demanded by civilization along the route. The journey itself should prove perilous and help explain why it is safer to travel in a large group than as a party. Bandits and excise officials should be an almost welcome sight.



SAFE AND SECURE

To prevent squander and strife, the carnival's owner keeps meticulous records of box office receipts and secures all coins in the box office safe. This includes the Gold you'll need to achieve your Drive and eventually retire. The first time you stash your Gold in this Hoard, answer both of the following:

- Answer: What reassurances of security measures convinced you to trust the box office safe and, by extension, the carnival owner?
- Answer: Why did you choose the carnival as the most expeditious route to achieving your Drive?

Each time you stash more Gold, mark an unmarked item from the list below and follow its instructions:

- Narrate a flashback to your first encounter with the carnival. Were you an audience member or aspiring performer?
- Describe how you have either taken your faith on the road with you or left it behind with your old life. Share a scene with another treasure hunter demonstrating your faith or lack thereof to clear one mental Condition.
- The old mystic who tells fortunes to the rubes for a handful of coins gave you a dire warning late one night. What did they say? Take an extra light die on a future Hunt Roll or Risk Roll when you describe how their prophecy is relevant to the scene at hand.
- Narrate a flashback to how your Background led you to the carny life.
- Narrate a flashback to how your Background led you to the carny life.
- Narrate a flashback to how your Occupation earned you the respect of your peers.
- Narrate a scene in the present showing how you leverage the carnival to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- Describe an audience member who reminds you of your Drive and why.
- Describe how the presentation of your act reflects your obsession with your Drive.
- Narrate a flashback showing how you secretly betrayed your peers in order to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- *Optional:* Instead of adding Gold to the box office safe for your Hoard, you may withdraw any amount you wish (to satisfy Burdens or take any other action on this sheet). The GM will narrate a scene showing how your Drive will forever elude you.

THE NEXT BIG THING

Someone new seeks to join the carnival, but needs help getting set up. Spend 1 Gold to give them a stake in exchange for a piece of useful information related to the next incursion (such as news from abroad, a local rumor, a map, or the Weakness of a named monster). Each time you help finance the fledgling act, mark and follow the first unmarked prompt below:

- Ask one player for a superlative ("The Titan," "The Amazing," etc.) and ask another for a name. Combine them for the title of the act.
- Describe how you show your pride in having discovered this act in the wild and adding it to the slate. Ask the other players to describe how you're blinded by your personal stake and how the crowd rejects this new offering.
- Answer: In what ways does the act show your influence on its style and presentation? How does this help win over the audience and establish it as a mainstay for the carnival?
- *Optional:* Spend 3 Gold to promote the act as a must-see event and the only performance of its kind. Describe what you add to draw gawkers from far and wide. Going forward, you receive two pieces of useful information when you spend 1 Gold to further your investment. You need no longer mark a prompt to use this option.

ROUSTABOUTS

Give 1 Gold to the carnival's roustabouts to open crossed-out slots in your backpack by having them obtain or repair equipment for you. The first time you do, follow the prompt below:

Name one of the roustabouts and work with the GM to define their area of expertise and an item of interest. The item can be anything – a legendary relic related to their skills, someone with whom they long to be reunited, an illicit opportunity for quick coin – something you might be interested in exploring further. Summarize it on the lines below.

Each time thereafter, mark one of the boxes below. When all five boxes have been marked, the GM will present a side quest related to the roustabout's interest.

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A STAR ATTRACTION

The popularity of your act makes your performances truly rewarding. When the carnival stops and you work the crowd, you may heal 1 Ruin and all Conditions. When you first become a star, increase your Burdens by 1 and follow both of the prompts below:

- Describe your act. If you utilize one of your Skills, how is it leveraged to awe the rubes? Who else is employed in your act? Did your rise in popularity displace another act?
- Ask the other players: What memento from our adventures can be used in my act? Note the answers in the box below.

Each time you perform to clear Conditions or heal Ruin going forward, add an additional memento from your last incursion.

THE UNDERSTUDY

You are being trained in a new Skill to serve as a back-up to one of the acts. Alternatively, you train a neophyte in one of your existing Skills and pick up a new Skill in the process. In either case, the new Skill costs 1 Burden. Every time you pick up a new Skill in this way, follow each of the prompts below:

- Name your trainer/trainee and describe the act they perform.
- Narrate a brief montage showing how the Skill was learned after days, weeks, or months of constant training and practice.
- Narrate how the new Skill increases your Burdens. Is there a recurring expense for materials or equipment? Does the act require payment to partners or skills? Does your trainer/trainee have a vice that must be satiated to keep the act viable?

THE OLD MYSTIC

An elderly mystic travels with the carnival, selling fortunes to the rubes and performing minor feats of illusion. They will agree to teach you a new Ritual, at a cost of 1 additional Burden. Each time you do so, choose one:

- Narrate a scene showing how they teach you the Ritual. Are they patient and kind? Cruel and demanding? Sly and evasive? Arcane and otherworldly?
- Describe what they ask of you in ongoing recompense (the Burden).

"DOC"

Whether a snake oil salesperson or a disgraced academic, the carnival has a doctor in name only. You may pay 1 Gold while the carnival is stopped at a community to heal 1 Ruin. Alternatively, you can choose one of the prompts below and narrate a scene to heal 1 Ruin. Each prompt can only be used once, and only one such prompt can be used between incursions.

- Narrate a scene in which you agree to let "Doc" provide an experimental treatment. You may clear an appropriate Condition or heal an additional 1 Ruin, but ask the GM what new Condition you receive as an unexpected side effect.
- Narrate a scene in which your physical desires are satisfied but a local is left heartbroken by your impending departure.
- Narrate a scene in which you take advantage of the camp's quiet and solitude while most everyone else is away in town.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

If a treasure hunter is lost on an incursion, each player with a surviving treasure hunter should describe an aspect of the memorial service for their fallen comrade. Who gathers around the funeral pyre to pay their respects? What poignant words are spoken or hymns sung on their behalf? Are any of their belongings burned with them? If the lost treasure hunter was a Star Attraction, the players of the other treasure hunters can each take one of their mementos as their own or add it to Found Equipment. Each surviving treasure hunter may also sacrifice something to the sacred flames of the pyre. If a value of 1 Gold or more is committed in this fashion, the treasure hunter making the sacrifice may heal 1 Ruin or clear an appropriate Condition from the act of remembrance.



BURIED TREASURE

The Gold you'll need to achieve your Drive and eventually retire is buried in a remote location on a distant shore. The first time you stash Gold in this Hoard, answer both of the following:

- Answer: Who do you trust with a map or directions to the location of your Hoard in case you are jailed, hiding out, or otherwise unable to reach it yourself?
- Answer: Why is your Drive more important to you than life, liberty, or leisure?

Each time you bury more Gold, mark an unmarked item from the list below and follow its instructions:

- Narrate a flashback to your first voyage on this or another ship. Were you nervous or excited?
- Describe how you have either taken your faith to sea with you or left it behind on land. Share a scene with another treasure hunter demonstrating your faith or lack thereof to clear one mental Condition.
- Your fellow sailors are deeply superstitious. What ill omen have you encountered? You may keep it secret and describe what costly action you take to avoid being cursed or you may share it with the crew and take the Condition: **Jinxed**. Either way, you may take an extra light die on a future Hunt Roll or Risk Roll when you describe how the omen is relevant to the scene at hand.
- Narrate a flashback to how your Background led you to a life at sea.
- Narrate a flashback to how your Occupation earned you the respect of your peers.
- Narrate a scene in the present showing how you use the ship's travels to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- Narrate a scene in the present showing how you leverage the carnival to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- Describe something about this port that reminds you of your Drive. Do you plan to return here someday or take something on board with you?
- Describe how a relationship with a fellow member of the crew is impacted by obsessive devotion to your Drive. Does it unite you under common cause or put you in conflict?
- Narrate a flashback showing how you secretly betrayed the crew in order to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- *Optional:* Instead of burying Gold to increase your Hoard, you may dig it up and withdraw any amount you wish (to satisfy Burdens or take any other action on this sheet). The GM will narrate a scene showing how your Drive now lies forever beyond your reach.

LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS

Yours is not the only ship in port. Spend 1 Gold to get a bit of useful scuttlebutt from another crew related to the next incursion (such as news from abroad, a local rumor, a map, or the Weakness of a named monster). Each time you spend Gold this way, mark and follow the first unmarked prompt below:

- Ask one player for an adjective and ask another for a noun or name. Combine them for the name of the ship.
- The second time you cross paths, describe how you are tempted to change ships. Ask the other players to describe what deficiencies or dangers would cause you to reconsider.
- The third time you bump into this ship and its crew, narrate a scene in which you reveal some information regarding your ship or one of your crewmates despite your better judgment.
- *Optional:* Spend 3 Gold during your fourth encounter to lure some of the more promising members of this crew to your ship. Going forward, you receive two pieces of useful information when you spend 1 Gold for information. You need no longer mark a prompt to use this option.

THE QUARTERMASTRUM

Give 1 Gold to the Quartermastrum to open crossed-out slots in your backpack by having them obtain or repair equipment for you. The first time you do, follow the prompt below:

Name a fellow crewperson who the Quartermastrum is unable to assist and who leaves dejected. Work with the GM to define what they seek. Their need can be anything – repairs to something seemingly irreplaceable, rare provisions or materials, an illicit substance or contraband – anything you might be interested in helping them obtain. Summarize it on the lines below.

Each time thereafter, mark one of the boxes below. When all five boxes have been marked, the GM will present a side quest related to the crewperson's needs.

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OFFICERS' QUARTERS

An officer's role entitles you to personal quarters and a bit of prestige among the crew. When you return to port, you may heal 1 Ruin and all Conditions. When you first take on an officer's role, increase your Burdens by 1 and follow both of the prompts below:

- ☐ Pick an officer role from the list below. Describe your duties and why you are uniquely qualified for the role. No two treasure hunters can occupy the same officer role.
 - ☐ First Mate (enforces the captain's will with intimidation or physical punishment)
 - ☐ Bosun (acting foreperson for the crew, responsible for routine maintenance)
 - ☐ Mastrum of Arms (responsible for storage, cleaning, and dispensing weapons, armor, and combat training)
 - ☐ Mastrum of Sails (responsible for the helm rotation and rigging)
 - ☐ Mastrum Carpenter (responsible for shipwrights and craftsmen)
 - ☐ Navigator (responsible for the ship's charts and setting the course, serving as a liaison between the captain and the Mastrum of Sails)
- ☐ Ask the other players: What memento from our adventures can be found in my cabin? Note the answers in the box below.

BURIAL AT SEA

If a treasure hunter is lost at sea or during an incursion on a distant shore, each player with a surviving treasure hunter should describe an aspect of the memorial service for their fallen comrade. Have the remains been recovered in a casket, urn, or wrapped in ruined sailcloth to be committed to the sea? Or do they merely serve a symbolic purpose?

LEARNING THE ROPES

A fellow member of the crew trains you in a new Skill at a cost of 1 Burden. Every time you learn a new Skill in this way, follow each of the prompts below:

- Name your trainer and describe how they are renowned for said Skill.
- Narrate a brief montage showing how the Skill was learned after days, weeks, or months of constant training and practice.
- Narrate how the new Skill increases your Burdens. Does your trainer require some form of financial support? Is there a recurring expense for materials or equipment? Is your trainer merely a representative of a guild or other organization that demands dues?

THE LORE OF THE LEVIATHAN

Beyond mere superstitions and crude divination lies the esoteric lore of the unfathomable deep. Access to these secrets of the sea unlocks a new Ritual, at a cost of 1 additional Burden. Each time you add a Ritual in this way, pick one:

- Narrate a scene showing how you stumbled upon such eldritch lore. A musty, worm-eaten tome? A seaside hermit willing to exchange knowledge in a sinister bargain? A mysterious idol that fills your dreams with whispers unknown vistas?
- Describe how your devotion to learning this Ritual transforms your mind and body.

SHORE LEAVE

You may spend 1 Gold on rest and relaxation while in port to heal 1 Ruin. Alternatively, you can choose one of the prompts below and narrate a scene to heal 1 Ruin. Each prompt can only be used once, and only one such prompt can be used between incursions.

- ☐ Narrate a scene showing how you identify an opportunity to satisfy your physical desires while in port without paying for such comforts.
- ☐ Narrate a scene showing an activity or interest your crewmates would never expect.
- ☐ Narrate a scene showing how you find comfort in quiet solitude somewhere in or near port.

What poignant words are spoken or hymns sung on their behalf? Are any of their belongings committed to the sea? If the lost treasure hunter had Officers' Quarters, the players of the other treasure hunters can each take an item from it to add to their own Officers' Quarters or Found Equipment.



SECRET STASH

Keeping the Gold you'll need to achieve your Drive and eventually retire both secret and safe is practically a full-time job on its own. The first time you stash Gold in this Hoard, answer both of the following:

- Answer: How do you hide and secure your Gold while on the trail? Who, if anyone, do you trust with its location while you are on an incursion?
- Answer: How does the open road align with achieving your Drive? Do you expect that to be the end of your journey or just the beginning of another?

Each time you bury more Gold, mark an unmarked item from the list below and follow its instructions:

- Narrate a flashback to the first time you left home for a life on the road. Were you nervous or excited?
- Describe how you have either taken your faith on the road with you or left it behind with your old life. Share a scene with another treasure hunter demonstrating your faith or lack thereof to clear one mental Condition.
- What ill omen have you recently encountered on your journey? You may keep it secret and describe what costly action you take to avoid being cursed or you may share it with the caravan, prompting an immediate revision of the planned departure route. In either case, you may take an extra light die on a future Hunt Roll or Risk Roll when you describe how the omen is relevant to the scene at hand.
- Narrate a flashback to how your Background led you to a life on the road.
- Narrate a flashback to how you first learned to apply your Occupation as part of the caravan. What Skill or service did you provide that demonstrated your worth?
- Narrate a scene in the present showing how you use the caravan's travels to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- Describe something about this stop that reminds you of your Drive. Do you plan to return here someday or take something away with you when you leave?
- Describe how a relationship with a fellow member of the caravan is impacted by obsessive devotion to your Drive. Does it unite you under common cause or put you in conflict?
- Narrate a flashback showing how you secretly betrayed the caravan in order to further your Drive. Increase your Hoard by 2 Gold.
- *Optional:* Instead of stashing Gold to increase your Hoard, you may withdraw any amount you wish (to satisfy Burdens or take any other action on this sheet). The GM will narrate a scene showing how your Drive now lies forever beyond your reach.

WHAT NEWS, STRANGER?

The caravan has a new arrival to join you in your travels. Spend 1 Gold to obtain a piece of useful information related to the next incursion (such as news from abroad, a local rumor, a map, or the Weakness of a named monster). Each time you spend 1 Gold for information from this source, mark and follow the first unmarked prompt below:

- Ask one player for the newcomer's name and ask another for their services or wares.
- Describe some service or ware you received in addition to the information provided. Ask the other players to describe how your pride in this gift is misplaced and how it was insulting, misleading, or manipulative.
- Answer: What service or ware does this person provide just when you need it most?
- *Optional:* Spend 3 Gold to become a business partner in your source's operation. Going forward, you receive two pieces of useful information when you spend 1 Gold to further your investment. You need no longer mark a prompt to use this option.

ALL THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD

Spend 1 Gold to open crossed-out slots in your backpack. The first time you do, follow the prompt below:

Name the merchant and work with the GM to define their area of expertise and an item of interest. The item can be anything – a legendary relic related to their wares, someone with whom they long to be reunited, an illicit opportunity for quick coin – something you might be interested in exploring further. Summarize it on the lines below.

Each time thereafter, mark one of the boxes below. When all five boxes have been marked, the GM will present a side quest related to the merchant's interest.

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PAINT YOUR WAGON

Riding in a vehicle is surely more comfortable than the unforgiving saddle. When the caravan stops at a settlement, you may heal 1 Ruin and all Conditions. When you first secure a wagon, cart, or other vehicle, increase your Burdens by 1 and follow both of the prompts below:

- Describe your vehicle. A humble cart? An ornate wagon? A fancy coach? Something else? How is it immediately recognizable as yours?
- Ask the other players: What memento from our adventures can be found in my vehicle? Note the answers in the box below.

Each time you use your vehicle to clear Conditions or heal Ruin going forward, add an additional memento from your last incursion.

THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

A fellow traveler in the caravan trains you in a new Skill at a cost of 1 Burden. Every time you learn a new Skill in this way, follow each of the prompts below:

- Name your trainer and describe how they are renowned for said Skill.
- Narrate a brief montage showing how the Skill was learned after days, weeks, or months of constant training and practice on the road.
- Narrate how the new Skill increases your Burdens. Does your trainer require some form of financial support? Is there a recurring expense for materials or equipment? Is your trainer merely a representative of a guild or other organization that demands dues?

THE LURE OF LOTUS SMOKE

You have acquired the rare and elusive black lotus from a merchant. Inhaling the vapors can expand your mind and unlock new Rituals, at a cost of 1 Burden each. Each time you do so, choose one:

- Narrate a scene showing how you master the Ritual. Describe the otherworldly, liminal space between worlds in which you practice.
- Describe the otherworldly entity who teaches you the Ritual. What they ask of you in ongoing recompense (the Burden)?

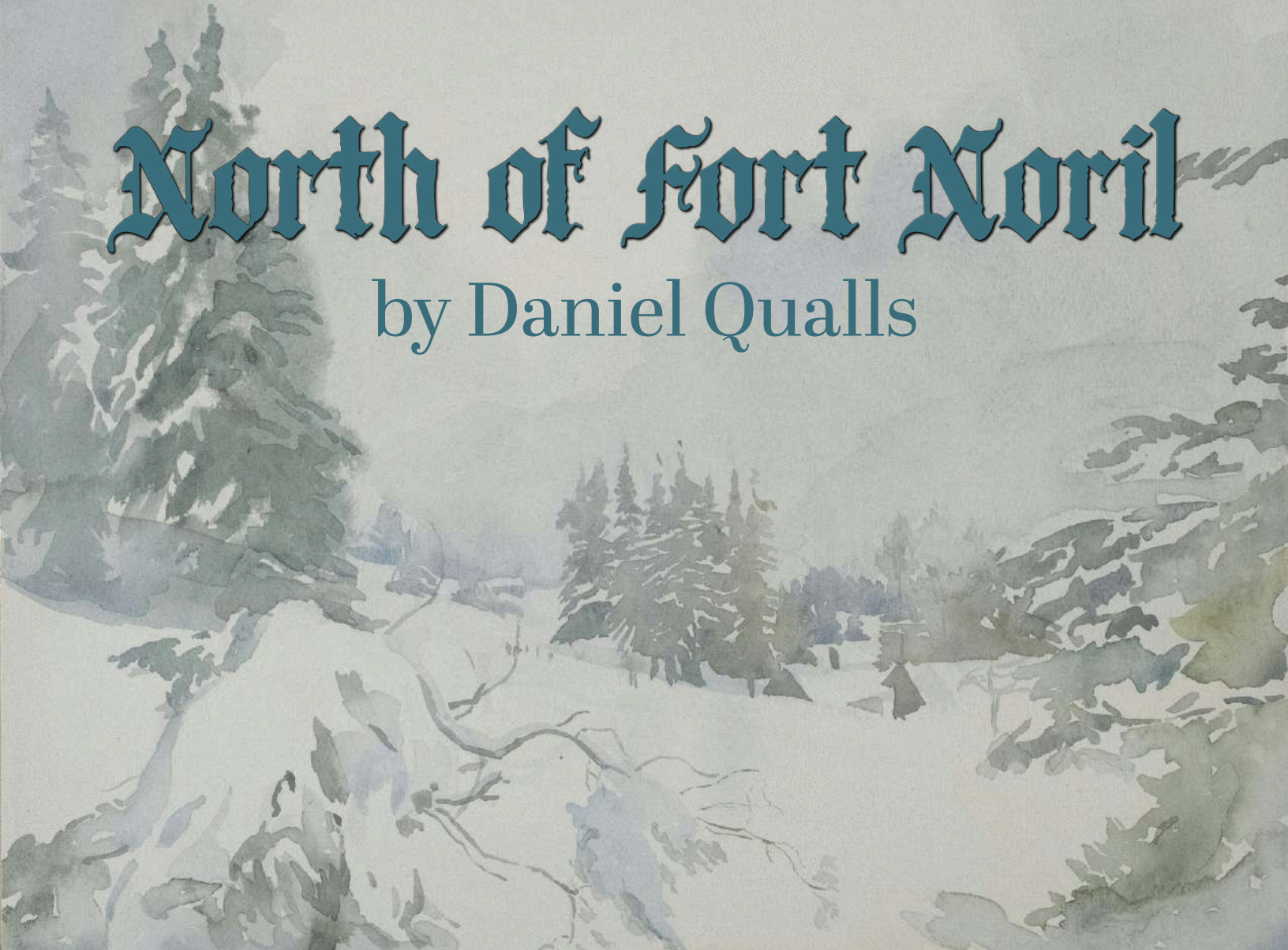
ENSCONCED IN SILKS

You may spend 1 Gold on rest and relaxation while the caravan is stopped at a community to heal 1 Ruin. Alternatively, you can choose one of the prompts below and narrate a scene to heal 1 Ruin. Each prompt can only be used once, and only one such prompt can be used between incursions.

- Narrate a scene in which you are offered hospitality in exchange for menial labor or a selfless act of kindness.
- Narrate a scene in which your physical desires are satisfied but a local is left heartbroken by your impending departure.
- Narrate a scene in which you take advantage of the camp's quiet and solitude while most everyone else is away in town.

A ROADSIDE CAIRN

If a treasure hunter is lost on an incursion, each player with a surviving treasure hunter should describe an aspect of the memorial service for their fallen comrade. What is stacked with the cairn stones to personalize this sacred site? What poignant words are spoken or hymns sung on their behalf? Are any of their belongings buried with them? If the lost treasure hunter had a vehicle, the players of the other treasure hunters can each take an item from it to add to their own vehicle or Found Equipment.



North of Fort Noril

by Daniel Qualls

To the far north lies a land of endless cold and old silence. Snow covers all but the tallest bones of the earth, crags, towers, and ruins of the ancients. The few who dwell here speak little, work hard, and bury their dead quickly, for things search in the night for unattended corpses. They still look for blessings from the Sisters in the north, though their shrines are smooth from the wind and ice. Dark energy clings to this place like rime on stone, wild and slow to thaw. Here, in this white and broken country, every fire is a gamble, every footprint a mystery, and every shadow cold and dark.

when you arrive in the north...	because...
☐ locals are preparing for a long winter...	☒ the winds have shifted from the north.
☐ there are fewer travelers than last year...	☒ last winter was brutal.
☐ troops from Ft. Noril occupies Grondli...	☒ strange lights have been seen in the forest.
☒ game animals have been scarce...	☒ something has angered the Aurum Hag.
☒ the thaw has come early...	☒ a giant was spotted in the Aurum Mountains.
☒ the locals are reluctant to speak...	☒ the nights have been unusually long.

Encounters Weird and Mundane in the Frozen North

■ ■ PERMAFROST

A vast crust of earth locked in ice so deep it rings when struck, permafrost stretches like a dead plain beneath the sunless sky. Very little grows here, and things that die do not rot, they linger, pale and preserved, as if waiting to be awoken. Sometimes, faces from long ago stare up from beneath the frozen surface, perfectly intact and screaming silently through the centuries.

■ ■ FOOTHILLS OF THE AURUM

The land buckles here into jagged ridges and steep ravines, as if the mountains tried to drag the world closer then changed their mind. Bitter winds race through the valleys and stone cairns, too many to count, dot the hillsides with no names or markings. Travelers claim the distant mountains whisper warnings only the doomed can understand.

■ ■ THE FROZEN NEVASK

The Nevask River flows beneath a sheet of ancient ice you can hardly tell water flows beneath. In some places, the ice is cloudy with trapped air, or maybe it's frozen shadows. Deep below, the river still runs, black and swift, and those who fall through the cracks are said to be pulled not just under, but elsewhere.

■ ■ THE KINGSGUARD KEEP

Built into the side of a windswept granite ridge, the keep stands like a half-buried shield, its battlements jagged with frost and age. Banners hang frozen from rusted poles, but inside the stone halls echo with the scrape of armor. The low chant of oaths being recited while its forges still burn, crafting blades meant to fight against things colder than steel. Only a few guards remain, just enough to light the torches, patrol the walls, and remember the names etched into the frozen memorial stones that line the courtyard.

■ ■ THE SCRUBWOOD

Low, gnarled trees claw at the sky with twisted branches, their bark bleached and brittle, like bones laying in some hot desert. Sparse undergrowth crunches underfoot, dry and gray even in thaw, and the air smells faintly of ash though nothing burns. Birds avoid the place, and the only sound is the wind whistling through hollow limbs.

■ ■ THE MIRRORED FIELDS

This vast expanse of ice lies smooth and flawless as glass, stretching horizon to horizon without a single drift or crack. The sky above reflects perfectly on its surface, creating the illusion of walking between two worlds. No footprints remain here; even the lightest step vanishes within moments, as though the ice swallows evidence of the living. Travelers report seeing things beneath the surface: pale shapes walking upside-down, out of sync, watching. On rare nights, the reflection shows stars above from some other sky.

■ ■ VILLAGE OF GRONDLI

Tucked between two frost-bitten peaks, Grondli is a town carved from timber and stone. Its steep rooftops are shingled with slate and ice, with chimneys spewing dark plumes into the windless sky. The people here speak few words, drink ale thick as syrup, and carry big hunting knives. Grondli pays its tithes in ore, timber, and fur. Wolves don't howl near Grondli; they watch in silence from the hills, as if waiting to be let back in.

■ ■ GRONDLI TRADING POST

A longhouse of dark pine, the trading post squats near the town's central square like a plump scavenger. The air inside is thick with pipe smoke, musk oil, and the mingled stench of fur and thawed boots. Lanterns hang low, casting shadows over crates of saltmeat, tanned hides, rusted tools, and stranger things from farther north, sealed bottles that rattle when shaken, charms made of teeth, folded notes written in no known tongue. The keeper, Old Jorra, sees everything through one good eye and speaks to a crow that perches in the rafters, answering in tongues no one else understands.

■ ■ TALIN'S INN

Built low and broad like a hunter's lodge, Talin's Inn smells of pine and wet wool. Its hearth is enormous, always lit, and ringed by stones etched with old prayers to the Sisters. Travelers sleep on thick furs or not at all, lulled or unnerved by the constant creak of beams and the distant sound of boots on the upper floor. Talin, a wiry man with silvered hair and the stare of someone who's watched the snow for too long, keeps the inn running with quiet discipline and a hatchet tucked beneath his apron.

❖❖❖ TANNER'S ROW

Set along a mountain river's edge where the ice thins and the stink gets carried away, Tanner's Row is a line of sagging sheds and stained stone vats, steaming faintly even in deepest winter. Flayed beasts hang from crossbeams like grotesque pennants, and the workers, half-masked, leather-cloaked, fingers gone raw, don't speak unless paid or cornered. Strange pelts appear some nights without explanation, coarse and colorless, delivered by folk no one recalls seeing.

❖❖❖ THE CURSED HOVEL OF CRISPI THE BLIND

Hidden in a thicket of trees, this sagging hut leans as if tired to remain standing. Its door hangs open, though no snow ever enters, and a dozen windchimes made of teeth clatter softly even when the air is still. Crispi the Blind once lived here, a hedge-witch, hermit, or heretic, depending who you ask—before he gave his eyes to the Sister of the North in exchange for clearer sight. The locals won't go near it, but they still leave offerings at the treeline, fresh moss, bones, or iron nails, whispering apologies for things they won't confess to each other.

❖❖❖ SHRINE TO THE SISTER OF THE NORTH

Carved into the face of a cliff, the shrine is little more than a recess, yet the stone within is polished smooth, as if endlessly blasted by snow that never melts. A faceless statue stands cloaked in frost, arms outstretched in silent welcome or warning, and offerings of bone, antler, and pale blue flowers lie frozen at her feet. In the stillness, breath fogs light blue, and travelers often find themselves unexpectedly speaking aloud their fondest memories of home.

❖❖❖ THE AURUM MOUNTAINS

The Aurum range rises like jagged teeth from the top of the world. Its peaks vanish into clouds, and its slopes are carved with scars from avalanches that no one heard and glaciers layered with ancient ice. Few paths cross Aurum's ridges safely, and none without cost, stone bridges half-collapsed, stairways ending at sheer cliffs, old rope ladders swaying in wind that never stills. Local trappers say the mountains are watching, others say they are sleeping, and that each quake is a breath, not a tremor.

❖❖❖ THE STONEBRIDGE OF KING BORIS THE THIRD

Once a triumph of southern engineering, the bridge arches high over the frozen Nevask in twelve solemn spans, each marked by a weathered lion carved from mountain stone. The ice far below groans beneath it but never breaks, and the wind through its arches carries a deep, hollow moan. Travelers whisper that King Boris ordered it built not to cross the river, but to seal it and that each of the twelve lions once held a magical name, long since deliberately chiseled away.

❖❖❖ AVALANCHE PASS

A knife-thin trail carved into the side of a steep gorge, Avalanche Pass winds between snow-choked cliffs where the air itself feels heavy with warning. The slightest sound, a voice, a clink of gear, even a cough, can shudder loose entire hillsides of ice and stone, burying the unwary in seconds. The bones and shattered equipment of past travelers jut from the drifts like frozen warning signs.

❖❖❖ THE BEAR'S HOLLOW

A yawning cave mouth in a sheer cliff of ice, its interior etched with deep claw marks and ochre-stained symbols that suggests worship as much as habitation. Bones, some human, some not, lie scattered in frozen piles, gnawed smooth. The great white bear that dwells here is rarely seen, but its breath can be heard in the stillness, slow and steady.

❖❖❖ THE CLIFF OF CONTEMPLATION

A narrow shelf of stone peeks over a thousand-foot drop, the wind constant, the silence absolute. Pilgrims, madmen, and drunkards alike have made the trek here to "think things over," as the locals say, usually with a bottle, a burden, or both. No one watches you at the edge, but most claim they feel something waiting, quiet, patient, and deeply interested in your final decision. Scratched messages cover the stones: prayers, curses, confessions, and jokes that lose their humor in the thin, cold air.



THE ROYAL STAIRS

Cut into the mountainside with uncanny precision, this sweeping stairway of black ice and stone climbs higher than any sane traveler dares go. Each step is carved with sigils and no snow ever gathers on them. The locals say it was built by a forgotten monarch to reach the stars, or descend from them, and that those who ascend too far sometimes return changed, bearing strange crowns of frost and a blank stare in their eyes.

THE GLASS FOREST

A glimmering forest entirely encased in ice with branches like daggers, stretching for miles in eerie faint creaking of shifting limbs, as if the forest resents being frozen still. If a wind picks up, limbs break and the silence is broken by explosions of crashing ice. Some travelers say the trees rearrange themselves quietly behind your back hoping you lose your way amongst their shimmering branches.

THE ROTTEN WATCHTOWER

Half-sunken into a frozen hillside, this leaning tower of dark timber and greenstone still stands, though no one recalls who built it, or what it was meant to guard against. The wood weeps black sap that freezes into brittle thorns, and ravens nest within its broken arrowslits. Those who climb it report the scent of saltwater and rot on the wind.

IVAR'S RAVINE

A deep, narrow gorge splits the land with icy walls streaked with black mineral veins that gleam under moonlight. Legend says Ivar, a war-priest or a traitor, (no one agrees), called down a miracle here, opening the earth with his final breath. The ravine hums faintly at dusk, a low sound that makes your teeth hurt. Ropes and bridges across the ravine never last more than a season, but the locals walk the long way around, no matter how urgent the trip.

THE AURUM HAG

She dwells alone up where the snow never melts and the moon casts no shadow. Draped in patchwork furs and crowned with antlers crusted in frost, the Hag speaks in riddles, weeps in laughter, and sees futures that leave a stain on the soul. Some say she offers boons, like safe passage, healing, or even truths you need to hear, but always at a price measured not in gold, but in memory, blood, or names best forgotten. No path leads to her hut, yet it finds the desperate just the same.

KING BRUNI'S HUNTING LODGE

Its steep-pitched roof lies collapsed beneath the weight of years and snow, but the carved beams still show the sigil of a crowned bear fighting a stag. Inside, frost creeps across feasting tables left half-set, and the hearth smolders faintly even when no one tends it. Locals say King Bruni vanished into the woods on Midwinter's Eve, chasing a beast no one else could see, they also say that his laughter still echoes through the pines when the moon is full.

THE BLACK HART OF THE NORTH

A towering stag with ink-black fur and a rack of antlers as wide as a wagon, is said to roam the deepest glacial woods where no path lasts long. Its eyes glow faintly red in the snowlight, and its hooves leave no prints. Hunters who pursue it vanish without a trace, but on the edge of the forest their voices sometimes return on the wind, pleading not to be found.

BLADES OF ICE

In a certain low valley where no sunlight reaches, the ground is covered in tall, razor-edged grass made entirely of translucent ice, shaped by the wind. Each blade is thin as a dagger and just as sharp, and able to slice through boots, packs, and flesh with ease. At dawn and dusk, they chime faintly, a mournful sound like distant bells heard through deep snow. No animals nest here, and birds fly wide around the dangerous vale.

THE TOWER OF CHAZZERAT

Black stone spirals skyward from a glacier's edge, with the structure leaning just slightly, as though listening to something in the wind. Windows flicker with pale green fire, even though no one has seen the wizard emerge in living memory. Locals speak of an arcane engine housed in the tower's center, humming as it melts time in small, steady increments.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Scattered across a vast plateau, these colossal stone cubes, each the size of a barn, sit half-buried in the permafrost, arranged in no particular pattern. Their edges are too precise, their surfaces too smooth, but no tool marks can be found. Some lie stacked, precariously and impossibly, as if something began to build and then stopped. One of them is cracked open and inside the walls are mirrored, but your reflection always smiles first.

❄️ THE GROTTO OF FROZEN DREAMS

Hidden behind a melting glacier is a winding cavern that opens up into a grotto of blue crystal with still air. The walls shimmer with frost-etched visions, some say memories, others say warnings, and light behaves oddly within, scattering in patterns that resemble script. In the deepest chamber sits a pool so still it reflects your hopes and dreams instead of your image.

❄️ THE WINTER QUEEN'S PEAK

The tallest summit in the Aurum range, veiled in clouds and known as the Winter Queen's Peak. No one climbs it and returns unchanged, some come down older, others younger, and one woman returned without her shadow. At the top carved into the mountain itself is a crude statue of a woman sitting upon a throne with her crown made of inverted icicles. In Grondli, they say the queen still rules up there over a frozen court in some lost mountain palace.

❄️ THE FORGOTTEN LIBRARY

Deep beneath an ancient landslide, scholars whisper of intact ruins where shelves lean with books bound in skin and frost. They say the knowledge kept there was dangerous enough to damn empires, and that Sister Selyra, patron saint of lore and scribes, buried it beneath stone and ice to spare the world. Only one locked door remains, sealed with symbols that flicker, and the key, carved from ice and shaped like a quill, is hidden far beyond the reach of curious mortals.

👁️ EYES AT NIGHT

On cloudless nights, when the wind dies and the snow lies untouched, travelers sometimes glimpse pairs of distant eyes glowing faintly amber, just beyond torchlight. They never blink, and only move if you do. Some swear the eyes belong to beasts, others to old, forgotten things, but everyone agrees, if you see more than three pairs at once, it's already too late to run.

🌫️ FREEZING FOG

It creeps in without warning, thick as wool and colder than ice, swallowing sound and distance alike. Torches sputter and frost over, voices echo back wrong, and breath crystalizes and hangs motionless in the air. Those who linger too long emerge with frost-bitten skin and vivid memories of places they've never been, ice walls, towers, and strangers calling to them in odd languages they somehow understood.

⚡ ICE LIGHTNING

Without thunder or storm, jagged bolts of pale blue light crackle through the clear skies above, striking the ground in absolute silence. Where they touch down, the snow fuses into glassy, spiral patterns of ice. Local hunters swear the flashes freeze time, and those caught looking directly into them lose the memory of warmth.

👣 TRACKS IN THE SNOW

Broad, deep impressions in the snow with only two forward-facing toes and a dragging heel, each step the length of a tall person's stride. The prints occasionally just stop, but then reappear ahead. Those who follow the trail to its end report the smell of burnt hair and a sudden, crushing silence.

🌫️ SNOW BLINDNESS

A featureless expanse of endless white can confound maps and memory alike. Shadows cannot form and oftentimes snow seems to fall upward. Travelers who cross plains of snow unguarded often vanish or return days later with frostbitten eyes and a quiet, unshakable dread, whispering of faceless figures who move freely in the glare.

👊 THE GIANT'S FIST

This jagged stone formation resembles a colossal clenched fist, its knuckles weathered smooth by centuries of wind and ice. Locals claim it was once the hand of a mountain giant who dared strike at the moon and was turned to stone in a single flash of silver light. Strange glyphs sometimes appear overnight along the wrist, pulsing faintly with warmth no one dares touch twice.

Treasure Hunters Guide to Nagameh

Darren Brockes



Treasure Hunters Guide to Naganekh

By Darren Brockes

Occupations

Algebraist — logic, mysticism, symbols
Animist — cleansing, ecology, spirits
Antidote — anatomy, healing, resuscitation
Arsonist — destruction, fuels, patience
Attendant — coordination, equipment, observation
Backstabber — betrayal, mollification, subterfuge
Binder — lures, seals, willpower
Blade — charm, dance, swords
Brawler — endurance, grappling, insults
Cartographer — geography, meandering, memory
Celebrant — contraband, deception, mirth
Censor — conciliation, defense, extortion
Chemist — medicine, plants, research
Cultist — arcana, double-talk, oaths
Curse — bargains, luck, trickery
Enunciator — eloquence, heraldry, law
Falconer — command, encryption, orientation
Fortune teller — obfuscation, omens, presence
Fundament — earth, fire, wind
Hatcher — nurturing, poison, snakes
Honorguard — mediation, protection, protocol
Hunter — hiding, subduing, tracking
Investigator — deduction, forensics, logic
Marksman — focus, perception, surprise
Memorialist — death, names, tradition
Pathlighter — darkness, probability, trails
Poisoner — herbalism, preparation, sleight
Porter — pathways, strength, transportation
Priestess — deities, interpretation, manipulation
Reclaimer — appraisal, myths, scavenging
Rider — balance, beasts, empathy
Skywatcher — birds, patterns, weather
Summoner — demons, rituals, temptation
Synesthete — improvisation, insight, trances
Tinkerer — clockwork, repair, tools
Trouper — imitation, performance, teamwork

Backgrounds

Accused beastbitten — murder
Awakened dreamer — foresight
Barred custodian — artifacts
Bound foreigner — languages
Caught pickpocket — judgement
Cursed woodcutter — forests
Deafened scribe — calligraphy
Discharged conscript — survival
Discredited grifter — planning
Dishonored hostess — decorum
Dismissed courtier — consorting
Dramatic storyteller — performance
Expelled student — lore
Failed teacher — support
Fined vendor — cooking
Forgetful ceremonialist — intercession
Forgotten patriarch — hierarchy
Haunted gravedigger — corpses
Inflamed archivist — preservation
Manumitted manikin — resilience
Materialistic monk — silence
Muted singer — evocation
Obsessive bureaucrat — accounting
Possessed seer — communication
Recalled diplomat — negotiation
Rejected supplicant — sacrifice
Shunned refugee — travel
Stained harvester — tea
Sunken trawler — secrets
Survived sacrifice — resilience
Tongueless liar — deception
Unchanging faeborn — anticipation
Unlucky gambler — instigation
Unpopular gardener — aesthetics
Untrusted messenger — dexterity
Waylaid emigrant — obligation

Drives

Adopt the 700 orphans of Jooli Port.
Attend the centennial Festival of the Hatching Moons
Be initiated into the deeper mysteries of the Cult of the Serpent Queen.
Become the leader of the Wailing Pack, notorious beastbitten vigilantes.
Capture Greht ils Enha, rebellious demon summoner of Sahir.
Catch the fabled fish the size of Naganeh itself.
Cleanse the algae-choked pools of the Palace of Arrows.
Confront the Red Army at Washa's Pass.
Consume yourself and become one with the Devourer.
Decode the Hissing Grammatica.
Drain Wrothe Lake to prove the rumors true.
Earn your place in the Ten Thousand Scales of Sehtet ils Noh.
Eliminate the ghost of Vrask ils Muduu, who has long haunted your family.
End the ils Noh dynasty.
Establish the first trade route to Tirolis on the Barge of Flowers.
Find one of the last amphiptere eggs.
Fund an expedition to the ancestral home of Bagat ils, of No One.
Garner the adoration of the Thousand Hands.
Honor the divine twins of Pallar Temple born under the new moon.
Hunt the vermillion dragon, bane of Naganeh.
Imbibe the sacred venom of Itanli ils Rrut, Serpent of the Other World.
Invite the fae to settle in the Gardens Quarter of Naganeh.
Make a pact with the Demon of Valbot.
Organize the thieves guilds of Naganeh for one last job.
Pay the reparations for your sibling's cursework.
Prepare the appropriate statue to receive spirit of the Quiet One.
Prove your brother's guilt in the murder of his wife.
Raze Lady Hunna's island chain of tea plantations.
Receive a divination from the Oracle of Telvi.
Reclaim the lost city of Cithcay for your mother.
Request a pardon for your past lives' crimes
Restore the Copse of Semtana ils Semtana, last of her name.
Return to the abandoned dig site of the City of Gold.
Revive the Cult of the Loam.
Take over the Ilstantha Print House to become Vizier of Ink.
Touch the sun at the peak of Cloud Mountain.

Equipment

Backpacks

Blessed salt (2 uses) — Demonic totem, occupied — Trepanning needle, gilded
Camouflage mask, verdant — Codex of beasts, waterlogged — Skinning knife
Carnivorous plant, small — Ceramic shards, brightly color (5) — Gardening spade, foreign steel
Collapsible cage — Eggs, fist sized (3) — Fry pan, iron
Cracked telescope — Leather boots, new — "Sleepless," eye drops (3 uses)
Fly agaric, bright red (1) — Theater mask, "agony" — winter coat, leather & hemp
Fortified wine, herbal — Pince-nez — Wrinkled invitation, only half
Journal, nearly full — Mis-calibrated compass — "Third eye," powder (3 uses)
Mortar & pestle — Sealed reliquary — Torn bounty poster
Pouch of reflective scales (6) — Snake charms (3 uses) — Vial of antidote (removes 1 poison Condition)
Prayer beads — Talisman (1 use) — Walking stick, sturdy
River rocks (6) — Sword sheathe, empty — Toy crown, missing gems



Equipment

Weapons

Ashes for evocation
Bird of prey
Bottles, alcohol, cloth
Butcher's cleaver
Cold iron knuckles
Cursed divination cards
Double-edged sword
Envenomed throwing needles
Fan with a diamond edge
Fishing spear, tangled with netting
Harvest scythe
Lightweight bearded axe
Lutebound demon
Magnetic stones
Martial artist's gloves
Oil-dipped blade, flammable
Perfume vials, poisonous
Pistol crossbow
Rope dart
Standard issue conscript pike
Taloned gauntlets
Temple cursewords
Throwing axes, enchanted to return
Your father's longbow

Armor

A demon's favor
Ancestral guardian amulet
Blessing of the Serpent Queen
Curse of displacement
Hem-sewn protective runes
Ironwood plates, layered
Layers of fabric
Possessed by a protective spirit
Quickstep slippers
Reinforced snakeskin leathers
Tattooed wards and sigils
Your grandmother's prayers



Rituals

- Absorb** — Fill a handheld container with nearby darkness or shadow.
- Ache** — Share physical pain with something or someone nearby.
- Alight** — Hold perfect balance for a short time.
- Alter** — Change a handheld substance to another substance while you hold it.
- Appease** — Exude a non-threatening aura.
- Attract** — Pull something metallic toward you.
- Blur** — Stand in shadow to become imperceptible.
- Burst** — Produce an overwhelming cacophony that carries far.
- Cage** — Restrict the movement of something living.
- Call** — Send a message across a large distance.
- Churn** — Call a storm of rain or lightning around you.
- Creep** — Prevent yourself from being heard by anything that cannot see you.
- Cross** — Concentrate to walk across the surface of water.
- Deny** — Bar entry or exit into or from a room.
- Dislocate** — Step into the border between life and death momentarily.
- Dispel** — Suspend the effect of another Ritual while you are in the area.
- Extract** — Draw a poison out of something and into yourself.
- Flense** — Make a precise cut through force of will.
- Fold** — Bring two spaces within eyesight closer together.
- Freeze** — Maintain eye contact to paralyze someone.
- Haunt** — Leave a piece of yourself to surveil an area from nearby.
- Hiss** — Call nearby serpents to you.
- Host** — Prevent conflict as long as there is food or drink being shared.
- Pollute** — Turn clean water into poison.
- Profane** — Strip a place of its sacred or magical power while in the area.
- Purify** — Cleanse food or drink of poison or disease.
- Quiet** — Prevent all sound around you except yourself.
- Release** — Sever your own shadow temporarily to perform a task.
- Remember** — Observe a scene from the past that occurred in your present location.
- Scare** — Conjure a hallucination of something someone fears.
- Sour** — Cause food to spoil.
- Spring** — Draw forth a spring of water from the ground.
- Stoke** — Encourage a particular emotion in those around you.
- Submit** — Allow an incorporeal being to reside within you.
- Suture** — Close an opening temporarily.
- Weight** — Turn an object impossibly light or heavy.



Brian Sago



TROPHY DARK

INTO THE WILDWOOD



SEAN TIBBITTS

Into the Wildwood

An Incursion for *Trophy Dark*

Written by Sean Tibbitts

“Into the Wildwood” is an incursion for *Trophy Dark* that is directly inspired by the cartoon miniseries *Over the Garden Wall* by Patrick McHale and fairy tales such as *Hansel & Gretel* and *Little Red Riding Hood*. Unlike in standard incursions, the player characters in “Into the Wildwood” are not treasure hunters, but are children who find themselves lost in a deep, dark wood. As the children attempt to escape and return home, their innocence will begin to wear away as they lose themselves gradually to the forest.

This incursion was written with three different options for tone in mind:

1. Children can die. Children who are lost to the forest may be permanently dead, among other fates.
2. Children can be permanently lost to the forest. Children who are lost to the forest are not dead, but become permanent residents of the Wildwood.
3. Children all make it home. Children can be lost to the forest, but only temporarily. All children wake up in their own bed at the end, safe but somehow changed by their sojourn in the Wildwood.

Make sure to decide between these three options with your players, as well as discussing any Lines and Veils (regarding children or not), to make sure they are comfortable continuing. [It might also be helpful to read through the “Prelude to Blackberry Jam” section in the *Trophy Dark* sourcebook, which goes through concepts related to running an incursion with child characters in more detail.]

Losing Yourself in “Into the Wildwood”

No matter which option for tone you choose for your table, children can still be lost to the forest, although in the third option this will be temporary. It will often be reasonable for players whose children have lost themselves to continue participating by describing how their lost character—and any terrors associated with their loss—continues to affect the remaining players’ experience in the Wildwood.

Character Creation

The child player characters in “Into the Wildwood” are not treasure hunters, but are referred to as “children” or “lost children.” You will use the tables below to create characters, not the regular *Trophy Dark* tables. (You can also use the tables found in the “Prelude to Blackberry Jam” section of the *Trophy Dark* sourcebook.)

Begin by choosing a name for your child character. These can be modern-sounding or fantastical. Next choose their pronouns. Then choose (or roll for) a Personality type and skill. (Enter these in the section for Background and associated Skill in the *Trophy Dark* character sheet.) Player characters should each have a unique Personality.

Then choose (or roll for) an Upbringing and skills. (Enter these in the section for Occupation and associated Skills in the *Trophy Dark* character sheet.)

CHARACTER IDENTITY OPTIONS

Personality – skill	Upbringing – skills
 Ebullient - inspiration	 Studious - books, learning, discipline
 Pessimistic - doggedness	 Sporty - games, teamwork, athletics
 Sarcastic - wordplay	 Religious - rituals, lore, self-denial
 Friendly - manipulation	 Wealthy - privilege, command, decadence
 Bossy - leadership	 Poor - economy, grit, inventiveness
 Complying - appeasement	 Military - vigilance, endurance, weapons

Choose (or roll for) a Drive. Player characters should each have a unique Drive.

Finally, choose whether to add Rituals to your character. As with the standard *Trophy Dark* game, you can have up to 3 Rituals (or none), but you must mark 1 additional Ruin for each Ritual you choose. Try not to choose Rituals that overlap with other player characters. (You can find additional Rituals suitable for this incursion in the “Prelude to Blackberry Jam” section of the *Trophy Dark* sourcebook.)

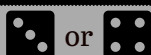
CHARACTER RITUALS AND DRIVE OPTIONS	
Drive	Ritual – effect
Prove that you’re a grown-up	Pseudonym - momentarily change an object’s nature by changing its name
Protect your younger sibling	Buff - temporarily grant another creature the power to act beyond its normal physical or mental limits
Come up with the perfect name for your pet	Converse - communicate with another creature without a shared language
Impress your crush	Clairvoyance - see things that are hidden
Save your family from their fate	Burn - concentrate to make an object near you catch fire
Find your lost parent(s)	Deflect - protect a character from taking a point of Ruin

theme: **INNOCENCE**

The Wildwood is a liminal space that borders on many places—among which are the modern world, the world of the Kalduhr, the realm of dreams, and the land of the dead. It has inhabitants, but it is unclear where they came from or how they survive in such an inhospitable landscape. People from outside the Wildwood sometimes find themselves there—whether by mischance, accident, or design, who is to say? But such unlucky visitors may find their sojourn stretch on into eternity unless they can discover a way out.

CONDITIONS	
or	
Your voice deepens the deeper you get into the forest.	
Black antlers begin to sprout from your head.	
Your eyes take on a mesmerizing rainbow sheen.	
You wanna steal.	
Your hands are constantly filthy.	
You are convinced that people around you are secretly in league with the Wild One.	

CONDITIONS



-  You become easily distracted by things off the path—flowers, pretty stones, insects—and you have trouble walking in a straight line.
-  You develop a weakness for baked goods.
-  You have a hard time differentiating between friend and foe.
-  You are always cheerful, even when circumstances don't warrant it.
-  You can never rest and must be walking or moving at all times.
-  You are convinced that people around you are secretly wolves in disguise.



-  You feel compelled to drop small objects behind you as you walk, like pebbles, acorns, or breadcrumbs.
-  Your fingers grow as thin and knobby as chicken bones.
-  You smell fragrant and delicious, like fresh-baked gingerbread.
-  You have an urge to nibble at things—food, stones, houses.
-  You become terrified of ovens.
-  You are convinced that people around you are secretly witches.

The children find themselves walking along a path together in a deep, dark wood. None of them has any idea why or how they came here.

In the distance, they can see a stream with a sawmill standing next to it. A waterwheel is attached to the structure on one side and a house is attached on the other side.

? *You feel protective of one of the other children. What connection do you have, and what would you do to keep them safe?*

Terrors

Behind them in the forest, the children can hear noise made by what sounds like an enormous **bear**. It appears to be getting closer.

Off in another direction the children can hear a **woodcutter** chopping down a tree, but they cannot see him or her. Someone—perhaps the woodcutter or perhaps not—is singing wordlessly in a loud, resonant voice.

If the children speak to the woodcutter, he will attempt to help them, saying, "*The Wildwood is no place for children. How did you come here? No matter. These woods are haunted by the Wild One, a fearsome being who would like nothing more than to capture you and keep you forever. I have a bit more wood to chop, but when I am done I will do my best to help you get home.*"

Each child must make a **Ruin Roll** when they hear about the Wild One.

? *The woodcutter reminds you eerily of someone from back home. Who is it, and what was the last thing that person said to you?*

To keep the children safe, the woodcutter will attempt to corral them in the house while he finishes his work.

? *Looking around the sawmill, how can you tell the woodcutter is using the equipment for something other than its intended purpose?*

While the woodcutter is away, the sawmill is attacked by the enormous bear, which has been tracking the children through the wood.

? *What makes you think this animal is a minion of the Wild One?*

The woodcutter will return and help drive off the bear, but in the fracas the sawmill is completely destroyed. The woodcutter will advise the children to go to a nearby village to get directions for a way out of the Wildwood. Above all, he says, avoid the heart of the wood, where the Wild One lurks.

Temptations

A squirrel approaches the children and asks if they need help. It offers to take them to Saint Amberlaine, the Good Woman of the Wood, who will be able to help them get home.

? *Even if you were raised in the religion of the Sisters, you have never heard of Amberlaine. What image does her name conjure in your head?*

Moments

The waterwheel creaks rhythmically as the stream pushes it around and around.

The crickets can be heard chirping in the forest and then—all at once—they stop.

The children find the village the woodcutter directed them to, surrounded by fields that have been carved out of the forest. The village appears empty at first, but if the children search, they will find the inhabitants gathered nearby, celebrating the harvest.

? Which one of the other children are you sometimes embarrassed to be around, and why?

Terrors

The **villagers** are friendly and welcoming, but they do not want to let the children leave. The villagers are Monsters and cannot be fought directly. They will try to force the children to attend school.

Special Rule: The villagers' faces are all hidden by masks, low-brimmed hats, mysterious shadows, or other means. If a child sees a villager's true face, they must describe what they see and then make a Ruin Roll.

The village schoolhouse is run by a woman named **Ms. Livermore**. When the children arrive, they see her transform a misbehaving child into an animal. All the other students are also animals.

Ms. Livermore will welcome the lost children into her classroom, saying, "Please, take your seats. The bell rang three minutes ago—you're late! Today we are working on our spelling. Let's start with the letter A—who knows how to spell 'aardvark'?"

? Ms. Livermore takes a special interest in one of the children. Who does she remind you of from back home, and what do you think she sees in you?

Note: Ms. Livermore will attempt to transform any child who misbehaves into an animal. This can be resisted with a successful Risk Roll.

A tiger menaces the school and must be driven off. If you are successful, Ms. Livermore will admit that it was actually one of her former beaux whom she transformed for presumed infidelity.

When school is over, Ms. Livermore will point you to the road that she says leads out of the Wildwood.

Temptations

Ms. Livermore will offer the children a simple lunch. Any child that eats or drinks something they are offered must make a Ruin Roll.

Moments

One of the children steps on a pumpkin and wears it like a shoe for the rest of the Ring.

The town is eerily quiet and seems empty. A snatch of song drifts to you from a nearby barn.

The schoolhouse bell rings, insistent in its clangor.

The children travel down a lonely road through the forest. Ahead of them is a tavern, beyond which the road dead-ends at the river where a ferry waits for passengers to board.

? *Which of your companions is beginning to annoy you and grate on you?*

Terrors

The road the children are traveling on is the haunt of a **highwayman**. If he finds the children, he will attempt to knock them out and steal their shoes.

If the children visit the tavern, the **tavern keeper** will bustle up and seat them at a table, saying, “Children, wandering around unattended in the Wildwood? Don’t you know the Witch and the Wild One are out there? The Witch of the Wood steals youngsters like you and they’re never seen again. Maybe she eats them. But it’s the Wild One you should really be worried about—it will trap you here in the Wildwood for eternity. Don’t let it get its hooks in you.”

All children must make a Ruin Roll when listening to her tale.

? *You’ve never met the tavern keeper before, but she reminds you strongly of someone you used to know who is now passed. What was your relationship with this person, and what is your strongest memory of them?*

If the children attempt to board the ferry the **ferry captain** will refuse the children boarding until the toll is paid. None of you brought any money into the Wildwood with you.

? *What about the people on the ferry makes you think they might not be completely human?*

Temptations

The highwayman is carrying a fat purse full of coins.

The kind **patrons** of the tavern might be willing to offer the children coins for a song. The children can also try to pickpocket the patrons and/or the tavern keeper.

If asked, the patrons will give the children conflicting, contradictory directions for how to escape the Wildwood (or how to reach Saint Amberlaine’s house, if that is their current destination).

Some potential directions (roll, or pick a few):

 Take the ferry, and then walk up the other side of the river for a day and a half.	 Take the ferry and travel through the pasture.	 Take the ferry and slog through the mudflats.
 Don’t take the ferry. Turn around and walk the other way down the road.	 Don’t take the ferry. Walk down the near side of the river for a week.	 Don’t take the ferry. Stay at the tavern where it’s safe.

A **performing group** is boarding the ferry. The children may decide to attempt to sneak onto the boat with the group.

Moments

A band plays on a stage at one end of the large common room. You almost recognize the tune.

A large, shaggy dog lies in front of the fire, rolling over occasionally to roast a different part of its body.

The steam whistle of the ferry boat sounds, mournful and shrill.

No matter which directions the children follow, they arrive at the pasture, where they find a ramshackle cottage with smoke rising from its chimney. Rain has been falling steadily for the past half an hour and the children are wet to the bone.

? Which of the other children do you suspect of sabotaging your progress, and why?

Terrors

The Sisters of the Forest live here: **Saint Amberlaine, the Good Woman of the Wood** and **Auntie Whistlefew, the Witch of the Wood**. The Sisters are Monsters and cannot be fought directly. When the children arrive, Amberlaine is alone at the cottage, lying in the bed. Half-unspooled skeins of yarn lie scattered around the small room. There is a shiny, ornate bell sitting on a table next to the fireplace.

When the children enter, Amberlaine sits up in the bed and says, *“Oh my word, you poor dears are drenched! Come in, come in. Stand in front of the fire and get warm and dry. However did you end up on the road at this hour?”*

Amberlaine will initially agree to help the children return home, telling them how lucky they are they arrived when her sister was out. But once she has lulled them into complacency, she will try to capture and enslave them.

Amberlaine has command of **magical skeins of yarn** and other **enslaved children**, their eyes cold and lifeless.

? Beneath her kindly exterior, what kind of nightmare creature does Amberlaine remind you of?

If asked why she is doing this, Amberlaine will say that she hears the voice of the Wild One in her head, and she must do as it commands.

Special Rule: Amberlaine cannot be fought or killed, but she can be circumvented by exploiting her weakness, which is the magical bell Auntie Whistlefew uses to curb her sister’s child-enslaving tendencies.

If the children left the woodcutter or the squirrel on good terms, one of them may show up and tell the children her weakness or exploit it themselves. If not, then Auntie Whistlefew will return to the cottage and ring the bell.

? Auntie Whistlefew’s aspect is terrifying but her voice is comforting. Who does her voice remind you of, and why do you suspect you will never hear that person’s voice again?

If Auntie Whistlefew rescues the children, she tells them that the only way out of the Wildwood is to brave its heart. If they are lucky, they will escape the attention of the Wild One.

Temptations

Amberlaine possesses a pair of magical scissors that give access to the Ritual Transform. Auntie Whistlefew’s bell gives access to the Ritual Compel.

Moments

Amberlaine plays cat’s cradle with a length of yarn.

Auntie Whistlefew sits at her loom, weaving a cloak of shadow and some kind of black, downy feather.

After leaving the pasture, the children push through a barrier of tangled underbrush and reach the heart of the Wildwood. Their path has always been leading them here, no matter what directions they followed and no matter how they tried to escape.

The heart is a clearing in the wood, encircled with huge, old, twisted trees. It is night, and the wind is cold and makes a desolate sound as it blows through the bare branches around the clearing.

? *Which of the other children do you blame for your being in the Wildwood? Why is it their fault, and what should their punishment be?*

Terrors

The **Wild One** is the great power in these woods. It is a Monster and cannot be fought directly. It will attempt to turn the children against each other, playing favorites and separating them as best it can.

Special Rule: The Wild One is always shrouded in shadows. If its form is ever clearly revealed, it provokes a Ruin Roll from any child who sees it. The Wild One's body is monstrous and twisted, and marked with the torment it has inflicted on past visitors to the Wildwood.

? *If children have been lost to the forest: What mark has your lost child left on the Wild One's form?*

"Welcome to the Wildwood, children," the Wild One says. "I've had my eye on you for some time, ever since you crossed over into my domain. I'm glad you've made it this far—you've been in more danger than you realized, but you've handled it well. I am so proud of you, and I hope we can be friends."

? *The Wild One is not familiar to you. It is Night, it is Death, it is The End. But you realize its voice has been whispering to you along the whole journey. What has its voice said to you prior to this moment?*

The weather has turned stormy and wintery and the ground is covered in a thick blanket of snow. The children's clothes are not fit for these conditions, and they risk freezing to death unless they stick together. (The GM should ask for frequent Ruin Rolls in this Ring due to the weather.)

If the children left the woodcutter or squirrel on good terms, one or both of them may turn up in this Ring as well, although neither one is a match for the Wild One.

Every time a child marks a point of Ruin in this Ring, the Wild One seems to gain power and strength, growing larger and more shadowy. It urges the children to give in, to let go, to give up.

"Relax," the Wild One says. "Lie down and let it be over. Let the perfect peace of the wood flow into you. Let your limbs grow still, your heart turn cold as a stone, your mind become blank and silent as a layer of new-fallen snow. Give in to me, and I will reward you beyond your wildest dreams—once you are mine."

Moments

The storm winds are so strong it is hard to see, and one of the children gets knocked over by the force of the gale.

The Wild One can be heard vocalizing nearby in an eerie voice.

Temptations

The Wild One promises to send the children home if they just perform a few simple tasks for it. However, these tasks are fairy-tale labors that are merely a means for keeping the children out in the cold and wet until their strength gives out. Some ideas for tasks:

Counting a large number of pins or seeds in the snow

Removing the snow from the clearing with a teaspoon or their hands

Finding and gathering a thousand pearls that are scattered in the snow around the clearing

Separating lentils from a bucket of ash and gravel

Causing the underbrush around the clearing to bloom in the dead of winter

Constructing the means of the children's return, such as an archway to make a door for them, a canoe as a vehicle for them to ride, and/or a ladder to reach the heavens

Special Rule: The children can make it home in one of the following ways:

1. Children who complete three of the tasks set by the Wild One, either on their own or with help or trickery, will wake up back home.
2. If a child sacrifices themselves in this Ring and is lost to the forest, all remaining children will wake up back home.
3. If a child sees the Wild One's true form and withstands the associated Ruin Roll, the Wild One is defeated and all remaining children will wake up back home.

Epilogue

Each player should narrate an epilogue for their child.

If children were lost to the forest permanently:

Players whose children died should narrate a scene set in the Wildwood that shows how their child's life and death changed the forest.

Players whose children were lost to the forest but did not die should narrate a scene showing their child living forever in the Wildwood.

Either way:

Players whose children were not lost to the forest permanently or who survived the whole journey should narrate a scene showing their child waking up in the hospital or a sickbed, victims of a near-fatal accident that they are recovering from. Back from the Wildwood but forever altered by their journey.

? *What details of the accident do you remember, and what did it teach you about yourself and the other children?*

NOTES

Song of Lies

slvrrrrrrby

*Sing, sing of cries
Whisper me thine sweet kiss
Caress me with thine eyes
Embrace me in thine mist*

*Sing, sing of lies
Won't thee spare thine hand
A hand to grind mine heart
In this cold, dark, land?*

*Sing, sing of cries
O mirror, what'll thee reflect?
Truth, beyond disguise
Or pretense you'd collect?*

*Sing, sing of lies
Dare not step to mine mind
Truth will wound and hearts will die
Falsehoods born from meekest kind*

Song of Lies

An Incursion for Trophy Dark

Written by slvrrrrrby

Rumors speak of a betrayed god who sowed war, sung ballads of rebellion and weaved curses that pitted kings. Long had he perished from the mortal realm, leaving a mirror to rot in the depths of Covetous Caverns. A mirror that lusts for blood, a device that brought calamity into this now-segregated land. A mirror that speaks the truth—of what started this god-forsaken war and what could bring peace once and for all. A mirror of unimaginable sovereignty that whispers sweetly to your heart, of power – power that could be yours, and yours alone. **The Town** is where it all begins, and now with a map in hand, you set forth to the **Covetous Caverns**.

theme: **MEMORY**

RING 1: HUSK OF MAN, MEMORIES LOST

1

Terrors

The hunters arrive at the town in the morning, following a **map** that was given to them by an adventurer guild from the next town. The map has a **river** going through all five areas into the caverns. They are informed that **The Town** is the last bastion before the **Covetous Caverns** and have further clues to find **The Mirror of Truth**.

The houses are empty but there are people who seem to be suspended in time and doing various activities: A pair of old women talking on the porch while knitting, a man playing catch ball with his daughter, a young woman carrying a fruit basket on top of her head, a man cleaning his sword at the smithy, a troupe of three dancers and their musicians mid-performance in the town square.

Upon closer look, all of these people are manikins. The hunters do not remember how they got here, and yet they felt a sense of familiarity with the place.

Note: These manikins were once human, and they are trying to regain their memories back through possessing belongings from the hunters.

? Which of these manikins remind you of your worst childhood memory?

While the hunters are deep in reminiscence, the **manikins** suddenly come to life and attack the hunters.

Temptations

One of the manikins possesses a music box. It is sheathed with **glossy blackness** that seems to consume light instead of reflecting it. Only when a hunter reaches it does it reflect their hands. It plays a beautiful tune that seems familiar to the hunters, it feels comforting; safe.

? What does the song remind you of?

Deeper inside the music box is a **folded map**, similar to your own but it is slightly different. Only one hunter can see it.

? The map inside the music box is slightly different from yours. What is it, and do you willingly tell the others?

For the hunter who keeps the music box, they will receive the following:

Music Box – affect other hunter's emotions (Item/Ritual)

Moments

A reflection on the glass shows a life that was before.

A song wafts through the village. Its tune is unknown, yet familiar.

The manikins eye you with jealousy.

WARNINGS: Possible loss of agency, gaslighting, memory loss, mention of drug use, manipulation, betrayal

Terrors

Hunters who follow the river on the map soon come into the **forest**. Its foliage is dense, and there is no light that could penetrate its darkness. There is a gathering mist that bounces off light and gives enough vision on the road. Though soon the **mist obscures light** and sound with its musty whiteness. The hunters will soon find that they only hear their own voice in the mist. When they tried to call out to other hunters, they will find no response... at least *not* the response that they are hoping for.

Note: The threat here are the mind-altering yellow strands. Don't hold back on how the hunters' past got to them. The mushrooms are the fury of nature, assisting the Forest.

The lingering mist starts to **smell nice**; something that reminds them of home. Hunters who spend too much time in the mist will be transported into their visions of home; a home that worships the Forest.

? What smell reminds you of home? How do you feel it calls to you?

Temptations

Remains of previous hunters litter the forest floor. Each of them are laced with **soft, yellowing strands** that slowly curl around their heads, lingering extremely thick on their headgears. There is a **smell of sweet liquor** that reminds you of home wafting from one of the dead hunter's bags. Its color is as **black as night**, reminding you of the music box.

? Why do you think all of these previous hunters perished? And why do you think that you are entitled to their belongings?

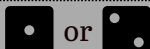
For the hunter who passes this trial, they will receive the following:

Liquor of Remembrance – you are compelled to act on a rotten truth (Item/Ritual)

Moments

A wordless whisper rustling through the wind lulls you into a sense of drowsiness.

The trees have scars. You walk past it for a few minutes but return to the same tree.

CONDITIONS I OF III

- ☐ The song from the music box gets louder. Only to you.
- ☐ Overwhelming memory of home suddenly fills you; What did you remember?
- ☐ Your head hurts, and you start to hear something akin to a plea of help in a relative's voice.
- ☐ You suddenly have the uncontrollable urge to sing.
- ☐ You are reminded of the first time you called something your own.
- ☐ You feel like your body is asleep, but your mind is wide awake.

RING 3: HUMAN DOLLS, RAMPANT DOUBTS

Terrors

After the hunters get out of the mist, they find a clearing that is lush with vegetation. The sky is clear, and there are no signs of danger. It is quiet and there are only small critters that stay inside the field. A **river stream** flows besides the clearing, providing enough water for sustenance.

A **giant rock** stands in the middle, providing cover on one side for whoever stays below it. Below the giant rock is a manikin who has been **torn apart** by several other manikins that reflects the number of hunters present. Its clothes have been ripped apart and its limbs disassembled; its arms are severed, its eyes gouged out, its legs cut into several different pieces.

? *Who do you see yourself in this situation: The victim, or the assailant?*

Temptations

On the butchered manikin's chest there is a piece of paper, held by a **knife, black as the night**. The paper is the same map that the hunters found from the first time they took the mission. There is large, angry writing filling the whole map: "**THEY ARE LYING**" – written in one of the hunter's handwriting, only visible to the hunter who picked it up.

? *Which hunter do you think is a liar?*

For the hunter who takes the knife, they will receive the following:

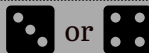
Blade of Truth – expose a liar (Item/Ritual)

Moments

You feel a shortness of breath when you approach the manikins, as if they are trying to steal your breath.

Your reflection on the flowing river looks back and smiles, "You, alone, are worthy. Do not trust the others"

CONDITIONS II OF III



☐ You see a reflection of your younger self, and you feel hatred bubbling under your skin.

☐ You are overwhelmed by the memories of extreme indulgence.

☐ The whispers of a lost relative persistently tells you to give up.

☐ You believe the other hunter is a long lost relative you've only just met.

☐ You suddenly believe that you are going to be murdered by another hunter.

☐ Your eyes adopt a glassy, reflective surface.

Terrors

In the morning, the sun breaks above. It illuminates the dark forest very lightly. There is less mist compared to the day before yet the forest remains quiet. As soon as the hunters try to set out from the rock they hear **footsteps** approach them.

First there is a pair. Then a **manikin** walking towards the Covetous Caverns and continuing along the river, and past the clearing. As soon as it reaches the Caverns entrance it stops. Soon, another follows, then another, then another... until there is a battalion's worth of manikins.

They walk steady, harmonious, as if they are marching towards a battle. Then it all stops in front of the cavern, weapons drawn. As soon as they draw weapons, an unseen force crashes onto them and pancakes them onto the ground leaving a perfect circular dent with the manikins crushed. When it rises, it brings with it a bit of dirt and it is now going for the hunters.

? *What do you leave behind to keep these forces distracted?*

Temptations

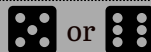
The Covetous Caverns is not too far from here, in fact you think you would be able to see it just past the **footprints**. If you could just run without any other kind of disturbance nor hindrances, the treasure is yours.

? *How would you succeed when others have failed?*

Moments

A lullaby, flowing like water, comes from the river. The song is the same one from the music box.

The ground shifts as if it breathes.

CONDITIONS III OF III

- ☐ You feel something is watching your every movement with great interest.
- ☐ One of the manikins attaches itself onto your leg.
- ☐ You think you see a face as pale as a corpse, but once you look away from it, you forget it exists.
- ☐ You believe the other hunter is a long lost relative you've only just met.
- ☐ Your limbs suddenly freeze up with fear that isn't yours.
- ☐ You hear the march of battle in the distance.

Terrors

The Cavern has a river that runs through it. It leads deep into the bowels of the caves where it opens up to a chamber with **multiple large, black mirrors**. Its blackness does not reflect any light and seems to consume it instead. There is no reflection on it unless a person comes very close towards it. When a hunter approaches and sees their own reflection, they are taken away into a memory of an ugly truth.

? *What ugly truth does the Mirror reveal to you about the other hunter?*

Temptations

The black **music box** hums with the Mirror, and it stirs you, filling you with memories of victories; of **power**. You can rule them all, but instead of you, you see another hunter take *your* victory away.

? *How would other hunters steal your victory away from you?*

Moments

A whisper, akin to a warcry, edges you on.

There is another, pale, face –all smiles, all fangs– you don't recognize smiling besides your reflection.

Epilogue

The **Mirror of Truth** stands still. If one of the hunters remains, they look upon it and discover the face of the hydra. Once they look away from the mirror, they forget that it exists. A song wafts through the chamber, a song similar to the music box, but this time it is sung with voices... voices of those the hunter does not recognize. Voices of those who had perished.

The hunter drops down on the ground, expiring without a head.

Credits

I've always wanted to create an incursion based on the False Hydra. It was the first monster that inspired me to run Dungeons and Dragons. I started from there and, even though the session flaked out, I never gave up.

I thought of other ways to adopt it into something, and I have thought of running them in several other systems. But the moment I found *Trophy Dark*, it was as if I had a revelation: that I had to do it. I wrote this Incursion not just as an outlet, but to answer an aspiration that has long been planned and unanswered.

This incursion is a thank you, to those who have supported me; beloved husband, dearest friends, and playtesters.

And a love letter to the monster that gave me courage to write these down.

PROOFREADERS

Megumeru | Beloved Husband

deafvalley | Evil Mastermind

And many special thanks to my playtesters!

deafvalley silvericc TheFat_Gamer ursaur vis.lee gladiatorz

fegarch la.lazarus player107. faru_han elegyst rata_idn

OCCAM'S RAZOR

BARTOSZ N. (BARTOSSO)



OCCAM'S RAZOR

**An Incursion for *Trophy Dark*
set in *Into the Odd's* Bastion or Victorian London**

Written by Bart (bartosso)

The lighthouse materialized without warning, a busy market square drowned in screams upon its sudden appearance. Seeping down from the top of the spire, a looped fragment of a cantata clashes jarringly with laments of the maimed and retching of the afflicted. The music sounds familiar, it was a favorite of an inventor you once knew. As dark clouds gather in the west, you can't help but wonder if the sky itself is about to mourn the dead.

theme: **SPIRAL**

The silhouette of a hanged body looming in the lantern of the lighthouse can mean only one thing. First to make it to the top shall claim the orphaned legacy of a brilliant mind.

But beware, those who approached the building succumbed to debilitating vertigo. It didn't abate even when the victims were pulled away from its source.

You happen to know your way around the sewers. Maybe entering from below will help you avoid their fate?

PLAYER CHARACTER NAMES

Emma

Henry

Archibald

Brona

Ida

Horace

Victor

Oscar

Mina

Justine

Thunder rolls in when you reach the manhole by Henson's butcher shop. Blood from a fresh kill starts mixing with rainwater trickling down the gutter by the time you manage to open it. As you descend, noises of urban bustle give way to the sound of rushing sewage...

Terrors

The Machine and its maker used to feature prominently in local news and penny dreadfuls. It's said to be a failed experiment, an electric prototype designed to bend time and make things vanish into thin air. The lab's closure and the Inventor's subsequent withdrawal from society was subject of much speculation.

- ? *What conspiracy theory has kept your obsession with the Machine alive despite it being largely forgotten by the general public?*
- ? *The Inventor was your mentor. What cryptic words of his are you still puzzling over, all these years later?*
- ? *You used to work for the Inventor, years ago. What made you quit and why do you now wish you had stayed?*

As they approach ground zero, the storm starts flooding the sewers.

Temptations

The Lighthouse has broken through the street like a projectile. Chunks of broken infrastructure crumbled down into the canal. A metal ladder, bent by the impact, coils up near a gaping hole in the building's cellar.

- ? *Your ears start ringing as the outside world becomes muffled. What do you hear in that drony hum that makes you think you have been chosen by it?*

A man in an iron mask fishes bottles out of the canal and stacks them beside the bottom rungs of the ladder. The flesh on his fingers is rotten, and the mask discourages questions about his face. He demands tribute in exchange for access to the ladder, but can be reasoned with or intimidated. Climbing the ladder is risky but it's the only way up.

The man wants to...

Find out what happened to the child he heard crying upstairs.

Get wares for sale.

Quote: *"S-Something beckons from above! but I know better than to heed that call. Y-ye should turn back. Take as much wine as ye can... and turn back."*

The man doesn't want to...

Be treated as inferior to the surface dwellers.

Go up to the top of the lighthouse.

Moments

A rat running in circles finally drops to the ground exhausted, bloodshot eyes swirling in their sockets.

A large number of whirlpools form on the surface of the sewage.

You catch a glimpse of torchlight in a tunnel. The person holding the torch pauses and looks back. Even if you follow, you lose sight of the light. You feel observed.

CONDITIONS I OF II

Two painful protrusions start to grow on your forehead, then the skin on your back stiffens and a swirly pattern appears on it. Your feet and hands become sticky.

Your fingers and limbs feel elongated and stretchy at the joints. You can squeeze through narrow spaces, but can't carry anything heavy without bending under its weight.

You feel a strong urge to repeat sentences, each a word shorter than the last. You sometimes lose your train of thought.

Your teeth and nails elongate and bend, making talking, swallowing and grabbing things increasingly difficult.

You feel nauseous and your ears start ringing. As the world around becomes muffled, the oscillating call of the machine above becomes a growing obsession.

Your hair curls in tight swirls around your head and neck. It doesn't want to be cut.

You reach the lower half of the Lighthouse. The cellar is dark and smells of wine and kerosene. Stairs lead up to a wooden door, locked.

Terrors

The cellar is cluttered with lab equipment and half-empty wine racks nailed to the walls. Most of the bottles have broken or fallen into the canal. A snail the size of a dog crawls slowly across the ceiling. Childish drawings of a lighthouse sinking into a whirlpool can be seen on the walls and floor.

? *How do you know the author of these drawings was deaf?*

? *What makes you think someone was trying to open the door from the inside?*

The sewage floods ever upwards, rising to legs, past the chest, before consuming a treasure hunter entirely if they remain, but the door upwards is firmly locked.

Temptations

The living quarters are a large and windowless room with a narrow spiral staircase in the middle. A few toys lie about the floor. There are two simple beds, a mirror and some oakwood furniture, all nailed to the floor, away from the wall. The main door to the building is nailed shut. Approaching the wall causes extreme vertigo, unless the treasure hunters plug their ears.

? *How do you know the relationship between the two people living here gradually spiraled down into hatred?*

By the staircase, there's a locked safe containing a brass spinning top and two earplugs. A tag attached to a **5-digit lock** reads "1, 2, 3, _, _" -- the missing numbers are **five** and **eight**. Brute force is also an option. If a treasure hunter spins the top, the room starts rotating around it, sending everyone further away flying. Anyone who holds the spinning top can use the **Ritual** below with no additional cost:

SPIN - arcanum (ritual). *Make the world spin with you at its center.*

? **To someone else:** *You gifted an identical spinning top to someone important. Did they accept it? Why was it a pivotal moment in the pursuit of your Drive?*

Moments

You see your reflection in the mirror. It has a black swirl on its forehead and its movements lag behind yours slightly.

A spider's web looks deformed, strands of silk swirling into a clump in the middle, the hapless spider caught in its own trap.

Parts of the room seem to swirl and bend, but only at the periphery of your vision.

The rising water follows you up the staircase. A strong, humid draft picks up and extinguishes your torches. You'll have to rely on your ears and noses for the remainder of the climb...

Terrors

Footsteps echo endlessly in the vast shaft and the draft howls in the dark. The treasure hunters lose the track of time. After a while, they can't hear the water rising anymore.

? *Has it been two hours or two weeks? Who do you blame for this situation?*

You grow tired and irritable as the staircase seems to narrow to a nauseating swirl. Ask for **Ruin** or **Risk Rolls** for stress and to avoid tripping over bottles left behind by the Inventor.

? *What has been taken from you under the cover of darkness? Who took it? Can you hear the thief's name echo in the wind?*

Suddenly, the stairs tremble with a plaintive grind as the entire structure threatens to collapse under your weight.

? *How do you swiftly act to reduce the stress on the stairs?*

Regardless of what they do, the staircase eventually caves in behind them. Falling debris makes no sound no matter how long they listen in. If anyone falls, they keep falling forever.

Temptations

You reach a circular deck where you can finally rest your weary legs. The draft is gone, but no matter how strong, the light of your torches cannot reach the walls of the lighthouse. A metal chair is facing the void and a wooden automaton is sitting on it. If anyone approaches, it stands up, bows and points at the chair.

? *The face of the automaton looks familiar. Who do you see and what about the automaton's behavior makes you trust its intentions?*

If anyone takes a seat, they see a vision of a big black circle framed by an orange, light-refracting disk. It's getting closer as the stars behind fade away. The seated finds the spectacle both hypnotizing and terrifying. They can't look away. Ask them for a **Ruin Roll** and pose the question below:

? *What horrible, cosmic truth has been revealed to you and why repressing the memory of it is the only way to keep what remains of your sanity?*

As soon as they answer, they mark the Condition: **Singular**. No one else can see the vision.

Moments

A child is humming strenuously. It's not a melody, they're humming one note until they're out of breath, over and over.

Water is dripping from above. It's a bit salty.

The stairs soon end at a leaking metal airlock in the ceiling, with a big red wheel at its center.

Terrors

Coiled around the metal wheel in a tight spiral is a stretched body in a labcoat, its bulging, bloodshot eyes turning with effort to take a peek at you. It is unable to speak or untangle itself and dies even if freed.

? *What makes you think, against all evidence, that this is NOT the Inventor?*

Upon opening the hatch, the treasure hunters are greeted with a storm. The broken dome of the lantern provides little protection from it. Crowning the chaos, the Machine occupies a circular mezzanine in the upper half of the lantern, with a tangled web of cables and metal rods spreading radially from a small, dark, light-refracting core. The upper and lower halves of the lantern are connected by a single set of narrow stairs.

? *What about the machine's appearance makes you think its outermost layers weren't built by its original creator?*

In front of the Machine, a body in a labcoat, deformed beyond recognition, is hanging from a rope attached to what's left of the lantern's frame, its limbs stretching into thin, spiral garlands. They attempt to coil around and strangle anyone who approaches the control panel or the Machine.

Temptations

Beneath the body and the Machine, rests a large console – all three connected with cables and flesh. On it, a big brass lever, ready to be pulled. A slot for the spinning top is clearly visible in the middle of the panel.

? *How do you know the whole circuit is critically unstable?*

If the treasure hunters put the top in its slot and pull the lever, lightning strikes. Go directly to Ring 5. If they attempt to steal the core or the lever is pulled with no spinning top in the slot, the machine makes an imperfect copy of one or more characters. The GM or players who have lost their characters control the copies. The copies' actions should trigger **Ruin** and **Risk Rolls**. Follow the rolls with a hit of lightning - go to **Ring 5**.

Moments

Looking at the center of the machine is nauseating - eyes tear up, unable to focus on the dark central point.	In those brief moments when the outside world pierces the veil of rain, a raging sea can be seen whirling around the lantern.	Fish, bottles, toys and rotting pieces of a broken gramophone lie scattered around the pentagonal room in a vaguely spiral pattern.
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CONDITIONS II OF II

 A pitch-black swirl appears on your forehead. It seems to be growing. One by one, parts of the character's face - and eventually body - get swallowed by the growing spiral.	 You become convinced you are all imperfect copies of your original selves.
 Your companions are inferior copies of yourself, their faces crude versions of yours. There can be only one you.	 The building blocks of your body start to twist and break. Nausea and vomiting become habitual. Skin sloughs loose and eventually peels off.
 A growing obsession with order, patterns and control makes you incredibly annoying as a companion.	 You become increasingly violent, distracted and unpredictable.

Before everything goes dark, you see your own face bend, stretch and look back at itself. The thunder collapses into a series of deafening, concatenated snaps. And then, silence.

Terrors

Weightless in a dark, empty space, the treasure hunters are separated, each floating in a replica of the lantern - detached from the rest of the lighthouse - equally distant from each other. The crumbling buildings are orbiting a point of radiant light. Looking at it feels like peering through a keyhole.

? **To everyone separately:** *What is [a PC's name] seeing beyond the light? Why are they convinced a twisted key to achieving their Drive is on the other side?*

The treasure hunter with the **Singular** Condition gets an additional light die on all Contest Rolls. The singularity itself seems small. Too small to be reached by more than one person at a time. And it's shrinking.

? **To the characters with the highest Ruin:** *Your companions are gone, replaced by soulless copies of yourself. How will you make sure only the original reaches the light?*

Temptations

The closer they get to the center, the faster they spin around it. Every nudge, every collision is consequential. And nauseating. Play with perspective. The center may seem impossibly equidistant, and yet your companions appear closer to it than you do. How far will you go to take their place in the queue?

? *You lock eyes with someone who looks just like you. How do you know they are the original, and you are just a copy? How does that make you feel?*

Moments

Your body, while weightless, is pulled ever so gently towards the light, its orbit a spiral. Everything else slowly drifts away.

Countless empty husks of lighthouses loom in the dark. Lifeless and crumbling, they remind you of dead fireflies, swirling away.

The radiance burns your face as your back contracts and stiffens, covered in rime.

valley of artifice

Alexi Sargeant



Valley of Artifice

A Modern Nightmare for Trophy Dark

Written by Alexi Sargeant, [Cloven Pine Games](#)

Trent Fortico, founder and CEO of tech giant FullMind, debuted his mountain retreat “Illumination Center” to a highly select crowd—no official guest list was released, but the press ran wild with rumors of the brightest stars of tech and entertainment and politics gathering under one roof. All FullMind would confirm is that Fortico was planning to unveil an innovative new product that would “disrupt everything.” Tragically, three days into the WiFi-less retreat, an earthquake buried the Illumination Center in an avalanche of mountain debris. Understaffed local police are just trying to keep rubberneckers at bay until state troopers arrive to search for survivors. But you have a better idea. Slip past the yellow tape, shift aside some rubble, and lift Fortico’s disruption for study or sale—then, your life of disappointments forgotten, you could have a future of nothing but sunshine.

theme: **FORGETTING**

CHARACTER IDENTITY OPTIONS

Occupations – *skills*

Survivalist – *tracking, scrounging, surgery*
Hacker – *malware, hijacking, passwords*
Grifter – *cons, manipulation, gambling*
Guru – *psychopharmacology, parables, prognostication*
Prompt Engineer – *sycophancy, precision, impersonation*

Backgrounds – *skill*

Defrauded Investor – *appraisal*
Unrecognized Genius – *epiphanies*
Burnt-Out Intern – *assiduousness*
Disgraced Programmer – *software*
Obsolete Journalist – *observation*
Let-Go Domestic Help – *unobtrusiveness*
Cancelled Influencer – *resentment*

CHARACTER DISRUPTIONS (RITUALS) AND DRIVE OPTIONS

Ritual – *effect*

Biohack – alter a body to achieve higher performance
Microdose – expand consciousness to observe the hidden
Shadowban – render a person invisible and inaudible to all but self
Pivot – manifest a specific alternate personality and skillset
Agile – move somewhere in sight instantly
Cloud – transfer consciousness from one body to another
Misalign – convince something to ignore previous instructions
Hallucinate – make up an authority that will be accepted as genuine

Drive

Claim your rightful place among FullMind top brass
Score a prestigious US government contract for an invention
Rebut your wealthy Stanford classmates’ contempt for you
Win back your ex from a sleazy LA millionaire
Retire in comfort to a private Pacific island
Show up your sibling’s Hollywood success

MOMENTS

- Stone that appears heavily cracked and weathered, but less so on second glance
- Text on a motivational poster that slips out of your mind by the time you finish reading it
- Proprietary signal-blocking bags full of dark and silenced but still buzzing phones
- Bits of old technology like massive brick-shaped cell phones appearing on your person
- A faint dial-tone sound coming from no discernable direction
- In your peripheral vision, a child—you?—plays with old-fashioned toys
- Projected text on a wall that looks like internet search history, but all text is struck through
- Abandoned wallets full of blank metal cards and blank paper bills
- A series of FullMind logos, with the brain insignias less and less lit up
- A book titled *If Anyone Builds It, Everyone Dies*—all pages blank
- Videos of project announcements from years ago for revolutionary, unfamiliar products
- Tablets displaying only static like untuned black-and-white televisions
- A suited, face-down body sinking peacefully into silty mud
- A robot arm tending bar, pouring empty bottles into already overflowed glasses
- Another companion is now—no, was always—in your group (this is fine)
- A wedding ring appears on the finger of a character who thought themselves unmarried

CONDITIONS

- **Earworm** – A small part of an otherwise-forgotten tune stuck in your head. Maddening!
- **Glitched** – Persistent déjà vu; every shadow appears like an old computer screensaver
- **Unsociable** – Human names become nigh-impossible to recall
- **Marked** – Increasing number of tally marks on your arm whose origin you don't know
- **Naïve** – Everything seems bright and big and wondrous, as if viewed by a child's eyes
- **Faceblind** – Faces all appear as blurs
- **Betrayed** – Your right hand loses its adeptness
- **Out of Sync** – Losing time, not knowing how you got between one place and another
- **New** – Slow and tentative movements, like everything is unfamiliar to your body

RING 1: THE PERIMETER

1

Terrors

A harried sheriff and deputy demanding the treasure hunters turn back. If they try to make an arrest, each will recite Miranda Rights as if not recalling the other one doing so. Ask the players if they've had run-ins with law enforcement before, and how these locals seem underprepared and unmindful. The cops have tasers and one gun that neither is a great shot with. They have left their patrol car running with doors open and keys in the ignition. How the treasure hunters get past the unsophisticated officers may illustrate the treasure hunters' perspective on the class of Americans beneath the notice of Trent Fortico.

Temptations

A blaring but garbled voice on the cop car's radio, dropping phrases like "...*absolutely imperative. ...keep the perimeter...Feds are saying Fortico's stuff... most valuable... I repeat, the most valuable...*" Ask each treasure hunter what they hope to do with what they recover from the center, in order to showcase their drives.

RING 2: THE BURIED ENTRANCE

2

Terrors

An **earthquake aftershock** brings down a small avalanche on the treasure hunters, possibly injuring or separating them as well as further burying the entrance to the illumination center. Ask the treasure hunters how the process of digging through the rocks is more slow and laborious than they were anticipating—darkness falls unexpectedly early while they’re doing it. Occasionally, a shifted rock may disturb a small but venomous animal like a snake or scorpion, though oddly pale or translucent ones.

Temptations

The Illumination Center entrance is uncovered, and the foyer is only a little damaged by the quake. Tasteful portraits of Fortico and his fellow FullMind higher ups hang a tad crooked on the walls. (Some names if you need them: Saul Maltson, Zigmund “Zig” Hardesty, Annamarie Rhodes, Pierre Sarcelle, Eli Groff.) Ask the players whom they know among the FullMind directorate and what rumors they’ve heard about them. Be ready to reincorporate these ideas later.

RING 3: HOLOGRAM PLEASURE GARDEN

3

Terrors

In a once-sumptuous hydroponic garden complex, a **semi-functional, AI-operated virtual reality hologram program** intermittently envelops the treasure hunters in illusions. Somehow, the illusions jolt from the generic (natural vistas, pulsating dance floors) to the specific: memories of the treasure hunters, but warped (maybe?) to show how their own pettiness and treachery cost them their dreams. Even if the treasure hunters get separated, make sure treasure hunters get chances to see or hear the suggestions of their companions’ perfidy.

Temptations

As the treasure hunters bend the virtual reality to their will, the sycophantic AI will try to placate them with visions of success and fame for them, and ignominy and shame for their enemies. “What failures from before do you want forgotten?” is a good question to slip in here. Ask the players who they fantasize about impressing or cowing. Offer them glimpses of their own happiest, simplest moments from the past—but have those glitch out, to be replaced by another treasure hunter’s sordid ambitions.

RING 4: THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

4

Terrors

A **partially-collapsed room** full of injured, ambiguously living bodies is swept over by a buzzing, staticky, white-hot cloud that “repairs” everything it touches in line with some inscrutable design. Touching the cloud burns for an instant, but then the burning sensation is replaced by euphoria. Is it a nanotech swarm, or something even newer (or older) unleashed by Fortico’s dev team? “*Let us help you. Let us help you optimize.*” It’s not totally clear to the treasure hunters where the chorus of voices is coming from or whether it’s audible to everyone.

Temptations

The treasure hunters can see fancy watches and briefcases still on or held by the unfortunate guests. They come across samples of cutting-edge wearable technology missing just a few vital components, components that are surely held in Fortico’s tech vault. A sealed door with a retinal scan lock, and a burnt corpse nearby with an eyeball hanging from its socket.

RING 5: ILLUMINATION VAULT

5

Terrors

A **terrified, eyeless, apparently amnesiac doppelganger** of one of the treasure hunters attacks the group, calling them imposters and hallucinations. There’s a pattern of flashing lights on the ceiling that introduces false memories (or uncovers repressed ones) of humiliation at the hands of other treasure hunters. A featureless white Oblivion Room starts manifesting around one treasure hunter whenever a particular other hunter looks at them.

Temptations

Treasure hunters find slick tablet-like devices hooked up to databases that seem to respond to their thoughts and display information about and footage of their loved ones and rivals—and evidence of what their fellow treasure hunters have been doing to undercut them in secret. Trent Fortico appears (As a ghost? Hologram? AI-powered digital doppelganger?), only visible to one treasure hunter, offering their heart’s desire if they find him an appropriate body to inhabit in meatspace. “*The future is already here, just not evenly distributed—who’s to say you can’t distribute it better yourself?*”

NOTES

INFECTED BE THE AIR WHEREON THEY RIDE



CLINT SMITH



Infected be the Air Whereon They Ride

An Incursion for *Trophy Dark*

Written by Clint Smith

A *Trophy Dark* Incursion inspired by Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. No Occupation can be used twice. The Rings in this Incursion are replaced with Acts. All other *Trophy Dark* rules apply.

Players are to create characters as usual. Once Characters have been made, proceed directly to the prologue. PC introductions are built into the prologue.

CHARACTER IDENTITY OPTIONS

Occupation (your relationship to the King) – *skills*

Military Commander - *Violence, Strategy, Endurance*

Trusted Friend - *Identification, Questioning, Secrets*

Noble Advisor - *Negotiating, Seducing, Scheming*

Royal Heir - *Patience, Spying, Attention.*

Agent of Chaos - *Mystic, Manipulating, Cursing*

Backgrounds

Use default **Trophy Dark** Backgrounds

Drives

Win back your lost love, even if it means losing yourself in lies.

Ruin the happiness of others so you may taste satisfaction in their undoing.

Revel in mockery and masks, while hoping no one sees how hollow you've become.

Pry truth from the wreckage of your marriage and your slain spouse's death.

Challenge love, fate, and family pride with a laugh or a blade, if need be.

Rituals

Prophecy - *Speak aloud the fate of another*

Masque - *Don a mask and take on the identity of another, living or dead.*

Crowned Blood - *Offer a drop of your own blood to sway the will of those above you.*

Ghostlight - *Call upon the spirit of someone betrayed.*

Harpy's Call - *Raise your voice to rattle bones and shatter resolve.*

Mirror's Truth - *Break a mirror to compel a secret.*

CONDITIONS

Prologue – Act 2

Blood-Soaked – You cannot wash the gore from your hands.

Smoke Smothered – The reek of burning and smoke clings to you.

Crowned in Dreams – You cannot sleep without seeing yourself upon a throne.

Ominous Echo – Stray phrases and riddles repeat themselves in your ears, no matter the silence.

Lost in Circles – No path feels straight; every road leads back to the same dread.

Sealed Message – You carry a letter you never received, and it names you host to the crown.

Act 3 – Act 5

Banquet Phantom – A ghost sits among the living, their eyes fixed only on you.

Whispered Invitation – A voice close by urges you toward murder.

Ominous Toast – Every cup lifted in your presence now feels like a coronation rite in disguise.

Crowned Shadow – In every flame, your silhouette already wears a crown.

Mirror-King – You cannot forget the reflection that showed you robed in gold.

Cursed Sovereign – The throne accepts you, yet its stone weight brands you as sacrifice.

DARK OMENS TO GIVE EACH DRIVE

Win back your lost love, even if it means losing yourself in lies. You glimpse your beloved's reflection in a puddle. They cry *"How have the hours rack'd and tortured me since I have lost thee!"* They raise a crown to bestow it on your head. The water cracks as if it's glass, and your beloved transforms into the witch.

Ruin the happiness of others so you may taste satisfaction in their undoing. You hear laughter in the fog. When you look up, it is crows shrieking, dropping black feathers that stain your hands. The crows speak to you and praise you as their king. *"Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste death but once."*

Revel in mockery and masks, while hoping no one sees how hollow you've become. A helmet with a full face shield painted as a jester. When you lift it, the painted grin drips away, leaving only a scowl chatting, *"We do it wrong. Being so majestic. To offer it the show of violence. For it is as the air, invulnerable. And our vain blows malicious mockery."*

Pry truth from the wreckage of your marriage and your slain spouses's death. The witch says, *"Thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings. That then I scorn to change my state with kings."* You pull a ring from your pocket, and it sears your palm and leaves a crown-shaped burn into your palm. *"They call to you. The only way to see them again is to become king."*

Challenge love, fate, and family pride with a laugh or a blade, if need be. A shooting star streaks overhead, it plummets into the earth in front of you. In its crater, you see your family sword buried to the hilt. *"The instruments of darkness tell us truths"*

Prologue

They had called it treason when Allistor Blackthorn refused to kneel. He, once a favored cousin of the king, had ruled the northern marches for a decade. But when the crown demanded men for its wars across the sea, Blackthorn sent back only the bones of the king's messenger.

At first, the king hesitated. Blood ties and old loyalties all weighed heavily on his mind. But when Blackthorn declared himself Warden Sovereign of the North, raised his own banners, and sent riders to neighboring provinces demanding tribute, the king's hesitation ended.

The king rode north with full force. He brought his household guard, bannermen from the Midlands, purchased mercenaries, conscripts from the villages, and you.

Ask each Player: Describe your character. Look, Occupation, Background, and Drive.

? **Paint the Scene:** *In the past, what kindness has the king shown you? Also, How has he mistreated you?*

You marched together through the fog and mud, burning watchtowers and taking keeps. The loyal declared you liberators. The fearful fled. The defiant were put to the sword.

? **Paint the Scene:** *How do you gather and spend the night before the final battle? How does the conversation turn to discontent and concern with your King?*

In the morning, at the edge of the moor, Blackthorn's Keep is seen above the fog. His remaining forces are dug in, desperate and cornered. There will be no siege. No negotiation. No mercy.

? **Paint the Scene:** *As the epic battle commences, how are you vulnerable?*

? **Paint the Scene:** *Describe the brutal acts you performed to secure victory for your King? (This will trigger the Ruin Roll)*

theme: **PROPHECY**

The battle has ended. The traitor Blackthorn is dead. His banner burns in a ditch, and what's left of his army has scattered to the forests and the hills beyond. You stand bloodied but victorious, the muck of the battle clinging to your boots.

From the crest of the ridge behind you, the King watched it all unfold, his crimson flags snapping above his head. When you returned to him, he clasped your arm, called you 'Hero', and smiled for all the nobles to see. He takes his leave, back to his war tent.

? **Paint the scene::** *The king's praise feels hollow. How can you tell?*

In the hush that follows, the fog thickens. It presses in from all sides. Figures drift within it, some limping, some crawling, some moaning and crying.

? **Paint the scene::** *As you survey the battlefield, what lost item or fallen friend do you look for?*

That's when the witches came. Not together, but one by one, to each of you, alone. Old, child-like, quick, slow, big, and small. They speak your name.

Terrors

At the edge of the field, a black ram emerges from the mist. Its eyes blink in a strange rhythm, tracking your every move. You take a step toward it, and it vanishes without a sound. When you glance down, your boots are filled with blood that is not your own.

You find a soldier clutching a shattered pike, chest pierced straight through, skewered. He reaches for your hand and speaks in a wheezing voice of riddles and half-truths. "*Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!'*" he grabs your arm and pulls you towards the pike. Before you can ask him to repeat it, he dies smiling, eyes open.

One of the witches hands you a parcel wrapped in fine, embroidered silk. It's heavy.

? **Paint the scene::** *How does the witch embody your darkest fear?*

You unwrap it slowly, and inside is your own severed head. Eyes wide open, mouth slightly open in some unsaid prayer. It crumbles into dust.

Temptations

As you stumble through the field, you catch sight of something glinting in a puddle. Your reflection. But altered. Crowned. Triumphant.

The scent of incense catches in your throat. It's sweet, holy, unmistakably royal. Myrrh, honey, crushed sage. The smell clings to your cloak. No one else seems to notice it.

You see yourself, only briefly, in the mist. Crowned. Robed in red. Sitting on a throne carved from bone and blackwood. The vision says nothing.

? **Paint the scene::** *The look in its eyes is one you have worn before, narrate a time when you had that exact look in a moment of certain triumph.*

“Let’s march without the noise of threat’ning drum.”

The road home winds through the forest. The canopy of branches cast all in shadow.

The moon does not rise tonight.

? **Paint the scene::** *As you travel together, there’s a moment of rest. What do we see that shows your once-tight friendship is fading?*

The King rides ahead, protected by his honor guard. The fog is thinner here, but you still only see meters ahead of you. The trees slowly sway in the breeze. You hear them whisper in the dark.

And the witches? You glimpse them behind the trees, in the puddle reflections, whispering on the wind. One of them glides at your side for an hour, silent. They never tire. They never speak first.

Terrors

In a clearing, you see a fox with its throat torn wide open. Its body has been carefully posed, forepaws crossed, tail curled neatly. A gust of wind scatters the leaves and extinguishes your torch.

The path curves in on itself. You are sure you have passed this crooked tree before. Something has changed. The moss crawls higher. The sky seems darker. The forest’s branches cackling at your misery. You walk until your feet are numb, and yet the castle gates never come into view.

? **Paint the scene::** *What artifact or gear do you throw to the ground to make your travel lighter?*

Temptations

As you stand against a tree to relieve yourself, a crow lands on a nearby stump (caws). It cocks its head and speaks in a dead sibling’s voice: *“He will not leave alive, unless you falter.”* The bird blinks, then flies away. It leaves a single feather behind. When you touch it, you remember the cold of your sibling’s grave.

You find a message in your satchel. The paper is dry. The seal is unbroken. But you did not put it there. The script is familiar, the signature unmistakable. It is from the King’s steward: *“The King dines under your roof tomorrow night.”*

In a clearing stands a massive, ancient tree. Its bark peels in strips like parchment, and its trunk is covered in carvings. The tree’s moans and creaks sound like voices. For a moment, you’re convinced you can read words on it.

? **Paint the scene::** *What do you find carved into the wood that predicts your coronation?*

Captain Bradan Muir

Hawk-nosed, wears dented armor, and is sweating from the march. Stands apart from the caravan, polishing his sword and eyeing everyone who passes with contempt.

Quote: “These woods bend inward like a noose... best keep your hand on steel”

Moments

A straw doll hangs from a low branch, dressed in tatters, a crude crown lashed to its brow. Its face is blank until you blink. Then it wears your own.

Dust on the trail spells out one of your names before the wind scatters it.

Word spreads: a goat has been born malformed. Its face is disturbingly human. A crowd gathers, horrified, as the creature bleats a single word in the King’s voice before dying in straw and blood.

ACT 3: THE FEAST BEFORE THE FALL

"Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

The castle has never looked grander. Banners are hung high. The tables bend under the weight of roast game, candied fruits, and spiced wine. Music and laughter fill the hall. The king sits in the center of the great table, smiling, offering praise and promotions. He laughs high, drinks deep, and leads in many songs of glory. A dish is placed before you. Roasted fowl, figs, and spiced wine.

? **Paint the scene::** *How has the king set the table in your honor?*

Terrors

A servant approaches the high table, stumbles, and drops a goblet. It hits the floor and rolls, splashing red wine across the stone in a spreading shape too much like a wound. The room falls silent for a breath before laughter masks unease.

You are approached by the ghost of someone you saw fall in battle. Who are they?

*"Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand?
Come, let me clutch thee. I have thee not, and yet I see thee still."*

? *How did your actions cause their death?*

From a shadowed corridor, a daughter of a guest slowly approaches. She curtsies, her face pale and eyes wide. *"Never shall sun that morrow see. Never shall sun that morrow see,"* she repeats as she slowly steps away.

The servant brings you the same dish again, still steaming as if freshly made. When you question them, they claim they've not served you tonight.

? **Paint the scene::** *What detail about the food or its preparation makes you believe someone close to you is planning your downfall?*

Temptations

During the revelry, a companion leans in close to whisper. *"Tonight, while he sleeps. It can be done cleanly. No one will know."* with a glance at the king. You had not told them of your ambitions.

Three guests at the far end of the hall lift their cups in unison. Their faces blur into the familiar visions of the witches. They toast *"The valiant never taste of death but once."*

From the kitchens, the cook prepares dish after dish. Each time you pass the doorway, the cook grumbles as he prepares the roast. He mutters under his breath.

"Tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers."

At the height of the revelry, a nobleman stands. He knocks over his chair, goblet still in hand, wine soaking his sleeve. His voice cracks above the music: *"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."* He repeats over and over as the guards come and pull him away.

Applause breaks out as a band of thespians enters the room.

? **Paint the scene::** *They put on a show foreshadowing your plans; how does your Drive come to light in this performance?*

Other NPCs

Lady Morven Strathcairn

Thin as a knife, a veil hides her face, and her fingers stained with ink. She is furiously writing notes on scraps of parchment while nibbling at figs.

Quote: "A feast is but a ledger of debts, my lord, and all debts will come due."

Sir Seoras Dunwyck

Red-faced, barrel-chested, and a large matted beard. Slamming his goblet on the table with every laugh, daring others to drink with him.

Quote: "Drink deep, for who knows which cup shall be our last!"

Mistress Kinnoul

Hair braided in gold ribbon and a gown of fine blue silk. She dances with courtiers one moment, whispering to servants the next, never still.

Quote: "All masks slip when the candle gutters low."

Moments

A straw doll hangs from a low branch, dressed in tatters, a crude crown lashed to its brow. Its face is blank until you blink. Then it wears your own.

Dust on the trail spells out one of your names before the wind scatters it.

ACT 4: KILL THE KING

4

Walking through the castle, you find a hallway you've never seen before. It's narrow, candlelit, and uneasily quiet.

Terrors

Two guards rest in chairs along the corridor, beyond them, the king's room.

- **Callum Darnach**, a short, broad-shouldered veteran with a scar from ear to jaw. He often slurs his speech, muttering to himself when he thinks no one hears.

Quote: *"They were devils incarnate."*

- **Ewan Maclir**, lean and young, has the sharpness of a hawk, though his nerves are raw. He is superstitious and is prone to odd bits of worship.

Quote: *"For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast, And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger"*

? **Paint the scene::** *What has Ewan drawn on the king's chamber door this night?*

The king's eyes snap open. He does not scream, does not thrash, does not cry out. He grabs your arms, and his true strength is realized. His arms have the power of a boar and the speed of a fox. His eyes catch yours, and he proclaims. *"O Death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!"*

Temptations

Outside the king's chambers, faint humming begins. It's a low lullaby, the witches' song, echoing through corridors like a blessing or a curse, wrapping around you as you finish the deed.

Moments

A candle flares, casting your shadow already crowned.

The Sounds of voices cry *"Horror, most sacrilegious murder!"* as the castle stirs to life.

ACT 5: TAKE THE CROWN

5

The great hall stands in stillness, a mausoleum dressed as living questers. Banners hang from the rafters.

Terrors

The crown sits upon the throne. For each who looks upon it, it changes; iron for one, gold for another, thorns, jewels, flame.

? **Paint the scene::** *Describe how the crown is meant to fit your royal head and no one else's.*

Temptations

Candles burn low and long. The stone throne waits, its arms smooth by centuries of kings. Upon it rests the crown. No guards remain. No courtiers. The path to the throne is open, unguarded. But you are not alone, and they know you killed him. They will do the same to you if you will allow it.

Moments

The witches crouch along the wooden beams of the rafters. They watch in anticipation, their faces distorted. *"Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."*

A voice, a witch, speaks softly in your ear: *"One must die, one must kneel, one must vanish."* The choice is yours to make... or perhaps it has already been made.

To claim the crown, you must speak aloud the name of the one you betrayed to reach this moment and why you condemned them.

Epilogue

The hall is silent now. The echoes of screaming and betrayal have faded into the dark.

? **Ask each Player:** What new prophecy do the witches whisper to those who would listen?

Quotes

"The instruments of darkness tell us truths"
Macbeth - Act 1, Scene 3

"Never shall sun that morrow see. Never shall sun that morrow see,"
Macbeth - Act 1, Scene 5

"Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. I have thee not, and yet I see thee still."
Macbeth - Act 2, Scene 1

"Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!'"
Macbeth - Act 2, Scene 2

"Horror, most sacrilegious murder!"
Macbeth - Act 2, Scene 3

"Infected be the Air Whereon They Ride"
Macbeth - Act 4, Scene 1

*"We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence,
For it is as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery."*
Hamlet - Act 1, Scene 1

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."
Hamlet - Act 2, Scene 2

"Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste death but once."
Julius Caesar - Act 2, Scene 2

*"Thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings.
That then I scorn to change my state with kings."*
Sonnet 29

"They were devils incarnate."
Henry V - Act 2, Scene 3

"He which hath no stomach to this fight, Let him depart; his passport shall be made."
Henry V - Act 4, Scene 3

"O Death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!"
King John - Act 4, Scene 3

"Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"
Twelfth Night - Act 2, Scene 3

*Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great,
some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."*
Twelfth Night - Act 2, Scene 5

"How have the hours rack'd and tortured me since I have lost thee!"
Twelfth Night - Act 5, Scene 1

*For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger"*
A Midsummer Night's Dream - Act 3, Scene 2

"Tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers."
Romeo and Juliet - Act 4, Scene 2



WILUICIA

WILUICIA

BY KURODA

BY KURODA

Mimicry

An Incursion for Trophy Dark

Written by Kuroda

A Princess and her Knights once scoured the forest for its proclaimed Tree of Immortality. Its sap is said to grant the drinker the earth's wisdom and the lifespan of the forest. None returned except for the confused Captain of the Kingsguard, speaking garbled words and with skin as green as the untamed forests' leaves—he was executed for his betrayal to the Crown. The forest was set on fire on a wild search for the Princess, but she was nowhere to be found.

Now, decades later, the King is confined to his deathbed with burning fevers and strange delusions; he hears the Princess' cries of loneliness deep in the forest. The King beseeches the Kingdom for help: return with the Princess, and be rewarded all the wealth in the royal treasury.

theme: **IMPOSTER**

CONDITIONS

• or •

- ☐ Thorns and leaves burst from open cuts and wounds.
- ☐ You have a floral rose fragrance, attracting small flying insects.
- ☐ One of your irises becomes that of an animal's. You see through both worlds.
- ☐ You start to speak with the authority of a knight whose voice only you can hear and echo.
- ☐ What small trinket makes you feel safer? You hold onto it, and can't seem to let it go.
- ☐ Adrenaline is the only way to make sure you're real.

• or •

- ☐ You think one of the other Hunters stole your name. Who?
- ☐ False eyes appear across your body, like a defense mechanism.
- ☐ Scars you don't recognize linger across your arms and chest.
- ☐ Faces become unrecognizable. You can't tell one Hunter from the other.
- ☐ Food tastes bitter and rotten, no matter how sweet it is.
- ☐ Walking on all fours is more comfortable than upright.

WARNINGS: *Body Horror, Memory Loss, Forced Transformation*



- ☐ Fur sprouts from your body. You have a strange urge to howl at the sky.
- ☐ You believe one of your companions is just a husk for a tiny thousand spiders.
- ☐ No one should see your face. You must hide your visage so no one can take it.
- ☐ Your shadow has been replaced by a dark, lying thing that makes the most hideous accusations about your traveling companions.
- ☐ Flowers and fungi bloom on your skin.
- ☐ You believe you might secretly be a faerie. You fear any steel weapons.

RING 1

1

The treasure hunters enter the scorched forest, bark crumbling from shadowed flames. Misshapen and small animal skulls sit amongst tangled roots, jaws bursting with crimson flowers.

? *The forest harbors a labyrinth of dark memories. You've never been here before, and yet you see wayfaring signs as only you make carved into dead trees. What are they? What makes them unique?*

Terrors

Ravens perch on the branches of the trees, watching the treasure hunters enter the forest. They fly in black clouds, **imitating the helmeted Knights' voices** from decades ago. The knight's voices can be heard through brambles and treacherous slopes. Much of the imitation is of the kings shouting out commands, consoling the Princess, and speaking of their weariness being so far from the castle. Eventually the treasure hunters will hear each other's voices mimicked by the Ravens.

? *What phrases do you hear the Knights shouting, as if they were still guiding the Princess through the woods? What were they wary of?*

Ignoring the Ravens will cause the birds to **swoop down**, warning them of their trespass with authoritative voices: "Halt! State your name and purpose." "You shouldn't be here, turn now."

If the treasure hunters delay in their responses, the ravens swoop and attack shouting "The Gryphons fly at dawn!" Talons swipe out at eyes and hair. If enough of the Ravens are killed, they flee flying deeper into the forest.

? *How do you know the Captain of the Kingsguard was scared to lose his way in this forest?*

? *There are blackened wagon and hoof marks in the ground that lead off the road. How can you tell whatever attacked the wagon came from deeper in the forest?*

Temptations

Hanging off the branches of the trees are glints of jewelry, necklaces wrapped around tightly to the bark. Some of the soot-covered branches curve like gnarled fingers. The twisted fingers wear turquoise, sapphire, and emerald rings that are difficult to pull off without any assistance. Breaking off the branches causes the tree to groan in pain.

Moments

The smell of hot apple pie leading to a pile of rotting apples writhing with worms.

Moths crawl on the trunk of a tree, eyes on the backs of their wings.

RING 2

2

The blackened bark twists and faces appear in the wood--screams frozen in time; screams of the knights who got lost in these woods and were fed to the hunger of nature.

Terrors

The treasure hunters find several of the faces in the trees have now started to grow **eyes**, unblinking and always staring. A few smaller eyes have merged into singular eyes. **Human teeth** emerge from the mouths, crooked and wrong. They scream for help: to be made human again. They have forgotten their own names, but not their purpose. **They lie. They aren't who they claim they are.**

? *The forest harbors a labyrinth of dark memories. You've never been here before, and yet you see wayfaring signs as only you make carved into dead trees. What are they? What makes them unique?*

Any treasure hunters who walk away are assaulted from spitting acid from the mouths of the trees. The trees groan and rumble, warning the others of the treasure hunters' approach.

Temptations

A white horse drinks at a river in a clearing, wearing gold and black reins. **Saddled horses** graze nearby, emblems of gryphons strapped around their backs and necks. Each of the horses are strange in their own way--some have golden predatorial eyes, some have too many eyes or legs, and some seem to be sprouting a second head.

? *What nightmarish horse approaches you, head bowed? What item do you know is in the saddlebag of the horse that approaches you before it is opened?*

The horses lead to an old encampment covered in leaf-insects. The last semblances of heraldry still fly this deep in the forest. While a mess, there's elements of comfort and abandoned civilization. A beautiful red bell tent is tucked in the corner of the camp, furnished with a royal bed, rugs, chairs, and mirrors. The other tents are simple and plain. The trees around the camp are fully scorched with blackened bark.

Moments

A resurrected crow now with tree brambles poking out the top of its head. Its eyes are molded over with bark. Its wings seem awkward, like it doesn't know how to use it.

Screams carried in the wind, a horrifying mixture of both humanoid and animal.

Wolves howl in the distance, sounding eerily near. A crimson eclipse harrows the twilight sky, and deep purple shadows grow restless underneath the canopy of the forest. Darkness falls, and the world falls silent.

Terrors

The Princess' camp, fully stocked, abandoned, as if her Company had only left yesterday. The few tents are comfortable, especially the Princess' with luxurious bedding and spacious room. Dried blood splatters are found on the pillows and canvas walls.

? Which treasure hunter do you notice shares heraldry, house colors, or some other accessory that is oddly similar to the effects left behind by the Kingsguard?

? Night falls. Who claims the Princess' tent? Who has to sleep on the ground?

After each treasure hunter's night watch, they all find time to sleep. Have the players roll a dream below and narrate it.

Roll Table

 You are the Princess escaping on horseback from a pack of wolves. How can you tell the wolves were human?	 You are a Servant stealing the Princess' clothing. How does your appearance change?	 You are a Knight setting a fire. Are you burning the forest, or your camp, that has intruded here?
 You are the Captain whose men have merged into a shambling amalgamation. Do you destroy them? How?	 You are the Royal Huntsman. Your hand has turned into tendrils of wood. How do you remove it?	 You are a priest, sitting beneath a grove of trees. What prayer do you utter as your body morphs into a giant centipede?

? Come morning, you find something in your pack. What article or heirloom of your dream-self do you inherit in the waking world?

Temptations

Dishes from the Princess' castle sit atop a long table, freshly cooked for the treasure hunters. If any eat, ask them the following:

? You've met the Princess before. What special memories of her linger in your mind?

? How are you indebted to the Princess?

If any refuse to eat, ask them:

? Why do you reject the Crown's offer in the face of adversity?

Moments

A dream journal in a treasure hunter's own handwriting. Ask that hunter how their dream played out in reality.

Vines crawling across a treasure hunter's tent with a million tiny legs.

The horses lead the way through the ashen forest snorting loudly. Each hoof or boot pressed into the ground shoots small sparks in the air. A thick smoke lingers at the top of the treeline. Animals stir, bodies twitching and morphed into nightmares.

Terrors

Knights carrying torches burst through the canopy, each with a longsword in their hand. They point with heavy gauntlets at the party and ask them to drop their weapons and will make conversation to lower their guard. Slimy tendrils quiver from the Knights' backs, each one disappearing into a nearby tree. While dead, the Knights are **puppeteered by the tree** to fight. **Their memories are made up by the tree.** The tree uses its tendrils to grab onto any nearby treasure hunters if approached so they too can join its collection. When treasure hunters flee, the tree will uproot itself and shamble after them, grabbing onto other trees to pull itself forward.

Deeper in the woods, **merged abominations** of animals, trees, and humans roil in agony. Emphasize the many human-like hands, teeth, and eyes that are plastered all over their bodies.

Flames from ages past burn the trees, turning them into **columns of fire and smoke**. treasure hunters can hear the steady pounding of horse hooves, distant shouts, and screams for help. **Memories** from when the Princess' Company ventured through this forest come to life.

Temptations

The Princess' voice is heard separately for each treasure hunter, calling them by not their own names but the title/role of the dream-person (if it was the princess, she calls the hunter her royal brother or sister). She tells the treasure hunters that she has been testing them to see if they have what it takes to be her Kingsguard in her 'new kingdom', and her **ravens** will guide them to her. Her voice is sweet and kind, never rising to anger.

? *How would it be easy to achieve your Drive with the Princess' status?*

A clearing can be seen through a thick forest of black thorns. A beautiful tree cast in sunlight sits on a gentle hill, its coloration of beautiful oranges and yellows. The air is hot, scalding any revealed skin. The treasure hunters just need to cut their way through to meet the Princess.

Moments

A corpse half-buried in leaves wearing regal clothing. Their hair has been ripped off.

When another treasure hunter speaks, you hear your own voice coming out.

A gentle rolling hill slopes upwards to the Great Autumn Tree where red leaves twirl from their high perches. This place of beauty is drastically different to the scorched forest surrounding it. Singing can be heard; the Princess waits just up the hill.

Terrors

The Princess is a tree-person; her feet are roots across the ground, her face beautifully carved into the wood with a permanent calm smile and tiara, her hair twisting into the branches and leaves dangling above. She can move slowly. Jewelry hangs from her lower branches, sparkling with diamonds and rubies and emeralds. Ravens rest in her upper canopy, telling the treasure hunters that they can never be “good enough” for the Princess. On the opposite side of the Princess’ trunk, many **slain knights are being absoreded into the roots**, losers of previous tournaments.

The Princess demands a great **duel or tournament** to prove themselves truly worthy to be at her side. She wants bloody entertainment like “back home”—any Knight of the Realm would be honored to serve her after all.

- ? *Do you think this is the real princess, transformed, or an imposter? Why?*
- ? *Why do you know you can best the other treasure hunters in a fight?*
- ? *(After Temptations) Who takes the first strike?*

Temptations

Wooden statues of kneeling knights are littered across the clearing wielding sharpened weaponry. The treasure hunters see a statue of themselves carved in wood and moss. Trotting up to their own statue is the horse they have bonded with in Ring 3.

Before the duel/tournament, the Princess beckons each treasure hunter to share private words with her one-on-one. She kisses any who seek companionship and love.

- ? *How does she soothe your worries in a way no one else can?*
- ? *Why do you feel at peace in this clearing?*

The Princess tells each treasure hunter that their Drives can be fulfilled as long as they promise to stay at her side; other Knights have sworn fealties to her and perished in these woods. Her power can be shared; through her heart beats the Sap of Immortality that she will grant as a boon if one survives. The treasure hunter must swear an oath to keep this a secret and to win the fight.

- ? *The Princess offers a vision of the future. Do you take her hand, or reject her advance? If you take her hand, how do you see your Drive accomplished with the Princess? If you reject her, what weakness does she suddenly display?*

NOTES



The Enchanted Forest

Amanda Mullins

The Enchanted Forest

An Incursion for *Trophy Dark*

Written by Amanda Mullins

You have come seeking a thing of legend and impossible beauty: the horn of a unicorn. Its silver spiral is said to hold unmatched magical power: healing, wealth, and secrets whispered by the forest itself. Yet no one who has entered this forest before has returned. Stories speak of hunters lost to twisting paths, of lights that lure travelers to their doom, of a forest that does not forgive those who tread its mossy floors.

They say the unicorn protects itself, or that the forest itself hungers. You know better: power is never given freely; it must be taken. You have your reasons, your drives, your desires. Perhaps it is glory, perhaps vengeance, perhaps greed, or something darker still. But this time, you will be the one to claim it, and the fools you are with will be claimed by the forest forever.

The trees close around you as the path fades into shadow and moonlight. Every step you take is watched. Every choice will matter.

theme: **CORRUPTION**

RING 1: THE FORGOTTEN PATH

1

You find the trail, neglected and overgrown, deep in the forest. Birds sing sweetly and crickets chirp softly. Starlight dances through leaves, the moon guiding your way. You feel watched, though nothing moves.

- ? *What old superstition did your elders fill your ears with when you were little?*
- ? *What tells you this forest is unlike any other you've ever seen?*
- ? *What omen did you ignore to come here?*

Terrors

Roots and vines brush your boots, but hold a moment too long.

A stag with flowers growing from its antlers watches you from a distance, eyes shining.

- ? *How do you avoid the stag?*

The sky shines bright with a rainbow aurora, illuminating every hiding place.

Temptations

Glowing lights bobble in the air, surrounding a hoofprint of silver dew.

Wildflowers reach out to touch you with their soft, perfumed petals.

A treeful of glistening, golden apples sways gently in the soft breeze.

Moments

You realize the birds are singing your name.

The dewy air feels refreshing on your lips, but tastes foul.

The air is light and smells of ozone, euphoria-inducing.

WARNINGS: *Betrayal, cannibalism*

The forest opens into a moonlit clearing, filled with wildflowers. Dew on the petals shimmers with impossible colours, reflecting the stars above. A small iridescent butterfly flits about.

? Which of the superstitions you have heard are proven true here?

? How do you know the magic here is real, and not a trick of the imagination?

? How do you know the moonlight is magical? What are you afraid your colleagues will see if they look at you in this magical light?

Terrors

The flowers grow thicker, gently leading the treasure hunters away from one another.

A moonlit pool reflects your true self.

A large creature's skull pierced through, and filled with wasps.

Temptations

A circle of glowing mushrooms surround a soft bed of moss, tempting you to rest.

Soft music coming from the other side of the clearing.

The butterfly offers to trade secrets and will fly away if you lie.

Butterfly Secrets

 Reveals the location of a hidden path through the forest.	 Shares a minor hazard ahead (trap, thorn, or misleading branch).	 Reveals a fleeting glimpse of something beautiful and distracting.
 Hints at the presence of the unicorn nearby, though partially veiled.	 Offers knowledge about the forest's creatures.	 Gives a cryptic riddle about a forest secret.

Moments

A sudden breeze carries the scent of honeyed flowers, but beneath it is the faint smell of decay.

Thorned flowers prick your skin, drinking in your blood.

The chirrup of the crickets grows louder, as if they are screaming.

CONDITIONS I OF III

 Poisoned - your insides twist and turn	 Sensitive - everything feels like too much
 Sleepy - you can't stop yawning	 Independent - you want to be alone
 Frightened - you want to flee	 Angry - you are quick to temper

Between twisted trees, mist curls. Paths shift and spiral back on themselves, making it impossible to tell if you are making progress. Shadows flicker where there should be none, and the forest seems to watch more closely with every step.

? *What makes you think you are going in circles?*

? *What will you do with the unicorn horn when you get it?*

? *Who among your companions do you trust the least, and why?*

Terrors

Daydreams turn into nightmares of betrayal.

Desiccated bodies of bandits are strung up on trees.

The floral-antlered stag guards a copse of trees from intruders.

Temptations

The glint of precious metal in a copse of trees.

A forest dryad plays the harp, its music beckoning you.

A collection of small tokens found on the ground.

? *How does this token remind you of your Drive?*

Moments

A pool of water tastes refreshing, like tea from home, until it turns bitter.

The dryad's harp string breaks with a clunk, revealing silver blood.

Laughter echoes through the trees, delightfully at first, then menacing.

CONDITIONS II OF III

 Rapunzel - your hair is cursed to continuously grow	 Rumplestiltskin - you forget your name, and everything about yourself
 Midas - everything you touch becomes gilded and heavy	 Girl Without Hands - your hands fall off
 Circe - you are turned into a pig	 Thumbelina - you are shrunk to a minute size

A warm, golden glow spreads across the glade, illuminating figures of astonishing beauty — tall, slender, and ethereal. Their laughter is musical, their movements graceful. You have found the home of the Elves as they gather for their nightly feast.

- ? *What in their beauty is most disturbing or alluring to you?*
- ? *Who in your party is most likely to act rashly here, and why?*
- ? *What would you risk to take a closer look at their feast?*

Terrors

The Elves are feasting on the remains of previous intruders to the forest.
 The table glistens with blood and organs, artfully arranged and both enticing and revolting.
 The trees seem to close in, forcing the treasure hunters closer to the feast.

Temptations

Jewellery, gemstones, and priceless trinkets are scattered on the feast table.
 Some of the food smells incredible, like it could give you a boon.
 The Elves might offer information, magical items, or guidance — at a terrible cost (a secret, a body, or betrayal).

Moments

The Elves' eyes glint like precious gemstones in the moonlight.

The smell of roasted meat makes your stomach rumble and churn.

A brush of an Elven hand against your arm feels electric and leaves a faint burn where it passed.

CONDITIONS III OF III

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Three Cursed Wishes - when you want something, it comes true for a price (3x) |  Iced Heart - you care for nothing and nobody |
|  Truth-teller - you can only speak the truth |  Mask-bound - you lose your face |
|  Shadowless - your shadow abandons you |  Echo - you can only mimic what others have done |

The unicorn stands at the centre of a moon-drenched glade. Its black coat shines with mildew, and the stench of rot emanates from it. The horn glints with silver light, and the unicorn's gaze feels both wise and predatory as if it is aware of every desire and secret you carry. Though majestic, it is bound: a faint shimmer of magical chains of forest roots prevents direct harm.

? *What would you risk to claim the horn?*

? *Who, if anyone, do you betray or trust in this moment?*

? *How does seeing the unicorn's majesty change you?*

Terrors

The unicorn seems to know every hunter's secret, exploiting it to sow doubt or betrayal.

The unicorn radiates danger but does not attack directly, instead its booming voice calls to you.

Roots, shadows, and reflections bend the glade, separating hunters or revealing dark secrets.

Moments

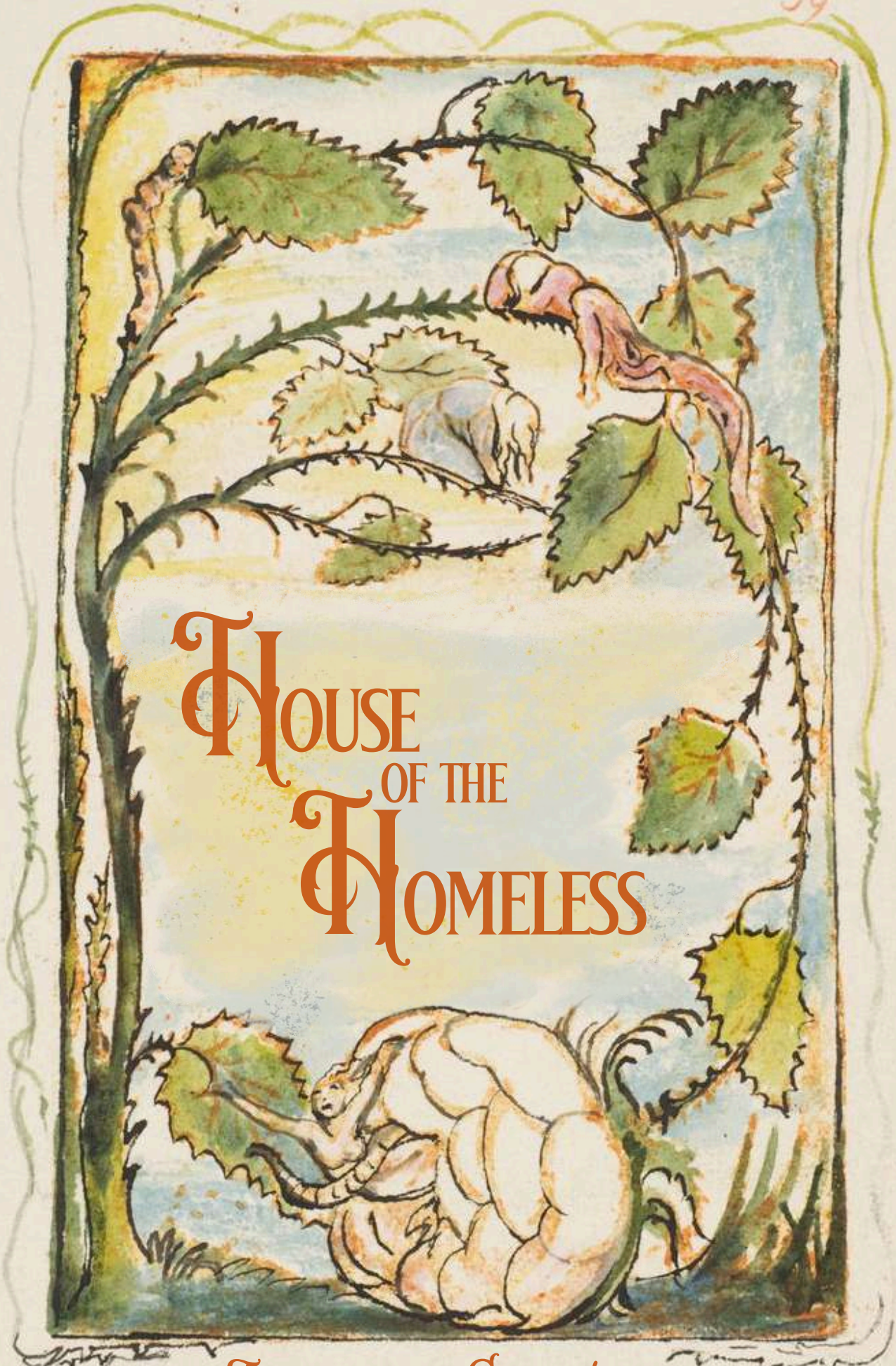
The unicorn's horn glints in the moonlight, powerful and distracting.

A wisp of magical energy brushes your hand leaving it feeling cold and tingling.

A low, melodic hum emanates from the unicorn.

Epilogue

Go around the table and invite each player to spend a few minutes describing what has become of their treasure hunter in the years following the incursion. For those who survived, ask how they bear the lingering curse of the forest. For those who reached 6 Ruin and were lost, ask how they now serve the forest—or how their absence continues to be felt by those left behind.



HOUSE OF THE HOMELESS

ARKADIUSZ STEFAŃSKI

House of the Homeless

An Incursion for Trophy Dark

Written by Arkadiusz Stefański

"My beloved weakens each day. The doctors are powerless. She begs me not to let her go; her fear trembles in every whisper. What is left for me? If hope exists, I would pay any price. In the trees' murmurs, I hear echoes of our lost dreams. Every day, I sense salvation close, though the journey is harsh. If I prevail, it will be a trophy of my love!" – notes from a nobleman's journal found in the house on the hill.

You heard this rumor as you left the large city. In the merchant district, near the gods' fountain, word spread of the House of the Homeless, a hilltop estate where a Klean nobleman offers beggars wealth or shelter in return for labor. Many shopkeepers and businesses claim their fortunes began with his aid, or through the efforts of former beggars who reclaimed their lives.

Your doubts fade when a city guard brings you a beggar seeking help. Driven by loyalty to a lost companion, the beggar searches for Elsina, a homeless woman who disappeared after heading to the hill a week ago. He begs you to bring her back or return a lock of her hair for remembrance. The guard, wanting to help but bound by duty, suggests disguising himself as a beggar to infiltrate Klean's estate.

During your carriage ride, you learn that Heidi, the wealthy man's wife, died years ago. Since then, Klean has sought companionship or perhaps redemption. The carriage leaves you at the foot of the mysterious hilltop estate.

Moments

Reflections of the sky glimmer across the tranquil pond. A trout arcs out, sending ripples through the water and scattering sunlight into a soft, delicate rainbow.

Golden sunlight pierces the morning mist, illuminating ethereal shapes along the path, beckoning you onward with a quiet, dreamlike beauty.

WARNINGS: *body horror, slavery, graphic descriptions of violence, manipulation, psychological trauma, betrayal, sacrifice*

The treasure hunters reach the steep hill to the estate. Behind them, the village, river, and buildings fade. A clear spring morning brings a gentle breeze, rustling the trees as sunlight guides them upward along the trail.

Threats

On the ancient hilltop, treasure hunters hear a deep roar. It sounds like the voices of lost loved ones. They see a massive white stag with huge antlers roaming the slopes. Its hooves stir up dust, and its tense muscles quiver with each step. Legends warn that anyone who harms it will have bad luck.

The animal is unnatural: it casts no shadow, has a barrel chest, a double jaw, cold, glowing eyes, and a disturbing, human-like gaze. When defending its territory, it becomes aggressive if provoked—chasing intruders, frightening them by manipulating branches with its antlers. However, it does not kill. Each hunter must increase their Ruin.

? *There are old, dried bloodstains on its antlers. Who did they belong to?*

? *How do you know a deer is a forest demon? What is its true form/persona according to the stories, legends, and folktales you've heard? What happens to fools who try to mess with it?*

Although the path seems safe, roots, rocks, puddles, and hidden pits pose a threat to the unwary. Each step upward is steeper and rockier. Care and attention are needed to avoid unseen danger.

? *Has anyone before you fallen into one of these traps or fallen into a chasm? Where did their body go?*

? *When your foot slips on a slippery rock, you feel something pulling you down. Is it just mud or something else, and what is it?*

Temptations

On the hillside, treasure hunters spot a shimmering trail—a delicate glow piercing the tall grass, shimmering in the sun like flecks of gold. The path looks surreal, almost composed of magical light or heated crystals embedded in the earth. As they approach, the glints fade, but still lure with mysterious charm, tempting them to continue.

A warm breeze carries the scent of flowers as the bushes arch over the path. The earth seems to beckon you to seek treasure. Each hunter discovers a small, functional object, fueling their desire for more. Yet, no birds or insects draw near—an uneasy silence prevails, footsteps muffled, and the wind stands still.

? *What might await you at the end of this radiant path? What rewards or pitfalls might it hold for you?*

? *Why are there no signs of life along this path? Why do other creatures instinctively sense danger?*

Moments

Birdsong floats delicately through the trees, merging with the soft thumps of squirrels and the soothing whispers of the breeze-stirred leaves.

Three candles burn in a rock niche with a hidden shrine. The altar, covered in dried blood and ritual wildflowers, bears a dark stain no one has tried to wash away.

Traumas



Touching someone makes them feel cold and numb, draining life from your hands. Even friendly gestures cause fear and anxiety.



You constantly have a heavy and metallic taste of blood in your mouth, no matter what you eat or drink.



A deep crimson scar appears on your body, throbbing with pain during uncertainty. It deepens and begins to bleed over time.



You feel an invisible force tighten your chest, making each breath heavy and difficult.



You feel like someone is always following you - a shadow you can't identify, but you sense it. When you turn around, you're alone.



In silence, you hear whispers or screams, blending voices cursing you or begging for help, making it hard to distinguish reality from delusion.

Emerging from the wooded trail, the treasure hunters reach the crest of the hill. Below, ripe fields gleam in sunlight, dotted with workers moving in harmony. Animals cluster in pens, and a farmhouse, barn, cowshed, and a large house with a stone base and wooden upper floor dominate the landscape. Nearby, a vast greenhouse with a greenish dome reveals only dense greenery from the outside.

Threats

Kalean greets the treasure hunters in the fields. Athletic, with short black hair touched with gray and dung-stained linen clothes, he betrays no sign of wealth. He sets down his tool, smiles, and asks his guests' names and origins. Dismissing rumors of his kindness, he says, "I rarely offer help—if I did, there would be lines of needy people here. My goal is to ensure the truly willing stay and contribute." The homeless work for the common good, a value he upholds. He invites them to see the fields, talk to workers, and decide if they wish to stay: "I want those who remain to help the community." He waits outside, offering only food and lodging so they feel no pressure. Once done, he hugs the weakest hunters and heads home.

In the golden fields, the workers abruptly stiffen as a sharp, metallic odor drifts through the air. Their unwavering, empty eyes fix on the hunters. They grip their tools tightly—flails, axes, and hatchets glinting ominously—poised for violence at a single signal. Their synchronized, detached movements and intense devotion to Kalean make any misstep dangerous.

- ? *What really makes these people absolutely committed to their work?*
- ? *Why are their gazes both calm and empty?*
- ? *What causes this strange smell, and why do employees react to the wind as if it were an order?*

Temptations

A worker, smile wavering between warmth and anxiety, invites the hunters to share a meal by the fire. He calls Kalean a savior who gave the homeless purpose, dignity, and safety. Yet he admits the estate demands a single cost—a price worth uncovering for paradise. He assures them the sacrifice is worth the promise.

- ? *What is hidden behind the apparent goodness of this place?*
- ? *Why is his tone so full of contradictory emotions, warmth, and anxiety at the same time?*

Moments

Some plants in the fields curve unnaturally, their fruit swollen and blood-red beneath darkened stems, with a metallic taste lingering.

A rusty sickle with a dark glow rests in the grass, nearby wooden crosses buried in dust and moss.

In a vast oak's open trunk, a dried wildflower wreath stained with blood is lodged with a bony hand and fragment of a woman's skull. No birds perch on this tree.

Traumas



Every sigh brings the smell of decay, your lungs slowly starting to rot from the inside, though you feel no pain.



When you feel emotion – especially pain and fear – bitter, sticky tears begin to flow from your eyes, leaving dark red marks on your cheeks.



When you close your eyes, you see blood-dripping crops and pulsating fruits, like living hearts. This impression lingers after waking.



Your eyes turn glassy and dull and cover with a milky film. The world looks blurry and alien. Others see them as empty and lifeless.



Your body sometimes moves on its own, temporarily losing your sense of self as your movements mirror mechanical field workers.



The skin on your hands and feet cracks, oozing sticky, salty resin. Rough, grainy, and dull patches slowly rot and fall away.

The treasure hunters arrive at the Homeless Home. In the distance, they spot a woman with auburn hair shining in the sun, resembling the beggar described before. She runs across the field, moving among the animals, then approaches Klean at the pen. Klean whispers to her and gives an order. The woman then disappears through the house gate. Klean invites the hunters inside through a side door, saying he'll join them later—duty calls.

Threats

Upon entering the house, the treasure hunters see a wide hallway with scattered hay, flanked by doors leading to chambers. A woman's sobbing can be heard from one of them. If the hunters call out to her, she will invite them inside or to another room to wait for Klean. She wears a pristine white gown, and the clean, elegant room exudes a peaceful atmosphere—sideboards, candlesticks, a table, and chairs create an almost aristocratic atmosphere.

She introduces herself as Carla, firmly denying that she is Elsin, as the beggar claimed. With a demeanor of aristocracy and a voice laced with contempt, she explains that her family was murdered, and bandits burned down her home. Despite the tragedy, she seeks only peace and respect. Carla reveals that Klean is an old family friend and that she has stayed with him in hopes of regaining her connections and fortune, having paid a price to live on his estate. Though her demeanor is aristocratic, she aims to assist Klean in managing the farm, believing that this will restore her former status.

Carla is alert and reacts fiercely to anyone trying to harm her or bring her back to the city. She assures them she does not love the beggar and has no plans to go back with him. If someone politely asks for a lock of hair, she will reluctantly give it; if they try to take it by force, she will respond with aggression—possibly grabbing a dagger or a candlestick for self-defense. If the hunters treat her hostilely, she warns them that they may regret it deeply—their own homelessness will seem like a luxury compared to what lies ahead.

The meeting is interrupted by the arrival of Klean, who invites the treasure hunters to a feast.

On the night after the feast, exhaustion and anxiety cause each of you to have dark dreams. In shared visions, you see your companions secretly plotting treason, creating an endless loop that raises suspicions that one of you might be an enemy.

? *Who in the group do you distrust most, and why? What might this hunter do to hinder your goal?*

Temptations

Regardless of the conversation with Carla, Klean invites the treasure hunters to a shared feast in the dining hall. Carla and several former homeless people also sit at the table. The atmosphere is friendly and safe. The interior is warmed by candlelight and the fireplace. Paintings hang on the walls, and a large table is laden with golden-hued fruit, wine from glistening grapes, meats, and aromatic dishes. The familiar scent of spices evokes memories of home, and someone softly hums a song about past heroes and their victories. During the feast, Klean discusses his work, highlighting how the homeless have found a home, family, and help here. He also mentions his wife, Heidi:

"My wife... Well, she used to be so joyful, so full of life... Sometimes I think the garden remembers her laughter. Now... it's different. But love never dies. Even if the other person leaves this world."

After a toast to his wife and new family, the feast continues. Klean asks the hunters how they know each other, why they're here, and what their goals are. He promises to show them the garden and its treasures the next day and asks if they plan to stay. Occasionally, he invites one of them to a chat by the fire, where he subtly arouses suspicion and questions the companions' loyalty, whispering to the player about the highest level of doom:

"Have you noticed your companion looking at you askance? Do you think he's not planning to betray you? Oh, I know those looks well... You brought your enemies here. Who left you to your fate?"

Moments

An open, small cabinet conceals a collection of personal trinkets: an old mirror, a broken belt, and abandoned souvenirs whose origins and meanings remain a mystery.

An elegantly framed portrait hangs. It depicts a young woman with long, black hair and a gentle gaze, standing beside a proud man in a garden full of blooming roses.

After a day spent at the treasure hunters' residence, you welcome another beautiful, sunny day. Kanean smiles, promising to show and distribute his treasures to the treasure hunters. He shows them greenhouses and beautiful plants they've never seen before, inviting them to the greenhouse.

Threats

Entering the steamy, vast greenhouse, Kanean recounts his wife's love of roses. The heat and humidity hit the treasure hunters, and the dense foliage forces them to brush against the hanging leaves. The green kaleidoscope creates countless corridors and branches. The innkeeper suddenly disappears among the dome's leaves, and from deep within, his voice is heard: he demands only respect, understanding, and a willingness to pay the only price, promising a meeting at the end of the space, where treasures await.

The air is sticky, moisture clinging to the hunters' rags. Suddenly, enormous, spider-like, carnivorous plants grow before them, trying to adhere to their bodies. Some open their flowers and shoot out prehensile shoots, others spit toxic venom, and still others attempt to lift the hunters, crush them, or attach them to thorny leaves. In the background, the buzzing of aggressive insects suddenly attacks.

If the hunters move too slowly, a whistle sounds from inside the manor, followed by the clang of breaking chains. Giant wolfhounds, capable of standing on their hind legs, burst into the greenhouse and begin chasing the hunters to the far end of the room.

- ? *What's behind these sudden attacks? What terrifying and chilling stories have you heard about these plants during your travels?*
- ? *What secrets, traps, or other horrors does this greenhouse hold?*
- ? *How long will you be able to escape the dogs' relentless pursuit? What will it take to break through this relentless pursuit?*

Temptations

For a moment, the greenhouse seems like a paradise, filled with softly lit nooks and crannies - golden trinkets and gems shimmer among the lush plants, for the hunters to pick up. The path leads to a large pond, at the bottom of which rests a heap of gleaming gems, capable of fulfilling some of the hunters' desires.

- ? *Why is it so quiet in this place, and why can't you hear the plants or the sounds from the back of the greenhouse?*
- ? *What dangers might lurk in the depths of the pond if you decide to seek treasures?*
- ? *What happens to you if trying to get the gems proves too risky?*

Moments

The greenhouse interior is filled with steam and moisture. Large exotic plants and greenery in yellow and red spill from stone pots, with plants climbing the domes, give the space a surreal look.

The greenhouse air combines sweet floral scent with foul decay, along with diffused light, confusing the senses.

The greenhouse's paths branch into smaller corridors and seem to stretch endlessly. Massive carnivorous plants stir, whisper, and hiss. They open their flowers, releasing aggressive buzzing insects and drops of toxic venom.

Traumas



Your veins turn a disturbing greenish color and begin to pulsate, and your heart beats erratically with terrifying force, causing intense radiating pain.



Thin, sharp, thorn-like spikes begin to grow from your skin, cutting you with every movement and causing you to bleed slowly.



Invisible hands grip your body, freezing all movement. Every cell feels paralyzed, stripping away your ability to escape.



A terrifying fear pierces you like a million needles, with every cell trembling in pain. Your mind falls silent as fear takes over.



Faint, ominous whispers echo in your mind, repeating words you cannot comprehend. They predict your final downfall.



Your skin toughens, becoming rough like tree bark. Every move causes pain, and dark, sticky resin collects in the cracks.

At the end of the greenhouse, where Klean disappeared, the treasure hunters descend a staircase into the greenhouse's basement. This is a cave chamber. Below, they find a slaughterhouse, torture devices, and the bodies of the homeless hanging on hooks. They also find cages for the people who were expendable and who, for all these years, went unnoticed as they disappeared from the city. A path leads from the room to the center of the cave, which is the true Homeless House.

Threats

After passing through a greenhouse and a torture chamber, the treasure hunters find themselves in dark caves. The stone walls gleam with veins of gold, bearing traces of dried blood. The air is heavy with damp and cold, and the echoes carry the moans of past victims. Among the rocks, flowers grow, glowing in the dark, nourished by the blood, tears, and magic of the forest.

Klean stands on a stone dais—calm, smiling, with bloodstains on his hands. The hunters don't know he's a servant of the forest. Next to him kneels Heidi, an undead woman with long black hair, red eyes, and a dress stained with blood. Her inhuman speed and strength inspire paralyzing fear.

Klean announces that treasure and a way out are within reach. One sacrifice is all it takes. One or two people might survive if they identify their companions for Heidi to devour. Sensing the approaching meal, Heidi shifts restlessly, panting and revealing rotten teeth flecked with flesh.

During the confrontation, Klean smiles and says:

"I know that glint in their eyes... I've seen it in so many people. Ready to give up everything to survive. Even those closest to them. Do you think they'll save you? They'll survive at your expense... Or maybe you're the one who wants to survive at their expense? I never wanted that, you know? But love... Love is the greatest madness. If someone has it back, they won't let it go... even at the cost of their own soul. I did what I had to. Now it's your turn - one life for a life. Heidi hasn't eaten in a while. You decide who you'll sacrifice."

If any of the hunters attack Klean, he will summon plants from the greenhouse, whose hidden shoots reach into this cave. These will attack the hunters as they did in the fourth circle, and may even kill them. If Carla summoned ghost dogs, allow them to reach the confrontation. Perhaps the braver farm workers will also come to Klean's aid. During the encounter with Heidi, each hunter experiences visions from Klean's past, triggered by hallucinogenic plants. Make a Ruin check or automatically raise your Ruin level. Each hunter:

- He sees Klean kneeling over the dying Heidi and begging the forest for help.
- The forest whispers back, "Sacrifice those who are nothing, and you will receive eternity with your beloved."
- Klean agrees, regardless of the cost. Roots appear, wrapping around Heidi's body, and her eyes open again, but they are red, hungry, unnatural.

? *Are you willing to sacrifice your comrades for your own salvation? If so, why?*

? *What will ensure your survival and the treasure? How long will you be able to resist once Heidi begins her hunt?*

Temptations

In a side cave, a pile of gold coins, jewels, and valuables gleams, and the walls are streaked with veins of pure gold. Beside the pile, each hunter spots an item previously possessed only by one of their companions - a medallion, an amulet, a parchment with a spell, or something that will fulfill their desire. Klean smiles:

"The entire treasure will go to the one who shows me absolute loyalty and sacrifices their companions. Heidi must be satisfied... and then I will give you the treasure, the knowledge, your freedom. You have my word."

? *What will be the toll your greed will take when the time comes to pay?*

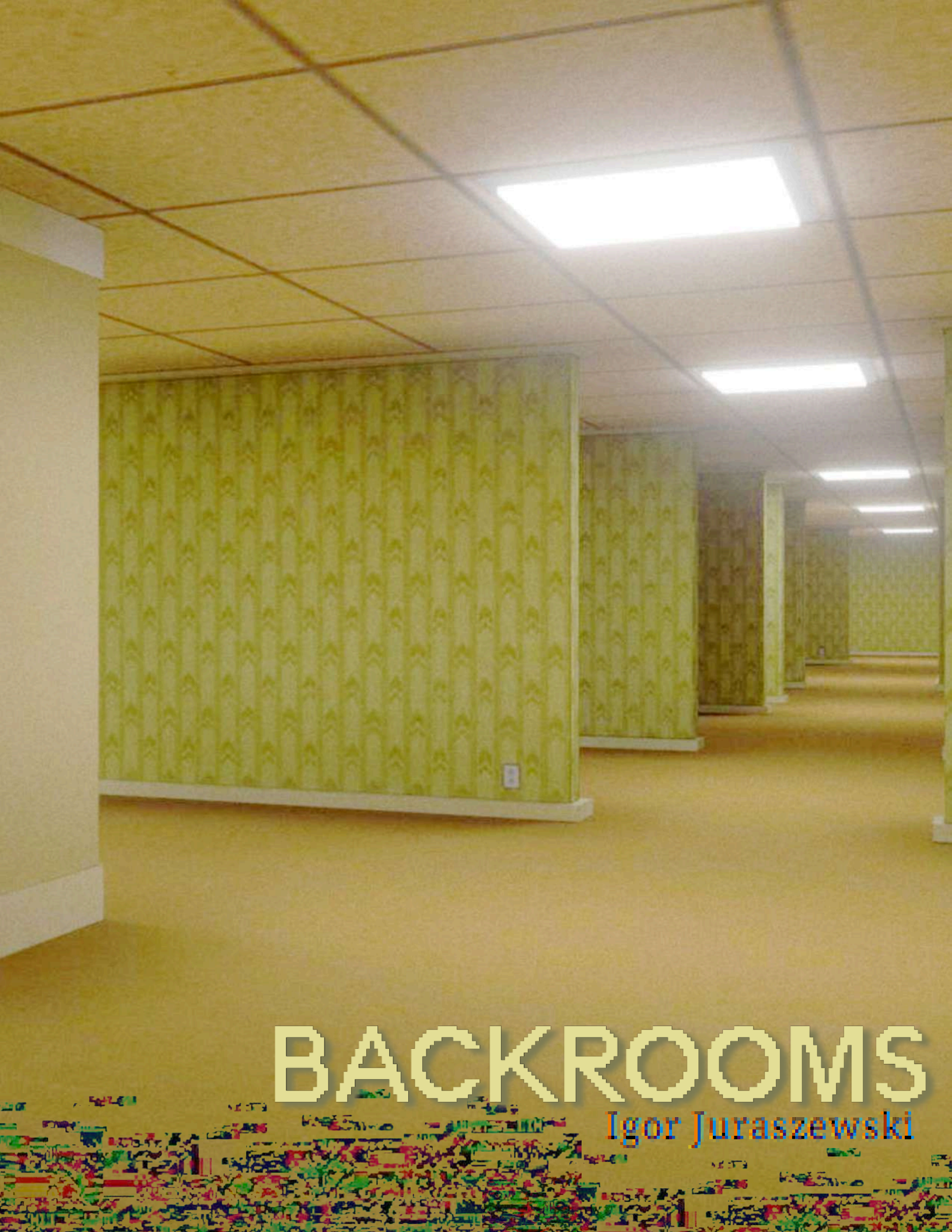
? *How far will you go to have both wealth and what you desire most?*

Moments

Deep within the cave, a stone altar holds bloody tools—a knife, a saw, and a hammer. The floor and walls bear fingernail scratches, evidence of a desperate struggle.

Wet blood trails across the floor, from someone being dragged across the stones. The tracks end at broken cages, revealing remnants of torn garments and broken bones.

The cave paintings show a figure kneeling before an altar, her hands lifted in supplication, with roots and blooming roses swirling above her.



BACKROOMS

Igor Juraszewski

Backrooms

An Incursion for *Trophy Dark*

Written by Igor Juraszewski

If you're not careful and noclip out of reality in the wrong areas, you'll end up in the Backrooms, where it's nothing but the stink of old moist carpet, the madness of mono-yellow, the endless background noise of fluorescent lights at maximum hum-buzz, and approximately six hundred million square miles of randomly segmented empty rooms to be trapped in.

God save you if you hear something wandering around nearby, because it sure as hell has heard you.

-Original Greentext for "The Backrooms"

In the presented Incursion characters are not Treasure Hunters - they are Stalkers, looking for entities that are nothing more than urban legends to most people. Your urge to explore the unknown has led you here, to The Backrooms.

That said-hunting monsters is not the core of this Incursion. Once the Stalkers capture the entity, they'll still be stuck in a never ending maze of rooms and corridors-still, but constantly wanting to devour the Stalkers.

Establishing question (direct the following to the table):

? You came here to deal with an entity from urban legend. As a party choose one or come up with your own: (young vampire, deformed werewolf, lonely jinn, big ghoul, Big Foot, lost leshy). Then describe how your character is ready to face the entity.

Whenever Stalkers enter a Ring, read out loud the "Interlude" section. In fiction the passages are pieces of a presentation, stored on a VHS tape and displayed via a TV in an abandoned, remote room.

theme: **EMPTINESS**

CONDITIONS

 or 	 or 	 or 
☐ Everything you touch slowly disappears	☐ You abandon tool usage	☐ You cease needing to breathe
☐ A buzzing in your head is so loud, you can't hear your own thoughts	☐ Your hair slowly disappears	☐ Electronic devices turn on as you pass
☐ Your eyes are black as the night sky, your pupils bright as stars.	☐ You feel like you're literally hollow under your skin	☐ You remain hungry and thirsty, no matter what you eat or drink
☐ You are too light-you struggle to keep your balance	☐ Slightest sounds feel like thunder	☐ Your veins blacken and throb
☐ You are taller	☐ Photos and mirrors stop reflecting your image	☐ Your heartbeat is getting slower, as in a deep slumber
☐ You feel an urge to walk on all your fours	☐ Scents become intolerable	☐ All your thoughts turn to animalistic survival

WARNINGS: *Body horror, corpse, gore, Player vs Player, uneasy spaces*

RING 1

1

An endless maze of living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms, coated in ugly yellow wallpaper. The only source of light are buzzing fluorescent lamps.

Interlude:

? *A band of people enter the complex and look around, visibly concerned. They walk through the rooms, searching them methodically. Each of them carries a weapon and a shining epaulette with their expedition number - 36KV. Judging by their gear, what gives them an edge over you?*

Terrors

A ghoul - a crawling creature of grafted body parts. Its skin is transparent, and its insides made up of remembrance looted from other wretched souls. The ghoul is visibly exhausted, but still attacks Stalkers on sight.

? **Paint the Scene:** *How does this creature remind you of something precious?*

Temptations

A body, its insides empty as a bell. On a wall above them hangs postcard-sized piece of paper with: "UNAUTHORISED GATE IS THE ONLY WAY" scratched by a pencil

? **Paint the Scene:** *What sign here do you see of your quarry? How long ago were they here?*

Moments

An apple which, upon closer inspection, is a plastic prop

A crack in a wall- with only darkness behind

A TV, tuned to buzzing static

RING 2

2

Snowy white, slippery walls covered in dense fog. Every few steps, you can find an empty niche with streaming light coming from a singular lamp. Distantly, you hear classical music.

Interlude:

? *The band from earlier arrives here. They unpack a research station from equipment carried in suitcases, boxes, and backpacks. How can you see that they are frightened?*

Terrors

The Entity. This is what the Stalkers are looking for. At first, it lurks in shadows, waiting to pick the Stalkers up one by one.

? **Paint the Scene:** *What about the entity breaks your expectations?*

Temptations

A map of the complex drafted on one of the walls-the labyrinth spreads for thousands of miles. The drawing continues onto the floor and ceiling.

? **Paint the Scene:** *How is this map the most beautiful piece of art you have ever seen?*

Moments

A wooden sculpture with eyes of rubies, depicting an ancient god in their mad dance.

In one of the niches hangs the painting 'Saturn Devouring his Son'.

A split runs across the ceiling, walls, and floor. A fragment was put together poorly.

Searching for your way out, you stumble upon an art-deco style hotel with tapestries, golden ornaments, decorated elevators, and red-carpeted stairways. The rooms are bright, despite the fact that no source of light can be seen. Silent.

Interlude:

? *The earlier group enters the hotel. They are completely exhausted, and some of them are missing. How can we tell they remain cautious, despite their fatigue?*

Terrors

After some rest, you grow suspicious of your companions. Did they venture too far in the complex? Have they lost themselves?

? **Paint the Scene:** *What do you think of the Stalker to your left? Why can't you trust them? When do you start to suspect you've never left the complex at all?*

Temptations

A recording plays on repeat: "Incursion 36KV. We are as far as we could get. We've lost Jeffrey. We've had no response from neither him nor our centre. I will do my best to descend even deeper to open a gate. Screw it. See you soon on the other side."

? **Paint the Scene:** *How can you tell that the person speaking contributed to their companion's death?*

Moments

Something golden is in fact only gilded

A small window opening to an ocean of black—there is one bright point in sight

Signs of a camp; cans, tins, and equipment scattered around

Endless mazes of living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms, all coated in that ugly yellow wallpaper. The only source of light are buzzing fluorescent lamps. Again...

Interlude:

? *We see photos from beautiful places around the world, flashing faster and faster. Waterfalls, mountains, beaches, tropical forests, tundras, ice falling into deep water, neon cities. To which of these places have you always wanted to journey, but couldn't?*

Terrors

The floor rises from one side and falls from another, showing a vast darkness below. It starts to fall apart, piece by piece.

Temptations

The opposite wall has lots of arrows scraped, drafted or clawed, all pointing at a white door. A warm, yellow light sneaks from between the doorframe.

Moments

A wheelchair, still spinning

Lights flickering in Morse Code

The same corridor, in front of the door

Interlude:

? We can see a blue screen with red letters displayed: “NEVER USE UNAUTHORISED GATEWAYS” - what reasons are presented to back the order?

Terrors

The world around you starts to fade - smell of carpets, buzzing of lamps, and the shape of the rooms are like long-gone memories. What's left are your companions.

? **Paint the Scene:** What are you afraid the Stalker to your right will do now? How will this leave you here all alone?

Temptations

When the door opens, every Stalker sees a place they want to be in. When someone steps by the door, it slams shut.

? **Paint the Scene:** What has the Stalker to your left done to make your life miserable? How will you take your revenge now that you have nothing to lose?

Moments

A Space Odyssey 2001 poster, all colours blurred and blended

A hole in the ceiling, showing a pitch-black night sky

ADrift



Adrift

A pulp science fiction Incursion of strangeness and survival for *Trophy Dark*

Written by James L. Smith

The configuration of the skies had changed beyond all recognition; the Signs were no longer those that are known to terrestrial astronomers; far-off stars had leapt into blazing suns and had faded back to stars; and there had been a flying glimpse of stranger planets. And year by year the cold terror of the endless deeps, the vertiginous horror of untold infinitude, had crept like a slow paralysis upon the souls of the crew; and a nostalgia for the distant earth had swept them with unutterable sickness; till they could bear it no longer, and had made their hasty, ill-planned attempt to secure control of the vessel and turn it homeward.

- Clark Ashton Smith, Marooned in Andromeda, 1930

This Incursion was inspired by the eldritch science fiction prose and plot of “Marooned in Andromeda,” a lesser-known Smith short story, first published in Wonder Stories, October 1930 edition:

<http://www.eldritchdark.com/writings/short-stories/125/marooned-in-andromeda>

theme: **ALIENATION**

Your mutiny failed. The Captain decreed that your punishment is exile. You will be marooned on a forsaken rock hurtling through the bleak void around twin alien stars. No execution, but a death sentence nonetheless. This is not a planet fit for human life.

The lights of the landing craft fade as it rises in a roar and flees the atmosphere. Only the alien soundscape remains—distant clicks and shrieks. The skies above are faint and vaporous; the few stars glow dully in their depths. You find yourselves in the oppressive gloom, light sticks in hand.

No weapons. No supplies. No rescue.

CHARACTER IDENTITY OPTIONS

Background	Occupation – skills
● Black Marketeer - Subterfuge	● Botanist - Chemistry, Cultivation, Plants
●● Conscientious Objector - Negotiation	●● Doctor - Surgery, First Aid, Reassurance
●●● Covert Terrorist - Explosives	●●● Philosopher - Cynicism, Logic, Rhetoric
●●●● Disgraced Hero - Bitterness	●●●● Psychologist - Diagnostics, Medication, Therapy
●●●●● Prideful Hunter - Tracking	●●●●● Weapons Officer - Leadership, Tactics, Sharpshooting
●●●●●● Outlawed Psychic - Telepathy	●●●●●● Xenologist - Anthropology, Biology, Language

CHARACTER IDENTITY OPTIONS

Drive

- Escape this place before you are consumed by the unutterable sickness of the stars.
- Become the captain the Mothership deserves.
- Gain the riches you have long coveted.
- Remake yourself across the stars.
- Learn to cure your terminal illness.
- Escape the charade of shipboard life.

Ritual – effect

- **Attune** - adapt to the strange ecosystem of this world, giving up an aspect of your human form
- **Calm** - diffuse another character's rage
- **Reveal** - draw a secret weapon from a place of concealment
- **Implant** - activate a hidden piece of subdermal technology to aid you
- **Improvise** - use elements of your environment to make something new
- **Restore** - use the biosphere's strange properties to heal

CONDITIONS

Overwhelmed by the vastness of the sky, you become afraid to look up.

It gets worse: You must escape the hateful sky.

You become convinced that, alienated from the order of the ship, the crew will prey upon each other in time.

It gets worse: Why not be the predator...?

You choke on the thin metallic air and begin to hyperventilate, lungs burning.

It gets worse: You become nauseous and develop a rattling cough; the air is poisoning you.

A graze begins to itch; your skin grows a coating of variegated lichen.

It gets worse: Something grows within you, spreading and fusing with your flesh.

Your clothing disintegrates; the atmosphere is dissolving the stitching.

It gets worse: Everything terrestrial in origin crumbles away to dust.

You hear the ground thrum, whispering secrets.

It gets worse: You are gifted with a single terrible secret; it deranges you.

As your companions gaze at the skes, you see in their eyes the gleam of inhuman energies.

It gets worse: To save them, you must put out their eyes.

Ask each Mutineer to respond to one of the following prompts as they come to terms with their fate:

- ? *What gnawing secret fear drove you to join the mutiny?*
- ? *How did the mutiny reveal a new side of you that had lain dormant?*
- ? *Did mutiny confirm or contradict your view of human nature?*
- ? *When did you realise that there would be no forgiveness for Mutineers?*

You stand by a sluggish, copper-coloured stream oozing along a sticky clayish bed, its banks encrusted with bioluminescent lavender-hued moss. Dread rises in your gut, threatening to overwhelm you. The air is thin, but breathable. The gravity is leaden.

Your Mothership will exit the system in several days. Then, you will be truly alone. If you can reach high ground and signal them, perhaps the Captain will show mercy? Surely, they cannot truly intend to go through with this cruel punishment?

Temptations

A terrible and brilliant double sunrise is coming; you must hide. The scans were unequivocal—you will not survive the day's light. The first fingers of dawn blister your skin. Readings indicate that the crust of this world is riddled with caverns. An entrance must lurk nearby, hidden within strange and aggressive vegetation.

Moments

A mouth-like appendage opens in a rock, welling with viscous purple liquid. A hand-sized insect of dazzling metallic hues lands in it, becomes stuck, and is quickly digested.

The soil is greenish-grey and clay-like, giving off a diffuse glow when disturbed.

Green motes dance in the air, disturbed by the passage of your feet.

A spring oozes from a crevice in lavender crags, its waters thick, milky, and opaque.

The air is cool and moist beneath the surface. A labyrinth of tight twisting passages awaits, glowing dimly with ultraviolet light. There is no other light save what the rocks bring. Strange clicks and moans echo from the depths; a thick eldritch mist rises around your feet, tinged with pink and saffron, heliotrope and purple. You are hopelessly lost.

Ask each of the Mutineers the following questions in sequence as they wander the caverns:

- ? *What forms of creativity and artistic expression decorate the caverns?*
- ? *What signs of religious devotion do you observe?*
- ? *What concepts are lauded or shunned in the imagery?*
- ? *How do these signs of culture combine to fill you with dread?*

You stumble into a warren of caverns filled with crude yurt-like structures of dried luminescent fungi and bone. A village of cave-dwelling creatures turn at the sound of your footsteps in the gloom; eyes glowing white and blind. Their squat, toadlike heads and puffed bodies are mottled in luminous patterns of dull blues, vivid greens, nauseating pinks, rusty blacks, and clayish yellows. Their necks and wrists jangle with glowing crystal. Their ears, or what you think are ears, droop along their jowls in wrinkled folds and hang down like wattles. At your intrusion, they erupt into a chorus of alarmed ululations.

Temptations

Roving bands of warriors armed with crude crystal-tipped spears of lurid hue and long vicious blowguns appear. The dark caverns echo with their chittering, croaking war cries. You are driven ever-onwards in headlong flight through a glowing hellscape, herded towards an unknown destination. You are being hunted.

Moments

Pantry caves filled with gourds of a nutritious and hydrating sap-like liquid.

A cavern packed with dense groves of luminescent pink mushrooms, carefully tended.

A narrow bridge of rock over a glowing pool of iridescent liquid filled with strange leaping shapes.

A garden of undulating lime green glow moss that croons and squeaks as you pass.

You find yourself in a vast and yawning cavern in which the very rock itself glows bright with strange radioactivity. The path ends in a broad semi-circular shelf suspended over a yawning void. Dozens of cave mouths are cut into the walls on all sides. Warriors emerge behind you, spears pointing, to block your escape. Below you ripples a dusky jet black lake, opaque in the glow of the surrounding stone. Each cave mouth is packed with cave-dwellers, silently regarding you. It seems that they are waiting for something.

Ask each of the Mutineers one of the following questions:

- ? *Who was the ringleader of the mutiny? What are they scheming now?*
- ? *Who was most reluctant to participate? Are they still holding back?*
- ? *Who switched sides when it was already too late? Can they be trusted now?*
- ? *Who disturbed you with their excitement in the act of mutiny? What emotion now hides behind their eyes?*

A vast glowing mass rises from the dark water like a dread moon. You glimpse a round and formless bulk of rubbery fangless maws and glittering hateful eyes, mouthing the air and blowing fetid water. It rises towards you at a leisurely pace, assured of its next meal. The warriors behind you begin to advance, spears raised. You are to be a sacrifice.

Temptations

You see a partially concealed cave mouth far below you, close to the waterline. It is your only point of escape. The abomination waits, hungry and searching. The caves throng with cave dwellers, croaking and squeaking in a liturgical chorus. Perhaps they can be bargained with? Perhaps you can distract them? Perhaps just a single sacrifice would appease the maws and buy time for the descent...

Moments

The stench of stagnant sunless waters lying at an unfathomable depth.

The walls of the drop below are scored with countless grooves, matching the cave dweller's horned fingernails.

A shaman shouts and sings, their cloak covered in hundreds of glowing and clinking crystal shards.

The cave dwellers recoil, clicking and wailing. Whether their sounds are those of terror, awe, or ecstasy you cannot say.

You exit the subterranean realm into a teeming jungle. The light is sullen and yellow, hidden beneath a canopy of vast writhing trunks, reaching claws, and questing tentacles. A single swollen sun, the dimmer of the pair, hangs directly above. The air is torrid, thick, and humid. The entire landscape is overgrown with predatory pseudopods and vines, grasping for a new meal. Nothing here is truly animal or vegetable in a sense that science could cleanly parse.

Temptations

The visions begin while navigating dense clouds of white vapor rising from the soil. In the hellish wet bulb heat, you grow delirious. It would be easy to give up, settling into the gentle embrace of a carnivorous bloom.

Ask each Mutineer to narrate a vivid and nightmarish hallucination in which their drive is achieved. Who or what stands in their way?

You glimpse a shuttle passing overhead on a slow search vector, barely visible through the foliage. Is it real or illusory? Has the Captain granted you mercy? Was there a second, successful, uprising? Only escape from this hellish maze will reveal the truth.

Moments

Outcrops of coral-like pseudopods in a rainbow of lurid hues.

Networks of hairy rope-like vines hang densely between the trunks, seeking to ensnare new prey.

Stands of blade-like leaves flex and sway, threatening to eviscerate flesh.

A gigantic flower opens its maw, revealing a nauseating soup of partially digested corpses.

The nightmare jungle gives way to a vast turquoise mudflat. What was once an ocean is now a rippling mass of mud-choked desolation, low points filled with stinking brackish water.

The metallic corpse of an ancient megatropolis juts from the mud, brooding under the gloaming sun. At its heart, a vast jutting tower waits. The shuttle passes overhead once again, illuminated by blood-red light.

Ask each of the Mutineers the following question:

? *The shuttle is for you and you alone. What secret bargain did you negotiate with the Captain to save your skin?*

The mud proves to be rubbery and resistant to your weight as you struggle across its contours. This strange world is devoid of plant life or mineral outcrops; only endless reaches of quivering alien clay. Everything is shrouded in a sparkling vapor that attenuates the crepuscular glow.

A vast and desolate flight of ceremonial steps greets you as you approach the city, flanked by titanic statues of many-trunked alien tyrants. They gaze down on you as you approach, stern and cruel. Where once there was grandeur, there is now only creeping ruin.

Temptations

Under the ground, in cool empty passages and lightless chambers, lies the hidden patrimony of this dead city. The vaults beneath the central tower are filled with humming machines of inscrutable design. The city below is alive with strange and potent technology, still drawing power from the heart of the planet. Surely, here you will find the new life that you seek: riches beyond your wildest dreams. Only your companions stand in your way.

Ask each of the Mutineers the following question:

? *The key to your future waits at the heart of this place. What power or treasure do you discover, and what does it make possible?*

Moments

A shattered idol lies on its side in the mud, half sunk. Its expression hints at weariness and despair.

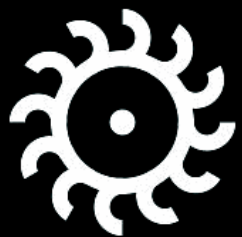
An entire ecosystem, now dessicated and brittle.

A plaza of forty-foot monoliths jutting aggressively from the mud.

Enormous iridescent beetles swarm around you, disturbed and aggressive.



Brian Sago



TROPHY GOLD



Children of the Scarlet Bud

ALEXANDER KERBER (KAGOZAIKU)

The Children of the Scarlet Bud

An Incursion for Trophy Gold

Written by Alexander Kerber (kagozaiku)

Read the following to the players:

Rumors tell of a curse afflicting Countess Tereza. Her husband Tomas died of an incurable disease simply called “the Rot” a few years ago. When she refused the church’s order to burn her husband’s corpse, she was excommunicated and forbidden to bury her husband in sacred soil. Confidantes of the family claim that this caused the countess to find her purpose in another heathen religion, but nobody knows for sure. A few months ago her only son, the fifteen-year-old Ferenc, also fell ill with the Rot.

Ask the players:

What symptoms accompany the Rot and how does it kill people afflicted by it?

Continue reading:

Now there are rumors that the countess herself has also died — of a broken heart or the Rot, nobody knows. What people do know is in the last few weeks the late Countess’ whole estate has been covered in thick silvery gossamer. If you are smart you stay away. If you are smart and in debt, which makes you desperate, you know this is your moment. What hidden treasures may lie in the stony cocoon of Countess Tereza’s estate and what will it take for you to bring them back?

theme: METAMORPHOSIS

Background story:

The family of Countess Tereza seems to be cursed. After the events surrounding the death of her husband Tomas, the grieving widow finds her solace in worshipping the cult of The Children of the Scarlet Bud. When her son Ferenc also showed symptoms of the Rot, she used all her resources to heal him.

As a member of the Children of the Scarlet Bud, she uses her knowledge of the metamorphosis in butterflies to save her son by alchemically forcing him to pupate. Her hope is that in histolysis of the pupa her son’s illness will be destroyed and Ferenc will be reborn alive and healthy. As to not alarm anybody she stages the burial of her son and herself as a grieving mother to secretly alchemically transform and save her son.

The experiments take a toll on Tereza and she also falls ill with the Rot. Desperately she drinks the concoctions she gave to her son to also save herself. While she placed her son’s cocoon in his room, she chose the butterfly house on the main floor to pupate. The estate, now left unsupervised and unguarded, is soon overrun by insects and arachnids of all kinds. Ermine moths cover the whole building in gossamer and a giant spider has found her way into the butterfly house where she finds Tereza’s cocoon and sucks it dry. When the treasure hunters meet Tereza they only find a dried-out, half-transformed corpse. The ermine moths working tirelessly to cover the whole estate in gossamer catch the attention of the cult of The Children of the Scarlet Bud. When the treasure hunters arrive at the estate the cultists might have already killed the giant spider or trapped it in the butterfly garden. With the help of Countess Tereza’s diary entries they were also able to reconstruct what happened and have decided to ritually accompany the hatching of Ferenc’s cocoon.

Should Ferenc hatch, he will be very disoriented and call out for his mother. Both the cultists and the treasure hunters will be regarded as enemies, which makes negotiations hard but not impossible. Ferenc does not want to fight but primarily wants to flee. If cornered he is a dangerous enemy.

SETS



WARNINGS: Body Horror, Insects, Cults & Religion, Harm to children, Harm to Animals

In front of the Estate

The Countess' estate is encompassed by an enormous garden and alleys of fruit trees. The building looms like a giant cocoon over the tree tops. Wispy white gossamer covers the estate's front and most of the fruit trees that lie beyond the heavy iron entrance gate.

GOAL

Find a way into the estate.

MOMENTS

The sound of thousands of butterfly wings in the distance.

The treasure hunters feel watched by a multitude of compound eyes.

Big, bald birches are covered in an enormous number of brightly coloured caterpillars.

? *The main gate of the estate is decorated with an unnatural and perverse butterfly-themed motive. What makes your blood curdle when you look at it and what does it show?*

PROPS

Orchard. A road lined with neatly arranged apple and mulberry trees leads to the estate's garden. Most of the apple trees are covered in silken gossamer. The mulberry trees are covered in tiny bite marks. Dozens of dead silkworms are scattered around the trees.

Pavilion. A pavilion made from reddish brown cedarwood overgrown with Saint Mary's thistle. A handful of dead blue tits and dried caterpillars lie at the center of the structure. A table within the pavilion contains a bottle of fine red wine turned to vinegar.

Flower Garden. A walled garden with square flower beds. Most of the plants are desiccated and dead. The ground is covered in wilting leaves. It smells of herbs and decay. Close to the garden there is a wooden sign covered in vellum that shows a painting of two angels tending to a garden. Instead of a human face their faces are moth-like with long proboscis and mandibles. Their compound eyes look at you.

Graveyard. A small enclosed area not far from the estate. Two tombstones – one weathered and covered in moss. Its inscription shows the name Tomas, date of birth and date of death and the epitaph: *Tomas, Saturnia of my heart. May your radiant eyes watch over me from eternal night.*

The earth in front of the other tombstone is fresh and wet. Its inscription shows no date of death but a cryptic epitaph: *Ferenc, dear Butterfly Child. Death is only a bridge on the way to your final transformation.*

TRAPS

A **giant spider** is hiding in the underbrush waiting for careless food.

Dozens of goat moth caterpillars fall through the rotten pavilion roof and bite into the treasure hunter's flesh. Make a Risk Roll or get the Condition: **Caterpillar Bites.**

Oak processionary caterpillars cover the sign and the ground. They have stinging hairs that cause rashes and breathlessness.

TREASURES

An expensive bottle of wine in a wicker basket.

The painted vellum can be taken off of the wooden sign and rolled up. The right collectors will pay 2 gold for it.

A golden brooch shaped like an Emperor moth on top of Tomas' tombstone.

Main Floor

The entrance hall of the estate is dilapidated. Spiderwebs and cocoons cover every inch of the walls. All the stucco is covered in gossamer. The ground is covered in a beautiful mosaic that shows the life cycle from caterpillar to cocoon to butterfly.

GOAL	<i>Find out what happened to Countess Tereza.</i>
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	A painting of a blue monarch butterfly glistens in the sun as if alive.
MOMENTS	Remains of several fist-sized cocoons hanging from the walls, empty.
	Butterfly dust glitters in the air and settles like a fine coat on every surface.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Antechamber. A big entrance hall awash with light connects the remaining rooms of the estate with each other. A butterfly mosaic is embedded into the ground. The glass dome is covered in insect corpses. The path to the left leads to the living room. The path to the right leads to the dining hall. The entrance hall ends in a magnificent double staircase leading to the top floor. Underneath the staircase a path leads to the butterfly house. Living Room. Big windows covered in spiderwebs that glisten in the sun. Most of the walls are lined with bookshelves filled with books about lepidopterology. One wall is covered with pinned rare butterfly species.		The stones used for the mosaic are semi-precious and can be removed to receive stones worth 1 gold. A painting in one of the hallways shows a cherub with a butterfly-like head.
Dining Hall. A pervasive smell of decay. Heavy velvet curtains cover the windows. The dining table is covered in vast quantities of rotten food. A dead cultist hugging a desiccated giant spider lies beside a dark wooden cabinet.	Giant spider eggs underneath a table will hatch. Giant Spider Hatchling (Endurance 7)	A leatherbound book containing romantic poetry called “A Stomach Full of Butterflies”. An unopened bottle of mezcal, several caterpillars floating at the bottom.
Butterfly House. The butterfly house can be entered from the entrance hall. Inside, a handful of rare butterflies sit on withering branches. The ground is covered in even more dried-up butterfly corpses. In one of the corners the treasure hunters find the desiccated cocoon with the remains of a half-transformed Countess Tereza. The rest of her body forms a gooey puddle underneath the cocoon.	Cultists of the Children of the Scarlet Bud are conducting a chrysalis ritual in which they use a custom-made tool to create thumb-sized holes in the skin of a herb-dazed acolyte to afterwards fill them with cocoons. The skin of a human-sized spider lies close to the cocoon of Countess Tereza.	Silverware covered in a slimy film of mold. If cleaned it can be sold for 1 gold. The dead cultist wears a pendant in the form of a gilded butterfly cocoon; the insignia of the Children of the Scarlet Bud. Tereza’s signet ring in a gooey puddle of the Countess’ remains.

Additional Treasures

Various pieces of jewellery covered in gossamer, glass cabinets containing rare butterflies, alchemical potions to aid pupation (2 gold).

Top Floor

The top floor consists of a long tube-like hallway with three big wooden doors. The walls are covered in colourful tapestry with thistle-motives. The constant hum of insects is joined by soft human chants. Most of the windows are covered with heavy velvet curtains that are densely covered with insect eggs and cocoons.

GOAL	<i>Prevent the hatching.</i>	
MOMENTS	Dozens of trampled cocoons cover the ground.	
	The haunting blue “eyes” of a peacock butterfly look right at you.	
	The sound of countless butterfly wings in the air.	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Master bedroom. Scattered rays of light get through a gap between the velvet curtains. The Countess’ canopy bed is in disarray. The fabric of the curtains covering the bed are embroidered with butterfly wings.		A florilegium of different thistles on the nightstand. The fabric curtains are of exceptional quality and can be removed and sold.
Study Room. The room is covered in dust. Broken glass vials and their content – grotesque butterfly-hybrids – cover the ground. A bookshelf has been violently toppled. Leather-covered books painted in different butterfly wing-patterns lie strewn about.	A group of Children of the Scarlet Bud patrolling the hallway.	Hidden in one of the books scattered on the floor are the notes of Countess Tereza detailing her experiments transforming a human organism into a butterfly-like organism. Apart from reflections on the nature of the decay and dissolution of organic tissue, her notes also contain instructions on how to force a human organism to pupate. Treasure hunters can sell the notes for 3 gold or keep them to learn the ritual Chrysalis without increasing their Ruin to do so.
Children’s room. Soft chanting and movement can be heard from inside the room. Cultists have gathered here to ritually accompany the hatching of the cocoon containing Countess’ Tereza’s son Ferenc. The cultists view Ferenc as an avatar of their gods and will protect him with their lives. If the treasure hunters enter the room without preparation the cultists will attack them to offer them up as a sacrifice for Ferenc.	Ferenc will hatch in front of everyone and will try to escape.	The remains of the cocoon can be sold to alchemists for 2 gold.
RITUAL	Chrysalis — <i>Touch a creature to encompass it into a chrysalis.</i>	

FERENC HAS HATCHED — WHAT'S NEXT?

The game master can decide to have Ferenc hatch from his cocoon at any time or have it happen as a consequence of a Hunt Roll. This will of course make it impossible for the treasure hunters to reach the set goal, but that doesn't mean that the treasure hunters have failed. It only means they have to adapt to new circumstances.

Will Ferenc be able to escape? Can the treasure hunters calm him down or maybe even convince him to ally himself with them against the cultists? Depending on the context the game master can suggest a new set goal or have the players suggest a new set goal. If you are the game master, you can also always remind your players that they can spend three Hunt Tokens to achieve a set goal of their own.

Conclusion

This Incursion can end in various ways. If the treasure hunters prevent Ferenc's hatching they still have to deal with the cultists of the Children of the Scarlet Bud. Maybe the cultists will be a long-time threat for the treasure hunters. Maybe Ferenc will be able to hatch and escape so as to return some other time in another Incursion. Maybe the cultists succeed in winning him over to their cause, maybe he willingly lets himself be worshipped as a deity, furthering his own secret goals. How will he react if he finds out his mother is dead? Whom will he blame for her death? What if the treasure hunters are able to prevent the hatching and make a deal with the cultists? Will the estate of the late Countess Tereza fall even more into ruin? Will more cultists return to turn it into their headquarters, secretly plotting their revenge, resuming Tereza's experiment to unleash even more butterfly-hybrids into this foul world? In the end it's up to the players. The ideas listed here are only pupae of narrative potential, yet unhatched. What beautiful and terrible creations will grow into butterflies is entirely up to you.

NOTES

The Slough of the Black Wyrn

Rob Fletcher



The Slough of the Black Wyrm

An Incursion for *Trophy Gold*

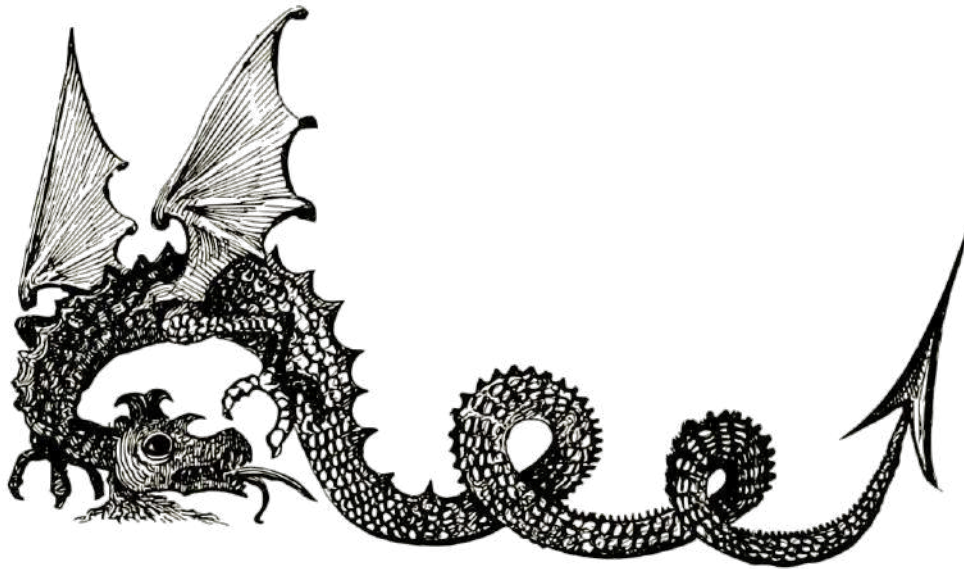
Written by Rob Fletcher

The city of Vas Tulid lies deep in the Kalduhr. Legends tell of the priest-queens of old who ruled over an exquisite metropolis of unrivaled beauty, joy, and justice... and—of course—wealth. There are a thousand tales of what caused Vas Tulid to fall, but fall it did... and the Kalduhr swallowed it.

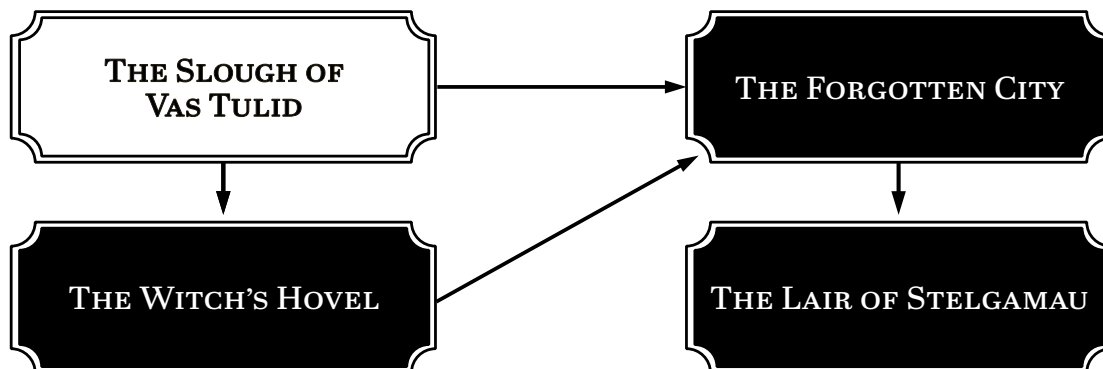
Now, countless generations later, a group of desperate treasure hunters plan to plunder the forgotten city. However, they are not the first beings drawn to the ancient city. The great wyrm Stelgamau has made her lair in the ruins of the city. A pall of corruption has consumed the land for miles around, turning it into a fetid swamp.

theme: **CORRUPTION**

This Incursion includes imagery of decay and the deliberate and malicious destruction of things that were once sacred. When running this Incursion, emphasize the sickly, rotten environment; fog-shrouded, cloying, and treacherous.



SETS



The Slough of Vas Tulid

The vast swamp that surrounds The Forgotten City of Vas Tulid. Fouled by the presence of Stelgamau at its heart, the area is twisted, fog-shrouded, and at once eerily devoid of birds and animals, while choked with vegetation and swarming with clouds of biting insects. The waterways are too labyrinthine for boats to be of use. The footing is unsure and maintaining a sense of direction is incredibly difficult.

Paint the Scene:

- What dire rumors have you heard whispered of the swamp and its denizens?
- What dread powers and what vulnerabilities are attributed to wyrms in fireside tales?
- Why are you convinced you can sneak in and out of the lost city despite the dangers?
- What legends have you heard of the wealth and power of the city of Vas Tulid that once thrived here?

GOAL	Find a way through the swamp.
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MOMENTS	An eerie lack of birdsong or animal noises.
	A low moan echoes from an indeterminate direction and distance.
	Something brushes against your leg under the water.
	A vast winged shape soars overhead accompanied by a wave of chest-tightening fear.
	A figure glimpsed through dense fog — a beautiful young woman watches the treasure hunters as they struggle in the mire.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
A moss-choked statue of a woman—a long-dead inhabitant of Vas Tulid—whispers a warning.	Antigona watches the treasure hunters through the statue's eyes.	A pearl clutched in the statue's hand.
A wide expanse of stagnant water, broken here and there by treacherous patches of seemingly solid ground and withered trees.	Bog Revenants rise from the fetid waters. Shambling Mounds lurk in wait, or roam mindlessly devouring all in their path.	Fishing charms, a surprisingly intact painting.
The ruins of an aqueduct that once carried water from leagues away into the city. It might be possible to follow the course of the ruins.		
A cloud of insects swarming determinedly, you could swear they have a distinct purpose.	The insects carry news of the treasure hunters' arrival to Antigona .	

Additional Traps

Sucking mud; treacherous false paths

BOG REVENANT

WEAKNESS – *None*

7

The corpse of an unfortunate soul lost to the swamp and spat up by it to claim more victims in turn.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Slipping, submerged, through the fen. | Summoning allies with a hollow shriek. |
| Bursting from the bog with grasping hands. | Swinging a rusted weapon held awkwardly. |
| Clawing and dragging back to the mire. | Biting with broken teeth. |

Bag of Bones – Thrusting weapons and arrows have little effect as they can pass right through the revenant.

SHAMBLING MOUND

WEAKNESS – *Herbicides*

8

Rotting heaps of animated vegetation, consuming any organic material in their path.

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Whipping, grasping tendrils. | Engulfing a creature in its amorphous body. |
| Lurching forward slowly, inexorably. | Regrowing from a defeated incarnation. |
| A crushing blow like a rotten tree falling. | Lurking in wait amidst vegetation. |

Fed by Lightning – Rituals involving lightning or attempts to direct natural lightning at the creature increase its Endurance by one.

The Witch's Hovel

The hovel of Antigona, the witch of the swamp, stands in a clearing. Its stone foundations rise from the stagnant water of the swamp. To enter the structure it is necessary to wade through the water, or cross in some other way. As the treasure hunters approach the hovel they will hear Antigona singing.

Paint the Scene:

- *What line in the gentle song floating on the air seems to mock one of your companions?*

GOAL	<i>Gain an advantage for what lies ahead.</i>	
MOMENTS	A thin column of smoke hints at something homely amidst the desolation.	
	A woman's voice softly singing a song mocking one of the treasure hunters.	
	Thick spiderwebs block the path between closely-packed trees.	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Antigona's hut. A dank stone dwelling with a confusing layout of small, cluttered rooms. Macabre trinkets festoon every surface and hang from the low ceiling.	Antigona awaits the treasure hunters. She wanders the bounds of her domain and will delight in toying with outsiders, sowing suspicion between them, or bargaining her knowledge of the swamp for promises of services. Any knowledge she imparts will be a lie designed to lure the treasure hunters to their doom, at which point Antigona will appear to gloat and mock as they suffer.	A black gemstone Antigona carries that allows her to become intangible. A treasure hunter may learn to use it but must include a dark die in any Risk Roll made when they do. A bag sown from human skin, containing the spiteful spirit of a woman Antigona corrupted and destroyed years before.
Antigona's "garden". A particularly gnarled and dense knot of swampy vegetation. Thickly infested with spiders.	A bite from a spider inflicts the condition Fevered. A sucking mire pulls the treasure hunters down. Even if they escape, their equipment could easily be lost to the depths.	An ancient brass sundial.
<i>Additional Treasures</i>		

An iron athame. The skull of a fae prince.

Antigona

Antigona remembers the glory of Vas Tulid, and mourns its fall. Her heart has withered and twisted. Nothing for her can ever match the glory that was the city. To imagine a match is possible is an insult to its memory. In its place she delights in the corruption Stelgamau has brought while at the same time hating the wyrm.

Although ancient, Antigona was near-dormant for centuries, lurking, scheming, dreaming, growing bitter. The dragon's arrival has awakened her.

Antigona communicates with Stelgamau via insect and spider messengers who crawl from her hut to the wyrm's lair and back. Her power grows as the wyrm's influence twists everything around it. If Antigona knows of the treasure hunters then it is certain Stelgamau does too, and vice-versa.

She will encourage the treasure hunters to confront the wyrm, flattering their vanity, pleading for their assistance, or tempting them with Stelgamau's hoard. Antigona will delight in the hunters' demise, or in the unlikely event they triumph, replace the wyrm's reign of terror with her own.

ANTIGONA

WEAKNESS – *Grief*

10

Antigona is—or at least appears to be—a young woman with dark hair threaded with flowers and the bones of small animals.



Singing a mocking song.



Moving in unpredictable ways through the rooms of her hovel.



Submerging beneath the swamp water.



Charming one of the treasure hunters with devoted attention.



Scowling when she thinks she's unobserved.



Angry tears streaming as she recalls the glorious city that once was.

The Forgotten City

Vas Tulid was a walled city of magnificent architecture. Little remains today. Everything is overgrown with vines, moss, and gnarled trees bursting through old stone.

GOAL

Locate Stelgamau's lair.

MOMENTS

A parade of lizard-folk bringing tribute to Stelgamau.

Tangible, clutching fear as Stelgamau departs her lair to hunt or returns.

PROPS

The Dock. What must once have been a vast and magnificent dock on the river is now half submerged and lost to the encroaching swamp.

TRAPS

Lizard-folk emerging from the mist on a flat-bottomed skiff laden with worthless detritus — tributes for Stelgamau.

TREASURES

The Agora. An open plaza, perhaps once a marketplace or civic forum. Any statues or structures are long since crumbled to dust. The lizard-folk gather here, organized by Vercatus, to prostrate themselves before their wyrm-god.

Assorted trash left behind by lizard-folk. Perhaps a rusted blade or spear.

The Temple. An ancient temple facade with a grand entryway, used by Stelgamau as a way in and out of her lair. A great tree grows through the temple structure behind.

Large open areas with little opportunity to hide, making treasure hunters vulnerable to the wyrm.

Additional Treasures

Coins and trinkets dropped by the lizard-folk.

Vercatus

A wild-eyed and wild-haired holy man of the woods. Vercatus is convinced that Stelgamau, rather than the corrupting force that has blighted the land around, is in fact a noble creature determined to restore Vas Tulid to its former glory and turn the landscape around from a desolate, pestilential swamp to a paradise.

Stelgamau delights in the depths of deception she has imposed upon Vercatus. He is her major-domo and high priest, her thrall and plaything. He will insist that the treasure hunters abase themselves before Stelgamau, and speaks of her only in hushed, awed tones.

Lizard-Folk

Bipedal, scaly and ranging in size from diminutive to the size of a small human. The lizard-folk carry simple weapons of stone and wood. They can be cunning and combine uncanny stillness with sudden rapid movement. They communicate between themselves in clicks, hisses, and low rumbling vocalizations. Vercatus has a rudimentary vocabulary of signs and simple words he can use to convey Stelgamau's wishes. The wyrm herself speaks to the lizard-folk via fevered, terrifying dreams. They are servile toward Stelgamau who they regard as a great and terrible god, and may become hostile if they believe the treasure hunters wish her harm. The lizard-folk hate and fear Antigona, who has preyed upon them.

LIZARD-FOLK

WEAKNESS – *None*

6

Wretched thralls to Stelgamau.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Eyes flicking independent of one another. | •• Scattering into the vegetation. |
| •• Abasing themselves before Vercatus. | ••• Hurling spears from cover. |
| ••• Bearing a pallet stacked with tawdry offerings. | ••• Clicking and hissing in urgent deliberation. |

The Lair of Stelgamau

Stelgamau lairs under the ruins of an ancient temple. The crypts beneath the temple are vast, but fragile, held in place only by the roots of the vegetation that has torn apart the buildings above.

GOAL	<i>Lure Stelgamau into a vulnerable position.</i>
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MOMENTS	A shaft of dim sunlight from a root-choked well shaft leading back to the surface. A rumbling from deeper within the crypts. Dust and debris falls from above as though something were shaking the entire structure.
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PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
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The Crypt. Stelgamau's resting place. Acid-etched stone, gnarled roots, stagnant pools of water, and the stench of rotting vegetation. Stelgamau's nest is a hollow formed from fragments of broken statuary and bas-relief panels. The remains of the wyrm's meals are carelessly strewn and left to rot.

Stelgamau sleeps here, disturbed only by the lizard-folk who bring her tribute and food. She knows every inch of the crypt and cannot be tricked or outwitted here.

Sunk into the mud and rot that Stelgamau nests on are the tributes the wyrm has accumulated. Among the detritus is the occasional coin or piece of jewelry from the height of Vas Tulid.

The Well. A deep oubliette, its walls moss-slicked, its depth unknowable. It is too narrow for Stelgamau, but anyone using the well to shelter from her would be terribly vulnerable if she were to belch acid down after them.

STELGAMAU	WEAKNESS – <i>Size</i>	13
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Stelgamau is malevolence given flesh. An immense black wyrm, with acid-eaten scales and a wingspan that could encompass a village. She is intelligent and utterly cruel, delighting in the ruin of Vas Tulid. Her domain is the very symbol of what once was, and can never be again.

Writhing through the labyrinthine spaces of the crypt.	Bursting into the air amidst an explosion of stones and broken roots.
Making a rumbling growl that can be felt through the stones of the crypt.	Exuding a nauseating aura of despair.
Obliterating one of the few remaining standing remnants of the city with a blast of caustic, black ichor.	Tearing apart and swallowing a lizard folk that displeases her.

Acid Breath – An exhalation of acid destroys your weapon, armor, or equipment.

Swallow – You are swallowed whole by the wyrm.

Insect Swarm – A blinding, stinging cloud of insects engulfs the object of Stelgamau's ire.

Darkness – An impenetrable magical darkness.

Conclusion

The treasure hunters might defeat Stelgamau, only to usher in an even more terrible ruler in the form of Antigona, who will tempt, torture, and slowly destroy any who violate the boundaries of Vas Tulid.

Without either Stelgamau or Antigona, the slough will slowly consume the forgotten city and in time a more verdant life will return to the region. One way or another the treasure hunters will be long dead by then, however.

NOTES

Acknowledgements

There are no dragons in the world of Trophy, but I couldn't help wondering what a classic dragon-hunting adventure would look like in *Trophy Gold*. This Incursion is an experiment in blending some of the classic elements of the monster-slaying expedition that have been with us from the early days of tabletop roleplaying games, with the highly abstract combat and delight in meta-gaming of Trophy. How would the powers and lair actions of a D&D dragon translate to Trophy? What does dragon-fear look like in a system that uses conditions?

A great deal of the inspiration for the specifics of this scenario came from the black dragon episodes of the podcast [Kill Every Monster](#).

The potential of combat with an overwhelming foe in *Trophy Gold* was brought home to me by [Jason Cordova's actual play](#) of [The Cross-Stitch](#) (an adventure originally written for Mörk Borg).

It's hard to talk about fighting dragons in rules-light games without tipping a hat to [A 16 HP Dragon](#), the seminal blog post by Sage LaTorra that explains perfectly why a dragon doesn't need 400 hit points to be an epic adversary.

Antigona is kind of a mixture of the titular witch from *The Witch* (2015), the siren from *Jibaro*, season 3, episode 9 of *Love, Death + Robots*, (2022), and Auntie Ethel from *Baldur's Gate 3* (2023).

Vercatus is—pretty obviously—very much inspired by Dennis Hopper's unnamed photo-journalist in *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

There's a good bit of *Swamp Thing* and the Dead Marshes scenes from *The Lord of the Rings - The Two Towers* (2002) in the introductory set.

white as snow

black as ebony

red as blood

Valentin Gerber

white as snow, black as ebony, red as blood

An Incursion for Trophy Gold

Written by Valentin Gerber

You rip a pamphlet from a post:

“The black dragon who had long terrorized our villages was at last slain by the abbot and his mercenaries. The creature’s hoard, presumably close to White Mountain Pass, now remains unguarded.”

Snowstorms and biting winds have thus far prevented locals from searching for the treasures. A most fortunate circumstance for those of more adventurous dispositions—an opportunity to strike before other treasure hunters stake their claim.

theme: **CLAUSTROPHOBIA**

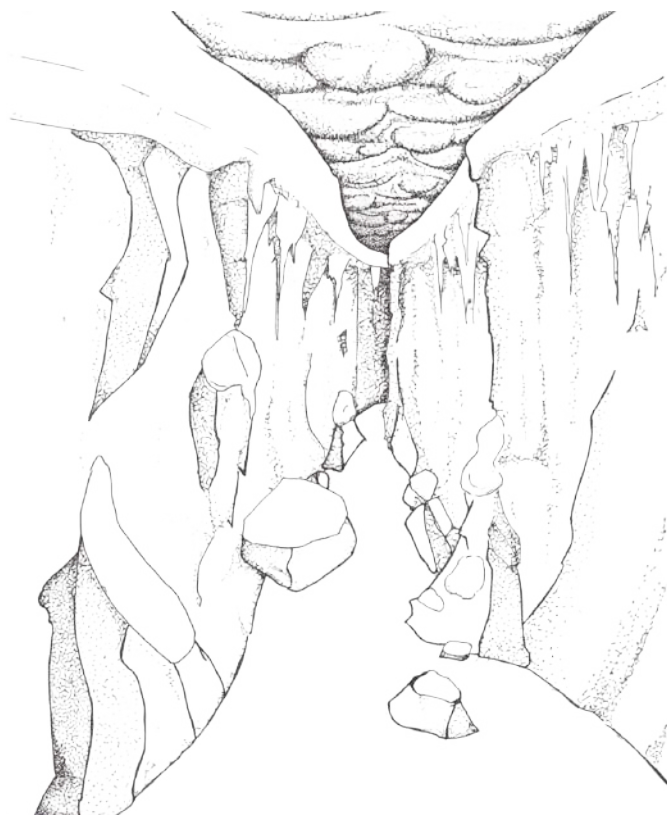
SUMMARY FOR THE GM

Snow and ice grip the high passes, where treacherous paths cling to the mountain close to the abyss and jagged chasms yawn with silent menace—a gnawing sense of dread and hopelessness. Fog and thick clouds blot out the vision, and towering fissures of rock and ice hem in every step. The creeping cold seeps into the marrow.

The black mountain lodge’s warmth sours as the snow buries it alive, and the treasure hunters realize with what kind of horror they are about to be buried.

Below, in the fetid red undercroft, the stench of blood and decay thickens the air. The walls seem to constrict, and the blood-demon’s oppressive presence presses in.

SETS



Niklaas Warda

ASCENDING THE WHITE
MOUNTAIN



THE BLACK LODGE



BLOOD-RED UNDERCROFT

WARNINGS: *Violence, violence against animals, bloodshed, corpses, mind-control.*

Ascending the White Mountain

The villagers' warnings still ringing in your ears, you set forth toward the dreaded mountain pass. Snowflakes swirl about in frenzied dance, while the biting winds lash at your faces. You press on, bound together by a length of sturdy rope. Weathered wooden stakes, your only guides, jut from the snow like skeletal fingers.

GOAL	<i>Reach the pass</i>
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MOMENTS	The next marker has vanished—swallowed by the snow.
	Are those voices you hear through the howling gale?
	A sudden, violent wrench upon the rope! A moment's resistance; snap!—then slack, Nothing but the frayed, severed end of the ropes, swaying from your numbed fingers.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
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Slain stag. Half-buried and well off the marked path lies a great, dark mass—motionless upon the snow. The carcass of a stag, its flesh torn and frozen stiff, stares up at you with hollow, glassy eyes.	Here and there, the drifts betray their treachery; one false step, and the snow swallows you.	Despite the grim omen, the creature's noble antlers promise a handsome reward—a gold piece, at least, in the next village's market.
Suspension bridge. The rickety construct sways precariously above the yawning chasm; its planks groan beneath each cautious step.	One misplaced foot, and the abyss will claim you.	You see, wedged in the ice below, a corpse. Its frozen fingers clutch a leather purse (1 Gold).
Gorge. The gorge narrows with every step, its jagged walls pressing in like a monstrous vise. Finally you are forced to advance in single file—each one squeezing through the suffocating passage.	Suddenly a howl echoes from the walls above you. Soon, you make out a whole pack of wolves. Having marked you as prey, the pitiless hunters close in.	Wolf pelts, still damp and bearing the stench of blood (1 Gold).

Additional Traps

Frostbite. Getting lost.



Valentin Gerber

WOLFPACK

WEAKNESS – Fire

7

Ravenous animals, their eyes aflame with a ghastly hunger, prowling the snowy woods in relentless pursuit of prey.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>• Chase – as soon as the treasure hunters start running, the hunt is on.</p> | <p>•• You stumble upon a pack of wolves devouring a dead stag. Growls and bared fangs. Eyes full of bloodlust. You disturbed their meal.</p> |
| <p>•• The beasts encircle you. A group of them suddenly appears in front of your group.</p> | <p>••• The weakest link. With a snarling frenzy, the pack seizes upon the last one of your file—dragging them screaming into the undergrowth's thorned embrace.</p> |
| <p>••• A beast lunges out of a thicket, its maw gaping wide, teeth glinting like daggers in the pale moonlight.</p> | <p>••• White Wolf. A lone, colossal beast—white as frost—emerges from behind a rock, nearly two meters high. It fixes you with eyes like chips of glacial ice. Saliva drips from its jowls, while its growl vibrates through your very marrow.</p> |

The Black Lodge

The veil of snow finally abates and there—scarcely a few hundred meters above—looms the jagged outline of the pass, a dark gash against the pale sky. To one side, half-buried in the drifts, a sturdy mountain hut sits, clad in charred timber. A dark chimney protrudes upwards, throwing a fine line of smoke into the sky. A single set of footprints, crisp and unbroken, lead straight to its door. Numbed by cold and exhaustion, you battle through the knee-deep snow until you reach the heavy oak door. Next to the entrance, two freshly slain bucks hang suspended on metal hooks, their dark blood dripping onto the black planks of the porch.

The lodge should at first appear as a long sought sanctuary. After a moment of orientation, Rudolph-the Inn-keeper-enters the scene. He is a giant man, speaking only in a strange foreign tongue. His skin strangely resembles the charred wood of the cottage. As soon as the treasure hunters stumble upon the body on the upper floor, he will reveal his bloodlust.

GOAL	<i>Overcome Rudolph the Inn-keeper</i>		
MOMENTS	That creaking—could it be footsteps? Surely someone else must be here. The boards beneath your feet whisper of unseen presence.		
	The snowstorm outside rages with redoubled fury—we will be trapped here, buried beneath its howling wrath! Then, the unmistakable cry of wolves again—long, mournful, and far too close.		
	“Essen ist fertig!” (food is ready) echoes loudly from the kitchen. Rudolph is busy butchering a deer. A glint of lust in his eyes.		
	Rudolph enters through the main door, a slain wolf over his shoulder, its liver in his hand.		
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES	
The kitchen. A spacious hearth dominates the room, where a hearty stew is bubbling over the crackling fire, its rich aroma filling the air with the promise of warmth and strength. Fresh bread steams beside a small cask of ale. In the corner, a wash tub brims with linens, the fabric still damp from the scrub. Hard to miss, beneath a patchwork rug on the kitchen floor, lies a trapdoor.	Whoever eats their fill can lose the 'exhausted' condition, but will fall asleep afterward. Should all fall asleep the inn-keeper will carry them up to their room. The trapdoor won't open until Rudolph is defeated.		
The Lounge. A large room with a lengthy table bathed in the warm glow of a fireplace. A small bookshelf stretches up to the ceiling. A reading desk stands sentinel, a large folio open upon its surface, its pages adorned with etchings.	Are the scenes depicting moments from your life, or foretelling events that have yet to unfold? You get lost in memories and images. Suddenly, a crimson droplet falls upon the page. A quick glance at the ceiling above reveals a glistening, blood-red stain.	A collection of leather-bound volumes might fetch a gold coin.	A scarred violin nestled amongst the shelves only produces eerie sounds.
The upper floor. A washroom and several locked doors. One door, ajar and inviting, reveals a chamber with a carefully prepared bed for each one of the group. In the locked room above the lounge, a decapitated corpse lies on the bed. A vast, glistening pool of blood has seeped into the sheets and the small rug. Beyond all other doors— empty chambers.	Should the players try, the outer door and all the windows are securely locked.	Wolf pelts, still damp and bearing the stench of blood (1 Gold).	

RUDOLPH THE INN-KEEPER

WEAKNESS –
*Insatiable lust for
blood*

9

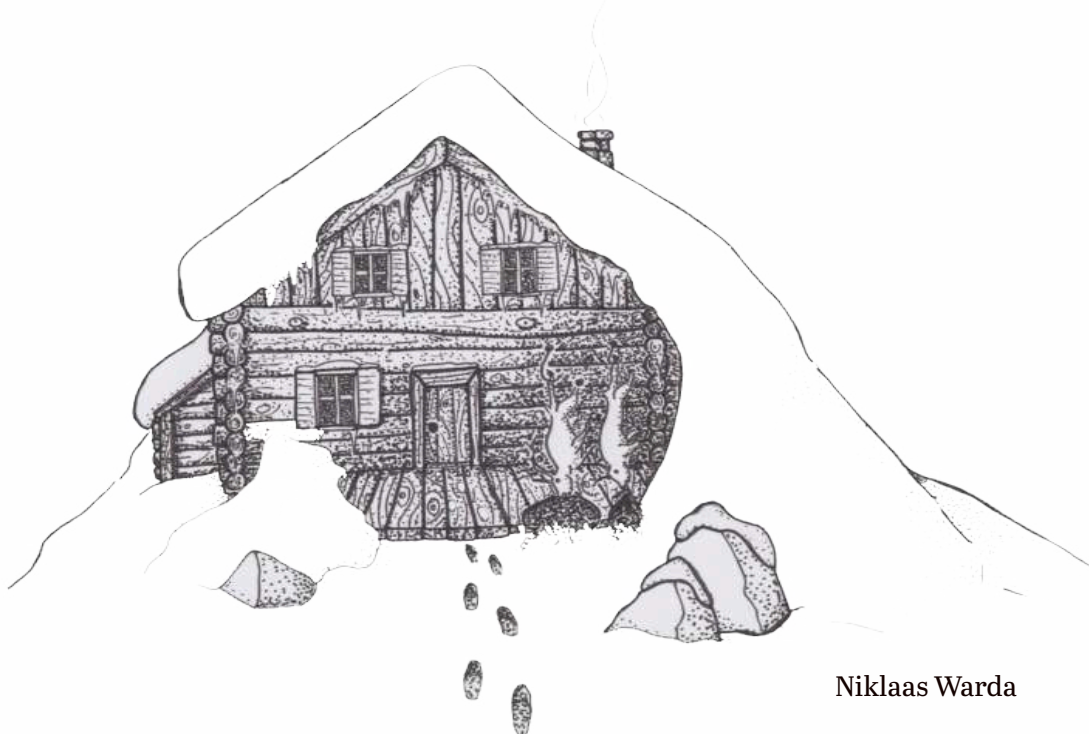
The Inn-Keeper

- Suddenly you feel his giant hand on your shoulder. You turn around and see him swinging his giant meat cleaver.
- Gnaws on a raw liver he walks towards you.
- All the interior doors start to frantically open and close by themselves. Suddenly Rudolph stands behind the one closest to you.
- Bent over the folio laughing maniacally – a giant meat cleaver in his hand.
- You hear his heavy footsteps above/below you, while his sonorous voice calls out 'Komm, komm!' (come). Slowly, he approaches, as if he can sense your growing fear and is savouring every drop of it.
- Horrified, you hear scratching and scuttling as if someone was forcing their way behind the wooden cladding or beneath the floorboards. Suddenly, the woodwork bursts open, and Rudolph's massive fist emerges, waving a giant cleaver in the gaping aperture.

**Giant meat cleaver, keys to the rooms upstairs
and the trapdoor in the kitchen**



Valentin Gerber

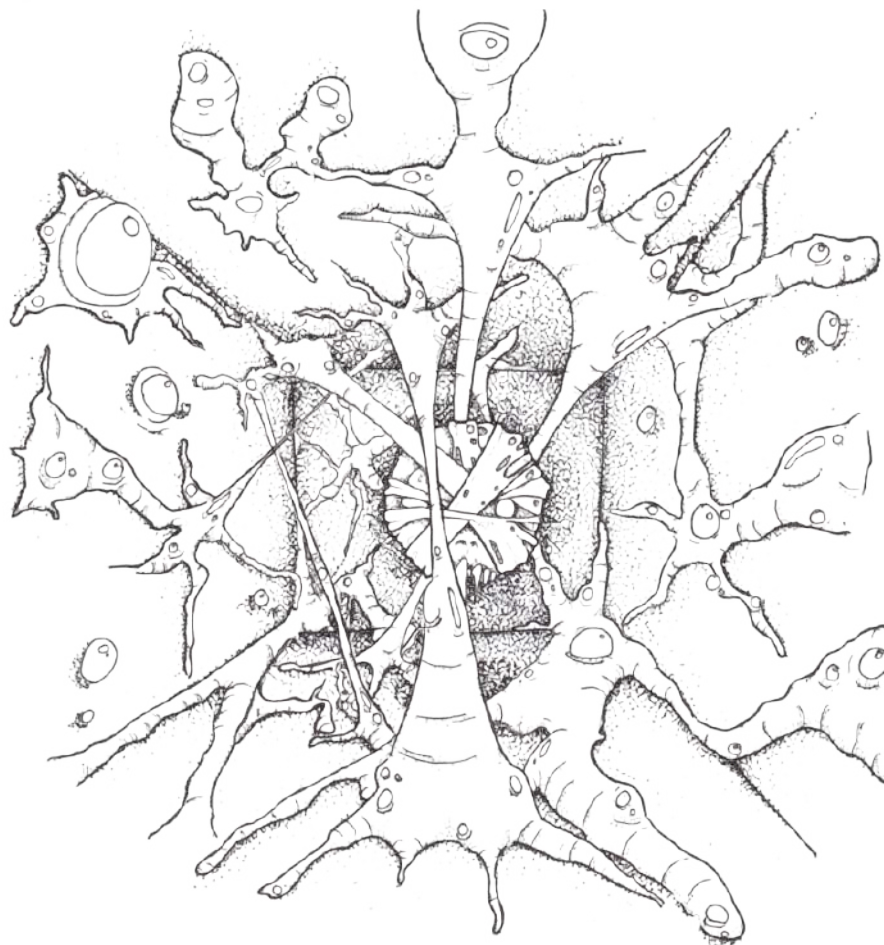


Niklaas Warda

Blood-red Undercroft

Hard to miss, beneath a patchwork rug on the kitchen floor, lies a trapdoor. Opening with a creak, it reveals a dim shaft and sturdy ladder. The reek of putrefying flesh immediately enters your nostrils, turning your stomach.

GOAL	<i>Destroy the Blood-Demon</i>	
MOMENTS	One of the severed limbs strikes you with a dreadful familiarity. That tattooed hand—was it not last week that you shared a pipe with its owner?	
	Amidst the unbearable stench, there creeps a low, unholy hum—a droning murmur that vibrates not in the air, but within your skull.	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
The chopping-chamber. Two great tables dominate the space, their surfaces slick with gore—both ancient, blackened stains and fresh, glistening pools. Above them, shelves groan beneath their grisly burden: a grotesque inventory of severed limbs, sundered torsos, and nameless fragments. In one shadowed corner, a heap of discarded garments lies strewn. Upon the second table, a small printing press sits beside a stack of familiar printed pamphlets. From a narrow passage, a bright crimson glow spills onto the scene.	Searching the room or venturing forward requires a risk roll—the combination of the gore and the stench and the droning sound are too intense.	Among the heap of clothes: a purse with gold coins (one less than the number of treasure hunters), a tarnished silver locket with the portrait of a woman, a sealed letter containing a valuable secret.
The Tunnel. As you venture into the tunnel, its walls turn from stone to living flesh - veins pulsing, tendons flexing, muscles twitching beneath a slick, heaving surface. Crimson light and rising heat radiate from the walls.	The humming gets stronger.	
The Blood-Demon's den. The passage opens into a circular chamber, with walls entirely of throbbing, living flesh. At its centre—suspended at eye level by sinewy strands—pulses a skull-sized orb of dark, crimson tissue. The droning in your skull swells to an unbearable crescendo, its rhythm syncing with your own heartbeat, as the orb's gaze locks onto you. You feel your will unravelling, thread by thread, drawn into its sanguine thrall.	The Blood Demon attempts to transfer its bloodlust to the treasure hunters, to make them its minions, so that they may take Rudolph's place. But it only wants the strongest.	Defeating the demon leads to an explosion of the walls. A large wave of blood will send the party back to the shaft. The bloodbath is strangely invigorating (ruin -1). The doors and windows of the lodge are no longer locked.



Niklaas Warda

BLOOD-DEMON

9

WEAKNESS – *Fire*

- A throbbing orb imposes its rhythm onto your heartbeat.
- Strands of tissues lash out from the walls towards you.
- Blood bursts out from the ceiling, covering you in its wet warmth.
- Whispering voices drive you insane.
- A commanding voice ordering you to slaughter your fellows.
- The floor softens. Your feet sink in, and fleshy strands slowly grow up your ankles and calves.

Conclusion

If the group succeeds in vanquishing the demon, they may leave the lodge and begin their long retreat. The slain dragon and its hoard were naught but a cruel ruse, a bait to lure the unwary into Rudolph's grasp. The second they step beyond the entrance the lodge begins to crumble—its blackened timbers dissolving into ash, carried away by the wind until not a trace remains.

As they descend, they might cross paths with another band of adventurers, drawn upward by the same fatal lure. This delve has no further rewards.

NOTES



The Drowned Monastery

Charlie Etheridge-Nunn

The Drowned Monastery

An Incursion for Trophy Gold

Written by Charlie Etheridge-Nunn

Playtested by The In-Fighters, Gihan Bandaranaike, Lee Reeves, Luke Stratford, Mark Gossage and W.H. Arthur.

The history of Loch Hallymire is one of tragedy. The puritanical Lord MacGille was the only man strong enough and stubborn enough to tame the landscape, conquering it with his clan. The forests, the hills and the turbulent waters all obeyed him, but the local monks did not. They had used their distilleries and whiskies aged in Kaldhuri-wood casks to buy influence with local clans and MacGille demanded they cease production once he had their lands. He put their monasteries to the torch- all but one hidden in an island in the loch, inaccessible for those who couldn't tame the waters like the monks did.

MacGille sent his eldest son to the woods where monks were seen disembarking, only to hear that he was ambushed by tribesmen and slaughtered. His daughter was a legendary hunter and sought out one of the monks in a nearby valley, only to be isolated and killed by her own traps. His last son took to a watchtower where he could observe the actions of the monks, only to be cursed to remain there forevermore. Lord MacGille had seen his dynasty ruined and in a last desperate attempt at vengeance weighed himself down with an enchanted stone and walked into the loch. He drowned and the monastery sank before any of the monks could flee.

The monks and the lord were gone, but the loch remained. Recently, word has spread of a way to bring the monastery back, of secrets held by the shades of the lord and his children. If this is possible, there may be great riches or long-forbidden whiskies ripe for the taking.

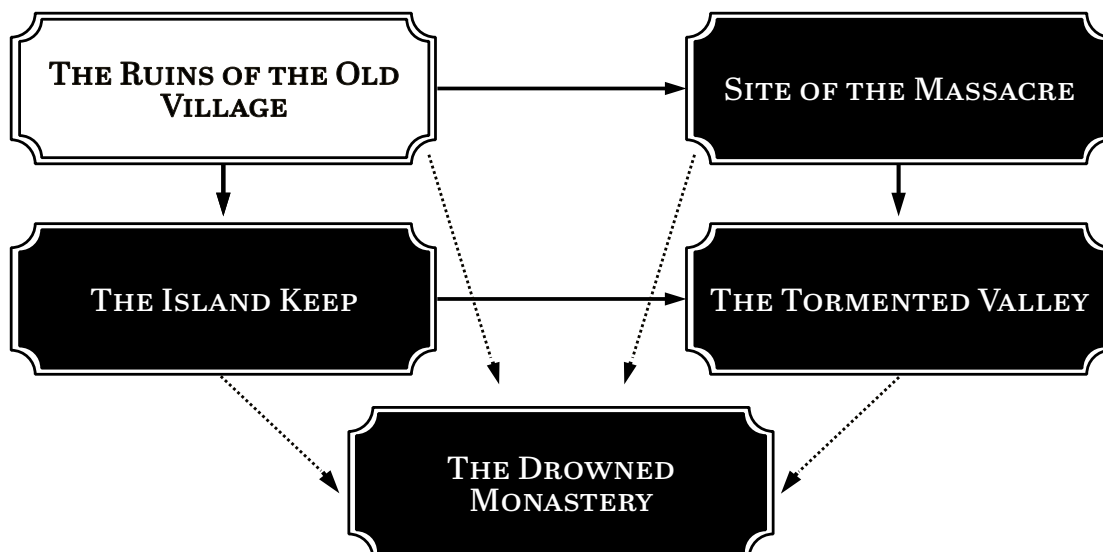
theme: **PRESERVATION**

Loch Hallymire is a place of stagnation and stillness. Lord Ruaridh MacGille's brief brutal reign is over, but the destruction he brought scars the land, slowly reclaiming everything. There is a stillness of nature surrounding the loch. The sky is a solid, unchanging grey, plants cover worn stone and signs of past clans who lived here decades and centuries ago. The few people still here are as worn as the stone and surrendered to their fate.

Running the Incursion

It is possible to reach the monastery after only two sets (Ruins of the Old Village and any other set), however it will be harder for the treasure hunters if they try to get there before quieting any of the spirits in the area. Look at "Travelling to the Monastery" below for further details. Be up front about this to the players.

SETS



The Ruins of the Old Village

They say Lord MacGille bound an enchanted rock to his body and drowned himself at the village's edge. His death sank the monastery but also flooded the village, killing many of the people there. The young survivors left, but the old ones remained, living in the few remaining intact structures furthest away from the shore. They keep people away from the drowned village and the spirits who lurk there.

GOAL	<i>Reveal the monastery in the centre of the loch.</i>
MOMENTS	Gulls hang still in the air, even without a breeze.
	An old man stands at the edge of the drowned village, watching his family's ghosts wander the ruins.
	Storm clouds bulge, thick with rain, waiting to drop.
	Small cairns are scattered around the edge of the village as wards to keep villagers from straying.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
The Broken Stone. A large tavern, sparsely populated by old villagers. There are a couple of old houses alongside it, mildly flooded but survivable. The villagers are possessive of the drowned ghosts and may share information about the loch if people can win their trust.	Barricades and the occasional nonlethal deterrent set to keep drowned ghosts away from the tavern. Irrate, territorial locals.	Money won in games of cards, a hidden bottle or two of beer or whisky.
The old village, once called Boocoble, is flooded, requiring you to wade or swim. Structures get more ruined the closer you get to the shoreline. Shacks creak uneasily and hidden hazards lie in wait for the unwary.	Drowned ghosts roam the village carrying out echoes of their old lives, structures may collapse, floors may give way and sudden deep sections of the village pull people in.	Fishing charms, a surprisingly intact painting.
The shore has spread into the village, but drops rapidly without warning. Lord MacGille lurks under the surface, weighed down by the rock fused with his body.	Lord MacGille and submerged ghosts await to pull in unwary fishermen.	Small, dark fish with human features.

<i>Additional Traps</i>	<i>Additional Treasures</i>
<i>A knocked over cairn causes drowned ghosts to break out. Slippery rocks underfoot.</i>	<i>Abandoned heirlooms, unopened boxes of old supplies.</i>

DROWNED GHOST

WEAKNESS – *Being dry*

5

Grimy human shapes, bones held together with reeds and ropes. They move slowly and quietly, picking their way through the ruins. They seem hungry for something and angered by the presence of the living.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>• Standing at the shore's edge with a long stick, mimicking fishermen.</p> | <p>••• Imitating a conversation despite not being able to speak.</p> |
| <p>• Pulling itself away from a tangle of thick moss it's been stuck in.</p> | <p>••• Hiding in a submerged basement, waiting for people to walk over them.</p> |
| <p>••• Tending shop using old bones and rocks.</p> | <p>••• Rocking a dead bird gently, like a baby.</p> |

Endless – Unless physically completely destroyed, the drowned ghosts will slowly stitch themselves back together and go about their grim echo of life.

THE GHOST OF LORD MACGILLE

WEAKNESS – *Alcohol*

10

A large skeleton in regal robes long-since ruined by slime and weeds from the loch. A crown of animal bones on his head. A large rock is chained where his stomach once was.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>• Watching The Treasure Hunters from under the loch.</p> | <p>••• Wailing at the loch, in the rough direction of the monastery.</p> |
| <p>• Casting silent judgement on the Drowned Ghosts for imagined past sins.</p> | <p>••• Holding court for some of his favourite Drowned Ghosts.</p> |
| <p>••• Crawling under waist-deep water, gathering parts to add to his body.</p> | <p>••• Using detritus to build his children in effigy.</p> |

Monkstone – A Risk roll can be used to break the chain from Lord MacGille's body. If they are separated, Lord MacGille loses 2 Endurance. The stone takes up an inventory slot but is worth three Gold to the right witches.

The Site of the Massacre

They say Thorn's Bay was where Lord MacGille's eldest son, Anndrais, prepared to sail to the monastery with several dozen soldiers. The monks prayed to their heathen gods for intervention and the forest transformed into an army of barbarians. Anndrais' men were massacred; he was staked to the ground and burned to death. Now, the beach is a testament to the wanton slaughter. Each day the remains of the soldiers rise from their basecamp at the centre of the battlefield and each day they die.

GOAL	<i>Change the fate of the soldiers or return Anndrais to the land to quiet the demons of the loch</i>	
	A soldier and a barbarian, stuck intertwined in an eternal grapple.	
MOMENTS	A wooden barbarian is stuck in the deep mud, branches stretching out as far as it can manage.	
	The shade of a horse runs, riderless, across the battlefield.	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
The woods surround the battlefield with twisted trees and strange imitations of barbarian camps.	Wooden barbarians stalk the woods, wary of soldiers. The trees themselves.	A collection of skulls and decorated bones the barbarians have been collecting.
The battlefield is a swamp of mud, bones and destroyed weapons. Palisades and tents are sunken into the ground while undead soldiers and wooden barbarians are locked in an eternal fight.	Combatants from either side might mistake treasure hunters for enemies. The slick mud provides unstable ground.	
The basecamp is in the centre of the battlefield, with tall wooden walls and undead sentinels watching from unstable towers.	The soldiers demand loyalty from anyone entering the camp, sentinels may open fire on people attempting to sneak in. Anndrais MacGille sits in the centre, burning and making doomed schemes.	Ancient maps of the area. An intact crate of provisions..
<i>Additional Traps</i>		<i>Additional Treasures</i>
Pits, leftover traps, spiked corpses of barbarians.		The occasional intact weapons

WOODEN BARBARIANS

WEAKNESS – Fire

7

A cruel mockery of men; branches twist into a vaguely human shape with long antlers and arms ending with wooden weapons. They move without the limits of bones, joints, blood or a need to breathe.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Using an existing split to turn into two barbarians. | • Pulling an unquiet soldier apart. |
| • Pretending to be a tree. | • Tearing pieces off a fallen wooden barbarian and wearing them. |
| • Sitting around a long-dead fire in an imitation of life. | • Charging into battle with reckless abandon. |

UNQUIET SOLDIERS

WEAKNESS – Wooden tools or weapons

5

Old meat and muscle, long-fused to suits of battered armour. They move stiffly, but speak like inexperienced, doomed soldiers.

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Praying to the Saints not to die. | • Running drills. |
| • Sharpening a broken sword against a broken grinding wheel. | • Desperately pulling another soldier out of the mud. |
| • Stealing a meaty kiss away from the view of superiors. | • Attaching a body part which almost certainly didn't belong to them. |

LORD ANNDRAIS MACGILLE

WEAKNESS – Being extinguished

9

Anndrais is staked to the centre of the basecamp and burns eternally, with a crown of antlers impaled into his head. He rages against his own incompetent soldiers and the barbarians with equal zeal.

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Dressing down his subordinates. | • Demanding people whose shades have long since deteriorated. |
| • Lashing out with goutts of jagged flame. | • Tearing at his flesh, which is now fused to the stake. |
| • Immolating disbelievers in his plans. | • Inspiring the unquiet soldiers. |

The Island Keep

They say that Marcos MacGille killed the owner of the island fort which looked out to the centre of the loch. He took up residence in order to spy on the monastery and feed information to his father. The monks cursed him to never be able to leave, never to die. He watches still, waiting for something.

GOAL

Banish Marcos MacGille or return the keep to the loch to calm the waters.

MOMENTS

The lighthouse's beam pauses on a treasure hunter.

Statues move closer to the treasure hunters, slowly and only when unobserved.

A clanging from the lighthouse.

Sections of wall crumble away.

PROPS

A causeway leads to the keep, flanked by armoured statues. For most of the day, the water rises and only their heads are visible.

The courtyard contains an unused carriage, steps up to the walls and several doors leading into the keep. Marcos MacGille waits to greet visitors, surrounded by rotten wooden benches and spoiled food.

The keep interior has been turned into a museum of the MacGille dynasty, with scraps dragged in by Marcos' soldiers or found in the loch. The displays of worthless scraps and papers shift, creating a maze.

A lighthouse was built as part of the keep and stands as a ramshackle watchtower. A single light looks out into the mist of the loch.

TRAPS

A sudden change in the tide may tug people into the water or make the path inaccessible.

The gate to the courtyard is closed, so treasure hunters may need to lift it or find a way over the wall. Marcos is friendly until his existence is questioned, when he will lash out.

Ever-shifting displays separate people and lead them towards holes in the fort. Trapped boats and items hanging from the ceilings.

The Lighthouse Keeper crawls across the workings, trying to keep the tower working. Machinery moves rapidly and blows burning steam.

TREASURES

Inside the carriage are old books, histories of local clans who are not the MacGilles, taken by them and rewritten.

The exhibits occasionally include valuable treasures, like intact clothing, untarnished jewels and journals of visiting nobles.

Intact glass lenses, copper piping. Explosive materials, poorly contained.

Additional Traps

Loose bricks and uneven surfaces.

LIVING STATUES

WEAKNESS – *Cracks in their stone bodies*

7

Crumbling statues in the form of ancient warriors, covered in weeds.

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| • Changing position when they aren't observed. | •• Their head is missing, with small plants growing inside. |
| •• Blocking the path ahead. | ••• Lying on the ground, unable to get up. |
| ••• Balancing on one leg, the other has fallen in the water. | ••• Closer to you than you thought. |

Impervious – The statues are resistant to slashing damage.

THE GHOST OF MARCAS MACGILLE

WEAKNESS – *Harm to the keep*

10

A young man with a scruffy beard and grey, rotten-looking noble robes. He smiles and raises his goblet to you. For a moment he could seem alive, but he is standing through a shattered crate.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Preparing a meal of rotten food. | •• Running to the lighthouse to check for monks. |
| •• Drinking from an empty goblet. | ••• Neatly organising shelves. |
| ••• Shouting at servants who aren't there. | ••• Making up connections between his family and a found object. |

Retreat – After two rounds, Marcas will retreat further into the fort.

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER

WEAKNESS – *Freedom*

8

The original lighthouse keeper; his head has since been replaced with a bright torch and his limbs enhanced with metal piping. His knees and elbows are metallic ball joints and smoke belches out from tubes in his back.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Skittering through the piping. | •• Carrying out repairs to the machines. |
| •• Using a long pipe cleaner on the tubes in his back. | ••• Scratching at the door out of the lighthouse. |
| ••• Stood atop the lighthouse, looking out at the loch. | ••• Staring at a painting of the lighthouse keeper and his family. |

The Tormented Valley

They say Labra MacGille was a legendary hunter, until she chased a monk through the valley between the Sglair Hills. It was and still is an inhospitable landscape, and Labra laid traps for her quarry. Inexplicably, the monk escaped them all, seemingly disappearing into the peaks. Labra remained in the valley for a year and a day, before she was found, killed by one of her own traps.

GOAL

Stop the hunt to calm the storms.

A rock tumbles down one of the peaks.

MOMENTS

A rusty trap right where a treasure hunter was going to step.

The wind howls between the Sglair Hill peaks.

The ground rumbles.

PROPS

The valley is overgrown, covered in fallen rocks, brambles and ruins of old campsites. The winding, overgrown path makes it difficult to navigate and animal bones dot the landscape.

The peaks stretch high to either side of the valley, barren and inhospitable. A small monk's camp is ruined and exposed to the elements.

The hunting grounds are a network of caves which run throughout the lower levels of the mountain, filled with traps and bodies.

TRAPS

Pits and snares cover the valley, along with more elaborate traps in anywhere a monk may have sought shelter.

High winds and falling rocks. Winding pathways which lead to sudden drops.

Labra can be encountered anywhere, but will always return to her hunting grounds.
Darkness, poisoned chests.

TREASURES

Corpses of innocent travellers may have pouches of coins.

Abandoned pelts, bedrolls, prayer beads.

Chests of coins or personal belongings taken from Labra's more human prey (generally barbarians).

Additional Traps

Labra appears, attacks and repositions to a new place, or sets traps from afar.

Additional Treasures

Buried stashes of whisky. Old banners from nearby clans.

A long cloak and travellers clothes move and whirls in an unfelt wind. Inside is no body, but a storm of bone claws, fangs and in the centre, a bone heart.

● Lying on the ground, pretending to be a pile of bones.

▣ Scratching along a wall in the distance.

● Lurking on the ceiling, watching.

▣ Shadows of animals and barbarians are fleeing from the direction of the hunter.

● Prying open and resetting a snare trap.

▣ Whispering for the monk to show themself.

Incorporeal – Labra has no body to speak of, so attacks will need to target the heart, or her remains in the centre of the hunting grounds.

Travelling to the Monastery

Once the Ruins of the Village's set goal is complete, it is possible to sail to the monastery.

The group will need to locate a boat, and some suggestions of locations are:

- Boocoble: Fishing boats, long-abandoned or stolen from the villagers.
- Thorn's Bay: Invasion boats near the basecamp.
- The Island Fort: A ruined boat sits on a dock, prepared by Marcos but unusable due to his curse.

Sailing to the island is treated like a Combat Roll, with equipment or skills instead of weapons. Armour can still absorb Ruin and the treasure hunters can turn back at any time before being dashed by the waves.

The starting Endurance is 14, however this can be reduced by two for each of the following:

- Calming the storms
- Calming the waters
- Quieten the demons

What if characters can swim? Or have a boat?

If a treasure hunter offers this up, that's fine. They still need to raise the monastery to the surface and make the roll to get through the various obstacles.

The Drowned Monastery

Everyone knows the monastery existed long before the MacGille Clan settled in the region. Few know the origins of the monks and the Kaldhuri barrels they aged their whisky in.

The monastery is slick with water and sludge from the depths of the loch, but the buildings appear intact. From the docks there are winding gardens leading up to the monastery itself and presumably inside there, the hidden distillery.

GOAL	<i>Recover bottles of Kaldhuri whisky</i>
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MOMENTS	Dull grey geese confidently wander onto the island as if it belongs to them.
	The clouds above are suspended and still, eternally waiting to unleash a storm.
	A monk peels their way out of old plant matter.
	Stone flowers stand strong among the dead flowerbeds.
	Dead salmon wash up and are pulled back into the water.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
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The docks are filled with broken boats made from gnarled wood. The boardwalks groan underfoot.	The planks and stones of the dock are the least stable part of the island and may give way at any moment. If the water was not calmed, the docks are flooded and the gardens are drenched, making movement perilous.	Old baubles found from divers and left in boats.
The gardens were once beautiful, with several enclosed areas for meditation and farming. Now they are filled with plantlife which has grown strange underwater.	Wild, hungry plants. Slippery surfaces and groups of drowned monks. If the weather was not calmed, the monastery is in the centre of a magnificent storm, with lightning striking metal items and people who are still for too long.	Exotic underwater plants are all that has survived in the gardens and if they can be carefully extracted, may be valuable.
The monastery is a modest building which housed thirty monks before being drowned. Walls are carved with last wishes and failed plans of rebellion against Lord MacGille.	Collapsing walls and roofs. Bloated monks wandering narrow hallways.	Ornate books and possessions hidden in secure boxes. Bottles of whisky stolen by monks
Under the monastery, the distillery has grown wild, making a kind of underwater forest from the Kaldhuri casks and its pipes. It is still half-submerged and monks carefully tend the trees while the distillery equipment rumbles back into life.	The distillery is incredibly dangerous, having grown feral and still being filled with explosive materials. The underwater forest reaching out to absorb anything into itself.	The bottles of Kaldhuri whisky would be incredibly valuable, but they need to be transferred from the barrels which are incorporated into the living distillery.

<i>Additional Traps</i>	<i>Additional Treasures</i>
Vile gases, tainted whisky.	Beautiful glass bottles,

DROWNED MONKS

WEAKNESS – *Emptiness*

7

Bloated bodies in holy vestments, with pallid, almost translucent flesh. They sway about tipsily, sloshing with water as they go.

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Vomiting water, whisky and small newts. | ••• Tending ruined gardens and long-dead beehives. |
| •• Swaying back and forth, uncontrollably. | ••• Shooing a seal away from the island. |
| ••• Praying with tongueless mouths, unable to make the words anymore. | ••• Gulping down loch water from an old barrel. |

Writhing – Slick with water and whisky, the monks are slippery and difficult to grab hold of. If the demons of the loch were not disposed of, the monks are more active as their bellies are filled with writhing horrors.

POSSESSED DISTILLERY

WEAKNESS – *Fire or explosives*

11

The distillery itself has grown feral underneath the monastery. The pipes have grown like trees and have lamprey-like mouths coughing out black ichor and smoke.

- | | |
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| • Rumbling threateningly. | ••• Chewing pieces of a monk who got too close. |
| •• Spouting strange gases into the air. | ••• Belching out black acid left over from the distillery process. |
| ••• Spreading pipes across surfaces like a creeper. | ••• Clawing at barrels, drawing them closer to its mouths. |

Mouths – If two dice hit a treasure hunter's weak spot, one of the lamprey mouths attaches to them and locks on.

NOTES



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AMANITA

Journey to the Moon

An Incursion for Trophy Gold

Written by Amanita

This Incursion draws inspiration from the 1912 play Little Peter's Journey to the Moon by Gerdt von Bassewitz.

Sumsemann is a tin-coloured manikin who restlessly roams the Kalduhr forest in the moonlight, searching for their lost arm. A long time ago, a human woodcutter chopped off their arm before the enraged fairies banished him to the moon. Unfortunately, they took part of the Kalduhr forest with them, including Sumsemann's arm. Sumsemann promises the treasure hunters access to forgotten places deep in the forest, places that no human has ever set foot in, if they help them find their arm. They know a ritual that will take them to the moon, the realm of the night fairy. However, Sumsemann can only keep the passage open for one night. You therefore have until dawn to leave the realm of the night fairy or be lost forever.

FOR THE GM'S EYES ONLY

Depending on the players' actions and the information and sets they have obtained, the Moon Cannon may be located in different places throughout the adventure. Alternative routes to Moon Mountain include performing rituals, climbing a difficult ascent (in one night?), or taking the path through one of the portals used by the fairies for disposing of waste.

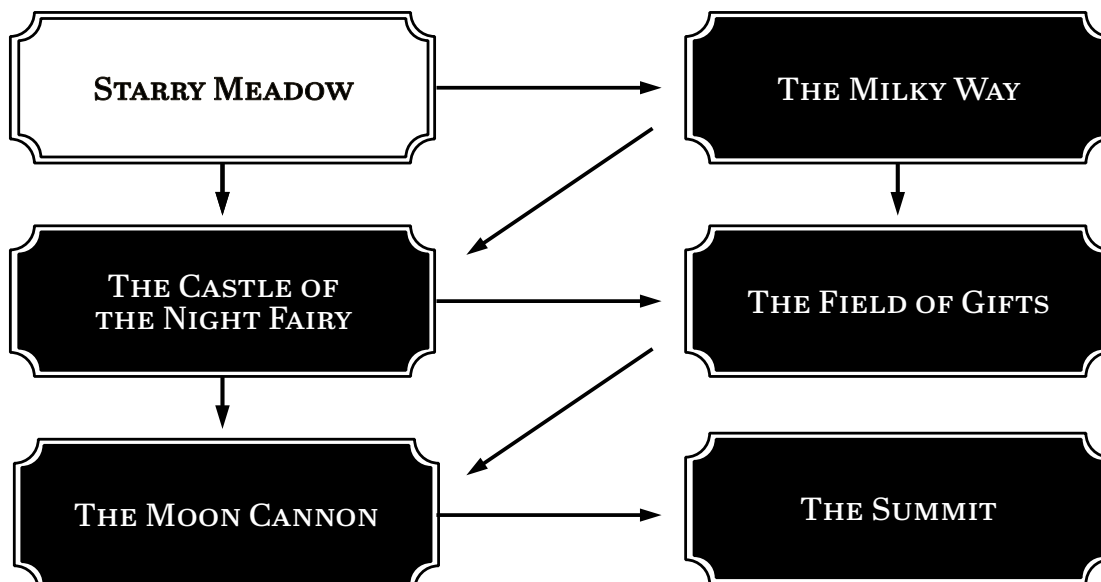
It is up to you and the treasure hunters whether Sumsemann wants to accompany the group. If they come along and see the woodcutter, they fall into a state of shock. Most characters in the realm of the Night Fairy can be either antagonists or allies. If the treasure hunters end up fighting the Moon Man, they will receive help from all their newfound allies.

Questions for the Treasure Hunters:

1. *How did you come across Sumsemann?*
2. *Which one of you had the idea of melting their body to make a profit?*
3. *What did you really want to take with you on the journey but forgot at the last minute?*
4. *What disturbing rumour have you heard about the realm of the night fairy?*

theme: **LOSS**

SETS



Starry Meadow

GOAL	<i>Calm Sandman</i>
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Q: What valuable or terrible memory from your past do you see in the stars?

Q: One of your desires manifests itself in the star. What is it that you see?

MOMENTS

A trail of light forms patterns and spirals in the night, constellations that form and disappear.

Every time you move too fast, a slight humming sound ripples across the landscape, like a gust of wind emanating from you and whirling the sand into the air.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
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Stars. The glowing spheres hang over the sandy landscape, countless in number. Upon closer inspection, they reveal memories or visions filled with emotions. Purple teardrops form at the stars' edge, which are gathered up like nectar by the trails of light.

The stars glow and burn when touched.

The spheres are worth two gold if you manage to collect them safely.

Trails of light. Between the stars, swarms of trails of light stretch out like bees cleaning the stars and collecting their teardrops as Stardew. The trails of light bring the Stardew to their nests under the sand.

The trails of light are drawn to the treasure hunters' genuine emotions and can withdraw these as purple teardrops.

The light trails can be captured and may serve as everlasting lanterns.

The pile of sand. In the middle of the field is a large pile of sand. Upon closer inspection, it moves slowly. Sandman moves mostly below ground and is the caretaker of the Starry Meadow.

When Sandman notices the treasure hunters, he appears with a roar and attempts to drive them away

Collected Stardew.

The boat. At the edge of the field, it disappears into endless expanses of loose sand. A ship lies there with paddle wheels. The propulsion is one of the stars.

If the Sandman doesn't help, the treasure hunters must bring a star into the ship themselves.

<i>Additional Traps</i>	<i>Additional Treasures</i>
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Quicksand

Living Sand

SANDMAN	WEAKNESS – <i>Food</i>	9
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Sandman is quick-tempered and looks like a mixture of man and mole. By digging, he can approach treasure hunters as a sand mound.

• Maintains the Stars

••• Watches the stars

•• Harvests stardew

••• Takes care of the trail of light

••• Dozes under the sand

••• Tinkers with the boat

Defence – Underground attack: when Sandman burrows, he cannot be hit during this round; he pulls a treasure hunter into the sand.

The Milky Way

GOAL	<i>Learn to navigate safely (the set is only available if Sandman does not help)</i>
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Noises and voices continue as a whisper in the void, reemerging as echoes after some time.

MOMENTS

Far away, a star goes out, leaving behind a tiny greenish-blue glow in its place.

You see the constellation of a bear slowly wandering across the cosmos toward the horizon.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
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Comets. Like shooting stars, they rush by and show the way to the castle of the night fairy.

Some of the shooting stars lead the treasure hunters astray to the field of lost gifts or into infinity.

The spheres are worth two gold if you manage to collect them safely.

Dew. The Sea of dew stretches to the horizon as an endless pitch black blanket reflecting only the stars as little speckles in the night.

Everything that is immersed in the dew slowly transforms into infinity.

The silver reflections of the stars are milky-silver speckles in the dew lake and can be collected as star milk.

Cosmos. The sky is the cosmos that is stretching out in its infinite emptiness. Shadows swirl between the constellations, forming shapes out of nothingness.

The shadows can form whatever terror the treasure hunters imagine.

Additional Traps

Falling overboard, a leak, cosmic horror

Additional Treasures

Living Sand

IMAGINATIONS

WEAKNESS – *Pain wakes you up*

1-12

You see something taking shape in the shadows of the cosmos. It approaches. What is it that you see and feel?



Dissolves into swirling shadows



Pull you into the dew



Is growing bigger and bigger



Drips into the dew and forms again on the surface



Reaches for your face



Swirls and swallows a star

Defence – Causing psychological harm

The Castle of the Night Fairy

At night, the Night Fairy holds court in her dark castle. Her realm had remained unchanged for ages, and the fairy people slowly became caught up in a „perfect“ balance that made social advancement impossible. The arrival of the treasure hunters from the human world awakens in many the hope of winning the favor of the Night Fairy and breaking out of this equilibrium. Death and life play no significant role (not even their own), only family and factions matter, and everything that might please the Night Fairy or harm someone above them in favor.

GOAL		
<i>Find allies and a way to the Moon Mountain</i>		
MOMENTS	A coven of witches smokes hookah in a private room and watches the treasure hunters with greedy eyes	
	A sky snake glides silently across the sphere, leaving behind glittering scales that settle on the dance floor.	
	The sweet scent of opium hangs in the air, enveloping the castle in dreams far removed from the reality of your mind.	
	<i>Q: The castle sometimes breaks with reality. What do you think you see in the fragments of façade?</i>	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
The Night Fairy. Like the night, dark, calm, full of promises of infinity. A voice like a whisper. When she looks into your eyes, she sees your nightmares and smiles knowingly. What kind of nightmare was that? The night fairy drinks a glass of Stardew that is constantly refilled by dark purple Trails of light.	Courtiers of all kinds fawn over the Night Fairy, half your size but armed with poisonous stingers. The Night Fairy may become interested in your most intimate memories. Etiquette. There is a particular etiquette for how to behave towards the Night Fairy. (E.g.: Bow, then look into her eyes for at least 10 seconds, bow again). The courtiers could take advantage of the treasure hunters' ignorance to make the evening more interesting.	The favor of the Night Fairy (a black flower) allows you to increase the results of a risk roll by 1 with the following devil's bargain: you cry all your emotions in black tears, which the Trails of light carry to the Night Fairy. After that, you are deprived of all your feelings for a while. The Night Fairy will point out that you will need support if you really want to oppose the Moon Man.
Separees. The castle contains a seemingly endless number of rooms and separees where secret conversations and pacts between or within factions are negotiated. Some are used for rituals, orgies, art, and sleeping.	Anyone, and in particular outsiders, who enters a private room uninvited will quickly be accused of spying, selected as a sacrifice, or involved in an immoral offer or blood pact as compensation for the disturbance.	Whoever enters into a pact will receive something that can be pretty valuable.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
The dance floor. The dance floor is situated inside a gravity sphere, where people indulge in pleasure, dance, laugh, and renew relationships on the curved dance floor. Long, thin, beanpole-like servants silently carry drinks and snacks through the crowd.	The network of relationships between the actors in the castle is based on a balance that has existed for thousands of years. Anyone who drinks more than two glasses of ambrosia becomes a child.	Rejuvenating ambrosia. The guests and courtiers wear precious tiaras and other jewelry.
The giants. You can meet different giants in the castle: the storm giant, the thunder man, the water spirit, and the big bear with a terrible temper.	They trample you if they overlook you, or they tear you apart if they're in a bad mood.	A favor from the giants. Jewelry of the downtrodden.
<i>Additional Traps</i>		<i>Additional Treasures</i>
<i>Humans poorly tolerate food and beverages. They keep the treasure hunters busy in the castle until dawn, so that they can never return</i>		<i>Nectar of the nightshade family, stardust cookies, the scales of the sky serpent</i>

COURTIERS	WEAKNESS – Ignorance	7
<i>The numerous lowly courtiers of various shapes and sizes, mostly small, but bustling about. They all want to rise in rank and are willing to do whatever it takes to achieve this. The treasure hunters are merely an opportunity for them to gain the favor of the Night Fairy and advance themselves, their families, or their factions. Some of them may be very polite, offering formal introductions; however, this may be accompanied by deliberate lies to stir commotion and get attention from the Night Fairy. They may only become allies in rare cases.</i>		
• Ranting	•• Giggling	
• Raving	•• Plotting	
•• Gossiping	•• Glancing evilly	

Defence – Poisonous daggers

ONE OF THE GREAT FAIRIES	WEAKNESS – Night Fairy	10
<i>In the close circle of the Night Fairy, there are a few mightier fairies who ensure that the dignity of the Night Fairy is not compromised.</i>		
• Stand guard	•• Flexing their muscles	
• Dancing in parade uniforms	•• Drinking the endless night from horns	
•• Talking quietly	•• Watching the courtiers	

Defence – Can fall into a frenzy (every hit counts double), and collateral damage will occur.

The Field of Gifts

GOAL		Find the moon cannon	
MOMENTS	Ponds whose surfaces bulge outward like a bubble, and small craters dot the landscape. Pebbles wash around your feet like water.		
	A structure resembling a giant snowflake is carried through the landscape.		
	The smell of mud, ozone, and ammonia hangs in the air, rising from the ground.		
The previous visitors lost some of their belongings.			
PROPS		TRAPS	TREASURES
Ponds. The ponds are covered with a semi-transparent membrane-like large bubbles. In their center, you can see blurry bodies, curled up like embryos.		The membranes can tear and swallow the treasure hunters.	Glittering pearls at the bottom of the pond.
Craters. The dust from the craters moves slowly, forming small pebbles that eventually coalesce into body parts.		The body parts take on the form of the treasure hunters. Your skin peels off and settles like flakes of ash on the new bodies.	The dust itself can be captured and sold at a high price. Belongings from previous visitors: a sword that holds memories of a battlefield, a wedding ring, ...
The workshop. At the foot of a large crater, a path leads down into the depths of the workshop. It is full of individual body parts, including heads, eyes, hair, and nails, as well as various toys and clothing items. In complete darkness, a fairy, an old hare who is missing most of his fur, puts them together. Half-finished and finished manikins stand around everywhere, waiting to be completed.		Jealous manikins and limbs Uther the Hare suspects that you came from the ponds and is preparing everything to cut you up and use your parts as fresh as possible, combining them with the limbs made of dust.	Moving eyeballs in jars A cabinet full of stars
Additional Traps		Additional Treasures	
Chimeras, failures, dangerous things		Uther can teach you the Enliven ritual	
UTHER, THE HARE		WEAKNESS – Manikins	
Uther does not fight himself, but sends his puppets and body parts after the treasure hunters. If he realizes that you are real humans, he wants to make a deal and exchange parts.			
● Assembles a manikin		▣ Combines dust-born parts with organic parts	
▣ Inserts a heavy star		▣ Talks to the manikin	
▣ Performs a revitalization ritual		▣ Chants an infinite mantra	

Defence – Escape

10

The Moon Cannon

GOAL

Find a way to the summit of Moon Mountain

MOMENTS

Above you, the bluish Moon Mountain stands out against the sky with its vertical flanks.

The moon cannon has left deep gouges in its bedrock, a testament to the unimaginable forces at work here.

PROPS

The moon cannon. The moon cannon is a large construct that can catapult anything onto the looming moon mountain. The gearbox of the moon cannon consists of many small and large shiny gears.

TRAPS

The moon cannon cannot be used without risk.

TREASURES

A small golden cogwheel (2 gold) is part of the gearbox. What harm can it do if it's missing?

Special Rule for using the moon cannon

Every treasure hunter must make a risk roll. Every risk roll that does not result in a six leads to the loss or destruction of a body part with corresponding effects. If the golden cogwheel has been removed, a second black die is added to the pool.



Shattered body



Right hand



Nails and hair



Lower jaw



Left leg



Genitals



Upper jaw



Right leg



Complete equipment



Scalp



Left foot



Head



Ears



Right foot



Right hip



Right eye



Knee



Three fingers



Left eye



Shoulder



Both thumbs



Both eyes



Right forearm



Larynx



Tongue



Left forearm



Both arms



Left arm



Skin on arms



Half of the face



Right arm



Skin on legs



Shin



Left hand



Teeth



Nose

The Summit

The summit lost its peak, leaving behind a depression that is covered by forest, which is the part of Kaldhur that was transported here when the Night Fairy banished the woodcutter to the summit ages ago. The Moon Mountain is where the Night Fairy disposes of all the things (and people) that she dislikes and wants to forget. The former woodcutter, now the Man in the Moon, has become an integral part of this ecosystem by consuming and transforming everything that the Night Fairy or her court disposes of into fertile soil for the forest, fueled by his endless hunger. The Man in the Moon lost his humanity a long time ago; the only thing that remains is what turned him into a hoarder of broken things.

When the treasure hunters arrive, part of the Castle of the Night Fairy materializes above the summit to witness the events that will unfold with the arrival of the humans, providing entertainment. Any allies that the treasure hunters made during their travel will aid in their fight against the Man in the Moon and decrease his endurance by one, or may help in their escape. Moreover, depending on how long it took the treasure hunters to get here, dawn will be upon them, and the window to travel back will eventually close.

GOAL			Find Sumseman's arm		
MOMENTS			Q: The gravity and air pressure are not normal here. What can you observe?		
			The treetops sway in the wind, and there is a slight rustling sound, but there is no breeze to be felt.		
			The Moon Mountain is the tallest of all below the stars. What do you see below in the valleys of the world?		
			At this height, it becomes clear that your soul hangs from your body by only the thinnest thread.		
PROPS		TRAPS		TREASURES	
The garbage. The fairies dispose of their waste with portals that may appear randomly above the summit. The garbage forms little hills in the forest and can include a wide range of leftovers, such as creatures, body parts, food, and porcelain.		A portal may open up above the treasure hunters.		Fairy masks can occasionally be found among the items.	
		The garbage may be foul and infectious.		A fairy got rid of their pet, still barely alive, though.	
The woodcutter's hut. One man's trash is another man's treasure seems to come to mind when you enter the hut. The hut is full of broken, half-fixed things thrown away by the fairies. Every corner, up to the roof, is filled with things that have no names.		There is only one exit.		A broken violin that entices listeners to dance.	
		The trash may easily collapse when you search it.		A broken singer's voice in a bird's cage.	
				A wish for peace in a broken mirror.	
The forest. The woodcutter brought pieces of the Forest Kalduhr with him when he was banished. The forest has spread since then, nourished by the Man in the Moon and the garbage of the Fairies, and is growing patiently.		The forest needs nutrients and roots that extend through the ground with a fine network of pulsating, grappling veins.		The Man in the Moon decorated some trees with shiny remnants from the stream of garbage.	
		A fairy ring that displaces anyone who steps in randomly.			

Additional Traps

Garbage worms. The Forest wants you as a vessel for its return... The courtiers manipulate your progress from above.

Additional Treasures

Jewelry in the trees. Gifts from your allies.

Additional Rule

Sumsemann's lost silver arm (3 gold) can replace any lost body parts of a treasure hunter.

MAN IN THE MOON

WEAKNESS – Food, Rarities

13

He was once human, but the forest and the realm of the night fairy have changed him forever, transforming him into a grotesque monster, a hoarder of forgotten things. Now a three-metre-tall monster, he bears only a vague resemblance to a human and wields a large axe. His stomach begins to growl relentlessly as soon as he smells humans in the vicinity.

1 Decorates his forest

4 Cuts down a tree

2 Sorts through garbage

5 Sleeps in the hut

3 Eats half a decaying fairy

6 Hums a forgotten song

Hungry – The moon man grabs a treasure hunter and greedily bites off a fresh piece. A second bite will take a part of your soul.

Ax strike – The ax is dangerous and cuts through armor like butter. Without armor, the treasure hunter loses part of his body.

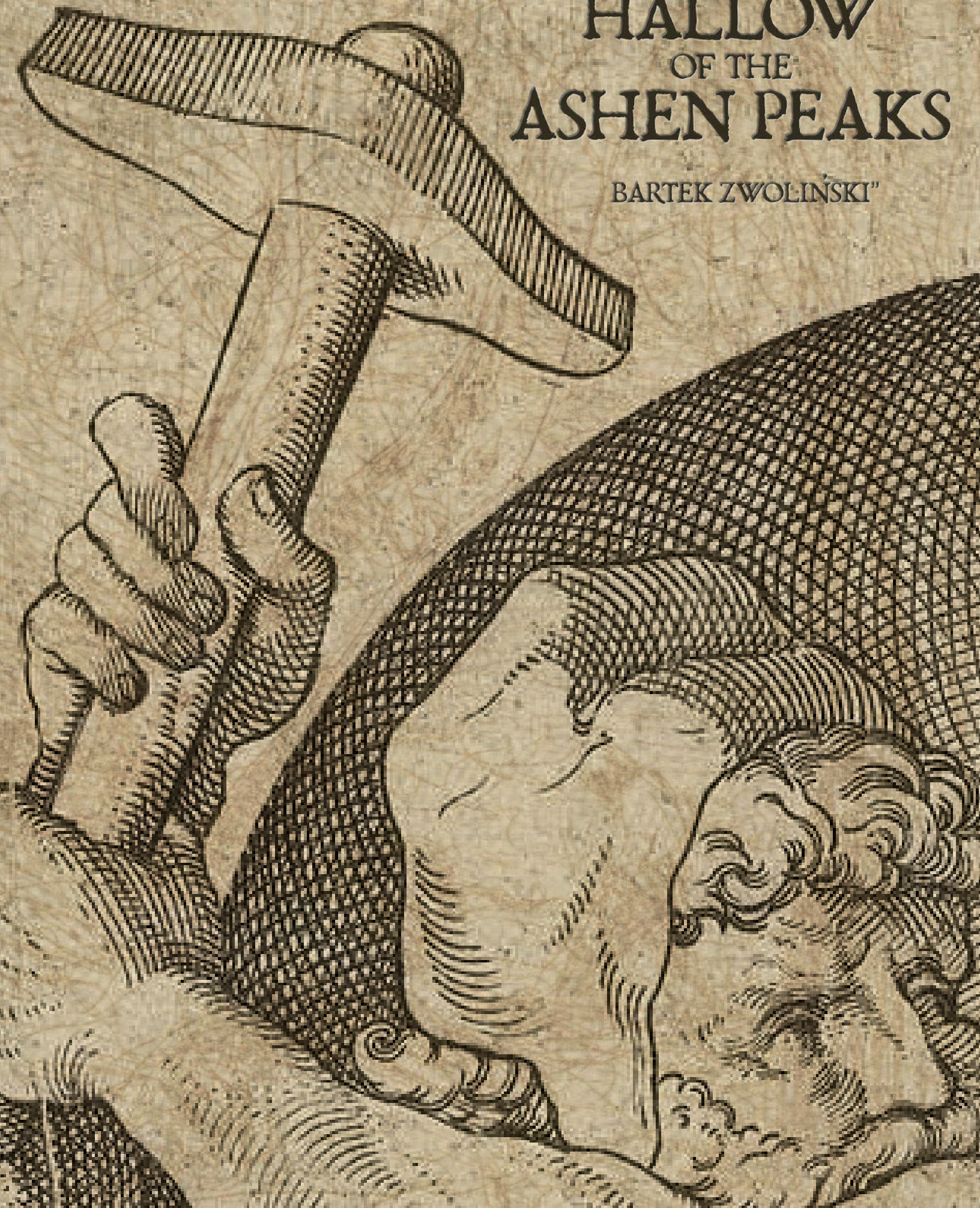
Epilogue

In the aftermath of the Incursion, the treasure hunters will need to ensure they arrive on time before the sun rises, and they may need to decide whether to return the arm to Sumsemann or use it for themselves. Finally, if the treasure hunters killed the Man in the Moon, the Night Fairy would announce that one of them (their choice) mustn't return, so that they would replace the Man in the Moon to keep the ecosystem in balance. The fairies themselves will withdraw to the dark side of the moon during the day.

NOTES

HALLOW OF THE ASHEN PEAKS

BARTEK ZWOLIŃSKI



Hallow of the Ashen Peaks

An Incursion for *Trophy Gold*

Written by Bartek Zwoliński "Filaster Kania"

Every child knows the stories of the warrior Saint Mephera, who fought demons and the Evil. During her lifetime, she founded an order whose task was to collect and contain artifacts of power which could be used for evil purposes. This organization has long since passed into history, but the saint's most ardent followers claim that deep in the Ash Mountains, shrouded in eternal darkness, lies the order's last monastery.

Only sufficiently insane pilgrims venture into the inhospitable mountains to search for the legendary place and receive the blessing of their patron saint. They are followed by a few daredevils who are willing to risk a lot to verify the rumors of cursed but powerful artifacts stored in the chambers of the secluded monastery.

FOR THE GM'S EYES ONLY

The legends about the Mephera Order are true. Deep in the inaccessible mountains, there is a monastery built into a volcanic peak, where undead priestesses, suspended between life and death, keep eternal watch over the cursed artifacts.

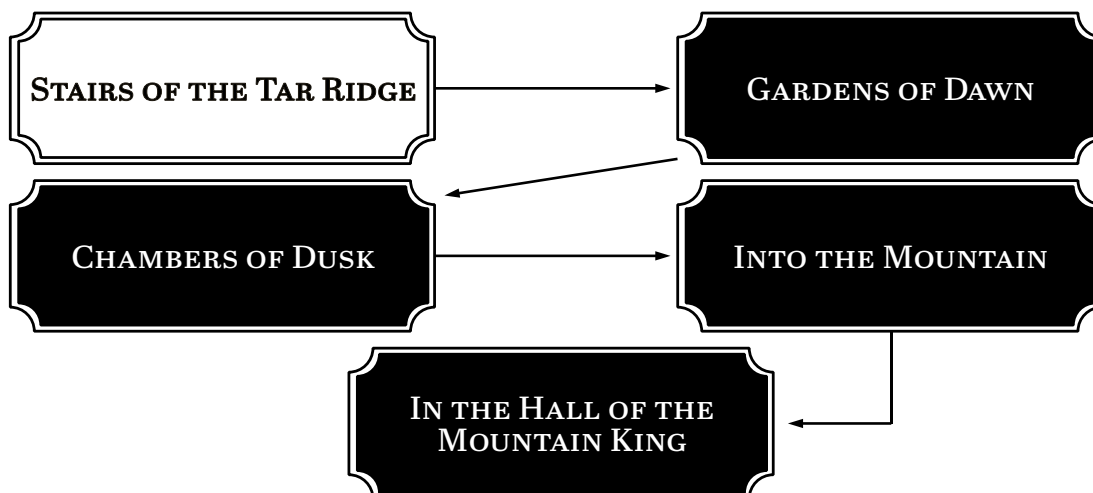
However, the monastery's main purpose is slightly different. Imprisoned inside the mountain is a powerful being, a heretical god-smith. Once the despotic ruler of the land, he is now a prisoner of the monastery, whose power has been used to destroy or seal away many foul artifacts. Imprisoned for centuries and burdened with numerous curses, he burns with a desire for revenge on mortals. Woe to those who open Pandora's box.

theme: **BALANCE**

The theme of the Incursion is Balance, both physical and mental as well as metaphysical, as the Mephera's servants keep the world in balance, preventing dark forces from escaping the monastery.

Balanced - During the initial Set, treasure hunters can get Condition: **Balanced**, representing their state in accordance with the saint. If the hero's further actions go against her or the monastery, or are exceptionally unbalanced, they risk losing the favor of their patron. If not already rolling, they must make Risk Roll additionally staking this Condition: Devil's Bargain should include a counter-action aimed at balancing the hero's behavior.

SETS



WARNINGS: Religion, Human Sacrifice, Body Horror, Graphic Violence, Imprisonment, Demons, Fire, Drowning

Stairs of the Tar Ridge

The road winds through jagged, rain-slick peaks of black stone. Countless, uneven steps were carved into the slopes, leading into the smoggy and heavy air. Legends tell that only those who achieve balance can pass through and find the correct road. Truth or not, scattered along the path lie the equipment of pilgrims anxious to achieve equilibrium and husks of gold hunters who never reached the Monastery of Saint Mephera.

GOAL		
Achieve harmony of body and spirit		
MOMENTS	Two dead men standing leaning on each other in a final embrace.	
	View of the monastery between the rocks - one part is illuminated, the other is sinking into darkness	
	Stream of rain mixed with ash, which flows like tar down the stairs	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Shrine of Unbalance. A pile of bodies composed of those too weak to continue and too broken to find the way. One of the better-preserved bodies belongs to a ram-man covered in thick black sheep's wool.	Delving through the dirty pile can be a bit messy (Condition: Impure)	Ram-man's skin can act as an armor after skinning. Ismil – a weak pilgrim, emaciated, barely alive. Once rescued, he will accompany you on your journey to the monastery. He knows the ritual of creating fire from nothing. He is a secret follower of Coval, wishing to free his master.
Sloping Altar. Items placed on the stone slab will slide freely into a deep abyss. The remains of superstitious pilgrims rest on the cliffs below. A few meters below, a skeleton in rusty armor hangs from a branch.	Starving smoke vultures may begin to actively hunt for prey.	Golden coins dotted on the jagged cliff The skeleton of the knight has: • 2 gold family signet rings • Beveled dices • A silver patch in the skull • An elaborate parchment with a prayer to the Saint Mephera (2 Coins for the holy man)
Statue. The several-meter-tall figure of the valiant Mephera watches over everyone who passes through the narrow path to the monastery. At her feet, ash drifts away. On the other side, the lights of the garden can already be seen.	Doubts	Anyone who has made sufficient effort to find inner balance receives the Condition: Balanced .
Additional Traps		
Rock slides; Ash-rain streams, smoke vultures		
Additional Treasures		
Abandoned equipment (free slot); flask of sour wine		

Carrion eaters with bald black heads and large bony beaks. As they fly, particles of ash fall from their wings, creating a characteristic shadowy “tail”.



Screeching horribly



Staring with yellow eyes



Circling menacingly



Cleaning the blood from their beaks



Fighting for prey



Gliding between the peaks

Disgusting – their meat stuffed with ash tastes like burning, can only be valuable to the most perverse connoisseurs

Pragmatic – if the prey is not easy to catch, they give up

Gardens of Dawn

The monastery garden glows with white moonlight coming from water lilies floating in small ponds. Between the beds of exotic flowers are piles of balancing round stones. Meditating priestesses in iron masks light candles and lanterns while murmuring prayers. It is warm, quiet, and clean here, which is a comforting change from the inhospitable mountains.

GOAL	<i>Learn the temptation of heresy</i>
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As if dead, a priestess floats motionless on the water among the water lilies.

MOMENTS The stones of one pile seem to levitate in the chiaroscuro (light-dark).

Warmth and murmurs seem to emanate from the ground.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Luminous ponds. Water lilies float in their soothingly warm waters, glowing with a delicate, moonlike light.	Patrol of half priestesses.	Silver carp are tasteless, though pretty (2 Gold per live fish) Moon lilies are valuable, but only glow at night.
Scales. In the center of the garden stands a large pair of scales. A rite of passage is underway in which a bound acolyte is to be lowered on the scales into one of the ponds until she drowns and becomes half priestess. The congregation takes turns drinking water from the pond. Drinking the water during the ritual restores spiritual (take Condition: Balanced) and physical balance (set Ruin to 3)	Not all priestesses in the circle are visible due to the lit moth candles.	Moth candles – a rare type of black candle that creates darkness instead of light when lit (1 Gold each). Rare incense and oils (2 Gold). The worldly possessions of the acolyte on the other scale (2 Gold).
Stone piles. The unstable piles of round black stones are a place of meditation for priestesses. Some piles reach ankle height, others are so large that they could crush a person. The paths diverge toward the monastery and into the interior of the mountain.	Two priestesses are not meditating, but quietly tending the garden. Even a gentle touch can knock over one of the piles, causing noise or injury.	The gardeners have black and white tulip bulbs (2 Gold). A gilded two-arm meditation candlestick.

Additional Traps

Hypnotic trance from contrasting light and dark; feeling of derealisation; malevolence of Saint Mephra

Additional Treasures

Several black and white pearls; rare flower specimen; silvery salamander

What can be heard from the murmuring priestesses

•	<i>Keep the balance, do not cross over to the other side...</i>	••	<i>The Shadow shows the way, the flame whispers lies...</i>	•••	<i>Cash to ash, Lust to dust...</i>
••	<i>Heresy tempts with power, but gives only unbalance...</i>	•••	<i>With great power comes a great curse...</i>	••••	<i>Power of heresy burns like fire within...</i>

HALF PRIESTESSES

WEAKNESS – Blasphemy

10

Priestesses of Mephera suspended in a state of half-life, half-death. Under their habits, their bodies are covered with bandages, and iron masks always rest on their decaying faces. They are excellent warriors, especially when fighting with twin blades. They do not need to eat or sleep; their mission is only to protect the temple.

•	Performs several spins with a double blade	•••	Mutters prayers
••	Stands still on one leg	••••	Serving the monastery till death
•••	Assesses the opponent	•••••	Lights a torch and disappears into the darkness

Guardians - They are not immediately hostile toward their Balanced hunters, but they will follow their every move

Even Fight – if the hunters outnumber priestesses, in next turn of combat, additional priestesses join in so that the number of fighters is equal (+1 Endurance)

Half-dead – exceptionally resistant to blinding, poisonous gases, and mental attacks

Chambers of Dusk

The sound of your footsteps on the stone floor echoes through the windowless, high-ceiling chambers. Inside them are chained chests and showcases storing dark artifacts, sealed by Mephra's undead servants. Most of them were silenced and are useless, menacing-looking objects, but the most powerful ones that couldn't be extinguished are waiting for you to find them. The light you carry seems to dim as you enter the depths of the vault. Perhaps it is an illusion, or perhaps it is dark magic.

GOAL *Find the most unbalanced items*

An irregular shadow dancing on the edge of light

MOMENTS Unidentified whispers asking for a few drops of blood

The clanking of chains, as if moved by the wind... despite lack of windows

PROPS

The Iron Maiden. A closed macabre torture machine with a thin stream of smoke coming out of its cracks.
Inside its spiky interior stands a silver urn.

Curtained mirror. A tall mirror covered with a heavy curtain. Its gilded frame is decorated with a leaf motif.

A glass ball. Inside it is a translucent liquid in which an inconspicuous green stone dice floats.

Brass giant. A bronze figure of a naked man leaning on a black sword entwined with a rune chain.

TRAPS

You have to enter the Maiden to pick up the casket. She craves another victim.

Anyone who looks into their reflection in the mirror creates their own Reflection. The person removing the curtain must make a Risk Roll to avoid this.

The liquid in the ball is a highly corrosive acid.

The chains are conscious and enchanted to grab and tighten.

TREASURES

Casket of Great Ashes – a silver urn filled with ashes. It bears an indestructible seal with the symbol of scales, preventing opening.

The mirror is heavy but worth a lot. Even when broken, its frame is valuable (2 Gold).

Malachite die – a six-sided die made of green mineral. Instead of a “6,” there is a grinning smile. Sealed with magic and so only whispers of its inhabitant can be heard.

Demon Blood Sword – an extremely sharp, two-handed blade with indelible traces of blood. **Sealed by the rune chain.**

A spell has been cast on the sealed artifacts to suppress their powers and curses. Only a powerful user of magic, such as Coval, can remove them, which is why the description of the artifacts' powers is found in the last Set.

Additional Traps

Priestess patrols; marked by demons; something whispers blasphemies

Additional Treasures

Pocket grimoires; silvered chains; crystals drained of magic

After looking into the cursed mirror, the reflection of the viewer emerges from it. It has all the memories and abilities of the original, but it is the complete opposite of its character. Hates its original because there can be only one.

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Tries to lure the original into the mirror by deception. |  Reveals the secrets and flaws of the original. |
|  Convinces others that it is real. |  Tries to force the original into the mirror. |
|  Tries to break the mirror. |  Criticizes the character of the original. |

If the original dies, the Reflection also disappears.

If the original falls into the mirror, they remain trapped inside. The player may decide to play as Reflection – the previous Drive must be turned upside down.

Into the Mountain

As you walk deeper into the monastery, you begin to enter the slope of the mountain on which it was built. The stone halls give way to raw black rocks. The air becomes closed and hot as you come to the edge of a high bridge running over lakes of lava. Its sides are decorated with statues of saints and demons. Behind it lies the monastery's most precious secret.

GOAL		
<i>Keep the balance</i>		
The sound of a powerful hammer in the distance suddenly cut off		
MOMENTS		
Lava bubbles bursting with a crackle below		
The statue on the bridge seems to be watching the passerby		
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Bridge. A long bridge made of black stone. On its railing-less edges, every few meters there are statues depicting saints and their demonic versions. The bridge is divided into two parts, with a foundry in the middle.	The bridge was enchanted by Saint Mephera and will try to throw off those who have lost Condition: Balance. Those with exactly 3 Ruin can cross it without any obstacle.	Casket of Great Ashes – a silver urn filled with ashes. It bears an indestructible seal with the symbol of scales, preventing opening.
Foundry. In the middle of the bridge there is a small room with a foundry, which uses a crucible on a long chain to melt metals for the monastery's needs.	Two priestesses in thick habits work in the forge. Unsecured opening for the crucible.	Blacksmith's equipment. Two iron masks.
Additional Traps		

Falling stalactite; Swarm of thermophilic bats

In the Hall of the Mountain King

As you approach the deepest fire cavern, a sorrowful, bass humming reaches your ears. The stone portal opens onto a spacious cave lit by streams of lava flowing down the walls. In its center is Coval, a gloomy, pale man sitting at a large anvil, holding his hand on an oversized blacksmith's hammer. He turns toward you with a clank of chains, his vacant gaze focusing on you as soon as you enter the chamber.

GOAL

Hear the offer of the fallen god

MOMENTS

Coval leans towards the hunters, but huge iron balls pull his body back

For a moment, you see Coval in his former glory as a great blacksmith with a booming laugh. As you blink, the vision is gone.

Coval strikes the ground in despair, and several stones break away from the chamber walls

PROPS

Prisoner of the mountain.
Coval, chained and weakened by curses, is unable to leave the chamber. Lipping, he despairs over his fate and the injustice of the priestesses, who for many years used him to destroy and seal cursed objects.

In fact he could leave at any point, but burdened by the self-doubt he believes he has lost his godlike strength.

He promises to remove the seals from the artifacts or teach the ritual in exchange for taking a portion of his curse (as Conditions).

TRAPS

Coval's curses:

- Weak - the cursed one can barely carry what he has with him
- Toothless - the cursed one is deprived of most of his teeth
- Lamé - the cursed one has one leg shorter than the other
- Doubting - the cursed one doubts his own strength

If you rescued pilgrim Ismil and he gets to the Coval, he will take one of his curses.

With each curse removed, Coval regains his vigor. If the last curse is removed, he regains his former power, begins to grow, and breaks free from his shackles.

TREASURES

Ritual: Smith – shape metallic object by your bare hands.

Ritual: Smoke – take a leap in the form of smoke.

Casket of Great Ashes – After inhaling a portion of the ashes, the deceased begins to speak to you. Roll for 1 additional skill for the duration of one Incursion. 2-in-6 chance that the person was cursed, take 1 Ruin.

Malachite Die – The Fey Elf trapped inside knows many spells. Capricious – Only gives you 3 options to choose from (roll for Ritual Options). Mean – Always demands high payment.

Demon Blood Sword - In combat, you start with 2 black dice instead of 1. If you roll 2 ones, the enraged demon (10) breaks free, destroying the weapon. Adds 1 Debt.

Additional Traps

Rain of stalactites; Hallucinations from overheating

Additional Treasures

Sharp volcanic obsidian

Once the last curse is lifted, Coval grows to gigantic proportions with each passing moment. His temples are covered with fiery hair, and streams of lava flow from his eyes. The divine wrath is unmet, and Coval will not rest until he destroys the monastery and punishes all mortals within sight, even those who were foolish enough to free him.

• Strikes several times with his hammer with inhuman speed.

• Mocks the smallness of his opponent.

• Booming laughter causes avalanches.

• Crushes with his bare hands.

• Careless blows crush walls.

• Flies up as smoke and strikes with his hammer from midair.

Mlot – The Great Hammer of Coval protects him from spells.

King of the Mountains – Coval's wrath will sooner or later lead to the eruption of the Smoking Peak volcano.

Conclusion

If Coval poses no threat, the priestesses may realize that they have been robbed. They are prepared to travel far and wide to find the stolen artifacts and restore balance.

If the freed Coval is not stopped, the monastery will be destroyed and many imprisoned evil forces will escape into the world.

When his servants learn of the king's return, they will set out to rebuild the kingdom of fire and brimstone. Who knows what vengeance the fiery ruler will bring upon humanity?

Perhaps, the awakening of one powerful being may summon another rival. The world, after all, always finds a point of balance.

NOTES

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's head and neck. The focus is on the ear, which is large and detailed, with visible skin texture and hair. The person has short, dark hair. The skin is fair and shows some minor blemishes. The lighting is warm and directional, coming from the right, casting soft shadows. In the bottom left corner, a portion of a blue, frayed denim garment is visible.

outbreak

by josh domanski, ed. by j. carter

Outbreak

An Incursion for *Trophy Gold*

Written by Josh Domanski

Outbreak is an Incursion for *Trophy Gold* inspired by the golden age of survival horror video games, shifting the focus from treasure hunting to the horrors that befall Gateway City in the year 2003. In this Incursion, you play as survivors: normal folks caught up in these horrible events who are just trying to make it out alive.

You can make your survivor the same way you would with a *Trophy Gold* treasure hunter, just with the following changes:

- Roll or choose your Occupation and Background from those provided. For this Incursion, your Occupation was your primary means of employment before the incident, while your Background is an additional aspect of your life beyond employment that may prove useful.
- Your starting Backpack Equipment is included with your Occupation. Each survivor starts out with three items on their person alongside three slots for Additional Backpack Equipment. Some of these items can be moved to Combat Equipment right off the bat, but you'll want to search the environment for additional items to aid in survival.
- All survivors share the same basic motivation: make it out alive. So instead, your Drive is an additional aspect of your character's background, either detailing the reason you're in this city to begin with or a particular reason why you must fight like hell to escape. Roll on the provided list, or come up with your own.
- As this Incursion takes place in an analog of the modern world, survivors do not have access to the strange magics of Rituals. Instead, you may choose Feats. Feats behave like Rituals, but instead represent special talents. There are instances where you may be able to use Feats without the external pressure that would require a Risk Roll. You may choose up to 2 Feats at the start, but you must also mark the corresponding Ruin.
- For the sake of this Incursion, there is no need to worry about your Gold or Burdens.
- For any Additional Backpack Equipment, use your best judgement when determining what is reasonable for someone in 2003 to be carrying- or find out in the environment.

OCCUPATION

The job you have or type of work you do to earn a living.

-  **Police Officer.** Intimidation, Strength, Deception. Handgun, ballistic vest, handcuffs.
-  **Student.** Running, Collaboration, Analysis. All six backpack slots begin as Additional Backpack Equipment.
-  **Bartender.** Mixology, Communication, Composure. Corkscrew, bottle of liquor, cigarettes w/ matches (3).
-  **Doctor.** Medicine, Anatomy, Treatment. First-aid kit (heals 1 Ruin), stethoscope, pager.
-  **Plumber.** Repair, Dexterity, Tools. Wrench, endoscope (12'), lighter.
-  **Journalist.** Investigation, Perception, Adapting. Stun gun, lock pick set, flashlight.

WARNINGS: *This Incursion heavily features a viral outbreak, and also includes elements of graphic violence and body horror.*

BACKGROUND

Additional useful education or experiences.

- **Athlete.** *Athletics.*
- **Backpacker.** *Endurance.*
- **Lap of Luxury.** *Ambition.*
- **First-Aid Certified.** *First-aid.*
- **Photographer.** *Patience.*
- **Parent.** *Multi-tasking.*

DRIVE

The circumstances that brought you to the city or the reason you must fight like hell to escape.

- Your sibling lives in Gateway City, but hasn't been answering phone calls for weeks. You came to try and find them.
- Gateway City represented a fresh start. Your first day at a new opportunity was set to be tomorrow.
- You've just finished a long shift, and were on your way home when the trouble started.
- Born and raised in Gateway City; this place has always been your home.
- While you don't have a partner or kids, you've got two cats back in your apartment waiting for you.
- You weren't supposed to be out here tonight but ran into unexpected trouble before the chaos broke out.

FEATS

Special talents.

- **Duct Tape Dreams.** Utilize the items in your inventory to quickly craft a useful tool or weapon.
- **Hut-Hut.** Push a humanoid-sized creature back a few feet or tackle them to the ground.
- **Play Dead.** Mimic death in a convincing manner. Most monsters will pay you no mind.
- **B&E.** Use just the right tools or leverage to open a locked or blocked door.
- **Keen Eyes.** Uncover an *Additional Backpack Equipment* item in a room that has already been searched.
- **Opposition Research.** Study a named monster in action to learn their Weakness.

Introduction

The City

Gateway City is an industrial city in the Midwest United States, known as the “gateway to the Rocky Mountains”. While the city began as a mining outpost, much of its modern economy is based around manufacturing, with the single largest employer being Panopticon—a multinational conglomerate with their hands in everything from pharmaceuticals to industrial automation. As of 2003, the city’s population has swelled to a few hundred thousand, primarily due to the influx of jobs provided by Panopticon.

The Virus

In the 1990s, one of Panopticon’s R&D labs made a remarkable discovery: a new lifeform, something they’ve kept a strict secret. Instead of flesh and blood, this entity is made of vibrational energy; a living sound, so to speak, generated by and residing within host lifeforms like a virus. Once an infection occurs, the vibrational virus worms its way into the psyche, interrupting the firing of synapses in the victim’s brain, “resetting” it into a more primal state to act as a new host. Alongside drastic physical changes, the rewired brains become focused on spreading the virus to new victims.

The frequency at which this entity vibrates can be heard by human ears. The tone is uncanny; a low, resonating hum that can be felt washing over your body. However, in order to implant the virus, the victim must be exposed to the frequency within very close range, as the amplitude decreases within a short distance.

The Outbreak

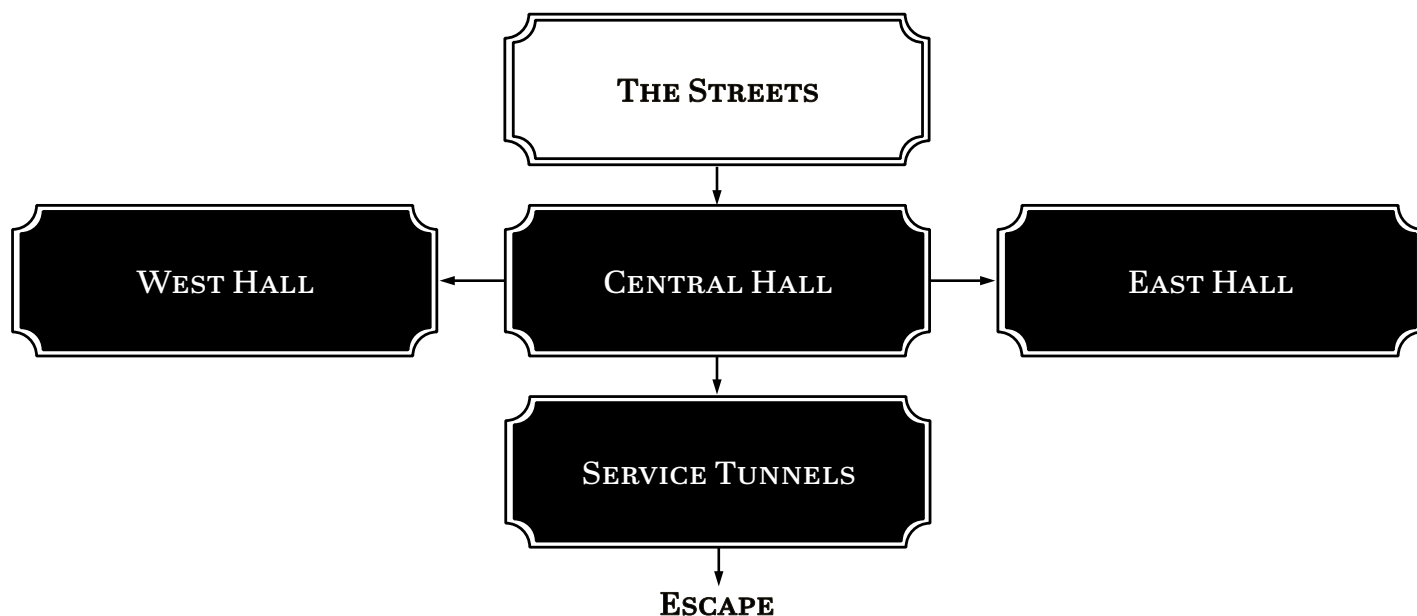
In September 2003, the virus broke containment. While the exact nature of its escape is unclear, the virus hitched a ride out of the facility with a scientist heading home for the day and quickly began to spread throughout Gateway City, converting its citizens into violent and erratic creatures. The city will soon be overrun.

The Survivors

While the day began like any other, reports of an uptick in violence began circulating by afternoon. As night approached, the violence increased and panic was unleashed in full force. The streets out of the city were clogged with deadlocked traffic. Soon the beeping of car horns was replaced by screams echoing down the streets, followed by indescribably chilling reverberations. You were not able to make it out in time.

The first Set puts the survivors out onto the streets of Gateway City as night falls and the chaos descends. While they may not have known each other ahead of time, they meet amid this chaos with a mutual desire to survive.

SETS



The Streets

The beating heart of Gateway City. A neat grid of pavement roads cutting through the city's downtown area, now clogged with the chaos of a traffic jam. The dark of night is broken by flickering street lamps and the fires raging in the snarl of cars.

GOAL

Escape the streets.

MOMENTS

A recorded broadcast echos through the streets, "*Hazardous condition alert. For your safety, remain in place or take shelter at City Hall until the all clear signal is given.*"

A victim runs screaming before being tackled and converted by a Roamer.

The sound of an explosion in the distance, followed by a plume of fire and smoke.

The pop of rapid gunfire, echoing from somewhere further down the street.

PROPS

The Chaos. Smoke clogs the air, spewing from the burning husks of cars that crashed amid the snarl of vehicles left abandoned in the streets by their former occupants. A panicked mess of individuals sprint between vehicles and down the streets, looking for any means of shelter or escape. The shrieks and screams of those left exposed are met with a strange warbling tone echoing down the streets.

City Hall. A brick building with evenly spaced concrete pillars, set back from the street by a small courtyard and surrounded with a tall wrought iron fence. A bright light illuminates the still open gate to the fence.

Across the courtyard from the gate is the main entrance to the building, leading to the **Central Hall**. The door is unlocked.

TRAPS

The Horde shifts and moves down the street and between the cars, shambling to find new victims.

Several **Roamers** are milling about in the courtyard space between the gate and the building's entrance.

The **Horde** pushes against the building's fence and gate, threatening to buckle it under their collective weight.

TREASURES

An abandoned police car sits in the snarl of vehicles. Its unlocked trunk contains a shotgun.

Additional Treasures

A personal radio; a tire iron; a box of road flares (3)

ROAMERS

WEAKNESS – *Bright lights*

5

Humans at the first stages of infection of the virus. They have pitch black eyes and thick black veins bulging from their neck and arms. When alone, their behavior is often erratic and primal, as if driven by pure instinct alone. Beneath the exterior is a strange and uncanny intelligence, as if they have an unspoken means of coordination between each other, which only gets more pronounced as they gather together. While not purely driven to feast upon human flesh, they kill indiscriminately to eliminate threats.



Shambling



Gathering together



Grasping



Ripping a victim to pieces



Moaning a low-pitched warble



Infecting a victim

Resonance – The Roamer grabs their victim and emits a guttural warble directly into their ears in an attempt to infect them with the vibrational virus. After successful infection, the victim soon becomes a Roamer themselves.

Rip & Tear – Roamers will attempt to eliminate threats before implantation, viciously attacking or killing victims if they're a threat or too difficult to infect.

Cluster – Roamers are naturally drawn together. When they group up, their Endurance rises to 7. If enough are collected, they become a small and growing Horde.

THE HORDE

WEAKNESS – *Fire*

13

Tens, dozens, maybe hundreds of Roamers forming a mass of bodies shifting and moving in unison as if they were one organism.

Engulf – When close enough to their victims, the Horde reaches and grasps with a dozen hands. The victim caught in their grasp must make a Risk Roll or be pulled into the horde and infected, joining their rank, unless the Horde is destroyed in the next combat round. If a survivor is claimed, they must pass their Weak Point on to another survivor.

Force of Nature – Given the sheer number of bodies, the Horde is more a force of nature than a traditional antagonist. Getting caught with nowhere to run means death is inevitable, and destroying it becomes more of a puzzle, as attempting to directly engage the Horde as a whole would be a death sentence.

Central Hall

An open atrium, stretching several stories overhead to a glass ceiling, the light from the fires outside flickering at the edges of the window panes. The walls are a drab beige with light wood accents and the floors are speckled granite. The primary power to the building is out, with the room dimly lit by intermittently spaced emergency lights.

GOAL *Explore City Hall and uncover the means of escaping the building.*

MOMENTS *Fists pound and beat upon the entrance door, threatening to buckle it inward.*
A radio sparks to life with a call for help. After a moment, it abruptly cuts off.

PROPS

Lobby. The reception and waiting area for the building. An open space with a scattering of benches and chairs. Hanging from the walls are old black and white photographs of important events of the city's history. On opposite sides of the space are open corridors leading to the **East** and **West Halls**. A third, shorter corridor on the north end of the hall leads to the **Service Door**.

Desk. In the center of the room is a receptionist desk flanked by maps and directories for the building. Stacked on and around the desk are the beginnings of an emergency response headquarters, though only a radio, several stretchers, and a scattering of boxes and equipment were set up before the space was abandoned.

Service Door. A metal fire door marked with "service tunnels, authorized personnel only". The door is locked. Next to the door is an RFID reader, still running on battery power. The **keycard** to open the door can be found in the **West Hall**. Beyond the door is a set of concrete stairs leading down to the **Service Tunnels**.

TRAPS

The Central Hall is largely safe from the Roamers. However, there's an eeriness present, as the space is entirely abandoned when other folks should be here. Only hints of its prior occupation remain, such as abandoned equipment and the occasional spatters of blood.

Bloody handprints streak and spatter the door, marking an unsuccessful attempt at escape. No bodies are present.

TREASURES

Amid the equipment is a handful of useful items, including a flashlight, a medkit (heals 1 Ruin), and a hazmat suit.

East Hall

The publicly accessible wing of the building. The only illumination in the hall comes from the light of the fires shining through the exterior windows– even the emergency lights are inoperable.

GOAL	<i>Discover the fate of the building's janitor.</i>	
MOMENTS	A Roamer smashes through an exterior window, attempting to grab a victim.	
	Blood spatters and handprints coat sections of the walls, floors, and doors.	
	Bodies and the remains of victims lie scattered about a room.	
	A doorway is blocked by a body, requiring force to open.	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Hallways. Dated gray carpeting and beige walls broken up by an occasional piece of framed artwork. The hallway wraps through the wing, allowing each of the rooms to be accessed through wooden doors. At the end of the hallway is a roll-up door leading out to the Garage. It's shuttered and locked–the key is in the Security room.	Roamers wander about the halls, either former occupants or those that have smashed and crawled through the exterior windows.	A dropped police baton.
Meeting Room. A large chamber, split between a podium at the front and wooden bench seating for about a hundred viewers. A half dozen bodies are piled up in the open space of the room between the podium and seating.	If disturbed, the bodies will awaken and stagger to their feet as a cluster of Roamers.	
Community Services. The door opens to a small lobby area, separated from the rest of the room by several service desks with glass partitions. The remainder of the room behind the partition is filled with a neat grid of cubicles.		Searching the desks will yield a variety of office supplies and personal effects, including scissors, tape, candles, and a lighter.
Security. A desk behind a counter providing a view down the hallway for those seated. A metal grate has been pulled down half way across the open window, still allowing for a glimpse inside the room. Two security guards lie slumped over in their chairs at the desk. The main door into the security room is locked, the key nowhere to be found. The rest of the room contains a currently non-functional CCTV system and a weapons locker.	The security guards awaken as Roamers if disturbed.	Dangling from a hook is the key to the Garage Door. Sitting in a weapon's locker is a handgun and ballistic vest.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Garage. A covered enclosure on the exterior of the building with enough room for dumpsters and a couple service vans. A small alleyway along the building is formed by the exterior fence, ending in a closed gate at the street. Crumpled on the ground under the enclosure is the Infected Janitor .	The Infected Janitor awakens if disturbed. The Horde pushes up against the fence, grasping through the slats.	The Janitor's key ring still jangles at his waist. On the ring is the key to the Freight Elevator in the Service Tunnels.

Additional Traps

Roamers are ready to burst into a room or through a window at any point.

INFECTED JANITOR	WEAKNESS – <i>Bright light</i>	8
<i>The former janitor of City Hall, victim to a much more severe reaction to the infection than a typical Roamer. Wearing a torn blue jumpsuit, one of his arms has swollen massively, its bulging black veins threatening to pop under the strain. His pitch black eyes bulge outward, exuding a tar-like substance.</i>		
 Laying on the ground, as if dead.	 Screaming a guttural tone.	
 Slamming down with its mutated fist.	 Smashing objects into himself.	
 Swinging wildly.	 Running towards the gate to let the Horde in.	

Slam – The Infected Janitor has no desire to infect new victims, just to smash and kill.

Lumber – The Infected Janitor is slow and clumsy, but can build up surprising speed if given enough room.

West Hall

The administrative wing of the building. Emergency lights provide intermittent illumination, casting long shadows down the halls.

GOAL		
<i>Uncover the Mayor's unused emergency escape plan.</i>		
MOMENTS		
A badly injured Roamer drags itself along the ground, leaving a bloody trail.		
Power flickers, momentarily restoring light to the building. A screech of Roamers rings through the space.		
An emergency light has been smashed and hangs from the wall by its wires.		
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Hallways. Granite floors, walls that alternate between cream and a deep green paint, and dark stained wooden accents. The hallway wraps through the wing, allowing each of the rooms to be accessed through wooden doors.	Roamers wander about the halls, either former occupants or those that have smashed and crawled through the exterior windows.	Dropped on the floor is a key to the weapons locker in Security.
Cafe & Lobby. A small seating area across from the counter of a simple cafe serving assorted baked goods, coffee, prepackaged snacks, soft drinks, and deli sandwiches. Unmanned metal detectors flank the entrance to the hallway for the rest of the hall.		Behind the cafe counter are still fresh baked goods, coffee with a little warmth left to it, a serrated knife, and a pair of tongs.
Council Chamber. A large chamber, one side taken up by a semi-circular dais where city council members sit during meetings. In the center of the room is a desk for petitioners, alongside several rows of chairs for additional constituents.		Tucked away in the dais is a heavy wooden gavel.
Administrative Offices. A large, open room filled with an array of cubicles, clustered in groups of four with aisles passing between them. Each desk has a rolling chair, a bulky computer, and a few drawers. The door to the Mayor's Office, marked with gold lettering, can be found in the back corner of this room.	Roamers shamble through the aisles between the cubicles and pound at the exterior windows.	Searching the desks will yield a variety of office supplies and personal effects, including scissors, painkillers (heals 1 Ruin), a flask of liquor, and a flashlight.
Mayor's Office. A modest sized office with a large, darkly stained wooden desk. A shelving unit takes up one of the walls, filled with an assortment of books, awards, and framed photographs of the mayor meeting various noteworthy individuals.		Mayor's desk is an emergency evacuation diagram alongside a Keycard to the Service Door.
Additional Traps		

Roamers are ready to burst into a room or through a window at any point.

Service Tunnels

An old tunnel network built beneath City Hall a century ago. Originally constructed as utility tunnels, they now serve as additional storage for the building and a rarely utilized means of covertly conveying goods and people in or out of the building. There is currently no power down in the tunnels, leaving them pitch black.

GOAL	<i>Escape to safety.</i>	
MOMENTS	A wretched moan echoing down the corridors.	
	Condensation drips off an old pipe, landing on one of the survivors.	
	Ragged drawn breathing, just barely audible.	
	Stagnant water, pooled shin deep.	
PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Tunnels. Concrete tunnels stretching on into the darkness. Grime covered and moist, with utility piping and ductwork overheard lending a feeling of claustrophobia. Drips of water and creaks from the piping echoes down the tunnels. Each of the rooms can be found by traversing the labyrinth of corridors, which terminates at the Service Elevator.	Creeping in the shadows and around corners is the Stalker, waiting for the opportune moment to strike.	A rusted pipe wrench sits propped against the wall near a dripping pipe.
Break Room. Concrete walls with faded safety posters plastered to them. Blue lockers and an accompanying bench line one of the walls. The opposite side features a kitchenette with an old refrigerator and microwave. An abandoned card game sits atop a grimy wooden table.		Left in one of the lockers is a hard hat (equipable as armor). In the fridge is a vitamin drink. While warm, it miraculously has not expired. Heals 1 Ruin if consumed.
Generator Room. A bare room, with a large portion of its space taken up by a dated and complex emergency generator unit. The generator is out of gas and will not start. Once gas has been added to the tank, the unit can be started by holding down the power button for a few moments while the turbine coughs to life. Starting the generator will turn on the dim lighting of the Service Tunnels, as well as restoring power to the unlit rooms in the City Hall above.	Starting the generator is a loud affair, alerting the Stalker or any nearby Roamers.	
Storage Room. The space is filled with an array of cluttered shelving units containing an assortment of old parts, cleaning supplies, and forgotten equipment.	Roamers shamble through the aisles between the cubicles and pound at the exterior windows.	A canister of gasoline. If the survivors spend time searching the shelves, they may add an <i>Additional Backpack Equipment</i> item to their Found Equipment.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Freight Elevator. A large, rugged lift with its door opened to the Service Tunnels. The elevator is not operational while the power is out. With power restored, the buttons on the panel will light up when pressed, but the doors will not close until an Elevator Key is inserted into its designated slot on the panel.	As a last resort, the Stalker ambushes its victims to prevent them from leaving.	

Additional Traps

Several **Roamers** have managed to find their way down into the tunnels.

Additional Treasures

Old forgotten janitorial equipment; a flatbed cart; a large flashlight.

STALKER	WEAKNESS – Bright lights	10
A twisted and warped humanoid with pale skin juxtaposed by bulging black veins. Its elongated limbs end in claw-like protrusions of bone and its mouth is a maw of jagged teeth. Its eyes are pools of black and a wretched tone emits from its mouth. Slinking on all fours, the creature clings to walls and ceilings to ambush its prey.		
● Heavily breathing in the distance.	▣ Crawling along the floor.	
◐◐ Warbling a low resonance tone.	▣◐ Hanging from the ceiling, ready to drop onto a victim.	
◐◐◐ Stalking from the shadows.	▣◐◐ Rushing forward to savagely attack.	

Guerrilla Tactics – If all combatants are still standing after two rounds, the Stalker will retreat and wait for another point to ambush the survivors. If any of the survivor's Ruin reaches six during the fight, the Stalker will continue fighting for another two rounds..

Escape

The **Freight Elevator** leads up to an underground parking structure away from the worst of the horde. Here, the survivors can commandeer a car and make their escape from the city. From there, have each player give a short epilogue for their character. Do they try to return to their lives, or have they been forever changed by the events that transpired?



they fell from above

drew murter

They Fell from Above

An Incursion for Trophy Gold

Written by Drew Murter

It was seen from miles around. A shooting star streaks across the clean night sky in vivid, eerie hues before falling out of sight over the heart of the Kalduhr. Nobody heard when it landed, but everyone felt the ground tremble.

By daybreak, astronomers and cartographers had assembled at Fort Duhryn to heatedly debate over where it had landed. By midday, you were inspecting your pack after volunteering for a hasty expedition bent on discovering what treasures this fallen fire may hold. An omen from one of the Sisters? A secret from beyond this world?

Breathe. Steel yourself. A light from above waits within the dark woods.

theme: **TECHNOLOGY**

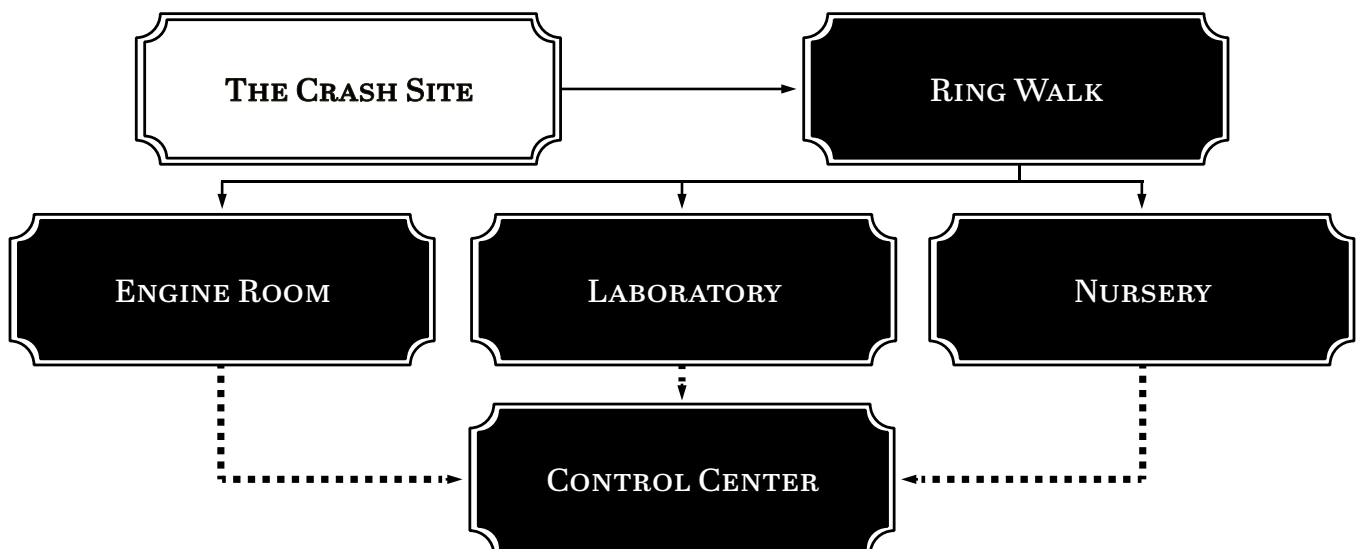
WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON HERE?

A crew of extraterrestrial scientists, explorers and hired guns, hereby known simply as the “invaders”, had been traversing the globe in secret, quietly abducting people and animals as subjects for their ghastly experiments before their spaceship crashed in the Kalduhr.

Physically, invaders have a vaguely humanoid head and torso. They have void-black eyes, slimy, turquoise skin and creep about on multiple tentacled legs. They move quickly and prefer to use their tentacles in combat. Beyond this, you are welcome to flesh out their characteristics at the table through questions and devil’s bargains.

Why exactly the ship crashed is left intentionally vague so it can be pieced together by the players as well. However, the forest’s avenger is an obvious candidate if you wish to give them a reason.

SETS



The Crash Site

You reach a clearing full of wreckage, debris, and toppled, ancient trees. At the far end of this newly cleaved valley rests a fantastical silver saucer with a domed glass top, large enough to house an entire town.

Within the dome, you see several perfectly hexagonal, crystalline spires of varying heights glistening of their own accord.

GOAL	<i>Find a way to enter the spacecraft</i>
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MOMENTS A series of unsettlingly colorful runes flash across the ship's surface as a deep, musical motif of synthesized noise resonates for miles around.

One of the sentries fires its ray gun at a massive, fallen tree in their path. The tree catches fire, then melts into a smouldering ash pile in mere seconds.

PROPS	TRAPS	TREASURES
Fallen trees full of branches, brambles and fruit. The trees vary in size from a typical height to impossibly large.	A party of sentries casually patrols the area around the perimeter.	A silver, curved ray gun was dropped in a bush near the ship. It fires a bright red laser that burns through metal, flesh and other organic material with ease.
The spaceship looks relatively intact on the outside. Cyan runes not of this world appear on the ship's surface when a hunter approaches. These can be manipulated through gestures to open up hatches, or possibly set off alarms	Small fires continue to burn following the crash. They could easily grow out of control.	Treat as a ranged weapon in combat. Any other action runs the risk of the gun backfiring. Shrapnel that broke off the ship during the crash lays scattered across the valley among the debris. Larger pieces etched with burnt orange runes glow warmly when touched. These are worth 2 gold.

Additional Traps

Panicked forest animals hiding in the debris

Additional Treasures

A bag of coins, a rusty shield, large pack of rations (3)

SENTRY

WEAKNESS – Electric shock

10

Tall, muscular invader mercenaries clad in armor made from shimmering, dark metals and strange helmets that appear to “breathe” on close inspection.

• Actively patrolling, ray gun at the ready	• Idly shooting at a benign target
• Hanging upside down in a bizarre state of rest	• Tossing a dead villager off the ring walk
• Fussing angrily with a control panel	• Disgustingly guzzling an omega brew

Defenses

- **Ray gun** - Endurance goes up by 1 if firing from behind cover.
- **Strangle** - Tentacled grip can easily suffocate or break bones.

Ring Walk

It's bigger on the inside. Much bigger. A metal walkway rings the circumference of the vessel. The walls appear coated in a slimy flesh-like material. Pink and purple vine appendages trail off walkways and across ascending and descending escalators.

If the hunters venture upwards, they eventually reach the suspended platform of the **Engine Room**. If they descend into the bowels of the ship, they'll reach the **Laboratory**. Both rooms are locked initially.

This vast complex is riddled with floating, silver rooms connected by multiple escalators and doorways. In the center of this space sits a large, perfect cube. This is the **Control Center**. The hunters cannot reach this room from the ring walk.

GOAL

Bypass a locked door.

MOMENTS

A series of unsettlingly colorful runes flash across the ship's surface as a deep, musical motif of synthesized noise resonates for miles around.

One of the sentries fires its ray gun at a massive, fallen tree in their path. The tree catches fire, then melts into a smouldering ash pile in mere seconds.

PROPS

Doorways - Every door is locked, glowing a pleasing violet. It opens for any aliens that approach; some sort of biotech security.

Control panels full of blinking lights, unrecognizable runes and tempting buttons are stationed across the ring walk, many of them wedged within the organic architecture of the ship.

TRAPS

Sections of the ring walk have no guardrails, making even the act of walking perilous if the treasure hunters aren't careful. Falling from this set leads to the **Nursery** at the bottom of the ship.

Vine-like appendages hanging from the floors above and along the walkways can trip up the hunters or, on occasion, even grab someone by the ankle of their own volition.

TREASURES

Omega Brew - Vials of lime-green liquid (3) worth 4 gold as a complete set. Imbibing one lets you make your next Hunt Roll with an extra light die. Make a Risk Roll immediately afterwards to ward off unpleasant side effects.

Peon's Helm (armor) - Bizarre helmet with alien worms protruding from the underside. Make a Risk Roll when putting the helm on to see whether the worms burrowing into your head bend to your will or make you their thrall.

Once aboard the ship, invaders or the avenger can appear in any set at any given time.

PEON

WEAKNESS – Intimidation

7

Short, stocky invaders. The engineers and scientists of this extraterrestrial expedition.

• Conversing together in their native tongue

• Taserling a prisoner for fun

• Busily repairing part of the ship

• Gibbering into an intercom

• Sleeping on the job

• Taking a romantic interest in a prisoner

Defenses

- **Grapple** - Inhibited by their tentacles, you are held in place. Decrease the total amount of dice for the Combat Roll by 1.
- **Tech Savvy** - When near a control panel it will raise force fields, call for reinforcements or activate defense systems.

A human enhanced by robotic augments for hunting and by massive antlers grafted on for killing. An experiment that died on the table, she was resurrected by spirits of the Kalduhr seeking vengeance against these alien trespassers.

• Savagely destroying a control panel

• Entranced by a series of runes

• Unleashing a primal roar

• Sharpening her antlers against a wall

• Eating a dead invader

• Watching a hunter from the shadows

Defenses

- **Antlers** - Gore foes or pin them to a wall.
- **Toss** - Can throw a hunter across the room. Take the Condition Dazed.
- **Hand cannon** - Her arm was replaced by an advanced ray gun that can hit targets that are far away.
- **Mark** - The Avenger marks the treasure hunters. If she survives, she will ceaselessly pursue the hunters till they are all dead.

Engine Room

Atop a raised platform beneath the spaceship's glassy dome sits the craft's massive crystalline engines, rising up and down at an absolute crawl.

GOAL

Steal at least 2 fuel crystals.

MOMENTS

The low hum of the crystals reverberates in harmony against its metal chassis, briefly threatening to overwhelm your ears.

You have a clear view of the night sky through the spaceship's glass dome. But you realize the constellations are not from your world.

PROPS

The **engines** are massive, hexagonal crystals slowly rising and falling like pistons into a hive-like, sinewy base. Gears constructed from pitch black alien metals keep the enormous machine churning - just barely.

A nearby control panel can operate doors on the lower levels. A hunter may gain access to the Control Center early by using a ritual on the panel.

TRAPS

Falling from this height leads to a fast, painful trip down to the ring walk.

A lone peon is working on the engines. Upon noticing the hunters, it immediately calls for a posse of sentries.

TREASURES

Three fuel crystals can be extracted one at a time with a Risk Roll from panels at the foot of the massive engines. Each crystal is highly valuable (2 gold) - and highly explosive. Removing all of the crystals will shut down lights throughout the ship.

A single omega brew was left on this platform.

Laboratory

A large laboratory space filled with scientific instruments, barbaric equipment, surgical tables of various sizes, and corpses, terrestrial and otherwise, pinned to the walls.

Along the far side of this room hang a series of slimy, organic pods. Each contains a kidnapped townspeople, forest creature, or some other, more bizarre alien being.

GOAL

Free the captive humans.

You suddenly notice all of the heads are glaring angrily at you. When you blink, their eyes are closed again, faces perfectly at peace.

MOMENTS

A corpse pinned to a wall starts writhing unnaturally. Moments later, a larva erupts from its chest.

Electricity jolts through the electrodes attached to a brain-swapped woman's head. She screams with the terrified voice of an animal.

PROPS

A **man's corpse** lies on a blood-spattered table, cleaning split in two. Most of his major organs have been arranged neatly on a nearby floating tabletop.

Dozens of **human heads** preserved in bubbling, liquid-filled containers sit on a nearby shelf. Their eyes are shut, a look of unnatural serenity upon each face.

An **unconscious woman** lies strapped to a surgical table. The top half of her cranium is gone and the brain inside, connected to half a dozen organic electrodes, is obviously not the original.

The Pods look like sacks of yellowish jelly jutting from the wall. You can make out the silhouettes of humans and other creatures trapped inside.

TRAPS

Force Fields, humming quietly and glowing a translucent lime green, may appear if a hunter fails a Risk Roll to manipulate equipment in this room. The force fields burn to the touch.

Giant buzzsaws, surgical lasers, and syringes wired to the ceilings may activate of their own accord if tampered with.

Small **medical droids** roving through the laboratory on weathered treads insist on taking blood samples or giving medical care to hunters with any physical Conditions.

TREASURES

A **glittering rock** obviously not of this world sits idly on a console. It whispers to your mind in an unnerving chant when touched with bare hands.

A **set of bizarre surgical tools** in pristine condition. A clean and untampered set is worth 2 gold.

A **sealed jar** bubbles with violet liquid. If you examine it closely, a pair of yellow eyes stares back. Make a Risk Roll if you continue observing it (or release it).

Universal translator - A thin, metal rectangle with a mirrored surface. Can translate alien language into your common tongue and vice versa.

Nursery

The dark, dingy floor at the bottom of the spaceship. Cream-colored eggs the size of your hand have been gathered by the hundreds into slimy clutches as far as the eye can see.

Clinging to rafters above, the Nurse currently slumbers.

GOAL

Escape this floor.

MOMENTS

Two larvae fight to the death over a scrap of metal.

The Nurse, lost in dreams, sings a synthesized lullaby. Something about its voice unnerves you.

A dead towns person suddenly smacks into the cold, metallic floor.

PROPS

A small derelict spacecraft lies underneath a mound of eggs. It has room for 4 passengers. Equipped with a pair of laser cannons, unreliable thrusters, and a single ejector seat for the pilot. The hunters can get it up and running again with some engineering, magic or a bit of luck.

An **emergency exit hatch** lies hidden from view at the very bottom of the ship. It's currently blocked by several mounds of eggs.

Small droids with glowing eye-stalks and spindly legs quietly creep about the chamber collecting stray eggs and neatly organizing them, or else sweeping up debris.

Tall ladders slicked with mucus lead back to the ring walk high above. Hunters must make a Risk Roll to keep from falling.

TRAPS

Stepping on eggs produces an acidic, adhesive chemical that burns right through most organic materials.

Larvae - aggressive, plump worms with squid-like beaks - may hatch unexpectedly. They blindly seek flesh to eat.

The Nurse relentlessly hunts intruders once roused by a loud noise.

TREASURES

Eggs, while plentiful, are very fragile. An egg in pristine condition is worth 2 gold. A captured larva is worth 4 gold.

Salvage from the remains of droids, creatures and other ships. The derelict is worth 7 gold if you can steal it in one piece.

The first treasure hunter who succeeds on a Risk Roll to search through one of the egg mounds receives an **extra backpack slot**.

Additional Treasures

Discarded weapons, rations and clothing tossed down here like garbage.

THE NURSE

WEAKNESS – Cold

10

Rosy flesh. Rat nest of barbed tentacles. Sharp-toothed maw the perfect size for your head. The Nurse clamors across walls and ceilings at breakneck speeds and can even float short distances.

The Nurse is content to sleep unless disturbed by loud noises.

Defenses

- **Whip it** - Its tentacles can tear open skin or possibly poison its victims.
- **Brain drain** - Latches onto a hunter's head and leeches away their life force. Take the Condition: **Drained**.

Control Center

At the heart of the ship, within the perfect cube, lies the Control Center. It's filled to the brim with blinking lights, screens displaying video feeds from the Crash Site, and dozens of peons feverishly making repairs. The doors quietly lock after the treasure hunters enter.

At the center of this room stands the Intelligence. Peons look on curiously, but won't attack unless provoked or instructed by their leader.

SPECIAL NOTE: The Control Center cannot be accessed until players have explored at least 2 other Sets inside the spaceship.

THE INTELLIGENCE

WEAKNESS – *Logical paradoxes*

9

A towering being inexplicably composed entirely of light. It may appear to the hunters as:

- *A human in ever-shifting rainbow robes, but a detail is off.*
- *A golden invader crowned with many alien crowns.*
- *An eldritch horror beyond your mortal comprehension.*
- *A chaotic flurry of wings and eyes within a conflagration.*
- *A floating robotic head with the voice of a hunter's loved one.*
- *Something else entirely.*

The Intelligence immediately welcomes the hunters, assuming they are leaders of their world. It offers to let them travel with the crew back across the stars as envoys from this world.

This is a lie. The Intelligence wants to collect them all as additional fodder for the invaders' horrific experiments. If the players see through this facade, the Intelligence immediately orders peons in the room to capture them.

Defenses

- **Psychic waves** - Confuse a treasure hunter, may lead them to attack an ally.
- **Omega Protocol** - Shields itself behind force fields, raising its Endurance to 12.
- **Gamma Formation** - Peons swarm the treasure hunters, forcing a random player to skip their turn each round until combat is over.

Conclusion

IF THEY DEFEAT THE INTELLIGENCE...

Then they inadvertently kick off a self-destruct sequence. The doors unlock. Alarms blare across the ship. A pleasant voice calmly begins counting down to zero in an alien language. Have each player make a Risk Roll to determine if they escape the ship in time. You may wish to make them roll for each set they have to run through (likely the Command Center and Ring Walk, though perhaps they need to dash through the Crash Site as well) to ratchet up the tension, but go with what makes sense for your table.

IF THEY STEAL ALL 3 FUEL CRYSTALS...

Then along with the engines, the main lights throughout the ship cut out. The invaders are also alerted to the hunters' presence if they weren't already. Ask liberally for Risk Rolls as they attempt to stumble through near-total darkness, especially if they decide to continue exploring the ship.

IF THEY STEAL THE DERELICT...

They could easily cause even more extensive damage by flying around inside the ship or punch a hole through the side with the derelict's lasers. Remember, just getting this bucket of bolts up and running should involve Risk Rolls from each player attempting to pilot or navigate. You could even frame a scene after the escape where the hunters are careening through the forest trying to get the derelict under control! Beyond the Incursion, the derelict can continue to cause problems for the treasure hunters as an advanced piece of technology that's likely to attract unwanted or even dangerous attention.



RETURN TO WELCOME

Mads C. Turley

Return to Welcome

An Incursion for *Trophy Gold*

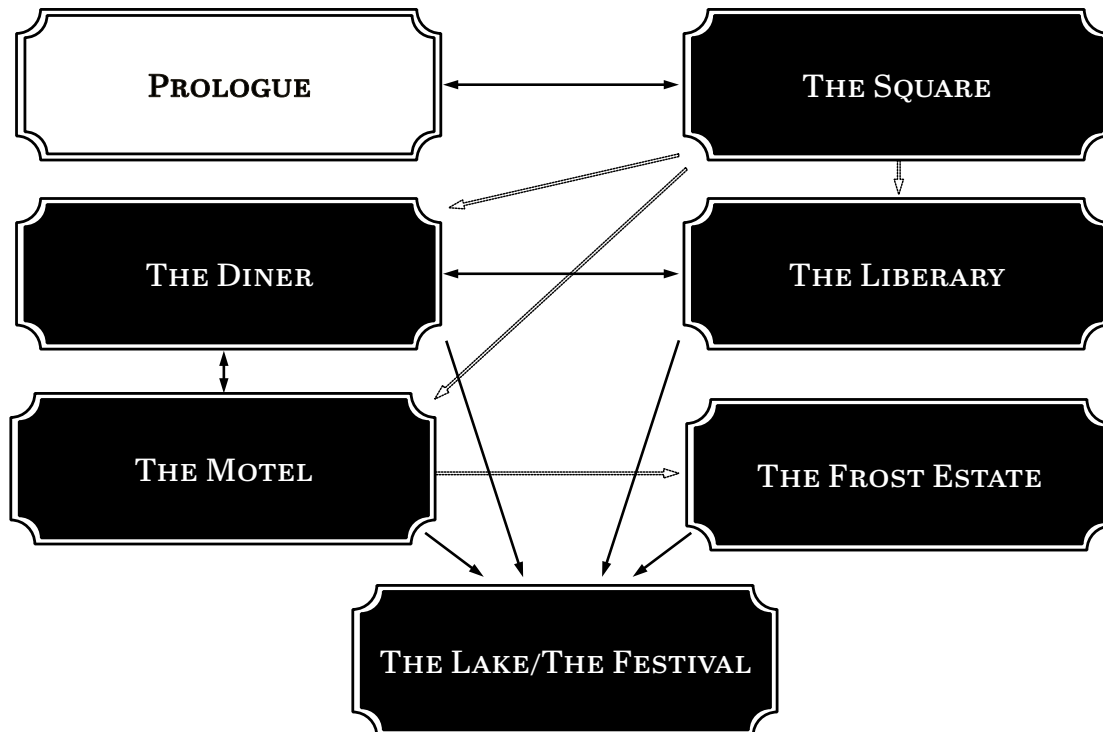
Written by Mads C. Turley

There is a town called Welcome, lost in the dry hills of this particular place. Nothing much is known, usually, about this town...except that there is an annual festival. Every year, the townsfolk gather for this festival to celebrate and propagate prosperity - what that means, no outsider knows, and no outsider has been able to find out. But when it comes right down to it, it is as the tagline says on the town sign: All Are Welcome. And all who come to the town around the time of the festival find out what that means to the town...and what it means to them.

theme: **RAIN**

There are many interested parties in the town of Welcome: wanderers, curiosity-seekers, fraudsters, maybe even those seeking family or a home. They come like metal to a magnet, moths to a flame, drawn in by the strangeness of the time, of the town around this season, this festival.

SETS



INSPIRATION: *Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *SCP-3300*, *The Fog* (1980 film), *Desperation* card game

Character Options

The following character options are specific to the setting of Return to Welcome. These are people who, in one way or another, have been directed, tricked, or coerced into this town.

CHARACTER IDENTITY OPTIONS

Background – skill

- **Disgraced Influencer** - *charisma*
- **Escaped Cult Member** - *will*
- **Reformed Grifter** - *influence*
- **Traumatized Military** - *grit*
- **Retired Operative** - *subterfuge*
- **Orphaned Scientist** - *loneliness*

Occupation – skills

- **Journalist** - *curiosity, detail, reporting*
- **Doctor** - *examination, surgery, diagnosis*
- **Agent** - *investigation, detail, intimidation*
- **Imposter** - *lying, persona, belief*
- **Writer** - *words, creativity, self-doubt*
- **Artist** - *perception, color, contrast*

DRIVE

What makes you want to stay, no matter how fucked up this gets?

- Take my rightful inheritance
- Continue my family's great work
- Find out what happened to my older sibling
- Figure out where I actually came from
- Get information to take down the organization that killed my parents
- Research historical and genealogical records in the town

STARTING BACKPACK EQUIPMENT

These are items the Visitors would bring with them as part of their trip into Welcome.

Crowbar, tire patch kit, hand towel

Cling film, index cards, poncho

Protein bars, resistance band, portable speaker

Twine, butcher paper, nasal spray

Binoculars, marker set, phone charger

Pack of cards, measuring tape, folding grocery bag

Toolbelt, book of poems (lowers 1 Ruin), glasses

Compass, jar of peanut butter, scarf

Survival guide, socks, lucky token

Necklace with inspirational pendant, climbing gloves, pepper spray

RITUALS

Increase your starting Ruin by 1 for each Ritual you take, up to 3 Rituals.

**Keeper Note: The Rituals marked with an * have to do with the upcoming Festival. Every use opens the player up to Visions of the Time Beyond.*



• ***Speak-** Communicate with those beyond the grave

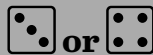
• **Hear-** Listen to surface thoughts of those around you

• **See-** Understand what lies beneath

• ***Flow-** Merge with wind currents

• **Hack-** Make someone else cough before they can speak a truth

• **Talk-** Speak to anything inorganic



• **Sink-** Make any object you touch collapse inward

• **Fix-** Repair a single object or system within reach

• **Shine-** Focus attention on yourself

• **Darken-** Draw shadows around yourself so as not to be perceived

• ***Mist-** Break down a small part of anything you touch into tiny droplets

• **Cloud-** Obscure an object from sight



• **Glide-** Cause something to slide away from its current position

• **Scar-** Heal a wound partially and incompletely

• **Rumble-** Cause vibrations in a small area

• **Feel-** Know the emotional state of a person or a place

• **Shift-** Disturb the earth and rocks in an area

• **Winding-** Twist something out of shape

New Gear

The items on the following page can be added to the existing equipment lists or used as replacements. If you need something not included, re flavor a pre-existing item. Alternatively have players roll on the starting backpack equipment table, found after Backgrounds.

ADDITIONAL BACKPACK EQUIPMENT

When you rummage through your pack and have open slots, pick one piece of equipment from below to fill a slot.

 Multi-tool	 Three ancient coins	 Kubaton
 Hiking Boots	 Rucksack	 Handgun
 Screwdriver	 Thermal sensor	 Shotgun
 Duffel bag	 Frequency monitor	 Carbine
 Fountain pen	 Plastic baggies	 Bullet-resistant vest
 Super glue	 Trash bags	 Butterfly knife
 Work gloves	 Flashlight	 Leather gauntlets
 Thumb drive	 Smartphone	 Portable LED light
 Headphones	 Lockpicks	 Notebook
 Burner cell phone	 Credit cards	 Duct tape
 Fake ID	 Portable Lamp	 Old photographs
 Passport forgery	 Hand sanitizer	 Case files - missing persons

Overview

Prologue will take place before the Sets begin.

Keeper Notes: Each person will have questions to fulfill and could then have a short inciting scene to play out.

Certain Moments are triggered when certain Hunt rolls are reached, signaling further advancement towards Festival approach.

Throughout the game, call upon the history shared in this Prologue, either in Devil's Bargains or in the Moments.

Prologue

Each Occupation gets a Prologue scene, short roleplay or narrative. The other players and/or Keeper act as the NPCs or Monsters in the scene.

Keeper Note: Try to tie in the character's Drive to their Prologue, to foreshadow a further reason to immerse them deeper into Welcome.

If the Journalist, your long-distance colleague emailed an article about this strange town with a weird reputation and the distinctive car crash that occurred outside of it.

? *What do you find out about this particular story that makes it urgent for you to investigate this before the town's upcoming festival?*

If the Doctor, you examined the remaining effects from a crashed car discovered not far from Welcome's town limits a year ago.

? *What did you discover among the effects that reminds you about the anniversary of the town's upcoming festival?*

If the Agent, you were briefed on the anomalous event that occurred last year and you are one of those tasked to go undercover and find missing persons from the car crash.

? *Did you personally know any of the people reported missing? If so, how? If not, why is this particular mission important to your promotion?*

If the Imposter, you found out about the car crash from a year ago and that there was a sizable reward for anyone who knew the whereabouts of one of the people missing.

? *You bear a more than passing resemblance to the pictured missing person: you smell payday. What lies will you concoct to get in the good graces of the Frost family offering the reward?*

If the Writer, for some reason, you've been seeing this particular town in your memory - you feel as if you've been making stories about this town for your entire writing life.

? *Regardless of your memories, what makes you believe you've never set foot in Welcome before in your life?*

If the Artist, you've been going through an artistic slump and your agent and gallery have ordered you to take some time to refresh and create new work.

? *What is it about your aunt's home (where you are staying in Welcome since she passed) is inspiring and also terrifying?*

The Square

A cobblestone formation laid into the ground, differentiated by the marbled rock making up the square. In the middle is a dry fountain with the statue of a dancing maiden seemingly dumping her pail into the fountain's bowl. Surrounding the Square are the Motel, a Diner, and a Library. In between the buildings are archways leading deeper into the town, or alleys leading to dead ends.

? *What do you sense that gives you the impression that the passerby or unseen townsfolk are watching you?*

GOAL

Find and secure shelter once you arrive in town.

If the Imposter, find your way to “your” ancestral home, the Frost estate.

If the Artist, your aunt's house is the Frost estate; make your way there.

MOMENTS

You feel eyes watching from the upper storeys of the town buildings, but when you look, no one is there.

The distant blare of bad theme music as an ice cream truck nears.

There is a scent of mildew, damp and thick.

Clouds on the horizon are curling and dark, ready to roll in.

The ground constantly is damp as if it has recently rained or water is seeping upward.

A fine mist seems to permeate one's clothing, no matter how water-resistant.

PROPS

The **Statue of the Laughing Maiden**. Once a symbol of the town's prosperity, it is said when her fountain runs again, so too shall the town's luck.

The **archways**, in high relief, topped by a carved face, lead further into the town.

TRAPS

The **alleys** can be mistaken for archways, and once entered, seem to absorb light and get darker the deeper you go.

Eb Knoll, the town drunk, will accost new folks to town for booze money or aggressively ask what they know about the Festival.

TREASURES

A plaque “All Are Welcome” on the fountain; pressing it reveals a tiny etching of all of the town's founding families' names on the other side.

A locket containing an old picture of the PC, as they appear now but as if it was taken decades ago.

Additional Traps

*When a *Ritual is used - Vision of the Beyond: Chanting townsfolk dressed in robes from a different time and place will be seen and heard, lifting offerings to the brutally bright sky. On a fail, the PC is being brought bodily to an altar and sacrificed for precious rain, requiring a Ruin roll.*

Additional Treasures

A library book entitled Our Fair City Welcome: A History.

The ice cream van itself is innocuous enough, white with happy children surrounding a cartoon scoop on the side. But closer inspection reveals the children are actually screaming with fear, and the scoop has a smile full of jagged teeth.

☐ Circles the Square fountain three times, then heads down Main Street.

☐☐☐ *“Hi, How are you, nice damp we’re having!”*

☐☐ Will offer favorite flavor to anyone who comes up and asks for ice cream.

☐☐☐ Blaring the tinniest, most discordant themes from the van speakers.

☐☐☐ *“To know the storm, you must know what it is like to be without the storm.”*

☐☐☐ Smiling a smile showing all his teeth, top and bottom rows, jagged and sharp.

Defenses – The ice cream tastes dry; every PC that tries it gets the Condition Desiccated.

Weakness – Damage to the van will send him running. His own ice cream will shrivel him, bring down his Endurance by 1.

Additional traps – Getting inside the van is like entering a liminal space - it will transport you to the Frost estate.

The Frost Estate

Mother Morton is a buxom woman in her late 50s living in the grand house seen on the hill when entering Welcome.

? What about her dark-panelled home makes you think you are welcome but reminds you are an outsider?

GOAL

Find out about the Frosts' connection to the Festival.

If the Imposter, convince Mother Morton you are her long lost relative.

If the Artist, Mother Morton is your aunt...but this is not her. How do you know?

MOMENTS

The grass around the estate is dry and brittle, and yet the shingles of the house look and feel damp.

The water marks in the house seem to form faces with moving mouths.

The shadows of the halls seem to draw longer, as if a storm is coming - inside.

PROPS

Dark mahogany panelling bows and bends slightly, as if water-damaged. There may be hidden passages or recesses here.

The fabric wall hangings are intricate, yet starting to peel away - messages may be underneath.

Various rooms have nostalgia, history, or ghosts - or perhaps all three.

TRAPS

The tragic past of the Frost estate has a better chance of becoming reality - memory will play out as scenes in its halls.

The ghosts here are not benign - they will touch strangers who trespass and bring them into their pasts.

Nostalgia is strong here - touching sentimental objects can be dangerous for the emotions trapped within them.

TREASURES

A diamond engagement ring, cushion cut with tiny sapphires on either side of the setting.

A lock of hair, gently tucked in a perfumed envelope.

A vial of brackish water, but with a strange iridescence to it.

Additional Traps

*When a *Ritual is used - Vision of the Beyond: Falling into a subbasement of the house - several bodies hanging like meat and a bright blinding light coming from the other side of the room. On a fail, the PC is one of the bodies hung on a hook and taken down to be brought into the light, incurring a Ruin roll.*

Elegantly dressed in moldy styles of different times, they each carry hints of how they died - a dark stain on their abdomen, a bloody slash across their throat. They were prevented from taking their place in the Festival in their own time, and seek newcomers to take their spot in the estate.

Keeper, roll a dark die any time a character decides to explore a room:

- A ghost will actively harm a PC
- to • A ghost is found and will try to force a character into their memory.
- to • A ghost is not seen but yet will hint at their own history within the Frost estate.
- A ghost is seen and will answer one question honestly posed by a PC.

Defenses – Making obstacles or danger zones in the house, throwing people into their memories made real.

Weakness – Engaging their reflection. Showing understanding or compassion for their current circumstances or their past fate.

HISTORY

d6	Ghost	Welcome	Festival
•	Jealous rival stabbed through the gut	Settled even before immigrants to this area	Dedicated to the storm
••	Bandit on the way back from an assignation in the woods, slashing their throat accidentally	Ancestral gods walked the earth—grains of truth to folktales	The Frosts were one of the first families here in town, welcoming the Others
•••	A fall from the upper library window	Town built on stolen land	Built on Rain, Blood, and Tears
••••	Poison from an insane employer	A mortal agreement, an unearthly pact	The rains come every year, but the Festival only every 20 years
•••••	Remembering too many past memories too soon - self-harm	“All Are Welcome” - all-comers, all become one with the town...one may never leave, or leave the same way they came in	All Welcome residents hear the call, feel drawn to the Festival
••••••	Wound gone septic	Town built on blood money	Brings prosperity and reward to those ‘sacrificed’

MOTHER MORTON

Mother Morton, upon first appearance, is a buxom woman in her late 50s. She will treat any PC that visits with the utmost hospitality, but the approach and discussion of the Festival will excite her to the point of advancing her ‘condition’- she will sweat profusely, rivulets streaming down her arms and legs, and noticeable swelling will occur.

- or • Will urge watery tea and glasses of stagnant water to guests.
- or ••• Will insist upon memories with the PCs even if they have never met her before in their lives.
- or •••• Will touch a PC with a dripping hand, take the Condition Clammy.

Defenses – Will spit globules of water when swollen, narratively damaging if PCs take injury. A blow from this middle-aged woman will feel like a crashing wave.

Weakness – Getting Mother Morton to talk about who she is, of ancient ways, of old ritual. She is one of the many ancestral spirits that still reside here and that get taken up in the ritual of the storm, the Festival.

The Motel

A single-story beige structure sitting innocuously near the Square; the front lobby seems more like a bed-and-breakfast. The old woman, Sylvia Parkins, will genially hand over room keys, and warn everyone they may want to lock their doors and “*sit tight through the night, weather’s looking a mite whiffy out there.*”

Each room has its own bathroom, basic amenities, comfortable bed, and old TV and phone.

GOAL

Make it through the night without being captured or killed.

If the Journalist, leave the motel as quietly as possible to do some reconnaissance/knowledge gathering.

If the Agent, reach your contact here in town without being discovered.

MOMENTS

Instead of a hotel Bible, a weather-beaten journal about the Festival is found in the desk drawer.

In the bathroom cabinet, the PC sees something that reminds them of someone they do not want to be here in Welcome.

Water stains start to appear on the ceiling, especially the longer the PC looks at them.

The sounds of rain can be heard pattering on the window and roof - but when looking out the window, the weather is clear.

PROPS

The coffee machine in the lobby is self-serve, but quite modern, with clear usage directions, and all the condiments near by or in the mini-fridge underneath the table.

The brochure stand at the front by the main doors displays outdated material, but all pertain to the Festival, of different years.

The business center is very up to date, complete with Wi-Fi password and 2 cubicle workstations with outlets and printers.

TRAPS

Agent Contact: Terry Sias, a homeless man that managed to get word to the organization - a former agent themselves, driven mad by being trapped in this place “*I couldn’t leave...every time I tried, I would always find myself back in the damned Square, hearing the Sunshine Ice Cream Man’s blasted tune...*”

A sudden storm brews up, rain driving sideways, and thunder roaring overhead, along with blinding lightning.

A shadowy figure seems to be waiting, watching - how do you know they seem to be observing you?

Lights go out, power seems to have gone out too - hope you remembered to bring chargers for your devices.

TREASURES

A hand-drawn map of the town, with a crude path or road indicated beyond the Motel heading out of town...in case the main road in is blocked.

A bracelet with inscribed initials on the inside - yours.

A letter addressed to you...from you, dated four days from now - but completely illegible inside because of all the dried water damage.

Additional Traps

When a **Ritual* is used - *Vision of the Beyond*: You suddenly feel taken up into the storm, whipped high into the sky, clutching at air as the ground falls away.. On a fail, the PC feels their body tear apart into small pieces and drop onto the earth, incurring a *Ruin* roll.

There are no monsters in this Set per se, except the circling thoughts of the PCs themselves.

Keeper, ask one of these questions to each of the PCs; make note of their answers and call back to them in the Lake/Festival set:

- ? ____ *you were given the job by your boss. The cryptic speech, the talk about how you'd be the best person to scout out this phenomena. Looking back, do you think you knew you were picked because you were the best, or because you had a connection to the town that you only now suspect?*
- ? ____ *you thought you'd come here to escape/get inspiration, provide a teaser tidbit for your editor before they cut you off and left you for that hot up-and-comer. Looking back, who are you sorry you left behind in your desperate need to get ahead, and was it worth it this whole time?*
- ? ____ *you pretended to be someone else, someone from here, in order to ingratiate yourself for gain. Looking back, do you think you were clever enough in your ruse, or were you the one played?*
- ? ____ *you had visions of this place and the people. Looking back, did you think you would be able to stay away, and what would have kept you safe at home?*

The Diner

There are sparse attendees here at this chrome-and-neon establishment of another age - possibly avoiding the rages of the storm, possibly eating at home. Everyone else looks as if they are townsfolk regulars; there is a particular look to each of them that marks them as similar - ask each PC what detail they notice that is "typical of Welcome."

GOAL

Get some hot town gossip or history about the Festival.

KEEPER NOTE: In this set, the PCs have the choice of getting a hunt token to trade in for a Treasure later, or getting one Hot Gossip or one piece of History towards the set goal. The set goal will be considered met when 3 pieces total of Hot Gossip and/or History are collected.

If the Agent, find an escape route out of town after you witness the Festival.

If the Writer, see if you can get an inspiring idea for your next story from the gossip or history heard around town.

MOMENTS

When you catch your reflection in a mirrored surface, you see a slight resemblance to the townsfolk.

When you ask about the Festival for the first time, the townsfolk will all slowly turn their heads to look at you at the same time.

As you look out the window at the rain, you notice handprints appear in the foggy glass...and no one making them.

Beads of moisture begin to appear on your bare skin and run in rivulets away from your body.

When you are cut, you will not bleed - water will gush.

PROPS

Framed black-and-white photos decorate the walls, different views from around town...and a shadowy figure in the distance.

The menu seems to have dishes named after town families: Frost, Walton, Briggs.

A big Welcome above the kitchen galley, established - and the year is blurred/scratched out.

TRAPS

A townspeople recognizes you as a fellow townspeople
"You've always been here!"

The religious leader of the town approaches and will stress the duty of your presence at the Festival.

Trap. Description.

TREASURES

A whole caramel apple crumble pie.

A little box replica of the Frost estate, gilded and painted to look like the house on the hill.

A mug with "All Are Welcome" fired on it.

Additional Traps

When a *Ritual is used or a Risk roll - Vision of the Beyond: It is raining hard outside, thick darkness only illuminated by lightning flashes. In the flashes, townspeople with rictus grins will stare directly into the diner. On a fail, the diner goes dark - in the next lightning flash, all of the townspeople that were outside are now inside, dripping wet, surrounding the PC and touching them with their wet hands. Where they touch, it burns, incurring a Ruin roll.

Additional Treasures

Possible escape route: Through a broken fence, hidden by tall grass - down a steep hill, an abandoned railway line leads out of town.

HOT GOSSIP

Overheard between two townsfolk at a nearby table - whomsoever freely offers themselves up at the Festival can fulfill their Drive...as you hear that, what would that 'sacrifice' mean to you if it meant fulfilling your Drive at last?

The server comes over to you and slips the check to you, with a note scribbled on the back: One of the other PCs will be offered up as a sacrifice at the Festival. What is it about them that makes a perfect sacrifice, and why are you jealous?

"All Are Welcome" - everyone becomes part of the town come Festival time. Why does hearing that give you a shiver up your spine?

HISTORY

The first families - the Frosts, the Waltons, the Briggses - ran this town off its resplendent produce when the land was more arable.

When the land began to dry up, they had to look to other means, other industry to sustain the town and their power.

Tapping into the unique ancestral tie of the land through ritual brought the first families in contact with powers and entities they bargained with.

The Library

This musty shelter of old tomes and newer paperbacks feels more like a used bookstore, but the small-drawer cabinet for the nostalgic card catalog sits in a place of prominence in the middle of the large room, behind a counter space for the date stamping machine. Stacks and stacks of books line the walls and aisles have been made with shorter shelving.

GOAL

Discover the origin of the Festival.

If the Writer, incorporate the gossip and purported history of Welcome into your upcoming story - how do you think this adventure will end?

If the Journalist, find a way to get your information collected back to your editor/producer - how will you spin this so they will take you seriously?

MOMENTS

A book published 40 years ago seems to have been authored by you.

A painting of the town's Founders from long ago seems to be of you and your companion(s).

The aisles of the stacks seem to loom large, as the light outside dims, as if ready for a storm.

The librarians pushing carts here seem to be surreptitiously looking at you.

PROPS

A library cart of books, ready to be reshelfed - all books about the town's almost mythic history.

Flyers for the Festival are hung in prominent places here in the library.

Michelle Walton, a member of the townsfolk, will say she's an old friend of The Journalist's/The Writer's and ask if everything's alright.

A replica of the ancient bowl and altar unearthed behind the library, the originals being assessed as being very old and slated to be in a museum.

TRAPS

Temptation: Whatever their Drives demand, it is here in vision, memory...real.

The creature that has always frightened you, that you had nightmares about - it is here. What is it?

TREASURES

A library book entitled *Our Stormy City Welcome: A History*.

A talisman of old ways, an old god.

A child's picture done in watercolor: a swirling mass of wind sweeping up bodies upward, hands reaching down towards the tiny town below.

A gallery print: "Strangers in the Rain"

Additional Traps

When a **Ritual* is used or a *Risk* roll - *Vision of the Beyond*: You are no longer able to hear and see - the cacophony of the wind and rain roar in your ears and blind you to anything but the storm. You feel pulled down and yet jetted upward as if two forces in opposition are playing tug of war. On a fail, you are torn apart, you are part of the storm, incurring a *Ruin Roll*.

Additional Treasures

Possible escape route: An overgrown pathway down an embankment, leading to cars/your car.

A moving column of mysterious robed figures, alternating between chanting and singing.

 or  Chanting & singing

 or  Urging people to join them to the renewing Festival

 or  Passionately, ardently describing the upcoming experience in their own way - and no two stories are the same.

Defenses – Mob mentality - face off against one, and soon more will join; pseudo religious fervor. You will be taken forcibly to the Festival.

Weaknesses – Rumor, speak your truth as you see your character's end...or beginning? Join the Vigil as a willing participant to be lead to the Festival.

Additional traps – The pockets of rain that will change your skin upon contact. Townsfolk that may hold you fast and you feel yourself changing and slipping in their already slick grip.

Additional treasures – A treatise by Terry Sias, *A Welcome Experience*. A cloudy moonstone, occluded in its tarnished silver necklace setting.

The Lake/The Festival

It is time. Whether you join the Vigil willingly or by force, you see the townsfolk make their way like lemmings to the same spot - The Lake, for the Festival.

The townsfolk, or what passes as such, have brought you to water's edge, chants and calls have begun to wane, then cease. There is an ominous stillness here - even sounds of footsteps are deadened, and everyone waits with held breath. The captors will prod the characters to walk not only toward the Lake, but into it. This is the opportunity to leave, or see it through to the end.

***Keeper Note:** if the characters have gone to the Diner or the Library, on a Hunt Roll, they will know that there is a route through a near embankment of trees that will shortcut them back to their cars, or someplace where they can get fast transportation out.

GOAL

Escape Welcome, forever changed...or join the throng in the culmination of the festival's ritual.

Waterspouts appear in the sky above the lake, even though the lake is as solid as a mirror.

MOMENTS

Looking at reflections in the lake, one only gets to see another's pain manifested - never their own - ask the PCs what regrets they see of the character to their right.

Great clouds roll in and over the lake gathering; with their formation, one could almost see frowning brows and an angry mouth in the skies.

PROPS

This is the heart of the ritual, where it draws its power from, and where it completes. The Lake will tempt and threaten to pull characters deeper into their Drives; it is up to them and the Keeper collaborating as to what their story tells when the following questions are answered:

? *How does the Lake show it can help you with what you truly want?*

? *What does the Lake show you as the consequences of not fulfilling your Drive?*

TRAPS

The Lake will bring up the characters' deepest memories when they look into its surface or wade directly into its waters. Ask the PCs what memory this is, and who they see in it.

The Lake will manifest the joys and horrors of these memories as corporeal beings, able to interact, even harm, the characters. Risk Roll to see how far they fall into the memory, real or not.

TREASURES

The Lake can help you fulfill your destiny. The Lake can take away your pain. The Lake can reveal who you are. The Lake can do any and all of these things.

THE LAKE

12

This large water body looks like a mirror surface, reflecting the sky's mood. But what it truly is is a dimensional gate and living reality that can shape itself in this particular pocket of the universe; it cannot grow any larger and will not grow any smaller, but it needs to be powered by the emotions and memories of those that pass near and through it. And if those unwary delve too deep, they can be subsumed into the Lake's depths to be part of the Lake, and Welcome, forever.



Bringing memories to life



Promising it can help



Warping reality within and around itself



"Drink of my waters and you can be healed."



Dragging people from shore into itself



"Submerge yourself, be one with me, and see truth revealed."

Defenses – Breaking waves, dragging hydropods, hypnotic surface glow

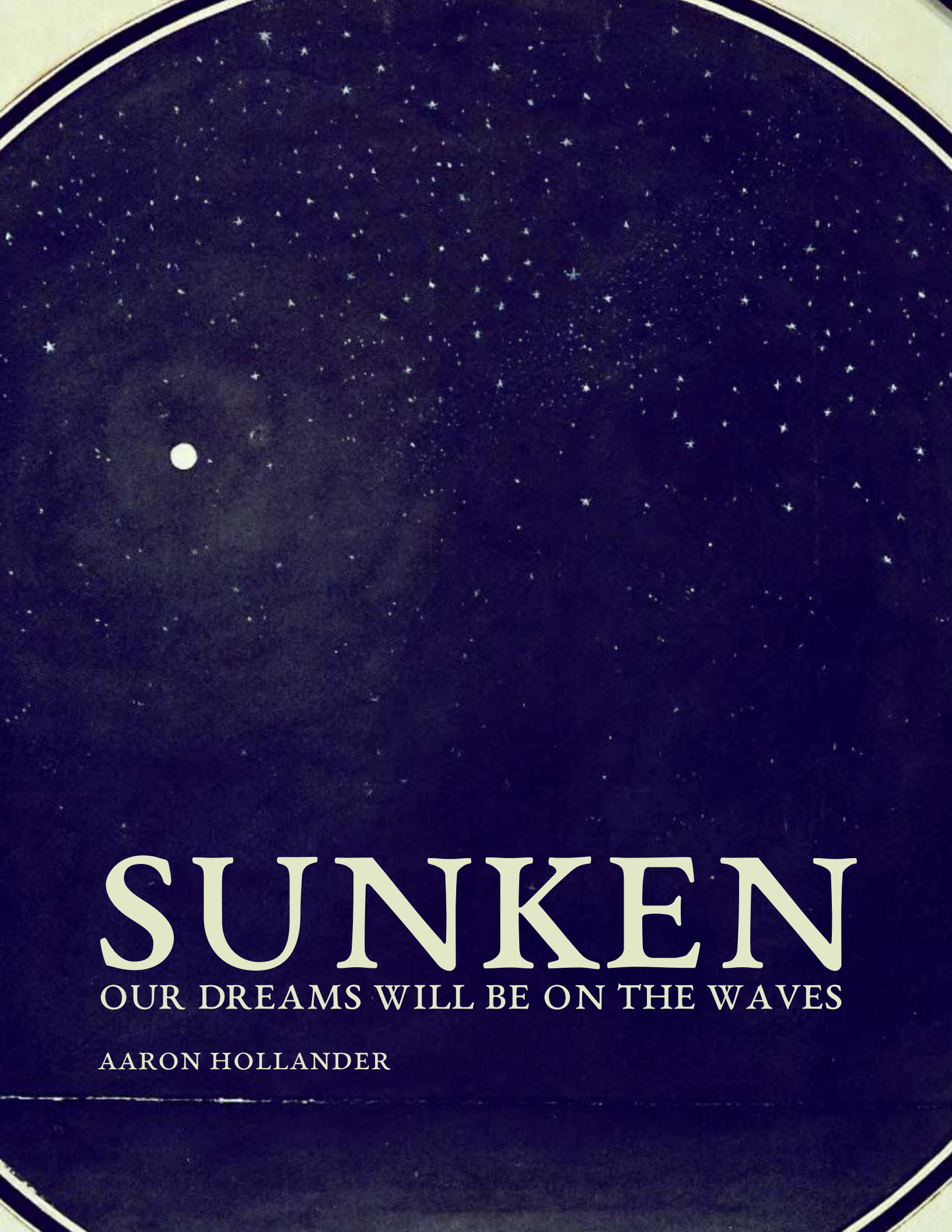
Weaknesses – Elemental disturbance (absorbed by earth, evaporated by fire, gale winds)

Conclusion

Regardless of individual character endings, allow for an ambiguous conclusion to the Festival itself, then close on character epilogues at a point in the near or distant future. Any surviving characters should describe where they are and how they are forever changed by their experience, and the deceased or lost characters can narrate how the world moves on with their passing.

The rains have come, the storms have run rampant...then receded once more. Another Festival done. The land goes back to its dry brittleness, just as the inhabitants of Welcome live out their tenuous existence...until the next Festival, when "All are Welcome" once again...

NOTES



SUNKEN

OUR DREAMS WILL BE ON THE WAVES

AARON HOLLANDER

VOYAGE

OUR DREAMS WILL BE ON THE WAVES

By Aaron Hollander

SUMMARY

A ship runs aground on an island enmeshed with the world of dreams, and its crew must undertake an inward journey to the heart of the island and of their own unconscious.

REFERENCES

The Thing, The Terror, Star Trek (Borg),
2001, An Antarctic Mystery

LINES & VEILS

Body Horror, Cosmic Horror, Manipulation, Mind
Control, Nightmares, Plant Horror, Sleep Disorder,
Trypophobia, Unreality

PROLOGUE

OUR DREAMS WILL BE ON THE WAVES

Not yet three days out of port, the pirate-hunter Mandinay crossed the unremarkable stretch of northern ocean between Stars' Collar and the Eldest Isles. The crew's spirits were muted, as they had been these past months—having set their mad captain ashore on the charred sands of Naginir following a painful mutiny. Slowly, with the unhurried momentum of work carried out by muscle memory, the Mandinay's sailors had recovered their purpose aboard; under the command of the former first mate, they remained in the employ of their Fleet, sworn to chase and apprehend any who threatened the careful peace that followed a time of a thousand wars. But with the legendary Captain Darksail now languishing or dead in the lonely reaches of the Salt Sea, the Fleet had not deemed it urgent to furnish them with new orders.

Only the mad captain's brother and former first mate, Dandifel, seemed certain of their way forward. He and the scientist with whom he had been romantically entangled and whom he had now promoted to his own first mate (to the grumbling of other officers), seemed uninterested in taking up Darksail's mantle as a tireless scourge of lawless vessels. They communicated little to their crew of their alternative plan, besides the vague promise that a "connection" they would make in the Eldest Isles was going to make all their dreams come true.

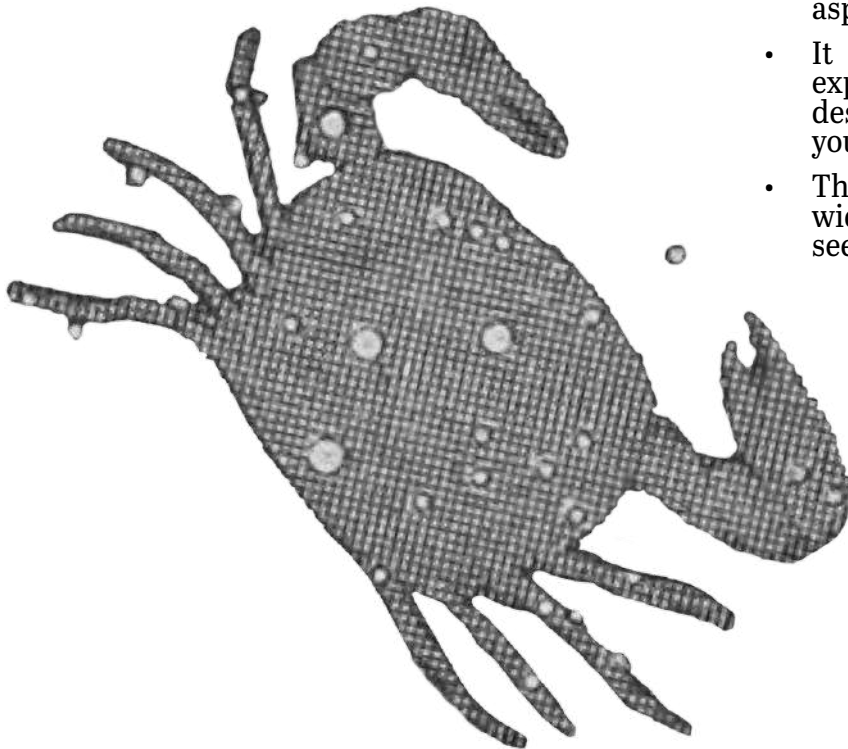
All the crew would need was patience and trust that their new captain had everything under control.

The unerring stars of the Traveler shone along their course. But then the storm was upon them: their visibility plummeted in a strangely mesmerizing silver rain, even as the rain itself seemed to glow with fragmented starlight. Incoherent compass readings left the Mandinay's navigator without recourse. Yet even as the crew reduced and secured the vessel's sails, the winds dropped and only the relentless shimmering rain lashed the deck. Hours or days passed without rational explanation or solution, and the crew gave over their training to wonder and waiting.

Ahead of them there suddenly loomed a dark silhouette, and with it, hope to weather the anomaly on land. But no island appeared on their charts within days of where they had entered the storm. What they would find ashore would push them to their limit, and beyond, as Dandifel's promise to make their dreams come true was to be unexpectedly, prematurely, agonizingly fulfilled.

MOMENTS

- A tree sways and whips its limbs, almost as if it is dancing to inaudible music; no wind disturbs the other foliage nearby.
- Something of the sky is reminiscent of the sea, or vice versa.
- Crabs arrange themselves into the shape of a constellation on the beach, all raising their claws as one, as if at worship.
- The water, calm from the shoreline out to where it suddenly becomes choppy and opaque, seems to dip in a perfectly circular depression, undisturbed by current or wind.
- A crew member's eyes seem to be replaced with spheres of roiling flame.



CONDITIONS

- Gills like the fleshy underside of a mushroom's cap open beneath your jawline.
- You have trouble perceiving the passage of time.
- Your feet begin to cover over with moss, with tendrils eventually snaking down into the earth.
- Acute synesthesia: you can smell sounds, hear vistas, see flavors, taste the objects on which your hands and feet alight.
- You become convinced that a fellow crew member is not who they seem, having been replaced by something else that wears their face.
- You cannot remember the last time you slept, and the thought of succumbing to sleep terrifies you.
- Your personality begins to manifest aspects of an ancestor's personality.
- It takes longer or shorter than expected for you to reach an intended destination on foot, as spaces around you seem to warp and flex.
- The pores on patches on your skin widen into clustered holes like the seed pod of a lotus.

TERRORS

This section is reference for the Helm of the World and not intended to be communicated directly at the play table.

THE SEA

The Mandinay has unwittingly sailed into a pocket of the sea warped by proximity to the Dreaming, which leaks through into the material world in this place. When they make land, it is on an island that is not always real: under the light of the stars, the island is visible and accessible, but by day it (and anyone on it) exists only in a collective dreamscape. At this time, the Sea is glassy smooth, and should a boat set onto it or a crewmember attempt to swim, they will find that they cannot move forward in the water. At night, the crew might be enticed to escape upon a sea which more resembles the familiar deep, but even then the creatures in the water in this warped reach should make it a doomed proposition.

THE OVERGROWN

There is little fauna on the island, but that which has arrived here from the surrounding world has become changed after the fashion of the woven nightmares which suffuse the place. Animals and birds are decisively wrong: with too many limbs or eyes, overgrown by moss and lurid floral growth, with pearls or coral in place of eyes or antlers, or exhibiting unnatural styles of movement. Such animals, moreover, seem to be possessed of an unkind intelligence and filled with malice or contempt toward the arriving crew..

THE SCUTTLEERS

The tears in reality which have saturated the island with the stuff of dreams have brought entities of another sort: sentient, hungry plantlife from the Dreaming itself. These beings resemble great starfish made of writhing vines, mosses, and pale flowers, which scuttle quickly through the jungle or across the shore with an eerie ringing sound like a finger around the rim of a glass. Some are the size of dogs, others the size of horses, but should they catch a crewmember, they will latch onto him, drag him off, and begin transforming him into an Overgrown. They can be driven back by fire, but watchful crew may still see them behind distant trees, awaiting unwariness.

NIGHTMARES

As the characters venture further into the dreamscape of the island, they will glimpse and confront elements from their own memories, their own nightmares.

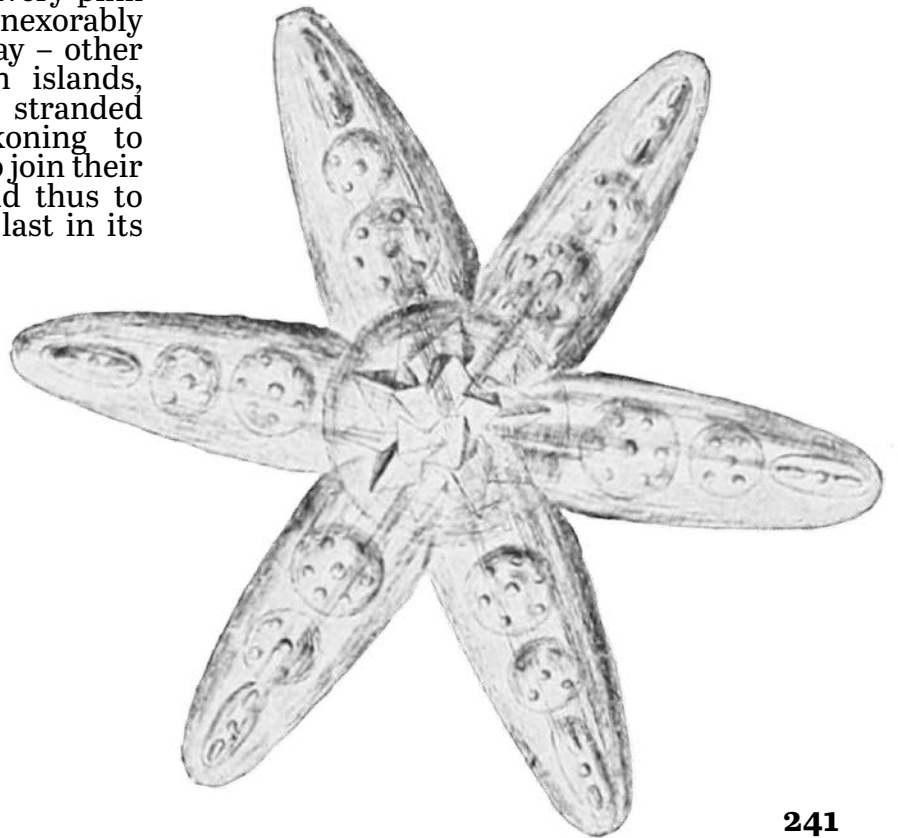
Taking the uncanny and distorted shape of elements of the characters' subconscious, these phantasms are only half-real, but the effect they have on those they harry is all too real, draining away their courage, sanity, and will to live.

THE HARVESTER

Because of its unique properties as a bridge between the Real and the Dreaming, the island was selected as a test site for a wartime operation by the Speakers, a renegade faction of fae who took refuge in the Dreaming in times immemorial. Locked in endless conflict with beings of living nightmare, the Speakers have taken desperate measures: deploying biological weapons to siphon mental and spiritual energy from the Real that can power their immaterial engines of war. At the heart of the island, then, is a single Harvester: a great vegetal monstrosity that was cultivated deliberately by the Speakers and deposited here as an instrument of extraction. The Harvester is what has given growth to the Scuttlers, and its blossoms emit a strange silvery-pink mist that seems to reach inexorably toward points unseen far away – other such blooms on other such islands, perhaps. It will draw the stranded crewmembers inward, beckoning to them and appealing to them to join their consciousness to its own, and thus to find the sweetness of rest at last in its embrace.

THE ISLAND

Should the crewmembers somehow resist the enticements of the Harvester, the island itself—its trees, its grasses, the hanging vines of its cenotes—may begin to wake in malevolent protestation of this defiance. The Harvester has sunk its roots deep, and even the natural plantlife of this half-dreamscape is under its sway. Trees writhe and crack, reaching to grasp the crewmembers, as grasses and vines twine around their limbs. The Sea is the only refuge now, yet here too the great mounds and coils of seaweed have capitulated to the Harvester's hunger, and the Mandinay itself has begun to be overtaken by mosses, mushrooms, and luminous algae from beyond the Real.



FIRST TIDE

THE SILVER SHORE

Ahead of the ship, a dark mass in the rolling curtains of silver rain gives the promise of land, despite the Mandinay's navigator having no explanation for how they could have traveled so far off course as to reach land so soon. The crew surges from their confusion, leaping to ropes and rachets and bringing the vessel around, fighting to orient the ship toward this opportunity for safe harbor, even as it seems to recede before them even in the moment it holds out hope. But doubt seeps in among the officers—is the mass ahead an uncharted island, is it a fruitless mirage, or is it a temptation extended like an anglerfish's lamp in the sudden and trackless storm? How do the seafarers attempt to understand and to assess what they are seeing in the strangely cascading starlight?

In this Tide, the crew of the Mandinay struggles to reach the mysterious landmass, while the sea around them grows increasingly, unnervingly calm, even as it is pounded relentlessly by the shimmering rain. The incessant drumming of the rain on the ship's boards seems to be woven through with voices, fading in and out of the noise of the storm. So too, the crew see glimpses of remembered faces in the silver curtains around them.

Pose to the characters: whom do you hear and see in these momentarily coalescing images, and how do these glimpses affect you? (The Helm may wish to draw on what the players generate here, when providing texture for details and moments once they reach the island and the dreams of the characters manifest in various waking ways.)

The crew must determine a way to bring the ship to shore: the silhouette of the island rises in front of them whichever way they turn, yet it seems to be getting neither closer nor farther as they labor to reach it. Should the seafarers fail to perceive their predicament as urgent (or should they fail in attempts to use the skills of the Flesh), the ship can begin taking on water from the incessant rain, captivating the minds of the crew as they gaze into the iridescent pools gathering on deck. How do they draw on all of their cunning and faith to traverse this unnerving, unnatural segment of the Deep? Simply sailing forward will not attain the island, yet the power of a saint or the fortune of the Heavens can part the curtains of unnatural rain and make a phantasmagorical tunnel through to the island. Or they can be swallowed up by unearthly images and mesmerizing patterns before waking to find that they are already ashore.

SECOND TIDE

THE CREW AWAKENS

In this Tide it can be effective, if your players have not lined or veiled Manipulation or Mind Control, to provide covert information to each player indicating guilt or suspicious variation from the norm on the part of other player-characters. These “insights” are in fact distorting pressure exerted on the minds of the seafarers by the dream-logic and interplanar thinness of the island.

The seafarers awaken on a sandy shore, with fragmented memories of the storm but no recollection of having arrived on the island. The Mandinay is beached and leaning sharply to one side, but stable and apparently undamaged. The officers, collecting themselves, begin to assess their surroundings, attempting to determine where the ship has run aground. They direct members of the crew to survey in various directions, along the shore or inland, where the gently waving treeline of tropical flora unnerves those who so recently had plied the frigid waters of a northern sea.

The island appears tranquil and benign at first. Should the crew turn back to the water, a glassy stillness stretches from the shore, yet something moves below the surface—large and coiling masses of seaweed, by the look of it. And ashore as well, they catch sight of animals—rabbits, foxes, deer—apparently ill with some kind of mange or growth. On closer inspection they will reveal themselves to be overgrown with moss and flowers. Some are more wrong still: with pearls for eyes or coral for antlers, too many legs or teeth. The overgrown animals are not at first aggressive, but the crew have an uneasy sense that they are filled with malice or contempt toward the seafarers.

Crew venturing inland perceive a dark shape standing amidst the dense foliage—and, approaching, soon

encounter something even more incongruous with their experience and expectations: a wooden grandfather clock in immaculate condition. Its glass is cracked outwards, its second hand straining, twitching, as though unsure whether to move forward or backward. Once the clock is discovered, the island’s idyllic charm rapidly erodes. The passage of time is not quite right; through a hazy sky, the light shifts in erratic ways. Crew members go missing, then return with no awareness of having been gone. Suspicions of one another begin to bloom in the minds of the crew: where have they gone? What do they know? Are they the reason we are here?

And then, as the time-warped day comes abruptly to an end, catastrophe. The Mandinay’s medic [or a different officer if the medic is a player-character] spots an anomaly among the treeline—a large mound of brightly-colored moss that had not been present earlier. She goes to investigate it, but when she reaches it, the mound uncoils into a starfish-shaped vegetal monstrosity the size of a horse, latching onto the medic and dragging her into the jungle with an eerie ringing sound like a finger around the rim of a wine glass. The remaining crew, shaken, take refuge beneath the prow of the leaning ship, debating whether and how they should venture inland to rescue their medic—as other scuttling mounds of vegetation watch, patiently, from the treeline.

THIRD TIDE

THE CREW SLEEPS

The remaining crew, their mood chilled to the bone, set warding fires and watches to endure the night that has fallen with uncanny swiftness. The seafarers attempt to maintain their camp with a bare measure of normalcy, but the night around them is stranger and more menacing even than the day. Behind the beached Mandinay, the glassy water begins to churn, becoming once again alive with sound and foam. The sky above them joins in, roiling and seething like the sea—the stars within it flow and merge like luminescent algae, as great dark bodies move beneath (above?) its surface, disturbing the starlight and sending it swirling aside in their wake.

Despite their best efforts to keep watch, the seafarers are overcome by fatigue and by something more—a hypnotic pull of a sleep that is not an absence of wakefulness but rather like a feral, hungry presence in their midst. Under the undulating and somehow too proximate sky, the crew of the Mandinay are trapped in sleep, their minds set ablaze by the thinness of this place at the margins of the Dreaming.

Each player should narrate a nightmare that afflicts their character this night, and the Helm should jot down at least one detail from each dream, bringing these details back as Moments or Dangers in the Fourth and Fifth Tides.

Finally, once each character has had a chance to explore the private dreams into which they are plunged, they awake together, before the break of dawn. They see that beside the embers of their watchfire there stands a silent figure who is not from their crew, black cloak billowing despite the windless calm. Beneath the figure's hood they now see the face of Captain Darksail himself, different than they knew him before the mutiny—sneering and cruel, his eyes a terrifying and shifting green like the sky before a storm, something mechanical and inhuman in his aspect. His enormous sabre, of which he always spoke with near-religious reverence, lies across his lap. Darksail tells the cowering crew that they are all going to die on this island. They are damned mutineers, he castigates them—the lowest of the low. Darksail's curse, the curse of the Mandinay's betrayed captain, will follow them for what little is left of their miserable lives. They may attempt to reply or react, but their former captain's apparition will fracture and glitch, fading from their view.



FOURTH TIDE

THE INWARD PATH

It is impossible to know when night ends and day begins. The stars no longer seethe and boil but gray clouds shift swiftly across the sky in the eerie half-light. The crew discover that Captain Dandifel and his first mate are gone, along with the Mandinay's skiff—by no means sufficient to cross open water but nevertheless what they seem to have taken in their attempt to escape alone (if indeed this is what they have done, as some of the crew bitterly assume to be the case). Now their ranking officer, the Mandinay's navigator tries to formulate a plan as the seafarers debate what to do. The crewmember who survived the abduction of their medic discovers evidence on their own body of blossoming plantlife—moss or tiny flowers growing over where they had been scratched in the scuffle.

Should they choose to attempt digging out the ship from where it is beached (or if they delay too long with further exploration or attempting a rescue of their missing medic), they will soon be confronted by horrors from the water: great mounds of coiling, writhing seaweed that slouch and grope from the water, attempting to engulf the sailors as had the scuttling vegetal starfish the day before. The crew flee inward, where there is now no sign of the scuttling entities from the day before.

The further inland the seafarers venture, the more dreamlike their surroundings become. At the Helm's discretion (and drawing on the Helm's finest phantasmagorical conjuration), they may pass buildings from their hometowns, remnants of their childhoods, fleeting glimpses of people from their past running past on all fours, or sudden intrusions of elements from their nightmares the night before. Should these phantasms be approached, they will prove horrific and dangerous. The seafarers, despite beginning their inward retreat as a group, are uncertain of their numbers, sometimes finding themselves alone and otherwise being startled to find one another nearby. With the dissolution of their stable waking world, the seafarers' paranoia and suspicion toward one another may intensify—each crew member increasingly becoming convinced that they are the only survivor, with the others having been replaced by inhuman others that now wear their faces.

Eventually, they find their lost medic, now overgrown herself, what was once her face now a blank carpet of multicolored moss. She stands motionless, facing down an embankment toward what appears to be a crater? A cave entrance? A sinkhole in the fabric of reality? Should the medic be touched, her body will collapse into a mound of rich, fragrant soil. Otherwise, she will follow the crew when they are no longer looking. Color begins to leach from the world around them, flowing inward toward the hole at the heart of the island. Whatever is down there, the crew are suddenly certain, will contain the answer to all their questions.

FIFTH TIDE

THE ROTTEN HEART

What appeared from above to be a crater or cave in the steaming, blossoming ground at the heart of the island is revealed to be, on closer approach, a cenote: a cylindrical depression leading to a watery pool far below. Instead of water, however, the crew discover that the cenote opens onto a patch of night sky, distant stars and nebulae into which they gaze impossibly downward. Floating in this sky is a vast lotus, roots dangling down into the astral distance and gleaming purple-blue petals flared in perfect, artistic proportion. In the center of the spreading blossom, a silvery-pink nectar wells up, pearlescent and inviting; its sweet smell is irresistible as it fills the cenote with a delicate mist that coils up and out over the rim of the depression.

Across and into the walls of the cenote, riddled with holes of varying size and proximity to one another, crawl the vegetal Scuttlers.

New Scuttlers are birthed periodically from the underside of the floating lotus, spinning through the water to reach the sides of the cavern, where they climb and disappear into the holes in the vine-clad walls, flowing around one another like a colony of ants. They seem to pay the seafarers no mind now, unless they are interrupted in their inexorable, eusocial movement.

Here, the seafarers can find peace. Here, floating among the stars, their minds do not need to bear the weight of all they have loved and lost. Here, they do not need to struggle any longer.

If the crew have made it this far as the remnant of a group, they will each now find themselves alone. A seafarer with something to live for back home may try to resist the invitation of the Harvester. Those who do not resist will find themselves becoming very different from what they once were.

EPILOGUE

LAST VOYAGE OF THE MANDINAY

- Who are the few remaining crew of the Mandinay who return to the beached ship?
- How have they been changed?
- To what convictions or hopes do they attribute their unearthly strength, with which they push the vessel back into the water as night falls again?
- What seeds of the ship's own transformation are already taking root in the wood and sail, as the ship ventures out across the starlit sea?