

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

HOLE IN THE SKIN

#36: A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY BRENDAN J. LASALLE



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PRISON

200 FT
TALL

1-11

10 FT

INSIDE
OF
PRISON
WALL

1-10

1-9

120 FT

BIRDS-EYE
VIEW

CAGE

TITAN

1-4

1-3

DEBRIS

1-2

ENTRANCE

1-8

1-7

1-6

1-5

1-4



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Hole In The Sky

A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back!

Hole in the Sky is designed for 16-24 zero-level DCC RPG characters who should “funnel” down to a small group of PCs that will rise to 1st-level and go on to fabulous adventures. The adventure is cosmic in scope but the adventurers will have to muck through the trenches to accomplish their objective. Only the tenacious, resourceful, and lucky can survive.

BACKGROUND



To embody chaos means to embody perpetual war. The Lords of Chaos are in continual struggle with one another for the sake of struggle. It is in the nature of Chaos to destroy the forces of Chaos.

The Lady in Blue was a powerful lord of Chaos with designs towards the disruption of all Lawful society in the universe. Full of jealousy and lust for power, the Lady's lieutenants destroyed her and squandered her treasures and influence. Now the extra-dimensional fiend known Raxahrrah, thought dispelled and destroyed by heroes of a forgotten age, is wearing the identity of the Lady in Blue like a mask in order to work its mischief on our plane of existence without attracting the attention of its ancient enemies.

Raxahrrah's goal is to gather all of its old allies together in order to destroy the civilized nations of the world. It means to first free Drezsta, a powerful but unpredictable transcendent being whose own plans of domination and blood have dovetailed with its own in the past.

To this end, the creature summoned groups of ambitious dupes to act as catspaws. From its home dimension, Raxahrrah disguised itself as the Lady in Blue, and appeared to the adventurers through dreams and signs. The extra-dimensional horror tasked the adventurers, a group with little in common, to rescue Drezsta from his extra-dimensional prison. This prison, guarded by a loathsome titan, is accessible only through a hole in the sky. The extra-dimensional prison is fashioned by Order of the Wise Servants of Yddgrll. Raxahrrah created the hole to allow agents to sneak in to the prison dimension that confines Drezsta. It also began to use what power it dared display to start working against the prison's defenses. The ancient lord of Chaos began to send beguiling dream visions to the titan, visions that became more real to the creature than reality itself.

All of the heroes chosen by Raxahrrah shared common feelings of alienation, despondency, and disaffection. This made it easy to manipulate them as the extra-dimensional beast has a powerful reward he offers to share in return for Drezsta's freedom: one spin on the Wheel of Destiny, an artifact so powerful that it can change the very stars a man

is born under, and thus change his destiny. The Wheel can grant wealth and power. It can also destroy a man utterly.

The beast sent his agents to the hole in the sky, but they failed. All were killed or scattered in the prison dimension, crushed by the loathsome guards of that place. So Raxahrrah sent another group, the beast's second choices, considerably less powerful. That group failed as well. So the beast sent another. And another. And another. Each made some progress, but none succeeded in freeing Drezsta.

And now, terrible Raxahrrah means to send one more group of ambitious adventurers to their destiny: victory or death in the prison world beyond the hole in the sky. This group is the least prepared of all, just ambitious and dissatisfied peasants.

ADVENTURE HOOK



There is really only one hook for this adventure. The characters all individually feel like they are living the wrong lives, and have since as long as they can remember. Each one believes they were destined for something much greater, yet can't find a way to escape their mundane existence.

Then the dreams begin. Each character individually begins to have dreams of an alluring woman dressed in blue finery, face shrouded in shadows, who confirms what they have believed their whole lives – their true destiny has been snatched away by sinister forces.

“Become my ally,” she intones in a ghostly tapestry of indistinct voices, “and your enemies shall become my enemies, and together we shall take back the life that was promised to you by the stars. Come and find me at the cliff.”

As the dreams continue, each character becomes more and more detached from their lives. They start to ignore their work, they have an increasingly difficult time engaging with their old family and friends, seeing each as a jailer in the prison of their life. Finally the dreams become a mandate, and the characters leave home and follow the visions of their dreams, hoping to discover the mysterious cliff they saw the woman standing before. They all travel dazedly, as if in a fever dream, their path dictated by strange omens and portents. In some instances, bandits stop the characters to rob them, but seeing the looks on their faces chooses to let the “madman/ madwoman” continue their journey unmolested. Eventually, these now waking visions lead the characters to arrive at the same time at a cliff overlooking the ocean.

JUDGE'S NOTES



It is very important to understand the workings of the Wheel of Destiny artifact (p 14) before the adventure begins. Make sure to keep notes on player actions that affect their spin on the wheel, and don't let anybody throw out the character sheets of anyone who dies – best to take the character sheets of the fallen up, in case they are returned to life later on.

There are three main settings for this adventure: the cliff where they meet the Lady in Blue, the invisible path over the ocean, and the bizarre twilight realm of the dimension beyond the hole in the sky. A fourth possibility is the outpost town of Mherkin, where the player's might go for supplies before the adventure begins.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
Bridge	C	Sea Shrikes
1-1	C	Arachnid Horror
1-1	C	Chaos Pigs
1-1	C	Woven Woman
1-1	C	Stranded Madman
1-3	C	Cur Maxima
1-3	P/C	The Titan
1-4	C	Sentinels
1-5	T	Deadfall
1-7	C	12 Abandoned Ones
1-7	C	Karlos Gend
1-8	C	Final Stage Mutant

PLAYER START

You arrive, exhausted and confused, at the cliff overlooking the ocean. The scene is exactly as it appeared in your dreams, and you are suddenly grateful as this must mean that you are not insane. There at the edge of the cliff is the woman who has haunted your dreams for months, standing behind a long table, incongruously set for a banquet here in this wild place. The woman is nearly seven foot tall, wearing tattered finery of deepest blue, and for the first time you see her face – somehow her head is that of a statue of a woman. Her features are inanimate and softened, as if rain and wind had eroded the statue head over time. In her left hand she holds two severed human heads by the hair. In her right hand she holds three. As you approach she holds all five up as if to greet you with their dead faces. Then those dead eyes open, and the five heads speak to you in unison, each in their own voice. “Welcome, brave friends. I know you have many questions, but let them wait for now. I know you must be exhausted from your journey. Sit, eat and rest. All of your questions shall be answered this day.” You notice that one of the heads, a pale-skinned outlander with bright red hair, speaks in a foreign tongue.

The feast is laid out before the players – meat, bread, cheese, vegetables, and wine – and the assembled characters may sit and eat all they like. Of every ten dishes, eight are fresh and delicious but two are visibly rotted or otherwise despoiled – for example, a plate of mutton crawls with mag-



gots, a bowl of berries is green with fungus. The despoiled dishes are disgusting but cause no ill effects. Keep track of any characters who choose to eat the foul dishes.

When the assembled indicate they have eaten their fill, the Woman in Blue addresses them with her assortment of heads.

“Thank you friends, for taking the dangerous journey to be here today. I know each of you, your minds and your hearts, and yet I must keep my identity veiled. If I were even to think my true name it would instantly be sensed by our enemies, and they would race here to break our fellowship and confound our plans. Please let me be known to you as the Lady in Blue. Trust that I am a friend, and not one that would mislead you.

“Know this – our enemies, who are indeed the enemies of all right thinking people of this world, have kept you from living the lives you were meant to live. Each of you was born under the wrong stars, a misfortune fostered upon you by our enemies. But I wish to be your ally. I can set this misfortune right.

“If you wish to have me for an ally, I ask just this: that tonight, when the full moon reaches the top of the sky, you step off that cliff and on to an invisible bridge that does not yet exist, but shall exist tonight. This bridge will take you on a long journey across the ocean. This journey will be difficult, and some of you may not live to see its end. But those who do shall find the hole in the sky, a porthole to another world. That world is a prison, and its warden is a titan, a fierce creature that cannot be slain by mortal means. This titan keeps a prisoner in a cage of Alder wood. Its prisoner is our ally, and to say her name aloud would give my presence away to our enemies.”

At this, the Lady in Blue takes a cup of wine from the banquet table and carefully pours it there on the dusty ground. For a moment you see a word written there – DREZZTA. A moment later, a mass of beetles bubble up from the earth and devour the word. An instant later they disappear, leaving only bare ground.

“Never speak the name aloud. Friends, I would ask that you take this bridge tonight under the full moon to the hole in the sky. Free our ally. Those who do shall be my trusted friends, and I shall set their stars right with this –”

The Lady in Blue gestures and you hear an immense tearing noise, as if the spinning of the world was grinding to a halt. Incredibly, a seam opens in the morning sky, and you are looking through it into another world, one where a massive black monolith is the epicenter of what seems like the mother of all storms. The wind blows so hard you are all shoved back several feet, almost to the edge of the cliff. As your eyes adjust, you see that the monolith is actually the edge of an immense black wheel. The wheel turns slowly and seems to be made of the night sky itself. You see stars, clustered in groups or shining alone, in its surface. As it spins you feel as if reality itself might slip from beneath your feet at any moment.

You clearly hear every word the Lady in Blue speaks, despite the hurricane winds. “This is the Wheel of Destiny, one of the posters of the universe. For each brave friend who aids in the rescue of our ally and returns, I shall allow them to spin it... once. One time, and the true destiny you were meant for shall be yours.”

With a gesture, the Lady closes the seam in the morning sky. The winds dissipate. You see that the remnants of your feast have all been blown into the ocean.

The Lady in Blue will not answer any questions about herself, or the nature of “the enemies.” If any characters decide to decline the Lady in Blue’s offer, she bids them farewell, then ignores them. However, each one dies of some mishap within 24 hours. In every case their head is severed. Once the remaining characters have agreed to the quest, the Lady in Blue blesses them, kissing each on the forehead with one of her severed heads, then sinks down into the earth. In the blink of an eye she is gone without a trace.

If a player speaks the name ‘Drezta’ aloud at any point before they enter the prison must make a Luck check – failure means they have tripped Yddgrl’s cosmic alarm, keyed to stop rescue attempts before they begin. Yddgrl sends a curse down upon the individual – the next opponent who attacks the speaker rolls an improved die (+1d).

THE VILLAGE OF MHERKIN



he players may fill the hours between the disappearance of the Lady and moonrise however they choose. If they do not make the rendezvous with the bridge at moonrise, their fate is the same as those who opted out of the adventure.

Members of the group remember seeing signs for a village called Mherkin nearby towards the end of their journey to the cliffs. They may decide to go there for supplies.

Mherkin is a tiny fishing and trade village that owes fealty to the local warlord. There are two guards (if need be, use the man-at-arms stats listed on DCC RPG pg. 434) who stand post on the main road, and a half dozen more stationed in the city. Players with trade goods can find buyers in the big fish marketplace. Characters with money or trade goods can find certain necessities for sale or trade: basic weapons (short swords, spears, and daggers), food and drink, as much as 200’ of rope, and enough leather armor to outfit three men. A persistent character who asks around carefully may discover a lone rogue willing to part with a worn but serviceable set of thieves’ tools for double the normal asking price (50 gp).

THE BRIDGE



hat night when the full moon rises to the top of the sky, the invisible bridge manifests itself at the edge of the cliff. PCs who attempt to step on to it earlier than moonrise discover that it does not yet exist. They fall to their deaths.

The bridge is 20 feet wide, 2 feet thick, and feels like stone cobbles underfoot. It simply hangs in the sky with no support. Once the last character has stepped upon it and gone more than 60’ across the bridge, the beginning of the bridge fades from existence, so that the bridge always ends a maximum of 60’ behind the hindmost character, and does not return. If they turn around and walk back without carefully feeling their way along, they will unwittingly reach the end and fall to their deaths without a successful DC 13 Reflex save.

Directly walking to the hole in the sky takes three days.

Day 1: The bridge gently rises to a height of a half mile over the surface of the ocean. Dawn eventually breaks, and the day is sunny but the air is quite cold at this height. Land is completely out of sight.

Day 2: By midday it starts to rain. By late afternoon it becomes a storm. Have every character make a Luck check; on a failure, the wind blows that individual off the bridge. They must make a DC 10 Reflex save to grab the side or they fall to their deaths.

It is cold and miserable, and any character with a Stamina of 7 or lower begins to get sick. Sick characters take a -1 penalty on attack, damage (attacks still do a minimum of one point), ability checks, and skill checks based on Strength, Agility, or Stamina. Sick characters who get eight hours of rest can make a DC 11 Fort save to recover. The storm abates around midnight.

Day 3: The day is cold and windy. At midday, the PCs pass over the wreck of a ship on the ocean. As they do, a pack of sea shrikes, warty and odious bird-like monsters that had been resting on the wreck, fly up and attack. These beasts have feasted on adventurers traveling over the bridge for generations, and are always on the lookout for their next



meal. The beasts want flesh, and if they kill one of the party they will work together to drag that individual over the side to fall into the ocean. If they manage to get three corpses over the side, one of them shrieks a signal and the beasts cease their attack to go feast.

Sea Shrikes (7): Init +0; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 3 each; MV Fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP Infravision, Blood Scent; SV Fort +0 Ref +2 Will -1; AL C.

Sea Shrikes can smell blood up to a mile away, and can unerringly track blood trails in the sea.

End of the Bridge: At some point at the end of a third day's walk, the characters reach the end of the bridge. Unless they go carefully, they will unwittingly reach the end and fall to their deaths without a successful DC 13 Reflex save. The bridge eventually shrinks to its minimum size – 20' wide and 60' long. It will not shrink out from under characters.

The Hole in the Sky: The hole in the sky is not yet aligned with the terminus of the bridge. If a character takes a leap of faith into the sky to see if it is there, they fall to the ocean a half mile below. The characters must wait an additional two days for the hole to appear.

When the hole in the sky first appears, it looks like an odd shimmer of air off on the horizon. As it gets closer the characters begin to see it as a 15' diameter window surrounded by crackling blue fingers of energy. Another world with a

magenta sky can be seen clearly through the breach as it approaches.

Eventually it lines up with the bridge and the characters can step through.

Area 1-1 – The Prison Vale: *As you step through the hole your ears pop and the sudden warmth of this place makes you momentarily dizzy. You are in what must be an entirely different world. The air is misty but as best you can tell the sky is a bright magenta color. You are standing in what appears to be some sort of bamboo forest, but the bamboo is thinner and flatter than you have ever seen. Looking behind you, you cannot see the porthole; your companions seem to be stepping in through thin air. The air is heavy and has an oppressively intense scent, like intense saffron. Off in the distance you see a single structure. The mist limits your visibility but you see a dark structure rising out of the mists ahead.*

This prison was created by the ancient Order of the Wise Servants of Yddgrl to hold their master's ancient foe, the transcendent being of chaos known as Drezsta. To make it as difficult as possible to escape, the Wise Servants filled this area with creatures of Chaos, as Drezsta's abilities are especially potent against beings of Law. At one time the entire vale was filled with such monsters, but after decades of sending sacrificial catspaws in attempts to free her ancient ally, the population of guardian creatures has thinned considerably.



They will poison a character, then dash away to hide, hoping the victim's body will be left behind for it to devour at its leisure.

Arachnid Horrors can make a startling leap of up to 60' once every five rounds. When they use this ability to leap on prey they receive a +1 bonus to hit for their first attack. These foul creatures can walk along walls and ceilings as easily as on the ground at no movement penalties. They can see in 360° and as such are extremely difficult to surprise.

Chaos Pig: Init +5; Atk tusk +1 (1d3+1); AC 12; HD 1d4+2; hp 4 each; MV 20', Burrow 5'; Act 1d20; Act 1d20; SP Surprise attack, ground sense, infravision; SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +0; AL C.

Chaos Pigs are green and black tiger-striped swine with elongated tusks and the webbed clawed feet of an alligator. These evil-natured beasts burrow beneath the surface and burst out of the ground to attack whomever trods over their carefully hidden burrows. They are semi-intelligent, and once combat begins they concentrate their efforts on vulnerable targets, working as a team to bring down as many opponents as possible each round.

If a target walks over the space where a chaos pig is burrowed into the ground, it bursts forth as a surprise action, gaining a +1 bonus on its first attack. Bursting from the ground counts as the pig's movement that round. Chaos pigs can sense creatures larger than a cat walking on the ground around them within 30'. The pigs have this sense if they are on the ground or burrowed underneath.

Woven Women: Init -1; Atk thorns +1 (1d3 + disease); AC 9; HD 1d12; hp 8; MV 20; Act 1d20; SP Vulnerability to fire, immune to sleep, poison, charm; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; AL N.

Woven Women are magical guardian plant creatures Yddgrl occasionally buds off to guard minor shrines and temples. If they hold still they seem to be a part of the background vegetation. Only when they attack do they reveal themselves: a vaguely feminine form, like a thorn bush twisted into humanoid shape, with bizarrely natural blue human eyes.

Woven Women take double damage from fire. On a successful hit, the victim must make a DC 14 Fort save or develop a terrible itching rash within 1d12+12 hours. The itch is a constant distraction, giving -2 on attack rolls until it passes in 1d3 days.

Stranded Madman: Init +1; Atk Spear +1 (1d6+1); AC 10; HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 30; Act 1d20; SP immune to charm; SV Fort +0, Ref+1, Will +3; AL C.

A stranded madman (or madwoman) is one of the earlier dupes of Raxahrrah that has gone insane, and consequently been cast out by Karlos Gend and his band of Abandoned Ones from protection of their warren (see page 10). While

The Prison Vale is a limited extra-dimensional realm with strange physical properties. If the characters turn around and walk away from the structure they find themselves approaching it again from the same angle after several hours walk through the strange, unending 'bamboo' (actually individual blades of giant grass).

If the party marches straight to the structure it takes them four hours. Roll every two hours for a random encounter (1 in 6 chance).

1d5	Random encounter
1	Arachnid Horror (1)
2	Chaos Pigs (1d3)
3	Woven Women (1)
4	Stranded Madman (1)
5	Supply Cache

Arachnid Horror: Init +1; Atk stinger +1 (1d3+poison DC 14 Fort save or Paralysis for 1-3 hours); AC 13; HD 1d10+1; hp 6; MV 30', climb 30'; Act 1d20; SP Venom, wall crawling, startling leap, 360° vision; SV Fort +3, Ref+0, Will+0; AL C.

Arachnid horrors are terrifying monsters that weave translucent webs in the space between the odd stalks of bamboo.

this is normally a death sentence, stranded madmen have absorbed enough of the chaotic energy of this place (see page 10) that they are ignored by the guardians of the Vale. They either attack straight away, or rant randomly at the adventurers before attacking (roll 1d5: (1) shouts invective against the Lady in Blue, (2) shouts curses and threats, (3) begs for help, (4) asserts their status as a deity and demands worship, (5) gibbers incomprehensibly).

The particular madness renders the stranded immune to magical charm.

Supply Cache: Earlier groups of invaders have hidden equipment around the grounds of this demi-plane, to help them fight off the many guardians. If you roll this encounter the equipment is either (roll a d6) (1-5) hidden from casual view, and will only be found if the party searches the area, or (6) in plain view. The equipment cache holds 1d4+1 of the following items (d3 to determine which, allow multiples of the same item):

1 - Weapon: (roll d6) (1) Battleaxe, (2) Club, (3) Longbow or Crossbow (50/50), (4) Polearm, (5) Sword, (6) 11+1d30 Arrows Or Quarrels (50/50)

2 - Armor: (roll d4) (1) Leather, (2) Hide, (3) Chainmail, (4) Shield

3 - Equipment: (roll d5) (1) Backpack, (2) Crowbar, (3) 50' Rope, (4) Rations (1d6 Days), (5) Waterskin

Area 1-2 - Prison Gate: *As you get closer and closer the structure begins to take form in your perception. Soon you see it clearly despite the mist – a three hundred foot monolith covered in fifty-foot long thorns. It looks not so much constructed as grown, like some kind of massive seed pod. There is one entrance ahead of you – sixty-foot tall double doors with a giant latch.*

The door is not locked but it is latched. Even unlatched it takes the force of a giant to push the doors open. There is a foot-tall space under the door that the characters can crawl under fairly easily.

Area 1-3 - Prison Chamber: *Inside you see that this is a single huge room, a massive organic shape, like the inside of some colossal hive. Lights shine down from holes within the ceiling, and glowing creatures fly about in the distant expanse, throwing strange green lights across the floor and walls. Reclining against the far wall is a massive creature, that looks like it would be sixty feet tall if it stood erect. It has red-brown fur and the head, face, and trunk of a giant predatory beast. The creature's snoring rattles your heart in your chest. Hanging above it, from what appears to be a massive tree branch growing from the inside of the wall, is a domed cage of woven wood more than one hundred feet off the ground. From this angle you can't see inside the cage.*

This room has four primary elements: the titan, the cage, the glowing creatures, and a plant-beast named Cur Maxima that is hidden above the entrance.



The Titan: The titan is the victim of Raxahrrah's formidable magic. Raxahrrah bombards the giant with endless dreams of pleasure, conquest, and happiness. The titan is now addicted to his dream state, and every moment awake is a torment. He only wants to sleep and dream forever. He will normally only arouse himself if he is attacked, bound, climbed upon, or otherwise bothered. In this case he will attack and destroy the intruders, but if they run away he will go back to his dream-state, always crawling back to his position under the dangling cage. External stimulus might arouse him long enough for him to go investigate – for example, the smell of a sustained fire or screaming or singing. His wits have been severely dulled by the constant dream state he lives in, so simple plans to confuse or distract him have a better than average chance of success.

The Titan: Init -3, Atk fist +12 melee (3d6+6); AC 13; HD 12d10+36; hp 99; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP Addicted to dream state, immune to charm; SV Fort +8 Ref +3 W +0; AL C.

The Cage: Hanging 120' over the sleeping titan is the cage prison of Drezsta. Drezsta hides in the shadows of her cage, biding her time. She has known for years that Raxahrrah is attempting to free her from her prison. The enchantment of her cage prevents her from undertaking any action to free herself until she is released. (See area 1-12 for information if her rescuers make it to the cage.)



The Hidden Plant-monster: Hanging 30' over the door is the Cur Maxima, a guardian plant beast. It looks like a wickedly carved jack-o'-lantern as large as a carriage, with a baleful green flame that can be seen through its eyes and mouth. The beast has eight tendrils of thick ropy vine that it uses both for movement and to attack prey. The creature, immune to the extra-dimensional magic of Raxahrrah, is aware that the prison is under assault and is alert for intruders. Its job is not destroying intruders as much as terrorizing them in the hopes that they will flee the dimension.

If one of the adventurers spots it (declaring they are looking over the door), it leaps down, destroys one of the adventurers, then climbs back up the wall and out of reach. If they do not notice it, it sneaks down until it is right behind the hindmost character, then attacks suddenly with a roar and gout of flame. This creature's pattern is to slay one intruder, then drag the dead victim beyond attack range to devour them. It has no need for sustenance here in the prison dimension – it only devours its victims to terrify intruders. It will not leave area 1-3, although it can attack certain other areas by reaching through the walls with its tendrils.

Cur Maxima speaks in a quiet voice that can somehow be heard anywhere within the prison. Once it has slain a party member, it apologizes for the necessity of such a senseless act and politely lets intruders know that they must all immediately leave the dimension or be summarily destroyed. It will not respond to questions, pleas for mercy, or any other communication.

Cur Maxima was created to cause terror, and will stalk and kill the members of the party one at a time for as long as they remain within in the prison, always slaying just one then moving off. Whenever it destroys a victim it rips them into pieces; be sure to describe the carnage in detail, so the players will quickly understand that they need to run away from the creature. The creature regularly torments Drez-ta, and if she is released her first action is to destroy Cur Maxima. If the characters do anything other than leave this area, the beast attacks again after a few moments of watching them from his spot on the wall.

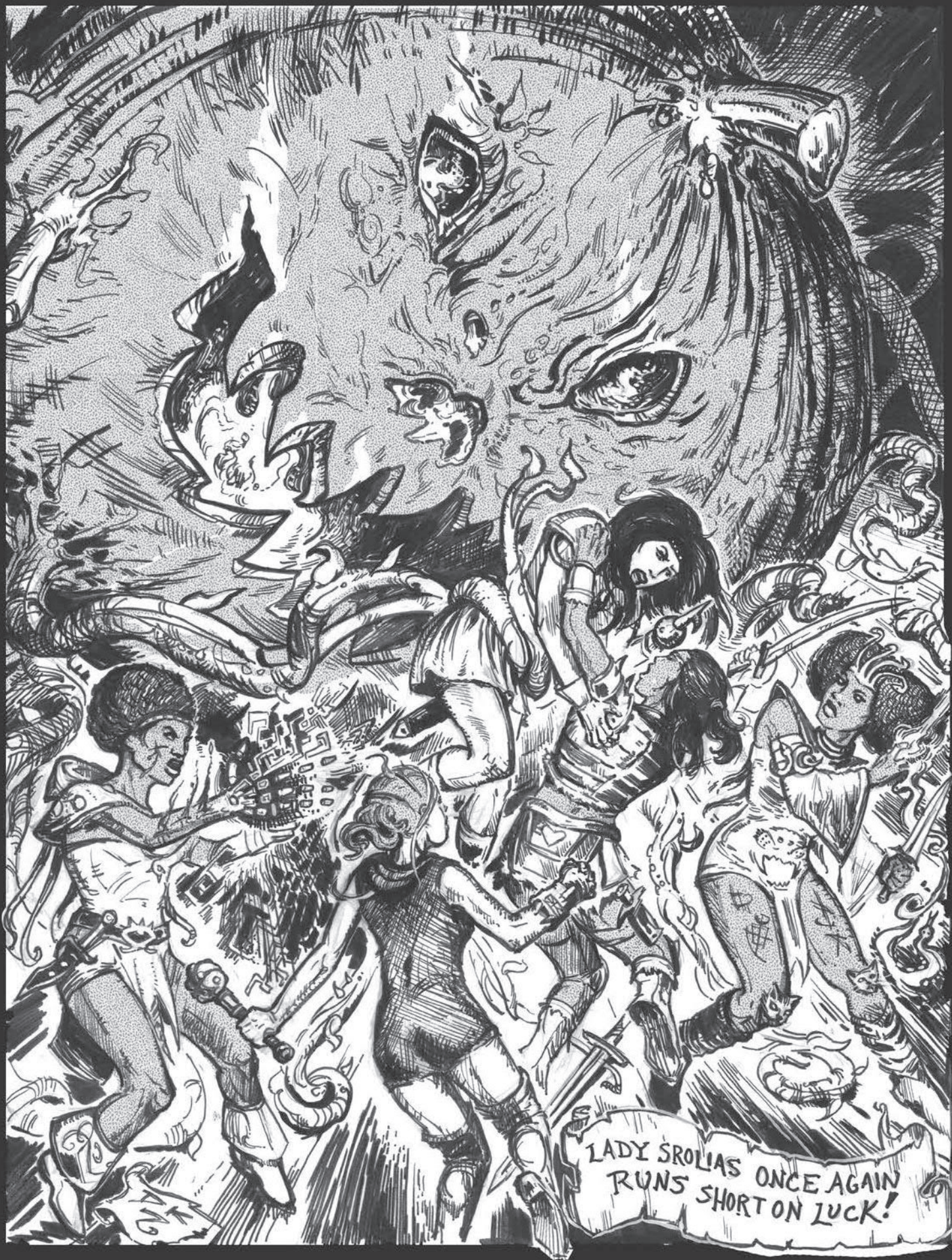
Cur Maxima: Init +3, Atk tendril +5 melee (2d6+1 or grab); AC 14; HD 8d10; hp 57; MV 30' or climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP grab on successful hit (DC 18 Strength check to escape), immune to charm, sleep, and poison; SV Fort +7 Ref +1 Will +5; AL N.

On a successful strike with a tendril, Cur Maxima may grab a target man sized or smaller and have them grappled. The victim can break free of the tendril with a DC 18 Strength check. On the next round, it draws the victim back and throws them into its mouth. Its internal green flame burns trapped victims very slowly, doing only one point per round. The screaming victim can attempt to escape by prying the beast's jaws apart but it is nearly impossible for a mortal (DC 20 Strength check to get its jaws open long enough to escape). Normally, the beast simply moves away from attackers while the trapped victim burns to death, to prolong the terror that the screaming causes.

The Glowing Creatures: The glowing creatures are brain flies, massive insects the size of grapefruits. They have oversized sensory organs that look exactly like human brains under a thin sheath of opaque exoskeleton, and glow a greenish-white color. They give off enough light to see clearly for 45'. The creatures are harmless, surviving on the biodegrading slough the interior of the prison continually sheds. If they are attacked they attempt to fly away (AC 14, 2 hp, MV fly 60').

Secret door: Characters who declare that they are looking for secret doors or a place to hide from the beast spot a breach in the wall along the floor – the entry way to 1-4. It takes a DC 12 Strength check to shove the debris aside enough to make room to squeeze in.

Area 1-4 – The Chamber Inside The Wall: *You push past the debris and find yourself in a gloomy chamber that smells like autumn leaves after a heavy rain. The chamber is lit by several of the same strange glowing creatures you saw in the main chamber contained in a hand-woven cage that hangs in the center of the room. This room is full of debris, and walking across it will be difficult. To your far left you see a shadowy passageway, slightly curved as it runs along the interior wall of the huge chamber you just left. In several places down that wall, a tiny breach allows a ray of the strange light from the main room to shine in.*



There are two watchers hiding in the shadows. They are both ragged and crazed survivors of an earlier expedition sent by the Lady in Blue. If anyone in the party declares they are searching the walls they will find the two hidden back in niches, partially covered by debris. If they are discovered, one will attack the intruders while the other attempts to run, shouting for help the whole way to area 1-7. If the runner gets as far as area 1-6, her shouts are heard and the rest of the survivors gather their weapons and prepare for the attack.

All of the survivors have gone a little mad from prolonged existence in a demi-plane that was never meant for mankind. They attack with no or very little provocation, and always fight to the death. If they are captured and interrogated, they mostly rant about the Lady in Blue being a devil who sent them to hell. The survivors are largely ignored by Cur Maxima, having absorbed enough of the taint of the prison realm to almost be natives.

Sentinels (Abandoned Ones): Init +1; Atk makeshift spear +0 melee (1d6); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 4, 3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

Area 1-5 – Deadfall: *The debris-strewn hall goes forward. You see lights up ahead.*

There is a primitive trap here. A raveling tripwire runs perpendicular to the hall. The survivors all know to avoid it when they walk. If an adventurer passes through the space without detecting it, they snap the wire and a heap of wooden debris falls upon them, showering them with painful branches, rocks, and bits of metal. The victim takes 1d10 damage from the trap. The trap is fairly primitive, and if the adventurers search here they find it with a DC 7 Intelligence or find traps check.

At the end of the hallway, just beyond the trapped section of curving hall, is a ladder fashioned with lashed together branches, broken spears, and twists of rope. The ladder goes up into a rough passage into the ceiling, three to five feet wide as it rises. The passage way goes up 60' to area 1-7.

Area 1-6 – A Thin Section Of Wall: *This vertical passage is rough and narrow. The first ladder leads to a second and a third, all makeshift, all a bit rickety but serviceable. There are several tiny holes in wall, and they let in a dim light from the main chamber of the prison.*

The Cur Maxima is hanging on the wall outside of the vertical passage. It can easily follow the invaders' progress as they proceed through the space in the walls. It ignores the abandoned ones, who have "gone native" and essentially become denizens of the demi-plane. It allows a few of the adventurers to pass the midway point of the passage, then it tears a section of wall off and reaches in to attack. As always, it kills one party member and leaves, all the while politely warning them to leave or face destruction. If the adventurers pass this way again, it may kill another one, or

it may let them pass – it uses unpredictability to keep the invaders terrified.

Area 1-7 – Chamber of the Survivors: If the survivors in area 1-7 know the adventurers are approaching, they wait in ambush for one to reach the top of the vertical passage from 1-5, then they attack while they have the invaders bottle-necked. If the denizens of this room are caught unaware, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

This is a long, low chamber with the offensive odor of too many humans living in too small a space. Light comes in from several tiny holes in the walls. Around the room is a ragged group of humans – adult men and women in over-worn clothing, unkempt and filthy. There is one dwarf here, as ragged as the rest but wearing a rusty suit of scale mail. The dwarf sits at a low table against the interior wall, his back to the shaft. There are sleeping pallets around this room, a small cooking area partitioned off by a low circle of blackened rocks, several hanging bundles, and two woven cages holding the glowing giant insects you saw in the main chamber.

This is the main "conventional" battle of this section of the adventure, and there should be as many abandoned ones here as will make a good battle – twelve for an average party of adventurers this far into the dungeon – but feel free to adjust that number as you see fit.

As soon as the survivors realize that there are invaders here, they attack. They all have clubs.

The dwarf is Karlos Gend. Karlos has survived here for years and is the de facto leader of the abandoned ones. The group survives by scrounging and collective cannibalism, and when the characters arrive his first thought is to cull the weaklings, imprisoning them and storing them for later eating, and welcome the strong into his band. He will join the attack against the invaders, but if the opportunity to take prisoners arises he will gladly capture whom he can, meaning to turn them into new followers or stock for the larder. He is both a survivor and relatively lucid, and he will surrender and plead for mercy if he thinks it will buy him time to escape later on. He tells of how he and his band were duped into this suicide mission, and how he hates the Lady in Blue and wishes he had just stayed in the mines of his homeland and never wished for anything else in life.

Gend possesses a magic whetstone wrapped in a silver cord. If he has the opportunity, he can spend a combat round running it down the blade of his axe. When the stone is run across every edge of a bladed weapon, the weapon lights up with a strange purple fire that lasts for 7 combat rounds, during which the weapon does +1d6 damage per successful strike. The whetstone can be used once per day.

All the hanging bundles contain personal effects. If they are searched, the searchers find 2d6 sp per abandoned one encountered here. One of the bundles belongs to Karlos Gend. Inside is 7 gp and a brilliant blue topaz of rare clarity and depth (100 gp value).

The concealed door to area 1-8 is behind a dusty blanket that appears to be just another section of wall.

Abandoned Ones (12): Init +1; Atk club +0 melee (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; ACT 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

Karlos Gend, Level-1 Dwarf: Init +2; Atk battle axe +2 (1d10+1 + 1d3 mighty deed); HD 1d10; hp 9; AC 14; MV 20; ACT 1d20 + 1d3 deed die; SP magic whetstone (+1d6 dmg for 7 rounds with preparation); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

Area 1-8 – The Abandoned Mutants: *The air in here is even worse than that of the last chamber. This room is dim, and the only light sources are a few beams of light streaming in through tiny gaps in the wall to the main chamber. You get the sense of several people here, mostly squatting on the floor, but you cannot make them out in the dim light. Several bundles hang from the ceiling here as well.*

There are eight abandoned ones here, most too sick and weak to move very far. These are the oldest survivors of this place, and prolonged exposure to this extra-dimensional space has warped their bodies and minds until they are almost unrecognizable. If the party uses a light source they will see that the former humans on the floor are all distorted and horrifying versions of their old selves – asymmetrical features, atrophied limbs, skin turning pale green, blind staring eyes. Seven of them are not dangerous at all. One of them, which has been here the longest, is on the verge of the final transformation of this place and is quite dangerous indeed. If the party decides to attack or threaten these creatures in any way this eighth one undergoes an amazing transformation – before their eyes he shoots out pseudopods of flesh with dangerous lamprey-like mouths on the end of each one. He attacks until he is destroyed.

If the rest of the mutants are kept alive here long enough (some for months more, some for years), they too will become such creatures.

There is a hidden passageway in the ceiling that leads to another vertical shaft. Characters don't notice it unless they declare they are searching the ceiling. The passageway is draped with a dusty sheet that makes it look like a part of the ceiling.

The bundles that hang from the ceiling here contain old soiled clothes and bits of stashed foodstuffs.

Abandoned Ones, old and sick (7): Init -1; Atk punch -1 melee (1d3 subdual); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 30'; ACT 1d20; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will -1; AL N.

Abandoned One, Final Stage Mutant: Init +3; Atk 2 tentacles +2 melee (10' range, 1d6+1 or grab); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 14; MV 10' or climb 10'; Act 1d20; SP grab (DC 14 Str to escape), immune to charm; SV Fort +3, Ref -2, Will +0; AL N.



The dangerous mutant abandoned one can choose to hold on to an opponent once it has made a successful hit, doing its tentacle damage every round until the victim breaks free by winning a DC 14 Strength check at the beginning of their combat round.

Area 1-9 – The Skeleton in the Wall: *The passage goes up into the darkness. The interior wall has handholds that allow you to climb up into the darkness. There are several small holes in the opposite wall, and a few beams of light illuminate the wall.*

About halfway up the shaft, the adventurers make a gruesome discovery; one of the "handholds" is actually a skeletal human arm protruding through a section of loose rocks in the wall. If the characters search, they find that the rocks can be pulled out fairly easily. Diligent explorers can uncover enough loose rocks to expose a 3'-wide passageway to a dusty abandoned chamber. The rest of the skeleton, minus the hand on the exposed arm, must be removed along with the debris to open the passageway.

The handholds in the shaft are spaced fairly closely, so removing the arm from the wall doesn't create a special hardship for climbing up or down the shaft.

Area 1-10 – The Forgotten Chamber: *The air in this small chamber is quite stale and dusty. The space is nearly twenty five feet long, but only ten feet wide. The ceiling is less than five feet tall. You see several small sacks, a few dusty suits of armor, and a small pile of weapons. Standing upright against the far wall is a silver-tipped spear of black wood. Unlike the other objects in the cave it looks fresh, as if it had been recently polished.*

The first group of adventurers sent by the Lady in Blue fought for months with the complete hosts of guardians that originally protected this realm. They found this chamber and used it as a staging point for their campaign against the guardians. Eventually, the entrance was caved in during an attack by Cur Maxima, and the original invaders' stash of gear lay here forgotten for years.

The room holds the skeletal remains of two of the original invaders. There is also a collection of weapons and gear in various states of decay:

- 3 usable sacks, and 3 torn sacks.
- A suit of dwarf size banded mail, in need of repair (AC bonus reduced to +4 until repaired).
- 2 suits of human sized chainmail, in need of repair (AC bonus reduced to +3 until repaired).
- 2 suits of leather armor in decent condition, one human sized and one Halfling sized.
- 1 crossbow – the string is nearly rotted through, and it can fire one shot before it breaks.
- Quiver with 6 crossbow bolts.
- 2 short swords.
- 1 beautifully wrought dwarven warhammer in excellent condition.
- 2 vials of holy water.
- 1 holy symbol (Justicia), made of platinum and copper and hung on a silver chain (1000 gp value).

The spear is a magical artifact created by Raxahrrah himself, in his guise as the Lady in Blue. The careful examiner finds carved runes along its ebon shaft: FOR SIR – SPEAR DEMON. The weapon is a +1 spear, but against the titan in area 1-3 it is +3 to hit, and if the strike is successful it automatically slays the beast. Once the titan dies it becomes a mundane, albeit masterwork, spear.

Any creature who holds the spear instantly knows that it was created by a being of Chaos specifically to destroy The Titan.

The weapon has a side effect – whomever uses it to deal the titan the killing blow is drawn in to the beast's dream prison. Every night when he sleeps, he visits the terrible

dreams of the dead creature – dreams of terrible conquest and terrible obscenities. The long term effects of these dreams, and any possible cure, are left to the judge.

Area 1-11 – The Upper Chamber: *The shaft continues another 60' until it enters a chamber, thirty feet by thirty feet and open to the huge main room of the prison. Several of the huge glowing insects buzz about, resting in the chamber for a moment before they fly off.*

Any characters moving to the edge of the chamber and looking down see that they are actually ten feet above the tree branch that holds up the woven cage. The branch is actually a part of the organic construct that is the prison. The branch is six foot wide at the widest point. A character can make a dangerous jump to the branch (DC 13 Agility check), but failure means they fall over the edge and 120' down onto the titan. If this happens the titan will wake up for just a moment, eat the body, then go back to sleep.

Cur Maxima has been following the invader's progress, and may attack them while they are in area 1-11 (judge's discretion). If he does he destroys one character, warns the group to leave, then climbs down the wall with the body.

Area 1-12 – The Cage: Read this if any of the characters makes the trek down the branch to the cage.

From your vantage point, you look down on the woven cage and see its inhabitant, a wretched-looking creature, vaguely feminine, with dark green skin. She sits, holding her knees, and has what appears to be a green cloak around her shoulders.

"Are you here to torment me?" she asks. "Please, have mercy! No more pain!"

The creature is Drezsta, of course, and she knows damn well that the adventurer on the branch isn't here to torment

OPTIONAL MAYHEM

Once Drezsta is free she might do anything. Her only assured action is the destruction of Cur Maxima. Beyond that, she might slay the her rescuer, embrace them and fly about the chamber as if they were dancing, slay the titan, begin destroying the prison, whisper the truth about the Lady in Blue's identity, hunt down the Abandoned Ones...she is a transcendent being of Chaos, and she can do whatever will make the most memorable ending to your story, or lead the characters their next adventure. She could save the characters lives, or choose one to destroy utterly (it is within her power to physically turn them inside out with a gesture, or drive them insane with a word). You should use Drezsta sparingly – while it is within her power to do so she could simply destroy all the invaders and put paid to the entire game at a stroke, but that would likely be an unsatisfying ending for your players.

her. Her helpless and innocent act is so her rescuer won't be afraid of being killed for releasing her – which is far from assured.

Any character can clamber down from the branch to the cage with a DC 11 Strength check. If they fail, they get a chance to catch and recover (DC 13 Ref save). Success on the Reflex save means they get to attempt another Strength check to make their way to the cage door. Failure on the Reflex save means they fall down to the titan, with the results as described in area 1-11.

Drezzta can do nothing to affect anything outside of her cage, but she will implore them to hurry and release her. Once a character makes it to the cage door she informs them that the only way to open it is with blood – they must insert their hand into the lock, *“and accept the pain it brings.”*

A character who places their hand in the door must make a DC 12 Fortitude save. Failure means they pass out from the pain, and fall to their death. If they make the save the pain is excruciating, but they take only one point of damage and remain conscious, then the cage door opens.

Once the door is open events quickly come to a head. Drezzta shrieks in ecstasy and flies out of the cage – what appeared to be her green cloak unfolds and becomes a pair of bat

wings. Drezzta flies out of the cage, immediately flies to wherever Cur Maxima is, and destroys the creature. It takes Drezzta, who has the power of a demigod now that she is released from her prison, only one round to find her hated jailer and destroy it.

Once Cur Maxima is destroyed the entire prison realm begins to crumble and disappear. The invaders are going to have to run back to the entry point in order to escape before it crumbles around them. As they watch, the interior of the prison begins to crumble, then the sky itself begins to fall as patches of reality become patches of pure white nothingness before their eyes. As long as the characters run for the entrance, the last one to exit through the hole in the sky

escapes just in time before the prison realm bursts into a shower of white light and is gone.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the players exit through the breach in the universe they find themselves on the cliff where they first met the Lady in Blue. Their ears pop, and the air feels foreign and exotic – they once again have the sensation of having passed into an entirely different world. The Lady in Blue is there, waiting for them as if no time passed

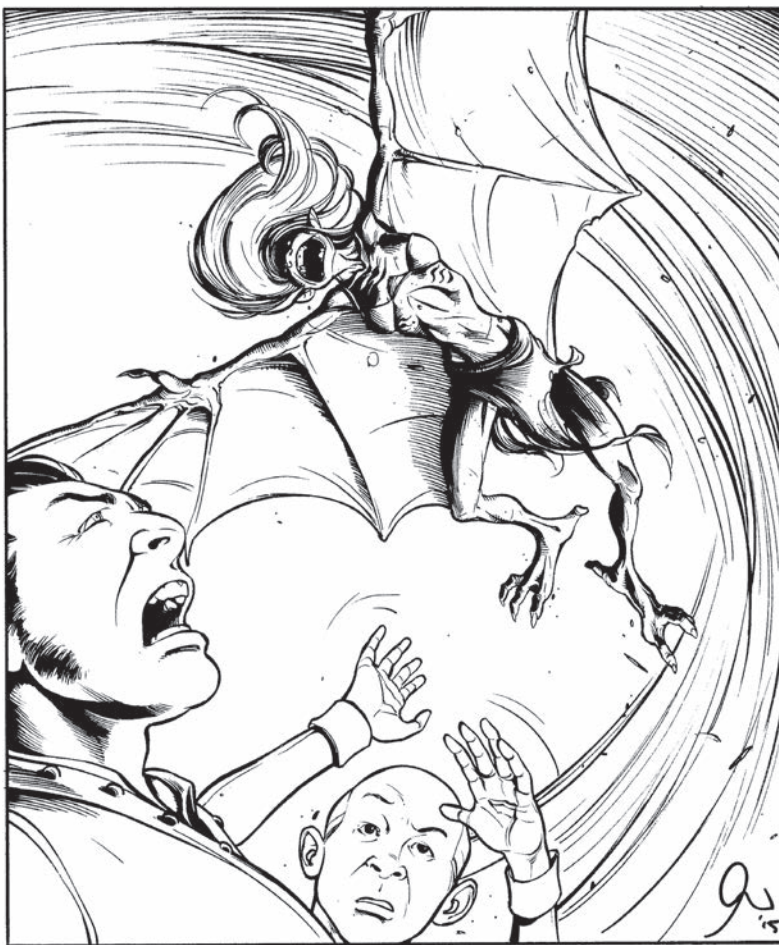
at all. She is exceedingly pleased at their success – she holds up her five heads to show the tears of joy that they all shed. The adventurers note that these are all different heads than she held during their last encounter, and if any of their original companions refused to go on the quest their heads are among them. Likewise, if any dedicated a beheading to the Lady during the adventure that head will be in her possession.

The Lady in Blue congratulates them for completing their quest – Raxahrrah instantly knew the moment Drezzta was free in the world. In his guise as the Lady in Blue, he says that from this moment on they are allies.

The Lady assures them

that she will be watching over them, sending them what luck and opportunities she can from her hiding place in the dark corner of existence. She explains:

“The time is not right for me to confront our enemies directly. If I were to project my real form into this world they would instantly be aware of my presence and could martial all their forces for an attack I am not yet prepared to answer. But have no fear – I am already working on gathering my allies, the first of which is Drezzta. How good it is to say her name aloud without fear of discovery! Soon our gathered power will be too great to resist, and then we shall strike and chase our enemies from reality itself. And on that day, my brave warrior allies, yours shall be the dominion of the World.”



At which point, she once again creates the breach in reality that exposes the Wheel of Destiny. The storm in that other reality has abated somewhat, but the wind is still strong enough to blow their hair back. She invites all of the characters to spin it once each, to regain the destinies that she claims should have been theirs for their entire lives. There is no penalty if they decline.

Have each player make a Luck check when they roll the wheel. If they are successful they have a brief sensation that the Lady in Blue is not what she appears to be and some

force is playing them as fools. This sensation is a side effect of using the wheel.

ROLLING ON THE WHEEL OF DESTINY



characters who would spin the Wheel of Destiny must approach the breach in the reality. They have to step into a stormy dimension of darkness and stars, as if they had passed to the chaotic vortex that is said to mark the end of our universe.

WHEEL OF DESTINY TABLE

Roll	Result
1 or less	History is re-written. The character is now dead, and one of the characters that died during the adventure is brought back to life in their place. The player rolling can choose which character to bring back, and that character is now under their control. Everyone recalls the newly dead character having been killed by whatever circumstance that slew the character just returned to life. The resurrected character earns whatever experience the dead one would have, and has any treasure or possessions the character who spun the Wheel possessed. Time returns to the moment when the Lady in Blue asks that character if they wish to roll the Wheel of Destiny, which they may do normally as if they had completed the adventure (because at this point they have, of course).
2-7	History is re-written. The character had managed to ignore the summons of the Lady in Blue, and goes back to his normal life as if he had never responded to those dreams or participated in this adventure. One of the characters that died during the adventure is brought back to life in their place, with the same rules for a resurrected character as listed above. The disappeared character lives out the rest of their life as a mundane individual, with a deep sense of loss for some unknown missed opportunity.
8-11	Minor change to the character's stars: The character receives a permanent +1 to her Luck score, and must re-roll her birth augur and lucky roll. The change is permanent. This change either adds or subtracts 1d12 months to the character's age, and causes minor physical changes (hair or eye color, sleight adjustment to height, etc.).
12-15	Significant change to the character's stars: The character receives a permanent +1 to his Luck score, and re-rolls his birth augur and lucky roll, but may choose the new roll or keep the old one. If they choose to keep the new augur/lucky roll, their age and appearance changes as above.
16-19	Major change to the character's stars: The character receives a permanent +2 to his Luck score, re-rolls his birth augur and lucky roll twice, and chooses which of the three (including the one he already has) to keep. The character also chooses one of their ability scores and re-rolls it, keeping the new score if it is higher than their old one. The character's identity changes significantly – they age plus or minus 1d4 years, they might be from a new family, city, or even a different country, and can have major physical changes (the character's gender or racial sub-group might even change). They might have a new name.
20+	Stars completely change: The same as the previous result but the player also chooses a new occupation for himself, and it is as if he had that occupation his entire life. This might even change the character's race – former humans might become elves, for example. Any previously known skills belonging to their previous profession are lost with the change. The character is now a completely different person and unrecognizable to anyone who knew him before he rolled the Wheel of Destiny.

Each character choosing to spin the Wheel of Destiny makes a roll on the following table, adding or subtracting their Luck modifier, as well as using the modifiers below:

- +1 for characters who ate of the despoiled dishes at the feast (Player Start).
- +2 for the first character to step on to the invisible bridge.
- +1 for characters who beheaded an opponent during the adventure, or dedicated a death to the Lady in Blue (bonus available only once per character).
- +2 for the character that opened the cage and freed Drezsta.
- -1 to any character who spoke the name of Drezsta before reaching the prison realm.
- -1 to any character who discussed a possible betrayal of, or by, the Lady in Blue.
- -1 to any character who died and was resurrected by the power of the Wheel.

DIE ROLL RITUAL

Spinning the Wheel of Destiny is the big roll of the game, the die roll with the potential to help usher your character to whatever new destiny awaits. You might want to stress its importance by making the die roll itself a bit ritualistic. Consider the following:

- The player must actually throw the die onto the rolling surface from a few feet away.
- The player should be encouraged to use either his oldest die, the one that has lived in his bag so long that its edges are getting round, or a never-rolled 'virgin' die.
- Elevate one side of the DCC book so that it makes a ramp, then roll down the book and on to the character sheet in question.

Commemorating this momentous roll with some kind of memorable action will make this game stand out in your players' memories for years to come. Get creative and make a memory!

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