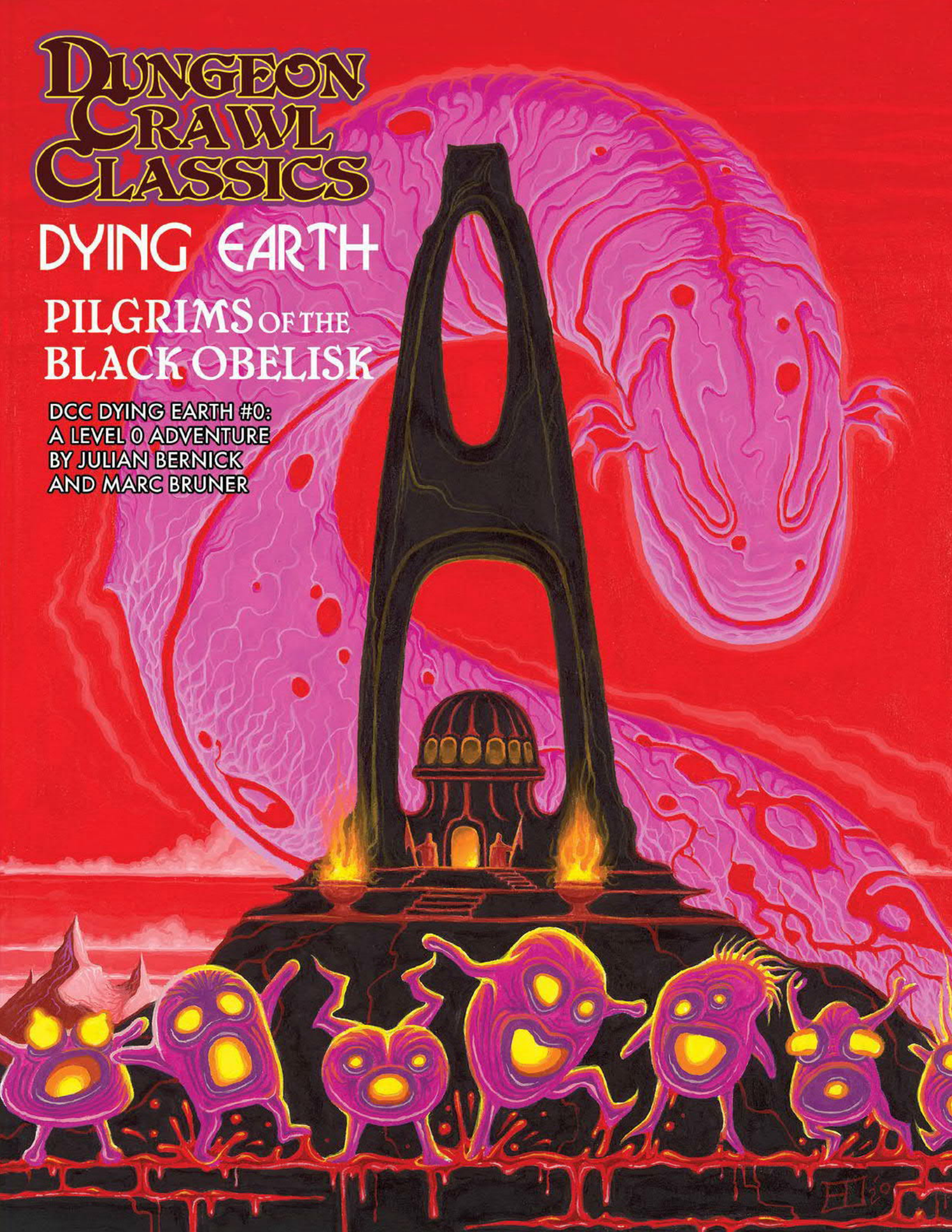


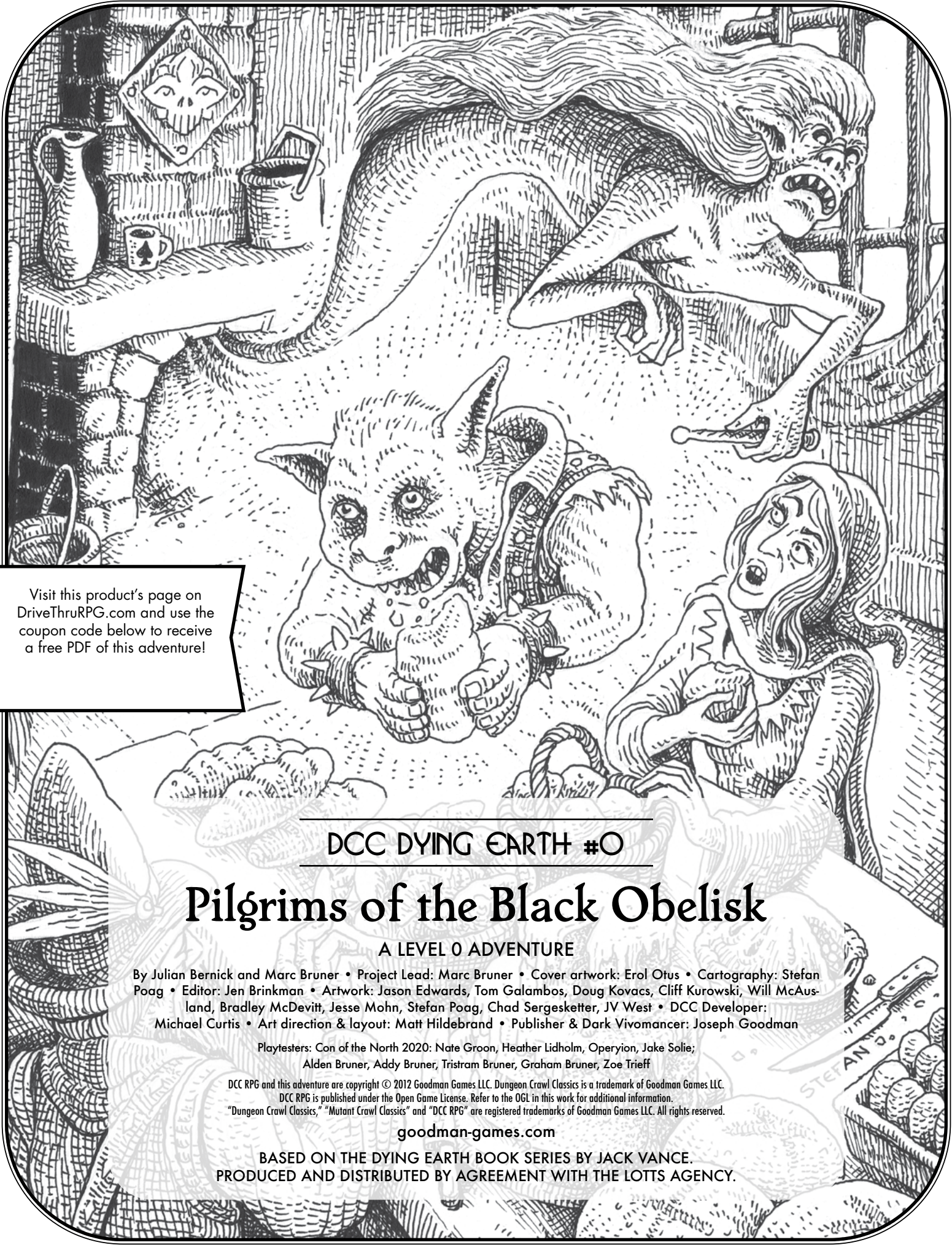
DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

DYING EARTH

PILGRIMS OF THE BLACK OBELISK

DCC DYING EARTH #0:
A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY JULIAN BERNICK
AND MARC BRUNER





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Pilgrims of the Black Obelisk

A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the world of the Dying Earth, a multifarious setting that evokes the distant twilight of Earth as a dim red sun sheds its last life; a world filled with the whimsical and the curious, the evil and monstrous, where magic and science are one and the same. Based on the singular works of the Dying Earth novels by Jack Vance, DCC Dying Earth gives players and judges new adventures inspired by the Dying Earth stories. With these instruments, you can play in Cugel's and Rhialto's world, seek the mighty Pandelume, or fall to an indifferent grue while searching for scintillant baubles among the ensorcelled remains of the ancient Earth!

Pilgrims of the Black Obelisk is a DCC Dying Earth adventure for sixteen 0-level characters and is designed to introduce players to the DCC Dying Earth setting. The PCs begin the adventure as part of group of pilgrims embarked on a journey to the holy city of Erze Damath. Normally a quotidian exercise of devotion, this year the annual ritual risks corruption by a rival godling, pitting their holy forces—and potentially the PCs—against one another in a ceremony that risks the destruction of the ancient city itself!

While the climax of the adventure is potentially quite deadly based on the choices made by the PCs, the relatively open-ended nature of the journey itself allows room for a great deal of Vancian banter between the players and NPCs. Judges are encouraged to draw inspiration from the Dying Earth stories themselves: in particular, *The Eyes of The Overworld*, Chapter V: The Pilgrims, and *Cugel's Saga*, Chapter IV: From Port Perdusz to Kaspara Vitatus, Section 2: The Caravan, as well as classical literary sources such as *The Canterbury Tales*, rewarding good role-playing with Luck or grudge tokens as shifts in fortunes and opportunities for comeuppance play out, if including those optional rules.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND



For thousands of years, the worshipers of the Great God Omaet-ko have devoutly held to their precepts as codified by Amon God-Friend, first among prophets, who is said to have witnessed Omaet-ko ascend to the overworld in a fiery throne at the holy city of Erze Damath on the god's third and last visit to earth.

Following Omaet-ko's ascension, Amon laid down his writings in a codex, and read the text of the god's behests and precepts out to the faithful, which, among other adjurations, stated that the holy city and all its lesser gods were subject to the Foremost God of Gods, thus justifying the brutal scourge that followed. Eventually, the Amonites were routed from the city and Amon was cut down and his codex lost. The faithful were broken and scattered, carrying only diluted and imperfect copies of the prophet's holy words, to be passed down between generations of the devout.

Prime among his exhortations, Amon commanded his followers to keep vigil for Omaet-ko's eventual return at the Black Obelisk, the site of the god's ascent. Thus, each year, the faithful make the journey to Erze Damath to participate

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Amon, first prophet and god-friend to Omaet-ko, whose lost codex holds the secret to the Prime Deity's return

Ohmvos, a minor demon-lord who may become a patron to the PCs

Ticius, a merchant and hostler of the Inn of the Violet Imp engaged to supply the pilgrims' journey

Mardon, captain of a company of teamsters

Kampryns the Puissant, a mad hermit who lives in Blawalt Forest

Thon Licenous, leader of the group of tithe-priests barring passage across the River Wyr

Tandervoos the Peddlar, a traveling magician and collector

in the Oblatory Rituals where they hope that Omaet-ko will recognize their devotion, and, as a reward to their faithful submission, return to the world once again. Without the text of the true codex, however, the frenzied hierurgies of the supplicants are uncertain and ineffectual at best.

Now the demon Ohmvos, an ancient rival of Omaet-ko, hopes to take advantage of the faithful's diluted message to serve its own needs. By corrupting the Oblatory Rituals, the demon hopes to bring its own being into existence in place of the godling. Unbeknownst to Ohmvos, though, Amon's codex—long thought forever lost—has been rediscovered, and holds the key to restoring Omaet-ko, setting up a conflict between the two powerful entities into which the PCs are unwittingly trapped.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Pilgrims of the Black Obelisk takes place over two parts, beginning with the pilgrimage to Erze Damath and culminating the Oblatory Ritual itself.

The PCs start the adventure at the Inn of the Violet Imp, a remote outpost and emporium where they have gathered prior to embarking on the long journey to Erze Damath. The inn is a large wooden structure on the bank of a small stream that serves travelers and caravans passing through the otherwise unpopulated eastern lands. Normally it receives no more than a few guests at a time, but is now crowded to overflowing with the PCs' large group alongside the various merchants, wayfarers, and minor magicians that pack the common room, leaving the PCs with little but meager accommodations and servings of coarse porridge to eat. The innkeeper, Ticius, a stout, keen-eyed man with a long red beard, is busy servicing the needs of his highest-paying customers, and has little time for the complaints of the PCs.

Erze Damath lies far to the south and west, on the banks of the slow-moving River Scamander, beyond which it is said lies the Silver Desert, and even further the Songan Sea—re-



gions which are purely imaginary to the relatively untraveled PCs. Reaching the city requires a hard journey over wild country with little in the way of civilization. There are three ways to the PCs may travel to Erze Damath:

- Through the Blanwalt Forest, an ancient canopy of trees that few travel into; rumored to be the haunt of leucomorphs and witches (8 days' travel time).
- Over the Plain of Oparona, a desolate hinterlands filled with little else but hills, scrub brush and banks of gray furze; populated by bandits and asms (7 days' travel time).
- Along the coast of the unnamed Eastern Sea, a swamp and sand-filled waste; while a longer journey, it is said to be safer due to its remoteness (10 days' travel time).

At the start of the adventure, the players get to choose which way they want to go based on this limited information. All

of the paths have their own dangers, obviously. PCs are also warned that leaving the road to strike out into the wilderness is much more dangerous than any of the three main routes.

As the PCs journey, they will have encounters depending upon which path they chose. Several encounters overlap between locations, meaning the PCs will have that encounter regardless of their selected path. During the adventure, judges should refer to the table below to note which encounters the PCs have based on which route they select.

Table 1-1: Pilgrimage Encounters

| Encounter | Forest | Plains | Coast |
|-----------|--------|--------|-------|
| A | X | | |
| B | | X | |
| C | | | X |
| D | X | | |
| E | | X | |
| F | X | X | X |
| G | | X | X |
| H | X | X | X |
| I | X | X | |
| J | X | X | X |

VANCIAN GLOSSARY

Barbican: the outer defense of a walled city, esp. a tower above a gate or drawbridge.

Brummagem: anything which is not genuine; a fake; a counterfeit.

Compendiary: a collection of writings, typically in the fashion of a journal or instruction manual.

Hierugy: a holy act or rite of worship.

Manciple: a person responsible for the supply of provisions, etc., for a group of people.

Oblatory: describing an act of offering or sacrifice, esp. as related to a deity.

Paroxysm: an episode of increased acuteness or severity of a disease.

Pleasaunce: A pleasure ground; spec. an enclosure or secluded part of a garden, esp. as attached to a large house, laid out with pleasant walks, trees, garden ornaments, etc.

Precellent: excellent, surpassing.

Puissant: possessing great power, strength, force, might; prowess; influence.

Quotidian: of an everyday character; commonplace, mundane, ordinary.

ADVENTURE START



Thousands of years ago, Amon God-Friend, the first prophet of the Great God Omaet-ko, is said to have written down his 99 precepts in a long-lost codex. Though only a few precepts have survived to this era, prime among Amon's exhortations was the commandment that his followers keep vigil for Omaet-ko's eventual return at the site of the Prime God's ascent in the holy city of Erze Damath. Now each year, faithful Amonites like yourselves make the journey to Erze Damath to participate in the Oblatory Rituals at the Black Obelisk, where Omaet-ko's effigy is carved into the stone itself.

This year, you and your fellow pilgrims have banded together to attend the annual ritual for the first time. A costly endeavor, you have made arrangements for a local merchant to supply you with goods and wagons for the long journey, and have gathered at the Inn of the Violet Imp in preparation for leaving the next morning.

Not all of your company are devout Amonites. Many pilgrims take the passage for a variety of motivations: clarity of knowledge, simple curiosity, or even due to some void in the mind that aches for nourishment of purpose. Regardless of your reasons, you have banded together to share in both the privileges and responsibilities of the company – and of course for protection against gids and erbs!

The PCs belong to a group of pilgrims making the annual pilgrimage to Erze Damath. For some, the pilgrimage is a once-in-a-lifetime journey for which they have waiting their whole lives. Regardless of what draws the PCs on the journey, as a group they have organized to travel together on the lengthy sojourn. None of the PCs are well-traveled, none have made the pilgrimage before, and aside from whatever starting equipment they carry, they have pooled all their remaining resources to secure passage for the trip.

In addition to supplies, the PCs have secured a chart from a local geographer of questionable pedigree, as it indicates little more than three large areas marked "Blanwalt Forest", "Plain of Oparona", and "Unnamed Sea", along with a smaller circle labeled "Erze Damath" towards the bottom of the chart. They also carry two sacred texts: a copy of *The Behests of Amon*, and a list of three commandments in how to attend the Oblatory Rituals and purify the vessel of Omaet-ko (**Handout A**). The latter are incorrect dilutions from Amon's lost codex, and the true precepts can only be discovered using the journal found among the possessions of one of the infected pilgrims (see Encounter H below).

Based on the limited information they have gathered, the PCs know there are three routes they can take:

- The forest is old and less traveled, though it is said witches haunt the forestlands.
- The central plain is the fastest route, though bandits are known to waylay small groups of travelers.
- The southern coast is quieter but that journey takes longer. Straying from the path is dangerous due to the bogs.

The party has contracted with a manciple and hosteler named Ticius to outfit their journey to Erze Damath. Per the meticu-

lously detailed contract, they are to receive a set number of rations and conveyances, along with wherriots to haul them.

They are supplied with two wagons, each pulled by two slightly undernourished one-horned wherriots. In addition to a driver, up to three PCs may ride in each wagon alongside the supplies without slowing the wherriots down (an overloaded wagon or one reduced to a single wheriot moves at half speed). The players may decide who gets to ride and who gets to walk, but those PCs who are forced to walk suffer a temporary loss of 1d3 Stamina until they can rest by riding on a wagon for a full day. (If playing with the optional rules for grudge tokens, the judge should look for opportunities to encourage their use as an additional incentive to receive preferential treatment or seating on the journey.)

Wheriot, one-horned (6): Init +1; Atk horn +2 melee (1d4+2); AC 14; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; AL N; Crit M/d6.

PCs with an appropriate background such as caravan teamster, mermelant groom, or wheriot driver may manage the pack animals without difficulty. Otherwise, each day the PCs attempting to drive the wagons must make a DC 10 handling check as an untrained skill, adding the higher of their Personality or Agility modifiers. On a failed check, the PC must make a Luck check to avoid a wagon mishap. If they fail the Luck check as well, roll on Table 1-2 and add their Luck modifier to the result.

Table 1-2: Wagon Mishaps

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|-----------|--|
| 1 or less | Axle break. Unless the PCs have a means of repairing it, they must abandon the wagon. |
| 2 | Wheriot collapses. The dying animal may be slaughtered for 2d6 meal-days' worth of rations. |
| 3 | Wheel comes off. The PCs lose a day replacing and resecuring the joint. |
| 4 | Wherriots offended by the smell of a gid. The driver must make a second animal handling check or they refuse to move for the rest of the day. |
| 5 | Stuck in a deep rut. The PCs lose half a day hauling the wagon out. |
| 6+ | Wagon infested by land molluscs, an invasive species from the distant star Cansaspara. 2d6 meal-days of the wagon's goods are spoiled and must be burnt. |

The party starts the adventure with 10 "meal-days" of plain rations per PC, enough to reach Erze Damath assuming they have no mishaps. The PCs are expected to restock the water along the journey at the River Wyr, roughly halfway to their destination along all three routes. Purchasing additional meal-days or better quality foodstuffs costs coin up front. PCs may choose to barter what little starting equipment or pool what few coins they still possess to purchase more supplies. Knowing he is the sole provisioner for leagues, Ticius

is happy to acquire any of their equipment at a quarter of its value and charges exorbitant prices for even such bland staples as boiled burdock leaves or fried moss and ganions.

Food and water management is not critical as long as the PCs consume it in a quotidian manner; however, time lost to mishaps or encounters can cause the PCs to quickly run out of resources. Of course, this can be balanced out by the loss of PCs as well, leaving a surplus of rations for the remaining pilgrims.

For each day of travel, keep track of the number of remaining PCs and deduct that number of meal-days. The total time it takes to complete the journey depends on the route, and can be tracked using Table 1-3. If the PCs run out of rations, for each day thereafter that they go hungry they temporarily lose 1d3 points of Stamina (cumulative). They immediately regain any Stamina lost due to starvation after a full meal and a complete day of rest.

PCs who inquire about the other patrons at the inn who might be traveling south find themselves talking with Mardon, captain of a company of teamsters. Mardon tells the PCs that their party is departing in the morning and is planning to meet up with a caravan hauling goods from the Southern Port of Sardusk, and they would gladly allow the PCs to journey with them part of the way.

While his offer is tempting, Mardon plans to rob the PCs and strand them on the coast. One the first night of the journey, still flush with excitement for the travels ahead, Mardon offers to share a celebratory meal with the party, serving rich food and drink laced with bitter belch-wort and nuxium. Any PC partaking of the meal falls stupefied, and Mardon and his company take the remaining wherlots and wagons and return to the inn, slaying any remaining PCs who refused the meal.

Teamsters (5): Init +0; Atk knoblolly +1 melee (1d5); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N; Crit III/d6.

If the PCs ask Ticius about Mardon, he will politely demur about any specific knowledge of the group, only that they came in last night and occasionally travel in these parts. In truth, Ticius knows of Mardon's plans. If pressed further with a successful DC 12 Personality check or if they offer to compensate him for his troubles with a bribe of at least 5 terces, he will warn the PCs of the plot.

Finally, any parties who choose to leave the main road to cut across country face increased hardships. Traveling away from the road slows the party to half speed and increases the daily handling check required to manage the wherlots to DC 15.

Table 1-3: Pilgrimage Supply Tracker

| Day | Starting Meal-Days | PCs Remaining | Meal-Days Remaining* | | |
|-----|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------|--------|
| | | | Forest† | Plains† | Coast† |
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |

*At the end of each day, reduce the total number of meal-days by the total number of remaining PCs.
†The length of the journey varies based on route. If the party is not impacted by mishaps or delays, the journey takes 8 days through the forest, 7 days over the plains, or 10 days along the coast.

THE PILGRIMAGE



he journey grows in difficulty each day as the PCs leave behind the well-traveled paths of the ancient roads and turn to barely identifiable tracks that cut through the wild terrain. At night, the PCs can hear the calls of distant unidentifiable creatures that stalk the surrounding land. Judges should have players describe how the PCs are managing watches or organizing to prepare for encounters, dialing the tension up or down as needed (but despite their worst fears, the first two nights of the journey pass without incident).

On the third day of the pilgrimage, the PCs find themselves in one of the following encounters based on which route they have taken (refer to Table 1-1: Pilgrimage Encounters, above).

Encounter A – Witch-Haunt (Forest): *After entering the forest on the afternoon of your first day's travel, you have followed the meandering track further and further into the dimly lit glens and sun-dappled pleasaunces of latter-day Earth, the light from the red sun shadowed by the towering canopy of ancient trees.*

On the afternoon of the third day, the trees open onto a large meadow where a simple wooden hut with two round windows and a low door is pleasantly situated. A wonderful smell of freshly baked bread and savory meat cakes wafts from the house.

The cabin is a simple one-story wooden structure with decorative trestles made of woven reed. PCs circumventing around the house see a small fenced area where a dozen squat, swine-like animals root around in muddy dirt; disturbingly, however, each beast has a human face.

This is the home of a callowhag, a skinny, almost shadow-like creature making her home in the forest where she lures travelers and transforms them into stock to use in her baking. The delicious smells are overwhelming to the PCs who have had nothing but plain dry rations for the duration of the journey. Each PC must make a DC 10 Will save or be overcome by a desire to approach the cabin and enter it to find and consume the source of the smell. (If the party or an individual PC purchased higher-quality goods, they receive a +1d bonus to the save.)

Inside, the cabin is cluttered with dirty furniture. A large iron oven radiates heat and a nearby counter is lined with a number of cooling baked goods. The callowhag hides in the cabin's chimney, waiting for the PCs to enter the cabin and begin eating the food. While they are distracted, she silently unfolds behind them and attacks with her swinebone wand to transform the PCs into one of her creatures.

Callowhag: Init +3; Atk cutting knife +1 melee (1d4+1) or special; AC 18 (10 if immobilized); HD 3d8; hp 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP shadow-step; swinebone wand (DC 15 Fort save, see below); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; AL N; Crit M/d8.

The callowhag is a thin, shadow-like creature with a wide gap-toothed smile who folds into shadow-like shapes to elude attacks. When attacking, the callowhag uses her

swinebone wand to transform victims into bestial creatures, then she places them in the pen to feed and fatten for future slaughter. Targets who fail the Fortitude save are transformed based on the result of the save.

| Fort Save* | Swinebone Wand Effect |
|------------|--|
| 5 or less | Target fully transforms into a swine-like creature, retaining its human visage. |
| 6-10 | Target grows two-toed hooves, a tail, and tusks and suffers a permanent loss of 3 points of Personality. |
| 11-12 | Target grows tail and tusks and suffers a permanent loss of 2 points of Personality. |
| 13-14 | Target grows tusks and suffers a permanent loss of 1 point of Personality. |
| 15+ | No effect. |

* Effects are cumulative: if a target rolls the same result, treat as the next highest result in the table. Thus a creature struck by the swinebone wand who fails the save with a 6-10 and partially transforms is fully transformed on a subsequent roll of 10 or less.

Among her collection, the callowhag keeps a well-used cookbook, *Datul Omaet's Savory Recipes*, and a collection of rituals in a small compendium containing the following squalms: *curse of blight*, *curse of doubt*, and *curse of haplessness* (refer to Chapter III of *Primer of Practical Magic*). Any PC attempting to study the callowhag's entries must make a DC 14 Will save or temporarily lose 1d6 points of Personality as the scrawl drives them mad. The callowhag also has accumulated a small number of valuables from her victims over the years, including a total of 59 terces and a map purporting to lead to a treasure located somewhere near Lake Lelt in the Land of Dai-Passant.

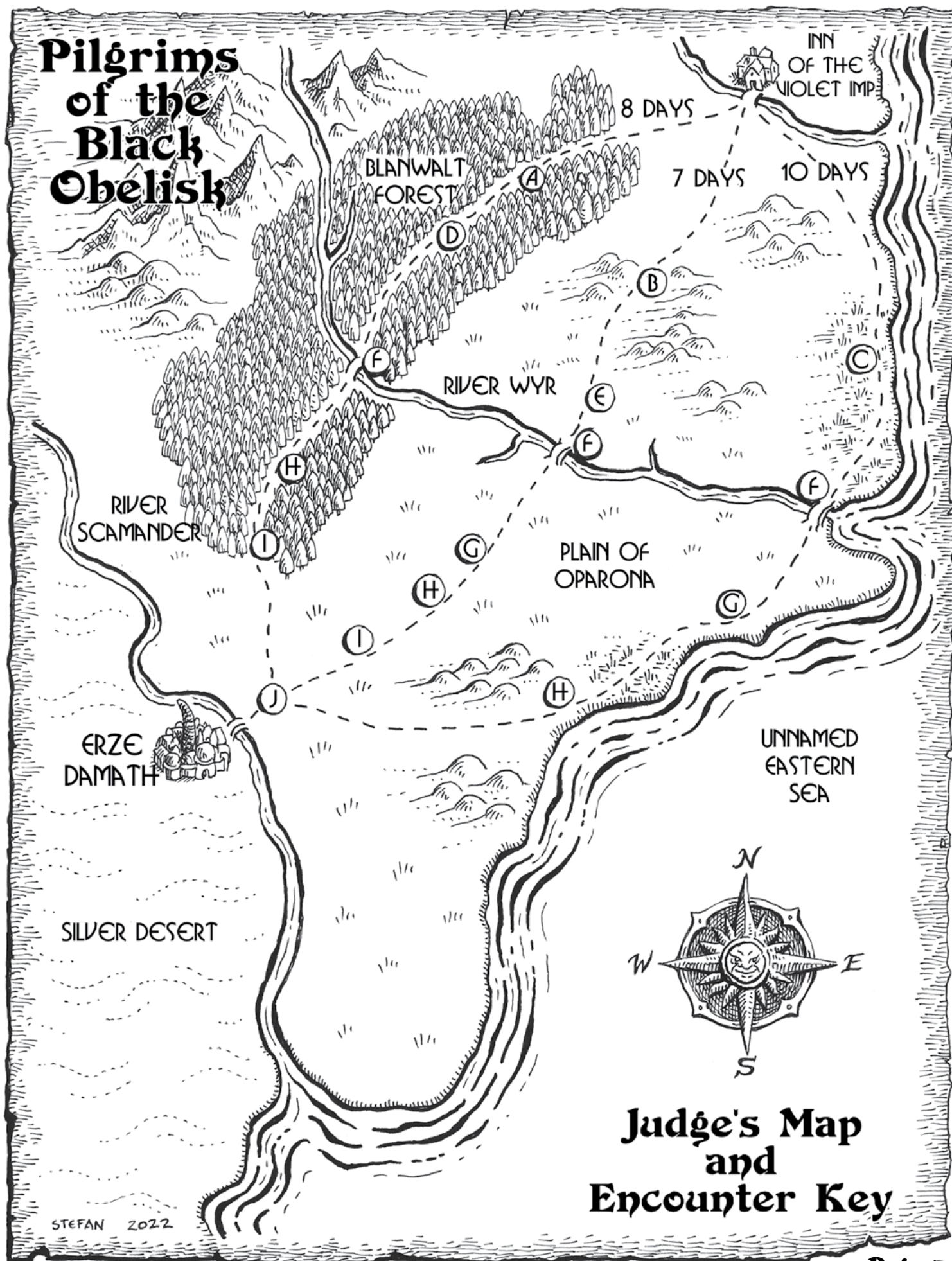
Encounter B – Good Samaritan Trap (Plains): *Each day, the plains open before you, a seemingly endless vista of scrubland broken by the occasional larch tree in the distance.*

Towards evening of the third day of your travels, the terrain gradually rises as you enter an area of small spurge-covered hills broken by dry streambeds. Rounding the corner of one such hillock, you see a lone traveler in the path before you, seated next to a light 2-seated trap with a broken-off wheel he is attempting to repair.

The lone traveler is a member of a group of bandits ready to waylay lightly protected caravans such as the PCs'. The bandits are hidden all around, scattered in the rises above the path. One of the bandits serves as lookout, ready to signal the remaining brigands using a double-reeded visp-call.

The bandit acting as a lure greets the PCs with a friendly smile, and offers generous payment in return for their help. If asked, he claims that his trap struck a rut in the road when his mount was spooked by the cry of a visp and broke free of its harness, wondering off into the surrounding hills. He fears to go after the beast in case the beast still stalks the area.

Pilgrims of the Black Obelisk



STEFAN 2022

Judge's Map and Encounter Key

Once the PCs are within the valley and their guard is down, the lure bandit will attempt to separate himself from the group, suggesting that he go and search for his mount while whatever arrangements for help he made with the PCs are concluded. Once separated, the lookout uses the visp-call to make a moaning, plaintive cry that echoes over the hills. Read or paraphrase the following:

A chilling, melancholy moan calls out from the hills to the east. Rising from a distant hilltop, you see an adumbrated, nine-foot-tall creature with a barrel-chested body and two flexible proboscises growing from each side of its scalp-crest.

At a distance and in dim light, the costume passes as a visp, especially to those who have only heard rumors of the creatures that stalk the plains. Only the lack of luminous pink eyes cause those who have seen one before to doubt its veracity (DC 12 Intelligence check for a PC of 1st level or higher to spot). Anyone who gets within 20' of the costume, though, easily spots the makeshift creation for the crude simulacrum it truly is.

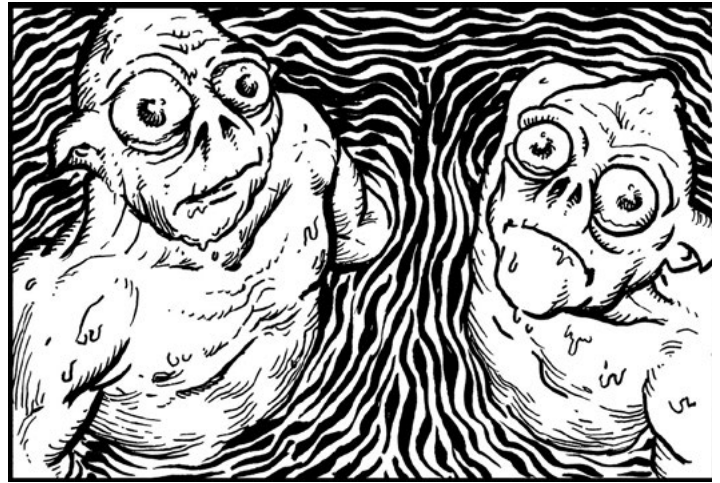
Hearing the call, the PCs' frightened wherriots rear and refuse to move unless a driver makes a successful handling check. If the PCs take the bait and scatter, the bandits swarm over the abandoned wagons. Otherwise, once the PCs' attentions are on the visp, the lookout signals the remaining bandits, who rise up from the opposite hills and begin firing their arrow-guns at the party. If at any time the plan appears to be going badly, the visp-caller blows the signal to retreat and everyone scatters.

Bandits (6): Init +1; Atk handaxe +1 melee (1d5) or arrow-gun +1 missile fire (1d4, range 75/150/225'); AC 12 (leather); HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N; Crit III/d6.

Each bandit carries 3 meal-days of rations and 2d10 copper bits along with some other miscellaneous brummagem. With practice, the visp-call can be used by an experienced musician to mimic the plaintive cry of a visp. While the bandits use it to instill dread in pursuers, it will also attract any nearby visps within 1 mile who hear the call. The PCs may also recover the visp costume, crudely constructed out of a long pole attached to a barrel and covered with sackcloth painted in an umber hue.

Encounter C – The Fisher-Men (Coast): *The path hugs the coastline for several days, winding through tall breaks of sand and thickets of prickly-bush. During the day, a constant wind – at times quite forceful – blows onto the shore, requiring you to constantly shield your eyes and face from the biting sand and salt spray. Finally, on the third day, the path leads further inland where the tree-lined marshes provide a bit of respite from the gale.*

That afternoon, you reach a large marsh, the stained marble ruins of an ancient temple rising from the beneath its reed-covered surface. Near the shore where the path circumvents the marsh floats a small barge, listing under a square sail of plaited reeds. Inside, you can just make out a prone figure lying next to several coarse sacks. Whether the figure is dead or merely sleeping, you cannot tell.



The reed-lined marsh is roughly 100' across. In the center, the broken columns and entablatures of an ancient temple to some long-dead god rise out of the water. Near the shore where the barge lies, the marsh appears quite shallow and easily navigable.

The craft itself is bait, placed there by a race of fisher-men living among the ruins under the surface of the water to lure victims in to drown and eat them. If the PCs waded into the lake to investigate the barge or rescue the prone individual therein, the fisher-men attempt to use their snaffle-irons to snare the PC's ankles and pull them underwater. Unless the PCs are taking appropriate precautions, they must make a Luck check not to be surprised during the first round.

Fisher-men (4): Init +2 (+6 underwater); Atk snaffle-iron +1 melee (1 plus grapple); AC 12; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; MV 20' or swim 35'; Act 1d20; SP water adapted; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C; Crit I/d8.

Fisher-men are humanoid creatures with webbed appendages and large bulbous eyes with a nictitating membrane that allows them to see underwater up to 60'. They live beneath the surface in crude bathysphere-like huts made from discarded stone collected from the temple ruins.

With a successful attack, the fisher-men make a grapple roll to pull the target underwater using the value of the original attack roll, and treating the fisher-men's size as twice its normal value for purposes of the opposed grapple check. (For man-sized targets, this results in a +4 bonus to the fisher-men's grapple check). Targets that are pulled underwater begin drowning, losing 1d6 points of Stamina damage per round and dying when Stamina reaches 0; lost Stamina is restored immediately if they are removed from the water. Snared targets may attempt to break free with a new opposed grapple check each round.

PCs diving beneath the water can locate the fisher-men's bathyspheres in the center of the ruins of the temple, 20' below the marsh's surface. Further explorations find most of the fisher-men's possessions to be worthless, consisting of decorative shells and the carved bones of various fish and creatures, but enough of the material from the ancient temple can be recovered to fashion three crude copper shields (+1 AC, shatter under a critical hit).

Encounter D – Mad Kamprynys the Puissant (Forest): *Growing directly over the road ahead is a huge vine-covered tree, its branches laden with animalistic-looking fruits. The path winds through its enormous roots which rise above it like a leering mouth.*

As the PCs approach, they observe a small wooden structure in the branches of the tree above. Leaning out of one of the treehouse windows is a wild-looking man with a painted face dressed in a hide robe. In his hands, he holds a large stoneware bottle. This is Kamprynys, a mad hermit-priest of a long-forgotten forest god who will not let the PCs pass until they offer up a sacrifice. As the PCs approach, he shouts down to demand that they offer up one of their wheriot steeds before he will let them through.

“Or the equivalent weight in men, three or four of the healthier ones should do...”

Sacrifices are “fed” to the tree by leading them into the mouth-like structure formed out of the roots, which enclose on the offering, and with a series of loud, masticating-like sounds of crunching bones, the creature is consumed.

If they are civil and pay the toll, Kamprynys politely invites the PCs up to the treehouse. If they go, remove them from play. Removed PCs are reborn as simulacra in 1d3 days, literally fruited out from a tree branch. Otherwise, he allows the PCs to pass without further hindrance.

Even if they pay, but demonstrate uncouth behavior or disrespect to the forest and surrounding trees, or if the PCs refuse to pay and attempt to bypass the tree by taking their wagons off the path, Kamprynys roars in anger and pours out a viscous sanguine fluid from the stoneware bottle onto the tree roots below. As the blood touches the gnarled roots, it soaks in and the tree shudders to life. From his perch in the branches, Kamprynys directs pursuit of the PCs until capturing his desired quota of offerings, after which he stalks away deep into the surrounding forest.

Mad Kamprynys: Init +0; Atk shortbow +1 missile fire (1d6, range 50/100/150’); AC 12 plus absorption; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP hide robe absorbs 1 point of damage from piercing and blunt weapons; SV Fort +3, Ref -1, Will +1; AL N; Crit III/d6.

Sanguine amanita: Init +0; Atk vine-lash +1 melee (1 plus entangle, range 10’), acorn-hail +1 missile fire (1d3, range 20’); AC 15; HD 10d10; hp 60; MV 20’; Act 3d20; SP blood animation, vine-grapple, acorn-hail, simulacrum fruit; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +4; AL N; Crit M/d16.

Feeding the tree with blood blessed by Kamprynys causes the tree to animate, its branches and roots moving with a series of cacophonous cracking sounds. When attacking, it uses its vines to lash out at targets, entangling them with a successful strike unless the target makes a DC 12 Ref save. Ensnared targets are pulled up to the “mouth” in 1d4 rounds, and can only be freed by severing the rope-like vine (treat as AC 12, 4 hit points per vine).

Scattered among the branches of the tree hang a number of ripening “fruits” in the shape of a variety of animals and

people. The fruits can be dislodged with a successful hit (treat as AC 18), dropping to the ground and revealing a leaf-covered form which awakens in 1d6 hours as a fully-living entity. Roll 1d10 for type: (1) wheriot; (2) drogger; (3) dwarf sailing worm; (4+) a level 0 character that can be used as a replacement PC. Replacement PCs are “seed-things”, treated as vat-things created by the forgotten forest god. For each seed-thing, roll 1d10 minus its Luck modifier to determine its unique starting flaw.

Table 1-4: Seed-thing Starting Flaw

| Roll | Flaw |
|-----------|---|
| 1 or less | The PC’s feet sprout roots, making footwear uncomfortable and reducing their base movement by 5’. |
| 2 | The PC’s body is comprised of a woody and flammable integument. The PC suffers an additional 1d4 damage when taking fire damage. |
| 3 | The PC experiences a state of estivation when away from sunlight. The PC is at a -2 penalty to all actions at night or away from sun. |
| 4 | The PC’s eyes grow on plantlike stalks, enabling PC to look behind them. The PC cannot be surprised by non-magical means, but loses 2 points of Personality. Furthermore, whenever the PC is stuck by a critical hit to the head, they must make a Luck check to avoid one of the stalks being severed. |
| 5 | The PC is born with a verdant plant-like texture and visage. Roll 1d4: (1) bark-like nails on fingers and toes; (2) green skin; (3) green leaves for hair; (4) all of the above. |
| 6 | The PC’s skin has a coarse woody texture. The PC gains a natural +1 AC from the covering and loses 1 point of Personality. |
| 7 | Each day, the PC sprouts fruit from their limbs. Roll 1d5 for type: (1) 1d4 healing berries (heal 1 point of damage per berry when ingested); (2) 1d4 poison berries (DC 15 Fort save or suffer 1 point of damage when ingested); (3-4) seeds and nutritious nuts (equivalent to 1 day of rations); (5) fruit that, when it ripens, releases a vile and persistent odor. The fruit loses its efficacy after a single day. |
| 8 | The PC eschews food and can only consume sunlight and water, suffering similar effects as starvation or dehydration if they are deprived of either. |
| 9 | The PC issues a fragrant pollen that makes those within 20’ pleasantly disposed toward them, granting a +1 bonus to any Personality checks made with creatures who can smell the PC. |
| 10+ | The PC has a natural affinity for the plant world, granting them a +1 bonus to any skill check or saving throw involving plants. |

If Kamprynys is slain, the amanita wildly lashes out at any nearby targets; in the following round, it crashes into the forest, carrying away any victims still entangled by its vines.

Inside his treehouse, Kamprynys has an additional 3 stone-ware jugs filled with animal blood, and has collected a number of items from wayfaring travelers, including a set of fine clothes, jewelry worth 10 terces, and 64 groats scattered on the floor.

Encounter E – Deodand Snare Trap (Plains): At one point in the journey towards nightfall, as the PCs approach the River Wyr, the PCs are passing through an area where a deodand lies in wait to ambush the party.

The deodand has set a snare trap and tries to use it on the last walking PC amongst the group. The snare is cleverly hidden. As they pass over the prepared trap, PCs who are walking (not riding in a wagon) may detect the trap with a successful DC 12 Intelligence check, treating the check as an untrained skill (unless they have an appropriate background such as huntsman). If the trap goes undetected, the last PC on foot triggers the snare and is silently jerked into the underbrush. The judge should inform the party of the missing character only when it would have been discovered—for example, when the group has halted for the night.

The deodand follows the PCs and attempts to take another one each night. The deodand stops hunting the party only when slain or when they cross the river.

Deodand: Init +4; Atk rend +3 melee (2d5+3) and bite +3 melee (2d4); AC 15; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP stealth,prehend attack (if two attacks hit in same round, victim is clutched and at a -1d penalty until freed), magical hybrid traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8; AL N; Crit M/d8.

As magical hybrids, deodands have infravision of 60' and an improved critical threat range of 19-20. In addition, their sorcerous legacy grants them a natural defense against magic: they have a 25% chance to resist all magic, regardless of level of caster, and gain a +8 bonus on Will saves against spells that do affect them.

If the trap is discovered, the deodand can be tracked back to its lair with a full day of searching. There the PCs find a number of other partially-eaten victims along with several items: a gaily ornamented caparison (worth 30 terces), a deck of cards, and dagger of extraordinary sharpness (treat as non-magical with a +1 bonus to damage rolls). There is a 50% chance that any PCs taken by the deodand are found still alive if the pursuers find the lair within a day.

Encounter F – Tithe Ford (All Paths): Rounding a bend, the road approaches a broad stream. Based on the descriptions, you judge this to be the River Wyr, marking the halfway point along your journey. The road leads down the shallow embankment to a bridge flanked by a pair of squat stone barbicans, between which a stout wooden gate has been erected. As you approach the barricade, a small window slit opens in gate and a gruff voice yells, "Pilgrims, eh? All pilgrims must pay the god-tithe: 10 terces per head, 5 per pack animal."

The tithe-priests here are charging an exorbitant toll to go through the gate. The priests will deny passage to all who cannot pay the tithe.

If the PCs refuse, or do not have the money to pay, they must find an alternative to continue their pilgrimage:

Striking a bargain: The leader of the tithe-priests, Thon Licenous, is not entirely unsympathetic to groups of pilgrims who cannot pay, and offers instead to allow them to work off their passage. PCs who cannot pay can either spend a day cleaning the small keep's latrines or digging in the soft mud banks of the river for the small bidechtils the priests enjoy as delicacies. With either task, afterwards their clothes are ruined and reek of a rancid odor, inflicting a -1d penalty to Personality checks until they can be exchanged. (This is an excellent time for characters to accumulate grudge tokens, if playing with those optional rules.)

Raising the gate: The barbicans are highly secured and difficult to climb from the outside. Three slot windows on each wall allow the tithe-priests to attack PCs with their dart-guns. PCs might attempt to scale the outer defenses at night and raise the winch securing the gate.

Bypassing the bridge: Bypassing the barricade requires the total loss of 2 days as the party seeks a safe ford across the broad river.

If the PCs decide to attack the tithe-priests, the defenders use the window slits in the barricade to fire darts at the party, only coming out to fight if they determine the tactics support it. Firing at or trying to hit targets through the narrow window slots incurs a -1d attack penalty at close range or -2d from more than 5' away.

Tithe-priests (7): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6) or dart-gun +1 missile fire (1d4, range 30/60/90'); AC 13; HD 1d10; hp 6 each; MV 30; Act 1d20; SP Thon Licenous is armed with fire darts (targets ignite upon contact and suffer an additional 1d4 damage each round until succeeding on a DC 10 Ref save to extinguish); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C; Crit III/d6.

Within the keep, the tithe-priests keep a ram and a stock of 2d6 meal-days of marchand tart and galingale, along with a safe box containing 20 terces, 32 groats, and 50 copper bits.

Encounter G – Tandervoos the Peddler (Plains/Coast): *On the road ahead, you see a small covered wagon parked off to the side of the path. The driver, a heavysset man wearing an oversized wide-brimmed hat and dressed in a colorful cloak, lounges against one of the wheels. He waves at your group as you approach.*

Tandervoos the Peddler is a traveling minor magician. His wagon is full of all sorts of bric-a-brac, cooking gear, and sweets and delicacies from faraway lands which he offers to sell to the travelers, as well as maps, torches, and perhaps a few useful weapons.

As the PCs approach, they can see that he wears a bulky leather coat; those making a DC 12 Intelligence check notice what appear to be squirming things beneath its enclosure.

Tandervoo engages the PCs in pleasant conversation while showing off his wares, asking about their pilgrimage and discussing the fine points of philosophy and religion.

When he judges that the PCs have let their guard down, Tandervoo opens his robe. Inside, Tandervoo carries 6 winged minuscules within that clamber out and start attacking the party, distracting them while the magician attempts to capture the PCs inside specially enchanted bottles he carries to preserve them for later study.

Winged minuscules (6): Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1 plus poison); AC 11; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP slowing poison (DC 10 For save or target suffers a -2d penalty to attacks and movement is halved); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C; Crit M/d6.

Tandervoo the Peddler: Init +2; Atk dagger +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 2d6; hp 8; MV 30; Act 1d20; SP bottling magic (+4 spell check, DC 13 Fort save to resist); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C; Crit I/d8.

Tandervoo can use his bottles to attempt to capture PCs by making a spell check. Any PC in line of sight can be targeted and transferred into a bottle, with a successful spell check requiring a Fortitude save vs. the spell check DC to resist. He carries enough of the enchanted bottles to capture up to 6 PCs. Tandervoo's practice with the bottles is such that he can never fumble.

| Spell Check | Bottling Magic Effect |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Fumble! Caster goes into the bottle instead of the target. |
| 2-5 | Failure. Caster takes 1 point of damage and bottle breaks. |
| 6-11 | Failure, but the bottle may be used again. |
| 12+ | Target must make a Fort save vs. the spell check DC or is placed inside the bottle, which is magically sealed with red wax embossed with a large "T". The bottle can only be opened from the outside by removing the wax, and once released, the occupant returns to full-size. |

If all of his minuscules are slain or cornered by overwhelming odds, Tandervoo surrenders easily to preserve his life. If the PCs kill him or raid his prized possessions, they discover four wax-sealed bottles containing previous victims of Tandervoo's magic who can be used as replacement PCs (opening a bottle provides a new 0-level character), along with 49 terces. They also find a small book with the bottling magic ritual written in an archaic language known as Old Naotic. Any PC able to translate the words can attempt to cast the ritual by making a spell check as above, treating as an untrained skill if they are not a spellcaster.

Encounter H – The Returning Pilgrims (All Paths):
Ahead on the road, you see a group of figures dressed in the hair-shirt vestments and the piled and bulky waddings covering the heads of devout Amonites. As they stumble towards you, the dusty wanderers can be heard mumbling and jeering, but you are not



able to make out what they are saying. You realize with a start that each of the figures' eyes are covered with black crystals just before they charge forward and attack!

Like the PCs, these pilgrims are journeying to Erze Damath to perform the Oblatory Ritual. While seeking shelter last night, this group stumbled into a nearby ruin where they unleashed an unusual infliction causing black crystals to slowly cover their face and skin.

Infected pilgrims (5): Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4 plus infection); AC 10; HD 1d6; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP crystal vision, black crystal bite (DC 13 Fort save or be infected with black crystal syndrome); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will NA; AL C; Crit III/d6.

While the infected pilgrims have crystals covering their eyes, they are not blind, and in fact can see well even in minimal amounts of light as the crystals act to refract and

ALA MANTER OF VIOLET BLOCKS A
LIGHTNING BOLT WHILE THE PARTY MAKES
A BREAK FOR THE FIERY PORTAL!





amplify sources of light. They are sensitive to bright light, however, and anything stronger than a lantern effectively blinds them.

When an infected pilgrim bites a target, the victim must make a DC 13 Fort save or become infected, turning the infected area black and crystalline, and the condition spreads over their entire body over time. After 2d6 hours the victim is fully covered, at which point the target's crystalline body shatters into so many shards of strange black glass.

If the PCs kill the infected pilgrims and search their belongings, they find on one of the bodies an ancient compendium: the *Codex of Universal Postulates*, illustrated with various symbols that any follower of Amon recognizes. Though written in an indecipherable long-dead language of old Egremish, a scrap of paper in back of the codex has a short handwritten note written in the language of the Twenty-first Aeon that offers a clue to the full ritual to summon Omaet-ko (see **Handout B**).

Encounter I – Wandering Teratoids (Plains/Forest):

At the edge of a pleasant meadow you see a number of creatures grazing, each of a different body configuration. A variety of cries, calls, and deep bellows accompanies the unusual menagerie, along with an intense multiphase odor of dung and a general acidity.

The creatures are semi-docile teratoids, descendants of creatures created by the wizard Follinense at the behest of Mad King Kutt aeons ago. They now populate Blanwalt Forest and the Plane of Oparona in uncontrollable numbers and with ever extreme and bizarre variations of form. Most of the teratoids grazing in the field are docile, frugal of habit, and function with maximum efficacy as pack-animals. However, a few of the beasts are wild and are no more suited to being a beast of burden than a deodand.

The creatures are scattered around the meadow. PCs who approach one of the grazing creatures must make a Luck check; with success, they have found a docile teratoid, and may attempt to restrain it for use as a pack animal. Failure indicates that they have encountered a wild teratoid.

Teratoid, docile: Init +3; Atk kick +3 melee (1d3) or bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 11 (feathers); HD 3d8; MV 20' (ponderous lumbering biped); Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N; Crit M/d8.

None of the docile teratoids have any special features. Taming a docile teratoid requires patience and enticement with a desirous source of nourishment. PCs offering a meal-day ration may make a DC 12 Personality check. Those with an animal handling background may use a d20; all others must use a d10. With success, they may take the beast under their control. Upon failure, the teratoid is spooked and runs away, with the rest of the herd following.

Teratoid, wild: Init +3; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 12 (fur); HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 60' (12-legged crawler); Act 2d20; SP soporific gaze (teratoid can use one action die to gaze into the eyes of a target within 120'; target must make a DC 14 Will save or fall sleep for 2d4 rounds); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N; Crit M/d10.

The wild teratoid attacks the party as soon as it is approached. Once a wild teratoid is encountered, the remaining creatures automatically flee, galloping off to a less crowded area.

Encounter J – Sub-World Storm (All Paths): *After a long day driving through a blazing heat, you approach the River Scamander and your destination. Pressing ahead, you hope to arrive in the early morning. Suddenly, dense dark clouds begin to form on the horizon. A bitterly cold wind whips around you, driving the storm in your direction with incredible speed.*

The storm drives towards the party with a ferocious haste, leaving only moments to find shelter. As the rain falls upon the pilgrims, an unusual weariness spreads, and each PC must make a DC 14 Will save or fall into a deep magical slumber that they cannot be awakened from. The PCs who fall asleep have the following vision:

A dark plain extends in all directions. Before you, seated upon a garish throne, is a monstrous shape holding a jagged spear. Next to the throne is a blazing portal outlined in fire.

The PCs who fall asleep find themselves in a pocket dimension with a demon—and ancient rival of Omaet-ko—named Ohmvos, who offers them a chance to enter into his service.

PCs submitting to Ohmvos make an untrained DC 10 spell check using 1d10 + Intelligence modifier (vat-thing PCs may use 1d14). If successful, they receive a boon of +1 to their choice of attribute score, but must serve Ohmvos (see Concluding the Adventure for more information). Those who commit to him are invited to depart by a doorway of blazing fire, returning them to the mortal realm.

If they refuse to submit, or they fail the roll, Ohmvos seizes a lightning javelin and attempts to destroy them where they stand, calling upon any of his newly-appointed servants to assist in their destruction.

Ohmvos, minor patron: Init +2; Atk claws +4 melee (1d10) or lightning javelin +4 missile fire (1d6 plus lightning, range 30/60/90'); AC 15; HD 3d12; hp 19; MV 30' or fly 40'; Act 2d20; SP lightning javelin (DC 15 Fort save when struck or suffer +1d6 lightning damage), demon traits (infravision, darkness [+4 spell check], half damage from non-magical weapons and fire); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C; Crit DN/d4.

It is unlikely that the PCs will be able to defeat the much more powerful entity, but they may escape by jumping through the fiery doorway. Any PCs slain in the dream are also slain in the mortal world (leaving them to waste away in sleep until they die).

PCs who take Ohmvos as their patron are returned to the dying Earth with a bull's head tattoo placed on a prominent location on their skin. These PCs can NOT submit to Omaet-ko, setting up a conflict between those who will and those who cannot (and perhaps those who do not want anything of either party by that point.)

PCs who fail to take the leap or otherwise get caught are enslaved in the demon-lands forever.

ERZE DAMATH

"The folk of Erze Damath were handsome enough, if somewhat swarthier than the folk of Almetry. The men wear only black: tight trousers and vests with black pompons; the women dress in splendid gowns of yellow, red, orange and magenta, and their slippers gleamed with orange and black sequins. Blue and green were rare, being unlucky colors, and purple signified death. The women display tall plumes in their hair, while the men wear jaunty black disks, their scalps protruding."

☞ The Pilgrims, The Eyes of the Overworld (EO.V.III) ☞



he bedraggled, whittled-down party finally arrives at their destination. The Oblatory Ritual has attracted all manner of devout folk to the city and the air is filled with their passionate cries and devotional frenzies. Regardless of how long it takes the PCs to reach the holy city, the ceremony is on the same day as their arrival.

Erze Damath is a large city, far vaster than any of the PCs' experience, though now the greater part lies tumbled in mouldering ruin. Mixed in with the vacant areas of dilapidated structures and mud compounds are splendid buildings rich with gem-encrusted adornment. Its location along the River Scamander has long made it a hub for trading, and it has been a center of religious sects for even longer, with the god-heads of five different sects laying claim to the site as a holy place. Overseen by the Precursor of the Black Obelisk, the worshipers of rival sects hold their own ceremonies at different times of the year to prevent outright battle between groups, though such conflicts still occasionally occur.

As the characters enter the city, read the following:

Rising a hundred feet above the city and its surrounding ruins is the Black Obelisk, a great fang of black stone perforated with openings that make it resemble a screaming cyclopean face. At the base of the structure, a round plaza encompasses a temple to the various sects laying claim to the site. There five statues have been carved, each a Prime Adept of some particular creed. Omaet-ko faces to the north, a serpentine creature swathed in the skins of the faithful, its fang-lined mouth carrying the broken bodies of the four prophets – Amon chief among them, his masked face raised towards the stars to look toward his god's return.

As you approach the spire, the cries of supplicants fill the air in a frenzy. Before you, a churning crowd dances and prays before the statue of Omaet-ko.

Allow the players a few minutes to discuss what they do next. Regardless of whether they move to join the crowd or attempt to perform the Ritual following the precepts (false or true), before they can act, they see the following:

As you prepare to begin the rites, you notice the bodies of some of the supplicants begin to take on a strange aspect. In the place of men and women, suddenly you see misshapen humanoids cavorting – headless beings whose faces are upon their naked torsos. The creatures begin to fall upon the remaining pilgrims, slashing at them with obsidian knives while continuing to dance in the gathering pools of blood.



As the demonlings attack the Amonites, they continue to shuffle and weave in and out in a mesmerizing pattern, raising a guttural chant. In the midst of the ceremony, Ohmvos has transformed those pilgrims already committed to him, corrupting the ritual into a twisted sabbath to summon the demon to the material plane.

Cavorting demonlings (12): Init +1; Atk obsidian knife +2 melee (1d4+2); AC 12; HD 1d10; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C; Crit III/d6.

How this encounter proceeds next depends on whether the PCs have solved the key to performing the true precepts and their relationship with Ohmvos. They have several versions of the precepts to pick through to figure out how to interact with it.

If the PCs have not discovered the key: They are left with the incorrect versions. Performing the Ritual using the incorrect precepts has no effect. The demonlings continue their sabbath, which can only be stopped if all are felled before Ohmvos is fully summoned.

If the PCs have discovered the key: Anyone may perform the true precepts by taking the following actions:

1. Approach it kneeling and naked.
2. Sacrificing one's finest weapon.
3. Accept its sacred purpose as your own.

Once the Oblatory Ritual is started, incorrectly performing the subsequent steps leads to Omaet-ko delivering a corresponding punishment. If the PC does not give up their weapon on the second step, they immediately take 1d3 damage and lose one hand. If they do not accept Omaet-ko's sacred purpose as their own (after feeling telepathic prompting), they must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or fall dead.

Note: If a PC who is bonded with Ohmvos performs the true ritual, they immediately transform into a demonling.

If performed correctly, and in the correct order, the statue of Omaet-ko cracks open! After 1d4 rounds, the avatar of Omaet-ko appears, a towering 20'-long mauve serpent with semi-translucent skin made entirely out of crystal.

Crystalline avatar of Omaet-ko: Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d8+2); AC 16; HD 4d10; hp 20; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP overworld armature (half damage from non-magical attacks, 25% chance to reflect magic); SV Fort +3, Ref -2, Will +5; AL C; Crit M/d10.

If Omaet-ko's avatar is destroyed, the crystalline serpent explodes, scattering shards that retain some of the magical properties of the overworld. There are enough intact shards for each surviving PC to pick one up. Once held, discarding a shard requires a DC 15 Will save as the supernal beauty overwhelms the resolve of the bearer to part with the artifact, with a new check being allowed each week.

Roll 1d10 to determine the shard's effect. This roll is reduced by the Luck modifier of the character picking up the shard.

Finally, the shards themselves are imbued with the resonance of the overworld that contravenes the matrix of people and objects from the material realm. For each year that the possessor holds the shard, there is a 1% chance that they themselves are consumed by it, never to be seen again.

Table 1-5: Overworld Shard Effects

| Roll | Effect |
|-----------|--|
| 1 or less | The possessor of the shard hears wonderful and endlessly distracting voices from the overworld. PC suffers a -1 penalty to all saving throws while it is carried. |
| 2 | The shard's possessor is afflicted with delusions, believing themselves to be excellently dressed, of surpassing physical beauty, and exquisitely clean and perfumed at all times. |
| 3 | The shard is a lens into the overworld, granting the user glimpses into the esoteric and unknowable lines of force that interweave between all objects in that place. Peering into the shard, the PC must make a DC 15 Will save or be obsessed with observing the unrelenting pageantry and beauty of that world for the next 1d3 days. At the end of that time, there is a 1% chance that the wielder retains some transcendent insight in the form of a random level 1 spell that can be cast once per day with a memorized spell check of 12 as per the rules for rote magic (see Chapter III: Magician in <i>Player's Libram</i>). |
| 4 | The broken shard becomes a portal to a hyper-dimensional space. The PC can place an object that is up to 10 cubic feet in size within this space, retrieving it at some future point that is convenient for the wielder, but there is a 1% chance per month that the object is filched by animalcules of Uthaw. |
| 5 | The shard is imbued with a precellent sharpness that can cut through any material when properly wielded by PC. Safely using the shard requires a DC 5 Agility check, otherwise the wielder incurs 2d5 damage to himself. |
| 6 | PC can peer through the glassy round lens with perfect perspicacity, penetrating any illusion. This effect only applies to sorcerous illusions or enchantments; the shard does not allow the user to see hidden people and objects, such as a bandit hiding in shadows, or that which is magically invisible. |
| 7 | The shard cuts the PC who picks it up and then enters their body, reducing their maximum hit points by 1. While in the PC, the sliver imparts a +1 bonus to all spell checks and saving throws vs. magical effects. |
| 8 | The shard imbues the PC with superlative precognition. While possessing the shard, the alacritous PC gains +1 AC due to anticipation of enemy blows. |
| 9 | The shard can be used to view a location the wielder has seen or has reference to (e.g., they can view a creature whose little finger they possess). To use, the wielder must make a DC 15 spell check (untrained if level 0), after which the shard allows the PC to view the desired location for 1d8 rounds, though no sound accompanies the images. On a roll of a natural 1 on the spell check, the wielder must make a successful Luck check or the shard breaks and loses its properties. |
| 10+ | The shard resonates with the soul and force of a demiurge from the overworld. The PC gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws while it is carried. |

Pilgrims of the Black Obelisk

BLANWALT
FOREST

INN OF
THE
VIOLET
IMP

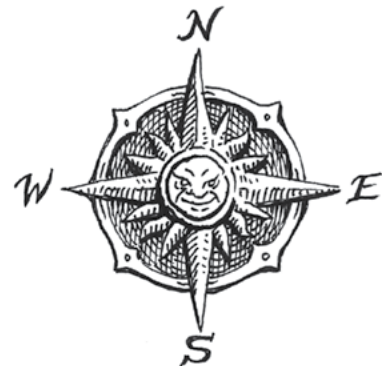
RIVER
SCAMANDER

PLAIN OF
OPARONA

ERZE
DAMATH

UNNAMED
EASTERN
SEA

SILVER DESERT



Player's Map

STEFAN 2022

THE BEHESTS OF AMON

Judge's note: While whether the PCs adhere to the Behests of Amon or not has little effect on the outcome of the adventure, judges should allow players to decide for themselves how strictly they follow their inscrutable nature or even to devise their own bizarre behests, and reward them as appropriate with a point of Luck for good role-playing. Of course, PCs who deviate from the five core behests are sure to be challenged by any Amonites among the party who consider themselves orthodox, or even blamed for any ill-fortune encountered by the pilgrims, claiming it the result of Omaet-ko's displeasure. Judges are free to encourage such suggestions as they see fit!

THE PRECEPTS

Judge's solution: The code is found in the book of a dead pilgrim who was translating the *Codex of Universal Postulates*. The numbers tie to the valid characters within the original commandments, spelling out the true precepts if only these characters are kept.

FOUND IT FOUND IT!!!!

1-26, 32, 37-38

1-12, 20-22, 29-31, 38-40

1-18, 26-29

The three false precepts:

1. Approach humbly and with all **natural knowledge**.
2. Yield your **fingers** and **estimable weakness upon** it.
3. Accept its sacred **purview** and **pose**.

The triumvirate true precepts:

1. Approach humbly and **naked**.
2. Yield your finest **weapon**.
3. Accept its sacred **purpose**.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs fail to summon Omaet-ko, Ohmvos returns to Earth and begins to wreak havoc, directing any PCs pledged to his service to attack the remaining non-believers as his army of transformed pilgrims ransack the city. If they choose to oppose Ohmvos, they immediately lose the boon along with 2 points of Luck, and are branded as the highest of traitors. The PCs will have a difficult time defeating the demon, but if all the demonlings are slain before the summoning completes, they will have halted the corrupted ritual.

If the PCs manage to summon the avatar of Omaet-ko, the returned god attacks Ohmvos, locking its crystal jaws around the demon's neck as the embattled titans destroy the gaudy houses surrounding the temple plaza. It is up to the PCs whether they assist either of the powerful entities or simply flee. Either way, any survivors continue their adventures in the Dying Earth!



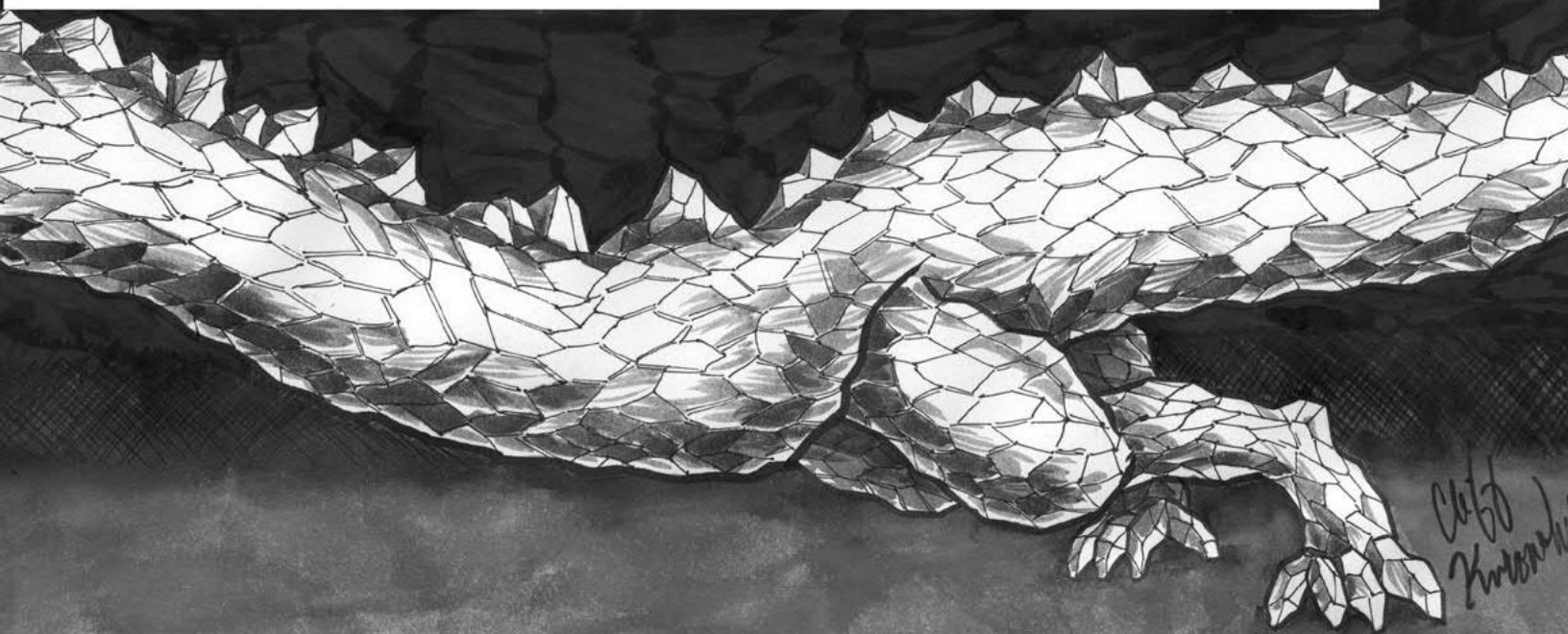
OHMVOS



he demon Ohmvos aspires to be a power amongst the lords of the sub-worlds equal to that of such potent entities as Kraan, Blikdak, or even Keino the Sea-demon. As a means to bolster his puissance and prestige, Ohmvos seeks to entice mortals into his service and draw strength away from its bitter rival, the demiurge Omaet-ko. In dreams, Ohmvos manifests as an enormous violaceous bull; when encountered on the mortal plane, the demon appears an immense squatting twilit form with bovine horns.

Invoke Patron check results:

- 12-13 Ohmvos bestows a shred of his dread gloom upon the caster, who is limned in pulsing darkness. Any enemies within 10' of the caster must make a DC 10 Will save or are momentarily frozen in fear and lose their next action.
- 14-17 The Keeper of Bulls grants a small measure of his power to the caster, endowing them with +1d6 Strength for the next hour, during which time large bull's horns sprout from the caster's head.
- 18-19 The Suzerain of Lightnings dispenses galvanic lances to the caster to use against enemies of Ohmvos. The caster receives 1d3+CL of the demonic weapons, which cause 1d6 plus 1d6 electrical damage on a successful hit and have a range of 40/80/120'. Any unused missiles vanish in one hour.
- 20-23 Ohmvos opens a way for the caster through the sub-world, allowing them to move anywhere that they can see within 50' of their current position.
- 24-27 Ohmvos sends a servant to the caster's aid for one turn. The 8'-tall minotaur will obey the caster's commands in all things for the duration of its service.
- Minotaur:** Init +2; Atk axe +4 melee (1d8+4); AC 15; HD 3d12; MV 35'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C; Crit M/d12.
- 28-29 Ohmvos sheathes the caster's body in a halo of sparking energy. For the next hour, caster's AC increases by +4, and anyone physically touching or striking the caster suffers 1d6+CL points of electrical damage.
- 30-31 The Suzerain of Lightnings imbues the caster with galvanic force. For the next number of turns equal to the caster's level, as an action they may discharge a lightning bolt at a target within line of sight for 3d6 damage (DC 15 Ref save for half). The caster can choose to split the bolt to strike as many as three different targets, with a minimum of 1d6 damage per target.
- 32+ The Keeper of Bulls unleashes a hellish stampede out of a portal to the sub-world, releasing an on-rushing tide of utter destruction 20' wide and 120' long. The caster may choose to open the portal at any point within 100' of their location. The column of raging bovine fury moves forward at 30' per round and causes 6d10 damage to anything in its path.



Handout A

THE BEHESTS OF AMON

The religion of Omaet-ko is based on the words of the prophet Amon who promised to deliver his followers to the land of Amon if they obey 99 inscrutable behests.

Amonite Behests*:

3. Steal not. The thief will have his fingers broken.
5. The murderer will die in this life and die forever in the next.
6. Eat not the bird or fowl for they are close to the soaring sky where dwells the great Eternal.
19. Avoid the color yellow in all things for it is [translation from the original Egremish is imperfect]
21. Terces must be paid to Amon, for he is the holy cousin of the Eternal upon this ephemeral world; and the servants of Amon must also have terces, to spread wide the holy word.

**Only a few of all 99 behests have survived intact, and it is a matter of deep debate among the various factions of the devout as to the content of the missing behests. For orthodox Amonites, it is considered a sin to mention this and will almost definitely result in bad luck!*

THE TRIUMVIRATE OF PRECEPTS

An excerpt from the *Travails of Amon*, Book IIX, in which the prophet promises to those who find and pay homage at the Black Obelisk the return of Omaet-ko and "Thus in true fashion to waken the god...":

And Amon said unto his brethren these words of the Great God Omaet-ko, "Blessed are they who venture forth to the holy city and venerate ME there. And they who journey shall have these triumvirate of commandments, for they are blessed by ME and will receive MY power and glory as their own."

1. Approach humbly and with all natural knowledge.
2. Yield your fingers and estimable weakness upon it.
3. Accept its sacred purview and pose.

Handout B

Scrawled in the Codex's last page:

FOUND IT FOUND IT!!!!

1-26, 32, 37-38

1-12, 20-22, 29-31, 38-40

1-18, 26-29



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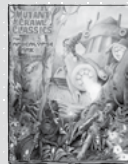
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