

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

## DYING EARTH

# THE SORCERER'S TOWER OF SANGUINE SLANT

DCC DYING EARTH #2:  
A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE  
BY TERRY OLSON







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# The Sorcerer's Tower of Sanguine Slant

A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE

By Terry Olson • Project Lead: Marc Bruner • Cover artwork: Russ Nicholson • Cartography: Aaron Kreader  
Editor: Jen Brinkman • Artwork: Chris Arneson, Tom Galambos, Doug Kovacs, Aaron Kreader, Cliff Kurowski,  
Will McAusland, Bradley McDevitt, Peter Mullen, Jesse Mohn, Chad Sergesketter, JV West • DCC Developer: Michael Curtis  
Art direction & layout: Matt Hildebrand • Publisher & Dark Vivomancer: Joseph Goodman

Playtesters: Dan Alban, Dave Aughinbaugh, Gregory Chandler, Brian "The Librarian" Courtemanche, Jack Derricourt, Chris Dodd,  
Eric Edell, Jeffrey Fleischner, Brett Gibson, Randall J. Harris, Matthew Lake, Brendan LaSalle, Mike McFarland, Jason Menard, Svebor Midzic, Dillon Mor-  
ton, Michael Nusbaum, Dave Persinger, Chris Rice, Philip Rogers, Trevor Russ, Jeff Scifert, Gary Soldati, Tim Spahr, Mihailo Tesić, Hank Wong.

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## INTRODUCTION

**E**ven as their sun reddens and expands toward death, the motivations of our distant 21st-Aeon descendants aren't so different from our own: pleasure, power, plunder, and perdurability. Here follows a trial that is both a celebration and an admonition of such pursuits. Through some intervention of sources demonic, magisto-technological, or hearsay (see Adventure Hooks, below), a party of savants, synthesized monstrosities, masters of maledictions, and fortune-seekers encounters a tower of crystalline blood that seemingly appears from nowhere and leans such that its wider upper stories should topple over, yet do not. Those with exploratory vim encounter an array of challenges. A building demands a sanguine sacrifice. A powerful sandestin librarian aids and harasses them as they seek information. The party discovers a laboratory for creating clones and might reconstruct a potential patron or even clone themselves. A swarm of miniscules implores them to collect gem-dissolving nectar from a viciously defended flower. They sleep on a demon and dance the Fourteen Silken Movements. Finally, they face a sorcerer's spirit in its hidden sanctum and risk annihilation from the dreaded black IOUN stone.

This adventure is intended to be utilized within the judge's pre-existing DCC Dying Earth setting for four or more 2nd-level PCs. If the judge is running it as a one-shot and wants more description of the tower's environs, then place the tower in the Silver Wastes of Nailuj, a haunting locale where vegetation appears malnourished, the landscape dry and barren with fallow farmland, and all is covered with silvery dust of unknown origin. Occasionally one can hear a lone male voice singing on the wind.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**Kolghut**, a sorcerous spirit incarcerated in an IOUN stone

**Padavona**, a short magician with an amazing singing voice; he hopes his death is impermanent

**Yedwe**, a pseudo-tolerant quasi-daihak librarian whose indenture points are almost extinguished

**Gratha-Mahmar**, a vat-thing dancer who is beginning to think there is more to life than the Fourteen Silken Movements

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

**K**olghut began as a proto-vat creature made from an ancient genetic splicing technique now forgotten. He had a natural aptitude for magic, but his metabolism was flawed. He received no nourishment from typical foods and required human blood and flesh to live. His creator, a nameless magician of little consequence, viewed Kolghut as a flawed experiment and abused him as a vessel for blood transfusions. However, this abuse was the key to liberation; the mooncalf of a magician erringly transfused a demon's blood into Kolghut, who suddenly gained some of the demon's knowledge and strength. The vat-creature no longer thought of failure, but of vengeance! He ravenously devoured his creator and through the blood feast, gained some of the magician's skill.

Through unnatural selection and eventual exsanguination of mentors, the vat-thing rapidly became a magician of infamy. Mastering a new form of blood magic, Kolghut drained entire villages...even small armies...and gathered a colossal reservoir of vital fluid. Finally, in the Nineteenth Aeon of the Fifty-second Cycle, the sorcerer used his crimson lake to raise his tower of frozen blood. The tower became a flying vessel capable of teleportation about the earth, and even ventured into the Demon-Realms and La.

Such an ascension cannot be made without making a few enemies, however. Of all Kolghut's rivals and nemeses, the most powerful was Padavona the Stargazer. The two met in cabalchor, where Padavona was exalted for his tenor coloratura while Kolghut was clandestinely ridiculed for his "vat voice". The jealous sorcerer cursed the Stargazer with *Follinense's Influenza*, with Padavona retaliating with *McRa's Melting Mouth*. Things escalated to slaughtering servants, murdering miniscules, defiling demesnes, and so on, until a competition of absolute power ensued. Meanwhile, Padavona had enslaved an archveult for centuries and learned the secrets of the IOUN stones. He knew that Kolghut had acquired his first stone and desired more, so he made a plan to bait Kolghut into self-destruction. Using forgotten rituals, Padavona created the dread black IOUN stone, which devours memory and traps a soul, leaving a corporeal husk of the witless fool who touches it. The Stargazer believed that with sufficient research, he could siphon the trapped soul's energy to empower incantations yet unseen.

Padavona placed the black IOUN stone in his conveniently-vacated lair, circulated rumors of its existence, and waited for Kolghut to take the bait. The power-hungry blood mage suspected a trap, so he enlisted some of La-Er's denizens to find and help him slay the Stargazer. Of course, moribundity is often a temporary inconvenience for powerful magicians, and Padavona had magical provisions for such a remote improbability (see Adventure Hooks). Kolghut devoured most of the Stargazer's body, but saved 6 vials of his blood – which can be found by the PCs – in case he ever needed to restore the mage. Despite his suspicions, Kolghut succumbed to the stone's temptation. When he offered to feed it a memory, the stone sucked away his body and bound him as an un-dead ghost left to haunt, but unable to leave, his tower.



However, the aeons have not left Kolghut's ghost idle. He has learned that if anyone else feeds the black IOUN stone, then he can inhabit that victim's body while the victim's consciousness binds to the stone. Thus, through unearthly bargains the ghost has spread news of his two IOUN stones far and wide, hoping to lure adventurers to his castle. Unfortunately, his spectral transformation has trapped him in his tower's upper sanctum. Kholgut's incorporeal form can neither control the tower's defenses nor control its navigation. The crystalline blood tower-vessel is on "auto-pilot" and orbits the dying Earth, teleporting to its surface every twenty-one hundred and twelve years, when the same stellar conjunction occurs that was present at its creation. Currently the structure sits for a lunar cycle, as Kolghut patiently waits for those who dare to burgle his lair, survive its inherent defenses, feed the black stone, and restore him to the Tower of Sanguine Slant.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A strange demon approaches the PCs and tells them that, for a fee, it will reveal the location of two IOUN stones. It is already bound by Kolghut and will tell them regardless of payment, but tries to get something out of it.
- PCs find a device that plays a recording from Padavona, although it is aeons old. He needs rescuing! Gain a great magician's favor! Time and date of tower's appearance provided. The wizard is sure to mention that his captor has an IOUN stone or two.
- The PCs learn that the infamous wayfarer Mit Cenedesh entered the tower bearing one of the coveted *Eyes of the Overworld* but never returned (see Area 4-2).
- PCs have heard of the one-and-only black IOUN stone which is supposed to reside in this tower.
- The tower suddenly appears! What do we do?
- PC animus: The judge can incorporate a PC's starting animus to get them to the tower. For example, one marked as "Devoured wizardly morsel" may have to raid the tower for a particular item as exactitude. A PC bearing Sins of the father may have had generations of ancestors compelled to seek the tower. A PC marked by a Vituperation curse might be able to lift this by performing some action related to the tower (putting Kolghut to rest, retrieving an IOUN stone, etc.).

## VANCIAN GLOSSARY

**Argentine:** made of (or seemingly made of) silver.

**Cabalchor:** a men's chorus of magicians, where the lines between singing and spellcasting are blurred and rivalries are born.

**Chronoplex:** a cosmic multi-dimensional structure-pattern comprised of different time-habitations. The number of such habitations is equivalent to 10 raised to the power of all possible times.

**Coloratura:** a singer who specializes in elaborate melodies with wide leaps, trills, and runs; often but not limited to a soprano.

**Contumacious:** stubborn or willful refusal to obey authority; rebellious.

**Effectuation:** the act of putting something into effect, causing something, or bringing something about.

**Indolence:** inactivity resulting from avoidance of exertion, work, activity; laziness.

**Magistoartifactologist:** magician specializing in the study, preservation, and recovery of artifacts.

**Mooncalf:** a dullard or foolish person who exhibits little wit or intelligence.

**Moribundity:** the state of approaching death or dying; obsolescence. Magicians sometimes use the term to imply a temporary death.

**Mucilaginous:** having a viscous or gelatinous consistency.

**Nonpareil:** a person or thing that is unrivaled and has no equal.

**Parsimonious:** not willing to use resources or spend money; stingy.

**Purloin:** to steal.

**Saltation:** the action of leaping or dancing as in a Saltarello (see Appendix V: Vancian Verbiage in DCC Dying Earth's *Player's Libram*)

**Tor:** a high craggy hill; a peak of a bare mountain; a rocky pinnacle.



# ADVENTURE START

## OUTSIDE THE TOWER



glistering red tower seems incongruous with the landscape. It seemingly defies natural law because it is smallest at the bottom and largest at the top, with each of its four stories built beyond the one below such that none of the above-ground levels are supported. And yet, the tower doesn't fall over. At first, the strange structure seems stationary as it refracts and reflects the sun's crimson rays. However, these scintillations have motion that betrays the structure's barely-perceptible rotation about an invisible vertical axis, turning at a rate similar to a sun-dial's shadow. The surrounding air is frigid and tastes like copper. As you observe, a crystalline door appears in the tower's ground level.

Refer to the map for help in describing the tower. The door to Area 1-1 is unlocked. PCs examining the structure's surface find it freezing cold to the touch. Those who lick it (someone will!) detect notes of blood on the front with deeper sanguine tannins on the finish. The entrance to Area 1-1 is the only way (besides supernatural means) into the tower.

### LOCKS AND TRAPS IN THE DYING EARTH

The Dying Earth fiction rarely mentions picking locks or disabling traps of mundane nature. Thus, the DCC Dying Earth classes do not maximize their efficacy in these pursuits. Players participating in a DCC Dying Earth adventure might not include a thief from DCC RPG or DCC Lankhmar. That's fine! In this adventure, the heroes might encounter non-magical locks and traps. While all PCs may attempt to solve these using a d10 skill check (untrained), wayfarers and vat-things have specialized means of dealing with these obstacles.

- The wayfarer has a d10 skill check (untrained) but can add their expanding Luck die. A wayfarer who spends 4 Luck has a skill check range of 5-26, for example.
- The wayfarer's arcane apocrypha and dissembler skills might be applicable, depending on the nature of the obstacle.
- Martial and theologian vat-things have a d16 skill check. Combined with applicable ability score bonuses and/or potential Luck expenditures, this becomes a viable option for locks and traps of moderate difficulty.
- A paragon vat-thing has a d16 + bonus die for skill checks. A 2nd-level paragon rolls 1d16+1d4, for example.
- The magician's *force of will* could shatter a lock, at the judge's discretion, although disabling traps could be more perilous.

Some may contemplate climbing this strange physics-defying, slowly-rotating structure. It is ridiculously smooth (DC 20 Climb Sheer Surfaces check) and dangerous, with falls almost definitely being fatal. Each story of the tower is capped with a pointed onion dome. Area 1's exterior is 100' tall, Area 2's is 200' tall, and so on. Note that the interiors have ceilings 20' high unless otherwise mentioned; only the exteriors are this tall.

Finally, there are those PCs who prefer to create their own door through force or magic. The tower's exterior is ultimately impenetrable, but persistent PCs are rewarded with a crack that releases 1 sanguine sludge per round (see Area 1-1 for stats).

## INSIDE THE TOWER



nless otherwise noted, the tower's interior has a soft red light emanating from the crystalline floor and ceiling. Walls bordering the tower's exterior are crystalline and also emanate light, whereas all other walls, such as interior walls along hallways, are made from an alien black stone. Doors, with few exceptions, are crystalline but divert light in too many directions to see through them; they are easily opened and have no locking mechanisms. A master magician can lock his doors by will alone!

**Area 1-1 – Foyer:** This sparse chamber's only furniture is a red-stained bowl affixed atop a granite pedestal. Glowing script around the basin's edge pulses rhythmically like a heartbeat. A one-foot-diameter pipe protrudes down from the ceiling with its opening a few feet above the bowl. The room's illumination is a kaleidoscopic spectrum of vermilion caused by semi-translucent crimson sludges flowing up the frozen walls' interiors. Opposite the entrance, a large silvery quartz geode serves as a door, fitted with handle and lock. Remarkably clean human bones litter the floor.

The tower's foyer is Kolghut's first demonstration of assumed dominance. Guests, both invited and uninvited, are expected to drip their blood into the bowl. The edges of the bowl are razor-sharp and easily cut any skin rubbed against it. The written script is magical and appears in the native language of the reader (for DCC Dying Earth PCs, this will probably be the language of the Twenty-first Aeon, but it differs for travelers from other realities). The script reads, "All give and be received." The bones on the floor are the remains of the sludges' previous victims. Miscellaneous fragments of items, clothing, and other detritus remain; PCs can find 1d10 gold coins, but all are quite old and were minted before the 21st Aeon. They are worth a terce each, though collectors might pay more.

Once a PC drains enough blood to lose 1 point of Strength, Agility, Stamina, or 1 hit point (player's choice), the bowl glows and the PC's blood streams upward into the pipe overhead, as if gravity is upside down.

A witch knows that dried blood is caked within the bowl, though anyone examining the bowl draws this conclusion by passing a DC 5 Intelligence check. Moreover, if a witch



ritualizes the bloodletting, they can convert it to 1 point of held spellburn to be used at their discretion; however, they must pass a DC 12 spell check (1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level) to do so. If failed, they gain demonic corruption from the tower itself! See Chapter III: Demonic Corruption in the *Primer of Practical Magic*.

Take note which PCs make this “donation,” as their blood will spawn doppelgangers found later in the sanguinarium, Area 3-2.

If every PC gives the requisite amount of blood, the party hears the door unlock and they can open it without peril. However, if the trapped door (see below) is touched before all PCs have made the donation, the door remains locked as sanguine sludges seep out of the walls to attack the party. One creature appears for every PC who did not bleed themselves. When the sludges attack, the bowl’s magical script is duplicated on the door’s surface to encourage PCs to exsanguinate. If a PC who hasn’t contributed blood decides to do so during combat, the sludge with the lowest current hit points is sucked back into the walls when the donation is given. The trap and sludge attacks only trigger once.

**Sanguine sludge (variable):** Init -2; Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d6 plus exsanguinating heal); AC 10; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 10’; Act 1d20; SP exsanguinating heal (victim must make DC 12 Fort save or lose blood to the sludge, which heals it the same amount as damage done), half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, resistant to force magic (*magic missile*, *force of will*, etc. gains d30 saving throw regardless of whether save is allowed), immune to mental effects; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will +0; AL N; Crit M/d8.

If the sludges gain the “upper pseudopod,” the party may try to expedite passage through the locked door. The trapped door (see below) requires a near-herculean effort to force it open (DC 19 Strength check), though a martial vat-thing can add their bonus die, a wayfarer can burn Luck to aid their own check, and other DCC classes with a deed die may add it to their roll. Up to two people can simultaneously force the door; have both PCs make the check and take the largest result. Only one attempt is possible per round. Its lock requires a DC 12 Pick Lock check if everyone hasn’t given blood (see “Locks and Traps” sidebar, above).

As mentioned, unless everyone has given blood, the door is magically trapped. The first PC touching the door or trying to pick the lock triggers a modified *Radl’s Pervasion of the Incorrect Chord*. The door keens with metal-shattering vibrato! The would-be door-pusher takes 2d3 damage unless they make a DC 12 Fortitude save. Possibly worse, though, is that the offending PC’s metal objects are weakened. Randomly choose one non-magic metallic weapon to suffer a -1d damage penalty (choose a second weapon if they have a negative Luck modifier). If the PC is wearing metallic armor, the armor bonus is also reduced by 1. The objects’ metallic damage is not restored until treated by a smith or a mending spell.

Spellcasters can detect this trap via *detect magic* or examining the door and making a DC 12 spell check. The magic may



be negated with a spell check result of 12 or higher from the following counter-spells: *enlarge* (or cast in reverse, *shrink*), *force manipulation*, *magic shield*, *mending*, *runic alphabet*, *ward portal*, or the caster’s own version of *Radl’s Pervasion of the Incorrect Chord*, creating a counter-harmony of the magician’s own devising. If the spell check is insufficient, however, the caster receives the aforementioned damage and the sludges attack (if they have not already appeared).

When having to make an unexpected adjudication in this room, remember that it was devised by a master magician, not some backwater charlatan. For example, feeding bleeding livestock, miniscule prisoners, etc., into the bowl does not affect the door or trap. Kolghut wants “special” blood – that of a DCC Dying Earth PC.

**Area 1-2 – The Blood Lift:** *The silvery quartz geode door opens into a tubular structure bent like an upright letter U, leading into an 8-foot-tall horizontal bottom between two vertical shafts extending upwards. A fine red mist of bloody red gelatinous orbs flows from left to right. The mist descends from above in a vertical tube on the left, while it ascends in a vertical tube in the right. The horizontal entryway connects these two tubes, both of which are 8 foot in diameter.*

This is the lift system to travel between floors. The mist carries PCs harmlessly up to the second floor, where there is an open doorway to exit. All floors have a similar mechanism for traveling between them. For brevity, we only mention them here. The key thing for the judge to remember is that two floors are bound by a single tube that is formed into a vertically elongated loop (see maps). When the PCs ascend they enter at the bottom of an upright U shape. When they descend they enter at the top of an upside-down U shape, but it is the same tube-loop binding any two adjacent floors. Looking at the maps, one sees that when PCs exit a floor



## DEALING WITH EXPEDITIOUS ADVENTURERS

It's possible that upon reaching the tower's second level, the party, to conserve resources, chooses to avoid rooms and attempts to proceed straight across to the next lift to the third level, and so on to the fourth level, thereby skipping most of the challenges and awards. This adventure assumes that most adventurers are, well, more adventurous than that. Consequently, there is nothing included to prevent such behavior. Players should not be penalized for clever play. If they're able to find Area 4-4 and solve the puzzle with no hints, more power to them. If they're able to defeat Kolghut without using the stone, great! However, reasonable consequences should accompany PC choices. If one of the PCs is trapped in the stone, restoring them is difficult if the sangunarium and vat chamber have been skipped (more so if the tower is melting with Kolghut's demise). Certainly, Yedwe will no longer be in Area 2-1 after Kolghut's defeat, and he may decide to take Kolghut's books with him. Padavona himself may not appreciate an ineffective rescue.

Nonetheless, the judge may feel that any reasonable magician would not let such expeditious progress be possible in his own tower. In this case, each level's inhabitants can become more aggressive and less localized. Rule that the gaunvine attacks through the door from Area 2-2 as the party passes. Rule that the miniscule swarm (Area 3-3) is patrolling the hallways of level 3. Finally, rule that the security on level 4 is joined by additional hemoguardians. Or, have these creatures waiting to "welcome" the party as they return from Kolghut's sanctum.

to ascend, they are facing east and the mist moves counter-clockwise (left-to-right). When the party exits a floor to descend, they are facing west, and the mist moves clockwise (also left-to-right). Note that for cardinal directions we are adopting the convention given on the map, i.e., relative to the tower itself; since the tower is rotating, its own east and west are changing with respect to the dying Earth's true north. So, whether a PC is ascending or descending, they see the mist moving left to right and are swept into the vertical tube on their right-hand side. If a PC places an object in the lift to test it, the object slowly departs on the right-hand side and eventually returns on the left-hand side.

Only Area 1-2 has a closed door at the bottom of the loop. All other blood lifts between floors have openings for entry and exit.

**Area 2-1 – Library:** *This oddly silent chamber is strangely both alien and familiar. Though the walls are simple stone, the ceiling and floor are a crimson crystal like the tower's exterior. Bookshelves line the room and extend beyond vision's limits. Impossi-*

*bly, the ceiling is visible, but the uppermost shelves are not. Books, librums, and grimoires made from various materials – bone, flesh, metal, scales, and leather – flicker in and out of existence among the shelves. A large table waits in the room's center, coincidentally with the same number of chairs as members of your party. Adjacent to the entrance, a distinguished man sits at a desk with pens, ink, and paper. His thin, dark, waxed hair is combed over his balding pate, and his meticulous appearance is emphasized by a carefully trimmed beard and mustache, a wrinkle-free, spotless black-and-white suit, and sparkingly polished spectacles. He looks at you and holds his index finger perpendicular to his lips. You each hear in your head, "Quiet please. Although you are guests, you must obey the rules. Let me know if you need help selecting a title. I recommend one by Padavona." You note that his lips did not move to speak, though he smirks somewhat sardonically.*

The distinguished librarian is Yedwe, a quasi-daihak. Bound to serving Kolghut, Yedwe has run the library and uses a unique timeline superposition cataloging system to organize its contents, hence the books flicker in and out of existence. Although he was bound for a seemingly insurmountable thousands of indenture points, he now has only one and a half indenture points left and sees the party as a means to spend them (see below).

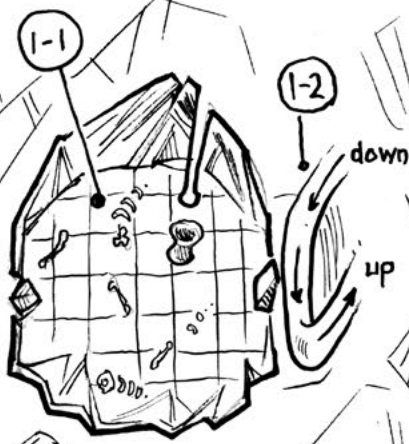
There is an infinitude of titles truly at Yedwe's command, but he only offers the eight titles listed below. The reason is that he wants to maximize the PCs' chances of destroying Kolghut, and these eight are the best for that purpose. This is why he recommends Padavona's titles, so that the PCs might be able to restore Kolghut's rival, who can aid them with critical information. In fact, Yedwe "reappropriated" three of the six vials of Padavona's blood from the sangunarium (Area 3-2) and hid them in the books here. Simply giving the vials to the party would violate his terms of service, but if the party obtains them through his obedience as a librarian, then that's another thing entirely.

**The Rules:** Yedwe has three rules, which he shares if asked.

- Be quiet.
- No books can leave the library. (Note that if the PCs antagonize Yedwe or test his patience, he extends this rule to the vials of blood in Padavona's books; see below.)
- Request assistance with title retrieval if required.

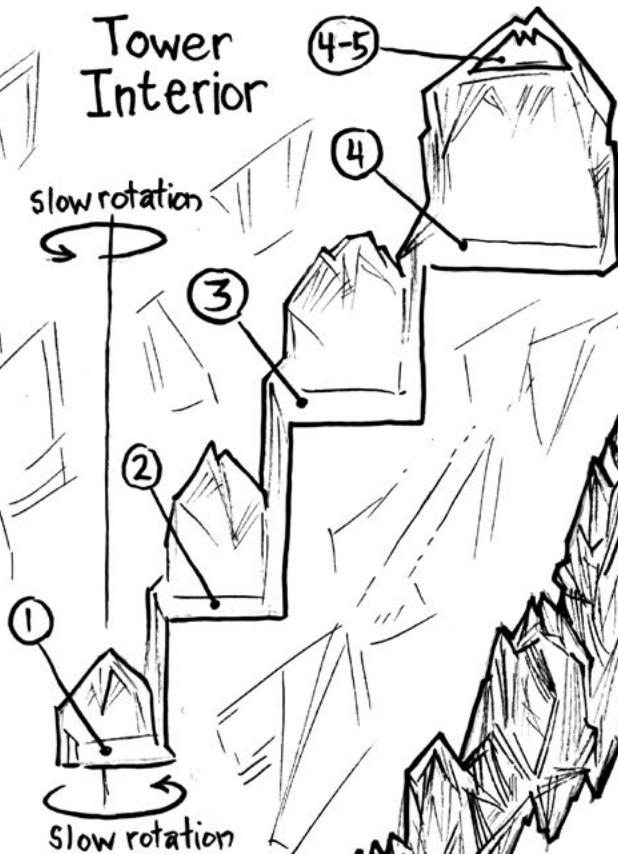
**Maintaining quiet:** Any time a PC speaks (even a whisper) they must make a DC 18 Will save or feel as if their eardrums are being punctured by needles; those who fail suffer 1 point of damage per sentence from an unknown source. (It is caused by Yedwe, but this is only detectable if time is stopped). At the end of the sentence, damage is applied, and the PC will hear, "Quiet, please," in their heads. Meanwhile, Yedwe appears to be ignoring them. If the PC continues to speak, another Will save is necessary for the next sentence. PCs may communicate telepathically with the librarian, but they must discover this on their own. PCs may not speak to each other, nor does Yedwe's telepathy allow them to converse telepathically amongst themselves. It's not that he couldn't facilitate it; it just isn't part of his contract. PCs may use the paper, pens, and ink from his desk to com-





Tower Interior

slow rotation



Tower Exterior



□ = 5'



## PORTRAYING YEDWE

Like most sandestins, Yedwe is conceited, capricious, contrary, and borderline contumacious; although being a quasi-daihak, one of the rare especially powerful sandestins, he expresses these traits to extremes. Ultimately, he has had to follow Kolghut's commands, but he's twisted the meaning of them as best he can. Yedwe is a particularly uptight Sandestin who has no time for anyone but apparently must make time for inferior species. To get in the proper mindset, the judge can imagine themselves being prevented from eating a gourmet meal because they are forced to watch ants devour a stale crust of bread: this is how Yedwe views his predicament. He is meticulous, cunning, and uncaring. He sees the PCs merely as a means to reduce his indenture points. For further information on sandestins and indenture points, see Chapter II in the *Primer of Practical Magic*, and the sandestin entry in Chapter IV of *Intimate Anatomy of Several Creatures and Personages of the Twenty-First Aeon*.

The suggestion that an inferior being even has the capacity to "aid" a quasi-daihak is not only preposterous, but borderline insulting, although Yedwe might let it pass if they do him the favor of asking him for enough titles to use up his indenture points. Clever PCs may try to negotiate with Yedwe, requesting aid (in the form of additional information). If the negotiator passes a DC 16 Personality check (wayfarers can add their rhetorical deed die), then Yedwe makes a small concession in favor of the PCs. Otherwise, Yedwe pretends to acquiesce but summons the buukwrms and leaves when his points are spent.



that this seems possible. They must achieve a result of 14 or higher to succeed, and the Personality points spent are lost regardless of the result. If successful, roll 1d8 on the table below, and the given volume remains on the shelf. If a roll is duplicated on a subsequent attempt, then the magician has generated a miniature time loop and reacquires a title already perused (this cannot create multiple copies of a book or its contents, however). Other arcane casters can attempt to anchor a book, but they have a harder time than magicians; they must spellburn at least one point (which counts toward the check) and achieve a general spell check result of 16 or higher.

The second way to acquire a book is to ask Yedwe, though he only responds to written or telepathic requests. The librarian lists the titles from the table below as being available, but only if asked. Otherwise, the book is randomly determined. If a PC asks for a topic not covered below, have the PC make a DC 14 Personality check (wayfarers can add their rhetorical deed die). If successful, then include the request in the most applicable title from below or create a new title and provide the information. For example, if a PC asks for a map of the tower, I Never Drink... Wine could contain some rough maps since it discusses the building. In this case, only include Area 4-5 if the Personality check is 19 or higher. If the PC fails the Personality check, the requested title is unavailable.

Unlike magicians, Yedwe has complete mastery of his cataloging system and never causes a time loop or pulls an already-retrieved book. He re-rolls any duplicates from the table below.

municate with one another. The judge is encouraged to enforce this with the players. They may speak to the judge as if telepathically communicating with Yedwe, but they must write down messages to each other. After inflicting a total of 5 points of "quiet, please" damage to one or multiple PCs, Yedwe grows bored and magically silences everyone and everything in the library (DC 24 Will save to resist).

**No-Checkout Policy:** If asked, Yedwe telepathically informs the party that they are permitted to examine the library's books, but they may not remove anything from the room. Otherwise, the librarian informs the purloining party as he summons the buukworm swarm (see below). Stealing a book requires a DC 14 Pick Pocket check. Wayfarers can use their dissembler skill for this; those untrained in legerdemain make the check with a d10. If the PC fails the attempt, or simply tries to run with a book, Yedwe conjures the buukworm swarm to punish them.

**Acquiring Books:** The librarian's timeline superposition cataloging system gives the books a flickering, quasi-reality nature, making retrieval difficult for anyone other than Yedwe, but there are two ways for the party to acquire books. First, a magician can focus their *force of will* toward the bookshelves to anchor a book in this reality. Let magicians know



d8	Title and Author	Description
1	<i>The Ready-Vat Primer</i> , by Kolghut the Imperfect	Hand-written manual for operating the Ready-Vat in Area 3-1. Key passage: "After inserting vital catalyst, apply equal parts fluid and gas, with the number of absorbed arcs their product." Also, scribbled in the margin, "Don't forget to close the lid!"
2	<i>Opaque Crystallography</i> , by Jameson O'Hens	The first chapter describes the subjugation of small sylvan beings by lizard creatures from another planet. However, this opening chapter is a decoy. The rest of the book contains hand-written notes describing a black IOUN stone. PCs recognize these as Kolghut's writing if they've read any other of Kolghut's books. Key passages: "Padavona has acquired a black IOUN stone. I must have it!"; "Destroyed the fool magician and got his stone, but I'm keeping him around just in case. I suspect a slim chance of treachery"; "Need to hide it; the door opens when the gods see the stars as one"; "Now, in the dawn of the Twentieth Aeon, I will use the stone." The latter is the last entry in the book. Remind PCs that the current aeon is the 21st. The segment, "the door opens when the gods see the stars as one" is a hint at the clue contained within the temple (Area 4-4).
3	<i>Refractions from Raindrops in Dimly Lit Areas</i> , by Padavona the Stargazer	Each of these is a false book bound to gold covers. The page interiors have each been bored out to contain a ridged glass vial of dark red liquid. This is a vial of Padavona's blood, which PCs can use in the Ready-Vat (Area 3-1) to reconstruct the magician. The covers' gold content is worth 200 terces. If a PC wishes to steal the vial, they must succeed on a DC 14 Pick Pocket check. Wayfarers can use their dissembler skill for this check. Those untrained in legerdemain make the check with a d10. If a PC fails, Yedwe cocks an eyebrow at the PC but does not prevent the theft, since this does not specifically violate "The Rules" as described above.
4	<i>Homo Sapiens on Argentine Tor</i> , by Padavona the Stargazer	
5	<i>The Collective Dominance of the Rabble</i> , by Padavona the Stargazer	
6	<i>I Never Drink... Wine</i> , by Kolghut the Imperfect	This book is written in blood ink upon pages of flattened embalmed flesh. It is an incomplete autobiography. Key points: Kolghut began as a proto-vat creature; he receives no nourishment from typical foods and requires human blood and flesh to live; his creator transfused his blood with that of a demon; he ate his creator and gained some of his memories; he has tried many times to improve the pattern of his body, but always failed. He used the blood of his victims to create this tower. He met his rival, Padavona the Stargazer, in cabalchor. Everyone thought Padavona's voice was wonderful, but they ridiculed Kolghut for his "vat voice". (The judge should pull additional details from the adventure background if desired.)
7	4224, by Elin Artep	This cover is adorned with a glowing red circumscribed pentagram. The first half details the probably-fictional (judge's discretion) god-kings of Syrinx taking revenge on the Solar Federation. It suggests that the events repeat every two cycles of a stellar conjunction that occurs every two thousand one hundred and twelve years. The second half describes in detail how to cast <i>Radl's Pervasion of the Incorrect Chord</i> . Elin Artep, aka "The Professor", was most formidable when working with a trio, so his spell provenance is that the spell check gains a +1d bonus if the caster has only two allies; otherwise apply a -1d penalty to the spell check.
8	<i>The Specter in the Apparatus</i> , by Gordland Somersting	Red vertical and horizontal line segments adorn this black cover. The pages detail three magicians who collectively crafted aeon-defining spells despite always disagreeing and fighting. They split from each other when their enchantments were most popular. The text contains explicit instructions for casting <i>Phandaal's Critique of the Chill</i> . Somersting's spell provenance is that for 1d3 rounds after casting the incantation, abilities and spells suffer a -1d penalty to their checks if being used to directly aid an ally.



Yedwe charges Kolghut 0.25 indenture points for retrieving titles for non-Kolghuts. For every book he retrieves he telepathically counts down his remaining indenture points from his remaining 1.5 points. All PCs mentally hear each countdown.

- First book: “1.25 indenture points remaining.”
- Second book: “1 indenture point remaining. I can taste freedom.”
- Third book: “0.75 indenture points remaining.”
- Fourth book: “0.5 indenture points remaining. Surely you desire another book.”
- Fifth book: “0.25 indenture points remaining; just one more retrieval.”
- Sixth book: “I’m done, you twisted excuse for a magician! Do you hear me, Kolghut? Good riddance!”

After retrieving the sixth book, Yedwe disappears to another portion of the chronoplex. As a parting gift to the PCs, he releases the swarm of buukwrms to attack them (see below).

**Consequences for Indolence or Violence:** If PCs are lazy enough to solely rely on Yedwe to retrieve books for them, he eventually leaves and summons the buukworm swarm. As mentioned above, if PCs are caught attempting to steal a book, Yedwe summons the buukworm swarm. Even if the PCs succeed in their sleight of hand, Yedwe knows of the thievery—but his contract stipulates that he attack only if he *catches* someone purloining the library’s contents. If PCs threaten Yedwe, he disappears and summons the buukwrms. If the PCs manage to harm Yedwe, he releases the full force of his arcane might. The judge is encouraged to be merciless in this regard.

The best way for the PCs to avoid harm in the library is to retrieve books for themselves (or enough to prevent Yedwe from disappearing). Optimally, the party should ask Yedwe for no more than five books (he runs out of indenture points on the six retrieval) and acquire the remaining three volumes themselves.

**Buukworm Swarm:** Init +4; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 14; MV fly 40’; Act 1d20 special; SP swarm attacks all targets within a 30’ cube, half damage from non-area attacks, feeding frenzy (if the swarm successfully hits all of its targets in a round, it gains a cumulative +1d bonus to its next round’s attacks); SV Fort +0, Ref +10, Will +0; AL N; Crit M/d10.

Buukwrms are flying carnivorous serpentine invertebrates from La-Er. They are unique in that everything they consume is instantly converted to energy; they produce no waste and can consume endlessly. Sandestins typically keep thousands of them as pets and as a means for eliminating rubbish. Yedwe can summon a swarm from his personal collection once per day.

**Yedwe the librarian (quasi-daihak):** Init +6; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3) or spell; AC 14; HD 6d8; hp 39; MV special; Act 1d20; SP telepathic communication, sandestin abilities (invisibility, teleportation, flight, appearance alteration, chro-

noplex travel, indistinguishable time, etc.), immune to magical attacks, “quiet, please” (can enforce magical silence in library at will, DC 24 Will save), spells (cast any level 1, 2, or 3 spell as wizard, +12 spell check, mentally cast without sounds or gestures), summon buukworm swarm (1/day); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N; Crit M/d12.

If Yedwe leaves and the swarm is conquered, PCs can try to obtain additional books as described above.

**Area 2-2 – Vivarium:** *This vivarium shows decades, if not aeons, of neglect. Strange plants and plant-animal fusions are in various states of decay and disintegration. However, there is one thing very much alive—a multi-vined horror covers the walls, ceiling, and floor. Thick green stalks support the vine and radiate from various hubs. Large bulbs protrude from the vines and stalks; these have sharp spikes that open and snap shut, reminiscent of hungry mouths. To that effect, some of them seem to be feeding on the decayed flora, although human skeletons, gnawed clean, are also among the detritus. Near the back of the room, a large flower blooms from this monstrosity, its center drips a viscous purple nectar.*

If someone steps into the room, the gaunvine attacks. A levitating/flying intruder remains unmolested until the plant is touched (including the flower). This ferocious creature is an experiment gone wrong; named “gaunvine” by Kolghut, it has some similarities to Ampridatvir’s nocturnal predators. Approximating its namesake, its vicious bite is sedatory, and its vines clutch sleeping victims to enable more powerful attacks.

The nectar from the gaunvine’s flower imbues miniscules with the ability to quickly grind through crystalline structures (one of the secrets of the tower’s creation). If the PCs manage to subdue the miniscule swarm in Area 3-3, the miniscules bargain for their lives by offering to uncover Kolghut’s spellbook, but they need the PCs to retrieve this nectar. The gaunvine easily consumes any miniscule that enters. Note that destructive area effects (e.g., area-specific spells or thrown flasks of oil) destroy the nectar if the attacker fails a Luck check.

The first PC who searches the skeletal bones must make a Luck check. If successful, they find a pouch of opals worth 100 terces.

A PC who consumes the nectar feels no effects. However, if they subsequently touch a gem (such as one of the aforementioned opals), they must make a Luck check. Failure results in the gem being reshaped by their touch and its value reduced by half. The effect lasts for 1 hour.

**Gaunvine:** Init +4; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus sedation); AC 15; HD 5d8; hp 28; MV 0’; Act 1d20 special; SP attacks all targets in Area 2-2 and up to 15’ beyond, sedation (DC 11 Fort save or drugged sleep for 1 round), sleep strike (uses d30 to clutch and attack sedated targets; crits on natural 20, 24, and 30), incoming non-area attacks suffer -1d damage, nectar is vulnerable to area attacks, immune to mental effects, immune to plant-only and animal-only effects; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; AL N; Crit M/d10.



**Area 3-1 – Vat Chamber:** *This large chamber is obviously a laboratory, though it resembles a jungle. Instead of trees, foliage, and vines, there are vats, multitudinous glassware, and hoses connecting them. Instead of bird calls, you hear frothy bubbling of various liquids. Instead of insects' buzzing, crackling of arcs of energy.*

*Human-sized vats lie among the beakers, tubes, metal rods, and sputtering sparks. Crimson light illuminates the chamber, seeping in through the semi-translucent sanguine walls of the tower.*

This laboratory gives clever and/or lucky PCs vital help and foreshadows events to come. The room serves four functions: (1) PCs can discover that those who donated blood in the foyer have already been cloned; (2) if a vat tank is used properly, a vat-thing can heal themselves (though not without risk); (3) PCs can discover that Kolghut has repeatedly tried and failed to make another version of himself; (4) if the party gained some of Padavona's genetic material from the library (Area 2-1) or sanguinarium (Area 3-2), they can reconstruct him here.

**Area 3-1a – Recently Activated Vats:** The description below assumes that PCs gave blood in Area 1-1, with the number of "warm" vats being equal to the number of PCs who contributed. There are eight vats in total (unless there were more than eight donors). So, if three PCs gave blood, adjust the text so that three vats are ajar and five are closed, accordingly. If none gave blood, then change the description such that all the vats are closed with the beakers and alembics still full of catalytic fluids.

*Warmth radiates from man-sized vats as their steel exteriors bead with condensation. The facial windows reveal a hardened pink foam inside. Each of the containers is slightly ajar and may be easily opened, if desired. The tubes and hoses running from the vats lead to glass beakers and alembics with only traces of liquid remaining within. Other vats appear closed, cold, and unused.*

Vat-thing PCs automatically know that these vats were recently used to create fresh vat-things. Other PCs can deduce this with a DC 8 Intelligence check (if necessary). If opened and inspected, the vats' hardened-foam interiors are shaped like the bodies of the PCs who donated blood in the foyer. If PCs wish to track the vat-things, they can do so with a DC 12 Intelligence check; the tracks lead to Area 3-2. If no PCs donated blood, the vats' interiors look unused and there are no tracks to follow.

**Area 3-1b – Hemispherical Healing Vat:** *This copper cauldron bubbles with frothy, sweet-smelling liquid. Metallic steps lead up to and into the vat. A pole rises on either side of the vat that is made of a hard, smooth, shiny, alien material; each pole is capped with a metal sphere. Arcs of energy spontaneously bridge the two spheres, sometimes in a periodic pulsing pattern, other times randomly.*

A vat-thing PC might disrobe and climb into this vat, expecting to be healed. Unfortunately, there is a loose springy wire at the base of one of the poles that is randomly shorting out the circuit. A PC can discover this problem (DC 10 Find Trap check) and fix it by cutting off the stray wire (DC 10 Disable Trap check), although in this case failure causes the would-

be thief 1d8 shock damage. A wayfarer can accomplish this with a single DC 10 arcane apocrypha check, though they too take damage upon failure. If the short is not fixed, then a vat-thing must make a Luck check when entering the cauldron. If successful, they are healed 1d6 hit points. If failed, they take 1d8 damage. For each round the vat-thing remains in the vat, they must make this Luck check and are subject to the associated damage or healing. Non-vat-things suffer neither bane nor boon. If the mechanism has been fixed, then the healing die is 1d8 and the damage die is 1d3. A vat-thing may use the cauldron for a total of 5 rounds (not necessarily continuous), after which it only does damage unless the Luck check rolled is a natural 1.

Should someone desire to drink the frothing liquid, they taste a mixture of ash, leather, and strawberries. Imbibing is neither harmful nor helpful.

**Area 3-1c – Repository of Failures:** *Four shelves, each containing eight large jars, are built against the wall. A translucent pink liquid fills each jar, inside which floats the body of a 2-foot-tall man. These thirty-two miniature men appear to be based on the same identical design, though each has some obvious deformity: extreme body asymmetry, missing eyes, multiple mouths, backwards appendages, etc.*

These are Kolghut's failed experiments of improving the pattern on which he's based. Unfortunately, the improvements he's made to one part of his pattern inevitably ruin another. If the party has visited Kolghut's bedchamber (Area 4-1), they recognize the bodies being based on the man in that room's painting. If a PC removes a jar, they note a label on the bottom. To determine what the label says, roll 1d100 three times and note the results. The label reads:

*Attempt number [1d100]: Improved pattern at bifurcation number [1d100], but degraded pattern at trifurcation number [1d100].*

A vat-thing PC, due to their protean quintessence, automatically recognizes these men as aborted vat-things. If a PC should try to grow one of these failures in the Ready-Vat (see below), they create a gelatinous vat-horror (also below, treat as dial setting 2) which immediately bursts from the vat and attacks them.

**Area 3-1d – Ready-Vat:** *This lone vat's lid lies open, almost invitingly. The liquid inside is bubbling quietly as a network of glass tubes and rubber hoses cycle gasses and liquids to and from the vessel. Some complicated chain-driven mechanism runs from the vat to large copper rods near the ceiling, where the rods arc energy at 10-second intervals; the chains run around a wheel like that used to lift a portcullis. The vat connects to a metallic plinth that has 3 devices set atop it. The first is an indentation for holding a ridged cylindrical-shaped object, which is missing. The second is a hose that can be connected to one of five gas-filled bottles ranging from one gallon to five gallons. The third is a box with a dial on top that has five settings; a glass tube enters and exits the box carrying a flow of liquid.*

Give the players **Handout A**. The PCs can use the Ready-Vat to create a clone from blood contained in a specially-shaped vial. Typically, the party will try to reconstruct Padavona from vials recovered from the library or the sanguinarium.





The party might also have to reconstruct a PC after facing Kolghut in his sanctum (Area 4-5). No matter how familiar one is with the equipment, an arcane spell check of 15 is required for a successful reconstruction. The caster receives a bonus to the check depending on the setting of the Ready-Vat (see below). Note that the vials of blood found within the adventure are specially treated by the sanguinarium; if PCs fill an empty ridged vial with untreated blood from other subjects (the tower's denizens, summoned animals, etc.), the spell check receives a -15 penalty.

To operate the device, PCs must insert the vial of genetic material into the plinth, attach a hose to one of the gas bottles, adjust the gas and fluid setting, and then use the chains to raise the vat to the ceiling's copper rods, which produce an arc of electricity once per round (10 seconds). The spell check occurs as the vat is lowered. Except for setting the fluid dial, the order of operation isn't important, but electric arcs don't begin until all other elements are in place (vial inserted, hose attached, and vat raised). Since the fluid dial doesn't have an "off" setting, its current value is used as soon everything else is set; PCs shouldn't save that for last.

If PCs have read or brought *The Ready-Vat Primer* from the library, they find the passage, "after inserting vital fluid, apply equal parts fluid and gas, with the number of absorbed arcs their product." Also, scribbled in the margin, "Don't forget to close the lid!" This means that if the one-gallon gas bottle is connected, then the fluid dial should be set to "1" and the PCs should wait to lower the vat until after it receives one arc of electricity. If the two-gallon gas bottle is connected, then the dial should be set to "2" and the PCs should wait to lower the vat until after it receives four arcs of electricity. See the Ready-Vat Settings Table: note that each correct combination yields a bonus to the DC 15 spell check. If the spell check is failed, a gelatinous vat-horror is created which attacks the PCs when the vat is lowered (its strength depends on the

fluid dial's setting); the vial of genetic material is wasted, but PCs can try again if they have another vial.

#### Ready-Vat Settings Table

Size of Gas Bottle	Setting of Fluid Dial	Number of Arcs	Spell Check Adjustment*
1 gallon	1	1	+1
2 gallons	2	4	+3
3 gallons	3	9	+5
4 gallons	4	16	+7
5 gallons	5	25	+9

\* If lid is left open, the spell check receives a -5 penalty. If PCs use blood that hasn't been vialled by the sanguinarium's process, the spell check receives a -15 penalty.

**Gelatinous vat-horror:** Init +3; Atk mucilaginous embrace +2 [+fluid dial setting] melee (1d8 plus esophageal expander) or globular slime +2 [+fluid dial setting] missile fire (1d6, 60' range); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 18 [+fluid dial setting]; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP esophageal expander (DC 14 Strength check or victim is helplessly restrained as jelly-like proboscis penetrates esophagus and expands, each subsequent round victim helplessly takes 1d4 damage unless they make Strength check to escape), half damage from non-magical piercing and slashing weapons; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N; Crit M/d10.

The party might be tempted to abuse the Ready-Vat, making multiple clones of themselves to use as "fodder." As seen in Area 3-2, vat-clones of PCs are violent toward their ancestor PC and attack upon creation, unless the ancestor PC is dead (or soul-trapped in the black IOUN stone). This is a shortcoming of the Ready-Vat process. Benevolent judges could remove such tendencies if a critical success is rolled on the creation spell check.

## PADAVONA'S HELP

If the party is successful in reviving Padavona the Star-gazer, he is quick to thank his rescuers. Being a proud magician, he does not directly reveal the circumstances by which Kolghut bested him, though he is sure to point out that he and Kolghut are famous rivals. Surely the PCs, with even a modicum of education and intelligence, already know of the rivalry! If this is not the case, Padavona assumes the effectuation of some memory-erasing ensorcelment. Regardless, Padavona provides the following answers if questioned appropriately. The judge may have to edit these based on the hook(s) previously provided to the PCs. If the adventure hook did not involve Padavona, then the judge can treat him as an unexpected surprise. However, if the party was led here by Padavona's recorded plea for help (or some other Padavona-motivated device), the judge should emphasize that the party has accomplished what they came to do and reward Luck accordingly. Padavona is parsimonious, and the party needs to negotiate for a reward besides the honor of basking in the magician's renewed brilliance. This is a perfect chance for the judge to incorporate another task for Padavona as part of the "reward." At the very least, he heals the party's wounds (see below) and is significantly more forthcoming about answering the party's inquiries.

- "Who are you?" Padavona is a well-known-to-those-who-know-him-well expert on IOUN stones and has successfully bent an archveult to his will.
- "What's the deal with this tower?" Kolghut is the creator of this tower, which teleports to the earth's surface every 2112 years. It, and many of its guardians,

are made from the preserved blood of his victims.

- "What can you tell us about the tower's magician?" He's the cross between a vat-thing and a demon. Kolghut gains the powers of others by eating their flesh and drinking their blood.
- "What happened to Kolghut?" After centuries of failure, Padavona crafted a black IOUN stone to trap Kolghut's soul. He might be trapped somewhere within this tower.
- "How can we defeat the magician?" It either will take vast power (doubtful in the PCs' cases) or ingenuity and sacrifice. Kolghut might be almost indestructible in his current form, but if a PC touches the black IOUN stone, then Kolghut's consciousness might be exchanged with the PC's, such that the magician occupies the PC's body. This would make him more vulnerable. Obviously a risk, of course.
- "Where is the treasure?" Besides the black IOUN stone, Kolghut always kept an IOUN stone with him.
- "Will you be my patron?" *"Hmm. Possibly. Come find me after you've defeated Kolghut. Whisper my name three times into a murid's ear as it looks upon the stars, and I will answer you."*

After speaking with the PCs, Padavona heals all the party's wounds and summons a sparkling rainbow bubble that encloses him and disappears (along with him) with a resounding pop. He leaves immediately if threatened.

**Area 3-2 – Sanguinarium:** *This room looks like a library for liquids. Rows of shelves line the walls, but instead of books there are racked vials. Some are empty, though most are filled with either sludge or the remaining flakes of something which evaporated long ago. One shelf contains a small iron box. Vast networks of tubes lead out of the walls to the racks. Long ago, these must have filled the vials. In the room's center, a single chair sits at a large table, atop which is a silvered crystal decanter and goblet, both flaked with red residue.*

If one or more PCs donated blood in Area 1-1, amend the above description with the following:

*Standing in front of the table are naked vat-things that look like those of you who bled yourselves in the tower's foyer. Although the body shapes are correct and the intended duplication is obvious, there are noticeable imperfections in these imitations. Each holds a rack of ridged vials full of red fluid. They set these on the table as boned spikes protrude from their arms. They snarl and attack!*

The sanguinarium is an ancient blood bank fed by the foyer. The vials of blood were mixed, tested, and tasted by Kolghut before using them to grow vat-things in Area 3-1. However, in Kolghut's absence, the sanguinarium magically replicates the blood in large quantities and sends some to the

vat chamber while storing the rest here. This relationship between the foyer, sanguinarium, and vat chamber is critical if a PC becomes trapped in the black IOUN stone (see the finale in Area 4-5). The room analyzes the vital fluid and labels vials with enough descriptive text to identify the donors ("tall and lanky, blonde hair, green eyes, very agile, somewhat strong", etc.). Thus, the party can retrieve a PC's blood (as long as they donated in the foyer) and use it to create a body in the Ready-Vat for the imprisoned consciousness to inhabit.

As mentioned above, if PCs donated blood, then their doppelgangers were formed in Area 3-1 and they came here, sensing their own blood. The duplicates can sense their progenitors and cannot be surprised via stealth. They hunger for their creators and attack immediately. Note that they melt into a pool of blood when killed. If spared, they do the same one turn after the end of combat. These were not built to last.

**Vat-doppelganger (variable):** Init +2; Atk bonespike +3 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP knows thyself (gains +1d bonus to hit progenitor, crits on natural 20 or 24), molecumagically unstable (if spared or subdued, the





ALAMANTER DIDN'T REALLY LIKE  
THE WITCH CHASER BLUNKO VERY  
MUCH ANYWAY!





stress of combat kills the doppelganger 1 turn after combat's end), death throes (vomits acidic vat fluid and melts into bloody puddle, slayer must make DC 10 Reflex save or take 1d3 damage); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N; Crit III/d8.

The small iron box is latched closed and has 8 thumb dials that show a single letter at a time. Each dial cycles through six letters: "A", "D", "N", "O", "P", and "V". If the dials are set to spell "PADAVONA", the latch automatically opens. If one tries to open the box with the dials set incorrectly, they are shocked for 1 point of damage and the box remains closed; this ward is perpetual unless dispelled by a spell check result of 18 or higher on *ward portal*, *dispel magic*, or a magician's *force of will*. It can be manually pried open with a DC 16 Strength check. The box contains six slots for ridged vials, but only contains three. These vials of Padavona's blood are for use in the Ready-Vat. Note that the other three were moved to the library by Yedwe.

**Area 3-3 – Miniscule Habitarium:** *This room encompasses a tiny city that sprawls across the floor and up the walls. Miniature gardens and fountains dot the landscape. Fine sculpture and impressive architecture are in abundance. An amazing miniscule metropolis! Thoughts of wonder are interrupted as swarms of tiny people surge out of the buildings and take to the air. They begin to form a dark cloud with the high-pitched scream of a maddened miniature mob.*

This is where Kolghut houses his miniscules, the tower's construction and repair crew. Unfortunately, their magically-enhanced perpetuity for aeons of inactivity has maddened them. The PCs have one round to prevent the miniscules from attacking via a parley. If the PCs claim to be agents of Kolghut, they automatically succeed in the parley. Otherwise, a DC 14 Personality check pacifies them, and they may offer to get the spellbook (see below). If a wayfarer is the negotiator, a rhetorical deed die can be added to the check. If a PC fails the Personality check, or the party stalls for one round, the miniscules surge forth malevolently! Once the miniscules are roused, they pursue a fleeing party and are not hindered by closed doors (unless magically warded, of course).

**Miniscule Swarm:** Init +3; Atk tiny tools +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 4d8; hp 23; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20 special; SP swarm attacks all targets within a 40'x40' space, half damage from non-area attacks, ruthless pursuit (swarm pursues fleeing targets), deafening crit (on critical success, swarm attacks victims' ear canals; victims take 2d4 damage and must pass DC 12 Fort saves or suffer permanent deafness and a -2d penalty to checks requiring hearing [including spell checks]), death throes (when reduced to 0 hp the swarm begs for their lives; see below); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N; Crit special.

Reducing the miniscules to zero hit points abates their frenzy. They will also yield if they fail a morale check (incurred by significantly destroying their city). In either case, they beg for their lives and offer Kolghut's spellbook in exchange. They explain that they haven't seen their master Kolghut for generations, so he mustn't need his grimoire anymore. However, to get the book from the statuary room (Area 4-3),

they need the gaunvine's nectar from the vivarium (Area 2-2). If the PCs have this, or obtain it, the miniscules fly to Area 4-3 and liberate the grimoire from its crystalline shell. If the PCs refuse the miniscules' surrender, the swarm commits suicide. The judge should invoke alignment-based or patron-based penalties if applicable.

**Area 4-0 – Entering the Fourth Floor:** Once the party has departed the lift and arrived on the fourth floor, read the following:

*A strange hum fills the air as you arrive on this floor, high within the tower. Flying with moderate speed is a 5-foot-diameter globe, seemingly made of crimson crystalline chains. Some of these chains extend menacingly as the spherical threat approaches!*

The hemoguardian superglobe patrols this floor and immediately attacks. Both it and the hemoguardians (see below) ignore the miniscules from Area 3-3, but still attack the party.

**Hemoguardian superglobe:** Init +2; Atk chain whip +2 melee (1d8+1, range 10'); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 15; MV fly 20'; Act 2d20; SP half damage from bashing weapons, death throes (3 hemoguardians erupt from superglobe's interior), immune to mental effects; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will +0; AL N; Crit III/d8.

When the superglobe is destroyed, read the following:

*The strange orb erupts, sending crimson crystalline shrapnel outward! Three dark red gooey globs hover within the explosion's center, undulating as if bubbling from within. They dart through the air with surprising alacrity and attack!*

**Hemoguardians (3):** Init +3; Atk caustic glob +3 missile fire (1d6 acid plus goo growth); AC 12; HD 1d10; hp 6 each; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP goo growth (a target hit by multiple caustic globs in one round takes additional acid damage equal to the number of globs), half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, immune to mental effects; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N; Crit M/d6.

The party may opt to flee from the globe or guardians; the former is much easier to evade. Regardless, these constructs are tireless and unbounded in their pursuit. They will wait outside a closed door if their quarry (the party) retreats to a room.

**Area 4-1 – Bed Chamber:** *There is little doubt as to this room's functionality. A huge bed follows a portion of the slanted wall. The bedsheets are strangely translucent, and a viscous red liquid slowly bubbles within the mattress which gently undulates in response. Paintings of various sizes hang within the chamber; all feature the same distinguished man who, despite eyes at different heights and asymmetric limbs, seems frighteningly powerful. Seven blankly-staring, androgynous vat-things dressed in sequined half-shirts and flared silk breeches are tied to the wall with loosely-knotted ribbons. A silver bell and hammer rest upon a jewelry case made of exotic wood, in a similar style to the armoire across the chamber. Lush crimson velvet hangs in flowing folds from the ceiling, from which a golden tasseled rope dangles in a corner.*

Kolghut's bed chamber is possibly unlike others the PCs have encountered. There are some features that may be found mundane, some fascinating, and some deadly.





The mundanities include the paintings and the tassled rope. The paintings all depict Kolghut in various phases of his rise to power. PCs who saw the failed duplicates in the vat chamber (Area 3-1c) or the statue in Area 4-3 recognize this man as the same. The judge should feel free to mine this adventure's background to describe scenes in the paintings, or simply make them up. The tassled rope, if pulled, retracts the crimson velvet hanging above and reveals a mirrored ceiling. Pulling the rope again resituates the velvet.

Kolghut preferred to be dressed and adorned by his chosen, so both the jewelry case and the armoire are trapped and magically keyed to the dancers (see below). With a DC 12 Find Trap check, a PC examining the lock of either piece deduces that the lock is pristine and has never seen the use of a key; no mundane trap is apparent. Those with arcane talents examining the case and armoire can detect a malevolent enchantment (DC 12 spell check); a wayfarer may discern the same with a DC 12 Arcane Aprocrypha check. A PC with superior skill (DC 14 Disable Trap or Arcane Apocrypha check) can deduce from the tiniest hints of skin oils near the doors that one of the dancers must open the containers. Likewise, spell checks of 14 or higher for *mending* or *ward portal* dispel one of the magical traps (unless otherwise noted in the spell, the check applies to either case or wardrobe, not both). Finally, a magician's *force of will* check of 14 or higher will shatter the enchantment. The traps are identical, so if one is successfully disabled, allow a +2d bonus to checks to exploit the second. Triggering the trap causes purplish black bolts of lightning to target all living creatures (except the dancers) within 15', inflicting 2d5 damage (DC 14 Reflex save for half; results of 20 or higher take no damage). The enchantment is *not* dispelled if triggered. PCs may opt to shatter the containers. To damage either, PCs must hit AC 10. The jewelry case has 8 hp, the armoire has 16 hp. Each strike that does damage triggers the trap.

If successfully opened by skill or force, the jewelry case has various adornments of La-rubies, Yu-sapphires, jeweled asm fangs, and sailing worm pearls. If the PCs salvage all and carefully sell, they can gain up to 1,000 terces. The armoire contains breeches, tunics, robes, hats, gloves, slippers, and boots, all fitted to Kolghut (though they magically resize to anyone donning them). The craftsmanship is superb and the materials rare. The collection may be sold for 300 terces, though discerning magicians and collectors might pay more.

PCs who inspect the bed find a 1'-square mirror leaning against it. The undulations of the fluid within the mattress have no discernible pattern. Actually, the fluidic bed is not a bed at all but an imprisoned demon from La-Er. Any witch passing a DC 5 Intelligence check recognizes the bed as a demon. Kolghut sleeps on it to assert his dominance. Should a mischievous PC attempt to puncture the bed, it forms a pseudopod and retaliates, attacking with 1d20+10 and doing 1d8+1 damage. The demon-prisoner is warded against damage both physical and magical, but only defends itself against puncturing and other acts of disrespectful malicious intent. Those PCs who are fluent in demonic languages may attempt to communicate with the demon, who reveals that

it hasn't seen Kolghut for hundreds, if not thousands of years. However, the magician must be alive—otherwise the demon would have been freed. If treated respectfully, the demon allows a single PC to a "healing rest" upon it for one hour (heals 2 HD). It can also answer questions about the bed chamber, but not about anything outside of the room.

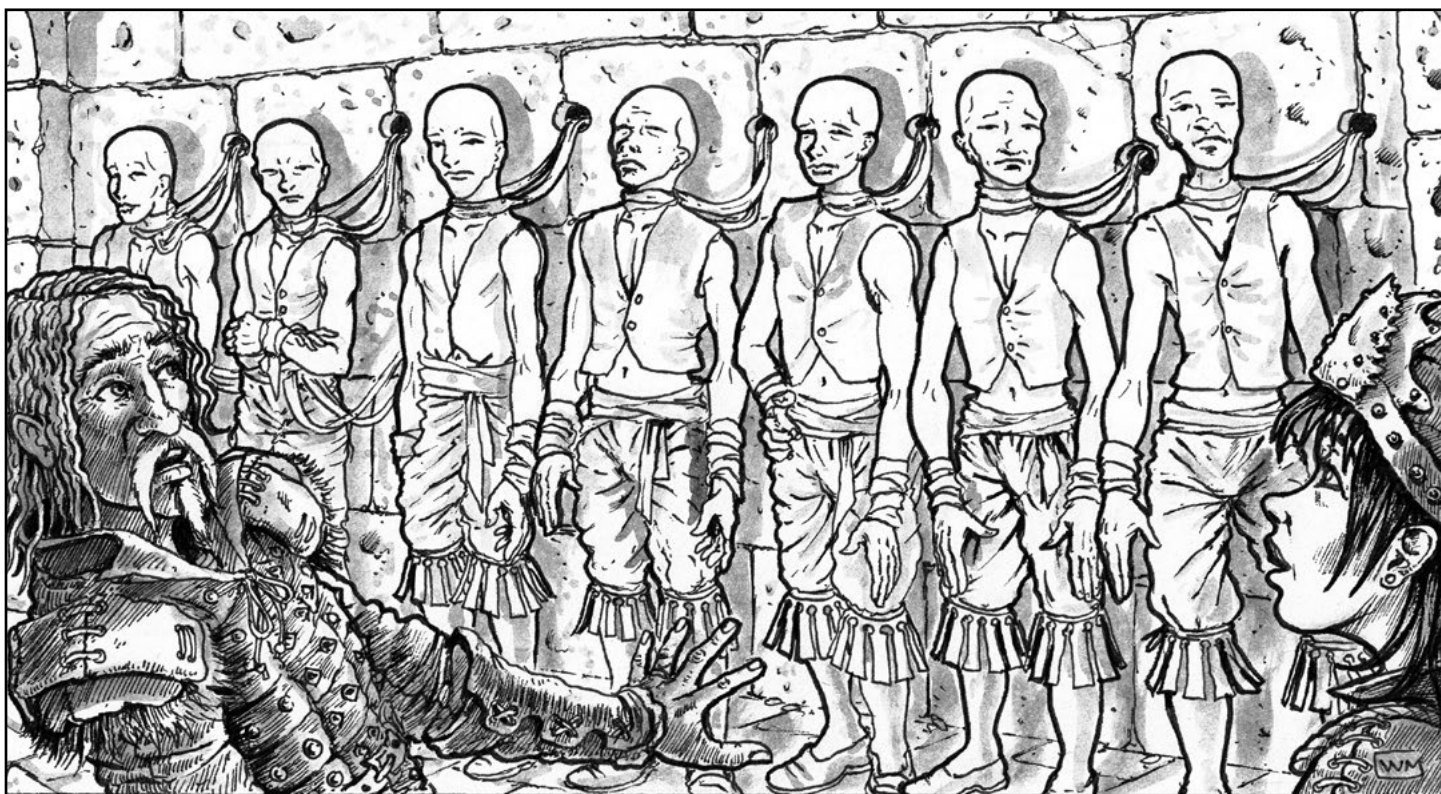
**The dancers:** The vat-things are all trained in the Fourteen Silken Movements from Kauchique and are dressed accordingly. They remain dormant and tied unless one is released or the silver bell is rung with the silver hammer (instruments worth 20 terces each). In either case, the ribbons magically untie, a Kauchiquian flute melody fills the room, and the seven begin their dance. But this isn't a spectator sport—at least, not for everyone. The dancers choose one PC, perhaps with the highest Personality, the lowest Luck, or some other criterion such as wearing a silken garment from the wardrobe (judge's discretion). Regardless, this PC must join the dance or the vat-things attack the party (see below).

The Dance of the Fourteen Silken Movements is composed of four "gyrations" subdivided into a dyad-dyad-quartic-heptad structure.

1. The first gyration consists of two alluring movements; it requires a DC 8 Personality check to perform successfully (wayfarers may apply their dissembler bonus).
2. The second gyration consists of two different fusions of squatting and push-up motions; it requires a DC 9 Strength check to perform successfully (mighty deed and martial vat-thing bonuses apply).
3. The third gyration has 4 different movements of balance and limbular independence (there's an especially challenging clockwise rotation of the left arm while rotating the left leg counterclockwise). This requires a DC 10 Agility check to perform successfully.
4. The fourth gyration has 6 movements which combine the previous 3 gyrations with saltations, bursts of speed, whirling, and other cardiovascular challenges. It requires a DC 11 Stamina check to perform successfully. (A magician may use force of will to help themselves here.)

Witches can use their *transfer vitality* power to aid the PC dancer in the second (Strength), third (Agility), and fourth (Stamina) gyrations: the dancer may add 1 point to their ability check for each point of the relevant ability score drained. Wayfarers and thieves can, of course, burn Luck as necessary to help themselves in the dance. Finally, paragon vat-thing PCs are at ease in the arts and make these checks with a +1d bonus.

**Succeeding in the dance:** If the PC successfully completes the Fourteen Silken Movements, then the dancers bow in supplication, re-bind themselves to the wall, and become dormant—except for one, Gratha-Mahmar, who remains to follow that PC's commands. She understands one-word commands along with gestures, but does not willingly endanger herself and does not leave the tower unless Kolghut is destroyed. This provides an interesting test of PC alignment for the judge to monitor. More importantly though,



Gratha-Mahmar can be commanded to touch the black IOUN stone in the sanctum (Area 4-5), saving a PC from having to make that sacrifice. If the PC doesn't sacrifice her, the judge is encouraged to make her a full-fledged NPC to accompany the party and/or provide a hook for another adventure.

**Failing the dance:** If the dance is failed, the PC refuses to dance, or the dancers are molested in any way, the dancers attack. If the failure is on a subsequent dance of the Fourteen Silken Movements (e.g., to scribe the spell, as below), Gratha-Mahmar neither attacks nor defends against the other six. The vat-things fight to the death using their silk belts with a secret sabre technique.

**Kauchique Dancers (6 or 7):** Init +2; Atk silken belt-sabre +2 melee (1d6+1); AC 13; HD 1d8+2; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP improved critical threat range (19-20); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N; Crit II/d10.

**Deciphering the hidden spell:** If an arcane caster looks at the ceiling's mirror during the dance, have them make a DC 12 spell check. If successful, they recognize that the dancers' feet are tracing out arcane instructions, but they seem backwards or reversed. If the caster uses the square mirror by the bed (or any other mirror, for that matter) to look at the ceiling's mirror, the dancers' feet are seen to be describing how to cast *Panguire's Triumphant Displasms* with one of Kolghut's provenances: if the caster drinks a waterskin's worth of fresh blood for the round preceding casting, the spell check gains a +1d bonus. The caster can transcribe the instruction, but they must do so on a subsequent rendition of the Fourteen Silken Movements. A dancer who has previously successfully performed the dance succeeds automatically on successive participations.

**Area 4-2 – The Hemoguardian Pool:** *This chamber's floor is a viscous, red, slowly-bubbling pool. The air has a slight coppery taste.*

Hemoguardians (as seen in Area 4-0) rest here. Have the first PC to enter this room make a Luck check. If they succeed, nothing happens. The hemoguardians attack if the PC fails the Luck check, or if the pool is disturbed in any way. The creatures ignore the miniscules from Area 3-3 and Gratha-Mahmar from Area 4-1, but still attack PCs.

If the hemoguardians attack, read the following:

*Six dark red gooey undulating globs rise from the pool. They look like those you encountered when you entered this floor. They attack immediately!*

**Hemoguardians (6):** Init +3; Atk caustic glob +3 missile fire (1d6 acid plus goo growth); AC 12; HD 1d10; hp 6 each; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP goo growth (a target hit by multiple caustic globs in one round takes additional acid damage equal to the number of globs), superglobe (3 undamaged hemoguardians can devote their actions to forming a superglobe; if they remain undamaged for the round, they succeed), half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, immune to mental effects; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N; Crit M/d6.

Three of the hemoguardians attack the PCs while three hover over the pool's depths to form a hemoguardian superglobe. If they remain undamaged for the first round, they form the superglobe and attack (see below). When it is destroyed, it pulls liquid from the pool to revert to the three undamaged hemoguardians as in Area 4-0.

**Hemoguardian superglobe:** Init +2; Atk chain whip +2 melee (1d8+1, range 10'); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 15; MV fly 20'; Act



2d20; SP half damage from bashing weapons, death throes (3 hemoguardians erupt from superglobe's interior), immune to mental effects; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will +0; AL N; Crit III/d8.

The pool is 30' deep and causes 1d3 rounds of acid damage per round of exposure. However, those who must know what is at the pool's bottom are rewarded by finding an acid-etched human skeleton with a single violet glass hemisphere attached to one of its eye sockets. This is a single *Eye of the Overworld* (see Chapter III of *Intimate Anatomy of Several Creatures and Personages of the Twenty-First Aeon*). With respect to a wayfarer's arcane apocrypha, this is an artifact (DC 20).

**Area 4-3 – Statuary Room:** *This chamber is strangely sparse. A marble lectern faces a man-sized statue of a distinguished magician who seems irreparably flawed yet immensely powerful. His eyes are at uneven heights with respect to his nose, but they radiate an intellect nonpareil. Similarly, his arms and legs deviate significantly from the symmetric, although their strength is undoubtable. The sculpted man holds a large book and studies it intently. The statue's material is crystalline, much like the tower's exterior.*

PCs who have observed the failed vat-things in the vat chamber (Area 3-3) and/or seen the paintings in the bed chamber (Area 4-1) recognize this statue as the same man: Kolghut. His spellbook is safely encased in the crystalline statue. For someone other than Kolghut, extracting the book is extremely difficult. If the miniscules have been granted the nectar (see Area 3-3) they can precisely carve around the grimoire such that it falls free without damage. The statue is immune to mundane damage, so the PCs must be creative. However, spell combinations can succeed, such as *magic missile* combined with *protective force manipulation*. Higher-level spells such as *shatter* may also help. Regardless, for every destructive spell there should be protective measures to safeguard the grimoire. If there are no protective ensorcelments, the grimoire must make an unmodified Fortitude save against the destructive spell check (or attack roll from a magical weapon, etc.). Every point by which the save fails counts as one spell lost. So, if a *magic missile* spell check result is 22, and the unmodified Fortitude save rolled is 18, the grimoire is missing 4 randomly determined spells.

The spell book is written on fragments of hard crystorrhoid skins (exoskeleta) of asms. The spells and provenances contained are:

- *The Excellent Prismatic Spray* (written in Demonic with Provenance 5)
- *Magic missile* (written in the Language of the Sixteenth Aeon with Provenance 2)
- *Magic shield* (written in Archveult with Provenance 5)
- *Panguire's Triumphant Displasms* (written in the Language of the Sixteenth Aeon with Provenance 1)
- *Word of command* (written in Demonic with Provenance 3)
- *Lotus stare* (written in Angelic with Provenance 5)
- *Nythuul's porcupine coat* (written in Archveult with Provenance 4)

Each of the above spells hold one of Kholgut's provenances as listed. The judge may reassign these to particular spells if desired.

**Provenance 1:** If the caster drinks a waterskin's worth of fresh blood for the round preceding casting, the spell check gains a +1d bonus.

**Provenance 2:** After casting the spell, the caster must drink a full waterskin's worth of fresh blood before being able to cast any spell again.

**Provenance 3:** The caster weeps tears of blood for 1 hour after casting the spell.

**Provenance 4:** If the caster suffers a wound within 1d6 rounds after casting, they bleed profusely for an additional 1d4 points of damage.

**Provenance 5:** This spell gains its power from another person. The first time it is cast, the caster must choose someone from whom the spell draws power; unwilling victims must pass a Will save (DC 12 + caster level) to resist. If the caster uses *force of will* or *spellburn*, the ability drain must come from the bonded person rather than the caster. The person must be alive to drain. The caster can choose a new source only if the old one dies.

**Area 4-4 – Temple of the Age of Glow:** *This chamber seems like the inside of a giant, strangely-cut ruby. Its triangular floor plan and tall ceiling are reminiscent of a prism, but there is only scarlet illumination provided by the crystalline walls. Ancient-looking statues stand in each corner. All three figures stare at an imaginary point chest-high in the room's center, where the floor bears a strange bas-relief of a closed eye. Five glowing orbs, each a different color, size, and brightness, hover in seemingly random positions about the room.*

**If PCs examine the statue left of the entrance:** *A woman stands with arms spread, feathers stretching from them like wings. She wears a strange headdress crowned with two branches that hold an upright circular disk and an arched cobra over her brow.*

**If PCs examine the statue right of the entrance:** *A bearded man wearing simple robes holds an open book outward in his left hand, but the pages are blank. In his right hand he cradles a lamb. A large ring hovers over his head.*

**If PCs examine the statue across from the entrance:** *A person sits cross-legged on the floor wearing only a loincloth. Although their torso seems masculine, their head and face seem feminine. They smile slightly as their eyes appear half open. Left and right hands rest palm upward on their respective knees, with middle finger and thumb touching to form a ring.*

**If PCs examine the closed eye on the floor:** *On the floor, beneath the spot in the room's center where all three statues seem to be looking, is a bas-relief of a closed eye enclosed in a triangle, concentric with the walls, with rays streaming outward. You note that the lashes form a handle, as if the lid could be opened manually.*

This temple serves a dual purpose: it is dedicated to three prominent deities from the Age of Glow, and it contains the keys to open the portal to Kolghut's sanctum.



**If PCs examine the glowing orbs:** The dark blue orb is 10 inches in diameter; it is the brightest and radiates the most heat. The light blue orb is 8 inches in diameter and is slightly dimmer and cooler than the dark blue orb. The yellow orb is 6 inches in diameter and is slightly dimmer and cooler than the light blue orb. The orange orb is 4 inches in diameter and is slightly dimmer and cooler than the yellow orb. The red orb is 2 inches in diameter and is the dimmest and coldest of them all.

These orbs are the stars referred to by Jameson O'Hens' *Opaque Crystallography* within the library; the relevant passage is, "the door opens when the gods see the stars as one." PCs can safely handle the orbs and place them in the air anywhere they wish. If removed from the room, placed in a container, left against the walls or floor, etc., they teleport back to their original positions. Moreover, if they are damaged, they teleport back to their original positions undamaged. Note that the orbs can only be manipulated if the floor's eye is closed. If the eye is opened, they remain fixed in place; see "Opening the portal" below for all consequences of opening the eye.

Each star has an equatorial seam that is not difficult to detect (DC 12 Intelligence or Find Trap check). If a player says they are specifically looking for a seam, crack, or opening, they can make their check with a d30. Once one seam is found, the rest may be found automatically. If pulled apart, the orbs reveal themselves to be thin shells that are hollow inside. A wayfarer who passes a DC 15 Arcane Apocrypha check recognizes the orbs as magical keys that can open a portal.

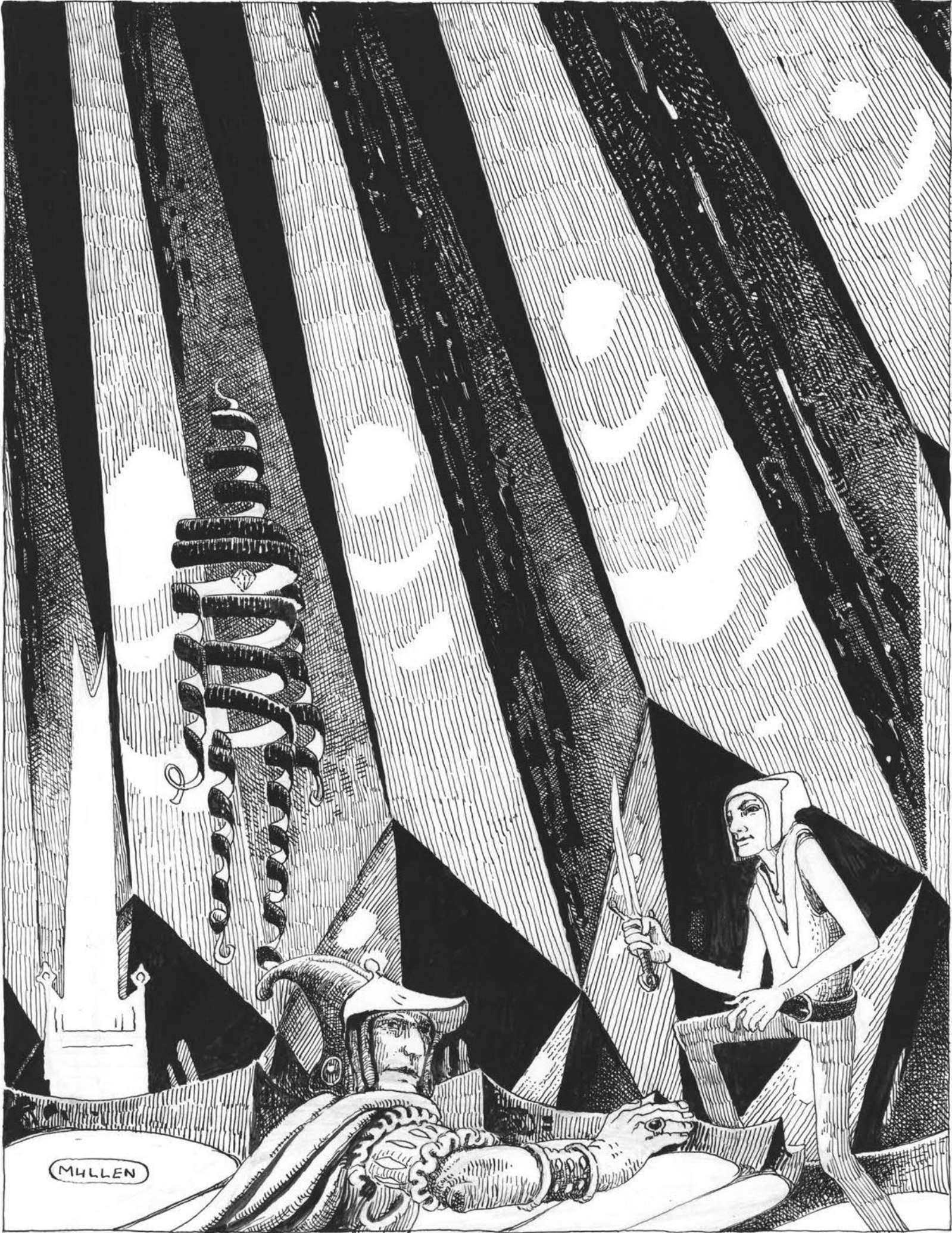
**Opening the portal:** To open the portal, the PCs must arrange the orbs such that "the gods see the stars as one." The only way to do this is to place each of the orbs nested inside one another: red in orange, orange in yellow, yellow in light blue, light blue in dark blue. When all are nested correctly the outer orb changes from dark blue to a radiant silver. The silver orb must be positioned where the three statues are looking, directly above the closed eye in the floor. Finally, the floor's eye must be opened. When the lashes are pulled, a ray of searing light streams from the floor's eye and strikes the nested orbs, which grow into a 10' diameter sphere of crimson magical energy. This is a portal which carries the PCs to Kolghut's sanctum (Area 4-5) and his IOUN stones.

If the floor's eye is opened and the orbs are placed incorrectly, the party is ensqualmed by the gods, with each squalm becoming more powerful than the previous one. Read aloud the corresponding result from the table below. A witch can negate any of these squalms for the entire party by casting *ensqualm* with a spell check equal to or greater than the Will save DC.

Attempt #	Failure result	Will Save	Damage
1	<i>The statues speak! "Kolghut came from vat's wet womb, yet you take first step to your tomb! Wounds are no more when you open the door."</i>	15	1 hp
2	<i>The statues speak! "The young vat-thing on blood did feed, yet you lose more blood that you will need! Wounds are no more when you open the door."</i>	16	2 hp
3	<i>The statues speak! "He ate his creator and gained his skill, yet your bodies will soon lie still! Wounds are no more when you open the door."</i>	17	3 hp
4	<i>The statues speak! "Magician grand built tower red, yet you seem to be almost dead! Wounds are no more when you open the door."</i>	18	5 hp
5	<i>The statues speak! "The stargazer tempted him with stone of black, yet from this death you don't come back! Wounds are no more when you open the door."</i>	19	8 hp
6+	<i>The statues speak! "He used the stone, but it was a trap, now lay you down for eternal nap! Wounds are no more when you open the door."</i>	20	13 hp

Since the orbs cannot be manipulated while the eye is open, the eye must be re-closed for a subsequent attempt. When the portal is opened, those PCs who are still alive have their squalms lifted as well as the associated health restored. Those who are dead or bleeding out from damage are not healed.





The beam coming out of the floor's eye can hasten moribundity; a PC touching the beam takes 2d8 damage (DC 14 Reflex save for half).

**Area 4-5 – Kolghut's Sanctum:** *Stepping through the portal, you emerge in a chamber that is best described as the interior of an upside-down faceted ruby. The flat top is the floor and the pointed bottom is a vaulted, pointed ceiling. The room's illumination is reminiscent of the foyer: a kaleidoscopic spectrum of vermillion, caused by semi-translucent crimson sludges slowly dancing within the many facets. An ornate chair sits against a wall and has a small mound of clothing upon it. More interesting, however, is the shiny black plum-sized stone hovering chest-high in the room's center...and the ghost that orbits this stone. It whips and spins like a ribbon manipulated by a dancing acrobat. You hear the word, "FINALLY!" echo in the chamber, followed by the syllables of an ensorcelment being intoned.*

Note that the portal the party used to get here is one-way. There is no exit from this chamber unless Kolghut is defeated.

Kolghut's ghost is bound to the black IOUN stone and has been powerless to interact with the PCs until now. He's maddened by the seemingly countless centuries he's been a prisoner in his own sanctum and is in no mood to parley. His strategy is simple: by necessity or enchantment, get a PC to touch the IOUN stone. He memorizes spells like a magician, but he is not bound by PC class restrictions. Instead of amplification or *force of will* abilities, Kolghut is able to absorb a target's vitality by "eating" living flesh (drainburn). Once enough has been accumulated, he can boost his memorized spell results (augmentation). These are abilities fundamental to his spirit; his abilities to absorb memories and experiences by eating victims are tied to his body (which must be recreated).

**Kolghut's ghost:** Init +4; Atk spectral bite +4 melee (1d3 plus drainburn) or spell; AC 14; HD 6d8; hp 33; MV fly 50'; Act 2d20; SP memorized spells (treat as CL 4; see below), drainburn, augmentation (uses drainburn to increase otherwise fixed spell checks), immune to non-magical weapons, undead traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8; AL C; Crit U/d10.

**Drainburn:** When Kolghut bites a foe, the victim must make a Fort save vs. a DC equal to the modified attack roll or lose 1d3 points from one of Strength, Agility, or Stamina (randomly determined). Kolghut stores these points for augmentation.

**Un-dead traits:** In his incorporeal form, Kolghut is immune to sleep, charm, paralysis, and other mental effects, as well as critical hits, cold damage, disease, and poison.

**Rote memorized spells:** (level 1) *The Excellent Prismatic Spray* [18], *magic missile* [16; manifests as bloody projectiles], *magic shield* [20; manifests as a globe of misty red droplets], *Panguire's Triumphant Displasms* [18], *word of command* x2 [12; manifests as omnidirectional sound with bloody-lettered captioning floating in the air]; (level 2) *lotus stare* [20], *Nythuul's porcupine coat* [18]. The provenances listed in Kolghut's spellbook do not apply to him during this encounter; the influence of the black IOUN stone has stripped him of these peculiarities.

Kolghut's strategy as a ghost:

- His first action is to cast *magic shield* as protection from *magic missile*, then uses his bite attacks to amass points of drainburn.
- If he takes significant damage from a single PC, he casts *magic missile*, *The Excellent Prismatic Spray*, or *Panguire's Triumphant Displasms*, with or without augmentation as the judge desires. However, he prefers to save these spells (along with *Nythuul's porcupine coat*) for when he transfers to a new body, if possible.
- After accumulating 8 points of drainburn, Kolghut spends them to augment *word of command* to a spell check result of 20. The ghost commands the target to "grab" and gestures to the black IOUN stone.
- If the target resists the stone's possession, Kolghut returns to bite attacks to accumulate another 8 drainburn points to cast his second word of command the same way as his first.
- If both attempts with *word of command* fail, he immediately follows with a non-augmented lotus stare. If this fails, then he fights mercilessly to kill the PCs.

As a ghost, Kolghut can be turned by a sufficiently impressive cleric (*turn unholy* check of 24 or greater, and Kolghut gets a Will save). If turned, the specter cowers for the requisite amount of time before resuming attacks. During this time the party can inspect the room's contents (see below) and the black IOUN stone, but they cannot leave.

**If a PC touches the black IOUN stone:** Unless the party has a strong magical arsenal, Kolghut's immunity to normal attacks may demand drastic measures. The only way to kill him may be to kill the body to which he transfers. Consequently, even if the party has resisted Kolghut's commands, a PC may voluntarily grab the stone. Touching the IOUN stone results in an opposed Will save roll between the PC (who might have Luck to burn) and Kolghut (who has a +8 modifier). If the PC wins the roll, Kolghut remains bound to the stone and the PC suffers no ill effects for as long as they maintain contact. If they break contact and touch the stone again, another contested saving throw is necessary. If Kolghut wins the roll, the PC's spirit is bound within the stone and Kolghut possesses the PC's body. If another touches the stone, the souls are exchanged between stone and body. If both souls are willing, the transfer ensues; if they are not, then an opposed Will save is necessary. The newly-bound spirit does not become a ghost like Kolghut...that takes aeons of effort.

**If Kolghut possesses a PC:** The PC's body possessed by Kolghut is immediately healed of all wounds, ability damage, etc., and gains an additional 12 hit points. Kolghut loses his un-dead traits and must use the PC's Fortitude and Reflex save modifiers, but keeps his own +8 to Will saves. Kolghut has access to the PC's memories and can use the PC's abilities as its former soul could. Unless he is out of spells to cast, Kolghut prefers to avoid possessing those in heavy armor. He carries over his own memorized spells (those that



remain) as well as his drainburn and augmentation abilities (though drainburn requires eating flesh, and unlike the spectral bite, this requires a full round in combat).

In his new body, Kolghut does his best to kill the remaining PCs. At soon as possession occurs, one sanguine sludge seeps from the walls, eager to aid its newly-corporealized master. Once per hour, Kolghut can summon 1 additional sanguine sludge from the castle's walls.

**Sanguine sludge:** Init -2; Atk pseudopod +4 melee (1d6 plus exsanguinating heal); AC 10; HD 2d12; hp 13; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP exsanguinating heal (victim must make DC 12 Fort save or lose blood to the sludge, which heals it the same amount as damage done), half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, resistant to *magic missile* (d100 saving throw regardless of whether save is allowed), immune to mental effects; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will +0; AL N; Crit M/d8.

**Defeating Kolghut without using the stone:** If a party manages to defeat the ghost without resorting to using the stone, then Kolghut's consciousness is still trapped within. The "ghost" is a spectral manifestation of that consciousness. When the ghost is destroyed, the PCs see it sucked into the stone. If the black IOUN stone is left alone, the ghost reappears after a week. The only way to be truly rid of Kolghut (i.e., put the ghost to rest) is to get his consciousness into another body, then kill that body. If a PC should touch the IOUN stone, even after the ghost is defeated, then a soul exchange can occur as described above.

**Charming Kolghut:** Despite his impressive +8 Will save modifier, the freshly-corporealized Kolghut might be charmed by a particularly skilled (or lucky) PC. If this occurs, Kolghut does his master's bidding as per the spell's description. A charmed Kolghut is quite helpful—but only if asked! He could make the sanctum's portal two-way such that the PCs can escape, explain how to destroy the IOUN stone (see below), give details on his glove's powers, etc. Of course, he does not volunteer such information to his master.

**Returning Kolghut to the Stone:** If the corporealized Kolghut touches the black IOUN stone, as a result of a charmed command, a Mighty Deed of Arms, etc., his consciousness automatically swaps into the stone, which extinguishes any pre-existing spell's effects (such as *charm person*). It takes him one year to reform as a ghost if this happens.

**The black IOUN stone:** Like all IOUN stones, the black stone is nigh indestructible. A PC must have access to extradimensional materials and forces to shatter it. Unlike other IOUN stones, a black IOUN stone is destroyed by touching it with a dormant IOUN stone (see below). A feedback loop of explosive proportions ensues, destroying both stones and causing 2d6 damage to all within 10' of contact (DC 16 Reflex save to avoid). Any spirit within the stone is utterly annihilated. When in possession of a soul, the stone is immovable except by extradimensional or supernatural means.

**The ornate chair:** The chair's mound of clothing consists of robe, padded armor, a padded case of filled vials, blood-soaked boots, and a single red glove. The robe and armor

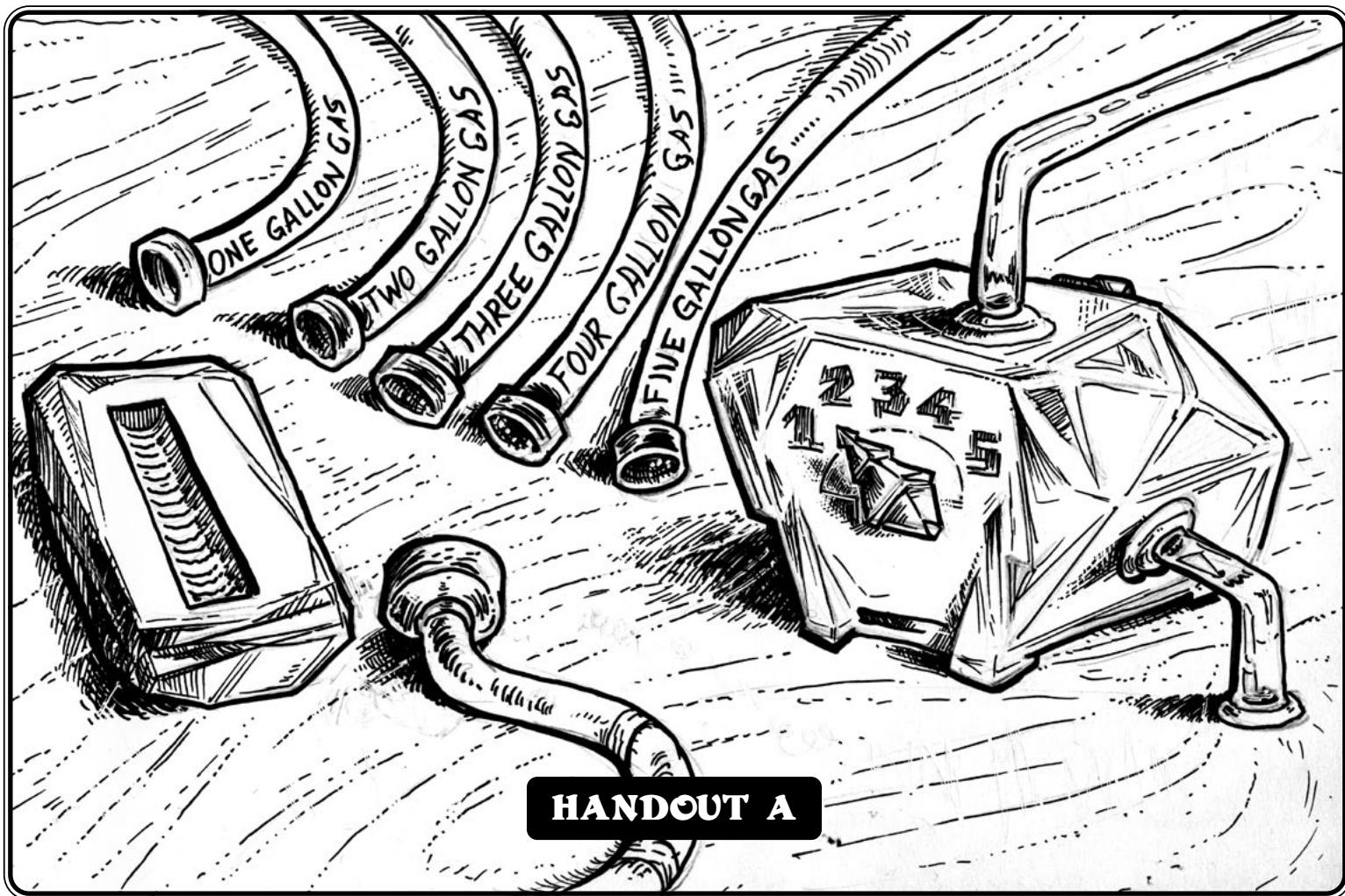
are mundane. The case contains 5 ridged glass vials akin to those found in the library. They are each filled with a dark red liquid that suspends gray globules. These vials are material for making five copies of Kolghut's body. The boots are also mundane, although stuffed in the toe of the left boot is a dormant IOUN stone. If found, this can either be bound to a willing PC (see Chapter III of *Intimate Anatomy of Several Creatures and Personages of the Twenty-First Aeon*) or it can be used to destroy the black IOUN stone (see above). The single red glove is *Amberlin's Audacious Digits*, an arcane device coveted by magicians.

**Amberlin's Audacious Digits:** This scarlet velvet glove is right-handed and magically adjusts its size to comfortably fit any manus. The Audacious Digits enable magicians to store 5 levels worth of memorized spells (five level 1 spells, one level 2 and two level 3 spells, etc.). However, there's a catch: for each spell level stored, the caster suffers a cumulative +1d penalty to their down amplification die. Moreover, whenever they cast a spell while wearing the glove, they must make a Will save vs. a DC equivalent to their own rote magic spell check or make a forced amplification roll—and this applies to any spell, not just those stored in the Audacious Digits. A magician may only utilize the stored spells while wearing the glove; if they take the glove off (or it is removed by other means), the stored spells are lost. If a PC of another class dons the glove, they must pass a DC 20 Will save or they cannot remove it unless aided by a magician; a *remove curse* spell allows a re-roll of this save. If the wearer is untrained in the arcane arts (d10 for an arcane spell check; this applies to clerics but not witches), the glove imposes a -1d penalty to all actions involving the right hand. Some magistoartifactologists contend that Amberlin constructed a left-handed sister glove, though the details are uncertain. With respect to a wayfarer's arcane apocrypha, this is an artifact (DC 20).

## EPILOGUE

If the PCs succeed in defeating Kolghut, a portal back to the Temple of the Age of Glow (Area 4-4) appears, having been suppressed by Kolghut's will. The PCs will have likely gained an IOUN stone, a magic glove, and other treasures. Perhaps Padavona will be a new patron for the party. It is up to the judge whether the PCs keep the tower or it begins to slowly melt with Kolghut's demise. If the PCs keep it, the judge is advised to invent a complicated somewhat random form of navigation with expensive fuel. It might even need to feed on an ongoing, or at least periodic, supply of blood for maintenance.

Finally, it is possible that one of the PC's souls becomes stuck in the black IOUN stone, their body destroyed by the slaying of Kolghut. If the PC had the foresight to give blood in the foyer, the party can find it in the sanguinarium and make a new body in the Ready-Vat following the same process as that used for creating a body for Padavona. If the PC did not donate blood, the party will have to find a creative solution!



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