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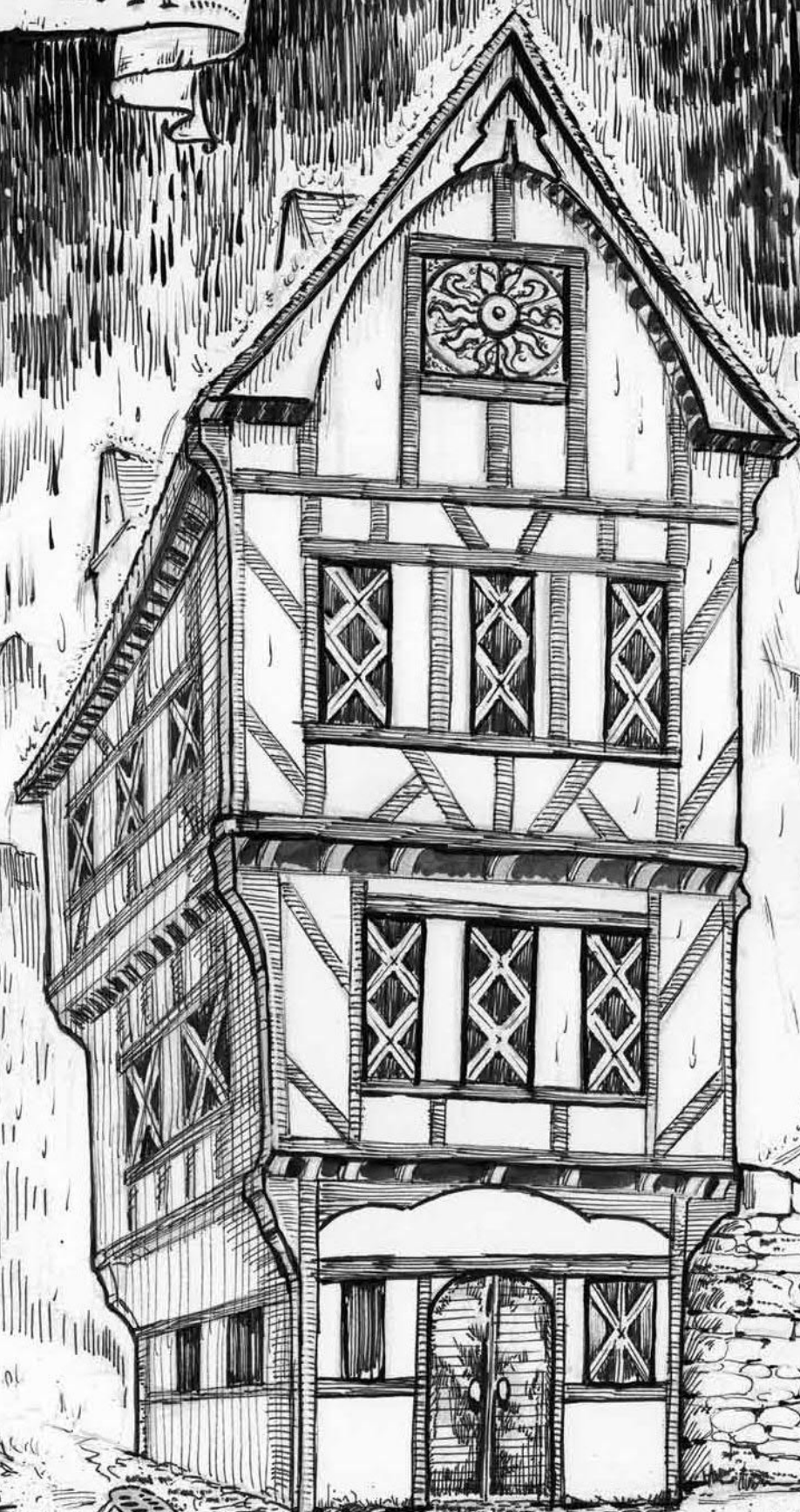
DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

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Welcome to Free RPG Day 2012, a grand tradition inaugurated by Goodman Games in 2007. As one of the creators of the concept and the very first publisher to sign up for the very first Free RPG Day, Goodman Games is proud to take part in the sixth year of this great event supporting RPGs in general and brick-and-mortar game stores in particular.

Earlier this year, Goodman Games released the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game, better known as DCC RPG. The Free RPG Day supplement you hold in your hands contains two short adventures designed for use with DCC RPG.

In addition, this volume introduces the Mystery Map Adventure Design Competition, an exciting challenge for aspiring dungeon designers. This is your chance to pocket \$1,000 and have your dungeon design published by Goodman Games! For complete details, see page 8.

The two adventures herein are as follows:

- *The Undulating Corruption*, a level 5 expedition to cure a wizard of corruption.
- *The Jeweler that Dealt in Stardust*, a level 3 heist where clever thieves can excel.

And now: Let the adventures begin!

If you like what you see here, be sure to look at other DCC RPG offerings from your friendly local game store!

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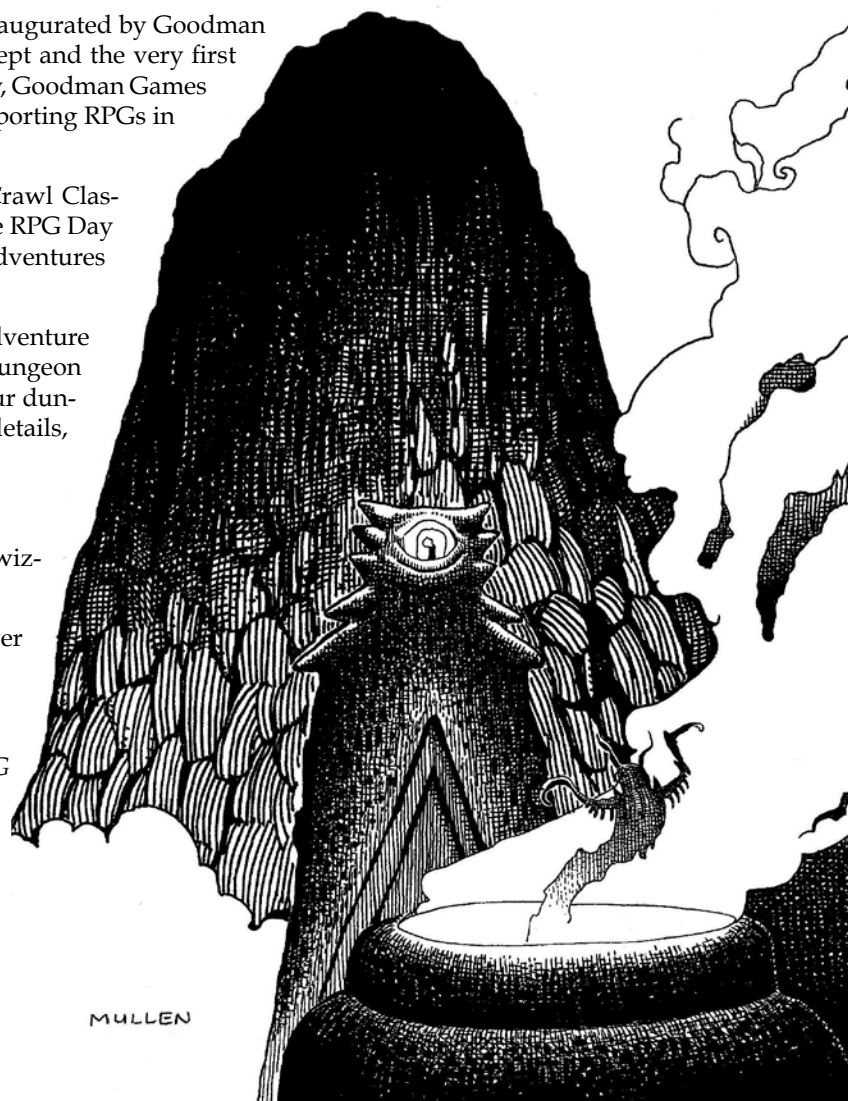
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THE UNDULATING CORRUPTION

A Level 5 Adventure

By Michael Curtis

Playtesters: David Key, Kurt Knoll, Mark Kellenberger, Jack Simonson



The Undulating Corruption is a short adventure designed for four 5th-level characters. At least one party member should be a wizard suffering from corruption. The adventure is intended to be played in a single session. The adventure can be located in any hilly area off the beaten path but should be close to a major town or city.

BACKGROUND



Long ago, an eclectic cult called into the outer dark and drew a creature of Chaos down to earth. Although their intent in summoning this agent of misfortune was nefarious, the cultists discovered that the great beast, which they named the Night Worm, served another purpose: the cleansing of debilitating corruption that plagued many of their numbers. The creature they bound to their cause feasted on corruption, removing the malignant taint from the physical form.

The cult flourished for many years, free to delve into the blackest arts without fear of being consumed completely. Their success was ultimately their undoing. Alerted by the cult's threat, the forces of Law waged war upon the cult and ultimately tracked them to their secret shrine, the Crucible of the Worm, and eradicated the sect in bloody battle. When the fight ended, the forces of order found the Night Worm bound in sorcerous chains, an easy foe to conquer. But before they could slay the beast, wizards amongst them stayed the killing blow. This beast could be made to serve Law, they argued, by removing the same corruption that endangered even wizards of goodly intent. The argument raged for days, but the wizards of Law ultimately prevailed, and the shrine was left intact and under their control.

Although their intent was pure, the wizards, as they are wont to, decided to use the Night Worm to their own benefit, making its unique gift available only to those sorcerers willing to pay for that honor. The shrine's cabal grew greedy and fractious and ultimately corrupted by a moral force that even the Worm could not counter. Eventually, the Worm's wizardly guardians turned upon one another. As each sought to become sole master of the shrine, they destroyed all who knew its secrets and then battled one another. In the end, there were no survivors, and the shrine of the Worm was forgotten. With no one to feed it and still restrained by occult binding, the Night Worm grew hungry in the dark, waiting for the time it could sup once more on corruption and misery.

Despite the attempts to occlude the Crucible's existence, rumors persisted amongst the practitioners of magic and those who seek unguarded fortunes in forgotten delves. Recently, these tales, along with clues to the Crucible's whereabouts, reached two groups: a band of brash tomb raiders and the PCs. Both seek to find the shrine and the wonders purported to lie within.

GETTING STARTED



Through whatever channels the judge desires, the PCs discover the existence of the Crucible of the Worm. They might uncover a moldering scroll that promises that the site can remove even the foulest corruption from a wizard or hear an old song describing the same from the lips of a madman. Regardless of the manner in which the judge introduces the Crucible, it is important that the party knows the shrine can cure sorcerous corruption—especially to the group's wizard, who at this level of experience is likely to be suffering from at least one debilitating taint. How the Crucible achieves such a cleansing should remain a mystery, however. The PCs will discover that soon enough.

The exact location of the Crucible is up to the judge, but for reasons that will soon be apparent, it should be located within a day's travel from a major settlement that is not the party's current base of operation. A sample map of the territory around the Crucible is included with this adventure for the judge's convenience but can be customized to fit his campaign world. It is assumed the PCs embark on horseback, and distances provided on the map reflect mounted travel-times. If the PCs venture to the Crucible on foot, the judge should rescale the distances to accommodate the travel times mentioned in the adventure's text. The party should journey to the shrine from a direction other than that which the Night Worm travels once free. This will place them in a better position to pursue the creature when they reach the Crucible.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Event	Type	Encounter
1-1	C	4 corruption sludges
1-2	C	2 corrupted giant catfish
1-4	C	The Night Worm & blood-spawn
1-5	C	Unlimited number of degenaphages



AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 – The Worm Unleashed: You've travelled through the rocky hills for several hours, guided by the scraps of lore you've uncovered regarding the Crucible of the Worm. The sky above has grown leaden and the air is still as if holding its breath in anticipation of the storm to come. The landscape before you is similarly grim: nothing but grey knolls and decrepit scrub grass for as far as the eye can see.

Suddenly, a thunderous explosion rings out, echoing in the craggy hills. Yet this is no thunderclap! It seems to originate from a distance ahead of you. Looking forward, you see a plume of smoke or dust rising from beyond a hilltop some miles away. A moment later, the air is split again by a titanic roar, as if the land itself was giving birth to something that should not be.

If the party attempts to discern what is happening ahead, the hills block their view, and they have no choice but to approach. Due to the uneven terrain, it takes an hour to reach the site of the Crucible regardless if the PCs are walking or on horseback. Halfway to their goal, the party smells an odor of filth and primordial foulness. As they crest the final hill, they see the following:

The bowl-shaped dell before you has been wrenched by unimaginable forces. The hollow is littered with massive stone blocks cast about like children's toys. A gaping crater emitting a mephitic stench mars the ground, and a haze of dust discolors the air. A wide trail of viscous black matter leads from the crater's edge into the nearby hills. Several amorphous globs of inky slime crawl about the dell, leaving similar

black trails in their wake. From behind a nearby stone extends a pair of flailing arms accompanied by a scream of utter pain and terror.

The black blobs are corruption sludges, semi-sentient excrement produced by the Night Worm. Three sludges turn their attentions to the party while the fourth, currently out of view behind the stone slab, continues to devour its victim.

Corruption Sludges (4): Init -8; Atk pseudopod +6 melee (1d5 plus 1d6 acid); AC 12; HD 4d8; hp 25, 21, 19, and 16; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons, acidic touch does 1d6 damage, rapid reproduction (every 5 hit points of damage inflicted by the sludge increases its size by 5' x 5' and adds 5 new hit points); SV Fort +8, Ref -4, Will -6; AL C.

Zobol Gnark, the Sole Survivor: Any PC who looks behind the stone block sees the fourth sludge dissolving a bearded, swarthy-looking human male dressed in leather armor. Despite slashing at the creature with a broken short sword, the corruption sludge has eaten his legs away and is working its way up his torso. He is Zobol Gnark, the sole survivor of the expedition that unleashed the Night Worm. If rescued before he is completely dissolved, he gasps out his tale.

Zobol and four others heard of the Crucible and came seeking treasure. They knew nothing of the Night Worm and its purported powers. Entering the shrine, they found it empty until they reached the central chamber. There they discovered the Night Worm, a gargantuan, ebony creature resembling a hybrid of monstrous grub and flatworm. The beast seemed to be restrained by stone pylons carved with strange symbols.





One of Zobol's companions, thinking there might be treasure concealed beneath the pylons, upset a plinth and unwittingly freed the Night Worm. It broke loose and began tearing the shrine to pieces. Zobol's companions were devoured (and were in fact the sludges the party just battled), but the thief escaped from the shrine only to be knocked senseless when the Worm exploded from the Crucible. He awoke to find the corruption sludge devouring his legs.

Zobol begs for death; he feels himself changing within. He is beyond the help of restorative magics, and even if he is healed of all his wounds (including having his legs restored), he undergoes the transformation into a corruption sludge two turns later.

Searching the Area: Examining the dell reveals several details. First, the smoking crater is 20 feet deep and seems to be a collapsed tunnel. Unless preternatural means are employed, there is no way to excavate the tunnel and gain access to the now-ruined and empty Crucible beyond. Should the PCs manage this feat, the contents and layout of the Crucible are left to the judge to design.

Secondly, one of the large stone blocks bears inscriptions. There are several images that detail a gnarled, monstrous-looking humanoid dressed in wizard's robes standing before a massive creature that resembles Zobol's description of the Night Worm. In a series of images, the corrupted wizard is consumed by the beast and is shown within the monster, casting spells against odd leech-like things that crowd around him. In successive pictures, the wizard becomes less inhuman-seeming. In the final image, he is excreted from the Night Worm and stands naked but free of corruption's taint.

One final detail of the hollow is blatantly obvious. A 20-foot-wide, viscous black trail, like that of a slug, leads out of the

dell and off to the west (or whatever other direction is appropriate), heading towards the nearest large settlement. The PCs' horses shy away from the substance when approaching it and require a DC 5 Personality check to be forced to cross the vile stuff. Any living creature touching the black matter must make a DC 5 Fort save or contract a minor corruption taint 1d3 hours later. The judge should keep the consequences of a failed save secret until such time.

Next steps: It's clear that whatever lies in the path of the Worm is in grave danger, and the beast itself is the key to removing corruption's taint. If the party's wizard wishes to be cleansed, the PCs have no choice but to follow it. Doing so leads to area 1-2.

Note on magical pursuit: It is possible that the PCs have means to fly, allowing them to avoid most of the encounters between them and the Night Worm. If the judge wishes to run a truncated session, he should allow them to take to the air and head directly after the creature. They encounter the Night Worm much sooner, and the judge should choose an appropriate location to stage the final battle. Having the party reach the Worm around the time it arrives at Izdrel's hut (area 1-3) is one possible suggestion. Areas 1-4 and 1-5 then play out as detailed below, with their descriptions altered to fit the setting.

If the judge would rather the party play out the adventure as written, he can use the Worm's trail as a roadblock. Under this option, the Night Worm's corruptive aura lingers in its wake, a result of the slime left behind. Any spells cast to speed the party's pursuit work normally at first but rapidly begin to fail as the party continues their chase. Flying characters lose altitude and land, and *hasted* PCs feel their speed evaporate long before it should, thus forcing the party to continue the chase at more normal speeds.

Area 1-2 – A Fearful River Crossing: Pursuit of the great worm is an easy task. The creature has left a 20-foot-wide trail of evil-smelling slime in its wake. This substance is clearly dangerous. Most vegetation covered by the slime is dead and desiccated, but even worse are the few hardy plants that survive. Occasionally, you pass a patch of grass or a scrub bush that has no place in this world. Transformed by the slime, this plant life assumes an alien cast, sprouting uncanny flowers that ooze phosphorescent sap or bear weeping mouths that gibber in indecipherable tongues.

An hour after departing the site of the Crucible, the hills give way to flatter ground. Following the slug-like trail for another hour brings you in sight of the sole landmark in this otherwise barren plain. In the distance, you see a narrow river blocking your path. A wide stand of trees grows on the far shore and a narrow bridge crosses the water. Even from here, you can see the slime trail enter the river just south of the bridge and continue into the trees on the opposite side. A clear path of splintered trees marks the place where the Worm entered the woods.

The river is 80 feet wide and 15 feet deep at its center. The wooden bridge that spans it is wide enough for two PCs to cross at once on foot or one at a time on horseback.

When the Night Worm crossed the river, it devoured and excreted a number of large catfish as it went. Two specimens survived, albeit in a transformed state. Now, wracked by corruption, they lie in wait for the next meal to cross the bridge or to ford the river.

Corrupted Catfish (2): Init +2; Atk bite +6 melee (2d8+2) or barbels +4 melee (1d6 plus poison); AC 15; HD 8d8+5; hp 45, 40; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP poison barbels (DC 15 Fort; 1d6 damage on successful save, 3d6 damage if failed), electrical burst (once every 3 rounds, 5d4 electrical damage to all within 15' radius; DC 15 Ref save for half damage); SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

If the party crosses the bridge, one of the 10-foot-long catfish bursts from the river as the second PC or group of PCs reaches the middle of the span. It emerges from underneath the bridge, shattering the wooden boards and forcing all PCs within 10 feet of the bridge's center to make a DC 12 Ref save or be knocked into the water. As it does so, the second transmuted catfish rises out of the water on stubby, unnatural legs at the far end of the bridge to eat anyone trying to reach the opposite shore. The catfish are maddened by their transformation and fight until dead.

PCs falling into the river must make Strength checks to remain afloat or swim to shore: DC 5 for unarmored characters, DC 10 for lightly armored characters, and DC 15 for heavily armored characters. Characters choosing to battle the catfish while swimming must make a DC 10 Strength check to remain above water and attack. A failed result on either check means the PC sinks beneath the surface. A submerged PC without an air source can hold his breath for as many rounds as his Stamina score. If he engages in actions while submerged, this duration is halved. Once this time limit expires, the PC begins drowning and must make a DC 10 Fort save each round or take 1d4 points of damage. The save DC increases by 1 each round after the first. A drowning PC can take no action and must be rescued by another character. Characters in the water lose their Agility modifier to their AC.

Area 1-3 – The Protected Hermitage: *The noxious trail leads through a forest turned nightmare. Splintered trees drenched in the slimy residue litter the forest floor, and the air is filled with the pain-wracked cries of animals exposed to the ooze's strange mutagenic powers. Terrible, misshapen creatures lurk in the underbrush only to disappear as you draw near.*

After an hour of travel, a silvery light pierces the gloomy woods ahead. Edging closer, you see a small clearing before you. Within it stands a hut of stone and thatch, simple and unpretentious. Surrounding the structure is a ring of shining silver fire the height of a man. The slick, black trail skirts the clearing, creating a path of destruction, but leaving the hut untouched. In the doorway of the building is slumped a human male dressed in homespun robes. He looks exhausted. The man raises his weary face to you as he notices your arrival.

The man is Izdrel Norne, an anchorite cleric (3rd level) of Ulesh. Not long ago, the Night Worm came upon Izdrel's home and would have destroyed it had the cleric not called upon the divine aid of Ulesh to save him. The god erected a barrier of righteous fire around Izdrel's hut, protecting his charge but leaving the cleric spent. The barrier is fading as the PCs reach his home.

Izdrel tiredly welcomes the party and questions them anxiously regarding the Night Worm. He recounts his own encounter and praises his god for his salvation. He can accurately describe the monster and his near-brush with death, but he

knows nothing else about the Worm other than it is obviously a force of pure chaos and a threat to whatever stands in its path.

Provided the PCs assert their desire to destroy the Night Worm, Izdrel is willing to assist them. However, calling upon the divine assistance of Ulesh has left him spent, and he is suffering a disapproval range of 1-11 on further spell checks. He is therefore loath to cast spells unless the PCs are in truly dire straits. As a cleric of the god of peace, he is also unwilling to take up arms against the Night Worm unless the party can convince him with an impassioned plea and a successful DC 20 Personality check. If Izdrel accompanies the party, he has the stats of a Friar on p. 433 of the DCC RPG rule book.

Despite these limitations, Izdrel is willing to gift the party with three curative potions that restore health in a way similar to the cleric's **lay on hands** ability. Each potion provides the drinker with 4 dice of health or cures injuries removed by that same number of dice or less. He also has a small jar of oil that grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls against unholy creatures (the Night Worm certainly qualifies) when smeared upon a single weapon. This power lasts for a single battle, and he warns the party of this limited duration. After providing them with these items, he wishes them luck and extends an offer to visit him again in more pleasant times.

After another hour's travel through the woods, the party reaches the western edge of the forest and their ultimate confrontation with the Night Worm.

Area 1-4 – The Night Worm: *The stench of decay and corruption grows stronger as you reach the edge of the woods. As you cross the threshold to the fields beyond, a flash of lightning sets the sky aflame and the crash of thunder splits the air. A moment later, the first drops of rain begin to fall, increasing in intensity with each passing minute.*

Looking to the west, you see a flat, broad plain dotted with farmers' crofts and fieldstone walls. Far off in the distance but growing dimmer as the rain strengthens, you catch a glimpse of tall rooftops and slender spires that mark a large settlement. You only have a moment to take in that view before your eyes are swiftly drawn to the immense monstrosity making its way across the farmlands.

Surging across the fields is a night-black horror. The size of a tower, the beast resembles a blasphemous mix of grub and worm. Tiny limbs dangle from its upper body as a long, flat tail propels it over the ground. The monstrous worm lacks a defined head; instead, a wide sucker-like mouth ringed by myriad eyes crowns its body. Slick slime flows from its flesh, and its entire body pulsates like a boil about to rupture.

This encounter can be scaled to accommodate exceptionally strong or extremely unlucky PCs. If the party is having too easy of a time (unlikely, but possible), feel free to ratchet up the tension by causing the storm to increase, causing penalties to ranged attacks or turning the ground into a morass of mud that slows movement and requires Agility checks or Ref saves to navigate. Likewise, if the party is in danger of being overwhelmed by corruption spawn or needs help battling the Night Worm, a squad of soldiers dispatched from the town or a band of terrified but resolute farmers can arrive to aid the heroes.



The Night Worm continues its inexorable drive towards the city unless the PCs intervene. Any wound doing 10 or more points of damage attracts its attention but also creates a blood-spawned corruption beast (see below). After the party draws its attention, the Night Worm fights them until either it or the party is slain. It automatically senses the presence of corruption amongst the party and targets a tainted wizard or elf first, seeking to devour them. If the corrupted spellcaster willingly accepts the attack or the Worm rolls an 18-20 on its attack roll, the PC is swallowed whole and proceeds to area 1-5 below. The Night Worm then turns its attacks on any non-corrupted PC.

The Night Worm: Init -1; Atk bite +10 melee (1d20) or tail slap +10 melee (1d20); AC 24; HD 15d8; hp 90; MV 60'; Act 2d20; SP blood spawns monsters, swallow whole on 18-20, corruption aura; SV Fort +15, Ref +15, Will +15; AL C.

The Night Worm swallows man-sized or smaller creatures alive on a roll of 18-20. Swallowed creatures take no damage from the attack but face other dangers as detailed in area 1-5. It attacks primarily with its bite and can bite twice using both its action dice if two PCs are within 20 feet of one another. The Worm uses its tail slap attack against party members seeking to flank it, but in doing so can only make a single bite attack that round.

Corruption aura: Due to its chaotic nature, an aura of energy 30 feet in diameter surrounds the Worm, visible only with a *detect magic* or *detect invisibility* spell. This field affects magic targeted against it, counteracting the effectiveness of Lawful idol magic and warping imperfectly cast wizard spells. Lawful clerics suffer a -4 penalty to any spells cast within the corruption aura. Any failed wizardly spell checks against the Night Worm cast within the aura automatically result in corruption

for the caster. Determine the effects of that corruption as normal for the spell.

Blood-spawned monsters: The Night Worm's blood has the power to create atrocious forms of corrupt life when spilled onto the earth. Spawned creatures burst from the ground one round after a sizable quantity of blood is shed. Each time a slashing weapon inflicts 10 or more points of damage in a single strike, a blood-spawned corruption beast is birthed. Piercing and bludgeoning weapons do not shed sufficient blood to produce such a creature. The unpredictable power of chaos grants each corruption beast a random power. The judge rolls to determine that ability when the corruption beast is created.

Blood-spawned Corruption Beast (up to 4): Init -1; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8) or claws +5 melee (1d6+2); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 15 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP corruption power; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

d6 Corruption Power

- 1 Spits caustic bile (DC 15 Ref save or suffer 2d6 acidic damage)
- 2 Eyes throw a *scorching ray* (+0 to spell check roll, ignoring misfire, corruption, or lost results)
- 3 Bite causes magical leprosy (DC 15 Fort save or lose 2 hit points per round until magically cured)
- 4 Essence drain (all damage inflicted is gained as hit points)
- 5 Digestive slime (physical contact with the creature requires a DC 15 Fort save or temporary loss of 1d4 Stamina as flesh dissolves)
- 6 Corruption taint (DC 15 Fort save or gain a random corruption taint from Table 5-3: Minor Corruption; this can be removed by the Night Worm as below)

This 5-foot-tall, loathsome beast is a blend of insect and mammal. Its head is that of a deformed mole with a pair of menacing mandibles jutting from its jaws. Patchy, matted fur erupts from gaps in a glossy black carapace. Four insectile limbs support the creature's ungainly body and a pair of rat-like arms tipped in serrated claws strike out at its foes.

The Night Worm fights until slain. However, killing the beast while fellow party members remain within it may doom them. See area 1-5 for details on what occurs if the Worm dies with allies inside its extradimensional stomach.

Area 1-5 – Inside the Worm: This event occurs after a PC is swallowed by the Night Worm.

The world goes black as the Night Worm's titanic mouth closes around you. With a sickening slurp, you find yourself tumbling down its odiferous gullet. You have only a moment to curse Fate for ending your life this way.

But your journey down the Worm's throat ends unexpectedly. You land abruptly on a spongy, expanse of grey-pink matter. Looking about, you see you stand in a seemingly endless space filled with pallid light and a swirling black mist that stinks of decay. A moment later, a howling din fills the air as numerous leech-like things with snapping mouths swarm through the air towards you.

A swallowed character has emerged in an extradimensional space that serves as the Night Worm's "stomach." The creatures approaching them are degenaphages, twisted things that serve as the Worm's digestive system and the means through which a wizard or elf can divest himself of corruption's taint.

To do so, the spellcaster must establish a supernatural channel with one or more of the degenaphages. This requires the wizard to cast a spell targeting one of the creatures. Any spell may be used. If the spell check is successful, rather than taking effect normally, the spell creates a glistening black umbilical cord connecting the caster and the degenaphage. More than one umbilicus can be formed at a time if the PC is capable of casting multiple spells in a round. A failed spell indicates the connection is not established, but the caster may try again. If the spell fails and results in the wizard gaining corruption, he is swarmed by 1d4 beasts drawn by this sudden influx of tainted energy. They physically assault the wizard, biting his flesh for 1d3 points of damage per creature for a single round. Any spell lost due to a spell check is temporarily removed from the caster's repertoire of spells as normal.

With the mystical umbilicus in place, the degenaphage begins siphoning away the caster's corruption, requiring the spellcaster to make a DC 15 Fort save. The caster adds a bonus to this roll equal to the level of the spell cast to make the connection (e.g., successfully casting *fireball* grants the wizard a +3 to his saving throw). If the save is successful, the beast "eats" one form of corruption affecting the wizard, and the player can erase it from his character sheet. The corruption consumed can be determined randomly, or, at the judge's discretion, be dependent on the power of the spell used to establish the umbilicus. If a 1st-level spell was used, the spellcaster loses a minor corruption taint, a major corruption taint with a 2nd-level spell, and a greater corruption if a 3rd-level spell was cast to create the umbilicus. The degenaphages eat only corruption; patron taint cannot be removed by this means.

Should the save fail, the PC suffers damage equal to 1d6 + the spell's level, as the beast takes some of the caster's life force in lieu of corruption. On a roll of a natural 1, the caster suffers damage and *also* permanently loses the ability to cast the spell used to make the connection, although it can be relearned the next time the wizard gains a new spell choice.

Character death: A spellcaster who dies while inside the Night Worm's "stomach" is lost forever barring divine intervention.

Non-spellcasters: It is possible that a PC without corruption is consumed by the Night Worm. That character is in danger of contracting corruption if attacked by the degenaphages. Although these creatures are attracted by corruption-bearing PCs, they swarm around any living creature inside the Worm. Each round while in the stomach, 1d3 degenaphages attack each non-spellcaster present.

Degenaphage (infinite; each round, 1d4 attack each spellcaster and 1d3 attack each other character): Init +3; Atk bite +5 melee (1d3 or corruption); AC 17; HD 1d10; hp 6 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP bite corrupts non-spellcasters; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -1; AL C.

Degenaphage corruption for non-spellcasters: A non-wizard/non-elf PC bitten by a degenaphage must make a DC 10 Fort save or gain a random form of corruption. Roll a d6: (1-3) minor

corruption (Table 5-3); (4-5) major corruption (Table 5-4); (6) greater corruption trait (Table 5-5). This save is modified by Luck, and the judge should re-roll results not applicable to a non-spellcasting character. After three successful Fort saves, which need not be consecutive, the degenaphages deem the PC an unsuitable meal. They create an exit within the extradimensional space, and the PC is excreted back into the world.

If a non-spellcasting PC gains corruption while inside the worm with a spellcaster, the wizard can attempt to create a connection between that character and one of the beasts, allowing that trait to be consumed and the afflicted PC cleansed. The process is the same as for a spellcaster, but the wizard suffers a -3 to his spell check due to the difficulty of creating an umbilicus between someone other than himself.

Escaping from the Night Worm: Once a spellcaster is free of corruption or he decides he no longer wants to continue the process, he must make a DC 13 Will save to impose his will upon the extradimensional space and force an egress to appear. If successful, a jagged tear appears in the air before him, and he and any other PCs present are expelled from the Night Worm back into the world. On a failed save, he takes 1d3 points of temporary ability damage (determine which ability is affected randomly), but he can try again. However, each time the save is failed, the DC increases by one. Should the DC ever rise so high as to make it impossible for the caster to successfully save, he is permanently lost in the Night Worm's gut.

Slaying the Night Worm: If the Night Worm is slain while a character remains inside the beast's gut, he has one chance to escape certain doom. He must make a DC 13 Will save as above, but if he fails, the extradimensional space collapses before he can escape, and he is lost between the planes forever (or until his allies discover a means to locate him, which can be an adventure on its own). If multiple PCs remain in the Night Worm when it dies, any one of them making a successful save will allow the entire group to escape.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE



hen the Night Worm is slain, it topples to the ground with a mighty crash, knocking the PCs off their feet. Any remaining corruption beasts continue to fight until killed, but once the last is defeated, the PCs are victorious. With luck, one or more PCs have been cleansed of some or all of their corruption. Unfortunately, with the Night Worm vanquished, they cannot use this method to remove corruption's taint again. Other avenues must be found when the black touch of sorcery begins to erode their beings once again.

No monetary awards are provided in this scenario. If the judge wishes to award the party with some recompense for their troubles, he can have the leaders of the saved town or Izdrel reward them with coin and jewels for their heroics. Izdrel is also able to use restorative magics to heal injured party member after a day has passed and his disapproval range returns to normal.

If the judge wishes to elaborate on the events of this adventure, and the PCs are willing, further adventures may await them in the now-buried Crucible of the Worm. Or Izdrel may have need of their services tracking down and destroying creatures in the forest that were transformed by exposure to the Night Worm's corruption excretions.

MYSTERY MAP ADVENTURE DESIGN COMPETITION

Win \$1,000 and have your adventure published!



Goodman Games is looking for authors steeped in the lore of pre-D&D fantasy to help usher in the next generation of old-school adventure. We are asking that you put your Appendix N knowledge to good use in creating an adventure designed around the Mystery Map shown on the facing page. A panel of experienced dungeon designers will judge all submissions. The best submission will be commissioned as a 5,000-word adventure to be published by Goodman Games, at a payment rate of \$1,000. The adventure will be released as our Free RPG Day 2013 offering, to be enjoyed by thousands of other gamers. There is only one winner, but strong second-place submissions may also be commissioned for separate publication, at the discretion of the judges.

The basic idea: We would like you to finish the Mystery Map shown at right, then outline an adventure based on your completed map. Your completed map must use the rooms that are already designated, and should be continued by your own design into the open space. Your final map must be only one page in size. You should provide a digital copy of your final map. Finally, your adventure should make use of the weird creature in the lower corner of the Mystery Map (the thing with six legs and the eyes on its flank – whatever it is).

What are we looking for? We are looking for an exciting, playable, well-written fantasy adventure that embodies the voice of DCC RPG. DCC RPG is a game of pre-D&D fantasy, based on the pre-genre adventure literature of Appendix N and the cultural voice of the 1970's. DCC RPG adheres to several basic principles whose goals are to conjure forth the sense of wonder we all experienced upon first playing D&D. First, all monsters and encounters are unique, never "from the book." Second, magic feels *magical* and highly unpredictable. Third, there is a noticeable lack of the constraints of genre-based fiction. Fourth, adventures feature strong visual elements in every scene that give the players a constant sense of immersion. Finally, the scope of adventures crosses planes, dimensions, space, and time wherever appropriate. Read DCC RPG and its published adventure modules to get an even better sense of the game.

How to submit: E-mail your submission, adhering to the rules outlined below, to mysterymap@goodman-games.com.

Deadline: All submissions must be received electronically by October 31, 2012.

Submission rules: Please adhere to these rules in your submission:

- Send your submission in an email. The body of the email should outline your submission. The email should have only one attachment, which should be the completed Mystery Map.
- Your submission should be an *outline* of your adventure. Include a brief summary of the plot and the encounters. Provide more detailed information on the key encounters. Give the game stats for the weird creature with six legs and the eyes on its flanks. Tell us how your adventure embodies the voice of DCC RPG and Appendix N. Tell us how your adventure is memorable to the players.
- Your submission should be no more than 1,000 words in length.
- You must include your e-mail address and phone number.
- Finally, you must include and agree to the following sentence in your submission (and it counts toward the 1,000 words): "I acknowledge that the ideas I have submitted may be identical or similar to the theme, plot, idea, format, or other element of material that Goodman Games has independently developed, or that has or may come to Goodman Games from other sources, and I shall not be entitled to any compensation by reason of the use by Goodman Games of such similar or identical material."

The Panel of Judges: All submissions will be judged by a distinguished panel of dungeon designers, who will collaborate to select the most worthy adventure. The judges are:

- Michael Curtis, creator of *The Dungeon Alphabet* and *Stonehell Dungeon*
- Aldo Ghiozzi, game connoisseur and Free RPG Day organizer
- Joseph Goodman, creator of DCC RPG
- Doug Kovacs, DCC RPG cover artist and "visual voice"
- Erol Otus, legendary TSR artist
- Stefan Poag, fan favorite OSR artist
- Harley Stroh, adventure writer extraordinaire

Send in your submission now. May the best adventure win!

START
↓

MYSTERY MAP

□=5'



THE JEWELER THAT DEALT IN STARDUST

A Level 3 Adventure

Writer: Harley Stroh

Playtesters: Dave Brown, Rae Brown, Patrick Carmichael, Michael Crane, Doug Keester, Kate Zaynard, Mark Zaynard; (Gary Con 2012) Tavis Allison, Chad Cartwright, Rick Hull, Jeffery Klingbeil, Ryan Peel, Christy Powell, Robin Powers

*"Tis no crime to steal from a thief."
-Unknown Punjaran Bravo*



At its heart, this is a heist adventure. As such, it can be played by a party composed entirely of thieves. However, if things go awry—as they should, in any good heist—the respective skills of the wizard, warrior, and cleric will be in high demand. The adventure rewards intelligent, cautious, clever play—but the inverse is often just as much fun.

Students of Appendix N will surely notice references to key works. Judges are encouraged to read *Tower of the Elephant*, by Robert E. Howard, and Fritz Leiber's *Lean Times in Lankmar* prior to running the adventure.

BACKGROUND



The fences of Punjar are infamous for their cunning and greed, and Boss Ogo is no exception. Operating under the guise of a jeweler, Ogo does a brisk trade in stolen goods, enjoying the protection of a gang of bravos and thugs.

But even the wary eye of a gang boss is no promise of surety in Punjar's deadly environs. For the last month, no one has seen or heard from Ogo. The jeweler's door is barred, his shutters locked, and no smoke escapes the shop's chimney. Like ravens circling a stinking carcass, the bravos and pinch thieves of the Souk smell a fortune for the taking.

All that is required is a band of rogues audacious enough to cross Boss Ogo, skilled enough to survive his house of traps, and lucky enough to make it out alive.

BOSS OGO



Unbeknownst to his band, Boss Ogo yet lives—after a fashion. Nearly two months ago he fenced a gem stolen from a travelling sorcerer. Though appearing as a simple, rough amethyst, the crystal can serve as a portal and beacon to the beings of the outer dark.

In his amateur study of the crystal, Ogo has undergone a conversion, believing that his role in this life is to usher Ygiiz, the Spider-Mother, into this realm. For the last month, he has spent every waking hour studying the crystal, seeking to activate its powers.

And at last, Boss Ogo has succeeded. The fence and jeweler has opened a portal to the space between the stars, luring agents of Ygiiz with his own soul and the souls of his gang members.

In the Boss' inexplicable absence, his second in command—one Sarzuk the Devil—has taken over leadership of the gang. Sarzuk has posted guards to watch over the shop, and is ready to mobilize the surviving gang members at the first sign of rogues in the house.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
Start	C	2 rogues
1-1	C	3 Spiders of Ygiiz
1-2	T	Poison needle trap Pit trap
1-3	T	Canary floor
2-2	C/P	1 or more shadows
2-3	C/P	Boss Ogo 4 or more Spiders of Ygiiz
3-2	P	False trap
	T	Triple blade trap
3-3	T	Spear trap
	T	Falling block trap
	T	Sleeping gas trap

A SURPLUS OF SPIDERS



In the course of the adventure, the PCs are likely to encounter both natural spiders and the Spiders of Ygiiz. The first are perfectly benign and pose no threat to the PCs. The Spiders of Ygiiz, however, are extraplanar creatures that hunger for the flesh of the living. To avoid confusion, instances of the Spiders of Ygiiz are always capitalized.

JUDGE'S NOTES



The adventure is nominally set in the decadent city of Punjar, where Cheap Street intersects Dowager Alley. For those not playing in the Known Realms, judges are encouraged to set the adventure in any major city of their choice.

Key to the adventure is impressing upon the players the furtive nature of their mission. A stray ray of candlelight, an unhooded lantern, an accidental crash, or the clash of blades can all easily draw unwanted attention.



Except where noted, there is no light within the shop, and the interior of the shop is as silent as the grave. For the most part, the only light will be the glimmer of the characters' candles reflecting off gewgaws, and the only sound will be the pad of their own footsteps. The read-aloud text presumes that the PCs carry torches or candles.

Finally, the second and third floors sport high ceilings (9' and 15', respectively) befitting Ogo's extraordinary success as a fence. Thieves will find ample room to both climb and hide amid the wooden beams, and warriors will always have a handy chandelier nearby for their dramatic Deeds of Arms.

PLAYER START

A band of torchbearers passes the shop of Ogo the Jeweler, where Cheap Street intersects Dowager Alley. Their brands sputter and spit in the darkness as the cold rain courses off the tile roof, pouring down into the street and draining into a nearby sewer. You flex your fingers to ward off the chill, silently thankful for a night without moon or stars.

As the last of the torchbearers pass out of sight, you nod to your companions. It is time.

Show the players Handout A, and allow them to form a plan on how best to assault Ogo's shop. A brief summary of the most common means and the PCs' likelihood of success follows.

The Great Door: The main entrance to the shop is a large wooden door covered in hammered copper that has tarnished to a green patina. The door is secured with stout iron hinges and is—as thieves quickly learn—barred from the inside. The door can be broken down with 10 minutes of hard work by anyone with an axe or with a DC 20 Str check. The door is easily unbarred and opened from the inside (area 1-2).

Windows: The shop's windows are shuttered and locked (pick lock, DC 10). To a rogue's dismay, however, the windows are all *also* bricked over from the inside, offering no means of entering the shop. To avoid confusion, these windows are not shown on the judge's map.

Only one widow affords a means of egress. The slim rose window, set high in the south-facing eve, has not been bricked over. The stained glass window depicts a single flaming eye, a testament to Ogo's mystic aspirations. The window can be reached with a DC 15 climb check or roped down to from above. The window is set in place and must be broken in or removed.

Sewers: A grate set in the center of the street offers access to the sewers beneath the shop. The grate is easily removed, leading to area B-A below.

Garden: Scaling the house wall is a simple affair for trained second-story men (climb, DC 10). See area 1-1 for the strange scene awaiting the PCs.

Chimney: Rogues ascending to the peak of the roof (climb, DC 15) discover that the chimney has been warded against intruders. The top of the chimney is channeled through three narrow clay pipes, each barred with iron.

However, once the PCs are *within* the shop, the fireplace chim-

ney offers an efficient (if sooty) means of passing between floors. The chimney is narrow, however. Humans in metal armor are unable to squeeze through the floors, as are all but the slimmest of dwarves.

Sarzuk's Rogues: Hidden to all but the most cautious of PCs, a pair of rogues lurks atop a nearby rooftop. Agents of Sarzuk the Devil, the pair have been tasked with ensuring that no one—especially not any thieves—disturbs Ogo's shop.

Brutish break-in techniques (as adjudicated by the judge) alert the rogues. The pair has a small, trained blackbird kept in a hooded cage. At the first sight of trouble, the pair releases the bird. Keep informal track of time once the bird is released. Once Sarzuk and his thugs arrive, he sends six of his men in to flush out the PCs, while waiting outside with the rest of his band. The rogues sent after the PCs conform to the stats below.

Sarzuk and his band of bravos arrive at the scene 1d20+20 minutes after the bird is released. See **Epilogue: Cheap Street Brawlers** below for details on this confrontation.

Rogues (2): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6) or dart +3 missile fire (1d4); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 6 each, 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

Area B-A – Cheap Street Sewer: *The stench of sewage is nearly overwhelming, causing your companions to gag, even as it chokes your sputtering torches. Rats squeal at the invaders of their realm, watching with beady eyes. The clay sewers run in either direction, extending beyond the reach of your torchlight.*

A secret door is hidden beneath plaster in the east wall of the sewer. Dwarves immediately recognize the change of texture from the clay sewer pipe, but others must deduce the location of the secret door from its relation to the shop or by careful searching.

If the thin layer plaster is chipped away, the PCs discover thin wooden lath. Breaking through the lath permits entry to area B-B.

Area B-B – Anchor of Ygiiz: *The long, narrow basement is seemingly overrun with spiders. Webs hang on the low ceilings and walls. Tiny black spiders scurry about, crackling underfoot.*

In the flickering light you spy the forms of three men hanging from the ceiling. Each is wrapped in a shroud of webs, with only their mouths exposed. A constant stream of spiders courses in and out of the helpless, gaping mouths.

The spiders are natural and pose no danger to the PCs and are simply drawn by the power sources anchoring the Spiders of Ygiiz to the material plane.

A close inspection of the webbed forms reveals that, despite the constant swarm of spiders crawling in and out of the open mouths, the bodies are still alive. If the PCs cut the webs away, they discover that the bodies are wrapped in soiled cotton bandages inscribed with dozens of repeating runes. Wizards and clerics inspecting the runes immediately associate them with the worship of Ygiiz, a being from the outer darkness.

Thieves succeeding on a DC 13 read languages check (alternately, wizards or clerics succeeding on a DC 15 Int check) translate the runes to the following:

*one soul to entice and bind
to the mighty mother of all crawlers
I dedicate thee*

The runes are repeated for the length of the cotton bandages.

The bodies serve as anchors for the Spiders in area 1-1; slaying the hanging bodies (requiring only a single, deliberate strike) sends the Spiders of Ygiiz shrieking back to the outer dark.

The bodies were once rogues in the service of Ogo. PCs brazen enough to search the bodies discover that each of the bodies carries 1d24 cp, 1d14 sp, and 1d5 gp.

The third rogue has an enchanted mithril dagger hidden in his boot. The smith's mark on the pommel indicates that the blade was forged by the famed elven smith, Eluniver Eluchil. The dagger is perfectly balanced, granting bonuses to ranged attacks: a +1 to hit and critical threat range of 19-20 on all ranged strikes.

Area B-C – Iron Oubliette: *The narrow pen is composed of iron bars reaching to the ceiling. A vertical chute rises through the stone above.*

PCs falling through the pit trap in area 1-2 plummet into this caged pen. The pen is narrow and tall, like a standing coffin composed of iron bars. The gate is locked, requiring a DC 10 pick lock check to open, or a DC 20 Str check to burst. If more than one PC falls into the pit trap, the pen's confines are even tighter, limiting movement and penalizing any Pick Lock or Strength checks by -1 for each additional character trapped.

As soon as a PC falls into the pit, the spiders in area B-B swarm towards the cage. The spiders do their best to spin webs around the victim, binding him within the iron cage as an offering to Ygiiz. They pose no real threat, but the PCs need not know this.

Area 1-1 – The Garden Path: *The walled garden is thick with webs. The silvery tendrils float in the pale moonlight, hanging from the lone, skeletal tree and down upon the garden. Despite the rain, thousands of small black spiders swarm over the webs, black stars in a silken sky. A lone crow flaps weakly, trapped amid the webs.*

The swarms of spiders and their webs are utterly natural and pose no threat to the PCs. The spiders are attracted to the weird, otherworldly presence of the Spiders of Ygiiz. The Spiders of Ygiiz lurk beneath the eaves of the shop roof, all but invisible in the near-darkness.

Among the first beings drawn through Ogo's starry portal, the Spiders are not arachnids in the true sense. Spiders most resemble enormous six-legged ticks, the size of large hounds. The Spiders are perfectly black, so dark that they reflect no light whatsoever, appearing as only the absence of any color, as if reality itself had been cut away in the Spider's form.

The Spiders wait for the PCs to enter the darkened garden before attacking—springing through the air and bearing their victims to the ground. The touch of the Spiders is as cold as the void, searing targets with frostbite.

A successful attack by a Spider of Ygiiz indicates the PC is grappled, granting the Spider +4 to hit on subsequent attacks. A PC can escape a Spider's freezing mandibles with a DC 15 Str check or by dealing a Spider 5 or more points of damage in a single round.

On a successful second attack, a Spider tears freezing chunks out of its victim, permitting the natural spiders in the garden

to swarm into the wound, eager to please their extraplanar allies (no attack needed).

On the third round a PC is pinned, a Spider of Ygiiz makes a final attack attempt, crushing the spiders infesting the wound, releasing a flood of toxins (DC 13 Fort save or unconsciousness). The target cannot be roused by allies from the toxic coma and only awakens with a successful DC 15 Fort save. The target may make one attempt per round, but after three failed checks, the PC dies.

The door leading from the garden into the shop is locked but not trapped (pick lock, DC 15).

Spiders of Ygiiz (3): Init +1; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 13; HD 3d12; hp 18 each; MV 35' or leap 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

Area 1-2 – Ogo's House of the Tarnished Jewel: *A long, worn counter runs the length of the dusty shop. Behind the counter stands a row of safe box drawers, certainly the holding place for Ogo's inestimable fortune!*

Contrary to hopeful rumors, most of Ogo's legendary riches were sold weeks ago to fund his obsession with Ygiiz. The objects that remain are largely worthless, though this is difficult to determine in the darkness.

The wall behind the counter is lined with safe boxes. Some stand open and dusty, while others are locked and trapped. Astute PCs may avoid many of the traps and distractions by correctly deducing that the shop was ransacked weeks ago. Avaricious PCs determined to loot the safe boxes will have little to show for their efforts.

Safe Box A: The drawer stands ajar and empty, save for dust and cobwebs. A dusty blade extends from an open, once-hidden panel. The blade is encrusted with dried poison that now poses no danger.

Safe Box B: The safe box is locked (pick lock, DC 15) and trapped (find/disable trap, DC 10) with a poisoned needle. Any failed attempt to open the lock or disarm the trap triggers the needle (Atk +5, dmg 1d3 plus poison: DC 12 Fort save or -3 Agility). A velvet pouch rests inside the safe box, holding 10 gems. The perfectly faceted gems appear to be worth 100 gp each but are in fact made of paste.

Safe Box C: The drawer stands open. The safe box is empty.

Safe Box D: The drawer is unlocked but trapped (find/disable trap, DC 15). If the drawer is disturbed, a pit trap opens in the floor, dropping all within 5 feet of the drawer into area B-C in the basement below (DC 20 Ref save or 2d6 falling damage).

Safe Box E: The safe box is open and not trapped. Inside the drawer is a silver necklace set with rubies. The rubies are all paste, but the necklace appears to be worth some 500 gp until the false rubies are identified. The silver in the necklace can fetch 5 gp.

Safe Box F: The safe box is open and not trapped. A panel conceals a hidden compartment in the base of the drawer. The remnants of the fence's fortune lie inside atop a velvet pillow: 3 rubies (worth 50 gp each), 4 diamonds (worth 100 gp each), and a jewel-encrusted dagger forged in the shape of a serpent (worth 150 gp).

Area 1-3 – The Speaking Hall: The floor of this area is sprung so that any weight causes the floor to shriek horribly,



alerting the entire house. The floors can be avoided by scaling the walls (climb, DC 13).

While the PCs won't know this, there is nothing living within the shop to respond to the alarm. However, the judge can use the floors to alert the PCs if Sarzuk's bravos pursue the PCs into the shop.

Area 1-4 – Kitchen: *The filthy kitchen is overrun with dust and cobwebs. A large table stands in the center of the chamber, opposite a fireplace. An iron cauldron hangs in the fireplace above dead embers.*

The chimney set in the south wall of the kitchen rises through the second and third floor. With a DC 10 climb check a PC can ascend to the next floor.

Area 1-5 – Storeroom: *The small storeroom is stacked high with barrels, crates, and casks. A coat of thick dust hangs over all.*

A trapdoor rests in the northeast corner of the chamber, concealed beneath an empty crate. Lifted, the trap door reveals a ladder descending to area B-B.

Area 2-1 – Study: *Mounds of tomes, weird librams, and discarded scrolls litter the floor of this chamber. Loose sheaves, torn from their spines, are cast about as if by a madman. It seems as if not a single volume has survived the violence.*

Boss Ogo amassed a considerable library in his quest for esoteric wisdom. Sadly—as any wizard or cleric can attest—the library is entirely worthless superstition and self-affirming drivel.

However, true knowledge is easily mistaken for twaddle. If a wizard or elf searches through the library, there is a slim chance (Luck check, DC 15) that the caster discovers the material necessary to learn a spell of the judge's choice.

Area 2-2 – Shadow Play: *A lone crimson candle burns in the center of the barren room, resting atop the horned skull of some weird goat-demon circumscribed by a magic circle carved into the floor. The light seems unusually stark here, the shadows unusually sharp.*

Boss Ogo placed the candle as defense against mortal intruders. If anyone steps foot into the flickering light, the candle causes his shadow to animate. While the shadow remains attached to the PC's form, the shadow lashes out, attacking nearby PCs, or—failing that—the PC itself.

The shadow attacks as its PC, with identical weapons and damage. The PC has no control over the shadow once it is animated; even if a PC casts aside his weapons, the shadow can continue to attack with any weapons it was “born” with. The shadows cannot use magic and continue to attack until their masters are slain.

Once a shadow is animated, retreating back into darkness only releases the shadow to move about freely. The shadows can only be harmed by magical weapons, magic, or by the faith of clerics.

If the candle is extinguished, the shadows cease to exist. However, the magic circle encircling the skull repulses all living creatures and most non-magical weapons. To extinguish the candle, a PC must either make a ranged attack against AC 10 with a magical weapon, or AC 20 with a non-magical weapon, or deal the candle 5 or more points of damage from a focused spell.

Finally, if the PCs are somehow able to flood the entire chamber with uniform light (i.e., if no shadows can be cast, whatsoever) any animated shadows are temporarily banished, returning after 1d3 rounds.

If the PCs somehow recover the goat-demon skull, they hear



a rattling within its cranium cavity. If the skull is smashed, the PCs discover a faceted piece of amber; trapped within the amber is a creature resembling a fly.

Wizards and clerics instantly recognize the gem as the phylactery of a minor demon. Possessing the *demonic amber* permits the PC to attempt a Personality check to command lesser demons (type I, DC 15; type II, DC 20), at the judge's discretion.

Shadow: Init as PC; Atk as PC; AC 15; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; MV as PC; Act as PC; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +4; AL C.

Area 2-3 – Chamber of Stardust: *This chamber is cast in shadows so deep that even the light of your torches seems diminished. In the center of the chamber sits a large violet crystal glowing with an inner light. Above the crystal swirls a strange column of spiraling stars, nebulae, and galaxies cast in miniature.*

The door to this chamber is locked (pick locks, DC 15, or Str check, DC 20). A haphazard pile of discarded furniture stands in the southeast corner of the room. Finally, the walls, ceiling and floor are covered by hundreds of thousands of small black spiders—literally a shifting tapestry of arachnids.

Boss Ogo stands directly behind the crystal, one hand touching the stone, though the bulk of his frame is not immediately visible. Four Spiders of Ygiiz are feeding from his body. Ogo only becomes visible when the fuliginous extraplanar ticks detach from his body, revealing him bit by bit.

Boss Ogo is haggard and gaunt, shrouded in drifting veils of cobwebs as spiders course over his skeletal frame. But his eyes are aflame with the madness of divine knowledge. On his silent command, the fell Spiders of Ygiiz move immediately to attack the PCs.

For his part, Ogo does little more in combat than howl out at the PCs in madness. So long as he maintains contact with the crystal, Ogo is able to direct the natural spiders, causing them to swarm at his command. This is always accompanied by declarations of the PCs as heathens to be sacrificed to Ygiiz, the Spider-Mother. Ogo can target one PC a round, causing thousands of spiders to swarm over the PC (no attack needed).

A swarmed PC suffers a -4 penalty to any skill checks, including attacks and spell checks. Ogo must concentrate on the target to maintain the swarm. If he breaks concentration, the swarm dissipates after 1d3 rounds. The swarm dissipates immediately if the PC spends an action sweeping the spiders from his body.

Alternately, instead of directing the spiders, Ogo can attempt to summon an additional Spider through the crystal. On a successful DC 20 Will save, Ogo succeeds in drawing an additional Spider through the portal.

The Spiders are anchored to this plane by Boss Ogo's soul. Therefore, if Ogo is slain, the Spiders are cast back into the outer dark. However, so long as the crystal remains active,

Ogo cannot be slain—Ygiiz feeds life force back through the crystal, keeping the gang boss clinging to life.

In order to break the crystal's hold on Ogo, PCs must separate him from the crystal. This can be accomplished with a Mighty Deed of Arms (bearing the gang boss away or—more directly—severing his arm). Alternately, a daring (or foolhardy) character can attempt to wrest mastery of the crystal from Ogo. A PC can attempt to upset Ogo's control by touching the crystal and making a contested Will save against the gang boss. If the PC wins the save, Ogo's connection is broken. The PC may choose to close the portal, or far more foolishly, attempt to control the crystal (see below).

If the PC fails the save, he must attempt a second DC 18 Will save or be dominated by Ogo and forced to turn his blades and magic against his former allies. The PC can attempt to break the domination once per round (Will save, DC 18).

Finally, the crystal can also be destroyed. The first 25 points of damage cause cracks to spider-web through the crystal. Once the crystal has taken 25 or more points of damage, any subsequent attack risks destroying the crystal. Roll 1d20; a result of 15 or better (modified by the attacking PC's Luck) indicates the crystal has been destroyed, severing Ogo's connection to Ygiiz and banishing the Spiders back to the outer darkness.

In the wake of the shattered crystal, PCs can collect 1d5 handfuls of the stardust of Ygiiz (see area 3-4 for details on this new magic item).

The Crystal of the Outer Dark: The amethyst-like crystal acts as a focal point for a vast collection of galaxies and distant worlds, serving as both a beacon and portal to beings that exist in the frozen darkness between the stars.

Little good can come of the crystal's dark potential. Bending the crystal to one's will requires absolute mental and emotional mastery, anything less invites instant madness and domination. A character attempting to actively use the crystal (as opposed to simply unseating Ogo) must succeed on a DC 20 Will save; the judge should roll the check in secret.

On a failed save, the PC is dominated by a being of the judge's choosing. Henceforth, the PC is merely a shell, acting at the whim of an unknowable being. Should the PC be somehow freed from the crystal's icy embrace, he is forever shorn of his sanity.

Boss Ogo: Init -1; Atk none; AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 8 (infinite while connected to crystal); MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to charm or domination, summon Spiders of Ygiiz, command spiders; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +6; AL C.

Spiders of Ygiiz (4): Init +1; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 13; HD 3d12; hp 18 each; MV 35' or leap 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

Area 3-1 – Safehouse: *A number of simple cots rest against the sloping walls of the attic. A rough table sits near the back of a brick chimney beside a stout door reinforced with iron and a narrow set of stairs, descending into darkness.*

Before his conversion, Boss Ogo would hide rogues from authorities (and rival gangs) here, in the shop's attic. The safehouse hasn't seen use in months, and there is little here to interest the PCs.

If the rose window on the south wall is broken or otherwise removed, it allows access to and from the outside.

Area 3-2 – Office of the Fence: *A large, polished desk occupies the back of the chamber. The desk is home to several balance scales of increasing sizes and weights.*

The door to this chamber is locked (pick lock, DC 15). Any attempt to search for traps indicates that the stout door is trapped with a scything blade; this is, in fact, a false trap. A DC 15 find trap check reveals as much, though lesser thieves may be stymied by their failed attempts to disarm a trap that doesn't exist.

This office is where Boss Ogo would conduct his work as a fence. The scales' weights are all slightly off, as would behoove a thief of thieves. Accurate weights are concealed within the desk, along with a brace of six silvered throwing darts, a fighting dagger, and a key ring holding four keys (copper, silver, gold, and electrum, respectively). Characters thinking to inspect the keys note that the copper key is worn, whereas the other keys are unscratched.

A secret door is hidden in the north wall of the office, behind false wooden paneling. Removing the paneling reveals a keyhole. The secret door can be opened with the copper key, but if any other key is tried (or if the lock is unsuccessfully picked) a trio of blades stabs up from the floor: DC 15 Ref save or 1d6+3 damage. The blades withdraw after striking, so that the trap can be triggered multiple times. The trap is easily disarmed with a DC 13 disable trap check.

With suitable climb checks (DC 10), the chimney allows access to the lower floors.

Area 3-3 – Fool's Gold: *The hidden door opens to a long, narrow hall. Opposite you stand three doors, each reinforced with iron and covered in hammered bronze. A simple keyhole stands in the center of each door.*

Each of the three doors is false and trapped, intended to lure would-be-thieves to their doom. Any attempt to unlock the doors triggers the associated trap. Characters thinking to inspect the faces of the locks to look for scratches note that none of the keyholes bear any sign of wear.

Northwest Door: This door is protected by a trap firing spears from the western wall (DC 13 Ref save or 1d8 dmg). A total of four spears are fired; check for each PC in the hall until all the spears have found a target or each PC has made a save.

Center Door: This door is protected by a series of large stone blocks that fall from the ceiling, targeting anyone standing in the hall (DC 15 Ref save or 1d5 dmg).

Northeast Door: This door is protected by a fragile vial of *sleeping gas* hidden within the lock. The gas is sufficient to fill the entire hall (DC 12 Fort save or sleep for 1d5 rounds).

The true vault is hidden behind a secret door in the east wall. While the door itself is masterfully built and well hidden to sight or touch, its simple keyhole is plainly visible, though easily overlooked.

The secret door can either be picked (pick lock, DC 17) or opened with the copper key. If any other key is used, or if the attempt to pick the lock fails, all three of the hall's traps are triggered in quick succession (first spears, then *sleeping gas*, and finally the falling blocks).

Area 3-4 – Ogo's Vault: *The narrow vault is lined with shelves. Sadly, nearly every shelf stands barren, save for a thick coat of dust, a few spare stacks of coins, and a scattering of jewels.*

A quick inspection of the vault reveals the last of Ogo's once-legendary hoard:

- 1d100 gp arrayed in stacks of 10
- 2d4x25 sp in bags of 25
- 1d24 pp scattered about on the floor
- 1d5 opals worth 10 gp each
- 1d14 emeralds worth 25 gp each
- A single ruby worth 5d100 gp
- A black velvet pouch containing three handfuls of the stardust of Ygiiz

The bulk of the treasure is mundane, save for the handfuls of stardust. Adventurers opening the pouch discover small granular crystals resembling quartz that glow with a faint, sickly light. Unlike natural crystals, the stardust is malleable in the following ways, with the following effects:

First, the stardust crystals are easily—and curiously—absorbed by living flesh. Firm, deliberate pressure is all that is required to force a handful of crystals beneath the skin. The crystals' properties immediately take effect. First, the PC's skin takes on a paler hue, and violet flecks appear within the PC's cornea. Second the PC must attempt a DC 15 Fort save; on a successful check, the PC gains 1d3 points to his Luck stat. On a failed check, the PC suffers 1d5 points of damage per level. The bonus to one's Luck can only be earned once, but an adventurer must make a Fort save each time a handful of crystals are pressed beneath his skin. If less than a handful is used, the crystals are absorbed but have no effect. Regardless of whether the Fort save was successful or not, any PC imbued with stardust can be instantly and forever monitored by Ygiiz.

Secondly, multiple handfuls of smaller crystals can be forced together to form a single large crystal: a Crystal of the Outer Dark. Once joined, the crystal can only be reduced back to stardust by violent force (see area 2-3). The larger crystal can be used as a focus, permitting PCs to contact the being known as Ygiiz, the Spider-Mother.

EPILOGUE: THE CHEAP STREET BRAWLERS

As the PCs exit the shop, they are confronted by Sarzuk and the remainder of Ogo's gang. Sarzuk is a brute, all too happy to negotiate with the blade of a sword. He offers the PCs one opportunity to surrender all their loot.

If the PCs hesitate, Sarzuk gives a whistle. Bravos pour in from all sides.

Despite their formidable numbers and overpowering greed, Sarzuk and his bravos are not warriors. If Sarzuk or more than half the bravos fall in battle, the rest flee into the night, vowing revenge.

Sarzuk the Devil: Init +5; Atk longsword +6 melee (1d8+3) or javelin +7 missile fire (1d6); AC 17; HD 3d8; hp 16; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

Bravos (2 for every surviving PC): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6) or dart +3 missile fire (1d4); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

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