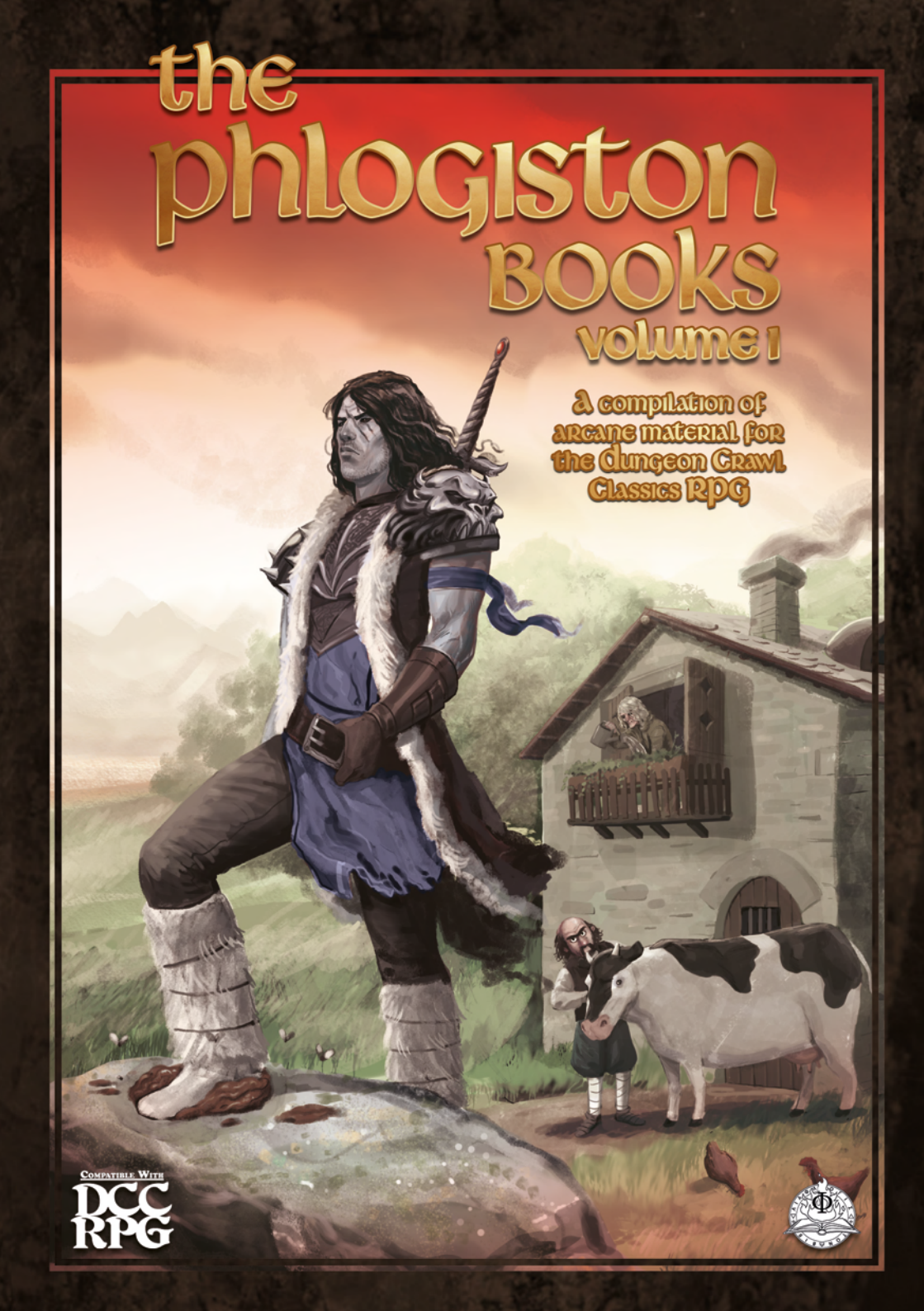
the phlogiston books volume 1

A compilation of arcane material for the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG



Compatible With DCC RPG

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A compilation of arcane material for the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG

Credits

The Phlogiston Books
Volume 1

A compilation of arcane material for the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG

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Appendix Ñ*

While they were heatedly debating, the Spanish writers Unamuno and Valle-Inclán arrived at the urbanized boundaries of Madrid. Right before they were about to step on rural lands, Unamuno grabbed Valle-Inclán by his only arm and warned him:

"Watch out, there begins that bastard countryside."

Although this issue of *The Phlogiston Books* isn't devoted exclusively to countryside or rural themes, some of its articles are. And although it won't be the sole focus of our publications, it's true that *The Vertical Halls*, *Beaten Copper*, and the upcoming *The Wandering Vaudeville of Earthly Pleasures* as well as some future adventures take place in rural milieus, vindicating this environment, its dwellers, and its potential. We'd thus like to dub a new genre, or if it exists to join it: **rural fantasy**.

Unamuno was right: the countryside is not the idyllic scenery of pastoral novels or nice postcards; it's a dangerous place, full of strange creatures, mysterious ruins, unfavorable climate, and tiresome travels.

It is also the humble origin of any given adventurer, the place through which they travel or where they stay, and it really comprises 95% of any pseudo-dark ages fantasy milieu. Most adventures entail travelling through the countryside: it's an end unto itself.

And it is, of course, the untamable frontier, a representation of what a human being wants to dominate and overcome, but that is ironically part of ourselves. Conan and Fafhrd knew it for sure. Although it's undeniable that some of the stories from the well-known Appendix N unfold in places like Lankhmar, most adventurers always go back to the countryside, to the wild, be it the mountains, the sea, a swamp, or a humble hamlet.

Let's go back to our roots. Grab your water skin, the blanket for those freezing nights, the greased cloak to protect you from the rain and, of course, the two-handed sword, 'cause here begins that bastard countryside.

** 15th letter of the Spanish alphabet. It corresponds to the sound [gn], and it's used in words like España (Spain).*

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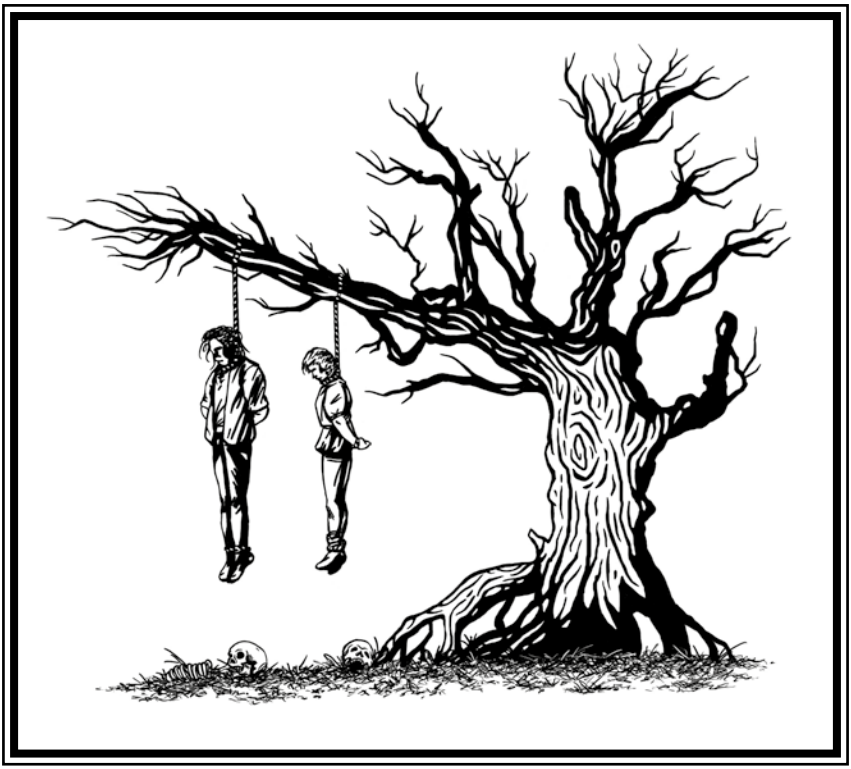


The Gallows Tree

The bulk of the civilized world is made up of small and scattered settlements, isolated and all but linked to each other. However, small as they are, these settlements are no stranger to crime, and when it does occur they can only deal with the perpetrators in two ways: banishment for minor infractions and the gallows for the felonies. So when it's time to execute a criminal, it's usually done by hanging him from a branch, leaving him swinging so the sun and the crows make short work of the corpse, serving as a reminder for those who harbor ill intentions.

As time passes and more executions take place, some of these trees become infected by death, adopting grim features and swaying their branches in the wind as if they were the limp fingers of those punished there. Their roots grow slowly, reaching deep in the earth to such unthinkable depths that they eventually reach the underworld and thus ease the sojourn of the hanged to hell itself through them. In fact, some people think that all those gallows trees are just sprouts stemming from the same root, one that grows from where the dead dwell.

Those trees seek justice and crave the souls of the criminals who feed their dry leaves and twisted limbs, so they're willing to make a pact with agents capable of quenching their dark needs.

***Invoke patron* check results:**

12-13 In its search for justice, the Gallows Tree is willing to guide your hand. You receive a +5 bonus to your next attack and damage rolls against an enemy who's committed a crime but hasn't paid for it.

14-17 The Gallows Tree notices you, and it lets you join it and those who hang from its squalid limbs. You gain +1d6 temporary Stamina points for an hour that can be used for spellburn. Furthermore, you won't need to breathe.

18-19 A tree with twisted branches suddenly sprouts within 100' of the wizard. There are some nooses hanging from its bare limbs. A target chosen by the wizard is lassoed around the neck and pulled up until the target hangs at 3 feet over the ground. Such a victim suffers 2d6 damage per round (Fort Save DC 15 for half damage) and will be ensnared by the noose until someone cuts the rope loose. The tree will wither and turn to dust after 1d6+CL rounds.

20-23 The Gallows Tree rises a criminal who died hanging from its limbs to scorn him by placing the resulting zombie under the wizard's command. It will appear in 1d4 rounds' time and will follow the wizard's orders until the Gallows Tree needs it somewhere else (judge's discretion, or the wizard has to make a DC 15 spell check every hour to prevent it from vanishing). **Zombie:** Init -4, Atk bite +3 melee (1d4 dmg); AC 9; HD 3d6 (10 hp); Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Un-dead traits; Sv Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +2, AL C.

24-27 The Gallows Tree helps the wizard by sending a horde of criminals who have been hanging from its branches over the past years. 2D5 zombies break through the earth in an explosion of rocks and dirt to attack the wizard's foes. The zombies will vanish after 1d6+CL rounds. **Zombie:** Init -4, Atk bite +3 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6 (10 hp); Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Un-dead traits; Sv Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +2, AL C.

28-29 The Gallows Tree summons the ghost of a victim of a terrible crime. The ghost will appear in 1d4 rounds and will follow the wizard's orders. The ghost will then vanish after an hour. **Ghost:** Init +2, Atk special (see DCC, chapter 9); AC 10; HD 2d12 (13 hp); Mv Fly 40'; Act 1d20; Sp: Un-dead traits, incorporeal, invulnerable to non-magical weapons, 1d4 special abilities (see DCC, chapter 9); Sv Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6, AL C.

30-31 The Gallows Tree sends an avatar of vengeance to fight the wizard's foes. It will stay on the wizard's plane for 1d6+CL rounds.

32+ The Gallows Tree sends an avatar of vengeance to fight side-by-side with the wizard against his enemies. It will stay on the wizard's plane for 1d6+CL rounds. Furthermore, as long as the avatar is with him, the wizard gains the penitence gaze.

Avatar of vengeance

The avatar of vengeance is the embodiment of the Gallows Tree's justice. It's a ghost rider, a skeleton with a flaming skull in black plate mail and armed with long chains that bend to its will. It rides a black horse with burning hooves that can gallop on any surface, even water and vertical surfaces. The avatar is almost unstoppable, and once summoned there'll be nothing that can stop it from exacting revenge for the innocent victims.

Avatar of vengeance (Type IV celestial, Gallows Tree): Init +6, Atk chains +12 melee (3d8+6 dmg + trip) or penitence gaze (special); AC 22; HD 10d12 (65 hp); Mv 40'; Act 2d20; Sp: telepathy, infravision, critical threat range 17-20, celestial steed, penitence gaze (DC 18 Will Save), spells (+8 spellcheck): *Detect evil, Rope trick, Summon celestial mount*, celestial traits; Sv Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +12, AL L.

Celestial traits: Invulnerable to normal weapons and magical weapons with less than a +3 enchantment, or attacks from creatures with less than 7 HD; invulnerable to fire, cold, electricity, and gas; only receives half damage from acid.

Trip: If the Avatar of vengeance successfully attacks with a chain, the target will be thrown 10' away and will have to make a DC 14 Ref Save to avoid being tripped.

Penitence gaze: An Avatar of vengeance may use one of its actions to lock its gaze with a living being's eyes; such a target will have to make a DC 18 Will Save or will be paralyzed during 2d6 rounds, feeling the pain he has inflicted upon his victims during his lifetime. After this harrowing experience, the target won't be able to engage in any kind of evil deed.

Summon celestial steed: Like the spell Summon animal*, but it can only be used to summon a celestial steed.*

Celestial steed: The celestial steed can move across any kind of surface, including water and vertical surfaces. The celestial steed has the same celestial traits as the Avatar, and can communicate telepathically with it.

Celestial steed: Init +1, Atk hoofs +5 melee (1d6+3 dmg); AC 16; HD 4d8 (18 hp); Mv 60 (special)'; Act 1d20; Sp: celestial traits, telepathic bond; Sv Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2, AL N.

Patron taint: The Gallows Tree

When a result of a patron taint shows up on the Invoke patron table, roll 1d6 and consult the following table. When a spellcaster is affected by the three levels of the six different results, he won't need to roll anymore.

1 Every time the wizard casts a spell, he'll be surrounded by dry leaves, blown by a gust of wind. The leaves are harmless, but they will make crunching noises if stepped on. If this result comes up a second time, the effect will be more potent, and the whole floor in a 15' radius around the wizard will be covered with dry leaves, imposing a -1d penalty on any attempt to move silently in the area. If rolled a third time, the wizard will leave a visible trail of dry leaves when walking, no matter what kind of surface he's on.

2 The wizard's skin turns pale and faded, and won't look tanned even if it's exposed to the sunlight. If this result is rolled a second time, the wizard will start smelling like rotten meat, and he won't be able to get rid of the smell, even if he bathes or uses perfumes. If a third effect comes up, the wizard's heartbeat and breathing will become almost non-existent, and his skin will wrinkle giving him the look of a corpse. The wizard will suffer a -1d penalty in all his social interactions not based on fear or intimidation. On the other hand, if the wizard stays still, he'll be mistaken for a corpse.

3 A distinguishing scar appears around the wizard's neck, as if he had survived a failed hanging attempt. This may make normal, respectable people distrust the caster. If this result is rolled a second time, the wizard's face will turn purplish, as if he was suffering from oxygen deprivation. If the caster gets this result a third time, the wizard's head falls over and remains ever after in a lopsided position, as if the neck was broken and he was unable to hold it upright.

4 In his search of justice, the caster becomes cold and distant about the motivations or feelings of those that commit human crimes, losing 1 Personality point in the process. If he gets this result a second time, the wizard won't be able to derive any pleasure other than punishing criminals, so he'll lose another Personality point. If this result is rolled a third time, the wizard won't feel he belong to humanity anymore and will see everyone either as a potential killer or a victim, thus incurring in yet another Personality loss (1 point).

5 The wizard's eyes bleed. If rolled a second time, the wizard loses an eye that falls to the ground leaving behind an empty and bloody eye socket that will never really heal. If the caster rolls this result a third time, he loses the remaining eye. A crow will then appear to join the wizard, perching on his shoulder. From then on, the wizard will see through the crow's eyes. It will stay with him forever, pecking at his wound from time to time. If the crow is ever killed or trapped, another one will fly in its stead.

6 The wizard hears the voices of the dead when he's near a place marked by death, like a cemetery, a mass grave, an old battlefield, a gallows, or a Gallows Tree. These voices are a confusing maelstrom of moans and wails, from which nothing useful can be learnt. If this result is rolled a second time, the voices will follow the wizard during 1d6 hours after he leaves the place where he first heard them. Such voices are now easier to understand, and they can either distract or help him, depending on the circumstances and the spirits' outlook. The wizard has an equal chance of either getting a +1d bonus or a -1d penalty to his initiative rolls (50%-50%). If the caster rolls this result a third time, he'll always hear the voices, making it very difficult to get a good night's sleep; this means a one point loss of Stamina.

Spellburn: the Gallows Tree

The Gallows Tree grants its blessings to those who devote themselves to the prosecution of justice and retribution. Those who serve it must commit their lives to hunting criminals and punishing them with a death sentence.

When a caster uses spellburn to invoke the Gallows Tree's favor, roll 1d4 on this table:

1 The wizard must commune with the Tree. In order to do so, he'll use a noose around his neck to suffocate himself, stopping right before losing consciousness. This translates into Strength and Stamina losses.

2 The Gallows Tree demands the execution of a criminal. The wizard can sacrifice up to 10 points worth of ability scores, but he won't need to perform any act of self-mutilation. If he catches a criminal and hangs him from a tree's branch before the following dawn, he won't suffer any ability loss due to spellburn; but if he can't hunt any wrongdoer, he'll lose twice the amount of points he expended. The criminal must be guilty, of course.

3 A murder of crows flies down from the sky and feeds on the caster's flesh. If the caster resists this feeding, the spellburn fails. If he doesn't resist to it, the crows will feast on his flesh until the spelburn is complete and then will fly off, vanishing between the clouds.

4 The wizard is assaulted by visions and nightmares. In these vivid dreams he'll witness a despicable crime through the victim's eyes; a crime not yet avenged. The wizard will need to make a DC 15 Will Save or he'll be unable to tell the difference between the visions and reality during 1d6 rounds.

Patron spells: the Gallows Tree

Level 1*: Rope trick*, with a +1d bonus to the spell check.

Level 2*: Speak with the dead*, like the third level spell *consult spirit*, but it only allows communication with the tormented ghosts of demi-humans or those who died in strange circumstances. The wizard receives a +2 bonus to his spell check.

Level 3*: Human hunt.*

Human hunt

Spell Level	3 (Gallows Tree).
Range	5 miles (or more).
Duration	6 turns.
Casting time	1 hour.
Save	Will vs. check as applicable.
General	This spell allows the caster and his allies to track a criminal so they can hunt and execute him, hanging from a tree's branch if possible. The wizard must have some kind of trace from the criminal to cast the spell: a personal belonging, a rag from his clothes, a lock of hair, some excrement, a recent footprint… Note that the target of the spell must be a proved criminal according to the local laws or religious tenets or else the spell won't work.
Manifestation	The wizard and his allies perceive the criminal's trail as a... (Roll 1d3): 1) a strong and disgusting smell, 2) footprints that shine with a sickly phosphorescence, 3) ghosts that point in the right direction.

1	Lost, failure, and patron taint.
2-11	Lost and failure.
12-15	Failure, but not lost.
16-17	During the spell's duration, the wizard will perceive the direction towards the target's location. Only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 5-mile radius. The prey can avoid being located by making a Will Save, DC equal to the spell check result.
18-21	During the spell's duration, the wizard will perceive the direction towards the target's location. Only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 5-mile radius. The prey can't avoid the detection.

22-23 During the spell's duration, the wizard and up to 6 of his allies will perceive the direction towards the target's location. Only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 5-mile radius.

24-26 During the spell's duration, the wizard and up to 6 of his allies will perceive the direction towards the target's location; only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 10-mile radius.

27-31 During the spell's duration, the wizard and up to 6 of his allies will perceive the direction towards the target's location; only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 10-mile radius. Furthermore, if someone from the hunting party pinpoints the target, he'll be able to set off a mental alarm.

32-33 During the spell's duration, the wizard and up to 6 of his allies will perceive the direction towards the target's location; only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 10-mile radius. Furthermore, if someone from the hunting party pinpoints the target, he'll be able to set off a mental alarm. In addition, the prey will be marked, receiving a -1 penalty to all attack, damage, and save rolls, as well as all spell and ability checks.

34-35 During the spell's duration, the wizard and up to 6 of his allies will perceive the direction towards the target's location; only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 10-mile radius. Furthermore, if someone from the hunting party pinpoints the target, he'll be able to set off a mental alarm. In addition, the prey will be marked, receiving a -2 penalty to all attack, damage, and save rolls, as well as all spell and ability checks.

36+ During the spell's duration, the wizard and up to 6 of his allies will perceive the direction towards the target's location; only the direction, not the exact location, and only if the target is within a 10-mile radius. Furthermore, if someone from the hunting party pinpoints the target, he'll be able to set off a mental alarm. In addition, the prey will be marked, receiving a -1d penalty to all attack, damage, and save rolls, as well as all spell and ability checks.

The Cultist

New Character Class: The Cultist

You're a fanatical follower of a supernatural agency. Acting from the shadows, you'll win converts to your master's cause, and you'll spread its ill tenets with the sole reason of increasing its power and influence. You'll try to convince others of the necessity of giving in to your patron but, if need be, you'll make use of magic and assassination to further your goals.

A myriad of powers (greater and lesser gods, celestial and demonic beings, elemental princes, transcendent spirits, and many more) populate the multiverse and vie for the devotion and worship of the intelligent beings who dwell in it.

Some are open about their intentions, and their doctrines and divine portfolios are popular and accepted by the vast majority of groups and societies; they foster civilization, cooperation, order, and even Good. Their clerics are their most devout followers and servants, paragons of their faith, and well-loved members of their communities because of their powers to heal the ill and turn the unholy.

Other powers, however, can't or don't want to show themselves so blatantly. Their intentions towards the worlds where their corrosive influence reach are usually related to conflict, struggle, selfishness, annihilation, and some of them are even Evil incarnate. Their clerics, better called "cultists", are therefore people who live in the shadows; they aren't usually the most popular people. The cultist has a deeper and closer relationship with his patron than the cleric, but this relationship is also more dangerous to mind, body, and soul.

The cultist could be an alternative to the cleric for chaotic characters.

Hit points

A cultist gains 1d6 hit points each level.

Choosing a god

The cultist always chooses a Chaotic god/supernatural being/power. When a character chooses this class, a pact with said patron is automatically made, just like a wizard would do, with the corresponding benefits (and some more).

Weapon training

A cultist is trained in the use of these weapons: blowgun, dagger, dart, garrote. Armor affects the casting of the cultist's spells, so they don't usually wear it.

Alignment

A cultist is always Chaotic.

Caster level

The cultist's caster level is equal to his class level.

Magic

The only primordial source of the cultist's power is his patron. Thanks to his utter devotion to his supernatural master, the cultist is able to channel a tiny fraction of such being, nevertheless a huge amount in the mortal plane.

The cultist casts spells with a spellcheck, usually 1d20 + Per modifier + caster level.

The cultist's entire magic ability is colored by his master's personality and divine portfolio. This is reflected in different ways in the following rules.

- **Spell list**. As said before, the cultist's patron is the one who gives out his spells and the power to cast them, so their availability is limited by the patron's area of influence that varies wildly from one another. These spells could be both from the cleric and the wizard's lists, as well as the ones

that the patron could bestow to its followers; they need to be adapted to show the patron's nature. So if, for example, the cultists' god was Azi Dahaka and the spell *Summon animal* was on his list, the summoned animals would always be reptiles of all kinds, especially poisonous snakes. Or, if the cleric spell *Detect evil* were on the list, it'd become *Detect good*.

So for level 1, a cultist of Azi Dahaka would have access to these nine spells, from which he'd randomly choose 4 (the amount a level-1 cultist gets):

Level-1 spells for cultists of Azi Dahaka

1 Rope trick (wizard spell; the ropes affected by the spell look like snakes)

2 Detect good (reversed cleric spell; the original is Detect evil)

3 Charm person (wizard spell)

4 Summon animal (wizard spell; only reptiles)

5 Flaming hands (wizard spell; manifests as waves of intense heat rather than as a spray of flames)

6 Darkness (cleric spell; unlike the original spell, the cultist will be able to see in the area of effect, and his eyes will look like snake's eyes)

7 Paralysis (cleric spell; the target seems to have been bitten by a poisonous snake)

8 Resist heat (cleric spell; only heat)

9 Snake trick (patron spell)

Likewise, all cultist spells will be affected by the Mercurial Magic rule; we recommend adapting the results from the Mercurial Magic table to better reflect the tone related to the god's theme. If we take Azi Dahaka as an example again, a result of 18 on the Mercurial Magic table would mean that instead of attracting insects, the cultist would attract small poisonous reptiles, and that he shouldn't resist or run away from them, because they're sacred to his patron.

The judge, working with the player who chose the cultist, has to create the spell list and the needed adaptations that will convey the magic of the unholy being to which the character has decided to devote his life in the most reliable way.

- **Spell check results**. The cultist's spells are never lost, prone to suffer a misfire, nor do they cause corruption; a cultist may incur deity disapproval, however, as explained below.

- **Deity disapproval**. The powers described above are neither subtle nor forgiving with their followers. If a cultist displeases his master, he'll suffer his god's fury (even more if he shows mercy or compassion, or uses his powers to promote good).

  Spellcasting for the cultist class follows the same rules as the

deity disapproval mechanic for clerics. Every time a cultist rolls a number that is in the disapproval range when making a spell check, he'll have to roll on the Deity Disapproval table and suffer the consequences describes therein; such a table will be unique according to his patron, and the results will be more severe and extreme. The disapproval range starts every day at 1, but like the cleric, it will increases to 1-2 with the first failed roll, to 1-3 with the second, etc. This disapproval range resets every morning, unless a result on the table says the contrary.

Roll as many d4s as the number on the dice for the spell check that triggered the disapproval (e.g., if the disapproval range was 1-5 and he rolled a 4, it'll be 4d4). This roll is further adjusted by the cultist's Luck modifier: if positive, subtract it from the roll, if negative add it to the roll. If the cultist don't want to or can't comply with the disapproval requirements, he'll suffer a cumulative -1d penalty to his spell checks for each day that he doesn't or can't, and his disapproval range won't reset at the beginning of each day.

If any given time the cultist is affected by all the patron taint levels, he'll become a sickening beast of chaos controlled by the judge.

Azi Dahaka's Deity disapproval

Roll (xd4)	Disapproval
1	The cultist must show the proper respect to Azi Dahaka. He must drop to the ground, where he must hiss and slither like a snake for 10 minutes, no matter the situation he's in.
2	The cultist's impulsiveness is his Achilles heel. He must stay still like a reptile for 1d5 hours, adding his Luck modifier to the roll if it's negative, subtracting it if it's positive (1 hour minimum).
3	The supremacy of the reptiles is one of Azi Dahaka's goals. The cultist must hunt down and swallow whole 1d7 warm-blooded animals.
4	Lay waste to your own body! The cultist must rub and scratch his whole body, including eyes, nose, and mouth with dry sand. He must stay so purified for 1d30 hours.

5	Although a warm-blooded animal himself, the cultist must share what Azi Dahaka's favorite spawn likes. He must expose himself to scorching heat for 1d5 hours during which he won't drink any liquids. If the environment doesn't match this requirement, the cultist must search such a place: a huge fire, a volcano's caldera, a factory's oven, etc.
6	The cultist must get ready for the incoming world desert. He must reject any liquid for 1d5 days, adjusted by his Luck modifier (see result 2), 1 day minimum.
7	Azi Dahaka imposes its presence into the cultist. He gets a patron taint.
8	The cultist is not worthy enough to share Azi Dahaka's deepest secrets. He loses access to his patron spells for a week (*Snake trick, Kith of the hydra, Reap the whirlwind*).
9	The cultist must show true repentance. He must commit an evil act as soon as possible (never later than an hour). This act can't benefit him in any way beyond regaining Azi Dahaka's confidence.
10	There's a time to hide in the shadows, and there's a time to go out in the sun. The cultist must show his true nature for a whole day. He can't use any ability nor spell that hides it.
11	Azi Dahaka's essence is overwhelming. The cultist gets two patron taints.
12	Deserts must spread all over the world. The cultist must find a park, a garden, or a small forest and completely destroy it, salting the land afterwards to make sure that nothing grows there ever after.
13	The cultist must strike the warm-blooded creatures where it hurts the most: their water reservoirs. He must poison the water source of a community: a well, a river, etc.
14+	The process of laying total waste to the planet must proceed faster. The cultist must cause a natural disaster. Breaking a dam to flood an area, demolishing a mountain peak to trigger a landslide, undermining the foundations of a mine to collapse it, etc. He has a week to do it.

We encourage you to create harsher results for these tables, and like this example, make the tables shorter.

- **Spellburn**. Cultists can spellburn like a wizard. The effects of making use of this ability should be customized to match the patron's nature.

- **Invoke patron**. A much closer relationship between a cultist and his patron makes it easier for him to ask for its help; therefore, the frequency with which he can do it doesn't rely on the spell *Invoke patron*, but a fixed number that increases as a cultist advances in level. The Table: Cultist shows the number of times per day.

Sacrifices

When conducting a spellburn, the souls of a cultist's living offerings can be used instead of his own. To make use of this evil ability, a cultist must offer an intelligent life to his patron through a ritual that must take at least an hour.

In exchange, the cultist receives 1 point for each of the victim's hit dice that can be used later when attempting a spellburn; there's no limit to the number of points he can amass or a deadline to use them, but he needs to keep a piece of the offering's body that vanishes when the point(s) are spent (or the piece burns, or it disappears into the earth, or the cultist must eat it… depending on the god).

Cultist skills

Taking into account the nature of the chaotic gods and supernatural beings, the cultist's job as a proxy for their dark plots is usually conducted in a subtle and illicit way, lest he risk being hunted down and killed by the agents of Law or even Neutrality.

To avoid this fate, the cultist learns and perfects some skills that belong to other classes, like the thief, so he can keep a low profile and carry out his mission discreetly. These skills are clearly an advantage for nearly all cultists, save those so demented or fanatical enough to expose themselves to the public eye.

- Hide in shadows. Like the thief's skill.

- Backstabbing. Like the thief's skill.

- Impersonation. The use of this skill allows the cultist to mimic another class or occupation on a superficial level so he can blend in a community or fool his enemies. It's similar to Disguise self (the thief's skill), but it's both more specific and more versatile; the cultist won't be able to look like someone in particular but, practically speaking, he'd pass as someone who's part of the group or occupation he's trying to infiltrate, not only physically but also by his accent or language, attire, etc.

The cultist makes a Per check, adding the bonus shown on the

Table: Cultist. The result will be the DC needed to find out who he really is or to track him down.

Proselytize

Above all, the main goal of a cultist is to spread the worship of his blasphemous god amongst the ignorant masses; the powers he's been given have a price, and this is the coin to pay.

Every week, the cultist must convert to his faith as many hit dice worth of intelligent creatures as his level. Otherwise, he loses 1 Luck point every day until he does so (and when he does, he recovers all those Luck points). Furthermore, his disapproval range won't reset at the beginning of each day if he doesn't get the number of converts demanded. Converting creatures with 0 HD works as follows: every four of them count as one hit die.

Luck

The cultist's Luck modifier applies to his *Invoke patron* checks and to his spell checks when he casts spells specific to his patron (e.g., if it's Azi Dahaka: *Snake trick*, *Kith of the Hydra*, and *Reap the whirlwind*).

Action dice

The cultist can use his additional action dice to cast spells.

Cultist titles

Level	Title
1	Convert
2	Cultist
3	Corruptor
4	Hierophant
5	High priest

Table: Cultist

Level	Attack	Crit. dice/ Table	Action dice	Ref.	Fort.	Will	Spells 1	2	3	4	5	Hide	Back stab	Imp.	Inv. Patron
1	+0	1d6/II	1d20	+0	+1	+1	4	-	-	-	-	+1	+0	+1	1
2	+1	1d8/II	1d20	+0	+1	+1	5	-	-	-	-	+1	+0	+2	1
3	+1	1d8/II	1d20	+1	+1	+2	5	3	-	-	-	+2	+1	+3	2
4	+2	1d10/II	1d20	+1	+2	+2	6	4	-	-	-	+2	+1	+4	2
5	+2	1d10/II	1d20	+1	+2	+3	6	5	2	-	-	+3	+2	+5	3
6	+3	1d12/II	1d20+1d14	+2	+2	+4	7	5	3	-	-	+4	+2	+6	3
7	+3	1d12/II	1d20+1d16	+2	+3	+4	7	6	4	1	-	+4	+3	+7	4
8	+4	1d14/II	1d20+1d20	+2	+3	+5	8	6	5	2	-	+5	+3	+8	4
9	+4	1d14/II	1d20+1d20	+3	+3	+5	8	7	5	3	1	+5	+4	+9	5
10	+5	1d16/II	1d20+1d20	+3	+4	+6	9	7	6	4	2	+6	+4	+10	5

Magic object: "The" Magic Sword

This legendary sword is one of those that can be found at the bottom of a lake, embedded in a stone, or clutched by a dead king on a funeral pyre. It's a masterwork sword, light and embellished, with a blade that never goes dull or dirty. It isn't affected by rust, and blood just washes over the blade and then trickles down, not leaving even a speck on it. Although it doesn't cast any light, it's got a special shine; with just but a glance anybody will realize that it's magical, no need whatsoever of any arcane skill or check to prove it. It's a magic sword, as simple as that.

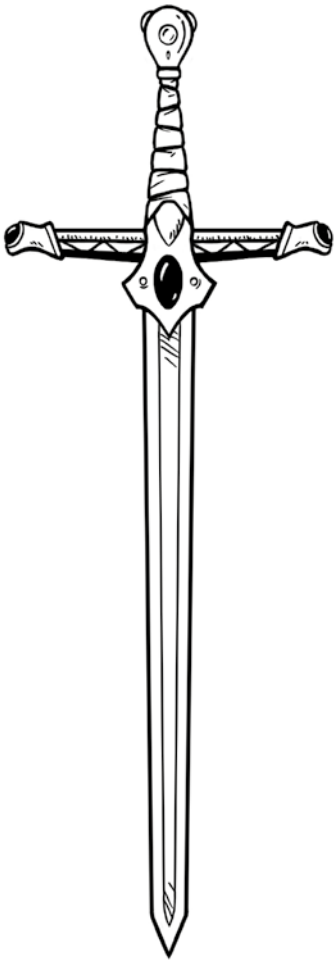
If the exact name of the sword is not known, the bearer will feel the need to come up with a moniker for it and will take advantage of any situation to proclaim it. "Felons! You'll feel the edge of Life-ender!"

If used in combat, the magic sword will amaze and frighten the bearer's rivals, and they'll suffer a -1d dice penalty to any morale check they make during that combat.

Once they pull themselves together, the survivors will become obsessed with the magic sword; they'll want to own it no matter what, and they'll organize hunting parties to take it away from its current owner. They'll thus start a never-ending cycle of assaults and getaways that'll only end either when they get it or when they die trying.

Magic sword, 1d8 damage.

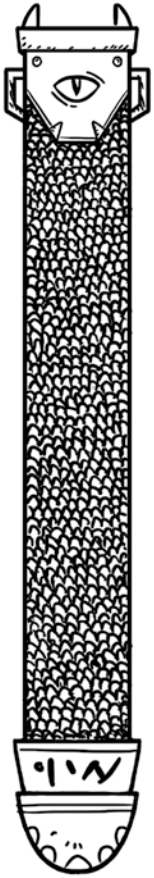
Note: there can be other versions of the magic sword, such as the magic spear, the magic warhammer, or the magic bow; just change the base weapon.



Magic object:
Lamprey Scabbard

It's a nice scabbard, embossed and full of precious stones that adjusts perfectly to any blade, keeping it greased and free of rust or any remains from the last battle.

However, it's not really an object, but rather a creature from a parallel plane of existence. It feeds on the magic emanations that ensorcelled weapons emit. In order to do so, the lamprey scabbard adjusts itself to the finder's weapon, and if it's not magical, it'll wait until its owner comes across one.



When it's used as sheath of a magic weapon, the lamprey scabbard drains the arcane properties of said weapon, and as a side effect it transfers some of that power to the bearer, provoking a "rush"; an extraordinarily addictive feeling. Once a day, the scabbard grants its owner a 1d3 deed dice or a +1d to the existing deed dice of warriors and dwarfs for 1d5 hours, and it can do so up to 1d7 times (1d12 if the weapon is powerful) before extinguishing its prey's magic.

If one wants to get rid of the lamprey scabbard before it consumes a weapon's arcane spark, a successful DC 10 Will Save is enough, but with a +2 to the DC for each time that the bearer enjoyed the arcane "rush". If that's the case, the lamprey scabbard will just scurry away and vanish to find another dupe to parasitize.

Those few of strong will have tried to destroy it, but this is doomed to fail: the cunning creature can teleport to its native plane, from where it'll return later. The only way to finish it off is by finding the legendary *Doomsday blade* and sheathing it in the scabbard; this will kill it with a fatal indigestion.

Although not completely drained, those weapons that are freed from the scabbard will never be the same. They'll suffer a cumulative -1d penalty to attack and damage rolls for each time they were affected; in addition, they'll lose their shine and their blades will turn breakable and prone to rust. Those weapons that have a mind of their own will always hold suicidal tendencies and will try to destroy themselves. Maybe reforging them in the right forge would help them to recover.

Intelligent magic weapons will perceive the lamprey scabbard for what it really is and will try to warn their wielder, but some won't be able to resist the urge to feel the intense and intoxicating feeling one more time. Some actually try to find more legendary weapons to feed the greedy creature, and in doing so get the satisfaction they seek.

Magic object: The Scarezombie

In the most remote and isolated rural communities, where saint men are rare and every stranger is looked upon with suspicion, peasants turn to desperate measures in order to avoid the most horrible of plagues: the undead.

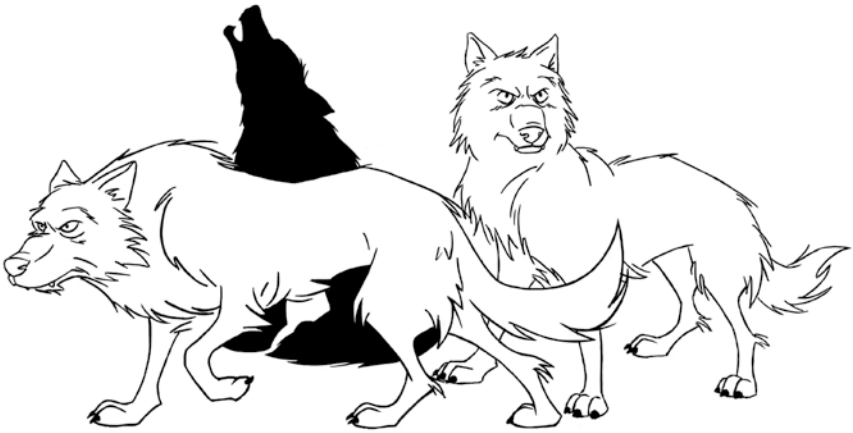
Such desperate measures are the Scarezombies: Strawmen of size and proportions similar to those of humans, dressed so they look like a cleric of a lawful god. Or as close as possible to the idea that the average bumpkin has of a cleric, that is.

Although the creation of a Scarezombie doesn't involve any ritual or special procedure, other than the most mundane craftsmanship, these strawmen are still capable of some magic. That's probably due to the faith that villagers put into them.

A Scarezombie that has been stuck into the same place for at least 12 hours (it's not enough to just lay it on the ground) will be able to turn unholy as a level 1 lawful cleric with both Personality and Luck 10. Only undead creatures will be considered unholy. The Scarezombie will automatically try to turn unholy 2 combat rounds after an undead gets within a 30 ft. radius, at initiative 20. It will always target the undead with the most HD in a 30 ft. radius. The Scarezombie will try to turn unholy again after every minute (6 rounds) if there are any undead still within 30 ft. Failed spell checks raise the disapproval range as usual.

If a spell check results in a disapproval, the Scarezombie will burst in flames and be completely destroyed. Everyone at 30 ft. or less will suffer 3d6 fire damage, or half of that if successful in a DC 15 Reflex save. Moreover, the ground on which the Scarezombie is stuck will be forever cursed, supernaturally attracting every undead nearby.

The Scarezombie will reduce its disapproval range by one point for each 24 hours spent without trying to turn unholy.



Animals

It's moderately easy to depict a wild animal with the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* rules. When we say "wild animals", we really mean wild animals of the sort that can kill you; not cats, sheep, or rabbits. You don't need stats for those helpless creatures, because they'll never pose a danger or a challenge in combat. Another different matter would be a mass of rabid mice or a stampede of vampiric sheep.

A wild animal's hit dice is d8, and its number of hit dice will vary according to its size. You could also increase the hit dice to d10 or d12 for strong or stout animals within its own species, because it doesn't change its offensive might.

Some examples:

1d8: dog, wolf. 2d8: jaguar, ape, crocodile. 3d8: tiger, lion. 4d8: bull, bear, bison. 5d8: rhinoceros. 6d8: elephant.

To represent the special attacks of the wild animals, give them a deed dice like a warrior or a dwarf instead of using an attack bonus. To determine the deed dice for each animal, use the number of hit dice as if it was the level of a warrior, so for instance an animal with 3d8 would have a d5 deed dice, the same dice as a level 3 warrior. Each beast uses this deed dice to make combat maneuvers related to its species. For example, a rhinoceros or a bull always tries to charge, a tiger trips and pushes down its prey, a gorilla or a bear will grapple, etc.

Wild animals have good Fortitude and Reflex saves and a bad Will save.

Sample wild animal:

Wolf

Wolf: HD 1d8 (5 hp); AC 12; Init +2, Atk bite +1d3 melee (2d3 dmg); Mv 40'; Act 1d20; Sp: Deed dice (trip), skirmisher, pack, night vision 60'; Sv Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -2, AL N.

Skirmisher: A wolf can move, attack, and keep moving up to his maximum movement rate, without triggering an opportunity attack (or something like that).

Pack: A wolf receives a +1 to its attack rolls for each wolf that attacked its target earlier in the same round. This is a cumulative bonus.

Wolves are mammals and carnivores, canny predators that work together to ensure their survival. They move over large territories and can communicate with each other across vast distances using their baying and howling.

Wolves are only dangerous to cattle, but if winter is too harsh or food is scarce, they could focus on humans and demihumans instead. They won't face a hard opponent without a good reason, since they're survivors above all.

Their packs are usually from 2 to 20 strong, with 8 being the standard number. The pack's leaders are an alpha male and female. These alphas are the strongest wolves in the pack, so they have 2d8 HD and a d4 deed dice. They're the only ones that mate and raise the cubs.

Dire wolf

Dire wolf: HD 3d10 (17 hp); AC 14; Init +2, Atk bite +1d5 melee (1d8 + 1d5 dmg); Mv 40'; Act 1d20; Sp: Deed dice (trip), skirmisher, carnivore, night vision 60'; Sv Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -1, AL N.

Carnivore: A dire wolf can feast on flesh to recover lost hit points. When it devours prey, it heals 1d6 hit dice for each hit dice the prey had.

A *Canis dirus*, dire wolf or giant wolf, is bigger than his normal brethren, weighting up to 200 pounds. Its legs are shorter, which makes it an excellent runner. Its muzzle and jaw are long and powerful, its teeth thick and strong, allowing it to shatter its victims' bones.

"The" wolf

***The* wolf:** HD 4d10 (2 hp); AC 15; Init +3, Atk bite +1d6 melee (2d6 dmg); Mv 40'; Act 1d20; Sp: Crit range 18-20, deed dice (trip), skirmisher, night vision 60', 1d4 special traits (see below); Sv Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1, AL N.

In the human settlements out in the wilderness, wolves have always been surrounded by an aura of myth and legend. Some places are not under the attack of a pack of wolves, but *the* wolf, a sole and extraordinary animal that terrorizes the region. This is an intelligent animal, almost as smart as a human (or even more), and it usually turns the tables around on

hunting parties, making the hunter its prey.

The wolf doesn't hunt alongside a pack; it's a solitary wolf. When it seeks other wolves, it is to become their master and use them in whichever plan it has devised.

Special traits: The wolf has 1d4 special traits rolled or chosen from the following table. These traits could be used with other "superior" animals, like a man-eating tiger or a lion that hunts hunters…

Roll 1d8:

1d8	Results
1	*The* wolf understands all human and demihuman languages and can even speak them… if it wishes to do so.
2	It's almost impossible to track *the* wolf because (roll 1d3): (1) it doesn't leave any prints, (2) it leaves prints, but they look like those from another animal, (3) it leaves human footprints.
3	*The* wolf detects traps automatically.
4	*The* wolf can summon other wolves in the vicinity with a howl. They'll arrive in 1d3 rounds.
5	Those who hear *the* wolf's baying must make a Will save, DC 14, or suffer a -1d penalty to all rolls when facing *the* wolf.
6	*The* wolf can handle objects as if it had human hands (open doors, windows, etc.).
7	*The* wolf can use its deed dice to disarm an opponent.
8	*The* wolf can curse those who kill it. It's usually a curse of lycanthropy, but don't feel constrained by it.

Why so many tables? It's part of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* experience to determine a creature's special traits or skills with tables. It can look bothersome, but the reason behind it is really simple: it's done to surprise your players, so they can't relax, and so they never know what they're facing. Each time they come across a wolf, it'll be different.

Superstition

Although magic is without a doubt the province of obsessive wizards and their ilk, everybody knows a trick or two to avoid its ill effects, or at least they try to. For the mystic arts to work, its victim must believe such arts to be real. Therefore, an unshakeable faith on a religious or supernatural belief (whether it exists or not), somewhat ironically, creates a protective effect for the people who hold it; in other words, ignorance in a magic-ridden world can grant some advantages. Arcane scholars call it "the magic of the poor".

The basic mechanic (with some exceptions in the following examples) is simple and applies to all the variants herein, although with different saving throws: for each Luck point spent to resist the evil influences that matches the popular belief held in the area, you get 1d5 points. In return, since the PC is "resisting" to accept reality, he won't get any XP from that encounter (immobility petrifies you).

This mechanic isn't like a wild card, to be used in any situation. If a player decides to use this optional rule, ask him to define at least four pillars that uphold his particular superstition. They have to be specific: nothing like "If I cross my fingers, magic won't affect me". Here, you'll find some quack theories from rural areas that all villagers believe are true and must be followed.

- If someone's going to cast an evil eye on you, look for a tree's shadows; too bad if it happens at night time.
- Never look at a black animal any longer than a moment; otherwise, the witch who controls it will be able to hold sway over you.
- If you're going to be the target of a sorcerer's spell, throw some salt at his face and its evil influence will vanish in the air.
- Run counter-clockwise around a witch and she'll be unable to see you.

Although the aforementioned superstitions imply gestures, actions, or a mix of the two, there's no limit to how the local hokum can manifest. Moreover, they sometimes involve the use of an object that is supposedly holy, blessed, or have powers. According to this, we can find:

Amulets

These fetishes have very definite functions within the day-to-day life of a community. Crafting one of them is usually reserved for a few chosen ones, like the local witch, who can wield the magical energies needed to create them.

The Great Sow's lucky hoof

Don't go anywhere without it! (Interchangeable according to the local beliefs with: black suckling lamb's horn / pickled leg of mole / widower vulture's beak / etc.). It'll protect you from evil spirits and is very useful against possessions and similar situations (Will saves).

The innocent marionette

Using the tiny femur of an unborn calf and its father's testicle wrapped in sackcloth, an effigy is crafted to serve as protection against the attacks of the increasingly abundant beastmen that dwell in the acidic crags. Said creatures will ignore you as long as you don't raise your hand against them; otherwise, its warding effect will vanish. In practical terms, this means that when locked in combat with those beasts, they'll attack somebody else until there's nobody else standing or the wearer attacks them.

Note: This amulet is only useful with the crags' dwellers; pity the fool who uses it in the salty moors or the dark forests of the north.

Images and writings

For the ignorant countryside dwellers, the scarce images and the even scarcer handwritten manuscripts contain and sum up the powers of civilization: illustrations or words are references that never change, that stay immutable. The forces of the wild bow before human intelligence and competence.

The protective vellum

Some grimoires find their way to illiterate people; their intricate drawings and diagrams, along with the scribbled words, inspire awe and mystery amongst the simple minds. Their pages are sometimes torn and literally used as a protective means against magic; they're

worn under the clothes, touching the wearer's body. The vellum reduces the damage taken from magic missiles and similar attacks (1d6 points of damage).

The entrails pebbles

The temples dedicated to the most popular deities are frequently decorated with runes and passages carved in stone on their walls and pillars. To a layman, these carvings are the physical expression of his god's protection, so the most desperate ones chip them away. These pebbles are never bigger than a fist; the most fanatical swallow them because they grant protection from poisons and curses that affect the entrails as long as they are inside the body (Fortitude saves).

Relics

Nothing compares to the former possessions of a holy woman or man, a part of his or his body, or even those objects touched or created by the gods themselves.

The teeth of the Rake God's champion

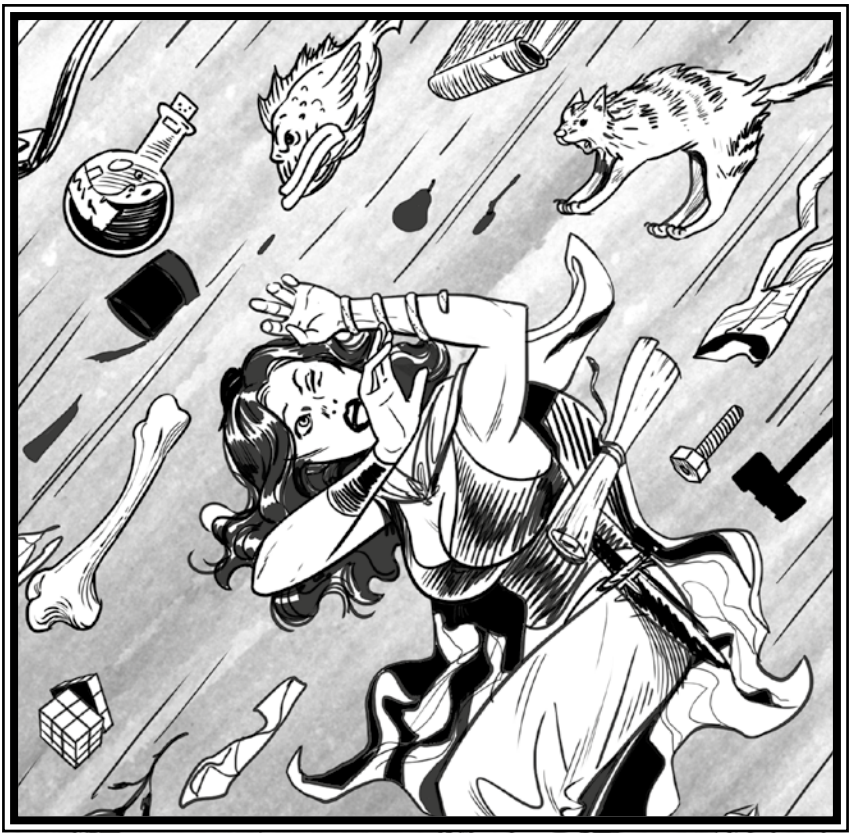
Devotion to the Rake God takes many forms, but it generally entails pleasure without limits and all kind of excesses. Fighting and combat are part of his creed, more as another sort of pleasure and wanton violence than as a means to achieve something. One of his most famous champions travelled from tavern to tavern and from festival to festival to start fights, where he often lost a tooth; his followers took those and carefully kept them. Just one of those would grant inhuman resistance to effects that cause loss of consciousness (Fortitude saves).

The ashes of St. Frigid

A champion of Law who battled the foulest creatures and promoters of Chaos during decades, she met her death in a lost dimension during a personal crusade, incinerated by a powerful demon lord. Her followers gathered her scant ashes and put them in a vase, from where her admirers have taken a handful here and there over the years. Wearing a sizeable amount of the ashes protects the wearer against heat and flames (Reflex and/or Fortitude saves).

St. Hermenegildo's knuckle

Hermenegildo was the founder of the homonymous knight order; this warrior, rumored to be too self-conscious about his scant height, defended the duchy against a band of giants. It's said that the battle was so fierce that, in the end, the saint had to fight the leader on his own… and unarmed. The 3.256 steps of St. Hermenegildo's temple honor the 3.256 punches that the saint needed to kill him. St. Hermenegildo died shortly after, both hands gangrenous. In any case, those who wear the notched and crushed knuckles will instill fear and terror amongst all kinds of giants (they'll have to check for morale), and if the wearer casts his weapons aside and starts punching the colossi's feet they'll suffer a -1 penalty to their checks.



Transplanar climatology

Roll 1d24 to set the climatology when the characters are traveling between planes:

1d24	Result
1	**Dead Calm**. A mysterious (from the characters' viewpoint) silence settles in, making them suspicious. All players must argue with the next person who speaks.
2	**Nice and Calm.** The weather is lovely across the planes of existence. PCs are in a great mood and must show it with displays of camaraderie.
3	**Weird Rain.** Roll 1d7: 1-Feces, 2-Green paint, 3-Nuts and bolts from a gnomish machine, 4-Bat wings, 5-Salt, 6-Forks, 7-All of these at the same time.

4	**Magic Gale.** A stream of wild magic energies instills life into the biggest non-magical object each character is carrying. Animated objects hate each other, and they talk to and demand their owners to destroy their rivals. The PCs must make a Fort save (DC judge's discretion) or fall under their influence.
5	**Karmic Downpour**. A multicolor rain swaps the PCs' personalities. Every player takes the character sheet of the player on his/her right. If someone's got the Judge on his/her right, instead of taking a character sheet, he/she turns into a 1d3-headed dragon.
6	**Spectral Twister.** A huge twister made of unknown energies quickly approaches the PCs. It's completely innocuous and will go through them harmlessly, but they don't need be aware of this fact.
7	**Someone Left a Gate Open.** On a nearby plane, an inept wizard took a break for lunch and left a gate open through which stuff is falling on the PCs. Roll 1d6: 1-Soiled clothes, 2-Scraps of food, 3-Big and heavy books (1d5 damage upon impact), 4-Scribbled parchments, 5-Random magic potions, 6-Familiar (a puppy, a parrot, a toad...) that breathes fire when it's between planes.
8	**Pack of Transplanar Demons.** A pack of demons that look exactly like the PCs (but with deer antlers and flip-flops) attack the PC from the rear, gaining surprise. Despite their frightening appearance, their stats are similar to a goblin's.
9	**Energy Overload.** The atmospheric magic is so intense that all magic items triple their bonus, but they burn to touch (1d2 damage every round until it's dropped). Dropped objects will turn into slugs (it's an irreversible process) on a 1-13 on 1d30.
10	**Will o' the Wisps.** The second highest-level PC begins to shine (in a color that is the lowest-level PC's favorite). Anybody who touches him will get shivers and awful nightmares about sawdust for a week.
11	**Planar Heat Wave.** The interplanar space has a stale smell. All PCs lose 1d5 hit points to sweat and heat stroke unless they take off their clothes and take a shower with all their drinking water.
12	**Elemental Leak.** The PCs' journey takes them near an elemental plane that, unfortunately, has a leak. The floor becomes ankle-deep in (Roll 1d5): 1-Fire, 2-Earth, 3-Water, 4-Wind, 5-Socks (yep, there's an elemental plane of that stuff).

13	**Night falls**, no matter what time it is.
14	**Day breaks**, no matter what time it is.
15	**Temporal Interruption.** The space-time continuum stops because of a breakdown. While the maintenance gods fix the issue, the Judge and PCs must keep silent during 1d6 minutes. Whoever speaks takes 1d16 damage.
16	**Spectral Cyclone.** It's exactly like the Spectral Twister (result 6 on this table) but it's deadly.
17	**Screaming Snowstorm.** Roll 1d7: 1-Screaming leaves, 2-Screaming cat heads, 3-Screaming bricks, 4-Screaming cockroaches, 5-Screaming sugar, 6-Screaming cleaning water, 7-All of these at the same time.
18	**Outlandish Dew.** Humidity from unknown origins soaks everything. The PCs need to stop and dry up or they risk losing their equipment and food.
19	**Frost.** The lowest-level character becomes encrusted with ice. Unless his/her mates do something, he/she'll slip and fall to the floor in 1d16 assaults.
20	**Magic and Electric Storm.** PCs wearing metal armor are struck for 1d13 damage. Magic-users have to cast a random spell at a random target at maximum effect.
21	**Dimensional Catastrophe.** In a nearby plane, a group of adventurers failed to stop a megalomaniac villain from destroying the world. The skies open up and corpses and burnt debris fall from that plane. Roll 1d5 to determine what kind of plane it was: 1-Fantasy, 2-Futuristic, 3-Superheroes, 4- Noir, 5-Cartoons.
22	**Transplanar Nomads.** Mysterious hooded guys who wander through the planes. Roll 1d7 for their demeanor: 1- Friendly, 2-Hostile, 3-Don't care much about anything, 4-They speak weirdly and are difficult to understand, 5-Democrats, 6-Moustached, 7-Cannibals.
23	**Galactic Equinox.** A great festival where the gods from all over the multiverse meet up. Clerics must offer a mandatory mass for the party. If there's more than one, the one who worships the most powerful god takes precedence.
24	**Climatic Mashup.** Roll 1d5 times on the table and apply all the results.

Available destinations for a planar trip

Roll 1d7 if the PCs get lost when they're travelling across the planes to determine their destination:

1d7	Result
1	**Plane of bad ideas**. This plane hosts the ideal of every single failed object and creature from the material plane. Nothing works the way it should, every creature has a flaw or ailment (although they may not be apparent) and any plan devised in this plane will fail when it's put in practice for some reason or another.
2	**Astral hulk**. An empty gargantuan sloop with broken masts, torn sails, and a breached hull. Left to their own devices in the dark and cyclopean cargo holds, a community of parasites or vermin has had a million years to thrive and evolve into a race of (roll 1d4) human- (1) rats, (2) barnacles, (3) lice, (4) remoras.
3	**Shangri-La, the land of never-ending happiness**. In this tiny and select pocket dimension there's no hunger, neither thirst nor injustice. Upon arrival, the PCs will advance to level 10, they'll find their perfect match and they won't find any reasons to leave the plane or go adventuring. These benefits will vanish as soon as they leave the plane.
4	**A cranny between the universe cushions**. Here's where the things and creatures that got lost and were never found end up; things like coins, keys, nuts, dogs, cats, or even the PCs. There won't be a shortage of pets or food in this plane, but it's simply impossible to leave it on one's own account: anyone trapped here needs to be found.
5	**Demiplane of resentment**. No offense or insult is ever forgotten here, be it real or imaginary, including those that took place between the PCs during their adventures. Additionally, at nightfall all the murder victims rise up from death seeking revenge.
6	**The innearth**. The PCs somehow find themselves inside their own planet, a hollow space with an inner sun, civilizations, and even giant prehistoric fauna and flora.
7	**Quatere, eleventh pit of Malebolge**. This is a minor pit of hell, a place for those fools with plenty of time to argue with each other and the inclination to do so. It'll be impossible to agree about anything, there'll always be someone who objects about any course of action, and when it seems that an agreement can be reached, another fool will pop up demanding to be updated just to raise objections. And so on.

Disturbing rural encounters

Roll 1d14:

1d14	Result
1	A tattered kid stares wordlessly from the side of the road as he picks his nose. As he turns his back to the PCs, a strange lump stirs under his garments before he disappears.
2	A fevered horse crosses the road, bloodshot eyes and froth on its lips, requiring that 1d3-1 PCs make a DC 12 Ref save or be hit for 1d6 damage. The horse can't be calmed down and if it's somehow stopped or held, it'll rise on its hind legs and, after uttering a human laugh, will drop dead.
3	A female laborer stops working to watch the travelers. She will insult and threaten them, getting more and more violent.
4	A wandering seller shows the travelers her wares insistently. She ends up displaying an eclectic collection of potions and charms, in exchange of which she doesn't ask for money, just some hair and a blood drop. Those she will put inside a pot full of silt, alongside some more samples.

5	During the journey, the plants and animals look gradually sickly and changed. Strangely hued corn, lettuce shaped in weird shapes and covered with unnatural outgrowths, pustule-ridden and ill-looking cattle, extremely pop-eyed bunnies...
6	A dog comes near the party and, after sniffing them or trying to, tails them from afar. Oddly, the dog is joined later by a cat, then a rooster, and a goose, a pig, a cow...
7	Those locals who see the travelers greet them kindly from a distance, but if approached, they begin to look restless, then fearful, and finally they freak out so much that they try to kill themselves.
8	A god-forsaken village sits by the side of the road. When walking by it, doors and windows can be heard closing as the visitors proceed.
9	The corn growing on both sides of the road progressively invades it, making the path narrower until it vanishes completely. When the PCs turn around, there'll be no trace of the path, and they'll be in the middle of a cornfield.
10	A sudden hailstorm forces the travelers to take shelter. The ice rocks are increasingly bigger and faster (1 hp dmg/minute). The only place to run for cover seems to be a barn; violent blows can be heard coming from the inside.
11	Some locals are laying a fence across the road so "those things can't get through".
12	On a nearby stream, a mysterious mill's wheel spins against the current's flow.
13	Pikes and pitchforks with dogs' heads stuck on them keep popping here and there in the fields, and their number keeps increasing.
14	The party stumbles upon Humberto Felipe Arteamado, a somber-looking bard, well-known for his horror tales, who joins them to share their wine and fire during the night. He'll talk about an unspeakable abomination, murmured by the locals to dwell in some peasants' barn, further ahead in the road. During the night he disappears, leaving behind a small octopus-like figurine wrapped in furs.

Names for cults!
Or other weird organizations

Roll 1d24 per column:

1	The Dread	Cult of	the Ghostly	King
2	The Silver	Worshipers of	the Unknowable	Eye
3	The Sacred	Holders of	the Lonely	Star
4	The Glorious	Keepers of	the Dreaming	Path
5	The Foul	Singers of	the Bloody	Ocean
6	The Shuddering	Gazers of	the Infinite	Heart
7	The Virginal	Implements of	the Grey	One
8	The Blighted	Blades of	the Dark	God
9	The Frenzied	Children of	the Emerald	Queen
10	The Phantasmal	Inheritors of	the Dread	Goddess
11	The Golden	Revelers of	the Stone	Lord
12	The Tormented	Prophets of	the Shrouded	Lady
13	The Immortal	Saints of	the Undying	Beast
14	The Oracular	Feasters of	the Eternal	Hand
15	The Loathsome	Hunters of	the Laughing	Dragon
16	The Holy	Seers of	the Grinning	Moon
17	The Fiery	Order of	the Sapphire	Sun
18	The Carnal	Warriors of	the Hanged	Abyss
19	The Ghoulish	Lovers of	the Ancient	Skull
20	The Sedate	Sacrifices of	the Burning	Child
21	The Unworthy	Stewards of	the Thorny	Woman
22	The Fiendish	Fingers of	the Drowned	Man
23	The Seething	Cannibals of	the Flayed	Spider
24	The Elder	Artists of	the Decaying	Flesh

Beaten Copper

a 0-level adventure

Beaten Copper is an adventure for 16-20 0-level characters who will leave their peaceful lives as peasants and will try the dangers and rewards of a life of adventure and peril. Some of them, a minority, will spend their plundered riches on a path of thrills and escapades; and others, the majority of them, will end up dead or near death in a pool of their own blood in a dark corridor, and then they'll die.

Humiliatown and its coppersmith

The hamlet of Humiliatown is not really big. It's not even small. It's comprised of just six or seven families who live in tiny farmsteads and rickety shanties, and sometimes, when the bell tolls, they gather in a muddy area that they affectionately call "the town square" to put down a fire or throw stones at a foreigner. Their economic balance is therefore pretty delicate, and some days ago this balance suffered a fatal blow from which it will be difficult to recover: nobody's seen the coppersmith in the last few days. This disappearance is extremely troubling, since the only reason to visit Humiliatown is its coppersmith.

Aniceto, the coppersmith, should have returned by now from his trip to Shadypass, the village where he usually travels to sell his wares and restock on copper, the same copper he uses to craft his pots and pans. Sadly, there's been an accident in the mine, and there's a shortage of copper. Desperate, Aniceto decided to get his copper from an alternate source. On his way back to Humiliatown, the coppersmith recalled a childhood memory about a wishing well said to be cursed. It's actually true: there was a time when people all around the region went to the well to throw in a copper piece and make a wish. According to the elders, some of those wishes came true, but sometimes those wishes were fulfilled in wicked and evil ways, so the well ended up being regarded as cursed.

Aniceto wandered off the trail thinking about the copper pieces at the bottom of the well, walking through the forest to the gloomy

spot. He leaned over the well, bent on getting all those copper pieces and… nobody's seen him since.

Starting point

So, right now, the bell is tolling to gather a group of neighbors and start a search for the coppersmith; they've found the tracks of his wagon, his own footsteps and his mule's, heading towards the wishing well through the forest and away from Humiliatown.

1 The wishing well

The forest thins out as it approaches the mountains; on the way, there's a glade where the ghostly and cursed wishing well stands. It's a dilapidated stone well, covered with moss that thrives on the humidity.

The well, 10' deep, lacks a bucket or any length of rope; at its bottom there's a shallow body of water (**area 4**). Although it's reputed to be a wishing well, there's no sign of the shine of coins.

There's a wooden sign by the well, written with a shaky hand with plenty of errors. There's a message, but only those whose occupation demands literacy will be able to decipher it with a DC 5 skill check. It says:

"WISSING WEL.
THROU A COPER AN'
MAIKE A WISS"

The sign isn't as old as the well, not even close.

The coppersmith's footprints go through the glade and wander off. Near the well is Aniceto's wagon, devoid of any useful or valuable items, if there were any.

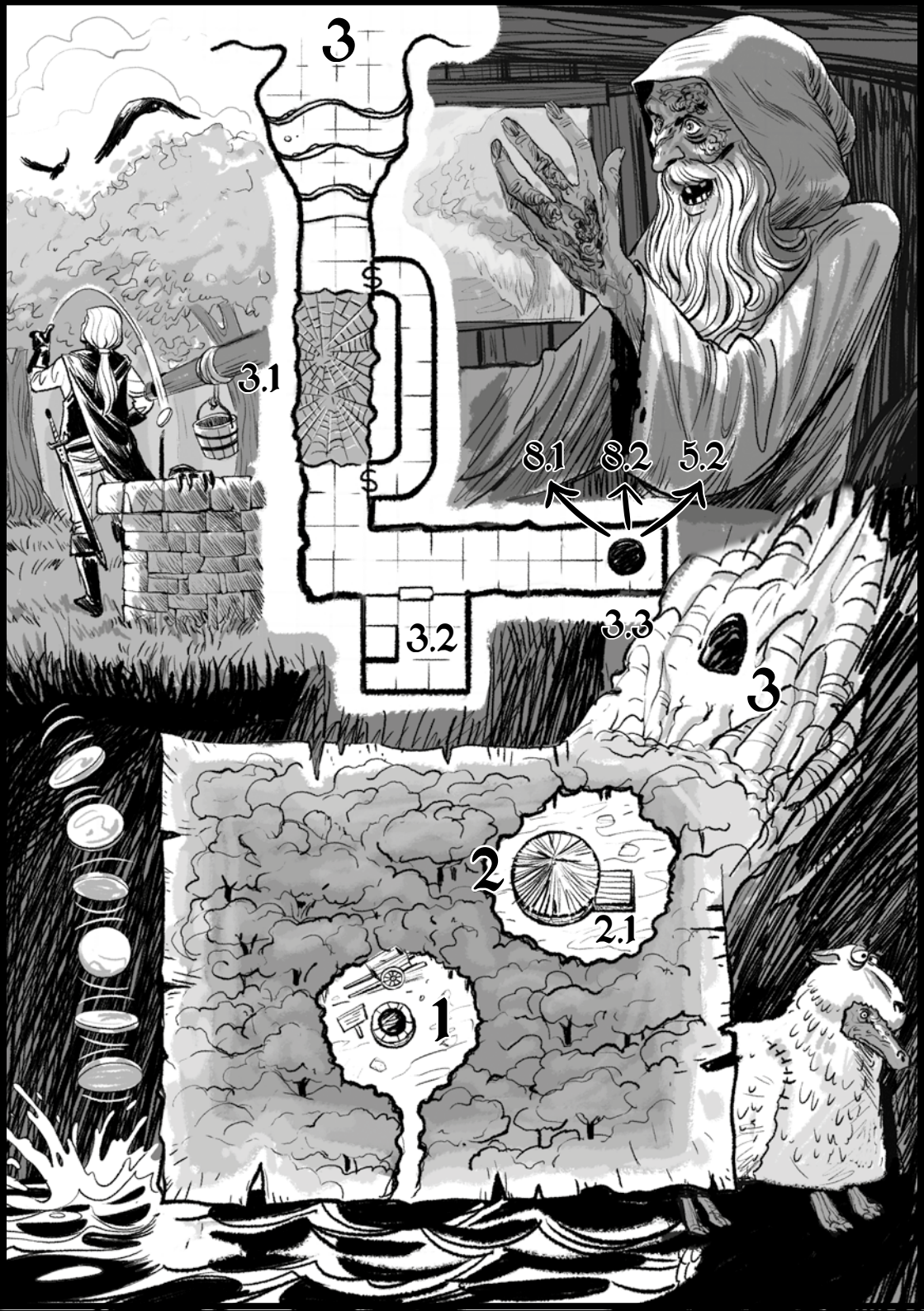
Far off, in the forest, there's a wisp of smoke, and even further away, the forest becomes a mountain, full of crags, cracks, and rocks.

It's not an easy task to track down the coppersmith or his mule (skill check, DC 10), but those who succeed will find out that his footsteps go near the well and vanish there, whilst his mule's tracks seem to head towards the mountain; the mule didn't seem to go on its own accord. This set of tracks leads to the cave of the fake spiders (**area 3**).

Making a wish

The wishing well does indeed grant wishes. Once every ten years it amasses enough magical energy to make a wish come true. If a player wants to make a wish, by all means allow it. But it won't be easy: once the player makes the wish, put a glass in the middle of the table and ask the player to throw in a coin from where he's sitting. If the coin gets in the glass, the wish is fulfilled.

If it's a wish that could disrupt the game, make it come true but in a twisted way or only for a while. The wishing well can make wishes happen, but nobody knows for how long or in which way. So if a player wants to "find the coppersmith"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he could be teleported to the cell or to the workshop where Aniceto is right now. If someone asks for a magic sword, it could be an intelligent sword that doesn't want to fight against "lesser enemies". And if someone asks for magical powers, grant them such powers but single-use, telling him that at level 1 they'll come back. If somebody makes a truly disrupting wish, tell him that the well doesn't have enough energy for that and that he has lost a coin.

This wishing trick can only be tried once *per player*, not character, and as soon as a wish is granted, take the glass away and tell them that the well needs 10 years to recharge itself.

2 The hermit cabin

There's a rickety cabin amongst the pines with a garden patch and a sheepfold. A "hermit" lives here, which is a very polite way to call someone who talks to himself crazy. This anchorite ran away from the world and the children who threw stones at him. But now he relishes in his hatred for humanity and worships Azi Dahaka, the three-headed dragon, Demon Lord of Storms and Wastes, and he has allied with its servants, the loozards. His name is Melitón, and he looks like a proper hermit; his beard and hair are very long and unkempt, he's extremely skinny, has some rotten teeth, and there are some ugly scars on his arms and face. If the characters knock on the door, Melitón will open it and invite them to come in to find out their intentions.

The cabin is very small, so no more than 5 guests can get in there. It's a one-room cabin with a packed dirt floor, a filthy mattress, and a table with a chair next to it. There's a corked bottle on the table and a lit candle. On the wall there are a couple of shelves with some kitchen stuff. Facing the door is a fireplace. There's a fire, although it's not really that cold.

This cabin is a cover, as it's a smoke outlet for the cave where the loozards live. The vent goes through Melitón's fireplace and chimney, so it looks like it's his own fire that's producing the smoke. The loozards, being a cold-blooded species, need a heat source to remain active or else they fall into a stupor.

Any character who comes close to the fireplace and looks at it will realize that there's too much smoke for that amount of burning wood. If the wood and embers are taken away, a grid appears; it covers the vent to the barracks (**area 5**).

Melitón will behave very nicely, playing dumb and deaf, and he will shout that he hasn't seen or heard anything strange in the past few days.

If the characters find out about the vent, ask too many questions, or make Melitón feel threatened, he'll uncork the bottle, drink a mouthful, and taking the candle to his mouth, he'll breathe a gout of fire.

After that, he'll yell "Feel the dragon's rage!" His homemade breath weapon causes 1d4 fire damage to 1d3+1 targets, and they'll catch fire. Consult the rules about fire in chapter 4 of the DCC rulebook.

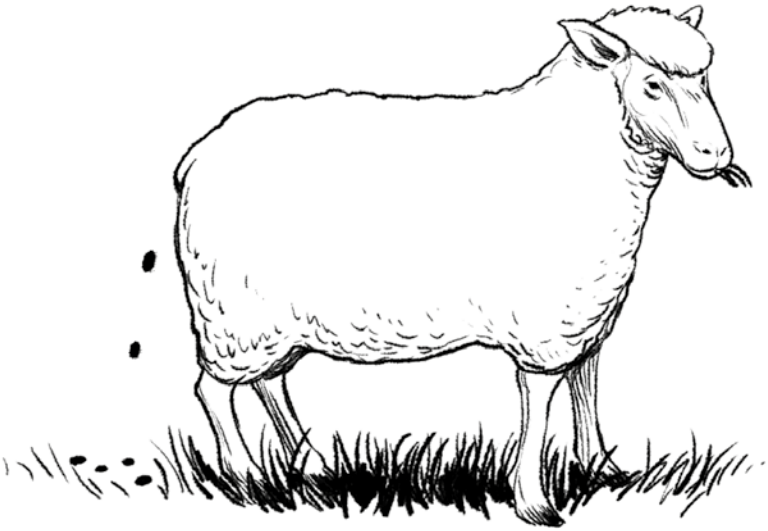
Melitón, crazy hermit: *Init +2, Atk chair +1 melee (1d4 dmg); AC 11; HD 1d8 (5 hp); Mv 30'; Act 1d20; Sp: Breath weapon (d3+1 targets, 1d4 dmg and fire, DC 12 Ref Save for half dmg; Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2, AL N.*

Treasure: There is a bag with 10 silver pieces and a rope ladder, hidden in the mattress' straw. There is also a bottle of flammable liquid, which is a mixture of oil, cherry liquor, and paraffin. There's enough liquid for two more homemade breath attacks. It's a tricky thing to try, though, without burning oneself in the process. The first time a PC tries to breathe fire, he must throw 1d8: a result of 1 or 2 means that he catches fire. The next time that will only happen on a result of 1.

2.1 The sheepfold

A tiny and smelly sheepfold holds three sickly-looking sheep; one of them looks especially small and feeble. The truth is that it's not a sheep at all, but two loozards disguised as a sheep, undercover to keep watch on the hermit and check out on possible victims like Aniceto or threats like the PCs. If spotted, they'll flee for the cave in the mountain.

Treasure: There is a sheep costume and, if a loozard corpse is searched, a copper piece.



Loozards

The loozards are a reptile species of tiny demihumans, smaller than a sheep. They are a hybrid between a huge lizard and an attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder kid. They've got scaly skin, a long tail, and two small horns. They're cowardly, fast, slithery, and always moving. They've got regenerative powers and are able to regrow a lost limb, mainly their tails. There are some that regrow two tails instead of one; this is regarded as a sign of godly favor.

The loozards are cowards at heart, and they try to avoid an open fight if they can; they prefer guerrilla tactics and traps. They live in underground lairs and caves, and have a symbiotic relationship with dragons, wyverns, basilisks, and other big reptiles. They take care of them, worshipping them as gods, feeding them until they're obese and lazy.

***Loozard* (2):** *Init +1, Atk tiny sword -2 melee (1d4-1 dmg); AC 11; HD 1d4; Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 60', tail regeneration; Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2, AL N.*

Tail regeneration: loozards can regenerate lost limbs, but it takes time and a lot of food to do so. It's easy for them to do it with a lost tail, and they can actually shed it on purpose to fool a predator or an enemy, because once it falls to the ground it vigorously shakes for a while. This will happen every time a loozard fails a morale check and flees. Anybody that sees such a show must make a DC 11 Will Save or stay where he is for 1d3 rounds looking in disbelief and disgust at the sundered tail, unable to chase the loozard.

Aren't they kobolds?

Veteran game referees will surely have noticed by now the similarities between the loozards and all the varied iterations that the kobolds have suffered during the long history of Dungeons & Dragons. The kobolds, as shown in the DCC rulebook, are no longer the cowardly race of reptilians related to dragons we saw in the third edition of the world's most famous RPG, but the tiny dog-like beings of the first and second edition. There was an empty niche that was asking to be filled: enter the loozards.

3 The fake spiders' grotto

The mule's tracks lead to this cave on the mountain's face. The entry is wide, and it's humid, dark, and full of disgusting bugs inside. There's a ramp near the entrance, very slippery because of the humidity. Unless it's safely and cautiously done, a DC 11 Ref Save is compulsory to walk down the ramp or else the PC will fall and slide towards the spider webs (**area 3.1**). It's extremely difficult to climb back to the entrance (DC 15 skill check).

3.1 The spider web

The loozards have installed a fake spider web in the cave, so it's nigh impossible to go through without touching a strand or thread. In the ceiling, hidden by the darkness, there are some small bells tied to the web, so when a creature touches it, the bells make a sound and alert the guards on duty in the sentry booth (**area 3.2**).

Right at the beginning of the cave is a hidden door to avoid the web. It's a stone door, lighter than it seems, on a hinge. The loozards use the tunnel to avoid the web and the bells. Someone who's looking for traps or secret doors can find it with a DC 10 Int check.

The web threads have been bathed in a flammable substance. When on fire, it creates a suffocating smoke. If someone unintentionally (or on purpose) kindles the spider web, a toxic cloud will fill the whole cave (DC 12 Fort Save; on a failure the PC will pass out for 1d6 minutes). While in the cloud, a creature fights with a -1d due to coughing and stinging eyes.

3.2 Sentry booth

Two loozards are on duty at all times here; there are only a couple of stools, a lit brazier, and two torches. If the sentries hear the bells, they'll alert the others using the trumpet that goes all the way to the barracks (**area 3.3**), then they'll go and have a look. If there are some trespassers around, they'll set the web on fire.

The loozards wear a rudimentary gas filter on their faces and lenses over their eyes to protect them from the smoke. Their mission is to kill those who are still standing and throw those who are unconscious into a cell.

Loozard (2): *Init +1, Atk tiny sword -2 melee (1d4-1 dmg); AC 11; HD 1d4; Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 60', tail regeneration; Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2, AL N.*

Treasure: The loozards carry a copper piece to use with the emergency exit should the need arises.

3.3 Emergency exit

Fixed on the wall is a trumpet to speak with the loozards in the underground tunnels (**area 5**) and to sound the alarm.

At the corridor's end is a dark pit; it's a slippery chute that leads to the underground levels.

Next to the pit there are three narrow slots, small as a coin, with

some strange symbols engraved above each of them. These symbols can't be deciphered since they were made up by the loozards (they don't have a written version of their language). Only a copper piece fits through the slots; they're used to set the chute to a fixed destination. The first slot leads to Cell 1 (**area 8.1**), the second one to Cell 2 (**area 8.2**), and the third one to the barracks (**area 5.2**). When a copper piece is introduced, the sound of cogs and wheels turning can be heard coming from deep underground.

If no copper piece is used, then the chute will lead to a random location (roll 1d3), or where the judge prefers:

- Cell 1 (**area 8.1**)
- Cell 2 (**area 8.2**)
- Barracks (**area 5.2**)

4 The bottom of the well

The water at the bottom of the well is only 2' deep; the PCs will only find the pieces they threw in. Above the water level, on one of the walls of the well, there's a narrow, dark passage. The ceiling in the passage is very low, so PCs other than dwarves, halflings, or children must kneel to advance. After several yards, the passage ends in a three-way.

The three tunnels end up in stone walls that block the way; there are levers mounted on the walls, one in each tunnel. The ones in the passages on the left and right activate a trap that collapses the ceiling on the poor fella that pulled them in a rain of rocks and dirt (1d6 dmg, no save).

The lever in the middle passage is covered with spiky thorns, but it opens the access to the loozards' tunnels. Only a small creature with tiny hands, like a child or a Halfling, can move the lever and avoid the thorns. Any other creature or character will howl in pain as the thorns bite his flesh, and he will receive a -1d penalty to any actions with that hand until he's healed.

5 Barracks

The tunnel gets broader until it opens into a huge cave lit by a fireplace. There are plenty of straw mattresses around the cave where some loozards doze, mend their clothes, cook, or chat among themselves with their hisses and grunts.

There are a total of 12 loozards here, four of which are females and two are youngsters. The six males will attack the trespassers while the rest run away into the deeper tunnels. When defending their tribe, they get a +4 bonus to their morale checks.

In the middle of the cave is a pit that goes down the deeper tunnels, and on the left there's a wooden door and a strange trumpet used to speak with the sentries up in the sentry booth (**area 3.2**).

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On the right is a tunnel that leads to the barracks' entrance (**area 5.2**).

The smoke from the fireplace goes up to a vent connected to the hermit's chimney (**area 2**). If someone puts out the fire in the fireplace, someone can climb up the vent to the surface.

Loozard (6): *Init +1, Atk tiny sword -2 melee (1d4-1 dmg); AC 11; HD 1d4; Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 60', tail regeneration; Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2, AL N.*

Treasure: All loozards, no matter their age, sex, or role, carry a copper piece.

5.1 Pit to the deeper tunnels

This pit connects the barracks with the deeper tunnels in the loozards' lair. There's a wooden ladder on one of the pit's walls. Halfway through the descent of the ladder, some of the steps are rotten, and any weight heavier than 60 pounds will break them. If one doesn't take special measures while climbing down the ladder, such as checking the steps before stepping on them, they'll collapse and the PC will have to pass a DC Ref Save to grab on to other steps as he falls, or else he'll suffer 1d6 damage.

5.2 Barracks' entrance

This little room is one of the emergency exits accessed via the chute by the sentry booth (**area 3.3**). There's a pile of straw on the floor here, and above it there's a pit on the ceiling; the end of the chute.

6 Pantry

This is where the loozards stash their food and the objects they steal or plunder, but what they call order is what we'd call a total mess. There are dry sausages hanging from the ceiling, sacks of grain in a corner, a couple of barrels full of rotten apples, and a wooden crate full of dry insects; a delicatessen for the loozards.

Aniceto's wares and equipment aren't here, however.

Two fat rats have made a nest in this room, amongst the sacks of grain, and they will attack anybody who disturbs them or rummages through the stashed stuff.

Rats (6): *Init +2, Atk bite +1 melee (1 dmg and malady); AC 12; HD 1d4-1; Mv 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Malady (DC 10 Fort Save or target gets the rabies); Sv Fort +4, Ref +2 Will -1, AL N.*

Rabies: 15 minutes after failing the Fort Save, the PC will feel dizzy, start frothing at the mouth, and attack anybody around him, be it friend or foe, until he passes out or is restrained.

Treasure: A lot of rancid food. Worth of note is a big hammer that could be used as a warhammer, a rusty and dented long sword (only 1d6 dmg), two spears (their shafts are splintered and will break after a successful hit in combat), mismatched armor pieces (they could be used to "make" a hide armor or a scale mail), and day-to-day objects forming a huge and disordered pile. For every turn shifting

through the pile, allow a roll on the table 3-4 from the DCC rulebook.

7 The copper tunnel

At the bottom of the pit is a long tunnel that ends up in a stout wooden door with a closed spyhole 2 feet from the ground. This is the widest tunnel in the lair, so two PCs can fit in it side-by-side. As soon as the tunnel is lit, everybody will see that the floor is coated with copper panels.

If the loozards are aware of the trespassers in their lair, which is highly probable by now, the spyhole will be open, and a pair of red and bright eyes (the sentry loozard on the other side) will be watching the invaders with a mix of curiosity and awe. As soon as there are four or more PCs on the copper panels, the sentry will open the door and empty a bucket over the copper floor. The bucket is filled to the brim with water and a huge electrical eel. The eel will release an electrical burst on the copper floor that will electrocute the PCs standing on it unless they followed some sort of safety measures. (I don't really know what those could be, but players never cease to amaze me.) The electrical shock causes 1d6 damage (2d6 if wearing metallic armor or plenty of metallic objects), DC 11 Fort Saving throw for half damage.

The eel has energy for only one shock. After that it'll just shake on the floor and suffocate, unless a merciful soul puts it back in the bucket and pours some water in it.

After the electrical shock, the sentry will close the door. The door doesn't have a conventional lock, but there's a slot next to it; it'll open with a copper piece.

Treasure: An electrical eel and a bucket. Also, with the right tools and some patience, the copper panels could be pried out from the floor. There are eight panels worth 10 gp each.

8 Cells

The corridor after the copper tunnel has several wooden doors on both sides. The first two doors on each side are cells that can only be opened from the outside; the next two are the doors to the praetorians' bedchambers and the concubines' parlor, shut but not locked. The last one at the end of the corridor leads to the treasure vault's foyer, and a copper piece is needed to open it (there's a slot by the door, of course).

Two loozard gaolers will try to fight their way past the PCs and run away through the copper tunnel and up the pit.

***Loozard* (2):** *Init +1, Atk tiny sword -2 melee (1d4-1 dmg); AC 11; HD 1d4; Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 60', tail regeneration; Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2, AL N.*

8.1 Cell 1

This small cell contains a pile of rotten straw and a bucket full of excrement. There's a hole in the

ceiling that leads up the chute and back to the emergency exit (**area 3.3**).

The cell is empty right now, but there are some personal belongings from Aniceto, proving that he's been in here: a comb, a shoe with a hole in it, and a small locket depicting Saint Casilda, elf martyr and patron of Humiliatown.

8.2 Cell 2

This cell is nearly identical to number 1, but in this case there's someone in here, a reckless traveller. Julián is a cheesemaker who tried to spend the night at the hermit's cabin, only to be abducted by the loozards. He'll ask the people from Humiliatown to rescue him and will offer a cheese in exchange.

This character can be a replacement for any player, especially one who has suffered the most casualties; if there's more than one, assign it randomly.

Julián, the cheesemaker: *Str 14 (+1), Agi 10 (0), Sta 8 (-1), Per 10 (0), Int 13 (+1), Luck 10 (0). HD 1, Init +0, Atk +1 melee, +0 missile; AC 10; Mv 30'; Act 1d20; Sv Fort -1, Ref +0, Will +0, AL N. Birth augur: Fortunate date (missile fire attack rolls); Languages: Common.*

8.3 Praetorian guard's bedchambers

Here is where Kypros' praetorian guard lives. These luxury bedchambers, at least by loozards' standards, contain four straw mattresses, a chest, and a table with copper plates and glasses and a bowl of dry insects.

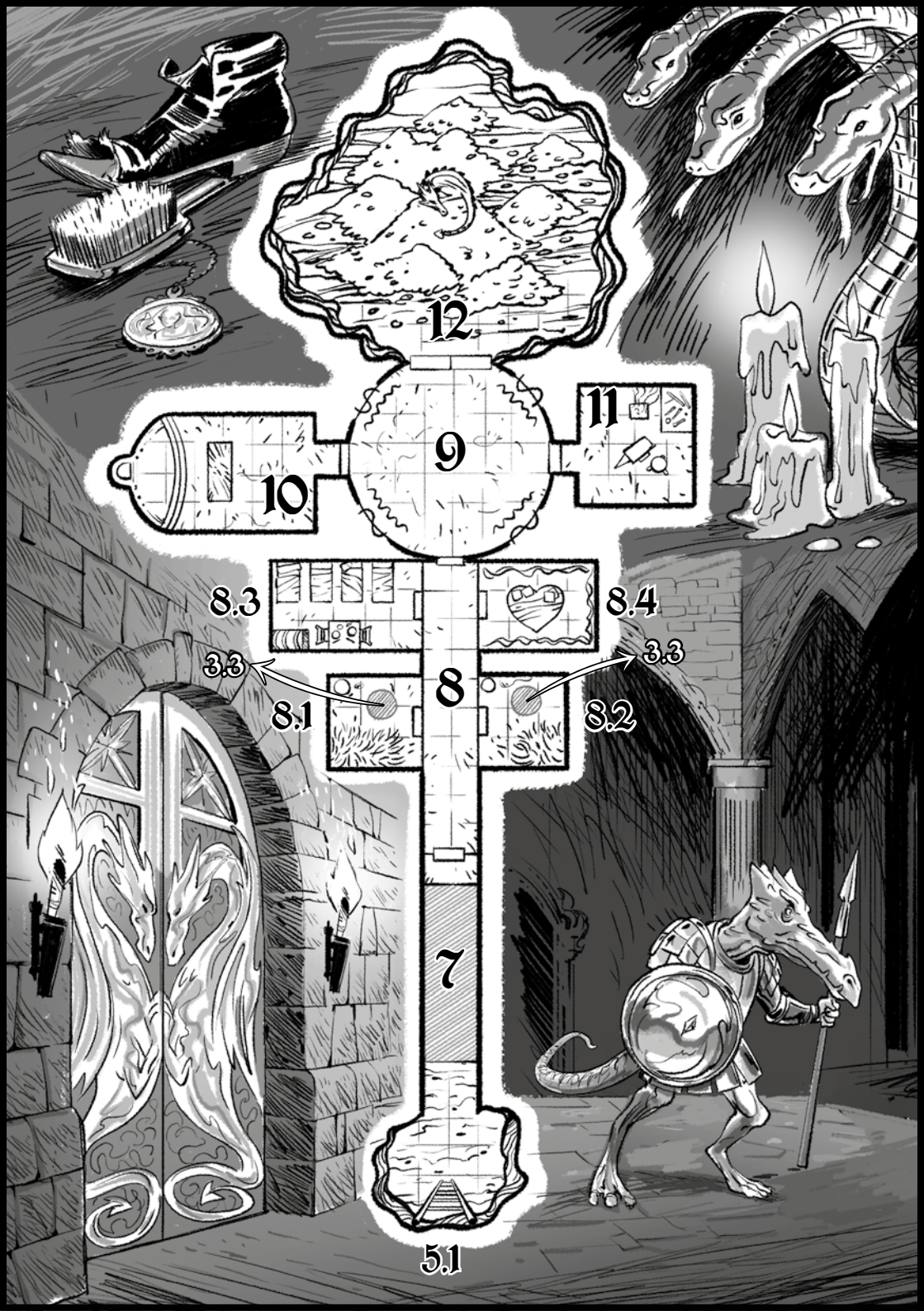
The praetorians are on duty, guarding the treasure vault's foyer (**area 9**).

Treasure: The copper tableware is worth 4 sp, and there are as many insects as you can eat. Inside the chest, the loozards keep their most valued treasure: four leather satchels containing some fragments of eggshell, a hatching memento. It's amazing how small they once were… time flies. They just have sentimental value to the praetorians.

8.2 Concubines' parlor

This cozy and nice room is lit by candle fire, and its walls are covered with silk curtains. A brazier in the middle is the source of the fragrant smell and the warmth that fills the room. On a huge pile of straw, among cushions, rest the beautiful concubines of Kypros' praetorian guard: two loozard females of bright and colorful skin, clad in filmy clothes; they can make a male go crazy with their tails.

The concubines know that if a bunch of strangers have come this far, things must be going south for the loozards. They'll try to seduce the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PCs, and if that doesn't work, they'll try to flee. If none of that works out, they'll cry and beg, even if nobody understands them.

Treasure: Silk curtains, 25 gp; two candelabra, 5 gp; perfumes and scented oils fit for a crazy, crazy night.

9 Foyer

Two huge copper doors (or, to be more precise, the two dragons carved on them) immediately catch the eye. In each mouth is a slot for a copper piece; two of them must be inserted at the same time to open the doors to Kypros' lair (**area 12**).

The copper dragon's praetorian guard is in front of said doors. They're the fighting elite of the loozards, four warriors who wear copper armor and carry shields. They attack with a spear, know how to fight behind a shield wall formation, and won't let any stranger come close to the treasure vault.

Praetorian loozard (4): *Init +1, Atk spear 0+d3 melee (1d4+1d3 dmg); AC 13; HD 2d4 (6 hp); Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 60', tail regeneration, deed (defensive maneuver); Sv Fort -1, Ref +0, Will +0, AL N.*

There are two more doors here, one on the left, the other on the right, not as spectacular as the dragon ones.

The walls are decorated with four different tapestries, stolen from merchants, with no regard to style or order: a fox hunt, an orgy, some squirrels in a tree, and two knights in a joust, this last one hanging upside down. Each tapestry hides a small hatch; nothing bigger than a crouching loozard can escape through them (but only if they introduce a copper piece through a slot). They're emergency exits and have been probably already used by the females and the offspring.

Treasure: The armor, weapons, and shields that the praetorians wear and hold. They can be sold for 144 gp as curios, or for 40 gp if just for its copper value. They also have a copper piece each, of course. The tapestries are worth 25 gp each.

10 Temple

An alcove in the wall opposite the door holds an obsidian figurine of a monstrous three-headed serpent. Under the alcove are lines of candles, most of them half-burnt in honor to Azi Dahaka, the three-headed dragon, Demon Lord of Storms and Wastes.

In the middle of the room, a sturdy stone altar for sacrifices is now being used to exsanguinate poor Matilda, Aniceto's mule. Two loozards are moving around the room clad in bright-colored ceremonial robes. One of them holds a bloody dagger in its hands and two tails slither slowly under its robe. The other one is crouching by the altar, collecting Matilda's blood (may she rest in peace) in a copper bowl.

The two-tailed loozard is Zahhak, high priest of Azi Dahaka, who is in charge of the sacrifices to the Demon Lord following the proper ceremony, and also of feeding the copper dragon with the resulting carcasses. Kypros is the name of the copper dragon, and he is very strict regarding his religious tenets and the way his food has been slaughtered; he won't accept anything less appropriate.

Neither Zahhak nor his "altar loozard" will allow any heretics inside their temple.

Zahhak, high priest of Azi Dahaka: *Init +2, Atk copper dagger +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 2d4 (6 hp); Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 100', tail regeneration, spells (Invoke Azi Dahaka, Snake trick, spell check +2); Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will +0, AL N.*

Altar loozard: *Init +1, Atk copper dagger -2 melee (1d4-1); AC 11; HD 1d4 (2 hp); Mv 20'; Act 1d20; Sp: Infravision 100', tail regeneration, spells (Invoke Azi Dahaka, spell check +1); Sv Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -1, AL N.*

Some will wonder how a group of small loozards could drag a mule through a series of narrow tunnels and corridors. It's very simple: it was Azi Dahaka's will.

Treasure: Ceremonial copper bowl, 15 cp; copper dagger, 5 gp; plenty of mule flesh; an obsidian figurine depicting Azi Dahaka. This figurine allows a wizard to cast *Patron bond (Azi Dahaka)*, and so begin a life of worship and magic devoted to the Demon Lord.

11 Workshop

Here is where the loozards beat and worked the copper… until they met Aniceto. The coppersmith is a gift from Azi Dahaka, a prisoner who can work the valued metal, so they didn't hesitate to charge him with the work.

There's a worktable in the room where some coppersmith's tools can be seen, surely Aniceto's. Also in the workshop is an anvil, a brazier, and a stool where Aniceto is seated while he patiently beats a sheet of copper with a hammer. Aniceto wears a pair of iron fetters around his ankles to prevent him from running.

The coppersmith will be incredibly pleased and happy to see his neighbors. He'll tell them his story, all the adventures he's been through, how he was brought here and the amazing treasure that awaits them behind the copper doors. Aniceto caught a glimpse of the vault when he was led from the cell to the workshop, and he'll try to convince the people of Humiliatown to get some of it before going back to the hamlet. He obviously didn't see the dragon.

Treasure: Coppersmith's tools (they're Aniceto's; he wouldn't take it very well if someone filches them) and two copper sheets worth 10 cp each.

12 The treasure vault

The thick copper doors guard a circular and ample cavern where the main

feature (apart from Kypros, that is) is a gigantic pile of copper pieces. Every now and then a tinkling sound can be heard. It's coming from a copper piece that has fallen from a slot on the ceiling to join the pile; there are many such slots here, around the loozards' lair, and other underground complexes.

On top of the orange hill rests a dragon, big as a fat cow, with tiny wings and bright copper scales. If it wasn't for its malignant yellow eyes, it would be nearly impossible to spot it amongst the surrounding copper pieces. His posture and attitude are similar to how a fat cat would behave while lying on a cushion. The dragon will raise its head veeery slowly to regard the intruders.

BOW DOWN BEFORE KYPROS,
SON OF AZI DAHAKA (it's
a figure of speech), MASTER
OF THE COPPER WISHES!

Kypros is a young copper dragon, and the feeding and devotion that the loozards provide it have made it an obese and lazy dragon. It'll curiously ask about the reason of the visit, and if the answer is not funny or interesting enough, it'll demand the trespassers to leave and close the doors behind them.

This politeness will certainly vanish when someone tries to steal one of Kypros' copper pieces; it'll then treat the thieves the way they deserve… with a reasonable amount of physical action. Kypros won't exert itself, so it won't leave the vault to hunt down the intruders thinking (wrongly) that its servants will be able to finish the job. If it thinks that they'll try to escape, it'll cast *Ward portal* on the vault doors to lock them up, and later it'll slaughter what's left of Humiliatown.

Kypros, copper dragon: *Init +3, Atk claws +4 melee (1d8), bite +4 melee (1d12); AC 13; HD 3d12 (20 hp); Mv 40'; Act attacks d20 spells 2d20; Sp: Spells (Ward portal, spell check +3), breath weapon (copper pieces, 10' wide x 15' long cone), immersion; Sv Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3, AL L.*

Breath weapon: Kypros uses an action to fill its mouth with copper pieces, only to spit them out in a spray that can tear a man in pieces as if it was a shrapnel burst (cone 10' wide and 15' long, 2d6 dmg, DC 13 Ref Save for half damage).

Immersion: The dragon can use an action to dive into the copper piece hill, vanishing from sight. On its next round, it'll emerge anywhere in the copper piece pile within 30' of its last position.

Treasure: An absurd amount of copper pieces. In practice, all they can put their hands on before the dragon crushes them. In addition, thrust in the pile of copper pieces not too far from where Kypros lies is a shiny and gleaming magic sword that is eager to get used in combat and renamed (see page 24 in this volume of *The Phlogiston Books*).

Last words

At this point, many if not all of the villagers who left Humiliatown looking for Aniceto have probably bought the farm. Those who survived, however, will become level 1 characters, putting aside their puny lives as ignorant farmers to start a life of adventure as a mercenaries, though still ignorants.

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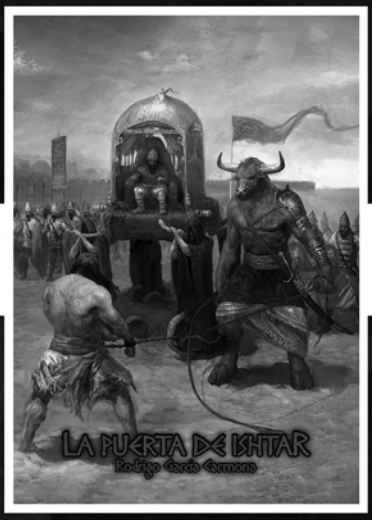

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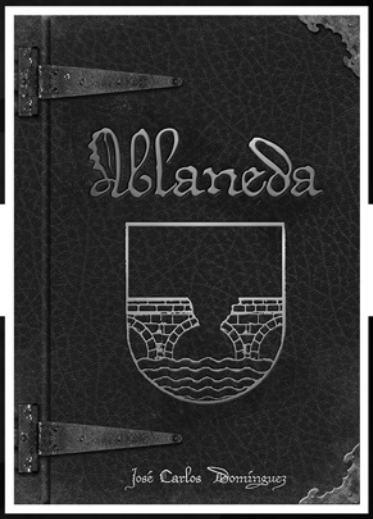

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