

The Gongfarmer's Almanac



The 2020 Gongfarmer's Almanac:

A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by
the DCC RPG Communities



DCC Adventure Time #4

VOLUME 4 OF SIXTEEN BOOKLETS

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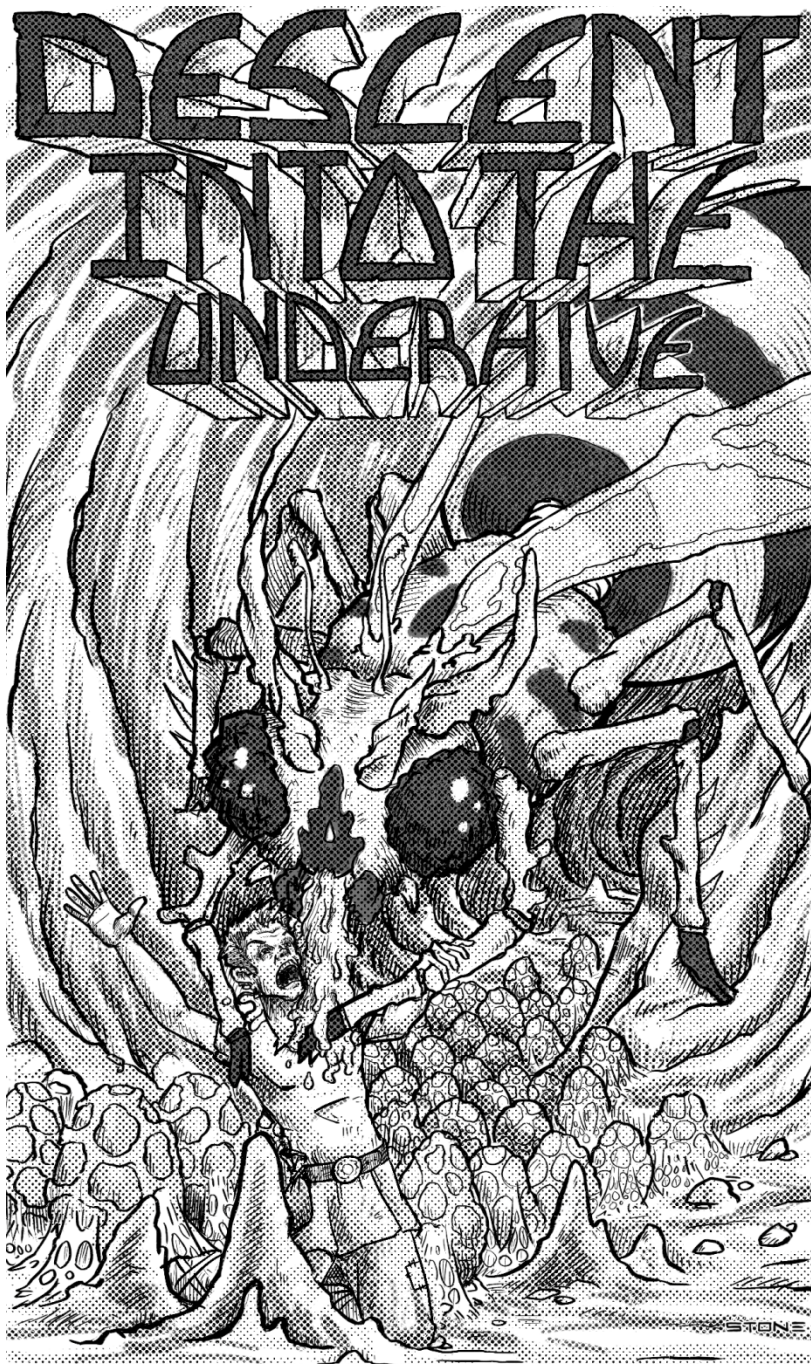
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WRITTEN BY: SEAN DUFFY ILLUSTRATED BY: J STONE

Descent into the Underhive is a level 1 *DCC RPG* adventure designed for 5 to 8 level one adventurers. The adventure exposes our players to the horrors of a long-dead god, a descent into the long dark, and a confrontation with an insectoid demoness.

BACKGROUND

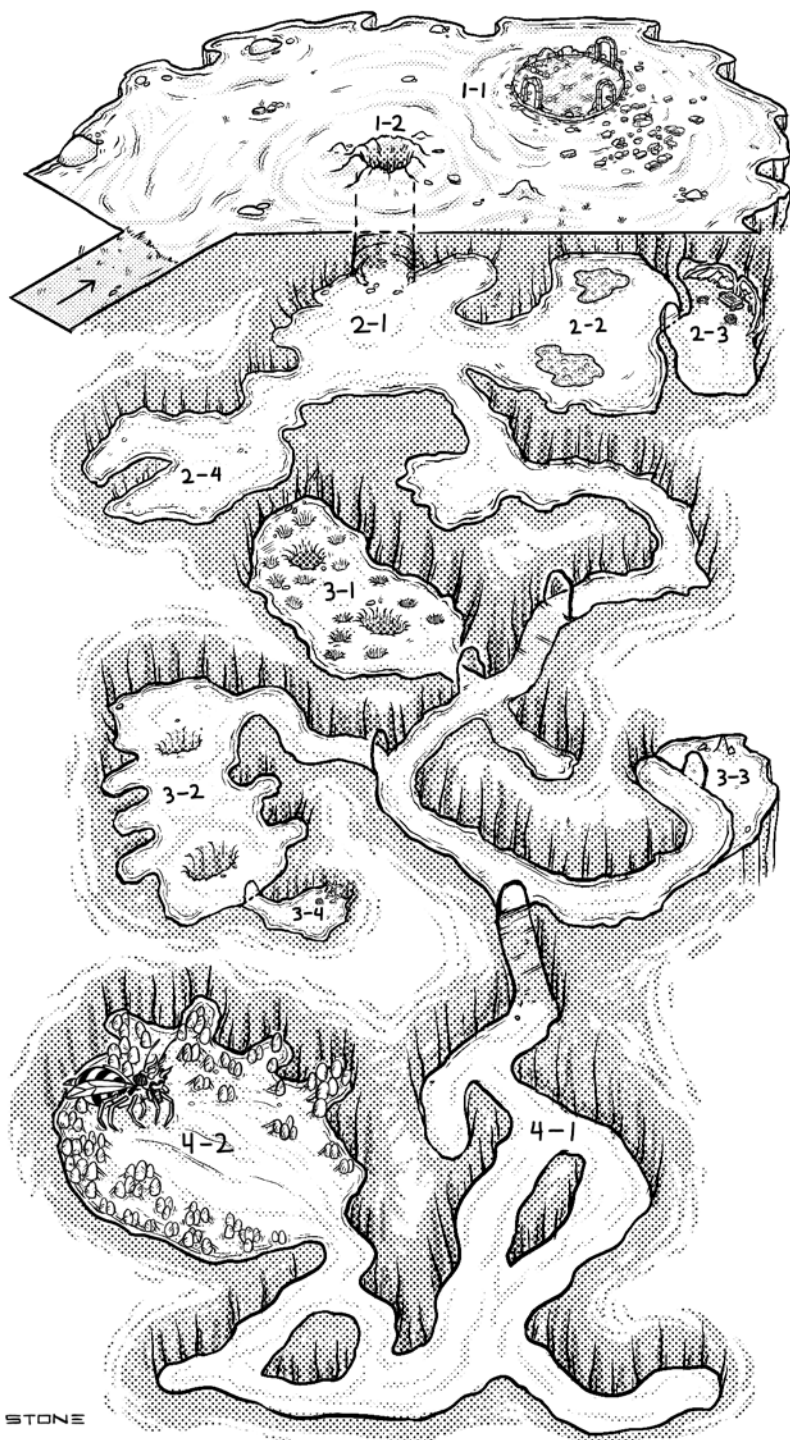
A sickness is spreading from the abandoned cliff face lookout of a long-dead Hyperborean king. Your adventurers are drawn here by the pull of chaos, a mysterious vellum note scrawled in blood, and the temptation of ancient treasure just as the local countryside is ravaged by insectoid creatures of unimaginable horror. Find the source of chaos, perhaps gain its power. Descend now into the underhive beneath the king's keep!

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Descent into the underhive begins on the cliff face of Moradune. In an age long lost and not oft remembered the ruins near this cliff face were part of a series of lookouts that once warned of the armies of chaos marching to fight the kingdoms of Hyperborea. Now they sit in ruins with an unholy infection spreading through the air, invisible to the eye except for a foul odor. The source is a burrow mound whose sickness is turning people into wasp-men abominations in the countryside. Our adventurers have a mysterious vellum note delivered to them anonymously. Scrawled in blood, it directs them to the cliff face of Moradune with the lure of treasure.

Rumor Table: Local Rumors (Roll 1d6 per player)

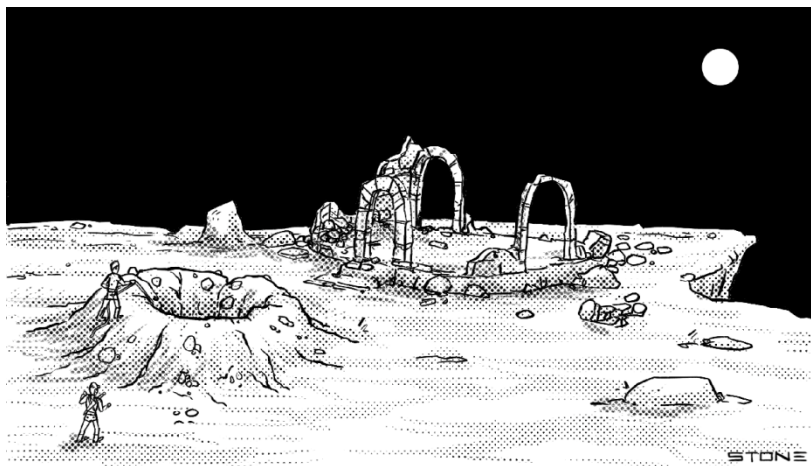
- 1 The infection is from a local hag who controls the creatures. (F)
- 2 There is a pile of gold buried near the ruins. A treasure hoard from a long-dead king worth at least 3,000 gp. (F)
- 3 The infection is due to local townsfolk's lack of faith, the creatures are drawn to the faithless. (F)
- 4 Dark sects from continents far away have been descending into the pit and casting rituals. (T)
- 5 The source of evil is a resurrected chaos god who seeks blood and sacrifice. (T)
- 6 An adventuring party containing local priests has already gone missing. (T)



ENCOUNTER TABLE

| Area | Type | Encounter |
|------|------|--------------------|
| 3-1 | C | Wasp-men |
| 3-2 | C | Grub |
| 3-3 | T | Cliff |
| 4-1 | C | Delirious Villager |
| 4-2 | C | Varakesh |

THE CLIFFS OF MORADUNE



Area 1-1 – The Ruined Keep: *The forgotten keep, a relic of some long-dead king's vanity stands before you crumbled and broken from generations of neglect. The base of a lone tower and three ancient archways still stand against the darkened sky. You feel a chill rush down your spine, something unholy is here, something not of this world.*

Players investigating the keep and the surrounding grounds can find the following item with a DC 8 Intelligence check:

Sword of Heratt - *The sword itself is broken in two and covered in soil and grime from years of neglect. If the players can reforge the sword it grants the ability of a +2 Longsword that acts as a torch once a day.*

Further investigation for clues as to why there is a giant hole in the ground, reveal the following:

In a small alcove a handful of loose stones are brushed away amongst the loose soil to reveal the femur of a recently deceased human being. The bone is picked nearly clean save for freshly torn flesh and sinew, a few scraps of robes that appear to be from the local priesthood. A small diary is among the remains. Most of the notes are damaged but one is clear as day: "...the creatures appear to be most active during the day, we've been able to approach the abominations closer during the night. Glory be to the all father!"

Area 1-2 – The Burrow Mound: *A vile vapor stings your nostrils emanating from the dank burrow mound. You hear the sounds of moaning and clattering of bone echo from below. You can make out the rocky dirt bottom of the entrance some 50 feet down below.*

Players can affix rope to one of the ruins' stones nearby and descend. If the PC's don't have methods of climbing, they can get to the bottom without incurring falling damage with a DC 16 Agility check.

THE CAVES OF MOONSTONE

Area 2-1 – Caves of Moonstone: *As your boots hit the stone you see several fresh sets of tracks in the dirt leading deeper into various corridors. The stench you smelled earlier is getting stronger by the second. The cave rock glows with an eerie moonlit glow.*

The glow itself is a natural part of the rock formations here in the cave. The tracks are human in nature and the judge can tell players that they are the result of at least 6 individuals being dragged to the south deeper into the complex.

Area 2-2 – Slime Vats: *The putrid stench of vile liquid from some unholy host fills the pools before you. The cavern walls are chipped away by what appears to be human hands that have clawed at the walls, mixing their blood into arcane bestial glyphs.*

If any player is a chaotic wizard they can understand the engravings are the sigils of some sort of demoness. Players can search and find a hand with bloody fingernails.

They can also search in the vile pools by passing a DC 14 Will save or else the foul odor compels them to drown themselves in the pool. The reward for passing is a bronze shortsword with an adamantium hilt, the name Ozaren is carved on both sides of the hilt. This acts as an +1 shortsword.

Area 2-3 – Altar of Bone Wings (S): *The hidden passageway breaks open. In this dust choked room there is an altar, constructed of various animal bones and some human remains. They arch above you and cast a shadow in the dim light of two nearly extinguished braziers. The bones of a hundred dead creatures stand before you in the shape of two giant wings that surround the altar. Towering insectoid mandibles protrude from a head made of human skulls. Upon that altar is a single wooden bowl, and a steel knife caked with blood next to it.*

Removing the bowl attracts more monsters to the party. The judge should generate random encounters at a higher frequency until the bowl is destroyed or put back. Making a sacrifice at the altar will grant the PCs favor in front of the demon goddess but comes at a turn of their alignment towards chaos and, at the judge's discretion, potentially the death of one player character.

Area 2-4 – The Failed Expedition: *A silent memorial of the futility of life lies at your feet. The fresh corpses of three humans rot beneath your gaze, their flesh ripped clean from their faces, frozen in abject horror. Littered at their feet and amongst their tattered clothes are several mundane items.*

PC's can search the packs and other equipment. They'll find a pickaxe, crampons, and 100ft of rope. The other mundane items are worthless. If the PCs have the wooden bowl from the altar the eyes of the dead glow a deep amber and speak of their last moments before falling silent.

AREA 3: THE INNER HIVE

Area 3-1 – Brood Pits: *A chittering and rustling can be heard beneath your feet as you step into this chamber. Multiple small pits are burrowed into solid rock numbering in the dozens. Several of these holes glitter in the dim light.*



The rock itself has been eroded away by the acid from the wasp-men's mandibles and excrement. The glitter is actually the lenses of the wasp-men waiting in ambush. Any character approaching the pits to investigate further will encounter a wasp-men creature. The pits are 10 feet deep, climbing out takes a DC14 Agility check. wasp-men can move in and out of the pits and pop up in different areas of the room. The Judge is encouraged to roll 1D6 and 1D4. On a 6 or a 1 spawn a D4 number of wasp-men out of the pits. Continue until the PCs retreat. Flavor text for wasp-men is as follows:

Slinking out of the dark pits is an unholy visage, several bipedal insectoids that once resembled men crawl from the pits. Pustules of bile and pus extrude from their skin, some with iridescent wings, others with rotten and tattered clothes. All of them transformed into agents of chaos, their mandibles chittering at the idea of fresh meat.

Wasp-men: Init +0; Atk stinger +3 melee (1d6+1); AC14; HD 1D6+1; MV 30' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref+2, Will -4; AL C.

Area 3-2 – Hive Den: *The crunch of bones snapping beneath your feet mixed with a viscous liquid rises up to your boots. A foul odor permeates your skin, just below the surface of the vile liquid are the shapes of what appear to be egg sacs.*

This is where the eggs reach their final maturity and hatch, the grubs wait for at least half of the PCs to enter the room before detaching from the ceiling to feast. Roll 1D20+4 and spawn that number of grubs.

Grub: Init +1; Atk chew +1 melee (1d3+1); AC11; HD 1d3+1; MV 40' or climb 40; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref+3, Will -1; AL N.

Area 3-3 – Exit to the Cliffs of Moradune (S): As the players approach, they feel cold fresh air very faint near a few loose stones in the wall. If they push with force rather than gently dismantling the wall, read the following:

Stone crumbles to the touch as you break through, freezing air from the outside blasts your face.

Any PC pushing with great force or smashing the wall within 5ft of the exit needs to make a DC 14 Reflex save or else fall 600ft to their death. This cliff exit can serve as an escape route if they decide to run from Varakesh rather than fight or take her as a Patron.

Area 3-4 – Carto's Last Stand: *Woven into the stone by his neck and ankles, mired in thick amber goo this poor soul appears to have fought his last stand. His armor, ripped from his body, is covered in dust and blood. The fool's fellow companions' bones are in pieces below him.*

The failed adventuring party of Carto the arrogant. At first, it appears they sealed themselves in. But upon further investigation, it's clear that something came from the ceiling to entomb them. Carto cannot be removed unless hacked apart. All armor and items are dusty and broken. But in a belt pouch is a scroll with the same vellum note the party received before setting off, along with 42 gp.

AREA 4: LAIR OF VARAKESH

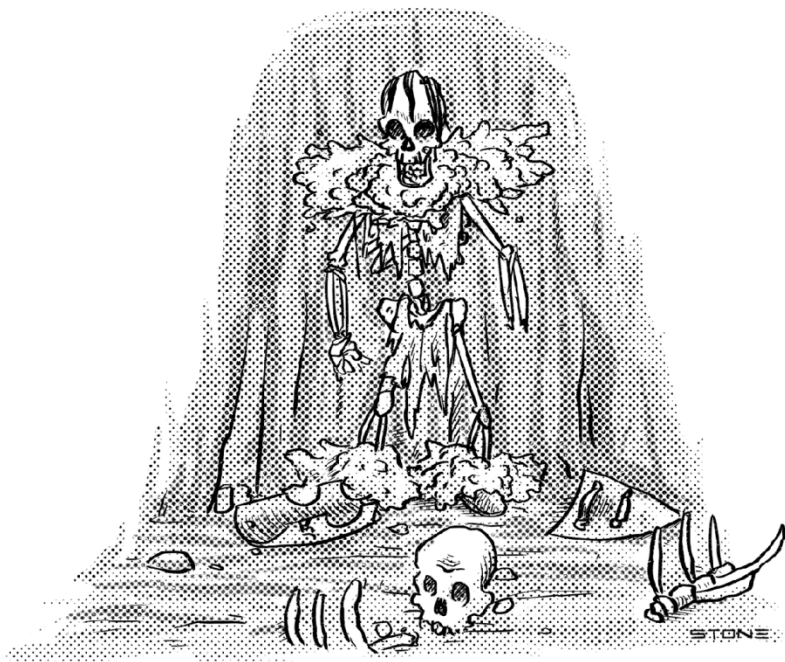
Area 4-1 – Brood Warrior Tunnels: *Unnaturally carved stone tunnels wind deeper and deeper into the cave complex. The sounds of mad cackling can be heard, along with the moans of what can only be the death rattles of dead men.*

The judge should spawn 1D4 Delirious Villagers. These individuals will attempt to flee or mutter nonsense while staring at the walls and attack the players if the PCs seem hostile or are carrying the wooden bowl from the altar. The villagers can be grappled and subdued, after which they can be brought to their senses and used as zero level characters. If the PCs subdue at least 1 Delirious Villager, and don't kill any of them, the first one subdued will show the PCs a family heirloom, but they will guard it jealously.

This heirloom is “The Ring of Nixx’s Scorching Tongue” and has 1d3 uses of the spell Scorching Ray. Pg.192 of the core rulebook.

Delirious Villager: Init -1; Atk punch +1 melee (1d4-1); AC10; HD 1d4-1; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will -3; AL N.

Area 4-2 – Lair of Varakesh: *An ungodly horror fills your vision, the dark and dank chamber is filled with eggs, some already hatched and others in various sizes and forms of maturity. Nestled amongst them is a monstrosity out of space-time. A four-horned insectoid pulsating an amber energy and dripping with a vile ichor not of this world. The wings of what must be the queen of this hive are tucked back behind her thorax, the size of at least two men. Its large three-point mandible is only eclipsed in horror by the ooze dripping from its open mouth.*



Once any PC sees Varakesh, have the whole party make a DC16 Will save, those that fail move their full movement into the room and hear the chaos god speak to them in their minds. The judge should also roll 1d20 for the number of eggs that will spawn grubs within 1d3 rounds and continue to do so if PCs take no action. Varakesh is not inherently hostile and will try to convince the PCs to pledge fealty and take her as their patron. Even if the PCs have already made a sacrifice at the altar in area 2-3, she demands more or larger sacrifices. If the power she offers as a patron is not enough of a temptation, she is sitting on a treasure pile worth 160 gp and 212 cp. If hostile action is taken, start combat and spawn $2d8+1$ wasp-men. If the PCs decide to run rather than fight or pledge fealty, continue to spawn $2d6+1$ wasp-men in each room to harass them on the way out of the complex for every 2-5 minutes of game time. To speed up play, have large groups attack in mobs.

Varakesh: Init +2; Atk mandible +6 melee ($1d8+2$) or infest +2 melee, PC makes Will 16 save or turns into a wasp-man in 1d3 rounds, or slime spit ranged +3 ($1d8+1$) target takes damage to their AC -1 each hit, stacks. AC13; HD $6D8+8$; MV 10' or climb 10'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref -3, Will +4; AL C.

AFTERMATH

The PC's should be rewarded by watching the mound collapse in on itself and the entire cliff face falling away into a body of water far below and the infection and odor dissipating. 1D4 pack mules are located nearby to take them to their next adventure along with an NPC of your choosing.

CONTEMPLATION OF THE DUST

By Christian Cotten-Dixon

Illustrations and Cartography by Cheese Hasselberger

Contemplation of the Dust is a level 1 *DCC RPG* module designed to be easily fitted into an existing campaign or provide the judge with plenty of adventure hooks to build into a story after a successful funnel. The setting is hopefully one which the party may return to and find more rewarding as they advance in levels and ability. As such, the judge should feel free to modify the adventure to best suit their needs, weaving their own stories like the Fates from the threads that are provided.

BACKGROUND

Tales are still told around the hearth on winter evenings concerning the Wormking, a powerful and feared chieftain in the ancient north. His tribe was nearly destroyed by a union of neighboring tribes which feared his sorceries. He fled this slaughter with a handful of survivors, venturing into the woods of the north. Years passed, and it was thought that he had perished in the wilds. Such was not the case. He returned and began to raid the tribes which had defeated him, taking wealth and slaves to sacrifice on the altars he constructed to ancient and inhuman gods. Legend says he was followed by horrors which crawled along the ground: the great worms. None could stand against these phantasms; and when, after several generations, the Wormking ceased to appear, it was welcomed by the tribesmen.

And so the Wormking passed into legend.

But now, civilization has begun to encroach on the ancient woods once more, and rumors have begun to surface regarding a certain burial mound in a distant clearing which is best avoided by right thinking people, although filled with the secrets of the ancients...

JUDGE'S SECTION

The fabled mound of the Wormking was built around a wall hidden in the dense forest, discovered by the Wormking when he fled the vengeance of his neighboring chieftains. It is engraved with the images of serpents, the last remnant of an ancient building which stood eons ago before the rise of the first humans in the area.

What creature created it has been lost to time. By the time the Wormking arrived, the mound had become imbued by the power of Ieldra, an entity which feeds off of natural age and decay wrought by time. Sensing the presence of this power and desperate for revenge, the Wormking began to venerate the wall, sacrificing his last retainers to its majesty.

Striking a pact with Ieldra, the Wormking revenged himself upon his enemies for generations; his life extended and his sorceries heightened by this avatar of the dust. He was joined by a force of demon-snakes which had slumbered since the wall had been constructed - but this power came at a price. At the height of the Wormking's power, Ieldra commanded that he join him in his otherworldly hall of dust and serve him.

And so it was done: the Wormking constructed a burial mound around the wall he had discovered, then sealed himself inside where he died of old age, entering into service at the court of his lord. A disturbance to the mound can call him back to his old body however, and Ieldra hungers for fresh, young servants.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The best way to introduce the Wormking to the party is through stories; either as rumors overheard as they travel in the regions surrounding it or as tales told to them during their childhood and the character funnel. The earlier these tales are seeded, the more impactful the adventure can become. For PCs unmotivated by the tales of the gold and knowledge which may be discovered, the party may always find the barrow the only shelter available against a powerful storm. Regardless of how the PCs encounter it, this tale picks up as they approach the clearing where it stands...

THE CLEARING

Area 0-1 – Raven on Stone: *The forest has grown more quiet the farther you have traveled north. No birds call out, no squirrels scurry down the tree trunks. There was a strong wind several hours ago, but that has stopped - although the cold lingers with you. The woods open into a large clearing, in the center of which is a low mound covered in tall grass. You can see a doorway on the right side of this mound. Directly in front of you stands a monolith covered in tatters of brightly colored cloth. At its foot is a bowl of a pale liquid. The eyes of the raven perched atop it glint with malefic intelligence.*



The liquid is rancid milk, left by a nearby cult of Malotech. They seek the Corby Child in area 1-6, and wait for their next holy day of the new moon to attempt to take it from the mound.

If addressed, the raven mourns the deaths of the PCs in the past tense, e.g.

Alas, the bright-haired warrior. His harness has rusted, and his thews are food for the worm.

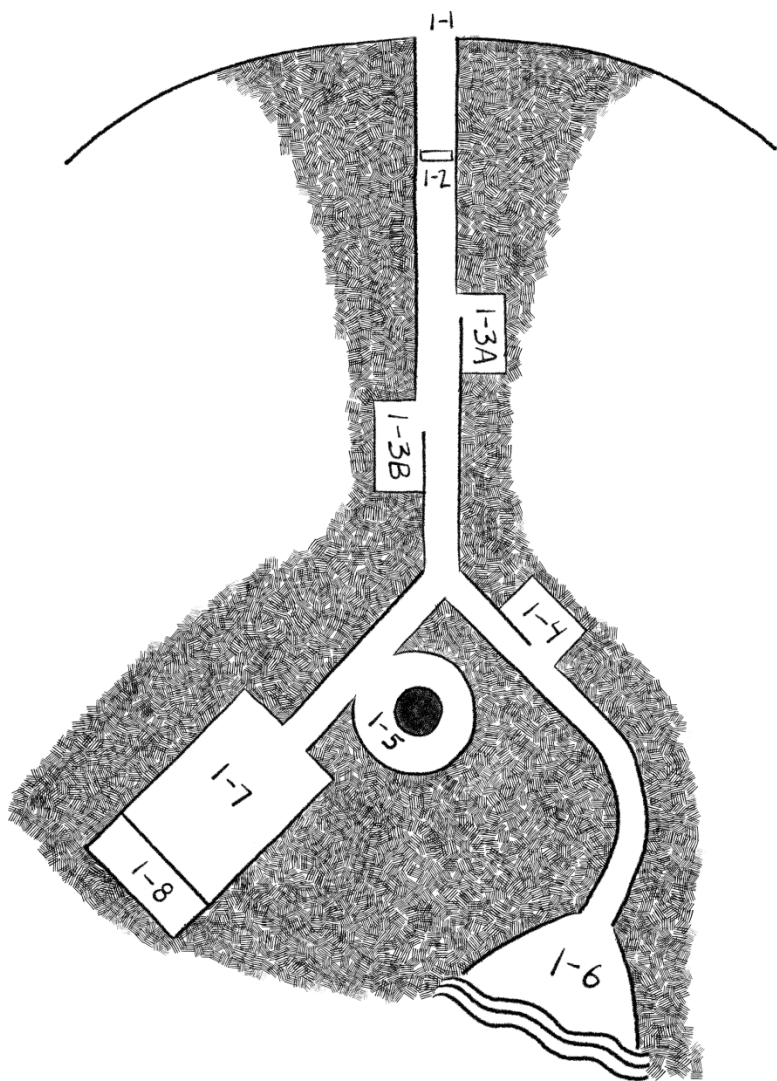
The judge is encouraged to make these statements specific to each character addressed. The bird possesses no other intelligence and responds to further questions with similar statements; flying off if threatened.

THE MOUND

Area 1-1 – Snake above Door: *The mound's entrance is formed by a low passage constructed of slabs of stone, which continues into darkness. Above the lintel is a dark cavity, 3' across and 1' tall. Filth and decayed birds' nests fill its corners.*

Above the door is the skeleton of a failed tomb robber- and the home of a viper. If the skeleton is disturbed, the snake will strike out against the PC moving the corpse, making a single +2 attack which deals D2 damage and poison (see DCC RPG rulebook, Appendix P) on a successful strike. Careful examination of the skull reveals a small hole with blackened edges through the cranium, the result of the light trap in at the end of the hall which passes through this cavity.

Sidebar – Digging into the Mound: The interior of the Wormking's mound exists in a place slightly outside of whatever dimension the PCs currently call home. If a party decides to bypass the welcoming doorway entirely and dig into the mound, it will take a six foot deep hole to reach the interior. In addition, regardless of where the PCs dig, the hole emerges in area 1-3b.



Area 1-2 – Doorway: *The tunnel ends at a single slab of stone, which blocks the tunnel like a door. A spiral is deeply cut into its surface.*

This door is a simple block of stone, with no wards. That which lies inside is all too happy to be disturbed, and it may be rolled aside or pushed back with a DC 20 Strength check. When the door is opened, read the following:

The air is warm beyond the door and carries a faint scent of decay, like rotted leather. The rough-hewn passage continues to slope downward into darkness.

And as the party steps downward:

Every step you take, a small cloud of dust rises from the floor. It looks like sparks flying from an anvil in your torchlight.

The Hallways: Aside from the layer of dust over the floors, there is only one notable feature in the hallways. At the end of the fork, 3ft up upon the wall there is a pitted and blackened spot (spotted if the wall is examined, or a Luck check at judge's discretion). This is evidence of the same trap which killed the tomb robber in area 1-1, which the Wormking will trigger to slow the PCs departure.

On returning to the fork in the tunnel after investigating a side passage, unless the PCs have taken precautions; have the lead PC make a Luck check. If failed, the character takes 1d6 damage as they stumble into the hot beam of light which now shines from a small hole above the door to the tomb to the end of the passage. At certain times of day and night the light of the sun or moon passes directly through the gap above the entrance to the tomb and is refracted through the entry hole.

Area 1-3a and 1-3b – Sidechambers: *This small sideroom holds nothing but a low slab of stone, upon which rests a pile of dust, in the rough outline of a human figure. Above what you assume to be the head is a large spiral engraved into the stone.*

These chambers, along with area 1-4 forms a powerful magical device, which renders the memories of the dead accessible to the living, so long as their corpses in the form of specially prepared dust may be accessed. The dust found here and in area 1-5- are those of minor chieftains killed by the Wormking. The spirals above the head form the trigger for this device. A DC 10 Spell check will activate any of the spirals in areas 1-3 and 1-4 . This check is performed using D16+CL+Intelligence. If succeeded, the activator is temporarily transported into a memory from table 1-1 (the Judge should feel free to roll randomly, choose a suitable memory, or invent one of their own). If failed, the caster must make a DC 10

Will save or take 1d3 points of temporary Personality damage as the spirit of the deceased tries to enter the caster's body.

Table 1-1. Ancient Memories

- 1 *You are seated in a large hall atop a dais, surrounded by empty benches and tables. It is dark outside, and the fire in the hearth before you sputters. You drain a beaker of bitter wine...*
- 2 *You lead a group of warriors past a gutted farmhouse as a giant serpentine form emerges from the woods before you. The faces of your men blanch as the creature swallows a man whole...*
- 3 *The screaming of a woman fills your ears as you are pushed bloody from your mother's body. Gentle hands pick you up and wrap you in rough cloth. You begin to wail...*
- 4 *Your head is pressed into the soil by a heavy boot; ravens flutter about you and you hear the shriek of metal against a whetstone...*
- 5 *You stand to one side of a dais with a tray in your hand. The floor is covered in writhing snakes, which dissolve into dust as they raise up to strike you...*

Area 1-4 – Empty Sidechamber: *This chamber is identical to the others you have found, save that the low bed is bare. There is a large pottery jar in the corner.*

The jar in the room is empty, save for a layer of inert dust coating the base. If the spiral in this room is activated, the caster's consciousness is transported to a void for a few moments before returning to his own form. A DC 15 Willpower save must be made, or an automatic minor corruption is incurred.

Area 1-5 – Snake Pit: *The walls of this large chamber are roughly circular, formed with the same massive stone blocks as the hallways. The walls are lined with a score or more of large jars. In the center of the floor is a hole which descends into darkness.*

If inspected, the jars are sealed with a layer of wax and contain thick dust: the remains of the Wormking's foes. Any PC who failed to activate the spirals in areas 1-3a and 1-3b will recognize these jars as containing spirits akin to those that tried to enter their mind. If

this dust is spread over the beds in areas 1-3 or 1-4 and the appropriate spiral is traced, the memories of those contained within may be accessed.

This is an ideal place for the judge to both flesh out the history of their campaign world and begin to seed further story hooks.

The pit is 10' in both diameter and depth and served as a feeding trough of sorts for the Wormking's pet serpentine horrors, known as nadders. These resemble a 12' anaconda with a disturbingly humanoid face and vestigial forelimbs. Two of these remain in a crack between two slabs over this pit, which may be spotted by a Luck check if a PC enters the pit, or if a PC thinks to investigate the room's ceiling. These creatures will come forth to investigate any loud noise, particularly if the harp (see below) is played. Expecting a hearty meal, they will attack the PCs unless a significant amount of flesh is thrown into the pit, which they will proceed to eat before returning to their lair.

Nadders (2): Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5+poison); AC 14; HD 3d8+3; hp 15, 13; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP poison (DC 12 Fortitude save or the skin surrounding the wound becomes covered in reptilian scales once healed. This effect is similar to corruption, and may be removed by the same means), death throes (when reduced to 0 Hit points, the Nadder will collapse into a pile of dust); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.

The remains of the last meal given the nadders is still in the pit; the skeleton of a young harpist who sought to sing of his night spent in the ancient barrow several generations ago. Instead of gathering material for his stories he was fed to the worms, playing his harp as he was devoured. The lowest string on this harp is imbued with a minor magical power to shatter metal. When discovered, the string is out of tune and unpredictable. Have the PC who picks it make a Luck check. On a fail the string is played, and the Nadders above them will emerge to investigate. If played, roll a misfire for the spell *shatter* (DCC RPG rulebook, pg.193).

If tuned properly (a DC 12 Skill check by a PC with the minstrel occupation), the string instead functions once per day as a result of 14 on the *shatter* spell result table, with a range of 10'.

If the PCs manage to enter the crack in the ceiling, it is a 40'/30' oblong cavity, filled with nadder bones and shed skins.

Area 1-6 – Lake of Hands: *Your footsteps echo as the hallway opens into a large cavern of natural stone. The floor is damp with mold and slopes away from you into darkness.*



When the party advances:

You struggle to keep your footing as you move forward across the slick floor. After some twenty paces, your light reflects against a dark, glassy surface covering the floor in front of you: the start of a vast pool of water which continues on out of sight.

When the Wormking constructed his mound, he discovered a series of natural caves below the Worm Wall. Curious of what lay within and what connection these might have with the wall, he connected the mound to these caverns.

The entrance to these caverns has since filled with water and is now inhabited by scores of pale hands. What, if anything these hands are

connected to is left to the judge's imagination. 1d3 of these hands will emerge if the water is disturbed and attempt to drag any living creatures in the room into the pool; with an additional 1d3 hands emerging every round after the first.

Pale Hands (each): Init +5; Atk Grapple +0 melee (1d3+grapple); AC 10; HD 1d3; hp 1; MV 10; Act 1d20; SP Grapple Immune to Spells; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +10; AL N.

Grapple: On successful strike, the victim is dragged 5ft towards the water, DC 12 Agility check to avoid falling prone on the slick floor.

These hands are long and slender, with flesh like that of a cave fish. Their arms have too many joints and can reach to the doorway of the room.

Judge's Note: I have intentionally resisted the temptation to fully describe or develop statistics for the creature/s which the hands are attached to. There are two reasons for this, the first being mystery: the encounter leaves a more lasting impression on players' minds if they are left to speculate what exactly it was they encountered. It also leaves the judge free to incorporate further caverns beyond the pool, especially if a PC is unfortunate enough to be dragged into the water.

If the PCs investigate the side of the cavern along the walls, they will discover a decayed bird's nest about 2' across and composed of dry grass. In this lies an egg. It is the size of a duck egg and is a mottled grey in color. This is the egg of the Corby Child (a roc-like creature which possesses superhuman intelligence), which is sought by the cult of Malotech. If placed in a constant source of heat for d7 days, the egg will break open to reveal a small raven chick with human-like blue eyes.

The chick will imprint on the first sentient creature it sees, treating them as its parent. The Corby Child grows very slowly, and will spend the average human lifespan in the same state as when it first emerged from its egg. It will reach maturity 713 years after hatching; when Malotech intends for it to become her high priestess and begin a new age of power for the goddess of death and renewed life.

Area 1-7 – The Hall: *Twin tables stand before you, arrayed as if for a feast. Your light glints off twisted glass beakers and dull metallic plates, all filled with dust. The chamber is lined with cracked stone slabs which form a peaked ceiling far above you. The end of the chamber is shrouded in darkness.*

When the party ventures forward:

The rear wall is a single, massive slab, worked into the images of serpents. They cover every inch of the surface, twisted and intertwined with one another, biting their own tails. Flakes of paint still cling to their carven skins, like fantastically colored blood caked onto their flesh. There is a low dais at the foot of this wall, formed of cracked stone. A tall wooden seat sits on the dais, its richly carved back facing you. Over its back you can see the crown of a pale, bald head, which begins to rise as you approach...

This is, of course, the Worm Wall, and the head rising from the chair is that of the Wormking. He and his master have watched the PCs' progress with some interest. He will spend a round rising and collecting himself, giving the PCs the opportunity to react. After they declare their actions, read the following:

The figure in the chair rises to its feet, and turns. It is a skeleton, yellowed with age, wearing a long hauberk of rotted leather plates. As you watch, the dust from the floor and tables rises and begins to swirl around this figure, covering it in a shifting layer of what appears to be flesh. Dark balefire glints from its empty eye sockets, and an axe and spiral-embossed shield are in its hands.

Uninterested in parley, he will attempt to transfix the PCs starting with those who appear of a higher social standing; then engage them in combat. If the PCs prove a stalwart threat, he will begin to hurl the spirits contained in area 1-5 to gain an advantage. He fights to the death.

Wormking: Init +2; Atk Adze +4 melee (1d6+1)/Choke +1 (1d4+1); AC 18; HD 4d10+4; hp 32; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP baleful gaze (the Wormking may spend an action die to transfix a target for 1D3 rounds, DC 12 Willpower save to resist), hurl spirit (the Wormking may hurl a screaming, dust-composed spirit for 1d4 Damage + pushback as a mighty deed result of 4 [DCC RPG rulebook, pg. 90]. For every spirit thrown, one of the jars in area 1-5 empties and the spirit within is freed to wander the earth) death throes (curse: when reduced to 0 hit points, the Wormking will recite the curse of the frozen north: see Appendix C); SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +6; AL N.

The round, spiral-covered shield the Wormking carries was once imbued with powerful magics, but most of these have faded with the passage of time. It is made of a very light bronze which incurs no check penalty when wielded. It is also usable as a ranged weapon similar to a discus, which causes 1d6 damage on a successful strike. This ranged attack may be used instead of a dwarf's shield bash attack. However, if the spiral on its front is traced, it crumbles into dust unless a Luck check is made to sense the decay before it is damaged beyond repair. Three golden arm rings (worth 15 gp each) are hidden in a hollow at the base of the chair. These are automatically discovered if the chair is investigated.

The Worm Wall: The elaborately carved rear wall is the ancient Worm Wall around which the barrow was constructed. If the serpents covering the surface are touched or traced, the PC's mind is overwhelmed with a sense of age greater than the human race. Images of the wall throughout time flash before them: the wall covered in snow and surrounded by faerie fire in a polar waste; hail and rain beating its surface; trees rising and falling like flickering flame. Finally, the PC sees a figure in a tattered cloak and crested helm stroke the serpent pattern in the exact manner as the PC just did.

After the apparent destruction of the Wormking, Ieldra is in the market for new servants. At judge's discretion, any PC who traces the wall may make an immediate *patron bond* (DCC RPG rulebook, pg. 148) spell check. Success indicates that Ieldra considers the PC worthy of attention, in which case read the following:

You cough as a cloud of dust fills your lungs, and you are transported to a vast, echoing chamber of dry-rotted wood. The floor is covered in writhing serpents, which crumble to dust as they raise their heads towards you and reform as they reach the floor. A voice, cracked with age, speaks from the dark end of the hall. “Who has sought me through silent ages? Young I see you; youthful and promising. Seek you power?”

If the PC is congenial to a patron arrangement:

Power have I. Ieldra is my name. In ancient days I was worshipped. Worthy champions seek I still. Serve me faithfully, revere my majesty and rewards I shall give you. The mighty power of time’s process shall be yours to wield; the world to conquer.

If the PC agrees to this arrangement, the appropriate level of *patron bond* may be granted to them. The nature of the aid given to the PC by Ieldra is left, at least for now, to the caprices of the judge.

CONCLUSION

So the adventure comes to its end. It has hopefully provided the PCs with opportunities to interact with a location and a powerful entity which may be incorporated into a larger campaign world. While the exact method of this is left to the judge, a few suggestions follow:

- The memory extracting device found in areas 1-3 and 1-4 may prove useful for the PCs in future, which could be treated in a similar way as the spell *speak with the dead* (DCC RPG rulebook, pg. 290). The PCs may even wish to take the barrow over as a base of operations, although what other creatures may lurk in its dark corners may make them think twice.
- There may be caverns beyond the lake of hands in area 1-6. Perhaps secrets left behind by the constructors of the Worm Wall may be found there.
- If the Corby Child is taken from the barrow, the cult of Malotech may follow the PCs to take back the child or enact vengeance if it was destroyed. Also, what relationship may Malotech have with the avatar of age, Ieldra?

APPENDIX C: CURSE OF THE FROZEN NORTH

This curse is thought to have originated in the cold wastes of the north, possibly created by the ancient giants who still dwell there. It occasionally shows up in more civilized lands, where the deliverer channels the primal power of these wastes through their own body into that of the target. Because of this, it is commonly used as a last, desperate resort. It is delivered by reciting the following rune:

*Worms writhe round you, rimefrost hanging
from ribs of stone. Rearing upwards
a hand outstretches; hoary and cold.
Heart be weakened, hearth be darkened
until fire of the gods fills your soul.*

The curse carries a -2 Luck penalty and -2d penalty to initiative as the body of the victim and invoker are both racked with chills, reducing their body temperatures by -7°. The curse may be lifted by burning the flesh over one's heart with a magical flame.

SHRINE OF NOCTYS

By
Ian Zebarah
Shears



BACKGROUND

This is a short, drop-in ready, level 0-1 adventure that can be inserted into an ongoing campaign or used to jumpstart a new one after a funnel. It features a new patron for spellcasters. The original setting is on a tropical island shielded from the ravages of time. Its first use was as a possible point for PCs to leave the “Isle of Dread”. It can, of course, be used and altered to fit nearly any campaign featuring an active volcano.

PLAYER START

After a particularly violent eruption in the nearby jungle, an ancient shrine composed of black marble has appeared in one of the craters. It radiates powerful supernatural energy and many of the tribes in the area are terrified to go near it. A patrol was sent out to scout it, but they never returned.

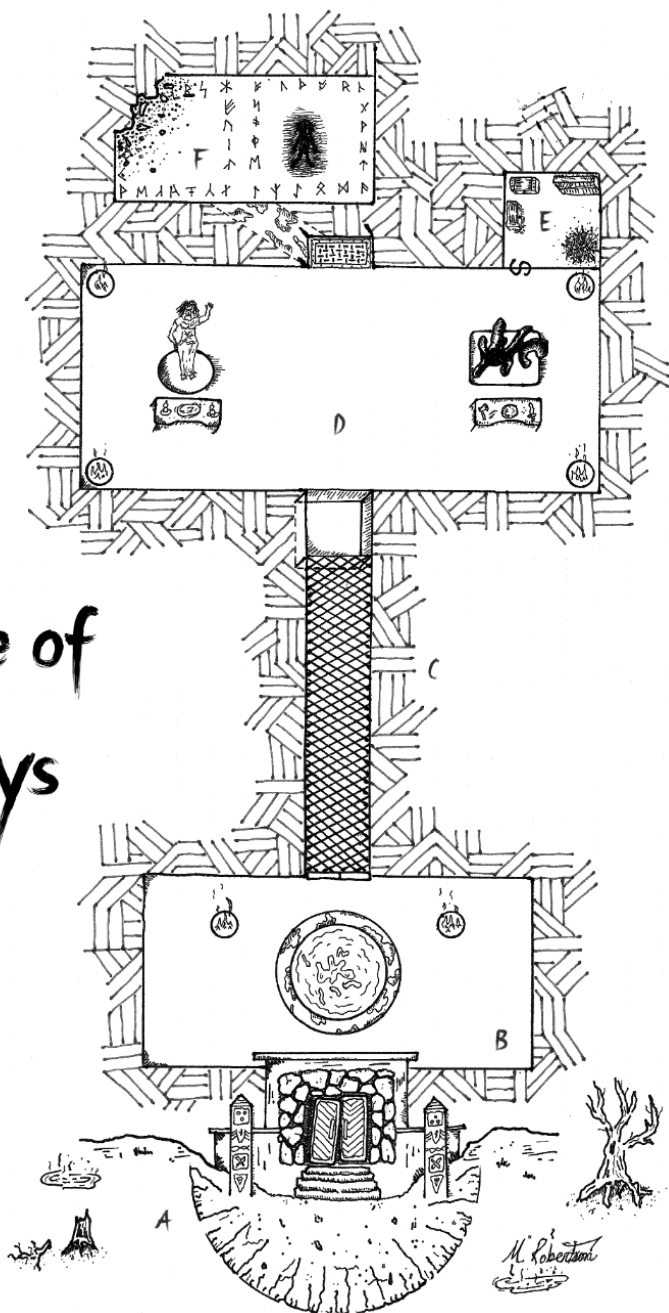
AREAS

Area A – Shrine Exterior: *The valley at the base of the mountain is scarred by volcanic activity. The grass is charred and devoid of color. All of the palms and cedars have been stripped of foliage and are blackened. Many craters with murky, filthy water dot the landscape. In the center of the largest crater is a massive shrine built in the style of an Ancient Greek temple to the gods. It looks untouched by time, except for the wooden double doors that lean heavily together.*

The path leading up to the shrine is safe, but eerie. The sounds of wind and a soft moaning can be heard coming from no direction in particular. The double doors are hazardous and threaten to collapse. Anyone entering must make a DC 12 Ref save or take 3d6 damage as the cornerstone comes loose, dropping the entire doorway on anyone on the top stair.

Area A - Shrine Foyer: *Dim light reveals a 20’ wide fountain with stagnant water. Thick growths of algae cover the bowl. Two braziers sit immediately behind it, lit by an uncanny blue flame. A pair of wooden doors blocks egress into the next chamber.*

Shrine of Noctys



Cartography by Matt Robertson

The double doors are locked and can only be opened by a silver key located inside of the well. 5d4 coins of random type can also be fished out, however, an intelligent ooze Blimgool resides in this fountain. He can be bargained with to give PC's the key and the coins. The room is a large 60' X 30' rectangle made of hard, black marble. It is lit by two braziers and four window slits cut into the stone.

Blimgool: *As you reach your hand into the fountain, a shape emerges from the water, as do two pseudopods. An eye floats up to the center of what could be called the head and it then speaks to you.*



Blimgool by Matt Sutton

Blimgool is a friendly, intelligent ooze (INT 6). It is hungry and will trade the inedibles in the fountain for any food and drink PCs have. He will also answer any questions. He knows:

1. Two gods were sealed here in ancient times. A goddess, Noctys the lady of night and shadows. The other, Blimgool's creator, Schluk is the lord of all slimes, oozes, and puddings.
2. The events of the eruption damaged the magic used to seal the gods and Schluk and many of his minions slipped through the cracks in the holding cell.
3. The people who built this shrine left their treasure behind the statue of Schluk. A proper offering must be made.

Blimgool is dim, and only really interested in food. If the PCs are mean to him, he will spit up 1d6 Compososnagthus skeletons and will then crawl out to punish the PCs.

Blimgool: Init+2; Atk tendril +5 melee (1d6+2) or spit +6 missile (1d6); AC 6; HD 5d12; hp 44; MV 20' or Climb 10'; Act 2d20; SP transference; SV Fort +10, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C.

Transference: Any damage inflicted by a tendril heals Blimgool by that amount.

Compososnagthus Skeletons: Init:+5; Atk claws +3 melee (1d3+1); AC 12; HD 1d12; hp 6; MV40'; ACT 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

Area C – Hall of Darkness: This hallway is 10'X60'. It is pitch black and the darkness cannot be lit. Torches fail, magic light does not illuminate it, and divine aid will only be met with: *This is a trial testing who is worthy to enter this prison sanctum.* A dim light can be seen at the end of the tunnel, the next room. A 10' wide, 20' pit trap is located at the end of the hallway, dropping anyone who enters the space. A DC 12 Ref save is required to avoid falling inside and taking 2d6 damage. The pit is empty, and the walls and floor are the same black marble making up the dungeon.

Area D – Shrine Proper: *Four braziers light each corner of this massive room. A statue of a woman's figure carved from onyx is on the left. An amorphous blob carved from green granite sits on a slab*

on the right. An altar sits in front of each. A sealed, metal grate is in the center of the room. Behind it is a slime coated sluice going into the depths beneath the shrine.

If an offering made in good faith is made to the statue of Noctys, the sluice slides upwards, allowing entrance to the basement. If an offering is made to Schluk, the wall behind the statue pivots open, allowing entrance to the priest's quarters. If anyone defiles Noctys' statue or altar, all light sources are immediately put out and torches and lanterns become soaked, and magic lights (braziers included) fail. If Schluk's is defiled, a lesser ooze is summoned (use Blingool's stats).

Area E – Inside the Priest's Quarters: *A small room dedicated to the original staff of this place. Two chests are on the far wall, to the left, a bookcase containing scrolls. A straw pallet has crumbled to dust in the center. It smells strongly of mildew and damp earth here.*

A black priest's toga and sandals can be found in the right chest, preserved by unknown means. The chest on the left contains an ancient, ceremonial kris sword made from silver and 1d12 ancient coins worth 50gp each to a collector. In the bookshelf is a scroll of the cleric spell *animal summoning*. It can be used to learn the spell by a cleric, or as a consumable when used by anyone else. The mercurial magic effect 79: "Plague of rats" triggers when used this way (see *DCC RPG core rulebook page 114*).

Lightbringer: The sword counts as magical when striking un-dead and unholy creatures. When wielded by a lawful priest, it functions as a +1 longsword. A pale, blue flame runs along the blood channel when un-dead are present. If the wielder willingly becomes un-dead or another creature their deity counts as being unholy, the sword will shatter and can only be reforged if all the fragments can be found and after an offering of an equivalent artifact has been made to Justicia.

Area F – Noctys' Cell: *After sliding down the sluice you are dropped 5' into a 20'x40' room. A magical, red glowing script is etched along the perimeter of the room. Fallen rubble from a partially collapsed ceiling has disturbed a second series of green runes. Dim light bleeds into the room from hairline cracks in the*

walls and ceiling. A tall figure stands serenely in the center. Your eyes have trouble focusing on it; its features are blurred. After a few seconds you can at least make out that it is a female figure composed entirely of darkness.

Noctys speaks with a soft, sibilant whisper, like that seductive urge to up and leave on a midnight stroll for no apparent reason. She begs the PCs to free her by erasing some of the red runes, like the green ones. She will be truthful if asked questions and explain that during the eruption, the runes containing Schluk were damaged, allowing him to escape. She will offer each PC a wish if they free her and also offer her services as a patron to wizards, or as a goddess to priests. She will also teleport the party to the shrine's exterior. Of course, she will twist and pervert those wishes as she sees fit (*see Noctys patron write up in The Gongfarmer's Almanac 2020*).

If PC's refuse, she will mock them. *You did all this work, circumvented traps and puzzles to just leave, and for what?! Trinkets?!* She'll cackle and disappear, summoning a spectre in her place. The spectre is a very dangerous foe. It can drain Personality or Experience Points, and can place debilitating curses. If the PCs manage to defeat the spectre, they will have to figure out their own way out of the basement.

Spectre: Init+2; Atk soul siphon +5 melee (1d10 PER or EXP) AC 10; HD 4d12; hp 28 ; MV fly 20' or hover; Act 1d20; SP soul siphon, hatred, un-dead; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

Soul siphon: A successful hit drains either Personality or Experience Points but a DC 14 Will save halves the drain. Roll randomly to decide which is drained. This damage manifests as the PC forgetting important memories or personality traits. Upon reaching 0 in any category, the PC simply ceases to be and cannot be resurrected. Cogito ergo sum indeed!

Hatred: Jealous of the living, a spectre can curse a PC by glaring at them for an action. A DC 14 Will save will prevent this. The curse manifests as the PC being at -2D on the dice chain until they have *remove curse* cast on them.

NOCTYS



By Ian Zebarah Shears, Illustration by Matt Sutton

Noctys is a neutral chthonic deity of the night. She is sister to Luminos, the lord of light. Ever jealous, ever plotting, Noctys despises that she and her domain are held in terror. Her voice is soft and sibilant, a sonorous, seductive tone that calls out to artists and creatives, madmen and monsters alike. She can take the form of a female silhouette, or that of a mature female human with coal black hair. Her icy pale skin is covered in black lace from head to toe. She prefers to wear diaphanous veils over her face. There are multiple piercings visible underneath this veil. She stands like an elegant noble lady, covering her mouth whenever she giggles.

Her wish is to see the night as loved as the day; she is a goddess of the natural order and will stand with the gods of law and of nature to maintain the cosmic balance when it is threatened. She knows full well that shadows cannot exist without light, and without the night, day is endless and brutal. She teaches these parables to her faithful, instructing them in empathy and kindness, much like the comforting embrace of night after a terrible day's events.

In ancient times, it was not unusual for a traveler to make a charm asking for her blessing when traveling after dark, or for a mother to give charms to her children when having them do chores in dark places.

As many ancient deities are, she is vain and fickle. However, she makes good on all promises to her followers and allies, making sure that they can call upon and trust her. When granting wishes or favors, she likes to pervert, or alter them more to suit her tastes, surprising the person beseeching her aid. If a wish for a horse drawn cart would be granted, the horse instead would be skeletal, bringing terror to mundane animals and common folk alike.

Her allies are creatures who prowl around the night: un-dead, predators, demons, bats, insects and the like. Beings that instill fear and unease into the common folk, further lengthening the divide she faces when seeking new worshippers.

It is rumored that she was sealed and buried in a shrine because of these associations.

Invoke Patron Check Results:

- 12-13 The caster hears the sigh Noctys makes when the sun sets. All spells cast by the caster increase by +2 for the duration of the night.
- 14-17 A defined silhouette can be seen just outside of the caster's light source. It follows the caster at a distance and will watch over their camp, decreasing the likelihood of an ambush the next time the caster rests.
- 18-19 The caster's pupils dilate like a cat's and they are able to see twice as far until sunrise.
- 20-23 Darkness congeals in a 10' dome centered on the caster, it will last equal to CL in rounds.
- 24-27 A cloud of carnivorous moths appears. It drifts slowly in a direction ordered by the caster and anything in its space takes 2d16 damage. All cotton or paper products are instantly destroyed. If a lit lamp is present, the caster must succeed at a CL check equal to 10+INT modifier. If the check fails, the moths act independently.
- 28-29 The caster becomes shadow for 1 turn per CL. They may go under doors, inside chests at the seams, or pass between objects or creatures. During this period, the caster is immune to attacks from mundane sources.
- 30-31 Noctys offers to wrap the caster and their allies in her cool embrace. If they accept, they will have excellent sleep, healing all wounds and may make a Luck check to overcome any illness or curse troubling them.
- 32+ Noctys appears before the caster allowing them to make a single wish. The judge has final say on what she agrees to and how she alters the final product. If it is something frivolous, or insulting to her, she will leave or bless an enemy if there is one present.

PATRON TAINT: NOCTYS

When patron taint is indicated for Noctys, roll 1d6 on the table below.

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | On the first time this result is rolled, the caster's iris turns bright gold in both eyes, like a bat's and their pupils become vertical slits. The caster sees an additional 10' in pitch dark, as though they have infravision. The caster's Personality decreases by 1. The second time this is rolled, the caster's sclera turns black allowing them to see in the dark up to 40'. Their Personality drops by 2 and they are at -1d in bright light. On a third time this taint is rolled, the caster's nose flattens and crinkles up like a leaf nosed bat. The caster can now smell scent trails in caves and tombs, but is at -2d when making Personality checks to positively influence others due to their obvious magical taint from a dark power. |
| 2 | Bright colors are disturbing to The caster. They are uncomfortable wearing clothes with pigment on them and openly gawp at people wearing anything brighter than the color grey. The caster must immediately go out and replace their entire wardrobe befitting their new fashion sense. On a second time, the caster begins to emit a flickering purple-black smoke in areas that are brightly lit. It is unnerving to natural creatures and they act nervous and skittish when the caster approaches. The third time this patron taint is rolled, the caster's clothes become void-black immediately. This allows the caster to hide in shadows like a thief of 1/3 their CL if they stay still and silent while standing in shadows. Animals are now terrified of the caster's presence and will lash out when they approach. |
| 3 | The caster's skin loses pigmentation. Their flesh is pallid and cold to the touch. On a second time, the caster's fingers and canine teeth elongate, giving them a vampiric appearance. Normal townsfolk if friendly in nature will treat them indifferently now, and if indifferent they will act with outright fear that quickly escalates towards hatred if the |

caster doesn't disguise their appearance. The third time this is rolled, the caster's skin becomes blue tinted and their arms and legs ache with early onset rigor mortis. The caster is at -2d when rolling initiative. Mindless un-dead will ignore the caster if left alone and intelligent un-dead will be more likely to speak with the caster.

- 4 At night, a cloud of moths will begin to swirl around the caster when outside. They flap in the caster's face and crawl up their sleeves. The second time, bats will begin to swoop in to eat the moths. This is really, very distracting, decreasing the caster's ability to fire missile weapons by -2d when firing a bow or sling. The third time, the caster can direct this swarm of animals at enemies, sharing their disadvantage to shoot accurately. When speaking with townsfolk at night, the caster is at -2d when making Personality checks due to the obnoxious and distracting display.
- 5 The caster can see the shades of the dead. They appear as they did in life, but whatever was the cause of death is on grisly display. The first time this is rolled, the shades are a faint hazy outline. The caster can only hear a faint buzzing when they whisper to them, and they don't seem to understand the caster at all. The second time, the shades are more distinct and the caster can make out their forms. The shades appear as they did in life and the caster can hear their whispers. The third time this is rolled, the dead now are fully conversant and see the caster as someone that can help them. There is a drawback, though. They won't leave the caster alone! The caster can't sleep, can't read, and can't get anything accomplished without one of them asking for a favor. In order to get the shades to leave the caster alone, the caster must spend 1d3+CL days in a ritual dedicated to Noctys and must sacrifice something of value to the caster to her. After this is done, the caster goes back to the first step of this patron taint.
- 6 The caster feels an uncontrollable urge to get something pierced (like an ear, nose, or lip) as a service to Noctys. The second time, the desire becomes almost like a mania and

now the caster wants to get 1d5 new piercings with precious stones embedded in them. The caster must make a DC15 Fort save to keep their body from rejecting all this new metal. Each piercing costs 100gp for materials alone. The third time this is rolled, Noctys takes the caster to her tenebrous palace to act as her paramour for a gala she is hosting for the other chthonic gods. If the caster does not embarrass her, she will reward them with a patron spell of their choosing and allow them to cast invoke patron with a +2d bonus the next time it is cast. If they fail in their duties, she will rip out each piece of jewelry one by one dealing 1d14 damage for each one removed. If the caster survives, they are returned to the rest of the party; if the caster dies, they become a servant spectre for her to summon at her beck and call and use as a personal footrest, or attack dog for all eternity. It's really degrading.

PATEON SPELLS: NOCTYS

Noctys imparts three unique spells, as follows:

Level 1: *Shadow Walk*

Level 2: *Crushing Darkness*

Level 3: *Servant Spectre*

SPELLBURN: NOCTYS

Noctys is goddess of the night and she loves to enwrap her followers in her embrace. Roll 1d4.

Roll Spellburn Result

- 1 Noctys' freezing hand touches the caster's shoulder. All spellburn damage is applied normally, but the caster's body drops a degree in temperature for each point spent. If 10 or more points are spellburned, the caster falls to the ground chattering until they can be warmed back up.
- 2 The caster can feel Noctys hugging them from behind in a friendly embrace. If the spell is failed, it can be cast again, but the caster must make a DC 10 + amount of ability points spellburned while casting, or lose the spell for an additional day.
- 3 A servant spectre appears as the spell is being cast. If the caster only burns one ability, the spectre will stay and fight until it is defeated or the combat ends. It is hostile to anyone not under the caster's protection.
- 4 For every 3 points the caster spellburns, a light is snuffed out. These lights cannot be relit until after combat. If this occurs during the day, a globe of darkness (as the cleric spell) is centered on the caster and it is equivalent to the spell check for the spell the caster is attempting to cast. This darkness emulates the night sky and stars can be seen as if it were midnight. Un-dead and other "creatures of the night" are at a +2 bonus at all rolls while under the cover of the darkness.

Shadow Walk

Level: 1 (Noctys) Range: Touch Duration: 1 hour

Casting Time: 1 round Save: None

General: The target becomes shadow stuff.

Manifestation: Once finished, the caster or their target become translucent and flicker in the light.

- 1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.
- 2-11 Lost. Failure.
- 12-13 The caster becomes a shadow and gets a +2 bonus to sneaking. If the caster is a thief, they get +1d.
- 14-17 The caster is at +1d to sneaking. If the caster is a thief, they are at +2d.
- 18-19 The caster can teleport to any shadow in the same room.
- 20-23 The caster's attack rolls ignore AC bonuses from armor.
- 24-27 As above, but the caster grants the bonus to two other targets.
- 28-29 The caster can fit under doors and look through seams in chests.
- 30-31 The caster bathes the room in darkness and can move about freely, ignoring traps, hazards and enemies. The caster is unable to affect corporeal enemies in this state unless it is with magic.
- 32+ All enemies in eyesight must make a Will save or become permanently blinded from a haze of darkness that manifests in front of the retina.

Crushing Darkness

Level: 2 (Noctys)

Range: Self

Duration: 1 round or by spell check

Casting Time: 1 round

Save: Fortitude negates

General: The caster calls forth dark matter from space.

Manifestation: A ball of pitch crackling energy is hurled at the target.

1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11 Lost. Failure.

12-13 Failure

14-15 An inky black ball of darkness is pitched at the target. They take 2d6 damage as immense gravity and pressure are exerted on them. All breakable objects are smashed, crushed and ruined.

16-19 Target takes 3d6 damage and is paralyzed for CL turns.

20-23 As above, but the caster may target an additional foe.

22-25 The orb is 10' wide, deals 3d6 damage and all creatures inside are blinded for 1d5 rounds.

26-29 4d6 damage and a second Fort save must be made for each creature in the area of effect to avoid being thrown 20' in the air. They fall on the ground for another 2d6 damage on the next turn. If a ceiling is present, they crash through it if it is composed of something softer than stone and take an additional 1d6 damage from falling.

30-31 A lesser black hole is formed centered on the target. Everyone in a 20'ft radius must make a Fort save or be drawn into the sphere. It lasts 1d5 rounds and all inside take 5d6 damage.

32-33 A moderate black hole is formed. It is the same as above, but any living being inside winks out of existence at the end of the duration.

34+ A severe black hole is formed by the darkness. It is the same as 28-29, the damage is increased to 8d6 damage and all creatures inside will wink out with it. When the spell ends, reality is scarred in its place. Any person or animal spending more than a few minutes in the area will develop corruption as per the whims of the Judge.

Servant Spectre

Level: 3 (Noctys)

Range: Sight

Duration: Varies

Casting Time: 1 minute

Save: None

General: Using a secret ritual, the caster summons one of Noctys' servant spectres to aid them. A servant spectre will obey orders as they are given, but if the caster behaves towards them in a disrespectful manner woe unto them! The spectres are in constant contact with Noctys and to degrade her servants is to degrade her. The caster must remain within earshot and eyesight for orders to be understood by the spectre. Most of Noctys' servants look like priests from a bygone era and their equipment shows the signs of decay. Those that died in the service of their deity show grisly wounds that leak and leave a trail of gristle behind.

Manifestation: A door leading from Noctys' palace opens inside of a nearby shadow which allows one of the dreaded shadow spectres to aid the caster.

- 1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.
- 2-11 Lost. Failure.
- 12-15 Failure.
- 16-17 The caster conjures a single shadow spectre for 1 hour.
- 18-21 The shadow spectre summoned will stay and obediently follow commands for 1d3 hours.
- 22-23 Two shadow spectres come to the caster's aid for 1d3 hours.
- 24-26 Two shadow spectres will aid the caster for 4 hours.
- 27-31 Two shadow spectres will loyally follow the caster until the next sunrise.
- 32-33 Three shadow specters appear and will follow orders for 24 hours.
- 34-35 1d5 greater shadow spectres are summoned. They have an additional +2 HD and drain Personality and Experience Points twice as fast as ordinary spectres. They will stay until dawn and reappear for 2 more sunsets.
- 36+ A massive arm composed of shadow claws out from a shadow on the floor. Another soon appears and a twelve foot avatar of Noctys pulls itself out. She has free will, but will recognize the caster and their party members as allies. The avatar will aid the party in combat and during exploration. She does not say anything or behave any way

to indicate that she is listening. The avatar will always stand as close as possible to the caster, wrapping them in a chilly embrace. The avatar will stay for 3 nights, disappearing at each dawn and appearing again at nightfall. Her arrival is always unsettling.

Spectre: Init+2; Atk soul siphon +5 melee (1d10 PER or EXP) AC 10; HD 4d12; hp 28 ; MV fly 20' or hover; Act 1d20; SP soul siphon, hatred, un-dead; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

Soul Siphon: A successful hit drains either Personality or Experience Points but a DC 14 Will save halves the drain. Roll randomly to decide which is drained. This damage manifests as the PC forgetting important memories or personality traits. Upon reaching 0 in any category, the PC simply ceases to be and can not be resurrected. Cogito ergo sum indeed!

Hatred: Jealous of the living, a spectre can curse a PC by glaring at them for an action. A DC 14 Will save will prevent this. The curse manifests as the PC being at -2D on the dice chain until they have remove curse cast on them.

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