

# The 2016 Gongfarmer's Almanac:

## A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by  
the DCC RPG G+ Community



### COMPLETE ADVENTURES

### VOLUME 4 OF EIGHT BOOKLETS

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# THE ORM LIES DOWN IN PUNJAR



BY TERRY OLSON  
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***The Orm Lies Down on Punjar** is best served when the PCs are recovering from their latest exploits, and are carousing and carelessly spending their hard-earned gold. Although the title references Punjar, this adventure can take place almost anywhere. “Punjar” is chosen for its familiarity among DCC veterans, as well as having the same number of syllables as “Broadway” (this romp is inspired by the well-known progressive rock opus by Genesis). Due to it being a short-format adventure, read-aloud area descriptions and level-specific stat blocks are not provided; the judge is encouraged to tailor the journey appropriately for heroes, demigods, or gongfarmers as needed.*

*Like its inspiration, **The Orm Lies Down on Punjar** could be interpreted as something that really happens, a bad drug trip, a dream sequence, a metaphysical exploration of the self, or something else entirely. The intent is to provide a few hours’ worth of entertainment when something slightly “off the books” is needed or when the judge needs a catalyst for transporting the party elsewhere (or elsewhen), giving the PCs an opportunity for reward along the way.*

## INTRODUCTION

The PCs have acquired an entire bottle of ultra-rare Purple Rhost, a hard, throat-scorching, mind-altering liquor known by its glowing green worm writhing within. Purple Rhost is actually an arcane hallucinogenic distilled from the blood of an Orm-Master deep within the Purple Planet’s Under Plateau. Its power is such that all who partake of a given worm’s liquor share the same “trip” - eating the worm is simply the catalyst. There are a number of places the PCs could have acquired the drink:

- Punjar’s Black Market;
- a gift from Dim Lane’s Old Thom;
- the Silent Maid’s secret stash;
- left in a PC’s pack by a mischievous quasit.

The fun begins when a PC eats the worm.

Consuming the bottle’s inhabitant causes the PC to see a spectral worm emerge from his palm; the apparition has a viridian glow, with

a forearm's girth. This PC gains a temporary +2 to their Luck, which must be spent during the adventure. The worm seems endless as it penetrates and wraps around all who shared the liquor. Other PCs drinking from the bottle must make a DC 15 Fort save. If they fail, they also see the specter and gain a temporary +1 to their Luck. Use the Luck gain as a lure for those who haven't partaken of the rhost. If PCs succeed on their save, encourage them to try again to get the temporary Luck bonus by drinking the last drop, really believing, etc.; subsequent saves are made at a cumulative -1d penalty. Note that this is when PCs may choose whether or not "to go on the adventure." Those that see the apparition and gain the temporary Luck have no escape from what follows unless successfully treated for poisoning.

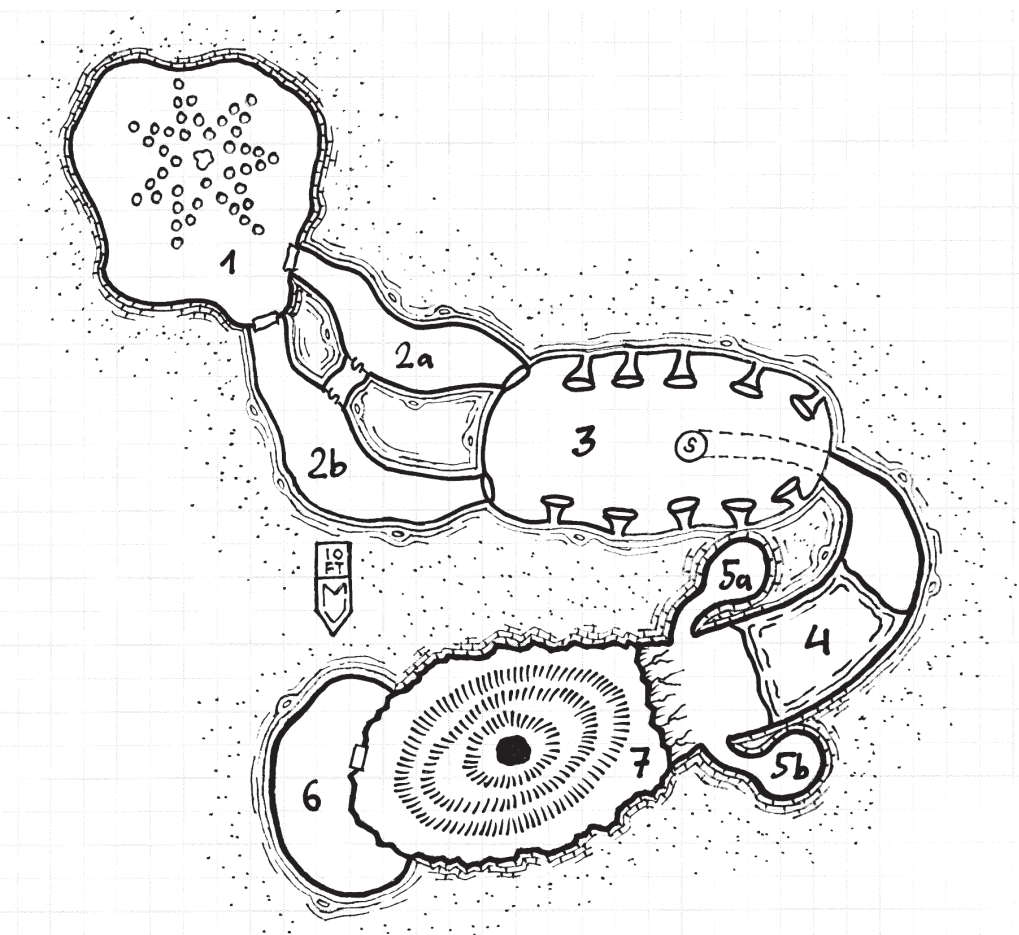
Once the saves have been resolved, the worm's tail exits the eater's hand and the ghost dives into the floor. The ground trembles as a large worm bursts through the floorboards and attempts to swallow the entire party. PCs may make a DC 12 Ref save to avoid being swallowed. Those who succeed see an even larger worm extrude from the ground, swallowing the first worm and attempting to swallow the survivors. Successively larger worms arrive until all PCs are consumed (increase the DC of the Ref save by 4 for each subsequent worm). The sensation of being swallowed is pleasant, and each PC passes out while seeing a warm light glowing from within his stomach.

## AREA DESCRIPTIONS

*PCs may believe that they are in the carcass of the worm that swallowed them; this is not the case, although the map bears some similarities to a worm's anatomy. The PCs are trapped in a multiversal intersection of their physical beings, shared subconscious, and the arcane transplanar energy of an Orm-Master's blood. Any attacks made against the chambers' fleshy surfaces also damages the PC that ate the Purple Rhost's worm.*

### **Area 1-Gelatinous Tears:**

The PCs awaken, each suspended in a giant, gelatinous tear-shaped pod that is partially filled with water. Numerous pods hang 10' above the ground forming the shape of a seven-pointed star. A fleshy orb



dangles from the ceiling in the star's center, sending jolts of electricity to the pods. The chamber is made of a chalky white rock. The pods can be easily punctured by PCs attempting to escape. Anyone opening a pod that doesn't contain a party member either finds a naked dead body visually identical to his own, or finds a Punjar resident (if a replacement PC is needed). On the wall, two skin-like portals alternate opening and closing. Each may be pried or forced to stay open, but when doing so the other remains tightly closed.

### **Area 2A and 2B-Anima and Animus:**

These fleshy chambers are identical in function, but differ in content. Both contain surfaces with tiny nubs that extend and retract, creating

the sensation of a moving floor (MV 15') going toward area 1. Subtract 15' from a PC's MV when determining his movement toward area 3: MV 15' stands still; MV 25' moves forward at MV 10'; MV 10' moves backwards at MV 5', etc. Area 2A contains flying tadpole-like creatures with vicious bites; they only attack male PCs. Area 2B contains flying prickly spheres that drip with acid; they only attack female PCs. 2A and 2B are joined by a secret corridor found by prying apart the fleshy wall (DC 14 Intelligence check). If the corridor is open at both ends then the PC with the lowest Luck makes a Luck check. Upon success, the inhabitants of 2A and 2B attack and destroy one another, otherwise their union creates a violent creature from the party's past.

### **Area 3-Pulsing Chamber of the Lily:**

The party finds themselves in a room that rhythmically expands and contracts. Except for the floor, a pink, luminous membrane surrounds the chamber. Besides the entrances to 2A and 2B, there are ten large tubes in the walls, each of which either suck or expel air in a complex rhythmic pattern, accompanied by a faint thumping. The floor is covered in soft, freshly tilled earth, in which a solitary white lily grows. Any PC examining one of the tubes is sucked inside and expelled out another (DC 14 Ref save to avoid); the exit is random even if the same tube is entered. The journey is too quick for PCs to gauge how they are traveling, but the expulsion causes damage.

A secret tunnel lies 5' below where the lily is planted. PCs may dig for the exit, although if they water the lily, it grows instantly and reveals the tunnel by removing dirt with its roots. At full growth, the lily's sticky stigma is capped by a humanoid head which tells the party, "Narcissim is poison" (a hint for area 4). The judge is encouraged to make the head identical to someone the party has met or will meet in the future. If the PCs do not have water, they may use liquid from the pods in area 1. Picking the flower causes it to turn to dust and another to grow back the next round.

### **Area 4-Pink Pond of Id:**

The tunnel leads to yellow spongy room, with odors reminiscent of rotten eggs. A large, 3'-deep pond of pinkish liquid spans the chamber, and must be traversed to reach the other side, which transitions to

a white-stone shore. Large stunner eels hide in the pond's sandy bottom and attack the party as they attempt to cross. This should be a challenging fight; stunner eels have a ferocious bite and can shock PCs to helplessness or team up to hold a PC underwater while others freely attack him. There are as many eels as there are party members. When an eel is killed, it floats to the top of the pool, and its head transforms to look like one of the PCs. Each PC is represented by an eel's corpse, without duplication. If a PC eats a portion of the eel representing himself, then he is severely poisoned, and his neck, chin, and shoulders grow flaps of flesh that seem to melt together. However, if a PC eats a portion of an eel representing someone else, then the represented PC is healed 1 HD of damage. The white-stone shore near areas 5A and 5B does not stink, due to a draft coming up the cliff from area 7.

### **Area 5A and 5B-The Unperceived Portal:**

Chalky corridors lead to areas 5A and 5B which are (seemingly) empty white-stone chambers. Entering either chamber causes a bluish portal to silently appear in the other. The only way for the portal to stay in place is for both rooms to be occupied simultaneously. PCs wishing to use the portal have to figure out how to get the last person through, since the portal always moves to the empty room. The party may use the body of a deceased PC, an eel's corpse from area 4, or a body from one of the pods in area 1 to occupy a given room, so that the portal stays in the other. The portal leads to the Shapeless Friends in area 6.

### **Area 6-Shapeless Friends:**

Upon entering the portal, the PCs are teleported to a chamber with firm gelatinous surfaces and a solitary metal door. Oozy humanoids step out of the gel, and speak to the PCs in bubbling voices, as if underwater. "Clever, clever," they say, and present the party with a huge net made of tiny, green, crystal links (extremely helpful in area 7). They speak in unison, as if sharing the same mind. Any melting-necked PC who poisoned himself in area 4 is given a scroll of alien hide; one side is tough and durable, the other is highly reflective. The scroll must be unrolled to see its reflective side. If a PC asks why he's receiving the scroll, they reply, "Because you remind you of you." Note that the ooze creatures have no reflection.

The creatures ask the PCs about where they come from, and why they are here. All answers are met with polite jiggling chuckles of disbelief. If asked questions, the creatures are either silent or answer cryptically with metaphysical contradictions, for example:

PCs: "Where are we?" Creatures: "You are in It's in you."

PCs: "How do we leave?" Creatures: "You have to get in to get out."

If the PCs attack their hosts, then a TPK is probable. The oozy humanoids become highly adhesive, as do the chamber's floors and walls, which close in on their assailants, attempting to suffocate them as they stick in place by oozing into the PC's ears, noses, and mouths.

## **Area 7-Mocking Shade:**

This is a gigantic cavern, the top hidden in a gray mist. The bottom is bowl shaped, with a 10' hole in the middle leading to darkness. The chamber's floor may be accessed either by descending the 40' cliff from area 4, or through the door from area 6, which is not visible from this side of the chamber. The area is otherwise empty until the PCs come within 20' of the hole in the floor; at this time, a Mocking Shade rises from the hole and attacks.

A Mocking Shade is a flying un-dead creature akin to a shadow, but more substantial in form. Each round, it forms part of its body to parody one of the PCs. The PC being mocked must make a Will save to act that round, and takes the same damage the shade does. In order to determine which PC is parodied, have the players roll 1d20, adding their character's Luck score (not modifier). The PC with the lowest result is mimicked, with the lowest Luck score used to resolve ties. Netting the shade with the green crystal net from area 6 has multiple benefits: the shade cannot change who it is mocking; the party gains +1d on all attacks; the shade is penalized -1d on all attacks. The shade may be turned, but this should be extremely difficult. Clerics who consumed the worm at the adventure's start are spiritually unable to turn the creature. If the party uses the Shapeless Friends' reflective scroll as a mirror, then upon seeing itself, the shade must succeed on a Will save or its mocking duplication melts away for one round. This encounter should be scaled appropriately by the

judge to present a significant challenge for the PCs. Upon its defeat, the shade transforms into a large black bird wearing a green crystal crown and flies away, dissipating moments later.

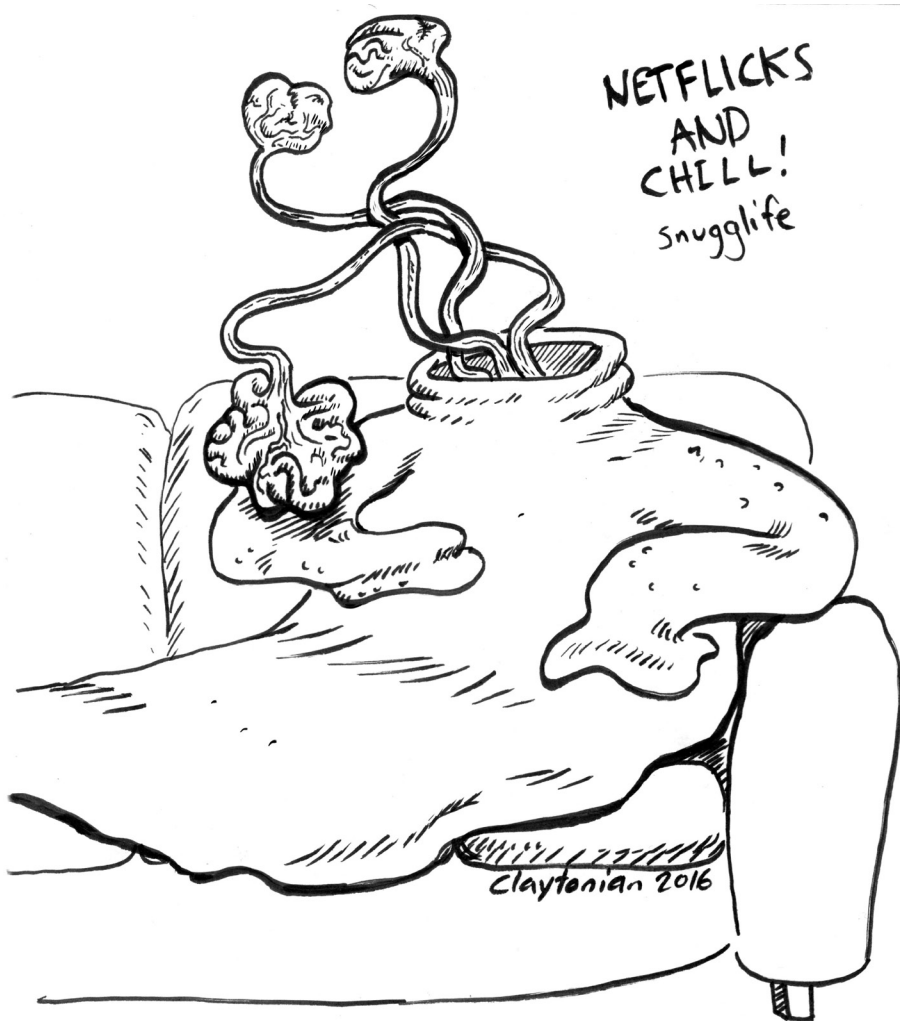
The bowl's hole begins as a 10' diameter fleshy, oily chute, ending in a portal; the entire chute is masked with darkness and silence. PCs cannot see into the darkness, hear anything from it, or gauge its depth. They have to make a leap of faith.

## ENDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs jump into the chute, they appear where and when the judge desires. Perhaps they wake up back in Punjar, having passed out in a tavern (which may or may not be flattened by the carcass of a giant, alien worm). Perhaps they find themselves on the Purple Planet, or in the Shudder Mountains, or in Lankhmar's Silver Eel. Regardless, the PCs should be rewarded appropriately by increases to Luck, removal of deity disapproval, etc., and also gain an insight specific to some unsolved problem. If they had gifts from the Shapeless Friends, then they still have them, but must discover their relevance in this new existence.

# UNTIL THE SUN GOES DOWN FOREVER

By David Coppoletti



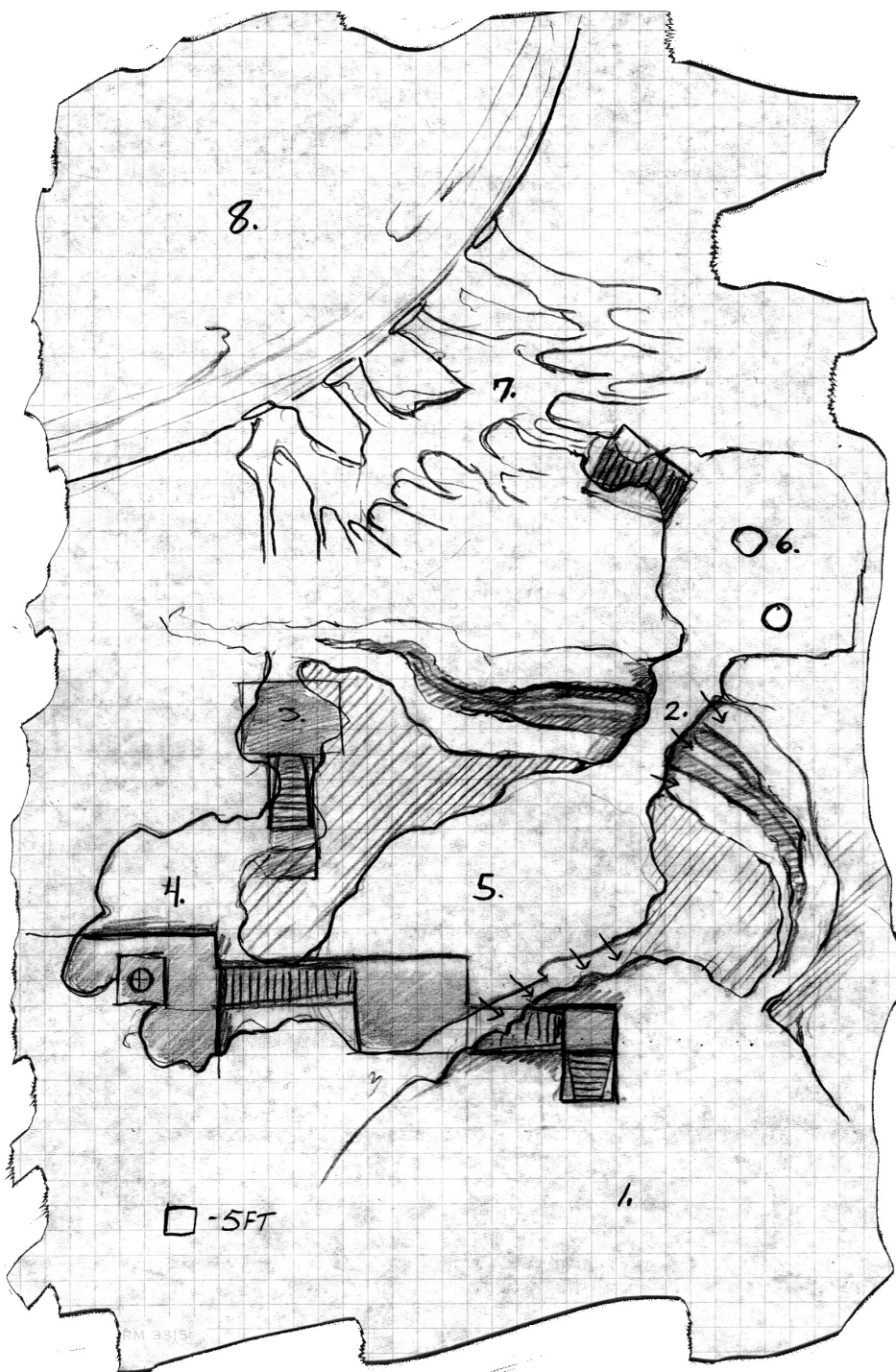


*The coma cult known as the narcolepers has one goal, and one goal alone: to put out all the lights, everywhere, so they can get a decent night's sleep (forever). They convert unbelievers by promising ultimate, unimaginable comfort in the soothing embrace of eternal drowsiness, dulling themselves against the pain and trauma of everyday life. Catatonic slumber and lucid dreams are their deepest desires. They are opposed by a zealous organization known as the cult of sleep deprivation. The deprivers are led by the reverse-vampire Mosh Sedation (he is energized by sunlight and is weakened by darkness) and his restless legion. Mosh wants to overclock everyone's neurotransmitters and steal the synaptic energy in something known as a cascading field dampener. It is a stupid idea.*

## ROOMS

**Area 1-CLOACA ENTRANCE.** This cavern is the entrance to a system of dank, dark abandoned sewers known as a CLOACA, long-rumored to be a den of cult activity. A wide hole ripped through the sewer's molden walls leads into a chamber dimly lit by mucus that glows with a milky silvery light. PCs actively observing the glow find it somehow comforting. A thin layer of the mucus covers the ground and lambent strands stretch from the ceiling to the floor, some thick as an arm, others too thin to pinch. PCs stooping to investigate the mucus on the floor find that it is pooled around the base of a stony stairway leading up to area 4. Touching the strands causes a pleasant numbness that spreads through the fingers and goes up the arm. The numbness feels soothing - the PC will feel like she has healed 1d3 hit points of damage, although there is no change in actual hit point total. In the corner of the cavern there is a narrow opening that leads to a chasm flanked by narrow rock ledges. The chasm is stuffed with sodden blankets, pillows, and plush accouterments of the sleepy.

**Note:** four distinct strands of mucus falling somewhere on or around the stairway and identified by arrows on the map serve as an alarm device for Snug'goo in area 5. If any of these strands are disturbed or interacted with in any way, Snug'goo will be alerted to the PCs presence, and will also intuitively know the alignment and general condition of the PC who has touched the strand. Spells focused on any of the strands will be transmitted directly to Snug'goo, who will



react according to the judge's discretion and may be required to make a saving throw against those spells.

**Area 2-NARCOLAMPREY AMBUSH.** PCs moving along the ledges of the chasm will notice bodies among the pillows and bedding material crammed into the chasm. The bodies are emaciated but have a look of placid calm on their dead faces. It is quickly apparent that people have willingly entered the chasm to sleep among the pile of softness, and have apparently wasted away from starvation and dehydration. There is a natural bridge overlooking the middle portion of the chasm. Six narcoleper cultists squat on the bridge with pots full of narcolamprey sleep parasites. They quietly and lazily wait for intruders, and will empty the pots onto the PCs once they reach the point in the chasm marked with arrows. Roll 7d7 to determine the number of narcolampreys that strike the PCs. Each narcolamprey inflicts 1 point of damage, which is equally divided among the party. Any party member reduced to 0 HP is not killed, but instead is knocked prone, and has accidentally ingested 1d7 narcolamprey (they are about the size of goldfish crackers™). PCs suffering from narcolamprey infestation will feel content and well-rested, and will wake up from slumber feeling refreshed, though they will externally show signs of physical fatigue and languor. No hit points will be recovered from sleeping once infested, and the host will be unaware of this condition due to the flood of soothing endorphins that impresses a sense of restful ease upon the host at all times. While infested, dreams will begin to lose color and assume a muted tone. Narcolamprey reach maturity after they have sucked out a full week's worth of sleep from their host, at which point they rapidly swell up to the size of coconuts and erupt from the stomach (1d16 damage, Luck check to avoid). Mature narcolamprey are extremely fragile, having only 1 HP, and will burst if they suffer a fall greater than six inches. Spilling out of a stomach will usually cause them to burst, leaving behind a pool of sl'ooze and seven newborn narcolamprey, ready to be harvested and milked.

**Area 3-(BRAIN) SAND IN YOUR (THIRD) EYE.** The walls in this square room are covered with carvings of eyes with holes in the middle. Each carving is the size of a hand. Close examination reveals that some of the eyes are fully open, while others are half-closed with drooping eyelids and are nearly shut. This room promptly seals shut the first time someone looks into a hole in the wall. Once

sealed, sand begins to slowly sift into the room from the bottom row of eyeholes (it will take 10 months to fill the chamber). Any PC looking up at the room's ceiling must make a DC 13 Will save. Failure indicates the PC must roll on Table Q as their parietal eye becomes rapidly calcified by an invisible beam of energy shooting down from a microscopic gemstone set in the ceiling. The second PC to look in any eyehole will have their parietal eye sucked out of their forehead, causing 1d14 damage from the rupturing skull and skin. PCs missing a parietal eye will develop narcolepsy as per result 13 on Table Q. If any trapped PC suffers from a parietal eye being removed, or from calcification of their third eye, the far door will open whumpishly after a 3 round delay (the door leading into the room remains sealed).

**Area 4-SL'OOZE SLUICE.** Most coma cultists who have their parietal eye calcified or removed move up the ranks to become lamprey milkers (comatote rank). This job is actually a lot more fun than it sounds, because milking the narcolamprey means you have to touch their narcotic mucousy sheaths. Narcolamprey were designed to feed off of a host's sleep. They provide an enzyme that releases massive quantities of calming endorphins in the host, leaving them feeling well rested even though physically they may still be fatigued. The digested sleep energy is separated into dream frequencies, which are collected by Snug'goo for power, and sleep ooze (or sl'ooze), the slimy byproduct that still produces a rush that is mildly euphoric, but also kind of shitty. The actual 'milk' of the lamprey is a highly concentrated anesthetic that causes instantaneous rapturous sleep for 1d30 hours, with no saving throw. Sleep of this kind is so deep and pure that the slumber-succumber must suffer points of damage equal to the remaining hours in order to be forcibly awoken. Purified narcomilk of this variety is rare and difficult to collect. Six comatotes languish here, tending to three oversized stone troughs holding narcolamprey swimming in their own slime. They will occasionally visit the grate to dump buckets of excess mucus. The grate is 5' wide and is made of rusty metal, requiring a DC 10 Strength check to force from either side. The comatotes will fight to defend the troughs and lamprey, but will not move to attack unprovoked or even to defend themselves, unless a trough or lamprey is somehow disturbed in the process. They use the same stats as coma cultists, but also have 1 dose of narcomilk and no less than 2 sleep disorders each. They will use narcomilk to defend themselves as a thrown weapon (+0 bonus, causes sleep as above) if combat does ensue.

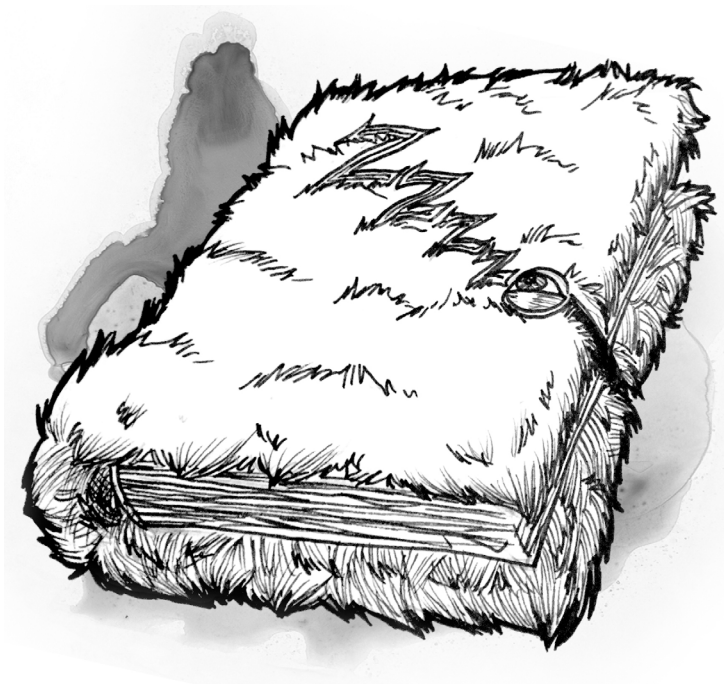
### Area 5-TEMPLE OF SNUG'GOO.

This natural stone cavern is almost unrecognizable as stone, or natural. It has been converted into a temple of Snug'goo and it looks like an immense, haphazardly organized pillow fortress shrouded in comfy dimness. Streamers of sweat-stained blankets twisted together with urine-reeking cotton sheets stretch from the edges of the cave to the central topmost stalactite, like some kind of deranged maypole. Pillows, comforters, quilts, and various other devices of sleep lay about the entirety of the cave, almost covering every inch of stone on the wall and floor. Ten coma cultists (dormancer rank) exist here in various stages of repose. They are dressed as standard cultists, but have pillows stuffed inside their clothing for added comfort and protection. They suffer half damage from any kind of impact or crushing force.



There is a bizarre effigy of Snug'goo here, which dominates the center of the cave-room standing at 12' tall. It appears to be a huge sentient Snuggie™ wrapped around a giant wad of mucus and bundled up nerve tissue (*note: the judge should describe this as an effigy, but this is ACTUALLY SNUG'GOO, he is just asleep. He will never awaken unless someone disturbs one of his mucus strands. He only ever wants to sleep, and he wants others to join him*). Pooled around the base is a substantial amount of sl'ooze, almost an inch deep. Four big, meaty strands of mucus branch off from the pool and snake along the floor where they appear to terminate in the stone wall behind a mass of soggy bedspreads (indicated by arrows on the map).





At Snug'goo's base is a plush-bound book, which is amply padded with the softest stitching. The fact that this book is free of stains or dampness suggest its magical nature. This is the Narco Libre, the book of sleep. It is just a book of bedtimes stories. Reading or even glancing at its contents will cause a sleep per the first level wizard spell to affect the reader, using a +0 modifier and a d30 for spell results. If the Narco Libre is placed inside an empty pillowcase, it can be swung in combat as a +1 mace, but it will never cause a foe to drop to 0 HP, they will instead drop to 1 HP and be knocked asleep with a narcomilk effect. Only the high snoozer knows how to use the narco libre in this way but he is off on an important mission for Snug'goo, or possibly napping.

Visitors are welcomed by the cultists to join in restful slumber, and those that resist are gently encouraged in a most lazy manner. Nobody will stop visitors from leaving and no cultist will attack unless the effigy or book is disturbed. If combat breaks out here, the six cultists from the stone bridge on area 2 have a 33% chance of joining combat in 1d3 rounds.

**Snug'goo, the Sentient Snuggie™:** Init -22 (always asleep); Atk absorb +2 melee (1d30+SP) or snuggle +1 melee (SP); AC 2; HD 10d8; hp 55; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP absorb (on a result of 18-20, victim is absorbed by Snug'goo), snuggle (causes 1d30 hours of sleep, as narcomilk); SV Fort +10, Ref -5, Will +5; AL N.

Snug'goo is not a violent entity. In fact, Snug'goo might be the least violent entity in all of existence. He just wants to sleep. And he wants everyone to join him. In combat, Snug'goo will attempt to snuggle opponents within his strands of mucus so that he can drag their comatose bodies close enough to be absorbed. Any victim absorbed by Snug'goo is transported spiritually to an afterlife of eternal, blissful slumber (in a snuggie™). The only remains left behind is a pineal gland, which floats in Snug'goo's snot-like inner body. He uses these to watch collected dreams and accumulated memories during his endless sleep cycle.

**Area 6-POOLS OF CORRUPTION:** This is the chamber where Mosh Sedation originally turned his back on sleep and separated himself from his parietal eye. Now he exists in a hyperalert state, always desperate for the next inventive idea to spring into his mind. He seeks complete connected superconductive thought, utilized by a sort of bizarre psychostatic network that links Mosh with his 1,093 spells in a kind of arcane parasitic electrobiosis (he calls this the 'krone lamp effect'). His ultimate invention, the Silver Sun, allows him to screen corruption from his physical form, compelling it to exit in a manner similar to excreted sweat forced from a superheated block of holiday ham. Inventing and practicing so many assorted spells over the years has caused a massive buildup of corruptive magical energy that Mosh has attempted to keep sealed in a lead-lined vat 66 miles deep. It is connected via ducts in the earth's crust that lead to the circular markings in area 6. The synaptic seepage from this vat has crept up from the earth's porous crust over the years and has accreted into the being known as Snug'goo, who now exists in area 5. The leftover corruptive substance now stews in a volatile, almost mobile state and wishes to rejoin Mosh and acquaint him with the sweet embrace of eternal slumber. Visitors to this room will notice two cleanly carved holes 5' wide that shoot straight down through the stone floor. Across the room is a stone ramp leading up to a glowing latticework structure of crystalline tubes. Inspecting the two floor-holes reveals a glimmering oily substance just below the lip. Touching the oily skin of the substance imparts a minor corruption. Plunging a hand or limb through the skin of the substance imparts a

major corruption and seizes the PC with a cold, frightfully numbing sensation that deals 1d10 damage and will paralyze that limb permanently (judge's call on modifiers). If full immersion occurs, the victim will be molecularly absorbed by the substance and the only physical remainder of the victim will be a peanut shaped brain gland that magically appears inside Snug'goo's mucousy bulk. If both pools are disturbed enough to impart corruptions of either degree, a greater corruption ooze will boil forth into the room and attempt to destroy the PCs, then slither up the stone ramp and through the Moon Volcano Vents of area 7, finally attempting to join combat with Mosh in his Silver Sun (see area 8).

**Greater Corruption Ooze:** Init -10; Atk mucus lash +4 melee (1d3+1d5); AC 10; HD 3d8+1; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP half damage from slicing and piercing weapons, mucousy tendril does 1d5 damage from stinging icy numbness, absorb identity (every 5 hitpoints of damage inflicted by the ooze will permanently steal one facial feature from the victim. Roll 1d5: 1) eyes, 2) ears, 3) nose, 4) mouth, 5) eyebrows; and adds 5 new hit points to the ooze); SV Fort +5, Ref -5, Will -8; AL C.

These oozes boil and quiver, wheezing with gassy discharges while phantom facial features drift to the glassy, membranous surface. They are about as big as a small cottage, but they can smoosh and deform like an actual wad of mucus, allowing them to fit into any opening, organic or otherwise. They attack by flailing wildly with their sticky, lashing tendrils. It is rumored that Snug'goo is a greater corruption ooze that digested enough identities to grow an amalgamous sense of id on its own. Way to go, Snug'goo!

**Area 7-MOON VOLCANO VENTS:** The stone ramp terminates at the entrance of a 3' wide shimmering multicolored crystalline tube that worms upwards at a slight angle. The inner walls of the tube are warm and smooth, but resilient and covered with bumps that make fine handholds for climbing. Most cultists don't bother coming this way because the light makes it difficult to sleep. These tubes are fossilized corruption tendrils that attempted to push up from area 6 but were calcified into hollow, coral-like structures by the waves of intense heat and magical energy produced by the Silver Sun. These structures now serve as vents, funneling minute quantities of corruptive energy from the vats into the Silver Sun, attempting to mutate it into a bloated, mucousy moon over the course of 666 years. PCs may discover untold dangers or wonders by exploring the uncharted branches, but that's entirely up to the judge. Following the vents to one of the four end



points reveals a fluctuating 5' wide membrane of psychic energy that allows passage into the Silver Sun, though it takes an action die to push through the 2" thick toughened membranous wall. PCs inside the tubular vents are protected from the coruscating energy of the Silver Sun, which is nearly blinding even from inside the crystal tubes. Strangely, this is the only place to get a decent sleep without risk of something weird happening. Sleepers here will develop a healthy tan from the dulled radiance emanating through the crystal walls, though there is a 1% chance of skin cancer developing (lethal in 1d24 months).

**Area 8-The SILVER SUN of MOSH SEDATION, the wizard of KRONE LAMP:** Mosh is a brilliant madman. He has invented 1,093 spells (he has invented another 1,239 outside of Punjar but those don't count within the context of this adventure). When I said earlier that Mosh is brilliant...I meant that literally and metaphorically. He is surrounded by intense electrical light, solidified and spherical in form. He calls it his Silver Sun - this 115' diameter sphere protects Mosh from corruption and allows him perfect sanctity in which he may develop his latest inventions and spells, but the ever-present-and-now-sentient byproducts of his frenetic research have accumulated to the point that Mosh is now a literal prisoner of his own devices, and he must spend every waking moment and every ounce of willpower and determination to keep the built up corruption from overtaking his tenuous field of wakefulness and privacy. The inside of the Silver Sun is hot and oppressively dry, and gravity is subjective. Visitors may hover or 'fly' at a rate equal to their normal movement rate while inside the Silver Sun. A static charge fills the air, causing skin to prickle and hair to stand on end. The light here is overpowering and comes in waves, washing over the skin in a flood of radiation that is both energizing and warming. The wizard Mosh Sedation hunches in the center of the Silver Sun, hovering in a cloud of tangled wires, knotted typewriters, and clusters and daisychains of just about every electrically conductive garnishment thought possible. It is simultaneously astounding and confusing to look at. Beads of sweat appear on his brilliant skin and instantly evaporate because of the heat and dryness. He looks overstressed to the point of perpetual living death.

Mosh is 18' tall, with candle-thin limbs that are bent under the mass of the many devices and diodes arrayed over and through them. Seemingly pierced in every pore, Mosh is barely recognizable as anything even once human. Even his hair follicles have been replaced with glass filaments cradled in coiled wires made of dwarf pubes,

for enhanced conductivity. Ghostly circuit boards occasionally drift to the surface of his tightly-stretched and translucent glowing skin, threatening to burst through. Every molecule of his being radiates energy and electricity, but it is so thinly spread and so overtaxed that it will deal no appreciable damage during any round that Mosh spends fully exerted. Mosh has 3d30 action dice normally, but every round he intends to keep his Silver Sun at full strength he must exert and spend all 3d30 action dice. His only actions available are psychic or mental, and even then he is required to focus a majority of his vast mental power on aligning the quantum regularity field that binds the Krone Lamp effect to his will. For any mental task, he may effectively use a d10 action die at no risk and without detracting from his normal allotment of action die. He can communicate through any frequency, but his thoughts must be slowed down by a factor of ten to be understood by most mortals.

Any round that Mosh does not spend all 3d30 action dice on maintaining the Silver Sun, there is a cumulative 11% chance that a singularity will form, caused by a corruption tendril forcing an atom-thick gap in the quantum containment field that protects the Silver Sun. The singularity appears at the very last square in the upper corner of the map, and to begin with is 1d4 feet in diameter. Anything touched by the singularity with a hit point total or mass (in cubed feet) equal to or lower than the current singularity diameter is swallowed up forever and ceases to exist. The singularity grows one step on the die chain each round, its diameter expanding by a factor of the result (for example, if a 2 is rolled on the d4 first round, then a 3 on the d5 on the second round, the diameter of the singularity is  $2' \times 3' = 6'$ . If a 4 is rolled on the d6 the next round, then the diameter becomes  $24'$ . Follow that progression until the singularity is stopped or it destroys your game world).

If the party convinces Mosh to shut down his Silver Sun, then Snug'goo will intuitively awaken and move towards area 8 to confront Mosh, bringing along any surviving coma cultists and any gathered corruption oozes.

If the party defeats Mosh, his Silver Sun will become unstable and will shatter after 1d3 rounds of agonizingly blinding fountains of incandescent energy and cracking silvered glass shards rain down on the party, inflicting 1d10 damage per party member and dealing a critical result as a 5th level warrior on the PC with the lowest luck score. In the ruin of the Silver Sun, PCs can collect 1d100 silver glass

shards, worth 1d30 silver pieces each. Generous judges may allow wizards to glean some magical secrets or spells from the wreckage of Mosh Sedation's physical form and his accompanying devices.

The effects of Snug'goo or Mosh Sedation rising to power or being destroyed entirely up to the discretion of the judge. It could become an embroiled massive conflict on a global scale, or little more than another cult battle in the deep, dank sewers of Punjar.

**Mosh Sedation, the Wizard of Krone Lamp:** Init +22; Atk energy claw +8 melee (3d7) or radiation lance +10 missile fire (1d7 plus radiation poisoning, range anywhere inside Silver Sun); AC 21; HD 10d8; hp 80; MV fly 80'; Act 3d30 (+1d10 special); SP quantum casting, radiation poisoning (DC 15 Fort; 1d6 damage on successful save, 3d6 damage if failed and suffer -1d from sickness as hair begins falling out), brilliant burst (once per round Mosh may spend 1 action die to produce a burst dealing 1d30 heat damage to all within the Silver Sun; DC 15 Ref save to take half damage and avoid permanent blindness), ablative shielding; SV Fort +16, Ref +14, Will +7; AL C.

He may spend two action die to cast any spell with a +0 modifier and a d30 casting die. Mosh does not suffer corruption, but if he casts spells in two consecutive turns he will cause an additional greater corruption ooze to spawn in area 6. For every 10 hit points of damage Mosh endures, he suffers a stacking penalty of -3 to both his AC and Fort save as his improvised electronic barrier is shattered into pieces around him.

His followers, the sleep-deprivers, are all now long since dead, having been sacrificed to demons for power and knowledge, or converted into new workstation printers to increase productivity.

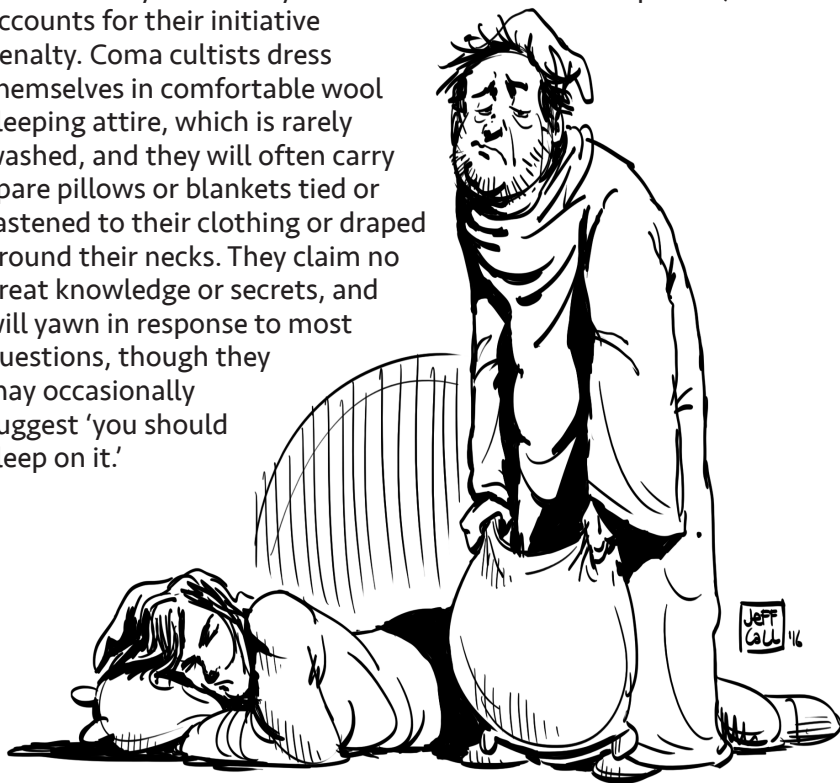


**COMA CULTISTS:** Coma cultists are covered in bedsores and are slow and lazy. They can only fight with weapons that can smother or asphyxiate, like pillows and plushcord garrotes. They do not pray, they sleep. Narcolepers, the lowest rank coma cultist, will have 1 disorder from Table Q below. Higher rank cultists - in ascending hierarchy comatote, dormancer, and high snoozer - can have as many sleep disorders as the judge deems necessary (the judge may add new disorders as needed).

**Coma Cultist:** Init -12; Atk pillow or plush weapon +0 melee (1d3); smother -6 melee (1d14); AC 9; HD 1d6; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP half-asleep, smother, sleep disorder; SV Fort +1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL N.

Coma cultists who successfully smother impose a -1d penalty to the victim's next action, and that victim may not move next round.

When coma cultists engage in combat, which is extremely rare, they tend to gang up on one opponent, attempting to smother that victim collectively in a maneuver they call a "group snug." Cultists of this variety are usually encountered in a half-asleep state, which accounts for their initiative penalty. Coma cultists dress themselves in comfortable wool sleeping attire, which is rarely washed, and they will often carry spare pillows or blankets tied or fastened to their clothing or draped around their necks. They claim no great knowledge or secrets, and will yawn in response to most questions, though they may occasionally suggest 'you should sleep on it.'

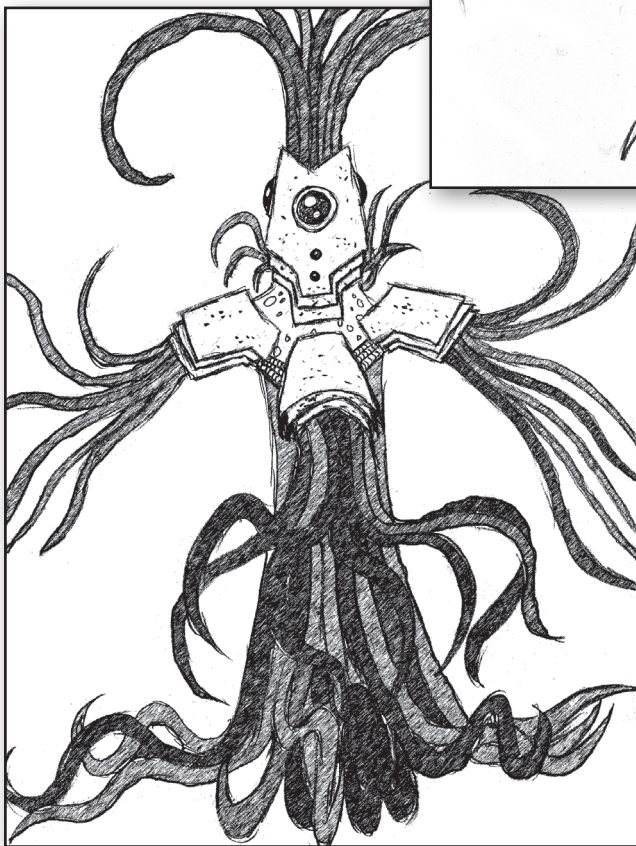


# TABLE Q: SLEEPING DISORDERS

(Roll 1d12 modified by Luck)

- (-1) You no longer need to sustain your body with food. A good night's rest nourishes you fully. your stomach no longer growls, though it sometimes yawns.
- (0) While sleeping, your body ages in reverse (on an hour per hour basis).
- (1) Sleep apnea. 2% chance to die during any prolonged rest.
- (2) Sleepwalking. "Noctambulism" causes you to sleepwalk whenever it is inconvenient or amusing for the judge. Judge controls your character as an NPC until awake.
- (3) Lazy limb. Roll a d6 to determine the affected area:. 1) lazy eye, 2) limp wrists, 3) shuffling gait, like professor farnsworth, 4) neck and head droop and loll around, 5) ass feels tingly numb like you've sat on your wallet in the bleachers all day, 6) hibernating genitals. Numb or limp appendages suffer a -1d to associated rolls in times of great stress or laziness.
- (4) Sleep paralysis. When you go to sleep you will sometimes leave your eyes open and suffer from bodily paralysis while your mind believes it is sees horrifying shadow people all around you.
- (5) Your face feels as if it is asleep even when you are walking around fully alert. It's full facial numbness - puffy, swollen, drooly shit existence. You poor fool.
- (6) Fatalism, in the form of an overwhelming desire to sleep forever, no matter what the consequences. Your first action die is now a d16 instead of a d20.
- (7) Ennui.
- (8) You believe the waking world is an illusory dreamworld and that your dreaming state is your native, living world. So basically, you're an asshole.
- (9) Inceptionception. the next time your character falls asleep, he or she becomes hyper aware that they are a character in a roleplaying game. On the verge of this realization, the [redacted] will [redacted] in your [redacted] [redacted]. (unless [redacted] is real).
- (10) Bedwetter. Yes, it's a real sleeping disorder. Now you need adult diapers, jackass.
- (11) Nighttime emissions. It's embarrassing and we don't need to go into detail about it right now.
- (12) "Snuffling tuffle sputz" you basically have uncontrollable, annoying snoring. But you do it all the goddamn time, even while speaking or chewing your food. It's disgusting. Even when you try to explain to people that this is just a sleeping disorder that somehow affects you while awake, they will invariably think you are lying and accost you with stones.
- (13) Narcolepsy. any time you roll a 1 or fail a Luck check, your character falls into a deep, pleasant slumber for 1d12 hours.
- (14) All of them. Just fucking end it, you nitwit.

# ROLL INITIATIVE!



Miscellaneous  
Monsters  
by  
Matt Jordan,  
Shield of Faith  
Studios



# ZERON PROTOCOL

A Low Level Adventure by Paul Wolfe

*After purifying a shrine dedicated to an ancient hero of Law, the party cleric's connection with his or her god becomes increasingly erratic.*

## BACKGROUND

Orvun the Healer was a paragon to an obscure order, the Bethines, dedicated to a long dead lawful god. Throughout his life, he wandered the land as a beggar, healing the sick, infirm and mad, as well as seeking out and destroying demonic influences. When Orvun encountered the demon Zeron, he found himself nearly outmatched. Though the Healer triumphed and Zeron was destroyed, the demon's blood sank into Orvun's body and soul, slowly corrupting him. Afterward, he wandered the land performing abominable rites and executing blasphemies lost to time, all under the guise of a simple mendicant healer. Finally exposed, the Bethine Knights hunted down the corrupted cleric and killed him. Attendant priests locked his soul into a tomb within an ensorcelled jade idol and placed the prison beneath the blessed waters of a natural spring.

But the blessings have worn thin over the centuries, and corruption has leaked from the prison, infecting the waters with the larva of the long-dead demon, Zeron. The rebirth of the demon could spell doom for the surrounding area...

## GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

This set of events is precipitated on the assumption that the party cleric (who is also assumed to be lawful) has received deity disapproval, and through his deity's direction, must travel to the Shrine of the Bethines in order to purify a corrupted well. How the party reaches the shrine and even its location within the game world is left up to the judge.

Within the general area, the inhabitants are familiar with both the shrine and the well, since the water was once used for their sheep when times were dry. Rumors associated with the well all agree – in the last year, the water has turned foul, stinking of something akin to lamp oil.

## THE SHRINE OF THE BETHINES

*The wind, heavy with the scent of the sea, moans as it courses down the limestone canyon. Up ahead, amid tufts of grass stubbornly clutching at mounded sand sits the unlikely shrine. Set into the base of the canyon wall is a small jade plaque above a wide hole, seemingly drilled directly through the rock. A rope ladder staked to the entrance sinks into darkness. As lonely and dilapidated as the shrine seems, this is the exact place that the vision has led you.*

The plaque depicts a bent-backed old man wearing tattered robes and holding a tall walking staff. Under his heel is a small, grotesque demon in obvious anguish. Study of the plaque reveals it to be dedicated to Orvun the Healer, a saint to a long dead lawful order, the Bethines (DC 15 Intelligence check).

A 15' diameter shaft sinks 30' into the rock and spiked to its wall hangs a rope lattice, easily climbed. At the bottom of the shaft stands a stone platform in a small cavern. The platform extends over a seemingly pristine 3' deep pool of water. A wooden bucket sits on the platform.



The water in the well smells faintly of lamp oil, but only if brought up to the nose. There is no other evidence of oil or other pollutants in or around the water.

## THE RITUAL

The cleric's deity imparts a ritual that is intended to cleanse the well and shrine. The ritual requires eight hours of uninterrupted prayer while the cleric periodically anoints their body with the water in the well. At the end of this time, the cleric makes a DC 15 spell check.

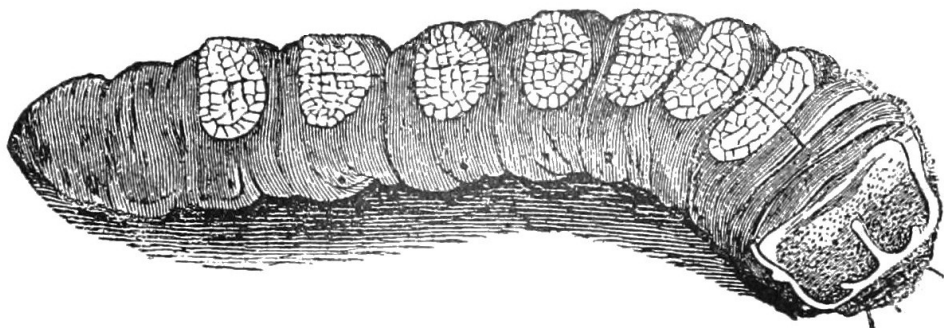
**Success:** The water is purified, fresh and drinkable. The deity disapproval effects related to this quest are immediately lifted and their deity disapproval score is set to 1. The cleric also makes a DC 18 Fort save. On a success, the cleric realizes that they have become corrupted by the water. There are no immediate effects from the infestation and any attempt to cure it seems to have no effect (see the Zeron Parasite section). On a failure, the cleric is unaware of the corrupting zeron parasites growing inside.

**First Failure:** The water in the well remains corrupted. The cleric's deity disapproval range is reset to 1, however, any additional effects for active deity disapproval are not lifted until the cleric successfully completes the ritual. The cleric makes a DC 22 Fort save. On a success, the cleric realizes that they have become corrupted by the water. There are no immediate effects from the infestation and any attempt to cure it seems to have no effect. On a failure, the cleric is unaware of the corrupting zeron parasites growing inside.

**Subsequent Failures:** The water in the well remains corrupted and the cleric is infected with zeron parasites. The cleric's deity disapproval range increases by 1. See the Zeron Parasite section for more information.

**NOTE:** Deific sources of information, when asked about the corruption, are silent at any spell check result. Even a Divine Aid returns no information. This test must be borne by the cleric, alone.

## THE ZERON PARASITE



Mutated zeron larva remain dormant in the cleric's system until the cleric experiences an increase in their deity disapproval range.

**NOTE:** Upon initial infection, the cleric receives the Activation/Reset effect (1<sup>st</sup> Occurrence). Each time the cleric's deity disapproval range is reset to 1, the next Activation/Reset effect becomes active. This progressive effect is permanent until the zeron parasite corruption is cured.

When other manifestations occur, consult the Infestation Chart to determine the cleric's fate. In each case, the cleric may make a Will save (DC 9 + current deity disapproval).

On a success, the effects of the infestation seem to wear off after an hour. Otherwise, the effects are persistent until deity disapproval range is reduced to 1.

# DISAPPROVAL EFFECTS

Disapproval Range	Effect	1st Occurrence	2nd Occurrence	3rd Occurrence
Activation/Reset	Succor	If the cleric is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, he or she may make a DC 12 Fort save each round to remain conscious and alive. If subsequently healed, the cleric suffers the same effects as if they had been successfully "rolled over."	If the cleric is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, the cleric receives a DC 12 Fort save each round to remain conscious and alive. If this fails, the cleric receives a +4 bonus to the Luck check if their body is rolled over.	If the cleric is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, they are immediately healed 1 hit point. The cleric suffers the same effects as if he or she had been successfully "rolled over," each time this occurs.
2-4	Attraction	Chaotic creatures are intrigued by the cleric. In combat, there's a 50% chance that the creature will not attack the cleric. In social dealings, chaotic creatures seem to only want to deal with the cleric.	When dealing with creatures of a chaotic nature, the cleric receives a +2 to all Personality checks.	Chaotic creatures of animal-level intelligence or lower (including constructs, mindless undead, etc.) will never willingly attack the cleric. If commanded to do so, they receive a DC 12 Will save to resist. Creatures of higher intelligence avoid harming the cleric, attacking only if attacked by the cleric.
5-7	Beacon	The cleric detects the alignment of Lawful creatures or objects with Lawful magical effects when touching them.	The detection extends to a 10' radius, and the cleric is extremely uneasy when within this range of such creatures or effects.	The detection extends to 60', and the cleric must move outside this range of any Lawfully-aligned creature or magical effect.
8-9	Surge	When channeling holy power (spell checks, lay on hands, turning, etc), the cleric automatically (and uncontrollably) burns 1d3 points in a random physical ability. These points are added to the spell check.	When channeling holy power (spell checks, lay on hands, turning, etc), the cleric automatically (and uncontrollably) burns 1d3 points in a random physical ability. These points are added to the spell check.	Negative energy bursts from the cleric -- when channeling holy power, every living thing in a 10' radius burns 1d3 points in each physical ability. For living things without physical abilities (such as plants, oozes, etc), the creature burns 2d3 hit points or adds 2d3 points per 10'x10' patch of living substance (killing the substance). These points are added to the spell check.
10+	Corruption	Minor Corruption	Minor Corruption	Greater Corruption

## CORRUPTED VISIONS

Each time the infected cleric receives deity disapproval, he or she also receives a vision. Whether these originate from the cleric's god, the zeron parasites, or the imprisoned soul of Orvun, none know.

### First Vision – The Waters of the Healer

*The air suddenly grows cold and thick. You realize that you are drifting deep under water with colossal shadowed shapes looming over you. One of these shapes resolves into a canted stone idol of massive proportions – a bent-backed man with a walking staff. Fish dart around the thing avoiding the black cloud that spills from the idol's middle.*

**Other's Perspective:** The cleric slips into a catatonic state for 1d3 rounds and cannot be roused by any means.

**Save:** DC 12 Will

**Failure Effects: Unnerved** – The cleric suffers –1d to all actions for the day. The vision repeats each night and the cleric must make a new save each morning. The cleric's disapproval range cannot be reset until the vision is interpreted.

**Success Effects: Revelation** – The vision reveals the location of the tomb of Orvun the Healer, sunk deep below the Shrine of the Bethines.

## Second Vision – The Shambles of the Living God

*(Occurs during daily prayers/meditations):*

*You sit in a comfortable candlelit room, reading an ancient tome. The words seem to blur together, but somehow you understand the writing. The text describes stories of blasphemous and evil deeds done by men and women in the name of their gods of Law. Wars, rapine, and dark deals with demons abound. A story about an ancient martyr and his misdeeds seem to repeat throughout the vision.*

**Other's Perspective:** The cleric's face is shadowy -- no amount of light can illuminate it. The cleric cannot see this effect -- even in a mirror.

**Save:** DC 14 Will

**Failure Effects: Disconnected** – On a failure, the cleric loses one randomly selected spell for the day. Each night, the cleric sees the vision again and must make a new save until they succeed on understanding it.

**Success Effects: Knowledge** – The book is an artifact of ancient evil: The Shambles of the Living God (described below). The cleric has a persistent “memory” of the location of the book.



### Third and Subsequent Visions: Teeth of the Zeron

A flash of impossibly black light appears and from it steps a creature from a nightmare. The tall, emaciated humanoid opens the jagged mouth at the top of its head, emitting a croaking blasphemy against your god. The single eye in the middle of its chest burns as it moves to attack.

**NOTE:** Zeron's are not affected by an infected cleric's Attraction effect, if active (see the Zeron Parasite section).

**Other's Perspective:** The cleric suddenly begins fighting with a shadowy opponent that drifts in and out of existence.

**Save:** DC 16 Will (NOTE: This save is made after the combat is resolved).

**Failure Effects:** The cleric receives Major Corruption, as per the core rules.

**Success Effects:** The cleric understands the nature of their corruption – the larva of the demon Zeron. In subsequent encounters, the cleric receives a +1d to attacks, spell checks and turn attempts against these creatures.

**Zeron Servitors (1):** Init +4; Atk claw +5 melee (1d3); AC 17; HD 4d8+3; hp 35; MV 30', Teleport 300'; Act 2d20; SP limb paralysis, teleport, shifting form; SV Ref +8, Fort +4, Will +10, AL C.

Zeron servitors are tall, emaciated humanoid creatures with jagged mouths at the top of their pointed heads and a single eye in the middle of their chests. Creatures struck by their claws must make a DC 14 Fort save or experience deadening in one or more limbs. Roll 1d4 – 1) Left Arm, 2) Left Leg, 3) Right Leg, 4) Right Arm. Deadened limbs are unusable for 1d4 turns. Additionally, an aura of unease surrounds the creatures. Those within melee range must make a DC 12 Will save or suffer a –1d to all attacks against them. NPCs in the character's service must immediately make a morale check.

Instead of damaging or paralyzing an opponent, the zeron servitor may choose to teleport itself and the opponent struck. This effect has no chance of failure and transports the victim and zeron up to 300' away.

In addition, the creatures can shift their matter in and out of existence such that they appear fully for only one combatant. Though they are corporeal, all combatants other than the chosen combatant have a -1d on attacks against the zeron and any given attack misses 50% of the time. Zeron servitors, being unrepentant demon worshippers, can be turned by clerics of any faith that finds them unholy, but receive a +2 to Will saves against such attempts.

**Treasure:** The dead zeron servitor evaporates after 1d3 rounds, leaving behind 1d24 black onyx teeth (see below).

## **Shambles of the Living God**

*Shambles of the Living God* is a book of pure evil, meant to corrupt those devoted to the gods of Law. Within its covers are lurid stories of men and women who have succumbed to worldly corruptions, failed their gods' edicts and descended into evil. The book also provides a cleric infected with the zeron parasite coded instructions on how to remove the corruption and reseal the prison of Orvun the Healer.

Judges may place the book anywhere within their campaign – just note that the infected cleric should eventually receive a vision as to its whereabouts (see the Corrupted Visions section).

## **Using the Book**

Anyone can attempt to use the book for information. Like any arcane artifact, those unskilled in magic roll a d10 on the spell check when making the attempt. Each use requires 1d3+spell check result in hours of study to glean information.

# SHAMBLES OF THE LIVING GOD RESEARCH

Spell Check	Effect	Additional Effects for the Corrupted Cleric
1	The book is sealed to this user for all eternity	Deity disapproval reduced to 1. The cleric may re-use the book after 1d3+CL weeks.
2-11	Failure; The book is sealed to this user for 1d10+2 years.	The cleric may re-use the book after 1d3+CL weeks.
12-13	Knowledge imparted provides a +1d to Personality checks when using intimidating tactics. User receives minor corruption.	Deity disapproval increased by 1. The cleric is branded on the left palm with the symbol of the Bethines -- a series of concentric squares. The cleric understands the location and method for entering the Prison of Orvun the Corrupted (see Ritual of the Teeth and area 1a).
14-17	Knowledge imparted provides information about major corruption within a current active Lawful religion. All interactions with devotees of this religion are made at -1d to the roll. User receives minor corruption.	Deity disapproval increased by 3. The cleric receives the previous effects along with the ritual needed to purify Orvun's prison.
18-19	User receives a 1st level spell that is cast at +1d on the spell check, however, each use of the spell imparts minor corruption.	Deity disapproval increased by 5. The cleric receives the previous effects and a +1d to all action dice while within Orvun's prison.
20-23	User receives a 1st level spell that is cast at +1d on the spell check. The spell never fails, however, when a failure is indicated, the caster receives major corruption, and the spell goes off at its least powerful result.	Deity disapproval increased by 10. The cleric receives the previous effects and receives the ritual required to bypass the Seal of Consequences (area 3).
24+	User receives dark knowledge about veins of corruption infecting major Lawful institutions -- lawful kingdoms, orders of knighthood, lawful religions -- all with interconnected corruption and evil. The user receives a 2nd level spell that is cast at +1d on the spell check. Each casting of the spell imparts greater corruption.	Disapproval. The cleric must roll 5d4 on the Deity disapproval table. The cleric receives the previous effects and the ritual of re-consecration. The cleric also receives an additional +1d to spell checks and turn attempts against zérons (anywhere) and the spirit of Zeron within the prison of Orvun.





## RITUALS

At certain spell results, the infected cleric may glean helpful rituals that assist in reaching or moving through Orvun's prison.

**NOTE:** Spellburn requirements for these rituals can be from any willing wizard or elf, though the cleric can only spellburn if he or she has received the Surge result on the Infestation table.

### The Ritual of the Teeth

This ritual transforms zeron teeth into minor artifacts. Eight hours of continuous prayer and 5 points of spell burn are required to complete the ritual. On a spell check result of 15+, 1d4+CL zeron teeth may be enchanted. Enchanted teeth provide both water-breathing and free-action while under water for 1d10+spell check result in turns after the tooth is immersed in water.

On a failure, disapproval range is increased by 3 and the cleric suffers minor corruption.

### The Ritual of Purification

This ritual purifies and prepares the Prison of Orvun the Corrupted for re-consecration. The ritual must be performed within the prison, requiring four hours of continuous prayer and 5 points of spell burn. On a spell check result of 15+, the ritual is performed correctly.

On a failure, disapproval range is increased by 5, and the cleric suffers major corruption.

## The Seal of Consequences

A magical seal in the ceiling of area 3 within Orvun's prison contains instructions for a ritual to pass into the Tomb of Orvun the Corrupted (area 7). These instructions, however, are false and trigger a deadly trap. The true ritual may be learned by study of the Shambles of the Living God (spell check result 20–23). The seal may be passed if the caster engages in four hours of continuous prayer and spends 5 points of spellburn. On a spell check result of 12+, everyone within the bounds of the seal is transported to the tomb.

On a failure, the cleric's disapproval range increases by 3 and the cleric suffers from temporary (1d3 hours) minor corruption.

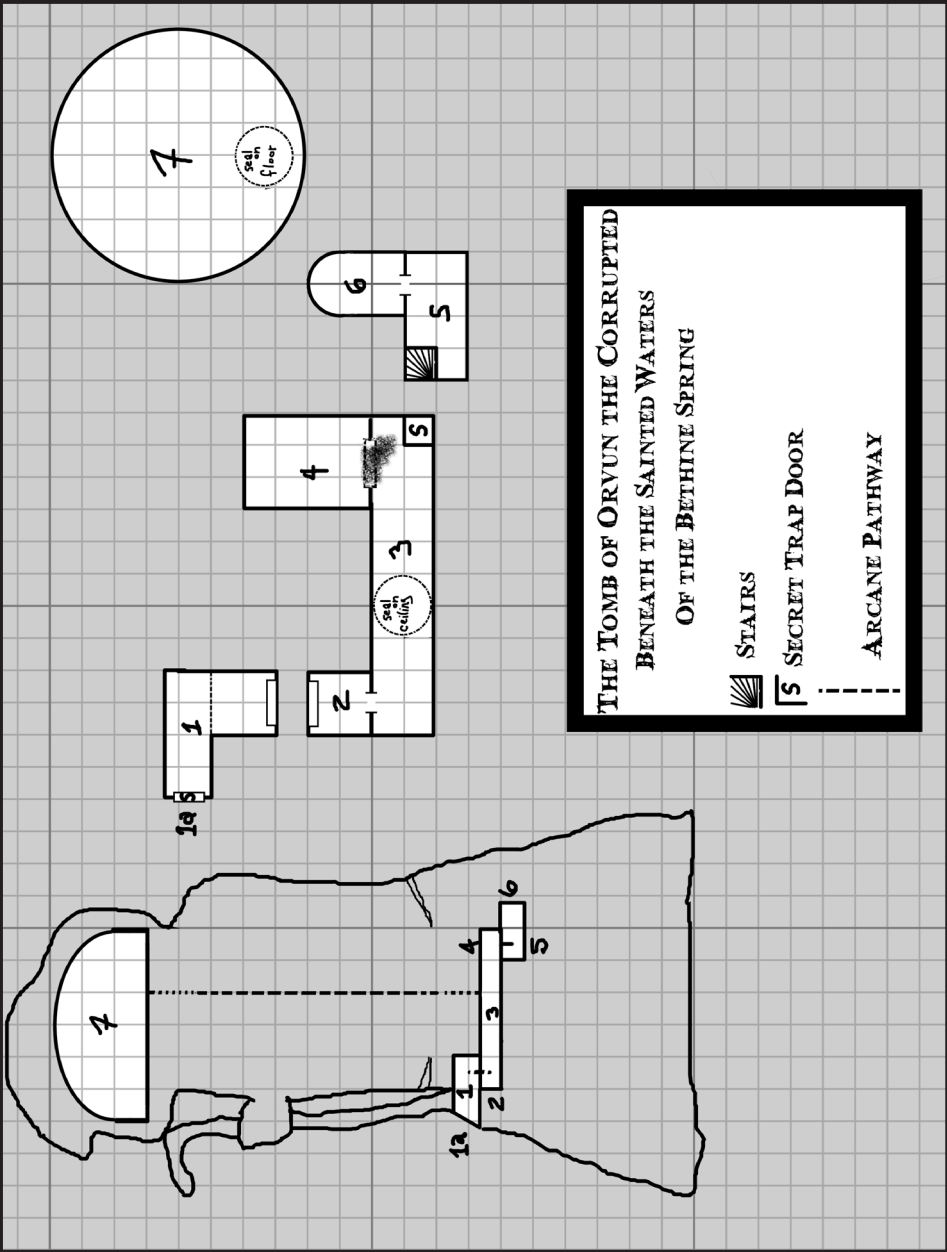
## The Ritual of Consecration

This ritual reseals Orvun's prison and contains Zeron's corruption. It must be performed within Orvun's tomb (area 7). The ritual requires 24 hours of continuous prayer and 15 points of spell burn. On a spell check result of 22+, the ritual is performed correctly – the prison is sealed and consecrated, and the cleric is cured of their infestation of zeron larva. The cleric and anyone in the prison must escape in 1d4 turns+Spell check result or stand forever as a guardian of the prison (see area 5).

**NOTE:** On a spell check result of 32+, the cleric is healed of all magical corruption. This includes corruption from using the Shambles of the Living God.

On a failure, the cleric receives deity disapproval and greater corruption.

# THE PRISON OF ORVUN THE CORRUPTED



## THE PRISON OF ORVUN THE CORRUPTED

When the Knights Bethine slew Orvun the Corrupted, they imprisoned his infected soul within a giant jade statue three hundred feet below the Shrine of the Bethines within the aquifer feeding the freshwater spring there. Within the statue are several ceremonial chambers used to perform the rituals that eventually sealed the prison against escape, as well as an arcane “lock” that further sealed the heart of the prison, where Orvun’s body and tainted soul remains.

Though the rituals were properly performed, what the priests and knights of the Bethines didn’t know was that Orvun the Corrupted was not just tainted – he was possessed by the shattered remains of Zeron itself. The spirit of Zeron eroded the consecrated seals of the prison and its larva infected the spring at the Shrine of the Bethines. Though the party cleric cleansed the “symptom” earlier in the adventure, the cure lies within the prison.

### Reaching the Jade Statue

If the party has enchanted zeron teeth, they may swim down 300’ to the jade statue, and area 1a in one turn. If the party cleric has received all of the visions from their infection, the secret entrance can be found and opened immediately. Otherwise, searching the exterior of the statue takes 1 turn per 20’. With a successful Luck check, the cleric or a halfling can find the secret entrance in 1d24+6 rounds.

Unprotected, the crushing depths deal 10d6 damage per round, and characters begin to drown.

### AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, the interior of the prison is dark, damp and silent.

**Area 1a – The Secret Entrance:** Above in the gloom lurks a massive statue covered in interlocking jade plates, smeared with black algae. One of the plates near the statue's middle faintly glows with the concentric squares symbol of the Bethines. A greyish fluid seems to leak from the symbol tainting the otherwise clear water around you.

Simply touching the symbol with a holy symbol of the Bethines causes the jade plate to slide away. This fills area 1 with water. A knock spell with a spell check result of 22+ also opens the portal (see area 1 for consequences). Physical means to open it fail.

**Area 1 – The Entry Hall:** Rough carved symbols and glyphs cover the walls of this spacious, but otherwise bare L-shaped room. To the south stands a massive round stone seal, the symbol of the Bethines carved upon its face.

If the secret door at area 1a was opened using a Bethine holy symbol, water immediately drains from the room. If opened via any other method, the water remains.

The glyphs and symbols on the wall are a pictographic language used by the Bethine orders and describe in parable form how to operate the portal to area 2. A spellcaster may study the writing for 1d5-CL turns (minimum 1) and make a DC 12 Intelligence check in order to understand the process. A comprehend languages spell allows for automatic success in understanding the process.

The southern alcove of this room is situated over area 2 (the dotted line on the map indicates the northern wall of area 2, below). The stone seal operates as a one-way portal to area 2. In order to activate the seal, a cleric must touch the center of the Bethine symbol and cast any level 1 spell with a spell check result of 15+. Everyone standing within the southern alcove is transported to area 2.

On a failure, the cleric's disapproval range increases by 3 and he must make a DC 10 Ref save or receive a jolt of

arcane energy dealing 1d3 Strength damage. Success or failure, this consumes the spell, preventing further casting for the day.

**Area 2 – The Blessed Arch:** The floor of this chamber is damp and slick. To the north, a stone seal similar to the previous room stands embedded in the wall. To the south an archway decorated with intricate bronze bas-relief exits to a darkened chamber.

After 1d6 rounds, the slick algae on the floor forms into a multi-limbed slime monster – a thing formed from the corruptive influences of Zeron’s larva. The creature surprises any PCs failing a DC 16 Luck check – up to three surprised characters are immediately attacked.

**Corrupted Algae Slime Monster (1):** Init –4; Atk slimy limbs +2 melee (1d4, acid touch); AC 10; HD 6d6+4; hp 22; MV 10'; Act 3d16; SP acid touch; SV Ref –2, Fort +0, Will –3, AL C.

The algae slime monster mindlessly attacks everyone in the room and pursues fleeing characters into area 3. The slimy pseudopods of the monster deal 1d4 acid damage each round to victims struck. Non-magical equipment and clothing affected must make a DC 12 Fort save (using the owner’s bonus) per round or be destroyed in 1d4+2 rounds. This includes weapons which strike the creature. The effects of the acid can be neutralized by washing off the affected area or equipment with water or other liquids.

The bronze archway is decorated with figures and symbols from the Bethine religion. A spellcaster studying the bas-relief for 1d5-CL turns (minimum 1) and making a DC 12 Intelligence check understands that the decoration describes a ritual of pacification, the location of the secret door to the guardian tomb (areas 5 and 6), as well as the process for passing through the archway unharmed. In addition, the cleric learns the stations of the Bethines, a ritual gesture in which believers touch each shoulder and each hip before passing through the archway.

The ritual of pacification requires that a cleric spends 1 round and expends a 1<sup>st</sup> level spell at spell check result 14+. If successful, while in the presence of the dead priests or guardian knight in areas 5 and 6, the creatures are pacified and provide the party with a boon.

Passing through the archway without performing the stations of the Bethines (see above) has harsh consequences. Persons of chaotic alignment are struck dumb (unable to speak). Those of neutral alignment are struck deaf. Those of lawful alignment are struck lame (MV decreased by ½). In the unlikely event that a character is a devotee to the ancient Bethine religion, that character is burned to ash. The condition lasts while the afflicted are within Orvun's prison (though the unlucky Bethine remains ash). Chaotic characters that perform the stations of the Bethines rouse the ancient spirit of the Bethine god. It extends a weak curse, causing a -1d to all actions for 1d3 turns (DC 15 Will save to resist).

**Area 3 – The Hall of Consequences:** A wide stone hallway stretches off into darkness. Faint dripping can be heard and the place smells of algae and age.

Characters that pass a Luck check hear faint clicking and buzzing echoing from the far end of the hallway. Those that have encountered zeron servitors before recognize the sound.



Unless the party is magically quieted, zeron servitors pour out from area 4. Each selects a single character as its “primary combatant,” but can only use its teleport ability to displace within areas 3 and 4.

**Zeron Servitors** (4): Init +4; Atk claw +5 melee (1d3); AC 17; HD 4d8+3; hp 23, 22, 28, 23; MV 30', Teleport 300'; Act 2d20; SP Limb paralysis, Teleport, Shifting form; SV Ref +8, Fort +4, Will +10, AL C.

In the ceiling of the hallway rests a 20' diameter round stone seal carved with Bethine pictographs. Spellcasters may study the pictographs for 1d5-CL turns (minimum 1) to understand the ritual. The glyphs describe expending a 1<sup>st</sup> level spell while touching the center of the seal. Unfortunately, this ritual is false and triggers a deadly trap. Expend the spell causes the seal to glow bright orange for 1d6 rounds before both ends of the passageway open and flood the chamber with rushing water from outside.

**NOTE:** A comprehend languages spell immediately detects the false ritual and reveals the trap. The true ritual is described in the Shambles of the Living God – see the Seal of Consequences section. If the seal is successfully opened, everyone within the circle of the seal (overhead) is transported to area 7.

Those that take refuge in area 2 are unaffected by the water – the archway holds the waters back. All others are crushed between two walls of water (each wall dealing 3d6 damage) and they begin to drown. Living characters may attempt to swim to area 2 – unencumbered characters swim at a rate of 10' per round due to the buffeting waters.

The hidden trap door is not locked, but requires either a Luck check to notice or a DC 15 Intelligence check to find while searching. The door leads to a cramped stairway down to Area 5.

**Area 4 – Zeron Cell:** Beyond the shattered seal, this cavernous room stinks of brimstone and acidic sweat. Dismembered and desiccated bodies lie in a pile near the center of the room. The walls are scratched with blasphemous prayers, the letters seeming to crawl between every known language.

The zeron servitors kept here destroyed the seal to their cell as the spells binding the prison began to break down. The bodies were once deathless knights that patrolled the hallway.

Investigating the dismembered skeletons reveals three chain shirts – each with the holy symbol of the Bethines woven into the chain with silver wires. The shirts are non-magical, however, wearing one in the presence of the spirit of Zeron (area 7) provides the wearer with +1d to attacks, turn attempts and Will saves against the demon, as well as other effects described in later areas.

The blasphemous prayers on the walls cause unease in all but chaotic spellcasters. These characters must make a DC 15 Will save or become fascinated by the knowledge and insights they impart. Fascinated characters sit and watch the crawling words for 1d3+2 turns before they are allowed another save (which may be forgone). Those that remain for 1+CL hours learn patron bond and invoke patron spells for Princess Naach', Zeron's demon lord mistress (see the Mystic Bull website for more information).

**Area 5 – Hold of the Devoted:** As you descend the stairs, a long room comes into view. Lighted by smokeless torches set into golden sconces, rows of robed and hooded humanoids crouch, their heads bowed to the floor. On the western wall, the symbol of the Bethines glows with an arcane light.

There are 32 mummified corpses in this room – the priests that sacrificed their lives to ensure Orvun remained imprisoned. As the characters step onto the floor of the chamber, the corpses rise in unison. Any PCs unmarked

by the symbol of the Bethines or of chaotic alignment are immediately attacked. The cleric with the Bethine brand may use the ritual of pacification (see area 2) to appease the dead priests. Appeased spirits return to their “prayers.”

**Devoted (32):** Init +2; Atk claws +2 melee (1); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 20'; Act 2d16; SV Ref -1, Fort -1, Will +4, AL L.

Those that join the devoted in prayer for 1 hour receive the equivalent of a blessing spell (spell check result 20–23, “when cast on an ally”) which lasts until the character leaves Orvun’s prison.

**Area 6 – Tomb of the Paragon:** At the back of this large domed room sits a jade throne, occupied by a skeletal figure in bright chainmail and a black armet helmet – concealing the figure’s face. A tall ashen staff topped by the iron holy symbol of the Bethines stands beside the throne.

The figure is Armand Tergen, Knight Commander of the Bethines. When the characters approach, the figure raises its hand and motions for them to halt. Those marked with the symbol of the Bethines are beckoned forward individually. If any others approach beyond the entrance, Tergen rises from the throne, takes up the staff and attacks – targeting chaotic characters, followed by those not marked with the holy symbol. Others are ignored, unless they attack Tergen. The knight ceases to attack if the offending party members leave the room or if the cleric enacts the ritual of pacification (see area 2).

**Knight Commander Armand Tergen, Paragon of the Knights Bethine:** Init +10; Atk Stave of the Bethines +1d10+6 melee (1d8+1d10+6); AC 21; HD 10d12; hp 93; MV 20'; Act 2d20+1d14; SP mighty deeds, repulsion of Chaos; SV Ref +4, Fort +6, Will +3, AL L.

The stave exudes an aura of Law so powerful that opponents of chaotic alignment must make a DC 15 Will save or suffer -1d to all action dice against the knight. The

dead knight fights as a peerless warrior, using the Stave of the Bethine and his mighty deeds to deal non-lethal damage -- most often to trip opponents, sunder their weapons or armor, and disable them with well-placed blows to the limbs. Tergen wears a magical chain shirt (+1), the symbol of the Bethines inscribed within the chain in golden wire.

If properly approached, Tergen speaks to those under the symbol of the Bethines.

*I am Knight Commander Armand Tergen of the Knights Bethine. Many an age ago, I sacrificed my life to ensure that Orvun the Corrupted remained imprisoned within his tomb – but time and evil have eroded the wards. If you be truly devoted to the Bethine cause, step forward that I may take your measure.*

*After a time, the dead knight speaks again.*

*Within Orvun's tomb lurks his vile spirit, still scratching against the prison walls. If you would pledge to destroy this spirit, I would grant you a boon. The Stave of the Bethine protected me when all other weapons failed. Imbued with the spirit Zar the Inquisitor, High Anointed of the Order, the stave seeks out evil and gives you the power to drive it from this world. Who shall take up the stave and pledge to the Bethine order?*

Any character of lawful alignment may take up the stave. Chaotic and neutral characters should reconsider before touching the weapon. See Appendix M for a full description.

Once done, Tergen sinks back onto his throne, forever silent.

**Area 7 – The Tomb of Orvun the Corrupted:** You stand in cavernous stone chamber, its bounds well outside your light. The floor is dry and dusty, and the air smells faintly of camphor and spices. Looking nearby, you see that the dust

has been disturbed, as if someone dragged a heavy sack or body away to the north.

Following the trail leads to Orvun. Once spotted, he speaks.

*A hunched and desiccated corpse in rotted clothing lies against the rounded wall of the tomb. A dry crackling whistle pierces the silence, and you realize that the corpse against the wall actually speaks!*

*“So, you have come at last,” the creature says. “And I see, at the behest of the ‘scions’ of the faith.”*

*“I expected that someone would arrive once the bonds of this place began to break down. Perhaps you think me monster, or victim, or character in a morality tale to teach the novices about grace, and hubris, and the temptations of the world. I am none of these. I am a saint, you know, within their pantheon. Still they worship me – though less of late – I hear their pleas and I intervene against corruptions of the body, mind and soul...Still to help.”*

*The corpse laughs, a ragged whistling cackle.*

*“Do what you’ve come for. Destroy me, that this everlasting corruption be dispelled and that I can finally know peace.”*

Orvun is easily struck down – he has 1 hp and puts up no resistance to attacks (automatic hit). However, continuing to speak with the disgraced saint may provide wisdom that could prove invaluable to a cleric of Law. Orvun is initially irascible (DC 18 Personality check to get him to talk), but once engaged waxes poetically about his faith, rise, and fall, as well as the similar path of the Bethine orders. The cleric may talk to Orvun for three turns and then make a DC 15 Will save. On a success, the cleric receives wisdom in the form of one of the following bonuses, permanently: +1d to spell checks for one spell, turn unholy, or lay on hands. Additionally, the cleric receives 1 Luck.

Killed or not, once done, the spirit of Zeron, the demon that possesses the saint, boils out of his body, which simultaneously releases Orvun's soul to its final reward (whatever that might be).

**Zeron, Possessing Demon (Type I):** Init +3; Atk Smoke claws +4 (1d3 + strength drain; while in smoke form), steel claws +6 (1d6+4); AC 20 (smoke form) 16 (physical form); HD 5d12; hp 55; MV 20' (smoke form) 40' (physical form); Act 2d16; SP strength drain, domination (physical form only), summon zeron, half damage from non-magical weapons and fire (physical form only) ; SV Ref +4, Fort +6, Will +3, AL C.

Zeron appears as a cloud of black smoke for 1d5 rounds before its form solidifies. During this time, it is immune to normal weapon damage, receives a +1d to all saves against turning and spells cast by idol magic (i.e. clerics), has AC 20 and +2 to all saves from magical attacks. The strike of its smoky claws deal 1d3 damage, and victims must make a DC 15 Fort save or lose 1d3 strength, as well.

In physical form, Zeron stands 12' tall and appears as a humanoid-shaped void that crawls with neon maggots with the heads of mortals that have fallen under Zeron's control. Instead of attacking, Zeron may speak to one character telepathically and attempt to dominate their mind (DC 15 Will save to resist). On a failure, the character is completely under Zeron's control until the demon is destroyed. The body of victims killed by Zeron are added to the maggots that crawl through its void-hell. Additionally, Zeron in physical form takes half damage from non-magical weapons and fire.

Zeron may also forego attacks to pull his minions from the cleric's blood, if the cleric is still infected. The victim must make a DC 15 Fort save or 1d3 zeron servitors appear.

If destroyed, the void of Zeron expands to fill the room and the characters are surrounded by the wailing cries of his victims as they pop into non-existence, one-by-one.

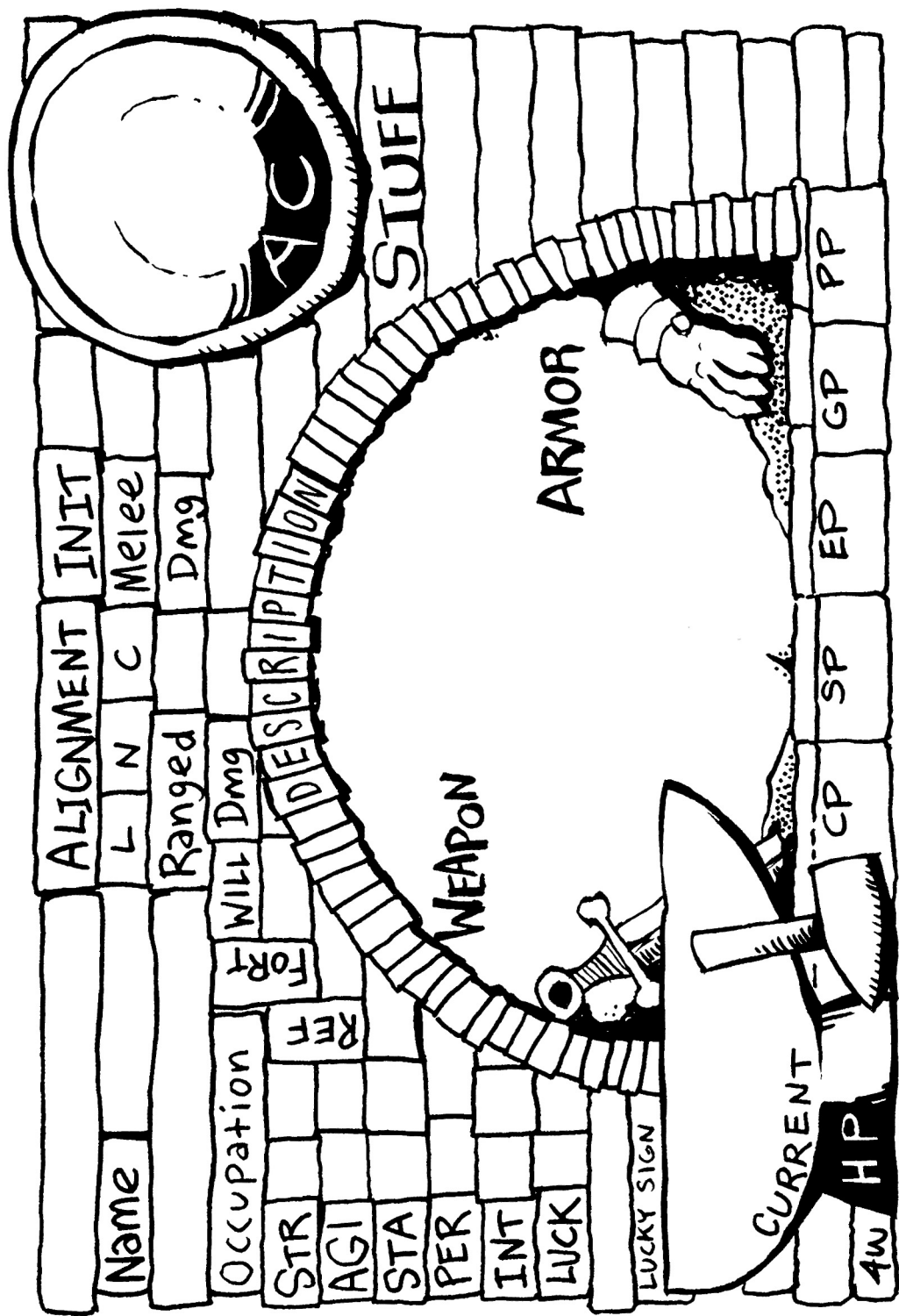
When the ritual of consecration is completed, a shimmering portal appears where Orvun's body used to be. Stepping through the portal takes the characters back to the stone platform overlooking the spring under the shrine of the Bethines.

### **Appendix M: The Stave of the Bethines**

This eight foot long ash staff is topped by a large iron symbol of the Bethines (concentric squares). When wielded by a cleric of Law, the staff allows the wielder to turn unholy as a cleric two levels higher. In addition, the staff deals  $1d6+2$  damage to opponents and may be used from the second rank of a formation. When wielded by a Neutral character, the staff deals  $1d4+1$  damage and provides a +2 bonus to Will saves against creatures unholy to Law. In the hands of a chaotic character, the staff is non-magical. Both neutral and chaotic characters must make a DC 12 Will save each day that the staff is wielded. On a failure, the character suffers a conversion to the path of Law. The nature and consequences of this sudden enlightenment are left up to the judge.







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