

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 #2

VOLUME 2 OF SIXTEEN BOOKLETS

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7 Beauties



Artwork by @fairstranger

SEVEN BEAUTIES

A Level 1 DCC RPG in the Shudder Mountains

by Christian Ovsenik

Illustrations by Jonathan Byrne

Cartography by Christian Ovsenik

BACKGROUND

In this adventure, the party is sidetracked while returning from a county fair. Staying overnight in a house of horrors run by Shonokins, a race of humanoids who existed in the world before Humans and demi-humans, they will have to fight their way out of an almost dormant Gardinel's basement.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	C	1d3+3 Beastmen
2-2	C	4 broom brawlers 4 attack chairs 1 shonokin
2-3	C	5 giant rats
2-5	C	Bear rug monster
2-6	C	Summoned coyote Delilah
2-7	C	Lester Winston

INTRODUCTION

Your party has been traveling for two days from the county fair in Munson's Hollow. You are escorting a troupe of seven beauties who travelled to the county fair to compete. Four of them placed in various competitions: yodeling, fiddle playing, clogging, and of course, the beauty contest. They are happy they have done so well at the competitions as they are tired of hearing about the #1 log rolling team in all of the Shudders. They are tired, too. Competing at the fair is stressful.

Virgil, the chaperone of the beauties, decided you would push through the night to arrive home in Timber Drop sometime before morning. The weather has quickly turned inhospitable - a hard-driving rain pelts your cloaks, thunder crashes, and high winds whip through the trees on either side of the road you travel. A low mist rolls in across the well-traveled path you walk on. In the distance, you hear the howl of a wolf and a strange braying that causes the hair on the back of your neck to stand on end.

"I don't right like the sound of that," says Virgil. So far, your trip has been uneventful. You saw a couple of wild hogs fighting on your way down, and you came across a lone traveler the day previous, but nothing dangerous has occurred.

"Let's just take this here shortcut west and maybe avoid that varmint makin' that racket off north. We'll cut around behind it and make good time back to Timber Drop." Virgil leads you west along a much less traveled path. Overgrown with weeds in spots, the trees reach in to almost touch you as you make your way.

"I know this path. My daddy would take me down it to go fishing in Three Finger Lake. It meanders by the Devil's Traipsing Ground on its way t' meet the main road just below The Great Grandmother."

On a DC 10 Intelligence check, PCs know the following details about the Devil's Traipsing Ground and the Great Grandmother:

The Devil's Traipsing Ground

"Maw told me that clearin' this side of Three Finger Lake was plain haunted. Nothin' ain't never grewed there for hunned's a years. Just barren rocks and dirt about 100 yards 'round."

The Great Grandmother

"I seen the Great Grandmother when I was knee-high to a huntin' dog. That rock formation looks just like Tosh's old granny I reckon. Some say a witches' coven carved it years ago as a place a power so to speak. I don't even want ta look at it I tell you."

As the PCs march deeper along the path, they hear another long howl and odd braying again.

The rain drums your cloaks even harder as you slosh through the mud between the tall, leafy trees on either side of the trail. The howl you heard earlier is now even closer - louder and longer. Your hands quiver as a blood-curdling braying starts up again - sounding like a dying or deformed goat. Something humanoid in shape flies over the path in front of you - it looks like a man with great moth-like wings. A huge humanoid with the head and arms of a bear steps onto the path in front of you, wielding a wooden club. One of the beauties lets loose a blood-curdling scream.



Artwork by @fairstranger

THE INN

Area 1-1: The Path

The muddy, root-laden path is closely bounded by trees on either side. The rain, fog, and darkness contribute to a -1d penalty to attack rolls for human characters.

Beastmen (1d3+3): Init +1; Atk Spear/Club/Mace +1 melee (1d6), AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1, AL C.

These beastmen were created in the tar pits around the now-abandoned town of Buncombe Bluff. Five years ago, a conjure-man who served Nengal the Wild One performed a horrible ritual over the tar pits trying to create a tar golem. Instead, the tar turned some of the townspeople who worked the pits into mutated beastmen. They now serve Nengal too. They have varied forms transformed from animals from the appalachians. Roll a D6 to determine the appearance of a given beastman:

1d6 Result (appearance of beastman)

1	A beastman with moth wings and red, glowing eyes. His hands end in horrible claws.
2	A small, lithe beastman covered in coarse grey fur. His head is pointy with beady black eyes and large, curved ears. He has a long, slimy pink tail.
3	A skinny reptilian humanoid with spindly arms and legs. Its head is that of a golden snake. It hisses and flicks its tongue.
4	A fat, shaggy, black-furred beastman walking on short, thick legs with short, thick arms. His head resembles a horrific bear.
5	A beastman with the head and tail of a skinny wolf. His hands end in claws and his legs are plantigrade.
6	A turtle man with fleshy brown arms and legs with a hard shell on his back.

The beastmen attack with reckless abandon. If they take someone down, they begin to gorge on human flesh. After the party has defeated the band of beastmen, they hear another howl in the dark as more fog rolls in.

"We've got to get a move on!" Virgil shouts over the din of the pouring rain. "I seen a light up 'round that bend!"



Artwork by @fairstranger

Virgil will lead the party if they aren't taking the lead. Just around the bend, a clearing opens up on either side of the trail.

A large wooden shack is set back about 50 feet off the trail to the left. Lights burn in the two small front windows, and a lantern hangs over the heavy wooden door on the front of the house. Dark green kudzu vines grow from the dirt all the way to the tin roof of the hovel. Rain patters on the tin, creating an eerie song that promises a dry night on a warm pallet.

The shack is extremely large - 40 feet x 40 feet. Having a wooden door and a tin roof makes it very high class for the Shudder Mountains.

Across the path sits a much larger clearing. It is tough to make out in the rainy gloom.

If the PCs approach the other clearing:

The clearing is covered in tall grass except for a rocky circle about 100 feet in diameter centered on some low stonework. It looks like old stone foundation work, a very rare thing in the Shudder Mountains. In the center of the stonework looks to be the remains of a burn pile.

If the PCs search the pile, have them roll a find traps check (DC 10). If they succeed, they see:

Under the burn pile, the ground is cracked, as if it were dried out completely from the fire.

If the PCs approach the house:

You walk up the path from the road toward the red painted wooden door of the shack. Virgil looks back at you. "This place looks as promising as any for a place to bed down. Real sorry I got y'all into this pickle!"

Knocking on the door yields a response from a pleasant male voice. "Hello, who's there?"

If the PCs identify themselves, the innkeeper will let them in.

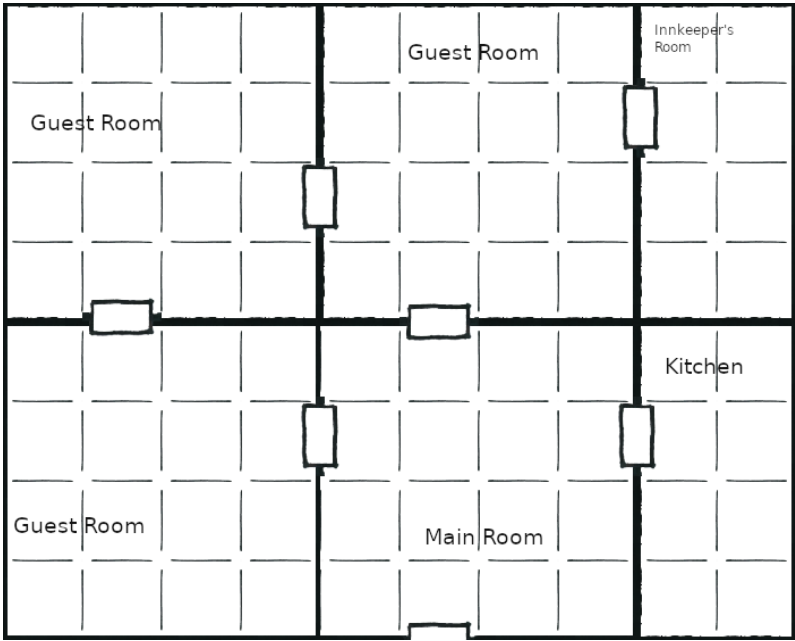
As the door opens, the warmth of the shack blows out the large door and seeps into your bones. The enticing smell of meat stew cooking wafts out past the curious dweller who opened the door. "Welcome, welcome! Get yourselves in here out of the rain and cold." He gestures to a coarse wire welcome mat on the wooden floorboards at your feet. "Once you've wiped your feet, come have a rest at the table and eat some supper. All are welcome at The Handsome Bee".

Looking around the room, it clearly doesn't take up the whole shack. The walls are made of rough barnwood. The floor is sanded wood. A comfortable, homecraft dining table is set with bowls and spoons, surrounded by long wooden benches. A huge hearth takes up another side of the room, a roaring fire staving off the night's cold and dampness. Before the hearth, several pallets and a long, stuffed couch are situated around a large black bear rug. A Halfling reclines on the couch with a woman who looks to be in her early 40s; before the hearth, a male Elf sings a murder ballad beautifully. In the back wall and right-side wall are thin wooden doors.

The dweller who let you in is tall, taller than most Shudfolk. He wears a long frock coat over a flannel shirt and corduroy pants. He wears shoes made from deer or moose hide. "I'm the keeper of this inn, named Lester Otis. Been keeping this inn in these parts for years."

Roll a Luck check for each player. Any who succeed notice the man's eyes glint in the candlelight. Any player who rolls

below a 5 notices his ring fingers are longer than the rest of his fingers.



"That's odd, I ain't never seen this inn before, and I've been by this Devil's Traipsing Ground once afore in my long life," says Virgil.

"Been here near to 5 years" says Lester. "But let's might sit you down and get you some supper."

A shapely woman of around 30 years enters the room from the right-side door. She wears a white apron over a scarlet dress cut just in the right places. She bears a big soup pot - at least 5 gallons - on a tray. The stew in the pot smells delicious.

"Got here some venison stew with plenty of bread for the lot of y'all!" says the woman in a sing-song voice. Lester emerges from the kitchen with two huge loaves of warm bread. The food is placed on the table.

"What are y'all charging for this fine feast you present so thoughtfully to weary travelers wore out from the weather and the walkin'?" asks Virgil.

"Oh, a pittance, my friend, a pittance. Five copper per night will see each tired traveler rightly fed, roomed, and bedded with the finest food and furnishings this side of Pilot Mountain."

Virgil reaches into the purse he keeps tied tightly around his rotund waist - pulling out several coins. "This should cover our lot for the evening, plus a little more for your gracious hospitality."

Lester quickly deposits the coins in an interior pocket of his coat. The other travelers are delivered bowls and bread in their current seats - leaving the large dining room table for your party.

The party can socialize with anyone present. Here are short descriptions/bios for each person present in the room.

Delilah, the mistress of the house: Short, with long red hair, Delilah is a handsome 30-year-old woman in a scarlet dress. Her blue eyes dart around the table as she sips her stew from a large spoon and drinks hill wine out of a wooden cup. She pours wine or more stew for anyone present. She will only say that she grew up around Bacon Holler, just a short jog from the Devil's Traipsing Ground.

She is actually an aspiring Witch. She is working with the Shonokins to feed the Gardinel beneath the Devil's Traipsing Ground.

Delilah: Init -2; Atk claw -2 melee (1d4-1) or curse (DC 16 Will save; see below) or spell; AC 9; HD 3d6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; curse, spellcasting (+4 spell check); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +8; AL C. (Spells: *charm person, chill touch, sleep, animal summoning*)

She can *curse* a target as the Cleric spell with a result of 22.

Lester is a Shonokin, a race of ancient humanoids from before the Shudfolk. He is tall and lithe, but only differs from humans in two ways; he has cat eyes and his ring finger is longer than his other fingers. He can cast spells and possesses a magic pair of spoons. The spoons will force anyone who hears them to begin dancing.

The Shonokins' goal is always the elimination of all Humans and demi-human races. Their current goal is to feed the Gardinel, hoping to regrow the first floor above ground, so they can move somewhere else and let the Gardinel eat people unattended.

The Shonokins have sharp nails and cannot tolerate the presence of one of their dead. If a dead Shonokin is in view, any other Shonokin will flee.

Lester: Init +2; Atk claw +2 melee (1d4+1) or offensive spell (1d6 damage); AC 12; HD 3d12; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP spoons; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

Spoons of Dancing Death:

Lester's spoons look like a pair of brass spoons. When he slaps them on his knee or side, everyone in earshot must make a DC 12 Will save or begin clogging for 3 rounds. On the second round, they can make a Will save again vs. a DC 10, or DC 8 on the third round. Anyone clogging is unable to take any actions. If a player actually stands up and clogs on the table, he will save automatically next round.



Artwork by @fairstranger

Gordy, the Halfling: Gordy is a road dog shoe salesman. He is one of the few Halflings seen wearing shoes. He sells “genuine authentic gator skin boots” that he claims to tan and cobble himself. He tries to work shoe sales into every conversation.

Elvira, the Priestess of Shul: Elvira is a middle-aged woman with a large black hairdo. She venerates and evangelizes Shul, the moon god, patron god of literacy. She wears a black robe with a wool hat. She is just passing through the Shudder Mountains from the Low Country, and her message of literacy is not popular here.

Zaos, the Elf Bard: Zaos is traveling the Shudder Mountains gathering stories. He has lived a long life in the area and is working on collecting all the stories told in the oral tradition locally into a Grimm’s Fairy Tales-type book. He wears a long wool jacket over a white long sleeve shirt and wool breeches.

Delilah comes back out of the kitchen with some fresh stew.
“Well now y’all will wanna have some of this stew I made for you. It’ll restore your vitality and really put some meat on them bones.”

The PCs can talk with the NPCs for a while over dinner. Delilah will bring out pots of hill wine as part of dinner, which will flow freely.

After dinner, Lester will show the PCs to their rooms.

“These are your rooms, folks. Finest rooms you will find this side of the Yancy River.” Each room has a pile of pillows on one side, a pile of heavy wool blankets on the other, and heavy rugs covering the floor. *“If y’all need anything just give a shout. Delilah and I will be just down the hall.”*

Allow the PCs to organize themselves how they wish; seven people will fit in a room. As the PCs settle in, they find that

the room is warm, though they can hear the wind howling and the rain pelting the side and roof of the house.

After a couple of hours, allow the PCs to roll Fort saves against DC 12. Anyone who fails is affected by the drugs Delilah put in the wine and will not wake up easily. The room with fewer PCs in it (more beauties) has a visitor: a Shonokin pops up through a trapdoor in the floor under one of the rugs. He pulls the sedated beauties down through the trapdoor and puts them in the basement for the Gardinel to eat. Allow PCs who didn't fall for the sedation to roll a DC 10 Intelligence check to notice the Shonokin stealing slumbering beauties down the trapdoor.

THE BASEMENT

Area 2-1: The Stairs Down

The ladder down from the bedroom leads to a dank basement with clay floors, wood slat walls, and a timber ceiling. There is no lighting. Dripping water can be heard, and the air smells like soggy bread. Light is visible under the crack of a door at the end of the hall. The door is not locked. It is an old pine door with just a latch, opening inward.

Area 2-2: The Storeroom

This is a large room with a clay floor. Wood beams hold up the ceiling overhead. The floor is piled high with crates and barrels. In among the crates are a stack of old chairs and several nasty old brooms. A candle burns in a wall sconce next to some stairs leading upward. A hall leads away from the room into darkness.

This room is normally the storeroom for the inn. After a moment of looking around, a Shonokin stumbles on the PCs from down the hall.

A tall man, rather resembling Lester, but not he, stumbles onto you from down the hall. "Say, what are y'all doing down here?" says the man.

PCs may notice he has the same cat's eyes and long ring fingers as Lester.

"I don't believe y'all belong down here. Let's go back upstairs," he says.

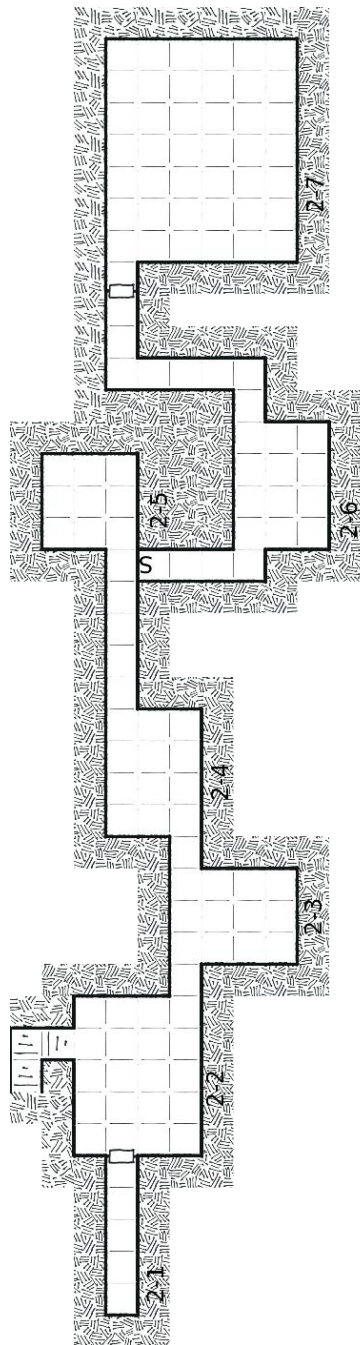
If the PCs disagree or attack, the man fights back:

"Well now, I hoped it wouldn't come to this."

The man reaches inside his long frock coat and takes out a large frog. He hangs it by one leg from his hand and chants:

*Dance, dance yonder chair,
Prepare to slay intruders there,
Obey my command dusty broom,
Kill the trespassers in this room!*

The frog lets out a loud CROOOOAKK as the chairs and brooms animate. The brooms stand up on their bristles like many legs, swinging their ends like staffs. The chairs splay out their backs like spines, charging toward you with the intention of impaling.



Attack Chair (4): Init -1; Atk stab +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 20', Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

Broom Brawler (3): Init 0; Atk slam +2 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 20', Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

Brooms can split into two smaller brooms when slain:

Small Broom Brawler (3): Init 0; Atk slam +1 melee (1d3-1); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 4; MV 20', Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

Area 2-3: Hill Wine Cellar

The walls of this room are lined with barrels, tapped with spigots. The floor is sticky with old hill wine and stump whiskey. The smell of old wine wafts over from the barrels when entering from the hall. The sound of quiet slurping is barely heard over the drip-drip-drip of the wine.

This room is largely empty, but footprints are noticeable in the dust if PCs look toward the floor. A large number of rats have feasted on the old wine and whiskey and have been tainted by the drugs put in them. The effect of the drugs varies depending on the rat (or person), but the bite of the rats causes extra damage from the effects of the drugs. The rats only attack if the party gets close to them, under the wine barrels against the wall.

Rat, Giant (5): Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d4 plus disease); AC 13; HD 1d6; hp 3; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP disease (DC 7 Fort save or additional 1d3 damage); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; AL N.

Area 2-4: Root Cellar

Crates of old food are stacked high on the dirt floor of this old root cellar. The flickering torch casts eerie shadows across the old quilts hanging from the wall. A clock hangs on the wall with different symbols and more than 12 hours. One of the hands spins wildly above a small closed door.

If the PCs approach the clock, it clangs loudly as the hands pass each other.

The door on the clock face opens, and a small wooden bird slides out on a wood dowel, opening its beak. A purple cloud shoots out of the beak in a cone 5 feet out from the bird.



The cloud is a mixture of aging mist. Any PCs affected by the cloud must roll a DC 13 Fort save or age 3d3 years. They gain any side effects of aging, like balding, wrinkles, gray hair, arthritis, etc.

Area 2-5: The Bear's Lair

This room is piled high with old junk. Ratty blankets, an old bear rug, and threadbare clothing are piled up in the far corner. The smell of rot pervades this dead-end room. Old blankets hang from the walls where they look like they were being cleaned before being forgotten.

When the PCs investigate the pile of junk, they hear:

From behind one of the blankets over your shoulder, you hear the words "Rise, Mortimer!"

A frog croaks, and the old bear rug on the center of the pile begins to stand up before your very eyes. The flat legs step down to support the hide while the head, loaded with sharp teeth, wobbles around. A dull roar echoes through the cavern as the bear rug monster leaps down.

Bear Rug Monster: Init +1; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6), swipe +2 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 3d10+3; hp 20; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 3d20; SP bear hug; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; AL N.

If the bear rug monster hits with 2 of its 3 attacks, it can bear hug. It wraps the target like a towel and starts to squeeze. The target takes an additional 1d4 damage. They can try to shake off the rug next turn with a DC 10 Strength or Agility check.

If the PCs investigate the voice that cast the rug-animating spell, they find a secret door leading onward behind the blanket. It can be found by an Elf (who is entitled to a check automatically while passing it) or anyone looking for it carefully with a DC 8 Intelligence check.

Area 2-6: Preparations

The floor squelches under foot. The walls look like tan mud, but they hold together. A disgusting smell, like bile, wafts back from the hall ahead. A large wooden table is laid out with clothing and jewelry. Delilah stands next to the table, an ugly look on her face. She points a wooden spoon at you.

"Y'all really do not belong down here. You should have stayed sleeping in your room until we came to get you for the Gardinel." She shakes her spoon, and a large black canine erupts from the floor.

Delilah: Init -2; Atk claw -2 melee (1d4-1) or curse (DC 16 Will save; see below) or spell; AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 16; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP curse, spellcasting (+4 spell check); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +8; AL C. (Spells: *charm person, chill touch, sleep, animal summoning*)

She can *curse* a target as the Cleric spell with a result of 22.

Summoned Coyote: Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6 SP Rabies); AC 13; HD 3d6; hp 10; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

The coyote's attack will cause rabies after a failed DC 12 Fort save. Rabies causes 1 point of Intelligence loss every 24 hours and 1d3 damage. Eventually the sufferer goes mad and starts attacking other party members, also inflicting rabies with his bite.

Area 2-7: The Stomach

The hallway opens up into a massive room. The walls are made of the same tan mud the last room was made of. On the walls you can see fleshy person-sized lumps. Lester, and the man who resembles Lester, are turned away from you on the far side of the room. You see them slide the body of one of the beauties into a gap in the wall, which closes around the beauty.

If the PCs look up, read:

The ceiling converges around a tiny opening. A small amount of light filters through the hole onto the floor in the center of the room.

As soon as the PCs enter:

Lester and his partner slowly turn toward you. Their cat eyes focus on you in unison. "So, you have come to be fed to the Gardinel!" growls Lester. "You could have rested and slowly drifted off like the rest of your companions," says his partner. The frog croaks, and a purple glowing orb flies toward the party.

Lester: Init +2; Atk claw +2 melee (1d4+1) or offensive spell (1d6 damage); AC 12; HD 3d12; HP 18; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP spoons; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

Spoons of Dancing Death: Lester's spoons look like a pair of brass spoons. When he slaps them on his knee or side,

everyone in earshot must make a DC 12 Will save or begin clogging for 3 rounds. Each round, they can make a Will save again vs. a DC 10, or DC 8 on the third round. Anyone clogging is unable to take any actions.

Winston: Init +2; Atk claw +2 melee (1d4+1) or offensive spell (1d6 damage); AC 12; HD 3d12; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

If either Shonokin is slain, the other will recoil from the dead body.

FINISHING UP

The PCs can leave as they wish. They could climb up out of the sphincter in the ceiling. They could go back out the way they came. They can burn the Gardinel and the inn to the ground or take it over as a place to live. Picking up the brass spoons and Delilah's wand will grant them powerful magic items.

Howlin' Wooden Spoon: This magic wooden stirring spoon allows a Wizard or Elf to cast summon animal at +1d. The animal summoned is always a canine.

Brass Spoons of Dancing Death: These spoons look like a pair of brass spoons. When a user slaps them on his knee or side, everyone in earshot must make a DC 12 Will save or begin clogging for 3 rounds. Each round, they can make a Will save again vs a DC 10, or DC 8 on the third round. Anyone clogging is unable to take any actions.



DEAD DRAGON PEAK

A level 1 DCC RPG adventure

by Stefan Surratt

Cover Art by Carmin Vance

Cartography by Matt Robertson

INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed for 4-6 1st-level characters. However, this adventure can be enjoyed by lower or higher-level parties increase/decrease enemy numbers, Hit Dice, and/or attack/damage modifiers, or include/remove hirelings in/from the adventuring party.

What happens after a dragon is killed? What if the dragon's corpse was the dungeon? Often those who kill a dragon will make the most of their kill by crafting armor or weapons. Necromancers, on the other hand, might have entirely different plans in mind and may even discover more than they anticipated.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In an age long past, the Frozen King of the Fey Court threw a javelin made of pure ice into the heart of a dragon. The dragon, its heart frozen, fell and crashed into a high mountain peak where the once fearsome dragon remains to this day. The frozen heart still beats once every few years and it slowly warms and rots even atop this frozen peak.

For some time, the wizard Zumaka Yechir has been following in his father's footsteps and researching draconic origins and biology. Although his father, Yecharz Yechir, was well known for writing *The Shine of Scales*, it was entirely based on historical stories, memoirs, and letters. Zumaka, having now

found an actual dragon corpse, is currently researching the practical properties of dragons.

Zumaka is working under the theory that the dragons “disappeared” by teleporting to a distant realm or even another plane of existence. He believes that he is only steps away from completing a ritual that will allow him to take control of the dragon’s body and open a portal to the realm of dragons.

Zumaka has created a special ritual spell that gives him, if performed correctly, a +15 while both attempting to cast animate dead on the dragon and to the transference spell to meld his mind with the dragon’s. His early experiments lead him to create a number of creatures made entirely of dragon blood (Bloodmen) and altering the ancient, frozen corpses found in the dragon’s stomach (Draconic Un-dead). He even created Draconic Clones of himself that will ease the transference ritual and help bridge the gap between man and dragon.

Unfortunately for Zumaka, an intrepid dwarven inventor has an interest in dragons and aims to gain access to Dead Dragon Peak with her new inventions, a “hot air balloon.” This dwarven inventor, Volvana Snowpeak (a last name sometimes given by those disowned by their families), does not obey the typical dwarven clan traditions.

HOOKS

As you travel along the roads of dirt and snow, you see an odd sight in the distant snow fields. Something like a basket attached to a large sphere is quickly coming down out of the sky. You hear a screaming voice over the wind as it lands hard in the snow, spraying snow into the air.

After trudging out into the fields to check on whatever individual is in this contraption, you find a very stout figure in thick hide furs trying to get hold of what appears to be a large piece of cloth

attached by ropes to a basket. You hear a gruff, feminine voice call out over the wind, "By the ancestors, if you're done staring then help me get a handle on this damned thing! I need to get this on me sled."

After you help the dwarven woman pack up her materials, she thanks you, introduces herself as Volvana, and asks you to accompany her while she pulls her things to the tavern a few miles down the road. During the journey, she cheerfully speaks of her invention (a hot-air balloon), but with some sadness notes that she was banished for seeking to fly high instead of stay low as her ancestors did. She seeks to summit the legendary Dead Dragon Peak, an ascent which no climber has yet survived. She is eager for companions to assist her in the ascent. Explaining that she aims to take back a collection of dragon scales on her first trip but would greatly appreciate others taking the more unsavory job of venturing inside the dragon to see if they eat gold as well as men.

RUMORS

1. (T) A fairy king used a javelin of ever-frozen ice to slay the dragon in a past age.
2. (T) Three dwarven brothers scaled the mountain about thirty years ago, but never returned.
3. (F) The dragon only slumbers! The fiery heart of the dragon still beats.
4. (T) Dragons absorb most heavy metals. You're more likely to find mithril than gold inside.
5. (T) No one except a master armorer would know how to work with dragon scales.
6. (F) The dragon crashed into the mountain after eating too many ale-soaked dwarves.
7. (F) You can still hear the dragon's dying roar in the wind coming off the mountain. It's spirit must live on.
8. (T) Toreg Gatesmasher says he saw some figure climbing up the mountain like a cave-spider in heat just a few moon's ago.

PLAYER START

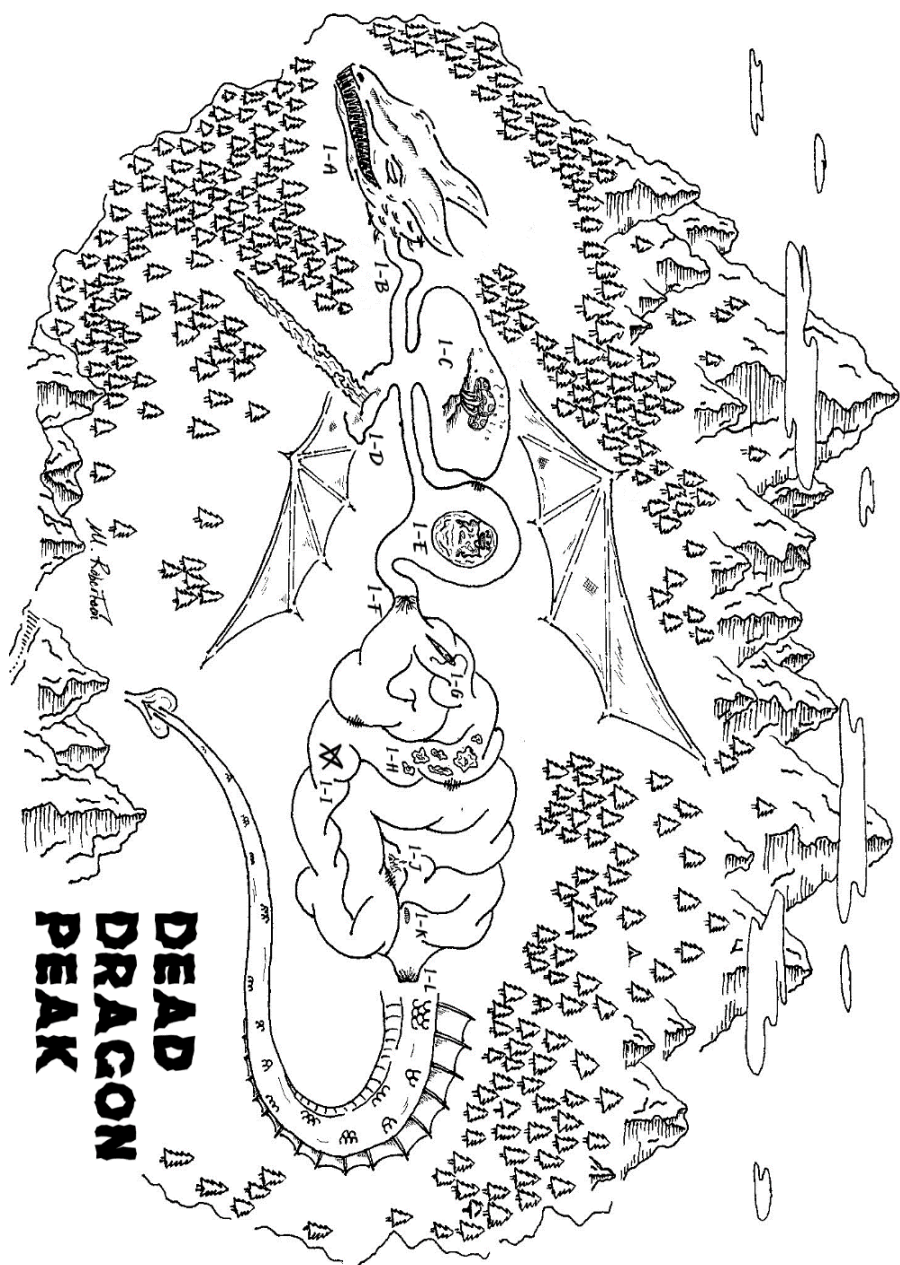
THE MOUNTAINTOP

The green pine trees, that now seem the size of children's toys from this great height, are covered by a harsh blanket of furious snowfall. The wind carries the balloon quickly towards the peak as Volvana shouts instructions at you over the roaring wind, "USE THE HARPOON AND SPEAR US TO THE PEAK! THE WIND IS TOO STRONG TO LAND NORMALLY!" You eye three harpoons attached by a rope to a hand winch then look towards the mountaintop where you see the outline of a frozen dragon carcass.

The party must make a ranged weapon attack and hit AC 10 to secure the harpoon. After that they can reel themselves in with the hand winch to bring themselves closer to the mountaintop and then use the other two harpoons to tether the basket safely. Volvana will deflate the balloon and secure it in the basket before inspecting the site.

If the PCs are not wearing adequate clothing for high-altitude, low temperature environments they will need to make DC 10 Fort Saving Throws every 10 minutes, with a failure resulting in 1 point of Stamina damage unless they warm themselves or find shelter.

After landing, your view of the frosted dead dragon becomes clear as you approach it. A massive, shattered ice javelin still peaks out the dragon's back. The frozen head rests on its side, the neck covered by ice build-up, and the rest of the body drapes itself on the other side of the mountain's crest. Volvana yells to you "Get in there and see what the innards are like. They should be well preserved," and heads off to inspect the wings of the fallen beast.



ENTER THE DRAGON

General Features: Passages inside the dragon are generally cramped and completely dark. The insides are almost entirely frozen, but due to the arcane and fiery nature of the dragon not all sections are completely frozen. Unless otherwise stated, all walls are frozen solid, and not easily breakable.

Area 1-A - The Dragon's Mouth: *The giant maw of the red dragon rests sideways on the ground, its man-sized teeth still sneering even in death. The jaws are barely open, not leaving enough room to fit through without further effort.*

A DC 10 Strength check is necessary to break off a tooth to allow entry into the mouth. +1d if they take the time to investigate which teeth might be loosest.

Each of the fourteen teeth on the bottom jaw have golden plaque worth about 15 gp if removed. The first character who investigates the gums of the teeth can find a gem worth 10 gp.

Area 1-B - The Neck: *The twisted broken neck creates a winding and frozen passage, with otherwise smooth walls of cold flesh periodically interrupted by bone pressing into the esophagus. Little red six-legged lizards crawl around, some burrowing into little holes in the flesh walls. A large meaty flap separates two passages. One passage stings your nose with its acrid odor and the other has a slightly musty smell that is carried by a faint draft.*

Area 1-C & D - The Lungs: *The left passage (C) is warm and smells of musty rot. The right passage (D) is frozen and deflated. A huge icicle, at least 2 feet wide, pierces the lung and a draft can be felt issuing from it.*

If the players enter the left lung chamber, they will see blue spore clumps growing throughout the area. The spores are flammable and will catch fire if exposed to open flame. Any

disruption of the spores results in those nearby needing to make a DC 10 Fort save to avoid a fungal lung disease that causes growths to begin festering in the lungs of the afflicted which, while not deadly, will result in diminished lung capacity and a -1d to all Stamina checks after 1d3 days. This fungal infection can be cured with 2d of Lay on Hands.

The right lung is completely deflated and frozen. The huge icicle is the ever-frozen ice javelin that the Frozen King used to slay the Dragon. A few small Draconic Salamanders chew on the lung near the wound. The ice javelin blocks entry.

Area 1-E - The Stomach: *The large area is characterized by a ankle-deep pool of slushy green liquid that pools in the center of this approximately 15' by 40' oval room. The sharp acidic smell burns your nose. A hole in the nearby stomach lining reveals what appear to be ribs. In the center of the room, surrounded by stomach acid, there is an altar of pulsating, living tissue. On it, augury bones float in a bowl of stagnant blood. At the other end of the room, the smooth wall is interrupted by a 4-foot-tall closed sphincter.*

At some point during the exploration of this room, the Judge should have three 6-legged red salamanders crawl out of the hole in the stomach and begin attacking. Once 2 of the creatures die the last one will run away, squeezing through the sphincter into the intestines.

Draconic Salamander Youngling (3): Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3 piercing +1 acid) or acid spit +2 ranged (1d3 acid, range 30'); AC 13; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; MV' 30 or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage (+10 to hide); SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will -3; AL N

DC 10 Intelligence check to notice that the hole in the wall was created by bite marks. DC 13 Intelligence check to see bite and sucker marks on the ribs that, from the numerous faded bite marks, indicate the salamanders have been eating the dragon slowly over a long time.

The altar is used as a relay system for Zumaka's final plan to transfer his consciousness into the dragon. If the altar is physically destroyed or *turn un-dead* is used upon it then Zumaka's ritual bonus is lowered by 5.

The sphincter at the other end of the room is the entrance to the intestines. It will open reflexively by holding up a torch or similar heat source to it, or by forcing it open with a DC 13 Strength check or a Mighty Deed.

Area 1-F - The Intestines: *This lengthy maze of guts is partially thawed; the ground is covered with an icy slush that wriggles with lethargic maggots. The air is warm and pungent. The average height of the passage being so that a tall man would almost scrape against the top and the average width would force anyone not walking single file to scrape the walls. The intestinal walls are marred by holes, varying size between a hand's width to an arm's length, clearly having been created by the gnashing teeth of some creature or creatures.*

1-G - Intestine Repairs: *A scaly disfigured man is trying to mend the intestinal walls. When he notices you, he turns towards you and lets loose an almost reptilian hiss and begins to stride towards you.*

Draconic Clone: Init +1; Atk claw +2 melee (1d3+2); AC 11; HD 3d4+4; hp 11; MV' 30; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -2; AL N

Spells: *flaming hands* (at +3 spellcheck)

This clone is using a rusty sewing kit to, quite noisily, sew dead skins over large tears in the intestines to repair some previous damage. It will attack immediately upon noticing intruders. When casting flaming hands it shouts *Kortarax*.

1-H Slush Puddles: *This small area is heavily laden with green slush puddles, making passage difficult.*

A puddle of acid blends in with the intestinal sludge. Unless the players describe being careful in a way that would prevent it, each character passing through this space has a chance of accidentally stepping in the acid puddle. Have each player character make a Luck check, with failures resulting in 1d4 acid damage. Once the first character steps in and notices it (painfully), others can avoid it. Melee attacks are at -1d in this area due to this difficulty unless the PCs forgo care and accept 1d4 acid damage per round from entering the acid puddle.

Melee attacks in this area are made at -1d if the players are trying to avoid splashing in the acid puddle.

1-I - Elven Corpses: *Two long dead elven corpses with mottled skin lay in your path.*

Draconic Un-dead (2): Init -2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 2d10; hp 10; MV' 20; Act 1d20; SP un-dead; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C - These creatures awaken when the player characters near.

Both of the Draconic Un-dead carry a mithril short sword that they once knew how to use in their former life.

1-J - Gas Pocket: *The air begins to take on a stronger fecal aroma as you press forward.*

A small pocket of gas will burst into flame when the first person carrying a torch or open flame travels through this area. The explosion affects a 5-foot radius, dealing 1d7 fire damage or half if a DC 13 Reflex save is made. This natural trap can be detected by discerning the methane smell via a DC 13 Intelligence check.

1-K - Intestinal Rupture: *An intestinal rupture causes a 20' cord of guts to spill down to the rock cavern floor below. An ancient looking corpse of a dwarf in heavily damaged plate armor is sprawled near the hole.*

The dwarven corpse wears heavily rusted and acid eaten full-plate armor with the insignia of a family crest. The family crest has the symbology related to the deity Daentharr. If the players locate the descendants of the dwarf, then they may be offered a reward. The armor only gives a +6 AC Bonus but can be restored by a master armorer to its full bonus.

1-L - The Sphinx: *A large sphinxer ends the intestinal pathway, reeking of methane and feces.*

This sphinxer marks the entrance to the lower intestines. If a lit torch or open flame is used to open the sphinxer, the methane build-up explodes dealing 1d7 fire damage to anyone in the area adjacent to the sphinxer, or half damage if a DC 13 Reflex save is made. It can instead be opened via a DC 15 Strength check or a Mighty Deed. If entered the party will find it is blocked by frozen feces. 2d4+1 draconic salamander younglings are feasting on the frozen excrement in this area.

If the players decide to explore the lower intestines, they may find one of the following items in the frozen feces:

1d5 Result (re-roll duplicates)

1.	Tortoise shell inlaid with runes that allow the user to cast Locate Object
2.	Adamantine battleaxe head
3.	3d7 crystalized snakes entwined in a mass
4.	Melted mass of gold (200+3d30 gp worth)
5.	Iron flask containing elven life water. Grants 1d6 hp and 1d20 years added to natural lifespan.

Draconic Salamander Youngling (2d4+1): Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3 piercing +1 acid) or acid spit +2 ranged (1d3 acid, range 30'); AC 13; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; MV' 30 or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage (+10 to hide); SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will -3; AL N

THE CAVES BELOW

General Features: This area is made of gray stone, with most passages being only about 8 feet wide. Occasional holes, between 1 and 2 feet in diameter can be seen in the passage walls. Slithering noises can occasionally be heard coming from these small passages and Draconic Salamanders may emerge from the tunnels to menace intruders.



2-A - The Tunneled Passage: *Crawling down the disgusting intestinal "rope", the torn intestine drops you into a cave passage approximately 15' wide and 20' tall. The passage diverges in two opposite directions. Large bloody marks and what look to be half-digested corpses of warriors have fallen here from the torn dragon's stomach above.*

If any PC tries to interact with a corpse, they all will animate and begin attacking.

Draconic Un-dead (3): Init -2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 2d10; hp 10; MV' 20; Act 1d20; SP un-dead; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +0; AL C

Bloodman (1): Init +2; Atk bloodsword +6 melee (1d8); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV' 30; Act 1d20; SP death throes (reverts to puddle of blood), un-dead (turn reverts creature to puddle of blood), ½ damage from mundane slashing and piercing; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N

The Draconic Un-dead each have 2d10 gp of unknown and ancient mint, of which 1d4 will be in good enough condition that a collector may have special interest in them.

2-B - The Beast's Chamber: *This large chamber is littered with the bones of mountain goats and humanoids. The chamber is approximately 30' by 40' with a 20' high ceiling. Near the far end is a nest of bones and eggshells that holds five unhatched eggs each about a hand's length in size.*

The matriarch draconic salamander lives here and watches from the high ceiling when the party enters the room. 33% chance it will attack if the party enters the room but will always attack if anyone gets close to her eggs. It stays on the ceiling, attacking from range, unless someone steals any eggs, then it will leap down and fervently chase the offender.

Those searching the room will find a pile of rubble that appears to be covering a collapsed tunnel that leads to the mountain exterior. It can be cleared with 20 minutes of hard work, which will also reveal the corpses of 2 dwarves that died in the collapse. They each have warhammers, 2 50' lengths of rope, 1d6 iron spikes, 2 grappling hooks, 1 mallet,

hide armor (dwarf sized) with furs, 2d20 sp, a tinderbox, rotten rations, and a broken lantern.

Draconic Salamander (Matriarch): Init +2; Atk bite +5 bite (2d3 piercing +1 acid) or acid spit +5 ranged (1d5+1, range 30'; DC 13 Fort save or lose 1d3 Sta); AC 15; HD 3d8+3; hp 15; MV' 40 or climb 30'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage (+10 to hide); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL N

2-C - Trail of Gold: *A small branch leads off the main passage. Moving down the branch you are greeted by the corpse of a long dead dwarf which lays clutching a small treasure chest that spills out a small pile of golden coins.*

Upon examination, PCs will notice the dwarven corpse has dried, bloody stumps where fingers should be, as the coins (2d20+5 in number) are each enchanted to grow golden teeth and bite off the fingers of any who grab them, dealing 1 point of damage. DC 13 Reflex check to avoid finger loss from a single coin. If an individual grabs multiple coins at once, then DC 15 Reflex or lose 1d3+1 fingers. Each lost finger incurs a cumulative -1d to motor functions performed with that hand. The fingers can be reattached with 2d of Lay on Hands. The dead dwarf still wears his hide armor (dwarf sized) and covered furs, but other goods have already been taken from the corpse. However, a set of thieves' tools can be found hidden in the dwarf's boot.

2-D - Sludge of Failure: *A large chasm with a sheer 50' drop into a pool of dark green liquid stands before you. It looks to be 60' long with no way across to the other side.*

DC 13 Intelligence check to see a few droplets of blood floating mid-air on an invisible bridge. Every few minutes that the PCs study the area affords each PC a Luck check to notice the diffusion of light caused by the invisible bridge. The path across the invisible bridge can be easily crossed with clever roleplay or via another DC 10 Intelligence check from

whomever leads the way. Anyone who falls off may make a DC 15 Reflex save to grasp onto the edge of the bridge.

This deep chasm separates the rest of the cavern from the Wizard's Chamber. When Zumaka needs to traverse it, he uses the invisible path that winds over the sludge pit (he created the pathway and has memorized its layout). Falling from the ledge of the pit will do 1d6 per 10' fallen but halved by hitting the liquid acid instead of solid rock. The sludge is made of a powerful acid that the wizard uses to dissolve his failed experiments, though some remains still float in it. 2d6 acid damage per round to anyone who falls in it. If one falls in, there is a small ledge on the southern side that can be climbed on to escape the acid, but there's no obvious way to escape the sheer walls of the deep pit without assistance.

2-E - The Wizard's Chamber: *Arcane chanting echoes throughout this 50' diameter circular chamber, emanating from the far end of the room. The floor of the domed cavern is covered in a glowing spiral of arcane runes that light the room, though some shadows remain at the top of the 30' high ceiling. Amongst the runes, five scaled humanoid bodies lay on the floor in a star pattern around the center of the room. Fleshy tubes connect the bodies, starting from their heads and intertwining together near the center of the room and leading up through a hole in the ceiling.*

On the far end of the room, a worktable sits, full of cluttered belongings and a bedroll lays nearby on the floor. Nearby these accoutrements, a robed man wearing a grisly, scaled mask chants ritual phrases, holding a staff in one hand. A winged reptile perches on one shoulder. He eyes you with suspicion and asks, "Who are you? Why do you disrupt me, Zumaka Yechir?" As he speaks, his winged familiar parrots the chanting in a facsimile of human speech.

Zumaka Yechir is in the middle of completing a Transference Ritual in which he will attempt to animate the dragon's corpse and transfer his consciousness into the body of the undead dragon. If he is not stopped, Zumaka will take full control of the dragon (statistics as noted below) and then use

planar step to attempt to teleport to a plane where he thinks dragons originate.

Without interference, Zumaka has a +22 to his *animate dead* and *transference* spell checks (which his special ritual is casting simultaneously) if nothing is disrupted. +7 is from his natural ability and wizard level, and the runes, the altar, and the connected clones each supply an additional +5. However, he will not spellburn further due to having exhausted himself already. He may speak with the players while his familiar continues chanting to continue the ritual, but once battle starts then he requires three more rounds of either himself or 4 more rounds of his familiar chanting to complete the ritual. He may activate blood-crafted runes that turn into **Bloodmen** to defend himself and begin attacking while his draconic parrot familiar continues the chanting required for the ritual. However, this action reduces the spell check bonus that the arcane runes were supplying to the ritual by 5.

Bloodman (3): Init +2; Atk bloodsword +6 melee (1d8); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV' 30; Act 1d20; SP death throes (reverts to puddle of blood), un-dead (turn reverts creature to puddle of blood), ½ damage from mundane slashing and piercing; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N

The five clones of Zumaka each lie on the floor around the center of the room. Each connected by a large connecting tube made of flesh that extends from their heads towards the center of the room where they converge and go up through a small opening in the ceiling. If these flesh tubes are severed then Zumaka won't have them to ease the passage of his consciousness into the dragon. Each severed tube reduces the ritual bonus by 1. The Judge can increase the difficulty of the fight (and likely TPK the party) by having these clones rise as **Draconic Clones** and join the fight.

Draconic Clone (1 - 5): Init +1; Atk claw +2 melee (1d3+2); AC 11; HD 3d4+4; hp 11; MV' 30; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -2; AL N.

Spells: *flaming hands* (at +3 spell check)

When casting flaming hands it shouts *Kortarax*.

If the players can erase a large number of the runes (made with draconic blood and other rare spell components) that are inscribed upon the floor then they will lower the chance of the animation spell working on the dragon by an amount appropriate to the number ruined. If Zumaka needs to flee he will free his Draconic Clones to attack any assailants and hide by turning himself invisible before fleeing. If Zumaka is able to animate the dragon, but not transfer his mind then he will order it to break into the tunnels so that he may try to escape on or, if necessary, inside of the dragon.

Zumaka Yechir: Init +2; Atk staff +3 melee (1d3+2) or dagger +2/3 melee/ranged (1d4+2); AC 13; HD 5d4+8; hp 25; MV' 30; Act 1d16, 1d12; SP spellcasting (see below); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; AL L

Equipment: padded armor, 3 daggers, ring of shielding (+1 AC), ring of revelation (cast detect magic 2/day), 5d20 gp
Spells: Spell check +7. Spells known: (level 1) *choking cloud*, *find familiar*, *runic alphabet*, *spider climb* (level 2) *invisibility*, *scorching ray* (Level 3) *transference*, *animate dead*

Familiar: Draconic parrot. Atk +2 melee (1d3), Atk +3 ranged fire breath attack (1d4+1), AC 14, hp 4.

Note: If a wizard's familiar is killed then the wizard immediately loses double the maximum hit points of that familiar. Zumaka is also currently acting at -1d due to exhaustion from the lengthy ritual.

If Zumaka is defeated and the PCs have time and the ability to search this cavern they will find the following: a Dragon's Breath Mask, ink and quill, a bedroll, frozen mountain goat meat, various arcane spell components, and the Shine of Scales.

Large Dragon (salamander-like): Init +2; Atk claw (x2) +9 melee (1d8; bite +9 melee (1d12); tail slap +9 melee (1d20); AC 20; HD 8d12; hp 52; MV' 60 or Fly' 50 ; Act 4d20; Spells 1d20, 1d16, +8 on spellcasting checks; SP un-dead, see below; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; AL C

Breath Weapon: Type (Flame) Save (Dex 18; Damage 8d12 or half for save; Cone 30 feet', 50' long

Level 1 Spells: *charm person, choking cloud, force manipulation*

Level 2 Spells: *levitate, phantasm*

Level 3 Spells: *eternal champion, planar step*

Martial Power: Snatch attack: On a successful claw attack, the dragon snatches a target. The dragon can snatch up to one target per claw attack and cannot make the corresponding claw attack while a creature is snatched. A snatched creature takes 1d6 crushing damage each round. The dragon can fly with snatched creatures and can drop the snatched target from any height, causing 1d6 damage per 10' fallen. Snatched creatures can attempt to escape with a Strength check (DC17).

Unique Power 1: Telepathic (1/hour) The dragon can read the surface thoughts of one creature within line of sight.

Unique Power 2: Curse (1/day). The dragon can curse one creature equivalent to a -1d penalty to all rolls for 24 hours.

LEAVING

If Zumaka completes the ritual and the dragon rises from death it will likely cause some of the tunnels to collapse,

making a quick exit advisable. If they manage to escape, they will find Volvana starting to set sail in her balloon, leaving just enough time for characters to grab onto a rope and climb up. They will see the dragon using its Planar Shift ability to leave this realm.

SPECIAL ITEMS

The Shine of Scales – The book is a thorough recording on the history of dragons and theories of their origins. In the margins, and in notes kept loosely in the book, there are also many unorganized theories on the subjects of the existence of other planes of existence, grafting draconic body parts to the flesh of humanoids, creating draconic hybrids, and mind transference into a draconic body. Studying this book can provide new ideas to the reader for creating their own spells and experiments. With enough study, they can put together Zumaka's custom version of animate dead. Some inserted papers also contain the spells that Zumaka knows, but they are hidden in a cypher written in draconic.

Dragon's Breath Mask – A grisly mask that hooks into the cheeks of the wearer, dealing 1d3-1 damage whenever attached or removed. The mask looks as though it is formed of the scales and tooth chippings of a dragon. Allows casting of scorching ray 1/day at +3 spell check. The flames are channeled through the mouthpiece of the mask and activated by the command word, *Kortarax*, which is the name of the dragon the mask was crafted from.



HOARD OF THE METAL GODDESS

A level 1 DCC RPG adventure

By Ryan Smith

Illustrations and Cartography by Michael Barous

For eons the goddess Brigex was worshipped at a smoke-belching and soot-filled temple. Iron priestesses would lead the devout in the ritualistic casting of raw ingots, each bearing the hallmark of the grimacing gorgon head. Worship abruptly ended long ago and the temple of the goddess of smithcraft and metallurgy fell into ruin. It is told that an unholy force still lurks within the bowels of the temple.

Hoard of the Metal Goddess is a short adventure for 3-6 1st level characters. It is designed to be completed in one session and can be used as a diversion or random encounter in a campaign.

BEGINNING AND ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs may visit the temple ruins to smite the unholy creature rumored to live within. Alternatively, they may come in search of the vast cache of metal told to be hidden here.

Before setting out, the party should be given the opportunity to learn the name of the creature that haunts the temple, as speaking it aloud offers one ending to the adventure. For example, a witch may tell of a lost temple that fell under the foul influence of something called “Tilutan.”

At the end of the adventure, the party can obtain an item (the goddess statue head) that may be of interest to an NPC in your campaign. Alternatively, the party can accept a quest to

find and retrieve an item (the goddess statue body), which can be used to start the next adventure. The PCs may also cause a demon to be released into the surrounding locale.

BACKGROUND

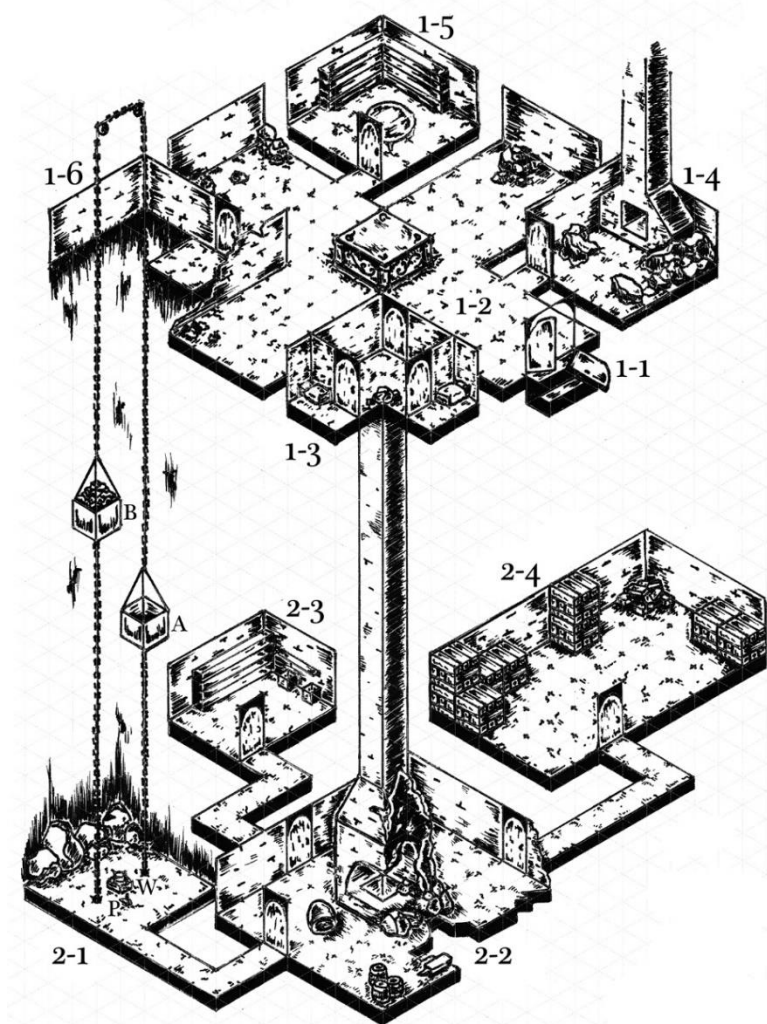
Many years ago, a loathsome creature erupted from the deep magma river that powered the great subterranean furnace altar of the metal goddess. The creature was tasked with destroying the faith of Brigex. It began work by ransacking the temple and maiming its occupants. However, the creature soon tired. After ingesting the head of the metal goddess statue, it fell into a deep sleep, only to awake many years later to find the body of the statue gone. Fearing its master's wrath, the creature now hides at the bottom of the temple still bound to its impossible task.

The temple ruins are located near the mountains where iron ore is mined or near a town with a history of metalwork and smithing. The surface level (area 1) lies in ruin and has been looted. The lower level (area 2) remains relatively intact aside from suffering some destruction by the creature.

UPPER TEMPLE (AREA 1)

Area 1-1 - Entrance: *You stand before a ruined hulk of stone. Great chimneys reach skyward from the center of the structure. A massive iron door lies on the steps before the dark entrance. The second door is missing, perhaps looted for scrap long ago.*

The creature sleeps in the lower level of the temple. Any loud sound, such as dropping the pedestal slab at main hall 1-2, will wake him. When awake, the creature will periodically telepathically communicate with the PCs. He may taunt or query the PCs and may allude to the negotiation that can take place at the ingot hoard area 2-4. PCs with a Personality of 10 or more will understand that the creature will not be immediately hostile to the party.



A 1st level adventure
 written by Ryan Smith
 Art by Michael Barous

It is apparent to PCs with a suitable occupation that the iron door is exceptionally well made, as is all of the metalwork that happens to remain in the temple. Worshipers would bring ore and metal goods to be ritually processed into ingots by the priestesses.

Area 1-2 – Main Hall and Statue Pedestal: *You enter a large octagonal soot-covered room. At the center stands a high pedestal. The statue that must have once stood there is gone. Stone rubble and pieces of dark glassy rock litter the floor. A wall at the far end of the room lies collapsed.*

Doorways to the north, south, and west lead to rooms that supported the temple's daily needs. The masterwork iron doors were stolen long ago. The east wall has collapsed into the main hall. The east wall once guarded the depths of the temple and was destroyed by the creature to gain entrance to the main hall.

The floor is littered with rubble from the collapse of the east wall. The dark glassy rock is solidified magma. The creature, having emerged from the magma river that flows beneath the temple, shed gobs of lava throughout the temple. Close inspection of one of the larger lava stones reveals a sturdy iron rod embedded in it. The rod is useful for the elevator at area 1-6 and may be removed from the stone by force.

The pedestal is 15' wide and as tall as a man. Its top is capped with a 10' square slab of stone. The edges of the slab are notched with vents that are encrusted with soot. The pedestal contains a chimney-crypt that once bathed the statue and hall in sacred smoke from the furnace below.

The slab may be raised by one edge by PCs with a combined strength of 30 (or 15 with a sturdy lever or crowbar). Holding the slab in the raised position for one round requires a DC 10 Stamina check for each PC and a single failure means the slab falls. PCs failing a DC 10 Ref save suffer 1d4 hp damage and a

permanent crushing wound. Using a suitable tool, the slab may be slowly prised sideways without lifting.

Moving the slab reveals a shallow crypt within the pedestal. Inside are human remains dressed in scale mail and a locked iron strongbox. The armour is of exceptional quality (AC +1) and is cursed (see below). The box's lock may be picked (DC 15). It contains a skeletal hand fused to a smithing hammer. Wielded by a skilled smith the Hammer of Brigex may be used for magical metalwork. Used in combat it deals +3 damage against foes in metal armour and metallic creatures. The skeletal hand is a holy relic and is destroyed if the box is smashed open.

The scale mail is human sized. When donned it warms noticeably and can be removed immediately. If not removed immediately, the armor cannot be removed by mundane means without killing the wearer (DC 20 Fort save to survive), as it fuses to the underclothing and skin. After one week, the wearer's skin has turned grey and begins to shed metallic particles. After two weeks, the wearer's skin has grown steel scales. After three weeks, the wearer has become a living suit of armour resembling an upright pangolin, no longer requiring food, water, or sleep. All other aspects of the wearer remain unchanged, though they may now be a social outcast due to their condition.

A chimney shaft opens onto the crypt and leads downwards to the furnace below at area 2-2. The shaft is 140' long and a halfling would have little difficulty descending or ascending. Larger PCs can fit provided they are slender and unarmored but must make a luck check or become stuck. If a PC climbs the shaft from area 2-2 and enters the unopened crypt, the vents provide light enough to see and the slab may be slid aside by persistent prising effort.

Area 1-3 – Cells: *The remains of spartan furniture and dusty bedding are strewn about the cells where the temple's inhabitants used to live. Debris litters the floor and the air carries a musty odor.*

Searching this area reveals that one of the cells contains the withered remains of a temple acolyte. Around the acolyte's neck is soot-encrusted forged steel amulet stamped with the gorgon head. The amulet is the holy symbol of Brigex. For the amulet to remain holy, it must be kept covered in soot.

Area 1-4 – Kitchen: *The ceiling of this room collapsed long ago crushing wooden tables and chairs. At the far wall stands a hearth, its dented and rusted cauldron tipped over and wedged under a large block of fallen stone. Shards of smashed crockery cover the floor. A flickering shadow is momentarily visible from under the caldron.*

The rubble makes it very difficult to maneuver in this area. PCs engaged in combat in this area must make a DC 10 Ref save at the start of each round or trip and fall prone.

Searching will reveal 1d20 pieces of well-forged cutlery and kitchen utensils (1 sp each) overlooked by looters.

A large krait lives in the caldron and will surprise a PC who inspects it without precaution.

Krait: Init +3; Atk bite +3 (dmg 1d6 + venom); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP venomous bite causes 1d4 permanent loss of Stamina or DC 15 Fort save for 1d3 temporary loss; SV Fort 0, Ref +6, Will -6; AL N.

The krait, dead or alive, may be milked for its venom by knowledgeable PCs, such as thieves. It has 3 doses of venom, including any that may have been injected into the PCs.

Area 1-5 – Study: *Refuse-filled shelves stand against the walls of this room. An ornate iron table is surrounded by chairs. Three*

withered corpses sit with open books on their laps in a motionless parody of devout study.

The corpses have long disheveled hair. Each wears a tattered robe under pieces of haphazardly chosen armor. The corpses are the priestesses of the temple. The creature inflicted eternal sleep upon them, during which they became un-dead. Still retaining some small kernel of their former selves, the priestesses don armor and hopelessly study and pray for a means to escape their fate.

If approached, the priestesses will rise and confront the PCs. Their moaning for help is easily mistaken for aggression. If not attacked, the priestesses will follow and surround the PCs wailing unintelligibly and pantomiming the story of the fall of the temple. Each wears a soot-encrusted steel amulet stamped with the gorgon head, the holy symbol of Brigex.



Priestess of Brigex (3): Init +1; Atk claw +3 (1d3) and bite +2 (1d4 and Will save at DC 15 or paralyzed for 1d6 hours); AC see below; HD 2d8; hp see below; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation; SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +0, AL C.

1. High priestess in chest plate and a single greave: AC 17; hp 20
2. Priestess in chainmail: AC 15; hp 16
3. Priestess in helmet and a single gauntlet: AC 12; hp 16

Any PC paralyzed experiences visions of a gigantic demonic toad-goat rampaging through the temple and consuming metal ingots by the hundreds.

The armor worn by the priestess is of fine quality and not cursed.

The shelves held books and holy objects. Most of the books rotted away long ago but four remain salvageable: the three being read by the priestesses and a fourth (*Lesser Demons*) on the floor under the study table. The books are as follows:

1. *The Way of All Ore* - Written in an ancient dialect of common, this book describes how to find, extract, and smelt various metal ores, such as iron, tin, and copper. Its cover and spine are of black slate. It is worth 30 gp to a booktrader and much more to those interested in metallurgy.
2. *Unreadable* - This tome is written in a lost script and poor ink that has faded with age. It is worth 20 gp to a booktrader, as a curiosity or for salvage. It is bound in dark green silk. The Judge is encouraged to adapt this book as needed.
3. *First Foundry* - Written in both an ancient dialect of common and a cryptic language known only to the followers of Brigex, this is the holy book of the metal goddess. Its covers and spine are made of fine steel plate bound by ornate chain. It is worth 80 gp to a booktrader and much more to the faithful or religious scholars.
4. *Lesser Demons* - Found under the table, the few unrotted pages of this book describe the general traits of demons and other unholy creatures. It is worth 10 gp mainly for the salvage of its goat hide cover.

Area 1-6 – Elevator: *This room holds a deep shaft. A large open metal box hangs by a heavy chain from an apparatus attached to the*

ceiling. At the other side of the apparatus, the chain extends down into the darkness. A warm stench wafts up from below and stings your eyes.

The shaft is 140' deep. Its walls are roughly hewn and climbable, though the climb is arduous and requires a DC 15 Stamina check (thieves use their climbing skill) or the PC will tire and fall. A falling PC may make a DC 15 Ref save to grab onto the chain if within reach.

PCs may slide down the chain with ease. See area 2-1 for climbing up the chain.

The apparatus is a simple elevator with two pulleys attached to the ceiling. The chain runs down from the pulleys. One end of the chain is attached to the metal box A at the surface. The other end of the chain is attached to a similar metal box B at the bottom of the shaft. Box B is filled with a counterweight of slag. The chain runs in a loop and the bottoms of the boxes are also connected.

Box A can fit up to six PCs. The counterweight balances three human-sized PCs and their gear. If a fourth PC (or other weight) enters box A, the pulleys begin to turn and the occupants descend at 5' per second, passing the ascending counterweighted box B about halfway down, before coming to rest gently at the bottom of the shaft at landing area 2-1. If five or more PCs go for a ride, box A accelerates to uncomfortable speed and lands roughly. The PC with the lowest luck makes a luck check. Failure means that the chain snaps due to the impact and box B comes plummeting down. PCs failing a DC 10 Ref save have a metal box, chain, and slag rain down upon them for 1d20 damage.

See area 2-1 for more.

LOWER TEMPLE (AREA 2)

Area 2-1 – Landing: *You are at the bottom of a deep shaft. The air is hot and laden with a foul stench. Breathing is difficult and your eyes water. On the floor lay chunks of black glassy rock and the shattered remnants of a wooden ladder. There is a wheeled apparatus here.*

The tunnel to 2-2 has rails on its floor. The elevator and wheeled carts were once used to carry offerings to the furnace area 2-2 and storage area 2-3.

The apparatus includes a wheel W with radial handles like a ship's wheel. The wheel may be turned to pull the chain connected to boxes A and B. A pillar P stands next to the wheel. The pillar has a hole that fits the sturdy steel rod found in area 1-2. This locks the wheel in place and secures the chain. Any sturdy object, such as a mace or pitchfork handle, may be inserted into the pillar. If the object is flimsy or made of wood, then the PC placing it must make a luck check or the object breaks if put under load, releasing the chain at some inconvenient moment.

If the PCs arrive here by riding in box A of the elevator, then they must safely exit the box to continue. Once there are two or fewer PCs in box A, the counterweighted box B will begin to descend and raise box A back to the surface. The pillar may be used to lock the wheel to prevent the boxes from moving.

To return to the surface, only two PCs at a time can ride in box A. Box A may be returned to the bottom against the weight of box B by the continuous effort of one or more PCs turning the wheel.

If only one PC rides up in box A, then extra weight must be added otherwise box A reaches dangerous speed during its ascent. A sole PC arriving at the surface in this manner must make a DC 10 Ref save to leap from the box to safely.

Otherwise, the PC rides box A back down at excessive speed when box B is destroyed due to its impact with the shaft bottom.

Assuming it is secured, the chain can be climbed by PCs with strength 10 or higher. Climbing all the way to the surface at area 1-6 requires a DC 13 Stamina check or the PC loses his grip and falls.

The chain is valuable but heavy. Each 10' of length weighs as much as a man and is worth 60 gp.

Area 2-2 – Furnace Altar: *An orange glow fills the tunnel as you approach this large open room. The air burns your throat. A massive furnace stands against the far wall. The furnace has partially collapsed into a large pit in the floor from which an acrid haze radiates.*

Strewn about the room are ingot molds, various smithing tools, and hunks of slag and lava. Everything is overturned and in disarray due to the creature passing through this area. The large metal crucible lies overturned next to the furnace. A lone wooden barrel sits undisturbed in one corner of the room.

The pit opens to a magma river 60' below. Moving between this area and the ingot hoard 2-4 requires careful traversal of the rail track that precariously straddles the pit. A PC simply walking across the rail makes a DC 10 agility check to avoid falling. Any PC falling makes a DC 10 Ref save to grab onto a rail to avoid being incinerated. Careful PCs who use a rope, 10' pole, or other precaution may traverse without check.

The furnace is the altar to Brigex. Its chimney leads 140' up to the inside the pedestal at area 1-2. The furnace is powered by magma from the river below. It has one lever that controls a valve that brings magma up and another lever that opens and closes the chimney louvre. The chimney louvre may be

opened to allow PCs to climb to area 1-2. If the magma valve is opened, magma will slowly rise into the furnace, eventually flooding the room in 2d4 turns. If a PC attempts to close the magma valve, the PC makes a luck check and failure means the lever is jammed and the flood cannot be stopped.

The barrel contains a small amount of glowing blue-white powder. Brigex's flour is an ancient and forgotten reagent used in the forging of steel. It may be used in magical metalwork. Anyone inhaling the powder must make a DC 15 Fort save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours. Anyone foolish enough to eat the powder makes a DC 20 Fort save to avoid being turned to stone and is merely paralyzed for 1d6 hours. Any PC with a metalwork or mining occupation will recognize the purpose of the powder, if not its actual origin and effect. There are six uses of Brigex's flour in the barrel.

Metalwork with Brigex's Flour

1d12 Result when forging a weapon or armor. Add +1 or +2 to the roll based on the blacksmith's skill.

1-3	Fine item: +1 to AC or dmg.
4-6	Superior item: +2 to AC or dmg.
7-8	Exceptional item: Superior as above and the item glows blue-white and may be used as an undying torch.
9-10	Masterwork: Exceptional as above and the item emits an eerie metallic hum during combat causing distraction and fear: User gains +4 to init.
11+	Holy item: Masterwork as above and the item serves Brigex's wrath by allowing the user to cast the 1st level cleric spell Paralysis once per day. A cleric who uses this item gains the spell and receives an extra 1d10 to the spell check while using the item. The item will cast Paralysis on its user in retaliation if used contrary to Brigex's aims (e.g., if used against smiths or snakes). The blacksmith who forged this item had his arm momentarily transformed into the goddess's own arm and is now a level 1 cleric (at Judge's discretion).

Area 2-3 - Offering

Storeroom: *This room is crowded with bins full of ore and shelves containing various metal goods.*

This area is undisturbed as the creature bypassed it on its way to the surface. There is no sign of looting.

The bins contain ore of all kinds brought by the faithful for the priestess to smelt at the furnace altar. The metal goods are sacrifices to be melted down and cast into holy ingots.



Sacrificial Goods

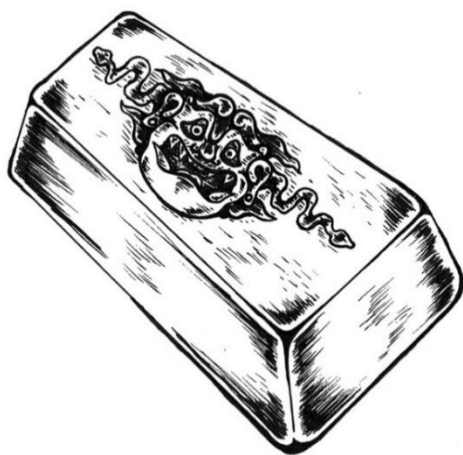
1d30 Roll until done, e.g., 4-6 items. Reroll doubles.

1	Fancy pair of brass knitting needles (1 gp)
2	Large tin cookpot (5 sp)
3	Gold goblet with empty gem settings (10 gp)
4	Steel shortsword with squid emblem on hilt (20 gp)
5	Bronze warhammer with bent handle (8 gp)
6	Steel 10' pole etched with ornate vine pattern (15 gp)
7	Iron bucket containing 158 gold coins minted by a monarch long dead (158 gp)
8	Brass flask, still contains ancient strong-mead (2 gp)
9	Bronze shield with swan-man emblem (20 gp)
10	Set of silver deer antlers, magical; wearer gains stealth +3 and MV +10' (15 gp)
11	Large silver mirror (10 gp)
12	Twenty decorative gold arrows (80 gp)
13	Large sculpture of toadstool in cast iron (8 gp)
14	One platinum bracer bearing a skull emblem and mother-of-pearl trim (45 gp)

15	Copper helmet with owl (8 gp)
16	Bag of sand (0 gp)
17	Orrery of various precious metals (350 gp)
18	Gold death mask, elven (25 gp)
19	Set of eight beer mugs, gilded lead (1 sp each)
20	Brass plate etched with long passage written in minotaur (17 gp)
21	Dwarven machine component made of tin and adorned with menacing spikes of copper (260 gp)
22	Brass stamp used to seal documents with wax, the stamp depicts the familiar of an ancient wizard; familiar is a (1d6): (1) weasel, (2) camel, (3) possum, (4) hummingbird, (5) giant wasp, or (6) rat. (90 gp)
23	Set of eight small figurines representing various military professions in pewter (1 sp each)
24	Hermetically sealed copper sphere, unknown contents (3 gp)
25	Statuette of wolf in silver, legs missing (7 sp)
26	Bronze casting of an infant gnom in a cradle (20 gp)
27	Silver prosthetic arm, human-sized, magically articulated, still useable (750 gp)
28	Small icosahedron with a different demonic marking on each face, made of strange alloy (5 gp)
29	Two-handed sword, made of tin, wieldable as a staff (3 gp)
30	Scale model of occupied outhouse in silver with working door (12 gp)

Area 2-4 - The Ingot

Hall: *This large hall is filled floor to ceiling with stacks of ingots cast of various metals. In the far corner of the room on top of a collapsed stack of steel bars sits a humongous frog-like creature with the head of a goat. An overpowering reek of vomit and bile emanates from its warty body.*



The hall contains a vast amount of refined metal, enough to give even the largest party a lifetime of riches. However, the holy ingot hoard rests on a critically weakened floor over the magma river. It could all plummet into the river at any time.

The creature is Tilutan, an enormous and obese frog with the head of a goat. His frog-tongue can lash out at distant foes. His empty goat-stare entrances all. Tilutan is intelligent, cunning, and willing to bargain. He speaks telepathically, and PCs may speak to him telepathically by directing thoughts to him when near. He does not speak normally, as he prefers to continually chew his profane cud.

If Tilutan is asleep the party may wake him simply by speaking to him. If already awakened, for example by noise made by the party, Tilutan will first try to parley.

Tilutan will ask the party why they have come to the temple. He will respond to questions, steering the dialogue towards making a deal. Tilutan is in grave trouble with his master, a greater demon. Decades ago, Tilutan was tasked with annihilating Brigex by killing her faithful and consuming her statue (area 1-2). However, Tilutan only ate the head of the statue before falling asleep for many years. When he awoke the body of the statue was gone. He cannot now return to his native plane, lest his master flay him. He also cannot roam in search of the statue body, as his master's bond forbids travel outside the temple. He can only wait.

During the conversation, three clear choices will emerge:

Free the Demon: The goddess statue head, along with many other things he has eaten, remains in Tilutan's gut. If anyone speaks his name aloud his bond is broken, and he is free. In exchange, Tilutan will vomit up the prize, along with gallons of foul bile, black cud, and indigestible objects. Tilutan will then bound out of the temple and into the surrounding countryside to eat and wreak havoc. Whoever first speaks his

name will incur the wrath of the master demon and may be able to call on Tilutan in the future.

Fetch the Body: Looters or pirates may have stolen the goddess statue body. Tilutan will allow the party to leave if they swear to return with the body, so that Tilutan can complete his task. The oath must be consecrated with blood and cud.

Die: Tilutan will not let the party leave without a deal that benefits him. He will fight to the death.

The judge is encouraged to provide other options. Tilutan is evil but pragmatic. He will honor his word for a short time and will give special consideration to the first PC to speak his name. Any member of the party not present when a deal is agreed won't be so lucky, unless the party specifically identifies them to Tilutan.

Tilutan: Init +4; Atk see below; AC 15; HD 6d10+7; hp 40; MV 25'; Act 2d20; SP telepathic communication, immune to fire and heat, half damage from non-magical weapons; SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will +6; AL C.

Attacks

1. Gore with goat horns: +4 melee (1d6).
2. Frog-leg kick: +2 melee (1d4 plus DC 10 Fort save or knocked unconscious for 1d4 rounds).
3. Poison frog-tongue lash: +2 range of 30' (1d6 plus DC 15 Fort save or 1d4 temporary loss of Stamina). A successful frog-tongue lash strikes the victim's (1d6): (1) face, (2) neck, (3) hand, (4) arm, (5) leg, or (6) torso and leaves a permanent ever-festering wound.
4. Empty goat stare: +2 range of 30' (DC 15 Will save or sleep until vigorously woken).

Tilutan will first target lawful PCs, especially clerics.

Fighting Tilutan may trigger the collapse of the floor, dropping the demon, unlucky PCs, and the ingot hoard into the magma river below. Judge's discretion should be used, as this could result in the incineration of the entire party.

If Tilutan is slain, his gut may be cut open to recover the goddess statue head. In addition to a disgusting fountain of bile and cud, several other items may also emerge (see the table at area 2-3).

The ingots each bear the gorgon hallmark and may be highly valued by skilled smiths. Industrious PCs could live prosperous lives of leisure merely by selling off ingots from the hoard. However, the unstable floor could put an end to that at any time.

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