



DREAD AND BREAKFAST

AN ADVENTURE FOR
3RD, 8TH, 13TH LEVEL

“MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.”

HELIANA



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USING THIS BOOK

Get ready to dive into a world of dangerous hunts, challenges, and monsters. This book presents all the tools you will need to run an entertaining adventure.

RULE ZERO

You are encouraged to use whichever pieces of this book you like and change the ones you don't. If there is a DC that seems off, a name that doesn't fit, or a quest hook that seems incongruous, then make it your own. Remember: if you're all having fun, you're doing it right.

RUNNING THE HUNT

The adventure in this book is referred to as a hunt. It is a type of adventure in which you find clues, prepare for the fight ahead, and then have a big battle. This hunt can be run at a variety of different average party levels (APLs), listed in the hunt's introduction. The hunt uses the following structure:

Introduction. The name and level of the hunt, as well as a brief synopsis.

Background. The information the GM needs to know about why a monster needs to be hunted! This includes:

- A summary of the monster
- Three quest hooks: curiosity, morality, and compensation
- Monetary and XP rewards
- Brief biographies of key NPCs

Location. The location where the hunt takes place, sometimes containing descriptions of unique flora and fauna or other rules.

Know Thy Enemy. Clues about the monster that, if discovered by the player characters, help them prepare for the battle.

The Battle Ahead. The creature's lair actions, any environmental effects, composition of each wave, and triggers for moving between waves.

Aftermath. This section wraps up each quest hook of the hunt and suggests ways this story can continue and shape your world. The Loot Tavern's bard, Cacophonics, has the link to the song he writes for the party here.

Treasure. Discoverable loot related to the specific boss monster, as well as information related to the optional Tracking and Crafting rules found in the *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting* book.

Beyond Deadly. Death is inevitable. In this book, it is a little *more* inevitable than usual, especially if your party doesn't pick up on the clues and prepare accordingly.

If you have fewer than four player characters or a lower APL than that for which the hunt is balanced, consider lowering the difficulty. This can be achieved by removing some creatures, replacing them with lower CR versions, or using the 'Helping Hand' paragraphs within each hunt to reduce the difficulty. The hunt's boss fight is designed to use a party's entire resources for a day's adventuring, which exceeds the daily XP budget at higher levels.

AVERAGE DAILY XP BUDGET PER HUNT

Level	Daily XP Budget Used per Hunt
1-4	100%
5-10	130%
11-16	160%
17-20	200%

Clues. This hunt contains at least three clues that can be conveyed to the players before combat starts. Understanding the clues is the key to your players preparing for the fight ahead and feeling empowered when their preparations pay off. Every clue has at least one example of how you can convey the information to your players. Note, these are examples! It's still up to you as the GM to make any necessary changes to the story and roleplay interactions to make sure your players understand these clues.

Be obvious when delivering clues. The more you can repeat and illustrate a clue, the more the players will understand it. In addition, prompting the adventurers to summarise what they've learnt by using an NPC to ask questions can engender a much-needed dialogue between players. Furthermore, player characters need time to prepare in a way that allows them to meaningfully act on the clues. It is often both enjoyable and less deadly for players to take a long rest to recover resources, prepare spells, and design a plan that exploits a monster's weaknesses. Be sure to give them the opportunity to prepare!

INTRODUCTION

This hunt, *Dread and Breakfast*, is intended for 3 to 7 characters and is optimised for a party of 4 with an average party level (APL) of 3, 8, or 13. Characters who complete this hunt should earn enough experience to progress one-third of the way to 4th level, one-quarter of the way to 9th level, or half-way to 14th level, respectively. The adventurers must find and end the menace causing a spate of disappearances within the Tanglepines, a shadowy, overgrown forest.

After finding the gory remains of several travellers and caravans, the party stumbles across a homely looking tavern. The tavern is, in fact, an enormous mimic: Dr. Stein's unscrupulous half-brother, Jonjo Starr. After dealing with the resident mimics and being shrunk down to the size of a gold coin, the party must choose to either destroy the congealed, mimified remains of Jonjo Starr, or perform a ritual to summon Dr. Stein to clean up the mess.

BACKGROUND

The Tanglepines are a long stretch of dark, root-filled woods. A narrow area in this forested expanse, known as the Neck, is the shortest route between two nearby trading hubs. Though Dr. Stein's experiments regularly escape his wizard's tower, his magical wards around this trading route redirect his chimeric creations, keeping trade flowing and the local nobility happy. However, trade caravans have been going missing of late and rumours abound of a deadly creature: the Tanglepine Terror.

Though everyone has heard of the infamous golemancer and progenitor of the school of biomancy, Dr. Francis Norman Stein, few are familiar with his half-brother, Jonjo Starr. Tired of relying on Stein's magical artifice to extend his life, Jonjo decided to put his limited wizardly expertise to the test and pursue a path towards lichdom. While house-sitting in Stein's wizard tower, Jonjo took the opportunity to create his phylactery using his favourite, perpetually-refilling amphora. Unfortunately, he confused a mimic with this vessel and the ritual went awry, dragging the biomancy-infused wizard tower into a maelstrom of magic.

This bizarre combination of biomantically altered humanoid-mimic now roams the forest, feasting on unwitting travellers as a shapeshifting building: the Tanglepine Terror. Due to Jonjo's shared genetic heritage with Stein, the Terror is immune to the doctor's wards and has been preying on creatures in and around the Neck.

After one too many caravans failed to emerge from the Neck, Dr. Stein has come under pressure from the local trade magnates and has requested Heliana's help in ridding the forest of the Terror. In addition, he asks for help in finding his half-brother and home, which he appears to have misplaced (his memory isn't what it used to be). Unbeknownst to Stein, the two events are linked and the party will have a choice as to how the hunt concludes: can Jonjo be saved or must the menace be put down!?

FUTURE HOOKS: DR. STEIN

Though not explored in this hunt, the inventions of Dr. Stein can be found plaguing many towns, regions, and biomes. Feel free to use Stein as the (ignorant and inadvertent) cause of any chimeric menace or monstrous pest.

SUMMARY

Here's the hunt breakdown:

- **Which Monster?** The Tanglepine Terror, a tavern mimic that takes the form of a homely tavern.
- **Monster's Motivation.** To consume enough creatures to sustain itself. Jonjo Starr previously wanted to become a lich and gain immortality.
- **Monster's Previous Actions.** Several dozen travellers have gone missing (and been eaten by the tavern). In addition, Dr. Stein's tower, along with his half-brother, Jonjo, are also missing.
- **Where's the Monster?** Deep in the Tanglepines, a gloomy, dense forest. When it gets hungry, it positions itself at conspicuous crossroads in the Neck, where travellers may be tempted to take a rest.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Two seemingly disconnected events in the same location can be a tempting prospect for most parties; who doesn't like to be efficient when adventuring?

- **Curiosity: Moving House.** Dr. Stein has lost his tower, along with his half-brother, Jonjo Starr. "Houses don't typically just disappear. In fact, the term 'moving house' is quite a misnomer when you think about it," says Dr. Stein to any who will listen. "Well, it's possible the latent biomantic magic caused the stones to gain sentience and wander off, or maybe my memory isn't what it used to be, but I can't find my tower anywhere. Or my half-brother. Mum will go mad, if I ever re-animate her..."
- **Morality: Lost in the Woods.** Travellers have been going missing in the Tanglepines. As patron of the woods, Stein feels responsible for the protection of those that travel through it. It wouldn't be unusual for one of his inventions to have escaped again... The travellers' belongings are often entirely untouched, ruling out bandits or robbery. It's likely that it's some sort of hunting predator that needs to become a monster hunter's prey.
- **Compensation: Patron of the Pines.** As the shortest route between nearby trading hubs, safe passage through the Tanglepines has become an economic necessity. Local nobility put up with Stein's eccentric ways so long as the trade route was kept clear. Now that whatever magic he previously relied upon has obviously failed, they're putting pressure on him to clear it up or clear out. In response, he offers a hearty reward to any who can kill the Tanglepine Terror.

Dr. Stein. This infamous biomancy wizard is now more arcanomechanical life-support system than flesh. As Patron of the Pines, Stein acts as the party's liaison for the quest hooks above. In addition, he provides them with a small painting of his half-brother and a *blob of biomatter*, a magical device that allows the party to establish a transponder to which Stein can rapidly teleport. He shows them how to activate it, a process which takes just short of twenty seconds, and states that this is only to be used if they find his tower or his half-brother.

HUNT REWARDS PER PLAYER CHARACTER

Hunt Level	Gold		XP*
	Restoring Safety to the Neck	Finding Stein's Brother	
3rd	250 gp	125 gp	900
8th	1,250 gp	550 gp	3,900
13th	3,500 gp	1,500 gp	10,000

*Includes all monsters, traps, and puzzles, averaged for a party of 4.

TANGLEPINES

Once a rich source of ruler-straight lumber, the conifers of this forest have become gnarled and twisted over the years. The cause of this change is, of course, Dr Stein. Biomantic magic seeping from his laboratory acted to accelerate the "perfectly-normal natural selection that would have occurred anyway." As lumberjacks seek only the straightest timbers to fell, it is the more twisted trees that would survive to propagate, producing more twisted offspring. What Stein articulately fails to mention is that this should happen between generations; the trees shouldn't be choosing to change their morphology in an act of defiance!

TRACKING

Finding the Tanglepine Terror isn't particularly difficult; meandering back and forth across the Neck, a half-day's journey, will eventually bring any travellers into contact with it. The trick is identifying what the Terror is and reaching it before it eats anyone else. The Terror is clever enough to retreat away from the Neck while it digests and assimilates its latest prey. To this end, you can present the party with a choice: patrol the main trade route of the Neck, or venture into the deep of the forest.

Whenever the party attempts to Track the Terror, you can have them make **VDC Wisdom (Survival) checks**. You can also use the optional Tracking rules and random encounters available in *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting*.

- **The Neck.** If the party stays in the Neck, they need four Tracking checks and zero successes. Failed checks don't result in any random encounters; the Neck's magic and reputation precludes hostile encounters. However, to up the ante, whenever a Tracking check is failed, you can have an interaction with some other traveller who mentions another group having disappeared.

- **The Deep.** If the party strays away from the Neck into the deep of the Tanglepines, they need two checks and two successes. The size of the Terror and the density of the woodland makes its tracks fairly obvious; Tracking checks made away from the Neck have **advantage**. Regardless of whether the Tracking check is a failure or not, the party has a hostile encounter.

You can unveil the clues in the Know Thy Enemy section after the third tracking check (if the adventurers explore the Neck) or after the first success (if they explore the Deep). Each Tracking check is suggested to take one day.

UNIQUE FLORA & FAUNA

The Tanglepines are home to all manner of Stein's experiments. Let your imagination run wild: if a unique chimaera of different beasts could be conceived, it probably exists in the Tanglepines. Here are some examples:

Owlboars. *Wizarding Weekly*, the premier monthly wizarding newspaper (they miss a lot of deadlines) did a feature on 'Owlbears'. An apparently accidental fusion of mammal and bird, it went on to flourish in the wild forests of the world. Not to be outdone, Dr. Stein attempted to recreate the feat. Unfortunately, words were never his strong suit; the letters always got mixed around. Thus, the owlboar was born.

Aggressive from birth, owlboars get no less combative as they age. The owlboar is amongst the few flying species that dive at their targets with the intention of hitting them head first, a strategy that might prove fatal to both parties, if not for the owlboar's thick, muscular neck.

Froption. No phylum is safe from Dr. Francis Norman Stein. Adored by chefs, deplored by fisherfolk, the half-frog-half-scorpion is as deadly as it is tasty. This amphibisect is widely regarded as Dr. Stein's second most irritating creation, after the overly-territorial owlboar. While its muscular hind legs—a delicacy in many locales—are a plyometric masterpiece, its barbed, prehensile tongue is the real danger and the downfall of many a waterman. With grasping pincers, a potent venom, and corrosive stomach acid, little trace is left of those that encounter a froption unprepared.

Changeberry. This colourful shrub can be spotted in the Tanglepines' undergrowth. Its golden, plum-sized fruit continuously matures year-round and has a unique property: its taste can't be predicted. For this reason, *Auranus variflava* has become known as the "Every Flavoured Berry Bush", and eating the fruit is a popular dare amongst teenagers that live close to the Tanglepines. At least... it's popular until it's not.



JESSE JACKDAW BURNS

FRPTION

OWLBOAR

KNOW THY ENEMY

While searching the Tanglepines, the party can come across one or more clearings with various clues: the remains of the Terror's meals (a pile of bones and metal), a confusing set of footprints, and a survivor: Guthric, a caravaner's apprentice. Investigating these and talking to Guthric can divulge the following information about the Terror:

- It deals acid damage.
- It is a shape-changing building, a mimic.
- Stein's wards keep it from being damaged from the exterior; it must be entered to be fought. Once inside, anything can be targeted to harm the tavern mimic.

Clearings. If running this hunt as a one-shot, you can choose to show all the clues in a single clearing, reading or paraphrasing the read-aloud opposite. Otherwise, for a longer build up, you can split the clues between clearings encountered during each Tracking check.

Arriving in a clearing, you observe three things: a roughly rectangular outline in the dirt, a pile of bleached bones and shiny metal, and a patch of burned and blackened earth. A loaded cart sits under the canopy of the surrounding trees, its harness splintered and broken. A 40-foot-wide path of trampled ground leads off into the forest.

CLUE 1: ACID

The Tanglepine Terror consumes those who enter it, amputating their feet and dissolving their flesh to fuel its quest for immortality. The pile of bones and metal is its excrement, inorganic solids that it can't digest. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check identifies the bleaching on the bones and the tarnish-free metal to be products of acid damage. In addition, a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that the pile doesn't contain any bones from the ankle downwards (the feet and ankles of all the creatures were amputated and used to move the Terror).

CLUE 2: MIMIC TAVERN

The Tanglepine Terror is a mimic that takes the shape of a warm and inviting tavern. When it moves, it sprouts hundreds of mismatched feet, trampling undergrowth and toppling trees.

Footprints. Around the edge of the clearing are hundreds of footprints, all facing outwards, away from the bones. Tracing the line of the footprints reveals a rectangular perimeter, around 100 feet by 40 feet. The footprints are each obviously unique: some are small, others large, some have claws, others look to be webbed. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** check identifies that the footprints are all humanoid.

A PILE OF BLEACHED BONES AND TARNISH-FREE METALS FOUND NEARBY CAUSED BY ACID CORROSION.

NO BONES FROM THE KNEE DOWNWARD WERE FOUND.



HANDOUT 1. SCAT

SETS OF FOOTPRINTS FOUND OUTSIDE OF CLEARING.

A VARIETY OF HUMANOID FOOTPRINTS ALL FACE OUTWARD.



HANDOUT 2. FOOTPRINTS

CLUE 3: WARDED

Dr. Stein placed multiple arcane wards on his wizard's tower. Some prevent erosion, others hinder thieves, and a few make it smell nice. The sum of these effects is that the tower, and now the Tanglepine Terror, is functionally immune to being attacked from the outside. It must be entered to be defeated.

Guthric. Guthric (LG male human **commoner**) hides behind a cart in one of the clearings. He is scared and alone, despite displaying an outwardly stoic demeanour. His presence is detected by creatures with a **passive Wisdom (Perception)** score of 15 or higher. He approaches the party if he

overhears them talking about tracking a monster, eager to impart his experience.

Guthric's caravaner master, an elf named Scilva, never paid for Guthric or the guards to sleep in any inns, including the one the caravan stopped by last night. Accordingly, he was sleeping outside with his colleagues when the screams started in the tavern. The guards ran inside, but never emerged, and when Guthric threw a bottle of alchemist's fire at the building, it was deflected to one side, causing the patch of burned and blackened ground. Before the curtains were drawn, all Guthric could see were shapes swinging weapons at the walls and furniture.



HANDOUT 3. WARDED EXTERIOR

THE BATTLE AHEAD

This hunt is a bit different. Instead of fighting the creature in its lair, the tavern mimic is its own lair. The party can only harm the tavern mimic by entering it and fighting it from within.

Inside the Belly of the Beast. There are two types of creatures that can be targeted by the player characters inside the tavern mimic: the smaller mimic creatures (**swarms of baby mimics**, **mimics**, and **mirrormimics**) and the tavern itself. The patrons, walls, furniture, and floor are all part of the tavern mimic; treat them as having an AC and saving throw modifiers equal to the relevant tavern mimic stat block (see wave 3, page 15). The tavern mimic automatically fails Dexterity saving throws. For ongoing effects that trigger when a creature “starts its turn in the area” or likewise, treat the tavern mimic as having an initiative count of 0.

Waves. A wave ends when the party has dealt a combined amount of damage to the tavern or its mimic inhabitants (see Wave Damage Thresholds table). Be sure to keep track of this.

Special Effects. Areas of effect and ongoing damage effects count towards the wave damage threshold in a slightly different manner: only one instance of the damage dealt by an effect per round is added to the total. This is either the first instance, or, if multiple creatures are affected simultaneously, the highest damage. For example, if a character casts *fireball* on a chair-mimic, it would also target the ground beneath the mimic. The tavern mimic automatically fails Dexterity saving throws, so the full damage of the *fireball* would be counted towards the threshold, even if the chair-mimic succeeded on its saving throw.

WAVE DAMAGE THRESHOLDS

Hunt Level	Wave 1	Wave 2
3rd	90	180
8th	230	460
13th	350	700

A TAVERN'S DOMAIN

Tavern mimics set up shop along busy trade routes, at well-travelled crossroads, or in mountain passes where no other respite is available. Benign tavern mimics often become recognised features in the landscape, while more hostile tavern mimics move frequently, lest their malevolent existence is discovered.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The area within 6 miles of the tavern mimic's favourite spot (e.g., its preferred crossroads) has the following properties:

- **Trampled Terrain.** Trampled ground consisting of hundreds of unique footprints can be found criss-crossing the region. Tracking checks that aim to follow footprints other than the tavern mimic's have **disadvantage**.
- **Bleached Bones.** Piles of bleached bones and inorganic matter, such as coins and gemstones, can be found in small piles in the region. Sometimes, gold coins among these caches are mimic eggs (see **swarm of baby mimics**, page 26).
- **Odd Stories.** Folks that have travelled through the region often inadvertently take shelter inside the mimic. They tell tales of strange proprietors and bartenders that communicate with one another without talking, of especially comfortable beds, and of fellow travellers that “leave before the crack of dawn” and are never seen again.

Helping Hand. At any time during the battle, an owl animal messenger belonging to Dr. Stein can fall down the tavern's chimney, before distributing *potions of healing* (normal, greater, or superior at 3rd, 8th, or 13th level, respectively) to any number of party members and exploding in a puff of feathers.

LAIR ACTIONS

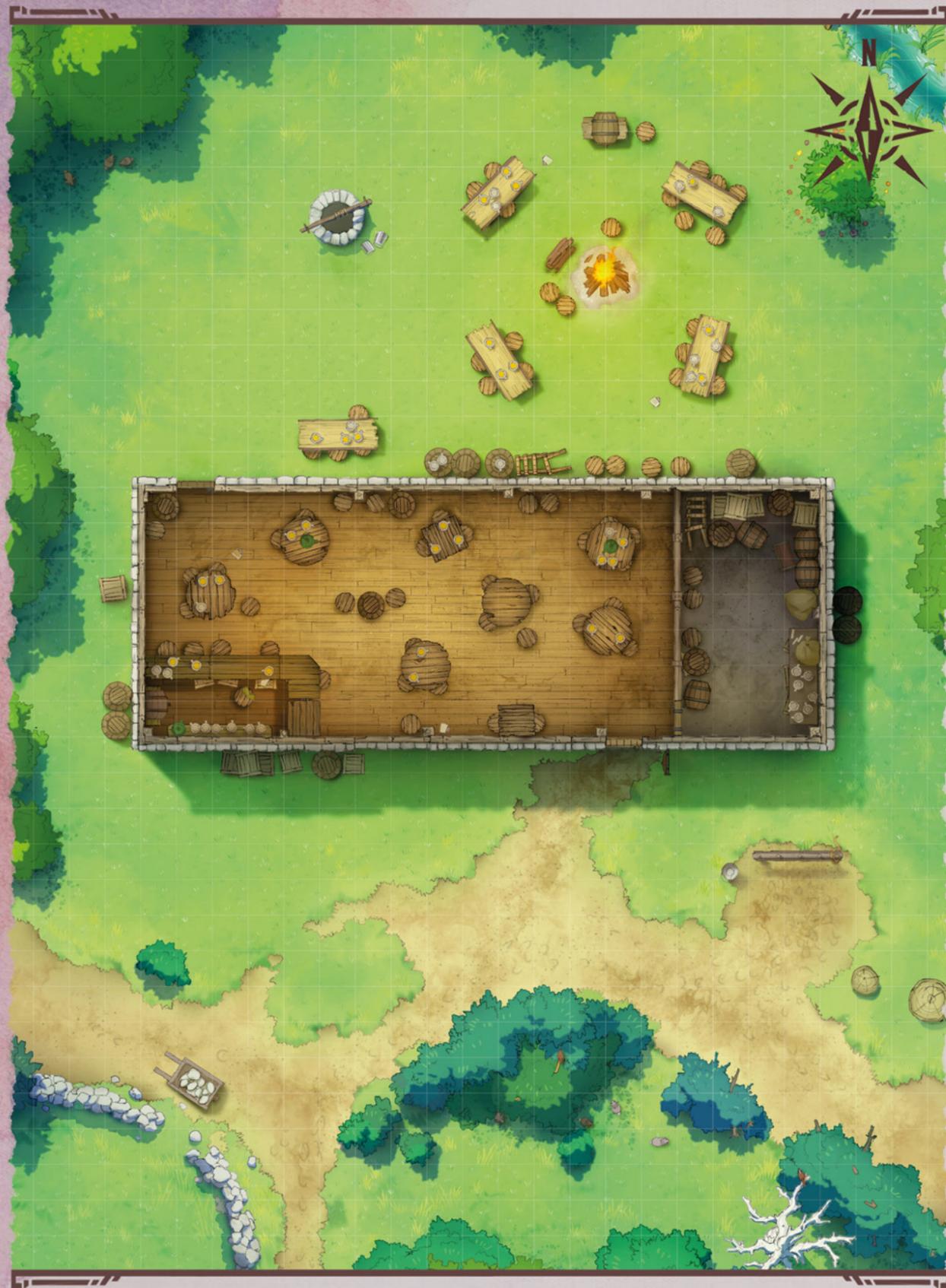
A tavern mimic's lair is its internal biosphere. While the tavern mimic lives, it can take the following lair actions. The saving throw DC and damage of the lair actions depend on the level at which you run the hunt, as shown in the following table.

VARIABLE LAIR ACTION STATISTICS

Hunt Level	VDC	Vdam
3rd	12	3 (1d6)
8th	14	7 (2d6)
13th	16	14 (4d6)

GM TIP

Write down the information in this table for your hunt level so you don't have to keep flicking back and forth!



MAP 1. THE TAVERN

CARTOGRAPHER:
CZE & PEKU

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

CZE & PEKU; OPPOSITE: OGNEN SPORIN

Lair Actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the tavern mimic takes one of the following lair actions; the mimic can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row.

- ♦ **Drool.** The tavern mimic secretes acid from a part of its ceiling in a **30-foot square**. Each creature directly under the area must make a **VDC Dexterity saving throw**, taking **Vdam** acid damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.
- ♦ **Peristalsis.** A wave shudders through the tavern mimic as its hidden musculature contracts. Each non-mimic creature in the tavern must make a **VDC Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, a creature is pushed **15 feet** in a direction of the tavern mimic's choice, where it falls **prone** and takes **Vdam** bludgeoning damage. On a success, it is moved **5 feet** in a direction of the tavern mimic's choice, takes no damage, and doesn't fall prone.

- ♦ **Sink.** A **10-foot square** of the tavern mimic's floor becomes incredibly soft and sticky for the next **minute**. Each creature on the floor in the area, or that enters the area for the first time on its turn, must succeed on a **VDC Strength saving throw** or become **restrained**. A creature that ends its turn while restrained in this way sinks **2 feet** into the tavern's floor and takes **Vdam** acid damage. A creature that sinks below its height can't breathe.

A creature within **5 feet** of a creature restrained in this way, including the restrained creature, can make a **VDC Strength** check, freeing the stuck creature and pulling it to the nearest non-sinking area on a success. The area is difficult terrain for all non-mimic creatures until the tavern mimic finishes a short or long rest.



ENTERING THE TAVERN

When the party finally finds the tavern (either after their fourth Tracking check in the Neck, or their second successful check in the Deep, see Tracking, page 4), it isn't immediately obvious that it is a mimic. Inside is a warm, inviting light, and the sound of mirth and laughter. You can read the following:

The sound of laughter and merriment echoes from a warmly lit wooden building in a forest clearing ahead. The shapes of cavorting drinkers can be observed, silhouetted through the sackcloth curtains inside the inn. Hundreds of differing footprints lead right up to the building's walls, where they suddenly stop.

When the party enters the tavern, you can read the following:

The dozen or so patrons of this tavern look to be having a rip roaring time as a smokeless fire burns in a hearth, a pot of something astringent bubbling over it. Despite the fire, the air is cold and stale. "Ah, new customers!" says the landlady from behind the bar, lifting enough filled tankards up to the bar's countertop for the entire party in an impossible display of digital strength and dexterity. "First one's on the house!" she exclaims, fixing them with an unblinking smile.

Trap: Tankards. The tankards are filled with acid, not beer, and a character that drinks from it takes **Vdam** acid damage.

Something's Wrong. After the party enters, a patron shuts the door, which seals shut. Shortly after this, the player character with the highest passive **Wisdom (Perception)** score notices an eye appear in a wall, and then disappear. The character with the highest passive **Wisdom (Insight)** score notices that all the patrons have the same fixed smile, tone of voice, and pattern of speech. A minute after this, the character with the highest passive **Intelligence (Investigation)** score notices that everyone seems to be repeating the same gestures and phrases, as if in a loop. Investigating the fire reveals that it produces no heat.

WAVE 1: FURNITURE

If the player characters act in a hostile manner or try to leave the tavern, the smaller mimics inside the building attack them. Use Map 1. The Tavern.

Waiting Outside. After the door has sealed itself shut, a creature that touches the tavern from the outside must succeed on a **VDC Strength saving throw** or be sucked inside the tavern.

ENEMIES

The enemies in wave 1 are smaller mimics inside the tavern:

Level 3. At 3rd level, the wave 1 combatants are:

- 1 **mimic** (CR 2)
- 2 **swarms of baby mimics*** (CR ½)

Level 8. At 8th level, the wave 1 combatants are:

- 1 **mirrormic*** (CR 6)
- 3 **mimics** (CR 2)
- 3 **swarms of baby mimics*** (CR ½)

Level 13. At 13th level, the wave 1 combatants are:

- 4 **mirrormics*** (CR 6)
- 6 **mimics** (CR 2)

*See Appendix C

TACTICS

The mimics always try to take advantage of their traits by first hitting a creature with a pseudopod attack, subjecting it to their Adhesive trait, and then trying to bite the target (hopefully with **advantage**, thanks to their Grappler trait). The mirrormics position themselves to target as many creatures as possible with their Distort action, and favour targeting creatures that look away with their pseudopod and bite attacks.

WAVE 2: SHRINK

On initiative count 20 after the damage threshold for wave 1 is reached, any remaining mimic creatures merge with the tavern and are no longer part of the encounter. The tavern mimic shrinks the adventurers and their equipment to be 2 inches tall and transports them onto a table it produces. Baby mimics—forks, coins, and other table-top paraphernalia—assail the player characters. Use Map 2. Dinner Table (page 14). Due to the change in size, these baby mimics have statistics equivalent to their bigger cousins (use the stated statistics in Enemies, below, but flavour them as baby mimics). Relative to the adventurers' size, the table is 100 feet tall and the purple goo, which is difficult terrain, is 2 feet deep.

With a lurch, a long table sprouts out of the floor and a bizarre feeling of vertigo takes over each of you. Everything looms larger as you realise you've been shrunk! The table's various accoutrements stir, small pseudopods drawing them closer!

ENEMIES

In wave 2, the enemies are baby mimics with the stat blocks of their larger cousins, **mimics** and **mirrormics**.

Level 3. At 3rd level, the wave 2 combatants are:

- 4 low-threat **mimics** (CR 1; half their normal hit point maximum)

Level 8. At 8th level, the wave 2 combatants are:

- 5 high-threat **mimics** (CR 3; **100 hit points**, speed of **30 feet**, +7 attack modifier and a new action: "**Multiattack**. The mimic makes two attacks: one with its Pseudopod and one with its Bite.")
- 2 **mimics**

Level 13. At 13th level, the wave 2 combatants are:

- 4 **mirrormics*** (CR 6)
- 3 high-threat **mimics** (CR 3; see above)

*See Appendix C

TACTICS

The mimics surround the player characters and quickly close in. As in the previous wave, the mimics use their pseudopodia first before resorting to their bite. The mirrormics precede this by using their Distort action.





1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

CARTOGRAPHER:
CZE & PEKU

MAP 2.
DINNER TABLE

WAVE 3: JONJO STARR

When the damage threshold of wave 2 is reached, the table disappears and the players return to normal size. The players return to Map 1. The Tavern. That's when Jonjo Starr materialises out of one of the tavern walls, and the final fight begins. You can read the following to narrate the end of the second wave:

As the world seems to shrink around you, a humanoid figure extrudes itself from the wall of the tavern. Webs of pale lilac filaments stretch taut as the discoloured but unmistakable face of Jonjo Starr looms over you. The building shudders with his hoarse voice: "You're proving to be quite the nuisance..."

Blob of Biomatter. The party has a choice. They can defeat Jonjo's tavern mimic form through combat, or summon Stein using the *blob of biomatter* they were given earlier. To activate the blob, one creature must use its action to manipulate it each round. On initiative count 0 of the third round this action is taken, Dr. Stein appears and traps his

brother-tavern mimic in a magical locket around his neck, returning the party to the forest outside.

Central Nervous System. Jonjo Starr is the central nervous system of this tavern mimic. As per usual, any damage dealt to the central nervous system is transferred to the tavern mimic. In addition, if the nervous system takes damage, it takes additional psychic damage (see statistics, pages 28 - 29).

ENEMIES

In wave 3, the enemy is the tavern mimic, Jonjo Starr, and some mimic allies.

Level 3. At 3rd level, the wave 3 combatants are:

- 1 emaciated tavern mimic brain* (CR 3)
- 1 low-threat mimic (CR 1; half normal hit point maximum)

Level 8. At 8th level, the wave 3 combatants are:

- 1 tavern mimic brain* (CR 9)
- 1 mirrormic* (CR 6)

Level 13. At 13th level, the wave 3 combatants are:

- 1 nourished tavern mimic brain* (CR 15)
- 2 mirrormics* (CR 6)

*See Appendix C



TACTICS

The mimic uses its lair and legendary actions to control the battlefield, grouping player characters before unleashing devastating area of effect attacks. The first step is to restrain or knock prone creatures using the Sink or Peristalsis lair actions. The second step is to cast a spell with a Dexterity saving throw like the *corrupting ichor* and *acid rain* spells, or the Drool lair action. The mimic reserves its reactions to counter spellcasters using its *zippit!* spell, raise its AC with the *shield* spell, or teleport away from melee attackers with its Central Nervous System reaction.

OPTIONAL ENDING: DIGESTIF

If you're running a one-shot, there might not be much point in continuing the game after the epic boss battle. Instead, you can use this optional ending to give an even-more-climactic conclusion to the hunt. If the party resolves the situation 'peacefully' by summoning Stein, you can describe it as only the Jonjo Starr portion of the mimic being trapped in the locket; the party still has to escape from the tavern. When the mimic is slain, or when Stein captures his half-brother, the tavern begins to implode:

With a sound like a hundred wet farts, the structure of the tavern begins to fold in on itself, squeezing the air through the flapping doors that flutter loosely in their frames. Astringent gases bubble out of the floor, filling the room with a stinging humidity. The floor compresses under the weight of your footsteps, making movement almost impossible. A yellow liquid begins filling the room at an alarming rate as the furniture turns into shapeless mush.

Mechanics. The tavern becomes difficult terrain and, at initiative count 0 of each round, the tavern fills with 1 foot of potent acid. Each creature still in the tavern at initiative count 0 takes **Vdam** acid damage for each foot of acid in the tavern. At the start of each creature's turn, it must succeed on a **VDC Strength saving throw** or fall **prone** and have its speed reduced to **0 feet** until the start of its next turn. At the end of the 3rd round after the tavern mimic is defeated, the structure entirely collapses and stops filling with acid.

AFTERMATH

Here are some possible developments after the hunt concludes:

- The surrounding nobles don't grant Stein planning permission for a new tower and he seeks more isolated lands where his creations won't cause so much havoc.
- With Stein gone, his wards eventually give way and the Neck becomes too dangerous! Alternative transport, such as airships and an underground 'locomotive', are developed by Baron Bodrum Businesses Inc.
- In addition, there are plenty of escort opportunities for a party of mercenaries, as well as hunt contracts for the deadly chimeras of the Tanglepines.
- Stein pays the agreed compensation and, if his half-brother is saved, offers to teach any wizard in the party one biomancy spell free of charge (see Appendix B).
- Stein's mimic and chimeric creations spread across the lands. Feel free to make new monsters by giving features of beasts and monstrosities to other creatures!
- Baby mimics in the form of gold coins disperse themselves, courtesy of the traders and scavengers who pass through the Tanglepines. Occasionally, when a party member tries to pay for something, they get bitten by one of the coins and take 1 piercing damage.

MAWLING MAUL



MICHELLE MUELLER

CACOPHONICS

When the party returns to the Loot Tavern, the resident bard, Cacophonics, badgers the party for details of their hunt. Upon hearing the tale of the tavern he becomes very quiet and isn't seen for a few days, as he investigates the Loot Tavern for signs of mimicry. Eventually, he appears back on stage with the following song.



YOU CAN PLAY THE SONG BY SCANNING OR CLICKING ON THE QR CODE, OR BY TYPING IN THE URL BELOW.

[HELIANA.LT/TAVERNIMIMIC](https://heliana.lt/tavernmimic)

This tale begins amongst the trees
Our heroes travel peacefully
But there's no others to be seen
And then appears a tavern

They're cautious so they enter slow
The tavern puts on quite a show
But something feels wrong down below
The monster has tempted them in

The building starts to move and quake
The monster's belly is awake
Our heroes must fight to escape
But what can they do to attack

The ceiling starts by raining down
And everything seems larger now
They draw their weapons navigate
And fight through this shapeshifting monster

Our friends have shown their bravest side
Battled monsters from inside
Courageous til the end of fight
And so ends this tale of the tavern



HEADBANGER LUTE

MICHELLE MUELLER

TREASURE

In the remains of the tavern mimic is a variety of bright and shiny coins, as well as a number of preserved monster components (GM's choice).

TAVERN TREASURE

Hunt Level	Coins	Monster Components
3rd	3d6 x 50 gp	2 + <i>frail essence</i>
8th	3d6 x 100 gp	3 + <i>robust essence</i>
13th	3d6 x 200 gp	4 + <i>potent essence</i>



MIMICKEY

HARVESTING

You can use the optional Harvesting rules available in *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting* to harvest the tavern mimic. The tavern mimic has the following unique components, in addition to ones normal for a monstrosity. In the remains of the tavern mimic is a *mimickey* (see page 23), which requires only harvesting supplies to preserve (if you use that optional rule), and can be socketed on any held or worn item. The food component for the unique recipe is *monstrosity (tavern mimic) tongue (flesh)*.

TAVERN MIMIC HARVEST TABLE

Component DC	Components
10	<i>Pouch of teeth</i> (∞)
15	<i>Tongue</i> ^E (2), <i>stomach</i> (4)
20	<i>Brain</i> (1), <i>skin</i> (5)

^E Indicates component is edible

CRAFTING

The following unique items can be crafted from the tavern mimic's components. You can use the optional Crafting rules available in *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting*.

TAVERN MIMIC CRAFTABLE ITEMS

Item	Item Type	Rarity	Attunement	Magical Components	Essence	Value**
<i>Breastplank</i>	Armour (breastplate, half plate, or plate)	Uncommon	Required	<i>Monstrosity (tavern mimic) skin</i>	<i>Frail</i>	1,200 gp
		Rare			<i>Robust</i>	3,200 gp
		Very rare			<i>Potent</i>	11,500 gp
<i>Headbanger Lute</i>	Club or greatclub	Uncommon	Required	<i>Monstrosity (tavern mimic) stomach</i>	<i>Frail</i>	800 gp
		Very rare			<i>Potent</i>	9,600 gp
<i>Mawling Maul</i>	Weapon (any hammer*)	Uncommon	—	<i>Pouch of monstrosity (tavern mimic) teeth</i>	<i>Frail</i>	650 gp
		Rare			<i>Robust</i>	1,600 gp
<i>Spelleater Tome</i>	Wondrous item	Uncommon	Required	<i>Monstrosity (tavern mimic) brain</i>	<i>Frail</i>	850 gp
		Rare			<i>Robust</i>	2,700 gp

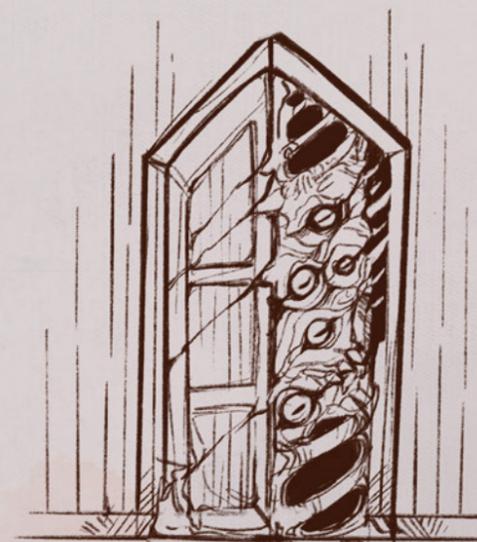
*Includes club, greatclub, light hammer, mace, maul, and warhammer.

**This is the 'off the shelf' purchase cost and can vary significantly from the crafting cost.



Like all mimics, tavern mimics lay eggs. These baby mimics have a limited number of forms they can take, and often appear as a pile of gold coins. This coin form is, in fact, their dispersal strategy. Mixed into a traveller's purse, a baby mimic can quickly find itself miles from home, and able to feed on the fingertips of consumers and pickpockets alike. Like the common cuckoo bird, a baby mimic will often push normal coins and other baby mimics out of a purse to ensure it is more likely to be spent.

— Heliana, Camping Enthusiast



MICHELLE MUELLER

JESSE JACKDAW BURNS

APPENDIX A — MAGIC ITEMS

BREASTPLANK

Armour (breastplate, half plate, or plate), uncommon (requires attunement)

The mundane appearance of this suit of armour belies the danger of its true nature. The wood feels soft and sticky to the touch, and eyes and teeth spontaneously form all over its surface as the mimic grows bolder... and hungrier.

Sticky Situation. While you're wearing this armour, creatures have **disadvantage** on ability checks made to avoid or escape being grappled by you. A creature grappled by you takes **1d10** acid damage at the start of each of its turns.

Rare variant: Increase the acid damage to **1d12**. The item has the Quick Grip property.

Quick Grip. While wearing this armour, you can attempt to grapple a creature as a bonus action.

Very rare variant: Increase the acid damage to **1d12**. The item has the Quick Grip and Tongue Lash properties.

Tongue Lash. While wearing this armour, you can use a bonus action to cause the mimic's tongue to elongate and attempt to pull a creature you can see within **15 feet** of you. The target must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength saving throw** or take **1d6** bludgeoning damage and be pulled up to **15 feet** towards you. A Huge or larger creature automatically succeeds on this saving throw. If this property pulls a creature to within **5 feet** of you, you can immediately attempt to grapple it as part of the same bonus action.



BREASTPLANK



MICHELLE MUELLER

HEADBANGER LUTE

Club or greatclub, uncommon (requires attunement)

The shapechanging abilities of the mimic infuse this musical instrument, a lute, with the propensity to subtly alter its shape and produce excellent acoustics. It also exudes a corrosive acid that can be a useful addition when the musician's plan to charm a foe with a sweet serenade doesn't go to plan.

This magic weapon deals an additional **1d8** acid damage to the first target that it hits on a turn. If you have proficiency with lutes, you're considered proficient with this weapon as well.

Ventriloquism. As a bonus action while holding the lute, you can command it to mimic simple sounds it has been exposed to, such as a person whispering, swords clashing, or simple melodies. You can choose for the sounds to originate from any point within **30 feet** of you that you can see. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they're imitations with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check.

Very rare variant: Increase the **DC** to **16**. The lute has the Club Music property.

Club Music. As an action while holding the lute, you can play one of two brief but powerful songs. Once a song has been played, you can't play that song again until the next dawn.

1. Panic! at the Tavern. You let loose a fast, chaotic melody that sows panic in the minds of your foes, forcing each creature of your choice within **15 feet** of you that can hear you to make a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw**. On a failed save, a creature takes **6d6** psychic damage and is **frightened** of you for **1 minute**. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't frightened. A creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

2. Mithrallica. You unleash an ear-shattering power chord that blows your foes away, forcing each creature in a **25-foot cone** to make a **DC 16 Strength saving throw**. On a failed save, a creature takes **6d6** thunder damage and is pushed **20 feet** away from you, knocked **prone**, and **deafened** for **1 minute**. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and suffers no other effects. A creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the deafened condition on itself on a success.



HEADBANGER LUTE

MICHELLE MUELLER

MAWLING MAUL

Weapon (any hammer), uncommon

Burning with ravenous hunger and unquenchable hunger, this mimic-infused weapon struggles relentlessly against the sturdy iron chains that bind it. Loosening the chains stimulates the weapon's digestive juices which, if not quenched, can have caustic consequences for its wielder.

Mimic Unleashed. As a bonus action while holding the hammer, you can loosen the chains restraining the mimic, leaving it free to mercilessly maul your foes. While the chains are loose, the hammer bites targets that it hits, dealing an extra **1d4** piercing damage.

If you end your turn holding the hammer while the chains are loose, and you didn't hit a creature with an attack using the hammer that turn, the hammer's excess digestive juices pour down the handle and you take **1d4** acid damage. The chains tighten on their own if the hammer isn't held for **1 minute** or if you use a bonus action to tighten the chains while holding the weapon.



MAWLING MAUL

Rare variant: Increase the extra piercing damage to **1d6** and the acid damage you take to **1d6**. The hammer has the Bilius Blow property.

Bilius Blow. When you roll a **20** on an attack roll made with this hammer, the mimic spews bile all over the target, covering it completely. A creature covered in bile takes **1d4** acid damage at the start of each of its turns until it or another creature uses its action to scrape or wash the bile off. Increase this acid damage to **2d4** if the chains were loose when the hammer hit.

MICHELE MUELLER

MIMICKEY

Wondrous item, common (socketable)

This bone and flesh keyring can be socketed on any weapon or held item. As an action, you can hold the item by the keyring and spin it in a circle, causing the socketed item to shrink to the size of a key. Using an action to spin it while key-sized returns it to its normal size.

SPELEATER TOM

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Learning and developing new spells can be a tedious and time-consuming process. Luckily, the spelleater tome is a shortcut to becoming a spell-slinging savant. Originally a creation of Jonjo Starr, the tome has become a favourite among lazy wizarding apprentices the world over.

This book has **8 charges** and regains **1d4 + 4** expended charges daily at dawn. It can be used as a spellbook and as a spellcasting focus by wizards.

Living Library. This tome is capable of copying and storing magical information. As an action, you can give it a *spell scroll* of 2nd level or lower, which it devours, destroying the *scroll* and adding the spell to its pages. While holding the book, you can cast one of the spells stored within it by expending a number of charges equal to the spell's level (**save DC 13, +5 to hit; 1 charge for cantrips**). The tome can store up to five spells in this way. If storing a new spell would take it above this maximum, you can choose one of its current spells to be replaced. When found, the book already contains one 1st-level spell and one 2nd-level spell, randomly determined.

MICHELE MUELLER



MIMICKEY



SPELEATER TOM



Rare variant: Increase the **DC** to **15**, the spell attack modifier to **+7**, and the number of spells the book can hold to seven. The tome can devour *spell scrolls* of 5th level or lower. Additionally, the tome has the Arcane Feast property.

Arcane Feast. You can allow the book to consume the corpse of a spellcaster over the course of **10 minutes**, after which it regains **2** expended charges. Once this property of the book has been used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

MAGICAL MEALS

A monster's components can be cooked into magical food. After spending 1 hour cooking the required components, you can succeed on a **Constitution (cook's utensils)** check against the meal's **DC** to craft the meal. *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting* presents more detailed rules on cooking.

When you consume a magic meal, which takes **10 minutes**, you gain its effects, which last for **8 hours** or until dispelled by the *dispel magic* spell or similar magic.

TONGUE TWISTER TART

Monstrosity (tavern mimic) tongue, plus brain; DC 16

You can use an action to transform into a piece of furniture equal to your size or back to your normal form. While transformed, you have a walking speed of **5 feet**, can't take any action other than the Dash action or the action to change back into your normal form, and otherwise retain your game statistics. A creature can use its action to make an **Intelligence (Investigation)** check to inspect you, realising you are a transformed creature on a success. The DC for this check increases with rarity, which is determined by your party's average level.

Level	Rarity	Check DC
1-4	Uncommon	DC 13
5-10	Rare	DC 15
11-16	Very rare	DC 16
17-20	Legendary	DC 17

TONGUE
TWISTER TART



APPENDIX B — SPELLS

This appendix lists the spells that can be found throughout this hunt, arranged alphabetically.

Biomancy. Biomantic spells revolve around living matter and its manipulation. If you'd rather not use the school of biomancy in your world, you can elect to use the alternative school of magic supplied with each biomancy spell.

ACID RAIN

3rd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet (20-foot-radius, 60-foot-tall cylinder)
Components: V, S, M (a drop of acid)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Class: Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

With a gentle patter, corrosive raindrops build to an acidic deluge in a **20-foot-radius, 60-foot-tall cylinder**, centred on a point within range. When the rain begins, each creature in the area must make a **Dexterity saving throw**, taking **4d6** acid damage on failure or half as much damage on a success. For the duration, a creature must also make this saving throw when it enters the spell's area for the first time on its turn or ends its turn there.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the acid damage increases by **1d6** for each slot level above 3rd.

CORRUPTING ICHOR

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: S, M (some phlegm)
Duration: Instantaneous
Class: Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You spit a globule of phlegm at one creature within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes **2d8** necrotic damage. In addition, until it uses its action to wipe off the phlegm, it takes **1d4** necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns and any hit points regained are reduced by half.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage at the start of the target's next turn increases by **1d4** for each slot level above 1st.

PINS & NEEDLES

Biomancy cantrip (*can be replaced with evocation)*

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Class: Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You momentarily shut down a small part of the nervous system of a creature you can see within range, before overstimulating it and causing crippling pain. The creature must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take **1d8** psychic damage. If the target fails its saving throw by 5 or more, it has **disadvantage** on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn as it temporarily loses full control of a part of its body.

This spell's damage increases by **1d8** when you reach 5th level (**2d8**), 11th level (**3d8**), and 17th level (**4d8**).

ZIPPIT!

3rd-level biomancy (*can be replaced with transmutation)*

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when a creature within range vocalises
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Class: Bard, Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

In response to a creature vocalizing, you make a sharp sound and hold a finger up in an attempt to interrupt them. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or become silenced as its mouth is fused shut for the duration. If you silence a target that is casting a spell with verbal components, the target's spell slot isn't expended, but its action is wasted.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a **Strength saving throw** as it tries to tear open its mouth. On a success, the target takes **1d8** slashing damage and is no longer silenced. Alternatively, as an action, the target can use a bladed implement to cut open its mouth, taking **1d8** slashing damage and ending the silence.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by **1d8** for each slot level above 3rd.

APPENDIX C — CREATURES

MIMICS

MIRRORMIC

Large monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

Armour Class 15 (natural armour)

Hit Points 153 (18d10 + 54)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +7

Damage Immunities acid

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Adhesive (Object Form Only). The mirrormic adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the mirrormic is also grappled by it (**escape DC 15**). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have **disadvantage**.

False Appearance (Object Form Only). If the mirrormic is motionless at the start of combat, it has **advantage** on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the mirrormic move or act, that creature must succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to discern that the mirrormic is animate.

Grappler. The mirrormic has **advantage** on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Shapechanger. The mirrormic can use its action to polymorph into an object or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mirrormic uses Distort if available, and then makes two melee attacks.

Distort (Object Form Only; Recharge 4-6). The mirrormic projects a **15-foot cone** of distortion until the start of its next turn. Each creature in the area that can see the mirrormic must succeed on **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or lose balance and fall **prone**. A creature that fails by 5 or more is **incapacitated** until the end of its next turn.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw. If the creature does so, it can't see the mirrormic until the start of the mirrormic's next turn, when it can avert its eyes again.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* **+7** to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (**2d8 + 4**) bludgeoning damage. If the mirrormic is in object form, the target is subjected to its Adhesive trait.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* **+7** to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (**2d8 + 4**) piercing damage plus 9 (**2d8**) acid damage.

Mimica mutafigura are patient predators that use disguise to unwary creatures. A mimic will then adhere themselves to their prey, making up for their slow speed and inability to pursue a quarry.

Biomancy. Exposure to biomantic magic has led to subspecies of mimics, *Mimica destorquera*, that distort light to unbalance their foes. Their elongated pseudopodia let them strike at a greater range before closing the distance and exogenously digesting prey using their hyper-corrosive stomach acid.

SWARM OF BABY MIMICS

Large swarm of Tiny monstrosities (shapechangers), neutral

Armour Class 12 (natural armour)

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities acid

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralysed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Adhesive (Object Form Only). The swarm adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the swarm is also grappled by it (**escape DC 13**). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have **disadvantage**.

False Appearance (Object Form Only). If the swarm is motionless at the start of combat, it has **advantage** on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the swarm move or act, that creature must succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to discern that the swarm is animate.

Grappler. The swarm has **advantage** on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Shapechanger. The swarm can use its action to polymorph into a pile of Tiny objects or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny mimic. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* **+4** to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 7 (**2d6**) piercing damage plus 5 (**2d4**) acid damage, or 3 (**1d6**) piercing damage plus 2 (**1d4**) acid damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

EMACIATED TAVERN MIMIC BRAIN

Gargantuan monstrosity (shapechanger), alignment varies

Armour Class 14 (natural armour)

Hit Points 72 (5d20 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	3 (-4)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +6, Wis +2

Damage Immunities acid

Condition Immunities charmed, paralysed, prone, stunned

Senses blindsight 5 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common plus three other languages

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Central Nervous System. The mimic's brain is the central nervous system of the tavern mimic. The first time the brain takes damage on a turn, it takes an additional 3 (**1d6**) psychic damage. As a reaction to taking this damage, the brain can relocate itself to any location within the tavern.

Grappler. The brain has **advantage** on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the brain fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Sensitive Gut. The brain's blindsight extends throughout its interior structure.

Shapechanger. The brain can use its action to polymorph into a different building or back into its true, tavern form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment or creatures it is wearing or carrying aren't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Warded. The brain can't be harmed or affected by attacks or effects that originate from outside of it.

Spellcasting. The brain is a 5th-level spellcaster and can cast the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (**spell save DC 12, +4** to hit with spell attacks):

At will: *create food and water, dancing lights, minor illusion, pins & needles**, *thaumaturgy*

2/day each: *corrupting ichor**, *grease, inflict wounds, shield*

1/day each: *darkness*^c, *major image*^c, *zippit!*^{c*}

*See Appendix B; **bold** indicates combat spell; ^c indicates concentration.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brain makes two attacks, one with its Pseudopod and one with its Squirt.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* **+5** to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (**1d8 + 3**) bludgeoning damage.

Squirt. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* **+6** to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (**1d8 + 4**) acid damage.

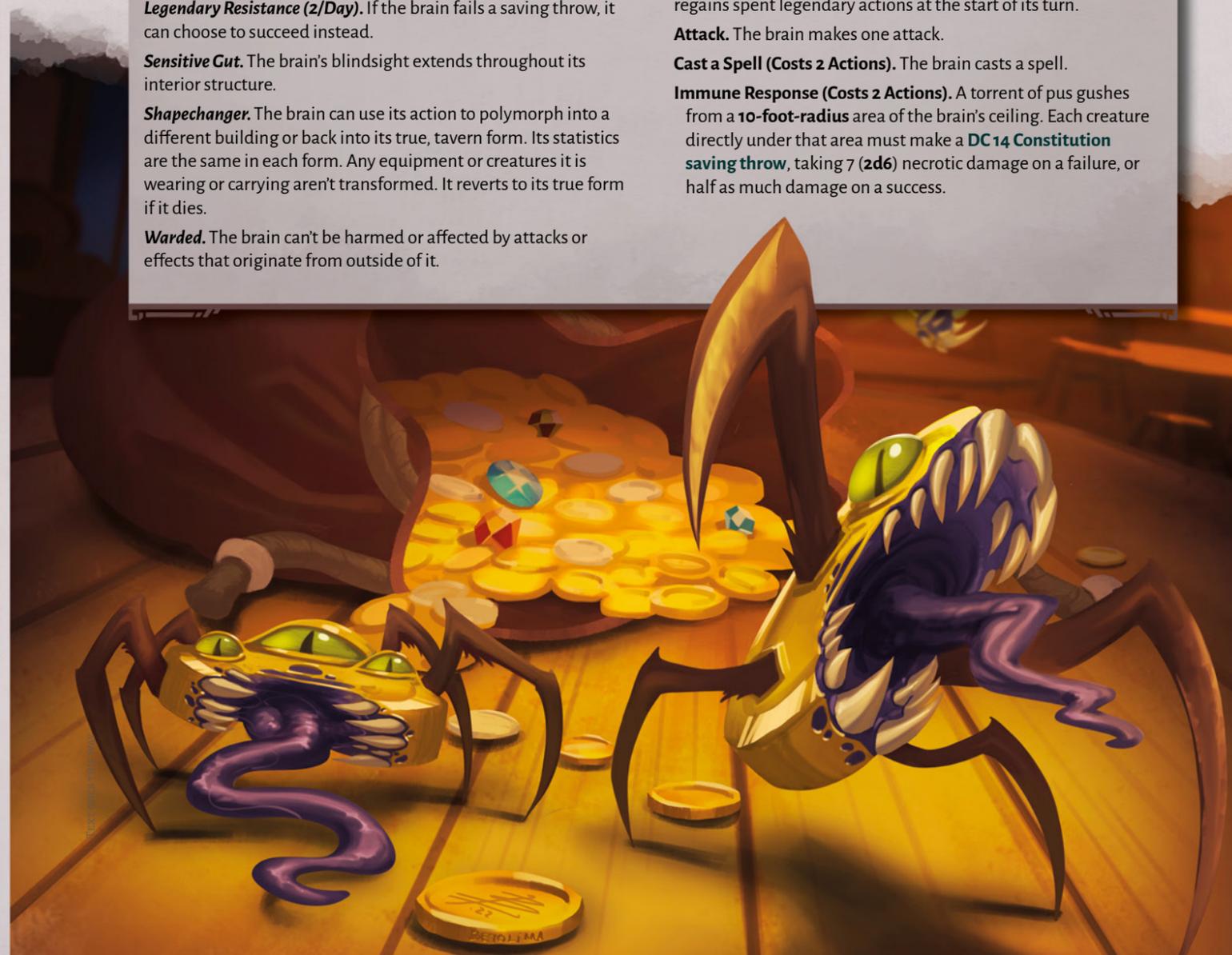
LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The brain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The brain regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The brain makes one attack.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The brain casts a spell.

Immune Response (Costs 2 Actions). A torrent of pus gushes from a **10-foot-radius** area of the brain's ceiling. Each creature directly under that area must make a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw**, taking 7 (**2d6**) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.



TAVERN MIMICS

One of the rarest forms of mimic, tavern mimics are living structures that provide hospitality, benign or otherwise, in the remote wilds. These shapechanging buildings move using a variety of mechanisms: slug-like convulsions, millions of tiny cilia, or even hundreds of humanoid feet.

Biomantic Origins. Tavern mimics occur when strong biomantic fields in the presence of a large structure, an unattached mind, and a mimic receive a sudden burst of magical energy. The most famous example is Jonjo Starr who, in attempting to create a lich phylactery in the biomantic laboratory of his half brother, Dr. Francis Norman Stein, accidentally fused himself to the building. Such creations are referred to as ‘mymilacteries’.

Dark Contest. Tavern mimics often experience strong internal conflict. The basal, voracious appe-

tite of the mimic desires only to consume and grow, while the mind with which it’s fused often has more complex desires. Not all tavern mimics are evil; some enjoy existence as a hub of activity, selling shelter and buying the produce on which they feed. Others aim to deceive travellers, giving into their core instincts and feeding on them as they sleep. Clever tavern mimics are selective and opportunistic predators, feeding only on strays and vagabonds who will not be missed.

Lifecycle. Like all mimics, tavern mimics lay eggs. These baby mimics have a limited number of forms they can take, and often appear as a pile of gold coins. This coin form is, in fact, their dispersal strategy. Mixed into a traveller’s purse, a baby mimic can quickly find itself miles from home, and able to feed on the fingertips of consumers and pickpockets alike. Like the common cuckoo bird, a baby mimic will often push normal coins and other baby mimics out of a purse to ensure it is more likely to be spent.

TAVERN MIMIC BRAIN

Gargantuan monstrosity (shapechanger), alignment varies

Armour Class 15 (natural armour)

Hit Points 124 (8d20 + 40)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	3 (-4)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9, Wis +4

Damage Immunities acid

Condition Immunities charmed, paralysed, prone, stunned

Senses blindsight 5 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common plus three other languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Central Nervous System. The mimic’s brain is the central nervous system of the tavern mimic. The first time the brain takes damage on a turn, it takes an additional 7 (2d6) psychic damage. As a reaction to taking this damage, the brain can relocate itself to any location within the tavern.

Grapppler. The brain has **advantage** on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the brain fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Sensitive Gut. The brain’s blindsight extends throughout its interior structure.

Shapechanger. The brain can use its action to polymorph into a different building or back into its true, tavern form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment or creatures it is wearing or carrying aren’t transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Spellcasting. The brain is a 9th-level spellcaster and can cast the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (**spell save DC 15, +7** to hit with spell attacks):

At will: **corrupting ichor*** (2nd-level), *create food and water, dancing lights, minor illusion, pins & needles**, *thaumaturgy* 2/day each: **acid rain**^{c*}, **darkness**^c, *major image*^c, **shield**, **zippit!**^{c*} 1/day each: **cloudkill**^c, *programmed illusion*, **stoneskin**^c

*See Appendix B; **bold** indicates combat spell; ^c indicates concentration.

Warded. The brain can’t be harmed or affected by attacks or effects that originate from outside of it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brain makes two attacks, one with its Pseudopod and one with its Squirt.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Squirt. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 14 (2d8 + 5) acid damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The brain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. The brain regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The brain makes one attack.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The brain casts a spell.

Immune Response (Costs 2 Actions). A torrent of pus gushes from a 15-foot-radius area of the brain’s ceiling. Each creature directly under that area must make a **DC 17 Constitution saving throw**, taking 14 (4d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

NOURISHED TAVERN MIMIC BRAIN

Gargantuan monstrosity (shapechanger), alignment varies

Armour Class 15 (natural armour)

Hit Points 210 (12d20 + 84)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	3 (-4)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +12, Wis +5

Damage Immunities acid

Condition Immunities charmed, paralysed, prone, stunned

Senses blindsight 5 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common plus three other languages

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Central Nervous System. The mimic’s brain is the central nervous system of the tavern mimic. The first time the brain takes damage on a turn, it takes an additional 10 (3d6) psychic damage. As a reaction to taking this damage, the brain can relocate itself to any location within the tavern.

Grapppler. The brain has **advantage** on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the brain fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Sensitive Gut. The brain’s blindsight extends throughout its interior structure.

Shapechanger. The brain can use its action to polymorph into a different building or back into its true, tavern form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment or creatures it is wearing or carrying aren’t transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Spellcasting. The brain is a 13th-level spellcaster and can cast the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (**spell save DC 17, +9** to hit with spell attacks):

At will: **corrupting ichor*** (3rd-level), *create food and water, dancing lights, darkness*^c, *minor illusion*, **pins & needles***, *thaumaturgy* 2/day each: **acid rain**^{c*}, *major image*^c, **shield**, **zippit!**^{c*} 1/day each: **cloudkill**^c, *programmed illusion*, **stoneskin**^c, *teleport*

*See Appendix B; **bold** indicates combat spell; ^c indicates concentration.

Warded. The brain can’t be harmed or affected by attacks or effects that originate from outside of it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brain makes two attacks, one with its Pseudopod and one with its Squirt.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (4d4 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Squirt. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 17 (4d4 + 7) acid damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The brain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. The brain regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The brain makes one attack.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The brain casts a spell.

Immune Response (Costs 2 Actions). A torrent of pus gushes from a 20-foot-radius area of the brain’s ceiling. Each creature directly under that area must make a **DC 20 Constitution saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

A TAVERN MIMIC'S LAIR

Tavern mimics set up shop along busy trade routes, at well-travelled crossroads, or in mountain passes where no other respite is available. Benign tavern mimics often become recognised features in the landscape, valued by travellers and traders. More hostile tavern mimics will move frequently, lest their malevolent existence be discovered.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The area within 6 miles of the tavern mimic's favourite spot has the following properties:

- ♦ **Trampled Terrain.** Trampled ground consisting of hundreds of unique footprints can be found criss-crossing the region. Tracking checks that aim to follow footprints other than the tavern mimic's have **disadvantage**.
- ♦ **Bleached Bones.** Piles of bleached bones and inorganic matter, such as coins and gemstones, can be found in small piles in the region. Some gold coins among these caches are mimic eggs.

- ♦ **Odd Stories.** Folks that have travelled through the region often inadvertently take shelter inside the mimic. They tell tales of strange proprietors and bartenders that communicate with one another without talking, of especially comfortable beds, and of fellow travellers that "leave before the crack of dawn" and are never seen again.

LAIR ACTIONS

While the tavern mimic lives, it can take the following lair actions. The saving throw DC and damage of the lair actions depend on the level at which you run the hunt, as shown in the following table.

VARIABLE LAIR ACTION STATISTICS

Hunt Level	VDC	Vdam
3rd	12	3 (1d6)
8th	14	7 (2d6)
13th	16	14 (4d6)

Lair Actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the tavern mimic takes one of the following lair actions; the mimic can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row.

- ♦ **Drool.** The tavern mimic secretes acid from a part of its ceiling in a **30-foot square**. Each creature directly under the area must make a **VDC Dexterity saving throw**, taking **Vdam** acid damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.
- ♦ **Peristalsis.** A wave shudders through the tavern mimic as its hidden musculature contracts. Each non-mimic creature in the tavern must make a **VDC Dexterity saving throw**. On a failure, a creature takes **Vdam** bludgeoning damage and is pushed **15 feet** in a direction of the tavern mimic's choice, where it falls **prone**. On a success, it is moved **5 feet** in a direction of the tavern mimic's choice, takes no damage, and doesn't fall prone.

- ♦ **Sink.** A **10-foot square** of the tavern mimic's floor becomes incredibly soft and sticky. Each creature on the floor in the area, or that enters the area for the first time on its turn, must succeed on a **VDC Strength saving throw** or become **restrained**. A creature that ends its turn while restrained in this way sinks **2 feet** into the tavern's floor and takes **Vdam** acid damage. A creature that sinks below its height can't breathe.

A creature within **5 feet** of a creature restrained in this way, including the restrained creature, can make a **VDC Strength** check, freeing the stuck creature and pulling it to the nearest non-sinking area on a success. The area is difficult terrain for all non-mimic creatures until the tavern mimic finishes a short or long rest.



APPENDIX D — FAMILIARS

If you are using the optional Tamer class in *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting*, this familiar can be crafted from the remains of unique monsters. The GM may also allow a character that is not a tamer to take this familiar as a companion, replacing all mentions of a "tamer" with "character".

MINIMIC

Type: Monstrosity (shapechanger)

Creature Component: Any mimic

Bonus Tamer Improvement: Growth I and +2 Hit Dice

With an appearance like regular household objects and the ability to change shape at will, mimics are easy to lose. Their adhesive epidermis sticks

to everything; tamers with minimic companions often have a bottle of solvent on hand. A minimic's ability to keep a foe grappled can be a useful battlefield control tactic, especially when deployed as an inanimate object for ambush operations.

If any of the minimic's traits or actions require a saving throw, it is always against the minimic's **save DC**, as calculated below.

Save DC = 8 + the tamer's proficiency bonus + the minimic's Constitution modifier.

TAMER LEVEL

GROWTH I PREREQUISITE: BECOME COMPANION "What was once a tankard is now a keg..."		1
GRAPPLER PREREQUISITE: — "They've got great technique."	IMPROVED ADHESIVE PREREQUISITE: — "So sticky. Got rubbing alcohol?"	3
MULTIATTACK PREREQUISITE: — "Slap 'em, then bite 'em."	REGURGITATE I PREREQUISITE: — "It's not pleasant..."	GROWTH II PREREQUISITE: GROWTH I "... sorry, a barrel!"
	THICK SKIN PREREQUISITE: — "They can take a joke."	9
REGURGITATE II PREREQUISITE: REGURGITATE I "...But it really eats through stains."	ACIDIC SWEAT PREREQUISITE: — "Ugh. I just got these gloves."	13
	GROWTH III PREREQUISITE: GROWTH II "...make that an entire brewing vat."	17



MONSTER TRAINER

If you are a tamer, you can grant the minimic the following improvements using your Monster Trainer feature in addition to those normally available for your companions.

GROWTH I

Prerequisite: become a tamer's companion

Type: Passive (companion)

The minimic's size increases to Small, its Hit Die size increases to a **d6** (its hit point maximum consequently increases by 1 for each of its Hit Dice), and the damage dice of its Bite and Pseudopod attacks increase to a **d6**. The minimic gains this improvement when it becomes a companion; it doesn't cost an improvement.

MINIMIC
Tiny monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned

Armour Class 12 (natural armour)
Hit Points 4 (1d4 + 2)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +2
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Adhesive. The minimic adheres to anything that touches it. A creature no more than one size larger than the minimic that is adhered to the minimic is also **grappled** by it (**escape DC 12**).

False Appearance (Object Form Only). While the minimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

Shapechanger. The minimic can use its action to polymorph into an object equal to it in size, or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage. The target is subjected to the minimic's Adhesive trait.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) acid damage.

GRAPPLER

Prerequisite: 3rd-level tamer

Type: Passive (companion)

The minimic has **advantage** on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

IMPROVED ADHESIVE

Prerequisite: 3rd-level tamer

Type: Passive (companion)

Creatures grappled by the minimic have **disadvantage** on ability checks made to escape its grapple.

GROWTH II

Prerequisite: 5th-level tamer, Growth I

Type: Passive (companion)

The minimic's size increases to Medium, its Hit Die size increases to a **d8** (its hit point maximum consequently increases by 1 for each of its Hit Dice), and the damage dice of its Bite and Pseudopod attacks increase from a d6 to a **d8**.

MULTIATTACK

Prerequisite: 5th-level tamer

Type: Active (action)

As an action, the minimic can make two attacks: one with its Pseudopod and one with its Bite.

REGURGITATE I

Prerequisite: 5th-level tamer

Type: Active (action)

As an action, the minimic can regurgitate a torrent of acidic bile. Each creature in a **15-foot cone** must make a **Dexterity saving throw**, taking 17 (5d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

After the minimic uses this action, it can't do so again until its tamer finishes a short or long rest.

When the minimic's tamer reaches 9th level in the tamer class, the damage of this action increases to 24 (7d6).

THICK SKIN

Prerequisite: 9th-level tamer

Type: Passive (companion)

The minimic gains a +2 **bonus** to its AC while it isn't wearing armour.

ACIDIC SWEAT

Prerequisite: 13th-level tamer

Type: Active (bonus action)

As a bonus action, the minimic can secrete acid. Each creature grappling or grappled by the minimic takes acid damage equal to the minimic's current Hit Die size (1d4, or higher, if it has further Growth improvements).

REGURGITATE II

Prerequisite: 13th-level tamer, Regurgitate I

Type: Active (action)

The damage of the minimic's Regurgitate action increases to 31 (9d6), and the size of the cone increases to 25 feet. The minimic gains a +1 bonus to the save DC of this action.

When the minimic's tamer reaches 17th level in the tamer class, the damage of this action increases to 42 (12d6).

GROWTH III

Prerequisite: 17th-level tamer, Growth II

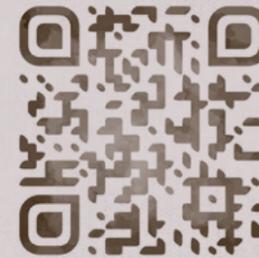
Type: Passive (companion)

The minimic's size increases to Large, its Hit Die size increases to a d10 (its hit point maximum consequently increases by 1 for each of its Hit Dice), and the damage dice of its Bite and Pseudopod attacks increase from a d8 to a d10.

APPENDIX E — SOUNDS

Did you hear that twig break? I swear I just heard a kobold chittering. Was that a vat of boiling Mut-x or are you hungry?

Fresh from the College of Ambience is the bard, Michaël Ghelfi, who's created a wonderful catalogue of ambiances for each monster hunt. Immerse your senses in these vibrant, layered soundscapes as you track, hunt, and harvest!



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