

FREE LEAGUE

FORBIDDEN LANDS



THE SPIRE OF QUETZEL

TAPPA
WHEEL

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INTRODUCTION

An iridescent spire in the distance, impossibly tall, tempting with dreams of black gems and glory. A prison at the top of a mesa, filled with light and demonic monstrosities, awaiting visitors. A lush forest where five witches rule unopposed. A deep cave where the last thunder lizard has retired for its final slumber.



Forbidden Lands is our love letter to the fantasy genre, and the result of many evenings discussing Conan's Hyperborea, the classic pictures of Nils Gulliksson, the anti-heroes of Fritz Leiber, old western movies, and more. We have been inspired throughout by the innumerable creative souls that are active in the so-called OSR-movement (Old School Renaissance). The OSR looks to the classic role-playing games of the seventies for inspiration, but often with a creativity that puts the originals to shame.

In this book, four prominent creators in the OSR-movement present their versions of what an adventure site in the Forbidden Lands could look like. Patrick Stuart (author of the magnificent *Veins of the Earth*) takes us on a dizzying dimension-hopping ride in *The Spire of Quetzal*, where the adventurers encounter the different personalities of a Demon-Queen in a psychological nightmare of an adventure site that would make Michael Moorcock proud.

Chris McDowall (creator of the acclaimed *Into the Odd*) invites us to a strange building at the top of a cliff, where a particularly dysfunctional family of demons is incarcerated. The *Bright Vault* is an infernal drama that could very well have been the illegitimate love child of Ingmar Bergman and Clive Barker. Relationships are the focal point of Ben Milton's (creator of the brilliant *Maze Rats* RPG) adventure site *Hexenrvald* as well, where five strong women stand in the fore, and wandering corpses cause trouble in an otherwise peaceful location. Last, but not least, Karl Stjernberg (creator of the post-apocalyptic *Rad-Hack*) cranks the pulpometer to the max and treats the adventurers to *The Graveyard of Thunder*, complete with rolling thunder, flesh-eating prehistoric lizards, and cruel orc warriors.

Four authors, four visions of what *Forbidden Lands* can be. It is now your turn to discover these places, so step through the Silver Door and journey to another world!





TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Castle

Wind dies. Pale grass grows in spirals. Lichen forms blurred iridescent sigils on cracked stone. Black trees curl their trunks and crook their branches as if bowing. The Spire is driven through the skin of the world like a pin through curling paper.

With every step toward the tower, it writhe and warps like a hallucination. It seems infinitely tall, like something in a dream. There is one silver door, marked with a pavonated eye in iridescent blue and green.

BACKGROUND

The Sorceress Quetzal was born in the crimson shadow of the Blood Mist as it rose. Child of

Elf and Demon, she was cast into the darkness before she could form words.

She wandered for years, talking to voices on the wind, learning the craft of magic from starlight on water and the entrails of peasants, a beautiful and terrifying nightmare to all she encountered.

Eventually, her mortal heart yearning for society and other worlds, she built her Spire. A tower that twisted through realities. At its top, in a world beyond worlds, she ruled from a crystal throne beneath burning nebulae.

She filled it with strange spirits, exiles, demons, and those from other planes or realities. All lost and rootless like herself.

Even common demons feared to go there,



lest they be enslaved by her incalculable magics. A fear that still holds, even today no demon will willingly approach that place.

Eventually, she tried to tear the fear and conscience from her own soul but could not destroy them. They betrayed her and left her dead, yet undead, on her crystal throne.



LEGEND

"That city burnt to brands and scattered ash,

Now home to wolf and ghost, there she did dwell.

Twas there, by subtle art and brutal lash,

The Demon-Queen made rule, and ruling, fell,

And falling, slept, yet not, for dead tongues tell;

What dying; dreams, when dreaming; may awake,

And sleeping, live, yet dead. So sleeps Quetzal,

And thirsts for taste her dry tongue cannot slake,

For life and breath, a fast she dreams to break."



GETTING HERE

The adventurers can find the Spire of Quetzal in many ways. You as the GM are free to use the best hook suitable for your campaign. One suggestion is presented below.

THE DREAM OF THE CROW-MASKED MAN

One night when the adventurers strike camp

under starry skies, they experience something strange: they all dream the same dream.

They are all in a familiar and safe place. A man is there. He wears a crow mask and a feathered robe. He seems familiar, like he could be themselves in disguise. Someone powerful and questionable.

"Please forgive me for contacting you in this manner. Secrecy is of some importance to me.

Word has reached me of your capacities. And – forgive me – greed. I have a proposition; The tower of a Sorcerer. A strange being, rumored to be half elf, half demon. Long since dead. Immensely powerful. And wealthy. Her body, and her treasures lie there still.

Her bodiless spirit dreams there. The presence of a truly powerful – again, forgive me, but not you – sorcerer might fully awaken her, a transformation few would wish to witness. Yet, with my information and your skills, it is possible.

This is my offer: First – silver, to be delivered to you the moment you agree. Second – information to assist you in the endeavor. Third – you may keep everything you find, the tower itself and all its treasures except for one, the only item I desire. The heart of the Sorceress; a Black Gem.

Do you agree to my terms?

If the players do, read the final piece of the dream. If they don't, well, let them continue their travels through the Forbidden Lands and find another adventure for now.

Very well! A few hours' journey to the north you will find a red, snail-shaped rock. Dig five feet down – you will find your payment. Second – the Sorceress put her power into her tools. A knife,





a bird, a ring, all silver, seemingly only trinkets. Those who hold these trinkets will have mastery over her spirit, and be able to destroy her.

When it is done, I shall know, and come to you.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE. Everything about this dream is false. There is no Crow-Masked man. The whole thing is an illusion created by the sleeping mind of Quetzal to get adventurers to visit her tower and touch her heart.



LOCATIONS

The most important locations at the Spire of Quetzal are described below.

I. THE TOWER

A tower. Reaching toward the cloudy sky, almost touching it. The needle-like structure shifts in and out of focus as you stare at its magnificence. A vibrating hum can be felt in the ground before it. Set into the tower's base before you: a silver door, a giant eye etched onto its surface. It stares at you.

With every step toward the tower, it writhes and warps like a hallucination. It seems infinitely tall, like something in a dream. There is one silver door, marked with a pavonated eye in iridescent blue and green. The door is not locked.

When the adventurers approach the tower, they notice a red, snail-shaped rock in the ground before it. This is the stone mentioned in the dream.

RUMORS

D6 RUMOR

- 1 An historical reference by a powerful Sorcerer describing going to "the city in the tower" – assumed to be a mistranslation.
- 2 Someone offers the adventurers payment in silver coins marked with a Pavonated Eye (an eye of iridescent blue and green, like a peacock's tail feather), they offer more than they need to, because many locals will refuse to touch the coins, saying "but you can spend them far away."
- 3 A Raven Priest is convinced the locals are secretly worshipping some unknown birdlike entity in disguise as the Raven God.
- 4 Brave sons of the local lord recently set off to find "a woman they saw in a dream." They have not returned.
- 5 A traveler saved from pursuing demons – they warn the adventurers not to approach a desolate tower they came upon by chance.
- 6 The "Ballad of the Lonely Lady" – a story of a woman who decides to never feel shame or fear again, but those emotions become monsters and hunt her in her own home, then burn it down.



- ❖ TREASURE: The money is below the rock. Buried five feet down in a stone box are 13 pieces of silver. The coins are old, and marked with a pavonated eye.

2. THE ENTRANCE

Gloom. A spiral stair of gilded bone leads up. A keening wind echoes down from the stairs and pale light gleams. Long-dead bodies are strewn across the floor and hung like pennants on the walls. Two huge and iridescent forms shift in the dark. Withered voices speak.

Two large birdlike monsters guard this room. They are bound to attack any uninvited guests. They are extremely dangerous and difficult to kill.

However, they are also slaves. They wish to be free. While their actions will be to attack the PCs, their words may betray their mistress, and could prove helpful.

Though they are bound to stop any uninvited guests from climbing the stairs, they are happy to answer any questions, and will do so truthfully.

- ❖ They were summoned by the Sorcerer Queen, Quetzl.
- ❖ They were tricked into these bodies, and this service, thinking it would be temporary.
- ❖ She seduced them with song and mummified the bodies, trapping them.
- ❖ If her black heart is crushed, or their bodies destroyed, they will be free.
- ❖ Until then, they must prevent any uninvited access to the stairs.
- ❖ An invitation is any formal sign, docu-

ment, or seal that proves the holder is invited.

- ❖ They are not stupid, they know the adventurers could just leave and fake or forge an invitation, but they want them to go upstairs.
- ❖ CREATURES: Grumis and Nachtrapp.
- ❖ TREASURE: Scattered about the room are the dry bodies of adventurers and fools. Anyone taking the time to search them could find a variety of basic adventuring equipment, most of it of a very old age.

3. THE RED-BRICKED TOWER

The stairs rise into a ruined red-brick tower. The roof is gone, the heavens above are an opal haze. The tower's bronze doors are black with smoke and hang from melted hinges.

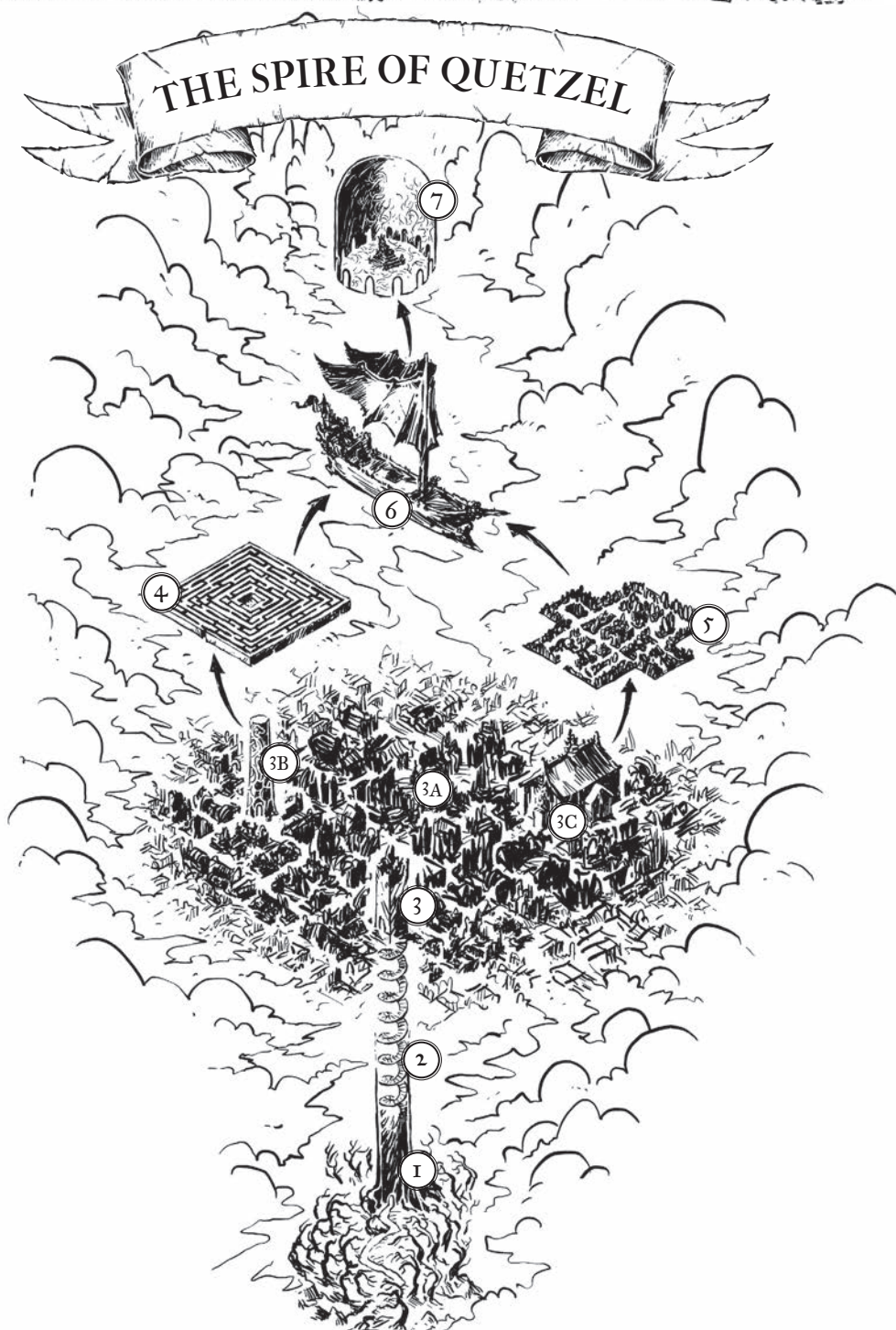
Outside, the burnt-black spars of ruined buildings lie tumbled in the hollow wind. The earth is caked grey ash on red-black mud. It stinks of iron, the air tastes like a rusted nail.

Wind kicks up flurries shaped like drifting people in the corner of your eye.

A small reality curved back on itself. Traveling more than a few miles in any direction brings you back on your own path.

A – THE CITY OF BLACK SPARS: The ruins stretch in every direction. Some structures must have been many stories high. The blackened spars have collapsed like ragged nests.

Three structures remain standing, each is equidistant, about quarter of a mile between them.





B – THE SILVER TOWER: Bright like poisoned mercury. It has one door, unlocked, marked with a pavonated eye. It opens onto the Silver Maze.

C – THE BYZANTINE GREENHOUSE: A huge rambling greenhouse like a decayed palace. Its front door is silver, unlocked, and marked with a pavonated eye. Inside is the Poison Garden.

Between them lie ruins, haunted by ghosts and starved, circling wolves. Neither the ghosts nor the wolves will follow adventurers into any built structure.

A Gleam: Anyone looking carefully at the ruins sees, in the shadows, a gleam of silver. Investigating it reveals the Feather Blade.

- ❖ **CREATURES:** The Ghosts of Ash. The Bent-Backed Wolves. See more under Events.
- ❖ **TREASURE:** The Feather Blade – a dagger, its handle Lapis-Lazuli carved in the shape of an eye, its blade, one metallic silver feather. If used to wound a flying

creature, this dagger steals its capacity for flight and gives it to the wielder for one day. For a man-sized wielder to fly, they must wound a man-sized bird, or something larger.

Otherwise, digging around in the ruins for a turn (a quarter of an hour) reveals blackened bones, smashed china and ceramic tiles, carbonized wood, and an interesting item (roll on the table below).

4. THE SILVER MAZE

A maze, the air is cold, the walls and ceiling are polished silver, the floor a sheen of rippled and continual time-frozen blood. The blood turns liquid at your step. As the ripples radiate away, they stop in time.

The only light here is whatever the adventurers brought with them. The polished walls and ceiling mean their lamps shine far. The maze is patrolled by Glass Tigers, at its center is the Silver Door and the Crucible of Quetz-Faeren.

D6	FIND	INFO
1	Silver cutlery melted into a piece	Worth D3 silver
2	Ruined tapestry of an iridescent Demon-Queen	Worth D3 copper, or D6 silver to the right collector
3	Cracked magical seal	Useless
4	Demon-bone blade	Stats as a longsword, with D10 Artifact Die against demons
5	Beautifully mutated skulls	Worth D6 gold to the right sorcerer
6	2D6 silver coins with peacock eyes	You swear you saw an eye blink.



TIME: Time in the maze freezes more than a few feet from an active, living thing. Only the Glass Tigers are immune to this effect. Projectiles slow and stop in the air, meaning no ranged weapons can be used here. Warm breath mists in the cold air and freezes in time a few feet away. Some corridors have trails of old breath hanging in the air.

THE BODIES: The corpses of adventurers are scattered in the maze, frozen at the moment of their death. From a distance, they look like insane waxworks, or disturbing modern art; slumped, half falling, poised upright, all with expressions of terror and terrible pain. If the adventurers reach out to touch them, the bodies collapse into real time. Fresh blood runs from their wounds, limbs slump to the ground, and gravity regains its hold.

Each is wounded in a similar way; bites from a large predator, usually on the back of the neck, often breaking the spine. The bodies show various claw and bite marks, defensive wounds, and shields clawed to splinters.

THE CRUCIBLE OF QUET-FAEREN: A glassworks, frozen in time, only springing into life as Quet-Faeren approaches each individual part. The large area contains a clay forge, bubbling crucibles of molten glass, long runnels and tubes for pouring the glass, broken pieces of imperfect tiger molds, and a new mold in the process of being carved. There is a silver door marked with a pavonated eye here (locked – Quet-Scyre, in the Poison Garden, has the key). A shower of bright red molten glass frozen before the silver door like volcanic rain, if anyone gets close it activates

in time and falls (roll **MOVE** or get hit with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force)).

- ❖ **CREATURES:** The Glass Tigers and Quet-Faeren.
- ❖ **TREASURE:** Argento, the Silver'd Crow (worn by Quet-Faeren). A tiny silver crow skeleton worn like a pendant on a silver chain. The crow wears an even smaller silver key around its neck. The links of the silver chain are formed into small letters which read “argentowakeup.”

Speak “Argento, wake up!” and he grows to the size of a normal crow, still skeletal and still silver. He then acts as a pet, loyal to whomever wears the necklace. He needs neither food nor rest, is capable of flight, and can speak, having the vocabulary of a toddler, and limited syntax.

As well as being an unusual and useful pet, Argento is capable, once per week, of flying to the land of the dead to ask a question of a person there. This works as a form of the **SPEAK TO THE DEAD SPELL**, but without the need to be near the dead body. The depth of the question is limited by Argento's vocabulary and syntax. Like any real conversation, there is no guarantee that the dead individual will be interested, willing, or honest.

THE KEY: When Argento grows to the size of a normal crow, the key around his neck grows to the size of a normal key. This key bears the symbol of a tree upon its bow. It opens the Silver Door in the Poison Garden.



5. THE POISON GARDEN

Hot, beady air hums in the golden-stained light. Fat bees buzz and crystal chimes ring. Boldly banded flowers and ripe plants of a thousand colors pack fenced banks, separated by narrow paved paths leading between.

The Garden has many branching paths, but all lead to the center and the Parlor of Quet-Scyre.

If the adventurers make a SURVIVAL roll, they will rapidly realize that every flower, vine, mushroom, and leaf is poisonous. A POISONER can find any plant they have been looking for here, if they search long enough, and if they are willing to dare the lizard-birds.

THE PARLOR OF QUET-SCYRE: In amongst the flower-banks is an open space, containing a series of low wooden benches covered with primitive alchemical equipment, pestles and mortars, bowls, jars, ladles, stirring sticks, and spoons. A simple wooden bed sits to the side, and several beehives are mixed in with everything else. Quet-Scyre moves through the bees without fear. Any violent action here would certainly tip or disturb them. There is a silver door marked with a pavonated eye here (locked, Argento in the Silver Maze has the key). Beyond lies the Ship with Amber Wings.

- ❖ **CREATURES:** Quet-Scyre. Lizard-birds. The Poison-Eating Bees.
- ❖ **TREASURE:** The Silver Ring and the The Poison Honey.

THE SILVER RING. Shaped like a curled Silver Feather, bent into a hoop to fit a

finger, the ring adjusts in size to fit whomever wears it. Once put on, the individual wearing it cannot take it off. Only another can remove it.

If placed on an intelligent humanoid, the ring transforms that person into a bird. The clothes and equipment of the target are not changed. If placed on a bird, the ring transforms them into a human. They gain intelligence, language, and a basic understanding of how to move and exist.

The transformation matches the nature or character of the being transformed, so a Rogue might become a magpie, or an eagle become a Fighter.

The transformations always end when the ring is removed.

THE POISON HONEY. The honey made by the bees of Quet-Scyre is amongst the most lethal substances on earth. Unlike most other poisons, it keeps for a long time if stored, and tastes delicious. It is a lethal poison with Potency 9.

6. THE SHIP WITH AMBER WINGS

The silver door opens onto a ship hanging in a wild and infinite sky. There is no visible ground. Looking up or down shows only endless strata of indigo and vermillion storms. Steel-bright azure lightning leaps between pinnacled clouds and pulses of light like magnesium sparks echo from inside the towering stacks.

The fuzz of static electricity arcs and flows



across the ship in an eternal pulsing wave. The adventurers' hair stands up, and sparks crackle between armor plates. Human beings feel short of breath, due to either the altitude, or a subtly different atmosphere.

Anyone pulling out and wielding a metal weapon in this environment will receive a serious static shock, counting as an attack with five Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (non-typical damage).

THE SHIP: Shaped something like a sea-craft, clearly based on the same design, instead of sails, this vessel has amber wings. The wings are bound with wire and linked to a huge engine in the center of the hull. Manned by a Terracotta Crew. At the wheel of the ship is a Clay Captain, his body shaped as a Captain's Uniform and his face with a magnificent moustache and look of high disdain. Around his neck is a Silver Key, its bow marked with a ship. This opens the Silver Door at the end of the chain. The crew and Captain are utterly silent. They will ignore the adventurers unless they interfere with the running of the ship or try to turn the crank. Then they will attack.

THE ENGINE: The means of its operation are far beyond the understanding of any adventurer. In the side of the engine is a crank with an insulated handle, big enough for two to turn. Secured within, a gigantic copper chain hangs down, like the chain of an anchor.

THE CHAIN: Hanging right at the end of the chain, dangling like a plumb-bob through the peaks of the storm clouds below, is a sil-

ver door. The adventurers can just see the mark of the pavonated eye. Lightning arcs from the clouds and hits the door. As this happens, the engine and the amber wings both hum and crackle. The ship noticeably lifts, and the door is pulled up, away from the storm. Then, slowly, the ship begins to sink back towards the storm.

PULLING UP THE DOOR: If the adventurers try to turn the crank to pull up the door, two things happen.

- ❖ The ship loses power and starts to sink down towards the storm-strata.
- ❖ The Terracotta Crew tries to stop them.

They will need to pull up the door fast enough to gain access before the ship falls into the storm. They must also get the key from around the Clay Captain's neck. Beyond this door is the Nebulae Throne.

- ❖ **CREATURES:** The Terracotta Crew.
- ❖ **TREASURE:** The Amber that forms the ship's beautiful wings is certainly valuable





(2D6 silver per inventory slot), and easy to knock off. But the more of it they remove, the lower the ship will sink.

7. THE NEBULAE THRONE

A throne room ringed by silver doors and covered by a crystal dome. Beyond the dome, alien nebulae burn. Azure cyclones revolving with infinite slowness, creeping indigo Tsunamis piling into viridian clouds, zinnobor waves on argent seas. All silent. All watching. Each storm has a central eye. Each eye seems to focus on this room. On a terrace of polished obsidian sits a cracked crystal throne. On the throne is the body of the Demon-Queen.

THE DOORS: Each silver door is marked with a pavonated eye. All are unlocked from this side.

1. To the outside of the tower in the “real world.”
2. To the Ship with Amber Wings. (The adventurers came through this one.)
3. To the Center of the Poison Garden.
4. To the Center of the Silver Maze.
5. To the door from the Poison Garden to the City of Black Spars.
6. To the door from the Silver Maze to the City of Black Spars.

THE THRONE: The terrifying nebulae reflect and refract in the glass of the throne. As if the “eyes” of those interstellar clouds filled it from within, and watch.

❖ **CREATURES:** The Demon-Queen.

MONSTERS AND NPCs

The monsters and NPCs that the adventurers can meet in the Tower of Quetzal are described below.

GRUMIS AND NACHTRAPP, REASONABLE DEMONS

Like great monstrous birds. Glorious in their beauty. Woeful in their dry decay. Terrifying in their murderous speed.

Huge demonic Peacocks, crossed with Ar-cheopteryx and Birds of Paradise, swollen and mutated, then mummified and stuffed, yet still alive.

Grumis and Nachtrapp have the personalities of weird, creepy, intelligent old men who have been locked in one room for a century. Their voices are like hoarse whispers, and their laughter sounds like a goat coughing.

They will not stop talking and will converse with the adventurers even, and especially, while they are fighting. The tone of their speech never changes. No matter the intensity of the violence, they speak as if discussing a minor poet in a library. They never become verbally upset.

STRENGTH 12, AGILITY 3, WITS 5, EMPATHY 2

ARMOR RATING: 4 (thick skin)

MONSTER: The demonic birds are monsters, and follow the rules on page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*. They will each perform a single monster attack each round.



D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **CRUSHING ARGUMENT!** The demon bird makes an argument for letting the adventurers pass, while at the same time charging one unhappy adventurer. Perform an attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack hits, the victim is thrown to the ground.
2. **PIERCING COUNTERPOINT!** While trying to slash an adventurer, the demonic bird argues a minor point with its demonic partner. Perform an attack with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
3. **STORM OF THOUGHT AND CLAW!** In an incomprehensible stream of consciousness, the demon bird rambles on about the adventurers or the state of the world, while clawing two adventurers within NEAR distance. Perform an attack against each with seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
4. **CONTEMPLATIVE BITE!** The demon considers something apparently profound while biting an adventure with razor sharp teeth. Perform an attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).





5. PUNCHY ACADEMIC GAG! The demon bird tells a very dry joke and cackles maniacally while punching the nearest adventurer with full force. Perform an attack with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force).

6. SWEEPING INVITATION! "Well go ahead, we won't stop you!" the demon bird shouts, while at the same time hitting all adventurers within NEAR distance. Perform separate attacks on each victim with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). There is a hint of regret in its eyes.

THE GHOSTS OF ASH

The wind screams and the blood-tinged ash forms human shapes as if boiled into existence by the angry air.

They appear in crowds. Each ghost hides its face, either with one arm or by clutching its hands over its face. They run, weave, stagger, and cry out.

These are the ghosts of those people sacrificed to build the city. Their blood was mixed with clay to make its bricks.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2

SKILLS: Sneak 2, Scouting 4

IMMATERIAL: The Ghosts of Ash can only be hurt by fire or magic. Even if a ghost is defeated, it will only be banished for a Quarter Day and will then return. The **BANISH UNDEAD** spell can destroy them permanently, but the simplest way is to wrestle their hands away from their face (with a successful **GRAPPLE**). Their faces are wracks of torment and their eyes infinite holes but meeting their gaze causes them to scream and disappear.

CHOKING ATTACK: The Ghosts of Ash attack by throwing themselves at adventurers within NEAR range in a dark embrace, suffocating them to death with their ashen form. Perform the attack with six Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (non-typical damage). This counts as a monster attack, and thus does not depend on the Strength of the Ghost.

THE BENT-BACKED WOLVES

Like starved wolves with snub faces and arched bent backs. They howl, mutter like people, circle beyond bowshot, and lick at cracked piles of wet red bricks.

The few surviving, and mutated, descendants of the survivors of the burning city. They drag off prey and use their prehensile hands along with teeth, to tear a downed foe apart.

The Wolves are fearful but will attack any adventurer separated from the group. They will also try to attack stragglers if the adventurers are in combat with anything else.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5

SKILLS: Sneak 2, Scouting 3

MOVEMENT: 2

ARMOR RATING: None

CLAW ATTACK: Eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). This counts as a monster attack, and thus does not depend on the Strength of the Wolf.

BITE ATTACK: Seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). This counts as a monster attack, and thus does not depend on the Strength of the wolf.



THE GLASS TIGERS

Like a perfect, life-sized sculpture of a tiger brought to life. Tireless, timeless, and imbued with all the stealth and hunting craft of the original beast.

The glass creatures are almost impossible to see in the bright reflective maze, where every view reflects repeated visions.

Their hunting tactics are like those of real tigers. They prefer not to attack head-on, when the target is facing them. They prefer to leap from the rear and take the rearmost person. They prefer to bite at the spine, just below the skull.

The tigers make a very faint, rhythmic “plink, plink” sound as they patrol. As they leap, their feet sometimes scrape slightly on the frozen blood.

STRENGTH 10, AGILITY 5

SKILLS: Scouting 4

MOVEMENT: 2

ARMOR RATING: None against BLUNT weapons, 10 (glass hide) against all other forms of damage



MADE OF GLASS: If a blunt weapon causes 3 or more damage in a single attack, the Glass Tiger will shatter completely.

MONSTER: The Glass Tigers are monsters, and follow the rules on page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **RENDING ATTACK!** The Glass Tiger leaps forward, tearing at a victim using its sharp claws. The victim is attacked using eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
2. **DEATH RATTLE!** The creature jumps at an adventurer, biting her, and then shakes the unfortunate victim, finally throwing the victim aside like a rag doll. Roll for the attack using eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). If the attack hits, the victim is thrown to a NEAR distance and lands prone.
3. **LEAPING ATTACK!** The Glass Tiger pounces on an adventurer in NEAR range. Roll for the attack using eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). If the attack is successful, the victim is thrown to the ground and the Glass Tiger immediately performs an extra attack (eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2, slash wound), outside of the normal turn order. The extra attack cannot be DODGED.
4. **LOCKED JAW!** The Glass Tiger bites the arm or leg of one of the adventurers and locks its jaws in a brutal grip. Roll for the attack using seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If hit, the adventurer is GRAPPLED.

- 5. VIOLENT BITE!** With a growl, the Glass Tiger jumps at the nearest adventurer, biting her using all its strength. Perform an attack using nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). The attack can be **PARRIED**.
-
- 6. NECK BITE!** The Glass Tiger sees a weak spot and attacks the adventurer by biting her in the spine, just below the skull, trying to kill her. Roll for the attack using eleven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). The attack may be **PARRIED**. The adventurer suffers additional damage to Empathy equal to half the amount of damage (rounded up) due to the horrific encounter.

QUET-FAEREN -
THE MAKER OF GLASS TIGERS

A half-elven teenage girl wearing rags. Her arms and hands scarred and burnt from constant and obsessive work. She wears Argento, the Silver'd Crow, around her neck.

Quet-Faeren is composed of fear extracted from the Sorceress Quetzel. She fears everything and everyone. She is completely innocent, driven only by a desire to protect herself. She will never willingly trust the adventurers.

Long ago, Quet-Faeren and Quet-Scyre conspired to kill the Demon-Queen and burn her city. Though they trapped her in her body, they were unable to destroy her spirit. Or perhaps unwilling as, composed of parts of her soul, when she finally, fully, dies, they will cease to be.



STRENGTH 2,AGILITY 3,WITS 3,EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Sneak 2, Insight 2, Manipulation 3, Healing 2

QUET-SCYRE – THE POISON-EATER

An ancient woman in a simple robe. Her long, long hair like whitest snow, her penetrating eyes like pale-blue sky, her skin like fine porcelain. Kind, simple and calm, she wears a single silver ring and carries a key on a chain round her neck. Quet-Scyre is the conscience of the Sorceress Quetzel, separated by magical artifice and kept in the form of a living being. She can eat only poison, or other toxic things, and without them she would starve. This garden is her larder.

Quet-Scyre is entirely good. She will not willingly surrender her silver key as she believes that the adventurers will inevitably release Quetzel. If she is attacked, the lizard-birds will defend her. If the silver ring is ever removed from her finger, dead or alive, she is transformed into a wonderful, pure-white, bird of paradise.

STRENGTH 2,AGILITY 2,WITS 4,EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Lore 3, Insight 4, Healing 4

GEAR: The Silver Key. This key bears the symbol of a maze upon its bow. It opens the Silver Door in the Silver Maze.

PURELY GOOD: Quet-Scyre is the exiled conscience of Quetzel and entirely good. Being so pure means she sees right through the adventurers and cannot be MANIPULATED. She is also immune to spells that damage Wits or Empathy. Read more under the event "A Good Woman" below.

LIZARD-BIRDS

Beautiful, turkey-sized dinosaurs, with feathered arm-wings, and long balancing tails. Their scales and plumage are glorious bands of iridescence, but the garden is so bright and colorful that these are effective camouflage.

The lizard-birds will follow the PC's from inside the undergrowth. They defend both the flowers and Quet-Scyre. Their bite is poisonous.

STRENGTH 5,AGILITY 5

ARMOR RATING: 3 (thick skin)

BITE ATTACK: Seven base dice and Weapon damage 1 (slash wound). If the attack succeeds the victim is affected by a paralyzing poison with Potency 7. This counts as a monster attack, and thus does not depend on the Strength of the Lizard-Bird.

THE POISON-EATING BEES

Fat, buzzing, heavily-laden bees with bands like the sheen of spilled oil.

The bees are no more aggressive than normal bees, but will attack everyone but Quet-Scyre if their hives are disturbed. Their sting is toxic.

STRENGTH 6

SWARM: The bees are a swarm, and any single attack against them can only cause a single point of damage.

POISONOUS STING: The bee swarm attacks using its current Strength, Weapon Damage 1. A victim that takes 1 point of damage or more also suffers the effects of a paralyzing poison with Potency 6.



THE TERRACOTTA CREW

These beings are made of red clay, sculpted as men. Stained gold with iron pyrites from the exhaled breath of flying Titans and green with verdigris from alien alchemical storms, their amber eyes flicker.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2

SKILLS: Melee 2, Scouting 3

PUSHING ATTACK: The Terracotta soldiers will use the **SHOVE** action to try and push the adventurers off the ship.

INNUMERABLE: For every Terracotta crew-member destroyed, another will rise. The only way to defeat them is to flee.

THE DEMON QUEEN

Surrounded by the shadows of birds, fighting and pecking at each other in a flock around her. Gray, like the shadow of smoke. Feathers fallen into piles like sapphire dust.

Her body seemingly mummified, but whole. Crowned by a living halo, like a miniature aurora borealis. Her throat cut like a smile, dried blood like a necklace. Her sapphire eye-carved mask hangs slightly loose, in its shadow, the dull glitter of a dry dead eye seems to wink. A straight silver sword hangs from one open hand. The other hand lies on an emerald book upon her lap. Her chest has been torn open by battle – inside you can see the black gem that contains her soul.

STRENGTH 24, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Scouting 5, Insight 4, Manipulate 4

ARMOR RATING: 6 (mummified skin)

PROTECTED AGAINST PROJECTILES: Any solid projectile fired at Quetzel turns into a bird in mid-flight, loops around her, flies back at the shooter and then transforms back into the projectile at the last moment. All projectile attacks miss Quetzel and hit the attacker instead.

IMMORTAL: The Demon Queen cannot be killed by normal means. Even if Broken, she rises again with full Strength after one turn (15 minutes). The only way to truly kill her is to destroy the Black Gem (see below).

TREASURE: The Demon Queen carries the following items:

- ❖ **THE BLACK GEM.** Anyone touching the Gem can be possessed by Quetzel (see the “Curse of the Black Gem” event). If the possessed individual is separated from the Gem, Quetzel must leave that body. If the Black Gem is destroyed, she dies. To destroy the Gem, the adventurers must **DISARM** Quetzel or take it from her Broken body, and then strike a single blow at the Gem inflicting 4 points of damage or more.
- ❖ **THE LONGSWORD NARSIKA.** Narsika loves beauty and hates ugliness. She is a longsword with a D10 Artifact Die, and ignores the armor of anything hideous (GM’s call). Quetzel can also use Narsika’s shining surface to **PARRY** directional spell effects. Other wielders can do this too, but never if Narsika dislikes them. When not in Quetzel’s hand, Narsika will continually try to persuade her owner to destroy and degrade things she considers ugly, and to become as beautiful and magnificent as possible. Narsika will not speak to any ugly wielder, and if one picks her up, she will seem to become rusty and old in their hand.



❖ **THE EMERALD BOOK.** This is a grimoire (see page 120 of the *Player's Handbook*) that contains D6 random spells of Awareness and Blood Magic. It is also very well protected and turns anyone who opens it without first casting **DISPEL MAGIC** on it into a Green Chicken. The book must be destroyed to end the transformation.

❖ **THE EYE-CARVED SAPPHIRE MASK.** Insanely expensive and very impressive looking. Any Sorcerer wearing this will look mysterious, powerful, and weird. Intelligent demons may fear the wearer, until they realize it isn't Quetzel. Even then, they may be wary, as this may be the person who killed Quetzel. This is not a magical or game-mechanical effect, it is a product of the dark history of the Demon-Queen.

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **DEMONIC DOUBLE!** Quetzel summons a demonic doppelganger from the shadow of an adventurer. This creature looks exactly like the victim and has the same stats, but is utterly evil and can never tell the truth. It will try to kill them and take over their life. It does not disappear when Quetzel dies. It must be independently destroyed.

2. **GRAVITY SWITCH!** Quetzel reverses gravity in an area around her. All adventurers in **NEAR** range will "fall" D6+6 meters to the ceiling where they will seem to walk upon the nebulae.

3. **BLASTING SCREAM!** Quetzel screams. The nebulae beyond the dome boil. All adventurers in **NEAR** range must succeed at a **DEMANDING** (-1) Insight roll or be blasted out of their bodies for one round, losing the ability to act. If multiple people are so affected, they will return to random bodies.

4. **IRIDESCENT MUTATING FIRE!** Quetzel hurls a powerful magical bolt of green fire which inflicts D6 points of damage (non-typical) or mutates a random body part into a birdlike form. The victim may choose whether to take the damage or the mutation. The mutations do not disappear with the death of Quetzel.

5. **WRATH OF NARSIKA!** The Demon-Queen lets the sword Narsika sing and performs a lightning quick slashing attack against two adventurers. Perform an attack at each with ten Base Dice and one D10 Artifact Die, Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). If wounded, the victims will be affected by self-loathing for D3 days, stopping all recovery of Empathy.

6. **THE HORRIBLE GAZE OF THE ABYSS!** A strange pulsating sound can be heard by the adventurers, before the floating giant eyes in the darkness behind the Demon-Queen suddenly focus on the adventurers. A horror attack with ten Base Dice is performed against all adventurers within **NEAR** range.



EVENTS

Many events can happen around the Spire of Quetzel. Below are some suggestions.

THE HARROWING GHOSTS

While exploring the City of Black Spars, the adventurers suddenly hear a swooshing sound and are quickly embroiled in a wind of ash and dust while hearing a strange wailing sound



around them. As the wind settles, they find themselves surrounded by D6+3 Ghosts of Ash, all hiding their faces and closing in with deathly intent.

THE WOLVES CIRCLE

Any time that one of the adventurers is separated from the group or is vulnerable and exposed for some reason, the Bent-Backed Wolves are there, ready to tear the victim apart. They often move in packs, with D6+6 members, constantly trying to flank and move up on their victims from behind. A concentrated effort by the whole group of adventurers will drive them off in D3 rounds.

THE GOOD WOMAN

The adventurers will most probably encounter Quet-Scyre while navigating the byzantine greenhouse. An old woman, Quet-Scyre, is the exiled conscience of Quetzel and entirely good. Being so pure means she sees right through the adventurers, their bloody swords, worn armor, and rucksacks filled with treasure, all reveal that they are amoral plunderers, not heroes. She is convinced that the adventurers will free the Demon Queen and do the world a great disservice. She is probably right. The only way she can be convinced that the group holds the right intentions is if one of them eats poisonous honey without fear. The poison is lethal and has a Potency of 9. If the adventurer succeeds in resisting it, she will be convinced of their good intentions. For the moment.

THE GIRL AND THE GLASS TIGERS

When the adventurers explore the silver maze, they will sooner or later run into Quet-Faeren. The girl fears strangers with weapons (with good reason). As soon as she sees the adventurers, Quet-Faeren shouts; “No! Not me!” and flees. Then she says:

“My Tigers! My Tigers! Where are you now?”

All remaining Tigers converge on her position and defend her with unrelenting force.

Quet-Faeren is driven by fear. No matter what the adventurers say or do, she will shake with horror at the sight of them. She might give them clues about the other aspects of Quetzel between fearful sobs just before she faints, or she might run away and hide in the depths of the maze. She will under no circumstances leave the maze.

THE CREW RISES

Once the adventurers try to pull up, or close in on, the silver door at the Ship with Amber Wings, the Terracotta crew will wake to life. 2D6 clay warriors will suddenly move toward the adventurers, their faces expressionless and devoid of feeling. They will simply try to push the adventurers overboard with their sheer numbers, walking slowly against them, shoulder to shoulder, creating a wall of clay and dead faces. Some will fall down in the storm in their efforts, others will surely perish by the adventurers’ swords, but nothing, however, will affect their intention. For every crewmember destroyed, another will rise from the depths of the ship. The only way to defeat them is to flee, or enter the silver door.



QUET-SCYRE





SHE'S AWAKE!

It will happen. Quetzel, the Demon-Queen, will awaken and challenge the adventurers. After all, this has been her intention all along. Quetzel will wake:

- ❖ If anyone touches her black, gemlike heart
- ❖ If it looks like the adventurers are going to leave without touching the heart
- ❖ If any adventurer manages to seriously physically damage her body
- ❖ If anyone uses magic to investigate the body

Her Intentions are to:

- ❖ Possess a new, fresh body.
- ❖ Grab as much of her stuff as possible.
- ❖ Kill Quet-Scyre and Quet-Faeren.
- ❖ Make sure no-one can ever find out what happened here (kill, trap, or convert the adventurers).
- ❖ Escape from the Tower.

THE TRAP TREASURES: The treasures from the rest of the tower and its surroundings will turn on their wielders the moment she wakes.

- ❖ **THE FEATHER BLADE.** Leaps into flight, swooping and dancing around its owner, cutting at her. On the Demon-Queen's initiative turn, the Blade performs a SLASH attack with seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 every round. The Blade cannot be damaged.
- ❖ **ARGENTO THE CROW.** Grows to the size of a Velociraptor and attacks the adventurers. Use the stats of a Wyvern (see page 124 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*).
- ❖ **THE SILVER RING.** Unwraps and climbs

like a worm around the finger of its wielder, turning them into a bird.

If Quetzel is destroyed, the items return to their customary nature and effects for good.

CURSE OF THE BLACK GEM

If an adventurer physically touches her black gem, Quetzel instantly possesses the victim. The adventurer suddenly finds herself in the Queen's horrible, mummified form, only to see her own body, under the control of the Demon-Queen, taking the obsidian gem from her chest and smiling.

- ❖ The Halo disappears from Quetzel's old body, now inhabited by the adventurer.
- ❖ In her new body, Quetzel immediately restores any lost Strength.
- ❖ As soon as Quetzel performs a monster attack in her new body, the halo re-forms around her head.
- ❖ The shadows of birds will follow Quetzel in whatever body she resides.

Quetzel's old body cannot speak, but it can move. The player is not allowed to converse with the other players at the table. Being trapped in it is like being trapped inside a zombie. The victim retains her stats, and gains Armor Rating 6 from the mummified skin of the body.

The only way for the victim to return to her old body is to destroy the Black Gem and thus kill Quetzel permanently. If the body has been Broken while possessed by Quetzel, it will remain broken when the adventurer returns to it.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Dungeon

A white structure stands out from the dull red rock of the wastes. A dome in its center, urchin-like spikes protruding from every surface, and a moon-like glow radiating from its walls distinguish the structure.

The fat, stepped Mesa below it is uneven, but could be climbed without need for special equipment.

On approach, a set of towering doors are visible between arrays of spikes. Made of marble-like stone, they show three stylised but monstrous creatures: One doglike, one swollen and shapeless, and one knotted and worm-like. Above them, an icon of a soft, innocent face, from which they all recoil.

BACKGROUND

A vault of bright white stone, set atop a stepped mesa. It holds four Demon spawn, Siblings taken moments after their birth and locked away in a blessed prison.



LEGEND

Standing on a squat, stepped mesa, surrounded by blasted desert, there has always been a structure of spiked white stone here.

Legends tell of a clutch of Demon spawn, Siblings stolen from their unnatural parents by a sect



of priests. In death, they could be reborn as true demons, so they were taken alive, interred in the only place holy enough to contain them.

Once three, now the four of them remain within the Bright Vault for eternity. No demon can approach its light, and any mortals that dared to visit the tomb have not returned.

The power that keeps demons at bay, and the spawn subdued, is subject to much speculation.



LOCATIONS

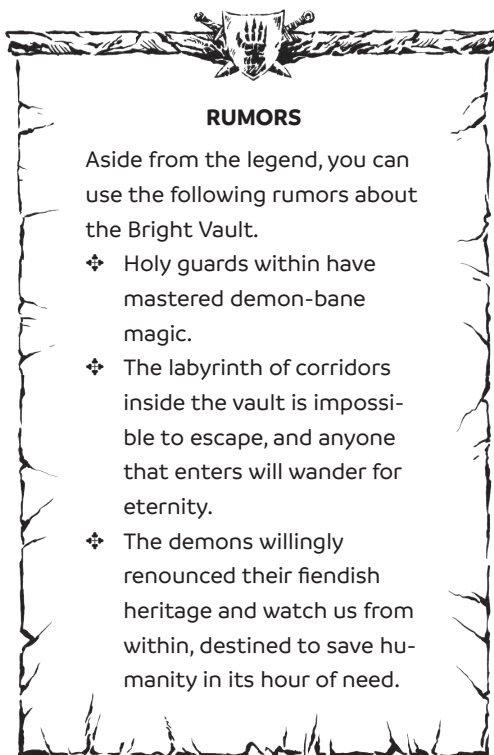
Each room of the Bright Vault is described below, along with general area information.

GENERAL AREAS

THE RADIANT HALLS (1-10 AND CONNECTING CORRIDORS). Faintly glowing white stone halls with soft white carpets laid down the center of each room. Sturdy doors of the same material are each embossed with an angelic face, which Her Radiance can appear to speak directly from. A faintly floral scent fills the halls.

CHORL'S PIT (11 AND SURROUNDING CORRIDORS). Wide corridors of reinforced stone, covered with roughly painted red crosses. Chunks of glowing stone are embedded in the ceiling, flickering with a distracting light. Smells like ammonia.

MILT'S MAZE (12-17 AND CONNECTING CORRIDORS). Cramped, uneven tunnels of soft rock, some chunks torn out of walls. The



RUMORS

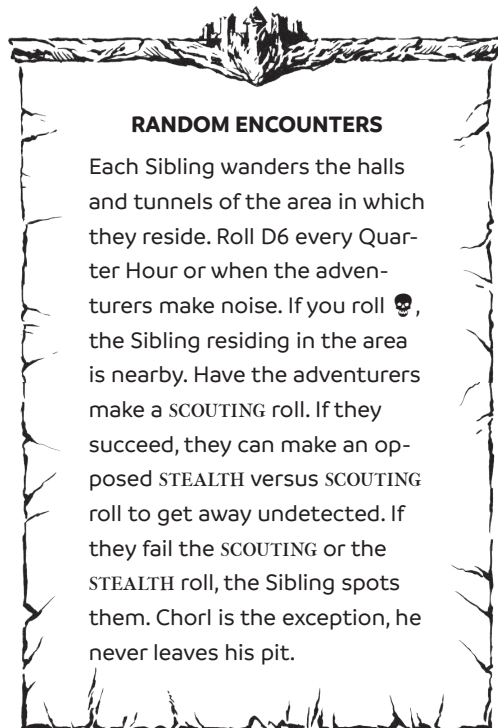
Aside from the legend, you can use the following rumors about the Bright Vault.

- ❖ Holy guards within have mastered demon-bane magic.
- ❖ The labyrinth of corridors inside the vault is impossible to escape, and anyone that enters will wander for eternity.
- ❖ The demons willingly renounced their fiendish heritage and watch us from within, destined to save humanity in its hour of need.

floor is covered with a mix of sand and filth. Utterly without light. Stinks like an uncleaned kennel.

DIV'S CHAMBERS (18-22 AND CONNECTING CORRIDORS). Wood panelled walls and floorboards, all painted in garish, bright colors. Filth and blood have been used to smear incomprehensible images onto the walls. Smells like damp and mold.

AN-DIV'S TUNNELS (23-24 AND CONNECTING TUNNELS). Smooth tunnels bored down into the red rock of the mesa, occasionally



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Each Sibling wanders the halls and tunnels of the area in which they reside. Roll D6 every Quarter Hour or when the adventurers make noise. If you roll ☠, the Sibling residing in the area is nearby. Have the adventurers make a SCOUTING roll. If they succeed, they can make an opposed STEALTH versus SCOUTING roll to get away undetected. If they fail the SCOUTING or the STEALTH roll, the Sibling spots them. Chorl is the exception, he never leaves his pit.

opening up into near perfectly spherical chambers. When moving through these tunnels, An-Div fills them perfectly.

1. THE HOLY ENTRANCE

A vast entrance hall, quiet and cool. The walls glow with pale light, and an ornate fountain bubbles softly. Each door, to the north, east, and west is embossed with an angelic face.

The Fountain has four ceramic cups on a shelf underneath. It is full of cool, refreshing water.

Upon entering, Her Radiance casts her light upon one of the angelic faces on the

doors and greets the party, welcoming them and beckoning them to drink. She uses this to gauge how trusting they will be. She invites them to come in further, but only gives vague answers to any questions.

2. SHRINE TO THE DEAD

A small room, its walls lined with skeletons propped up in heroic poses. Some are clad in armor, others in rune-stitched robes.

The skeletons are fake, and so is the armor. Her Radiance will make up stories about heroic individuals that came here in search of treasure, dying on their quests. She uses this as an opportunity to gauge the character of the party.

3. SHRINE TO THE LIVING

A small room lined with crude wooden statues. There are four, each depicted carrying a staff, sword, crown, and pile of gems respectively.

Her Radiance claims that these are the only four beings to make it out of the vault alive, each finding a great treasure. This is entirely made up, and she uses any questions as an opportunity to find out the desires of the party.

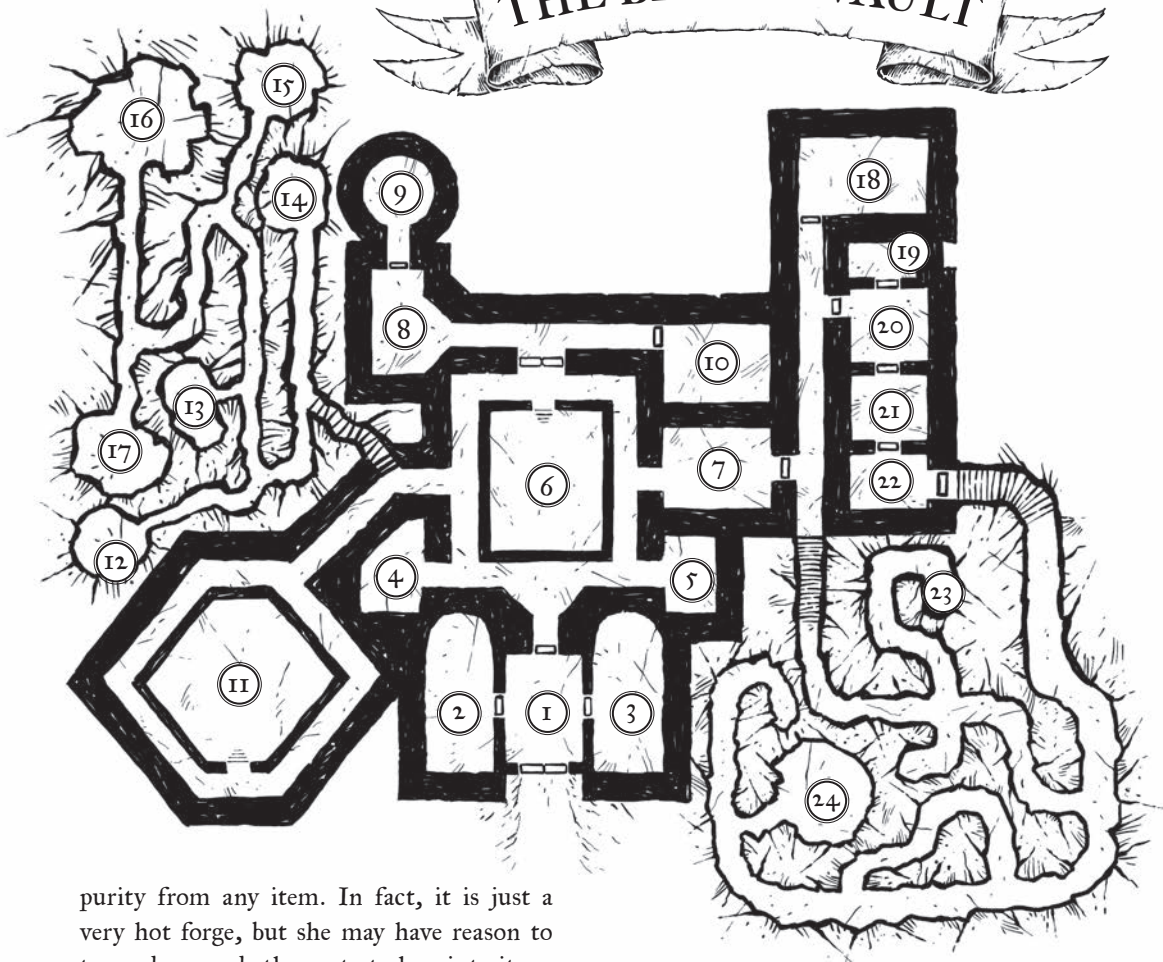
4. THE FURNACE

A baking hot room, entirely taken up by a flaming pit in the floor.

Her Radiance claims that this is a forge of purity, a fire that can remove demonic im-



THE BRIGHT VAULT



purity from any item. In fact, it is just a very hot forge, but she may have reason to try and persuade the party to leap into it, or throw an item in. Any object thrown into the furnace is destroyed, and any living being is killed outright.

5. THE LANTERN

Searing light radiates from the center of this room, like a miniature sun.

Her Radiance claims that this light destroys any demon or spawn that it touches. This is true of demons, but not for spawn like the Siblings. The light works like the **BANISH DEMON** spell with a Power Level of $2D6$, triggered on any demon in the room each round.

The light is fixed in place and cannot be moved by any normal means.



6. HER-RADIANCE'S PILE

Marbled steps lead down into a cold, dark room. A light appears in the center of the room, slowly forming into a humanoid shape. She has flowing robes, moves softly, but you cannot make out any features. You can make out the glint of metal objects scattered around her.

This is the only place where Her Radiance can take on a more specific shape, and can manipulate metal objects. For all other purposes she is still immaterial.

She will ask what the adventurers need to help them explore the vault, and will willingly give them the best fit from her treasure pile. She doesn't like to give out more than one object at once, but will let the adventurers take one thing home with them if they offer a good trade.

Anyone trying to take something without her permission is gently rebuked while she snaps the object back to the ground. She cannot be overpowered, but may be deceived or persuaded.

- ❖ **TREASURE:** The treasure pile contains D6 PRECIOUS finds (in the lair), 2D6 VALUABLE finds, and the specific items below:

CHOKY PENNY: A particularly shiny coin. Her Radiance has conditioned each of the Siblings to crave this item more than anything else. If they get it, they will always try to eat it, and they will always choke. This will immediately reduce the Sibling's Agility to zero, making the Sibling broken. The Sibling takes one Quarter Hour to recover fully.

MILK BOWL: If filled from the fountain at the vault entrance, the water turns to warm milk. Anyone drinking the full bowl slips into a peaceful sleep for a Quarter Day. None of the Siblings enjoy drinking the milk except for Div, who does so willingly.

BONDING COLLARS: Two brass collars connected by a 10-foot chain. The collars warp to fit any being required. When two beings are collared together in this way, they can communicate with each other despite any normal barriers, and are utterly unable to harm each other. Either can remove the collar at will, as long as the other allows it.

PHANTASM SHIELD: A silver, almost mirrored, shield. When laid flat, any being that steps on it triggers a perfect illusion of themselves to appear, and act in a way most typical of them. The illusion disperses if the shield is lifted off the ground.

7. THE BROKEN ROOM

The white glow of this room is flickering, unlike the rest of this area. The floor is cracked from the center up to the eastern door. The door itself is imprinted with an angelic face, which is also cracked down the middle.

The crack here was caused by the splitting of Div and An-Div. This is the only room in the vault where Her Radiance cannot see or communicate. She will do everything to hide this.



8. GLUTTON'S ROOM

A broad stone table fills the room. There are no seats, but the table is covered with simple stone bowls filled with a rich-smelling stew.

The stew is delicious and filling, counting as a day's full ration of FOOD. Her Radiance encourages the party to eat until they're full.

9. SILENT HOLE

A seemingly bottomless pit fills the floor of this room. Upon entering, no sound can be made in here. Everything is painfully silent.

The Pit is not bottomless, but very deep. The bottom has a handful of corpses with rusted equipment. Her Radiance can still talk in here, but generally chooses not to.

10. THE WHITE LIBRARY

A dusty library filled with even more dusty books.

All books are bound in white leather, written in a strange language. They would be worth a lot to a collector. The books detail disputed methods for controlling and destroying demons. If they can be deciphered (requiring a LORE roll and Quarter Day's work), they count as grimoires containing the BANISH DEMON and BIND DEMON spells.

II. CHORL'S PIT

The pit below is dimly lit. In the shadows, the figure of a swollen giant can just about be made out. There is a whimpering sound, and a strong

smell of ammonia. A red light glows behind the bulking creature.

Her Radiance will warn the adventurers that Chorl is a dangerous creature of great power, and must not be provoked. In fact, he is terrified of everything.

If the adventurers try to soothe Charl, Her Radiance whispers into his ear that they're lying. She translates anything Chorl says as a threat to the party.

- ❖ CREATURES: Chorl
- ❖ TREASURE: The red light is a glowing ruby worth D6 gold to the right buyer.

Her Radiance has convinced Chorl that it keeps ghosts away, so he will fight for it.

I2. OPAL POND

This alcove ends in a small pool of muddy water, with some blue mushrooms growing around its rim.

The mushrooms are delicious if cooked, but cause vomiting if eaten raw (inflicting 1 point of damage to Agility and not counting toward the daily need for FOOD).

The pool is used by Milt as a toilet and swimming hole. He keeps some shiny stones in a sack at the bottom, they are actually opals of some value (2D6 stones worth about 1 silver each).

13. THE UDDERS

This tall alcove has uneven walls, which can be clambered up with ease. At the top of the wall there are four white, bulbous protrusions.



The protrusions are udder-like fungus that secrete a liquid when squeezed. This is highly alcoholic, with a strong aniseed note. The liquid counts toward the daily need for WATER, and drinking a dose of it restores 1 point of lost Empathy, but it also inflicts 1 point of damage to Wits.

If Milt is here, he always suggests a drinking contest.

14. SPOOK PILE

Four skulls are embedded in the wall here, each one decorated in a different way. The first has blood smeared over its mouth, the second has coins in its eye sockets, the third is dotted with puncture holes, and the fourth sports long hair made from weeds.

If Milt is here, he talks to these as if the skulls are alive. The coins in the second skull are worth 1 silver each.

15. TOY STASH

A tattered curtain covers this alcove, marked with a red cross.

Behind the curtain, Milt has his stash of toys laid out on plinths of hardened mud. If Milt catches the party here he will attack in a fury, but soon turns the hostility into a game.

- ❖ TREASURE: Milt's stash of toys contains several items of interest:

THE LIVING-LIGHT ROD: When the wielder focuses, a spotlight is projected from

the end of this rod. Any being the light is on cannot be Broken and cannot die, no matter how much their body is damaged. If the light is removed, even for a second, then any averted damage and death catches up with them.

ETERNAL LENS: If placed in the eye socket of a skull, it projects the last thing that being saw before death.

HOBBY HORSE: Just a regular hobby-horse with a ragged head.

16. DOG TOTEM

This vast cave is lit by crude torches stuck into the walls. At the center of the room, a towering statue, some twelve feet tall, has been slapped together from mud and other filth. It looks loosely like a gaunt dog, with knives studding its mouth where teeth would be.

If Milt is here, he will insist that everybody pets the dog. He spends days rebuilding it whenever it collapses, so Her Radiance will try to trick the party into destroying it.

17. MILT'S HIDEOUT

Piles of straw fill the room, with a few tattered strips of brightly colored cloth mixed in. The dog-bed smell is intense here.

- ❖ CREATURES: This is where Milt sleeps, and if he hasn't been seen up until now, he will be napping in the straw.



18. DIRT GARDEN

The brightly painted door opens onto a tall natural cave, the floor of which is little more than a mud pit. There are tufts of bright green weeds, piles of rocks, and puddles of water dotted around.

The weeds are lightly hallucinogenic if chewed, counting as a hallucinogenic poison of Potency 3. The rocks are unremarkable.

❖ CREATURES: There is a frog hopping between some of the muddy puddles, Div is very fond of him.



19. PRECIOUS ROCKS

Little more than a pantry, each shelf is lined with tattered cloth and contains several rocks. Each is a normal rock but either in an amusing shape, or with a face crudely painted on.

The rocks are worthless, but priceless to Div.

20. PET ROOM

Three wicker baskets line one side of the room, each covered by a white cloth. There is a rotten smell.

The first basket contains a dozen dead frogs in various states of decay. The second, a partially decomposed horse's head. The third is an indeterminate pile of bones.

21. DIV'S ROOM

A large wicker basket fills the room, thinly lined with straw.

If Div hasn't been encountered yet, he will be lying at the bottom of the basket. Otherwise, the basket is empty, but the bottom of it is stained with a large amount of blood, and part of it has been badly damaged. This is where An-Div finally split from Div.

22. THE CELLAR

A stairway leads to a tiny, dusty room, the back wall of which has been completely eaten away, leaving a smoothly-bored tunnel into the darkness.

Around the hole there are some smashed wooden shelves, containing a few more of Div's

"precious rocks," which are worthless besides their sentimental value to him.

23. MIRROR CAVE

This spherical cave is lit by glowing white rock from above, and the bottom is filled with a silvery, reflective liquid.

The floor is a mercury-like metal that Her Radiance can project images onto. She tells An-Div that these are visions of the future, but she is just making them up.

24. AN-DIV'S BATH

The smell of cinnamon, limes, and alcohol fills the tunnel leading to this cave. The cave itself is filled halfway up with murky liquid, with black vines dangling from the ceiling.

If the party have not encountered An-Div yet, she is here, bathing.

The vines are the source of the lime and cinnamon smell. They are recognisable as Darni Weed, a valuable cooking ingredient (worth D6 silver per full inventory slot).

The liquid is corrosive to mortal flesh (inflicting 1 point of damage per round), but An-Div uses it as a tingly bath.



MONSTERS AND NPCs

The most important monsters and non-player



characters in the Bright Vault are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

MILT – THE WORST SIBLING

Six foot tall, but hunched almost double. Its body is apelike, with golden fur, its head that of a slavering, cross-eyed dog, with a crown of knotted, spiralling horns. Each clawed hand grips a knotted stick.

His speech is a crazed yapping, which Her Radiance translates faithfully unless she has reason to mislead the party. Milt understands any speech, and so cannot be misled in the same way.

He is full of bad ideas, and wants the adventurers to act them out with him. Everything is a game.

Commonly, he either gives his two sticks to two characters and tells them to act out a dangerous game, or keeps one for himself to play along. If in doubt, roll D6 to see what he wants to play:

1. **EXPLORERS:** Using the stick like a spy-glass, try to spot one of his Siblings from a distance without them seeing you.
2. **KNIGHTS:** Charge at each other using the sticks as lances.
3. **BANDITS:** Miming a bow-and-arrow motion with the stick, try to sneak into one of the other Sibling's areas and steal something from them.
4. **SNAKES:** Clutching the stick to your belly, writhe on the floor and try to bite each other.
5. **PARADE:** Waving the stick like a flag,

march into another Sibling's area and shout about how great Milt is.

6. **CLUB:** One person closes their eyes, while the other hits them with the stick then runs away, swapping when caught.

Anybody without a stick can't take part in the game, and he lashes out at them if they try to interfere. Anybody refusing to play is chastised as a coward, and Milt will lash out before fleeing, hoping to encourage them to chase him.

He thinks everybody else adores him, and sees the other Siblings as nothing more than toys, holding no real opinion of them individually. He sees Her Radiance as a mother figure, not obeying her, but enjoying the praise she lavishes upon him. He stays here willingly, because Her Radiance says he can keep any toys that outsiders bring in here.

If Milt is killed, his body burns in a violent fire before a truly terrifying and malicious demon hound, "Horath-Milt," rises from the ashes. Her Radiance can do nothing to control this demon, and it immediately heads for the vault exit, smashing any obstacle in its way.

MILT'S ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 14, AGILITY 4, WITS 1, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Move 5, Scouting 4

MOVEMENT RATE: 2

ARMOR RATING: 2 (fur)

MONSTER: Milt counts as a monster in combat – see page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.



D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **GO FETCH!** Milt picks up the smallest (lowest Strength) adventurer and tries to hurl her away. Roll for the attack with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack hits, the victim is thrown to **SHORT** range (an adjacent room or corridor) and lands prone. Milt then runs after the victim. In the next turn, don't roll on this table. Instead, Milt bites the victim (seven Base Dice, Weapon Damage 1, stab wound). If the attack hits, Milt carries the victim back to the other adventurers and triumphantly drops her at their feet.
2. **HOWL!** Milt stands up on his hind legs and howls in agony. All adventurers within **NEAR** distance suffer a fear attack with six dice.
3. **BITE!** Milt throws himself over an adventurer within **NEAR** distance and bites her. Roll for the attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (stab wound).
4. **TANTRUM!** In a rage, Milt stomps and smashes wildly around himself. Everyone within **NEAR** range is attacked with seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). All victims that are hit are also thrown to the ground.
5. **SMASH!** Milt swings his stick with all his power against an adventurer. Roll for the attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack hits, the victim is also thrown to the ground.
6. **LET'S PLAY!** Milt wants to play with the adventurers and runs away to an adjacent room or corridor. There, he awaits them. This action can lead Milt to run into the area of another Sibling, potentially bringing the adventurers into conflict with two of them at the same time.

HORATH-MILT'S ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 24, AGILITY 4, WITS 1, EMPATHY 1

SKILLS: Move 5, Scouting 4

MOVEMENT RATE: 2

ARMOR RATING: 8 (demonic skin)

MONSTER: Horath-Milt counts as a monster in combat – see page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **CHARGE!** The demon hound snarls and rushes toward the exit. It moves one zone (i.e. into an adjacent room or corridor in the direction of the exit). Any adventurers in the path of the beast are attacked with eight Base Dice (Weapon Damage 1, blunt force). Any victim hit is also thrown to the ground.
2. **DEMONIC HOWL!** Horath-Milt emits a demonic howl, the like of which has never before been heard in the Forbidden Lands. Everyone within **NEAR** range is affected by a fear attack with eight Base Dice.
3. **RENDING ATTACK!** Horath-Milt leaps forward, tearing at an adventurer within **NEAR** range using its sharp claws. The victim is attacked using ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
4. **DEMONIC LEAP!** Horath-Milt rushes forward and jumps at an adventurer within **NEAR** range. Roll for the attack using eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack is successful, the victim is thrown to the ground and Horath-Milt immediately performs an extra attack (ten Base Dice, Weapon Damage 2, slash wound), outside of the normal turn order. The extra attack cannot be **DODGED**.



5. DEATH RATTLE! Horath-Milt jumps at an adventurer, biting her, and then shakes the unfortunate victim, finally throwing her aside like a rag doll. Roll for the attack using seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). If the attack hits, the victim is thrown to NEAR distance and lands prone.

6. LOCKED JAW! Horath-Milt bites the arm or leg of one of the adventurers and locks its jaws in a brutal grip. Roll for the attack using seven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound). If hit, the adventurer is GRAPPLED.

CHORL – THE LARGEST SIBLING

A swollen giant, twelve feet tall and just as wide, with misshapen limbs growing from seemingly random points on his body. He is wrapped in rags, his skin a dull red, and a single blue eye dominates his monstrous face.

By focusing with his eye, he can cause objects to burst into flames, but he is so afraid of fire that he never willingly uses this power.

He is a coward through-and-through, and will plead to be left alone, but if backed into a corner will unleash his strength. He is convinced that danger is everywhere, and Her Radiance is always warning him of threats, both true and false.

His speech is a whining roar, which Her Radiance translates faithfully unless she has reason to mislead the party. Chorl understands any speech, and so cannot be misled in the same way.

He idolizes Milt, but is too scared to engage in his games. He is terrified of Div and An-Div. He trusts Her Radiance blindly, and is kept here by her stories of the terrifying

things outside the vault.

If killed, his body melts into slime before the towering demon lizard “Shira-Chorl” emerges from the puddle. Her Radiance can do nothing to control this demon, and it immediately heads for the vault exit, smashing through any obstacles in its way.

CHORL’S ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 22, AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Scouting 3

MOVEMENT RATE: 1

ARMOR RATING: 2 (thick skin)

MONSTER: Chorl counts as a monster in combat – see page 73 of the *Gamemaster’s Guide*.

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. WEEP! Chorl stops fighting, sits down heavily, and weeps loudly. He raises his arms in defense and pleads to the adventurers not to hurt him. This “attack” has no mechanical effect.

2. ROAR! Chorl lets out a deep, bellowing sound that terrifies all adventurers within NEAR range. Roll for a fear attack with six Base Dice.

3. STOMP! Chorl tries to stomp two adventurers within NEAR range. Roll for the attacks with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). A victim who is hit is also smashed into the ground.

4. TANTRUM! In a rage, Chorl stomps and smashes wildly around himself. Everyone within NEAR range is attacked with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). All victims that are hit are also thrown to the ground.



5. **CANNONBALL!** Chorl is fed up with an adventurer within NEAR range and tries to throw her away. Roll for the attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If the attack hits, the victim is thrown to SHORT range and lands prone.

6. **FIRE GAZE!** Chorl focuses his demonic gaze on an adventurer within SHORT range, causing the victim to burst into flames. Roll for the attack using twelve Base Dice, Weapon Damage 2

(non-typical damage). Armor has no effect against this attack, and it cannot be DODGED.

SHIRA-CHORL'S ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 36, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Scouting 3

MOVEMENT RATE: 1

ARMOR RATING: 10 (scales)

MONSTER: Shira-Chorl counts as a monster in combat – see page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.





D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **CHARGE!** The demon lizard snarls and rushes toward the exit. It moves one zone (i.e. into an adjacent room or corridor in the direction of the exit). Any adventurers in the path of the beast are attack with ten Base Dice (Weapon Damage 1, blunt force). Any victim hit is also thrown to the ground.
2. **DEMONIC ROAR!** Shira-Chorl lets out a powerful roar against the adventurers. Everyone within NEAR range is struck by a fear attack with eight Base Dice.
3. **DEADLY BITE!** The beast targets the adventurer with the highest Strength and bites her with sharp teeth. Roll for the attack with twelve Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
4. **CLAW ATTACK!** Shira-Chorl sweeps its claws towards two unlucky adventurers within NEAR range. Roll for the attacks with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound) each.
5. **TAIL ATTACK!** The beast uses its long tail to make a sweeping attack against all adventurers within NEAR range. Roll for the attacks with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). All victims hit by the attack are also thrown to the ground.
6. **DEVOURING MAW!** The demon lizard chooses the adventurer with the highest Strength and tries to devour her. Roll for the attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). If the attack hits, the victim is devoured whole. Inside the beast, the adventurer suffers 1 point of damage every round due to the acidic gastric juices. The adventurer can attack Shira-Chorl from inside, where the beast has no Armor Rating. If the beast is killed, the trapped adventurer can escape.

DIV – THE BROKEN SIBLING

A skeletal, hairless, humanoid body; crawling and unable to stand. Its head is limp, featureless, wormlike. It is drooling a cold white slime.

Div is truly broken, now little more than the basest survival instincts in a husk of a body. He will crawl towards warmth, eat anything presented to him, and ask where his sister is.

He hates Milt for abandoning him, fears Chorl's physical might, and longs for his sister An-Div to come back and help him. She won't.

Its speech is a gurgling grunting, which Her Radiance translates faithfully unless she has reason to mislead the party. Div understands any speech, and so cannot be misled in the same way.

If killed, his body shrivels until child-sized, no demonic force left within it since An-Div broke away.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 1, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Scouting 3

MOVEMENT RATE: 1

ARMOR RATING: None

SPECIAL: If attacked, Div will not fight back. The adventurers can kill him easily if they want to. If killed, his body shrivels until child-sized. No demonic force is left within it since An-Div broke away.

AN-DIV – THE NEW SIBLING

A fat, wormlike being, bristling with spines. Her head is mostly featureless except for two tiny black eyes, and a wide, eloquent mouth that opens to reveal seven rows of jagged teeth.



Her speech is a breathy, sing-song language that the adventurer's have never heard before, which Her Radiance translates faithfully unless she has reason to mislead the party. An-Div understands any speech, and so cannot be misled in the same way.

If encountered, she will want information on the other Siblings, and will enforce whatever Her Radiance is asking the adventurers to do.

She is ashamed of the other Siblings, especially Div who she grew out of and eventually split from. She idolises Her Radiance and wants to become like her. She is kept here by Her Radiance's constant praise and ongoing promises that one day she can be in charge of the other Siblings.

If killed, her body melts into dark slime before a black, immaterial humanoid shape grows from it. This twelve foot shadow demon, "Niv-An-Div," immediately wrenches Her Radiance into a physical form and crushes her, releasing an explosion of light as she is destroyed. Niv-an-Div takes her place as the keeper of the vault, but will use her new sway over the other Siblings to drive them against each other. When they are all dead, she will rule over the empty vault in peace.

AN-DIV'S ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 28, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4

MOVEMENT: 1

ARMOR RATING: 10 (spines)

MONSTER: Niv-An-Div counts as a monster in combat – see page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

- 1. DEADLY BITE!** With a roar, An-Div throws herself against an adventurer and shuts her giant maw. Roll for the attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
- 2. HIDEOUS ROAR!** The beast lets out a horrible roar that strikes all adventurers within NEAR range with a fear attack with seven Base Dice.
- 3. BODY SLAM!** An-Div rises into the air with her huge mass and then lets it fall onto the adventurers to crush them. Have everyone within NEAR range roll for MOVE to get out of the way (does not count as an action). Anyone who fails their roll is hit by an attack with twelve Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force).
- 4. DEVOURING MAW!** An-Div chooses the adventurer with the highest Strength and tries to devour her. Roll for the attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound). If the attack hits, the victim is devoured whole. Inside the beast, the adventurer suffers 1 point of damage every round due to the acidic gastric juices. The adventurer can attack An-Div from inside, where she has no Armor Rating. If the beast is killed, the trapped adventurer can escape.
- 5. WORM ROLL!** An-Div uses its long body to make a sweeping attack that can hit all adventurers within NEAR range. Roll for the attacks with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (blunt force). If an attack hits, the victim is also thrown to the ground.
- 6. SHATTERED GROUND!** The An-Div dives into the ground and uses its mass to shatter the ground around the adventurers. Everyone within NEAR range falls 2D6 meters and is thrown to the ground thereafter.



NIV-AN-DIV'S ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 42, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2

MOVEMENT RATE: 1

ARMOR RATING: 12 (shadow hide)

MONSTER: Niv-An-Div counts as a monster in combat – see page 73 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **DEMON CRUSH!** Niv-An-Div grips an adventurer and attempts to crush her. Perform an attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If hit, the victim is also **GRAPPLED**.
2. **HIDEOUS ROAR!** The demon lets out an icy roar that strikes all adventurers within NEAR range with a fear attack with eight Base Dice.
3. **STOMP ATTACK!** Niv-An-Div attempts to stomp an adventurer within NEAR range like an insect. Perform an attack against the adventurer with eleven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the victim is thrown to the ground.
4. **DEADLY THROW!** The demon has had enough of an adventurer within NEAR distance, grabs her, and attempts to throw her away. Perform an attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (blunt force). If the attack succeeds, the victim is thrown to SHORT distance and falls prone.
5. **SHADOW GAZE!** Niv-An-Div stares straight into the adventurer's eyes. The victim suffers a fear attack with nine Base Dice. If the attack hits, the victim also falls to the ground.

6. **LIFE DRAIN!** The demon chooses an adventurer within NEAR distance and casts the spell **WEIGHT OF AGES** on her with a Power Level of D6. The afflicted adventurer then drops to the ground. No Willpower Points are needed for this spell, and there is no risk of a magical mishap.

HER RADIANCE – THE VAULT'S ETERNAL WATCHER

This being is immaterial, sometimes appearing as a shapeless light, and speaks with a soft, angelic voice.

She was created to keep the Siblings here, but has no real power over them beyond persuasion and deceit, but has managed to keep them here for this long.

She cannot interact with the world beyond her words, but sees everything in the vault, and can speak to anybody within it. She acts as translator for the Siblings, but may misrepresent what they are saying if it suits her needs.

Outsiders coming into the vault are greeted by her, and encouraged to explore. She uses them to enforce whatever is keeping each of the Siblings here:

Milt: Providing play partners and a source of new toys.

Chorl: Demonstrating that he should be afraid of everything outside the vault.

An-Div: Providing a threat for her to overcome, so that Her Radiance can praise her.

Div: Whatever was keeping him here is irrelevant now that he is broken.

She knows they must be kept within the vault, but also kept alive, and cannot be allowed to unite.



If she thinks the outsiders are a genuine threat to any of these things, she will try and split them up, or else keep them away from the Siblings entirely.

WITS 5, EMPATHY 5

SKILLS: Lore 4, Insight 5, Manipulation 5

MOVEMENT RATE: 1

SPECIAL: Her Radiance is an immaterial being and immune to all forms of damage – even from spells and magical artifacts. Only the demon Niv-An-Div can kill her.



EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to outside of or inside the Bright Vault.

THE HARPIES

A flock of Harpies circle the vault, held at bay by its light. Their shrill, desperate flock leader is disgraced in the eyes of their demonic master, and seeks to release the imprisoned spawn to regain favour. They do anything to encourage the adventurers to enter the vault, lying about treasure, or the vault's power weakening. Their hope is that the adventurers will inadvertently release the Spawn.

THREE PRIESTS

A wagon with three decrepit, white-robed priests (one blind, one deaf, one mute, all senile)

is resting at the foot of the mesa. They are praying and offering blood to maintain the power of the vault. They claim to be descendants of the priests that originally captured the imprisoned spawn. They know nothing, and will only tell the adventurers exaggerated versions of the bravery of those old priests. They know the best path to the top of the mesa, and will guide the adventurers if asked, but they travel very slowly.

THE RIDERS

Three Aslenian women have gathered outside of the vault. They are refugees passing through on worn-out horses, heading to a rumored haven beyond the desert (false). They don't know anything about the vault, but the most daring (loud, over-optimistic, starving) intends to scour it for supplies while the others (one shy and pessimistic, one tired and impatient) wait below.

THE DIVISION OF CHORL

Screaming is coming from the direction of Chorl's Pit. He is in the process of splitting himself into two demon spawn. One will be a broken version of Chorl, even more cowardly and pathetic. The other will be Mel-Chorl, a stronger, crab-like giant that is finally capable of breaking down the vault door and returning to his parents. None of the other Siblings will want to go with him, even when the doors are open, as they are too involved in their own affairs.

THE DEATH OF DIV

Div has died. His chambers are visibly rotting away. His corpse has begun to shrivel, and will



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Village

Not quite a forest, the Hexenwald is a small, dense wood of fir trees and bracken. The path north into the Hexenwald ends at a wide pond, buzzing with insects and covered in green scum. In the middle of the pond stands a hut, while on its east shore can be seen a hill draped in willow trees. Over the treetops away to the north can barely be glimpsed the top of a broken tower, while the sound of a fiddle can be heard somewhere to the east.



BACKGROUND

The focus of this adventure site is a coven of five witches. If the players want, the Hexenwald

can be a primarily roleplaying location, where the PCs meet, talk to, and trade with each of the witches. However, most parties will quickly realize that each witch possesses a number of valuable or very useful items that they might be tempted to acquire. Attacking the witches directly, however, is usually not a good idea, as they tend to be fairly powerful and an attack on one of them by outsiders will likely provoke a counterattack by the rest.

The most effective strategy is likely to be turning the witches against one another. Due to the wide variety of spells, magic items, and personalities in play, a huge number of outcomes and strategies are possible, so the GM should focus on tracking the witches' relation-



ships and motivations, and introducing occasional twists as each of them react to events.



LEGEND

Nearby villages whisper of witches who live within the shadows of Hexenwald, trading favors and charms for blood. Others insist it is the haunt of an ancient necromancer, pointing to antique maps showing a tower where the forest now stands. They say this necromancer wished to live forever, and so sealed his heart away in a jeweled statue, hidden beneath his throne. No one has seen the necromancer in centuries, however, and the educated dismiss these rumors as superstition. Until several weeks ago, that is, when shambling corpses were sighted near the borders of the wood, some even wandering onto nearby farms. Has the Necromancer woken from his ancient slumber? Or is some other dark power at work?



LOCATIONS

The five witches all live in close proximity to each other near a lake in the Hexenwald. The witches' homes are all about a 15 minute walk apart, except for Zora's and Silence's, which are on the same pond. Paths connect the homes of Silence, Astrid, and Emmaline, but Mother Mab's dolmen can only be found if a witch tells the PCs where it is, or after a successful SCOUTING roll if they go looking for it. Any time PCs travel along paths through the forest, there is

a 1 in 6 chance of encountering D6 ghouls (see page 122 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). If ghouls are encountered, there is a 2 in 6 chance that Mother Mab and her wolves will appear to attack them.

1. ZORA'S HUT

A wooden hut stands on stilts in the middle of a wide, still pond. Smoke, which seems to shift in color every few minutes, rises slowly from the chimney. A ladder descends from the front door to the water level, where a boat is tied up.

Zora's hut is unlocked, and almost entirely filled with a dozen different-sized cauldrons brewing an assortment of half-finished potions. The cauldrons are stirred by floating, animated ladles. If consumed, the potions will do 1 point of damage to Agility and Wits, and transform one feature of the drinker into an animal equivalent (GM's choice). For example, a tongue becomes a frog tongue, one leg becomes a deer leg, etc. A huge assortment of herbs and dried plant matter are stocked in various containers around the room. The bed is under the main worktable.

- ❖ CREATURES: Zora. There is a 3 out of 6 chance that she is underwater gathering plants during the day, but she will always quickly return to her hut if the players enter it, as she can see them crossing the pond above her. There is a separate 1 out of 6 chance that Astrid will stop by.
- ❖ TREASURE: Inside a glass-fronted cabinet covered with hexing runes are four labeled potions (see the boxed text on page 44).



ZORA'S POTIONS

Each of Zora's potions transforms the drinker into a giant-sized animal (snowy owl, black goat, serpent, or fly) for a Quarter Day. The drinker loses his ability to speak and use tools. He retains his stats but gains additional abilities as per the table below.

ANIMAL TYPE	ABILITY
Snow Owl	Flight. Movement Rate 2.
Black Goat	Kick. Gives +2 to unarmed attacks which have Weapon Damage 2.
Serpent	Poison bite. Unarmed attack Weapon Damage 1. If target suffers damage, a lethal poison with Potency 7 is injected.
Fly	Flight. Movement Rate 1. Fast reflexes, giving +2 to all DODGE attempts.





Only Zora's hand can open the cabinet without triggering a hex. Attempting to open the cabinet without dispelling the hex turns the victim into a newt permanently. A potion recipe book on a table might be very valuable to the right buyer. There is a small magic mirror in a drawer that is linked to an identical mirror in Emmaline's tower.

2. SILENCE'S GROTTO

A flagstone path leads up to the base of the hill on the edge of the pond, and disappears among the branches of some willow trees. Small round windows can be seen in the hillside, and a stone chimney protrudes from its top. The sound of chickens clucking can be heard nearby.

A heavy wooden door (locked when Silence is away) has been built into the entrance to the grotto. The high-ceilinged interior is lit by 100 candles hanging in lanterns or standing in clusters on almost every available surface. Each candle is etched with tiny runes. The walls have alcoves and shelves built into them all the way up to the top, and the furniture is all of the hand-carved, rustic variety.

When one of the candles is extinguished, the runes disappear and the smoke forms a globe with tiny ember-like eyes and a mouth. This is a smoke servant – see page 49.

- ❖ CREATURES: Silence. There is a 1 out of 6 chance that Silence is away, bringing baked goods to Mother Mab's dolmen, and a separate 1 out of 6 chance that Astrid is stopping by. Smoke servants.

3. ASTRID'S TREEHOUSE

The treehouse is built into the branches of a huge oak. Balconies, platforms, and rope bridges sprawl in every direction along its massive limbs. Birds circle it constantly, and a slight breeze seems to always be rustling the leaves.

There is no ladder to reach the treehouse, since Astrid usually flies in and out as needed, so PCs will have to climb (rolling for MOVE) or find some other way up. The inside is piled high with teacups of every description, as well as an ever-boiling kettle of tea on the central fire. Dozens of different fiddles hang on the walls, and a variety of overstuffed armchairs and ornate rugs are scattered about. Astrid will know if her house is entered without her permission.

- ❖ CREATURES: Astrid.
- ❖ TREASURE: Each of the fiddles on the walls is a unique masterwork, and amplifies musical magic such as Stone Song if tuned properly, increasing the Power Level of all spells cast by 1. Only Astrid knows this secret, but it might be worked out with sufficient research and experimentation. They could be worth a fortune to the right buyer. If stolen they will screech horribly unless unstrung.

4. EMMALINE'S TOWER

The tower is a crumbling ruin, the only remaining piece of a much larger fortress. A second tower lies collapsed nearby, its stones overgrown with ivy and tree roots. The tower leans crazily but somehow remains upright, and a faint glow emanates from the uppermost window.



Emmaline's tower was the home of a necromancer, now long dead. Emmaline has spent years deciphering his writings and spends most of her time locked in her study on the topmost floor. The four lowest levels are composed of libraries (all looted) and moldy tapestries.

A spiral staircase runs around the outside of the tower all the way up to the fifth floor, which consists of a single octagonal room with eight stone thrones placed with their backs to each wall. Sitting on each throne is an armored skeleton holding a longsword. These eight skeletal servants serve whoever wears the ironwood ring (currently possessed by Emmaline). A ladder in the center of the room leads up to a locked trapdoor to Emmaline's study. Picking the lock or disturbing the skeletons will cause them to come to life and attack any intruders.

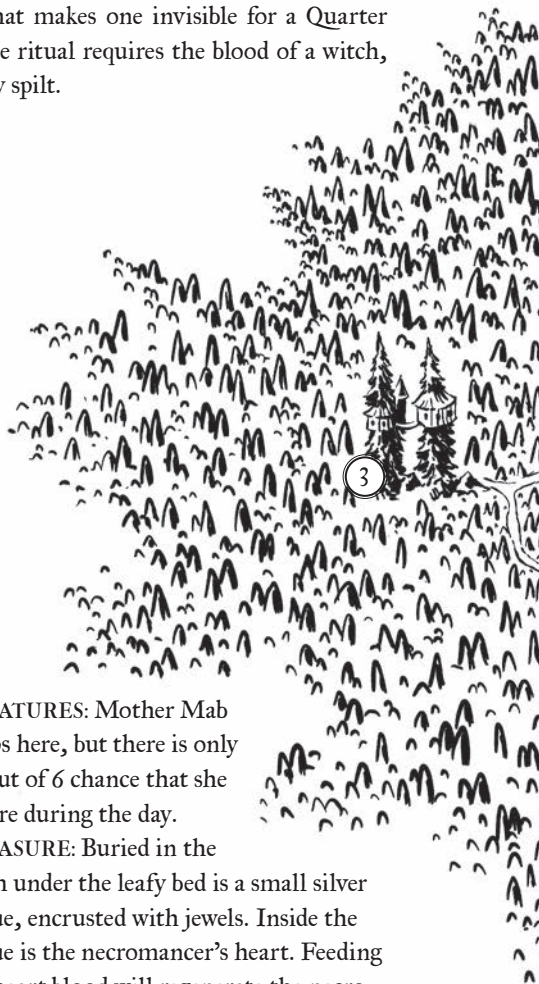
The sixth floor is Emmaline's study. It is packed to the high, conical ceiling with books on necromancy (counts as a grimoire with a random assortment of Death Magic spells) and astrology (giving +2 Gear Bonus to LORE in the field). Searching the shelves will reveal the necromancer's journal, which refers to a dolmen in the woods as his "throne."

- ❖ CREATURES. Emmaline. Eight skeleton servants (typical stats as per page 122 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*).
- ❖ TREASURE: The orrery on Emmaline's desk is a clockwork masterpiece, worth 2D6 gold. A small magic mirror on the wall is linked to the one in Zora's drawer. As a result it is usually black.

5. MOTHER MAB'S DOLMEN

In a small clearing stands a dolmen: three low megaliths supporting a flat stone table. The space beneath is filled with piles of leaves, moss, and small animal bones.

The faint carvings on the rim of the stone table, if studied for several hours, describe a ritual that makes one invisible for a Quarter Day. The ritual requires the blood of a witch, willingly spilt.



- ❖ CREATURES: Mother Mab sleeps here, but there is only a 1 out of 6 chance that she is here during the day.
- ❖ TREASURE: Buried in the earth under the leafy bed is a small silver statue, encrusted with jewels. Inside the statue is the necromancer's heart. Feeding the heart blood will regenerate the necromancer within one Quarter Hour.



THE HEXENWALD





MONSTERS AND NPCs

The most important monsters and non-player characters in the Hexenwald are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as in the Bestiary or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide* in the starter box.

GEAR: A magical knife of black glass covered in intricate patterns. Stats like a normal knife, but with a D10 Artifact Die. If an attack with the knife inflicts 1 point of damage or more, the victim must make an INSIGHT roll or be controlled for a Quarter Day by the intelligence residing in the knife, which is that of a slightly daft elderly knight named Sir Rodwick. Zora also carries a potion that can turn her into a giant snowy owl and a ring that allows her to breathe underwater.

ZORA

Zora is a witch in her early twenties, tall and angular, with a very long blonde braid. Her hands are stained with plant juice.

Zora has a disconcerting way of rarely blinking while talking and loathes small talk. She can talk endlessly about botany and alchemy and gets more and more irritated the longer PCs talk about anything else. She is utterly unfazed by people trespassing in her hut, as long as they don't touch anything. In combat, Zora will use spells and the knife she has on her.

Zora is good friends with Astrid and often collaborates with Emmaline on research via a magic mirror. She has no contact with Mother Mab, and is ignorant of Mother Mab's recent vendetta against her. She resents Silence, who lives in a nearby cave, and will aid any operations taken against her. She claims that the constant flickering lights and grumbling voices coming from the grotto keep her up all night.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Melee 3, Sneak 2, Scouting 4, Lore 4, Insight 4, Manipulation 3, Healing 2

TALENTS: Path of Shifting Shapes 2

SILENCE

Silence is short, round, and in constant motion. She wears a solid black robe, and has her hair tied up in a floral-pattern handkerchief.

Silence is chatty and grandmotherly. She likes visitors and feeding them baked goods, but doesn't like them to overstay their welcome. She has work to do. When not baking, she spends her time testing out new runes on candles. It's a painstaking process, but Silence is an expert in her field and enjoys a voluminous correspondence with magic-users from far and wide, delivered by carrier pigeon. Much of it is piled on her dresser by the bed.

Silence is friends with Mother Mab and Astrid, but thinks Zora is an arrogant amateur and would love to put her in her place. She doesn't know that Emmaline resents her for the prestige she has gained in the magical community.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 5, EMPATHY 4

SKILLS: Melee 2, Sneak 3, Lore 5, Insight 4, Manipulation 3, Healing 2

TALENTS: Path of Signs 3



GEAR: A red candle which causes the bearer to explode in to a being of living flame when lit. In this form, the bearer cannot be hurt by physical damage, and its unarmed attacks have a Weapon Damage of 2. The effect lasts for D6 rounds, until someone puts the candle out (requiring a successful GRAPPLE), or until the user loses contact with it. She also wears two jeweled bracelets sent to her by rival wizard suitors. The inside of one reads "From Zephyrax, Master of the Burning Spheres, Mastered at Last."

SMOKE SERVANTS

The smoke servants summoned by Silence's magical candles can perform minor tasks for Silence (complaining the whole time), such as channeling her voice or moving small objects. If multiple candles are blown out at once, however, a larger smoke servant is formed, its Strength equal to the number of candles, up to a maximum of 13. The smoke servants don't have any other attributes and lack any skills.

Servants of Strength 5 or higher can burn hot and bright and can scorch foes. This attack has NEAR range and is rolled with a number of dice equal to the servant's current Strength. The smoke servants are immune to normal weapons, but are vulnerable to magical effects. They last a number of minutes equal to the number of candles used, except for 1 candle servants, who last for an hour. Their short lifespans don't seem to bother them. It takes Silence a full day to engrave the runes on five candles. The smoke servants will obey anyone who blows out their candles, as long as Silence doesn't countermand their orders.

ASTRID

Astrid is dressed in black robes and keeps her red hair up in intricate braids on top of her head. Her hands are calloused and strong, and she smells constantly of tea.

Astrid is the only one of the five witches who can fly. The other witches are secretly very jealous of this. Her talents lie primarily in fortune telling and music-based magic. When not at Zora's or Silence's houses (1 out of 6 chance of each), she is practicing playing one of her fiddles out on a tree limb. Her music travels quite far and can be used by the GM to draw the PCs to her location.

Astrid dislikes it when other people don't get along and tries to resolve differences, but is very deeply hurt by any dishonesty or duplicity and will never forgive an offender if crossed. She is usually quite friendly and laid-back, with a wry sense of humor.

Astrid loves visitors and will usually invite PCs into her house (flying them up if necessary) but greatly dislikes intruders. They may usually stay as long as they want unless they cause trouble, but are responsible for feeding themselves. She insists on reading visitor's fortunes in the tea leaves. The GM should invent something short and vague like "I see a king, dead upon his throne," or "I see seven blue orbs in a pool of gold." She also enjoys playing music for guests and knows a huge variety of songs from different cultures, but her favorites are tragic ballads.

Astrid is good friends with Zora and Silence, and is distressed about the enmity between them. She is terrified of Mother Mab's wolves (which she thinks are out to get her), and suspects that Emmaline is behind the dead rising.



In combat, Astrid will usually try to get airborne and use her fiddle to cast spells, which technically work as a form of Stone Song. She has no real combat skills, but her black cat Gothmog will do its best to protect her.

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 5, WITS 4, EMPATHY 5

SKILLS: Sneak 4, Scouting 2, Lore 3, Insight 4, Manipulation 4

TALENTS: Path of Sight 2, Path of Stone 3

SPECIAL: Astrid can fly, with a Movement Rate of 2.

GOTHMOG Is a large black cat. It has stats as on page 127 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, but Strength 3.

EMMALINE

Emmaline is a woman in her early thirties with a small face, high forehead, and a huge halo of pale blond hair. She moves quickly and purposefully, with eyes that seem to sum you up at a glance.

Emmaline has become obsessed with the movements of the heavens and how those movements control the fates of the living and the





dead. She has recently learned that if the proper spells are cast during certain conjunctions, the dead can be pulled from their graves to serve the living. She has managed to “recruit” eight skeletal servants so far, and is working on building a labor force strong enough to repair the fortress. She, alone of the witches, desires power over others, and dreams of an army of the dead to follow her. What she does not know is that many of her experiments have been only partially successful, and the dead throughout the countryside have been periodically waking and assaulting travelers. She doesn’t get out much.

Her manner is usually disdainful and condescending, but she adores flattery and gifts, although she tries to hide it.

Emmaline collaborates with Zora on research, and hates Silence for the esteem she is shown by the magical community. She has recently learned that Mother Mab is guarding the heart of the necromancer beneath her dolmen, and is making plans to take it from her, as she believes it can magnify her control over the undead.

In combat, Emmaline will always use her undead servants to fight for her if possible. If she is without them, she will usually retreat until they can join her. If forced to fight, she will grapple any attackers and begin draining the life from them using the BLOOD BOND spell. The more life she drains, the larger and more powerful she grows, until she is up to 20 feet tall. Her teeth and nails grow as well, becoming long and needle-sharp.

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 3, Sneak 3, Scouting 4, Lore 3, Insight 4, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: Path of Blood 2, Path of Death 2

SPECIAL: If Emmaline steals one or more attribute points from a victim using BLOOD BOND, she grows fangs and claws with a Weapon Damage of 2.

GEAR: The ironwood ring, which prolongs her control of her skeletal servants. Without the ring, the skeletons will crumble to dust within D6 turns.

MOTHER MAB

An old woman, with black tangled hair streaked with white. She wears black rags and speaks only in hand gestures.

Mother Mab is the oldest of the witches, and sleeps beneath her dolmen, often accompanied by one or more wolves (for stats, see page 126 of the *Gamemaster’s Guide*). During the day she is often roaming the wood with the wolf-pack, either riding on the back of the huge alpha or running alongside with unnatural speed and agility. Most of the time, she is hunting the undead that have begun appearing in the area.

Mab has lived in the swamp longer than any of the witches. She ignores all of them apart from Silence, with whom she has formed an unlikely friendship, and Zora, who she hates for killing one of her wolves.

STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 2, WITS 5, EMPATHY 5

SKILLS: Melee 3, Sneak 3, Scouting 4, Lore 4, Insight 5, Manipulation 5, Healing 3

TALENTS: Path of Signs 3, Path of Blood 3, Path of Death 3

GEAR: Three small magical bird bones. If snapped while looking at someone, one of their limbs will break. The victim suffers 1 point of damage and a random critical hit for blunt trauma. The victim is not necessarily Broken by the attack.



EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in Hexenwald.

EMMALINE'S QUEST

If the adventurers visit Emmaline's tower, she sees an opportunity – the visitors are the perfect tool to get her hands on the heart of the necromancer that Mother Mab guards in her dolmen. Emmaline realizes that the adventurers might object to resurrecting an undead necromancer, so she makes up an imaginative tale about a sister that Mab slew, enraged over some petty squabble. It's just a story. Emmaline has never had a sister (something the other witches are aware of). To sweeten the deal, she offers the party 15 silver coins.

THE WALKING DEAD

Emmaline's attempts to create an undead labor force have succeeded in a way that the witch hadn't really expected. In the area around Hexenwald the dead of the villages have stirred, and dug themselves out of their graves. Emmaline hasn't noticed the unwanted side effect, but it hasn't escaped the attention of wanderers in the area, or that of Mother Mab and her wolves. When the adventurers trek or ride through Hexenwald they may encounter a very confused undead stumbling out from the underbrush, straight into the party with a moaning sound. The undead is soon followed by D6 additional wandering corpses, desperately searching for the source of their unnatural life: Emmaline's tower. If the undead sense

that the adventurers have already been there, they'll start to tear at them. They only wish to know where the tower is, so that they can reunite with their creator, but they are unable to convey this through words.

MOTHER MAB AND THE WOLVES

The greatest power in Hexenwald is Mother Mab and her pack of wolves. As self-appointed guardian of the area, the old witch rides around on the largest wolf, and scouts for intruders and monsters. Mother Mab stalks and observes the adventurers long before they realize that they are being watched. The appearance of Mother Mab in the gloom of the forest, astride a massive beast, is a terrifying sight. Feel free to let the adventurers believe that she is some kind of demon or monster hunting them. When they least expect it, she makes a dramatic entrance – maybe when the adventurers are beset by the undead, or when they visit Zora (whom Mother Mab detests).

THE NECROMANCER AWAKENS

If the adventurers or Emmaline figure out that the necromancer's heart lies beneath Mother Mab's dolmen, they can resurrect the dead sorcerer. All they need to do is spill some witchblood on the heart in the silver statue. When that happens, a decomposed, bony hand shoots from the ground beneath the dolmen, and then another one. Soon, the rotted corpse of the necromancer, whose name was lost in the mists of time long ago, pulls itself from the earth and observes its surroundings with empty eye sockets. The necromancer obeys



EMMALINE



no one, and will soon realize that he has been tricked back into life. He will immediately head to Emmaline's tower to ascertain who's behind this. The undead sorcerer is actually not particularly powerful (use the stats for sorcerer

on page 184 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) and is easily defeated. Though if the adventurers leave him to his own devices, he and Emmaline may become a force to be reckoned with in the Forbidden Lands.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Dungeon

The smell of metal and smoke fills your noses, and the roar of thunder is deafening. The dark sky suddenly turns blinding white, as yet another bolt of lightning strikes, this time just ten meters away from you.

In the middle of the ravaged lands, surrounded by the remains of burnt out trees, towers a rock-strewn hill. Your gazes are drawn to the center of the hill, where a cave mouth opens up like the grinning jaws of a dragon. The Graveyard of Thunder. The place where they say that demons go to die...

BACKGROUND

The Graveyard of Thunder is a cave system

that lies in the middle of a wasteland ravaged by lightning.

The name originates from the uncountable thunder lizards, enormous creatures similar to dinosaurs, which have come to the location to lie down for their final rest. Just what attracts the thunder lizards to this specific location, no one knows, just as no one knows why powerful thunderstorms herald the arrival of the thunder lizards.

The network of caves has two entrances: one wide mouth decorated by sharp, protruding stones, which leads deeper underground, and one on top of the hill, in the form of a hidden crevice that leads down into a grot-



to with a babbling brook (location #5 on the map).

A couple of days ago, One-Eye, the last thunder lizard of her kind, arrived to die. She got the name after losing an eye in a violent fight.

One-Eye's life has been fraught with violence and rage, and she has now finally realized that her time has come. She has settled down on an immense collection of skeletal parts belonging to her ancestors, now slumbering deeply, waiting for death.

A tribe of saurians moved into the eastern part of the network of caves a long time ago. They view the thunder lizards as gods, and have appointed themselves the guardians of this place. The penultimate guardian of the tribe died a couple of years ago, and the location is now guarded by a lone saurian, by the name of Ssilsk. Ssilsk woke from a long torpor shortly after One-Eye's arrival, and she is now doing her best to guard the cave system.

A group of orcs, lead by the warrior Kraakh, came to the location a couple of days ago. They have searched long and hard for the mythical location, tempted by legends of unrivalled riches and artifacts waiting in the depths of the caves. Kraakh is certain that powerful artifacts await him in the cave, and plans to unite several orc clans and become their sovereign leader with their help.

The orcs haven't dared to venture very far into the caves, since their first expedition ended in an ambush. The saurian Ssilsk has managed to keep the orcs at bay for now, but it is only a matter of time before they brave the depths of the cave again.

LEGEND

I followed the stag deeper into the forest, beneath giant ferns and around stinking bogs. I thought I had lost its tracks, when I suddenly saw the deer stand and stare at me, just fathoms away. Completely still, it was, as if it had given up. I notched an arrow, whispered a short prayer, drew and took aim and was just about to let fly, when the sky exploded in a blinding light.

I must have been struck by lightning and fainted when I was thrown to the ground, for when I woke there was a ringing in my ears and my mouth was flooded with the taste of blood. When I finally regained my legs and took in my surroundings I saw the stag, or what was left of it, hanging from a tree. It was as if something huge had just lifted it, taken a bite and then thrown the remains into a tree. I heard thunder roll in the distance, but couldn't see a single cloud above me.



GETTING HERE

Exactly how the adventurers are lead to the location is up to the GM, but here are a couple of suggestions:

- ❖ One moment the sky is bright blue, the next it is dark and threatening. On the horizon, the adventurers can see several lightning bolts striking the same location. Something mysterious must be afoot!
- ❖ A hunter tells the adventurers of how she found the remains of a beast that something had taken a large bite out of. Big,



RUMORS

If the adventurers spend time and money to gather information on the Graveyard of Thunder, you can roll on the table below to let them hear rumors about the location.

2D6 RUMOR

2	The cave is sacred ground for the saurians, who guard the place from intruders. (True)
3	A gigantic dragon lies in wait in the depths of the cave. (False)
4	An evil sorcerer used the location to perform dreadful rituals. (False)
5	The cave leads deep underground, to an abandoned dwarven kingdom. (False)
6	The cave is haunted! (False)
7	Thunderstorms are frequent in the area. Something below has triggered the wrath of the skies! (True)
8	I saw a lizard-like footprint, the size of a wagon wheel, in the area! (True)
9	Orcs have been sighted in the area. (True)
10	A special kind of elf lives in the depths of the cave, where they are building a vessel that they can travel to other worlds with. (False)
11	Monsters the size of houses are said to slumber in the depths. (True)
12	My father found a tooth, big as a dagger, close to the cave. (True)

three-toed tracks had then led the hunter to a place where the trees burned and thunderclouds roiled in the skies.

- ❖ The next time the adventurers discover a find, they also discover an old scroll of papyrus on which they can read of an ancient saurian sect, that has guarded a treasure chamber from intruders for centuries. Below the text is a simple map that leads to the cave.
- ❖ The adventurers catch wind of an orc warrior named Kraakh, who is said to be planning to unite the orc clans. The war-

rior was last seen leading a smaller group of orcs toward a cave system nearby.



LOCATIONS

Below are sites in and around the Graveyard of Thunder that the adventurers can visit.

1. KRAAKH'S TENT CAMP

A handful of tents, made from dirty hides, stand



haphazardly at the edge of the lightning-ravaged wastes. Humanoid silhouettes move between the tents from time to time.

Kraakh and his orcs have raised a tent camp just outside the Graveyard of Thunder. There are five tents in total, where a dozen orcs dwell. From the tent camp they keep watch over the entrance to the cave. To sneak past the camp requires an opposed roll for STEALTH against the orcs' SCOUTING.

If Kraakh or any of his orcs see the adventurers approach the cave, they will prepare an ambush. If Kraakh confronts the adventurers, he will try to capture them, to then force them to explore the cave, led by himself.

2. THE CAVEMOUTH

The mouth of the cave opens up like a dark maw, lined with sharp stones and dark roots. A number of stinking animal skulls impaled



on sharpened poles are lined up by the entrance, and someone has carved crude symbols into the dark rock of the adjacent cave wall. The text reads "KRAAKHS TERRITORY." A creeper with dark red leaves covers the west wall of the cave mouth. A soft, babbling sound comes from within the cave.

If the adventurers succeed with a roll for LORE, they will recognize the crude handwriting as typical orcish.

TRAP: A bear trap, hidden underneath a thin layer of ash and gravel a couple of meters inside the cave. The hinges are rusty and the risk to trigger it is only 2 in 6. The bear trap inflicts 1 point of damage to Strength as well as automatically inflicting the critical injury "skewered foot" (outcome 14–16 on the table for stab wounds, see page 198 in the *Player's Handbook*). Breaking free requires a successful roll of MIGHT. The trap can be discovered by adventurers that are actively searching for traps on the floor.

HIDDEN PASSAGE: A crack that leads to a hidden chamber (location 3 on the map) is covered by the creeper. The crack is large enough to squeeze through. The crack can be discovered by adventurers who are actively searching along the walls.

3. HIDDEN CHAMBER

Behind the veil of the creeper, a smaller chamber opens up. The air is stuffy and the floor is covered with dust. On an altar of stone lies a collection of simple objects, and the wall behind the altar is adorned with an ancient cave mural.

A stone altar rests against the far wall. On the altar are six seashells (worth D6 copper each), three black pearls (worth 1 silver each), and a pitcher containing fragrant and expensive oil (worth D6 silver).

The wall behind the altar is adorned by a cave mural depicting three lizard-like creatures kneeling before a draconian demon. A jagged lightning bolt shoots from the demon's mouth, painted in a peeling, golden color.



4. SUBTERRANEAN BROOK

The path continues downward, deeper into the darkness. The air is cold, and leaves a metallic taste in your throat. The babbling sound grows stronger. A subterranean brook creates a lake on the right side. The water is cold and black with ash. Something glistens in the dark water. By an old campfire lie the remains of a crab shell, the size of a small table.

❖ **CREATURES:** The stream is deep, and a big, blind crab lurks at the bottom. The



GRAVEYARD OF THUNDER



crab's shell glistens like gold, and a nosy adventurer risks being dragged below the surface. The crab has Strength 4, Agility 2, skill level 3 in MELEE and Armor Rating 8. It attacks any adventurer that enters the water. If the attack (which inflicts blunt force) succeeds, the victim is GRAPPLED, and pulled below the surface – see page 113 in the *Player's Handbook*. If the crab is killed, it provides four units of FOOD.

❖ **TREASURES:** At the bottom of the lake are animal and human bones, nine silver coins, and a sword handle, decorated with beautiful gems (worth D6 silver).

5. DEFILED ALTAR

The water of the brook runs from a dark tunnel on the left side. The babbling sound of the water is occasionally drowned out by the deep rumble of



thunder, followed by the sound of pebbles falling from the ceiling. A stone altar stands in the back of the room. The remains of a cave mural on the wall behind the altar have been vandalized and replaced by crude symbols similar to those at the cave mouth. The text reads "THE CLANS WILL UNITE UNDER KRAAKH". Crushed seashells litter the floor.

A thin crack in the eastern wall leads to the hidden armory (location 7 on the map). The inner walls of the crack are covered with slime that Ssilsk has smeared on the walls to be able to easily slither through. The crack can be found by someone actively searching along the walls.

- ❖ TREASURES: Three black pearls (worth 1 silver each) lie behind the altar.
- ❖ CREATURES: Ssilsk, the last Guardian, observes the room from the darkness further into the cave. She has sensed the stench of orcs, and has, after an ambush, managed to scare them off. She is very wary of who or what ventures deeper into the cave, and if she senses intruders, she will attempt to scare them off with hissing sounds. If she doesn't succeed, she will resort to other, deadlier methods.

6. THE DEAD ORC

A figure lies face down in the cold water of the brook. The body is lit by a weak light from the chamber's ceiling.

The figure in the water is a dead orc. If the body is examined, a poison dart, the length of a little finger, is found in the neck. The skin

surrounding the arrow is swollen and dark. A PC well-versed in healing or poisons will realize that the orc has been poisoned.

Light leaks in through a crack in the ceiling, five meters up. The crack leads up and out of the cave system and is, thanks to thick foliage, hidden from above.

- ❖ TREASURES: Seven silver coins, crushed seashells, and two black pearls (worth D3 silver each) lie in the orc's left boot.

7. HIDDEN ARMORY

A heavy smell of wet stone and mold hangs in the air. A leather bundle and a couple of animal skulls are neatly lined up on the floor next to a large hide of scaly, reptilian skin.

Under the hide, a tunnel leads downward, about two meters wide. The tunnel leads to Ssilsk's Sanctuary (location 9 on the map).

- ❖ TREASURES: The leather bundle contains a blowpipe, ten blowpipe darts, three dried fish (one unit FOOD each), a filled waterskin, and a ceramic jar. The jar contains a hallucinogenic salve that can be smeared onto a weapon. The salve has Potency 8.

8. ECHOING STALACTITES

The sound of your footsteps echoes out and into the darkness. From the ceiling hang a myriad of stalactites, which meet their floor dwelling relatives, the stalagmites. All sources of light cast shadows that eerily dance on the walls, making it difficult to judge the size of the room.



If Ssilsk has discovered the intruders, she will try to scare them off with hissing warnings that echo out from the darkness. If this fails, she will instead choose the one in the group that appears weakest to her, and wait for the right moment to pepper the victim with poison darts.

HIDDEN PASSAGE: A narrow passage is hidden behind a stone slab leaned against the eastern wall. The slab is shaped to look as if it is part of the cave wall, and is difficult to discover. A passage behind the slab leads to Ssilsk's Sanctuary (location 9 on the map).

9. SSILSK'S SANCTUARY

Three alcoves have been chiseled from the mountain's walls, and within them lay peculiar bone fragments.

One of the alcoves is used by Ssilsk as her resting place, where she usually lies in a deathlike torpor. In the others lie the skeletal remains of saurians. The remains are from the previous guardians, who like Ssilsk, devoted their lives to protecting the cave system from intruders.

❖ **TREASURES:** Among the skeletal remains can be found a small collection of valuable objects. In the eye sockets of one skull lie two black pearls (worth 1 silver each), and one desiccated hand holds a razor sharp knife, made from volcanic rock. The knife has Weapon Damage 2 and ignores 2 points of Armor Rating, but breaks directly after a successful hit. If the skeletal remains are disturbed, two shadow creatures slither from their bodies and attack. The

shadow creatures count as ghosts (page 94 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*), but their energies are only strong enough to attack for one round, after which they dissolve and disappear with a hissing sound.

HIDDEN PARCHMENT: Behind a loose stone, at the back of one of the alcoves, lies an enchanted scroll of parchment. The parchment is intended for the saurians, and if it is read by someone not belonging the saurian kin, she will be transformed into a saurian herself. The skin of the enchanted hardens to sturdy scales (Armor Rating 3), her teeth become sharp, and her body becomes coldblooded. The scroll counts as a treasure for the saurians, and can be sold to them. What is written on the scroll is up to the GM. Maybe it leads to a secret treasure, or a place long lost to the saurians?

A massive door of stone blocks the path north. The door is covered by druidic paintings and three-fingered palm prints. It is magically locked, and can only be opened by one of saurian kin.

10. FATAL GARDEN

Pollen fills the air and subterranean plants with pale leaves, short shrubbery, beautiful flowers, and prickly vines grow along the walls. Among dirt piles on the floor are ewers, spades, and other tools intended for taming the wild greenery.

Ssilsk has cultivated this garden for years, and uses many of the plants to produce poisons and narcotics. An adventurer with the talent **POISONER** can find D6 units of **HERBS**





to produce lethal, hallucinogenic, or paralyzing poisons.

- ❖ **CREATURES:** A bloodthirsty Strangling Vine (page 118 in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) with beautiful leaves glittering in gold grows on the western side of the chamber.

with small berries of different colors. Over the years, the shrub has absorbed strange energies from the water and soil of the cave system. An adventurer that eats one of the berries rolls a D10 on the table below. The effect is permanent unless otherwise stated in the description.

Among several beautiful plants stands a short, inconspicuous shrub. Its branches are filled

II. CHAMBER OF WIND CHIMES

The sound of wind chimes gently knocking against

EFFECTS OF EATING THE BERRIES

D10 EFFECT

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | The adventurer's hair randomly changes color. |
| 2 | The adventurer's body is covered by thick, grassy fur, that gives an Armor Rating of 1. The fur is shed after a Quarter Day. |
| 3 | The adventurer's muscle fibers become tough and plant-like, giving +1 to all Strength-based skills for a Quarter Day. |
| 4 | A parasitic plant starts growing in the adventurer's body. She must consume double rations of FOOD and WATER each day. After D6 days a wicked vine sprouts from the adventurer's body. This inflicts D6 damage to the victim, and the critical injury "bleeding gut" (outcome 52–54 on the table for stab wounds). |
| 5 | A mental link opens up between the adventurer and the plant kingdom. The adventurer can once per day communicate with a plant to find out what the plant has experienced recently. Plants are usually very slow to converse with. The effect works in the same way as the spell ANIMAL SPEECH, Power Level D6. |
| 6 | The adventurer receives the ability to once per day force a plant to grow huge or to wither away completely. |
| 7 | The adventurer's skin becomes green, and she no longer needs to eat FOOD, as long as she is able to stand in direct sunlight at least a Quarter Hour each day. |
| 8 | One of the adventurer's arms is turned into a barbed vine. The adventurer is henceforth no longer able use two-handed weapons. |
| 9 | The adventurer suffers from potent hallucinations for a Quarter Day. |
| 10 | The adventurer's head swells grotesquely before finally exploding in a cascade of melon-like flesh and seeds. Time to create a new character. |



each other is the only thing disrupting the silence in this enormous chamber. From the ceiling hang hundreds of wind chimes made from the skeletal remains of innumerable thunder lizards. A gigantic cranium hangs from the ceiling by ancient ropes, and stares down with empty sockets and enormous, grinning jaws.

12. GRAVEYARD OF THE THUNDER LIZARDS

Gigantic bones from innumerable thunder lizards litter the floor of the cave. Uncountable jaws gape with razor sharp teeth, and ribs rise like towers from a bed of bones. An enormous presence resides in the center of the large chamber, and the metallic smell burns your nostrils.

In the center of the chamber, her body wrapped around a black rock, lies the gigantic thunder lizard One-Eye. Embedded in the rock is a trident, and emanating from it is a buzzing, electrical sound that is almost drowned out by One-Eye's rhythmic breaths. The relative silence is from time to time broken by a crack of thunder, followed by a lightning bolt that runs from the ceiling of the chamber, down into the trident and onwards into One-Eye's body. One-Eye seems completely unconcerned.

Each round the adventurers spend in this chamber they risk waking One-Eye. Roll a D6 every Quarter Hour. On a roll of 1–3, One-Eye wakes from her slumber and attacks, furious over being disturbed in her attempt at a final rest.

One-Eye is the last living thunder lizard. When she dies, the thunderstorm outside the cave system increases tenfold, which in the end will lead to the cave collapsing. The GM should

warn the adventurers of this by describing terrible lightning bolts, slabs of stone falling from the ceiling, and a rumbling noise that increases by the minute. Repeated rolls for MOVE are required if an adventurer wants to remain in the collapsing room. Failure entails certain, and swift, death.

- ❖ **TREASURES:** Among the gigantic skeletons littering the room are many valuable treasures – objects that the thunder lizards have brought with them to the cave, one way or the other. An adventurer that carefully searches for finds rolls a D8 on the table on the next page. Each outcome on the table is unique – if the same outcome is rolled a second time, it means that nothing is found. Each attempt takes one turn (a quarter of an hour).

THE TRIDENT FULGARIS: The powerful weapon Fulgaris is embedded in a fragment of magnetic metal in the center of the room. Fulgaris is a black trident that has absorbed the energies generated by the thunder lizards for centuries. One-Eye immediately wakes up if Fulgaris is removed from the stone in which it is embedded.

Fulgaris is a trident with normal stats as well as a D10 Artifact Die. In addition, the wielder of Fulgaris is able to call lightning from the sky once per day. The attack, which must occur under open skies, drains all of the user's Willpower Points, and inflicts damage equal to the drained Willpower points on a victim within LONG range (non-typical damage). Armor grants no protection from the attack.



TREASURES IN THE GRAVEYARD OF THE THUNDER LIZARDS

D8 TREASURE

- 1 A large, fossilized thunder lizard egg. If the blood of a thunder lizard is spilled on the egg, it will hatch in D6 days.
- 2 The head of a very beautiful dwarven war axe made from silver. Lodged in the skull of a thunder lizard. Worth 1 gold to the right buyer.
- 3 2D6 silver coins.
- 4 Mineral geode worth 4D6 silver. Heavy object.
- 5 Magical parchment. Allows the user to cast the spell *IMMOLATE* once, then the parchment crumbles to pieces. The user must use their own Willpower Points. A successful roll of *LORE* is required to understand how to use the parchment.
- 6 Beautiful lute decorated with a thin layer of gold. Worth 1 gold to the right buyer.
- 7 D3 gold coins.
- 8 The enchanted orcish scimitar *Swarthand*. It has normal stats as well as a D8 Artifact Die. An orc can spend Willpower Points to re-roll a critical injury caused by the scimitar. More Willpower Points can be used for more re-rolls, for the same attack.

MONSTERS AND NPCS

The most important monsters and non player characters in the Graveyard of Thunder are described below. Monsters and creatures not described here have the same stats as in the *Bestiary* or the chapter on Kin in the *Gamemaster's Guide* in the starter box.

KRAAKH, WARLORD OF THE ORCS

After years of internal conflict, the orc Kraakh left his clan, *Urhur*, under violent circumstances. With the help of his most loyal followers he has set out to find and collect as

many powerful objects as he possibly can, to be able to finally unite the orcish clans once and for all.

After having tortured a captured hunter, Kraakh found out about the Graveyard of Thunder, a place as notorious as it is avoided. He is now determined to plunder the cave system for all of its finds and secrets.

Kraakh seeks great honor in the things he does, and wants to prove himself strong and powerful at any cost. Despite being very superstitious, he will do anything in his power to achieve his goals. When he encounters the adventurers, he will attempt to catch them first-hand, to then force them to do his dirty work under slave-like circumstances.

Kraakh is superstitious and very afraid of ghosts, a fact that he attempts to hide.



STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 5, Stealth 3, Marksmanship 2, Scouting 2, Insight 2, Manipulation 3

TALENTS: Lightning Fast 1, Defender 2, Path of the Enemy 2, Firm Grip 1, Steady Feet 1, Pain Resistant

GEAR: Scimitar, chainmail, small shield, throwing axe

KRAAKH'S ORCS

Kraakh's underlings are a dozen in number. All of the orcs wear armor made from hides and carry weapons made from wood and bone. They followed Kraakh when he left the Urhur clan, but now they've begun to doubt his leadership – a fact that the adventurers can exploit if they play their cards right.

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2

SKILLS: Scouting 2, Endurance 2, Melee 3

GEAR: Leather armor as well as a large wooden club, or a wooden club and a small shield

SSILSK, THE LAST GUARDIAN

Ssilsk is the last of a very religious kin of saurians. Her ancestors grew up near the Graveyard of Thunder, and have over the centuries protected the caves from intruders, believing the place to be sacred. They view the thunder lizards as gods, and believe themselves to be able to reincarnate as titans similar to dinosaurs, as long as they dedicate their lives to guarding the place.

Ssilsk knows all of the nooks and crannies of the cave system, and attempts to scare off all intruders. Her favorite method is to subject a victim to a very hallucinogenic poison, then scare the living daylights out of the poor bastard. If Ssilsk realizes that she is at a disadvantage and is about to lose her fight with the adventurers, she will instead try to convince them of the significance of the cave, its godlike denizens, and the importance of keeping the place closed off from the outside world.

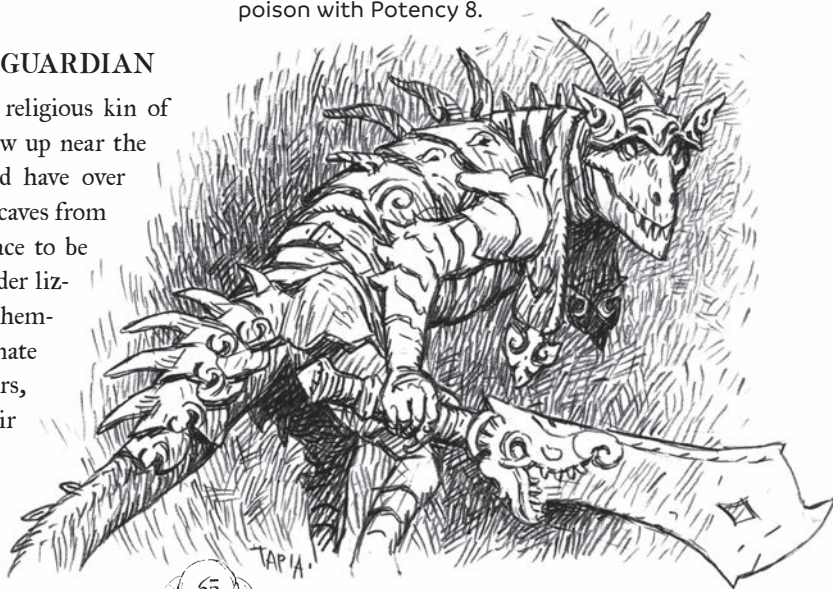
STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 5, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

SKILLS: Melee 4, Stealth 5, Scouting 4, Marksmanship 4, Insight 1, Manipulation 2

TALENTS: Lightning Fast 2, Fast Footwork 3, Sharpshooter 1, Steady Feet 2

ARMOR RATING: 3 (scales)

GEAR: Trident, blowpipe. The blowpipe has a +2 Weapon Bonus and Weapon Damage 1. The darts of the blowpipe do no actual damage to Strength though – the damage is only calculated to determine if the dart pierces armor. If that is the case, the victim is subjected to a hallucinogenic poison with Potency 8.





ONE-EYE, THE LAST THUNDER LIZARD

This terrible collection of muscles, sinew, and rage has, after a long and violent life, arrived at the Graveyard of Thunder to lie down and die among the hundreds of bones belonging to her ancestors.

If someone or something disturbs her, she will awaken with fearful rage, to prove one last time that she is the mightiest of all beings on this earth.

One-Eye will not leave the cave system, no matter what happens.

STRENGTH 42, AGILITY 3

SKILLS: Scouting 3

MOVEMENT: 1

ARMOR RATING: 10

D6 MONSTER ATTACK

1. **LETHAL BITE!** One-Eye singles out the adventurer with the highest Strength and bites her with razor sharp teeth. Perform an attack with eleven Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound).
2. **CHILLING ROAR!** The thunder lizard lets out a terrifying roar that inflicts a Fear Attack with eight Base Dice on all adventurers within NEAR distance.
3. **RENDING CLAWS!** One-Eye sweeps her claws across two adventurers within NEAR distance. Perform an attack with nine Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (slash wound) on each of the victims.
4. **SWEEPING TAIL!** The beast uses its long tail to perform a sweeping attack that hits all adventurers within NEAR distance. Perform an attack with seven Base Dice and Weapon Dam

age 1 (blunt force) against each and every one of the victims. Anyone hit is knocked to the ground.

5. **DEVOURING MAW!** One-Eye singles out the adventurer with the highest Strength and attempts to devour her. If the victim fails a roll for MOVE (does not count as an action) she suffers an attack with ten Base Dice and Weapon Damage 1 (slash wound) and is devoured whole. Inside the beast, the victim suffers 1 point of damage each round from the acidic gastric juices and electrical jolts. The adventurer can continue to attack the thunder lizard from within, where the beast has no armor. If the lizard dies, the adventurer is able to escape.
6. **LIGHTNING STRIKE!** The dying thunder lizard opens its maw and shoots a deadly lightning bolt against an unlucky adventurer within SHORT distance. Perform an attack with fourteen Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (non-typical damage). Armor offers no protection and it is impossible to DODGE the lightning. Everyone within NEAR distance to the victim suffers 1 point of damage to Agility.

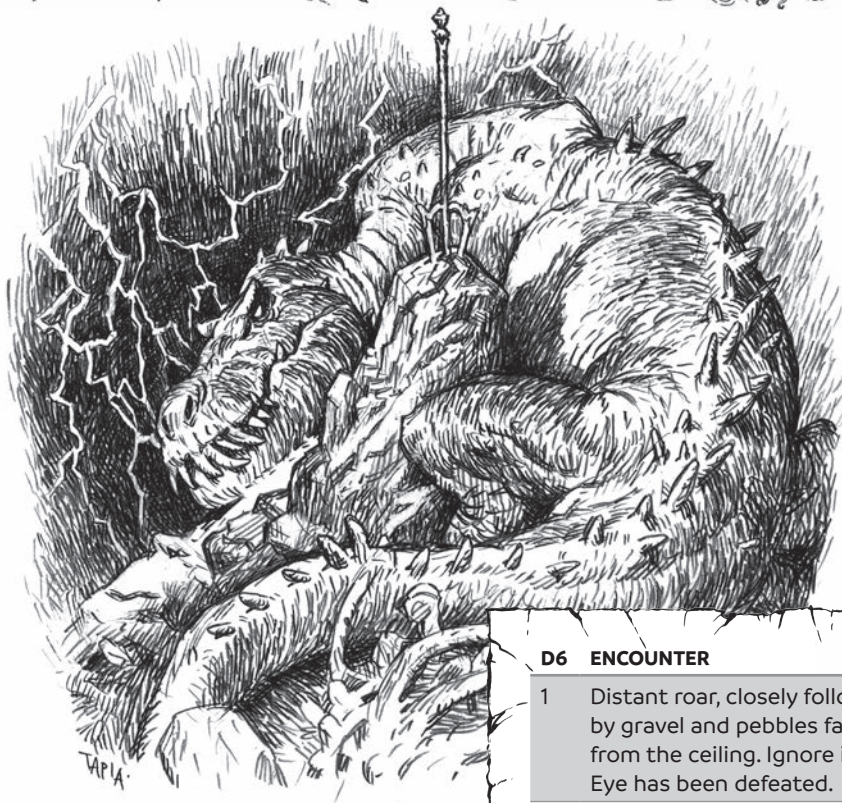



EVENTS

Below are suggestions for events that you can subject the adventurers to in the Graveyard of Thunder.


THUNDER & LIGHTNING

A violent thunderstorm rages at the site when the adventurers arrive, and lasts until the



thunder lizard One-Eye passes away. Adventurers wearing gear made from metal risk being struck by lightning. For every Quarter Hour that they move about at the location, they must roll a die. If the outcome is a  the adventurer is struck by lightning – perform an attack with eight Base Dice and Weapon Damage 2 (non-typical damage).

ENCOUNTERS IN THE CAVE

Inside the Graveyard of Thunder you can randomize encounters in the cave. Roll a D6 for every new room that the adventurers enter. If the outcome is an , roll on the table to the right.

D6 ENCOUNTER

- 1 Distant roar, closely followed by gravel and pebbles falling from the ceiling. Ignore if One-Eye has been defeated.
- 2 Orcs that have been left behind during a previous expedition.
- 3 Some ten rats scurry in blind panic in the opposite direction that the adventurers are traveling.
- 4 Two orcs, sent by Kraakh to scout.
- 5 Ssilsk, stalking the adventurers, waiting for the right moment to strike. Ignore if Ssilsk has been defeated.
- 6 The echoing sound of the footsteps of something gigantic. Ignore if One-Eye has been defeated



THE SPIRE OF QUETZEL

*“That city burnt to brands and scattered ash,
Now home to wolf and ghost, there she did dwell.
Twas there, by subtle art and brutal lash,
The Demon-Queen made rule, and ruling, fell,
And falling, slept, yet not, for dead tongues tell;
What dying; dreams, when dreaming; may awake,
And sleeping, live, yet dead. So sleeps Quetzal,
And thirsts for taste her dry tongue cannot slake,
For life and breath, a fast she dreams to break.”*



THE BRIGHT VAULT

Standing on a squat, stepped mesa, surrounded by blasted desert, there has always been a structure of spiked white stone here.

Legends tell of a clutch of Demon spawn, Siblings stolen from their unnatural parents by a sect of priests. In death, they could be reborn as true demons, so they were taken alive, interred in the only place holy enough to contain them.

Once three, now the four of them remain within the Bright Vault for eternity. No demon can approach its light, and any mortals that dared to visit the tomb have not returned.

The power that keeps demons at bay, and the spawn subdued, is subject to much speculation.



THE HEXENWALD

Nearby villages whisper of witches who live within the shadows of Hexenwald, trading favors and charms for blood. Others insist it is the haunt of an ancient necromancer, pointing to antique maps showing a tower where the forest now stands. They say this necromancer wished to live forever, and so sealed his heart away in a jeweled statue, hidden beneath his throne. No one has seen the necromancer in centuries, however, and the educated dismiss these rumors as superstition. Until several weeks ago, that is, when shambling corpses were sighted near the borders of the wood, some even wandering onto nearby farms. Has the Necromancer woken from his ancient slumber? Or is some other dark power at work?



GRAVEYARD OF THUNDER

I followed the stag deeper into the forest, beneath giant ferns and around stinking bogs. I thought I had lost its tracks, when I suddenly saw the deer stand and stare at me, just fathoms away. Completely still, it was, as if it had given up. I notched an arrow, whispered a short prayer, drew and took aim and was just about to let fly, when the sky exploded in a blinding light.

I must have been struck by lightning and fainted when I was thrown to the ground, for when I woke there was a ringing in my ears and my mouth was flooded with the taste of blood. When I finally regained my legs and took in my surroundings I saw the stag, or what was left of it, hanging from a tree. It was as if something huge had just lifted it, taken a bite and then thrown the remains into a tree. I heard thunder roll in the distance, but couldn't see a single cloud above me.

