

# RACE TO STARPORT



PARTS 1-6

# RACE TO STARPORT

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

In this adventure the player characters discover a new threat, face strange beings banished to the stars in a previous age, and must race to stop a portal being created that will bring more monsters into the Dragon Empire.

*This adventure is split into six two-hour sessions, for a total of 12 hours run-time. The adventure is designed for characters of levels 1 to 4.*

*Monster stats appear at the end of this document in the Race to Starport Bestiary.*

## QUICK GAME ADVICE

This advice is mostly for GMs running this game at GenCon 2015, but applies equally to other conventions and to running the game in stores, online, or at home.

### BE WELCOMING

Players at your table will have different expectations, different past experiences, and different ways of having fun. Some players will be die-hard fans of 13<sup>th</sup> Age and it will be their regular game, others might play similar games, and for some this might be their very first time playing an RPG.

### USE INDEX CARDS

It makes your life easier. Make name tents for the characters, use them to track initiative (*hand out a big '1' to the player with the highest initiative, then a '2' to the next highest, then a '3', and so on*), draw terrain, etc.

### DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

If you forget to use a monster's special ability, didn't remember to apply ongoing damage to a monster, or whatever: don't sweat it. Just fudge things a little to compensate and move on. If a game looks like it will run longer than its assigned time slot you can fudge the monsters to make a fight easier, or have the monsters flee.

### ROLL WITH IT, AND SAY YES

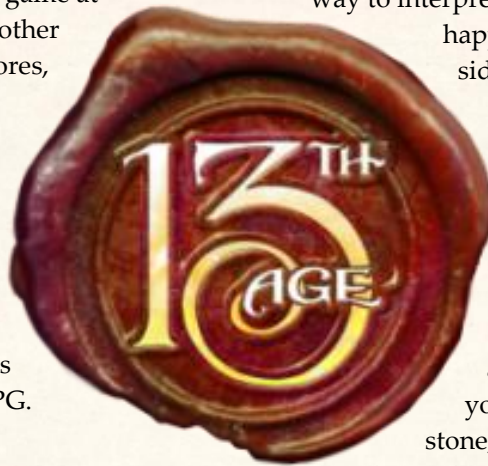
A player comes up with an interesting idea that this adventure didn't account for then go with it. Skill checks range from 15 (normal) to 25 (ridiculously hard), and if they are trying something easy or failing just wouldn't be interesting just say "yes" to whatever they are trying. Saves are easy (6+), normal (11+), and difficult (16+). If you need to deal some damage then impromptu damage ranges from 2d6 to 4d6 for a single target and 1d10 to 2d8 for multiple targets.

### FAIL FORWARDS

Outside of battle, true failure tends to slow action down rather than move the action along. A more constructive way to interpret failure is as a near-success or event that happens to carry unwanted consequences or side effects. The character probably still fails to achieve the desired goal, but that's because *something happens* on the way to the goal rather than because nothing happens.

### ICON OPTIONS

Throughout this adventure I've given options on how you can customize it to account for which icons are important to your players. These options are not set in stone, but are suggestions on how you can bring the presence of the icons into a given scene.



Author: ASH LAW

Editor & Developer: Rob Heinsoo

Front cover: Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones & ASH LAW

Interior art: Lee Moyer, ASH LAW, Aaron McConnell

Cartography: ASH LAW

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# PART I: NIGHT OF DEADLY STARS

In this introductory adventure the player characters face falling meteorites, and bandits.

## PLAYER CHARACTERS

Part 1 of this adventure is designed for 1<sup>st</sup> level characters. If you are using the GenCon 2015 pregens use the 1<sup>st</sup> level versions of the characters.

It is **highly recommended** that at least a couple characters have positive relationships with the Archmage and that none have negative relationships with the Archmage.

## ADVENTURE SET-UP

The adventurers are hired to aid a merchant to protect her marsh-drakes from bandits. The last few merchants to travel this route have been attacked.

### *Read this aloud:*

**Hosford Merrywife has purchased a herd of marsh-drakes and intends to drive them to the town of Candlefen for sale. She is aware of the bandits that might lie in wait on the road through the vast Dragon Wood, and has hired you to keep her and the marsh-drakes safe.**

**Hosford Merrywife has paid you 20gp each up front, and she will pay the party an extra 10gp per marsh-drake that makes it safely to its destination. She has 20 marsh-drakes.**

**You have heard that the town of Candlefen is having some sort of problem and is looking to hire adventurers, so this is on your way anyway.**

**The Archmage also has a request of you: find out what is going on in the Dragon Wood and report back to him. There have been stories of strange monsters.**

### *ICON OPTION: ARCHMAGE*

If the Archmage is an important icon based on icon relationships then Hosford Merrywife is a failed wizard. She has some small magical aptitude, enough to sense magic but lacks the training to cast spells. She can, however, aid wizards in casting spells. As she journeys with the party she can give anybody who attempts a skill roll based on a magical solution a +1 to the skill check.

### *ICON OPTION: ELF QUEEN*

If the Elf Queen is an important icon based on icon relationships then Hosford Merrywife has distant elven ancestry—not enough to make her a half-elf but enough to give her sharper senses than most humans possess. As she journeys with the party she can give +1 to any skill checks involving spotting things.

### *ICON OPTION: DIABOLIST*

If the Diabolist is an important icon based on icon relationships then one of Hosford Merrywife's ancestors made a pact with a demon. Hosford (and others of her family) have a sixth sense when it comes to danger. Once during this adventure Hosford can shout out a supernaturally prescient warning and force an attacker to reroll an attack on an adventurer.

### *ICON OPTION: OTHER ICONS*

If the other icons are important based on icon relationships then Hosford Merrywife is very interested in those icons, and will quiz the adventurers about them as the party journeys through the marsh.

## SO WHAT IS A 'MARSH DRAKE'?

Do they have horns? Webbed feet? Are they like wingless dragons, or are they merely large lizards? Marsh drakes are big enough to need driving like cattle, and they can trample somebody, but in combat terms they're like mooks rather than true combatants. *Apart from that the details are in your hands, and if you wish you can use the icon option ideas below to get you started.* Marsh drakes are domesticated, they don't want to fight people, but that also makes them easy to rustle. If the adventurers end up fighting the marsh drakes for some reason you can find the marsh drakes listed in the bestiary section at the back of this adventure.

### *ICON OPTION: CRUSADER*

If the Crusader is an important icon based on icon relationships then the marsh drakes are dangerous animals that attack those they consider not part of their herd—the Crusader uses them as watch animals. Once during the adventure if the adventurers have the marsh drakes with them then start the escalation die at 1.

### *ICON OPTION: HIGH DRUID*

If the High Druid is an important icon based on icon relationships then the milk of marsh drakes is an ingredient in healing potions. During a quick rest Hosford Merrywife can milk the marsh drakes and one adventurer can heal an extra 1d8 hit points from drinking the milk.

### *ICON OPTION: PRIESTESS*

If the Priestess is an important icon based on icon relationships then these marsh drakes are part of a

sacrifice that is intended to take place in Candlefen. As the beasts are sanctified beasts, clerics travelling with them gain a +1 bonus to saving throws.

## TRAVEL MONTAGE

At this point you should run a travel montage as the adventurers leave the town of Oxhill with Hosford Merrywife and the marsh-drakes and start travelling through the Dragon Wood. Candlefen is a village that lies deep in the Dragon Wood, in marshland at the foot of a mountain called Starport. This montage will not take them to Candlefen, just into the Dragon Wood.

Explain to the players how a montage works. You will pick a player and ask them to describe a problem that the party faced but not how it was solved. You will then ask the player to their left how *their* character solved that problem. There is no dice rolling, just a quick narration from each player. As you go around the group everybody will get a chance to create a problem, and everybody will get a chance to have their character solve a problem.

**The focus of this montage is travel deep into the Dragon Wood.**

## NEKRIEN SILVERLEAF

As the party crosses a bridge on the ill-kept road deep in the Dragon Wood they meet a dark elf, Nekrien Silverleaf. She is a necromancer, and with her are her two zombies Shuffle and Shrug. She is also travelling in the direction of Candlefen and suggests that she join the party (“Safety in numbers”). Anybody with an icon relationship with the Lich King will soon spot that she has the Lich King’s tattoo hidden under a bracer on her left wrist (as if the zombies were not a dead give-away).

### **Flip a coin:**

*Heads:* Hosford Merrywife is fine with the dark elf coming along, the marsh-drakes have no problem with zombies and an extra person protecting her is a great idea.

*Tails:* Hosford lets the party know that she feels very uncomfortable around the dark elf, and the marsh drakes hate the zombies.

The party has a decision to make... Does the party let the necromancer and her zombies travel with them? Do they refuse the dark elf’s request? Do they fight Nekrien?

A DC 25 skill check to discern Nekrien’s motives (*or to rummage through her pack when she’s not looking, later after she’s traveling with the group*) means that the party figures out that she is in the Dragon Wood investigating the strange monsters recently reported in the forest. She is working for the Lich King. Failing the roll means that the party still uncovers the information, but are so obvious about it that Nekrien knows that they know, and

furthermore that they have accidentally revealed that they are working for the Archmage. A roll of a 1 means that no information is uncovered.

If the party fights the bandits or the crater monsters later in the adventure and Nekrien is with them, then she aids the party from the edge of the fight, casting spells that create entangling shadowy tentacles. The effect of the shadow tentacles is that Nekrien grants one adventurer each round a +1 to an attack roll.

*If the party chooses to just attack Nekrien Silverleaf at the start of the adventure that is fine. If the party refuses to travel with her that is OK too. You can find Nekrien and her zombies in the bestiary at the back of this adventure. The most dramatically satisfying option if it turns into a fight is to allow Nekrien to flee player character-style, but dropping her wand of power behind her by way of compensation. (You can find the wand in the treasury at the end of the adventure).*

## SHUFFLE AND SHRUG

These ‘friendly’ zombies are under the control of Nekrien Silverleaf the Necromancer, and have distinct personalities. Shuffle *shuffles* its feet when unsure, and shrug just *shrugs* in response to stimuli that are not commands from Nekrien. The two zombies can move surprisingly quickly when they are ordered to by Nekrien, and can leap and climb trees.

### *Icon Option: Lich King*

If there are adventurers with a positive or conflicted relationship with the Lich King then perhaps Nekrien secretly reveals her allegiance to them and asks for their help. The Lich King knows that something big is happening—the strange celestial phenomena known as the Archmage’s Comet is interfering with magic, almost as if it is probing the Dragon Empire’s defenses. Naturally this interests the Lich King. Nekrien tells the adventurers that Candlefen has an old abandoned wizard’s tower near the town, from which the Lich King can be contacted. If the party sees anything odd involving the Archmage’s Comet and her secret ally in the party lets her get to the tower unmolested then she’ll pay them 100 gold pieces.

## THE SKY FALLS!

*Read this aloud:*

**As night begins to fall you are looking for a place to camp. A whistling sound draws your attention to the sky—to something that is commonly known as the Archmage’s Comet. This strange phenomena appeared a month ago, a**



comet that moves erratically across the sky and sometimes disappears for days at a time. The whistling at first sounds distant, like the warbling of a bird, but it grows painfully and piercingly loud as the comet seems to momentarily change course.

The comet brightens, and an instant later the Dragon Wood is shaken by a loud explosion. The comet is still intact, but several chunks have fallen off it!

Suddenly the Dragon Wood is pelted by red-hot rocks from the sky! Trees explode. The marsh-drakes panic and begin running away. What do you do?

The meteorites scream from the sky with whistling noises. Merry Hoswife begins yelling at the adventurers to grab the marsh drakes and keep them safe. This gives the adventurers a chance to get out of the way, find a rocky overhang to shelter under, or just raise their shields and hope for the best. Exactly how they deal with the burning rocks falling from the sky is up to each individual player. Each adventurer must succeed at a DC 15 skill check to find safety or be targeted by an attack from falling red-hot rocks, steam explosions from suddenly super-heated puddles with hot rocks in them, and other hazards. Each adventurer who fails the roll gets targeted by one of the following attacks:

**Micrometeorite +5 vs AC—3d6 damage**

OR

**Exploding tree +5 vs PD—2d6 thunder damage**

OR

**Steam blast +4 vs PD—3d6 damage**

## PANICKED MARSH-DRAKES

Once the initial onslaught of sky-rocks ceases Merry Hoswife starts frantically running after the scattered marsh drakes. She yells at the adventurers to join her in rescuing the freaked-out beasts.

Rescuing the marsh-drakes is a skill check, and the higher the roll the more marsh-drakes a specific adventurer can rescue. There are 20 marsh-drakes in total and each PC can give it a try.

Roll	Result
25+	5 marsh-drakes are saved
20-25	4 marsh-drakes are saved

15-20 3 marsh-drakes are saved

10-15 2 marsh-drakes are saved

2-10 1 marsh-drake is saved

1 Something interestingly bad happens

The interestingly bad thing could be that the adventurer causes a marsh-drake that somebody else had saved to become panicked and run away, or a marsh-drake tramples them:

**Trampled by a panicked marsh-drake +5 vs AC—2d6 damage.**

If for some reason the adventurers decide to fight the marsh drakes they can be found in the bestiary section in the back of the adventure, and also below...

## MARSH DRAKE

*1st level wrecker* [beast]

Initiative: +6

**Gore +6 vs. PD—1 damage**, and the trample gains a +2 attack bonus against the same target this turn with its *trample* attack

*Limited use:* 2/round, each requiring a quick action.

(Hitting the same target twice with *gore* gives the *trample* attack a +4 bonus.)

**Trample +6 vs. AC—1 damage**, and 1 ongoing damage

**AC 16**

**PD 15 HP 7 (mook)**

**MD 10**

Mook: Kill one *marsh drake* mook for every 7 damage dealt to the mob.

## TRACKING THE MARSH-DRAKES

If the party loses a lot of marsh-drakes into the forest then they might decide to go after them once the meteorite bombardment fully stops. It is a DC 15 skill check to recover a marsh-drake. Each party member searching can roll once. The first adventurer to fail the roll sees the marsh-drake they were trying to recover in the distance being hauled off by some bandits. A natural 1 means that the marsh-drake is lost somewhere in the Dragon Wood, irrecoverable or that the marsh-drakes is found, but it was killed by a meteorite.

Chasing the bandits will lead the adventurers to the **bandit camp**.

Even if the party loses all the marsh-drakes then Hosford Merrywife still wants to travel with the adventurers to Candlefen rather than face the Dragon Wood on her own. Of course she'll end up grumbling a lot on the journey if she has no marsh drakes to sell in Candlefen.

## THE BANDITS

The Dragon Wood has bandits in it, but who are the local bandits? Here are some options to give them more flavor beyond simple generic bandits.

### *ICON OPTION: EMPEROR*

If the Emperor is an important icon based on icon relationships then the bandits are former imperial soldiers, deserters who have turned to banditry. Characters with a relationship with the emperor know the fighting style and tactics that the bandits are trained in and gain a +1 bonus to attacks against the bandits.

### *ICON OPTION: DIABOLIST*

If the Diabolist is an important icon based on icon relationships then these bandits work for the Diabolist, in a roundabout way. The bandits intend to sacrifice the beasts in a ritual to appease a demon that they made a pact with. The sacrifice isn't payment for their pact, merely to appease the demon until the pact can be fulfilled. The bandits made the pact with the demon when they were about to be lunch for a black dragon called Sorrowscorn. The demon got them out of the frying pan, but if they want to avoid the fire(s of hell) they need to keep their new master happy. Maybe the adventurers will be the sacrifice that finally pays off the bargain they made?

### *ICON OPTION: ORC LORD*

If the Orc Lord is an important icon based on icon relationships then these bandits are of half-orc ancestry, and have fallen to the ways of the Orc Lord. The bandits enjoy raiding, killing for killing's sake, and eating raw meat. They have an especial hankering for the flesh of sentient races, and look forward to eating the party if they can—of course they'll settle for the marsh drakes.

### *ICON OPTION: OTHER ICONS*

The bandits have recently raided a caravan that belonged to a servant of an icon, and are bedecked in stolen finery. Maybe they wear fine silks stolen from an elven caravan, or have repurposed some pilfered dwarven mail, or are bedecked in filched holy symbols that were due to come to be delivered to a monastery on the Green Star river.

## THE ADVENTURERS' CAMP

Assuming the adventurers didn't already find the bandits while searching for the missing marsh-drakes, the adventurers can either press on in the darkness of the Dragon Wood, or choose to make camp for the night. If the adventurers press on in the darkness they stumble into the **bandit camp** by accident. If the adventurers make camp themselves the bandits are attracted by the sound of marsh-drakes.

The bandits creep up to the edge of the clearing and shout out to the adventurers. The bandits want the marsh-drakes, but are willing to let the adventurers pass.

The bandits are willing to take half the remaining marsh-drakes (a DC 20 skill check to negotiate this). If the wizard uses *charm person* on a bandit then the DC of the skill check becomes 15.

See the Bestiary section at the back of the adventure for the bandit stats and all other monsters, and also on this page.

Adventurers	Human Thug	Bandit Archer
3	3	4
4	4	4
5	5	4

## HUMAN THUG

1<sup>st</sup> level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

**Heavy mace +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

*Natural even hit or miss:* The thug deals +6 damage with its *next* attack this battle. (GM, be sure to let the PCs know this is coming, it's not a secret.)

**AC 17**

**PD 14 HP 27**

**MD 12**

## BANDIT ARCHER

1<sup>st</sup> level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

**Short sword +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

**R: Crossbow +6 vs. AC—5 damage**

*Limited use:* These bandits take 1 full turn to reload.

**AC 17**

**PD 15 HP 7 (mook)**

**MD 11**

*Mook:* Kill one bandit archer mook for every 7 damage you do to the mob.



## THE BANDIT CAMP

The bandits have a camp in the woods. The adventurers might have chased bandits that stole some marsh-drakes during the meteor shower, followed the bandits to the camp after being held up in their camp, or have stumbled into the camp in the dark.

The camp is obviously a long-term settlement, built in a forest clearing near a river. The bandits have made crooked shacks at the edge of the clearing. There are 15 underfed marsh-drakes in a large paddock, some of which did not belong to Hosford Merrywife.

When the adventurers approach it is a DC 15 skill check to stay hidden if they have no marsh-drakes with them, and impossible if they are driving marsh-drakes through the forest.

*If the adventurers have already fought the bandits then the camp is deserted—otherwise half of the bandits will attack the adventurers as soon as they spot them, and the other half will flee into the forest.* The fight below is for the bandits that stay to defend their secret camp and the stolen marsh-drakes.

**See the Bestiary section at the back of the adventure for the bandit stats and all other monsters, and also on this page.**

Adventurers	Human Thug	Bandit Chief
3	2	1
4	3	1
5	4	1

## HUMAN THUG

*1<sup>st</sup> level troop* [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

**Heavy mace +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

*Natural even hit or miss:* The thug deals +6 damage with its *next* attack this battle. (GM, be sure to let the PCs know this is coming, it's not a secret.)

**AC 17**

**PD 14 HP 27**

**MD 12**

## BANDIT CHIEF

*Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level leader* [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

**Stolen sword +7 vs. AC—14 damage**

*Natural even hit:* One human thug or bandit archer can move as a free action.

*Call to arms:* When the bandit chief rolls a natural 16+ attack or save one bandit archer reloads their crossbow as a free action.

**AC 18**

**PD 15 HP 72**

**MD 13**



## SCREAMS IN THE FOREST

The adventurers continue their journey on the road through the Dragon Wood, only to hear screams echoing around the forest. It is hard to tell from which direction the screams are coming from, or who or what is screaming.

A short time later the adventurers come across a wide river, known as the Green Star. The river here is swollen, the water rushing over rocks and foaming white. There was a bridge that crossed the river here, but it was destroyed recently—most likely by the meteorites.

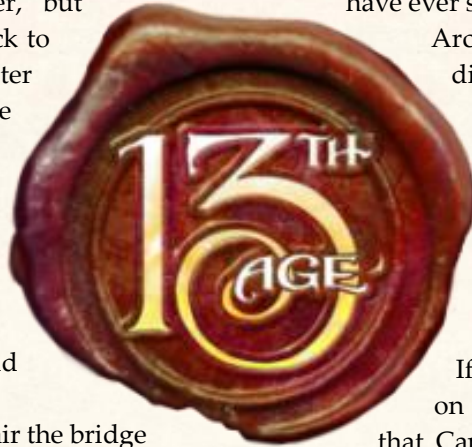
**This is a skill challenge. The adventurers must cross the river with the marsh-drakes.**

Crossing the river could involve making temporary repairs to the bridge, looking for a shallow place to swim across, building rafts, etc. Whatever the players decide to do it is a DC 20 skill check per adventurer to cross the river.

Possible outcomes of failure include:

- The adventurer crosses the river, but loses a marsh-drake in the process.
- The adventurer crosses the river, but makes the DC of the next skill check to cross the river 5 higher. The character who failed the roll gets to narrate why their failure inconveniences others.
- The adventurer crosses the river, but takes 2d6 damage from half-drowning.
- The adventurer crosses the river, but loses the gold that they were paid by Hosford Merrywife.

If the party decides to cooperatively repair the bridge then it is a DC 25 skill check requiring two successes; if the party gets two failures before getting two successes then the bridge collapses as the party is crossing—everybody still gets across but everybody takes 2d6 damage.



## THE CRATER

The adventurers are almost to Candlefen, but their way is blocked by a huge impact crater that swallows the road. Much of the surrounding forest has been blasted, the trees uprooted and burnt. In the road are a dozen dead people, bandits that have been cooked alive in their own skins or half-eaten.

As the adventurers consider their options they are attacked by creatures rising out of the crater. It is a DC 25 skill check to notice the attackers before the ambush happens. If the character walking at the front of the group failed the skill check the star thing and one egg swarm gets a free attack on the adventurer who is walking in front.

Adventurers	Star Things	Xombie Egg Swarm
3	1	5
4	2	2
5	2	5

These strange creatures are like nothing the adventurers have ever seen before. Bringing samples back for the Archmage is out of the question (they start dissolving once dead) but a good description of them and their tactics, together with the fact that they come from the meteorites, or at least accompany them, is sure to get the adventurers in the Archmage's good graces.

### ICON OPTION: ARCHMAGE

If the Archmage is an important icon based on icon relationships then the party knows that Candlefen has an old abandoned wizard's tower near the town. It is possible, in theory, to use the tower's lingering magic to send a report to the Archmage.

### ICON OPTION: OTHER ICONS

If the Archmage is *not* an important icon based on icon relationships then the party still knows about the old abandoned tower but the person who last lived in the tower was dedicated to the service of whichever icon is most important to the party based on icon relationships. So it might be an old watch-tower of the Crusader, a tree-wrapped tower formerly inhabited by a servant of the High Druid, or an ancient elven tower known to servants of the Elf Queen.

## STAR THINGS

*They're clearly deviant, malevolent, octopus-like flying monsters from a dimension where space obeys different geometry. No one understands their language, but everyone can understand their squeals of glee when they kill and feed.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Ripping tentacles +8 vs. AC—10 damage**

*Natural even hit:* If the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, the attack deals +2d6 damage.

*[Group ability] R: Warp-pulse +8 vs. PD (1d3 enemies in a group)—5 ongoing psychic damage*

*Natural 16–18:* While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is dazed (–4 attacks).

*Natural 19–20:* While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is confused instead of dazed.

*Group ability:* For every two star things in the battle (round up), one of them can use *warp-pulse* once during the battle.

*Limited flight:* Star things flap and glide and hover, always within seven or eight feet of the ground. No one knows how that works.

**AC 16**

**PD 12 HP 54**

**MD 15**



## XOMBIE EGG SWARM

*These tentacled white spheres roll and hop around looking for a corpse to inhabit.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +5

**Swarm +7 vs. AC—5 damage**

*[Group ability] C: Puppeteer tentacles +7 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—the target makes a basic ranged or melee attack against a target of the xombie egg swarm's choice*

*Miss:* The target is immune to puppeteer abilities for the rest of this fight and the fight after.

*[Once per battle] Swarm rush:* As a move action the swarm pops free and moves twice, but must finish its move engaged with an enemy.

*Group ability:* For every four xombie swarms in the battle (round up), one of them can use *puppeteer tentacles* once during the battle.

### **Nastier specials**

*Corpse puppet:* If there are intact corpses in the battle (say a star-mask cultist died) then part of the xombie egg swarm burrows into it and it rises as a xombie.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one xombie egg swarm mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.





## THE ABANDONED TOWER

The party arrives at an abandoned tower at the edge of Candlefen. Here the forest is less dense, and here and there the trees have been cleared and crops planted. *The adventurers are not at Candlefen proper, but are near enough to the settlement that they are seeing signs of civilization.*

The tower is a means by which the party can contact an icon. The exact method that the party uses is down to you: a magic circle with some still-lingering magic, a special room with a talking bust linked to another in the domain of an icon, or maybe there is a magical servitor that roosts here and can carry a message to its master or mistress. Whichever you choose as the most appropriate method, let the players know that the adventurers feel they will be rewarded for reporting the strange incidents in the Dragon Wood.

**If the party has had only one fight so far, or if you have extra time available** then Nekrien attacks the party to prevent them reporting on the monsters to the Archmage. If the party drove Nekrien away previously then it turns out that she reached the abandoned tower minutes before they did and they find her while she is preparing to send a message. *Of course if Nekrien is already dead then she can't attack, so ignore this fight and any other Nekrien-related ideas. But wait... she serves the Lich King...GM's choice if you want her undead and angry!*

Adventurers	Nekrien	Shuffle	Shrug
3, 4, or 5	1	1	1

**If there have been two fights already** (and you don't want to run a 3<sup>rd</sup>) the dark elf decides not to push her luck, and lets the party do whatever they want (though doubtless will try to send her own message once the adventurers have left).

**If the party is in league with the Lich King** and intend to report to him then Nekrien helps them to activate the magic circle, bargain with the magical servant, or whatever else needs to be done to send a message to her dark lord and master.

### Ἰκὼν Ὀρτίων: Ἀπὺ ἰκὼν

Sending a report to an icon will get a reply, though the method of reply will depend on the icon involved. With the replay comes a reward: a magic item. Whichever icon is involved the contents of the return message is in essence the same: *investigate further.*

## NEKRIEN SILVERLEAF

*This dark elf likes having people obey her. Zombies are people, right?*  
Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [HUMANOID]  
Initiative: +8

**C: Shadow bolt +7 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)**—15 negative energy damage

*Natural even hit:* The target is stuck (save ends).

[Quick action] **C: Tenebrous tentacles (automatic hit vs. one nearby or far away enemy)**—Nekrien and her allies have a cumulative +1 bonus to hit the target until the start of her next turn (up to a maximum of +3 if Nekrien uses all her actions this turn).

### Nastier special

*Necrotic vitality:* When Nekrien takes damage she can transfer that damage to the zombies that she controls, splitting it between the two zombies as she sees fit.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 72**

**MD 16**

## SHUFFLE

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +3

Vulnerable: holy

**Death grip +8 vs. AC**—8 damage

*Natural even hit:* The target and Shuffle are stuck (target saving ends). Every time the target fails to save they take 4 damage.

[Quick action against targets stuck in a death grip]

**Squeeeze +12 vs. PD**—4 damage

**AC 19**

**PD 13 HP 45**

**MD 17**

## SHRUG

3<sup>rd</sup> level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +3

Vulnerable: holy

**Low moan +8 vs. MD**—5 ongoing psychic damage

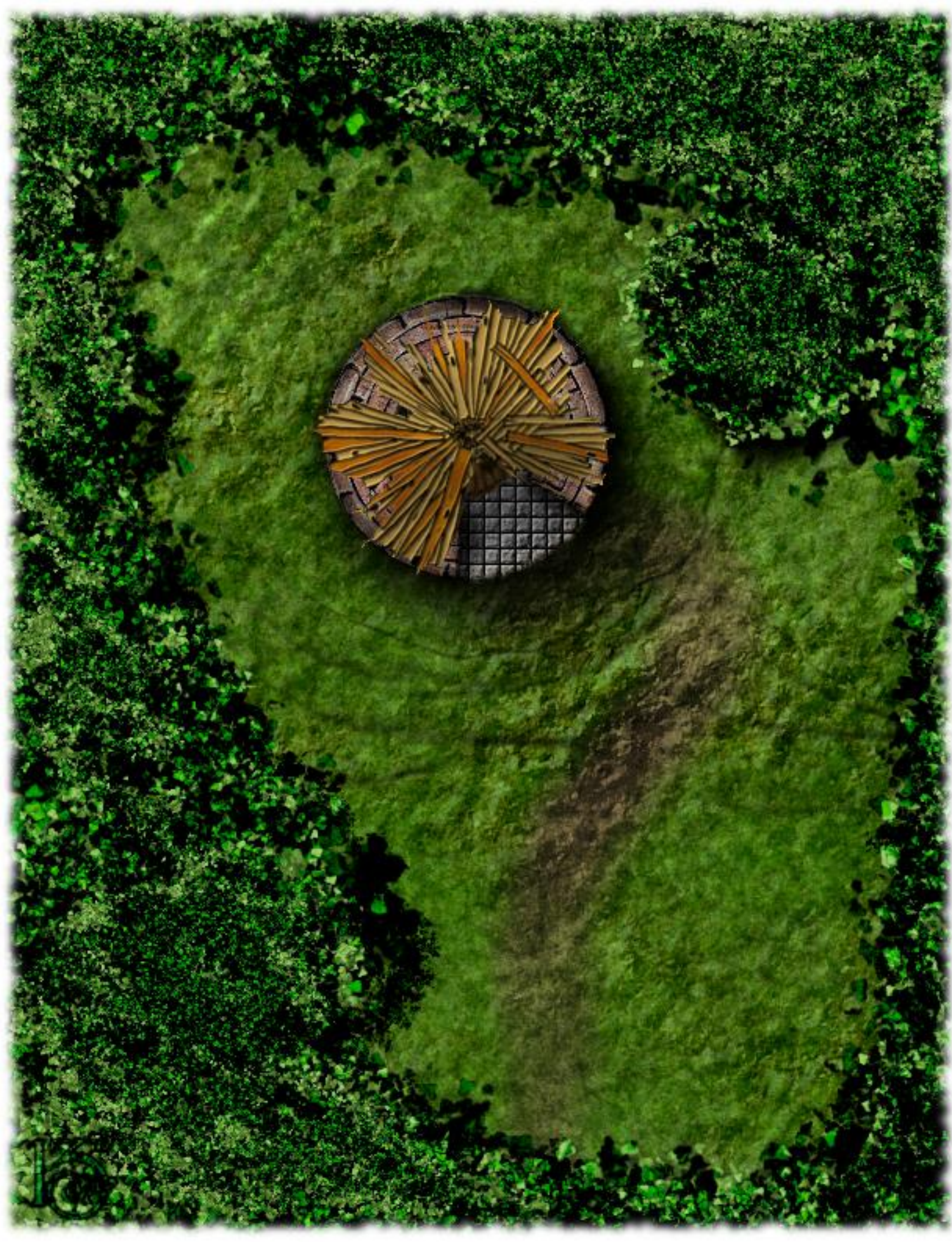
*Natural even miss:* Shrug can use *baleful gaze* as a quick action this turn.

**R: Baleful gaze +10 vs. MD (1d3 enemies in a group)**—4 psychic damage and the target must attempt to move away from Shrug on its next turn.

**AC 19**

**PD 13 HP 45**

**MD 17**



## TO CANDLEFEN

From the tower the adventurers can see some from the chimneys of Candlefen. The town is not yet in sight, but for now at least the party is out of the wilder part of the Dragon Wood.

If they have any marsh-drakes left they are collectively paid 10gp per marsh-drake by Hosford Merrywife and can split the money between them as they wish. Merry Hosford thanks them for getting her safely through the Dragon Wood.

*Read this aloud:*

**...but what of the strange creatures that came out of the crater? Find out in part 2: The Terror Beneath.**



## PART 2: THE TERROR

### BENEATH

The townsfolk of Candlefen are menaced by bizarre creatures from the marsh. What does the strange meteorites that landed in the marsh have to do with the masked cultists?

### PLAYER CHARACTERS

Part 2 of this adventure is designed for 1<sup>st</sup> level characters. If you are using the GenCon 2015 pregens use the 1<sup>st</sup> level versions of the characters, but give them an incremental advance. To save time at GenCon just give everybody a choice of either getting their 2<sup>nd</sup> level hit points early or add +1 to all their skill checks.

It is **highly recommended** that at least a couple characters have positive relationships with the Archmage and that none have negative relationships with the Archmage.

New characters this session who were not part of last week's session are travelers who have joined the party, travelling together for safety.

### VILLAGE LIFE MONTAGE

At this point you should run a montage as the adventurers arrive in Candlefen. Candlefen is a village that lies deep in the Dragon Wood, in marshland at the foot of a mountain called Starport.

Explain to the players how a montage works. You will pick a player and ask them to describe an NPC that the party met but not who met that NPC or what the result of the meeting was. You will then ask the player to their left how *their* character interacted with that NPC. There is no dice rolling, just a quick narration from each player. As you go around the group everybody will get a chance to create an NPC, and everybody will get a chance to have their character interact with an NPC.

As you cooperatively describe Candlefen here are some facts to keep in mind:

- A woman called Hosford Merrywife has just delivered some marsh drakes to the town. *The marsh drakes and Hosford appeared last session.*
- Candlefen is at the edge of the Wicklight Marsh, in the Dragon Wood.
- Candlefen is the last piece of what passes for civilization in these parts for many day's travel. There are villages north of here, but they are small and are plagued by dragons. Candlefen is the last safe town.
- Candlefen acts as a trading hub for the hunters and other inhabitants of the Wicklight Marsh.
- The village elder of Candlefen is called Jon Doonal.
- There is an old abandoned wizard's tower near the edge of town, back in the Dragon Wood proper. *This tower was featured near the end of the last session.*

**The focus of this montage is cooperatively creating the village of Candlefen.**



## JON DOONAL

In Candlefen the village elder, Jon Doonal, is pleased to see the adventurers (and is willing to overlook most eccentricities they may have or trouble that they may have caused when they arrived in the village). Elder Doonal explains the following:

*Read this aloud:*

*“Hello and welcome to Candlefen,” the nervous-seeming elder says “I’m glad to see so many adventurers. Naturally your stay here will be free.”*

**The town elder seems anxious, as though he is expecting trouble or has a lot on his mind.**

The town elder seems keen to make the adventurers at home, suspiciously keen in fact. It is a DC 15 skill check to gather information either by questioning Jon directly or by asking around town. Adventurers who dig deeper discover the following:

- Strange meteorites fell into the marsh and on Dragon Wood recently. Odd creatures were spotted in the marsh soon after.
- A group of white-masked cultists showed up, and have been abducting the hunters and fur-trappers of Wicklight Marsh.
- Elder Doonal hopes that having adventurers in town for a couple of days might convince the white-masked cultists to move on and not bother the town.

After their introduction to town the party will probably want to find a place to stay: the Thorn and Berry Inn.

## THE THORN AND BERRY INN

The town has but one inn, the run-down Thorn and Berry. Despite the town’s relatively poor status elder Jon Doonal insists that the adventurers be given free room, food, and drink.

This is a good time to introduce any surviving NPCs from the last session, and to bring in any NPCs created during the *village life montage* scene earlier. Some of the NPCs from Candlefen will start to get nervous come dusk, glancing out of the windows and huddling closer to the fire.

## READYING CANDLEFEN (OPTIONAL)

If the adventurers correctly deduce that the town fears attack they might decide to prepare the town for the attack. Preparing will make the town safer and make any fight in the town easier as a result.

Preparing the town is a DC 15 skill check for each adventurer, and everybody gets the chance at one roll. Failing the roll means that a preparation is made, but it will have no impact in any coming fight. A roll of a 1 means that the fortification collapses, caves in, or catches fire before the masked strangers come. Here are some fortifications and their effects if the DC 15 skill check is passed.

**Traps.** These might be pits to slow the enemy down, or tripwires, or crossbows rigged to fire when doors are opened. Whatever the adventurer decides to rig up they deal 1d4 damage to the mob of mooks in the *cultists attack* fight.

**Barriers.** These slow down attackers. For every barrier created a non-mook enemy enters the fight only once the escalation die is 1+.

**NPC defenders.** Training villagers to defend themselves (by firing arrows from rooftops, or forming a pike levy) subtracts 1d6 hp from a non-mook enemy in the first round of combat.

**Redoubt/fortification.** This could be as simple as nailing planks over the inn’s windows and wedging the doors shut, or might involve digging ditches and putting stakes in the ground—whatever it is the adventurers are creating a defensible space. If an adventurer the DC 15 skill check for this sort of preparation add +1 to each adventurer’s AC during the coming fight, provided the party stays in the defensible location.

### *ICON OPTION: CRUSADER*

If the Crusader is an important icon based on icon relationships then the party discovers that the town is already prepared, and can pick one of the above options to already be in place. Before Candlefen was a town it was a garrisoned fort, and some elements of the fortifications for that still exist.

## HUNTING CULTISTS (OPTIONAL)

The adventurers *might* decide to actively hunt down the cultists before they can attack Candlefen. If that is the case then the adventurers don’t get to make preparations (see *Readying Candlefen*) but spend the early evening and the first part of the night in the Wicklight Marsh.

Hunting the cultists is a DC 20 skill check. Every time the adventurers fail the skill check they take 1d6 damage from stumbling into too-deep water, getting tangled in thorn bushes in the dark, and other dangers of wandering around a marsh in the gloom of night. Once they pass the

skill check they come across the cultists (use the *Cultists Attack Candlefen* fight in the next section, and skip the *Cultists Attack Candlefen* encounter itself and when the adventurers get back to town use the *Missing Villagers* scene) but start with the escalation die at 1.

### ICON OPTION: ELF QUEEN

If the Elf Queen is an important icon based on icon relationships then the party discovers an old elven road through the marshland. Thanks to travelling on the overgrown road failing the DC 15 tracking roll only does 1d3 damage to each party member rather than 1d6.

### ICON OPTION: DWARF KING

If the Dwarf King is an important icon based on icon relationships then the party encounters the cultists near an old dwarven way-marker. Fighting with their backs to the massive carved stone representation of a dwarf gives the party +1 to their AC for this fight.

Adventurers (Tough fight!)	Star-mask	Star-mask Cultist	Star-mask Brute	Star-mask Cult Leader
3	0	2	1	1
4	0	4	1	1
5	3	5	1	1

## STAR-MASK

The white mask scuttles along the ground on barbed tentacles, looking for a host to 'wear' it.

2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Strangling tentacles +7 vs. PD**—3 damage and 3 ongoing damage, ongoing damage ends if the target is no longer engaged with the star-mask

[Group ability] **Suffocating thoughts +7 vs. MD**—Until the end of the battle, if the target drops to 0 hp; the target rejoins the fight as a star-mask cultist. Converted player character star-mask cultists can be freed from their masks as a standard action by a character next to them.

*Group ability:* For every four star-masks in the battle (round up), one of them can use *suffocating thoughts* once during the battle.

*Leap:* On turns when the escalation die is odd the star-mask can leap into engagement with a nearby enemy as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one star-mask mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

## STAR-MASK CULTIST

This hapless humanoid has become host to a mask, and is in thrall to the group mind.

1<sup>st</sup> level archer [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +6

**Club +5 vs. AC**—4 damage

**R: Bow +5 vs. AC**—5 damage

[Group ability] *Coordinated attack:* Until the start of its next turn the star-mask cultist gets a +2 to bonus to attack enemies that are engaged with allied star masks, star mask cultists, xombies, etc.

*Group ability:* For every two star-mask cultists in the battle (round up), one of them can use *coordinated attack* once during the battle.

**AC 17**

**PD 13 HP 27**

**MD 15**

## STAR-MASK BRUTE

This was once a large animal, but now it is a bipedal mass of muscle covered in multiple masks.

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +9

**Fist smash +8 vs. AC**—10 damage

**Crush +8 vs. AC**—5 damage and 5 ongoing damage and once per battle the star-mask brute throws the target as a free action [special trigger] **Throw +12 vs. PD**—Target is thrown far away, takes 10 damage, and is weakened (easy save ends)

*Miss:* Target pops free.

**AC 19**

**PD 14 HP 45**

**MD 16**

## STAR-MASK CULT LEADER

Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level leader [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +7

**Iron-shod staff +7 vs. AC**—14 damage

[Group ability] **R: Psychic domination +7 vs. MD**—7 damage and 7 ongoing damage

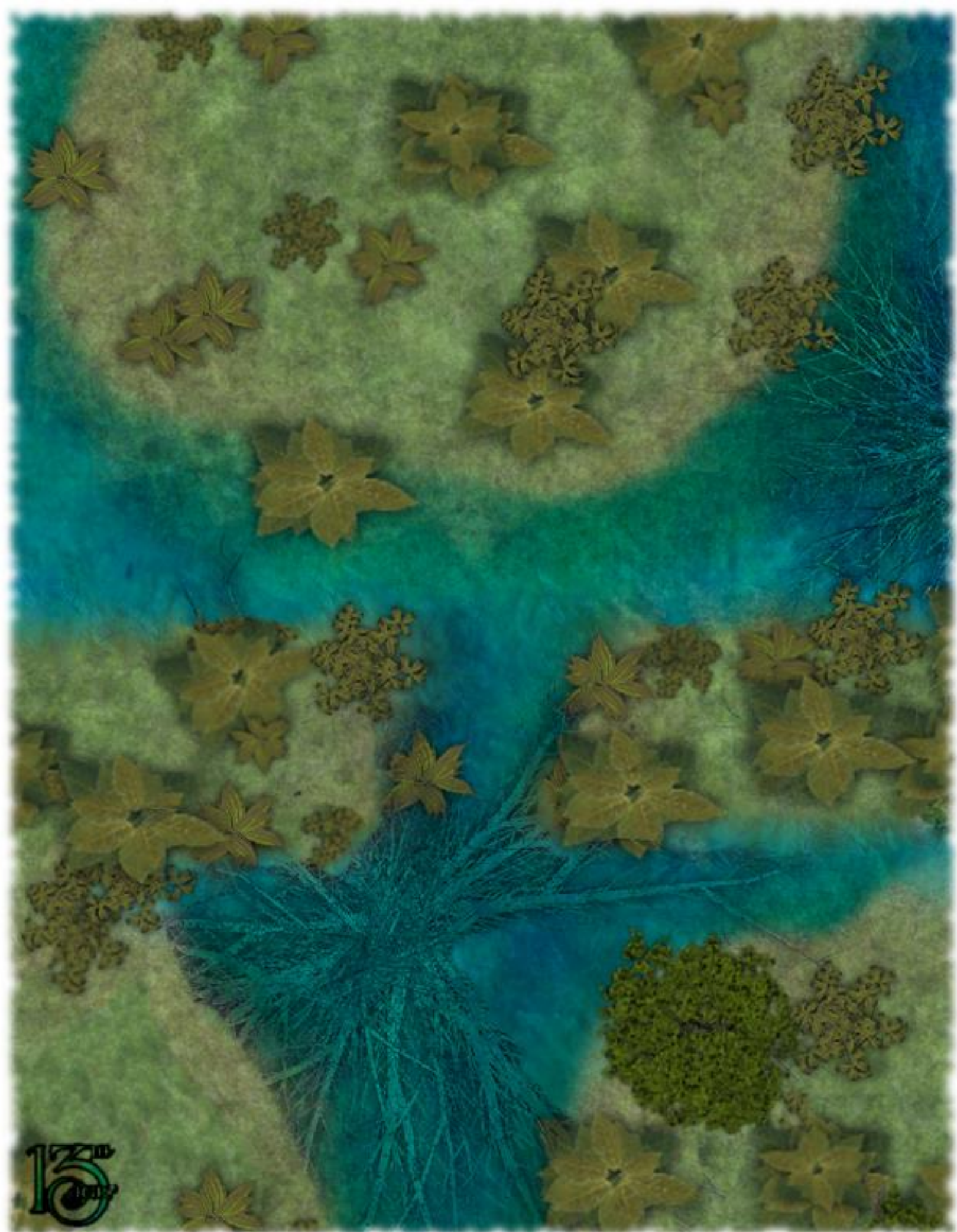
*Natural even hit or miss:* One dead (or unconscious or otherwise out of the fight) star-mask cultist, dead star-mask cult leader, or dead star-mask brute becomes a living star-mask.

*Group ability:* For every two star mask-cult leaders in the battle (round up), one of them can use *psychic dominion* once during the battle as a quick action.

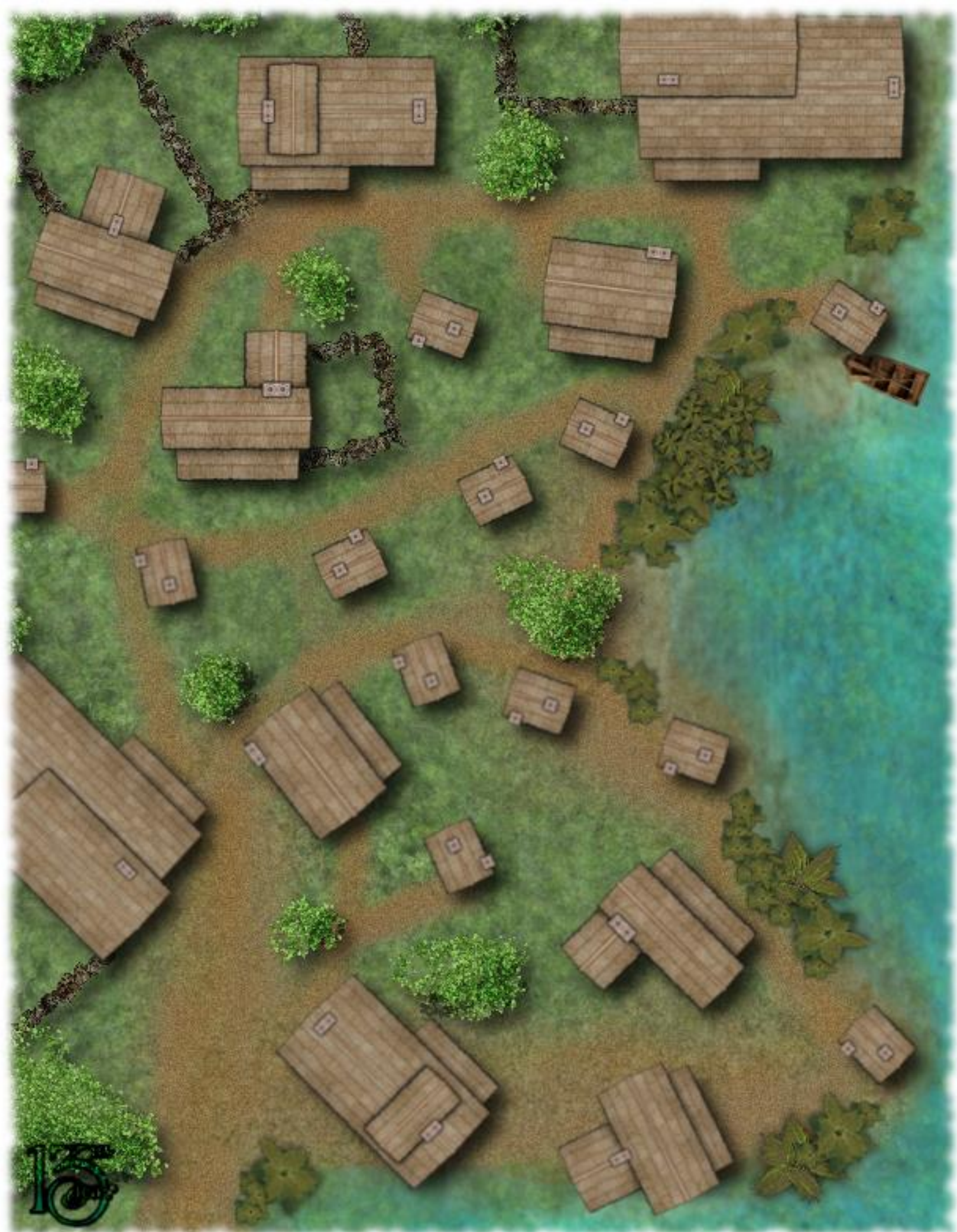
**AC 18**

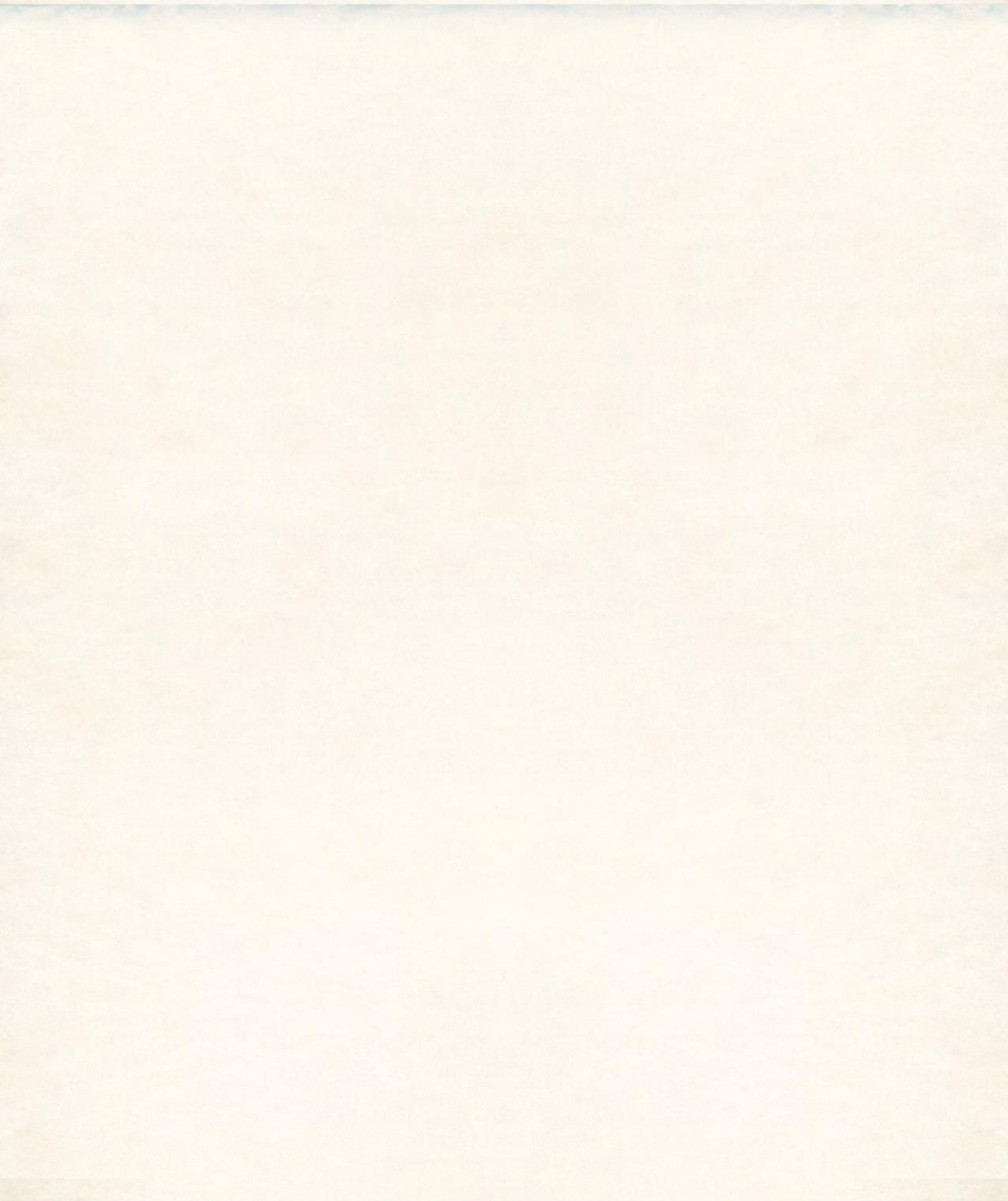
**PD 13 HP 72**

**MD 15**









## THE MASKS

After the battle it should be possible to closely examine the masked strangers. The cultists are wearing masks made of a bone or porcelain-like substance lined with black tentacles that wrap around the wearer's heads and push into their cranial openings. Some of the dying cultists even make facial expressions with their masks, which flex and move despite the hardness of their material. The masks are alive, though dying now that their hosts have been slain!

## MISSING VILLAGERS

After the fight (and after the adventurers get back to town if they left to search for cultists in the marsh) Jon Doonal rushes over to the adventurers. Elder Doonal has terrible news—the cultists have snatched villagers and carried them off into the marsh. Elder Doonal mentions several of the NPCs that the party created during the *Village Life Montage* as being among the missing (and perhaps Hosford Merrywife is gone too).

Elder Doonal implores the adventurers to track down the cultist's lair and rescue the missing villagers. If the adventurers ask for a reward he can offer them 10 gp for each adventurer, and can be bargained up to 50 gp each if the adventurers are persuasive or are refusing to heroically rescue the villagers.

Tracking the cultists across the swampy Wicklight Marsh is a DC 15 skill check, requiring 3 successes. A failure means that the adventurers temporarily lose the route and face a danger:

**Dunking & drowning +5 vs PD (vs each party member)**—1d10 damage

OR

**Insidious marsh gas +5 vs MD (vs each party member)**—1d12 psychic damage

## THE CULTISTS' LAIR

After the party has accrued three successes in the tracking the cultists section they come across the lair of the cultists on an island deep in the swamp.

The cultists don't seem concerned about being tracked down, as nobody seems to be standing guard. Their moss-covered thatched longhouse has candles burning inside, and the cage in which they have placed captured villagers is near the longhouse. Figures move about the island, and crab-like things scuttle in the undergrowth of the swamp plants that grow here and there on the small hillock that is their hidden island in the swamp.

### IF THE ADVENTURERS RUSH IN...

They face the monsters below. *Star-mask brutes* are hugely-muscled bipedal creatures with multiple masks attached to

their bodies and black vein-like tentacles pulsing under their skin. Unattached *star-masks* act like swift-moving octopuses or crabs, but with the ability to leap large distances.

Adventurers (Tough fight!)	Star- mask Cultist	Star- mask Brute	Star- mask Brute	Star- mask Cult Leader
3	1	3	1	1
4	2	7	1	1
5	3	10	1	1

### IF THE ADVENTURERS DELAY...

More masks are applied to villagers, converting them into cultists.

Adventurers (Tough fight!)	Star- mask Cultist	Star- mask Brute	Star- mask Brute	Star- mask Cult Leader
3	2	0	1	1
4	4	0	1	1
5	5	3	1	1

### IF THE ADVENTURERS COME UP WITH A CLEVER PLAN FOR THE ATTACK...

Use the fight below to represent the adventurer's improved tactical situation. Having a plan *and* passing a DC 15 skill check related to the plan starts the escalation die at 1, and if the plan also involves a character's One Unique Thing start the escalation die at 2.

Adventurers (Fight with a plan in place)	Star- mask Cultist	Star- mask Brute	Star- mask Brute	Star- mask Cult Leader
3	2	0	1	0
4	4	3	0	0
5	5	3	0	0

**Warning:** The fight is tough without a plan (at least twice as tough as a normal fight). Let the players know that just rushing in without a plan may mean that they face greater odds than their characters can perhaps handle. If the adventurers decide to flee the fight, the result will be that the cultists move deeper into the wilderness and away from Candlefen, but they'll take all the captured villagers with them, as well as the magic item the PCs would have gained after victory.

**Screaming villagers:** There should probably be at least one captured villager alive during the fight. That villager should be yelling about not killing their friends and family. It's hidden in the combat rules, but when you drop an enemy to 0 hit points you can choose to knock them unconscious instead of kill them. Maybe the PCs want to try that, or maybe they don't want to take chances.

## STAR-MASK CULTIST

*This hapless humanoid has become host to a mask, and is in thrall to the group mind.*

*1<sup>st</sup> level archer [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +6

**Club +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

**R: Bow +5 vs. AC—5 damage**

*[Group ability] Coordinated attack:* Until the start of its next turn the star-mask cultist gets a +2 to bonus to attack enemies that are engaged with allied star masks, star mask cultists, zombies, etc.

*Group ability:* For every two star-mask cultists in the battle (round up), one of them can use *coordinated attack* once during the battle.

**AC 17**

**PD 13 HP 27**

**MD 15**

## STAR-MASK

*The white mask scuttles along the ground on barbed tentacles, looking for a host to 'wear' it.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Strangling tentacles +7 vs. PD—3 damage and 3 ongoing damage, ongoing damage ends if the target is no longer engaged with the star-mask**

*[Group ability] Suffocating thoughts +7 vs. MD—*Until the end of the battle, if the target drops to 0 hp; the target rejoins the fight as a star-mask cultist. Converted player character star-mask cultists can be freed from their masks as a standard action by a character next to them.

*Group ability:* For every four star-masks in the battle (round up), one of them can use *suffocating thoughts* once during the battle.

*Leap:* On turns when the escalation die is odd the star-mask can leap into engagement with a nearby enemy as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one star-mask mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

## STAR-MASK BRUTE

*This was once a large animal, but now it is a bipedal mass of muscle covered in multiple masks.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +9

**Fist smash +8 vs. AC—10 damage**

**Crush +8 vs. AC—5 damage and 5 ongoing damage and once per battle the star-mask brute throws the target as a free action**

*[special trigger] Throw +12 vs. PD—*Target is thrown far away, takes 10 damage, and is weakened (easy save ends)

*Miss:* Target pops free.

**AC 19**

**PD 14 HP 45**

**MD 16**

## STAR-MASK CULT LEADER

*This cultist is more in tune with the group mind than others, and issues orders to its underlings.*

*Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level leader [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +7

**Iron-shod staff +7 vs. AC—14 damage**

*[Group ability] R: Psychic domination +7 vs. MD—7 damage and 7 ongoing damage*

*Natural even hit or miss:* One dead (or unconscious or otherwise out of the fight) star-mask cultist, dead star-mask cult leader, or dead star-mask brute becomes a living star-mask.

*Group ability:* For every two star mask-cult leaders in the battle (round up), one of them can use *psychic dominion* once during the battle as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 13 HP 72**

**MD 15**



## THE RESCUE (OPTION 1)

If the adventurers chose to knock out the cultists and cult leaders when they drop them to 0 hit points, instead of slaying them, they can cut the living masks free from unconscious enemies, though doing so will kill the masks. Sadly not all of the cultists can be rescued, some have had their masks on for too long.

Any rescued villagers are horrified and grateful, as are their de-masked abductors, who turn out to be a lost imperial patrol who stumbled upon the masks in the swamps a while back and were possessed by them. The star mask brutes are integrated with their masks, and were probably not human to begin with... in fact under the masks some look like they might have originally have been large animals before the masks changed them.

The lost imperial patrol leads the party to wooden cages out in the marsh which contain more captured villagers and marsh-dwellers, which the star-masks forced them to capture and imprison while they were possessed.

The imperial patrol have with them a piece of magic armor (see the treasury at the back of the adventure) and are grateful enough to make a gift of it to the adventurers.

## THE SLAUGHTER (OPTION 2)

If the adventurers choose to kill the cultists then they rescue the villagers who had not yet had masks applied, and many more villagers that the cultists had in wooden cages in the marsh near their hideout.

The freed villagers cheer the adventurers, thanking them for their timely rescue.

On one of the cultist's bodies floating in the marsh the adventurers discover some magic armor.

*Read this aloud:*

**...but where did these strange masks come from? Find out in part 3: Echoes from a Dark Age.**



## PART 3: ECHOES FROM A DARK AGE

The adventurers investigate a meteorite that is more than it at first seems.

### PLAYER CHARACTERS

Part 3 of this adventure is designed for 2<sup>nd</sup> level characters. If you are using the GenCon 2015 pregens use the 2<sup>nd</sup> level versions of the characters.

It is **highly recommended** that at least a couple characters have positive relationships with the Archmage and that none have negative relationships with the Archmage.

New characters this session who were not part of last week's session are travelers who have joined the party, travelling together for safety.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHMAGE

Explain to the players that the adventurers are in the Dragon Wood north of a place known as the Wicklight Marsh (between the Green Star river and the mountain known as Starport). If any player in the current session took part in *Part 2: The Terror Beneath* ask them to recount the previous episode.

*GMs: This section can be changed to be a message from the Priestess, the Blue of the Three, the Elf Queen, or any other magically inclined icon that the party has a positive relationship with.*

*Read this aloud:*

**A glowing orb zooms up to the party, and expands to become an image of the powerful and wise Archmage. The image speaks.**

*"Greetings brave adventurers. A strange menace has appeared in the north of the Dragon Empire, and my questing orb has selected you as the closest and most suitable candidates to resolve the issue.*

*A meteorite has fallen near your location, disgorging strange creatures. If you investigate the fallen star and the creatures that it has brought I will reward you with magic.*

*After this message has finished the orb will guide you to your destination, as it glows brighter the closer you get to the meteorite. Once you have investigated, speak your findings into the orb."*

*...and with that the orb's light vanishes to a tiny glow and the orb drops softly to the ground.*



## JOURNEY MONTAGE

At this point you should run a montage as the adventurers march northwards through the Dragon Wood.

Explain to the players how a montage works. You will pick a player and ask them to describe a challenge that the party encountered on its journey but not how that challenge was resolved. You will then ask the player to their left how *their* character solved the problem or met the challenge. There is no dice rolling, just a quick narration from each player. As you go around the group everybody will get a chance to create a problem, and everybody will get a chance to have their character spotlighted as they solve a problem.

**The focus of this montage is cooperatively telling the story of a several day journey through the Dragon Wood.**

## RUBICARN THE DRAGON

The party starts to see signs of dragon habitation. Dung piles, bark scraped off trees, claw marks and footprints in the ground, piles of burnt bones near scorched woodland. A dragon definitely lives nearby.

At around mid-day as they follow the orb's glow northwards the party is overflown several times by a very big red dragon. Let the players know that it is obvious to the party that the dragon has spotted them in its territory.

That night the party hears something large moving in the forest. As the party starts to react the dragon reveals itself.

*Read this aloud:*

**A burst of fire illuminates a large shape in the forest, clinging to the top of several trees. A voice like the crackling of burning logs comes out of the night.**

***"Little morsels. What do you want in my territory? Who dares to trespass in the domain of the Rubicarn, she who melts swords and brings empires to ruin?"***

This is Rubicarn the dragon. Despite her boasts she's uncertain of her success in taking on the party in a fight, and wants to convince the party to leave her territory.



Rubicarn the dragon just wants assurances that the party is not looking for her lair or her horde of gold. If the party convinces her of their mission she will let the adventurers know that to the north is a large crater with lots of strange bipedal creatures in it. The dragon has stayed clear of the creatures (they don't taste good, like rotten meat), and as the crater is near the territory of a larger black dragon known as Sorrowscorn she hasn't investigated the crater itself.

### ***IF THE PARTY CONVINCES RUBICARN...***

That they are not here to harm her or take what is hers she offers to guide them the following morning to the edge of her territory. She mentions that in the no-mans-land (or no-dragons-land) between her territory and that of Sorrowscorn is a village, and suggests that they enquire there about the crater as it is within easy (humanoid) walking distance of the village.

### ***IF THE PARTY FAILS TO CONVINCE RUBICARN...***

That they are here to investigate the crater and are just passing through, the dragon will take to the air and fly circles around the party, breathing fire to burn the forest and box them in. Attempting to get through the fire inflicts 2d8 fire damage for 1d3+2 turns to those passing through the conflagration. Once she has boxed the party in she'll land and begin to attack the party—see the bestiary section at the back of this book for Rubicarn's stats... or turn to the next page.



### *IF THE PARTY KILLS RUBICARN...*

They can loot her cave which is nearby and easy to find if they are looking for it; they recover 1000 gp worth of rubies, and a single magic item.

Adventurers	Rubicarn
3, 4, or 5	1

#### *ICON OPTION: GREAT GOLD WYRM*

If the party convinces Rubicarn that they are not here to raid her lair and the Great Gold Wyrn is an important icon based on icon relationships then Rubicarn holds to ancient dragon tradition and provides honorable guests passing through its realm with a meal (roasted whole cow) and a place to stay (sheltering under its wing from the rain). It's nice to eat a meal with a dragon, rather than risk *being* a dragon's meal. Rubicarn is apparently a rare 'good' red dragon (or as good as red dragons can get at least, which is not saying much). Of course if the adventurers come back this way they are likely to get eaten unless they bring appropriate tribute.

#### *ICON OPTION: THE THREE*

If the Three are an important icon based on icon relationships then the party spots the scars that mark Rubicarn as an outcast among her kind and marked for death by the Three—the party could use this information to get on Rubicarn's good side if they share an enemy, or could even attempt to bluff and intimidate the red dragon (a disastrous tactic if it goes wrong, naturally).

## RUBICARN THE RED DRAGON

Large 6<sup>th</sup> level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +11

Vulnerability: cold

**Fangs, claws, and tail +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—16 damage**

*First natural even hit or miss each turn:* Roll a third fangs, claws, and tail attack.

**C: Fiery Breath +11 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—10 fire damage**

*Miss:* Half damage

*Intermittent breath:* Rubicarn can use her breath attack 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

*Resist all fire:* When a fire attack targets Rubicarn the attack only deals half damage. Critical hits with fire attacks against Rubicarn do normal damage, not double damage.

*Fiery blood:* While Rubicarn is staggered add +1d8 fire damage to all her attacks, hit or miss.

**AC 21**

**PD 20 HP 180**

**MD 16**





## THE VILLAGE OF FAR PINES

As the party walks over a ridge they see a village below them. The village looks deserted: no smoke rises from chimneys, no dogs bark, no voices can be heard, no people can be seen. A palisade (a defensive wall) surrounds the village, but the gates are wide open. Livestock wander about untended.

The glowing orb indicates that the meteorite lies further north than the village. If you squint you can see what might be a crater, far to the north.

**If the adventurers investigate the village:** there are obvious signs of struggle, as though the villagers fought off attackers. There are farming implements dropped in the streets, and blood splatters in doorways and inside homes. Whatever happened here happened quickly. Strangely none of the villagers' possessions were taken. If the party chooses to loot the village they end up with 2d100 copper pieces, 2d20 silver pieces, and 2d10 gold pieces. If the party wants to do so they can round up the livestock, gaining themselves 1d3 goats and dozens of chickens. Any farming equipment, peasant clothing, and the like that the party wants to take is here for the taking.

*GMs: If the party fought Rubicarn skip this fight. The party still finds and may investigate the village, but don't encounter the Xombies.*

As the party is leaving the village some beaten up looking villagers stagger out of the forest. The villagers are carrying crude weapons and farming implements and appear to have recently been in a fight. As soon as the party is within shouting distance the villagers will sprint towards the party and attack.

Though they appear to be alive at first, these are moving corpses. Adventurers (and players) expecting zombies are in for a shock.

These moving corpses are not undead, they are xombie's. Xombie's do not have the weaknesses of traditional undead zombies.

Adventurers	Fast Xombie
3	7
4	9
5	11

### FAST XOMBIE

*One of the xombie eggs inside this xombie has matured into a star-mask and is directing the others like a troupe of killer corpse-puppets..*

*0 level spoiler [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Xombie rush +5 vs. AC**—4 damage and the xombie pops free and moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

*Natural even miss:* the xombie pops free and moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

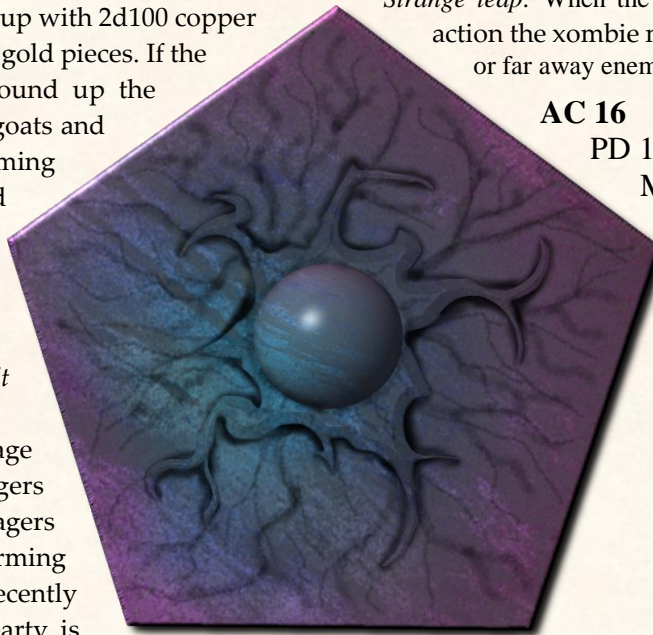
*Natural odd miss:* the xombie pops free.

*Strange leap:* When the escalation die is 0 or 1, as a move action the xombie moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

**AC 16**

**PD 10 HP 20**

**MD 14**





## THE CRATER

The party continue to follow the glowing orb until they get to the crater itself, as the orb begins to pulse with ever brighter light the closer they get to the meteorite.

Near the crater lots of zombie-like creatures shuffle around in small groups, with a greater concentration the closer that the party gets to the meteorite.

In the distance in the sky above the party notices the comet that people are calling the Archmage's comet. The party saw this strange phenomena above the dragon wood previously, prior to meteorites falling from the sky.

**If the party decides to just march into the crater:** skip ahead to the next section (*Xombie Swarm*), but add an extra fast xombie to the fight.

**If the party decides to sneak into the crater:** it is a DC 15 skill check to sneak into the crater unseen by the xombies. Roll separately for each PC. For each success that the party gains remove one meteorite xombie from the *Xombie Swarm* fight. Every failure means that whoever made the roll is targeted by one of the following environmental attacks:

**Strange radiation +5 vs PD—1d10** negative energy damage

OR

**Hot broken rocks and shattered trees +5 vs AC—1d8** damage

Once the party has failed or passed three rolls move on to the next section *Xombie Swarm*.

### *Icon Option: Lich King*

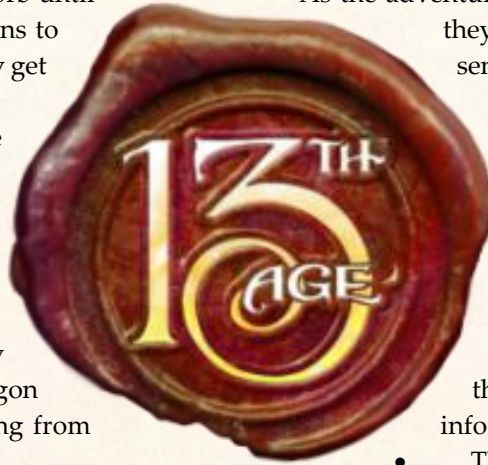
If the Lich King is an important icon based on icon relationships then the meteorite landed in the graveyard of the abandoned village. There are corpses everywhere, and tiny white things are crawling over the bodies. The white things look like tiny skulls and have black tentacles.

Anybody with an icon relationship with the Lich King can add +2 to their skill roll to avoid the dangers of the crater while sneaking in.

## PSYCHIC ATTACK

As the adventurers approach the meteorite in the crater they are assailed by a wave of images and sensations. Something is attempting to control their minds, but is failing to do so—the big clue is that the orb provided by the Archmage is glowing blue and throwing out shimmering wards. Instead of becoming possessed, the PCs are buffeted by the thoughts that emanate from the meteorite's interior. From these fleshes of thought the adventurers learn the following information:

- The meteorite is in fact a living dungeon.
- The Archmage's Comet is not actually a comet, but is in fact a conglomeration of living dungeons—a living dungeon planet.
- The living dungeons were cast into the skies long ago by a former Archmage. The living masks come from the living dungeons.
- The Archmage's Comet is searching for a way past the magical defenses of the Dragon Empire.
- The living dungeon meteorite in the crater was supposed to land on the slopes of Starport mountain.



## XOMBIE ATTACK

As the party reels from the attempted psychic attack a hoard of shambling humanoid figures start to converge on their location, stumbling out of the Dragon Wood. These humanoids are slow moving and easy to move past at first, but as their numbers in the area increase so does their speed and coordination as a group. The zombies attack the party.

Adventurers	Meteorite Xombie	Brain-Absorber Xombie
3	7	1
4	12	1
5	7	2

## METEORITE XOMBIE

*This barely coordinated xombie is falling apart, its limbs barely held on by the black tendrils of the xombie eggs within.*

*1<sup>st</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Decaying fists +6 vs. AC**—3 damage

*Natural 16+ hit:* The attack does double damage, but the xombie takes 1d6 damage.

*[Group ability]* **C: Vomit tentacles +6 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)**—4 damage

*Group ability:* For every four meteorite xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use *vomit tentacles* once during the battle.

**AC 17**

**PD 11 HP 7 (mook)**

**MD 15**

*Mook:* Kill one meteorite xombie mook for every 7 damage you do to the mob.

## BRAIN-ABSORBER XOMBIE

*This xombie is mostly composed of black tentacles, with star-masks crawling about on its outside. Freshly harvested brains can be seen inside the dark mass.*

*Large 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Fist smash +7 vs. AC**—14 damage

**C: Psychic crush +7 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)**—9 psychic damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* 4 ongoing psychic damage.

*[Group ability]* **C: Mass confusion +7 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—9 damage OR if the target is the first one hit the target by this attack it makes a basic melee or ranged attack against one of its own allies.

*[Group ability]* **Brain-ripping tentacles +7 vs. PD**—14 damage

*Natural even hit:* The target loses a recovery OR must succeed on a normal save or become confused (target's choice).

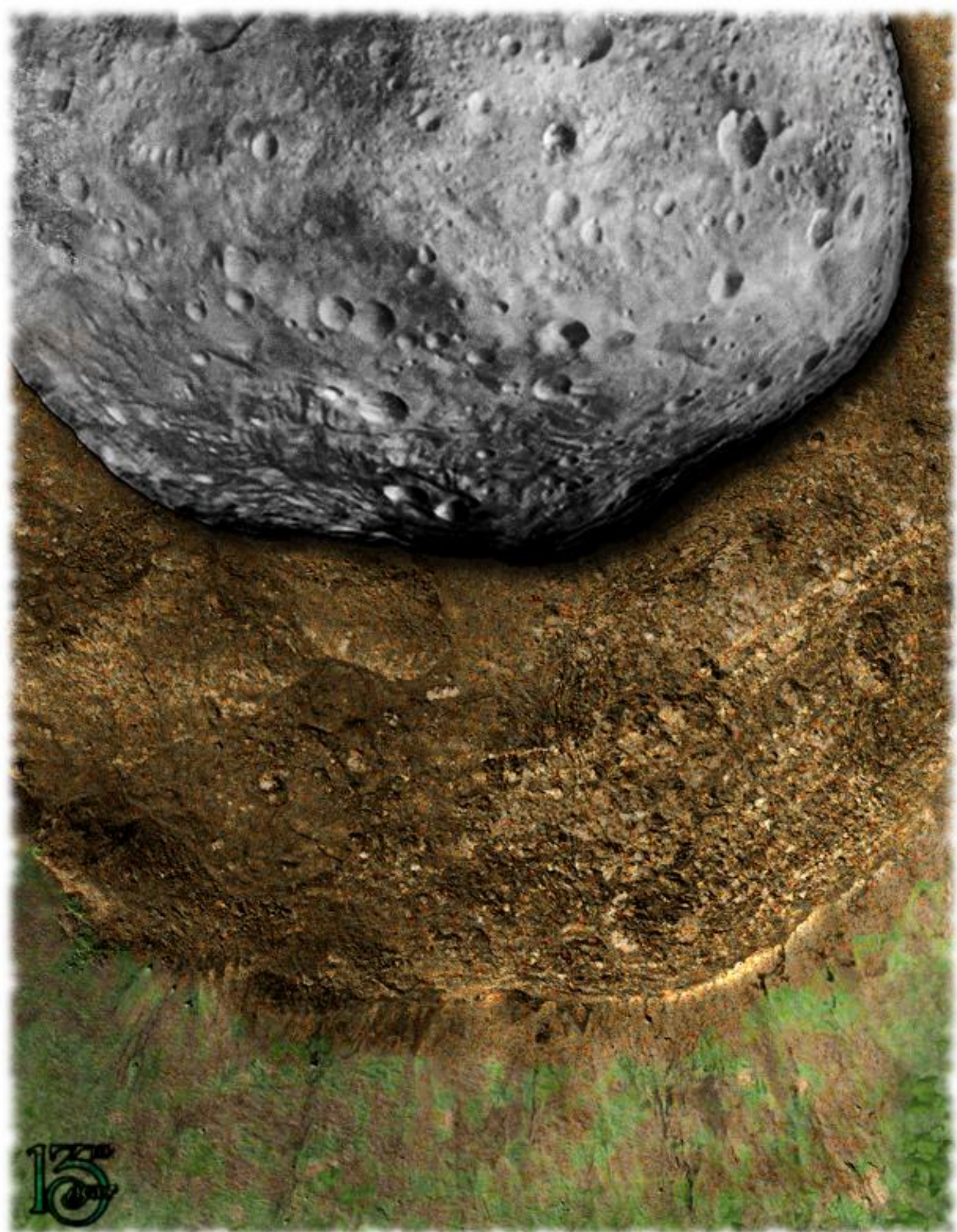
*Group ability:* For every two brain-absorber xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use either *mass confusion* OR *psychic crush* OR *brain-ripping tentacles* once during the battle.

*[Once per battle]* *Re-broadcaster:* If the brain-absorber xombie does nothing 1d4 xombie, star mask, etc allies can take an extra action on their next turns.

**AC 18**

**PD 14 HP 72**

**MD 18**



## THE TREASURE CHAMBER

As the last xombie falls the meteorite shudders from within, rock falling off it. The adventurers are again assaulted by an ineffectual psychic blast, but this time the party realizes that this is the living dungeon/ meteorite is calling more xombies. The xombies are not here yet, so the party has time to look around.

The living dungeon/meteorite's shudder has revealed an inner chamber, sparking with the familiar glint of gold. Inside the chamber is around 1000 gold pieces worth of gold in the form of coins from a past age, and two magic items. Loot!

*The orb given to the adventurers is glowing and pulsing. The adventurers can communicate with the Archmage through the orb, letting him know what they have found.*

### **ICON OPTION: PRINCE OF SHADOWS**

If the Prince of Shadows is an important icon based on icon relationships then the treasure chamber has a second secret chamber inside it, with an extra magic item in it. However the chamber is trapped. It is a DC 15 skill check to get past the trap without setting off the trap.

**Guillotine doorway +5 vs PD—2d6 energy damage**

*Read this aloud:*

**...but what is the true meaning of the meteorite, and how do the adventurers escape from the Xombies? Find out in part 4: The Doomsday Weapon.**





## PART 4: THE DOOMSDAY

### WEAPON

The adventurers explore a meteorite/living dungeon.

### PLAYER CHARACTERS

Part 4 of this adventure is designed for 2<sup>nd</sup> level characters. If you are using the GenCon 2015 pregens use the 2<sup>nd</sup> level versions of the characters, but give them an incremental advance. To save time at GenCon just give everybody a choice of either getting their 3<sup>rd</sup> level hit points early or adding +1 to all their skill checks.

It is **highly recommended** that at least a couple characters have positive relationships with the Archmage and that none have negative relationships with the Archmage.

New characters this session who were not part of last week's session are travelers who encountered zombies and fled to the crater, taking shelter in the strange hallways of the meteorite.

## THE METEORITE'S INTERIOR

If any players were present for *Part 3: Echoes from a Dark Age* you should ask them to recap that adventure now—otherwise recap the salient points for them.

At this point you should run a montage as the adventurers cautiously move into the interior of the living dungeon/meteorite. As the adventurers move further in to the rock it looks less like a rough rock and more like a dungeon—with a tiled floor, smooth carved walls, doorways, stairs, etc.

Explain to the players how a montage works. You will pick a player and ask them to describe a passageway and a danger that appears in that corridor. You will then ask the player to their left how *their* character got the party past the danger of the living dungeon. There is no dice rolling, just a quick narration from each player. As you go around the group everybody will get a chance to create a problem, and everybody will get a chance to have their character spotlighted as they solve a problem or overcome a danger.

**The focus of this montage is cooperatively telling the story of the adventurers as they move deeper in to the meteorite/living dungeon.**



## THE BIRTHING CHAMBER

The adventurers are almost to the center of the meteorite/living dungeon when they come across a group of *star-mask brutes* with a lot of corpses. The star-mask brutes are vomiting out *xombie eggs* onto the corpses, and the eggs are crawling inside them and animating them.

It is too late for the party to just sneak past. While the newly-made xombies are too uncoordinated to attack the party the brutes and the eggs are certainly able to attack.

Adventurers	Xombie Egg Swarm	Star-mask Brute
3	3	2
4	7	2
5	12	2

This fight is a good opportunity to re-introduce previously met NPCs from past sessions, this time as corpses! What the Star-masks are doing in the Dragon Wood is pretty terrifying and abominable, and this scene can serve to highlight that. Of course, you should keep things PG-13, and imply all the horror of the birthing chamber rather than give graphic descriptions of each atrocity.

## STAR-MASK BRUTE

*This was once a large animal, but now it is a bipedal mass of muscle covered in multiple masks.*

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +9

**Fist smash +8 vs. AC—10 damage**

**Crush +8 vs. AC—5 damage** and 5 ongoing damage and once per battle the star-mask brute throws the target as a free action [*special trigger*] **Throw +12 vs. PD—**Target is thrown far away, takes 10 damage, and is weakened (easy save ends)

*Miss:* Target pops free.

**AC 19**

**PD 14 HP 45**

**MD 16**

## XOMBIE EGG SWARM

*These tentacled white spheres roll and hop around looking for a corpse to inhabit.*

2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +5

**Swarm +7 vs. AC—5 damage**

[*Group ability*] **C: Puppeteer tentacles +7 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)**—the target makes a basic ranged or melee attack against a target of the xombie egg swarm's choice

*Miss:* The target is immune to puppeteer abilities for the rest of this fight and the fight after.

[*Once per battle*] **Swarm rush:** As a move action the swarm pops free and moves twice, but must finish its move engaged with an enemy.

*Group ability:* For every four xombie swarms in the battle (round up), one of them can use *puppeteer tentacles* once during the battle.

### Nastier specials

*Corpse puppet:* If there are intact corpses in the battle (say a star-mask cultist died) then part of the xombie egg swarm burrows into it and it rises as a xombie.

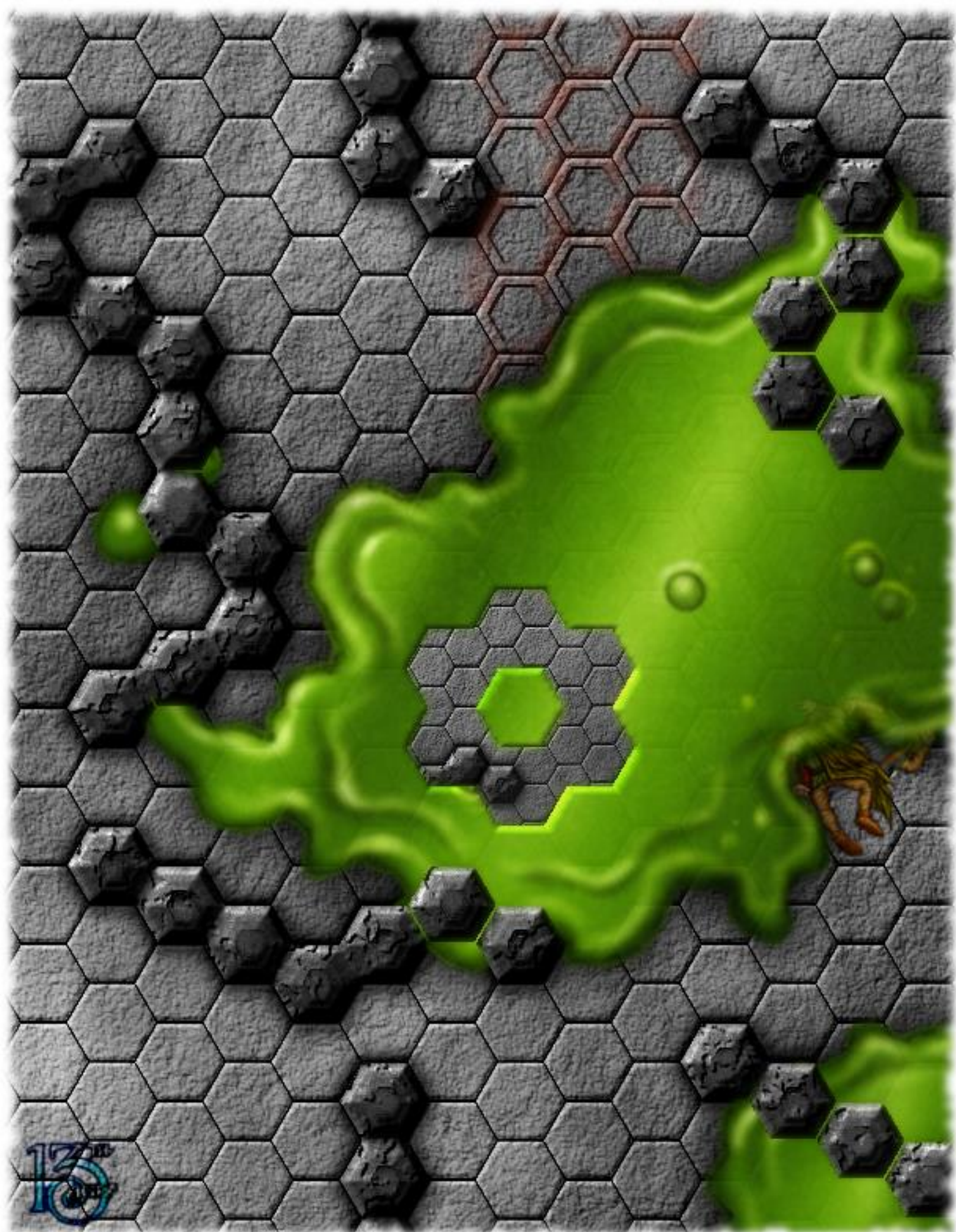
**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one xombie egg swarm mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.





## THE LIVING DUNGEON STIRS

As the adventurers kill the last xombie and brute the dungeon shudders and stirs. The adventurers hear the *shink!* and *chunk!* of shifting stone. The living dungeon is reacting to their presence, creating traps and rearranging its corridors.

The dungeon will keep trying to lead the adventurers into newly created traps, and attempting to kill the adventurers until the party is dead: let the players know that their characters know this, probably as an echo of the various psychic assaults they've endured in the dungeon. The party's only hope is to kill the dungeon's heart—or as it turns out its pulsating brain.

Each adventurer must pass a DC 15 skill check related to moving through a dangerous environment. Every character who fails the skill check is targeted by a trap. If anybody rolls a natural 20 on the skill check they can aid another adventurer, lowering their DC to 10. The traps are...

**Spiked pit trap +10 vs AC**—3d6 damage

OR

**Poison cloud trap +10 vs PD**—3d4 poison damage

*Miss:* 1d4 poison damage.

OR

**Stairs become slide +10 vs AC**—2d10 damage

OR

**Crushing wall trap +10 vs AC**—2d8 damage

OR

**Electrified corridor +10 vs PD**—3d6 lightning damage

### *ICON OPTION: DWARF KING*

If the Dwarf King is an important icon based on icon relationships then the inner corridors of the living dungeon were stolen from a dwarven freehold in a past age. The solid dwarven construction is hard for the living dungeon to manipulate, so attacks by the dungeon using traps only have a +8 to hit instead of +10.

## THE DUNGEON HEART

Fortunately the adventurers survive long enough (right?) to reach the very heart of the dungeon. Here a vast glowing brain is embedded in the rock, glowing a baleful blue-green. The brain throbs like a heartbeat.

If the party destroys the dungeon heart (or pulsating brain in this case) then the dungeon will die. The dungeon isn't fully recovered yet from crashing out of the sky and is not able to mount an effective defense this close to its own core.

It takes three DC 20 skill checks to destroy the pulsating brain. What type of thing are the PCs doing? Things that make sense for killing a crazy big alien brain that won't just die by taking huge amounts of damage, though feel free to

pile the damage on also! Of course failing a roll means that the dungeon assails them with waves of psychic energy:

**Psionic discharge +10 vs MD (vs each party member)**—1d12 psychic damage

### *ICON OPTION: ARCHMAGE*

If the Archmage is an important icon based on icon relationships then the chamber with the pulsating brain has walls that are carved with protective wards laid by the hand of a past Archmage. Anybody capable of casting magic can temporarily reinforce the wards, lowering the damage from the brain's reflexive psychic attack to d8 from d12.

### *ICON OPTION: ELF QUEEN*

If the Elf Queen is an important icon based on icon relationships then the brain at the heart of the dungeon is wrapped in fine silvery chains imbued with elven magic. The chains restrict the brain's growth, meaning that the brain is weaker than it would otherwise be and two successful skill checks are needed to destroy the brain.

## THE DOOMSDAY WEAPON

The party, on their way out of the living (well, recently slain and still twitching) dungeon discovers a large chamber with totem-pole metal-like structures in it. The metal poles drain magic from their environment, then discharge the magic. Whatever is hit by this discharge transforms into pulsating brain tissue. The poles are arranged around an opening, for this is a weapon. It is a weapon used by a living dungeon to create more living dungeons!

Interacting with the poles in any way (poking them, throwing things at them, and especially using magic) causes them to discharge:

**Mutagenic ray +15 vs PD**—2d6 damage and part of the target's flesh and equipment becomes alien brain tissue.

*Targets who have wounds filled with alien brain tissue take a -1 penalty to all their rolls until the brain tissue is removed. The penalty represents the brain tissue causing them pain and sending nerve signals to their limbs. Cutting out the tissue causes 2d6 damage. Getting infested with brain-tissue filled wounds doesn't confer any new powers or abilities.*

The characters' way out is via the doomsday weapon's aperture. Several of the metal poles or staffs have been removed by xombies (who can be seen at the edge of the crater taking them away into the forest and toward Starport) so the characters can slip past the missing poles.

Slipping out of the dungeon here is a DC 20 skill check per adventurer. Adventurers who fail the skill check are attacked by the weapon discharging its mutagenic ray.

Alternately if the star-staff poles have discharged three times already the party can rush out while they are recharging.

*ICON OPTION: EMPEROR (OR PRINCE OF SHADOWS OR THE ARCHMAGE)*

If the Emperor (or the Prince of Shadows or the Archmage) is an important icon based on icon relationships then the doomsday weapon just happens to be pointed towards Axis and Glitterhaegen (and Shadow Port and Horizon). This wasn't deliberate, the meteorite just happened to land pointed that way.

The arcing discharge of energy can't travel very far, mostly hitting the wall of the crater and making a mutated mess. Still, if there are other weapons like this out there they could spell doom for the cities that the icon in question cares about.

## SNEAKING PAST THE XOMBIES

The crashed meteorite chunk is surrounded by xombies, but with the living dungeon dead they seem aimless. It should be easy to sneak past them, in theory.

Each adventurer must succeed at a DC 20 skill check to make it out of the vast crater unseen. Every adventurer who fails the roll adds one *meteorite xombie* to the next scene—the fight against Sorrowscorn.

## SORROWSCORN

The party successfully gets out of the crater and back to the Dragon Wood. Unfortunately for them one of the star-mask parasites has found a host in the form of the black dragon Sorrowscorn. It has been tracking the adventurers ever since they passed through the dragon's territory and has been waiting for them to re-enter the dense forest (its home territory and preferred terrain for fighting in). See the bestiary section at the back of this book for Sorrowscorn's stats, or see below.

Also involved in the fight is one *meteorite xombie* per adventurer who failed the skill check to exit the crater without drawing the attention of a xombie.

Adventurers	Sorrowscorn	Meteorite Xombie
3, 4, or 5	1	?

## SORROWSCORN THE POSSESSED BLACK DRAGON

*Sorrowscorn is host to a star-mask, and is now part of the group mind. The group-mind has less control over a mighty dragon than a mere humanoid, but Sorrowscorn still serves the aberrations.*

*Large 6<sup>th</sup> level wrecker [DRAGON]*

Initiative: +13

Vulnerability: thunder



**Claws and bite +11 vs. AC (2 attacks) — 18 damage**

*Natural 16+:* The target also takes 10 ongoing acid damage.

**C: Acid breath +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies) — 20 acid damage, and 10 ongoing acid damage**

*Miss:* 10 acid damage.

*Intermittent breath:* A large black dragon can use *acid breath* 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

[once per battle] *Feed upon the group mind:* If Sorrowscorn doesn't use its breath weapon on a turn when it is able to, it can heal 45 hp.

Doing so kills up to 1d3 Star-mask or Xombie allies, if there are any in the battle. If there are no Star-masks or Xombies the healing is only 30 hp.

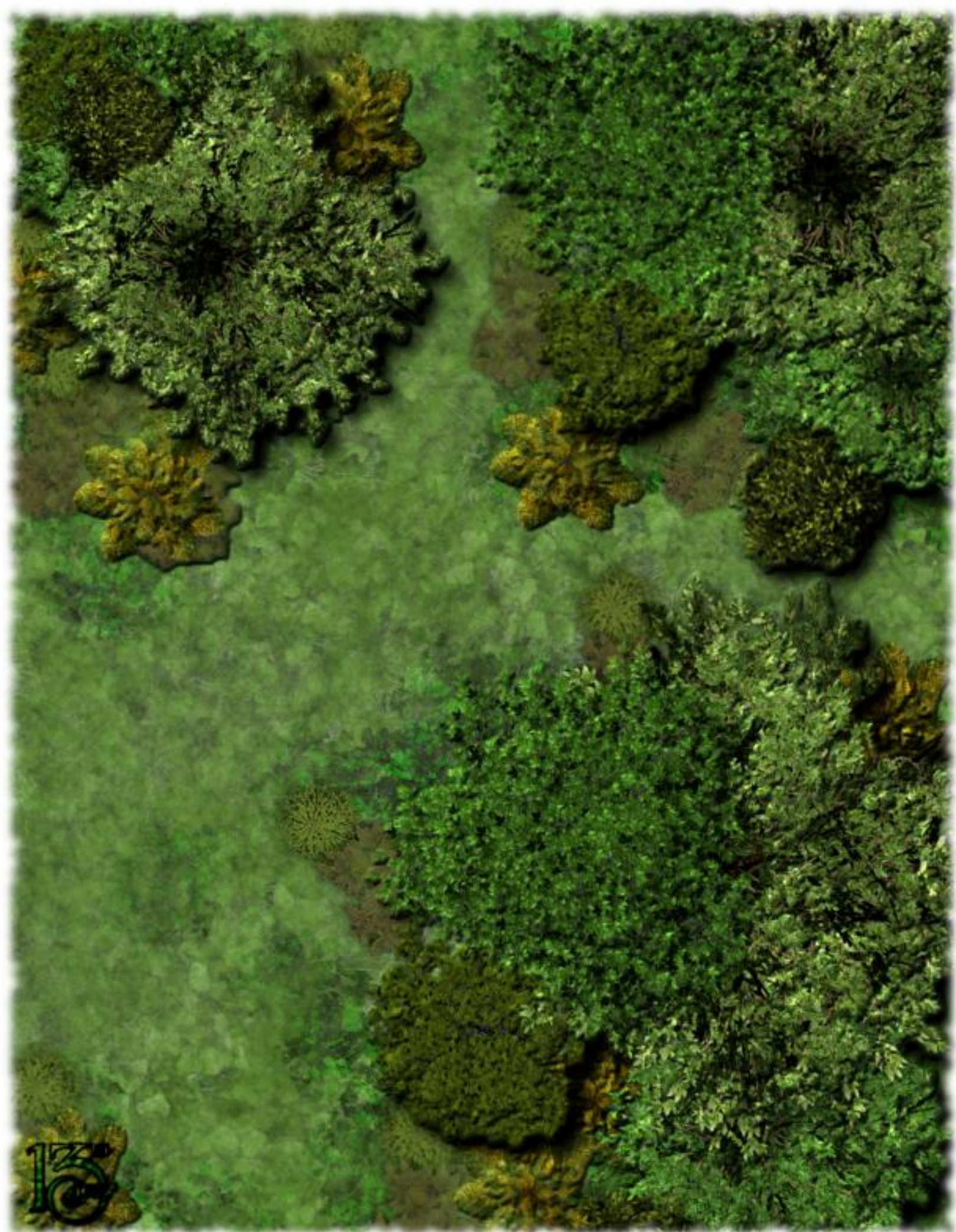
*Draconic grace:* At the start of each of the black dragon's turns, roll a d6 to see if it gets an extra standard action. If the roll is equal to or less than the escalation die, the black dragon can take an extra standard action that turn.

After the first success, the grace die bumps up to a d8. After the second success, it's a d10, then a d12 after the third success, and finally a d20 after the fourth one.

*Water-breathing:* Black dragons swim well and can breathe underwater.

*Resist acid 16+:* When an acid attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

**AC 22**  
**PD 20 HP 160**  
**MD 18**



## LOOT?

Once Sorrowscorn is dead the party will need to find shelter and a place to rest. The black dragon had a lair under a rock overhand at a bend of a river. The trail that the dragon left is obvious and the party can both rest at the dragon's lair and will discover an onyx statue worth 2000 gold pieces and a magic item.

For magic items pick one from the back of this adventure. If the party also destroyed the dungeon heart give out 2 or 3 items.

If the party fled from Sorrowscorn then the mask-possessed dragon will return to its lair, leaving the adventurers without the opportunity to loot the lair—though they will be able to find rest elsewhere.

### *ICON OPTION: DWARF KING*

If the Dwarf King is an important icon based on icon relationships then the black dragon had raided a dwarven mine in the past and there is an extra 1000 gold pieces worth of uncut diamonds in the lair.

*Read this aloud:*

**What evil do the star-masks intend for the Dragon Empire? Find out in part 5: The Staff of Stars.**



## PART 5: THE STAFF OF STARS

The adventurers face off against the bizarre creatures from the stars, who are attempting to build a device to call down more of their kind.

### PLAYER CHARACTERS

Part 5 of this adventure is designed for 3<sup>rd</sup> level characters. If you are using the GenCon 2015 pregens use the 3<sup>rd</sup> level versions of the characters.

It is **highly recommended** that at least a couple characters have positive relationships with the Archmage and that none have negative relationships with the Archmage.

New characters this session who were not part of last week's session are agents of the Archmage, teleported in (with a magic item of their own) when the Archmage provides magic items to the party.



## THE STAFF OF STARS (RECAP)

Explain to the players that the adventurers are in the Dragon Wood on the lower slopes of a massive mountain known as Starport. If any player in the current session took part in *Part 4: The Doomsday Weapon* ask them to recount the previous episode.

Explain how the adventurers saw a group of zombies carrying one of the components of the doomsday weapon toward the mountain of Starport, but the zombies had a head start and disappeared into the Dragon Wood forest.

## TRACKING MONTAGE

At this point you should run a montage as the adventurers climb the slopes of the colossal mountain known as Starport, tracking the zombies and their curious metal pole.

Explain to the players how a montage works. You will pick a player and ask them to describe a challenge that the party encountered on its journey but not how that challenge was resolved. You will then ask the player to their left how *their* character solved the problem or met the challenge. There is no dice rolling, just a quick narration from each player. As you go around the group everybody will get a chance to create a problem, and everybody will get a chance to have their character spotlighted as they solve a problem.

**The focus of this montage is cooperatively telling the story of a several day climb up the mountain.**

## THE CHASE

The adventurers spot a group of star-mask cultists, star-mask brutes, and zombies climbing the mountain with a metal pole, a staff of stars from the doomsday weapon. The party and their masked enemies are too distant from each other to fight, in fact they are on separate ridges.

However, the adventurers are close enough to their enemies to see that they are all carrying packs and are intent on getting to what looks like a squat fort high on a plateau above both groups.

This is a chase scene, and it comes in three parts.

### PART 1: CLIMBING

The party tries to reach the plateau before the star-mask cultists do. This is a DC 25 skill check, requiring three successes. Each time the party fails the roll the adventurers face one of the following threats:

**Avalanche +15 vs AC (vs each party member)—1d12 damage**

OR

**Fall +10 vs AC (vs the person who failed the roll)—3d6 damage**



Once the party passes three times, fails the roll three times, or makes a total of five rolls they reach the plateau. If the party succeeded move on to part 2. If the party failed move on to part 3.

### ICON OPTION: HIGH DRUID

If the High Druid is an important icon based on icon relationships then this area has several animal trails that go across round not so covered in scree and other underfoot hazards. In fact based on the piles of small stones by the side of some of the trails it looks like the local animals are unusually intelligent (and being such have fled already).

Anybody with an icon relationship with the High Druid, anybody who is a druid or has an animal companion, pet, or familiar, or anybody who is a tracker gains +2 to their skill checks in this area.

## PART 2: CHASING (IF THE PARTY

### SUCCEEDED AT PART 1)

The adventurers reach the plateau more or less just as the star-mask cultists do. The cultists race for the safety of the squat stone fort, but the adventurers have a chance to catch them first. Each party member must succeed on a dexterity-based DC 20 skill check to stop the cultists from reaching the stone fort before they do. If the whole party succeeds move on to the *Courtyard Fight* section, otherwise they fall behind the cultists.

## PART 3: RUNNING THE GAUNTLET (IF THE PARTY FAILED AT PART 1 OR 2)

The party has failed to stop the cultists reaching the fortress. The low stone fort is of dwarven construction, and has been long abandoned. The gateway is missing its gate, but the cultists have managed to get on top of the wall and are pelting the adventurers with stones and firing arrows down on them. Each adventurer must make two DC 25 skill checks as they move under the barrage of missiles. Failing a skill check means that the star-mask cultists make one of the following attacks against that party member:

**Lucky shot with an arrow +10 vs AC—3d4 damage**

OR

**Big rocks dropped down from the wall +5 vs AC—3d6 damage**

After each party member has made two rolls the party reaches the inner courtyard of the abandoned fort.

### ICON OPTION: ELF QUEEN

If the Elf Queen is an important icon based on icon relationships then the elves assaulted this dwarven fortress long ago. The adventurers spot an elven grave (really a pile of stones above a shallow depression with a body in it) that is centuries old. The elf was buried with their possessions, which include a magic item.

Since then the stones have shifted, revealing the glint of magic from within the grave.

Looting the elf's grave might not be something the party can do mid-sprint to the dwarf fortress, but it is something that they can come back for later.

## COURTYARD FIGHT

The adventurers meet their enemies in the courtyard of the abandoned fort. The metal pillar that the xombies and cultists were carrying has been planted in the center of the courtyard. It has been lashed to several other similar staffs and is humming with energy!

Before the party can investigate the star-mask creatures attack.

Adventurers	Brain-Absorber Xombie	Star-mask Brute	Star-mask
3	1	1	10
4	1	2	10
5	1	2	16

### ICON OPTION: PRIESTESS

If the Priestess is an important icon based on icon relationships then also here are several recently converted star-mask cultists here. They are still struggling with the masks for control (they don't join in the fight), and the adventurers can remove the masks and save them from permanent conversion.

Exactly who the cultists/victims are depends on which other icons are important: if it is the Elf Queen then it is a wood elf hunting party, if the Diabolist then some escapees from one of the Diabolist's dungeons, etc.

## STAR-MASK BRUTE

*This was once a large animal, but now it is a bipedal mass of muscle covered in multiple masks.*

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +9

**Fist smash +8 vs. AC—10 damage**

**Crush +8 vs. AC—5 damage** and 5 ongoing damage and once per battle the star-mask brute throws the target as a free action

[special trigger] **Throw +12 vs.**

**PD—Target is thrown far away, takes 10 damage, and is weakened (easy save ends)**

*Miss: Target pops free.*

**AC 19**

**PD 14 HP 45**

**MD 16**



## STAR-MASK

The white mask scuttles along the ground on barbed tentacles, looking for a host to 'wear' it.

2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Strangling tentacles +7 vs. PD—3** damage and 3 ongoing damage, ongoing damage ends if the target is no longer engaged with the star-mask

[Group ability] **Suffocating thoughts +7 vs. MD**—Until the end of the battle, if the target drops to 0 hp; the target rejoins the fight as a star-mask cultist. Converted player character star-mask cultists can be freed from their masks as a standard action by a character next to them.

*Group ability:* For every four star-masks in the battle (round up), one of them can use *suffocating thoughts* once during the battle.

*Leap:* On turns when the escalation die is odd the star-mask can leap into engagement with a nearby enemy as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one star-mask mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.



## BRAIN-ABSORBER XOMBIE

This xombie is mostly composed of black tentacles, with star-masks crawling about on its outside. Freshly harvested brains can be seen inside the dark mass.

Large 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Fist smash +7 vs. AC—14** damage

**C: Psychic crush +7 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)—9** psychic damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* 4 ongoing psychic damage.

[Group ability] **C: Mass confusion +7 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—9** damage OR if the target is the first one hit the target by this attack it makes a basic melee or ranged attack against one of its own allies.

[Group ability] **Brain-ripping tentacles +7 vs. PD—14** damage

*Natural even hit:* The target loses a recovery OR must succeed on a normal save or become confused (target's choice).

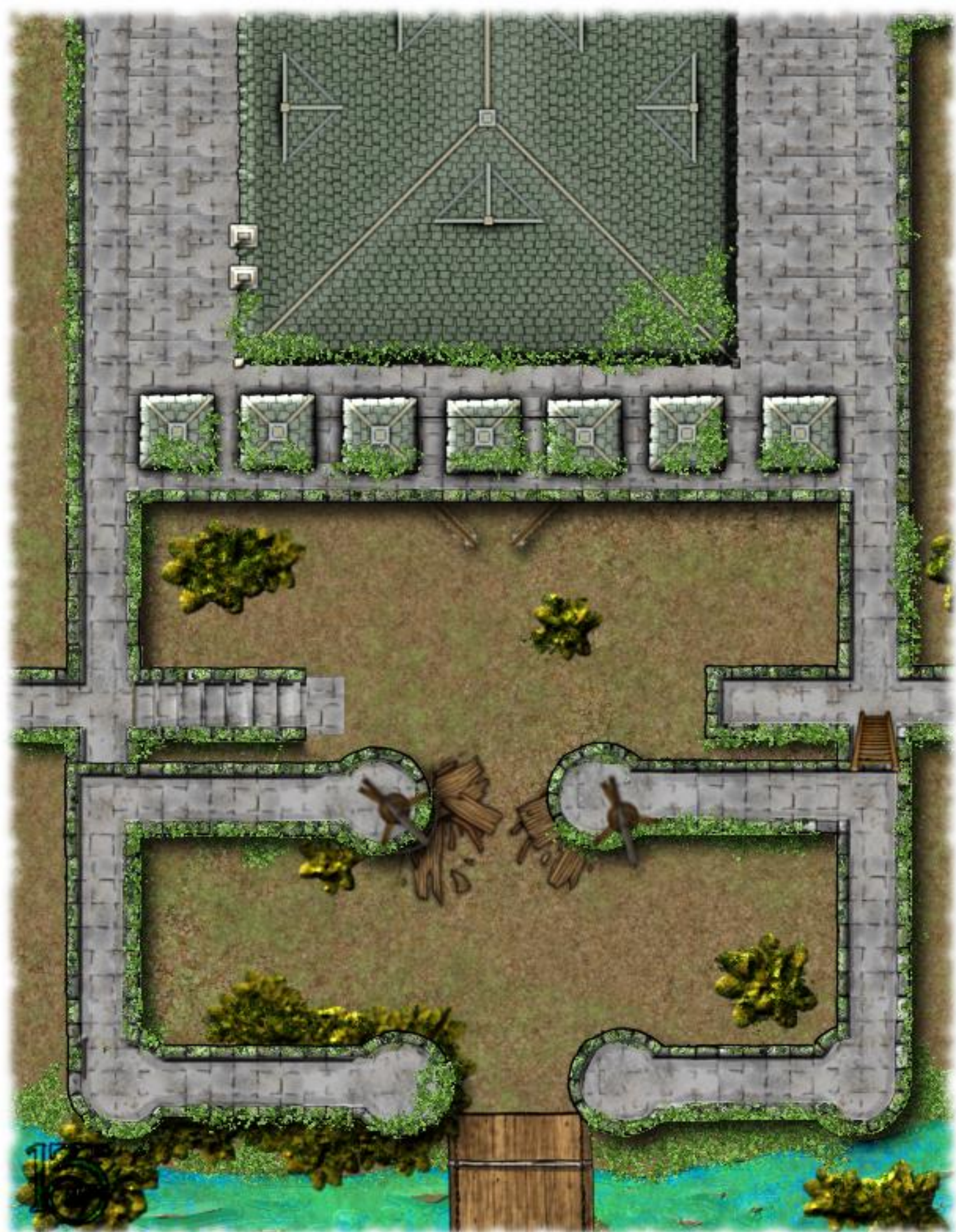
*Group ability:* For every two brain-absorber xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use either *mass confusion* OR *psychic crush* OR *brain-ripping tentacles* once during the battle.

[Once per battle] *Re-broadcaster:* If the brain-absorber xombie does nothing 1d4 xombie, star mask, etc allies can take an extra action on their next turns.

**AC 18**

**PD 14 HP 72**

**MD 18**



## THE STAFF OF STARS

The star-mask creatures are dead, but the strange pillar of linked metal staffs is starting to glow, with a void opening above it. Bizarre creatures can be seen moving about in the void, crowding close to the weakening of the dimensional membrane.

Destroying the device requires the party to pass three DC 15 skill checks (keep track of the number of failures accrued before the players roll 3 successes). Anybody not making a skill check can rest after the fight with the star-mask cultists. Explain to the players that it is obvious to the adventurers that something *will* come through the gateway that is appearing above them, but destroying the staff of stars will lower the number of enemies that are about to appear.

Resting characters can explore the courtyard and surrounding fort and make rolls to prepare for the fight, attempting one of the following:

- *Look for a defensible position* (DC 15): The adventurer gains +1 to all defenses until they are hit.
- *Familiarize yourself with the battleground* (DC 20): If the adventurer rolls a miss and the d20 result is the same as the escalation die value they either gain that amount of temporary hp or may reroll the attack (player's choice).
- *Set up traps* (DC 25): At the start of each round the adventurer rolls a d6, the first time the d6 result is less or equal to the escalation die value one enemy selected by the player at the time takes 3d6 damage.

### ICON OPTION: DWARF KING

If the Dwarf King is an important icon based on icon relationships then the dwarven fort still has some working siege weapons. At the start of the next fight a character can use a standard action to fire a siege weapon into the rift and deal 50 damage to one of the star things.



## THE PORTAL OPENS

With a wet sound like tearing skin the gateway briefly opens, spilling out the monsters and warping reality. Add one extra star-mask for each failed skill check the adventurers made while destroying the staff of stars device. If the adventurers failed to destroy the staff of stars at all then add an extra star-mask each round until the adventurers destroy the device (making the skill checks to destroy the device is a standard action during the battle).

Adventurers	Star Thing	Star-mask
3	2	10
4	3	10
5	4	10

### ICON OPTION: ARCHMAGE

If the Archmage is an important icon based on icon relationships then the adventurers have heard a song about how the Archmage long ago defeated creatures like these. Of course the ditty is low on details but the knowledge that it can be done gives the adventurers a morale boost—start the escalation die at 1.



## STAR THINGS

*They're clearly deviant, malevolent, octopus-like flying monsters from a dimension where space obeys different geometry. No one understands their language, but everyone can understand their squeals of glee when they kill and feed.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Ripping tentacles +8 vs. AC**—10 damage

*Natural even hit:* If the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, the attack deals +2d6 damage.

*[Group ability]* **R: Warp-pulse +8 vs. PD (1d3 enemies in a group)**—5 ongoing psychic damage

*Natural 16–18:* While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is dazed (–4 attacks).

*Natural 19–20:* While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is confused instead of dazed.

*Group ability:* For every two star things in the battle (round up), one of them can use *warp-pulse* once during the battle.

*Limited flight:* Star things flap and glide and hover, always within seven or eight feet of the ground. No one knows how that works.

**AC 16**

**PD 12 HP 54**

**MD 15**

## STAR-MASK

*The white mask scuttles along the ground on barbed tentacles, looking for a host to 'wear' it.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Strangling tentacles +7 vs. PD**—3 damage and 3 ongoing damage, ongoing damage ends if the target is no longer engaged with the star-mask

*[Group ability]* **Suffocating thoughts +7 vs. MD**—Until the end of the battle, if the target drops to 0 hp; the target rejoins the fight as a star-mask cultist. Converted player character star-mask cultists can be freed from their masks as a standard action by a character next to them.

*Group ability:* For every four star-masks in the battle (round up), one of them can use *suffocating thoughts* once during the battle.

*Leap:* On turns when the escalation die is odd the star-mask can leap into engagement with a nearby enemy as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one star-mask mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.



## THE TUNNEL

This fort was built by the dwarves to guard a mine entrance further up the mountain. Dark lightning suddenly crackles near the mine entrance. Now that the battle is over and the adventurers have a chance to look around they see that in the mouth of the tunnel stand more staffs!

A gateway is opening up to another realm, and monsters are coming through.

We'd call it a cliff-hanger ending, but it's more like the cliff is falling on top of you.

### *ICON OPTION: EMPEROR*

If the Emperor is an important icon based on icon relationships then he had sent some mercenaries here to stop the impending doom his empire is facing. Unfortunately the would-be-heroes died, being less lucky or skilled than the party. Fortunately for the party the mercenaries had a magic item with them, one that the party can now claim for themselves and make use of.

*Read this aloud:*

**...can the gateway be closed? What is the dark lightning? How will it all end? Find out in part 6: The Gate of Stars.**



## PART 6: THE GATE OF STARS

The adventurers are all that stand against the extinction of the world as they know it.

### PLAYER CHARACTERS

Part 6 of this adventure is designed for 4<sup>th</sup> level characters. If you are using the GenCon 2015 pregens use the 4<sup>th</sup> level versions of the characters.

It is **highly recommended** that at least a couple characters have positive relationships with the Archmage and that none have negative relationships with the Archmage.

New characters this session who were not part of last week's session are travelers who were caught on the mountain and have joined the party for safety.

### THE STORM

Have any players whose characters were involved in a previous session recap what has happened so far.

Explain to new players (and recap for existing players) who they are on the slopes of the gigantic mountain known as Starport. Strange masked figures and monsters not of the world are flooding the land. A supernatural storm is wheeling around the mountain, dark lightning splitting apart the rocks and arcing up into the sky towards a comet.

*Read this aloud:*

**The dark lightning on the mountain crackles all around you, as the strange sphere known by some as the Archmage's Comet (but which the adventurers know is a living dungeon planet) hovers in the sky above the mountain.**

**Rips appear in the sky, and strange monsters flood out of the holes in reality.**

**The Archmage's image appears before you, and attempts to speak but the image is blasted away by a magical wind from the sky above.**

## SURVIVING THE STORM

At this point you should run a montage as the adventurers weather the trans-dimensional storm.

Explain to the players how a montage works. You will pick a player and ask them to describe a challenge that the party encountered trying to survive the storm but not how that challenge was resolved. You will then ask the player to their left how *their* character solved the problem or met the challenge. There is no dice rolling, just a quick narration from each player. As you go around the group everybody will get a chance to create a storm-related problem, and everybody will get a chance to have their character spotlighted as they solve a problem.

**The focus of this montage is cooperatively telling the story surviving on the mountain known as Starport as a trans-dimensional storm ravages the landscape around them.**

### THE MINES

The adventurers need to find a safe place to weather the storm—it is getting worse. The adventurers know of a mine entrance near where they have taken shelter, and that seems like a good a place as any to avoid the dark lightning and rock-smashing winds.

As the party makes its way toward the mine entrance the ground about them begins to shift and melt, turning into twisted flesh. The energies of the storm are warping reality itself.

The party must make its way past the now animated flesh-rocks of the mountainside. Each party member must succeed at a DC 20 skill check or be targeted by one of the following attacks:

**Rock mouth +15 vs AC—3d6 damage**

OR

**Bleeding flesh tentacles +10 vs AC—4d6 acid damage**

Arriving at the mine entrance the adventurers find several large piles of skulls and severed heads surrounding the now burnt-out staffs of stars. The possessed cultists that caused the current apocalyptic breakdown of reality bought these fresh brains here to enhance their strange staffs that called down the power of the Archmage's Comet.

#### *ICON OPTION: DIABOLIST*

If the Diabolist is an important icon based on icon relationships then the dwarves abandoned this area because of a demons that came to live here. Any character with a relationship with the Diabolist can feel the lingering presence of the demons and gets to reroll their icon dice with the Diabolist if they wish.



### ICON OPTION: DWARF KING

If the Dwarf King is an important icon based on icon relationships then the mines were abandoned by the dwarves because of a demonic infestation, not because they were played out. Anybody who rolls a 20 on a skill check this session finds a huge nugget of silver worth 5d20 gold pieces.

### ICON OPTION: ORC LORD

If the Orc Lord is an important icon based on icon relationships then it was a demon who drove the dwarves from their mines, but that demon was then killed by an orc hero. Any character with a relationship with the Orc Lord remembers the legend and gets to reroll their icon dice with the Diabolist if they wish.

#### *Read this aloud:*

**It is obvious to you that if you do not act the Dragon Empire may be soon destroyed, drowned under a flood of extra-terrestrial abominations. There is nobody else on the mountain with you that can help—you are it!**

## ATTACK OF THE SKULL CRABS

As the adventurers shelter and consider how best to save the day they hear something from outside. The remains outside have been animated, being used by the uncanny creatures known as *star-masks*.

Adventurers	Brain-Absorber Xombie	Skull Crab	Xombie Egg Swarm	Star-mask
3	2	2	5	0
4	2	3	5	5
5	2	5	5	5

Soon after the battle is over the mountainside drops away below the party, the stone-turned-to-flesh sloughing off the flanks of Starport. The mountainside is collapsing—the only safe place to go is further into the mountain via the mine entrance.

## XOMBIE EGG SWARM

*These tentacled white spheres roll and hop around looking for a corpse to inhabit.*

2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +5

**Swarm +7 vs. AC—5 damage**

[Group ability] **C: Puppeteer tentacles +7 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)**—the target makes a basic ranged or melee attack against a target of the xombie egg swarm's choice

*Miss:* The target is immune to puppeteer abilities for the rest of this fight and the fight after.

[Once per battle] *Swarm rush:* As a move action the swarm pops free and moves twice, but must finish its move engaged with an enemy.

*Group ability:* For every four xombie swarms in the battle (round up), one of them can use *puppeteer tentacles* once during the battle.

### **Nastier specials**

*Corpse puppet:* If there are intact corpses in the battle (say a star-mask cultist died) then part of the xombie egg swarm burrows into it and it rises as a xombie.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one xombie egg swarm mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

## STAR-MASK

*The white mask scuttles along the ground on barbed tentacles, looking for a host to 'wear' it.*

2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Strangling tentacles +7 vs. PD—3 damage** and 3 ongoing damage, ongoing damage ends if the target is no longer engaged with the star-mask

[Group ability] **Suffocating thoughts +7 vs. MD—**Until the end of the battle, if the target drops to 0 hp; the target rejoins the fight as a star-mask cultist. Converted player character star-mask cultists can be freed from their masks as a standard action by a character next to them.

*Group ability:* For every four star-masks in the battle (round up), one of them can use *suffocating thoughts* once during the battle.

*Leap:* On turns when the escalation die is odd the star-mask can leap into engagement with a nearby enemy as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one star-mask mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

## BRAIN-ABSORBER XOMBIE

*This xombie is mostly composed of black tentacles, with star-masks crawling about on its outside. Freshly harvested brains can be seen inside the dark mass.*

Large 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Fist smash +7 vs. AC—14 damage**

**C: Psychic crush +7 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)**—9 psychic damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* 4 ongoing psychic damage.

[Group ability] **C: Mass confusion +7 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—9 damage OR if the target is the first one hit the target by this attack it makes a basic melee or ranged attack against one of its own allies.

[Group ability] **Brain-ripping tentacles +7 vs. PD—14 damage**

*Natural even hit:* The target loses a recovery OR must succeed on a normal save or become confused (target's choice).

*Group ability:* For every two brain-absorber xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use either *mass confusion* OR *psychic crush* OR *brain-ripping tentacles* once during the battle.

[Once per battle] *Re-broadcaster:* If the brain-absorber xombie does nothing 1d4 xombie, star mask, etc allies can take an extra action on their next turns.

**AC 18**

**PD 14 HP 72**

**MD 18**

## SKULL CRAB

*Lacking a full corpse, these xombie eggs make do with what they have found. Of course they'd be more than happy to trade up once you're dead!*

2<sup>nd</sup> level spoiler [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +5

**Bite & butt +7 vs. AC—7 damage**

[One successful hit per battle] **Burrow +7 vs. AC—5 damage**

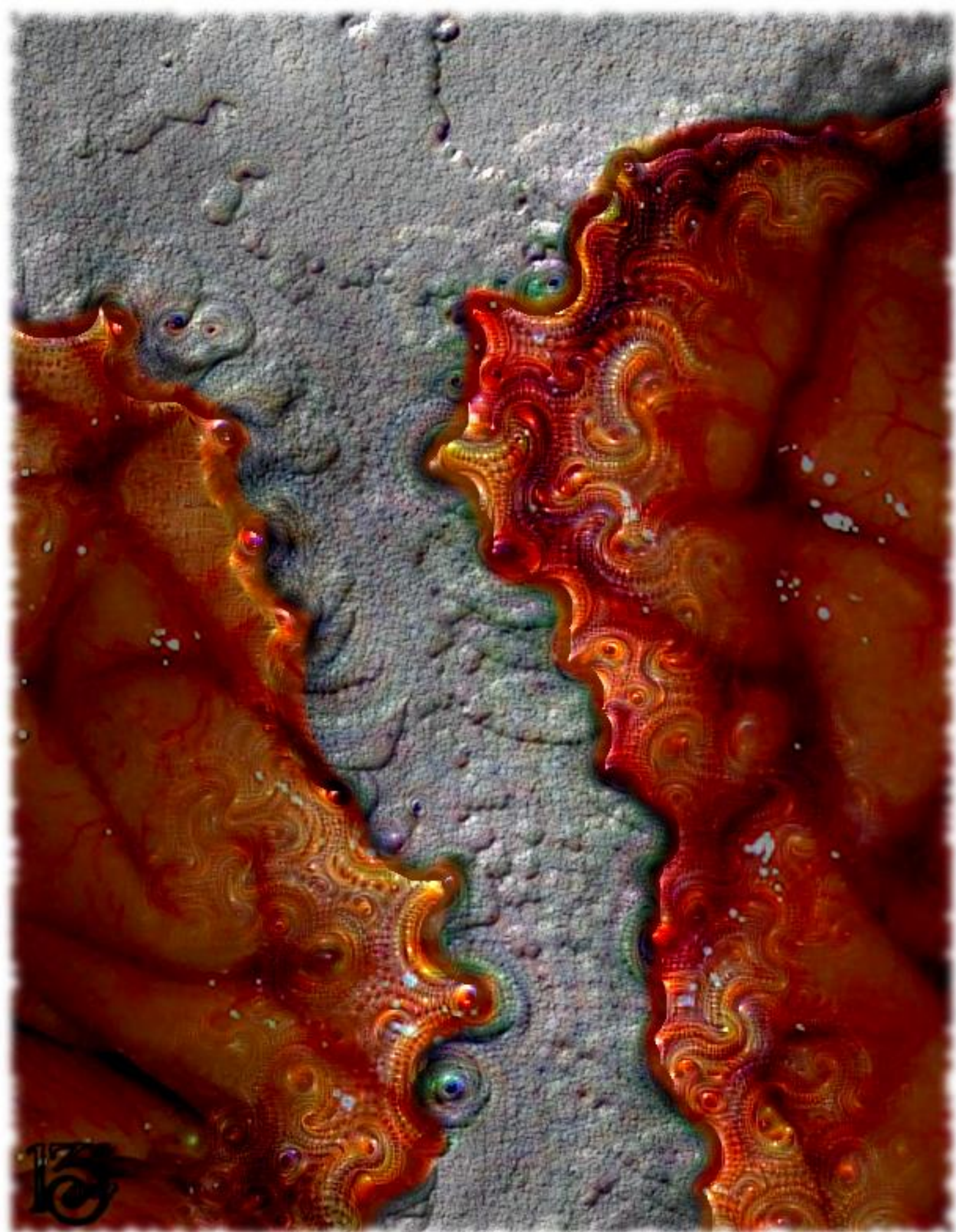
*Natural even hit:* The skull crab has burrowed its tentacles into the target's limb. Target takes a cumulative -1 penalty to all d20 rolls (max -4), save ends.

[Once per battle] *Quick leap:* As a move action the skull crab moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 36**

**MD 16**



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## A DUNGEON IS BORN

As the adventurers flee the transformation of the mountain they discover that the tunnel they are moving down starts to shift and change. The rough walls of the mine start to straighten, the stone shifting and ‘plinking’ into new forms. Soon the adventurers find themselves in a stone dungeon, with doorways, rooms, cross-passages, and stairs.

The adventurers are witnessing the mountain of Starport being converted into the world’s biggest living dungeon; let the players know that it is obvious to their characters that if this is allowed to continue the dungeon will become the greatest threat to the world in the current age!

The adventurers have more immediate problems, however: as the dungeon shifts and grows it is creating traps. Even the adventurers being inside the dungeon as it morphs and becomes alive is dangerous.

Each adventurer must pass a DC 20 skill check or be targeted by one of the following attacks:

**Sudden pit +15 vs AC**—4d6 damage

OR

**Floor becomes wall +15 vs AC (whole party)**—2d4 damage

OR

**Psychic intrusion +15 vs MD**—4d6 psychic damage OR make a basic attack against an ally

OR

**Dark lightning +15 vs PD**—4d6 negative energy damage

*ICON OPTION: HIGH DRUID*

If the High Druid is an important icon based on icon relationships then the characters can hear the stones screaming as they are twisted by the birth of the living dungeon under Starport. This keening gives the adventurers a +2 bonus to their skill checks to avoid the dangers of the dungeon’s birth.

*ICON OPTION: PRIESTESS*

If the Priestess is an important icon based on icon relationships then Starport has a resident god or ‘*spiritus mundi*’ which is actively resisting the changes wrought by the evil magics of the Archmage’s Comet/Dungeon Planet. The attack rolls made by the living dungeons dangers are at +13 to attack instead of +15.

*ICON OPTION: THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS*

If the Prince of Shadows is an important icon based on icon relationships then the dungeon forms a lot of traps as it comes to life. Fortunately for the adventurers these traps are slow to form and not yet fully effective. Replace one danger of the living dungeon with the following attack:

**Half-formed trap +10 vs AC (whole party)**—1d4 damage

## THE HEART OF STARPORT

The adventurers are stumbling around inside the ever-growing twisting dungeon that Star Port is becoming. The floor opens below them, dropping them into a shaft that leads downwards.

Thankfully the adventurers fall is broken by something soft. As their eyes adjust to the darkness they discover that they have landed on a vast brain! This is the dungeons’ heart (or brain as it turns out), and it is not happy that the adventurers are here!

Adventurers (Tough fight!)	Brain-Absorber Xombie	Starport Brain	Xombie Egg Swarm
3	1	1	5
4	2	1	5
5	2	1	15

**Warning: This fight is tough! The Starport Brain has lair effects that make the fight tougher than it would otherwise be.** Additionally the adventurers can’t flee, the brain blocks their exit from the area. This fight is the grand do-or-die conclusion to the last 12 hours of adventuring.

*ICON OPTION: ARCHMAGE (AND/OR EMPEROR)*

If the Archmage (and/or Emperor) is an important icon based on icon relationships then the brain has some twisted form of racial memory, and remembers a past Archmage (and/or Emperor). It forms tentacles with a past Archmage’s (and/or Emperor’s) face on the end. The tentacles aren’t functional in any way, but are uncanny to behold. The faces scream and babble about the revenge the living dungeons will take upon the dragon empire.

## XOMBIE EGG SWARM

*These tentacled white spheres roll and hop around looking for a corpse to inhabit.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +5

**Swarm +7 vs. AC—5 damage**

*[Group ability]* **C: Puppeteer tentacles +7 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)**—the target makes a basic ranged or melee attack against a target of the xombie egg swarm's choice

*Miss:* The target is immune to puppeteer abilities for the rest of this fight and the fight after.

*[Once per battle]* **Swarm rush:** As a move action the swarm pops free and moves twice, but must finish its move engaged with an enemy.

*Group ability:* For every four xombie swarms in the battle (round up), one of them can use *puppeteer tentacles* once during the battle.

### **Nastier specials**

*Corpse puppet:* If there are intact corpses in the battle (say a star-mask cultist died) then part of the xombie egg swarm burrows into it and it rises as a xombie.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one xombie egg swarm mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

## BRAIN-ABSORBER XOMBIE

*This xombie is mostly composed of black tentacles, with star-masks crawling about on its outside. Freshly harvested brains can be seen inside the dark mass.*

*Large 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Fist smash +7 vs. AC—14 damage**

**C: Psychic crush +7 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)**—9 psychic damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* 4 ongoing psychic damage.

*[Group ability]* **C: Mass confusion +7 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—9 damage OR if the target is the first one hit the target by this attack it makes a basic melee or ranged attack against one of its own allies.

*[Group ability]* **Brain-ripping tentacles +7 vs. PD—14 damage**

*Natural even hit:* The target loses a recovery OR must succeed on a normal save or become confused (target's choice).

*Group ability:* For every two brain-absorber xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use either *mass confusion* OR *psychic crush* OR *brain-ripping tentacles* once during the battle.

*[Once per battle]* **Re-broadcaster:** If the brain-absorber xombie does nothing 1d4 xombie, star mask, etc allies can take an extra action on their next turns.

**AC 18**

**PD 14 HP 72**

**MD 18**

## THE STARPORT BRAIN

*This giant pulsing brain pushes out waves of psychic influence and magical radiation.*

*Huge 4<sup>th</sup> level caster* [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

[quick action, 2/round against different enemies] **C: Psionic supremacy +12 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy) – 15 ongoing psychic damage**

*Aftereffect:* When the target successfully saves against the ongoing damage they must either: make a basic melee attack against themselves or an ally with their next standard action OR become weakened (-4 to attacks and defenses) until the end of their next turn. Target's choice as to which aftereffect they take.

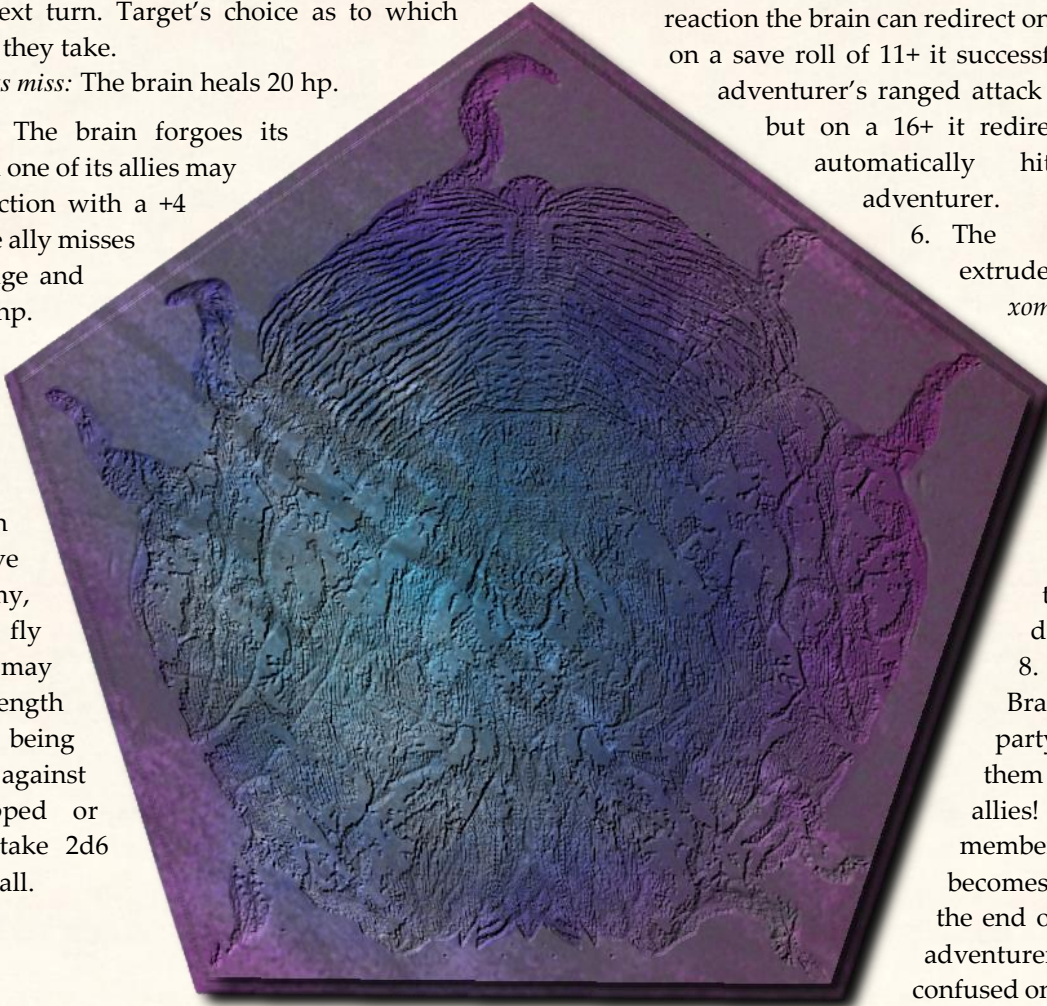
*Both attacks miss:* The brain heals 20 hp.

*Psychic command:* The brain forgoes its attack, and instead one of its allies may attack as a free action with a +4 attack bonus. If the ally misses it takes 1d8 damage and the brain heals 20 hp.

*Immobile:* The brain can't really move about.

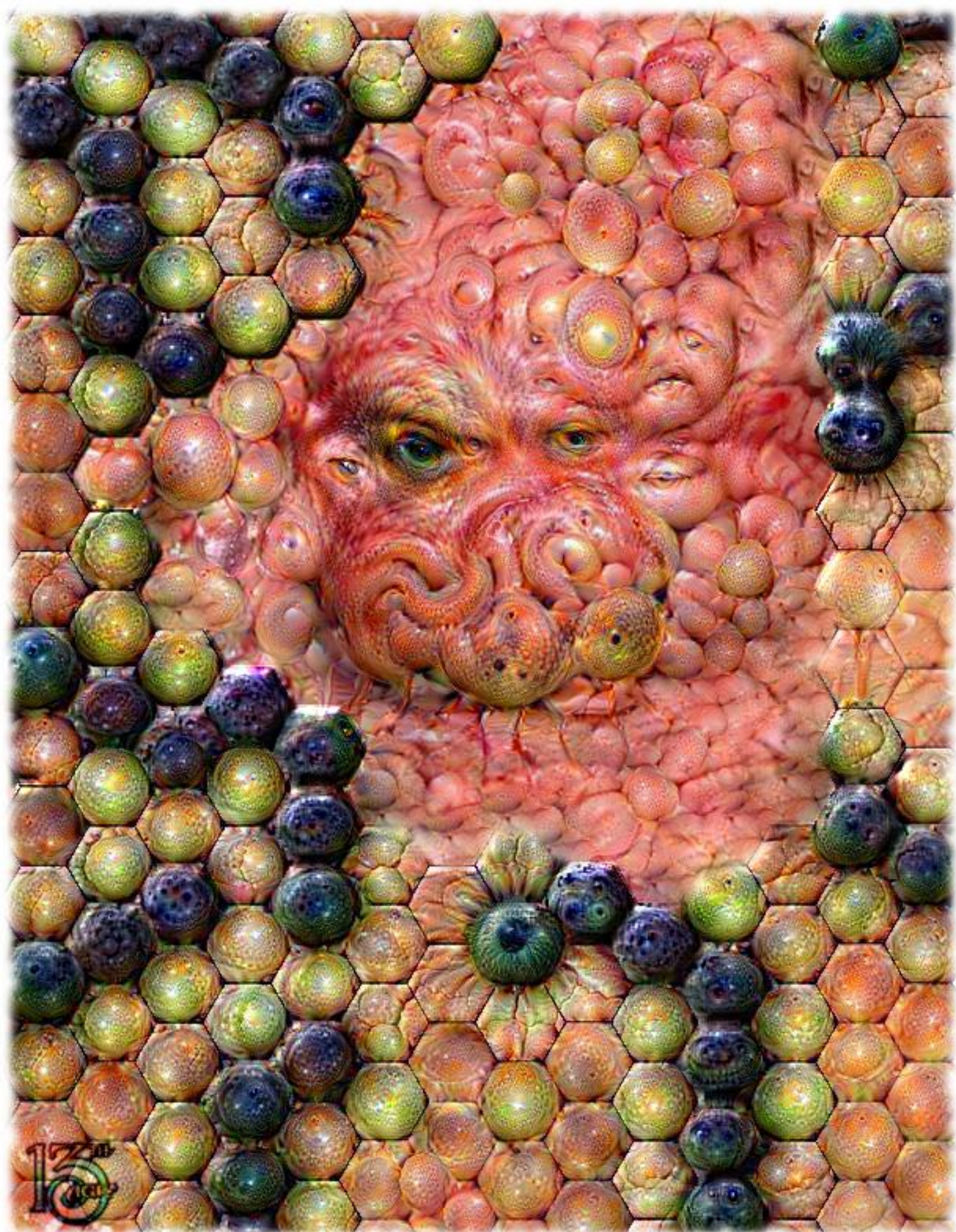
*Telekinetic grasp:* As a move action the brain can move an ally or enemy, causing them to fly about. Enemies may save with a Strength bonus to avoid being moved about against their will. Dropped or thrown enemies take 2d6 damage from the fall.

**AC 20**  
**PD 12 HP 200**  
**MD 18**



The Starport Brain has some unusual lair effects. At the start of each round roll d10 to see what happens:

1. If there are any *xombie egg swarms* still in the fight the Starport Brain ingests one and heals 20 hp.
2. Magical flux: adventurers roll twice for magic attacks and take the lower roll.
3. Magical flux: any PC casting a spell this round takes 2d6 force damage.
4. The Starport Brain blasts the minds of the adventurers with illusions—the escalation die value goes down by 1 (to a minimum of 0).
5. The Starport Brain can mess with the adventurers' perceptions. Once during this round as a free reaction the brain can redirect one ranged attack—on a save roll of 11+ it successfully redirects the adventurer's ranged attack so that it misses, but on a 16+ it redirects the attack to automatically hit a different adventurer.
6. The Starport Brain extrudes an extra 1d4 *xombie egg swarms* into the fight.
7. The Starport Brain is thinking hard about the party. Each party member takes 2d4 psychic damage.
8. The Starport Brain possesses a party member, forcing them to attack their allies! One party member (GM chooses) becomes confused until the end of their turn. Each adventurer can only be confused once per battle from this effect.
9. The Starport Brain shudders. Everybody pops free of engagement.
10. The Starport Brain steals the escalation die. This round the enemies get the benefit of the die, and the adventurers don't.



## THE APOCALYPTIC AFTERMATH

With a shudder the Starport Brain dies. The living dungeon stops moving, becoming mere stone once more. The dungeon begins to collapse, but the adventurers are in a location that is relatively safe.

As one of the walls sloughs off the adventurers can see the sky, and they view the Dungeon Planet hovering angrily in the sky, dark lightning crackling around it. As the adventurers stare they see an image of the Archmage made of blue fire. The image grows until it is large enough to encompass the rogue flying mega-dungeon, and with a heave throws it back into space.

The image of the Archmage shrinks as it walks towards the party, until it is a glowing blue humanoid figure, a slightly translucent figure.

*GMs: This section can be changed to be a message from the Priestess, the Blue of the Three, the Elf Queen, or any other magically inclined icon that the party has a positive relationship with.*

**Read this aloud:**

**The image of the Archmage speaks.**

*"Heroes! Thanks to you the world has been saved. I was not able to intervene while the living dungeon was actively growing in Starport."*

**With a gesture the Archmage causes a very large pile of gold to appear.**

*"Here is your reward, though the Dragon Empire is still in your debt and no amount of gold could ever repay what you have done. It is in my power to transport you to any of the Seven Cities, or if you prefer you can stay here and investigate the deeper secrets of Starport that the death of the living dungeon has doubtless laid bare.*

*The Dungeon Planet will be back, so I may have to call upon you again in the future."*

The adventurers each receive 2000 gp, the gratitude of the most powerful wizard in existence, and can choose to be teleported back to civilization to spend their treasure or can decide to delve into the ruins of the (now-dead) living dungeon.

*However, that is a story for another day...*





## RACE TO STARPORT BESTIARY

The monsters in this bestiary are split into 4 groups...

**Humans** can be used for villagers, and the adventurers will end up fighting humans when they encounter the bandits in session 1.

**Animals** deals with the marsh drakes, should the adventurers end up fighting the cantankerous beasts that they are supposed to be herding.

**Nekrien & Zombies** deals with a dark-elf NPC from session 1 and her two zombie minions.

**Star-masks and Xombies** make up the bulk of the enemies that the adventurers will end up fighting during the adventure. They are aberrations, creatures from beyond the stars. Star-masks attempt to mind-control living creatures, and xombies are corpses that are puppeted by star-mask eggs.

**Greater Threats** contains the ultra-dimensional star things, a dragon, a dragon possessed by a star-mask (!), and a gigantic psychic living dungeon heart called the Starport Brain that forms the 'end boss' of the adventure.

## ANIMALS

### MARSH DRAKE

*1st level wrecker* [beast]

Initiative: +6

**Gore +6 vs. PD**—1 damage, and the trample gains a +2 attack bonus against the same target this turn with its *trample* attack

*Limited use:* 2/round, each requiring a quick action. (Hitting the same target twice with *gore* gives the *trample* attack a +4 bonus.)

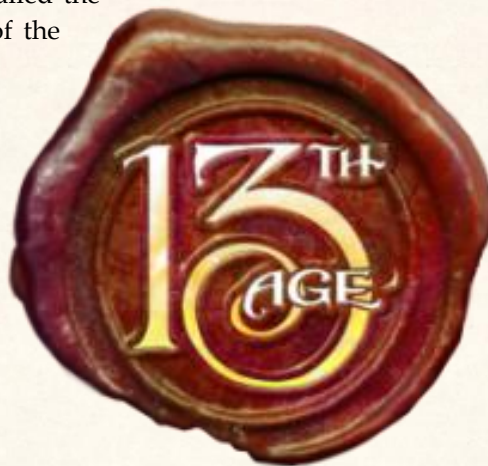
**Trample +6 vs. AC**—1 damage, and 1 ongoing damage

**AC 16**

**PD 15 HP 7 (mook)**

**MD 10**

Mook: Kill one *marsh drake* mook for every 7 damage dealt to the mob.



## HUMANS

### HUMAN THUG

1<sup>st</sup> level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

**Heavy mace +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

*Natural even hit or miss:* The thug deals +6 damage with its *next* attack this battle. (GM, be sure to let the PCs know this is coming, it's not a secret.)

**AC 17**

**PD 14 HP 27**

**MD 12**

### BANDIT ARCHER

1<sup>st</sup> level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

**Short sword +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

**R: Crossbow +6 vs. AC—5 damage**

*Limited use:* These bandits take 1 full turn to reload.

**AC 17**

**PD 15 HP 7 (mook)**

**MD 11**

*Mook:* Kill one bandit archer mook for every 7 damage you do to the mob.

### BANDIT CHIEF

Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

**Stolen sword +7 vs. AC—14 damage**

*Natural even hit:* One human thug or bandit archer can move as a free action.

*Call to arms:* When the bandit chief rolls a natural 16+ attack or save one bandit archer reloads their crossbow as a free action.

**AC 18**

**PD 15 HP 72**

**MD 13**

## NEKRIEN & ZOMBIES

### NEKRIEN SILVERLEAF

*This dark elf likes having people obey her. Zombies are people, right?*

Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

**C: Shadow bolt +7 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)—15 negative energy damage**

*Natural even hit:* The target is stuck (save ends).

[Quick action] **C: Tenebrous tentacles (automatic hit vs. one nearby or far away enemy)—**Nekrien and her allies have a cumulative +1 bonus to hit the target until the start of her next turn (up to a maximum of +3 if Nekrien uses all her actions this turn).

#### Nastier special

*Necrotic vitality:* When Nekrien takes damage she can transfer that damage to the zombies that she controls, splitting it between the two zombies as she sees fit.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 72**

**MD 16**

### SHUFFLE

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +3

Vulnerable: holy

**Death grip +8 vs. AC—8 damage**

*Natural even hit:* The target and Shuffle are stuck (target saving ends). Every time the target fails to save they take 4 damage.

[Quick action against targets stuck in a death grip]

**Squeeeze +12 vs. PD—4 damage**

**AC 19**

**PD 13 HP 45**

**MD 17**

### SHRUG

3<sup>rd</sup> level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +3

Vulnerable: holy

**Low moan +8 vs. MD—5 ongoing psychic damage**

*Natural even miss:* Shrug can use *baleful gaze* as a quick action this turn.

**R: Baleful gaze +10 vs. MD (1d3 enemies in a group)—4 psychic damage and the target must attempt to move away from Shrug on its next turn.**

**AC 19**

**PD 13 HP 45**

**MD 17**

## STAR-MASKS & ZOMBIES

These monsters have a sort of collective 'intelligence field'—not quite a hive mind, more a shared set of instinctual goals combined with an intelligence boost. The more of them there are in a battle the smarter and more dangerous these monsters get.

### STAR-MASK CULTIST

*This hapless humanoid has become host to a mask, and is in thrall to the group mind.*

1<sup>st</sup> level archer [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +6

**Club +5 vs. AC—4 damage**

**R: Bow +5 vs. AC—5 damage**

[Group ability] *Coordinated attack*: Until the start of its next turn the star-mask cultist gets a +2 to bonus to attack enemies that are engaged with allied star masks, star mask cultists, zombies, etc.

*Group ability*: For every two star-mask cultists in the battle (round up), one of them can use *coordinated attack* once during the battle.

**AC 17**

**PD 13 HP 27**

**MD 15**

### STAR-MASK

*The white mask scuttles along the ground on barbed tentacles, looking for a host to 'wear' it.*

2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Strangling tentacles +7 vs. PD—3 damage and 3 ongoing damage, ongoing damage ends if the target is no longer engaged with the star-mask**

[Group ability] **Suffocating thoughts +7 vs. MD—**Until the end of the battle, if the target drops to 0 hp; the target rejoins the fight as a star-mask cultist. Converted player character star-mask cultists can be freed from their masks as a standard action by a character next to them.

*Group ability*: For every four star-masks in the battle (round up), one of them can use *suffocating thoughts* once during the battle.

*Leap*: On turns when the escalation die is odd the star-mask can leap into engagement with a nearby enemy as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook*: Kill one star-mask mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

### STAR-MASK CULT LEADER

*This cultist is more in tune with the group mind than others, and issues orders to its underlings.*

Double-strength 2<sup>nd</sup> level leader [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +7

**Iron-shod staff +7 vs. AC—14 damage**

[Group ability] **R: Psychic domination +7 vs. MD—7 damage and 7 ongoing damage**

*Natural even hit or miss*: One dead (or unconscious or otherwise out of the fight) star-mask cultist, dead star-mask cult leader, or dead star-mask brute becomes a living star-mask.

*Group ability*: For every two star mask-cult leaders in the battle (round up), one of them can use *psychic dominion* once during the battle as a quick action.

**AC 18**

**PD 13 HP 72**

**MD 15**

### STAR-MASK BRUTE

*This was once a large animal, but now it is a bipedal mass of muscle covered in multiple masks.*

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +9

**Fist smash +8 vs. AC—10 damage**

**Crush +8 vs. AC—5 damage and 5 ongoing damage and once per battle the star-mask brute throws the target as a free action**

[special trigger] **Throw +12 vs. PD—**Target is thrown far away, takes 10 damage, and is weakened (easy save ends)

*Miss*: Target pops free.

**AC 19**

**PD 14 HP 45**

**MD 16**



We've used 'Xombie' instead of 'Zombie' because these walking possessed corpses are definitely not undead—they are puppet-like corpses controlled from within by living creatures. Xombies serve a group intelligence in search of more hosts and in some cases "Brains...Braaaains..."

Unlike Zombies the Xombies get smarter the more of them there are in a location.

## FAST XOMBIE

*One of the xombie eggs inside this xombie has matured into a star-mask and is directing the others like a troupe of killer corpse-puppets..*

*0 level spoiler [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Xombie rush +5 vs. AC**—4 damage and the xombie pops free and moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

*Natural even miss:* the xombie pops free and moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

*Natural odd miss:* the xombie pops free.

*Strange leap:* When the escalation die is 0 or 1, as a move action the xombie moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

**AC 16**

**PD 10 HP 20**

**MD 14**

## METEORITE XOMBIE

*This barely coordinated xombie is falling apart, its limbs barely held on by the black tendrils of the xombie eggs within.*

*1<sup>st</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +8

**Decaying fists +6 vs. AC**—3 damage

*Natural 16+ hit:* The attack does double damage, but the xombie takes 1d6 damage.

*[Group ability] C: Vomit tentacles +6 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)*—4 damage

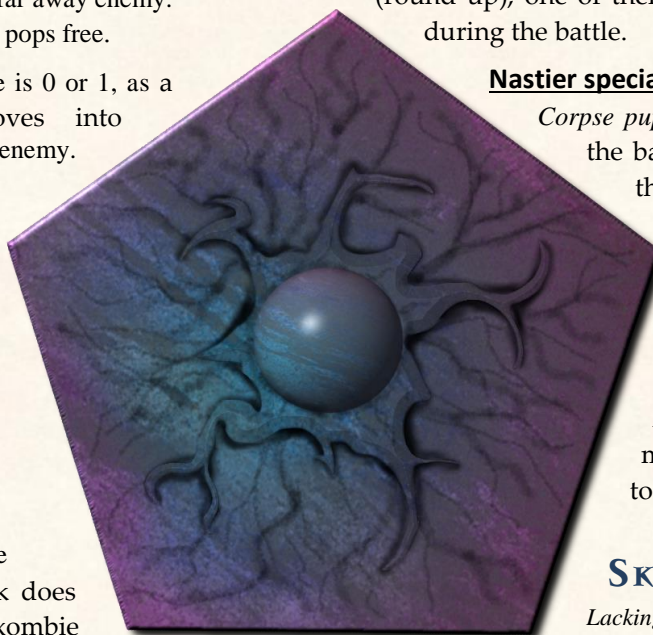
*Group ability:* For every four meteorite xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use *vomit tentacles* once during the battle.

**AC 17**

**PD 11 HP 7 (mook)**

**MD 15**

*Mook:* Kill one meteorite xombie mook for every 7 damage you do to the mob.



## XOMBIE EGG SWARM

*These tentacled white spheres roll and hop around looking for a corpse to inhabit.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> level mook [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +5

**Swarm +7 vs. AC**—5 damage

*[Group ability] C: Puppeteer tentacles +7 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)*—the target makes a basic ranged or melee attack against a target of the xombie egg swarm's choice

*Miss:* The target is immune to puppeteer abilities for the rest of this fight and the fight after.

*[Once per battle] Swarm rush:* As a move action the swarm pops free and moves twice, but must finish its move engaged with an enemy.

*Group ability:* For every four xombie swarms in the battle (round up), one of them can use *puppeteer tentacles* once during the battle.

### Nastier specials

*Corpse puppet:* If there are intact corpses in the battle (say a star-mask cultist died) then part of the xombie egg swarm burrows into it and it rises as a xombie.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 9 (mook)**

**MD 16**

*Mook:* Kill one xombie egg swarm mook for every 9 damage you do to the mob.

## SKULL CRAB

*Lacking a full corpse, these xombie eggs make do with what they have found. Of course they'd be more than happy to trade up once you're dead!*

*2<sup>nd</sup> level spoiler [ABERRATION]*

Initiative: +5

**Bite & butt +7 vs. AC**—7 damage

*[One successful hit per battle] Burrow +7 vs. AC*—5 damage

*Natural even hit:* The skull crab has burrowed its tentacles into the target's limb. Target takes a cumulative -1 penalty to all d20 rolls (max -4), save ends.

*[Once per battle] Quick leap:* As a move action the skull crab moves into engagement with a nearby or far away enemy.

**AC 18**

**PD 12 HP 36**

**MD 16**

## BRAIN-ABSORBER XOMBIE

This xombie is mostly composed of black tentacles, with star-masks crawling about on its outside. Freshly harvested brains can be seen inside the dark mass.

Large 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Fist smash +7 vs. AC**—14 damage

**C: Psychic crush +7 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)**—9 psychic damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* 4 ongoing psychic damage.

[Group ability] **C: Mass confusion +7 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—9 damage OR if the target is the first one hit the target by this attack it makes a basic melee or ranged attack against one of its own allies.

[Group ability] **Brain-ripping tentacles +7 vs. PD**—14 damage

*Natural even hit:* The target loses a recovery OR must succeed on a normal save or become confused (target's choice).

*Group ability:* For every two brain-absorber xombies in the battle (round up), one of them can use either *mass confusion* OR *psychic crush* OR *brain-ripping tentacles* once during the battle.

[Once per battle] *Re-broadcaster:* If the brain-absorber xombie does nothing 1d4 xombie, star mask, etc allies can take an extra action on their next turns.

**AC 18**

**PD 14 HP 72**

**MD 18**

## GREATER THREATS

### STAR THINGS

They're clearly deviant, malevolent, octopus-like flying monsters from a dimension where space obeys different geometry. No one understands their language, but everyone can understand their squeals of glee when they kill and feed.

3<sup>rd</sup> level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

**Ripping tentacles +8 vs. AC**—10 damage

*Natural even hit:* If the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, the attack deals +2d6 damage.

[Group ability] **R: Warp-pulse +8 vs. PD (1d3 enemies in a group)**—5 ongoing psychic damage

*Natural 16–18:* While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is dazed (–4 attacks).

*Natural 19–20:* While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is confused instead of dazed.

*Group ability:* For every two star things in the battle (round up), one of them can use *warp-pulse* once during the battle.

*Limited flight:* Star things flap and glide and hover, always within seven or eight feet of the ground. No one knows how that works.

**AC 16**

**PD 12 HP 54**

**MD 15**



## RUBICARN THE RED DRAGON

Large 6<sup>th</sup> level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +11

Vulnerability: cold

**Fangs, claws, and tail +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—16 damage**

*First natural even hit or miss each turn: Roll a third fangs, claws, and tail attack.*

**C: Fiery Breath +11 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—10 fire damage**

*Miss: Half damage*

*Intermittent breath:* Rubicarn can use her breath attack 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

*Resist all fire:* When a fire attack targets Rubicarn the attack only deals half damage. Critical hits with fire attacks against Rubicarn do normal damage, not double damage.

*Fiery blood:* While Rubicarn is staggered add +1d8 fire damage to all her attacks, hit or miss.

**AC 21**

**PD 20 HP 180**

**MD 16**



## SORROWSCORN THE POSSESSED

### BLACK DRAGON

*Sorrowscorn is host to a star-mask, and is now part of the group mind. The group-mind has less control over a mighty dragon than a mere humanoid, but Sorrowscorn still serves the aberrations.*

Large 6<sup>th</sup> level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +13

Vulnerability: thunder

**Claws and bite +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—18 damage**

*Natural 16+: The target also takes 10 ongoing acid damage.*

**C: Acid breath +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—20 acid damage, and 10 ongoing acid damage**

*Miss: 10 acid damage.*

*Intermittent breath:* A large black dragon can use *acid breath* 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

*[once per battle] Feed upon the group mind:* If Sorrowscorn doesn't use its breath weapon on a turn when it is able to, it can heal 45 hp. Doing so kills up to 1d3 Star-mask or Xombie allies, if there are any in the battle. If there are no Star-masks or Xombies the healing is only 30 hp.

*Draconic grace:* At the start of each of the black dragon's turns, roll a d6 to see if it gets an extra standard action. If the roll is equal to or less than the escalation die, the black dragon can take an extra standard action that turn.

After the first success, the grace die bumps up to a d8. After the second success, it's a d10, then a d12 after the third success, and finally a d20 after the fourth one.

*Water-breathing:* Black dragons swim well and can breathe underwater.

*Resist acid 16+:* When an acid attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

**AC 22**

**PD 20 HP 160**

**MD 18**



## THE STARPORT BRAIN

*This giant pulsing brain pushes out waves of psychic influence and magical radiation.*

*Huge 4<sup>th</sup> level caster* [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

[quick action, 2/round against different enemies] **C: Psionic supremacy +12 vs. MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)** – 15 ongoing psychic damage

*Aftereffect:* When the target successfully saves against the ongoing damage they must either: make a basic melee attack against themselves or an ally with their next standard action OR become weakened (-4 to attacks and defenses) until the end of their next turn. Target's choice as to which aftereffect they take.

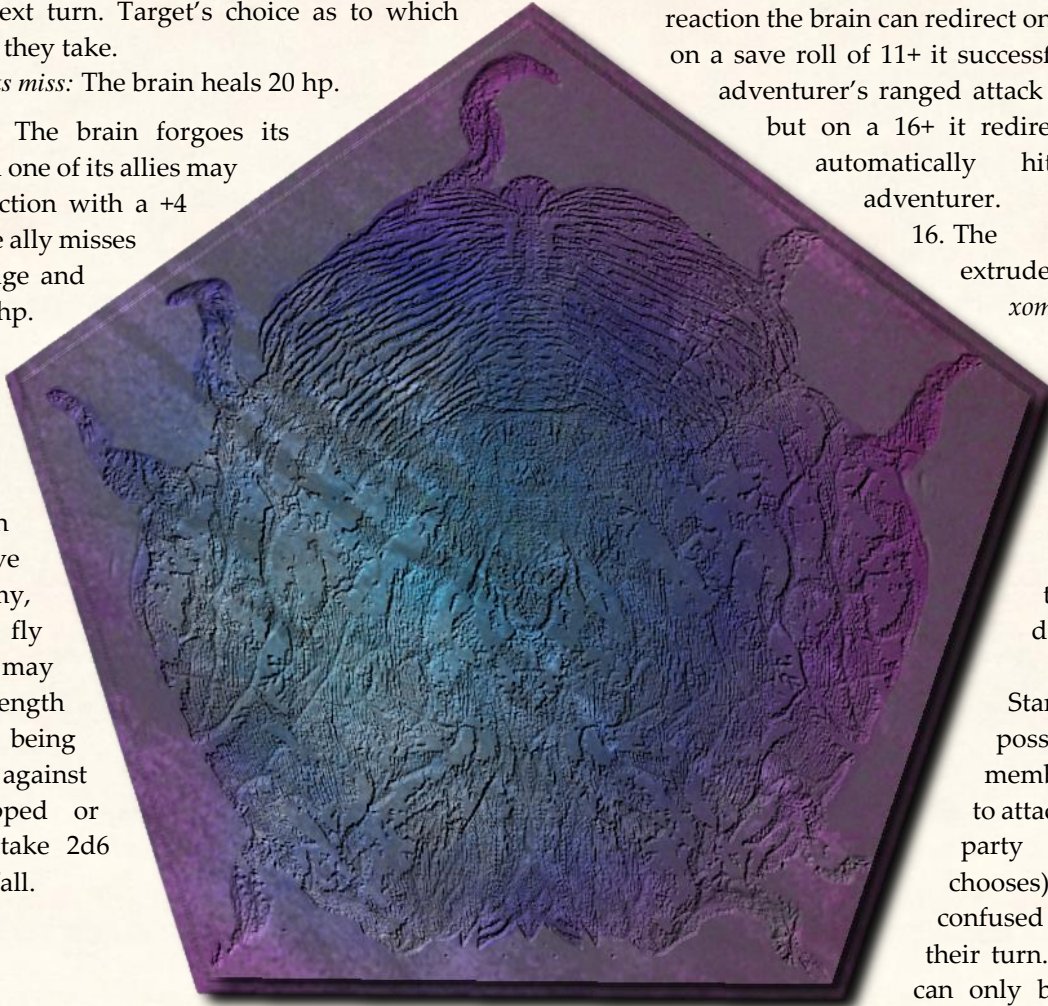
*Both attacks miss:* The brain heals 20 hp.

*Psychic command:* The brain forgoes its attack, and instead one of its allies may attack as a free action with a +4 attack bonus. If the ally misses it takes 1d8 damage and the brain heals 20 hp.

*Immobile:* The brain can't really move about.

*Telekinetic grasp:* As a move action the brain can move an ally or enemy, causing them to fly about. Enemies may save with a Strength bonus to avoid being moved about against their will. Dropped or thrown enemies take 2d6 damage from the fall.

**AC 20**  
**PD 12 HP 200**  
**MD 18**



The Starport Brain has some unusual lair effects. At the start of each round roll d10 to see what happens:

11. If there are any *xombie egg swarms* still in the fight the Starport Brain ingests one and heals 20 hp.
12. Magical flux: adventurers roll twice for magic attacks and take the lower roll.
13. Magical flux: any PC casting a spell this round takes 2d6 force damage.
14. The Starport Brain blasts the minds of the adventurers with illusions—the escalation die value goes down by 1 (to a minimum of 0).
15. The Starport Brain can mess with the adventurers' perceptions. Once during this round as a free reaction the brain can redirect one ranged attack—on a save roll of 11+ it successfully redirects the adventurer's ranged attack so that it misses, but on a 16+ it redirects the attack to automatically hit a different adventurer.
16. The Starport Brain extrudes an extra 1d4 *xombie egg swarms* into the fight.
17. The Starport Brain is thinking hard about the party. Each party member takes 2d4 psychic damage.
18. The Starport Brain possesses a party member, forcing them to attack their allies! One party member (GM chooses) becomes confused until the end of their turn. Each adventurer can only be confused once per battle from this effect.
19. The Starport Brain shudders. Everybody pops free of engagement.
20. The Starport Brain steals the escalation die. This round the enemies get the benefit of the die, and the adventurers don't.

## RACE TO STARPORT TREASURY

### BRILLIANT BREASTPLATE

This armor produces a bright light on command, impressive enough to temporarily dazzle foes.

#### Heavy armor

+1 to AC

Once per day, as a quick action; dazzle your enemies and increase the escalation die by 1

Quirk: Fear of the dark

### FEATHERED BOW

#### Ranged weapon

+1 to attack and damage

When you roll a crit with this weapon you can fly with your next move, but must land after the move action

Quirk: Obsessed with shiny trinkets of little value

### WAND OF POWER

#### Wand

+1 to wizard spell attacks and damage

Once per day, when you crit with a spell; roll a save, on a 16+ that spell was not expended.

Quirk: Maniacal laughter and the urge to say things like "FOOLS! I'LL SHOW THEM ALL! BWAHAHA!"

### SLAYER'S SHOES

#### Boots

+1 to disengage checks and other fancy footwork

+1 to attacks made immediately after disengaging

Quirk: Writes out lists of enemies, constantly warning people they are going on the list.

### DRAKESCALE ARMOR

#### Light or heavy armor

+1 to AC

Once per day as a quick action when in shadow or darkness; increase the AC bonus to +2 until the end of the battle, but only when you are in shadow or darkness.

Quirk: Hard to resist making puns in battle

### VERBAL BLADE

#### Weapon

+1 to attack and damage

This weapon taunts your enemies (ask your GM to do its funny voice): add psychic damage equal to your level to your damage (hit or miss) when the escalation die is not odd (0,2,4,6)

Quirk: Loves clever insults

### RAINBOW SYMBOL

#### Symbol

+1 to cleric spell attacks and damage

Once per battle, when a nearby or far away ally heals; you gain temporary hit points equal to your wisdom modifier plus your level.

Quirk: Spells cast with this symbol produce a rainbow effect that will give your position away

### BEAR HELM

Helmet (can also be used by animal companions, though you use your chakra and get the quirk)

+1 to MD

The wearer deals +1d4 miss damage if they have healed or gained temporary hp since the start of their current turn

Quirk: Eats raw fish

### STARBRIGHT ROBES

Woven from spun meteoric iron, this shimmering robe warps space slightly.

#### Light armor

+1 to AC

Recharge 11+ after battle: pop all currently engaged characters free

Quirk: Needs personal space

### RAGE HAMMER

#### Weapon

+1 to attack and damage

Once per battle, when staggered; reroll one attack die and take the better result

Quirk: Eager to air grievances.

### REGENERATION POTION

#### Potion (x3) consumable

When you drink this potion spend and roll a recovery; but heal only half the amount rolled.

On the start of your next turn, you heal again, this time using a free recovery, but again healing only half the amount you roll. Then roll a normal save (11+) to see if the regeneration effect continues. If it does, you'll heal half a free recovery again at the start of your next turn, and roll a save again to see if the effect continues. If the save fails, the regeneration effect ends, but you get an after-effect depending on the natural result of your failed save!

Keep rolling saves to continue the healing effect on each of your turns, until you fail the save.

Natural failed save:

1-3 A strange temporary side-effect: sparks fly from your finger tips, your eyes glow, your hair grows by a foot, etc. No direct impact on game.

4-6 Gain 1d6 temporary hit points.

7-9 Barky-skin: You gain damage resistance 12+ against the next attack against your AC (half damage unless attacker rolls 12+).

10 Rocky-skin: You gain +2 AC until an attack against AC misses you.



# ICON ROLL IDEAS

You can use the following ideas for icon roll results during your game, if players have an unspent 5 or 6. The following are just suggestions, to get your own ideas flowing.

## A 6 ON AN ICON RELATIONSHIP

**ROLL...** can be traded in for one of the following benefits during this adventure.

### THE ARCHMAGE

- Sudden inspiration! Once during this game you may cast a magic missile as a quick action when the escalation die is 4+.
- You remember a quick yet not terribly reliable spell—reduce the damage that you take from meteorites by 1d6.

### THE CRUSADER

- Stomp, stomp, stomp! You do double damage (hit or miss) on any even attack rolls against *xombie egg swarms*.
- You gain a +2 to all rolls to intimidate the bandits.
- You have a lot of experience in military matters. You gain a +2 to skill rolls to fortify Candlefen.

### THE DIABOLIST

- Destroy something beautiful. Gain a +5 to any skill checks to destroy the dungeon heart.
- Sudden cruelty! Once this battle reroll damage and take the higher roll.
- You gain +2 to all rolls to tempt the bandits to do what you want them to do.
- You have experience with the unnatural and the uncanny. Gain +2 to MD this session.
- You meet a demon in the marsh and are able to bargain with it to show you the way. If you face a danger of the marsh due to a failed skill check you must nominate another party member to face that danger instead of you.

### THE DWARF KING

- Mountains? Dwarf fortresses? Gain +1 to all defenses this session.
- Stonework is easy for somebody with your experience—you or one ally may reroll a failed skill check involving avoiding traps.
- You can't beat dwarven know-how. You gain a +2 to skill rolls to fortify Candlefen.

- You expect the dark elf to betray you—gain +1 to all defenses against her attacks.
- You've withstood worse than this. Once this game spend a recovery as a quick action.

### THE ELF QUEEN

- Dreams and illusions you know about. Reduce all psychic damage you take by 2 points (to a minimum of 1 point of damage).
- Thanks to your training of them the NPC defenders of Candlefen do 1d8 damage with their bows instead of 1d6.
- You are light on your feet and quick with your hands—you or one ally may reroll a failed skill check involving avoiding traps.
- You automatically dodge arrows for one whole round.
- You gain a +2 skill check to sneak about in the Dragon Woods.
- You know the weak points on a dark elf's body—gain +1 to attacks against Nekrien.

### THE EMPEROR

- The emperor has dominion over dragons, or at least a good working relationship with the mighty monstrosities. You may reroll a failed skill check involving Rubicarn the Dragon.
- You have a commanding presence—once during this game you may command a nearby unengaged ally to heal you. If the ally spends a quick action you may spend a recovery.
- You requisition a magic potion from the village elders.
- You spot that one of the bandits is a former soldier, and in any battles with bandits if you roll a save (11+) you can force one bandit to flee.

### THE GREAT GOLD WYRM

- If your relationship is positive you can trade in the 6 for a temporary magic enhancement to your weapon or to armor (good for +1 to attack and damage, or +1 to AC) that lasts for one fight this game. If your relationship is negative you can deal an extra 1d8 damage to a mook with your first attack against mooks each battle. If your relationship is conflicted pick which one you'd rather have.
- You have fought monsters before, gain +1 to defenses against undead.
- You know about dragons—gain a +1 to attacks against Sorrowscorn.

- You may reroll a failed skill check involving Rubicarn the Dragon.

#### **THE HIGH DRUID**

- Abominations like these should not exist. You do double damage (hit or miss) on any even attack roll against *star things*.
- One of the Marsh Drakes will follow you about, not panicking or running away.
- You are immune to the effects of hallucinogenic marsh gas.
- You gain a +2 skill check to sneak about in the Dragon Woods.

#### **THE LICH KING**

- Due to your experience with the undead you gain a +2 bonus to discern the motives of Nekrien and other skill rolls involving the necromancer.
- When you first kill a non-mook enemy this game you gain +2d10 temporary HP that last until lost or until the end of the session.

#### **THE ORC LORD**

- You are tough as old boots, ignore damage from a single trap or from environmental damage

#### **THE PRIESTESS**

- The gods smile upon you! Reroll one failed save this game, including death saves. If the rerolled save still fails this benefit is not expended.
- You foresaw this day in a vision—reroll one failed roll this game.

#### **THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS**

- Automatically succeed on an attempt to sneak about or hide.
- Ignore one trap, side-stepping the attack.
- Ooh look, this Xombie had a magic item. Yoink!
- The villagers have a magic item in their village chapel. Nobody's looking, and you can take it if you want.
- You gain a +2 skill check to sneak about in the Dragon Woods.

#### **THE THREE**

- Cultists? Pah! You've seen better cultists than this. Reroll one failed attack.
- The Starport brain looks awful squishy in places. On your turns you may spend your move action to deal 1d8 damage to the brain by kicking at its lobes.
- You know about dragons—gain a +1 to attacks against Sorrowscorn.

- You know the legends and lore of the Dragon Woods—roll any skill checks involving the Green Star River twice and take the better result.
- You may reroll a failed skill check involving Rubicarn the Dragon.

### **A 5 ON AN ICON RELATIONSHIP**

**ROLL...** can be traded in for one of the following benefits during this adventure. 5s normally come with an obligation or complication.

#### **THE ARCHMAGE, DIABOLIST, ELF QUEEN, HIGH DRUID, LICH KING, PRIESTESS**

- You meet an old friend, an elf called Krow Blueroot. Krow can use his magic to aid the party with one skill check, granting +1 to a party member. Spending additional 5s allows him to help out more often.

#### **THE ARCHMAGE, DIABOLIST, ELF QUEEN, HIGH DRUID, LICH KING, THE THREE**

- You meet a trader, Lar, and can buy a magic potion for 50 gold. The more 5s the party trades in, the more potions are for sale.

#### **THE ARCHMAGE, HIGH DRUID, LICH KING, THE THREE**

- If you narrate a quick 5 second flashback to your magical training with the mysterious Council of Thorns you can gain a cumulative +1 to PD against the dungeon discharge. You get 1 flashback per 5 spent.

#### **THE CRUSADER, DIABOLIST, ORC LORD, PRINCE OF SHADOWS**

- If you narrate a quick 30 second flashback to escaping from jail with your buddy Thog the Half-Orc you can gain a +1 to a skill check relevant to the flashback. You get 1 flashback per 5 spent.

#### **THE CRUSADER, DWARF KING, EMPEROR, GREAT GOLD WYRM, ORC LORD**

- You meet an old friend, a soldier called Dara Goldenshield. Dara can use her battlefield training to aid the party with one save, granting +1 to a party member. Spending additional 5s allows her to help out more often.

## THE CRUSADER, DWARF KING, EMPEROR, GREAT GOLD WYRM, ORC LORD, PRINCE OF SHADOWS

- You meet a traveler called Rallia Thatcher. Rallia intends to steal Rubicarn's treasure and her presence starts the escalation die at 1 if the party attacks the dragon. Spending additional 5s allows her to find more treasure, multiplying the loot by 10% for each 5 spent (including a cut that she takes).

## THE PRIESTESS

- You meet a hermit living in the woods. The hermit, Kala, gives advice that lets the party arrive at the crater earlier than otherwise, reducing the number of fast zombies by 1 for each relationship die 5 spent.

## THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS, THE THREE

- A contact of yours called Sliver shows up. Sliver can backstab enemies in combat, adding +1d4 to the damage for one attack (hit or miss) for one party member. Spending additional 5s allows Sliver to attack more often.

## ANY ICON

- You find the corpse of a trader, who has magic potions. Each potion has a 50/50 chance of working, but you won't know until you try one if it works or not. The more 5s the party trades in, the more potions are on the trader's body. The trader is missing their head.
- If you narrate a quick 30 second flashback to being in a dungeon with your old friend Nilrem the Red you can gain a +1 to a skill check relevant to the flashback. You get 1 flashback per 5 spent.



## GAME ADVICE

Organized play for 13th Age is a little different from normal organized play. This document gives you tools to create a linked series of adventures that will highlight the cool things about 13th Age (One Unique Things, Backgrounds, Icon Relationships). You will need around 2 hours per session.

## THE ORGANIZED PLAY PLAN

### *THE PLAN*

Each game of 13th Age is different because the one unique things and backgrounds of the characters in separate groups will be different. The plan here is to have players be able to find and take part in 13th Age games around the world with a continuity of story. As a GM this will require you to be on your toes, but we think you have the chops for the job. This document gives you six linked adventures to take place over six weeks, and advice on running the adventures.

### *FEEDBACK*

We'll be asking for feedback from both GMs and players. We want to know what works, what doesn't, what people enjoy, and what could do with revision. We'll also want game reports ... we want to know what happened, what cool and awesome things you did with 13th Age. Part of our ethos is giving you the tools to play the game you want - so if we get a lot of feedback saying "Hey - what are the rules for exploding gems? My players found this crystal throne and exploded it, and I'd like some rules for that." then we might want to consider addressing that in a [See Page XX](#) article, [13th Age Monthly](#), or in a future supplement. You can give feedback [here](#).

### *ONE UNIQUE THINGS*

Once you've run a couple of dozen games for strangers you'll notice that certain unique things come up surprisingly often. Illegitimate sons of the Emperor seem to populate half of all adventuring parties, and there are a ton of adventurers who used to be animals. In your home game it is cool to build a story about the Emperor's only illegitimate son because you know that nobody else in your game is going to pick that, but in an organized play program you may have players who created their character with another organized play GM. So as to avoid

conflicts of Emperor's only son meets Emperor's only son we are saying:

### **No ONLYs please**

You can be one of the last of your kind (or one of the first) but you can't be the only one. You can be a prisoner sent forward in time from the first age as a punishment but you can't be the only one to whom that happened. You can be a rare half-human half-clockwork creature and you might be under the impression that you are the only one, but maybe you aren't the only such creature. If you're one unique thing relies upon you being the only something think about how you could make it cooler and more unique. If somebody does pick an 'only' type of unique remind them that their character believes themselves to be the only one but in fact they may not be.

### **BACKGROUNDS**

All characters have 8 background points, and can spend up to five of them on any one background. Try to encourage players to tell you stories about their backgrounds rather than just a list of words. This...

- Climber 4
- Urban Survival 3
- Artist 1

... is boring and as a GM tells you very little about the character and doesn't give you a lot to work with. Encourage the players to talk about their backgrounds and name them appropriately. With a little nudging the above list of words can blossom into...

- Second best rooftop runner in Horizon 5
- Member of the Beggar's Guild 3

... which is awesome and tells you a lot about the character.

## STATEMENTS ABOUT THE WORLD

One of the cool things about 13th Age is that players help to define the world. There is no standard universal Dragon Empire, each game is different. This presents challenges for organized play and as a GM you need to be on your feet. Whenever a player mentions something about the world either via a background or one unique thing or just as a plain statement make a very quick note about it and repeat back to them what they have just said. As an example:

Player: "... and then I bend down and look into the mechanism. Half orcs know a lot about this stuff. How hard is it to disable the trap?"

GM: "Half orcs do know a lot about traps - why is that?"

Player: "Oh I meant half orcs know a lot about breaking things. We love smashing clockwork."

GM: "Why do half-orcs like smashing clockwork?"

Player: "It gives us headaches, nobody knows why."

GM: "Ah, you need to get a 15 to break the trap without setting it off" (makes a note 'Clockwork = causes headaches for half-orcs').

Each session recap all the statements about the world and ask if anybody has extra input on them. Be sure to ask each player if they have anything to add to the world. It's a little ritual that helps to build a stronger game for your players.

GM: "Ok, so last week we discovered that orcs hate clockwork because it gives them headaches"

Player 1: "Ah, I figured it is their two natures warring in them. There is something mystical about clockwork".

Player 2: "Yeah, like maybe it is trying to separate out your two natures - giving you a 'splitting' headache"

GM: (makes a note) "I like that. What else did we learn. High elves fear mice, they think mice are spirits of the dead. That is an old elf legend."

Player 3: "Yeah! It is just a legend, but they still creep elves out"

GM: "As you are new to the group, what things did your character discover last week?"

Player 4 (the new player): "Orcs have clockwork axes"

GM: (makes a note) "So some tribes of orc are able to use clockwork, but obviously not all tribes."

... then recap them with the added player input and ask if anybody has anything more to add.

GM: "So clockwork gives half-orcs headaches, but some orc tribes use clockwork. That is true. What else is true?"

Player 2: "Only some orc tribes are lucky enough to mutate into half-orcs, and those tribes don't use clockwork. They have to get rid of it to commune with the spirits and begin the transformation process."

GM: "Yes, that is true." (makes a note) "And elves fear mice due to legends revolving around mice and ghosts. That is true. What else is true?"

Player 3: "Maybe their god of the dead uses mice as messengers, and elf necromancers have mice familiars"

GM: (makes note) "Yes, that is true"

In this way your players build the world with you, and you remind them each week of the world that you have built together. You also let new players know what your game is like, and you let them bring in the bits of the 13th Age game they played last week into your game that are important to them.

## SKILL CHECKS

### USE YOUR INDEX CARDS

The humble index card is one of the best gaming tools I've discovered in years. Write down each character's backgrounds and set the index cards out in front of you. As play progresses glance down and put obstacles in the path of the party that speak to the backgrounds possessed by the party. For example if your party's dwarf has the background 'Mistress of Metal: I train dwarven smiths' then during play announce

"The path is blocked by a partially toppled statue. It is made of metal of intricate design," and then look around and ask "Does anybody here know anything about dwarf metalworking?"

Bring in interesting options for success and failure (perhaps success reveals that the statue has coins in the base to keep it upright, a common practice from an age where gold was more plentiful - and failure results in the hollow statue shifting and making a huge racket sure to attract monsters). By bringing backgrounds into play you make the story about the characters themselves.

## ***WHEN NOT TO ROLL***

Being a game with limited time you don't want to roll for every little thing, especially if pass/fail doesn't really matter. Only have players roll dice when failure would be an interesting outcome and would impact the story. If a character has a background specific to a task and failure wouldn't be interesting narratively invite them into the task.

"That wall looks tough to climb, but you know that your Dwarf friend used to be an acrobat. He could easily climb the wall and pass a rope down to you"

## ***ONE ROLL SHOULD DO IT***

When you have a character attempting something with lots of steps in it you don't have them roll for every step, in fact you probably shouldn't. If a character is drinking from every bottle of elven wine in a castle cellar looking for the best vintage don't have them roll once per bottle - just one roll should do it.

## ***FAIL FORWARDS***

Remember to Fail Forwards.

...outside of battle, true failure tends to slow action down rather than move the action along. A more constructive way to interpret failure is as a near-success or event that happens to carry unwanted consequences or side effects. The character probably still fails to achieve the desired goal, but that's because something happens on the way to the goal rather than because nothing happens.

Suppose a player makes a Charisma check to have his or her rogue rustle up some clues as to where a certain monk of the black dragon might be hiding. The player fails the check. Traditionally, the GM would rule that the character had failed to find any information. With 13th Age, we encourage you to rule that the character does indeed find clues as to the monk's location, but with unexpectedly bad results. Most likely, word has gotten to the monk that the rogue is looking for him, and he either escapes before his lair is found, or prepares for the group, either setting up an ambush or leaving a trap. The failure means that interesting things happen.

## ***ESCALATING RISKS***

If a character fails it is interesting to offer a choice to the player - fail forwards as above OR succeed but with a

complication. In this case the player gets what they want but it causes another problem. You then pass that problem on to the next player and ask them if they want to attempt to solve it or leave it where it is. Consecutive failures can have interesting results as the consequences escalate as shown in the example below...

The halfling rogue successfully climbs the stable wall but drops their lantern into the straw below starting a fire.

The elf wizard successfully convinces the angry crowd that the fire the rogue started was the doing of the Dwarf King, but now the crowd wants to lynch dwarves.

The dwarf paladin successfully smuggles the dwarven ambassador out of town away from the angry guard but the ambassador figures out that the party are to blame for the fire and is going to tell agents of the Dwarf King.

The human sorcerer successfully bribes the dodgy-looking boat captain to take the dwarven ambassador somewhere where they can't contact the Dwarf King's agents but as he sails away the party realizes that the captain is a slaver.

## ***MONTAGE!***

Sometimes you don't want to go into details but do want to give a sense of time passing. Overland travel, random dungeon exploration, fortifying an old farmhouse against zombies. All these things can happen in a montage if they are not the focus of the montage itself.

Go round the table and ask each player:

"Describe an obstacle that the party encountered but defeated."

Then turn to the player to their left:

"Your character was the one to get the party past that. How did you succeed?"

They don't need to roll for this - they just tell you an awesome thing that their character did that solved the problem.

Repeat this around the table until everybody has had a chance to come up with a death-trap or a wandering monster or whatever their imaginations can conjure up and a chance to overcome an obstacle. As each player tells you how their character saved the day narrate back to them what they have said and put a spin on it to highlight their heroism.

"Yes! The party encountered a minotaur's ghost and you entertained him with your bagpipes. Not

only did that pacify the ghost but several other ghosts appeared to hear you play and in gratitude led you part-way through the maze."

"Awesome - you killed the magically animated pagoda with your mighty axe. Later you came to an underground river and crossed it using your foe's remains. Good job."

"Brilliant. With a flick of your wrist you turn over your last card. The skeletal guards are amazed by your winning streak and untie your companions as agreed. They are so impressed with your poker-face that they tell you how to get to the center of the maze. Congratulations - you have a better poker-face than skeletons and they don't even have faces!"

## PACING

Sometimes things go slowly. Players get the idea that there is a secret door they can find if only they spend another 10 minutes searching for it. In organized play you've got limited time available to you. If the players start going off track supply them with unambiguous information by using the phrase "It is obvious to you that..."

"It is obvious to you that there is no secret door here."

"It is obvious to you that the dwarf is telling the truth."

## ROLLS->FOLLOW->FICTION NOT

### ROLLS=FICTION

What does that mean? YOU tell the players when to roll, based upon what they say their characters are doing. If somebody announces "I'm rolling to see if I can get past the guards" put your hand out in a 'stop' motion and ask "HOW are you attempting to get past the guards?" and play onwards from there. Talk about how the guards look half-asleep, how the character notices one of them is wearing new boots but the other one is dressed shabbily, how the guard on the left gets distracted when he looks at the food cart nearby. Role-play the encounter, and build the scene using a back-and-forth exchange of information and suggestions between you and the player. Only call for a roll once the character acts to change the situation and the outcome is in question and failure would be interesting. Let the rolls flow from what characters do. It is a small thing, but important.

## MONSTERS & COMBAT

Some of the monsters that appear here are from the core 13th Age book but others appear in books like the Bestiary or 13 True Ways. In this adventures we've put in the monsters that we think you'll need, and a guide to how many to include in a fight.

### USING ALTERNATE MONSTERS

The backgrounds and uniques of the player characters and the statements by players about the world may mean that the monsters we've provided are not suitable for your needs. In that case there are three options. Hopefully you can stretch the existing monsters to fit your needs - if one of the adventurers has the unique 'Raised by giant rats' you can just say that the skeletons the party are about to fight are the skeletons of giant rats. If that doesn't work for you you can 'reskin' the monsters for the adventure - instead of fighting skeletons you use the skeleton stats but call them 'giant rats' or 'pixie swarms' or 'loquacious rust-golems' or whatever the story needs. If neither of those options works for you the core rule book has a ton of advice for creating new monsters on the fly.

### BIG DAMN HEROES

Combat is a prime opportunity to remind players that their character is awesome. When an adventurer hits an enemy take the opportunity to describe the hit.

"With a mighty swing of the sword you slice the zombie in two! Hyah!"

"Lightning crackles from your eyes as you unleash your spell. ZZZZT!"

"The eyes of your enemies widen in shock as you destroy their shaman with a well placed arrow. Zonk!"

"The hag runs towards you screaming and reaches out towards you, but you duck her swing and launch a bolt of pure sizzling magic into her. She screams as the burning energy sinks into her body."

"You swing the sword and the dragon jerk's it head back ... but your cunning backswing slices deep into its gums - it roars in rage and you dash in under its maw to strike a deep blow into the tender flesh under the chin!"

Even miss damage is cool...

"You do miss damage? Your axe whizzes past the goblin's head, but your foot connects with his kneecap!"

"The zombie staggers backwards and your axe misses. You take the opportunity to kick it in the groin. normally this wouldn't faze a zombie but your kick is bone shatteringly powerful!"

Don't be afraid to really get into it. Stand up from the table. Mime the zombie who takes an arrow through both eyes. Snarl like the hob-goblin chieftain as you caper about with bent back swearing vengeance on the cleric. Just a second or so of play-acting each round to highlight an awesome hit or near miss goes a long way towards drawing our players out of their shells. Once you start doing it your players will too.

### ***TONE***

The tone of your game will depend a lot on who you are running it for. A group of 12 year olds may not appreciate gory decapitations (or they may, pre-teens are a bloody lot) but it is part of your job as a GM to gauge what your audience wants. In the words of Tyler Durden "If someone says "stop" or goes limp, taps out ..." then you may want to tone it back a bit. If you know your audience well and have previously discussed what their limits are then you can play within those limits. Remember if you are running the game in a public place to keep it appropriate. What is cool to shout out at the top of your lungs at a friend's house may not be acceptable to say at all in a game store or at a convention.

### ***PACING IN COMBAT***

The escalation die and the design of monsters in 13th Age means combat is pretty fast moving, but you may still be pressed for time. The store that you are playing in is closing for the night, or you have a limited time at a table at a convention, or one of your players needs to leave early. If some outside constraint is limiting your time you may want to end the combat early. Drop the defences of the monsters and adjust their damage downwards. If you are still pressed for time have the monsters run away or use a dramatic moment to kill the big bad guy (the gnome bard who hasn't hit all day gets in a crit and takes the head of the dragon in one blow).

### ***DEALING WITH A TPK. TOTAL. PARTY. KILL.***

We haven't made this adventure super-deadly... but sometimes the dice are against the players, bad decisions are made, and the unthinkable is thought. If the entire

party dies then the following session tell the tale of how their new characters were following their old characters, always a day or so behind on the same quest, finding dungeons pre-looted and monsters already defeated; they have finally caught up with the heroes only to find them dead. The next session starts normally, but perhaps their new characters start with some recovered loot from their former characters' corpses. Or if you prefer use Jonathan's idea from pg 170 of the core rule book.

## **TIPS TO MAKE YOUR JOB EASIER**

### **AND THE GAME MORE FUN**

#### ***INDEX CARDS***

Seriously. Grab a pack and...

##### **Make name tents**

Each player gets a name tent. Fold the index card in two and write the character name on it and put it in front of the player. Now instead of saying "your dwarf" or "the ranger" you can call the characters by name. This is an awesome thing for you to do, it links players to their characters.

##### **Write out one unique things and backgrounds**

Go around the table and have players recap their uniques. As they do so jot down their uniques on index cards - two or three uniques per card using a short phrase. Use big letters so you can quickly glance down and see what is going on. As the game progresses glance down and introduce skill challenges or obstacles tailored for the party. As each party member succeeds (or fails in an interesting way that advances the story) cross their unique or background off.

##### **Use them to make scenery & minis**

If you are using minis to map out battles (while 13th Age does not rely upon minis using them does make visualizing relative positioning in battles easier) you can draw scenery on index cards and put them down on the table to indicate terrain or objects. If you need to improvise a large creature that you don't have a mini for you can make a tent out of an index card and write the monster's name on both sides.

Seriously - get some index cards!

#### ***Minis***

When running combat in 13th Age remember that miniatures don't represent exactly where a character really is, it is a rough approximation of where characters are in relation to each other. You don't need minis to run 13th Age combat but your job of letting players know



what is happening and where things are in relation to each other is made easier by having them.

the monster initiatives on them to track conditions, HP left, etc.

## TERRAIN

### **Rob has this to say about terrain:**

Play terrain any way you like, but don't worry about it. There isn't really time to get deeply into terrain action when people are playing for the first time. The ease of simply moving your characters around and attacking should be the priority.

If you don't know 13th Age already, grab any style of fantasy terrain/setting as the location of the battle. Miserable swamps, ruined temples, ghost towns, haunted orchards, regenerating graveyards, living dungeons, spiral towers, woodlands, grumbling volcanoes—they all exist somewhere in 13th Age.

## INITIATIVE

This is how I do initiative. You might prefer your own system, but I find this speeds up play

1. Everybody rolls initiative. All monsters share the same initiative, unless they are of very different types. All goblins share an initiative, all spiders, etc. If in doubt fudge monster initiative downwards.
2. Count out how many characters and groups of monsters there are. Write numbers from 1 to the total number of characters and groups of monsters acting on index cards. Write big. If there are 6 adventurers and 2 types of monsters (or two different groups of monsters acting on different initiatives) you would have cards numbered 1-8.
3. Start counting upward from 1. When you get to an initiative that an adventurer or monster has, hand them the highest numbered card you have. In a fight with six adventurers and two monsters the lowest initiative gets the card with '8' on it, the next lowest initiative gets the '7' card, and so on.
4. Each round just look around the table for the person with the number 1 in front of them and tell them it is their turn. After that glance around for the number 2 card, then the number 3 card, and so on. Players can also use the cards to write you quick notes if they wish to, or to take notes during combat. I like to use the index cards with

## 'BUS STOP' GMING... WHAT?

The idea behind the Tales of the 13th Age organized play program is that players should be able to play in London one week and New York the next and be able to pick up where they left off. This means that the games can not be completely freeform. However, they are not rail-road adventures either. Each session has a start point and an end point and how you get from one bus stop to the next is up to you, the driver of the bus. If you decide to substitute goblins for kobolds or your players decide to circumvent an encounter or battle then that is fine, provided you end the session in such a way as it leads naturally on to the next session as written. Side-quests, digressions, and player-generated plots are cool - encouraged even. You can go whichever route you choose and do whatever weird stuff you and your players like along the way, just make sure you get to the next bus stop so that anybody who wants to get on your bus at that point can.

## WHEN TO GIVE TREASURE OUT

At the start of every session roll icon relationship dice. If the dice would seem to indicate it, have adventurers find treasure during montage scenes or place treasure into the adventure in places that it would make sense for it to appear. Aim to give out one item of treasure each week like this. Some sessions also have sections that will tell you that it is time to hand out treasure.

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