

the phlogiston books
volume 2:

the stone heir



COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC
RPG



the phlogiston BOOKS

volume 2

the stone heir

...and other adventures doomed
to fail for the Dungeon Crawl
Classics RPG



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To **Sebastián** and **María**, the very best adventurers anyone could delve with into a dungeon.
Also to **Marina**, so she dedicates me something before anybody else.

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fade to one

As **Daniel J. Bishop** masterfully stated: “DCC RPG is the game where you fight unknown monsters, speak with alien gods, find ancient magics... and then you reach level 1”.

It’s a known fact that one of the many appeals of DCC RPG is its “funnel”, when the lucky survivors become 1st level player characters having overcome their first traumatic adventure. Playing with those adventurers when they earn their brand-new level 1 class is deeply satisfying, nothing at all like playing characters who start their careers immediately as adventurers.

But, alas, our keen eyes noticed that between those two situations the game fades elegantly to black, or better said, “fades to one”: the pathetic level-0 villagers turn overnight into competent cutpurses, mercenaries, sorcerers and holy men.

For many that’s enough, but not for the devious minds that devised this supplement. We wanted to tell the story of what befalls the adventurers betwixt the funnel’s conclusion and the beginning of their first level-1 adventure. What better way to do it than with a couple of modules?

The first one, “Pigs from the Pit”, is the perfect choice to fill the aforementioned gap between 0- and 1st-level adventures. In this module the adventurers will test their recently acquired skills and abilities in a milieu they’re still unwilling to leave: their hamlet. In a sense, it’s akin to those stabilizer wheels for newbie cyclists.

The second one, “The Stone Heir”, also takes place in familiar surroundings, but in this case the PCs will have to prove that they deserve their status as 1st level adventurers. Enemies and hazards abound, and they give no quarter.

Pardon us our spam, but we strongly recommend the funnel adventure from *The Phlogiston Books Volume I*, “Beaten Copper”, to give your starting adventurers a complete rural experience – even more so if what lies inside this compilation pleases you.

On top of that, we offer some “crunchy bits” to complement these two modules: four entries to further define and personalize your newly upgraded characters.

In other words, explore with us the origins of people who will later become living legends...who will rub shoulders with patrons, gods and extraordinary creatures in dungeons, far-off planes and crowded city-states. Because, after all, we all come from the countryside.



Girl, you'll be a woman soon

You made it! You've survived your first adventure, armed with a stick and with a hen by your side. You've watched your comrades and neighbors die, got undreamt-of riches, and are now unwilling to go back to your former life. But you don't become a warrior just by grabbing a sword, or turn into a sorcerer after reading a book.

There's a narrative leap in *Dungeon Crawl Classics* after finishing a funnel: we don't really know what happens in the PCs lives that makes competent level-1 heroes out of the level-0 useless boors. How and when did they learn all those things that they can do know? We offer some ideas and suggestions that you could use as a guide to fill that void in your PC training period.

Cleric

You joined your neighbors to face the forces of evil and darkness. You thought that everything was lost, so you put your life in your god's hands... and it worked. You survived, and it's quite literally a miracle. You've seen the light and are eager to share it with everybody so they can share your religious enthusiasm. But before that you'll need to learn the doctrine, liturgy, and rituals of your faith... and even more important, the appointed holidays.

When you decide to become a cleric you first need to choose a deity to follow blindly, to speak about non-stop, and to thank when something good happens or to blame for everything bad that affects you. Pick one of the gods included in the rules according to your alignment, use one of the thousands of gods that dot mythology and fantasy literature, or let your imagination run wild and make one up. Your god will determine what kind of weapons you'll be able to wield, the kind of creatures that you can rebuke and the spells that you can choose from. Where you say "your god", you can also say "your Judge".

The Judge decides what spells your cleric can learn, either randomly or assigned in accordance to the chosen deity.

There's nothing to prevent her from assigning you a wizard spell, if it fits your creed. It makes complete sense that a cleric of Atlach Nacha, the Spider God that spins its web across the chasm under the mount Voormithadreth, should get the wizard spells *spider climb* and *spider web*. In this case, ignore the corruption and misfire results, and treat any failure when casting the spell as an increase of the disapproval range, as usual.

Once you know for sure who you'll be serving, you'll have to become a competent servitor. This means devoting some amount of time to studying, praying and the contemplative life. This can be done on your own, as an anchorite or a crazy hermit who talks to herself and munches her own hair, or alongside other acolytes in a monastery, seminary or temple of doom close at hand.

This brings us to the next topic: If you're now a cleric, a bulwark of your faith, a scourge of infidels... where are your followers? Where is your congregation? Isn't there anyone else in the whole region who shares your beliefs? Yes indeed! Roll 1d6 to find out who are some of them:

- 1 Let the children come to me:** Your faith is particularly alluring to kids. You're always found in the company of 1d3 kids who keep asking awkward questions ("If the holy scriptures say that Choranus made us perfect, why can't we fly?"), and who seem to be homeless.
- 2 Elderly women:** No matter where you are or what time of the day it is, there's always an elderly parishioner eager to confess, and they unfailingly manage to find you. Not a single day goes by without an anguished woman (50 + 1d30 years old) following you, in great need of absolution, contrition and redemption.
- 3 Procession:** A group of parishioners have decided to parade a statue of your god or one of its avatars in hopes that doing so will stop a drought, heal their sick king, or put an end to an epidemic. You're at the forefront of it. 1d3+1 penitents follow you, bearing a huge effigy of your god, singing whatever hymns cross their minds and praising its beauty.
- 4 Altar girl or boy:** Your words have made quite an impact on a local lass or lad. She or he is a bit odd, doesn't talk much and sometimes stares off into space, but she/he helps you with the rituals and ceremonies of your faith. You feel that it's your duty to train her/him as your disciple.

5 Suicidal celebrants: Some people seriously misunderstood your holy scriptures and the tenets of your faith, and now insist that you prepare for the transition to the afterlife with a simple yet charming ceremony. They're a flock of 1d5 people, literally dying to leave this vale of tears.

6 Crusader: Regardless of your opinion about other religions and beliefs, there's a guy with a strong opinion about anybody who doesn't follow your faith - they're all heretics who deserve to be exterminated. Furthermore, he believes that it's your duty to point them out. Sometimes it's hard to live with him.

All these NPCs are mere level-0 followers who could be used to substitute for a dead PC if the need arises. You don't have to pay them a salary, although it would be

nice to give them some food in case their prayers don't provide enough sustenance.

Warrior

One day you're milking your goats, and the next one you're a killing machine. How's that even possible? Even more, where did you get your weapon from? Remember, the warrior adds his Luck bonus to all attack rolls for a specific kind of weapon. If you've got a positive Luck bonus that will mean a weapon that you're particularly skillful with, but if it's negative the opposite will be true, meaning that it'll be a weapon with which

you usually hit yourself more often than your enemies. By the by, it's just logical that the lucky weapon be one of those you came across during your first adventure.

Once you own a tool designed to make people stop moving so much, you'll need to work out the second part of the warrior's mystery: How the heck have you learnt to wield it? Roll 1d6:

1 Self-taught: You learnt the art of war by your own means, which in practice implies that you just got yourself in trouble again and again. As you may imagine, this learning method doesn't take place in a controlled environment. You've suffered some misfortunes during your training, which resulted in some scars, one of them on your face. Roll 1d7: 1- The scar highlights your appeal and grants you a wild and dangerous look, you get a +1 to Per; (2-6) The scar is not too flashy, it maybe stands out a bit more when the sun shines on you; (7) The scar ruined your face or left you with a permanently unpleasant expression, you suffer a -1 to Per.

2 Levy: You're part of the local lord's army and you've fought in many armed conflicts against someone (you're uncertain as to who). You just know they pointed at them, and you charged. You're back home after that traumatic experience with a bucketful of stories that could bore the hell out of anybody and a band of brothers-in-arms who you stumble upon every time you go to a tavern.

3 The drunken master: Everybody's heard about the venerable teacher, responsible for the skills of the kingdom's most famous warriors, but you found him and asked him to teach you. Unfortunately, what you found was a man who smells of wine and speaks too close to you. And still, you've followed his weird martial teachings. Add your inverse Luck modifier to your weapon of choice (positive if it's negative and vice versa).

4 The bridge: You lived under a bridge and spent some time fleecing all those who wanted to cross it, training your martial skills every time someone didn't want to pay. At some point, you were forced to leave the bridge, but you did so with a bounty of 1d20 sp and 1d10 randomly determined objects from the trade goods list on Table 1-3, pages 22-23. There is probably a reward out for you.

5 The order: You're part of a knightly order, a clan, or a mercenary company. Now a lad or lass helps you don your armor, and takes care of your mount if you've got one. In exchange, you're responsible for his or her martial training. This servitor is a simple level-0 follower with a certain knack for cooking.

6 Verdadera destreza (The True Skill): You're a rare bird among men at arms: you can read. You found a manual of fencing, archery, or an ancient martial art and you've studied till you mastered its secrets. In any case, what's really remarkable is that you can read... and you like it.

If you want to endow your warrior with a stronger personality, think about your fighting style and write down a list of Mighty Deeds of Arms that fits her, either the ones from the manual or your own deeds. Even more, if you want her to stand out above the rest of warriors,

consider naming your deeds in a cool way to turn them into “secret maneuvers”. Why limit yourself to just slapping someone when you can unleash the overwhelming power of The Fist of the North Star?

Thief

Unlike other character classes, it doesn't take anything out of the ordinary to become a thief. It's even possible that you dabbled in thievery stealing apples from someone else's orchard, scrounging money for groceries, or

marrying very old folks who get very ill shortly thereafter. In any case, you've been surely taking care of your own businesses while your fellow adventurers have been honing their skills. Roll 1d6:

- 1 Wanted:** During one of your heists, things went south and you eliminated one or more witnesses. Anyway, they weren't enough, because someone went to the authorities and provided them your name and description. They've put a steep price on your head and wallpapered the entire region with billboards showing a very good portrait of you. In order to go back to the streets and evade the gallows, you had to change radically your looks. Now you go under a new name.
- 2 Thieves guild:** You've joined a thieves' guild, criminal union, assassins' league or mob family. From now on you'll have to give them a 10% of your income in exchange for... you don't really know what they give you in exchange, but you better pay them, or you'll get yourself in big trouble.
- 3 The inside man:** You've been undercover in an organization for months, planning to pull a masterstroke. Regardless of how well it went, you've spent so much time embodying that role that you ended up learning quite a bit about your pretended occupation. Throw again on Table 1-3 to determine what new occupation you've been infiltrating. You can undertake skill checks in the new occupation almost as well as you can with your original (using a 1d16 for skill checks).
- 4 The Spanish prisoner:** You've devised an intricate mail scam about a prisoner of war and a buried treasure with which to fleece the wealthy... or at least those who can read. Whenever you need money, and you can make use of a mail or courier service, you'll be able to send a letter to one of your victims to get 2d10 sp in two days' time.
- 5 Brigand:** You've been acting as a masked highwayman, robbing merchants and tradesmen, and keeping a nearby cave as a hideout. They got you, and when they were about to lynch you, you thought about giving up all the loot you had hoarded up till that moment and told them that you stole from the rich to give it to the poor. You're now part of a band of 1d3 peasants who ran to the hills with you and who believe that you told the truth. They're level-0 followers with a big social conscience.
- 6 Street urchins:** You're part of the “creme de la creme” of the village's youngsters, with whom you've committed all kinds of misdeeds and wrongdoings. Your friends give themselves nicknames like Vermin, Axe, or Lover Boy, and they're partial on drugs. You should look for the right street alias that can measure up to theirs.

Wizard

Once you couldn't even read, and now you're able to unleash the forces of nature. It's clear that in order to become a master of the arcane arts you need to sequester

yourself in a quiet place so you can focus on your studies, but where? Throw 1d6:

- 1 In your room:** You've spent several months at home and concentrated on your studies, missing sleep, not eating well, and, what's worse, neglecting your personal hygiene. When you left home at last, both your hair and beard were long and bushy. You could have them cut if you want, but from now on, your sanitary measures are not what they used to be.

2 At some ruins: Be it because you live next to a tavern, or because you've got a large family, it's nigh impossible to study at home. Luckily, you've found a place where a deathly silence reigns supreme: the very same ruins, fortress, doomed temple, or wherever it was where your first adventure took place. With some time and money you could make it as dangerous as it once was.

3 In a pocket dimension: Your first attempt at casting a spell went horribly wrong and you were transported to a pocket dimension, where you've spent some years trying to find your way back. When you finally got back, it had been only for a few days on your plane of origin, but 1d20 years in the pocket dimension.

4 With a teacher: A wizard took you under his or her wing to become an "apprentice": organize the library, tidy up the laboratory, cook, do the laundry, mop the floors... Your arcane skills haven't improved at all, but you can now consider servant as a second occupation (or if it already was, you can roll 1d24 with your trained skill checks).

5 In the blood: You now understand why you didn't need to study to acquire your magical prowess and why you don't look like your father. You come from an otherworldly lineage from which you inherited your arcane powers... and some physical features that are beginning to show. Roll 1d5: (1) Fey: You're whimsical and volatile, and you always smell of flowers; (2) Elemental: You're always complaining about being either too hot or too cold; (3) Prehuman: Atlantean, Lemurian... you've got exotic looks and sometimes words in a long-dead language slip out of your mouth; (4) Demigod: Your likes and dislikes correspond to your father's divine portfolio; (5) Alien: your head is way too big when you compare it with the rest of your body.

6 In the Dreamlands: When you sleep, your astral self travels to the Dreamlands, where you delve into the secrets of magic by visiting its libraries and consulting with its sages. This experience is utterly alienating, meaning that once you fall sleep, there's no way to wake you up short of slapping you. Not shouting, nor shaking you, nor throwing water in your face: slaps.

The grimoire and initial spells

Remember, the *DCC RPG* states that the wizard's grimoire doesn't need to be a book. You can write your spells on a musical score, crystal spheres or sand glasses. You can draw on your starting occupation and turn your gongfarmer into a "copromancer" whose spells reside in the droppings of fantastic animals, or a chandler who stores his knowledge about magic in candles of strange fragrances.

Although you'd usually determine your initial spells in a random fashion, it might prove interesting if some of them could stem from an event that took place during your first adventure, like for instance:

If you found a scroll, you can change one of the randomly-determined spells for one of your choice.

If you were the owner of an animal like a sheep, a pig, a hen, a dog, or a mule and it also survived the funnel, you can change one of your randomly-determined spells for the spell *find familiar*.

If you met a supernatural being during your first adventure, you can change one of your randomly-determined spells for *patron bond* and *invoke patron*.

Your initial spells could also stem from your starting occupation. It wouldn't be too far-fetched for a smith or a swordsmith to learn the spell *mending*, or for a scribe to unravel the secrets of *runic alphabet*, or for a gongfarmer to master *choking cloud*. If your occupation is wizard's apprentice, you should be able to change one of your initial spells for a spell of your choice. That was the spell written in the mysterious grimoire that never left your side.

Lastly, remember that your wizard doesn't have to be just a common wizard. There's nothing stopping you from being a demonologist, a shaman, or an illusionist... apart from your choice of initial spells, that is. Propose a selection of spells to your Judge that fits the kind of wizard that you want to play. For example: If the Judge thinks that's OK for your wizard to be a druid, you just need to choose the spells *comprehend languages (animals)*, *animal summoning*, *find familiar*, and *patron bond (Yggdrill)*. Choosing the right manifestation for your spells could also help to define your style.



Elf

During the elf's first adventure, a powerful supernatural being notices her and willingly proposes a pact that could last hundreds of years if the elf doesn't die in a vi-

olent way, which is the most probable outcome. It could prove convenient to determine the reason, the nature, or the purpose of that pact. Roll 1d6:

- 1 Eternal champion:** You're a key player in the eternal struggle between Law and Chaos. You're maybe destined to safeguard the balance of Neutrality, to ensure the dominance of Law or Chaos, or to annihilate all reality to clear up the game board so the big cosmic powers can begin a new game. You gain an additional point of Luck every time your actions help forward that purpose. On the other hand, you'll also lose an additional point of Luck if you act against that purpose or if you disobey your patron's orders.
- 2 Inscrutable:** To be honest, you don't really know what your patron wants of you. It sometimes commands you to do something, only to do the opposite a while later, and it speaks to you in such a cryptic way that you often don't know what it's asking of you. Obviously, you'll never admit this publicly, so you tend to express yourself in the same obscure terms when speaking of your patron.
- 3 Vessel:** There's something about you that makes your body a perfect choice for your patron's possessions. Maybe your soul doesn't put up enough of a fight, or you're a deep sleeper, or that your body is specially comfortable or attractive to it. Whatever the case is, your patron possesses you sometimes to go about its businesses in the material plane, and you don't remember any of that.
- 4 He's dumb but nice:** For some strange reason, your patron finds you extremely funny, and not precisely because of your brains. Use your Personality bonus instead of your Intelligence bonus for all your spell checks with *patron bond*, *invoke patron*, and any other patron spell. Neither your patron nor its followers take you too seriously.
- 5 Blood and souls!** Your patron is only interested in souls. That's all it can think about. It's insatiable; and it thinks that you're the right person to bring them to it. You use 1d24 when casting *patron bond* on a PC or a relevant NPC. The NPC's importance is up to the Judge.
- 6 Double agent:** You've struck a pact with your patron, but you actually work for another one. It presented itself to you years ago, and tasked you with the mission of working for another patron and informing your real patron about all the other patron's doings and activities. The time has come. It goes without saying that your situation is tricky and that if your new patron ever finds out about your treason you'll have to hide in another dimension.

Once you've got a bond with a patron, you have the opportunity to acquire a mithril weapon and armor at the same price as a normal weapon or suit or armor. Where do you get them from? It's highly improbable that the village smith deals in mithril items. It's possible that you'll have to travel to an elven settlement, or maybe your patron will provide them in exchange for a particular service. Remember, wearing mithril armor only

means that you can avoid your sensitivity to iron, but you still have to apply the penalty to spell checks (unless the Judge rules otherwise).

Remember also that you don't have to get them right away. Your elf could use hide armor and wield a flint-tipped spear until she raises enough money to buy chain mail and a sword.

Dwarf

Dwarves share many abilities with the warriors, like the choice of a lucky weapon and Mighty Deeds of Arms. However, unlike warriors, dwarves are all usually trained in the same way. The news of their success during their first adventure above ground doesn't take long to reach some recruitment office in a dwarven com-

munity. They're invited to finish their martial training at some underground settlement's garrison. They'll spend some time there, learning the art of war and dwarven traditions, and some months later, they'll go back to the surface world with more than a knack with both the axe and the shield. Roll 1d6:

1 Workaholic: Not only didn't you leave your old occupation, but you're passionate about it and take any available opportunity to work. Roll 1d24 on all skill checks related to your occupation. You always travel with your occupation tools and utensils on you, whatever that is.

2 Foul character: You've got what you call "a hot temper" and what everybody else calls "a foul character". Roll 1d6 to determine what type exactly: (1) Short-tempered: It doesn't take you much to snap and shout; (2) Brooding: You're miserable; (3) Spiteful: You never forget a grudge; (4) Volatile: You think one thing today and the opposite the following day; (5) Stubborn: You never, ever, cave in; (6) Curious: You want to know anything and everything. The Judge could award you with a point of Luck when your temper gets you in some kind of trouble (please note: you, not your comrades).

3 Photophobia: You were so happy in the dwarven tunnels and galleries, where you enjoyed the warm embrace of darkness, humidity, and stale air. Your life above ground is a living hell. You can't stand the scorching touch of the rays of sunshine, nor the repulsive caress of the breeze. During daytime you cover yourself up and take shelter under a parasol that you take everywhere.

4 Litigator: You've become an expert in the complicated dwarven legal system, both its inner working and its relation to other species. You're passionate about anything to do with law, and you could achieve bureaucratic deeds such as an adoption or the distribution of an inheritance. Roll 1d20 on your skill checks related to law and judicial practice, and you never pass up the chance to get involved in a good ol' lawsuit.



- 5 **Forger:** You've learnt the most recondite secrets of the dwarven forge so, even though you're not a wizard, you're able to cooperate with a group of dwarven smiths to forge weapons, armors, and jewels that can be enchanted. Every now and then you're summoned to assist in the creation of one of these legendary objects, and it's your duty to answer the summons. By the same token, if the need ever arises, you could count on your forge colleagues.
 - 6 **Son of...:** Your family is the most important thing for you. Not only you're proud of your heritage, you're obsessed with it and take any opportunity to recite the list of your ancestors and relations until the person who asked your name regrets having done so. Make a huge family tree and bore the hell out of your friends.
-

Halfling

What makes a halfling adventurer so extraordinary isn't their amazing ability to hide, or the way they handle gardening tools as if they were deadly weapons, nor even the astonishing Luck that seems to stick with them and

the rest of the party. What's really extraordinary is that they left their homes in the first place. Something huge had to happen for you to do so. Roll 1d6:

- 1 **The affair scandal:** You've had an affair with a married person, you got the wrong girl pregnant, or you got yourself pregnant and you're not sure who the father is. In any case, you were forced to get the hell out of town to avoid any kind of retaliation. There's probably someone very pissed hunting you down. They'll turn up when you least expect it.
- 2 **The ultimate cookbook:** The local cooking holds no secrets for you, but you know that there's a whole world of flavors and aromas out there waiting to be discovered and blended in a fusion cuisine. You'll regain an additional point of Luck every day that you discover and enjoy a new dish with which to sate your hunger and curiosity.
- 3 **This ain't no place to live:** Your home is a mess, people always coming and going... if not your parents, your in-laws, or some cousins, or your neighbors, or your neighbors' children. There's no intimacy, no tranquility, or even a damn chair to sit on and read. The deserted dungeons, caves, and ruins are a haven of peace, and you only need to slaughter some foul creatures to enjoy the silence. Aahhh... silence... Add +1 to your Sneak silently skill checks.
- 4 **The quest:** A very nice old man gave you a beautiful red stone and asked you to toss it in the magma chamber of an active volcano. The fact is that you couldn't say no. You haven't found a volcano yet, but surely one will show up sooner or later. Sometimes, at night, when everybody's sleeping, the stone seems to speak to you. You can burn a permanent point of Luck to invoke Obitu-Que (or another patron of the Judge's choosing).
- 5 **Debts:** Whether because of a bad investment or a failed business, or because you were robbed or scammed, or maybe because you like gambling a little too much, the fact is that you owe a substantial amount of money, and you won't be able to pay it back working an honorable job. Your only chance is the short and profitable life of an adventurer. You have to spend half of your earnings towards the fulfilling of the debt.
- 6 **Flying solo:** Poverty in your community forces eight out of ten halflings under thirty years old to live with their parents. Luckily, your first adventure reinforced your self-esteem and convinced you that you can find the way to earn a decent living, so you finally left the nest. Your parents didn't take it very well and decided to come along. You have two 0-level followers who are always telling you to bundle up, whether you want them or not.

PIGS from the pit

a level 1 adventure for *dungeon crawl classics*

Pigs From the Pit is a simple adventure designed for the players to get accustomed to their PC's recently-acquired class skills, before leaping headfirst into more dangerous and challenging escapades. It's even possible that this adventure might prove too easy for them. That's good, 'cause they'll never see the incoming storm of death and horror that awaits them. Its ideal placement is after a funnel, so that you can move the PCs from the miserly hamlet where they lived until now (Humiliatown in this case) to a more important city of your milieu (in this case the noble town of Burgstard).

Introduction

The player characters went through a dangerous adventure and lived to tell the tale. However, they're now having a hard time readjusting to the slow and miserable pace of rural life. They've encountered unthinkable wonders and horrors, and amassed a small fortune the hard way. They no longer see the point of going back to ply their old occupations for the sake of a handful of stinking copper pieces.

To make matters worse, it seems as if the bulk of their earnings doesn't exist. There aren't too many people interested in buying the weapons or armor they found, and all the money in the hamlet wouldn't be enough to pay for the silk, precious gems, and the rest of valuable goods that are part of their recently acquired hoard. Days go on, and the heroes languish in the tavern. Their stories, born out of spite and booze, make the rumors about the treasure rotting in their houses spread wide.

All this came to the attention of Parmenio "the Swineherd", the leader of a local band of bandits, highwaymen, and small-time thieves preying on the region's poor peasants. Parmenio put a plan in motion to get the heroes out of the hamlet, so that he can take advantage of their absence to steal the riches they've been talking about for so long.

The Swineherd Band

Parmenio's alias comes from his inseparable herd of pigs. It's not that he's specially attached to the animals, but when he started his criminal career one of the first things he found out is that the pig's voracity was ideal for making stolen spoils and victims disappear. His pigs devour anything they're fed and, should he need to grab his booty, he just has to slaughter one and empty its innards to recover some coins, jewels, or any other valuables.

The Swineherd Band has been hiding for months under a ramshackle bridge on the way to Burgstard. In addition to being a good hideout, it's also a great and stable source of income, since the miscreants charge travellers for the right to cross it. Unfortunately, there have been times when they've tried to bully the wrong people.

Nobody knows why a sorcerer was wandering around the bridge. Nor did they know that he actually was a sorcerer, since Juvernón the Bitter hid his foul taint under a wide collar and baggy clothes. As usual, Parmenio's band tried to charge the traveller a toll, but the wizard didn't seem too inclined to pay, and things got heated... literally. The discussion came to an end with an arcane blast that vaporized several bandits and weakened the bridge. The floor collapsed under the sorcerer's feet and



he fell, plummeting to the bottom of the ravine, where Parmenio's pigs devoured his tainted and corrupted body and all his belongings. From that day on, Parmenio's pigs have behaved strangely, some show peculiar features, and one of them in particular, Big Eyes, advises Parmenio about how to lead the band and helps him plan the jobs when they're alone.

Stealing from some bumpkins who plundered a dungeon is precisely one of those master plans staged by the hog. Piece of cake.

1 The tavern

Read or paraphrase the following:

Once again, you're drowning your sorrows in cheap wine in the only tavern at Humiliatown. You've already bored the heck out of your neighbors with stories about the riches you're hoarding, and you've already insulted them for being so ungrateful to the heroes who risked their lives for them. You're about to shout that you're too good for this filthy hamlet when a raggedly-looking kid bursts into the tavern breathing heavily: "There's a farm under attack! Where are the heroes from Humiliatown?"

The kid is Miguelico, an orphan who takes care of the neighbors' sheep. Following Big Eyes' plan, Parmenio gave Miguelico some coins so he would ask the PCs for help, telling them that something or someone is attacking a farm near the hamlet.

If the player characters ask the lad for more information, Miguelico will tell them that he was shepherding the flock when he heard someone crying for help in a farm. He could spy the smoke and flames amongst the trees. He didn't dare to get closer and decided to go look for the renowned heroes from Humiliatown. After all, he's just a kid.

When the PCs leave the tavern, they'll be able to clearly make out a smoke plume rising in the sky, about two miles north of the hamlet. They'll also notice that they're the focus of the neighbors' suspicious looks. They've been nagging everyone about their heroism, so the villagers now expect them to solve the crisis. If they don't, they'll be the laughingstock of Humiliatown and they'll be the recipient of subtle and harmful nicknames like "sissy", "loudmouth", or "driedshit", that'll be passed on from parents to children till their bloodlines die out in the tempestuous sands of time.

2 The forest

The smoke plume rises from a farm located two miles north of Humiliatown. There's not a clear path leading to the spot, so they PC will have to cross through the forest full of pine trees, briars, and ferns common in this area. Reaching the fire won't be fast or easy. They'll need nearly an hour to get there, and the path isn't entirely free of hazards.

The smoke from the fire has affected the pine processionnaires, whose whitish "tents" plague the pine tops.



Hundreds of them, disoriented and groggy because of the smoke, fall from the branches and nests. As they're getting closer to the farm, all the PCs will have to make a Luck check or a caterpillar will land on them and slip onto their backs through the seams and holes in their clothes. The itching and rashes are unbearable. Those who fail the Luck check won't stop until they get rid of their clothes and the pesky insect. If they dress themselves in a piece of clothing coarser than the finest fabric they'll suffer a -1d penalty on the dice chain to all their actions because of the urticaria (and yeah, armor is quite coarse to the touch). The urticaria will heal in 1d3+1 days' time or when they receive care (like the cleric's *Lay on hands* or a successful DC 10 skill check from a healer, herbalist, alchemist, or the like). Moreover, the victims have to make a DC 13 Fort saving throw or they'll become allergic to the crafty and tiny motherfuckers.

As they get closer to the farm the heat and smoke increases, and they hear a woman shouting for help.

3 The farm

Read or paraphrase:

The forest thins into a clearing where the farm is located, a wooden and stone structure surrounded by a fence and completely engulfed by the flames. The heat is suffocating and drowns you in sweat. The smoke makes your eyes tear and makes it difficult to breathe. The underbrush invades the clearing from the line of the trees, so if a gust of wind caught some embers, it could start a forest fire. There's a woman shouting for help from the inside of the house. God knows how she can be still alive but what's clear is that, if you don't do something quick, she'll burn to death.

The PCs can try to rescue the woman, put out the fire, or wait till the flames burn down the house...though this wouldn't only mean the death of the woman, but it also could make the fire spread all over the forest. What happens then is up to the Judge and their sadism.

The farm's interior is a flaming hell. Every round that a character spends inside she has to make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid the flames and chunks of burning beams that rain down from the wooden roof (1d4 damage and catch fire), and a DC 10 Fortitude save (+1 for every round that they spend inside the house) or take 1d4 temporary Stamina damage due to the smoke. If a character's Stamina is reduced to 0, she falls unconscious, which could prove deadly in these circumstances. Adjust the difficulty of the saves according to the precautions the characters take, like soaking themselves in water before coming in or covering their mouth and nose with a damp scarf.

If they look for water, they'll discover that unfortunately there's not a well at the farm, only an irrigation canal

with stagnant and stinking water running alongside the orchard. The PCs won't probably have time to stop and examine the orchard, but if they do it's crystal clear that nobody's been working the land for months. The chards have dried in their rows, the fruit has fallen from the trees and now lay rotten and desiccated, and the pumpkins have crawled and fought with the weeds and now cover most of the farming land.

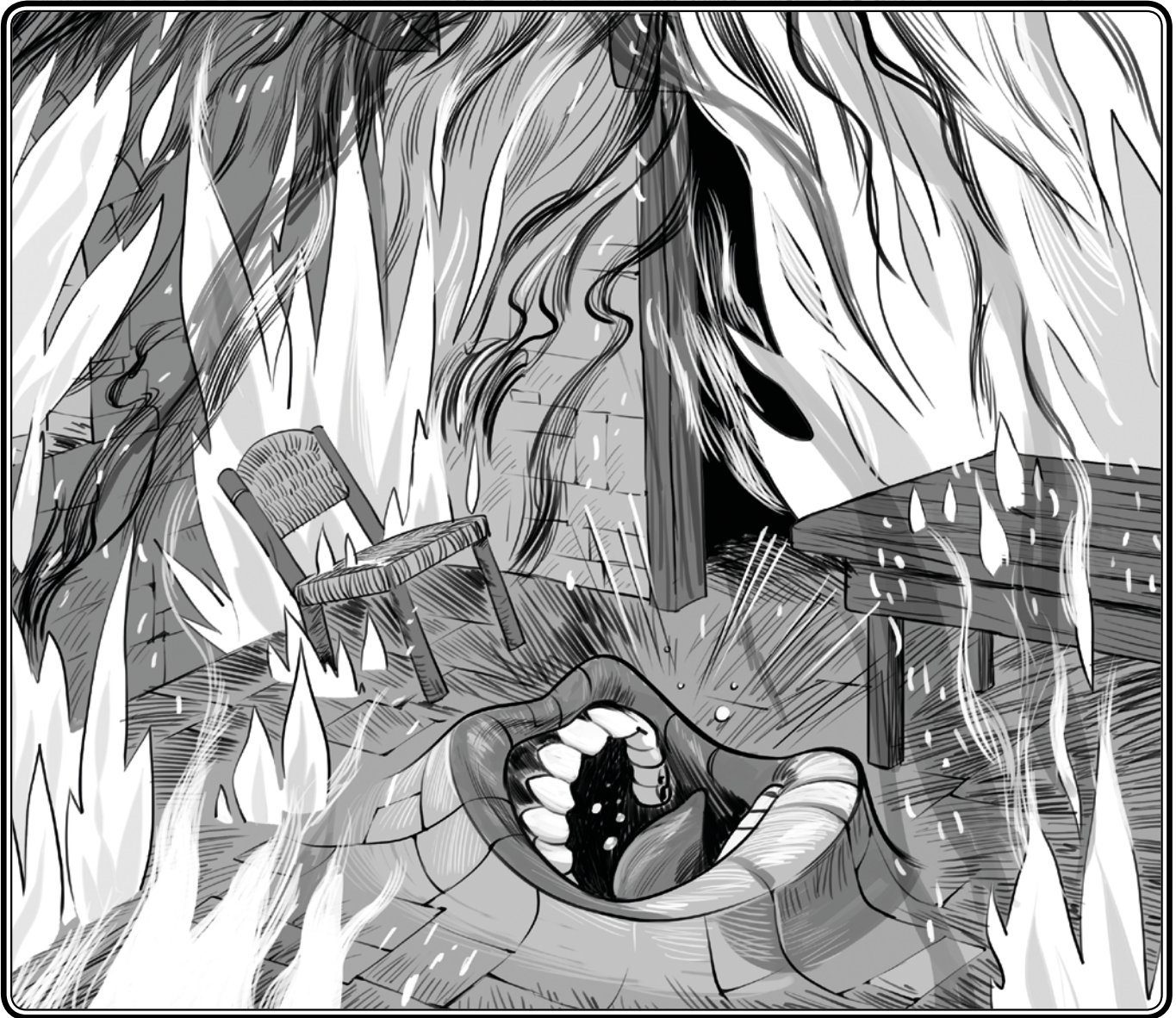
It takes 3 rounds to reach the little room where the help cries come from. After breaking down the heat-swollen door (DC 10 Strength check to do so; it can be attempted again in successive rounds, but they'll have to make the corresponding saves for being in the fire), the PCs will find a small empty room where there's nothing apart from a strange mouth on the beaten-earth floor, shouting for help on and on in a loop, heedless of its surroundings. The farm's been abandoned for some months, despite what the looks might suggest.

In this dark age communications are not great, and, after some time with no news from a family of peasants, neighbors tend to assume that they got ill, are dead, or have been kidnapped by some huge, violent and stinky creature to eat them, enslave them, or both. Nothing justifies going all the way out there to see, even more when the disease or the creature could still be around. But, if the farm's been abandoned for months... whose are the screams that come from it? That's simple (well, simple... you know what I mean): From a *magic mouth*, a spell cast by Parmenio.

Big Eye's plan

Here's where the second part of Big Eyes' master plan unfolds. The idea was to attract Humiliatown's heroes to the abandoned farm and distract them while the bandits plundered their houses, and then run back to their hideout under the bridge. That's why Parmenio cast the *magic mouth*, reading the blotches that appeared on the back of the pig that ate a scroll from the wizard who fell from the bridge: what's known as a *hogscroll*. They then set the farm on fire and used the young Miguelico to raise the false alarm. When the symbols on the *hogscroll* were read, the beast was consumed, its remains smoking and dried. Big Eyes hadn't foreseen that possibility, but he didn't mind sacrificing one of his comrades.

Once the fire is under control, the PCs will be able to examine the farm and its surroundings at leisure. If they do, they'll find the *hogscroll's* withered and lifeless carcass, hidden in a bush. The corpse is mummified, as if it had been drained of all its bodily fluids, and shows strange mutations: it has a second mouth on its back and some bizarre blotches of black hair similar to symbols or glyphs. A wizard, elf, or thief who makes a DC 12 Read scrolls check will identify the pig's blotches as part of the spell, *magic mouth*. Unfortunately, the arcane energies that saturated the *hogscroll's* innards are depleted, so the spell can't be cast again.



Apart from the dead hog, a DC 10 Intelligence check will reveal some hoof tracks from several horses and a couple of pigs that cross through the forest towards Humiliatown following a different path from the one the PCs used.

4 Back to the hamlet

When the heroes go back to the hamlet they won't receive the triumphant welcome they might be expecting, but silence and the suspicious looks of their neighbors, who drop their gossip as soon as they see them.

If questioned, the neighbors answer with a succinct "you've been robbed" and point at the PCs' residences, where some onlookers are snooping around, looking through the doors and windows.

When the PCs arrive at their respective homes they find overturned furniture and scattered belongings on the floor; they've apparently been robbed, and that's exact-

ly the case. Any valuables they could have gotten in their previous adventure will be gone.

Your players could say things like "I always carry my valuables with me, even things like bronze candelabra and 10-yards rolls of silk", or "I hid it under a rock up the mountain summit opposite the river". No way, José. They left their riches at home, under the mattress, or under a loose plank on the floor, or in a cookie jar and Snouty, a hog capable of sniffing gems and precious metals found them almost right away.

A detailed account of the eyewitnesses will reveal the following information:

Shortly after they left a band of riders, cloaked and covered up, arrived. They were with two strange pigs. One of them didn't blink and had an almost-human look, and the other had a very big snout, completely out of proportion.

The bandits threatened the neighbors, broke in the homes of Humiliatown's heroes, one after the other,



and brought the big-snout pig inside. Later, they would leave each house with a clinking sack, that grew bigger and bigger.

After that, they left, riding their horses on the way to Burgstard, with the hogs tailing them. They're way ahead of the PCs, but... who knows, if they hurry up maybe the PCs could catch up with the thieves.

Needless to say, if the PCs want to recover their stuff they'll have to go after the bandits, following them toward Burgstard.

5 The bridge

Unless magic or divine intervention prevents it, the Swineherd band will arrive at their hideout well before the PCs can catch them, because they had both horses and a good head start. The bandits, who are a group of lower-class men and women more pitiful than evil, have a hideout under an old stone bridge, at the bottom of a dry creek. Some years back the Marquis of Burgstard ordered the river to be diverted (to drown some elves' lands where he wasn't allowed to pass through their ancestral forest or some such). Since then, the elves live in a marsh, and the riverbed is just a trickle of water, barely enough for the pigs and horses to drink.

After the central part of the bridge fell down because of the wizard's arcane blast, the bandits refurbished it with some thick wooden planks, turning it into an inverted drawbridge. That's to say, while on a drawbridge the central sections open up to allow the passage of watercraft, in this bridge they open down to impede the pass of travelers...or to throw them down to the bottom of the creek. The bridge can be lowered by activating one of the levers located on each of the tolls or under the bridge, but it can only be raised again from the pulley system under it, in the encampment.

Since the bandits camp on a little-used road, they haven't drawn the attention of the local law enforcement. Furthermore, the creek can be crossed avoiding the bridge, although it means a long detour. Some peasants have done so because they don't have anything with which to pay the toll.

5.1 Tolls

The bandits erected two crude tolls, one at each side of the bridge. They simply stacked some stones so they could barricade themselves behind them, facing the path, should the need arise. There are always three bandits at each toll. One of them halts the travelers while the other two take cover behind the stones and ready their slings. They can shoot from there while benefiting from a good cover (+2 to their AC), pull the lever that lowers the wooden bridge, or ring a

bell to raise the alarm; though a loud shout would be enough for those below in the encampment to know that something's amiss.

In case of an emergency, the bandits have two escape routes: they can either drop a rope to climb down to the encampment, or they can run to the other side of the bridge, trusting their comrades to lower the drawbridge once they cross it. Anyone on that part of the drawbridge when it's being lowered must make a DC 12 Reflex save to grab an edge, or they'll plummet to the bottom of the creek for 6d6 points of damage. As soon as they land, the pigs will try to devour them, regardless of their condition.

The rate to cross the bridge is not fixed, and varies depending on the travelers' looks: from 1 cp or a basket of eggs for the peasants who want to go to the fair to sell their products, to 1 sp or a pair of boots for lordlings or wealthy merchants.

The bandits know their own capabilities and will just greet and wish a good journey to those traveling with men-at-arms.

Bandits (6, 3 at each side of the bridge) *Init* +2; *Atk handaxe* +2 *melee* (dmg 1d6+1) or *sling* +3 *missile fire* (dmg 1d4); *AC* 13 (*hides*); *HD* 1d8; 5 *hp*; *MV* 30'; *Act* 1d20; *SV Fort* +2, *Ref* +2, *Will* +0; *AL* N.

5.2 Slope

A mile away from the bridge, following the dry riverbed, there's a smoother slope descending to the bottom of the ravine. The bandits use it to take their horses up and down. This needs to be done with the utmost care to avoid falls, since the sand and the gravel tumble easily from the slope.

5.3 Pulley system

A complex system of ropes and pulleys run from the bridge pillar to its base, where the machinery that raises and lowers the central section can be controlled. The drawbridge lowers just by pulling a lever, but it's more laborious to raise it, which entails cranking a huge and noisy handle set on the stone rests. There's always a bandit guarding it.

Bandit (1): *Init* +2; *Atk handaxe* +2 *melee* (dmg 1d6+1); *AC* 13 (*hides*); *HD* 1d8; 5 *hp*; *MV* 30'; *Act* 1d20; *SV Fort* +2, *Ref* +2, *Will* +0; *AL* N.

5.4 Bandit huts

The bandits built some shacks, taking advantage of the holes on the creek's sides, stones from the bridge, and



some planks. These are humble abodes containing just a pallet, simple crockery (plates and the like), pans, rabbit traps, and varied objects from their robberies. Some band members live as a couple, and there are even some brats hanging around the encampment, torturing ants or throwing stones at the birds.

A thorough search of every shack will result in 2d8 copper pieces, 1d6 silver pieces, and 1d3+1 random objects, trade goods from the Table 1-3 from the *DCC RPG* rulebook.

Bandits (5): *Init* +2; *Atk* handaxe +2 *melee* (dmg 1d6+1) or sling +3 *missile fire* (dmg 1d4); *AC* 13 (*hides*); *HD* 1d8; 5 *hp*; *MV* 30'; *Act* 1d20; *SV* *Fort* +2, *Ref* +2, *Will* +0; *AL* N.

5.5 Parmenio's cave

Parmenio "the Swineherd" is quick-witted and sharp-eyed, an opportunist who knows how to make the most of the resources at hand, be them an old bridge, a group of the dispossessed, or a herd of pigs. He looks hardy and unkempt, and could be mistaken for an ordinary peasant if not for his leather armor and the short sword dangling from his belt.

As the band's leader, Parmenio has the best lodging in the encampment, a cave deeper than the rest. The interior is surprisingly luxurious. He has a four-poster bed, a fine wood desk, candelabra, tapestries hanging from the walls, and rugs covering the floor. Since all of them come from pillaging, the style, color and state of the items is different, which endows the chamber with a dreamy quality, like from a grotesque fairy tale. In the desk drawer there's a bag of tobacco, a pipe, a leather pouch containing 2d14 silver pieces, and a pearl necklace worth 15 gold pieces. On a small shelf there's a bottle of cognac

sealed with wax and a crystal glass, a luxury indeed around here. Nothing else of value can be found, as Parmenio habitually feeds his herd of pigs with the loot of his robberies, so nobody can find them.

Although Parmenio lives alone, Balbina the pigwoman sometimes keeps him company and warms his bed on winter's cold nights. Big Eyes, who come and goes as he pleases, can also be found here, even though the bandit bars the door.

Parmenio is a bit unsettled. The pigs have been behaving strangely ever since they ate the wizard and his belongings, Big Eyes more than most. Parmenio was somewhat amused at the beginning, when the hog spoke to him when they were alone, but for some time now, when the bandit wakes up in the middle of the night, the pig is by his bed, staring at him. Moreover, the pig's plans are increasingly more ambitious and dangerous. He demands a bigger share of the loot, and sometimes it looks like the herd gets angry when someone draws too close to them.

Parmenio is very fond of his own hide and of his men and women. If some trespassers break into the encampment at the point of a sword and there are casualties, he'll try to surrender. He'll do whatever it takes to do it far from Big Eyes, because he'll try to take advantage of the situation so the PCs "deal" with the animal. What's more, he'll confess that everything he robbed from them is in the pig's innards. You can make use of this negotiation to introduce seeds of future adventures, like an offer from Parmenio to join his band, a fence contact from the city of Burgstard who will buy any jewel or valuable from the PCs, or a treasure map of a mysterious place in exchange for their lives.

Parmenio "the Swineherd" *Init* +4; *Atk* short sword +4 *melee* (dmg 1d8+2) or dagger +5 *missile fire* (dmg 1d4); *AC* 14

(studded leather); HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: read languages +3, cast spell from a scroll 1d14+1; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.

5.6 Pigsty

There's a crude pen made with wooden stakes under the bridge where the herd of pigs frolic in the stinky mud and lay down to enjoy the sun's heat. In the past the bandits closed the pen, but they stopped doing so after the animals devoured the wizard, since as soon as they stopped looking the fence was open again, even if they had closed it. Now the pigs only stay inside of it when they wish, and it's pretty common to find them sniffing around the encampment.

Parmenio and Balbina take care of the animals, which is to say that mainly Balbina does. She is a short and stocky villager with a straw-colored and messy hair who took care of her family's pigs until the swine fever killed them all. When they were down and out and utterly famished, she heard rumors about the Swineherd band and thought, rightly, that her abilities could come in handy. Balbina doesn't know anything about Big Eyes' intelligence, but she's noticed the animals' strange behavior and approaches them with care...and a sharp knife tucked in her skirt's creases.

Balbina: Init +2; Atk knife +2 melee (dmg 1d4); AC 13 (hides); HD 1d8; 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

The pigs from the pit

After devouring Juvernón "the Sour" and his belongings, some of the pigs were bathed in arcane energy. Since then, they've developed a liking to certain delicacies and some skills related to them. After all, you are what you eat. There are 13 pigs in the herd. Big Eyes, the alpha male, 6 hogs with extraordinary abilities, and 6 completely normal pigs. Some pigs have died, have got lost, or have been eaten by the bandits, but a few days later they're 13 again thanks to Big Eyes' animal summoning spell.

Ordinary hogs (6): Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4+1); AC 11; HD 1d8; 6 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: scent; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Big Eyes: Big Eyes looks at you as if he could understand... and indeed he does. In fact, he could speak to you and you wouldn't be able to understand half of the things he would tell you. This huge male pig swallowed the wizard's head and now he's got a soft spot for humanoid brains. His intelligence increases every time he consumes grey matter, and is now greater than that of some of the bandits'. On top of that, he's begun to gain access to the arcane knowledge and memories of Juvernón "the Sour" and he's building a plan of global

domination. The first step is taking over the Swineherd band and the adventurer's group, if he finds the way to do it. If he's cornered, he'll talk to them and try to convince them to "adopt" him. Another of his objectives is to improve his porcine comrades by giving them the food they need to enhance their supernatural capabilities.

Big Eyes: Init +1; Atk bite+3 melee (dmg 1d6); CA 13; HD 3d8; 14 hp; MV 30'; Acc 1d20; SP: telepathic bond, spell-casting (+3, dispel magic, choking cloud, animal summoning (only hogs)); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

Big Eyes has a telepathic bond with the rest of the herd. If he felt threatened by someone, the rest of the pigs would get aggressive and violently defend him while he casts spells from the rearguard, particularly *dispel magic*. Don't miss the chance to enact a spell duel against an intelligent pig!

On the other hand, if Big Eyes dies, the remaining pigs will be back to their usual docility.

Snouty: Snouty has a meaty and disproportionate muzzle, with which he's always sniffing and boring through the ground in search of jewels and coins. He's able to smell gems and precious metals like a dwarf (check the DCC RPG rulebook, page 52). If he's sliced open an amalgam of melted metals worth 25 gp can be extracted from his stomach.

Snouty: Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: scent; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Velvet: this cheerful piglet is partial to fabrics, particularly if they're soft. His skin is silky and shiny, and casts reflections of multiple and lively colors when bathed by the sunlight. It's impossible to come across him without caressing him. If he's flayed, his skin could be worth 20 gp.

Velvet: Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: soft; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Precious: after devouring all kinds of canvases, statues, and other works of art Precious has become a very beautiful pig...very much so. She's got a *je-ne-sais-quoi* that makes her pleasing to the eye. Nobody is able to kill or mistreat her in any way if they don't make a DC 14 Will save first. She's so pretty...

Precious: Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: pretty (DC 14 Will save to mistreat her); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

Samantha: a sow with huge teats, who is always thirsty and gulps down any liquid she finds. Samantha swallowed all Juvernón's potions, lamp oil, spirits, and poisons. Since then, her twelve teats are always about to

burst and every time she's milked, roll a 1d6 to determine what kind of liquid gushes from them: (1) milk; (2) water; (3) oil; (4) giant centipede poison (DCC RPG, page. 446); (5) red wine; (6) potion of... roll 1d7 (1) healing, (2) invisibility, (3) levitation, (4) shrinking, (5) polymorph, (6) growth, (7) longevity.

Samantha: *Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: chaos breasts; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.*

Ashy: this pig looks emaciated and sickly. He only eats carrion, and in small quantities, because he's got a little health issue: he's dead. Ashy is the porcine equivalent of a ghoul. He hasn't started a ghoul epidemic in the region yet, but that's only a matter of time.

Ashy: *Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4 and paralysis); AC 12; HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: paralysis (DC 14 Will save or paralysis for 1d6 hours), un-dead traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.*

A creature killed by Ashy who is not completely devoured will rise as a ghoul during the next full moon, unless the corpse is blessed.

Blotches: Blotches has his rosy back dotted with black blotches that look like letters and arcane symbols, and some feathers are beginning to grow behind his ears. His diet is based on paper and cellulose, mainly coming from magic scrolls. This has turned him into a *hogscroll* who contains the spells *feather fall*, *ward portal* and *patron bond* (Sezrekan).

Blotches: *Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4+1); AC 12; HD 2d8; 9 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: hogscroll; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.*

Hogscroll: when the pig digests a scroll the magic symbols are transferred to his back. The hogscroll can show one or more spells, depending on how many he has been able to eat. Unfortunately these spells can't be copied in a spellbook, so the pig is needed until they are cast. When the last spell from the hogscroll is cast, he dies consumed by the arcane energies.

Outcome

There are three possible outcomes: Parmenio's defeat, Big Eyes' defeat, or both. The PCs can ally with any of them, but the only way to recover their belongings is to slice open the pigs and rummage through their entrails. They can also keep one or all of those animals, which will give them some benefits and will also cause many problems.

Remember, everything in a pig is put to good use. That's why, if Big Eyes dies, his carcass won't be left to rot: the bandits will quarter it, cook it, make cold cuts, and will eat him. If the PCs kill or disband the bandits,

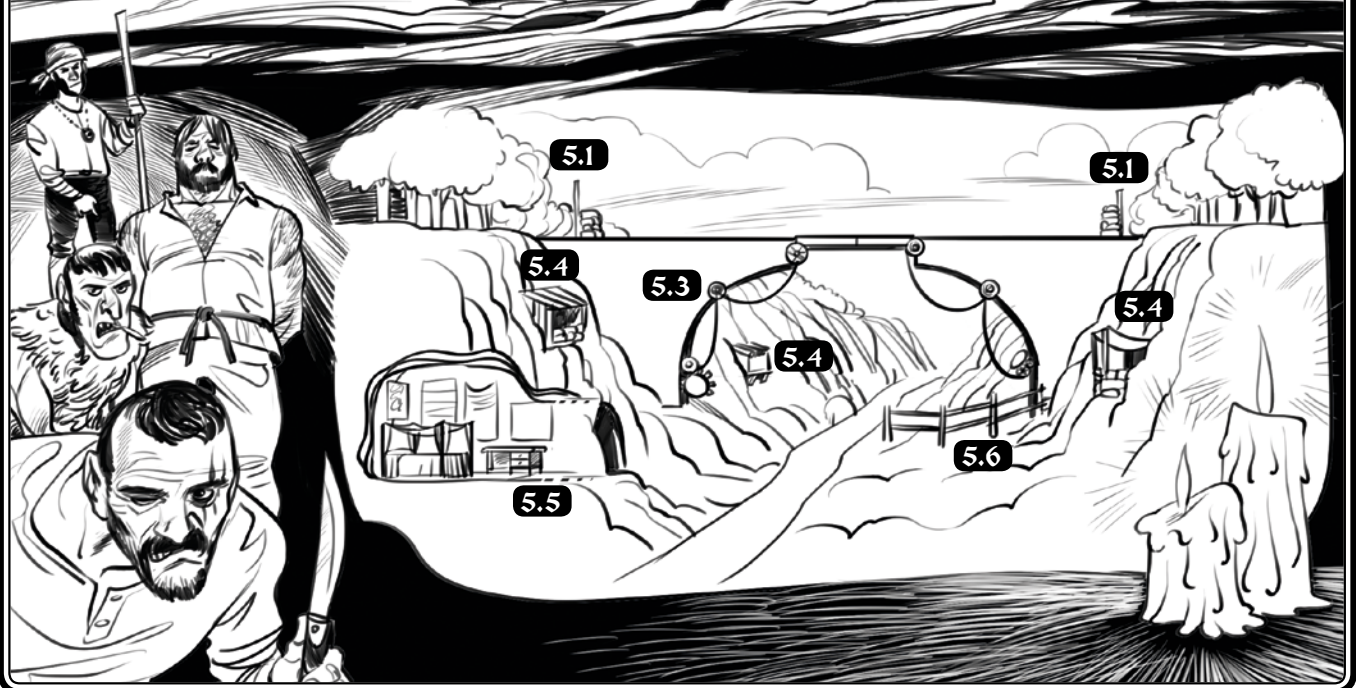
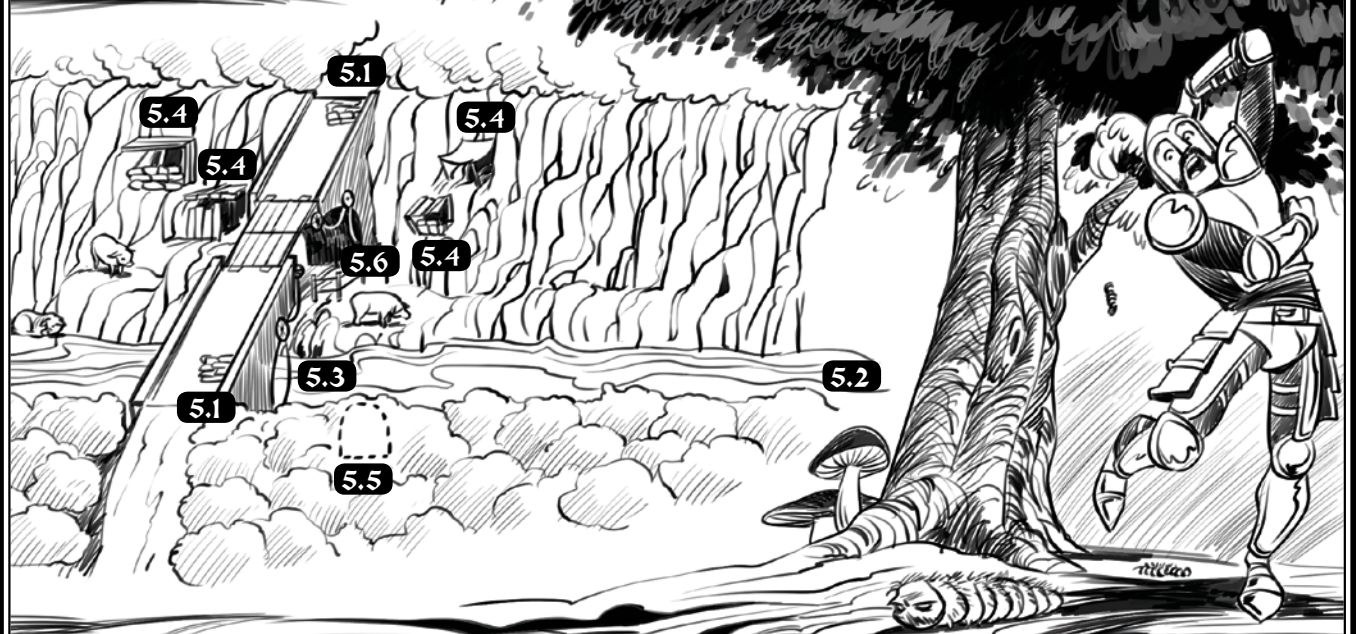
the pig's carcass will be devoured by carrion birds or other forest animals. In any case, one of the partakers of Big Eyes' banquet (be it a human or an animal) will slowly lose his personality to become Juvernón "the Sour". The wizard will raise from the dead by possessing another body, he'll seek revenge on the Swineherd band and his allies, and will resume his arcane and enigmatic objectives.

Failure is an option

This adventure is not so difficult so that a moderately competent group should have trouble finishing it, but hey, stranger things have happened, and sometimes dice can spoil the best plans. If the adventurers can't end the menace of the Swineherd band, Big Eyes will take control of it after Parmenio has an unfortunate "accident". He'll complete his transformation to a second incarnation of Juvernón "the Sour" and will become a despot who will rule the shire, helped by his six porcine lieutenants.



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the stone heir

Introduction

Alarico, the stern Marquis of Burgstard, is coming to the end of his days. His only remaining joy is the company of his sole heir, Marcial, also known as "the Bold", a big fan of hunting. A few weeks ago the youngster, ignoring his father's advise and honoring his nickname, gathered a hunting party to track down and kill a basilisk. What happened was what had to happen. The only survivor who got back delivered the sad news that Marcial was boldly petrified in the beast's lair. The Marquis moved heaven and earth until he found an alchemist who could cure the dramatic petrification, only to find out that the alchemist wasn't willing to go into the basilisk's lair to apply the required oils. He needed to find a group of brave adventurers who would recover the statue and bring it back to the castle.

Enter the player characters.

Adventure's summary

"The stone heir" is an adventure designed for a group of 4-6 PCs of 1st level.

The PCs have to travel through the dangerous forests of Burgstard and go into the basilisk's lair to recover the petrified body of Marcial "the Bold" and bring it back to the castle. Unfortunately, all their efforts could be in vain, since someone beaten them to it.

I Getting ready for the hunt

Read or paraphrase the following:

In a cold, dark hall of Burgstard's castle a decrepit alchemist named Hirónides seems to have finished his speech about the basilisk's habits and capabilities, whilst he toys with a petrified rook, an alleged victim of one of those creatures. You're here answering the Marquis calling, or more precisely, his gold's

Getting the PCs involved

The Marquis called for the bravest amongst his subjects, offering lands and a title to get someone to answer. Ambition is a good motivation for those adventurers who want to amount to something in this life.

On the other hand, the basilisk's had free rein for years in these lands. During this time many shepherds, hunters, and travelers have fallen in its clutches. Some characters may volunteer in order to end its reign of terror or to exact vengeance for a loved one who was a victim of the lizard. So much altruism is improbable, but it could happen.

Furthermore, the only survivor of the hunting party, a halfling from Humiliatown called Rufo "the ragman", needs all the help he can get from friends and relatives to avoid the gallows if the Marquis doesn't retrieve his son.

Lastly, any female character could have had a fleeting romance with Marcial "the Bold"...and this may be her chance to lay hands on a title, lands and the Marquis' favor, because the lack of those were, according to Marcial, the only reason they couldn't be more than bed partners. Now nothing can get in the way of their love.

calling. The old Alarico is willing to bestow a title and lands to those able to rescue the petrified body of his only son, Marcial "the Bold", from a basilisk's lair. Once he's back in the castle, the alchemist will be able to apply the oils that he claims will turn Marcial back to his original state. Knowing the old Marquis, the punishment for failure will be proportional to the reward for a success.

The old alchemist clears his throat noisily, waking you from introspection before asking: "Any questions?"

Since they volunteered for this dangerous mission, the PCs receive a short lecture on the basilisks' capabilities and habits that could be summed up as "Watch out for his gaze, it's petrifying". They'll also have the castle's blacksmith and engineer at their service, a grumpy guy called Otilio, as well as a modest budget of 10 gold pieces for him to design and build any contraption they deem necessary to hunt down the basilisk. 10 gold pieces, not a piece more, because the Marquis doesn't really trust blindly in the group's chance of success, nor does he believe that they won't run away with the brand-new contrivance at the drop of a hat. The Marquis, a generous man despite all, will also give them a mule to carry all that junk and a small cart to bring his son's body back.

Let the players be creative and propose their devices to avoid the basilisk gaze: mirrored shields, helmets with rear-view mirrors, etc...

The PCs are allowed to stay at the castle barracks while Otilio assembles their designs, and then they'll meet their guide, Rufo "the ragman", the only survivor of Marcial's failed hunting party. Rufo answers any question about what happened to the best of his abilities, which are few, since he saved his skin thanks to his outstanding cowardice. He doesn't know much apart from the location of the basilisk's lair.

When they're ready they'll depart...an impressive retinue of adventurers, a mule, and a cart following "the ragman", leaving the castle amidst the cheers and wagers of Burgstard's good people.

NPCs: Rufo, 0-level halfling ragman. Init +0; Atk scissors +1 melee (dmg 1d4); AC 11; HD 1d4 (3 hp); MV 20'; SP: Infravision 30'. SV: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -2; AL N. Rufo will turn tail at the slightest signs of trouble.

II The lands of Burgstard

Rufo "the ragman" leads the PCs to the basilisk's lair taking the same route as he did with Marcial's hunting party: a first leg through the forest to the Marquis' hunting cabin, and a second leg crossing the hill to the caves where the beast dwells.

The cart hinders travel away from the well-trodden ways. The PCs will have to push it, stick it out of the mires, and take some detours. The journey is hard, and the mule isn't much help.

The roads and forests of the lands of Burgstard are as safe or dangerous as you want to make them, but it would be ideal if the journey to the hunting cabin isn't too troublesome, so that the characters don't expend their valuable resources in random encounters. If you're still looking for trouble, these are some of the encounters you might use (or roll 1d8 if you prefer the responsibility to lie in the hand of fate):

- 1 A matter of boundaries.** The shouting of two men arguing about something related to apples can be heard from the road. If the PCs decide to investigate, they are able to follow the noise to a couple of neighboring shanties. Matching orchards are separated by a low stone wall. Next to the wall of one them grows a huge apple tree; its trunk is completely crooked, and its branches, ladden with apples, hang over the other orchard. Two men are heatedly arguing about who is the legitimate owner of the apples. If the characters decide to intercede, they'll find out that neither of them will listen to reason, and neither are willing to cave in. Any suggestion like cutting down the apple tree (or something similar) will enrage them both. After shouting "I'll kill you dead, damn my soul!", they try to chase the Solomonic judge out with sticks and stones.

Brawling neighbors (2): Init +1; Atk stick +1 melee (dmg 1d4) or stones +1 missile fire (dmg 1d4); AC 10; HD 1d4, 2, 3 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -2; AL N.

- 2 Nosy brothers.** The party bump into a boy whose trousers are tied up with a piece of string, and he starts walking with them. The lad doesn't seem to be the sharpest knife in the drawer, and will ask them who they are, where they are from and where they are headed, and many other profound questions like: "Why are you carrying a sword?", "Where did you buy those boots?", or "What's your father's name?" Then he'll leave. After a while, another lad with a passing resemblance to the former will show up, and ask them what they were talking about with his brother. He will try to make them repeat the conversation they had, just to leave afterwards. Nothing's amiss, they're just nosy.

3 Stubborn like a mule. The mule stops and decides that it won't go on for the rest of the day. Good luck!

4 Dire centipedes. These arthropods usually nest in the hollow trunks of the trees that are knocked down by the wind, like the one that lays on the path blocking the way for the mule and the cart. As soon as anyone tries to move it apart to clear the way, its dwellers, 1d4+1 centipedes as big as an arm, scurry out of their hideout to stop them. Watch out, for they could also sting the mule.

Dire centipede: Init +1; Atk sting +1 melee (dmg 1 and poison); AC 12; HD 1d4, 2 hp; MV 30', climb 30'; SP poison (Fort DC 12 or partial paralysis); SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will -1; AL N.

Centipede poison: Anyone stung by a dire centipede must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or the affected limb will be paralysed for as many rounds as the range of failure. I.e., if the save is missed by 5 points, paralysis lasts for 5 rounds. Choose the affected limb or roll a 1d6 to determine it: 1: Right arm (unable to hold a weapon). 2: Left arm (unable to hold a shield). 3: Right leg (movement speed reduced to half). 4: Left leg (movement speed reduced to half), 5: Torso (suffocation, mouth-to-mouth respiration during 1d6 minutes). 6: Head (total paralysis).

5 The fortune teller. A nypsy, holding a little branch of rosemary, offers to read the fortune of the character with the lowest Personality (the nypsies are a community of nomadic and free elves who revere the Three Fates as their patrons). If the PC rejects the nypsy, she'll feel offended and will leave after cursing and insulting her in every possible way. The character has been inflicted with a minor curse and during the rest of the gaming session, the Judge can make her repeat a successful check and keep the second result. If she accepts, however, the nypsy will read her hand and say: "I see a beautiful dark-haired woman/man coming from afar, but she/he'll ignore you." Once this encounter is over, the encounter number 6 will automatically take place (see below). She then asks them if they can spare any money. If the PC gives her more than one copper piece, the nypsy bids them farewell and blesses the character who gave her money, so that during that gaming session, that PC will be able to reroll a failed check and keep the second result.

6 A beautiful dark-haired woman/man comes from afar, but they'll ignore you. The party sees someone getting close from afar. As the the distance shortens they'll realize that is a beautiful dark-haired woman/man who, as she/he passes by, completely ignores them and goes on.

7 Taxmen. Also called "bandits" in other milieus, a taxman accompanied by two guards and backed by the Marquis of Burgstard's authority. He insists that the PCs pay certain fees and taxes they've never heard of. He demands 5% of whatever they have in their sacks. They'll need to make a DC 15 skill check modified by Intelligence (and occupation) to prove to the taxman that they're exempt from that particular fee. If they can't convince him, and refuse to pay it, the guards are authorized to detain and take them to Alarico's oubliettes.

Guards (2): Init +0; Atk spear +1 melee (dmg 1d8); AC 12; HD 1d6, 4 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP authority; SV: Fort +1; Ref +0; Will +1; AL L.

Authority: The taxman as well as the guards are officials of the authority of the feudal lord, so attacking them implies breaking the local laws.

8 The nigh-compulsory random encounter with wolves. You can hear a pack of wolves howling in the distance that... blah blah blah... they're getting closer... blah blah blah... they bite your ass... blah blah blah... oh god so scary, I'd rather be dead.

Hungry wolves (1d6+1): Init +2; Atk bite +1d3 melee (dmg 1d3+1); AC 12; HD 1d6, 4 hp; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP: deed (trip); skirmisher; pack; night vision 60'; SV: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL N.

Skirmisher: A wolf can move, attack, and keep moving until it completes its movement, and it won't incur a free attack when withdrawing after doing so.

Pack: a wolf gets a +1 bonus to its attack roll for each wolf that attacked the same creature in the same round. The bonus is cumulative.



III The hunting cabin

Background

Lady Urraca Borja, the youngest of the wealthy, powerful, and resentful Borja family, has been involved in a tormented and passionate romance with Marcial “the Bold” for months. The couple has kept it a secret from their parents (particularly hers), since the Marquis’ son has a reputation as a womanizer that’s only slightly surpassed by his fame for courage. His frequent hunting forays were the perfect excuse to meet Urraca in a secret chamber located under the hunting cabin of the Burgstard Marquises. That was the plan they had in mind for after he killed the basilisk.

It’s been a long while since anyone else has set foot in the cabin where Urraca and her maidservants waited for the dashing Marcial. Luck dictated that a storm knocked down a tree just on top of the access to the secret chamber. The days of confinement turned into weeks, and finally the hunger and despair forced Lady Urraca to assert her status, killing one of her maidservants to devour her dead flesh. It didn’t take long for the rest to experience the same fate.

Such an unspeakable sin left Lady Urraca completely insane and on halfway to becoming a ghoulish. The maidservants’ souls are trapped in the dolls that Marcial gave Lady Urraca to decorate their love nest.

And here’s where the PCs will spend the night.

Development

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs approach the cabin:

At sunset, the valiant party of adventurers, tired of pushing the cart and exhausted from pulling the mule, reach their destination. The hunting cabin of the Marquis is in the middle of the forest, in an isolated place ideal for hunting deer. A path meanders through the trees up to the wooden porch where dead leaves and small twisted twigs pile up. It’s a simple building, with a square floor plan and a gabled roof. The wall is made of stone with a chimney inside. The ravages of time, weather, and lack of maintenance give it a decrepit and sinister look; not that the dozens of deer antlers or the rhythmical beats of the window shutters buffeted by the wind help to alleviate that appearance.

The adjoining stable is little more than an awning with a pen and a trough; and some feet away, almost overrun by the forest, there’s a hut whose function is probably to keep tools, bear traps, and similar stuff.

1.1 Porch

The porch covers the entrance door to the cabin, a window, and a wooden bench where hunters can sit and smoke calmly, drink some liquor, brag about their kills, and skin rabbits, judging by the blood and hair stains that dot the floor planks.

The door is locked (DC 10 Pick lock or a DC 15 Strength check to batter it down), but there's a key hidden under one of the planks. This hiding place can be located by tapping on the floor until finding a hollow sound. Rufo knows of this key, so if he's still with them, he'll easily open the door. When they do, the characters will discover that there's something rotten in the hunting cabin. Literally.

1.2 Common room

The main door grants access to a room with bunk beds, a stone fireplace, and a huge black bear skin rug. On one side there's a dining room with an oak table and wooden benches, and a door leads to the Marquis' chamber. There's an omnipresent stench of putrefaction, so foul that it's almost mandatory to open the windows to air the cabin a bit.

If the stink of decay isn't enough to convince the PCs that they need to investigate where the stench is coming from, they'll hear the sound of claws scratching the wood in the middle of the night, as well as some moans, and a woman's broken voice, whispering: "*Marcial... Is that you?... Why are you taking so long?... Come... I'm waiting for you...*" The voice seems to come from the Marquis chamber, specifically from the stove. The adventurers can look into the voices, ignore them and try to sleep, or even camp outside (which would be ill-advised since there are packs of wolves in the area). Rufo, for his part, will spend the night with the mule in the stable as soon as he sniffs (rotten) danger.

1.3 Marquis' chamber

The chamber is reserved for the Marquis or his son whenever they spend time in the cabin. The door to the chamber is locked (DC 10 Pick lock or a DC 15 Strength check to batter it down). Moreover, the lock has a needle trap ready to be activated if anyone tampers with it.

Poisoned needle trap: (*dmg 1, and poison*); *Find trap* DC 10; *Disable trap* DC 10. *Notes: Scorpion venom, Fort DC 14, 1d4 Stamina damage.*

The room contains a four-poster bed covered with hides, a chest, and a wood stove. There's a tapestry on the east wall depicting a hunting scene, with a matching, heavy rug under the chest.

The stench emanates from the stove, and it will be more obvious after examining it. This stove's flue is connected to the one underground, taking advantage of the common exhaust to vent smoke from the hidden chamber without drawing attention.

The chest is locked (Pick lock DC 10) and inside there are quality hunting clothes, handkerchiefs, riding

boots, and other Marquis son's personal objects. It's not advisable to keep them, or at least to be seen with them in Burgstard lands.

The rug and chest cover a trap door locked with a padlock (Pick lock DC 10). Upon opening the trap door, a gust of fetid air surges forth. PCs must succeed in a DC 12 Fort or be nauseated for 2d4 minutes (-1d penalty on all rolls and a shameful puking that ruins the rug). There are scratch marks on the interior of the trap door, as well as traces of dry blood and broken fingernails stuck in the wood.

2.1 Underground access

A wooden ladder descends some 10 feet towards a passage engulfed in an absolute darkness, like a colossal open maw. Below, a dark and narrow corridor dug in the earth goes deeply to the north. A metallic tube coming from under the stove runs along the corridor wall.

The corridor is very narrow and claustrophobic, so it's only possible to walk in a single line, and even then only by almost walking sideways.

2.2 Marquis' dressing room

The corridor ends at a wooden door that opens to this room. It's unlocked.

A hanging bar with dozens of suits covers one of the walls side-to-side, while some candelabra with consumed candles hang from the opposite wall. There are scattered and torn garments on the floor, and blood spatters on the rug and walls. In the middle, in front of a full-length mirror that is also splattered with blood, stands a grisly mannequin made with bones and dressed in young Marcial's glad rags, including a courtesan wig. Its mouth is covered with carmine, as if someone's been kissing it.

There's another wooden door on the far side of the room.

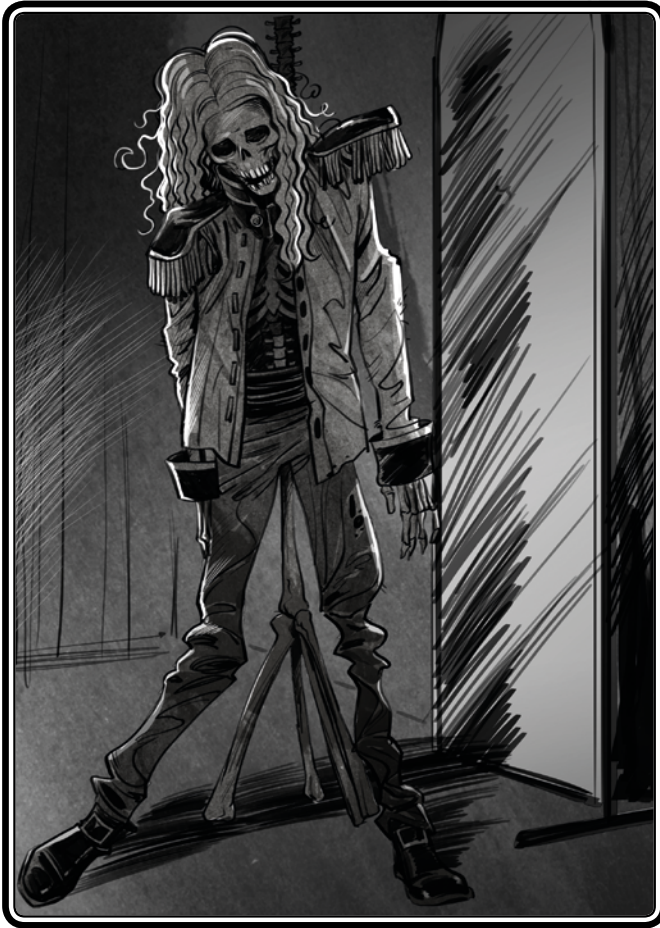
The Marquis son used this room to change clothes and splash on some perfume before meeting his lovers.

If the PCs examine the morbid mannequin, a successful DC 10 skill check modified by Intelligence shows that the skeleton has been assembled using the bones of different women, and that they were painstakingly gnawed.

2.3 Bedroom

This is Marcial's love nest, also known as "the knocking shop".

An enormous four-poster bed fills the room. It has a red velvet canopy and golden embroidery that match-



es the silk sheets. The walls are filled with shelves lined with porcelain dolls. In front of the bed, next to a wooden stove, there's a dresser and a woman sitting at it. Half-hidden by shadow, she combs her hair facing a broken mirror, while she murmurs: "Marcial, my love. I knew you'd come".

Lady Urraca will leap on the most attractive male character in the party (the one with the highest Personality score) and try to paralyze him...to receive her loving attentions as soon as she devours his pesky companions. To say that her beauty is a shadow of its former self is being too generous, because she's in a very advanced stage of her ghoulish transformation. She has only some remaining tufts of hair, her skin is stretched over the bones, her teeth are sharper, and her fingernails have turned into splintered claws. All of this is coupled with an exquisite stench of death and decay.

Furthermore, three of the porcelain dolls harbor the tormented souls of Urraca's three maidservants. The possessed dolls stay motionless until the characters turn their backs on them, at which point they'll levitate or walk towards them to ambush them, try to hide again among the rest of the dolls, or even to befriend some of the adventurers.

Lady Urraca Borja, passionate ghoul: Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (dmg 1d4+1 and paralysis) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12; HD 4d8; 16 hp; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP: un-dead

traits, paralysis, infection, infravision 100'; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.

Paralysis: A humanoid creature bitten by a ghoul must make a DC 14 Will save or will be paralyzed, unable to move or make any physical action during 1d6 hours. Elves are not affected by the paralysis.

Un-dead traits: It can be turned by a cleric. It doesn't eat or breathe and it's immune to critical hits, disease, and poison, as well as the spells Sleep, Charm person, and Paralysis, to any other mind effect and cold damage.

Infection: A creature killed by a ghoul is usually devoured. Those who are not will rise as a ghoul the following full moon, unless the corpse is blessed.

Sally, Sue, and Betsy, possessed dolls (3): Init +1, Atk bites, scratches, and hair-pulling +1 melee (dmg 1); AC 13; HD 2d6, 7 hp; MV 30', levitate 10'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, backstab, best friends forever; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

Backstab: As the thief skill, when a doll surprises its victim or attacks from behind, its attack bonus increases to +3 and if it hits, its base damage increases to 1d4 and gets a critical hit (1d10/Table II) if the attack succeeds.

Un-dead traits: Like Lady Urraca.

Best friends forever: The doll spends an action to curse the target, who must make a DC 14 Will save. If the target fails the save, the doll will become linked to the victim's Luck score, who from that point on will try to protect it at any cost. If the character doesn't take the doll with them, their Luck score will be reduced to 0. Additionally, from that moment on the doll will communicate with her in deceitful and malicious whispers that nobody else can hear. It's a minor curse that can only be lifted with the spell remove curse or when the doll decides to change friends. Those who make the save will be immune to future attempts made by the dolls.

Once they deal with this threat from beyond the grave, the PCs will be able to examine the room carefully. At the other side of the bed there's another wooden door and, on the dresser, a letter signed by "the Bold" addressed to a certain Lady Urraca Borja. The letter, utterly perfumed, reads:

Urraca, my love.

I can't stop thinking about you since our last rendezvous. I'm burning with desire to see you again.

Come to the cabin when you see me leaving the castle for another hunting foray with my retinue. I'll bring you a trophy the likes you've never seen.

Yours, Marcial.



If the PCs examine the bed they'll find a poisoned dagger that Marcial hides under the mattress, in case an enraged father or husband shows up. It's wrapped up in a black cloth to prevent him from cutting himself accidentally, and bathed in scorpion poison (Fort DC 16 or 1d4 Stamina damage). Furthermore, in the nightstand's little drawer is the secret of his legendary love-making skills: a vial filled with a potion that grants 1d5 temporary Stamina points for an hour.

On the other hand, the fetid Lady Urraca wears a couple of earrings worth 5 gp, a necklace with a mounted white agate worth 10 gp, and a ring with the Borja family seal. This seal can be identified making a skill check modified by Intelligence. The family will award a 50 gp reward to the person that brings it back, and they'll make her an unwitting part of a twisted plan to retaliate against the Marquis of Burgstard.

2.4 Lovers' dressing room

This is a dressing room almost identical to the other one, but in this there are dresses and nightgowns hanging

from the bar and three exquisitely upholstered comfortable chairs, where human remains and chewed bones among rags of blooded clothes lay.

If the PCs examine the bodies of the deceased maidservants, they'll realize that some of the bones are missing: those that Urraca used to make the sinister mannequin in Marcial's dressing room. A thorough search of the remains and the dresses uncovers the tiny maidservants' handbags, which contain a total of 30 cp, as well as brushes, makeup, a powder compact, and many other stuff a lady shouldn't leave home without, and which at some point could be used to dress up. As a woman, that is.

2.4 Exit tunnel

The narrow, dark tunnel ends in a ladder to a trap door leading outside. Unfortunately, the trap door cannot be opened in any way. There are also scratches, blood splatters and hit marks on it.

Outside, a fallen tree over the trapdoor makes it impossible to open it till the tree is removed. To do so, a DC 15



Strength check must be made (for every character helping, the DC will be reduced in 1 to a minimum of DC 10). If the PCs can't make the check, they'll be able to burn 2 points of Strength between them to remove the tree. This is similar to spellburn in effect. Nearby, among the underbrush, are the corpses of four horses with their reins tied to a tree, devoured by wolves when they couldn't escape from them.

Once they get rid of the menace of Urraca and her maid-servants, the characters are able to sleep with complete

peace of mind, without further frights save the occasional hooting owl in the forest. At dawn, after they finish their sumptuous breakfast, Rufo leads them through the forest towards the basilisk's cave.

Rewards

On top of the corresponding XP, characters will gain 1 point of Luck for everybody to which they give a decent burial.



IV The statues game

Background

The path to the basilisk's cave goes smoothly until the characters enter the loozards turf.

Loozards are humanoid lizards with the size and attitude of a seven years old kid with attention deficit disorder. Many generations ago, the loozards clutch of Crack'dtalon left their ancestral, evasive, coward, and healthy old habits, and decided to deal face to face with the "rosies", thinking that their superior numbers would make up for their lack of logistics and military acumen. Although it's true that they managed to strike the odd blow to those stinking mammals, they weren't able to withstand the reprisals from the good and resentful people from Burgstard, who paid a group of ruthless mercenaries and assassins (i.e. adventurers) to find their lair and carry out a never-seen-before slaughter.

Some loozards, however, survived the massacre; like Sqrre, apprentice of Qrre, the last master trapper whose

motto always was "never confront anything taller than a halfling...on its knees". Under his leadership, a band of sly waylayers was formed.

Sqrre knows that the "rosies" are vengeful scum, capable of arranging a genocide every time that one of them dies. That's why his band never kills, and they just steal travelers' purses. Nobody's gonna make a big fuss for a handful of coins. With that in mind, Sqrre has come up with the perfect plan, taking advantage of a calamitous clash that took place years ago between the hunters of the Crack'dtalon tribe and the basilisk.

Development

After several hours of travel, read or paraphrase the following:

The tree tops are so dense that it's almost impossible not to stumble in the darkness beneath. As you enter the deepest part

of the forest, a deathly silence falls, and in the midst of the thick overgrowth you can make out some small, petrified animals. A sparrow here, a rabbit there, the occasional fawn on alert... the unlucky victims that crossed paths with the basilisk's gaze. And then statues of strange creatures similar to huge, humanoid loozards start to pop up. Judging from their arrangement and the expressions on their petrified faces, it could be said that they belonged to a very large group, petrified in the act of fleeing, probably surprised by the basilisk. It's a bone-chilling vision.

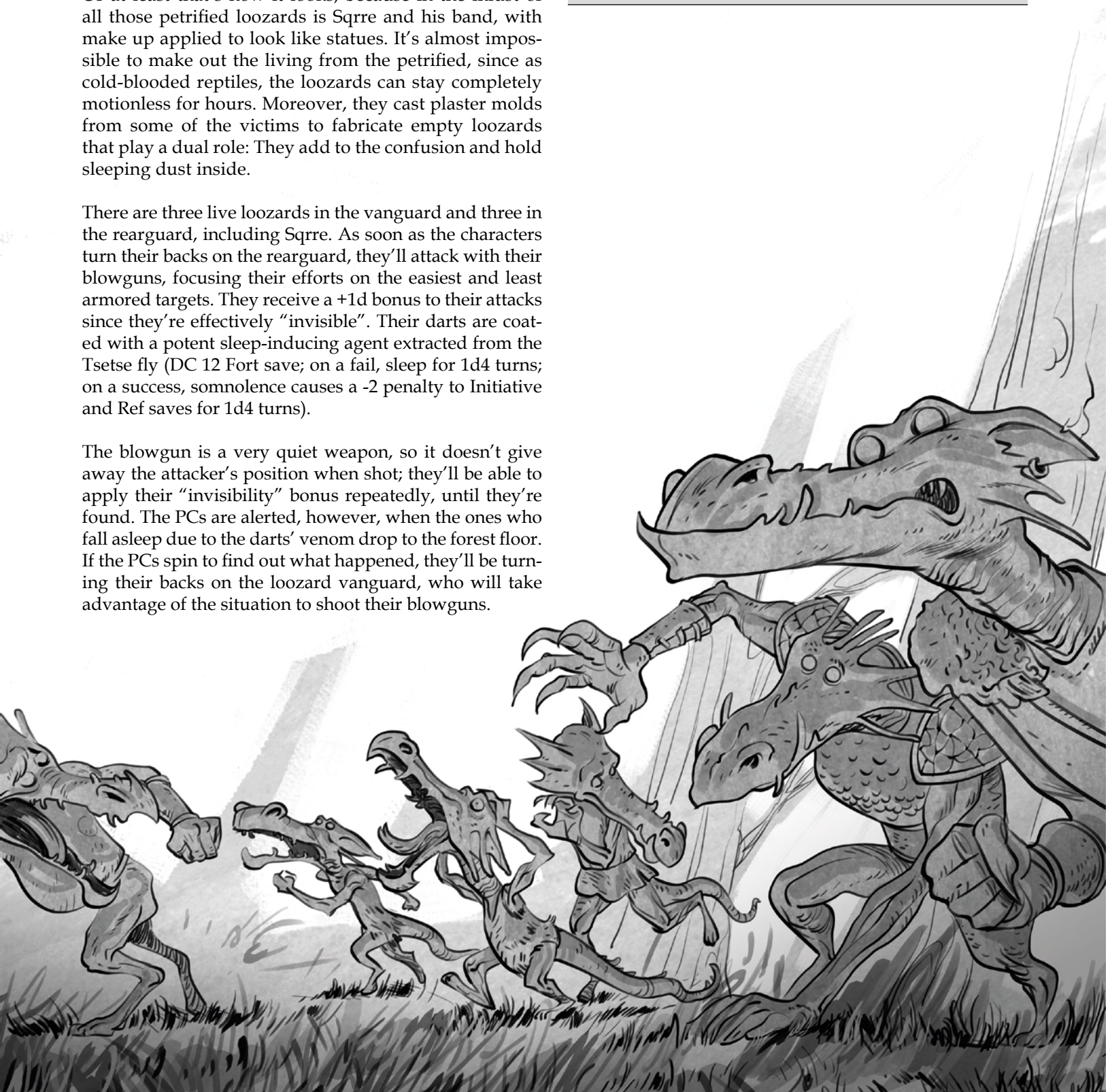
There are more than 20 petrified loozards scattered over a 50' area, in the path as well as between the trees. Or at least that's how it looks, because in the midst of all those petrified loozards is Sqrre and his band, with make up applied to look like statues. It's almost impossible to make out the living from the petrified, since as cold-blooded reptiles, the loozards can stay completely motionless for hours. Moreover, they cast plaster molds from some of the victims to fabricate empty loozards that play a dual role: They add to the confusion and hold sleeping dust inside.

There are three live loozards in the vanguard and three in the rearguard, including Sqrre. As soon as the characters turn their backs on the rearguard, they'll attack with their blowguns, focusing their efforts on the easiest and least armored targets. They receive a +1d bonus to their attacks since they're effectively "invisible". Their darts are coated with a potent sleep-inducing agent extracted from the Tsetse fly (DC 12 Fort save; on a fail, sleep for 1d4 turns; on a success, somnolence causes a -2 penalty to Initiative and Ref saves for 1d4 turns).

The blowgun is a very quiet weapon, so it doesn't give away the attacker's position when shot; they'll be able to apply their "invisibility" bonus repeatedly, until they're found. The PCs are alerted, however, when the ones who fall asleep due to the darts' venom drop to the forest floor. If the PCs spin to find out what happened, they'll be turning their backs on the loozard vanguard, who will take advantage of the situation to shoot their blowguns.

As if this were not enough, every time a character strikes a loozard, roll a 1d6 modified by Luck to determine what has she hit exactly:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | A plaster loozard. The hit breaks it, dispersing a cloud of sleep dust into the air that affects all adjacent characters (same effect as the darts). |
| 3-5 | A petrified loozard. |
| 6 | A real loozard. |



The loozards aren't looking for real trouble. They just want to steal the sleeping travelers' bags and flee as soon as they get them all, or whenever they lose two of their members. Sqrre will always be one of the survivors.

If they're hunted down, the loozards will use one of their escape tunnels that are all over the forest. These narrow tunnels are about 16' long and they have camouflaged entrances and exits in the underbrush, and a spike trap in the middle of its length to slow down their hunters (DC 12 Ref save or take 1d6 damage).

Sqrre: Init +1; Atk tiny sword +1 melee (dmg 1d4-1) or blowgun +3 missile fire (dmg 1 and poison); AC 12; HP 2d4, 5 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', tail regeneration, skills as neutral lvl 1 thief; SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Loozards (5): Init +1; Atk tiny sword -2 melee (dmg 1d4-1) or blowgun +0 missile fire (dmg 1 and poison); AC 11; HP 1d4, 3 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', tail regeneration; SV Fort -2, Ref +0, Will -2; AL N.

Tail regeneration: loozards can regenerate lost limbs, but it takes time, effort, and a lot of food to do so. It's easy for them to do it with their long tail, and they can actually shed it voluntarily at critical moments to distract a pursuer. Once it falls off, it shakes vigorously for a long while. This will happen every time a loozard fails a morale check and flees. Anybody who witness the spasmodic tail moves must make a DC 11 Will Save or stay where he is for 1d3 rounds, unwilling to chase the loozard, unable to turn away from the twisting sundered tail, and paralyzed by disgust.

Each loozard has 1d4 copper pieces, a blowgun, and 2 darts coated with Tsetse fly extract (see above) Sqrre also wears handmade leather armor.

Rewards

The characters gain an extra XP for each bag that wasn't stolen. In case of robbery, assume that each PC carries 10% of their wealth if the players have not specified who is carrying what on their character sheets.

Basilisk lair

Background

Greystopher is one of the seven grey dwarves from the Evendeep colony, located in the dark pits of the Hungrymoon mountains. A couple of weeks ago, during one of his prospecting works, he discovered the existence of a basilisk lair. It didn't take him long to conclude that he could obtain gross benefits, from the basilisk as well as from its petrified victims. He went back a few days later with his degenerate slaves to begin exploiting it, after installing some security measures to protect his investment.

Thanks to their blindness, the slaves could capture the basilisk effortlessly, and they now work collecting the petrified bodies of its victims, putting them in crates full of straw to send them to Evendeep, where they'll be sold to museums, universities, and collectors. Greystopher has nine misshapen, robust and stocky slaves whom he plucked the eyes from and sewed shut their eyelids. They cover themselves with rags and wear fetters on their necks. Their foreman, the obese Guzag, trains bats as if they were falconry hawks.

Development

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters approach the basilisk lair:

The path is increasingly craggier, leading to a cliff wall where, amidst roots and vines, a cave mouth opens. In the vicinity you can see some of the petrified bodies of the mem-

bers of Marcial "the Bold"'s hunting party, according to the Burgstard coat of arms that adorn their clothes, banners, and tabards.

Rufo "the ragman" is unwilling to enter the cave. He'll stay outside, "watching" the mule. If the PCs don't come out some hours later, he'll move to another town, where he'll live under a false name and very much afraid of the Marquis finding him someday.

Entrance

A narrow grotto goes into the dark entrails of the hill. Tricking water snakes down the walls, turning the ground into a mire. From the interior blows a current of cold and humid air that carries a strong animal smell.

Greystopher has taken measures to prevent intruders from coming in. The slaves have dug a ditch (10 feet across) at the cave entrance and covered it with leaves, branches, and mud. Anyone who steps on the trap will fall to the bottom of the ditch, suffering 1d6 points of damage (DC 12 Reflex save for half). Once inside the ditch, the victim will see a rope tied to a rock, which seems to be there to help climbing up. Unfortunately, the rope sets off another trap: if someone grabs and pulls it, the rock to which it's tied will detach, falling onto the poor soul (DC 12 Reflex save to avoid it, 1d4 points of damage otherwise). This also uncovers a hole from which 3 albino beetles will scurry out.

The albino beetles are a white-carapace variety of coleopteron, adapted to the darkness of the underworld. They can function with complete ease in an absolute darkness, but a bright light makes them flee and hide. They're voracious carrion insects, which can turn a corpse into a pile of bones in just a matter of minutes.

Albino beetles (3): *Init +1; Atk mandibles (dmg 1d3 and latch on); AC 14; HD 1d4, 2 hp; MV 10', climb 10'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', photophobia, latch on; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.*

Photophobia: A sudden exposure to a bright light (like the sun, a torch, or a lantern) will force the beetles to make a Morale check. Furthermore, they'll suffer a -1d penalty on the dice chain to all their actions as long as they're exposed to the light.

Latch on: If the attack succeeds, the beetle is able to slip through the victim's clothes, latch on his flesh and start to eat it. In order to pull the beetle out, the victim will have to undress, and the victim (or one of her allies) will have to make a melee attack. While the albino beetle is latched on, its AC is the same as its victim's and it inflicts 1 point of damage each round.

1.2 Cavern

The grotto opens out to a massive cavern with a vaulted ceiling covered with stalactites. On the floor, stalagmites, water pools, and mud hinder the passage and propiciate the occasional slip. At one of the cavern's corner, there's a pile of offal and carrion from animals like partridges, deers, rodents, and the odd boar: despoils of the basilisk's diet. Some of the half-eaten creatures are petrified.

A short tunnel heads east, while the cavern keeps getting narrower towards the northwest.

Insects of all types nest amidst the carrion. Almost all of them are fat, slimy, paled-colored, and have more legs that is advisable. If the despoils are searched through, a myriad of insects surge forth, running away and looking for another dank and dark hideout, threatening to sting whoever stands in their way. The insects aren't a real hazard, but they're yucky.

1.3 The slime well

Water drips from stalactites, forming trickles that flow into a small natural cistern, 5' across. At the bottom there's something like a shiny redish gem. There's a heap of many humanoid skeletons with their clothes on and belongings, strangely intact, at the cistern's lip.

In the cistern, apart from water, there's a decrepit ooze ready to devour anyone gullible enough to approach and examine the huge and bright gem (which is in fact its gallbladder, and a bit swollen). The ooze

is a gelatinous and transparent mass, and it's almost impossible to single it out in a water pool. It can form a pseudopod to attack close targets. Although it can move very slowly, it prefers not to do so unless it's strictly necessary. This specimen has reached an old age and it's starting to suffer from aches and pains, like the enormous rock that has sprouted in its protoplasmic gallbladder.

The ooze will just wait for someone to touch it, so it can paralyze and swallow them afterwards. It'll also attack anyone who approaches to rummage through the bones that encircle its basin with its pseudopods.

Mingled with the bones and despoils is everything that the ooze couldn't digest, like a dagger, a short sword, an axe's head, a mace, several nails, a strapless banded mail, 1d20 copper pieces, 1d10 silver pieces, 1d5 gold pieces, and a strange transparent stiletto called *Obsequy*. Moreover, the ooze's gallbladder is a powerful arcane ingredient for potions and rituals, and can fetch a value of 25 gp.

Obsequy

It's a stiletto that exhibits on its pommel the symbol of The Erebus Warders, a reserved and mysterious monastic order devoted to putting the un-dead to rest. *Obsequy* is a weapon forged in the spiritual plane, and thus it can damage any ghostly or immaterial being. However, if it's used to attack a living being from the material plane, there will be a 50% chance that the blade goes through its target without inflicting any damage.

Obsequy: magic weapon +1; un-dead Bane (Hunter); Powers: *Detect invisible* (1/day, spell check +5), AL Law; Int 7; Special purpose: devoted to the search and destruction of ghosts, spirits, and specters.

Decrepit ooze: *Init (always last); Atk pseudopod +2 melee (dmg 1d6 and paralysis); AC 10; HD 3d8, 12 hp; MV 5', climbing 5'; Act 1d20; SP half damage from slashing or penetrating weapons, acid, paralyzing touch, fire and cold vulnerability; SV Fort +4, Ref -8, Will -6; AL N.*

Acid: Any creature touching the ooze suffers 1d6 points of damage. The ooze tries to cover and swallow adjacent targets. Swallowed victims suffer 1d6 points of damage and won't be able to escape or take any action before making a contested Strength check against the ooze (consider it to have Strength 14).

Paralyzing touch: Any creature touching the ooze or its pseudopods must make a DC 13 Fort save or be paralyzed for 1d6 turns.

Fire and cold vulnerability: This ooze is very watery, so it can boil and freeze at the same temperatures as water does. It suffers double damage from fire and cold.

1.4 The fungi cavern

A gallery snakes towards the west and opens into another high-ceilinged cavern, wherein an immense column located in the center, formed where a stalactite and a stalagmite meet, stands out. The sound of a water course from a tunnel opening to the west can be heard. Some huge fungi have grown around the pillar, covering almost all the cavern floor. They're spherical and gigantic, reaching the size of a pumpkin.

Near the west exit there's a wooden crate as big as a man, lying broken and splintered on the floor. The lid is open, and some straw dangles from it. If the characters examine the crate they'll confirm that's full of straw, and that there's a stone human hand amidst it. Apparently, a couple of slaves were moving a petrified man when they dropped the crate, and the goods suffered a small incident.

The fungi are specimens of a kind called "ogre's fart" that Greystopher grew around the column with some fast growing spores. The tiniest contact is enough for the fungi to detach a dense and smelly cloud of spores that adhere to skin and clothes. Its function is to warn the degenerate slaves who work in the interior caverns about trespassers. A DC 10 Agility check is needed to cross the cavern floor without disturbing the ogre's fart fungi. These spores' smell won't go away for a week, although this can be sped up with baths, oils, and perfumes.

If the fungi discharge their spores, six degenerate slaves will come running, drawn by the smell, after 1d4+1 rounds. These slaves are the product of a painstaking selection and breeding of human slaves, carried out by the grey dwarves until they obtained a race capable of functioning with ease in their tunnels' darkness. Their eyes have been pulled out and their eyelids sewn closed, so they've developed an excellent sense of hearing and smell. They're stocky and stumpy, pale-skinned and white haired, and it's difficult to make the males out from the females, even though they're almost naked. They communicate with a crude language of grunts and shouts, or via the universal language of violence, using sticks, stones, or their fetters' chains.

Degenerate slaves (6): *Init: -1; Atk sticks, stones, or chains +3 melee (dmg 1d4+2); AC 13; HD 1d8+2, 7 hp; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP: scent 120', blindness; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.*

Blindness: The slaves can't see, so they ignore all visual magic effects and gaze attacks.

The slaves will fight till they fail a Morale check, at which point they'll fall back to the cavern at the underground river.

1.5 Underground river's cave

The gallery leads to a cavern divided by an underground river running from east to west, before vanishing into the rocks. On the far bank, a pair of fetters hang empty from the wall. Among heaps of straw and wooden crates, a trio of degenerate slaves are lifting the petrified body of a knight, and are putting it in one of the crates. Next to them, a muscled and imposing degenerate keeps threatening them with a whip and barking orders in their brusque and unpleasant language. He's Guzag, the foreman.

This is the cavern where the degenerate slaves work, store the basilisk's victims in wooden crates before sending them to Greystopher through the underground river. The river noise prevents the slaves from listening clearly to noises coming from other areas in the cave. This is why Greystopher encouraged the ogre's fart fungi to grow in Area 1.4.

As soon as he's aware of the trespassers, Guzag orders the slaves to leave their posts and attack them. It takes the slaves one round to cross the river, and while doing so they'll be very vulnerable. Guzag will try to protect their advance with his huge trained bats.

Degenerate slaves (3): *Init: -1; Atk sticks, stones, or chains +3 melee (dmg 1d4+2); AC 13; HD 1d8+2, 7 hp; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP: scent 120', blindness; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C.*

Blindness: The slaves can't see, so they ignore all visual magic effects and gaze attacks.

The threatening presence of the foreman gives the slaves a +2 bonus to their Morale checks.

Guzag: *Init: +1; Atk whip +1d4+1 melee (dmg 2d4+2), crit range 19-20; AC 13; HD 2d8+2, 12 hp; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP: scent 120', blindness, deeds (disarming or trips); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.*

Blindness: Guzag can't see, so he ignores all visual magic effects and gaze attacks.

Guzag has two chubby trained bats that attack on his command, eat from his hand, shake their paws, and perform tricks like these. They're hidden among the stalactites up in the cavern ceiling.

Bats (2): *Init: +1; Atk bite +1 melee (dmg 1d4 and vampire grapple); AC 12; HD 1d8+2, 6 hp; MV 40' flying; Act 1d20; SP: sonar, blood drain. SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.*

Blood drain: After a successful attack, the bat attaches to the target and automatically inflicts 1 point of damage every round until detached or dead.

In order to go through the stone wall and reach the basilisk chamber, characters can use the wooden crates

as improvised vessels or swim downriver. In the latter case, they'll have to make a DC 10 skill check modified by Strength (with penalties due to armor and encumbrance). On a failure, the character sinks and starts to drown: she'll lose 1 point of Stamina and she'll have to try the same check again on her next round, with identical consequences.

1.6 The basilisk's chamber

When the PCs get into this cavern, read or paraphrase the following:

The river runs through this cavern before disappearing again through the west wall. There, a net has been fixed over two stakes to stop the wooden crates and prevent them from being dragged off by the current. In a corner there's an enormous cage with thick metal bars where a basilisk sleeps; its head has been covered with a leather hood tied with straps. There are more wooden crates and a peculiar couple next to the cage, supervising their contents before they are carried down a tunnel open on the north wall.

The couple is made up by an expressionless grey-skinned dwarf who phlegmatically looks into the crates and takes down notes on a book while his mate, a baggy-eyed halfling, crunches numbers with an abacus. They are linked by a long chain made of a strange dark metal. Color itself appears to be muted around the dwarf. Only the gold keeps its shine, and its gleaming hue even seems to increase. The dwarf closes his book and turns his cold and grey eyes toward you, saying with an expressionless tone: "This is a private enterprise, I urge you to let us proceed with our work and leave this cavern".

They're Greystopher and Catullus, his accountant, a halfling who's in a perpetual state of nervous exas-

peration due to the stress caused by being linked to his patron with the grey fetters. They're taking inventory of their last acquisitions. They've been plundering the basilisk's lair for days, and they have some buyers interested in the spoils they found, among them Marcial's body.

Greystopher only cares about one thing: gold. If the PCs want the body of Marcial "the Bold", it'll be theirs for a reasonable price... to which must be added the damages they've caused (dead slaves). The dwarf will ask the steep sum of 100 gp for the heir of Burgstard and 10 gp for each dead slave, although he'll be also willing to barter for something of equal value or a good business opportunity like, for instance, Urraca Borja's ring.

Greystopher isn't afraid of a violent reaction on part of the PCs, but the same cannot be said of Catullus. The dwarf is under the protection of the grey fetters that ward him from all evil and, besides, he knows he has something the characters need. If he still feels threatened, he'll try to free the basilisk so it can sow chaos and destruction. If the hood isn't removed, the basilisk will be blinded, and will only have a d16 Action Dice. Obviously, the characters can employ the same strategy and free the basilisk using a spell or a Mighty Deed.

If Catullus dies, Greystopher turns into a shadow and vanishes through the tunnel dug out on the northern wall's rock. That tunnel bores through the bowels of the earth several miles until it reaches the grey dwarves' colony, Evendeep. The journey through this gallery is miserable and full of dangers, but detailing it is beyond the scope of this adventure.

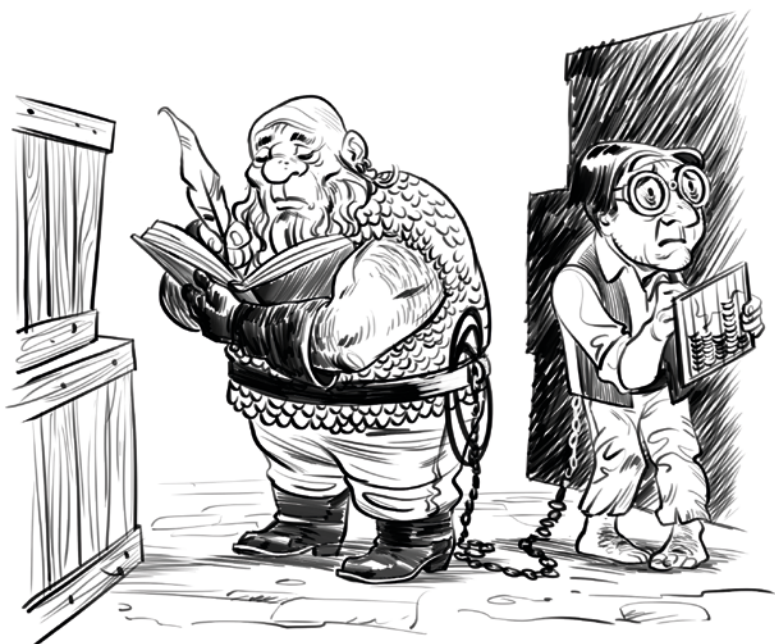
Basilisk: Init -1; Atk bite +5 melee (dmg 1d10) or claw +3 melee (dmg 1d4) or gaze (special); AC 16; HD 5d8, 22 hp; MV 40'; Act 1d16 or 2d20; SP gaze (DC 14 Will save); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Gaze: Anyone looking into the basilisk's eyes must make a DC 14 Will save or will be turned into stone permanently.

Catullus, halfling accountant: Init +0; Atk paper knife +1 melee (dmg 1d4); AC 11; HD 2d6, 7 hp; MV 20'; SP: Infravision 30'. SV: SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

Greystopher, grey dwarf: Init +1; Atk whip +3 melee (1d6 + DC 14 Ref save or snared) and chains +3 melee (DC 14 Ref save or snared); AC 15 (scale mail); HD 3d10+3, 20 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20 + 1d16; SP infravision 60', grey fetters, turn into shadow, greyness; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4; AL N.

Turn into shadow: a grey dwarf can turn into a shadow and move on the ground, the walls, and the ceiling, like a normal shadow would do. In shadow shape, a grey dwarf can only suffer damage from spells, +1 or better magic weapons,



or creatures with magic natural attacks. This is exhausting for the dwarf, and they cannot attack or interact with their surroundings while in shadow shape.

Greyness: Colors are muted when there's a grey dwarf nearby. This phenomenon is emphasized when there are several gray dwarves together, so the colors disappear completely and the world changes to a palette of greyscale hues. There's only one thing that doesn't lose its color in the grey dwarves' vicinity: gold, which shines even brighter.

Grey fetters: This is a broad belt linked to a 10' chain or so that ends up in a fetter for a slave's neck. Thanks to these fetters, when the dwarf uses any of his special abilities (like turning into a shadow), they'll also affect his

slave. Furthermore, the slave will suffer all the damage and any harmful effect from an attack or spell targeting his master. Once the slave is dead, the master will suffer damage as usual.

Treasure:

A basilisk, several petrified people in wooden crates (Marcial "the Bold" among them), pikes, shovels, and bad quality rations for several days of travel.

Catullus carries a quill pen and an inkwell, a stack of paper, and some notes where there's a written inventory of the recovered pieces and a list of names, possible buyers for the petrified bodies.



VI Return journey and rewards

If the characters manage to recover Marcial's body, they'll have to travel back to Burgstard castle, probably spending the night at the hunting cabin. You can use the random encounters from the outward journey during the return journey. What's more, you can repeat the same encounter that took place in the outward journey, which is even more appropriate if it was the "nosy brothers" one.

The Marquis receives the characters joyously, and his alchemist Hirónides applies the needed oils to cure the stone heir's petrified state. Marcial comes back to life, a bit stunned and with sluggish reflexes.

Despite his bad reputation, the Marquis is true to his word and will reward the characters with a minor title like Knight, Guild Master, or Grandee of Burgstard, and lands; albeit he'll make the most of the situation so the loss of these particular lands leads to his own benefit. Thus, the PCs will be the new owners of a fortress taken by bandits, a cursed abbey, a magic laboratory purportedly abandoned, or some frontier lands contested with a barbarian tribe. Adventure is served.

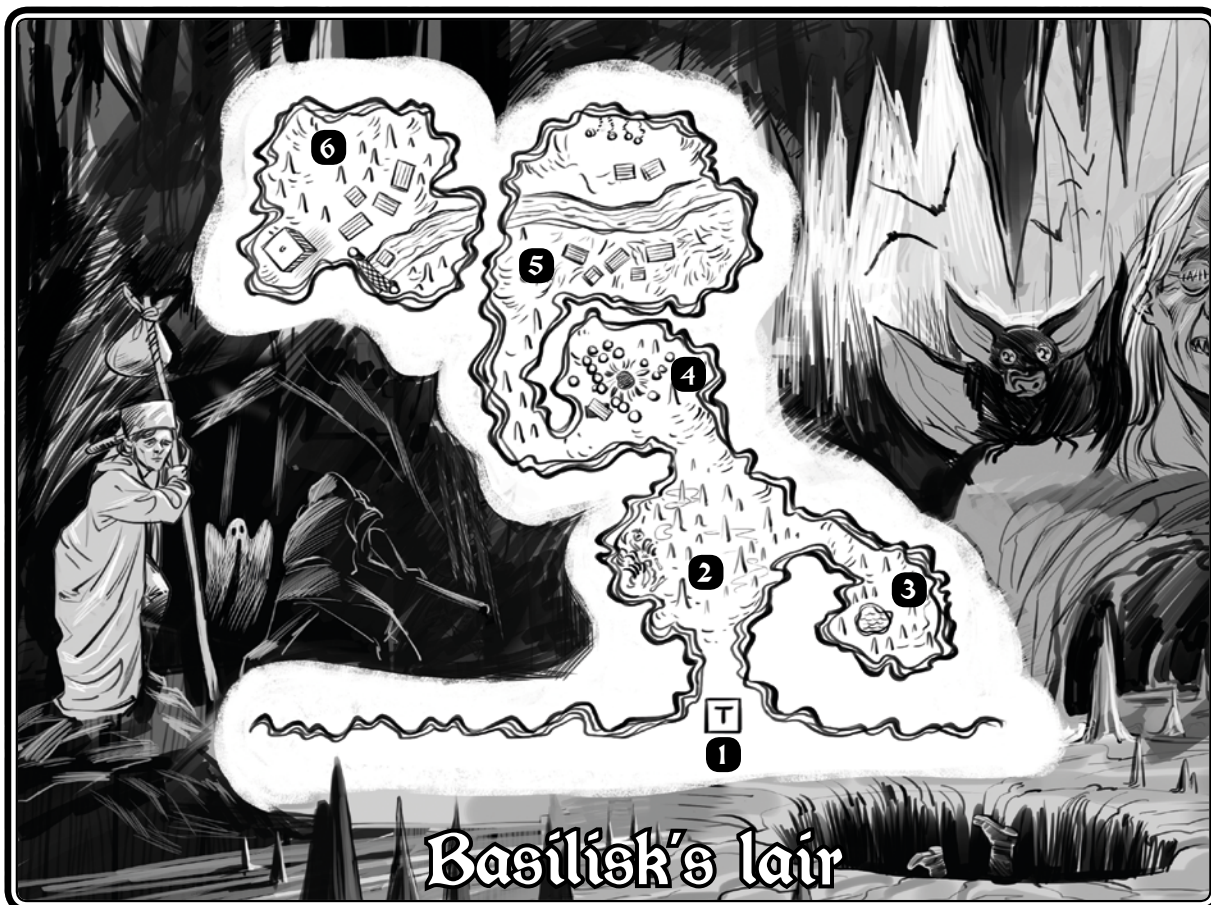
failure is an option

If the characters fail in their attempt to recover Marcial's body, the Marquis of Burgstard loses his only heir and a turbulent dark age ensues. Many nobles with succession rights (or who claim to have them) clash for the Marquis' throne, resulting in the people's suffering.

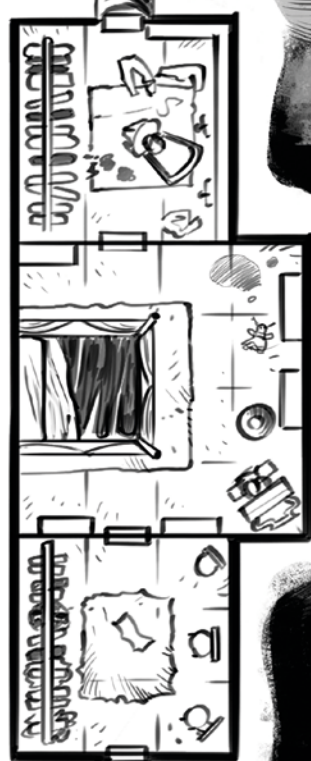
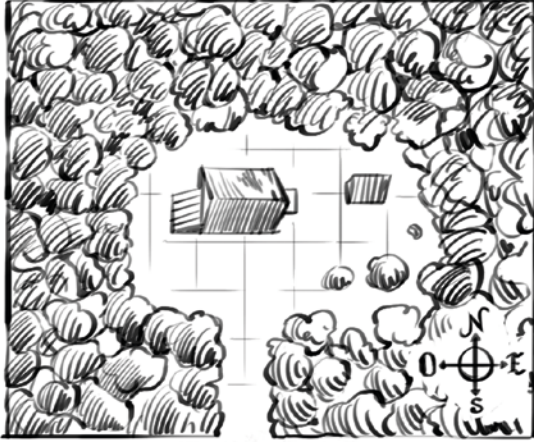
If the characters are defeated by Greystopher and his slaves, the dwarf will chain them, and lead them to the slave market in Evendeep, where they'll be sold to the highest bidder. The adventurers are a highly-sought goods for the underdark races, since they're able to operate freely under the sun, and succeed in the kind of assignments in which their usual slaves would fail. It's an ideal way of introducing any adventure, because the only hook you'll need is: "You have to do this because your new master orders you to do it".

Another option would be that the basilisk petrifies them, in which case they'll be sold as a morbid curiosity to any collector and they'll maybe return to their fleshy state... hundreds of years later.

Appendix 1: Maps



- Outside -



- Underground -



- Ground floor -

Hunting cabin



Adventuring ties

Any newly formed party of adventurers can confirm it: there's nothing that build ties better than surviving a funnel. The awful circumstance that throws you to a life of plunder and hazard is the perfect excuse to explain why the heck an elven candle maker, a human miller, a halfling chicken butcher, and a dwarven mushroom farmer are together.

But, what happens when the inherent dangers of an adventurer's life begin to decimate the ranks? How can it be explained that new recruits pop up suddenly, ready to join a party of complete strangers? And what even defies further the suspension of disbelief, how can they find the party in the middle of a dungeon full of nasty creatures?

Sometimes during the quest arises the opportunity to replenish the ranks, but many other times there is a lack of a reason that binds the party of adventurers together, and furthermore, that explains the questions or inconsistencies exposed beforehand. That's why there are adventurer's organizations (although of course, none of them would call themselves an "organization"), stemming from wildly varied ties.

Who should decide what kind of group is created? If the first adventure doesn't lay it down clearly, there are two obvious choices: either it's the players, or the Judge with the players' acquiescence. Being a game that loves tables and random results, we also include the option to leave that choice in fate's hands.

As it befits the sword & sorcery genre, we've classified the ties in "For glory", "For gold", and "For glory and gold". Apart from the description of each organization, we've further differentiated them through these variables:

- **Starting level**

As with other game mechanics, *DCC RPG* doesn't specify what happens when your PC dies and you need to roll a new one. This is made on purpose: Each Judge will come up with her own home rules. In this section, we propose the level which the replacement PCs will start with.

- **Milieu**

Availability of replacements according to the adventurer's surroundings: rural, urban, and the wilderness

(included here are also underworlds, other planes, and such nonsense). If a milieu is not shown here, the party will need to travel to the right place to get a new PC.

- **Leader**

Every adventurers' organization need a leader for the party, even though they don't want to admit it or name her as such; this position usually carries both benefits and some drawbacks for the PC that dons the mantle. As an advantage, when she openly identifies herself as such ("I'm Gaudencia, leader of the Humiliators, scourge of



the prairie), and once per battle, the enemies must make a Morale check, with a DC and consequences as shown in the following table:

Leader lvl	Enemies HD	DC	Result
1-2	1	10	Retreat
	2-3	8	-1 to attacks, until the leader is damaged
3-5	1-2	12	Retreat
	3-4	10	-1d to attacks, until the leader is damaged
	5-6	10	-1 to attacks, until the leader is damaged
7-9	1-3	14	Retreat
	4-6	12	-1d to attacks, until the leader is damaged
	7-8	10	-1 to attacks, until the leader is damaged
10	1-3	18	Retreat
	4-7	14	-1d to attacks, until the leader is damaged
	8+	12	-1 to attacks, until the leader is damaged

• Advantages

Listed here are the privileges derived from being a member of an adventurers' organization; some affect the rules, other the milieu and the campaign.

• Drawbacks

As with the advantages, some are related to game mechanics, and other add flavor and color to the sessions.

For glory (roll 1d6)

- The chosen ones.** You're pawns in the Eternal Struggle, but maybe one day you'll be rooks or bishops... The Powers of Law, Neutrality, and Chaos use you as agents in their confrontation to achieve the supremacy in the multiverse.

Starting level: Lawful PCs, same as current; Neutral PCs, average of the PCs levels, rounding down; Chaotic PCs, Luck check (1d20, equal or less than current Luck): beaten by 5 or less, same level as current; beaten by 10 or more, same as current plus one; failed by 5 or less, same as current minus one; failed by 10 or more, same as current minus two.

Milieu: Any. The new recruits arrive guided by dreams and omens, anywhere you are.

Leader: You must align with one of the Powers, becoming a paladin, an exemplar of the corresponding Power with the responsibilities associated with it (although the rest of the party doesn't have to devote exclusively to that Power).

Advantages: the Eternal Struggle conspires to keep you pushing ahead... what's a cause without anybody to back it? You've got a pool of Luck points; roll 1d7 at the beginning of each session (you can't keep the remaining points for the next one).

Drawbacks: You can't refuse the quests that the Powers ask you to undertake, or you'll all suffer a daily loss of 1d3 Luck points until you embark upon it, at which point you'll recover the lost points.

If you take either side, you'll become mobile targets for the opposing faction (or opposing factions, if you choose Neutrality).

- 2 Divine spark.** Be it because the gods made you in their own image and likeness, or because you're the offspring of some divine being's fling, it's undeniable that you possess a share of that godly essence.

Starting level: Same as current. You're the elite, the best of the best.

Milieu: Urban. Your kind feel attracted to crowds.

Leader: Must be always the highest-level PC in the party. In case of a draw, the leader will be the one with the highest Personality. If there's still a draw, roll a 1d7.

Advantages: At the end of every adventure, everyone in the party gets at least 1 point of Luck, no matter how well (or bad) it went.

Drawbacks: You're always mixed up in quests, whether you want it or not, and they're not always beneficial for you. Furthermore, you're the target of supernatural beings of every stripe, which are looking to test their mettle against their "equals".

- 3 Bobugbubilz's witnesses.** You're devout followers, maybe even fanatics, of the same patron/god. You're maybe part of the official congregation, or you've created your own cult.

Starting level: 1d10, to a maximum equal to the level of the replaced PC; your holy cause draws a wide variety of adventurers and you accept them all, no matter what.

Milieu: Urban and rural. Wherever there's people, there are believers.

Leader: Must be either a cleric in the case of followers of a god, or a wizard/elf if they're supporters of a patron.

Advantages: +1d to *Patron bond* castings or to Divine aid attempts.

Drawbacks: You're in the eye of the divine/patron storm; much is expected of you, more than from the average worshipper/follower, and that's why your mistakes are more painful. Whenever you suffer a patron taint, roll twice on the patron taint table and keep both results; whenever you roll on the disapproval table, add 2d4 to the result.

- 4 Ascension.** You don't want to serve anyone: you want to run the show, you want to become gods. But it ain't a piece of cake: You can ask the ones in the higher echelons, who by the way don't take the competition too well.

Starting level: 1. There's no mercy for the upstarts.

Milieu: Wilderness. The hidden knowledge is, as its name truly exposes, hidden.

Leader: The adventurer who's spent the longest time with the party; if there's more than one, the one with the most XP. If there's still a draw, the PC with the least Luck.

Advantages: You always get (1 x current level) additional XP for every encounter. If you survive a Recovering the body check, you'll get (5 x current level) XP. You cannot, and will not, stop.

Drawbacks: The Powers-that-be don't look kindly on you; you only get a Luck point at the most after each adventure.

You're like a magnet to the followers of the other gods and supernatural patrons, who tend to focus their ire on you.

- 5 The foundling home of the Archmage Z for the gifted.** The story is very similar in all the instances: Orphaned, scraping out a living in a city or in the countryside, a stranger offers you a new life of adventures to unleash your full potential. You all accepted.

Starting level: 1. No orphan leaves the orphanage grounds until she's ready for a life of adventures, and there's not any other way to prove your worth.

Milieu: Rural. The archmage's home base is a mansion in the middle of nowhere, and he's got additional bases in other backwoods places.

Leader: A mysterious benefactor, your mentor. Each group of orphans has a leader, who must be of Lawful alignment, and who is your liaison with your sponsor.

Advantages: You have access to all the mundane equipment you'll ever need. On top of that, since you can consult your mentor's huge library, the wizards and elves can choose 1d3 of their starting spells, and 1 of the spells they'll learn upon achieving a new level.

Drawbacks: You follow a strict ethical code that aligns you with Law; you receive missions and assignments from your benefactor quite often. Anyone who strays from this path is marked as an outlaw and hunted by the rest of orphans.



- 6 Living legends.** You're going down in history, whatever it takes. You're already famous, but you'll be even more famous; this draws all kinds of youngsters (and those not so young), seeking the thrills and the fame.
- Starting level:* Equal to the replaced PC minus 1. You're very picky and won't accept everybody in your ranks.
- Milieu:* Urban. Cities are the mecca of those who want to achieve renown and true glory, and they truly are like meat grinders for those pretenders.
- Leader:* It can only be an elf, or a human warrior or thief. If possible, charismatic and handsome.
- Advantages:* Your fame precedes you; the masses cheer you, the inkeepers make eyes at you, the guards look the other way. +1d on social checks, 10% discount on services (inns, taverns), and shops.
- Drawbacks:* There's nothing people like more than to see the ones on the top fall down. You won't get any XP from those encounters which entail illicit activities if there are witnesses around.

For gold (roll 1d6)

- 1 Mercenaries.** Unquestionably, the straightest and most lucrative way to work in the adventuring business is to found a mercenary company. Besides, is among the few ways to make the people and authorities to take you seriously.
- Starting level:* Half of current, rounding down (minimum 1). You're professionals, for Justicia sake.
- Milieu:* Urban. The best jobs and candidates invariably come from urban centers.
- Leader:* Obviously, it has to be a warrior (or a dwarf), and the highest-leveled in the party. Moreover, her name must appear on the company's founding charter.
- Advantages:* You've got an almost inexhaustible reserve of level-0 recruits who will act as followers, but they won't charge you anything (that's right, they're interns). Apart from that, they follow the same rules as shown on the *DCC RPG*, page 310.
- Drawbacks:* If you want to keep your reputation and thus your clients, you'll have to accept at least a job for every personal quest you follow.
- 2 Adventurer's guild.** It had to happen: where there's money, middle-men pop up. Either because you prefer to have some legal cover or because you're forced to, you're part of a guild, as the shoemakers, drapers or thieves.
- Starting level:* 0. Anybody can live the exotic and dangerous life of an adventurer, and as the guild laws dictate, they all start as apprentices.
- Milieu:* Wilderness. Ruins, as any good adventurer worth its name knows, are the right place to find the most valuable treasures and the real hidden knowledge.
- Leader:* Any level-1 or higher PC. You're all under the sway of a guild master, the absolute leader of the organization, but every "chapter" like yours has its own leader.
- Advantages:* You can rest and stock up on provisions in the chapter houses for free, and gather truthful information about your next quest (the Judge will supply veracious rumors from the relevant tables or she'll convey one of the adventure's details).
- Drawbacks:* You must give 10% of all the treasure you find (jewels, coins, art...) over to the guild. If you find magic relics or spells, the guild requires that you give them over in order to conduct a study (if they're magic objects or weapons), and copy them (if they're spells), but they'll return them in two session's time.
- 3 Letter of Marque.** The count's lands are too vast, the monsters too bold, and the ruins too dangerous. You've your feudal lord's permission to deal with everything that her guard or troops can't handle.
- Starting level:* Same as the PC with the least level. If that PC is you, then level 1: The wilderness doesn't make any concessions with the weak.
- Milieu:* Rural. The expansive uncivilized regions that kings and other rulers leave to the women and men bold or irresponsible enough to deal with in their name.

Leader: Must be a human of at least level 1, and under no circumstances a wizard. The rough countryside people is superstitious and a bit xenophobic.

Advantages: You can count on the region's official authority, and you're de facto officials of its government. Upon reaching level 5, you can reclaim an area that you've personally pacified to build a castle or a stronghold, and rule as feudal lords under the count's protection.

Drawbacks: You can't act against the law, on pain of losing your letter of marque. You must also attend to the count vassals' petitions of help, as long as they are related to the defense of hamlets, resolution of disputes, etc.

- 4 **The freak parade.** You're fed up of being the sideshow attractions, the village idiot, and the targets of the kids' stones, so you've allied with each other to make a living in a somewhat decent way, in which it doesn't matter if you look like an elephant or your Siamese homicidal brother lives in a wicker basket.

Starting level: 0. You accept in the fold anyone who needs shelter or a second chance because of their monstrous looks.

Milieu: You can choose two of them upon creating the organization; there are freaks everywhere.

Leader: Ironically, it has to be the one with the most "human" looks, since you need a nexus with the rest of the supposedly "normal" society. Apart from that, it doesn't matter her level or class.

Advantages: You cause disgust and repulsion on other people, even the universe seems to avoid you. Once per session you can ignore a fumble result, be it during a combat, casting a spell, using a thief skill, or even a disapproval result.

Drawbacks: You all have a physical flaw, of mundane or supernatural origin. Depict it as you wish, but as an in-game effect it will reduce one of your abilities by one, any you want, except Luck.

- 5 **Blood is thicker than gold.** Your village (Hirot, Humiliatown, Upper Coldcutters...) fell, but you, the survivors, are connected by the strongest tie: family. Although you were scattered all over the place, it's become a tradition that when there's a position in your party, it's filled by one of the original denizens or one of their descendants.

Starting level: 0. You're maybe not the best candidates, but you're family, and you take care of each other and you set them up in your organization.

Milieu: Urban and rural. The neighbors migrated anywhere they could, be it the countryside or a city, but you all keep in touch and know perfectly where everyone lives.

Leader: The oldest PC, no matter the class or level. The gerontocracy is the glue that binds you together, dear neighbors.

Advantages: You're like a "hive mind", so when you must roll an untrained skill check, you do it with -1d instead of 1d10 (usually 1d16); moreover, you can attempt an Intelligence check to know more about strange creatures or far-flung places. Grandpa's old stories are good for something, after all.

Drawbacks: Adventurers or not, you're still humble people who think about the future. You must save half of all the treasures you find, in anticipation of the probable rainy days that, sooner or later, always come.

- 6 **Outcasts.** Although you all say that you're innocent, that tattoo on your face, that amputated hand, and that shaved head say the contrary. Marked by justice, banished, condemned... you only have each other.

Starting level: Same as current. Your life is very hard, and definitely only the fittest survive.

Milieu: Wilderness. You've taken, quite literally, to the "hills". You can only find people like you in the most remote and underpopulated places, to live in a relative peace.

Leader: The PC whose both Strength and Stamina together are the highest. In such a harsh environment, only the strongest survive, and only the ablest among them rises as the leader.

Advantages: Contacts in the cities' underworld and amongst the rural banditry, as well as the pirates and other scum from rivers and seas. They'll help you in matters related to information, hideouts, equipment, followers, etc. They'll expect a bit of *quid pro quo*, though.

Drawbacks: Nobody, aside from people like you, will help you; people fear and despise you. Any social interaction with respectable people will be at -2d penalty, unless you find a way to hide your condition.



For glory and gold (roll 1d3)

- 1 King Conan.** You aspire to more, more than most of the ruffians and miscreants around you: you'll be one day the sovereigns of your own kingdom. But not for elusive and circumstantial reasons like lineage or godly rights, but by your arms' strength and your mind's cunning.

Starting level: 2 less than the PC with the highest level (minimum of 1). You gladly accept new renowned and powerful adepts for your expansionist cause, but you don't want them to overshadow you.

Milieu: Rural. There are wide expanses of uncontrolled land or ruled by weaklings, awaiting to be unified under your firm hand.

Leader: Any PC with leadership skills. Furthermore, the leader can't ever refuse a single combat (be them magical or martial) called by another group's leader, moreover if said enemy is the ruler of a land.

Advantages: You're an indomitable spirit, and you're sturdy and strong-willed. Once a day, after a combat, you recover 1d4 hp. At level 4 you'll recover 1d6 hp, and at level 8, 1d8 hp.

Drawbacks: It's impossible to build or get a kingdom without stepping on someone's head. Enemy leaders have 2 hit dice more than usual, and they always find the way to escape, only to return once and again with new allies and even more absurd plans.

- 2 Me, myself and this elf.** YOU are ALL a different embodiment of the same person/soul/identity, but from different ages/planes/species: no matter the class, sex or alignment. You can't help it, you're drawn to each other like the moth to the flame.

Starting level: Same level, with same XP as the replaced PC; her adventures and career have been almost identical to the preceding PC.

Milieu: All. Other planes, the alley behind the inn, or your dreams are some of the places where you can find your twin souls.

Leader: All and none. You can choose one among your numbers to take that role, but your adversaries will mistake her with another member of your party.

Advantages: All your PCs have the same amount of XP, even if they haven't been in an encounter, or even if they haven't been in the same game session; fate keeps you from being idle while the rest of you are in dire straits.

Drawbacks: By the same token, any creature, sorcery or similar event that drains levels or XP will affect all your PCs, no matter what. Even more, mercenaries and followers who join the party will ask double the usual amount of money; it's very unsettling to be surrounded by people with such rapport.

- 3 The Warriors.** The city-states are small worlds filled up to brim with adventure and chances to stuff your pockets, in addition to being an almost endless reserve of kids and youngsters with no future. For mutual protection, or power and riches hunger, these youngsters organize in street gangs.

Starting level: 0. The young initiated in the gang start at the bottom.

Milieu: Completely urban. The street gangs feed on the outcasts and the dregs of urban society.

Leader: Being a gang leader isn't easy; once per game session, if the leader doesn't make a DC 12 Luck check, she'll have to face a contender. It'll be a NPC of the same level and class as the PC, randomly generated, and she'll have to defeat her in singular combat to keep the leadership.

Advantages: Every level-1 PC has a level-0 loyal follower; from level 5 onward, it'll be two. These followers gain XP, level up, and can be chosen as replacement PCs. If any of them die, you'll have to wait for the next gaming session to attract a new one, who will always be a level-0 follower.

Drawbacks: You must defend tooth and nail your turf and status, which are always threatened by other gangs. You must make a DC 14 Luck check every session, and you have to apply all your Luck modifiers. If you fail, you'll face an encounter orchestrated by another gang (combat, trap, negotiation, etc.).



0-level initial equipment

Are you fed up of starting your funnel games with just a strange-looking stone, a hen, and a sack full of feces? Tired of delving into a dungeon without a torch, a roll of rope, or a 10' pole, as Azi Dahaka dictates? Try your skill as a haggler in the wonderful barter economy that rules over the DCC RPG worlds of pseudo-medieval fantasy!

The mechanic is exceedingly simple: **for every item from your trade goods** (i.e., the ones you get when you roll your occupation or as initial equipment on the table 3-4: Equipment) **that you barter, you can roll on one of the Barter Sub-tables**, randomly chosen on the Barter Master Table... Yes, you can also exchange your trained weapon, but nobody can assure you that you'll get another one.

The thrilling and unpredictable art of haggling, as anyone who has spent her holidays in some countries certainly can attest, has a strong component of negotiation, charisma and shamelessness, and in the case of a medieval era, luck (you can't know for sure if you'll get what you're looking for, malls won't be available for some centuries to come).

Every +1 on Personality and/or Luck adds a +1 on your roll, and every -1 subtracts the same amount. Those PCs with the elven barrister, halfling trader, confidence artist, merchant, costermonger, and similar occupations can choose the Sub-table(s).

The last option you can take advantage of is **exchanging one of your items for another on the Sub-table it "belongs" to**; the Judge must rule which category it fits in. This roll, by the way, is made with a d16.

And of course, there's nothing preventing you from using this rule for the day-to-day of your campaign, combining it or replacing the classic but not very trustworthy proto-capitalist system, or the trade using gold pieces, cocoa grains, or seashells.

What can I do with the spare change?

The 0-level hardy folks get 5d12 copper pieces when they're created, and some occupations like the halfling trader, halfling moneylender, merchant, noble, and tax collector start with even more funds.

Some people will ask themselves why they can't spend that money to acquire more equipment and therefore skip the tediousness of this article, putting to good use the lessons of our society of capitalism and inequality. That's certainly a choice you can make: allow your players to indulge in a shopping spree throughout the big city with some background music. →

Another option is to take the barter economy to its limit, ruling that money amounts to almost nothing in their rural environment or in the wilderness where the starting adventures take place, so they better save it until they arrive in a metropolis.

Master Barter Table (Roll 1d30)

1-2	Sub-table 1: Supernatural
3-6	Sub-table 2: Religious
7-12	Sub-table 3: Guild
13-14	Sub-table 4: Adventure
15	Sub-table 5: Ornament
16-18	Sub-table 6: Leisure
19-25	Sub-table 7: Sustenance
26-28	Sub-table 8: Animals
29	Sub-table 9: Armor
30	Sub-table 10: Weapons

Sub-table 1: Supernatural*

1	Dryad branch
2	Dowsing rod
3	Mandrake root
4	Roc feather
5	Tiger bone
6	Unicorn horn
7	Lion fang
8	Dragon scales (1d7)
9	Rabbit foot pendant
10	Lamb jackstones
11	Elder sign carved on wood
12	Shrunken head
13	Monkey foot (with 1d5 fingers)
14	Ouija board (wooden)
15	Bowl, human skull
16	Pendulum, semiprecious stone
17	Ivory runes (1d7)
18	Tarot deck
19	Crystal ball
20+	Choose one from the list: it grants +1 to all spell checks of a level 1 wizard/elf spell, randomly chosen.

** of dubious origin and/or utility, unless it's a 20+ result*

Sub-table 2: Religious*

1	Rat's bone of Nimlurun
2	Dry bubo's earring of Ahriman
3	Snake's skin of Azi Dahaka
4	Dried frog of Bobugbubilz
5	Crow mask of Malotoch
6	Vellum containing an unspeakable secret of The Hidden Lord
7	Sword's shard of Cadixtat, Titan of Chaos
8	Sacred cutting of Ildavir
9	Skin full of seawater of Pelagia
10	Tentacled necklace of Cthulhu
11	Puzzle box of Amun Tor
12	Moon amulet of Shul
13	Vial full of Choranus' semen
14	Portable anvil of Daentharr
15	Treatise on military strategy of Aristemis
16	Miniature helm of Gorhan
17	Incense cones of Ulesh (1d7)
18	Blooded handkerchief of Klazath
19	Mummified finger of Justicia
20+	20+ Choose one from the list: it grants +1 to all turn unholy attempts of the corresponding god.

** of dubious origin and/or utility, unless it's a 20+ result*

Sub-table 3: Guild

1	Traps (1d5) and poison (1/2 pounds), both for rats
2	Horseshoes (1d4) and nails (1d10)
3	Measuring rod (1 yard, cast iron)
4	Skinning knives (1d3)
5	Barber's pliers and a bottle of strong liquor
6	Roman balance and a set of weights
7	Plumb bob and level
8	Sewing box (small scissors, needles, thread)
9	Hammer and chisel
10	Mortar and vials (1d6)
11	Barber's razor and soap
12	Sieve and quicksilver (1d3 pounds)
13	Bloodletting leeches (1d7)
14	Copper still and berries (1 pound)
15	Quill, ink, and parchment
16	Abacus and ledger
17	Dye and fabric fixative (1d3 colors)

18 Prints of saints (1d10) and alms box

19 Brushes (1d3) and oil paintings (1d5)

20+ Choose one from the list

Sub-table 4: Adventure

1 Iron frying pan

2 Whetstone

3 Copper pot

4 Caltrops (1d14)

5 Greased cape

6 Wool blanket

7 Sleeping bag

8 Exotic spices

9 Tent, one person

10 Little bell

11 Tent, 1d5+1 people

12 Map of the region

13 Nautical chart

14 Sandglass

15 Portable battering ram

16 Spyglass

17 Compass

18 Leather boots

19 Astrolabe

20+ Choose one from the list

Sub-table 5: Ornament

1 Soap

2 Scented oil

3 Kohl

4 Rouge (1d3 colors)

5 Lipstick

6 Perfume

7 Leather belt

8 White wig

9 Embroidered fan

10 Leather shoes

11 Silk blouse

12 Velvet cloak

13 Cufflinks (Roll 1d7: 1, gold; 2-3, silver; 4-7, copper)

14 1d3 earrings (Roll 1d7: 1, gold; 2-3, silver; 4-7, copper)

15 Monocle

16 1d5 rings (Roll 1d7: 1, gold; 2-3, silver; 4-7, copper)

17 Gold teeth (1d5)

18 1d7 pearls

19 Necklace (Roll 1d7: 1, gold; 2-3, silver; 4-7, copper)

20+ Choose one from the list

Sub-table 6: Leisure

1 Bottle of anisette (empty) and spoon

2 Wooden spinning top

3 Maraca

4 Bone marbles (1d14)

5 Ratchet

6 Panpipe

7 Tambourine

8 Stone pétanque

9 Zills

10 Horseshoes (1d7) and a stake

11 Tabor

12 Dice (1d6, loaded on 1 in 1d)

13 Clarion

14 Deck of cards and 1d14 clay beads

15 Bagpipe

16 Dominoes

17 Lute

18 Clay pipe and tobacco (1/4 pound)

19 Snuff (1/4 pound)

20+ Choose one from the list

Sub-table 7: Sustenance

1 Wooden spoon

2 String of garlic

3 Quince cheese (1/4 pound)

4 Jar of blackberry jam

5 Bloomer, one

6 Wine skin (full)

7 Beef jerky (1d6 strips)

8 Straw hat

9 Jar of honey

10 Bird trap

11 String of chorizo sausages (1d10)

12 Rabbit trap

13 Sackcloth cape

14 Fishing rod

15 Cheese wheel (1d5 pounds)

- 16 Patched doublet
- 17 Boar trap
- 18 Cotton breeches
- 19 Hemp boots
- 20+ Choose one from the list

Sub-table 8: Animals

- 1 Deer antler
- 2 Bull's horn
- 3 Rabitt skins (1d5)
- 4 Badger skin
- 5 Boar skin
- 6 Deer skin
- 7 Bear skin
- 8 Ermine skin
- 9 Cat
- 10 Trained bat
- 11 Trained rat
- 12 Trained ferret
- 13 Trained crow
- 14 Sheep dog
- 15 Hunting dog
- 16 Donkey
- 17 Mule
- 18 Pony
- 19 Horse
- 20+ Choose one from the list

Sub-table 9: Armor

- 1 Buckler shield (+1 AC, breaks after an attack against wielder fails)
- 2 Pavis shield (+4 AC, wielder can't attack, -10' to speed)
- 3 Tower shield (+2 AC, -1d to all attacks, -5')
- 4 Barding, horse (AC 1d4)
- 5 Barding, pony (AC 1d4)
- 6 Sabatons (cancel a critical hit against the feet, one use)
- 7 Poleyns (cancel a critical hit against the knees, one use)
- 8 Cuisses (cancel a critical hit against the thighs, one use)
- 9 Greaves (cancel a critical hit against the lower part of the legs, one use)

- 10 Gauntlets (cancel a critical hit against the hands, one use)
- 11 Pauldrons (cancel a critical hit against the shoulders, one use)
- 12 Couters (cancel a critical hit against the elbows, one use)
- 13 Vambrace (cancel a critical hit against the lower part of the arms, one use)
- 14 Rerebrace (cancel a critical hit against the rear part of the arms, one use)
- 15 Fauld (cancel a critical hit against the crotch or the buttocks, one use)
- 16 Breastplate (cancel a critical hit against the breast, one use)
- 17 Gorget (cancel a critical hit against the neck, one use)
- 18 Helmet (cancel a critical hit against the head, one use)
- 19 Choose 1 item from the list
- 20+ Choose 1d3 items from the list

Sub-table 10: Weapons

- 1 Weeder (1d3 damage)
- 2 Handsaw (1d3 damage)
- 3 Pruner (1d4 damage)
- 4 Sickle (1d4 damage)
- 5 Scalpel (1d4 damage)
- 6 Whip (1d4 damage, +1d to grapple maneuvers)
- 7 Shovel (1d5 damage)
- 8 Hoe (1d5 damage)
- 9 Rake* (1d5 damage)
- 10 Pitchfork* (1d6 damage)
- 11 Poker (1d6 damage)
- 12 Harpoon (1d6 damage)
- 13 Machete (1d6 damage)
- 14 Pickaxe (1d6 damage)
- 15 Scythe* (1d7 damage)
- 16 Spit (1d7 damage)
- 17 Pike pole* (1d7 damage)
- 18 Spiked iron bar* (1d7 damage)
- 19 Man-catcher* (1d6 damage, +1d to grapple maneuvers)
- 20+ Choose 1 weapon from the list

* Two-handed weapon

Sword and sorcery classes for DCC RPG

DCC Corebook's human classes are already iconic Sword & Sorcery concepts: Warrior, Wizard, Thief and even the Cleric. If the Judge customizes a Cleric's Disapproval Tables and Sacrifices, he can easily create truly Sword & Sorcery priests that follow Mitra, Set, Cthulhu, etc.

However, it's hard to find a place for the demihuman classes (Dwarf, Elf, Halfling) in most traditional or original Sword & Sorcery fiction. You could just ignore those classes, but they have great mechanics and can in fact simulate concepts faithful to the Hyborian Age or Lankmar, for example.

Each demihuman class from the Corebook receives the same treatment. A new name (followed by suggestions), a few adjustments and one or two new traits to replace old racial abilities like Infravision.

The Defender (or the Guardian, the Protector, the Oathsworn)

Original Class: Dwarf

Concept: Where warriors seek the riddle of steel as an end, Defenders see it as a tool to be wielded for a greater goal. Defenders see themselves as bulwarks against death. They're the lone wanderers in the wild, guarding the borders, bodyguards to princesses and priestesses, zealots sworn to a cause, a place or even just a person – maybe just their brothers-in-arms.

Hit points: A Defender gains 1d10 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: Defenders prefer to battle with a weapon and shield. A Defender is trained in the use of these melee weapons: battleaxe, club, dagger, handaxe, longsword, mace, short sword, spear, two-handed sword, and warhammer. A Defender is also trained in these missile fire weapons: crossbow, javelin, bow, and sling. Defenders wear whatever armor they can afford.

Alignment: Lawful Defenders are the Oathsworn, members of religious sects and holy orders, followers of ancient codes, bound to guard a bloodline, a place or even just a doctrine. Chaotic Defenders are Protectors, nameless wanderers who chose those worthy of their guard – even if they don't want. Neutral Defenders, Guardians, are a rare breed. They usually belong to fallen armies, knightly orders or even cultures dedicated to guard a place or people, most of the time without being seen.

Attack modifier: Defenders do not receive a fixed attack modifier at each level. Instead, they receive a deed die, just like a warrior. At 1st level, this is a d3. The Defender rolls this d3 on each attack roll and applies it to both his attack roll and his damage roll. On one attack, the die may give him a +1 to his attack roll and damage roll. On the next attack, the die may give him +3! The deed die advances with the Defender's level, climbing to d7 by 5th level, and then further to d10+4 by 10th level. The Defender always makes a new roll with this die in each combat round. When the Defender has multiple attacks

at higher levels, the same deed die applies to all attacks in the same combat round.

Mighty Deed of Arms: Defenders, like Warriors, can perform Mighty Deeds of Arms in combat. See the warrior entry for a complete description.

Warden: Defender excel at fighting with a shield in one hand and a weapon in the other. When fighting with a shield, a Defender always gains a shield bash as a second attack. This shield bash uses a d14 to hit (in-



stead of a d20). The Defender adds his deed die to this number, as with all attacks, and can attempt Mighty Deeds of Arms involving the shield as well as his weapon. The shield bash does 1d3 damage. Some Defenders customize their shields with spikes or sharp edges to do more damage, while others enchant their shields with unique powers. Defenders with multiple action dice (levels 5+) still receive only one shield bash each round.

Instead of a shield bash, a Defender can use a block. When an adjacent ally is attacked, the Defender can use his shield bash dice to block the enemy's attack. If the Defender's roll is equal to or higher than the enemy's, then the ally is protected. Instead of protecting an ally, a Defender can also use a block to protect himself, but with a -1d (Defenders are trained always thinking about their charges, never themselves).

With the Judge's permission, a Defender can change a shield for another parrying or exotic weapon, like a dagger or whip (the damage remains 1d3).

Luck: At first level, a Defender's Luck modifier applies to attack rolls with one specific kind of weapon (e.g., "longsword," not swords"), just as a Warrior does. This kind of weapon must be chosen at 1st level, and the modifier remains fixed over time, even if the Defender's Luck score changes. "Shields" is a common choice.

Action dice: A Defender receives a second action die at 5th level. Defenders always use their action dice for attacks. A Defender's shield bash is always in addition to his base action dice.

Defenders use the same Attack/Deed Dice, Crit Die/Table, Action Dice and Save progressions as a Dwarf.

Their titles are:

Level	Lawful/Oathsworn	Neutral/Guardian	Chaotic/Protector
1	Watchman	Patrolman	Wanderer
2	Custodian	Sentinel	Yojimbo
3	Inquisitor	Ranger	Zorro
4	Zealot	Warden	Avenger
5	Templar	Keeper	Dark Knight

The Rogue

Original Class: Halfling

Concept: Rogues are jack of all trades, scoundrels and vagabonds. They are urban parasites, preying on cities and civilizations, but at the same time they can't leave them. Rogues learn a bit of everything: fighting, skulking, and even a bit of magery (gutter mage is another common name for the more arcane-minded rogue).

Hit points: A Rogue gains 1d6 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: Rogues prefer to battle with a weapon in each hand. A Rogue is trained in the use of the club, crossbow, dagger, handaxe, javelin, shortbow, short sword, sling, and staff. Rogues usually wear leather armor.

Alignment: Lawful Rogues are usually protectors of the downtrodden (even when they demand payment for that). Neutral Rogues see themselves as artists, bards, renegades, self-declared heretics (and usually failed apprentices and acolytes) and avant-garde. Chaotic Rogues

are usually assassins, racketeers and bloodthirsty (and traitorous) duelists.

Two-weapon Fighting: Rogues are masters of two-weapon fighting, as follows:

- Normally, two-weapon fighting depends on the character's Agility to be effective (see corebook pages 94-95). A Rogue is always considered to have a minimum Agility of 16 when fighting with two weapons. This means he rolls at -1 die for his first attack and second, based on the dice chain (typically 1d16 for his first attack, and 1d16 for his second).
- A Rogue can fight with two equal-sized one-handed weapons, such as two hand axes or two short swords.
- Unlike other characters, when fighting with two weapons, a Rogue scores a crit and an automatic hit on any roll of a natural 16.

- If the Rogue has an Agility score higher than 16, he instead uses the normal two-weapon fighting rules for his Agility.
- When fighting with two weapons, the Rogue fumbles only when both dice come up a 1.

Thievery: Rogues are quite good at skulking around. They receive a bonus equal to their class level to the following skills: Sneak Silently, Hide in Shadows, Disguise, Shadowing and Rumors. They can be used in the same manner as the thief's abilities. The last two abilities are new and described below:

- *Shadowing:* the Rogue can follow people in urban areas or in public places (taverns, halls, festivals) without be seen. If the target doesn't know about the Rogue and the place is open to all parties, the DC is usually 10. Following a big and organized group or going inside a controlled place (like a temple or church) is 15. Following someone in any crowd where you clearly stand out or inside some place heavily watched (like the Lord's castle or the dwarf embassy) is 20.
- *Rumors:* give a Rogue 2d4 hours (or 1d4 hour and some gold) and he/she can gather or spread rumors in a town or city (halve the time for small places and limit its effects in big cities, perhaps dividing a metropolis in four or six areas). Catching current rumors is an automatic success. Finding information about a local NPC, place or recent event is 10. Finding clues or directions to the secret hideout of the thieves' guild, a forgotten temple or an NPC that is hiding from the watch is usually 15 (discovering information about magic items usually falls in this area). Finding true secrets (or the person that knows about them) is DC 20. This last DC is where you find stuff like the backdoor to the King's chamber, the chapel of the last paladin in the realm, the library of an archmage dead centuries ago, etc. The Rogue can also spread rumors, with the DC based on the person or impact of the lies (telling everyone that Rogar, the Fat, is in debt might be DC 10, but spread that the King is a diabolist is DC 20).

On Rumors and the OSR: the Rumors ability should never replace roleplaying, exploration and investigation. This ability doesn't grant free access to magic items, allies, or allows the party to sidestep the adventure. Rumors grant game hooks, contacts and directions. It is especially useful when the party don't know who to look for or where to go. And because Rogues are awesome urban PCs, even failing a Rumors check should be useful. For example, if the Rogue wants to find the secret sewer passage to the King castle and fails, let the party find the entrance, but make them fall in an ambush with the local thieves (or rat-catcher) guild.

Cantraps & Hexes: all Rogues have had an interest in magic at some point in their lives, and therefore have some esoteric know-how that allow them to Cast spell from a scroll like a thief (DCC RPG, p. 36), although the Rogue will always do so with 1d10, adding their level and Intelligence bonus.

Their arcane studies also give them dominion over a few cantraps, hexes and minor curses. Nothing flashy or advanced, Rogues are in this aspect closer to hedge wizards, local diviners and adepts. In game terms, this is represented by burning Luck. First, Rogues double the bonus of the burnt Luck points. For every 1 point of Luck expended, a Rogue gains a +2 to his roll.

Second, unlike other classes, a Rogue recovers each night one point of Luck. They can increase this recovery by a number of points equal to his level by making sacrifices to minor demons, spirits and godlings of chance (usually like a cleric, spending 50 GP per extra Luck point). This process cannot take his Luck score past its natural maximum.

Third, a Rogue can burn his Luck to affect allies and enemies. The target must be nearby and visible to the Rogue. The Rogue can act out of initiative order to burn Luck and apply it to the target's rolls - either as a penalty or as bonus. The Rogue's Luck modifier can apply to any



roll made by the target: attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, spell checks, thief skills, and so on.

A target can only be affected by one “bonus” or one “penalty” derived from Cantraps & Hexes at the same time. If another Rogue tries to alter the same threads of destiny, the Luck will be spent with no resulting effect whatsoever.

Every time a Rogue uses this ability to inflict penalties, he/she must also roll a Luck check (i.e. roll 1d20 and try to roll equal or lesser than his Luck ability score). If the Rogue fails, he suffers some kind of misfire or backlash

(like a minor corruption). Black magic is black magic, even if just a cantrap.

Finally, when a Rogue uses this ability something minor and odd happens (animals shriek, flames dance, a wind blows out of nowhere etc.). Characters trained in the occult or who battled spellcasters before can notice that the Rogue is casting magic.

Rogues use the same Attack/Deed Dice, Crit Die/Table, Action Dice, Sneak & Hide and Save progressions as a Halfling.

Their titles are:

Level	Lawful	Neutral	Chaotic
1	Thief-Taker	Vagrant	Trickster
2	Vigilante	Artist	Mounteback
3	Bravo	Rumormonger	Rascal
4	Duelist	Savant	Rake
5	Yakuza	Factotum	Scoundrel

The Warlock

Original Class: Elf

Concept: Where Clerics get their powers from gods and Wizards from unravelling esoteric lore, Warlocks... well... Warlocks cheat. They're those who sell their souls in exchange of magic, who follow Left-Handed Paths better avoided by the sane, or who just can't resist picking that one cursed sword. They accept power for justified reasons, at least in their own minds. They do it for revenge, to save a loved one, because gods and tutors “failed” them, or perhaps simply because they can take power and they believe they'll be the exception. Warlocks are those that took the easier path to eldritch power. Their magic (and mind) always have a dark and strange flavor. Wizards consider Warlock as “lesser magicians”, Clerics love to burn them and Elves (if you use them in a S&S setting) see them as “promising” adepts.

Hit points: A Warlock gains 1d6 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: A Warlock is trained in the use of the dagger, javelin, longbow, longsword, shortbow, short sword, staff, spear, and two-handed sword.

Warlocks often wear armor, even though it affects their spellcasting.

Alignment: Lawful Warlocks are the unwilling, those who took power in order to save a loved one (or to prevent people worse than them from getting it). Chaotic Warlocks are the most common. They can fool themselves with all kind of reasons for accepting pacts and bargains in exchange for power, but the truth is - they took it because they love it! Neutral Warlocks are the rarest ones and ironically the most dangerous. Unconcerned with Law or Chaos, Neutral Warlocks are the kind of people that accept a pact with Arioch, Nyarlathotep, or the Crippled God just because they're curious about what lies at the deepest bottom of the Abyss or what existed before Chaos.

Magic: Warlocks practice arcane magic by keeping pacts with otherworldly creatures. Where a Wizard may summon a demon a few times in his life, a Warlock needs “his” demon to power his spells. This leaves Warlocks considerably vulnerable to their patron's demand. Some Warlocks keep multiple patrons exactly to avoid that...

the results aren't pleasant, and rare (and terrifying) are those Warlocks that manage to reach old age.

Caster level: Caster level is a measurement of an Warlock's power in channeling a spell's energy. An Warlock's caster level is equal to his level. For example, a 2nd-level Warlock has a caster level of 2.

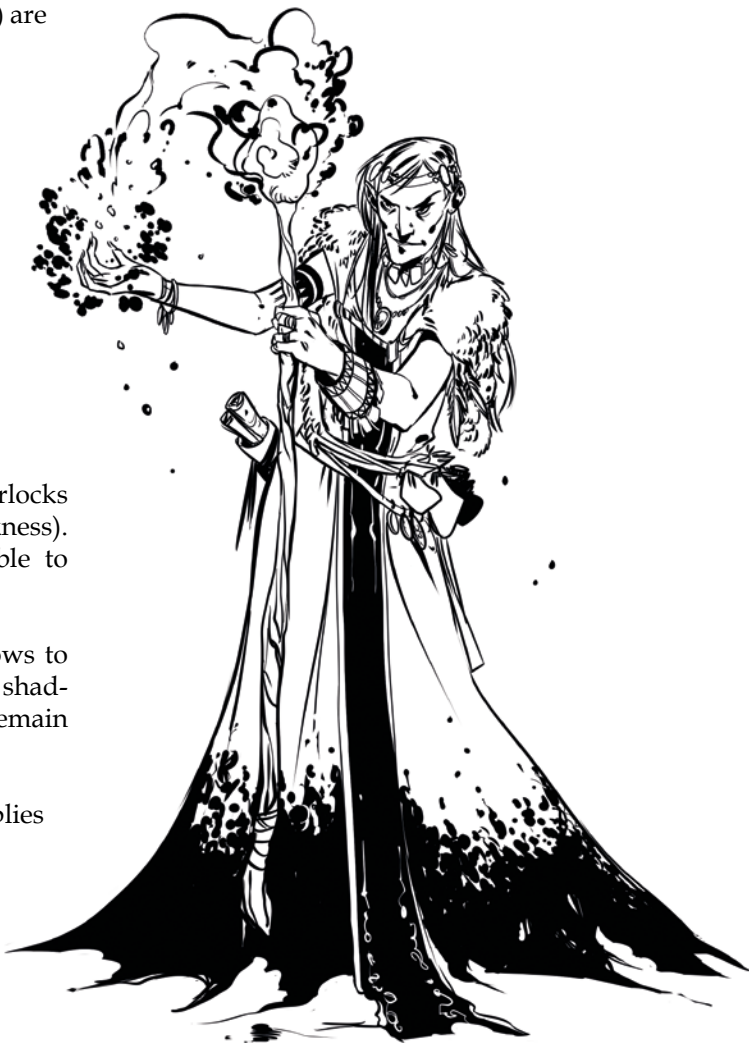
Otherworldly Master: Like Wizards, Warlocks can invoke supernatural patrons. A Warlock automatically receives the spells *patron bond* and *invoke patron* at 1st level in addition to his other spells.

Darkborn: A Warlock's eye glow in the dark. Warlocks can see in the dark up to 30' (even magical darkness). Bright lights or daylight is always uncomfortable to Warlocks.

Cloak of Darkness: A Warlock can weave shadows to hide his presence. They receive a bonus to hide in shadows (and only in shadows and darkness), if they remain still, as a Halfling of the same level.

Luck: At first level, a Warlock's Luck modifier applies to spell checks on one spell of his choosing. That modifier does not change as the Warlock's Luck score changes. Every time a Warlock levels up (or after doing some quest for his patrons), he can change the spell that receives the Luck modifier.

Action dice: A Warlock's action dice can be used for attacks or spell checks at any level. At 5th level, a Warlock can cast two spells in a single round, the first with a d20 spell check and the second with a d14; or he can make two attacks, the first with a d20 attack roll and the second with a d14; or he may combine an attack with a spell check. Note that the results of mercurial magic supersede the action dice, so a Warlock with a particularly high (or low) spell check die



from mercurial magic uses that result instead (with his total actions still limited by his level).

Warlocks use the same Attack/Deed Dice, Crit Die/Table, Action Dice, Known Spells, Max Spell Level and Save progressions as an Elf.

Their titles are:

Level	Lawful	Neutral	Chaotic
1	Adept	Occultist	Blasphemer
2	Channeler	Heretic	Black Magician
3	Eldritch Knight	Cabalist Warrior	Diabolist
4	Gith	Binder	Eldritch Blade
5	Theurgist Blade	Magus	Sorcerer



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the stone heir

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the stone heir

an adventure for hardened
level 1 characters

Marcial "the Bold", only heir to the Marquis of Burgstard, honored his nickname when he organized a hunting foray to hunt a fearsome basilisk. A few days later, the only survivor returned with the sad news that Marcial was boldly petrified in the beast's lair. The Marquis moved heaven and earth until he found an alchemist who could reverse the dramatic petrification, only to find out that the alchemist wasn't willing to go into the basilisk's lair to apply the required oils. The Marquis needs a band of courageous adventurers to recover the stone heir and bring it back to the castle. The reward is as plentiful as the mission is dangerous!



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