

the phlogiston books  
volume 3:

the CARNIVAL of  
earthly  
delights



COMPATIBLE WITH  
DCC  
RPG



the  
phlogiston  
BOOKS  
volume 3

The Carnival of  
Earthy Delights  
for the DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS RPG





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## the Phlogiston Books

### volume 3

## the carnival of earthly delights

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This book is dedicated to the parties of brave Upcutters who faced the Moiran wilderlands,  
wreaking havoc and bursting out in laughter

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# Nothing ever happens here

That's the mantra of everyone who lives in a small village. Nothing ever happens here. However, as soon as you dig a bit deeper... being a place where nothing ever happens, you can always find clandestine love affairs, old feuds, brutal murders, mysterious vanishings, and ghoulish legends that surround some of the bucolic and sleepy landscapes. None of this is revealed to the occasional visitor. If they take a walk around the main square, all they'll notice is some people openly gazing at them, some neighbors greeting each other apathetically, and the laughter of kids who are chasing a cat with ill intent. And yet, they'll be able to notice that something is going on there. Underneath the apparent rural tediousness, there's a noticeable underlying tension, that only needs a tiny spark to burst into a raging inferno.

In *The Carnival of Earthly delights* the dam of secrets cracks open, and everything that isn't supposed to be going on pours forth like a torrent that threatens to drag the poor Upcutters. The author, well-versed in the rural milieu as he's been a reluctant part of it, offers the vision of a village just like the ones where we used to spend the summer at, but through the black-humored and lysergic filter of the *DCC* game.

Furthermore, the Barony of Moirás is a small sandbox that anyone can expand by twisting their own memories, through the legends their grannies told them, or the rumors about the local preacher. The ideal scenario for a 0-level funnel where, on top of the dangers related to a fantasy world, are those from a rural environment: the deadly jaws of a wild cat, a deadly and slippery sheet of black ice, or the precise stones thrown by an angry shepherd.

So go grab a sickle and roll up your skirts to follow a band of women who break free for the first time from the prison of deathly routine, to embark on a journey that could well be their last. Most of them won't go back; some of them because they'll be pushing up daisies, others because they won't be able to resume their dull lives when they'd rather earn a living in the wild, sacking bandits' camps alongside the Numantian Company, invoking the favors of the Superb Sow, or joining the ranks of the Nypsies. They even could take over one of the demesnes in Hundreds of Lordlings and face the Burgstards or Borjas in their twisted palace intrigues.

In any case, know that as soon as all of this is over, when the dust from the battle settles down, and the brimstone from the invocations dissipates... the elders will once again sit on the stone benches to complain about that nothing ever happens here.





*The fearsome owlsine, fierce dweller of the Moiran wild*

# Summary

Hundreds of Lordlings is a land divided into tens of minute turfs, governed by numberless, garden-variety tyrants. It's the homeland of rough and humble people, wild landscapes, and a highly miserable and unpredictable weather. One of these territories is the barony of Moirás, humorously referred to as "the place where you vanish in the haze" due to its remote and isolated location. Although everyone calls it a barony, neither the Baron nor his knights have been spotted for a long time. And in the most remote and isolated place in the barony is the village of Upper Coldcutters.

Despite its isolation, Upper Coldcutters is not bereft of trouble; its people have been blackmailed by a gang of bandits, and they've been giving them part of their cold meat produce from their annual pig slaughter to quench their rage. Every year, the village's men take a load of cold cuts and preserved meats to a meeting point to exchange them for the bandits' "protection"; from a pig slaughter to the next one, a whole year. But this time, after going to the designated place with their invaluable cargo, the men didn't get back home. Have they been the target of the bandits' capricious rage? Have they stumbled upon one of the many hazards that dot the Moiran fields?

What is really going on is far more twisted and unfair than the story told by the men. It's true that a group of hardened highwaymen planned a racketeering "business" in the region, but a minor squabble became a bloody fight and most of the bandits died or ran away before meeting the men from Upper Coldcutters. When the Upcutters (that is to say, the men from Upper Coldcutters) arrived to the meeting point, instead of finding the bandits they discovered the mysterious Carnival of Earthly Delights, and the promise of a handful of hours filled with unknown pleasures, in exchange for the valuable cold meats. This proved to be too tempting for them. Instead of going back to their wives, the Upcutters abandoned themselves to vice and have kept the bandits' ruse to this very day, to cover up their yearly visit to the Carnival, free from their women's scrutiny.

Unfortunately, this time a poor decision taken by the Carnival leader is keeping the men there longer than they ever would've wanted, and the good people back at the village (mostly women) are starting to expect the worst case scenario. So, the mothers, wives, sisters, and girlfriends have decided to take matters into their own hands and find out whatever happened to their men, either to rescue or bury them. These women will have to journey through the dangerous Moiran countryside and either avoid or confront the animals that dwell in it, and the people who haunt it. Clues, hints, or sheer luck will guide their steps towards The Carnival of Earthly Delights, from which they'll have to rescue their unfaithful men... if they don't decide to leave them there, of course.

## Rural fantasy

As we pointed out in *The Phlogiston Books, Volume I, Dungeon Crawl Classics (TPBI and DCC from now on)* stresses out the day-to-day happenstance of the fantasy medieval worlds where the action is set. This module takes place in rural surroundings, wild and half-civilized. The bucolic and pastoral ideals that modern city-dwellers have in mind aren't a good starting point; life in the countryside (and even more so in a Sword & Sorcery setting) is harsh, unpredictable, and limited. Tell your players about it and keep it an important part of your history: the descriptions of the creatures, their scarce knowledge of anything beyond their village, the protagonists' prejudices, etc.



# Folk Wisdom

## Common knowledge

*“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing”*

Villages are a hotbed of gossip, legends, half-truths, and blatant lies. The PCs’ knowledge of the world that surrounds their tiny bubble of comfort and safety (i.e., Upper Coldcutters) is sparse, but it’s better than nothing. All characters are privy to these details about their village and the immediate vicinity (we know, it’s not a lot; travelling was almost unheard of, literacy was an exotic occurrence, and logical or rational thinking was the province of madmen):

Southward, at an hour’s distance, is the village of Lower Coldcutters. Although the Upcutters have an antagonistic relationship with the Lowcutters, in practice there’s a steady traffic between both enclaves.

One of the constant sources of rivalry with the Lowcutters is the communal meadows that stretch down south of the village; it’s there where the famous Upcutter swine spend most of their lives.

Almost all the ways that connect the places of interest are pathways created by the foot transit. Northwards and westwards there’s the hint of a couple of old roads: one seems to lead to the City-State of Slugburg, whereas the other linked the Baron’s castle with other demesnes; they’re now ruined, and vegetation ridden.

On the old road to Slugburg is The Gallows Tree, where the impenitent criminals are hanged; it’s said that The Tree has awakened.

In the eastward forest, at a couple of hours’ distance, lives the witch. She proved herself as someone to be afraid of and respect some years ago, when she bewitched two lads, one from each village, to serve her.

Southwestward, at three hours’ distance, is the Sanctuary of the Superb Sow, the Pig Mother, the Protector Swine, she that oversees the village’s spiritual and physical well-being.

Southwestward but farther away, are some ruins. Years ago, a false god was worshipped there, but luckily it was unmasked.

Those brave enough who ventured into the west speak of a frightful creature, half bird and half ursine, that devours anyone who marches through its turf.

There are rumors about a group of rich lordlings from Slugburg (the City-State) who founded in the Northwest a complex of so-called “vacation habitations” (whatever that means), but there haven’t been news of lately about the place.

Eutimio “the hardheaded” got fed up of raising pigs, so he decided to move out into the countryside and grow barley and potatoes. It’s been two weeks since he last visited the village.

When it’s time to grind some potatoes or barley to make flour, or berries from the crimson bramble to brew wine, the place to go is one of the nearby galemills: one is on the west, whereas the other is in the south.

Killjoy, the local bandit (if he can be termed so), makes a rough living in the wildlands alongside some former baron’s men-at-arms and even the odd, good-for-nothing, Upcutter.

Northward is the noble town of Humiliatown, and climbing up the Hungrymoon mountains, a small settlement called Shadypass; the City-State of Slugburg is faraway in the west; and in the south there’s a swampy expanse.

Don’t hesitate to share with the players whatever data you consider that a Moiran village dweller might know (locations, customs, famous people, proverbs); and if you twist it a tad, even better.

# Rumors

*“Better he devil you know (that the devil you don’t)”*

Apart from the above, every player (player, not character) should roll on the following table to determine what secret or rumor they know.

Id10	Rumors and legends
1	Demons wander unhindered at night, devouring pigs and people alike, except at full moon. It’s <b>false</b> ; they aren’t demons, but talpids, that can only hunt at night due to an ancestral pact.
2	Watch out where you tread, you might fall into the underworld. It’s a bit <b>false</b> and a bit <b>true</b> : there’s an intricate net of talpid tunnels, but they are master builders, so finding or falling into a tunnel is highly improbable.
3	The high priestess of the Superb Sow is not who she claims to be; one of the attendants to the last cattle fair attests that she was a mere swindler in her hometown, Slugburg. <b>True</b> .
4	Some pigs, mainly the unruliest, break free and even procreate. They are extremely dangerous, since they hold no fear for men. <b>True</b> .
5	The fields to the west lay wasted, and strange creatures have been seen wriggling in the underbrush then vanishing from sight. It’s <b>true</b> , those are the largerpillars.
6	A second cousin told me that the bewitched lads aren’t so but are Amaranta’s lovers. <b>True</b> .
7	The bandits have decided that our tribute isn’t enough, so they’ve slaughtered our men. We should be ready for the worst. Utterly <b>false</b> .
8	During the pig slaughter festivities the village youngsters stumbled upon a hairy devil; they made quick work of it with stones. Unfortunately, they couldn’t recover the carcass. Some of it is <b>false</b> and some is <b>true</b> : they indeed inflicted a deadly wound upon a talpid, not a devil, but he managed to escape and died in his “molehill”.
9	Upper Coldcutters and Lower Coldcutters were founded when two siblings had a strong dispute, many generations ago. It’s both <b>false</b> and <b>true</b> : the founders were siblings, but the main reason to split wasn’t either familiar or material.
10	It’s said that the male Lowcutters are a bunch of effeminate wusses; nothing like the virile Upcutters. Again, it’s partly <b>true</b> and <b>false</b> in equal measure: the strange properties of the Upcutter swine’s meat induce men to behave more and more in a lecherous way, but they aren’t necessarily more virile.

## Superstition

Both villages in this module share a body of beliefs and superstitions that help them (or hinder!) in their day-to-day lives. The PCs can adhere to these beliefs: their most important effects on the game are included below. Check out **hexagon O** to know more about the Superb Sow.

**The Superb Sow** is the village’s patron deity (for the time being), and she offers the Upcutters protection in exchange for sacrifices and rituals. Invoking her name while linking both pinkies grants a +1d5 bonus to Will save rolls when resisting spells that affect the mind for each Luck point burnt.

**The Superb Sow’s lucky hoof.** Brandishing this amulet, made with the hoof of a pig sacrificed to the Superb Sow, helps resisting the spiritual or infernal possession attempts on the wearer, granting a +1d5 bonus to Will save rolls for each Luck point spent.

**Give me strength.** When the Upcutters suffer the consequences of physical ailments (poisons, illnesses, fractures, etc.), they can gobble up a generous portion of the regional delicacies (a bite out of a cold meat, a swig of wine, etc.) to get a new saving throw, if there was one to start with.

You can find more information on superstitions and their effect on the game in *TPBI*.

# Mini sandbox

This funnel provides a **Player start**, a hook (see **hexagon A**), background (what really happened and what could happen in the future), and a social and physical context for all the affairs going on during the adventure. That is to say, a sandbox. The courageous village dwellers have before them multiple options to unravel the mysterious disappearance, so the outcome completely depends upon their decisions. Although it's given for granted that they'll find the Carnival, maybe your group can't reach it, or they get there and decide to leave their immoral men to fend for themselves, or reach an agreement with the Carnival leader to "free" them, or... in any case, they won't be forced on a line of action. Long live free will!

To that end, every entry on the map includes a description of what can be found there, its quirks, and the possible outcome of the situation there. A generous amount of common sense and improvisation are needed.

Chapter six from *DCC RPG*, **Quests and journeys**, and in particular the sections **Journeys in a small world**, **Travel in a medieval setting**, **Overland speed** and **Security while traveling**, sum up perfectly what's like to live in a medieval rural milieu and travel around it; this module agrees wholeheartedly with all of it. Since it's important for the Judge to estimate how many hexagons do the intrepid characters explore every day, we've included here the rules about overland speed.

Please note that this table refers to travel under optimal conditions, and that's just the opposite of what will happen during the adventure: the paths and roads aren't in a good shape, the weather is rainy and even snowy... Consider reducing the distance in a half or a third part, based on how bad it is. Speed can be increased up to a third with a forced march (check page 308 on the *DCC RPG* manual).

Transportation	Hourly speed	Daily distance*
Walking	3 mph**	24 miles
Mule or donkey	3 mph	24 miles
Horse or pony	4 mph	32 miles
Warhorse	5 mph	40 miles
Farmer's cart***	2 mph	16 miles
Passenger wagon****	3 mph	24 miles
Merchant's caravan	3 mph	24 miles

\* 8 hours per day

\*\* Miles per hour

\*\*\* Two-wheeled cart with mule designed for hauling vegetables.

\*\*\*\* Covered wagon designed for carrying paying passengers. Available only between major destinations (e.g., large cities or trading ports)

There's not a deadline to finish the adventure (check **hexagon V** to know more about the purple lotus overdose and its length), apart from what logic dictates and how the events unfold in the Carnival if the PCs take too long to reach it (or if they never get there!). Ponder the situation and act out in consequence; the section **Failure is an option** offers more details about the fallout of a failed mission.

# Weather and environment

*"It never rains but it pours"*

The proverb can be easily applied to the Moiran weather. The land of the barony is afflicted by long and hard winters, and dry and hot summers; it's a region of climate extremes. Furthermore, the territory's quirks make it possible for sudden weather changes to come and go without previous notice, and even weird and harmful climate events. This adventure takes place at the beginning of winter, which is the best time for the preferred local holiday: the pig slaughter (just celebrated, by the way), but the worst to start or undertake a journey. Roll on this table every day, at morning time, to determine the weather conditions; if you're feeling specially playful you can even roll again at any time during the day to show one of those sudden weather changes. Here's the most mundane climatology; for unusual or extreme events, check out the **Random encounters** section.

## 1d12 Weather conditions

- 1 All clear, the sun shines but it's very cold.
- 2-4 Clear, a chilly wind blows.
- 5-6 A thick fog envelops everything, it's freezing.
- 7-9 Cloudy; it can either rain or snow (50%). 1d6: 1-3 rain, 4-6 snow.
- 10 Cloudy; some hail is probable (50%). 1d6: 1-3 hail, 4-6 rain.
- 11 Very cloudy, it will almost surely snow (85%). 1d6: 1-5 snow, 6 intense cold.
- 12 Blizzard.

The no-nonsense locals (that is to say, the PCs) dress and prepare every morning according to the weather conditions and the forecast. Barring unexpected events or the players' choices, it's given for granted that the PCs are wearing the right clothes for the season: warm garments and masterwork overcoats, coated in pig grease to rain- and snow proof them. Therefore, the PCs won't be affected by this awful weather (but things like impaired visibility and travel distances indeed will).

The barony's countryside is unruly and wild. It's covered in bushes and undergrowth adapted to an extreme climate, although some tree species have managed to prosper. The ground is a mire during the wintertime and a dust plain in summer. Rocky outcrops are also a common sight, and most of them consist of round and big rocks.

The traditional crops are barley and potato, well suited to a harsh environment. Most of the people also grow the crimson bramble, a shrub similar to the blackberry bush, which fruit is very sweet. With these berries they brew the foremost alcohol beverage: a crimson dark wine, sugary and rough, the most important ingredient of their celebrations and holidays.



# Random encounters

*“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”*

The barony of Moirás is not a tranquil setting whatsoever; it’s ridden with a capricious weather and a wide assortment of hazards. Obviously, humans weren’t the first people to inhabit it, and even to the present day they’re in bad company.

Not only wild beasts, but also the monsters that call this land their home, the wrath of the elements, some demi-humans and humanity itself because, as the old saying goes, man is a wolf to man. To simulate this, for every hexagon the PCs arrive into, roll 1d7 adding or subtracting the worst Luck modifier of the party. If the result is 2 or less, determine what the PCs stumble upon.

Spending the night in the Moiran outdoors, in the open, is doubly bold (or plain stupid). Every time they do so, roll 1d7 again adding or subtracting the worst Luck modifier of the party. If the result is 4 or less, one of the following encounters will take place. Unless otherwise stated, if one of the PCs stands guard, allow them a DC 10 Intelligence check to act before it happens; if there aren’t any sentries, the one with the highest Intelligence stat can attempt a DC 20 Intelligence check.

If there’s an encounter, roll on the corresponding table depending on the time of the day, adjusting it with the worse Luck modifier of the party; you can also choose one you like, if you prefer it.

1d16+mod.	Daytime
1 or less	Conscience storm
2	Ground frost
3	Flash flood
4	Owlsine
5	Largerpillar
6	Wolves
7	Skullfrage
8	Bandits
9	Black ice
10	Runaway pigs
11	Transhumance
12	Fake bramble
13	Hunting party
14	Nypsies
15	Numantian knight
16	Peddler
17 or more	Stag

1d8+mod.	Nighttime
1 or less	Conscience storm
2	Wild cat
3	Ground frost
4	Flash flood
5	Owlsine
6	Largerpillar
7	Wolves
8	Squirrels
9 or more	Stag



## Encounter description

1 or less

Conscience storm

1 or less

The weirdest climate phenomenon (if it can be termed as such) in the Moiran countryside, and luckily the most uncommon, is what scholars call “conscience storm”, but the locals are more prosaic, and usually call it “mindfuck” or “mind twister”.

This mythical, but completely real storm, manifests as a roiling mass of deep purple clouds, alongside a discharge of amazing scarlet lightning bolts that make no sound whatsoever. What’s more, the area under it seems to lightly shimmer, like in a blazing summer day. The most perplexing fact about it and what confirms it as a supernatural event is that it appears out of the blue (even on cloudless days) and always over a group of people; everyone who suffered it agree on this.

The tempest is harmful in just one, but big, way: it changes the afflicted people’s alignment. Those who were once law-abiding citizens and advocates of civilization, suddenly become supporters of otherworldly entities that supposedly govern the cosmos and humanity’s fate. There’s not an outbreak of cognitive dissonance or anything like that, the new philosophical outlook feels like the one the person always upheld.

Not everyone under the storm is affected; its fickle rays (the actual agents of the change) only strike certain people. In fact, they exclusively hit the people with the highest and the lowest Luck score (if there is a draw in either instance, the lightning strikes them all). The apparently brutal discharge (those hit by it later remember a blinding light but no pain at all) swaps the alignment one step to the left (from Chaotic to Neutral, from Neutral to Lawful, and from Lawful to Chaotic). A DC 16 Will save negates this effect. It’ll certainly be difficult to explain it to your patron or god...

**Life goes on.** The conscience storm can’t affect the same person twice. Changing back to the old alignment will only be possible through quests, the help of a patron, or a lasting and progressive correction of the PC’s behavior and beliefs.

2

Wild cat

Bigger than a house cat and better suited to live in the wilderness, the elusive wild cat complements its diet of rodents and birds with something more nutritive: human life force. It will invariably target a sleeping person to do so and will purr softly next to their mouth and nose while it syphons the sleeper’s breath.

**Roll 1d3:** 1, one wild cat; 2, male and female; 3, female with a hidden litter nearby, in her lair (1d8 kittens).

**Wild cat:** *Init* +5; *Atk claw* +1d3 *melee* (1d8 plus *rend*, 1d6) or *bite* +1d3 *melee* (1d4); *AC* 13; *HD* 1d6, 5 *hp*; *MV* 40'; *Act* 2d16 or 1d20; *SP* *deed die*, *syphon life force*, *stealth* +8; *SV Fort* +1, *Ref* +4, *Will* +0; *AL* N.

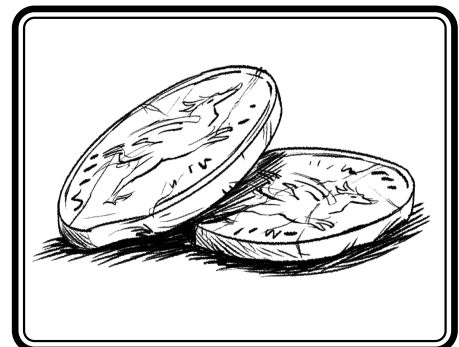
**Action dice:** A wild cat can use 1d20 action die to bite or claw, or two 1d16 action dice to attack with both claws; if the two of them hit, it will *rend* its objective for 1d6 additional damage.

**Deed die:** A wild cat can use its deed die to ambush an objective from a hideout; if the deed die is 3, it will automatically score a critical hit, using the Crit Table M.

**Syphon life force:** A sleeping person being affected by this must make a DC 10 Will save each round to wake up; otherwise, they suffer the temporary loss of 1d3 Personality points every round.

**Stealth:** This special ability allows a wild cat to hide in shadows and move silently, like a thief.

**Life goes on.** If a wild cat manages to syphon the life force of one or more PCs and escape, it will become addicted to that PC’s energy (or, if more than one, to the PC with the lowest Luck score). The feline will haunt their nights once and again, if possible. If that PC attains level 1 and becomes a wizard, they can choose that wild cat as their familiar.



## Animals or dire beasts?

The wild (and some domesticated) animals of the barony are not exactly the same as the ones we're used to see on the TV documentaries. The harsh and weird environment of the region has turned them into dangerous and unpredictable creatures. Apart from their special abilities, most of them have a deed die (as described in *TPBI*) to attack and attempt maneuvers related to their nature (a bull's rush, a wolf's trip, etc.). Any Moiran PC (and Upcutters in particular) can try to remember any species' quirks if they make a DC 13 Intelligence check. If the PC has an occupation related to nature, they won't need to make the check to know those details.

### 2 3 Ground frost

During wintertime in the barony, the temperature can drop drastically both at night and day, not only before dawn. Some hints of an imminent infamous and feared ground frost are a silence that blankets everything (DC 10 Intelligence check, just one using the worst modifier in the group), and a sudden drop of the temperature (DC 10 Stamina check to realize it, again only one, using the worst modifier in the group). As a last resort, a successful Luck check (using the worst score) grants a grim finding: the frozen effigy of a squirrel that fell to the icy menace, standing on a branch. In just 1d14 minutes' time the frost will cover everything in several hundred feet of radius, and it could freeze to death those unprepared dwellers of the countryside. The lethal cold forces a DC 10 Fort save every 10 minutes to avoid suffering 1 hp damage; if the PC survives despite sustaining damage, their movement decreases 10' due to the numbness and stiffening of muscles and tendons (which will go back to their original condition after spending some time next to a bonfire). Death by frost leaves a rigid corpse, sparkly and brittle like glass.

To evade such fate, PCs have to run away from the area as soon as possible (the affected zone is 100 x 2d10 square feet, during 1d100 minutes) or find shelter inside a solid structure. They can also huddle together to warm up, but those on the "outside" of the "melee" still have to make the Fort save (although the DC would lower to 5).

**Life goes on.** If any PC sustains at least 2 hp of damage from the frost and survives, they'll permanently develop the supernatural ability of predicting the weather in a 1-mile radius area; their bones and joints' pain will be like an alarm. This ability can be used once a day, and the forecast will only be right if they succeed on a DC 12 Stamina check (we recommend the Judge to roll it behind the screen).

### 3 4 flash flood

The hard rains that fall mercilessly and sometimes cause flash floods and high water are yet another manifestation of the harsh Moiran weather. The settlements are built in places meant to lessen their harmful effects, but being in the middle of nowhere during a flash flood is very dangerous: the powerful current will flow unimpeded, dragging animals, trees and rocks with it, alongside anything that crosses its path.

Ominous storm clouds will converge over the area, alerting the travelers and allowing them to react if they think it appropriate; 1d20 minutes later a waterspout will fall over the hexagon, creating a deadly current in just 1d10 minutes. At this point, if the Upcutters haven't ran for their lives (climbing up a tree or a rock, tying themselves up, etc.), they'll be pulled by the flash flood and suffer 1d5 damage (DC 12 Reflex save for half damage). Furthermore, they'll be hauled to an adjacent hexagon (roll 1d6 to assign it randomly).

**Life goes on.** The strong water stream will bring a huge earthenware pitcher, miraculously intact. It's one of the mythical clay jars, property of a now-forgotten king, who confined his daughters inside them and sealed them with tar, as the famous romance goes:

*"There was once a king*

*With three girly offspring*

*Off he put them inside an earthenware jar*

*And on top of that he sealed them with tar*

*Am I keeping you interested so far?"*

What kind of curse afflicts the princess? What would befall on the PCs should they break the pitch seal? This and many other Moiran legends will be further developed in future publications...



*A valuable galemill and its sinister night visitors*



## 4 5 Owlsine

This encounter can only take place in **hexagon J** and those adjacent to it; in any other case, reroll. This huge and hungry ursine creature wanders off farther and farther from its lair, and it won't hesitate to attack the PCs to sate its hunger and let some steam off. For a detailed description, refer to **hexagon J**; there's an illustration of the owlsine on page 6.

**Owlsine:** Init +2; Atk claw +1d6+2 melee (1d6+2 and bear hug) or bite +1d6+2 melee (1d8+2); AC 14; HD 5d8+5, 29 hp; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP deed die, flammable, stench; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

**Bear hug:** If both claw attacks hit the same target, the owlsine hugs the victim, crushing them (1d8 additional damage) and coats them with tar (can only be removed with alcohol or a strong alcoholic drink; see "flammable" below).

**Deed die:** The owlsine can use its deed die to make a trip attack or a grapple.

**Flammable:** The owlsine is covered in tar, so a fiery attack (torches, fire arrows, etc.) will automatically set it alight during 1d5 rounds for 1d8 damage, and it will have to make a morale check or flee.

**Stench:** Like all the bears native to the barony, the owlsine's strong body odor is extremely nerve-wracking. Anybody who is at 15' or less from the beast must make a DC 12 Will save or suffer a -1d penalty during 1d7 rounds.

**Life goes on.** Check out **hexagon J**.

## 5 6 LARGERPILLARS

These creatures, an authentic plague, are spreading out from their original location, **hexagon Q**. These slimy and disgusting worms move by crawling easily under the soil, and will burst out from their underground tunnels to attack their nutritious prey, either biting them or spewing a stream of the same earth they swallow to make their way through the dirt. The PCs can make a DC 10 Intelligence check to notice the cracks on the floor or the faint noise of the beast digging under them. If it's nighttime, consult the beginning of this section.

**Largerpillar (1d10):** Init +2; Atk bite -1 melee (1d3-1) or earthy puke +0 missile fire (1d4, 30'); AC 10; HD 1d4, 2 hp; MV 15', dig 30'; Act 1d20; SP underground senses, pit trap, earthy puke; SV Fort +0, Ref -2, Will +2; AL C.

**Underground senses:** A largerpillar can see in the dark (60') and detect the vibrations caused by the overground creatures when they move (60').

**Pit trap:** If nobody notices the largerpillar, its first action will be to dig a pit trap under its objective, who will be pinned down when they fall into the hole. The victim must make a DC 8 Reflex save or become trapped (-1d penalty on all actions and they can't move). On following rounds, the trapped PC can get out of the pit if they succeed on a DC 8 Strength check.

**Life goes on.** Refer to **hexagon Q** to to know more about the threat that these nasty pests pose. The tunnels they dig to spread throughout the area lead to that hexagon, but those PCs that venture into them will face 1d10 largerpillars in each hexagon they move through this way.

## 6 7 Wolves

The Moiran wolves have learnt the hard way to avoid humans, so it's highly uncommon for a pack to attack a person, and a group of people is out of the question. This pack, on the other hand, is another matter altogether, since its alpha is The Wolf, a local legend in itself. This fearsome creature takes advantage of its bestial intelligence to plan ambushes and inspire courage (or intimidate) to its pack in order to stalk and hunt their prey, even humans and demi-humans. Its mien betrays its nature: it's bigger than the rest of the wolves, and its jaws as well as its forequarters are grotesquely huge when compared with the rest of the body.

Given the choice, The Wolf and its pack of wolves will attack at night guerrilla-style (grabbing one or two victims and then running away); but if met at day, they'll flee to hide and coordinate a surprise attack with the same objective: hunting their prey and run.

There are plenty of rumors and myths regarding this creature. If you wish to know more about it, have a look at TPBI.

**Wolves (1d8):** Init +2; Atk bite +1d3 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8, 7 hp; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, skirmisher, pack, night vision 60'; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**Deed die:** A wolf can use its deed die to attempt a trip attack.

**Skirmisher:** A wolf can move, attack, and keep moving until it completes its movement, and it won't incur in the withdrawal attack after doing so.

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

**The Wolf:** Init +2; Atk bite +1d3 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8, 7 hp; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, skirmisher, pack, night vision 60'; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

*Howling:* Anyone who hears this terrifying howling must make a DC 12 Will save or give in to the atavistic instinct of wildly fleeing a deadly threat for 1d7 rounds.

*Intelligent:* The Wolf understands the human language and will use this advantage to better organize its brethren in the most efficient way.

*Deed die, skirmisher and pack:* Consult the wolf entry.

**Life goes on.** Killing a wolf in this pack will earn the PCs The Wolf's eternal enmity. If it manages to hunt and drag away one of the killers to devour their body, it will obtain the supernatural ability to look like them during 1d5 days, and it will try to infiltrate the group to wreak havoc.

## 7 Skullfrage

This enormous bird, based on **hexagon N**, is spreading its area of influence throughout the entire barony. The total absence of predators (that used to be the baron and his men-at-arms) have emboldened it, so it's begun to attack wounded humans, but it won't be long before it starts to try with the healthy.

Its MO is fairly consistent: thanks to its special ability, it grabs a rock (so common in the Moiran countryside) and shatters it over the heads of the unsuspecting creatures that happen to be nearby (DC 10 Intelligence check to notice the shadow above). After that, it swoops down on those that are dying to eat up their brains, or it take them to its nest if it can't consume them at that moment for any reason (it's very clumsy on land).

**Skullfrage:** Init +5 [-2]; Atk beak +1d4 [+1] melee (1d8 [1d4]) or claw +1d4 [+0] melee (1d6 [1d3]); AC 13 [9]; HD 4d8, 27 hp; MV 10', 60' flying; Act 2d20; SP bird, deed die, lethal crit, stone rain; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

*Bird:* Some scores on the profile are worse when it's on land [shown in brackets], and if it's flying it doesn't trigger attacks of opportunity.

*Deed die:* A skullfrage can use its deed die to seize a human-sized creature or smaller and carry it on its claws (rules-wise it's like a grapple).

*Lethal crit:* If a skullfrage scores a beak critical attack, it fractures its victims' skull, killing them.

*Stone rain:* This beast crushes huge rocks that fall over a 30' radius area and inflict 1d5 hp to everyone (DC 10 Reflex save to avoid).

**Life goes on.** If the Upcutters take down the skullfrage, they'll be able to plunder easily its nest in **hexagon N**. If this colossal bird snatches one of the women and flies away with her, the deadly (or badly wounded) remains can be found there.

## 8 Bandits

A group of five highwaymen from Killjoy's band, whose base is in **hexagon I**, have laid the Upcutters an ambush. Being as they are a bunch of loafers and not suited at all for a life of crime, they'd rather intimidate before fighting, showing a great deal of hesitation and a lack of professionalism. At the first hint of violence on behalf of the Upcutters, the bandits will surrender while they beg and cry for their lives. They don't know anything about the men, but they do about the Carnival and its location.

The PC with the worst Luck score must make a check; if they succeed, one of the bandits will be Lauro Asadura. This young Upcutter vanished a couple of years ago (leaving a devastated mother behind) and any neighbor will recognize him. Giving Lauro a heated scolding (an opposed Personality check while shouting out loud: taking the middle road here imposes a -1d penalty on the check; Lauro has a +0 Personality modifier) will make him break down. He'll go back to the village, even if that means confronting his old mates.

**Bandits (5):** Init +0; Atk short sword -1 melee (1d6) or short bow -1 missile fire (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP coward, harmless; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.

*Coward:* Killjoy's bandits are complete cowards, so they'll automatically fail any Morale check.

*Harmless:* Killjoy has taught his men well how to inspire pity and look harmless; anyone witnessing their surrender must make a DC 12 Will check or will soften, feeling sympathetic and commiserated.

**Life goes on.** If you roll this encounter again and Lauro wasn't with the bandits before, he'll be this time. Unless the Killjoy's gang is disbanded, there'll always be a group of highwaymen lurking around. For more ideas and consequences, check **hexagon I**.



## 8 Squirrels

The Moiran squirrels, although basically creatures of daytime habits, won't hesitate to attempt a nighttime "heist" if a group of humans spend their evening rest in the open. Some could think that these squirrels (red fur, bright beady eyes, agile hands) are motivated by hunger, but in reality they're nothing more than a bunch of thieves that hoard tiny objects in their unreachable hideouts, with an unknown purpose. Quiet like cats, a group of squirrels is able to "clean out" a sleeping person in just a matter of minutes.

**Squirrels (1d12):** Init +3; Atk bite +0 melee (1); AC 13; HD 1d2, 1 hp; MV 20', 30' climbing; Act 1d20; SP stealth +8, pick pockets +3; SV Fort -2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

**Stealth:** This encompasses the thief's abilities hide in shadows and move silently.

**Pick pockets:** Like the thief ability, but a squirrel can only steal small-sized objects.

**Life goes on.** If the PCs can locate their hideouts, they'll be able to find 1d5 random objects from **Table 3-4: Equipment** in the *DCC RPG* manual (reroll if the object wouldn't fit in a cramped space). Strangely enough, they'll never find the stolen items (if any).

## 9 Black ice

That's the name given by the Moirans to the thick sheets of ice, almost invisible to the naked eye, that covers the ground in winter and is the cause of so many broken bones.

If the PCs want to avoid the frozen surface, first they have to notice it. On a clear day, a successful DC 8 Intelligence check (one per group, use the best modifier) is enough to glimpse a shine cast by the icy layer. Otherwise, the check's difficulty rises up to DC 12 (to notice the fallen leaves from nearby trees frozen inside the frosty surface, for instance).

Those groups that fail the roll will step into the frozen area. One by one, the PCs must make a DC 12 Reflex save or they'll slide uncontrollably up to a distance of 1d30' before falling, which will cause 1 hp damage. They'll need to make a DC 10 Agility check to stand up and "skate" back to security. Another failure means falling again on the ice, as explained above; some Moirans have cracked their skull while trying to escape from a black ice area.

**Life goes on.** These icy layers tend to appear always on the same spots. If any PC marks it on the map, it'll allow them to bypass the frost or use it as a trap.

## 9 or more Stag

The elusive stags from the barony (very sought-after because of their meat and hide) are shy creatures, hard to see and even harder to take down, since they have the supernatural ability of inflicting upon their hunters the same wounds they suffer... with an exception: Chaotic-aligned people are exempt. But if you think it carefully, who wants to live side-by-side with that kind of people?

**Stag:** Init +5; Atk antler +1d3 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 2d8, 9 hp; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, an eye for an eye; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +0; AL N.

**Deed die:** A stag can use its deed die to trample with its antlers.

**An eye for an eye:** Any Lawful or Neutral attacker will suffer the same wound they inflict upon a stag (same aspect, hp loss, consequences, etc.).

**Life goes on.** Whoever hunts down a stag and speaks openly about it, sells its hide, or wears it, will earn the enmity of local Lawful NPCs (-1d when interacting with them) but the admiration of Chaotic ones (+1d when interacting with them). In addition, the local nobility will gladly invite them to their hunting forays.



## 10 Runaway pigs

Some of the stubborn porkers raised by the Upcutters and Lowcutters alike run away to live in the wild (a deed in itself). The harsh countryside life forces them to eat whatever they can find... even human flesh. These runaway pigs are doubly dangerous, since it's not that they aren't afraid of humans, but they even dare to attack them to supplement their diet. When you roll this encounter, the hogs can be found in one of these situations:

### 1d3 Drove

- 1 A drove of pigs fighting with a pack of wolves. 1d6 adult hogs and 1d10 piglets are facing off 1d8 wolves (it would be interesting to find out who started the scrap). The pigs will divide their attention between the newly arrived and the lupines that, as everyone knows, don't use to attack humans, although in this case they'll be more than willing to fight for their tasty prey.
- 2 Sow with piglets. A huge sow accompanied by 1d12 piglets. It'll fight to death to defend its offspring.
- 3 Young male pigs. 1d8 of them, sticking together for the sake of survival, are sniffing for truffles. They won't hesitate to fight if they have to, or to defend their territory.

**Runaway pig:** *Init +1; Atk bite +1d3 melee (1d4+1); AC 13; HD 2d8, 8 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, stubborn; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3; AL N.*

**Runaway piglet:** *Init +2; Atk bite +0 melee (1d3); AC 11; HD 1d5, 2 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP stubborn; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.*

*Deed die:* Adult pigs can use their deed die to trample.

*Stubborn:* When a pig losses its last hit point, it can take actions for another round and will succeed on its Morale checks out of sheer "pigheadedness".

**Wolf:** *Init: +2; Atk bite +1d3 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8, 7 hp; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, skirmisher, pack, night vision 60'; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N.*

*Deed die:* A wolf can use its deed die to attempt a trip attack.

*Skirmisher:* A wolf can move, attack, and keep moving until it completes its movement, and it won't incur in the withdrawal attack after doing so.

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

**Life goes on.** A runaway pig's remains can be the main ingredient to make cold cuts, and these will be more potent (double effect) than those detailed in the text box found on **hexagon A, Typical cold cuts**. In addition, if the Upcutters kill a wolf, they'll earn the enmity and hate of The Wolf, as described on encounter **6/7**, and the next night they spend in the open, they'll be accosted by a pack automatically.

## 11 Transhumance

Come winter, the shepherds from other regions take their flocks to the pastures in the south, where they await for the summer to return before going back to the mountains. The barony is a transit area for the herds, mostly composed of sheep.

The shepherds are hard folk, used to the life in the countryside and the dangers it entails. They're usually gruff and socially awkward (their solitary way of life leaves a mark on them, to say the very least), and most of them are fed up with bandits, lordlings, and wild beasts, so they won't shrink back from sending their mastiffs first and asking later.

A big flock of sheep and the PCs cross their ways, and two enormous mastiffs guarding the cattle turn their attention to the Upcutters, barking and running towards them. The dogs aim at biting two of the PCs (using their special ability *mark*) before returning to their shepherd, who walks slowly and seems to completely ignore what his mastiffs are about to do. If the PCs don't flee immediately, they'll have to stave off the violent dogs, find a way to chase them away, or cool them down; some solutions could be to offer a string of cold cuts, kick them in the snout, or even shout an order (this last option would mean an opposed Personality check to discipline the mastiff; use their Will save score).

The shepherd, Ordulio, is truly a character: his social skills and personal hygiene are almost non-existent, but he's an excellent storyteller and has a passable talent when it comes to wood carving. He's always chipping a piece of wood while he's talking to someone, getting closer and closer to a shape; in this case, a nasty worm-like creature with anthropomorphic features. He won't take it too well if one of his mastiffs is killed, and he'll start casting curses left and right before slipping away with his flock of sheep.

If the PCs can handle diplomatically this encounter, Ordulio will tell them about the Carnival and its whereabouts. He'll also inform them with a wink that he's planning on "paying a visit" to the place. He knows it well since he's been there before, but he has no clue about the Upcutter men.



*Ordulio with his flock and his two loyal but grumpy mastiffs*

**Ordulio, shepherd:** Init +1; Atk walking stick +1 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d6, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP amazing tales; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N.

*Amazing tales:* See below.

**Mastiffs (2):** Init +2; Atk bite +1d3 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8, 6,7 hp; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP mark, deed die; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

*Mark:* When a mastiff first meets a group of people, the damage inflicted by its bite is reduced to 1 hp, and it won't attempt a grapple attack.

*Deed die:* A mastiff can use its deed die to grapple its prey; if successful, the objective will suffer automatically the bite damage every round until they break free.

**Life goes on.** If the Upcutters willingly listen to one of Ordulio's tales, they'll witness a show full of excitement, wonder, and colorful language, a narration inarguably full of wisdom and fun. Being the audience of such a story grants 1d3 XP, but only once per level (level 0 counts as a level in this case).

On the other hand, earning Ordulio's enmity (if they kill one of his mastiffs, for example) means a curse placed on that person. The Upcutters will be the main characters of one of his stories, which inflicts a -1d penalty on their interactions with the people of the barony in particular, and Hundreds of Lordlings in general. The only way to lift Ordulio's curse is by making up for the harm done to him (e.g., if they killed one of his mastiffs, they'll have to replace it) AND telling him an amazing tale.

## 12 Fake crimson bramble

This harmful bush has adapted swiftly to humanity's penchants, assuming the outward appearance of the valued bramble. In some cases, it even grows up closely with the real crimson bramble, making it extremely hard to tell one apart from the other.

Many wild animals (and some absent-minded humans) try to reach their prized berries after falling for the ruse, pricking themselves with its poisonous thorns and entering a deep slumber. To make things worse, the fake bramble's berries are acidic to help in the prey's "digestion": when a victim drops by the bush the berries fall on them, until all that is left is a burbling pool of organic matter, ready to be absorbed by the roots.

Finding a crimson bramble full of ripe berries is like hitting the jackpot, so the vast majority of Moirans would dive head on to pick them, even knowing that the fake bramble grows uncontrollably in the area (DC 10 Intelligence check to notice). A DC 14 Reflex saving throw is needed to reach the berries and avoid the thorns. If failed, another saving throw (DC 15 Fort save this time) is required to stay conscious; otherwise, the victim will be knocked out for 1d24 hours. It's then when the fake bramble releases 1d16 berries on the poor soul, inflicting 1hp per berry.

**Life goes on.** If one of the PCs is rendered unconscious because of the berries and is rescued, they'll find a small dagger attached to their clothes; it was under the bush, partly interred. The dagger is just a plain blade of poor craftsmanship, but it's sheathed in a *Lamprey scabbard* (see *TPBI*).

## 13 Hunting party lead by Marcial, the marquis of Burgstard's son

The baron of Moirás was a hunting enthusiastic, so he introduced plenty of non-indigenous species in his reserve and brought some of the native ones to the brink of extinction. The missing baron has created a power vacuum that other lordlings are taking advantage of, like the marquis of Burgstard, neighbor of the barony. For now, they're using the barony like an enormous playground... but the day will come when one of them makes a bid for power.

The PCs can make out the marquis' son, Marcial "the Bold" and his entourage (an assortment of his buddies from the court, knights and minor lordlings) from afar (they're extremely noisy, it's highly improbable for them to hunt anything at all).

If the PCs don't try to go unnoticed, the hunters will trot right up to them to find out who they are. They're all mounted, heavily armed, and suitably equipped (edibles, strong spirits, noble bagatelles...).

Marcial and his entourage are a bunch of partygoers, but also rude, rowdy, and fickle. No matter what time of the day they're met, their advanced state of inebriation will be obvious to whoever sees or talks to them. They'll surround the Upcutters, half toying and half threatening them, while they chatter non-stop between them and with the women. Their jabber will be full of nasty and offensive comments, especially considering their position as noble-born. The outcome of this encounter is completely up to the Upcutters' reaction: the lordlings expect them to put up with their behavior and do nothing, since they won't do anything beyond behaving like a bunch of spoilt sons of a bitch. A defying or violent reaction will utterly surprise them, but they'll adhere to the "knightly" rule of never attacking a dame.

Marcial's priority (who, after all, is the one deciding what they're doing) is to hunt one of the elusive Moiran deers (see encounter 9), although he has no clue about the harmful consequences of doing it. He'll hugely appreciate it if someone informs him about it, which will radically change his outlook towards the women; he'll answer any questions they'd have (they know about the Carnival but not about the male Upcutters), and will even help them if the task doesn't take longer than a day.

**Marcial, the marquis of Burgstard's son:** Init +3; Atk lance +3 melee (1d12+1) or morning star +3 melee (1d8+1) or crossbow +3 missile fire (1d6); AC 17; HD 3d8, 19 hp; MV 25', horse 50'; Act 1d20; SP wasted, panoply; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; AL N.

**Entourage (Albriego, Clodoveo, Rulfino, Indecencio, and Titulcio):** Init +3; Atk lance +2 melee (1d12) or long sword +2 melee (1d8) or crossbow +1 missile fire (1d6); AC 16; HD 1d8, 8 hp; MV 25', horse 50'; Act 1d20; SP wasted, panoply; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

**Wasted:** -1d penalty on all actions, except Morale checks, and Fort and Will saving throws.

**Panoply:** Marcial wears an excellent equipment; his panoply (a familiar heirloom, passed from father to son during generations) includes a banded mail and a magic lance, affectionately called "Fixed-arse". The panoplies of Marcial's entourage are very similar, but of worse craftsmanship, and their lances are more run-of-the-mill.

## Fixed-arse lance

Those who wield Fixed-arse while riding a horse won't fall from the saddle, no matter what: hitting a branch, crowds shuffling the horseman, lance attacks during a joust... On the other hand, if the horseman drops it because they're disarmed or die, they'll fall like a stone.

It's made of wood from the legendary tree "Sky pillar", a millenary vegetable that's withstood earthquakes, hurricanes, woodcutters... Its excellent craftsmanship and elegant vamplate hint at the special qualities of this weapon. Unfortunately, as a side effect the wearer turns into a living lightning rod: they automatically draw all electrical discharges of any kind, be it magical or worldly.

**Life goes on.** This encounter could utterly change the Upcutters' life: if they attack or even kill one of Marcial's buddies or the marquis' son himself, they'll be branded as outlaws, and a reward offered for their heads. Then again, if they manage to impress the lordlings, their reputation will spread in the surrounding lands.

Furthermore, you could decide that the events transpiring in *The Stone Heir*, the adventure in *The Phlogiston Books II (TPBII)*, take place after this volume to involve the survivors in the rescuing attempt of Marcial "the Bold", son of the marquis of Burgstard...

## 14 Cursed nypsies

A group of these elves, who are camping at **hexagon M**, are exploring this area in search of game, water, and supplies. Extremely apathetic and dull, they'll answer any questions awkwardly, while they try in vain to start an interesting conversation or tell a funny joke. In the meantime, some nypsy kids would be watching them unfazed, calmed, and with an unnerving look on their faces. These nypsies indeed know about the Carnival and where to find it.

**Nypsies (adult) (1d6):** Init +1; Atk knife +1 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d6, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Luck vortex; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; AL N.

**Nypsies (child) (1d3):** Init +2; Atk knife +0 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 1d4, 3 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Luck vortex, the voice (3 times per day); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +10; AL N.

**Luck vortex:** These nypsies are The Three Fates' chosen people, so they're blessed and cursed at the same time. Anytime a nypsy fails a check by 3 or less, they'll drain as many Luck points as they need to be successful from a PC in a 30' radius (DC 12 Will save to avoid). If there's more than one "candidate", the affected PC will be the one with the highest Luck score. It's a passive ability that these wretched folk can't control but know exactly how it works; and that's why they long for the company of strangers.

**The voice:** The nypsy children have the power to be obeyed when they utter a command; this ability is identical to the spell word of command with a +3 bonus to the spell check (corruption results count as a failure).

**Life goes on.** The nypsies as a collective have a very good memory, more so for slights; they'll share any significant interaction they've had with the rest of their people, and over time, even with other communities. Check **hexagon M** to know more, and what it entails to deal with them.

## 15 Knight of the Numantian Order

Bent on righting any existing wrong, a Numantian knight has left the bivouac in **hexagon L** alongside a squire. They'll courtly introduce themselves to the Upcutters, showing a strong interest on their intentions and letting them know that the wilds are not the right place for a group of damsels. They'll offer to escort them back to their abodes and will frown upon a negative answer. Good diplomatic skills will be needed (a DC 12 Personality check) to avoid this bizarre conflict, or far better, change the tables to turn them into allies (beating the DC of the check by 5 or more). Go to **hexagon L** for further information.

**Numantian knight:** Init +1; Atk longsword +1 melee (1d8) or lance +2 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30', horse 50'; Act 1d20; SP code of chivalry, insane; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AL L.

**Numantian squire:** Init +1; Atk wooden sword +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30', horse 50'; Act 1d20; SP code of chivalry, insane; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AL L.

**Code of chivalry:** A Numantian knight or squire follows a strict code of chivalry, so they'll protect the weak, face danger to right a wrong (or what they perceive as such), wander aimlessly to find injustices, and fight honorably (only against armed foes, one to one, and on foot).

**Insane:** Reading accursed books and the unhealthy environment of Slugburg, their hometown, made these second sons go nuts. They're prone to misunderstand what they hear and see, fits of anger, and extreme mood swings.

# Clues

**Life goes on.** This encounter can be rolled again as long as there are knights left in the bivouac where they're based on, in **hexagon L**. The slighted knights will later forget the "affront" because of their madness.

## 16 Peddler

One of the few ways to "stay in touch" with other places is through merchants or peddlers. They're an invaluable source of news and goods that wouldn't be reachable otherwise. Alberico is a peddler, originally from Hundreds of Lordlings. He's a middle-aged man with a body crissed-crossed with scars and lacking several fingers and an ear. He's been traveling to villages, hamlets and castles for years, to be, quoting Alberico himself, "piss poor, as always". He's got the strange ability of having any object a customer would need (no magical or unique ones) at all times; he's not aware of it and will always attribute it to sheer luck. He travels on horseback alongside a mean-looking man-at-arms named Elpidio and two mules packed with products from across Hundreds of Lordlings, such as leather goods from Embosslet, copper pots from Humiliatown, cheese, etc. Elpidio is planning to kill him and steal any valuable items, and then join the bandits or a militia.

If asked about the missing men, Alberico will confirm that he met the mentioned men, but they looked happy and carefree. When he inquired about their destination, one of the youngest ones started to talk, but was cut off abruptly by an older one who seemed to be their leader. He blurted out that it was none of his business, and then all of them walked off west.

*Alberico, peddler:* Init +1; Atk club +0 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d6, 6 hp; MV 30"; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2; AL N.

*Elpidio, ruffian:* Init +1; Atk longsword +1 melee (1d8) or short bow +1 missile fire (1d6); AC 13; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30"; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

**Life goes on.** If rolled again, the PCs will find out that Alberico survived Elpidio's assassination attempt and is looking for him to enact his revenge; he'll ask the women for help. If Alberico lays his hands on Elpidio, he'll take the ruffian to **hexagon U** to execute him on the Gallows tree.

## 17 or more Stag

Refer to result 9.

Here you can find a register of the clues that can be gathered, who can convey them, and where they can be found.

### Location of the Carnival

*Amaranta (hexagon G):* Through her lovers, who have dealings with the Carnival wizard.

*Avelino (hexagon A).*

*Bandits (encounter 13, hexagon I).*

*Hierónides (hexagon U).*

*Ludovina (hexagon B or O).*

*Nypsies (encounter 14, hexagon M).*

*Ordulio (encounter 11).*

*Pánfilo (hexagon A).*

*Marcial's hunting party (encounter 15).*

*Ursicinio (hexagon B).*

### Assorted information about the men

*Alberico, peddler (encounter 13):* The men were due west; they looked carefree and seemed to be keeping a secret.

*Owlsine (hexagon J):* Cold cut leftovers.

*Numantian knights (encounter 15, hexagon L):* They stumbled upon the men, who stoned them.

### Men's location

*Amaranta (hexagon G):* Through her lovers, who have dealings with the Carnival wizard.

*Angustias (hexagon A):* But only the name of the place.

*Avelino (hexagon A).*

*Pánfilo (hexagon A).*

### Men's secret

*Avelino (hexagon A).*

*Ludovina (hexagon B or O).*

*Grandma Nontoya (hexagon M).*

*Ursicinio (hexagon B).*



# Hexagons

*"There's no place like home"*

The hexagons that make up the map of the barony of Moirás span 3 miles from side to side; those labeled with a letter refer to special locations described below. Under every location's title there's a short text specifying if it's known by the PCs or the conditions to find it (whether by chance or if they explore carefully the hexagon, which will take them at least an hour) if they don't.

There are two main land paths shown on the map (the north and west roads), as well as the Bitterwater river, and the tracks that locals use. None of these routes are easy trails, well-kept, straight, and free of undergrowth; they're barely kept by the traffic of people and some wild animals. All the people living in the barony know them.

No Moiran will get lost in the countryside; they were born and raised there.

## Would you like to map it? Tell me how!

When playing games of wilderness or dungeon exploration, is very common for a player (or even the Judges themselves) to draw a map of what the group's findings.

If you want to achieve a greater rural experience (but at the risk of being tossed inside a watering trough), we propose you to limit them to their PCs' means and know-how. Cartography (not to mention literacy) is reserved to a limited number of people or groups of people (sages, tax collectors, artists...) You can safely bet that a person from Hundreds of Lordlings have never seen a map in their lives.

## **A** Upper Coldcutters

*Known by the PCs, of course.*

This tiny thorp, the PCs' point of origin, is moderately well-known in the region thanks to its excellent meat produce, in particular its cold cuts, smoked meats, and porcine guts and entrails. The local hogs have an uncommon flavor to them, due to a truffle that only grows in the Upcutter common lands. Their coat of arms is a rampant black mole on a green field; its meaning is lost to the ravages of time.

Curiously enough, a high amount of male Upcutters "go awry". The cold cuts from Upper Coldcutters have a beneficial effect (with healing and strengthening qualities), but they affect the will, making the male consumers volatile and easily influenced. Women find their taste shocking, bordering on unpleasant, and are only affected by their favorable aspects (check the text box *Typical cold cuts*).

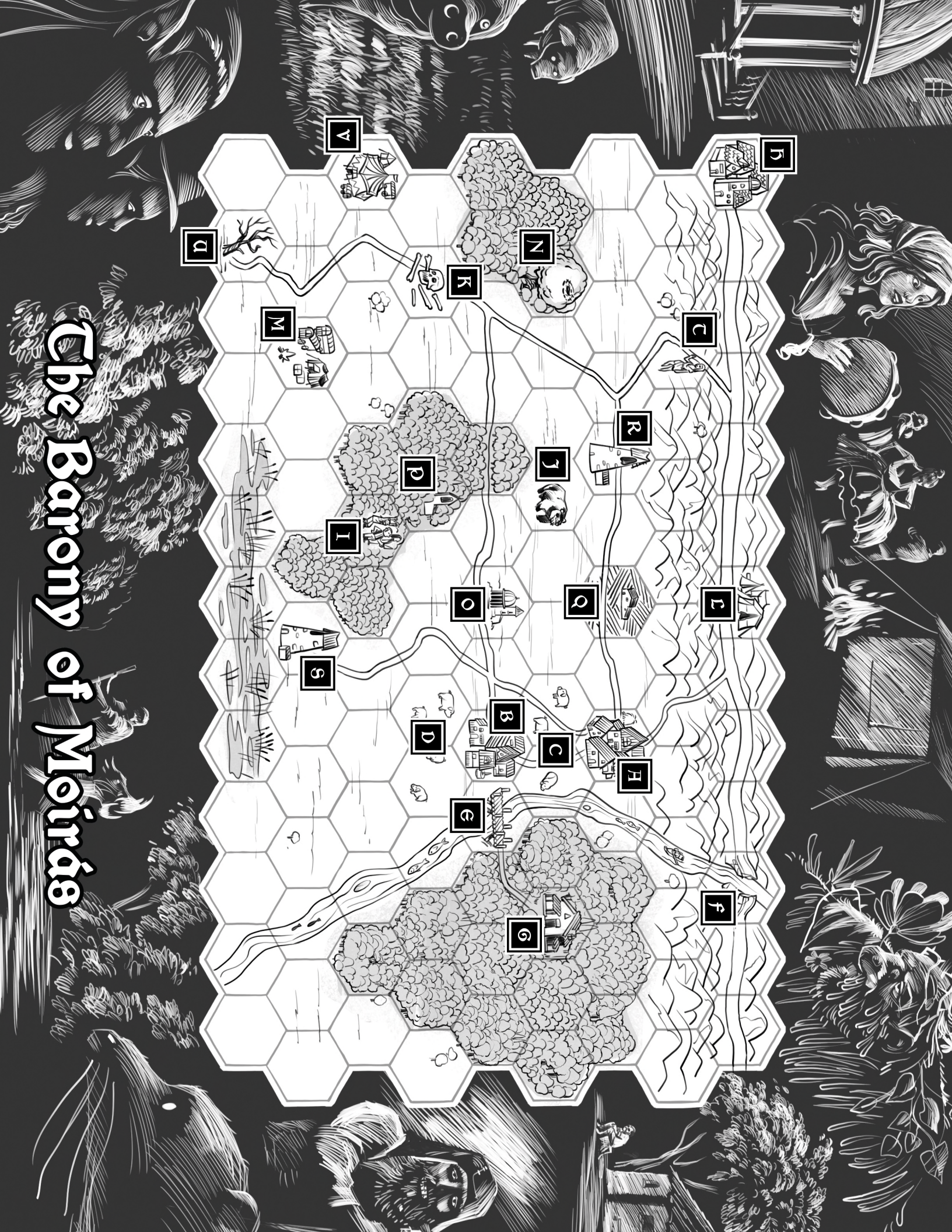
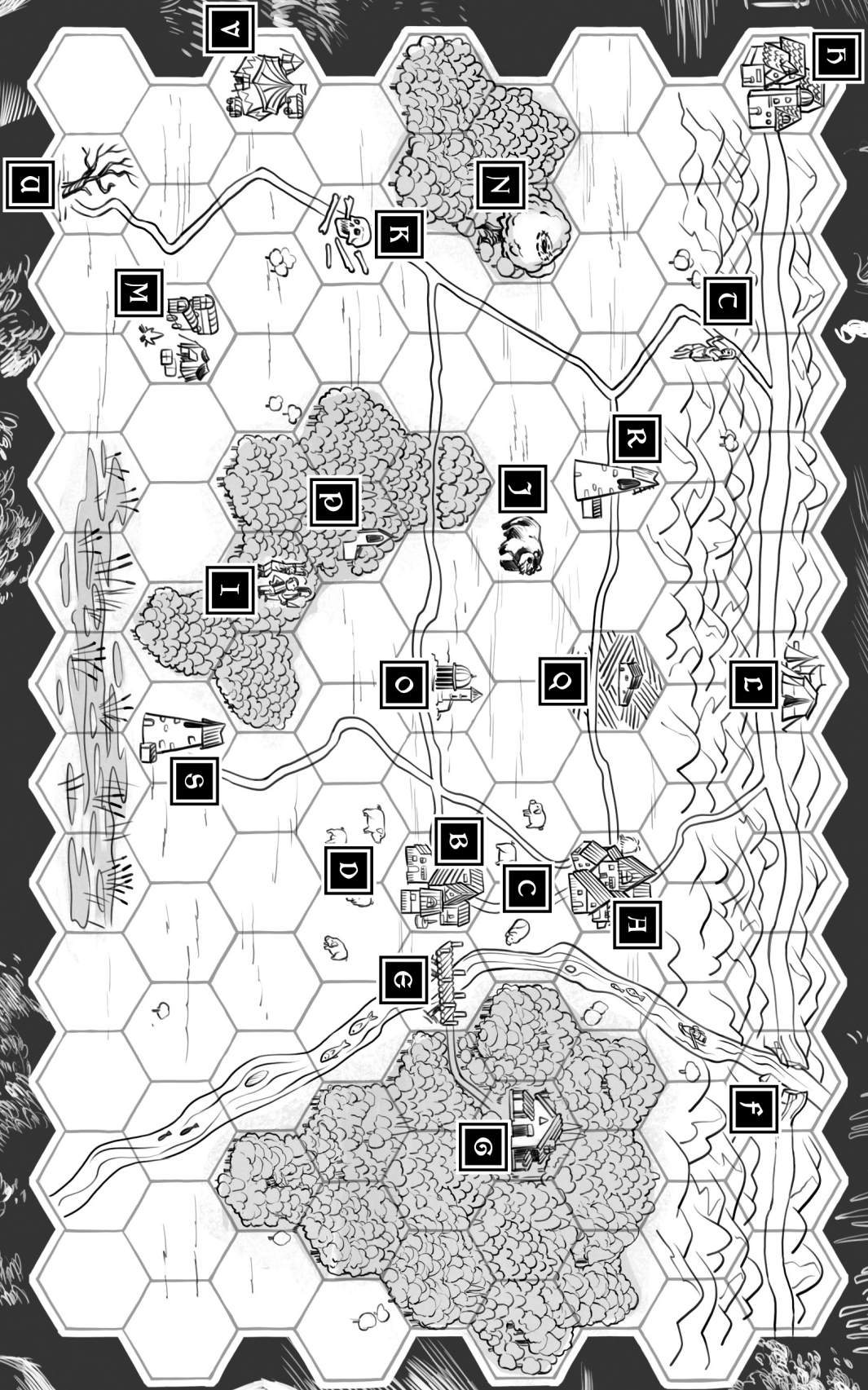
Apart from their multiple traditions and local celebrations, there's an event that has a huge impact on the village: for seven years now, they've been handing over part of their meat produce to a band of bullies who pardoned the hamlet in exchange for a load of their valuable cold cuts. Every year, after the pig slaughter celebration, a group of men fill up a cart (well, the cart) and head off west to meet their extortionists.

Due to the weather conditions during their journey, it usually takes the men at least a day and a half to go there and back, bringing with them the symbol of the renewed deal: a bundle of the arrows and spears not used to maim or kill the Upcutters (they're kept in Remigio's house).

## Player start

This adventure starts in the town square. This year the men's return trip is taking longer than usual, and there's a feeling of uneasiness amongst the female Upcutters. They've called a meeting to decide what course of action they should take. You can take advantage of this to talk briefly about the village, the region, and what the PCs know. The NPCs listed under the **Personalities** section (see below) will all be in the town meeting. You can also share the information on the **Folk wisdom** section, and let the players roll on the rumors table.

# The Barony of Moirás



This is the basic information for the PCs:

The people from Upper Coldcutters have been handing over a third of their meat produce to the bandits for 7 years (this is the seventh).

The men spend approximately a day and half to get to the meeting point and come back; right now, it's already been two and a half day since they departed.

The men have never given many details about where they gather with the bandits, alleging that every year is in a different place, though it's usually somewhere along the west road. They normally take the west or southwest track when they leave the village.

Because of the recent snowfall, there aren't any footprints to follow.

This is a key scene: The PCs will lean toward a path or another depending on what they find out. Now it's the right time to feed them false clues and for a NPC to help them in some way, like *"Do you remember the witch? Her magic is powerful!"*.

Some groups might need additional reasons to embark on the quest. The NPCs must make it clear that, without the missing men, the hamlet is doomed. They could also provide more reasons as a way to breathe more life into the scene: the religious pilgrimage is nigh, and the lack of men would cause the village to lose face in the eyes of the Superb Sow (the town patron, see **hexagon O** for more info); the "neighbors" from Lower Coldcutters would take advantage of the situation and take over the village; or that the bandits won't stop at killing the men and will do the same with the rest of the Upcutters.

Pigs, by the way, have an excellent sense of smell. Unfortunately, it won't be possible to track down the men with hounds or pigs, given the weather conditions.

### Iconic spots

Here are listed the village locations that deserve a detailed description. Upper Coldcutters is a highly clustered town, as experience taught the locals that it isn't wise to live far from each other. The typical Upcutter house is a construction with a ground floor and a small attic. The village is also dotted with small orchards, the ever-present pigsties, henhouses, stables, cabins on top of poles as drying rooms, a washhouse, and two drinking fountains.

**Remigio's home** is the biggest house in town and used to be the knight commander's (the baron's representative) residence. Its ample dining/living-room barely maintains its past grandeur.

An enormous fireplace presides over the place; its mantelpiece is used to show off the most important items in the village: the arrows and spears that prove the deal with the bandits, the *Staff of Grandpa Mole*, and the *Compact Tome*, a huge book bound in pig's leather that explains the origins of Upper Coldcutters.

### The Staff of Grandpa Mole

It's a pilgrim staff, spiraled-shaped, hollow, and with a piece on top that resembles a funnel. It's a tool to summon the talpids that also allows the communication with the Underworld inhabitants, grants a +1d to Personality checks with them, and enables the casting of spells through it to affect those underground.

According to the Tome, the first settlers were basically cereal famers, but during their first harvest the feared largerpillars showed up (**hexagon Q**) and almost wiped out the entire population. That's when the talpids made themselves known: they were the original inhabitants of the barony, and offered themselves to stop the largerpillars' threat in exchange for a peaceful cohabitation. The nights would be theirs, whereas the days would belong to the humans. Some settlers signed the compact, but some other would rather not have anything to do with beings that they considered as "devils", so they decided to found Lower Coldcutters.

Urania is Remigio's wife; she feels and behaves like the most important woman in Upper Coldcutters and likes others to play along.

**The Town square** is the real focal point of the hamlet, and its most spacious free area. It goes without saying that the square's only stone bench is always occupied by several elders talking about the weather.

In the midst of this meagre space there's a Council Column, an eroded and crude pillar where the criminals used to be tied or executed, but it's fallen in disuse. Any wizard or elf in the vicinity will be able to sense the dark halo surrounding the "monument", created by the tortures and executions that took place there. A necromantic spell being cast in a 10' radius from it will get a +1d bonus to its spell check. Mayhap a shard of the Column might keep the same properties or could be used for death-themed rituals.

Nowadays, in the strange event of an execution, it's done by hanging the guilty by a tree in the southwest.

**Angustias' house** doubles as a tavern and occasional hostelry when the odd traveler or peddler decides to spend the night at Upper Coldcutters.

There's **another tavern** in town (Patri's), run by Patricio from Lower Coldcutters, who will always be an outsider. Patricio is a mole who is laying the groundwork for an eventual invasion by the Lowcutters.

The "**crossroads**" **corner shop**. The most powerful family in the region, the Chitterlings, is the only one capable of hoarding a surplus and barter with the rest of the population. They're also kin to the southern galemillers (**hexagon S**).

### Upcutter celebrities

**Angustias**, legit gossip. As barmaid and having a natural inclination to gossiping, she's the biggest source of Upcutter rumors and folklore in particular, and worthless facts in general. In practice, she can give out information about any person living in the village or in Lower Coldcutters but beware about the veracity of her statements. For every question asked, make a secret Luck check; if it's successful, the information provided is true. Otherwise, it's a big, fat lie.

**A striking trait:** She's got a talent to detect a group of people chatting about the latest rumor and will appear out of thin air to listen to it.

**Typical statement(s):** "You look familiar, who's your next of kin? You know, I've heard that..."

**Known facts:** She suspects foul play concerning the whole bandit situation and the cold meats payoff; unfortunately, given her reputation, nobody takes her seriously. Curiously enough, her latest theory is the closest to the truth; she overheard the word "Carnival" some weeks ago, when one of the men drank too much and talked about it.

**The weird:** Angustias is a man, but she's been covering this up for decades. She killed her sister, replaced her and told everyone that her brother had moved away in search of fortune. She'll kill anyone to keep her secret.

**Avelino**, once a scoundrel through and through, is now a wretch since he had a stroke; it doesn't help either that he's not young anymore.

He used to go to the Carnival with the rest of the men right until his fit, two years ago. His gibberish talk makes it very hard to understand him, but he's the only one who knows for sure where are the missing men. If he can drink a large amount of wine he'll be able to speak more coherently but everyone, including his wife, frown at this.

**A striking trait:** He moves around the village on a small cart pulled by a castrated hog.

**Typical statement(s):** *Thoo llu vrink guain? Am zo tirsti (Do you drink wine? I'm so thirsty)*

**Known facts:** He knows everything about the Carnival, save the dire situation the men are going through, but will only talk about it if he's drunk.

**The weird:** He's got the *Green Hand* talent, a blessing from the god Weeder, by which the plants grow healthy and fast around him (specially the underbrush), much to his wife's dismay, who is continually clearing their orchard.

**Pánfilo**, the town fool, was one of the Upcutter bailiffs until he was beaten by some highwaymen. Since then, and as the local saying goes, something got loose inside his brainpan. He picks up all kinds of trash and stockpiles it for reasons only known to him. He can be seen wandering between both towns, day and night.

**A striking trait:** He's always carrying something bulky and apparently useless.

**Typical statement(s):** *Have you had lunch? What have you had for lunch? You gonna throw that away?*

**Known facts:** He's seen the Carnival and been there many times in the past (and recently as well). He knows that the men are there but doesn't know that they're held against their will.

**The weird:** He can teleport himself due to his faint contact with reality. This ability has severe limitations: he can't teleport when someone is looking, he can't choose his destination, and he's not aware of what he does.

### Don't call me Angel, call me Abundia

If the need arises, here's a brief listing of first and second names fit for both the Up- and Lowcutters. First names can be equally used for women or men, you just need to change the last letter (-o for male, -a for female).

**First names (d12):** 1, Arnulfa; 2, Baudilia; 3, Mainaria; 4, Hermágenes; 5, Eufrasia; 6 Sinclética; 7, Etelvina; 8, Baraquisia; 9, Espino; 10, Acilina; 11, Telesfora; 12, Ulrica.

**Second names (d8):** 1, Scratchings; 2, Giblets; 3, Chitterlings; 4, Gizzards; 5, Innards; 6, Tripes; 7, Brawn; 8, Pluck.



## Region's cold meats

Summer sausage, haggis, black pudding, meatloaf, salami... and serrano ham, of course; the list is never-ending. Every single Upcutter family is the jealous keeper of a secret recipe.

In practical terms, anyone who nibbles on a piece of cold meat (what is in itself a copious meal or lunch) will heal 1d3 hp and get a +1 bonus on their Fort saves for the next hour. There's no use in gobbling up a lot; subsequent pieces won't grant further bonuses until a whole day has passed.

When it comes to men, its occasional consumption imposes a -1d on their Will saves for a day. If they eat more than one ration per week, the penalty will be prolonged as many days as rations. Its constant ingestion for a span of months turns this penalty into something permanent.

Nobody knows for sure the effect of these cold meats on the demi-humans, although several rumors abound in the barony lands: They're harmed instead of healed, their physical features are changed into porcine ones, etc.

**Tálpida**, the girl who knows everything. Tálpida is a name only used in Upper Coldcutters and is a legacy from an almost-forgotten past. The little and smart Tálpida is plain and simple a genius, the biggest in human history. If she had access to a proper education, she could change the world... it's a shame that she's just a poor swineherd who will never leave Upper Colcutters.

Or will she? Who knows...

Tálpida taught herself to read using the books in Remigio's house, and after some intellectual clashes with some close-minded Upcutters, she's become used to keeping what she's learnt to herself.

**A striking trait:** She is always scribbling mathematic formulae and diagrams with a stick in the dirt.

**Typical statement(s):** *Why does water turn into ice when it's cold? Where do birds go to during the winter? Why...?*

**Known facts:** Nothing about the mystery at hand. What she does know is how Upper Coldcutters was founded and about the existence of the talpids.

**The weird:** The diagrams that Tálpida scribbles are complex arcane-quantum formulations and, if carefully transcribed, can be learnt and cast as spells.

**Urania**, "the knight commander". Although there hasn't been a knight commander sanctioned by the baron in years, Urania acts out like one, given that her family is the richest one in the region (the Chitterlings) and that she lives in the house used for generations as the seat of office. It's undeniable that she's a very influential person in the village, and her opinions can bolster or ruin a reputation.

**A striking trait:** She always wears clean and ironed clothes, a luxury in the region.

**Typical statement(s):** *"Don't mind me, but I think that Ordelia doesn't feed her porkers well".*

**Known facts:** Nothing useful for the current situation. However, her secret recipe for summer sausage is excellent.

**The weird:** Urania can speak Talpid. She learnt it from her grandpa, and always thought that is was some kind of "secret language" just for them.

## Life goes on

If the men don't return to the village, whatever the reason may be, the Lowcutters will take over the Upcutter common lands. The men will make use of the male-inheritance sexist law and proceed to claim their possessions in the thorp. If nobody stops it, Upper Coldcutters will become an "extension" of the Lower village.



## **B** Lower Coldcutters

*Known by the PCs*

For an outsider, it's difficult to tell the two villages apart at a glance, since their buildings, traditions and way of living are exactly the same. However, an invisible fault line divides them, an ancestral animosity. According to the elder Lowcutters, Upper Coldcutters was founded after some of the original southern colonists split up; but if you ask the Upcutters, it was just the other way round (check **hexagon A** for more details).

Despite their mutual rancor, contact between both villages is frequent, as commonplace as mixed marriages, goods and services bartering, and visits among places, especially during festivities.

Although the Lowcutters devote themselves to the same kind of business as their hated neighbors, their products are not as sought-after. This is because the Talpid truffle (the reason behind the cold meats' strange properties) doesn't grow in their communal meadows. Apart from that, their produces are excellent and very nutritious.

In its day, the bandits also threatened the Lowcutters. They also decided to pay the tribute, but as they didn't find them neither the Carnival, they went back. As time went by, they finally found out the male Upcutters' ruse, but due to their mutual aversion decided to keep it secret.

### Iconic spots

Taking as a reference the description of Upper Coldcutters, there's little more to add to the Lower village features. The buildings and its layout are almost identical.

**The town hall** is in fact uncle Ursicinio's home, and it's where the neighbors gather when they need to make an important decision. Although it may seem that the hamlet is governed following democratic principles, it's usually Ursicinio who's got the last word about any resolution.

**The casino.** The Gizzards, a family related to the gale-millers in **hexagon R**, run this den of betting games. The most popular ones are hogminoes (the tiles are made with dried pork skin, full of patterns that repeat themselves), and bones (pig talus bones used as dice).

**The Town square.** It's prettier than the one in Upper Coldcutters, as it's encircled by cloistered houses with wooden beams and columns. Here's also the only statue in the barony, that according to the locals is a rampant bear, but is in reality a worn-down talpid (DC 15 Intelligence check to realize).

**The watering trough.** This stone basin doubles as the place to chastise the know-it-all outsiders. Being tossed in the watering trough is not only a humiliating act, it's also a cursing ritual: those affected get a -1 Luck penalty while they're in Lower Coldcutters. The only way to lift it is by losing the "outsider status" to the Lowcutters (good luck with that!).

### Lowcutter celebrities

**The "coven" of the three rumormongers.** These three elderly women are a constant view in the Town square; they're something like an informal wise people council, and they're as likely debating about how to better rise a pig as they're complaining about Goyo's spoilt brats.

**A striking trait:** Their mouths move non-stop, as if they were always munching.

**Typical statement(s):** "The Upcutter sluts want to steal our men".

**Known facts:** Whether through natural or supernatural means, the three rumormongers know everything listed as *The weird* from all Upcutters and Lowcutters. Getting them to tell you is another matter altogether...

**The weird:** They're as deaf as a post, so they share a copper ear trumpet. Only the one using it can hear what happens around them.

**Ludovina,** the Superb Sow high priestess. She lives in Lower Coldcutters to avoid the constant harassment she suffered when she was living in Upper Coldcutters. She's fed up of the "attentions" shown by the male Upcutters. On top of that, she'd rather spend her time with women. Her responsibilities make her stay most of the day in the Sanctuary of the Superb Sow, in **hexagon O**. Check out that section to know more about the ruse she's made up around the pig cult.

**A striking trait:** She's always covered up in garments, including her neck, wrists and ankles, even in the summertime.

**Typical statement(s):** "All hail the Superb Sow!".

**Known facts:** As a privileged member of the community, she's aware of the local dirty laundry and uses it to her advantage.

**The weird:** For a few weeks now, she's been able to understand what the hogs say. Their begging cries and testimonies are starting to affect her, so she's avoiding as much as possible the pig slaughters and religious ceremonies.

**Uncle Ursicinio**, unofficial leader of Lower Coldcutters. Ursicinio is a vigorous, irritable, and cunning person. It was his idea to keep the Upcutter men's activities as a secret, in order to harm Upper Coldcutters and as an "ace up the sleeve", in case he'd need that kind of leverage.

He'll always pretend to be too busy and will only accept to talk with the Upcutters in exchange for some of their cold meats. Anyways, he won't let on about the men's whereabouts, awaiting the right time to inflict the greatest harm on Upper Coldcutters.

**A striking trait:** He's got always a blade of grass in his mouth, and he keeps it there when he's lying.

**Typical statement(s):** "State your business!".

**Known facts:** Ursicinio knows everything about the Carnival: its location and what it's about.

**The weird:** He's the leader of the sect that still worship Weeder (**hexagon P**), and he's looking for a human sacrifice.

**Periquín**, the talpid boy. The past relations between the talpids and the barony dwellers still come to the surface, such as Periquín. He looks like a hybrid of both species, dressed in rags. His parents keep him hidden and locked in their house's tiny attic.

**A striking trait:** Out of the corner of your eye, a strange figure can be seen through a minuscule window, on a house's second story.

**Typical statement(s):** "Help me, please!".

**Known facts:** He knows everything about the talpids, who have tried to free him many times.

**The weird:** Everything about him. He's got both human and talpid features: budding vibrissa hairs on his face, long and powerful nails, and a short black fur all over his body.

### Life goes on

As exposed in the previous section, the Lowcutters will take advantage of the Upcutter men's absence to take over their properties. They'll move their pigs to the northern meadows, so their cold meats will gradually acquire the same properties. As a result, the Lowcutter men will start showing the same inclinations as their Upper counterparts and will end up causing the same problems.

## C Upcutter communal meadows

*Known by the PCs*

These are the Upcutter lands where the hogs spend most of their time and also double as a frontier between both villages. Nowadays, it's almost becoming a tradition that the youngsters from the competing Coldcutters taunt each other and even get into scraps during the festivities, or every time there's a territorial dispute. Following the mantra of the minimum effort, the Upcutters have grown a natural enclosure with crimson brambles to mark the limits of their municipality, and while they're at it, to collect the valuable wine-producing berries.

The meadows are an expanse of mires dotted with some sparse bushes and trees. Here's where the strange talpid truffles grow, the same ones that provide the Upcutter's pigs its peculiar flavor. It's a blackish fungus, a bunch of nodules with an intense taste that overwhelms humans. It grows underground, 1' deep approximately, and the pigs are experts when it comes to find them.

These meadows are sacred lands for the talpids, who "bury" their dead here (more like "push" them from below), and it's actually those rotting corpses that fertilize the topmost substratum and foster the growth of the truffles.

The talpids are one of the barony's biggest secrets, and their peaceful coexistence with the human dwellers is about to blow up. During the last pig slaughter fest, a group of youngsters stoned one of them to death, so any talpid found here (1-2 in 1d6, only during nighttime) will be, at the very least, extremely suspicious. These subterranean beings live under the barony's ground since times immemorial, digging sumptuous tunnels and lairs, convoluted, and covered with bas-reliefs. The huge mounds of earth scattered all over the meadows are telltale signs of their digging prowess. The entries to their tunnels are usually hidden inside hollow trees or amid thorny bushes.

The talpids are bipedal creatures, smaller than humans and with a body coated with soft fur. On their nearsighted faces grow a handful of vibrissa, long and hard whiskers that allow them to feel vibrations and smells. It's also worth of note their powerful claws, handy both in digging as well as in combat. Their saliva has calcifying properties and helps them with their building labors, but it's also paralyzing and very poisonous to the largerpillars (**hexagon Q**). Their subterranean nature afflicts them with a grave aversion to sunlight, even the one reflected by the full moon. They have a diet comprised basically of insects and microscopic prey, as well as the nutrients found in the soil. Theirs is a complex and sophisticated society, where both sexes are completely equal regarding rights and responsibilities.

Detailing their galleries and dens would go beyond the intent of this publication; the Judge should design them if the PCs decide to take on such a quest.

**Talpids (1d4+1):** Init always first; Atk claw +2 melee (1d5) or bite +0 melee (1 and paralysis); AC 12; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30', burrow 30'; Act 1d20; SP vibrissa, paralyzing saliva, nocturnal; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

**Vibrissa:** It's impossible to surprise a talpid; moreover, they always act first during a combat.

**Paralyzing saliva:** After a successful bite attack, the affected body area will be paralyzed (-1d penalty on related actions for 1d14 hours) unless they pass a DC 8 Fort save. Those larger-pillars that fail the save will die.

**Nocturnal:** If they're exposed to sunlight or to the moonlight from a full moon, talpids will suffer a -3d penalty on all actions.

### Life goes on

Tensions between humans and talpids will escalate, barring intervention by a third party. Consequently, they'll spend less and less time in the meadows, and this will expose both villages to the largerpillar threat (**hexagon Q**). It'll also reduce the talpid truffles more and more until they're gone, which will negatively impact the Upcutters' cold meats.



A talpid, being "hailed" by a group of Upcutters



## D Lowcutter communal meadows

Known by the PCs

In every respect they're identical to the Upcutter ones, though here are some low stone walls that demarcate these lands. The most notable difference is the absence of the talpid truffles since the underground dwellers use these territories as their communal kindergartens. That's the reason why an encounter with the talpids is more probable here: specifically, a talpid taking care of a young one (1-2 in 1d6, only during nighttime). Males as well as females are in charge of this.

**Talpid (1):** *Init always first; Atk claw +2 melee (1d5) or bite +0 melee (1 and paralysis); AC 12; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30', burrow 30'; Act 1d20; SP vibrissa, paralyzing saliva, nocturnal; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.*

**Talpid child (1):** *Init always first; Atk claw -1 melee (1) or bite -1 melee (1 and paralysis); AC 13; HD 1d3, 2 hp; MV 20', burrow 20'; Act 1d20; SP vibrissa, paralyzing saliva, nocturnal; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.*

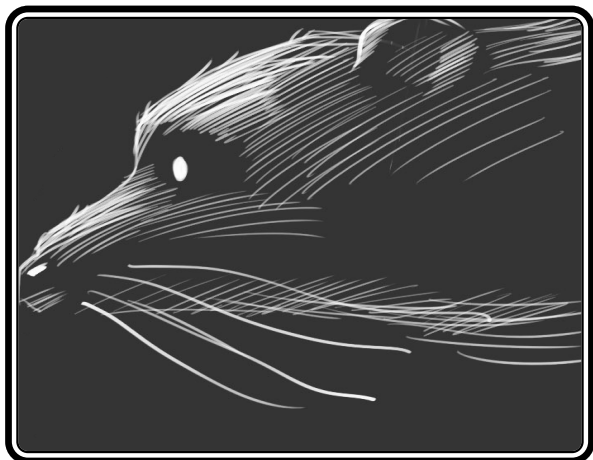
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*Paralyzing saliva: After a successful bite attack, the affected body area will be paralyzed (-1d penalty on related actions for 1d14 hours) unless they pass a DC 8 Fort save. Those largerpillars that fail the save will die.*

*Nocturnal: If they're exposed to sunlight or to the moonlight from a full moon, talpids will suffer a -3d penalty on all actions.*

### Life goes on

If a confrontation between the villagers and the talpids breaks out, the latter will move their nurseries and will visit the meadows less and less, and therefore the risk of largerpillar attacks will increase. If a talpid child gets lost, they'll stick to a group of kind Upcutters if the occasion arises.



## E River crossing

Known by the PCs

The Bitterwater river's watercourse is fed by the snow and the streams from the Hungrymoon mountains; it's a cold, treacherous and wide river. This place near Lower Coldcutters is where the river's current thins down enough to make it easier for a safe crossing (the bridge in **hexagon F** is another site to traverse the river, with its own risks). As years went by, the barony residents kept on laying rocks on the riverbed until they piled enough to create a path; it's nonetheless slippery, so a DC 5 Agility check is needed to cross the waterway without an accidental tumble. This is even more dangerous in wintertime, which is the current situation: after a failed check to cross, the PC must roll a DC 10 Fort save or will catch pneumonia, losing 1d3 Stamina points. This save roll will be attempted every morning until they die or overcome it, which marks the end of the illness; at this point, they'll start recovering the lost Stamina at the normal rate.

Unfortunately, this apparently petty threat becomes more serious due to a whole family of Moiran otters that live in the vicinity. This huge predator species, also known as "river wolf", doesn't have any compunctions about complementing their scant winter diet with the human inhabitants of the barony. They're excellent swimmers which would rather move in the water than on land, and they easily withstand low temperatures thanks to their thick waterproof skin. They ambush travelers using their uncanny ability to create sudden currents and waves when they strongly pound the river surface with their mighty tail. So, when someone tries to cross the river, one of the otters will prompt a flash flood (see their special abilities) while the rest will be waiting down the river to attack anyone who falls in it.

**Giant otters (4):** *Init +2; Atk bite +1d3 melee (1d6); AC 13; HD 1d8; 7, 6, 4 and 3 hp; MV 25', swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, flash flood; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.*

*Deed die: A giant otter can use its deed die to grapple a prey in the water to drown it.*

*Flash flood: The strong current and waves caused by the otters force a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid falling into the river and being dragged 1d30'.*

### Life goes on

If their holt is located on the east riverside, a mile away, the PCs will find human bones and a rotting leather pouch containing the *Saint Hermenegildo's knuckles* (for more information about this relic, check TPBI).

## **f** The bridge over the river Bitterwater

*Known by the PCs*

This ancient bridge is the other option to cross the river. Sadly, it collapsed in its middle section, a victim of the course of time and the lack of maintenance; now there's a breach, nearly 10' wide, so travelers have to practice their athletic skills (DC 10 Strength check or fall into the river). The fall entails two hazards: On the one hand, catching pneumonia (see **hexagon E**), and on the other the possibility of being pulled by the current and drown; to avoid this fate, they must succeed on a DC 8 Strength check, using 1d10 if their occupation is not related to water at all. They can attempt the Strength check once a round, but each time they fail the current will haul them 20' down the river, and they'll lose 1 point of Stamina; if they ever reach 0, death follows. They'll recover the lost points as soon as they pass the Strength check and reach the shore.

The dispossessed cleric of Weeder (**hexagon P**) lives here. On the western riverside, a steep embankment enshrouded in fake brambles (see result **12** of the random encounters) leads to his hidden shelter under the bridge. The cleric was cursed by his god after he lost his followers in the barony; his body is now a mass of brambles, moss, and weeds. There's now only a residue of his unpleasant and sullen personality, so he enjoys hiding in his refuge to spout a barrage of obscene words to whoever tries to pass over the bridge, making it even more difficult.

*The "troll":* Init -2; Atk *bramble* +3 *melee* (1d7); AC 15; HD 5d8, 27 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP *camouflage* +5, *trolling*, *vegetable*; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +7; AL N.

*Camouflage:* When in natural surroundings, it works like the *hide in shadows* thief skill.

*Trolling:* The "troll" spouts a stream of insults, deprecations, and hurting comments that make even the staunchest person to falter. If the target fails on a DC 13 Will save, they'll suffer a -1d penalty during 1d14 minutes or until they accomplish a task of any kind.

*Vegetable:* The "troll" is immune to mental effects, receives half damage from bludgeoning attacks but double from fire attacks. Moreover, he's able to regenerate his limbs and even his head.

### Life goes on

If he's not driven away or destroyed, the "troll" will reproduce by slips from his own "body" (1d7). His offspring will spread throughout the Moiran countryside, placing themselves in transit points to carry on with their father's nasty task.

## **G** The witch

*"Beauty is only skin deep"*

*Known by the PCs*

Amaranta is the local witch and, as such, fulfills all the expectations that the barony inhabitants hold for people like her: ugly as sin, respected and feared for her magical powers, dwells in a gloomy hut in the middle of a lush and haunted forest. She lives with two Moiran guys, that according to the rumors were ensorcelled as a punishment for them and a warning for the rest.

The reality is that Gaudencio and Ercilio, the two young men from Upper and Lower Coldcutters respectively, were enthralled by Amaranta's loving prowess and decided to stay with her, orchestrating this deception so the people would leave them alone in their polyamorous love. In fact, Amaranta's witchcraft is nothing but a combination of a rebellious demeanor, a vast knowledge of nature and herbology, and a complete lack of prejudices. Her sexual abilities are mythical. A last touch that completes her fairy tale witch aspect is her crow "familiar", Blackie, which she utterly spoils.

Amaranta has a wide variety of concoctions, unguents, and poultices in her jumbled hut. Apart from remedies for common ailments like chilblains, underarm abscesses, and stinking feet, the witch also brews a poultice with a strong dung smell that is exceedingly effective as a healing salve (it heals 1 dice worth of hp according to class, 1d4 for 0-level PCs). Her flagship product is the barren'un, a rudimentary condom made with pig's intestines. She only accepts food or future services in exchange for her products.

Her two lovers, Gaudencio and Ercilio, are two smart locals who highly dislike physical labor. They know well the region, Carnival included, because Amaranta is friends with Filogonio, the wizard, and they act as messengers between the two of them. It was Gaudencio and Ercilio themselves who proposed and planned the ensorcellment ruse. For the purpose of keeping her reputation as a feared witch and getting rid of pranksters, the two lovers have plagued the surrounding forest with "special effects", activated by traps skillfully hidden (DC 12 Intelligence check to spot them). Roll on the following table when the PCs stroll through **hexagon G** or any of the adjacent hexagons.



## 1d7 Bewitchment

1 Dozens of snakes burst out of the bushes! They're held captive in a basket, kept warm by red-hot stones; when the cable trap is activated, the basket opens itself. They're not poisonous.

2 The wind carries anguished incorporeal moans! It's caused by a series of wooden flutes hanging from the trees, so the wind blowing through them creates the unsettling sounds.

3 The treetops shake ominously, although there's not a whiff of wind! A pressure plate cuts the ropes that bound the treetops to the forest floor.

4 A multitudinous murder of crows surround you, cawing and trying to gouge your eyes! They're led by Blackie, Amaranta's crow, and only pretend to scare away the PCs.

5 The air around you reeks like the Abyss itself! A pushed branch punctures some bladders full of a mephitic gas.

6 The ground under you suppurates blood! There are several small clay spheres full of pig blood; when the PCs step on them, the blood flows free.

7 A monstrous figure moves menacingly its huge claws! It's an articulated scarecrow, clad in furs, which arms are tied to a pulley set on the tree branches.

Furthermore, Gaudencio and Ercilio will appear to be bewitched when in the presence of strangers: they'll move robotically and speak in a toneless voice, and will remain still until Amaranta orders them something.

**Amaranta:** Init +0; Atk broom +1 melee (1d4); AC 11; HD 2d6, 10 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP herbalist, curse; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; AL N.

*Herbalist:* As the cleric "Lay on hands" ability; Amaranta adds +4 to her roll and always uses the "same" column on the table. It can be attempted only once per day on a given person.

*Curse:* Amaranta will cast a curse on anyone who hurts her. The target will lose 1d3 Luck and Personality points while pustules sprout all over their face. The only way to lift her curse is to earn her forgiveness. If Amaranta dies because of an attack, the curse will only be lifted if the killer takes her place as the local witch.

**A striking trait:** There's always a crow perched on her shoulder, and she takes good care of it.

**Typical statement(s):** "Let me have a look at my lab..."

**Known facts:** She knows where the Carnival is and that the Upcutters are there because her lovers told her.

**The weird:** Amaranta's pheromones are highly addictive. Anybody who shares the bed with her must roll a DC 13 Will save three days later, or will feel the need to meet her again, suffering a -1d penalty on all their actions until they fulfill their wishes or spend a month far from her.

**Crow (1 or murder, 1d14):** Init +1; Atk beak melee +1d3 (1d3); AC 13; HD 1d6, 4 hp; MV 15', fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP deed die, caw; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

*Deed die:* A crow can use its deed die to temporarily blind a target.

*Caw:* The words learnt by a crow bear a compelling power ("run", "jump", "stop", etc). Ignoring a single crow's order is fairly easy (DC 5 Will save), not so a murder (+1 to the DC for every crow).

**Gaudencio and Ercilio:** Init +0; Atk club +1 melee (1d5); AC 12; HD 1d8, 7 and 8 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

**A striking trait:** If watched when they are unaware of it, they'll act in a normal fashion.

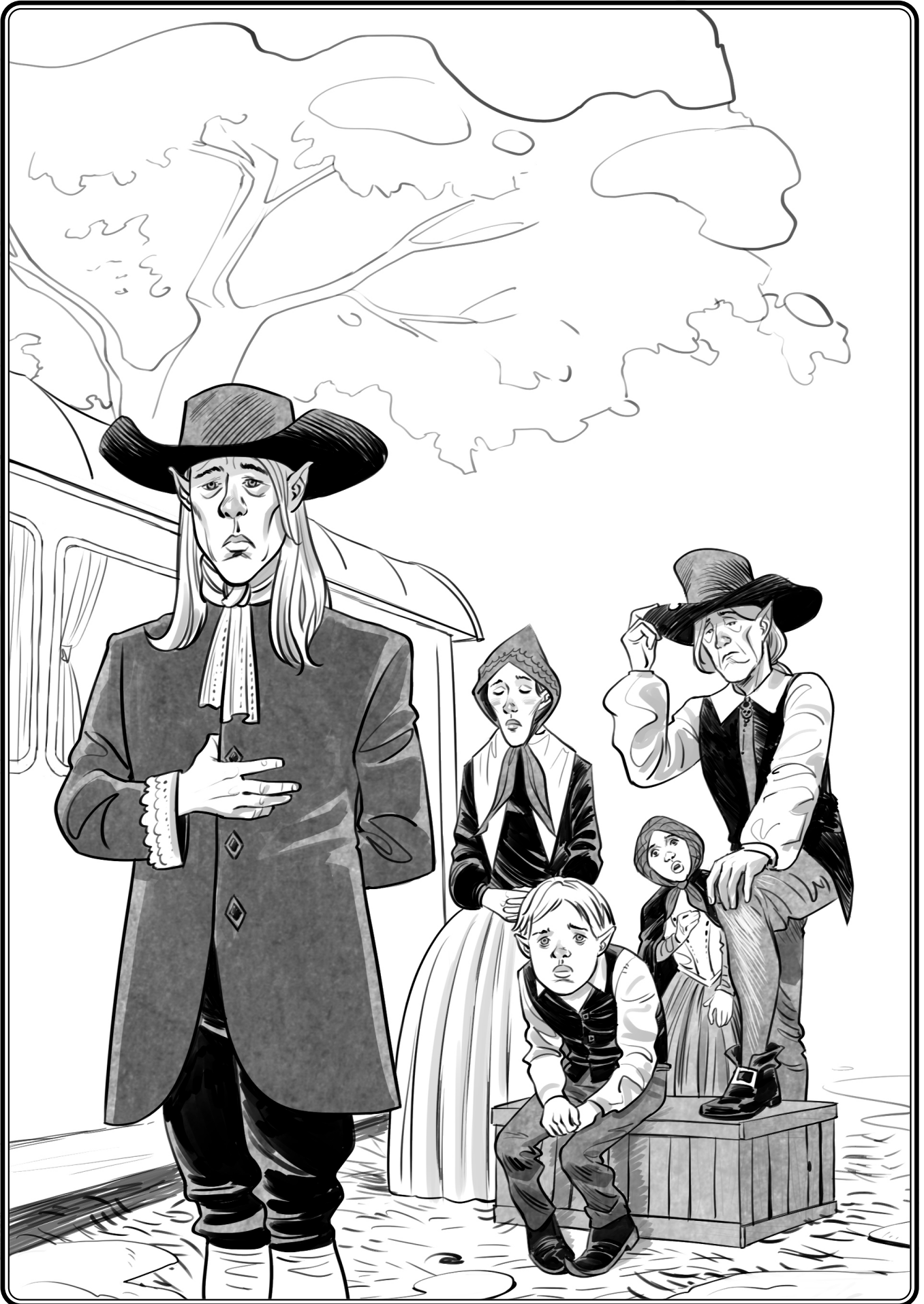
**Typical statement(s):** "Whatever Amaranta orders".

**Known facts:** The Carnival's location and that the men are currently there.

**The weird:** Since they're hooked on Amaranta's pheromones, they're immune to other people's advances and the effects of the charm person spell.

### Life goes on

If anyone hurts or kills either Gaudencio or Ercilio, Amaranta will seek revenge and won't have any qualms about allying herself with supernatural agencies to fulfill it. In her search of patronage, she'll hear about The Gallows Tree, and will go to **hexagon U** to bond herself with the patron and after that track down the PCs to deliver justice.



*The cursed nypsies, who used to be The Three Fates' favorites*



## **7** Summer vacation dwellings for the potentates and nobles of Slugburg

*Unknown to the PCs, 1-3 in 1d7 to stumble upon them, automatic if they explore the hexagon*

A tall stone wall (7') overgrown with ivy encircle this strange enclave, isolating it from the rest of the barony. The roofs pertaining to luxurious country residences built with stone and slate can be seen from the outside. The entry point to the compound is a big iron gate covered also with ivy, clearly indicating that it hasn't been opened in a long time.

This residential area was the brainchild of a Slugburgian entrepreneur: rental houses for his wealthy compatriots in a far-off place, so they could get away from the unhealthy city-state for a while. This will sound crazy to any prudent country-dweller; who would like to live in the rural lands on purpose? Eccentricities of the city denizens, no doubt.

In any case, the initiative was a complete success, and some months ago during the last summer, the first batch of opulent Slugburgians stayed in the complex for the first time. They brought the service with them, huge quantities of food and drink, useless bric-a-brac, and every kind of pastimes. It was all wonderful until one of them tried to leave the place...

...and found out that they couldn't. When they reached the exit, something made them go back to their houses for this or that reason, however outlandish it might sound. Even worse, when they tried to warn the rest, the conversation would wander off into unimportant minutia, or they changed the topic straight away. In a pathetic attempt to keep the situation as normal as possible, the rich entertain themselves with card games, take strolls inside the compound, dress for dinner... and the service keep cooking, cleaning, and serving them, although they're running out of food and they've been forced to improvise.

If any PC gain entry to the complex, be it by climbing or opening the gate (DC 10 *pick lock* check), they'll be able to witness the surreal state of affairs. Being as they are practical country folk, they don't have time for nonsense, so they won't be affected by this condition.

If they wish to intervene, they'll have to impose their vision of reality on the trapped people; that means a DC 12 Personality check. This can be attempted on a group of people, but they should do it when all the confined are together; otherwise, the "healed" group will be "infected" again as soon as they meet the rest of the residents.

The PCs will have to gather all of the affected people, whether through a ruse (a fire, an attack...) or openly; that latter will be more difficult, as the wealthy Slugburgians have a stark contempt for the lower-class rabble.

### Names for the Slugburgian potentates

**Men:** Aloisio, Anier, Ariando, Amaldo, Bernal, Blasco, Ceandro, Dalmacio, Dolfos, Galsino, Iago, Illán, Leocardio, Medardo, Nicodemo, Orlino, Pelayo, Sunifré, Time-teo, Ubaldo.

**Women:** Amata, Ásela, Belicia, Casilda, Chila, Delfina, Erlinda, Guilla, Huera, Idoya, Ligia, Liseta, Melosa, Mencía, Misia, Nuela, Ria, Saritia, Virida, Zita.

The Slugburgians are especially proud of their family names, that always preceded by an "of". They commonly end with the suffix "-or", mostly when it comes to the privileged caste:

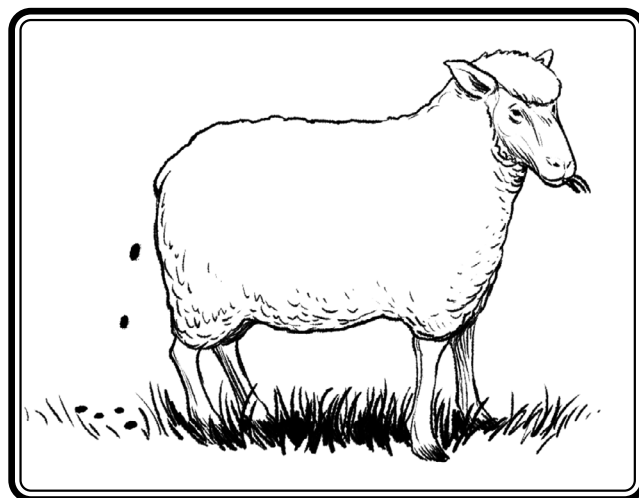
Bástidor, Cástrador, Jícaror, Létrinor, Regüeldor.

They're all frivolous, haughty people, fond of superficial small talk.

Their lowborn service is named in a similar fashion to the Up- and Lowcutters (check **hexagon A**). They're a down-to-earth collective that, sadly, have been infected by their masters' malady.

### Life goes on

If nobody helps the Slugburgians to get out of the compound, their little imitation of an urban society will collapse, and after a serious crisis it'll become a self-sufficient agrarian utopia. There will be a running rumor about a place in the barony where everyone lives in peace and harmony, sparking a flow of dreamers who want to join them.



## I The bandit Killjoy and his “brave” men

Life goes on

*Known by the PCs*

In the wildest part of this small wood the bandit Killjoy and his meager band of eleven lads scrape out a living atop pitiful-looking tree houses. As everybody in the barony knows, both the infamous leader as well as his goons are bandits of scarce vocation. They’ll ambush the Upcutters with a remarkable lack of enthusiasm and will weakly demand all of their valuables and, if possible, any food they’re carrying. They’ll respond to any kind of resistance or opposition with pathetic whimpering, pleas, and will ask for a little empathy from the assaulted PCs. That’s actually their usual procedure: the barony inhabitants end up pitying them, and they carry on making a living.

Some members of the band used to be the baron’s men-at-arms, others are villagers from both towns, and there’s also the odd citizen from Slugburg. If the PCs didn’t meet Lauro during the daytime encounter **S**, he’ll be here. Since they are a bunch of good-for-nothing men, they surely know where the Carnival is, but know nothing about the Upcutters.

**Killjoy:** *Init +0; Atk short sword +0 melee (1d6) or short bow +0 missile fire (1d6); AC 12; HD 3d8, 19 hp; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP coward, harmless; SV Fort +1, Ref+0, Will -1; AL N.*

**A striking trait:** Dozens of scars adorn his body, but none of them makes him ugly.

**Typical statement(s):** “This is a robbery! Hand over your valuables... ..please?”.

**Known facts:** The Carnival’s location.

**The weird:** If Killjoy becomes a PC (an option for a reduced band of adventurers), he’ll always be successful on a “roll the body” check, and will lose a Luck point instead of Strength, Stamina, or Agility.

**Bandits (11):** *Init +0; Atk short sword -1 melee (1d6) or short bow -1 missile fire (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8, 5 hp; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP coward, harmless; SV Fort +1, Ref+0, Will -1; AL N.*

**Coward:** Killjoy’s bandits are complete cowards, so they’ll automatically fail any Morale check.

**Harmless:** Killjoy has taught his men well how to inspire pity and look harmless; anyone witnessing their surrender must make a DC 12 Will check or will soften, feeling sympathetic and commiserated.

If an authority figure unseats Killjoy, they’ll easily take control of the band and could even turn them into a real threat for the barony (that person could be the ruffian Elpidio from the daytime encounter **S**).

## J Owlsine

*Unknown to the PCs. 1-4 in 1d7 to come upon the rock, automatic if they explore the hexagon. 1-3 in 1d7 to encounter the owlsine, 1-5 in 1d7 if they explore the hexagon*

This recent addition to the Moiran countryside has quickly adapted to the wild surroundings by being even wilder. Despite its weird outlook, this creature is an angry brown bear coated with tar from head to claws; since it’s adhesive, feathers and twigs form now the topmost layer. Furthermore, some bones are affixed on its muzzle, so they now look like a beak. There’s a simple reason for all of this: the bear fell in a hot tar pit that, apart from giving it that aspect, affected its vocal cords, so now its growls sound like cawing and even hooting.

The owlsine comes from another lands, but it’s established in the barony because it loves the taste of the runaway pigs. It’s fed up of the humans that try to hunt it, so it has learnt to foresee their predictable actions and acts accordingly.

It lives under a huge rock that looks like a disproportionate cork. If closely inspected, some faint inscriptions and runes can be seen. This enormous rock served as a “stopper” for one of the crevasses where the gale mills where later built upon (**hexagons R and S**). There’s an illustration of the owlsine on page 6.

The Upcutter men threw some cold cuts to distract it when they were on its way to the Carnival; some leftovers from the meal can be spotted near the rock.

**Owlsine:** *Init +2; Atk claw +1d6+2 melee (1d6+2 and bear hug) or bite +1d6+2 melee (1d8+2); AC 14; HD 5d8+5, 29 hp; MV 40’; Act 2d20; SP deed die, flammable, stench; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.*

**Bear hug:** *If both claw attacks hit the same target, the owlsine hugs the victim, crushing them (1d8 additional damage) and coats them with tar (can only be removed with alcohol or a strong alcoholic drink; see “flammable” below).*

**Deed die:** *The owlsine can use its deed die to make a trip attack or a grapple.*

**Flammable:** *The owlsine is covered in tar, so a fiery attack (torches, fire arrows, etc.) will automatically set it alight during 1d5 rounds for 1d8 damage, and it will have to make a morale check or flee.*

*Stench: Like all the bears native to the barony, the owlsine's strong body odor is extremely nerve-wracking. Anybody who is at 15' or less from the beast must make a DC 12 Will save or suffer a -1d penalty during 1d7 rounds.*

### Life goes on

Left to its own devices, the owlsine will end up stalking the pigs from both Upper and Lower Coldcutters, and confronting the villagers, since it's no longer afraid of humans.

## K Battlefield

*Unknown to the PCs, 1-4 in 1d7 to stumble upon it, automatic if they explore the hexagon*

Here's where the vicious bandits that tried to extort the Upcutters killed each other.

It's been seven years since they visited both villages and threatened the population. After that, they went to this spot to await the cold meat delivery, but an internecine fight broke out: they were arguing about what they'd do with the goods, and the opposed points of view evolved into a deathly battle. None survived.

The leader's skull (a rotting eye patch gives away his identity; DC 10 Intelligence check to remember) rests amidst a pile of bleached bones and crushed craniums (it was the skullfrage). There's not much of value in the ossuary: the clothes rotted away some time ago, and the weapons are rusted and broken.

### Life goes on

If anyone rummages through the scraps and succeeds on a Luck check, they'll find a decaying burlap pouch, and inside it *Four Teeth of the Rake God's champion* (to know more about this relic, check TPBI). They surely had its part in the fight that took place.



## L Numantian knights' bivouac

*Unknown to the PCs, 1-5 in 1d7 to stumble upon it, automatic if they explore the hexagon*

This encampment is composed of tents and pavilions made with a patchwork of colorful rags; it's the Moiran base of the Numantian knights' Order and their squires. On their coat of arms, a quill and sword crossed over a book; a frayed banner with this blazon can be seen fluttering in the middle of the encampment.

These Slugburgian second sons are fanatics of Manuel of Numantes and Talavedra's books (he's a famous writer and poet), but in particular his *magnum opus*, "The beguiling lordling Don Mariote of Slugburg". These series of infectious chivalric novels impose little by little their world view upon the reader, causing a cognitive dissonance that drives them mad in the end.

The members of the order are poorly equipped and armed, as well as underfed, especially the squires. They roam the barony while trying to follow their elevated chivalric ideals, with mixed results. That's how the met the Upper Coldcutters' men, who greeted them with a hail of stones; and then Marcial, the Marquis of Burgstard's son and his entourage, who mocked them at great length.

One of the pavilions acts as a meeting room and improvised library. Don Manuel's works are here, as well as heraldry and lineage books. There are also writing implements and a rudimentary map of the barony (showing hexagons V, K, M, and J).

As exposed on daytime encounter 15, dealing with the knights is complicated; they'll treat the PCs with extreme courtesy, but will insist on escorting them back to their homes, swearing (by placing their hands on Don Manuel's works) that they'll take care of their quest. A successful DC 12 Personality check or roleplaying through the situation will avoid the trouble that could arise if they reject the knights' "suggestions".

**Numantian knight:** *Init +1; Atk longsword +1 melee (1d8) or lance +2 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30', horse 50'; Act 1d20; SP code of chivalry, insane; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AL L.*

**Typical statement(s):** "Villains! My strong arm will make short work of your vile hides!".

**Known facts:** A group of knights met the men on the western road, the one that leads to the Carnival.

**The weird:** Isn't the above enough?

**Numantian squire:** Init +1; Atk wooden sword +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d8, 6 hp; MV 30', horse 50'; Act 1d20; SP code of chivalry, insane; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; AL L.

**Code of chivalry:** A Numantian knight or squire follows a strict code of chivalry, so they'll protect the weak, face danger to right a wrong (or what they perceive as such), wander aimlessly to find injustices, and fight honorably (only against armed foes, one to one, and on foot).

**Insane:** Reading accursed books and the unhealthy environment of Slugburg, their hometown, made these second sons go nuts. They're prone to misunderstand what they hear and see, fits of anger, and extreme mood swings.

**Typical statement(s):** "Charge, my lord, charge!".

**Known facts:** Same as the knights.

**The weird:** For them to follow their "lords".



The Numantian knight Don Espigardo de Gatardón and his squire, Felfeñique

### Life goes on

Hunger, exposure, and wild beasts will take their toll on the brave and dashing knights. The last survivor will spend the night in Weeder's temple, and the next morning he'll emerge with his armor plagued by moss and his skin full of a greenish mold; he'll then proceed to proclaim himself as the Green Knight, protector of the wild.

### Numantian names

Id6	Don...	of...
1	Espigardo	Calafren
2	Romualdo	Olgado
3	Fadrique	Vigardo
4	Albrejo	Ágorer
5	Alberico	Gatardón
6	Timorato	Tostón

### Id5 Accompanied by his squire...

1, Felfeñique; 2, Indalecio; 3, Guillermino; 4, Ovidio; 5, Lambro.



## **M** Nypsy campsite

*Unknown by the PCs, but they'll find it as soon as they enter the hexagon*

The nypsy elves' campsite is a bleak and dull place, with its ash-colored wagons and brownish tents. An uneasy silence blankets the area, and the bonfires that shine weakly here and there don't seem to offer much warmth. Even the domestic animals look apathetic.

In the past, this group of carefree and cheerful nypsy elves lived pushing their luck to the limit, knowing that they were the favorites of The Three Fates, as their ancestors had signed a pact millennia ago. They were a people prone to ostentation, unrestrained passions, and taking risks. They lead a nomadic life, assisting their patronesses and divining the fate of those who came to their campsite.

Few remember what happened, since the offenders are already dead; what's for sure is that these nypsies' patriarchs turned their backs on The Three Fates, and they pulled their favor away and cursed them: they wouldn't be the masters of their own destiny any more.

This incident caused a deep change in the elves: they became somber, stern and highly predictable, changed their colorful clothes for grey or black ones, and stopped dancing and singing altogether.

On top of that, the most recent generation are born white skinned, blond and blue eyed. They're extremely quiet and inexpressive, and their voices sound with a timbre that make them hard to ignore. They make non-nypsies uneasy, and when they're close some witness even report getting goosebumps.

Grandma Nontoya is the matriarch of the cursed nypsies, and the oldest person in the group. She can't foresee the future any longer, but she can make complex reasonings and deductions based on any problem she faces or is posed. If the Upcutters tell her about their situation, she'll ask them a long list of questions, and from the answers she'll deduct that the men have been fooling them all along; what she can't infer is their current whereabouts.

**Nypsy adults (30):** *Init +1; Atk knife +1 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d6, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Luck vortex; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; AL N.*

**Nypsy children (10):** *Init +2; Atk knife +0 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 1d4, 3 hp; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP Luck vortex, the voice (3 times per day); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +10; AL N.*

*Luck vortex: These nypsies are The Three Fates' chosen people, so they're blessed and cursed at the same time. Anytime a nypsy fails a check by 3 or less, they'll drain as many Luck points as they need to be successful from a PC in a 30' radius (DC 12 Will save to avoid). If there's more than one "candidate", the affected PC will be the one with the highest Luck score. It's a passive ability that these wretched folk can't control but know exactly how it works; and that's why they long for the company of strangers.*

*The voice: The nypsy children have the power to be obeyed when they utter a command; this ability is identical to the spell word of command with a +3 bonus to the spell check (corruption results count as a failure).*

**Grandma Nontoya:** *Init -2; Atk knife +2 melee (1d4); AC 8; HD 3d6, 10 hp; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP Luck vortex; SV Fort -2, Ref -2, Will +15; AL N.*

**A striking trait:** She's the only one in the campsite wearing colourful clothes, yet a bit worn.

**Typical statement(s):** "Tell me everything in great detail".

**Known facts:** She knows where the Carnival is, like the rest of the nypies. If the PCs answer all of the questions, she'll explain what happened to the men.

**The weird:** Grandma Nontoya is the person who brought the curse upon these nypsies but has managed to keep it a secret by blaming the dead patriarchs.

Nontoya has *Gambón's Tambourine*, formerly the property of the famous nypsy bard and singer, a legend among these people.

The illustration on page 35 shows several nypsies, both adults and kids.

### Life goes on

This group of nypsies will stop wandering and will settle in the barony, but this will bring a period of ruined crops, sick cattle, bad weather (yes, even worse), etc. When their kids grow up, they'll conspire first to conquer the barony, then the rest of Hundreds of Lordlings; and if everything goes according to the plan, they'll rule the whole world with a tyrannical and straight hand.

A band of heroic adventurers could try to lift the nypsies' curse. The Three Fates are bitter enemies of Chaos, so one way of achieving this would be by wiping out a Chaotic religion or cult with as many followers as cursed nypsies... both the Superb Sow faith and Weeder fit in this description.

## Gambón's Tambourine

Its sound incites dancing to the music it plays, but the "musician" has to know what they're doing; just thumping at it won't work. The Tambourine's holder must make a Personality check (using 1d10 if they don't have an appropriate occupation). This check's result will be the Will DC that those listening to the instrument must roll against; otherwise, they'll start dancing and clapping, suffering a -2d penalty on their actions.

## **N** The Trelm. Skullfrage nest

*Known by the PCs, 1-3 in 1d7 chance for the skullfrage to be in its nest*

This gigantic elm, clearly visible within several miles' radius, is the most remarkable landmark in the Moiran countryside. Luckily, the barony inhabitants never had the need or means to chop it down, so it's stood the passage of many centuries and has reached a height of 100'.

A skullfrage, a carrion bird, has nested here, on the top-most branches. This species was on the verge of extinction, back in the time when the baron's men patrolled the region, but it's now slowly building up its population. The skullfrage detects wounded animals and demi-humans with its amazing senses of sight and smell. It attacks them by crushing rocks, so the rubble rains on the victims, usually hitting their heads; it then swoops down to eat the exposed brains.

There's nothing of value in the nest: this is a hard-working bird that keeps it spotless clean. The branches where it rests, however, are where the valuable samaras grow (DC 14 Strength check to reach them). These flying seeds, V-shaped and 3' long, are sharp and lightweight, so they can be used as two-handed weapons (damage 1d7, they shatter on a fumble). In addition, an invigorating nougat can be made with the nuts inside them (+1d3 hp for 1d6 hours).

**Skullfrage:** Init +5 [-2]; Atk beak +1d4 [+1] melee (1d8 [1d4]) or claw +1d4 [+0] melee (1d6 [1d3]); AC 13 [9]; HD 4d8, 27 hp; MV 10', 60' flying; Act 2d20; SP bird, deed die, lethal crit, stone rain; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

*Bird:* Some scores on the profile are worse when it's on land [shown in brackets], and when it's flying it doesn't trigger attacks of opportunity.

*Deed die:* A skullfrage can use its deed die to seize a human-sized creature or smaller and carry it on its claws (rules-wise it's like a grapple).

*Lethal crit:* If a skullfrage scores a beak critical attack, it fractures its victims' skull, killing them.

*Stone rain:* This beast crushes huge rocks that fall over a 30' radius area and inflict 1d5 hp to everyone (DC 10 Reflex save to avoid).

## Life goes on

If they slay the dangerous bird, the female (they mate for life) will be able to track down his killers and pursue them, no matter how long it takes (even years!).

## **O** Sanctuary of the Superb Sow

Alongside the Trelm and the gale mills, this wooden and stone building is the most striking feature of the barony. The Sanctuary of the Superb Sow, with just a circular ground floor, seems to be always under construction. It's an expiatory temple that supports itself exclusively by the faithful's donations, who often add pilasters, buttresses, decorative tiles, and stained-glass windows to the structure. The result is an organic, irregular, and baroque construction.

Inside it is the big sculpture that portrays the barony's patroness, also called the Pig Mother and the Protector Swine, goddess of pigs, fertility, earth, and the pig slaughter: a huge sow sitting on her hindquarters. She holds in her hoofs sausages that sprout from her belly, and one of her legs is cured ham. Several chubby piglets are sucking at her nipples.

The temple's interior is an amalgamation of pigsty where pigs roam free, slaughterhouse, and cold meat storage. On the temple walls there is a number of chapels depicting the "saints" of this religion: the three piglets, "prodigal" sons that decided to leave the drove and, after confronting the big bad wolf, went back with their coiled tails between their legs; the castrated pig, that symbolizes the sacrificial hog's calmness and obedience; and the stud, the male pig and leader of the drove.

The Superb Sow's faith grants tangible benefits (as explained in section **Folk wisdom**, in text box **Superstition**), but demands regular sacrifices to the patroness and the selfless help of the young faithful during the rituals. Her most sacred celebration is the Pig slaughter fest, that takes place during wintertime, and is accompanied by a mass pilgrimage. Amongst the revered relics are the *Incorrupt Sausage*, the first anointed artifact of this young faith, hard as stone and used to bless the sacrificial pigs; and the *Bacon Mask*, a face implement of cured meat borne by the high priestess during the religious ceremonies.



Ludovina, the porcine goddess high priestess, lives in Lower Coldcutters (**hexagon B**); she's the founder of this faith. This Slugburgian crook arrived in the barony fleeing from justice, but she didn't need much time to realize that she could take advantage of its gullible inhabitants to live like a queen. Being an expert poisoner, she contaminated the meadows' aquifers to kill some pigs, and later used an antidote on them. She then presented herself to the neighbors as the intermediary of a savior goddess, known to her after a cold meat binge: the Superb Sow. Ludovina has part of the yearly tribute for the bandits, and the Upcutters could notice it after making a successful DC 15 Intelligence check. She knows perfectly well where the men are.

Having said that, despite all the deceit, devotion always finds a recipient. This worship, stoked by a considerable amount of souls, has drawn the attention of an orphan entity that has impersonated the Superb Sow: a demon from a dark circle of hell, weak for the moment, but growing in power for each faithful and sacrifice offered in its porcine name. Its origin and objectives are, for the time being, unknown.

Quite a few youngsters stand out in their adoration to the Protector Swine, but among them shines Sindimia, a novice utterly devoted to the cause. This lass is able to channel the Superb Sow and has grown two new pairs of tits as a sign of her goddess' favor. Her devotion is such that she sleeps in the sanctuary and is always next to Ludovina.

On page 56 there's an illustration of the sanctuary and Ludovina.

### Life goes on

If nobody unmasks Ludovina, the Pig Mother's faith will grow, and the most devout will start manifesting the stigmas of their adoration: pig tails, additional nipples, hoofs... The inner circle will find out the true nature of their goddess, so their rites and objectives will take a darker course. Even more, if Parmenio's pigs survived the Swineherd Band fiasco (see *The Phlogiston Books, Volume II*), Big Eyes will feel attracted to this cult and, after reaching an agreement with Ludovina, he'll become something akin to a messiah, and his piggish companions, the apostles.



*Eutimio the hardheaded house and orchard, and his "guests"*

## **P** Weeder's temple

*Known by the PCs, 1 in 1d7 to coincide with Ursicinio and his followers while they're carrying out a ritual (only at nighttime)*

Before the Superb Sow became the barony's patroness, its inhabitants reluctantly prayed to Weeder, the Wild Lord of the Stepmother Nature. Adoring Weeder was never easy: he's a harsh god, inflexible, and ruthless, who represents the most merciless aspects of nature, so that's why it's referred as the "Stepmother". His tenets include taking the dying faithful to the countryside so their bodies return to the natural cycle, and not tending the wounds of those affected by natural disasters or accidents since it's part of the natural selection; his celebrations revolved around hunting and surviving in the wild.

When Ludovina poisoned the Moiran pigs (**hexagon O**), the Weeder priest (**hexagon F**) was incapable of solving the problem, so the neighbors kicked him out, and the faith on the grim god was quickly forgotten. The temple is now home to weeds and all kind of vermin (even more than the usual), clearly showing a supernatural reason behind them. The holy holm oak that presided over it was cruelly felled, but its stump is resprouting.

Not everyone stopped following Weeder. A small group of Moirans, unhappy with the new goddess, still keep their faith on him and gather periodically to honor the forsaken god of the wild. Led by Ursicinio (**hexagon B**), they believe that the sacrifice of a Superb Sow's follower could earn Weeder's favor back. Their gloomy canticles that mimic animals (howls, shrieks, roars) and the pale lights from their candles reinforce the popular belief about the haunted condition of the ruined temple. The temple is indeed cursed, but it only affects the non-believers. It's triggered when one of them spends more than 15 minutes near or inside the ruined building, and makes nature turn against the hexed person: it starts raining, it grows colder or hotter, birds attack them, mosquitoes and flies accost them, etc.

Furthermore, most of the temple was constructed with stones from the huge "stoppers" that used to block the galemills' crevices (**hexagons R and S**). The runes and inscriptions on some of the stone blocks are from a bygone era, and if they're used as "entrails pebbles" (as in **Supers-tition** from *TPBI*), will protect from hellish possession.

### Life goes on

If nobody intervenes, Ursicinio and his lackeys will capture a follower of the Protector Swine and will proceed to sacrifice them in a favorable date: spring's equinox. The Lowcutter leader will then become a Cultist of Weeder (see *TPBI*) and his adherents, emboldened, will start a campaign of proselytism that will result into a devastating religious conflict.

## **Q** Eutimio the hardheaded

*Known by the PCs*

In the middle of a large treeless area is Eutimio's farm, surrounded by a low stone wall. The family house, a small one-floored building, sits near a potato field.

The stubborn Upcutter and his family decided to leave the traditional occupation in Upper Coldcutters and start growing potatoes, very nutritious and highly valued. Eutimio hold that the diet based on cold meat was spoiling his children and stood up for meat abstinence and a full-vegetable option. As a result, he was the laughingstock of the rest of the Upcutters. Actually, many neighbors would say that he deserves what's happened to him... because the largerpillars were attracted to his vegetables and are devouring them, as they did with him and his family.

At first sight, the house looks OK, and the field ready for the harvest. There's no one in the vicinity, and the chimney is not spewing any smoke. Inside, there's a huge sinkhole on the floor of the one-room house. The door is stuck (DC 10 Strength to open it) because of the debris and piled dirt from the largerpillars' tunnel, and the PC who bashes down the door must succeed on a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid falling into the pit. The sinkhole has a very steep slope that leads to the largerpillars' tunnels; what's left of Eutimio and his family can be found here: a heap of bones and half-digested clothes.

On the other hand, in the midst of the plantation a flashy scarezombie stands out (see *TPBI*). The underground, however, is completely criss-crossed by the largerpillars' tunnels, so anyone stepping on the plantation risks sinking in them. Any PC who sets foot on it must make a DC 12 Reflex save or fall into a largerpillar's *pit trap* (see the description on the largerpillar profile).

What or who are the largerpillars? Some sages (and everyone knows how they like to waste their time digressing) wonder whether these creatures are degenerate humans or evolved worms. What's for certain are their disturbing anthropomorphic features: human-like faces with a huge mouth, vestigial arms and legs held close to their pale and long worm body.

They're opportunistic creatures able of eating almost anything, though they prefer tubers since they're easier to eat from the underground. Since they move around in large groups, they readily attack humans when the opportunity arises. They reproduce by parthenogenesis, so they can quickly become a plague.



## **R** **S** Galemills

The potatoes are the catalysts that cause a metamorphosis in this species. If nobody stops them from consuming Eutimio's plantation, they'll reach a life stage rarely seen since the advent of their enemies, the talpids, in the barony. The largerpillars will encase themselves in a chrysalis, from which will come out transformed into deathmoths, huge nighttime butterflies that will lay waste to anything and anyone on their path, draining vegetables' and animals' fluids.

**Largerpillars (20):** Init +2; Atk bite -1 melee (1d3-1) or earthy puke +0 missile fire (1d4, 30'); AC 10; HD 1d4, 2 hp; MV 15', dig 30'; Act 1d20; SP underground senses, pit trap, earthy puke; SV Fort +0, Ref -2, Will +2; AL C.

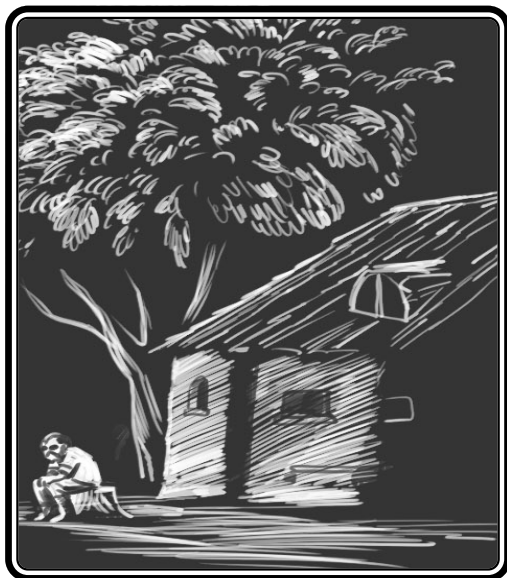
*Underground senses:* A largerpillar can see in the dark (60') and detect the vibrations caused by the aboveground creatures when they move (60').

*Pit trap:* If nobody notices the largerpillar, its first action will be to dig a pit trap under its objective, who will be pinned down when they fall into the hole. The victim must make a DC 8 Reflex save or become trapped (-1d penalty on all actions and they can't move). On following rounds, the trapped PC can get out of the pit if they make a DC 8 Strength check.

**Deathmoths (as many as surviving largerpillars):** Init +1; Atk proboscis +1 melee (1 plus fluid extraction, 1d3 Stamina, temporal loss) or +1 grapple melee (DC 12 Strength check to avoid, can be attempted every round); AC 12; HD 2d6, 7 hp; MV 40' fly; Act 1d20 or 2d16; SP fluid extraction; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

### Life goes on

If not taken care of, the largerpillars will consume Eutimio's harvest and, after a week inside their chrysalis, will emerge as the dangerous deathmoths, black butterflies with bone-white motifs that grant them a grisly and skeletal look. Their main targets will be both villages.



*Known by the PCs.* If visiting by night, 1-2 in 1d7 chance to meet creatures from the underground flapping around

The strange shape of these structures can be seen almost everywhere in the barony: they're truncated cones topped by a gable roof. There's always a background noise stemming from the upper opening, that adds up to the feeling of disquiet around them. Next to them, tiny in comparison, there's a fortified house, with embrasures instead of windows. Check the illustration on page 15.

The galemills, as they're named, are a mixture of chimney and wind turbine. They're constructed with black slate, and there's a long and thick log inside with blades inserted all along its length. This rudimentary turbine spins thanks to the air currents flowing through the crevasse the galemill is on, also causing the unique and distressing sound. The torsion energy moves the millstone with which potatoes, barley, and crimson bramble berries are grinded.

During certain nights of the year some flying creatures emerge from the crevasse; their bodies are adorned with an amalgam of wings, claws, and teeth. Apparently, they come from the underworld. That's why the annexed houses are like small forts with windows like embrasures, thick walls, and iron-reinforced doors. The galemillers have also weapons at their disposal, a privilege granted by the baron due to the high risk that their jobs entail. Despite the hazards, the families in charge of a galemill cling to it since the grinding fees are steep.

The galemillers of **hexagon S** are the Chitterlings, related to the Chitterlings in Upper Coldcutters, while the ones in **hexagon R** are the Gizzards, and their family lives in Lower Coldcutters. They're all stone-deaf because of the constant noise and the air currents; a galemiller's life can drive even the most resilient folk crazy, so most show quirks.

The galemills cover up a secret (pun intended) that is more terrifying than those maddening noises: the crevasses they're built on are fissures (nobody knows whether natural or artificial) that lead to a remote and dark hellish plane. Ages ago they were blocked (literally) with huge stoppers, but someone or something "uncorked" them. One of those giant stoppers is in **hexagon J** (the owlsine shelter), whilst the other one was crushed and partly used to build Weeder's temple (**hexagon P**).

**Underworld creature (Type I demon, 1d8):** Init 3; Atk claws, teeth, or wings +2 melee (1d5); AC 13; HD 2d8; MV 40' fly; Act 1d20 or 2d16; SP airborne, demon traits; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

*Airborne:* If one of these demons drops to the ground, it'll be unable to take off, and will crawl at a 5' speed.

*Demon traits:* As in the DCC RPG, but these creatures can travel from their plane to the barony through one of the fissures under the galemills.

### Life goes on

After years and years of reconnaissance, the masters of the underworld creatures will commence their conquering attempts, firstly replacing the galemillers and their families with demonic doppelgangers. More galemills will be erected as entry points for the demonic masters' armies, and the barony will become the beachhead for a future global campaign.

### **T** The lass on the bend

*Unknown by the PCs, but the encounter will be triggered as soon as they set foot on the hexagon*

On the west road, near the crossroads with the north one, there's a plain-looking bend where Albricias, the lass on the bend, appears.

If the PCs take the west road and cross this hexagon, they'll see a girl next to the way, before reaching the bend. She seems lost, so as soon as she spots the PCs she'll approach them with a relieved look. She's a young girl dressed in clothes more appropriate for hotter seasons than the current. She's polite to a fault, and will ask the PCs' help, as she's lost and needs a guide. She'll offer to go with them anywhere they're heading to.

Albricias will accompany the group as long as they agree to it; she's courteous and kind but inexperienced and naive, and she likes giving her opinion about everything. She's not a good traveler and will complain non-stop, and she can be a real liability during dangerous situations, because she tends to get in the way.

A brief exchange will be enough to expose her as an odd youngster. Albricias only knows that she belongs to the noble family of Lockankey, from the namesake county, but doesn't remember where she has to go, how old she is, why she's dressed like that, or why she's alone; but after the third question she's asked, she'll casually say: "Watch out there, that's the bend where I was killed".

For Albricias is a "residue", who are also called "obstinates": people who resist to disappear after they die. The obstinates are humans and demi-humans who died before they were due, and for reasons alien to Atropos' scissors, and are therefore loose ends in fate's loom. Their life's thread is still interwoven in universe's weave, so they are in a limbo between life and death.

They aren't un-dead, as they breathe, eat, are warm to the touch, etc... They don't grow old or die (or at least not in the usual way), and although they can bleed from inflicted wounds and even seem to die, they'll reappear in the same place where they first manifested, intact again.

### Life goes on

If the PCs read the genealogical annals like the ones the Numantian knights hold, they'll find out that Albricias should be at least 134 years old, and that she was in fact a previous Lockankey count's daughter. If they escort her back to the family state, she'll claim her heritage, uncovering in the process the biggest Lockankey secret: she was murdered by her younger brother so he could become the next count. This will probably ignite the spark of a civil war in the county. Sadly for her, this won't solve her supernatural condition.

If the PCs get rid of her (by hook or by crook), she'll keep manifesting on the bend. The only way of finding closure for her is to request a hearing with The Three Fates, which is a quest to be created by the skilled Judge.

### **a** The Gallows Tree

*Known by the PCs*

In clear contrast with the Trelm in **hexagon N**, this tree is like a macabre and dark parody. Although dry and dead in appearance, it still stands by the road, serving as a perch for crows and various carrion birds, and another ghastly use: the hanging place for criminals.

A Gallows Tree follower, Hierónides, is about to execute a youngster, an arsonist who has started some fires in the nearby marquis' lands, killing some people in the process. The vigilante waited near the Carnival, since he knew that the scoundrel would go there, and ambushed him. A true pale rider, his dusty wide-brimmed hat barely hides a gaunt face that never shows a smile. Close by there's an aggressive-looking nag.



The prisoner will plea mercy, appealing to the PCs' mother instinct. He swears never to do it again, asks for a second chance, and brings into question the executioner's authority. Needless to say, Hierónides won't allow such a thing, and if need be, will face the PCs, but always looking to knock down or pin down rather than wound or kill. His patron's code obliges him to capture the criminals alive. To that end, he'll use his whip to grapple and his crossbow with blunt-headed arrows to stun. He also carries a net and several fetters and chains to shackle and move the criminals.

Hierónides belongs to a sinister ranger brotherhood based in a ruinous castle, located in the middle of a tundra full of dead trees, and commanded by a mysterious person; presumably, a powerful wizard, a follower of the Gallows Tree. All the brotherhood members used to be criminals who were executed on a Gallows Tree, but the supernatural patron brought them back to life to devote their lives to its cause.

**Hierónides, countryside vigilante:** Init: +1; Atk whip +4 melee (1 and grapple) or crossbow +3 missile fire (1 and stun) or net +3 missile fire (pin down, DC 12 Ref save); AC 12; HD 3d10, 19 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Gallows Tree follower, whip; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; AL L.

*Gallows Tree follower:* Hierónides can use the Invoke patron result 12-13 (Gallows Tree) once a day, and the result 18-19 once a week, but this last result only when in presence of a Gallows Tree, that won't turn to dust when the effect ends (see TPBI).

*Whip:* Hierónides can inflict subdual damage with his whip. In addition, if he hits a target, he'll tangle them up. His victim will have to spend an action on a DC 12 Strength check to break free.

**A striking trait:** A big scar around his neck.

**Typical statement(s):** "-".

**Known facts:** The existence of the Carnival.

**The weird:** Hierónides doesn't need to breathe anymore, but he does it out of habit.

### Life goes on

Hierónides will go deeper and deeper into the barony and will start executing the local criminals, like Killjoy's band, what will put him at odds with the bandits' relatives.

## ▼ The Carnival of earthly delights

*Unknown by the PCs, but visible in a 1-hexagon radius*

It's difficult to overlook the Carnival, as his creator designed it to draw attention. The first thing that catches the eye is its huge red marquee, like an enormous bonfire. As they approach the Carnival, they'll see the wagons that encircle the marquee, forming a defensive but at the same time attractive perimeter: they're both a barrier and a colorful mural of evocative scenes.

The Carnival is an intelligent mix of bordello, casino, tavern, and circus in one package, irresistible to the majority of men who have visited it. The management avoids trouble (like enraged spouses, local businesses, and prude organizations or individuals) by adopting nomadic habits. The owner doesn't turn his nose at charging the customers not in money but in kind, knowing that the countryside folk rarely carry cash, as it's true with the Upcutter men.

Almost all the Carnival staff, from its owner to the harbor children (the bottom of the Carnival's pyramid), consume the purple lotus' extract. This time, and due to management meddling with it, the dosage they've ingested is higher than usual, which has caused a grave intoxication (see area 7). Apart from their bizarre behavior, it's easy to pick out the purple lotus' users, since their tongue and lips show an intense purplish hue.

The Carnival's workers know about the visit of the Upcutter men, but will say nothing about it, instead telling those who ask questions to take them to the owner.

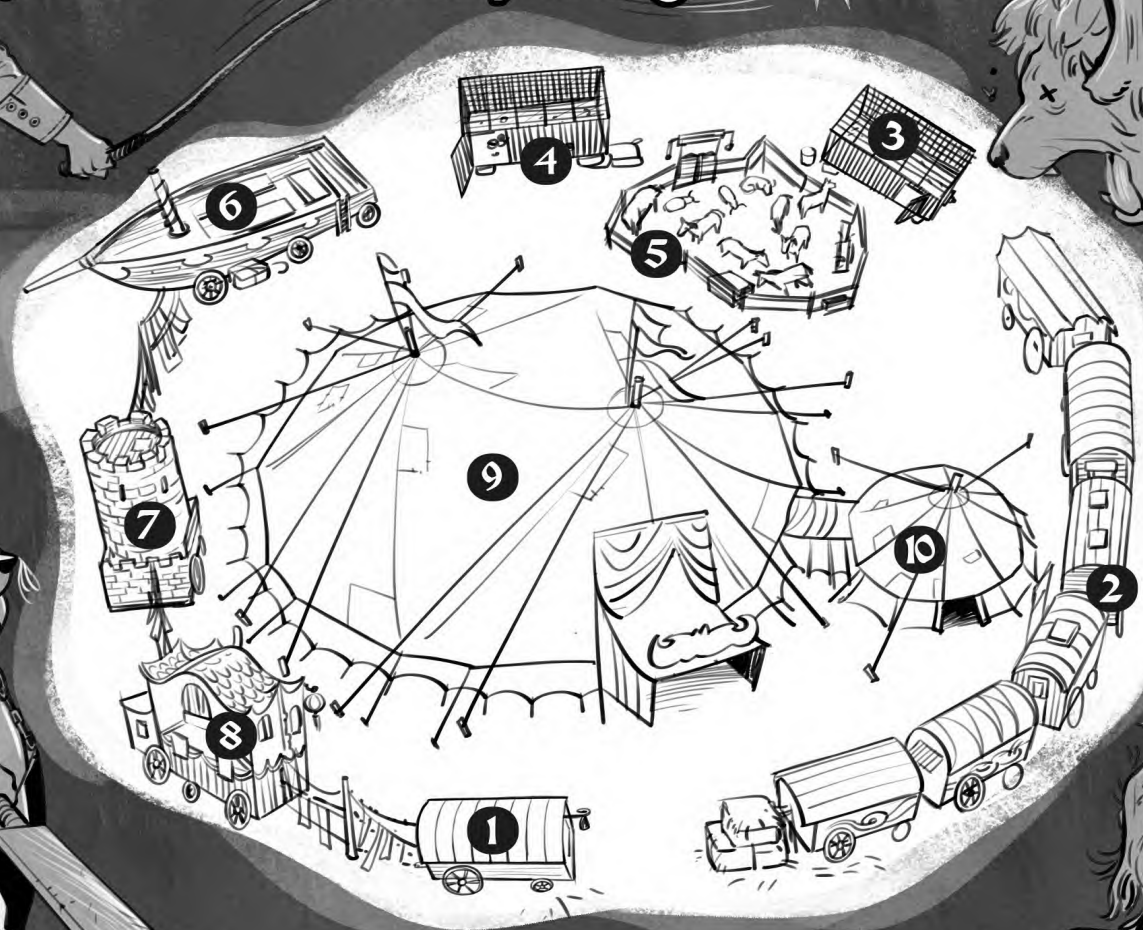
### Carnival areas

The Carnival's marquee is surrounded by carts, wagons, and other vehicles. Between them are chains and ropes from which tiny bells and colorful rags hang. There's a retinue of goons watching the premises to make sure that no undesirable trespasses, and people like the PCs, looking for unruly men, fit the bill. These bruisers are posted all around the perimeter and will come to help each other after 1d4 rounds. As they're intoxicated, they'll take any slight or threat as a violent act and will react accordingly.

**Goons (5):** Init +1; Atk club +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d8, 7, 5, 5, 4 and 3 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

# The Carnival of Earthly Delights





## 1 Ticket office

The wagon of the Carnival's leader is located just in front of the marquee's entrance, and doubles both as residence as well as access point to the attractions. The outside wooden planks are decorated with suggestive scenes of scantily clothed women, games of chance, and drinking ruffians. A short stair leads to the entry door; it's half-open.

Vístulo is inside, completely lost in his thoughts. He was the one who increased the purple lotus' dosage that everyone at the Carnival consumes, because he's started to develop some tolerance to the drug. He's seated at his desk, which is overflowing with wooden tokens used as a method of payment in the Carnival, and empty, full and half-full bottles.

The wagon's interior is a "preview" of what can be found in the Carnival. The room is choke full of every kind of work of art and objects related to revelry, partying, and debauchery: bacchanal paintings, erotic sculptures, exotic stuffed animals, games of chance, amazing liquors... In a big city, these items would fetch up to 500 po, enough to retire the PCs and the inhabitants from both villages.

Moreover, the tokens are legal tender in the Carnival and can help the PCs to negotiate with the workers, since greed is not affected by the purple lotus: every 5 chits grant a +1 bonus to Personality checks.

Vístulo is a devout follower of the Rake God, whose name clearly states his godly portfolio. He's a fickle and eccentric man, capable of being both kind-hearted and cruel. He's sometimes taken a decision based entirely on a dice roll, but the purple lotus intoxication has pushed him to leave everything in luck's hands. To this end, he uses his favorite dice: the *Accord Ivories*.

Vístulo will only allow women into the Carnival if they beat him in a dice game. He's also happy to gamble tokens, items of his collection... and even his own life, if one of the PCs can match the bet.

**Vístulo, leader of the Carnival:** Init +2; Atk punch +3 melee (1d3, see boxer); AC 12; HD 3d8, 17 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20 or 2d16; SP intoxicated (purple lotus), boxer; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; AL C.

### The Accord Ivories

They're a couple of dragon's ivory dice with black opal pips. Whatever bet is solved with these dice will compel both parties to fulfill it, under penalty of losing 1 point of Luck every day until the compromise is satisfied. If you want to simulate this, just take two six-sided dice and decide if the winner must get the highest or the lowest result.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

*Boxer:* The punch attack inflicts subdual damage; he can make one attack with 1d20 or two with 1d16.

**A striking trait:** His metallic teeth (he's lost all of his original pieces), each from a different valuable metal.

**Typical statement(s):** "What would you bet to get it?"

**Known facts:** Obviously, everything about the men. Vístulo has amassed a lot of information about the people of Hundreds of Lordlings, some of them in positions of power.

**The weird:** After years of drug abuse, Vístulo's blood has turned poisonous. It's considered as Giant wasp poison for all intents and purposes (check **Appendix P** in *DCC RPG*)

## 2 Cartrain

These joined carts and wagons are the main means of transport and living quarters of the Carnival's staff. They're decorated with colorful pictures that seen as a whole compose a scene: a gigantic snake crushes between its coils a score of people from different social standing.

There's nothing worth of noting in the carts: personal belongings, beds, food, and tools. If the PCs want to look for something, have them roll on **Table 3-4** in the *DCC RPG* for every 5 minutes they spend searching.

## 3 Cage

A filthy and nauseating cage of thick bars, doors opened. Considering the excrements, there's been some kind of big carnivore locked inside.

## 4 Cage

Similar to the other cage, but the droppings point to several omnivores.

## 5 Horses and oxen pen

Four strong oxes and eleven horses graze and rest here.

## 6 Waincraft

This small ship repurposed as a wain is the transport for the freak troupe from area 10. Its hold is divided up in cabins and is a stark contrast with the rest of the wagons, as it's tidy and organized. Apart from that, there's nothing to write home about or riches to steal.

## 7 Wizard's towergon

If it wasn't for the wheels, one could say that this is a small tower standing here in the Carnival. Up close, the stone blocks turn out to be grey-painted wood planks.

The towergon's inside is the opposite of Vístulo's place: a collection of grisly trophies that the wizard has accumulated during his journeys. Desiccated heads of dreadful creatures, jars full of variated substances, amulets made with dubious materials, and dozens of scrolls, tablets, and books containing 1d5 level 1 spells.

Amongst this assortment of trinkets there is a small ebony box, a cube so perfectly carved that its edges can cut a person who doesn't handle it with care; its faces show an intricate geometric pattern of criss-crossed lines: it's a *Box of the Legéomètre*.

Filogonio is the Carnival's wizard and is in charge of everything that pertains to the supernatural sphere. He also concocts the purple lotus for the staff in the overturned clay pot, now by the entrance and dripping the leftovers of the drug. The purple lotus provokes an exacerbation of the ego; those who consume enter an altered state of self-indulgency, and in the case of wizards and their ilk, it also empower their focus (+1 bonus to spell checks, but they fumble on 1-2). An overdose makes the consumer's worst fears to become real (although it's just in their minds).

Filogonio is now prey to this paranoid state, so he's entrenched behind his upturned desk. The wizard is a lazy follower of Sezrekan and believes that the mad archmage has sent his minions to collect past debts. He'll use his spells defensively and cast *invisibility* as a last resort to escape.

*Filogonio, the Carnival's wizard: Init +1; Atk bone dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 11; HD 3d6, 11 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus), spells; SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will +6; AL C.*

*Spells (+4 to spell checks, fumbles on 1-2, won't use spell burn); (level 1) sleep, flaming hands, choking cloud; (level 2) invisibility.*

*Intoxicated (purple lotus): The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).*

**A striking trait:** A gaudy tattoo on his brow, a "third eye" in the style of Slugburg's harbor.

**Typical statement(s):** "I'll make it up to you, my lord Sezrekan!"

## Box of the Legéomètre

Also known as the *Key of Sobs*, this box is closed shut and there's no lock in sight; it can only be unlocked by tracing the lines while mentally solving complex trigonometric calculi, that opens a dimensional breach. The breach's destination depends on the result of an Intelligence check:

01-09 Roll on the table Available destinations for a planar trip (TPB1, page 36)

10-19 The Vertical Halls' Foyer (Area 2 of *The Vertical Halls*)

20+ Cornalis, a Lawful demiplane where a group of cold and merciless celestials "welcome", dissect, and frame those who solved the Legéomètre's puzzle. The "chosen" don't die in the process, and some argue that it could even be reversible, although maybe the bodies wouldn't end up looking the same.

**Known facts:** Everything about the Upcutter men, as well as a vast knowledge of geography.

**The weird:** Filogonio can't stand the touch of metal, so there's nothing metallic in his towergon.

## 8 Double wagon

This ornate wagon is a double-decker. It's pink and highly embellished both on the outside and the inside; the home of the Carnival's prostitutes is crammed with lingerie, sexy clothes, makeup, and fake jewelry, all of it scattered around the place.



## 9 Marquee

### Marquee's features

The marquee is like a giant tent; two strong posts uphold it, and the strings tighten the tarpaulin. It's made of a vegetable fiber, very resistant to fire and cutting attempts; inside, several additional tarpaulins demarcate the Carnival's "rooms" and "corridors". These areas don't have a "ceiling" as such, apart from a tangled mess of rope and the marquee itself; the "door" is a cutout section of tarpaulin that can be lifted. Over these openings there are stitched symbols that hint at what's in the interior. The floor is covered with straw in highly frequented places. The light from the braziers is dim on purpose, to hide stains and ugly spots. There are some oil lamps hanging in the corridors, but they're almost out of fuel. There's a heavy smell as if the place's been closed for a long time; a cacophony of sounds can be heard, like people shouting, moaning and conversing.

It's highly probable that the players try to damage the tarpaulin in order to either tear the marquee down or cut through the rooms. However, this won't be as easy as it looks:

- Only the sharpest blades can rip the tarpaulin, and those aren't the ones that the Upcutters are carrying. If they lay their hands on sharper blades (a weapon that inflicts 1d8 damage or more), it'd take 1 minute to tear a yard of tarpaulin. Starting a fire inside the Carnival will burn the flammable objects but will only blacken the tarpaulin. If they're outside, only the strings and surrounding vegetation will catch fire.
- The wooden stakes around the Carnival pull the guy ropes. Cutting them or uprooting the stakes won't have an immediate impact apart from making the marquee look loose and more prone to being dragged by strong winds. On top of that, the marquee is so tight that it's extremely difficult to slip under the tarpaulin (DC 15 Strength check).
- The two main poles, in rooms 2 and 3, are the most important supports. If the Upcutters want to bring the marquee down they'll have to chop the poles down or topple them (DC 20 Strength check).

The inside upper part of the marquee is criss-crossed with ropes and strings, and it's "inhabited" by "harbor kids", orphans from Slugburg, the city-state. They live almost like savages, encrusted with filth from top to bottom.

The wizard Filogonio found them in one of his trips and was impressed with their expertise climbing up and down the ships' rigging, so he decided to take them to the Carnival to take care of the marquee's strings and rope. Those who survive the harsh living conditions usually end up joining the Carnival's attractions when they grow up.

The kids won't attack the Upcutters unless they try to enter a room climbing up the ropes; although if you feel like scaring them a bit, you could start an ambush using these unsettling youngsters.

**Harbor kids (6):** Init +3; Atk hook +1 melee (1d3) or stone +1 missile fire (1d3); AC 13; HD 1d4, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4 hp; MV 30', climb 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +5; AL C.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

### Carnival's attractions

The Carnival's attractions are rooms or areas with related events that will be triggered when the PCs arrive. They're totally independent, since the groups are completely isolated due to the purple lotus; once the Upcutters choose a room, the clock will start ticking for the rest of them: their choices will rule how many men can be saved. They've been locked up for at least a day, maybe more if the PCs took too long to reach the Carnival. The Judge must determine the identity of the surviving men. You can check out **hexagon A** to randomly generate names, and this table for the relationship with the PCs:

1d7	Relationship with the PC
1	Father
2	Son
3	Brother
4	d3: 1, husband; 2, boyfriend; 3, lover
5	Brother-in-law
6	Son-in-law
7	Cousin, and you may roll again (it's a very small village...)

Unless stated otherwise, the men are held by the Carnival's staff and haven't consumed purple lotus; they're partaking against their will in the twisted versions of the attractions.

## 9.1 Hall

Here's where the customers leave their coats and shoes and put on a pair of comfy plush slippers. Hanging from the coat rack are the men's oilskins, and their worn boots are nearby.

## 9.2 Tavern

*Symbol: A bottle and a jug*

It's an ample room with a big bar and several tables. Behind the bar, the shelves show an overwhelming assortment of alcoholic beverages and glasses. Right in the middle of the room there's a thick and robust pole.

**Starting state:** Two Upcutters are tied to the bar stools; one is conscious, the other has passed out. Their clothes are soiled with vomit and liquors. Another two are trying to play a lute and a small drum in the middle of the place, threatened by a man clad in colorful garments and wielding a sword; they're not doing great.

The Carnival's waiter is lavishing the Upcutters with all kinds of cocktails and beverages, so they'll die in short order due to a severe alcoholic intoxication. He's an expert juggling bottles and is eager to prove it by throwing them at newcomers. He's also mixed some liquors up to create a rudimentary, but nonetheless lethal, version of the molotov cocktail. The waiter has concocted some of them and will toss them at the intruders as a last resort.

The bard has decided that he's fed up of singing and playing music for others and has given the men his instruments; he's forcing them to try their best at sword point.

**Waiter:** *Init +2; Atk bottle +1 missile fire (1d4) or molotov cocktail +1 missile fire (1d4 and 1d6 fire during 1d6 rounds); AC 12; HD 1d8, 4 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; AL N.*

**Bard:** *Init +1; Atk sword +1 melee (1d8); AC 11; HD 1d8, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.*

*Intoxicated (purple lotus): The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).*

### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. The waiter and bard will ignore the PCs unless they meddle.

- Intermediate (4th-5th): One of the men will be dead; he choked on his own vomit. One of the "musicians" is dead, skewered by the bard (the quality of the music was abysmal).

- One of the last (6th or subsequent): All the men will be dead. The waiter and bard will try to capture the PCs as soon as they enter the room to start it all over again.

## 9.3 The monster tamer

*Symbol: A fantastic beast, similar to a big cat with two heads and a spiky tail*

There's a semicircular wooden grandstand around a sandy circus ring; a strong animal smell permeates the room. Behind the ring, there are various cages with furry creatures and a sturdy pole identical to the one in 9.2.

**Starting state:** A monster tamer is whipping two beasts in the middle of the circus ring, a two-headed lion and a donkeycorn, against three Upcutters who are doing their best to remain alive. There's a fourth one, dead on a pool of blood. The tamer is using the whip to ensure that no one leaves the ring and to goad the beasts to attack the men.

**Tamer:** *Init +0; Atk whip +2 melee (1d5 and grapple); AC 12 (leather jerkin); HD 2d8, 6 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus), whip; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +5; AL L.*

*Intoxicated (purple lotus): The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).*

*Whip: The tamer can inflict subdual damage with the whip. After a successful hit, he can grapple his target and drag them to the circus ring. His victim will have to spend an action on a DC 12 Strength check to break free.*

The big cat is a two-headed lion. It wears a set of worn-out barding that offers little protection but keeps in its place one of the heads that died weeks ago; the spiked tail hanging from the armor is just a leather prosthesis with metallic spines. This lion is very old, as its scraggly pelt and slow reactions show.

**Two-headed lion:** *Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d8); AC 11; HD 5d8, 12 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP roar, subdued; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.*

*Roar: The lion's mighty roar causes an irrational fear; any creature in a 30' radius will have to make a DC 12 Will save or flee for 1d6 rounds.*

*Subdued: If the tamer falls unconscious or dies, the two-headed lion will run away and will only fight if cornered or attacked.*



*The dungeon, a Carnival attraction for those with peculiar tastes*

The other beast is a donkeycorn, an ass with a curved horn, similar to a bull's, sprouting from its forehead. It's also protected with barding and, although is reluctant to fight, is afraid of the tamer's whip.

**Donkeycorn:** *Init* +1; *Atk horn* +1 *melee* (1d6) or *kick* +3 (1d8); *AC* 12; *HD* 3d8, 17 *hp*; *MV* 40'; *Act* 1d20; *SP* subdued; *SV Fort* +3, *Ref* +1, *Will* +0; *AL* N.

*Subdued:* If the tamer falls unconscious or dies, the two-headed lion will run away and will only fight if cornered or attacked.

The creatures in the cages are monkey-rats from Sumeria, a far-off island. They're a crossbreeding of both species, mixing the worst features from each. If freed, they'll attack the tamer en masse, and will flee when they're done with him. They'll only attack the PCs if they're cornered or threatened.

**Monkey-rats (6):** *Init* +3; *Atk bite* +1 *melee* (1d4); *AC* 13; *HD* 1d8, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 6 *hp*; *MV* 30', *climb* 30'; *Act* 1d20; *SP* zombifier; *SV Fort* +1, *Ref* +3, *Will* +0; *AL* N.

*Zombifier:* A monkey-rat bite carries a very infectious disease with zombifying effects. Someone bitten by them must succeed on a DC 10 *Fort* save to resist it. A sick person has to make a DC 11 *Fort* save every day for 1d5 days or lose 1d6 *Stamina* for every failed check; if the patient dies, they'll become a zombie which bite carries the same disease.

#### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. The tamer will invite the newcomers to sit and watch the amazing show offered.

- Intermediate (4th-5th): Another Upcutter has died, a victim of the donkeycorn's powerful kicks.
- One of the last (6th or subsequent): The only surviving Upcutter is by the monkey-rat cages and is trying to release them, while the tamer is closing in, intent on preventing it.

#### 9.4 The drugs room

*Symbol:* A hookah

This is a radically different place compared with the rest: a big and soft carpet covers the floor, fluffy cushions invite to sit down, and vaporous curtains hide the walls. There are four smallish tables with hookahs, and a couple of cupboards show a wide selection of drugs and narcotics of every kind and way of ingestion: sniffing, swallowing, smoking, smearing... The room is choke full of smells. Between the cupboards there's a table filled with alembics and beakers, like an alchemist's.

**Starting state:** The person in charge of this room, who everyone calls the Alchemist, is distilling new drugs with the help of one of the Upcutters, who he has connected to the alembic with cannulas inserted in his body. Next to each table there's a steaming Upcutter connected to a hookah through a flexible cane inside his nose. If they're disconnected (the PCs or the Alchemist himself as a defensive measure), they'll blindly attack, being severed from their addiction source.

**Alchemist:** *Init* +0; *Atk cannula* +2 *melee* (1 plus poison); *AC* 10; *HD* 2d8, 6 *hp*; *MV* 30'; *Act* 1d20; *SP* intoxicated (purple lotus); *SV Fort* +3, *Ref* +0, *Will* +5; *AL* C.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus): The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).*

*Poison: Every time he hits with the cannula, he'll inject a different poison. See the Appendix P in the DCC RPG and choose a random poison. If the Alchemist fumbles, he'll inject himself the poison.*

**Uppers (4):** Init -1; Atk fist, headbutt or kick -1 melee (1d4+2); AC 8; HD 1d8, 8 hp; MV 30'; Act 2d14; SP withdrawal symptoms; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +5; AL N.

*Withdrawal symptom: The Uppers suffer a series of penalties already accounted for in their stats; they'll never flee and will attack everyone, disregarding any attempt of communication.*

#### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. The Alchemist is terribly busy with his experiments and will ignore the PCs, unless they attack him or try to free a man.
- Intermediate (4th-5th): One of the men has died from an overdose.
- One of the last (6th or subsequent): Another one has died, the other two are in a coma.

#### 9.5 Gladiator fight

*Symbol: Two crossed swords over a shield*

This long room offers two shows. In the south end, there's a grandstand overlooking a sandy circus ring for the jousts, the local nobility's sport. In the north side, a circular arena surrounded by a semicircular grandstand is used for the gladiator fights. There are many corpses littering both shows.

**Starting state:** In both cases, the spectators are now the fighters, and the other way around. The horsemen have tied two Uppers to their horses, as well as a couple of lances to their arms; they're now prodding the mounts to clash with each other. For their part, the gladiators have armed two men and are encouraging them to fight, threatening them with javelins. Another four Uppers await their turn bound to combat dummies.

**Gladiators (2):** Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6) or javelin +1 missile fire (1d6); AC 13 (leather armor); HD 1d8, 6, 7 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; AL N.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus): The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).*

**Horsemen (2):** Init +0; Atk longsword +1 melee (1d8); AC 15 (chainmail); HD 1d8; 5, 7 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +5; AL N.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus): The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).*

#### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. The gladiators and the horsemen will ignore the newcomers as long as they don't meddle.
- Intermediate (4th-5th): Two of the men have died and have been replaced for two of the ones bound to the dummies.
- One of the last (6th or subsequent): The last four men alive have decided to try their luck fighting their torturers but are losing the battle. There are two ongoing bloody combats, one in each area.

#### 9.6 The games room

*Symbol: Cards and dominoes tiles*

This carpeted room has four game tables: roulette, dice, dominoes, and cards. There are wooden tokens scattered all over the tables and floor.

**Starting state:** There are four croupiers sitting in each table, who in addition to their usual equipment have some odd tools like hammers, saws, and nails. The gamblers are nailed to their chairs and are betting parts of their own bodies; the tokens weren't enough thrill any longer. As the saying goes, the house always wins: the croupiers are using the amputated limbs to adorn themselves.

The croupiers have tied one of the men to the roulette: whenever the ball falls in a pocket, they cut off the closest body part to it. The victim is unconscious and bleeding profusely, and there's only a gambler placing bets on this grisly game. There are two Uppers sitting at the dice table, one of them badly hurt. At the dominoes table there are three, and the cards table is occupied by a dead man and a gravely hurt one.

**Croupiers (4):** Init +1; Atk hammer +1 melee (1d5); AC 15 (meat armor); HD 1d8; 2, 4, 4, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus), meat armor; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; AL N.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

*Meat armor:* This ghoulish protection is made of the limbs and meat chunks lost by the Upcutters; every hit received lessens its AC by 1, to a minimum of 11.

#### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. Unless interrupted, the gambling tables will go on with their morbid entertainments.
- Intermediate (4th-5th): There is only one man alive per table, except the cards table, that is empty.
- One of the last (6th or subsequent): The croupiers are playing together at the cards table but will happily "recruit" new gamblers as soon as the PCs enter the room.

### 97 The dungeon

*Symbol:* An iron maiden

This room's décor and lighting make it look like a dungeon. There are lots of torture implements here: a rack, an iron maiden, a hanging cage, a couple of pillories, and a huge brazier with blazing coals and pokers next to an operating table.

The former baron's dominatrix and mistress of torture is now in charge of this attraction that, surprisingly, gathers more patrons than expected. She's an old acquaintance of the Upcutters and took advantage of it when she gave them some purple lotus, so she could enroll two very efficient assistants.

**Starting state:** The dominatrix and her two helpers, clad in black tight leather, are torturing a poor Upcutter chained to the operating table. Another three are in the iron maiden, the cage, and in the pillory.

**Dominatrix:** Init: +0; Atk riding whip +1 melee (1); AC 12 (leather); HD 1d8, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP torturer, intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +5; AL L.

*Torturer:* The dominatrix knows where it hurts the most when attacking with her riding whip; the target will have to make a DC 12 Fort save or suffer a -1d penalty during 1d5 rounds.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

**Assistants (2):** Init +0; Atk pokers +0 melee (1d5+1 fire); AC 11 (leather); HD 1d8; 3, 4 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4; AL C.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

#### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. The two assistants will immediately recognize the PCs and will try to capture one of them to drag her to the rack. The dominatrix will keep on torturing the Upcutter on the table.
- Intermediate (4th-5th): Same as above, but the man in the iron maiden has bled to death.
- One of the last (6th or subsequent): Same as the previous ones, but there are only two men alive: the one in the cage and the one who was in the pillory, now on the table.

### 98 Brothel

*Symbol:* A girl's silhouette, extremely curvy

A strong perfume fills this comfy room. There's a common area in the middle with brocade cushions. On the north wall, four screens cover up the same number of private spaces, each one with a bed. There are five Upcutters here, who know Vístulo personally and have consumed the purple lotus drug. The prostitutes, however, haven't ingested it.

**Starting state:** The Upcutters are forcing the four prostitutes to enact a bizarre scene; they're pretending to be dolls in a tea party. They've made the women up and dressed them almost in a cubistic way, completely over the top.

**Upcutters (5):** Init +0; Atk fist +1 melee (1d3 subdual); AC 10; HD 1d8; 3, 3, 4, 5, 6 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP intoxicated (purple lotus); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; AL N.

*Intoxicated (purple lotus):* The purple lotus' overdose causes boldness (no morale checks), stubbornness (+5 bonus to Will saves), and acute paranoia (perceives everything as a threat, and follows conspiracy theories).

**Prostitutes (4):** *Init +0; Atk fist +1 melee (1d3+1 subdual); AC 11; HD 1d8; 4, 4, 5, 6 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL N.*

#### State depending on the visit order:

- One of the first (1st to 3rd): Same as Starting. The men are “moving” the women as if they were puppets and talking in a high-pitch voice.
- Intermediate (4th-5th): After the initial shock, the prostitutes have taken control over the situation. Two men are unconscious on the floor, and the rest are fending off the women’s punches.
- One of the last (6th or subsequent): The five men are on the floor, out cold and tied up with silk sheets. The women are resting on the cushions and will be friendly but cautious with the PCs. They won’t free the men unless given a very good reason.

### 9.9 Warehouse

*Symbol: An open hand barring passage*

This dark warehouse holds dozens of wooden crates piled up haphazardly, some of them in a precarious balance of up to five-stories high. Most of them are empty, but some contain drinks and the tools used to assemble the marquee. If a PC enters here without a light source, an avalanche of boxes will fall on them and the three closest PCs (1 point of damage, DC 12 Reflex save to avoid; if they survive the impact, another DC 10 Fort save to avoid falling unconscious for 1d30 minutes due to the head concussion).

### 9.10 Corridor to the freak show

*Symbol: A human silhouette with two heads*

### 10 freak show

It’s evident that this tent is the latest addition to the Carnival, since it’s got a different color (aquamarine) and it’s linked to the marquee with a tunnel. It can be accessed via an opening on the tent or through the tunnel, but both entrances are blocked with tied ropes. Inside, there are four different zones with painted canvasses as back-grounds for the freaks: the sea bottom, a cave, a jungle, and an oriental-looking city.

The tent belongs to a troupe of pariahs, freaks, and mutants who were part of another Carnival. Vístulo beat the previous owner in a dice game and won the show. They’re newcomers to the Carnival.

The freaked-out freaks, who didn’t consume the purple lotus drug, are entrenched here.

They’ve seen what the Carnival workers are doing, so it’ll be difficult for the PCs to convince them that they mean no harm. If the women talk to them and they sound convincing and true, they could let them in. If the group’s numbers are low, some or all the freaks could join them.

**Icticina, the “mermaid”:** *Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 1d6, 4 hp; MV 30', swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP freak (mermaid); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.*

*Freak (mermaid): Fish features from the waist up (scales, fins instead of arms, big round eyes, wide mouth, gills...).*

**Káspito, the dwarven dwarf:** *Init +3; Atk hatchet (two-handed) +1d3-2 melee (1d6-2+1d3); AC 13; HD 1d5, 3 hp; MV 15'; Act 1d20; SP freak (dwarven), dwarf traits; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.*

*Freak (dwarven): Káspito is a dwarven dwarf, so he’s as tall as a 3-year old human child, and his profile is accordingly adjusted (movement, damage, hit dice, etc.).*

**Ontuno and Onutno, the mirror twins (2):** *Init +0; Atk club +1 melee (1d4+1); AC 10; HD 1d8; 4, 4 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; ESP freak (mirror twins); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.*

*Freak (mirror twins): The twins move, act, and talk at the same time. If one of them suffers damage or adverse conditions (hp loss, poison, stat loss...), it’s shared between them. When the hp of one of them drop to 0, the check for “recovering the body” will automatically succeed, but their Luck score will be halved.*

**Odilia, the “bearded” woman:** *Init -1; Atk club +2 melee (1d4+2); AC 9; HD 1d8, 5 hp; MV 30'; Act 1d20; ESP freak (bearded); SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +1; AL N.*

*Freak (bearded): Odilia’s head is upside down, so his hair hangs, giving her the “bearded” outlook.*

### Life goes on

When the purple lotus effects wear off, the surviving workers will pack up the Carnival and will take to their heels. The only ones who could look for revenge would be Vístulo and Filogonio if the PCs stole something from them. In any case, the Carnival won’t return ever to the barony to avoid any repercussions.





*The Superb Sow and her high priestess, Ludovina*

## failure is an option

There are many ways to consider this adventure a failure, some of them a bit unconventional; there will actually be cases in which a failure could be considered a success, and the other way round.

On one hand, the PCs could succeed in their search of Upper Coldcutters' men, but on the other they could decide to leave them to their own devices, or they could even lose too many of them during their rescue attempt. The adventure foresees, and in a way fosters this outcome, which corollary will be for the women to take control of the village and their lives. What they'll do after that is a mystery... but it wouldn't be too far-fetched for them to start a life of adventures.

If the Upcutter women never reach the Carnival (because they don't find it, because many or all of them die, or because you as a Judge decide that they took too long), the men will die at the hands of the Carnival's workers.

Whichever the reason, if the majority of the Upcutter men die, the Lower Coldcutters villagers will swiftly fill the gaps left by them, and asserting inheritance rights they'll claim the meadows, houses, and pigs.

And, on top of all of these, are the consequences that every hexagon might bring and that could change the barony, depending on the PCs' actions. The survivors have a long way to go...

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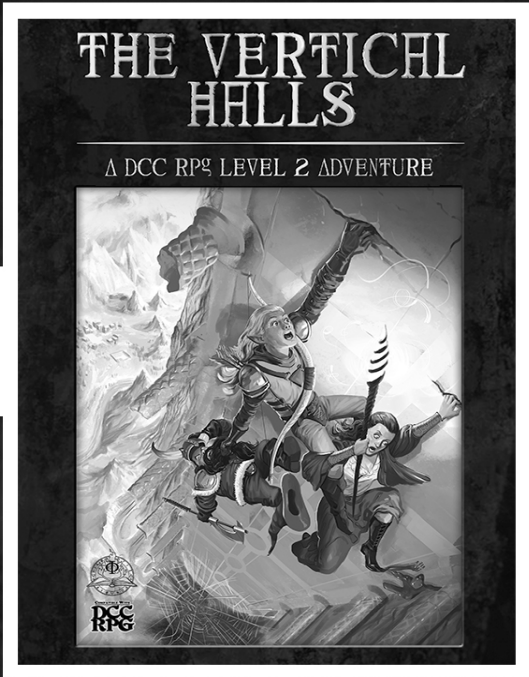
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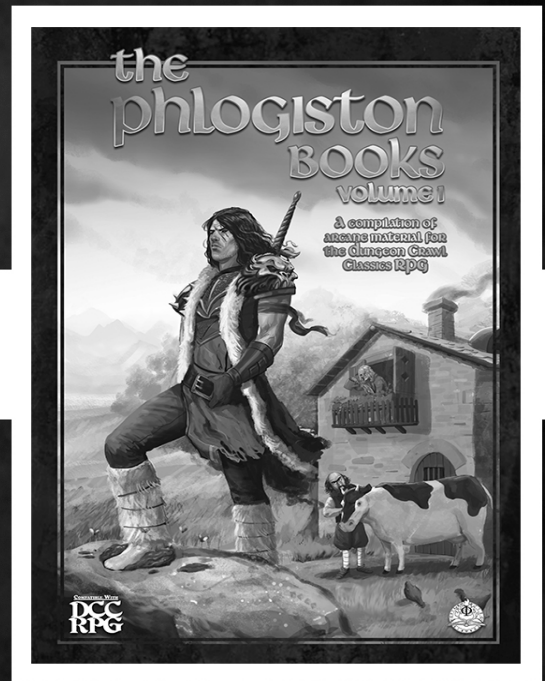
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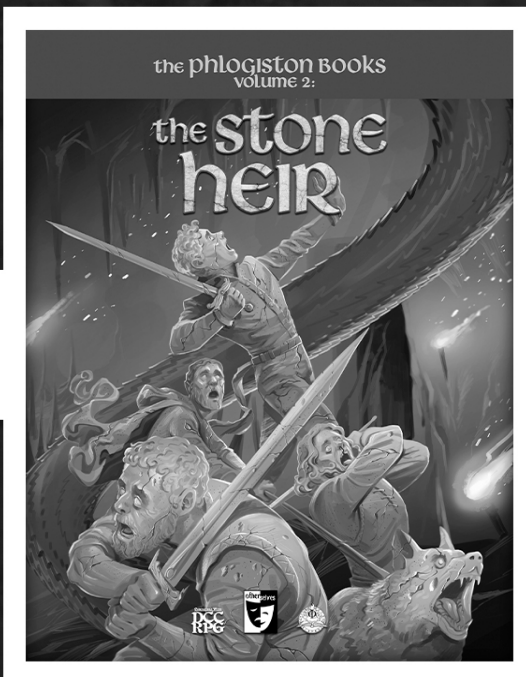
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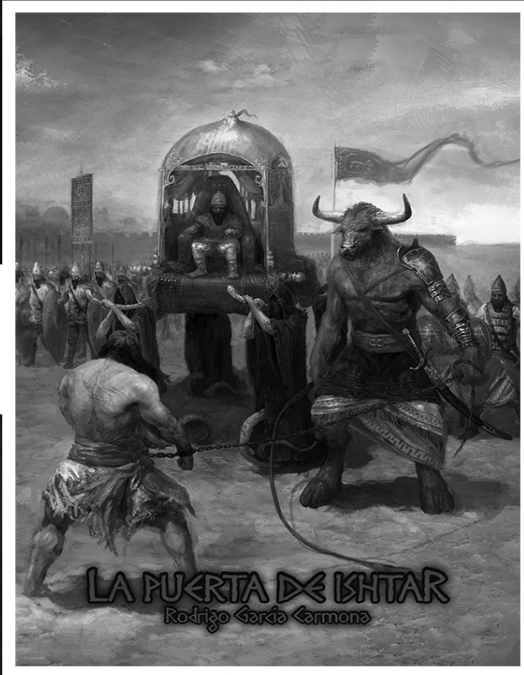


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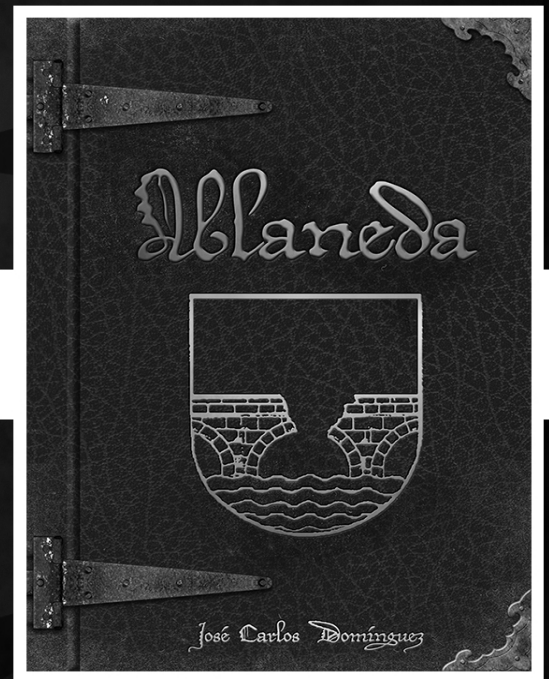
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