

THE  
**MIRKASA**  
CHRONICLES



For  
**Tim & Tilly**  
*First templar and First daughter of the gods*



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# INTRODUCTION

Think of a modern day city in Eastern Europe, like Budapest or Prague. Imagine what it looks like: iron-wrought and stone bridges crossing cold, sluggish waters; the gothic and the clockwork vying for your attention; individuals of all shapes and sizes, colours and creeds, coming to trade and work. All this, every day, for hundreds of years. Now, dial the clock back to before the First World War. No cars, no TV. Electricity exists, but is still new and a bit weird—maybe not everyone trusts it yet. Place this city at the centre of our fictional land. The city is called **Nosjad**.

Fix the city in your mind. Zoom out. The air is cold up here, frozen; the land is nearer the top of the world than the centre. Place the city on the centre of a line, running north to south. Right of the line is blue; churning ocean, savage and unpredictable. Left of the line is speckled green; marshes, hills, forest and looming mountains. From our zoomed-out view, the forest is a nest of black spines, like a porcupine's back. Dots of grey and white lie half-covered by the spines. Valleys, mines and mountains; even the bones of long-dead giants, all big enough to see from the air. No settlements, though. You know they're there - you see evidence of their existence, like roads and smoke - but they're hidden under everything else.



The line curves left as it heads north, becomes zig-zagged with snow-capped mountains. The waters (now above it, north) get wilder and harder to read, like someone's spilt tea on the page. Somewhere in that blurry murk, you think you make out islands. The more you study that space, the more you feel something's staring back at you. You turn your gaze south again, rapidly.

Back south, down the line, past the city. As far south as we went north, the green and white softens, fades. We catch the scent of desert roses and old iron. We go as far south as we dare, reaching the edge between the green and the yellow. At that border, in the distant haze, we think we see a great rock, capped with a glass spire. Then we turn back, to familiar territory.

In summary: A coastal region, bounded by seas and mountains to the north. The deserts to the south and the glass spire are the lands of *Umberto*, described elsewhere. Even from this distance you smell the sizzle of ozone and hear the ticking of a thousand tiny clocks from the central city. The marshes and mountains extend west as far as you need them to. This is the land of our setting. We call it **Mirkasa**.





BEYOND THE NORTH ONLY DEATH MAY LIVE.

DO NOT VENTURE UNTO  
FAILSPEAKE



TO THE FAR SOUTH  
LIE THE IRON DESERTS  
OF UMBERTO  
WITH THEIR IMPROPER SORCERIES







HERE STANDS  
**NOSJAD**  
CAPITOL OF THE JUST



# AS COLD AS BONE

A land is defined by its places and people. Neither are fixed, and nothing is sacred—feel free to remix, modify, or remove entirely, any elements that are not useful for your game.

Three of the biggest aspects that influence the Mirkasa setting are: **the Undead**, who collectively are the greatest threat; **the Templars of Mirka**, first line of defence against the undead; and **the gnolgi**, a poorly-understood and relatively new sub-culture living in Mirkasa.

## THE UNDEAD

Beyond the cities, the most frequent and obvious threat is the undead. The north is steeped in death; it is cold and unforgiving at the best of times, and many seek the means to extend or enhance their lives through evil magic. The first to try this were the giants of the northern islands, now extinct. The first human to learn their evil secrets used this power to enslave the northern people. Subsequently, the nation of Mirkasa was founded by the rebels who overthrew this Necromancer.

Though long-dead, the land remains tainted by the first necromancer's influence. Every year, more would-be witches or desperate fools dabble in the powers beyond Death's Black Gates, or are drawn to the Mirkasan wilds in search of answers from the long-dead. (A handful of these necromancers are detailed later in this book.)



It is up to the likes of the Templars and heroes (like the adventurers!) to ensure Mirkasa is never enslaved by evil again.

**Consider the following:** How might local customs or superstitions interfere with your player's goals? How could you make undead creatures that are a threat, but sympathetic? How do you think Mirkasans feel about Clerics of other faiths, or Magic-Users?

## THE TEMPLARS

Were it not for Saint Mirka, Mirkasa would not exist. Her faith made her immune to the Necromancer's power, and she was the first to rebel against his rule. When she died in battle, her followers made her a martyr; the nation that followed was named in her honour. Today, the Templars are Mirkasa's major authority, travelling from settlement to settlement to dispense judgement and exorcise evil. Any authority figure the party are likely to encounter in Mirkasa is either already a Templar, or answers to one.

Note that while the templars as a whole are portrayed as heroic and "good", individual templars are only human and vary greatly in regards to methods and behaviour. (There are also rules later for players who want to play as a Templar themselves.) The question that best defines the setting—what your players will "play to find out"—is "will the Templars and their allies stop a Necromancer destroying the nation?"

**Consider the following:** How zealous is the average Templar? Do the common folk trust them, or fear them? Do Templars ever make false judgements? What happens when they do? What will you do if one player wants to be a Templar and another wants to be an evil Cleric?



## THE GNOLGI

The grolgi (pronounced “nolg-eee”) are the descendants of the northern mountain people, who fled underground when the Necromancer took over the surface. Though the grolgi people include multiple races - humans, elves, dwarves and the like - all tend towards short stature, pale skin, and a talent for invention borne from centuries of harsh resource management.

Years ago, a mysterious calamity forced them back above ground for the first time in centuries. Naturally, there was mistrust on both sides at first. Eventually, the grolgi's natural skill earned the peoples respect and they were declared official citizens, granting them rights to settle and propagate “as long as their interests served the faith.” To date, the grolgi bureaucrats, engineers and inventors have honoured this agreement.

**Consider the following:** How might a grolgi react when asked about their homeland? How might the cataclysm that destroyed their home impact your games? How might you play with your player's expectations of the typical fantasy “deep folk”?



## DEVOTION & BATTLE

Conflict and custom are the way of life in Mirkasa. After any skirmish with the undead, it's considered good manners to leave some spoils of the battle at one of the numerous roadside shrines that dot the countryside. These are seen as offerings to Saint Mirka, queen of the free people and justiciar of the righteous. Passing warriors sometimes leave a simple token (such as a dagger or some rations) as an offering instead.

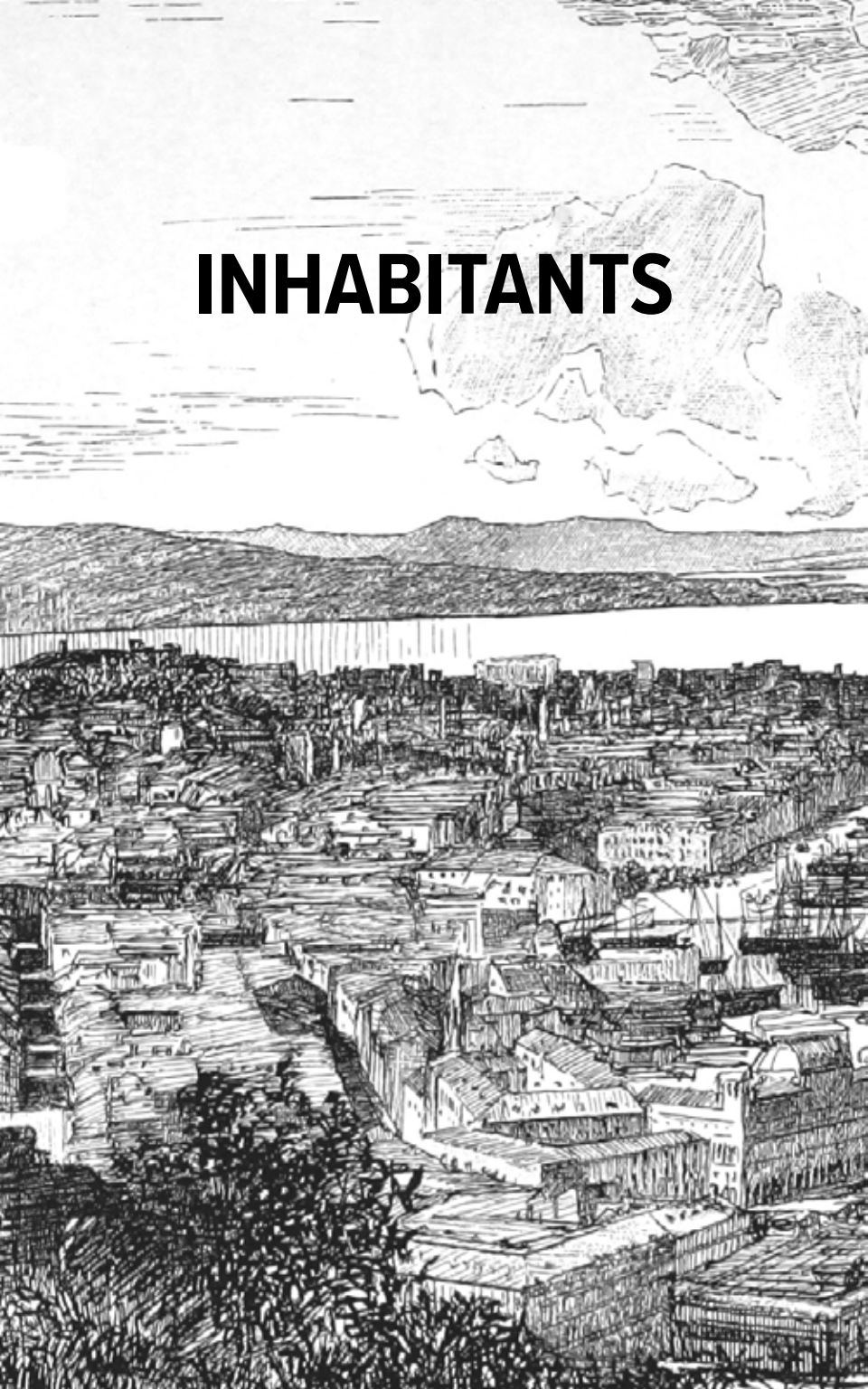
Any weapon left at one of these shrines becomes blessed with Saint Mirka's sight - it's thought a templar can tell if a shrine-weapon has been used for ill purpose just by looking at it. Should the common folk need them, they can take up these sanctified supplies to defend themselves.

Mirkasan monasteries are roadside shrines taken to their natural conclusion: havens of peace and spirituality, littered with the spoils from years of conflict. Sometimes these relics are arranged in neat rows, like some kind of odd graveyard; other times, they are left where they lie - a testament to the peace they have brought.

Mirkasan monks are former templars who have lost their taste for battle. Until the flames of war rekindle in their hearts, they swear to leave all their order's trappings at the entrance, and harm no soul, good or evil, until they are deemed ready to return. Some never leave. Others spend years in solitude, only to find their original equipment lost or beyond use. Sometimes, these redeemed warriors return to a roadside shrine of old and take a token once left as a symbol of their return to Mirka's way.



# INHABITANTS





# MIRKASAN PEOPLE

Who or what is a Mirkasan? They are a native of Mirkasa. They are generally human. But how does a Mirkasan differ from a Chalcedoni, or an Umbertoan, or a native from some other land?

A Mirkasan fears death. There is an old saying: “Death is the rod that broke the back of Grandfather.” Death is not kind, or peaceful, or gentle. It is oblivion at best, soulless unlife at worst. Death represents an unwanted end to a lifetime of honest effort. It is ironic this fear drives so many to study necromancy in secret, knowing what devastation necromancy did before. Even the gholgi - distant cousins of the Mirkasans - fled underground rather than face their fear of death.

The Templars of Mirka see themselves as bastions of life. Their lot is to burn bright while they live, drive back the dark, and inspire others with their sacrifice.

The common Mirkasan is well-built and active; the better to seize life with both hands while they can. The templar creed preaches a life worth living is it's own reward. Many take this literally, denying their fears through work, prayer or carousing. Most are defensive and suspicious of outsiders, but in the cities this outlook is shifting.





Mirkasan features tend towards the rugged and pale. Hair is often silver, grey or white. Symbols of faith will be prominent and obvious. Most of Mirkasa is cold and dangerous, and the fashion reflects that: heavy furs, oiled leathers, swords and axes belted to the waist.

A Mirkasan's self-identity is what is most important to them. Death means oblivion, and loss of one's identity. Un-life - unwarranted servitude - is worse. Mirkasans abhor slavery, and the work of one's own hands carries the greatest value.

### COMPENDIUM CLASS: MIRKASAN

**When you create a new character**, with the GM's approval, you may declare your new character is from Mirkasa. If you do, gain both the following moves:

- ✦ **Faith, Fury, Sacrifice:** You carry a symbol of your nation's faith, a blessed blade (touch). While you suffer a debility or only have 50% or less of starting HP, your blessed blade deals +1D4 damage. If you renounce your faith, you lose this move but mark XP. If you give your blade away to someone defenceless and weaker than you, you lose this move but mark 1D6 XP.
- ✦ **Grandfather's Fear:** Death comes for us all - it is what happens in life that truly counts. You take -1 ongoing to Last Breath rolls.

If you have both of the above moves when you level up, you may choose to take the following move instead of one of your usual options:

- ✦ **My Faith is Rewarded:** The bonus damage from your blessed blade is increased to +2D4. If you renounce your faith or give your blade away, you lose both this move and *Faith, Fury, Sacrifice*.



# A LEGACY OF DEATH

*Seven Necromancers currently at large in Mirkasa*

**Aurek the Inheritor** was once the weakest of the Coven of Abraxus, a devil-cult operating from a hidden lair north of Mirkasa. The conclave was destroyed, but Aurek survived. In doing so, he absorbed the sum total of his former coven's knowledge and experience, driving him insane. During rare moments of lucidity, Aurek leads terrifying sorties against the living, seeking vengeance against the Templars who destroyed his brothers and sisters.

**Balsora the Baseless** was a promising young student in the service of the Umberto Royal Court. Seeking more power, she trapped her mentor's soul in a demonic puzzlebox. Unfortunately for her, the ritual was interrupted before she could absorb his soul for herself. Exiled to Mirkasa and with the formless taunts of her mentor constantly whispering in her mind, Balsora seeks a means to complete her ritual—or at the very least, shut the old man up for a minute.

The **Dhenze Lobeng** was one of hundred of gods who fought to defend the Green Scar. Although mostly destroyed, a fragment of the god remained and fled total destruction. Though the cold climate is a far cry from it's jungle homeland, Mirkasa is full of two things the Dhenze Lobeng can use to regain it's former glory: necromantic magic, and uneducated dolts prone to worshipping others.



**Inquisitor Nagol** comes from a parallel dimension where his Necromantic Inquisitors rule Mirkasa with an iron fist. Having managed to escape from the Planarch Vault, he now seeks the ultimate gamble - merging this reality with his own. Nagol intends to siphon the excess energies from this monumental process for himself, becoming a god of whatever is left. With an extensive knowledge of relics from both dimensions and significant amount of magic skill, he may just do it. However, his first goal is to eradicate the gnolgi; an unknown quantity, as they do not exist in his dimension.

**Pelechus Nolt** is a gnolgi revolutionary. He sees his people as the true rulers of Mirkasa. In bustling cities and distant enclaves, rebel cells dedicated to Nolt seek to overturn the Templar's authority. He encourages necromancy - the most powerful weapon his rivals will never use. Indeed, Nolt and his kind have been declared dead over a dozen times only to reappear weeks or months later.

The heretic templar known as **Scripture Jane** has eluded her former comrades for years. A deathless revenant—the corpse of her lover—is never far from her side. Jane seeks a means to return them to true life, but has so far been unsuccessful. What Jane does not realise is the wards placed on her partner's body are imperfect. If the corrupted, stagnant soul breaks free it could be a greater threat than any necromancer.

**Vandonita Roag** has spent centuries of unlife as a formless spirit, contained by her Chalcedoni aether-suit. Roag seeks the means to transfer a soul from one body to another. She believes she has found the answer in the forgotten caverns beneath Failspeake gorge, in the shadow of the Giant's skeleton. If successful, Vandonita intends to use this power to restore herself and several of her ghostly peers back in Chalcedon - for a fair price, of course. These tycoons were the ones who irradiated their homeland and all but destroyed the Green Scar. Who knows what acts they might attempt next if freed from the cycle of life and death?



# THE ABERRACJA

A Mirkasan templar who died with their devotion intact but buried without due ceremony will rise three days later as an *Aberracja*, an aberration. They are a paradox. Though the soul is dead, the mind and body are still bound to service. However, said service is in the destruction of the undead - which the newly risen corpse well and truly is. They are creatures fuelled by their own self-loathing, a danger to their former wards and an embarrassment to their comrades. Thus, they are extremely dangerous.

*Solitary, Terrifying, Organised*

Desecrated sword (1D8+2 damage close unholy) and/or vicious claws (b[2D6] damage touch messy)

*Instinct:* to consume the faithful

- ✦ Leave behind messy evidence of an attack
- ✦ Act like a wild beast
- ✦ Make a lair in dark places
- ✦ Drain the blood of Mirkasans
- ✦ Move faster than you can blink
- ✦ Reveal a fragment of their past life
- ✦ Prey on those who once trusted them
- ✦ Destroy the unfaithful indiscriminately



Aberracjas are a lot less common than you might think. For one, despite their reputation, many templars die in doubt. (Even the most zealous man falters when it's their turn before the Black Gates.) Secondly, an Aberracja must feed regularly on the blood of the faithful or starve.

The longer an Aberracja is active, the more self-aware it becomes. Freshly risen, the creatures are little more than wild beasts. Although no trace of the soul remains, the body may retain some crude muscle memory of the activities it did in life. Inevitably, the longer it is active, the more it will come to realise how much it is hated and feared by the rest of the world. This realisation first turns to anger, then a discipline borne of cunning and madness.

The destruction of Aberracja is one of the most difficult tasks for a templar. Though monsters now, they were once your brothers and sisters. Death does nothing to stop the former templar's formidable resolve and constitution, while also removing any need to rest. It is possible to complete the rites on an active Aberracja, destroying the threat while preserving the soul. However, the ritual takes time and is not without risk to the templar themselves.

**If using an Aberracja in your games**, consider the following custom move for any characters who are natives of Mirkasa:

**Funeral Rites: When you have time (at least an hour) and ritually send a templar of Mirkasa to the next life**, roll+int.

Describe the process and implements you use, if the GM asks you to. Take +1 forward if you are of a holy disposition (e.g. a paladin, cleric, or templar). On a 10+ the ceremony is completed without fault and the body turns into a pile of sanctified salt. On a 7-9, before that happens, the GM chooses one:

- ✦ You are attacked (physically, mentally or spiritually) by the body before the ritual is complete.
- ✦ It costs you something: more time, additional resources, or the well-being of the faithful around you.



# A GNOLGI

They started in the light. Some forlorn offshoot tribe, forgotten by time, forced underground by poor circumstance. When their cousins were enslaved, they fled underground; the Necromancer could not enslave what he could not find. They burrowed deep, down into the infinite warrens of Gnogorroth, the greatest mountain. Their skin grew pale, their eyes wide, to take in what light they could amidst the gloom. Other things hunted them, ancient things, that did not need light and colour to see. The pale folk huddled in their flickering lights, and they were afraid.

It is not known who forged the first cog. Suffice to say there was little time or inclination to commend that soul to record. With predators on every side, time was the one resource they lacked. What the deep kindred had in abundance was mineral resources and an ingenuity born of war. The most ingenious among them forged the first machines, soldiers of beaten brass to throw against the dark. They were crude - but successful. They held back the umbral horrors, for a time. Time enough to improve and perfect the mechanical, and reinforce borders.



Time passed. Umbral horror became shadowed nuisance. A scattered tribe became a nascent under-empire. There was comfort, here. All the wealth of the world's deep veins was theirs. Strength and savagery were secondary; ingenuity and bureaucracy defined who would prosper. The surface was a distant memory, a fairytale land described to wide-eyed children.

Yet. All this is crumbling record to the pale folk of today, the children of those who returned to the surface. They will not speak of what occurred below - in truth, they already forget. The eldest recall how the empire failed, the darkness returned to claim it's own. A fraction of the pale folk chased a dream of a land of light, above the dark; of these millions, only thousands survived, to stumble blindly back into the sunlight.

They found salvation among their distant cousins, trading knowledge for protection. The people of Mirkasa were always slow to trust; but the two were distant family, and both cultures were joined by their hatred of the dark.



Gnolgi are small and quick and light, with a tendency to focus on the here and now. Gnolgi value over-description; they will take ten words to describe something where two would suffice. Their culture comes from a life where light - and the knowledge it brings - are at a premium.

They value engineering, invention and technology. They are what turned inhospitable mountains into a place they could prosper, for a time. (Most gnolgi would be really good at playing *Minecraft*.)

Their skin is paper-thin and prone to injury, but very sensitive. A gnolgi with their skin exposed doesn't always need their eyes to see. Their hair is thin, but wiry; closer to fur.



Around fifty years ago, the gnolgi returned to the surface. The ‘true’ reason for this does not exist (though you are welcome to imply to your players that it does, make one up yourself, or leave it open to be revealed through play.) Theories abound, of course: plague, famine, assault (from the undead, or something awoken in the deep) or civil war. One of the most common, particularly amongst the gnolgi’s enemies, is their technical might and industry somehow turned against them.

### COMPENDIUM CLASS: GNOLGI

**When you create a new character**, with the GM’s approval, you may declare your new character is a gnolgi. If you do, gain the following move:

- ✦ **Just the right tool:** You have a knack for invention, and have the means to make something out of nothing. **When you’re in a tight spot and rummage through your pockets**, gain 1 use of adventuring gear but consume 1 use of another, similar, piece of equipment. (This could be rations, a small weapon, a page or 3 from your bag of books, or something else.)

## GNOLGI AS ENCOUNTERS

### GNOLGI ROGUE INVENTOR

Solitary: 12HP, 2 armour, 2D4 damage (close, near)

“This is it! This is the one!” BOOOOM!

**Instinct:** to manufacture chaos

- ✦ Hide or ignore a prior (dangerous) failed experiment
- ✦ Defend themselves with technology
- ✦ Create something useful but unreliable





**GNOLGI ELEKTRIK CREATION**

Horde, Construct, Tiny: 2HP, 3 armour, w(2D6) damage (close, near)

*\*Squeaky voice\**: YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS TO COMPLY.

**Instinct**: to follow their creators orders

- ✦ Patrol, Scan, Attack or Block a route
- ✦ Stun or electrocute them
- ✦ Not require food, water, or rest
- ✦ Fall victim to rewiring
- ✦ Explode dramatically when destroyed

**GNOLGI TEMPLAR**

Solitary: 12HP 2 armour b(2D8) damage (2-piercing close)

**Instinct**: to act decisively

- ✦ Rally a mob of villagers
- ✦ Never deviate from a decision once set
- ✦ Cleave through deception and falsehood

**GNOLGI BEAUREAUCRAT**

Solitary: 12HP, 1 armour, 1D6 damage (close)

The pen is mightier than the sword. **Instinct**: to hoard wealth

- ✦ Cite an obscure by-law or agreement
- ✦ Send them on a wild goose chase
- ✦ Profit from their actions

**GNOLGI MILITIA**

Group: 8HP, 2 armour, 1D6 damage (close, near)

*"Wait, I thought I was sergeant?"*

**Instinct**: to defend Gnolgi interests - for a price

- ✦ Take a bribe
- ✦ Use technology to distract, protect or obscure
- ✦ Constantly reform the chain of command



## INTERESTING GNOLGI NPCS

### OSYMAS, GNOLGI TEMPLAR

Osymas is from Nosjad (the Mirkasan capital.) He's four foot tall and carries a templar sword, which due to his small size he has to wield two-handed, like Cloud from *Final Fantasy VII*. He favours rugged leathers and mail; simple and reliable.

Osymas is one of only a handful of g nolgi templars. Osymas has spent the best part of his life proving to his peers - and himself - that not all g nolgi are weak-limbed, fasting talking technocrats. Ironically for a g nolgi, he doesn't approve of the rise of 'elektrickery' and other g nolgi ideas in his adopted homeland. Sometimes, he fears he's the only one who remembers the folly of his forebears.

Despite his obvious skill and depth of experience, Osymas is haunted by the need to prove himself. (Aren't we all.) His rivals use incidents like the sky-siege of Klaanashi and the purge of Misck as evidence why g nolgi make poor templars.

Osymas was only a child when his people fled the northern mountains. He has snatches of memory: fire and smoke, the wails of the wounded, a looming darkness in the deeps. He still wakes up screaming from time to time, shirt soaked with sweat. (He takes great pains to hide these moments of humanity. It wouldn't be right, he believes, for a Templar of his stature - so to speak - to appear so fallible.)

Like most templars, Osymas works alone. He walks a lonely, long patrol, north to south, rarely stopping for long.

### RENNIE SPATTERSPURT

"Spatterspurts" is a messy little workshop on the outskirts of the Inventor's Quarter. The owner, Rennie Spatterspurt, dresses like a man twenty years his elder. But his gaze is bright and he holds his head high.



Rennie takes pride in his family workshop and creating tools to help his fellow Mirkasans. He only wishes he was as good at business as his father, Arkwright Spatterspurt, who recently disappeared without a trace.

Rennie only recently learned his late father was dabbling in illegal magic. Etheromancy, blood rites, even transient pyroclasm - it seems he dabbled in a lot of things he shouldn't. He found the evidence in a secret room under the basement. (He's not told anyone.)

The night he discovered this, *something* slimy got out and seeped into the sewers. (Rennie definitely hasn't told anyone that.) He's worried if these secrets got out it would mean the even the attention of the Templars. He might even have to close the business! In a place as competitive as the Inventor's Quarter, any perceived weakness between rivals can be fatal.

## GNOLGI CUSTOM MOVES

### CITATION NEEDED

When you try to impress, cow or manipulate a gnolgi with your educated knowledge, roll+int. On a 10+ you come off as a reliable source of information - they'll pass this reputation on. On a 7-9 they're convinced for now, but you'll need to prove your work or quote your sources if you want to cement the relationship. On a miss, they don't trust you and have knowledge that discredits what you say.

### CAFFEINE FIX

When you drink the Gmolgi Elixir of Invention, roll D6+D8 for any rolls involving INT (instead of 2D6.) This effect lasts until the end of the session or until you make camp (whichever comes first).



# THE BELLICORN

*Intelligent, Solitary, Large, Fast*

16HP, 1D10 damage reach (messy, arcane)

- ✦ Trample you underfoot
- ✦ Leave a bloody path in its wake
- ✦ Warp, dispel or reflect magic
- ✦ Patrol a territory
- ✦ Resist control

Unicorns have always had it rough. They've been hunted for sport, for their magic-soaked hide and bones, and out of suspicion of being devils. There's hardly any left. The ones that survived are stunted, angry things - a far cry from their noble forebears. Maybe now, at the end, it would be a blessing to finish the bloodline off.

*"Tell me what happened, Orlech." The old druid groaned as he sat by the fire. Everything about him spoke of an old, long life. His skin was grey like old lichen; his features as worn as bark. A thick leather eyepatch covered half his face. The druid's good eye was fixed on his old friend. Whatever had caused Orlech to summon Vargh, sole survivor of the Lux Tenebrae, to this dismal forest had clearly shaken him to the core.*

*Orlech was shivering in spite of his thick furs. His eyes were wide open, but his gaze refused to focus on anything for long. Vargh spotted battered chainmail beneath the furs. The man gripped his sword so tightly his knuckles were bone-white.*



“Y-you’ll not thank me for summoning you. B-but I didn’t know where else to turn, Vargh.” Orlech stopped, shifted his weight, licked his lips nervously. Vargh said nothing, his face still as stone.

“It was a B-bellicorn. We tracked it here... then it found us.” Vargh closed his one eye, sighed. A Bellicorn? What a mess.

“Why, Orlech? Why chase a monster like that? You know better..”

“Of course I know better! It was that damn foreign noble, Lord Whatshisname. I told him it was a fool’s errand, but he insisted. And he paid in gold...”

Vargh felt his temper rise, as the waves might churn to smash the ships of mortals. After all these years, after everything they’d been through, his friend was still a slave to these mortal pleasures. And now they would be his doom. He felt a temptation to leave Orlech to his fate; let the Bellicorn track Orlech down, out of vengeance or spite, as they are want to do, and leave him another bloody corpse to feed the forest loam.

But Vargh knew he couldn’t do that. Nature was balance; and without Orlech’s help he would have died long ago, and everything he had done to preserve nature would never had happened. The good he had done outweighed this one foolish choice - just.

“You are a fool, Orlech. You are a fool, even for a mortal and a human. But you are also my friend.”

Vargh heard a low, ragged sob. He opened his eye to see Orlech slumped low across the fire, his shoulders shuddering in relief.

“Fine, then. Let us go Orlech, out into this misbegotten forest, and hunt nature’s least pleasant mortal creature. We shall hunt the Bellicorn, and may Grandfather Thorn have mercy upon us for this thankless task.”



# IDIOT PILGRIMS

*Horde, Stupid*

3HP (each) 1D4 damage close (holy)

- ✦ Make a show of "divine intervention"
- ✦ Recruit others to the flock
- ✦ Get in the way
- ✦ Refuse to see sense
- ✦ See your faith as an insult
- ✦ Be loud and obvious

Note: Remember the rules for **Damage from Multiple Creatures** from the *Dungeon World* rulebook (page 22) as Idiot Pilgrimages rarely number less than a dozen:

**I** If multiple creatures attack at once roll the highest damage among them and add +1 damage for each monster beyond the first.

You might hear the chanting first, or see their flickering torchlights as they round the bend. A chorus of provincial tones, mumbled prayer in such numbers as to echo for a mile around. They come in their tens or dozens, never one or two - the idiot god lives or dies on groupthink.

As they approach, you catch the acrid tang of sweat and dung. You might hear snippets of mantras stolen from other faiths, but never whole prayers. Hands wave in seemingly random patterns.



Glimpsed at the back, tottering on the backs of the most devoted, a rickety wooden palanquin. And on top, the object of the throng's desire - a broken lantern? A lead cup? Maybe some random skull?

Foolish, ignorant pilgrims, you'd think. And you'd be right.

But ignorance is bliss.

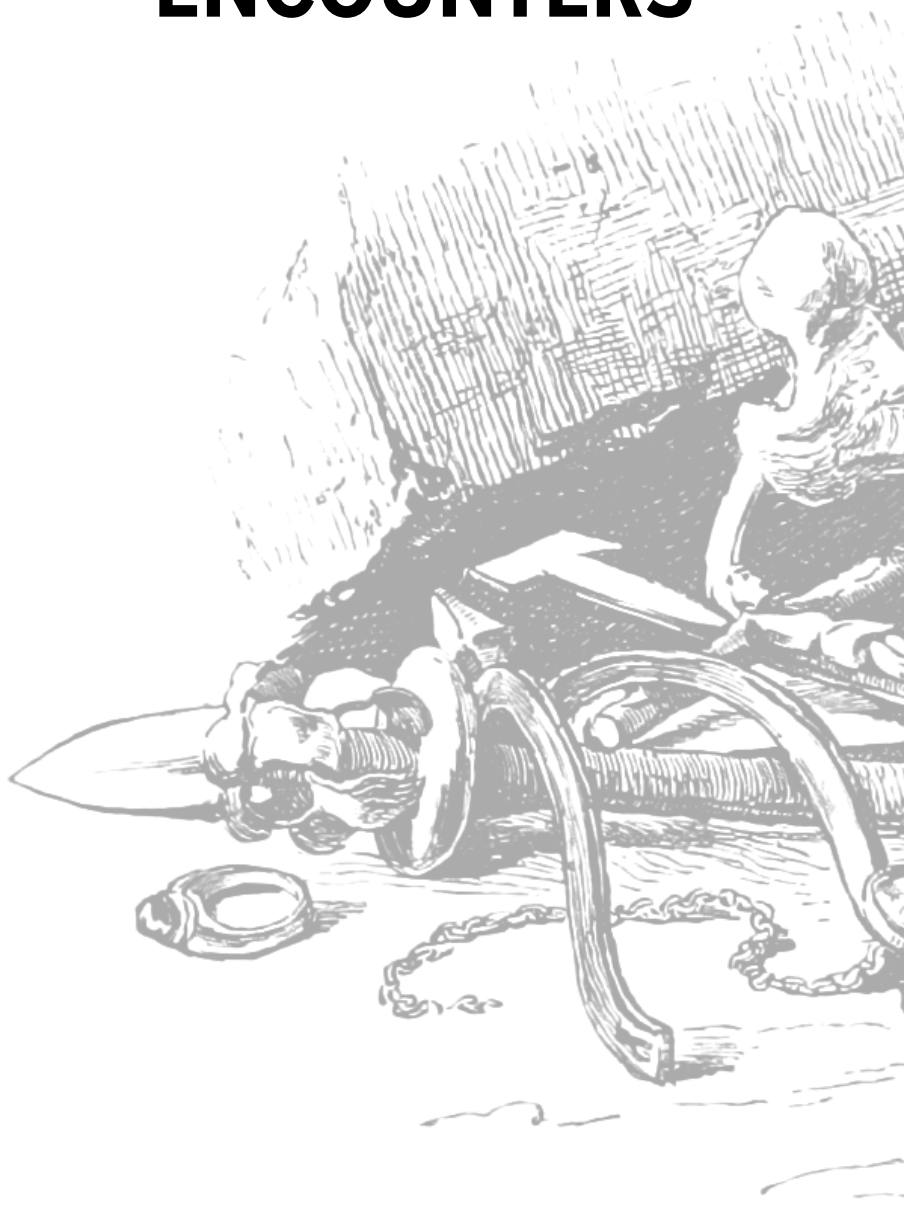
The idiot pilgrims could not or would not worship other gods, so they made their own. And because they worshipped something, they gave that thing power. The idiot pilgrims literally created a god. It's a pretty useless god - poorly-defined, crude - but a god nonetheless.

The god seeks more idiots in order to increase its power. Smart people are anathema to it; they pick it apart, contradiction by contradiction. A stupid follower might only grant a fraction of the power a smart one would, but they're more easily appeased and much more common.

Mirkasa is not a land known for its religious tolerance, and Templars are frequently called upon to break up Idiot Pilgrimages as they occur. They're usually considered a nuisance, but sometimes these seemingly random mobs are controlled by more dangerous and intelligent threats.



# ENCOUNTERS







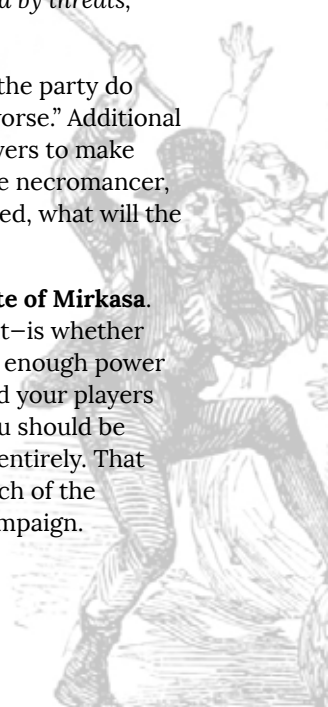
# RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

After the first session or two, your GM prep should include your fronts. Here's the description from the main rulebook:

*"Fronts are secret tomes of GM knowledge. Each is a collection of linked dangers - threats to the characters specifically and to the people, places, and things the characters care about. It also includes one or more impending dooms, the horrible things that will happen without the characters' intervention. "Fronts" comes, of course, from "fighting on two fronts" which is just where you want the characters to be—surrounded by threats, danger and adventure."*

So when you make a front, you're saying "If the party do nothing, here's how things go from bad to worse." Additional fronts increase the stakes and force the players to make difficult choices. Will they go after the rogue necromancer, or the army of felwolves? Even if they succeed, what will the monster that escaped do?

For this game, the campaign front is **The Fate of Mirkasa**. The ultimate doom—what we play to find out—is whether the players can stop a necromancer gaining enough power to destroy or conquer the land. You may find your players take the game in a different direction, so you should be prepared to edit or even scrap these fronts entirely. That said, presented here is one way of using much of the content of this book in one over-arching campaign.



# CAMPAIGN FRONT: THE FATE OF MIRKASA

**Doom:** Tyranny (A Necromancer rules the north once more.)

## CAST:

- ✦ Seven Deadly Necromancers:
  - ✦ Aurek the Inheiritor
  - ✦ Balsora the Baseless
  - ✦ The Dhenze Lobeng
  - ✦ Inquisitor Nagol
  - ✦ Pelechus Nolt
  - ✦ Scripture Jane
  - ✦ Vandonita Roag

## GRIM PORTENTS:

- ✦ Damage and destruction leads to revolt in Nosjad city
- ✦ Chaos and darkness is released from Failspeake Gorge
- ✦ The Planarch Vault is destroyed, it's prisoners free
- ✦ One or more of the necromancers join forces
- ✦ A necromancer's power increases
- ✦ The Templar order is overthrown
- ✦ The gnolgi are exterminated or exiled

## ADVENTURE FRONTS

- ✦ **Nosjad City**, capital of Mirkasa
- ✦ **Failspeake Gorge**, a place of secrets and forbidden lore
- ✦ **The Planarch Vault**, jail of the damned

## ADVENTURE FRONT: FAILSPEAKE

### CAST:

- ✦ The skeletal giant atop the mountain
- ✦ The Antler'd Wolves, a cunning and duplicitous pack
- ✦ The people of Logansfell, the nearest village
- ✦ The Animate Armours, mysterious children of bone

### DANGER: PROMISES IN BONE

*Unholy Ground (Impulse: to spawn evil)*

**Doom:** Tyranny (The Armours are enslaved or destroyed.)

### Grim Portents

- ✦ The work of the Children of Bone is subverted
- ✦ The Children of Bone are destroyed
- ✦ The power of the Giant's Skeleton is captured

## ADVENTURE FRONT: NOSJAD

### CAST:

- ✦ Rennie Spatterspurt, gnolgi inventor
- ✦ Oozes of the sewers
- ✦ The city Templars

### DANGER: A STENCH IN NOSJAD

*Shadowland (Impulse: to corrupt or consume the living)*

**Doom:** Chaos (The Spatterspurt creation and other mutant oozes terrorise the sewers below Nosjad. They and other terrors are displaced onto the streets.)

### Grim Portents

- ✦ The Ratcatchers refuse to work
- ✦ Random murders and acid-etched destruction
- ✦ Rennie Spatterspurt is killed, taking the means to neutralise any oozes with him
- ✦ The Inventors' Quarter becomes plagued with acidic ooze-things, undead, and rogue looters



# ADVENTURE FRONT: THE PLANARCH VAULT

## CAST:

- ✦ Osymas Templar, charged with containing the threat
- ✦ The Shapeshifters, a malevolent swarm
- ✦ The Inquisitor, an evil twin templar
- ✦ The Wardens: four Templar guardians of the vault; Possibly shapeshifters

## DANGER: THE VAULT CRASH

*Dark Portal (Impulse: to Disgorge evils)*

**Doom:** Chaos (The vault no longer contains the monsters it once secured, who run amuck.)

### Grim Portents

- ✦ Collision course! Abandon vault!
- ✦ A vital element of the vault is destroyed
- ✦ One or more wardens are replaced with shapeshifters
- ✦ The templar's cordon around the vault breaks
- ✦ The last wards within the vault fail
- ✦ The ruins of the vault collapse in on themselves

## DANGER: THE PRISONERS ESCAPE

*Vermin (Impulse: to multiply and consume)*

**Doom:** Chaos (Shapeshifters make everyone paranoid)

### Grim Portents

- ✦ Strange deaths and ritualistic murders in the city
- ✦ A place is corrupted/subverted by the shapeshifters
- ✦ A prominent NPC is replaced by the shapeshifters



# FAILSPEAKE

*There is a cold mountain in the north. A giant skeleton lies upon it. A sharp, sword-like spit of metal runs through the skeleton's mouth, pinning it in place. From time to time, the skeleton's eyes flare crimson and it tries to break free. It has never succeeded - yet some say with each attempt it frees itself a little more.*

*Nearby stands a simple town, Logansfell. Its people are pious and hard-working. They fear the mountain, and rarely go there. They say the forests between the town and the mountain are filled with devil-wolves and hulking monsters. (They are right.)*

*Stranger things abound within the mountain. There is a gorge below the giant's ribcage that (they say) glows green at night, and echoes with strange clamour and noise. Sometimes, at dawn, the townsfolk see suits of beautiful armour at the base of the mountain.*

## STAKES AND DANGERS

- ✦ What will happen when/if the giant frees itself?
- ✦ Why can't the animate armours leave the gorge? What will happen if they are freed?
- ✦ What could a necromancer do with the armours?
- ✦ What is the fate of Logansfell, the nearest village?



## QUESTIONS

*For the players, to add details to the world around them*

- ✦ How long until this wretched winter storm passes? (Or if you prefer: how long until the storm hits the mountain?)
- ✦ What did you barter with the Antler'd Wolves to earn safe passage?
- ✦ What were you accused of the time you met a templar? How did you get out of it?
- ✦ What do you intend to claim from the Giant of Failspeake?
- ✦ Name someone close to you who disappeared into the Gorge. When did you last see them, and what did they tell you?

## CUSTOM MOVES

**When you scale the calcified skeletal ruins**, roll+str (take +1 forward if you spend an adventuring gear.) On a 10+ name where you want to be, you get there with minimal problem in a reasonable amount of time. On a 7-9, your choice: it takes longer than you want, or you lose something important (GM's choice) to get there in good time. On a miss, both.

**When you try to earn the trust of the animate armours living in the mountain**, roll+cha. On a 10+ they're in awe of you, mysterious outsider, and happy to take your word as gospel truth. On a 7-9, they're nervous of your motives: they misinterpret what you're saying or omit useful details. On a miss, they assume you're trying to lead their people astray.

**When you've earned the trust of the animate armours and take bold or courageous action in front of them**, the armours will try to copy you to the best of their ability, even if this puts them in danger or gets in your way.



**When you touch the fossilised ruins of the giant with your bare hands and try to scour it's memories for answers,** roll+wis. On a 10+ ask the GM a question: they will give you an honest and correct answer in the form of one of the giant's memories or emotions. On a 7-9, ask away but the vision will be murky and could be interpreted multiple ways. On a miss, the giant shows you something you didn't want to see, and you suffer for it.

**When you keep a fragment of the giant's bone on your person** and in contact with your skin, the giant will whisper truths to you whether you want them to or not. Take +(D3)-2 ongoing (-1 to +1) when you Discern Realities or Spout Lore. When you discard the fragment, roll 1D6; on a 1, the giant keeps whispering to you anyway.

## IMPRESSIONS

- ✦ A titanic skeleton, pinned to the mountain by an even larger sword
- ✦ Fearful rumbling each time the skeleton tries to move
- ✦ *Logansfell*, a farming village in the lee of the mountain
- ✦ A workshop of grisly bone tools. Walls lined in bone and etched scripture
- ✦ Deep rumblings through the cavern whenever the skeleton tries to get up.
- ✦ A beautifully rendered shrine to a strange green god
- ✦ A proud parent admiring their newly built 'child'
- ✦ Dim light from many tallow candles
- ✦ On armour: Lacquered ivory plates, filigree chainmail, a tapered helmet, tiny hands, multiple legs, festooned in gems, covered in scrollwork





## REWARDS

### A SUIT OF BAROQUE ARMOUR

By default, it's left unanswered whether the suits of armour can actually be worn or not. (In my playtest, the soul remained intact so long as the head was attached to the torso, making this impractical, but not impossible.)

Perhaps some have been designed in a way to do so; perhaps they all have. Maybe it's part of the soul-transfer system. It might be worth considering this before play in case one of your players gets the idea to get a suit of armour for themselves. Also consider the consequences in play of having an NPC who is effectively a child in the party, and how suitable that may be for long-term play.

In my playtest, the templar took on Chide as their squire. (No, they didn't get XP for 'looting a memorable treasure' as a result...)

### A WEAPON OF BONE AND GREEN-STONE

Although the settlers don't do it themselves - why should they, the wolves provide their security? - it could certainly be possible to build a weapon from bone and green stone. Such a weapon would theoretically be able to drain the soul from it's target; but perhaps those souls would accumulate in the weapon over time, or a part of the wielder's soul gets trapped as well.

## ENCOUNTERS

### ANTLER'D WOLVES

*Group, Intelligent, Organised*

D8+2 damage, 1 armour, 6HP

- ✦ Trap, ambush and lead astray
- ✦ Gore them with bone antlers
- ✦ Offer a cunning deal



**ANIMATE ARMOUR**

*Horde, Intelligent, Construct*

*Instinct: to create more of themselves*

Smash (d6 damage) 4HP 2 Armour

- ✦ Rebuild themselves
- ✦ Seek safety and knowledge
- ✦ Not know their own strength

**VH'ORR THE VORACIOUS**

*Solitary, Huge, Intelligent, Organised, Terrifying*

*Instinct: To smash, and eat, and smash, and eat...*

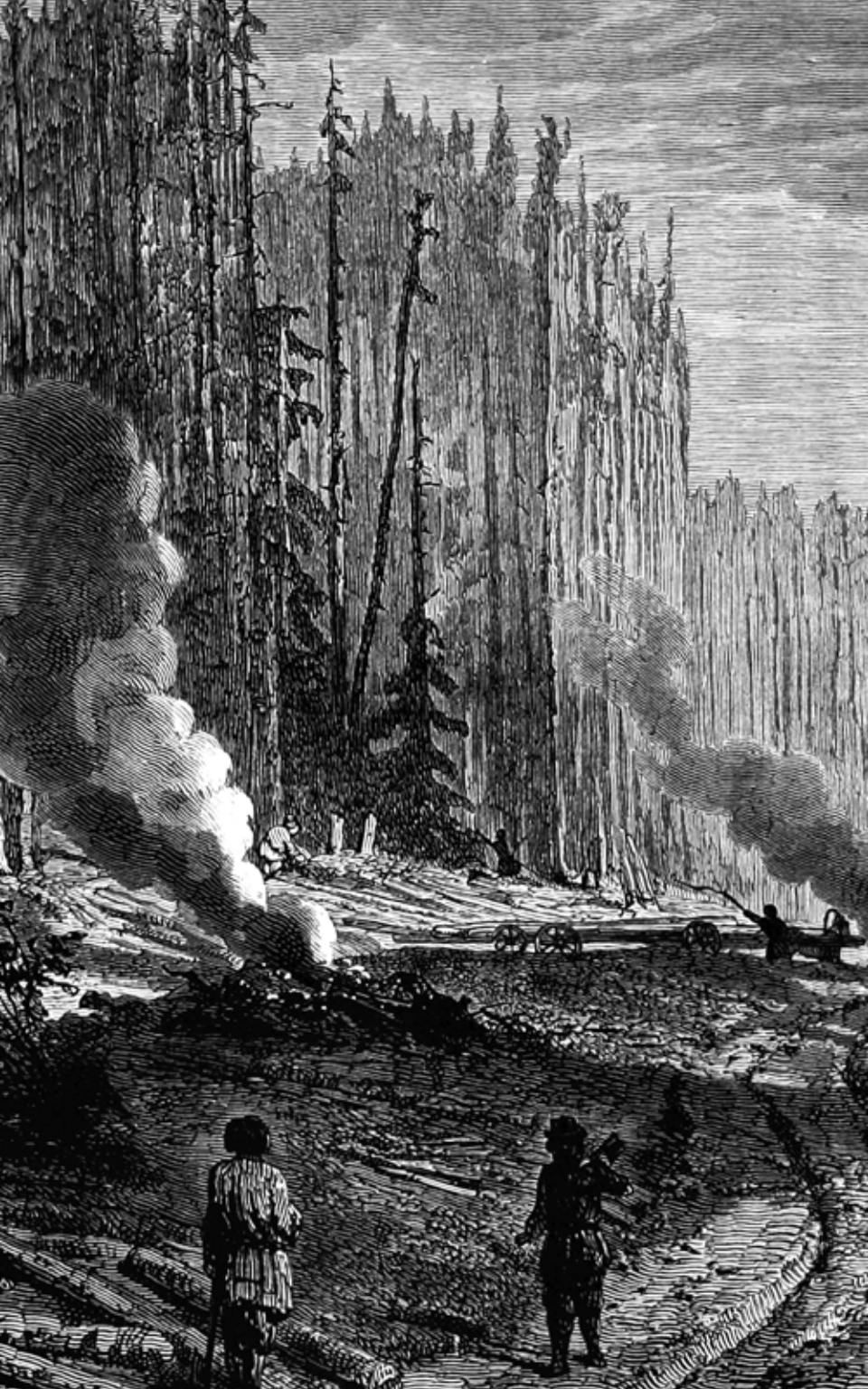
D10 damage Great Butcher's Knife (reach, messy)  
9 HP, 3 Armour

A huge, silent suit of armour, capped with a gruesome mask and stinking of old blood. Vh'orr attempted to use his brothers for spare parts, and was exiled for it. He roams the region hunting other creatures for sport.

- ✦ Ambush from a place of safety
- ✦ Reveal a hideous face beneath his mask
- ✦ Come back after being "killed"

**When Vh'orr has been "killed" and you're busy doing something else** (planning, fighting, negotiating, sleeping) roll+WIS. On a 10+, Vh'orr will attack soon (seconds or minutes) and you know precisely where from. On a 7-9, Vh'orr will attack soon but he could come from one of two directions, the echoing of the caverns makes it hard to tell. On a 6-, Vh'orr bursts through a wall right in front of you!





# A STENCH IN NOSJAD

*You don't need rumours of foul play to tell you there's a stench in Nosjad. Everyone's heard about the strikes. The Ratcatchers Guild hasn't worked in over a week. In the middle of summer!*

*The promise of work has brought you to a particularly noisome part of town: the Inventor's Quarter. One Rennie Spatterspurt is in need of your help. People are going missing near his workshop, and he wants to clear his good name. "The Spatterspurts have their reputation to consider," he insists. (The reek of week-old dinner wafting through his workshop suggests otherwise.) Still, gold is gold, and a job's a job...*

## STAKES AND DANGERS

- ✦ Will the Spatterspurt Workshop survive?
- ✦ Will the Templars discover evidence of foul play?
- ✦ What will flood out of the sewers? What will it corrupt or destroy?
- ✦ Can the templars deal with a non-supernatural threat?
- ✦ Will the gnolgi be blamed for this, and what will be the consequences?

## QUESTIONS

- ✦ Who offered you the job of investigating the Spatterspurts? What reward did they offer as an initial downpayment, with more promised on completion?



## CUSTOM MOVES

**When you try and appeal to a mutant oozes emotions** roll+cha. On a 10+, it retains enough to parley with, though it cannot speak. On a 7-9, it pauses for a moment, as though it were considering your words - but doesn't change it's behaviour.

## IMPRESSIONS

- ✦ A skyline of palatial domes and sanctified citadels
- ✦ Foul, acrid smells emanating from the sewers
- ✦ The Ratcatcher's Guild, on strike
- ✦ A old, lame Templar—still faithful—singing a hymn on a street corner for a few koppas
- ✦ A stern templar on every corner
- ✦ The Inventor's Quarter, streets echoing with the shrill gnolgi language
- ✦ *Something* oozing in a dark alley just out of your eyeline
- ✦ Two gnolgi arguing over some elektrik appliance
- ✦ A Mirkasan hunter, fresh from Oskabad with a bounty of half a dozen beastman corpses

## REWARDS

### TENDERWEIGHT'S FLOATING DISC

(1 weight, d10x[charges] coin) This foot-wide disc will float once activated and can carry up to 5 weight for a number of hours equal to it's current charge. When it's charge is depleted the disc drops to the ground (along with whatever it's carrying.) The disk can be switched off, conserving any remaining charges (rounding down.)

### ANTI-STATIC GLOVES

(1 weight, touch, 4 coin) Another mainstay of gnolgi technology, these jet-black gloves absorb elektrickery harmlessly. Someone wearing them can muck about with uninsulated copper wire as much as they like.



**SONIC SCREWDRIVER**

(1 weight, touch, 20 coin) When you try and unlock a door with the sonic screwdriver, roll+int. On a 10+, it's open no problem. On a 7-9, it'll take time or resources (GM's call) to get the door open, but you can do it. On a miss, you've discovered a flaw in the screwdriver meaning it'll never work on this door or any door of the same material again.

**A PISTON-DRIVEN JACKHAMMER (WITH BROKEN PISTONS)**

(close, 1 coin, 2 weight)

**A "HIGH TEMPLAR LOGAN" ACTION FIGURE**

(0 weight, D6 coin)

**ENCOUNTERS****GENERATOR GNOLEM**

*Solitary, Huge, Construct, Stealthy*

Static Shock! (d8 damage, ignores armour)  
18HP 3 Armour

Special Qualities: More than Meets the Eye

- ✦ Hide in plain sight
- ✦ Reveal hidden weapons
- ✦ Expand to fill an area
- ✦ Paralyse with an elektrik current
- ✦ Self-destruct explosively

**TEMPLAR CITY GUARD**

*Horde, Intelligent, Organised*

Blessed Blade (d6 damage/b[2D6] versus undead, close)  
3HP 1 Armour

*Instinct: to keep the streets clean*

- ✦ Summon more guards
- ✦ Provide small healing



**REVOLTING RATCATCHER**

*Horde*

Stick of Ratcatchin' (1D6 damage close)  
3HP

*Instinct:* to fight for their rights

- ✦ Start a riot in the wrong place and time
- ✦ Unleash a monster from the sewers
- ✦ Show in-depth knowledge of the city

**THE OOZE OF NOSJAD**

*Solitary, Large, Amorphous, Terrifying*

Slithering Strike (2D6 damage close, ignores armour)  
16HP 2 Armor

*Instinct:* To absorb

**NOISOME TENDRIL**

*Group, Amorphous, Stealthy*

Noisome slap (D8 damage reach)  
6HP

*Instinct:* To capture

Special Qualities: It's all sticky!

- ✦ Digest anything but wood and leather
- ✦ Stick to things (your blade, your equipment)
- ✦ Grow bigger with every meal



# THE PLANARCH VAULT

*Created as a joint venture between the gnolgi and the Templars, the Planarch Vault is a prison complex and archive for monsters and treasures too powerful to keep anywhere else.*

*It has crashed just south of Nosjad city, overtaken by two of its worst inmates: a villain from another reality and a horde of quasi-mechanical shapeshifters. The villain, Inquisitor Nagol, has already escaped ("A Legacy of Death", page 18). The shapeshifters still lurk in the ruins, intent on causing as much trouble as possible. They cannot be allowed to get into the city!*

## STAKES AND DANGERS

- ✦ What will escape from the vault, and how will it terrorise the land?
- ✦ What strange technology survived the crash, and how might it be abused?
- ✦ The planarch vault is a doorway leading to other planes of existence - some of them dangerous and *hungry*. How might these other planes threaten the parties' homeworld if the door is not sealed?





## QUESTIONS

- ✦ **Barbarians, Fighters:** You heard an old rival got locked in a mega-prison like this. What was their crime? What did they owe you?
- ✦ **Thieves, Bards:** You heard a drunken rumour a long time ago about a treasure that 'fell into another dimension.' Maybe it's here? What was the treasure, and who might pay for it?
- ✦ **Wizards, Immolators, Druids:** How long until the Planarch vault's wards give in, do you think? (Make a guess, then roll+int. On a 10+ you're right, give or take an hour. On a 7-9, give or take a few hours. On a miss, give or take a day - you don't really know.)
- ✦ **Clerics, Paladins:** The Templars entrusted you with more knowledge about this place. Take +1 ongoing to Spout Lore regarding the Vault and its inhabitants. The GM can offer a secret mission on behalf of the Templars. If you complete it, gain 1 XP.

## IMPRESSIONS

- ✦ A looming structure carved from the living rock
- ✦ Empty cells flooded with light, leading to other realms
- ✦ An irregular ticking in the vents above
- ✦ Brass-worked gnolgi engines filled with steam and static
- ✦ The bridge, lavish and opulent
- ✦ Recreation rooms for the crew, turned upside down
- ✦ The lower decks: rent open, leading to perilous walkways and the open sky
- ✦ The distant sounds of conflict and a promise of imminent violence
- ✦ A paranoid guard, mortally wounded
- ✦ A shapeshifter hidden as an inanimate object
- ✦ The ship's log, telling a sorry tale of a betrayal from within



## REWARDS

**A key to the Hungry City of Dis**, locked in the vault's aetherstone and diamond core. This relic empowers the entire generator. It radiates waves of chaotic energy - a clarion call to the hungry city, an immense and immeasurable god.

**Portals to parallel worlds**, other planes of reality, and other magically charged locations around the globe. (Visions glimpsed through portals include an alabaster-white temple; the world tree, wreathed in rainforest; and a desolate island hemmed by house-sized gravestones.) Many of these portals are used as "bigger-on-the-inside" jail cells. Not all of them are stable, especially since the crash.

**A one-of-a-kind elektrickery glove**. Enough power to light an entire district in the palm of your hand. It's *so bad*.

**The Anastasis, an old sky-frigate**. Before they became wardens, several of the vault's inhabitants used to be privateers. This was their ship. It's been decommissioned but might still be air-worthy? It hangs proudly in the gallery-sized archives of the vault.

## ENCOUNTERS

There were dozens of Vault Wardens active before the crash, but only four survived. They're all former members of the Anastasis. The wardens start separated, but will attempt to reach the Anastasis and fall back. All are fully aware of the danger of the shapeshifters, and are suspicious of anything and everything.

At the start of the session, choose or randomly pick one of the Wardens. They're already dead! They're now a shapeshifter in disguise.



In one playtest, the party found "Regulus" in the middle of a staged fight with half a dozen shapeshifters. The templar player did the noble thing and moved to defend them. Together they started to turn the tide until Regulus lost his weapon. So the player threw "Regulus" his spare pistol, fully loaded...

Shortly after the templar player was bleeding from an open gunshot wound and down to 3HP...

### **FREY, THE HUNTER**

"Show me your blood! I don't believe you're not one of those filthy tickers. SHOW ME YOUR BLOOD!"

- ✦ Make an impossible shot
- ✦ Destroy a shapeshifter, utterly
- ✦ Suspect everything

### **OLIVER, THE ARTIFICER**

"I can fix this! All I need's a spool of aetheric copper, four tempered steel plates, and a cold towel..."

- ✦ Attract something (a metal object, a friend, trouble)
- ✦ Deflect a powerful attack with technology
- ✦ Repair the un-repairable

### **REGULUS, THE FOOL**

Yeah, the old holy flame don't keep me warm any more. Not to worry, that's why I keep this FLAMETHROWER handy!

- ✦ Sneak off without warning
- ✦ Ambush or entrap a target
- ✦ Sow chaos and confusion

### **SILVER, THE DASHING ONE**

"If we survive this, first round's on you!"

- ✦ Put them off-guard with a cutting comment
- ✦ Dodge out of the way
- ✦ Fly an airship with grace and ease



## MONSTERS

### GNOLGI SHAPESHIFTERS

*Horde, devious, organised, construct*

Bronze Raking (1D6 damage touch, forceful)

3HP 2 Armour

*Instinct:* to scare, confound and deal mischief

Each shifter is a swarm of dense bronze gears, constantly interchanging. No-one knows exactly how many there are or where they got their sadistic personalities from. (They're Gremlins that can change shape.)

## CUSTOM MOVES

**When the adventure is over** and the party has returned to safety, roll 2D6. Add 1 for each wardens that survived the adventure.

On a 7+ one surviving warden has decided to return to the adventuring life. Create a new hireling (with skills, loyalty and a cost) reflecting their status at the end of the adventure.

On a 10+, the warden has a job for the party... "the one that got away." The party head north to JAKABOL, the Island of Giants!

On a miss, business for the party continues as usual. Weeks later, the party hear rumours of the wardens going missing en masse, and a spate of abductions in Nosjad city. Also - wasn't that chair over THERE this morning...?





LOGAN COLLAPSED into the short chair, fumbling at the latches on his breastplate. The last blow had smashed his armour so badly he reckoned it had bruised his ribs, at the very least. All the battle damage had turned the armour's embossed scripture into crude scrawl.

Logan stifled a gasp as the breastplate came free. Bright crimson flowed from a gash on his side, staining his sleeve and the bronze worktop he had sat next to. Head throbbing, he tried to focus on something--anything--that wasn't the grievous wound in his side. He recognised gnlgi shorthand on the dials and levers on the worktop. Some kind of engineering room, he supposed. Other than a handful of flickering lights, the room was dark.

Silence filled the air, after the raucous chaos of the last few hours. "Won't stay long" Logan muttered, in response to a question no-one asked. "...Just need to buy them a few more minutes." Logan pulled a gnlgi pocket-watch from his jacket, listening to the delicate mechanism. Tick, tick, tick. What a delight, Logan mused. In his lifetime, his country had gone from backwards savages to technological masters. No witchcraft, no sorcery - only science, and the strength of faith. Logan knew many of his fellow templars wouldn't look at a gnlgi other than to beat them. Part of him even understood their fear, their uncertainty. But every year that passed, the mistrust grew less. Encouraging, thought Logan.

The ticking seemed to grow louder, less regular. Logan's awareness drifted back to the here and now. A shape coalesced in the corner of the room, it's face so like his own.



Yet the eyes held no emotion and the mouth was drawn into a cruel smile. When it spoke, it sounded like two sheets of rusted metal ground together.

"Ssstill here, I see." The motion of its mouth failed utterly to match its grinding speech. "I did hope I'd get the chance to repay you." As the creature advanced, Logan noted the charred mess of its left side. Logan's vision blurred; the creature swam in and out of focus. He thought he saw his allies' faces next to his own. Even San--poor, brave San--her face bloodstained and solemn.

"Your friends have come to watch you suffer!"

A trick, then. More of the creatures, their faces transformed into devilish reflections. They pranced and cackled around him; tormenting him for their own amusement. More faces, more scenes designed to torment him.

Through gritted teeth Logan blocked their leering faces from his mind. He gripped the pocket-watch so tight his knuckles turned white. He could feel the soft tick-tick-tick through his palm. The motion calmed him, helped him focus. He barely realised he'd drawn his sword.

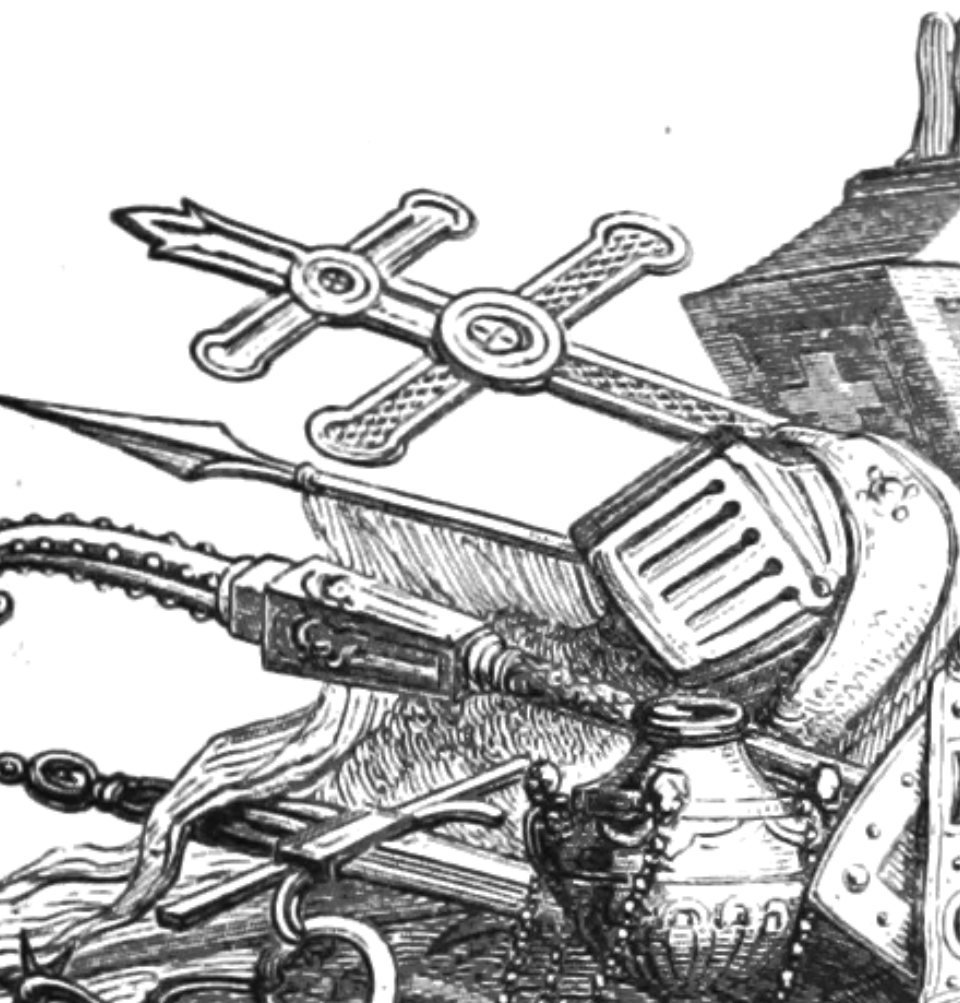
"I won't be leaving yet, monster. I have a job to finish."

The shapeshifters, cowardly creatures that they were, shrank from his grim advance. All except his doppelganger. The cruel smile widened, revealing a mouth lined with bronze fangs.

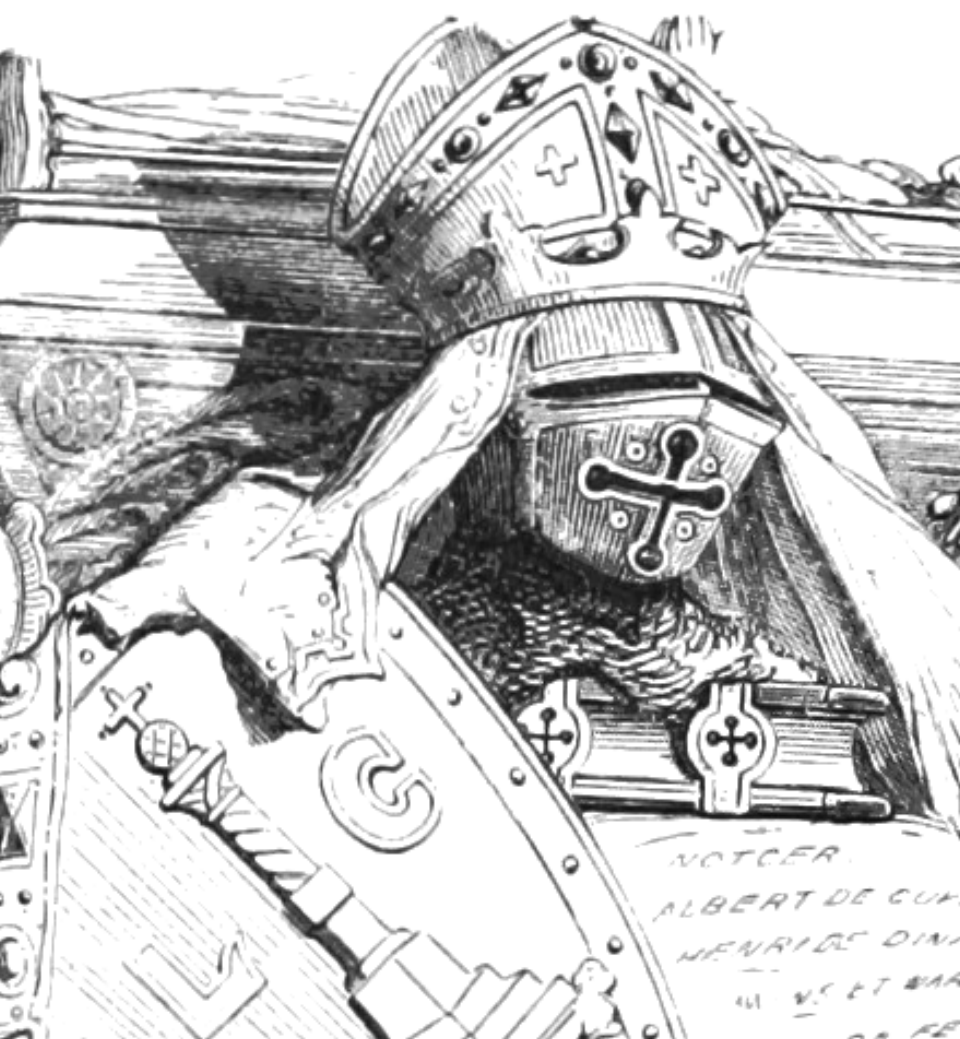
"Just a few minutes more" thought Logan, as he charged headlong into the writhing dark.



# CLASS: THE TEMPLAR







NOT CER.

ALBERT DE CUK

HENRI DE DIN

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22 FE

SAINT MIRKA CALLED ON YOU for a reason. You hear her in your fitful dreams. You see her in the eyes of the faithless. You sense her guiding hand when the shadows grow long.

These other folk, these so-called heroes, barely acknowledge her. But you will show them the path. They brand you with false names: shepherd; zealot; inquisitor.

These are not what you are. You are Templar.

Your will is iron. Your cause is just. Your foes are doomed.

**Templars are a mix of the Cleric, the Paladin and the Ranger.** They draw power from their personal faith rather than a higher power, and work best leading others into battle. If you like the idea of a character who's more righteous than holy, and less reliant on the word of god than other devout classes, play a templar. *Warning: The Templar of Mirka is weaker than the Paladin and less effective at healing than the Cleric. You may find the most interesting thing about playing the Templar is what happens after they die.*

## STARTING STATS

The Templar's **maximum HP** is 10+Constitution.

The Templar deals **d8 damage**.

### NAMES

Anajinn, Brachus, Duncan, Evelyn, Flynt, Godina, Holdfast, Jezebel, Karak, Quintus, Logan, Oster, Patience, Zarya

### LOOK

- ✦ **Eyes:** Mirthful Eyes, Weary Stare, Firm Gaze
- ✦ **Head:** Nice Hat, Simple Cut, Clean-shaven, Elaborate braid
- ✦ **Body:** Lean frame, Old Scars, Weathered Skin





## STARTING MOVES

The Templar of Mirka starts with all the basic moves and two unique moves: *Ardent Squire* and *Blessings of Faith*.

### ARDENT SQUIRE

You have an apprentice, name and describe them. Your Squire's +skill for all their abilities is equal to a third of your level (rounding up.) They start with the following abilities:

**Intervene:** When your squire defies danger alongside you, you may roll+SKILL instead. If you do, the Squire takes the brunt of any consequences.

**Ministry:** When you make camp with your squire, if you would heal, you also recover +SKILL HP.

Additionally, during a session the GM may ask what lessons you've taught your Squire about the faith. If you answer, mark XP.

*Squires lie somewhere between the Ranger's pet and a permanent hireling. They'll follow your commands, but are ultimately controlled by the GM. We'll play to find out what sort of a character the Squire becomes, under your tutelage.*

**Squire names:** Elias, Gunter, Lucky, Baldrick, Humble.

### BLESSINGS OF FAITH (WIS)

**At the start of a session or when you eliminate a powerful enemy of the Templars,** choose one of the following Cleric spells: *Cure Light Wounds*, *Magic Weapon* or *Cause Fear*.

**When you unleash the power of this spell,** roll+wis. On a hit, the spell is cast. On a 10+, the spell's power is retained and you may cast it again. On a miss, the spell backfires, failing to work and drawing attention from enemies of your faith.

*Blessings aren't as reliable than Cleric spells, but Templars have better health and damage to compensate. Use them wisely!*



## ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2–5, choose from these moves:

### LEAD THE FLOCK

When you command a mob of willing NPCs to do something, they do it, but the GM picks one or more from the following:

- ✦ It'll take days/weeks/months to complete
- ✦ The flock will question their faith, or yours
- ✦ Doing so will leave \_\_\_\_\_ vulnerable
- ✦ It will cost you \_\_\_\_\_
- ✦ First you must \_\_\_\_\_
- ✦ You'll need help from \_\_\_\_\_
- ✦ You must defeat \_\_\_\_\_ first
- ✦ The best they can manage is a lesser version

### I AM THE LAW (CHA)

When you give an NPC an order based on your divine authority, roll+Cha. On a 7+, they choose one:

- ✦ Do what you say
- ✦ Back away cautiously, then flee
- ✦ Attack you

On a 10+, you also take +1 forward against them. On a miss, they do as they please and you take -1 forward against them.

### I WASN'T ALWAYS A TEMPLAR

You may take a move from the *Fighter*, *Bard* or *Ranger* playbook. Treat your level as one lower for choosing this new move.

### BEHOLD THE WORD

When you unleash your *Blessings of Faith* in battle, you gain +1 to the roll.



**BOUND BY FAITH**

When you and your Squire deal damage together, add  $2x(\text{SKILL})$  to the damage. If there are consequences to your actions, you and the Squire share them.

**CHARGE!**

When you lead the charge into combat, those you lead take +1 forward.

**WARDEN OF THE INNOCENT**

When you stand in defence of the unarmed or defenceless, gain +1 hold, even on a miss.

**SPECIAL MOVES**

When you reach level 6, you gain this move:

**THE LEGEND WILL NEVER DIE**

**When you die**, your Squire continues your cause and becomes your new PC. Their starting level is equal to their current + $\text{SKILL}$ .

They gain *Blessings of Faith* and *Ardent Squire*, plus additional Templar moves, of your choice, for each level gained after the first. The new character also inherits any equipment that survived your former character's death.

The new Templar must take on a squire of their own - work with the GM to decide who this might be and how they can be introduced as soon as possible. Perhaps they are a trusted hireling or NPC already known to the players, or someone new, freshly assigned by the order?

**MASTER MOVES**

When you gain a level from 7-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.



**CRUSADER**

(Requires: *Lead the Flock*) When you *Lead the Flock* in a war against evil, they will always give their all for the cause. The GM may not choose “The flock will question their faith” or “the best they can manage is a lesser version.”

**EVER ONWARD**

(Replaces: *Charge!*) When you lead the charge into combat, those you lead take +1 forward and +2 armor forward.

**HIGH WARDEN**

(Replaces: *Warden of the Innocent*) When you defend you always get +1 hold, even on a 6-. When you get a 12+ to defend, you gain 0 hold but the nearest creature is distracted or momentarily stunned, granting you a clear opportunity.

**DIVINE AUTHORITY**

(Replaces: *Voice of Authority*) Take +1 to order hirelings. When you roll a 12+ the hireling transcends their moment of fear and doubt and carries out your order with particular effectiveness or efficiency.

**EZEKIEL 25:17**

You may choose any Cleric spell of your level or lower when you prepare your *Blessing of Faith*.

**GEAR**

Your load is 10+Str. Your starting equipment comes to 7 weight, leaving 2-5 load remaining (3+str.)

**You start with all the following:**

- ✦ A symbol of Mirka (0 weight, describe it)
- ✦ Dungeon Rations (5 uses, 1 weight)
- ✦ Adventuring Gear (5 uses, 1 weight)
- ✦ A short sword, sabre, axe or hammer (close, 1 weight)
- ✦ A tabard or quilted longcoat (1 weight, 1-armor)



**You also start with one of the following:**

- ✦ A broadsword, warhammer or executioner's axe (reach, +1 damage, two-handed, 2 weight)
- ✦ A crossbow or long-rifle (near, far, 2 weight)
- ✦ A brace of matchlock pistols (near, 2 weight)

*If you choose a firearm, you also start with 1-ammo.*

**Finally, choose one:**

- ✦ Blackpowder pouch (+3 Ammo, 1 weight)
- ✦ Armoured Breastplate (+1 armour, clumsy, 1 weight)
- ✦ Concealed Pistol (Hand, Close, 1-use, Hidden, 1 weight)
- ✦ Poultices and Herbs (2 uses, slow, 1 weight)

**BONDS**

You may take up to two bonds. Fill the name of one of your companions in at least one, or write your own:

- ✦ \_\_\_'s misguided behavior endangers their very soul!
- ✦ \_\_\_ has stood by me in battle.
- ✦ I hope \_\_\_ will someday see the true way.
- ✦ \_\_\_ is a brave soul. I have much to learn from them.







THE GIANTS OF JAKABOL were dead. Their own sorceries were their downfall: dark powers, drawn from Death's Black Gate itself. One vile soul inherited this evil legacy: a human the northern tribes called Kang Admi, the King without a Crown. History remembers him better as the **Necromancer**.

The Necromancer's rule was absolute. The legions of the dead held sway over the north. The living were enslaved, put to work on dark designs or hunted for sport. None dared oppose him—not even the mighty Magi of the Southern Deserts. But then, a woman rose to unite her people. With nothing save her blacksmith's hammer and a simple shield, she managed what no-one else had: she defied the Lord of Death. History remembers her, too: she was the **Lady Mirka**, first templar of the North.

Word of Mirka's fame grew. In the Sanguine forest, near modern-day Logansfell, she slew the undead monster Mamut-Bogh in single combat. An army of the faithful cast down the Necromancer's foul shrines on the eastern coast. The Oskabad headlands were swept clean of witches and beastmen in one of the bloodiest purges the world had ever seen. Every victory swelled the ranks of the faithful, and disrupted the power of the dead.

The Necromancer's devilish grip on the land faltered. Though bloodied and weary from decades of conflict, the armies of Mirka pressed on. They marched north, to the edge of their continent, where they would lay siege to the lair of the Necromancer himself. The Templars of Mirka would be victorious, or die trying.

THE NECROMANCER'S LAIR, a spar of black obsidian, squatted grotesquely on the peak of the highest mountain. Thousands of screaming dead barred the Templars path. The ascent took days and claimed hundreds. Only a few survived alongside the Lady Mirka to stand before that obsidian citadel.



Nothing barred the final passage, a narrow defile that reeked of decay. The first to push forward was Bold Aelbitras, always eager for glory. He made five paces before his flesh rotted in his armour. None could match Aelbitras' attempt - until, her face grim, the Lady strode forward.

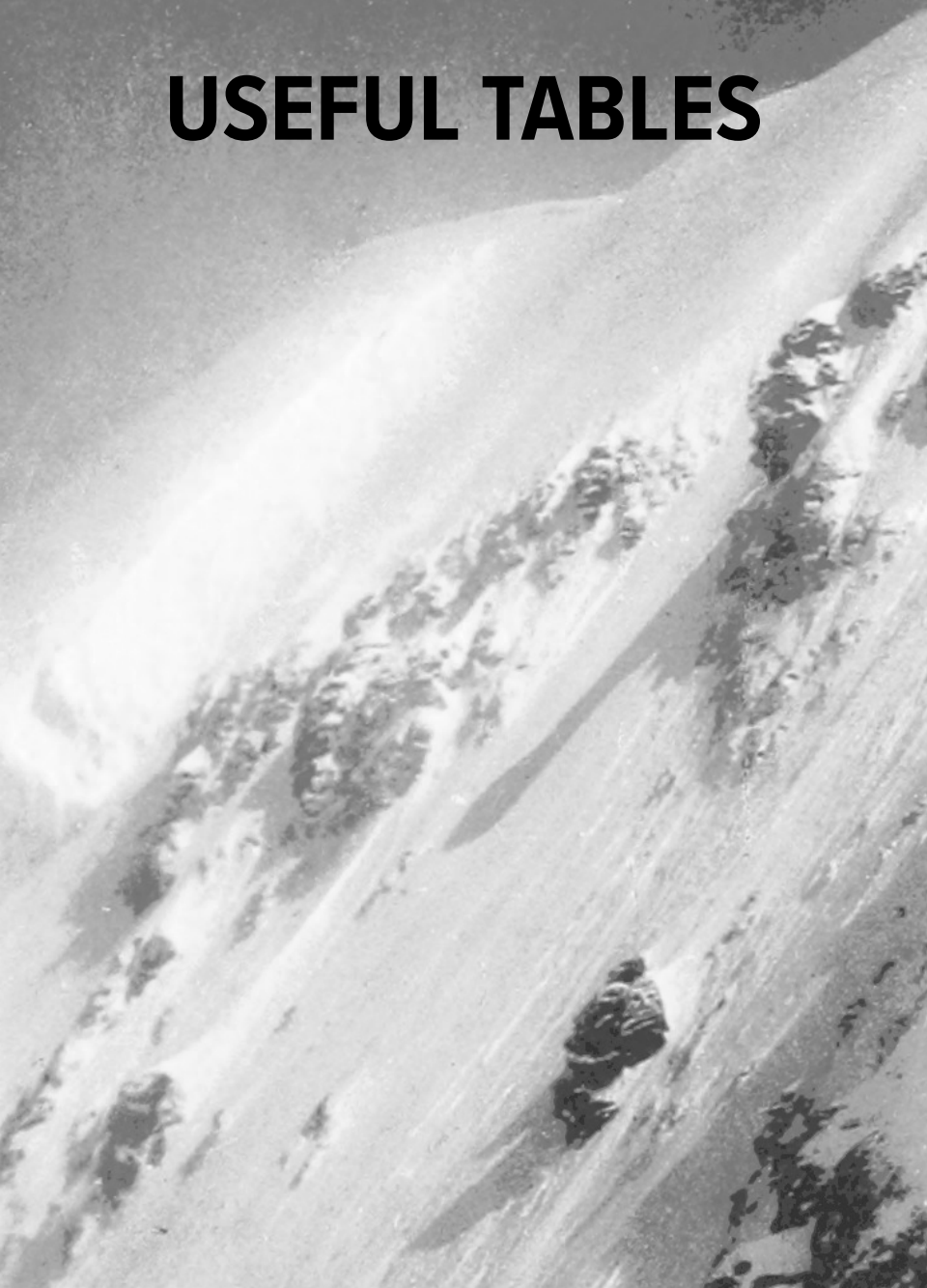
The stories say as Mirka crossed the threshold her armour glowed brighter than the sun. With a voice like thunder, Mirka ordered her surviving Templars to hold the pass, and await her return. It was the last time anyone saw the Lady alive. As the light faded, Mirka was gone. The survivors, loyal to the last, turned back to the undead beneath them. To a warrior, they would see their Lady's will done.

Hours passed. Waves of undead assailed the brave survivors. By dawn, barely a dozen remained. As the first rays of sunlight struck the mountain, there was an ear-splitting crack. The mountain shuddered, as though to shake off that obsidian canker upon its peak. The Templars watched, amazed, as the Necromancer's fortress collapsed.

It was over. The Necromancer's minions crumbled to ash, or fled into the darkest places they could find. Neither the Necromancer nor the lady Mirka were ever found - the ruins of the keep served as their final tomb.



# USEFUL TABLES





# 36 RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

- 1 1 A woman in rags, frostbitten extremities, carries empty pistol and seal of Mirka.
- 1 2 A corpse, freshly reanimated. Stutters names or places of local interest.
- 1 3 Three Farmers, stitched together with the remains of some kind of cow.
- 1 4 Wandering minstrel, singing is bad enough to wake the dead.
- 1 5 Slave-train travelling south. Carries 1D6 accused witches.
- 1 6 Soul of an errant knight. Appears in your dreams to challenge you.
- 2 1 Warband: 1D6 survivors of a town destroyed on Templar orders.
- 2 2 Warband: 1D6 survivors of a town destroyed through necromantic ritual.
- 2 3 Warband: 1D6 survivors of a town destroyed by gnolgi elektrik mishap.



- 2 4** Warband: 1D6 survivors of a town destroyed by foreign bandits.
- 2 5** Warband: 1D6 survivors of a town destroyed by a poor harvest.
- 2 6** Warband: 2D6 undead creatures from a destroyed town that had no survivors.
- 3 1** 6d6 rats, empowered by shamanic ritual. Each speaks a different human tongue.
- 3 2** A small dog, seemingly abandoned. Malnourished. Secretly a shapeshifter.
- 3 3** A pack of 3D6 giant wolves in the middle of a hunt. 3-in-6 chance you're the best prey out there.
- 3 4** 1d3 woodsmen, voices slurred, faces hidden. Poorly-disguised shapeshifters.
- 3 5** A flock of red ravens who tell the future through their flying patterns.
- 3 6** A single mammoth, undead, engaged in some pitiable act.
- 4 1** Umbertoni Wazir. Carries an angry djinni. Will wish the party away if harrassed.
- 4 2** An errant god-thing from the shattered remains of the Green Scar. Appears as a nest of serpents, a plume of smoke, or a beautiful maiden as it sees fit.
- 4 3** Spire merchant from distant Xi. Carries miniature works of beautiful spiral architecture in pristine glass bottles. (Spires return to full size if glass broken.) Hunted by (roll again.)
- 4 4** Amnesiac ether-ghost from Chalcedon. Haunts technology. Vaguely compatible with gnolgi tech.



- 4 5 Sentient mass of coral in rags. Claims to come from the shores of Tyrhennia.
- 4 6 A floating, talking skull. Claims to be a famous Templar (1-in-6 chance it's telling the truth.)
- 5 1 Ghost armour: a huge, empty suit of baroque armour. Carries no weapons.
- 5 2 A swarm: 6D6 zombies. 1-in-6 chance the animator (See *A Legacy of Death*) is near.
- 5 3 A red raven feasting on the dead. Unless killed, will spread infected viscera to the nearest town.
- 5 4 2d6 beastmen with the features of lions, goats and serpents. Engaged in a foul ritual.
- 5 5 A caravan of g nolgi, 2D6 (all related). Will trade, or pay for safe escort. Hunted by (roll again.)
- 5 6 A g nolgi engineer testing an advanced suit of powered armour for the first time.
- 6 1 A g nolgi band intending to raise awareness of their political patron beyond the cities.
- 6 2 Dozens of Templars and squires on a pilgrimage. They carry 3D6 reliquaries and holy relics.
- 6 3 A squire, alone, covered in blood. Claims their lord broke and fled from a terrible beast.
- 6 4 A Templar and their squire. The squire is clearly undead. The Templar wishes you to swear secrecy.
- 6 5 A warband of Templars, en route to investigate the parties' recent actions.
- 6 6 A solitary Templar, well-armed, well-equipped. Possessed by the soul of a powerful necromancer.

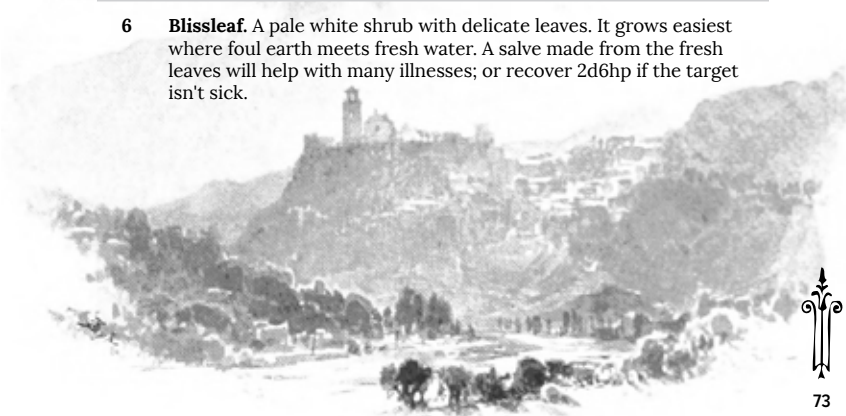




# FLORA & FAUNA

## 1D6 SCHEME

- 1 **Blackbeard's Delight.** A pungent mushroom with a formidable scent - it stings the nostrils. The smell will linger for several days, no matter how hard the picker washes themselves.
- 2 **Devil's Button.** A saucy northern black rose, with red veins and thorns. It only blooms in the presence of black rain, itself a by-product of the most profane of rituals. Seeing Devil's Button is a good sign evil is afoot. The flower is also a key reagent in a number of rituals, both holy and unholy.
- 3 **Ossifia Curatrix.** A curious moss that only grows where runes of warding have been carved into old bones. The older the bones, the better the moss. When you study the mossy runes, roll+int. On a 7+, you discover something encouraging. On a 10+, this discovery doesn't take a long time or attract unwanted attention. On a miss, the discovery terrifies you instead.
- 4 **Diamond Posey.** This rare and glittering orchid only blossoms above gemstones, although there's no telling how far below they are. When you dig below a sprout of diamond posey, roll+hours spent digging. On a 10+ you discover an uncut stone worth d6x10 coin. On a 7-9, you only find a bit of common malachite worth d6xd6 coin.
- 5 **Ironbark.** A variety of pine tree, greatly valued for its sturdy properties. As the name suggests, its bark is as tough as iron; each needle is sharp on every side, like a double-edged sword. It's just as flammable as any other wood, of course. If you can find a way to collect the needles or strip the bark from the tree without hurting yourself, the needles could be turned into knives or the bark could be fashioned into a fine armour.
- 6 **Blissleaf.** A pale white shrub with delicate leaves. It grows easiest where foul earth meets fresh water. A salve made from the fresh leaves will help with many illnesses; or recover 2d6hp if the target isn't sick.



# NAMES

## MIRKASANS

ID20	NAME	ALTERNATE (2)	ALTERNATE (3)
1	Wulff	Worna	Wurm
2	Ornah	Orno	Osta
3	Skellig	Skalf	Skala
4	Fray	Freya	Furl
5	Gan	Gennie	Gospul
6	Kaeligge (Kay)	Kanna	Kantor
7	Aventail	Avatae	Aventus
8	Bascinet	Baella	Bronc
9	Morion	Maella	Mantagar
10	Schynbald	Scholo	Schinitar
11	Estoc	Estrella	Exeter
12	Gottlibe	Gunta	Grunhilde
13	Zara	Zanna	Zok
14	Vix	Vendigo	Vulturaz
15	Aron	Aaenli	Axton
16	Burtan	Bella	Boare
17	Nikko	Nelestar (Nellie)	Nox
18	Levy	Leaden	Lenne
19	Cindra	Catarina	Chell
20	Dorn	Daelyr	Donna



**GNOLGI**

1D6	NAME	SURNAME
1	Aedala	Runnyman
2	Rinceley	Softkeg
3	Quintessa	Spinninger
4	Farquid	Geldenchild
5	Timbleton	Solderson
6	Impy	Deeps*

*\*Deep or Deeps are particularly common Gnolgi surnames, analogous to “Smith”.*

**BEAST OR BOUNTY**

#	TITLE	CREATURE	FEATURE
1	Erebus	Half-human (roll again)	Antlers
2	The Onslaught	Wolf	Glowing eyes
3	Winter's Bite	Snail, Worm or Maggot	Foul stench
4	The Scourge of Xi	Mammoth	Bile-like blood
5	Templars Bane	Bat or Crow	Aura of death
6	Old Ironsoul	Horse or Stag	Brings the Storm

**PLACES**

#	TITLE	SIZE	ENVIRONMENT
1	Nekesti	Keep	Freezing
2	Oskabard	Monastery	Cold
3	Havenshine	Farmstead	Rainy
4	Altai	Port/Waystation	Sodden (Marshland)
5	Colobzreg	Village	Grassland
6	Kursk	Fortified Town	Dry and bright



# MIRKASAN TABLES

## FEATURES

### 1D6 FEATURE

- 1 Broken nose
- 2 Steel-grey eyes
- 3 White hair (roll again: 1-3 cropped short; 4-5 ponytail; 6 unkempt)
- 4 Covered in tattoos: symbols of faith, scripture, and battle scars
- 5 Battered traveling armour
- 6 Huge broadsword

## TRADES

### 2D6 TRADE

- 2-4 Templar
- 5 Woodsman
- 6 Carpenter
- 7 Blacksmith
- 8 Fisherman
- 9 Mason
- 10 Miner
- 11 Sheriff
- 12 Magistrate



## SYMBOLS OF FAITH

### 1D6 SYMBOL

- 1 A sword and sickle, crossed together.
- 2 Three swords, in a complex interlocking pattern.
- 3 A three-eyed skull, pierced with brass.
- 4 A book, aflame.
- 5 A bronze hammer and silver anvil.
- 6 A "T"-shape, representing a sword.

## REWARDS

Also useful for "I loot the body" rolls involving Mirkasan corpses; treat a roll of 1-2 as nothing.

### 1D6 REWARD

- 1-2 Their services for free (smithing, armoring, woodwork)
- 3 Money - (1d3)x16 coin.
- 4 A book on the nature of death.
- 5 A strong, potent liquor. (As healing potion but alcoholic.)
- 6 A Templar's silver dagger, for killing undead.

## CRIMINALS/BOUNTIES

### 1D6 CRIMINAL

- 1 **THE NIGHTINGALE** A witch and practitioner of heretical magics, linked to the recent corruption of Bodigen's glade.
- 2 **THULAGON COLDROAR** accused of slavery and vicious bloodsport in the Sorrows (slums) of Nosjad city.
- 3 **JALIRA ROSEBANE** attempting to coerce the people of the southern headlands into their old, hedonistic lifestyles.
- 4 **VLASTA SLAVIK** convicted of betraying her templar brothers and escaping execution. At large somewhere in the Sanguine forests, specific location unknown.
- 5 **DOBRI MYASKOVSKY** wanted by the Gnomish Trade Association for petty larceny and tax evasion.
- 6 **BROTHER ISSAC OF THE ORDER OF MARETH** guilty of Necromancy. Destroy with extreme prejudice.



# GNOLGI TABLES

## FEATURES

1D6	FEATURE
1	Short, even for a Gnojgi
2	Wide, bright blue eyes
3	A crest of wiry white hair
4	Pale grey skin, the colour of saltwashed stone
5	Festooned with watches, compasses and other bronze devices
6	Dressed in the Mirkan tradition, awkwardly cut to fit their frame

## TRADES

1D6	TRADE (WELL-OFF)	TRADE (POOR)
1	Templar Squire	Serf
2	Architect or City Engineer	Lamplighter (Electrician)
3	Independent Inventor	Passing Tinker
4	Trade Merchant	Curio shop owner
5	Cartographer	Mushroom Brewer
6	Mine Foreman	Entertainer



**REWARDS****1D8 REWARD**

- 1 Their services for free (tinkering, alchemy, dungeoneering)
- 2 1d6 uses of adventuring gear.
- 3 Money - 1d8x(parties' level) in coin.
- 4 Technical journals, bohemian art 'zines, or political diatribe.
- 5 A large flask of *Elixir of Invention*. (1d6 uses.)
- 6 A tiny pistol (close, reach, near, +1 damage) and 1d3 ammo for it.

**SCHEMES****1D6 SCHEME**

- 1 I need a new samoflange! Bilby Buzzerbright owes me, go pick one up from his lab in the Franken Stead. I wonder how his experiments with etheric farming golems have been going?
- 2 Here, take this massive bag of money! You can even spend a bit of it as payment, if you like. If a tax officer asks, this gold is just "resting in your account", yes?
- 3 Dobbs? Is that you, Dobbs? I can't see so clear, nowadays. If only those foolish templars hadn't confiscated my spectacles...
- 4 I call it the "transistor"! It will redefine industry, but it must be placed on the highest hill (where the Shackleteeth goblins make their den) during the lightning storm tomorrow!
- 5 The templars call me a heretic, but really I'm just misunderstood! Now, would you be the person to speak to about procuring a variety of corpse dusts?
- 6 My velocipede is complete and ready for it's first lap around town! But these uneducated yokels (for reasons I cannot fathom) seem to have it in for me. What's the charge for you strapping folk to defend my latest invention?



# CONVERSION & ADAPTATION

If using a different system, I suppose the main things you'll need are revised stats for creatures and more maps. The following may help:

## CREATURES AND ATTRIBUTES

- ✦ **Damage** is about the same between Dungeon World and most OSR games, give or take a D6.
- ✦ **Hit Points** are usually calculated based on whether you're fighting a horde of chumps, a solitary important guy, or a group somewhere in between. A horde probably have less than 3HD each; A group might have anything up to 7 or 8 each, and a solitary would have more depending on how cool or tough they are. (This assuming a Hit Die is 1D8—or 4-5HP per HD.)
- ✦ **1-armour** is about AC 13; 2-armour is about 15; 3-armour is 18 (and/or magical in nature.)
- ✦ **Instinct** remains important no matter what system you're using. This is the thing the creature does that makes life difficult for the players.
- ✦ For **Attributes**, use your best judgement. I advise average stats across the board unless it's obvious something is very fast/slow/strong/etc.





## MAPS

When it comes to **maps**, I generally use either theatre of the mind or a scribble in a lined notebook that's not really fit for publication. When I need something with a little more flair and *élan*, I go to Dyson Logos or Michael Prescott:

- <https://rpgcharacters.wordpress.com/maps/>
- <http://blog.trilemma.com/>

## WAYS TO USE THIS BOOK

1. Organise 3-6 sessions (a short campaign) of *Dungeon World* for your friends, telling them beforehand you want to include witches, knights templar, tropes relating to the "frozen north" and similar.
2. Organise a longer or shorter number of sessions, using a different rule system you prefer (like D&D 5th ed or Lamentations of the Flame Princess).
3. Read the book, declare to yourself "*The Oxford comma can bite my ass, and he keeps spelling armor wrong - I can write better than this!*" Use this rage and fire to create a wonderful RPG product.
4. Buy the book, put it on your shelf with all your other indie RPG stuff, then never open it again.

This book broadly assumes you'll go for option 1. Honestly I'm happy whichever way you use it, but I'd advise against 4 as you're better than that.



# PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

When running a game of Dungeon World, the GM has a set of rules—their **agenda**, **principles**, and **moves**—they are expected to follow as surely as players are expected to roll damage or track hit points. The agenda is the three things you are expected to be doing at all times while GM'ing:

*Portray a Fantastic World*  
*Fill the Character's Lives with Adventure*  
*Play to Find out What Happens*

When the players look to you to discover what happens next, you want to say something that meets the game's agenda. The principles and GM Moves are guidelines to help make this happen.

## **ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES**

The GM moves and principles in Dungeon World are pretty good - if you follow them, you won't go far wrong. I've been told the extra principles I've added in some of my older releases have been useful too, so I've repeated them here.

**Keep the cast diverse.** It's a big world out there. When you introduce new characters, introduce new and unexpected races, genders and pronouns. Diversity makes both the NPCs more memorable and your world more grounded and realistic.



**Add a fantastic twist...** Play with player expectations. How's this creature different from others of it's kind? How are they sympathetic? How do they conform to stereotypes? How do they buck the trend?

**...But sometimes, a monster is just a monster.** As a GM, time is always against you. If you can't think of a fantastic twist, move on. It's more important to keep the story going.

**Link treasures and creatures.** Kill two birds with one stone! Arm notable monsters with memorable treasures, then let the party claim those treasures. (See the *End of Session* move in *Dungeon World* for more details.)

**Use the player's input.** If a player asks a question about the world ("so what happens if I try and kill a god?") assume they're interested in seeing more of that aspect of the world, and cater future content appropriately. Don't be afraid to *aggressively* edit previously planned content - in many ways, the less you plan, the better.

**If you say "no", offer a compromise.** When a player suggests something that goes against the spirit of the game, it's OK to say "no". As GM, you're just as entitled to a good time as the rest of the players, and accepting every outlandish or silly suggestion the players offer might impact that.

That being said? Keep an open mind. If you do say no, offer a suggestion or substitution. Compromise suggests you're working *with* the other players; you're "playing to find out what happens" together. A lack of compromise might feel like you're shutting the other players down instead.

**Focus on what happens at the table.** The content of this book is secondary to your personal ideas, and the moments of inspiration that can only happen through playing together. If the players do something that invalidates a rule or idea in this book, roll with it!



