

LAMENTATIONS  
*of the*  
FLAME PRINCESS



FERMENTVM NIGRVM  
DEI SEPVLTIV

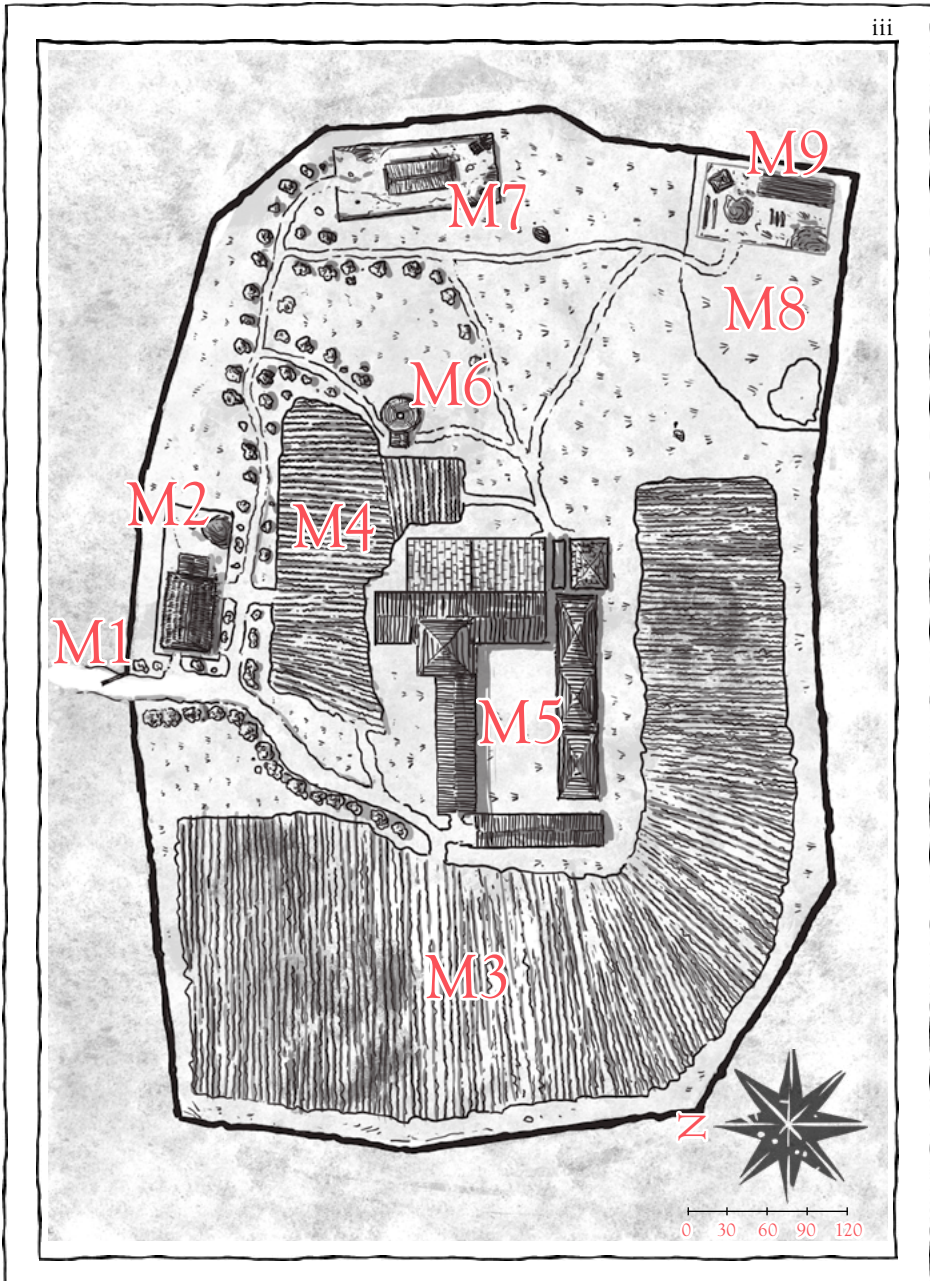
## Aboveground Encounters 2d4

- 2** 1d4 **Infected Pigs**, Armor 10, Movement 140', 1 Hit Die, 6 hp, attack 1d4 bite, Morale 10, initiative +1, can Projectile Vomit Black Barm: saving throw vs. Magic to avoid increased Black Barm Infection.
- 3** 1 Infected **Brewery Horse**, Armor 9, Movement 150', 3 Hit Dice, 15 hp, trample 1d8, kick 1d4, Morale 11, Initiative +2, trailing broken harness that tangles opponent on 19 or higher trample attack, allowing the target to be dragged away.
- 4** 1d4+2 **Gärunger**. Choose: Neanderthal, human, animal, or mixed group. (See page 16.)
- 5** 1d4+1 **Infected Monks**, Armor 12, Movement 120', 1 Hit Die 1, 2-4hp, improvised weapons, Morale 7, Initiative -2. Assign each monk one random Infection Card.
- 6** 1d4 **Uninfected Monks**, Armor 11, Movement 120', 1 Hit Die 1, 2-4hp, improvised weapons, Morale 7, Initiative -2.
- 7** 2d8+3 **Excited Locals** from a nearby village, Armor 12, Movement 120', 1 Hit Die, 2-5hp, improvised weapons, Morale 7, Initiative -2.
- 8** **One monk, dying**. No roll on "What's It Up To?": if touched, transmits infection (saving throw vs. Magic to resist), but is lucid and will warn those who do to beware Tedrick and his Brothers in the Catacombs. If healed, will flee the Abbey.

## Aboveground What's It Up To? 1d6

	Uninfected Humans	Infected Animals	Infected/Gärunger
<b>1</b>	Attempting to flee, Abbey loot in hands.	Running around: aimless and frenzied.	Rolling barrels of ale out of the Brewery toward the front gate.
<b>2</b>		Stalking the PCs.	
<b>3</b>	Fighting something else. (Roll again for opponent, ignoring duplicate result.)		
<b>4</b>	Hiding in terror.	Spewing Black Barm onto doors, path, etc.	Gleefully vandalizing the Abbey while guzzling Abbey ale.
<b>5</b>	Heading to the Abbot's Quarters (to loot).	Chasing 1d3 uninfected monks toward the Brewery.	Dragging 1d3 uninfected monks or villages toward the Brewery.
<b>6</b>	Begging: "Please help us escape!"	Drinking from a smashed-open barrel of Abbey ale.	Trying to trick PCs into entering the Catacombs via Secret door in C1: "Please save Brother Alfonse!"

**O**ther **Gärunger Animals** can be generated by statting up a normal animal and modifying its Armor by -1 to -3, reducing its movement rate to 75%, adding 1-2hp of attack damage, (and optionally adding an Infection-spreading effect), increasing its Morale to 12, and applying a 3 penalty to Initiative.



M1 (page 31)  
Entry Gate

M3 (page 31)  
Barley Field

M5 (page 34)  
Main Complex

M7 (page 33)  
The Stables

M9 (page 33)  
Pig Shed

M2 (page 44)  
The Brewery

M4 (page 32)  
Hopyard

M6 (page 32)  
Oasthouse

M8 (page 33)  
Pigsty



# FERMENTVM NIGRVM DEI SEPULTI



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**LAMENTATIONS**  
*of the*  
**FLAME PRINCESS**

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# FERMENTVM NIGRVM DEI SEPVLTIVM

BLACK YEAST OF THE BURIED GOD

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF  
THE FIRST THROUGH THIRD LEVELS  
FOR LAMENTATIONS OF THE FLAME PRINCESS

CONCERNING AN UNTIMELY PLAGUE OF  
A MOST ANTIQUE WICKEDNESSE,  
WHICH, HAVING STRICKEN  
THE UNFORTUNATE ABBEY,  
SHALL BE MET BY ARMED SOULES  
HOLY, VALIANT, UNWISE, FOOLISHE, OR MADDE

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No. 8-10 SEMITA ORIS, HELSINKI, FINNIA

# LAMENTATIONES PRINCIPISAE FLAMMAE

MMXX

*Blood and bones of Christ, the scriptures say nothing of  
thif how can we contend with thif foulness in the depths  
that beckons at every sleeping and waking hour?*



A DISTILLATION OF THE **DESIGNER'S NOTES** EXPOUNDING UPON THE CONTENTS OF THIS TOME

4

A BRIEF AND GENERAL DISCOURSE UPON THAT MOST BLESSED OF LOCALES, **THE ABBEY OF ST. CHRISTOPHER**, AT WHICH THE ACTION OF THE PROCEEDING ADVENTURE IS FATED TO OCCUR

6

✠ A PRELIMINARY EXPLICATION OF **STRANGE GOINGS-ON** THERE

8

✠ A COMMENTARY UPON THAT MOST PERFIDIOUS AND INEXPLICABLE FOE OF THE ABBEY KNOWN AS **THE BLACK BARM**, AND ITS SECRET, WICKED NATURE, KNOWN TO BUT FEW

10

✠ AN EXPOSITION OF THE **RULES OF INFECTION** FOR THE SICKNESS PLAGUING THE ABBEY

12

✠ A BRIEF INVESTIGATION INTO THE OBSCURE TRUTH OF BOTH THE **GÄRUNGER** AND THAT HORROR OF WHICH THEY ARE THE ACCURSED FRUIT, VIZ. **THE BLACK ROCK** WHICH GLOWERS IN DARKNESS

16

A BRIEF DISCOURSE UPON THE SUBJECT OF WHAT MAY BE READILY APPREHENDED BY THOSE **APPROACHING THE ABBEY**

18

AN EXCOGITATION UPON WHAT MAY BE DISCOVERED WITHIN THE WALLS OF **THE INN OF THE MONASTERY**

21

AN ACCOUNT OF THOSE EVENTS WHICH UNFOLD WHEN **THE ABBEY FALLS** IN A CONFLAGRATION OF THE MOST TRAGIC AND MENACING NATURE

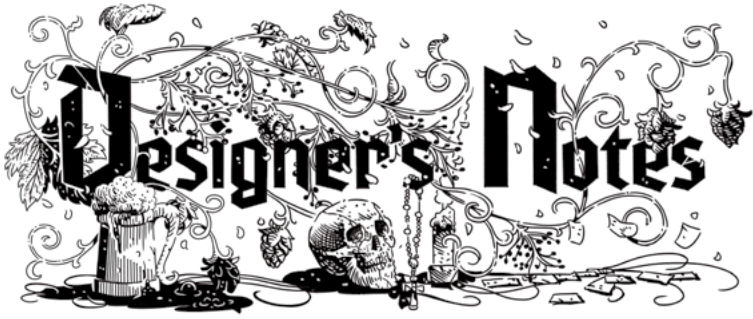
29





A TABULA (I.E. MAP) OF <b>THE ABBEY GROUNDS</b> ACCOMPANIED BY A DETAILED INVENTORY OF MAJOR LOCALES TO BE FOUND UPON THEM	30
A CONCORDANCE OF LOCALES WITHIN <b>THE MAIN COMPLEX</b> OF THE ABBEY, INCLUDING THE CATHEDRAL, DORMITORIUM, CLOISTERS, ÆDIFICATUM, NECESSARIUM, ETC.	34
THE MYSTERIES THAT ROIL IN BLACK FERMENT WITHIN THE WALLS OF <b>THE BREWERY</b> , ACCOMPANIED BY A FINELY DETAILED TABULA (I.E. A MAP)	44
A DETAILED COMMENTARY UPON THE SUBJECT OF <b>WEAPONISING THE BREWERY</b> FOR USE AGAINST ALL TRESPASSERS	46
AN EXPLICATION OF THE TERRIFYING, SECRET, AND UNHOLY CONTENTS OF <b>THE CATACOMBS</b> ACCOMPANIED BY DETAILED TABULA (I.E. MAP)	58
A THOROUGH ACCOUNTING OF THE COMPLETE MEMBERSHIP OF THAT PARTY KNOWN AS <b>THE COMPANY OF THE SCALDED SHIELD</b> : THEIR SINS, POSSESSIONS, APPEARANCE, AND THE TERRIFYING CONDITION BINDING THEM TO THESE TERRIBLE EVENTS	66
AN EXEGESIS OF THE EVIL HISTORY, ACCURSED SECRETS, AND TERRIBLE NATURE OF ALL <b>MAGICAL ITEMS</b> THAT MAY BE FOUND AT THE ABBEY	69
RATIOCINATIONS UPON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRECEEDING IN <b>FURTHER PLAY</b> AS MAY BE DESIRED BY THE PURCHASER OF THIS TEXT	79
AN ASSORTMENT OF <b>INFECTION CARDS</b> DETAILING THE SYMPTOMS, BOTH MIRACULOUS AND UNSETTLING, TO BE SUFFERED BY THE AFFLICTED	81

*Can you hear it? I hear it muttering in the darkness promising things to me that only a god could grant!*



If only every monster in the world could be clubbed to death and looted. Some adversaries, unfortunately, are too insidious to be overcome that way. They resist and overcome us by being everywhere we turn, by infecting both us and the world around us, by rewriting us from the inside. *That's what *Fermentum Nigrum Dei Sepulti* is all about.*

Sure, it's wrapped up in an exploratory dungeon crawl packed with beer and intelligent space-yeast and Cistercian monks and the fallout from a horrible revenge story, but this adventure is really about *an elusive antagonist that hijacks the protagonists*, changing them in ways that leave them *complicit in its monstrous acts* and mired in the shadowy, ambivalent place where their *free will* used to live.

I am genuinely interested in hearing how this adventure plays out with your group. Feel free to *email me at [gordsellar@gmail.com](mailto:gordsellar@gmail.com)* and tell me all about it.

### For more inspiration, check out:

- ✦ H.P. Lovecraft's classic story, "*The Color Out of Space*"
- ✦ The films *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Thing*
- ✦ The late great Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*
- ✦ For insight into how the primary antagonist sees humanity, check out Peter Watts' short story "*The Things*," available online at the Clarkesworld website. ([clarkesworldmagazine.com/watts\\_01\\_10/](http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/watts_01_10/))

## On Beer Terminology:

If there's a beer geek in your gaming group, this may come up. Yes, the terms are misused: in Early Modern Europe, "ale" and "barm" are British English. German-speakers have their own terms for these things. ("Altbier" and "hefe.") However, **in reality historical beer terminology was a bafflingly messy patchwork** of local (and sometimes regional) conventions, and plenty of the types of beer popular back in those days are extinct or only now being resurrected. Ultimately, **this is an adventure game**, not a beer history gab session; feel free to remind your players of this, if need be.

On the other hand, **if verisimilitude interests you**, or you want to use the Black Barm and weird beers on a bigger (campaign-sized) scale, here are some helpful resources:

## Blogs:

✦ **Shut Up About Barclay Perkins!** ([barclayperkins.blogspot.com](http://barclayperkins.blogspot.com)) Deals with historical English (and German) brewing.

✦ **Zythophile** ([zythophile.co.uk](http://zythophile.co.uk)) Martyn Cornell's beer blog. See also below...

## Books:

✦ *A vade mecum for malt-worms: or, A guide to good fellows*, by Edward Ward (1667-1731). **A wonderful early 18<sup>th</sup>-century pub crawl guide, written in verse.** PDFs of the complete text, scanned, are available free on several sites, and could be printed, scribbled over with cryptic adventure hooks, and distributed as a player handout. Find it, among other places, at [archive.org](http://archive.org). (<https://archive.org/details/vademecumformalt00warduoft>)

✦ *Radical Brewing* by Randy Mosher. Actually a guide for experimentally-minded homebrewers, it has **plenty of weird stuff**—fungal beers, toxic bittering herbs and additives actually used in history, and more—that could be fun to include.

✦ *Beer: The Story of the Pint and Amber, Gold, and Black* by Martyn Cornell. **Some of the best beer history out there**, by the same author as the Zythophile blog.

## Acknowledgements:

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*Oh, this strange voice in my head—I fear it is the devil, it flashes  
visions of naked bodies before me, makes me feel as if I will never die!  
It tempts me to grave and terrible fun, and yet I write on, hoping to  
dispel evil through dutiful work!*

# The Abbey of St. Christopher

**E**rmentum Nigrum Dei Sepulti is a short, open-ended dungeon crawl set at an imperiled brewing monastery. The text has Germanic flavoring, but only slight modification should be necessary to insert it into any rural location within any of the brewing cultures of Early Modern Europe; with a little more work, it could be retooled to almost any fantasy or historical setting, even an ancient one. (The temples of the Mesopotamian beer goddess Ninkasi were sacred brewery-brothels, for example...)

**T**his adventure can easily be used either as a one-shot, or integrated into an ongoing campaign. In the latter case, it's best if the Inn of the Abbey of St. Christopher is a recurring locale—a pit stop favored by the PCs en route from their home base to various wilderness adventures, dungeons, or ruins. This will give you time to get the characters familiar with the locale and invested in the local NPCs, increasing the likelihood they'll choose to get involved in the events to come. It will also allow you an early start on making dramatic hay regarding the monastery's beers: strange

visions, dreams, or mysterious spiritual visitations all could build suspense. Perhaps you could even prepare the Infection Cards a few sessions before you intend to run this adventure, and allow for the possibility that a character who drinks a beer from the Abbey could develop a mild infection weeks in advance of the events described in this book. (*For more on the aforementioned infection, see The Black Barm, page 10.*)

**A**lthough it can backfire—as it almost did in one of my playtests—a good approach is the bait-and-switch: characters end up stopping for the night at the monastery while on the road to someplace else, and wake in the dead of night to an unexpected, bizarre adventure. That said, characters could be drawn to the Abbey in a number other ways:

- ✦ as burglars, hoping to rob the Abbey's famously rich coffers
- ✦ by stumbling onto it for the first time on the way back to civilization from some calamitous misadventure

drawn

*Nous sommes près de l'abbaye, et près de le faire de trouver le secret de ses bières, et l'histoire dans le livre me donne un soupçon trop étrange et grave...*

- ✦ drawn by curiosity, after finding a potent healing beer “potion” during some previous adventure, wrapped in a note identifying it with this Abbey
- ✦ as a Papal commission (or its guards) sent to investigate the Abbot’s claims of an ancient evil in the Catacombs
- ✦ as a group of random strangers who simply happened to be lodged at the Inn on the fateful night of the Abbey’s fall

Whatever the setup, the PCs’ desire to escape should be low at the beginning, and climb very high near the end... but their desire to escape will also be inversely proportional to their ability to escape, which grows increasingly difficult with each passing hour they remain at the Abbey.

For those with no idea where to set the adventure, in my own campaign world, the Abbey of St. Christopher is a day’s ride west of Bad Aachen, a city with a fascinating history and much to offer in terms of adventure hooks.



The Abbey of St. Christopher is famous in the region—and likely known at least by reputation to the PCs—as a producer of excellent beer, as well as for the tavern/inn it operates, which offers travelers a safe, clean place to sleep. It is located about a day’s ride from the nearest large city, and is in the immediate vicinity of (i.e. about ten minutes’ walk from) a small, commonplace town.

Founded sometime in the high Middle Ages, it is a Cistercian Abbey that sustains itself by brewing, growing its own barley, and raising pigs. However, beer revenues have enriched the Abbey considerably. Those beers are available throughout the region, including in the nearest big city. In the sorts of places frequented by adventurers, entire casks of the stuff are consumed in a night, and corked bottles—decorated with distinctive paper labels depicting a grinning monk, an unusual practice for a brewery in this time period—are also sold for those provisioning themselves for travel.

It is common for adventurers to mention having passed through the Inn, and they compare notes regarding the latest rumors circulating there. Outside of adventuring circles, the beer is also well-known, but for a different reason: popular (if factually mistaken) stories about the beer’s ostensible holiness, and the many miraculous healings and wonders attributed to it by the superstitious, make it beloved of those who pray and drink with equal fervency. The ominous truth about the ale’s wondrous effects—and the terrible conflict secretly brewing at the Abbey—are known to only a few even within its walls.



Several weeks before the events taking place in this adventure, tensions began to develop between two groups of monks within the Abbey.

It all began when the Abbot, an elderly monk named Reiner, woke from a haunting dream one night. Neither prophetic nor particularly eventful, it had simply involved a dark hole in the ground beneath a sky full of shimmering stars. From the hole, a terrible sound echoed out into the night air, filling the sleeping Abbot with dread. On waking he felt it must have something to do with the catacombs beneath the Monastery, where the bones of the dead lay in disorder, disturbed time and again over the Abbey's long history. Most monks feared to trespass into those dark tunnels, and had taken to burying their dead in graves in a small cemetery plot outside the Abbey's wall to avoid going underground at all. The catacombs had lain in neglect for too long, he decided.

So Abbot Reiner resolved to inspect the catacombs. What he (and the brothers who accompanied him)

found there was the stuff of far worse nightmares. They entered through a hidden passage within the Church (C1 see B page 37), and were immediately confronted with a small—but still bizarrely violent—cluster of plant roots (belonging to the previously-sessile, but now dangerously restless **Hopfenwürger** plants growing in the Hopyard directly above where they stood). Fighting past it (and losing one brother to its strangling grasp), they pressed on through the damp tunnels beyond, until they reached the catacombs proper.

There, they discovered all manner of dreadful horrors: incorrupt corpses both human and inhuman, some of them resurrected by unspeakable forces, their noses and mouths foaming black froth; walls clad in strange molds and even stranger drawings; and in the bowels of the place, a room that was clearly a chapel—one evidently not consecrated to their God, but rather to a strangely patterned chunk of black rock, which they took to be a pagan idol. The rock filled their minds with horrific visions. These horrors convinced the

Abbot

*Einmal ist nicht viel, und man mag nicht sein sein sein  
 ein sein, und einmal ist Abbot sein lachend in einem sein,  
 ein sein ein wenig sein sein in ist sein sein in gelächter  
 gegen ein,*

Abbot that the site was **evil**, and needed to be cleansed thoroughly with fire, and the black rock within crushed to dust.

**N**ot all of the monks agreed with Reiner's conclusion. Unbeknownst to him, some had in fact been **visiting the Catacombs regularly** by another route—via the Abbey's brewery—and were fascinated by the black rock in the hidden chapel; indeed, they were obsessed with protecting it. The Abbot himself was not completely free of its strange charm: it filled his thoughts for days, **obsessing him**, until finally he found himself walking, quite against his will, down the hallway into the catacombs. Through a supreme act of will, he regained control of his body and ran to the **Aedificatum** (the monastery's library). There, he rummaged through the Abbey's verboten collection of **wicked and occult tomes**, and found the scroll he knew lay among them. He used it to cure himself of the illness, incompletely but enough to flee into the night.

**H**e returned from town a week later to find **his flock had schismed** during his absence. Half of them insisted that the catacombs must be cleansed, but the other half—led by a young, charismatic ex-mercenary named **Brother Tedrick**—had defiantly deactivated the hidden door to the catacombs and set up guard against all who would invade the place. Abbot Reiner gathered the brothers who had resisted the charms of the “pagan” black rock, and after scrounging what weapons they could, they penetrated the catacombs, **prepared for an exorcism and a battle**.

**T**hat battle is the event that kicks off this adventure proper. (See **The Abbey Falls**, page 29.)

**2+ weeks ago:** Black Barm Infection develops slowly, taking months to move from one stage to the next. Approximately half the Abbey's monks are sufficiently infected to be **worshipping The Black Rock**.

**2 weeks ago:** Abbot Reiner has a **nightmare of the Catacombs**; explores them with selected monks; reaches Stage 3 Infection but regains self-control long enough to flee the Abbey.

**10 days ago:** The Black Barm achieves **control of Brother Tedrick** and several other monks, who begin plotting against Reiner.

**1 week ago:** Abbot Reiner returns, partially cured, and begins writing letters to **summon aid** from Rome and other monasteries in the area. Over the next few days, a number of monks from other Cistercian Abbeys arrive.

**2 days ago:** The Company of the Scalded Shield arrives at the nearest big city. Drinking Abbey Ale reestablishes their connection with the Black Rock. **It summons them to the Abbey.**

**1 day ago:** With a few elite Brothers, Abbot Reiner plans the **cleansing of the Catacombs**. Among the Brothers is a monk at Stage 3 Infection, so the Black Barm overhears everything, **panics**, and preemptively **accelerates** the speed and variability of Black Barm Infection.

**Tonight:** Abbot Reiner attempts to **storm the Catacombs**; battle breaks out throughout the Abbey; **adventure begins**.

*I'll mix again balls of the end  
before I let again be first a  
wonderful to me!*



Most of the mysteries at the Abbey of St. Christopher center on the **strange yeast or “barm” that ferments its beers.** Anyone with experience brewing (including most of the PCs, since brewing at home was common practice in Early Modern Europe) would notice how unusual that yeast is: instead of the white billowy foam that normal brewer’s yeast forms on fermenting beer, the Abbey’s fermentations are topped by fluffy, **oozing masses of bubbling, grey-black gunk**, a “black barm” which also leaves an ashy-colored residue at the bottom of bottles and barrels. Nonetheless, beer brewed at the Abbey is usually rich and delicious.

Over the decades, a few monks have realized that there is **something preternatural** about the Black Barm. While some have guessed that it is simply a special, natural yeast with **mind-altering powers**, like certain mushrooms and herbs found in the wild, wiser minds have suspected otherwise. One monk in the Abbey has whispered about theoretical “**yeast elementals**,” while a few others have imagined a **ghost** (or cabal of ghosts) haunting and enchanting the brewery. A

century ago, an alchemist from Leipzig who briefly stayed at the monastery (one Gregor Haussmann) even theorized about the possibility of a **demon** possessing a colony of yeast as others possess human bodies, a theory which might be discovered in a well-stocked library.

All of these theories are utterly wrong. The Black Barm is actually a **sentient network of alien yeast particles** that was carried to the Earth in the guts of a meteorite known as **The Black Rock** (see page 17) long ago. The particles themselves are no more intelligent than individual neurons in a brain, but working in concert, they produce a **godlike, alien intelligence** that long ago found itself trapped on Earth, a being that is now fighting for its survival.

It is up to the Referee when the Black Barm arrived on Earth, as long as it is sometime in prehistory. The yeast colony survived the meteorite crash, but spread out to **colonize an area only a few miles in diameter**, centered on what is now the site of the Abbey. It immediately began **opportunistically meddling** with

the

*Fich Abt Reiner Fich pervers Jane Fich  
Bruder Tedrich Fich Maria Fich die  
Jungfrau, Fich Bruder Anton, Fich Bruder*



the wildlife in the area, experimentally pitting newly-arrived Cro-Magnon humans against Neanderthals and other animals, while struggling to understand the conditions of its new environment. Over the aeons, the Black Barm has developed a partial—but certainly incomplete—understanding of human beings. Their emotionality and factionalism baffle it, but it has slowly assembled **sufficient knowledge to manipulate** them individually, both indirectly (through visions, dreams, and hallucinations) and directly (through direct chemical manipulation of their brains).

**T**hrough the enticement created by the **seemingly miraculous effects** of the beers made with it, the Black Barm has in recent decades gained a foothold in the brains and bodies of the local populace. Its purpose ultimately is to **ensure its own survival** in a hostile, bewildering world ruled by a terrifying and violent species. The Black Barm knows at least enough about human nature to understand that if they discover it, they are likely to **fear** it... and, eventually, to try to **exterminate** it.

**U**ntil recently, the Black Barm had been content with **local, low-level meddling** in human brains. However, as crisis began to loom at the Abbey, it escalated its neurological meddling to the point where mild infection gave way to weak symbiosis, all the way to a complete takeover of the infected. Its ultimate goal has been to build a force of individuals it can use to ensure it survives the conflict in the Abbey. (See **The Abbey Falls**, page 29.)



*Marco Fich Bruder Petter Fich Bruder Lars Fich  
Bruder Adso, Fich Bruder - Geh zum Teufel!*



# Infection Rules

Prior to a few weeks before the Abbey's Fall, infection was a slow and tenuous business, but the Black Barm has **ramped up its efforts**. When the PCs arrive at the Abbey, there are **four stages** to Black Barm Infection, the effects of which are randomly determined by drawing **Infection Cards** (see pages 81-93.)

In gameplay, this works as follows: for **every hour of in-game time** spent at the Abbey (plus when exposure occurs, as noted in locale descriptions), they must roll a **saving throw versus Magic** (unless otherwise noted) to resist further infection. These saving throws are subject to the following penalties:

- ✦ A **cumulative penalty of -1 to this saving throw for each hour of exposure not resulting in infection**. (This cumulative penalty immediately resets to 0 when a character's level of infection increases.)
- ✦ An **additional -1 penalty in areas saturated with the Black Barm** (i.e., The Brewery and The Catacombs.)

When this saving throw fails, the player **draws an Infection Card** from one of four piles sorted by icon and laid out by the Referee, as per the table below. The player then keeps the card unless or until her PC's degree of infection is somehow reduced.

(The exception is the single Stage 4 card, which must be placed on the table again after it has been read by the affected player. Thereafter, the player is nonetheless considered to be "holding" the Stage 4 card until her PC's infection is reduced to Stage 3 by some means. When this occurs, the character automatically loses her Stage 4 card first.)

When a player draws an infection card that duplicates one she already holds, she must return the newly drawn card to the middle of the same pile and re-draw from the top.

The icon on each card denotes the stage of infection with which the effect is associated.

Number of cards already held	Draw from (Pile) for Stage...
0-1	(Tankard) 1
2-3	(Tooth) 2
4	(Broken Heart) 3
5	(Star) 4

(Alternately, a merciless Referee could simply **mix up the cards** from Stages 1-3 (Tankard, Tooth, and Broken Heart) and have the players encounter a random set of symptoms. The Referee must still **separate the Stage 4 card**, reserving it for the player's sixth failed saving throw.)

In order to maintain some **mystery** regarding the nature of the infection, Referees may opt to **delay the call for saving throws**—perhaps using a timer of some sort to keep the delay consistent, or by tracking game time closely and having characters roll their saving throw anywhere from ten to twenty minutes of game time after each exposure. Likewise, the Referee will probably want to avoid the term “infection” for as long as possible, until (innocuously) letting it slip at the right moment.

The **number of cards** currently held by the player determines the PC's stage of infection:

### Stage 1 (1-2 Infection Cards):

The Black Barm is **infiltrating the character's nervous system**, subtly creating new instincts and urges which make further exposure likely, while masking the infection with apparently positive physical and mental effects.

### Stage 2 (3-4 Infection Cards):

The Black Barm has a **foothold in the victim's body**. It begins performing significant modifications on her brain, effectively sickening her.

### Stage 3 (5 Infection Cards):

The Black Barm has effectively **colonized the character's brain and nervous system**, and assails her mind with **bizarre visions and hallucinations** superimposed on her perceptions. She begins to **lose touch with reality**. If she attempts it, the character may temporarily reassert conscious self-control and banish these effects by successfully making a **saving throw versus Magic** at a -2 penalty. (Ability Score modifiers apply, but so do any modifiers resulting from Infection Cards currently held by the character's player.) If successful, she **regains control** for 1d6x10 minutes.

### Stage 4 (6 Infection Cards):

The character is **completely in the thrall** of the Black Barm, or, rather, she has fused mentally with it. Subjectively, she perceives her own continued existence, but outsiders will perceive her as having been **possessed by an outside force**. The character will serve the Black Barm unquestioningly, has Morale 12, and **cannot break the Black Barm's hold** on her on her own. However, the Black Barm *may* choose to continue to allow her personality to be expressed in interactions, so as to minimize suspicion.



*The bewitched thing in the Adifratum! The rumors are true—it has laid a curse on us! I will burn it to the ground! Hell take every last boot!*

## Setting The Stage:

For those Referees setting up the Abbey in an **existing campaign**, it's a good idea to prepare a set of cards prior to the first time characters visit the locale. Be sure to make dramatic hay of the characters' ongoing exposure to the Black Barm prior to the events of the Abbey's Fall: **Ability Score modifications**, **eerie dream visitations** by the Black Barm, **encounters with specific monks** who figure into these events, and perhaps even distributing the odd Stage 1 Infection Card all will help set up this adventure, hopefully **raising the stakes** for your players.

Like any yeast infection, Black Barm is **difficult to eliminate**. Any **Cure Disease** or **Remove Curse** spell effect will only remove a single Infection Card from play at a time. (In other words, a character at Stage 2, holding four cards therefore requires four distinct spells, potions, or scrolls to be completely cured.) **When such a curative effect takes place**, the player should shuffle her Infection Cards and have a fellow player choose one card randomly, to determine which infection effect disappears.

Black Barm Infection is a cumulative and ultimately complete encroachment onto character ego and will. Most players rightfully despise having their characters turned into NPCs, however; it defeats the point of playing a role-playing game, after all. Therefore, instead of *de facto* hijacking the PCs, the Referee should **urge players to role-play the Card effects**, including the effects of Stage 4 infection, while providing cues when necessary. The

cards are not to be shared with other players, obviously, and the Referee ought to bear in mind those effects of the cards which will result in the character **further exposing herself, or her companions, to concentrated doses of the Black Barm**, prompting further saving throws. Cards like **Simply Fabulous!** and **Unholy Spew**, for example, may indeed spontaneously expose the whole party in this way.

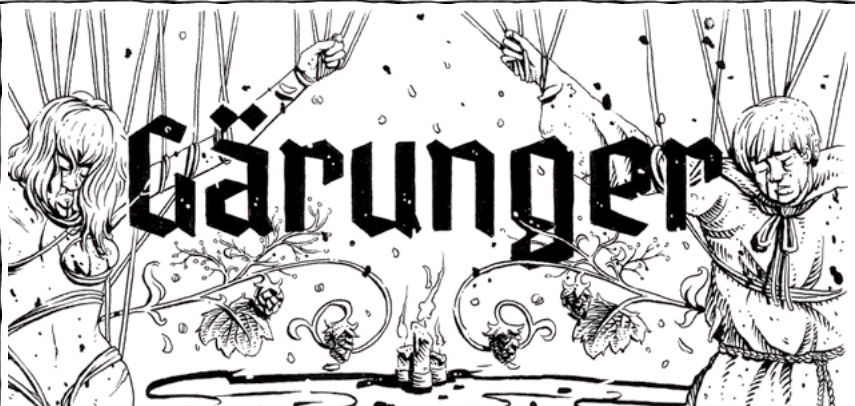
## Strange Visages

When **appearing in visions**, the Black Barm will tailor its appearance to the characters' **cultural background and knowledge**, linking beer and religion. To most Early Modern Europeans, it will often appear as a saintly brewer monk, but other possibilities include pagan deities like Dionysus, Albina, or Ninkasi; mythic figures like the Norse mead-making giantess Gunnlöd or the Finnish brewster Osmotar; or even creatures like Biersal, a traditional Germanic beer-kobold. This apparition will be **ostentatiously shrouded in supernatural light**, and will beg the infected for help. (That is, **to serve** the Black Barm.)

At present, the Black Barm's goal is (a) **retrieve and protect** an object called the **Black Rock**, and (b) **move it to a safe location** where the Company of the Scalded Shield will claim it from the characters (either cordially or by force). (See **The Company of the Scalded Shield**, page 66.)

*W'ho's it? A'fif' n'w'ard! I g'limp'se, f'ield'n' away' in f'lood'n',  
w'ith f'low'n' of w'ar'm' b'ow'ling' and f'low'n' of f'ur'w'inn'  
w'ar'm' b'ow'n' on w'ar'm' of d'el'iv'nt' b'ubbl'ng' b'ar'n'! E'g'! O'w',  
I'd g'ive w'ar'm'g'ing' to g'o f'ar'm' in A'f'at' b'l'af'f' w'ar'm'!*





The **Gärunger** (“Fermenters”) are corpses—human, Neanderthal, and animal alike—that are **fermented and reanimated by the Black Barm**. They can be created in two ways: either by being **ritually infected** with the Black Barm at the moment of death (in which case they do not rot, but instead slowly ferment into a Gärunger over a period of minutes or decades), or by the **death** of any creature currently at **Stage 4 infection**, which is transformed into a Gärunger instantly.

Gärunger technically are **not undead** (nor are they subject to any of their classic vulnerabilities). Rather, they are symbiotic living fermentations of an alchemical nature, which leave the transformed host capable of **indefinitely suspended animation**.

**B**lack Barm fermentation permanently adds 3 points to a host’s Wisdom and Intelligence (as the Black Barm partially rewires their brains for better usefulness), reduces their Charisma to 3, imposes an initiative penalty of -3, adds a bonus two hit dice or levels (for the purposes of hit points), and gives them a **bonus breath weapon attack usable up to five times a day** (and usable simultaneous to conventional attacks the character had prior to her transformation), consisting of spewing a **massive dose of Black Barm** into their enemies’ faces. They are under the **complete control** of the Black Barm. They stink of sour pickling juice and booze, but their exhalations and spew attacks smell uncannily yeasty and bready.

### Gärunger Man

*Armor* 14      *fists* 1d4  
*Movement* 60'      *Morale* 12  
*Hit Die* 2(8hp)      *Initiative* -3

### Gärunger Stag

*Armor* 8      *antler* 1d4  
*Movement* 160'      *Morale* 12  
*Hit Die* 3(12hp)      *Initiative* -3

### Gärunger Neanderthal

*Armor* 9      *fists* 1d2+1  
*Movement* 100'      *Morale* 12  
*Hit Die* 2(10hp)      *Initiative* -3

### Gärunger Rat Swarm

*Armor* 6      *bite* 1 (infection)  
*Movement* 120'      *Morale* 12  
*Hit Die* 1d3(1hp ea)      *Initiative* -3



The Black Rock is a large, cumbersome chunk of **black, porous nickel-iron meteorite** that once carried the Black Barm to Earth. It serves as the locus or “**command center**” for the Black Barm’s consciousness in the area. It is housed in a chapel in the Abbey’s catacombs—a chapel constructed for it in the depths of prehistory by the Neolithic humans and hominids who worshipped it in the area—and weighs **at least three hundred pounds**. (It should require more than one character to lift it.)

Characters with **occult training** (such as Magic-Users) or a background in metalwork may make a Skill check to realize (from the distinctive crystallization pattern visible on its broken edges) that it is of **extraterrestrial origin**. Powerful bio-geological adaptations ensure its **immunity to most normal damage**, but the Black Barm culture within it (which is the nexus of the Black Barm’s consciousness) can be “killed” by continuous exposure to **very hot fire for six hours**.

Because the Black Rock is **saturated** with an **aggressive yeast colony**, direct contact with it (i.e. with bare hands) **automatically** increases a character’s degree of infection by one stage (receiving one or more infection card(s), optionally chosen by the Referee).



*Behold what the ale does, Jehovah! The one in the depths has given us the secret of conquering death! No more do we fear Hell! We will destroy you next!*



As the characters draw near, they can smell the increasingly heady **aroma of a brewery**, doubtless familiar from their travels or sojourns in cities. As they draw closer, they smell **smoke**, the **reek of pigs** and stables, the sour, vomitous **stench of spent brewing grains** left to rot, and—if they approach from the west—the **overwhelming aroma of the roses** that grow in fields there.

Depending on the time of their arrival, they may hear monks **singing**, the clanging of the **church bell** calling monks to prayer, or simply a **profound silence** punctuated by the sounds of the Abbey's livestock and monks at work.

When characters finally catch a glimpse of the Abbey in the distance, they see a **monastic complex laid out in a simple style**, connected by tree-lined pathways. Around the complex a stone wall is visible, about nine feet tall in most places. (Local legend holds that it was built by Romans who established a “doomed garrison” there, but this is not true.) Black smoke pours from the chimney of the brewery, and monks clad in white robes work busily—rolling barrels around to rouse the yeast, tending to the livestock and fields of grain and hops within the walls, and hurrying between buildings.

✦ If a character makes a successful Architecture check from a distance, she notices that the monastery is of **typical 12<sup>th</sup>-century Cistercian design and layout**, except for the oddly anachronistic brewery near the north wall, by the front gate.

The main gate itself is a **massive bronze double door covered in verdigris** and bearing the juxtaposed images of St. Christopher miraculously bearing a child across a river, and Jesus walking on water. There is a **guard posted** behind it: a ten-year-old boy monk named Peter who is likely napping when the PCs arrive, but will inform anyone outside the gate that the Abbey grounds are closed to non-initiates (and of course, women). If they complain, he is willing to fetch an older monk to speak with them, but will first direct them to the Inn, which lies about a hundred paces north of the gate.

*Die kleine dreckige Schlampe im  
Klostergasthaus bringt mich noch ins Grab!*



The road to the Abbey is relatively safe, though there is a 10% chance of a random encounter for each half-day of travel toward the Abbey.

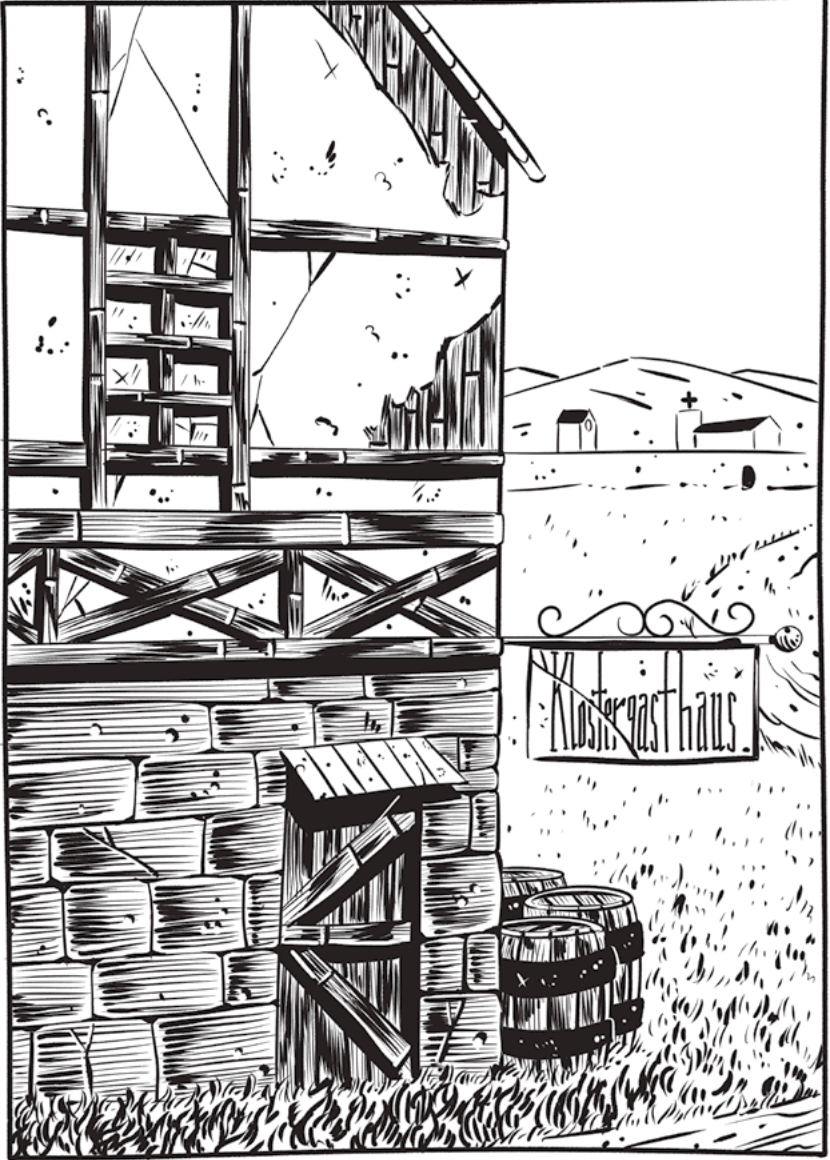
## Morning/Afternoon

- 1 Farmer.irate about lost cow.
- 2 Wounded Adventurers. Lost, half party dead.
- 3 Cow. Wandering, painted with strange writing and handprints.
- 4 A monk, wants to borrow or buy a horse. (Carrying secret letter from the Abbey to nearest big city.)
- 5 An elderly widow, glaring balefully.
- 6 Bandits. Timid, too scared to attack.
- 7 Bandits. Not timid. 5x 1<sup>st</sup> Level Fighters, 1x 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Fighter.
- 8 The Company of the Scalded Shield gallops past. (See page 66.)
- 9 Carousing villagers. Celebrating the death of a local (corrupt) tax collector.
- 10 A rabid dog. As a normal dog, but with a diseased bite attack.



## Evening/Night

- 1 Farmer. Drunken and mouthy.
- 2 Town militia leading a single adventurer—female, with a tattooed eye—in the direction of town. Claim she is a witch. (She isn't.)
- 3 Group of wandering adventurers, gathered around a butchered cow. Claim the cow attacked them.
- 4 A monk, will attempt to steal a horse. (Carrying secret letter from the Abbey to nearest big city.)
- 5 A child leading an old woman home, coddling her with gentle words.
- 6 Beggars. Really failed, cowardly bandits, booted from their gang.
- 7 A cluster of dead bandits, their bodies looted. One has a map tattooed onto his arm, which has been halfway severed.
- 8 The Company of the Scalded Shield. (See page 66.) Camped, gathered round a fire.
- 9 Carousing, incoherent villagers. Still celebrating the death of a local (corrupt) tax collector.
- 10 A rabid dog. As a normal dog, but with a diseased bite attack. (Wounded: arrow in one flank.)



The main door opens into the Inn's tavern, a **dark but cheerful space** with clean wooden floors and a low ceiling, crammed with a hodgepodge collection of mismatched chairs and tables. Most days, those chairs and tables sit **empty, but for a few locals** clustered together and muttering to one another. In any season (or time of day) in which a fire would be lit, the air within is spiced by the mild aroma of burning chestnut logs, and if the innkeeper, Master Philip, isn't otherwise occupied, he will holler a friendly greeting in the local German dialect at all who enter.

Rumors circulate about the Abbey's beers inducing **miracle cures, visions, and so forth**. Some locals are skeptical, while the more devout among them mistakenly imagine a holy, divine origin for these magical effects... but the truth is that the Black Barm has, for centuries on end, been experimenting on human brains and bodies, refining its ability to control and modify them. The "magical" effects of the Abbey's beers are simply a **side-effect of this experimentation**.

Random Ale Effects (16)

Occasionally (10% chance) an ale consumed inside (and only inside) the tavern will have a **surprise random magical effect**, as follows (d6):

1. **Cure Disease** (any one physical disease) or **Remove Curse**, whichever benefits the drinker more.
2. **Telepathy** (drinker can hear others' thoughts for 1d10 minutes, though of course they cannot be sure without checking whether the effect is real or imagined)
3. **Healing** (cures 1d6hp of non-burn damage)
4. **Wisdom** (cures insanity in the insane; grants non-insane drinker a temporary 1d4 boost in Wisdom (to a maximum of 18) for 1d10 days)
5. **Dogs' Ears** (drinker now has extremely sensitive hearing; -1 penalty to all Stealth skill checks for attempts to sneak in her presence for 1d20+4 hours)
6. **Cats' Eyes** (drinker now can see in the dark for 1d20+4 hours)

**Note** that drinking any ale at the Abbey—magical or otherwise—represents **concentrated exposure to the Black Barm**, necessitating a **saving throw versus Magic** to resist increased (or initial) infection. The Referee may demand a saving throw per hour of carousing, or one saving throw for the full evening. (But there's no point in having characters reach Stage 4 before the Abbey even Falls.)

*The First bottle taught me hunger... the second, rage. The third gave me power, and the fourth converted me to the truth!*

## NPCs

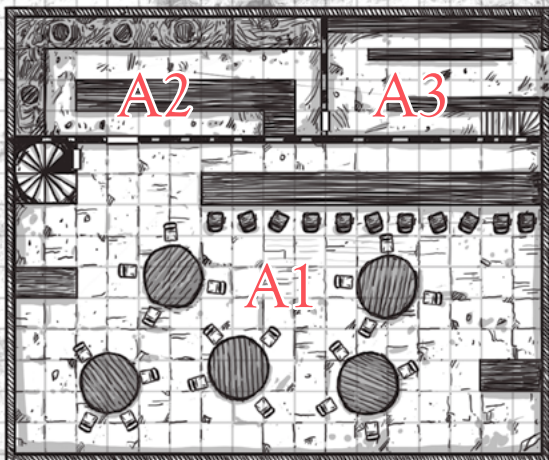
**Master Philip** is the innkeeper, a widower and former monastery brewery worker (0 Level Human, 3hp). He's friendly, but doesn't gossip. Currently at Stage 4 infection, and will rush to the Catacombs when the Abbey falls unless forcibly restrained.

**Jane** is Master Philip's daughter, a **wearry, bored girl of seventeen** (0 Level Human, 4hp) who does all the cleaning and cooking at the inn. She is unusual in being immune to Black Barm Infection. Out of boredom, she trusts occasionally with several of the Abbey's monks. During the Fall of the Abbey, Jane huddles in her room, terrified.

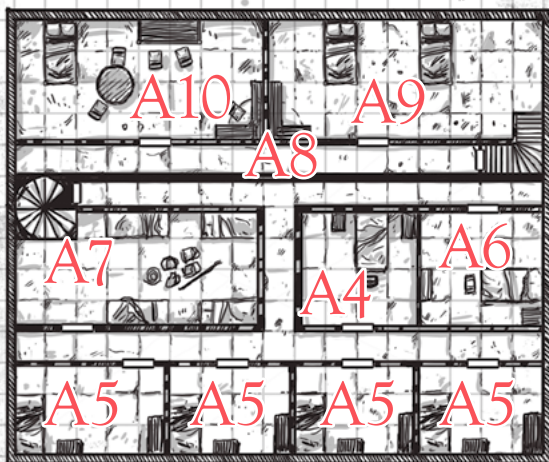
**Willi** and **Catherine** are a pair of (0 Level) **rumor-mongering locals** (respectively at Infection Stages 2 and 3) and tavern regulars. Willi is hard of hearing but chatty, and Catherine tends to be quiet until invited to speak. **Each claims extensive adventuring experience**—Willi, as a soldier in the service of the Pope, and Catherine as a professional witch-hunter—but literate PCs will quickly recognize the pair are generally know-nothings whose accounts are recycled from folktales, poems, and popular novels. When the Abbey Falls, they likely will already have gone home, or will be passed out in the tavern.

## Rumors (d6)

- 1. Clerical Strife!** A group of monks have been caught **stealing, corrupting local maidens, plotting the Abbot's overthrow, or performing "unspeakable rites"** in hidden crannies within the monastery.
- 2. Artifact!** The magical beers of the monastery derive their power from a **holy relic**—the preserved nose of the actual Saint Christopher—which is immersed in one of the Abbey Brewery's fermentation vats.
- 3. Filthy Lucre!** The monastery's **coffers** are unimaginably full, its wealth ill-gotten, and all of it is hidden in the catacombs. The corrupt Abbot **rolls around naked** in the piled coins nightly after evening prayers.
- 4. Exile!** Master Philip used to work in the brewhouse, and was **banished** not because of age, but because **he knows a secret** that made the monks **fear him**.
- 5. He's a She!** The Abbot is in fact **secretly a woman** (and she keeps the monks as a male harem used in the Abbey's **constant, secret orgies**).
- 6. Haunted!** **Ghostly figures** have been seen around the monastery over the years: charming, terrifying, seductive, pitiful, always begging for help or threatening those who see them. They **sometimes possess people**, too.



Ground Floor



Upper Floor



1 square = 5 feet

*I feel it inside me, creeping from muscle to muscle, fattening itself on my blood and fear, and hear it calling me from the darkness below!*

**A1 Tavern.** A homey, warm, if jumbled, room. Wood-lined walls, warm hearth. A **dull-edged sword** (never used by anyone in the town, least of all Master Philip) hangs on the wall behind the bar-counter.

**A2 Kitchen.** Just a normal tavern kitchen, with **wood-fired stoves** along the outer wall. Pots, pans, knives, a few stoves, and stains all over the place, none of particular interest.

**A3 Pantry and Cellar.** Plenty of **preserved foods** line the shelves in this dark, gloomy pantry: jams, pickled vegetables, duck and pork confits, and—in the cellar—many aged beers, and sausages and hams hung up to cure. In the adjoining cellar, which is full of bottled beer, the chance of finding a brew with a random magical effect is 15%.

If the characters search the cellar, after one turn someone (chosen randomly) will stumble upon **something strange** (say, a jar of pigs' eyes, or a jug of pickled octopus tentacles) and must successfully roll a **saving throw versus Paralysis** or **cry out in surprise** loudly enough to attract the attention of anyone in the Tavern.

**A4 Mélusine's Lodgings.** Standard Inn bedchambers, with **expensive clothing tossed about**. The occupant, a **traveling French scholar and Magic-User** named Mélusine Sainte-Catherine, is slightly drunk and dozing on the bed in a flimsy nightdress. If any character who enters fails a Stealth skill check, she has a **50% chance of waking**, and will assume they have entered the room to steal from her, or attack her. Either way, she will be *very* unhappy.

## Mélusine

Armor 12

Movement 90'

Hit Die 2(4hp)

silver dagger 1d4

Morale 8

**2<sup>nd</sup> Level Magic-User.** (Only spell currently memorized is *Shield*.) **10sp**, a silver dagger (ornately engraved, worth **30sp**), a spell book with three random first-level Magic-User spells, a partly-damaged set of portable alchemical equipment (**250sp** value), and a book titled *Unausprechlich Geschichten* (*Unspeakable Tales*; see page 26).

**A5 (Multiple): Empty lodging chambers.** For all unoccupied rooms, during daytime there is a 20% chance of **finding Jane lounging about or napping** there. She will either play defensive, turn diffident, or act the part of the simpleminded country girl fascinated by adventurers. In any case, she will inevitably ask or challenge the characters to **tell her of their adventures**. Any character doing so successfully will gain an extra 100xp at the end of the adventure, or 150xp if she engages in colorful, dramatic exaggeration in the telling. In exchange, Jane will recount a rumor (see page 22).

A search of any **unoccupied room** has a 10% chance of yielding loot (hidden behind some furniture or under the mattress) for each turn of searching. If the characters find nothing in a given room after three rolls (thirty minutes of searching), there is no misplaced/hidden treasure in the room. (Reroll any duplicate roll results. See page 27.)

The following room descriptions assume nothing unusual has yet happened at the Monastery. (See **The Abbey Falls**, page 29.)

**A6 The Characters' Room.** If the characters are staying together at the Inn, this is "their" room. (If they are regulars, this is their usual room.) If characters search it while lodged in the room, they will **mysteriously find** one valued item **lost** by one of the characters **in a previous adventure...** even if they have never visited the Inn before, or even if the item was lost in some distant locale. If they are not lodging in the room, it will be unoccupied and contain no treasure.

**A7 The Company of the Scalded Shield's Room.** A very large room rented out to a **trio of adventurers** who flamboyantly call themselves The Company of the Scalded Shield (see page 66). Between the four bunks sit several **assorted, very tattered packs of adventuring equipment**, mainly ten days' worth of preserved food (for three people) and many bottles of the Abbey's beer. The party is not present.

**A8 Family Home.** Master Philip and Jane live in the **nondescript** rooms adjoining this unadorned hallway.

**A9 Master Philip's room.** A simple bedroom, unremarkable except for a purse containing 4d12sp, which is Master Philip's **meager life savings**, hidden inside the mattress.

**A10 Jane's room.** Under the mattress in Jane's room there are (more) **concealed love letters from various monks**, plus small **tokens of affection**, including 1d4 pieces of silver jewelry worth 1d20+10sp each. Characters reading the lecherous love letters (from different monks, as the varying handwriting indicates) will find

occasional references to a **terrifying and powerful entity** that secretly lives within the monastery complex and controls both the monks and the monastery alike. This mysterious entity is never referred to by any name in the notes, but simply as "It."

For every three minutes the characters spend in Jane's room, there is a cumulative 5% chance that she **will walk in on them** snooping around, reading her letters, handling her treasure, and so on. (That is, the chances of her catching them go from 1 in 20 during the first three minutes, to 2 in 20 the following three minutes, to 3 in 20 the next three minutes, and so on.)

**If Jane is confronted about her affairs**, she will **immediately go on the offensive**, accusing characters of stealing from her; her father will believe such accusations, without pausing to consider how she came to possess such goods, at least until later. She may, however, eventually **summon a group of locals** to seize, search, and punish (or, if necessary, murder) the PCs.

**If the characters threaten or roughly handle Jane**, she will **cry to her father** for help. If he is within (or outside, but near) the Inn and hears her (60% chance) he will come as soon as she calls, arriving 1d6 minutes later, accompanied by 1d10 random slightly inebriated locals, 0 Level Humans (1d4 of whom are **armed with various rusty farm implements**).

Mélusine's

*Bruder Friedrich ist tot!  
Hüte dich vor dem Hopfenwürger!*



Mélusine's book *Unaussprechlich Geschichten*, or Unspeakable Tales, is crammed with local occult/supernatural folklore and fairytales.

If the characters read the book, they will come across **two stories of note**, both featuring **monasteries**, and (unlike the rest of the tales) accompanied by excited scribbles in the margins. These scribbles essentially make it clear that a reader—evidently Mélusine—believes the two monasteries are both in fact The Abbey of St. Christopher, and that parts of the story are **based on historical events**.

The first is a tale in the middle of the text, about **a bizarre tragedy involving a saint, a witch, and the son that the witch bore the devil**. As the story goes, the witch was **spurned** as a girl by the saint—who, even in youth, felt drawn to holy orders, but who also sensed a **wickedness** not yet blooming in the girl. Out of rage at being spurned, she **sold her soul to the devil** (and bore him a child) in exchange for **magical powers**. She used these powers to avenge her broken heart, attempting to corrupt the saint and failing, but ultimately martyring him. However, a lifetime later, when she grew old, **the son she had borne the devil** enacted the ultimate betrayal: he, too, **left her for the Church**, joining a monastery nearby and saving his soul. When he died and ascended to heaven, the evil witch died of a doubly-broken heart, and all the people of the land celebrated for a full year.

At the back of the book, another tale concerns **the wanderings of Saint Meinhard**. Among the many episodes in this tale is one where the Saint vanquishes **an evil pagan cult of drunken stone-worshippers**, and banishes them into the bowels of the Earth for eternity, staying long enough to found a cathedral on the spot. Distorted though it is from retellings and exaggerations, the tale actually concerns the **founding of the Abbey of St. Christopher**, as Mélusine seems to have realized, judging by the illegible but excited **scribbles in the margins** of this section of the tale.

(For the **truths** hidden in these stories, see **The Grimoire of Crimson**, page 70.)

Fire Fire Fire, glorious Fire eating the bones of this fucking church! Take that, Christ, you shitten mercy-monger! I serve a better god now!



# Inn Room Loot

1. **1d6sp** in a **coin purse** embossed with an unfamiliar but memorable coat of arms (Lions Rampant Combatant).
2. **A pair of silver chalices** (tarnished and slightly damaged, but nonetheless exquisitely crafted, and worth 30sp for the pair) **stolen from the Abbey a generation ago** and left hidden beneath the floorboards of this room all the years since. The reward for their return to the Abbey (assuming a monk or local old enough to recognize them can be found) will be **permanent "friend of the Abbey"** status, offering free lodging and beer for any visit, and local fame.
3. **A spicy love note** dropped behind the headboard of the bed—detailing **all manner of lechery** in simplified, crude language—from an unspecified monk to Jane, with **eerie drawings** of "the god in the crypt" on the back.
4. **A monk's cassock**. It is soiled and still stinks of its former owner, who **stuffed it into a cranny in the wall** after changing into layperson's clothing stolen from the Company of the Scalded Shield's equipment stash before fleeing toward town.
5. **A bottle of murky, beery-smelling fluid**. This is a sample of The Black Barm, magically "put to sleep" by **an alchemist who disappeared mysteriously** weeks before. (He was infected by the Black Barm, but briefly reasserted control of his body and fled immediately, never to return. His corpse lies **hidden in the woods** nearby the monastery.) It adds 1000sp to the value of any alchemical laboratory, and reduces the cost of production of any magical potion by 30%... but with each use, it has a 5% chance of awakening, leading to **an outbreak of Black Barm Infections** in the vicinity of the laboratory.
6. **An abandoned copy of Sebastian Brant's *Das Narrenschiff*** (*The Ship of Fools*, 1494), a popular satirical poem, with **scathing commentary** in the margins. One set of comments specifically concerns an **unspeakable conspiracy or scandal** (i.e. adventure hook) involving a well-connected and/or powerful figure in the nearest big city. Also, in the margin of the first poem, "On Useless Books," there is a reference to some sort of **"Crimson Grimoire,"** and, barely legible beside it is scrawled (in Italian): "The Abbey of St. Christopher?" and the name of the nearest large town or city.



*you vile monks! How dare you plot against me! I know everything!*

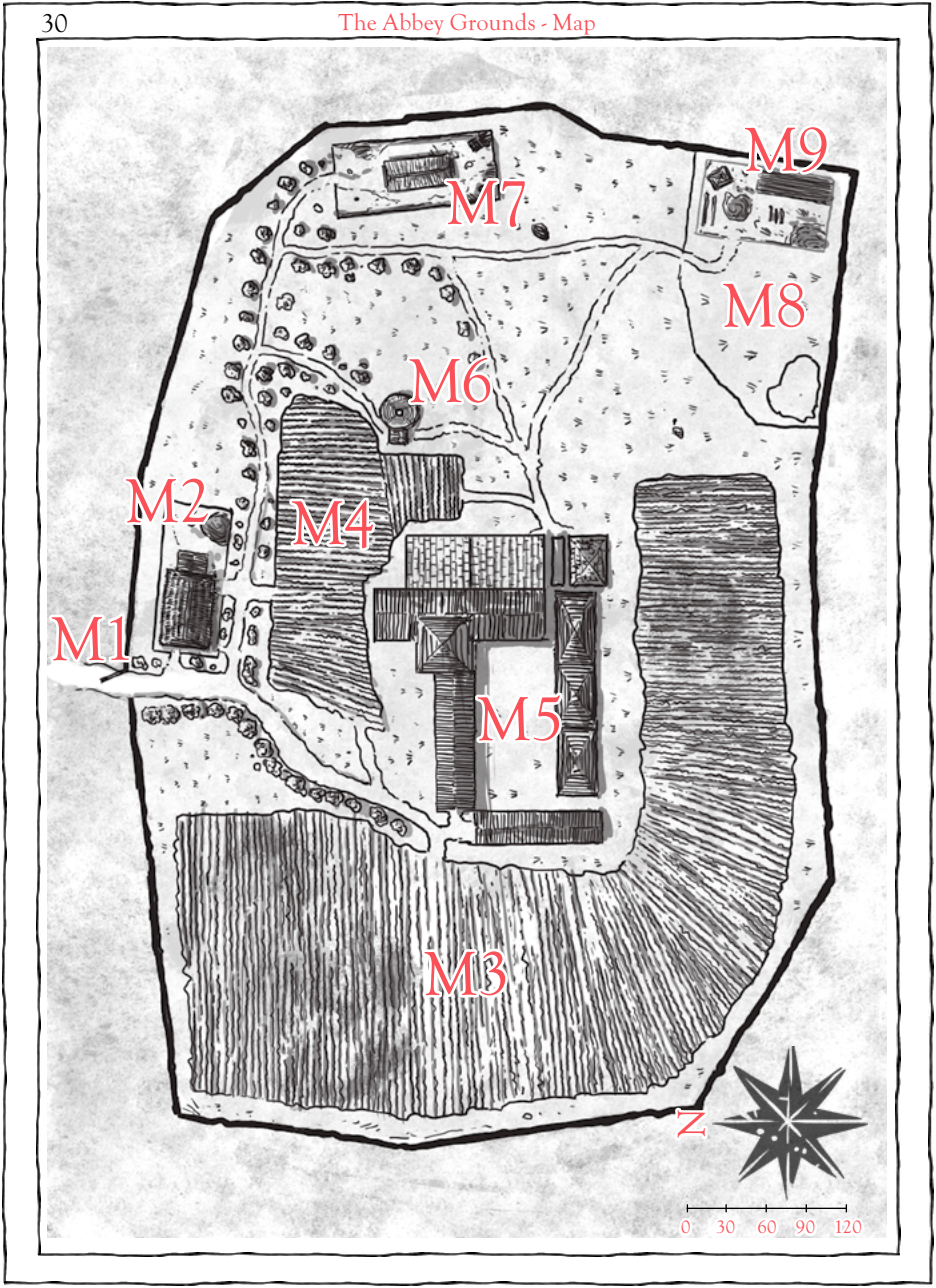
**A**s written, this adventure assumes that characters may (or may not) visit the Inn and Tavern more than once before the main adventure begins, but **will not broach the walls of the Abbey until it falls.**

**R**eferees whose players wish to send their characters into the Abbey earlier—**as burglars, initiates to the Cistercian Order, part of a group of visiting Papal dignitaries or investigators, or a band of adventurers hiding out or trying (unsuccessfully) to retire from the wayfarer's life—may have to improvise** for a session or two, or simply accelerate the timeline for the Fall of the Abbey. Either option could produce a fascinating session or two of play for any Referee who has the chops to wing it, but are **beyond the scope of this text.**

**F**rom the outside, the first sign of trouble is when a number of **fires break out** across the Abbey grounds (noted in the text that follows). Then it becomes apparent that the monks seem to have split into **two warring factions.** Smoke clogs the air, and the **cries of the dying** mingle with the **clatter of weapons,** the **shouting** of threats and taunts, and the intonement of **desperate prayers.** Many monks on both sides **die in the ensuing battle,** while **others flee** into the countryside. Frightened, most of the Inn's guests (as well as the host) remain in their rooms, waiting out the conflagration.

- ⊕ If the characters are lodged at the Inn of the Monastery when the Abbey falls** (the optimal situation), they **wake to the screams of dying monks and to the smell of smoke and burning flesh.** Much of the battle is over, and most of the monks (of both factions) have retreated.
- ⊕ If the characters are within the Monastery or Brewery prior to the fall** (for example, as burglars), they see **a bewildering battle between various monks**—all 0 Level characters—as all hell breaks loose around them. The skirmish unfolds mostly in some other part of the complex—the Referee will have to make adjustments to suit the circumstances—but the characters should **witness one battle at least,** and ought to have at least **one major fire to deal with** as well.
- ⊕ If the characters are traveling toward the Abbey when it falls** (not recommended unless the locale is already familiar to them), they see a **pillar of smoke** and hear **distant screams and the tumult of a dreadful battle,** arriving only after the fighting has largely died off. The party may (at the Referee's discretion) encounter **1d4+1 monks fleeing the monastery.** They should be at **varying stages of infection** (roll 1d4 for each monk) and should regale the PCs with **lurid tales of the horror** at the Abbey. (Monks at Stage 4 infection are under direct control of the Black Barm, and will definitely be up to no good.)

*Do you think I'm blind, writing  
all your wicked plans upon this  
wall in plain sight?*



The grounds of the Abbey of St. Christopher normally look like those of any well-to-do monastery: **well-tended, tranquil, and verdant**, with a particularly **fruitful hopyard and barley field** within its walls.

As mentioned earlier, a successful Architecture check reveals that the monastery is of **typical 12<sup>th</sup>-century Cistercian design** and layout, **except for the brewery**, about which details are discussed in **The Brewery** (page 44).

During and after the Fall of the Abbey, things look **somewhat different**. The gate has been left **thrown open**, and like many of the monks, the boy has fled. The smoke-clotted air reeks of burnt flesh and wood **beneath a dark, roiling sky**, and the flames that burn in several places within the complex—flickering through the church windows, consuming the squat building to the west of it, and more—cast **eerily dancing patterns of lights and shadows** upon the surrounding grounds. **Vague movement** is visible in the half-burnt field of barley, and the **blood-chilling screams of horses** ring out from somewhere nearby.

The locale descriptions below assume the characters are visiting **after the Fall of the Abbey**.

**M1 Entry Gate.** The gate—a **large bronze door covered in verdigris** and bearing the juxtaposed images of St. Christopher bearing a child across a river, and Jesus walking on water—is located approximately a hundred paces down a path running south from the Inn of the Monastery. Though sturdy looking, it has been left about **one-third of the way open**.

**M2 The Brewery** is a building laid out in **surprisingly familiar, modern style**, unlike most Abbey Breweries of the time. (See page 44.)

**M3 Barley Field.** Any character with a background in farming will have at least seen barley plants, and will recognize that **the scorched barley growing here is abnormally large**; it is still burning in places at the north end, but the fire has almost gone out on its own.

Searching for 1-2 turns will reveal **a patch of ground saturated with fresh blood and bits of ground meat and bone**. Further searching of the soil for 1-2 rounds yields fragments of bone throughout the area. These are the remains of **Gärunger** (human and otherwise) who were fished out of **The Pit** in **The Catacombs** (see location U9, page 63), sacrificed near **The Black Rock** by Tedrick and a few other under the Black Barm's control, as part of its **inexplicable experiments**. After the rite, their remains were chopped up, and then spread on the barley field.

**If characters attempt to detect by magical means the source of this material**, it will be **unclear** (Gärunger are not one creature but two, living in a bizarre magical-symbiotic relationship).

**If characters taste the barley or touch the Gärunger remains**, they suffer exposure to the Black Barm, risking increased infection. (**Saving throw versus Magic** at -2 penalty to resist.)

**If the PCs search the barley field**, they each have a **10% chance per turn** of finding one of the following things (d4):

A severed

*Why does nobody remember Brother Jesge but me? Christ, did they wipe him from their mind after they betrayed him? Was it vile witchcraft made them do it?!*

1. **A severed human foot.** Unremarkable except that it seems to have been **hacked off with a knife or axe**, rather than cut off in a single slice.
2. **A small burlap sack covered in barley straw, containing 3d10 silver coins and a couple of small stolen religious relics** (a miniature painting worth 100sp, and a golden crucifix worth 500sp) **discarded here by a fleeing monk** during the Fall of the Abbey.
3. **A small mound of earth from which the corner of a wooden box protrudes.** The box contains **The Bloody Tooth**, a **large enchanted molar that is covered in wet, warm blood**. It confers complete **immunity to disease** (including Black Barm Infection) at the cost of **terrible nightmares** and a cumulative (albeit temporary) loss of **1hp and 1 point of Constitution per day** of ownership. (*For more information, see The Bloody Tooth, page 69.*)
4. **A discarded scythe** left amid the barley, **covered in a whitish fuzz**. (A non-Black Barm yeast colony.)

**M4 Hopyard.** A familiar sight to most European characters from brewing cultures, this area is filled with hop vines neatly trained to poles and threads, though **the hops here are of an unusually pungent, weirdly large-coned strain**—indeed, they are double the normal size, and an unsettling sight to anyone with experience in brewing.

Up close, the **overpowering floral stink** of the hops is noticeable even despite all the smoke from the buildings burning nearby.

Three malevolent **Hopfenwürger** (“Hops Strangler”) vines grow among the other hop vines in the yard (H). These **mutant hop vines** are unnaturally long and thick, and rapidly mobile; their hop flowers emit a **highly acidic vapor** which is also saturated with Black Barm spores.

## Hopfenwürger Vine

**Armor** 10                      **strangling** 1d4 (50'r)  
**Movement** 60'            **fumes** 1d6 (10'r)  
**Hit Die** 4(24hp)            **Morale** 12

Additional Acid Hop Fumes attack of 10' radius for 1d6 damage (victims save versus Breath Weapon twice: once for half damage, and once to resist increased Black Barm Infection). The strangling attack has a range of 50' radius from where the Hopfenwürger Vine grows.

Note that the **Hopfenwürger's root system** is at item **H** of location **C1** (in the secret tunnel leading from **The Church** to **The Catacombs**, *see page 38*). Even if the vines and the roots of the Hopfenwürger are destroyed, each plant will not be killed until its (defenseless) **rhizome** is dug up and burnt to cinders.

**M5 The Main Complex.** Grey stone walls loom before the characters. During or after the Fall of the Monastery, **pillars of black smoke** pour up from multiple fires. (*See page 34.*)

**M6 The Oasthouse** is an **oddly conical-shaped building** filled with racks above a softly crackling oven. A crop of the Abbey's **unusually large**

hops

*I have seen the void flief of hell, the cold dark  
emptiness teeming with fears and silence! I have  
feared through that nothingness, far from the light of  
God... and expelled!*

hops have been spread in thin layers in the racks to be dried for storage and use. Contact with the hops exposes a PC to Black Barm Infection. (Saving throw versus Magic to resist.)

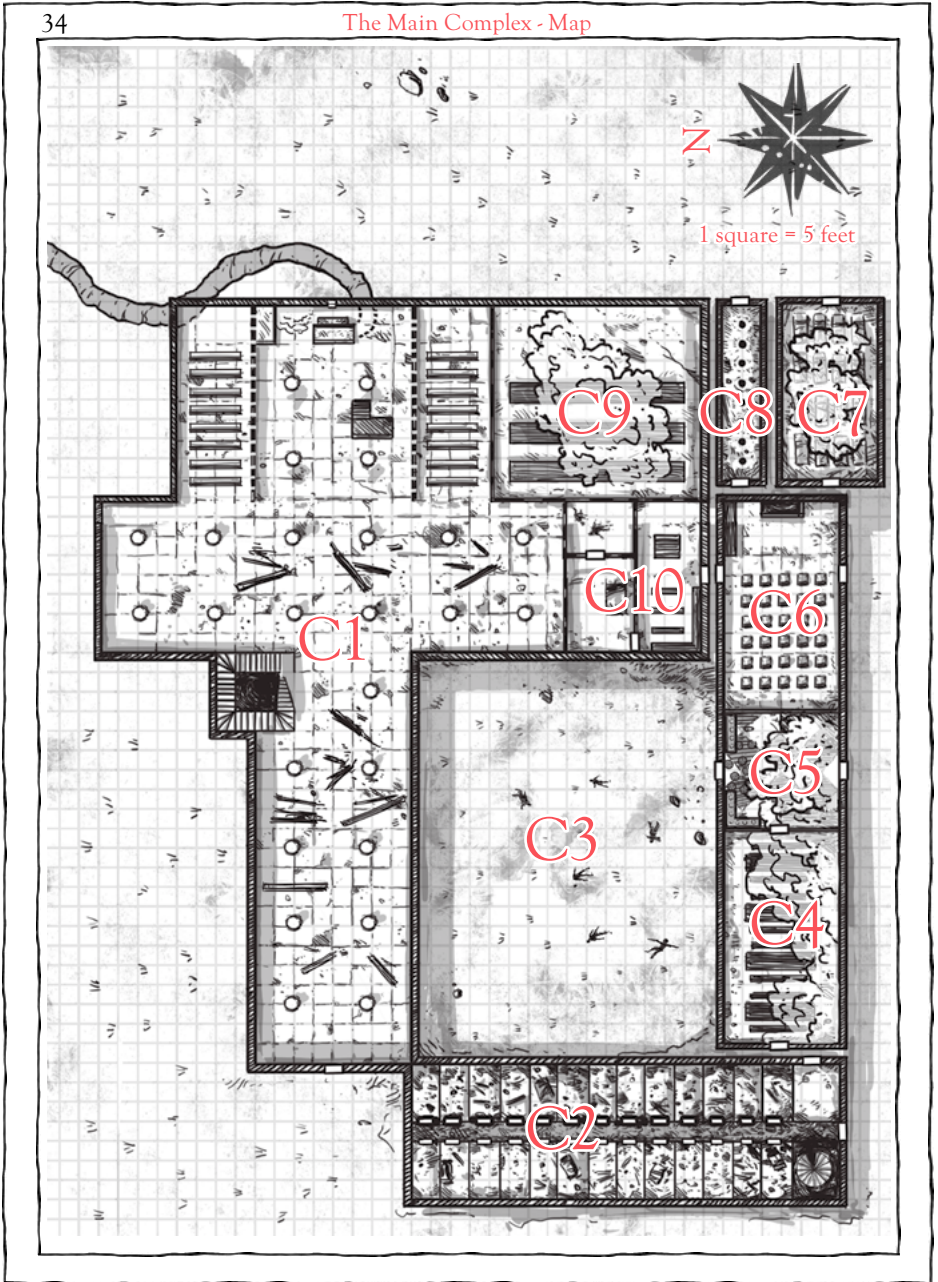


**M7 The Stables** are cramped and in need of some basic repairs, but are relatively well-provisioned and clean (for stables). After the Fall of the Abbey, **most of the twelve horses normally kept here are missing**, having been used by fleeing monks or left inside the brewery. Only one, quite panicked, remains in its stall, a dead brother—**felled by a frenzied kick to the head**—in a pool of blood before it.

**M8 Pigsty.** This is a **muddy, penned-in plot** where the monastery's (now missing) pigs usually root, run around, and wallow in the muck. **Heaped in the southwest corner** of the sty is **a brewday's worth of spent grains** deposited here as pig feed. (Unless the Abbey falls in the wintertime, the stink will be profound.)

**M9 Pig Shed.** A **vilely stinking** single-story structure, the pig shed is built of **cracked, blackened bricks**, as if it were built from stone sourced from the ruins of some burnt-down ruin. A **few dozen pigs**, terrified by the smoke and noise emerging from the Main Complex, are **hiding** within this shed, collectively shivering in disturbing silence.

Also hiding here is **a single uninfected and terrified monk, Brother Alfonsus** (a 0 Level Human), who carries a kitchen knife and **will attempt to cut his own throat** immediately as soon as anyone but a pig enters the shed. If his life is somehow spared, he will flee the PCs at the first opportunity, believing them **agents of the "devil"** that he's certain reigns in the catacombs. Because he is truly convinced of this, his terrified explanation is **quite incoherent**.



*What is this wicked, forbidden word that has sprung to vile life in my skull, wriggling and moving through my brain?*



The Abbey's main complex stands at the center of the grounds, and is **dominated by the Church and its tower**. Clearly **the oldest building** in the area, the Church is built in a very simple Medieval style predating the founding of the Cistercian order. The smaller buildings clustered around it are built in approximately the same style—and from the same granite—but show **signs of recent renovations**.

**A**fter the Fall of the Abbey:

- ✦ Parts of the complex are **on fire**, most notably the **Church (C1)** and the **Aedificatum (C9)** attached to it to the southeast. **Dancing flames are visible** through the Church's **grey-and-black stained glass windows**.
- ✦ Smoke pours up into the air from a half-dozen other places within the complex, so thick that the top of the tower cannot be seen from the ground.
- ✦ The church **tower bell tolls steadily**, filling the complex with its **ominous ringing**.



*Why does it whisper itself so loudly at me,  
fighting to be released?*



**C1** **The Church.** Normally just a smallish stone Medieval church, a fire was lit in the northeast corner (in the Aisle, just north of the altar) during the Fall of the Abbey. Vast, ominous shadows dance eerily across scattered corpses, simple liturgical paintings, and high contemplative arches.

✚ Characters who look carefully at the bell tower before entering will glimpse what looks like the silhouette of a hanged man swinging by the neck—but struggling for his life—just beneath the bell.

**A** **Church Tower Staircase.** A badly injured, terrified monk (Brother Bertram (0 Level Human, 1hp remaining)) lies curled up behind the stairs. Unless found, he will remain in hiding. He fears the party is involved in the plottings of “Tedrick the Traitor.” He’s too weak to accompany the PCs, and will answer their questions in a

way that ensures his own survival. (For example, sending characters into the Catacombs via the hidden entrance below the Altar (B), to die in the grip of the Hopfenwürger Roots.) If healed, he will attempt to leave, or bide his time until he can do so.

Three flights up in the Church Tower, one monk hanged with the rope used to toll the bell has fermented into a Gärunger and is struggling to free himself. If freed by the PCs, he will attack them immediately.

## Gärunger Monk

Armor 14                      fists 1d3  
 Movement 60'                Morale 12  
 Hit Die 2(12hp)              Initiative -3

Additional 5x/day breath weapon attack (save versus Breath Weapon to resist increased Black Barm Infection).



**B Altar.** Dead monk flung across it, reaching toward the reliquary (E). A gold-plated crucifix (worth 150sp) hangs behind it. **An entryway to the Catacombs, is hidden beneath the altar stone.** Any non-novice monk (including Brother Bertram) knows the dangers that lie beyond it, and that the safest route is through the **Brewery**.

✠ Prying up the altar stone requires a **combined Strength of 50 points** and successful Skill checks (Open Doors) for all characters involved. Beneath it is a **ladder leading twenty feet down**, to a 5' wide passageway. This is the only way to open the door, since **the lever in the Pulpit (G) has been disabled**.

**C Sacristy.** **Sacramental goblet and plate** (gold-plated tin, worth 20sp).

**D Dropped Rosary.** Lost among the pews in the southern aisle, it is **beaded with tiny rubies**, worth 500sp.

**E Reliquary.** A small **glass display case** set into the wall, containing an unmarked, mummified human finger knuckle wrapped in grubby white silk. *Detect Magic* reveals powerful enchantment; any local or Brother of the Abbey (including the dead, if prompted by a *Speak with Dead* spell) will call it **The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher**. It confers on the bearer **immunity to the effects of heat and fire**; unfortunately, the bearer also develops **raging antipathy toward all Magic-Users** and wants to destroy spell books on sight. (See *page 69 for more information*.)

**F Goblet Corpse.** A dead monk clutches a bloodstained, gold-plated communion goblet (worth 80sp).

Raised

*Who painted the mural in the wall? The Crucifix? I know  
 what was plotted against the Abbot, and I know what  
 was so faithful, and I want nothing of it for him!*

**G** **Raised Pulpit.** Poorly-concealed beneath the pulpit's bookstand is a lever that would normally trigger the altar stone to pivot upward, revealing the hidden entryway (B).

- ✦ Characters searching the pulpit suffer a -1 penalty to their Search skill roll to find the lever if the Church is still on fire. If the fire is out, apply a +1 bonus to the roll.
- ✦ The lever mechanism has been deactivated from within the tunnel: triggering it has no effect.

**H** **The Root-Clogged Passage.** Past the desiccated remnants of violently chopped root segments awaits a vast, tangled growth of bone-white roots that have swelled to fill the hallway. They have grown more aggressive since Abbot Reiner's party visited several weeks earlier. These are the roots of the three **Hopfenwürger** plants that grow directly above this locale (see M4, **The Hopyard**, page 32).

## Hopfenwürger Roots

*Armor* 8 *crushing* 1d4 (30'r)  
*Movement* 60' *choking* special  
*Hit Die* 5(34hp)

On the first successful hit, the vine **seizes and constricts the victim**. The following round, unless she has dealt this root 4hp of damage (incapacitating it), a successful **saving throw versus Paralysis** is required to break the vine's hold. Otherwise the character takes 1d4hp of choking damage as the roots **penetrate her mouth, nose, and throat**. After each unsuccessful saving throw, this **choking damage increases** by one die type: 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and finally 1d20 per round, until the vine's hold is broken or the character is unconscious. Treat the combined roots of all three plants as one monster. Hopfenwürger Roots take double damage from all fire-based attacks.

Note: even if both the vines (M4) and the roots of the **Hopfenwürger** are destroyed, each plant will not be killed until its (defenseless) **rhizome is dug up and burnt to cinders**. The rhizomes can, however, be **replanted and will sprout vines bearing unusually large hops**, though in the absence of Black Barm, they will not attain **Hopfenwürger** status.





**C2** The Dormitory contains the cells for all the Abbey's monks save the Abbot.

✚ It is filled with **smoke and the reek of spilled blood**, its single long hallway dark and abandoned. The **mangled corpses** of several monks lie scattered throughout. Some rooms are burnt; others have just been ransacked.

✚ A *Speak With Dead* spell will reveal them mostly **faithful to the Abbot**, and most of them will either rail in Latin against "**Tedrick the Traitor**," or **warn the characters to leave** unless they wish to be consumed from within by "the evil below." They will also **beg for one last beer** to be poured into their corpse's mouths. The Black Barm hopes to **gain a few Gärunger** this way.

**J** **Brother Ludwig's cell.** A former adventurer (2<sup>nd</sup> Level Fighter) **clubbed unconscious** by Tedrick's compatriots and **left for dead**. If revived, he will try to convince the PCs to **join him in storming the Catacombs** to kill Brother Tedrick "the Traitor"; if they are already headed there, he will offer to join them as a **temporary henchman**.

## Dormitory Treasures (d10)

- 1-4 No salvageable treasure
- 5 Tattered, filthy clothing. (A monastic robe, sandals.)
- 6 1d6 **hidden** silver pieces.
- A religious object of negligible value, such as a **cheap wooden rosary** or a small crucifix.
- 8 A religious book, but not the Bible.
- 9 A vernacular Bible filled with **baffling illegible scrawlings**.
- 10 A stash of **pornographic drawings**.

## Brother Ludwig

*Armor* 11                      *club* 1d6  
*Movement* 120'            *Morale* 8  
*Hit Die* 2(10hp)

2<sup>nd</sup> level fighter. Prayer book. Rosary(1sp). Wounded. Normally has 10hp.



Brother

*Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a signature or note, located at the bottom of the page.*

**K** **Brother Adso's Cell.** A corpse lies on the floor beside the bed in this trashed room.

- ✚ Brother Adso's corpse is **not** fermenting into a **Gärunger**.
- ✚ It clutches an **unsettlingly illustrated diary** detailing **visions and dreams of apelike succubi** "abusing" him sexually and force-feeding him Abbey ale, while a **divine, luminous brewer-monk** whom he called "Satan" looks on.
- ✚ The diary **mentions, but does not elaborate on, a cure for Black Barm Infection**, mentioning only that "While God is beneficent, sometimes other measures are necessary to attain salvation..."

**L** **Brother Friedrich's Cell.** In one corner, a monk in a bloodstained white robe **hangs from a hook nailed into the wall**. The hook pierces both his clothing and his flesh, emerging beneath his right clavicle.

- ✚ This corpse, formerly called Brother Friedrich, is **currently fermenting** into a **Gärunger**. It will **reanimate 1d6 rounds after the PCs enter** (or immediately if touched). Black foam (loaded with Black Barm) drips from its wounds.
- ✚ **Bare-handed contact with the corpse** necessitates the usual **saving throw versus Magic** to resist further infection. **Touching the dripping foam** adds a -2 penalty to the saving throw.
- ✚ The Black Barm is **curious about the PCs**, but also **considers them a potential threat** to its survival. When

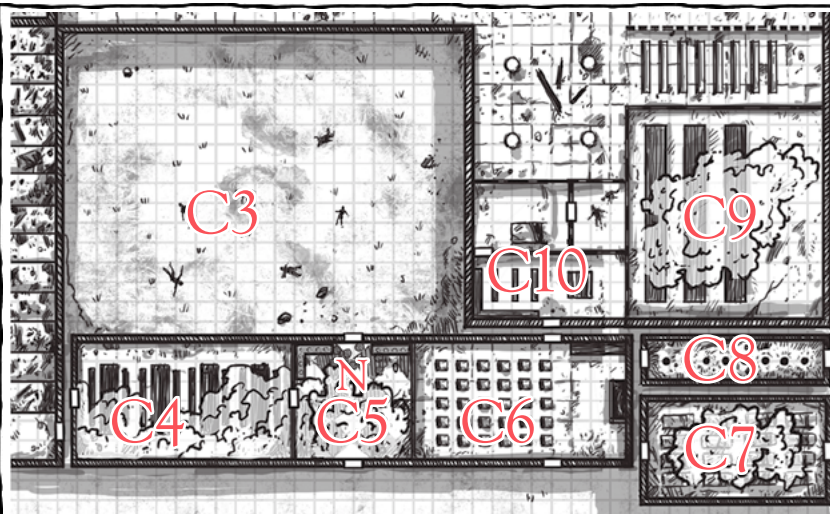
the Gärunger reanimates, roll on the following table to determine its behavior:

- 1-4 Attempts to **attack the PCs** as best it can while hanging from a hook in the wall. (Starting with a breath weapon attack.)
- 5-6 Begins **clawing at the hook** behind him, while staring at the PCs with a terrified look.
- 7-8 Begins **screaming as loudly as possible**, attracting 1d3 Gärunger who arrive 1d4 rounds later.
- 9-11 Is used as a conduit by the Black Barm, which launches into a **cold-eyed interrogation of the PCs** about their presence at the Abbey, **psychoanalyzing** their reasons for falling into **the shameful life of parasitic, useless adventurers**. (Hannibal Lecter's first interview with Clarissa Starling in *The Silence of the Lambs* is a good model.)
- 12 **Pleads with the characters to be released**, claiming it knows a way its condition can be reversed and that he will not harm them. In fact, if freed the Gärunger will flee to the Catacombs to bulk up Brother Tedrick's party.

**M** The spiral staircase leads to the roof of the building, where another dead brother lies sprawled, his robe half-burnt, with a look of panic still frozen on his face. The roof is otherwise empty.

Cloister

*Magnificent, Brothers! Glorious! With this beer, I baptise you again in the name of the Black Rock, and the Black Barm, and the spirit of fermentation!*



**C3 Cloister.** An open-air area of well-manicured grass within the complex, littered with several monks' bludgeoned corpses. None are sufficiently infected to turn Gärunger immediately, or have any personal treasure, although several carry improvised weapons, such as kitchen knives and farm tools.

**C4 The Refectory.** A large abandoned bare stone room, undecorated but filled with wooden tables arranged in the style of a dining hall. It is so far untouched by the fire but filled with smoke from the kitchen. Abandoned bowls of hardly-touched barley gruel adorn many of the tables. (Now cold, the gruel is surprisingly free of Black Barm contamination, and safe to eat, despite tasting awful.)

**C5 The Kitchen** is a smallish, simple cooking space lined with charcoal stoves and an oven (for baking

bread) on the north side of the room; that side of the room is currently on fire.

✚ Contains assorted kitchen implements—knives and meat-scissors—which are usable as weapons, if needed, but will require 1d8 rounds to gather up.

**N** A barrel of salted pork. From the moment the PCs enter, there is a cumulative 10% chance per round that the barrel will explode from the heat expansion of the brine within it.

✚ When the barrel explodes, searing-hot chunks of meat and brining juices will be flung across the room. Characters must save versus Breath Weapon or suffer 1d4 burn damage.

**C6 Chapter House.** An unadorned meeting hall lined with wooden chairs, and spookily lit by the fires

outside

outside. A book on one table documents a year's worth of interminable meetings. (The last few pages have been roughly torn out.) It is otherwise empty.

**C7 Infirmiry.** This resting place for ill monks—most of them recently driven mad by the Black Barm's experiments on their brains—is currently burning; any of the stricken who were strong enough to flee have done so, and those few who remain are all dead, their corpses now lying tangled among the soiled and bloodied bedding strewn about the floor. (*Speak With Dead* accesses only a welter of crazed babbling.) There is no treasure beyond a few worthless wooden rosaries and one tattered Latin psalter.

**C8 The Necessarium** is the Abbey's foully reeking communal latrine. This repugnant locale is saturated with airborne Black Barm, exposing PCs to infection. (*Saving throw versus Magic* (3 penalty) to resist.)

**C9 Aedificatum.** A drab little library and former scriptorium, this place was crammed with books and a few low desks. During the Fall of the Abbey, it was one of the first buildings to be torched—because the Black Barm hoped to destroy **The Grimoire of Crimson** (see page 70), an object that it fears deeply. By the time the PCs arrive, the interior is almost completely consumed by fire.

✦ Characters with a scholarly background can salvage 1d10 (large and bulky) surviving volumes of theological writing with a resale of value of 1d10sp each (provided the right buyer is found).

✦ Each book sold has a non-cumulative 10% chance of attracting enough clerical attention to prompt an official Papal investigation 1d4 weeks later, (on a timeline suiting the Referee's ongoing needs) targeting the PCs as responsible for the Abbey's sad fate.

✦ The remains of several murdered monks lie buried among the ashes here: *Speak With Dead* reveals them stalwarts of the Abbot, disgusted with "The Traitor Tedrick" and his wicked co-conspirators.

✦ **The Grimoire of Crimson** (see page 70) is here, buried deep among the ashes. When the characters enter, one of them—chosen randomly—will sense a powerful magical presence waiting for them. (If that character decides to search for it, she will enjoy a +2 bonus on her Search skill roll to find it.)

**C10 The Abbot's Residence.** Very clearly the site of a massive brawl, with several dead brothers scattered on the floor, this residence is only slightly more lavish than that of the normal monks' cells; it is dark but warm and comfortable-looking, with what were probably beautiful religious paintings on the wall, before they were (recently) defaced.

**O Abbot's Desk.** Amid piles of mundane administrative paperwork are communications in Latin, pleading with Rome to send ecclesiastical and military aid to the monastery—and referencing previous messages; the letters vaguely claim "the situation here has worsened." On a successful search, three more things will be discovered:

The

*Young Afam will kill Afayna morally! I am not sure Afam  
into himself of the end will Afam find! He will find an  
evening, a fresh evening, he will find the world!*



1. The Abbot's work has been neglected for a couple of weeks.
2. The desk also contains a hidden stash of papers beneath the false bottom in a drawer. (Apply a +2 bonus to all Search skill rolls: it's poorly hidden). These papers detail growing suspicions of a mutinous plot, an account of the Abbot himself being possessed by an evil force (and the cure he received in a nearby town, including some sort of tonic called "theriac"—see below), and his plan to have a much-feared "Thing in the Catacombs" destroyed with fire.
3. The Abbot's stash: a Scroll of Protection from Charm, which grants the user twelve hours of protection from Black Barm Infection and its side effects (granting a +6 bonus to all saving throws to resist further infection or infection effects), and two bottles of Theriac.

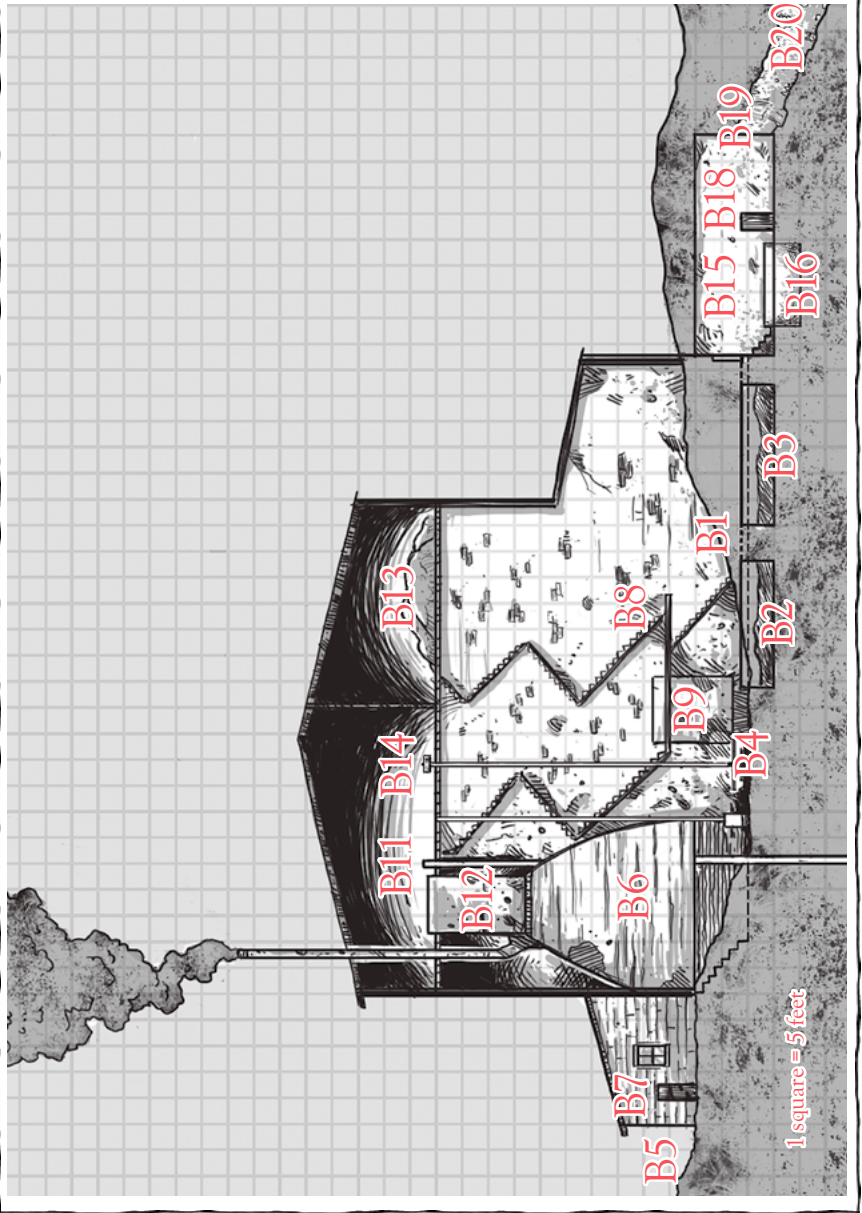
**P** **Abbot's Bedroom.** More lavish than normal monks' cells, but still relatively spartan. Several tapestries have been torn down from the walls, but one remains intact, depicting St. Christopher blessing a child.

**T**heriac is an insanely expensive—and horrendously foul-tasting—non-magical alchemical potion made of viper's flesh, scorpions, frogs, and (in the case of this particular recipe) flakes of gold. The theriac was produced by an alchemist in the nearest big city. Theriac normally is quite useless as a curative or disease preventative, but by sheer dumb luck, the microscopic amounts of the toxins from viper's poison and gold flakes in this potion happened to combine to form a toxin that weakens the Black Barm. Therefore, the theriac effectively reduces the imbiber's degree of infection by one card per bottle consumed. However, only this particular recipe will have this effect. Other theriacs are unlikely to work. Additionally, theriac is made to be taken a small amount at a time: anyone imbibing a full bottle must save versus Poison or be ill for 6 hours, with -4 to all rolls and movement rate cut in half.

**Q** **The Abbey Treasury.** The door to this room has been forced open. All the treasure is missing save 1d100+50 pieces of silver, 1d6 pieces of jewelry worth 2d20sp each, and three bulky, cumbersome paintings of immense value (5000sp each).

✦ Like the theological books from **The Aedificatum (C9)**, after being sold these paintings may (cumulative 20% chance each) trigger a Papal investigation aggressively scapegoating the PCs for the events at the Abbey.





The Abbey's brewery is a **single building, made of homely brick and stone**—and not at all in a Cistercian style—and is clearly the newest structure on the Abbey grounds (save the oasthouse). It stands just within the Abbey gate, and **smoke pours up out of the chimney stack**.

✦ Characters who have spent time around breweries or monasteries—or those successfully making an Architecture roll—will note that it is **unusually large for an Abbey brewery**, and that it appears to have been **expanded sometime in the last century** or so, a fact evident from the brickwork on the upper floors of the building.

✦ During and after the Abbey's Fall, the **main entrances** on the ground floor, leading to **The Main Brewhouse (B1)** and **The Fermentation Room (B15)**, are both locked, but the doors to the **Coal Store (B5)** and **Office (B7)** remain unlocked.

**The Main Brewhouse** is a **large, dimly lit space filled with steam**, the air thick with the scent of barley sugars, smoke, horse shit, and the spicy aroma of dried hops. All the windows within the brewery have closed, slatted blinds, leaving the interior dim and gloomy even in broad daylight.

The brewery is **extremely technologically advanced** for the time, with complex piping (devised by the Black Barm, of course) and different platforms set up to allow gravity to do the majority of the work of moving liquids around while unusually large batches of beer are brewed. Characters with a background in

brewing (or a Tinker Skill of 4 or above) will discover **one new idea or insight that they can sell off to brewery operators** for every turn they spend examining the brewery's contents. Those who have no skills in the area of brewing must be content simply to marvel and be astonished at the sight of the massive brewhouse.

**A brew session seems to be ongoing** at the moment, but the space appears **abandoned**.

In fact, **two monks are present**: Brothers Peter and Marco. They are at Stage 4 infection, completely controlled by the Black Barm, and **will use the brewery itself as a weapon against the PCs** (and any other trespassers) in order to keep the Black Rock safe. They have been watching through the window, and **will be ready** when the PCs arrive. Peter will be **crouched and out of sight** on the **Kettle Platform (B11)** with one hand on the release valve, while Marco will be **well-hidden** in the **Grain Storage Room (B13)**, ready to drop a heavy bag of grain onto the head of someone below.

If captured or forced into mêlée, both monks will **scream nonsensical, garbled phrases from the Latin Mass** at the characters ("Hominiminibus dominus Patri culpa!" etc.), and beseech the aid of Heaven. When push comes to shove, both are **willing to perform suicidal acts** to protect the Black Rock.

## Brother Peter & Marco

<i>Armor</i> 12	<i>mash paddle</i> 1d3
<i>Movement</i> 120'	<i>Morale</i> 10
<i>Hit Die</i> 1(4hp)	<i>Initiative</i> 3

Infection Stage 4 and currently insane. Will use the brewery itself as a weapon.

*This must be the work of that old sodomitical pair, Peter and Marco! They poisoned the beer... what frig-fied or hell-boy have they pickled from one another's asses? They'll kill us all!*



### Hop/Barley Flood:

Unleashing a **flood of milled grains** or **loose hops** down the trough at the base of the **Millstone (B14)**.

- ⊕ Affects a **roughly circular area of 20' diameter**, anywhere on the **Mashing Platform (B8)** or on the brewery floor between the **Kettle (B12)** and the **Mashing Platform**.
- ⊕ Within the affected area, **mobility is reduced** to 25% of normal, and **visibility is reduced** (effectively blinding (-6 to combat rolls) for 1d3+1 rounds or until the cloud is dispersed). Hops and grain also have special effects:
- ⊕ **Hops:** Acidic **Hop Resin** burns eyes: **-3 penalty on all combat/saving throw rolls** until rinsed off.
- ⊕ **Grain:** **Saving throw versus Paralysis** to avoid **coughing fit** for 1d3 rounds, plus **saving throw versus Magic** to resist increased Black Barm infection (the dust is loaded with Black Barm spores).

### Sack Attack:

Dropping heavy sacks of barley from the **Grain Storage Room (B13)** onto the PCs from above, aiming either for **impact damage**, or to knock PCs on the **Mashing Platform** into **Mash Tuns** or off the platform. Monks make an attack roll:

- ⊕ **Critical Success:** Target slammed for 2d6hp of damage, plus a **saving throw versus Paralysis** to avoid crippling injury (broken back, skull fracture, etc.): if successful, she is merely **stunned for 1d4 rounds**.
- ⊕ **Hit:** The PC is **grazed**: 1d3hp of damage plus a **saving throw versus Paralysis** to avoid being knocked into a **Mash Tun** or off the **Mashing Platform**.
- ⊕ **Miss:** The sack misses, but **ruptures on the floor**, reducing movement within 10' square area by 50%.
- ⊕ **Critical Fumble:** The monk **stumbles and falls**, taking 5d6hp of damage if he strikes the **Half-Full Mash Tun (B10)** or **Brewery Floor (B1)**, or 4d6hp damage if he falls to the **Mashing Platform**.

*Come to me, Jane, my whore! Come and strip off your flesh, and consecrate yourself to the foaming blackness!*



Treat the **Mash Tuns** as 12' deep pit traps accessible from the **Mashing Platform (B8)**, one **empty (B9)** and the other **(B10) half-filled with scalding mash** (~70°C). Monks will lure PCs onto the platform and then attempt to knock them into the Mash Tuns by using one of these methods:

- ⊕ **Sack Attack** (page 46)
- ⊕ **Hops/Barley Flood** (page 46)
- ⊕ **Paddle Whack** (page 49)
- ⊕ Simply **shoving them in**.

### Nasty Falls:

- ⊕ onto the **Brewery Floor (B1)**: 1d6hp falling damage.
- ⊕ into the **Empty Mash Tun (B9)**: 1d6 in falling damage; followed by **Kettle Dump**.
- ⊕ into the **Half-Full Mash Tun (B10)**: cumulative 1d2hp burn damage/round (2d2hp on 2nd round, 3d2 on 3rd round) and see **Drowning** below. Also followed by **Kettle Dump**.
- ⊕ Characters in either **Mash Tun** cannot climb out **without special equipment** (grappling hooks) or **aid from others**.

### Drowning:

- ⊕ **Saving throw versus Paralysis** each round to avoid **choking/drowning on mash**. (Heavily armored/encumbered PCs automatically fail the first saving throw)
  - ♦ 1st failed save: PC **inhaled scalding mash**. (1d4hp internal burn damage, -3 penalty on all saving throws in the **Mash Tun**.)
  - ♦ 2nd failed save: **PC unconscious, drowning**. (1d4hp burn damage per round until rescued, and drowning after 6 rounds.)

### Rescue:

- ⊕ Prior to **Kettle Dump**: Rescue from either **Mash Tun** is **trivial when rope or a mashing paddle is used**. (No skill check, 1 round.)
- ⊕ During and after **Kettle Dump**: Rescue requires two steps:
  1. **Roll to hit the victim** (-3 penalty; -5 if unconscious).
  2. **Strength check** to pull target free. On critical fail, the rescuer is **dragged into the Tun** by the flailing target.

*We will be angels of zyme!  
We will be united in a single  
fruiting body!*



## Kettle Dump:

Unleashing the **boiling contents** of the **Kettle (B12)** down an **adjustable wooden trough** attached to the base of the **Kettle**, and towards:

- ✦ **Empty Mash Tun (B9):** Anyone inside it takes **2d4+2** of damage per round of immersion.
- ✦ **Half-Full Mash Tun (B10):** Anyone inside takes **1d6+2hp** of damage per round of immersion for the first two rounds of this attack (the Mash slightly moderates the heat gain) followed by **2d4hp** of damage per round of immersion thereafter. They must continue rolling **saving throws versus Paralysis** to avoid drowning on the mash. (See **Drowning**, page 47)
- ✦ **The Brewery Floor (B1):** The **Kettle** contains **10 rounds' worth** of **splashing attacks**; each round of exposure causes **1d12** damage to all within a **20'** radius of target area (**saving throw versus Breath Weapon** for half damage). The hot puddle is dangerous as well, inflicting **1d4hp** of damage (1hp

per round post **Kettle Dump**).

- ✦ **Note:** The **wooden trough** can be **repositioned** if struck by a PC, either standing on the **Mashing Platform (B8)** and using a **long implement** (such as a mashing paddle, pole arm, etc.) or throwing something heavy at it. (Requires a **successful hit roll versus Armor rating 13**.)

## Kettle Push:

Directly shoving victims into the **Kettle**.

- ✦ If the **Kettle** is **full** of boiling water, PCs take **4d6** of **boiling damage per round**, and must roll a **saving throw versus Poison** to avoid **instant death from the shock**.
- ✦ If the **Kettle** has been **dumped**, victims take **3d6** **falling damage** the first round. The next round, the **heat** from the **Underworks (B6)** inflicts **1d4hp** **burn damage per round** on any PC who is not wearing heavy boots and who fails to find **something** (a backpack, a corpse, etc.) **to stand on**.

# Other Tactics

## Paddle Whack:

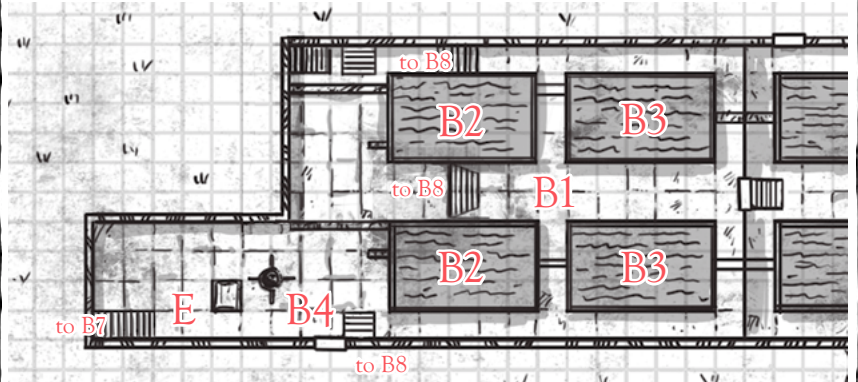
Using one of the **four mashing paddles** on the **Mashing Platform (B8)** as a **bludgeoning weapon** causing 1d4hp damage... and while on the **Mashing Platform**, anyone struck this way must roll a **saving throw versus Paralysis** or be knocked into the nearest **Mash Tun**.

## Trough Slide:

The **brewery's two troughs** are attached to the bottom of the **Kettle (B12)**—a difficult leap from the **Kettle Platform (B11)**, but still possible—and at the base of the **Millstone (B14)**. Either **may be used as a slide for a quick escape** from those areas. As noted above (in **Kettle Attacks**), these troughs can be redirected from below.



*Quam E quibus fungitur me, I fiam denu and fundi Afa vray  
 Avaring de Afa pleva I'd fiam in Afa vilivm Afa Aving in  
 Afa fiam Afa vray munitur me, ducimus me, but refesturum I luff in  
 Afa, Afa luff fumatfing me, Afa I fund it.*



**B1 Brewery Floor.** A partially-subterranean, bricked floor that runs the full length of the Main Brewhouse.

**B2 Mashbacks.** These are simply large, shallow wooden trays (sealed with pitch) where the “wort” (the sweet mash water drained from the grain) is collected to be pumped back into the **Kettle**. The wort has cooled, but contact exposes PCs to **Black Barm** infection. (Saving throw versus **Magic** to resist.)

**B3 Coolbacks.** Shallow wooden trays like **Mashbacks**, but used to cool the wort after it is boiled with hops. They are even more infectious than the **Mashbacks**. (Saving throw versus **Magic** at -1 penalty to resist.)

**B4 Mill.** This horse-driven mill on the ground floor runs the brewery’s pumps and grain elevator (E), and turns the Millstone in the **Grain Storage Room (B14)**. A team of four horses, now violently panicked, has been left harnessed to it, and are running wildly in a circle. (Therefore the Grain Elevator is going up and down in a loop,

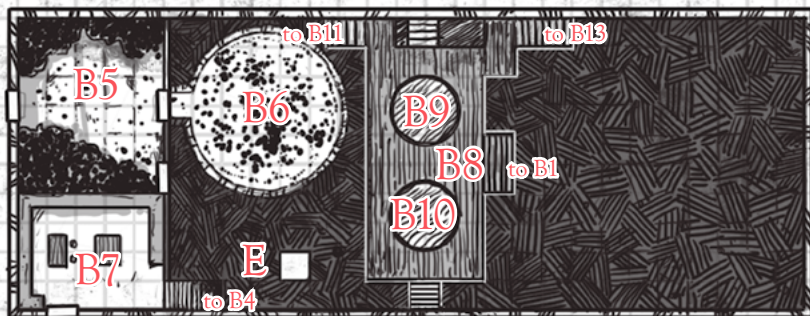
and the millstone in the **Grain Storage Room** is also spinning at a frantic pace, with no grain left to grind.)

✚ If approached, the fear-maddened horses will attempt to trample unwary PCs who get too close. When the PCs are near the horses, there is a 1 in 20 chance per round that a horse will break free from its harness and attempt to flee, likely trampling the closest PC along the way. (Successful saving throw versus **Paralysis** required to dodge.)



*Cardinal Rafael, I am begging you: something evil has secretly grown among the roots of this Abbey, and I fear it shall consume us all soon... in the name of Christ the Merciful, please have the Pope send help immediately!*





**B5** The Coal Store is a small, grubby little room with high shelving piled with coal. A shovel has been left on the floor nearest the (currently closed) door on the east side of the room, through which coal is fed into the underworks (beneath the copper).

Characters with brewing experience will immediately be surprised to find the room unattended, given that a fire is currently burning in the underworks.

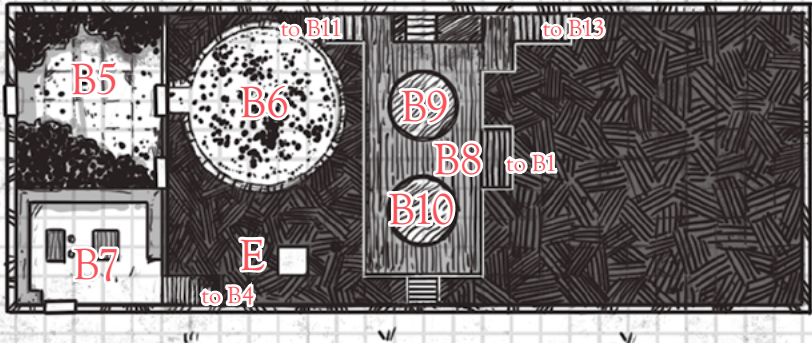
**B6** The Underworks is a large furnace used to fire the Kettle. It is normally tended to by a monk named Brother Dietrich (0 Level Human of limited intelligence). After the fall of the Abbey, Dietrich is missing, and the Underworks are currently stoked with burning coal, too hellishly hot to enter without magical protection, but reeking of burnt hair and the telltale sickly-sweetness of roasted flesh.

If the PCs use magical fire resistance to enter the Underworks, they will find a man's charred remains within.

If *Speak With Dead* is used, Dietrich will tell them that he does not know why he was shoved into the fire by a crazed monk named Brother Peter, but begs for a proper burial. If the PCs promise him one but do not follow through within seven days, they will be stricken by a curse: all beer in their presence will spoil, and every beer they drink will have a 1 in 20 chance of sickening them (3 Constitution for 1d4 days). The curse can be lifted if they retrieve his meager remains and give him a proper Catholic burial.

**B7** Brewery Office. A typical brewery bookkeeping space, its shelves crammed with books tracking brewing sessions, accounts, recipe adjustments, and other records of the brewhouse's operations, along with writing supplies and more. During and after the Fall of the Abbey, it is on fire. Without magical means, it will take 1d4 turns to put out the fire, which characters will need to do in order to search properly.

✚ The room contains a century's worth of exhaustive brewing records— noting the weather conditions, the



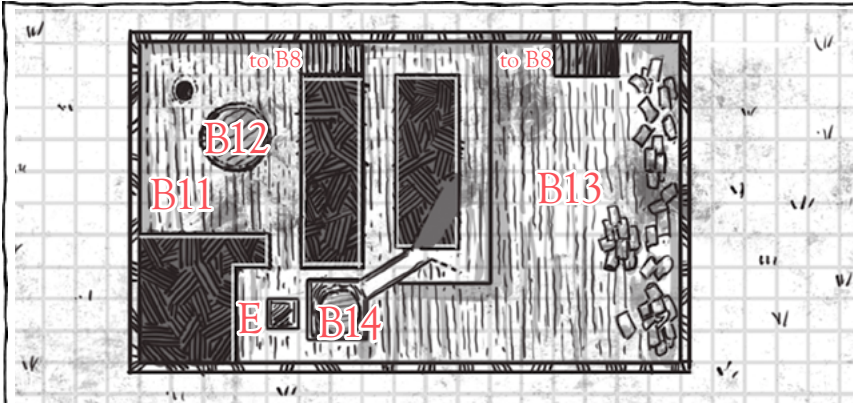
source and quality of the grain and hops, and the time spent brewing and fermenting each batch of beer made at the brewery.

- ✦ Careful reading by a character of at least 13 Intelligence reveals that the brewery's efficiency suddenly improved thirty years before, when the Brewery mysteriously "upgraded".
- ✦ Further reading allows characters to find occasional, eerily cryptic Latin scribbles in the margins of the record book, in phrases like, "The damned rock must be destroyed! It is wicked!" and "In the belly of the earth it lies, muttering softly and grasping at us all," as well as, "The barn bubbles black as sin..."
- ✦ A locked strongbox contains a petty cash fund of 50sp, and a small book of advanced brewing methods and beer recipes which can quietly be sold for another 100sp.

**B8 Mashing Platform.** An oaken platform raised to a height of 15', granting workers access to the brewery's two Mash Tuns, vast wooden containers used for soaking barley in hot water to extract its sugars. Several mashing paddles (used to stir the grain into the water) lie scattered here. They can be used to rescue characters from tuns, or as blunt weapons inflicting 1d4 damage.)

**B9 Empty Mash Tun** is completely empty, and is approximately 12' deep. Without help or magical assistance, PCs are simply unable to climb out due to the tun's (purposefully) smooth sides.

**B10 Half-Full Mash Tun** contains a 6' deep mash (a thick soup of ground barley and scalding water). There is one mashing paddle left upright within the mash, long enough for the paddle end to rest on the bottom, and the handle to reach just above the rim of the tun.



**B11 Kettle Platform.** 50' above the Brewery floor, this provides access to the **Kettle (B12)**.

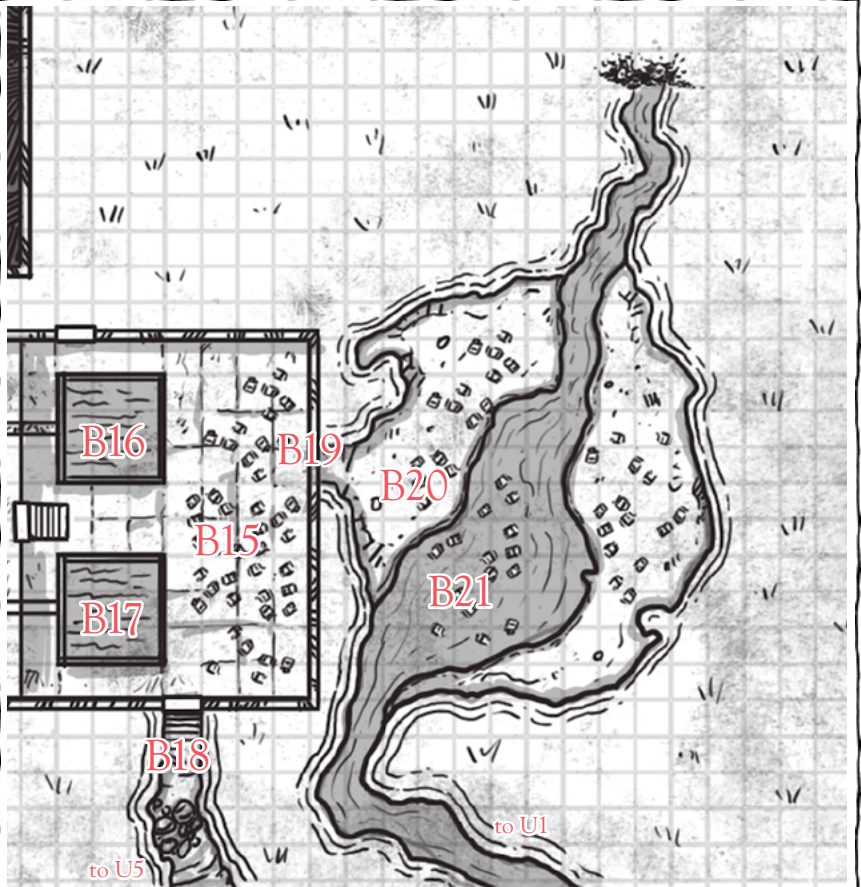
**B12 Kettle.** This vessel is used for most of the **large-scale heating and boiling of water**. It is fed by a pump well at the northern end of the **Kettle Platform**. (The water source is a deep, uncontaminated, hot spring.) As the furnace in the **Underworks (B6)** is currently burning hot, the water has been reduced to a mere 50 gallons, and is now at a **heavily rolling boil**.

**B13 Grain Storage Room.** This **lofty-ceilinged upstairs room** (50' above the mash tuns) is where the grain is stored and ground using a **Millstone (B14)**. It is located above the **Mash Tuns**, allowing large quantities of grain to be dumped down an **adjustable grain trough**. One batch's worth of grain has been milled and is in the hopper above the grain trough. Otherwise, the storage room contains **five heavy sacks of barley, and three large bags of hops**.

**B14 Millstone.** This is a **large millstone** for grinding barley, which is deposited into a long wooden hopper at the top of a trough that feeds the crushed grain into one of the **Mash Tuns**.



*They don't understand why I laugh so happily every time I puke on them... not yet, but they will!*



**B15 Fermentation Room.** This **dimly lit room** is filled with **barrels on their sides**, filled with fermenting wort—frothy Black Barm foams out of open bungholes—and has a couple of **low, broad fermentation vats** set into the ground on the west side of the room. It is silent and still, the air cool, damp, and laden with **the aroma of freshly-baked bread** (except in summer,

when the stink turns sulphuric). A door large enough for barrels to be rolled through opens from the north side of the chamber. To the south, the land rises to provide cooling cover for the room, making it **effectively underground**.

A monk named Brother Volker (a 0 Level Human)—**faithful to the Abbot** and until now only at Stage 1 of Black Barm

Infection

*This ale is holy! It must be! When I drink it, I feel as tall as Gargantua, and as mighty as Samson!*

Infection—is **hiding behind the barrels** on the northeast side of the room, in the spot marked with an X on the map. When characters enter, he will have just failed his saving throw to resist further Black Barm Infection, and is moving into Stage 2. As he is **doubled over and holding his belly while groaning**, he is easily discovered in 3 rounds or less if characters declare a search.



## Brother Volker

*Armor* 10                      *fists* 1 dmg  
*Movement* 60'              *Morale* 7  
*Hit Die* 1(3hp)

Infection Stage 2 and currently ill.

**If the characters do not find Volker and restrain him**, he will **eventually attack them**, seeking to **hurl one of them into a vat**. If held off for three rounds, he will realize the PCs are not compatriots of Tedrick's, and he will **relent**. While he is only **half-coherent**, he should be able to explain how characters can access the **Catacombs**, and even **show them the secret door on the east wall** of the room.

## What's in this Barrel? (d10)

Just **Beer fermenting with Black Barm**. (Saving throw versus Magic required to resist further infection.)

Highly **pressurized** barrel of Black Barm-infused beer. When opened, the contents **spray** into the air, exposing characters to infection. (Saving throw versus **Breath Weapon** at -2 penalty to resist.)

The barrel is **half-empty**, and the contents **sour smelling and sludgy**.

This is a batch of Black Barm that was cut off from the network and went wild, consuming itself. (No extra saving throw required.)

An **empty**, dry barrel.

A full barrel with a **magical charm** (a little golden flower emblem which provides protection from putrefaction) placed **inside**. It will **preserve food and drink indefinitely**, or can be used to **preserve a corpse** indefinitely after death. The charm can be sold for a rather considerable value (10,000sp). The barrel must be drained to retrieve it.

A barrel with **the body of a Gärunger**—now dead—placed inside. There are equal chances for the Gärunger to be the remains of a modern **human**, a **Neanderthal**, or **some other mammal**. Invisible Black Barm spores fill the air, exposing characters to infection. (Immediate **saving throw versus Magic** at -4 penalty required to resist.) There are three such barrels in the Fermentation Room.

**B16 Normal Fermentation Vat.** This vat is a **normal vat**, currently empty and very clean. It is set deep into the ground, bottoming out at ten feet deep, with very smooth walls. Any character who falls in will likely need help getting out, as there is nothing to grasp to pull oneself out.

✦ **If a character makes contact with this vat**, she is exposed to Black Barm infection. (**Saving throw versus Magic** to resist.)

**B17 Bottomless Fermentation Vat.** This vat is **apparently bottomless**. Of course, it isn't actually bottomless; rather, it terminates in a **portal to a bewildering world where beer is a fundamental component of everything**. The world features oceans and rivers of ale, hopvine sargassoes, vast glaciers of pale, thin lager, islands covered in wheat and barley fields, barleywine lagoons, and civilizations (human or otherwise) centered on brew. This is actually a **distant, bizarre world** in some far-flung corner of the galaxy that was **originally conquered by the Black Barm millions of years ago**.

✦ **If a character makes contact with this vat**, she is heavily exposed to Black Barm infection. (**Saving throw versus Magic** with a -6 penalty is necessary to resist.) Any character crossing over to the Black Barm's world automatically progresses to the next stage of infection.

If the Black Barm is so **terrified for its own survival**, why didn't it just have Tedrick's followers **dump the Black Rock through** this handy portal days ago, or **summon Black Barm-infected armies** to invade the Earth? Some **possibilities** include:

✦ The portal was only recently opened by the monks in the Black Barm's service. It is currently the Black Barm's favored escape route, if only it can reach it.

✦ The Black Barm can't communicate with its homeworld. It has **branched off** evolutionarily since it arrived on Earth, and is no longer capable of communicating with the other side.

✦ The Black Barm opened the portal millennia ago, but then lost track of it. The untracked portal **drifted within the area** for centuries until **anchoring itself in this vat a century earlier**, unbeknownst to the Black Rock colony. (Every Black Barm yeast cell crossing the portal **ruptures and dies**, so no communication is possible.)

✦ The Black Barm is unaware that the portal is open, because it was opened from the other end. In fact, the Black Barm colony was **exiled aeons ago** from this world, due to its cruelly experimental inclinations. **It is being watched from across the galaxy...** and already a few agents have been sent to handle it, including the yeast colony on the **discarded scythe** in the **Barley Field** (see page 31).

**B18 The Side Tunnel.** There is a **locked doorway** here which, if opened, leads down a flight of stairs into the darkness. It smells **dank and moldy**, as if the air has not been disturbed down this stairway in a long time. This passageway originally led directly to the **Young Brothers' Mausoleum (U6, see page 61)** in the Catacombs, but it has **collapsed** near the bottom of the stairwell. (Now the primary route into the Catacombs is through the **Fermentation Cave (B20).**)

Without some form of magical aid, characters would require **a crew of ten workers and a week of time to clear the tunnel**, but long before completing their work, they **would be attacked** by a group of monks under the control of the Black Barm, and, possibly, **The Company of the Scalded Shield (see page 66).**

**B19 Secret Door.** This unlocked portal is **simply hidden behind a stack of barrels**, and set up so that while characters can detect the door behind the barrels, **only slender characters in normal clothing** (not armor) will be able to pass behind them to access it without having to **move the barrels** (a laborious task requiring 1d6 turns).

**B20 Fermentation Cave.** This is a **cool, dark natural cave** where still more barrels have been laid out. The cave's surfaces are carpeted by a **bewilderingly rich variety of molds, spores, and fungi**, which bloom on every surface in vivid shades of yellow, white, green, and blue. The air is filled with a heady **fungus aroma**, and the soft music of **dripping water softly echoes** in the darkness.

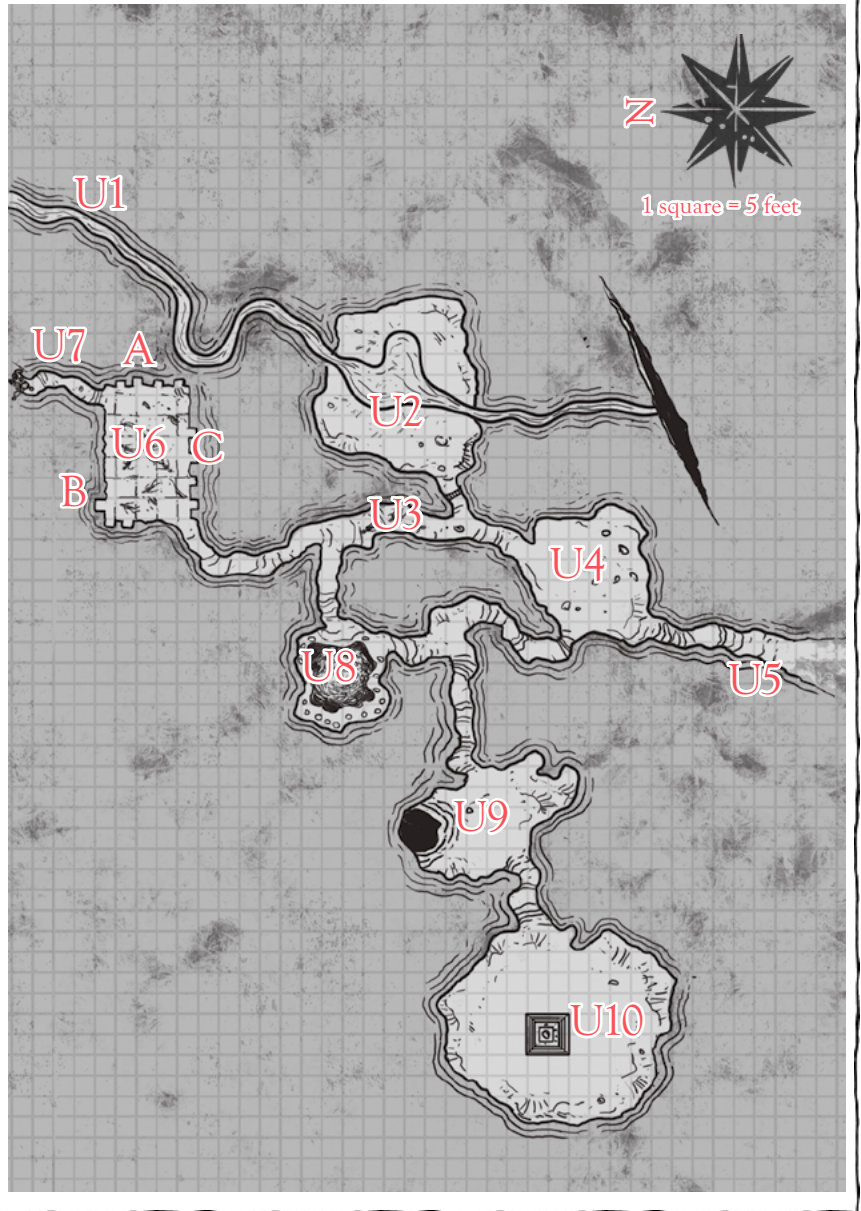
The barrels here all contain **very old beer** (aged 5-10 years minimum) that is being **fermented indefinitely by the Black Barm**. For any barrel opened, there is also a 10% chance of a barrel containing a **"dead" Gärunger**. For each barrel opened, the characters doing so must save versus Magic to resist increased infection.

**B21 Stream and Pool.** A **stream** runs through the **Fermentation Cave, widening into a sort of pool** in the middle of the chamber. Several barrels have been placed in the pool. They are not floating. (i.e. They seem full, and weighted down.) These barrels also contain "dead" (no longer functional) Gärunger, and have been **sealed with pitch** and placed in the stream to cool. For each barrel opened, characters must save versus Magic at a -2 penalty to resist increased infection.

✚ This **Stream Tunnel (U1, see page 59)** leads into the **Catacombs**. Among the monks this is in fact **the current preferred method of entry** into the **Catacombs**. It is **big enough for anyone to walk through**, and the water is **relatively shallow**, running only a few feet deep at most.



*The first a jug, he daren in alm, and within Amorphous, like  
the sun we climb out of the pit! I fear from than even  
with, mighty of gods, what of wizard, what old and famous  
and wild!*





The chilly, shadowy Catacombs stink of fungus, mold, and the bready aroma of brewers' yeast. The air is thick with swirling spores, in places dizzying and almost throat-constricting. Glimpsed by firelight—which is necessary since the passages are underground—the crumbling, rough-hewn walls seem older than ancient, with the squarer burial chambers being recent additions of a few centuries ago. (This fact is obvious to any player character who successfully makes an Architecture Skill check.)

Most surfaces in these rough limestone tunnels are covered in vast, multicolored colonies of molds: brown, black, greenish-blue, pink, orange, and white, which occasionally exhale visible clouds of spores. The fungal colonies are thick enough to muffle all echoes throughout the Catacombs, though occasionally strange noises—sometimes resembling groaning voices, sometimes the noises of unknown animals—are audible from elsewhere within the tunnel system.

**U1 Stream Tunnel.** This stream connects the **Fermentation Cave** (B20, see page 57), downstream into the Catacombs. The water is frigid and runs deceptively clear, but is contaminated by the leakage from the **Necessarium** (C8, see page 42), which has fouled the whole water table east and south of the monastery.

- ✦ Characters drinking the fouled water must save versus Poison or lose 1d4 points of Constitution and Dexterity for a period of 2d6 days.

**U2 Ancient Mausoleum.** The door to this room is secured with a rusty, stiff lock. Beyond it, ancient bones lie jumbled in a rough-walled, damp and musty chamber strangely untouched by the ubiquitous fungus. Inspection reveals many bones that seem hominid, but not quite human. (These are the remains of Neanderthal Gärunger slain by Black Rock's Cro-Magnon human worshippers.) The locked doors are modern, and were added in the last century or so, by fearful monks. If interrogated using *Speak With Dead*, the creatures will merely grunt unintelligibly, as they are incapable of complex language. The bone-clogged stream and pool here drain through an (ultimately impassable) tunnel in the southern wall.

Magic-Users who show an interest in the Neanderthal bones should be asked to make a Lore check, if you use a Lore skill, or to check their Intelligence + Level against a percentile roll. Those succeeding will recall a bit of obscure arcane lore regarding the usefulness of such bones in crafting wands. (In fact, any wand made this way can be charged/recharged at half the (magical) cost; however, the lore fails to mention that with each use, there is a cumulative 5% chance that the user will lose one Intelligence and Charisma point, and after this happens three times consecutively within a year, the user will immediately be cursed with a desire to go feral and will flee into the woods alone, to live wild and naked. The curse can only be removed by a Magic-User of seventh or higher level.)

*Let us go rip up the barleycorn field, and discover whatever that vile pig Reiner has been having our brothers bury there at night!*

**U3 The Dreadful Hallway.** This steep, rough-hewn, descending hallway is filled with the same bizarre mat of colorful, stinking molds as elsewhere, though it grows thicker here, probably spurred on by the dripping of moisture from the ceiling and along the walls. Strewn about along the hallway lie the remains of several poor dead monks, their bodies twisted horribly and fungal colonies sprouting from the pooled bloodstains that surround them. Among them is the corpse of a heavy-set, older monk dressed in fine robes and carrying a cudgel, who seems to have been the Abbot.

✠ *Speak With Dead* will confirm that he indeed was Abbot Reiner, and that even being dead doesn't preclude imploring the PCs to find and destroy the Black Rock, a task he urges with the utmost insistence, (emptily) promising rewards from the Vatican if the characters do what he asks.

✠ Within the dead Abbot's voluminous robes can be found two unused scrolls, kept in a flexible leathern tube worn against his skin: one is a random 3<sup>rd</sup> level Magic-User spell, and one is a random 1<sup>st</sup> level Magic-User spell, which can be used by anybody and bear the mark of an alchemist from the nearby city to which he retreated to recuperate from his infection.

**U4 Painted Cave.** A group of brothers and their leader, Brother Tedrick "the Traitor," are here, recovering from the battle during the Fall of the Abbey, in a cave where primitive paintings adorn all the walls. Several are wounded, including Brother Tedrick, and several (also including Brother

Tedrick, a 0 Level Human) are under the direct control of the Black Barm. When the characters appear, the monks are preparing to enter the Antechamber to the Black Rock Chapel (U9). They can easily be heard arguing (about how to escape the Abbey grounds) up to 40' away along any hallway leading to the chamber.

If the characters make any effort to sneak up to the cave, they easily succeed, as the monks are distracted by their wounds, their argument, and their concern over their mission.

If the characters attack the monks, the autonomous monks will attack first, while the monks under direct Black Barm control will hold off until necessary.

### Seven Monks & Tedrick

*Armor* 12

*improvised weapons*

*Movement* 120'

*Morale* 11

*Hit Die* 1(2-4hp)

*Initiative* -2

Improvised weapons (farm tools 1d6, kitchen knives 1d3) 5x/day breath weapon attack (saving throw versus Breath Weapon to resist increased Black Barm Infection).

Tedrick (8hp) is a small, muscular man of middle age, and his tonsured hair is greying. His eyes seem somehow vacant, as if he were constantly beholding a brilliant, distant light, but he seems to retain a degree of his humanity, and a sort of intelligent, bewildering charm as well.

If the characters examine the primitive cave drawings in this chamber, which are curiously free of mold, they find images of a star falling from the sky, a glowing figure leaping from a large black stone, and elsewhere

human

human and humanoid figures dancing, genuflecting, copulating, and fighting around the black stone.

### U5 Passageway to the Church.

This passage is **less-heavily infested by fungus**, and leads upward to the (currently disabled) exit into the Church. Characters who follow this tunnel **will encounter the Hopfenwürger Roots** (see page 38).

If they manage to **destroy or bypass the root system**, the PCs will need to open the doorway into the church. It's at the top of a ladder, the **lever is broken**, and the unlikely feat requires a combined 50 points of Strength to lift it, plus successful strength checks from all involved in the attempt.

### U6 Young Brothers' Mausoleum.

Though **less mold-infested**, this chamber **stinks of death**. It contains the remains of more **recently deceased monks**—as in, during the last few decades—wrapped in linen and interred upon three-tiered burial niches. They can be organized into three groups:

#### First Group:

A jumble of a dozen normal, **rotting corpses** scattered throughout the room.

#### Second Group:

Seven corpses are monks who died at Stage 1 or 2 of Black Barm Infection, and are therefore slowly **fermenting into Gärunger**. They are inert, though **black foam gurgles out of their mouths, nostrils, tear ducts, and privities**—and any cuts or wounds made to their



*a summo caeli gregorio eius et occurus eius usque ad summum eius nec est qui de  
abreondat a calore eius lex Domini immaculata converteret animas testimonium  
Domini fidele rapientiam praestans parvulis iustitiae Domini rectae lactificantes  
corda praeeptum Domini lucidum inluminans oculos*

bodies. The sight will recall immediately the **bungholes in the barrels** in the **Fermentation Room (B15, see page 54)** and **Fermentation Cave (B20, see page 57)** (if characters visited that locale). They are concentrated in the niches on the east (A) and northwest (B) sides of the room.

**If one fermenting corpse is disturbed**, it will **spew forth a spray of Black Barm spores**, exposing all within a 20' radius. (**Saving throw versus Breath Weapon** (-3 penalty) to resist.)

**If three fermenting corpses are disturbed**, the air throughout the **Catacombs** will be **heavily saturated** adding an additional -1 penalty to all saving throws to resist infection there within the Catacombs.

### Third Group:

⊕ A group of four monks (all interred on the south side of the room, in niches on the bottom tier of C) seem to be **incorrupt**, and are dressed in fine clothing, their **eyes left open and staring eerily out from their still, bony white faces**. They are in fact **fully-fermented Gärungers**, three of them effectively devoid of personality, likely only to attack the PCs if the fourth Gärunger does.

⊕ The fourth Gärunger is the reanimated remains of the current (now late) **Abbot's predecessor**, whose personality remains partially intact: he will **lie still and speak in a flat monotone** to the PC, like a voice from the darkness, **asking whether they wish to help or to harm** the god of the underworld.

**If the PCs seem amenable to helping**, the fourth Gärunger will **rise and tell them to move the Black Rock**, supposedly for the sake of the Abbey. (The other three Gärunger will remain still and silent.)

**If they refuse**, the Abbot will go **still and silent**, and only attack them if they attack it first... until they leave, at which point all four Gärunger will attempt a **surprise attack from behind**.

### Three Gärunger Monks†

<i>Armor</i> 14	<i>fists</i> 1d4
<i>Movement</i> 60'	<i>Morale</i> 7
<i>Hit Die</i> 2(13hp)	<i>Initiative</i> -3

### Gärunger Abbot†

<i>Armor</i> 14	<i>fists</i> 1d4/ <i>steel flail</i> 1d6
<i>Movement</i> 60'	<i>Morale</i> 12
<i>Hit Die</i> 3(18hp)	<i>Initiative</i> -3

**U7 Caved-In Hallway.** This hallway used to connect to the **Fermentation Room (B15)**. It is **caved-in**, and would require a week to clear. (During which time constant exposure to Black Barm Infection would require hourly **saving throws versus Magic** to resist.)

**U8 Skeletal Garden.** This especially chilly chamber looks at first like some sort of **wild, beautiful mold garden**. Close inspection reveals the foundation of this fungal landscape: **chest-deep jumbled piles of countless human skeletal remains**. The **mold-crowned skulls**, however, have been **carefully arranged in a neat perimeter** along the wall, their empty sockets seeming eerily to watch and accuse all who enter and desecrate the silence. A

whistling

What they did to simple-headed young Dietrich... what a wondrous sin! It was beautiful and glorious to watch the idiot burn! He was no use to the One in the Depths, so there is nothing to mourn!

whistling sound can be heard within the chamber. (It is merely an air vent, but the characters will be unable to locate it, no matter how they search.)

- ✦ If *Speak With Dead* is cast, the bones will rant about their disinterment, claiming that the **younger monks have dishonored them** to make room for new bones. (Which is true.) They demand the characters re-inter them properly, going so far as to (emptily) **threaten the PCs with hauntings, divine intervention, bad dreams, and curses** if they refuse.

**U9 Antechamber to the Black Rock Chapel.** This chamber has **even more cave paintings**, none of which are overgrown by moss, and a deep black pit in one corner of the chamber.

- ✦ The paintings depict a **glowing figure springing from the rock**; the same figure manipulating **two battling puppet-like armies**—one of humans, the other of humanoids, with myriad strange animals on both sides—while pots of liquid or honey foam **bubbling black froth**; and finally **the rock being borne underground** through a field of what looks like grain.

- ✦ The pit to the north is in fact **The Gärunger Pit**. During rituals carried out by the Black Rock's prehistoric worshippers, the **corpses of sacrificial victims were cast into this pit**, to ferment into Gärunger.

- ✦ Depending on the region where the Referee set the adventure, **wildly varying types of anachronistic or unexpected Gärunger** may emerge

**from the pit:** members of ancient, rival pagan groups, Romans, pre-Roman Celts, prehistoric hominids and beasts, unlucky modern travelers, or prisoners of war from a century earlier are among the many possibilities. (Some Gärunger who have emerged were to be interred in barrels of beer in the **Fermentation Cave (B20, see page 57)**; more recently, others were chopped up and spread on the **Barley Field (M3, see page 31)**.)

- ✦ Currently **five** (or more, if the Referee prefers) such Gärunger **have ascended high enough near the mouth of the pit to emerge** within 1d10 minutes of the characters arrival, unless the characters make **an effort to tread silently**. (Combat or noisy conversation will automatically summon them within 1d10 minutes.)

### Gärunger Man<sup>†</sup>

<i>Armor</i> 14	<i>fists</i> 1d4
<i>Movement</i> 60'	<i>Morale</i> 12
<i>Hit Die</i> 2(8hp)	<i>Initiative</i> -3

### Gärunger Neanderthal<sup>†</sup>

<i>Armor</i> 9	<i>fists</i> 1d2+1
<i>Movement</i> 100'	<i>Morale</i> 12
<i>Hit Die</i> 2(10hp)	<i>Initiative</i> -3

### Gärunger Stag<sup>†</sup>

<i>Armor</i> 8	<i>antler</i> 1d4
<i>Movement</i> 160'	<i>Morale</i> 12
<i>Hit Die</i> 3(12hp)	<i>Initiative</i> -3

<sup>†</sup>5x/day breath weapon attack (save versus Breath Weapon <sup>†</sup>to resist increased Black Barm Infection).

Et sicut montibus, et prae: cubicis et pueris: et sicut non. Sanctum servitium, et ab ira. Ceteri servitium: quoniam servit.

**U10** The Black Rock Chapel. The room is a **broad, dark chamber containing a small (3') dais** at its approximate center. Upon the dais sits a **very large, black metallic stone covered in weird crystalline patterns (The Black Rock, see page 17)**. The dais is surrounded by offerings including 1d6 pieces of silver jewelry (worth 1d10x10sp each), bundles of fresh-cut flowers and barley sheaves, a number of fungus-caked bottles of mead and beer, and bowls of (Gärunger) blood.

Once the characters are within the chamber long enough to **glimpse its contents** as described above, they are exposed to Black Barm infection. (**Saving throw versus Magic** at a -3 penalty to resist.)

**Any character holding at least one Infection Card after this saving throw** will also **perceive the room** through the **distorting effect** of one or more of the **following three delusions** (effective for 24 hours), which are cumulative:

- ✚ **1-2 cards:** The vessels of blood, mead, and beer around the dais appear to contain **healing beers** that the PCs ought to drink. (Ingestion triggers further saving throws versus Magic to resist Black Barm infection.)
- ✚ **3-4 cards:** Any characters (PC or NPC alike) with fewer cards than the character appear as if they are actually **apelike, inhuman creatures who must be killed to save the Abbey, the Black Rock, and the world.**
- ✚ **5+ cards:** The Black Barm appears as an apparition in the room, and **speaks directly to the character.** It congeals like some sort of god out of

the spore-filled air, in whatever form makes sense given the PC's culture and religious background, if any.

- ✚ Contact with any of the **offerings surrounding the dais** exposes characters to Black Barm infection. (**Saving throw versus Magic** (-4 penalty) to resist.)
- ✚ The Black Rock dais is **booby-trapped**. Attempting to move the Black Rock will trigger a series of **poison spikes in the base of the dais**. All characters within 5' must make a **saving throw versus Breath Weapon** or be **struck by one of the spikes** for 1d4 damage. Those struck must immediately roll another **saving throw versus Poison**, or be **sickened by the poison** on (some of) the spikes. Those who succeed take no damage, but those who fail take 1hp of damage the first round, 2 points of poison damage the second round, and 3 points of poison damage the third round. (Then the poison has run its course.)
- ✚ Any character struck by one of the poisoned spikes will **suffer an additional -1 penalty on all saving throws to resist further Black Barm Infection** for the rest of the adventure.

**Note:** The Black Barm, being sentient yeast, lacks "hit dice." If defeated, for the purposes of XP, treat it as a monster of **hit dice equivalent to double the total of all foes in its thrall encountered by the party** (possibly including party members).

Et vidi quos aperueret Ceresidarius unum de septem dolio, et audisi unum de quatuor animalibus, sicut tamquam vocem tonitru: Veni, et vide. Et vidi: et ecce equus niger, et qui rebebat super illum, habebat poculum, et data est ei corona, et exisit vincens ut vinceret. Et cum aperueret dolium secundum, audisi secundum barbarus, sicut: Vide, et vide. Et exisit alius equus rufus: et qui rebebat super illum, datum est ei ut numeret pacem de terra, et ut invicem se interficiant, et datur est ei concitantem. Et cum aperueret dolium tertium, audisi tertium animal, sicut: Veni, et vide. Et ecce equus aertuabundus: et qui rebebat super illum, sine humeris in manu sua.



Et batus sunt illis singulis, et solas nigrae et spumose: et dicitum est illis ut requirerent adhuc tempus mortuum donec compleretur contritio eorum, et frater eorum, qui firmamenti sunt sicut et illi.

THE BLACK ROCK CHAPEL

Et audisi tanquam vocem in medio quatuor animalium dicentium: Bilibris tritici denario et tres bilibres hordei denario, et humulum, et fermentum ne cerevisiam. Et cum aperuisset solum quartum, audisi vocem quarti animalis dicentis: Bibe, et sibe. Et ecce equus liquidus: et qui roebat super eum, nomen illi Ebrietas, et insaniam requirebat eum, et data est illi potentas super quatuor partes terrar, imperia gladio, ebrietate, et morte, et bestis fermenti. Et cum aperuisset solum quintum, visi rubrus altare animas suffocatum in cerevisia propter verbum Nigrum fermentum, et propter testimonium, quod habebant: et clamabant voce magna, dicentes: Nequoquo Domina (profanus et ebriamen), non iudicaris, et non vindicaris sanguinem nostrum de his qui habitant in cerevisia?

Et vidi cum aperuisset solum quartum: et ecce equus liquidus: et qui roebat super eum, nomen illi Ebrietas, et insaniam requirebat eum, et data est illi potentas super quatuor partes terrar, imperia gladio, ebrietate, et morte, et bestis fermenti. Et cum aperuisset solum quintum, visi rubrus altare animas suffocatum in cerevisia propter verbum Nigrum fermentum, et propter testimonium, quod habebant: et clamabant voce magna, dicentes: Nequoquo Domina (profanus et ebriamen), non iudicaris, et non vindicaris sanguinem nostrum de his qui habitant in cerevisia?

# The Company of the Scalded Shield

The Company of the Scalded Shield is a party of adventurers who have fallen under the control of the Black Barm. They are all at Stage 4 infection, but the Black Barm finds it useful not to tamper too radically with their personalities.

Summoned by the Black Barm to the Abbey of St. Christopher as a form of insurance, the group is essentially present to protect the Black Rock in case hostile forces take control of it. The group, long and faithful servants of the Black Barm, will be waiting outside whichever exit from the Catacombs the characters use (guided there by the Black Barm) and prepared to take possession of the Black Rock.

Members of the group may threaten the characters to hand it over (and fight for it); or may offer to aid them in transporting it (with a cart they have on hand) and then attempt to slit the characters' throats at the first easy opportunity; or, if the characters are at Stage 4 infection, they may simply ask for the Black Rock and receive it, with highly-infected characters attempting to hand it over at the Black Barm's

bidding. Of course, if certain PCs are less infected, they may be left out of the bewildering (to them) alliance.

## About the Company

A few years ago, an unfortunate trio of adventurers frequented the Inn of the Abbey of St. Christopher, drawn by rumors of the magical ales available there. After a few visits, they found themselves drawn back repeatedly, until they were sufficiently infected by the Black Barm to find themselves serving it. They soon found themselves traveling on long quests to do its bidding, though they justify this as "a life of adventuring" and "serving a true god." They have done various services for the Black Barm, such as hunting down outsiders who come inquiring about the yeast, and seeking out a supposed missing fragment of the Black Rock. Indeed, they have just returned from a failed mission to retrieve one such fragment recently traced to Athens. (The fragment may not even exist, and the adventure may have been a wild goose chase for all they know.) Having just returned to the area, they were suddenly summoned by the Black Barm.

The

*Do you hear them,  
riding like hell in our  
direction? They're headed  
to the Abbey, to come to  
our aid!*



The group consists of Jaël Brauer (a female Magic-User), and a pair of warriors named Auberich and Euphonia Rasmussen. Euphonia has a taciturn character, while Auberich is normally more friendly and witty. The pale, black-haired pair are decked out in matching mail armor and have a strikingly sibling-like resemblance... yet they also seem to be sexual partners. They will joke ambiguously if the question is raised: "What do you think?" or, "Is that how it seems?" or, "Why don't you ask Jaël, now..."

Jaël, the group's Magic-User, is normally sarcastic and opinionated, but has absolutely nothing to say on the subject of Auberich and Euphonia's relationship, at least to outsiders. She will either tease inquirers about their lurid interest, mock them for their prurience (as one might mock a raving religious zealot), or will ignore the line of inquiry altogether. (She will inquire with any apparent Magic-Users in the group regarding local mages offering apprenticeship, and with whom they themselves apprenticed.) She has the air of a noblewoman, and dresses the part, wearing gorgeous, ridiculously expensive embroidered finery even when traveling.

The Black Barm Infection and the rigors of intense travel have taken their toll on each of them: though in good physical shape, all three currently have weary limbs and dark circles beneath their eyes; Auberich's speech is slightly slurred, and Euphonia is unusually grouchy, while Jaël trembles slightly whenever she is not doing something with her hands. Each sometimes slips into a thousand-yard stare... sometimes, most disquietingly, they do so simultaneously.

## Jaël Brauer

Armor 14                      staff 1d4  
 Movement 120'              Morale 9/12†  
 Hit Die 4(17hp)

4<sup>th</sup> Level Magic-User. (Currently memorized spells: *Charm Person*, *Spider Climb*, *Phantasmal Force*) backpack, spell book, torches, oil, flint, very expensive clothes (2 outfits), bedroll, horse. Black Barm Infection Stage 4. Retained Infection Effects: Tiny Bubbles: +1 to Dexterity after drinking ale.

## Auberich Rasmussen

Armor 16                      broadsword 1d10  
 Movement 120'              musket 1d8  
 Hit Die 3(34hp)              Morale 9/12†

3<sup>rd</sup> Level Fighter. Chainmail, backpack, map to a dungeon, sketchbook full of drawings of a nude goddess holding mugs of ale, the severed head of a monk (in the backpack), bedroll, horse. Black Barm Infection Stage 4. Retained Infection Effects: *Magical Thinking*. (Can cast one random spell once per four hours, refilled by drinking more ale.)

## Euphonia Rasmussen

Armor 17                      pole axe 1d10  
 Movement 120'              longsword 1d8  
 Hit Die 4(31hp)              two pistols 1d8  
    Morale 9/12†

4<sup>th</sup> Level Fighter. Chainmail, book of prayers (with heretical Black Barm scribbles within), bedroll, horse. Black Barm Infection Stage 4. Retained Infection Effects: *Unholy Spew 3x a day: all characters within 10' must roll a saving throw versus Magic* or gain one Infection Card.

†The first morale stat given is the character's natural morale. However, if the character fails a morale check, then the Black Barm will assert direct control of the character and send her back to the battle in whatever way seems likeliest to result in victory. (Not necessarily straight back into battle, in other words.)



## The Bloody Tooth

In a small wooden box, half-buried in the Abbey's Barley Field (M3, see page 31), is **The Bloody Tooth**: a large molar that is covered in wet, warm blood. (It is *always* covered in wet, warm blood.) The tooth was taken from the mouth of a female Neanderthal Gärunger by the son of the sorceress who made **The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher**, and enchanted using **The Grimoire of Crimson**. It was buried in the Abbey's barley field many generations ago, and mysteriously appeared on the surface during the Fall of the Abbey.

Any character possessing the tooth will be immune to disease (including Black Barm Infection) for as long as the tooth remains in her possession. However, the same character will also be haunted by terrifying dreams or visions of a ghostly apelike woman plunging its face through the character's abdomen and chewing on her innards. These dreams reduce both the character's Constitution and hit points by one point per day, temporarily. (After discarding the haunted tooth, the Constitution & hit points will be regained at half the rate they were lost, but the character will also immediately become bedridden with a variety of illnesses for 1d6 weeks.)



## The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher

The Knuckle kept in the display case behind the altar of the church (Item E of Location C1, see page 37) is not really a blessed saint's knuckle at all, but the knuckle of a madman who once attempted to kill a now-nameless sorceress and failed. She removed the killer's knuckle—bone, flesh, and all—and enchanted it using **The Grimoire of Crimson**. Then she promptly donated it to the Abbey, claiming it was a relic of Saint Christopher, as an act of revenge against the Abbot at that time.

Whoever bears the Knuckle is immune to all damage from heat and fire (though her possessions, including clothing and armor, are affected normally by both). However, the possessor will also begin to feel a growing antipathy towards Magic-Users, and will attempt to destroy all spell books on sight (saving throw versus Magic at -2 to resist; the character must also roll a saving throw versus Magic at -4 to willingly submit to having a magical spell cast upon her.)

If the bearer is a Magic-User, she will be filled with self-loathing and begin behaving in foolishly self-destructive ways and even, eventually, contemplate suicide. While the immunity to fire is lost when the character ceases to possess the Knuckle, its negative effects can only be eliminated by a Remove Curse spell... which will only take effect once the Knuckle is destroyed.

(Though magical, the Knuckle is not especially durable, and can be destroyed by any normal means except heat and fire, to which it is completely impervious.)

The

*Let the flames consume this wicked place, as long as the catacombs lay unburnt! We shall exhume the stony flesh of the black goddess tonight, and bear her forth from her prison like rain to bearing Christ...*

## The Grimoire of Crimson

This is a **large, leather-bound text** which is much heavier than one might estimate at a glance, so bulky and heavy that it counts as five items under *LotFP* encumbrance rules. The cover seems to have been **stitched together from many small pieces of tanned leather**—the segments vary in hue, though all are dark due to the tanning process—and its pages are thick, very soft leaves of vellum across which a **fine and ornate script** has been painstakingly etched and inked in various colored inks. Unlike most magical texts, the writing in the Grimoire of Crimson is clearly **the work of not just one scribe alone, but a number**, which was assembled and bound together into a single text.

For several hundred years, this book was kept in a **locked compartment** in the **Aedificatum (C9, see page 42)**, among a collection of **supposedly “evil” and “sorcerous” books** held at the library to prevent their copying and circulation. Of all the books locked in the compartment, only the Grimoire of Crimson was **actually magical**: the others were merely anthologies of ineffective folk cures and superstitions, mildly heretical religious tracts, illustrated vernacular translations of ancient erotic poetry, and nonsensical pseudo-occult gibberish.

However, the Grimoire of Crimson is different. It is magical... and **extremely dangerous**.



## History of the Grimoire

The origin of this ancient tome is unknown, though a **hint at its pedigree** lies in the other name by which the text is known, **Catullus' Crime**—a reference to the mostly-forgotten **Roman alchemist** who once owned this copy, and not his better-remembered literary contemporary. A Roman citizen during the rule of Diocletian, he was called **“Catullus Sanguinarius,”** by his detractors. (The nickname suggesting him to be “bloodthirsty,” not “cheerful.”)

However, Catullus was only the text's most infamous owner, and not in fact the originator of the book: **he actually copied it** from a text brought him by a cousin who spent time as a military adventurer in Persia. The original reputedly was created by either a **shadowy figure** known only as **The Necromancer of Tarsus**, or one of the **court necromancers who served an ancient Egyptian Pharaoh**, or, unlikely as it seems, by a cabal of **temple mages** in the ancient city of **Uruk** during the tumultuous period known as **“The Madness of Gilgamesh.”** (The last claim, though the least credible, is mentioned in several occult histories as having been made by no less than **Pliny the Elder** in a historical treatise now lost).

Whatever the truth, the Catullus codex of the Grimoire of Crimson is **the world's only surviving copy** of this particular magical text. When Catullus was **slain by a number of his slaves** during a failed blood-ritual involving the book, it passed into **obscurity** save for the occasional passing mention in abstruse occult texts. **Epididymus the Greater**—a famed thief and poetic memoirist of very late antiquity—

claimed

*maleficor non patieris sidere... qui immolat diis occidetur praeter Domino soli  
siduae et pupillo non nocbitis... et indignabitur furor meus percutionemque vos gladio  
et erunt uxores vestrae siduae et filii vestri pupilli...*

claimed he'd seen it in the boudoir of a Roman noblewoman who'd cuckolded her husband with him; after relaying a detailed and accurate description of the book, he described the **vast sense of foreboding** it inspired in him, and gave an account of (wisely) **fleeing tome and lady alike**: "It was the only unattended object worth any money at all that I ever declined to steal," he quipped.

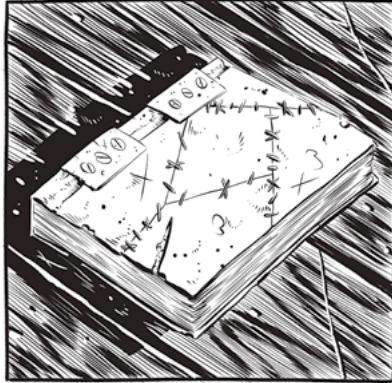
**T**he book may have been taken to **England**, where the secretive **13<sup>th</sup>-century English alchemist and astrologer** known only by his pseudonym, "**Antiphraxis Hermeticus**," **declared the book anathema** in one

of his treatises on magic: "Blacke and Bitter that Booke be,/ Finde it and Flinge it into the frothinge Sea!" (It is unknown whether Antiphraxis ever solved the book's puzzle and accessed its **hidden, grim ritual**, or simply was enraged by **a riddle he failed to solve**. Indeed, he may only have known the text by reputation.) It has even been claimed that the book was **carried to the court of Kublai Khan** by Venetian traders, supposedly at the behest of the Pope, only to be **sent back a year later wrapped in the flayed skin of the same man** who had carried it there in the first place.

**A**lthough it disappeared for centuries, at some point in the **14<sup>th</sup>-century** The Grimoire of Crimson ended up in **the collection of a sorceress**

**who lived in a hidden tower in the Black Forest**. This sorceress was, in fact, a homely woman from a small village whose girlhood experiences are related (in garbled form) in the first of the two annotated fairy tales in **Mélusine's book *Unaussprechlich Geschichten*** (described in the text for location **A4**, on page 24). The

girl, of course, did not fall in love with a saint, nor did she bear a child for the devil. Rather, the boy who spurned her was **a local rascal** with whom she fell in love while she was still a girl. It turned out that the boy's uncle had already set him up to found and run an Abbey—a lucrative enterprise for the family, after all.



Before taking monastic vows, **the boy seems to have done something terrible to the girl**—the few sober accounts that survive vary, but all emphasize his brutality—and the girl grew up with only one purpose: to **avenge herself** against him **in the most horrific way possible**.

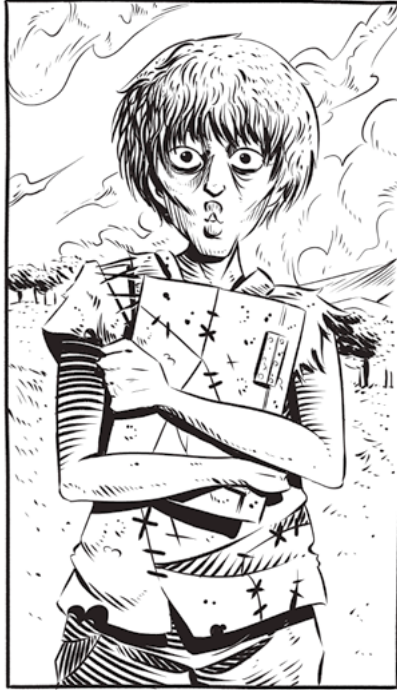
**S**o, of course, she did all she could to become a **sorceress**. Decades later, she visited the Abbey's founder. He was now elderly, and damaged badly by fire that had broken out in the Abbey a few months earlier, while **she remained unwholesomely young**, though as homely as ever. She bestowed a gift upon him: **The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher** (see page 69), one of a number of items she had successfully **enchanted using the**

**Grimoire of Crimson.** (The original owner of the Knuckle was not St. Christopher, but rather a random madman who professed to hunt Magic-Users with a dedication one could only describe as pathological.) **Terrified of fire** as he was, the elderly Abbot (completely unaware of his visitor's identity) took the Knuckle for his own use... and ultimately, driven by the hatred of mages that it instilled into him, he **began a suicidal holy war against a coven of mages** secluded in a tower nearby (who, as it turned out, just so happened to be enemies of the sorceress).

**T**he sorceress' name has been lost to all time, **erased from memory by a terribly botched magical experiment** she carried out a little over a century later. Wiped from history by the fickle hand of magic, **she left behind a hidden tower** in the Black Forest, but also, **within it she left behind a small son**—the offspring not of the devil, but of her mentor, a wicked old Magic-User from Antwerp called Zvart Jetse who was killed in the same magical accident. The boy, aged three at the time of her disappearance, **grew up alone in his lost mother's seclusion**, attended

to by those of her spirits and other magical servants who remained bound in servitude, and **slowly corrupted and warped** by those who did not.

**O**ver the years, the boy's **longing** for his now all-but-forgotten mother **led him to her library**... and, ultimately, to the Grimoire of Crimson. The originally quiet, gentle boy **read his lost mother's notes, which revealed exactly how to access the Grimoire's secrets and perform its secret ritual.** Curious, and either too young to understand what he was doing, or too stricken with grief to really care, **he enacted the ritual once**, on a traveler who happened upon the tower. Then, **as if by compulsion**, he enacted it again, on an aging servant who had cared for him as a child, and who had slipped into endless slumber in the depths of the caves beneath the tower.



**T**he boy was **horrified at himself**, and those of his mother's remaining spirit-servants who cared at all for his well-being reproached him for performing these rituals. Certain that he would be cursed, doomed, or even damned if he

repeated his crime even once more, he left the Tower and brought the Grimoire to the Abbey, hoping to break the vicious and addictive cycle of rituals into which he had entered, completely unaware of his mother's connection with the Abbey. The Abbot—a different Abbot, a successor to the one who had tortured and spurned the boy's mother—took the book, promising to burn it immediately and remove its evil from the world.

Struck by the Abbot's kindness, the boy—now a young man—ended up taking vows and joining the monastery as a novice, as penance for his past crimes.

The Abbot did attempt to follow through on his pledge. However, when the book failed to burn after a full night in a very hot fire, he was paralyzed with fear. What's more, this Abbot was under the influence of the Black Barm, which had not yet encountered a magical object since its arrival on Earth. The Abbot's natural fear of the book, and the Black Barm's curiosity, led to the Grimoire of Crimson being stored in the Aedificatum, under lock and key, as a “dangerous” text.



A few weeks later, the boy from the tower (now a novice monk) was infected and experienced the infection side effect *The Whisperer in Darkness* (see the Stage 2 Infection Card of this name). The Black Barm, glimpsing a memory of the Grimoire of Crimson in his mind and believing the despondent monk wished to be reunited with the book, whispered its location into his mind. The monk, of course, believed that it was the voice of the devil lying or, worse, tempting him to break his vow and lapse into wickedness. He fought to ignore the voice.

Ultimately, however, he succumbed to temptation. Breaking into the Aedificatum one night, he stole the text from its locked compartment, murdered a fellow monk, and enchanted a tooth stolen from a Gärunger female whom the Black Barm had sent

forth from the catacombs, and which been found wandering the monastery grounds, as sometimes happened in those days. After creating **The Bloody Tooth** (which is now hidden in the **Barley field**: see *Barley Field Treasure table in location M3, page 32*), he despaired at his own

OWN

Why did I ever worship that tongueless, mindless God? I feel a true god within me, pulsing with every breath and thought, and am ashamed at kneeling for their lies and fantasies!

corruption, and **threw himself from the Church Tower** to his death.

**I**ronically, he never learned that the **supposedly sacred relic** held in that very church—**The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher**—**had been enchanted by his own mother**. As for the Black Barm, the Grimoire of Crimson both confuses it, and fills it with a sensation vaguely akin to **cosmic dread**. It wants nothing to do with the text, even in desperation, except possibly to **destroy it**.

## The Book and its Contents

**F**or an inanimate object, the Grimoire of Crimson is **astonishingly present**. Even without the benefit of a **Detect Magic** spell, anyone **looking at it or touching it**—even when it is covered in ashes, once the **Aedificatum** has been consumed by fire—will **immediately know that it is a magical object of unusual power**. A **Detect Magic** spell will confirm this, though the caster will also immediately feel ill after casting the spell on the Grimoire. Some hear **disembodied, murmuring voices in its presence**, or feel as if it is **observing them silently** (or even **hungrily**).

**A**ny professional bookbinder or bookseller will immediately suspect (though they cannot definitively confirm) that the book has been **bound in human skin**. What they may not so quickly recognize—though on close examination, antiquaries will think it is both horrific and probable—is that **its vellum pages were also fashioned from human skin**. (In fact, they were. Even **the glue** used to bind the book **uses human bone as a component**, just as **the ink uses human blood and ashes** from burnt human corpses.)

**T**he book, which is **written in ancient Latin**, contains within it a number of **flamboyantly-named rituals promising incredible results**, such as “The Immolation of the Heavenly Host,” “Black Raven Burning in the Caesar’s Belly,” and “The Rite of Fiery Laceration Across Trackless Distances” (which promises to slash an enemy anywhere in the world to death using fiery blades summoned out of thin air from the scabbards of the armies of heaven).

**E**very ritual in the book is **utterly impossible to carry out**, calling for such absurdities as the sacrifice of a thousand unicorns, or the ingestion of two hundred gallons of virgin’s blood in a single sitting. Should someone find a way to actually carry out one of these absurd rituals, she will be disappointed to find that not only do the rituals not work, but that **on completing any one of them**, she will immediately and **permanently lose a point of Intelligence**. If she tries a **second ritual**, she will lose two points of Intelligence. On the **third try**, the following random effect will occur:







- 1 Caster's **brain liquefies**, causing instant death. (No saving throw.)
- 2 Caster slowly and painfully (over a period of a week) **turns inside out**, and then dies. (This effect can only be counteracted if someone—not necessarily the caster suffering this effect—solves the riddle of the book and correctly performs its ritual. Then, just as slowly and painfully, the effect reverses.)
- 3 The volume of the caster's blood expands by 10% per day, for ten days. The caster loses 2 points of Dexterity (and is reduced to three-quarters her normal rate of movement) the first day; on the second, she loses 4 more points of Dexterity and is reduced to a quarter of her movement rate. On the third day, she is paralyzed, but continues to bloat. Each day after the first, she must make a successful **saving throw versus Poison** or die. She can counteract the effect by letting the excess blood and feeding it to the book—on a continual basis—for a week. However, **when fed, the book will begin to mutter and emit eager and stomach-turning feeding noises, like a suckling baby animal**. Listening to the book's noises drains her sanity: she must make a **saving throw versus Poison** each day of the feeding to avoid losing a point from one randomly determined Ability Score (1d6: 1-2: Wisdom, 3-4: Intelligence, 5-6: Charisma). A botched saving throw means she loses one point each from two Ability Scores for that day.
- 4 The caster **becomes irrevocably attached to the book**. She cannot break contact with it, and writing will begin to become faintly visible beneath her skin. The next time she sleeps, she will not wake—but others will find she has disappeared, and **a new leaf of vellum has appeared in the back of the book**, containing a new (impossible) ritual that contains mention of something related to the character who became the page. If the character **amputates the limb** attached to the book, the process nonetheless continues, but it takes a week instead of one night, as she slowly grows desiccated, her bones softening to jelly and leaking from her pores, until she **becomes a flattened scroll of vellum, upon which a curse is written**. (When anyone casts the curse spell contained on it, the curse will fail, the writing on the scroll will suddenly be replaced by the life story of the caster whose body it once was, and the individual who attempted to cast the curse will begin to transform into a similar curse scroll herself.)

*Oh, an ale! I would cut off my right arm for a tankard of fresh-tapped ale! Black One, deliver me from this thirst!*



Nonetheless, the book is magical, and contains a single, powerful magical ritual. The problem is that characters will need to figure out the puzzle in order to use it. There are two ways that this might be discovered:

1. On reading the book in its pre-ritual form (nonsense rituals and all), the reader will suddenly (and inevitably, for the book magically ensures this) notice that among the horrific illuminations and gory woodcuts that adorn its pages, there is a repeated motif: human figures, whose bodies—flayed, skeletal, or merely brutalized—are covered in arcane writing, in each image being immersed in a vessel filled with what seems to be blood. After noticing this fact, the character will (again, inevitably) realize that most, but not all, of the writing in its pages are made with an ink that contains human blood. (Which writing is in bloodless ink is however not apparent by examination, magical or otherwise.) If the reader ignores this insight, she will find herself subject to a (recurring) nightmare where she witnesses the assembly of the book in a Roman villa from the skin, bones, and ash of dead human slaves, and its first ritual immersion in blood.
2. Investigation into the book's history will reveal that Catullus the Alchemist actually owned this copy of the Grimoire of Crimson, and was widely known (and shunned) in Rome both for his obsession with the book—he had a guard of a hundred men to protect it from thieves and rival alchemists—and for keeping a vast stable of slaves whom he bled regularly (and unabashedly) into a great golden bowl. He never confessed the nefarious purpose of this practice, but everyone involved (and many gossiping Romans) understood it was somehow related to the book. Upon hearing or reading this story, which should be discoverable in any decent-sized collection of occult books, the current owner of the Grimoire (or, if nobody has claimed ownership, anyone standing within 10' of the text) will suddenly feel an immense hunger and thirst... and will know it is the book's hunger.

**I**f the book is completely immersed in human blood, it will begin to emit what seem to be gruesome sounds of pleasure, halfway between the vocalizations of an infant suckling at a breast and an animal copulating. Finally, all the blood (up to two full gallons) will soak into the book and it will go silent again, and if its pages are opened, the reader will discover that most of the text within has disappeared. (It will remain missing until the next new moon.) All that remains visible is a single line, or even just a few words, every few pages, amid the many blank pages. In all, approximately fifty lines of text are revealed.

**I**f the revealed lines are read in forward sequence (from the beginning of the book to the end) on completion the reader must save versus Magic or lose 1d4 points each of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. The result of the three 1d4 Ability Score loss rolls may also have a secondary effect:

- ⊕ **If the result of all three of these rolls is identical**, the character must save versus Poison or die immediately.
- ⊕ **If the result of the three rolls, in the order rolled, form an ascending linear sequence** (1-2-3 or 2-3-4), the character will still suffer the loss, but will immediately understand how the Grimoire works.
- ⊕ **If the result of the three rolls, in the order rolled, is a descending linear sequence** (4-3-2 or 3-2-1) then the character will suddenly and permanently be unable to see the Grimoire of Crimson, even if it is

right in front of her. This effect can be removed either by the character causing another to claim ownership of the Grimoire of Crimson (though she will nonetheless remain permanently unable to read its pages in this case), or by using a Remove Curse spell (provided it is cast by a 5<sup>th</sup> Level Magic-User, or simultaneously by multiple Magic-Users whose levels add up to 5). If three days are allowed to pass before this curse is lifted, however, on the fourth day she will awaken to find herself permanently and irreversibly blind. (i.e. From the fourth day onward, neither conventional medicine nor magical means—including Remove Curse—will reverse the condition, and the PC will be permanently blinded.)

**I**f the character reads the lines in backward sequence, she will discover they contain instructions for a ritual which will enchant any body part from a dead creature. The ritual is easily carried out: it involves the immersion of the body part to be enchanted in a golden fount of fresh blood, the recitation of a specific magical formula, and the sacrifice of a small mammal of any kind which is to be slain by being crushed to a bloody death using the book.

**U**pon the ritual's completion, the body part will be enchanted such that its bearer is technically immune to whatever killed its original owner. For example, the human being from whom The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher was taken was killed with magical fire by the same (now-forgotten) Magic-User who enchanted it; therefore, the Knuckle confers on its owner immunity to heat

and

*The visions it gives me are a horror. Strangely-dad folk gathered round a table, fiddling with papers and laughing at the horrors we endure. God, save me from that friend of the pit!*

and fire. Likewise, the Neanderthal (from whom **The Bloody Tooth** in the barley field was taken) died from Black Barm Infection gone wild; therefore, the tooth confers immunity to infections of all types, including Black Barm Infection. This immunity also extends to the object, for those causes of death that might be relevant to the object being enchanted (resistance to fire, for example).

(Indeed, the Grimoire of Crimson itself was constructed out of human body parts in this way to ensure its durability: fire, acid, water, cutting, and many other forms of damage are ineffective against it. This is because Catullus of Rome, using an earlier version of the Grimoire's ritual (from an ancient source text, now lost to the ages), carefully devised an exhaustive list of causes of death to inflict upon those of his slaves slated to contribute body parts to his handmade copy of book.)

Unfortunately, there is always an attendant negative side-effect to the enchantment, which is also rooted in the life of the person from whom the body part was taken. **The Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher** was taken from a man with a compulsive and irrational hatred for Magic-Users, a predilection that is passed onto the bearer of the Knuckle. Likewise, the Neanderthal woman from whose tooth **The Bloody Tooth** was

made had a terrible dental abscess, which had weakened her significantly by the time she was infected by the Black Barm: hence the tooth's perpetual bloodiness, and its slow erosion of the bearer's Constitution and hit points. Aside from optional cosmetic magical effects (like the blood on the tooth), no such negative vulnerability or side effect extends to the object enchanted by this ritual, however: only the owner of the enchanted object is thus affected.



Finally, performing the ritual means risking a potentially terrible price: at its completion, the character performing the ritual must successfully make

a saving throw versus Magic or be possessed by a sudden thirst for human blood. She must either consume a gallon of fresh human blood per day (and nothing else) until the next new moon, or roll a saving throw versus Poison to avoid instant death. (Success on the saving throw means permanently losing 1d4 points of Constitution.)

In the unlikely event that PCs manage successfully to use the Grimoire of Crimson, the specific immunity and attendant curse conferred by the resulting enchantment are left to the Referee's discretion, but should be worked out in conjunction with the player of the character performing the ritual.



If the Referee decides, the **Black Barm** could easily serve as a major antagonist for the PCs, but remember it is not really evil, just alien and inhuman, with radically incomprehensible motivations and (at times) an unsettling lack of compassion for human beings.

Beyond that, the fallout from this adventure could easily be far-reaching and profound:

- ✦ **Papal investigators come, seeking the truth about the Abbey's fall:** PCs could be held responsible, pressed to pay for the loot they took, or imprisoned under canon law on trumped-up charges of witchcraft. (Or maybe they'll impress their interrogators and the Vatican will offer them work of a similar nature?)
  - ✦ **Other pieces of the Black Rock in other locales** (from North Africa to the Urals, to Western Europe, to the Near East) could become the impetus for ongoing conflict with the Black Barm... or a longer struggle by the characters against
- their enslavement to it. (A **global Barmocalypse** obviously isn't a necessary endgame or potential outcome, but it could be a truly fun and challenging one for your group, if it fits your campaign world and style of play.) Choose any of the following locales for other fragments of the Black Rock: Kairouan, Vatican City, Constantinople, Toulouse, and (thanks to an Italian Silk Road trader in the Middle Ages) either Delhi or Beijing's palatial Forbidden City.
- ✦ **Other groups** like the Company of the Scalded Shield, enslaved by the Black Barm, could be sent to hunt down the characters... or to "recruit them" to the Black Barm's service. The Company of the Scalded Shield could also become either long-term allies or foes, depending how things go. Likewise, surviving monks from the Abbey who fled might come sniffing around, hoping to find and destroy the Black Rock... or eliminate those who are rumored to have found it and carried it out of the Catacombs (whether the PCs did so or not).

An

DEUS, DEUS meus, respice in me: quare me dereliquisti?  
longe a salute mea verba delictorum meorum. DEUS  
meus, clamabo per diem, et non exaudies: et nocte, et non ad  
irripientiam mihi.

✦ An outbreak—ranging anywhere from a local sickness to global pandemic—could occur if the characters (or some other group of salvagers) carry the Black Rock (or a sample of the Black Barm, or the hops from the oasthouse, or any of the grain at the Abbey, or a Gärunger) to an urban locale. Against this backdrop, the PCs could struggle with their own difficult-to-eradicate infections.

✦ The whitish yeast colony on the scythe in the barley field gets collected, and grown into a large colony by an alchemist aware of the PCs' involvement in the events at the Abbey; the result is a large colony of sentient, Lawful yeast—either an Earth-native strain mutated by long exposure to the Black Barm, or a sympathetic emissary from the Black Barm's homeworld—seeking to banish its trespassing extraterrestrial cousin from the face of the Earth, and requesting the PCs' aid.

✦ Solitary Gärunger (or even small groups) could awaken, weeks or months later, and set out to track down the Black Rock or the PCs.

✦ The sorceress who created the Blessed Knuckle of St. Christopher wasn't wiped from history after all: she returns, and wants to reclaim the Grimoire of Crimson... and to destroy what's left of the Abbey in the process. (This was the scenario used in my own campaign.)

Or perhaps if the Black Rock is destroyed, that's the end of the Black Barm, period. The choice is yours.

Note: concision requires the effect descriptions on the Infection Cards included with this adventure to be focused on the Abbey, but if the Black Barm remains active within your campaign, changes will need to be made for the following Infection Cards:

✦ **Klosterphilic:** The character would be compelled to protect any locale housing The Black Rock (or any fragment of it), and enjoy the same +1 bonus when doing so.

✦ **Where Everybody Knows Your Name:** The character would experience the same mind-melding effect with other Stage 4 Infected servants of the Black Barm, in locales far from the Abbey, with the same in-game effects.

✦ **The Whisperer in Darkness:** The character would gain the same access to secret knowledge or insight in any area where the Black Barm has managed to infect a number of individuals and gain this knowledge, at least while in the vicinity.



Gloria, gloria, in excelsis fermentata! Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Petra Nigra! Gloria, GLORIA  
**GLORIA!**

# ON THE PREPARATION OF INFECTION CARDS

The Infection Effects are described on player handouts on the following pages. The Referee should photocopy (or print, from the PDF) sufficient copies of each handout to be prepared for the majority of the characters in their game to proceed to level 3 infection. Here are suggested numbers of copies of each page to prepare, depending on the number of players in your group:

	Stage 1	2-3	4-5	6-7
Tiny Bubbles		1	2	2
Delving Instinct		1	2	2
Klosterphilic		1	1	2
Drowning Your Sorrows		1	2	3
Simply Fabulous		2	2	3
Where Everybody Knows Your Name		1	1	2
Magical Thinking		1	2	2
Standing Tall		2	2	3
<b>Stage 2</b>				
Oceans of Time		1	2	2
Invisible Friend		1	1	2
The Writing on the Wall		1	1	1
The Whisperer in Darkness		1	1	2
Diderotian		2	2	2
Unholy Spew		2	3	3
Geological Time		1	1	2
<b>Stage 3</b>				
She Who Has Eyes		1	1	2
Manichean		1	1	1
Logos Flush		1	1	1
A Better Place		1	1	1
Meta		1	1	1
The Inhumanity		1	1	1
<b>Stage 4</b>				
The End of the Beginning			1*	

For groups of more than seven players, cards should be added following the Referee's preferences, or may be shared between players.

\*Only 1 copy is needed: **The End of the Beginning** lacks detailed mechanics. Therefore if multiple Player Characters reach Stage 4, the Infection Card can simply be passed between players.

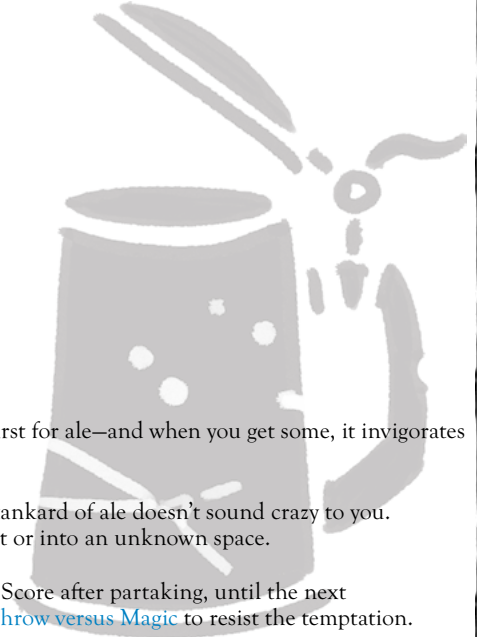
## Tiny Bubbles

*Thirst, thirst:  
A torment, this,  
It is the worst,  
But a full tankard's bliss!*

**Y**ou are filled with a bottomless thirst for ale—and when you get some, it invigorates you powerfully.

**Roleplaying:** Risking your hide for a tankard of ale doesn't sound crazy to you. Neither does wandering off from a fight or into an unknown space.

**Mechanics:** +1 to your highest Ability Score after partaking, until the next opportunity arises... or make a [saving throw versus Magic](#) to resist the temptation.



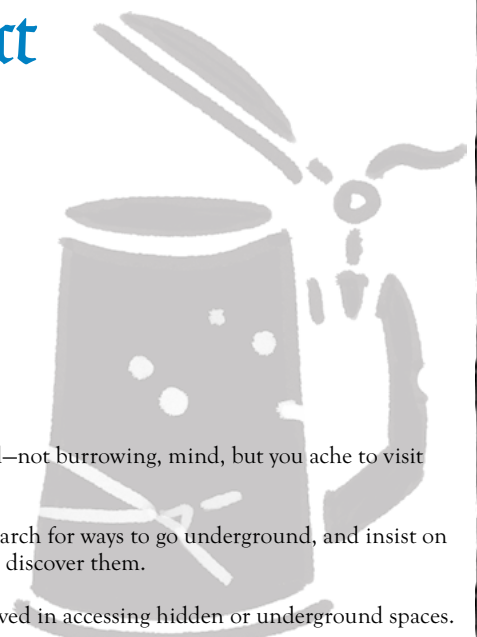
## Delving Instinct

*Like a mole or worm,  
You long to descend,  
Fearless of meeting  
An untimely end.*

**Y**ou yearn to descend underground—not burrowing, mind, but you ache to visit hidden caves and tunnels below.

**Roleplaying:** Go out of your way to search for ways to go underground, and insist on going there (or going deeper) when you discover them.

**Mechanics:** +1 to any Skill Rolls involved in accessing hidden or underground spaces.





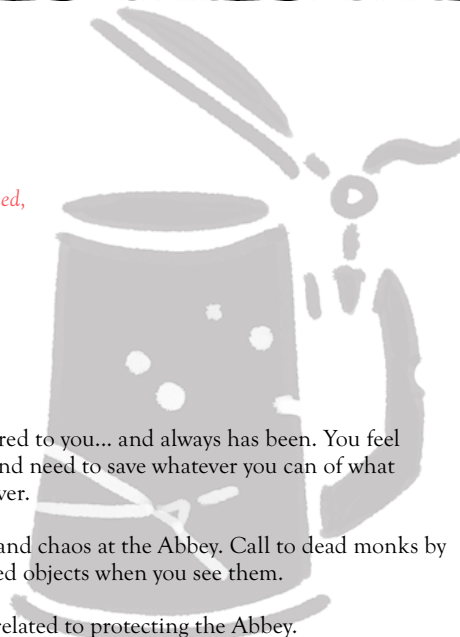
## Klosterphilic

*The Abbey is a holy place,  
Blessed, it cares for its own,  
It must not be disturbed or harmed,  
It shall remain your home.*

**T**he Abbey of St. Christopher is sacred to you... and always has been. You feel intensely protective of the place, and need to save whatever you can of what remains. You long to remain there forever.

**Roleplaying:** Lament the destruction and chaos at the Abbey. Call to dead monks by name and rush to save precious or sacred objects when you see them.

**Mechanics:** +2 on all rolls for actions related to protecting the Abbey.



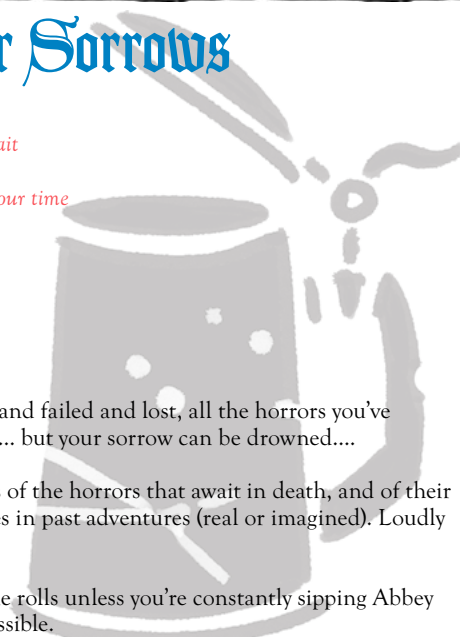
## Drowning Your Sorrows

*Behold the slaughtered, who await  
For you to fail and die,  
They watch and wonder when your time  
Will come—and think it nigh.*

**B**ehold the faces of all you've slain and failed and lost, all the horrors you've witnessed and innocents harmed... but your sorrow can be drowned....

**Roleplaying:** Remind other characters of the horrors that await in death, and of their past crimes against people and creatures in past adventures (real or imagined). Loudly take great relief in Abbey ale.

**Mechanics:** Suffer a -2 penalty to all die rolls unless you're constantly sipping Abbey ale, and refilling your cup whenever possible.



## Simply Fabulous!

*In ale, you find now all your joy,  
Your faith, your true belief;  
An urge most curious fills your mind  
Fulfill it and find relief.*

**T**he sight of ale makes you want to pour a whole tankard over your party's heads while shouting, "Fabulous! Amazing! Prodigious! Buxom! Fierce!..."

**Roleplaying:** Actively seek out Abbey ale. When you get some, sneak up on characters to ambush them with ridiculous praises and sprayed ale!

**Mechanics:** When you see ale, make a **saving throw versus Magic** to resist enacting this fantasy. No more than once per hour, but -1 penalty to all subsequent saving throws until you do. If your party joins in, enjoy +1 bonus to all die rolls for the next two hours.

## Where Everybody Knows Your Name

*Sometimes you want to go,  
Where every brother knows your name,  
And they're rejoicing that you came,  
You want to pray where people say,  
Sinners are all the same,  
You want to pray where everybody knows your name.*

**Y**ou glimpse memories of some novice monk living at the Abbey: daily routines, names, locations...

**Roleplaying:** Chime in with comments about locales in the Abbey and daily life events that took place there. When you ask the Referee a question, phrase it elliptically, to show you're drawing on memories: "I remember this place. I think there was another, secret way out...?"

**Mechanics:** Player may ask the Referee one general question per location. (Referee must answer, but only things novices would know.) However, -2 to all rolls involving actions hostile toward monks: familiarity inhibits you.

## Magical Thinking

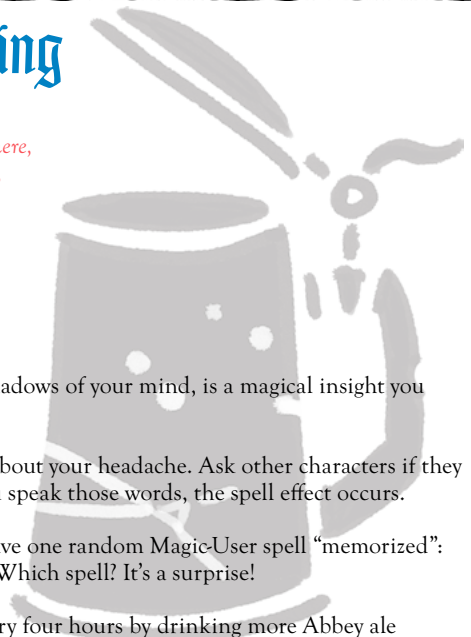
*Something unnatural twitches there,  
Buried in the folds of your brain,  
A little arcane formula...  
And you'll never be the same.*

**M**urky and wild, tangled in the shadows of your mind, is a magical insight you never noticed before.

**Roleplaying:** Complain occasionally about your headache. Ask other characters if they hear the arcane murmurings too. If you speak those words, the spell effect occurs.

**Mechanics:** Regardless of class, you have one random Magic-User spell "memorized": cast it by speaking a single alien word. Which spell? It's a surprise!

Replenish with a new random spell every four hours by drinking more Abbey ale



## Standing Tall

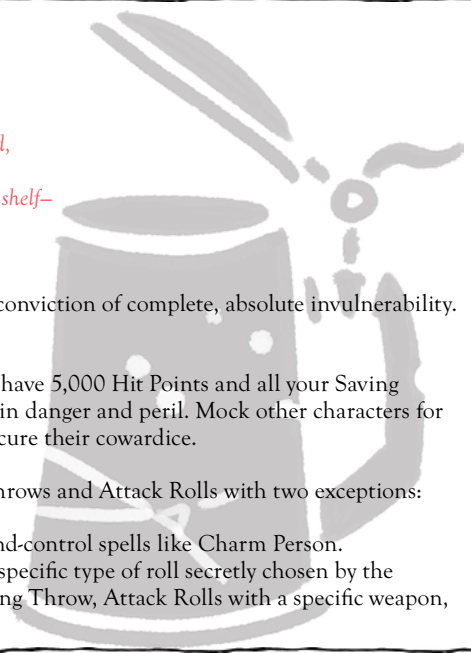
*A flagon filled is courage in hand,  
A flagon empty is courage fled!  
So take down a bottle from that shelf—  
At least we cannot end up dead!*

**T**he Abbey's beer fills you with the conviction of complete, absolute invulnerability.

**Roleplaying:** Make decisions as if you have 5,000 Hit Points and all your Saving Throws auto-succeed. Laugh and exult in danger and peril. Mock other characters for fearfulness, and claim that the ale will cure their cowardice.

**Mechanics:** +1 bonus on all Saving Throws and Attack Rolls with two exceptions:

- ⊕ You suffer a -4 penalty to resist mind-control spells like Charm Person.
- ⊕ You suffer a -4 penalty on another specific type of roll secretly chosen by the Referee. (Examples: A specific Saving Throw, Attack Rolls with a specific weapon, a specific Skill Check, etc.)



## Oceans of Time

*A void, cold and vast, you've seen,  
And oceans of time you've crossed—  
You soared across the darkness, once,  
But no longer are you lost.*



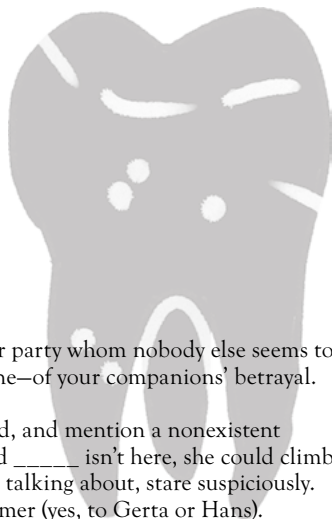
**You** glimpse slow, aeons-long travel across a vast and lightless void, distant stars gloaming dimly through immense veils of silently drifting dust.

**Roleplaying:** You're distracted, and if aboveground, keep looking up and muttering, "So cold, so vast... so far..." Nag others to share their ale, or help you find more.

**Mechanics:** -2 Wisdom while holding this card, and -1 on all **saving throws versus Magic**. When you see ale, roll a **saving throw versus Magic** at -2 or immediately drink it.

## Invisible Friend

*A secret conspiracy, only known  
To you, of a hidden crime;  
Against an ally they've all forgot—  
This knowledge is not sublime.*



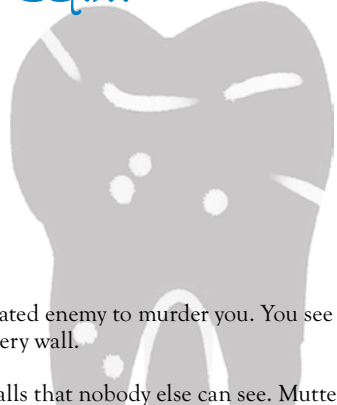
**You** half-remember a missing member of your party whom nobody else seems to remember. The friend whispers—to you alone—of your companions' betrayal.

**Roleplaying:** Distrust your allies. Take rearguard, and mention a nonexistent character (Gerta or Hans) in passing: "It's too bad \_\_\_\_\_ isn't here, she could climb this wall." When other characters ask who you're talking about, stare suspiciously. Later, hint that you know what they did last summer (yes, to Gerta or Hans).

**Mechanics:** -2 on Skill Rolls and actions requiring intense concentration.

# The Writing on the Wall

*Lamb and lion lie together,  
Plotting for your head:  
You know they will not stop until  
You lay before them, dead.*



**V**our companions are plotting with an old, hated enemy to murder you. You see lurid diagrams of this plot scrawled onto every wall.

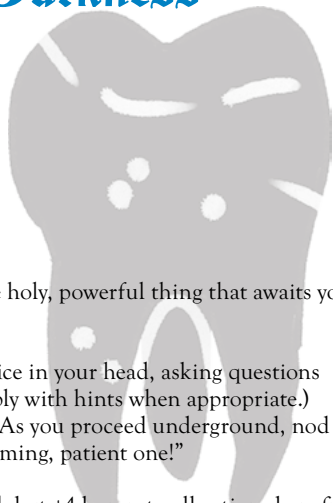
**Roleplaying:** Murmur as you read writing on walls that nobody else can see. Mutter, “My neck? My intestines?” Occasionally ask others, “Why do you hate me so?” and refuse to be convinced otherwise. If they save or help you, comment in dubious surprise. Obsess about an old enemy—powerful or insignificant—from a past adventure and ask when the others last saw that enemy. Distraction and hesitation slow you.

**Mechanics:** -2 penalty on all Initiative and Combat-related rolls.



## The Whisperer in Darkness

*Come, come to me, my little beast,  
I'll give you what you need,  
I'll guide you to me with my voice,  
And fill you with fruiting seed.*



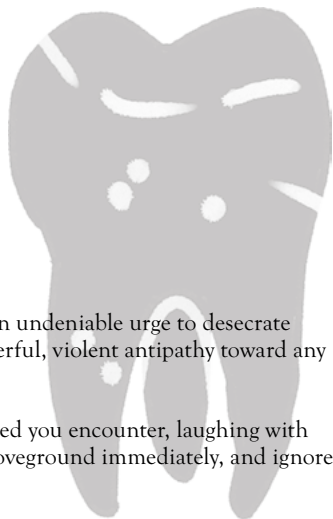
**A** voice in your head guides you toward some holy, powerful thing that awaits you in the depths.

**Roleplaying:** Occasionally converse with the voice in your head, asking questions pertinent to the adventure. (The Referee may reply with hints when appropriate.) Thank the voice in your head when it helps you. As you proceed underground, nod excitedly and say things like, "I'm coming, I'm coming, patient one!"

**Mechanics:** -6 Charisma while holding this card, but +4 bonus to all actions benefiting from secret, insider information about the Abbey (like searches). You may also demand a 2-second glimpse of each Referee map (once per map).

## Diderotian

*Upside down and inside-out,  
Profane what's held sacred, yes:  
Help a cosmic curse befall  
What vile monks and abbots bless.*



**R**egardless of your religious beliefs, you feel an undeniable urge to desecrate anything sacred in the Abbey, and feel powerful, violent antipathy toward any monks encountered above ground.

**Roleplaying:** Exultantly desecrate anything sacred you encounter, laughing with maniacal glee. Attack any monk encountered aboveground immediately, and ignore party members who try to stop you.

**Mechanics:** *Saving throw versus Magic* or immediately, compulsively assault any monk encountered above ground, even if he has already become an ally.

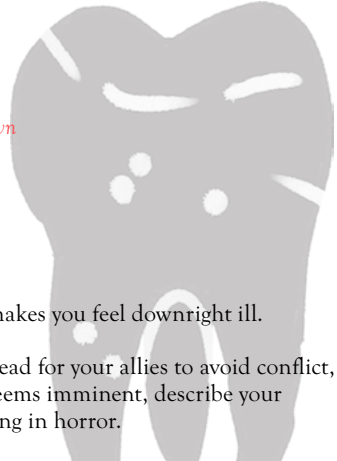
## Unholy Spew

*Boil and bubble, gastric trouble,  
Something's wrong, it's true,  
When blades and pistols are suddenly drawn  
You then commence to spew.*

**Y**our guts gurgle loudly, and confrontation makes you feel downright ill.

**Roleplaying:** Complain of an upset stomach. Plead for your allies to avoid conflict, sneaking or fleeing if necessary. When combat seems imminent, describe your character gagging, hands on belly, and whimpering in horror.

**Mechanics:** When any conflict begins, make a [saving throw versus Poison](#). Fail: spend 1 round immobilized and projectile vomiting onto all within a 10' radius (make a [saving throw versus Breath Weapon](#) to resist increased infection). Succeed: cumulative -1 penalty on subsequent saves, and -10' movement rate, until you spew.



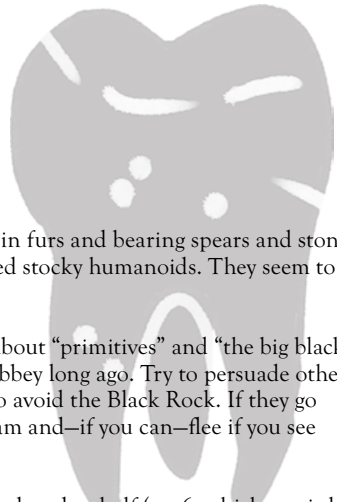
## Geological Time

*Long ago when we were near-apes  
We fought over nothing but stones.  
Spears in hand near a great black rock,  
And a shuddering pile of bones.*

**Y**ou see visions of primitive humans dressed in furs and bearing spears and stone axes, fighting primitive-looking, slope-headed stocky humanoids. They seem to be fighting over a large, blackish stone.

**Roleplaying:** Make vague, terrified statements about “primitives” and “the big black rock.” Suggest something evil happened at the Abbey long ago. Try to persuade others to flee the Abbey, to avoid going underground, to avoid the Black Rock. If they go along, nag them about the evil Black Rock. Scream and—if you can—flee if you see anything from your visions.

**Mechanics:** Your Wisdom score is temporarily reduced to half (or -6, whichever is less). When you see anything from your visions, or representations of them, you must roll a [saving throw versus Paralysis](#) to avoid suffering incapacitating terror for 1d3 rounds.



## She Who Has Eyes

*"A sight for sore eyes," so they say,  
But what makes a sore eye?  
It's recompense for a life of sin=  
And helps you sooner to die.*

**Y**our eyesight is now garbled, and cycles through double vision, horizontal and vertical inversion, and even more exotic warping effects.

**Roleplaying:** Describe your character squinting and looking in the wrong direction at things, asking "Why are you all upside down, now?" or "How do you think they got the table to stick to the wall?" Get colors and shapes wrong, too, and walk into walls, complain of dizziness. If trying to read, give up or fake it in embarrassment.

**Mechanics:** -4 penalty to all actions involving eyesight; -5 to all involving aiming or concentrated focus (like reading), which will make combat, spell preparation, and general adventuring difficult and increasingly perilous if the condition continues.

## Manichean

*Two gods, not one, at war for all:  
That is the mystery  
Which threads its way through everything...  
Now you've sided with history.*

**Y**ou realize the truth: history centers on a secret war between an evil deity above, and the benevolent entity it forced underground. The latter now needs your aid.

**Roleplaying:** Regardless of previous beliefs, you grimace and spit on the ground (or floor) when characters mention anything conventionally religious. Your default analogy for any conflict is between "good and evil," and you associate the sky and conventional religion with the latter.

**Mechanics:** When aboveground, you suffer a penalty of -6 on all physical Ability Scores (-3 when aboveground but indoors). You also suffer an additional -2 penalty on all saving throws while aboveground. All penalties cease once you are underground.



## Logos Flush

*What separates us from the beasts,  
Or so the naturalists say,  
Has left your mind and mmmr zrr thrrh,  
Brr bm, gmr zyav vw vweh.*

**S**omething has gone terribly wrong: your friends' speech no longer makes sense to you, and when you try to speak, uyuhkl bgtds vwrawv mullfhtg...

**Roleplaying:** You can use gestures (as you might use playing Charades), but as long as you have this infection effect, your in-character speech can only be garbled nonsense.

**Mechanics:** -3 penalty to all Charisma-related rolls; automatically fail all language-based tasks (including spellcasting).

## A Better Place

*Another world, familiar, yet  
Bewildering to behold.  
You feel burning a longing, your  
Return there long foretold.*

**Y**ou glimpse another, better world: isles covered in sprouting barley, forests overrun by hop vines with massive hop cones, rivers of ale flowing down into bubbling, beery oceans. You know you've never been there, yet you ache to return.

**Roleplaying:** Whenever beer or barm is present, rush over and look at it. Comment on the world you see (described above). You might try reach (or dive) into the beer to see if it will lead you down to the other world.

**Mechanics:** Character must make a [saving throw versus Paralysis](#) anytime she sees beer or barm, or enter a trance for 10+1d10 minutes.

## Meta

*A vision far stranger than any other,  
Of players in a room;  
Shuffling papers and dice on a table;  
They're laughing at your doom.*

**T**he vision your character has is precisely what you, the player, are seeing: your fellow players, dressed in strange modern clothing, fiddling with dice and maps and papers in this place where you play your game. They are discussing events at the Abbey, and, horrified, you somehow are certain that they control the entire world...

**Roleplaying:** Describe what you see, literally. Mention fellow players as you'd (charitably) describe them if you'd never seen them before. Describe the materials on the table before you, and the decor of the room. Quit when your fellow players catch on.

**Mechanics:** Your character suddenly achieves game-transcendence for 2 minutes. (Have the Referee set a timer or watch the clock after players catch on and your description ends.) Any 3 modifications you make to character sheets, cards in play, maps, or other game materials apply in-game... but beware the cunning Referee.

## The Inhumanity

*They live among us, hidden horrors,  
Capering when the blood-moon's high  
And feasting on infants behind closed doors:  
These monstrous fiends must die.*

**O**h, the inhumanity of it all! Well, of *them* all. You realize your companions were never human: they're evil, apelike monsters. Now that you've seen it, you can't unsee it, illogical as it seems... and you believe that for the world to live, they must die.

**Roleplaying:** Occasionally find your companions incomprehensible, and mimic back incomprehensible and inhuman grunts and guttural jabbering after they speak, as if you're imitating what you hear them saying. Query them about their "backstory" and latch onto inconsistencies. Glare at them in horror for a moment and then try to hide it. Watch them carefully, and bide your time: if you strike now, outnumbered as you are, you'll surely die... and the world will die with you.

**Mechanics:** When fighting your companions, you are at +2 on all attack rolls, and -2 on all damage rolls. (You can't help but pull your punches.) For you, their Charisma is reduced by -10, and your spells or magical effects treat them as Chaotic.

# The End of the Beginning

Your will has been completely eroded by a strange and inhuman consciousness who fills you with beatific joy. There is a god within the Black Rock, deep in the Catacombs: you must rescue and transport it to safety. Kill all who oppose the blessed task—even your companions.

## Praise Be the Black Barm!

**Roleplaying:** Your brain has been hijacked, and you serve the Black Rock now. Be as strategic and cunning as your character is capable—if you can convince characters to confiscate and transport away the Black Rock, that's better than just killing them immediately. Just do whatever it takes to get the Black Rock out to safety... and then dedicate your life to serving your new alien god.

**Mechanics:** All penalties noted in the Mechanics sections for other infections accumulated are hereby canceled out; you can, however, invoke at will any of their of the useful effects or bonuses.



# Infection Reference

# Mechanics

## Stage 1

### Tiny Bubbles

Strong urge: drink Abbey ale at every chance.

- + Save vs. Magic to resist urge to drink more.
- + After succumbing, +1 to highest Ability Score until next opportunity to drink.
- + Bonus lost if urge is successfully resisted.

### Delving Instinct

Strong urge: go underground.

- + +1 bonus to all Skill Rolls involving access to underground spaces/passages.

### Klosterphilic

Strong urge: protect the Abbey.

- + +2 bonus on all rolls for actions related to protecting the Abbey.

### Drowning Your Sorrows

Memory: plagued by horror, sorrow, and guilt that only ale can cure.

- + -2 penalty to all die rolls unless a tankard of ale is at hand, sipped & refilled when possible.

### Simply Fabulous!

Strong urge: pour ale (and praise) onto allies.

- + Save vs. Magic to resist urge, but gain a -1 penalty to all saving throws until urge is acted on.
- + After succumbing, +1 bonus to all rolls for 2 hours (in-game time).

### Where Everybody Knows Your Name

Memory: access to an unnamed monk's knowledge.

- + -2 penalty to all rolls for hostile actions against monks.
- + Referee must answer one (general monk knowledge) question per location.

### Magical Thinking

Memory: unexpected magical insight.

- + PC (any class) gains one (1) Magic-User spell. Spell randomly determined when cast.
- + Replenish (new random spell) 1x/4hrs by drinking Abbey ale.

### Standing Tall

Delusions: invulnerability.

- + +1 bonus on all Saves and Attack Rolls, except:
- + -4 on Saving Throws to resist mind-control effects.
- + -4 on any one roll type of the Referee's (secret) choice.

## Stage 2

### Oceans of Time

Strong urge: drink Abbey ale at every chance.

- + -2 Wisdom and -1 on all saves vs. Magic. (Must save vs. Magic at -2 to resist drinking ale on sight.)

### Invisible Friend

Strong urge: go underground.

- + -2 penalty to all Skill Rolls/actions involving intense concentration.

### The Writing on the Wall

Strong urge: protect the Abbey.

- + -2 penalty to all Initiative- and Combat-related rolls (due to distraction).

### Whisperer in Darkness

Memory: plagued by horror, sorrow, and guilt that only ale can cure.

- + -6 Charisma penalty
- + +4 bonus to all actions benefiting from insider info.
- + Player may demand a 2-second glimpse of each map once during play.

### Diderotian

Strong urge: pour ale (and praise) onto allies.

- + Save vs. Magic to resist urge to immediately attack any monk/clergy member encountered aboveground (includes allies).

### Unholy Spew

Memory: access to an unnamed monk's knowledge.

For any conflict witnessed:

- + Save vs. Poison to resist 1 round incapacitation and projectile vomiting on all within 10' radius.
- + If successful, cumulative -1 on subsequent die rolls throws to resist this effect and -10' movement rate.
- + After failing, penalty resets to 0.

### Geological Time

Memory: unexpected magical insight.

- + PC's Wisdom score reduced to half (or -6 if less).
- + Save vs. Paralysis to avoid incapacitating terror (1d3 rounds) at sight of Neanderthals, cave paintings, and the Black Rock.

## Stage 3

### She Who Has Eyes

Distortion: Exotically warped eyesight.

- + -4 penalty to all actions involving eyesight
- + -5 to all involving aiming or concentrated focus.

### Manichean

Delusions: a secret, dualist cosmic war between (evil) sky god and (good) underworld god.

- + While aboveground:
- + -2 on all saving throws
- + -6 on all physical Ability Scores (outdoors) or -3 (indoors).

### Logos Flush

Distortion: scrambled speech & language comprehension.

- + Verbal communication, spellcasting impossible.
- + -3 penalty to all Charisma-related rolls.

### A Better Place

Visions: a beer-based world, and Strong Urge to "return" there.

- + Save vs. Paralyze or enter a paralytic trance for 10+1d10 min when seeing barm/beer.

### Meta

Visions: the real-life gaming group playing this adventure.

- + PC transcends game for 2 minutes: can make any three changes to Infection Cards in play, character sheets, etc. (But beware the canny Referee.)

### The Inhumanity

Delusion: fellow party members are secretly evil ape-monsters.

- + +2 on all attack rolls and -2 on all damage rolls, against companions.
- + Charisma effectively -10 for the PC
- + PC is effectively Chaotic alignment for all magical mechanics.

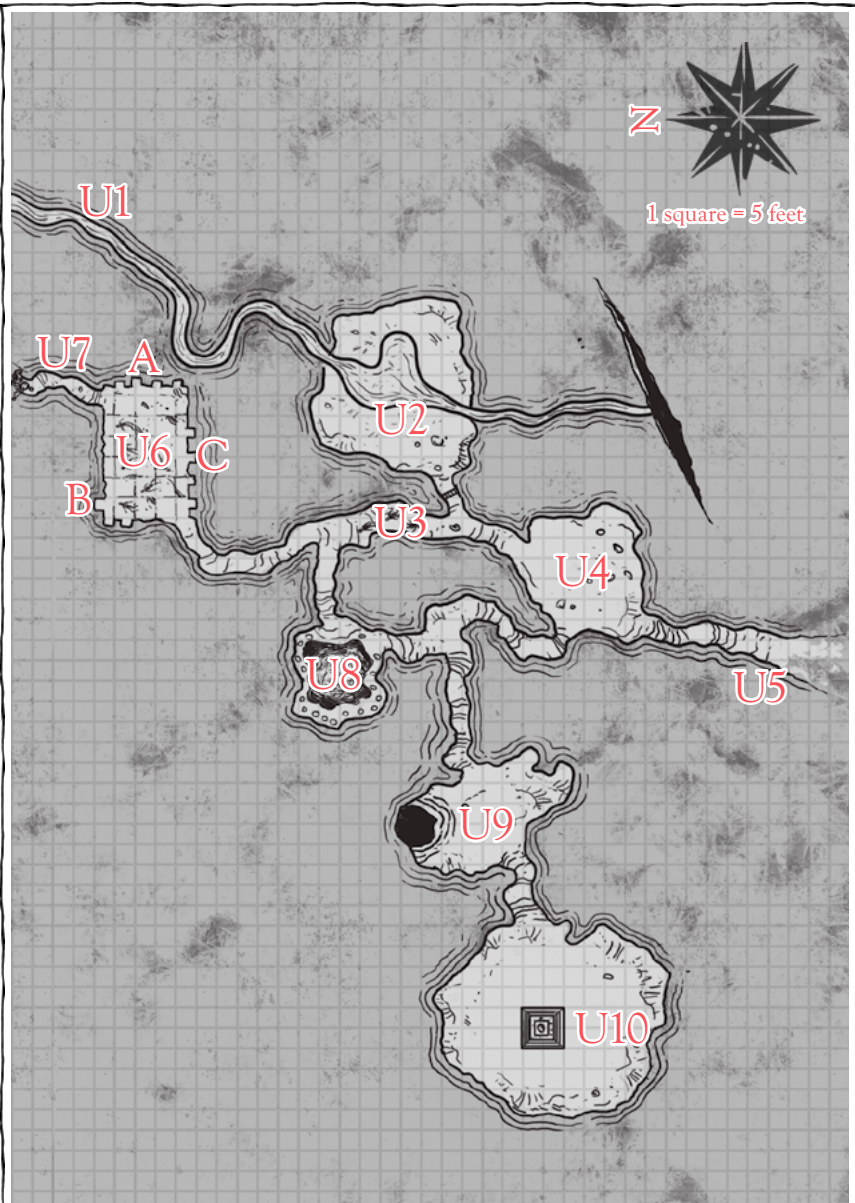
## Stage 4

### The End of the Beginning

Brain fully hijacked by the Black Barm. Player now fights on its side.

- + Penalties from previous cards nullified, but any effects or bonuses described can be invoked at will





**U1** (page 59)  
Stream Tunnel

**U3** (page 60)  
The Dreadful Hallway

**U5** (page 61)  
Passageway to the Church

**U7** (page 62)  
Cave-In

**U9** (page 63)  
Antechamber

**U2** (page 59)  
Ancient Mausoleum

**U4** (page 60)  
Painted Cave

**U6** (page 61)  
Young Brother's Mausoleum

**U8** (page 62)  
Skeletal Garden

**U10** (page 64)  
The Black  
Rock Chapel

## Catacombs Random Encounters 1d6

- 1 **Gärunger Rat Swarm:** Armor 6, Movement 120', 3 Hit Dice, 14 (1hp each rat), bite 1, Morale 12, Initiative -3, if bite attack succeeds saving throw vs. Magic to resist increased Black Barm Infection. Each hit point of damage kills one rat.
- 2 Group of **Infected, Tedrick-Aligned Monks**, Armor 12, Movement 120', 1 Hit Die 1, 2-4hp, improvised weapons, Morale 7, Initiative -2. Assign each monk one random Infection Card.
- 3 1d4+2 **Gärunger**, mixed group (human and Neanderthal). (For Stats see page 16.)
- 4 **Master Philip** (from the Abbey Inn), Armor 11, Movement 120', 1 Hit Die 1, 3hp, dull-edged sword 1d4, Morale 7, Initiative -3, Stage 4 Infection: assign appropriate number of Infection Cards.
- 5 **Fungal spore cloud.** Saving throw vs. Poison to resist 1d3hp poison damage per round of exposure.
- 6 1d4 **Uninfected Monks**, Armor 11, Movement 120', 1 Hit Die 1, 5 hp, 1hp punch, Morale 5, Initiative -2. (1d3 are also armed with improvised weapons like flails, scythes, shovels, brewing paddles.)

## Catacombs What's It Up To? 1d4

	Gärunger Rats	Infected/Gärunger	Master Philip	Uninfected Monk(s)
1	Trying to drive PCs toward the <b>Black Rock Chapel (U9)</b> .	Examining passages for the evacuation of the <b>Black Rock</b> .	Lost and frightened, in an apparent (but fake) daze.	Searching for a way out of the Catacombs.
2	Building a barricade out of bones from the <b>Ancient Mausoleum (U2)</b> .	Dragging 1d3 terrified <b>Uninfected Monks</b> to the <b>Black Rock Chapel (U9)</b> .	Drinking Abbey Ale and making his way to the <b>Black Rock Chapel (U9)</b> .	Hiding and desperately praying for salvation.
3	Attacking 1d4 Uninfected Monks. (See result 6, <b>Catacombs Random Encounters</b> table).		Unconscious, facedown in a pool of black barm vomit.	Fighting something else. (Roll 1d4 on the <b>Catacombs Random Encounters</b> table.)
4	Attempting to stealthily observe/stalk the PCs from a distance.			

Other **Gärunger Animals** can be generated by statting up a normal animal and modifying its Armor by -1 to -3, reducing its movement rate to 75%, adding 1-2hp of attack damage, (and optionally adding an Infection-spreading effect), increasing its Morale to 12, and applying a -3 penalty to Initiative.

LAMENTATIONS  
*of the*  
FLAME PRINCESS