

# The Undercroft

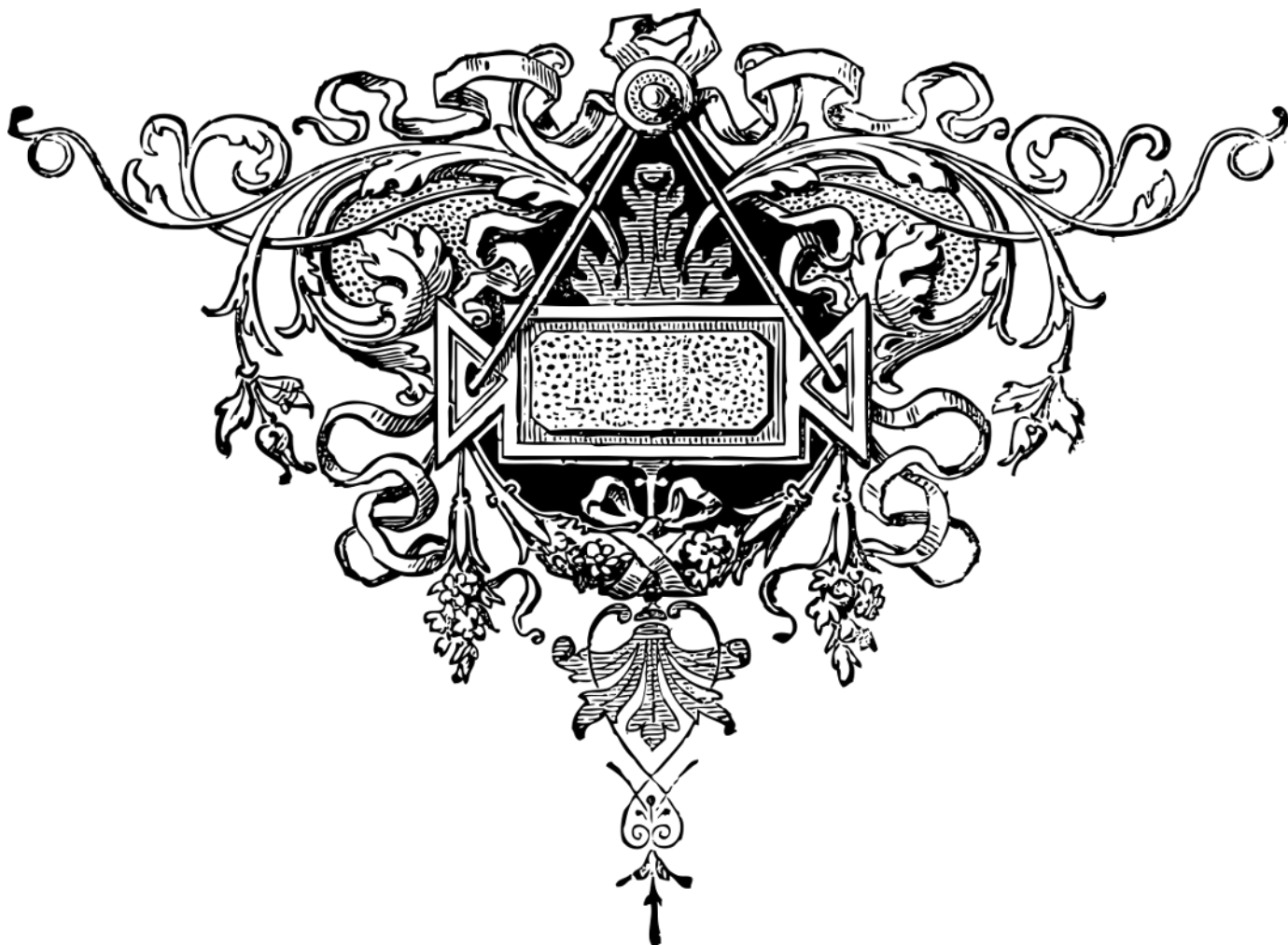




Melsonian Arts Council, 2015

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## **Contents**

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*A curious miscellany  
of magic and science*

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# The Undercroft

- 1 Editorial**  
**2 Smiling Goat's Horn**  
*by Chris Lawson*  
**4 The Washer Woman**  
*by Oliver Palmer*  
**7 The Opticaphobiascope**  
*by Chris Lawson*  
**12 The God of Seven Parts**  
*by Frank Mitchell*  
**23 The Precocious Abundance  
of Holy Mountain**  
*by Daniel Sell*

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# A SUDDEN GLORY

*an editorial*



All manner of things can wash ashore and take the accidental beachcomber by surprise. Gods and goats, women and war machines, all gathered at the tide line like lost whales, rich and fat. It's not often you get such a fine harvest from such a surprising angle and it's painful to have to leave some where they lay, staring out with their beautiful human eyes (I'll creep back later to push them into the sea). For the lucky few, I'll drag them home to be butchered with my rude tools so that you may feast on blubber and ambergris.

-Daniel Sell

# SMILING GOAT'S HORN

*by Chris Lawson*

A hollowed out curly horn with intact, mummified goat's head. The horn is ingrown through its nostril and out the back of its skull. When blown, the sound projects out of its mouth. The goat's cheeks are stretched and it appears to be smiling. Its dried tongue dangles out its mouth and makes a flapping sound when blown.

## **BLOWING THE HORN**

Any domesticated farm animal who hears it will attempt to break out of its confines and steal the nearest valuable object. Assume  $d100+10$  animals per farm. The animals will use violence to take jewelry. The animals will then present the horn-blower with their treasures, along with any gore generated by their actions (a ruby ring still on a dismembered finger, for example). Each treasure is worth  $1d20$  sp.

After they have presented their gifts, the animals begin singing psalms with the voice of classically trained choirboys. They will continue following and singing until it is physically impossible to do so, attempting to carry on even after being mutilated or entirely confined. If killed, the animal will reappear unharmed after the character has woken from sleep, or in an unoccupied room that the character enters, and will resume singing and following. Stealth and regular sleep will be nearly impossible.

Once each day afterwards, each animal will leave the blower only as long as it takes to assault and rob the nearest human in the area and bring back another item worth  $1d20$  sp. The animals will not target humans who have drunk goat's milk in the last 24 hours. The animals' trails are easily followed if pursued and they know the horn blower's location perfectly.

Whoever is in possession of the horn will be stalked by 13 starving timber wolves upon the next full moon. The wolves will attack when they believe they have advantage and will fight intelligently, though they are so hungry that they will not retreat once committed. The wolves will try to eat the horn bearer, their allies, and any singing animals that accompany them. The horn does **not** have to be blown to attract the wolves. If all 13 wolves are slain they will re-materialize at the rising of the next full moon.

The only way for the singing animals to stay dead is to be eaten by one of these wolves. While being eaten the singing animals will cry the horn-blowers' name and beg for rescue.

In the morning after a wolf attack, a mist envelopes the area and a solitary pitch black goat appears amidst the carnage. It casually eats any carrion left behind and stares at the horn blower between mouthfuls. If approached, it bounds away into the mist and disappears.

If the horn blower ever dies, even years later, the black goat will find a way to eat their corpse.

### **Timber Wolves**

**AC** as Hide, **HP** 12, **Attack** Bite +2 d6+1, Charge (if Wolf moves 10' or more before attack, save vs. Paralysis or be knocked prone).

They will try to encircle the procession before attacking.



# THE WASHER WOMAN

*by Oliver Palmer*

In appearance this is a delicate porcelain statue portraying a servant doing her washing in a basin. She rests on her knees, hunched over the basin as she scrubs what appears to be a towel against a washboard. Entirely white save for some shading in blue, the statue bears the number '38' engraved underneath. The whole thing is no more than 6 inches tall and weighs practically nothing – it appears entirely mundane.

The statue however will move around its owner unseen. One day the owner may place it on a table in his home only to arrive at his local tavern and find it waiting for him at the bar. He may place it in a locked chest in his bag and then find it in his jacket pocket. Were someone to watch the statue carefully, it would not move. It is only when it is left alone does it shift to another location. The Washer Woman is persistent however and she will want to appear before the player at least once a day, if not more often.

While this sounds harmless enough, the Washer Woman's appearances can be problematic: for example, perhaps as the player reaches for his food rations he instead finds her in his bag. The player should roll a d6 twice a day to determine where the Washer Woman appears.

- 1-3** The Washer Woman is exactly where the character last left her, unless more than 24 hours have passed since he last saw her. If 24 hours have passed, see result 6.
- 4** The Washer Woman has replaced an item in the characters inventory – number the carried possessions and roll an appropriate numbered dice to determine what's been switched out.
- 5** The Washer Woman will be found in the next scene unobtrusively. For example, if the players are entering an abandoned home they may find her sitting on a shelf out of the way amongst some old books. Unless the player specifically looks towards that shelf, he may not even see her.
- 6** The Washer Woman demands to be seen. She will appear at the next most convenient (for her) moment. The character may be washing his face, open his eyes and see her sitting in the sink. The character might be investigating the remains of brutal murder and find her sitting daintily in the deceased's rib cage.



The first time the statue is smashed or broken, the owner's skin will crack and blister painfully, causing 50% loss of HP as well as heavy scarring. The more observant character will notice that the cracks on their own skin match the pieces of the statue. Shortly after however the owner will find the statue completely intact in another location. This stage is the Washer Woman's warning stage as it were.

Should this happen a second time then the player needs to roll a d6 on the following chart to determine the outcome:

- 1-2** The warning stage takes effect again; the owner's skin will crack and blister painfully once more, causing 50% loss of HP as well as heavy scarring. The statue will then reappear in another location as normal completely intact.
- 3** The statue will smash, but only a piece will break off – the Washer Woman's basin. Accordingly, the character's carried possessions will turn to porcelain and be rendered useless.
- 4** The statue will smash, but only a limb will break off – the left arm. Accordingly the character's arm will be ripped from his body and drop to the ground where it will turn into porcelain. This cannot be stitched back on (or rather the player can try but it's going to be painful and unsuccessful).
- 5** The statue will smash, but only a limb will break off – the right leg. Accordingly the character's leg will be ripped from his body and drop to the ground where it will turn into porcelain. Again, this cannot be stitched back on.
- 6** The owner will shatter completely in a spray of body parts. Amidst the remains however will be a porcelain statue representing the owner doing a mundane daily task. The statue in turn becomes the new cursed item, with the Washer Woman ceasing to be. The number underneath the statue will now read '39'.

The statue determines its owner in the initial instance by whoever picks it up first, and the only way to get rid of the statue is through the death of the owner or if someone tries to steal it.

Carefully watched, the statue will never move. It will try its best to be seen by its owner at least once every 24 hours. Should 48 hours pass with the

statue unable to move (perhaps some enterprising players will set up some retainers to watch the statue?) then the owner will need to make a saving throw vs poison. If the roll succeeds then the owner is fine but the closest character to the owner (PC or NPC) will have their face contorted into that of the statue (lasts for 1d100 days) – she will appear before her owner, one way or another. If the roll fails then the character will begin to take 1hp damage every 10 minutes until he is reunited with the statue, as well as suffering a permanent 1 point loss in charisma.

If someone steals the statue, it transfers ownership – if someone were to pick up the statue with the intent to harm its owner through the statue by smashing it, well, this would count as stealing and the would-be thief will quickly suffer the effects of destruction (but still get to keep the statue assuming he survives).

If the player tries to give or sell the statue, roll a d6 on the following chart:

- 1-3** The statue crumbles to dust as it rests in the potential new owner's hands, and will later reappear in the original owner's possessions as normal.
- 4** The statue morphs into that of the potential new owner. The body looks mutilated however and incredibly detailed for a porcelain statue, filling the potential new owner with a sense of dread and despair. If the statue is given back, it reverts back to the form of the Washer Woman. If the statue is not returned, it will return itself as soon as it gets a moment unobserved.
- 5** The statue begins to emit a high pitched scream, and tears of blood start to pour down from its eyes. This will only cease when its returned or smashed – if its smashed, please roll on the previous table, affecting the original owner (and then have the statue return to the original owner, assuming they survive).
- 6** Please see the previous table – the effects of a result of 6 take effect, with the original statue shattering at the same time.

There is of course no benefit to owning the statue aside from just that – owning it. A player may believe otherwise of course, the belief may make them feel better about their predicament.

# THE OPTICAPHOBICASCOPE

*by Chris Lawson*

A small monacle mounted on baroque and poorly balanced headgear, like a gyroscope with a lens near the middle. The monacle itself is extremely concave so that, when worn, it fully cups one's eye and protects it. This is good because the "viewer" must then adjust a dial to force the monacle (and their own eye) deep into their skull.

Here, light entering the viewer's eye socket is filtered through the monacle and reflects all around the inside of their cranial cavity, providing information the naked eye cannot normally perceive.

The Opticaphobicascope has five uses:

- A:** Discern a person's most pressing desire or intention while conversing with the viewer.
- B:** Determine the background context and true nature of a conversation or interaction between 3rd parties that the viewer encounters in medias res.
- C:** Sense visual details of events that took place in a location the viewer is in up to 24 hour ago as if they were present for them.
- D:** Pinpoint exact visual details of the viewer's surroundings that perfectly reveal things like the location and nature of secret doors and hidden traps.
- E:** Get 6 seconds to look at whatever notebook page or supplement page the referee was most recently looking at (besides this one).

Every time the viewer uses it, roll a d6. The outcome of that roll determines how much information they get, or how many seconds they can look at materials if it's use E. If they use it more than once an hour, it does d6 damage each time after the first due to the strain on the eye.

Equipping the Opticaphobicascope inflicts 1 point of permanent CON damage, while unequipping it causes a further d4 points of CON damage as well as a 3in6 chance of losing the viewer's natural eye entirely. While wearing the Opticaphobicascope, the viewer's appearance disturbs everyone they meet unless they know the viewer well, and even then, it takes some getting used to.

The Opticaphobicascope has instructions concerning its use engraved in small print right on the apparatus in plain english, revealing the above information (not exact damage values, but it says there **will** be damage)

The following details are definitely **not** written on it or ever revealed to the players: The d6 roll is meaningless except for the following effects (and for the seconds allowed in Use E). Tell the viewer as much or as little information as you like, perhaps varying the amount with each roll so they can't tell if any outcome is better or worse than another.

The first time the viewer uses the Opticaphobicascope, it works perfectly. Any use after the first, a result of 1 on the device's d6 roll means that instead of working normally, it has one of the following effects:

The Opticaphobicascope, having pushed the viewer's real eye deep inside themselves, is now causing the viewer to see themselves in everything external

## PARANOIA LEVEL 1 EFFECTS

- A:** The persons' intentions and desires are perceived to be directly aimed at the viewer, even if they want something the viewer couldn't reasonably be expected to have or be capable of doing. This only seems true to the viewer.
- B:** The 3rd parties are perceived to have just moments ago been talking about the viewer and are only pretending to do what they're doing now. This only seems true to the viewer.
- C:** While sensing the events that happened in the viewer's location, the viewer senses a glimpse of their own body in the scene at some point, like they walked by the window or somewhere in the background.
- D:** Some precise details of the viewers' surroundings appear to have been somehow manufactured or caused by the viewer themselves or made from objects and materials familiar to the viewer. A lock appears to be made from the same metal as the viewer's weapon or armor, a secret door is covered by a carpet the viewer remembers from childhood.
- E:** The page you were just looking at behind your screen or that you keep at the top of your game note pile is one you've prepared ahead of time for this purpose. It looks like another page you actually have except this one has the viewer's name inserted all over the place. The text explicitly mentions how the viewer's mundane actions will have direct effects on all sorts of in-game events, every NPC is looking to get something out of them and is going behind their back in some way, and the viewer may have even done things the viewer's player never did.

After the viewer has experienced two PARANOIA LEVEL 1 effects, there is now instead a 2in6 chance that they will experience a PARANOIA LEVEL 2 effect every time they use it. (The Opticaphobiascope is now projecting the viewer's fears and ego into the external world)



## PARANOIA LEVEL 2 EFFECTS

**A:** The person the viewer is speaking to wants an item the viewer has and is trying to distract them while they or an accomplice tries to take it or figure out a better way to take it. Once the viewer "knows" this, it will appear to be true even to other PCs and anyone else closely affiliated with the viewer, who can all now detect subtleties in the person's action or demeanor that corroborate the viewer's senses. However, it will never happen because it's not actually true. The group hallucination lasts for the duration of the encounter.

**B:** The 3rd parties are communicating in a secret language of code words and body language about how to best assassinate the viewer. Once the viewer "knows" this, it will appear to be true even to other PCs and anyone else closely affiliated with the viewer, who can all now detect subtleties in the 3rd parties' actions or demeanors that corroborate the viewer's senses. However, it will never happen because it's not actually true. The group hallucination lasts for the duration of the encounter.

**C:** At least one scene that the viewer senses involves the viewer taking an active and visually prominent role that they will obviously not remember playing. If some extraordinary act happened here, like a murder, the viewer senses themselves committing it. If possible, these actions took place when the viewer was apparently asleep, unwatched and/or unaccounted for. If no one did anything here in the last 24 hours, the viewer senses themselves acting out the most recent criminal act they've encountered evidence of.

**D:** The details of the viewer's immediate surroundings include items explicitly belonging to the viewer and the viewer's comrades stashed around the area but only appearing now that the viewer is looking through the Opticaphobiascope. These items appear real and can be touched by the viewer and the viewer's comrades. The items will disappear as soon as no one is looking at them or someone looks at the real item.

**E:** Tell the player that his Opticaphobiascope roll was so successful that the whole party gets to see the fake page you've prepared. If the viewer has already seen this page, make another with the other PC's names in it as well.

After the viewer has experienced four PARANOIA LEVEL 2 effects, there is now instead a 3in6 chance they will experience a PARANOIA LEVEL 3 effect every time they use it. (The Opticaphobiascope is now shaping the fabric of reality according to the projected fears and ego of the viewer).

## PARANOIA LEVEL 3 EFFECTS

**A:** The person the viewer is speaking to wants an item the viewer has and is trying to distract them while they or an accomplice tries to take it or figure out a better way to take it. This wasn't true before, but it is true now. Anyone nearby is an accomplice. The "thieves" in this case are not charmed - reality has been rewritten such that this has always been true. The way they attempt the theft depends on who the thieves are. Peasants and townsfolk will not be subtle and might even try to mug the PCs right away. Someone with legitimate power may try to exercise that power to get what they want instead of more obvious criminal action.

**B:** The 3rd parties are communicating in a secret language of code words and body language about how to best assassinate the viewer. This wasn't true before, but it is true now. The "assassins" in this case are not charmed - reality has been rewritten such that this has always been true. If interrogated, the assassins will admit to being hired by the most obvious enemy of the viewer, who can confirm this is true.

**C:** At least one scene that the viewer senses involves the viewer taking an active and visually prominent role that they will not remember playing. If some extraordinary act happened here, like a murder, the viewer senses themselves committing it. If possible, these actions took place when the viewer was apparently asleep, unwatched and/or unaccounted for. While these events originally took place without the viewer's involvement, reality has been rewritten so that the viewer was in fact involved, as if they were sleepwalking. Any physical evidence that should exist does now, including witness reports that did not exist prior. If nothing happened here, the viewer senses themselves strangling to death a hireling or otherwise familiar and helpful NPC who wasn't dead a moment ago. But they sure are now.

**D:** Every single thing the viewer inspects in precise detail is discovered to be made of, containing or concealing items and materials belonging to the viewer and their companions. Reality has been rewritten so that this is in fact true.

**E:** The power of the Opticaphobicascope breaches the capacity of the human body to channel it. The viewer has turned so far inward to tap their power of perception that their mind has concluded nothing else but the viewer exists. They get one last burst of reality shaping power before going comatose.

Give the viewer's player your game notes and a pen. They have 1 minute to study them, then 10 seconds to change them however they want by scratching out words and/or writing new ones. The only thing they cannot do is alter their own fate.

The viewer is now trapped in an interior reality in which only they exist and cannot be revived by any known means. Take their character sheet away. The character will die from starvation or dehydration as normal, unless nursed 24/7 by professionals in a fully equipped facility. They are unplayable.

Secretly put their character sheet in a sealed container and put it in your freezer. Ask that player to get you a drink with ice once in a while. The character will recover from the coma and be playable if that character's player ever discovers the character sheet in your freezer.

# THE GOD OF SEVEN PARTS

by Frank Mitchell

## THE HEAD OF THE SUNDERED GOD

### Description

A soapstone head, apparently broken off a larger statue, of a leering fat man with curly hair, a short scruffy beard, and ram's horns.

### History (Earth)

Some scholars call the Head of the Sundered God *Baphomet* due to its association with the Knights Templar. Undoubtedly the "Baphomet" used in Templar rituals was not the real Head; opinions differ whether it was a Saracen skull or a wooden copy. However, the fortunes of the Knights Templar indicate they had the real Head in their care, and that the Templars gradually succumbed to its temptations and unearthly knowledge.

According to some rumors, Pope Clement V seized it when he disbanded the Templars. If that is true, it now lies in the Vatican vaults. Others say that King Phillip IV of France seized it, and that his successors buried it under the foundations of the Bastille Saint-Antoine. One theory holds that Jacques de Molay hid it somewhere on Malta, not long before Philip's soldiers seized him. The most likely possibility, however, is that the Head used its blandishments on another dupe, who spirited it away to some unknown pagan temple.

### Properties

Anyone touching the Head will hear a voice in his native language. The Head is an intelligent being, and it will advise listeners on how to succeed in finance, love, battle ... whatever they desire. Its advice is almost invariably illegal, immoral, and/or unnatural to some degree, but only a paragon of rectitude can avoid being lead from small indiscretions to bigger crimes. Following its advice will indeed bring its listeners success, with no apparent consequences. Things will simply go their way. At first.

After 1d6 months of fortune, the Head will cajole its listeners to seek out the other parts of its body, scattered across the known world, and possibly the unknown but accessible world. Any listeners who take active steps to do so will maintain their success and apparent luck. To those who do *not* actively

look for its body -- and the Head will know -- the Head becomes more disengaged and sullen; advice becomes less useful, and good fortune will turn bad.

The Head will soon demand total commitment to finding its body, and listeners will soon expend all their wealth and influence in that effort. Those who abandon the quest, or never began it, will likely meet some grim fate -- prison, exile, death, or possibly worse -- as they reap the consequences of prior sins.

Details of good and bad fortune are left to the Referee, but they should be tied to the campaign world and the characters' goals, desires, and actions. The history of the Templars is a prime example: a military force that conquered Palestine, a holy order respected across Europe, bankers rich beyond imagining ... eventually driven from Palestine, imprisoned by the King of France, and executed for witchcraft.

The Head is indestructible by any means.

## **Grafting**

Placing the Head onto a freshly decapitated body -- blood is key -- creates a new being with the BAB, hit points, and saving throws of its previous owner, but no spell-casting ability or other special abilities. Atop the body the Head will animate and be able to talk audibly in any language, and retains its unearthly and corrupting knowledge. The creature is completely free-willed; it may attack, flee, or collaborate depending on what will get it the rest of its real body quickest. Over time, the flesh body will match the Head: corpulent and debauched.

Decapitation or fatal wounds will remove the Head from a borrowed body.

## **THE LEFT ARM OF THE SUNDERED GOD**

### **Description**

A thick soapstone cylinder, about a yard long, sculpted to look something like a severed arm. One end of the arm has been shaved or worn down to form a stone hilt, almost like an arm bone jutting out. The other end bears a knob shaped like a tightly curled left fist.

### **Properties**

Any living thing that touches the Arm with bare flesh must Save vs. Poison or die instantly. Survivors will remember a momentary sensation of burning



cold and being yanked out of their own bodies, but will otherwise remain unharmed.

Anyone who grasps the hilt, regardless of hand protection, must Save vs. Poison or die instantly. Anyone who survives this process becomes the Arm's new owner; they can wield the Left Arm like a one-handed club despite its length and apparent weight. The current owner need not make a saving throw to grasp the hilt again. A feeling of burning cold will travel up the owner's arm even after the owner releases his grip, and intensifies upon grasping the hilt again.

If someone besides the current owner grasps the hilt and survives, *that* person becomes the new owner. The original owner must survive another saving throw to reclaim it.

Any living thing struck by the Left Arm takes 1d12 damage, and (if not dead) must make a Save vs. Poison or die. If the target survives the *wielder*

must make a Save vs. Poison or die instantly. If the wielder succeeds he can wield the Left Arm again.

If the Left Arm touches a Revenant created by the Right Arm of the Sundered God (q.v.), the Revenant will die permanently and irrevocably, no saving throws needed or possible. The wielder of the Left Arm will remain unharmed and in control.

Against nonliving matter like wood or stone, or against an ooze or other unconventionally alive creature, the Left Arm merely does



damage. If the Left Arm strikes an Undead creature, the creature regains all lost hit points.

The arm is indestructible by any means.

### **Grafting**

If someone presses the hilt to the stump of a severed arm, the subject must make a saving throw vs. Poison as if he grasped the hilt. If he survives, the Left Arm reshapes itself and grafts itself onto the amputee's shoulder. (If only the forearm or hand was amputated, the Left Arm consumes it.) Thereafter the new owner has a new, functional stone arm with a left hand, even if grafted onto a right shoulder.

The new arm does 1d6 unarmed damage and it kills just like in weapon form. The effect is involuntary, though, so an owner must wear a long glove for safety's sake.

When the owner dies or someone cuts the Arm away from surrounding flesh, the arm reverts into weapon form. At that point the Arm has no owner.

## **THE RIGHT ARM OF THE SUNDERED GOD**

### **Description**

A thin soapstone rod, about a yard long and shaped like an extremely emaciated arm. One end widens into the carving of an open right hand with long fingernails. The other end of the arm, which narrows to about two inches in diameter, looks like it was broken off a larger sculpture.

### **Properties**

The Right Arm can be used as a clumsy two-handed club, doing 1d8 blunt damage.

Touching the palm or fingers of the Right Arm to a humanoid or animal carcass, or fragment thereof, will reanimate the dead thing as a *Revenant* with 1d6 hit points. The Revenant will still bear any wounds or mutilation, albeit bloodless. Limbs hacked off will remain missing; if the creature is headless it will remain so, and stumble around blind and deaf. A severed head will regain awareness of its surroundings, but remain mute without lungs.

The Revenant of a sapient creature will dimly remember its former life, but lacks specific (i.e. useful) memories. Revenants lose all class levels, spells, and abilities not innate to their race or species. Their brains are too fogged to relearn anything they have lost.

The Right Arm cannot *control* Revenants, only create them. Revenants have free will, such as it is. Most desire only to die again.

Revenants cannot heal naturally. Magic can restore a Revenant's hit points up to the base creature's original maximum. At the Referee's discretion a successful Tinkering roll could add extra HP equal to the amount on the die. With care Revenants may exist, unchanging, for centuries, although most succumb to daily wear and tear in a year, far sooner if called upon to fight.

Revenants do not count as Undead for the purposes of Cleric powers and spells. The Right Arm has no effect on Undead, Constructs, or differently-alive creatures like oozes.

The Arm is indestructible by any means.

### **Grafting**

If someone presses the hilt to the stump of a severed arm, the subject must make a saving throw vs. Magical Devices. If he *fails*, the Arm swells and grafts itself onto the amputee's shoulder. (If only the forearm or hand had been amputated, the Arm consumes it.) Thereafter the new owner has a new, functional stone arm with a right hand, even if grafted onto a left shoulder.

A grafted Right Arm has the same effect on dead things as before, so owners should wear a glove and consider vegetarianism.

When the owner dies or someone cuts the Arm away from surrounding flesh, it reverts again into rod form.

## **THE LEFT AND RIGHT LEGS OF THE SUNDERED GOD**

### **Description**

A soapstone goat's leg longer and thicker than a man's leg, apparently broken off a larger statue. Apart from being mirror images of each other, the two legs are identical.

### **Properties**

If the hoof of either Leg touches bare earth or natural stone, anyone touching the Leg (maximum of 3) will have a rushing sensation and feel a force pulling them away. The Leg teleports up to 1d6 leagues in a random direction, arriving somewhere not immediately lethal. Each person *touching* the Leg must make a saving throw vs. Magic to hold on, or they will drop somewhere in a straight line between their origin and the leg's final destination. This may leave "passengers" over a ravine, inside a wall, or in some other inconvenient/lethal position.

If one or more people holding both legs (maximum of 3) touches both hooves to the ground at the same time, and both hooves are facing the same direction, the Legs will travel together in that direction up to 2d6 leagues.

Passengers must still make saving throws to hang on. Clicking the two hooves together returns passengers to their location prior to their last jump, if they can hang on.

Each Leg is indestructible by any means.

## **Grafting**

Pressing the base of a Leg to the end of a living person's mutilated or missing leg grafts the Leg onto the person, consuming any remainder of the living leg. He will have a fully functional (stone goat's) leg. One leg will make walking awkward and reduce running speed by half; both legs will restore full running speed but produce an unmistakably inhuman gait. Each Leg can be removed by killing their owner or hewing off the leg where it meets the owner's flesh.

Grafted legs will still have their powers of travel, so wear shoes. A person with one or both Legs attached need make no saving throw to hang on to his/her/its own Leg(s). Two cooperating people who each have a Leg *do* need to make saving throws to hang onto each other. A failed saving throw has the same result as using each Leg separately.

## **Notes**

1. If players do not specify which direction hooves are pointing, roll 1d8. Each d8 indicates a direction (1 = N, 2 = NE, 3 = E, and so on).
2. If players have both legs, roll 2d8 to get two directions, as above. The Left Leg goes in the direction of the leftmost or bottom die, and the Right Leg goes in the direction of the rightmost or top die.
3. If a character has hold of both legs but they are not going in the same direction, make one saving throw for each leg. If the character succeeds in neither of them, he takes 1d12 damage from being nearly wishboned. If the character succeeds in only one roll, he hangs on to one of the legs. If he makes both saving throws, ask the player for a split second decision on which Leg he hangs onto; the character will hang onto that leg. If the player hesitates, the character is torn in half.



# THE PHALLUS OF THE SUNDERED GOD

## Description

A polished and unmistakably phallic chunk of soapstone, approximately a foot and a half in length, tapering from three inches in diameter along half of its length to six inches at the base. The base looks broken off from something else, but a hole in the base can accommodate an ordinary male member.

## Properties

When a humanoid inserts the tip of the Phallus into one of their orifices, the stone softens and grows warm, fitting snugly into the orifice in question. The humanoid experiences the most intense sexual pleasure they have ever felt. Likewise, when a humanoid presses their functioning sex organ into or onto the hole at the base, they experience the most intense sexual pleasure of their life. The wide end will remain attached to the wearer's groin until the wearer pulls it off.

Use of the Phallus can be addictive. Each user must make a saving throw vs. Magic to *stop* using it. Failure means that the user is addicted to it, and will give up even food or regular sex to use it, over and over. If an addict does not have it in their possession, it will steal or kill to get it. Addicts will pleasure themselves to death unless forcibly prevented; deprivation allows another saving throw.

The Phallus has no effect on undead, constructs, or humanoid species incapable of sexual pleasure. Humanoids with specific mating cycles are only vulnerable during that cycle. (So it won't bring all the catgirls to the yard.)

Even touching the Phallus under certain circumstances can induce intense feelings. If the current holder of the Phallus bids his henchmen to kiss the Phallus, any who do so need make no Morale rolls in combat, at least to avoid fleeing. Henchmen must *fail* a Morale roll to retreat when ordered, or to otherwise avoid throwing their lives away for the sake of their master. Some henchmen have thrown themselves into deadly traps that were otherwise no threat, screaming their master's name ecstatically. This effect ends when the master dies, or the master loses the Phallus.

It's said that if two people touch the Phallus on either end at the same time, they will instantly and irrevocably fall in "love", regardless of gender or sexual orientation. What most don't know is that this love isn't the supportive romantic kind; it's the screaming, irrationally jealous, murdering the other partner over a trifle kind.

The Phallus is indestructible by any means. Even the suggestion of destroying it will drive an addict into a murderous frenzy.



## **Grafting**

If attached to missing or mutilated male genitalia, the Phallus will graft to that area irrevocably, or at least until its new owner dies or someone slices the Phallus off. The new owner will not experience sexual pleasure except when stimulating the Phallus in the usual ways. This pleasure is still addictive, and the owner as well as any target of the owner's attentions must make saving throws as above.

The Phallus will not graft itself permanently over/onto female or intersex genitalia unless said genitals have been freshly mutilated, with plenty of blood. Such mutilation can be fatal.

## **THE TORSO OF THE SUNDERED GOD**

### **Description**

A heavy soapstone sculpture of a fat man's torso, with the arms, legs, and head broken off. Flush against the sculpture's back are a relief of bat wings, placed as if they grew between its shoulder blades. The lower body has copious sculpted hair, with a conspicuous smooth spot in the genital area.

### **Properties**

Grasping the Torso tightly and making a wish does nothing to make the wish come true. However, it triggers a random Reality Warping event from the table overleaf.

Whatever the Reality Warping event is, the Referee should strive to relate it somehow to the wish, unless they don't feel like it.

The Torso is indestructible by any means.

### **Grafting**

If for some reason characters pressed the stumps of severed limbs to corresponding stumps of the Torso, they would fuse to the Torso, but otherwise nothing happens (yet).

A severed head placed atop the Torso will come to life, screaming loudly and incessantly with an expression of deranged imbecility. The wings carved on the Torso's back will flap, and the composite horror will levitate at a walking pace. The Torso will careen towards the nearest living being; anyone it touches will suffer a Reality Warping event. (Treat this as an attack with +0 BAB, but ignore the target's armor; the animated Torso only needs to touch a character.)

## **d12 Reality Warping Event**

- 1** Some common item is erased retroactively from the world: cats, dogs, tea, rectangular doors, the color green. All NPCs, and *maybe* all PCs but the wisher, don't notice or remark on the lack.
- 2** Some common item is added retroactively to the world: steam-powered Babbage engines, pet dragons, morning cups of spoo, the color ulfire. All NPCs, and *maybe* all PCs but the wisher, thinks it's perfectly normal, and can even cite the history of such things.
- 3** Some ordinary thing becomes extraordinarily dangerous, e.g. shadows can swallow a man whole, lime juice is toxic, anything long and flexible is a serpent. All NPCs treat this as normal.
- 4** Some mythical or legendary thing becomes common: vampires work nights at the kosher butchers', manticores pull carriages, the construction industry uses golems. No NPCs remark on this.
- 5** An important historical event happened differently than the PCs remember. The effects could be subtle (e.g. Queen Mary replaced Elizabeth but accomplished essentially the same things) or blatant (e.g. France still controls England). All NPCs regard this as the way things have always been.
- 6** Someone important to the wisher, maybe even a PC, is erased retroactively from reality.
- 7** The wisher now has a previously unknown relative, friend, or spouse who is *constantly* underfoot, making adventuring difficult.
- 8** An ordinary feature of reality becomes strange: furniture roams unless tethered, the sky turns paisley, rabbits throng the streets begging for spare change. If a PC marvels aloud at this occurrence, any NPCs in earshot will regard the PC as an imbecile or madman.
- 9** The wish comes true! Now something stalks the wisher, destroying everything he or she loves but the subject of the wish. If he or she somehow undoes the wish the old-fashioned way, e.g. self-destruction or murder, the stalker vanishes.
- 10** All the players pass their character sheets to the player on the left. They each now play the characters they're given, permanently. (Or until this result comes up again. Or until reality warps even further.)
- 11** All previous sessions in this campaign were just a dream. The Referee, if she chooses, may pass out new character sheets for the "real world".
- 12** Roll twice: both events take effect, simultaneously or in succession as appropriate.

- If the characters previously attached any limbs to the Torso's stumps the limbs will flail at the nearest living being (+2 BAB for having reach).
- If the characters previously attached at least one leg to the Torso's leg stumps the creature will *run* at the movement rate of whatever species contributed the limbs. (If two different creatures, use the lower movement rate. If one leg and one arm, use half the leg's former owner's movement rate.)
- If the characters previously attached a pair of severed wings of the appropriate size to each of the Torso's arm stumps, the torso will *fly* at the movement rate of the creature that contributed the wings.

Unless prevented it will flee, inflicting mayhem on the wider world.

Destroying the monster's head will convert the Torso back to stone. The head has 3 hp, but it is -4 to hit because of its size, plus the protection of any helmet or other armor it possesses. Each limb is likewise 3 hp but only -2 to hit (excluding armor). The Torso itself is, as noted above, indestructible, but consider it AC 12 for purposes of knocking it backward with a sufficiently heavy blow (Referee's decision).

## ASSEMBLING THE SUNDERED GOD

Just touching any other piece of the Sundered God to the Torso grafts that part irrevocably onto the Torso. Each part will slide into its correct place and orientation.

If someone combines the Head and the Torso, the Sundered God gains full control of its Reality Warping ability, and can use it once per day in any fashion the God (i.e. the Referee) chooses. It can also levitate by flapping its tiny wings, and move at the speed of a slow walk.

Additional pieces give him the same powers a mortal would gain, and more:

**Left Arm:** The Sundered God can switch the Arm's effects on or off at will. He never needs to make a saving throw if the Arm fails to kill someone.

**Right Arm:** The Sundered God can switch the Arm's effects on or off at will. He can raise Revenants with full class levels, hit points, abilities, and spells. The Sundered God can reanimate Revenants slain with the Left Arm.

**Both Arms:** The Sundered God can use the powers of each arm with either hand.

**One Leg:** The Sundered God can teleport safely up to 6 leagues to any point he wishes.

**Both Legs:** The Sundered God can teleport safely up to 12 leagues to any point he wishes.

**One Leg + One/Both Arms:** As above, plus The Sundered God can take one human-sized being or one hand-held object in each hand.

**Both Legs + One/Both Arms:** As above, plus The Sundered God can teleport with one living being or contiguous piece of matter of any size in each hand.

**Phallus:** The Sundered God is nigh-irresistible to any humanoid being. If he gives anyone a direct order that isn't obviously lethal, that being must save vs. Magic to disobey. (Revenants created by the Right Arm get no saving throw, and must obey.) The god may also induce paralysis with a glance (save vs. Paralysis) until the god leaves the victim's presence.

Rebuilding the Sundered God will unleash an indestructible reality warping demigod that can travel anywhere, kill at a touch, form an unswervingly loyal cult around itself, raise an army of Revenants, and control his enemies' minds. Nations will fall in short order, and proclaim a new, immortal, inhuman, debauched emperor of the world.

The weapon that sundered the Sundered God was destroyed long ago, and unlikely to be re-created. He made sure of that.

# THE PRECOCIOUS ABUNDANCE OF HOLY MOUNTAIN

*by Daniel Sell*

## **AQUA GRAVIS**

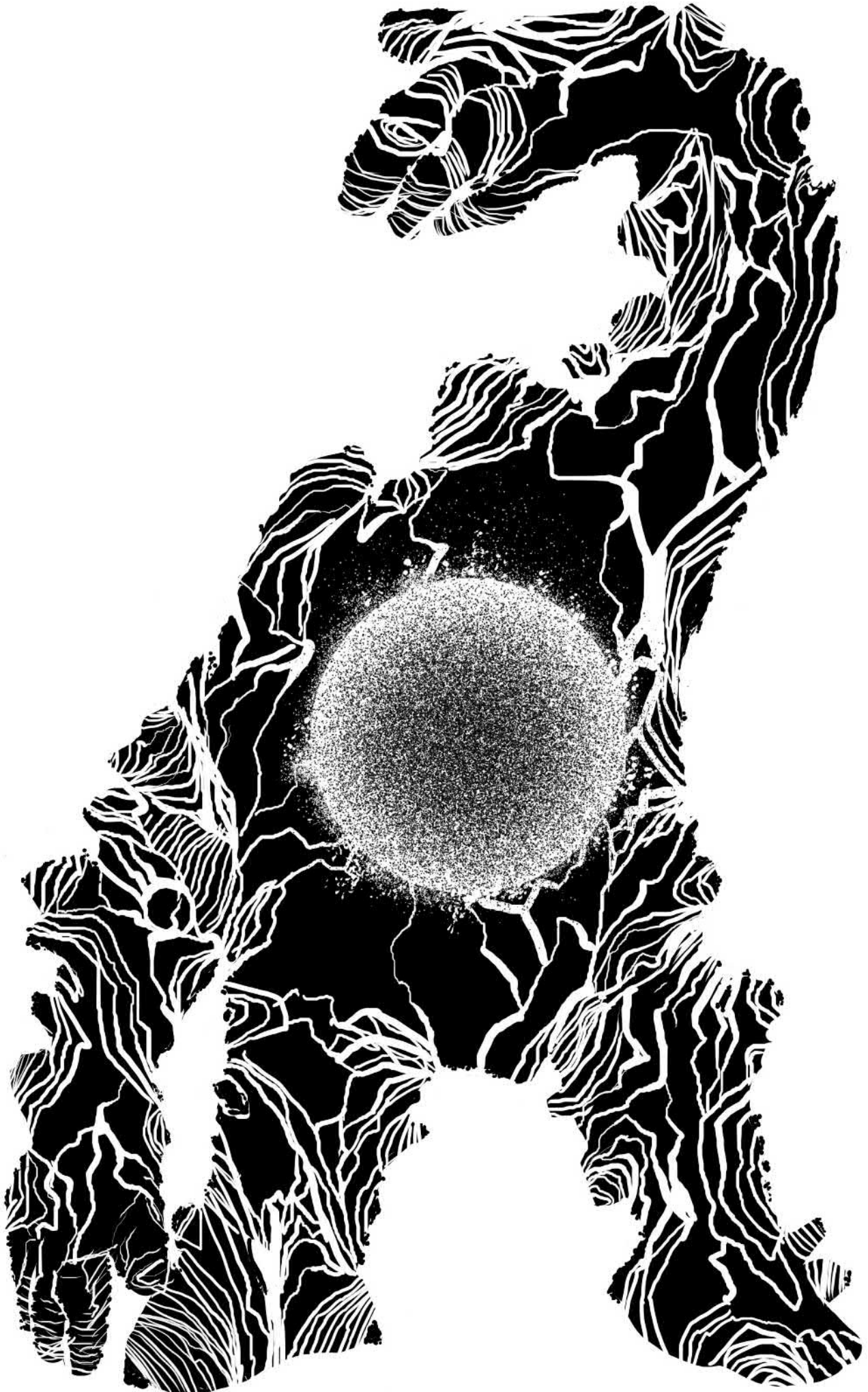
Heavy water, the blood of the Holy Mountain, the fuel that drove the Ven war machines and still moves their pale imitations. It bubbles up from subterranean lakes under the Ven fortress-mountain and is collected by a vast infrastructure of pipes and valves and pumps. Huge reserves of it remain and are greedily eyed by those with minds old and grey enough to remember their histories. At its natural source it takes the form of a puddle of shimmering black, disturbed occasionally as it ejects a lazy bubble. They may pop, if disturbed, with a sharp ring as though someone had rung a tiny bell, and splatter those watching.

**If you drink a little bit**, a mere snifter of the viscous stuff will sharpen your senses. All sensation will be exaggerated to the point where the turning of a page or the brush of cloth against skin is overwhelming. Any moderate sensation will cause you to make a save vs. paralyse or be thrown into helpless fits of pain. However, if allowed a moment to absorb the sensations, you will be acutely aware of your environment. Tell-tale breezes from under hidden doors, distant or past scents, the sound of mice in the walls.

**If you drink a lot** it will, in addition to the usual effects, enter your bloodstream and colour your vascular system a bright blue, showing distinctly through the skin like woad. After D6 turns it will harden and shatter, tearing your veins and arteries, bursting through your skin like broken glass. This process will certainly kill you.

**If you burn it** — though the water is not easily ignitable, taking a concentrated effort — the fire takes and burns in a rampant, plasmic fog. It will expand to fill an area magnitudes greater than the excited mass. Flesh and steel are melted with comparable by the intense heat, but it can sustain itself only briefly. All caught in its expansion take 5d8 damage per turn, with each subsequent turn doing one less die of damage until fully inert. In addition, they must save vs. magic or also suffer the effects of inhalation (effects as drinking a little) and exaggerating their suffering.





## CUSTODIAN

The last remnant, pressed in the workshops deep in the Holy Mountain, fuelled by gold and powered by heavy water, abandoned by the people they served. They stand at 4ft, human in shape and gait but with no head to speak of. Instead they have in their chest, between their hulking shoulders, a hole straight through. A thin veil of aqua gravis serves as their method of speech, as it snips and cracks rapidly in their curious orifice. Their skin resembles the crust on a magma flow, scaled and shifting but cool to the touch. When struck they bleed thick, heavy, water and, when drained dry, leave behind the mournful statuesque corpses so familiar to those plundering the halls of the mountain. Stood guard where they died, curled up in corners, bracing collapsing ceilings until they dried up, endless images of sacrifice and suffering.

**If you are kind to them** they will be receptive to it. The Ven and everyone who came after them were fond of the industrious workers. Their workings are obscure and none but their creators have any grasp of them, but all who find them eventually learn of their weakness to a gentle word. Why the Ven, of all people, would create them so is a mystery. Does this show a latent need to offer affection? Can they only find joy in harming those who love? Or did they take pity on the legions of identical workers and see a kindred spirit?

**If you attack or interfere with them**, though they are not designed for violence, they are as capable of reciprocating it as any mortal labourer. They may echo their belligerent cousin, the Slaughtergrid, in form but their abilities fall far shy of it. Indeed, they aren't much tougher than a rather rugged human. Indeed, though they may look to be made from solid stone, it is a thin veneer and easily perforated, spraying their precious life fluids freely.

**If you want to make more** you must find one of the remaining molds and ignite the foundries under the mountain. At face value, this seems an achievable task, but one must first secure the forges of Holy Mountain — an act many would perform if able — and find an intact mold in the storage vaults. The witch-tallow molds were never meant to last this long. You can walk the galleries for days and not find one in a state capable of casting from. You could pull case after case and they would all have sagged into unusable mush. Even if you did find one capable of completing the procedure it would be subtly damaged, corrupted from its once fine lines and regal stature, now lumpy and malformed. They are a pitiable lot, but never complain.

## VEN GATE

A semi-mythical race of men built Holy Mountain as their fortress. They have dwindled to a dim point of light in the collective consciousness, their conquerors have been conquered, and they in turn have been added to the interminable lists of people and places of dry history. Yet they are only a moment away, relatively speaking.

Men rose up, as they always do, overthrew the order of the time and cycled out to another aeon. The Ven were expelled. But in truth they were not, are not, and, indeed, are yet to be. The Ven sit at the end of time, in a single moment, caught in the death throes of their kind. In a final bid to prevent the inevitable they threw their seed back in time, not to save themselves, but to try again, to do it better, to be prepared for the trials that await them at the end of all things.

At places confirming specific and arcane parameters, from the peaks of mountains to beneath the confused and vicious waves, the Ven set their beacons. Conflagrations captured in brass and steel, polished black metal and undulating heavy water. At these places the Ven can return again, step across time and space and emerge naked and new to set their inscrutable plans turning. They arrive through their portals with only the knowledge needed for the future, their past being ahead of, and hidden from, them.

**If you find one not yet used** you have dug too deep and greedily. The first evidence of the machine will be the perfectly spherical cavity surrounding it. Be it rock or water, a bubble of air will always surround the floating aperture unless the Ven have already passed through and deliberately altered it. At the centre of the twisted vines and jagged glass will be a second sphere, its perfect, black, surface holds a spectral beauty; aqua gravis, rarest of materials, gathered by the portal, drawn through the veins of the earth over the ages until it was sufficient to receive their seed. The value of such a find is staggering, the Ven would not forgive its violation.

**If the Ven arrive** they will form from the heavy water, diminishing its volume as they do. Each — huge, naked and identical — will know exactly how to proceed, their will bent only to the survival of their future selves. Though witnessing this would be unlikely since they arrive at disparate and obscurely appropriate times, often separated by generations.

**If you destroy it** you will find little resistance. The hovering glass and wire wreath is as delicate as it looks and can be pulled apart like stubborn brambles. The water at its heart will appear to sweat and drip until finally collapsing as the structure fails, whereupon it will disappear into the rock as though water through a sponge.



## EXIGENTIA

Medical device and fashion statement all in one. They were made by the Tan before the Collapse of Good Governance, devised by expert tinkers using skills stolen from the expelled Ven. Where the Ven could create full automatons, the Tan could only manage parts. Spare parts for those rich and broken few.

A most common example: the lax observer would discover a high boot, made of brass and festooned with pistons and pipes with no discernible purpose beyond its artistic merit, which it possesses in great abundance. However, with the correct administrations it can be caused to open along its length like a bear trap so that one may insert their foot and lock it firmly in place. Once closed it grips the leg tightly while the pistons retract into the boot, and the wearer's flesh and bone, and performs the gruesome surgery needed to attach itself in a permanent manner. There is much whirring and grinding as it shaves down the bone like a screw making its own thread, finally pinning itself in place. The excess material will flow out through the gilded toes in a thick slurry.

The leg, if attached correctly, is an excellent prosthetic. However the wearer must save vs. paralyse or pass out from the pain of the application and, if applied with an uneducated hand, things can go very wrong.

**1.** It snaps shut and drops off, taking your leg with it. Oh dear.

**2.** The leg was not braced correctly and the device has dug too deep and dislodged itself. Part way through the procedure it will spin off in an energetic fashion, spattering gore and shards of bone on all present. Each round they will suffer 1d8 damage until the enormous wound is stymied.

**3.** The leg is not on securely. This is not noticeable until the first time it is used for a strenuous activity, such as kicking someone or running. Each time this is done there is a 1 in 6 chance that a result resembling #1 will occur.

**4.** The leg is attached securely but at the wrong angle. The foot sticks out to the side, or is on backward. You will always be slightly slower than others, but otherwise nothing occurs.

**5.** The leg does not register having finished the procedure. At the point it should be applying the securing pistons it instead continues to eat up your leg. This will inflict 1d4 damage per turn until it is forcibly taken off (save vs. paralyse or pass out). Lose an inch of leg per turn of damage.

**6.** With great luck the leg has been attached correctly and performs like a natural leg with the added bonus of being tireless, made out of Ven steel, and being most attractive.

## LUNG SPIDER

Imagine scissors attached to a leather muzzle, all varieties: long elegant tailor's scissors, thick shearing scissors, serrated pinking scissors; riveted together, entangled in pipes, powered by pistons hidden deep amongst their sharp recesses. This is a lung spider. The origins of the machine are — as is typical for things of this nature — vague, but it is popularly understood that all examples of them were taken from the halls of Holy Mountain after the Collapse of Good Governance and the mutual assassination of the Tan Triumvirate. It is also known that, with few exceptions, they are inoperable and ruined, their blades blunted and their pistons non-firing. But if you were so lucky as to find one, maybe hidden in a secret cache or hermetically sealed box deep in the halls of the Mountain, you may find that you are in possession of a handy treasure.

**If you pull at the legs** others will move in response. Have the player pick a die and roll it, if the result is even then the machine kicks or flips out of their hands with surprising energy, breaking the delicate contraption. Blades and springs burst from it as it breaks, dealing 1d4 damage to everyone within two metres. If the die result was odd, then it moves pleasingly in peculiar ways, almost alive. A fine curiosity.

**If you try to wear the muzzle** it will flex and snip excitedly, covering your mouth and entering your nose with tubes and pins. Meanwhile, the bulk of the contraption scampers across your chest and implants itself in your lungs with two long — and erstwhile hidden — spikes; it will whirr and force them in with a pop and burst of air as it deflates your lungs and begins to breath for you. If you fight it suffer 3d3 damage from poorly aimed invasive surgery and then suffer the results of shattering the thing (as above), otherwise it will take over the burden of breathing for you, making you immune to all noxious fumes. You cannot, however, speak in any way, not even to call out, hum, grunt, or moan.

**If you want to remove it** you will have much trouble. The machines were designed for indentured workers in the aqua gravis reservoirs, intended to be removed only with the correct tools by their overseers, who could disentangle them from the wearers respiratory system without tearing out great chunks with it. Without such tools, brute force is your only recourse. Typically they will be grasped around their thick mid section and pulled, both from the lungs and head at the same time, both issuing a cracking-sucking sound that is as painful and harmful as it sounds. Saves vs. device or take 1d8 damage and permanently lose the ability to speak. A successful save leave you with a missing columella and permanent wheezy timbre to your voice.





## SLAUGHTERGRID

The Ven do not fight battles, they use tools, proxies, gentle nudges, but when blunt force is required they hold the largest hammer of them all. Foremost weapon of war, an androgynous stone monument to their self obsession; made in their own image, 80 metres of naked stone and flesh: the Slaughtergrid. Their construction is an incredible undertaking, years of preparation, growth, feeding and gentle instruction. There is only one place, people and time that could even hope to replicate them, only at the apex of the Ven dominion.

Dormant Slaughtergrids are typically mistaken for ruins, buried monuments impossibly deep in the earth or disgorged by tectonic upheavals. But each one has been placed as precisely as the Ven could manage; hurled black blindly, but with hope, slung far and buried in the earth's hot crust to be recovered at the appropriate juncture, to be pulled up and made whole again when they come to retrieve them.

Once active, their destructive power is immense, nothing short of the concerted effort of nations could stop one. And yet, such has been done in the past and may be done again in the future. Fortunate, since the Ven diaspora search for these artefacts above all others.

**If you find a dormant Slaughtergrid** enter through her ambiguous genitalia, it will not resist you. Inside you will find a baleful machine of stone and flesh awaiting its operators, pulsing spasmodically in anticipation. Beyond the cervix you will find a womb that holds against death, blood that runs gold, a mind that can take you as a lover and destroy all that stands between you. There is much to be gained.

**If you die within** you will find you can not. In his womb you will be born again. She loves her children and none can die within her flesh. Where his seed falls to the earth burst forth chimera and beasts. Bottled, it would be a valuable tonic.

**If it awakes** the earth shall tremble as giants stride. Cities fall, people and nations scatter as it ascends to the heavens upon their broken backs, hurling the Gods down to the dusty earth.

If the rumours are true a score of them stand waiting in the deepest caverns of the Holy Mountain, awake and ready for command. One need only say the word and they will lift the mountain from its roots.