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# THE DECK OF MANY THINGS



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## THE DECK OF MANY THINGS

*“Good and mighty Sirs and Madams! What an honour this is! Please forgive my intrusion, but Master Rogarth, the esteemed Keeper of Relics, has urgent need of your services. I implore you, follow me now to Master Rogarth’s home that he may speak with you immediately. I regret to inform that time is already against us. Please good masters, gather up your belongings posthaste. I shall explain things further on the way.”*

### Fenrir’s Gift

In the First Age, when humans crawled from the divine crucible and emerged into the world, it is written that *Fenrir*, god of skill and luck, gifted a floundering queen with the *Astravali*, a divine relic that bends fate.

The queen’s crisis, and what became of her people, are lost to time, but the item itself persists as a genuine artifact of unique power. Every few centuries, the *Astravali* manifests somewhere in the world, reforming itself as an instrument of prophecy and chance.

In this instance, the *Astravali* reappeared as a faded deck of tarot/fate cards, washed up on the shores of *Crow’s Keep*. Acquired by a wealthy relic collector known as *Rogarth*, the deck stayed in his possession for some months before being stolen by agents of the *Ordo Malefactos* 48 hours ago. *Inquisitor Varro*, his *Giant Ape* guardian, and others of his retinue departed *Crow’s Keep* immediately thereafter, most likely heading for southern *Melek*.

### Utmost Urgency

This adventure begins with the PCs being accosted by a puffy cheeked messenger, *Marcus* (20’s, long dark hair, well groomed and practiced manner of speaking) who has obviously been scouring the city for them.

*Marcus* expounds that *Master Rogarth*, a collector of relics and other treasures, is in urgent need of their services. He bids them follow, leading the party to *Rogarth’s* home in a well to do quarter (GMs might roll for a random city encounter on the way). If the PCs decline the invitation, or fail to take up *Rogarth’s* offer (see below), the adventure ends before it begins (see *Aftermath*).

Although frail of body (80s, severely bruised, decrepit, walking cane, expensive robe) *Master Rogarth* remains mentally sharp, and his eyes light up upon meeting the party. He has knowledge of at least some of their exploits (via the rumour mill, common contacts, spies, or perhaps the party has worked for him before), and could think of none better to assist him at this desperate hour.



*Rogarth* explains that a deck of magical cards, the “*Deck of Many Things*” as he likes to call it, was stolen from him two days ago by members of the *Ordo Malefactos*. The *Ordo* forced their way into

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his home, beat him to a pulp, and took the deck (nothing else). *Rogarth* believes the men thought him dead, but he survived (the deck's magic preserved him; a side effect of *The Undying* card, see p.15). *Pierce the Veil* detects healing magic emanating from *Rogarth's* card tattoo, which has moved from his forearm to directly over his heart since the attack.

Inquiries have revealed that the leader was *Inquisitor Varro* (*Rogarth* can provide a description). Informants confirm the inquisitor left the city posthaste after acquiring the deck, and headed south (probably for *Melek, City of Shackles*, but *Rogarth* can't be sure).

*Rogarth* implores the PCs to catch up with *Varro*, retrieve the deck, and return it to him by any means possible (*Rogarth* already petitioned the guard, who flat out refused; they have zero interest in a wild chase across skorn/barbarian infested outlands). As a reward, he invites each PC to draw one of the deck's enchanted cards (or 300 gp, for those who will not truck with sorcery). Given their merciless attack upon him, and the vengeful nature of the *Ordo*, *Rogarth* suggests leaving no survivors.

In addition to the thieves' two day head start, there is one other complication: *Varro* is accompanied by a dozen guards and a towering 10 ft *Giant Ape*. On the bright side however, travelling with such a beast will make their quarry easier to track.

## Ordo Malefactos

*Inquisitor Varro* (30s, drab clothes, bald with scarred head, steely brown eyes) was raised by the *Ordo* from an early age, a true believer in the *Lucentum's* anti-magic creed for the good of the Empire. He has been seeking the deck for some months and will do everything in his power to get it to *Melek*. *Varro* would rather die than draw from the deck.

**Inquisitor Varro** AC 13, HD 6, Staff 1d6+2 and Fist/Kick 1d6+2, 19: target tripped, prone or disarmed, S15 D16 C12 I12 P11 W15 Ch10 L10, Mv 30 ft. *Varro* has Martial Arts like a 6th level Monk, and may choose from the following techniques three times per combat: *Iron Fist*, *Formless Water*, *Moon Shields Sun*, *Heaven's Leap*, *Unchain the Dragon*, *Fork the River*, *Strength of One*.

**Guards** AC 12 (leathers & wooden shield), HD 1+3, Sword/Axe 1d8, 19: as weapon, S14 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft.

*Mochugu* is unique, a *Giant Ape* snatched from the *Suurat Jungle* at birth, trained to protect its handler *Inquisitor Varro*. He is akin to a smart, loyal guard dog, but 10 ft tall, 2,000 pounds, and sporting opposable thumbs larger than one's hands.

**Mochugu, Giant Ape, Boss Monster**, AC 13, HD 6+3 (54 hp), 2 x Fists 1d6+4 and Bite 2d4, 19: special, S19 D14 C16 I5 P10 W15 Ch5 L10, Mv 40 ft. *Mochugu* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks*, *Major Exploit Protection* and *Stronger Luck*. On a Nat 19-20 *Mochugu* grabs the target and slams/throws them into another enemy (both targets roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, *Luck* (Con) save resists). Causes 20 hp damage on a crit. May throw boulders, branches or people up to 50 ft for 2d6 damage.

If the band is killed, *Varro* has the deck on his person in a sealed (stitched) pouch, plus 1x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables.

## Following the Trail

With a *Giant Ape* in tow, travelling by ship was not an option for *Varro*, and it's easier to disappear into the wilderness than it is the *Fennorn River* if required. Although the inquisitor does not expect a pursuit, interfering parties are a possibility, so he intends to travel at speed where possible.



Crow's Keep

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

Trackless Moon

I

J

L

K

M

Melek

elnor

Fennorn River

Crow's Keep

elnor

Fennorn  
River

Trackless Moor

Melek



Inquiries at the docks and city gates confirm *Rogarth's* information that *Varro* departed on horseback and headed south. He was in the company of a dozen men, and the giant simian.

The *Giant Ape's* trail is relatively clear, granting advantage on Int (Wilderness Lore) checks to track them. A check is required each day, or other period determined by the GM. Failing the tracking check means losing half a day searching for tracks/following the wrong tracks/backtracking, etc, before a retry is permitted.

The red dots on the first map indicate the thieves' intended path, subject to intervention by the PCs or others. A second (unmarked) map is provided as a player handout. Each hex is approximately 20 miles. Travel speeds on foot (horses travel twice as far) for an 8 hour period appear below.

TRAVEL SPEED	
ENVIRONMENT	8 HOURS TRAVEL
Roads & Trails	10 miles
Plains & Light Woods	8 miles
Forests, Hills, Subterranean	7 miles
Mountains, Jungles, Swamps, Deserts & Artic Ranges	5 miles
Ocean (large sea vessel at about 5 knots)	40 miles
River or Lake (rowboat, canoe, barge, small sailing vessel at about 3 knots)	24 miles

Parties may perform a forced march for 16 hours of travel, forgoing foraging/hunting, but require a Con check to keep up such a pace the following day (else they must resume normal speeds the next day, including riders on horses).

GMs might assume *Varro's* band travels by horse, and performs a forced march every second day

(the ape travels at horse speed). *Varro* has a 2 day head start on the PCs. Day 1 was a forced ride (32 miles through plains) to the southern border of Hex A. Day 2 was spent crossing the river (requiring half a day), and a further 8 hours riding through forest (travelling 7 miles), crossing into the northern border of Hex C. Assuming the PCs get lucky with a few double forced marches, they should catch *Varro* before he reaches Melek.

## Into The Wilds

Beyond the first hex (approx 20 miles), the wilds beyond *Crow's Keep's* borderlands are untamed, occupied by marauding skorn (beastmen), xenophobic thuels (barbarians), and ferocious beasts. Trade caravans with Melek are rare, well planned, heavily guarded affairs. The wilderness between the cities is uncharted; there are no roads to guide explorers, nor villages to provide respite.

Each hex travelled by *Varro* has been labelled, with suggested encounters or other details. Unmarked hexes are left for the GM to determine, guided by adjacent hexes and/or LFG exploration rules. GMs might employ LFG's *Weather* tables at their convenience (may affect travel speed, visibility, likely encounters, etc).

### Hex A - Plains

The plains adjacent to *Crow's Keep's* borderlands are the periphery of the western *Low Plains*. Grasses grow 3 - 4 ft high, with spotted groves of oaks and willows, populated by skorn, barbarians and wildlife such as horses and bison.

There is a 50% chance of a random encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 5d6 *Riders* of the *Skull Drinkers* thuel tribe (their armour is adorned with bones) are on patrol in their territory, and will take immediate offence to any city dwellers they encounter. They might be persuaded to leave a well armed party alone for a significant tithe of gold or other



valuables. But probably not. Claiming the skull of an *Ulnorta* (outsider) is a high honour amongst the clan.

2. A large flock of 3d4 *Giant Eagles* appear on the horizon, looking for a meal. If the party doesn't take action to conceal themselves, they will zero in on their location and attempt to snatch up a small target.

3. Circling ravens telegraph a recent battlefield. More than two score half eaten corpses lie about the area (*barbarian* and *skorn*, both feasted upon by the victorious beastmen). Searching the remains turns up a Tribal Trinket (roll 1d12):

- (i) A bowl crafted from a human skull.
- (ii) A necklace of skorn ears (small and misshapen).
- (iii) 2d6 gold concealed in the bottom of boot.
- (iv) A stone knife buried deep in a barbarian ribcage, inscribed with icons of *Ulgoth* (skulls, the moon, fire, drums). The knife counts as magical (but has no attunement properties).
- (v) A clay flask of fermented milk.
- (vi) A cracked but functional warhorn, carved of bison horn.
- (vii) This dead barbarian possesses a primitive peg leg below the knee, fashioned of oak and horse sinew.

(viii) A wooden carving of a colossal frog swallowing a bison (see Hex G).

(ix) A burnt and splintered shield (still functional, but will shatter against a critical hit).

(x) A single barbarian corpse is peppered with 3d6 skorn arrows, half of which may be pulled free and reused.

(xi) A small hide map, the size of your palm, written in blood. There are no words, only pictures. An Int check suggests something hidden at the base of a tree with five faces (see Hex H).

(xii) This decomposing skorn skull has a false eye (carved from a thighbone), painted in the likeness of a cat's eye.

4. This region has few animals (small or large, an Animal Lore (Perc) check notices the absence), many of whom have moved out of the area. Local water sources are infected with a diseased moss (an Int (Wilderness Lore) suspects as such if the water is inspected). Drinking the water requires a *Luck* (Con) save to resist a random disease.

5. A series of 1d4 pit traps (15 ft drop) are concealed here (Perc (Detection) check to notice, set by barbarians to catch animals).

6. A freak weather event occurs. Roll on the LFG *Shifting Weather* table and exaggerate the result (eg wetter becomes a major storm).

7. A pack of hungry *Tigers* are prowling in the area, defending their patch of



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grasslands. Characters that act aggressively will be attacked, while those that retreat will be left alone (a Cha (Animal Lore) check may be required).

8. 3d10+30 *Giant Rats* have taken over this section of the plains, along with hundreds of normal rats, their warren tunnels stretching for a quarter mile. The vermin infestation is led by a wolf sized *Dire Rat*.

### Hex B – River Crossing & Forest

The border between Hex A and B involves descending some cliffs and crossing the powerful *Fennorn River*.

Scaling the ravine walls requires a Str (Athletics) check to avoid losing 1 Con, Str or Dex (determine randomly) due to strain and exhaustion.

Once at the bottom, crossing the 2 mile wide river (swimming, making rafts, etc) at a suitable point takes up to about 3-4 hours (depending on whether the party swims, builds rafts, etc).

A Party Challenge is required (difficult, 8 successes, focusing on Athletics, Sailing, Perception, Wilderness Lore). Each failed check suffers a random setback (roll 1d6):

- (i) A random weapon, shield or other piece of important gear is lost in the river (possibly not immediately obvious).
- (ii) A hireling, pet or NPC is swept off a raft, requiring rescue.
- (iii) A PC is dashed against rocks or suffers an injury felling logs, etc, suffering 2d6 damage.
- (iv) 3d4 *Giant Crocodiles* launch an attack against one of the rafts/swimmers, trying to drag it (and any passengers) beneath the water.

- (v) 1d2 horses suffer serious strains during the long swim, rendering them lame.

- (vi) The group is carried into dangerous rapids, requiring a Group Str (Sailing) check to avoid 1d4 PCs rolling 1d6+1 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.



*Drelnor Forest* is an ancient woodland, filled with oaks, yews and willows, its thick canopy shading the nettled undergrowth in mouldering half light. Navigating the trees has a 40% chance of an encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

- 1. 2d6 *Giant Tree Spiders* (as *Giant Spider*, but with special web attack) lurking in the high treetops launch an attack. The spiders may drop webs up to 90 ft, then pull their trapped prey up 30 ft/round to eat them (a *Luck* (Dex) save avoids, otherwise incapacitated. A victim may spend their action to make a Str check vs Str 17 to break free).

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2. The PCs stumble across a crumbling elven ruin, its once graceful arches collapsed. Searching the broken columns takes 1d4 hours and reveals 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables, but with a 75% chance of disturbing a vengeful *Banshee* (an age old priestess).
  3. A hideous wheezing can be heard emanating from a giant tree trunk, where an *Owlbear* is dying of old age. The silver beast is panting profusely and clearly in terrible pain. Easing its suffering (including ending its life humanely) grants +1 *Luck* from a lingering *Fey* spirit.
  4. The co-ordinated howls of a pack of 3d4 *Dire Wolves* (50%) or hideous *Urgot* (50%) can be heard nearby. Over the next two hours, the monsters move in for the kill.
  5. *Twin Hags*, *Sliven* and *Ylmere* live in this region of the forest. Their sister recently died, and they are looking to add a third member to complete their coven. They offer such to any *Magic User* or *Cultist* in the party (male or female). Acceptance leads to a horrible rite that transforms the PC into a *Hag* (player may control the hag PC until the end of the adventure, then they become an NPC). Refusal causes the twins to begrudge the party, but they take no immediate action against them. At the GM's option, they might reappear in another forest section to kidnap the prospect.
  6. 3d4 *Shades* from a long fallen civilization slide silently from the trees, eager to feast upon the lifeforce of the living. Any character with clear adornments of the gods are not targeted (except in self defence).

7. The PCs pass close to an ancient *leyline* that has not been harnessed for centuries (check to sense magic, for anyone trained in Arcane Lore). If successful, the PC may perform a 1d4 ritual attuning themselves to the site, siphoning the arcane energy for a future magical effect (no action, automatic maximum effect or invoke any 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell). Harnessing the leyline requires a DDM check.
8. A war party of 5d20 *Skorn* attempt to slowly encircle the party (whose scent they have picked up). A Group Perc (Detection) check is required to foil the ambush. When the skorn strike, they sound their warhorns simultaneously as they charge in for the kill. 50% chance one *skorn* is a *Lycanthrope (Wolf)*.

### Hex C - Plains & Forest

This hex is half plains, half forest. Use the encounter tables from Hex A and Hex B respectively.

Alternatively, the party must make a Group *Luck* check or their rations (50%), water supply (30%) or both (20%) run out (tainted by parasites, spoiled by disease, stolen by animals, overeaten after too many ales, dropped in a chase, etc).

Hunting for food and/or water requires a Party Challenge (focusing on Int, Perc, Wilderness Lore and Animal Lore). A success gathers sufficient supplies for the remainder of the trip. A failure means the PCs go without (or subsist on quarter rations), causing 1 Con loss. Alternatively, the PCs may consume tainted food/water, avoiding Con loss, but requiring a Con check to avoid contracting a random disease.

### Hex D - Plains (Landslide)

This Hex is effectively plains. Use the encounter table from Hex A, but the chance of an encounter is 75%.

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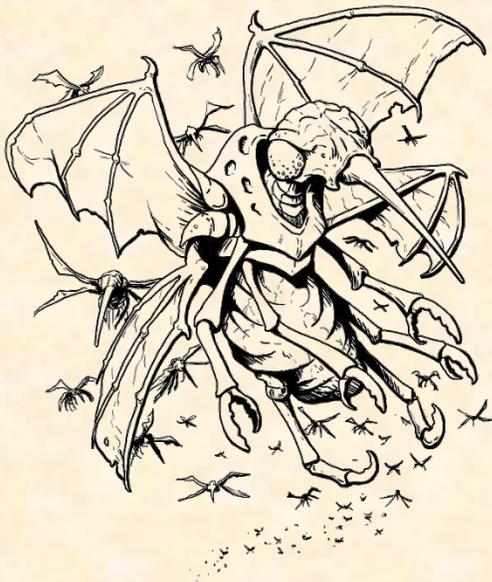
Alternatively, rain induces a landslide as the party traverses near slopes of the *Trackless Moors*. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check notices the danger, granting advantage on avoid the consequences of the slide. A *Luck* (Dex) check negates 4d8 damage and 1 point of Dex loss.

### Hex E - Plains, River & Forest

This hex involves a mix of plains, forest and a 300 ft wide river. Use the encounter tables from Hex A and Hex B respectively.

The river is relatively shallow but strong flowing, with numerous sharp rocks beneath the flow. Crossing it allows access to the pass leading up to the *Trackless Moors*, but requires a Dex (Acrobatics) test to avoid slipping and suffering an ankle or wrist injury (lose 1 Dex).

Part way up the pass are the recent bodies of twenty *Skull Drinker* thuels and horses, and three of *Varro's* leather clad warriors (and horses). Searching them yields 2x Tribal Trinkets (see Hex A). *Varro's* men were stripped of their valuables.



### Hex F - Moors

The fog addled fens and bogs of the *Trackless Moors* are covered in heather and crowberry, with pockets of birch, bald cypress and mangroves. Deer, otters and crocodiles are common, but pale

in comparison to the mosquito and leech infestation.

Tracking *Varro* through the fens is more difficult, given the large number of watery pools and byways (imposes disadvantage on tracking tests).

There is a 30% chance of an encounter every 12 hours in the fens. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 1d12 hideous *Moor Trolls* lurch from nearby pools to attack the PCs! The trolls have been hibernating beneath the pools for weeks, and are ravenous. They will not flee, unless faced with large amounts of fire/acid.
2. 2d4 *Giant Crocodiles* are lying in wait in these swampy shallows, only their nostrils visible above the lichen covered water (Perc (Det) vs *Crocodile* Dex 10, but the croc has advantage).
3. A buzzing swarm of disease carrying mosquitos besets the party, carried to them by unfortunate winds. PCs must make a *Luck* (Con) check or be infected with a random disease.
4. Slushy ground suddenly turns to quicksand for one unfortunate traveller, causing them to vanish beneath the marsh (*Luck* (Dex) save to avoid, otherwise treat as drowning, Str (Athletics) check at disadvantage to claw their way out). Pulling oneself out of the quicksand causes 1 Str loss.
5. Toxic gases are seeping from the sodden ground in this area. PCs must make a *Luck* (Con) save or be affected by a serious madness. The madness naturally subsides after 2d4 days.

6. 1d3+1 waves of 3d10 *Stirges* descend upon the party each hour, drawn to their delicious, warm bodies.
7. Shallow pools conceal 5d4 *Projectile Leeches* eagerly waiting to launch themselves at passing humanoids. The first half of the leeches launch themselves round 1, followed up by the second half in round 2 (they had to swim closer before launching).
8. Far from *Varro's* trail but glimpsed through lingering fog, a mysterious obelisk can be seen. Investigating the area reveals ancient serpentmen ruins of the First Age. 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure can be scavenged here, but is defended by 3d4 *Giant Serpents* that act with a strange, coordinated intelligence.

### Hex G - Moors (Colossal Frog)

This hex is largely marshy swamplands, with pockets of dry hillocks. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but the chance of an encounter is 35% every 12 hours.

Alternatively, a *Colossal Frog* (20 ft tall) emerges from hibernation beneath the soggy earth with a deafening croak, eager to devour the PCs!

**Colossal Frog**, *Boss Monster*, AC 14, HD 14, Bite 2d12 and Leg Slap 1d8+3, 19: special, S21 D7 C19 I3 P8 W15 Ch7 L14, Mv 40 ft. The *Colossal Frog* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks*, *Major Exploit Protection* and *Stronger Luck*. On a Nat 19-20 the target is swallowed (may attack the frog's guts with a small weapon, but suffers 3d6 crushing damage on the monster's turn). Tongue attack up to 60 ft drags a target into melee and prevents them moving away (Str contest resists). 10 ft reach.

### Hex H - Moors (Tree with Five Faces)

This hex is drier than most of the fens but still damp, with tall cliffs overlooking *Drelnor Forest*

to the west. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but the chance of an encounter is 50% each day.

Alternatively, an old bald cyprus clings to life at the edge of one of the cliff-tops, bent by the fierce winds. If inspected more closely, five faces can be seen carved into the tree (thuel like countenances, representing the five winds; north, south, east, west and the spirit wind).

Buried at the base of the tree are the bones of a long dead shaman, plus 1 x Tribal Trinket (see Hex A), 1 x Valuables, and a leather thong with a bison head runestone (as 1 x Scroll).

### Hex I - Moors (Kadimos Ruins)

Despite sections of this hex being particularly foggy, the ruins of *Kadimos* are clearly visible on a narrow plateau to the west. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but the chance of an encounter is 50% each day.

*Kadimos* was a Nydissian city brought low thirty years earlier by a combination of barbarians, skorn, and finally Midlanders. Its pillared and domed villas have been torn down, streets and statues cracked and overgrown with creepers and bracken. Some old soldier skeletons still lie where they fell.

A nest of 3d6+30 *Swamp Beetles* (4 ft long, dark blue colouration, oversized mandibles) have taken control of the streets, and will attack any juicy humanoids they happen to cross paths with.

**Swamp Beetle**, AC 16, HD 4, Bite 2d4+2, 19: special, S17 D9 C13 I2 P11 W11 Ch8 L7, Mv 30 ft or 10 ft burrowing. May burrow through soft earth at 10 ft per round, and sense ground based creatures within 60 ft. On a Nat 19 another *Swamp Beetle* burrows out of the cracked street to aid this one!

The city was plundered when it fell, but some treasures still remain. A Party Challenge (difficult, 8 successes, focusing on Detection, General Lore,

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Wilderness Lore and Divine Lore) leads to a villa with a hidden cellar cache (1 x Valuables and a *cold iron* spear).

### Hex J - Moors (Large Pools)

This hex is particularly wet, with large tracts of pools 3 or 4 ft deep, mangrove trees stretching out across the water. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but 60% encounter chance each day.

Alternatively, a small tribe of 2d12+20 *Urgot* (mutants with scaled skin, serrated teeth, and back spines) have taken up residence by the pools. They saw *Varro's* band pass, and might be willing to update the party with that info for something valuable. On the other hand, *Nirp'Tok*, the leader, would rather eat them.

**Urgot**, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club/Claw etc 1d6+1, 19; the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. Moan once/day, all creatures within 20 ft suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

### Hex K - Plains & Jungle

This hex is half plains, half jungle. Use the encounter tables from Hex A and Hex L respectively.

Alternatively, 2d6+20 *Melek Legionaries* are patrolling this region and will home in on the party. They are not necessarily aggressive, but will come to aid *Varro* if combat breaks out here with the PCs.

**Legionary**, AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1, Spear 1d6+1, 19; the *legionary* may move to form ranks with another soldier without suffering an attack due to movement, S14 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. 10 ft reach. The guard's shield may be used to negate one attack.

### Hex L - Jungle

This green wilderness is an offshoot of the *Suurat Jungle*, tangled with towering kapok and ficus trees, strangler figs, flowery aroids and thick,

choking liana vines. The jungle is humid but generally well lit, the tree tops only partially shield against the sun and frequent rain. Animal life is a plentiful, with many species of birds, small mammals and reptiles, including giant serpents and scorpions. Jaguars and sabre tooth tigers are not uncommon.

Horses may be lead through the jungle, but the tangled undergrowth makes it too dangerous to ride for long periods (use normal walking speeds).

There is a 75% chance of an encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4:

1. 5d6 *Flesh Eating Vines* (Midlands) are growing in this region. They wait until the PCs are in the middle of them before striking.
2. A *Sabretooth Tiger* is stalking the party from behind, hoping to snatch one of them (or their horses) while they sleep. It is intelligent enough to recognise a sentry, and will approach from the opposite side.
3. Loud hissing foreshadows 2d4 *Giant Serpents* that are mating in the low branches nearby. If the serpents pick up the party's scent, there is a 50% chance they will break off to seek out a warm meal instead.
4. 5d6 *Man Eating Monkeys* attempt to ambush the party, ideally when they are sleeping, by dropping from the high branches. Their objective is to drag an unconscious PC into the undergrowth for later eating.

### Hex M - Foothills

*Melek's* western foothills are well patrolled by *Nydisian Legionaries*. If *Varro* has made it here before the PCs, he recruits a contingent of 3d20 soldiers to escort him into the city proper.

## The Deck of Many Things

The *Astravali* consists of twenty one fate cards as outlined below. A character may only draw one card at a time, resolving any immediate effects before drawing another card (if desired). Each card may only be drawn once, and vanishes forever after, indelibly marking the user with a tattoo reflecting the expended card. The brand, and any other effect brought about by the deck, cannot be removed or negated with mortal magic.

If players would like to draw cards from the deck, GMs might like to use cards from a normal playing deck, as indicated below (\* good, # bad):

PLAYING CARD	FATE CARD
Diamonds - Ace	Keeper of Time *
Diamonds - King	The Emperor *
Diamonds - Queen	The Empress *
Diamonds - Jack	Judgement #
Diamonds - Two	The Demon #
Hearts - Ace	The Undying *
Hearts - King	The Magician *
Hearts - Queen	The Sentinel *
Hearts - Jack	The Lovers #
Hearts - Two	The Juggernaut #
Spades - Ace	The Stars *
Spades - King	The Sun *
Spades - Queen	The Moon *
Spades - Jack	The Void #
Spades - Two	The Hanged Man #

Clubs - Ace	Wheel of Fortune *
Clubs - King	The Hierophant *
Clubs - Queen	The High Priestess *
Clubs - Jack	The Tower #
Clubs - Two	Death #
Joker (with TM)	The Fool #
Joker (without TM)	Unholy Avenger #

- **Death;** All living things within 120 ft of the PC instantly die (animals collapse, plants wither). Intelligent humanoids gain a *Luck* (Con) save to resist. The drawer is immune.
- **The Demon;** A *Balor* crosses the Veil somewhere in the world, called by the card's magic. The demon is instinctively drawn to the PC and will find them in 2d6 days, at which time it tortures and eats them. The PC experiences a building sense of foreboding until the *Balor* appears. The demon cannot be escaped via the standard Party Retreat rule.
- **The Emperor;** 2d6 flawless diamonds worth 2,000 gp each appear in the PC's hands.
- **The Empress;** The ghostly form of a human like empress manifests and hands the PC a magical mace of jagged red steel (an alien metal).

The *Red Mace of the Star Empress* grants three levels of attunement as follows:

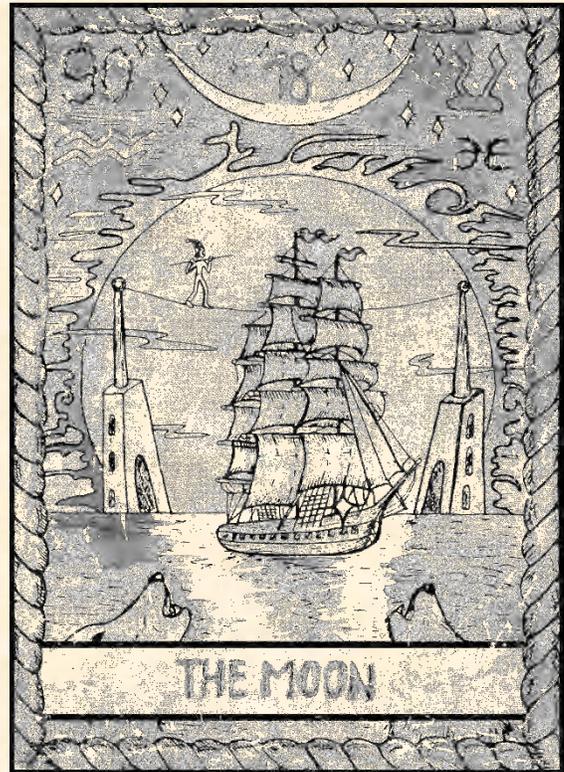
- The wielder may invoke *Strange Joining* at will (each use requires the usual DDM check).

- ii. When using the mace, the wielder's crit range by increases by 1 point, and on a critical hit, add the user's full level to damage (instead of half).
- iii. Once every 1d4 days, the wielder may spend an action to invoke *Dimension Door*.

- **The Fool;** The PC is immediately stuck by a *Feeblemind* spell, but the *Luck* (Will) save is made at disadvantage.
- **The Hanged Man;** The PC is immediately suspended in the air and begins suffocating. A successful *Luck* (Con) save ends the effect before the PC dies (permanently lose 1 Con instead).
- **The Hierophant;** The PC may assume the form of a *Greater Fire Elemental* once every 2d6 months (treat as the spell *Sudden Transmogrification*, but ignore the HD cap, and the PC gains relevant magical abilities).
- **The High Priestess;** The PC may use the Cultist *Turning* ability once per adventure. The card's brand appears on the character's palm, and may be presented instead a holy symbol.
- **Judgement;** The cosmos judges the PC for their last six months of deeds. If the GM judges them benevolent or kind, the PC gains one level. If merciless or unkind, they lose one level. If neutral, the PC is compelled to draw again.
- **The Juggernaut;** A random monster bursts from the card in a thunderous roar to kill the PC. Roll 1d4: (i) *Mammoth*, (ii) *Bloodroot Treant*, (iii) *Greater Elemental*, (iv) *Hydra*. The monster has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn*

*Attacks.* The monster cannot be escaped via the standard Party Retreat rule.

- **Keeper of Time;** The PC gains a one off ability to reverse time by up to 10 minutes (no action, but must be conscious). After invoking this boon, the PC immediately ages 2d10 years.



- **The Lovers;** The PC immediately falls in love with the next stranger of the same race and opposite sex, and vice versa. The magical attraction ends approximately nine months later, when a child is born. The infant displays magical powers, and grows increasingly odd as he/she matures.
- **The Magician;** The PC learns 1d3 random spells (level 1d4, roll for each), which they may cast once per adventure (treat the PC's level as caster level).
- **The Moon;** The PC may use an action to shapechange once per month, taking the

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form of a rat, wolf, or bear (treat as the spell *Sudden Transmogrification*). While in beast form, the PC gains *Lycanthropy* traits. If the beast form suffers *silvered* damage, the transformation ends in 1d3 rounds.

- **The Sentinel;** The card transforms into an 9 ft bronze warrior (as *Minotaur*) that follows the PC's orders (no action), and never checks for morale. The sentinel does not sleep, eat, or breathe, and is immune to mind based effects.
- **The Stars;** The PC may invoke a *Forbidden Wish* (no action). The wish may be used at any time. Once invoked, the *Deck* vanishes for 10d100 years.
- **The Sun;** The PC gains the ability to invoke *Gift of the Fiery Furnace* once per adventure (requires an action).
- **The Tower;** The adventurer is instantly transported to a distant tower, naked and shackled. An evil sorcerer or sorceress treats them as their plaything until the character is rescued. Other PCs instinctively understand their ally's plight, and where to find them.
- **The Undying;** This card is no longer available, having been drawn by *Rogarth* when he first acquired the deck. The character no longer requires sleep, will not die from mundane causes (excluding devastating injury such as beheading), and ceases to age for 500 years.
- **Unholy Avenger;** A rent in space unleashes a *Gibbering Terror* that attacks the PC for 1d4 minutes. The *Terror* has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*. The *Terror* cannot be escaped via the standard Party Retreat rule.

- **The Void;** The PC stares into the Void, learning secrets no mortal ought bare. The PC gains a random incurable pervasive madness. After 2d12 months the severity reduces to serious and stabilizes (no further reductions are possible).

## Aftermath

If *Varro* makes it to Melek before the PCs, the deck is handed over to the *Lucentum*, who swiftly secure it. Eventually it makes its way to *Osk* and the *Vault Eternal*.

If the PCs manage to retrieve the deck, and kill their opponents, there are no repercussions from the *Ordo*. If any of the Nydissians survive however, the *Ordo* eventually sends assassins (or other agents) after the party. True to his word, Rogarth is happy for the PCs to draw cards from the deck if they wish. He does insist on keeping the relic, however, which he intends to pass on to his granddaughter when she comes of age.





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