

VALE OF SHADOWS v1.0E

A Dungeon Starter by Mark Tygart
For Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel's
Dungeon World
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AGENDA

- Make the world fantastic
- Fill the characters' lives with adventure
- Play to find out what happens

QUESTIONS

- Why are you traveling to the Vale of Shadows?
- How did you learn of the location of a gate to this alternate reality?
- What do you believe about the stories of the Demogorgon?
- Have you made arrangements for an empty casket memorial service if you don't return?

IMPRESSIONS

- Black trees everywhere...
- A cool mist surrounding you
- Strange red lichen covers ruined buildings
- The feeling of despair
- The distant sounds of tribal drums
- The rustle of your boots in the black leaves
- A shattered skull
- Sudden appearance of a brightly colored slug
- A cold wind
- A horizon full of alien stars above
- Always dark, always night
- A scream of horror then silence

"The Vale of Shadows is a dimension that is a dark reflection, or echo, of our world. It is a place of decay and death, a plane out of phase, a [place] with monsters. It is right next to you and you don't even see it."

-Stranger Things

GOALS

- Establish details, describe
- Use what they give you
- Ask questions
- Leave blanks
- Look for interesting facts
- Help the players understand the moves
- Give each character a chance to shine
- Introduce NPC's
- Fill out your worksheet

DUNGEON MOVES

- Change the environment
- Point to a looming threat
- Introduce a new faction or type of creature
- Use a threat from an existing faction or type of creature
- Make them backtrack
- Present riches at a price
- Present a challenge to one of the characters

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. "

- *Hamlet* (1.5.167-8), Hamlet to Horatio

CUSTOM MOVES

When you attempt to navigate The Vale of Shadows, describe how you do it, and then roll +STAT. *On a 12+, hold 2 *On a 10+, hold 1. *On a 7-9, hold 1, but you also encounter a monster or trap. *On a miss, you encounter a monster or trap. *On a 1-3, you encounter the Demogorgon (At the GM's discretion...)

If multiple party members navigate in turn, their hold is pooled together for the entire party. To find one of the vale's treasures, spend 1 hold and describe the place it is found in. You may spend 3 hold at any time to find an exit to this evil dimension.



THINGS

Scroll of Demogorgon Protection

Will form a sphere of protection around the caster so that he or she cannot be harmed or harm the Demon Prince until camp is next made.

Wand of Green Fireballs

Casts fireballs that will harm the Demogorgon.

Services

Local Scholar (100 coins)

Can warn the party about the Demonogorgon.

Monsters

The Coco (Solitary, Stealthy, Intelligent)

Drains Life (d10 damage) 10 HP

Close, Ignores Armor

Special Qualities: Undead, Shapeshifters

The Coco (or Cuco, Coca, Cuca, Cucuy) is a mythical ghost-monster, equivalent to the bogeyman, found in many Hispanic and Lusophone countries. He can also be considered a Hispanic version of a bugbear, as it is a commonly used figure of speech representing an irrational or exaggerated fear. The Coco is actually an undead, murdered child that preys on other children. Children killed but not consumed by a Coco will arise as a Coco within three days of being drained. The Coco's true form is hideous, that of a twisted, half melted corpse child in rags. It will normally not reveal its true form and will only appear as a cloaked figure (often with a jack-o-lantern head) if not shape shifting. It can appear as anything roughly human to child-sized, but radiates magic and evil strongly. The Cuco is normally cowardly but has been known to work as a spy for other evil creatures. It dislikes, but can endure, sunlight but not salt or running water.

Instinct: Devours children

Demogorgon (Solitary, Huge, Stealthy, Planar, Terrifying)

Withering tentacles (d10+3 damage) 19 HP, 1 Armor
Reach, Near

Special Qualities: *Gaze attack can charm or drive insane*

Demogorgon appears as an 18-foot-tall (5.5 m), reptilian (or amphibious) hermaphroditic demon prince with a somewhat humanoid form. Two mandrill heads sprout from his twin snake-like necks, and his arms end in long tentacles. His two heads have individual minds, called Aameul (the left head) and Hethradiah (the right head). One of Demogorgon's best-kept secrets, even from his cultists and minions, is that his two personas strive to dominate (and even kill) each other, but are unable to because they are aspects of one another. Despite this duality, many of Demogorgon's plots revolve around either permanently separating or uniting these two personas. His blue-green skin is plated with snake-like scales, his body and legs are those of a giant lizard, and his thick tail is forked. His appearance testifies to his command of cold-blooded things such as serpents, reptiles, and octopi.

Instinct: Corrupts

- Spreads Insanity
- Always moves twice
- Immune to most magic
- May start to argue with itself and allow party to escape
- Unable to leave the Vale of Shadows

Troglodyte (Horde, Intelligent)

Primitive spear (d6 damage) 3 HP, 2 Armor

Troglodytes are the degenerate reptile man descendants of a group of Demonogorgon worshippers. They have lost much of their former glory, now forced to eke out a living at the edge of civilizations, often taken as slaves by others. They emit a noxious stench, a natural adaptation to help fend off predators.

Instinct: Serve Demogorgon



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“Yeah, that’s right! You better run! She’s our friend and she’s crazy!”

-Dustin Henderson, *Stranger Things*

Starter Inspired by the Netflix series Stranger Things