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# SANTICORE 2014

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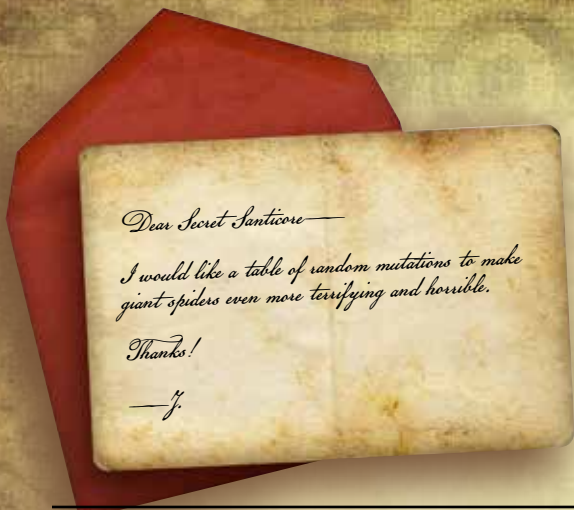
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# EXTRA GRIBBLY ARACHNID FACEMUNCHERS FOR OLD SCHOOL D&D

by Peitsa Veteli  
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## D6 SOCIALITY

- 1 Colonial, sweet hell there'll be like 1d1000 of these things. One larger per 50.
- 2-6 A hermit.

## 3D6 SIZE OF THE GOOD OL' FUCKER IS ABOUT THE SIZE OF A

- 3 Dust particle. Maybe some hapless bastards inhale these?
- 4-5 Grape. Large numbers, no real HP, easy to hit.
- 6-7 Clenched fist. 1/2 HD and as unarmoured in melee.
- 8-13 Cat. Run of the mill "gah it's horrible!" sized spider. 1 HD, as unarmoured.
- 14-16 Wolf. +1 HD, armour as chain and +1 attack.
- 16-17 Horse. +3HD, armour as plate and +2 attacks.
- 18 Elephant. +5 HD, armour as plate, +2 attacks, +1 special thing.

## D10 METHOD OF HUNTING (HUNTER TYPES HAVE PRETTY ACCURATE SIGHT SPINNERS BIT BLURRIER):

- 1 Web-spinner: uses static, barely visible planes of webs to stop prey.
- 2 Web-funnel: uses a funnel-like formation of webs to guide prey, hides somewhere in the killing zone.
- 3 Web-hunter: uses webs like a gladiator, holds them in its forelegs and runs at you with them.
- 4 Web-slinger: creates threads of web with a sticky ball of web at the end, throws at prey. Think bolas. Hits cause saves vs. paralyze.
- 5 Web-home: creates a nest of web and rubble, darts out when structure is disturbed. Works underwater, too.
- 6 Trapdoor lurker: lurks in crags, tunnels and holes, ready to pounce upon the prey. Very good at surprise, 5/6.
- 7 Running hunter: this one will chase you down and damn is it fast. Cat-sized spiders run near twice the speed of a man in a short burst.
- 8 Leaping hunter: moves around constantly, pounces when it senses prey. Cat-sized spiders can leap over 30', larger maybe even more.
- 9 Mimicking: the spider tries to look like its prey, get near undetected and scurry away after a kill. Usually done on ants, but what if they have adapted to hunting humanoids or suitable species in your campaign?
- 10 Mixture of the above, roll 1d3+1 types the spider uses.



D12	TYPE OF POISON USED BY THE NASTIE:
1	No poison. Uses webs to entangle prey to helplessness and devour them in peace. Hits as if 2 HD higher.
2	Weakly paralyzing poison. Save vs. poison if bitten, kicks in in 1d6 rounds, 1d3 if of large size. Lingers for 1d3 x 10 minutes.
3	Strongly paralyzing poison. Victim is utterly helpless for 1d6 hours on a failed save. Instantaneous.
4	Weak neurotoxin. Take 2d6 extra damage when bitten, half that on a save.
5	Strong neurotoxin. Save vs. instant death, only 2d6 extra damage on a successful save.
6	Weak necrotoxin. Save or lose control of the bitten bodypart for next 1d6 rounds.
7	Strong necrotoxin. Save or lose the bitten bodypart in a horrible shrivelling as biological agents melt your flesh, control lost for 1d6 rounds even on a save.
8	Lingering haemotoxin. Save or have a horrible burning pain cripple you for the next 1d6 days, harsh penalties to everything remotely exercise-like. Including this combat, dude. 50% chance of being weaker, which only causes -2 worth of pain to all actions for 1d6 hours.
9	Hallucinogenic. Save or get high, as per Confusion spell. The victim is as likely to trash around and murder his companions as he is to simply stare at the wall with no signs of intelligence.
10	Radioactive. Save or die. If successful, each bite has a cumulative chance of 1% to give superpowers.
11	Weak feverish toxin. Victim's heart goes into overdrive and he starts to sweat a lot, any strenuous activity after 1d3 rounds for 1d3 x 10 minutes will require a save or cause 1d6 damage in muscle strain.
12	Strong feverish toxin. Victim's heart pounds like it would burst out of his chest. After 1d3 rounds, no actions except weak whiping on the floor may be made for 1d6 days without saves against heart failure.

D50	THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)
1	Extra legs. +1d20 limbs, may or may not speed the thing up and give more attacks.
2	Extra mouths. Because it's too slow to eat with one mouth, do so with 1d20 instead. This might mean usage of more than one type of poison, perhaps even randomized every time?
3	Blade-like chitinous claws and hooks in legs. Damage die type upped (from 1d6 to 1d8 and so forth).
4	Can opener. The monster has rending claws that rip even the best of armour to pieces. If it hits, the armour on the victim is destroyed and no longer protects the wearer.
5	Extra eyes. The beast's head is filled with hundreds of eyes of varying sizes, giving it a whole lot of a better view of the situation. Almost impossible to surprise, +2 AC for added reaction time. If unusual, can mesmerize the prey with its alien gaze as per Hold effects as long as it can maintain eye contact.
6	Digestion problems. Spiders can't eat solids, so they spout acid and stuff on their prey and this one has particularly nasty innards. Instead of biting, the spider can vomit 2d8 points of caustic damage to the people immediately in front of it that will burn skin and melt fabrics, leather...
7	Different habits altogether, this spider actually will eat its prey whole. Depending on the size of the prey (nanosized spider won't swallow an adventurer), if the spider can, it will try to whomp and slurp down its target on a natural "to hit" roll of 20. This will force an immediate save vs. paralyze from the victim, as the insides of an arachnid are not very spaceous, if he wants to try anything. Every round within causes 1d6 damage from the burning digestion fluids.



**D50 THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)**

- 8 Euphoric pheromones. The predator oozes almost indistinguishable smell that draws the prey to its doom. When moving near (100') this monster, subtle saves vs. poison should be made to resist the luring effect. Lured characters are not fully controlled or anything, they can still fight the thing if they find it, but it requires another check or all the fighting will be at -2 because the pleasure given by the pheromones weights the warriors down.
- 9 Bat-shit crazy. This arachnid is aggressive like a rabid dog and attacks anything edible on sight. +1 Attack as if 2 HD higher, will not stop to feed or retreat until everything invasive is either killed or in flight.
- 10 Airwalker. The animal can shoot webs out of its limbs like Spiderman and sling from walls and ceilings, moving quietly and quickly from place to place, leaving hanging threads everywhere.
- 11 Healing ability on steroids. The thing regenerates 2d6 HP every round, even after being "killed" if not properly incinerated, its flesh constantly bubbling with new growth, fresh limbs bursting forth to replace those broken and carapace knitting itself together time after time. This leaves the being ravaged by constant hunger and it always starts to feed on the first victim it manages to fell, taking few precious minutes assimilating its soft parts.
- 12 Infectious. The thing smells rancid like a corpse dead for a week, oozing foul liquids from its mandibles wherever it goes. If any bite connects, another save must be made against a virulent and potentially fatal sickness that will set in in a week, causing high fever and instability.
- 13 Energetic like a drugged rabbit. The monster runs along all surfaces thrice the speed of a man and darts restlessly from place to place in a blur of furred horror. Double the amount of attacks and +5 AC.

**D50 THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)**

- 14 Static fur. The thing is covered in exotic, dark hair which seems to create electric currents along its surface. Anyone striking it with metal weapons or coming to a contact with bare skin takes 2d6 damage from the discharge. The spider can hold up to three charges at a time plus one for every size above average and minus for below.
- 15 Slimy. The spider is not actually that solid, with a consistency more akin to ice cream, only gooey and disgusting. It can be hit with normal weapons, but they'll only split it up like a blob of mud. Those bits and pieces will immediately start to coalesce together and form new spiders that will act like the original, only smaller. They gain mass by eating and eventually end up bigger. Because of their weird physiology, these spiders are not longlived and perish naturally when they run out of immediate nourishment.
- 16 Part of the shadows. The creature emits a swirling black cloud of ink vapor around it when in contact with its prey. This extends to about 5' around it and is strong enough to block torchlight in its vicinity.
- 17 Blowtorch. A freak of nature, this thing can create extremely high temperatures (~3000 K) in its mouthlimbs for a short while and use them as a means to brutalize its target. No armour save plate mail protects from this special attack, and even that is ruined on a hit, shields burst into flames and whatnot. If the attack connects, it does 2d10 points of damage and destroys equipment. Because it is tasking for the creature, it needs a few rounds of rest before it will use this strike again.
- 18 Explosive chitin. The creature has pressurized fungal colonies growing on it and those will burst upon impact if the thing is attacked, spreading their guts on everyone within 5'. Hissy fits, hacking cough or even dreaded death by vomiting your lungs out because of Yellow Mold are on the menu if characters doing the hitting fail in their saves or dexterity-checks or whatever you like to use.



D50	THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER. ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)	D50	THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER. ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)
19	Noxious clouds. This spider doesn't just bite with poison, it constantly pushes forth a foul cloud of protrusions from within its shell. When agitated, it releases a 10' radius cloud of the type of poison it uses.	27	Automaton. Is actually a cybernetic sentrybot. AC as plate, made of metal, uses subduing electrical shocks (save vs. paralyze or fall down convulsing) and tear gas grenades.
20	Extended carapace. Looking more akin to an eightlegged tank than a nimble spider, this thing is hard as nails and maybe subsists on those in normal conditions, who knows. AC as plate plus a bit more, double HD. Moves with only half the speed of an unburdened man, though.	28	Freak of nature. Crossbred with other random animals, may or may not be fit for survival. Dogs, bears, deer, lambs, otters, fish, birds, cats...
21	Breeder. The spider seems to go from lightning pregnancy to another in a matter of hours, pushing forth more of its ilk in front of everyone. 1D10 smaller spiders are given birth every round, though some end up being eaten by the mother in its rapacious hunger if no meatier targets are available.	29	Chainsaw. The being has a weird mouthpiece, akin to a breaching drill. It uses its first attacks to latch onto a target, no damage. Then a high pitched whirr is heard and sparks begin to fly from metal armour as it drills into the prey, causing 4d6 points of damage every round which will result in a spectacular shower of organs if something is not done quickly.
22	Light in the darkness. In addition to its normal hunting methods this abomination employs laser beams from its multitude of eyes. Attacks as if of double its normal HD because lasers, does 2d6 damage. Needs to recharge for two rounds afterwards.	30	Intelligent. The spider is actually pretty capable of speech and even conversation, although it is kind of a dick and will ramble on and on about its recent kills in a boastful manner.
23	Spiked shot. Has chitinous spikes on its back, can shoot them all around in a pointy shower of death if scared. 1D6 damage like a breath weapon to all in 20'.	31	Sniper. Will stalk its prey from the shadows and crawl in the ceiling unseen, until it sees a good opportunity to launch a poisoned needle into an unsuspecting neck from up to 30' away. Target suffers a hit with Strong paralyzing poison.
24	Cob thrower. This predator can shoot sticky webs size of a food plate in combat and hurls them to opponents' faces, nails their feet to the floor and whatnot. Strength check or paralyze save required to break free, otherwise stuck and impeded.	32	Looking for a cradle. The spider doesn't care about its own life, but is seeking a warm, fleshy place for its young. It will try to plunge its ovipositor into the opposition, deposit a cluster of eggs in their bodies and wander off (unless hungry itself). Those will hatch in 1d6 weeks, producing 1d100 little spiders that burst forth from the afflicted character. They may also hatch inside him and start to eat away, which will cause major havoc inside the body and might even be fatal.
25	Bloodsucker. If attack hits, sticks to the target and does automatic damage from that round onward until separated. Gains HP back half the amount it deals in damage.		
26	Adapted to arctic / volcanic / vacuum / wherever you are that fits and is highly useful. No penalties from environment, can walk on lava or doesn't have to breathe air, stuff like that.		



D50	THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)	D50	THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)
33	Unstable form. The thing is shifting in appearance, producing and shedding carapace and limbs, opening new mouths around its body and eating away old ones. It will reroll its HP every round, disregarding previously taken damage as it molts, have a new AC plus or minus 1d6 from the baseline and make 1d6-2 attacks as it is entirely possible that it merely bubbles in confusion or lashes out with primal fury.	40	Corrupted. The spider has come into contact with primal Chaos and is a sick, twisted mockery of its former self as a result. There is no rhyme nor reason in its behaviour except unrelenting aggression towards anything. It will have +1d6 HD and +1d6 attacks, which take on many forms. It has claws, tentacles, gibbering mouths, razor-sharp hair and gurgling, choking breath accompanied by mad laughter as it seeks to pass the Gift of Chaos on to new converts. Inhaling its foul spoutings or taking more than few points of damage from its frantic thrashes forces a save vs. poison on those struck so to not become infected with Seed of Chaos themselves. This will manifest in slowly appearing mutations and creeping insanity, unless something (difficult) is done about it.
34	Burrowing. The spider not only lives in the cracks in the walls, it creates them. With sheer power or acid, you decide.		
35	Bioluminescent. This creature has certain points in its body that give off an eerie glow, possibly akin to that of its prey species.		
36	Unusual appetite. The thing doesn't eat other creatures like normal spiders do. What does it eat? Wood, metal, books, knowledge, memories?	41	Camouflaged chameleon. The spider blends into its environs almost perfectly, making it very hard to see even in face to face contact.
37	Banshee. This critter is able to emit a piercing shriek if aggravated, possibly to startle small mammals it preys upon or drive away bigger predators. With dungeon gigantism, however, it has reached new infernal heights in its art and is able to pop eardrums and shatter glass with its cry. Everyone within clear hearing distance takes 1d6 points of damage if not protected and potions, oil jars and whatnot may crinkle.	42	Flamethrower. Igniting its own fluids, this monstrosity spews forth a 20' long and 10' wide cone of flame, doing damage like dragonbreath. Only once per week, though, as it does take quite a bit of oomph from the poor animal.
38	What sorcery is this? The spider can by some freakish accident of nature tap into the energies of beyond and use those in its hunt. The spider will pop a random spell of level 1d6 every few hours with an instinctive grasp of it, thus not using it in optimal way but neither will it use it in any suicidal attempt.	43	Illusionary. The critter is somehow able to project a copy of itself into the fray to drive its prey into the right direction, where the monster itself is really waiting. The illusion is weak and easily shattered, but gives those precious seconds for the pouncing predator to strike.
39	Phasing. The creature is partially in our state of existence and partially not, bypassing all manner of obstacles and armour as if they were not there. It will be missed by all attack attempts 50% of time. When it dies, it will cease to flicker in between and anchor into one of those.	44	Crystalline structure. The spider is not organic, but made of some slightly transparent crystals. It still hungers for warm prey, though, and will do anything to get it. +1 HD, AC as plate, shatters into possibly valuable shards, poison causes crystal growth in veins and muscles. Heart is a crude gemstone worth HD x 50 gp.
		45	Extra heads. The being has +1d6 heads and attacks, but will always only attack one target at a time.



**D50 THE SICKNASTY: OR HOW I MUTATED YOUR SPIDER ROLL AS MANY TIMES AS APPROPRIATE (ONCE PER SIZE CLASS?)**

- 46 **Discordant aura.** This creature emits a pheromone that causes humans and humanlike creatures bicker violently with each other. It is pretty peaceful in itself, but within 50' people need to save vs. infighting that might turn ugly.
- 47 **Corrosive.** The spider seems bloated and overfed, drooling slightly bad smelling dribble as it slowly goes. If hit or otherwise disturbed, the thing will vomit violently and spray corrosive bile on everything near, causing 2d6 points of damage and destroy equipment it lands on.
- 48 **Napalm spider.** These spiders are weird creations, moving with double the normal rate as they try to devour all they find to sate the blazing furnaces inside them. Otherwise normal, they sizzle and crackle and if killed, one round after explode in a fiery shower of napalm, dealing 2d10 damage to anything within 10' of them, sticking in skin and clothes and burning almost even underwater.
- 49 **Specialised mimic.** This guy has taken copying to the next level, looking very akin to its humanoid prey. Doesn't talk, though.
- 50 **The Were.** Is spider only occasionally, otherwise normal citizen of varying repute. Doesn't know this.



*Dear Secret Santicore—*

*An illustrated dice drop table for hit locations and (if possible) criticals and (if possible) the same for quadruped monsters, winged and tailed monsters, any other typical anatomical variants*

*Thanks!*

*B.B.*

# HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

by Kálmán Faragó  
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## AN UNNECESSARILY COMPLEX SYSTEM OF THROWING GAMING DICE AT TERRIFYING IMAGES OF HELLACIOUS BEASTS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION & NATURE OF THEIR WOUNDS & INJURIES COMPILED FOR THE EDIFICATION OF ROLE-PLAYING LADIES & GENTLEMEN

**I** – Once you have hit the enemy via a normal attack roll, roll the damage die on top of the image. You're free to try and angle the throw creatively, just as the DM is free to make you do it again if he thinks you're being a wee too obvious about it.

**II** – Whatever part of the image the die lands on is the enemy body part that you hit. If the die lands touching two or more parts, you can either choose one of those freely, go with the one that's covered by a larger part of the die, or just ask your DM.

**II/a** – If you're using some rules where you can attack with two weapons at the same time, roll both damage dice simultaneously. You get to choose which one hits – this gives you more control, but the flip side is that the other damage die is altogether ignored – it was just a feint.

**II/b** – If your weapon's damage is rolled with multiple die, ask your DM what to do. He might say you should just roll one die on the image and another elsewhere; or that you can roll both (or all three of them) on the table and pick your point of attack anywhere along the line(s) connecting the dice. That might make such weapons rather powerful, though.

**II/c** – If your die ends up not touching the figure at all, it's still a hit (there was a valid attack roll, after all), but it's just a bunch of bruises and minor lacerations. You do normal HP damage but nothing more.

**II/d** – When you're attacking a humanoid target holding a shield, any attacks to the shield arm, chest or torso automatically count as if the die stop right on top of the shield. Yup, shields are just that good. Much more useful than a measly -1 to AC. Ignore this rule if you're attacking from behind or the sword-arm side, obviously.

**III** – On a normal, non-critical hit, the exact wound location is largely just for colour (unless the DM decides to apply some ad-hoc ruling).

**IV** – On a critical hit, roll both the damage die (as described above) as well as an extra d6 on the image. You can choose to cause normal damage at the location of the damage die (or maybe some extra on top if the DM says so), OR go for some special damage: look at the body part where the die fell and cross-index that location with the number shown on the die. Note that the tables have no column for a 6 – those results are terrain-dependent and you or the DM will have to come up with something on the spot.

**IV/a** – If you chose a special effect, your normal damage roll is ignored unless the description says otherwise. If the description states Hit Point damage, add your Strength bonus to it.

**IV/b** – If your DM wished to keep it simple, he can forgo checking the tables, and just look at the hit location and the type of damage and make up something on the spot. In general, this is how to interpret the special die:

- 1 – A slash or chop
- 2 – A stab
- 3 – A pummeling, crushing, blunt attack
- 4 – Some sort of grapple, hold, wrestling move or somesuch
- 5 – A mystic kung-fu bullsh\*t attack: you twist the victim's solar plexus, stab his chakra, sever his Chi line or whatever.
- 6 – You use the terrain to your advantage in a way that affects the target's indicated body part.

**V** – If you roll a critical hit and both (or all) of your dice fail to touch the image, just do double damage or whatever you'd normally do; and learn to cheat with the dice better.



## HUMANOIDS

	1	2	3	4	5
Head	<p>You deftly slash at his face. You chop off:</p> <p>1 – an ear 2 – a nose 3 – a clump of hair 4 – you give him a scar on the face, he's probably lucky. He loses 1d6 HP and 1d4 points of Charisma (except if you rolled a 3).</p>	<p>You stab him in the head:</p> <p>1 – You put out an eye, -2d8 HP. 2 – You puncture an eardrum, -1d8 HP. 3 – You give him non-lethal brain damage, -2d8 HP and he permanently loses 1d6 points from a random attribute and might get a new personality. 4 – You kill him straightaway with a savage stab through the head.</p>	<p>You hit him in the head with the blunt side of your weapon. The poor wretch must make a save (Fortitude, Petrification, Constitution, whatever) or die from having his skull caved in. If he survives, he still drops to -1HP and starts bleeding out unconscious.</p>	<p>You grab his head and slam his face into something hard, stunning him for 1d4+1 rounds during which he can only defend himself.</p>	<p>You hit your foe on his Third Eye Chakra. If he's a spellcaster of some sort, every time he'll try to use magic for the rest of the day, he'll accidentally cast another spell he has memorised. If the target is a humanoid golem of some sort, you disable it by scratching the holy symbol on its forehead. If the target is anything else, it will forget all known languages and gain 1d4 new, randomly selected ones until restored by sufficiently powerful magic. Also, -1d4 HP.</p>
Neck	<p>Immediately make a second attack roll. If it's a hit, you decapitate your opponent. Otherwise, blood gushes forth from his neck, causing him normal damage and a further 1HP per round until bandaged or magically healed.</p>	<p>You puncture your victim's windpipe. He can still breathe, but is unable to speak (and cast spells) until healed. Also do normal damage.</p>	<p>The target's larynx is crushed. He'll only ever speak again if healed magically, and it will still only be a hoary rasp unless the magic was of the highest degree. -2d6 HP.</p>	<p>You've laid your hand on his throat and are queezing the breath out of him – use some sort of drowning rules to see how long he'll last before fainting. The downside is you need to have at least one free hand on his throat constantly.</p>	<p>You sever the chi between his head and body. He's paralysed with a body as rigid as a plank, but only until someone or something touches him again, restoring the flow of chi. -1d6 HP.</p>



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Chest	You slash at his chest. If he was wearing a backpack or something similar, it falls to the ground with its straps cut. He also loses whatever HP you rolled on your normal damage die, +4 for the profuse bleeding.	You drive the point of your weapon into his chest. 1 – Straight through the heart, immediate death. 2-3 – Punctured lungs, he'll soon lose consciousness and die as if he was drowning. 4-6 – No lethal damage, but you can leave your weapon stuck in him for a -4 penalty on all his d20 rolls. Also, normal damage.	You break his ribcage. He loses your normal damage roll's worth of HP, and he can't regain these with the usual sort of clerical magic or healing potion – it needs something stronger, or slow natural healing.	You lay a free hand, leg or shield on his chest and shove with a bull's strength. Your enemy goes flying or stumbling 3d6+6 feet backwards and ends up lying on his back. Or falling down a chasm, if you're lucky.	You tap his chest just the right way to confuse the mystical energies of the heart. He'll either go into uncontrolled berserk courage (cannot do anything but attack) or run away from the fight like a rabbit, 50-50 chance
Torso	He loses your normal damage die's worth of HP, AND you should make a second attack. If that's a hit as well, you slash his guts open – he's down for the count and will die in 1d4 rounds.	You stab him through the guts or some other internal organ. Internal haemorrhaging will kill him within a day unless the inner bleeding is spotted and treated. Note that magical healing will only fix it if he's healed up to full HP. He also takes normal damage.	You knock the wind out of him, he's stunned for 1d4 rounds and takes normal damage.	You wrap your arm around him and slam him into the ground with a powerful throw. -1d4 HP, he ends up prone and you get to decide where exactly he falls.	You deliver a mystical hit between the Solar Plexus and the Sacral Chakra, causing him to throw up his breakfast for 1d4 rounds. He'll also be filled with a supernatural feeling of dissatisfaction for the rest of the day



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Groin	Ouch! If your enemy was male and not clad in metal, well... he can still be a godfather, let's just say. Also takes normal damage and an extra 1 HP per round until healed.	A solid stab in the groin. Serious, but not compared to some of the other stuff on this table. Still good enough for normal damage +4 HP.	He falls on the ground with a shattered pelvis and will be unable to stand until fully healed. Also, normal damage.	A grab, a twist and a squeeze, and your enemy is now lying on the ground writhing in pain for 2d6 rounds – if he was male.	You forcibly awaken the target's Kundalini dragon. If he survives the fight, he'll act like a mysterious, cold-blooded reptile for a week: communicates by hissing, won't blink, slows down in cold, develops a taste for live rodents, etc..
Arm	You chop off his arm (either all of it, at the elbow, or at the wrist; 2 in 6 chance of each), also causing normal damage.	You've impaled the enemy's arm for 1d6 HP damage. If you wish, you can let your weapon go and leave him with a -4 to attack rolls (for sword arm) or no benefit from his shield (for shield arm).	You've crushed one of his arms with multiple fractures. He drops his weapon (if it's that hand) and loses use of the limb until fixed up. Also, normal damage.	You've grabbed his arm. If it's his sword arm, he has to make a saving throw or drop his weapon when you twist it. Regardless of the result (and/or if it's his shield arm), you can also slam him into a wall, column or other combatant for 1d4 HP one round of being stunned.	He loses control of his arms due to your stimulating the pressure points. Ever round, he'll randomly: 1 – attack a nearby random target 2 – parry 3 – drop his weapon or shield and grab something else at reach. 4 – flail his arm around comically. The effect lasts until he gets a breather out of combat.



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Hand	You deftly remove 1d4 fingers, possibly rendering him unable to use his chosen weapon and definitely giving him a penalty for future acts of legerdemain. Also, -1d4 HP.	You nail his hand to a nearby wall, tree or whatever is at hand. He loses 1d4 HP and can't use his hand or move away until he is ripped free — the latter requires a successful WIS, Willpower or similar save and causes another 1d4 HP damage.	All those tiny bones and muscles in his hand are horribly shattered. He completely loses use of that hand and the damage can only be restored by something more powerful than the usual healing spell of potion. Also, -1d6 HP.	You dislocate his wrist or finger. He loses 1d4 HP and can't use that hand at all until healed. If you have a free hand, you can just simply take whatever he was holding at the time, if you want.	You scramble the Chi in your enemy's hand. If he survives the fight, he will automatically write out a true answer with that hand whenever asked a question, no matter how much he tries to resist. The effect lasts for a day.
Leg	You chop off his leg. You can easily imagine the drawbacks over and above the normal damage.	You stab him in the thigh for 1d6 HP. His movement rate is halved due to the limp.	You break his kneecap. He can no longer put any weight on that leg, slowing his movement to a limping hop. -1d6 HP.	You sweep his feet out from under him. He falls on the ground prone, and you can make a follow-up attack on him as the first action of the next round.	Your cunning attack gives him a magical stimulation of the leg muscles. Until held down for a minute or two, he cannot help but run at top speed. He gets to decide where, but he cannot slow down or stop, no matter what.
Foot	Your downward chop removes some of his toes. He gets a penalty to acrobatic rolls such as balancing, tightrope walking, climbing, etc.. -1d4 HP.	You pin his foot to the ground. 1d4 HP damage, and he can't move until he yanks your weapon out, which requires him to make WIS or Willpower save and costs another 1d4 HP.	You shatter his foot. He's slowed down to a hobble and loses 1d4 HP.	I'm not quite sure how you got your hand on his foot, but well done! You can flip and throw him anywhere within 20 feet; he'll end up sprawling on the ground, possibly after knocking down several people and things in the way.	You hit whatever chakras he has in his foot. For the next 2d6 rounds, he can't help but do a skipping, hopping little dance to no particular tune. All of his actions are at a -4 penalty.



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

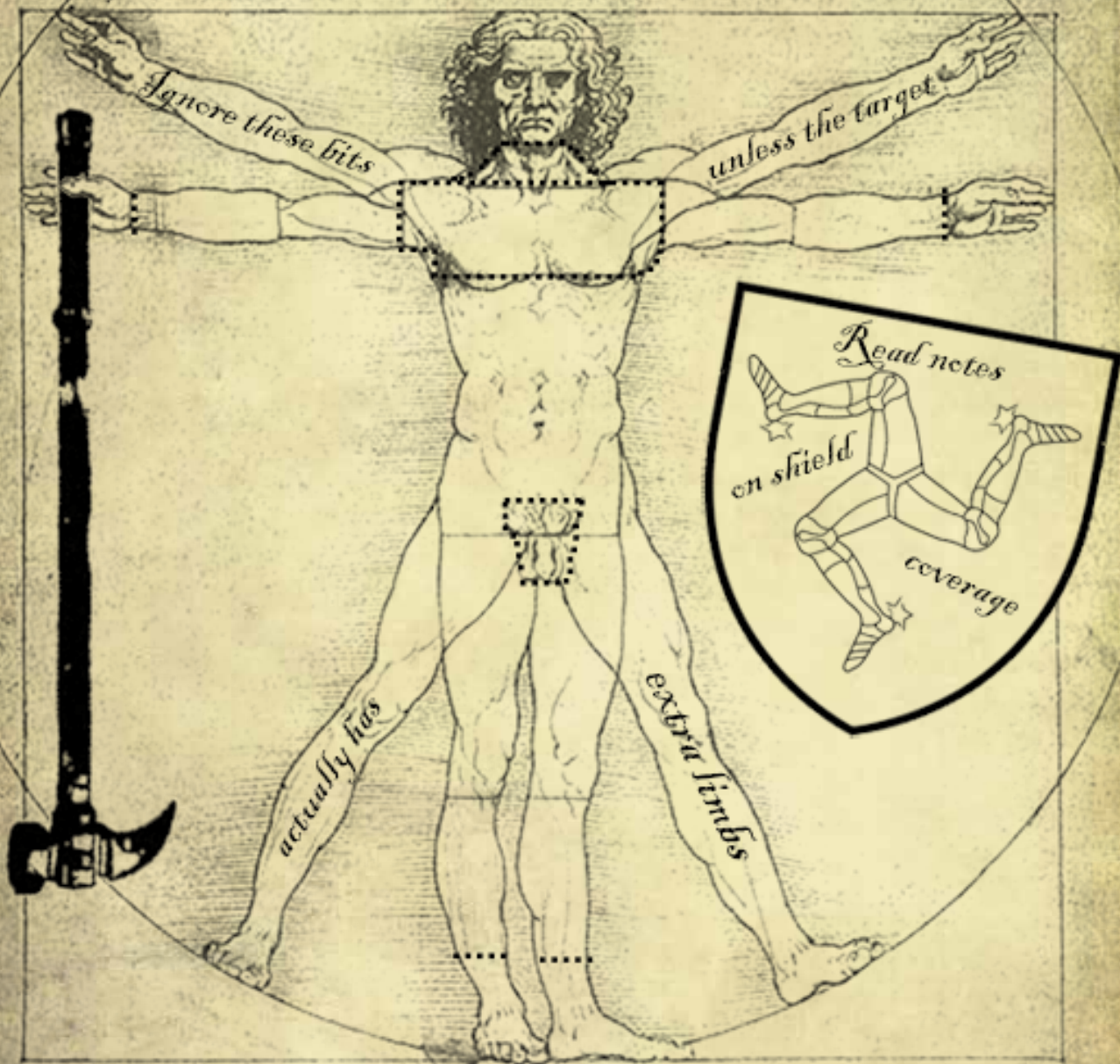
	1	2	3	4	5
Weapon	You slide your weapon along his in a shower of sparks. The two of you make opposed attack rolls (e.g. subtract $d_{20} + \text{modifiers}$ from your THACo). If you win, his weapons flies away at the flick of your wrist.	You shove his weapon aside just before delivering a blow. He'll automatically go last in the next round.	Whether with a sharp edge or a heavy blunt head, you cleave the poor bastard's weapon asunder.	He'll never understand how you did it, but if you have a free hand, now you're holding his weapon in it. If you don't have a free hand, his weapon is now exactly where you wanted it to fly.	You set up disharmonic resonations in his blade, giving him a -1 penalty to attacks, damage and all saving throws until he puts it down.
Shield	Nothing much happens, really; this is exactly the sort of thing shields were invented for. He still loses HP, though.	If your weapon is pointy, you drive it through the shield. You can try to yank it back with an opposed strength roll, or just leave it there, giving the enemy a -2 to all combat rolls thanks to the impediment. If your weapon is long enough, you can try to drive it further in: make a strength check to stab him behind the shield for an extra $1d_4$ HP.	Your savage battering causes splinters to come off and the leather to loosen, decreasing the shield's AC bonus by 1 point and destroying it when it reaches complete ineffectiveness.. If you have an axe or pick, you destroy the shield straightaway. If you have a mace or hammer, you break your victim's shield-arm through blunt trauma: he'll no longer benefit from the shield and can't do anything with that arm until healed. (Also, $1d_6$ HP damage.)	You slide your blade, fancy polearm, own shield or just free hand behind his shield and rip it out of his grasp. It goes flying and lands somewhere nearby. Good job, he no longer has it.	His shield is now cracked in imperceptible ways. The next he deflects anything with it (either on the drop table or just thanks to the AC bonus), it will fall apart.



*[Faint handwritten text at the top of the page]*

*Special die:*

- 1 - Slash / Chop
- 2 - Stab
- 3 - Crush / Pummel
- 4 - Grapple, hold, kick
- 5 - Twist its plexus, sever the Chi, etc.
- 6 - Use the terrain



*[Faint handwritten text at the bottom of the page]*



## FOUR LEGGED BEASTS

	1	2	3	4	5
Head	It loses any trunk, paralysing tongue, or xenomorphesque inner jaw that it might have had. Also, normal damage.	Roll 1d4: 1-2 – you stab it through its open mouth. If it had any sort of breath or sound attack, it's lost. It also takes normal damage.	The monster's fangs might be slavering, but now they're slavering on the ground after you've fractured its jaw. It's bite attack damage is halved, rounded down. Also, normal damage.	You ram your fist down its throat so far and hard it can't use its bite attack or shake you loose while your hand is there.	You don't even need to touch the beast: you hypnotise it with hand gestures and a soothing voice. It will sway back and forth in a trance until attacked. If you're still hypnotising it when the fight is over, you may be able to tame it.
Neck	Make a second attack roll. If it's a hit, you've chopped its head off. Even if you didn't, you still do normal damage.	You stab it through the neck. You can leave the weapon there and give it a -4 penalty on bite attacks; or you could try to wrestle it by yanking on the weapon, preventing it from biting if you win an opposed Strength roll. Normal damage, too.	You pummel it in the neck well. Normal damage and a -1 penalty to all rolls due to the spinal concussion.	You grab it by the neck. You can either try to strangle it to death, but it takes several rounds and you need win an opposed Strength check or some such in each; or you can vault on its back while hanging on to try and ride it.	By applying a true tantric pinch on the scruff, you paralyse the beast for 1d4 rounds.



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Forelegs	You chop and slash at its forelegs, doing 1d6 HP of damage and reducing the number of claw attacks it can make per round by one.	You stab it in the leg, doing 1d6 damage. If you decide to leave your weapon there, the creature will be distracted for 2d4 turns as it tries to get rid of it.	You break several bones, halving the monster's claw attack damage (rounded down). Also, -1d6 HP.	Others teach their dog to "shake hands". YOU grab this monster's front leg and raise it until it's forced to stand on its hindlegs. If you can grab a weapon with your other hand, you get to make an immediate attack with a +4 bonus that always hits the abdomen.	By exciting the right arcane points on the paw, you give the creature a torturous itching of the claws. It will rush to the nearest tree, boulder or such object and furiously scratch at it for 1d6 rounds – it WILL resume fighting if attacked.
Torso	You do normal damage. Attack again: if it's a hit, you've severed the beast's spine, it's down for the count.	You stab it for normal damage and injure some organ: it will lose another 1 HP per round.	You break the monster's ribcage, causing normal damage and giving it a -2 penalty to all d20 rolls.	You valorously wrestle with the beast: you can either keep it in a choke and render it incapable of fighting back (it might still be able to attack others nearby); or you can slam it into the ground and stun it for 1d4 rounds.	You rapidly prod at the beast's acupuncture points, roll a d4 : 1 – paralysed for a round 2 – confused, attacks random targets for 1d4 rounds 3 – enervated: -4 to all rolls for 1d6 rounds 4 – unconscious until touched, at which moment it will go berserk with a +2 to attack rolls.



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Abdomen	You spill its guts, literally. It thrashes about for 1d4 rounds, making an attack against random targets in reach; then dies.	You slide under the beast's belly and impale its heart while avoiding the ribcage, killing it immediately. The downside is that unless it was a really large monster, now you're on the ground and will have to get up next round. Still, an instant kill!	You give it a thorough pummeling, causing internal ruptures: and extra 1d6 HP damage over and above the normal, and it will very likely die even if it survives the fight.	You drop your weapon, grab the monster by the underbelly, and heft it above your head while howling with savage triumph. Enemies witnessing it are terrified (save or flee for a while), your allies are driven to ferocity (+2 to all attacks). Then you drop the creature, grab your weapon and deliver an automatic hit.	A gentle caress on its abdominal leylines gives the creature an all-consuming hunger. For 1d6 rounds, it will stop fighting to gobble up ANYTHING it can fit in its mouth: rocks, sand, caltrops, dropped weapons, coins, etc.
Hindlegs	You cut through tendons: -1d6 HP damage its movement speed is halved, and it cannot pounce.	You pin its hind leg to the ground and do 1d6 HP damage. If you leave the weapon there, the beast will need to make a save to free itself (and suffer an extra 1d4 HP damage).	You break a bone in its leg: normal damage and the beast's rendered immobile for a round and slowed down afterwards.	You get behind it and grab its leg. Unless it's clearly ridiculously too huge and heavy, you can spin it around and throw it 1d3*2 meters away, knocking things down and causing 1d4 HP damage.	At your touch, the monster takes off like a bat out of hell, running away at full tilt for 2d6 rounds to burn off the tingling excitement in its sprinting muscles. (Bats don't really run, actually.)
Tail	You unceremoniously chop off its tail, causing normal damage and denying it any tail-related attacks.	You deftly jab it in the tail: 1d4 HP damage, and if the creature had any poison gland in or near the tail, it's rendered inoperative.	It's tail is probably too flexible to really grievously damage it by blunt trauma, but you still do 1d6 HP damage.	You grab it by the tail. If it has any tail attacks, you force the creature to automatically hit itself with it.	By pinching off the biological Feng Shui at the base of the tail, you make the creature believe that its own tail is an independent thing. It will keep chasing it for 1d4 rounds.





*Arrrr! I'm missing my highly topical Santa cap!*



## WINGED BEASTS

	1	2	3	4	5
Head	You hack and slash at its head, causing normal damage. It's also dizzy and confused, will attack random targets or run around (50-50 chance)	You put out its eye, doing normal damage. Half-blind, it will inevitably bump into things (or the ground) if it tries to fly.	You bash its skull, causing normal damage and a round of confusion. Make another attack: a second hit indicates you've caved its skull in, killing it instantly.	You get your hand on its beak or jaw: it can't use it to attack while you're hanging on.	The brain damage you cause rewrites the creature's primary imprinting. Now it thinks you're its mother and will follow you around. Won't fight or anything, just follows you. At some point it will get back to normal and will be pissed off.
Neck	You do normal damage and attack again: on a hit, you decapitate the monster. It will run around headless and attack random things for one round before dropping.	You do normal damage and ruin any sort of breath weapon, prehensile tongue or sonic attack it might have had.	You knock it hard on the spinal cord: normal damage and it's stunned for 1d4 rounds.	You start strangling the monster. You must beat it in an opposed attack roll, Strength check or some such every round, but it's flailing about ineffectually in the meantime and will asphyxiate in a few rounds.	You remove a chakra, making the beast believe it has been decapitated. It will run around flapping for 1d4 turns then go catatonic. It will be alright the next morning.



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Body	A solid strike for your normal damage and an extra 4 points.	Attack again: a hit indicates you've impaled the monster's heart. Otherwise, it suffers normal damage and a further 1HP per round for bleeding.	You manage to break some of the fragile, hollow bones it has: double your normal damage.	You jump on its back: it can't reach you with its talons, might not be able to reach you with its beak, jaws, or tail, and might or might not be able to fly. As long as you hang on with one hand, your attacks with the other ignore the beast's dexterity.	You put the beast's life energies into overdrive: over the next 2d4 rounds it pops out an egg (-4 to attacks in the meantime) which it will pick up and fly to safety.
Wing	You cause normal damage and roll another attack: on a hit, you chop off a wing.	Your stab causes normal damage, and if you leave the weapon in there, the beast's flying speed and maneuverability will be halved due to the impediment.	You break the wingbone: normal damage and the monster plunges to the ground.	You start twisting the beast's wings this way and that. As long as you keep it up, it won't be able to fly. It needs an opposed attack roll, Strength check or some such to break free.	You remove feathers or scales vital for the flow of Chi: the creature tries to shake off the numbing sensation by flapping its wings furiously for the next hour. It can't fly and might buffet nearby targets.
Legs	You slash at its leg for normal damage. If it's on the ground and it requires a jump or a running start to take off, now it's grounded.	You cause 1d6 HP damage by stabbing its leg. It's walking speed is halved and it can't carry anything in its talons.	You break its leg bones, causing normal damage. Any claw or talon attacks are done with half damage, rounded down.	You deftly grab its leg: depending on its strength, it's either prevented from flying anywhere (and using talon attacks), or it will fly away with you still dangling off it (unless you let it go).	Your nerve pinch causes the beast to mistake its legs for its wings: instead of flying it will run around at full tilt, mightily surprised at its failure to ascend.



## HELLACIOUS DIE DROP TABLES

	1	2	3	4	5
Tail	You cut the feathers, scales, muscles or whatever else is responsible for steering: 1d4 damage, and the creature must make a save every round or fail to fly within striking distance of its intended target.	You stab your weapon through the creature's tail for 1d6 HP. If it tries to take off or fly away (if already airborne), it will suffer an extra 1d6 HP damage ripping itself free.	You pummel the tail for normal damage, but don't really do much otherwise.	You grab its tail and hand on for dear life. If it's big and strong enough, it will fly around with you dangling behind it: you can make a Dexterity check or some such to twist its tail and steer it (roughly) where you want it to go.	You invert the monster's sense of balance by twisting its steering feathers (or scales, whatever). It automatically turns upside down in flight and will crash into the ground if it tries to maneuver close to the ground.







# DAUGHTERS OF TERROR

by Erik Jensen  
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Dear Secret Santicore—

Variant Medusa's. Anything is cool from Greek myth style to spaceships and blasters. Why do all medusas have snakes for hair and turn dudes to stone, what other kinds are out there in the multiverse of different types of Medusa

Thanks!

J.A.

## VARIANT MEDUSAE

“Snakes? Petrification? Oh, how pedestrian. How downright mundane. Gorgonids exist beyond your backwater planet, my friend -- out there in the vastness, always hungry. The commonality is the fear...they are children of terror and revulsion. Wherever there is a fear of death, of corruption, of beauty, there shall the medusae be.”

### d20 Her \_\_\_\_\_ turns you to stone.

1	gaze	6	shadow
2	touch	7	touching your shadow
3	kiss	8	breath
4	song	9	tasting your blood
5	speaking your name	10	spattered blood

### d20 Not stone...

1	turns you to sand
2	turns you to mud
3	turns you to gnarled old wood
4	turns you to amber
5	ages you d66 years
6	bleed from all orifices
7	your bones crumble within you
8	your heart stops
9	your identity/memory fades
10	your skin combusts
11	turns you to a pile of roaches
12	turns you to glass
13	turns you to a puddle of stagnant water
14	transforms you into a black cat
15	impregnates you with a thousand spider-babies
16	you become hideous and misshapen
17	you become a zombie under her control
18	your shadow detaches, escapes, and plots your downfall
19	you are cursed with a run of foul luck which will end in your demise
20	you become a medusa over 1d6 hours (use these tables for your new traits)



## d30 Features Monstrous and Terrible...

- 1 serpents for hair
- 2 scorpion-tails for hair
- 3 her eyes are mouths
- 4 her fingers are eels
- 5 brazen claws on hand and foot
- 6 tattered, feathered wings
- 7 maw in abdomen
- 8 spits poison
- 9 rows of teeth like a shark
- 10 long, prehensile tongue
- 11 eye in palm of hand
- 12 cloven hooves
- 13 legs a typhonic assemblage of snakes
- 14 lower body that of a great serpent
- 15 vomits forth poisonous centipedes
- 16 her spilled blood spawns cobras
- 17 her wails of pain deafen
- 18 her spilled blood, like napalm
- 19 severed limbs will in time become new medusae
- 20 skin scaled like a serpent or fish
- 21 skin rough as a shark's
- 22 sharp spines on arms and back
- 23 twisted bony growths protrude
- 24 her body covered in eyes
- 25 lower body like that of a lioness
- 26 maggots bloom in her footsteps
- 27 utterly skinless, all musculature visible
- 28 she bears the face of your loved one
- 29 limbs double in length with sickening sound
- 30 vagina dentata (weaponized)



Dear Secret Santicore—

I would like a new monster for a "modern horror" adventure scenario -- one that steers clear of the classic Universal/Hammer horror tropes. Something you might see investigated and hunted on *The X-Files* or *Kolchak the Night Stalker*.

Thanks!

J.J.

# FEVER DREAM

by James Aulds  
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The Fever Dream is a virus based monster from some unknown parts and unlike any other virus known to man, it manifests in three types.

## TYPE THREE

"They just started going crazy, all drooling and stuff, with those pulsating colors under their skin, and then they started attacking us and yelling in some weird language" - EMT First Class Smith on being interviewed after responding to the scene.

Humans recently infected fall into a deep coma-like sleep for 12 to 48 hours. While in this coma strange colored swirling glyphs will form under their skin. These glyphs appear arcane or alien, but are unreadable to the normal person. Upon waking, they will babble incoherently in an arcane language and lash out to attack any non-infected. The infected Type Three attacks by grappling with hands and by spewing a rainbow colored pus-like vomit which transmits the contagion. A successful save negates becoming infected.

The number appearing is 2-6 in an infected area on first contact, with an additional 12 to 24 the next day if not stopped, growing past that at an exponential rate. A mix of henbane, murrums root, ginger hot, swallowleaf, and some pulverized rust is said to cure it, but that also could be insane ramblings.

## TYPE TWO

"It was like a big pile of swamp oozing along the roof, we all emptied our weapons into as it slithered, that was when it got Lt Jonas, all he had was a pistol and a flashlight - he didn't have a chance, just swallowed him whole with its slimy fangs" - Trooper Delerux LaTrouix, formally of the RCKMPD, now in Upper Glacier Asylum for Broken Minds.

Type Two Fever Dreams are a manifestation of the more violent Type Three fever dreams. Two out of every 12 Type Three's will eventually become a Type Two, while the rest will either die in 3-6 days or the disease will run its course due to an unknown resistance believed to be tied to rare and poorly understood genetic markers.

A Type Two is a blood-thirsty killer who haunts the shadows. Light of any kind will anger and hurt them and they will always attack someone with a light first.

They appear as a multi-limbed, many-fanged puddle of algae or slime of different earthtone colors. They surprise on a 5 in 6 and move silently except for a slurping sound when on the hunt. They retain the vomit attack of the Type Three, that causes infection as a Type Three. A Type Two's body can be distilled down to make a cure/vaccination in a complicated occult and medical procedure requiring expert knowledge in both areas.

## TYPE ONE

"Sir, you have to see this, I can't believe it, I have checked the equipment for malfunctions. . ."

"Nuke it from orbit." - Conversation between Cpt. Gordan, drone operator, and Col. Marion McSmith, on the occasion that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize.

Type One Fever Dreams are very rare as they are patient zero of the infection and only become a Type One after several weeks of feeding on people as a Type Two. They will appear as a hot ball of heat on any thermal imaging and will cause disruption with any radio traffic within a one mile area. They are hard to describe except as a huge ball of swirling colors and hate and teeth about 100 feet round and rolling over the land eating any life. They do not have a vomit attack like a Type Two or Three, but instead have a lightning-swirl color attack that shoots out 2d6 save or die attacks a round. No one knows how to fight them as the only one ever seen before was nuked from orbit, and people speculate that the virus came from space.



# HOW TO TRAIN YOUR GIANT

by Legion

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*Dear Secret Santicore*

*How to train your giant (open for interpretation)*

*Thanks!*

*J.T.*

The Gnomes of Clorris are the recognized masters of giant-husbandry. They have formulated a three step plan for mastering giants and their kin:

## Stage 1: Obtain a giant

## Stage 2: Train the giant

## Stage 3: Profit

It is important to know why one wants a giant in the first place. The Gnomes have identified six roles for giants, easily remembered by the mnemonic BAFFLE. The roles (and their reasons) are:

- Bodyguard (to loom large and be imposing);
- Actor (to perform on stage and work behind the curtain);
- Farmer (to pick cherries, bale hay, peel the skin off sheep, etc.);
- Father figure (to cradle you in its arms, lift you to get things on high shelves, etc.);
- Labourer (to clean eaves, pull carts, break masonry, smith metal, etc.); and
- Enforcer (to bust – and pull off – heads).

Coincidentally there are also six main sub-species of giant. However, it's best to avoid the wilfully stupid ones; they are harder to bring to terms and their tantrums are destructive. And the more intelligent – or magical – giants should also be avoided because they ponder and scheme more often than is desirable. So the group-living mountain-dwelling varieties of giant are a would-be trainer's best bet.

Certain kinds of giants are better suited to some of the above roles than others, height, talent and disposition being the main considerations. For other roles though any old giant will do. In some situations the size of the trainer is also a factor (e.g., piggybacks!).

The Gnomes' recommended means of obtaining a giant are also six in number. They are listed below in order of reliability, least to most.

**Trickery:** Gulling a giant into servitude is a risky – at best – proposition. It can be done, but if the giant figures it out there will be hell to pay. This should probably only be attempted by very smart characters against very stupid giants. Note that the GM will need to determine the giant's Intelligence score beforehand or at the start of the encounter for this particular technique. Roleplay the shenanigans

to determine success. The giant gets a saving throw to clue in thus:

To determine a giant's saving throw against trickery first subtract its Intelligence from yours. Record the result. Call this your Intelligence Difference (INT DIFF).

A giant being tricked gets an Intelligence-based saving throw with an INT DIFF penalty (or bonus if the giant is smarter) to the roll. If it fails it is baffled by your bullshit and duped. It then gets another save once every <your INT score> weeks with an INT DIFF penalty (or bonus if you're the dumb one) to the roll.

Depending on how the giant's saving throws pan out, you could end up with a really well whitewashed fence or some smashed teeth.

**Bondage:** The old standby, straight-up beating the giant into submission. The problem with obtaining a giant this way is that it will resent its situation. Bondage also requires an ongoing display of strength and show of force by the trainer to maintain dominance. Subdued giants get to make a Loyalty/Morale/Reaction roll (with a <your STR modifier> penalty in your favour) once every <your STR score> weeks. Depending on the result of that roll, the giant might continue in service, run off or take another shot at you.

**Fealty:** This is a variation of Bondage that doesn't necessarily require physical dominance. The giant is first overawed and then coerced or impressed into swearing an oath of loyalty or vassalage. It only really works with my-word-is-my-bond types of giant. So, not often. Even after it's oathsworn the giant might have a change of heart, especially if treated badly. Vassal giants can make a Loyalty/Morale/Reaction roll (with a <your CHA modifier> penalty in your favour) once every <your CHA score> weeks. Depending on the result of the roll – as with Bondage – your giant might continue to serve, desert or take a swing at you.

**Sorcery:** Another classic. A giant can be charmed, mind-controlled or otherwise sensibility-altered into service. This is a reliable way to obtain a giant but fraught with the dangerous possibility the giant will snap out of it. Another risk is the giant being freed from the charm by a third party. The giant gets any normally allowed saving throws under the prevailing magical or psionic circumstances, largely determined by the level of magic spell or mental discipline used.



**Friendship:** This is the best but least-likely means of securing oneself a fully capable giant. It requires an open-minded, good-natured trainer and a like-hearted giant. This kind of relationship is usually established by the trainer besting the giant in a game or contest and having that outcome result in a knee-slapping belly laugh and not a murderous rampage. Of course one does not own one's friends, so a giant secured this way cannot be bossed around with impunity. These giants desire no saving throws but are governed by the normal rules for henchman Loyalty/Morale/Reaction rolls.

**Surgery:** The surest way to achieve dominance over a giant is to physically, magically or psionically cut a hole in its mind. This has the advantage of permanently taking the fight out of a giant; it has the disadvantage of permanently impairing the giant's intelligence and memory. And if done improperly or too enthusiastically the trainer's effort toward obtaining a giant in the first place will go for naught. Lobotomized giants get no rolls of any kind to alter their lot or improve their state. But they require constant supervision because they frequently forget what they're doing or become distracted from the task at hand. The Clorris Trepanners and Scalpellers Guild are the specialists in this field; their nimble little fingers can work wonders inside a giant's huge cranium.

The Intelligence score of a lobotomized giant is halved. Such a giant can only ever be taught skills or proficiencies to level 1. And it must pass an Intelligence test once every <its INT score> weeks or forget something it knew and have to be retrained in a skill.

One more thing:

Multi-headed giants are harder to obtain and even more difficult to train. And because they argue with themselves and everyone else ad nauseam they require more control more often.

It is possible to use a different method to gain control over each head. For example, Arthur "Two Heads" Jackson could be dominated by a combination of Sorcery and Trickery, one head with each technique. In such a case each head is allowed its applicable saving throws and Loyalty/Morale/Reaction rolls at the start and as time goes on.

Regardless of the hows and wherefores of obtaining a giant, once you've got one it can now be thought of as either a hireling or henchman. It's time to stat up that bad boy! Generate the giant's ability scores. Intelligence in particular has the most impact on the training regimen. Multi-headed giants get Intelligence and Wisdom scores for each head.

There are two paths of training a giant, hands-on in the field (i.e., you teach it something yourself) and the schools of Clorris (i.e., you pay the Gnomes to do it). Both paths get results. The former costs much less but takes longer and is limited by what the trainer knows; the latter costs more but is faster and a lot of skills and proficiencies are available. The two different training paths cannot happen concurrently.

A giant can be trained to a number of levels in skills or proficiencies equal to its Intelligence score, a multi-headed giant equal to the average of its scores.

For you to self-train your giant one level in a skill or proficiency you possess it takes a number of weeks of full time training equal to 20 minus the giant's Intelligence score.

You cannot engage in any other activity during the training (no exploring or travelling). And you can't train your giant to be better than yourself at anything.

Obviously there is no fee for self-training your giant though of course you do have to take care of the big lug food and shelter-wise.

The Gnomes of the Fifty-nine Schools in Clorris teach every skill and proficiency in which it is possible to train a giant. The word "school" here — as it does in many arts — has two meanings; it identifies an instructor, location or institution as well as a philosophy, style or method. In Clorris one finds both eccentric itinerant Masters and fine old schools with trappings and traditions.

The Gnomes and their Spriggan assistants employ a combination of mundane and arcane methods to rapidly train giants. This costs gold. And gems. It's possible to shop around in Clorris for better rates but generally the price is equal to the XP value of the giant in GP per level of skill or proficiency taught. This intensive training takes a period of days per skill level taught equal to 20 minus the giant's Intelligence score.

You are able to raid dungeons and loot temples to your heart's content while your giant is in the hands of the Gnomes.



Dear Secret Santicore—

The ancient psionic minotaur overlords used labyrinths as Glyphs. O Santicore, we know weak-willed adventurers have been ensnared by the relatively common Immobility, Slumber, and Compulsion variants; what effect did the more recondite of those most potent symbols have, either when seen or when traversed?

Thanks!

T.H.

# SECRET GLYPHS OF THE MINOTAURS

by Arnold Kemp  
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Labyrinths are important cultural symbols to minotaurs, just like true names and language. They believe that great wisdom can be divined by challenging a labyrinth, and gradually finding one's orientation after being lost. Symbols are a semiotic analogue of the same thing: a meaningless array of lines from which a meaning is derived. Among the minotaurs, interpretation is a revered process.

Glyphs are magical symbols that must be derived from the dungeon it occupies. Therefore, each glyph contains unique components, and a glyph cannot be inscribed unless the dungeon is well-known. Because of this derivation, each glyph can be used to gain clues about the size, tortuosity, or secret passages of a dungeon. Just as people have true names, so do dungeons have true symbols, visible in their glyphs.

Curiosity is not a virtue among minotaurs. It is seen as the indulgence of cowards. Minotaurs are not curious. Minotaurs DECIDE, and sometimes minotaurs KNOW, but minotaurs do not ASK. In the context of a dungeon, glyphs are seen as the perfect way to punish those who are so unsure that they spend time looking around for clues.

Minotaurs placed the glyphs in out-of-the-way places, where no decent minotaur would ever look. The middle of a ceiling, on the floor beneath a chest, in the middle of a keyhole, or behind a curtain on the wall. This makes it easy to determine if a player sees the glyph or not. Did they move the chest or peer through the keyhole? By default, a person who gazes upon a glyph

gets a save to resist its effects.

Alternatively, a glyph can be writ huge, across the floor of a hallway. When inscribed this way, the glyph does not take effect when it is viewed. Instead, the glyph is triggered when a person walks across it, and it is large enough that progress down the hallway is impossible without triggering it.

Characters who successfully decipher a glyph (usually after rolling their save) can make a second check to learn about the dungeon's topology. With an equal chance of each, they can learn (1) the number of floors and rooms in the dungeon, (2) the nearest secret door, (3) the number of entrances and exits, or (4) rough directions to the deepest part of the dungeon, farthest from the entrance.

## GLYPH OF VANITY

The victim of this glyph is charmed by it. They will protect the glyph and will do anything to keep it in their line of sight, but are otherwise sane and rational. This condition is permanent, but it can be broken if there are multiple sentient creatures gazing at the glyph; in this case, the more charismatic creatures are free to leave (though they will always think fondly of the glyph) while the least charismatic creature so enthralled is forced to stay.

They are usually found among luxurious ornamentation, surrounded by the shriveled, adoring corpses (some of whom persist on into undeath by the strength of their



conviction, and jealously guard “their treasure” from all others).

### GLYPH OF DOOM

These glyphs each impart a feeling of ineluctable dread when gazed upon (no save). If one glyph is glimpsed, the victim feels the hollowness inside their bones, and feels the loneliness of empty places. If two symbols are glimpsed, the victim feels the mortality of all of their ancestors, and knows that their own death is near. If three symbols are glimpsed, the character dies (no save).

These glyphs are well-known among adventurers, and desperate individuals have been known to gouge out their own eyes in order to avoid glimpsing a third, fatal glyph.

### GLYPH OF THE LABYRINTH

This potent glyph causes the victim to become lost. Their cerebellum twists 45 degrees inside your skull, so that they become incapable of understanding navigation or orientation. As far as you are concerned, ‘up’ is ‘down’ is ‘east’ is ‘right’. Additionally, all doors become identical to you. A person suffering from the glyph of the labyrinth can only ever exit a room through a random exit. (They can sometimes be used to find secret doors this way.) Additionally, if one of the exits is actually the exit to the dungeon, they have only a 1% chance of realizing it’s presence. (So if a room has a 4 exits, and 1 of them is the exit from the dungeon, the poor character has only a 0.25% chance of finding it.)

Sufferers from the Glyph of the Labyrinth often wander dungeons forever. Minotaurs recognize these doomed souls, and do not attack them, instead regarding them as pariahs, fellow children of the myth. Some minotaurs will even go so far as to protect such people. In certain dungeons (mythical underworld dungeons) the dungeon will recognize the victim as one of its own, and will not seek to destroy them.

Many of those wanderers write on the walls of their prison. Warnings, imprecations, prayers. However, since their brains have lost all sense of orientation, each letter that they write down is randomly rotated, creating a distinctive script.

The Alekothos Prison actually uses this method. Prisoners are shown the glyph and then released into the maze, and the wardens can be confident that they will never find their way out.

### GLYPH OF DOMAIN

Labyrinths are dark places, but minotaurs cannot see in the dark. They use this glyph to punish those who do. Whenever a creature with darkvision sees this glyph (and it is only visible through darkvision), they must save or go blind. The effect wears off when minotaur spit is rubbed into both eyes.

### GLYPH OF THE NOBLE PATH

This is the Labyrinth’s name, inverted. The victim knows their previous path exactly, and is never lost (unless something prevents them from sensing which way they have moved and in what direction). However, they can never retrace their steps. So, if they travel from room A to room B, they cannot return to room A until they first visit room C, thereby completing a loop within the dungeon. The effects of the glyph wear off when they have visited all the rooms of the dungeon (not including secret rooms).

### GLYPH OF EMPTY PLACES

A creature affected by this glyph must save or go charging off into the dungeon. They will not retrace their steps, but will instead be preferentially compelled to explore areas that they have not explored before. They will run ahead of the party, and take no precautions except to bring a torch. They cannot slow, even if they or their friends are attacked. This effect lasts until they have explored 1d6 new rooms of the dungeon.



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## GLYPH OF FIRE

When a person is affected by this glyph, all of their flammable inventory items ignite, and then burn at a terrific rate. Torches, oils, and strong alcohols all combust, and then then burn twice as fast (and twice as bright) as normal. If oxygen is deprived (via smothering or submersion) the combustion will resume as soon as oxygen is resumed (e.g. as soon as you pull the torch back out of the water). If these items are kept in a pack, flammable objects will likely be lost. Also, the person is possibly on fire at this point, and taking double damage as if from a torch.

Minotaurs originally used this glyph in their ceremonies, in order to make light sources more dramatic. They also used in certain types of executions, to burn victims alive.

## GLYPH OF PREY

For as long as the victim remains in the dungeon, he or she will be preferentially attacked by all enemies. The person simply has an aura of victimization and weakness, so that others will be compelled to violence against them. Even the character's allies will notice how vulnerable the target now appears. While this can be useful to a player who wants to be a decoy, the extra attention from so many hostile forces can be quickly fatal. There is also a -2 penalty applied on all reaction rolls concerning the victim or the victim's associates.

This effect wears off when the cursed character kills a challenging opponent with their bare hands and bathes in their blood while bellowing out the names of their ancestors.

## GLYPH OF NAMING

This symbol is always written on parchment and hung on a small frame. When this symbol is triggered, the viewer's name is lost from their memory and everyone elses. They'll still remember the person, just not their name. The stolen name appears in the center of the

symbol. From then on, if the paper symbol is destroyed or taken more than 100' away, the victim will die. (The victim will be aware of this condition as soon as they fall victim to it.)

While this symbol is important to minotaurs in many of their ceremonies, the player will more likely be inconvenienced by having to carry a dream catcher around, while being careful that the fragile thing doesn't burn, tear, or wash away with water. The effect is removed when a grandmaster calligrapher copies the name back onto the victim's forehead. Grandmaster calligraphers are common among minotaurs, but rare elsewhere.

## SYMBOL OF NO SYMBOLS

This glyph causes a person to lose all ability to interpret symbols. Language becomes meaningless, spoken, written, and otherwise. Likewise, anything used to refer to something else becomes meaningless. Pictures can still be understood as long as they are recreations of what they represent. For example, a drawing of a duck would be recognized, because it \*looks like\* the duck it represents. But a drawn arrow would be meaningless, because directionality has no innate connection to a symbol of an arrow. Additionally, money cannot be understood, and the player will discard any money they have at the next opportunity, since they cannot see the value in carrying around a heavy piece of gold. Scrolls and spellbooks are likewise incomprehensible, although prepared spells are not affected.

The effects of this symbol fade when victim sees a sight of such great beauty that they struggle to describe it. Watching a sunset from a high place is usually sufficient, but other beautiful vistas might also be sufficient, at the DM's discretion.



*Dear Secret Santicore—*

*I need some denizens for a mineral rich, red planet. Where the boiling hot tide rises from within the earth every 24 hours to drownall but the tips of several small but lush mesa's. Can you dig it?*

*Thanks!*

*M.C.*

*Dear Santicore, please find the enclosed submission in response to your request. I hope that you will find it satisfactory and will not flay me on the Tree of Eternal Merriment.*

Extracts from the report of the scouting expedition Temerity, part 3, flora and fauna. As is traditional, these notes use the expedition-determined nicknames for the described life forms; please see appendix 11b for the formal scientific categorization.

“Bloaters”: Simultaneously the largest life forms on the planet but also the most obscure, these large bags of gas never touch the ground voluntarily. Clearly their floatation is in part related to the height of the tide, as they fly highest at high tide, but as they stay at least ten feet above the ground at all times, some of their buoyancy must be internal. Observation suggests the bloaters are made up of a number of different compartments, each filled with different gases which can be vented voluntarily by the bloater for a variety of effects. These gases are primarily propulsive but on at least one occasion an attacking butcher bird was seen to be dissuaded by an acidic spray from the assaulted bloater. It is unclear whether or what bloaters eat; we speculate that they may be photosynthetic or feed off minerals in the sea-spray. Spectroscopic instruments suggest bloaters have a spherical, solid region near their center - this “pearl” may be a brain, or connected somehow to their floatation.

“Butcher birds”: These small, predatory fliers are noteworthy mainly for their habit of collecting pieces of metal (more common here on occasionally-exposed areas of seafloor for reasons noted in part 2 of this report) and arranging them to form jagged “sculptures” on exposed areas of mesas. Prey animals will wander into these labyrinthine sculptures and become trapped, cut themselves on the metal and bleed to death, at which point the butcher birds will come in to feed. The design of these sculptures merits further investigation; they seem to be more elaborate than strictly necessary for the assumed purpose. In addition, it should be noted there are a few unconfirmed reports of butcher birds adorning \*themselves\* with pieces of metal, forming some sort of costume or exoskeleton, and of placing pieces of metal on the “nozzle” of a launcher tree, shortly

# TEMERITY CREATURES

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before the launch of a projectile.

“Launcher trees”: Roots stretching down the edge of a mesa provide both secure anchoring for the launcher trees and a means of ingesting the boiling sea-water. This is taken up through a series of internal tubes in order to power what appears to be a natural steam engine. While this may be a fuel source in addition to or in place of photosynthesis, the most dramatic use of the steam engine is to occasionally launch a seed-pod at great velocity into the air, accompanied by a loud pop. Very few of the seed-pods fall onto mesas, of course. Those that fall onto the sea-bed at low tide seem to be a particular favorite of mudhogs, which have been seen to emerge from their holes as soon as the pop is heard.

“Mudhogs”: Despite the name, these denizens of the ocean floor are more reminiscent of turtles. The life of a mudhog is ruled by the tides: while the tide is high, they remain buried in the muddy ground, the tops of their shells blocking the entrance to their holes. Once the tide drops, they emerge, scurrying around to collect food and explore the detritus left behind by the lowering water. Presumably they even fit in mating in this period, but there can be no lasting relationships - as soon as the tide begins to rise again, the mudhogs return to their holes, blocking the entrance securely with their shells. Mudhogs and snappers have a complex relationship: young snappers that hatch at low tide may be eaten by nearby mudhogs, but a mudhog that is caught by high tide and forced to dig into a beach instead of a deeper part of the ocean will occasionally be dug out and consumed by a snapper.

“Snappers”: Far and away the expedition’s least favorite inhabitant of the planet, the snappers are large crab-like things that spend most of their life on the mesas, ferociously defending a small patch of territory from anything that comes nearby. The only break in their ferocity is a brief pause to mate, after which the fertilized eggs are dropped off the edge of the mesa. These eggs float in the oceans for a time, and will not hatch until they have been exposed to the proper temperatures for the proper lengths of time. If they are lucky, this hatching leaves them near a beach, at which point they swarm up and onto the mesa, growing to full size surprisingly quickly and taking over a new territory of their own. Young snappers are even more voracious than adults and will eat anything edible nearby to fuel their growth, including other newly-hatched snappers.



A few members of the expedition received nasty surprises early on when they took snapper egg pouches back to their living quarters or laboratories without knowing what they were, and then unknowingly left them near a radiator or in a kitchen, only to come back to find a hatched and angry snapper. The tell-tale sign of a snapper is a large pile of cracked and broken inedibles in the middle of an open area, possibly nearby a pile of food hoarded for later. Sweepers seem to have no fear of snappers; their raids may involve one coming in to distract the snapper while the others raid the snapper's stockpile.

“Sweepers”: Large creatures that are mostly leg, the large patches that serve sweepers as feet allow them to glide gracefully over the seas, and are apparently heatproof enough to let them do so without harm. Sweepers can move on land as well, albeit more slowly. Their motivations are mysterious - normally they seem to skate peacefully from mesa to mesa, but occasionally they gather in groups to make raids on mesas, snatching whatever food they can find and then fleeing off across the sea, relying on the inability of the inhabitants to follow. In a few instances, a large group of sweepers have been seen keeping pace directly underneath a bloater as it moved across the ocean: the reasons for this remain unknown.



# BOARS, BEARS, AND TIGERS

by C. Weeks  
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*Dear Secret Santicore—*

*Some setups for forest/jungle encounters (a D12 table could be cool) with these sorts of mundane creatures that is fun and off the beaten track. Tactical, vivid, bizarre are all good stuff.*

*Thanks!*

*A.F.*

In a harsh and remote land of foothills and mountains where mixed forest meets the taiga and wild streams bound down mountains to form wilderness rivers on the way to the sea, live wild animals and wild people. (Inspired by the Sikhote-Alin at the far-east border of Russia and China where the book and film *Dersu Uzala* take place.)

While your game is in this location, determine random encounters as you normally would in any deep wilderness. Perhaps: once per hex-entry and once per twelve hours inside a hex, roll 1d6 and generate an encounter on a 1. When that happens, roll 1d12 to determine what the encounter is. Follow the instructions specific to the roll.

1. Tiger
2. Bear
3. People
4. Hazard
5. Leopards or Wolves
6. Wild Boar
7. Moose
8. Oddities
9. Bugs
10. Monsters
11. Supernatural
12. Botanical

## A NOTE ON ALL ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

This region is ancient and mysterious. In any case where these rules generate an encounter with an animal, there is a 1% chance that the animal is special. If it is, roll 5d6 and count the number of 6s you get:

0	Cunning	As intelligent as a smart human, limited by natural form, but not as much as a normal beast; mimics the sounds of other beasts and may lead enemies into traps.
1	Giant	Roughly 1.5x the standard size dimensions and so up to 4x the mass of a normal beast of its type. Play this by ear. If it's a rat, then it's just an oddity, maybe with 2 HP instead of 1. If it's a tiger, several extra HD.
2	Talking	This animal can speak, with either modified vocal apparatus or some mental power. It knows a local civilized language for sure and may know the common tongue.



- 3 Enchanted This beast has developed extraordinary powers. Roll 2d10, count the 10s and add 1. Give the creature that many powers from this list: invisibility, limited (how?) teleportation, assumes the form of a person, unnatural speed, charms prey, breeds outside species, derives sustenance from an unusual source, can grow or shrink, has unusual body parts (horns, wings, extra limbs, etc.), employs poison attacks, can breath fire/paralytic gas/lightning/darkness/sticky resin/hallucinogens, is amphibious, regenerates (how radical?), chameleon blending, carries wasting disease, controls the weather, precognitive, acid secretions, fly/levitate, a greatly heightened sense, hive-mind-link with others, metallic hide/fur armor, immune some attacks ((non)-magic, cold, fire, etc.), controls some lesser animals as psychic minions, odour causes retching and flight in others, projects aura of harmlessness, can travel by tunnelling (which leaves behind tunnels and pits all over), can swap souls with people -- taking their body for a year over which time they slowly transform back to an animal, leaving the PC's soul trapped.
- 4 Magician As with spell-casting dragons in your system or this animal acts as a spellcasting class of level = to animal's HD.
- 5 Deity This creature has existed, one way or another since prehistoric times. Give it a mess of extra HD and powers. It can speak every language. Give it some alien motivations. Even if the PCs destroy its form, it will be reborn in another one nearby. And it'll hold a grudge.

## TIGERS

Tigers are big cats. In this region, they routinely grow to be two yards long and weigh 300-500 pounds by the age of three. Some are bigger. Males are typically larger than females. And they're fairly solitary, but not completely so. They're also wicked smart. Assume they know where the PCs are. They are, for all intents and purposes, silent when they want to be. They have been known to imitate the sounds of other animals as a trap and are experts at waiting to single out lone travellers who stray from a group.

Most tigers in this region survive by following migratory sounders (groups of females) of wild boar and taking a straggler every week or three. They also consume a wide variety of other ungulates (deer and goats of several types), rabbits, fish and fowl. Occasionally a tiger will have violent encounters with people, brown bears or moose. The outcomes of these conflicts are quite variable and largely depend on surprise and preparation. A surprised person simply has no chance. Young adult brown bears and moose lose about 2/3 of these fights but a tiger has to be pretty hungry to engage them unless the other animals are small or weak. Full-grown bull moose or brown bears aren't really tiger-prey.

When your PCs encounter tigers, understand that there is a primary animal in the encounter. There is a 1/8 chance that this is a male. If it is a male, there is also a 1/8 chance that he is accompanied by a mate. When a queen is encountered (either as the primary encounter or the mate of a male), she will quite likely be accompanied by some of her young. There are 1d4/1d4 cubs from last spring and 1d4/1d4 cubs from the spring before. (That is 1d4 divided by 1d4. Or 1: roll 1d16: 1-2 zero; 3-11 one; 12-14 two; 15 three; 16 four. Or 2: roll 1d4 to determine each of column and row and use the table below:)

*	1	2	3	4
1	1	2	3	4
2	1	1	2	2
3	0	1	1	1
4	0	1	1	1

Once you know what tiger(s) are about, you have to determine if, when and how the PCs will encounter them. When it comes to an actual face-to-face encounter start by figuring out surprise. On 1d6, the tigers don't know about the PCs' immediate location only on a 1. On another d6, a 2-6 indicate the party was oblivious. On a 1, the PCs spotted fresh tiger tracks and thus might be cautious. On a 0, they've actually spotted a tiger when the encounter starts. Subtract 1 from that last roll if some member of the party is an expert (ranger, druid, tiger-hunter, etc). Also, you should figure out the tigers' hunger. If it's winter, roll 3d6. If it's spring, roll 2. Otherwise, roll 1. Whatever the roll, that's how many days since the tigers last ate. Unless the tigers are really hungry, they're very patient. What they want is for one of the PCs to wander away from the party where they'll be more easily victimized. Take these factors into consideration when deciding what's going on: party size, tigers' party size, tigers' hunger and of course, what each side knows of the other. The most likely outcome is that the tiger knows about the PCs while they're oblivious. If the tiger isn't starving, have it attack someone alone -- maybe on watch, but better, when they split up, even if only 50 feet to take a crap.

Live tiger cubs, particularly the very young, are prized by some of the ultra-wealthy, back in civilization. But keep in mind, there's nothing that will turn a mother into a non-stop killing machine like snatching her babies.



## BEAR

This region supports two sorts of bears. In the flat, thick forest at the foot of the mountains, where the rivers run wide and a little way into the foothills, arboreal black bears make their way. Up in the foothills and on the lower slopes of the mountains, the brown bears live in excavated hillside burrows and rocky hollows. There's also a little area in the hills where both bears can be encountered so just flip for it if need be -- either one can ruin your day.

In adulthood, black bears of this region weigh 300-400 lbs and are a yard tall at the shoulder when on all fours and two yards long. These are the most bipedal bears in the world, sometimes travelling for miles in the upright position. Being arboreal, they have massive and powerful upper bodies and arms with relatively weak rear legs. These bears are omnivores and more than capable of defending themselves with swipes from their dangerous two-inch fore-claws and powerful bites. Female black bears will have 1d4-1 cubs all the same age: 1d3 years old.

Brown bears are much larger than the local black bears. An adult weighs in at 500-1300 lbs and stands 1.5-3 yards tall. Confusingly, their fur ranges from middling brown all the way to black. These bears eat opportunistically more than they hunt and are entirely omnivorous, happy to eat carrion but they do actively fish. Though they aren't big hunters, they are vicious combatants. Adult (>6 years) males and females with cubs are very likely to attack people they encounter while the young and cub-less are more likely to avoid intruders.

When encountering a brown bear, there is a 1/3 chance of it being a male. If it's a female, there is a 2/3 chance that it will have 1d4 cubs, 1d3 years of age. Cubs will retreat up a tree while the mother mauls the PCs. Regardless of the sex of the bear encountered, there is a 10% chance that it will be part of a large colony of bears surrounding a food source and the PCs are VERY LIKELY to encounter more bears if they do anything other than leave the area immediately.

Bears in this region do not fully hibernate though they do semi-hibernate during the winter. Black bears reside in nests of sticks and foliage, aloft or on the ground or occasionally in abandoned brown bear dens during the winter. Brown bears nest in a newly dug den each year. Thus, during winter, it is more likely to surprise a bear at home, though they wake into an aggressive posture quite efficiently.

## PEOPLE

The local people live sparsely in villages of wooden houses, stilted above the rivers. Most of them avoid leaving their villages, preferring to fish in relative safety and nearly all of their material culture is derived from their catches -- food from their meat, clothes from pounded fish skin, tools from their bones, etc. A village of 3d6\*5 people will typically also have a 2-3 men who venture into the forest as hunters, sometimes taking their children of both sexes along. There is also likely to be a spiritual leader (shaman/witch) who gathers herbs and materials from the forest. River-trade takes place among these villages and more advanced material goods make their way slowly into the region through that channel as well. Occasionally someone will fail to accommodate the norms of their village and be driven into the woods to live as outcast.

There are also very occasional outsiders making an appearance in the region as traders, hunters, explorers, warriors, etc.

When an encounter with people is indicated, roll 1d6:

1. If sensible, a river-village is nearby, otherwise a local hermit's hut is.
2. A native hunter and 1d3-1 kids (ages 2d6+5) is stalking prey (1:leopard, 2:bear cubs, 3:boar, 4:deer, 5:fowl, 6:ermine)
3. A native shaman/witch is gathering seeds from a weeping tree or killing songbirds for colorful feathers or harvesting medicinal mushrooms from piles of dead pine needles or even sketchier activities.
4. A young native, engaged in a rite of passage, is walking near the PCs through the wilderness with only two of: 1:knife, 2:loincloth, 3:medicine bag, 4:boar hide, 5:smoked yard-long fish, 6:large net.
5. 2d3-1 elderly river-natives have wandered into the wilderness to appease the spirits of the world. They are painted, head to toe, in red.
6. A party of 3d4 outsiders is near the PCs on a mission of: 1:trade, 2:hunting, 3:exploration, 4:war. On a 1/3 they are from some civilised place, otherwise they are another primitive people of some non-local wilderness.



## HAZARDS

There are a variety of things that can interfere with travellers in this region that have nothing to do with the living world. Roll 1d10 to see which one is a current problem:

1. Unseasonable heat - Lasts 2d3-1 days. In the winter, the land is made wet, muddy and treacherous and encounters are twice normal likelihood but always animal in nature. In the summer, the heat (spiking up to 120F/50C) is dangerous, sucking the life and stamina out of the PCs, requiring rest and constant hydration.

2. Unseasonable cold - Lasts 2d3-1 days. In the winter, the temperature can easily drop to -20F/-30C for a week or even colder on rare occasions. With a wind, a poorly prepared (dressed/sheltered) person can suffer lethal trauma in only a few minutes. Consider frostbite and loss of digits on patches of exposed skin and stat penalties. Consider saves vs. death or con checks due to prolonged exposure and fatigue. During the summer, a cold snap can be a welcome respite, bringing night-time temperatures down as low as 50F/10C.

3. Storm - Includes substantial winds, torrential rain and potentially dangerous hail. Or a blizzard in winter. This storm will last 4d8 hours and will deposit 1d4+1d6-1 quarter-inches of rain (or half-inches of snow) per hour. During the summer, there is a 1/10 chance of dangerous hail and a 1/10 chance of twisters forming. In the case of a long and heavy drenching, consider a very increased chance of mudslides on hills.

4. Fog - dense fog lasting 2d3-1 days. Sometimes conditions produce a thick fog that rises up from streams, filling the valleys and covering the lower slopes. It is dangerous to travel for anyone who relies heavily on sight.

5. Mud/rock/snow slide - You'll need to figure out if/how this interacts with the PCs based on what they're doing, where they're travelling, etc. Paths and buildings may be destroyed. The PCs may be struck directly by the slide. The PCs may cause the slide and then may be drawn along with. The slide may attract attention from local people or animals. It may be entirely safe for the PCs, and just an event of interest.

6. Earthquake - This part of the world shakes. Roll 1d4:

1. Slight tremors over an hour peter out and go away.
2. A moderate initial quake frightens animals, causes minor property damage if possible and maybe fells a few old trees. Tremors appear from time to time for the next week.
3. A powerful quake causes damage to and around the PCs. Trees fall, animals are enraged or frightened, insects

swarm, etc. Locals might possibly decide the PCs are doing something to cause the quakes. Numerous smaller quakes follow. There is a 10% each day following, that another similar quake occurs until four days pass concurrently without. Then tremors will be felt daily for 2d10 days before really calming down.

4. A genuinely dangerous quake affects the PCs. Something dramatic happens: a rift opens in the ground, a river flows backward and changes course, a mountain breaks -- cascading the contents of an elevated lake along with millions of tons of rock, down into the hills, volcanic activity (see below) escalates, or something! Afterwards, follow the procedure as if a 3 had been rolled except the chance each day is 20% instead of 10%.

7. Volcanic activity - Choose a nearby mountain and use the following list of occurrences, in order, crossing an item out as they take place. Enact the next line down, next time this option is rolled. As long as the same mountain is perceptible by the PCs, have the occurrences take place there. If they've moved 50+ miles away, pick a new mountain but continue using the list where you left off.

1. An earthquake rocks the region. Herds of deer are seen fleeing the mountain. Occasional tremors continue to shake the mountain and immediate surroundings. Each of the following events takes place in and around many more earthquakes.
2. A caldera collapses at the peak of the mountain, changing the visual shape of the peak. There is a 20% chance that substantial snow and ice hits lava causing a plume of ash and steam to rise miles into the atmosphere and drift east.
3. A lake boils off or a rift opens in the earth exposing magma below to air. Dangerous concentrations of ash and gases are flowing out, up and often east.
4. Magma begins leaping in great gouts out of the rifts and the rifts spread as lava-tubes collapse.
5. The volcano erupts. Molten and solid rock are thrown into the atmosphere. Magma flows down some sides of the volcano following the path of least resistance. There is a 50% chance that the eruption is presaged by a long (1-6 days) and widespread (10-40 miles) series of tremors under the mountain and rifts. There is a 10% chance that one side of the mountain explodes causing horrifying damage for 10-20 miles on that side. There is a 40% chance that the ash-plume will be visible in the sky 1000 miles downwind and another 10% chance of another 1000 miles more. There is a 30% chance that the magma proper is lead by a pyroclastic flow of minerals, ash, rocks, glass shards, cinders, etc that travels much faster than a human can run (60+ miles per hour). There is a 20% chance that "bombs" of rock and magma will be hurled into the air and come down in a circular area around the eruption.



The immediate danger zone is highly variable in any given direction. To simplify the modelling of this situation, roll 4 dice and count the even numbers. Danger from magma and pyroclastic flow reaches out in any given direction to  $10^{(n+1)}$  yards where n is the number of evens rolled.

8. The PCs are exposed to Disease - Roll 1d6:

1. Bad water causes mild fever, gut cramps and the runs in all who fail their save unless some crazy precautions against such were taken.
2. Lingering fatigue with a variety of other minor symptoms plague those who fail a con check due to some sort of environmental exposure.
3. Significant parasites have entered the PCs' bodies. While the parasites infest the PC, 1d3 of these symptoms are experienced: 1) fever, 2) hunger, 3) twitches, 4) vulnerability to possession, 5) crippling disfigurement, 6) strange changes to your skin, 8) odd cravings, 9) fatigue, 10) constant cold-like symptoms, 11) joint pain, 12) trouble sleeping, 14) irritable bowels, 15) anxiety, 16) hair loss, 17) vulnerability to sunburn, 18) magic resistance, 19) oozing genital discharge, 20) +1 random stat gain. Roll once on each column below to learn about the parasite's life cycle:

	entry method	destination	infection until
1	biting insects	blood	several days pass
2	consumed water	brain	a few months pass
3	game or forage	spine	host goes swimming
4	wading in mud or water	reproductive organs	host is bathed in radiation
5		intestines	host takes six weeks of bedrest
6		skin	the young eat their way out
7			host engages in planar travel
8			host dies

4. The PCs have encountered something giving off dangerous radiation. Decide what the source is -- a meteorite, an ancient magic, a monster, something. Then, as the PCs expose themselves to the source, note the following effects in order: difficulty healing, headache, dizziness, nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, vomiting, red skin, hemorrhage, fever, temporary (later permanent) stat degradation, hair loss, cancer, death. Expose these symptoms quite slowly. Continue exposing them for a while after contact with the source of radiation has declined.

Any advance from one to the next should be subject to a save or con-check. If wacky mutations are appropriate for your game, work them in as a permanent fairly late-stage symptom and consult your own resources, Gamma World or Johnstone Metzger's The Metamorphica.

9. Swarm - A massive (probably horrifying) swarm assaults the region, ignoring the wishes of everyone, perhaps blocking out the sun and interrupting all normal order. In some cases, devastation of plant and/or animal life may result as the swarm cuts a swathe through the land, be creative. The impact on the PCs can be quite variable depending on swarm and situation. The swarm lasts 2d20 hours and consists of:

- 1) ants, 2) grasshoppers, 3) baby spiders aloft, 4) bees, 5) beetles, 6) blackbirds,
- 7) mice, 8) bats, 9) fish walking out of rivers on leg-like fins, 10) moths, 11) worms, 12) something stranger

10. Traps - The PCs find themselves in an area that has been trapped. There are many traps about, left by people of one type or another.

1. Pits - dug and covered in leafy camouflage, large enough for a large animal (or human). 1d6+4 feet deep. 20% spikes in the bottom. 50% that whoever set the trap has abandoned it and won't be back.
2. Nets - woven nets, laid flat, covered in ground debris, attached to bent trees and mechanism, large enough to catch a tiger or several people. Difficult to escape without outside help, but non-fatal. 10% chance the trap is abandoned.
3. Deadfalls - large stones, logs or piles of such set to collapse on a creature when bait is taken. Relatively easy to spot in most cases, potentially very dangerous. 20% chance the trap is abandoned.
4. Cages - cages of woven wooden/cane/iron rods camouflaged, with one or two gates that close when prey is inside and triggers a release mechanism. May be large enough for people but more likely too small to easily catch people. 5% chance trap is abandoned.



## LEOPARDS OR WOLVES

If the encounter is taking place in a river basin (that is, the land below the foothills, relatively near a river -- as most of this land is) then there is a leopard in the area. Leopards are shy and remarkably clever. They will avoid an encounter with the PCs with wile and guile unless and until they feel confident that one PC is alone and they can strike from surprise. Because of this, if the leopard ever does attack, just assume it has surprise unless the circumstances are very special. It will ideally attack by leaping from above and initiating the attack with a grapple from behind followed immediately by a bite to the neck and top of the victim's spine. Adult leopards weigh 60-100 lbs and have very powerful jaws.

When not in a river basin, the PCs are inside the territory of a pack of wolves. A pack is made up of one or more families. Roll 6d6 and count the 6s rolled (minimum 1) and that's the number of families. Each family has 1d2 adults, 1d3 young adults and 1d3+3 juveniles. Under normal circumstances, PCs will encounter only adult animals as the hunting wolves locate and assess the people. If there are more than 1 adults in the pack, roll 1d10: 1-3) a single hunter is stalking the PCs, 2-9) two hunters are stalking the PCs, 10) if the pack has more than 2 adults, randomly determine how many (>2) of them are involved in the hunt and assume that the same % of the young adult wolves is along for an educational hunt.

The wolves will locate and stalk the PCs but are unlikely to initiate an attack except under certain circumstances. If the PCs run, the wolves will chase. If a PC splits from the rest of the group or is travelling alone, the wolves will attack. If the PCs have mundane animals, any but the most severely hobbled or extraordinarily trained, are very likely to run and the wolves will chase. The wolves will present an aggressive posture to the PCs, trying to get them to run, with one or more moving in close and perhaps taking nips at the party's flanks. It's likely that any but the most knowledgeable people are likely to interpret this as an attack, but the attack won't really begin until the party takes flight. If it does develop into an attack, the wolves will try to bite the PCs or their animals, while on the run, in the crotch, belly or throat. They'd like their prey to bleed out while running and then kill and eat them leisurely.

## WILD BOAR

Male adult boars roam the forest alone, in search of forage while females and young live in "sounders" each with 2d2 sows, one of whom is dominant and 4d10 juveniles. They rest during the day and forage either at dusk and dawn or through the night. As a result, PCs are likely to encounter the boars' tracks during daytime travel or by stumbling upon their resting area during the day but can be found by the boars at night.

Adult boars are about a yard tall at the shoulders and 1-2 yards long and weigh 100-200 lbs. Boars are pretty likely to run off unless they're surprised, a male is in rut, or a mother feels like her young are in danger. Either sex will charge a person's legs, but a male will slash up into the crotch or belly with his upward pointing tusks of 2-5 inches in length, while the female will open her mouth and bite/impale with her teeth. They accelerate quite rapidly and will slam into their victims with quite a bit of force, easily knocking a person down.

## MOOSE

The moose in this region are the largest deer, standing 1.5-2.5 yards tall at shoulder and weighing 1000-1600 lbs when full grown. Bulls grow full and heavy antlers, less twig-like than most deer. The largest bulls may carry racks > 2 yards across. These animals inhabit the flat-lands around rivers and streams where lots of vegetation that makes up their diet grows abundantly. They also travel away from those areas when forage becomes more scarce. Moose are typically unaggressive, but also unpredictable. When faced with a threat, moose are likely to stand still and maintain eye-contact while appraising the situation. When they decide to attack from a distance, they will lower their head, emit a predator-like roar, and charge. Up close, moose can kick in any direction and with all four legs, bringing their weight and the force of their muscles to bear on enemies through their sharp hooves. Moose will also rear up and stomp on smaller attackers that are underfoot.

In general, humans who see moose and decide to leave are very likely to be left alone. However, parties with dogs are quite likely to be attacked as both the dogs and the moose understand the predator-prey relationship and are hard to control.

Moose are easily capable of killing bears (though it's not a sure thing) and have been witnessed fighting predatory tigers into retreat. Moose are dangerous!



## ODDITIES

The region the PCs are in is assumed to be remote from any particular center of civilization and thus, full of creatures unknown to the PCs. This is where they'll meet these new and unusual critters. Roll on the table below and follow the associated procedures. Develop the creature; figure out where and how it lives before deciding what an encounter with it looks like. Some of these encounters will be tremendously dangerous and some are mere color, helping to bring the setting alive.

1-5	Unknown Animal	To generate one of these, start with a base animal and apply one or two quirks from the tables below. If it seems a little strange after the first one, stop there, otherwise give it a second quirk.
6-7	Weird Animal	When generating a weird animal, roll twice on the animal table and give the first, some reasonably subtle element of the second and then add quirks from the table below until it seems outright weird.
8	Bizarre Creature	To build one of these, do one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roll an animal for the shape but it's actually an animate fungus.</li> <li>2. Roll an animal for the shape but think of it as greenish because it is actually a mobile plant.</li> <li>3. Roll three animals and combine them into one in obvious ways. (Think Chimera.)</li> <li>4. Roll an animal and add ten quirks.</li> </ol>

When rolling a base creature for any of the above scenarios, remember to interpret liberally. (A "deer/goat" might end up being buffalo-like and "small bear" could be a raccoon, red panda or armadillo under the right circumstances):

1. deer/goat
2. marten/rodent
3. small bear
4. cat
5. dog
6. bird
7. fish
8. frog/toad
9. snake
10. insect



## BOARS, BEARS, AND TIGERS

Quirks are only quirks if they're quirky. If you're rolling up a fish and the quirks table produces gills, roll again. Sometimes you can enhance something to make it appropriately quirky. A deer with fur is normal, but it could be a deer with long fur and especial cold-resistance. If you get two quirks that negate each other, keep the first and roll again for the second -- there's no point in having a large-small snake. To generate a quirk, roll 1d4 for the column and 1d20 for the row:

	1	2	3	4
1	bright 1: yellow, 2: green, 3: blue, 4: white, 5: red, 6: silver exterior (fur, feathers, scales, whatever)	produces something useful to people (wool, milk, hallucinogens, something)	preserves surplus food for longer eating (chemical/technological/whatever)	exceptional locomotive attributes (brachiation, backward flight, etc.)
2	tough armor plated skin	lays eggs (or doesn't)	exceptionally verbal	creative
3	fangs	regenerates	migratory	particularly fancy
4	tough hide	stores of fat and water	doesn't sleep	photosynthetic
5	abnormal number of limbs	eye-stalks or compound eyes	mimics another animal	navigates by the stars
6	gills	large	small	metal scales
7	glides on arm-flaps or winglets or something	cooperates with or aids (an) other species	can make a particularly loud noise	abnormally prehensile body part
8	aerial	matriarchal	burrows	trades sex for food
9	horn(s)/antlers	grows a shell	intelligent	cares for young
10	chitinous exoskeleton	exudes slime or mucus	strange reproductive habits	smells so foul that predators leave
11	toxic claws or bite	immune to poison	social	scales
12	chemo-receptors allow the creature to smell things other animals can not	some natural missile attack (chemicals, quills, feces, whatever)	can enter suspended animation state	has a system to appear larger than life
13	camouflage	larval young	playful	a tail
14	stripes or spots	doesn't age	extra joints	large ears
15	abnormal claws	tusks	climbing suckers	large eyes
16	gives off an electric shock	farms some sort of prey animal	has a LOT of children	unusually predatory/peaceful
17	unusual diet	arboreal	pincers	hive social life
18	aquatic	produces silky fiber	quills	carries disease
19	sense organ in a weird place	particularly keen sight	particularly keen smell	particularly keen hearing
20	fur (thick or exotic)	stinger(s)	uses fires	builds homes

You'll often have something kind of weird, but not too weird. But sometimes it'll be really bizarre. Make sense of what you roll. Tweak things a little. Build up a story about how these quirks all make sense together. Whatever you come up with, think about it a bit -- what does it do? How does it live? You need to understand just a little bit about it before you can set up the encounter with the PCs.



## BUGS

“Bugs” can be a problem to explorer PCs. They can be a minor inconvenience, they can carry disease, swarm, have poisonous bites, and can prey on the PCs or their stuff. There can also be giant or exotic insects (determined way up above or right down here). Roll 1d8:

- 1 Swarm; see the swarm rules under Hazards above.

Nasty stingers; the PCs have come too close to the nest of some hostile vespids and are being attacked. Maybe the nest is near something the PCs want or maybe it's easy to run away from and avoid. It is in:

1. The ground
2. a tree-trunk
3. a great ball of paper, hanging from a branch or
4. something exotic like the colony lives on the surface of a particular tree or in a cave

Either way, there are 1d1000 enraged insects, but only 3d10% of the mob will attack each round. If and when the PCs evade, decide how to resolve it based on what they do. Immediately running 100 yards and jumping in a river is a pretty sure way to get them to leave you alone. Hitting the hive with a club several times makes it much harder. Also remember the individual animals are quite vulnerable and an early, well-placed fireball will just eradicate the entire problem.

- 2

While the PCs are being attacked, assume that the insects will divide among them fairly evenly but weighted toward those closest to the swarm/hive and assume that 50% of them will “hit” each round. Each sting after the first couple should require a con-check or save vs. fear to allow the PC to do anything other than run away. Any character who experiences a sting-count greater than their constitution should take 1d4 HP damage and make a save vs. death or lose one point of constitution. Repeat for each multiple of their con stings received. Each time a point of con is lost, roll another save to avoid slipping into shock (anaphylactic, or not).

The toxins involved attack muscle and blood right away, causing pain and fatigue from which it could take a few days or several years to recover. They also attack the organs, particularly the kidneys in very bad sting cases, though typically if a person survives the week following a sting incident, their organs will recover completely.

- 3 Weird bugs; take one of the following and give it a quirk or two from the Oddities section just above. 1) beetle; 2) spider; 3) ant; 4) hornet; 5) moth; 6) dragonfly. This kind of bug lives in the area nearby and may be merely a curiosity or full of danger.

- 4 Moth colony; The PCs have found a dim natural grotto, an abandoned brown-bear burrow, or a thick clump of trees blocking wind and light. It's a place that some local moth species breeds in immense numbers. It is forever aflutter with moths, coming and going in their inscrutable way. The moths are harmless to the PCs but the bears who eat them may not be. So long as the PCs are within a mile or so of the moth colony, any encounter check that fails to yield an encounter has a 1 in 6 chance of being a bear encounter instead of nothing.

- 5 Large bugs; The PCs have entered an area where huge versions of one of the following live: 1) hornets; 2) spiders; 3) ants; 4) beetles; 5) larvae; 6) mantis. To determine how large these creatures are, roll 1d6 and double the animal's normal size that many times (x2, x4, x8, x16, x32, x64). The nature of a conflict with 2-inch ants is different than that with 2-yard beetles, so consider the situation while coming up with specifics.

- 6 Parasites; The PCs discover that they've been covertly attacked by parasitic bugs (leeches, ticks, make something up) 1d6-1 hours after being exposed (or whatever makes sense). Most of these critters are relatively harmless if removed, but 1 in 20 of them inject eggs into their hosts and 1 in 6 of them are so difficult to remove that they are nearly certain to leave festering wounds when removed with anything short of surgical precision.

Spiders; The PCs have wandered through a spider-rich environment and each of them has a 25% chance of having been bitten. These particular spiders have a nasty venom that:

1. Causes 1d4 damage that can't be healed for a week.
2. Is a powerful soporific and requires a save or con-check each round to stay conscious for 1d6 rounds or fall asleep for 1d4 hours during which time more spider attacks may come.
3. Causes intense pain and itching in a dinner-plate sized area around each bite and may cause distractions (-1 surprise/initiative, etc) at any time or poor sleep.
4. Stays in the victim for 100 days during which time if the victim is reduced to 0 HP or killed outright, the victim will rise and pursue a direct course back to the home of the spiders where it will surrender itself as a food source.

- 8 Giant Colonies; 5-yard tall termite mounds, acre-wide ant-hill, wasp-nest the size of a small warehouse, a field thick with sand-fleas, the most mosquito-thick swamp anyone has ever seen, or whatever else you imagine. One of these is near the PCs and certainly may cause trouble.



## MONSTERS

Once in a while there are dangers beyond the animals, earthquakes, hostile war-bands, etc. Sometimes there are just monsters.

### 1 Ogres

#### Dinosaur:

1. pack of little carnivores like velociraptors
2. big-ass herbivore like a triceratops or stegosaurus
3. tremendous herbivore like an apatosaurus
4. tremendous carnivore like a tyrannosaurus

3 A flesh golem, animated by a native sorcerer (80% now dead), following some orders. Perhaps to guard a place against intrusion. Or maybe to find and harvest the royal blue butterfly. Or something else that makes sense in your setting.

4 Animal-headed folk. A tribe of gnolls or hive of ant-men or a single bear-lady in the woods. Pick an animal (use the base-creature table in Oddities above if you want to roll) and use its head to replace a human's. Then decide if it's a lone, powerful monstrosity or maybe there's a tribe of these things and they're really just a kind of alien folk. Go.

5 A bug the size of a truck. A wasp? A grub? A trap-door spider?

6 Exotic jellies. One or more jellies, slimes, puddings or oozes. Decide on some color and pick a special power or attack that seems to fit. Or use a canned creature of this type from your game -- it's all good.

7 Undead war-band. 1d8 for leader: 1-5 no leader; 6 mummy; 7 lich; 8 necromancer, and 1d4 for band: 1 1d4 skeletons; 2 2d6 skeletons; 3 1d6 zombies; 4 3d6 zombies.

8 Roll on some default monster-encounter table from your game -- sometimes a mundane monster creeps into this region.

## SUPERNATURAL

Bad juju of the forest -- color, danger, help; or all three.

1 Possessor spirit - The PCs have found a dark home to a long-dormant spirit, trapped in a bauble or fetish. The character who first touches the binding object will be the spirit's initial target, perhaps followed by others in close proximity. The spirit will battle a character's wisdom, attempting to replace the victim's native spirit; taking occasional control of that person -- subjecting them to blackout periods during which she engages in strange, troublesome behavior. Once it has fixed in someone, it can be removed, bound, commanded or destroyed in the normal fashion.

2 Faeries - The fae of the wood are prominent here with circles of mushrooms and glowing pools. They are chaotic, alien, dangerous and immune to many forms of harm. They are also easy to please with gifts of milk, bread, honey, wine and amusement. When first encountered, faeries will visit the camp of the PCs, nearly invisible in the dark of night, exploring packs, untying knots and tying others. They may leave behind charcoal drawings on the PCs and their stuff. If they are placated and amused, they will allow the PCs to travel in peace and may even give aid which can take any form. When vexed, the PCs may find their food spoiled, their horses lame and rusting iron.

3 Hyperlocal god - An ancient tree, a stream, or a particularly significant boulder. Any natural thing may have a mighty spiritual essence bound up within. Local people may venerate this force with a shrine, fear it, or both! The deity may project itself as a physical thing and interact with the PCs or it may stay quiet, only pulling subtle strings to meet its own desire. Decide what the god wants -- something cliched: respect and veneration, the delivery of gold, the safety of a stand of trees, or virgin sacrifice or something unfathomable: a collection of left gloves (or hands), to have a piece of it carried to distant places, to have people joined under its boughs. Then consider what it will do to get what it wants. Then play with it.

Demonic portal - in a shallow cave or beneath the waters of a leaf-clogged pond or under the archway formed by two trees grown together over a hundred years, there is a tear between this world and another; a place of malignance and suffering where monstrous impulse congeals into demonic creatures. Once in a while, the conditions cause the tear to heave a shuddering breath, causing things in our world to be drawn into the darkness beyond while others are blown into our world from beyond.

4 When the PCs find themselves near such a portal things may feel off to them in subtle ways. There is a 50% chance that a demon will be present. Roll 6d6. For each six rolled, roll another die into the pool. The total number of sixes, plus one, is the demonic thing's level/HD. From there, choose something appropriate from your system or create the demon by describing a horrible form and choosing two character classes from your game, giving it all the abilities of those classes at the level determined. It will seek to either: learn from the PCs, murder them, or enslave them -- whatever seems best.



## BOTANICAL

There are many ways that the flora of this region can interact with travelers. Here are some:

The PCs have discovered a new kind of poisonous leaf and the oils from it are all over their clothes, gear and exposed skin. They experience (1d4):

1. Itching for a week.
2. Minor blisters hurt, are sun-sensitive and create an opening for opportunistic infection -- lasts for a week or so.
3. Thousands of barely-visible seed-spines are stuck in the PCs and their stuff, each of which is coated in stinging toxin. It's distracting and painful.
4. A few hours after exposure, the PCs all take 1HP damage. unless the PCs figure out a way to neutralize the toxin, they will take another 1HP each morning for 1d3 weeks. Maybe a save vs. poison can reduce the effect.

If the PCs are supplementing their travel-rations with ongoing forage (as any normal wilderness expedition must), some of the roots, leaves, berries or mushrooms gathered are unexpectedly chemically sophisticated. Roll 1d6 to determine the effect caused to everyone who's eating from the forage:

1. 2d4 hours of altered senses which includes two of the following: disordered thought, terror, euphoria, alogia, tactile hallucination, visual hallucination, auditory hallucination, calm, anxiety, cognitive enhancement, hyperarousal
2. Wrenching gut pains followed by 3d6 hours of vomiting and diarrhea. If this toxin is ingested a second time, require a save vs. death. The PCs won't be right for 1d6 weeks.
3. Numbness for 3d4 hours after breakfast;
4. Rapid, labored breathing, profuse sweating, fluids flowing freely from mouth, nose, eyes, bladder and anus. Without medical care of any kind, save vs. poison repeatedly until successful. Each failure represents two hours of symptoms and the loss of 1 point of constitution.
5. Extreme lethargy leads to a save vs. poison to avoid 1d100 hours of paralysis.
6. Sensation of dramatic overheating (for 1d10 hours) causes victims to seek removal of clothing and the coolest location possible -- snow, streams, caves, whatever. To act against this compulsion requires a wisdom check.

A local weed spreads by injecting seeds into close-wandering animals which grow inside the victim's skin. Soon, the host ends up dead -- whether the pain causes imprudent behavior or the plants destroy the animal's bodily systems. At this point, the plants drop roots into the richly-fertilized ground. The PCs have unwittingly wandered through such weeds and the plants get to make an attack as a third-level fighter against each PC's armor. Anyone who is hit, has been colonized. The victims will suffer 1d4-2 HP damage and increasing pain and decreased mobility each day after the first, until they die or figure a way to remove the young plants.

The PCs are near a patch of thorny canes that produce delicious fruit during the early to mid summer. The plants grown outward over several years in a circle up to several hundred feet across in extreme cases. On the outer edge, where the vines are young, the thorns are small and harmless -- anyone in travelling leathers is immune to them. As one penetrates the patch, larger and more significant thorns and barbs are found. Eventually, at the center of particularly aged patches, the spike-covered vines are mobile and will attack animals (or people) who wander in with horrible whiplike swipes and entangling grasps. Once an animal succumbs to the plants' attacks, the corpses helps to renew the soil.

Occasionally, there are plants that can only be considered monsters. Roll 2d6 on the form and desire table, and 1d6 and 1d4 to create two characteristics from the charactersics table.



## FORM AND DESIRE TABLE

d6	Form	Primary Desire
1	tree	to be left alone
2	snake-like vine	to consume flesh
3	all the bushes within 40' of a central 'brain'	to collect magical resources
4	a patch of flowers	worshippers
5	leafy lengths of ivy floating on gas-bags	to spread its offspring
6	a giant bundle of wood, vines, leaves and other vegetation, occasionally taking a humanoid form	to return the world to an uncivilized, natural state

## CHARACTERISTICS TABLE

	1	2	3	4
1	stealthy	brutish and powerful	possessed of ancient intellect	a vegi-zombie parent
2	entirely mobile	hungry for blood	difficult to harm	hypnotic
3	a user of traps	regenerative	alien	immortal
4	capable of suspended animation	capable of reproducing with any organism	extracts soil metals for reinforced structure	extremely ecologically flexible
5	frightening	entangling	amphibious	as a spell-caster
6	capable of healing animals	exists in multiple worlds	has visual organs	potion-like floral effusions



Dear Secret Santicore—

Given that I'm known for my post-apocalyptic  
output, I'd love to see mutated / ruined / radioactive  
/ wasteland-ed versions of cinematic masked killers.  
You know, Jason Voorhees and Harry "My  
Bloody Valentine" Warden and Pinhead and  
Ghostface and such.

I'll be happy with anything: statted-out write-ups,  
goofy doodles, whatever! lol. NUSST!!

Thanks!

J.D.

# MONSTERS!

by Joey Lindsey  
metalvsskin@gmail.com

I made up some post-apocalyptic slashers ready to go in any Mutant Future or Gamma World type game. Just generate a random dungeon online, put one of these guys in one room, figure out where else they've "prepared for guests", and you've got one or more nights of mayhem!

I hope the requestor isn't sad that I went more gonzo/sci fi with these, and made up my own instead of directly adapting.

N01



The Neuro-inhibitron Personality Eraser Soothing Face Mask was made by the Takkyon Corporation for various therapeutic applications Before The World Went To Shit. Sometime in the last several thousand years, it's gotten a bit...off.

The current wearer doesn't know who he was, but now he is N01. His ego erased, he despises that in others. Individuality, personality, they must be crushed and stabbed. Roaming the halls of the abandoned Takkyon Corporate Headquarters, setting traps, stalking with his unnatural stealth and strength, several groups looking for supplies have met their end at his hands. He may use traps on occasion, but he likes to feel the life, the ego, the personality of his victims leak out over his bare hands.

Anyone wearing the mask will become stronger and stealthier, but will lose themselves over the course of several days. Anyone near the mask is affected, their veins and arteries turning cobalt blue, growing to hate any individuality and personality in others. Within 4 days, anyone who has spent a significant amount of time near the mask will go insane.

## CRUSTY FACE

Kept alive for centuries by medical nanobots, Crusty Face just wants to give his gifts to everyone. His "Gifts" mean assimilation into a nanobot hive mind and painful "modifications", like his own drill hand, which he uses to create pit traps and other structural instabilities. He takes captives to the Medical Room, where they are assimilated and rebuilt with their own modifications. If the process is not interrupted, their only remaining purpose will be to bring more victims to the nanobots. Crusty Face does not like to be seen,



as years of radiation exposure have left him with six distinctive bony ridges on his face that constantly ooze pus and are covered with a crust of dead nanobots.



**THE GREY MAN, THE JUDGE, THE TORCH-DROPPER**

He disguises himself, taking on a new personality each time, full of hope. These companions will be different. They just need help. Hired help. They hire him, unremarkable, just like the other hirelings. Help us raid for supplies. We want that ancient military tech. We had to kill those guys.

Each time, they fall short. They let him down. These are as petty and selfish as his last group.

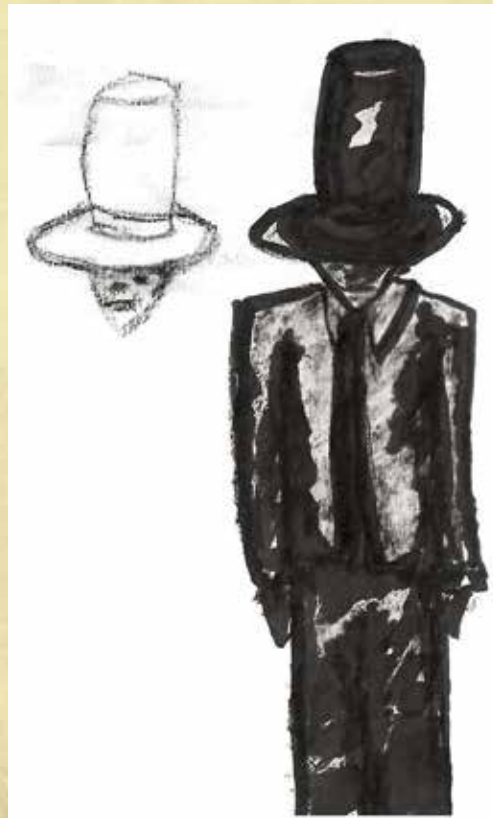
They're not mistakes, exactly - how could this hireling know the trap was there? The blast would go that way? The monster only attacked armored guys?

By the time there's only one of the party left, the Judge has shed his bright clothes and hopeful demeanor. These people let him down. They're just like all the others. Self-serving. Vain. Petty. They have been judged. There must be punishment. The sentence is....  
**DEATH!**

**GRAGALTHON**



Once Greg Althon, his mutations have left him merely a brain with eyes and fleshy, spiked tentacles. He crawls around on four small ones, usually through the AC ducts of the abandoned mall that is his home. Two longer tentacles are usually around a victim before they realize there is another presence. Worst of all, if Gregalthon gets his tentacles in you, he eats your brain and replaces it with - himself! It takes hours and hours for your head to swell, tipping off your companions that you - aren't you!





# EVIL YETI WIZARD

by Lucien Reeve  
lucien.reeve@gmail.com

*Dear Secret Santicore—*

*Art depicting an evil yeti wizard*

*Thanks!*

*H.S.*





# SPIDER MOTHER

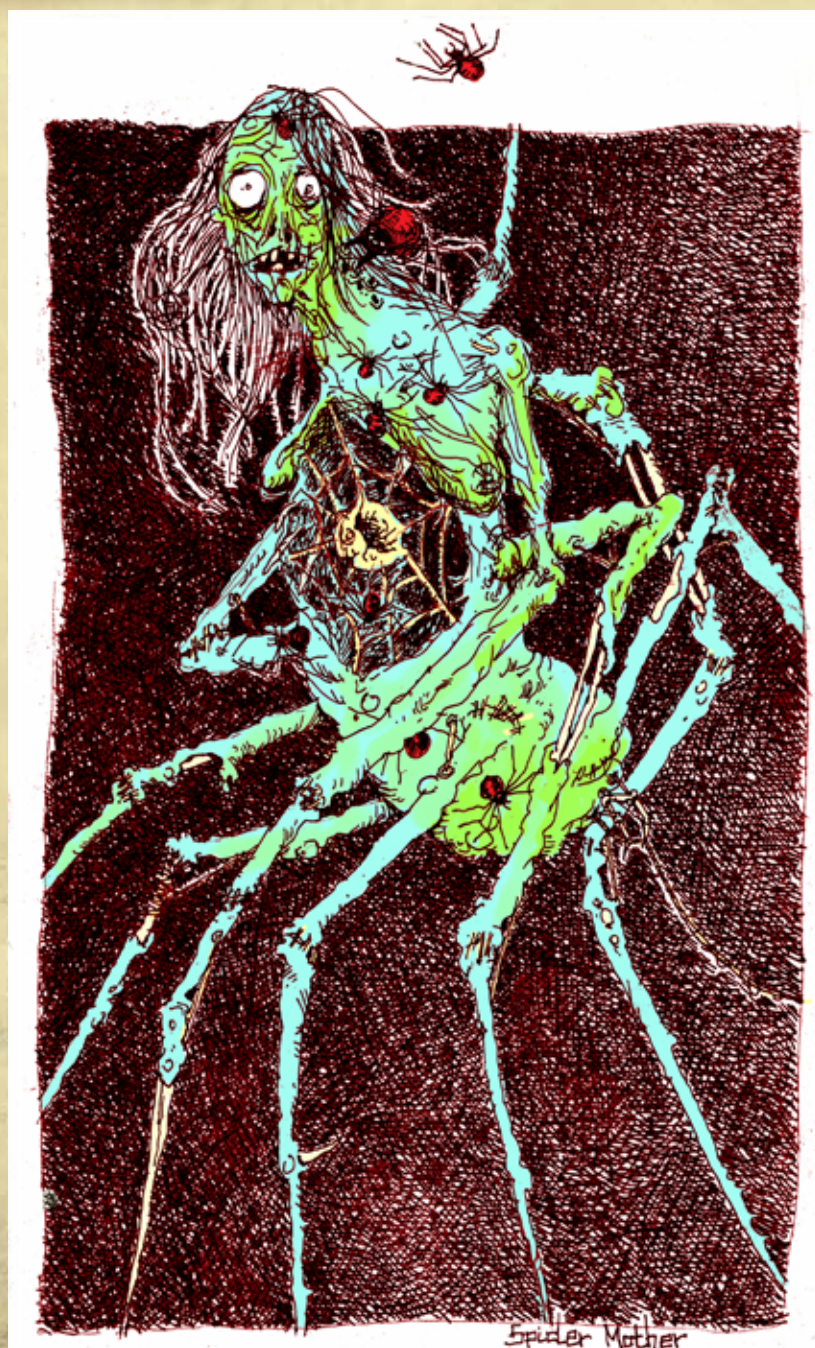
by Matt Adams  
gadjogadjo@hotmail.com

Dear Secret Santicore—

A drawing of some sort of undead w/ a bursting egg  
sac of baby spiders visible inside its ribcage. Pretty  
please.

Thanks!

J.S.





Dear Secret Santicore—

Oh merciful Santicore, please bestow upon me a piece of art of a mythological creature with a twist (towards gonzo, if they dig) and OAR stat blocks (if the author/artist feels so inclined).

Thanks!

M.E.

# OPHIOTAURUS

by Peter Seckler  
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## Ophiotaurus

(DCC Stats)

Init +4

Melee Atk (choose one of three attack modes each round)

- Claws +5 (2d4)
- Bite +6 (1d8 + 1d4 Stamina Drain)
- Impaling Stinger +5 (see below)

AC 13

HD 8d6

MV Fly 35

Act 1d20

SP 1/2 damage from non-magical weapons, impaling, poison bite

Fort +5

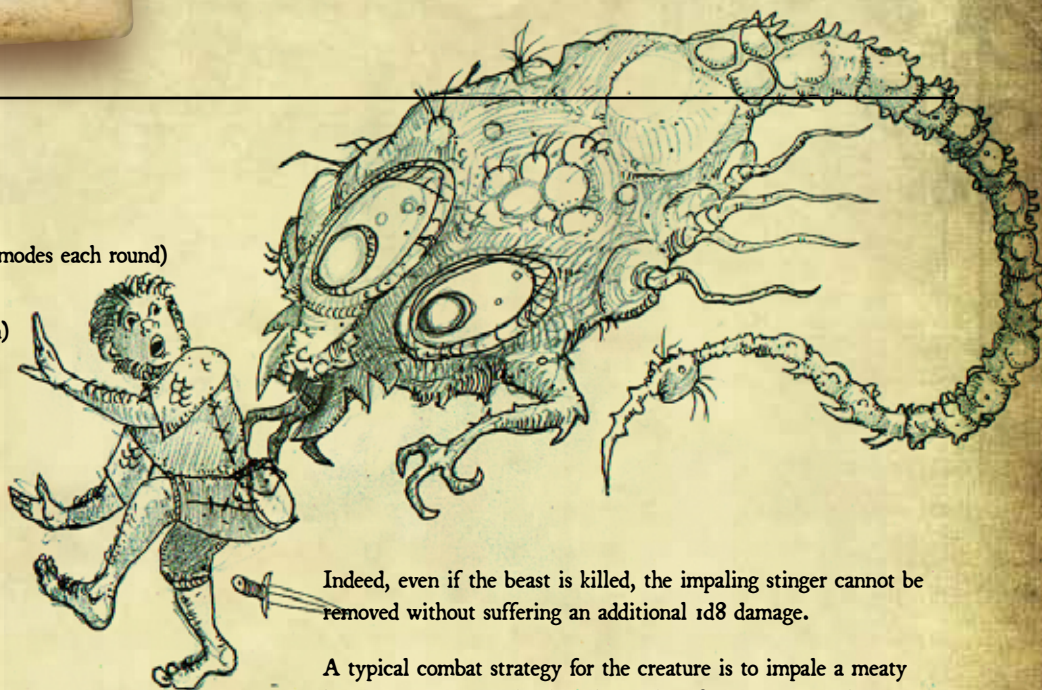
Ref +9

Will +4

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The Ophiotaurus is a dangerous monster of ancient primordial chaos that hunts the lowest levels of dungeons and can often be found lurking around ancient ruins of great power. It was described by early scholars as having the features of both a bull and a sea-serpent, but you may chalk this description up to the inability of these scholars to describe what they were seeing. It's a fleshy musclebound barrel chested body with three massive sensory organs, a pair of hairy arms ending in claws, wriggling cilia, and a bony whiplike tail that ends in a vicious sword-shaped stinger. It moves by magical flight and can exist underwater or in other airless environments because it doesn't breathe.

The Ophiotaurus has three attack modes (claws, a poisonous bite, and it's impaling stinger); it may choose a different type of attack each round. The poisonous bite of the Ophiotaurus drains the stamina of it's victims who fail a DC 14 fortitude save. It's most dangerous attack is it's Impaling Tail. Once the tail hits, the victim automatically takes 8 damage and will be impaled through his armor, and unable to escape or retreat for the rest of the battle.



Indeed, even if the beast is killed, the impaling stinger cannot be removed without suffering an additional 1d8 damage.

A typical combat strategy for the creature is to impale a meaty looking specimen with it's tail and then fly it up to a secluded location to finish it off with bites and claws. A typical specimen can lift up to 400 pounds of armored warrior. An impaled victim may attempt to unimpale himself either during combat or after the creature is killed, but must take an additional 1d8 damage removing the stinger.

## Entrails of the Ophiotaurus

The entrails of an Ophiotaurus are highly sought after. Although legends falsely suggest they grant the power to "defeat the gods", in reality, they do contain the lingering primordial essence of chaos. Anyone who burns the entrails of an Ophiotaurus and inhales the smoke will be granted an additional hit dice and will be treated as if he were wielding magical weapons for 72 hours.

## Mythologically Speaking...

"Its sole reference is found in Ovid's *Fasti* (3.793 ff), where the creature's entrails were said to grant the power to defeat the gods to whomever burned them. The hybrid was slain by an ally of the Titans during the Titanomachy, but the entrails were retrieved by an eagle sent by Zeus before they could be burned. The creature emerged from Chaos with Gaia and Ouranos."



*Dear Secret Santicore—*

*I always like cool new monsters. Surprise me.*

*Thanks!*

*J.B.*

# MAMESK

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## Mamesk

"He-Of-Too-Many-Tusks"



Worshipped by  
the Mameskites ("Skites")



Pyraccus the Skite high-priest

