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New to RPGs?

How do you play?

One player is the Referee. They describe the situation the characters are currently in. The players then asks questions and uses their character to interact with the environment. The Referee tells the players what happens or which dice to roll dice to determine the outcome.

What do you need?

A twenty-sided die, some six-sided dice, pencils and paper. The Referee will have prepared a location for the characters to explore or may use an existing adventure module.

The World of Oddness

The world is too large for anyone to fully map and too old for academics to accurately record. Explorers return from every direction with tales of bizarre places, wondrous and horrific.

You are an Explorer, braving the unknown in search of riches, fame, knowledge or power.

Industry and Revolution

Citizens flock to the cities, vast factories providing dangerous but dependable work. Guns, chemicals and newspapers are mass produced and coal is mined by the tonne. The common man feels a new sense of power and the threat of revolution gives nightmares to every decadent aristocrat and cruel work-master.

Arcana

An Arcanum is an item of great power waiting to be unleashed. Those who have the inner strength to control such an item find them indispensable, but those who underestimate them will be mentally overwhelmed. They range from the smallest cylinder or locket to vast machines, ships or even towers.

The Astrals

Tribesmen paint cave walls with their image and each corner of the world has its own memory and name for the distant visitors. Scholars see them as our great teachers, while the belligerent Union of Man prepare an army to fend off their return. Some claim they gifted us with Arcana, others arguing they came only to steal these wonders of man.

Monsters

Ada Jade spent her short life compiling an encyclopedia of all fauna, but knew that searching in places too dark or distant would show things too foul to be recorded. Those that seek out monsters to slay will usually find their own death before too long.

Surviving the Odd World

Explorers have impressive skills and access to powerful arcana, but no one survives getting their throat cut or falling into spiked pit. Run, sneak, surrender, or bribe. Whatever it takes to get what you need and escape with your life is just as good as fighting.

Rolling a Character – Who are You?

Characters are created by rolling their Ability Scores. Roll 3d6 for each Ability Score.

STRENGTH – Fighting, fortitude and physical prowess.

DEXTERITY – Sneaking, shooting, athletics and reflexes.

WILLPOWER - Using Arcana, cunning and discipline

You may then swap of any two of your scores.

If your WIL Score is now your highest score (or tied) your character has an Arcanum. See the later section on Arcana.

An Ability Score of 10 is the human average.

The character starts with 1d6 **Hitpoints**, a measure of how safe they are from taking life-threatening Critical Damage. More HP means the character is safer.



Forest, Novice Graverobber

STR 10, DEX 13, WIL 8, 3HP.

Equipment: Pistol (1d6+1), Sword (1d6+1), Shield, Lockpicks, Lantern, Shovel, 20ft Rope, Caltrops, 5p.

Equipment

All characters carry standard equipment, including simple clothes, a backpack, basic camping equipment, torches and a few days' rations.

Characters also have twenty Shillings (s) to spend on additional equipment. Ten Pennies (p) make a Shilling and one-hundred Shillings make a Guilder (g).

Unarmed Attack (free): 1d6-1 Damage.

Simple Weapon (1s): 1d6 damage or +1 damage if two-handed melee. Light or crude weapons. Dagger, bow, pitchfork, club etc.

Martial Weapon (5s): +1 damage or +2 if two-handed melee. All basic, purpose-made weapons. Sword, axe, mace, pike, pistol or musket etc.

Superior Weapon (1g): As normal weapon type with additional +1 Damage.

Off Hand Weapon (cost as weapon) Additional +1 to damage in melee.

Body Armour (10s): Armour 1.

Full Armour (1g): Armour 2. Very heavy. Prevents running, jumping and swimming.

Shield (5s): +1 Armour. Bulky and heavy.

Tools (1s each): Lantern, Crowbar, Hatchet, Animal Trap, Lockpicks, Mirror, Writing Set, Fishing Pole, Spyglass, Shovel, Grappling Hook, Collapsible Pole, 20ft Rope, Spike Set, Chalk, Game Set, Caltrops.

Luxuries (1g each): Clockwork items, Thermometer, Elaborate Clothes, Jewellery and Ornaments.

Fire Oil (10s per flask): Sets an area alight. All inside take 1d6 damage now and 1d6 at the end of their next turn unless extinguished).

Bomb (20s): Ignited with fuse or direct flame. Causes 3d6 damage to anything in contact and 1d6 damage to all within the blast.

Boats: Rowboat (50s), Barge (1g), Galley (200g).

Vehicles: Cart (30s), Wagon (1g).

Board (per week): Bed in a Dormitory (1s), Room in a Boarding House (10s), Town House (20s).

Food and Drink: Bread and Broth (1p), Bottle of Gin or Rum (5p), Pie and Wine (5p), Fine Meal (1s).

Property: House (10g), Factory (100g), Manor (1,000g).

Horses: Mule (5s) to Horse (1g). +1 to Armour and Damage in melee when mounted.

Hounds: Mutt (5s) to Hound (50s). STR 8, DEX 10, WIL 6. 1d6hp for Mutt, 2d6 for Hound.

Hirelings (cost per day, 1d6hp and Ability Scores 10 unless noted):

Lighter Boy (1s): Lantern, Club.

Mercenary (5s): 2d6HP, Gun, Sword, Body Armour.

Champion (20s): 3d6, STR 13, Full Armour, Halberd.

Playing the Game - What the players need to know.

Saves: Roll 1d20. You must roll under the appropriate Ability Score to pass. A 1 is always a success and a 20 always a failure.

Taking your Turn: In a combat situation the Referee decides which side acts first. If unsure, opposing sides will roll 1d6 and compare. On your turn a character can generally move and carry out one action.

Attacking: An attack normally causes 1d6 damage, plus any bonus from your weapon, minus the target's Armour score. If the target is unaware of the attack or unable to defend themselves an additional 1d6 damage is caused. Ranged weapons cannot be used while the character is engaged in melee combat.

Damage: When an individual takes damage they lose that many Hitpoints. If they have Hitpoints remaining then the attack was mostly avoided or only a minor wound. When the character runs out of Hitpoints their lives are at risk unless they can save themselves.

Critical Damage: If a character has no Hitpoints they must pass a Save to avoid Critical Damage whenever they take damage. This is a STR Save in melee and a DEX Save for ranged combat. A character that takes Critical Damage loses STR equal to the damage caused by the attack. For other sources of damage the Referee will choose the most appropriate Save, provided the character can save themselves somehow.

Other Manoeuvres: In place of making a normal attack a character may spend their turn trying to carry out another manoeuvre, such as knocking an opponent down, snatching an item and fleeing or cowering behind their shield. In these cases the Referee will call for the character or their target to roll a Save to see if the Manoeuvre is successful. For example, a character grappling a wild beast will force the beast to make a STR Save to break free.

Ability Score Loss: Character may lose points from their Ability Scores. If an Ability Score is halved in a single stroke the character is incapacitated until they have are tended to and have a Short Rest. Having a Score reduced to 0 or being left incapacitated for an hour results in death.



Death: When a character dies the player creates a new character and the Referee finds a way to have them join the group as soon as possible. Alternatively the player may take control of a Hireling or Member of their Company.

Morale: Groups of combatants require a WIL Save to avoid being routed when they lose half of their total numbers. Lone combatants must pass this Save when they are reduced to oHP. This applies to opponents and allies but not player characters.

Short Rest: A few minutes of rest and a swig of water will recover all of a character's lost Hitpoints. Resting may waste time or attract danger.

Full Rest: A Full Rest requires a whole day and somewhere safe, at least a secure camp. This restores any lowered Ability Scores and generally cures any other ailments.

Arcana - Powers you do not understand.

Arcana are devices that can be used to unleash strange powers commonly called Spells. Their form varies from rods, rings, tablets and orbs to statues, guns and even structures. Characters can release the power inside an Arcanum, but doing so is a mentally draining, dangerous process.

Using an Arcanum

On their turn a character can choose one of the Spells stored in their Arcanum to cast, which will take the whole of their turn. The caster must immediately pass a WIL Save to complete the casting. If they fail the Save then they lose WIL equal to the Spell Power and the Spell is not cast.

A Starting Character's Arcanum

Some characters begin with an Arcanum. This will contain one Spell with a Spell Power equal to their WIL and one lower powered Spell. These spells are determined at random. The exact method of randomising the Spells will be determined by the Referee based on the list of Spells he has compiled.



Identifying an Arcanum and Spells

When a character first picks up an Arcanum they will sense its magical nature and how many spells it contains. An unknown spell must be cast to be identified. If the spell requires a specific target that is not available at the time of casting then it will not be cast successfully and so not identified.

Other Arcana

Explorers will encounter Arcana other than those possessed by themselves. These may function very differently to their own Arcanum and should be treated with great caution and respect.

The search for the secrets of Arcana has driven many explorers to obsession and even more to greedy deaths.

Example of Play

(Three player-characters and their hireling torch bearer have been delving deep into a strange underground complex they stumbled on in an inhospitable desert)

Referee: The base of the long staircase leads into a spectacular room, some 30ft high and equally wide. Its walls look like an intricate mosaic but the tiles are constantly shifting in colour. Waves of differing hues wash across the walls and the centre of the floor is dominated by a six-foot-wide circular shaft.



Ezekiel: (Sketching down the room on his rough map) Are there any exits other than the way we came?

Referee: Just the shaft in the middle of the room.

Toku: Well, this is a dead end. My hunter's instincts were right!

Ezekiel: The walls look strange... I'm being very careful not to touch them and tell my torch bearer to do the same.

Toku: Oh come on, we hired him because he's disposable! Maybe Uthred should try touching them.

Uthred: I'm not scared of a wall, but I'm not stupid. I'll try tapping the wall with the handle of my axe.

Referee: The pattern of the tiles doesn't seem to respond, but as you're inspecting them more closely you can feel that they're giving off a slight heat.

Uthred: Enough to burn me?

Referee: Doesn't look like it, only a slight heat.

Uthred: I place my hand boldly against the tiles.

Referee: As soon as Uthred's hand touches the wall the shifting colours stop and a pulsing blue pattern starts to radiate from around Uthred's hand.

Ezekiel: Stand by for his head exploding...

Uthred: You worry too much! How do the tiles feel?

Referee: They feel much like you'd expect a smooth mosaic too, but they are giving off a faint warmth.

Uthred: Huh, weird. Well I'll take my hand off the wall and go to check out the shaft.

Referee: As soon as you remove your hand from the wall it starts to shift colours again and you now see the tiled shape of a person, looking almost like your own reflection. Barely a second later the room is filled with a crackling noise and the tiled visage of Uthred somehow steps out of the wall, hefting the axe from its back and taking up a combat stance.

Toku: Right, I'm not giving this thing a chance to pull us into the wall or whatever it's going to try. I leap at it with my daggers.

Referee: Roll for damage.

Toku: (Rolls 1d6) That's a 4!

Referee: Okay, you sidestep around the tiled being and after a few probing thrusts you stab it in the side. Instead of a scream the copy of Uthred roars out in crackling static-noise. It's still standing.

Uthred: I'll have at it with my axe, trying to drive it away from Ezekiel and the lantern-bearer.

Referee: Okay, roll for damage.

Uthred: (rolls 1d6, scoring 4) with the +1 damage from my axe I have five.

Referee: (notices that the opponent is now at ohp, with 2 damage left over) You kick the thing back, knocking it off balance and leaving it open to Critical Damage unless it can make its Save. (Rolls a STR Save, failing) The copy ducks Uthred's first swing, but the backswing buries the axe head in its side. It loses 2 STR, roaring out in static fuzz.

Uthred: There's only room for one Uthred here!

Referee: The copy of Uthred drops its axe on the ground and reaches forward to try and grab Toku. Give me a STR Save.

Toku: (Rolls a STR Save) Erm... I got a 20.

Referee: (Over the groans of the table) The creature grabs Toku and tries to push him against one of the walls.

Referee: The creature slams you against the wall. You see a blue pulsing pattern form on its surface. A moment later the colours shift into your shape and the copy steps forward from the wall. Over to you guys.

Ezekiel: I never thought I'd have to choose between killing Toku and Uthred. I'm going to use the Wither spell from that weird glove-arcanum thing we found earlier and try to destroy the copy of Toku.

Referee: Right, make a WIL Save.

Ezekiel: (Rolls his WIL Save) Made it!

Referee: It gets a DEX Save to avoid the touch (Rolls a DEX Save), but it fails! Roll to see how much STR Toku's copy will lose.

Ezekiel: (Rolls 2d6 for STR loss, as dictated by the spell) Eleven!

Referee: (Checks his notes and sees that this will reduce the creature's STR below zero) It's enough to drain the energy from this thing. The touch of your glove causes the colour to fade from the being as it falls motionless to the ground and snaps out of existence, completely destroyed.

Uthred: Yes!

Referee: You should be aware that you've really been making quite a lot of noise in this room. (Secretly makes a Luck Roll to see if any nearby monsters have noticed the noise. A roll of 1 indicates something bad should happen, so he rolls on the hostile encounter table he has prepared for this area).

Ezekiel: I don't like the sound of this.

Referee: You notice the sound of something descending the staircase. Remember that weird horse-like creature with skin like super-hard tree bark you were ambushed by last session?

Uthred: Sure, we knocked it down that pit and fled like heroes.

Referee: Well this thing looks almost identical, but rather than being horse-sized it's large enough to barely be able to squeeze into the staircase. Its jaws look large enough to be able to swallow you whole and its forelegs end in grasping claws spanning some six feet. Needless to say it's squeezing down the staircase with you in its sights and it doesn't seem friendly. (Fails a WIL Save for the copy of Uthred, as the sight of this thing is enough to scare it) The copy of Uthred sees this thing and immediately crawls back into the wall, fading into the tiles.

Ezekiel: I don't much like the idea of being swallowed whole. What are our chances of running through its legs?

Referee: It's pretty tightly packed into the stairway. If you want to try it would certainly require a DEX Save.

Uthred: The smaller monster was afraid of fire, wasn't it? Perhaps we should send the lantern bearer over to try and keep it at bay.

Referee: He looks pretty hesitant... he'd need to pass a WIL Save to follow such a suicidal order. You never know, though, it could work!

Toku: Running past it and trying to scare it seem needlessly risky when we have a perfectly good exit right here!

Uthred: The shaft? Does it look like the creature could fit down there?

Referee: Unlikely, it's certainly too big to be able to do so easily.

Ezekiel: As suicidal as it sounds it might be our best hope. Can I throw a coin or something into the shaft?

Referee: As you flick a half-shilling down the shaft you hear a distant splash a few seconds later.

Toku: Water!

Ezekiel: That's optimistic... how do we know it isn't acid or something? I figure we can find a way to distract it long enough for us to escape back up the staircase.

Referee: While you're formulating this plan the creature has managed to force itself into the room, brushing against the tiled wall, which sends out blue ripples.

Uthred: Oh crap, this isn't going to end well.

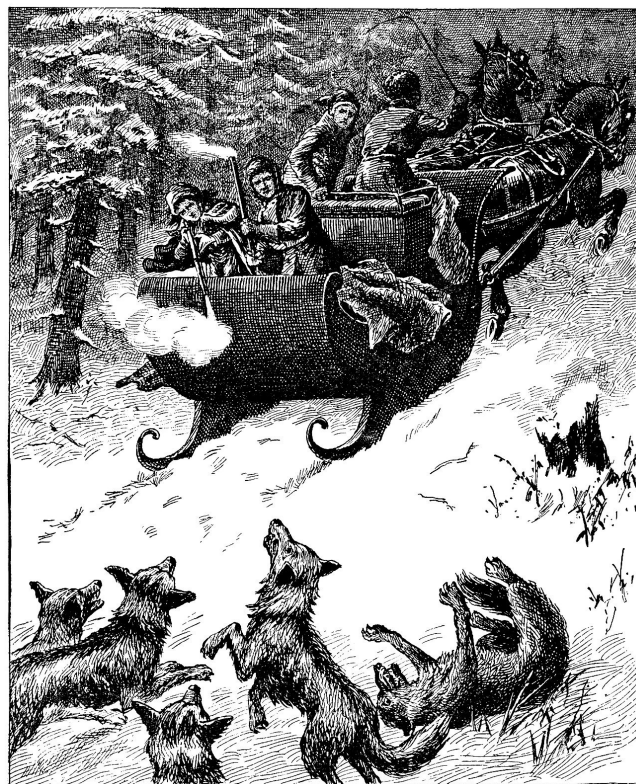
Ezekiel: Fine! Into the hole!

Toku: Trust me! I'll even leap it first.

Referee: You're all leaping down now? (The group all nod reluctantly)

Referee: You plunge into the darkness of the shaft, falling for a few seconds before splashing into what feels like ice cold water, deep enough for you to fall into safely. The bearer's lantern is extinguished and you're barely able to get your bearings in the pitch-black pit before you feel a tingling sensation over your bodies. WIL Saves all round!

(Groans fill the table)



Spells – The Powers of Arcana

The Referee may provide players with a list of Spells. This is far from all the spells that exist in the world, the vast majority of which are unknown to any single person. Examples are provided.

Spells do not have an agreed name, but are often named by whoever is currently in possession of the Arcanum. As such the Referee may wish to provide players with spell descriptions, but not names.

Power 1

Expert's Eye: This spell allows you to identify the general function of any object, including an Arcanum. It will also reveal areas of weakness or particular value.

Frozen Brain: Target must pass a WIL Save to avoid being dazed for a turn.

Pale Glow: An object glows with a strange light. Contact with the glowing object causes a point of damage per minute. The effect wears off when the spell is used again

Burden Soul: Target may pass a DEX Save to avoid your touch. If touched they feel a weight on their very soul and lose 1d6 WIL.

Unbreakable Seal: One door, window etc. is magically sealed until you lift the spell.

Obscuring Mist: Mist surrounds you and all within 20ft. Any attacks into the mist suffer -2 to damage rolls. Strong fire or wind will disperse this.

Red Oil: Anyone moving or standing on the 10ft target area must make a DEX Save to avoid falling and being unable to move on their turn. Disappears in a harmless flash if ignited.

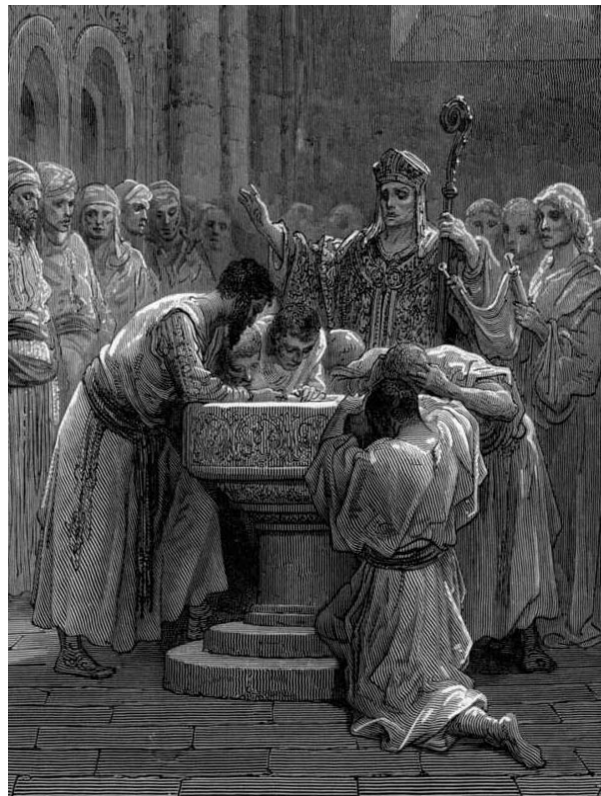
Pain Curse: Cause 1d6-1 damage, ignoring armour, and intense pain. The target must pass a WIL Save or only be able to scream for their next turn.

Comprehension: You can understand the spoken words of creatures or read otherwise incomprehensible written messages. In either case, you must touch the creature or the writing.

Sunblessed: Until you sleep you count as having Armour 2 but glow and hum faintly.

False Charm: Target must pass a WILL Save, or treats you as a friend for the rest of the day.

Command Word: Order a target to drop, fall, flee or halt unless they pass a WIL Save.



Power 2

Veil Senses: Target must pass a WIL Save or is Blinded or Deafened until you lift the curse or they have a full rest. Blinded individuals subtract 2 from damage rolls.

Binding Strands: Strands spread between two surfaces up to 20ft apart. Those within only move very slowly unless they pass a DEX Save.

Heat Ray: A beam of fire causing 3d6 damage. Will sear a thin hole through even metal.

Breath of Recovery: Touch a creature and restore 1d6 points of lost STR, but take that much damage yourself.

Invisible Grasp: Hold one person still, unable to defend themselves, until they pass a WIL Save to break the curse.

Phase Out: You look like you aren't quite there. Reroll any failed saves against Critical Damage until you take damage.

Devil's Roar: All glass, crystal or ceramic objects within 5ft are shattered. In addition one object you are touching (wielder may avoid with a DEX Save) is shattered. This object must be light enough for you to lift. Shattering an Arcanum like this causes you damage equal to the total Spell Power contained within.

Uncanny Double: A perfect duplicate of the caster or a target is formed. It acts just like them but is a visual illusion and cannot interact physically with anything. The double lasts until dismissed or a new double is created.

Power 3

Hypnotise: Target must pass a WIL Save or carry out a single action until you say stop or they pass the Save on their turn. Cannot harm themselves.

Inferno: Cause a source of fire to explode, causing 3d6 damage to all within 20ft.

Drain Life: Reach out and touch a target. They must pass a DEX Save or lose 1d6 STR. You gain this many HP, up to your maximum.

Burning Blood: A wounded creature must pass a WIL Save or have their blood turned to acid. They take 1d6 damage, ignoring armour, each round until they pass the Save. If the affected creature reduced to 0HP then those adjacent take 1d6 damage from acid spray.

Ghost Form: Yourself or an ally you touch and all equipment turn to an insubstantial, smoky form. You ignore any physical attacks. You can float and squeeze through holes but cannot manipulate objects and can be blown by a strong wind. Return to normal at will.

Miniature: Touch an object to shrink to one-sixteenth of its original size. Restore the object to original size at will. The original object can be up to your size.

Power 4

Black Tentacles: Summon a 20ft area of STR 18 tentacles that lash out and attack. Anyone with reach must pass a STR Save to move away. The mass of tentacles has 10HP and can be destroyed.

The Madness: All within 15ft of a point must pass a WIL Save or become confused. Roll 1d6 at the start of each turn until they pass the Save. 1: Attack the caster, 2: Act normally, 3: Do nothing, 4: Flee, 5: Attack nearest creature, 6: Attack nearest of their allies.

Beast from Beyond: Summon a horrific flying beast (STR 14, DEX 10, WIL 4, Armour 2, 10HP, attacks for +2 Damage) to fight for you until no enemies remain, after which you must roll 1d6. On a 1 it attacks you, otherwise it flies away.

Babbletongue: For one conversation you speak in a strange sounding language. Every living thing is able to understand and reply in the same tongue if they wish.

Snakebite: When you next cause Critical Damage in melee your opponent is bitten and loses 3d6 STR immediately.

The Beast Within: Roll 1d6 and add this to Armour and melee Damage, but lose the ability to speak. Return to normal form whenever you wish or when you sleep.

Power 5

Deathswarm: 20ft buzzing cloud moves 10ft away from you each round. Anyone caught within takes 1d6 damage, ignoring armour, and loses 1d6 STR. This continues every round the target spends in the cloud.

Wither: Reach out to touch a target. They must pass a DEX Save or lose 2d6 STR, withering to a husk at STR 0.

Dire Beasts: Up to five animals double in size. They gain +1 Armour and melee damage. They also grow much more violent.

Power 6

Petrify: Target must pass a WIL Save or lose 3d6 DEX. If this reduces their DEX to zero they are turned to stone.

God Hand: A giant hand appears between you and your target. The target cannot attack you and each round the target must pass a STR Save or be pushed 10ft away. The hand can be attacked and destroyed (STR 18, DEX 10, WIL 5, 15HP). The hand disappears when the target is defeated or has withdrawn.

Master of Earth: Over an hour you shift sand, soil or earth to your will, creating ditches up to 10ft deep. This may destabilise structures, redirect rivers and fell trees but will not affect rock, create tunnels or be fast enough to bury mobile opponents.



Power 7

Change Weather: Cause the weather within a mile radius to change for the rest of the day. In the case of dangerous weather you cannot target specific individuals or locations or cause extremes that are inescapably lethal.

Obliterate: Choose a target and roll 3d6. If this is equal or higher than their current HP they are completely destroyed in a blast of fire.

Cheat Death: If successfully cast on a being's dead remains the target is miraculously restored to life, but permanently loses 1d6hp. If the spell fails the remains are utterly destroyed and the spell cannot be attempted on that target again.

Teleport: You and up to one companion are teleported to a location you have been to before.

Weakening Wave: All enemies within 20ft lose 2d6 STR and DEX.

Spirit Commune: Conjures a ghostly image of a dead target, which will speak with you clearly and willingly, regardless of language or intelligence. The image remains until dismissed.

Power 8

Mark of Madness: Creates a symbol on any object. Anyone trying to read it loses 2d6 WIL.

Earthquake: Targets a 100ft area. All structures take 5d6 damage and caves or tunnels collapse, causing 2d6 damage per round to anyone within, until they escape.

Mighty Servant: A large object is animated and serves you unquestioningly. The object has STR 18, DEX 5, WIL 5, 10hp, Armour 3 and attacks for 2d6 damage. No more than one object can serve you at once.

Forcefield: Create a semi-transparent, shimmering surface that only you may pass through. Any enemy approaching within 20ft of the wall is blasted with light for 2d6 damage. The field lasts until dismissed.

Iron Body: You have Armour 4 and ignore fire and poison based damage. You can no longer swim but also do not need to breathe, eat or drink. Electric damage ignores your Armour. The effect lasts until dismissed.

Dead Zone: Creates a permanent zone one mile across where any living things lose 1d6 STR each hour, starting at the end of this hour. Living things within this zone are instantly aware of this and will try to leave. Even plants wither and die in this time.

Power 9

Rebuild: Over an hour one damaged or ruined structure, ship or similar target is repaired to peak condition without need for materials.

Inspire the Masses: Anyone fighting alongside or for you immediately gain 1d6hp and STR.

Divine Presence: Anyone currently looking at you must pass a WIL Save or believe you are a god, serving you as such.

Storm Being: You turn into a bolt of lightning, moving at impossible speed to a specified location you can see. Anyone you pass through takes 3d6 damage, ignoring armour.

Shapechange: You shift to take the form of your target, retaining only your WIL score and general level of intelligence. This lasts until dismissed.



After the Expedition - How do I win? What next?

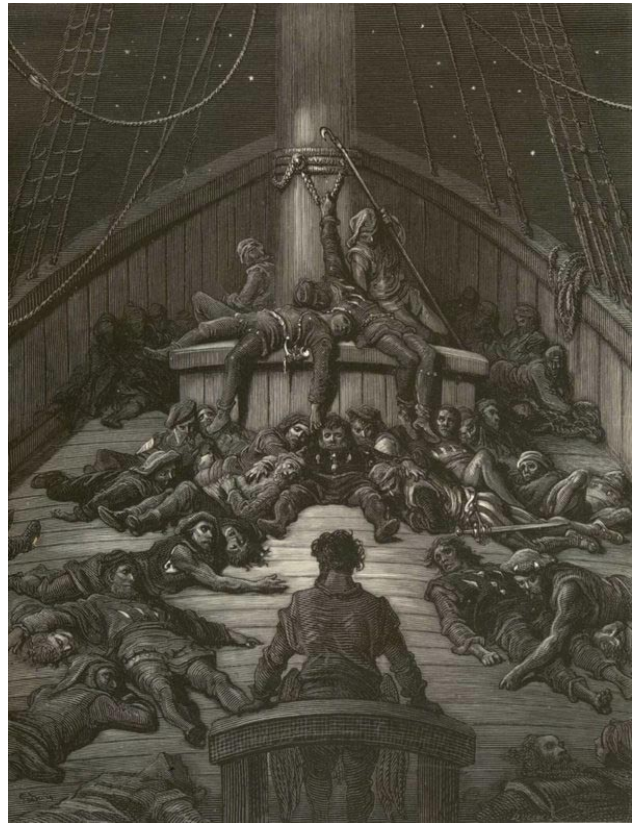
Generally the goal of an Expedition will be to find out about a mysterious environment, destroy a powerful threat or seek out mysterious Arcana.

Experience Levels

When they have completed the requirements for the next Experience Level a character may take a break from adventuring to reflect on their learning. The player describes what their character has been doing in this time, whether humble or grand. After this time they move to the next experience level. A Character cannot advance more than one experience level in a single session of play.

When a character moves to the next experience level they gain 1d6hp and roll 1d20 for each of their Ability Scores. If the roll is higher than the score it is increased by 1.

New characters start at the Novice experience level and chose a title representing their career or speciality (e.g. Mercenary, Burglar, Scholar). A character's title may change over their lives as the player wishes.



Novice

- You have chosen a title and are ready to go on an expedition.

Proven

- You have survived at least one expedition to a dangerous place, returning to civilisation.

Expert

- You have donated a Guilder (100s) or more to a Company or used the money to launch your own.

Veteran

- Your Apprentice is Expert Level or higher.

Master

- Your Company has at least one hundred Members.

Companies and Apprentices

From Expert Level upwards you may choose to launch a Company (see the following page. For each week spent in a settlement you may recruit 1d6 Members (Ability Scores 10, 1d6hp). Normal Members do not advance in Experience levels.

In place of a single Member you may take on an Apprentice, rolling their scores as a new character and having them advance in Experience Levels under your guidance.

Founding a Company

A Company could be anything from a political group or overseas colony to a cult or business enterprise. A group of characters generally share management and individual members may range from supporters or employees to partners in management. A Company that reaches 100 Members stops tracking individual Members and instead has a Size Score.

Size Scores

Size Score, or SIZ, is a measure of the number of Members your Company has and works the same as a character's Ability Score.

1: 100, **2:** 300, **3:** 600, **4:** 1,000, **5:** 3,000, **6:** 5,000, **7:** 7,500,
8: 10,000, **9:** 15,000, **10:** 20,000, **11:** 30,000, **12:** 50,000,
13: 75,000, **14:** 100,000, **15:** 150,000, **16:** 200,000,
17: 300,000, **18:** 500,000, **19:** 750,000, **20:** 1,000,000

Each month you must choose a focus for your Company from the following.

Funds: You gather money this month, gaining 1s for each of your Members to go into your personal funds.

Growth: Increase SIZ by one.

Satisfaction: You do not need to roll to see if there is Unrest within your Members this month.

Unrest

At the end of the month pass a WIL Save or else there is Unrest amongst your Members. 20% of them revolt and must be quashed, or else they will seize control.



War and Revolution

Training Soldiers: 5% of the general populace are soldiers (7HP). A further 20% are fit to fight as conscripts (3hp). In some Companies up to 50% of Members can be called up for combat.

Revolution: Typically the largest Company present in a settlement will act as Government. However, the current rulers can be overthrown, outvoted or otherwise deposed, even by smaller Companies.

Large Battles: When handling large numbers of combatants they should be massed together as a unit. They fight as one but for the unit adds 1 to Damage, and Armour for how many times to one they outnumber their opponents, to a maximum of +5. For example, a unit of 300 cavemen fighting 100 pikemen outnumber them 3-to-1, so add 3 to Damage and Armour. When a unit suffers Critical Damage they do not lose STR but their numbers are halved and they must pass a WIL Save or break and disband.

Sieges: Wooden walls have Armour 6, 6HP and stone walls have Armour 8, 8HP. Reducing a wall to 0HP allows passage over it. Cannons and the like cause up to 3d6 Damage depending on their size.

Example Companies

The Black Hands Club – Revolutionary Group

Leader: Yuren Spinner, Master Activist.

SIZ 3 (600 Members)

100 Revolutionary Soldiers (Musket, Body Armour, Sword), 200 Rebel Workers (Polearms).

West House Gazers – Star Cult

Leader: Arch Gazer Nicol Fox, Master Astrologer

SIZ 8 (10,000 Members)

500 Peacekeepers (Musket, Sword), 2,000 Truthseekers (Sword, Dagger).

Royal Court of Rosevine – Deposed Rulers

Leader: Queen Essa IX, Master Aristocrat.

SIZ 12 (50,000 Members)

2,500 Royal Guard (Horse, Body Armour, Longaxes),
2,000 Pikemen (Pike, Shield), 4,000 Gunmen (Musket),
2,000 Light Cavalry (Horse, Pistols).

Running the Game - What the Referee needs to know.

Knowing when to Roll: When a player describes what they want their character to do you generally have four options.

- 1) It's something the character can do safely.
- 2) It's not possible. Ask for another approach, perhaps giving suggestions.
- 3) It might be possible but there's a risk. Roll dice.

A Note on Risk

Generally the Referee should make the players aware if they are taking a risk. A game should have surprises, but players should feel that their decisions in the game have led to the risk that lead to the nasty surprise. For example, when the characters encounter a monster or hazard that is very likely to be able to kill them outright, the Referee should ensure that the players know this is a possibility. If they want to hack down a door with axes they should know the noise is likely to alert anyone nearby. Assessing the risk against the possible reward is an important part of the game, so the players should always have what they need to make an informed choice.

Understanding Ability Scores

- 3: Human minimum, severely limited in this area.
- 10: An average human.
- 15: Excellent human ability.
- 20: The most exceptional beings imaginable.

Understanding Saves

STR Save: Avoiding harm through exerting physical force or withstanding strain on your body.

DEX Save: Avoiding harm through quick reactions, whole-body control and grace.

WIL Save: Avoiding harm through focus and control over Arcana and yourself.

Luck Rolls: Sometimes you'll want an element of randomness without rolling a Save, particularly in situations dictated by luck or those that fall outside of the four Ability Scores. For these situations roll a d6. A high roll favours the players, and a low roll means bad luck for the players. The Referee will decide what a specific result means for the situation at hand.



How Much Damage?

Damage from falling rocks, explosions and other sources outside of normal combat is typically between 1d6 and 3d6. Consider how it would affect an average person. A fall that is quite likely to injure an inexperienced character might cause 1d6 damage but a huge rock that would crush most might do 3d6. Poison will usually cause Ability Score loss and effects like Blindness cause a penalty to damage rolls.

Combat Advantages and Disadvantages

In combat, clear advantages grant that combatants +1 to Damage or Armour as is appropriate. Similarly, being in a disadvantageous position will grant a penalty of -1 to Damage or Armour. Weapons may carry specific disadvantages, such as guns being extremely loud.

Unusual Attacks: Manoeuvres such as kicking opponents into holes, grappling or disarming them will generally give the target a Save to avoid the desired effect. A Luck Roll may be called for in addition if the attack is especially demanding, such as firing an arrow into a target's eye.

The Core of Good Refereeing: A good Referee gives the players interesting choices to make and ensures that these choices have a meaningful impact on the current situation and progress of the game.

Arcana in your Game

Breaking the Rules

Not all Arcana function as those given to new characters. Arcana can do anything and are not subject to limitations.

Side Effects

As well as their Spells an Arcanum may display various side effects. This could include emitting a constant glow, only functioning in daylight or possessing its own intelligence and communicating psychically.

Big Arcana

Not every Arcanum is as portable as a wand or locket. Many more closely resemble furnishings or structures.

Example: Utopian Gate

This metal structure acts as a portal to another world if someone spends an hour casting the Power 20 Spell required to do so. Closing the portal requires the spell to be recast. Passage to and from the other world is instant and unrestricted.

Disposable Arcana

An Arcana may take a disposable form, such as something that must be consumed or an item that disappears after one or more uses. Other than disappearing after use it will function as a normal Arcanum.

Example: Five Demon Ball

When this glass orb is shattered the thrower immediately attempts to cast *Beast from Beyond*. If this is successful then five such beasts are summoned instead of the normal one. If all five beasts are killed the ball reforms at the corpse of the last to be killed.

Arcana Weapons

Some Arcana function as a weapon alongside containing spells. They may still function quite differently to a normal weapon of their type.

Example: Komdar's Blue-Iron Deathgun

This heavy gun (+3 damage, cannot move and fire) fires a beam of whistling blue light in place of a shot. This ignores any armour and passes through to any targets in line with the original.

The gun ignores armour, contains the spell *Miniature* and anyone taking Critical Damage from the gun is turned into a charred skeleton.

Treasure and Riches

Different types of treasure, from gems to artwork to functional items, will have a certain value. Traders will try to haggle this price or, in the case of expensive items, may not be able to afford it at all.

Money

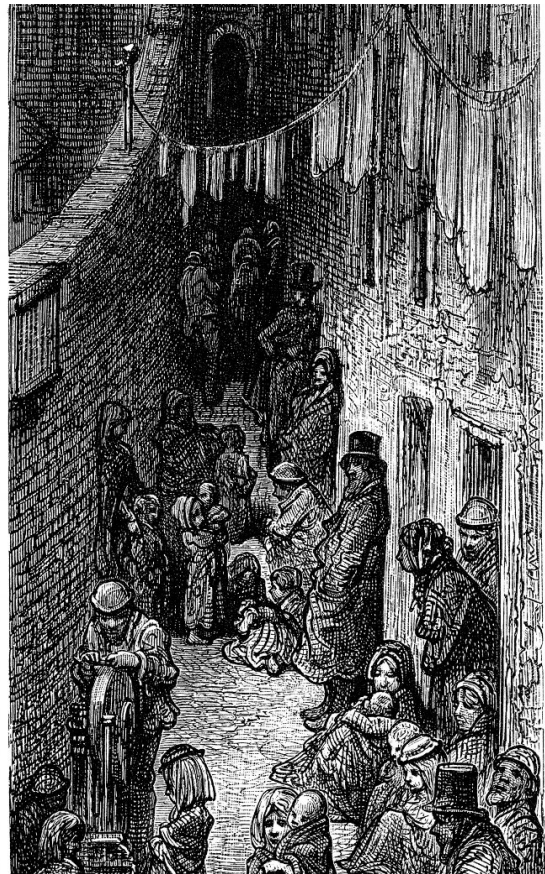
All coins are valued against the **Silver-Standard Shilling** (s). One Shilling is the amount a typical labourer earns in a week.

There are a huge variety of coins that are valued against the Shilling, with two being especially common.

Copper Pennies (p) are worth a tenth of a Shilling. One penny buys you a cheap drink in a bad tavern.

Gold Guilders (g) are worth one-hundred Shillings. One Guilder will get you a good horse, a wagon or a valuable piece of jewellery.

Bank Notes are a relatively recent innovation and are used for large business transactions. Notes range from ten Guilders to one-thousand.



Obstacles, Tricks and Hazards

Spotting Hazards

As a general rule the presence of a trap or other hazard will always be noticed by characters unless they are running, visually impaired or distracted. After this the characters may be harmed through further inaction or lack of caution. The players should consider creative ways of getting around a hazard or disarming it completely. Risky methods may call for a Save or Luck Roll.

Locked Doors

Typically a locked door can be picked by someone with a lockpick, given some time. No Save is required unless there is a risk of triggering a trap, alerting foes or running out of time. Attempts to use lockpicks and other equipment quickly under pressure generally require a DEX Save and may include having to light a torch while under attack or tying a rope before a friend plummets to their death.

Breaking down a door can similarly be completed without a Save, unless there are risks or pressure, which may require a STR Save. However, breaking down a door always causes lots of noise and can take a long time.

Wandering Encounters

It's important to note that anything mobile in an expedition site is unlikely to remain in one place all the time. As such, the Referee should consider having a chance of the party encountering someone or something. Making loud noises will increase or decrease the chance of this happening, depending on the nature of the beings nearby.

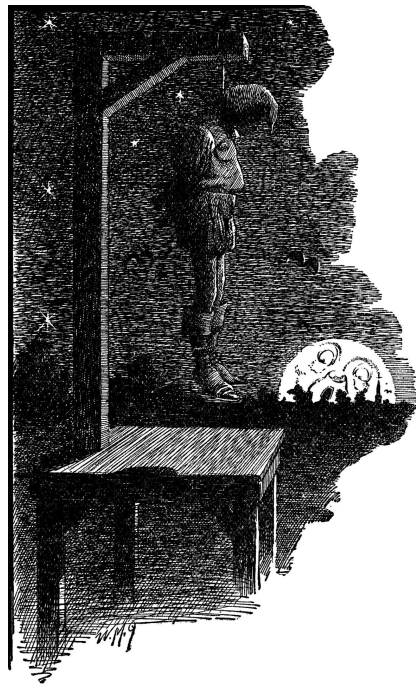
Stupefying Poison Trap

Dart pipe is visible at base of chest. Triggered by opening the chest without taking appropriate precautions. Broken darts litter the floor of this room. 2d6 Damage. Critical Damage causes 2d6 DEX loss.

Balancing Ledge

Must be crossed to reach whatever lies on the other side. Can be done quite safely without pressure, but when having to run or under attack make a DEX Save or fall to the lower level, taking 1d6 damage and requiring a rope to climb back up.

The lower level contains crocodiles (STR 13, DEX 5, WIL 5, 5HP, Armour 1, 1d6+1 damage).



Swinging Blade Trap

Eternally swinging over a corridor in a sequence. Can be blocked only by very strong metal pole or other such objects.

Passing through without disabling causes 2d6 Damage.

Grasping Vines

Triggered on nearing strange-looking vines.

Take 1d6 damage each turn until you break free. STR Save to break free each turn, otherwise you are immobile. Highly flammable.

Cage Pit

Trapdoor is visible unless the character is distracted, sprinting or vision is impaired. Triggered by stepping onto trapdoor.

Fall causes 1d6 damage, a metal cage traps the victim until released with a key held by guards. An alarm alerts these guards.

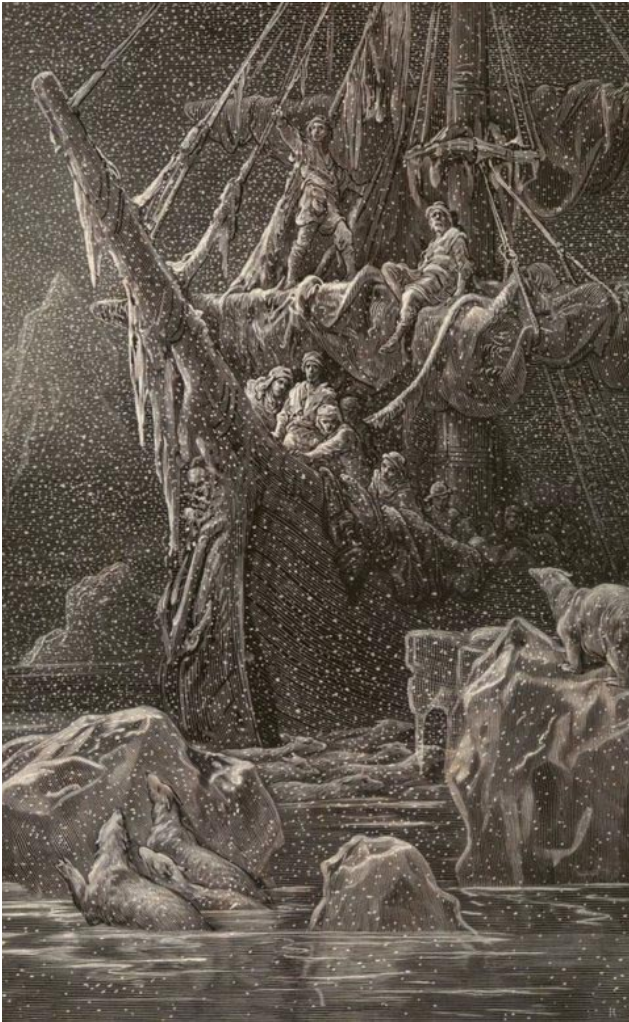
Traitor's Circle

Triggered by entering the circle marked with a symbol depicting a dagger being thrust into a heart.

WIL Save or immediately attack your closest ally, continuing until knocked unconscious. If you pass the Save you are thrown out of the circle and take 1d6 damage.

Monsters

Monsters are, by their very nature, different to people and animals. As such they often have special abilities outside of their Ability Scores. An expedition site should contain mostly unique monsters but some examples are given in this section.



Hitpoints: Most creatures will have between 1d6 and 5d6HP. Remember that Hitpoints are not purely the ability to absorb physical damage but also the monster's cunning and skill in avoiding harm

Killing Monsters: Monsters are treated exactly the same as characters other than noted exceptions.

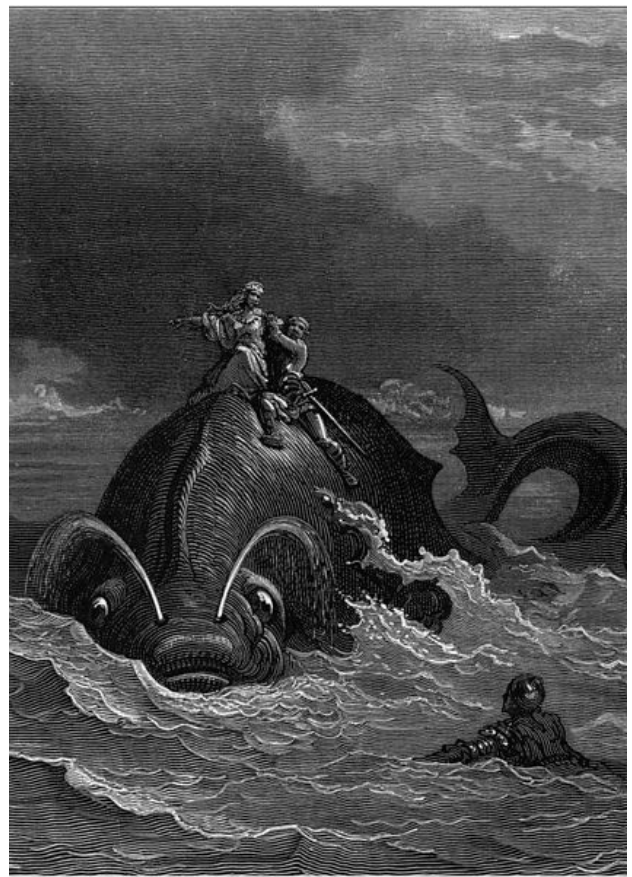
Arcana: While some monsters may use Arcana, some will be able to use spells without an Arcanum. Monsters do not need to follow the rules.

Armour: Use character armour as a guide for how to represent monsters with tough hides or those large enough to be able to shrug off most weapons. Monsters of legendary toughness may even have up to Armour 5.

Damage: Most monsters will cause 1d6 damage if nothing is mentioned. Some will Attack for extra damage or maybe even roll multiple damage dice.

Ability Score Loss and Death Attacks: Particularly deadly creatures may reduce the target's Ability Score if they cannot make a Save, often resulting in a horrible fate if the score is reduced to zero.

A Note on Ability Scores: When assigning Ability Scores 20 should generally be considered the maximum. A huge monster may look like it should have a STR of 30 or more. Instead, they should have their size represented by attacking for more damage and having a high Armour score.



Example Monsters

The Referee should use these examples as guidance for creating their monsters.

Dust Hag

STR 8, DEX 13, WIL 11, 13hp.

Incredibly paranoid, will try to make a deal with strangers to gain what she can and protect herself. Attacks with claws. Able to turn to dust at will, she ignores physical attacks, but this defence is bypassed by any attacks linked to water. Splashing water will cause 1d6 damage and submersion will cause 3d6. Conjures a veil of dust around her when in danger, momentarily blinding all who fail a DEX Save .

Glass Staff Arcanum contains Pain Curse and The Eye.

Pain Curse (Power 11): Causes 1d6-1 damage, ignoring armour, and intense pain to a target. They must pass a WIL Save or only be able to scream for their next turn.

The Eye (Power 12): Conjures a floating eye that the caster can direct and see through. Destroying the eye causes the caster 1d6 damage, ignoring armour.



Abyssal Turtle

STR 19, DEX 6, WIL 6, 15hp, Armour 4

Usually content to avoid anything man-sized in search of larger prey, but relentless when threatened.

Attacks with a bite (2d6). Anyone taking Critical Damage is swallowed whole, losing 1d6 points of STR each round through digestion until they are pulled or cut out. Breathes Steam in a 20ft cone once per hour for 1d6+2 Damage.

Beckoning Shadow

STR 10, DEX 17, WIL 13, 6hp.

Must stick to a surface, as a normal shadow, but can pass from one side of a surface to another. Will try and lure targets to touch it. Upon touching the shadow the victim loses 1d6 WIL each turn. Escaping the Shadow's grip requires a WIL Save .

Immune to normal attacks. Can only manipulate objects touching the surface. A spell that would bring someone back from the dead will kill the shadow. The shadow is repelled and eventually destroyed by light.

Strange Hunter

STR 13, DEX 13, WIL 12, 14hp, Armour 2.

Speaks only a bizarre language and hunts the most impressive-looking prey it can find.

His shoulder mounts a beam-gun (2d6, disintegration on Critical Damage) and he carries an exotic, curved blade (1d6+1).

Thing of Glowing Smoke

STR 14, DEX 10, WIL 15, 10hp

Immune to normal attacks and any fire-based damage is thrown back at a target of the Thing's choice. The thing can be repelled by wind or cold-based means. Anyone that damages or is damaged by the thing in melee catches fire, taking another 1d6 damage at the end of their next turn, after which it is extinguished. Once per hour it can belch smoke to fill a large room. All attacks into the smoke, except those made by the thing, suffer -2 to damage.

Ebon Crawler

STR 12, DEX 18, WIL 7, 6hp, Armour 1.

Attacks with claws (1d6+2). Climbs walls and ceilings effortlessly. Anyone incapacitated or killed is pinned down as the Crawler dislocates its joints and starts to climb into the victim's mouth. On the Crawler's next turn it enters the victim's body, killing them, and enters a month-long hibernation state.

Dead Echo

STR 15, DEX 8, WIL 8, 12hp.

A character is implanted with a Dead Echo if they kill with one of the cursed black guns currently secured in Bastion's Vaults. The echo is always lurking invisibly inches away but only materialises and attacks (1d6+1) in complete darkness or when the character is looking at their reflection. The echo resembles a mutilated copy of the victim. When light is restored or the victim looks away from their reflection the echo disappears.

The Odd World

The Free States

The dozen states of the northern continent and their distant colonies have been united for over a century. Despite the treaty, states remain on the edge of conflict with each other.

Bastion – Hub of Mankind

With nearly a million citizens, Bastion is the self-proclaimed capital of the Free States.

Its skies are black with smoke and its streets bustling with residents from every corner of the world. Canals feed the city with trade from every direction and vast factories produce mass goods and new prototypes.

The city sits on a network of tunnels and vaults that hold devices and beings of great power. Their contents are only known and accessed by the ministers that lead the nation's parliament. New ideas and enterprises flourish along with frequent and bloody revolutions.

The Union of Man have flooded Bastion's streets with blood in their search for Astral imposters. They claim shape-shifting beings occupy nearly every point of power in the city. Meanwhile, countless sects of astral worshippers have vastly different beliefs and agendas, rarely coexisting peacefully.



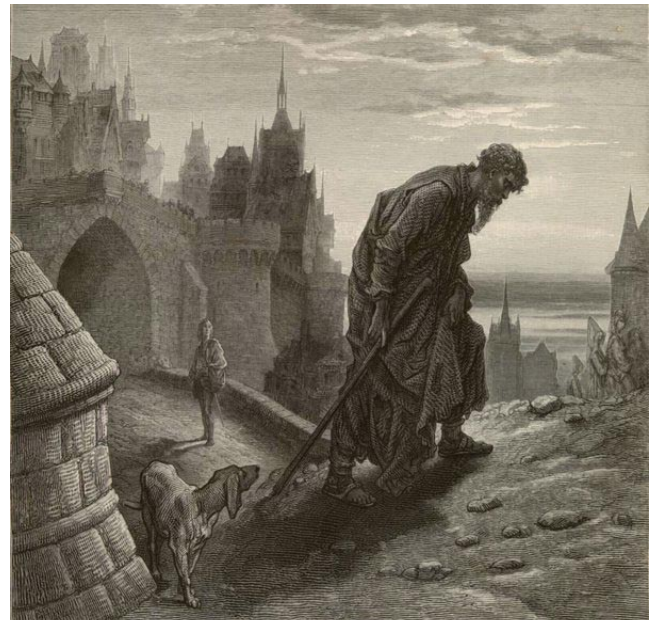
Beyond Bastion

Deep Country

With so much of the populace driven to cities, stretches of the countryside have been completely abandoned. Those that choose a rural life are often fiercely dismissive of city dwellers. Beyond the fields and villages are ghost towns, ancient ruins and overgrown woods haunted by rumour.

The Lesser Cities

Bastion is by no means the only industrial city in the Free States. Each State is built around a Capital and lays claim to the lands surrounding it. Dialects, fashions and traditions vary hugely and each has its own attitudes to modern innovations and the Astrals.



Beyond the Free States

The Golden Lands

Dotted amongst the feral tribes of this distant continent are bizarre ruins filled with riches and unnatural landscapes twisted by Astral influence. These lands are barely mapped and seem to stretch on forever with increasingly alien natives and surroundings.

The Polar Ocean

The great Polar Ocean stretches as far North as anyone has ventured. Few return and each brings a different story. Some talk of a shining paradise and some of a passage to the stars themselves. The mysteries of this Ocean continue to draw explorers to their death.

Expedition to the Iron Coral

Stop reading if you intend on playing in these sites!

Under The Iron Coral

The Iron Coral is a recent addition to the coastal waters of Hopesend, a scum-filled fishing town in North Country. The colourful residents of the town have seen its jagged, metallic form grow out of the sparkling ocean over no more than a month. Gaping holes beckon from its sponge-like shell and the few men to explore inside have not returned. Naturally, this has led to rumours of mysterious powers lurking within the coral's caves.

o: On the Coral

Waves lap over the shards of metallic coral that crop out of the frothy sea. The opening in the coral is easy to find and a dangerous climb down leads to **1**. Fish are floating unconscious around the coral.

1: The Pit

The sound of the ocean echoes strangely through the coral walls. Those looking closely can see tints of red pigment on the east side. This Coral is softer and can be hacked through to provide passage to **2**. There is a narrow 20ft chute leading down to **4**, a crawlway to **5** and a strange foam blocking the way to **13**. There are sea-cucumbers slowly writhing against the ground.

2: The Red Room

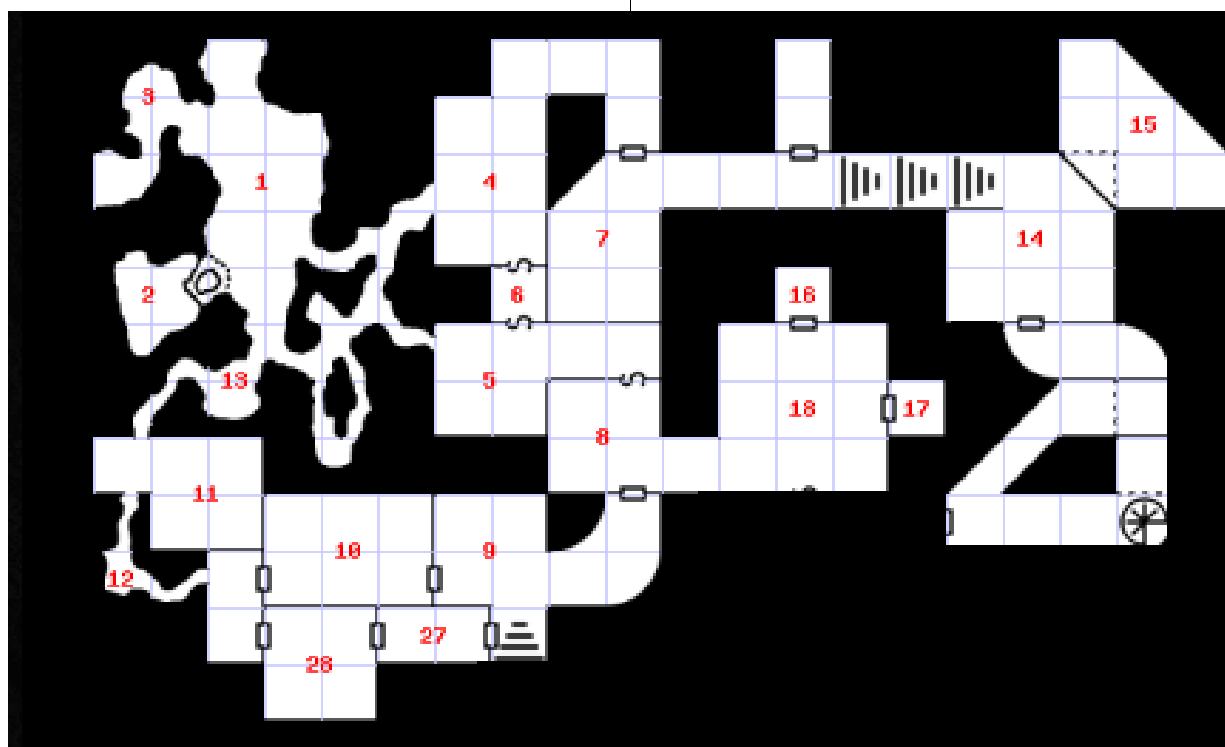
The walls in here are a deep red coral. There are a few coins (worth 2s) and buckles on the ground. Anyone spending a few moments in here starts to feel faint. Staying after this will require a WIL Save to avoid passing out. Anyone left in contact with the floor is digested in their sleep over an hour by the red coral. Even metal will be digested after a few days. After a few hours the red coral will grow over the entrance to this room again.

3: Escape Route

This tunnel is just wide enough to crawl through but is incredibly jagged and rough inside, with a cluster of Spike Molluscs (1d6 damage) troubling the first person to enter, after which they will close up. A half-hour crawl leads to a cellar in town. Part of the tunnel is flooded.

4: Observation Room

The transparent coral of this cave shows off an undersea view of the Iron Coral. At this depth there are spots of colour and exotic sea life. Large worm-like creatures suck at the glass, moving to any part of the glass the characters touch. There is a dead husk here. Door to **6**, corridor to **7**.



5: The Stash

This room contains empty boxes made from incredibly thin wood. There are some crumbs of a jerky-like food at the bottom and clear signs that the boxes have been tampered with. A heavy stone box holds six glass jars of tiny green and blue gems. Each jar will sell for 30s but the gems are impossible to collect by hand, appearing to ignore any friction. A secret door can be found by inspecting the south wall closely.

6: Vent

A tiny, sloped tunnel leading up from 4 to 5. Far too small for a person to fit through.

7: Signs of Life

This room's walls are coated in a yellow slime, which twitches on occasion. It is harmless but is being feasted upon by a creature resembling two sucker-like feet supporting a glistening black sphere. This is a Juncala and will use its Telepathic Scream if anyone interferes with it or the slime. Stairs lead to 14.

Juncala STR 5, DEX 8, WIL 4, 2HP. Does not attack normally.

Telepathic Scream: One target, WIL Save or lose 1d6 WIL and bleed from ears. Anyone reduced to WIL 0 by this attack has their head explode.

8: Misshapen Room

This metallic room appears to have been beaten out of shape, with a very uneven floor and walls. The ground is covered in a fine powder of bone.

Joins onto 18, door to 9 and secret door to 5 for anyone who inspects the wall.

9: Shaft to Nowhere

This shaft leads through a valve to the abyss of the ocean, killing anyone who is thrown down. Interfering with the Shaft too long will cause a Crawling Creaker to come up and investigate.

Crawling Creaker STR 10, DEX 14, WIL 8, 8HP, Armour 1. Carries a joint-stiffening poison. Anyone taking Critical Damage loses 1d6 DEX.

Staircase leads to a passageway blocked by overgrown red coral. Carving it away leads to 27.

10: Drying Room

There are several metal cages in this room, all of them empty. If they are interfered with there is a whistle for a few seconds before the room is blasted with heat. 1d6 damage, repeated until the character leaves the room.

11: The Source

This stone chamber has a metal pipe at its centre, sticking up from the ground. It seems to be the source of the foam filling this room and those nearby. A grate in the ceiling babbles out an incomprehensible language. Doors lead to 10 and 28.

12: Toad Room

A fat, lobster-like creature sits in the corner of this cave. It looks weighed down and cannot move. It is full of sparkling blue dust that is worth 50s if sold. It makes hand gestures but does not speak. Will understand common and attempt to help. Doors lead to 10 and 28.

13: Foam Room

This salty foam is harmless, smelling strongly of the sea. Pushing through it leads to 11.

14: The Sentry

A 10ft glass dome sits on the floor, filled with swaying water. The water sways towards characters that are near. Breaks on any contact, unleashing a huge Seaworm bursting in as water floods the room. The worm cannot fully enter the room, keeping its back half in the water and not pursuing fleeing opponents. A secret door leads to 15, opened by using Arcana on a wall marked with an Astral symbol. A sealed door can be smashed open to lead to an chute. This leads to an underwater cave where the water is held at bay by an invisible field. From here the characters can swim to the surface but risk the attention of an Abyssal Turtle.

Huge Seaworm STR 17, DEX 5, WIL 5, 15HP. Anyone taking Critical Damage is swallowed whole, losing 1d6 points of STR each round through digestion until they are pulled or cut out.

15: The Colony

A huge room with a strange braid pattern carved across its walls and ceiling. Lining its walls and corners lined with 12 feeble-looking, pale, boneless humanoids with empty white eyes, Husks. They are huddled around six sacks of silver balls, each worth 2g. Will only fight to defend the balls, clawing feebly. Anyone carrying one of the bags of balls must pass a WIL Save or find themselves unable to leave this chamber. They can be forced out but if left they will slowly decay into a Husk.

Husk STR 4, DEX 6, WIL 2, 1HP, claws (1d6-1).

16: Death Hand Store

Contains the Death Hand. An Arcanum containing Wither (Power 15) and Ghost Form (Power 13). A character that is incapacitated while activating this Arcanum activates Ghost Form permanently.

17: Life Hand Store

Contains the Life Hand. An Arcanum containing Dire Beasts (Power 15).

18: Glittering Air

The air in here faintly glitters. Anyone using an Arcanum will cause a Glittering Being to materialise and attack. It will not pursue further than this room.

Glittering Being STR 16, DEX 10, WIL 15. 12HP. 1d6+1 damage in melee from freezing cold, ignoring armour. Immune to normal weapons. Upon causing Critical Damage the being opens its maw and the target loses 1d6 WIL, causing disintegration on death. Joins with **8**. Doors lead to **16** and **17**, marked with Astral signs for Death and Life respectively.

27: Behind the Jaws

Carving further into this room starts to cause loud roars of pain and the coral starts to bleed. Eventually it becomes too tough to cut through but the creature facing **28** will be dead. Its gut contains a suit of chain armour, a dagger, a longsword and 50s worth of gems.

28: Jaw Trap

One wall of this room is covered in red coral, with a large, rocky outcrop. Close inspection will show it is breathing. Getting too close will cause the jaws to snap forward (1d6+2).

Jaw Beast (STR 14, DEX 1, WIL 5, Armour 2, 10HP)

Immobile. Jaws (1d6+2).

Its gut contains a full suit of armour, a dagger, a longsword and 20s worth of gems.

Wandering Encounters

- 1: A scrawny man and sickly boy scrounging for treasure.
- 2: A floating "glitter cloud" that will summon the glittering being if anyone uses an Arcanum.
- 3: A sudden rush of hot air.
- 4: Sprayer Thing.
- 5: A lone, starving husk.
- 6: A juncala.
- 7: Coral Climber
- 8: Slug crate
- 9: 1d6 Murky Water Missiles (1d6 damage each, continuing every round until washed off with water)
- 10: Lost fisherman, STR 12, DEX 8, WIL 8, 1d6-1hp, Simple Weapon.

Slug Crate

STR 12, DEX 1, WIL 5, 4HP

A huge metal box crawling on a single sluglike foot. Cannot attack normally. If damaged the crate will whirl before launching the lightbeam disc for 2d6 Damage.

Coral Climber

STR 6, DEX 14, WIL 4, 2HP.

Small, brittle-bodied human. Attacks with a dagger. Will follow and try to get off an annoying dust cloud before fleeing.

Dust Cloud: Blinds until eyes are washed. DEX Save or subtract 2 from attacks until eyes are washed. Use once per hour.

Sprayer Thing

STR 6, DEX 8, WIL 5, 2HP

Squat, four legged creature with a toad-like body and vast, round, gaping mouth that also functions as a sensory organ.

Blasts a cloud of barbs. DEX Save to avoid getting barbs stuck into face. Will hurt but fall harmlessly out of any other body part. After a few minutes they submerge underneath facial skin. A wriggling sensation continues for a few moments. Face starts to scab over, looking quite hideous. Healed by a Full Rest.

The Falling Marsh – The Wound of the World

The marsh separates the Iron Coral to the North from the port of Hopesend to the South.

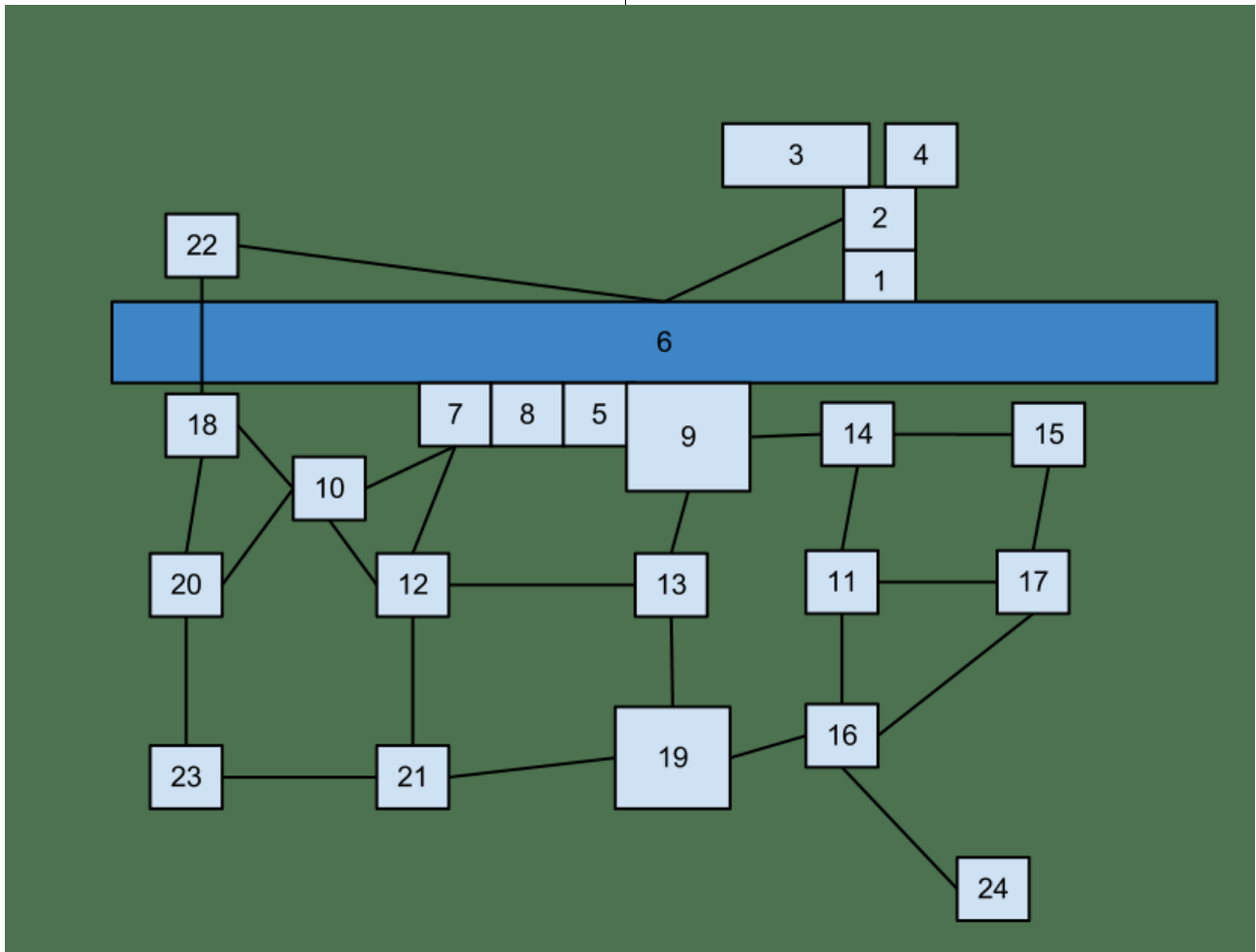
A cold, soggy marsh with hazardous fog and hideous odour. The elderly locals remember it as lush farmland and a quaint village. Each year the land has seemed to sink deeper and has become overgrown with thick vegetation. Even the local wildlife is rumoured to have grown less desirable.

3 - Wooden Walkway

Leads over a rushing underground river. Two people's weight will break it, forcing a DEX Save to avoid falling into the water (1d6 damage per round until rescued or passing a DEX Save). Leads upwards to 6.

4 - Rope Tunnel

A narrow tunnel with a thick rope hanging out of it. Pulling it will reveal the other end is bloody. The tunnel is a dead end besides some unidentifiable bones.



1 - Spiral Staircase

Damp, slippery steps lead down some 20 feet. At the base there is a corridor leading to 2, branching off to 5ft cube cell with crude self portraits carved on the wall.

2 - Columns

At waist-height some pillars have holes you can reach into. There are polished shells giving off a faint sparkle in some of these. Grabbing them triggers metal jaws for 2d6 damage. At the end of the passageway doors lead to 3 and 4.

5 - Underground Stash

A hidden chute leads down into a tiny hideout containing boxes of dried meat, hard bread and some empty liquor bottles.

6 - Riverside Walk

The air here is thick with insects. River leads through to 7, going up the bank leads to 8 and those inspecting the bank will find 5 and 19.

7 - Lilly Pad Pond

The bottom of this pond contains a bag of personal belongings worth 20s including a mirror, shoes and a hairbrush and weighed down with rocks. Bugs will swarm onto anyone not carrying a torch. This causes -1 to Damage on attacks through distraction.

8 - Rock Pile

A pile of rocks stacked high. Pulling them down reveals a large animal skin sealed with wax and stuffed with dozens of seabirds. They smell foul. Heading further away from the river leads to **10**.

9 - Sinking Shack

A house half-sunk into the marsh. Mundane items found inside.

10 - Golden Orchard

A clearing thick with golden flowers. A blanket and empty box has been left in the middle of the clearing. Harmless insects buzz around.

11 - Watering Hole

Two random encounters here, interacting with each other. The water faintly hums. At the very bottom of the deep waterhole the Iron Coral is starting to grow.

12 - Ruined Square

The remains of a stone-paved square and well. There are 2d6s of coins at the bottom of the well.

13 - Hoarding Cave

Crawling with centipedes. The cave leads into the hoard containing piles of furniture, household items, skeletal corpses and some jewellery worth 2g. 4-in-6 chance it is being guarded by a pair of ape-men. They will defend their hoard but flee when badly hurt. They will continue to harass anyone that steals from them.

Swamp Ape-Man: STR 14, DEX 12, WIL 6, 8HP. 2-in-6 chance of approaching with curiosity, or else will be hostile on sight. Communicates with a form of sign language and can use simple tools.

14 - Body Pit

A mass grave has become partially revealed here. Rotten wooden boards are marked with dozens of names. The bodies are heavily decomposed.

15 - Warrior Statue

An eroded statue of a warrior wielding an axe and shield. The carving underneath says "Felen the Dunmen's Scourge". Locals will know this warrior was known for killing off the savage locals some decades ago.

16 - Hunter's Hideout

A well-built treehouse looks down over the woods. 25% chance of a pair of hunters being present. STR 11, DEX 13, 4HP. Muskets, daggers.

17 - Meat Trap

A hung piece of meat dotted with shiny shells. Pulling on the rope will trigger two swinging logs (2d6) that are clearly visible in advance.

18 - Leviathan Corpse

The corpse of a huge fish lies rotting on the ground. Has attracted flies and centipedes.



19 - Dark Cave

First room: A wide natural cave with a low-ceiling and columns obscuring view. 1d6 poisonous centipedes will try to sneak attack anyone that enters. Others are hiding in holes. Crawspace leads to next room.

Centipede (STR 6, DEX 10, WIL 4, 1hp. Critical Damage causes 1d6 STR loss)

Second Room: Natural coral cave with some loose floor. Some dead clams on the ground. First person passing through must pass a DEX Save or break through the ground, causing water to rush in. A field of glittering air will stop it ascending too high. Leads to Passageway.

Passageway branches into three. High path leading to the pool room, shaft down to the Anemone Room and carved corridor to the Wheel Room.

Pool Room: A carved room that ends in an underground pool, Light will disturb two Darkthings.

Darkthing (STR 14, DEX 10, WIL 6, 12HP) Bear-sized floating creature, cloaked in unnatural black smoke. No visible detail other than fleshy bubbles and lashing tendrils for 1d6 Damage. The smoke around them fades when they are killed. Their corpses will also contain a thick chain each wears around their body. Trying to pick this up is painful, as they are intensely cold. May be safely picked up with leather or other thick material but over time will cause the material to stiffen and crack. Causes 1d6 damage per ten seconds of exposure to skin. Anyone who is knocked unconscious from this damage becomes a Darkthing themselves.

Wheel Room: Carved room with a huge wheel in the centre. Turning it is quite impossible. Using an Arcanum causes it to start to spin and ascend. This reveals a container at the base of the wheel containing a carved sheet of metal that glows in response to a touch. This is an Arcanum containing the spell "Delay Poison" (Power 13, Touched target immune to poison for the rest of the day).

Anemone Room: Immense natural chamber filled with clear Anemones. 1d6 drones attack on sight. STR 8, DEX 7, WIL 15, 2HP. Club (1d6), 3d6s.

20 - Deadly Fruit

Several trees here bear fruit. Although not deadly they

taste foul and birds will squawk as you pick them.

21 - Research Lab

A partially submerged stone building containing a cramped lab. Oil burners, flasks, vials of deadly centipede poison (Critical Damage causes 2d6 STR loss).

22 - Steamy Pond

A very shallow pond that can be walked over. Warm to the touch and giving off steam.

23 - Cliffside Climb

A good place to get a view of the marsh. Seabirds have abandoned nests here.

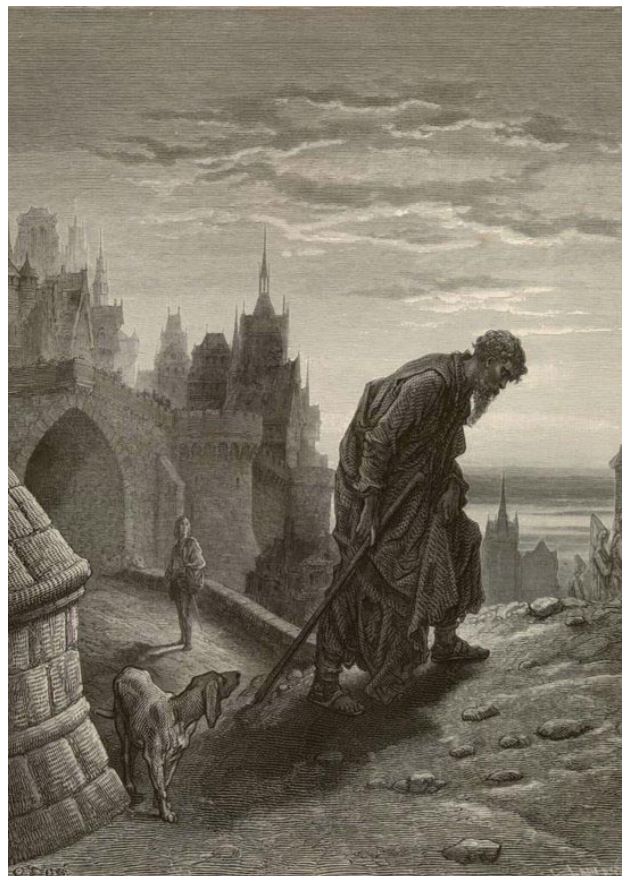
24 - Thick Wood

Trees eventually thin to reveal...

Mother Anemone

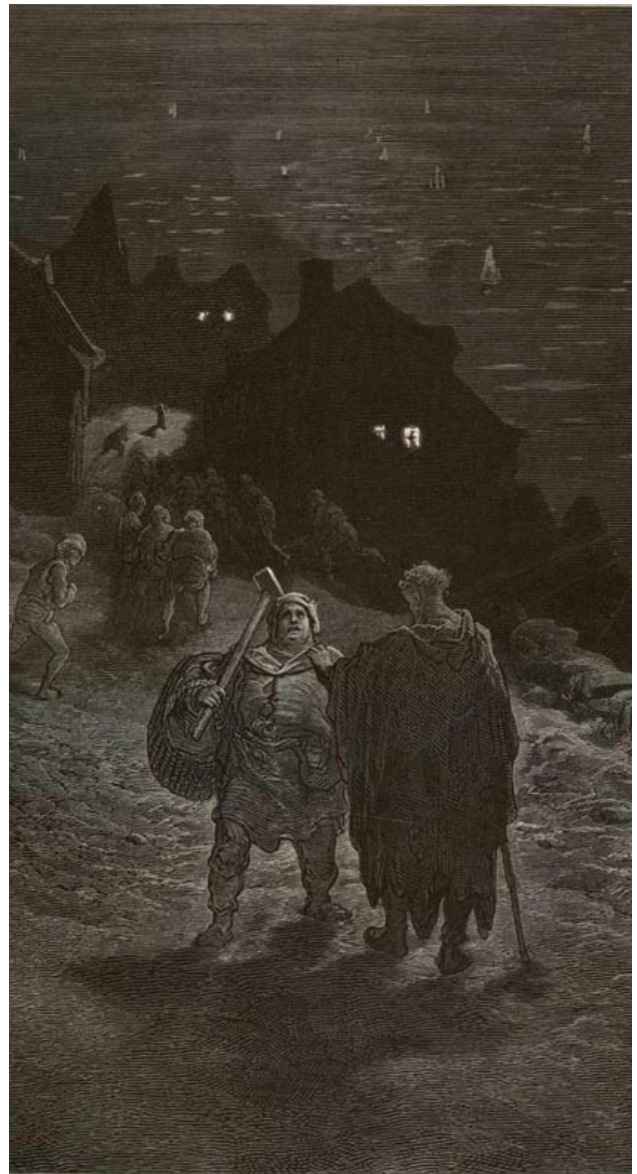
STR 18, DEX 3, WIL 20, 20HP.

Anyone taking Critical Damage is pulled in and paralysed until freed (helper must pass a STR Save to avoid being pulled in themselves). Consumes anyone left for an hour, releasing them as a drone. May alternatively release an electric shock. All nearby take 1d6 damage, ignoring armour. Has 2d6 drones at her disposal.



Random Encounters

- 1:** Mist Giant (STR 14, DEX 15, WIL 10, 14HP, 2d6 Club)
Relatively peaceful, afraid of fire.
- 2:** Rabid Dog (STR 8, DEX 14, WIL 5, 2HP).
- 3:** Lost fisherman, STR 12, DEX 8, WIL 9, 5HP. Spear.
- 4:** Swamp Ape-Man: STR 13, DEX 14, WIL 6, 8HP. 2-in-6 change of approaching with curiosity, or else will be hostile on sight. Communicates with a form of sign language and can use simple tools.
- 5:** Anemone Drone, STR 8, DEX 7, WIL 15, 2HP. Simple Weapon, 3d6s.
- 6:** Two Hunters "fishing" with a large piece of meat and makeshift catapult. STR 11, DEX 13, 4HP. Muskets, daggers.
- 7:** Ground splitting open to reveal growing red coral.
- 8:** Lost, angry man and family. STR 10, DEX 7, WIL 9, 4HP, Simple Weapon.
- 9:** Lost horse. (STR 10, DEX 7, WIL 8, 6HP)
- 10:** Could have sworn you saw something just then... I guess not.
- 11:** Towering Metal Man (STR 18, DEX 5, WIL 15, 18HP. Armour 5, Attacks for 3d6 damage. Deathray for 2d6 ranged damage). Astral Blob inside.
- 12:** Investigator (STR 7, DEX 12, WIL 11, 6HP) Looking for weird things.
- 13:** The Buzzard (STR 9, DEX 14, WIL 12, 7HP, 1d6+1 crossbow) complete scumbag, will follow at a distance to scavenge.
- 14:** Swarmface (STR 3, DEX 3, WIL 14, 6HP, ignore non-area-effect attacks) will talk in gibberish buzztongue. Will point to water if asked.
- 15:** Shifting ground. DEX Save or start to sink. STR Save to climb out or 1d6 damage each fail.
- 16:** Rising pillar of coral.
- 17:** Skyward blasting coral chunks.
- 18:** 7 Looters (STR 10, DEX 12, WIL 7, 4HP, Clubs (1d6), Shield, Armour 1) will rob anyone but flee easily.
- 19:** Metal Man Hand (STR 16, DEX 7, WIL 15, 10HP, Armour 4, 2d6 Damage)
- 20:** Astral Blob STR 4, DEX 4, WIL 20, 13HP. May activate Arcana remotely.



Hopesend – Last Port of the North

SIZ 3, 600 Members.

30 Town Guard (STR 12, 2d6HP, Muskets, Swords, Body Armour) leading a militia of up to 120 men (Polearms, 1d6HP).

Bastion lies One-Hundred Miles South.

Tunn, a Port-City, lies Fifteen Miles South-East.

Places

The Frontwalk

A row of shops facing out to sea. Your typical grocer, carpenter, armourer, tailor etc. The back of the shops are houses for the traders.

The Pickled Goose Tavern and Boardhouse

Provides drink, food and beds. Gambling with dice has become extremely popular and encouraged by the Landlady, Joy.

The Docks

In dire need of repair. The occasional ship's captain will be bellowing out requests for new crew.

Red Cross Tradehouse

Here Foxwater oversees all trade going in and out of Hopesend.

The Sipping Hole

No more than a hole in the wall selling small cups of rum. Frequented by passing sailors more than locals.

Backstreets

The poorly lit streets that lead from the seafront to most peoples' homes. Militia patrol irregularly at night with lanterns.

Random Happenings and Rumours

- 1: A huge wave washed over the town with little damage, but leading to rumours of the sea-witch returning.
- 2: Patcher thinks Foxwater is letting too many criminals into port and is calling for his replacement.
- 3: Monks have travelled from far south, claiming their abbey was overrun by shadows.
- 4: An engineer, has brought a shipment of superior guns into port.
- 5: Stories of Ghosts walking the outskirts of town.
- 6: Joy has come down with severe illness and the Pickled Goose has become lawless.

People

Fantastic Yar – Proven Wrestler and Acrobat

STR 14, DEX 16, WIL 9, 7HP.

Staff (+1 Damage), Ridiculous Outfit, 2s.

Performs for money, trying to get enough to travel to a big city.

Joy – Proven Bawdy Landlady

STR 9, DEX 8, WIL 12, 7HP.

Dagger, 10s.

Loves the noise and bustle of a full tavern. Hates being alone since she believed she was abducted by glowing creatures.

Doubter – Expert Wandering Carpenter

STR 11, DEX 7, WIL 15, 12HP.

Carpentry Tools, Crossbow, 50s.

Usually found drinking and telling stories.

Turncoin – Novice Street Thief

STR 13, DEX 9, WIL 7, 4HP.

Pistol, Club, Caltrops, Fire Oil, 2s.

Comes out at night to rob travellers.

Foxwater – Proven Port Overseer

STR 9, DEX 10, WIL 7, 7HP.

Fine clothes and jewellery, ceremonial mace (+1 damage, 1 hand), 3g.

Monitors all traffic in and out of the port but is lazy and easily mislead.

Patcher – Expert Militia Captain

STR 10, DEX 9, WIL 6, 15HP, Armour 2.

Sword, Shield, Pistol, Body Armour, 10s.

Eyepatch and wooden leg. Tells stories of man-apes in the marsh and his near-death at their hands. Leads a guard of 30 men in protecting the town and training militia.

Cathenne – Novice Reclusive Artist

STR 6, DEX 12, WIL 5, 2HP.

Artist Tools, Locket Arcanum, 10s.

Locket Arcanum: *Obliterate* (P17) Choose a target and roll 3d6. If this is equal or higher than their current HP they are completely destroyed in a blast of fire.

Paints the night sky and secretly believes she is receiving prophecies from the stars. Is unaware of the power of her locket, but senses *something* about it.

Copper - Expert Armourer

STR 16, DEX 10, WIL 13, 11HP, Armour 3.

Full Armour, Longsword, Shield, 50s.

Detests Dogal and his militia but begrudgingly supplies them with arms. Has a young apprentice, Pigott, that claims to have seen a metal giant roaming the marshes.