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THE BARNACLES AND THE PERCH

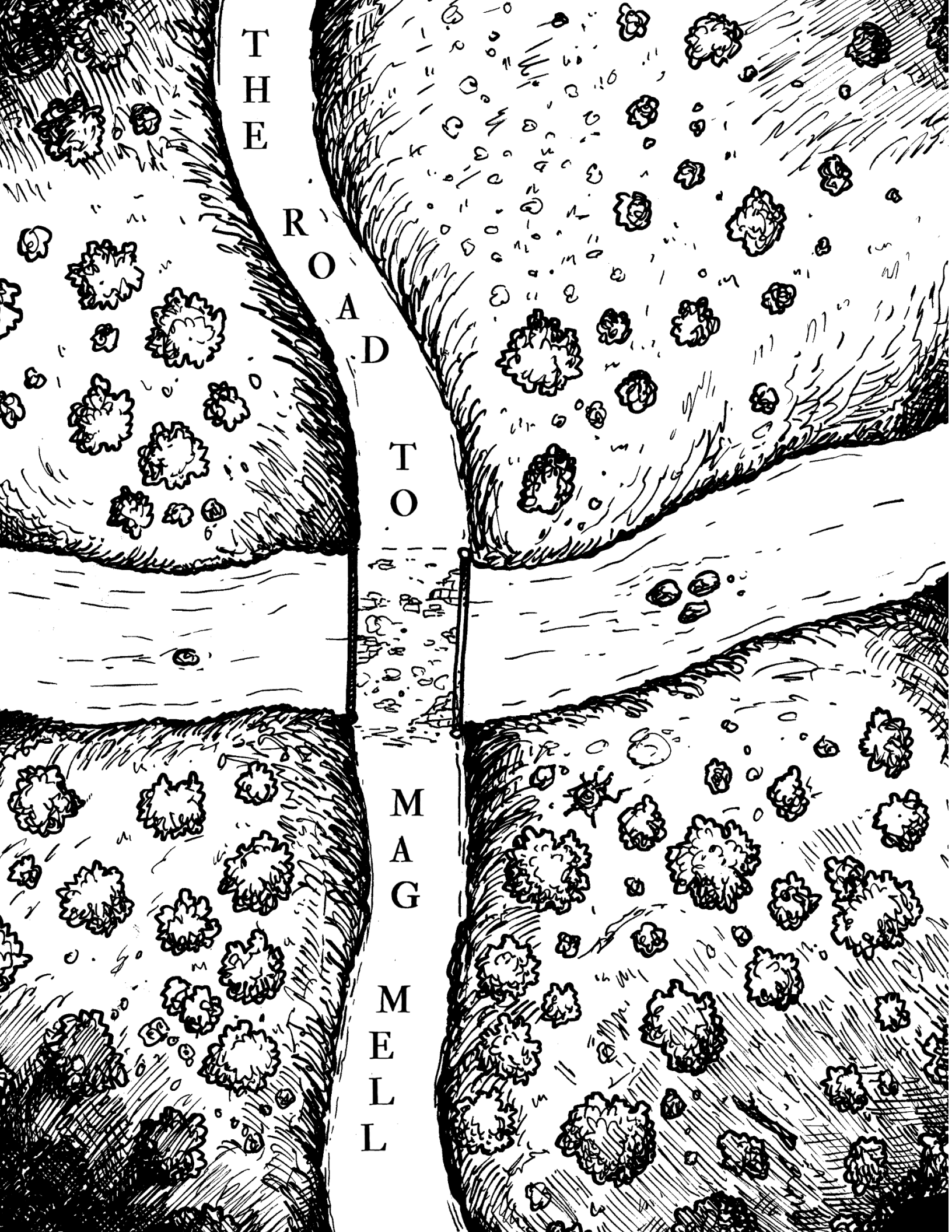
Based on clues from the journal of Fraff the Foolish and an Intelligence (History) check of DC 10 or consultation with Lady Una or a suitable sage, the party can ascertain a few details of the Erlking's failed conquest years ago, giving them clues as to the destination of the Green-Fingered Gentleman - apparently the new owner of the Sacred Cauldron.

It remains somewhat unclear as to where the Erlking was slain, for he possessed a kind of body-double, a doppelganger known as a Fetch, which he used as a means of political and strategic deception. This means that *either* the Erlking was killed at the **Battle of the Barnacles** or the **Battle of the Perch**, two now-ruined fortresses on the borderland between Logris and Mag Mell. To pick up the trail of the Sacred Cauldron, the party will have to investigate one or both castles.

The **Barnacles** is the name of a castle built on a series of islands which fell to the Erlking's forces after a prolonged siege. The castle was later drowned by ferocious tidal waves conjured by Oberon himself, slaying all within. Since this battle, the half-sunken ruin has passed back and forth between two occupying forces, who trade it regularly - from Mag Mell, Oberon's daughter, the **Mither of the Sea**, regularly occupies the castle, driving out one of Mab's monsters, the **Nuckelavee**, a nightmare of decay and destruction. As a result of this endless struggle, the Barnacles are a shell, scarred from countless battles, overgrown with seaweed, the beaches and swamplands around it choked with the bodies of the dead.

The **Perch** was held by the Erlking's forces and overrun by a joint attack from Oberon and Mab during their alliance against the rebel. Perched high in Murmuring Mountains, the Castle was ruined much later during the Year of Brimstone, when the Tithe to Hell went unpaid and the Archdemons took what had been promised them seven times over. A great fissure appeared in the mountains, sundering them in two, and demons poured forth, slaying all they found. Though the Tithe was paid and peace restored between Eflhame and Hell, the Perch is still be demon-haunted, resounding with the wails of the damned.

Both castles contain clues as to the potential location of the Sacred Cauldron. It be that the party only explores one of the two fortresses before moving on to the next phase of the quest in the city of Gossamer, or they may assail both; in any case, the following two brief adventures detail the journeys to these two castles, and could easily be run on their own as short, self-contained adventures.



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THE ROAD TO MAG MELL

After passing west through the Gloamwood, the party nears Mag Mell, the Summer Realm - a region of huge woodlands, soaring mountains, surging seas, fierce storms, and raging rivers. Where Tír na nÓg is a mellow, gentle realm, beautiful and subdued with the pastel hues of spring, Mag Mell is sublime, a place of glory and fame, wonder and terror.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

It takes four days to reach Mag Mell. On the journey, roll on the following random encounter table once per day, ignoring duplications:

Roll (1d8) Encounter

- 1 A beautiful roan unicorn, **Miguel**, emerges from the woods, arrows whizzing behind him. In hot pursuit comes the elf hunter called the **Lady of the Game**, a resplendently appointed woman with the eyes of a wolf, clad in the furs and scales of slain beasts and followed by three retainers. She seeks the unicorn's horn as a trophy. Miguel pleads with the party for assistance, but the Lady will not let him go without his precious horn. **Miguel**: AC 12, HP 67, Spd. 50 ft., Immune poison, charm, paralysis Melee +7 hooves (2d6+4) and horn +7 (1d8+4) **The Lady**: AC 15, HP 35, Spd. 50 ft. (mounted), Ranged (2 attacks) +7 (1d8+4).
- 2 A dozen of the **Erlking's** warriors have set an ambush on the road. They hit and run, taking captives (or corpses) with them - unbeknownst to the party, these are bound for the Sacred Cauldron, to be raised as undead servants of the Erlking. **Erlking's Warriors**: AC 12, HP 11, Spd 30 ft., Melee or Ranged +3 (1d6+1).
- 3 Two Seelie elves, **Sir Dandelion** and **Sir Jonquil**, fight a duel to see which of the two warriors may have the honour of facing the mysterious **Bleeding Knight** who guards a nearby bridge. The towering knight - some manner of phantom, ten feet tall - stands at the bridge, blood constantly seeping from his armour, staining it red. The Bleeding Knight is armed with an intelligent Greataxe of Wounding called **Red Tom**, prone to making gruesome jokes. The two elves will not allow anyone to pass until they have first fought their duel and then defeated the Bleeding Knight, though they are likely to be slain. Under no circumstances will either fairy knight allow others to aid them in the battle. The Bleeding Knight likewise demands single combat, and any Lawful creature who defies this edict suffers disadvantage on attack rolls against it.
Fey Knights: AC 18, HP 52, Spd. 30 ft., Melee (2 attacks) +5 (1d10+2).
Bleeding Knight: AC 18, HP 85, Spd. 40 ft., Vulnerable to Bludgeoning, Immune Poison, Exhaustion, Melee (2 attacks) +7 (2d6+4).

- 4 A little robin named **Wilhelm** chirps at passersby from a juniper tree. Anyone who can communicate with animals can hear his sad story - he is the spirit of a boy who was murdered by his treacherous stepmother, who killed, cooked, and ate him after he refused to call her “mother” - she told his father he’d run off. Wilhelm begs for assistance with his revenge, and will lead the party to his parents’ house, claiming that if he eats her heart, he will transform back into a little boy - the house lies in the mortal realm, accessible via a narrow path through the woods that leads into the misty borderland between worlds.

Unfortunately, this whole tale is a terrible lie. Wilhelm is neither a robin nor a boy but a cruel bogle from Logris. The stepmother claims (truthfully) to have never had a son if confronted, and if questioned, claims to have been harassed recently by mischievous fairies. A successful Wisdom (Insight) check vs. the bogle’s Charisma (Deception) (+6) can hint at the ruse if the party asks the right questions; the other hint is the iron horseshoe over her door, which wards off fey, requiring a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw to bypass. **Wilhelm**: AC 13, HP 10, Spd. 20 ft./fly 40 ft., Melee +5 (1d4+3) and Con save DC 11 or take 3d6 poison.

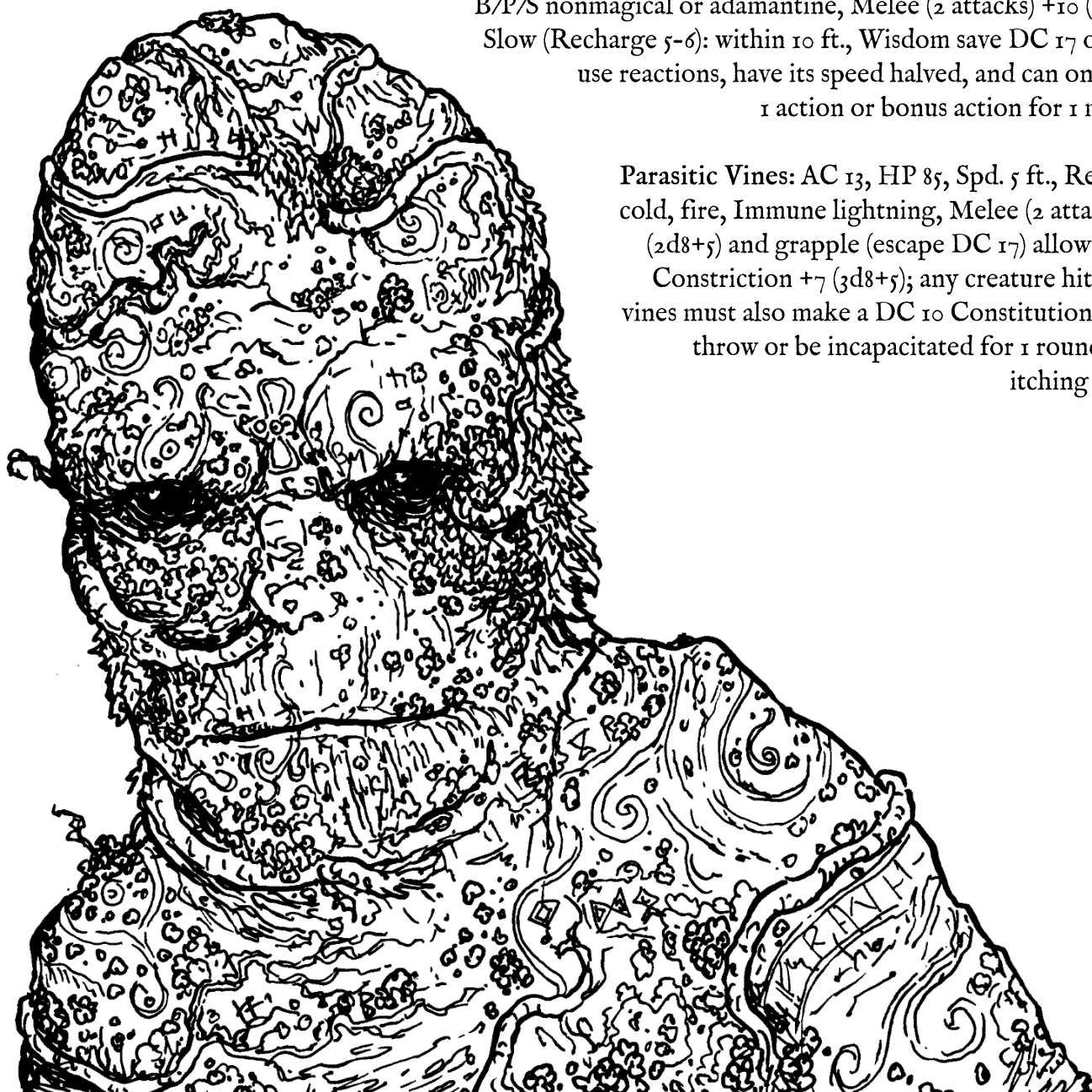
- 5 A young elf-maid, **Giselle**, known as the **Girl Without Hands**, wanders the path. She is missing both hands and begs the party to give her replacements - in exchange, she will give the donors her rings, a **Ring of Sustenance**, which prevents any need to eat or drink, and a **Ring of Endless Wealth**, which causes the wearer to cough up 1d100 gold pieces each day. She claims that she cannot tell why she lost her hands due to the conditions of a curse. If a party member surrenders a hand, they can no longer wield two-handed weapons and can only hold one object at a time.
- 6 A giant tree overshadows the road. Suspended from its boughs like fruit are chrysalises containing what look like fey children - hamadryads. A huge, hungry-looking bear, **Sebastian**, slavers below the tree. If one of the party members can help him in knocking loose a meal, he will protect them in their next battle. If, instead, they frighten the bear off (or kill him), when one of the hamadryads drops from the tree it rewards the party with twenty Goodberries which retain their magic for a full week. **Sebastian**: AC 12, HP 42, Spd. 40 ft., climb 30 ft., Melee bite +5 (1d8+4) and claws +5 (2d6+4).
- 7 A dozen mortal missionaries preach the word of the Hanged God by the roadside, urging passersby to repent their sins. They’re in the midst of baptizing a pixie, who seems to view the process as some sort of game. They beseech the party to donate to the Church and join them in prayer. If the party donates at least 50 gp total, the leader, **Father Darius**, casts *Prayer of Healing* over the party. **Missionaries**: AC 10, HP 9, Spd. 30 ft., Melee +2 (1d4), Spells: *Sacred Flame*.

- 8 One of the Walking Stones - as distinct from their sedentary cousins, the Standing Stones - wanders the trail. Shaggy with moss and covered in parasitic vines, it is adorned with ancient runes that shift and rearrange themselves subtly, but these are obscured by the vines. The Walking Stone asks if the party would be so kind as to remove the vines - which they discover to be sentient, endowed with puissance from the spells. They defend themselves against removal.

If the vines are removed, anyone who consults the runes beneath them can write down a cryptic prophecy of some kind. The prophecy must rhyme and cannot mention proper names. The DM takes any prophecies generated and must attempt to work some of their imagery into the campaign at some point, though “Monkey’s Paw” logic is, of course, encouraged.

Walking Stone: AC 17, HP 180, Spd. 20 ft., Immune Poison, Psychic, B/P/S nonmagical or adamantine, Melee (2 attacks) +10 (3d8+6), Slow (Recharge 5-6): within 10 ft., Wisdom save DC 17 or can’t use reactions, have its speed halved, and can only take 1 action or bonus action for 1 minute.

Parasitic Vines: AC 13, HP 85, Spd. 5 ft., Resistant cold, fire, Immune lightning, Melee (2 attacks) +7 (2d8+5) and grapple (escape DC 17) allowing for Constriction +7 (3d8+5); any creature hit by the vines must also make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated for 1 round while itching madly.



THE VASTWOOD (TO THE BARANCLES)

To reach the Barnacles, the party must pass through the region known as the Vastwood, where the trees stretch seemingly endlessly into the sky, a land of absurd proportions. Entire ecosystems flourish in each level of the forest along the trunks of the huge trees. Like all of Mag Mell, everything feels heightened here, so grand and sublime it teeters on the edge of bathos.

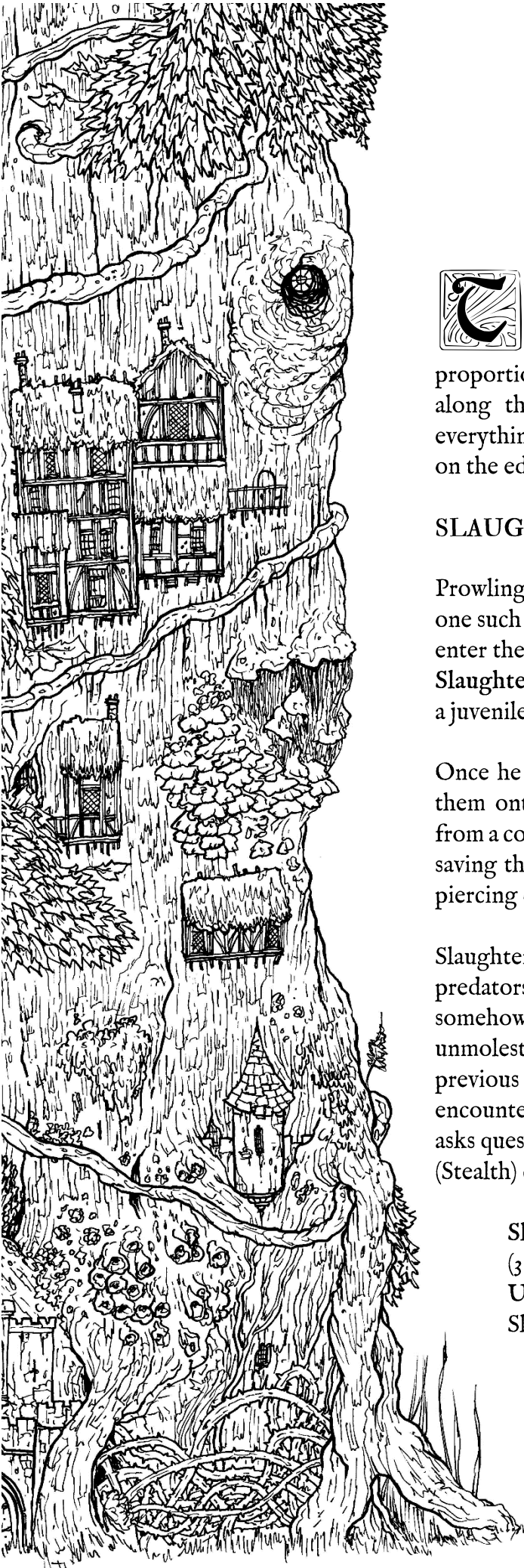
SLAUGHTERBEAK THE DIRE SHRIKE

Prowling the upper boughs of the Vastwood are enormous birds; one such monster, a butcherbird, will spy the party soon after they enter the Vastwood. This melodramatic creature, which calls itself Slaughterbeak, flatters itself a deadly dealer-of-death. It is in fact a juvenile of its species.

Once he grapples characters, Slaughterbeak will attempt to hurl them onto enormous brambles to skewer them, dropping them from a considerable height. The victim must pass a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 2d6 falling damage and 2d6 piercing damage; on a success, they only take the falling damage.

Slaughterbeak will not attack those he considers to be “fellow predators.” If they party can prove their “predator cred” somehow, the angsty teen dire shrike allows them to pass unmolested. This typically will involve displaying trophies of previous kills, or at least describing in gruesome detail such encounters. Generally, however, Slaughterbeak attacks first and asks questions later. He has +6 Stealth and advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in the upper canopy.

Slaughterbeak: AC 14, HP 68, Spd. 30 ft., fly 50 ft., Melee (3 attacks) +5 (1d8+3) and target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Slaughterbeak only gets one attack (with his beak).



HOLLOWHAM

In the midst of the Vastwood is the town of Hollowham, a settlement built within a gigantic fallen log. Smoke pours from knotholes, trickling up to the distant canopy above. Buildings riddle the exterior of the log, while the interior bustles with activity, more structures climbing up its curving sides, lights twinkling from its depths. The town is ruled by the elfin princeling known as **Baron Borewell**, who maintains control of the town with his **Stag Beetle Guard**, armoured insects who fight with glaive and mandible. They extract significant taxes and tariffs on goods passing through Hollowham, ensuring Baron Borewell's continued wealth. There are seven districts in Hollowham if one includes the mysterious Burrows:

The Bolemart: In the middle of Hollowham is the teeming market called the Bolemart, where fairies, elves, gnomes, and the odd goblin, Lengian, or firbolg exchange goods - enormous fruits and vegetables, meat, furs, livestock, arms and armour, charms, scrolls, spellbooks, and all manner of other objects. Carts drawn by horses, elk, or giant mice bustle through the Bolemart piled high with items for sale, and the log echoes with the constant cries of costermongers.

The Brackets: The "slums" of Hollowham are known as the Brackets, named for the bracket fungi that infest part of the log's length. A sprawl of hovels, the Brackets are thick with toxic spores - and with fungoids, who dwell in some numbers amongst the dilapidation and rot. Despite its pungency, the Brackets also contain a fine alchemist, one **Roberta Glug**, a gnome famous for her cures and potions. Here can also be found the **Toadstool Tavern**, a notorious haunt of rogues and ne'er-do-wells, though said to possess fine drink. The Brackets also contain entrances to the **Burrows** beneath Hollowham.

The Burrows: Tunnels wind beneath Hollowham, an extensive series of excavations that sprawl deep under the forest floor. Baron Borewell has tried on several occasions to fill the Burrows in, but they always return, re-excavated by Hollowham's shadier inhabitants, who use the tunnels for smuggling purposes. The most infamous of these smugglers are a gang of giant woodlice called the **Gramersow Gang**, led by the ruthless hag known as **Granny Grey**.

The Cobwebs: The web-swathed district known as the Cobwebs are home to a small colony of Lengians, immigrants to Elfame from the distant Dreamlands. They operate several workshops selling finely-wrought swords, nets, and spidersilk armour - the latter can be treated as a mithral Chain Shirt, acting as armour that does not impose Disadvantage on Stealth checks. A suit of it costs 200 gp at the **Attercop Armourer**.

Easthole: The district at the east end of the log is aptly known as Easthole; here stabling and lodging can be secured at **Woodpecker's Rest**, a rambling inn of several tottering storeys. Those seeking to quench their thirst might also pay a visit to the **Acorn & Briar**, a boisterous establishment run by the eponymous duo, an oaken treefolk and a needle-witted pixie.

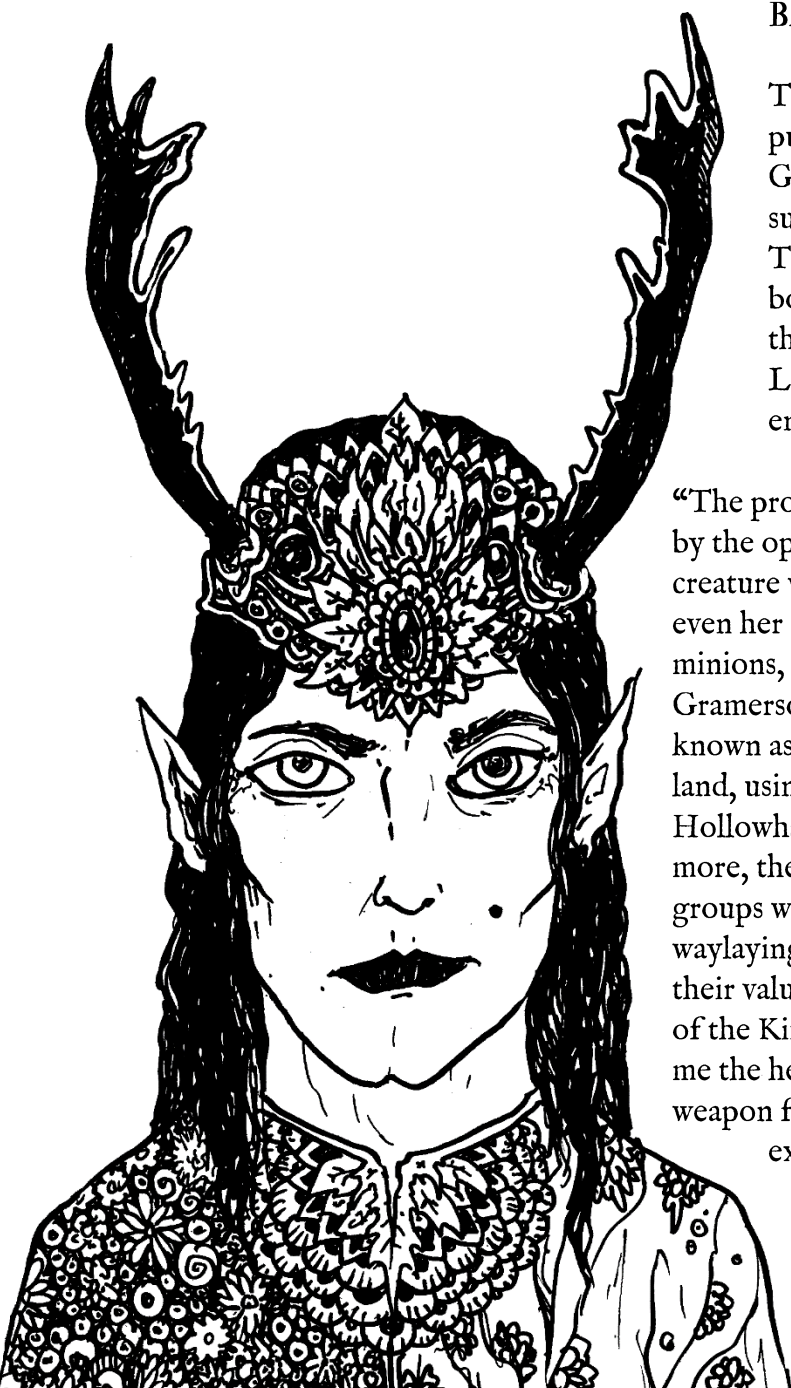
Toptrunk: The rich digs in Hollowham, Toptrunk consists of the homes of the wealthy, built largely atop the log rather than within it. Largely owned by wealthy merchants and minor nobility, the fortified houses can only be reached by long, winding stairways or mechanical lifts. Crowning the log, exposed to a shaft of valuable sunlight, is the ornate **Manor of Baron Borewell**, ruler of Hollowham - a pompous Seelie vassal to King Oberon, Baron Borewell boasts of having created Hollowham originally by removing the wood from its middle, though many believe this wood rotted of its own accord. The Manor itself is a resplendent example of fey architecture in the heart of Toptrunk, protected by a veritable army of the Stag Beetle Guard.

Westhole: Those heading out towards the coast will take the road through Westhole. Lodgings can be found here at the **Adder's Bane Inn**, named for the gigantic serpent's fang on its wall, a trophy of the snake-slaying proprietor known as the **Fangtaker**.

BARON BOREWELL'S REQUEST

The party may be contracted by Baron Borewell to put an end to the smuggling operation by slaying Granny Grey. Any Seelie Fair Folk will be summoned to Baron Borewell's Manor in Toptrunk as a matter of course, and if the party book lodgings they will similarly be contacted by the Stag Beetle Guard and instructed to meet his Lordship. Baron Borewell's request is simple enough, in theory:

"The prosperous town of Hollowham has long been vexed by the operations of a vile hag, Granny Grey, an Unseelie creature who crept down from Logris - perhaps so hideous even her own kind could not bear her sight. She and her minions, a colony of woodlice who call themselves the Gramersow, have infested the tunnels below Hollowham, known as the Burrows. Here they flout the laws of the land, using their tunnels to smuggle goods in and out of Hollowham without paying the requisite tariffs. What's more, they have an alliance of sorts with local bandit groups who pillage and murder throughout the Vastwood, waylaying travelers along the road and relieving them of their valuables, and frequently their lives. These violators of the King's Peace must be punished. Should you bring me the head of Granny Grey, I would gift to each of you a weapon from my personal armoury, containing many exquisite weapons of ancient craftsmanship."





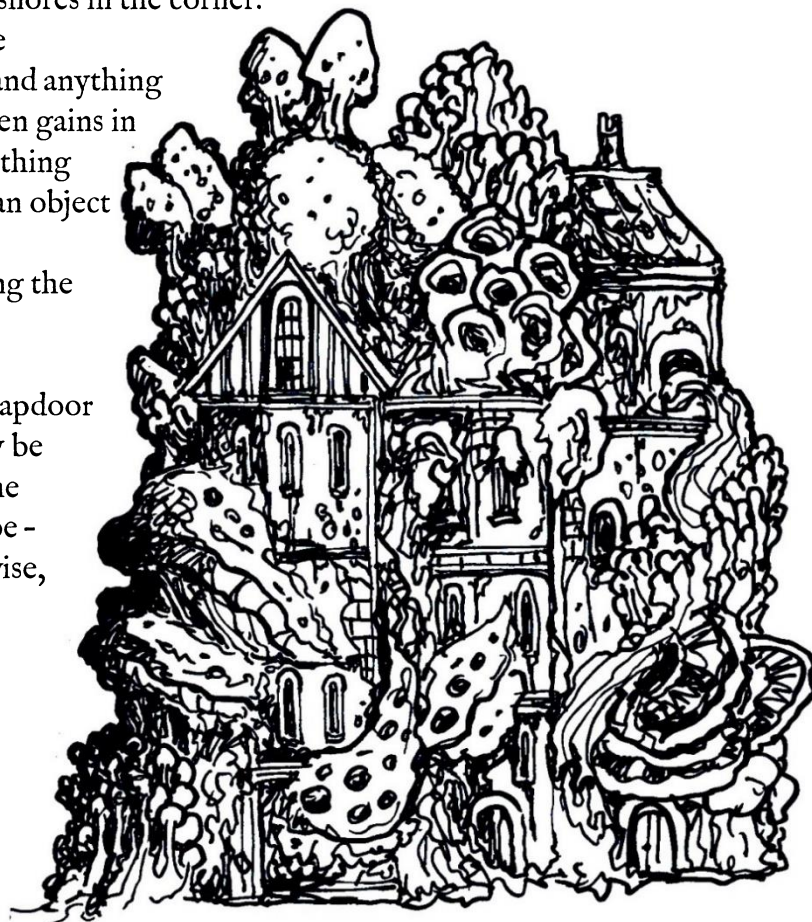
THE TOADSTOOL TAVERN

The Toadstool Tavern is a rancid tumbledown dive that looks ready to collapse under the weight of the fungi growing rampant across it. Within, the taproom reeks of spilled beer, dried blood, and fruiting bodies. The bartender is a vast, wheezing figure covered in tiny sac fungi, known as **Wineskin**, who reputedly brews many of the drinks on tap from fungi harvested from his own vast body, which appears to have grown into the Toadstool itself.

The tavern is the haunt of thieves and scoundrels, including a number of goblins, ill-favoured pixies, and even a handful of ratty-looking humans. These characters and crooks include:

- ❖ **Markus “Zigzag” Grimscowl**, a human adventurer from the city of Hex, gruff of manner and brawny of bicep. His face is criss-crossed dozens of times with scars. Asking about them is not recommended. He’s a skilled archer and competent swordsman, hireable for 5 gp per day and a share of any treasure.
- ❖ **Scabies and Zilch**, twin goblin sisters, deft cutpurses who gamble away most of their earnings here at the Toadstool. They love foul jokes and have breath like absolute death. Each is very capable with a knife, and as the evening wears on they switch from cards to chucking daggers at a target on the wall.
- ❖ **Mousebeard**, a firbolg barbarian who snores in the corner. He’s home to a gang of mice called the **Squeakthieves** who steal coins, food, and anything they can carry, then stow their ill-gotten gains in Mousebeard’s beard, a massive, mossy thing that hangs to the floor. Trying to get an object back requires a DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid waking the notoriously grumpy giant.

In the backroom of the Toadstool tavern, a trapdoor leads down into the Burrows. Accessing it may be tricky, however, as the fungoid bouncers of the establishment keep a close watch. A hefty bribe - at least 50 gold pieces - will buy access; otherwise, the party will have to use force or stealth, or somehow trick their way downstairs.



THE BURROWS

1. FUNGOID TOUGHS

Half a dozen fungoids armed with spiked cudgels and hand crossbows guard this roughly-excavated chamber. Obvious tourists are ushered into the gambling den quickly and not permitted to wander freely.

2. GAMBLING DEN

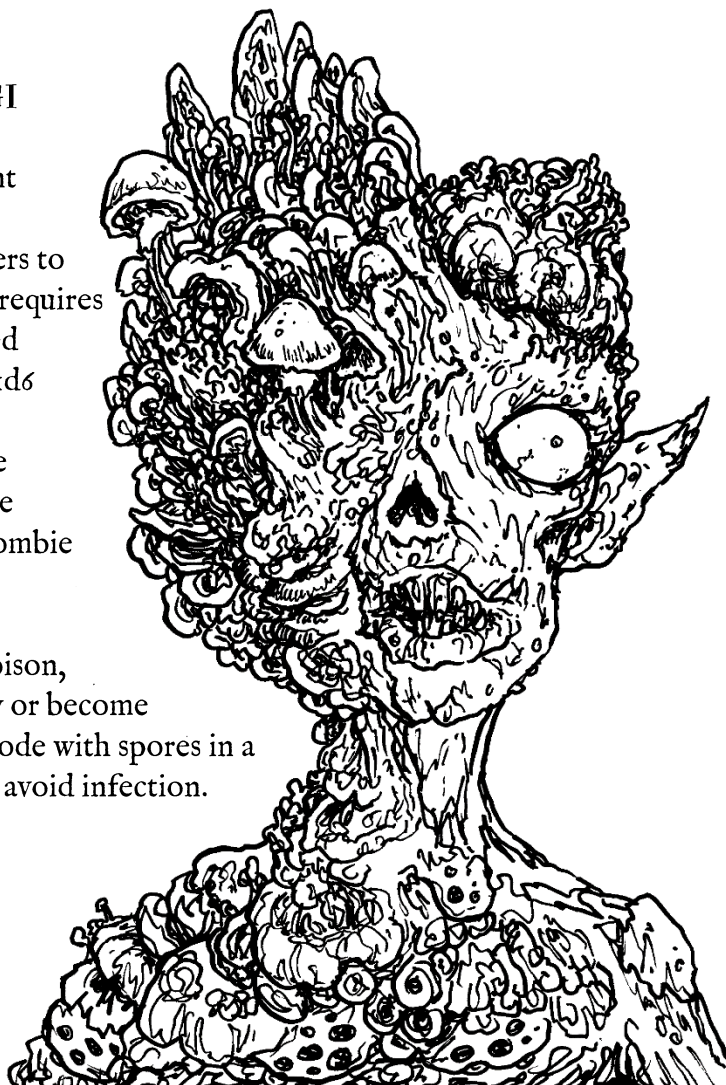
The rattle of dice and the click of tafl pieces echoes throughout this cavern, set up with crude tables for gamblers - fungoids, Fair Folk, gnomes, pixies, and the odd goblin. An imposing fungoid bouncer guards the exit. This is a good place to lay a few bets and lose a few coins; rumours of the Burrows can also gathered here. Notable gamblers include:

- ❖ **Velma Mornsaw**, a gnome tinker and card-sharp, well-acquainted with the Brackets and the Burrows generally.
- ❖ **Big Gulp**, a rotund goblin who drinks from a gigantic tankard nearly as big as he is, an ensorcelled object which automatically fills to the brim any drop of liquid placed within.
- ❖ **Longlashes**, a pixie tafl-master who buzzes over the board while playing, studying every possible angle.

3. FUNGI

Gigantic fungi fills this chamber, teeming with pungent spores. The chamber is guarded by a dozen slaving fungus-infested zombies who kill and bury any intruders to feed to the spurious grove. Merely entering the grove requires a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid becoming afflicted with Shambleshroom infection, dealing an immediate 1d6 poison damage; the infection spreads with another 1d6 poison damage every hour, requiring an additional save each time. Three successful saves cures the illness; if the afflicted creature is killed while afflicted, it rises as a zombie itself. Fungoids are immune to this disease.

Fungal Zombies: AC 9, HP 25. Spd. 20 ft., Immune poison, Melee +3 (1d6+1) plus DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become infected (see above). When killed, fungal zombies explode with spores in a 10-foot sphere, requiring a DC 15 Constitution save to avoid infection.



4 MEG'S LAIR

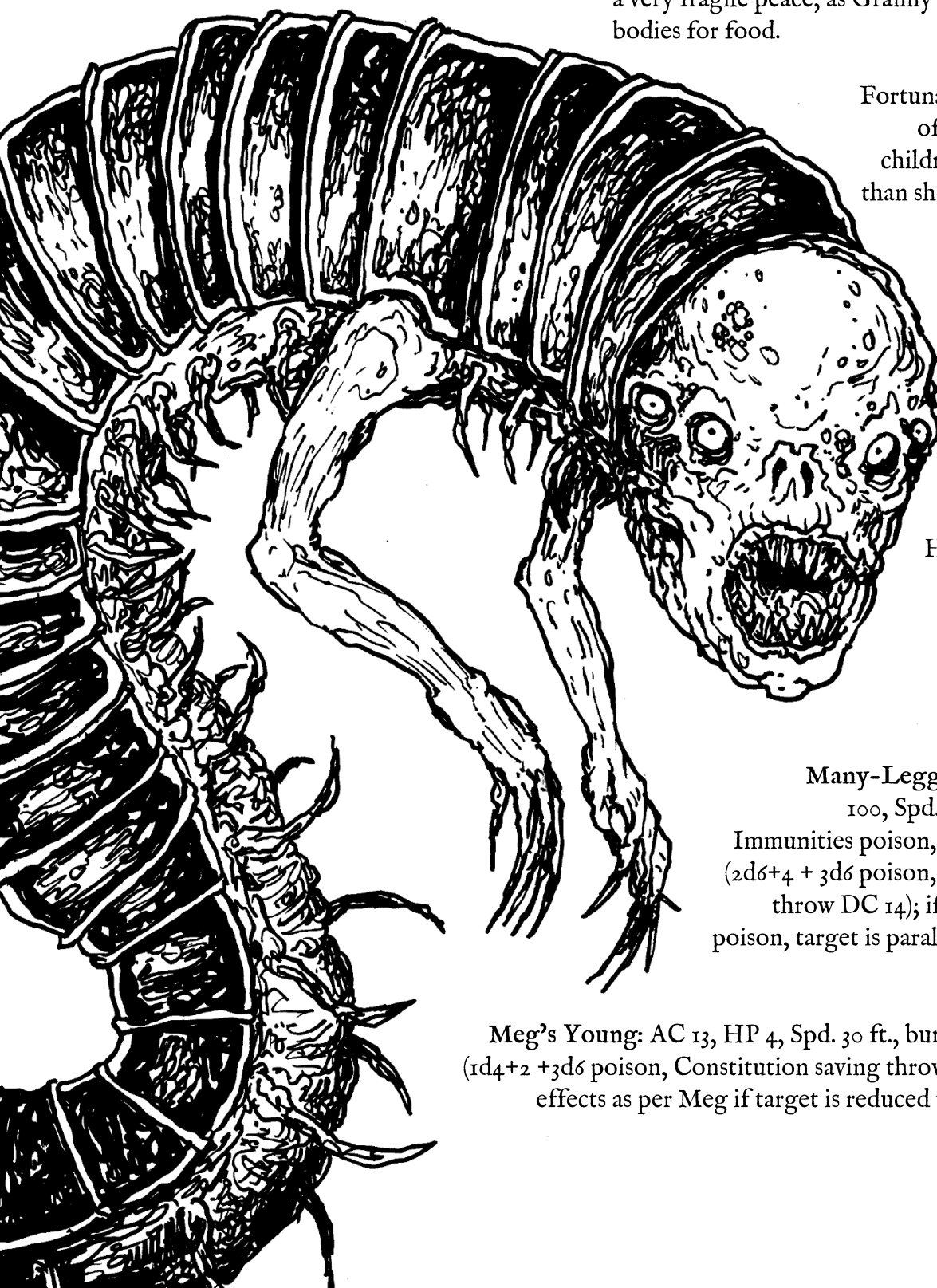
Hundreds of glossy eggs rustle in the nest of Scuttling Margaret, also known as Many-Legged Meg, the strange creature that first created the burrows. She is justifiably feared by all those who dwell in the Burrows, feeding as she does on fungoids, woodlice, and anyone else she finds in her earthen domain. She and Granny Grey are wary of one another, having coexisted in a constant state of antagonism ever since Baron Borewell drove the hag underground. They currently have a very fragile peace, as Granny's bandits bring Meg bodies for food.

Fortunately for the citizens of Hollowham, Meg's children are much smaller than she is, though they are still large enough to pose a threat to intruders.

Unlike Granny Grey, Meg cannot generally be reasoned with. However, if someone brings her a tasty treat in the form of fresh meat, she may hesitate before striking.

Many-Legged Meg: AC 16, HP 100, Spd. 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., Immunities poison, Melee (2 attacks) +6 (2d6+4 + 3d6 poison, Constitution saving throw DC 14); if reduced to 0 by the poison, target is paralyzed for 1 hour.

Meg's Young: AC 13, HP 4, Spd. 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., Melee +4 (1d4+2 + 3d6 poison, Constitution saving throw DC 11, plus poison effects as per Meg if target is reduced to 0 hit points).



“Many-Legged Meg”

Margo-Black-Teeth, Pallid Madge,
Mags the Baby-Eater -
Writhing Peggy, Wicked Padge,
Gretchen Shadow-Creeper.

You'd best keep clear of Scuttling Marge -
she's always on the prowl.
She'll make you plead, she'll make you beg,
she'll make you scream and yowl.

With fangs agleam, long as your arm,
and eyes alight with greed,
her foul caress'll make you squirm -
her kiss'll make you bleed!

Margaret Long-Arms, Green-Eyed Peg,
Marjorie-Most-Dreaded -
Sharp-Toothed-Molly, Crawling Meg,
Meg-the-Many-Legged.

Unto her babes she'll feed your eyes -
your heart she will devour.
She loves to listen to your cries -
she'll make them last for hours!

She'll sniff you out, she'll hunt you down -
she thinks it's all great fun.
Don't make peep, don't make a sound -
and if you see her, RUN!

Meg reproduces without need of a mate, laying fat, white eggs in her underground burrow. Her spawn bear the faces of those she has eaten and seem to possess fragments of their memories as well, often murmuring snatches of phrases and fragments of conversation. Meg dotes on her dozen or so chitinous children, feeding them the most succulent organs of her prey.

Many-Legged Meg almost never attacks outright, preferring to strike solitary targets. She often burrows under a target (such as a hapless adventurer wandering the Burrows) and then emerges, strikes, and drags her prey back to her lair. She can throw her voice and mimic human voices perfectly to try and break targets up, isolating them, stalking them slowly.

5. POOL

A pool of dirty water, this serves as the chief water source for several creatures in the Burrows and is considered something of a “neutral ground.”

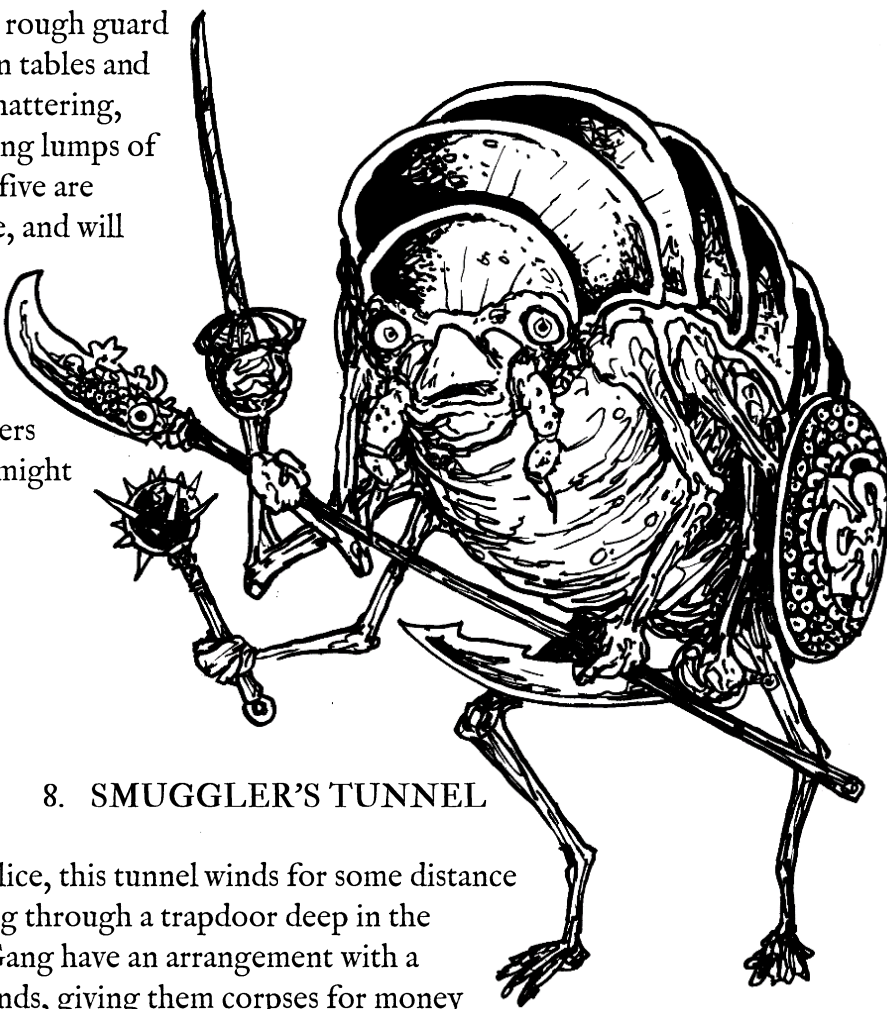
6. FRAGILE TUNNEL

This tunnel has a very fragile roof and is liable to collapse. If anyone hits the tunnel wall hard or if a sonic spell or other loud noise is cast within the tunnel, a rumbling precedes the collapse. Anyone still in the tunnel after a round must pass a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage, or half so much on a successful save. Those who failed are also trapped in the rubble and can only pull themselves free with a DC 20 Strength ability check.

7. GRAMERSOW GUARDS

The Gramersow Gang have a rough guard room here, with a few wooden tables and chairs. While four sit about chattering, sharpening weapons, and eating lumps of decomposing wood, another five are burrowed beneath the surface, and will awaken only if the guards are under attack. They initially attempt to deter obvious intruders, but will be receptive to Unseelie characters or others who look like they might be smugglers.

Woodlouse: AC 15, HP 22,
Spd. 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.,
Melee (2 attacks) +4 (1d10+2).
Tremorsense 60 ft.



8. SMUGGLER'S TUNNEL

Protected by two more woodlice, this tunnel winds for some distance underground before emerging through a trapdoor deep in the Vastwood. The Gramersow Gang have an arrangement with a Group of the Erlking's brigands, giving them corpses for money and trade goods. The Erlking's warriors are gathering cadavers to produce an army with the Sacred Cauldron - though the Gramersow do not know this (nor would the player characters).

9. GRAMERSOW LAIR

This dripping cavern serves as the lair of the Gramersow Gang, where they live, sleep, eat, and stow goods for smuggling. There are half a dozen woodlice here, though they will emerge to join in a fight in area 7 if one breaks out.

The following treasures can be found here:

- ❖ 2000 gold Elfmarks.
- ❖ 12 barrels of fine Elfin wine, each worth 100 gp.
- ❖ 20 crates of fine clothes, each worth 50 gp.
- ❖ 6 suits of spidersilk armour (treat as mithril Chain Shirt, acting as armour that does not impose Disadvantage on Stealth checks).
- ❖ 6 Potions of Common Healing.
- ❖ 6 doses of weaponized Shambeshrooms (see area 3).
- ❖ 100 longswords.
- ❖ 100 longbows.
- ❖ 50 halberds.
- ❖ 1000 arrows.

10. GRANNY GREY

The den of the Gramersow leader swarms with creeping vermin, attentive to the song of Granny Grey, a green hag who generally appears glamered as a pale elfin woman with luminous amber eyes, though even in this form there is something unnerving about her slightly too-wide smile. In addition to her woodlouse minions, Granny Grey commands a swarm of itching insects that can distract her foes while she dispatches them.

Granny Grey:

- ❖ Cunning and exceedingly wise.
- ❖ Knows the value of appearances.
- ❖ Wishes to reclaim Hollowham for herself and take vengeance on Baron Borewell.

Granny Grey is not instantly hostile and prefers to parley - she has a proposition for the adventurers.



“Baron Borewell is a lying sack of shit,” she proclaims. “*I* hollowed out this log, with my children... then Lord Bugbrains arrived, drove us out, and seized the place for his own. Oh, he’ll go on and on about honour and oaths, but he’s a hypocrite through and through. Now our only way to survive is through theft and banditry. Unless you were to help us.”

She grins crookedly and rummages around in her nest of garbage, withdrawing from it the severed head of an elfin man, with a sinister rune carved on the forehead. She passes her fingers over his face, and instantly the head’s visage changes to that of a wizened hag. She places the head in a wooden box.

“Give this to his Lordship, as ‘proof,’ of my demise. It’s cursed - an infestation of vermin will plague anyone who touches it, spreading out from them. When it becomes clear that the Baron is cursed, the people of Hollowham will have no choice but to exile him from their town - and perhaps then we can reclaim our place in the log above...”

Granny Grey: AC 17, HP 82, Spd. 30 ft., Melee +6 (2d8+4), Illusory Appearance, Dancing Lights, Minor Illusion, Vicious Mockery at will.

Insect Swarm: AC 12, HP 22, Spd. 20 ft., Resistant to B/P/S, Immune Charm, Fear, Grapple, Paralysis, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned, Melee +3 (2d4), and target must pass a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be Restrained.

In the event of combat in area 9, Granny Grey will cautiously emerge from her chamber. If things seem to be going ill for the Gramersow Gang, she will attempt to stop the fighting and treat with the invaders.

Though she values her woodlouse minions, she has a cold, calculating mind, and is willing to put aside petty grudges in pursuit of her larger goals - most notably, destroying Baron Borewell and retaking Hollowham for her own.



REWARDS

If Baron Borewell receives Granny Grey's head (or the glamered duplicate), he rewards the party with a weapon each from his armoury. He can also provide some intelligence as to the whereabouts of the Green-Fingered Gentlemen, who he can confirm passed through Hollowham some months past, accompanied by a mysterious figure whose face was obscured, but who brought a strange chill with it wherever it tread. An Intelligence (History) check of DC 20 hints that these figures might be Gwynn ap Nudd, son of Arawn, a cambion who slew King Finvarra, having joined the Erlking's army during his rebellion and rose up against his own father. He vanished after the Erlking's death centuries ago, doubtless fearing the wrath of his dread sire, the Horned King of Annwn. Here are the weapons of Borewell's armoury:

The Butterfly Blade

Longsword, rare (requires attunement)

This slightly curved sword of iridescent metal is set with glittering, many-faceted gemstones. It grants a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls made with it. When it strikes a foe, the wound blossoms with butterflies, which swirl around the injured creature for one turn, imposing disadvantage on attack rolls. The butterflies can be dispersed with a gust of wind or similar effects.

Goblin's Kiss

Handaxe, rare (requires attunement)

This ugly, notched beast of a weapon is intelligent, speaking with a deep, gravelly voice. It is highly prone to conspiracy theories, rabid speculation, and rampant bigotry. It grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. Each day, its wielder selects one species, culture, or other group; if they whisper this to Goblin's Kiss, it begins ranting and raving about this group, and deals an additional 2d6 damage against any members of that group. The rambling of the blade is such that it reduces the Wisdom score of its wielder by 1 per day of use, slowly poisoning their brain.

Whisper

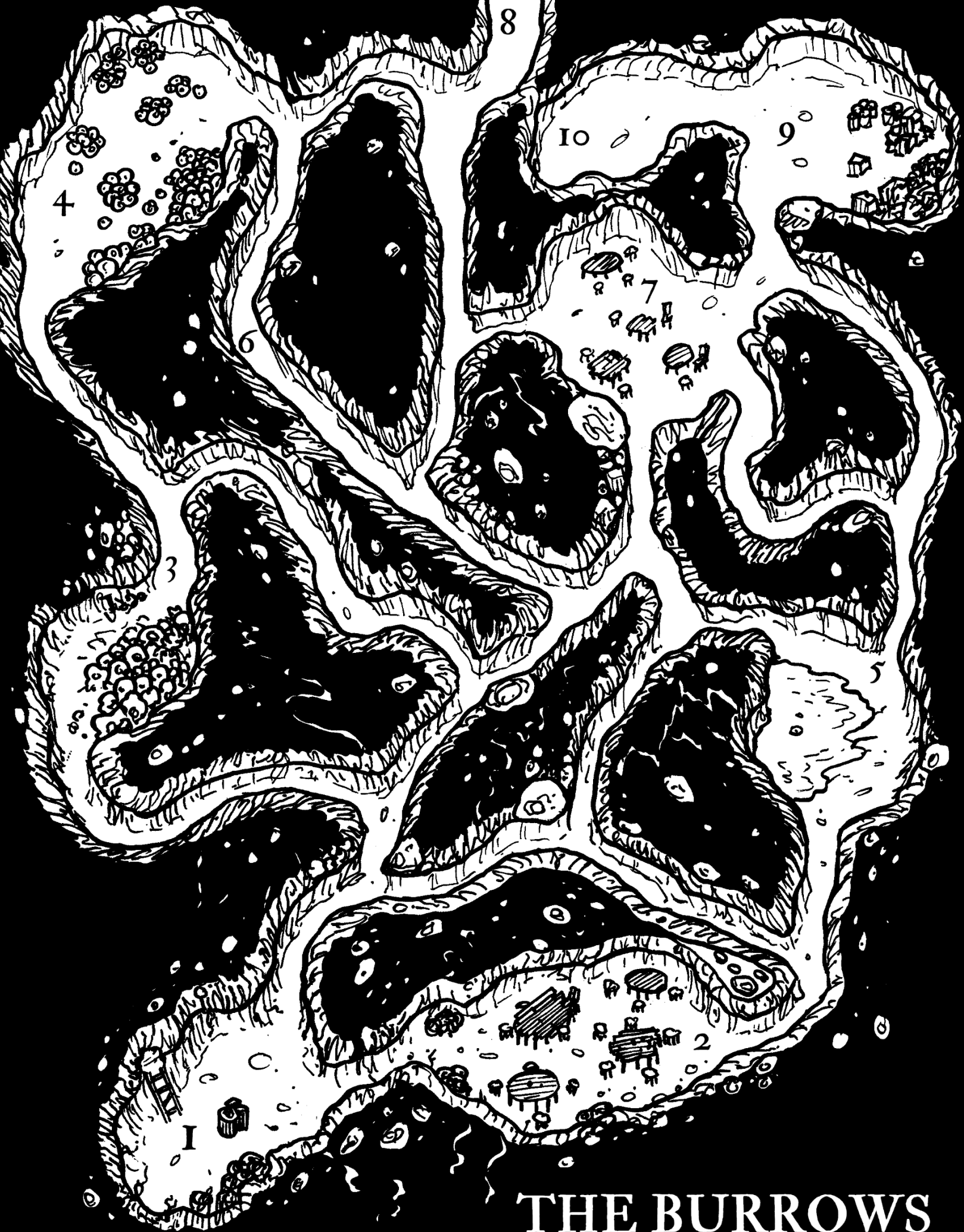
Shortbow, rare (requires attunement)

This shortbow made from dark, twisted wood grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. If it kills someone, the corpse animates as per a zombie under your control; you can only control up to one zombie at a time. The corpse also answers questions as per *Speak with Dead*.

The Wormdart

Dart, rare (requires attunement)

This well-balanced dart looks like a writhing worm and grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Once it strikes a foe, it becomes a tunneling worm that squirms its way into the enemy's body. Here it deals an additional 1d8 damage at the start of each of the opponent's turns unless they pass a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, which expels the worm - at which point it reverts to its weapon form.



THE BURROWS

THE HOWLING HILLS (TO THE PERCH)

To reach the Perch the party must travel through the Howling Hills, which lie on the border with Logris. These lightly forested hills are so-named for the ravenous gytrash that roam its lonesome crags - the result of wolves and hellhounds who interbred with one another. A desolate country, the hills are bereft of Sídhe - a handful of woodsman's cottages and the occasional remote firbolg fastness are the only habitations. One such bastion lies nestled deep in the hills, the isolated township of Redpelt.

THE LONESOME CABIN

A short distance from the road, a small log cabin perches on a spur of rock emerging from the dense forest. Its door stands open, swinging lightly in the breeze on a creaking, unoiled hinge.

Blood stains the path up to the cabin door, which on closer inspection is quite low, requiring many to stoop. Within, furniture is strewn wildly, pictures knocked from the walls, and a stench of death perfumes the air. A torn basket lies on the ground, its contents spilling from a rent in its side - bread and oat-cakes, smashed and partially eaten. In a corner of the room stands a bed, its sheets rucked and hideously blood-stained.

Investigation of the bed turns up a pair of bloodstained spectacles. These match the glasses of the kindly gnomish grandmother pictured in several paintings.

GYTRASH ATTACK

The wind dies, and a heavy fog settles over the path. A pack of gytrash begin stalking the party through the mist. They are totally concealed, but a Perception check of DC 20 reveals glimmer of red eyes and a very low growling sound. There are 8 in total; they retreat if 4 or more are slain.

If defeated, the party will catch a brief glimpse of the pack's leader, a gigantic headless dog, smoke leaking from its neck.

Gytrash: AC 14, HP 30, Spd. 30 ft., fly 60 ft., Resistant to all except silver, holy, or magic; Melee +5 (1d8+4), and trip (DC 15 Dex save) Bay for 300 ft. or frighten creatures who fail a DC 13 save.



LANDSLIDE

The path winds into the hills, climbing steadily. Wind and heavy rain buffet the party, making the path slippery. To one side yawns a gorge through which a rapid stream gathers strength. The rainclouds glower darkly, shot through with red, and you could swear that evil faces were visible within them; they stab at the ground with crimson lightning.

A DC 10 Survival check alerts characters that the groaning of trees to their left could indicate a gathering mud flow. It appears suddenly, a seething, roiling wall of mud, churning up the forest and slope. Anyone caught in the landslide will take 6d6 bludgeoning damage and be swept into the gorge, with half damage on a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. A Constitution check of DC 15 is required to simply sprint to outpace the flow on foot, but those aware of the mud flow due to a successful Survival check have advantage.

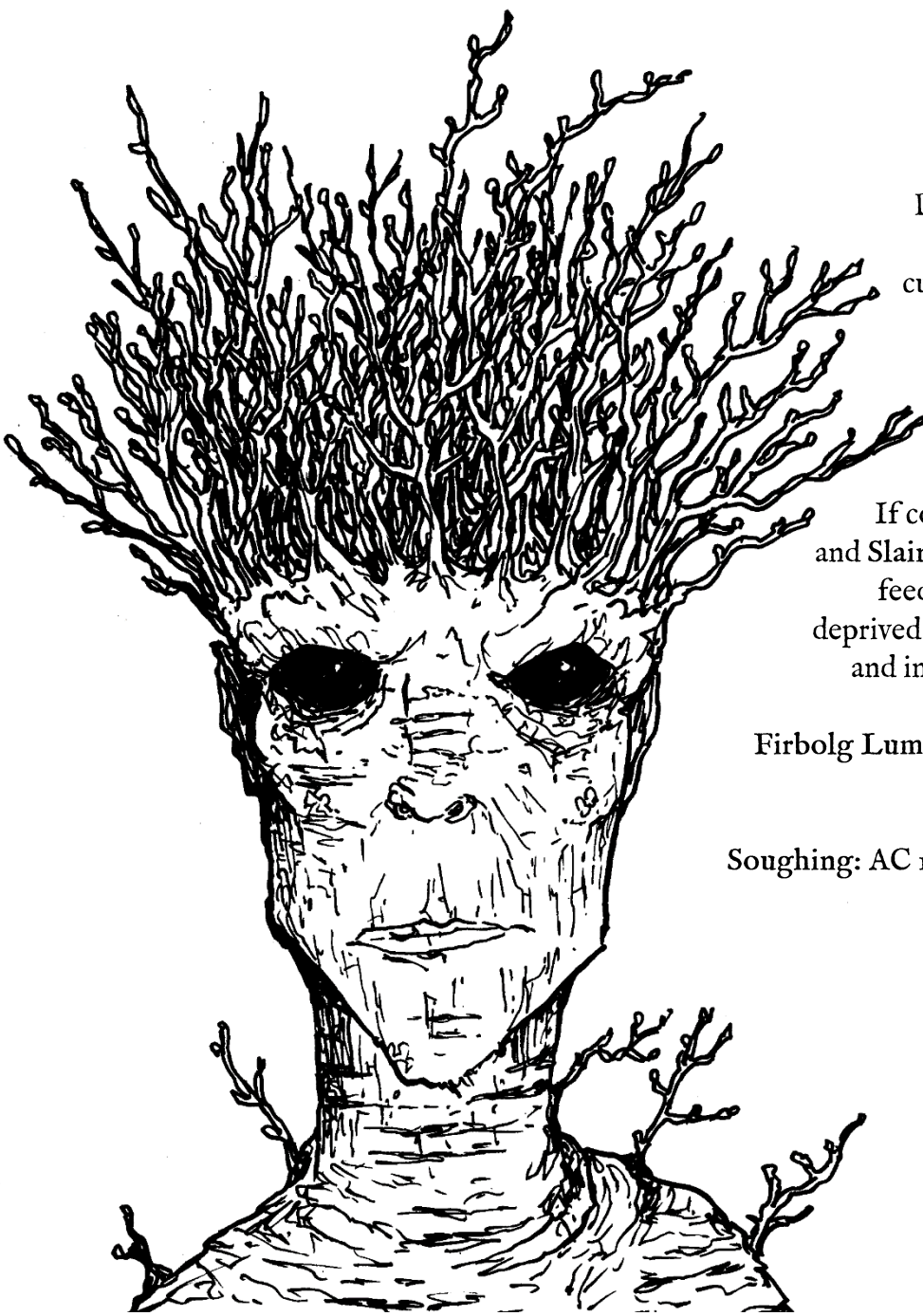
BELEAGURED TREEFOLK

Up ahead, a wailing cry can be heard amongst the trees. Drawing closer, the party discovers two brawny firbolg lumberjacks cutting into a large white birch tree, which is shrieking in pain - this is Sougning Petrichor, one of a reclusive grove of treefolk that dwells nearby.

If confronted the lumberjacks, Genan and Slaine, explain they need the timber to feed their families, as the gytrash have deprived them of their usual source of food and income. Sougning pleads for rescue.

Firbolg Lumberjacks: AC 11, HP 60, Spd. 35 ft.,
Melee +6 (1d12+4), Hidden Step.

Sougning: AC 14, HP 30 (50), Spd. 20 ft., Melee +5
(1d6+3).

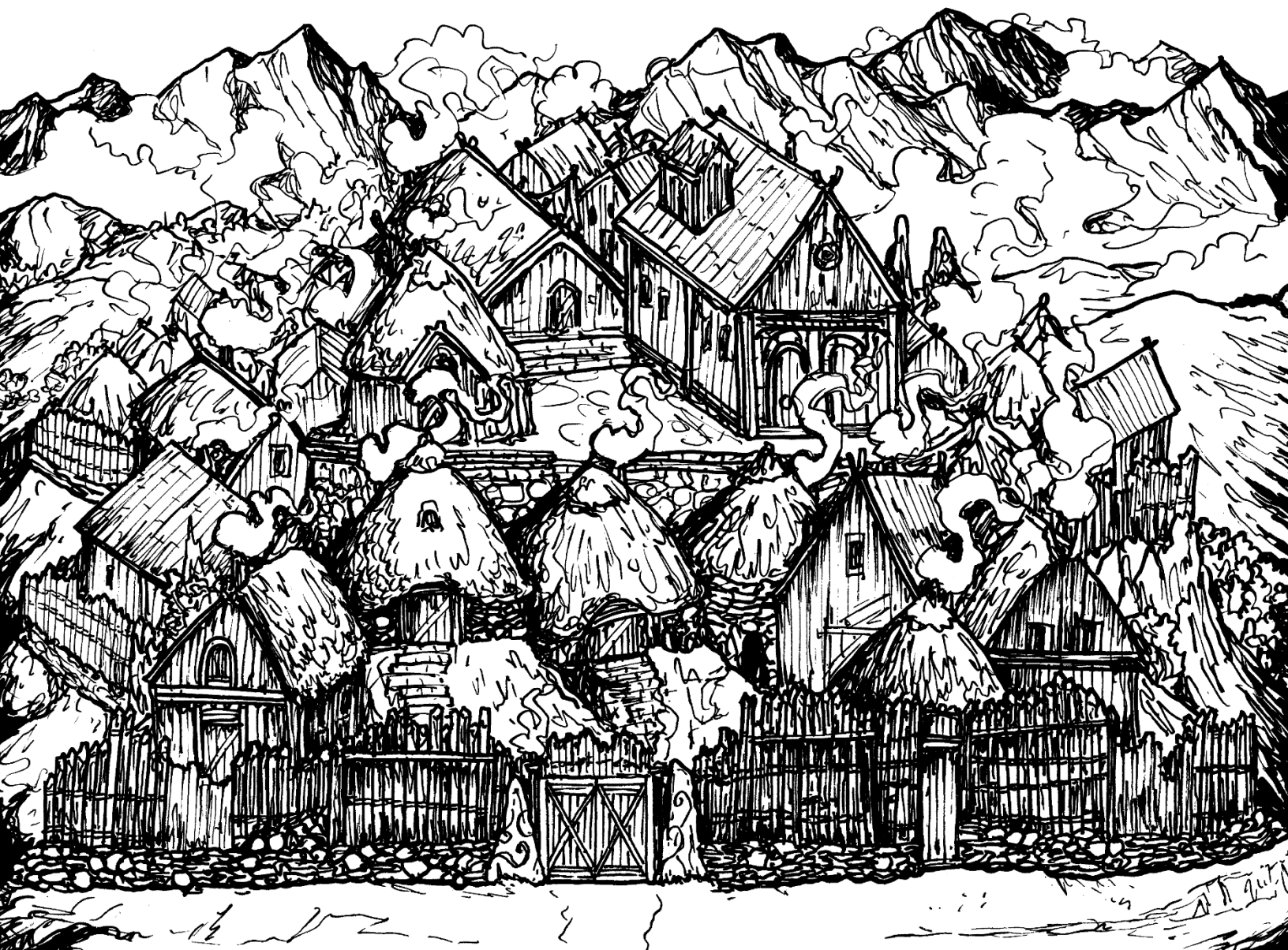


REDPELT

The firbolg settlement of Redpelt is a heavily fortified bastion ringed by a palisade of wooden stakes protecting habitations of timber and stone. The firbolg keep the gates shut and are generally distrustful of outsiders, but upon discovering the party are adventurers they will be ushered into the narrow, winding streets, where suspicious eyes peer at them from windows and doorways.

Redpelt includes:

- ❖ A healer, **Lenus**, known for his miraculous poultices and his absolutely foul sense of humour. People joke that he'll stitch up those wounded, but then split their stitches with a particularly rancid jest.
- ❖ A weapon-smith, **Rionni**, who specializes in axes and spears. Considered a highly eligible bachelorette, she scorns the attention of her many suitors.
- ❖ A diviner, **Eoch**, who reads the future by observing the wrestling of two oracular bears, **Artio** and **Occhi**.



ANDARTA

The chieftain of Redpelt is Andarta, a towering firbolg woman with huge dark eyes, clad in furs. Bones rattle around her neck. She asks the party's aid in a matter vexing Redpelt - should they assist her, she can guide them to the fortress and provide warriors to assist them in their search of the demon-haunted ruins.

Andarta

- ❖ Fierce protector of her people.
- ❖ Proud traditionalist.
- ❖ Senses something amiss in the land.

She explains her plight thus:

“The Howling Hills have long been filled with wolves. But they lived in harmony with us, and the other beasts - rival hunters, not sworn foes. In recent years, their numbers have swelled, and they have become misshapen things, unnaturally warped; some say they have mingled their blood with the hellhounds of the rift that claws the Perch in twain. They have become gytrash, led by the headless horror some call the Wisht Hound. The demon-dogs devour all game, all life. Aurochs, deer, even bears - all fall beneath them. We have been forced to turn to forestry to survive, trading lumber for food. Our attempts to slay the gytrash ourselves have claimed many of our best hunters.

“The gytrash lair in an abandoned structure built by the mortals who once came to this land. They sought to convert the firbolg to their faith, worship of their Hanged God. I ask you, why would strong firbolg worship a god that hangs himself? When their efforts failed the priests left their temple to moulder in the hills. The way to the Perch is filled with perils; aid my tribe and we will show you safe paths through the Murmuring Mountains to the ruins.”



ABANDONED CHURCH OF THE HANGED GOD

1. THE GRAVEYARD

The overgrown graveyard of the abandoned church has been thoroughly defiled - graves dug up, coffins splintered, and gnawed bones scattered everywhere. The reek of dog piss and brimstone clots the air. Two slaving gytrash picnic on a mostly-decomposed corpse near the wrought-iron gate of an ornate tomb.

If one of the gytrash is given a chance to bay, 1d6 gytrash emerge from the church to investigate. The corpse is that of a human missionary; around its neck is a holy symbol of the Hanged God, which the fiends carefully avoid. Anyone wearing such a holy symbol gains +1 AC against the gytrash or other fiends.

Gytrash: AC 14, HP 30, Spd. 30 ft., fly 60 ft., Resistant to all except silver, holy, or magic, Melee +5 (1d8+4), and trip (DC 15 Dex save) Bay for 300 ft. or frighten creatures who fail a DC 13 save.

2. THE TOMB

The tomb is curiously untouched by the gytrash, though swathed thickly with ivy. The grim, bearded visage of the Hanged God gazes down at those seeking entrance to the tomb via the wrought-iron door. The gytrash will not follow anyone who passes the tomb's threshold.



3. THE CRYPT

Despite the reek of carrion and sulphur pervading the churchyard, the heavy layer of dust covering every surface of the crypt, and the dour statues of mangled martyrs scowling down from carved niches, there is a sense of peace and safety here. Several stone sarcophagi occupy the middle of the chamber, while dozens of skulls fill shelves along the walls.

The crypt is haunted by **Brother Cornelius**, one the missionaries who tried to convert the local firbolg to worship of the Hanged God. He materializes before the party, demanding to know whether they revere the Strangled Lord or whether they are Unclean Heathens. Those with a holy symbol of the Hanged God will be presumed to be members of the Faith. Should the party identify themselves as worshippers of the Gallows-God, they will be allowed to rest within the crypt, and the good Brother will even provide healing services by casting *Cure Wounds* (1d8+4) on any injured party members. There is 600 gp worth of jewellery buried with the dead in the sarcophagi, along with 6 holy symbols of the Hanged God and a Sun Blade.

Should the party reject the Hanged God, however - and if they resist Brother Cornelius's attempts to convert them

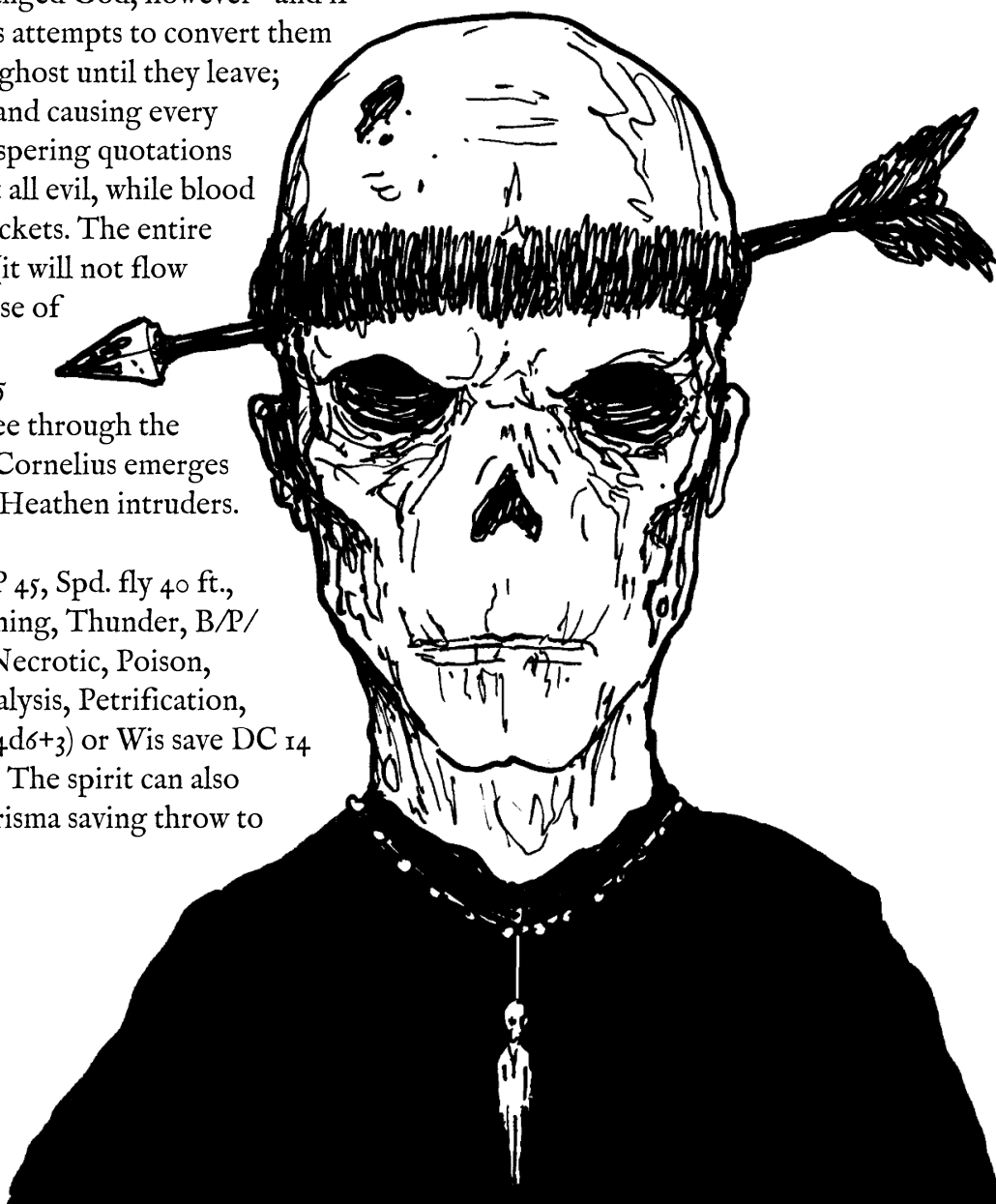
- they will be menaced by the ghost until they leave;

the spirit begins by vanishing and causing every skull in the crypt to begin whispering quotations from holy scripture to cast out all evil, while blood pours from their empty eye sockets. The entire crypt fills with spectral blood (it will not flow out of the crypt) over the course of

1 minute, drowning anyone within unless they pass a DC 15

Intelligence saving throw to see through the Illusion. Meanwhile, Brother Cornelius emerges from the blood, attacking the Heathen intruders.

Brother Cornelius: AC 11, HP 45, Spd. fly 40 ft., Resistant to Acid, Fire, Lightning, Thunder, B/P/ non-magical, Immune Cold, Necrotic, Poison, Charm, Exhaustion, Fear, Paralysis, Petrification, Prone, Restrained, Melee +5 (4d6+3) or Wis save DC 14 or be Frightened for 1 minute. The spirit can also possess characters (DC 13 Charisma saving throw to resist), Recharge 6.



Should the party befriend the spirit of Brother Cornelius, he explains how the church might be cleansed of the evil influence that pervades it. Buried beneath the altar is the body of the Kirk Grim, a lamb, that may be used to cleanse the church of evil. To revive it, however, a ritual must be performed on the altar using holy water from the baptistery and a copy of the **Book of the Noose**, the sacred text of the Hanged God. Holy water can be acquired in the Baptistery - but only by purifying the water there with a holy relic from the Reliquary. He can perform the ritual itself, but only if he is possessed one of the party members.

A party member possessed by Brother Cornelius gains access to the spells *Light*, *Resistance*, *Sacred Flame* at will, and can cast *Bless* or *Sanctuary* as per a first level Cleric.

4. THE ATRIUM

The front doors of the church are of beautifully carved oak, but stand open, the wood rotting and discolouring, swarming with insectile corruption. A vile stench emanates from within - along with a chorus of feral howls, the gytrash joining their guttural canine voices in a diabolic hymn.

Just inside the doors, the atrium is a small antechamber whose walls are covered in murals depicting the divine suicide of the Hanged-God, a circular sacrifice of himself to himself, in which he hung himself using a gallows made from the bones and entrails of the Rime-Giant Hrimnir, and in return achieved knowledge of all things, and salvation for his followers, who, the creed holds, are granted a special domain in the Hereafter free from the molestations of demons, a paradisiacal hall of plenty and rest. One wall depicts the Hanged God's slaying of Hrimnir, another the construction of the Holy Gallows, and the third the Strangled Lord's death and resurrection.

The atrium is guarded by two ghastrs, chained up like watch-dogs - the rotting, nibbled remains of priests buried in the churchyard, dug up by the gytrash. The undead have skin covered with unholy glyphs written in blood, and bark like hounds to alert those within of intruders.

Ghastrs: AC 13, HP 36, Spd. 30 ft., Melee +5 (2d6+3) and DC 10 Constitution save or be paralyzed for 1 minute, Stench (DC 10 Con or be poisoned till start of next turn).

5. THE BELL-TOWER

The rusted church bell slowly turns to rust at the top of the bell-tower. It is guarded by an imp named **Splugly**, who roosts in the eaves. The bell requires a DC 10 Strength check to ring fully; however, when rung, all the gytrash to retch and yowl in pain one minute, and are Deafened for 24 hours, granting those infiltrating the church advantage on Stealth rolls. **Splugly**: AC 13, HP 10, Spd. 20 ft., fly 40 ft., Resistant to B/P/S non-magical, Immune Fire, Poison, Advantage vs. spells, Melee +5 (1d4+4 plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con save for half).

6. THE NAVE

The church nave is lined with pews that have been knocked askew and badly gnawed. Stained glass windows depicting saints of the Hanged God look down dolefully on the appalling scene, where 13 gytrash growl their hellish hymns, rut, gnaw on bones, chew scripture, and befoul the church. The reek is awful, requiring a DC 10 Constitution save to avoid taking a level of Exhaustion. A fight in the nave alerts the Wisht Hound at the altar.

The floor of the church is slippery and acts as difficult terrain; when dashing on it, you must make a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

A thorough search of the nave turns up a dozen partially-chewed copies of the Book of the Moose which could be used in the exorcism ritual. Additionally, there is a loose flagstone - Intelligence (Investigation) DC 15 to find - with a scroll of *Protection from Evil*.

Gytrash: AC 14, HP 30, Spd. 30 ft., fly 60 ft., Resistant to all except silver, holy, or magic Melee +5 (1d8+4), and trip (DC 15 Dex save) Bay for 300 ft. or frighten creatures who fail a DC 13 save.

7. THE RECTORY

The former dwelling of the priests who ministered this church is in total disarray, beds smashed and sheets rotting. Amidst the wreckage can be found 12 holy symbols of the Hanged God, three copies of the Book of the Moose, and 60 gp. Hidden in one of the books is a bottle of the poison *Somnolence* (DC 15 Con save or be Poisoned/Incapacitated for 4d6 hours).

The walls and floor of the rectory have been defaced with glyphs scrawled in blood. Anyone who attempts to make sense of them must pass a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the glyphs, which cause the afflicted to become violently ill, choking as long-fingered hands emerge from their mouth, followed by a horned head - a scabrous cacodemon.

Cacodemon: AC 11, HP 20, Spd. 30 ft., Immune poison, fire, Melee (2 attacks) +2 (2d4), 1/day exhales fire in a 15 ft. cone, Dex save DC 12 for half of 4d6 fire damage.



8. THE BAPTISTERY

This chamber has a font of water used for baptism, its bottom covered in gold leaf. The walls are adorned with murals depicting the martyrdoms of several saints - the cannibalism of Saint Severine, when she offered her body as food to those condemned to die with her, and absolved them of their sins with her immaculate head; the drowning of Saint Moira, and subsequent blessing of the Blind Sea; the scaphism of Saint Ambrose, where the ants and flies that devoured the milk and honey he was drenched in absorbed his holy essence, becoming a righteous scourge that punished his executors. A jewelled chalice worth 100 gp rolls about on the floor.

Unfortunately, the fountain-waters are befouled, with the half-eaten corpse of a firbolg rotting within. A solitary gytrash worries at the hunter's hand. If the fountain is purified by immersing a holy relic within it - such as the one found in the reliquary - it becomes holy water. Weapons immersed in the purified font become blessed for one hour, dealing an additional 1d6 radiant damage against undead and fiends, including the gytrash. Additionally, the holy water can be used to perform the rite of the Kirk Grim at the altar in order to re-sanctify the church.

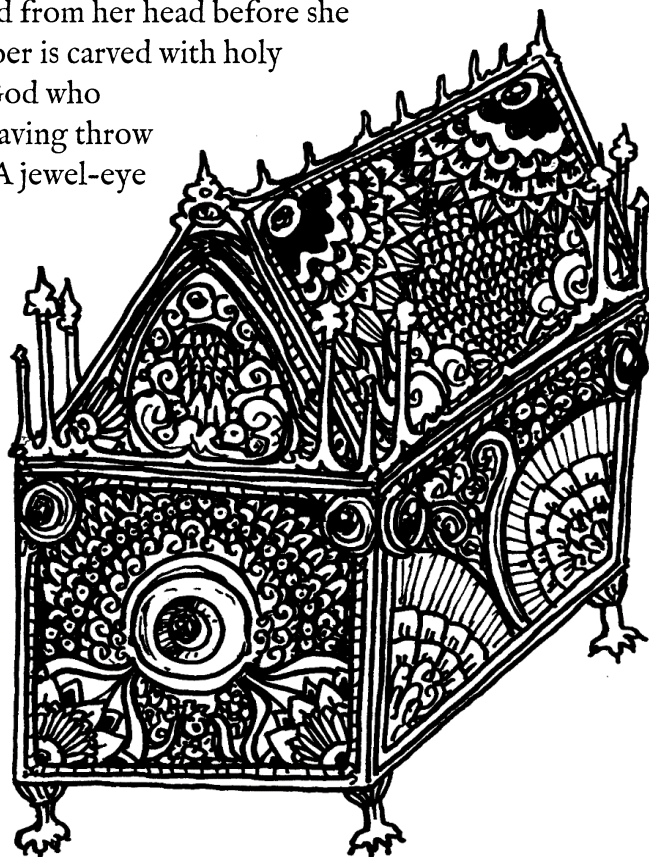
9. THE RELIQUARY

A large reliquary is set on a dais in the middle of this chamber - a gilded chest containing the incorruptible eyes of Saint Moira, which were plucked from her head before she was drowned in the Blind Sea. The floor of the chamber is carved with holy runes; anyone not wearing a symbol of the Hanged God who approaches the reliquary must pass a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be stricken blind while they remain in the church. A jewel-eye in the box also targets any non-worshippers who approach with a +6 ranged attack dealing 1d6 fire damage.

The Eyes of Saint Moira

Wondrous item, legendary

If placed in a body of still, fresh water, these eyes transform that water into holy water. Additionally, if placed in someone's empty eye sockets, the eyes allow their new "owner" to see any invisible or incorporeal fiends or undead and to instantly detect any diabolic magic.



10. THE ALTAR

The altar of the Hanged God is a dour block of stone, more rough-hewn than the rest of the church. Squatting before it like a priest before a congregation is the grotesque Wisht Hound, a headless demon-dog. From the depths of the gaping hole where its head should be issues forth a steady stream of brimstone smoke and infernal chanting.

Buried beneath the altar are the bones of a lamb, the Kirk Grim, the symbolic protector of the church. The rite of the Kirk Grim can be found in the Book of the Moose and involves sprinkling the altar with holy water while reciting the requisite phrases. This requires a DC 15 Intelligence (religion) check and an action; if a character is possessed by Brother Cornelius, they automatically succeed on this check. The rite conjures the Kirk Grim, a heavenly warrior with the head of a lamb whose bleating causes the gytrash and any flying heads to explode, banished back to the depths of the Netherworld.

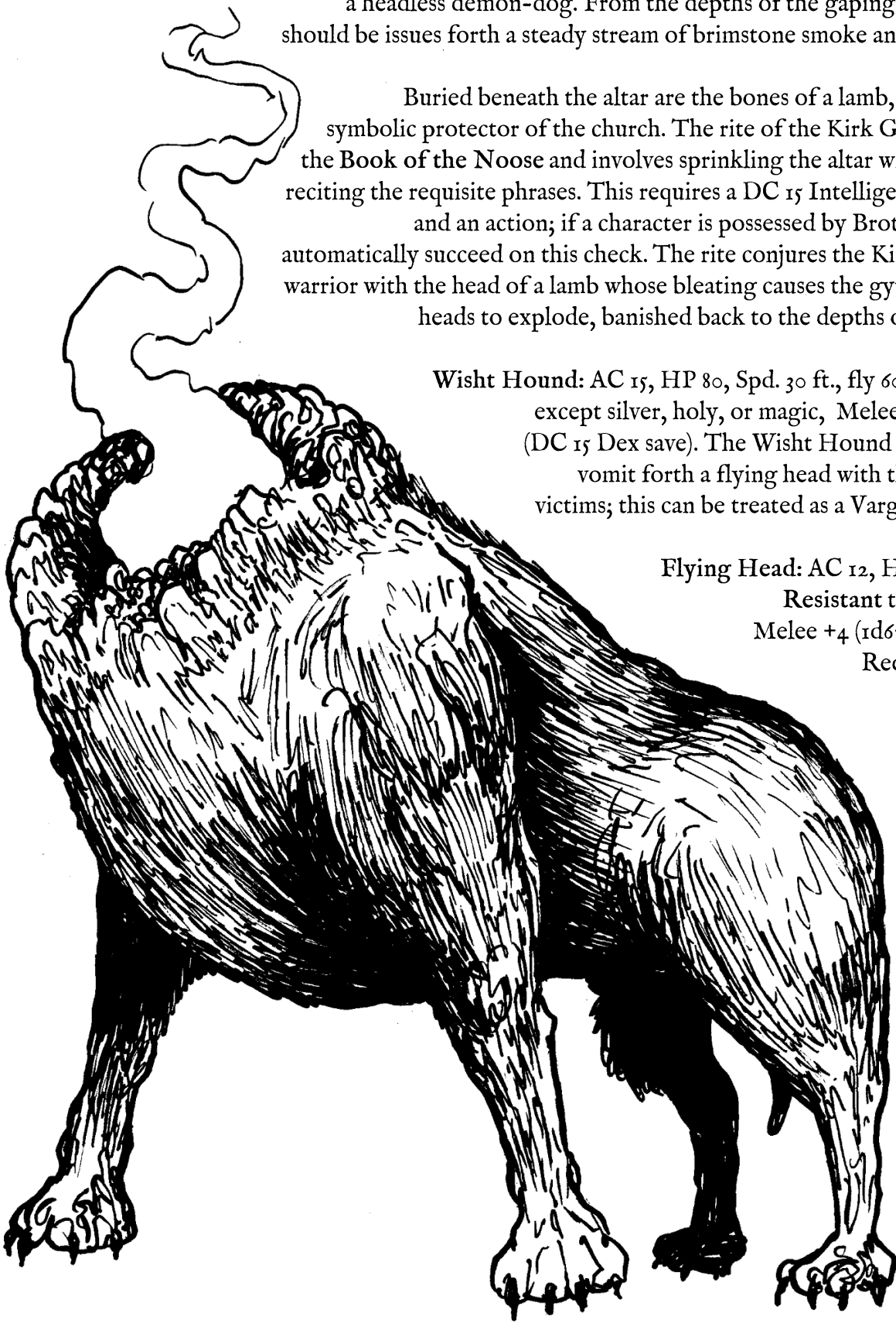
Wisht Hound: AC 15, HP 80, Spd. 30 ft., fly 60 ft., Resistant to all except silver, holy, or magic, Melee +6 (1d8+5), and trip (DC 15 Dex save). The Wisht Hound can use an action to vomit forth a flying head with the face of one of its victims; this can be treated as a Vargouille (Recharge 6).

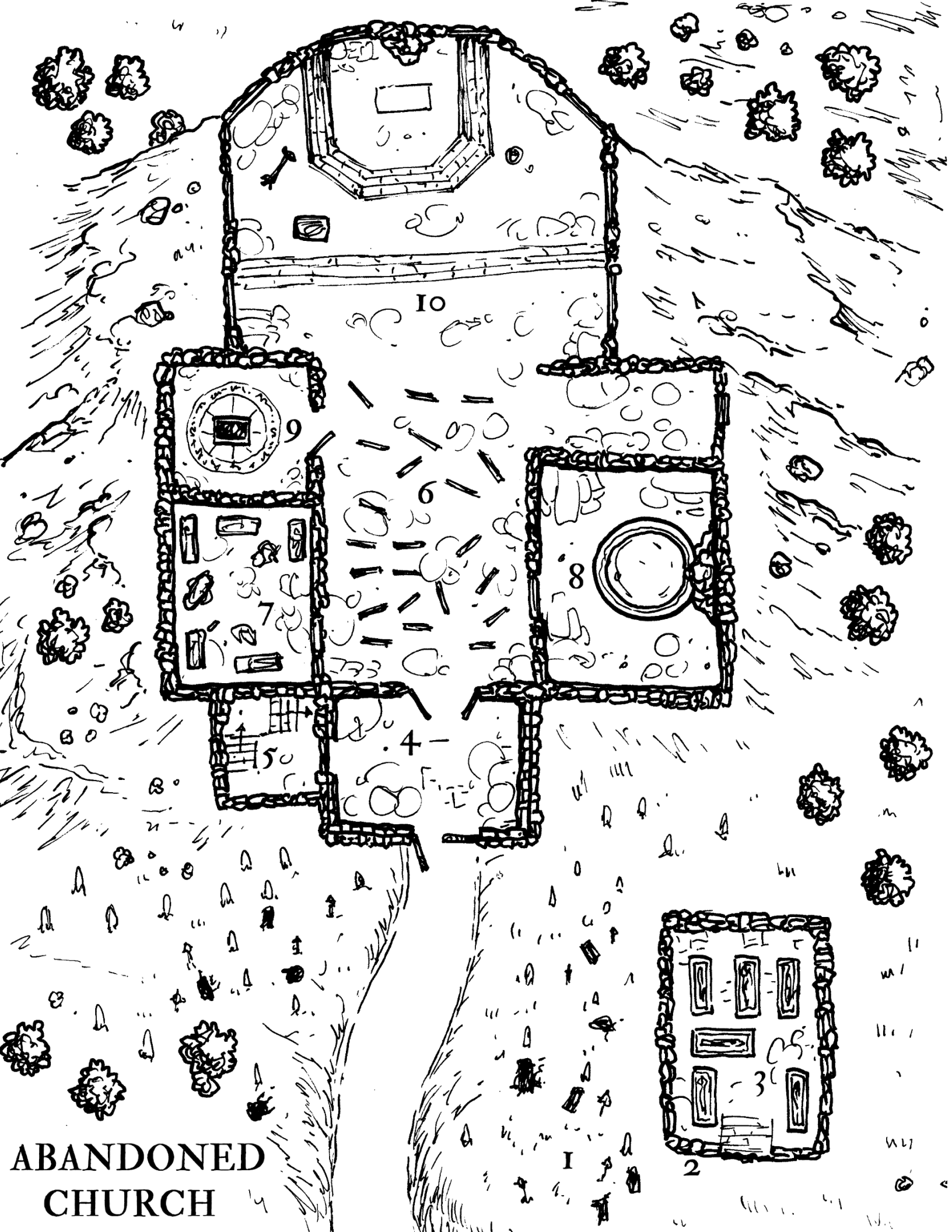
Flying Head: AC 12, HP 13, Spd. Fly 40 ft.

Resistant to fire, cold, poison, Melee +4 (1d6+2), Shriek for 30 ft.

Requiring a DC 12 Wis saving throw or be stunned. Can also Kiss a stunned foe Requiring a DC12 Charisma check or be cursed, losing 1 Cha per hour, killing it at Charisma 2 and creating a new flying head.

If the Kirk Grim is summoned, the Wisht Hound loses half its HP.





ABANDONED
CHURCH