

THE CHRONICLE

A LIFETIME'S CATALOGUE OF BEASTS, MONSTERS, FOES,
AND DANGERS.

BENNETT AND RINEHART

CONTENTS

Alpha Crab *	<u>4</u>
Aubhoblin *	<u>6</u>
Basilisk	<u>8</u>
Bears	<u>10</u>
Beetles	<u>12</u>
Beithir	<u>14</u>
Chatterjaws	<u>16</u>
Dinosaur	<u>18</u>
Dweller	<u>20</u>
Errata #	<u>22</u>
Fratri's Demon *	<u>24</u>
Ghosts	<u>26</u>
Golem	<u>28</u>
Greenie	<u>30</u>
Guard	<u>32</u>
Haunt	<u>34</u>
Hedgeworc	<u>36</u>
Hedran #	<u>38</u>
Krador	<u>40</u>
Mare *	<u>42</u>
Network Spikes	<u>44</u>
Octopus	<u>46</u>

Pirate	<u>48</u>
Prickler	<u>50</u>
Purple Impaler	<u>52</u>
Robots	<u>54</u>
Scathan	<u>56</u>
Scotia	<u>58</u>
Seeker *	<u>60</u>
Sidewinder	<u>62</u>
Skeleton	<u>64</u>
Snowmen	<u>66</u>
Soulcruncher	<u>68</u>
Spiclops *	<u>70</u>
Supervillian	<u>72</u>
Swamp Man	<u>74</u>
Thaco #	<u>76</u>
Vampire	<u>78</u>
Veeshan	<u>80</u>
Wendigo	<u>82</u>
Will-o-wisp	<u>84</u>
Wraith *	<u>86</u>
Zombies	<u>88</u>

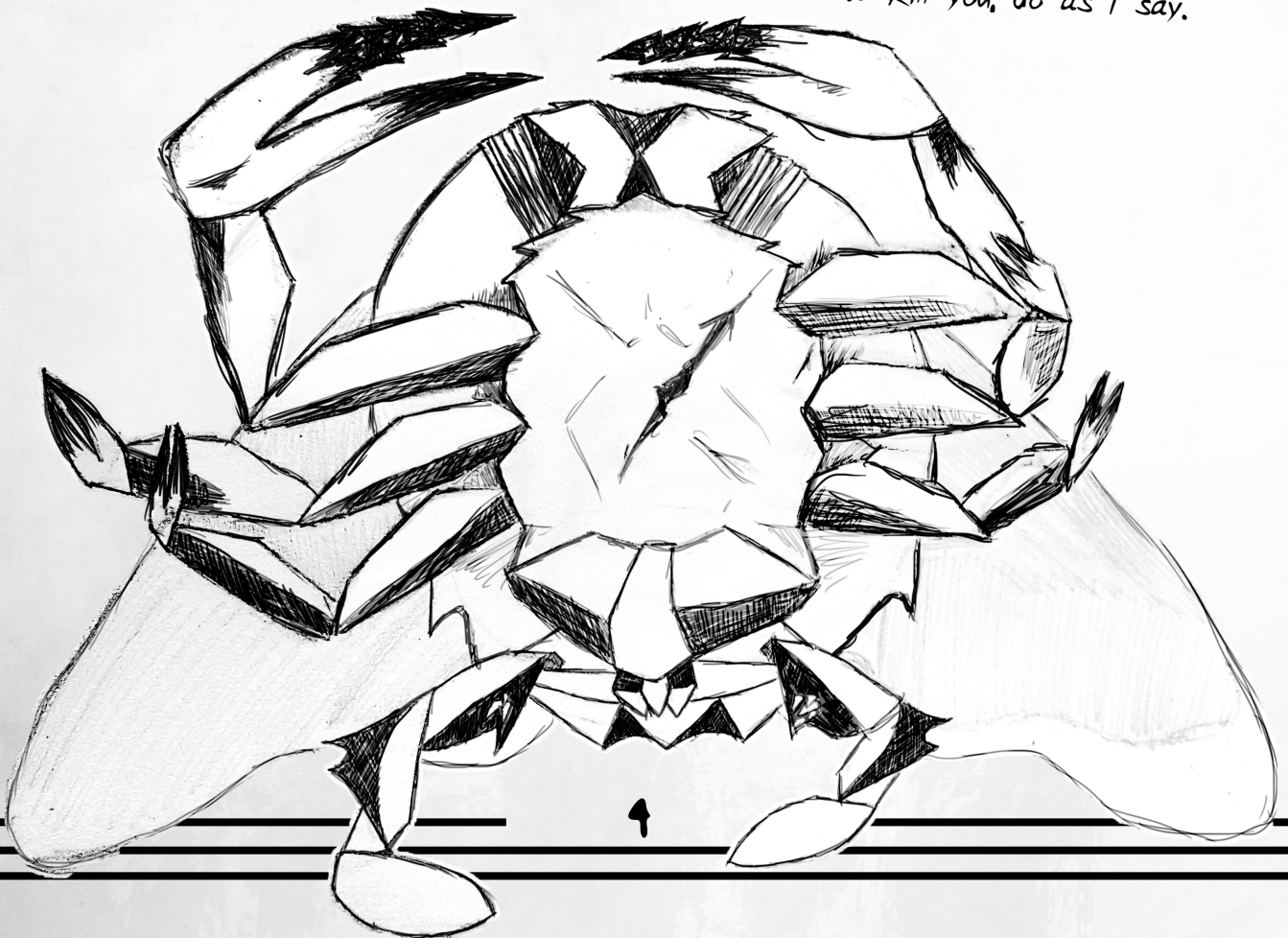
* Created by Kickstarter Backers.

Unlocked as Kickstarter stretch goal

ALPHA CRAB

It is not known exactly where the alpha crabs originated; their presence having become so ubiquitous that few remember a time when they were not considered as native as the oldest trees. The crabs vary greatly in size. At birth, their skin is weak, and they can barely walk, but by the time they are adults, they can run and fly incredible distances, and their chitinous hides can deflect arrows. Many men have tried to tame them as some kind of flying force. The lucky ones only end up maimed from such an attempt.

The crabs themselves adhere to a strict hierarchy, which has been made the subject of some study (from a safe distance, I can assure you). The hierarchy is not known innately to the crabs, but proven in battle, cemented in their insectoid brains and gouged into their armored flesh. No leader rises by fear or threats, but by delivery of pain, by rushing claw and tearing teeth. By these means, armies are gathered, with one clear mantra: serve or die. And every crab swears fealty to another (as much as they understand the concept of fealty) until the biggest, strongest crabs prosper, as they understand the concept of fealty) until the biggest, strongest crabs prosper, a well-regulated army with squads, generals and factions already formed. Loyalty does not need to be taught the way these alphas punish disobedience. There is only one law to this primitive species: if you don't want me to kill you, do as I say.



If the alphas ever set their bulbous eyes on human territory, the battles would be short indeed. Unlike soldiers of more intelligent species, these things feel no fear, and every inch of land is fought over as if it were a breeding ground. And most are. Where corpses fall, flocks of crabs swarm to lay their eggs in the still-warm flesh. Within days, the body will burst with a flood of crablings, from the first day eager to prove their superiority over their birthkin.

Initiative	4
Move	4, fly 6
HP	10
AC	20
REF	18
FORT	18
WILL	16
AP	100
AP Regen	40
Utility Mod	1
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +3, d6 *2 damage
Abilities	Reinforcements (As summon bigger fish) Speed Burst
Can see in dark	

"THE SMALLEST ONES COULD FIT IN YOUR HANDS, WERE YOU SO INCLINED. IF YOU'RE LUCKY, THAT'S ALL WE'LL SEE THIS YEAR."
-SHEP HERDSMAN, FARMER

Luckily for us, the creatures are more curious than they are battle-hungry, their own ranks excluded. They travel across the land, blurs of red-and black clouds blotting out the sun for minutes at a time as they search for places to feast and procreate, for new lands to populate. The most fortunate of farmers have a single cast of crabs alight upon their crops each season, destroying a patch of fruits or vegetables. Seasoned farmers set aside a poorly-defended crop as an offering of sorts, and often it ends there. But if the crabs can't find easy food, they'll fight for it, equally likely to eat the entire field as they are to feast upon a family, the contents of a wardrobe, or a pile of farm equipment.

"I CAN STILL HEAR THOSE WINGS BEATING AGAINST THE WINDOWSILL. UNDER THE BED, I KNOW IT COULDN'T SEE ME, BUT I THINK IT KNEW I WAS HERE. ALMOST AS IF IT COULD SMELL ME. I CAUGHT HALF A GLIMPSE INTO ITS EYES, THOSE TERRIBLE EYES. IT WAS LIKE LOOKING INTO A KALEIDOSCOPE OF TERROR. IT REFLECTED ONE HUNDRED BROKEN IMAGES OF BLOODSTAINED WALLS, BROKEN LIMBS AND GLEAMING WHITE BONES. IT WASN'T UNTIL THE NEXT MORNING WHEN I CLIMBED OUT OF MY SHELTER AND REALIZED IT WAS REFLECTING THE ROOM AROUND ME."
-WILLIAM PAYNE, SURVIVOR

AUBHOBLIN

It is possible to live near the forest and not have heard of the Aubhoblin, but it is near impossible to live near the forest and not heard the Aubhoblin herself. When she gets angry -usually the fault of some witless explorer- she starts screaming, and does not stop until there isn't a creature around that can hear her cries. It is said that the birds can sense her anger, taking flight in droves before the screaming even starts. This may be true, or it may simply be that the animals in the forest can read the Aubhoblin better than anyone else. After all, on a good day, they all get along, sharing information and newfound games. But even the closest of friends flee when the screaming starts.

Take this as a warning. Should you meet the creature, it would be in your best interest, as well as the interests of others dwelling in the forest, not to cause anger or strife. I suppose that in order to heed this advice, you need to know what the Aubhoblin looks like. She is a Fae creature, and looks as you might expect: as adorable as a sunbeam, with a similar temperament. Aubhoblin stands about three feet tall, and has huge wings capable of lifting her above the forest's canopy. The wings are as deep a blue as the eye can see one moment, before shifting to the hue of a rainbow, or to reflect like fresh dew. From all accounts, the Aubhoblin's wings can take on as many colors as she can mood, though I know not of any correlation between the two.

The Aubhoblin may be small, but she is not to be underestimated. There is a reason that men and woodland creatures like flee from her tantrums. The Aubhoblin's undulating screams pierce through the very souls of men. She can sustain the screams for incredible durations, and if not satisfied will fall into a rage, attacking anything nearby. Few have witnessed this event and been able to tell of it, even fewer have seen it twice.

Small Creature

Initiative	2
Move	5, fly 5
HP	140
AC	24
REF	26
FORT	24
WILL	26
AP	200
AP Regen	40
Destruction Mod	3
Enhancement Mod	5
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +4 vs AC, 1d4 * 3
Abilities	Fade to Fae: cost 20. The Aubhoblin disappears from the current realm, unable to return until the next sunrise. Battle Rage Cleanse Healing Fountain Reflect Scream Taunt

Like many Fae creatures, the Aubhoblin loves to make deals. She trades in knowledge and secrets, the most valuable of treasures. Those who are learned know that a well-placed piece of information can topple an empire more surely than even the most skilled of blades. If you're looking for a deal, she'll expect you to offer time or stories. If you can craft a story about the Aubhoblin, especially one she has not yet heard, you will find yourself in her good graces, for those are a particular favorite. If you offer time, you may find yourself playing one of its many simple games, and, should you be quite lucky, you may even glean some information the Aubhoblin deems you worthy of during play.

Once the Aubhoblin is exhausted, she slips into the Fade to rest. Exhaustion can happen as a result of play or at the end of a Betrayal Frenzy. It is far more pleasant for all involved if it happens after games. Her time in the Fade can last as little as an hour, or up to three days. During this time, the Forest is absent of the Aubhoblin, and the birds and woodland creatures gather information in her stead.

Once again, I must caution you: do not betray your deal. Whether time, information, or trinkets you offer, you'd best deliver, or the Aubhoblin will fall into a frenzy the likes of which you can scarcely imagine. Watch the creature carefully, for her appearance follows her happiness. As one deteriorates, so too does the other. And this may well be the only warning you get.



"IT IS NOT WISE TO ENTER THE FOREST SO UNPREPARED. HAVE YOU A WEALTH OF STORIES TO SHARE? SOMETHING YOU CAN BARGAIN WITH? WHAT WOULD YOU DO, YOUNG ADVENTURER, SHOULD YOU FIND YOURSELVES IN THE COMPANY OF THE AUBHOBLIN?"
-CHASE MEUSEL, SAGE

BASILISK

I was fourteen when I killed my first basilisk, and I doubt there are many living who know more about them than I do. You know, of course, about the stony gaze. You probably don't know that the effects are rarely permanent. I myself have been frozen, and have been fortunate enough to break out. In my case, the basilisk lost interest in me once it saw I was no longer a threat. Perhaps it intended to return to me for a later meal. In any case, I was vividly aware of all that surrounded me until fortune favored my escape. I do not know why the effects did not last on me, while others still remain frozen.

"..."
-MADAM ZHEAL,
STATUE

Basilisks mate for life. If you manage to kill a full-grown basilisk, you've likely made another enemy. They tend to live in small colonies, usually 2-3 per cave system. One ventures out to hunt and gather food. While the stony glare is developed by the time a basilisk reaches maturity at around 7 years, this is mostly used (I believe) for long-term food storage. When hunting, basilisks rely on long whiskers near their mouths that can stun prey on a touch. I too have been victim to these whiskers, and the sensation was like my arm being lit on fire.

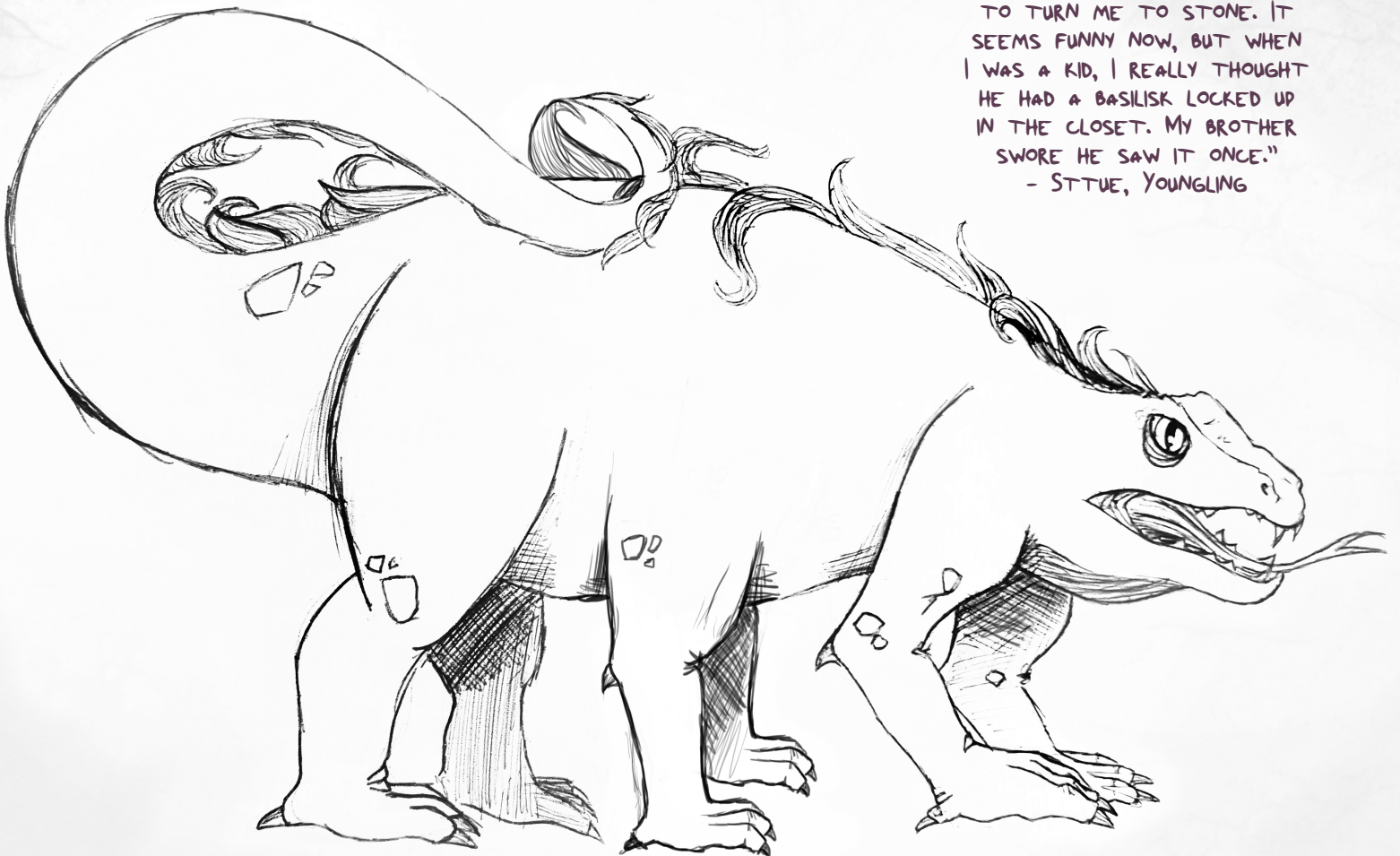
After eighteen months of gestation, basilisks are born a blind, writhing sack of mucous. They gain sight after about a week, and grow at a rate of roughly one foot per year, up to their full length of nearly fifteen feet. Their six stumpy legs seem to stretch with them as they grow, though I've not watched any one basilisk go from childhood to maturity. Basilisks waste no time; shortly after one is born, the parents will get to work creating another.

	Adult	Young
Initiative	3	3
Move	5	5
HP	120	40
AC	20	12
REF	15	7
FORT	21	13
WILL	18	10
AP	200	135
AP Regen	30	15
Unarmed attack (2 attacks)	+4 v.s. AC, 1d4*4	+2 v.s. AC, 1d4*2
Abilities	Petrify: +5 v.s. Fortitude Stun: +3 v.s. Will within 1	Petrify: +1 v.s. Fortitude Stun: +2 v.s. Will within 1

I've heard that mirrors are an effective way to kill a basilisk, but I cannot verify this claim. It seems the basilisks are adept at breaking out of the gaze, and some seem to be immune to it altogether. I find that the best way to kill a basilisk is just like you kill any other creature. If there's a shortcut or trick, I'd love to hear it, though I'm sure you can tell my hunting days are largely past.

"BASILISK? OH I HOPE NOT. WE HAVEN'T HAD A BASILISK AROUND THESE PARTS SINCE I WAS A BOY. ASK ME, IT'S JUST A WOLF. WOLVES ARE PREFERABLE TO BASILISKS, I TELL YOU. SOMETHING NOT QUITE NATURAL ABOUT THOSE THINGS. NEVER DID LIKE EM."
- PADD WHITESTONE

"MY DAD USED TO THREATEN TO TURN ME TO STONE. IT SEEMS FUNNY NOW, BUT WHEN I WAS A KID, I REALLY THOUGHT HE HAD A BASILISK LOCKED UP IN THE CLOSET. MY BROTHER SWORE HE SAW IT ONCE."
- STTUE, YOUNGLING



BEARS

These are an odd species to be sure. Physically, they look like a few hundred pounds of fur, almost like an enormous round housecat. Don't let their appearance fool you- a closer look reveals massive claws and teeth, and it will warn you to stay back with a horrible roar. If it feels generous enough to warn you, that is. If threatened, these things will launch at you, swiping with paws the size of a grown man's head. A single well-placed strike can knock you unconscious- and that's if the claws don't hit you. They also have teeth, and while many bears eat fruits and berries in the forests where they're found, some won't hesitate to search for something meatier, like a fish. Or you. If the prey is big enough, they'll grab on, biting until it's dead. It's not just the ruthlessness that makes bears unusual.



What's odd is that they sleep for a large part of the year. These beasts could reign over forests, the indisputable champions. Their thick fur and hide renders them capable of shrugging off injuries that would kill most men. Only the most well-placed of arrows will even penetrate, and even then it's a gamble as to whether or not the bear even notices. But they don't ruthlessly patrol their territory. They pick a cave, killing or evicting anything that was in it beforehand, and just settle down and nap for a few months. I don't know if these creatures understand mercy, are incredibly lazy, or if they have the foresight to leave enough food for them to hunt when they wake up. They're smart creatures, by all accounts. Wouldn't surprise me if they listen in, waiting until prey start to get wary of the forest before laying off the hunt for a while. The fact that they sleep so long leads me to believe that they don't actually need food to survive; they hunt and kill for the pleasure of it.

I've only seen a bear once, and that's enough. It was almost ten feet long, big and brown, walking along on all fours like it had every right to be there. I wasn't going to be the one to dispute it. The nonchalance with which it looked at me made it clear that it could kill me without putting up much of a struggle.

There are rumors in less forested places of bears as well. Predictably, these vary with their cultures. I've met with village elders who describe their bears as smaller, hunting exclusively meat. To the north, they claim to have white bears that blend in with the arctic snows, stealthing into homes with no notice. I don't know if these are folklore, or if the bears can travel and camouflage, but I know that I don't care to be the one who finds out.

IF I'M NOT BEING CLEAR:
STAY CLEAR OF BEARS.

"I'VE HEARD TELL THAT THEY CAN SEND THEIR GREAT FURRED SPIRITS OUT AND EAT KIDS WHO DON'T HANG THE WASHING PROPER.

'SPOSE THOSE MAY JUST BE TALES. MAYHAD NOT.."

-ELLA MAY, MOTHER, WITH A MEANINGFUL LOOK AT ELIJAH MAY, AGE 8.

"SOME FOLKS SELL RUGS MADE OUTTA BEAR HIDE. YOU WON'T FIND ANYONE BUYING ONE AROUND THESE PARTS, NO SIR. I HEARD THEM BEARS HOLD A GRUDGE, AND I DON'T WANT ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THAT ONE, NO SIR."

-CARTER FELDS



"WOLVES ARE ONE THING. A WOLF COMES FOR YOU, IT TAKES A SHEEP, MAYBE TWO. BUT A BEAR? THAT'S IT. PACK YOUR BAGS. NOTHING TO DO ABOUT THAT."

-FARMER FLOODS

"THEY AREN'T JUST BRUTES. THEY CAN PICK LOCKS. I CAME HOME, OH, ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO I RECKON. HOUSE WAS UNLOCKED, BED SHEETS TORN UP. REAL MESS OF A PLACE. WIFE SAID A BEAR JUST WALKED UP TO THE DOOR AND HELPED ITSELF TO SUPPER. SPITEFUL THINGS, BEARS."

-FARMER ARN REDIS

Initiative	4
Move	5
HP	40
AC	20
REF	14
FORT	18
WILL	14
AP	160
AP Regen	15
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +4 vs AC, 1d6 *3
Abilities	Wallop Roar (as scream, 1d4 * 1) Inspire fear (+1 vs Will within 2) Bloodlust Frenzy



BEETLES

"THEY LURE THE KIDS OUT WITH THOSE DAMN SONGS. DON'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU TELL 'EM NOT TO GO. THEY CHANGE THE SONG, AND IT'S NO USE. TRANSFIXES 'EM IT DOES. I'VE SEEN MANY A MAN RUN OUT AFTER 'IS KID. NOT ME. THEY RIP 'EM APART, PINSERS TEARING INTO 'IM. LEAVES A BIG MESS."
-RED WELLDIGGER, FARMER

Songspinners, Death Roaches, Insects, Shellers, Roaches, Death singers, Babystealers, stealers, Fanterers. These are some of the more polite names I've heard used to describe the critters that plague Gunry's Hill. No one can remember a time when the large beetles didn't come by; they're a part of harvest as accepted as the changing leaves. But no one can also seem to give a good reason why they haven't relocated or left. Folks just don't do that kind of thing around here. I can't help but feel that something is troubling this town aside from the pests.

These creatures are about the size of a dog, though with their wings extended they can almost triple in size. I believe they're some kind of cricket from the descriptions I've heard. They seem to have a thick chitinous hide, strong enough to break off a pitch fork. The insects come around near harvest, and aren't seen the rest of the year. This leads me to believe they estivate. Perhaps they are waiting for more prey to be produced.

When they come (which is almost every night, and exclusively after sunset), they "sing" a haunting song, the tune of which no one can quite remember, but changes every evening. I've heard it described by a number of people, always in abstract terms, and different each time. Children, it seems, are particularly vulnerable to the song, being lured out to the beasts and climbing atop them. Sometimes the parents say the children were fast asleep or within eyesight moments before, with no good explanation for the missing time. The creatures presumably leave after claiming a child, but no one seems to remember seeing them go.

The insects have never harmed a child (that anyone has seen), though what they do with them is anyone's guess. They do not hesitate to kill any concerned parents who run after. It seems the creatures will team up, ripping chunks from unprotected man-flanks and tearing them apart, using their wings to stop any attackers from getting close. From what I understand, it's quite gruesome.



Initiative	3
Move	5
Fly	5
HP	8
AC	18
REF	9
FORT	10
WILL	10
AP	150
AP Regen	30
Melee Attack (Pincers)	+2 vs AC, d6x2
Ability: Wing Blast	as Empulse
Ability: Dominate	+2 vs Will against 1 creature within 4 squares.

"THEY TOOK TWO OF MY BROTHERS. I ONLY REMEMBER ONE THOUGH. MA' DOESN'T LET ME NEAR THE WINDOWS AFTER DARK ANYMORE."
- KEND BREWSON, AGE 10

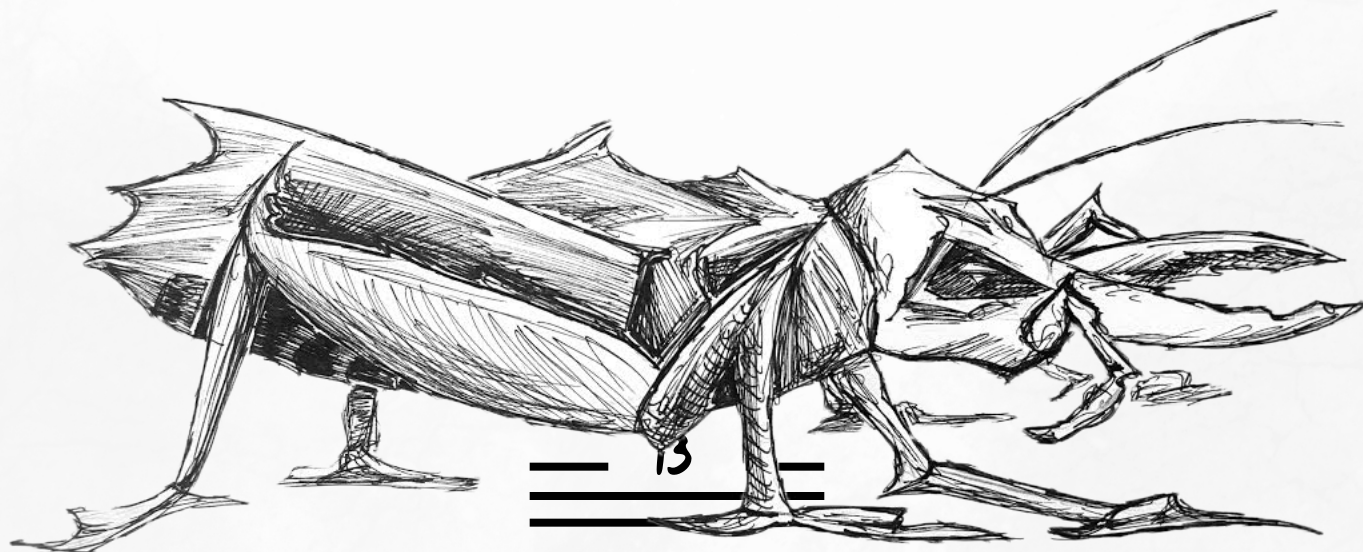
"MOST NIGHTS THEY ONLY TAKE CHILDREN."
-ANDER MILLS, VILLAGE ELDER

"THE SONG? IT SOUNDS LIKE- LIKE CHILDHOOD"
-OAKIE MILLS

"YOU CAN HEAR 'EM COMING A WHOLE HOUR AHEAD 'A TIME. NOTHING TO DO FOR IT BUT SIT AN' WAIT. THEY SING THEIR SONGS, FLAPPING THOSE WINGS AROUND. IT SOUNDS LIKE A BLANKET LOOSE IN THE WIND. MORE THAN ONCE I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT CHECKING..."
-WINONA, BASKET WEAVER

It isn't known where the beasts reside during the day, nor where any children have been carried away to. I suspect they have a hive nearby, though they visit the town in groups of 3-5. The search parties for the hive have all returned fruitless.

Well, the ones that returned, anyway.



BEITHIR

I used to think the beithir created the lightning. That it was their way of signaling to each other.

"Here I am"

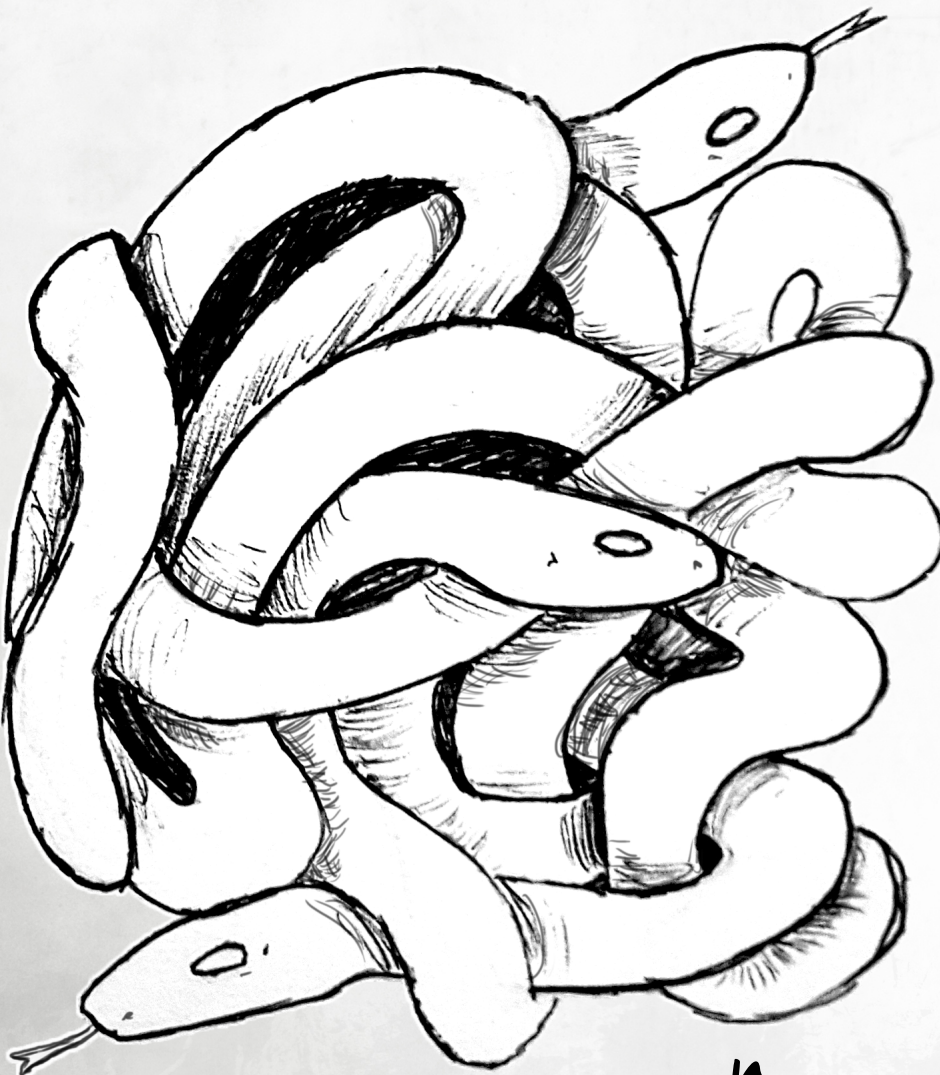
"There's strong ones nearby"

"Stay away, these ones are dangerous."

When I told my friend, a fellow youth by the name of Victor, he laughed. "If only it were so innocent," he'd chided. "They're not sending messages. They slither into the sky, becoming the lightning. It's how they travel. Whenever you see lightning, a beithir is only a thunderclap away."

I'm older now, and I know that isn't true. At least I hope it isn't. They show up whenever lightning strikes. Or rather, they only show up when lightning strikes, and usually at night. I hope it's not every time. They're big things, beithirs. At first, you might not know them from a snake, provided you'd only heard about snakes before.

They grow to 30 arms in length. Maybe more. The smallest one I've ever seen was 3 arms, and that may have been a river snake. You never can be too sure with beithir. They grow longer than snakes, and in knots. You see a pile of rope, tied amongst itself rolling towards you? That's a beithir.



Initiative	3
Move	5
HP	15
AC	25
REF	10
FORT	18
WILL	16
AP	350
AP Regen	90
Unarmed attack (2 atks)	+4 v.s. AC, 1d6 *2 If both attacks hit, the target takes 3 ongoing poison damage (save ends).
Destruction Mod	3
Enhancement Mod	4
Utility Mod	4
Abilities	Arc Battle Rage Storm Teleport Permafrost
Undead	Vulnerable 5/ radiant or holy damage
Lightning	Healed by lightning/ electrical damage

If you get bit by one, you'd best find some faith to confide in. An arbiter or priest if you're lucky. Whoever can execute your wills and deliver your lasts. You don't have long. The poison spreads fast. Minutes, if you're lucky. Hours if you aren't.

I don't know of anyone who's ever lived through it, though I've heard claims of a woman in the south who says one took her arm. Says she chopped it off in a frenzy and it saved her life. I aim to interview her, and update this log when I do.

They've already died once, is the thing. So it's not exactly easy to kill them. You kill a snake, you chop its head off. We don't need more of these things rolling around. Else, next time there's a storm, lightning strikes, and...well, you've heard the tales. We all have.

"I HAVE THE MOST EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF BEITHER ANYWHERE IN THE SIX DUCHIES. NOT THAT THERE'S A LOT OF COMPETITION, MIND YOU. IT WASN'T EASY, NO, NO IT WASN'T. NOT EASY AT ALL. I WADED OUT TO CORPSE'S LAKE EVERY TIME I SAW A THUNDERCLOUD. SOON ENOUGH, I HAD THIS WHOLE MENAGERIE. IT'S QUITE SAFE, DON'T YOU MIND. THEY ONLY COME OUT IN THE SUMMER. DID YOU KNOW THAT? I WISH I'D KNOWN THAT. MY ASSISTANT IS OUT GATHERING SMALL WOODLAND CREATURES TO KEEP THEM FED. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT."

"I NO LONGER THINK THEY MAKE THE LIGHTNING. I THINK... I THINK IT'S ATTRACTED TO THEM. IT CHANGES MY EXPERIMENT QUITE A BIT, BUT IF I CAN JUST HARNESS THAT ENERGY, TO FIND SOMEWAY TO... TO DISTILL THAT POWER. IF I CAN CHURN THIS INTO A BREW, A BREW FROM WHICH I WILL DRINK DEEP, WE CAN CONTROL THE POWER. THINK OF IT! JUST THINK!"

- 'SLEEPY' RAD WITHERS, SCIENTIST

CHATTERJAWS

I wrote at length about skeletons coming back to life and moving as if life still animated their decaying flesh. While that is a widespread and well-documented phenomenon, an almost entirely different one sweeps the lands to the North: that of the Chatterbones.

Rather than the full skeleton, the Chatterbones (or Chatterjaws, as they are sometimes known) is simply a floating human skull, often bleached white, that lofts through the air of its own accord. Occasionally, they still have bits of flesh drooling off of them, the rotting scent hanging about them like a warning. While the flesh remains, it's still possible to identify who the skull belonged to in life. Most often, they wait months or years before returning, but I've heard cases where they didn't last the night.

The floating heads gnash and tear at flesh, ripping it to shreds and dropping it to the ground. They have no digestive system; they are more akin to a mass of tools turned weapon. While anyone can become a Chatterbones, it seems that murder victims come back most often. For this reason, many bodies are found with the teeth knocked out, as if by a chisel or hammer. If not the murderer himself, then some citizens have taken it upon themselves to neuter this plague of skulls.

Chatterbones get their name from the distinctive clacking noise they make as their mandibles slam together, propelling them through the air. They should not be able to make noise apart from this, and yet it's not uncommon to hear locals speak of a terrible, haunting laugh. In rarer cases, they endlessly chant the last thing they heard before they died. I suspect they are telepathic, able to communicate solely via mental energy. This explains how some can hear their haunting, unending cry, while others claim they are silent, save the clacking. If this is the case, I wonder if they haunt those who oppressed them in life, much like the ghouls that can be found throughout the lands...



Initiative	0
Move	4 (Fly, hover)
HP	30
	Resist 3 damage
AC	20
REF	18
FORT	18
WILL	17
AP	350
AP Regen	30
Unarmed attack (Gnash)	+4 vs AC, 1d2 * 4
Abilities	Infection Plague Silence
Control	60

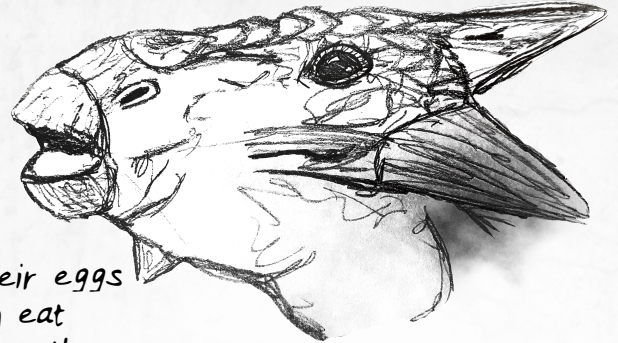
DINOSAUR

You can't lump all dinosaurs into one group. You can't even lump them into three, no matter what your history books teach you. Each dinosaur is unique, each with a dozen ways to kill you, often without even noticing. What matters is which ones are worth the trouble to kill, which ones can be tamed enough to ride, and which ones mean your settlement has gone the way of... well, of creatures we haven't invested in for sport. Let's start with the obvious- There's a lot to know here. You'll figure it out, or you'll die. So listen up.

Tyrannosaurus. Scavenger. Nothing to worry about, if you prepared your meat correctly. By the time it gets a scent, you better hope you're long gone. Hang a decoy far, far from your camp, if you dare.

Velociraptor. Its name means "Speed death". If you're lucky, you might lose an arm. Most aren't lucky.

Pterodactyl. The unsung threat. You ever see one of their eggs on the ground, you'd best leave it alone or hope you can eat omelets real fast-like. I recommend the former. They own the skies. They see everything, and if they can't swoop down and grab you (which, unless you're the size of a young mammoth, they can), they'll alert every other hunter around.



	Tyrannasaurus	Velociraptor	Pterodactyl	Stegosaurus
Initiative	5	8	4	4
Move	5	9	5 (Fly, 8)	5
HP	60	30	25	130
AC	19	18	13	16
REF	8	18	13	14
FORT	18	14	13	16
WILL	8	16	13	18
AP	230	200	90	100
AP Regen	20	10	25	10
Attack	Teeth: +3 vs AC, 1d6 * 3	Unarmed: 2 attacks +4 vs AC, 1d2 * 4	Swoop: +2 vs AC, 1d4 * 2 Ranged-Drop Rock: within 8 squares, +3 vs AC, 1d4 * 3	+3 vs AC, 1d4 * 3
Abilities	Mass Deafen (+5 within 5) Mass Inspire Terror (+5)	Bloodlust Frenzy Decoy (Control mod of 2) Speed Burst	Debris Slam (+2 vs Ref within 4, d8*2) Scream: d4 * 2	Inspire Fear (within 4) Wallop
	Vulnerable 5/ Ice Vulnerable 5/ Rock	Vulnerable 5/ Ice Vulnerable 5/ Rock	Vulnerable 5/ Light-ning	Vulnerable 5/ Rock

Stegosaurus. Keep these around. They can't be domesticated exactly, but what they can be is lured with food. Unlike diplodocus, they'll put up enough of a fight to give you time to high-tail it on out. They won't win your fights for you, but they can be a good distraction.

Ankylosaurus. The armored tank. You get one of these on your side, and your village is set. This is probably the closest we've come to domesticating a dinosaur (aside from the duck-bills, of course, but you'll tire of eating those soon enough). The Ankylosaurus will defend their turf with their life-and oftentimes they'll even win. Just don't forget that it is, in fact, their turf.

Diplodocus. Farm animals. Not hard to catch, they make easy prey. Down a few of these before you move on to a real threat.

Woolly Mammoths. They're big, their coats will warm a village, and they've enough meat to feed the same. Just don't forget that their massive feet will destroy you long before the tusks ever get the chance. When you think you're ready for one of these, think again. They can only be brought down the old fashioned way-spears and pikes. These beasts have grown adept at shrugging off every modern advancement since.

"THE TRICK IS KNOWING WHICH ONES YOU CAN KILL. KNOWING WHAT YOU NEED TO RUN FROM, AND WHAT YOU NEED TO HIDE FROM WILL ALSO SERVE YOU WELL, BUT IF YOU DON'T HAVE THAT FIRST PIECE OF KNOWLEDGE, YOU WON'T LAST LONG. IT'S BEEN SAID THAT KNOWING IS HALF THE BATTLE. OUT IN THE PLAINS, KNOWING IS THE ENTIRE BATTLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU TRY TO KILL A MAMMOTH WITH A PRIEBED LASER RIFLE, YOU'LL LIKELY LIGHT THE FUR ON FIRE. BEST CASE SCENARIO, YOU SEAR THE MEAT. WORST CASE SCENARIO, YOU START A STAMPEDE. EITHER WAY, IT WON'T BE MAMMOTH MEAT THAT FEEDS YOU THROUGH THE WINTER."-EXCERPT FROM SURVIVING THE CRUSTACEOUS PLAINS

Triceratops. These guys like to fight. Seems to be all they live for. Sure, they don't eat meat, but if they're around, predators usually give a wide berth. Befriending them would be a sure boon.

	Ankylosaurus	Diplodocus	Woolly Mammoth	Triceratops
Initiative	2	2	8	5
Move	3	2	5	4
HP	140	110	140	80
AC	24	11	19	20
REF	12	8	14	12
FORT	18	16	16	16
WILL	16	12	15	14
AP	120	50	100	80
AP Regen	20	10	10	10
Attack	Tail Slam +4 vs AC, 1d6 * 2	Stomping foot +2 vs AC, 1d6 * 2 +10 to Bull Rush	Charge! 3 attacks +5 vs AC, 1d6 * 5	Horn Strike! 2 attacks +3 vs AC, 1d6 * 3
Abilities	Armor Barrier (resist 2) Crush (+1 within 2, d10 damage) Wallop	Wallop	Barrier Wallop	Bone Spikes (+3 within 6) Injure (+3 within 6, ongoing 2)
		Vulnerable 5/ Rock	Resist 3 damage Resist 5 Ice	

DWELLER

SL. 2. 899109. 155:

We thought we were safe. Didn't think they'd be able to find us here. The first foraging party came back unharmed. Found some resources not far off from the settlement. But they found us. They eliminated the East outpost before we could assemble a task force. Killed every soldier stationed there. Twenty-three soldiers, and only two had time to signal a distress beacon. Four were still alive when we sealed them off. We didn't have a choice, really. Once they get a taste for flesh, they don't stop coming. These have had our taste for two years now. We thought if we moved we would be safe. We were wrong. We thought if we killed them, they would fear us. But we don't know if they can be killed. All we know is that we are in here, and they are coming. We have enough food to last the month, not much more. But they will return. I'm beginning to think it was a mistake to settle here, and not just for the dwellers. The air is toxic, resources are scarce, minerals have to be refined. Even the rain wants to kill us. But it won't get the chance. Not with the dwellers.

SL. 2. 909109. 156:

We knew they were here when we built this facility. But we didn't think thirty pounds of childlike stature would impede us. This was progress, the report said. They'd adapt to our presence, or get eradicated. Just like every other species we've colonized. The report was wrong, and writing it may well be my last regret. We didn't have enough information at the time. We didn't know about the claws, oh God, the claws. These things may look like scaly children, but when they are hungry, claws erupt out of their arms, legs, and backs. They can tear into an entire squadron in seconds, leaving nothing but a bloodstain and a blur. They move so quickly that the soldiers' shaky shots miss them, and fear and adrenaline make poor stabilizers.

I've watched the videos so many times. I can almost do it without gagging now. It's hard to tell with how quickly they move. The cameras can barely track them. They appear to unhinge their jaw, wrapping their mouth up, over their eyes, revealing rows and rows of jagged teeth. And with just as much fervor, they tear into our soldiers, our scientists, our progress. There's nothing left of the Eastern outpost but blood and ruin. We channeled in gasses, but we didn't have anything more toxic than the air outside.

SL. 2. 919109. 157:

We're all going to die here, and I'm sending this message because we need help. Please. Pull whatever strings you have, call in all your favors. This isn't a distress call, it's a last will and testament disguised as me begging. I don't want to end up as a footnote next to a "failed to colonize planet". You have to help us. Get us off this place and destroy the planet or leave it alone. Abandon it, and hope the things that dwell here forget about us.



SL. 2. 919109. 158:

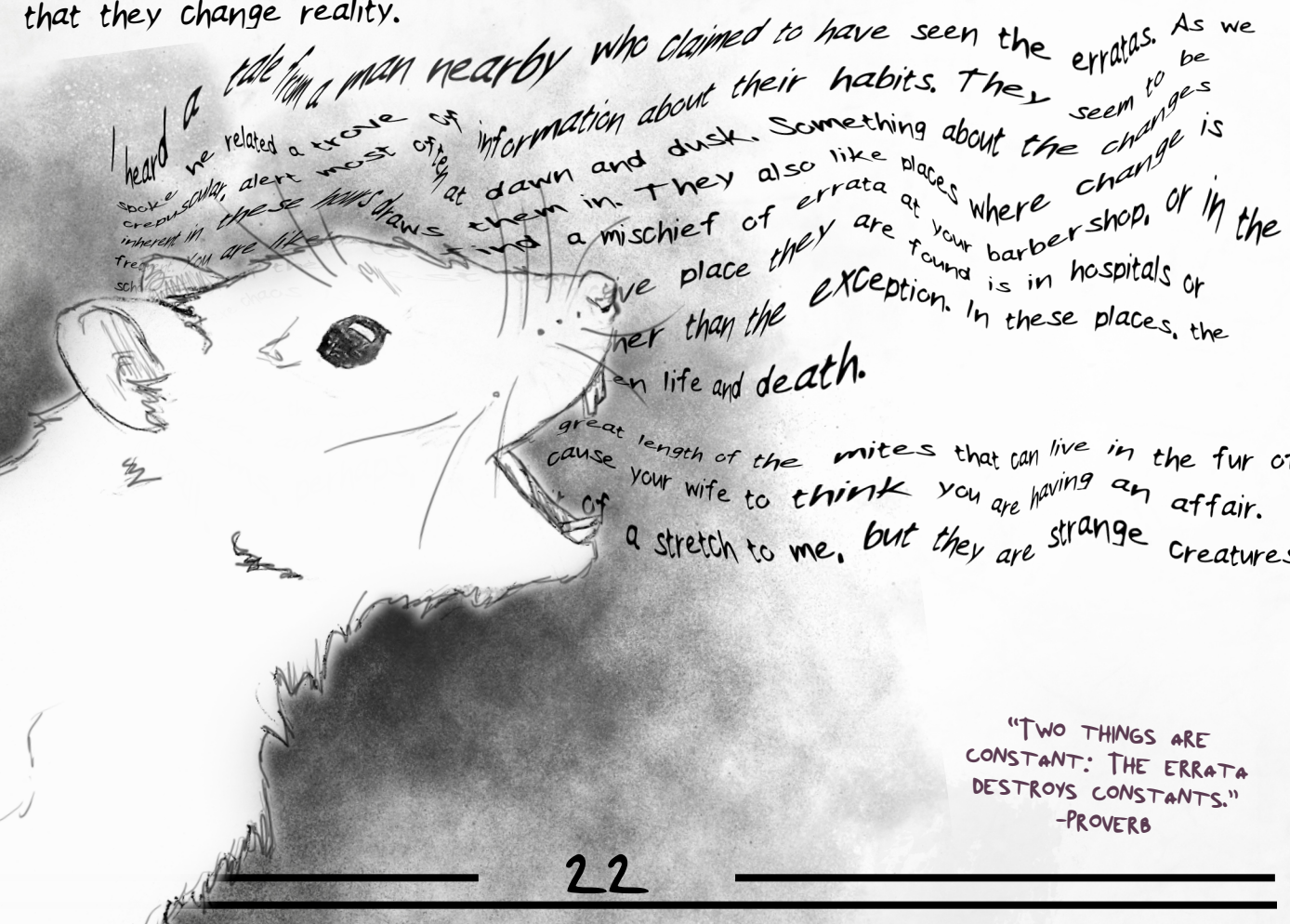
Please. I don't want to end up like the soldiers in the video. I can't imagine what noise they heard last, but I know that the sound of it caused trained warriors to collapse to the ground, clutching their ears. Blood spurt forth, raining down. I know it will be the same for me. I jump at every noise, not knowing what to expect. There are forty of us, and in a month there will be none. If they even let us live that long.

Initiative	6
Move	8
HP	10
AC	18
REF	16
FORT	12
WILL	12
AP	80
AP Regen	35
Attack	1000 Teeth: +3, 1d8*3
Abilities	Speed Burst Scream (d4*2)

ERRATA

You might think they're larger at first. It's in your best interest to lose that thought as quickly as it finds you. Errata are not to be messed around with. While they resemble simple rodents, it is quite clear that they are much more than that. Where the errata go, change follows.

Not much is known about these creatures. Most witnesses describe them the same way: they stand about as tall as a man's knee, and twice as long. They have beady eyes, large teeth, and an inky black cloud that follows wherever they travel. Many believe that it is this cloud, and not the rodents themselves, that possess their unique properties, but I maintain that it does not matter. No one has seen a cloud without a rat, nor a rat without a cloud. Not of this kind anyway. There's something about the eyes, something that isn't quite right. They seem more intelligent than they should. Almost everyone who talks of errata mentions the eyes. Yet I've never heard the same description twice. There is nothing consistent about the errata, except that they change reality.



I heard a tale from a man nearby who claimed to have seen the erratas. As we spoke, he related a trove of information about their habits. They seem to be so peculiar, alert most of the day at dawn and dusk. Something about the changes in these animals draws them in. They also like places where change is a mischief of errata at your barber shop, or in the place they are found is in hospitals or other than the exception. In these places, the errata can cause your wife to think you are having an affair. A stretch to me, but they are strange creatures.

"TWO THINGS ARE CONSTANT: THE ERRATA DESTROYS CONSTANTS."
-PROVERB

Some scholars have sworn that texts, even texts they themselves wrote, have been transformed by the appearance of the creatures. I've never seen an errata myself, but an acquaintance of mine was able to show me two tomes, almost identical, each over 200 years old. The text differed between the tomes in few places, but all were substantial. One copy my friend had in his possession when the errata came. The other was hundreds of miles away.

Initiative	4
Move	4
HP	30
AC	18
REF	18
FORT	18
WILL	18
AP	180
AP Regen	30
Control Modifier	6
Unarmed attack (bite)	1 attack, +3vs AC, d4*2 damage
Abilities	Dishearten Disorient Reversal

Some of the changes were small. Improved translations. Others, larger. Contradictions were fixed, paragraphs added and removed. And every change was done in the original handwriting- the handwriting of a monk 100 years dead. My friend carries the books with him at all times, claiming he can feel the errata looking for it, coming to correct their oversight. I do not know if they are drawn to works in such a way, only that for him, it has become an obsession.

Some cultures worship errata, marking them as heralds of the gods, messengers from another plane. How else, they argue, could they effect such great power? Several tribes follow the errata, noting their changes and destroying any evidence that things were not as they used to be. This may include rewriting books and replacing them in the night, or enforcing new truths with spear and claws. No matter if you worship them or not, many claim it is bad luck to kill one.

Nothing is safe from errata. Scrolls, books, and paintings have all been affected. There are those who claim oral retellings are safe, and thus the only thing to be relied on, but I think it more likely that one has no way of knowing if the telling changes, and I have seen the failings of the minds of men, while the errata, to me, remain a second-hand story.

"I DON'T BELIEVE I HAVE EVER SEEN ONE MYSELF, NO. BUT I CAN PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE. THERE IS A FACILITY SOME THREE DAYS TRAVEL FROM HERE DEDICATED TO TRACKING THESE CREATURES YOU SPEAK OF. IN FACT, THEY PUBLISH A BULLETIN TRACKING THEIR MOVEMENTS, MONITORING EXACTLY WHAT CHANGES OCCUR WHEN THE ERRATA ENTER A REGION."
-REGINALD GROSSLEY, PROFESSOR

FRATRIS DEMON

"I WAS LIKE, BRO, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU BEFORE, YOU NEW AROUND HERE? AND THE DUDE JUST KINDA GLARED AT ME. TOOK CHAD'S BEER OFF THE TABLE. I WAS LIKE BRO, AND HE JUST WALKED AWAY. NOT COOL."
-MARK NICHOLAS WILLIAMS

Perhaps as old as fun itself, these creatures have been known to appear wherever revelry rears its head. They can smell fun in the air, materializing at parties and social events of all kinds just in time to totally ride the buzz 'til morning.

"I WAS AT THIS PARTY, AND THEN ALL THESE GUYS KEPS SHOWING UP AND DRINKING ALL THE BEER. I'M PRETTY SURE NO ONE KNEW ANY OF THEM. WHAT A BUNCH OF LOSERS."
-TYFANI LYNN

It is not known what the true form is, as the Fratriis demon rarely shows it. The soul-eating demons take the form of an average brosky, infiltrating the brosky sanctum and doubling the buzz of everyone nearby. The demon's body chemistry allows it to exude a pheromone of sorts that acts exactly like intoxication. In short, the Fratriis demons carry the party with them.

Once the Fratriis demon has gained entrance, it challenges partygoers to drunken bets, tricking them into surrendering their souls, which it promptly devours. As if that isn't enough, they are also known to consume more than their fair share of booze, draining kegs with little more to offer in apology than a shrug and a "Sorry, man". Still, Fratriis demons are personally invested in the life of a party, and will ensure that an empty keg won't be the reason anyone leaves.

If they have a natural habitat, it must be some special circle of hell. It isn't known exactly what lures them away, but wherever fun is to be had, kegs are tapped, and bros are gathered, so too does the Fratriis demon appear. The Fratriis demon requires a constant stream of energy once summoned. If at any time there is a break in revelry or a shortage of alcohol, the creature is immediately and loudly returned to the hell plane from which it presumably sprang. This leaves behind a mist that has a number of remarkable medicinal properties. These include, but are not limited to: dry mouth, nausea, memory loss, and headaches.



One of the most well-known oddities of the Fratrīs is that not even they can tell each other apart. This, combined with their desires to keep the party thriving, can lead to amusing situations. On one famous occasion, dubbed the Ambiguitatis Event, what started out as a house party, ended up consisting entirely of Fratrīs demons, as they continued to appear, and regular guests kept leaving as the intensity of the party increased. Each of the demons present kept trying to steal souls from the other attendants through dares and bets, all trying to get their opponents drunker than themselves for easier stealing. The party lasted for six days before one of them realized.

Since then, rumors of an agreement to stop such a miscommunication among the Fratrīs have run rampant. Dubbed the Ambiguitatis Accords, most scholars agree that they exist, but no consensus as to what they actually entail can be reached.

Because this effect tends to ruin the party, preventing other Fratrīs demons from showing up, many Fratrīs demons will do everything in their power to keep the party going, no matter the cost. This usually entails increasingly absurd stunts and bets, and unhealthy amounts of alcohol being consumed by all. Other, more competitive Fratrīs will attempt to keep the party just on the edge of dying, so they have enough energy to sustain themselves, but there isn't enough energy for a competitor to spawn.

Initiative	2
Move	4
HP	20
AC	25
REF	22
FORT	30
WILL	38
AP	200
AP Regen	60
Control Mod	4
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, each hit does 1d4 * 2 damage

Abilities	Disorient Dishearten Enthrall Morph (Can shapeshift into any creature in the same size category. While in this form, Defenses all decrease by 2, Abilities can still be used. Taunt
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Intoxicating Aura	Any creature that starts its turn next to a Fratrīs Demon must make a saving throw or suffer a -2 to all die rolls (save ends). This aura will not stack with itself or any other Fratrīs Demon auras.
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Nemesis: Law Enforcement	Increase damage die by 1 when attacking any enemy of this type.
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GHOSTS

Bodies fade quickly after death, but sometimes the spirit doesn't quite get the message. More often than not, spirits that stick around in this way have some pressing goal—to incriminate their murderer, to find a certain artifact, to warn others who might die in a similar fashion. Other times they simply stick around as if they are unsure how to leave. If there is a goal, the ghost often fades after the task has been completed (except in the case of those who serve as a warning against some perpetual danger).

"AAAAAH!"
-VANORY BANNER

Ghosts tend to be rooted to one place, often one that has special significance to the departed. Sometimes it's the place they died, but it can also be where they are buried, a house they grew up in, or a boat they once traveled on. Other ghosts are not rooted, and can travel freely. I've yet to discover a consistent cause to reliably predict this behavior.

Spirits tend not to be malevolent, though many are not aware that they are dead. Some want to be left alone, and will quickly resort to violence in order to ensure their peace. Often, spirits will lash out with energy to fight any perceived threats to their goal, territory, or person. Unless they're an old spirit, ghosts tend to be clumsy and awkward in their attacks. You'll know it by the cold shiver that penetrates your core, as if someone dumped icy water into your rib cage. I have fought many ghosts in my time. It never gets easier, slaying what doesn't know it's dead. But my advice on the matter is this: Ghosts are spiritual things, and must be fought in spiritual ways. The weapon that killed the body will rarely be as effective against the spirit.



Intangible	Abilities are twice as powerful against this creature. Physical attacks are half as effective as normal against this creature.
Ignores difficult terrain	
Initiative	4
Move (fly)	5
HP	100
AC	16
REF	16
FORT	14
WILL	18
AP	120
AP Regen	35
Destruction Score	25
Ranged Attack:	Ectoplasm +2vs AC, 1d4 * 2
Unarmed Attack	+1 vs AC, 1d2 * 1
Abilities	Invisibility Phasing Pooling Health Pulse Scatterbrain Scream

AT FIRST I MISSED MY MOMMY.
BUT NOW I WISH SHE'D GO AWAY."
-YANCE PENFLOWER, AGE 8

"USED TO KNOW A GUY WHO CLAIMED HE COULD EXORCISE GHOSTS. SAID HE'D RID THE PROBLEM ONCE AND FOR ALL. USED TO TRAVEL AROUND, COLLECTING A FEE FOR HIS SERVICES. A FEE MOST PEOPLE (MYSELF INCLUDED) WERE GLAD TO PAY. TURNS OUT, HE WASN'T EXORCISING THEM AT ALL! HE JUST BANISHED THEM A LEAGUE OR SO AWAY. FOR SOME, THAT SOLVED THE PROBLEM, SURE. BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THEY JUST CAME RIGHT BACK! A TOWN TO THE EAST LYNCHED HIM FOR BEING A CHARLATAN A FEW YEARS BACK. SHAME REALLY. GUY HAD THE BEST STORIES."
-GEGOR VYLSTWITH

Sometimes, spirits adjust well, and have knowledge of their past life. In these cases, they can provide valuable information that otherwise would be lost. Ghosts like these have provided valuable insight in the creation of this journal, as well as to many adventurers and explorers before me. When not rooted to one location, these ghosts tend to drift towards libraries, tombs, and other places of great knowledge or historic importance. Upon my next encounter, I will have to enquire why. My favorite resource is a Baroness whose name in life was Elizra. She usually resides in the catacombs of the library at Blackmouth. I have utilized her knowledge more times than I count, though of late it seems she does not remember me as often as I remember her. It's possible that her link to this world is fading. It could also be more widespread, like something is pushing all of the spirits away. Or perhaps drawing them somewhere else...

GOLEM

Perhaps one of the more interesting creatures I've ever encountered, I cannot understand why the Golem exist. I've seen them, towering over me, and I've had colleagues who spend far too many days studying these things, colleagues who in turn have spent far too many hours trying to explain to me, but for the life of me, I cannot understand what causes them to live. I'm not entirely convinced that my colleagues (who, apart from time management, do have many admirable qualities) understand it themselves.

What I do know is this: magic bleeds. When magical items are left in caves, or leaning against rocks, in places that magic should not be, sometimes that rock gets upset. It consumes the item, and it gains something that isn't quite sentience. The golems are attracted to magical items. They seek them out and eat them, each time growing just a little bit in size, and probably in power.

"REALLY IT'S JUST POWER. ANY POWER SOURCE WOULD DO IT. WHAT STRIKES ME IS WHEN. IT'S NOT EVERY TIME, YOU SEE. I'VE TRIED TO MAKE ONE, OF COURSE I HAVE! I'VE LEFT SO MANY ARTIFACTS LYING ABOUT, I'VE ACCOUNTED FOR EVERY VARIABLE. ALL I'VE GOTTEN IS AN EMPTY HOUSE, SINCE MY HUSBAND LEFT. MAYBE THE PROBLEM IS THAT I'M MONITORING THEM..."-GRINETTE WALLS, GOLEM EXPERT

It's considered bad luck to see a golem, but many people hunt them down for what they've eaten. The little ones don't have much, maybe a cursed gem or a haunted sacrificial dagger. Perhaps a bowl that was used in a ritual. But the big ones. Oh the big ones. You wouldn't believe how many legendary tools and weapons we've lost to the inside of a golem. You get there fast enough, you might be able to get them back, but chances are they're part of the rock now.

If you do see a golem, I suggest parting with whatever magical item you value least. Throw it, run, and hope for the best. After all, you never know what trace elements of power might have seeped on to your clothes. The golems aren't malicious, but they won't hesitate to rip off a torso if it means getting at the sweet magic that adorns what's underneath.

"YOU WANT TO CAMP? CAMP IN A GOLEM-SITE. EVERYONE KNOWS ONE WON'T SPRING FROM THE SAME ROCK TWICE."
-HUMBERT BURNS

Initiative	1
Move	2
HP	140
AC	22
REF	11
FORT	22
WILL	17
AP	60
AP Regen	10
Unarmed attack: Fist	+6 vs AC, 1d4 * 3, make 2 attacks
Abilities	Wallop Resist 5/ Electric



It's not the items they're after, just their power. If there were some way to extract one from the other, I'm sure you could make a sort of lure for the things. Maybe even compromise, if the power isn't what you like about the item. Still, my stance is firm: when it comes to golems, avoid if possible. Treasure hunting isn't worth the risk

"I USED TO WORK AS A JUGGLER. NO, NOT THAT KIND. PEOPLE WOULD HIRE ME TO KEEP TRACK OF THEIR GOODS. KEEP 'EM OFF THE ROCKS, THAT SORT OF THING. I NEVER SAW ONE, BUT THEN, IF I HAD, I'D BE OUT OF A JOB, I GUESS. LOTTA TIMES THE STUFF YOU'RE JUGGLING IS WORTH MORE THAN THE PAY. NOT EVERYONE NOTICES IF EVERY DAGGER GETS PLACED BACK, YOU KNOW?"
-QUIN "SLIM" DOURDY

"THEY MAKE GOOD HUNTING, THE LITTLE ONES. USUALLY HAVE A STORE OF STUFF THEY WERE EATING STILL INTACT. ONLY HARD PART IS GETTING INSIDE."
-CORRIM HYN, MINER

GREENIE

THAT MAN SAID THEY WERE EVIL. SAID THEY'D STEAL AWAY OUR BABIES IN THE NIGHT. BUT THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS. THEY'RE NICE ENOUGH, THEY JUST DON'T SPEAK LIKE WE DO. WE WENT TO VISIT THEM, ALL OF US DID! THEY LIVE UNDER THE BIG OAK TREE IN THE FOREST, I CAN SHOW YOU! ANYWAY, THEY'RE JUST LIKE US! THEY'VE GOT TOOLS AND PITCHFORKS, I BET THEY'VE EVEN GOT TRACTORS! THEY GROW LOTS OF STUFF DOWN THERE, I EVEN SAW A POTATO! BUT I DON'T THINK THEY LIKE BRIGHT THINGS. THAT MUST BE WHY THEY LIVE UNDERGROUND. LYDIA LIT A FIRE AND THEY ALL RAN BACK, LIKE THEY'D NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE. I TRIED TO TELL THEM IT WAS OKAY, BUT THEY REALLY DIDN'T LIKE IT. I WONDER HOW THEY KEEP WARM AT NIGHT. I HOPE WE DIDN'T MAKE THEM MAD. THEY ALL KEPT STANDING UP WHEN WE GOT TOO CLOSE TO THE BACK OF THEIR CAVE, BUT YOU KNOW HOW LYDIA IS. ALWAYS SO CURIOUS. WE WENT AND PEEKED BACK THERE, AND THEY HAD A LITTLE NURSERY, JUST LIKE THE SMITHY USED TO HAVE! THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A SCORE OF THEM BACK THERE! BUT THEY DID NOT LIKE US LOOKING, NOT ONE BIT! WE HAD TO APOLOGIZE A LOT, BUT I'M NOT SURE THEY KNEW THAT WORD, SO WE JUST KEPT SAYING IT AND SAYING IT, JUST LIKE MOMMA TAUGHT. I HOPE THEY AREN'T UPSET. I'D LIKE TO SEE THEM SOME MORE, THEY SEEMED REALLY NICE. MAYBE I CAN EVEN GIVE THEM ONE OF OUR POTATOES IN RETURN! -RAPHAELA, AGE 10

In almost every forest, there are little creatures, not more than four feet tall. I speak not of squirrels or rabbits, nor snakes or monkeys. I speak of Greenies.

They vary in size, coloration, and name from village to village, but they are often green or yellow, with hard bumpy skin. They live underground, and may be nocturnal. I've seen ones with skin that is orange, red, or even purple, often with streaks of discoloration or markings. I do not know if they are natural or cosmetic.



Initiative	4
Move	8
HP	10
AC	14
REF	12
FORT	12
WILL	12
AP	0
Attack (Spear)	+1, d4*2

The creatures that I've had the chance to inspect close up have sharp teeth in two rows. Hunting teeth. Yet they seem to be farmers, growing plants underground. They have a language, rough and coarse to my ears, but I've never been able to ask them how they manage to grow their crops with no natural sunlight or rainwater.

They don't live far from human settlements, and it's not uncommon for city dwellers to refer to them as thieves or murderers, but I've been almost entirely unable to find anyone who's had a proper personal dealing with them, negative or not. If it weren't for the teeth, I'd be confident that they devolved from us, some strain of human exiled into darkness. But with how deformed they are from us, it would take magic of a strange and powerful kind to produce such horrendous results.

Greenies can see in perfect darkness and hear the slightest twig snap at 200 paces. Their eyes can glow in the dark, but I've reason to believe this is something they can control. I've seen them move at astounding speed without making a single sound. If they weren't always a forest-dwelling creature, they certainly are now. Whoever it used to belong to, and wherever they may have belonged before, the forest is their home. That much, at least, no one can dispute. Each of their hands ends in claws, though I cannot say how many. The fact that these creatures do not thirst for blood is astounding. They are built to be perfect stalkers of the night, to drag small mammals to their hidden underground forts and feed off them for weeks. Instead, they live in colonies and plant.

As far as I can tell, they are perfectly pacifistic. I've seen a single spear in the one colony I managed to discover (it was at the base of an oak tree, impossible to find if you don't know where to look. Luckily, I found a guide in a small child), but it was picked up only when I ventured 30 paces into the chamber. At once, the whole colony, all ten of them, tensed up. I'd misstepped. I'd gone one inch too far towards their birthing chambers, where they care for their young. These creatures have many secrets, and though I've sat with them in desperate attempts to communicate, until their language is broken, their secrets remain their own. Still, I hesitate to investigate. A cruel man would see them as defenseless, ripe for the harvest. And I fear that man may not be as wrong as I hope...

GUARD

SECRETS, MONEY, DRUGS. EVERYONE'S GUARDING SOMETHING. I DON'T CARE WHAT. IT'S NOT MY JOB TO CARE. IT'S MY JOB TO GET IT. I START CARING, I GOTTA FIND A DIFFERENT JOB. BUT THERE'S ALWAYS ONE THING BETWEEN ME AND WHATEVER'S BEING GUARDED. ONE THING THAT NEVER CHANGES: THE GUARDS.

THAT'S NOT TO SAY THERE'S NO CHANGING OF THE GUARDS, OF COURSE THERE'S A CHANGING OF THE GUARDS, I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHANGING OF THE GUARDS, THAT'S NOT THE POINT, THE POINT IS... IF YOU'LL FOCUS, THAT WHILE I'VE NEVER HAD TO ACQUIRE THE SAME THING TWICE, THE ACQUIRING ALWAYS GOES SIMILARLY. I DON'T KNOW IF EVERYONE WHO HAS SOMETHING TO HIDE RECRUITS FROM THE SAME GUARD SCHOOL, THE SAME SPECIALISTS, THE SAME SECURITY FIRM. BUT I DO KNOW THAT THE HOLES IN THEIR SECURITY, AND THE HOLES IN THEIR ARMOR ARE QUITE SIMILAR, NO MATTER WHO I'M STEALING FROM. NOW, I MUST ADMIT, MANY OF THE HOLES IN THEIR ARMOR WERE NOT THERE BEFORE I STOLE FROM THEM, BUT KNOWING WHO YOU'RE STEALING FROM MAKES THE JOB A LOT EASIER. THEY CALL ME THE STALKER. OR AT LEAST, I WANT THEM TO. CAN YOU QUOTE ME AS THE STALKER? I'M ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR A PUBLICIST RIGHT NOW...

-IAN NIKOLAEV



IS THAT ME? OH, MAN, MAKE SURE YOU MAKE ME LOOK REALLY COOL AND INTIMIDATING, OKAY? IT'LL BE GREAT FOR MY IMAGE. DO YOU THINK I COULD HAVE A COPY TO SHOW REBECCA? I BET SHE WOULD BE REALLY IMPRESSED THAT I AM IN A BOOK AND STUFF...

- "THE STALKER"

Initiative	5
Move	6
HP	25
AC	17
REF	14
FORT	16
WILL	16
AP	90
AP Regen	20
Control	10
Destruction	10
Enhancement	30
Utility	30
Melee Attack	+4 vs AC, 1d6 * 2
Ranged Attack	Range 6, +2 vs AC, 1d6 * 1
Abilities	Summon Bigger Fish

"WHAT? GUARD SCHOOL? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M JUST TRYING TO EARN A LITTLE EXTRA MONEY AT NIGHT. MY KID THINKS I'M TAKING CLASSES. I'VE GOT MOUTHS TO FEED."
 -GUARD, NAME UNKNOWN

"THE STALKER? NEVER HEARD OF HIM.
 OH, WAIT, IS HE THAT IAN FELLOW WHO KEEPS RUNNING AROUND HERE?
 YEAH I KNOW HIM. REAL MENACE. DANCES AROUND IN BLACK CLOTHING LIKE WE CAN'T SEE HIM. SAD REALLY. A COUPLE OF THE GUYS PLAY ALONG. KID'S GOT SOME KIND OF WOODEN STICK OR SOMETHING. I DUNNO. THEY KEEP THE REAL THREATS OUT, NOT MY PROBLEM IF THEY WANNA PLAY SOME FANCY HIDE-N-SEEK. LONG AS THEY PROTECT THE STUFF I CARE ABOUT."
 -ALEXIS HOLCOM, PLANT MANAGER

"SEE THOSE GUARDS? THAT MEANS WE'RE HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. TRY NOT TO BE SPOTTED."
 -RIF CORINTH, THIEF

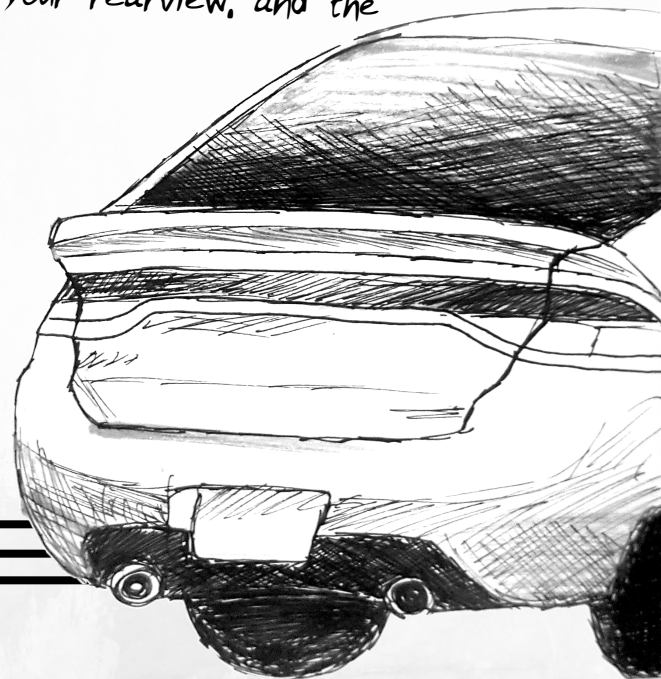
HAUNT

You see them at the edge of your vision. Perhaps when you're driving. It's night-time. You take a wrong turn at an intersection you've been to a thousand times before. You're not sure why you do it. It just feels right in the moment. You find yourself in an unfamiliar neighborhood. The houses here seem off somehow. Or maybe just quaint. It's no matter. Soon you're at a cul-de-sac, and as you spin around, just for an instant you see... but no, of course you don't.

You travel back the way you came, undoing each turn perfectly. But you don't find yourself back at that familiar intersection. Instead you're on a lonesome county road, a tower blinking in the distance. Suddenly, you're unsure how long you've been driving. Where did the last few miles go? It's no matter, you think, the main road can't be far. But the road turns, and it's heavily forested. A chill seeps through your car, one that the heating does nothing to help. You shiver, and, just for one moment, you feel the cold in your lungs, as if it's struck you right to your core.

The road is curving now, it's not safe to go fast. Still, you go faster than the sign recommends. Something isn't right here. Again, at the exact spot you're not looking at, not quite, you see a man. It's far too late to be out, and he's just standing there. Just standing at the side of the road, a kitchen knife plainly sticking out of his clothes that are at least a century old. "Help me," he mouths, but you hear his words as if he was whispering an inch away, you can feel his tongue lapping at the edge of your earlobe. You turn to the seat next to you, and your car turns with you. The man isn't there, of course he isn't there. You respond quickly, correcting, looking too drunk to be on the roads at night. You check your rearview, and the man isn't there.

Just like the women holding two dead children wasn't waiting in that cul-de-sac. Both of the figures that weren't there had the same glow to them, as if a shadow made of pure light clung to them, too afraid to leave ghouls like these in the dark. Much safer this way, where everyone can see them coming. But it catches your eyes, no matter how hard you fight it...



Initiative	5
Move	4
HP	70
AC	18
REF	14
FORT	8
WILL	16
AP	220
AP Regen	70
Destruction	40
Control	30
Ranged Attack	+6 vs AC, 1d4 * 2
Abilities	Arc Aura Death Field Push Shadowstep (cost 30, move action- can teleport between any two visible shadows) Stun Taunt

Vulnerable 5/ Sonic



Haunts aren't ghosts. They aren't lost souls, waiting to be put to rest. Haunts are murderers in life who didn't quite get their fill in death. They only want one thing: to take as many people with them as possible. Not everyone can see haunts. The most common belief is that you can only see them if you've had a brush with death yourself. Either it came for you and you clung to this Earth harder than it cared to grab, or it came for someone else while you were unlucky enough to serve witness. Others still say that kids can see them, as can the young at heart. They're there if you can see them or not, and I doubt they'd spare you just because you don't see them coming.

HEDGEWORC

You'd think a twelve foot tall bipedal mammal would leave an impression, but it's hard to find a witness who's actually seen a hedgeworc and who's willing to talk about it. Perhaps that's a testament to the destruction they leave in their wakes. You'll find drunkards and beggars who'll spin you a tale for a coin, but tales of such low repute are not the kind you'll find printed here. It's rare anyway that you'll hear anything but the myths you were raised on, and you'll still be short a coin for your trouble.

The myths. You've heard them. As tall as three men and just as wide. Hedgeworcs run through a village, their orange or brown fur shining in the sun. They aren't supposed to be smart, and I've not heard any stories claiming otherwise (in fact, one drunk told me he outwit one in a game of riddles, as if that was a point to brag about!). Aside from the one drunkard, tales are silent as to their ability to speak. Most often they're compared to a shaggy grizzly bear with no neck, or a giant, furry porcupine.

"YOU'RE ASKING ABOUT BARKGUARD? I'VE BEEN TO BARKGUARD. THERE'S NO WAY IT WAS ONLY TWO. I DON'T CARE IF THEY WERE HEDGEWORCS OR SOMETHING ELSE, AIN'T TWO 'A NOTHIN' WHAT CAN DO THAT TO A TOWN."
-SANDRE WAINSMITH

I HEARD IT WAS JUST TWO THAT DESTROYED BARKGUARD. IF TWO CAN RAZE A CITY, I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH 'EM."
-PIERS CARTER



"YEAH, I SEEN ONE. FROM A DISTANCE IS ALL. IT WAS ENOUGH. MAN ON A HORSE WOULDN'T QUITE MEASURE UP NEXT TO IT. HUGE HULKIN' THING, I DON'T THINK IT'D EVEN NOTICE A DOZEN ARROWS, UNLESS THEY WERE REALLY WELL-PLACED, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?"
 -ARN LUMRY

THIS PELT? YEAH, IT'S A HEDGEWORC. SEE HOW IT'S SINGED? THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW IT'S REAL. DIDN'T KILL IT MYSELF, NO. BOUGHT IT FROM A TRADER. SEEMED HONEST ENOUGH, AND I'VE NEVER SEEN A BEAR THIS BIG."
 -BERNARD ALCHOY

Hedgeworcs have claws, that much is clear. What isn't clear is their length. Six inches seems a bit small for so tall a creature, but three feet seems like a stretch, even to the least skeptical of my fellows. I'd wager they're a foot long, though I don't care to dispute their being razor sharp! Some say that a hedgeworc has teeth just as sharp, but it seems to me anyone with a good enough view wouldn't have a throat left to tell about it.

In any case, there's only one thing to do if you see a hedgeworc: start a fire. The only things these beasts fear is the flame. Perhaps because they're so shaggy, or perhaps one had a bad experience, I don't care to know. But if you can get a fire between you and a hedgeworc, there's a chance you'll live to tell about it. Rumors say the only reason there's anything left of Barkguard is that the candlemaker's shop went ablaze during the rampage. Only time in history a fire's prevented damage to a city.

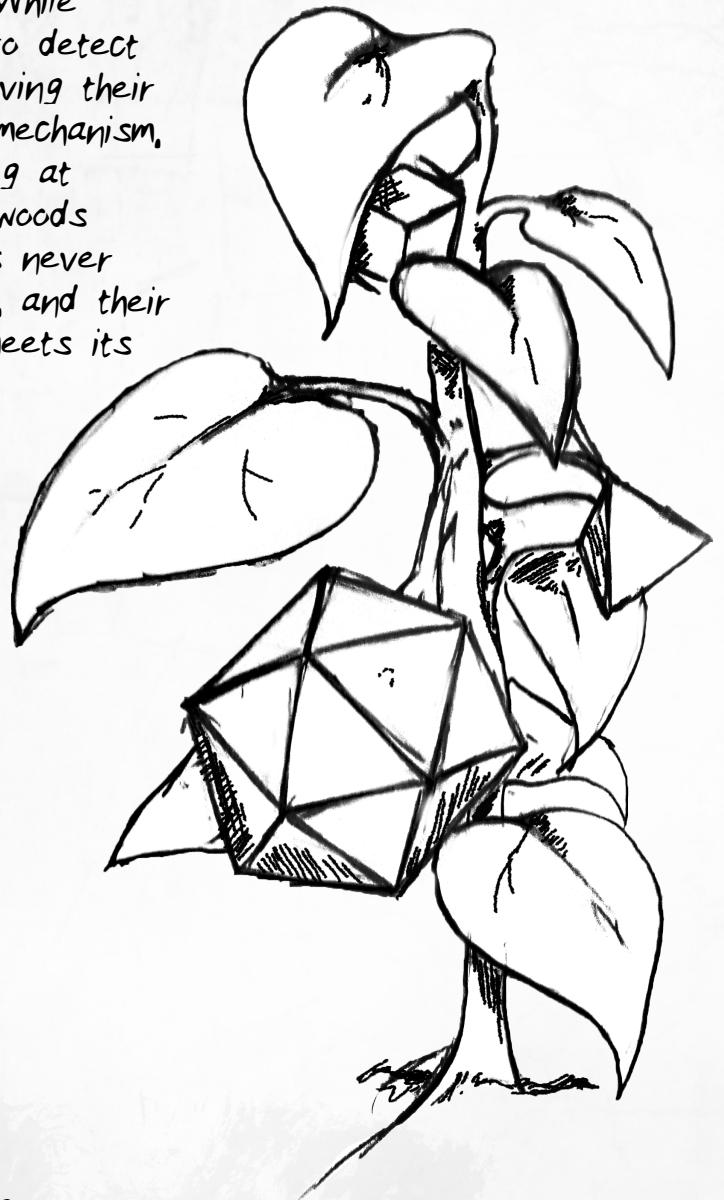
Initiative	4
Move	5
HP	80
AC	18
REF	15
FORT	18
WILL	12
AP	60
AP Regen	10
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +4 vs AC, 1d4*4
Abilities	Wallop
	Vulnerable 5/ Fire

HEDRAN

I don't tend to talk about plants much in this journal, but the Hedran is one that cannot be overlooked. It has no important properties. It is not poisonous, cannot be used effectively in salves, and has no medicinal value. Yet, its cultural significance cannot be overstated. An encounter with a Hedran plant is often seen as an encounter with Fate itself.

Known colloquially as "Battlefield plants", these vines grow round bulbs about the size of a particularly fat 20 year old. They are known to shoot needles at random. While not sentient, these creatures seem to detect when living creatures are nearby, saving their nettles for prey. If it's a defense mechanism, it's an arbitrary one, sometimes firing at Druids fighting to protect the very woods that the plants reside in. The plants never seem to fire when no one is around, and their needles never miss- every attack meets its mark.

Hedran are rumored to bring good luck to those close to them, provided you don't get riddled full of bramble, that is. Because of their ease to spot and their purported good luck, it is tradition that duels take place in their sight. Many times, the plants strike first, and it's not uncommon for the duel to end then, nature having declared the victor. Still, it's not always so clean, and the plants do serve as an occasional grave marker.



The bulbs themselves are almost perfectly spherical, with hardened sides. Occasionally, they detach in the wind and go rolling throughout the woods or even into towns. Until they reach maturity, Hedran will grow, with the smallest bearing 4 triangular sides. As they age, the sides shrink and split. It's not uncommon to see Hedran with 10, 12, or even 20 sides. The locals insist that it is good luck to keep one if it's stored the right way, but accounts differ on what the right way consists of.

"WE ARE EVENLY
MATCHED, NO BOUT OF
SKILL WILL SETTLE THIS.
WE SLEEP BENEATH
THE HEDRAN. WHOEVER
WAKES UNHARMED IS OUR
SUPERIOR."
- ARGYLA, CHAMPION-IN-
WAITING

Initiative	0
Move	0
HP	15
AC	10
REF	0
FORT	Immune
WILL	Immune
AP	300
AP Regen	60
Control Mod	3
Luck Mod	3
Abilities	Backfire Gambit Lottery Kismet
Aura 2	+10 Luck OR -10 Luck
Vulnerable 5/fire	

Because of their lucky reputation, generals throughout history have coordinated defensive strategies that involve the plants, even going so far as to build forts around their natural gardens. As with the duels, this tactical decision paid off as often as it backfired, leading to the practice falling largely to antiquity.

KRADOR

Fear is different for everyone. So it's no surprise that everyone sees Krador, the living embodiment of fear, slightly differently. There are certain features that remain consistent across descriptions, of course. The all-consuming blackness, the deafening wings, and the feeling of pure dread. But that's where the similarities end. Sometimes a Krador is a mess of whirling claws and teeth. Other times it's barbed tentacles slinging out of the dark, flailing with the wings, lashing out. Sometimes it's a beak tearing out of the shadows. Very rarely it's all of these things at once.

The krador is one of the hardest creatures to categorize. There are those who believe that there is not one krador, but several, each visual distinction a different species, or even just a difference among races, the way you and I might wear our hair differently. I don't follow that line of thought. The krador is shaped by fear.

"IT WAS FEAR, IT WAS FEAR, IT WAS FEAR. I FOUGHT FEAR. I FOUGHT FEAR, AND FEAR KILLED MY BROTHER. WHY DID IT TAKE HIM? WHY DID IT TAKE HIM?"
-TRAVELER, NAME UNKNOWN

The first time I saw one, I saw an owl with too many wings, each with dozens of hooked claws. The creature flew towards me, barbs headed towards my face. I felt the deaths of my friends emanating from the beast. I was younger then, and I froze. My mentor did not. He wouldn't tell me what thoughts crossed his mind, but he described the creature like a squid. We looked at one creature and saw two different things.

"AHHHHH!"
-ANDREW BURLMAN

I do not know the krador's true form, I only know that it is fear, and it feeds on the shadows of our mind. You won't see one clearly, and you'll know it by its horror. If you are travelling with others, describe everything you see. Any discrepancies, especially when rooted in shadow, may be the krador.

"I CHOOSE NOT TO SEE THE DARKNESS. THE RADIANCE OF MY FAITH PROTECTS ME. YOU SEE A NIGHTMARE, I SIMPLY SEE A GREAT DOG. A DOG THAT IS NO MATCH FOR MY DIVINE BLADE."
-SER BRAIDEN COWLY, HOLY WARRIOR

Once you identify them, krador are not hard to kill. A bright light does wonders towards weakening their resolve. They seem to actually burn at its touch, with even the faintest light being able to overcome the shadow that it emanates. I must warn you: close your eyes when you strike. The stomach does not take kindly to the thing's true form (or whatever form lies beneath the shadow. I have my doubts that it is in fact true).

"I WATCHED THEM. THE MEN AROUND ME. IT DIDN'T KILL THEM. THEY LET IT. WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT? THEY PUT DOWN THEIR ARMS, OR IF THEY SWUNG, THEY MISSED BY A MARGIN. WHAT DID THAT THING DO TO THOSE MEN?"
-ARYS MENAL, SQUIRE

Do not listen to any thoughts you may have while you fight. You'll feel like dropping your arms, like running, like giving up. This would be the last mistake you ever made. Of course, the Krador themselves are rarely the problem, for they seldom travel alone. Often they are a distraction for something more vile. I've seen them alone, of course, and it's becoming more common these days, times being what they are. But it used to be a Krador was little more than an omen, accompanying some vile hellbeast sent to collect the spirits of men.

Initiative	3
Move	5
Fly	5 (must land at end of turn)
HP	14
AC	18
REF	9
FORT	10
WILL	10
AP	70
AP Regen	10
Claws	+2 vs AC, 1d4 * 1
Abilities	Demoralize (enemies within 4 take a -2 penalty)
Other	Vulnerable 5/ Holy, Radiant, and Light

MARE

No armor can protect against the devastation of the will, and it is this devastation that the Mares carry with them, distributing it as freely as candy in a parade. The Mares do not need to take physical form, do not need to lower themselves to strike out with flesh and blood when they can destroy the mind of even the most hardened warrior on a whim.

The mares are fear incarnate. They travel on clouds, taking whatever shape they will and blending into the night sky. Traditionally, the clouds look like horses, giving them their name. It is not known if this is because those who witness them expect to see horses, or if there is another reason. In any case, a dark night marked by a rider whose horse makes no noise, no clapping of hooves on cobbles, is a sure sign that the Mares are nearby.

Only the most resolute of will, the stoniest warriors, can drive them out. To everyone else, there is no hope. A Mare can paralyze its victim through sheer force of terror, binding them in place, causing them to forget how to even move. One person might see a childhood bully, while another might see a bear, bloodstained claws flashing. Yet another might see nothing, simply a void, absent of love, meaning, or companionship.

The thing about fears is that they can't be killed. They can be pushed down, buried in the darkest corners of your mind. But they lurk there, waiting for a moment of mental weakness. For those quiet seconds before sleep, for the lonely moments on the road. First, doubt trickles in, perhaps in the form of a memory, an embarrassing mistake. By then, it's too late. The Mares creep through your mind, probing for what make you most vulnerable. And then they manifest, appearing in front of you as a cloud of horror, tendrils slick with the moist coatings of the inner crevices of your mind.

Those with abstract fears, that no one ever liked them, or of speaking in front of a crowd, have at once an easier time and a harder one. On one hand, it is harder for the Mare to manifest itself, for it to take form to begin with. The beast searches the victim's mind for a form to take. If it fails to find one, it can't progress past crippling doubt, and a lack of confidence. In this way, the one immune to the Mares is not the one without fear, but rather the one without imagination. On the other hand, those who can bring the creature to form have something to strike at, something that can be driven away or killed. In this way, each has their advantages and their pitfalls.

Initiative	8
Move	10
HP	80
AC	25
REF	28
FORT	25
WILL	30
AP	200
AP Regen	60
Control Mod	5
Abilities	Invisibility Mass Inspire Terror Duplicate (As Summon Bigger Fish, except a creature summoned this way can cast Duplicate on itself).
Intangible	Takes ½ damage from physical attacks, double damage from Abilities



"IT WAS ALL OVER ME, SLITHERING AND HISSING. MY ARMS WERE PINNED, ITS FORKED TONGUE JUST INCHES FROM MY FACE. I COULD SEE MY FEAR LIKE A CLOUD POURING FROM MY MOUTH. I CHOKED AT FIRST, BUT THEN I CRIED OUT, YELLING ABOUT THE SNAKE IN MY BED. THE GROUNDSKEEPER CAME RUNNING IN, BUT HE LOOKED AT THE BED AND FROZE. LUCKILY, OSCAR WAS THERE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE SAW, BUT HE DIDN'T HESITATE. HE RAN INTO THE ROOM, BARKING AND GROWLING AT THE THING. IT IMMEDIATELY FLED, AND OSCAR JUMPED UP ON THE BED, MAKING SURE I WAS ALRIGHT. I ASKED THE GROUNDSKEEPER WHY HE DIDN'T INTERVENE, AND HE SAID, 'YOU SAID THERE WAS A SNAKE, NOT A NEST OF SPIDERS!'. THE CREATURE FLED, BUT I KNOW IT WILL BE BACK. I CAN FEEL IT LURKING IN THE SHADOWS OF MY ROOM, WAITING FOR ME TO FALL ASLEEP. STILL, I'LL REST EASIER WITH OSCAR BY MY SIDE."

-ADAM BOYES

The creatures don't feed on fear, exactly. They start by lapping at confidence, absorbing trickles of experience and rationality, forcing even professionals to lose their heads and start to worry. Worry, once it starts, is contagious, spreading faster than torchlight, infecting ranks of men. In this state, with huddled, anxious minds, the Mares sort of breed, spreading and gaining ideas. With each new worry and every added fear they grow stronger, taking form as a creature more powerful than could be formed off the dread of one.

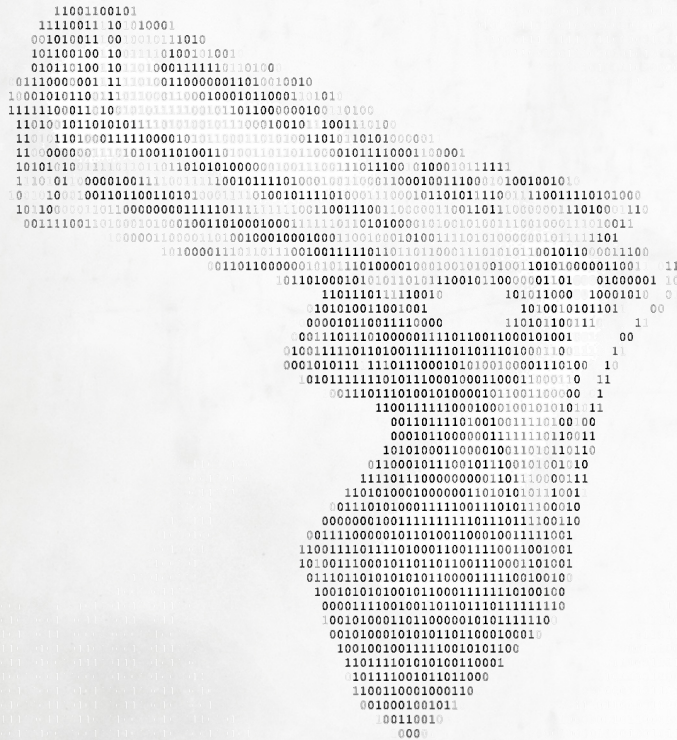
Few share the same fears, and in this way it is hard to describe the Mares. They've been described five different ways by five fighters staring at the same thing. All that could be known for sure is that each saw something that made them tremble, fleeing for safety. It doesn't matter that the thing is basically harmless, if it can reduce a seasoned veteran to a sack of flesh unwilling to raise a spear, well then these Mares could destroy an army more effectively than any soldiers or plague they might encounter. When it's the Mares combined with combat, well, at that point the plague will find few men left for it to take.

NETWORK SPIKES

You know when an email gets lost? You'd think we'd be beyond that by now, but it happens. You send something off, and it never arrives at its destination. Maybe it's a payment, holodeck from your last vacation, perhaps a drop location or a book of recipes the corps don't want you to know about. Doesn't matter. It's gone. Write it off.

The truth is, you don't want to know where that email goes. It's better left untouched. This isn't last century, this isn't a physical object. It's not like some pony ran out of oats or a clumsy human dropped your letter to Santa. Those are physical threats for physical parcels. In here, in the world of bits? Those rules don't apply. If you lose an email, it got eaten.

Most call them viruses, but that's not really correct. For one thing, it's virii, and for another, they're more like mites. Little balls of energy, glowing in bright colors. They look like fires at first, the avatars they choose. You heard of RichtOr? Built the first Deck? He made 'em glow bright like that. One thing in the overlay that isn't easy to change, and I don't recommend trying. You'll feel them before you see them, most times. Feels like a network drop, the empty feeling in your stomach, the wave of nausea. If it lasts more than a couple seconds, just jack out. Unless you're looking for a fight, you've found a hive, and you're in for more than you can handle.



Initiative	8
Move	6
HP	15
AC	17
REF	17
FORT	11
WILL	13
AP	130
AP Regen	10
Unarmed Attack	2 attacks, +4 vs AC, 1d4 *2
Abilities	Disorient: +2 vs Will within 4 Drain ability: one creature within 4 Enthrall: +2 vs Will within 4 Quell: +2 vs Will within 4

THEY GOT GUNDARK-ZERO, AT LEAST I THINK THEY DID. ONE MINUTE HE WAS DOWNLOADING THE SPECS, ME AND TROY WERE COVERING HIM. SECURITY KNEW WE WERE THERE, BUT HE SAID THE NETWORK WAS CLEAR. HIS SIGNALS FLASHED FOR A MOMENT, BUT HE DIDN'T JACK OUT. SAID HE WAS ALMOST DONE. JUST ANOTHER MINUTE HE SAID. NOW HE'S...WELL, YOU'VE SEEN HIM. SOMETHING FRIED HIS BRAIN IN THERE, AND WE LOST THE BEST DECKER I'VE EVER RAN WITH."

-JOANNY AMADCZYK

I said it feels like a network drop, and that's because it's what it is. Those things eat data. They swim around in the byte stream and take a byte here or there, nibbling your emails. Most times you won't notice. Maybe you thought that picture of your target had a little more resolution, maybe the end of that file you downloaded got corrupted. Worst case scenario, you had to restart a file transfer. 'Less it's time-critical, you probably won't notice. Unless you're inside.

These things get to you, you jack out. I don't care how bad the dumpshock is, you jack out. When you're in, you are the bytestream. Your personality, your love of romance novels? All it is is ones and zeros. Unless you want to come out like a digital Phineas Gage, you jack the hell out. You can fight 'em, one or two at a time. But they grow when they feed, and they're surrounded by food. If there's more than a couple and you don't take my advice, well, you weren't cut out for hacking before, and you sure as hell aren't now.

"I FEEL EVEN A KILO LESS DATA THAN MY UPLINK SHOWS, I'M OUT. SEEN TOO MANY GO THE WAY OF DEMENTIA. NOT ME, NOT YET. I MAY NOT JANDER OUT, BUT FRAGGED IF I DON'T COME OUT EVERY TIME. NO DATA'S WORTH WHAT THOSE THINGS DO."

-TREXXORE, DECKER

OCTOPUS

Octopuses. Spiders of the sea. They can open jars, wield eight weapons at once, and, most horrifying of all, they have three hearts. While they tend to travel in solitary units, groups of octopuses have been spotted. Small groups of octopi have been reported to take out entire squadrons of Marines. They (the poly-octopasi, not the Marines) don't have spines, so they can slip into even the smallest of holes in defense. Once they're behind you, they can strangle three people at once, hold two others, wrestle for a gun AND text their command a status report. And yes, I have to believe they have a command. The strikes these monsters can execute are too coordinated to be random. If the rumors are wrong and there is no central command, well, waterlife is doomed, for these creatures are purebred evil, destroying well-guarded targets for sick pleasure. For now, they mostly strike military targets and research outposts, any settlement of non-native waterites larger than ten people. To date, the longest settlement has lasted 81 days.

It's possible the octoposee see themselves as some kind of defender of the sea, or that they're just a particularly xenophobic breed of sealife. Whatever the case, their training is thorough, and they know malice in all three of their hearts. They are experts in covert ops, as I said before, and can slip in unnoticed to most places. They also have never been recorded on film, are either transparent, or capable of natural camouflage, and can disguise themselves as all manner of beings. In the Melville attack, an octopus squad impersonated a sentry and reported for duty for three days, each time replacing the successor in the chain of command. The thing had served three hours as a Staff-Sargent before a janitor found the bodies. On top of all this, the beasts have rows and rows of suction cups, perfect for climbing as well as snatching an unmonitored access card or rifle. If you ask any of the survivors, they all echo the same phrase: "Look sharp, look up, look always".

The octopopi alone are one thing, but that's to say nothing of their recruit. I know not if he's a man or a myth, but if you ask questions about octopi, sooner or later he'll come up: The Squid. According to legend, he's a man who sought peace with the leader of the octopus. What he received was something else entirely. I know not what magic or promise binds him to them, but they say he is the ultimate assassin: unable to be killed, and so stealthy he makes actual octopoxen look like manatees. Almost every unsolved murder under the sea (and a few above) have been attributed to him. The death usually looks natural, organ failure or a blood clot. But it's always a little too convenient. A general preparing to staff a seastation. A mariner securing funds for undersea research. A researcher drafting a treaty with the ruler of Atlantis. I could go on. There's a web of mysterious deaths related to undersea politics, and the more I stare at them, the more the tendrils start to look like tentacles, spiraling away from an almost invisible body...

"NEVER TRUST ANYTHING WITH MORE LEGS THAN YOU. THAT'S WHAT MY FATHER ALWAYS SAID. COURSE, HE ONLY HAD THE ONE, AFTER THE INCIDENT WITH THE KRAKEN, SO HE MAY HAVE BEEN A BIT PREDISPOSED ABOUT WATER CREATURES. NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, I DON'T THINK HE'DA MUCH LIKED ME ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT NO OCTOPODES."

Octopus

Initiative	3
Move	3
Swim	8
HP	40
AC	16
REF	16
FORT	18
WILL	16
AP	120
AP Regen	35
Control	35
Melee Weapon (up to 8, 1 per open hand)	+10, +6, +2, -2, -6, -10, -14 v.s. AC. 1d2x8 (1d4 with Combat Advantage.)

- Abilities
- Alter Self
 - Invisibility
 - Morph
 - Phasing
 - Quell
 - Relinquish
 - Reversal
 - Silence

Kraken

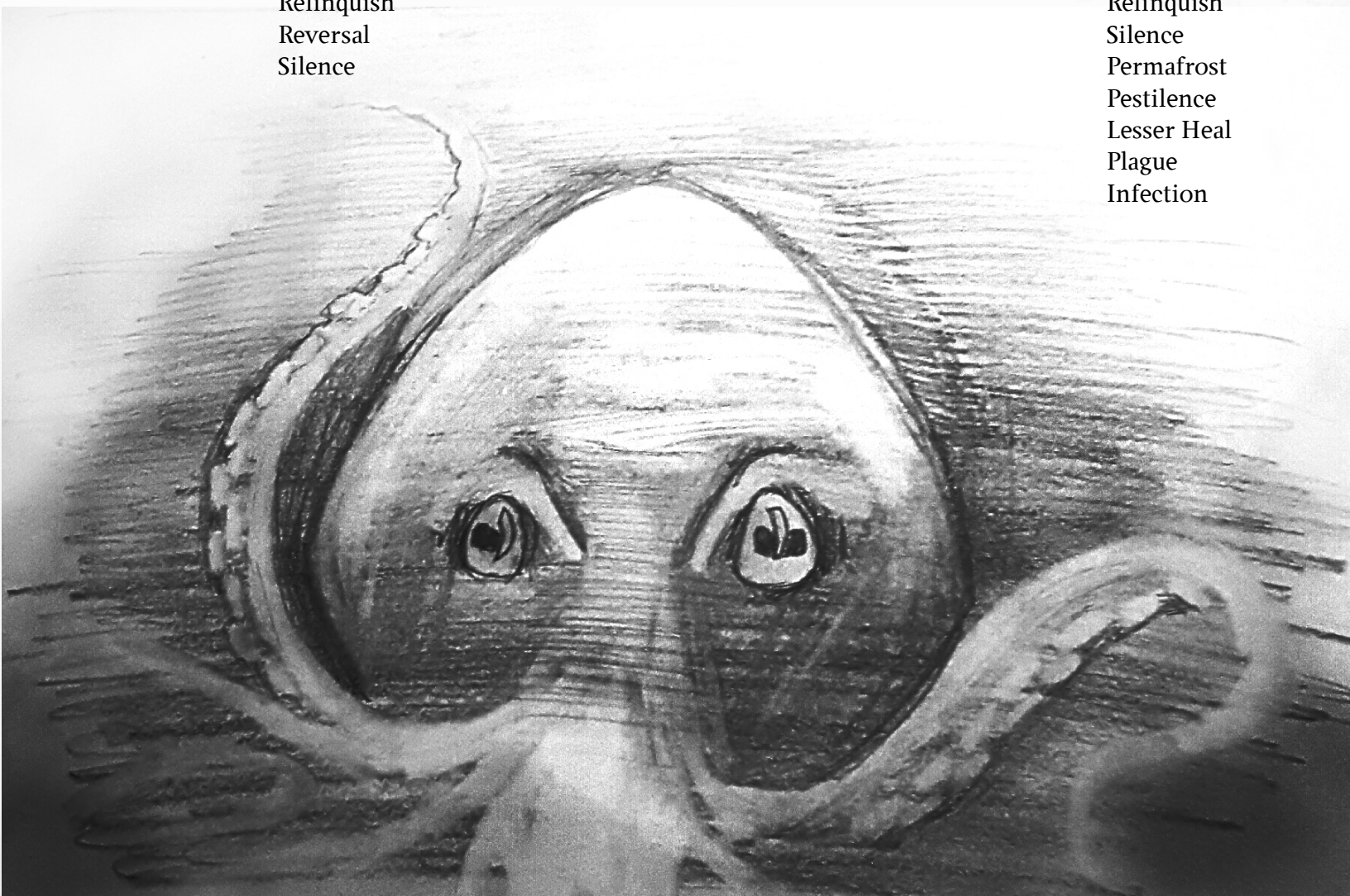
Initiative	8
Move	4
Swim	10
HP	130
AC	22
REF	14
FORT	21
WILL	22
AP	40
AP Regen	15
Unarmed Attack: Beak Smash	+10 v.s. AC, 1d6x6. Crits on a 19 or 20
Bone Spikes	+3 v.s. Fort within 6

Cannot be Dominated

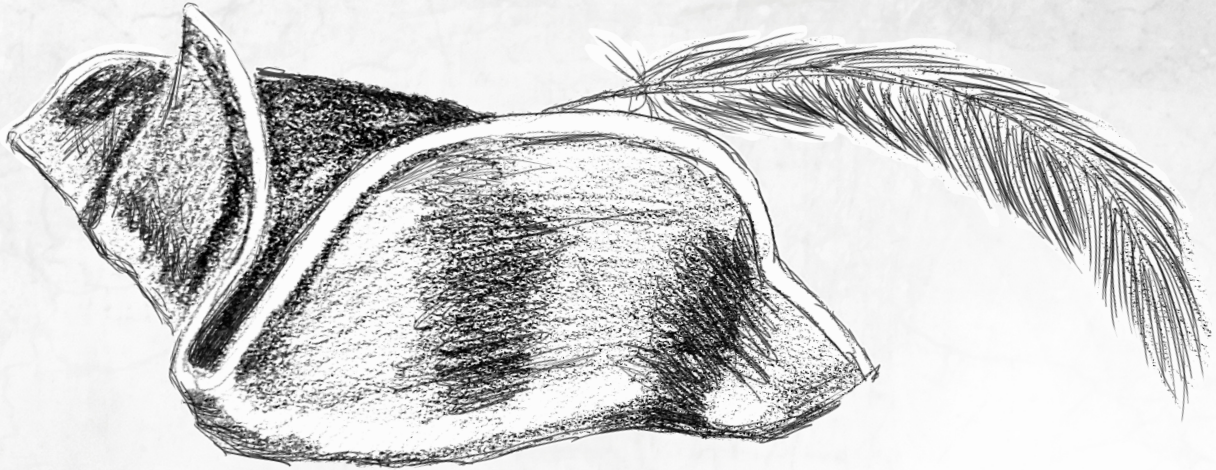
The Squid

Initiative	8
Move	4
Fly	10
HP	25
AC	17
REF	17
FORT	17
WILL	17
AP	140
AP Regen	20
Destruction Score	40
Melee Weapon	+2 vs AC, 1d4x2. 1d6 with combat advantage, target takes 1d6 damage (save ends).

- Abilities
- Invisibility
 - Phasing
 - Relinquish
 - Silence
 - Permafrost
 - Pestilence
 - Lesser Heal
 - Plague
 - Infection



PIRATE



If you're lucky, you'll wake up to the sound of their horrid song. If you're less lucky, you'll wake up to the screams of your friends. And if luck is not with you at all, you won't wake up until you're breathing smoke and smelling the alcohol on their breath. At that point, whether you survive or not seems to depend only on whimsy. There are enough who have survived the raids to show that mercy isn't an alien concept to the raiders, but they won't hesitate to leave piles of corpses in the towns they desolate.

I'm talking, of course, of the brutish folk who make their lives at sea, pulling into port only to make a raid. They're no honest tradesmen, trusting no bank with their loot. Occasionally they'll run an honest trip, transporting goods or people, but it's only if there's no better money to be made, and it's just as likely they'll keep the goods and kill the waiting merchants at the other end. These ruffians make their living preying on other ships on the sea, taking their supplies and disappearing again into the foggy night. If ever there's a dearth of ships at sea, they strike a port city in the middle of the night, slipping past watch towers and lighthouses without ever stirring an alarm. Once they land, all attempts at subtlety are abandoned, and they charge into town, lighting on fire everything they can't steal.

The raids are over in less than an hour. They pour from their ships, seemingly without number, spilling through town, thieving and burning before most are even awake. They never strike the same region in the same month, so the only time you know you're safe is when your neighbors get hit.

Initiative	5
Move	5
HP	30
AC	12
REF	8
FORT	16
WILL	12
AP	80
AP Regen	35
Control Score	20
Destruction Score	20
Ranged Attack	Blunderbuss; Range 6, +3 vs AC, d6 * 2
Melee Attack	+3 vs AC, 1d4* 1
Abilities	Gambit Dishearten Inspire Fear Injure

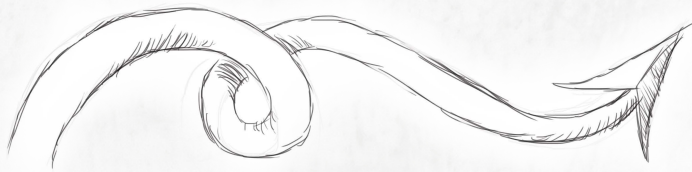
It's not just torches. These thieves come armed to the teeth. Their ships have stolen cannons, all state-of-the-art, for when they overtake a ship with better equipment, they salvage what they want. Some of the more benevolent pirates will leave their old weapons with their victims, but more often than not, they'll simply toss them overboard.

They themselves carry swords, rusty and dangerous, along with flintlock spread-shot guns and blunderbusses. They set fire indiscriminately, hiding in the frenzied panic as they sweep through a city. Anyone who does try to resist will quickly meet blade or bullet. While they may sound organized, they are anything but. They revel in the chaos. If they need to shoot an ally's arm off to save themselves, they'll do it without a second thought. Many dead pirates will be found in the streets after a raid, but the marks are of fire, scimitar and lead, rarely of the portfolk's doing. It's just as likely that a raider dies from an old grudge as it is that a shot simply missed, or the dead pirate was in the way of a good shot.

They will sometimes take prisoners, though those that are captured are almost never heard from again. Whether they are sold into slavery, indoctrinated into pirate ways, or if they suffer some other, worse fate is one of those mysteries that no one is too eager to investigate. Recently, there have been rumors of a group of people going out to hunt the most egregious of these sea bandits, protectors of the coast and saviors of the sea. These pirate hunters are wildly popular with the port cities, and are often treated like royalty, given the best mead and food in town. Whether they actually help defer the pirate threat has yet to be seen...

PRICKLER

From far away, you might think it's a panther. The glowing yellow eyes, what looks like black fur, the haunched stance, the way it blends into the shadows... but no. The back is too arched, the body too wide. This looks too much like a beast to match the leanness of a jungle cat. And what you might initially take to be fur is actually a mess of cables, long and thin that run down the length of the beast's back. It might not have a back; it's possible it's formed entirely out of these ropey strands.



Each rope ends in a tail, a spear-like triangle that can whip out. They have at least nine tails, but I don't believe they have more than a dozen. Each one has a different strain of poison in it, making this creature an efficiently dangerous hunter. It can carry a different weapon for each prey it seeks, and if any creature were foolish enough to hunt one of these, well, I'm sure it would have a weapon for that as well.

"THEY COME AROUND, SURE. YOU SHINE YOUR TORCH AND THEY DON'T COME TOO NEAR. AFRAID OF THE LIGHT, I THINK. STORMS SEEM TO SCARE 'EM OFF TOO. NOT SURE IF IT'S THE THUNDER OR THE LIGHTNING THAT DOES IT. THEY ALSO DON'T LIKE THE COLD, COME TO THINK OF IT. YOU KNOW, I'VE ONLY EVER SEEN ONE OF THESE ON NICE NIGHTS. COURSE, I DON'T GO LOOKING FOR TROUBLE IN THE RAIN ANYMORE."
-MAYRN GREVES.

"FELIX HERE LOST HIS BACK LEG TO A PRICKLER, BACK WHEN HE WAS STILL A PUP. STABBED RIGHT THROUGH, IT DID. HAD TO CUT IT OFF, INFECTION WAS SPREADING SO BAD. HE WOULD BARELY EAT FOR A WEEK AFTER, SNIPPED AT MY HAND EVERY TIME I TRIED TO FEED HIM. HE'S GOTTEN OVER IT NOW, BUT HE CAN SMELL THEM A WAYS OFF. HE'LL BE SULLEN IN THE MORNING, AND JUST GO MAD BARKING WHEN THEY'RE NEARBY. GOOD TRICK, THAT ONE."

I assume the thing has jaws. It's impossible to imagine it without a too-wide mouth full of jagged teeth, smelling of death. But I've never seen one smile, never seen that mouth open. All I can know is what I've seen, and that means the tails.

"YOU CHANGE YOUR LAUNDRY ENOUGH, YOU WON'T SEE 'EM. THAT'S WHAT MY MA USED TO SAY. 'NOTHIN' DRAWS A PRICKLER LIKE UNCHANGED LAUNDRY'. COURSE, SHE MIGHT'A JUST BEEN SAYIN' THAT. YOU KNOW HOW MAS ARE."



"I SAW IT! A SPIRIT ROSE UP, POSSESSING ROPES. WHEN IT TOUCHED THEM, THEY TURNED BLACK. IT LOOKED LIKE A CLOUD POURED OVER IT. THEY SNAPPED AT US, MAKING THIS TERRIBLE CRACK. I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING FOR A WHILE AFTER THAT. I JUST RAN AND RAN. I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO MADE IT BACK."

-EDLINE ARMISS

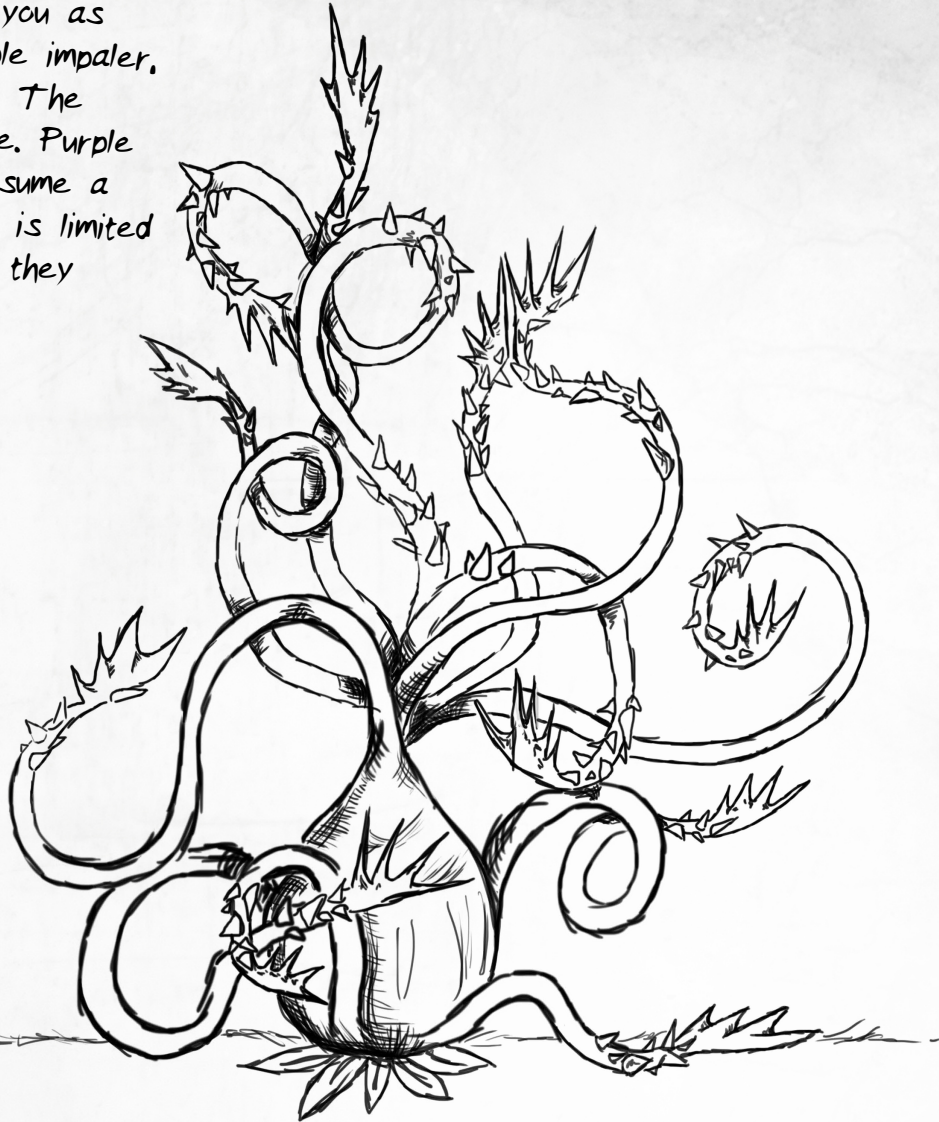
I do not know if a prickler can die; I've never seen a corpse. I imagine it would fall to the ground in a pool of black vines, and no one who saw it would ever know there was a creature there. Some say there is no body, and that the creature is a spirit, possessing vines, ropes, or whatever sinew it can find. I don't subscribe to this theory, although it would explain a few things. Why a spirit would need different ropes for each poison is beyond me; it seems like a spirit would will any rope to any effect...

Initiative	4
Move	4
HP	50
AC	16
REF	14
FORT	14
WILL	16
AP	120
AP Regen	15
Melee Attack	Tail +2 vs AC, 1d4 * 2, on a hit can also spend 30 Ability points to add an effect to the target until the end of its next turn
Effects	Deafen Daze and Confuse Slow Grant Combat Advantage Ongoing 4 damage Vulnerable 5/ Electric

PURPLE IMPALER

Most plants grow in damp, bright places. Most plants also don't try to kill you as soon as they notice you. The purple impaler, by all accounts, is not most plants. The most obvious difference is its size. Purple Impalers grow every time they consume a carcass. As far as I can tell, this is limited only by the size of the room that they occupy.

The body is a bulb shape, almost like an onion. The impaler has a number of barbed tentacle-like vines. Accounts vary, but the number seems to be more than five and no greater than twelve. Each tentacle can extend several feet, usually to the outer edges of the room they occupy. The tentacles are the primary mode of attack, grabbing opponents and reeling them in towards the bulb. I know not what terrible fate awaits those who near the bulb, and I've never gotten a good look at it myself.



What I do know is this: the thorns on the vines (each extending the length of a hand off the vine itself) are tipped with a noxious poison. It's this poison that gives the thorns the purple hue from which the plant-beast derives its name. This poison can cause a number of effects in victims, ranging from paralysis to delirium. Some survivors report a numbing sensation, while others spoke of burning, unstoppable pain.

"I ONLY GOT AWAY BY PRESSING BACK AGAINST THE CORNER. THE VINES KEPT LASHING OUT AT ME, BUT THE SPIKES COULDN'T QUITE REACH ME. I WAITED FOR- I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG, BUT I GOT TIRED OF WAITING, AND I RAN AS HARD AS I COULD. ONE OF THE VINES SCRAPED ME, HERE ON MY LEG. DOC SAID THE SCAR'LL BE WITH ME FOR LIFE, BUT HE WAS ABLE TO SAVE MY LEG. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE WAY THE GASH BUBBLED!"
 -SASHA RENDLINGS

Purple Impalers exclusively dwell underground, often in the deepest parts of dungeons. It isn't clear what draws them here, nor how they survive without the sunlight that most plant species require. I assume they find nourishment from any living creatures that stumble by, but given that they are firmly rooted in place by, well, a series of roots that run along the (often stone) floor, they tend to be set for life.

My research has shown that there are records of impalers living in the same area for hundreds of years, but whether it is one plant that has incredible longevity, or if the plant has reproductive capability, I do not know.

Initiative	4
Move	0
HP	250
AC	22
REF	13
FORT	21
WILL	20
AP	160
AP Regen	40
Unarmed attack	(2 attacks, +2 vs AC, 1d6 *2, within 4 squares) If hits, target is grabbed.
Abilities	Ensnare Infection +4 vs Fort within 8 Inspire Fear +4 vs Will within 8 Injure +4 vs Fort within 8 Vulnerable 10/ Fire Resist 5/meat-based attacks

"I DIDN'T MEAN TO LEAVE HIM. BUT I SAW THOSE SPIKES PUNCTURING EV'S BODY, HIS SCREAMS ADDING TO THOSE TERRIBLE PLANT NOISES... I JUST RAN. IT WASN'T A CONSCIOUS CHOICE, MY LEGS JUST SPURTED AWAY. I WISH I COULD MAKE MYSELF GO BACK"
 -STEN COOK

Adventurer's note: While I myself have not experienced it in my encounters with the creatures, several survivors I spoke with mentioned that the creature emitted some kind of "plant noises" as it attacked. As far as I could tell, the survivors had no way of knowing each other or communicating, but none could be more specific about the noises when pressed. I doubt the veracity of the information, but include it here for posterity's sake.

ROBOTS

ME? YEAH, I'VE SEEN 'EM. KILLED A BUNCH OF 'EM MYSELF, AS MUCH AS THEY CAN BE KILLED. IT'S NOT HARD, REALLY, NOT IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING. THIS BASEBALL BAT HERE IS PRETTY GOOD AT CRACKIN' 'EM WIDE, AND ONCE YOU SEE THEIR CIRCUITS, A BUCKET O'WATER WILL FINISH 'EM RIGHT OFF. PISS'LL WORK, 'F YER THE TYPE WORRIED ABOUT SAVING UP THE FRESH STUFF. MATTERA FACT, I LURED A COUPLA THE THINGS INTO A CONSTRUCTION PIT A COUPLE TOWNS OVER. MAYBURY, THINK IT WAS. THESE THINGS ARE GETTING CLOSER TO CIVILIZED LIFE EVERY MONTH, I'M TELLING YOU. GET READY.

YOU GOT A BAT? CAREFUL WITH THE METAL ONES. YOU WANNA WRAP THE END IN RUBBER, ELSE YOU'LL ELECTROCUTE YOURSELF IF YOU STICK IT SOMEWHERE THEY DON'T LIKE. AND THEY DON'T LIKE LOTSA PLACES. PRACTICE YOUR SWING. NOT TOO FAST, NOT TOO HIGH. REAL ART TO IT. YOU CAN MAKE A SORT OF MUSIC, IF YOU HIT 'EM JUST RIGHT.

ANYWHO, ONCE YOU HIT 'EM, WATER WORKS REAL WELL. WATER, AND GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED BLUNT-FORCE TRAUMA. COUPLA HATCHETS TO MAKE AN OPENING, IF YOU DON'T GOT A BAT HANDY. SAW A GUY TAKE ONE OUT WITH A POWER LINE ONCE. I WASN'T SURE IT WAS GONNA WORK. FIGURED THE DAMN THING WOULD JUST START CHARGING OFF IT. GROWING STRONGER, YOU KNOW? BUT WOULDN'T YOU KNOW, THAT TIN CAN BLEW UP, SURE AS YOU AND ME. NOT AS EASY TO CARRY AROUND AS A BASEBALL BAT, THOUGH, 1500 AMPS IS.

BUT YOU CAN'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, NOT EVEN IN THE WATER. HAD A FRIEND WHO DID THAT. WE FOUND SOME OLD SHOWERS. PUBLIC, OUTSIDE A SWIMMING POOL. PLACE STILL HAD RUNNING WATER, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? WE CALLED OUT FOR SURVIVORS, EXPECTED TO SEE SOME RAIDERS OR SOME SCHMUCK HOLED UP, HOGGING THE WATER FOR HIMSELF. DIDN'T LOOK TOO CAREFULLY, OF COURSE. PROSPECT OF FRESH WATER 'A HOT SHOWER- WAS SOMETHING TO SEE. YOU BEEN OUT HERE LONG? FEW MORE NIGHTS BY THE CAMPFIRE AND YOU'LL KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

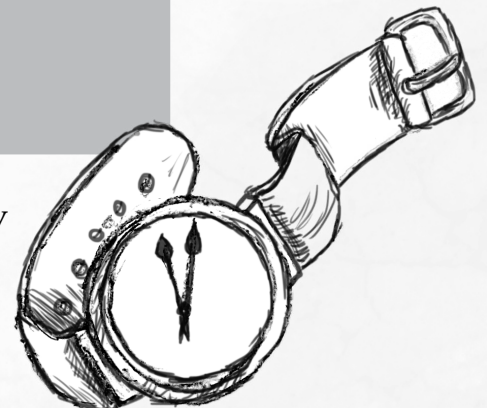
WE DROPPED OUR GUARD REAL LOW, ME AND HIM, THINKING WE WERE SAFE WITH ALL THE WATER AROUND. THE CLANKERS DON'T LIKE TO GET CLOSE TO IT, YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE. BUT WE WERE CLOSER TO DAMN FOOLS THAN WE WERE TO BEING SAFE. COUPLE OF THE MORE MOBILE ONES CAME OUT AFTER US. THEY'D BEEN DENTED, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO SLOW 'EM DOWN.

I GOT OUT A' COURSE, YOU SEE ME HERE TODAY. BUT JIMMY? MY PARTNER, HE WASN'T SO LUCKY. HE STAYED BEHIND SO I COULD GO. 10:42'S THE TIME O'DEATH. THEY USED TO WRITE THAT DOWN, YOU KNOW. BEFORE...ALL THIS. NOW THE VERY THING THAT'D TELL YOU IS JUST AS LIKELY TO KILL YOU FOR ASKING. STUPID PRACTICE ANYWAY. AS IF IT EVEN MATTERED WHAT TIME WE STOPPED BREATHING, AS IF THAT PIECE OF INFORMATION EVER SERVED ANY PURPOSE. IT DIDN'T. NOT ONE TIME. NEVER HAS, NEVER WILL. ONLY REASON I KNOW HIS IS BECAUSE OF THIS WATCH HERE. BELONGED TO HIM, TO JIMMY. ONLY THING OF HIS WORTH CARRYING AROUND. HE LEFT THE HATCHETS BURIED TO THE HILT IN THE ONES THAT GOT HIM, AND IT SEEMED LIKE SUCH A SHAME TO REMOVE THEM. I USED THIS BAT TO DRIVE THEM IN FURTHER. BUT THE WATCH GOT WET, AND, WELL, WHAT USE IS TIME OUT HERE ANYMORE?

10:42 IT WAS, 10:42 IT IS. 'LESS OF COURSE, IT STOPPED BEFORE HE DIED. NEVER DID REALLY STOP TO CONSIDER THAT ONE. HE CHECKED IT ENOUGH, I CAN'T ASSUME THAT WAS THE CASE. ALWAYS DID WONDER WHY THE TIME MEANT SO MUCH TO HIM, EVEN AFTER THE FALL. SAID IT WAS ABOUT KEEPING ORDER OR SOMETHING....

LOOK, THIS HAS BEEN NICE, BUT IF YOU WANT ME TO POUR OUT THE REST OF MY LIFE STORY, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO POUR ME OUT THE REST OF THAT DRINK.
 -RAND SIMMONS, SURVIVOR

Initiative	4
Move	4
HP	45
AC	23
REF	18
FORT	Immune
WILL	Immune
AP	220
AP Regen	40
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +3, d6 *2 damage
Control	30
Destruction	10
Abilities	Inspire Fear Pulse Repair (As lesser Heal) Reflect Stun Resist 5 blunt damage Vulnerable 10 Electricity Vulnerable 10 Water

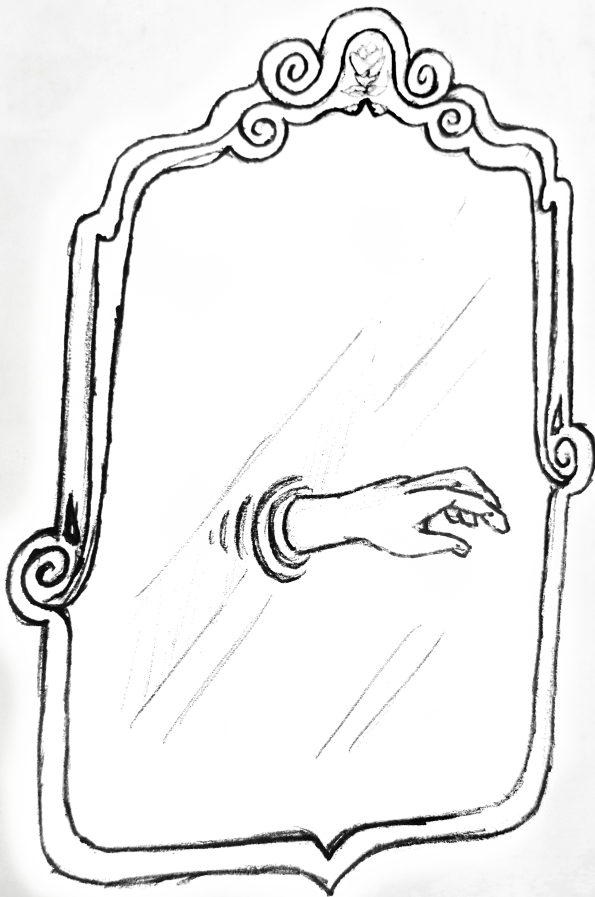


SCATHAN

It's not the worst way to die that I've heard of, but it certainly isn't ideal. Anyone who crosses paths with the Scathan eventually ends the same way: bedridden from heavy fever that refuses to break. It isn't the fever that proves lethal; the body invariably explodes within three weeks of initial contact. It's said that if anyone survived the experience, they would serve as host, that each victim the Scathan claim is merely an attempt to cross over into our world. I fear the day they find a strong enough vessel.

"I KEEP SEEING THAT POOR WOMAN OUTSIDE MY WINDOW,
BUT NO ONE ELSE SEEMS TO WANT TO TALK TO HER.
I DO HOPE SHE STOPS BY."
-VIVIAN SKIRESS, WIDOW

The name comes from an ancient word for "mirror". It isn't known if it is one creature or many. It's difficult to collect information given the rapid nature of the affliction. What I do know is the following:



The Scathan lives in mirrors. Or rather, they appear in mirrors. It's unclear to me if they live in them, or in some realm that is accessible only via mirror. Victims report seeing an elderly woman, doubled over, almost unable to walk. She seems blurry, and is beckoning the victim to take a close look, to lean in for a better view. The woman is dressed in dark rags, with ragged hair falling down about her. I know of no one who has seen her and survived, nor anyone who managed to look away.

"EVERY TIME I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, SHE GETS CLOSER.
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE OF HER NOW, I THINK."
-ADRIN VOURSMITH

Once the victims see her, she appears more often, and more clearly each time. She approaches the mirror, whispering and beckoning as if she has some important message to convey. If only one exists, then all mirrors must be connected; reports of her have been collected from thousands of miles apart, from cultures whose only communication has been me and my ilk, collectors of stories. It's possible that this story was spread by those like me, but right now I have to believe that that isn't true. The implications astound me. An entire realm of passages beyond the mirror. If we could find some way to tap into that, to explore these lands...

"I FEEL LIKE THERE IS A CROW LIVING INSIDE MY RIB CAGE. INSTEAD OF FLUTTERING, IT IS TRYING DESPERATELY TO ESCAPE. I CAN FEEL IT THRASHING, BEATING AGAINST MY BONES IN PERFECT, HAUNTING RHYTHM, EVERY STRIKE ECHOING THROUGH MY BODY. I AM NOT AWARE OF MY HEART, EVERY PULSE REPLACED WITH THE ANGRY BEATING OF WINGS. IT IS MERE COINCIDENCE THAT THIS IS ENOUGH TO KEEP MY BLOOD FLOWING."
-FINAL JOURNAL ENTRY OF MOIRA FANGLY, VICTIM

Initiative	5
Move	5
HP	15
AC	14
REF	12
FORT	10
WILL	14
AP	300
AP Regen	40
Melee attack	Claws +3 vs AC, 1d4 * 2
Abilities	Mirror Walk (As teleport, except can move to any reflection within 15 squares). Enthrall: +3 vs Will within 6 Infection: +3 vs Fort within 6 Plague (Control mod of 3). Anyone who dies while affected will turn into a Scathan. Backfire (Control score of 35 +3 vs Will within 3) Insanity: Cost 60 +3 vs Will within 6, target becomes insane Save Ends

Still, I prefer this to the idea of there being multiple. Multiple Scathan could surround a city in minutes, turning friend against us. I don't know if the host would alter physically, or if the Scathan would live silently inside, a parasite among us, watching, learning, waiting to strike. I suppose it's possible that there are infected among us, that several Scathan have survived the transfer...

SCOTIA

IT'S NOT POLITE TO ASK HOW SOMEONE LOST AN ARM, DEARY. THOUGH I SUPPOSE IT'S ALSO NOT TOO POLITE TO LECTURE THOSE WHO PAY AS MUCH AS YOU ARE. VERY WELL, YOU HAVE MY TALE.

I WAS MUCH YOUNGER THEN, WITH A COUPLE OF FRIENDS AND NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD. BECCA AND I WOULD GO COLLECTING BERRIES IN THE FOREST BEFORE SUNUP EVERY WEEK SO WE COULD COME HOME AND PRACTICE MAKING PIES. THIS PARTICULAR MORNING, WE WERE AFTER BOYSENBERRIES. I REMEMBER THINKING IT WAS A LITTLE COLD FOR AS CLOSE TO HARVEST AS WE WERE, BUT AT THE TIME WE JUST ATTRIBUTED TO THE WAY NATURE IS.

TURNS OUT THERE WASN'T A THING NATURAL ABOUT IT. BECCA AND I EACH HAD ABOUT A BASKET'S WORTH WHEN WE FIRST SAW THE THINGS. THEY WERE SMALL, NOT MORE THAN TWO FEET LONG AND HALF OF ONE TALL. THEY HAD SLICK GREY QUILLS ON THEIR BACK. THE ONE ON THE LEFT HAD A FEW QUILLS POKING OUT IN ODD DIRECTIONS, AS IF HE'D FORGOTTEN TO COMB HIS HAIR THAT MORNING. I DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE KEMPT ONE, BUT THIS ONE HAD THE BLUEST SHADE OF GREY IN ITS EYES. THEY PIERCED RIGHT THROUGH ME, I SWEAR I COULDN'T MOVE. I WAS STARING AT THE LITTLE GUY, URGING IT TO COME NEAR SO I COULD PET IT. I COULD ALREADY HEAR MY MOTHER'S VOICE. "MARY-SUE, YOU CANNOT KEEP THIS CREATURE! YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE IT HAS BEEN OR JUST WHAT IT COULD BE CARRYING! YOU TAKE THAT THING BACK WHERE YOU GOT IT AND BAKE YOUR PIES SO SOMEONE MIGHT BELIEVE I ACTUALLY RAISED YOU PROPER!"

PA WOULDN'T CARE THOUGH. HE'D JUST LOOK AT ME, A SHINE IN HIS EYES, NEVER SAYING NO, NEITHER OF US ACKNOWLEDGING THE FACT THAT HE HADN'T SAID YES EITHER. HE'D CLAIM NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, ESPECIALLY AS FAR AS MOTHER WAS CONCERNED, BUT I'D FIND FRESH PRINTS IN THE MUD TO AND FROM ITS SHED ALMOST EVERY MORNING, AND IT WOULD GROW AS IT WAS WELL-FED WITH SCRAPS FROM WHATEVER MEAL MY PA HAPPENED TO "LOSE SIGHT" OF.

BUT OF COURSE, THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN. I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO TALK MY PARENTS INTO KEEPING IT. WHEN I BENT DOWN, TWO OF THE QUILLS STRAIGHTENED AND LAUNCHED TOWARDS ME, STRIKING ME IN THE ARM. I NEARLY FELL OVER WITH FRIGHT. I COULDN'T FEEL A THING! IT FELT COLD AT FIRST, LIKE I'D PLUNGED THE LEFT HALF OF MY BODY INTO THE RIVER IN WINTER. BUT SOON THAT FADED TO NUMBNESS, CREEPING IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, PAST MY ELBOW. THE QUILL STRUCK ME RIGHT HERE... OH SORRY, JUST A BIT ABOVE THE WRIST.



WELL BECCA DROPPED HER BERRIES RIGHT THERE, AND KNOCKED MINE OUT OF THE MY GOOD HAND. SHE STARTED SCREAMING AND RUNNING BACK TO TOWN, FRIGHTENING THE POOR THINGS OFF. I SAUNTERED AFTER HER, ONLY CATCHING UP WHEN WE WERE ABOUT TO MY MOTHER'S PLACE ANYWAY. COURSE THE WAY SHE TOLD IT SHE CARRIED ME RIGHT FROM THE START, AFTER SCARING THOSE THINGS AWAY BY TOSSING OUR BERRIES AT THEM. THEY WEREN'T EVEN TIPPED OVER WHEN WE LEFT, AND I NEVER DID GET A BOYSENBERRY PIE OUT OF THE ORDEAL.

MOTHER WOULDN'T HEAR ANYTHING OF IT, SHE TOOK ME STRAIGHT OVER TO MICKEY'S. HE'D NOT SEEN THIS BEFORE, AND INSISTED I WAS LYING. SAID I GOT BITTEN BY A SNAKE AND WAS TELLING TALES. SAID WE NEEDED TO AMPUTATE TO STOP THE POISON FROM SPREADING. I SAID IT THEN AND I STAND BY IT NOW, IT WAS HIM TELLING THOSE TALES, OR IF NOT HIM, THAT ACCURSED BOTTLE HE FOUND HIS SOLACE IN.

HERE I AM NOW. THE ONLY VICTIM OF THOSE POOR CREATURES. THEY HUNTED THEM, PROBABLY NEAR EXTINCTION, AT LEAST AROUND THESE PARTS. I BET SOME RANGER GOT STRUCK SOMEWHERE TENDER WITH ONE OF THOSE QUILLS AND WAS TOO ASHAMED TO ADMIT TO ME THAT IT WORE OFF IN AN HOUR OR TWO. THEY TELL ME THAT'S JUST WISHFUL THINKING, OR A BITTER REMEMBRANCE FROM AN OLD MAID, BUT I FOR ONE DO NOT SEE HOW THE SAME SENTIMENT CAN BE BOTH.

- MARY-SUE BROWN

Initiative	2
Move	4
HP	50
AC	22
REF	18
FORT	22
WILL	18
AP	180
AP Regen	50
Ranged attack	Quills: Costs 30 points. 2 attacks, +2, d4*2 cold damage. If hit, a creature is slowed until the end of their next turn. If already slowed, creature is immobilized (save ends).
Alteration	30
Abilities	Permafrost
Other	Vulnerable 5/Fire Resist 10/Cold

SEEKER

The most obvious warning that Seekers are approaching is the smell. The creatures look almost human, from a distance, and they smell exactly how they look. They walk with a slight limp, though you wouldn't know it by their speed. Clumps of skin hang off of them, dangling by the last thread of humanity. Their body is covered in boils, their limbs hang almost limply off of them, bones bending at odd angles. They walk in a certain way, a shuffling of their feet that is almost a shamble. And sometimes, they glow.



Specifically, they have large sacs of flesh, pus and acid that hang from their bodies like forgotten ornaments. Oftentimes, they sit dull and lifeless, waiting to be punctured, spraying foul-smelling ooze over everything in sight. Other times, they glow, giving off a bright light that can serve as more of a warning than the fetid smell creeping before them. This light is the only sign that a mage put up a fight.

While Seekers are nonviolent towards those who cannot use magic, almost to the point of not noticing their existence, they feed off magic energy. Seekers are drawn to magic users like carnivorous, fireproof moths to a particularly vulnerable flame. For you see, magic has little effect on Seekers. They absorb it, charging their pus sacs. When they get hit with a spell, a new sac forms, surging with light. And then the battle truly begins.

Seekers can tear these sacs off and throw them towards mages, causing a sticky mess of burning pus. Other times, they'll tear the sac off and drink from it. When they do, their wounds seem to heal, their boils and scars glowing softly as their blood dries up.

Whether charged or not, Seekers are formidable. They rush forward, lusting for combat, ready to tear their own limbs off and use them as clubs or bone spears in close-quarter combat. Whether because they know mages are less potent at short range, or because they feed off the mere presence of magic isn't known. The fact is, once they're close enough that you can feel their ragged breath on your wizard's robes, you don't have a good chance of making it out alive.

Initiative	8
Move	7
HP	35
AC	18
REF	15
FORT	20
WILL	22
AP	200
AP Regen	60
Utility Mod	1
Melee attack	Torn limb: +3 vs AC, d6 *2 damage. A target hit by this attack is debilitated (save ends).
Ranged attack	Throw Sac: consumes one sac. Choose a square within 4 squares. All creatures in that square or an adjacent square take 1d4 * 2 acid damage and are slowed until the end of your next turn.
Abilities	Backfire: +4 vs Will within 8. If hits, target gets Backfire 45. Battle Rage Bloodlust Frenzy Speed Burst
Sacs	Roll 1d4 - 1 to see how many charged sacs a seeker starts with. There is no limit on how many sacs a Seeker may have charged at one time.
Drink Sac	Minor action, consumes one sac. Regain 10 hit points.
Magic-fed	When a seeker is hit with an Ability that would normally deal damage, they take no damage, and heal half of the damage that would have been dealt. It also charges one sac.

Some say that the Seekers themselves are mages that have been corrupted. A poultice gone wrong, or a misfired spell, and suddenly an apprentice becomes a Seeker, feeding off the cauldrons of magic stew, the many orbs and artifacts that magic users keep around.

Others suggest that victims of the Seekers turn into Seekers themselves, a plague designed to rid magic from the world. Still others hold that they aren't from this world, that some sorcerer meddled in affairs that were not hers to meddle in. Some pact formed, some portal opened, and now Seekers aim to devour magic, to rid the world of the most powerful casters, clearing the way for some more powerful foe to enter. Subscribers to this theory believe that Seekers are merely a mindless army moving before some great foe who has yet to be revealed....

"THEY ONLY HUNT MAGES. THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT THE REST OF US. THAT'S WHY YOU AND I WERE ABLE TO WALK RIGHT BY THEM. IT'S ALMOST LIKE THEY COULDN'T SENSE US. PERHAPS THEY CAN'T. MAYBE WE'LL BE THE ONLY ONES WHO SURVIVE BECAUSE OF IT."

-RYDER SCHOON, COURIER

SIDEWINDER

Everyone who's been within a day's travel of the sea has encountered one of these creatures, and I'm no exception. A full-grown Sidewinder is as tall as three men (though the rounded bodies don't look to be taller than a man's, they are quite elevated). This makes them easy to see, and easy to avoid. While not typically hostile, Sidewinders will chase down anything they deem to be a threat to their eggs, which they lay on the shore. They'll usually ignore children, but it's better to be safe than to be dead.

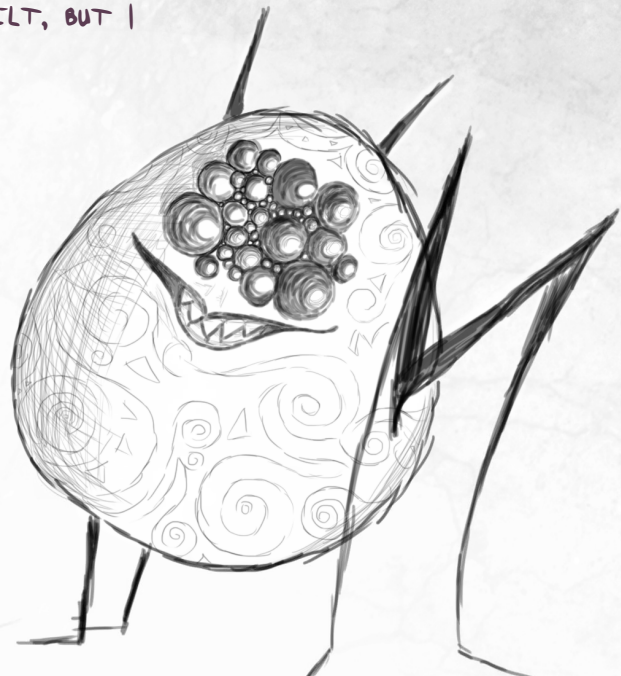
If you can get far enough away, Sidewinders are a thrilling sight to watch. The males are covered in intricate whirling designs, usually just a shade darker than their skin. The way their legs attach to the body makes it hard for Sidewinders to walk in a straight line. This leads to a bobbing effect that can be quite hypnotic as the designs weave over the waves. If you ever get the chance to watch Sidewinders by sunset, leap on it!

YOU AREN'T REALLY WELCOME 'TIL YOU CAN FELL SUMMIN BIGGER 'N YOURSELF. WE'LL SELL TO YOU ALL THE SAME, IF THE MONEY SPENDS, BUT YOU WON'T BE TREATED QUITE THE SAME, NOT 'ROUND HERE. SIDEWINDER'S A GOOD'A PLACE TO START AS ANY."
-ROGER ELKINS, HERMIT

The legs themselves are huge, jagged things that jut straight to the air, above the body. Each of the four legs makes a sharp angle downwards, towards the head, and it's here that they attach. This angle is a joint, though it only provides minimum movement. That being said, DON'T underestimate their speed. Sidewinders may look clumsy, but they will move quickly if they need to, and I've no doubt that they could spear an entire family with a single swipe of that jagged leg.

"I LOVE TO WATCH THE SIDEWINDERS DANCE AND BOB ALONG THE SHORE. THE WAY THE SUN STRIKES THEM REALLY ILLUMINATES THEIR PATTERNS. IT'S NO WONDER TO ME THAT THE DANCE ATTRACTS THE WOMEN. I'VE ALMOST WALKED DOWN THERE MYSELF MORE THAN ONCE."
-SUNSHINE MARIE

"YOU WANT TO SEE SOMETHING FUNNY? YOU KILL A WOLF OR A BEAR AND STRING IT UP GOOD ENOUGH, RUN ON DOWN BY THE WATER. YOU'LL SEE SIDEWINDERS SPRINTIN' AND RUNNIN', ALMOST FALLING OVER THEMSELVES. THEY COME RIGHT OUT OF THE SAND, I SWEAR YOU CAN'T SEE THEM. THEY TEAR THAT PELT UP UNTIL THERE'S NOT A TRACE LEFT OF IT. DA' SAYS IT'S A WASTE OF A PELT, BUT I SAY IT'S WORTH IT."
 -DANIEL TOWNHALL



"I WANNA RIDE ONE!"
 -A.J. CARPENTER, AGE SIX

Initiative	6
Move	6
HP	35
AC	15
REF	8
FORT	13
WILL	11
AP	100
AP Regen	20
Melee attack	(Jagged leg)+2, 1d8*2 (can attack 2 adjacent enemies at once)
Abilities	Disorient +4 vs Will against 1 creature within 8 squares

The body is shaped like a large egg, with clusters of eyes atop. They have a rounded mouth with rows of jagged teeth, though I have never seen one eating. I would love the opportunity to examine one's corpse, but they are almost as protective of these as they are of their own young. Some villages will hunt the 'winders for sport, claiming the meat and any eggs they can find as luxuries. Most stay their distance, as I am advising you.

I haven't heard it myself, but sailors will often refer to "the call of the Sidewinder", a faint croak they hear at dawn. I don't think anyone can say that it's definitively the Sidewinder's making the noise, but the hollow creak echoing across the water is a sure sign to boats that they're near shore.

SKELETON

I see it all the time, whenever bodies aren't buried quite right. Sometimes there isn't enough reverence given to the corpse, enough tears shed, some ritual overlooked. Other times it seems the body simply wasn't ready to die. No matter the cause, the outcome is the same: A decaying corpse, with no muscle left to direct its bones, crawls out of the ground and wanders about. Sometimes it takes weeks. Other times years. But they aren't always hostile.

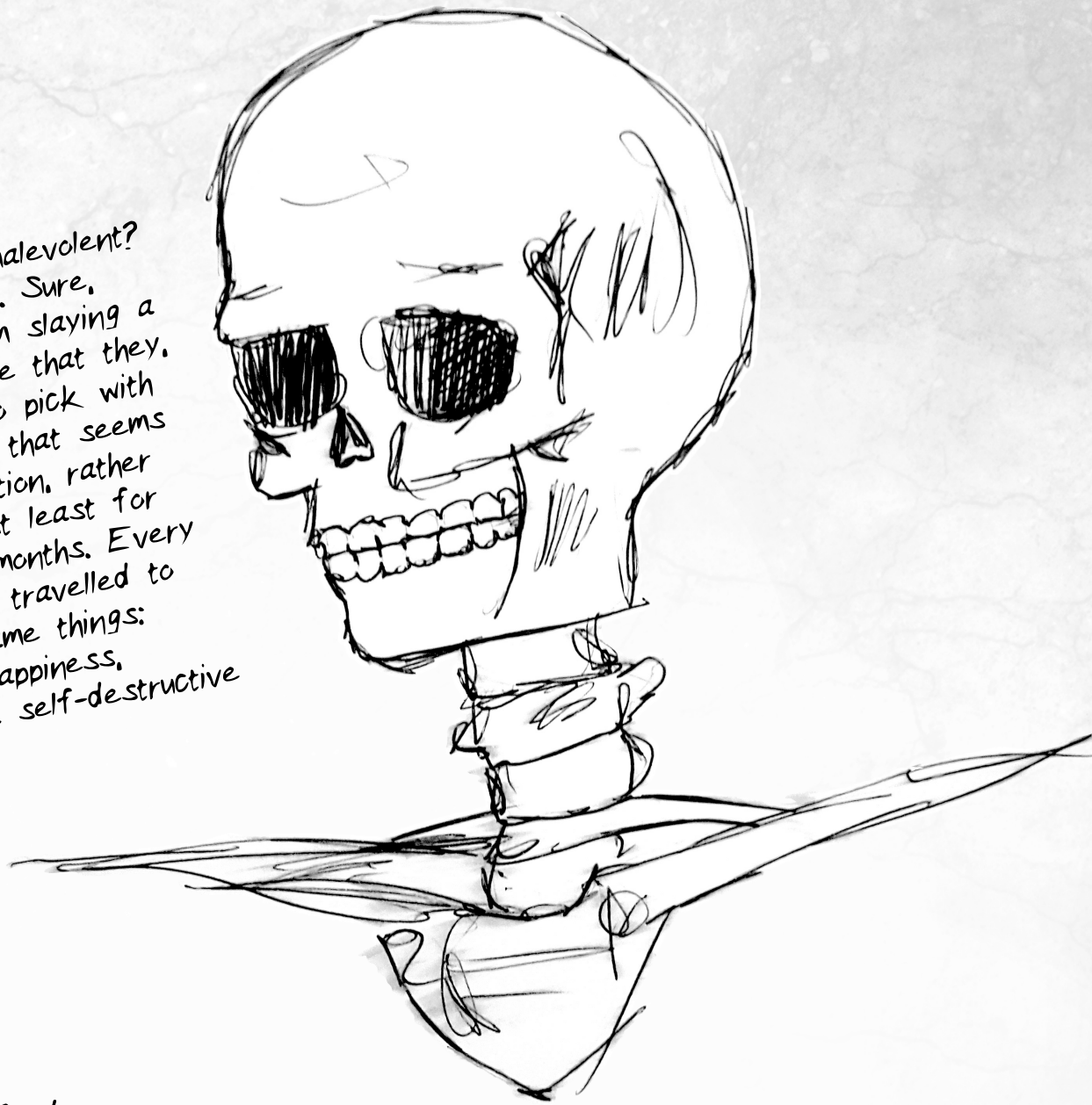
More often than not, I've seen these creatures return to the job they had in life—sweeping a porch, cutting hair, or planting seeds. Things they've done so many times that it's not a thought, it's a reflex sewn into their very bones. Other times, I've heard tales of glowing red eyes and a tendency to fight. And not just those who wronged them in life. Folks tend to be more content with a skeleton cleaning shop than they are when it's holding a straight razor near their vulnerable bits, but that's folks.

It's certainly not uncommon for the corpse to be destroyed again, and I've heard of more than one town driven mad as they ran from door to door, murdering each other, trying to drive out the necromancer among them. If there's one thing I've learned in my travels, it's that people want to believe others are to blame. That, and I've seen a dozen ways to ruin a settlement. They all start with doubt. Doubt and fear.

But the skeletons. It's usually just people who come back like this, but I've seen it happen to a pet. Bit of a hard spot it puts the parents in, between destroying the kid a second time and allowing an abomination into the house. Even if the abomination doesn't eat or crap and still comes when it's called. Then again, it tends to be less fuzzy after having been dead for a few weeks.

Initiative	1
Move	3
HP	12
AC	15
REF	7
FORT	14
WILL	14
AP	100
AP Regen	20
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +3 vs ac, 1d2 * 2damage
Abilities	Throw me a bone (as throw weapon) +3 within 8

Are these things malevolent?
Not that I've seen. Sure,
I've heard of them slaying a
colleague from life that they,
uh, had a bone to pick with
(excuse me), but that seems
to be the exception, rather
than the rule. At least for
the first few months. Every
settlement I've travelled to
reports the same things:
a period of happiness,
followed by a self-destructive
rampage.



And when I say self-destructive, I mean removing its own limbs
and using them as weapons. Skeletons hobbling through the streets
using their own femurs as weapons. Old friends throwing rib
bones, arm bones, hip bones... until there's nothing left to throw,
just a clattering skull. The life usually fades when there's
nothing left. Just once I'd love to learn what's going on. If only
they could talk!

But the period. It can last anywhere from weeks to months. It varies by continent. In
the south, it's shorter: they destroy them on sight, and have taken to burying their
dead at odd angles. In the north, the good-natured period lasts for close to a year
most times. Perhaps it has to do with the weather? Must investigate further.

SNOWMEN

Thumpity thump thump, thumpity thump thump thump look at those heads roll. For many, these are the last sounds they hear. Within moments, the only sign of the murder is a bright smear of red in the otherwise untouched snow. If any footsteps are present, they were made by the corpse.

"I TOLD MY MOMMA THAT SNOW-MAN CAME TO LIFE, BUT SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME, NOT ONE LICK."
-SKIPPER HORSON

For centuries, unsolved murders like these plagued villages and cities. Every winter, corpses would appear. It seemed like men would die, evidently by their own hand. A wood axe next to the body was the only clue. Sheriffs had little choice nor clue, and investigations were brutally short. As time went on, we became more aware. We travelled together when the snow fell, and we started listening to the children. You see, it all started with the children.

When exposed to snow for the first time, the youngest among us played with it, forming shapes, and forming those shapes into images of themselves, into men. Somewhere along the line, these "snow men" came to life. And, confronted with their own mortality, they grew mad. I can't tell you if it happened that first winter, or if the hostility arose several iterations into the endless cycle of being born and slowly killed by the ever-bearing sun, but I know that however many of these things exist, they aren't happy.

"THAT'S JUST AN OLD MYTH, WHO TOLD YOU THAT? SOMEONE DIES IN THE SNOW, EVERYONE'S EAGER TO BLAME IT ON THE YETI OR THE SNOWMEN. I SAY DON'T GO OUT IN THE SNOW AND WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT'S OUT THERE! NO ONE EVER DIED SITTING IN FRONT OF THE FIRE, I TELL YOU STRAIGHT."
-MISS MADERLY OAKWORKER

Initiative	2
Move	1
HP	25
AC	14
REF	12
FORT	15
WILL	12
AP	70
AP Regen	35
Unarmed attack	(2 attacks, +2 vs AC, 1d4 *2)
Abilities	Snow Walk (as teleport, range 5) Permafrost
Other	Damage Reduction 5

"NOT WISE TO GO OUTSIDE IN THE
WINTER ALONE. YOU'LL FIND YOUR
DEATH OUT THERE, ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER."

-RIKKARD BROKERMAN



One moment they're across the field, a child's plaything. You turn around, chopping wood. You look up a moment later and it's bigger. Closer. You've been working too hard, you think. There's wood to chop. But then it's on your left, and closer yet. You start to sweat. It's the axe you've been swinging, bound to make anyone sweat. Still, sometime isn't sitting quite right. The way that carrot seems to twitch at you, the way those beady eyes...wait. Those eyes are actual beads. Your wife's beads, you've seen them before. The snow man takes a step towards you. Or rather, it uproots itself, bouncing on the snow with a muffled thump. You want to run, but your legs freeze. You cry for help. The snowman disappears. You exhale, uncomfortable warmth spreading. You start to move towards the house, faster than normal. A shuffling in the snow. It's behind you. Your axe, forgotten in the snow, rises up as the ground mounds up below it, forming into a large ball, then two, three. It's holding your axe, swinging down. You dodge, and the axe falls to the ground. A second later, the snowman is in front of you. You run, spotting your shotgun near the shed. You're halfway there. Closer. The snowman is nowhere to be seen. You lunge for the shotgun, but it too starts to rise up out of the ground. You scream again, your cries cut off by a blast of lead. A second. You collapse in the snow, your blood melting the ground around you.

Rumors tell of a 'major disturbance' some years ago in the East near Atir when three of these snowmen discovered they were not long for this life. They went on a rampage, searching for some way to extend their lifespans, some way to delay the ever-rising sun. As I understand, they held half the town hostage before the heat got them. Even as they were melting away, they held onto hope and anger. I wonder, if they come back, will they have the same personality? The same memories?

"'S JUSS A TALE THEM COUNTRY WIMMEN
TELLS THEM'S CHILLUM'. I NEVER SEEN
SNOW COM'TA LIFE. THEM DEATH'S JUST
FOLKS TRYNA GO EASY ON THEIR FAMLAS.
WINTER'S HARD ON FOLKS."
-ARGUN STRANDS, RECLUSE



SOULCRUNCHER

"BY THE TIME YOU SMELL THE SULFUR, HE'S ALREADY GONE. NO WARNING DOES HE GIVE YOU. NEVER ANY WARNING, NOT THAT ONE."

-LUNDA LORES, GARDNER

From what I can gather, the soulcruncher is a giant made of smoking tar and smouldering fire said to haunt mountainous regions. According to popular folklore, he feeds on lost explorers, and as long as he gets his fill, he avoids the town. But the second he goes hungry, he knows just the place to go.

The town drunkards told me how their ancestors used to intentionally lure mountaineers to their deaths, or trap them in ruins and treacherous slopes outside the city in order to keep the giant sated. They said that when he reaps a soul of a loved one, you'll feel it in your bones, suddenly thinking of a friend you haven't spoken to in years.

Initiative	8
Move	5
HP	140
AC	19
REF	14
FORT	16
WILL	15
AP	100
AP Regen	10
Melee Attack (Axe)	+6 vs AC, 1d6 * 3
Abilities	Demoralize: +4 vs Will within 8, -4 penalty. Reflect Wallop
Resist 5 fire	
Vulnerable 5 ice	

"I'VE NOT HEARD OF HIM, NOT THAT I CAN REMEMBER. COURSE, I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING YOU 'ROUND HERE BEFORE, NEITHER. YOU'RE NOT LOOKING TO START SOMETHING ARE YOU? COMING AROUND ASKING ABOUT STRANGE GIANTS IN LANDS YOU DON'T BELONG. GOOD WAY TO START TROUBLE, THAT IS."
-GOODWIN VACAR

No one can give an age on Soulcruncher; the oldest person I talked to, a gardener, said she could remember hearing about Soulcruncher from her grandmother when she was but a child. Certainly not a new story, then. But how long can one such creature live for on lost adventurers?

As the story has it, Soulcruncher has another name, one too terrible and too difficult to pronounce, that has been lost to time. There was one fellow who I thought knew more than he was saying, but he wouldn't let anything on while his buddies were watching. I'll make a point to single him out later.

No matter what name he goes by, the stories I've gathered place him at around twenty feet tall, with globs of dripping pitch and the smell of sulfur trailing behind him. Some say he carries a club, others had it as an axe, some say he has no arms at all, but is more a roiling mass of hot earth, fire, and dead bodies.

I thought it was a legend, but I did find a law on record, an ancient thing the sheriff wouldn't comment on, stating that anyone turning a townspeople over to soulcruncher for the good of the community was not to be punished. Now I'm not so sure. It only adds to my suspicions how many townspeople fell silent when I started asking questions, or ran out of the stew they'd offered me in generous proportions the moment before...



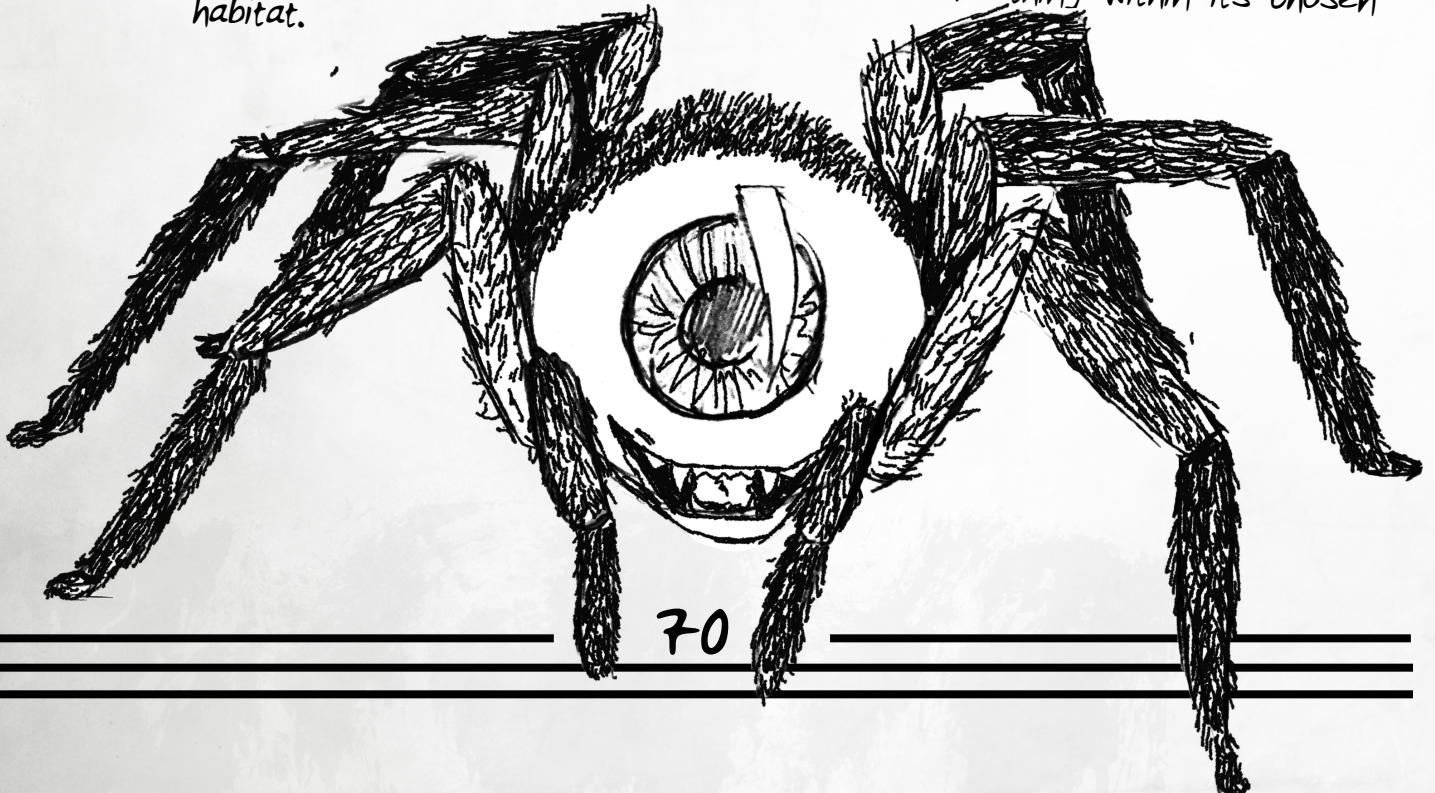
SPICLOPS

Initial report: Some months ago, a few villagers went to explore a cave. They'd hoped to find an underground lake, perhaps some valuable gems. What they disturbed in those dark corridors was something else entirely.

A flash of light chased them from the caves, reducing a sturdy rock to a pile of ash, billowing through the air. When they made it back to town, the villagers still smelled like chimney smoke and magma.

In the time since its discovery, I've had the unique chance to study the creature they found. I say creature, for as far as I can tell, there is just the one, though I have not ventured deep enough into the cave to learn if it has a colony, nor have I traversed every cave in the land. It's quite possible that these large arachnids inhabit caves just outside of every village from here to the Jeweled Coast.

In any case, the creature stands as tall as five men, with eight large, arching legs that stretch half as far outward as they do to the ground. These legs, as well as the body of the thing, are covered in hair, so much so that an aspiring merchant could make a small carpet from each. The hairs are thick bristles that can be moved independently. I have determined that the creature can sense with each one. Not only touch, but air pressure, temperature, and even remote movement. It has no ears, but does respond to sound. It seems as though the vibrations from sound itself tickle these ears, alerting the creature to even the smallest mammal's breathing within its chosen habitat.



Initiative	0
Move	4, Climb 4
HP	80
AC	24
REF	22
FORT	24
WILL	22
AP	100
AP Regen	40
Unarmed attack	(8 attacks, each hit does 1d4 * 5 damage. +6/+4/+2/+0/-2/-4/-6/-8 to hit)
Abilities	Eye Blast: Cost 60. +5 vs Will against all creatures burst 5. Each creature hit takes damage equal to 1d4 * 5 and is blinded (save ends).
Large Creature	
Darkvision	
Enhanced Senses	Takes no penalties for attacking creatures it cannot see.
Awareness	Does not grant combat advantage from being flanked.

"MOSTLY WHAT I REMEMBER IS THE LEGS. IT HAD SO MANY. I DIDN'T KNOW THINGS COULD HAVE THAT MANY LEGS. YOU'D THINK IT WOULD FALL OVER, TRIPPING ALL THE TIME."
-SAM BROWNING, DISCOVERER

The body of the creature is remarkable. If I'd been told of it, I would have called the story a lie, as it seems to be nothing but a vulnerability, especially for a creature living in the dark depths of a cave. The body, you see, is an eye, fully functioning, near as I can tell, and longer than I am tall. I assume the creature can see in the dark, though it responds to torchlight far less aggressively than most cave-dwelling creatures. With its fine-tuned hair legs, I can't imagine the eye's vision is actually used for hunting or defense. A curious thing indeed.

The bottom of the eye (the body of the thing) is a mouth, with teeth as sharp as a soldier's blade. I nearly cut myself just looking at them! The teeth vary in size from six inches to as long as my forearms, immediately dispelling any hopes of the creature being herbivorous.

Ammendum: Though sight may not benefit the spiclopes, the eye is not simply vestigial. The villagers who discovered it spoke of a great flash. I cannot imagine many before them have seen that flash and lived to tell the tale. It took over a month of observing before I witnessed it myself, but the beast is capable of unleashing devastating bursts of energy from its eye with almost no warning! One moment, the pupil swivels towards its target, and the next there is a flash, and whatever the eye was looking at is replaced with a cough-inducing nothingness, as dust fills the cave. This doesn't hinder the spiclops at all; I've already spoken about the redundancy of vision for the thing. Only now can I grasp at understanding the lethality of such a beast. And only now am I grateful that it does not hunger for more prey than can be found in this cave, as the village is only a short jaunt away...

SUPERVILLIAN

As if my life isn't hard enough tracking down the bank robbers from the Renton heist, some new clown rolls into town this week, calling himself Arctic Breeze. That's not a super villain, it's a type of chewing gum. Anyway, I told him this, and gave him about as much attention as a piece of gum deserves. My mistake. Don't underestimate this guy, he's not messing around. What he lacks in originality, he makes up for with minty fresh breath.

Errr, I mean lots of powers. I let him know he's in my part of town, and as I'm clarifying that that does not make us nemeses, the guy screams something about spearmint and lobs a spear at me! A spear! Who does that? I got out of the way, but my "Hierarchy of Nemeses, Edition Two" got harpooned like a beached whale. I had it autographed and everything.

So now I've got this problem: some new villain going around making ice everywhere. Single-handedly fighting global warming and threatening old ladies with hip replacements. And the guy doesn't even know how the nemesis system works! How am I supposed to defeat him if he doesn't know the rules? I mean sure, villains break rules all the time, that's kind of their thing. But they're usually AWARE of the rules that they're breaking. This guy's completely unpredictable! He could lock the police force out of their cars until they can get boiling water! Or get stuck in some girl's hair until she can find scissors.

Actually, I'm not sure about the last one. I think the chewing gum shtick (heh) only applies to his naming conventions. At least I hope so. If this guy can make things arbitrarily cold, unpredictably sticky AND carries around spears, I might have to call in some backup. Then again, I could always claim him as my nemesis...



"TWO WEEKS AGO, LORD PREDICTABLE ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD END THE WORLD AT 8, 7 CENTRAL. IT SEEMS THAT DESPITE HIS TIMELY WARNING, SUPER HERO SQUADS A-F ARE UNAVAILABLE. WE UNDERSTAND IT'S NOT IDEAL, BUT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CALL IN WHOMEVER WE CAN SPARE. THE SIDEKICKS, THE REJECTS, THE NOBODIES. ANYONE WE CAN GET A HOLD OF, NO MATTER HOW INEPT, WHO DOESN'T HAVE PLANS TONIGHT NEEDS TO GET TO LORD PREDICTABLE'S LAB AND STOP HIM FROM ENDING THE WORLD."

"I WAS ON THAT MISSION. FIRST ONE, ACTUALLY. IT WAS ME, AMERICAW, AND THAT GERMAN STEALTH BEAR THAT GOT KICKED OUT OF THE CIRCUS A FEW YEARS BACK. WUNDERBEAR, I THINK HIS NAME WAS. ANYWHO, THE THREE OF US GET TO LORD PREDICTABLE'S AT ABOUT 4 PM, AND THE GUY PULLS OUT A GIANT PURPLE RIFLE AND SAYS HE'S GOING TO SHOOT HIS DEATH RAY AT US! EVIDENTLY HE GRABBED HIS +1 GLASSES OF BADASSERY INSTEAD OF HIS READING GLASSES THAT MORNING, BECAUSE NONE OF US DIED. NOT THEN, ANYWAY. HE HAD GRABBED HIS SHRINK RAY INSTEAD OF HIS DEATH RAY. I FOUND OUT LATER THE THING WAS CLEARLY LABELED."

ANYWAY, HIS CLEANING ROBOTS TOSSED US IN THE TRASH, BUT AMERICAW TURNED INTO AN EAGLE AND FLEW US BACK TO THE GROWTH CHAMBER. LUCKY THING TO HAVE SITTING AROUND, REALLY. WELL, WE CONFRONTED HIM, JUST THE THREE OF US. HE STARTED MONOLOGUING, DIDN'T EVEN SEE THE BEAR COMING UP BEHIND HIM. STILL THOUGH, WE WERE ALL CURIOUS WHAT HIS DOOMSDAY MACHINE ACTUALLY DID. LABEL ONLY TOLD US WHAT IT WAS, DIDN'T TELL US ANYTHING MORE. "DOOMSDAY DEVICE," WHAT AN UNHELPFUL LABEL! SO, YEAH, WE MAY HAVE PULLED IT. WOULD YOU HAVE DONE ANY DIFFERENT?"
 -HERO, ANONYMITY REQUESTED

Arctic Breeze	
Initiative	5
Move	8
HP	150
AC	20
REF	18
FORT	18
WILL	15
AP	300
AP Regen	60
Control Mod	4
Destruction Mod	3
Ranged attack	Spear (range 6, +3,d6 *2 cold damage) Has 5 spears
Abilities	Permafrost Ice Shards (As bone spikes) Blizzard (as storm, but cold damage)
Other	Resist 5/ Cold

SWAMP MAN

You remember the stories, back from before. Everyone knew 'em, even if no one believed. There wasn't a person around who didn't have an uncle who swears he saw a shambling pile of moss chase him off the road. Problem is, that uncle liked to drink. Still does, matter'a fact. You should check in on him. But you won't. Just facts, kid.

It's a story as old as America. Family's driving down the road, they see something move. They ignore it. It's a foggy night. Raccoons are out. Makes no difference that raccoons aren't 8 feet tall. The lies we tell ourselves never do. Make a difference, that is. It's just about comfort. But this isn't about some hypothetical suburban family from a hundred years back. This is about the war, and this is about your uncle.

Initiative	1
Move	3, Swim 8, Ignores difficult terrain
HP	70
AC	20
REF	11
FORT	21
WILL	18
AP	200
AP Regen	45
Control	10
Destruction	10
Enhancement	30
Utility	30
Unarmed attack	2 attacks, +4 vs AC, 1d4 * 2)
Abilities	Barrier Crush Enthrall Morph

YOU HEAR OF BOGEYMN AND ZOMBIES, SWAMP MEN AND DEVIL-FOLK... THOSE OTHER ONES AREN'T REAL, ARE THEY?"
-GERALD FOSTER

"YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE SERVING UNDER AN 8 YEAR-OLD? I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU DO. THEY HAVE NO EXPERIENCE, NO RIGOR. IT IS NOT WHY I SIGNED UP FOR THIS. BUT I HAD MY ORDERS. HOW CAN WE KNOW WE WIN IF WE CAN'T SEE OUR ENEMY!"
BAH!"
-LIEUTENANT ADAM SAVAND

"THE HARDEST PART, GROWING UP AFTER THE WAR, WAS NOT KNOWING HOW TO REACT WHEN MY KID TOLD ME THERE WAS A MONSTER UNDER HIS BED. IT'S NOT THAT I DIDN'T BELIEVE, I JUST... NEVER HAD THE SIGHT."
-SAM CONCANON

"I WASN'T IN THE WAR, NO. COULDN'T SEE ANY OF THE THINGS. LOST MY BROTHER TO IT THOUGH. HE WAS ALWAYS MORE ADVENTUROUS THAN ME. NEVER LEARNED TO LET GO OF HIS IMAGINATION. I ALWAYS TOLD HIM IT'D BE HIS UNDOING, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT...FAIRY TALE CREATURES COMING TO LIFE, WHO WOULD HAVE IMAGINED?"
-SOPHIA TORRES

You didn't believe him, I wouldn't have believed him either. No one blames you. Only now it's not just your alcoholic uncle who's seen the thing. War's over, I guess it didn't have a reason to hide anymore. It's out there. I don't know what it's capable of, don't reckon many people do. But people like to talk, and not knowing nothing never stopped anyone from talking on it, specially round these parts. Look, maybe it just wants to protect its swamp. There was a movie 'bout that, way back. Probably older'n you are. But the fact is, people have gone missing. And if we can't find someone willing to go 'n make peace with a mound of moss shaped like a man, well, I reckon folks are gonna start looking for a scapegoat. Known associates and the like. I'm talking about your uncle.

I'm not saying he's one of them, though, there are some round here who say it's contagious, I'm just saying, ya might want to seek him out, if there's any love left to be lost between you. Just be mindful of those rumors flying around, hear?



THACO

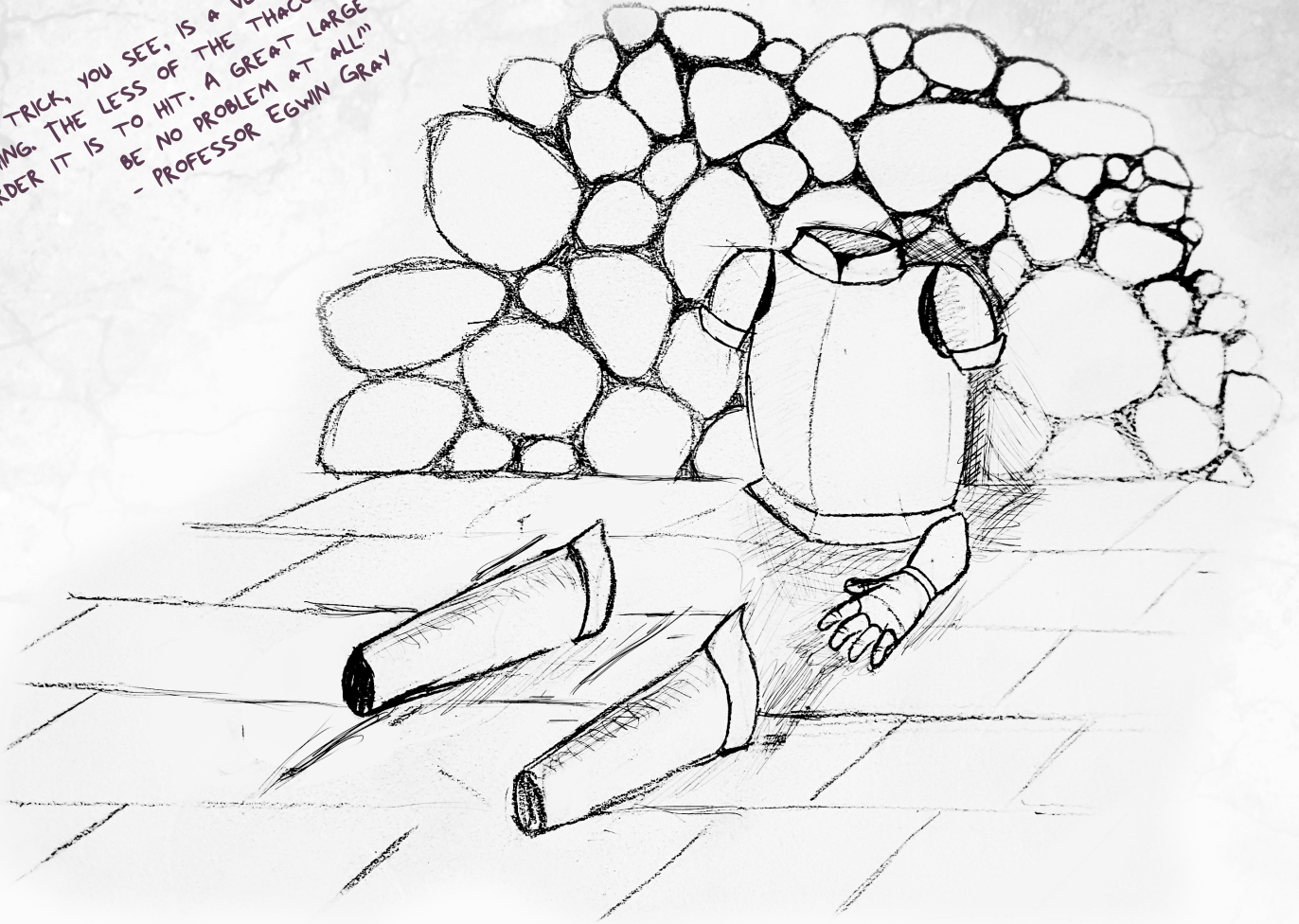
I thought it was a man walking. I've never been so wrong. The thaco is a curiously unique creature. I know not if it is a ghost possessing abandoned armor, a fallen fighting spirit that hasn't realized its body has gone, or if simply the armor itself has come to life.

What I do know is that they used to be everywhere! In dungeons, crypts, and vaults, near dragons and their hordes. These days, they're much harder to find, having been driven to extinction or exile. That's not to say they're gone from the world, not by a measure! If you're ever walking through a dark tomb and you feel a mix of dread and nostalgia, well, keep your wits about you, it's liable you're about to encounter a thaco.

They aren't inherently dangerous, any more than a suit of armor can be. They'll thrash into you and pinch here and there, but every encounter I've had with thaco has ended the same way: confusion. This is why I believe them to be spirits of the dead, they themselves not knowing why they continue fighting or moving about the world. That confusion spreads from them like a tangible cloud. Alone, they are no problem, but if ever a beast were to be with them, it could be deadly indeed. It's a tale commonly told around here, though the names often change: a group of youngsters with not enough chores goes to investigate some old abandoned building, and they all turn up dead. The next week, another group will go in to investigate, to the same end. Eventually, the building gets boarded up, and the myth only grows.

That's not to say that strange buildings don't house murderous folks, not indeed! But on more than one occasion, what seems like a suit of armor decorating the foyer is actually a thaco, and in their enraged confusion, the explorers turn on each other, driving a stake through their friendships as well as their spleens.

"THE TRICK, YOU SEE, IS A VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD
 THING. THE LESS OF THE THACO YOU SEE, THE
 HARDER IT IS TO HIT. A GREAT LARGE ONE SHOULD
 BE NO PROBLEM AT ALL!"
 - PROFESSOR EGWIN GRAY



Initiative	2
Move	3 (flight, hover)
HP	20
AC	17
REF	10
FORT	18
WILL	IMMUNE
AP	30
AP Regen	10
Destruction Mod.	3
Unarmed attack	(1 attack, +2 vs AC, 1d4 *2)
Abilities	Chafing (as Pulse)
Damage Reduction	5

VAMPIRE

It's all the mayor's fault, really. It all started after that thing with his wife, you know? It had happened to most of us at one point, but we weren't ones to fuss. Neither was she, really, but she was the mayor's wife, and he... well, you know how he his. Things got a little out of hand. It was always a peculiarity around Perf Crater, the two neck pricks. Called it the Mark of the Crater. Practically sold it on our postcards. But the second the mayor's wife gets one, the town goes to hell.

She woke up about a month ago, a little paler than usual. Worried about her health, he inspected her and found the two pinpricks. Like I've said, it's happened to all of us. Me? I don't think he noticed the paleness. I know I never did. I think he found the pinpricks of his own accord. That's not really the point though. Point is how he reacted. He decided there was a vampire amongst us (as if we didn't already know, as if we hadn't been shushing our children from talking about it for fear that them singing their songs and spreading his tales would bring him to our door for more than just a taste).

No, what he did is quarantine the town. He turned us against each other, offering bounties for proof of the death of this creature. Creature. Monster. These are the words he used. Nothing else. Never acknowledging that it was one of us. Started offering money to whoever could kill the Monster of Perf Crater. First came the merchants. Nearby folk looking to make a neat profit. They were selling protection kits.

Then came the hunters. People from nearby cities who'd bagged a few wolves, maybe something a little scarier. They'd heard to words, the warnings our mayor was sprouting, came to cleanse us, to capture the bounties. They sat in our bars and drank us out of town. They would have if we'd been allowed to leave, anyway. They were rowdy enough that we all started to stay home. Not that anyone wanted to be seen after dark anyway. Seems to me we'd want to make a show of being seen in the sunlight, not hiding inside at night, but maybe that's why I was never put in charge of this kangaroo court. The hunters were taking over. They owned our town, started declaring their own kinda martial law, claiming property "for the good of the hunt". Mayor wasn't gonna stop 'em. That'd mean admitting he was wrong. He wanted their vengeance.



Vampire Lord		Vampire Underling	
Initiative	10	Initiative	6
Move	8	Move	6
HP	140	HP	70
AC	25	AC	18
REF	25	REF	18
FORT	24	FORT	16
WILL	28	WILL	21
AP	300	AP	200
AP Regen	60	AP Regen	40
Control Mod	4	Control Mod	4
Destruction Mod	4	Destruction Mod	4
Enhancement Mod	8	Enhancement Mod	8
Utility Mod	4	Utility Mod	4
Unarmed attack	Bite (1 attack, +6, d4*2 damage)	Unarmed attack	1 attack, +3, d4 *1damage
Abilities	Armistice Battle Focus Battle Rage Death Field Decoy Dishearten Enthrall Inspire Terror Mass Inspire Fear Morph (Wolf)	Abilities	Aura Decoy Demoralize Drain Ability Enthrall Inspire Fear
Other	Crits on 19-20 Vulnerable 10/Radiant	Other	Vulnerable 10/ Radiant

Then the clever ones started to realize that if you could prove you'd been bit you wouldn't be one of them. So we started asking our neighbors to see their necks, growing suspicious of scarves and turbans. And those greedy merchants, eager to take their piece, sized up the situation and started selling kits. Little bits of dye so you could mark yourself. Sarabeth bought one. They were watching her, the Mayor's squad was. Burned down her house while she slept.

'Course that didn't stop the bitings. So they went after the merchants. Wanted to drive them out of town, but the mayor started saying the thing could shapeshift. Seemed to know quite a bit about it. So we killed them. Anyone selling goods aimed to hide that creature, the Mayor's monster, was killed and hung outside our gate. 'Course they were all exsanguinated before their death. Couldn't leave anything for that creature to enjoy.

We grew warier. Turning on each other. I've run in fear from women I've known my entire life. I know that vampire is still around and feeding well, and I don't think we'll ever find him.

Even so, I'm not so certain that it was ever the Monster of Perf Crater.

VEESHAN

It's unclear where the Veeshan came from. The oldest references we have to them are from almost one hundred years ago. No documents nor living people can recall them existing before then (though, most living people have no memories of that time period, for one reason or another). I believe they were created by a scientist by the name of Francis Paine. I'm not alone in this belief. Paine was a researcher who studied birds, and whatever research he did probably led to these foul beasts. Whatever he did, his creatures turned against him, and they continue to plague the land to this day. What I wouldn't give for a look at his journal... of course, no one is brave enough to venture into what remains of his research laboratory, and I am not going to be the one to supply enough coin to inspire that bravery.

Initiative	4
Move	8
HP	75
AC	20
REF	16
FORT	16
WILL	20
AP	200
AP Regen	40
Unarmed attack	Wing Strike (+8 vs AC, 1d6 * 4)
Abilities	Disorient Dominate Empower Ridicule Scream Taunt
Other	Vulnerable 5/ Electric Insanity Aura (whenever an enemy enters a square adjacent to a veehsa, it must pass a saving throw or become Confused until the end of its next turn)

"I REMEMBER THE SOUND OF HONKING. AND THE SMELL OF CHERRIES. THEN WAKING UP HERE THE NEXT DAY. I'M SORRY, THAT CAN'T BE HELPFUL."
-MAC HIGHWATER, VICTIM

"THEY TEND TO HUNKER DOWN IN THE WINTER. EVERY SPRING THOUGH, AT LEAST ONE VEESHA WILL PARADE THROUGH THE CITY. BEST JUST TO STAY INSIDE, I SAY. THE YOUNG ONES NEVER DO, BUT THEN, THEY NEVER HAVE."
-ARTIN JILKS

"MY HUSBAND USUALLY HUNTS A COUPLE A YEAR. I MAKE A MEAN HOT PIE OUT OF THE THINGS. THERE'S JUST SO MUCH MEAT THERE, YOU CAN EASILY MAKE FIFTY PIES, EVEN FROM A SMALL ONE! WE USHER IN EVERY SPRING THE SAME WAY. IF WE FREEZE THE MEAT, WE CAN USUALLY SELL THEM UNTIL THE START OF SUMMER. OF COURSE, MY KIDS ARE TIRED OF THEM BY THEN, BUT OUR NEIGHBORS LOVE THEM, JUST YOU ASK."
-ANITA CORINTH

Whatever the origins, the Veeshan have remained largely unchanged over the years. I know not if these are the same ones that Paine created all those years ago, or if they figured out some method of reproduction. What is clear is that these giant, bipedal, swan-like creatures should be feared. They grow up to seven feet tall, and a single strike from their pure-white wings can break bones. Luckily, the creatures are not hard to avoid: they never leave the plains, though sightings have been spotted closer to the mountains every year. They regularly announce their presence with loud, honking roars that strike fear into the sane. Any who ignore these warnings will be drawn under their spell: each veesha emits some kind of pheromone that causes rioting, anger, and general loss of control. I've never been affected myself, but I've seen the veeshan tear through a city, destroying infrastructure with reckless abandon. Even the most well-ordered militia have trouble containing them. Once they're gone, only a trail of destruction remains.

The birds either migrate or estivate; they only appear in the early spring. If you ever see one attack, you will know chaos as they flail around. Every strike is a sporadic stumble accompanied by a harrowing honk that echoes over the plains.

"HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT THOSE IN QUITE SOME TIME. CAN'T SAY I MISS IT REALLY. I DIDN'T LEAVE THE PLAINS TO AVOID THEM, BUT I SURE DIDN'T STICK AROUND FOR THEM EITHER"
-CLAY NORDSHIRE

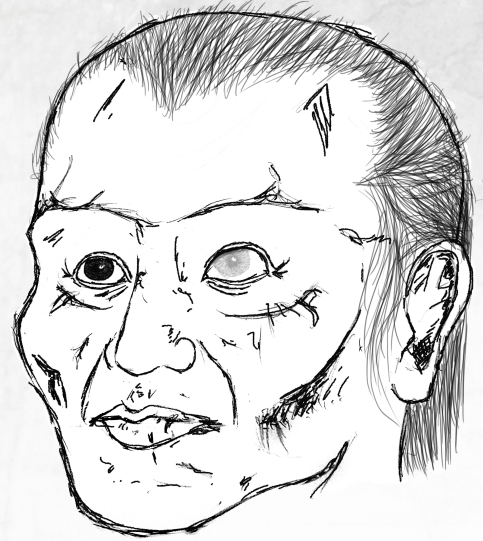
"WE'RE GONNA GO HUNTING VEESHAN! WHOEVER CAN STAY HIMSELF THE LONGEST WINS"
-ADEN CORTEZ



WENDIGO

The first thing you notice is the smell of death. For many, it's also the last thing you smell. It creeps into your nose, crawling into your throat, smothering you. The smell of a dead mammal, perhaps a small rat, forces all other scents and air out of your lungs, choking you with its cloying odor. And of course, the scene does not come alone.

The first thing it brings is memories. Every time you've smelled death, every corpse you've stumbled across, every friend you've had to watch die. Each of these memories is lured to the front of your brain. This leads to the second gift of the Wendigo: panic.



People don't like death, and they don't like being reminded of their own constant movement towards it. Many times, Death comes before the Wendigo, the scent alone being enough to drive men to striking their friends. By the time a search party is sent, all that remains is one survivor, pieces of the rest scattered around their campsite or left dissolving in the survivor's stomach. Experienced travelers will end it there. But some encourage the traveler to come back to town, to tell their tale. This is the third gift of the Wendigo: itself.

The Wendigo is a gaunt man, one who looks as though he has not eaten in weeks, perhaps longer. The opposite is usually true, he feeds on his fellow companions, and the guilt of these actions feeds on him. He wears his skin like a mask, stretched thin over his bones. They poke and tear out, and while it may look like your childhood friend, only the Wendigo remains. Each time the creature strikes, a lone survivor is left. More often than not, this survivor rises up, becoming a Wendigo itself. It travels to the nearest farm or city, continuing the cycle. After all, who would turn away a starving man, lips bloody, covered in cuts? Even if the smell of death clings to him a little too closely...

Initiative	6
Move	4
HP	60
AC	23
REF	20
FORT	24
WILL	20
AP	120
AP Regen	40
Control Mod	3
Unarmed attack	(2 attacks, +4, d8*3damage)
Abilities	Enthrall Infection Mass Inspire Fear Wallop

"THE WENDIGO DOESN'T WANT TO KILL US. IT WANTS TO BRING OUT THE WORST IN US. YOU SEE A STARVING MAN ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND YOU LEAVE HIM THERE ON THE CHANCE HE MIGHT KILL YOUR LOVED ONES? THAT'S IT. THE WENDIGO WON."
-AL "BEARCLAW" SHEARTON, LUMBERJACK

But those who take pity don't live long. The Wendigo sheds its human mask, unhinging its jaw and climbing out through the mouth, unleashing its cannibalistic horrors on all who offered help. All but one.

Of course, these are just the newborn Wendigo, as it were. As they travel, they grow, each meal adding to both their size and hunger. They are an insatiable plague, spreading through the winter wasteland, not leaving even so much as a pair of footprints. Old Wendigo (and they do grow quite old, as only vultures and scavengers seek the smell of death for food), grow as large as five men, and still look as emaciated as a beggar. But these old Wendigo do not go about their feasts in the same way as the young. They do not seek refuge, or pretend to be something they are not. When the eldest appear, death is near, the scent more like a beacon, a call to perform whatever last rites you see fit. For the Wendigo brings Death, and the two rarely split company.

WILL-O-WISP

"BAD LUCK TO SEE A 'WISP.
ONLY WAY TO REVERSE IT IS
TO CATCH ONE IN A GLASS
BOTTLE THAT YOU MAKE
YOURSELF"

-OLD TAB MIREs

"OH DON'T LISTEN TO
HIM. ANY BOTTLE'LL DO.
PLUS'N THAT WAY YOU
GET TA WATCH THEM
DANCE AND SHINE."

-OLD MORN MIREs

Country folk love to capture the Will O' Wisps, despite almost all conventional folklore telling them not to. Perhaps that's the very driving factor. Wisps, for their part, aren't malicious. They just love a good prank. It's said that they bring winter's frost with them wherever they go, and it's them who puts the morning dew on the grass.

Will O' Wisps aren't hard to find, they lurk in caves and fields, and at night they light up. Little balls of lights, with creeping tendrils floating, dancing in the darkness. They aren't very big, no more than the size of your palm, and they fit nicely in a mason jar, provided you let in enough air. It's a shame to catch them though. When they're free, they lash out, twisting from a simple ball to a spread of tentacles, each one cutting the black night, leaving traces of light burned into your eyes or maybe the night itself.

"THEY'RE HARMLESS, REALLY. JUST LIKE
TO PULL PRANKS. CAN'T BLAME THE
CRITTERS, REALLY, GIVEN HOW OFTEN WE
BOTTLE THEM UP."

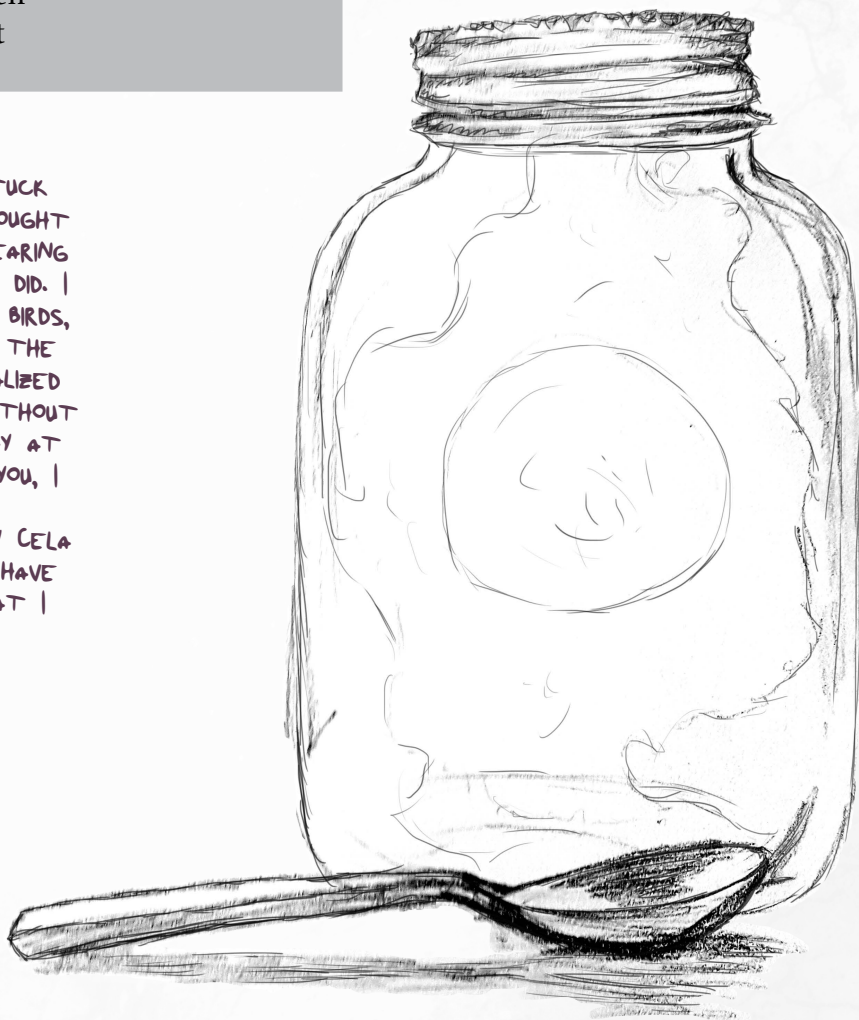
-FARMER SEN LAKES

Unlike most of the creatures in here, Wisps are fairly harmless, though heaps of superstition and folklore surround them. Most stories pit them as bearers of bad luck. The oldest tales, those from two hundred years ago, tell that they're only bad luck if you catch them, but modern tales have it that catching them is the only way to reverse that luck, and that just seeing them will put you in an unlucky spot. I think it's just a matter of convenience; folks like to catch them, and what better excuse can be had than it being the only way to reverse the spell they've already wrought. See something pretty, lock it up. Bah! Any creature as fascinating and long-lived as the Wisps will naturally develop lore, but that's not to say that there couldn't be some truth to it all.

Initiative	1
Move	5
HP	6
AC	12
REF	12
FORT	12
WILL	16
AP	240
AP Regen	40
Unarmed attack	(+2 vs AC, 1d4*2) If hits, target's luck score is reduced by 5 (Min 10)
Abilities	Backfire 15 Bless (cost 30, restore all attributes to full normal values) Disorient +2 within 4 Ensnare Imbue Mass Deafen Permafrost Silence

"ALL MY WIFE'S SPOONS WERE STUCK TOGETHER IN ONE CLUMP. SHE THOUGHT THAT WAS BAD. THEY TOOK MY HEARING FROM ME, FOR A WHOLE DAY, THEY DID. I COULDN'T HEAR THE SONG OF THE BIRDS, THE LAUGHTER OF THE CHILDREN, THE WASH OF THE WAVES. I NEVER REALIZED HOW TRULY EMPTY THE WORLD IS WITHOUT THE MUNDANE SOUNDS TAPPING AWAY AT YOUR EARS. I NOTICE NOW, I TELL YOU, I DO.

ALSO DIDN'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO MY CELA GO ON ABOUT HER SPOONS. MAY'NT HAVE BEEN SO BAD AFTER ALL, NOW THAT I TELL YOU."
-BRYN STABLER



WRAITH

A spirit of energy, floating through places of unrest. Often felt at the bridges of suicide victims, at graveyards, and at train stations. At wedding altars, and schools. At first date spots and crossroads. The creatures seem to be drawn to choosing points, to transitions in human lives. The most unsettling time to encounter one is when it seems to happen without reason, in a forest grove or natural oasis. Nothing interrupts a peaceful scene like an unsettling presence lurking just out of sight. Despite their fascination with the turning points in our lives, it is important to remember that these things are not human. They are the furthest things from human.

In their natural state, they barely look like anything. A gust of wind that seems more solid than most. Leaves spinning when none are nearby. Our mind brushes away the truth with something more palatable. But if you stare long enough, look until you can see past your mind's veil, you might see them: Spiritual energy, not tied to anything else on the plane.

No one is sure where they come from, not really. There's theories, of course. There's always theories when it comes to the unknown. But the facts are these: Everywhere in the world these spirits exist, and everyone's mind fills in a convenient lie to avoid seeing the truth.

But it can only be avoided when it isn't tied down. And before too long, the story ends the same way: The spirit, the wraith, finds some untied host, some body that isn't as guarded against spiritual energy as the ones around it. An animal, usually. I'm always grateful when it's an animal.

The host, whatever it may be instantly dies. There's debate on this matter, but I can't believe anything else. It's possible that this is one of those lies my brain is feeding me, but it's one I have to cling to, for on it lies my sanity. The host is replaced with a pale shadow of its former self, twisted and wrong. It turns black and wispy, becoming less substantial, a grim reminder that it is no longer part of this world. Cows become cow wraiths, sheep become sheep wraiths, and so on. It's easier to deal with the problem when you can accept that this transformation is permanent.

Often, the changes are slight at first. An extra spot on a favorite cow. A wolf that you can't quite seem to focus on. But the effects in personality are immediate. The animal spurns its old habits, acting standoffish and confused. It isn't long before the rest of the changes follow.

The eyes turn silver, and the black energy spreads over the beast. It grows, and with its growth as it seeks more power. Before too long, the wraith is wearing the beast like a mask, its silver eyes shining through the empty husk that used to be the animal. Then it unleashes itself upon its next victim.

They can be killed once they have a host, leaving behind a deformed skeleton, vaguely resembling each of the hosts it had consumed. The skeleton is charred black by the sheer energy contained within it, and the wraith is let loose upon the world, biding its time until it is ready to take on a new host, wiser this time, more powerful. If there is a more permanent solution to this problem, it is not known to me.

There are stories of humans who have been able to keep the wraith at bay, humans strong enough to retain both their sanity and their shape, restricting the wraith to their own body. These humans are said to be great leaders, singlehandedly turning the tide of war. They also tend to be largely fabricated. I would love for such a thing to be true, but it simple cannot be. This, these human "werewraiths" are a manifestation of hope, a lie we tell ourselves to sleep at night. The truth is there are few horrors worse than becoming host to a wraith, and fighting for control, struggling in the dim hope that you can fight back the black energy, that you can merge souls and gain mastery over the wraith's power before it controls your body... holding onto that hope is sure to be the final foolish notion you hold before you die.

Intangible	Takes ½ damage from physical attacks, double damage from Abilities
Initiative	5
Move	4
HP	30
AC	21
REF	18
FORT	18
WILL	22
AP	180
AP Regen	60
Unarmed attack	1 attack, +3, d4 *2 damage

Abilities
 A were-creature gains all of the abilities that a Wraith has, if it does not already have them
 Death Field
 Injure
 Inspire Fear
 Invisibility
 Phasing
 Possession: Cost 140. Make an attack Control vs Will against one creature within your Control range. If the attack hits, the creature is dominated (Save ends). If the creature fails 2 consecutive saving throws against this domination, the Wrath takes control of their body and the creature makes a saving throw. On a success, they become a were-creature. On a failure, the Wraith retains control.

"THERE IS NO WAY TO DESCRIBE THE TERROR, THE INTOXICATION. AT TIMES YOU FEEL MORE BEAST THAN MAN, WORRIED YOU WILL BREAK AT THE SLIGHTEST PUSH BUT ALWAYS LOVING THE SURGE OF POWER. YOU HOLD IT BACK, YOU GUIDE ITS STRENGTH, BUT YOU FEAR ONE DAY IT WILL WIN. YOU FEAR ONE DAY YOU WILL WAKE UP AND YOU WON'T BE YOU ANYMORE. MOSTLY, YOU FEAR THE TRUTH. THE GUT FEELING THAT THERE IS NO "IT". THERE IS ONLY YOU. YOUR DEEPEST INSTINCTS, YOUR BASE DESIRES, WITHOUT LEASH."
 -SAHU



NOVEMBER 21ST: I TRACKED THE SPIRIT THROUGH MOUNTAIN AND FOREST, HOPING TO FIND THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF ITS ORIGIN. THIS IS THE FIRST UNBOUND WRAITH RECORDED IN YEARS, AND FELT I MUST STUDY IT. I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME. WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT SOMETHING SO UNNATURAL FELT AT HOME IN THE QUIET PEACE OF NATURE? I WANTED TO FIND MORE, AND I DID. OH, I DID. AND NOW, I'M AFRAID I'M NOT THE ONE TRACKING ANYMORE. -JOURNAL OF STEPHEN STER, DISCOVERED 3 MILES FROM TOWN. NO BODY WAS FOUND.

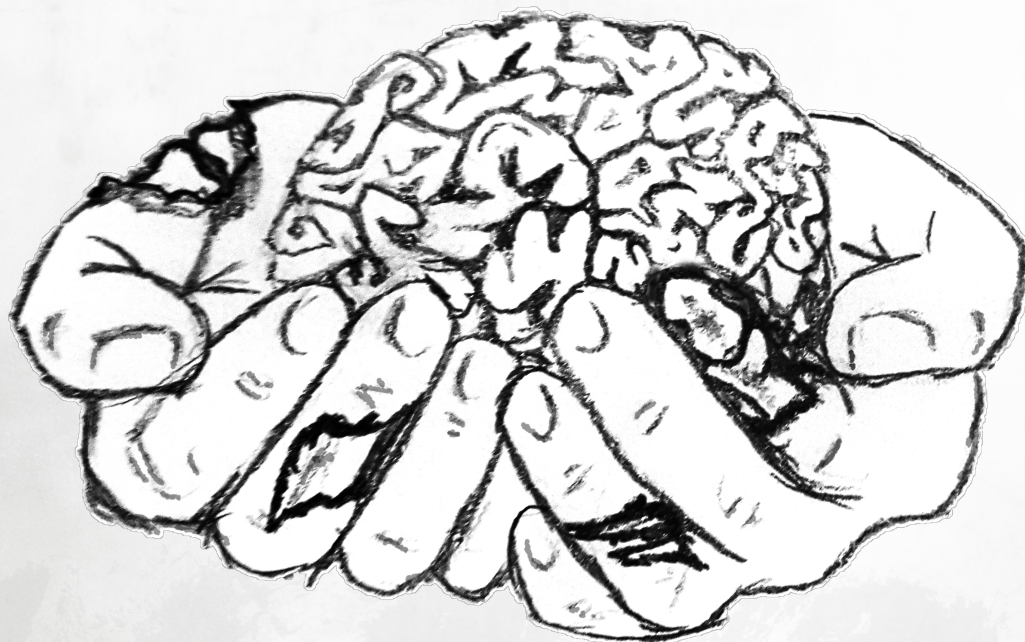
ZOMBIES

MY MOM MARRIED A DEAD GUY. HE WASN'T DEAD AT THE TIME, OF COURSE. BUT A YEAR AFTER THE WEDDING, HIS HEART GAVE OUT. SHE LOST HERSELF THOSE DAYS. DIDN'T CHANGE OUT OF HER MOURNING VEIL, JUST KEPT TO HERSELF, MUTTERING ABOUT HOW SHE MISSED HIM. I LET HER BE. MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT, BUT NO ONE TOLD ME WHAT TO DO. SHE WASN'T MY MOM THAT WEEK. SHE BARELY ATE, AND SHE NEVER TALKED EXCEPT TO SAY HOW SHE MISSED HIM. AND AT NIGHT, OH AT NIGHT SHE'D WAIL SO LOUD I THOUGHT THE NEIGHBORS WOULD COME RUNNING.

THEY DIDN'T OF COURSE. THEY BROUGHT FOOD THE FIRST DAY, AND THEN FADED FROM SIGHT. THAT'S JUST HOW IT WAS. UNTIL SHE CAME BACK. I OPENED THE DOOR, THINKING IT WAS A JOKE. SOME DRUNKARD PRODDING HIM UP LIKE THAT. I WANTED TO SCREAM, I WANTED TO VOMIT. MOST OF ALL, I WANTED TO HIDE IT BEFORE MY MOM SAW. BUT IT WASN'T A JOKE, IT WASN'T HIS BODY. IT WAS HIM. FLESH DANGLING OFF, HIS BONES VISIBLE. THE WAY HE WALKED TOWARDS ME WITHOUT EVER LIFTING HIS LEG, LIKE THEY WERE ROOTED TOWARDS THE GROUND. HIS LIMBS WERE CROOKED AND...WRONG. I SLAMMED THE DOOR, AND I DID VOMIT THEN, AND WHEN I HAD MOISTURE IN MY MOUTH I SCREAMED. BUT MY MOM DIDN'T COME.

HE STAYED LIKE THAT, OUTSIDE OUR DOOR. HE'S BEEN THERE FOR ALMOST A WEEK NOW, AND I FEAR EVERY TIME MY MOM LEAVES HER ROOM THAT SHE'LL SEE HIM, THAT SHE'LL LET HIM IN. I DON'T KNOW WHY THE NEIGHBORS HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING, BUT I HOPE THEY'RE ALRIGHT..."

-SYNDIANNE GROVES, 15



Initiative	0
Move	2
HP	8
AC	12
REF	5
FORT	14
WILL	12
AP	90
AP Regen	15
Unarmed attack	+1 vs AC, 1d4 *1
Abilities	Infection +1 vs Fort within 2 Inspire Fear +1 vs will within 2 Drainlife (As Death Field, but against one target. Cost 30, +1 vs Fort within 2)
Other	+3 on all saving throws

"IT HELPS NOT TO LOOK THEM IN THE FACE. NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU MIGHT RECOGNIZE SOMEBODY."
-ALAN MOINES, SPECIALIST

You've heard of them. They're in every culture, and sooner or later, they appear in every town. Zombies, shamblers, living dead. They've got a dozen names, and only one way to deal with them: Bash in the skull. That's a temporary solution; you'll be swimming in former friends until your graveyard's empty or you find the cause. There's always a cause.

Sometimes it's a talisman. I've also seen a plague, an angry priest, an unsealed tomb... the cause isn't important. What's important is the effect: recently dead rising up (usually in a localized area, thank all that is good!) and feasting upon the flesh of their own.

One zombie is rarely a problem. The brain is a fragile thing, more so when the integrity of the skull is compromised. The thing is, they rarely come one at a time. They come as a horde, and a horde, no matter how slow-moving, is something that can't be stopped by any lone person.

There are some folks who run around calling themselves specialists. Most times, they lost their family this way, their village, their town. But you get a lot of experience when you survive, experience that makes it hard to go back to the way things were. Whatever their reasons, they often take up the same lifestyle: listening for news of outbreaks, and using their experience to eradicate the undead problem. Of course, nothing is free, any more than one village has found that the price of the liberators can be worse than the undead threat that drew them...

"USED A SHOVEL TO PUT THEM IN THE GROUND ONCE. ONLY FITTING THAT I USE IT TO PUT THEM DOWN AGAIN"
-RIORDIE JEAN, UNDERTAKER