

THE ARCHMAGE'S ORRERY



A TALES OF THE 13TH AGE ORGANIZED PLAY ADVENTURE, IN FOUR WEEKLY 2-HOUR SESSIONS FOR CHARACTERS OF 8TH LEVEL.

BY ASH LAW



ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE

The adventurers are contacted by the Archmage himself and asked by him to recover a missing part of the Mystic Orrery. An orrery is a mechanical device that predicts the movement of celestial bodies, and for centuries the Mystic Orrery has accurately predicted celestial events and their effect on magic. However, the Mystic Orrery's predictions are becoming increasingly erratic, and it turns out that an Archmage of a previous age removed some parts and hid them away from her successors. The whole Dragon Empire is at risk, as the rules of magic begin to fluctuate. Something big is approaching, something that the current Archmage is unable to foresee.

Powerful wards keep the Archmage and his immediate underlings from retrieving the needed parts, but the wards don't account for people like the adventurers.

The adventurers start the adventure in Vantage, a secret flying city run by the Archmage. Once the first part is retrieved the Archmage will transport the adventurers to the remaining locations.

CREDITS

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Maps created using: Excel, GIMP, and Pro-Fantasy's Campaign Cartographer.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Many thanks to Kendall Jung for creating pre-generated characters of levels 1-10 and hosting them on fan site [Vault of the 13th Age](#)

[Barbarian \(Forgeborn\)](#)

[Bard \(Half-Elf\)](#)

[Cleric \(Halfling\)](#)

[Fighter \(Human\)](#)

[Paladin \(Human\)](#)

[Ranger \(Wood Elf\)](#)

[Rogue \(Halfling\)](#)

[Sorcerer \(Dark Elf\)](#)

[Wizard \(Human\)](#)

Maps from many of our adventure [can be found here](#).

Links to all published TALES OF THE 13TH AGE adventures [can be found here](#).

Advice on running this adventure can be found at the back of the adventure.





IF IT IS PUBLISHED THEN IT IS PERMITTED

If it appears in a 13th Age rulebook you can play it. So yes, you can play the classes from [13 True Ways](#) and the new Twygzog race from the [13th Age Bestiary](#). We're also allowing the new races from the [Midgard Bestiary for 13th Age](#), and any new races that appear in [13th Age Monthly](#) or in adventures published by Pelgrane Press.

If you play something still in playtest send your playtest notes to 13thAgePlaytest@gmail.com. Note that we're not making you sign an NDA but we do have a request: if you'd seriously like to help the playtest process for unpublished classes and races, don't post your playtest feedback publicly or discuss it on the internet. In our experience, publicly discussed playtests generate less useful data because people start agreeing and echoing each other (or getting concerned about disagreeing with other people) rather than testing things for themselves.

INCREMENTAL ADVANCES & FULL HEAL-UPS

Each week every character that participated should receive an incremental advance... unless somehow the party fouled up beyond belief, or chose to flee a battle. Details on incremental advances are on page 189 of the core rules. This adventure is designed for level **8** characters from beginning to end.

Aim for a full heal-up at the end of every session.

USEFUL RESOURCES

General: <http://www.pelgranepress.com/?p=8764>

Character sheet: <http://www.pelgranepress.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/13th-age-character-sheet-fillable.pdf>

Harassment policy: <http://www.pelgranepress.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/13th-Age-OP-Harassment-Policy.pdf>





THE CHAIN DRIVE.

I.0 PRELUDE/INTRODUCTION.

Start by discussing with the players why their characters have been chosen for this quest. Encourage players to link together their reasons for being chosen by the Archmage, and to say how their characters know other members of the party. Look for character backgrounds that match up and suggest links between the party members. Here are some ideas that link to other adventures:

2ND LEVEL ADVENTURES

Crown of the Lich King

Your ability to penetrate the defenses of the former Wizard King has made you uniquely suited to this task.

Benefits for characters who took part in the previous adventure: +4 to all skill rolls in session 4.

Quest in the Cathedral

Your experience in the cathedral that the Archmage helped to create has suggested that you are well-matched to the task of piercing the mystic wards set up by the Archmage's predecessor.

Benefits for characters who took part in the previous adventure: Turn untyped damage to holy damage when fighting the dracolich.

Shadow Port Shuffle

Your experience with the Prince of Shadows has made you renowned in certain circles, especially after you stole the Darksyde Diamond.

Benefits for characters who took part in the previous adventure: +2 to social skill rolls when on the flying island of Shockquake.

Wyrd of the Wild Wood

You survived the Wild Wood, poisoned though it was by wild magic; the Archmage recognizes that and has decided that you might be the just person he needs for this quest.

Benefits for characters who took part in the previous adventure: +2 to non-social skill rolls when on the flying island of Shockquake.

3RD LEVEL ADVENTURES

Fungaloid Infection, The Folding of Screamaunt Castle, Tower of the Ogre Mage, Omenquest

You have experienced weird environments that few others have encountered, a fact that means you are well-matched to getting past whatever weirdness the previous Archmage has set up to defend her secrets.

Benefits for characters who took part in these previous adventures: +2 to saves against confused during this adventure.

4TH LEVEL ADVENTURES (THE ORC WAR TRILOGY)

Wrath of the Orc Lord, The Elf Queen's Enchantment, Domain of the Dwarf King

The Archmage heard of your bravery in the war, and so you have come to his attention. He needs brave adventurers, this quest is not for cowards or weaklings.

Benefits for characters who took part in these previous adventures: +2 to all death saves and last gasp saves during this adventure.

6TH LEVEL ADVENTURES

Escape from the Diabolist's Dungeon, The Crusader's Fist

You have been plagued by demonic influence, and the Archmage has removed it in exchange for you performing a service for him.

Benefits for characters who took part in these previous adventures: +2 to attacks in sections 2.6 and 2.7.

The Wurm's Tale.

The Great Gold Wurm has recommended you to his ally, after you served him so well in locating his lost paladins. You used your smarts, and the Archmage respects intelligence.

Benefits for characters who took part in the previous adventure: +2 to attacks against evil dragons during this adventure.

You can find links to these and other adventures [here](#)





Don't forget to roll icon relationship dice at the start of every session and have any 6s give a positive benefit and any 5s give a benefit with a story complication.

SESSION START

The adventurers arrive at Vantage, a secret flying city controlled by the Archmage.

SESSION END

The adventurers have recovered the chain.

I.1 JOURNEY TO VANTAGE.

This first section is a travel montage. The adventurers have to get to the hidden city of Vantage, and the only way there are the secret enchanted sky-roads that crisscross the Dragon Empire. There are many outlandish sights and even stranger dangers to be found up high on the veiled sky-roads. Turn to a player and ask them to describe a possible uncanny danger. Then turn to the next player and tell them that their character faced and overcame that danger, and ask them to say how their PC did that. There is no need to roll, this is just a travel montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to invent a danger, and everybody has overcome a danger. Ask the group who was travelling together, who was journeying alone, and which characters already know each other and how. Use this opportunity to help the players tie their character's histories together through the use of backgrounds and one unique things.

Finally, the adventurers arrive in Vantage. Vantage is a flying city, concealed from those beneath by a permanent bank of clouds and powerful memory charms. The adventurers can see a peaceful valley far below them, simple farmers going about their business completely unaware of the magical marvel that hangs motionless above their heads. Vantage itself is a marvel of dreamlike architecture, and blends enchantment and engineering together in a perfect union of magical achievement.





I.2 MEETING THE ARCHMAGE.

The adventurers are shown into a splendidly appointed hall, the ceiling of which is overlaid with an image of the night sky. Faintly streaking at the edge of the sky is a comet. At the center of the room is a fire pit, which wizards are piling fragrant logs into, wood taken from the heart of the Dire Wood. The wood is set afire, and the fire pit fills with a sinuous blue flame. Appearing in the flame is the Archmage himself (or rather his projected image).

- As he manifests those with a positive or conflicted relationship with the Archmage feel as though they are finally in the right place in the right time, and that all is right in the world. The Archmage's gaze penetrates to their very souls, and approves of what it sees there.
- Those with a negative relationship with the Archmage discover that their whole lives have been lies, that they have been rebellious cogs. Their earlier agitations against the Archmage were all just part of his plan to get them here...
- Those with no relationship with the Archmage feel a sense of power just being in the Archmage's presence, as though their destinies are being carried along by a vast magical current. With the Archmage on their side, how can they lose?

He addresses the adventurers:

"Greetings adventurers. I have brought you here to undertake a momentous quest. In a past age one of my predecessors hid part of the Mystic Orrery, a device that allows me to predict and counter the effects of the celestial realms on magic. Her reasons for hiding it are not your concern, but now we need it back."

The Archmage's then lists his reasons for choosing each adventurer; his image then points to the comet visible in the night-sky/ceiling.

"The spells of an Archmage are powerful... fortunately my esteemed predecessor prepared for powerful wizards, but not for you. Disaster approaches from the sky, and across the Dragon Empire protective wards are failing. You must recover the missing parts of the Mystic Orrery, and save the world."

ATTACK THE ARCHMAGE?

Not a very good idea, really. For a start he's an icon, and secondly the adventurers are only in the presence of a projected image. The Archmage might tolerate or ignore some minor transgressions, but is likely to teach underlings their place if they reveal themselves to be his enemies. A temporary magical debility (such as when the player says the word "and" their character takes 1d6 force damage) that lasts until the character has completed the first quest for the Archmage should suffice.

Yes, at epic tier a concerted effort by player characters could thrust a PC to the power level of an icon (and destroy or dethrone an existing icon in the process), but charging with an axe at the Archmage's projected image isn't that thing.

The Archmage's image vanishes in a puff of blue smoke, and a quaestor steps forward. She is Vastari Durrel, an aasimar wizard who manages some of the affairs of Vantage—specifically running the teleport rings that propel the Archmage's servants through space-between-spaces.

She leads the adventurers to a long tubular chamber that has multiple silver rings arranged along it and explains their mission. The Archmage's predecessor hid part of the orrery, a chain, on an island far off the coast beyond sight of land—far off in the Iron Sea. The teleportation chamber will deposit them as close to a large structure on the island as the wards there will allow them to scry to. The chain should be somewhere inside the structure. When they have it, she will teleport them back. The chain is about 6ft long, is made of a light metal, and probably glows blue.

The pearlescent rings in the chamber begin to spin, glowing runes floating up off them, and with a weightless feeling of speed the adventurers find themselves rushing forwards toward a tear in time and space...





I.3 THE ARCANÉ GUARDIAN.

The adventurers feel themselves being stretched like taffy; and suddenly snap back into reality, standing on a wind-swept spit of land. Around them surges the Iron Sea, roaring and smashing into the black rocks of the beach. A black storm swirls around the island, lightning blasting at the surface of the water yet never touching the ground. Scattered around the spit of land are corpses of adventurers past, many of them still gripping the weapons they died holding.

Ahead of the adventurers is a monolithic structure, a solid dome of polished rock with a single massive door set into it. Far above the dome a pale flame burns in mid-air. In front of the door stands a massive golem, impassively watching the adventurers, its rusted metal eyes swiveling to follow their movements. As soon as the adventurers move away from the spot that they are standing on, the golem rumbles forward to attack them.

NUMBER OF PCs	ARCANÉ UNDEAD	ARCANÉ GUARDIAN
3	2	1
4	4	1
5	6	1
6	8	1
7	10	1

ARCANÉ GUARDIAN

Huge 10th level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +17

Spell-fist smash +15 vs. AC (two attacks, against two different targets if possible but if not against the same target)—The damage depends on how many hits the guardian has made so far, as the arcane guardian slowly surges back to life...

First hit this fight: 25 ongoing force and fire damage.

Second hit this fight: 45 ongoing force and fire damage.

Third hit this fight: 95 ongoing force and fire damage.

Fourth hit and every hit after: 70 ongoing force and fire damage.

ARCANÉ UNDEAD

The dead adventurers on the beach begin to stir...

8th level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +7

C: Pale fire +13 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)—28 fire and force damage

Crumbling: The crit range against these creatures is expanded by the escalation die value (esc=0/crit=20, esc=1/crit=19+, esc=2/crit=18+, up to esc=6/crit=14+).

AC 24

PD 20 HP 140

MD 16

Looting the bodies on the rocks mid-fight is an option, if adventurers want to scoop up some non-magical weapons to deal with the Arcane Golem's *mana battery* ability. Let the players know that picking up a rusted weapon (or bone, or rock) is a quick action.

Amazing reach: On turns when the escalation die is odd the golem can make attacks against nearby enemies as if they were engaged with it.

Golem immunity: Non-organic golems are immune to effects. They can't be dazed, weakened, confused, made vulnerable, or touched by ongoing damage. You can damage a golem, but that's about it.

Mana battery: When a magical attack (a spell or an attack using a magical weapon) hits this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 11+ on the attack roll or it heals the golem instead of damaging it. This becomes obvious to the adventurers the first time it happens.

AC 27

PD 25 HP 888

MD 21

FLEEING

The adventurers really can't flee from this fight, there is nowhere to go but the unforgiving and deadly Iron Sea. They could run around the dome, but the golem and the undead will follow them.

PCs who jump into the Iron Sea take 2d20 damage per round, until they climb back onto the rocks. Climbing back onto the rocks is a move action. Rolling a 1 on a disengage check or attack will cause a character to stumble into the angry Iron Sea





The iron sea thunders endlessly, as the storm roars around the adventurers.





I.4 КНОCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED.

The dome itself is made of seamlessly joined stone, with but a single door allowing entrance. With the doorway's guardian disposed of, the adventurers can pause to examine the entrance. Upon the entrance, carved into it, is a circle which contains symbols that the characters are unfamiliar with.

Opening the door requires four successes with DC 30 skill checks. *Track the number of failures that the party accrues before they open the door. Each failure increases the danger within the structure.* The players can doubtless come up with ways to use their backgrounds, but here are some ideas:

- A wizard with the background "*Student of the Imperial School of Magic*" might have a background that allows them to decipher the symbols.
- A rogue with the background "*Thief*" might be able to discover concealed locks.
- A barbarian with the background "*Strongest woman in New Port*" might be able to use their strength to pry the door partially open.
- A cleric with the background "*Servant of the god of knowledge*" could pray for guidance.
- A paladin with the background "*Former apprentice to the Archmage*" might be able to use an incantation to reveal hidden markings on the door.
- A druid with the background "*Best in the Wild Wood at riddles*" could possibly decipher the meaning of the message spelled out by the markings.

The dome itself is empty inside, bar a set of spiral stairs that lead upwards. The stairs fade and disappear as they rise into mid-air. The stairs themselves are the way forward, but first they must get past any magical traps that the party has triggered while opening the doors to the dome. Every failure that the party accrued getting into the dome has armed one of the following traps, which attack the party as they move toward the stairs. If the party accumulated more than 3 failures then have some of the traps go off multiple times.

TELEPORTING ROCKS	LIGHTNING FIELD	FIRE BLASTS
<i>Stone spheres teleport into your body... ouch!</i> Splat +20 vs PD (1d3 adventurers) — 3d20 damage	Splat +20 vs PD (1d3 adventurers) — 3d20 lightning damage	Scorch +20 vs PD (1d3 adventurers) — 3d20 fire damage





I.5 THE GHOST TOWER.

As the adventurers climb the stairs they find themselves becoming intangible and climbing up out of the dome. Above the dome, rising from it, is an intangible and invisible tower. Of course, now that the adventurers have climbed the stairs they are intangible and invisible too, and so can see and interact with the tower. The tower contains shifting stairs, making it a vertical maze. However, the adventurers have all the time in the world (right now) to backtrack and explore.

Climbing the tower reveals that it was once the tower of a wizard, abandoned since before the start of the current age. Though enchantments have kept the tower from the ravages of time, it is clear that it has not been inhabited for eons. However, the rooms do look to have lots of interested magical doodads in them. This is a prime opportunity to loot an abandoned wizard's tower. If the adventurers decide to loot the tower on their way up through it have each player roll a Wisdom-based skill check with a background appropriate to looting the former abode of a powerful wizard. There are enough magic items for everybody, but what they each find depends on their skill check result.

Natural 1:

BOOTS OF BUTT-KICKING

These sturdy boots have oricalcum toe-caps, and their satin lining is embroidered with star charts.

Boots (cursed)

Recharge 11+: Until the end of the battle automatically succeed at disengage checks

Aftereffect (if you do not succeed in recharging): Until your next full heal-up you cannot remove the boots

Curse: When you roll a 1 or 2 (on any d20 roll) you take your level in damage as you kick yourself

Quirk: Tap-dances when nervous

CLOAK OF INDISCRIBIBILITY

The silk cloak shimmers when in direct light.

Cloak (cursed)

Always: +5 PD

Recharge 16+: Until the end of the battle you become hazy (attacks against you have a 10% miss chance, stacks with the spell Blur and other similar effects)

Curse: When you roll a 1 (on an attack roll) you lose your next standard action due to temporarily misplacing vital equipment

Quirk: Practical joker



ASH SAYS: Rob Heinsoo suggests that some GMs, crueler GMs than I, might want to hide the fact that these boots are cursed. Personally I like giving players cursed items and being open that they are powerful but cursed, and letting players grapple with their unwillingness to attune to a cursed item vs their lust for power... which in some ways is itself a kind of cruelty. For GMs who wish to hide the fact that these items are cursed until *after* the adventurers have attuned to them and discovered their powers and abilities (and curses) I've put a separate 'items' section at the back of this adventure after the GMing advice. The items write-ups at the end don't have the curses listed for the Boots of Butt-Kicking or the Cloak of Indiscernibility so you can use it to create a player hand-out while concealing the fact that some of the items are cursed.

Skill check result of 2-24:

EPIC-TIER HEALING POTION

1d4+1 doses

Standard action to drink

Effect: Spend a recovery and heal with an extra 3d8 hp (maximum 100 hp healing from drinking this potion).





Skill check result of 25-34:

ICONIC-TIER HEALING POTION

2d4 doses

Standard action to drink

Effect: Spend a recovery and heal with an extra 4d8 hp (maximum 130 hp healing from drinking this potion).

Skill check result of 35+:

ROBE OF STARLIGHT

The satin of the midnight blue robe glitters, as though tiny flecks of mica were embedded into the fabric.

Light armor

Always: +3 AC

Recharge 16+: When you are targeted by an attack, teleport to a point nearby and force the attacker to re-roll the attack

Aftereffect (once you have used the recharge power): Until the end of the battle you can teleport on your turn as a move action

Quirk: Believes in astrology

WIZARD'S BLADE

The metal of the blade is etched with sigils and hieroglyphs that bend space around the wielder.

Any bladed weapon

Always: +3 to attack and damage

Recharge 11+: Until the end of the battle you do not provoke attacks when you make ranged attacks while engaged

Aftereffect (if you do not succeed in recharging): Until your next full heal-up gain +2 to disengage checks

Quirk: Monologues

STAFF OF SUPREMACY

This staff is topped with a diamond.
Staff

Always: +3 to attack and damage
Recharge 18+: When targeted by an attack, warp space to retarget the attack against any creature nearby or far away. If the retargeted attack misses the recharge becomes 16+ instead of 18+

Quirk: Caster supremacist (believes non-magic users are socially inferior, or stupid, or are too lazy to learn magic)

I.6 THE GHOST-LIGHT.

At the top of the tower is circular room in at the center of which a pale fire burns. This tower was originally a light-house for ghost-ships lost on the Iron Sea, keeping them away from the Dragon Empire. While the light still burns, it is only kept burning by the power of the chain coiled in the pale fire. The metal of the chain is strangely light, and the chain itself is not too long, so it is no more difficult than carrying a rope. The pale blue flames produce no heat, and seem to be coming from the chain itself. As the adventurers spot the chain, they also become aware of ghost ships out in the storm— pulling the chain out will dim the flame and the ghost ships (and storm) will no longer be kept at bay.

There are two ways to deal with this threat... The first is to simply yank the chain out and run as fast as they can for the front door and their teleport back home (1.6a). The second way is to pull the chain and make a stand against the ghost ships with their backs to the fading flame (1.6b).

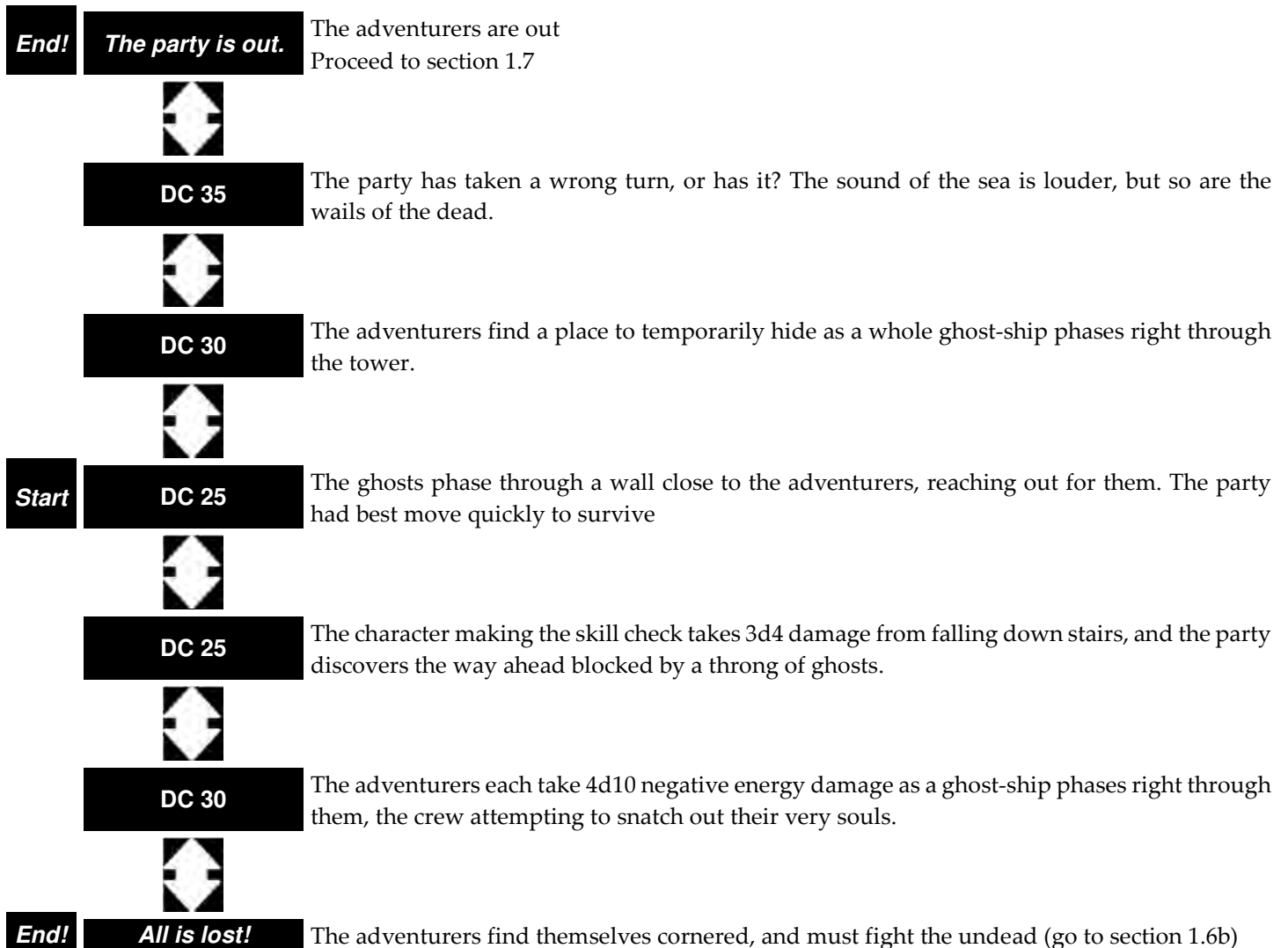




I.6A RUN AND HIDE.

The adventurers have chosen to flee from the ghostly ships, as their crew begin to phase through the walls of the ghostly tower. Each player in turn must narrate how they help the party escape the tower, and make an appropriate skill check using an appropriate background, with a DC as determined by the below chart. When a player succeeds move one place upwards on the chart, but a failure moves the group one place down. When you move to a space on the chart take any damage listed there before making the skill check.

Start where the chart says 'Start...'



ASH SAYS: If the party is spending too much time on the chart, bouncing from bad to worse and back again yet neither encountering the undead (1.6b) nor exiting the tower (1.7) and dying by inches, or simply taking up too much game time by neither succeeding or failing I'd suggest having the ghost tower become increasingly less substantial until the adventurers fall out of it and then moving them along to section 1.7. Of course if the adventurers are dumped out of the fading tower into mid-air you might want to call that a campaign loss and have them lose a magic item, or add a phantom sailor or two from the Lonely Dead fight (1.6b) to the Ghost Ship fight (1.7).





I.6B THE LONELY DEAD.

It seems that the adventurers have no choice but to fight the undead...

NUMBER OF PCs	PHANTOM SAILOR	GHOST CAPTAIN
3	3	1
4	5	1
5	7	1
6	9	1
7	11	1

PHANTOM SAILOR

8th level archer [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +7

Vulnerable: Holy and force

Ghostly claws +13 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—38 negative energy damage

R: Harpoon +14 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—28 negative energy damage

Natural odd hit: The target is hampered and stuck until the end of the battle whenever the escalation die is odd.

Phasing: When the escalation die is even this creature can move through walls, drift through floors, and does not provoke attacks.

AC 24

PD 18 HP 140

MD 22

GHOST CAPTAIN

Double strength 10th level leader [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +17

Vulnerable: Holy and force

Soul-severing saber +15 vs AC—100 damage

Crit: The target must start making last gasp saves, as its soul leaves its body. Soul-less characters are living dead, with no will or intelligence yet still walking around alive. Resurrection will restore the soul.

Arr me hearties: On turns when the escalation die is odd the ghost captain restores one phantom sailor to full hp. It is obvious that the ghost captain is doing this.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Greater phasing: When the escalation die is odd this creature cannot be targeted by attacks, as it phases away from the battle (except for its voice).

AC 26

PD 20 HP 430

MD 24

FLEEING

The adventurers can flee this fight, and that takes them to section 1.6a. It is possible for adventurers to flee 1.6b and fail in 1.6a, get cornered and fight the undead in section 1.6b only to flee again to 1.6a, and so on until they beat the pirates or successfully get out of the tower.





13TH
AGE

The pale flame burns bright through the top of the ghostly tower.





I.7 THE GHOST SHIP.

The adventurers make it back out of the tower, watching it fade away as they descend the stairs back into the dome, and then flee out into the storm. Now that the chain has been removed from the flame, the pale fire is dimming and the storm is closing in; the ghost-ships that the flame kept away come rapidly toward the party. Thankfully they are teleported out.

However, not all is as it should be. One of the ghost ships gets to their location just as the teleportation to Vantage is being completed. The adventurers find themselves in limbo, on the deck of a ghostly ship rushing through the space-between-spaces with them. The crew of the ship are hungry... for souls!

This ship has three decks, between which characters can move at-will as a quick action (fading up and down through the translucent decks). Use d4s to indicate where each character is (1= the hold, 2= below deck, 3= on deck, 4= elsewhere/the rigging); only characters in the same level of the ship can interact with (i.e. fight or heal) each other—which clever players might be able to use to their advantage.

The fight ends when the escalation die reaches 6, and the adventurers escape out of the teleport to Vantage.

NUMBER OF PCs	IRON SEA LOST SOUL	CAPTAIN BLACKSKULL
3	4	1
4	6	1
5	9	1
6	11	1
7	14	1

IRON SEA LOST SOUL

12th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +13

Vulnerable: Holy and force

C: Soul-suck +17 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—24 ongoing negative energy damage

AC 26

PD 24 HP 90 (mook)

MD 20

Mook: Kill one iron sea lost soul mook for every 90 damage you deal to the mob.

CAPTAIN BLACKSKULL

12th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +20

Vulnerable: Holy and force

Ghostly anchor +17 vs. AC—80 negative energy damage and the target is stuck (save ends).

C: Iron Sea's Rage +17 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—70 negative energy and thunder damage

[Free action once per round when an enemy saves] **R: Call the lost +15 vs. MD**—a new iron sea lost soul joins the fight, engaged with the target

"This ship is MINE!": When the escalation die is NOT even the captain can teleport anywhere on the ship as a quick action.

AC 28

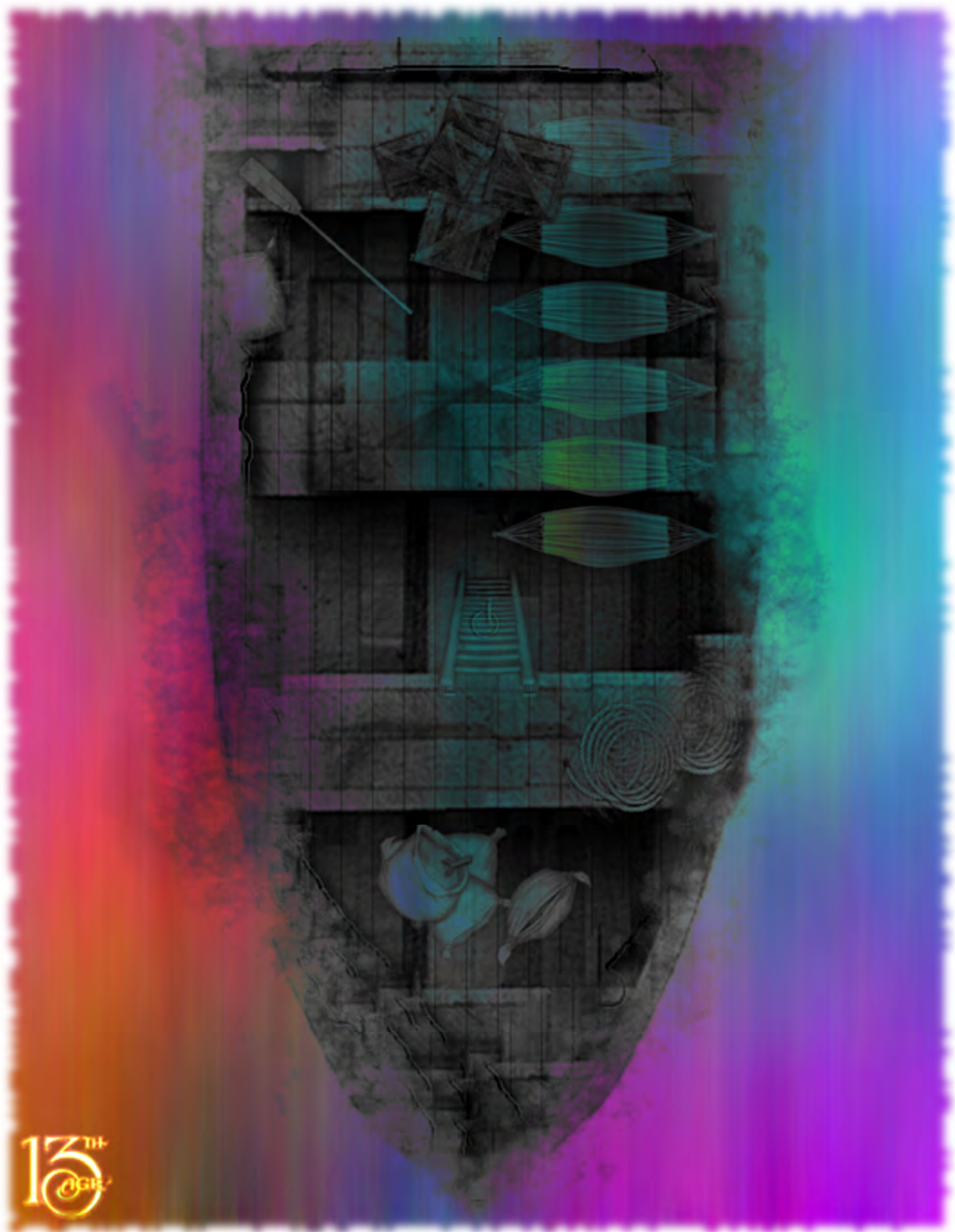
PD 26 HP 350

MD 22

FLEEING OVERBOARD

Jumping off the ship means that the jumper must start making last gasp saves or be misplaced in the ethereal space-between-spaces, perhaps forever. Succeeding on the last gasp save means that the adventurer tumbles out of the teleport and ends up *somewhere...* alive and in the mortal realm, but hurt and lost. Either way it will remove the character from the current adventure, but succeeding means that the adventurer might return in a later adventure.





15TH
AGE

A semi-transparent ghost-ship hurtling through the un-space of an interrupted teleport. Yikes!





I.8 RETURN TO VANTAGE.

The adventurers see the ghostly image of Vantage approaching rapidly down the tunnel of un-space through which the ghost-ship is speeding. With a jolt the adventurers find themselves back in the 'real' world, once again on the mortal plain—and the frustrated screams of the ghosts of the Iron Sea doppler away. The rings of the teleport chamber spin down with a rumbling descending tone, varicolored smoke coming from the now red-hot runes glowing on them.

Quaestor Vastari Durrel hurries from behind a lead screen to check that the adventurers are all right. A pair of guards with tongs retrieve the chain, while clerics wearing the priestess' symbol hurry to tend to the wounded among the party.

Vastari asks the adventurers what happened. The teleport ritual warlocks lost their scrying-lock on the party as soon as they stepped into the dome, and then the return teleport took an unusually long time. As the adventurers relay what happened Vastari nods.

"It is as the Archmage feared, the comet's approach is beginning to disrupt magic in unpredictable ways. We must hurry to retrieve the rest of the orrery. Unfortunately we can't allow you any time to rest, but we can offer an hour's exposure to the healing chamber"

(The healing chamber, of course, counts as a full end-of-session heal-up)





THE GEAR CROWN.

2.0 PRELUDE/INTRODUCTION.

The adventurer's quest for the missing parts of the Mystic Orrery continues, with the Archmage's quaestor Vastari Durrel sending them almost immediately back out to retrieve something called the Gear Crown.

SESSION START

The adventurers are teleported to the prison of Shockquake in the Overworld

SESSION END

The adventurers have recovered the missing gear crown.



Don't forget to roll icon relationship dice at the start of every session and have any 6s give a positive benefit and any 5s give a benefit with a story complication.

New PCs that join the party this week will have been recruited by the Archmage directly, or by quaestor Durrel. The Archmage foresaw that the party would need extra help.

2.1 LIFE ON VANTAGE.

The flying city of Vantage is a marvel of modern magic, ancient knowledge, and architectural wonders. Hidden far above the Dragon Empire in the clouds, only the elite know of its existence. This first section is a montage, dealing with the adventurers spending an hour or two in Vantage while their next teleport is being set up.

Turn to a player and ask them to describe a wonder of Vantage that another character will encounter. Then turn to the next player and tell them that their character saw or participated in that wonder, and ask them how they reacted to it. There is no need to make any skill rolls, this is just a montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to invent a wonder, and everybody has had a chance to interact with Vantage.

As the group co-operatively tells the story of their brief stay on Vantage, mention that many of the wizards on Vantage keep glancing nervously at the sky, where a new star can be seen.

Vantage is a good place to buy and sell items, remember to point out that the adventurers might want to buy healing potions, magical oils, and the like... especially if they have loot left over from previous adventures.





2.2 TO SHOCKQUAKE.

Quaestor Vastari Durrel once again summons the adventurers to the teleportation chamber. The teleportation warlocks have finished repairing the spinning rings that line the tubular hall, and are ready once more to fling the adventurers into the unknown. The assimar Vastari steps forwards...

"The second missing part of the Mystic Orrery was hidden in a prison called Shockquake, far in the Overworld in a place called the Shattered Realm. Contact was lost with the prison at the end of the last age, when the Diabolist's plague ravaged the land. It is only recently that we have discovered the prison's true importance, and have made a concerted effort to find it. We do not know what you will find there, except that the prison definitely has something or someone living there.

The missing part of the Mystic Orrery that you are to fetch back is a gear that looks like a crown.

I would wish you luck, but luck is for those that do not have the right spells and skills. You have the right stuff. We will meet again soon."

With that she hurries behind a protective screen as the rings in the chamber begin to spin to life. With a sensation like falling upwards, the adventurers once again find themselves rushing through the space-between-spaces...

DON'T FORGET! OVERWORLD ADVANTAGE

Remind players of wizards that they have Overworld Advantage this session. Wizardly magic taps into the power of the overworld. While a wizard is in the overworld, their daily spells become recharge 16+ after battle.

... and with a snap suddenly their motion has ceased. The party blinks away the last of the psychedelic colors of un-space to discover that they are standing on a large rock floating through the air. All around them similar rocks are floating, bumping into each other. Some are the size of castles, others no larger than a child's fist. The air itself is gritty, full of the detritus of eons of erosion. In every direction the adventurers look, there are rocks and more rocks.

In the distance the adventurers can see a glint as though of metal. It is obvious to the adventurers that they have arrived some distance from Shockquake and must get there themselves. It requires 4 DC 35 skill checks for the party to jump or crawl from rock to rock. A 25-34 skill check result will result in the adventurer whose player failed the roll facing some danger, a result below that endangers the whole party.

Skill check result of 25-34 (pick one, and make the attack against the adventurer):

ERRANT ROCKS	SLIP AND FALL	CRUSHED
<i>Ouch! Better find somewhere to hide from the volley of stones.</i> Flying rocks +20 vs AC— 3d20 damage.	<i>Don't worry... there are more rocks to land on.</i> Fall onto another bolder +20 vs AC— 4d20 damage	<i>The huge rocks grind slowly through the sky.</i> Crushed between two flying boulders +25 vs AC— 2d20 damage

Skill check result of 1-24+ (pick one, and make the attack against each party member):

CRYSTAL STORM	DUST STORM	DRY STORM
<i>It looks pretty (from a distance).</i> Sudden impacts +15 vs AC— 3d12 damage	<i>You need air to breathe, and see.</i> Too much dust, not enough air +20 vs PD— 4d10 damage	<i>Dust particle friction builds up a static charge... and BOOM!</i> Dry lightning +25 vs PD— 4d12 lightning damage





2.3 ENTERING SHOCKQUAKE.

The adventurers eventually make it over to near the flying rock that they have identified as Shockquake. Unlike the other rocks this one is large enough that it doesn't tumble or spin. The adventurers see evidence of metal structures on its upper surface, but these have for the most part been smashed flat by flying rocks and scoured and polished by untold years of sand storms.

The adventurers also spot several rocks that have been tethered to Shockquake, acting like jetties or piers. Several of the outlying rocks have squat armored watch towers on them. The adventurers see a glint from one of the watch-towers, a spy-glass— they have been spotted!

Nobody gets into or out of this place without paying a toll. The guards look like lowly humans of poor health (see 'shapechange' below), but demand outrageous prices to let the adventurers past: the going rate is one magic item surrendered per adventurer who wants entrance to the former prison.

If the adventurers agree to pay the price the guards escort them across (to section 2.4), and answer some questions (the guards tell them that Shockquake is divided into several fiefdoms, and that they control the exterior). If the adventurers refuse, the 'guards' shift into their true form of evil tiger-people and attack...

Rakshasas blend savagery and sybaritic tastes—long-view plotting with the constant temptation to blood their claws in slaughter. It's not easy being smarter and nastier than everyone else, but being an almost entirely evil shapechanger helps. Puffing on their water pipes, wreathed in smoke, the rakshasas bask in their superiority... though these ones would rather be inside Shockquake running things than on the outside taxing travelers.

NUMBER OF PCs	RAKSHASA
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

Shapechange: As a standard action, the rakshasa can change its form to that of any humanoid, or back to its own shape. Seeing through the shapechange requires a DC 25 skill check.

Nastier Specials

Master of chaos: The rakshasa gains a bonus to all defenses equal to the current number of confused enemies in the battle.

Reversal of fate: Once per day as a quick action, the rakshasa steals the escalation die; until the end of the battle, the rakshasa gains an attack bonus equal to the die's value when it was stolen. Reset the escalation die to 0 for the players and increase it normally with each new round.

RAKSHASA

Double-strength 8th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Claws and bite +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—25 damage

Natural even hit: The rakshasa can make a rend mind attack as a free action.

R: Striped lightning bolts +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—25 lightning damage, or 50 lightning damage against a staggered target

Natural even hit: The rakshasa can make a rend mind attack as a free action.

C: Rend mind +13 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—15 psychic damage, and the target is confused (make a basic or at-will attack vs. ally) until the end of the rakshasa's next turn

AC 23

PD 20 HP 280

MD 22

FLEEING

If the adventurers flee they will only have to return and face the rakshasa fiefdom/faction again, only this time the bandit/guards will be waiting and will spring an ambush.

DON'T FORGET! OVERWORLD ADVANTAGE





The Rakshasas expect to be obeyed, and become furious if the adventurers refuse to hand over a toll.





2.4 BEATSMITH MARKET

The adventurers pass through a series of thick metal doors into the interior of Shockquake. As they progress down the tunnels they hear a series of clanging noises, as though of metal on metal. The passage the adventurers are walking down opens out onto a metal gantry, and the party is greeted by an outlandish sight. A multitude of creatures through a marketplace built into a gigantic cavern within the rock. The adventurers spot forgeborn, zorigami, and creatures that they have no names for. Not all the creatures are constructs here, just the majority — the party can see everything from gnomes to tieflings to strange humanoid oozes bustling about between the stalls selling spare parts, mechanical weapons, and oddities unknown and unheard of in the world below. Shockquake is a nexus of trade here in what Overworlders call the Shattered Realm; the adventurers are in no real danger here, Beatsmith Market welcomes travelers of all sorts. There are oddities aplenty to buy here for the curious adventurer, epic tier items such as...

150 gp items

- **Emollient of speed.** *When applied to a weapon gives +2 initiative during the next fight (but it has unfortunate laxative effects if drunk). A bright green substance in a clay jar. CONSUMABLE ITEM.*
- **Liniment of swiftness.** *When applied to the feet adds +2 to disengage checks during the next fight. Smells of faintly lavender and strongly of burnt leather. CONSUMABLE ITEM.*
- **Replacement limbs.** *A variety of colors, races, and ages are available; most of them are second hand.*

300 gp items

- **Deck of sharper cards.** *These cards count as small throwing weapons. The deck never runs out of cards (it always refills when unobserved, with new cards bought by magical sprites). The cards magically display the face of the person that they hit, often showing pain or surprise or an otherwise gurning and unflattering expression.*
- **Gawkglass goggles.** *This amber-lensed eyewear gives you +1 to skill checks to discover magic, see through illusions, spot magical fields, etc.*
- **Professor Sabin's patent soul glue.** *When drunk (a quick action) it prevents dracoliches knocking the drinker's soul right out of their body... or at least that is what the label claims together with claims that it cures baldness, lifts the spirits, alleviates restless-eyebrow syndrome, and other similar claims. The liquid smells strongly of alcohol, and faintly of either poppies or vanilla. CONSUMABLE ITEM.*
- **Rool's Book of Twisted Magic.** *This slim tome of magic contains versions of popular spells, with a twist... none of them work quite right. Included are such spells as Burr, Chaos Belt, Constipation, Dragon's Weep, Fold Monster, Shelled, Shocking Gasp, Tragic Missile, etc. If a magic user casts a version of a spell that they already know but using the book there is a 55% chance (1-55) it works as normal, a 35% chance (56-90) that it does minimum damage, and a 10% chance (91-100) that it does something awesome. The book does not allow you to cast twisted versions of spells that you could not normally cast.*
- **Tonic of revivification.** *When emptied down the throat of someone rolling death saves or last gasp saves (a standard action), until the end of the fight they roll 2d20 & use the best roll. CONSUMABLE ITEM.*

600 gp items

- **Automated crossbow.** *This crossbow has self-powered mechanical legs. Once per day it can independently walk around a battlefield (it is not technically an ally and cannot be targeted by enemies), and once during that battle it can make the following attack against a random enemy:*
 - R: Automated crossbow +10 vs AC—3d8 damage**
 - Miss: 10 damage*
 - Natural 1-5 miss: The automated crossbow irreparably breaks.*
- **Diamond sword.** *This sword is made out of a single crystal. It isn't magical, but it looks brilliant.*
- **Dreamwoven garments.** *These luxurious silken garments reweave themselves, metamorphosing according to the wishes of the wearer. Counts as light armor, and looks really fancy.*
- **Enchantment transference.** *This service has a 50% chance (01-50) of transferring an enchantment from one item to another, though only an item of the same general type. Rolling a double (00, 11, 22, 33, 44, etc) on the percentile dice means that there is some side-effect, wither or not the magic was transferred. Money up front please!*
- **Peacock dreams.** *The contents of this bottle glow faintly. If drunk it gives the imbibor a temporary new background Peacock +2 until their next full rest... exactly how useful this background is depends on the player's ingenuity and imagination. CONSUMABLE ITEM.*





As the adventurers move around the market, they will discover a little more about the factions of the former prison of Shockquake...

THE UNION



These constructs control the market, and all the trade therein. They provide traders with protection from the other factions, in exchange for a cut of every deal. Of course if you don't pay the protection money...

Leader: Cogface, a Dusk Zorigami.

Who eagerly greet you in the market: Five-hammer, a forgeborn trader.

Consider the following to be their enemies: the Royals, the Twilight Seers.

Consider the following to be allies: the Abdeads, the Rakshasa.

Icon relationships: the Archmage (+/-), the Dwarf King (+/-)

THE RAKSHASAS



They say that they guard Shockquake from monster attacks, and just demand a small tax from visitors. Really they are bandits and parasites.

Leader: 'Prince' Shahzoda, a Rakshasa

Who'll follow you about in the market: Yolbars, a venal and treacherous rakshasa sell-sword.

Are secretly the deadly enemies of: absolutely everybody.

Are very good at pretending to be the allies of: everybody.

Icon relationships: the Prince of Shadows (+/-), the Orc Lord (-)

THE TWILIGHT SEERS



A gang of wizards, sorcerers, druids, and the like; they control the food supply. They would very much like to control the 'resurrection pit' too.

Leader: 'High Wizard' Lady Arbrazet.

Who you might drink with in the market: Nuxion the Enchanter, a tiefling.

Consider the following to be their rivals: the Abdeads, the Rakshasas.

Uncertain trade partners of: everybody who isn't the Abdeads.

Icon relationships: the Archmage (+), the Diabolist (+/-), the High Druid (+/-)

THE ROYALS



These dragons use tunnels in the underside of Shockquake as a roost. They are the dominant faction, bullying the other factions into giving them a cut of the action. Their enforcers are dragonic toughs, and they employ kobold spies.

Leader: 'King' Threehorn.

Who'll rudely shove you aside in the market: Lesek Strongbeak, dragonic tough-guy.

They'd like to eat: The Twilight Seers (fizzy blood), the Rakshasa (spicy food).

Not-food: The Union (indigestible), the Abdeads (rotten meat).

Icon relationships: the Diabolist (+), The Three (+/-)

THE ABDEADS



These undead 'nobles' control a 'resurrection pit', making them invaluable to the other factions despite the fact that they enjoy feasting on the living.

Leader: 'Duchess' Marwolaeth Half-Face

An uncanny presence in the market: Nula, a free-willed zombie talismaner.

Have as enemies: everybody would like to see them dead (or dead-er, as it were)... they just plain creep everyone out.

Have as clients: Eveybody, with the exception of the Union.

Icon relationships: Lich King (+), Elf Queen (+), The Crusader (+)





2.5 THE DRAGON'S CROWN

Using the information about the factions in section 2.4, provide the players with information about the political situation in Shockquake. Present to the players at least two of the suggested NPCs from the market place as sources of information, and let the adventurers overhear some rumors as they shop. The adventurers see lots of carvings and posters that followers of the Royals (the dragon faction) have put up, and the leader of the Royals (King Threehorn) is wearing the Gear Crown (the item the adventurers are after).

The adventurers might want to just storm the area of Shockquake that the dragons inhabit and take the crown by force. **However, point out to the adventurers that there are four separate factions that hate the Royals... and perhaps one of those factions might aid them in getting past the Royal's many guards so that they are fresh when they fight the dragons.** This is to adventurers' advantage.

Spending a 6 with an icon that one of the factions has a relationship with (and role-playing the meeting with the faction in question) will allow you to gain the aid of that faction. The aid that each faction can give is as follows:

The Union can sneak the adventurers through the disused sewage system of Shockquake, left over from when it was a prison. They will provide guides for the adventurers, and will take out any kobold spies lurking in the pipes. The adventurers can skip right past section 2.6 and into the Royals throne room roost (section 2.7).

The Rakshasas are willing to sneak the adventurers over the surface of Shockquake in order to get them to the dragon's roost... but will need paying of course. In the chaos that ensues the Rakshasa faction will wait and see who tries to take advantage of the Royal's misfortune and will then start plotting their downfall. Getting the Rakshasa's aid gains the adventurers the ability to start with the escalation die at 3 in section 2.6.

The Twilight Seers covert the magic items that the Royals have in their hoard. They will teleport the adventurers right into the throne room and back out afterwards (skipping section 2.6 and putting them right into section 2.7) provided the adventurers promise them all the magic items the Royals have (minus the Gear Crown of course). Unlike the other factions the Twilight Seers will be able to tell the adventurers all about one of the dragons, but will only be able to provide basic information about the color of the other dragons.

The Abdead want to create undead dragons with their resurrection pit, and for that they need dragon corpses. They can take the adventurers in to the lair as food, but the 'meal' will actually be armed. This allows the adventurers to skip section 2.6 but will mean that the dragons will gain +10 to their initiative rolls in section 2.7.

THE RESURRECTION PIT

The Abdead faction on Shockquake maintains its power through control of something called the 'resurrection pit'. This magical abomination allows a creature to be bought back to life, but requires the sacrifice of a greater life-force. If the adventurers want to resurrect somebody they'll need to supply 10 adventurers worth of living monsters as a sacrifice to the pit (see the building battles section of the core rules)... and also provide whatever the Abdead demand as payment.

When using the pit roll a d100

1-50: The person returns to life (perhaps even rejuvenated and younger-seeming), but is at -1 to all rolls until their next full heal-up.

51-60: The person returns to life as a different gender, but is at -1 to all rolls until their next full heal-up. Characters who don't normally have a gender gain one if the d100 roll was even.

61-70: The person returns to life as a different species/race, but is at -1 to all rolls until their next full heal-up. The species is usually related to their icon relationships.

71-80: The person returns, but somehow 'wrong' (insanity, illness, etc)—a quest is required to fix the person (they are not playable as a PC until fixed).

80-90: The pit fails to work, but you can try again if you have more sacrifices.

90+: The person returns drastically 'wrong': either both permanently insane and antagonistic towards the party, or as a terrible undead monster, or perhaps both (the returning character becomes a hostile NPC).

Each time the party uses the pit add a cumulative +1d20 to the d100 roll—eventually all attempts will produce undead monstrosities or mad and evil former PCs.





2.6 THE ROYAL GUARDS.

The adventurers need to access the 'throne room' of the dragon-led faction that calls itself the Royals. However, the way to the lair is guarded by dragonic warriors.

DO NOT FORGET! OVERWORLD ADVANTAGE

NUMBER OF PCs	DRAGONIC MOOKS ...a mix of archers & jailers	ROYAL GUARD	ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
3	15	1	1
4	15	2	1
5	15	3	1
6	15	4	1
7	15	5	1

DRAGONIC ARCHER

8th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +13

Blood-iron sword +11 vs. AC—20 damage

[once per battle] **C: Hell breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)**—18 fire damage

Natural even hit: The hell breath attack recharges and can be used again this fight.

R: Iron bow +15 vs. AC—12 ongoing damage

AC 24

PD 22 HP 36 (mook)

MD 18

DRAGONIC JAILER

8th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +13

Blood-iron whip +13 vs. AC—24 damage

Natural 16+ hit: The target becomes hampered (save ends).

[once per battle] **C: Hell breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)**—18 fire damage

Natural even hit: The hell breath attack recharges and can be used again this fight.

AC 24

PD 22 HP 36 (mook)

MD 18

Mook: Kill one dragonic archer or jailer mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

DEMONIC DRAGONICS

These creatures are tougher than regular dragonics, and the adventurers will soon figure out that these brutes are possessed of demonic strength.

ROYAL GUARD

Double-strength 8th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Spike-fist punch +13 vs. AC (two attacks against different targets)—60 damage

[once per battle] **C: Hell breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)**—26 ongoing fire damage

Crit: Targets that are not staggered take enough damage to reduced them to half hit points.

R: Hell-stare +13 vs. MD—76 psychic damage

Flame wings: Yes, this monster can fly!

AC 24

PD 22 HP 276

MD 18

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN

Double-strength 8th level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Flaming zweihänder +13 vs. AC (two attacks)—60 damage

[once per battle] **C: Hell breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)**—26 ongoing fire damage

Crit: Targets that are not staggered take enough damage to reduce them to half hit points.

[quick action] **R: Curse +13 vs. MD**—target becomes vulnerable to all attacks (save ends).

Natural even hit: One of the captain's allies engaged with the target can make an attack against the target.

Flame wings: Yes, this monster can fly!

AC 24

PD 22 HP 300

MD 18





The Royal's demonic draconic guards were not expecting company.





2.7 BEHEADING THE KING.

The 'throne room' is in the underside of the massive flying rock that is Shockquake, and is a series of shafts that are open on their bottom to the sky. The shafts are crisscrossed with rocky outcroppings, upon which the dragons roost and pile up their treasure. White dragons hang upside-down from the pillars, while a red dragon rests supine among a huge pile of gold.

If the adventurers fought the royal guards (section 2.6) and the escalation die got to 5+, then the escalation die for this fight starts at 1, and the dragons are ready for the adventurers. If the adventurers kill King Threehorn and wish to flee with his crown, it is a standard action to grab it from his corpse.

NUMBER OF PCs	KING THREEHORN	ALBINO DEMONIC RED DRAGONS
3	1	1
4	1	2
5	1	3
6	1	4
7	1	5

KING THREEHORN

A demonic red dragon with a belly full of molten gold!

Large 11th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +20

Vulnerability: holy

Terrible bite +16 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—140 damage and King Threehorn can make a *molten gold regurgitation* attack

[special trigger, twice per battle] C: Molten gold regurgitation +16 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies, including the one that the king just bit)—40 ongoing fire damage (hard save ends, spending a standard action also ends the ongoing damage)

I am KING: This fight while the king is alive the dragons get to use the escalation die, but each adventurer must save at the start of each of their turns (11+) to get to use the escalation die. If the king dies, the other dragons may decide to flee.

Mine now: King Threehorn will snatch up dying enemies and take a turn to bury them under his huge pile of gold.

Flight: The king can fly, but prefers to sit among his gold and let his albino underlings serve him.

Escalator: A dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

AC 27

PD 24 HP 560

MD 19

ALBINO DEMONIC RED DRAGON

A white dragon, they are vulnerable to fire... right?

Large 8th level spoiler [DRAGON]

Initiative: +16

Vulnerability: holy and cold

Raking claws +12 vs. AC (two attacks)—15 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The dragon can make a *burning bite* attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] Burning bite +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)—15 ongoing fire damage

[twice per battle] C: Burning breath +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—20 ongoing fire damage

Miss: The crit range for all dragons' attacks expands by 1 until the end of the battle or until a dragon next crits.

Flight: The dragon can fly, quickly and well.

Escalator: A dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

Nasty surprise (pick one per dragon, or roll d6):

1. *Aura of hades:* Enemies that start their turn engaged with this dragon take 24 fire damage.
2. *Brimstone teleport:* Once per battle this monster can teleport to anywhere nearby or far away.
3. *Diabolical aura:* Characters with a relationship with the Diabolist become confused (save ends) when they roll initiative.
4. *Exact sight:* Not only does this dragon ignore invisibility, blur etc, but it can target shadow-walking rogues.
5. *Inevitable:* Once per battle this demonic dragon can turn one of its attacks that missed into a hit.
6. *Ovorum:* The first enemy that is hit by this dragon must make last gasp saves as they turn into a dragon egg.

AC 25

PD 22 HP 260

MD 12

DON'T FORGET! OVERWORLD ADVANTAGE

This fight is in a very three-dimensional environment. Climbing up a level is a standard action (or a move and a DC 25 skill check with failure meaning the character goes nowhere much), but jumping down a level is only a quick action





The dragons definitely have the advantage in their three-dimensional lair!





2.8 BACK TO VANTAGE.

The adventurers finally have the gear crown, an orichalcum bevel gear that looks sort of like a crown large enough for a dragon (the dragon 'King' Threehorn was indeed using it as a crown). If they grabbed the crown and are fleeing then they can contact quaestor Vastari Durrel for an emergency teleport. If they killed all the dragons (or killed the king and the albino dragons fled) then they have the opportunity to pick over the hoard of the dead 'king'.

There is a lot of gold in the hoard, about 1000 gp per character. Some of this is in the form of coins, but more is in the form of jeweled gold statues depicting dragons. There are also a surprising number of magic items, enough for one item per character. If the adventurers made an agreement with the Twilight Seers and wish to honor that they'll need to give up these magic items. Otherwise the adventurers find enough epic tier items for each player character to receive one. Have the players tell you what items from the core 13th Age book that they find, or use icon relationship rolls and the Book of Loot to determine what epic tier items are available.

If the adventurers want to stick around on the former prison of Shockquake for a couple of hours, they can spend their new wealth at Beatsmith Market.

When the time comes for the adventurers to be teleported back to Vantage they contact Vastari, and they are teleported back to the secret flying city. Unlike last time the teleportation goes smoothly, and the adventurers arrive back in the cylindrical teleportation hall. The chant of the teleportation warlocks is a harmonious greeting, as the adventurers are welcomed warmly by quaestor Durrel.





THE STAFF OF EONS.

3.0 PRELUDE/INTRODUCTION.

The adventurers are sent to a 'tamed' living dungeon that long ago escaped its mystic bonds and now wanders the land. Their task is to retrieve a staff, one of the final pieces of the Mystic Orrery.

SESSION START

The adventurers are teleported to a Menagerie of Terror to search for the Staff of Eons.

SESSION END

The adventurers recover the staff for the Archmage.



Don't forget to roll icon relationship dice at the start of every session and have any 6s give a positive benefit and any 5s give a benefit with a story complication.

New PCs introduced this week are likely to be already working for the Archmage, or have perhaps infiltrated Vantage in order to gain information for the icon that they are really working for.

3.1 THE MENAGERIE OF TERROR.

Vantage's quaestor, Vastari Durrel, gives the adventurers a night to recover from their adventure (a full heal-up) before summoning them back to the teleportation chamber. *Vantage is a good place to buy and sell items, remember to point out that the adventurers might want to buy healing potions, magical oils, and the like... especially if they have loot left over from previous adventures.*

Vastari is sending the adventurers this time to a living dungeon known as the Menagerie of Terror; they are being sent to recover a rod known as the Staff of Ages. The previous Archmage who hid the components of the Mystic Orrery that relate to the new comet was fond of enslaving living dungeons, just as the Crusader does with demons. One such dungeon the Archmage of a previous age put to use has come to be known as the Menagerie of Terror. Its original purpose was as a flying laboratory focused on experimenting on living creatures to produce governable hybrid beasts for the imperial legions to ride or to use as guard-creatures. However, with the turning of the ages the Menagerie of Terror slipped from the grasp of the icons; it now wanders the Dragon Wood scooping up hapless beasts to experiment upon. Quaestor Durrel can teleport the adventurers to near where the Menagerie of Terror was last seen, but they will have to locate it on their own. As soon as they have the staff and are out of the flying living dungeon she will have them teleported back to Vantage. One small problem... the staff is *inside* the living dungeon's heart!

Once again the adventurers line up in the tubular teleportation chamber, to be flung through the space-between-spaces...





3.2 TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION.

The adventurers arrive back in the mortal realm with a snapping sensation, stumbling to a halt in a forest clearing. A road leads from the forest clearing, but on closer inspection it turns out that the 'road' is in fact a trail of destruction. Trees have been uprooted and flung about, the burrows of animals have been dug up, and here and there are splotches of blood. In the distance a creature can be seen, no not a creature, a living dungeon. The Menagerie of Terror floats above the forest, uprooting trees and plucking up animals into the many maws on its underside—the living dungeon is huge! From its rocky exterior descend dozens of tentacles, each as wide across as a dragon is long.

Turn to a player and ask them to describe a danger that the party faces while following the trail of destruction. Then turn to the next player and tell them that their character got the party past that danger, and ask them how they did it. There is no need to make any skill rolls, this is just a montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to be a hero during the montage.

As the group co-operatively tells the story of their journey to the Menagerie of Terror, mention that the comet is larger in the sky here than when they last saw it from Vantage.





3.3 INTO THE MENAGERIE.

The adventurers need to get into the Menagerie of Terror itself, but being plucked up by a tentacle isn't a brilliant plan – most things that are plucked up are crushed and dropped back into the forest again. Instead the adventurers will need to run up the outside of a moving tentacle and climb in through one of the many rocky orifices of the flying dungeon.

Doing so is a DC 30 skill check, and actually getting inside is another DC 30 skill check. Every time a skill check is failed the whole party faces one of the following dangers...

FLUNG FROM THE SKY	TENTACLE SQUEEZE	ACIDIC DROOL
<i>The Menagerie of Terror rejects you.</i> Falling +15 vs AC — 4d10 damage.	<i>The living dungeon attempts to crush you like a bug.</i> Crush +15 vs AC — 3d12 damage.	<i>Mouths on the tentacles slobber caustic sputum.</i> Dissolution +15 vs AC — 6d6 acid damage.

The party can decide to retreat and rest, and try again. Trying again means that the party learns what tactics work best when trying to climb a tentacle, but as the slow mind of the dungeon comes to recognize that it is perhaps under attack it becomes more aggressive (*every time the heroes run away and come back add a cumulative +2 to skill checks, but it also adds a cumulative +2 to the dungeon's attack rolls*).

3.4 WANDERING MONSTERS.

The interior of the Menagerie of Terror is a mixture of biological creature, natural rock tunnels, and architectural features. Rather than lay out every possible chamber on the way to the dungeon's heart we're providing you with an area generator, and a list of hybrid monsters that can be found either in cages or wandering free. Once the adventurers have fought a group of wandering monsters (or two groups if you have the time) go to section 3.5.

AREA GENERATOR (ROLL 4x D6)	MAIN FEATURE OF AREA	MINOR FEATURE	TREASURE?	MONSTERS?
1	Pulsating stalactites	Dank and slimy	No	No
2	Open to the air above	Eyes in the walls	No	Yes, caged
3	Smells of rotting flesh	Cloyingly warm	No	Yes, dead
4	Lit by bioluminescence	Sticky floor	Chart A	Yes, docile
5	Dark, lots of shadows	Bad air / fumes	Chart B	Yes, hungry
6	Strange gurgling noises	Veiny walls	Chart A+B	Yes, hostile

When building a wandering monster fight in the Menagerie of Terror use the following chart. Type 'A' monsters are all 10th level, the 'B' monsters are all 8th level mooks, and the 'C' monsters are all huge 9th level monsters. You may use any mix of hybrid beasts when building battles inside the Menagerie of Death.

NUMBER OF PCs	'A' MONSTERS	'B' MONSTERS	'C' MONSTERS
3	1	5	1
4	2	5	1
5	1	5	2
6	2	5	2
7	1	5	3





Use the following treasure charts when the area generator indicates that an area of the Menagerie of Terror has treasure to be found there. Roll any rolls that duplicate things the adventurers have already found.

TREASURE CHART A (D4)

- 1 200gp worth of pearls, found near a skeletal clam-dog— a short-lived hybrid made by the Menagerie of Terror. There is electric moss around the pearls, DC 30 to get them without taking 3d10 lightning damage.
- 2 A paladin's suit of armor, inlaid with gems. The gems are worth 300gp. The armor is rusted and pitted and falls apart when it is moved, causing bones and dust to tumble out from inside it. It is a DC 25 Constitution skill check for all characters to avoid becoming host to a particularly nasty fungus which was in the bone dust (lose one recovery if the skill check is failed, roll a hard save [16+] at the start of next session to get it back otherwise the recovery only comes back when the character levels up).
- 3 A dead human, fused with an equally dead horse. The human has 100gp worth of platinum coins from a previous age, together with 50gp worth of modern coinage. The horse's saddle bag has rotted away, but the champion-tier healing potion that was in the bag has rolled into a corner of the room (DC 25 to spot it).
- 4 A battered suit of armor of no great worth, with a fresh corpse still inside it. Something has been nibbling on the corpse. The corpse carried an ever-glowing lantern, an object that is now partially embedded in the bone/rock floor beneath the corpse. DC 25 skill check to remove it without alarming the living dungeon (failure on the skill check means that the lantern is retrieved but the fight in section 3.5 has one extra *heart crab*). The ever-glowing lantern is a very minor magic item, it doesn't need to be attuned to— it just glows.

TREASURE CHART B (D6)

- 1 A glowing sigil hovers in mid-air. When interacted with by a hurt character with there is a 50% chance it will heal them to full hit points at the cost of 1d3-1 (0-2) recoveries taken from a random nearby ally. If a fully healed character interacts with the sigil it steals two recoveries of theirs and fades away. There is no indication why the mystery sigil should be where it was, or what made it... maybe it is part of the dungeon, or maybe an Archmage of the distant past left it there for some reason.

A suit of armor, inlaid with gems. The gems are worth 300gp, the armor is rusted and pitted. Still wearing the armor is an undead creature that attacks those that disturb it—

UNLUCKY WRETCH

Scrawny 10th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerable: holy

- 2 **Grab and bite (+15 vs AC)—30 negative energy damage**

Natural 16+ hit or miss: Another *unlucky wretch* wanders into the area.

Shambling: Unlucky wretches will not and cannot chase those that flee a fight, a fact that is evident to all that fight them. Fleeing from these monsters is not a campaign loss.

AC 22

PD 24 HP 100 (this monster is scrawny for its level)

MD 30

- 3 A champion tier magic item, together with the dead adventurer that carried it.
- 4 An epic tier magic item, encased in hardened goo and stuck to a wall.
- 5 An ordinary house-cat. Ordinary except for the fact that it can teleport and can talk. Its name is Munca-munca (it says) and it has cat-level intelligence and concerns. It used to belong to a wizard, and would like very much to go back to Vantage. The cat is worthless or priceless, depending on your point of view.
- 6 One of the Menagerie of Terror's tentacles explores an internal crevice of the living dungeon. It is a DC 25 skill check per party member to get out of its way or take 2d10 damage. The tentacle exudes a slime that can be collected after it has left (roll on the random rune effects in the core book for the slime's effect).





'A' MONSTERS

HORRID LEOPARD-WYVERN

10th level troop [BEAST]

Initiative: +20

Claw and bite +15 vs. AC (two attacks against the same target)—38 damage

If both attacks hit: The leopard-wyvern makes a poison breath attack as a quick action.

[special trigger] **C: Poison breath +15 vs. PD (two nearby or far away enemies)—23 ongoing poison damage**

Miss: 12 poison damage.

Flight: This monster can make long hopping-jumps assisted by the leathery wings-membranes on its legs, which pretty much amounts to flight over short distances.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 216

MD 20

UNSTABLE ORC-HORSE-BOAR-THING

10th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +15

Many-headed bite +15 + escalation die vs. AC—60 damage

Miss: The monster takes damage equal to its total attack bonus this round as it savages itself.

Nastier special

Building rage: If the monster misses with its attack it gains a cumulative +1 to its attack.

AC 24

PD 21 HP 280

MD 16

PHASING PANTHER-SQUID

10th level spoiler [BEAST]

Initiative: +13

Sudden bite +15 vs. AC—45 damage and the target is stuck while the phasing panther-squid remains engaged with it.

Natural even hit: The monster teleports into engagement with another enemy and makes a tentacle attack as a quick action.

[special trigger] **C: Tentacle attack +15 vs. PD (two nearby enemies, or two attacks against the same enemy)—12 poison damage**

Displacing teleport: When the escalation die is even, as a move action the monster can pop free and teleport to any point nearby or far away.

AC 26

PD 23 HP 216

MD 21





'B' MONSTERS

TERRIFYING SPIDER-SNAKE

The head and legs of a spider, fused to the body of a snake, with the venom of both!

8th level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +16

Vulnerable: fire

Envenoming bite +14 vs. AC—10 ongoing poison damage

Slither-climb: The spider-snake can move anywhere: over walls, on ceilings, up your trouser leg...

8 legs and a muscular tail: Disengage checks against these monsters take a -4 penalty. If you fail to disengage and roll below the escalation die value to spider-snake automatically deals you 10 poison damage.

AC 25

PD 21 HP 36 (mook)

MD 21

Mook: Kill one spider-snake mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

BLOODCURDLING ANT-WOLF

8th level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +14

Formic bite +13 vs. PD—10 acid damage

If the attack roll would also hit the targets AC: an extra 18 damage

Chemical howls: Whenever an ant-wolf dies one other ant-wolf may make a free *foaming spit* attack:

[special trigger] C: Foaming spit +15 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies, or far away enemies at -2)—9 acid damage

AC 24

PD 18 HP 36 (mook)

MD 22

Mook: Kill one ant-wolf mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

CREEPY HORNET-HIVE OCTOPUS

8th level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +12

Vulnerable: poison

Papery tentacles +13 vs. AC—23 damage

[Quick action] C: Stinging swarm +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)— escalation die ongoing poison damage

Flight: This monster can fly, though in a mad buzzing unpredictable way

AC 22

PD 20 HP 36 (mook)

MD 18

Mook: Kill one hornet-hive octopus mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.





'C' MONSTERS

MACABRE DRAGON-BEAR

It is a terrifying beast, covered in claws and mouths and madly rolling eyes.

Huge 9th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +9

Too many claws +14 vs. AC—100 damage

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 60 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Insecure biology: When this monster dies it does 100 fire and thunder damage to all engaged enemies, and all creatures in the battle become stunned (easy save ends).

No flight: This monster has wings, but can't fly.

AC 25

PD 23 HP 360

MD 20

FEROCIOUS BAT-SHARK

Huge 9th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +9

Limb-severing chomp +15 vs. AC—50 ongoing damage

Critical hit: The target loses a limb and the bat-shark's crit range expands by a cumulative 2. If the target has no limbs left and the ferocious bat-shark scores a critical hit, the target is instantly killed.

Savage bite +15 vs. AC (all engaged enemies)—60 damage

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 60 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Extra senses: The bat-shark can use echo-location, can smell blood, can sense electrical activity from its preys' muscles, can read pressure changes in air and water... there is no hiding from this beast. Treat it as a sort of true-seeing ability: invisibility, illusions, blur spells, shadow-walking, and so on: all will not work on this monster. It always knows where you are.

Clumsy on land, strong flyer: This monster can fly and swim, but when moving on land has a -4 to disengage checks. The bat-shark while flying or in water can make its attacks mid-movement without provoking attacks on itself, but at a -2 penalty to hit.

AC 25

PD 23 HP 400

MD 21





3.5 THE DUNGEON'S HEART.

The party eventually hears a rhythmic thumping sound, a pulsing that indicates that they are near the heart of the living dungeon; the Staff of Eons is embedded within the heart. Some living dungeons have calcified dragon eggs as a heart, and some have crystals, some have elaborate torture chambers at their center, others have glowing balls of pure magic. This dungeon, appropriately enough given its partly biological nature, has a colossal beating heart.

As the adventurers venture closer the area becomes less and less like a dungeon and more and more like venturing through a living creature. Veins pulse on the walls, sections of floor shift atop pulsing meat, and everywhere there is blood.

As the adventurers step into the heart's chamber large crab-like creatures with the faces of humanoids stretched across their soft shells scuttle in, and tentacles emerge from the meat to defend the heart. It takes 12 standard actions to hack through the tough meat of the heart, so the adventurers will have to deal with the living dungeon's final defenses as they do so. If the adventurers 'kill' the heart and retrieve the staff before the end of the battle the meat tentacles become *weakened*.

NUMBER OF PCs	MEAT TENTACLE	HEART CRAB
3	2	1
4	2	2
5	2	3
6	2	4
7	2	5

MEAT TENTACLE

Huge 10th level blocker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +12

All flesh is one +15 vs. PD (1d2 enemies engaged with the tentacle)—100 (non-lethal) acid damage

Both attacks hit the same target: The target is stuck (save ends).

Target is reduced to 0 hp or fewer: Instead of death saves the target must start making last gasp saves as the dungeon absorbs their flesh into itself. It is a standard action to pull an ally partially free of the all-absorbing meat of the heart chamber and give them an extra free last gasp save.

Fleshy heaving: Once per round per tentacle, the heart chamber heaves and one random unengaged enemy is thrown into engagement with a tentacle.

Death throws: When the escalation die is 4+ the tentacle gains an extra standard action each turn.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 660

MD 20

HEART CRAB

8th level spoiler [BEAST]

Initiative: +9

Claws-that-once-were-hands +13 vs. AC—40 damage

C: We-were-people-too +15 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—13 ongoing psychic damage

First time the target fails to save in a battle: The face on the back of the crab pleads with the nearest adventurer to put it out of its misery.

R: Psychic scream +15 vs. MD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—Target is dazed (save ends)

Hit but the target is already dazed: The dazed effect becomes a hard save (16+).

Hit but the target is already dazed with hard save ends: The dazed effect now lasts until the end of the battle or the *heart crab* dies.

Nastier specials:

You know this person: Yep, you know this person, or at least you knew them before the Menagerie of Terror snatched them up and turned them into a monster. No effect, beyond being a source of abject horror.

"All praise the Great Heart": This poor soul has been driven mad. It has +1 to all its attacks and +2 to MD.

Supernaturally parasitic: This heart crab heals half the hit points of any nearby enemy who heals using a recovery.

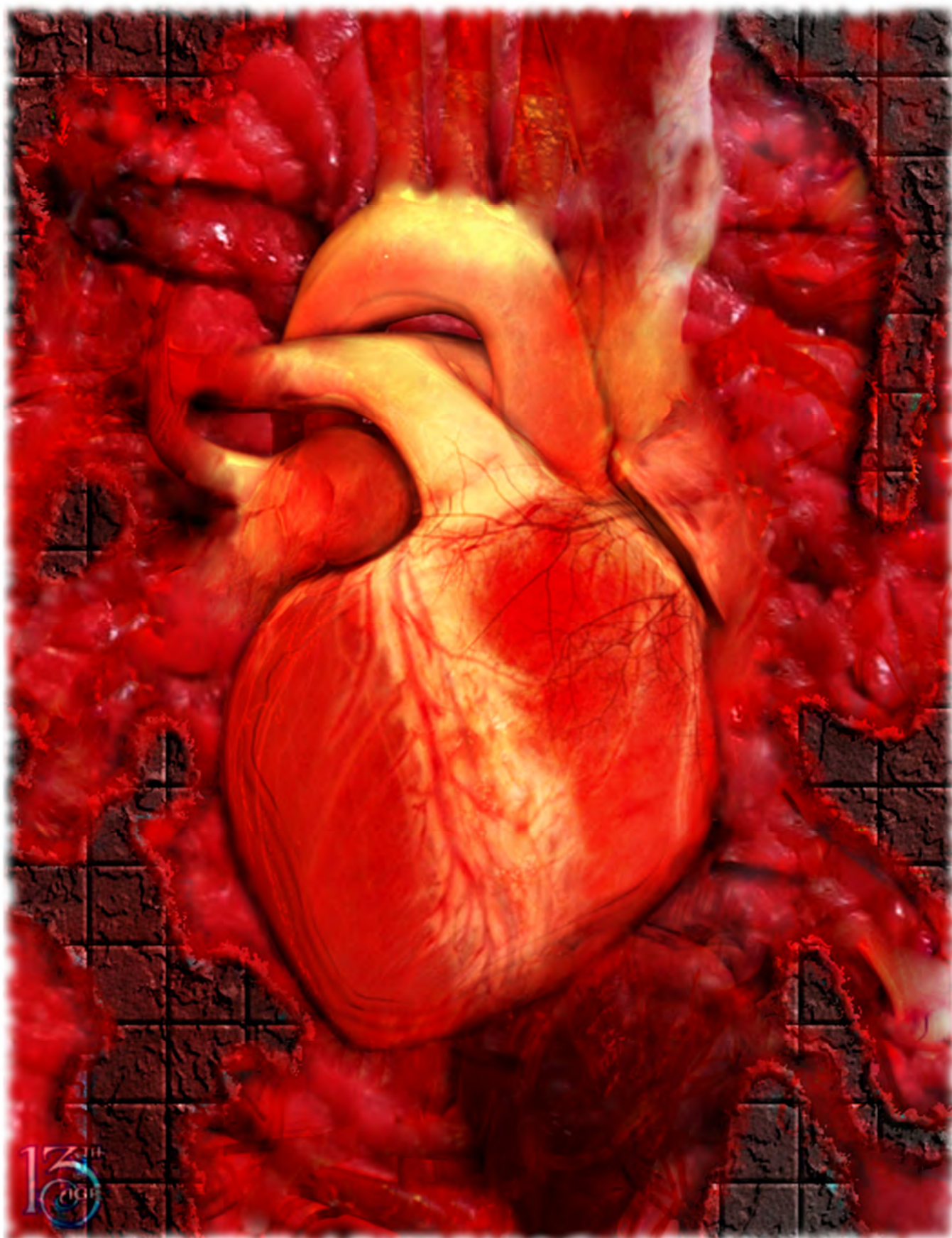
AC 24

PD 18 HP 140

MD 22

Adventurers standing atop the heart itself at the start of rounds when the escalation die is even must save (11+) or take 30 thunder damage.





13th
AGE

The colossal heart of the Menagerie of Terror beats thunderously loud.





3.6 ESCAPING THE DYING DUNGEON.

The adventurers have hacked through the oak-tough meat of the dungeon’s heart to retrieve the Staff of Eons, a simple copper rod with strange markings along its length. As soon as they end their work of butchery upon the dungeon they face fresh new dangers. It requires 3 DC 35 skill checks to get out of the chamber in which the dungeon’s heart was. Each failed skill check provokes one of the following dangers:

GOUT OF RED-HOT BLOOD	DUNGEON TREMOR	ERRANT TENTACLE
<p><i>You risk drowning, as well as being scalded by the sticky fluid.</i> Blood fountain +25 vs PD (vs each adventurer)— 4d10 damage.</p>	<p><i>The living dungeon shudders as the life leaves it.</i> Thrown about like rag dolls +25 vs AC (vs each adventurer)— 4d12 damage.</p>	<p><i>It turns out that not all of the tentacles in here were dealt with. This one is smaller, but still dangerous.</i> Epic slap +15 vs AC (vs the adventurer who failed the skill check)— 4d20 damage.</p>

Once the staff is retrieved the dungeon begins to slowly fall out of the sky as it dies, lurching and careening through the trees of the Dragon Wood. The adventurers must reach the outside with the staff in order to be retrieved via teleportation. This requires a DC 30 skill check per adventurer, with each failed skill check provoking one of the following dangers:

FLOOD OF BLOOD	DUNGEON QUAKE	PSYCHIC SHRIEK
<p><i>A tidal wave of blood blasts the adventurers down a tunnel, to who knows where.</i> Blood tsunami +25 vs PD (vs each adventurer)— 2d20 damage.</p>	<p><i>The living dungeon suffers massive convulsions as it dies.</i> Exploding walls and thrashing tentacles +25 vs AC (vs each adventurer)— 4d12 damage.</p>	<p><i>The death cry of a living dungeon, as it falls from the sky.</i> Dungeon’s demise +25 vs MD (vs each adventurer)— 4d20 psychic damage.</p>

Ultimately the adventurers reach the surface with thousands of tons of meat and rock about to fall on them, or they climb onto the plummeting dungeon’s outside, or they tumble out of one of the dungeon’s orifices into the sky. At that point Vantage’s quaestor, Vastari Durrel, is able to see them through her scrying mirror and quickly teleport them back.

With a sensation like the snapping of elastic the adventurers are hurled into the space-between-spaces and back to the teleportation chamber of Vantage. As they arrive they shower the teleportation warlocks and Vastari Durrel with the dungeon’s still-hot blood.





THE COMET'S ORB.

4.0 PRELUDE/INTRODUCTION.

The adventurers have almost retrieved all four parts needed to repair the Mystic Orrery so that it may properly foretell the effects of the strange comet that has appeared in the sky. Only one part remains missing, a mithrillium orb.

SESSION START

The adventurers head to the Necropolis to recover the Comet's Orb from the forehead of Termatrix the dracolich.

SESSION END

The adventurers present the final missing part to the Archmage, and receive their reward.



Don't forget to roll icon relationship dice at the start of every session and have any 6s give a positive benefit and any 5s give a benefit with a story complication.

New PCs introduced this week are likely to be already working for the Archmage, or have perhaps infiltrated Vantage in order to gain information for the icon that they are really working for.

4.1 PANIC ON VANTAGE

The flying city of Vantage is a marvel of modern magic, ancient knowledge, and architectural wonders. Hidden far above the Dragon Empire in the clouds, only the elite know of its existence. The wizards of Vantage are starting to panic, as the mysterious comet looms large in the sky—blazing a blue-white trail and visibly shedding parts of itself. This first section is a montage, dealing with the adventurers spending a day of rest in Vantage while their next teleport is being set up.

Turn to a player and ask them to describe a wizard from Vantage. Then turn to the next player and tell them that their character encountered that wizard, and ask them what that was like and how the interaction went. There is no need to make any skill rolls, this is just a quick montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to create a wizard, and everybody has had a chance to interact with a wizard living on Vantage.

As the group co-operatively tells the story of their brief stay on Vantage, mention that many of the magical wonders of Vantage are acting oddly.

Vantage is a good place to buy and sell items, remember to point out that the adventurers might want to buy healing potions, magical oils, and the like... especially if they have loot left over from previous adventures.





4.2 RETURN TO THE GRAVE.

Vantage's quaestor, Vastari Durrel, calls one last time for the adventurers. The Archmage has identified the final piece of the Mystic Orrery that his predecessor hid, once it has been retrieved he will be able to learn about the mysterious comet that has appeared in the sky and is causing magic to go into a strange flux. The only problem is that they don't know *exactly* where the orb is. The last piece of the Mystic Orrery is a weighted mithrillium orb that represents the comet in the repaired orrery, much like a golden orb represents the sun and a silver one for the moon. The sigils on the orb help to predict what the comet will do, the sigils changing over time.

The comet's orb was placed into the skull of an undead dragon, the dracolich known as Termatrix (the Archmage of a previous age wanted to make really sure that nobody could learn about the comet). The undead dragon is somewhere on the Lich King's island of the Necropolis. Vastari has a list of locations that the dracolich might be, but due to the Lich King's power the Archmage's wizards can't (or perhaps refuse to) scry any closer.

One last time Vastari leads the adventurers into the tubular teleportation chamber, as the rings spin up and the adventurers are snapped into the space-between-spaces to speed motionlessly to the Necropolis...



MULTIPLE PATHS

The rest of the adventure can be approached in any order. The adventurers have four locations to visit, the last of which will be the location of the dracolich. In one of the other locations the party of adventurers will meet hostile vampires. In the other two locations the adventurers will have a chance to explore, and the results of those explorations will either lead some benefit that will aid them in either their fight with the dracolich or with the vampires. The locations are:

4.3a The Apostate's Chapel.

4.3b The Unquiet Graveyard.

4.3c The Silent Cove.

4.3d The Throne of Blood.

Our advice is that whatever order the adventurers choose to explore in, that they meet the vampires in the second location that they choose and the dracolich in the fourth. If you are running short on time you could condense the adventure by having the dracolich show up earlier. Once the dracolich is defeated go on to section 4.4, but if the adventurers flee then the Archmage's people will not retrieve them and the dragon will catch up with them at one of the locations that they have not yet had a fight in (and the dracolich will be fully healed).

The stats for the dracolich and the vampires are after immediately after this section. The vampire fight is an easy fight, the dracolich is a very tough fight— potentially a party-killer if the party are not prepared to flee to another location that they have already explored.





NUMBER OF PCs	SPAWN OF THE MASTER	VAMPIRE
3	9	1
4	9	2
5	9	3
6	9	4
7	9	5

SPAWN OF THE MASTER

10th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +16

Vulnerability: holy

Claws and fangs +15 vs. AC—30 damage

Natural 18+ hit: If the target is staggered, it is also hampered (makes only basic attacks) until the end of its next turn.

AC 25

PD 23 HP 54 (mook)

MD 20

Mook: Kill one spawn of the master mook for every 54 hp you deal to the mob.

VAMPIRE

10th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +15

Vulnerability: holy

Deathly touch +15 vs. PD—50 negative energy damage

Natural 11+ hit or miss: The target is also weakened until the end of its next turn (–4 attacks and defenses). In addition, the target expends one unused limited trait (a spell, power, or talent with a once-per-battle or daily use, but not magic item powers) of its choice.

Vampiric regeneration: The vampire regenerates 1 hit point per level at the start of each round indefinitely, but it turns to mist if it drops to 0 hp (see below).

Mist form: Unless it is slain in a manner appropriate for truly killing vampires in the campaign, a vampire that drops to 0 hp drifts away to return and fight some other day.

Nastier Specials

C: Vampiric compulsion +15 vs. MD (one enemy; see below)—the target is confused and vulnerable (save ends)

Limited use: The vampire can use vampiric compulsion as a free action only when a nearby enemy attacks the vampire and misses with a natural attack roll of 1–5.

AC 26

PD 20 HP 220 (see *mist form*)

MD 26

FINAL DEATH

Each campaign should choose the elements of vampire lore that suit its purposes. Want vampires that can only be truly slain by having their heads cut off and buried at a crossroads? Surely there's an Emperor-oriented rationale for that. Prefer vampires that can be truly slain only by a sharpened wooden stake? Sounds like a lethal message from the High Druid. Vampires deterred by garlic? Umm, that's pretty random, so unless you think that garlic is a new spice that only grows in the Cathedral, maybe say it has nothing to do with the icons. One typical piece of vampire lore shouldn't be as mutable: in the 13th Age, the only vampires afraid of cross-shaped objects are vampires who fear being enslaved by the Lich King. As usual, the fear is a small deterrent, not an actual problem for a determined vampire. In the hands of someone who is not a devoted follower of the Lich King, a cross-shaped symbol is nothing but an irritant.





TERMATRIX THE DRACOLICH

This massive undead monster has a mithrillium sphere embedded in its skull.

Huge 13th level spoiler [UNDEAD/DRAGON]*

Initiative: +30

Vulnerability: holy, force

Fangs, boney claws, and skeletal tail +18 vs. AC (1d6 enemies)—80 negative energy damage

[twice per battle] Natural even hit or miss, if the attack would beat the target's MD: The target's soul is temporarily knocked out of their body! The target is weakened and hampered (easy [6+] save ends both).

C: Grave breath +18 vs. PD (2d3 nearby or far away targets)—80 negative energy damage

Natural odd miss: half damage.

Limited use: Only when the escalation die is odd.

Now I'm mad: The first time the dragon is staggered each battle, it uses its breath weapon as a free action that does not count against the normal uses of its breath.

Flight: The dracolich can fly, flapping its ragged wings with thunderous beats.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 144 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Resist everything except holy and force 12+: When an attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 12+ on the attack roll or it only does half damage. The exception to this is holy damage and force damage attacks, to which the dragon is vulnerable (they crit on a 17+).

Nastier specials:

"Your soul is mine now": When the dracolich knocks a target's soul out of its body the undead dragon snatches hold of it, making the save to end the hampered and dazed condition normal (11+) instead of easy.

Zombie puppet: If a target fails three times in a fight to save to regain their soul then the dazed and hampered effect on them ends and is replaced by the confused effect. Until they get their soul back by successfully saving against the confused effect (or by the dracolich being killed) their creature type becomes undead.

Escalator: A dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls. Normally this is a standard dragon ability, but it is up to you if a dracolich can use it too, or if dragons give up the ability when they are welcomed into the undying service of the Lich King.

AC 29

PD 25 HP 1300

MD 24

* We don't usually give monsters multiple types or sub-types; however an undead dragon is very clearly a dragon and is also self-evidently undead, so in this one case it is justified. As a GM treat it as a dragon and/or undead, depending on what you feel to be most appropriate. If players have something that affects dragons or affects undead then it affects this undead dragon.

FLEEING 'STRATEGIC RETREAT'

Point out to the players right at the start of this fight that it is a tough fight, and let them know that in this one instance if they fight for a bit then flee back to an area which they are familiar with they will gain the benefit of fighting Termatrix in that other area: a +2 to their attacks (and a chance for a short rest between meeting the dracolich and recommencing the fight). Normally we balance fleeing with a campaign loss, in this instance we are coming right out and recommending it and not imposing a campaign loss. Of course if the adventurers get a chance to rest and recover so will the dragon, but at least the adventurers will get that +2 attack bonus due to being more familiar with the terrain. Strategically retreating multiple times stacks the bonus, up to a maximum of +6, but only if the players describe how they'll use the terrain to their advantage.





4.3A THE APOSTATE'S CHAPEL.

The adventurers make their way across the broken buildings and mass graves that surround a hill known on imperial maps as Voth's Hill. A long time ago this was a verdant land belonging to an imperial noble called Baron Voth, but that was before the death of the Wizard King and the rise of the Lich King. The Voth family became part of the Lich King's undead peerage, but recently Baron Voth fell out of favor with the Lich King. The dracolich that the adventurers hunt has been seen flying near here multiple times by the scryers who work for the Archmage.

On the hill stands a chapel, formerly dedicated to the gods of light, but now dedicated to the worship of the Lich King. Smoke arises from the chapel. As the adventurers climb the hill they notice that the landscape is pock-marked with glowing craters. The comet looms large in the sky, and showers of falling stars can be seen.

If this is not a combat encounter... the adventurers hear a whistling sound and then burning rocks from the sky begin impacting all around the hill. It is a DC 25 skill check per adventurer to avoid the hazards that the meteorites pose to the party, every time the adventurers fail it triggers one of the following hazards.

BURSTING SKY-ROCKS	EXPLODING GRAVES	AWAKENED UNDEAD
<p><i>The tiny chunks of stone are very very hot, and are travelling very very fast. This is very very bad.</i></p> <p>Meteorite shower +15 vs AC (1d3 adventurers)— 3d12 fire and thunder damage.</p>	<p><i>As the meteorites impact the ground the graves explode. Any sleeping undead in the ground are now truly dead.</i></p> <p>Explosion +15 vs PD (all adventurers)— 4d8 damage</p>	<p><i>The dead do not rest easily in their graves here in the Necropolis. Some of them are awake now, and claw upwards through their graves at the adventurers' feet.</i></p> <p>Grabs and bites +15 vs AC (1d3 adventurers)— 20 negative energy damage</p>

If this is not a combat encounter... the adventurers, upon reaching the chapel, find it deserted. Meteorites have damaged the structure, and many of the windows are blown out. Tell the players that if the adventurers get into a fight that is too tough and they flee back to here that they will get +2 to their attacks due to knowing the lay of the land.

If the adventurers have yet to fight the dracolich then a DC 30 search check will reveal that the book on the lectern is a blasphemous text that deifies the Lich King. In its pages it lists the Lich King's servants, and reveals that Termatrix has a weak spot on her back... in the fight with the dracolich the crit range of the adventurers is expanded by 1.

If the adventurers have yet to fight the vampires then a DC 30 skill check involving examining their environment will allow the adventurers to realize that the shattered glass window shows a vampire being repelled by a holy icon of the elven god of smiths. When the adventurers fight the vampires showing that holy symbol (a quick action) will cause all vampires to pop free and will increase the escalation die by 1.





The meteorites have left behind glowing craters full of molten rock.



4.3B THE UNQUIET GRAVEYARD.

The Necropolis is one giant graveyard in places, thousands of graves stretching off in every direction. Though it is night, the sky is lit by falling stars, and the adventurers can see that many of the graves have been opened. Though there are no undead about, it is obvious that these bodies were about to be awakened to unlife. Maybe the meteorites falling on his island have caused the Lich King to wish to bolster his ranks, or maybe this was a planned re-awakening of workers that was interrupted by the falling sky-rocks. Whatever the reason the graves have been left open.

If this is not a combat encounter... as the adventurers pick their way through the graveyard, some of the dead stir to action. They are not fully revived to unlife, consider them to be sleep walking. They are easy to cut down so this isn't really a proper fight. It is a DC 25 skill check per adventurer to avoid getting grabbed by a hand or bitten by an errant skull; adventurers can use a basic attack roll against a defense of 30 in place of a skill roll. Every time the adventurers fail the skill check it triggers one of the following hazards.

ANGRY GHOST	BITING SKULLS	STUMBLING CORPSES
<p><i>The spirit blames the adventurers for its body being disturbed.</i></p> <p>Ghostly howls +15 vs MD (1d3 adventurers) – 3d12 psychic damage.</p>	<p><i>Barely visible beneath the dirt, the skulls snap at the feet of the unwary.</i></p> <p>Deadly nibbles +15 vs PD (all adventurers) – 4d8 damage</p>	<p><i>They shamble about, grabbing at anything that moves. They mostly attack each other, but the crowd is growing thicker</i></p> <p>Mindless attacks +15 vs AC (1d3 adventurers) – 4d10 damage</p>

If this is not a combat encounter... the adventurers stumble about the graveyard, looking for evidence of the undead dragon's presence, and although there are claw marks in the ground, they are not fresh. Tell the players that if the adventurers get into a fight that is too tough and they flee back to here that they will get +2 to their attacks due to knowing the lay of the land.

If the adventurers have yet to fight the dracolich then examining the graves will show a body of a beast that is similar to that of a dragon. The dragon-like creature gives the adventurers an idea on how to fight the dracolich if they succeed on a DC 30 skill check involving dragon physiology, allowing them to start with the escalation die at 1.

If the adventurers have yet to fight the vampires then a DC 30 skill check involving searching the graves will show the adventurers a vampire staked through the heart. The vampire is buried with a silver dagger, which is magical...

Grave-Silver Dagger

A silver dagger made in the shape of the Lich King's sigil, forged from silver coins taken from the eyes of the dead.

Epic tier implement, symbol, or small one-handed weapon.

Always: +3 to attack and damage with this weapon, or with spells cast while wielding the dagger. Whenever this blade kills a vampire it drains part of that vampire's essence and its wielder can spend a free recovery as a quick action on the same turn, though some would argue that doing so is itself rather... vampiric.

Recharge 6+: A vampire killed with this weapon won't return. There may be other ways to permanently kill a vampire of course, but this dagger is a sure-fire way to prevent its return as the silver blade drinks in their essence.

Recharge 11+: Make one vampire, were-creature, or other similar 'creature of the night' vulnerable to all attacks until the end of the battle. This won't work on were-creatures allied with the High Druid.

Quirk: The blood is the life.





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The dead are restless.





4.3C THE SILENT COVE.

The dracolich is fond of washing its bones in a discreet and sheltered cove of the Necropolis' shore. The cove is also a favorite spot for smugglers to come ashore and trade goods from the mainland for the gold and silver in the Lich King's treasury (or at least for his servants' grave goods). If the adventurers don't find the dragon, might at the least find a group of smugglers and be able to trade with them for things that they need or for information about the dragon. Though it is night, the strange comet in the sky provides light to see by.

If this is not a combat encounter... as the adventurers pick their way along the shoreline they hear a strange whistling sound in the air. The adventurers have but moments to find cover among the rocks of the shoreline before the meteorites that accompany the comet strike the area around the cove. Dodging the comet is a DC 25 skill check per adventurer, every time the adventurers fail it triggers one of the following hazards.

BURPING SKY-ROCKS	BOILING WATER	CRUMBLING SHORELINE
<p><i>The strange comet in the sky is shedding burning rocks. The adventurers are all in danger of being hit.</i></p> <p>Meteorite shower +15 vs AC (all adventurers)— 3d12 fire and thunder damage.</p>	<p><i>The meteorites hit the sea, causing it to explode. The water roils and steams as the red hot rocks crack and explode.</i></p> <p>Exploding steam +15 vs PD (all adventurers)— 4d8 fire damage</p>	<p><i>As the meteorites hit the Necropolis the adventurers are in danger of being pitched into the now-boiling midland sea</i></p> <p>Boiling water +15 vs PD (1d3 adventurers)— 20 fire damage</p>

If this is not a combat encounter... the adventurers see a boat out at sea, struggling amid the sudden waves caused by the meteorite shower. It is obvious to the adventurers that the ship is a smuggler's dhow. The adventurers will have half an hour or so to become familiar with the terrain before the smugglers arrive. Tell the players that if the adventurers get into a fight that is too tough and they flee back to here that they will get +2 to their attacks due to knowing the lay of the land.

If the adventurers have yet to fight the dracolich or have yet to fight the vampires then the adventurers will be able to purchase a weapon that the smugglers refer to as a "*scroll of dissolution*", a magical battle-ritual that can kill enemies. It will cost the adventurers 600 gp for the scroll though a DC 25 skill check will get the price taken down to 500 gp. The smugglers' black-market weapon will be easy to take by force if the adventurers decide to go that route... the smugglers only expected to meet some death cultist middle-men who were going to sell the weapon to a party of adventurers from Drakkenhall. The smugglers names are Dabney Corso (a human) and Nibblin Kendrik (a gnome), and they work for the Prince of Shadows. They have other items for sale, such as oils, runes, and healing potions.

Scroll of Dissolution

Epic tier one-shot item.

Use: Any ritual caster can use this scroll, as a series of standard actions intended to destroy a target the caster designates. Reading aloud from the scroll requires a ritual skill check. Keep track of the skill check results, adding them together. When the ritual caster finishes reading, the scroll explodes and the target takes the escalation die times the total accumulated ritual result in damage (maximum 600 points of damage) of every type (acid, cold, fire, force, holy, lightning, negative energy, thunder, poison, etc) as successive waves of magical energy hit it, blasting it apart. If the ritual caster stops reading the scroll for any reason the scroll 'goes off', the damage hitting the intended target. If the target dies before the ritual is completed, the scroll is not expended.

The smuggler's boats make for uncertain footing (-1 to attacks when fighting on them unless you have an appropriate background). The water is chest-deep and rises in unexpected swells (it takes a quick action and a move action to disengage, instead of just a move action).





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4.3D THE THRONE OF BLOOD.

The dracolich has been known to work for a clan of vampires, flying out from the Necropolis and snatching sailors from their ships and bringing them back for the blood drinkers. Exactly what the vampires get from the deal is unknown to the Archmage's sycrers, but they do know that the clan maintain a bastion on the north side of the Necropolis.

Vampires typically don't leave their lairs unguarded, and this clan is no different. Of course most of the ghouls that guard the bastion flee when the adventurers show up, they are loyal to the vampires but know when they are outmatched.

If this is not a combat encounter... the adventurers scare off most of the guardian ghouls, but in doing so they attract the attention of some the Lich King's mortal subjects who attack them from a distance and flee when confronted. This isn't really a combat, more the adventurers running the gauntlet. It is a DC 25 skill check per adventurer to avoid the attacks of the Lich King's servants, every time the adventurers fail it triggers one of the following hazards. Spending a 5 with a positive relationship with the Lich King will excuse an adventurer from having to make a skill check; spending a 6 result with either a positive or conflicted icon relationship with the Lich King will negate the negative effects of a failed skill check for the whole party.

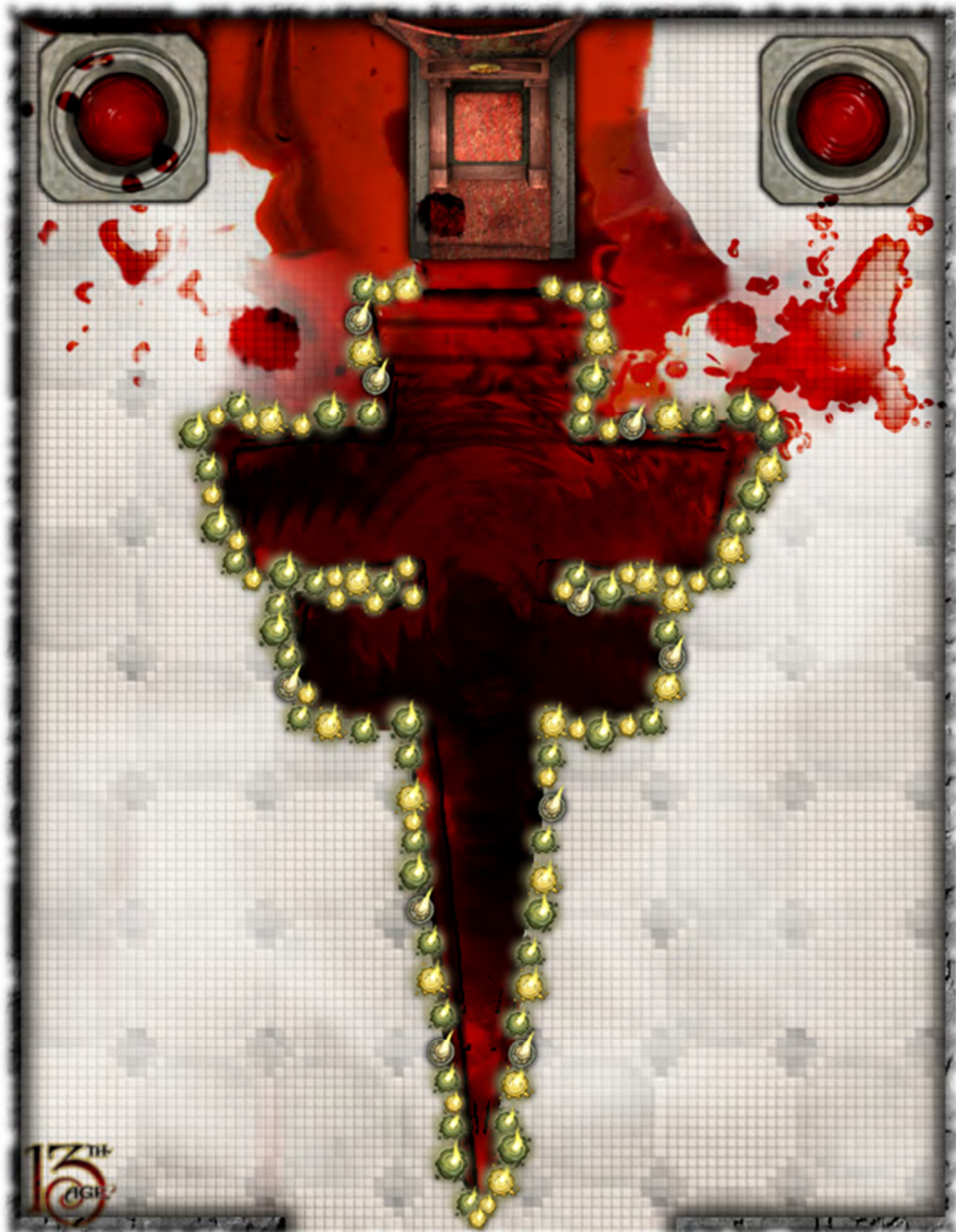
RAIN OF ARROWS	HEXES	UNDEAD RAVENS
<p><i>The Lich King's subjects fire arrows and throw rocks, but skitter away from the adventurers to safety as soon as the party makes an aggressive move.</i></p> <p>The rabble's missiles +15 vs AC (all adventurers) — 3d10 damage.</p>	<p><i>A necromancer who is friendly with the vampires sends a curse at the adventurers, but flees when they try to respond.</i></p> <p>Fell-speech +15 vs MD (all adventurers) — 4d8 cold damage</p>	<p><i>The mortal servants of the Lich King unleash a flight of undead ravens on the party.</i></p> <p>1000 claws +15 vs AC (all adventurers) — 2d20 negative energy damage</p>

If this is not a combat encounter... the adventurers find the bastion empty. The vampire clan is not present, and neither is the dracolich. Any servants that were here fled when they saw the adventurers coming. Tell the players that if the adventurers get into a fight that is too tough and they flee back to here that they will get +2 to their attacks due to knowing the lay of the land.

If the adventurers have yet to fight the dracolich then a DC 30 search check involving searching will reveal to the adventurers a secret compartment beneath the seat of a throne. It contains the dracolich's phylactery; smashing that during the fight (a quick action) will daze the dracolich (save ends).

If the adventurers have yet to fight the vampires then a DC 30 skill check involving knowledge of undead creatures will allow the adventurers to find the vampire's coffins. Smashing the coffins will mean that the vampires start the combat weakened until the end of their first turns.





In this area *vampiric regeneration* restores double the normal hp when the escalation die is 1-3.





4.4 THE MYSTIC ORRERY IS REPAIRED, BUT ALL IS NOT WELL.

As soon as the adventurers pry the mithrillium sphere free of the dracolich's colossal skull and hold it aloft in triumph the warlocks on Vantage spin up the teleportation chamber and whisk them home. With the now-familiar pulling-twisting sensation of travelling through un-space the adventurers find themselves back on Vantage. Vantage's quaestor, Vastari Durrel, gratefully receives the sphere from the adventurers and hurries with them to the chamber where they first had their audience with the Archmage. The ceiling of the great hall is still filled with the image of the night sky, but now the mysterious comet blazes brightly across the sky and shooting stars mar the usual constellations. The attendant wizards hurriedly ignite the magical wood in the fire pit and pronounce unpronounceable words, and the fire pit once more fills with a sinuous blue flame and the image of the Archmage.

He addresses the adventurers:

"Greetings once again brave adventurers. Through your efforts we were able to bypass the restrictions and wards placed by my predecessor upon retrieving those parts needed to repair the Mystic Orrery."

Vastari passes the orb to the image, and paradoxically the Archmage takes it, reaching across hundreds of miles as easily as an adventurer would reach for an item on their belt. As he takes the orb all feels right with the world. The Archmage smiles at the adventurers, and continues.

"The Dragon Empire is safe thanks to you. I wish to reward you, so I h— g— with you— rizon—."

Suddenly the Archmage's image cuts out, as the flying city of Vantage lurches to one side. The adventurers can hear falling masonry and screams, and taste the burnt tin tang of magic in the air. The magical lights in the hall flicker and go out. The Archmage's image reappears briefly and reaches out his hand to the adventurers to make a gesture. With a sickening lurch the party and quaestor Durrel are whisked by magic to a hillside overlooking the valley over which Vantage floats. By the light of the comet that still burns in the sky, it is clear that something is attacking Vantage!

4.5 THE END, MY FRIEND.

The adventurers have provided the Archmage with the objects that he was unable to retrieve, and thus have helped prepare the Dragon Empire against whatever danger the comet poses.

This concludes the adventure! The party are heroes, and have the gratitude of the Archmage. Characters who survived this adventure may from now on re-roll one positive icon die with the Archmage each time they roll their icon dice. Anybody who wishes to swap icon relationship points around so that they have positive relationship with the Archmage can do so now.

As to Vantage... for that read (or better yet GM or play) [Shards of the Broken Sky](#). Shards of the Broken Sky is aimed to take adventurers from 1st to 10th level, as a full campaign, and deals with the mystery of who attacked Vantage and why.

You'll be able to learn more about the comet, its origin, and its effects on the Dragon Empire in the next season of organized play.

Thank the players for being great. If you enjoyed GMing for the group (and we hope you did) then let them know.

Ask for feedback on the adventure, and on 13th Age in general. We want to hear what you think.

... and finally **THANK YOU**.







Game advice

Organized play for 13th Age is a little different from normal organized play. This document gives you *tools* to create a linked series of adventures that will highlight the cool things about 13th Age (One Unique Things, Backgrounds, Icon Relationships). You will need around 2 hours per session.

The organized play plan

The plan

Each game of 13th Age is different because the one unique things and backgrounds of the characters in separate groups will be different. The plan here is to have players be able to find and take part in 13th Age games around the world with a continuity of story. As a GM this will require you to be on your toes, but we think you have the chops for the job. This document gives you six linked adventures to take place over six weeks, and advice on running the adventures.

Feedback

We'll be asking for feedback from both GMs and players. We want to know what works, what doesn't, what people enjoy, and what could do with revision. We'll also want game reports ... we want to know what happened, what cool and awesome things you did with 13th Age. Part of our ethos is giving you the tools to play the game you want - so if we get a lot of feedback saying "Hey - *what are the rules for exploding gems? My players found this crystal throne and exploded it, and I'd like some rules for that.*" then we might want to consider addressing that in a [See Page XX](#) article, [13th Age Monthly](#), or in a future supplement. You can give feedback [here](#).

One Unique Things

Once you've run a couple of dozen games for strangers you'll notice that certain unique things come up surprisingly often. Illegitimate sons of the Emperor seem to populate half of all adventuring parties, and there are a ton of adventurers who used to be animals. In your home game it is cool to build a story about the Emperor's only illegitimate son because you know that nobody else in your game is going to pick that, but in an organized play program you may have players who created their character with another organized play GM. So as to avoid conflicts of *Emperor's only son* meets *Emperor's only son* we are saying:

No ONLYs please

You can be one of the last of your kind (or one of the first) but you can't be the only one. You can be a prisoner sent forward in time from the first age as a punishment but you can't be the only one to whom that happened. You can be a rare half-human half-clockwork creature and you might be under the impression that you are the only one, but maybe you aren't the only such creature. If you're one unique thing relies upon you being the only something think about how you could make it cooler and more unique.

If somebody does pick an 'only' type of unique remind them that their character believes themselves to be the only one but in fact they may not be.

Backgrounds

All characters have 8 background points, and can spend up to five of them on any one background. Try to encourage players to tell you *stories* about their backgrounds rather than just a list of words. This...

- *Climber* 4
- *Urban Survival* 3
- *Artist* 1

... is boring and as a GM tells you very little about the character and doesn't give you a lot to work with. Encourage the players to talk about their backgrounds and name them appropriately. With a little nudging the above list of words can blossom into...

- *Second best rooftop runner in Horizon* 5
- *Member of the Beggar's Guild* 3

... which is awesome and tells you a lot about the character.





Statements about the world

One of the cool things about 13th Age is that players help to define the world. There is no standard universal Dragon Empire, each game is different. This presents challenges for organized play and as a GM you need to be on your feet. Whenever a player mentions something about the world either via a background or one unique thing or just as a plain statement make a very quick note about it and repeat back to them what they have just said.

As an example:

Player: "... and then I bend down and look into the mechanism. Half orcs know a lot about this stuff. How hard is it to disable the trap?"

GM: "Half orcs do know a lot about traps - why is that?"

Player: "Oh I meant half orcs know a lot about breaking things. We love smashing clockwork."

GM: "Why do half-orcs like smashing clockwork?"

Player: "It gives us headaches, nobody knows why."

GM: "Ah, you need to get a 15 to break the trap without setting it off" (makes a note 'Clockwork = causes headaches for half-orcs').

Each session recap all the statements about the world and ask if anybody has extra input on them. Be sure to ask each player if they have anything to add to the world. It's a little ritual that helps to build a stronger game for your players.

GM: "Ok, so last week we discovered that orcs hate clockwork because it gives them headaches"

Player 1: "Ah, I figured it is their two natures warring in them. There is something mystical about clockwork"

Player 2: "Yeah, like maybe it is trying to separate out your two natures - giving you a 'splitting' headache"

GM: (makes a note) "I like that. What else did we learn. High elves fear mice, they think mice are spirits of the dead. That is an old elf legend."

Player 3: "Yeah! It is just a legend, but they still creep elves out"

GM: "As you are new to the group, what things did your character discover last week?"

Player 4 (the new player): "Orcs have clockwork axes"

GM: (makes a note) "So some tribes of orc are able to use clockwork, but obviously not all tribes."

... then recap them with the added player input and ask if anybody has anything more to add.

GM: "So clockwork gives half-orcs headaches, but some orc tribes use clockwork. That is true. What else is true?"

Player 2: "Only some orc tribes are lucky enough to mutate into half-orcs, and those tribes don't use clockwork. They have to get rid of it to commune with the spirits and begin the transformation process."

GM: "Yes, that is true." (makes a note) "And elves fear mice due to legends revolving around mice and ghosts. That is true. What else is true?"

Player 3: "Maybe their god of the dead uses mice as messengers, and elf necromancers have mice familiars"

GM: (makes note) "Yes, that is true"

In this way your players build the world with you, and you remind them each week of the world that you have built together. You also let new players know what your game is like, and you let them bring in the bits of the 13th Age game they played last week into your game that are important to them.





Skill checks

Use your index cards

The humble index card is one of the best gaming tools I've discovered in years. Write down each character's backgrounds and set the index cards out in front of you. As play progresses glance down and put obstacles in the path of the party that speak to the backgrounds possessed by the party. For example if your party's dwarf has the background 'Mistress of Metal: I train dwarven smiths' then during play announce

"The path is blocked by a partially toppled statue. It is made of metal of intricate design," and then look around and ask *"Does anybody here know anything about dwarf metalworking?"*

Bring in interesting options for success and failure (perhaps success reveals that the statue has coins in the base to keep it upright, a common practice from an age where gold was more plentiful - and failure results in the hollow statue shifting and making a huge racket sure to attract monsters). By bringing backgrounds into play you make the story about the characters themselves.

When not to roll

Being a game with limited time you don't want to roll for every little thing, especially if pass/fail doesn't really matter. Only have players roll dice when failure would be an interesting outcome and would impact the story. If a character has a background specific to a task and failure wouldn't be interesting narratively invite them into the task.

- *"That wall looks tough to climb, but you know that your Dwarf friend used to be an acrobat. He could easily climb the wall and pass a rope down to you"*

One roll should do it

When you have a character attempting something with lots of steps in it you don't have them roll for every step, in fact you probably shouldn't. If a character is drinking from every bottle of elven wine in a castle cellar looking for the best vintage don't have them roll once per bottle - just one roll should do it.

Fail forwards

Remember to Fail Forwards.

...outside of battle, true failure tends to slow action down rather than move the action along. A more constructive way to interpret failure is as a near-success or event that happens to carry unwanted consequences or side effects. The character probably still fails to achieve the desired goal, but that's because something happens on the way to the goal rather than because nothing happens.

Suppose a player makes a Charisma check to have his or her rogue rustle up some clues as to where a certain monk of the black dragon might be hiding. The player fails the check. Traditionally, the GM would rule that the character had failed to find any information. With 13th Age, we encourage you to rule that the character does indeed find clues as to the monk's location, but with unexpectedly bad results. Most likely, word has gotten to the monk that the rogue is looking for him, and he either escapes before his lair is found, or prepares for the group, either setting up an ambush or leaving a trap. The failure means that interesting things happen.

Escalating risks

If a character fails it is interesting to offer a choice to the player - fail forwards as above OR succeed but with a complication. In this case the player gets what they want but it causes another problem. You then pass that problem on to the next player and ask them if they want to attempt to solve it or leave it where it is. Consecutive failures can have interesting results as the consequences escalate as shown in the example below...

- The halfling rogue successfully climbs the stable wall but drops their lantern into the straw below starting a fire.
- The elf wizard successfully convinces the angry crowd that the fire the rogue started was the doing of the Dwarf King, but now the crowd wants to lynch dwarves.
- The dwarf paladin successfully smuggles the dwarven ambassador out of town away from the angry guard but the ambassador figures out that the party are to blame for the fire and is going to tell agents of the Dwarf King.
- The human sorcerer successfully bribes the dodgy-looking boat captain to take the dwarven ambassador somewhere where they can't contact the Dwarf King's agents but as he sails away the party realizes that the captain is a slaver.





Montage!

Sometimes you don't want to go into details but do want to give a sense of time passing. Overland travel, random dungeon exploration, fortifying an old farmhouse against zombies. All these things can happen in a montage if they are not the focus of the montage itself.

Go round the table and ask each player:

- *"Describe an obstacle that the party encountered but defeated."*

Then turn to the player to their left:

- *"Your character was the one to get the party past that. How did you succeed?"*

They don't need to roll for this - they just tell you an awesome thing that their character did that solved the problem.

Repeat this around the table until everybody has had a chance to come up with a death-trap or a wandering monster or whatever their imaginations can conjure up and a chance to overcome an obstacle. As each player tells you how their character saved the day narrate back to them what they have said and put a spin on it to highlight their heroism.

- *"Yes! The party encountered a minotaur's ghost and you entertained him with your bagpipes. Not only did that pacify the ghost but several other ghosts appeared to hear you play and in gratitude led you part-way through the maze."*
- *"Awesome - you killed the magically animated pagoda with your mighty axe. Later you came to an underground river and crossed it using your foe's remains. Good job."*
- *"Brilliant. With a flick of your wrist you turn over your last card. The skeletal guards are amazed by your winning streak and untie your companions as agreed. They are so impressed with your poker-face that they tell you how to get to the center of the maze. Congratulations - you have a better poker-face than skeletons and they don't even have faces!"*

Pacing

Sometimes things go slowly. Players get the idea that there is a secret door they can find if only they spend another 10 minutes searching for it. In organized play you've got limited time available to you. If the players start going off track supply them with unambiguous information by using the phrase "It is obvious to you that..."

"It is obvious to you that there is no secret door here."

"It is obvious to you that the dwarf is telling the truth."

Rolls->follow->fiction *not* rolls=fiction

What does that mean? YOU tell the players when to roll, based upon what they say their characters are doing. If somebody announces *"I'm rolling to see if I can get past the guards"* put your hand out in a 'stop' motion and ask *"HOW are you attempting to get past the guards?"* and play onwards from there. Talk about how the guards look half-asleep, how the character notices one of them is wearing new boots but the other one is dressed shabbily, how the guard on the left gets distracted when he looks at the food cart nearby. Role-play the encounter, and build the scene using a back-and-forth exchange of information and suggestions between you and the player. Only call for a roll once the character acts to change the situation and the outcome is in question *and failure would be interesting*. Let the rolls flow from what characters do. It is a small thing, but important.





Monsters

Some of the monsters that appear here are from the core 13th Age book but others appear in books like the Bestiary or 13 True Ways. In this adventures we've put in the monsters that we think you'll need, and a guide to how many to include in a fight.

Using alternate monsters

The backgrounds and uniques of the player characters and the statements by players about the world may mean that the monsters we've provided are not suitable for your needs. In that case there are three options. Hopefully you can stretch the existing monsters to fit your needs - if one of the adventurers has the unique 'Raised by giant rats' you can just say that the skeletons the party are about to fight are the skeletons of giant rats. If that doesn't work for you you can 'reskin' the monsters for the adventure - instead of fighting skeletons you use the skeleton stats but call them 'giant rats' or 'pixie swarms' or 'loquacious rust-golems' or whatever the story needs. If neither of those options works for you the core rule book has a ton of advice for creating new monsters on the fly.

Big damn heroes

Combat is a prime opportunity to remind players that their character is awesome. When an adventurer hits an enemy take the opportunity to describe the hit.

- *"With a mighty swing of the sword you slice the zombie in two! Hyah!"*
- *"Lightning crackles from your eyes as you unleash your spell. ZZZZT!"*
- *"The eyes of your enemies widen in shock as you destroy their shaman with a well placed arrow. Zonk!"*
- *"The hag runs towards you screaming and reaches out towards you, but you duck her swing and launch a bolt of pure sizzling magic into her. She screams as the burning energy sinks into her body."*
- *"You swing the sword and the dragon jerk's it head back ... but your cunning backswing slices deep into its gums - it roars in rage and you dash in under its maw to strike a deep blow into the tender flesh under the chin!"*

Even miss damage is cool...

- *"You do miss damage? Your axe whizzes past the goblin's head, but your foot connects with his knee-cap!"*
- *"The zombie staggers backwards and your axe misses. You take the opportunity to kick it in the groin. normally this wouldn't faze a zombie but your kick is bone shatteringly powerful!"*

Don't be afraid to really get into it. Stand up from the table. Mime the zombie who takes an arrow through both eyes. Snarl like the hob-goblin chieftain as you caper about with bent back swearing vengeance on the cleric. Just a second or so of play-acting each round to highlight an awesome hit or near miss goes a long way towards drawing our players out of their shells. Once you start doing it your players will too.

Tone

The tone of your game will depend a lot on who you are running it for. A group of 12 year olds may not appreciate gory decapitations (or they may, pre-teens are a bloody lot) but it is part of your job as a GM to gauge what your audience wants. In the words of Tyler Durden *"If someone says "stop" or goes limp, taps out ..."* then you may want to tone it back a bit. If you know your audience well and have previously discussed what their limits are then you can play within those limits. Remember if you are running the game in a public place to keep it appropriate. What is cool to shout out at the top of your lungs at a friend's house may not be acceptable to say at all in a game store or at a convention.

Pacing

The escalation die and the design of monsters in 13th Age means combat is pretty fast moving, but you may still be pressed for time. The store that you are playing in is closing for the night, or you have a limited time at a table at a convention, or one of your players needs to leave early. If some outside constraint is limiting your time you may want to end the combat early. Drop the defences of the monsters and adjust their damage downwards. If you are still pressed for time have the monsters run away or use a dramatic moment to kill the big bad guy (the gnome bard who hasn't hit all day gets in a crit and takes the head of the dragon in one blow).





Tips to make your job easier and the game more fun

Index cards

Seriously. Grab a pack and...

Make name tents

Each player gets a name tent. Fold the index card in two and write the character name on it and put it in front of the player. Now instead of saying “your dwarf” or “the ranger” you can call the characters by name. This is an awesome thing for you to do, it links players to their characters.

Write out one unique thing and backgrounds

Go around the table and have players recap their uniques. As they do so jot down their uniques on index cards - two or three uniques per card using a short phrase. Use big letters so you can quickly glance down and see what is going on. As the game progresses glance down and introduce skill challenges or obstacles tailored for the party. As each party member succeeds (or fails in an interesting way that advances the story) cross their unique or background off.

Use them to make scenery & minis

If you are using minis to map out battles (while 13th Age does not rely upon minis using them does make visualizing relative positioning in battles easier) you can draw scenery on index cards and put them down on the table to indicate terrain or objects. If you need to improvise a large creature that you don't have a mini for you can make a tent out of an index card and write the monster's name on both sides.

Seriously - get some index cards!

Minis

When running combat in 13th Age remember that miniatures don't represent exactly where a character really is, it is a rough approximation of where characters are in relation to each other. You don't need minis to run 13th Age combat but your job of letting players know what is happening and where things are in relation to each other is made easier by having them.

Terrain

Rob has this to say about terrain:

Play terrain any way you like, but don't worry about it. There isn't really time to get deeply into terrain action when people are playing for the first time. The ease of simply moving your characters around and attacking should be the priority.

If you don't know 13th Age already, grab any style of fantasy terrain/setting as the location of the battle. Miserable swamps, ruined temples, ghost towns, haunted orchards, regenerating graveyards, living dungeons, spiral towers, woodlands, grumbling volcanoes—they all exist somewhere in 13th Age.

Initiative

This is how I do initiative. You might prefer your own system, but I find this speeds up play

1. Everybody rolls initiative. All monsters share the same initiative, unless they are of very different types. All goblins share an initiative, all spiders, etc. If in doubt fudge monster initiative downwards.
2. Count out how many characters and groups of monsters there are. Write numbers from 1 to the total number of characters and groups of monsters acting on index cards. Write big. If there are 6 adventurers and 2 types of monsters (or two different groups of monsters acting on different initiatives) you would have cards numbered 1-8.
3. Start counting upward from 1. When you get to an initiative that an adventurer or monster has, hand them the highest numbered card you have. In a fight with six adventurers and two monsters the lowest initiative gets the card with '8' on it, the next lowest initiative gets the '7' card, and so on.
4. Each round just look around the table for the person with the number 1 in front of them and tell them it is their turn. After that glance around for the number 2 card, then the number 3 card, and so on. Players can also use the cards to write you quick notes if they wish to, or to take notes during combat. I like to use the index cards with the monster initiatives on them to track conditions, HP left, etc.





'Bus Stop' GMing... What?

The idea behind the Tales of the 13th Age organized play program is that players should be able to play in London one week and New York the next and be able to pick up where they left off. This means that the games can not be *completely* freeform. However, they are not rail-road adventures either. Each session has a start point and an end point and how you get from one bus stop to the next is up to you, the driver of the bus. If you decide to substitute goblins for kobolds or your players decide to circumvent an encounter or battle then that is fine, provided you end the session in such a way as it leads naturally on to the next session as written. Side-quests, digressions, and player-generated plots are cool - encouraged even. You can go whichever route you choose and do whatever weird stuff you and your players like along the way, just make sure you get to the next bus stop so that anybody who wants to get on your bus at that point can.

Dealing with a TPK. Total. Party. Kill.

We haven't made this adventure super-deadly... but sometimes the dice are against the players, bad decisions are made, and the unthinkable is thought. If the entire party dies then the following session tell the tale of how their new characters were following their old characters, always a day or so behind on the same quest, finding dungeons pre-looted and monsters already defeated; they have finally caught up with the heroes only to find them dead. The next session starts normally, but perhaps their new characters start with some recovered loot from their former characters' corpses. ***Or if you prefer use Jonathan's idea from pg 170 of the core rule book.***

When to give treasure out

At the start of every session roll icon relationship dice. If the dice would seem to indicate it have adventurers find treasure during montage scenes, or place treasure into the adventure in places that it would make sense for it to appear. Aim to give out one item of treasure each week like this. Some sessions also have sections that will tell you that it is time to hand out treasure.





Loot!

BOOTS OF BUTT-KICKING

These sturdy boots have oricalcum toe-caps and the silk lining is embroidered with star charts.

Boots

Recharge 11+: Until the end of the battle automatically succeed at disengage checks

Quirk: Tap-dances when nervous

CLOAK OF INDISCERNIBILITY

The silk cloak shimmers when in direct light.

Cloak

Always: +5 PD

Recharge 16+: Until the end of the battle you become hazy (attacks against you have a 10% miss chance, stacks with the spell Blur and other similar effects)

Quirk: Practical joker

EPIC-TIER HEALING POTION

1d4+1 doses

Standard action to drink

Effect: Spend a recovery and heal with an extra 3d8 hp (maximum 100 hp healing from drinking this potion).

ICONIC-TIER HEALING POTION

2d4 doses

Standard action to drink

Effect: Spend a recovery and heal with an extra 4d8 hp (maximum 130 hp healing from drinking this potion).

ROBE OF STARLIGHT

The satin of the midnight blue robe glitters, as though tiny flecks of mica were embedded into the fabric.

Light armor

Always: +3 AC

Recharge 16+: When you are targeted by an attack, teleport to a point nearby and force the attacker to re-roll the attack

Aftereffect (once you have used the recharge power): Until the end of the battle you can teleport on your turn as a move action

Quirk: Believes in astrology

WIZARD'S BLADE

The metal of the blade is etched with sigils and hieroglyphs that bend space around the wielder.

Any bladed weapon

Always: +3 to attack and damage

Recharge 11+: Until the end of the battle you do not provoke attacks when you make ranged attacks while engaged

Aftereffect (if you do not succeed in recharging): Until your next full heal-up gain +2 to disengage checks

Quirk: Monologues

STAFF OF SUPREMACY

This staff is topped with a diamond.
Staff

Always: +3 to attack and damage

Recharge 18+: When targeted by an attack, warp space to retarget the attack against any creature nearby or far away. If the retargeted attack misses the recharge becomes 16+ instead of 18+

Quirk: Caster supremacist (believes non-magic users are socially inferior, or stupid, or are too lazy to learn magic)





EPIC TIER PURCHASABLE ITEMS

150 gp items

- **Emollient of speed.** When applied to a weapon gives +2 initiative during the next fight (but it has unfortunate laxative effects if drunk). A bright green substance in a clay jar. CONSUMABLE ITEM.
- **Liniment of swiftness.** When applied to the feet adds +2 to disengage checks during the next fight. Smells of faintly lavender and strongly of burnt leather. CONSUMABLE ITEM.
- **Replacement limbs.** A variety of colors, races, and ages are available; most of them are second hand.

300 gp items

- **Deck of sharper cards.** These cards count as small throwing weapons. The deck never runs out of cards (it always refills when unobserved, with new cards bought by magical sprites). The cards magically display the face of the person that they hit, often showing pain or surprise or an otherwise gurning and unflattering expression.
- **Gawkglass goggles.** This amber-lensed eyewear gives you +1 to skill checks to discover magic, see through illusions, spot magical fields, etc.
- **Professor Sabin's patent soul glue.** When drunk (a quick action) it prevents dracoliches knocking the drinker's soul right out of their body... or at least that is what the label claims together with claims that it cures baldness, lifts the spirits, alleviates restless-eyebrow syndrome, and other similar claims. The liquid smells strongly of alcohol, and faintly of either poppies or vanilla. CONSUMABLE ITEM.
- **Rool's Book of Twisted Magic.** This slim tome of magic contains versions of popular spells, with a twist... none of them work quite right. Included are such spells as Burr, Chaos Belt, Constipation, Dragon's Weep, Fold Monster, Shelled, Shocking Gasp, Tragic Missile, etc. If a magic user casts a version of a spell that they already know but using the book there is a 55% chance (1-55) it works as normal, a 35% chance (56-90) that it does minimum damage, and a 10% chance (91-100) that it does something awesome. The book does not allow you to cast twisted versions of spells that you could not normally cast.
- **Tonic of revivification.** When emptied down the throat of someone rolling death saves or last gasp saves (a standard action), until the end of the fight they roll 2d20 & use the best roll. CONSUMABLE ITEM.

600 gp items

- **Automated crossbow.** This crossbow has self-powered mechanical legs. Once per day it can independently walk around a battlefield (it is not technically an ally and cannot be targeted by enemies), and once during that battle it can make the following attack against a random enemy:
R: Automated crossbow +10 vs AC—3d8 damage
 Miss: 10 damage
 Natural 1-5 miss: The automated crossbow irreparably breaks.
- **Diamond sword.** This sword is made out of a single crystal. It isn't magical, but it looks brilliant.
- **Dreamwoven garments.** These luxurious silken garments reweave themselves, metamorphosing according to the wishes of the wearer. Counts as light armor, and looks really fancy.
- **Enchantment transference.** This service has a 50% chance (01-50) of transferring an enchantment from one item to another, though only an item of the same general type. Rolling a double (00, 11, 22, 33, 44, etc) on the percentile dice means that there is some side-effect, wither or not the magic was transferred. Money up front please!
- **Peacock dreams.** The contents of this bottle glow faintly. If drunk it gives the imbiber a temporary new background Peacock +2 until their next full rest... exactly how useful this background is depends on the player's ingenuity and imagination. CONSUMABLE ITEM.

600 gp ... but probably only shows up in a game once

- **Scroll of Dissolution.** Any ritual caster can use this scroll, as a series of standard actions intended to destroy a target the caster designates. Reading aloud from the scroll requires a ritual skill check. Keep track of the skill check results, adding them together. When the ritual caster finishes reading, the scroll explodes and the target takes the escalation die times the total accumulated ritual result in damage (maximum 600 points of damage) of every type (acid, cold, fire, force, holy, lightning, negative energy, thunder, poison, etc) as successive waves of magical energy hit it, blasting it apart. If the ritual caster stops reading the scroll for any reason the scroll 'goes off', the damage hitting the intended target. If the target dies before the ritual is completed, the scroll is not expended.





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