



Up to our
necks.....in the
Knee Deep

An Adventure Environment for 13th Age

Grand Scheme

Publishing

The
ARCHMAGE



ENGINE

“Swamp. Definition: wet land covered with vegetation. Synonyms: bog, bottoms, everglade, fen, glade, holm, marsh, marshland, mire, moor, morass, mud, muskeg, peat bog, polder, quag, quagmire, slough, swale, swampland”

- The Lexipedia of the Dragon Empire by Dr. Darius Melloire of Horizon

“If you think it doesn’t get much worse than working up to your arse crack in filthy stinking stool water all day, then wait ‘til tea break is over and it’s back on your knees again.”

- Pulsipher Lieu, sapper with the Emperor’s Penal Column

“On the western edge of the central Giantwalks is the Knee Deep, a swamp on the high plateau. It gets its name from the fact that the giants in the region treat the swamp as a minor inconvenience, wading straight through. Everyone else has difficulty crossing it, particularly because the swamp’s giant insects zero in on flyers.”

- 13th Age

An Adventure Environment for 13th Age, the fantasy roleplaying game by Rob Heinsoo & Jonathan Tweet

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Welcome to the Knee Deep

Quiet. Out of the way. Unwatched. Unknowable. Unnecessary.

Just the way its inhabitants like it. Yet the region is stirring, as plans, schemes and accidents make themselves known to the outside world. The Knee Deep is starting to draw attention, and that means of the very worst kind. The adventurer kind.

How to use this supplement

This is an *Adventurer Tier Environment*. It's a handy haversack of locations, plots and antagonists, based in a marshy part of the Dragon Empire called the Knee Deep. It could serve almost anywhere, with a bit of creativity and sleight of hand.

I really hope you enjoy it as an inspiring read, and even more as a part of your game.

Let me know how it goes. I had a bunch of fun writing it.

We'll start as we always do, with the Icons...

An agenda of Icons, a panoply of plots, a skein of schemes

The Archmage

The Archmage always has a thousand plans. Some of them have a tendency to frighten the horses back in the big cities. He likes to use little known out of the way places for his more outré arcane experiments. The water comes in handy for keeping the flames down too.

He is aware that the Black uses the Knee Deep for her own ends. It causes him sleepless nights. To that end he seeks to install wards and alarms against Her. He intends that the Bastion be the first of many sites that will tap into the ley lines prevalent around the Empire. With this power he will build a weapon, an ultimate deterrent to blunt the Wyrms' aggression.

The Crusader

There are bigger and badder hellholes than this place to deal with. However, two things could move the Knee Deep up his priority list with alacrity.

First, should the Diabolist make any moves. Naturally.

Second, given that this area sits on the doorstep of First Triumph, he cannot afford to turn his eye away from it for too long. The newly opened hellhole in the swamp is too small to provoke urgency just yet, but if it should grow...

The Diabolist

Her fiendish agents roam the morass even now, always seeking, always searching, but to what end?

Knowing the Diabolist there may not actually be any end to speak of. Her currency is chaos,

and she knows her very presence is enough to put the chimera among the ravens. That pleases her. She will prod and poke at anything that gets a reaction, and the Knee Deep is not short of threads to pull at.

The Dwarf King

Too wet. Too open. Too poor. Not likely to feature in his travel itinerary any time soon.

Magical treasures are another matter, a matter of dwarf law and dwarven lore. They will always remain property of the lord of Forge, and adventurers had better have a compelling explanation for the unauthorised possession of such.

The Elf Queen

She keeps half an eye on the place, just in case. Of course, half an elven eye is worth thirteen mortal ones.

She maintains a band of roving scouts who report back to her anything they might decree of interest to the Court of Stars. Adventuring parties absolutely and immediately qualify.

The Emperor

The Emperor feels it his duty to bring the Knee Deep into the protection of the Empire, whether its denizens want that protection or not.

His main base in the Knee Deep is the Bastion, though it bears little relation to anything he would recognise in his own court. This is the frontier, where Imperial civilisation is just that little bit less civilised.

The Great Gold Wym

The Wym has more pressing matters to attend to than some backwater swamp leagues from anywhere.

The Golden Order does maintain a skeleton force within the Imperial Bastion. Not that sort of skeleton force.

The High Druid

A largely untamed and untouched bastion of natural wilderness you say? The High Druid would have to insist upon it remaining that way, just so you know.

She is not yet concerned about the building of the Imperial Bastion, but it won't take much more before she mobilises her primal forces. For now, she is content, in a strangely pleasing way, to let the swamp take its own toll on the Imperials.

The Lich King

The dead sleep uneasily in their watery graves 'round here. The Lich King would know their secrets and their desires.

He currently allies with the Dusktreader tribe while they seek to power the wisp factory. The Lich King maintains a skeleton force within the swamp. Yes, that sort of skeleton force.

The Orc Lord

The denizens here are too salty for the Orc Lord's otherwise easily pleased palette.

The goblin tribe seem to be working towards an agenda. Could that have a bearing on the Orc Lord's plans?

The Priestess

She would willingly save a soul from anywhere, though the pickings remain slim in the Knee Deep.

The Wayfarers are currently under on a mission set by the clergy of Santa Cora. The Priestess would be upset to hear of any bad tidings in that regard.

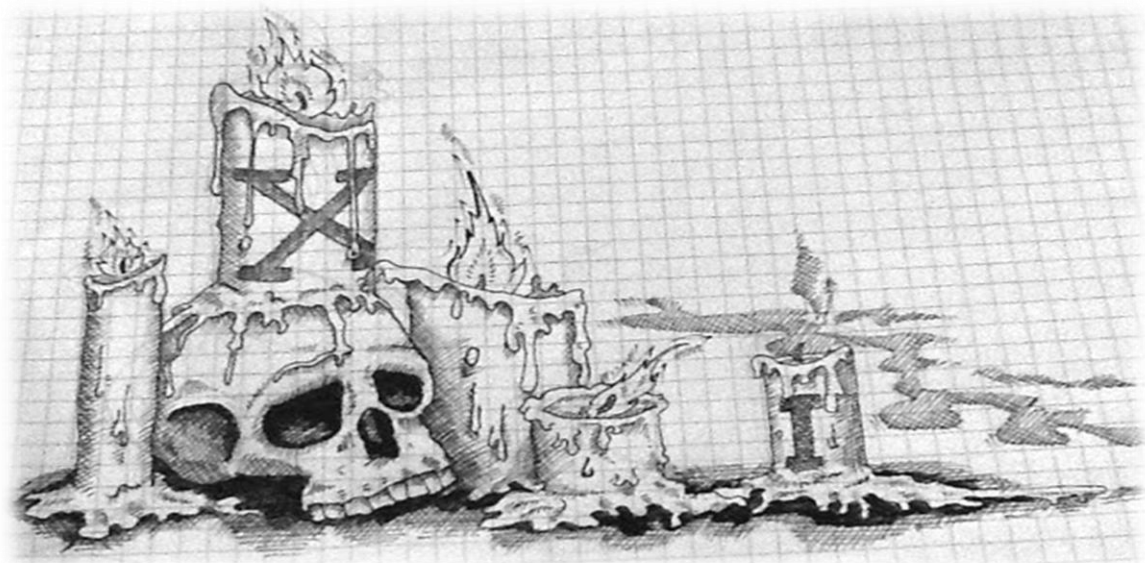
She maintains a professionally courteous interest in the Archmage's movements. She remains unaware, or oblivious to, his schemes.

The Prince of Shadows

No agenda here. Nothing. Didn't even know it was here. Honest. Promise you.

The Three

As hunting grounds for the Black this is unholy ground for Her. Her treasured isolation is gradually being eroded. If She angers, Her wrath will be both terrible and final.



Locales, haunts and mireways

The spectral keep of Dunmarren

“Dunmarren Keep juts from the fetid pools like a rotten tooth. It's occasionally a crossing between this world and the shadow realm though only on specific occasions. Exactly when those junctures occur are a matter of much speculation. There are almanacs that could offer a clue, but even they must bend to the realities of kismet and happenstance. In other words the appearance of the tower is entirely dependent on the needs of its visitors. Certainly when adventurers approach in groups (called ‘parties’ in some quarters), it appears that the tower notices, and quietly prepares for their arrival.

This tower was almost certainly built by an Archmage in a past age. This much we know from the preponderance of bizarre experimental monsters that have roamed the area, staggering under the weight of tentacles, beaks and hooks. Now, only their fused skeletal remains litter the muck paths leading to the tower.

It seems the tower was once the domain of Sad Queen Wyllm, back when she was of a more cheerful demeanour and in a somewhat higher state of lividity. Now the tower appears much as she does, both in anticipation of and in mourning for better days.

Yes, there are indeed rumoured to be dungeons below. Luckily for all of us, they slumber.”

-Endymion Dann, writer and poet

This long abandoned keep phases in and out of existence seemingly at random. Sometimes it stays for an hour, at other times a year and a day. At

the time of writing the keep has only reappeared in the Knee Deep quite recently after an absence of some years.

It was once part of a hunting lodge in another age. That lodge was once the backdrop for a royal drama, the details of which have mostly faded into history. Suffice to say it involved forbidden love, poison and betrayal, as these things so often do. At the end of all that jiggery pokery there remained only a ghost, now known by the name of Sad Queen Wyllm, and the haunted remains of her keep.

No-one knows why or where the keep goes on its sojourns, but it's assumed to travel the planes. When it returns, it rarely contains the same inhabitants it left with, though there are exceptions to that, Queen Wyllm being a notable one.

Places of note, with chattels

The hall

- *Suits of knights armour*
- *Stuffed pets*
- *Tapestries*
- *Portraits of nobles*

The lab

- *Bubbling flasks and beakers on retorts*
- *Coppery ozone-like tang in the air*
- *Jars full of pickled things, some twitching, some writhing*
- *A bulky chair with wires, restraints and scorch marks*

The quarters

- *Teetering piles of scrolls, books and papers.*
- *A list on a blackboard with names, some crossed out: ~~Elminster~~,*

~~Acerak, Keraptis, Bargle,~~
~~Fistandantilus, Raistlin,~~
~~Mordenkainen, Bigby, Tenser, Melf,~~
Tasha, Otiluke, Nystul, Evard, Rary,
Drawmij, Leomund.

- An obvious treasure, but beyond normal reach. See the queen.

The barracks

- Cramped bunks
- Footlockers
- Weapons racks

The donjon

- Murky, chill, and damp
- Scratched tally marks recording the days
- Blood smears
- Rusty manacles and chains

Ghoulish retainer 3 spoiler [undead]

Init +8, Vulnerable: Holy, AC 18, PD 16, MD 12, HP 36

Claw and bite +8 v AC, 8 damage (12 v vulnerable)

Natural even hit: foe vulnerable for one turn (critted on 18+)

Infectious bite: slain foes rise again as ghouls next night

Zombie Owlbear Large 4 wrecker [undead]

Init +8, Vulnerable: Holy, AC 19, PD 17, MD 13, HP 101

Rip and peck +9 v AC, 15 damage and hampers foes for next turn

Natural 16+: ongoing 5 damage

Eat brains: it keeps attacking downed opponents until slain

The path of Sad Queen Wyllm

This lonely ghost, with her still speaking head, held at her side, stalks the keep and the surrounding fens.

She goes about her routine, paying no attention to the living world. She cannot be stopped on her path, nor reasoned

with, and is immune to all mundane applications of violence or subterfuge.

She is utterly and completely unaware of her undying state.

She retains all the knowledge of Dunmarren Keep, and the events that occurred within it up to a specific point, that of her betrayal and soon after, her demise. She simply replays her final living day over and over, unaware of her ever repeating date with destiny.

She does hold the key to unlocking Dunmarren's secrets though. This key could be physical (well, ethereal), or it could be knowledge necessary to bypass obstacles temporal or arcane.

"The trick is interacting with her. To do that, a suitor would have to die in nearly every sense, save the fatal one. If one could become a ghost, as her, then she would see such a person as you and I can see each other here and now. It is said that certain spells, and less certain poisons can replicate the desired effect for a time. That difficult matter dealt with it becomes simply a matter of charm or leverage.

The real challenge lies in the return journey to vitality, but perhaps cross that particular river when the road takes you to it."

- Querillous Meh, soulwright

Sad Queen Wyllm 1 troop [undead]

Init +3, AC -, PD -, MD 12, HP 27

No attacks

The Emperor's Bastion

"A redoubt of fools and vermin"

- Anghaeradre Poh, of The Crusader

This is a tiny island of civilisation, coerced from the muck by the raw muscle and sheer will power of the Empire's finest. It's got pleasingly straight

lines in its architecture. This aligns the building with the ley lines present at this arcane juncture. The Archmage has (literal) designs on the place, and uses his homunculi to keep abreast of developments.

The clerics, paladins and assorted zealotry are pretty hardcore about their version of civilisation. So much so, they're all here as a kind of dare. They have willingly accepted the challenge of the Emperor to bring civilisation and order to the lawless frontier country. They've decided the best way to do this is to build. They've started as they mean to go on, shoring up the defences and constructing something suitable impressive and defensible all at the same time. Trouble is, they've little chance of permanently drying the swamp or keeping their roads in good repair. The fundamentally wet landscape is far more likely to defeat them than any marauding band of humanoids. Yet it doesn't stop them trying.

Of course the Emperors own citizens are unlikely to be getting their hands dirty. Instead they use penal labour gathered from the heretics usually locked under the cathedrals to the south, and the criminals that would otherwise infest the seven cities. This is an endeavour upon which the Emperor and the Priestess can readily agree. These poor miscreants are assigned shovels and buckets at dawn each day, and spend every waking hour in heavy chains attempting to drain the swamp. Actually that's not strictly true; in fact they merely try to avoid the attention of their overseers. The water level concerns them not a jot.

The only respite the chain gangs get is when the great horn sounds, signalling an airborne attack. The goblins and their giant insect steeds appear seemingly at random in the murky skies. They strafe

those too tardy or dull to get to shelter, and dropping alchemical bombs on the ramparts. They depart as swiftly as they arrive, leaving death, destruction and disease in their wake. The Imperials struggle to understand the goblin's motivations, as do all the civilised peoples. In this case they never seem to want anything more than chaos and confusion, and that's exactly what they achieve.

Places of note

- Barracks
- Teleportation circle
- Chapel
- Captains Quarters
- The Works
- The brig
- The Pens
- The Study



Persons of note and some agendas

The Preceptor-Captain, a Fighter, of The Emperor.

She wants law and order to prevail and remains furiously devoted to the Dragon Empire. She brooks no dissent. A tenacious warrior in her youth, she sees this as her last chance to leave something permanent in her name, and for the glory of the Emperor.

She is confused and slightly afraid of anyone or anything that does not share her world view, hence her rage at the tactics of the goblins. She would pay well, in coin and favour, for a cessation of goblin hostilities, or even some intelligence on their command structure and goals. She had hoped for some progress from the Wayfarers, but they have not proved equal to the task.

Preceptor Captain 3 troop [humanoid]
Init +5, AC 19, PD 16, MD 12, HP 45
Fell Blow: +7 v AC, 10 damage, 5 on miss
Contemptuous Backhand: +9 v PD, 1d6 damage,
and foe pops off (*a quick action when escalation
die even*)

The Sophist-Chaplain, a Cleric of The Priestess

Insert your own campaign specific agenda here. Go mad.

The Infinitist-Logician, a wizard, of The Archmage.

The Captain's right hand and most trusted advisor. She also reports directly back to the Archmage. At least, she assumes she does, they only communicate via mystical dreams, the Archmage choosing to appear as a smiling small blue furred elephant. She provides the architectural plans for the continued expansion of the bastion, and though those instructions occasionally baffle the engineers, they are followed without question.

Infinitist Logician 4 spoiler [humanoid]
Init +7, AC 18, PD 14, MD 17, HP 44
Dagger +6 v AC, 10 damage
Cull: +5 damage to any foe suffering from arcane mutterings
Arcane Mutterings +10 v MD of 1d3 foes, 5 psychic damage
Natural 16-17: foe hampered (easy save ends 6+)
Natural 18-19: foe weakened (easy save ends 6+)
Natural 20: foe confused (easy save ends 6+)

The Armiger-Engineer Cadre, of The Emperor.

These conjurers of stone, metal and wood are the masterminds behind the construction of the bastion. They battle the Knee Deep on a daily basis, and though often confounded, remain committed to taming this wild land.

They seek to understand the movements of the Imperial Highway, and would pay well for information brought in from the field.

Armiger Engineers 2 troop [humanoid]
Init +5, AC 18, PD 16, MD 12, HP 36
Picaxe +5 v AC, 7 damage
Natural even: +5 damage with next attack

The Warden-Templars, Fighters and Rangers of The Emperor (mostly)

This regiment is made up of the remains of others drawn from all across the Dragon Empire. They are the military arm of the Bastion. They have various duties which they perform with various levels of duty and enthusiasm. These include:

- i. *Patrolling*
- ii. *Gambling*
- iii. *Drinking*
- iv. *Drilling*
- v. *Sallying forth*
- vi. *Fighting off goblin attacks*
- vii. *Guarding the chain gangs*
- viii. *Carousing*
- ix. *Eating*
- x. *Sharpening*
- xi. *Arguing*
- xii. *Bartering*
- xiii. *Complaining*

They are hard bitten, loyal, courageous and honourable women: in the main. A small sorority of individuals pledge allegiance to the Crusader. This manifests as aggression in training, and no mercy in battle. They have no great agenda, except to see the Bastion dominate the Knee Deep rather than accommodate it.

Warden Templars 4 troop [humanoid]
Init +8, AC 19, PD 17, MD 13, HP 47
Longsword +9 v AC, 14 damage
Furious Charge: deals 20 damage
Righteous frenzy: +4 attack v staggered foes

The Racaraide. A rogue of The Prince of Shadows.

The one and only prisoner in the Bastion. His arrival in the brig predates everyone else in the bastion except perhaps the Captain and the Wizard. Why he is kept in chains, no-one really knows or is saying. Rumour is rife throughout the rank and file. Just who is he, and why is he in irons?

- i. *He was the Captain's lover, but was discovered having an affair.*
- ii. *He supplied intelligence to the goblins.*
- iii. *He attempted to destroy the teleportation circle.*
- iv. *He is a vicious and unpredictable were-jaguar*
- v. *He is the Prince of Shadows himself*
- vi. *He is the Emperors bastard*
- vii. *He carries a dangerous and virulent divine plague*
- viii. *He made the Memory Idol*
- ix. *He is a Heirophant Druid and can command the swamps*
- x. *He is immortal and the Mage is studying him*
- xi. *He insulted the Priestess to such a degree that it tested even her patience.*
- xii. *He has a treasure map tattooed on his back*
- xiii. *Everyone has forgotten who he is or why he's there.*

The Racaraide 4 troop [humanoid]
Init +8, AC 20, PD 18, MD 14, HP 56
Improvised weapon +10 v AC, 12 damage
Natural even hit: +2 to defences one round
Natural odd hit: +1d6 damage
Natural even miss: 4 damage
Natural odd miss: next natural even hit becomes crit
Thrown weapon +10 v AC, 10 damage

The Emperor's Penal Legion

These men and women are the criminals of the Empire, a rather perilous circumstance in the give surroundings. They must serve their sentence at the will of the Emperor, which in these parts is the Captain. Until she decrees otherwise, these souls will dig, lift, pull, push, move, carry, hoist, chip, fell, sweat, and pray at her pleasure.

They don't mind their captors, not in particular. The work is hard, but the day ends in a square meal and a dry bunk. It's the swamp they hate. That, and the goblin raids. Only the crazy or hopelessly desperate ever try to escape. Civilisation is a long way away, with endless tracts of monster infested black shallow grave between here and there.

A lifer by the name of Pulsipher Lieu has a more ambitious scheme. He hopes to take the teleportation circle by storm. To achieve that goal he must lure the Warden-Templars from their vigilance. The only way he can see that happening is if there were another escape, one to cause a diversion, perhaps that of the Racaraide?

Penal Legion 2 troop [humanoid]
Init +5, AC 18, PD 16, MD 12, HP 36
Shovel +5 v AC, 7 damage
Natural even: +5 damage with next attack

The Counter Moot

"A market specialising in the buying and selling of things that don't normally turn up in civilised places. The vast majority of sales are by auction, a state of affairs that can stir the most base of emotions in the violent and envious. There are other trades, underhand and secretive. The Moot Masters would see these extracurricular and illicit deals stamped out. There is no commission for them there."

- Gnomonian Dinge, hawker of spittle



Creatures, denizens, dwellers in, on and of the muck

The great enemy

"The Great Black Drake is worshipped as a living god. She cares not, much like the Great Old Ones of other more tenebrous legends. She sleeps in Her hidden underwater lair, only lazily opening one eye when one of Her many wards are triggered by foolish worshippers or luckless robbers. Her dreams become tangible, and stalk Her dripping halls in search of prey.

She is a great but apathetic Mage. She prefers to sleep. Her knowledge is surpassed only by the Archmage himself, and some say She knows dweomers that elude even his storied researches. The fact that She remains utterly unmoved by her own arcane potential only serves to irritate the power hungry, of which there are manifestly many.

She is also a repository of more mundane, yet no less spectacular resources: treasure, and poison. All drakes have the magpie's eye for pretty baubles and She is no exception.

The Crimson Scythe would have Her milked for Her venoms both delicious and malevolent."

- Jimleanne Unt, collector

The Black is of course one third of the Three, an Icon within the Dragon Empire. As such you may have your own ideas of what that means. In my world, She is essentially a God (hence all the capitalization) and is worshipped and feared as such. It definitely means She is not to be confronted directly, at least not in the adventurer tier...

However, the Black extends her influence into the start, middle or end of many of the agendas presented below. She has agents, allies and enemies throughout the Knee Deep and beyond. Whatever the adventurers do, or don't do, in her domain, she will have opinions.

Her dreams take physical form. The ultimate in lazy minions, these shade drakes guard her, or venture out into the swamp to do her business.

Huge Black dragon 9 wrecker [dragon]
Don't be silly. You don't need stats.

Dream remnants 3 spoiler [undead]
Init +6, AC 19, PD 13, MD 17, HP 40
Touch of the Black +8 v PD, 10 negative energy damage
Recurring Nightmare +8 v PD, 1d3 foes, 8 negative energy damage and free teleport (limited use, escalation die even)
Flight: floating and swooping
Ethereal: resist damage 16+

The Wisp factory

"Lizardmen aren't one of those races cursed by savagery and evil because of some terrible deed committed by their ancestors. No, this is the age of glorious murder that will shape the destiny of all future nests."

- 13th Age

"You might think that they stick with the traditional stone weapons of their ancestors as a form of conscious ancestor worship. But actually they just like the way stone sounds when it's going through bone."

- Savage lizard men, 13th Age

Deep in the fens, in the darkest hollows, weary and frightened travellers will sometimes glimpse the Wisps. These are floating glowing balls of ephemeral magic. An ambitious Duskreader lizard folk shaman has found a method for gathering these and siphoning their energies for his own fell purposes. Trouble being, the wisps have an aversion to living creatures. So the shaman seeks an alliance with the undead, which just goes to show how magic users can justify just about any scheme if there's enough power in it.

The factory is situated in a unique spot in the Dragon Empire. It is widely known that the path of the Koru Behemoths has never altered in all its unknowable history. That is almost entirely accurate. Save for one moment, unwitnessed by anyone of civilised note, where a Behemoth stumbled, stepped momentarily away from its to all intents and purposes eternal route, righted itself, and moved on, unconcerned.

This misplaced step has resulted in a deep crater, since draped in the murky lustiness of the Knee Deep. The only witness to this mis-step, the lizardfolk Shaman Tenochitel, whose turgid cold mind soon saw the possibilities in siting his mystical siphon in such a precipitous locale.

The Three Tribes

There are three tribes of lizardfolk living in the swamps, the Duskreader (lairing in the western Choker Woods), the Terrafins (seething over their hatred of the goblins) and the third tribe, of which, strangely, absolutely nothing is known.

“The Duskreader tribe are dominant in the region. Those that (believe they) have the ear of the great black drake. Their shamans are powerful, mixing death magic with

shadows and diablerie as easily as you or I might add lime to our flask of T’chai. They are naturally dusky in coloration, and use strange paints to give themselves skeletal outlines. These pigments are slightly phosphorescent, making them all the more terrifying-stroke-ludicrous at night.”

- Defenstre Tre, bilker

They are led by Ssurransurr, a palsied and shrivelled young lizard. He is the physical equivalent of a 10 year old human, with even less emotional maturity. His position is guaranteed by the shamen, a council of three wily old lizards. It is they who have all the real power, with precious little of the responsibility.

Of the three, it is Tenochitel the Damned that has the most dangerous agenda. He has allied with Mordecai Sulk, the Necromancer, who supplies undead labour to build the Wisp Factory. In return? An audience with the great enemy, the single largest repository of death magic in the region.

“The Terrafin tribe are little more than savages. These brutes barely scrape an existence in the muck. They brawl, fornicate and devour their own young. If it wasn't for their uncanny ability to regenerate almost any injury, they would have been an unknown footnote in a non-existent bestiary by now. This ability is largely unknown, because the tribe have no ambitions beyond their own territory (about as far as they can spit, which is frankly further than you'd warrant). If somehow one could tap that regenerative potential... why, the riches it would command!

It should go without saying that only the mad or brave would encroach upon their territory, which is marked by stakes draped with creepers and the innards of their goblinoid enemies. They attack on sight,

are relentless and full of unbridled fury. Only the hated goblins drive them to extended bouts of frenzy. An enraged Terrafin is the embodiment of fury and violence, which thankfully, only the goblins have ever truly witnessed. The stupidity of the goblins is the only thing that fuels this bitterest of wars. Quite what the goblins want from 'Fin territory? You'd have to ask them."

-Uhnuldrous Wan, arena tout

"Of the third tribe? Nothing is known. Nothing. Which is of course impossible, but none the less, it remains an unfact. Perhaps they exude some kind of memory retarding sweat, or perhaps... Now... What was I? It's on the tip of my... what do you call it again?"

- Unknown

Lizardman. 2 wrecker [humanoid]
Init +6, AC 17, PD 16, MD 12, HP 32
Weapon +7 vs. AC, 7 damage
Thrown spear +6 vs. AC, 5 damage
Natural 16+: make a trigger attack as a free action
[Duskreader trigger] Chill bite +8 vs. AC, 7 damage
[Terrafin trigger] Rend +7 v PD, 2d6 damage, and the Terrafin regenerates 10 HP
[Third Tribe trigger] Memory Rip +7 v MD, 5 psychic damage, and foe confused (average save ends 11+)

Lizardfolk Shaman 2 troop [humanoid]
Init +5, AC 18, PD 12, MD 16, HP 42
Scaly Curse vs. 1d3 nearby targets, +6 vs. MD, 1d10 psychic damage and target can only use a basic attack on its next attack
OR
Spear +6, 2d6 (crit 17+ until wounded)

Zombie Worker 1 mook [undead]
Init +0, Vulnerable: Holy, AC 14, PD 12, MD 8, HP 10 (mook)
Rotting Fist +5 v AC, 3 damage
Natural 16+: Both zombie and foe take 1d4 damage
Headshot: Crit destroys zombie

Decrepit Skeleton 1 mook [undead]
Init +6, Vulnerable: Holy, AC 16, PD 14, MD 10, HP 7 (mook)
Rusty Sword +6 v AC, 3 damage

Wisp 1 troop [aberration]
Init +4, AC 17, PD 15, MD 11, HP 27
Light pulse +5 v PD, 5 damage
Hypnotic lure +5 v MD of 1d3 foes, 5 psychic damage and foe vulnerable (easy save ends 11+)
Limited flight: hover ability up to 10'
Immune to life: Resistance to all physical damage

The Pact

There are many long abandoned settlements dotted throughout the swamps. Many had succumbed to the predilections of the Diabolist in prior ages. The evidence is everywhere. The clever witness can spot ancient signs of devil worship in their layouts and their structures. That, and the mass graves.

Demon worshippers come in all shapes, sizes and skill-sets. Some, like those who prowl these swamps, are historians, scholars and archaeologists. Not unlike many adventuring parties, but with rather more serpentine daggers and secret tattoos.

A Diabolist sponsored infernal expedition treads these parts, looking for the lost ruins of Baleful Cherathoon, an ancient monastery that once housed a cadre of philosopher-warriors and assassin-monks, the fabled and feared Crimson Scythe.

Quixotium 3 caster [demon]
Init +7, AC 19, PD 13, MD 17, HP 45
Horns and Daggers +7 v AC (2 attacks), 8 damage
Natural 16+: can pop free from foe
Abyssal Whispers +8 v MD, 13 psychic damage and foe confused (average save ends 11+)
Sow Discord +8 v MD, 2 foes, 1 foe makes basic attack against the other (limited use, 1/day)

Entropine 2 caster [demon]
Init +5, AC 18, PD 12, MD 16, HP 27

Pincer +7 v AC, 7 damage
Natural even hit: causes grab, disengage at -5, gets +4 damage v grabbed foe
Painbolt +7 v MD, 7 psychic damage
Hellfire +7 v PD (1d3 foes) 7 fire damage
Mirror images: at will, move. Foes successful hit now has 50% miss chance, miss dispels all images
Power Word Stun: Cancel action from foe with fewer HP (limited 1/day)

The Ataxian large 2 troop [demon]
Init +4, AC 18, PD 16, MD 12, HP 72
Meaty paws +7 v AC (2 attacks), 10 damage
Any hit: causes grab, disengage at -5, gets +4 damage v grabbed foe
Demonic Stench: engaged foes with <24HP is dazed and ignores escalation die

Tumulta 2 troop [demon]
Init +6, AC 18, PD 16, MD 12, HP 27
Whirling Blades +7 v AC (2 attacks), 6 damage, and pops free
Beguiling Gaze +7 v MD, foe moves to engage (quick action)
Swift swords: crit range expands by escalation die value

Furorre 2 wrecker [demon]
Init +5, AC 19, PD 17, MD 11, HP 30
Claws +7 v AC (2 attacks), 7 damage
Raging Frenzy: on miss, +1 attack, +1d4 damage for rest of battle, max 4

The goblin problem

They're on a crusade at the behest of their crazy chieftain. He desires the eyes of wizards. Don't ask why.

The goblins direct most of their ire at the Imperials walled up in their bastion to the north east.

They use tamed giant insects as air cavalry. They strike hard and fast before turning for home.

Grunt 1 troop [humanoid]
Init +3, AC 16, PD 13, MD 12, HP 22
Club +6 v AC, 6 damage, 4 if outnumbered
Shortbow +6 v AC, 4 damage

Shifty bugger: +5 to disengage

Scum 1 mook [humanoid]
Init +3, AC 16, PD 14, MD 10, HP 30
Club +6 v AC, 4 damage
Shortbow, +6 v AC, 3 damage
Shifty bugger: +5 to disengage

Shaman 2 caster [humanoid]
Init +3, AC 16, PD 14, MD 10, HP 30
Pointy spear +6 v AC, 5 damage
Quivering Rays +6 v MD, 1d3 foes, 4 psychic damage and foe vulnerable (easy save ends 6+)
Shifty bugger: +5 to disengage

Giant insects 0 troop [beast]
Init +0, AC 14, PD 13, MD 9, HP 20
Sting/bite +5 v AC, 3 damage + 1d3 ongoing

The Wayfarers

"Diverting enough company, though boorish as to be expected of their ilk. The very epitome of naïveté. Consistently outflanked by kobolds, mocked by dire beasts, outwitted by slimes and oozes. They struggle through the thigh high waters, gallantly pressing on, searching for glory, treasure and decent iron rations."

- The Wayfarer's recruiting reverend, Cathedral

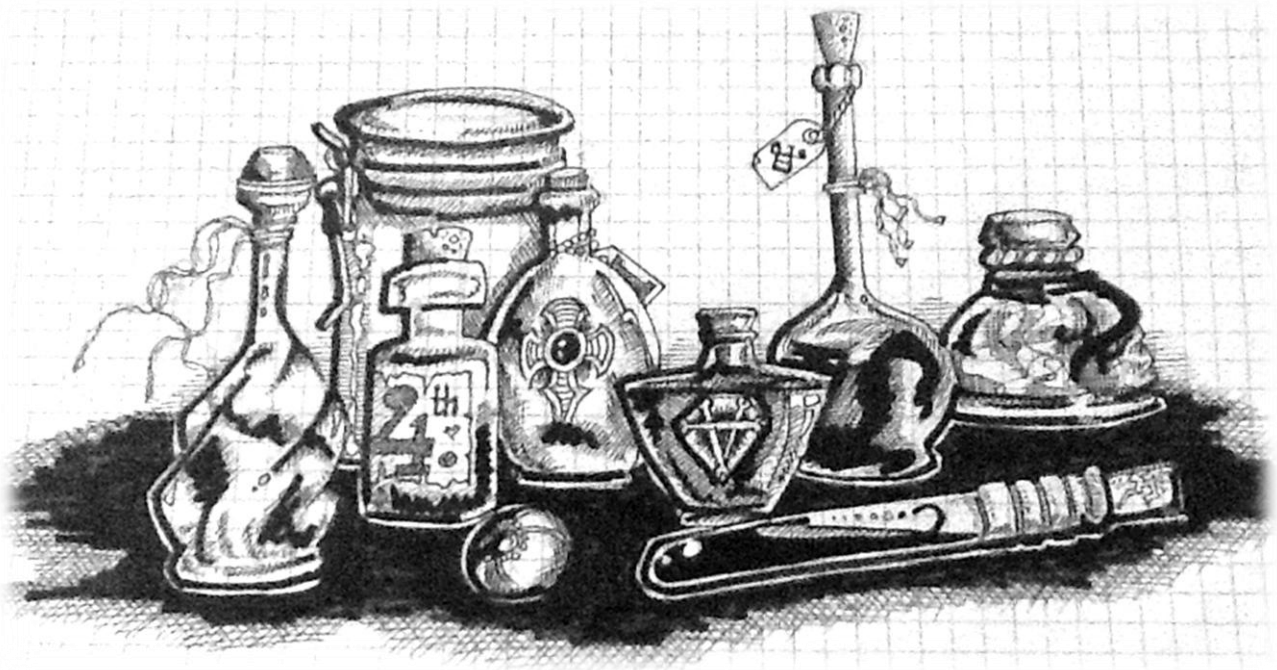
This party of novice adventurers has only recently been contracted by factions with Santa Cora to explore the Knee Deep and return with ancient relics for Cathedral. It's a fool's errand, and one they are likely to not return from. They are wounded, and in over their heads. They will not quit readily, though it wouldn't take much more than a hint of help and they'd take it.


Any party that offers succour will swiftly find the Wayfarers to be little more than a reasonably armed liability. Any chance of stealth is ruined by reckless battle cries at inopportune moments. Any chance of diplomacy is damaged by stubborn

refusals to compromise. Any chance of survival is hampered by their woeful state of unpreparedness.

And yet, they possess a raw and youthful enthusiasm for the adventuring life that can't help but endear them to their would-be benefactors.

The Wayfarer's are statted up as full PCs, yet shouldn't necessarily be encountered as such. They make excellent PC replacements in a pinch, or as pre gens for the short of time. If they are to be used as opponents, then it's recommended that a short form stat block is used.



| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--|--|---|
| Name | Abstemius | Shill | Class | Wizard |  |
| Race | Human | | Level | 1 | |
| | Stat | Mod | +Lvl | | |
| Str | 12 | +1 | +2 | Recoveries (1d6-1) 8 HP 15 | |
| Dex | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Con | 8 | -1 | 0 | | |
| Int | 18 | +4 | +5 | | |
| Wis | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Cha | 14 | +2 | +3 | | |
| Initiative +2 | | | | | |
| AC | 11 (15) ^{A1} | | Unique | The Gods don't believe in him or notice him, despite his deeply held fervour | |
| PD | 11 (15) ^{A1} | | Backgrounds | Son of a potion merchant 2, deeply religious 4, well travelled 2, street smart 2 | |
| MD | 14 | | Icons | Archmage +2, Lich King -1 | |
| Feats Quick to Fight Ritual Magic Further Backgrounding | | | Talents Abjuration ^{A1} Evocation Vance's Polysyllabic Verbalizations ^V | | |
| Spells Cantrips Rituals 1. Utility (Disguise Self ^V , Feather Fall ^V , Hold Portal ^V) 1. Command 1. Charm Person ^V 1. Shocking Grasp 1. Sleep ^V | | | Possessions Gnarled Staff (m +2 v AC, hit 1d6+1) Paring Knife (r +2 v AC, hit 1d4+1) Threadbare robes Crooked wand Pouch bandoliers, overflowing with past-their-best components Patchy beard Squinting, rheumy eyes 2 gp in loose change | | |
| Story Born to an unsuccessful potion merchant in one of Axis's more destitute districts, Abstemius' childhood was unpleasantly unpredictable. This changed when his mother caught religion and ran to Santa Cora to join the church. Abstemius spent much of his adult life attempting to pry his mother from what he saw as the Prophet's clutches, only to discover his mother was utterly unwilling to acknowledge him. This revelation only confirmed Abstemius' lack of faith in family and confirmed his total belief in the power of the church. He abandoned one, setting out into the world to serve the other. Abstemius stumbled into the ways of wizardry, and has slowly (very slowly, he's in his fifties now) become an adequate if uninspired spellcaster. | | | | | |

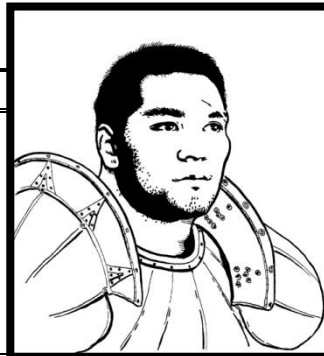
| | | | | | |
|---|---------------|------------|--|-----------------------------|--------|
| Name | Kimantha Lenn | | | Class | Cleric |
| Race | Human | | | Level | 1 |
| | Stat | Mod | +Lvl | | |
| Str | 16 | +3 | +4 | Recoveries (1d8+1) 8 | |
| Dex | 8 | -1 | 0 | HP 24 | |
| Con | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Int | 10 | 0 | +1 | | |
| Wis | 18 | +4 | +5 | | |
| Cha | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Initiative 0 | | | | | |
| AC 15 | | | Unique | | |
| PD 12 | | | Backgrounds Initiate of dark paths 4, armorer 2, village healer2 | | |
| MD 12 | | | Icons Crusader +3 | | |
| Feats Quick to Fight Heal ^A Ritual Magic | | | Talents Domains: Vengeance, Community, Leadership Invocations | | |
| Spells 1. Hammer of Faith 1. Javelin of Faith ^A 1. Righteous Spirits 1. Turn Undead | | | Possessions Hammer (m +4 v AC, hit 1d6+3, miss 1) Light crossbow (r +0 v AC, hit 1d6) Ringmail and large steel shield Holy symbol 1 sp | | |
| Story Kimantha was one of many survivors of a hopelessly inept raid on her hometown by kobolds. Yet even as disorganised and hapless as the raiders were, they somehow managed to raze the village to the ground with their alchemical fire. Among the smoking ruins of her village she secretly swore her life and arms to the Crusader. Possessed of a stubborn streak, plenty of hubris, and a little skill with the hammer, Kimantha has not wandered far since her conversion. She almost lost her family and did lose her home that fateful day, so is utterly consumed by anger and a thirst for revenge. Kimantha has found solace in the crusade, and in the belief that, if she can destroy all evil kind, her own losses will not have been in vain. | | | | | |



| | | | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|--|---|-------|
| Name | Selassi | | | Class | Rogue |
| Race | Wood Elf | | | Level | 1 |
| | Stat | Mod | +Lvl | | |
| Str | 10 | 0 | +1 | Recoveries (1d8+1) 8 HP 21 | |
| Dex | 18 | +4 | +5 | | |
| Con | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Int | 14 | +2 | +3 | | |
| Wis | 8 | -1 | 0 | | |
| Cha | 14 | +2 | +3 | | |
| Initiative +5 | | | | | |
| AC 13 | | | Unique | | |
| PD 13 | | | | | |
| MD 12 | | | | | |
| Backgrounds | | | Crimson Scythe apprentice 4, alchemist 3, smuggler 3 | | |
| Icons | | | Prince of Shadows +2, The Elf Queen -1 | | |
| Feats | | | Talents | | |
| Elven Grace | | | Thievery ^A | | |
| Momentum | | | Tumble | | |
| Sneak Attack | | | Shadow Walk | | |
| Trap Sense | | | | | |
| Powers | | | Possessions | | |
| Thief's Strike | | | Short sword (m +5 v AC, hit 1d8+4, miss 1) | | |
| Tumbling Strike | | | Hand crossbow (r +5 v AC, hit 1d4+4) | | |
| Sure Cut | | | Form fitting leather armour | | |
| Roll With It ^A | | | Loaded bone dice | | |
| Evasive Strike | | | 3 gp | | |
| Story | | | | | |
| <p>Selassi's life experiences have taught her to be grateful for what she gets out of life, since it's likely the bad times will return soon enough. Possessor of a razor sharp mind, Selassi complements that by carrying at least thirteen sharps on her person. She looks for challenges that can be solved with blades, and has not been found wanting yet. Terminally lazy and reluctant to actually get working on ways to make money, in the end it comes down to being smarter than everyone else—either with her mind, or with her knives. She secretly wishes it were another way.</p> | | | | | |



| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|------------|---|--|---------|
| Name | Valfernion Mol | | | Class | Fighter |
| Race | Human | | | Level | 1 |
| | Stat | Mod | +Lvl | | |
| Str | 18 | +4 | +5 | Recoveries (1d10+3) 8 HP 33 | |
| Dex | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Con | 16 | +3 | +4 | | |
| Int | 10 | 0 | +1 | | |
| Wis | 8 | -1 | 0 | | |
| Cha | 12 | +1 | +2 | | |
| Initiative +2 | | | | | |
| AC 16 | | | Unique Backgrounds Weapons master 2, carousing 2, fleeing 2 Icons Emperor 2, Priestess -1 | | |
| PD 13 | | | | | |
| MD 10 | | | | | |
| Feats Quick to Fight | | | Talents Comeback Strike Power Attack ^A Tough as Iron | | |
| Maneuvers Carve an Opening Deadly Assault ^A Shield Bash | | | Possessions Notched longsword (m +5 v AC, hit 1d8+4, miss 1) Well weighted Boot Knife (r +2 v AC, hit 1d4+2) Piecemeal plate and heavy shield 3 sp | | |
| Story Born an arms dealer's bastard to a camp follower in the caravan of a marching army, Valfernion spent his youth dreaming of a comfortable bed and exploring libraries. That hasn't happened. In the past year, he's been a cabin boy with the Yellow Ogre Flotilla, a runner for the Hustler's Guild, chased by elven bounty hunters, and 'reluctantly let go' by a dozen different employers. Gone is his youthful hope, replaced by bruises and a total lack of resolve. While miserable at heart, Valfernion hides this beneath a cheery, sometimes clumsy gallows humour, often claiming that there's no better way to end a day's adventuring than with "an evening of soft drinking and a night of hard company." | | | | | |



Mordecai Sulk

“An infamous poisoner and necromancer, on the hunt for the rarest of ingredients for his foul concoctions. He appears to be an elderly male drow, wrinkled and greyed, yet with an obvious touch of the daemon. The horns and hooves are probably the biggest giveaway. This affliction is probably to do with all the weird muck he's ingested over the years, and the peculiar company he keeps.”

- Denkquifer Sho, rival and student

Sulk usually travels alone. He tends to distrust the living, and most find the feeling entirely mutual. Of course, he's happy to have the odd skeletal servant to help him with tasks beneath his station, such as walking, or getting into unwanted melees.

He carries tiny and elaborate glass bottles on lanyards about his person. They rattle like bird scarers. Some of them are beautiful, some purely functional and some, the more valuable looking ones, are secret badges. They identify the holder as a member of a highly secretive guild of master assassins. (The authorities are utterly unaware of their existence, but other members of the guild will kill a false bearer on sight. They will be screaming "heretic!" At the top of their lungs while they do it too, which is perhaps not the absolute mark of quality in a top flight secret society.)

As well as a master poisoner, Sulk is also a consummate necromancer. The two trades tend to go hand in hand. He supplies Tenochitel the Damned with undead servants, enough to staff his Wisp factory. Sulk is getting increasingly irritable with the lizard's apparent lack of progress in securing him an audience with the Great Black.

He is currently travelling to the Counter Moot to meet with his potential patrons and to network with others of his odious trade. He hopes to supplement his wares with a field trip through the Knee Deep.

Upon encountering other travellers, he will appraise them the way a vulture does a corpse. Quick to avoid outright conflict, but always willing to strike a bargain.

Poisoner 4 caster [humanoid]

Init +7, AC 18, PD 15, MD 18, HP 40

Barbed Staff +7 v AC, 7 damage +5 ongoing poison

Natural 16+: one quick spell

Mist Cloak: +1 to all attacks and defences

one round

or

Icy Bolts: 2d8 cold damage to two foes

Deathly Visions +9 v MD, 12 psychic damage and foe confused one round

Natural 16+: Deathly Visions again for free

Poisons

The reverse of a healing potion, dealing MINUS one recovery and an extra 1d8 damage

Things, both jetsam and flotsam

The Memory Idol

A god, an oracle, or just an item of power?

Either way it looks like a squat statue, about 3 feet high, of a crouching man clutching his knees. Oddly, it always floats six inches off the ground. It has the slightest glow to it, teal in colouration. When asked a question the statue creaks and stretches, opening out like a blossoming flower. Then it offers *the deal...*

The Memory Idol has the power to reveal the future and does so with absolute accuracy. There is of course a small downside. You must forget something of the idol's choice. There's no cheat for this, it's totally forgotten, forever. Often, the lost memory seems inconsequential, and the price worth paying. So many have accepted the bargain, now unable to recall their own names, or Tuesdays, or how to kiss.

Still tempted? Of course you are, and you wouldn't be alone in that.

There was once someone who went all in on the deal. To this day he knows nothing about the past, his or anyone else's. It is a blank to him, even when confronted with evidence. He cannot even hold a new memory of the past, everything just... slips away. He has handed over his entire memory to the idol, willingly. In return, he now knows everything about the future. Everything. What's even more incredible, he is never ever wrong.

So now he finds himself as sought out as the oracle ever was. Because if he can

supply the answer to questions about the future, then there will be no payment to make to the idol.

That makes him very popular indeed with that certain type of ruthless and brutal entrepreneur found the Empire over. Naturally, it's exceedingly difficult to surprise a man who knows you're coming.

But if he's kept in chains in the brig of the Emperor's Bastion, then perhaps there isn't much he can do about it.

The Assassin's Knot

A lanyard of poison bottles. And then some.



Magic Item: Belt
Description: HP +8 (but only against poisons and venoms, like temp hp)
Endless fill (recharge 16+): an emptied bottle refills on its own with the same poison it last contained. Makes poisons deal ongoing 5 damage (easy save ends 6+)
Makes carried bottles weightless and, on command, soundless.
Makes carried bottles impossible to break by accident.
Quirk: sweats when cold rather than hot.

The catobelpas and the beholder

A pub, a queer book, or a rivalry between monsters?

A queer tentacle

Twenty feet in length, lying alone in the water, sheared off at one end. Never decaying. Tattooed along its

length with instructions for use.

Scarecrows

These scarecrows present in a set of five, in a circle, facing inwards towards each other, arms outstretched. They are utterly mundane, made of sacks, old clothes and straw. They are child sized, and have a gnomish appearance.

This is because they were indeed once gnomes, standing in a circle, arms outstretched. It was a ritual that went horribly wrong for the short wizards a year and a day ago. They still have their scrolls, potions and staves, which have also been turned into mere stuffed and upholstered apparatus.

If the ritual could be undone (or perhaps completed) then perhaps the circle of arcanists would be grateful (or angered).

The hot springs

Gas bubbles slowly belch forth from the mud here. They are strong enough to capture things within their spherical grasp and carry them skywards a while.

A poor place indeed to be ambushed.

Edition Warriors

Two scholars argue over a tome. One prefers the earlier editions, the other the more recently published. The first claims the second is not even a tome, but something not-even-a -tome. A terrible pejorative indeed. They are on the verge of coming to blows.

The tome is entitled "*Papers & Paychecks*"

The fantabulous major mynah bird.

A clockwork brass and gold construct.

Belongs to Denny the Rigger, a dwarven rope seller. Both he and the rope are dwarven, just so we're clear.



Magic Item: Wondrous

Description: Never reluctant to impart esoteric knowledge. The bird is unparalleled when it comes to the most obscure academic subjects, giving +4 to Intelligence skill checks. However, the bird knows little about the mundane, though still attempts to help, giving no more than a +1 to Intelligence skill checks.

Quirk: pinches bridge of nose when thinking.

Familiar Orphans

A cat, a raven, a frog, all looking for a way home.

They are familiars and have lost their masters, probably in some ill advised dungeoneering venture.

Or do their masters souls now reside within them following some magical mishap, looking for a way back into their own flesh?

The uncanny flock

A swarm of blood red kestrels. All apart from a single white one with a solitary eye. Spy's for the lich king, naturally.

The Giant's Bones

A moss covered mound turns out to be ancient skeletal remains of a stone giant. The skeleton is in remarkably good condition, being made of stone. It is covered in plant and fungal

growth after decades lain in the woods. All the giant's belongings have rotted away, or been stolen, except for one. The giant's body fell across his broadsword, which lies beneath it still, untouched, waiting (and wanting) to be found.

The sword is nearly ten feet in length, so cannot be carried, let alone wielded, by any human sized creature. It is of plain design except for a single rune carved on the blade near the hilt. The sword is highly magical, and sapient.

The sword can communicate with its wielder, and will happily do so. It's goal is to strike balance, to destroy extremists of any stripe. It reserves a special loathing for an Icon of your choice and their followers.

It calls itself Oncelimor, and in ages past was once wielded by the queen of titans.

Magic Item: +1 weapon
Greater Striking and Liberation
Quirk: violent mistrust of all icons

The thirteenth duke of Marrh''

A song or long-form poem. Sought by scholar-bards the Empire over. The original manuscript is priceless. It is woven with powerful magic of illusion.



Slime Out

Your Knee Deep listings, roll 1dXIII

Sounds of the swamp

- i. A plop in the water, as a rock, or a body
- ii. Repetitive slosh, slosh, slosh, the oar in the water
- iii. The quork of the raven
- iv. The brush of the hunting owl
- v. The sharp crack of branch, or bone
- vi. A sucking sound
- vii. A trapped animal's scream
- viii. The lowing of an ox
- ix. A tolling bell
- x. Nervous laughter
- xi. Ugly rumours, largely unsubstantiated
- xii. Utter silence
- xiii. The buzzing of flies

Scenes from the Miasma

- i. Wan sunlight
- ii. Rolling clouds of fog
- iii. Moss shrouded branches
- iv. Clouds of tiny insects
- v. Stream of bubbles in the water
- vi. Snares, pots, and animal traps
- vii. A wake
- viii. A footprint, slowly filling with water
- ix. A smashed potion bottle
- x. Dead fish, floating
- xi. Fungal bloom
- xii. A gibbous moon
- xiii. Mozart records, copies of the Crabapple Cove Courier & the Boston Glove, letters from 'Peg'.

Sensations in the mire

- i. A sudden but not unwanted chill
- ii. A cool sweet breath of air
- iii. Trickling sweat
- iv. Stinging insects, slap!
- v. Oppressive heat
- vi. Cursed clinging humidity
- vii. Swollen white toes
- viii. Clammy crawling skin
- ix. Hacking cough
- x. A presence
- xi. Is that... a leech?
- xii. Trepidation
- xiii. Cobwebs across your face

Olfactory offerings

- i. Woodsmoke
- ii. Rotten flowers
- iii. Carrion stench
- iv. Fear
- v. Marsh gas
- vi. Decay
- vii. Spore burst
- viii. Peaty mush
- ix. Dead leaves
- x. Stagnant water
- xi. Ordure
- xii. Each other
- xiii. Bitter almond

Fauna to warn you

- i. Eels, roiling
- ii. Warthogs, snuffling
- iii. Scavenger birds, picking
- iv. Oxen, grazing
- v. Birds, wading
- vi. Dragonfly, darting
- vii. Alligator!
- viii. Flying ants, swarming
- ix. Snakes!
- x. Turtles, chewing
- xi. Toads and frogs, croaking and hopping
- xii. Rats, squeaking
- xiii. Bats, flitting

Bantersnatch

Overheard in the Knee Deep

“Quickly, lift it up!”
“I’m trying damn you...”

“I wonder if it is wise to make camp in the shadow of these ancient blood-soaked standing stones?”

“Have you got any more of those?”
“Only a brace left now I fear.”

“Avert thine eyes my friends! I shall summon a Circle Of Ineffable Repulsion to send this black morass of living mud and bone back to the hells that spaw... *crack crunch snap swallow*”

“You snivelling wretch!”
“Mercy master, mercy!”

“No more, Primus. I beg of you.”
“You, who are without mercy, now plead for it? I thought you were made of sterner stuff.”

“Bree yark!”
“Oh no you don't.”

“Come ferryman, tell me more of the sinister secret of this salty marsh. Is it true that a living statue of jet black onyx haunts the tangled mangrove depths at night, luring the unwary to their deaths in a hellish maze of thorn?”

“We’ll never survive.”
“Nonsense. You’re only saying that because no one ever has.”

“Leeches! Why’d it have to be leeches?”

“Run! Run for your lives! It lives, and it’s hunger is as mighty as it’s cruel claws!”

“By Clangeddin’s Beard, this swamp stinks worse than Potswold’s underbritches.”

“Lo! What’s this, a bottle stuck in the mud? And a scroll inside...”

“\$@#&?”
“\$@#&! \$@#&! \$@#&! \$@#&!”

“Look on the bright side my merry lads. We may be lost, but our bellies are full and we no longer have to listen to Skiltstins’s grumbling. Who’d have thought that wee dwarf’d have so much meat on his bones?”

“Something beginning with a.....”
“W? For ‘waste of time’ perhaps?”

“Mwahaha Volo! My pet were-jaguars scent prey! *Terrifying roars*”

“Climb up the tree he says. Them undead ‘gators will lose interest soon enough he says. Four \$@#&!ing days we’ve been here, four \$@#&!ing days!”

“There, through the gap in those mangrove trees! Do mine dwarvish eyes not spy the cyclopean stonework of the ancient city that is the zenith of our quest, the strange black rock carved with eldritch sigils that hint of alien gods and star-spawned vistas of such ineffable cosmic evil that even the mere contemplation of them is enough to wrack and ruin this dwarf’s mind to a gibbering fecundity of insanity?”

Fen

