

# RAVENLOFT

## SOLACE IN SILENCE



*A Ravenloft adventure of desolation and inevitable tragedy  
for characters of any level*

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## SOLACE

*Silence is the most perfect herald of joy*

—Shakespeare

Solace is a Ravenloft domain for characters of any level.

### Story Overview

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Adventurers from a distant land find themselves in the mountains of Solace, a silent world where life has given way to stillness. In the shadows of a snow covered mountain, grim reminders of those who came before lie under the snow waiting to be found.. As the evidence of what transpired in Solace becomes more apparent, our adventurers must make a single choice - one that threatens not only their lives, but their souls.

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## PROLOGUE:

# SOLACE IN SILENCE

*"I used to think the quiet was a divine blessing - a gift from some unknown god tethered to a dying world. I know now that I was wrong."*

*- Records of the XVI Division Scientific Corp*

## What Is Solace?

Solace is a demiplane nested in the dark mists of Ravenloft. Like the other domains of Ravenloft, the demiplane is self-contained, and difficult to escape from. This has led many to speculate that the domains of Ravenloft hold some kind of purpose, though this has never been revealed. The first and most important feature of a domain is its Darklord. This malevolent being is a creature of darkness that committed a crime so terrible that the mists snatched them away. Many domains spring forth from the evil of the ensnared Darklord, and thus the entire demiplane is permeated by their particular brand of evil.

In Solace's case, the Darklord has already cleansed the mountainous area of life and laughter long ago. Not a single discreet creature, but a sickness of the spirit, the Darklords imbues all of Solace with its evil. Starved in recent days, the Darklord hungers for new life to consume with its deadly infection... but more than that, it hungers for new worlds to visit and consume.

The presence of its Darklord has caused Solace to develop some sinister and unwelcoming traits.

## What To Expect

Adventurers who end up in Solace will face weapons more insidious than claws and teeth. The sickness that killed Solace resides there still, and characters will soon realise that they must find their way out of the domain before they join the piles of bones buried under Solace's snowbanks. As they travel through the silent, freezing and empty realm, they may discover more about the nature of Solace's evil, and the means by which it is possible to escape back to their own world. Flickering in and out of phase, the Deadworld reveals horrors from the memories of Solace into the present. When and if the characters finally find a way out of the demiplane, they find themselves faced with a terrible choice.

## Plot Elements

### Sickness

The adventurers will become sick from Solace's malefic influence sooner rather than later. Once infected, the necessity of haste should soon become apparent. The sickness is a driving force of the narrative, and constrains the module to a limited time frame. Either the characters press on and find a way out of the domain, or they die trying.

### The Malaise

In the distant past, a spelljamming vessel crashed into a world called Solace, carrying a deadly virus from the stars. The crew tried to find a cure, but only infected the people that attempted to aid them. Soon enough, the disease killed everyone above or below the earth and silence fell. Without anything to feed on, the infection lies dormant in the bedrock beneath Solace, waiting for new life that it can use as a host to escape to a new world.

When adventurers are stolen away by the mists of Ravenloft and arrive in Solace, the Malaise stirs. Sensing life to devour, it begins to insidiously infect any living creatures that set foot in the realm. It can't help but rush its meal, after all its been so long since it last ate. However, if it waits long enough to finish, it hopes that the canny adventurers (like many almost have before it) will find a way out of the domain - taking the Malaise with them.

Where the Malaise came from originally is a mystery. Why the mists of Ravenloft sealed it away is another. One thing is certain: if the Malaise were to breach its prison and enter another world, that world would become as barren and lifeless as Solace.

### SHIP LOG ENTRY 50, DAY 21 THE HAPHAZARD - SIDEWHEELER CLASS

The gate is missing a few vital components, but the captain refuses to listen. The look in his eyes - noone wants to say it, but I think he might have gone crazy. This isn't the man we knew, the man who drew the plans to get us out of here. The food we brought with us won't last forever, and we can't afford to wait here day after day whilst N keeps pretending he can make it work to keep the captain happy. Things are about to come to a head, mark my words.



## Marks of Horror

Solace uses several tropes to achieve the desired feel. They should be used liberally whenever appropriate to paint the frozen peaks of Solace in the right manner.

**Nothing is Scariest:** This module doubles down on arguably the most effective horror trope of all time - nothing is scarier than the calm before the storm. Waiting for an enemy to strike can be far more nerve-wracking than the event itself. The bleak, cold, absence of event can be leveraged to force the players and their characters to imagine what might be lurking out there in the snow.

**Quieter than Silence:** The eerie atmosphere of the mountains is amplified by the lack of noise. No forest critters. No birds. Nothing. This (if played for keeps) can be more terrifying than explosions, screams or gratuitous violence.

**Paranoia Fuel:** The absence of monsters to fight doesn't mean there's nothing to be afraid of. Littered everywhere in the mountains are grisly dioramas evidencing past horrors.

**After the End:** The main horrors of Solace have already been perpetrated, and the people of that realm have passed into oblivion. There is no one to save in Solace, other than the characters themselves.

## Titus Alone

Solace is an unusual adventure location, for a very simple reason. It contains no monsters, and no antagonist other than the creeping infection. It is very much a mystery/horror module, and players who find most of their enjoyment in destroying monsters with fireballs likely stand little to gain from the atmosphere that Solace tries to invoke. In some of the locations, encounters designed in the same way as Complex Traps have been provided to set a brief change of pace. See the section on Complex Traps in *Xanathar's Guide To Everything* if you need help in running those scenarios beyond what is presented here.

## Running the Adventure

*Silence in Solace* is not designed to take a very long time to play through, depending on how thorough an investigation characters perform on each location before moving on. The main motivator here is the disease, and the possibility of a cure/escape before it kills them. Early on, guide characters towards the mountain as a possible means of rescue, and then let them climb/explore as you see fit. As the characters advance, their condition will steadily worsen. Investigation of the Haphazard (particularly the ship logs) will reveal part of the underlying nar-

rative, whilst the rest lies with the corpse at the top of the mountain.

The real crux of the module lies at the very end, with an ethical dilemma. There is only one escape pod, with room for one person. A character who took it might be able to seek help before they perished, but risks exposing anyone they encounter to the infection.

## The Deadworld

Though Solace is utterly devoid of sentient threat in the conventional sense, it lies parallel to a strange place we shall simply call the Deadworld. In the Deadworld, the sky is tinged purple and the sun is always setting. In some places in Solace, the Deadworld has naturally bled into the plane, like drawing away a curtain to reveal the horror that lies beneath.

**DEADWORLD** - Where you see this marker in the text, it is a suggestion as to where the borders between Solace and the Deadworld are weak. In such areas, the world seems to flicker like a candle guttering, revealing hidden messages, signs or evidence that isn't present in Solace proper. These manifestations are usually only momentary, but can trigger multiple times at your discretion.

## Extreme Cold

Whenever the temperature is at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit (which is always the case in Solace), a creature exposed to the cold must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear (thick coats, gloves, and the like) and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates.

## High Altitudes

Traveling at high altitudes, because of the reduced amount of oxygen in the air. Each hour a creature spends in Solace counts as 2 hours for the purpose of determining how long that creature can travel.

## Going Without Rest

A long rest is never mandatory, but going without sleep does have its consequences. If you want to account for the effects of sleep deprivation on characters and creatures, use these rules.

Whenever you end a 24-hour period without finishing a long rest, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. It becomes harder to fight off exhaustion if you stay awake for multiple days. After the first 24 hours, the DC increases by 5 for each consecutive 24-hour period without a long rest. The DC resets to 10 when you finish a long rest.



## Alterations to Magic

Solace resides in its own Demiplane, isolated from all others. No spell, not even a Wish spell, allows one to escape. Astral Projection, Teleport and all similar spells cast with the intent of leaving Solace simply fail, as do all effects that Banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artifacts. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from the Solace is pulled back into Solace upon leaving that plane.

For the purposes of spells whose effects change across planar boundaries, Solace is considered its own plane. Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes functions normally in Solace, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such a space are subject to the same restrictions as in the rest of Solace.

Whilst in Solace, characters who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so. Spells that allow contact with beings from other planes receive nothing but a grim silence.

**Revival:** Spells or abilities that either allow communication with the dead, or raise the dead, instead cause the target to rise as a hostile undead creature of the DM's choosing.

**Curatives:** Spells and abilities that cure (or render a character immune to) poison or disease fail to function.

**The Earthmother Is Dead:** Spells or abilities that conjure or purify food and water fail to function.

## Cosmetic Changes

The grim nature of Solace has strange effects on spells cast within the perimeter. Not all of these changes are mechanical, but most are unnerving or unexpected. Some examples are included below, but feel free to create your own.

**Find Familiar** - Familiars summoned with this spell are always invisible, and have the undead creature type.

**Unseen Servant** - The unseen servant sidles up close to you when unoccupied, and gently touches your hand.

**Armor of Agathys** - The icy armour is inscribed with meaningless sigils that flicker in and out of sight.

## A Note on Character Level

Solace is an unusual adventuring location. The lack of monsters and focus on environmental danger/mystery mean it is possible to run it with characters of any tier. The threat of the module varies from tier to tier.

**Tier 1 [Lv1-5]:** These characters are likely to find reaching the end of the module a challenge, due to a limited number of ways to deal with exhaustion and low hit point maximums.

**Tier 2 [6-10]:** These characters may find some of the scenarios a challenge, and are unlikely to die due to damage, but may well TPK to accrued exhaustion.

**Tier 3 [11-15]** These characters have ways to deal with the main threats of the module other than the Malaise. The pace should be slow and creeping, and more concerning the mystery than threat of sudden death.

**Tier 4 [15-20]:** These characters are practically invulnerable, or are used to being so. They may feel cheated when none of their teleports, heals and other failsafe magics work as intended, but then Ravenloft has never been a fair place. Expect to find yourself in an ethical conundrum at the end of the adventure with characters trying to decide who should leave and who should stay. Feel free to let them murder each other, it's in the spirit of the occasion.

## Malaise

The most insidious effect the Darklord of Solace has on reality is its ability to slowly poison living creatures with an invisible radiation. This sickness creeps in slowly, and is always fatal.

Merely arriving in Solace is enough to find yourself infected by the Malaise. Minuscule pathogens lurk in every blast of snow, every grain of dirt. At the end of each chapter, infected characters gain one level of exhaustion. Malaise (and the Exhaustion caused by it) cannot be cured whilst in Solace. The symptoms include

### Level One Exhaustion:

Nausea, Stomach Aches, Shivering,  
*[Disadvantage on ability checks]*

### Level Two Exhaustion:

Green tinted blotches, shaking  
*[Movement speed halved]*

### Level Three Exhaustion:

Coughing Blood, Nosebleeds  
*[Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws]*

### Level Four Exhaustion

Hair loss, Vomiting Blood  
*[Hit point maximum halved]*

### Level Five Exhaustion

Weakness in limbs, muscle spasms, blurry sight  
*[Speed reduced to 0]*

### Level Six Exhaustion

Death

**The disease cannot be cured by any conventional magic or ability until an infected character has left Solace.**

The Malaise has one purpose and one purpose only - **escape Solace inside a living host and use that host to infect a new world.** Any character that dies whilst diseased continued to move about as a hollow shell of their former self, as the Malaise takes over the driving seat of the body. This may or may not be immediately evident depending on the manner of the creature's death. A creature that dies in their sleep would get up the next morning as usual, just grimly quiet and sick-looking. A creature which falls to their death, breaks their neck, and immediately arises is somewhat more disturbing to onlookers. Reanimated characters gain the undead creature type, and all their personality traits are erased and replaced with "I must escape this place, at any cost." The malaise can possess a corpse this way for 1d4 weeks, after which the remains crumble into a skeleton.

## Alien Technology

When adventurers find a piece of technology that isn't from their world or time period, the players might understand what the object is, but the characters rarely will. To simulate a character's ignorance about the technology, have the character make a series of Intelligence checks to figure it out.

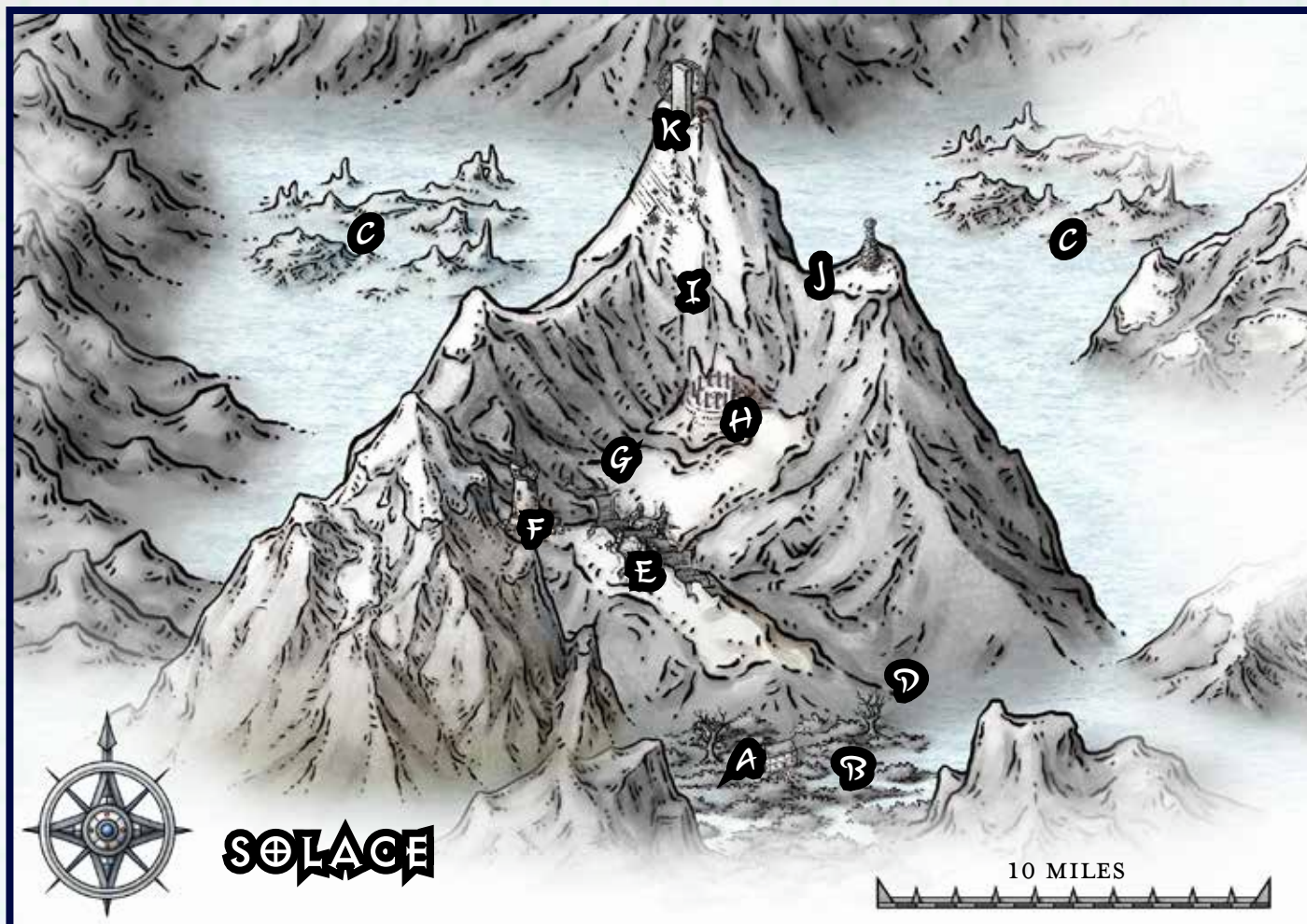
To determine how the technology works, a character must succeed on a number of Intelligence checks based on the complexity of the item: two successes for a simple item (such as a cigarette lighter, calculator, or revolver) and four successes for a complex item (such as a computer, chainsaw, or hovercraft). Then consult the Figuring Out Alien Technology table. **Consider making the item break if a character fails four or more times before taking a long rest.**

A character who has seen an item used or has operated a similar item has advantage on Intelligence checks made to figure out its use.

| Int. Check Total    | Result  |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>9 or lower</b>   | One failure; one charge or use is wasted, if applicable; character has disadvantage on next check |
| <b>10–14</b>        | One failure   |
| <b>15–19</b>        | One success   |
| <b>20 or higher</b> | One success; character has advantage on next check  |

Occasionally in this adventure, you will see the text "Alien Difficulty Check (difficulty X)" in these cases, the difficulty cited is the number of successful Intelligence checks required using this mechanic to successfully understand the technology enough to utilize it.





## Locations

### A - Cold Comfort Farm

See Part One: Cold Comfort Farm

### B - Tundra

The blackened weeds here are rimed in frost and half-buried in snow. A chill wind blows down from the mountain, carrying snow and shards of ice from above. The landscape seems bleak and shattered. Not a single creature or plant here seems alive.

The plants here are dead but frozen in stasis. Digging under the earth is difficult given the frozen ground, but will reveal hundreds of humanoid and animal skeletons, as if buried en masse. The bones show signs of death by a horrendous disease, marred with lesions and studded with cancerous growths.

A character proficient in Medicine or Nature can easily detect the telltale signs of plague, though it will not be a familiar one to them.

### C - The Cold Flats

Sheets of ice are covered in thick blankets of snow. The air is bitterly cold, and there is no sign of sanctuary in sight. For miles around, the mist and mountains are all you can see. The central mountain seems to rise high into the sky, and something glimmers at the top.

The glimmering is from the Bridge to Nowhere (see Area K). The cold flats are desolate, lonely and certain to drag characters to a wintry doom if they insist on exploring it.

### D - The Mountain Pass

A small path winds its way up the mountain ahead of you. Stone markers dot the path every few meters showing the way, though some have been almost completely buried in snow. The wind rushing down the channel sounds like far away whispers.

The stone markers are inscribed with text in druidic that confirms their purpose as markers to keep wayward travelers on the path. They also warn travelers not to stay out at night, and to watch the moon for signs of trouble.



## E - Dead Man's Bridge

See Part Two: Dead Man's Bridge

## F - The Old Watchtower

This 30 foot wide tower is crumbling with age. Skeletons are piled inside it, hundreds of them. The top of the tower has collapsed inwards, crushing many of the remains beneath gigantic blocks of stone.

This tower was used to store uncovered remains by the gnomish expedition aboard the Haphazard. Investigating it reveals some curious metal clockwork devices which glow green when worn by a person afflicted by the Malaise.

**DEADWORLD:** The area surrounding the tower is imbued with the sinister flickering twilight of the Deadworld. If characters approach it, the skeletal heads all turn to face the nearest character, before falling still again.

## G - The Wreckage of the Haphazard

See Part Three: The Wreckage of the Haphazard

## H - The Standing Stones

See Part Four: The Standing Stones

## I - Ascent

See Part Five: The Ascent

## J - Starlight Beacon

A plateau stretches out before you, wind howling as if to hurl you back down the mountain to your death. A single pillar made of many rocks stretches into the sky. Symbols have been engraved onto it.

This beacon is written in the dead language of the humans who once lived in Solace. No one alive speaks it any longer, but a comprehend languages spell can understand it. The stones are inscribed with local legends about the spirit world/the world of the dead. The people seemed to fear it, as it rendered their shamans powerless. At the base of the Starlight beacon, the body of a dead gnome lies. It's holding something in one of its hands - a small metal device which no longer functions but seems incredibly complicated inside to anyone who pries it open.

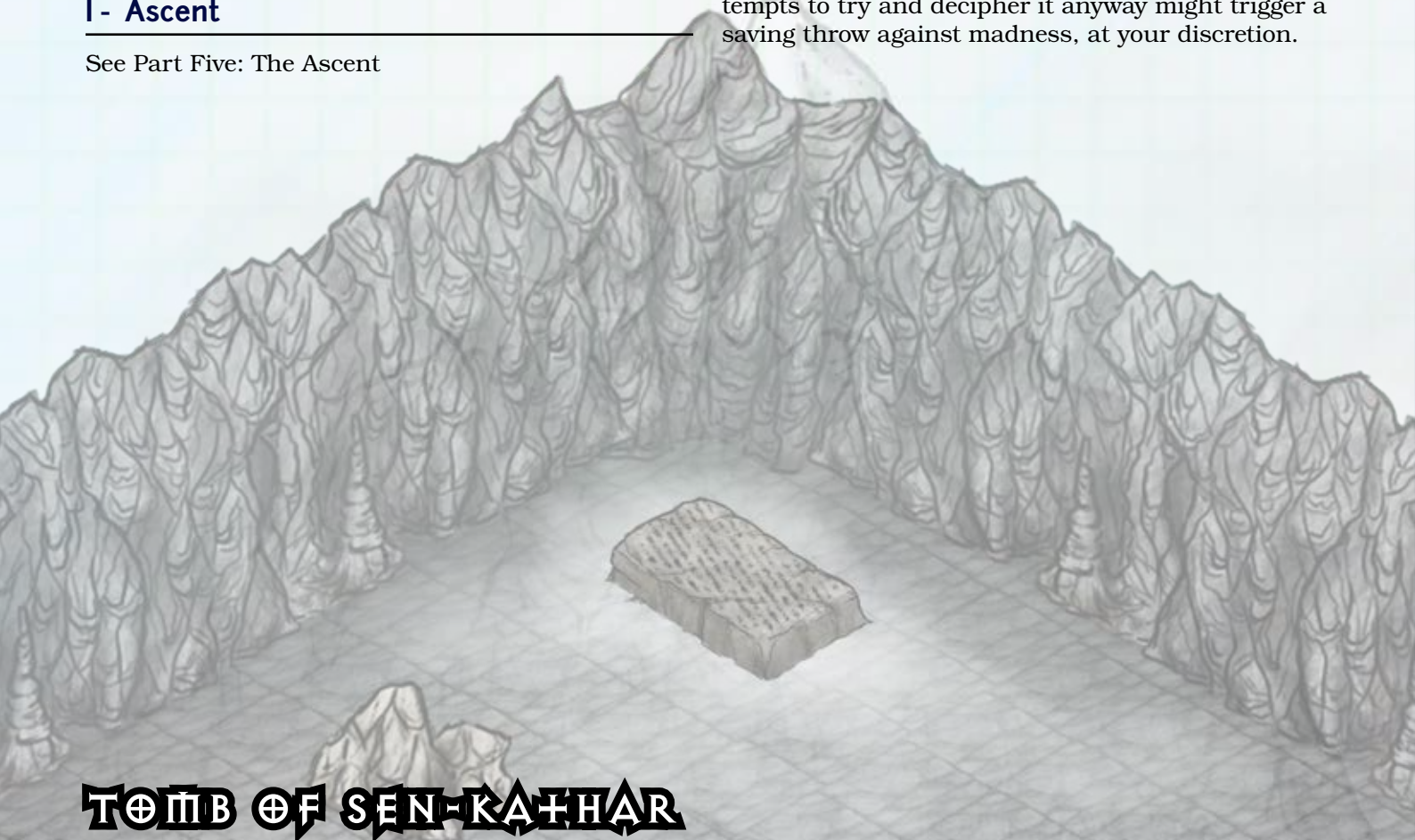
## K - The Door to Nowhere

See Part Six: The Door to Nowhere

## L - The Tomb of Sen Kathar

A set of crumbling stone steps lead down into an underground chamber with a slab of stone set into the floor. The writing on the slab is hypnotic and ghastly at the same time.

The writing is incomprehensible, even to magic. Attempts to try and decipher it anyway might trigger a saving throw against madness, at your discretion.



TOMB OF SEN KATHAR



# PART ONE: COLD COMFORT FARM

*When the music first came, we thought it a blessing. What angel has come to us in our poverty, we thought, and enriched our lives? We couldn't have known how wrong we were.*

## Part Overview

Cold Comfort Farm is one of the few remaining intact structures in Solace. The last human residents were killed by the disease a long time ago, but the house has been preserved ever since. Characters who enter the domain of Solace for the first time are likely to arrive very near here, if not right outside. If characters investigate, they might find some helpful clues as to the dangers they face, and some direction concerning where to head next.

## The Farm

Cold Comfort Farm is a bungalow farmhouse, with a small woodshed and a well located out back. The farm is blanketed in snow, like the rest of Solace, but the plants outside remain evergreen under a coating of frost and neglect.

## 1a - The Front Door

The double front doors of the house are made of wood, with a thick iron banding. No sound comes from inside the house, and the door is ever so slightly ajar.

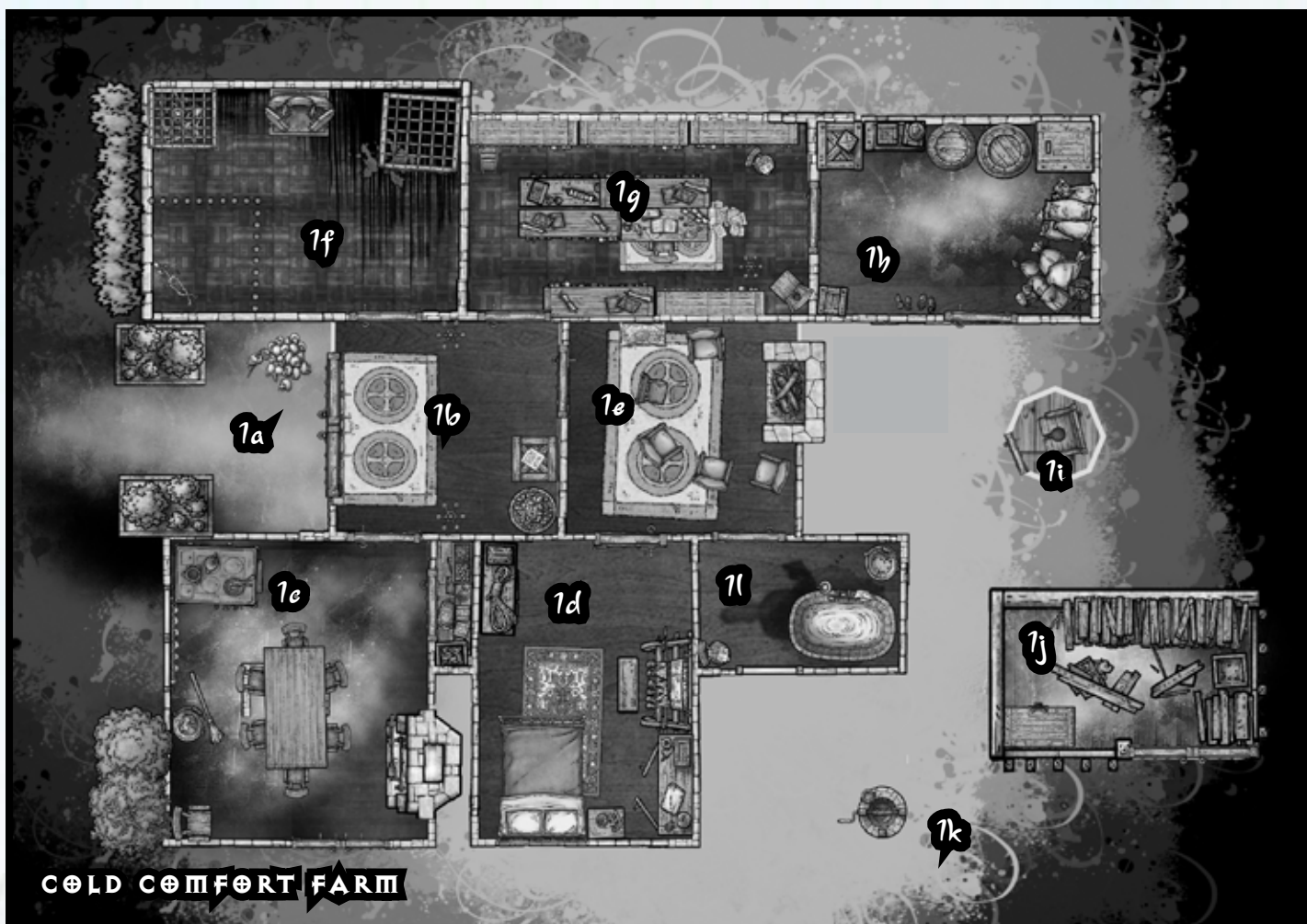
The doors are unlocked, and lead into area 1b.

## 1b - Antechamber

This chamber has a large rug inside the front door, scuffed from years of shoe marks. On one side of the room, shoes are piled up in a corner. On the other, a crate and a barrel have been stacked up against a wall, upon the latter lies a sheaf of papers in a spidery hand.

There are 6 pairs of shoes. The range of sizes suggests they belonged to a family unit with at least one child. The sheaf of papers has been written in common, and reads thus:

"Day 18: The snow is heavy, and the crops must be dead by now. Amelia is sick, but our messages to base camp have received no answer. I fear for their safety. We should have left this place whilst we could, when they warned us. [pto]



[ctd] Day 19: We're so cold. We ran out of fuel this morning. I had hoped we could start up the mountain to safety, but the blizzard drives us back each time, and little Jessie is already so sick I fear she may suffer without my help

Day 20: Jessie died today, from the chills. We buried her in the back garden, but my fingers are numb.

Day 21: There's something in the woodshed. I can hear it when I close my eyes. I'm ever so tired.

Day 22: Today I leave them, and thank them for their help. They look sad, but I think they understand. I leave this diary with them in case any of my colleagues come looking, though I think it unlikely at this late hour. It is a long way back to the Haphazard, a long climb indeed, But safety waits there - it is my only chance.

No other pages from this journal are present in the room.

## 1c - The Kitchen

[This bare-looking kitchen is dominated by a large wooden table. On the walls, pots, pans and knives hang ready for use. In the corner, an empty fireplace is devoid of logs and covered in frost. A grim looking stove occupies another. The room smells like oil, and an open door in the east wall leads to a small pantry.

The kitchen contains little of note, other than 2d6lbs of food frozen in the small pantry.

**DEADWORLD:** The room stinks of death. A child's skeleton lies under the table, clutching a toy clockwork train.

## 1d - The Bedroom

A large double bed sits against the far wall. A cupboard and dressing table are adjacent, and covered in worn looking daily necessities. A simple rug sticks out from underneath the bed at a peculiar angle.

The bedroom contains some mundane clothes and bathroom supplies, enough for a man and wife. There's a woman's skeleton under the bed, it's curled up in the fetal position.

**DEADWORLD:** Scrawled on the walls in blood are the words THERE'S SOMETHING NASTY IN THE WOODSHED.

## 1e - The Lounge

A fireplace sits unused against the far wall of this cozy lounge. Padded chairs sit facing the fire on top of a luxurious rug.

The lounge is otherwise bare.

**DEADWORLD:** The shadow of a many-legged creature moves over the room for a brief moment.

## 1f - The Bloody Chamber

The floor of this room is coated in dried blood that seems to have dribbled down the back wall and onto the floor. Two large metal cages, and one barred cell sit in each corner. Each has a humanoid skeleton inside. An iron maiden sits against the far wall, door hanging open.

The skeletons here (if examined) are the bones of human men. It's impossible to say how long they've been here, but the bones have strange knotted growths on them, like cancerous tumours.

**DEADWORLD:** The iron maiden slams shut. Blood seeps out of the bottom of it.

## 1g - The Library

This room is stacked to the ceiling with paperback fiction novels, many of which are falling apart. Tall shelves divide the room in half and run around the walls. Papers are scattered everywhere here.

The vast majority of these books are poor-quality detective fiction. Scattered across the floor are a series of papers handwritten in common. If collected, they read (in order):

Day 4: The mountain is beautiful from here. I hope the captain is safe, he always hated the cold. The people here seem willing to help, but wary. I hope with time I can begin to get through to them.

Day 5: The humans seem to have become sick as well but none of my medpacs have helped them either. What kind of sickness could defy Sparkwright's medications?

Day 6: Bumper went out alone to the woodshed today. He came back looking scared, but he won't talk about it. I won't go myself - if there is something in that shed, I want no part of it.

**DEADWORLD:** The books are all blank. Scribbled into the pages are the words HELP HELP HELP US HELP US PLEASE SOMEONE HELP US over and over again.

## 1h - The Storeroom

This storeroom is piled high with frozen goods, which seem to have been preserved by the cold. A trapdoor in the northeastern corner is rimed in frost, and a door leads out to the south.

The trapdoor here leads to a small 5 foot wide crawlspace. The crawlspace travels for over 50 feet before leading up to the trapdoor in area 1j.



## 1i - The Outhouse

This small wooden hut is barely big enough to fit one person in sitting down. A wooden box with a hole in the top sits above a deep hole in the ground. The smell of excrement is pungent.

The outhouse contains little of note (depending on who you ask, of course).

**DEADWORLD:** The muck down in the pit begins to burble. There's something down there, in the dark. The bubbles soon vanish.

## 1j - The Woodshed

This wooden building seems innocuous from the outside. Opening the wooden double doors reveals piles of logs occupying a cramped and dark shed.

The woodshed contains several piles of logs, rusty axes and other tools.

**DEADWORLD:** A word slowly begins to appear on the rear wall of the hut, letter by letter. SURPRISE.

## 1k - The Well

This small stone well leads down into the darkness. It's impossible to see the bottom from here.

Objects tossed into the well vanish without a trace once they hit the water. They make no sound as they reach the bottom.

## 1l - The Bathroom

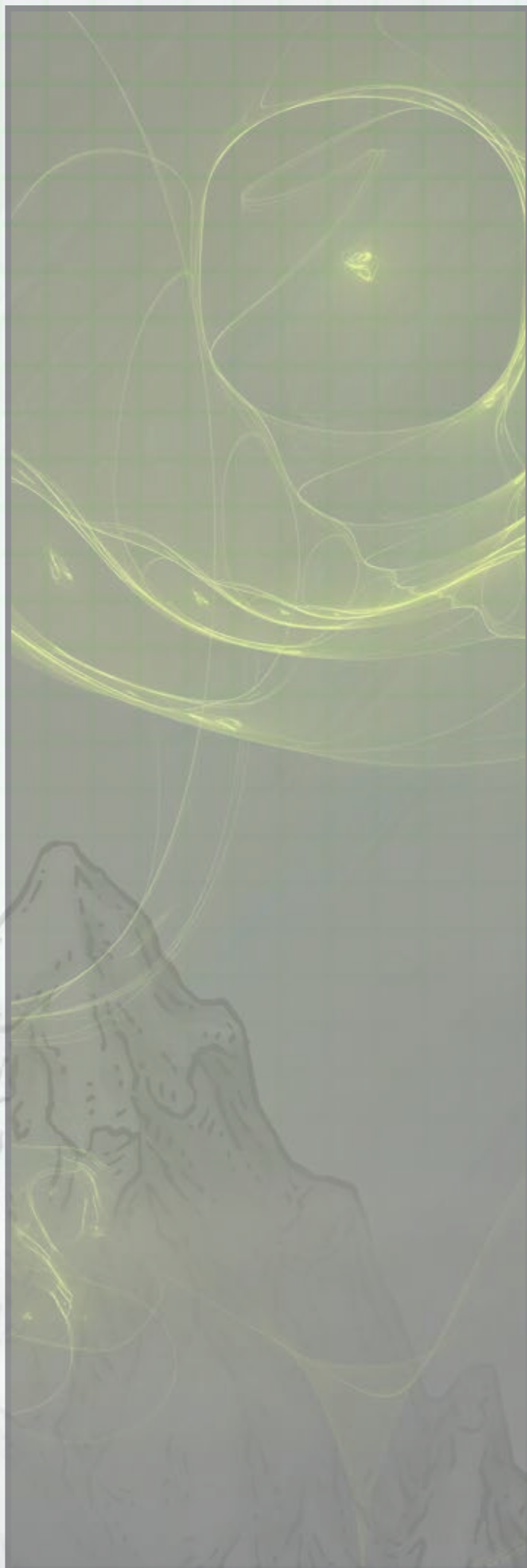
This small room contains a large metal bath and several basins for washing. There's an ugly blood-stain on the floor by the bath, though it seems old.

The bath here is functional, if dusty. Noone has used it in a long time, by the look of it.

**DEADWORLD:** Claw marks appear on the inside of the bathtub, as if made by long nails.

## Moving On

For characters to move on in any meaningful way, they need to be pointed up the mountain, either by common sense, the mists or the notes in area 1b. If you need to move the notes to another room to make sure they encounter them, then do so.



# PART TWO: DEAD MAN'S BRIDGE

*The UnPhasers have displayed many irregularities in their programming, but we cannot make more. We will have to trust in Garl's grace, and hope for the best. We leave in the morning.*

## The Bridge

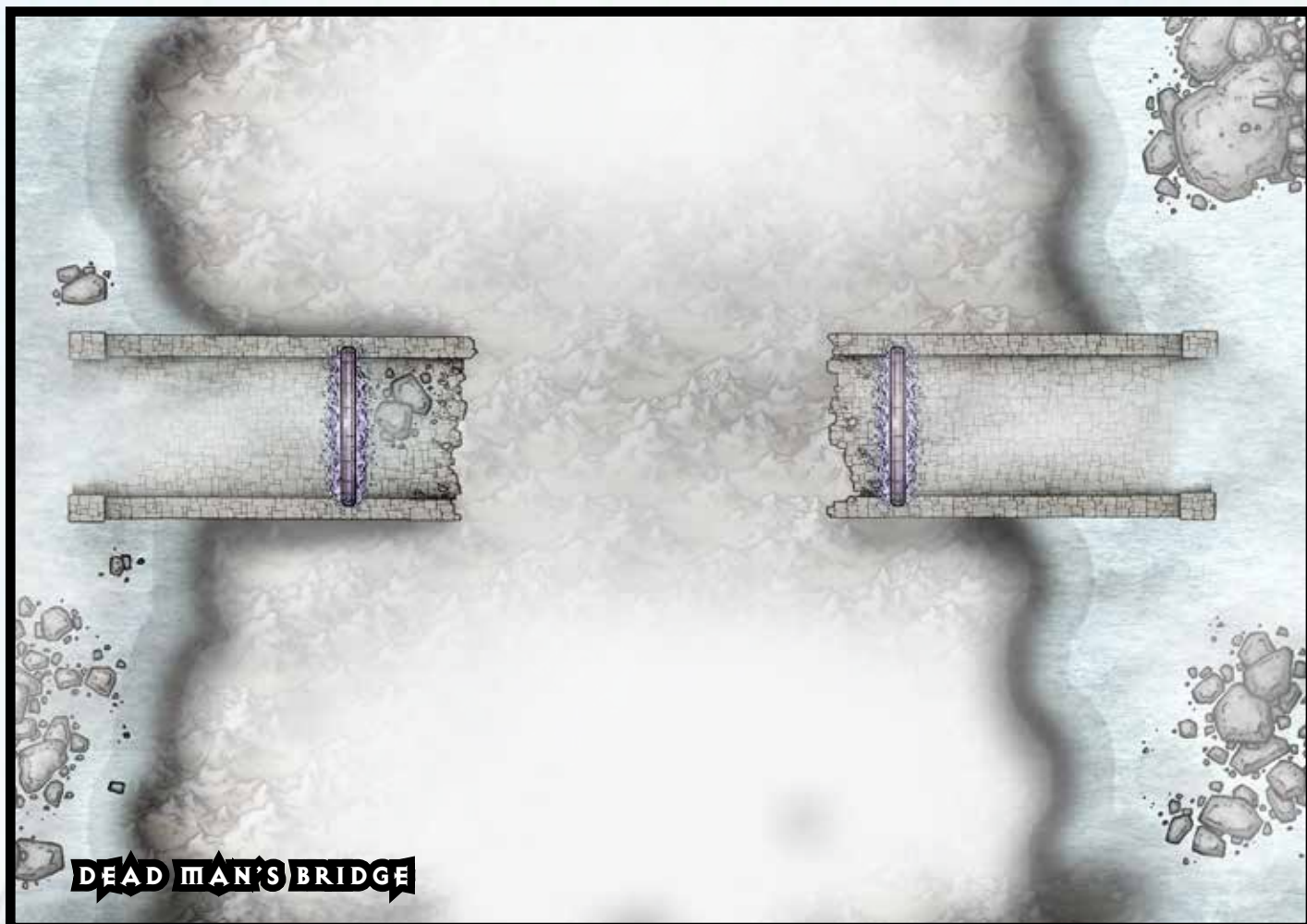
Dead Man's Bridge crosses a vast chasm and allows travelers to continue their way up the mountain path. In recent days it was destroyed by another unnatural visitor to Solace, a gnomish spelljamming vessel called The Haphazard. Suffering from a grievous malfunction, the ship crashed right through the bridge on its last death circle around the mountain, before crashing a significant distance further up. When the gnomes exited their craft to look for repair supplies or help, they bypassed the broken bridge with gnomish technology, which they perished before they were able to recover.

## The UnPhaser

The gnomish UnPhaser is a technological device far superior to anything the adventurers are likely to have encountered before. It takes the form of two silver archways which have been set up on either side of the bridge. Stepping through one transports a creature to the other side instantaneously. Sadly, the device is malfunctioning, preventing either archway from working reliably. As soon as a character touches or otherwise interacts with either of the Unphasers, run the complex trap scenario as outlined below.

## Fly. My Pretties

It's not necessary for characters to interact with the Unphasers to find a way across the bridge. In fact, it might even be safer not to. Characters with flight, rope, and other ingenious methods could likely scale the gap without assistance from the machines. This scene relies on someone being too curious not to investigate, which is a more reliable bet than most. If that doesn't happen? Move on, it's not the end of the world. Yet.





## ENCOUNTER:

### DEAD MAN'S BRIDGE

**Trigger.** This encounter begins as soon as a character touches or interacts with an Unphaser device.

**Initiative.** Dead Man's Bridge acts on initiative count 20, and 10.

**Active Elements.** The Unphasers malfunction. The radiation accelerates the Malaise.

#### ACTIVE ELEMENTS

**Technological Surge** [Init 20] Each round, the Unphasers flicker and spark, releasing a jolt of unstable energy into the area surrounding them. Roll a d6 to determine the result.

**1-2** - Creatures within 20 feet of the Unphasers are shocked by a blast of electrical energy, and must succeed on a DC12 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of their next turn.

**3-4** - The Unphasers emit a thunderous shockwave. Creatures within 10 feet of either Unphaser must succeed on a DC15 Strength saving throw or be blasted 30 feet directly away from the nearest Unphaser and knocked prone.

**5-6** - The Unphasers release a blast of radioactive dust and grime. Creatures with 30 feet of the Unphasers must succeed on a DC10 Dexterity saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.

**Malefic Influence** [Init 10] The radiation emitted by the Unphasers triggers hostile defence mechanisms in the Malaise. Characters within 120 feet of the unphasers and afflicted by the Malaise must succeed on a DC15 Constitution saving throw or lose a hit die permanently. This acceleration manifests visibly and prominently as the violent expulsion of blood from a random orifice.

#### DYNAMIC ELEMENTS

**Purge.** A character who loses all their hit dice to Malefic Influence is killed. A character killed in this way explodes in a fountain of blood and gore.

#### COUNTERMEASURES

There exist several ways characters might fix the situation. Some are suggested below

**Destroy the machines.** Each Unphaser has 50 hit points, AC 9 and is immune to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from non magical weapons that aren't adamantine. The unphasers are also resistant to lightning, fire and cold damage, and immune to poison and psychic damage. Destroying an Unphaser ends the encounter.

**Fix the Machines.** A character proficient in a relevant toolset (tinker's, thieves etc) can attempt to fix the machines by operating the control panels hidden under the snow. A DC12 Wisdom (Perception) check can locate the panels. A character will then need to complete a Figuring Out Alien Technology sequence (difficulty 4) to find the correct sequence that disables the machines and ends the encounter.

# PART THREE: THE WRECK OF THE HAPHAZARD

*We cannot wait for our colleagues forever. We must assume they have perished, and act accordingly. Our supply*

## The Ship

Hardly reliable at the best of times, the gnomish spelljamming vessel known as the Haphazard crashed into Solace some years ago. During the crash, the gnomes managed to destroy the bridge leading further into the mountain, and finally came to rest in a smoking heap on the frozen mountain-side. At this point in time, the malaise had not yet finished devouring the gnomes (though it was close to achieving this). Not knowing the danger they were putting the world of Solace in, the gnomes sent an expedition down the mountain to search for supplies with which to either repair their ship or build a beacon to signal for help. Sadly, the gnomes who went down the mountain never returned, killed by the sickness. In their ship, the remaining gnomes fell to infighting. One gnome, a genius engineer named Sparksworth (Sparks), instigated a mutiny and tore out the central spelljamming helm of the ship and fled to the top of the mountain, where he promised to help his followers escape in a smaller, lighter escape pod. The remains of the Haphazard and the crew who refused to join Sparksworth still lie here, and their ship has become their tomb.

## The Haphazard

The Haphazard is (or was) a gnomish spelljamming vessel, designed for scouting missions and surveying new territories.

**Alien tech:** The Haphazard (whilst a structural mess by spelljammer standards) is made of an advanced gnomish alloy which is difficult to harm. The metal of the Haphazard's structure, including walls and doors, is impermeable to damage for the purposes of this adventure (unless they come up with a way to crash a planet into it.)

**Doors:** The Doors in the Haphazard are open. They can be sealed by flipping a switch on either side of the door, which causes a metal sheet to slide down from above, closing off the egress. A sealed door has an armour class of 18, and 100 hit points. A damaged door can henceforth not be opened or closed. A locked door can be forced open with a DC 35 Strength (Athletics) check, and the panel can be hotwired with a DC20 Intelligence (Thieves' Tools)

Check.

## 3a - Porthole

This steel tube is half buried in snow, but is still wide enough for a human to crawl through. It smells of oil, and feels sticky to the touch.

The portholes lead into the small cannon chambers. (area 3b). Other portholes exist mirroring the visible ones on the buried side of the craft, though these are now impractical to access from outside.

## 3b - Cannons

This peculiar metal device is mounted on a pedestal, with a seat big enough for a halfling or a gnome. There's a grey square box with broken glass at eye-level, as if for looking through or at. Two handles come out of the machine at strange angles, like the handlebars of a bike. Both have large red buttons worked into the handles.

These were the rather unpredictable cannons of the Haphazard. Though the aiming and security protocols have been disarmed, the cannon retains basic functionality. If pressed, the cannons emit a clunking screech, smoke a bit and judder ominously. If a button is pressed subsequently, there is a 50% chance that the cannon explodes, dealing 8d6 force damage to any character within 30 feet of it.

## 3c - The Command Post

This room is dominated by a metallic hexagonal table, which has been bolted to the floor. Scorch marks and skeletons litter the area, and the room is lit by a flickering glass bar from above.

A brief examination of the skeletons reveals them to be gnomes. The remains of their clothes suggests they were not from a culture the adventurers are familiar with, as the fabric seems slippery and somehow fake. Many of the skeletons show small signs of disease - bone growths, lesions and warped spinal columns. Some carry objects in their hands, tiny hand-held devices with a nozzle, a trigger and a handle. A DC20 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that many of the corpses were killed from behind by a powerful effect that burned right through them.

**Gnomish Bangnozzles;** (Futuristic Item)  
**Martial ranged weapon,** 2d6 radiant damage, 2lbs, reload (50 shots).



One wall of the room is covered by a gigantic black sheet of glass. As you approach, colours swirl to life across its surface, shedding illumination on a panel below it covered in buttons. The floor near the panel is leaking a blue fluid which resembles liquid lightning.

A character who wishes to try and engage with the console must make a series of Alien Technology checks (difficulty 4). A success reveals a cavalcade of information in a strange dialect of gnomish. If a character can read gnomish, they are presented with the following options. If they cannot, they may elect to choose random options as they appear, with unpredictable results.

### Engineering

*Diagnostics.* The engineering panel confirms the machine's dire state, and the fact that the spell-jamming helm and escape pods are missing. It also notes irreparable damage to the ship's buried side under the ice.

*Doors Open/Close.* The doors inside the ship, and the portholes, are sealed or unsealed.

*Initiate Self Destruct.* The ship begins countdown to self-destruction. Run the Complex Trap [COUNTDOWN].

### Ship Log

The information is fragmented and corrupted, but enough is whole to reveal the fate of the Haphazard's crew. See the Appendix for the ship's log.

### Navigation

*Scan.* A sensor blips on the screen, and confirms that the adventurers are the only life forms on the mountain. There's a small fuzzy blip that occasionally appears near the ship, but vanishes soon after.

*Set Course.* The ship lurches to one side, unable to take off.

*Map.* The ship opens up a staggering map of stars, leading off into infinite space. Characters from small insular worlds should make a Wisdom saving throw, or gain a madness level from the revelation of their own insignificance.

*Crew Health Scan.* The screen throws up biometrics of all humanoids aboard, revealing their state of infection, current health, dietary habits and frequency of bowel movements.

### Weapons

This screen flashes the word ERROR over and over again.

### Communications Array

*Open Communications.* This option causes the screen to emit a curious static sound.

*Locate Crew.* This option cause a three dimensional map of the mountain to appear on screen, with red dots spaced out between Cold Comfort Farm, the mountainside, the Haphazard and a small group of them right up at the peak of the mountain.

*Contact Homeworld.* This option causes the screen to glow white, and then fade to black again as the ship vibrates for a moment. The words CONTACT FAILED flash onto the screen.

*Translator.* The ship's translator function analyses the known languages of the creatures on board, then translates everything on screen into common subtitles.

### SOS

*Self Destruct.* Run the Complex Trap [COUNTDOWN]

*Launch Flare.* The flares have all been used by gnome crew, and this operation fails.

*Launch Escape Pods.* All the escape pods have been cannibalized by the gnomes, and this fail to function.

*Quarantine.* This function seals all the doors and locks them permanently. This can only be overridden by a knock spell or similar magic.

| d6                | d4                     |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Engineering    | 1. Diagnostics         |
|                   | 2. Doors Open          |
|                   | 3. Doors Close         |
|                   | 4. Self Destruct       |
| 2. Ship Log       |                        |
| 3. Navigation     | 1. Scan                |
|                   | 2. Set Course          |
|                   | 3. Map                 |
|                   | 4. Crew Health Scan    |
| 4. Weapons        |                        |
| 5. Communications | 1. Open Communications |
|                   | 2. Locate Crew         |
|                   | 3. Contact Homeworld   |
|                   | 4. Translator          |
| 6. SOS            | 1. Self Destruct       |
|                   | 2. Launch Flare        |
|                   | 3. Escape Pods         |
|                   | 4. Quarantine          |

**DEADWORLD:** The room is basked in the familiar twilight, and the screen suddenly switches to video footage of the adventurers exploring a previous location such as Cold Comfort Farm. The footage is shaky, as if hand-held.





## EVENTS

### Intruder Alert

At any point, the old gnomish security systems might come back online. The flickering bars of light overhead turn an ugly red, and the doors slam shut with a hiss. An alarm begins to blare overhead, calling out INTRUDER in gnomish. The noise is distracting, shrill and really irritating. [I suggest you invest in an actual alarm sound effect for this, or just scream INTRUDERS at your players until they lose the will to live.] The security systems blare for 1 minute, and then initiate a self-destruct.

### Leaking Power

The main console is leaking a dangerous radiation. Characters who can detect poison or disease sense a dangerous aura around the machine. At any time, this radiation might surge, and characters near the console begin to feel sick. All characters on the Haphazard must succeed on a Constitution saving throw DC15 or gain a level of exhaustion. Characters who fail their saving glow a faint green colour, and must repeat the same saving throw every hour.



## ENCOUNTER: COUNTDOWN

**Trigger.** This Haphazard's self destruct feature is activated by the control panel.

**Initiative.** COUNTDOWN acts on initiative count 20, and 10.

**Active Elements.** The Haphazard secures the blast doors and portholes. The countdown advances.

### ACTIVE ELEMENTS

**Technological Surge** [Init 20] Each round, the Haphazard reassesses the security protocol and shuts all doors and portholes, locking them. (see Doors on page 14)

**Malefic Influence** [Init 10] The countdown progresses. The countdown starts at 5, and moves down 1 each round, until it reaches 0.

### DYNAMIC ELEMENTS

**Purge.** Once the countdown reaches 0, the haphazard explodes, killing everything inside it.

### COUNTERMEASURES

**Breaking Free.** A sealed door has an armour class of 18, and 100 hit points. A door reduced to 0 hit points can henceforth not be opened or closed. A locked door can be forced open with a DC 35 Strength (Athletics) check, and the panel can be hotwired with a DC20 Intelligence (Thieves' Tools) Check. The knock spell and similar magic can also provide egress. Magic that shapes stone has no effect on the hull of the Haphazard.

### SIDEBAR - THE HAPHAZARD

The Haphazard (before it crashed into Solace) much larger, once. As it stands, only a fragment of the main ship is available for players to explore. You might decide that more of the ship survived, scattered all over the mountain, or buried under nearby rock. If that's the kind of story you want to tell, then go for it! As written here, the Haphazard is beyond repair, but you are free to make whatever changes to that you wish.

# PART FOUR:

## THE ASCENT

*Bells! Bells that sounded through my very soul. If we has heeded the words of the wise, perhaps wouldn't have lost Solderson. I cannot regret my actions, I did what I thought I must, but if I could have spared anyone, it would have been him.*

### Finding The Ascent

The cave inside the mountain was once protected by a strong door enchanted to keep out trespassers. Sadly, this precaution lasted about as long in practice as it took a spelljamming gnome to become curious about it. The entrance lies not far from the wreck of the Haphazard, visible from a distance due to the blackened snow and stone debris. Gnome footprints are scattered all around.

### The Upwards Climb

The staircase inside the mountain was carved from the living rock by druids long before Solace became infected or desolate. The caretakers of the mountain used their powerful magic to hollow out the core and spiral it round with an enchanted staircase that would reflect the sins of the unworthy, testing their resilience before they reached the holy places at the top of the mountain. Green jade runs through the rock here, tinted with amber and jet. The staircase is a trial, a test and a blessing, all in one. Since Solace fell to the mists of Ravenloft, the ascent has become corrupted by dark thoughts.

### The Ascent

The caverns built by the ancient druids and stoneworkers remain intact and unharmed despite Solace's desolation.

**Lighting:** The ascent is dimly lit by glowy druidic sigils across the walls, floor and steps.

**Stairs:** The stairs are 5 feet wide, and 1 foot tall. Any character which falls asleep on the stairs has a 50% chance to roll off them during their slumber and fall.

### 5a - The Entrance

Buried in the mountain's face, a wide stone door lies in ruins. Blackened snow lies all around, and the acrid stench assaults you even from a distance. Beyond the door, a wide chamber stands invitingly empty. Large stone fragments from the door lie everywhere, charred and broken.

Little remains of the explosive charges the gnomes used to destroy this door. A particularly perceptive character good at puzzles might be able to piece

together a mental image of what the door would have looked like - the grim looking face of an old man, carved from the stone like some kind of silent guardian.

### 5b - The Antechamber

As the stone door rolls shut behind you, darkness crowds in on you. You find yourself in a small stone chamber with rugged walls and a high ceiling. Ominous humanoid faces are hewn from the rock, and their grim countenance suggests disapproval. Markings criss-cross the walls and floor, glowing very faintly. The air here is chill and slightly damp. Ahead of you, a wide stone staircase leads upwards.

The markings are in druidic, and are warnings about the journey upwards, which may only be taken by those pure of heart, body and soul. The markings have no real power, and were designed by the humans who once lived in solace to deter intruders from reaching the sacred plateau at the top of the ascent.

Investigating the area may reveal the small footprints of humanoid creatures, possibly gnomes or halflings. The footsteps lead up the stairs.

### 5c - The Ascent

The stone stairway leads out of the room and takes a sharp turn, joining with the cavern wall. The sight beyond is breathtaking. The mountain's interior is hollow, and a staircase runs in a spiral all the way around the inside of it, up until it vanishes from sight high above you. Etched into the mountain walls, gigantic humanoid faces stare downwards as if in judgment, glowing with a faint white luminescence. Dust and memory have heavily in the air here, and the silence has the air of a sacred place.

Speaking in the Ascent chamber causes a character's voice to echo, reverberating up the mountain shaft over and over. By the time the sound reaches the top, it rings like a carillon. The first time a character hears this terrible chiming, they must succeed on a DC10 Wisdom saving throw or succumb to Shadowfell Despair. [See table below.] The despair can be removed by calm emotions, remove curse, or similar magic, once the characters have left the antimagic effect.



## 5e - The Upper Landing

### Shadowfell Despair

#### d6 Effect

1-3 *Apathy*. The character has disadvantage on death saving throws and on Dexterity checks for initiative, and gains the following flaw: "I don't believe I can make a difference to anyone or anything."

4-5 *Dread*. The character has disadvantage on all saving throws and gains the following flaw: "I am convinced that this place is going to kill me."

6 *Madness*. The character has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws that use Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma, and gains the following flaw: "I can't tell what's real anymore."

The ascent is shrouded in an antimagic effect, as per *antimagic field*. The innate passive magic of the staircase is exempt from this. Imbued by druids in ancient times, it allows for creatures to ascend the staircase much faster than the distance would suggest. The climb takes only 8 hours, roughly, compared to the many days it might take without this effect.

The ascent, in addition to being enchanted to null the magic of lesser creatures, is also protected by powerful wards against evil. Despite everything, these protections are still working. The spells laid here so long ago sense the presence of the Malaise in living creatures, and strike out to smite it from the face of the earth. The first warning is a low humming sounds, and an increase in the runic luminescence. The wards then spring into actions (run the Bells, Cry Out!)

The seemingly endless staircase comes to an end ahead of you, heading directly into the mountain face. You can feel a slight chill breeze blowing from the wall.

The door leading outside is hidden with clever craftsmanship in the mountain face. A character who succeeds on a DC18 Intelligence (Investigation) check can find the cracks indicating a hidden door. The door will open to

- Any verbal commands in Druidic to that effect
- A creature which has maintained its silence the entire way up the staircase, and touches the door.
- A DC25 Strength check.
- A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check to remember druidic words of opening

Failed attempts to force the door open physically cause the door to shudder, sending tremors throughout the mountain. Have any character standing on the staircase or landing roll a DC12 Dexterity saving throw. A failure results in the character toppling off the ledge and falling a significant distance to the floor below, taking 20d6 bludgeoning damage if they hit the floor.





## ENCOUNTER: BELLS, CRY OUT!

**Trigger.** This trap activates as an infected character reaches halfway up the staircase.

**Initiative.** The trap acts on initiative count 10.

**Active Elements.** The trap invokes ghostly temptations in an attempt to lure evil souls to their doom.

### ACTIVE ELEMENTS

**Call of the Spirits. (Initiative 10)** Unearthly spirits call the unwary to their deaths. These voices take the spectral form of loved ones from the memory of the character, drawing on their memories to do so. Character on the staircase must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC10). On a failure characters are Charmed. A character charmed by this effect must use their movement on their turn to walk off the stairwell, falling to the floor below. The charmed condition ends when the character takes damage, or if another character uses an action to shake them out of it.

### DYNAMIC ELEMENTS

**Insistent Voices.** The DC to resist the spirits' call increases each round after it activates by 2.

### COUNTERMEASURES

There exist several ways characters might fix the situation. Some are suggested below

**Thunder Calls, And I Listen.** A character who somehow manages to invoke thunder damage of any kind whilst inside the room causes a cacophony that forces the chamber into a dangerous level of reverberation. Characters take 3d6 thunder damage, and cracks split the walls, plunging the room into complete darkness as the light fades from all the glyphs.

**Hearken To Me.** Characters who yell out cause the tower to resonate like a gigantic bell. A character wishing to do so should use an action to attempt a Performance, Intimidation or Musical Instrument check, DC 15. On a success, the resulting cacophony prevents that character from hearing the call of the spirits until the start of their next turn. Once this countermeasure has been successfully performed three times, the spirits flicker as if unable to maintain their form, and fade.

**Rest for the Restless.** Characters can attempt to soothe the spirits back into their slumber with druidic rites and symbolism. This might involve holy water, burning incense or a meditative trance. A character wishing to do so should use an action to attempt a Religion or Nature check, DC15. Three successful uses of this countermeasure cause the spirits to fade into nothingness, and the ascent becomes calm once more.



## PART FIVE:

# THE DOOR TO NOWHERE

*I was a fool to think I could escape this place. The evil that lurks here has given me a choice, and I refuse to submit. No, Sparkwright will not go down in history as a fool and a coward. This will be the site of my grave.*

*I have saved the multiverse, and no one will ever know my name.*

### The Plateau

As you crest the peak of the mountain, the snow and wind abate suddenly, leaving you in crisp winter air. The rock formations up here at the peak seem to shelter this plateau from all but the worst of the weather. Nestled in the center of the outcrop is a strange cylinder like metal tube, with an open metal door hinged onto the front. Resting against the device, a gnome skeleton lies clutching a single sheet of paper in its dead hands.

The paper reads thus: *"This being the last testament of Sparkwright, engineer for the Haphazard and free gnome. I have failed. I betrayed my captain, and my friends to reach this blasted plateau. I know my device will work - I can feel it. It can only take one, of course, it won't work for more than one. Even as I relish my success, the joy withers in my heart. I can feel the sickness growing in me - I must have caught it from the others before I began to climb. The irony...to complete the greatest work of my life and die unable to use it. If anyone should find this..I beg you, turn away. If you are infected with the horror of this world, it wants you to leave. It wants to leave this world using you as a vessel, to infect countless other worlds. Do not allow it. You must not allow it, or the fate of this place will be the fate of your world and countless others."*

The metal tube can be investigated with an Alien Technology roll (difficulty 6). If a creature gets inside the tube, and programs it to launch, it begins a countdown internally. At the end of the countdown, it lifts itself from the earth and blasts into the sky, trailing fire and smoke. The cylinder soon disappears from view, and is never heard from again.

The metal tube can be attacked. It has an AC of 9, and 75 hit points. It is immune to poison and psychic damage. A cylinder reduced to 0 hit points explodes - characters within 30 feet must succeed on a Dexterity Saving Throw, DC15 or take 8d6 fire damage.

## EPILOGUE:

# I WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

*There are times in this life where we must make a choice. To save ourselves, to save another. To weigh the cost of our own lives against those of countless others. To count the cost.*

Reaching the peak of Solace, characters are likely to be sick, tired and in desperate need of help. Investigating Sparkwright's machine will reveal its flaw - it can only rescue one person.. Furthermore, if Sparkwright is correct (as canny characters may have already gathered), a character who arrives on a new world will bring the infection that destroyed Solace with them, possibly dooming that world and many others in the process.

It's up to the characters what to do at this point. Perhaps they will fight to the death over the space in the machine. Perhaps they will agree to let one person go, and the rest will stay. Maybe they will all choose to stay, denying Solace's evil the chance to spread to other worlds. Characters who do not leave Solace will surely perish to the infection, and you can have your players join you in narrating how any characters that stay choose to end their lives.

If a character survives using Sparkwright's escape pod, you are free to decide what happens to them. Perhaps the escape pod fails after all, and the mists prevent the capsule from leaving. Perhaps the pod vanishes into the deep void between stars and never returns. Perhaps it lands in another crystal sphere - but that is a story for another time.

### ALTERNATE ENDING: THE HAPHAZARD

At your discretion, and if you prefer a Deus-Ex Machina style ending, you could allow the characters (presuming they have time remaining), to travel down the mountain with the escape pod and attempt to repair the Haphazard, restoring it to working order. This will take time, magic and skill, but is not outside the realms of possibility. As written, the Haphazard is beyond saving, but it's your game and your rules. If you want to fix the ship, go ahead! There's worlds of possibilities for characters with a spaceship.

## APPENDIX:

### SHIP LOG

\*\*\*FILE CORRUPTED\*\*\*

-CRASHED IN THIS STRANGE PLACE, HOPING TO FIND MEDICINE. I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. THE MISTS CANNOT TRAVEL THE PHLOGISTON, IT'S DOCUMENTED IN MORDEN-

\*\*\*CORRUPTED\*\*\*

-WE HAVE NOT HEARD BACK FROM THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE SINCE THEY FOUND NATIVES. I DO NOT HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE FOR AID, THEY SEEM TO BE TRIBALISTS AND SAVAGES-

\*\*\*CORRUPTED\*\*\*

SPARKWRIGHT HAS SUCH A PECULIAR LOOK IN HIS EYES NOWADAYS. I WONDER IF THE SICKNESS HAS GOT TO HIM TOO. THE INCUBATION PERIOD FOR IT SEEMS TO VARY FROM PERSON TO PERSON, AND NONE OF OUR CURES SEEM TO HAVE MADE THE SLIGHTEST DIFFERENCE. IF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE DON'T MAKE IT BACK WITH SOME KIND OF EFFECTIVE MEDICINE SOON, I FEAR WE ARE ALL LOST.

\*\*\*CORRUPTED\*\*\*

THEY ARE ARGUING AGAIN. SPARKWRIGHT WANTS TO USE THE SPELLJAMMING HELM FOR A NEW MACHINE. WORSE, HE WANTS TO CANNIBALIZE THE ESCAPE PODS, TOO. HE CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO DO IT, THANK NEBELUN THE CAPTAIN CAN SEE THE SENSE IN STAYING PUT FOR NOW. I

\*\*\*CORRUPTED\*\*\*

-MERGENCY! EMERGENCY! CAN ANYONE OUT THERE HEAR ME? THIS IS AN SOS EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION FROM THE HAPHAZARD! OH, GODS. HE'S COMING. PLEASE, PLEASE SPAR-

\*\*\*LOG ENDS\*\*\*