



BEYOND THE WORLD'S EDGE



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A Shadow of the Demon Lord Supplement

BEYOND THE WORLD'S EDGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..... 3

Using this Book	3
What You Need	3

CHAPTER I: BEYOND THE NYXIAN OCEAN..... 5

Isle of Skulls	5
Rakeshames	5
Seething Islands.....	7
Things from the Depths	7
The Incisor of Encephaladus	8
Gabalans	8
The Vault of the Mad God.....	9
Nephilim	9

CHAPTER II: BEYOND THE DESOLATION..... 11

Drowned	11
Devourer	11
Shattered Lands	12
North Watch.....	13
Isle of the Apes	13
Shadow Mount.....	14
Ys	15
Ysien Horror	16

CHAPTER III: BEYOND THE AURORAL OCEAN... 17

Ocean's Deep.....	17
Iron Isles.....	18
Paradise, New Hope	19
The Unclean	19
Freebooter's Cove	19
The Forever Storm	20
The Isle of Song	20
Siren	21
Sea Giants	21
The Ark at World's End	22

CHAPTER IV: EREMEA: THE LOST LAND..... 23

Rediscovery	23
Basic Features	23
Ruined Nations.....	23
A Savage Land	25
Bizarre Inhabitants	25
No Faeries	25
The Lost Lands.....	25
Swelterwood	25
Village of Bones	26
Mountains of Fear and Flame.....	26
Mountain of the Necromancer	27
Seawatch	27
Forest of Screams.....	28
Harrowtop	29
Saltblight.....	30
Xiid, the Sinking City	30
Ashen Wastes.....	31



INTRODUCTION

One of the things I never wanted to do in *Shadow of the Demon Lord* was to use thousands and thousands of words constructing a world. That statement might seem strange, since it's in the introduction of what is, to some degree, a setting book. But here's the thing: I don't like having to read a couple of hundred pages to understand a setting before I can run a game there. I want just enough information to get me started, to agitate my brain cells enough so that I can spin out a story at the table to entertain and challenge my players.

I believe a setting should inspire and not dictate. Setting material might surprise you, make you laugh or recoil in disgust, fill you with wonder or dread, but above all, it should give you what you need to make the world your own to explore. You don't need a massive tome explaining where they make the bricks in that building over there or how much barley some wretched little town produces. Why? *Shadow of the Demon Lord* exists to help you tell apocalyptic stories set in a fantasy world. The details might be interesting to some people, but they also get in the way. They're like little bullies, pushing you around and filling your head with trivia that has nothing to do with using horrifying monsters and perilous situations to make your players sweat.

I can see you leaning back, arms crossed, fixing this page with a suspicious look. Yes, this is a setting book for *Shadow*, and it grabs the edges of the map and drags them back to reveal what sort of weirdness lurks beyond Rûl. On the following page, you'll find a great map by my friend Cecil Howe that shows you where the locations described in this book *could* be, relative to Rûl, in the waters and lands north, east, and west of that beleaguered continent. We depict the locations not to lock them in place in some sort of canonical way, but to give you a starting point. You can move the lands around, replace them, or remove them altogether. Hell, you can even grab the locations and sprinkle them into another world, either one of your creation or someone else's labor of love.

The point is that I don't really care how you use this book. I'm filling it with what I hope will be interesting, disturbing, inspiring, and revolting places for you and your friends to use and explore. So, relax, brace yourself, and have fun!

USING THIS BOOK

Beyond the World's Edge reveals a bit more about the world of Urth, showing off new islands, new lands, and other places that can be havens for exploring groups or destinations for characters in search of adventure. Also, this book is loaded with new creatures, denizens of the places described. The book has four parts, each focused on a different part of the world.

Chapter I looks west, into and beyond the waters of the Nyxian Ocean. In this chapter, you'll find information on the horrifying Vault of the Mad God, the Seething Islands, the Incisor of Encephaladus, and plenty of other weird sites.

Chapter II takes you north, beyond the Desolation, to a place no one has dared to explore since the Men of Gog withdrew into the wastes after rejecting the dominion of the faerie folk. The Shattered Islands stretch away from the punishing wastelands, each isle infested with terrifying monsters, shuffling undead, and the ruins of ancient civilizations.

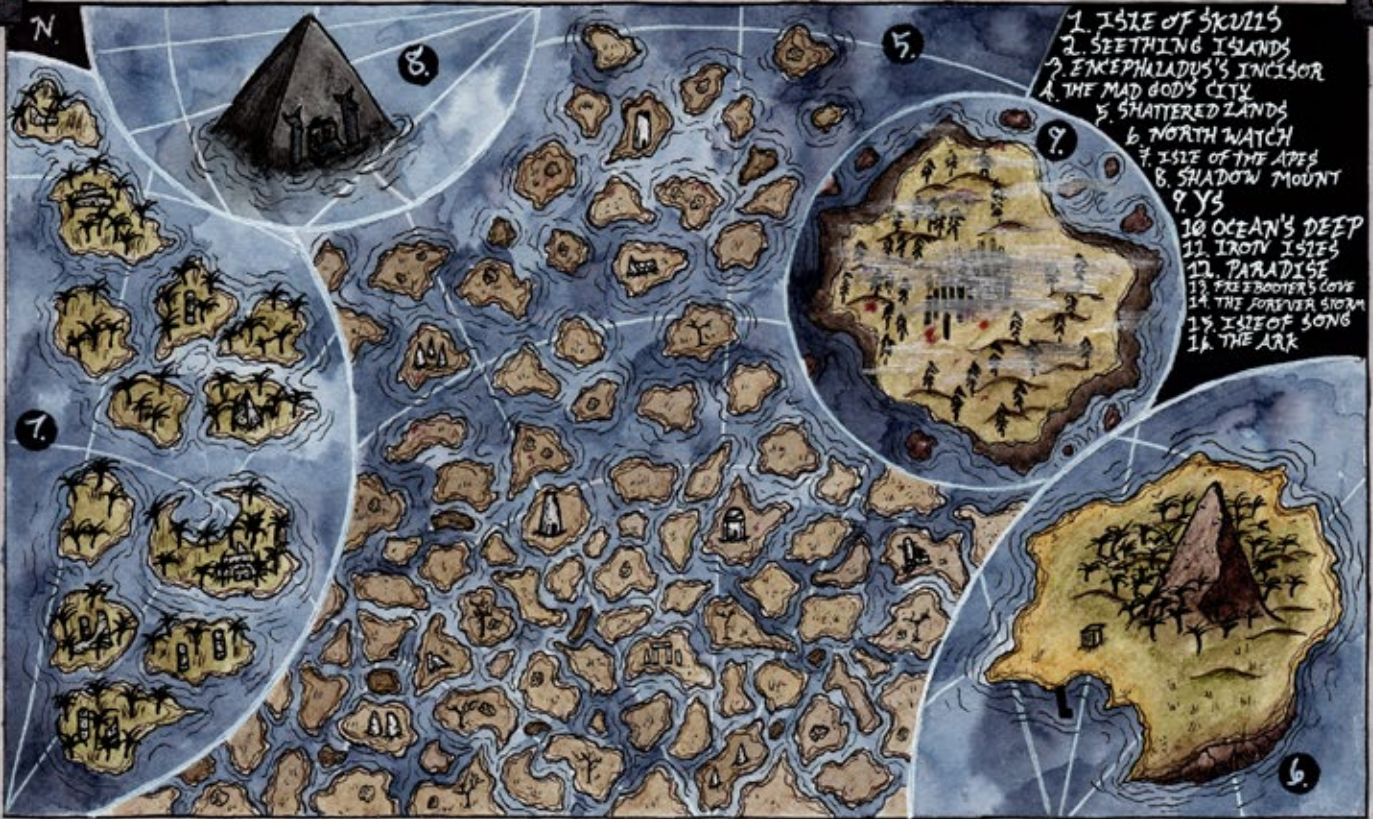
Chapter III looks east to reveal what lies beyond the Pirate Isles—from Freebooter's Cove to the island of New Hope, the Forever Storm, and the weird Ark at the World's End, a structure that fell from the heavens in a ball of fire.

Chapter IV unveils a new continent far to the east, called Eremeä. This place is the ancient homeland of the Edene people, and the horrors that drove them remain untamed. Explore at your own risk!

WHAT YOU NEED

This book was made possible only by the generous support of those people who backed the *Shadow of the Demon Lord Freeport Companion*. While not expressly needed to use this book, the *Companion* contains all the rules you need for running voyages and conducting battles between ships, both of which could be invaluable for exploring the lands revealed in this book.

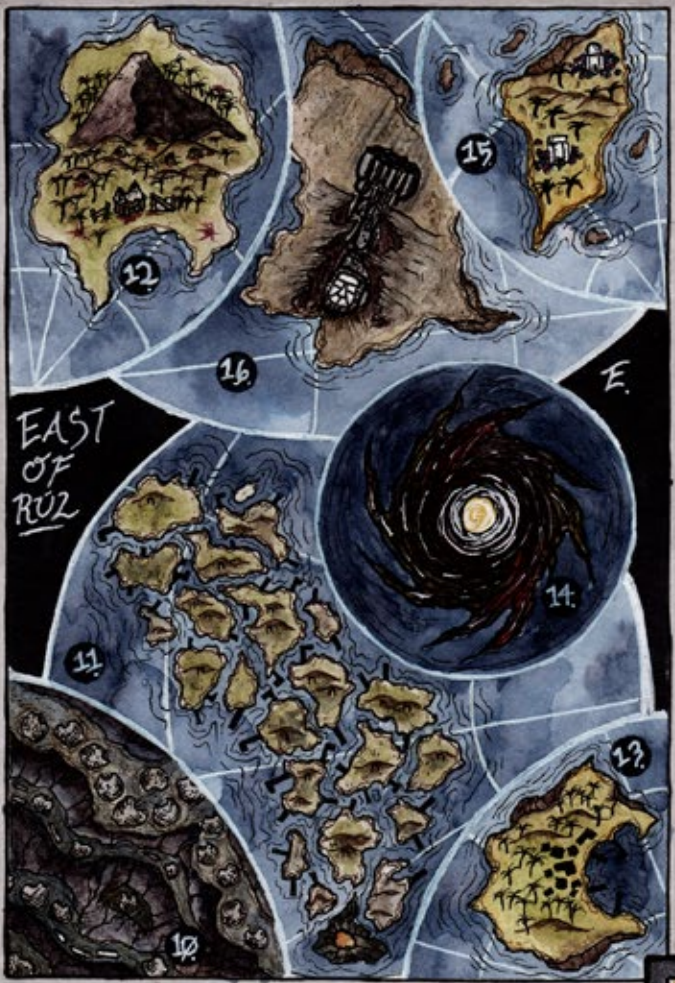
Some of the game elements used in this book are taken from products other than *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. Spells from the Telepathy tradition are described in the *Demon Lord's Companion*. More information about gnomes can be found in *Children of the Restless Earth*. The text also mentions works that have more information on certain topics.



- 1 ISLE OF SKULLS
- 2 SEETHING ISLANDS
- 3 ENKEPHALADUS'S INCISOR
- 4 THE MAD GOD'S CITY
- 5 SHATTERED LANDS
- 6 NORTH WATCH
- 7 ISLE OF THE APES
- 8 SHADOW MOUNT
- 9 YS
- 10 OCEAN'S DEEP
- 11 IRON ISLES
- 12 PARADISE
- 13 TREE & BOOTER'S COVE
- 14 THE FOREVERA STORM
- 15 ISLE OF SONG
- 16 THE ARK



WEST
OF
RUZ



EAST
OF
RUZ

CHAPTER I: BEYOND THE NYXIAN OCEAN

Many natural barriers cut off access to the Nyxian Ocean from the Empire. Few passes lead through the Shield Mountains, and grim, dwarfen defenders guard the major routes. Beyond them lies the Endless Steppe, where the centaurs greet trespassers with arrows and spears. To the south, the dark lands of the Kingdom of Skulls and Blötland make travel to this mysterious body of water dangerous under the best conditions. So what is known about the Nyxian Ocean comes mainly from mad mariners who sailed around the Desolation and fierce jotun explorers who were eager to find new lands to plunder. But even they consider the dark, cold waters to be cursed, and sailing them to be the height of folly.

The Nyxian Ocean deserves its reputation. Strange and nasty monsters call the waters home and take interest in ships passing above them. Krakens, sea serpents, spirits that dance among the waves, and other denizens pose grave threats to sailors and ships, as evidenced by the body parts and the occasional bits of wreckage that wash up on the ocean's shores. Even ships that manage to navigate the perils of the ocean find lands beyond that are equally inhospitable. It's a wonder that anyone dares to sail these waters.

ISLE OF SKULLS

The Isle of Skulls is a large island found some 800 miles northwest of Blötland. Roughly 400 miles long and 240 miles wide at its widest point, it has a hilly landscape blanketed by pine forests and thick mists that never quite burn off, even on the hottest days. Getting to the island aboard a ship is no easy feat. The dark, swirling waters near the shore hide jagged rocks that can tear out the bottoms of approaching boats, leaving them hung until the waves dash them to pieces. Cracked bones litter the slimy rocks that make up its shores, detritus left to be picked over by crabs and gulls.

The landscape remains much as it has always been, a wild and untamed place where mammoths, bears, elk, wolves, and other creatures dwell. Civilization has never really managed to get a foothold here, even though the island is inhabited by a people, of sorts. These are the rakeshames, a degenerate race of people mired in the darkness of barbarism who revere monstrous gods and perform vile rituals in their worship.

Despite the rakeshames' hostility toward outsiders, the promise of fabulous riches lures sailors and explorers into the island's interior. Bits of gold

and uncut gems lie all over the island, ignored by the degenerate people who live here, waiting to be collected up and taken away. The rakeshames are watchful for intruders, waiting until they have burdened themselves with treasure before striking. And once they have sacrificed and eaten their prisoners, they scatter the wealth across the ground once more, festooning the body of their dark goddess with the riches she deserves.

RAKESHAMES

The primitive inhabitants of the island are believed to be descended from one of the lost tribes of the First People who never made landfall on the continent. Thousands of years of inbreeding and isolation have reduced them to something less than human. Rakeshames have humanoid bodies covered in hair so thick that it approaches fur. They have small eyes set deep beneath pronounced bone ridges. Their broad noses with flaring nostrils lie flat against their faces, and thick, chisel-like teeth fill their wide mouths. Most rakeshames forgo clothing, though some wear gold spikes or hoops piercing their ears, noses, and lips. They use crude weapons, spears and clubs for the most part.

Rakeshames communicate in a language that sounds like coughing, barking, and grunting.

RAKESHAME

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human

Perception 8 (-2)
Defense 11; **Health** 13; **Insanity** 1d3; **Corruption** 1
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 12
Savagery When a rakeshame becomes injured, it makes attack rolls with 1 boon for 1 round.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Spear (melee or short range) +3 with 1 boon (1d6)
Bow (long range) +1 with 1 boon (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Surging Violence When a rakeshame deals damage to a target and causes it to become injured, the rakeshame can use a triggered action to attack the same target.

HOSTILE AND HUNGRY

Rakeshames regard intruders on their island as prey, and when they discover outsiders, they move quickly to take them alive. They hold prisoners in wooden cages until night falls and then cook them alive on pyres, dividing the charred meat among the warriors who provided it.

WARRING TRIBES

Twelve tribes of rakeshames, each within a few hundred members, occupy the Isle of Bones. Each tribe controls a piece of the island. The borders between territories are marked with wooden stakes, and these locations are frequently guarded or patrolled by the tribes on either side. Scattered across each tribe's domain are tiny villages of wattle and daub huts roofed with pine needles and branches.

Each tribe has a chieftain who wins the position by killing the previous chieftain. These tribal leaders maintain their status by waging war against other tribes, which distracts their rivals within the tribe and brings favor from their gods to the community. Frequent episodes of violence between tribes help keep the population of each group in check, such that no single tribe ever grows populous enough to dominate the others.

RAKESHAME CHIEF

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)

Defense 11; **Health** 23; **Insanity** 1d3; **Corruption** 3

Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 12

Savagery When a rakeshame becomes injured, it makes attack rolls with 1 boon for 1 round.



ATTACK OPTIONS

Spear (melee or short range) +4 with 1 boon (2d6)

Bow (long range) +1 with 1 boon (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Surging Violence When a rakeshame deals damage to a target and causes it to become injured, the rakeshame can use a triggered action to attack the same target.

PROFANE GODS

Rakeshames worship two gods, Gorbolod and Mashra, and they believe that all life sprang from the union of these entities. Gorbolod is depicted as a monstrous bipedal mammoth sporting an engorged phallus and wearing a necklace of skulls. Mashra is represented by no image or idol; rather, the rakeshames consider her to be the world-mother, believing they live upon her body.

The rakeshames invoke Gorbolod when they hunt and fight, and call upon their goddess to ease childbirth and when harvesting her bounty from the land. Twice a year, the rakeshames of all tribes gather at a great, reeking sinkhole they call the World Womb, at the island's center. A holy site to the rakeshames, it is considered neutral ground. Here, the rakeshames' shamans, called listeners, lead the tribes in a ritual that involves the sacrifice of two children from each tribe and the eating of their bodies. Then, the tribes pass the rest of the night in an obscene orgy, filling the darkness with the screams, shrieks, and grunts of their enthusiastic couplings.

Listeners are second only to the chieftains in the hierarchy of the tribes. They earn their status by being chosen by other listeners to descend into the World Womb and remain there for a week and a day, during which time Mashra whispers to them the secrets of magic, creation, and the future. The experience always leaves these petitioners changed; when they emerge, their eyes are wide with madness and their fur has been turned white from the terror brought about by these epiphanies.

RAKESHAME LISTENER

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 human

Perception 9 (-1)

Defense 10; **Health** 17; **Insanity** 1d6 + 1; **Corruption** 3

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 12

Savagery When a rakeshame becomes injured, it makes attack rolls with 1 boon for 1 round.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Club (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Savage Howl When the listener becomes injured, each rakeshame it chooses within short range can use a triggered action to make an attack with a weapon.

Wrath of Gorbolod The listener can use an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to move one rakeshame up to half its Speed. If the listener used an action to use Wrath of Gorbolod, the target can make one attack at any point during its movement.

MAGIC

Power 1

Battle *augmented attack* (2), *mighty attack* (1)

SEETHING ISLANDS

The Seething Islands rise from the western waters of the Nyxian Ocean, about 600 miles due west from the Firepeaks. They comprise a dozen islands, each no more than a few miles in diameter. Jungle covers them all, thick undergrowth dotted with colorful, sweet-smelling flowers. The trees hold singing birds, while the undergrowth hides all manner of insects and rodents, along with wild pigs rooting in the rich soil for grubs and tender shoots.

Such a rich place offers a refuge for ships sailing the seas as well as a perfect place to found a new settlement, as evidenced by the numerous vessels that have dropped anchor in the waters around the islands, and the few buildings that stand near the shores. These places are all devoid of habitation, however, with no sign of what happened to the ships' crews or the islands' inhabitants. It is as if everyone vanished.

The reason for the disappearances reveals itself when night falls. A hush falls over the islands: Birds go quiet in the trees, and beasts retreat into their cramped burrows to wait out the danger. The waters around the shores begin to bubble and froth, and out of them come forth horrors from the depths, lurching onto dry land to find food.

THINGS FROM THE DEPTHS

Lurking in the waters around the Seething Islands are a host of horrid creatures of wildly varied appearance, from weirdly warped humanoids to lumps of flesh that use tentacles to pull themselves across the ground. These things from the depths are unnatural in every way. Most have a profusion of rolling eyes, tongues, digits, and puckered orifices decorating their surfaces, making it seem as though they were assembled by some deranged god in the throes of a fever dream. The only trait these monsters have in common is their hunger for flesh and blood. And when the hateful sun leaves the sky, they can leave the safety of the waters to resume their hunt.

Things from the depths make an awful racket while hunting. They chirp and pipe from their multitude of orifices, the sounds forming a bizarre song that infects the minds of creatures who hear it. As these victims go insane from listening to the music, their higher mental functions shut down, reducing the creatures to relying on pure instinct alone. When a victim's mind finally buckles under the assault, the creature transforms fully and joins the awful host.

The island's animal inhabitants are spared from this effect, seemingly unaffected by the music, but they are fodder for the monsters nonetheless—the night air is filled with their screams and sounds of panicked flight as the animals struggle to escape the unnatural predators. If the things from the depths cannot find suitable fare, they turn against each other, the stronger ones ripping the bodies of the weakest members into bloody gobbets that they then greedily stuff into their maws.

Sunlight harms these monstrosities, so before the dawn of a new day, the things withdraw from the island, returning whence they came, to wait until night falls again.

Apply the following modifications to any monster of a Size you choose to represent a thing from the depths.



THING FROM THE DEPTHS

DIFFICULTY INCREASE BY ONE STEP

Add horrifying trait, change descriptor to monster

Defense +1

Speed Add swimmer trait

Slimy Body A thing from the depths takes half damage from fire.

Breathe Water A thing from the depths breathes water as easily as it breathes air.

END OF THE ROUND

Song of the Deep The thing from the depths issues a piping, hooting noise when not submerged in a liquid. Each creature that is within short range of at least one thing and has an Intellect score of 7 or higher must make a Will challenge roll. The creature makes the roll with 1 bane for each thing beyond the first within short range. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Insanity. While the creature is frightened as a result of gaining this Insanity, the creature has a -5 penalty to Intellect.

A creature driven mad by gaining Insanity in this way transforms into a thing from the depths under the GM's control. The creature drops whatever it is wearing and carrying as it becomes a monster of its Size with these additional traits. The creature retains none of its original statistics, and the transformation is permanent.

Burned by Sunlight The thing from the depths takes 3d6 damage if it is in an area lit by sunlight.

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

The jotun believe the reason for the horrors and strangeness found in abundance in the Nyxian Ocean stems from the ocean's proximity to the edge of the world. Their legends declare the world to be flat, with a defined edge. Exactly how far away the edge is, no one knows for certain, but at that place, the waters simply cascade off the edge of the world in a great, thundering fall, beyond which lies the starry Void and all the terrors it contains. One myth proclaims that when all the waters of the world have spilled off the edge, the end times will begin.

THE INCISOR OF ENCEPHALADUS

Hovering over the waters of the Nyxian Ocean is an enormous tooth, cracked and yellowed, nearly a mile high and half a mile wide. This bizarre sight, utterly baffling to the jotun and centaurs who have viewed the tooth when it draws to within sight of the mainland, is the fabled Incisor of Encephaladus. Word of its existence has slowly spread across the Empire and has now reached the mages of the Tower Arcane, who through their divinations and their histories are aware of its origins.

Centuries ago, Encephaladus led the mages of the Tower Arcane, the great floating citadel that soars over Caecras, the capital of the Empire. As archmage, it fell to him to lead the other mages, to guide their research and to oversee the instruction of their apprentices. Encephaladus had other interests, however. He was obsessed with the nature of the soul, and, after consulting several forbidden tomes, he concluded that mortal souls were made from the same stuff as demons. His "new" ideas and erratic behavior led his chief advisors to stage a coup to oust him. They stripped from him the white robes of his office and ordered him

exiled from the Tower Arcane. But before he could be driven out from the place, he opened a hole to the Void and stepped through, never to be seen again.

The Void's hostile environment was no match for the former archmage's magical prowess. For many years, Encephaladus explored the darkness, binding to his service a host of demons to aid in his search for the source of all souls. He never discovered what he was searching for, but he did find an enormous incisor—seemingly all that had survived from the remains of some titanic beast that had been sucked into the darkness. The mage quickly discovered that inside the tooth were numerous passages and chambers, with the bones and detritus of its previous inhabitants scattered throughout them. In his unhinged mind, Encephaladus believed the tooth could be transformed into a new Tower Arcane, and so he used his magic to bring the tooth with him back to Urth, somewhere far to the west of Rûl.

Upon his return to the world, he imbued the tooth with magic so that it would float in the same manner as his lost home, the Tower Arcane. He made plans to travel to Caecras and avenge himself against the mages, and began by willing the giant tooth to fly over the Nyxian Ocean toward the continent.

What the mad mage did not realize was that hundreds of bizarre monsters infested the deep tunnels. After lying dormant for centuries, they were awakened by the tooth's arrival into the mortal world. Ravenous, they boiled out from the depths, spilling into the upper tunnels and chambers where they found the former archmage and made short work of him. Now these creatures, called gabalans, scuttle through the gloomy passages, gnawing on the walls to assuage their hunger until the tooth finally reaches dry land and they can quit the place to feed on the people they find there.

The tunnels and chambers in the tooth are arranged in thirty loose levels that start at the tip of the incisor and descend to the broken root at the bottom. Encephaladus lived in the upper chambers, where rest many enchanted objects and a relic or two, including his fabulous flying vehicle—a giant sentient bird made of bronze. The lower passages have a maze-like quality, made of dark, reeking tunnels that twist and turn at random. The Incisor of Encephaladus is a dangerous place, but one that offers great rewards for those who would risk its many perils.

GABALANS

Gabalans come from a world the Demon Lord devoured eons ago. They survived the cataclysm by clinging to the corpse of an enormous beast that tumbled into the Void and then stayed alive by slowly consuming the beast they had infested, chewing through bone and flesh until only a single tooth remained for them to use as a lair, at which point they became dormant.

Gabalans scuttle about on six legs, which end in four-fingered hands that let them move as easily across walls and ceilings as they do on floors. Their ovoid heads, perched atop long, wattled necks, feature nine toothy maws that snap and slaver.

Gabalans do not speak.

GABALAN

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 horrifying monster

Perception 12 (+2); blindsight
Defense 16; **Health** 26; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 5
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12; climber
Immune gaining Insanity; blinded

ATTACK OPTIONS

Teeth (melee) +3 with 1 boon (4d6 plus Rend Armor on attack roll 20+)

Rend Armor A target wearing medium or heavy armor must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bone or have its armor become damaged. While a target wears damaged armor, it grants creatures attacking its Defense 1 boon on their attack rolls. If the armor was already damaged in this way, it is instead destroyed.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Maddening Screech The gabalan issues a piercing scream from its nine mouths. Each creature that is not a monster inside a 10-yard-long cone originating from a point in the gabalan's space and that can hear the scream must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bone or gain 1d3 Insanity and become deafened for 1 minute.

THE VAULT OF THE MAD GOD

The wreckage of a ruined continent climbs above the waves some 3,000 miles west of the Endless Steppe. Much of the coastland has been shattered, now consisting of jagged stones jutting up from the waters. Many of these outcrops, large and small, bear carvings, alien script, and sculptures that depict grasping hands, screaming faces, knots of tentacles and serpents, and sexual organs. The upthrust rocks stand so close together that it is impossible to navigate the waters between them in anything larger than a rowboat; in some places, one can easily jump from one stone to the next.

The broken debris surrounds a titanic square block of black stone—a full 50 miles on a side—that rises 500 feet above the sea. Here and there, rusty channels in the stone leak colorful liquids that run down the sides like blood from a wound.

A low parapet of black stone crowns the block. Hanging from stone rings on hooked chains around the perimeter are the ribcages from skeletons the size of giants. Sculpted stone faces stare out from the walls, their agonized expressions a warning to trespassers.

Beyond the walls lies a maze of passages, the walls defined by rectangular monoliths that seemingly

grow from the black stone foundation, for there are no seams or signs of construction. Although the structures are all different sizes, they share a common shape. One might be 150 feet tall, 100 feet wide, and 50 feet thick, while the one next to it is 51 feet tall, 34 feet wide, and 17 feet thick. Rectangular windows, each 9 feet by 6 feet by 1 foot, placed sporadically across the surfaces grant access to the towers' interiors. The purpose of these towers is unclear, for the hollow interiors stand silent and empty.

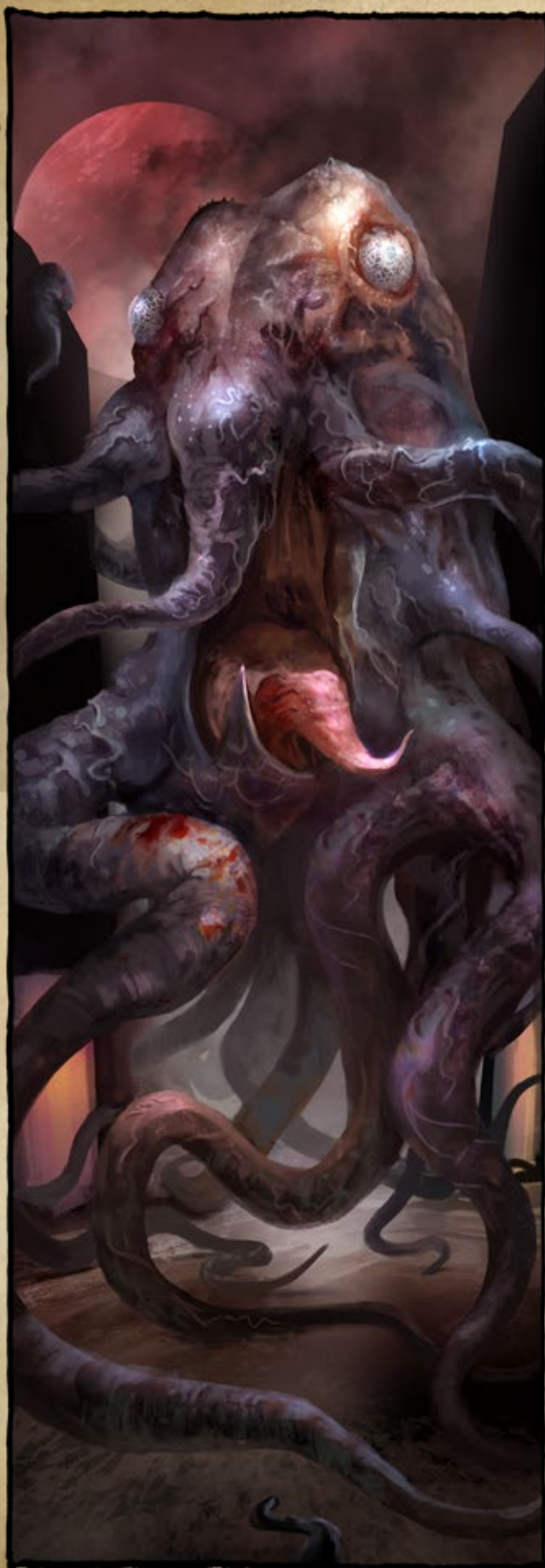
The haphazard layout of the streets makes navigating the place a challenge. Roads lead between and around the buildings, their width and direction changing with little warning. Persistent explorers who find their way through the maze might eventually reach the center—an open square 100 feet on a side. A great golden seal, 50 feet in diameter, sits in the ground at the plaza's center. The seal consists of a ring of sinister glyphs displaying depraved acts such as human sacrifice, cannibalism, and coupling with monsters, surrounding the horned skull of a demon in bas relief.

In a vault beneath the seal is imprisoned the Mad God, a demon prince of hideous aspect that once terrorized the world in a time long forgotten. Powerful wards protect the seal from being tampered with. Any creature that touches the seal must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 3 banes or gain 3d6 Insanity as the Mad God stirs in its vault and fills the mind of the hapless target with a vision of itself. If this Insanity gain would cause the creature to go mad, the creature takes damage equal to its Health and dies.

The Mad God wants to be freed and constantly strains against its prison, pervading the surrounding area with mental impulses. Any creature that sleeps for more than an hour anywhere in the plaza has a dream in which it witnesses the ritual torture and sacrifice of one hundred and one virgins, their bodies piled in a heap upon the seal. When the final victim is sacrificed, the seal melts away and releases a being of blinding beauty and staggering power. Upon waking, the creature must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 3 banes or gain 2d6 Insanity. If this Insanity gain causes the creature to go mad, it becomes obsessed with releasing the Mad God and makes every effort to do so. If the seal is broken by the means revealed in the dream, a **demon prince** (see *The Hunger in the Void*) comes clambering out of the vault to prepare the way for the Demon Lord.

NEPHILIM

The Vault of the Mad God is not as empty as it seems to be during the day. When night falls, the original inhabitants of the place, the nephilim, manifest, revealing themselves in all their alien hideousness. Thirty-foot-tall ghostly blobs of quivering flesh dotted with swiveling eyes and sagging maws, they lurch



between the buildings on long, twisting tentacles, pulling themselves along the streets to thwart any who would approach the seal and threaten its wards.

Creatures within a few yards of a nephilim hear gibbering, moaning, and shrieking sounds in their minds. This telepathic chatter consists of the thoughts that are broadcast by a nephilim, which the creatures use to communicate with each other, and others find unnerving. Creatures other than nephilim have no way to make sense of these phenomena.

NEPHILIM

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 10 horrifying spirit

Perception 17 (+7); darksight

Defense 17; **Health** 100; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** —

Strength —, **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 17 (+7)

Speed 12

Immune damage from cold, disease, fire, and poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, blinded, deafened, diseased, fatigued, immobilized, poisoned, slowed

Insubstantial A nephilim takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of difficult terrain.

Protect the Seal A nephilim makes attack rolls against creatures within short range of the seal or standing on the seal with 1 boon, and its attacks against such creatures deal 1d6 extra damage.

Naturally Invisible A nephilim is invisible to creatures other than spirits, animals, and children. While invisible, the nephilim cannot use its attack options or special attacks.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Tentacle (melee) +7 with 2 boons against the target's Agility (6d6 plus Tormenting Visions)

Tormenting Visions A creature must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or gain 1d6 Insanity. While frightened from gaining Insanity in this way, the creature is dazed.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flailing Tentacles The nephilim attacks up to five creatures it can reach with its tentacles.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Dark Manifestation If the nephilim is in an area not lit by sunlight, it uses an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to become visible. It remains visible until it uses an action to become invisible once more.

END OF THE ROUND

Maddening Presence Each living creature within 10 yards of at least one nephilim and that can see it must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1d3 Insanity.

CHAPTER II: BEYOND THE DESOLATION

The Desolation marks the northern edge of the known world. It is a daunting wasteland of shifting sands, sucking mud, and dust storms that rage for days on end. Here and there, enormous black pyramids rise out of the land, bearing mute witness to the time centuries ago when these places were home to the denizens of this land. As if the natural hazards were not bad enough, undead infest the landscape—tattered, withered remnants of forgotten armies, foul warlocks that have refused the agonies of Hell, and the victims of these endless wastes, lured by promises of treasure and other prizes that might be contained in the pyramids.

As nightmarish as the Desolation can be, technological developments have taken some of the difficulty out of navigating this place. Airships offer swift passage across the wastes, avoiding the undead hordes and the other hazards faced by overland travelers, but these vehicles face troubles of their own. Dust storms can reach miles into the sky, and their vicious winds can bat down flying vessels. In some places, earth bergs float in the skies. Although usually avoidable, they sometimes house dangerous flying creatures such as **drakes** and **dread mothers**. So even with the inherent advantages of flying, many airship captains are reluctant to risk their vessels on such ventures into the Desolation.

Much of what is known about the world north of the wastes comes from explorers who sail the waters around the Northern Reach, following the eastern coast until they leave the map's edge. Although such a route is far safer than attempting a crossing of the wastes, the Desolation's deadly nature reaches across and through the waters. Corpses float in the water and sometimes crawl up the sides of ships to attack sailors. Strange monsters might fly out from the wastes to harry passing vessels, while cruel sirens sing to lure sailors to their dooms.

For more information about this region, check out *Tombs of the Desolation*.

DROWNED

The rotting undead remains of sailors and others who lost their lives at sea are collectively referred to as the drowned ones. These horrors are most common near the shores of the Desolation, their bloated bodies floating on the water's surface, to be carried wherever the waves take them. The drowned might sometimes bump into passing ships and climb up the sides to feed on the living.

DROWNED

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 frightening undead

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight
Defense 8; **Health** 12; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 6
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 8 (-2), **Intellect** 6 (-4), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 8

Immune damage from disease and poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, dazed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned, stunned

Bloated When a drowned takes 8 damage or more from a weapon attack, it instead takes damage equal to its Health and then explodes in a 2-yard radius, dealing 1d3 damage to everything in the area. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll and takes no damage on a success.

Sluggish A drowned can take only slow turns and cannot use triggered actions.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Teeth (melee) +2 with 1 boon, or 2 boons against a grabbed target (1d6 + 1, or 2d6 + 1 against a grabbed target, plus Drowned Disease)

Drowned Disease A creature must make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the creature becomes immune to Drowned Disease from any creature until it completes a rest. On a failure, the creature becomes diseased. While affected by Drowned Disease, a creature cannot heal damage and, if it becomes incapacitated, it dies and 1d6 rounds later stands up as a **zombie**. Each time an affected creature completes a rest, it makes a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the creature removes the diseased affliction.

END OF THE ROUND

Shuffling Advance The drowned moves 1d3 yards toward the nearest living creature.

DEVOURER

Rotting meat in the waters around the wastelands attracts sharks, but a steady diet of corrupted flesh triggers a transformation in these creatures, turning them into undead. Devourers resemble sharks, but have rotting bodies, and they darken the waters around them with their corruption.

DEVOURER

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 frightening undead (aquatic)

Perception 10 (+0); darksight
Defense 12; **Health** 34; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 1d6
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 5 (-5), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12; swimmer

Immune damage from disease and poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, dazed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned, stunned

Blood Scent Creatures of flesh and blood that have 1 damage or more and are within extreme range of a devourer cannot become hidden from it.

Cloudy Water Filth lightly obscures the water within 3 yards of a devourer.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Teeth (melee) +4 with 2 boons (3d6)

SHATTERED LANDS

The Desolation extends some 1,500 miles northward from the Northern Reach, at which point it breaks apart into an enormous archipelago known as the Shattered Lands.

Most of the Shattered Lands are small islands, not many of them bigger than a half-mile in diameter. Like the wastes to the south, they might be sandy or rocky, and nearly all are barren, unable to sustain any life other than birds and insects. Larger islands, of which there are few, tend to be rocky and sport a few scraggly trees, hardy grasses, and brush. These places might have rodents, wild pigs, lizards, or monkeys, but nothing much larger.

The islands would be devoid of interesting features if not for the presence of ruins. Broken towers, wall sections, and foundations still stand on the larger islands, indicating that this area was settled at some time in the distant past. Now, roving bands of undead such as **boneguard**, **barrow wights**, and **zombies** make these ruins dangerous to explore, but hidden in the rubble are clues about the people who once lived here.



Some islands hold ruins of obvious faerie origin, with delicate stonework covered in vines, images of grinning faces, and nature scenes. These places have fallen into ruin, and all that remains are fragments that hint at their lost beauty.

On other islands, the ruins are features left behind by the trolls, and the petrified inhabitants still stand where they died. These structures are just as grim and as uninviting as they were when the faeries fought the trolls for dominance. Murals on the walls reveal what life was like in the lands that would become the Desolation, showing forests, deep valleys, lakes, and rivers. Other murals depict the struggles against the faeries and the lengths to which the trolls went to defeat their enemies: the creation of the giants, the use of dark magic, and the binding of demons, to name a few.

Although many of the ruins have been picked over by scavengers, underground complexes lie beneath some of the larger fortifications. Those places hold ancient vaults filled with gold and gems, enchanted objects, and relics, along with strange creatures and ancient guardians charged with protecting these things.

MOSPAL

Many isles in the Shattered Lands are littered with the withered husks of foolish sailors and explorers who sought to make landfall and explore these places. Examining the remains reveals that the bodies have been sucked dry through deep holes burrowed into the bodies. Veteran sailors take this sign as a warning to stay away, for these corpses were victims of the mospali, a race of degenerate people that sustain themselves by feeding on the vital fluids of living creatures.

A mospal appears almost human, with loose, wrinkled skin hanging from its bones, and an ugly, mouthless face dominated by a flaccid proboscis that ends in a hollow, keratin-sheathed spike. The creature stands about 3 feet tall and has a pair of thin, transparent wings extending from fleshy knobs on its back. Thin limbs end in clawed appendages that it uses to cling to its victim. When a mospal attacks, its proboscis engorges like a phallus, and it punches this appendage into its victim's body to drink its fill of the creature's blood and other fluids. The more it drinks, the fatter it becomes, until its body bloats and takes on a reddish color.

Mospali live as wild animals and have no language.

MOSPAL

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1/2 frightening monster

Perception 11 (+1)

Defense 14; **Health** 20; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 2

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 7 (-3), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 10; flier

Immune damage from disease; gaining Insanity; diseased

Blood Burst If the mospal has a bonus to Health from its Blood Drain attack when it becomes incapacitated, the mospal's body explodes, showering everything within 3 yards with blood.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Proboscis (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 + 3 plus Bleed on attack roll 20+)

Bleed A living creature that has an organic body begins to bleed from the wound, taking 1d6 damage at the end of each round until a creature uses an action to stanch the wound.

Claws (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 plus Grab)

Grab The mospal can attempt to grab the target as part of the same attack.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Blood Drain The mospal plunges its proboscis into the body of one creature of flesh and blood that it has grabbed. The target takes 1d6 + 3 damage and is subject to the Bleed attack option. In addition, the target becomes grabbed for 1 round. Each time the mospal uses Blood Drain, it gains a +2 bonus to Health and takes a -1 penalty to Defense. When the mospal has used Blood Drain five times, it cannot use this attack again for 1d3 hours. At the end of that interval, the mospal loses the penalty to Defense and the bonus to Health.

NORTH WATCH

Ten years ago, an explorer named Alland Freet set sail from the city of Gateway in the Northern Reach with a fleet of six ships loaded with colonists and mercenaries, planning to establish an outpost off the eastern coast of the Desolation. He envisioned the community as a launch point for further exploration of the islands and the area beyond. After contending with unfavorable winds and several attacks by the drowned (page 11), the fleet dropped anchor in a bay off the coast of an island that Freet named North Watch.

Freet chose the island for its size and natural resources. A steep-sided mountain rose from its center, and dense jungle covered its foothills and sides all the way down to a wide, sandy beach. Although he could discern little in the way of wildlife, the place seemed perfect for Freet's plans, and so he and his people disembarked and prepared to begin taming the wilderness. The would-be settlers did not notice until too late the thick webs that stretched across the treetops overhead. Inside these webs lurked a host of **shadow weavers** that descended and ambushed everyone who came ashore.

Only a few sailors from the expedition survived and found their way back to civilization. Each told of enormous spiders that dropped from the heights to snatch the settlers into the air, as the jungle was filled with their screaming. Passing ships have reported that five of Freet's six vessels are visible from a distance, still floating in the bay where they dropped anchor, but all are in states of extreme neglect and decay. No evidence exists that any other ships have approached the island with the intent of staying.

In fact, the shadow weavers control the island still and consider all trespassers fair game. Throughout

the island, one can still find bits of bone, rusting weapons, and rotting leather—all that remains of these monsters' victims.

ISLE OF THE APES

On the westernmost edge of the Shattered Lands, where the Firepeaks spill their lava into the boiling seas, stands a chain of a dozen islands full of lush vegetation and various kinds of wildlife. A traveler who approaches their shores can just pick out crumbling structures strewn about the interior of the isles.

These ruins were left by neither the faeries nor the trolls, but by a civilization of an age comparable to both. Hieroglyphic carvings, mosaics, and other imagery depict a race of humanoid snakes, with long, thin bodies supported by short limbs. Scraps of writing that remain are in an ancient tongue, one that scholars associate with the serpent people of old. The writing tells of a cataclysm brought about when the people turned their backs on their god in favor of the King in Yellow. In return for their wickedness, their god struck them with an apocalypse that sent their civilization sliding into the sea.

After the islands' original inhabitants were long gone, a new people settled into the jungles and staked their claim on the ruins. The creatures known as the bestia now control the island, guarding their territory against giant spiders and terrible lizards (large or larger **animals**), as well against explorers who ignore the warning signs the bestia have put up to deter trespassers from venturing into their lands.

BESTIA

The bestia (introduced in the *Demon Lord's Companion*) are a race of aggressive and intelligent apes found on the edges of civilization, settling in places abandoned and lost to humanity. Bestia despise humans, seeing them as competition, and so they mark their territory with the severed heads of human invaders mounted on poles. When heads are in short supply, the bestia carve demonic faces into the trunks of trees and smear the images with blood to deliver the same warning. Intruders are captured and dragged back to the ruins, where they are offered up to primal, savage gods that demand regular blood sacrifices.

A bestia stands 12 feet tall and weighs hundreds of pounds. As aggressive and powerful as ordinary bestia are, they pale before the might of the bestia chiefs and shamans. Chieftains grow up to 18 feet tall, thanks to the favor of their gods, while shamans commune with the spirits to divine the will of the gods and channel their power to embolden the tribe's warriors. Wild, superstitious, and exceedingly dangerous, bestia resolve most of their disputes through violence.

Bestia communicate in a crude tongue, peppering their speech with trills, clicks, and hoots.



BESTIA CHIEF

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening bestia

Perception 14 (+4); shadowsight
Defense 16; **Health** 120; **Insanity** 1d3 - 1; **Corruption** 0
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; climber

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +6 with 1 boon (2d6)
Teeth (melee) +6 with 1 boon (4d6)
Rock (short range) +6 (2d6 + 3)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Rend Limb from Limb The bestia chief attacks twice with its claws. A target that takes damage from both attacks takes 4d6 extra damage.

Leap Attack The bestia chief jumps up to a number of yards equal to its Speed and then attacks with its claws and with its teeth, making each attack roll with 1 bane. This movement does not trigger free attacks.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Snapping Fangs When the bestia chief takes damage, it can use a triggered action to attack with its teeth.

Prodigious Leap The bestia jumps 1d6 + 3 yards. This movement does not trigger free attacks.

BESTIA SHAMAN

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 bestia

Perception 13 (+3); shadowsight
Defense 13; **Health** 50; **Insanity** 1d3 + 1; **Corruption** 1
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; climber

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff of the Ancestors (melee) +5 with 1 boon (3d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Spirit of the Bestia The shaman slams the butt of its staff on the ground, sending a shock wave out in a 5-yard radius from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area that is not a bestia must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take 8d6 damage and fall prone. Each bestia in the area makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon for 1 minute. Once the shaman makes this attack, it must wait 1 minute before it can use it again.

Bestial Roar The shaman roars, affecting a 5-yard-long cone originating from a point in its space. Each creature in the area that is not a bestia must get a success on a Will challenge roll or become frightened for 1 minute. While frightened in this way, the creature is also deafened.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Prodigious Leap The bestia jumps 1d6 + 3 yards. This movement does not trigger free attacks.

MAGIC

Power 1

Spiritualism *spirit of vengeance* (2), *bear spirit* (1), *wolf spirit* (1)

SHADOW MOUTH

An enormous pyramid of black stone rests on the floor of the ocean and rises above the waters to a height of a few hundred feet. It stands as a grim, salt-crusted monument to the Men of Gog, who built it to house the spirit of the Witch-King if the unthinkable

should occur and the King be vanquished. Shadow Mount stands at the center of the Shattered Islands, its nearest neighbor more than 10 miles away. It is almost as if the other islands shrank away in fear from the dark structure, and the waters around are clogged with the bloated corpses the drowned (page 11).

The pyramid has two entrances. A pair of 20-foot tall statues (**huge constructs**) depicting humanoid with the heads of jackals stand guard on either side of double doors set in the side facing south. On the northern face is an enormous circular opening, 50 feet in diameter, that drinks in the light. The inside appears to be a pool of perfect darkness. When night falls, **shadows** slither out from the opening to crawl over the pyramid's surface and shriek their hatred at the stars in the sky.

The interior of the structure comprises over fifty discrete floors connected by steep staircases and divided into chambers that house the Witch-King's closest servants and direst treasures. Diabolical traps protect most of the chambers within, some that maim and others that suck the souls from mortal bodies. Demons that have been bound to the place for nine thousand years roam the passages, whimpering from the pain that Ashrakal's magic inflicts upon their monstrous forms. In some locations, undead stand at attention, awaiting their master's return so they might march against the living once more.

The Receptacle of Ashrakal lies somewhere in the pyramid's bowels. According to legend, the animated remains of one hundred ogres hold aloft the ceiling in this chamber, and in the center of this space rests the Witch-King's sarcophagus. When Eronymous killed the Witch-King, its body dissolved into a mess of black serpents that slithered off in all directions. The surviving Men of Gog believe that these serpents converged at this unholy site and now writhe inside the Witch-King's tomb.

Ys

The Tower Arcane that floats over Caecras is one of the great wonders of the world. It drifts in the sky, a mysterious structure controlled by a secret society of mages who have watched over Caecras for hundreds of years without ever taking part in the city's fortunes. Many have speculated about where these mages came from and for what purpose, but for a long time none of the theories had the ring of truth. In recent times, however, some facts have come out as a consequence of the orc uprising, during which many secret documents were brought to light.

The evidence indicates that in the days following the death of the Witch-King, strangers came to the shores of Rûl, dressed in colorful clothing that revealed nothing of their true appearance, so fully were they garbed. Though they were foreigners, they spoke with perfect fluency the tongues of the young Empire and

could make themselves understood by everyone with whom they spoke. Claiming to have come from the fabled land of Ys, they sought a new realm in which to settle. They set out across the continent, performing wonders as they went, until they reached Caecras and received an audience with Eronymous.

The Ysiens sought a refuge, a place where they could preserve their knowledge for all time and one that had the protection and blessing of the city. In exchange, the Ysiens would share their knowledge of magic and instruct worthy pupils in occult philosophy. The emperor, thinking he would gain powerful magical allies, welcomed the mages into his city. After coming to an accord, the Ysiens fashioned the Tower Arcane, using magic unheard of in the Empire, and set it aloft high above the city, where it remains to this day.

Many thought the Ysiens came from the east, but old salts who had sailed beyond the Desolation knew of another, likelier place north of the Shattered Lands, a realm cursed by the gods and one that promises madness and death to anyone who dares go there.

The rumors about the cursed land are more or less accurate. The Ysien set sail from the place nearly a thousand years ago to escape the tragedy that they had brought upon themselves through reckless magical experimentation. After their diviners predicted that a calamity would befall them, the Ysien sought to shift their island nation away from Urth and into another reality. Rather than whisk the island and its people to some other place, their magic brought that other reality to where they were, so that the realities mingled, letting loose impossible things to run amok. Desperate to contain their error, the survivors sealed away their homeland inside a magical mist and then fled south.

The spell that sealed the island remains in effect, covering it with a thick mist from which the monsters cannot escape. No matter how much they move over the island, they can never be dispersed, and all areas of the island are heavily obscured.

The landscape is hilly and covered in forest. At about the center of the island rise twenty-one slim towers, each marked with a triangle of a different color. The colors identify to which wizard each tower belonged. The surviving Ysiens fled without taking much of their belongings with them, and so these towers remain much as they were, their contents layered with thick dust. Constructs still roam the halls, guarding the towers against intruders, and many of the spires feature magical traps to destroy would-be thieves.

The ordinary people who lived on Ys, a population numbering less than 30,000, lived in small hive-like structures around the towers' bases. Although the spires have withstood the ravages of time and the monstrous invasion, the homes of the lesser peoples have not—they are crumbled and decayed, the interiors strewn with their bones and debris.



YSIEN HORROR

The reality accessed by the Ysiens' magic was a dimension unlike anything in the mortal world, a place that had its own laws of nature. Thus, when the two realities merged and then snapped apart again, the other realm left behind a host of strange creatures, alien by any mortal standard. The spell that

surrounds the island trapped those things here. Over the intervening years, these creatures have preyed on each other, and the most powerful of them have risen to the top of the food chain.

Ysien horrors, as these creatures are known collectively, run the gamut in terms of size and appearance. All have physical qualities similar to those of ordinary animals, but are bizarrely changed in some fundamental way. One creature might have a bear's body covered with teeth in place of fur, while a fluttering, bat-like creature could be a winged eye with a long tail tipped with a toothy maw.

The mist contains the monsters, but does not prevent people from outside the mist from entering it and exploring the island. The Ysiens planned to return one day, after the monsters died off; in the meantime, they expected that the monsters would vanquish anyone who sought to rob their towers. Hence, the Ysiens made it possible to pierce the mist from outside, but exceedingly difficult to escape.

The mist envelops the island, extending 20 yards out from the shoreline and rising to a height of 50 yards. The mist prevents the monsters from leaving of their own volition. If one is pushed or magically removed from the mist, the monster takes damage equal to one-quarter of its Health at the end of each round until it returns to the mists. If this damage would cause the monster to become incapacitated, it dissolves into a puddle of foul-smelling slime.

To represent the Ysien horrors, you can use the statistics boxes for monsters as presented in *Shadow* with the following modifications. *Of Monstrous Mien* offers additional ways to customize monsters.

YSIEN HORROR DIFFICULTY INCREASE BY ONE STEP

Add the horrifying trait

Perception Replace darksight (if the creature has it) with truesight

Defense +1

Variable Movement Roll a d6. On a 1, the creature gains the climber trait. On a 6, the creature gains the flier trait.

END OF THE ROUND

Frantic Attack Roll a d6. On a 6, the Ysien horror can use a triggered action to attack.

MISTS OF MADNESS

The mists that imprison the Ysien horrors also test the sanity of creatures that explore them. Visitors to the island see and hear things that aren't there, experience unsettling sensations, and feel a mixture of panic and desire warring in their hearts. At the end of each hour a creature spends in the mists, it must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gain 1 Insanity.

CHAPTER III:

BEYOND THE AURORAL OCEAN

The humans who live on Rûl feel a connection to the Auroral Ocean, a sense of longing for what might lie beyond the horizon and a feeling of inexplicable loss when they peer out over the waters. That so many people experience these sensations, regardless of culture or ethnicity, makes sense since much of humanity is believed to have come from lands beyond the ocean, such as Eremeä (see Chapter IV), or some land even farther away. These dimly remembered places are the subjects of legends and myths distorted so much in the telling and retelling that it has become almost impossible to discern the strands of truth in the tapestry of invention. These stories romanticize the sea and lure some explorers east, who usually find only their doom beyond the edge of the world.

Although mountains and xenophobic centaurs make reaching the Nyxian Ocean difficult, if not impossible, the people of Rûl have free access to the Auroral Ocean. Sea lanes connect such far-flung places as Blötland and the Kingdom of Sails, or Balgrendia and the Pirate Isles. Merchant ships bring goods from Gateway in the Northern Reach down to the Nine Cities, where the vessels pick up slaves, foodstuffs, arms, and more bound for the Patchwork Isles. The Freehold of Nar sends ships south with ore, competing with the metals extracted from the Iron Isles far to the east.

While the waters east of Rûl are every bit as perilous as those found to the west, ships and sailors have had more success venturing beyond the Kingdom of Sails and the Pirate Isles, both of which mark the eastern extent of most peoples' knowledge of the world. The presence of these maritime nations makes possible extended forays into the deeper seas, and both employ fleets to keep the sea lanes clear of pirates, monsters, and other hazards. Their efforts, along with those of the Confederacy of the Nine Cities, protect vessels going to and from the continent, making exploration safer and making such expeditions possible through the abundance of both ships and sailors.

The Auroral sees more traffic than the Nyxian and is generally free of the dangers that plague those who venture off the well-traveled routes. Even so, routes that go east beyond the Pirate Isles see little traffic, since ships that venture that way have a habit of never returning. Some ships do head east on well-protected sea lanes, bound either for the Iron Isles and the ore they produce, or other safe ports offered by pirate lords and ladies, fabled treasures, and countless other enticing lures. Yet, as one might expect, danger and

adventure await those who test their luck by sailing beyond the world's edge. These waters are home to all kinds of strange creatures, some of which are no longer alive; islands infested with freakish monsters; and cold-blooded pirates who show no mercy to those they find in open water.

LANDS IN SHADOW

Several of the coastal locations along the Auroral Ocean have been detailed in the Lands in Shadow series of digital supplements. To learn more about these places, check out *Kingdom of Sails*, *Freeholds of Nar*, *City of Death*, *City of Chains*, and other entries in this series.

OCEAN'S DEEP

The undines, water elementals that were created by the genies long ago, have outposts throughout much of the Auroral Ocean. They make their homes in coral reefs, kelp beds, and sometimes the hulks of sunken ships. The largest settlement of undines, called Ocean's Deep, clings to the side of the continental slope about 300 miles southeast of Kem, the Golden City.

Built from stone and living coral, Ocean's Deep has been home to several thousand undines for millennia. The structures of the place have roofs to camouflage the city when viewed from above, but otherwise there are no walls or divisions to mark the edge of one's territory from another's.

In recent years, the undines have begun visiting settlements on the surface. They portray themselves as traders, offering pearls, fish, and found items, but they ask for few goods in return, since the cloth, leather, metal, and other materials favored by surface dwellers rarely remain viable in the depths. Instead, the undines seek rumors and information about the happenings on the continent. The undines have sensed a growing darkness spreading across the world above their heads and previously had thought to stay in the depths and steer clear of the troubles of the surface dwellers. But after bizarre demonic and monstrous creatures began to swim out of the depths, the undines had a change of heart. They set out to learn more about the coming Shadow and determine, once and for all, if they should rise up and join the struggle or hunker down and wait for it to pass.



People rarely visit Ocean's Deep, since the city lies far below the waves at a pressure surface dwellers can't tolerate. From time to time, undines bring rescued sailors to convalesce in the safety of their community, after dosing them with the Gift, an elixir that allows anyone who imbibes it to breathe underwater and survive at great depths. Polite and deferential guests are welcome to stay for as long as they wish. Those who don't behave properly have their Gifts rescinded, with predictable results.

IRON ISLES

A string of twenty-three islands stand in an arc 300 miles east of the Pirate Isles. Each one was formed by volcanic activity, and the southernmost island is a still-active mound of wounded black rock, with lava oozing from its top and sliding into the boiling sea. The dormant northern islands are now quite green and home to diverse wildlife. Until recently, most people thought them attractive but worthless. Then, fifty years ago, two prospectors from Kem, Arnus Field and Reubald Tanaka, set sail to find precious metals in the far-flung islands. Although they didn't find gold or silver, they did find iron—and lots of it.

At that time, the dwarfs had held a virtual monopoly on iron for centuries, and the price for steel had been steadily climbing as the holdfasts dealt less with human

lands and more with tending to their own troubles with troglodytes and monsters. The prospectors knew they could make their fortunes selling iron for a fraction of the dwarfs' price, but only if the entrepreneurs could find cheap labor. Luckily for them, labor aplenty could be had in Dis, the City of Chains. The pair returned to Kem, took out loans from the Vault, and used those funds to buy equipment, an army of slaves, and ships to transport them. It took five years to get the mining operation under way, but now the isles are yielding iron ingots in great quantities, which are then shipped to ports in the Confederacy for distribution across the continent.

This productivity comes at a terrible cost in lives. Because slaves are cheap and the gold has been pouring in, Field and Tanaka have no incentive to keep their slaves alive or to provide anything more than the bare necessities for survival. Regular arrivals from Dis replace the dead and maimed, so even if a dozen die in a day, the operation hardly notices.

Field and Tanaka liquidated much of their properties in Kem to fund the operation and have built estates for themselves on the lush northern islands. The two men entrust the day-to-day mining operations to a staff of well-paid overseers and rarely leave their playgrounds nowadays. Some of their underlings are aware that Field hosts obscene orgies with willing and unwilling participants, some of which are no longer alive. Tanaka

has been acting strangely ever since discovering a strange relic during his explorations.

It's just a matter of time before the slaves revolt against their overseers, so bad are the conditions. Although the slaves outnumber the masters and guards, there's a great deal of wealth to be had from the iron, so any effort to liberate the islands will end in terrible bloodshed, even if the slaves ultimately succeed.

PARADISE, THE ISLE OF NEW HOPE

Untold numbers of people have been spared an early death through the ministrations of the House of Healing, whose members work to fight disease and contain outbreaks when they do occur. Some diseases, however, are so virulent that even skilled healers are thwarted.

A century ago, such a disease appeared in the populations of several villages on the shores of Mercy Lake in the Holy Kingdom. The sickness caused hideous tumors to appear all over its victims' bodies, bent their bones out of shape, and otherwise ravaged them until they became disfigured.

Fearing the epidemic would spread to elsewhere in the province, the Matriarch quietly had the survivors removed from their communities and transported to an island 750 miles east of Crescent Bay that she had dubbed New Hope. The refugees did their best to survive, fashioning shelters and foraging for food to supplement the meager supplies they had been given. But if they expected the Matriarch to send further aid, they were sorely mistaken—in fact, she had no such intention and expected the colonists to die off soon after they had been abandoned.

But die off they did not. As the disease ravaged the colony, the people went mad from the horror of the experience. They began to worship the wreckage their flesh had become, believing it to be a gift from a being they called the Shuddering One. Their faith in this entity, which some believe to be an aspect of the Demon Lord, enabled them to cope with the excruciating agony of their affliction. As these deformed individuals descended into madness, they abandoned their original shelters to live in caves. Now, the wooden buildings stand totted and sagging, their roofs pocked with holes.

Because the colony of New Hope was established in secrecy, some pirates and merchant ships have approached the island over the years and seen no reason not to drop anchor and make landfall to explore it. Unfortunately for them, the visitors get more than they bargained for when the unclean find them.

After a number of such incidents, word has begun to spread about the island, and ships now generally avoid it. This news has reached the Matriarch herself. As a result, fearing the bad publicity that might

arise if the cult's part in founding the colony became known, she has been in talks with the Hammers of Justice (see *Uncertain Faith*) on a plan to eliminate the unclean and erase any sign that they ever existed.

THE UNCLEAN

The descendants of the afflicted people who were exiled to this small island bear the signs of the plague evident in their monstrous forms. Although the unclean are still human, their warped bones, the tumescent nodules that dot their flesh, and the open, weeping sores they display make them appear to be monsters.

Oddly, one out of every six children born to the unclean is resistant to the sickness and thus looks like a normal human. The other unclean abuse and scorn these "ugly ones," and use them to lure outsiders onto the island, where they can be hunted and killed for food.

The unclean speak the Common Tongue.

UNCLEAN

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 horrifying human

Perception 8 (-2)
Defense 11; **Health** 17; **Insanity** 1d6; **Corruption** 9
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 9 (-1)
Speed 10

Shuddering Eruption When an unclean becomes incapacitated, the tumors and growths covering its body explode. Each creature within 1 yard of the unclean that is not itself an unclean must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or become diseased from being splashed by the stuff.

A creature diseased by Shuddering Eruption must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane whenever it completes a rest. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Corruption. If the creature's Corruption reaches 9 while it is diseased in this way, the creature becomes an unclean, gaining this trait and removing the diseased affliction.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Spear (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6)

FREEBOOTER'S COVE

For several decades, the people of the Pirate Isles have sought to put their criminal past behind them and enter the world stage as a legitimate maritime nation. As a result, the folk of the isles have become less and less friendly to the sort of people who founded their community, and many pirates have begun looking elsewhere for a friendly port. Luckily for them, they don't have to look far—an enterprising orc pirate named Grubthumb has established a settlement on what he believed to be an uninhabited island 560 miles southeast of the Pirate Isles.

Using the wreckage of ships dragged from the nearby waters, he and his crew built a small community in a bay along the east side of the island. When they had finished, he named the place Freebooter's Cove and put out the word that all pirates and buccaneers were welcome. In the time since then, the place has grown into a significant outpost.

Grubthumb has a problem, however. The island is inhabited by more than the animals living in the jungles—the entire place is alive. The orc made this discovery when he descended into a cave and found the rocky exterior of the walls gave way to flesh on the inside. And when he poked this substance with his blade to confirm his suspicions, the whole island shook for a moment. Grubthumb quickly realized that the sandy beaches, the palm trees, and the rolling hills of the highlands were all part of the shell of some titanic creature, and he now fears that if the creature awakens, it will drag him and his dreams down to the bottom of the sea.

THE FOREVER STORM

The great explorer Eremo Mandelson set sail five hundred years ago to find the mysterious Kalasan homeland, a mission that had been attempted at various times but had always failed. After assembling a fleet of ten fast ships and gaining the backing of the emperor, Mandelson ventured into unknown waters. Ten years later, one tattered ship, the *Intrepid*, limped back into Crescent Bay, its sails torn and its masts broken. Of the famed explorer, there was no sign.

The ship's crew, of which a mere ten members had survived, had gone mad. They muttered and



shrieked about demons of the deep, islands teeming with cannibals, and beautiful women whose song lured sailors to their deaths. They spoke of becoming caught in an enormous storm that destroyed much of the fleet. In the thunderheads, they could see violet lightning, and the boiling clouds formed monstrous faces whose laughter boomed like thunder. Only by chance did their ship escape the destruction, but not without suffering extensive damage and loss of life.

Since the Mandelson expedition, other voyages have traveled east into uncharted waters, only to find themselves eventually beset by the same storms. Some vessels made it back, but most went missing, devoured by the violent weather. A halfling engineer named Fortunado undertook the most recent expedition, heading out from Lij on an airship. He flew one way and another above the clouds, searching for the heart of the storm. He finally discovered a column of flashing, multicolored lights reaching up into the heavens as if from the eye of a giant hurricane—an enormous beam that he believed was either responsible for the storm or had emanated from it. Few believed Fortunado's tale when he returned, for he, like so many others, appeared to have gone mad from the experience. Nonetheless, he claims he has told the truth and that in that horrible light, he spied the face of god.

In fact, the center of the storm, which measures several hundred miles across in its entirety, marks the point where the Kalasan fleet originally entered the world. As many have suspected, but none have ever proved, the Kalasans came from a world far from Urth and were caught in a magical mishap that plucked them from their world and deposited them in this one. The storm acts as a sort of tunnel through the Void, connecting both worlds. It has continued to rage for more than eight hundred years and shows no sign of abating.

THE ISLE OF SONG

Not every peril faced by those who journey east wears a monstrous mask. Some come in beautiful guises, singing sweet music to those they encounter, such as the sirens who dwell in the shifting Isle of Song. Although the enchanted island moves from place to place with little warning, veteran sailors have learned to watch for the telltale mists that herald its coming and to listen for the eerie music that accompanies it. Too many have succumbed to the music and have found their lives taken from them by the cruel sirens that create it.

The Isle of Song can't be found by searching for it, because it drifts in and out of reality all the time, slipping into a hidden kingdom and returning as the sirens will it. Often, the island appears in a swirl of mist near some passing ship, and as the mist clears, an island paradise is revealed, with shores of white sands, jungles thick with colorful flowers and musical birds, and strange buildings of white stones, looking much like temples. It is from these buildings the sirens emerge to sing to the sailors and lure them to their doom.

SIREN

As the nisse did on the continent, the sirens of the sea remained in the world when the other faeries withdrew to their hidden kingdoms. They refused to surrender the world to a people they believed should be their subjects. So they stayed on their islands, living as they had for thousands of years. They sung their laments, channeling their grief and rage into the music, until that music, as beautiful as it sounded, acquired a sinister quality, one that could beguile mortals who heard it. The sirens, after discovering their dread power, used their songs to draw mortals into their clutches and tear them to pieces.

Sirens appear as faerie maidens of unsurpassed beauty, except for the crimson claws at the tips of their fingers and the sharp teeth in their mouths. They wear little in the way of clothing, but sometimes drape their nubile bodies with gossamer gowns woven of silk harvested from enormous spiders.

Sirens speak Elvish, a language that enhances the otherworldly beauty of their songs.

SIREN

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 faerie

Perception 14 (+4); shadowsight
Defense 14; **Health** 10; **Insanity** 3; **Corruption** 4
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10; swimmer
Immune damage from disease; charmed, diseased
Iron Vulnerability A siren is impaired while in contact with an object made from iron.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d3)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Beguiling Song The siren sings for as long as she concentrates. Each living creature within long range of the siren that can hear the song must make a Will challenge roll. For every three sirens that sing, a target makes the roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the target becomes charmed until it can no longer hear the song. While charmed in this way, the creature is also compelled. A siren typically orders a creature it compels to move itself into danger. On a success, the creature becomes immune to any siren's use of Beguiling Song until it completes a rest.

SEA GIANTS

From the decks of ships, strange sights can sometimes be seen in the waters, but few have reported anything stranger than to spot a giant walking on the ocean floor. Sea giants are thought to have wandered into the ocean from Blötland long ago, becoming able to adapt to their new watery environment thanks to troll magic.

Sea giants are a menace to coastal communities, as they sometimes stumble into fishing nets and swim up to drag down ships that pass over their heads. Hunting down and killing a sea giant is not an easy task by any means, so most crews cooperate in watching out for them and passing on news about any sightings. Many sailors pour out a measure of rum over the side of their ship to appease these giants—a practice that sometimes actually works, leading the drunken celebrants of the Pirate God to adopt it in appeasing their own mad deity.

Standing nearly 60 feet tall, a sea giant looks like an enormous, corpulent human, hairless and rarely clothed. Most sea giants have a weird pattern drawn in their skin that resembles a nautical map. It's thought that each of these maps marks the places a giant has visited during its travels. Sea giants might wear large ships on their heads as hats when they swim, making the ships appear to be floating on the sea.

Sea giants speak Trollish.

SEA GIANT

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 10 giant

Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 9; **Health** 320; **Insanity** 1d3; **Corruption** 1d3
Strength 19 (+9), **Agility** 9 (-1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 12; swimmer

Colossal A sea giant takes half damage from creatures half its Size or smaller. It cannot be charmed, compelled, dazed, immobilized, slowed, or stunned by effects originating from creatures half its Size or smaller.

Crushing Footfalls When a giant moves into a space on the ground on dry land occupied by a creature, the creature must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or take 3d6 damage and fall prone. If the creature is already prone, it takes 1d6 extra damage. A creature makes this roll once per round, regardless of how many times a giant moves through its space.

Giantfall When an effect knocks the giant prone, the giant's body covers an area on the ground on dry land that is as long as it is tall (pick a number between 10 and 20 yards) and as wide as its Size, starting at the end of its space and extending from the source of the effect that knocked it prone. Everything in the area takes damage equal to 2d6 × the giant's Size. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to the giant's Size. On a success, the creature takes half the damage and moves to the nearest open space outside the area. On a failure, the creature becomes trapped under the giant's body.

A creature trapped in this way is prone, blinded, immobilized, and totally covered. It can use an action to make an Agility challenge roll with a number of banes equal to half the giant's Size. On a success, the creature moves half its normal Speed in a direction it chooses. If it moves out of the area, it is no longer trapped and it removes the afflictions. Otherwise, the creature remains trapped.



Water Breathing A sea giant can breathe water as easily as it breathes air.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +9 with 3 boons (6d6 + 5 plus Smash Down)

Smash Down A target half the giant's Size or smaller must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or fall prone.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Mass Attack Each creature in a cube, 4 yards on each side, centered on a point within 8 yards of the giant must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or take 6d6 + 5 damage and be subject to Smash Down.

THE ARK AT WORLD'S END

Two weeks ago, a fiery red star streaked across the skies above Rûl and disappeared somewhere in the east. Many who saw its flight thought it a harbinger of doom, and fear spread in its wake. A fell omen it was indeed, for that crimson object was no star, but a great ship that had escaped the Void to crash onto Urth, bringing with it many wonders and many more evils.

As unusual as a spacefaring vessel might be to the people of Urth, it was only a matter of time before an event like this would happen. The Demon Lord has destroyed countless worlds, and the detritus of those universes tumbles through the endless dark. The Ark hailed from one of these other universes, one that had

drawn the Hunger's malign attention. The inhabitants of that world filled the massive starship with as many people and supplies as it could hold and set off into the Void. Ultimately the vessel escaped destruction, but it could not escape the Void. For eons, the ship drifted through the darkness, its cargo held in stasis, until it slipped into Urth's universe through a crack in reality and became caught in the planet's gravitational pull, causing it to crash on an island far to the east of the continent.

Now, many days after the crash, smoke still spills from the Ark's smoldering wreckage. It lies half buried in a deep trench, running nearly 10 miles across the center of the island. The impact triggered a wildfire that wiped out much of the surrounding forest and nearly all the island's indigenous wildlife. The ship's hull, still mostly intact, is over a mile long and a half-mile high. The nose is covered by rocks and debris, and the tail, with its bank of twenty engines, rests at ground level. Fissures, scorch marks, and numerous punctures venting steam mar the surface, which also includes a profusion of spines, fins, and dangling dishes. Every now and then, an explosion inside causes the structure to rattle and shake, as fires leak out from cracks in the hull.

The interior can be accessed by any of the breaks in the hull. Inside is a maze of passages and chambers spread across eight different levels. The remains of the crew litter the vessel, all of them looking all

too human. Some coffin-like structures enclose the slumbering remains of would-be colonists, while other containers hold bizarre animals and plant specimens.

Although the crew was killed, the ship's mechanical servants (**small and medium constructs**) survived to make repairs, contain the damage, and fight off the demons that still stalk the corridors of the ruined ship, trying to tear apart the slumbering passengers who survived the crash.

Those who explore the ship might discover all kinds of technological wonders amid the wreckage. Most of these items ought to function as enchanted objects,

but you can also introduce the following prizes, in addition to ones of your creation.

Laser Pistol: A laser pistol must have an energy cell to function. An energy cell allows the weapon to be fired 1d20 + 80 times. The device counts as an off-hand ranged weapon that deals 3d6 damage and has the range (long) property.

Laser Rifle: A laser rifle must have an energy cell to function. An energy cell allows the weapon to be fired 1d20 + 80 times. The device counts as a two-handed ranged weapon that deals 4d6 damage and has the range (long) property.

CHAPTER IV: EREMEÄ: THE LOST LAND

Nearly two thousand years ago, the God-Queen Umessa led the armies of Edene across the Auroral Ocean to conquer Rûl. A force of nearly 80,000 warriors clad in bronze armor and armed with spears and shields, they made short work of the First People, driving many to the continent's fringes and enslaving the rest. Umessa established a kingdom, ranging from the continent's northeastern edge to what is now known as the Low Country in the south, one that would persist for many centuries until the Men of Gog came out from the wastes to avenge the deaths of those the conquerors had slain.

History is silent on why the Edene came to Rûl. Some have suggested it was out of naked ambition, a desire to add riches to Umessa's coffers and bring glory to her name. This story has served for many generations, offering justification for the Kalasans' subjugation of what was left of the Edene when they made their own bid to seize Rûl. But modern historians, aided by evidence unearthed by recent explorers, suggest a different story.

The war that the God-Queen brought to Rûl was not one driven by lust for territory or slaves; rather, it was one of necessity—for monsters had overrun their homeland, and to stay there meant extinction. The search for a new land explains why the Edene warriors brought with them twice their numbers in noncombatants, which included craftsmen, laborers, and others who would be needed to rebuild their civilization.

REDISCOVERY

Centuries ago, explorers rediscovered the Edene homeland, 3,000 miles northeast of the Desolation in the northern hemisphere. What they found was a land scarred by old wars and crowded with strange creatures. Forays into the continent came at a steep cost. Unfamiliar diseases wiped out camps, while hideous monsters snatched unwary explorers, dragging them off to die messily. The towns and cities left by the Edene now stood in ruins, somewhat reclaimed by nature. The few descendants of those who were left behind have turned savage and primitive, aggressive and violent to perceived invaders.

BASIC FEATURES

Eremeä is a large continent in the northern hemisphere. Civilization has all but retreated from this land, leaving it wild and untamed. It has much in common with Rûl, including similar flora and fauna, but there are some important differences as well.

RUINED NATIONS

None of the ancient civilizations that once thrived in Eremeä have survived over the centuries; their people have fled, died out, or become savage barbarians. Much of their artifice remains, however—one can find evidence of the past people everywhere, from overgrown roads to crumbling bridges, rotting buildings, weathered monuments, and the occasional city emptied of all but the ghosts of the dead. In these places, great treasures lie hidden: vast quantities of gold and gems, exquisite sculptures, and relics of magical power.

● MTNS OF
FEAR &
FLAME



- 1 SKULL PEAK
- 2 GHOSTWOOD
- 3 FOREST OF SCREAMS
- 4 HARROWTOP
- 5 XIID
- 6 SALT BLIGHT
- 7 CITY OF BONE

500
MILES

A SAVAGE LAND

Most of the Edene fled from the continent when it became clear that staying would mean the end of their civilization, but some people stayed behind, hoping to weather the storm. Their descendants still live in these lands, but they are thousands of years removed from the heights of civilization and now live as simple hunters and gatherers, warring tribes fighting for their survival in a hostile landscape.

BIZARRE INHABITANTS

Aside from the primitive people, the continent is also home to many strange inhabitants. Some are degenerate humans, having been warped by strange magic; others are monsters, mad horrors spawned by whatever disaster drove out the Edene.

NO FAERIES

Eremeä escaped the wars between the faeries and trolls because neither people ever lived here. The elemental beings barred the faeries from entering these lands, preserving them for their genie masters until they faded from the world to shield it from the Void. The elementals—salamanders, gnomes, and the rest—also died out long ago, and so the human civilizations had little experience with dealing with nonhumans of any kind.

THE LOST LANDS

Eremeä stretches from the equator to the cold waters of the North Sea. The continent boasts a varied landscape, rich in natural resources, with high mountains, thick forests, and grasslands that stretch as far as the eye can see.

SWELTERWOOD

A wall of dense jungle greets visitors to Eremeä's southern tip, then spreads inland across uneven and treacherous terrain up to and around the southern arm of the Towers, a range of mountains that bisects the continent. Rains drench the Swelterwood, bringing the punishing humidity that grips the jungle. An army of biting and stinging creatures haunts the emerald gloom under the canopy. Leeches thrive in standing pools of brackish water, while venomous snakes, enormous reptiles, and large spiders all do their part to

make any expedition into the Swelterwood as costly and unpleasant as possible.

Although the jungle is thoroughly wild and untamed, the remains of older settlements can be found throughout. Here and there, vine-choked ziggurats break through the canopy, while old walls, their stones slimy, encircle the rotting remnants of towns and villages. Bizarre idols with monstrous visages warn trespassers away, while crooked obelisks carved with pictographic bas-reliefs hint at the bloodthirsty society that lived here.

Three thousand years ago, the Empire of Maran ruled the southeastern corner of Eremeä. A warlike people, the Maran fought often against the Edene, dragging prisoners back to sacrifice them to their dark gods. After the seventh war between the two peoples, the Maran summoned a terrible demon to destroy their enemies. This titanic monster lurched out of the jungle to lay waste in the east before the Edene wizards could send it back to the Void. This summoning enraged the gods, who punished the Maran with plagues and calamities until they were destroyed.

SYSTHREN

One of the strange creatures found in the Swelterwood is the systhren. Resembling a crocodile, it has a long, flat body armored in green and brown scales. Spikes bristle from its muscular tail, which it uses to bat aside those it fights. The creature's most unusual feature is the thick bulge protruding from its head. A systhren can use this organ to release a pulse of psychic energy that blasts the mind of its prey, leaving the victim helpless. Voracious and relentless, systhren never retreat from the prospect of a meal.



SYSTHREN

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 monster

Perception 11 (+1); shadowsight
Defense 14; **Health** 25; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 0
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 7 (-3), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Immune gaining Insanity

ATTACK OPTIONS

Teeth (melee) +4 with 1 boon (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Stun Pulse The systhren looses a wave of energy in a 5-yard-long cone originating from a point in its space. Each creature in the area must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 boon or become stunned for 1 minute. A stunned creature removes the affliction when it takes damage. Once the systhren uses Stun Pulse, it cannot do so again for 1 minute.

Tail Sweep When the systhren takes damage, it can use a triggered action to sweep its tail, making a Strength attack roll against the Agility of one creature within its reach. On a success, the tail hits, deals 1d6 damage, and knocks a Size 1 or smaller creature prone.

VILLAGE OF BONES

The bones of some titanic monster sit in the heart of the Swelterwood. An enormous skull lies on its side, its jaw open wide, and through it is the entrance to an abandoned city. The beast's ribs curve down from a spine, 300 feet in length and 100 feet in the air, until they press into the soft, loamy earth. The creature's limbs, splayed, end in curling talons that still grip the ground as they did when the monster finally expired.

Webs hang between the bones, and in them, birds and large insects struggle. The webs are the work of a group of two dozen **shadow weavers**, which have claimed the structure for themselves. When intruders enter the village, the shadow weavers scuttle down the ribs and lower themselves on lines of spider silk to take their prey by surprise. Of the original inhabitants, not much remains other than a few webbed huts containing bits of charcoal, scraps of cloth, and bones.

MOUNTAINS OF FEAR AND FLAME

Mountains occupy the continent's interior, marching from the northwest to the southeast until they turn south to the sea. Several active volcanoes thrust up from the peaks and fill the heights with lurid red light, their sporadic eruptions sending lava spilling down their slopes and plumes of smoke and cinders billowing into the air to fall eventually upon the eastern badlands. The mountains are thoroughly inhospitable, the ground treacherous, and the climbs sheer. Furthermore, the mountains offer few routes through them, and these are almost always infested with beastmen and strange monsters.

GTHONIC

Under the Mountains of Fear and Flame, the cthonics hold court in massive caverns made noisome by their foul secretions. Believed to be sentient seed spilled from the mad gods of Eremeä, the cthonics behave like deities in many ways. They crave power and worship, and they gather to them mobs of idiotic servants, their noisy shrieks serving as bizarre prayers to their vile masters.

A cthonic's bloated body has no definable shape, no form to which it can hold itself. Great red eyes drift across the body's surface, unblinking orbs that display an alien intelligence most folk would call madness. Four dripping tentacles emerge from the body, each one equipped with a bizarre organ that tastes the air and excretes a dreadful, corrosive mucus. A cthonic can be up to 40 feet in diameter and can weigh as much as 5,000 pounds.

A cthonic can communicate with any creature that knows at least one language and is within 1 mile of it, provided it has seen the creature at least once.

CTHONIC

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 4 or 5 horrifying monster

Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 17; **Health** 100; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 1d6 + 3
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 9 (-1), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 6
Immune charmed, compelled, dazed, frightened, gaining insanity, stunned
Telepathy A cthonic can communicate with any creature within short range that has this trait, as well as any creature that knows at least one language.
Gnawing Doubt Each creature within short range of a cthonic makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane.

WEAPONS

Pseudopod (melee) +7 (3d6 plus Liquefying Disease)
Liquefying Disease A living creature must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or become diseased until it heals damage.

At the end of each round, a creature diseased in this way must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 damage, gains 1 Corruption, and gains 1d3 Insanity. A target incapacitated by this damage transforms into a pool of liquid flesh and eyes, a fate from which there is no escape. The creature is defenseless until it dies.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The cthonic attacks twice with its pseudopod.
Enslave Mind The cthonic can use an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to make a Will attack roll against the Intellect of one creature it can see. If the target is dazed, the cthonic makes the attack roll with 1 boon. On a success, the target gains 1d3 Insanity and becomes compelled for a number of rounds equal to its Insanity total. If the Insanity causes the creature to go mad, the creature becomes utterly enslaved—the cthonic decides when the creature takes its turn and what actions it takes when it acts, as long as the creature remains within 1 mile of the cthonic. This latter effect ends when the cthonic becomes incapacitated.

A cthonic can have up to two creatures compelled or enslaved at a time.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Swift Casting The cthonic can use a triggered action to cast a spell. Once it uses Swift Casting, it must wait 1 round before it can use it again.

MAGIC

Power 5

Illusion *clamor* (6), *figment* (3), *phantasm* (2), *mirage* (1)

Telepathy *sense thoughts* (6), *mental static* (3), *mind stab* (3), *read minds* (2), *mind blast* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Epic Recovery The cthonic removes one affliction from itself.

Epic Adversary Roll 1d3 + 1 to determine how many actions the cthonic can use during the next round. The cthonic can use these actions during any turn and can do so before its enemies act. Each time the cthonic uses an action, it can move up to its Speed before or after the action.

MOUNTAIN OF THE NECROMANCER

Leering out from the side of a tall mountain on the northwestern side of the Mountains of Fear and Flame is an enormous skull, 300 feet tall. Carved by an ancient tribe of death-worshippers, it stands as a monument to the darkness they sought to spread across the continent. Water dribbles down from pools higher up and spills out from the skull's eye sockets to fall into a pool at the mountain's base. The skull's lower jaw hangs open, allowing access to a cave that extends into darkness.

The cave leads to a large network of tunnels and chambers once used by the people who built this place. These people died out long ago, leaving the place free to be taken over by a mad wizard named Rudebendius Mal. A master of necromancy, he used his foul magic to animate the corpses of the previous inhabitants and uses them to keep intruders out. Supplementing these **boneguards** and other undead creations are numerous traps of diabolical cunning, of both mechanical and magical nature. Rudebendius Mal keeps to himself, conducting weird experiments in the privacy of his lair, but he does on occasion send out his servants to bring him fresh victims from the surrounding lands.

Rudebendius Mal and his lair are described in more detail in the adventure anthology *Tales of the Pirate Isles*.

SEAWATCH

Three tall peaks known as the Three Towers extend southwest from the Mountains of Fear and Flame. Clinging to the side of the southernmost peak are the ruins of a large city. Stone steps climb up and around the mountain to a high gate that pierces the first of several 100-foot high, 50-foot thick stone walls that wrap around the city. Statues of fierce men and women clad in armor and armed with swords and spears festoon the walls.

Inside the innermost wall, narrow, cobbled streets

twist and turn between lichen-spotted stone buildings capped with peaked slate roofs. More statues stand in alcoves set in the sides of the homes and shops, some still littered with offerings left by the vanished people. Here and there, one finds cleared areas with basins at the center for catching rain.

The higher one climbs inside the buildings, the more resplendent the structures become. Some houses boast wild, overgrown gardens that must have been wondrous when they were maintained. Temples dedicated to forgotten gods stand empty, their contents plundered long ago. Shops, restaurants, and other facilities frame the roads as they climb toward the peak, where one finds the crumbling remains of a mighty fortress, bristling with turrets and shielded by even higher walls than those found in the city below.

Seawatch—the name that survives from writings left by the Edene invaders—was one the greatest cities of the Edene in ancient times and, unlike the many other communities on Eremeä that now stand in ruins, it remains unspoiled for the most part. The elements have eroded some of the statuary and the fine detail on many of the buildings, and some structures have collapsed or caught fire—though since the whole of the city is built from stone, the fires never spread.

Of the original inhabitants, only ghosts remain. Each night, apparitions of the people who lived here two thousand years ago materialize and go about the activities they undertook in life. These vestiges ignore the living and might move right through them as they go about their business or hold silent conversations with others of their kind. Throughout the night, it is as if the city has come back to life, but when the first rays of dawn break the horizon, the apparitions fade, one by one.

APPARITION

The echoes of people long dead, apparitions appear as they did in life, but are semitransparent, revealing their ephemeral nature. Apparitions appear only in places where people lived and died, and then only at night, dissipating in sunlight like a snuffed candle flame. Each performs the same activities it did when it was alive, running the same errands, toiling at the same task, conversing with the same people, each night without end. Apparitions never alter their behavior and do not recognize other creatures or changes to their environment.

APPARITION

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1/2 to 1 horrifying spirit

Perception —

Defense 10; **Health** —; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** —

Strength —, **Agility** —, **Intellect** —, **Will** —

Speed 10

Immune all damage; gaining Insanity; all afflictions

Ephemeral An apparition can move through creatures and solid objects. It ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Relive the Past An apparition performs the same set of tasks it performed in life. It cannot detect the presence of other creatures other than apparitions or acknowledge changes to its environment.

END OF THE ROUND

Night Bound If the apparition is in an area lit by sunlight, it ceases to exist until the area is no longer lit by sunlight.

SOUTHERN RUINS

Scores of ghost towns dot the hills around the Three Towers, the remains of client communities that supported Seawatch. Most of these places now stand in ruins, with trees growing out windows and walls crumbling in the grip of vines. In some places, only the foundations of buildings remain. In others, huge idols depicting bizarre gods stand tall, untouched by the environment. Searching the ruins turns up little more than pottery, bronze weapons, and some statuary.

LIVING IDOL

The ancient Edene believed that their gods incarnated themselves in idols. They carved statues of their deities from stone, and generations of worship of these



gods imbued the statues with power, causing them to come to life as living idols. The idols protected their worshipers or punished them depending on the quality of the followers' sacrifices and the strength of their belief. When the Edene left, they carried with them some of their idols, but many more remained behind, abandoned. The ones that remain can still call upon the ancient power granted to them by their followers. These idols silently mourn their lost worshipers while they pass the centuries as inanimate objects. If anyone disturbs their temples or shrines, however, they stir to life and demand worship from the intruders, growing enraged if they are refused.

Since each community worshiped a god particular to those folk, living idols take on a variety of shapes. One might be a winged bull; another might be a human with a giant spider for a head. Living idols communicate in the language of the Edene (see *Only Human* for details on the language).

LIVING IDOL

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 3 frightening construct

Perception 13 (+3); truesight

Defense 15; **Health** 200; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** —

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 15 (+5)

Speed 10

Immune damage from disease or poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned

Spell Immunity Choose three traditions associated with the god the idol represents. The living idol is immune to spells from these traditions.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +5 with 3 boons (4d6 plus Divine Curse)

Divine Curse A creature must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or become cursed as if by a rank 5 spell. While cursed in this way, the creature takes a -10 penalty to Health and makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 2 banes. The curse lasts until the living idol is destroyed.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The living idol attacks twice with its fists.

END OF THE ROUND

Divine Judgment Each creature the living idol chooses within short range must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gain 1d3 Insanity.

FOREST OF SCREAMS

The Forest of Screams spreads up Eremeä's western coast from the ruins of ancient Edene to the edges of the Ghastrwood in the north. It extends from the shore all the way to the foothills of the mountains. A mix of oak, maple, hackberry, and birch trees, the forest is a bright and lively place, teeming with wildlife. It is also a dangerous place, since it is home to the Shen tribes, the savage descendants of the Edene who opted to stay behind.

SHEN TRIBESMAN

When the God-Queen led her people out from Eremeä, she had no destination in mind and could give no assurance that the people would find a new home. For this reason, many citizens chose to stay behind and try to overcome the troubles that had befallen them. Most died out from plagues and violent storms, or were devoured by the demons loosed by the Maran, but enough survived to have offspring—a new generation who would become the first members of the Shen tribes that now live in the Forest of Screams.

A primitive people, they have divided themselves into twelve tribes, each one claiming a portion of the forest. Most live in crude encampments, in hovels of wattle and daub or assembled from scavenged materials. Others build homes in the trees, and one tribe digs holes in the ground.

Although the Shen tribes share a common heritage, they all revere different gods, and each tribe believes its gods to be the right and proper ones. Conflicts over religious beliefs sometimes result in skirmishes and even outright war.

Members of the Shen tribes are all human, with olive complexions and dark hair and eyes. They wear animal hides and carry crude weapons of wood and stone. Rarely, champions wield bronze swords or wear bronze breastplates plundered from the eastern ruins.

The tribesmen speak different pidgin dialects of the Edene language.

SHEN TRIBESMAN

DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1 human

Perception 10 (+0)
Defense 14 (leather, small shield); **Health** 12; **Insanity** 1d6;
Corruption 1d3
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 9 (-1)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Spear (melee) +2 (1d6)
Knife (melee or short range) +2 (1d3)

GHASTWOOD

This patch of mixed woodland was once part of the Forest of Screams, until the Shen tribesmen cleared away its perimeter and built a crude wall to keep this area contained. The clearing around the area enabled the Shen to see when the area's denizens had come out of the trees to hunt. By day, an eerie silence prevails in the Ghostwood, with no sound other than the wind sighing through the branches. Fallen needles and leaves carpet the ground, smothering the undergrowth and keeping the paths between the trunks clear. At night, however, the Ghostwood comes alive as its denizens emerge from hiding to resume feeding the painful hunger that burns in their guts.

GHAST

Monstrous humanoids warped by strange magic, ghaasts are unique to Eremeä, but have spread out across much of the continent, driven by their hunger to feast on the living. Each of these creatures stands about 6 feet tall and has a thick, muscled body. Its flat head slopes back from just above its eyes and sweeps back to form a sharp point, looking much like a teardrop. Between its gleaming eyes and its slobbering maw are two crusty holes in place of a nose. Ghaasts move with surprising quickness on backward-bending legs that end in hoofs. Bulging out from the rough skin all over their bodies are tumescent nodules that sometimes break and leak foul-smelling slime.

Ghaasts eat whatever they can catch. They have virtually emptied their woodland home of prey, and so many have moved into the caves under the mountains and into the Forest of Screams to prey on the Shen tribesmen there. Ghaasts cannot tolerate sunlight—before the sun rises, they bury themselves in the dirt, slink into caves, or take refuge under piles of detritus to await the next night.

GHAST

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 horrifying monster

Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 22; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 6
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 12
Immune gaining Insanity
Keen Smell A ghost knows the location of each living creature with an organic body within medium range of it. Such creatures cannot become hidden from the ghost, and the ghost ignores banes incurred when it attacks targets in an obscured area.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws and Teeth (melee) +4 with 1 boon (3d6)

END OF THE ROUND

Burned by Sunlight The ghost takes 5d6 damage if it is in an area lit by sunlight.

HARROWTOP

Explorers settled Harrowtop about a year ago, hoping to use the site as a staging ground for further exploration into the continent's interior. They built the settlement atop a high hill, cleared away the light forest surrounding it, and raised a wooden wall to surround the buildings they had built. Months later, the first attack came.

The vremen, a great horde of hooting and shrieking humanoids, came pouring out of the hills and destroyed the farms around the settlement. The survivors pulled back for safety behind the walls and managed to fight off the attackers for a time. For six months, the people have lived under fear of the vremen climbing over the walls and killing everyone within. Now, the remaining settlers have run out of food and have started eating

their dead. This act has set in motion a transformation that will cause them to become ghouls. When this happens, there will be nothing to stop the vremen from overrunning the place.

VREMEN

Misshapen humanoids, combining the traits of all kinds of creatures with those of men, often rush out from the caves under the Mountains of Fear and Flame. These vremen, as they are called, seem driven to destroy everything in their path for some inscrutable purpose. Whether they crave flesh, chaos, or glory, none can say, for the members of the barking mob are as apt to turn against each other as they are to visit the full fury of their insane wrath on others. It's thought that these monsters are the creations of the cthonics, but none can say for sure.

VREMEN

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 horrifying monster

Perception 8 (-2); darksight

Defense 9; **Health** 33; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 4

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 9 (-1), **Intellect** 6 (-4), **Will** 8 (-2)

Speed 10

Immune gaining Insanity

Panicked Horror A creature that gains Insanity from the vremen's horrifying trait must use its action to rush away from the vremen each round until it is no longer frightened from gaining Insanity.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Natural Weapon (melee) +3 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2)

Orgy of Violence If the target is within the reach of at least one other vremen, the target takes 1d6 extra damage.

END OF THE ROUND

Mindless Slaughter If the vremen can reach at least one other creature, roll a d6. On a 1, the vremen takes 1d6 damage. On a 6, the vremen attacks a randomly determined creature it can reach.

SALTBLIGHT

The Swelterwood gives way to a boggy marshland, fed by the waters of the Bay of Blood and shadowed by the southern arm of the Mountains of Fear and Flame, known as Saltblight. It is a pestilential place, thick with noisome beasts, from three-eyed serpents to blood-sucking mosquitoes as large as housecats. The black, brackish waters almost conceal the bones of the dead as they decay in the foul soup.

XIID, THE SINKING CITY

The city of Xiid, also known as the Sinking City, rises from the mud at the westernmost edge of the Saltblight. Rotting buildings perch atop pylons that lean crookedly, threatening to deposit their burdens into the muck. Wood and rope bridges serve as treacherous streets, the ropes frayed to the point of breaking and the planks nearly rotted through. Most structures are wattle and daub, roofed with reeds, but in the middle of the community, a huge stone ziggurat

slowly sinks in the mud as it has done for the last few centuries. Weird carvings adorn the exterior, depicting serpent people sacrificing humans to horrifying gods, strange objects soaring through the skies, and displays of dangerous magic.

Unlike much of the other evidence of civilization found on Eremeä, Xiid is a living city, still inhabited by its founders, the krin. Utterly in the thrall of their religious beliefs, the krin worship a pantheon of terrible gods with profoundly awful appetites, which are fed by sacrificing infants, mutilating sexual organs, and staging orgies with hideous creatures summoned from the Void. The krin regularly range out from their swampy home on skiffs to raid the lands across the Bay of Blood, in search of people to enslave.

KRIN

When the old empire of the Edene collapsed nearly two thousand years ago, the krin emerged to fill the vacuum created by the absent humans. This people's kingdom once occupied the entire peninsula, but decadence and weak leadership caused their civilization to contract until only their first city, Xiid, remained. The krin are now a debased and decadent society, wholly in the thrall of their monstrous gods.

Krin appear human except for their heads. Between a krin's shoulders rises a mound of mottled, gray and brown flesh, covered with a thin veneer of slime. Two veined eyestalks emerge from the top, and a puckered hole, like a sphincter, occupies the center of their faces.

Krin do not speak.



KRIN

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 frightening monster

Perception 11 (+1)

Defense 11; **Health** 10; **Insanity** 6; **Corruption** 3

Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 10

Immune gaining Insanity

Telepathy A krin can communicate with any creature within short range that has this trait, as well as any creature that knows at least one language.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Spear (melee) +1 (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Psychic Screech When a krin becomes injured or incapacitated, it can use a triggered action to loose a psychic scream. Each creature within 2 yards must make a Will challenge roll. Creatures that have the telepathy trait as well as creatures that have discovered the Telepathy tradition get an automatic success. On a failure, the creature gains 1d3 Insanity.

KRIN PRIEST

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 horrifying monster

Perception 15 (+5)

Defense 11; **Health** 19; **Insanity** 7; **Corruption** 6

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 10

Immune gaining Insanity

Telepathy A krin can communicate with any creature within short range that has this trait, as well as any creature that knows at least one language.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Long Knife (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Psychic Screech When a krin becomes injured or incapacitated, it can use a triggered action to loose a psychic scream. Each creature within 2 yards must make a Will challenge roll. Creatures that have the telepathy trait as well as creatures that have discovered the Telepathy tradition get an automatic success. On a failure, the creature gains 1d3 Insanity.

MAGIC

Power 3

Forbidden *harm* (3), *hateful defecation* (2), *tongue rip* (2), *vision's end* (1), *desire's end* (1)

ASHEN WASTES

Beyond the Mountains of Fear and Flame to the north is a land smothered by ash and cinders. For hundreds of miles, the landscape is awash in powdery, gray dust. Only the hardest creatures can live in this cold waste, as evidenced by the ruins of former cities emptied of life and covered by the pervasive dust. Scavengers and a few weird monsters are the most numerous inhabitants.

GUG

The monsters known as gugs lumber across the Ashen Wastes, their gigantic, furred bodies caked with the dust kicked up from their passage. A gug's head sports two bony protrusions that emerge from the sides and feature great, globular yellow eyes. Its toothy maw, which opens vertically, extends from the top of its head all the way down to its chin.

Gugs do not speak.

GUG

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 5 horrifying monster

Perception 10 (+0); darksight

Defense 13; **Health** 160; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 8

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 12

Immune gaining Insanity

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +6 with 3 boons (2d6 + 6)

Teeth (melee) +6 with 3 boons (3d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Savage Advance The gug moves up to half its Speed and then attacks with its claws and its teeth. If the gug attacks a single target and gets a success on each attack roll, the target takes 2d6 extra damage.



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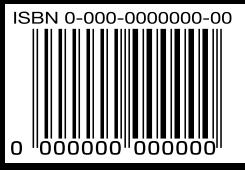


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