

Cursed Scroll

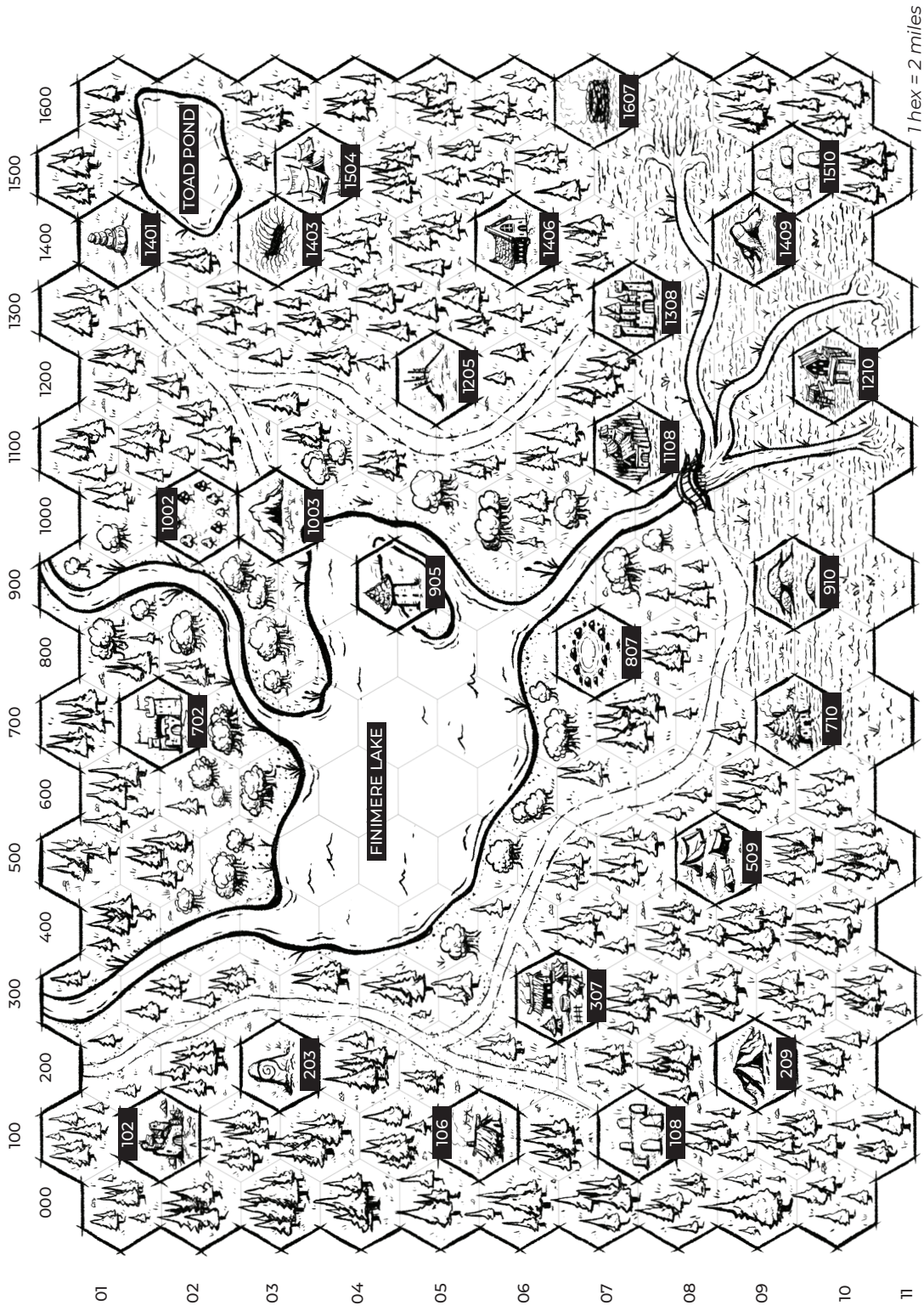
Shadowdark Zine Vol. 1: Diablerie!

#1

Spells!
Monsters!
Adventure!

Witches!
Warlocks!
Cursed Knights!





1 hex = 2 miles

A miniature hexcrawl featuring

The Blooming

An ancient forest where black trees tower over mossy standing stones and mist-addled bogs. Here, fragile bastions of mankind cluster behind torchlit palisades and pray for deliverance from the demons that hatch from the forest's cursed **marrow trees**. The **Knights of St. Ydris** range out of their deepwood conclave to wage a losing war against these demons and their servants. The knights' leader, **Inquisitor Justinia Morvin**, suspects a traitor in their ranks.

ENCOUNTER ZONE

d8	Forest	Marsh	Path	Water
1	Demon	Demon	Demon	Demon
2	Demon	Demon	People	Aquatic
3	Animal	Aquatic	People	Aquatic
4	Animal	Aquatic	People	Aquatic
5	Animal	Aquatic	Animal	Aquatic
6	Animal	Animal	Animal	Aquatic
7	People	Animal	Animal	Animal
8	People	People	Animal	People

See pg. 39 for *The Blooming's* hex key!

*New monsters, pg. 45 †*Knights of St. Ydris* (L), 1:6 secret traitor (C reaver)

RUMORS

- 1 The stones of Bittermold Keep are slowly melting like wax
- 2 The Lord of Time grants boons for offering his slain enemies
- 3 Watch for strange happenings on the new and full moons
- 4 The ruins of Myre Castle once housed a holy order of knights
- 5 A six-eyed wolf as big as a horse roams the marshes
- 6 Cultists have been tossing people into a rift near Toad Pond
- 7 Three witches were burned on Boot Hill near Marin's Hold
- 8 Bandits camp by a huge marrow tree near Wardenwood
- 9 There is a priory of secretive, cursed knights in the forest
- 10 Walk the woods enough and The Willowman will find you

ENCOUNTERS

d8	Aquatic	Animal	Demon	People
1	3d6 stingbats	2d6 wolves	2d6 hexlings*	1d6 faeries
2	1d4 crocodiles	Brown bear	Ichor ooze*	Werewolf
3	Giant snake	Troll	2d4 tar bats*	3d6 bandits
4	1d6 willowisps	2d6 gt. rats	2d6 skrell*	2d4 orcs
5	2d6 gt. leeches	2d4 boars	2d4 bogthorns*	2d6 knights†
6	1d4 wights	Unicorn	Marrow fiend*	1d4 reavers
7	2d6 bogthorns*	Gt. spider	Dralech*	2d6 cultists
8	3d6 orcs	1d6 moose	The Willowman*	2d4 villagers

Cursed Scroll

WRITING, DESIGN, DUNGEON CARTOGRAPHY, LAYOUT

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ShadowDark



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Introduction



Welcome to the first issue of *Cursed Scroll!*

Everything in this zine is ready to use with the free public **Shadowdark RPG** rules. You can check out the fully playable quickstart PDFs at thearcanelibrary.com/pages/shadowdark.

This issue's theme is **Diablerie**, and the pages inside are brimming with player and Game Master material about demons, devilry, curses, the occult, and witchcraft.

You can roll up a brand new witch or warlock character, explore the dark forests and bogs of **The Gloaming**, join the tormented Knights of Saint Ydris, or test your mettle in *The Hideous Halls of Mugdulblub!*

The plan for future *Cursed Scrolls* is to continue with a theme for each so you can plug the whole zine right into your game world and instantly expand its boundaries.

So, intrepid reader! You've dared to open this musty scroll and glance through its contents... Will you risk discovering what horrible hexes or magical boons await you after reading through the final word on the last page?

Fair warning: You'll probably be cursed. But that's never stopped an adventurer worth their gold from reading a magical scroll anyway.

As the saying goes:

Roll high and don't die!

-Kelsey Dionne, Dec. 2021



Characters



"Fear is a knife that lives in the hearts of all mortals. I shall teach you to pluck it out, and wield it."

-The Willowman to a petitioner

Knight of St. Ydris Class

Cursed knights who walk the path of St. Ydris the Unholy, the Possessed. They embrace the darkness in order to fight it, cleansing evil with a flurry of steel and forbidden sorcery.

Weapons: All melee weapons, crossbow

Armor: All armor and shields

Hit Points: 1d6 per level

Languages. You know Diabolic.

Demonic Possession. 3/day, gain a +1 bonus to your damage rolls that lasts 3 rounds. In addition, add half your level to the damage bonus (round down).

Spellcasting. You can cast witch spells you know.

Each time you gain a level, you choose new witch spells to learn according to the Witch Spells Known table.

You use your Charisma stat to cast witch spells. The DC is 10 + the spell's tier.

If you fail a spellcasting check, you can't cast that spell again until you complete a rest.

If you roll a natural 1 on a spellcasting check, you must also roll on the corresponding Diabolical Mishap table (see pg. 22) for the spell's tier.

KNIGHT OF ST. YDRIS TALENTS

2d6	Effect
2	Your Demonic Possession bonus increases by 1 point
3-6	+1 to melee or ranged attacks
7-9	+2 to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution stat
10-11	+2 to Charisma stat or +1 to witch spellcasting checks
12	Choose a talent or +2 points to distribute to stats

WITCH SPELLS KNOWN

Spells Known By Spell Tier

Level	1	2	3
1	-	-	-
2	-	-	-
3	1	-	-
4	2	-	-
5	3	-	-
6	3	1	-
7	3	2	-
8	3	3	-
9	3	3	1
10	3	3	2



Warlock Class

Howling warriors with sharpened teeth, wild-eyed doomspeakers preaching of The Dissolution, and cloaked lore-hunters bearing the hidden Mark of Shune.

Weapons: Club, crossbow, dagger, mace, longsword

Armor: Leather armor, chainmail, and shields

Hit Points: 1d6 per level

Languages. You know either Celestial, Diabolic, Draconic, Primordial, or Sylvan.

Patron. Choose a patron to serve (see pg. 17). Your patron is the source of your supernatural gifts.

Your patron can choose to grant or withhold its gifts at any time. You can gain new Patron Boons/ talents (or lose them) as a result.

Patron Boon. At 1st level, you gain a random Patron Boon talent (see pg. 18) based on your chosen patron.

Whenever you gain a new talent roll, you may choose to roll on your Patron Boon table rather than the Warlock Talents table.

WARLOCK TALENTS

2d6	Effect
2	Roll a Patron Boon from any patron; an unexplained gift
3-6	Add +1 point to two stats (they must be different)
7-9	+1 to melee or ranged attacks
10-11	Roll two Patron Boons and choose one to keep
12	Choose a talent or +2 points to distribute to stats



Witch Class

Cackling crones stooped over cauldrons, chanting shamans smeared in blood and clay, and outcast maidens with milky eyes that see portents and secrets.

Weapons: Dagger, staff

Armor: Leather armor

Hit Points: 1d4 per level

Languages. You know Diabolic, Primordial, and Sylvan.

Familiar. You have a small animal such as a raven, rat, or frog who serves you loyally. It can speak Common.

Your familiar can be the source of spells you cast. Treat it as though it were you for determining spell ranges.

If your familiar dies, you can restore it to life by permanently sacrificing 1d4 hit points.

Spellcasting. You can cast witch spells you know.

You know three tier 1 spells of your choice from the witch spell list (see pg. 24).

Each time you gain a level, you choose new witch spells to learn according to the Witch Spells Known table.

You use your Charisma stat to cast witch spells. The DC is 10 + the spell's tier.

If you fail a spellcasting check, you can't cast that spell again until you complete a rest.

If you roll a natural 1 on a spellcasting check, you must also roll on the corresponding Diabolical Mishap table for the spell's tier (see pg. 22).

WITCH SPELLS KNOWN

Spells Known By Spell Tier

Level	1	2	3	4	5
1	3	-	-	-	-
2	4	-	-	-	-
3	4	1	-	-	-
4	4	2	-	-	-
5	4	2	1	-	-
6	4	3	2	-	-
7	4	3	2	1	-
8	4	4	2	2	-
9	4	4	3	2	1
10	4	4	4	2	2

WITCH TALENTS

2d6 Effect (2 duplicate = +1 use per day)

2 1/day, teleport to your familiar's location as a move

3-7 +2 to Charisma stat or +1 to witch spellcasting checks

8-9 Gain advantage on casting one spell you know

10-11 Learn an additional witch spell of any tier you can cast

12 Choose a talent or +2 points to distribute to stats



Titles

KNIGHT OF ST. YDRIS TITLES

Level	Lawful	Chaotic	Neutral
1-2	Arbiter	Traitor	Brother/Sister
3-4	Enforcer	Fallen	Exorcist
5-6	Knight Marshal	Oathbreaker	Reverend Knight
7-8	Judge	Blackguard	Inquisitor
9-10	Justiciar	Demonlord	Grand Inquisitor

WARLOCK TITLES

Level	Lawful	Chaotic	Neutral
1-2	Favored	Marked	Chosen
3-4	Herald	Zealot	Channeler
5-6	Eminent	Occultist	Prophesied
7-8	Exalted	Champion	Transcendent
9-10	Incarnation	Harbinger	Avatar

WITCH TITLES

Level	Lawful	Chaotic	Neutral
1-2	Fortune Teller	Whisperer	Shaman
3-4	Far Seer	Hexer	Conjurer
5-6	Prophet	Hag/Elder	Soothsayer
7-8	Wise One	Crone/Uncle	Conduit
9-10	Baba	Baba	Baba

Patrons

Patrons are eldritch beings of immense power who gift magical ability and boons to mortals who petition their favor.

Patrons are not seeking worship from petitioners. Instead, they want something in exchange for the power they grant.

The Willowman might demand to drink of the petitioner's nightmares on the dark of the moon. Mugdulblub might require the boiling of tooth and bone. What these eldritch demands truly mean reveals itself over time.

ALMAZZAT

A wolf-headed arch-demon with six eyes and six horns. Almazzat seeks to wrest the Sands of the Ages from his father, Kytheros.

KYTHEROS

The Lord of Time who sees all possible futures. Kytheros seeks the fulfillment of all destinies as they were meant to be.

MUGDULBLUB

The Elder Ooze that leaks between the cracks in memory and the darkness between the stars. Mugdulblub seeks the dissolution of all physical form.

SHUNE THE VILE

A goddess, the Mother Witch who speaks to her children in the flicker of candles and the rattle of dry bones. Shune seeks hidden secrets and lost lore.

TITANIA

The fickle Queen of the Fey who views all of existence as a whimsical dream with hidden meaning and poignant drama. Titania seeks mischief, beauty, and artistry.

THE WILLOWMAN

A ghostly, elongated being who stalks misty forests and watches from the edge of nightmares. The Willowman seeks fear.

Patron Boons

ALMAZZAT

2d6 Effect (2 duplicate = +1 use per day)

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2 | 1/day, gain advantage on melee attacks for 3 rounds |
| 3-7 | Learn to wield 1 melee weapon or get +1 to melee attacks |
| 8-9 | +2 to Strength or Constitution stat or +1 to melee damage |
| 10-11 | Gain advantage on initiative rolls (reroll if duplicate) |
| 12 | Choose one option or 2 points to distribute to stats |

KYTHEROS

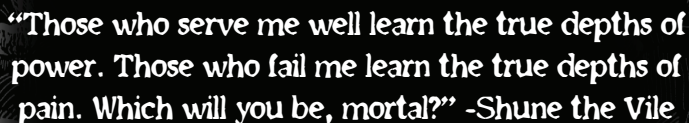
2d6 Effect (2 duplicate = +1 use per day)

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2 | 1/day, force the GM to reroll a single roll |
| 3-7 | Gain +1 to your AC through supernatural foresight |
| 8-9 | +2 to Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom stat |
| 10-11 | 3/day, add your WIS bonus to any roll (reroll if duplicate) |
| 12 | Choose one option or 2 points to distribute to stats |

SHUNE THE VILE

2d6 Effect (2 duplicate = +1 use per day)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | 1/day, read the mind of a creature you touch for 3 rounds |
| 3-7 | Learn a wizard spell, tier = half your level. Cast it with INT |
| 8-9 | +2 to Dexterity or Intelligence stat |
| 10-11 | +1 XP whenever you learn a valuable or significant secret |
| 12 | Choose one option or 2 points to distribute to stats |



“Those who serve me well learn the true depths of power. Those who fail me learn the true depths of pain. Which will you be, mortal?” -Shune the Vile



MUGDULBLUB

2d6 Effect (2 duplicate = +1 use per day)

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2 | 1/day, turn into a crawling puddle of slime for 3 rounds |
| 3-7 | Maximize 2 hit point die rolls (prior or future) |
| 8-9 | +2 to Dexterity or Constitution stat |
| 10-11 | Become immune to 1: acid, cold, poison (reroll if no options) |
| 12 | Choose one option or 2 points to distribute to stats |



TITANIA

2d6 Effect (2 duplicate = +1 use per day, 10-11 duplicate = reroll)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | 1/day, hypnotize a LV 5 or less creature for 3 rounds |
| 3-7 | Learn to wield a longbow or gain +1 to ranged attacks |
| 8-9 | +2 to Dexterity or Charisma stat |
| 10-11 | Hostile spells that target you are always hard to cast |
| 12 | Choose one option or 2 points to distribute to stats |



THE WILLOWMAN

2d6 Effect (2 and 10-11 duplicate = +1 use per day)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | 1/day, teleport to a far location you see as your move |
| 3-7 | +1 to melee or ranged attacks |
| 8-9 | +2 to Strength or Dexterity stat |
| 10-11 | 1/day, force a close being to check morale, even if immune |
| 12 | Choose one option or 2 points to distribute to stats |

Diabolical Backgrounds

DIABOLICAL BACKGROUND

d20 Details

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Hermit. The wilds (and its creatures) are your family |
| 2 | Outcast. You were thrown out for real or supposed crimes |
| 3 | Woodborn. They found you in the hollow of an oak tree |
| 4 | Amnesiac. Your past is a haze, but some memories return |
| 5 | Haunted. A restless spirit wants something from you |
| 6 | Fugitive. An anonymous savior helped you disappear |
| 7 | Feytouched. A fairy befriended you in your childhood |
| 8 | Witchborn. They burned your mother, but spared you |
| 9 | Forager. You know how to find the edible and the deadly |
| 10 | Redeemer. You must redeem the name of your kin |
| 11 | Marked. You carry an eldritch mark. Is it a curse, or a gift? |
| 12 | Sacrifice. You were to be ritually sacrificed, but escaped |
| 13 | Marooned. They left you behind, but you refused to die |
| 14 | Fallen. You fell from grace. Will you atone, or embrace it? |
| 15 | Drawn. You hear a whispered call and follow it |
| 16 | Ascetic. People fear you, but seek out your guidance |
| 17 | Wolfchild. Long ago, you walked into town wearing pelts |
| 18 | Healer. You understand how life and death intertwine |
| 19 | Chosen. An eldritch being selected you for a purpose |
| 20 | Demonborn. An ancestor of yours is a powerful demon |

Magic



**"May your way be lit by your very dim wit!"
-Witch curse**

Diabolical Mishaps

DIABOLICAL MISHAP 1-3

d12	Effect
1	Diablerie! Roll twice and combine both effects (reroll any further 1s)
2	Wither! You take 1d6 damage per spell tier
3	Newt! You turn into a tiny, 1 hit point newt for 3 rounds. You can't cast spells in this form
4	Shune's baleful gaze! You can't cast this spell and another random spell again for a week
5	Thieving fairies! You lose a random piece of gear
6	Cobwebs! Mental cobwebs cloud your mind; you can't cast this spell again for a week
7	Cackles! You fall to the ground in a fit of cackling, unable to do anything but laugh for the next 3 rounds
8	Double trouble! You lose the ability to cast a random spell until you complete a rest
9	Swamp gas! The air fills with sulfurous gas in a near-sized cube around you. All creatures who end their turn in it are blinded and take 1d6 damage. It lasts 3 rounds
10	Bat! An angry bat appears on your head, flapping and clinging to your face. You are blinded for 3 rounds or until you can toss the beastie away from you
11	Salt! You're surrounded by a ring of salt and can't touch it or pass through it until something breaks the ring
12	Siphon! You have disadvantage on casting spells of the same tier or lower for the next 10 rounds

DIABOLICAL MISHAP 4-5

d12	Effect
1	Maelstrom! Roll twice and combine both effects (reroll any further 1s)
2	Ruin! You take 1d8 damage per spell tier
3	Mind rot! You permanently forget one random spell
4	The Willowman! You summon The Willowman (who is angry with you) in a space near to you. He stays for 1d6 rounds before disappearing from whence he came
5	Accursed imps! Cackling imps from hell swarm you, stealing three pieces of random gear and flapping away
6	Lightning blast! You deal 3d6 damage to yourself and all nearby creatures
7	Cold iron! Spikes of cold iron lance from the ethereal realm, piercing you. You take 2d6 damage and are paralyzed for 2 rounds
8	Mother of Night! You displease the Dark Mother and lose the ability to cast this spell until atoning to her
9	Catatonia! You stare blankly and can't take any actions for the next hour
10	Tongue of dog! Your tongue lolls every time you try to cast a spell of a random tier, ruining the magic. This persists until you complete a rest
11	Fiddlesticks! You have disadvantage on casting all spells for the next 10 rounds
12	Nemesis! Somewhere, a child is born who will grow up to become a mighty, sworn enemy to you



Witch Spell List

TIER 1

- Cauldron
- Charm Person
- Eyebite
- Fog
- Hypnotize
- Oak, Ash, Thorn
- Puppet
- Shadowdance
- Willowman
- Witchlight

TIER 2

- Alter Self
- Augury
- Bogboil
- Cacklerot
- Cat's Eye
- Frog Rain
- Invisibility
- Poison
- Spidersilk
- Toadstool

TIER 3

- Broomstick
- Coven
- Divination
- Howl
- Mistletoe
- Pin Doll
- Speak With Dead
- Swarm
- Void Stare
- Whisper

TIER 4

- Beguile
- Cloak of Night
- Curse
- Dimension Door
- Glassbones
- Moonbeam
- Nightmare
- Polymorph

TIER 5

- Anathema
- Dreamwalk
- Enfeeble
- Finger of Death
- Mother of Night
- Scrying
- Shapechange
- Soul Jar



Spells

ALTER SELF

Tier 2, witch

Duration: 5 rounds

Range: Self

You magically change your physical form, gaining one feature that modifies your existing anatomy.

For example, you can grow functional gills on your neck or bear claws on your fingers. This spell can't grow wings or limbs.

ANATHEMA

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Close

All allies revile and abandon the creature you touch for 1 day.

Each time you or your allies harm the target, its former allies may pass a DC 15 Wisdom check to end the effects of the spell.



AUGURY

Tier 2, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

You interpret the meaning of supernatural portents and omens. Ask the GM one question about a specific course of action. The GM says whether the action will lead to “weal” or “woe.”

BEGUILE

Tier 4, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Near

You conjure a convincing visible and audible illusion within range.

Creatures who perceive the illusion react to it as though it were real, although it can't cause actual harm.

Touching the illusion instantly reveals its false nature.

You may force a creature who interacts with the illusion to make a DC 15 Wisdom check. If the creature fails, it is enchanted by the illusion for the spell's duration and seeks to protect it.

BOGBOIL

Tier 2, witch

Duration: 5 rounds

Range: Far

You turn a near-sized cube of ground within range into a muddy, boiling bog of quicksand.

A creature stuck in the bog can't move and must succeed on a Dexterity check vs. your spellcasting check to free itself.

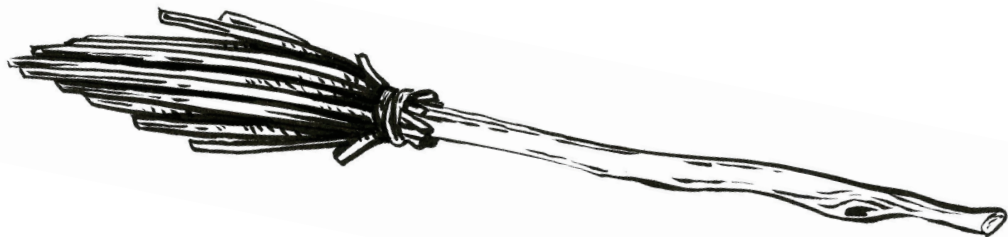
BROOMSTICK

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Self

You conjure a flying broomstick in your hand. The broomstick's rider can fly a near distance each round and can hover in place.





CAACKLEROT

Tier 2, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Close

One target you touch of LV 4 or less collapses helplessly with disturbing, pained laughter for the spell's duration.



CAT'S EYE

Tier 2, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Self

Your irises grow to fill your eyes and your pupils turn into black, vertical slits.

You can see invisible creatures and secret doors for the spell's duration.



CAULDRON

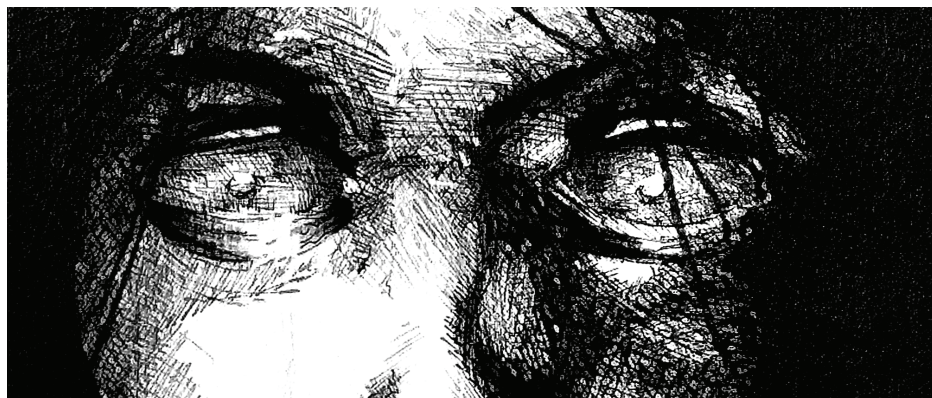
Tier 1, witch

Duration: 1 round

Range: Close

You conjure a bubbling cauldron next to you. It can produce one of the following effects:

- Any broken mundane item placed inside the cauldron is repaired.
- A fat, croaking toad leaps out and follows your instructions for the next 3 rounds.
- You can place up to 3 item slots of items inside the cauldron. The cauldron expels these items the next time you cast this spell (expelling items counts as the cauldron's single effect).





CHARM PERSON

Tier 1, witch

Duration: 1d8 days

Range: Near

You magically beguile one humanoid of level 2 or less within near range, who regards you as a friend for the duration.

The spell ends if you or your allies do anything to hurt it that it notices.

The target knows you magically enchanted it after the spell ends.



CLOAK OF NIGHT

Tier 4, witch

Duration: 8 rounds

Range: Self

You wrap yourself in a swirling cloak of shadows. For the spell's duration, your armor class becomes 17 (20 on a critical spellcasting check).

You have advantage on Dexterity checks to sneak and hide for the spell's duration.



COVEN

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

You call upon the magic you share with your fellow witches.

You regain the use of one tier 3 spell or lower that you can no longer cast for the day.

After successfully casting this spell, you can't do so again until you complete a rest.



CURSE

Tier 4, witch

Duration: Permanent

Range: Close

A creature you touch is afflicted by one of the following curses:

- Hideous boils and warts
- All food tastes of ash
- Voice becomes shrill
- Disturbing nightmares
- Always lose at gambling
- An ally turns into an enemy
- Fear of something ordinary

DIMENSION DOOR

Tier 4, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

You teleport yourself and up to one other willing creature within close to any point you can see.

DIVINATION

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

You throw the divining bones or peer into the blackness between the stars, seeking a portent.

You can ask the GM one yes or no question. The GM truthfully answers "yes" or "no."

If you cast this spell more than once in 24 hours, treat a failed spellcasting check for it as a critical failure instead.



DREAMWALK

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Close

You and any willing creatures you choose within close range step into the dream of a sleeping creature you name that is on your same plane.

You and anyone traveling with you can step out of the creature, appearing next to it as if having teleported there.

ENFEEBLE

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Close

A creature you touch has a random stat reduced to 3 (-4) for one week. Roll a d6 to determine which stat:

1. Strength, 2. Dexterity, 3. Constitution, 4. Intelligence, 5. Wisdom, 6. Charisma.

If you fail the spellcasting check, you have a random stat reduced to 3 for a week instead.



EYEBITE

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Near

One creature you target takes 1d4 damage, and it can't see you until the end of its next turn.



FINGER OF DEATH

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Close

One creature you touch of LV 9 or less dies.

Treat a failed spellcasting check for this spell as a critical failure, and roll the mishap with disadvantage.



FOG

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Close

A thick cloud of fog blooms in a close area around you, making you hard to see. The cloud moves with you. Attacks against creatures in the cloud have disadvantage.



FROG RAIN

Tier 2, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Far

A rain of indignant frogs pelts a near-sized cube around a point you can see within range.

All creatures within the frog rain take 1d6 damage. Any surviving frogs hop away and disappear.



GLASSBONES

Tier 4, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Close

A creature you touch becomes fragile. It takes double damage for the spell's duration.



HOWL

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Near

All enemies within near range of you must immediately make a morale check. This spell does not affect creatures that are immune to morale checks.

HYPNOTIZE

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Near

One creature of LV 3 or less that can see you is rendered stupefied.

Breaking the creature's line of sight to you allows it to make a DC 15 Charisma check. On a success, the spell ends.

INVISIBILITY

Tier 2, witch

Duration: 10 rounds

Range: Close

A creature you touch becomes invisible for the spell's duration. The spell ends if the target attacks or casts a spell.

MISTLETOE

Tier 3, witch

Duration: 1d8 days

Range: Near

Two creatures you can see within near of you become enchanted with each other for 1d8 days.

Each time one of the affected creatures takes damage, it may make a DC 15 Charisma check. On a success, the spell ends.

MOONBEAM

Tier 4, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Far

A wavering ray of silvery moonlight strikes one creature within far. It takes 3d6 damage.





NIGHTMARE

Tier 4, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: On the same plane

You visit the dreams of one sleeping creature, sending it heart-stopping nightmares.

You can target a creature whose level is less than or equal to half your level rounded down (minimum 1). The target must be sleeping, and you must have seen it before in person.

If you successfully focus on this spell for 3 rounds in a row, the creature dies of fright.

MOTHER OF NIGHT

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

You beseech the Mother of Night to lend you power.

Make a single wish, stating it as exactly as possible. Your wish occurs, as interpreted by the GM.

If you fail this spellcasting check, the Mother of Night pulls you into The Nightfall for judgment. You can't cast this spell again until you appease her demands.

OAK, ASH, THORN

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Self

For the spell's duration, faeries, demons, and devils can't attack you. These beings also can't possess, compel, or beguile you.



PIN DOLL

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: On the same plane

You pin a piece of hair or flesh taken from one creature to a small, burlap doll the spell conjures.

On your turn while focusing on this spell, you can push a pin into the doll. Each time you do this, the creature who the hair or flesh belonged to takes 2d6 damage. After this spell ends, the piece of hair or flesh burns to ash.

POISON

Tier 2, witch

Duration: 5 rounds

Range: Close

One worn or carried object you touch becomes toxic for the spell's duration. Any creature in contact with the object at the start of its turn takes 1d6 damage.



POLYMORPH

Tier 4, witch

Duration: 10 rounds

Range: Close

You transform a creature you touch into another natural creature you choose of equal or smaller size. Any gear the target carries melds into its new form.

The target gains the creature's physical stats and features, but it retains its non-physical stats and features.

If the target goes to 0 hit points, it reverts to its true form at half its prior hit points.

You can target any willing creature with this spell, or an unwilling creature whose level is less than or equal to half your level rounded down (min. 1).

PUPPET

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Close

One humanoid creature of LV 2 or less you touch becomes ensnared by your movements. On your turn, the creature mimics all your movements.

If mimicking you would cause the creature to directly harm itself or an ally, it can make a DC 15 Charisma check. On a success, it resists mimicking you.



SCRYING

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Self

You look into a crystal ball or reflecting pool, calling up images of a distant place.

For the spell's duration, you can see and hear a creature or location you choose that is on the same plane.

This spell is DC 18 to cast if you try to scry on a creature or location that is unfamiliar to you.

Each round, creatures you view may make a Wisdom check vs. your last spellcasting check. On a success, they become aware of your magical observation.

SHADOWDANCE

Tier 1, witch

Duration: 3 rounds

Range: Near

You spin shadowstuff into a convincing visible and audible illusion at a point within near.

The illusion can be as big as a person and can move within a near range of where it appeared.

The illusion can't affect physical objects. Touching the illusion reveals its false nature.

SHAPECHANGE

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Self

You transform yourself and any gear you carry into another natural creature you've seen of level 10 or less. You assume the creature's physical stats and features, but you retain your non-physical stats and features (including INT, WIS, and CHA).

If you go to 0 HP while under the effects of this spell, you revert to your true form at 1 HP.



SOUL JAR

Tier 5, witch

Duration: Permanent

Range: Close

You transfer the soul of one creature you touch of LV 9 or less into a vessel, such as a jar. The creature's body becomes comatose, but it doesn't die.

If the vessel opens or breaks, the creature's soul returns to its body.

You can possess the empty body with your own spirit, taking control of it. Your body becomes comatose during this time. If the body dies while you possess it, your soul returns to your body.

SPEAK WITH DEAD

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Close

A dead body you touch answers your questions in a distant, wheezing voice.

You can ask the dead body up to three yes or no questions (one at a time). The GM truthfully answers "yes" or "no" to each.

If you cast this spell more than once in 24 hours, treat a failed spellcasting check for it as a critical failure instead.

SPIDERSILK

Tier 2, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Self

Sticky spidersilk covers your hands and feet.

For the spell's duration, you can walk on vertical surfaces as easily as if it were flat ground.

SWARM

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Far

A dense swarm of biting bats, rats, or locusts appears in a near-sized cube around a point you can see within range.

All creatures that start their turn within the swarm take 2d6 damage and are blinded.



TOADSTOOL

Tier 2, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

You conjure a plump, speckled toadstool in your hand. It disappears at the end of your next turn.

A creature that eats the toadstool regains 1d6 hit points.



VOID STARE

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Far

Your eyes turn black as you look into the dark between the stars.

One creature of LV 6 or less you can see falls under your control. You decide its actions during its turn.



WHISPER

Tier 3, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Close

You whisper into another creature's ear, planting a false memory in its mind.

You describe one brief, false memory that the target believes is true going forward.

If you fail this spellcasting check, the GM chooses a short, false memory to plant in your mind instead.



WILLOWMAN

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Instant

Range: Near

You call upon the Willowman to appear in one creature's mind, filling it with supernatural terror.

Choose one creature of LV 2 or less within range. That creature must immediately make a morale check.

Even creatures that are not normally subject to morale checks (such as undead) must do so.



WITCHLIGHT

Tier 1, witch

Duration: Focus

Range: Near

You summon a floating marsh light that bobs in the air and casts light out to a close radius around it.

The light can change colors and take on vague shapes. It can float up to a near distance on your turn.

The Gloaming



"The gods made these woods for demon-kind, not us."

-Gurney Tullins, hunter from Wardenwood

The Gloaming Hex Key

102. SHATTERED TOWER

A crumbling keep in a clearing choked with thorns and nettles. A heavy trapdoor in the ruins leads down to an old **cistern** where a dark shape slithers beneath the putrid algae.

106. DRUSILLA'S HUT

A cozy, thatched hut strung with drying flowers and herbs. Inside lives **Drusilla**, a weald hag, who impersonates a shy medicine woman. She is gaining the trust of the residents of nearby **Wardenwood** village (307) by "nursing" villagers back to health whom she has secretly poisoned. Drusilla is forming a plot with the werewolf **Victoria** (1003) to begin turning the village's children into werewolf cubs.

108. MOSSY MENHIRS

Mossy standing stones form a circle inside a gulch. Each new moon, the earth inside sprouts d10 dandelions of pure silver (10 gp) that **Drusilla** (106) harvests.

203. MARKER STONE

A tall, pointed stone bears an ancient mark in a spiral shape. In the earth beneath it, four **wights** lie in stone coffins. Each has a different gemstone in its sewn-shut mouth; a pearl (40 gp), an emerald (120 gp), a ruby (200 gp), and a sapphire (280 gp). Slotting these gems into four worn grooves at each cardinal point on the marker stone opens a magical portal to the fey realm.

209. TROLL CAVE

Black marrow tree roots that have been gnawed to a pulp lie scattered around this cave entrance. A warty, lank-haired troll named **Barbarog** lairs inside. He's addicted to the toxic oil in the marrow tree roots that grants him temporary immunity to fire (his greatest fear). His cave houses a suit of green-hued mithral plate mail etched with leaves and a *+1 longsword* named *Rot-Ruin* that can rust one door-sized piece of metal it touches into powder once a day.

307. WARDENWOOD

A woodland village of a few dozen sagging, thatched huts surrounds a stone well. 80 woodcutters and trappers live here with their families.

Mathilde Bower is the superstitious village elder who believes the "medicine woman" Drusilla (106) has been helping sick villagers. In reality, Drusilla has been causing the rash of illnesses by poisoning the well.

Gede's Hearth. The town's inn and tavern run by Elana, a cheerful-but-tired woman with young, triplet boys (Zeke, Herbert, and Lantin). Her husband, Carlin, is bedridden with Drusilla's "rot fever."

509. OUTLAW CAMP

30 bandits camp here led by **Greaves Redthorne**, an outcast Knight of St. Ydris. Greaves, a cunning liar, serves the marrow fiend **Unduluk**, who is only a few moons away from erupting from the marrow tree at the center of camp. Unduluk needs protection from the **Knights of St. Ydris** (1406) for now, and human flesh after its apotheosis. The bandits do not realize they serve as both.

702. BITTERMOLD KEEP

An abandoned castle keep with tattered, crimson banners that flap atop its collapsing battlements. Droplets of foul slime bead out of its slowly dissolving masonry. In the caves and catacombs beneath the keep, servants of **Mugdulblub** war for their patron's favor.

710. UNCLE GRIGOR

Crazy **Uncle Grigor** lives in a ramshackle hut on the edge of the marsh. He wades through the bog in bare feet, nattering to himself and collecting leeches to pickle inside cloudy jars that crowd every corner of his home. Within one of these jars is *Brak's Cube of Perfection* (*Shadowdark RPG*). Grigor is a powerful witch, and he might take on an apprentice who proves their worth and/or taste for leeches.

807. STONE CIRCLE

One minute of time that passes inside this low circle of stones is actually an hour on the outside. **Kytheros** grants a random patron boon to those who lay the slain six-eyed wolf (1409) inside the circle.

905. HALDRIN'S TOWER

This ivory tower with a red roof dominates a sandy island on **Finimere Lake**. The elf sorcerer **Haldrin** once lived here and used the laboratory inside to study the infernal properties of the forest's marrow trees. Haldrin has been trapped within the Vile Well (1607) for the last century, leaving his volatile experiments untended for far too long.

910. BARROW MOUNDS

Dozens of low, rolling hills mark the tombs of ancient denizens of the forest. Mist from the bogs roils over these burial sites, and strange lights dance in the fog.

1002. MUSHROOM GROVE

Fat, dewy mushrooms sprout inside this sunlit grove, forming a faerie ring the size of a house. On the full moon, **Titania**, Queen of the Fey, appears inside the circle with a troupe of actors who put on a whimsical theatrical performance. They disappear instantly if they learn mortal eyes watch. Any person who sees the entire play gains a random boon from Titania (once per person).

1003. BONE CAVE

A werewolf named **Victoria** resides in this cave. It stinks of wet fur and rancid meat. Piles of cracked bones and skulls are arranged in spiral patterns sacred to her ancient tribe, long dead. Victoria recently lost her two cubs to the swamp dragon **Ixidian** (1403). **Drusilla** (106) coaxed the grieving Victoria into a plot to turn children from **Wardenwood** village (307) into her new pack of werewolf cubs.

1108. MARIN'S HOLD

300 fisherfolk live in a motte-and-bailey hold where the river meets the bog. A palisade surrounds the village, and Reeve **Tarley Winters** resides in the keep atop a hill with 30 guards. The village is still recovering from an attack by six skrell demons who breached the palisade and slew 20 souls. Winters believes sorcery attracts the demons, and he recently had three women burned alive on **Boot Hill** (1205) for suspected witchcraft. Villagers eye each other warily, and the gossips at **The Crayfish Tavern** wonder who will be accused next.

1205. BOOT HILL

Three scorched skeletons are lashed to poles atop a hill overlooking the forest. These women from **Marin's Hold** (1108) were accused of witchcraft.

1210. STILT ORC VILLAGE

80 reclusive orcs live in peat huts on raised platforms in the deep swamp. Snakes and crocodiles weave between the tall stilts they wear to spearfish in the murky waters. Their leader, **Haruuk**, knows demons prefer human flesh, and he will offer it to buy his tribe's safety.

1308. MYRE CASTLE RUINS

The soaring stronghold of the **Green Knights** now sits deserted, hazy light filtering through its shattered, stained glass windows. Slain warriors still roam its halls in an unending battle between the Green Knights and its surviving offshoot, the **Knights of St. Ydris** (1406). A weapon both sides claim, the *Emerald Blade*, stands in a stone pedestal surrounded by the living dead. It's a +2 *bastard sword* that allows its wielder to speak to wild animals.

1401. ANCIENT CAIRN

An overgrown path leads to a cairn of piled stones. A worn inscription on the largest stone says, "Here rests Cyrinia, Mother of the Circle." **Cyrinia** was a mighty druid in ancient times. Her bones lie buried beneath the cairn, fingers wrapped around a +1 *staff* of knotted oak called *Ynnith*. Once a day, the wielder can summon an obedient giant owl for 5 rounds. Druids who see the staff will try to lay claim to it.

1403. THE MUD PIT

A muddy ravine as big as a galleon gapes in the wet earth. Deep within, the swamp dragon **Ixidian** slithers in the dark morass and devours the living sacrifices his cultists (1504) hurl inside. Ixidian has grown large and arrogant; if not fed for a day, he bursts angrily from the pit to gulp down the nearest creatures. Inside the dragon's belly are 1,200 gp, a giant ruby (400 gp), a suit of mithral chainmail, and a *Wand of Moonbeam* that any spellcaster can wield. The wand begins twitching whenever a lycanthrope is within near distance of it.

1406. GREYWALL PRIORY

In the deepest part of the woods lurks a grey-stoned priory with a pointed roof and arched, stained glass windows. 40 **Knights of St. Ydris** live here led by grim **Inquisitor Justinia Morvin**. Few know 160-year-old **St. Ydris** is still alive deep within the priory's catacombs, bound painfully (and willingly) in a magic circle to trap the mighty demon lord who possesses him. Initiates into the order gain their fell powers by drinking of his cursed blood and surviving. These knights swear to use their fiendish abilities to hunt demons, never losing control or embracing evil. Thus their oath: "I will walk the path between darkness and dawn, ever vigilant, sword drawn." They are sorely outnumbered.

1409. WOLF CAVE

A pack of 16 wolves lairs here. One wolf is favored by the demon prince **Almazzat**; it stands as tall as a horse and has six eyes (x2 level and damage). Anyone who leaves a worthy offering of flesh for it gains a random patron boon from Almazzat (once per person).

1504. CULTIST CAMP

20 cultists led by the charismatic firebrand **Torak Bain** (cultist) have recently set up camp here to make offerings to the dragon **Ixidian** (1403). The cultists stage ambushes on the path to Marin's Hold (1108) to capture sacrificial victims. Current captives are **Regina Pence**, a merchant from Marin's Hold, and her 3 guards.

1510. CORRUPTED HENGE

A henge of standing stones has been shifted out of alignment by the roots of a massive marrow tree. Spells are hard to cast within near distance of it. Inside the tree trunk rests **Taigolar**, a conjoined-twin dralech (treat as two combined) that erupts forth when it smells nearby prey.

1607. THE VILE WELL

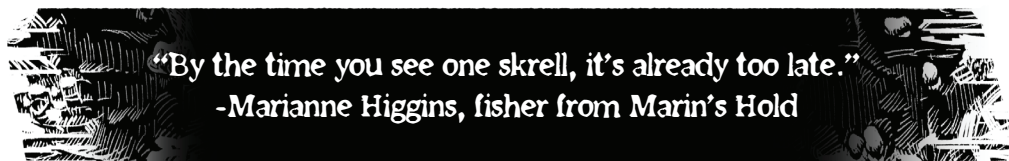
The stench of rot gusts out of this mold-encrusted, lightless well. Inside, **Haldrin** the sorcerer (905) is entangled in a nest of veins and tendrils that keep him alive, of sorts. Any creature who enters risks the same fate. 1,000 gp and a *Kytherian Cog* (*Shadowdark RPG*) rest on the well's fleshy, damp floor.

Monsters



"By the time you see one skrell, it's already too late."

-Marianne Higgins, fisher from Marin's Hold





BITTERMOLD

A staring, stooped human that scuttles along. Pale, wet skin.

AC 12, **HP** 5, **ATK** 1 shortsword +1 (1d6) or 1 sling (far) +2 (1d4), **MV** near, **S** +1, **D** +2, **C** +1, **I** +0, **W** +0, **Ch** +0, **AL** C, **LV** 1

Rubbery. Half damage from stabbing weapons.



BOGTHORN

A skittering nest of nettles and thorns with marshlights for eyes.

AC 13, **HP** 11, **ATK** 1 stab +0 (1d4) or 1 thorn hail (near) +2 (1d4 + poison), **MV** near (climb), **S** +0, **D** +2, **C** +2, **I** -3, **W** +1, **Ch** -3, **AL** C, **LV** 2

Poison. DC 12 CON or paralyzed for 1d4 rounds.



DRALECH

As tall as two humans with a pair of curved horns, a shark's grin, and an axe of white bone.

AC 13, **HP** 29, **ATK** 3 bone axe +5 (2d6), **MV** near, **S** +4, **D** +1, **C** +2, **I** +0, **W** +0, **Ch** +1, **AL** C, **LV** 6

Shatter. Destroy one non-magic gear instead of dealing damage.



GORDOCK BREEG

A halfling with a distant gaze and black veins around his lips.

AC 15 (chainmail), **HP** 19, **ATK** 1 bastard sword +3 (1d10) or 1 sling (far) +2 (1d4), **MV** near, **S** +3, **D** +2, **C** +1, **I** +1, **W** +2, **Ch** +2, **AL** N, **LV** 4

Algae-Eater. Lose 1d4 HP to gain advantage on next check/attack.



HEXLING

A whispering, writhing shadow that coils and snaps like a whip.

AC 12, **HP** 11, **ATK** 1 chill touch +2 (1d6 + energy drain), **MV** near, **S** +0, **D** +2, **C** +2, **I** +0, **W** +1, **Ch** +0, **AL** C, **LV** 2

Energy Drain. 1d4 CON damage. If reduced to 0, become hexling.



HOWLER

A lunging halfling with sharpened teeth wearing a cloak of coyote pelts.

AC 15 (leather + shield), **HP** 5, **ATK** 1 club +2 (1d4) or 1 sling (far) +2 (1d4), **MV** near, **S** +2, **D** +2, **C** +1, **I** +0, **W** +0, **Ch** +0, **AL** N, **LV** 1

Mob. Deal +1 damage in melee when beside an ally.

ICHOR OOZE

A trembling mass of filmy bile that slurps toward warmth.

AC 12, **HP** 15, **ATK** 2 tendrils +3 (1d6), **MV** near (climb), **S** +3, **D** +2, **C** +2, **I** -3, **W** +1, **Ch** -3, **AL** N, **LV** 3

Rubbery. Half damage from stabbing weapons.

Corrosive. Metal or wood that touches the ooze is destroyed on a d6 roll of 1.

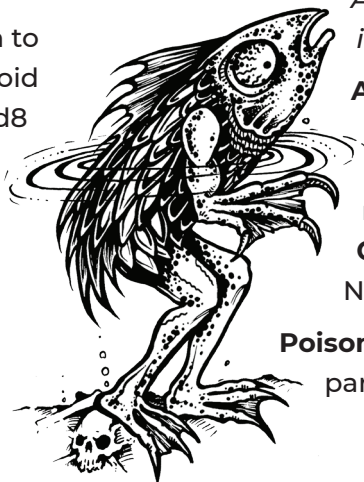
MARROW FIEND

A wolfish hulk of razor bone and sinewy muscle. Black marrow tree sap drips from its jaws and the gaps in its bony plating.

AC 15, **HP** 39, **ATK** 2 claws +7 (1d10) and 1 sap gout (near line) +5 (2d6 + sap), **MV** near (climb), **S** +4, **D** +4, **C** +3, **I** +2, **W** +3, **Ch** +3, **AL** C, **LV** 8

Devour. Use turn to devour a humanoid body to regain 3d8 HP.

Sap. DC 15 DEX check or stuck in place. Repeat check on turn to escape.



MUGDULBLUB

A roiling mass of stars floating in a whirlpool of purple goo.

AC 16, **HP** 58, **ATK** 3 tendrils (near) +8 (2d8) and 1 dissolve, **MV** near (climb, swim), **S** +5, **D** +3, **C** +4, **I** +2, **W** +3, **Ch** +4, **AL** C, **LV** 12

Rubbery. Half damage from stabbing weapons.

Mutagenic. Creatures within near 1:6 chance on their turn of a mutation. 1d4: **1.** Extra eye, **2-3.** Lost bone, **4.** Extra finger

Dissolve. One creature in far DC 15 CON or 1d4 CON damage. If reduced to 0, become ichor ooze under Mugdulblub's control.

MUTANT CATFISH

A slimy, enormous catfish with four limbs and webbed claws.

Amphibious and dimly intelligent.

AC 11, **HP** 11, **ATK** 1 claw +2 (1d6) or 1 barb (near) +2 (1d4 + poison), **MV** near (swim), **S** +2, **D** +1, **C** +2, **I** -2, **W** +0, **Ch** -2, **AL** N, **LV** 2

Poison. DC 12 CON or paralyzed 1d4 rounds.

SKRELL

A gobbling, scabby raptor with rolling eyes and hooked claws.

AC 13, **HP** 5, **ATK** 1 claw +2 (1d6),
MV double near, **S** +2, **D** +3, **C** +1, **I** -3, **W** +1, **Ch** -3, **AL** C, **LV** 1

Clever. Advantage on checks to do the same action on a consecutive turn.

TAR BAT

A pinwheeling bat that smells of sulfur. Excretes a black, tarry oil.

AC 13, **HP** 4, **ATK** 1 bite +3 (1d4),
MV near (fly), **S** -3, **D** +3, **C** +0, **I** -3, **W** +1, **Ch** -3, **AL** N, **LV** 1

Pyro. Seeks open flames, ignites on contact with them to deal +1d4 damage. Immune to fire.



PLOGRINA B.

Lank-haired and moon-eyed. Purple ichor dribbles from the corners of her trembling mouth.

AC 14, **HP** 25, **ATK** 2 tendril (near) +4 (1d6), **MV** near, **S** +0, **D** +4, **C** +3, **I** +1, **W** +1, **Ch** +3, **AL** C, **LV** 5

Rubbery. Half damage from stabbing weapons.

Slime Form. Turn into a puddle of slime that can climb walls for 1d4 rounds (does not use action).

THE WILLOWMAN

A pale, faceless man with elongated limbs and curved talons that rake the ground. Moves in quick stutters during each eyeblink.

AC 17, **HP** 61, **ATK** 3 finger needle +9 (2d10) and 1 terrify, **MV** near (teleport), **S** +5, **D** +7, **C** +3, **I** +4, **W** +4, **Ch** +5, **AL** C, **LV** 13

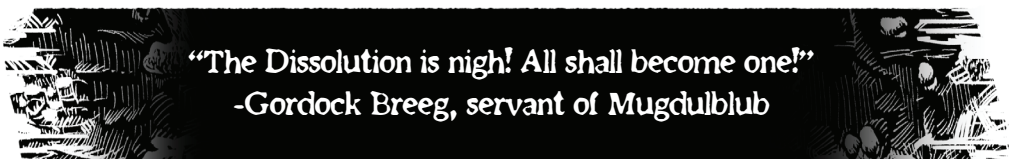
Fearless. Immune to morale checks.

Terrify. One target in near DC 15 CHA or paralyzed 1d4 rounds.

Waking Nightmare. In place of attacks, all creatures within near DC 15 CHA or flee in a random direction for 1d4 rounds.

The Hideous Halls of Mugdulblub

A 1st-level adventure for Shadowdark RPG



"The Dissolution is nigh! All shall become one!"
-Gordock Breeg, servant of Mugdulblub

Overview

ROOM KEY

The keyworded **descriptions** at the start of each location are safe to share with the players. The **bulleted details** beneath are for the GM.

BACKGROUND

Long ago, a fissure in the caverns below **Bittermold Keep** bubbled and grew, spewing forth a pool of muttering madness. This primordial ooze, **Mugdulblub**, drove the Bittermold family who lived in the keep to insanity. Now, the ooze's petitioners zealously feed and protect it, warring with each other for their patron's favor.

FACTIONS

Bittermolds. The Bittermolds' warped descendants haunt the caves beneath the keep, preferring its wet and slimy environs. Their leader, **Plogrina Bittermold**, has begun a hit-and-run war against the recent halfling "invaders" camping inside the keep's ruins.

Howlers. Fervent, barbaric halflings whose warchief, **Gordock Breeg**, saw visions of Mugdulblub after drinking algae-laced pond water. Gordock knows all must eventually be Dissolved, but he'll ally in the short term to eradicate the sneaky Bittermolds.

Vengeful Catfish. Mugdulblub's mutating influence has caused the river catfish to grow legs and dim intelligence. They resent being sacrificed to Mugdulblub when there is nothing better to Dissolve, and they want revenge against the ooze's worshippers.

Mugdulblub. Mugdulblub plays its petitioners against each other; the survivors are the ones best suited to protect and feed it.

RUMORS

- 1 The wealthy Bittermold family once lived in the keep, but their line suddenly died out and the whole place fell into ruin.
- 2 A fisher caught a catfish with four legs in a stream behind the keep. It took the hook out of its own mouth and dove back in!
- 3 The castle's stones are melting like wax from a horrible curse.
- 4 Woodsmen recently spotted several short, cloaked figures scurrying into the keep. They never came back out again.
- 5 A hunter heard a ululating cry echoing inside the ruins.
- 6 The lord of Bittermold Keep had a magic ruby that let him walk through fire unscathed. It was a gift from a demon!

BITTERMOLD KEEP

Dissolving. The ruined keep is slowly collapsing into mush from Mugdulblub's liquefying presence. The stones feel spongy and have a dripping, melted-wax appearance. The crenels fold and sag, and loose rubble has stewed down into pools of globby mortar.

Entrances and Exits. The keep itself is a gaping shell upon a hill, but a rusty **trapdoor** in its floor leads to **Area 1**. A cold **river** trickles out of the hill's south face; its cramped, muddy tunnel leads up into **Area 23** (3:6 chance of **1d4 mutant catfish** in the river).

ORDER OF BATTLE

Bittermolds. If the Bittermolds fall into audible battle, any of their allies in **adjacent rooms** arrive in **1d4 rounds**. Fleeing Bittermolds try to lead pursuers into acid quicksand traps or the skeletons in Areas 10 and 11. They retreat toward **Area 27**.

Howlers. The halflings shriek a ululating war cry in battle that summons all allies in that quadrant of the complex in **1d6 rounds**. They fall back to **Area 4** if overwhelmed and barricade inside.

Areas 1-33

Danger Level. Unsafe. Check for an encounter every **3** crawling rounds or after the PCs make loud noises (1d6, 1 = encounter).

Light. Halflings have 1d4 lit torches. Otherwise, wet, inky darkness.

Totals. 35 **Howlers**, 30 **Bittermolds**, and 28 **mutant catfish** between keyed locations and wanderers. It's possible to wipe a faction out.



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d12 Details

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Plogrina Bittermold (Area 29) with 1d6 Bittermolds looking for something to feed to Mugdulblub that it's never tasted |
| 2 | 1d6 Howlers wrestling a mutant catfish down the hall |
| 3 | An ichor ooze slurping toward the nearest source of heat |
| 4 | Gordock Breeg (Area 4) leading a band of 2d6 Howlers in pursuit of 1d4 wounded Bittermolds |
| 5 | 1d6 Bittermolds stealthily looking for Howlers to capture |
| 6 | A new pocket of acid quicksand gives way beneath 1d4 characters (DC 12 DEX to escape, 1d4 damage/round) |
| 7 | 1d4 vengeful mutant catfish out for violence (can be distracted with tasty food or sympathy) |
| 8 | 1d6 bandits looking for treasure who are realizing coming here was a bad idea; they refuse to leave empty-handed |
| 9 | 2d4 Bittermolds dragging 1d4 tied Howlers to Mugdulblub |
| 10 | A lone cultist in an algae-induced fever dream looking for Mugdulblub; mutters about how all must be Dissolved |
| 11 | 2d6 roosting tar bats ; open flame makes them frenzy |
| 12 | A fat glob of sticky slime drips onto a light source, ruining it |

1. ENTRY HALL

Statue in Alcove: Misshapen, waxy lump. **Floor:** Streaked with mud.

Walls: Slushy water oozing from hairline cracks. **Air:** Humid, sour.

- **Statue.** Humanlike shape. Worn, copper plate says "Sir Reginald Bittermold." Pushing the plate opens the **secret door** to Area 32.
- **Floor.** Child-sized, bare footprints in dry mud toward Area 2.
- **Walls.** "Water" is corrosive globs of acid. Sizzles when touches flesh, DC 12 CON or 1d4 damage. Enough to collect 3 doses.
- **Faint Sounds.** Snarling voices from Area 4 if Howlers are there.

2. MEMORIAL CHAMBER

Stone Busts: Dozens carved inside deep wall niches. Melting, distorted. **Floor:** Mud abruptly ends halfway across room.

- **Loud Sounds.** Barking voices from Area 4 if Howlers are there.
- **Busts.** Humans. A stone is jammed in the mouth of one. If removed, he bellows the jaunty Bittermold family anthem (three **Howlers** from Area 4 investigate in 1d4 rounds).
- **Floor.** Muddy prints lead into acid quicksand **trap**. Floor is very smooth over the area. DC 12 DEX to escape, 1d4 damage/round.
- **Secret Door.** Faint, wobbly crack in north hall. Leads to Area 3.

3. PIPE ORGAN VAULT

Pipe Organ: Massive, fills east wall. Swollen, cracked wood. Brass tubes crusted with verdigris. Wobbly stool. **Ceiling:** Soaring, arched.

- **Bittermolds.** 2:6 chance of 1d4 **Bittermolds** crouching in here.
- **Ceiling.** Hundreds of subtle, pin-sized holes (trap, see below).
- **Organ.** Carved with imps. 42 ivory keys left (1 gp each). Honks and wheezes, shakes room. Playing a grave/unholy dirge grants 1 XP and luck token (once per PC). A pleasant/holy ode triggers **trap**.
 - ▶ **Trap.** Door locks, poison gas fills room. DC 15 CON or 1d4/round.

4. HOWLER CAMP

People: Twelve, child-sized, bare feet. Scraggly coyote-pelt cloaks. Jabbering and gnawing raw catfish around campfire. **Pillars:** Chiseled with spiraling runes. **Smell:** Wet dog, faint brimstone.

- **People.** 12 unruly **Howlers** make squalid camp. **Gordock Breeg**, their leader, is addicted to psychedelic algae; it gives him delusional, self-important visions about Mugdulblub's desires.
 - ▶ Gordock plans to win Mugdulblub's favor by "Dissolving" the Bittermolds. He'll make temporary **alliances** to that end.
- **Pillars.** Minuscule screed in Diabolic covering six pillars. Examining causes brimstone smell to rise. **Reading whole thing:** +1 CHA stat and summons 2d4 hostile **hexlings** through alcoves.
- **West Door.** Barricaded from Area 4 side. DC 18 STR to force open.

5. COMPASS ROSE HALL

Floor: Swooping compass rose carving. Scattered bones. **Body:** Splayed out, clutching silvery item. **South Door:** Warm, wet draft.

- **Body.** Recently dead Howler, scorched to a crisp. Holding *Wrath Bolt*, +1 dagger, deals 1d100 damage to anyone who tries to take it from previous possessor (dead or alive).
- **Bones.** Old human skeletons. Scraps of burned armor and gear.
- **Compass.** When asked a location, flares to indicate the direction.
- **South Door.** Barricaded from both sides. DC 20 STR to force open.

6. ASHES CHAMBER

Glass Bowl: Opaque white. On pedestal of lumpy stone. **Walls:** Draped in shredded, crimson banners. **Air:** Frigid, can see breath.

- **Bowl.** Rime plays over surface. Filled with ash. Sifting reveals dozens of teeth and a blue pearl (40 gp). Removing pearl causes teeth and ash to knit into a **skeleton** that serves the pearl-holder.
- **Banners.** Sewn into the hem of one is the fat iron **key** to Area 12.

7. BURROW HOLES

East Wall: Pockmarked with jagged holes. **Smell:** Faint bile stench.

- **Holes.** 20 at varying heights, as big around as a fist. Connected warren of tunnels inside. Three **ichor oozes** nest within.
 - ▶ **Reaching Inside.** Roll d20. On 1-16, pull out a hostile **ichor ooze**. On 17-20, pull out a random diabolical treasure (see back cover). Once all ichor oozes pulled out, nest is empty of treasure.

8. ANCIENT FOUNTAINS

Fountains in Alcoves: Wide, smooth, burbling water. One is glossy black, one pearly white. **North Wall:** Bas relief carving covers wall.

- **Obsidian Fountain.** Sulfurous water, causes violent coughing when drunk. Pouring a draught of it into Reginald Bittermold's mouth (Area 25) causes corpse to hack up the *Cloven Heart* gem.
- **Pearl Fountain.** Dead mutant catfish floats inside. Pink water. Drinking it heals 1d6 HP but causes a **mutation**. **1d4:** **1.** Extra eye, **2.** Extra finger, **3.** Split tongue, **4.** Longer, sharper teeth.
- **Bas Relief.** Runny and distorted. In it, a many-fingered man atop Bittermold Keep drops a heart-shaped stone into his mouth.

9. HOWLER GUARDS

People: Group of short, tan-cloaked figures pacing around.

Occasionally stop to listen at double doors. **Ceiling:** High, vaulted.

- **People.** Four jumpy **Howlers** on guard against Bittermold intruders. They believe Bittermolds sneak in through this door to attack their camp (they actually use the secret door in Area 1).
 - ▶ **Howlers.** Clove, Gabby, Merv, Tobin. Territorial and suspicious, but open to parlay. Still not sure why Gordock made the tribe come here. **Clove** secretly wants to mutiny. **Gabby** is blindly in love with Gordock. The other two just want hot meals and ale.
- **Loose Stone.** Base of stairs. Inside, moldy *Scroll of Charm Person*.

10. NORTH SKELETON GUARDS

Skeletons: Crimson glow in eye sockets. Tattered red tabards.

- **Arrow Slits.** Cleverly hidden. Can't be seen from outside hall unless specifically looking (shooting through it reveals location).
- **Skeletons.** Three. They shoot shortbows at non-Bittermolds. Surprise if shooting through undetected arrow slits.
 - ▶ **Treasure.** A ruby chip in each skeleton's right eye (5 gp each).

11. SOUTH SKELETON GUARDS

- As Area 10, but two **skeletons** instead of three.

12. METEORITE ROOM

Door: Rusty, thick iron. Gouged and dented. Stamped with runes.

- **Door.** Hefty keyhole. Locked. Runes in Diabolic say "Betrayal is Imminent." DC 18 DEX to pick, DC 20 STR to force. Opening with anything but **key** from Area 6 triggers **trap**.
 - ▶ **Trap.** Creature closest to the door possessed by a demonic spirit. DC 18 CHA or fly into screaming rage and attack allies. Ends if knocked unconscious or demon exorcised.
- **Inside.** Vast, hollow room rimed with dust. Stale air. Black marble dais with weighty, iron **chest** on it that pulls light into itself.
 - ▶ **Chest.** Starry void on interior lid. 20 iridescent meteorite chunks inside (30 gp each). For each removed, gravity of void increases (cumulative 5% chance of being sucked into void, forever lost).

13. STALACTITE CAVERN

Stalactites: Dangling, crowded, wet. **Sound:** Splashing water (west).

- **Floor.** Acid quicksand **trap**. Ground is very smooth over the area. DC 12 DEX to escape, 1d4 damage/round.
- **Stalactites.** Tiny one carved with an X. Hit for a luck token, AC 15.
- **North Tunnel.** Wispy coils of steam waft out and dissipate.

14. THE GOLD CATFISH

Pool: Crystal clear, glittering water. **Gold Catfish:** Long beard tendrils, radiant scales. Splashing and darting merrily in water.

- **Pool.** Piles of sparkling, gold coins glint on bottom (60 gp). Highly acidic water, 1d6 damage/round to non-metal objects. 10' deep.
- **Gold Catfish.** Transcendent **mutant catfish** (LV 5, +4 attack, x2 damage). Solid gold body (100 gp). Jovial, wise, speaks Common. Answers questions about ruins, 5 gp each (70% chance accurate).

15. STEAMING STALAGMITES

Stalagmites: Fat, wide clusters. Steaming like tea kettles. **Steam:** Dense. Fills room and passages. **Sound:** Soft clacking and rattling.

- **Steam.** Visibility out to a close distance. Checks to hide are easy.
- **Stalagmites.** Spitting and bubbling, 1:6 chance per round of steam gout (DC 12 DEX or 1d4 damage). Round mineral balls (cave pearls) rattle around in the bowl-like tips of several.
 - ▶ **Cave Pearls.** Five total. When thrown against a hard surface, explode with a loud pop, flash, and puff of sulfur.
- **Hum.** Echoing from the west passage. Rises and falls.

16. RESONANT CAVE

Hum: Like air blowing over the lips of glass bottles. Vibrates teeth.

Walls: Rough rock with high, craggy ceiling. Turns into paved stone to the south. **South Alcoves:** Thin, rectangular objects on the walls.

- **Tar Bats.** Six roosting in niches along north cave wall. Bright light directly below drives them into a fluttering frenzy.
- **Cave Chimneys.** Dozens of natural holes in ceiling, big enough for mice. Air whistles over them, creating fluting reverberations.
- **Alcoves.** A tarnished, gold-framed painting in each (10 gp per). The paint runs into a grey slurry. An old **parchment scrap** is stuck to the back of one. It says: "The door is behind my statue. -R.B."

17. TIME FLUX CHAMBER

Floor: Carpet of tiny, glossy brown mushrooms. **Northeastern Wall:** Stone churns and froths with bubbles. **Sounds:** Soft hissing and popping, like a boiling cauldron.

- **Mushrooms.** Crunch softly if tread upon. Regrow swiftly. Filling, nutritious, savory. DC 12 CON or neon hallucinations (1d4 rounds).
- **Wall.** Affected by a **time flux**. 3' deep. Stone roils between mud and solid. Bubbles form, burst, and then reverse back inside.
 - ▶ **Time Flux.** Objects/creatures in the mud suffer an effect each round. **1d4: 1-2.** Age 2d10 years, **3-4.** Become 2d10 years younger.
- **East Passage.** A pale statue slowly glides across the floor in a wide chamber beyond the passage.
- **South Door.** Locked. DC 18 DEX to pick or DC 15 STR to force. 2:6 chance/round **Bittermolds** in Area 21 notice attempts to open it.

18. GELATINOUS CUBE

Floating Statue: Alabaster woman, white eyes, gentle expression. Air shimmers around her. Glides silently. **Floor:** Cracked, free of debris. **Ceiling:** High, vaulted. Sounds echo loudly.

- **Gelatinous Cube.** The statue floats upright inside the cube's translucent body. The cube has grown too large to exit the room. It pursues sources of motion and heat.
 - ▶ **Statue.** Carving on base: "Rosemary Bittermold." Impervious to acid. **Hidden compartment:** Gold hummingbird charm necklace (30 gp), grants advantage once/day on a DEX check.

19. EMPTY PRISON CELL

Rusty Cell: In alcove. Iron bars, door hanging open.

- **Cell.** Wall chains with manacles. Scratched into the mushy stone: "MGDLBLB WLL DSSLV LL"
- **Bittermolds.** 2:6 chance **Bittermolds** in Area 21 hear noises.

20. JELLIFIED REMAINS

Rusty Cell: In alcove. Iron bars, door shut. Lumpy shape inside.

- **Floor.** Acid quicksand **trap**. Ground is very smooth over the area. DC 12 DEX to escape, 1d4 damage/round.
- **Cell.** Oxidized, locked bars. Break on DC 12 STR check, pick lock with DC 15 DEX. **Inside:** Goopy, rotted skeleton in scraps of purple robes sags in the manacles. Bones have become rubbery.
 - ▶ **Bones.** The willowy, blue spirit of a thin human in robes (**Jakku the Polyglot**) rises out of the remains if touched. He is chatty, academic, and speaks every language. If impressed by a PC's vocabulary, he tells them of the **illusory wall** in Area 24.
- **Bittermolds.** 2:6 chance **Bittermolds** in Area 21 hear noises.

21. HOWLER PRISONERS

People: Hunched, pale humans with lank hair sneer and poke sticks through bars of cells. **Rusty Cells:** Two, in alcoves. Doors shut.

- **People.** Four young adult **Bittermolds:** Vort, Globriella, Murdock, Rogart. Vort has **keys** to Area 17 door, cell doors, and manacles. **Globriella** is Plogrina's cruel and sadistic daughter; the others wish to impress her with false bravado and oneupmanship.
 - ▶ **Investigating Sounds.** Bittermolds stealthily investigate sounds in Areas 19-20. They set up an ambush and try to lead PCs into the quicksand **trap** in Area 20.
- **Cells.** Locked bars (break on DC 12 STR check, pick lock with DC 15 DEX). One **Howler** in manacles inside each, soon to be fed to Mugdulblub in Area 22 (manacles break on DC 18 STR check, pick lock with DC 15 DEX).
 - ▶ **Howler Prisoners.** Ignatius and Bron. Caked in blood and muck, festering wounds, feverish. Bite and snarl at threats. Ask to be taken back to **Gordock Breeg** (Area 4). If returned safely, Gordock's attitude toward PCs improves one step.



22. MUGDULBLUB'S HALL

Starry Pool: Swirls and trembles on floor, purple and sparkling.

Room: Cavernous, airy. Damp wind wafts from the east. **Walls:** Pockmarked, rough. Globbs of mortar plop down into sticky puddles.

- **Pool. Mugdulblub,** a telepathic, primordial ooze of eldritch power.
Goal: It must Dissolve and incorporate all material. The strong will enforce this upon the weak until only Mugdulblub remains.
 - ▶ **Hungry.** Needs a steady diet of material to Dissolve. It bestows favor upon those who bring it the most material of the highest novelty. It's bored of catfish, humanoids, stone, and refuse.
 - ▶ **Boons.** Grants a random boon to those it favors (see pg. 19). Withdraws boons if displeased.

23. RIVER OUTFLOW

River: Burbling, murky stream empties into a dark tunnel in floor.

- **River.** 5' deep. Glittering objects skate by along the bottom each round (DC 15 DEX to grab). **1d20: 1.** Irritated **mutant catfish.** **2-19.** Worthless sliver of quartz. **20.** Blue pearl (40 gp).
- **Tunnel.** Cramped, muddy. Exits to south face of hill outside the keep. 1:3 chance of encountering 1d4 **mutant catfish** in tunnel.

24. ILLUSORY WALL

Cave Walls: Streaked with red and purple minerals. Trickles of water leave white salt trails. **River:** Turbid, charges past. Small waterfalls.

Air: Faint, ruffling breeze.

- **River.** 5' deep. Fast current: DC 12 DEX check if moving quickly or slip and be carried a near distance toward Area 23.
- **Breeze.** Faint, from tunnel to Area 25 behind illusory wall (see below). Bends flames and carries the smell of dust and decay.
- **Illusory Wall.** Touching the back wall or looking at it in a reflective object (mirror, bright shield) reveals the illusory portion.

25. BITTERMOLD FAMILY TOMB

Alcoves: Six dusty coffins stand upright gripped by tarnished, brass claws driven into stone.

- **Coffins.** Dust-covered, green-hued glass. Wiping reveals pale, sunken corpses floating in preservative. Glass easily shattered.
- ▶ **Bodies.** Three men, three women. 1:6 chance each rises as a **wight** if freed from glass. Two wear matching gold necklaces with a ruby-and-gold eye pendant (40 gp each).
- ▶ **Reginald Bittermold.** Southeast coffin. Seven fingers on each hand. Body is rubbery; cuts instantly slurp shut. Inside stomach is **Cloven Heart:** heart-shaped, glittering ruby with crack down center. Grants owner immunity to fire, +2 STR, +2 CHA, and the enmity of the dralech, Tzakoru, who wants it back. Water from **obsidian fountain** (Area 8) makes Reginald cough the ruby up.

26. TOOTH PILLAR

Cavern: Drafty, high ceiling, crimson-striated rock. **Central Rock**

Pillar: Flecks of white peppered all around bottom half.

- **Rock Pillar.** Hundreds of teeth driven into rubbery stone. Thin fangs, hefty molars, human and animal. Six gold teeth (2 gp each).
- **Northeast Tunnel.** Distant rush of water, cavernous echoes.

27. BITTERMOLD HOVELS

People: Groups of pale, stooped humans squat on the ground, chewing brown mushrooms and muttering quietly to each other.

Shacks: Two dozen rotting, wooden lean-tos against cave walls.

- **People.** 15 **Bittermolds** drift about. Praising Mugdulblub makes them hostile; they detest rivals. They hide hostility, preferring to ambush. Instead, they sweetly offer hallucinogenic **mushrooms** (see Area 17; Bittermolds are immune) to incapacitate enemies.
- ▶ **Zalk.** Grey hair, wiry, twitchy. Offers to introduce PCs to their leader, **Plogrina** (Area 29). If hostile, this is a ruse for ambush.

28. SHRINE TO MUGDULBLUB

Carved Stalagmite: Spiraling mass of tentacles looming 10' high. Runnels of dew. **Cauldron:** Battered iron, set before carving. Boiling.

- **Stalagmite.** Shrine to Mugdulblub. Sweats beads of acid (DC 12 CON or 1d4 damage). Faithful who touch it gain a luck token.
- **Cauldron.** Boiling teeth and bones inside (some humanoid). Salty broth. Drinking restores 1d4 hit points.

29. PLOGRINA BITTERMOLD'S CAVE

Person: Pale, human woman meditates on mat of woven hair. Purple, glittering liquid dribbles from her lips. **Rock Pillar:** 20' high, dull grey, lumpy, scratched. **Smell:** Burned herbs and tangy iron.

- **Person.** Plogrina. Cryptic, harsh, and respected. Obsessed with pleasing Mugdulblub (Area 22) and Dissolving rivals. Fears losing Mugdulblub's favor. **Globriella** is daughter and protégé (Area 21).
 - ▶ Will **ally** to destroy Howlers (Area 4) and/or mutant catfish (Area 32). Betrays alliance for juicy opportunity to please Mugdulblub.
- **Rock Pillar.** Highly magnetic lodestone. Metal in close range of it DC 18 STR check or stick to pillar. DC 18 STR to remove. If **hostile**, Plogrina lures warriors near the pillar to entrap them.
 - ▶ **Metal Vial.** Stuck to tip of pillar. *Potion of Extirpation* (*Shadowdark RPG*) inside.

30. CENTRAL CAVERN

Cavern: Vast, breezy. Sheets of dripping flowstone covering walls and natural pillars. **Floor:** Cut stone crumbling into gritty, uneven rock. **River:** Sluggish, murky, winding. Occasional splash.

- **River.** 5' deep. Lazy current. While in water, 3:6 chance per round 1d4 **mutant catfish** appear and demand a toll (food/gold). Hostile toward **Bittermolds** (who often sneak through toward Area 1).
- **North Door.** Barricaded from both sides. DC 20 STR to force open.

31. CONTESTED CAVE

Cave: Smooth rock layered with maroon stripes. **River:** Cloudy with brown sediment, rushing. **Walls:** Crude carvings at waist height.

- **River.** 10' deep. Fast current: DC 12 DEX check if moving quickly or slip and be carried a near distance toward Area 30.
 - ▶ **Catfish.** 2:6 chance per round 1d4 **mutant catfish** from Area 32 investigate noises. Hostile toward **Bittermolds** (who often sneak through toward Area 1). They demand a crossing toll (food/gold).
- **Carvings.** Childish, jagged. Depicts four-legged fish as big as horses eating and rending humanoid stick figures.

32. CATFISH POOL

Pool: Deep pool of cloudy water. Colorful shapes dart around inside.

- **Pool.** 20' deep, spring fed. Nine **mutant catfish** inside. Hostile toward **Bittermolds** (who often sneak through toward Area 1). They demand a crossing toll of food/gold.
 - ▶ **Wise One.** Oldest catfish. Red scales with silver flecks, sagacious, arthritic. Promises "our greatest treasure" (see Rock, Area 33) for **Plogrina's** head (Area 29). Is trying to ally with the **Howlers** (Area 4), but so far the halflings only want to eat them.
 - ▶ **Blue Pearls.** Three in the muck on the bottom. 40 gp each.

33. MAGICAL ROCK

Catfish: Several slimy, four-legged catfish stump in a rhythmic circle around a low rock. **Rock:** Flat, smooth, size of wagon wheel. Piled with gold coins cascading off sides. **Walls:** Covered in thin carvings.

- **Catfish.** Six **mutant catfish** guarding the rock. Bored, hungry.
- **Rock.** 100 gp stacked on top. This is actually an offering to the rock, which is magical. STR becomes 20 while standing on it.
- **Carvings.** Rudimentary scratches of hulking, four-legged fish rampaging through humanoid stick figures.

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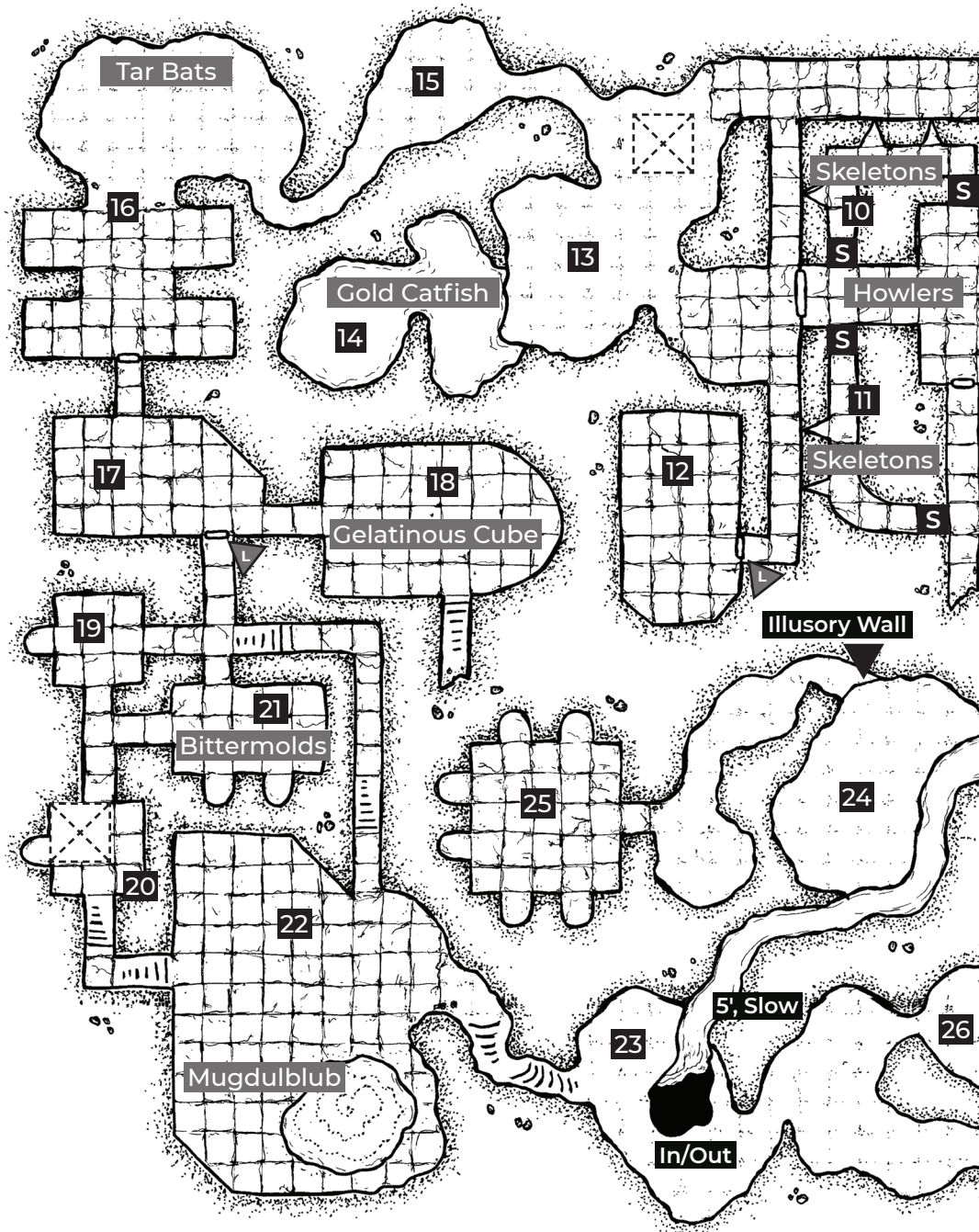
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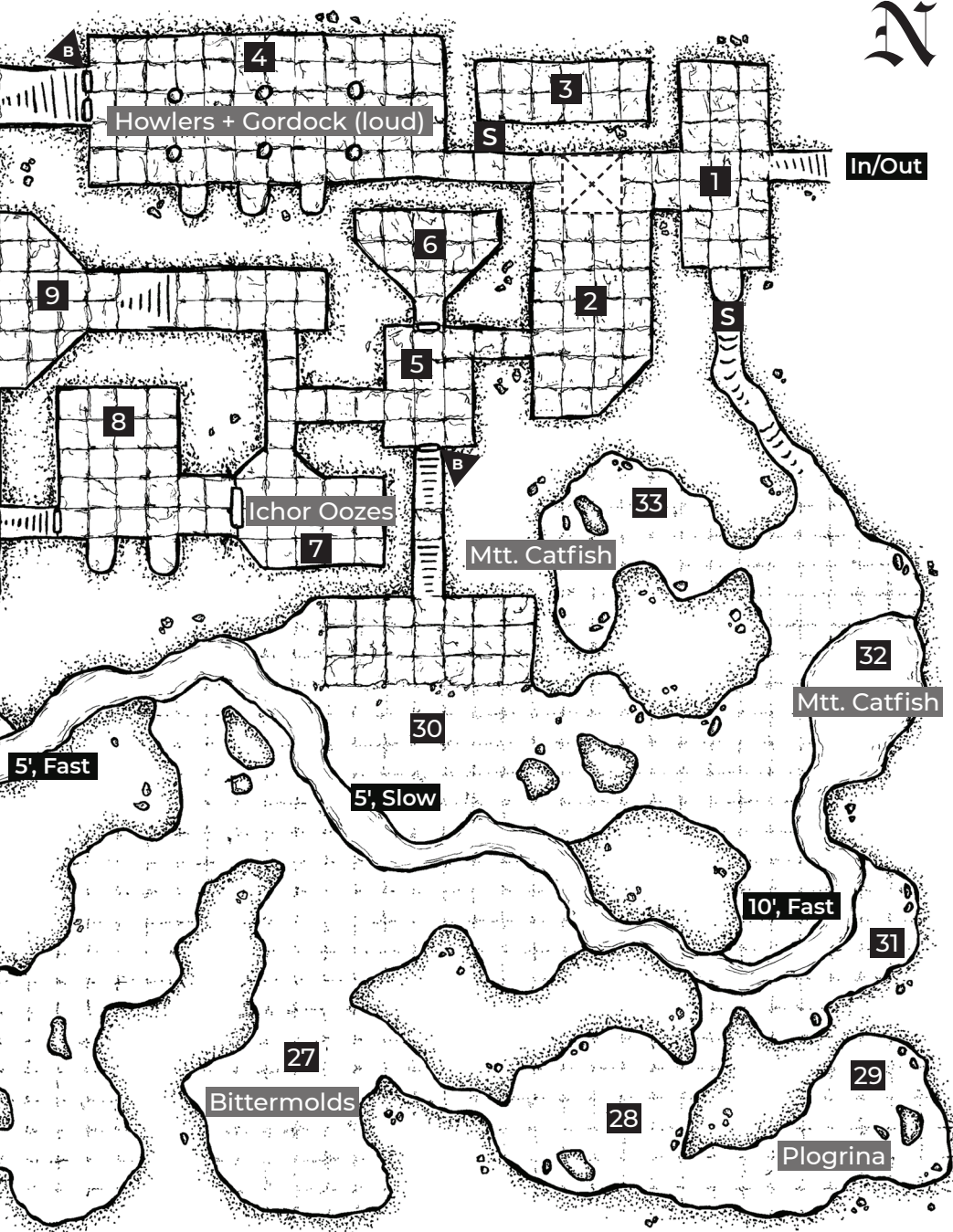
Kuins of Bittermold Keep



Acid quicksand: DC 12 DEX escape, 1d4 damage/round



Barricaded



Locked



Secret door: thin cracks in wall if examined

A collection of **ideas** for ShadowDark RPG

DIABOLICAL TREASURE

d20	Item	Feature
1	Carved bone	Ignites in flames once/day for 1d4 rounds
2	Eyeball	Repels insects and spiders to arm's length
3	Wolf idol	Floats in the air wherever it's placed
4	Dried rose	Turns toward due north when untouched
5	Pickled imp	Attracts demonic creatures to its location
6	Bundle of sage	A creature holding it can't knowingly lie
7	Cold iron spike	You can smell if something is poisonous
8	Warped skull	Drips blood in the presence of undead
9	Cracked mirror	Sings a haunting lullaby when rattled
10	Severed finger	Belongs to a witch who wants it back
11	Black candle	Causes pain and disgust in fey creatures
12	Shrunken head	Can open a one-way gate to hell once
13	Ring of daisies	Allows you to hold your breath for an hour
14	Unholy symbol	A demon owes the item's owner a favor
15	Rusty key	Once/day, fire immunity 1d4 rounds
16	Vial of blood	Slowly rolls away on its own if released
17	Faded locket	Once/day, briefly read one creature's mind
18	Bag of teeth	Object cannot be crushed by anything
19	Pan pipe	As heavy as an anvil when not carried
20	Brain in a jar	Causes doubt and hesitation in demons



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