

A PRECIOUS CATCH

by Russell Bevers

A level 0 DCC RPG adventure. Thank you to the playtesters: GrapeApe, Hemlocks, Brucifer, DakotaMichaelRose, Devon, Spencer, and Danatronic.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins as an investigation into the whereabouts of Ol' Grizzie, a fisherman well-known to the nearby village. It quickly turns into a dive for treasure beneath Grizzie's Cove and beyond. The characters learn that there are strange forces beneath the surface. The wreck, which is the ultimate destination for the adventure, is the habitation of a boy, son of an ancient ruler, now a creature of the deep and long a plaything of these same forces. He sees the characters as playmates come for a visit.

A Precious Catch is a 0-level adventure intended for 8-16 characters, inspired by poems and tales of sea towns and the secrets of the deep.

This adventure forces characters to go under the waves in ways that do not facilitate simple, straight-forward combat with monsters. Players and judges are encouraged to be creative about these interactions in ways that make sense to them.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago the King of Pellidus, Parnassus the Wise, had sent for his two great treasures to return to the capitol after a great war. The first treasure of Pellidus was its young heir, Parnassian the Second, a boy-prince not yet come into manhood. The second was a small amount of magical material known only to the king and his key counselors as "*The King's Mint.*" The material, when touched to mundane things and precious gold at the same time, turns the objects wholly into gold.

"The King's Mint" is in truth a small crumbling piece of the Shell from the Primeval Egg of Creation, an ingredient that helped make the whole material world. Those who have studied its lore believe that it is the raw stuff of generative creation or chaos.

While on the voyage, the young heir grew curious and managed to open *"The Mint"* up, with disastrous results. The vessel sank off the coast before it could return home. The kingdom of Pellidus then faded into the annals of history.

Over time, the supply of Shell on board the sunken ship has been transforming the ship, its passengers, and the local flora and fauna under the waves near Grizzie's Cove. Recently, some of the gold made by the *King's Mint* was part of a precious catch that lured Ol' Grizzie underwater after more of the same. His lust for sunken treasure drove him to go beneath the waves and explore the ancient wreck to find more.

THE SHELL OF THE PRIMEVAL EGG

Pieces of the Shell look like flakes of mica or enlarged grains of sand. They glow enough to light the nearby area and scintillate unpredictably.

Passive Effects. If in open air, there is a gentle, fresh breeze coming off of them. If underwater, there is a gentle current of fresh water flowing from them.

Placing a piece of the Shell into any gaseous or liquid substance begins to increase the volume of the substance. Placing two solid materials against a piece of the shell almost instantly changes the less dense material into the denser one, but not predictably. The Shell has no effect on lead and its alloys.

Active Effects. Touching a piece of the Shell to a living thing without a thick barrier causes a strange occurrence. Roll on the following table:

1d10	Effect
1	Thick hair begins to grow all over the character at a rate of 1 inch per round for 1d6 rounds. This growth is permanent. The hair grows back to this length every 1d3 weeks unless it is cropped regularly.
2	The character's mind grows in sensitivity such that the character can sense the emotional state of any creature of its same race within 3'. This sense requires the character to concentrate for a full round and does not give details, but can be used to more reliably detect falsehood and anxiety.
3	The limb with which the character touched the Shell grows an additional 3d6 inches. Every 6 inches of growth, rounded down, gives the character a cumulative +1 to throwing a weapon with that limb.
4	Roll 1d10 modified by Luck on the Major Corruption table. For a result of 11+, re-roll on the Greater Corruption table.
5	Roll 1d5 to determine which non-Luck ability is raised permanently by 1 point, with an unnatural rapid adjusting.
6	The character's hair, finger nails, and toenails all grow an extra 1d7 inches over the next 2 rounds. This makes it awkward to hold weapons and to see properly, giving them a -1d on attack rolls and reflex saves until they trim themselves.
7	The character's fingers and toes become webbed with a fleshy tissue that allows them to move at full speed underwater as long as their feet and hands are bare. Additionally, small gills become apparent on the underside of their jaw enabling them to breath underwater without appearing horrible to behold.
8	The character feels very sick to their stomach. They have 1 round to find a more comfortable place to vomit, and then everything they've recently eaten comes back up in triplicate.

9	Random lumps of flesh grow extraordinarily all over their body and face. Their face becomes unbalanced and tipped slightly with their eyes uneven. The character becomes their own version of “the elephant man.”
10	The character feels a jubilation moving through their body from the point where they touched the Shell, resulting in a shaking sensation and a compulsive need to stand up, dance, and holler vigorously for the next 1d3 turns.

With a DC 12 Personality-based spell check, a character can coax a piece of the Shell to create a generative or transformative effect. A higher check is required depending on the effect.

When used actively, the piece of the Shell deteriorates on a roll of 1 on a d30. Each use thereafter increases the chance of consumption, a lower die is rolled on the dice chain.

RUMORS

The following are the bits of gossip related to Grizzie and his recent behaviors. Each player rolls 1d8 to determine which their characters have heard.

1d8	Rumor
1	Murky (proprietor of Murky’s Mercantile, Bait & Tackle)says Old Grizzie’s been buying large lead weights and porthole glasses for large sailing vessels along with yards of canvas. He’s paid in gold and still has a tab he hasn’t used up.
2	Deergen the farrier saw one of the coins... the coin looked old and had weird stick-words on it.
3	Feargol, another local fisherman, saw Grizzie in his rowboat about a week ago, with the biggest glass float he’d ever seen.
4	The only thing anybody’s ever heard Grizzie call his dog is “Yippin’”. The quietest time on the cove is when he’s sleeping.

5	A tavern customer shares that the waves outside Grizzie's cove have been odd. One ship that should have foundered said that it pushed them back into the harbor.
6	Grizzie wins the prize for the grandest crab every year at the fair. Maybe he finally got the crab fever and walked off into the surf.
7	An ancient treasure ship wrecked long ago in Grizzie's cove. The survivors of these ancient peoples are said to be the founders of this here fishing village.
8	Grobin's Grotto is near Grizzie's hideout. It's underwater now but used to house pirates on this coast. Maybe Grizzie found their loot. Or maybe the pirates found him.

PLAYER BACKGROUND

Old man Grizzie has been fishing the rocky shores near town for as long as anyone remembers. Recently he hasn't been seen working his nets like usual. He's also been flashing some gold around.

It's been a week since anyone has seen Ol' Grizzie. Some think he's dead. Some think he needs finding, alive or otherwise. Others think he's caught a sunken treasure in his nets and left town. His home is down the cliff path known as "the Crawl" to the sea, which leads to the rock outcropping that serves as Ol' Grizzie's usual launch.

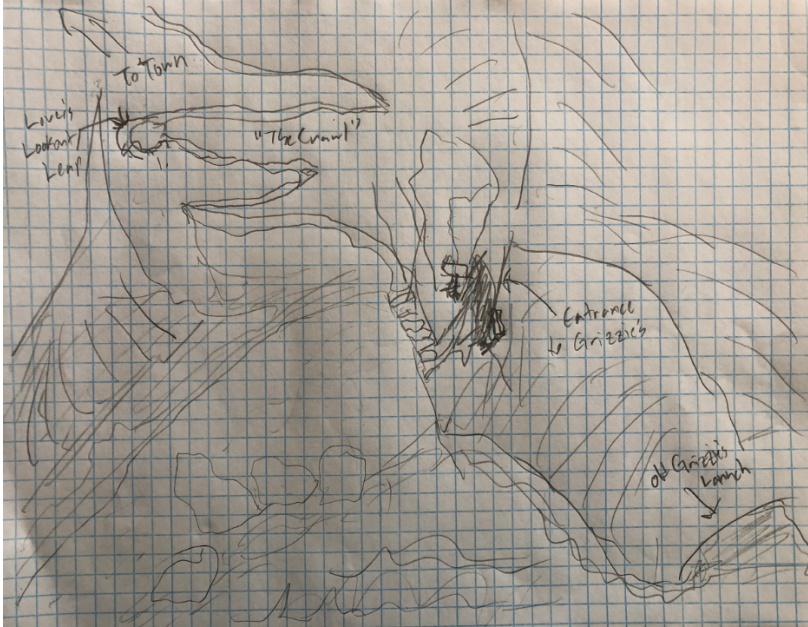
Time to find Ol' Grizzie, or time to get cold, wet, and hopefully rich.

AREA 1 - LOVERS' LOOKOUT / LEAP

The steep path down to Grizzie's Cove passes a grassy flat with a great scented coastal cedar growing on the landward side. It's a popular place for the young folk to steal away from the small-town eyes.

Any character with an ocean-going occupation or making a successful luck check notices a strangeness in the waves beyond the cove: a grey swell with odd waves.

This is the point at which it's usually possible to hear Grizzie's dog barking. Today it is silent.



AREA 2 - CHÂTEAU D' CRABE (GRIZZIE'S FRONT DOOR)

After coming down a set of slick stone slab steps, the path ends at an opening into the cliff.

Two grey wooden signs are affixed to either side of the entrance, each made of a ship's plank tacked onto a piece of old driftwood. One reads, "Château d'Crabe." The other says simply, "Do not feed the dog!"

There is a bit of dim light inside, enough to see a pile of nets and an open space just beyond the door.

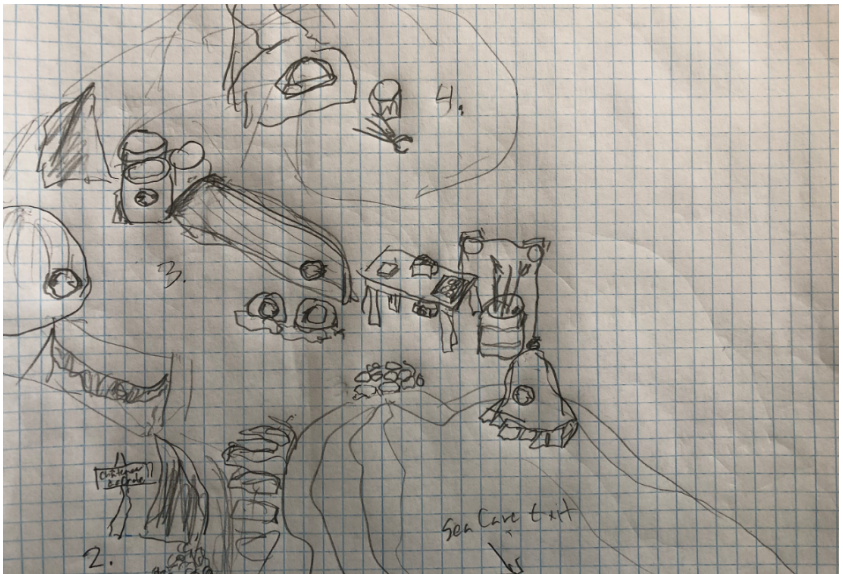
AREA 3 - DIVERS' WORKSHOP

A cavernous chamber of time-worn salty rock with a large sandy floor is obviously a domicile and workshop of some sort. To the right, ocean water fills part of the chamber at high tide. Netting is piled nearby, and a strange pile of pinkish-grey rocks lies at the edge of the water.

There is a work table against the far wall. Next to it, a rope and pulley attach to some sort of large bell near the water. Beside the table and cluttering the room are various odd devices, items, and paraphernalia, including an overturned rowboat, huge glass fishing floats, half dozen barrels, and metal objects for some strange purpose.

At the far left, a dark passage goes off to some other chamber. There is no sign that Grizzie or his dog are at home, though their home looks more workshop than living quarters.

Finally, to the left of the entrance, somehow hooked to the wall is a net-like hammock. It looks just like the sort which sailors sleep in when they're away at sea.



This is Grizzie's home. The room seems to be lit in an ever-changing spectrum of shining light coming out of all the strange items around the workshop.

These various oddities are Grizzie's attempts at constructing diving equipment. His most recent model is a cast metal helmet with double-paned glass for vision and a canvas suit to

keep water out. He made four of these. One of them he wore when he left this chamber to go after more gold ten days ago. The rest of the experiments working up to the final suit can be found here and can be used by the desperate or ignorant to explore the sea outside the workshop in the Cove.

The available diving gear includes:

- Two glass floats (aka human hamster balls): each is 7-8' in diameter and has a cork plug about 18" in diameter. Large enough to support two to four characters. One person by themselves doesn't weigh enough to keep it on the ground. Gives AC 15 and MV 25' under water. A missed attack still knocks the ball back, requiring a DC 12 Ref save of those inside to avoid falling on top of each other.
- One upside-down rowboat: portholes allow seeing out. Large enough to support four characters comfortably, or up to six if they're willing to step on each other's toes. Gives AC 16 vs large creatures, AC 12 vs small, with MV 10' under water. If all are knocked prone, the boat fills with water and no longer works for diving until refilled with air.
- Six barrel suits: porthole to see and leather sleeves. Each supports one character comfortably. Gives AC 13 and MV 20' under water. If knocked prone, fills with water and no longer works for diving until refilled with air.
- One large cast metal diving bell: double-paned glass windows on three sides. Large enough to support up to six characters. Gives AC 18 vs large creatures, AC 12 vs small, with MV 10' underwater. If all knocked prone, make DC 12 Ref saves to avoid crushed feet.
- Three cast-metal helmet and canvas suits - double-paned glass view port. Each helmet/suit combination only supports one character. Gives AC 14 and MV 20' under water.

On the table is Grizzie's work journal along with a small lead box. His journal tells how he found a gold piece in his catch and began to explore the underwater cove outside his chamber. In addition to gold, he's discovered this "rainbow mica" that produces sweet air. He's learned that it doesn't do weird stuff when held by lead fixtures, so he's managed to install this into his diving gear to supply fresh air.

He spent all the gold he found on the equipment to make the diving gear. His last entry was 10 days ago when he planned to try the best of his new "helmet and canvas armor" suits under the water.

The lead box contains 11 grains of the Shell of the Primeval Egg of Creation.

The pile of strange stones near the ocean water is actually a pile of sleeping crabs. They've recently dined on Grizzie's dog, whose bones can be found beneath them. They're still hungry and rise to attack as soon as anyone moves close to them.

Crabby crab (1 per player, not character): Init +3; Atk pincer +2 melee (1d5 + finger snip); AC: 13; HD: 3d8; hp 12; MV: 50'; ACT: 1d20; SP finger snip (DC 10 Ref save or also lose a finger); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.

As each rises up, it is clear that these crabs have more than the usual number of legs, enabling them to crawl extremely fast.

AREA 4 - THE FURNACE ROOM

The dark corridor goes back into a room with an oven of sorts. There is a sound of breeze blowing out through the chimney. The air has a faintly metallic smell. On the floor in front of the oven, there is a crucible for the heating and melting that go along with casting. Inside the crucible there is a small fist-sized glob of red-hot metal.

The glob of red-hot metal is a blob of lead, a red-hot coal, and a grain of the Shell. Getting within 6" of the crucible excites it enough to throw hot lead through the air. Roll an attack with a d20. On a hit, it does 1d6 fire damage. If the victim survives, then roll a random passive effect of the Shell.

Grizzie's Cove.

All locations are under water and require specialized equipment or magic to explore. As in other funnels, attacks – even those underwater – are done at a d20 to avoid too high a casualty rate.

Grizzie has dropped some large lead weights along two routes. One goes left from his workshop cave, and the other straight out into deeper water. The route to the left has only three "guide" weights until no more continue on. Grizzie began removing these when he learned that the Grotto is inhabited by a terrible predator. The route going straight out of his workshop disappears into a large waving forest of kelp. There are no weights that go to the right, coming out of this cave.

AREA 5 - GROBIN'S GROTTTO

All the rock and sand approaching this cave are strangely bare of all underwater growths, kelp, shellfish, or small fish of any kind. There are signs that it was inhabited once, but it has since been picked or scraped clean. The dark mouth of a cave opens into some sort of grotto beyond.

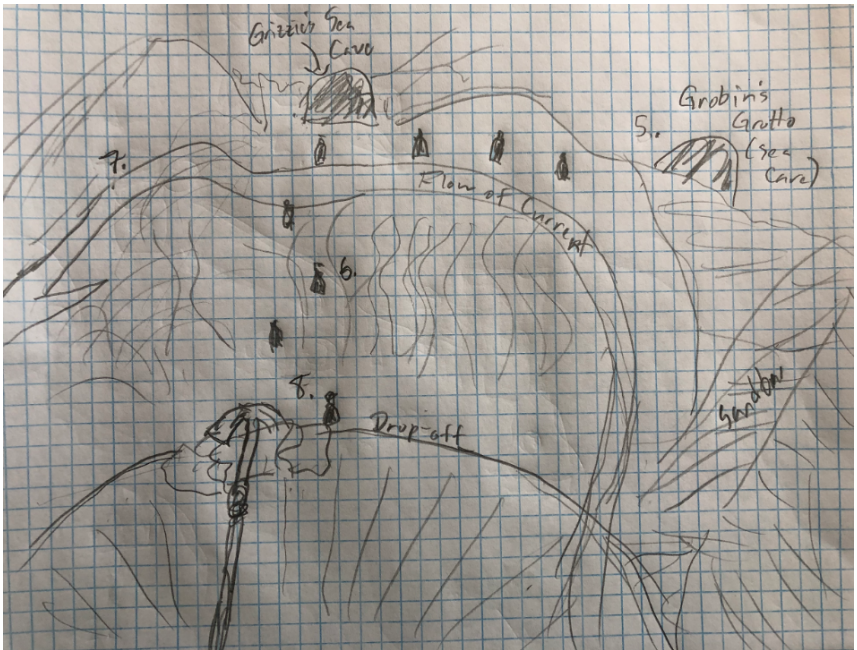
This grotto was once used by pirates to hide treasure. No one has claimed the loot because a giant decapus (similar in appearance to a monstrous octopus but with ten tentacles) has made its lair in the grotto. It hides in a small nook just above the underwater entrance waiting for snacks. There is an open-air grotto beyond that.

In the grotto beyond is an old slightly moldy chest with a large padlock (DC 10 to pick the lock or smash it off).

Calamitous decapus: Init +8; Atk tentacle +4 melee (1 + grab); AC: 18; HD: 8d8; hp 37; MV: walk 20' or swim 50'; ACT: 10d20; SP grab; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; AL N.

Grab: On a successful tentacle attack, the victim must make a Fort save equal to the attack roll or they have been grabbed. They can attempt to escape again on subsequent rounds. A grabbed victim suffers a -4 to AC. The decapus can draw one grabbed victim per round to be bitten by its beak for 1d8 damage.

Pirate Loot. The chest is filled with 300 gp, a pink pearl necklace (15 gp), a black pearl necklace (30 gp), and a decanter that fills the mind of anyone who drinks from it with a collective consciousness of the greatest wine collectors of the ages, giving them the ability to detect poison with a sniff and to gauge true vintage from common plonk instantly.



AREA 6 - THE KELP BEDS

A thick mass of waving strands of kelp dance in the current. The black shape of a lead weight sticks just out of the edge of the kelp bed where the seaweed is a bit thinner straight ahead, but you can only see a few feet through the kelp.

Visibility in the kelp bed is limited to 5'. Fortunately, Grizzie has placed lead weights every 10' through the center of the bed, so it is difficult to get lost.

There is an aggressive mutated eel that hunts in the kelp bed. When the first group is about halfway through the kelp, it attacks.

Bi-headed eel spearfish: Init: +1; Atk bite +2 (1d4) or skewer +3 (1d2 + 1d2 next round unless save); AC: 11; HD 3d6; hp 13; MV: swim 40'; ACT: 2d20; SP skewer; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will 0; AL N.

Skewer: On a successful skewer, the victim takes 1d2 damage and must make a DC 10 Fort save or the eel has pierced them and remains in the wound for the round, doing another 1d2 damage automatically the next round. The victim may repeat the save each round after taking damage. While skewered, any attacks against the eel have a 50% chance of targeting the victim instead.

On a failed skewer, instead of biting with the other head, the eel can bounce off the victim rapidly to allow the second head to attempt a skewer attack.

AREA 7 - RIP TIDE

Moving seems to get easier on this side of the cove. Perhaps the sand is more compact. Soon enough you realize that the current here is strong and is pulling you away from where you came faster than is desirable -- perhaps even out to sea!

There is a rip tide pulling everything west of Grizzie's cave out toward the open ocean. It is made stronger by the strange currents of the Shell. Overcoming the rip requires two things:

1. **Don't panic!** Make a DC 12 Will save or your efforts become panicked (-1d).
2. **Get out or fight it.** A DC 10 Intelligence check is required to know to move out of the rip.

Non-oceanic professions roll with a d12, being untrained but from a coastal area. Moving out of the rip even a few steps allows a character (or group) to get back without issue. Otherwise, they must make a DC 15 Fort save to persevere against the rip.

If a group fails to get out of the rip, they find themselves in the deep sea. The Judge is encouraged to use their favorite random encounter table for aquatic encounters. Otherwise, they are captured by hungry merfolk and later eaten.

AREA 8 - ANCHOR'S AWAY

As you step out of the kelp, you are met with a great expanse of deep-looking water rising above a jagged, reef of rock, coral, and sea detritus. In the middle of the reef juts out an incredibly ancient looking spade-shaped anchor. A corroded chain is attached to its end, from which its length descends into deep water beyond the reef.

Crossing the reef is difficult but doable. Only one side of the anchor is safe, and Grizzie has not marked it with a weight. If the characters decide to descend without being specific, roll 1d2 for the first group. On a 2, they go left, waking up the unusual anemone sleeping there.

Hydranemone (starts with 4 heads): Init: -3; Atk tentacle head +1 (1+sting); AC: 9; HD 4d6; hp 12 (4, 4, 4, 4); MV 5'; ACT 1d20/head; SP sting (DC 8 Will save or stunned for 1d2 rounds), multiplying heads; SV Fort +3, Ref -2, Will -1; AL N.

Multiplying heads: Causing 3 or more damage destroys a head but causes 2 new heads to grow, each with 1d3 hp. Only prying the hydranemone free from the ocean floor can kill it.

AREA 9 - THE LANDING



The chain descends fifty feet down a steep slope to a small shelf. It passes by a strange growth on one side that looks like a scrub oak tree resplendent with green leaves. The small shelf is flat and muddy, framed by two halves of a barnacle-covered wooden ship hull that split in two and settled here, halfway down to the abyss.

The end of one half of the hull rises straight up. Its end has grown into the trunk of a tree growing as though the ship germinated like an acorn here.

The other half of the hull is buried in the mud, settling the doors of the ship's cabin like they were meant to open out onto the flat. The doors to the cabin are closed.

Between the two halves of the ship is what looks like a solid gold statue kneeling on the ground. It is shaped with a strange metal helmet with a circle in the face. Its hand is stretched out to reach some gold-looking coins on the flat ground.

This ship is the wreck of the voyage to Pellidus. Close inspection of the statue reveals the obvious likeness of Grizzie. He stooped to pick up some gold coins. But there was a piece of the Shell under his foot, and so he became the gold he sought.

The solid gold Grizzie is far too heavy to lift, but he is now worth 1,000 gp. There are 4 gp strewn about. Picking each up requires a Luck check to avoid also contacting a stray piece of the Shell here. Failure indicates that the greedy character suffers the same fate as Grizzie, becoming solid gold forever.

AREA 10 – SHIP'S CABIN

Within the ancient ship's cabin are shapes that may have been an old bunk, a foot locker, and a small grey metal chest. The water in the cabin scintillates with specks like fireflies floating everywhere about the room.

This cabin is filled with floating grains of the Shell, moving about as they all generate saltwater in a fluid diffusion spectacle.

Anyone entering the cabin, even a little, should roll 1d3 times on the passive results for touching the Shell. Moving the doors too vigorously could have a similar effect.

If the characters somehow extract the foot locker from the cabin, they find the captain's log in a watertight pouch. The language is ancient and unreadable except to a scribe or

historian (DC 18 to decipher a small bit). It tells of the history of Pellidus (worth 20 gp to a collector). It also tells where the Shell was first acquired, which could lead to further adventures.

The small gray metal chest is made of solid lead-based pewter. It used to contain "*The King's Mint*", which is now suspended in the ocean water all around. It can be used like a clam shell to capture 1d7 pieces of the Shell for safe transport. Although the lock is broken and unusable, the clasp still works.

AREA 11 - THE PROW TREEHOUSE

As you peer into the empty hull of the tree-grown prow of the ship, ships' timbers surround a small room-like space.

A strange creature like a young child swims out of the shadows. His hair is black, his eyes blue. One hand is pale. A blue gemstone ring glitters on the index finger. The other hand is green, its fingers webbed, with solid-gold fingernails. From the waist down, the boy's body is that of a seahorse, the tail propelling him toward you. He smiles strangely and waves in a slow back-and-forth motion that reminds you of a noble Lady greeting the populace.

This boy was Parnassian the Second, but he hardly remembers that life. He speaks Pellidisian and Dolphin, so communication is limited to hand-signals. He wants the characters to stay and play games with him.

If attacked, the boy immediately escapes into deep water. He bleeds red but heals from any wounds almost as they are made. His dolphin friends immediately attack to defend his retreat.

Dolphin (1 per character): Init +3; Atk beak jab +2 melee (1d4); AC 114; HD 2d8; MV swim 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.

If not attacked, the boy pulls a piece of Shell from a pouch and crushes it. Hundreds of bubbles fill the flat area near the two

halves of the ship's hulls. They combine to form a pocket of breathable air throughout the area. The boy clucks and chirps at the party, inviting them out of their dive gear to play games with him.

If anyone tries to leave while the games are going, he'll squeal a few strange noises, and a pair of dolphins move to herd characters back to the game, dealing subdual damage.

GAME 1: SLINGING DISCS

Each character is given 1 sp. The boy then flings his into the wall of water at the edge of the bubble. Roll $d20 + 1$ for his throw.

It goes flying into the water, flashing as it curves through the sea. From somewhere a dolphin goes racing along beside it. When the coin begins to sink in its trajectory, the dolphin catches it in its beak and starts to dance in place.

The boy then indicates that someone else should throw. Roll $1d20 + \text{Strength} + \text{Agility}$ modifiers to see how far the coin goes. Each coin gets its personal distance-tracking dolphin. The winner receives all the coins from all the dolphins.

GAME 2: MARBLE TOSSERS

The boy draws a ring on the ground. Inside he drops a beautiful white pearl. He then takes a black pearl and throws it at the white one. Roll $1d20 + 4$ to see if he hits. If he misses, he hands the black pearl to a character to throw. If all the characters miss, he'll take another turn until someone knocks it out.

The white pearl is AC 18. On a hit, roll $1d3$. On a 3, the white pearl rolls out of the ring, and the character wins the game and keeps the pearl (5 gp).

GAME 3: SEAWEED TUG OF WAR

The boy dives into the water and comes back with a long length of kelp. He shows the characters that they are going to play a tug of war. For every character who holds the kelp beyond the first, the boy calls a dolphin to help pull his end from the water outside the bubble.

Each round everyone rolls a $d20 + \text{Strength modifier}$. The boy rolls $d20 - 2$, and every dolphin rolls $d20 + 1$. Total up both sides. The winning side gets a positive addition to their result total. The losing side gets a negative addition. One side has to get to +10 to win. Both sides start with +0.

GAME 4: SEA CUCUMBER RACES

The boy fetches a sea cucumber for each character. Next, he draws two lines on the ground and then lines up his own sea cucumber on this side of the first line and indicates for others do likewise. Each character makes a Luck check to set the cucumber down in the right direction (the rear looks just like the front).

He pounds the ground behind his cucumber, trying to get it to move. Each round, each character can do likewise, rolling a Luck check. If they succeed, their cucumber moves a length. If their cucumber was backwards, it loses a length. A cucumber has to move three lengths to cross the finish line.

If the child wins at least one of the games, he starts to laugh. He digs out his prizes. Consult the table on the following page for the prize given to the winner of each game (choose arbitrarily if there was a tie).

Game	Prize
1	A black sling of leviathan-hide. It grants a Strength bonus in addition to Agility bonus to all stones/bullets thrown with it at all ranges.
2	A set of three seahorse throwing knives. All three can be thrown in a single action (each 1d4 dmg) and never suffer from metal decay of any kind.
3	A crystal dolphin (worth 80 gp if sold as art). It grants the bearer the ability to swim as fast as a dolphin and hold their breath underwater for 3 turns.
4	A slim golden necklace (worth 20 gp if sold as jewelry). If removed from the neck and held while throwing one end, it springs out to 30' in length and wraps three times around something to hold it tightly. I can support a full-sized human. A special flick of the wrist frees it.

After imparting his gifts, he waves and then dives away into the water. The air bubble slowly collapses, but gives enough time for everyone to get back into their diving equipment before engulfed in water.

If the child loses all the games, he suddenly claps his hands together three times. The bubble holding back the water disappears instantly, taking all characters by surprise. They begin drowning while he swims away, never to be seen again.

Descending from the landing into deeper water is asking for trouble. Give it to them.

JUDGE'S SCOREKEEPING FOR THE PRINCE'S GAMES

Game	Winner
Slinging Discs	
Marble Tossers	
Seaweed Tug of War	
Sea Cucumber Race	

DJ CYRUS DUNGEON CRAWL FUNNEL:

DIRT EDITION

By Cyrus Duane
Art by Stefan Poag and Eon Fontes

*"The Only Show Where Survival Is the Punchline,
Where Every Step Is a Laugh and Every Boss Is a Blast!"*
- Zorblax the Phrase-Master's tagline for this 0-Level Xcrawl
Funnel made possible by the miracles of intergalactic
corporate sponsorship agreements.

DJ Notes: Use only human 0-levels and emphasize that they all come from our Earth. They have only whatever is on them, a starter backpack with a few supplies and whatever they happen to have in their pockets. Lean into weird aliens and allow rewards anytime they try to appeal to the sponsors. This is designed to comfortably run in a convention slot. Let the players know in advance this is designed to be a bit absurd. With thanks to the LitRPG genre and Douglas Adams. You are encouraged to rebrand this adventure with your own name as the DJ instead of Cyrus.

Opening Scene: The Interview

The adventure begins with a floating pixie, Glimmerplume, conducting pre-show interviews in a large sterile room immediately after the character's abduction from earth. She asks quirky questions to the players about their time on Earth (called "Dirt" by the aliens), setting the tone for the adventure. She will say all of the following, first to the invisible cameras watching the characters at all times and then directly to the characters.

I just received the programming update for this weekend, and I'm excited to see that the new season of Dungeon Crawler World will be starting today! This season is called: Dungeon Crawler World: Dirt! Yes, the locals call their planet dirt, isn't that delightful!

She clears her throat and collects herself before turning excitedly to the PCs.

Congratulations! You've been abducted! You, an ordinary Dirltling (or in your local tongue "Earthing") have been randomly selected from your dull, pre-apocalypse retail existence to appear on the hottest intergalactic entertainment sensation this side of the New Andromeda Mall: DJ Cyrus' Dungeon Crawl Funnel: Dirt Edition!

Broadcast live to quadrillions of hyper-sapient beings with nothing better to do, this dungeon-crawling death gauntlet drops you boring isolated backworld sacks of meat into a studio-built megadungeon filled with the most entertaining encounters our delightful corporate sponsors have devised.

Your goal? Survive live broadcast encounters, win the hearts of an alien audience with varied taste, and if you live long enough, face off against GIGAN-9000, a neurotic mechanical monstrosity having an existential breakdown on a live talk show hosted by the galaxy's most insufferably cool DJ.

It's messy. It's violent. It's sponsored by different alien corporations you absolutely can't pronounce and it's your only shot at galactic fame if you are lucky enough to survive this next episode.

Survive the Dungeon. Impress the Audience. Don't Die Screaming (unless it's really funny).

Sample questions to have Glimmerplume ask the characters:

- "What exactly were you doing on Dirt when you got pulled into this glorious game?"
- "Is it true you dirltlings eat these things called *hot dogs*?"
- "How do you feel about being turned into intergalactic celebrities?"

After asking a few questions, a door will open that leads down a 60-foot corridor. Glitterplume will tell the characters that they only have two minutes to leave this room and be in the hallway or the room beyond. If Glitterplume is attacked, it will quickly become evident that she is an illusionary projection. DJs can bring Glimmerplume back to ask questions or to recap action during the crawl for added entertainment.

Adventure Encounters

Encounter 1: Goblin Janitors Gone Mad

Location: The Janitor's Closet.

As the players enter the narrow, dimly lit hallway, they hear whistling and see goblins in oversized janitor uniforms, pushing squeaky cleaning carts at the far end of the room. These goblins, sponsored by **Skwee Gee Galactic Cleaners**, are here to “clean up” – but they’re not very good at their jobs. They wield mop handles as weapons and throw buckets of soapy water, making the floor slippery and hazardous.

The goblins fight chaotically and use their cleaning tools in bizarre ways, like swinging vacuum hoses and flinging wet towels. The DJ should use this room for both comic relief, and slapstick violence and emphasize that all of this is so alien and new compared to their lives up to date on earth. The room is full of janitorial supplies that can be interacted with across eight cleaning carts. As combat starts, announce the Sponsorship Tie-in: “Skwee Gee Galactic Cleaners—For when you want spotless floors and total chaos!”

Skwee Gee Goblin (10): Init -1; Atk bite +0 melee (1d3) or Mop or Broom +0 melee (1d4) ; Crit I/d6; AC 10; HD 1d6-1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60'; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL C. The Goblins all wear uniform jumpsuits. During combat the players may pick up that a goblin named Chip is very mad at a goblin named Phic. Phic has dyslexia and is always putting on Chip's uniform.



"Goblin Janitors" by Stefan Poag

The DJ should feel free to let creative players find ways to utilize cleaning products they may find on the carts.

SPONSORSHIP BOX: Once the goblins are defeated, an unseen announcer will comment on some of the best parts of the fight and then announce that they have received a room sponsor prize box from Skwee Gee, making sure to repeat the tag line from when combat started. The box contains 4 bright orange Skwee Gee heavy cleaning smocks which grant +4 armor and one pack of “Stim Gum” made by a Skwee Gee subsidiary. The Gum is anise flavored, has five pieces and chewing a piece will heal one point of damage.

Encounter 2: The Slime Pits of SludgeCo

Location: A dark, dungeon-like chamber with multiple pits.

The players are urged to go down another corridor leading into a much larger room that reeks of industrial chemicals and rotten eggs. The room is filled with 6 bubbling, toxic slime pits, three along the left wall and three along the right. This chamber is sponsored by **SludgeCo Refinement**, an intergalactic waste disposal company. The slime pits are not just hazards—one slime creature rises from each pit and attacks the characters. These slimy monsters are slow but can merge to form a larger and more dangerous version of itself.

On the far side of the room is a hatch set in the floor, clearly labeled “EXIT, USE THE RIGHT CRANK TO OPEN”. The hatch has 12 handcranks on it, six across the top and six across the bottom. Each is slow and requires a round to turn. The label is a clue, as the right most crank on the bottom is the correct crank that opens the hatch. The slime monsters will not pursue players once they go down the hatch and onto the ladder below.

Sponsorship Tie-in: “SludgeCo Refinement—Turning toxic sludge into something slightly less toxic!”

Slime Blob (6): Init -2; Atk Slam +3 melee (1d6 Acid); Crit M/d10; AC 14; HD 2d8+2; MV 15' or climb 10'; Act 1d20; SP Combine; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -3; AL N.

Slime Blobs will try to join when nearby and there is nothing to attack as a full round action. When Blobs join, the new larger Blob will have the combined HP, and doubled attack bonus and damage. Their action die becomes a d24. Fortunately only two blobs can combine.

SPONSORSHIP BOX: Once the last surviving characters have escaped down the hatch, The DJ will comment on some of the best parts of the fight and how they have survived the perils of poorly managed hazardous waste, and then announce that they have received a room sponsor prize box from SludgeCo making sure to repeat the tagline. The box contains a SludgeTech Deluxe Utility Kit which includes:

- Icky-Sticky Rope (30 ft): Sticks to surfaces. DC 10 Str to unstick. Will stick to players using it. Smells foul.
- FoamSeal Canister: Single use. Can seal doors, holes, or wounds (blocks a doorway for 1 turn or heals 2d4 HP with weird crunchy foam)
- Sludgecore Lantern: Emits green light. Fuel never depletes. Slightly radioactive.

Encounter 3: "Trivia"

Location: A live studio audience chamber.

The players find themselves on a stage with a live alien audience watching from above. This encounter requires them to play a guessing game in which they must answer a series of questions based on alien trivia. Each wrong answer activates a random trap, while each right answer brings them closer to freedom. The twist? Alien trivia is really a guessing game for those without any context.

Sponsorship Tie-in: "Sponsored by MindSplosion—It's the game show where you either win or explode!"

Guessing Game: The trivia questions revolve around obscure alien culture or bizarre galactic history. After the announcer reads the sponsorship tagline, it goes right to the first question.

- *Question 1: "What's the favorite snack of the Squorkian Emperor?"*
 - *Options:* A) Brined Snargg eggs B) Deep-fried starfish C) Pickled moon beans D) Celestial cheese curls
 - *Answer:* Celestial cheese curls.

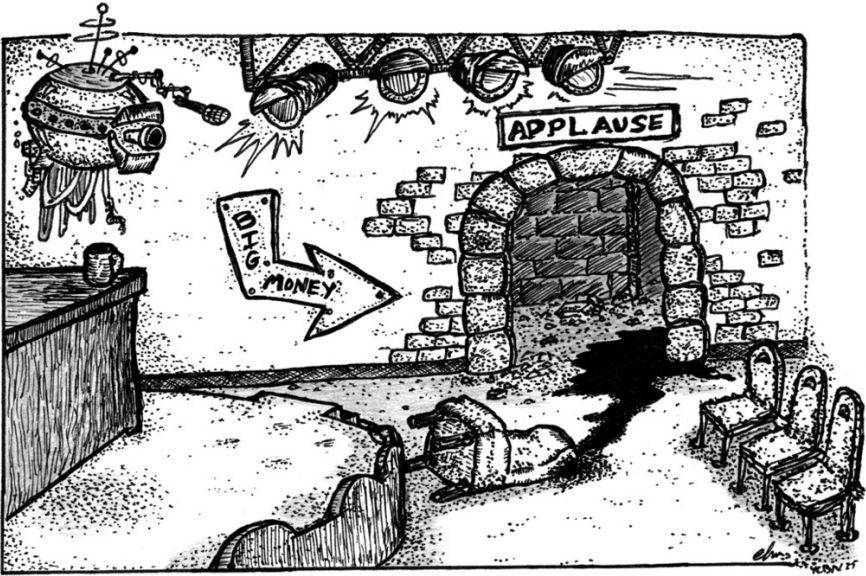
- *Question 2: Which of these slogans is real?*
 - *Options::* A) "Drink Glarnax, or don't, we already took your money." B) "Flarbus: For your third stomach and beyond!" C) "WormFlix: Just brainwaves, now with less context!" D) "Buy GrexMeat! Or be the GrexMeat."
 - *Answer:* "Flarbus: For your third stomach and beyond!"

- *Question 3: What was the national anthem of the now defunct Glorb Union traditionally performed on?*
 - *Options:* A) A gelatinous harp made of ancestral mucus B) A 7-foot-long musical saw played by trained insects C) The spine of a still-living diplomat D) A jar of bees shaken at random
 - *Answer:* The spine of a still-living diplomat.

Cunning players may try to appeal to the audience for assistance. Reward good roleplay here by having the audience eliminate incorrect options by providing loud feedback as a crowd, similar to guests on NPR's "Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!"

Each incorrect answer will result in a theatrical lightning bolt strike to one random character. They must pass a reflex save DC 14 or take 1d8 damage. After 6 incorrect answers the floor will disappear and with an outrageous toilet flushing sound the characters will be flushed down to the final showdown. Characters that arrive this way will be dripping wet and receive double damage from the GIGAN-9000's electrical salad spinner.

SPONSORSHIP BOX: If the characters answer the questions before they can be flushed, the unseen announcer will comment on how smart these dirtlings really are and then announce that they have received a room sponsor prize box from MindSplosion, making sure to repeat the tagline. The box contains a large spiked mace that deals 1d8 damage with the inscription "Trivia Knight" and four daggers in a bag labeled "Multiple Choice". There is also one vial of MindSplosion Brain-Fizz, which will heal 1d4 damage.



"The Stage" by Eon Fontes

Encounter 4: The Final Showdown - DJ Cyrus' Late-Night Talk Show

Location: DJ Cyrus' talk show stage.

The players are transported to DJ Cyrus' late-night talk show. DJ Cyrus, a charismatic and smug alien host, greets them as the studio audience applauds wildly. The players must endure a round of talk-show style questions, complete with lights, a studio band, and cheesy intergalactic puns while an illusionary camera droid flits about the room spasmodically to focus the party's attention

Sample Questions:

- “So, how does it feel to be the latest *Dirtlings* to survive this *wholesome* dungeon crawl experience?”
- “Who would you say was the biggest slacker on your team? You can be honest – nobody’s watching... *except* the entire galaxy!”
- “If you had to face one challenge again, which one would it be? And why?”

After the interview, DJ Cyrus announces the final showdown: “Ladies and gentlemen, we’ve saved the *best* for last! Let’s see if these dirtlings can handle our BIG BOSS!” A massive mechanical monster crashes onto the stage, signaling the climactic final fight. DJ Cyrus and his audience will be watching (and commenting) throughout the entire encounter, adding humor and tension to the scene.

Final Showdown: As the players engage GIGAN-9000, the scene unfolds on DJ Cyrus’ talk show set, where the bright lights and uproarious laughter create an atmosphere of delightful chaos. Between ridiculous attacks and introspective musings, GIGAN-9000's antics keep the audience in stitches.

The challenge for the players isn't just defeating this mechanical marvel; it's navigating the absurdity of the situation. Early in the combat DJ Cyrus disappears from the stage but his voice will be heard commenting during the fight with GIGAN.

Appearance: GIGAN-9000 is a monument to absurdity, resembling a cross between a Victorian-era steam engine and an over-caffeinated octopus attempting to perform ballet. It stands approximately three stories tall, with a body that is an improbable blend of riveted metal plates, blinking lights, and an extensive collection of mismatched kitchen appliances. Its "arms" end in an assortment of bizarre implements: one a ladle, another a salad spinner, and the third a device that inexplicably dispenses marshmallows at high velocity.

The overall effect is something akin to a 1970s science fiction film set designed by a committee of bewildered alien children. In fact, most design decisions were made through a promotional contest targeting elementary school children.

Origin: GIGAN-9000 was conceived in a lab that had once been a prestigious institution of technological innovation, but over the years had fallen into a state of disarray. Originally intended to be a state-of-the-art entertainment robot for the now-defunct *Intergalactic Improv Show*, it was cobbled together from spare parts, questionable engineering decisions, and the remnants of a sentient blender.

After a catastrophic incident involving a malfunctioning joke generator and an uninvited audience of overzealous space otters, GIGAN-9000 was abandoned and left to wander the cosmos in search of purpose.

Personality: With a personality programmed to entertain, GIGAN-9000 is a delightful blend of self-awareness and utter cluelessness. It often laments its former glory being a star of interstellar theater through lengthy monologues about the existential dread of a mechanical being lost in a universe that has long since moved on to the next shiny thing. "Ah, to be a blender again, warm and safe in a kitchen rather than a battleground!" it might lament, pausing dramatically as if expecting an audience to react. It should be obvious to all that this entity is insane through its actions and words.

GIGAN-9000: Init +2; Atk salad spinner +6 melee (1 electrical) and ladle +2 melee (1d4) and flaming marshmallow gun +3 missile fire (1d6, range 40); Crit II/d12; AC 16; HD 4d8; MV walk 20'; Act 3d20; SP Randomization Protocol, Self-Doubt Projection, Ranting; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +2; AL N.

Abilities:

- **Multiattack:** The Gigan-9000 will try to use its salad spinner, ladle, and marshmallow gun in each round.
- **Randomization Protocol:** The first time each round that the GIGAN-9000 takes damage, it randomly throws kitchen debris at a nearby character, inflicting a -1D penalty to that character's next action. This does not cost an action.
- **Self-Doubt Projection:** GIGAN-9000 will project its insecurities onto the players. During combat, any fumbles rolled by either side have a +2D penalty. The GIGAN-9000 rolls fumbles with a d16 with this penalty.
- **Philosophical Rants:** When at half HP or less, the GIGAN-9000 will launch into mumbled existential soliloquies about the nature of reality. During this time the GIGAN-9000's action dice are +1D.

Conclusion: Broadcast End Tag (VICTORY)

As sparks fizzle from the twitching remains of GIGAN-9000 and the stage lights dim to a moody violet, a triumphant synth fanfare blares across the studio as confetti cannons fire off their celebratory payload. A hovering neon banner blinks above the players:

“CONGRATULATIONS, DIRT-SURVIVORS!”

“Against all odds (and several lawsuits in progress), you’ve clawed your way to the top of this week’s ratings – and maybe, just maybe, to galactic relevance!”

The studio audience erupts into a sound like monkeys gargling soda. DJ Cyrus reappears, standing atop the crumpled remains of his talk show desk, mic in hand.

“You came. You screamed. You product-placed. And against every known biological forecasting model, some of you even lived. Now, your journey as Dirtlings may be over... but your contracts have only just begun! We’ll see you next week – assuming the sponsors don’t sell your likenesses to a line of keto breakfast cereals first!”

The lights cut to black. A giant logo slams into frame with a stomach-churning WUB-WUB-WUB.

DJ CYRUS’ DUNGEON CRAWL FUNNEL: DIRT EDITION

“Broadcast Concluded. Emotional damage not covered by the standard prize package. All surviving contestants are now eligible for unpaid appearances in Dungeon Crawler World: DIRT – Episode 2: CORPORATE LADDER OF PAIN.”

A final splash screen shows your survivors – bleeding, dazed, but weirdly proud – as an alien voiceover cheerfully intones:
“Until next time, Dirt fans: Survive the Dungeon. Impress the Audience. Don’t Die Screaming (Unless It’s Really Funny).”

Conclusion: Broadcast End Tag (FAILURE - A TPK in the final battle)

The GIGAN-9000 Looms large in the stage lights, and a odd synth medley blares across the studio as glitter cannons fire off their celebratory payload. A hovering neon banner blinks above the corpses:

"The Dirtlings lost, but you, our audience and sponsors, won!"

"They came, screamed, and product-placed. As expected with every known biological forecasting model, none lived. Hopefully we will see another batch of Dirtlings come through our Dungeon again soon. The only show where survival is the punchline, With every step a laugh and every boss is a blast!!"

The lights cut to black. A giant logo slams into frame with a stomach-churning WUB-WUB-WUB.

DJ CYRUS' DUNGEON CRAWL FUNNEL: DIRT EDITION

A final splash screen shows replays of every death – as an alien voiceover cheerfully intones:

"Until next time, Dirt fans: Survive the Dungeon. Impress the Audience. Don't Die Screaming (Unless It's Really Funny)."

Cue commercial for Flarbus™: For Your Third Stomach and Beyond

Bonus Corporate Sponsorships

The adventure is sprinkled with sponsorships from fictional companies, used to add humor and satire. Here are a few examples:

1. **Nebula Noms** - "The snack that stops the void in your stomach!"
2. **Event Horizon Express** - "Zoom through your busy schedule—literally!"
3. **VoidTech Industries** - "Pushing the limits of reality...until they break."
4. **MindSplosion** - "The galaxy's most dangerous quiz show!"
5. **HyperCore Energy Drinks** - "Because collapsing isn't an option."

List of 20 Sci-Fi Companies

1. Galactic Credits Bank
2. Starlight Dynamics
3. Nebula Noms
4. HyperCore Energy Drinks
5. Zarnon Galactic Outfitterz
6. VoidTech Industries
7. Skwee Gee Galactic Cleaners
8. DirtCorp Terraforming
9. MindSplosion
10. PortalGo
11. Orion Quantum Computing
12. Chrono Corp. Timepieces
13. Stellar Stylez
14. Event Horizon Express
15. Intergalactic Rentals
16. Quantum Quik-Stop
17. AstroArmor Security
18. Celestial Beverages
19. Wormhole Wares
20. SolarFlare Transport

List of 20 Mundane “Alien” Objects

1. Hover broom
2. Alien fast-food wrapper
3. Cracked hologram phone
4. Space gum
5. Useless space credit card
6. Gravity-defying rubber band
7. Neon backpack
8. Alien hand sanitizer
9. Metal toothpick
10. Sticky note from another dimension
11. Half-eaten energy bar
12. Anti-gravity paperweight
13. Empty glowstick
14. Floating newspaper
15. Glowing space rock
16. Holographic driver's license
17. Mini drone in need of repair
18. Galactic toll receipt
19. Incomplete puzzle cube
20. Holo-watch with no battery

List of 20 Silly Magical Items

1. Bag of Infinite Popcorn
2. Cloak of Permanent Static
3. Shoes of Uncontrollable Tap Dancing
4. Sword of Slightly Warmer Damage
5. Amulet of Eternal Mild Annoyance
6. Helmet of Random Invisibility (lasts 3 seconds)
7. Wand of Minor Irritations
8. Ring of Questionable Fortune
9. Pocket Dimension Lunchbox
10. Orb of Slightly Tinted Vision
11. Boots of the Never-Ending Squeak
12. Belt of Sudden Fanfare
13. Gloves of Awkward Handshakes
14. Compass of Getting Lost
15. Potion of Instant Mood Swings

16. Scarf of Loud Sneezing
17. Hat of Unexpected Growth spurts
18. Cape of Pointless Flourishes
19. Flask of Forgettable Potions
20. Mirror of Overconfidence

Zorblax the Phrase-Master

(When you need a Showrunning NPC)

Description: Zorblax is a flamboyant, colorful alien with a knack for wordplay and a passion for marketing. He has vibrant, shifting skin patterns that reflect his mood, and his large, expressive eyes convey an ever-present enthusiasm. Zorblax wears a stylish vest covered in holographic buttons that display his latest slogans. He carries a small, magical notepad that automatically records and enhances his ideas.

Background: Once a failed stand-up comedian in his home galaxy, Zorblax discovered his true calling in advertising and became the chief slogan creator for DJ Cyrus' show. He has a reputation for turning even the dullest ideas into catchy taglines, ensuring that the show remains a favorite among viewers. With a blend of charm and absurdity, Zorblax aims to keep the audience laughing and engaged, both in the dungeons and at home.

Personality: Zorblax is witty, exuberant, and a bit eccentric. He loves puns and has an endless supply of jokes, often breaking into spontaneous performances to test new slogans. His enthusiasm can be contagious, making him a beloved figure in the chaotic world of galactic dungeon crawling.

The Battle of Bright Hill: A Shattered Host

**Being an Account of the Fall of the Old Provinces
under the Thrall of the Foul Wizard Dubghall**

By Paul Wolfe

The vile forces of Lord Agron broke through the last line of defense, and now your village is in the path of a marauding army. Lord Daystar, his van in disarray, arrives and rallies you and your fellow villagers into a last-ditch peasant army. The dreams you've had lately, though -- they tell you that Lord Daystar and his holdings are doomed and that salvation lies within Bright Hill. There stands an ancient hill fort where King Dominus fell under demonic invasion. Can you find the secret to King Dominus's power? And can that power drive back the hell-warriors of Lord Agron?

Running This Adventure

The Battle of Bright Hill is a 0-level DCC RPG adventure intended for 4-6 players. If you run it with more than four players, have them generate only two or three 0-level characters (this will help with game management). There are several opportunities to replace dead characters throughout the session.

Background

The old lord of Bricehold died under suspicious circumstances, and his bannerman, the sorcerer Dubghall, rose to lordship over the largest of the Old Provinces. Now the new lord of Bricehold placed General Agron, said to be a half-demon, at the head of a great army. All believe that Dubghall intends to reunite the Old Provinces under his dominion - if only he could find the Seat of Kings, said to be the source of kingly power since ancient times.

The Shattered Host

Your liege, Lord Daystar, rode through Beorhurst Village at the head of an army of thegns, freeman soldiers, and peasant spearmen, intent on smashing the invasion of Lord Agron between various armies of the Old Provinces. Agron, rumored to be a half-demon himself, led the men of Bricehold in conquest of the rest of the Old Provinces at the command of his sovereign, the foul sorcerer Dubghall.

Dominating your dreams while asleep and weighing on every waking moment are visions of a rusty steel helmet marked with a raven, a font that pours pure silver liquid, and a simple stone throne. Others in Beorhurst Village admit to similar dreams. Could the gods be telling you something? A warning? A promise?

Before dawn, all notice smoke from fires that should not burn upon Bright Hill. Other smaller fires – torches – snake down familiar paths like great burning snakes.

As the sun breaks the eastern horizon, a ragged group of warriors stumble across the bridge over the Adelbright River and collapse into the arms of the villagers. They rave about an army of hellish things, of a beast that can devour a whole warband, and of the men of Lord Agron's army, driven to bloodlust by the spells of Dubghall, the sorcerer-lord behind the invasion.

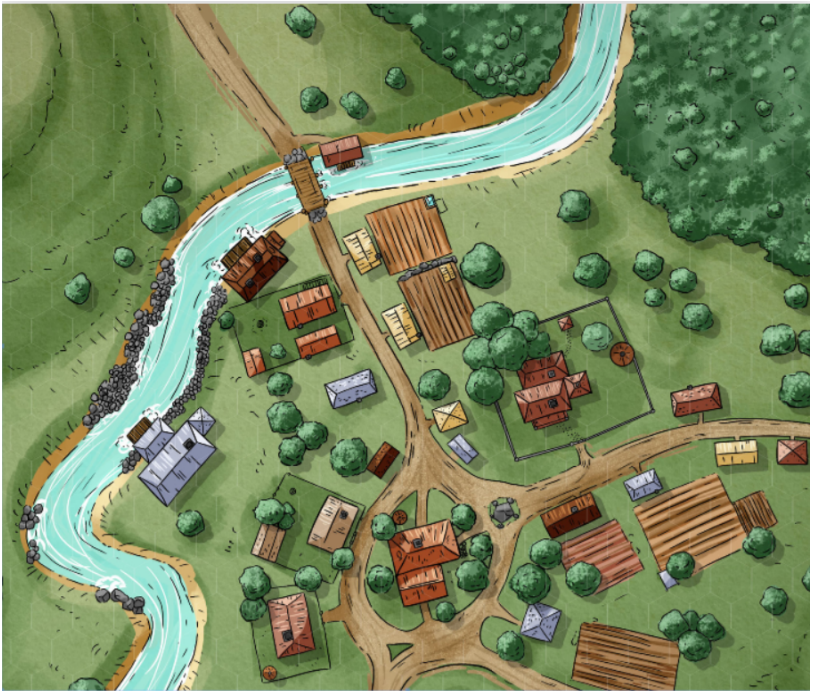
All day long, similar refugees reach Beorhurst Village, and, in the late afternoon, Lord Daystar arrives upon a lame and dying horse with a few haggard bannermen. Daystar calls for water, for the horse to be butchered for meat, and for the village headman.

The fires grow ever closer while your betters hold conference, but all can see that this is where Daystar intends to make his final stand.

Indeed, Daystar's thegns herd the villagers into nervous formations, handing out makeshift spears, pitchforks, and clubs. Unless the player characters take other actions, each player's group of 0-levels ends up in a single formation - there are a total of eight formations of 20 villagers each. One of the thegns takes command of each group, and all is ready when Daystar re-emerges with the bent-backed village headman.

The Lord is brought another horse - though certainly not as regal as the one now sizzling over a communal cookfire. After much adjustment and shouted orders, six of the formations are arranged along a low rise facing Bright Hill and the advancing armies of Lord Agon. Two are held in reserve near the village center, ready to be deployed by Daystar himself to where the fighting is the hottest. The peasants in these units are given slings and 10 stones each.

The player characters have about 30 minutes before Lord Agon's advanced scout party hits.



THE BATTLE OF BEOHURST VILLAGE

See the “The Battle System” in Volume III of The Gongfarmers’ Almanac 2025 for details on resolving combat between units and an expanded Battle Rule system.

The following are the formations for and against the village:

Forces of Beohurst Village

Lord Daystar’s Command Group:

- Lord Daystar: HD 2 (+1 morale rolls to all troops in a 3 hex radius)
- Captain Hemingr: HD 2 (+1 defense to troop)
- Thegns: 12 @ HD 1 (+1 attack to troop)
- Ceorls: 12 @ HD 1
- Army Value: 28; Morale 12; Luck 7; AC 14; Damage 3d6; Ranged: $\frac{1}{4}$ HD/d4: 4d4

Hastily Assembled Soldiers:

- Stigandr: HD 3 (+1d damage)
- Horsa: HD 2 (-1 morale to enemy troop)
- Ceorls: 15 @ HD 1
- Army Value: 20; Morale: DC 12; Luck 5; AC 13; Damage 4d6

Peasant Armies (8) – The PCs 0-level characters take command of these formations.

- Morale -1d.
- PC 1: HD $\frac{1}{2}$; (Luck +1; If sacrificed, +1 Luck)
- PC 2: HD $\frac{1}{2}$; (Luck +1; If sacrificed, +1d Morale)
- Peasants: 30 @ $\frac{1}{2}$
- Army Value: 17; Morale 12; Luck 4; AC 12; Damage 3d4

The Forces of Dubghall the Foul

Lord Agron has sent a scouting party to determine Lord Daystar's strength.

Lord Agron's Scout Command

- Captain Hroarr: HD 4 (Damage +1 HD)
- Corporal Wilburg: HD 2 (AC +1)
- Elite Soldiers: 10 @ HD 2 (Morale DC -1)
- Army Value 26, Morale 11; Luck 6; AC 13; Damage 4d8

Lord Agron's Scout Troop

- Captain Asco: HD 2 (Morale +1d)
- Javelineers: 25 @ HD 1 (Ranged attack ¼ HD/d6, 60 ft)
- Army Value: 27; Morale 12; Luck 6; AC 12; Damage 3d6

Lord Agron's Light Infantry

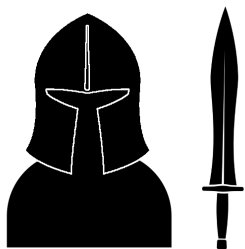
- Captain Gudini: HD 3 (AC +1)
 - Army Value 23; Morale 12; Luck 5; AC 13; Damage 3d6
- Corporal Raginherd: HD 1 (Reach 10'; Damage dealt first)
 - Army Value 21; Morale 12; Luck 5; AC 12; Damage 3d6
- Captain Bernard: HD 2 (+1 to Morale rolls)
 - Army Value 22; Morale 12; Luck 5; AC 12; Damage 3d6
- Sergeant Alfheah: HD 3 (+1 HD damage)
 - Army Value 23; Morale 12; Luck 5; AC 12; Damage 4d6
- Light Spearmen: 20 @ HD 1

Aftermath

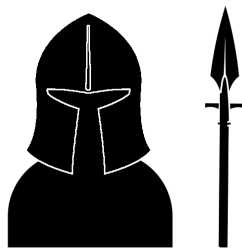
If the forces of the village are defeated, surviving PCs may flee before Lord Agron's scouting party and regroup in the nearby forest. If the scouting party is repelled, Lord Daystar organizes the PCs to further actions while General Agron regroups. Judges are encouraged to develop further adventures in the Old Provinces.

ARMY TOKENS

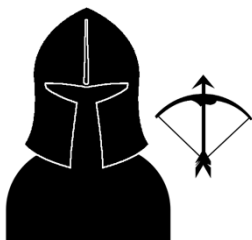
The Forces of Beohurst Village:



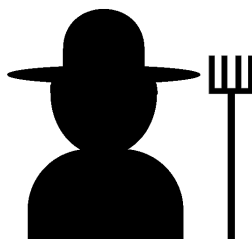
Command Unit



Spear Unit

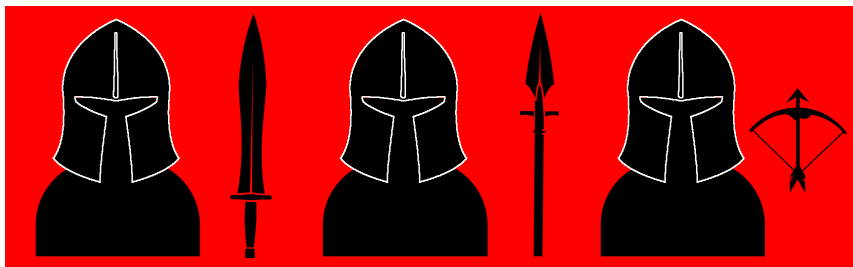


Ranged Unit



Peasant Unit

The Forces of Dubghall the Foul



Command Unit

Spear Unit.

Ranged Unit

THE NIGHTSOIL COMETH

A Zero-Level Funnel Mini-Adventure

Written by Paul Keller

Cartography by Marc Anderson

Art by Izzy Royston

INTRODUCTION

This short funnel adventure is designed for 8 to 12 zero-level characters and can be completed in two hours. It is a humorous tribute to the noble gongfarmer, the patron occupation of the DCC Roleplaying Game, where players begin as simple working-class peons that are thrust into an unexpected and deadly situation one day whilst plying their trade at a festival. Not all characters need to have the specific gongfarmer occupation; any character could be finding a day's wage by working part time in the kingdom's sanitation department.

PLAYER START

The King's Festival was a time of revelry, indulgence, and excess – for everyone except the gongfarmers. While nobles feasted on roasted boar and honeyed wine and peasants danced to the tune of lutes and drums, your lowly crew toiled in filth. Clad in patchwork rags and thick boots caked in the leavings of the kingdom's finest, you wade through the trenches of waste, hauling sloshing buckets of foulness to the pits beyond the city walls. It was thankless work, but it was work, and, in a kingdom that prized lineage over labor, that was all one could hope for.

As you shovel muck from the grand pavilions, the ground beneath you trembles. A low wet groan echoes through the night, as if the earth itself has finally recoiled at your ceaseless burden. Without warning, the filth-slick soil gives way, and like stones you fall, your cries swallowed by the darkness below. You tumble past layers of rotting detritus, through stone and root, until you land hard upon a damp cavern floor.

Silence follows – save for the distant drip of water and the uneasy shuffle of shifting rock. No longer toiling unseen beneath the festival’s grandeur, you now lay at the threshold of something older, something forgotten, something waiting in the deep...

AREA 1: The Throne of the Filth King

The cavern walls glisten with years of accumulated waste dripping from the festival grounds above. At its center, atop a mound of compacted excrement, sits a grotesque figure – a skeletal corpse draped in rotten royal garb, wearing a tarnished crown. A rusted scepter lies in its bony grasp, and a sign at its feet reads: ALL BOW BEFORE THE FILTH KING.

If touched, the corpse animates and bellows, demanding fealty; refusal causes the corpse to attack. Anyone struck by the scepter must pass a Luck check or be cursed with “Eternal Stench”, causing anyone within 10 feet of them to gag violently (-1 to all rolls). Anyone bearing the curse may wield the scepter as a +1 magic club; otherwise it is only a normal cudgel.

Filth King: Init +2; Atk Scepter +1 melee (1d4+1); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP curse; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C

AREA 2: The Chamber of the Chittering Horde

This cavern is dimly-lit by phosphorescent lichen. Three giant dung beetles, each the size of a hound, scuttle about, rolling up waste into grotesque glistening balls. They seem mostly indifferent to your presence. One of the beetle’s dung balls glows with a faint golden light at its core...

The floor here is slick and treacherous. Anyone fighting in this chamber must roll a DC 10 Reflex save at the start of combat or slip, landing face-first into something unpleasant and losing their action for the round. Inside the glowing dung ball is a fist-sized chunk of solid gold worth 100gp! The beetles will react violently to any attempt to touch their foul treasure.

There are 1d10 additional gold coins scattered around the cavern floor, any attempt to gather these coins will also result in the beetles attacking.

Dung Beetles (3): Init +1; Atk Bite +0 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d4; hp 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N

AREA 3: The Shrine of Saint Gongus

The tunnel opens into an ancient shrine, its walls covered in crude carvings of a figure wielding a mighty shovel. A plaque reads: Saint Gongus, Keeper of the Great Cesspits, Cleanser of Unseen Filth. A rusted shovel stands in a stone pedestal at the room's center.



Removing the shovel requires a DC15 Strength check; no one may assist with the check or the shovel will be immovable. If successful, and if the bearer is a gongfarmer, the shovel grants the power to command excrement (once per day, they can hurl a pile of filth to blind enemies as the spell *color spray* with a spell check of 14 plus any luck burned). The wall carvings seem to shift when no one is looking. If the shovel is taken, the eyes glow, and spectral hands emerge from the walls to try and snatch it back. A touch from the spectral hands causes the target to make a DC8 Fort save or be shrunk to a “flushable” 1 foot in height! A cleric may heal this curse with *lay on hands*.

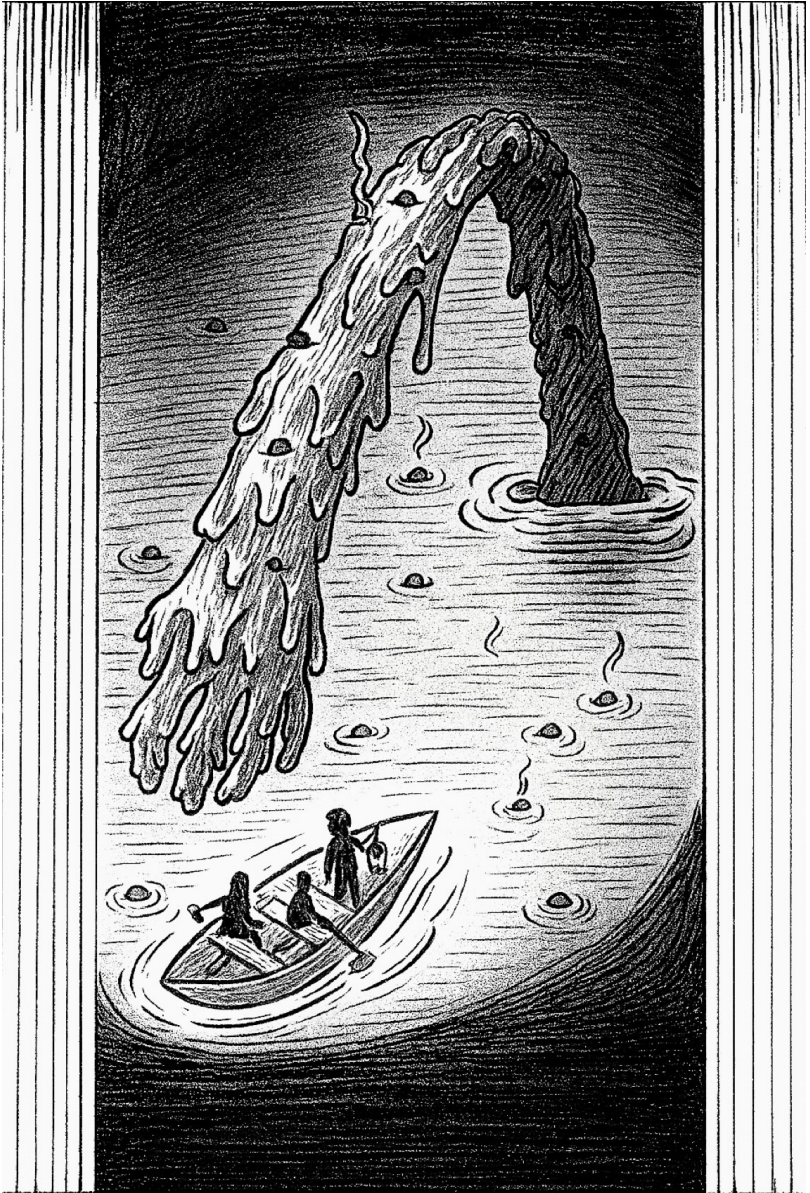
Spectral Wiping Hands (6): Init +0; Atk touch +0 melee (1 damage + special); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP DC8 Fort save or be reduced to 1 foot in height suffering -6 to attack and damage until healed by a cleric; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C

AREA 4: The Great Cistern and the Cesspool Demon

A massive underground cistern filled with unbelievably foul brackish water blocks the way forward. A large rickety wooden raft with a steering pole on top bobs on the surface, tethered to the near shore by a rotten leather cord.

The raft is large enough to hold the entire party, and the lake may be crossed in four rounds of travel, but the Cesspool Demon, a sludge-covered semi-corporeal horror with glowing yellow eyes, lurks beneath the surface. If players try to swim across the cistern or enter the water in any way, they must make a DC 15 Fort save or contract a disease that causes 1 point of Stamina loss per day until healed by a cleric and a permanent Minor Corruption determined randomly on the Minor Corruption table on p. 116 of the DCC Core Rulebook. Once the players push off on the raft, or if they disturb the water in any way, read the following text:

The water begins to boil with noxious bubbles that release a faint green gas when they burst on the surface. Suddenly, an impossibly long, impossibly pale, leprous human arm that spews horrid flammable gas from every pore bursts from the surface and tries to snatch one of your companions!



The demon gains a surprise attack against the party unless they specifically state they are all watching the water for signs of disturbance. If a character is hit, the demon will pull them under the water where they will have to make a DC 15 Strength check (as well as a Fort save and Minor Corruption for entering the water, see above) to escape its grip or drown within 3 rounds. A new arm will emerge from the water each round regardless of how many characters are held below. For larger parties, the Judge may give the Cesspool Demon two action dice per round.

The Cesspool Demon is immune to mundane attacks unless hit with fire, the Filth King's scepter, or Saint Gongus' shovel. If hit by the holy shovel, the demon will release all player characters held underwater as it thrashes about in agony. If fire is used, the gasses spewing from the arms will explode, causing 2d6 damage to both the demon and any characters in melee range that fail a DC 12 Reflex save.

Cesspool Demon: Init +4; Atk Grab +1 melee (1d3 + grapple); AC 12; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 1d20 (or 2d20); SP pull under, immune to mundane weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C

AREA 5: The Royal Privy Exit

Beyond the cistern, a tunnel slopes upward to a long narrow chute – a chute you recognize all too well... This stone passage leads up into the castle, to the king's personal privy! Dim light filters down from above, and voices can be heard: nobles laughing and chatting idly as they await their turn at the lavish latrine. A collection barrel, full of royal nightsoil, stands ready to catch at the bottom.

Climbing up the privy ramp is possible, but it requires a series of successful Strength and Agility checks (each DC 12) to avoid slipping back down. Use of spikes or other clever climbing implements will reduce these checks to DC 10. Characters that slip while climbing the ramp must make a DC 10 Reflex save to halt themselves before the momentum from slipping down

the poo-chute sends them hurtling into the cistern of waste behind them. Falling into the cistern in this manner also requires characters to make the necessary Fort save or suffer disease and corruption as detailed above.

In addition to all this, the Cesspool Demon will continue to attack characters still standing on the shore that are not actively climbing up the ramp. There is only enough space for one character per player to ascend the ramp at a time.

The nearby barrel of “nightsoil” (fermented excrement used as fertilizer) could be ignited to create a blast powerful enough to open another exit—but it will cover everyone in an unspeakable mess and collapse the royal privy above, with dire implications for the characters as several nobles are cast down into the filth with them below.

If ignited, the barrel of nightsoil will explode, causing 2d6 fire damage to everything in a 10' radius and 1d6 damage in another 10' beyond that. A Reflex save is allowed for half damage.

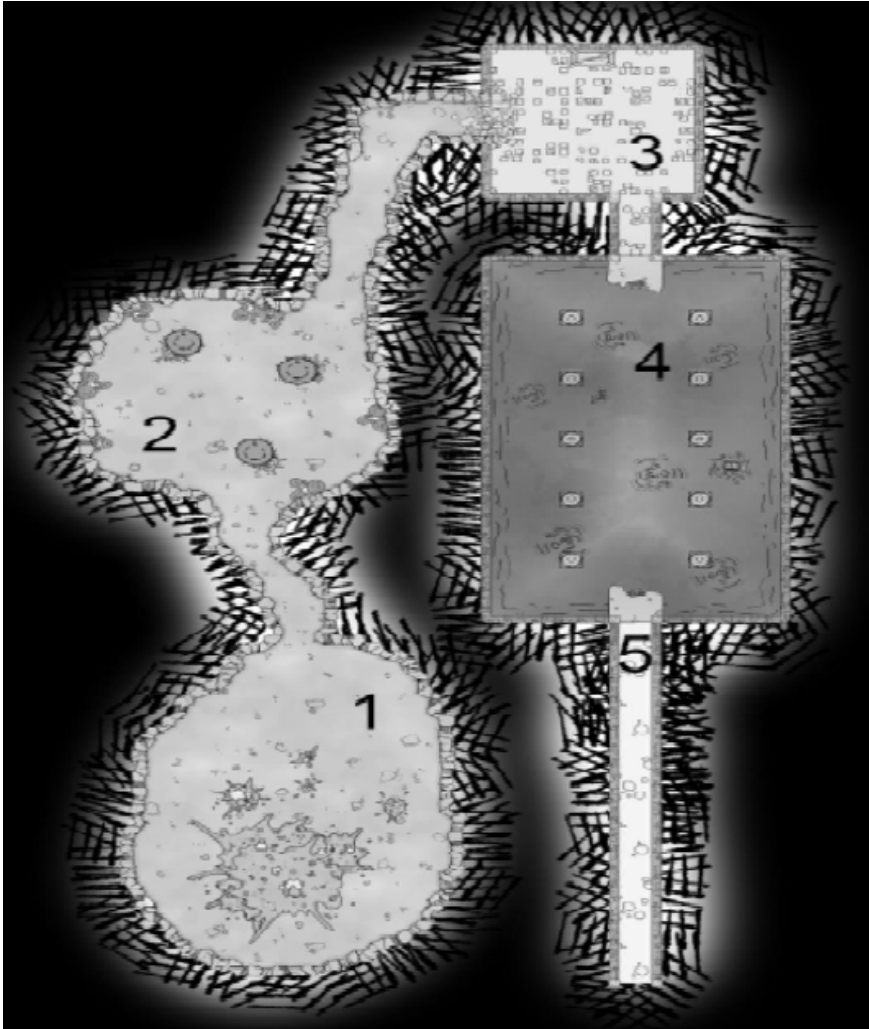
Many loose coins and objects have fallen from the King's pockets over the years of using this privy; if players declare they are searching the ramp or the shoreline just below it, they will find 1d6x10 total GP worth of mixed coins.

CONCLUSION

If the player characters emerge through the privy, they find themselves in the middle of the royal feast, shocking the nobles and likely earning a death sentence—unless they can talk their way into either a pardon or a new career as court jesters... Will the gongfarmers escape the depths, or will they become just another forgotten layer of filth beneath the King's Festival?

Characters that survive the funnel each receive 1 point of permanent Luck as a reward for defying the odds and making

it through alive. In addition, characters will also receive enough experience points to advance to level 1.



The Nightsoil Cometh Adventure Map

THE PALECLAWS

By Shane Madgett
Art by Nick Heazell

A Sneak Preview of an upcoming adventure/setting for
Weird Frontiers and DCC



"Paleclaw" by Nick Heazell

I don't know who will read this,

Something is hunting us, yesterday we saw the tracks again.
Long, thin, and deep—as if knives walked on end. But no
prints leading to or away. And the meat in the sledge?
Frozen solid. Bones all gone.

I fear, the four of us might not make it out with our lives.

— Letter never delivered, found near Red Hill Depot,
February 1865

WHAT ARE THE PALECLAWS?

The Paleclaws are not animals, and they are not men. They are cold-born things—figures that haunt the snowbound wilds west of Rupert's Land and north of the last telegraph lines.

Some say they came from inside the earth—chased to the surface by the digging of railway prospectors. Others claim they're fragments of frost given motion, cursed wanderers made from hunger and snow.

Nobody who's seen them clearly ever makes it back whole.

Description

Stretched figures wrapped in matting of white fur, not sewn or worn, but grown.

Bone-pale claws extend six inches from long, thin fingers—sharp enough to cut buckskin and crack iron nails.

Their eyes glow silver in moonlight, and they do not blink.

They leave strange, deep gouges in snow or wood—longer than a man's hand, spaced like walking feet but with no heelprint.

When they move, there is no sound—not even from snow.

Behavior & Folklore

Origin Myth: The Paleclaws and the Headless Valley

From the whispered accounts near Nahanni Butte, passed in fragments and warnings...

Long ago, before fur traders mapped the rivers and before the mountain spirits were driven quiet, there was a people who lived along the warm springs of the Nahanni Valley. They were tall, strong, and kind-hearted—but prideful.

When the great cold first fell from the North Star, these people did not hide. Instead, they challenged it. They **struck pacts with the old winds**, buried bone into ice, and carved their own blood into stone **to stay warm forever**.

But warmth was not free. The cold answered. It sent its **envoys in dreams**, whispering truths not meant for mortal minds. Some of them listened. Some *changed*.

One night, they all vanished. The valley was found littered with **heads, cleanly taken**—not by blade, but **by cold so sharp it sliced identity away**. The heads were buried in ice tombs. The bodies rose again, **unburdened by thought, memory, or soul**.

These were the first **Paleclaws**. The rest of the people were lost to the drift.

Even now, the Nahanni Valley is avoided. The air is too still. No birds fly over it. It is said that those who sleep there **dream without a head**, and wake without a heart.

They strike in storms, especially when someone strays from a group, or refuses to leave an offering of warmth (whiskey, meat, or flame).

Campfire tales say they hate bells, bronze, and prayer, but none of that has ever worked.

More than a few isolated outposts reported odd scratching on the walls, but no signs of entry.

Sometimes a dead horse is found standing upright, frozen solid, with long cuts spiraling around its legs.

Paleclaw: Init +2; AC 15; HD 4d10; Speed 40'; Atk Claws +5 (1d8 + bleed); Sp Trackless, Cold Harvest, Ice-Walk, Fear Gaze; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4; AL N (Unnatural Neutral); XP 100
Trackless: Cannot be tracked except by supernatural means. Even when wounded, it leaves no blood, only faint warmth.
Cold Harvest: On a crit or killing blow, the Paleclaw drains body heat—flash-freezing the target (DC 12 Fort save or stunned for 1d3 rounds). The area around the body becomes unnaturally cold for hours.

Fear Gaze (1/day): Locks eyes with a single target within 30'. Target must succeed a DC 13 Will save or be frozen in place with terror (paralyzed for 1 round per level/HD).

Ice-Walk: The Paleclaw moves effortlessly across ice, snow, and vertical frozen surfaces, leaving no prints. It takes no penalties from cold-based terrain or weather.

Excerpt from the Personal Journal of Elias Durnley, Natural Philosopher attached to the 1865 Dominion Overland Telegraph Survey, Yukon Interior:

February 17, 1865

Subject displays locomotion inconsistent with known species. Tracks found in soft snow show unnatural stride length—far exceeding human range without dislocation. No evidence of heel or boot compression. Claws? Tools? Unclear.

Observed site showed elevated temperature readings (in crude mercury register) near claw marks. Local magnetometer spiked briefly during my approach. Conclusion: subject may emit low-frequency vibration or field interference.

Theory: A creature evolved in subterranean geothermal pockets, drawn up by sonic resonance of distant storms. Possibly heat-scavengers. May extract warmth from prey or ambient environment."

I have named the subject: Specimen H1 - Paleclaw. Caution advised. Avoid direct observation after dark. Carry bronze pendulum and wax-stoppered salt."

Regional Variants and Names (Multi-Regional Folklore)

Region	Name for Paleclaws	Description / Lore
Yukon/ Fort Selkirk	The Bone-Walkers	Said to rise from mineral springs, using carved tibias as flutes to summon more. Their songs are only heard in dreams.
Northern Alberta	Frost-Bitten Men	Believed to be corrupted surveyors and cartographers who mapped too far north and were claimed by a cold that remembers names.
Great Slave Lake	Ice Fathers	Spirits of long-dead patriarchs who punish descendants that forget ancestral winter rites. Their coming is marked by hoarfrost inside locked rooms.
Manitoba Interior	Snow Devils	Blamed for vanishing children and blizzards that arrive under clear skies. Their footprints appear after the snow stops falling.
Newfoundland Interior	The Chill-Men	Said to move through coastal fog with whale-oil lanterns and tap gently on cabin windows during storms. The knocking never stops until answered.
Quebec Hinterland	Les Silencieux	No one hears them. When found, the dead are frozen mid-sentence or mid-scream, faces stretched in final realization.
Southern Ontario <i>(secretly whispered)</i>	Pale Sons of the Snow King	Linked to early settler myths of caves beneath Georgian Bay. Said to awaken during the deepest freeze and replace those lost on winter trails.

FIELD DIRECTIVES:

DO NOT ATTEMPT CAPTURE OR COMMUNION.

Engagement with any such anomaly—whether humanoid, spectral, or [REDACTED]
—is strictly prohibited.

MAINTAIN FLAME AT ALL TIMES.

Camps must retain a central fire. Individuals should carry an open flame source when posted alone. If flame extinguishes unexplainably, regroup immediately.

NO WHISTLING.

Harmonic sounds (particularly of metallic pitch) have been associated with increased event likelihood. This includes whistling, pipe music, or Morse-tone transmission.

REPORT ALL INSTANCES OF ARRANGEMENT.

Should you discover any symmetrical configuration of gear, bone, wood, or meat
—do not disturb it. Log location and vacate the area.

ATTACHMENTS:

Diagram: "Recovered Glyph Pattern from Outpost W" [REDACTED]

Transcript: "Last Transmission, Fort Poudervale" (Partial Only)

FINAL REMARKS:

This is not a matter for natural philosophy.

This is not a matter for superstition.

This is a matter of procedural safety.

Failure to comply may result in internal sanction or [REDACTED BY ORDER].

— By order of the Dominion Provisional Oversight Bureau (Winter Div.)

Filed under Category: CRYO-RESIDUE / Non-Hostile unless Provoked

DOMINION ARCHIVES

FIELD WARNING NOTICE — DO NOT DISTRIBUTE

Ref. No. 5-A/177 — Northern Survey Files

Classified: INTERNAL USE ONLY — NOT FOR LOCAL CONSTABULARY CIRCULATION

TO: All Commanding Officers and Survey Leads assigned to Overland Telegraph Work Groups, Frontier Weather Monitoring Stations, and Temporary Posts North of Line D-4

DATE: March 12, 1865

SUBJECT: ANOMALOUS ENCOUNTERS / PRESERVATION OF MORALE

SUMMARY:

Recent disappearances and unconfirmed sightings have created undue disruption to survey operations in sectors [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and along Ridge Axis [REDACTED]. The following guidelines are issued in the interest of safety and operational continuity.

OBSERVED PATTERNS:

Unexplained Loss of Personnel during clear-weather transit, often accompanied by:

Undisturbed snow surrounding site

Folded garments or upright boots without prints

Evidence of deliberate arrangement of nonorganic materials (tin cups, firewood, tools)

Animal Distress or premature freezing in livestock without exposure rationale.

Unnatural Silence: In areas of reportable incident, ambient noise—including wind and wildlife—ceases entirely for measurable periods.

Optical Distortions: Multiple accounts of “figures walking above the treeline” or “men without feet.” These reports are to be recorded but not discussed publicly.

— Frontier Science Theory (Expedition Notes, 1865)

Suggested Adventure Hook

A telegraph survey team went missing near the proposed McGregor Line crossing. Their snow shelter was found half-buried, with no footprints—but the fire was still burning and one man’s boots were frozen to the roof. The expedition log ends with a charcoal sketch of a creature with antler-like ears and claws as long as a man’s forearm, captioned:

“IT WATCHES. IT WAITS FOR THE SLEEP.”

Rumors & Campfire Stories of the Paleclaws (1d6 Table)

1d6	Whispered Tale
1	“There was a mail driver out of Fort Assiniboine, went off-course in a squall. They found the sled, still packed, but his boots were gone and the reins were knotted like a bird’s nest. Said he walked into the woods naked, smiling.”
2	“Old Jeb swears he saw a Paleclaw watching his cabin from the trees. Next morning, the firewood was all stacked into a perfect spiral. No prints. No wind. Just the spiral.”
3	“They only come when something is broken—an oath, a lock, a promise to return. That’s when they smell it. Like blood, but colder.”
4	“The fur traders used to say they’re born when a man dies forgotten in a snowdrift. One for every lonely corpse.”
5	“There was a chaplain who tried to bless a Paleclaw trail. He ain’t been right since—just mutters about bells that don’t ring and teeth under the ice.”
6	“You’ll hear them before you see them. Not footsteps—just the wind... stopping. Like it’s waiting.”

Recovered Artifact: The Hollow Tine

"It sings when the wind dies."

– From the logbook of surveyor W. Hemming, found frostbitten and unblinking in 1866

Description:

A thin, curved sliver of pale bone-like material, cold to the touch even in firelight. The surface is etched with symmetrical ridges, like grooves in a music box cylinder or an insect's wing.

It hums softly – but only when: snow is falling; wind is utterly still; and no other sound is being made within 60 ft.

Possible Effects (System-Agnostic Ideas):

"Field Dampener": While held, all warm-blooded creatures within 30' slowly feel warmth drain (1 HP/hour or similar).

"Frost Pulse": Once per day, can unleash a wave of freezing static (2d6 cold damage, DC 13 Ref or movement halved for 1d4 rounds).

"Echo Tap": When tapped against a frozen surface, reveals the last motion recorded nearby in ghostly snow-static hallucinations (like a cold playback).

Curse (optional): The bearer dreams of vast, white halls, and wakes with frost in their breath. After 3 nights, the Paleclaws know their name.

Royal Dominion Telegraph Survey — Temporary Post, Camp Red Bell
Dated: February 3rd, 1865 — Never officially submitted

NAME OF MISSING: Constable Edmund Vale

AGE: 29

LAST SEEN: 10 miles northeast of Survey Beacon 7, en route to ice ridge breakpoint

DESCRIPTION:

5'10", black beard, pale complexion, red serge coat, navy wool trousers

Mounted on leased sled dog team (4 animals)

Armed with percussion rifle and one brass signaling whistle

NOTES (unofficial):

Vale was last seen at sundown, 2 February, by Corporal Pritchard. Reported a "light in the snow" pacing him at distance, "like a man on stilts made of bone." Dismissed at the time.

Sled recovered midday, 3 February—dogs frozen mid-run, reins slack, no damage. Food untouched.

Vale's clothing and rifle were neatly folded beside a frost-blasted pine. Boots stood upright, laced and empty. Snow beneath them was not disturbed.

The brass whistle was found embedded in the tree trunk 15 feet off the ground, wrapped in a thread of unknown white sinew.

RECOMMENDATION: Camp be moved south. Send report to McLeod Station.

(unsigned, unsigned copy)

-Unfiled Missing Persons Report

Rumors about the Paleclaws:

1d8	Rumor
1	<p><i>"They were men once – voyageurs who followed a cursed northern route and never came back right."</i> Some say you can still see patches of red sash tied to their limbs, frozen into the skin.</p>
2	<p><i>"They won't cross running water – but they'll follow a frozen river for days, just under the ice."</i> Trappers whisper of shapes that <i>crawl with the current</i>, scraping just beneath the surface.</p>
3	<p><i>"You don't hear them howl. You feel your breath slow, your joints lock, and then the snow goes silent."</i> The old Swede up at Lac Noir says they <i>steal the sound first</i>, so you won't scream.</p>
4	<p><i>"They dig with their hands – never tools. Never speak. But they leave bone altars behind."</i> An entire HBC camp at Spruce Narrows vanished, leaving only a <i>ring of jawbones in the snow</i>.</p>
5	<p><i>"They can smell warmth. A fire too hot, a heartbeat too fast – that's how they find you."</i> Best sleep cold and breathe slow. A scout once buried herself in slush to survive the night.</p>
6	<p><i>"Mission records claim the Church tried to baptize one once. It dissolved in the water – but the priest hasn't aged since."</i> He lives near Fort Carlton. Won't speak of it. Still wears the same cassock, thirty years on.</p>
7	<p><i>"They don't breed. They take."</i> One winter a Métis girl went missing from Turtle Lake. Came back in spring – but silent, pale, and pregnant with nothing.</p>
8	<p><i>"They only come when the temperature drops below -40, and only when the moon is completely veiled."</i> One old tracker keeps a silver barometer and <i>shaves off his eyebrows</i> when the cold hits deep – says it keeps them from looking back at him.</p>

Truths Behind the Paleclaw Rumors:

- 1. Voyageurs gone wrong? Partly true.**
A 1797 fur brigade vanished upriver from Fort Liard. They entered a cleft in the limestone cliffs where compasses failed and heat drained from the air. Only one came back—a mute with frostbitten lips and **claws for fingers**. His journal, smeared with wax and blood, spoke of “*a voice beneath the cold that taught us how to shed ourselves.*”
- 2. Running water aversion? Incomplete.**
They shun water in *motion*—not because of superstition, but because it disturbs their **long-range resonance**, something akin to echolocation. But when the river freezes, it becomes a perfect **highway of vibration**. Their claws can feel **footsteps from miles away**.
- 3. Stillness before the strike? True.**
Paleclaws emit a **field of thermokinetic dampening** when closing in—a natural adaptation or a form of predatory ritual. The stillness is not silence; it’s **stolen sensation**, a numb space around them where sound, heat, and time fray.
- 4. Bone altars? Real.**
These are **resonance markers**, arranged in spiraling sigils. They're not just symbolic—they shape reality subtly around them. Prolonged exposure causes **joint calcification, amnesia, and night terrors**. Several forts were abandoned due to bone lattice growth beneath the snowline.
- 5. They track heat.**
They have **temperature-adaptive vision**, and even deeper than that, they can sense **emotional heat**—terror, anger, lust, even joy. A “cold” sleeper isn’t just physically chill—they’ve mastered stillness of the *soul*.

6. **The baptism? Darkly true.**

The Paleclaw brought into the church was **not yet fully formed**, and water disrupted the binding between its flesh and whatever *will* animated it. The priest didn't escape unscathed – he became a **vessel for the memory** of that broken rite. Now he lives in solitude, aging outwardly, but *repeating the baptism dream every night*.

7. **They don't breed – they replicate.**

Through wounds, dreams, and deep cold, they **rewrite the living**, especially those left vulnerable by isolation or despair. The girl who returned to Turtle Lake? She gave birth to a **pile of preserved snow and a single knuckled claw**. Then she walked into the ice and vanished.

8. **Temperature and moon phase – observed, but misunderstood.**

It's not superstition – it's **activation timing**. Below -40°C and under a **veiled new moon**, something opens – possibly a *window* in the Drift. It's then they walk freely, not as flesh alone but as **echoes of winter's memory**, enforcing a deeper cold than weather allows.