

# The Goblin Hulk

Campaign sourcebook compatible  
with 4th edition Dungeons & Dragons



Created by Role Playing Public Radio



# The Goblin Hulk

Created by Role Playing Public Radio  
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Jon P Nilson  
Mark Shocklee  
Chris “bigznak” Zank  
Sam Greenberg  
Murph  
Peter Nielsen

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# Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Bazaar Deck	6
Exterior Docks	9
Dragon skeletal side rigging	12
Orlop Deck	15
Prison Deck	17
Crew Deck	19
Shamanic Engineering Deck	21
Stray Dogs Adventure	23
Break Out Adventure	28
Destroy the Hulk	31
New Monsters	32
New Templates	42



*Cortez, tyrant and fallen paladin.*

# Introduction

No one welcomes the goblin horde into their land. No one wants the goblins as guests or friends. No one, not even the other monstrous races, trusts the goblins. They are as the locust, a ravenous swarm consuming or despoiling all within reach. Normally, they are held back by the armies of civilized nations but the New World lacks an organized defense.

The first goblin ship has laid anchor off the shore of the New World, a massive hulk that holds together despite its improbable construction. It is a ramshackle floating fortress with countless goblins nesting within it. Its very presence destabilizes the region and if left unchecked, the goblins could overrun the New World.

## What is the Goblin Hulk?

At first glance, the hulk appears as an impossibly large misshapen ship that somehow stays afloat despite its improbable construction. Each hulk is unique in appearance, but the one that menaces the new world appears as a massive galleon with a full-sized dragon skeleton embedded in the side of the ship, with a shanty town built upon its top deck and a rough dock protruding from its other side. Smaller ships are tied onto the dock and countless goblins swarm over the ship.

Goblin hulks typically start as a normal ship, often built by another race, but piece by piece the ship grows like a floating cancer on the oceans. The goblins acquire a ship through theft or brute force and use it for piracy and smuggling. If the ship isn't destroyed quickly, it grows as the crew lashes on smaller ships or builds new decks and sections. Normally such a ship would quickly fall apart under the weight of its unplanned additions.

Every once in a while, the engineers and shamans actually work together to transform a ship into a fully fledged hulk. This is a lengthy ritual taking many months and tens of thousands of gold pieces worth of supplies and labor. But once the ritual is completed, the magic of the ritual ensures that the hulk will remain seaworthy until completely destroyed or until the hull sigils are removed.

The hull sigils are mystic artifacts that maintain the power of the hulk ritual. Without them, the hulk would collapse in a matter of hours. Only one hull sigil needs to exist in order to maintain the ritual but the destruction of even one damages the hulk and reduces its abilities. Each hull sigil is hidden and protected by dedicated guardians and traps. Only the engineers and shamans who built the hulk know their exact location.

The shamans and engineers who built the hulk live in the center of the ship, maintaining its hull sigils and constantly repairing and building upon the ship. All of the factions leave them alone, fearing their magic and armaments. For their part, they care more about the hulk itself than where it goes or what it does. The engineers seek to perfect their jury-rigging skills while the shamans believe they are serving the will of the goblin gods by building the hulk.

Once a hulk is ready to sail, it becomes a mobile stronghold and bastion of goblin-kind. It is steered by whatever faction currently controls the sails, which is usually the strongest faction currently onboard. Few navies can effectively stop one, as the goblins can rebuild the hulk quickly and there are always more goblins ready to live onboard the hulk. Like a dragon, it grows with age, becoming darker and more dangerous, not only to potential raiding targets but to its own crew. Life is cheap and most goblins wind up feeding the fish or even as part of the next night's stew.

## Life onboard the hulk

Anarchy on the sea, more or less. No single character can rule a hulk. As the hulk is kept afloat by powerful magic and obsessive engineers who care not what the hulk actually does or where it goes, there is no need for a disciplined and orderly crew to keep things running. Instead, the hulk houses numerous gangs, cliques and factions that have carved out or built their own turf. The politics of the various factions are mercurial. Allies turn on each other, enemies become friends and peace or war breaks out on a daily basis. However, all factions do share a few rules in order facilitate their trading with outside groups.

Every hulk is unique but almost all have two common sections and are considered neutral territory: the bazaar and the docks. Visitors are allowed to trade in the bazaar but non-goblins are closely watched and seldom allowed access to the other decks. The docks allow raiders and pirates to stay at the hulk while they trade and resupply. A faction that starts an open fight in either section will be exiled or outright destroyed by the others for threatening their revenue stream.

For the average crewmember, the hulk offers constant danger to life and limb. The corridors are dark, dank and poorly maintained and the wrong step may send a goblin crashing through rotten wood to another floor or the ocean. Disease festers in the lower decks and pandemics can wipe out entire factions. Many goblins do not work for any faction and survive by scavenging or preying upon other crewmembers. It is common for someone to be killed over a few copper pieces or their cloak. Furthermore, the crew quarters are always overcrowded, regardless of the time of day, as goblins gamble, fight, scheme and sleep in dirty hammocks, elbow to elbow. Some have even turned to sleeping wherever they can find some peace and quiet, including the bilge deck! Despite this, goblins jump at the chance for getting on a hulk, as it offers mobility and adventure.

## Using the Goblin Hulk

This module focuses on a single goblin hulk but the concept can easily be integrated into most campaigns. Goblins are chaotic and inventive, so perhaps a brilliant engineer or shaman builds the first one in your campaign world to ravage the coast of the kingdom. For an epic game, perhaps an entire fleet of hulks could threaten to overwhelm civilization. Or for more morally ambiguous campaigns, a goblin hulk could serve as a port of call for a less savory group of adventurers. Many deals are struck in the makeshift taverns of the bazaar and everyone from elves to mind flayers can be found buying and selling there. To illustrate how the goblin hulk can be used, I have created three adventures frameworks that can be used as the foundation of many potent adventures.

## A note on mapping

There is no map of the entire goblin hulk. It is constantly changing, as factions constantly rebuild their turf to keep enemies guessing and the hulk is frequently attacked, necessitating quick fixes along the way.

## Major Areas

Each major area description uses the following sections.

**Observations:** This describes the area through the five senses, although taste and smell have been consolidated into one part. Use this as a guide to describe the area to your players.

**Who Lives Here:** The current residents of the area, even if they aren't goblins. Also describes the factions that hold turf in this area.

**What's Going On:** What the residents do on a daily basis, whether it's fighting, trading, scheming or whatever else. Every plot and plan is detailed.

**Getting Around:** How do characters get in and out of the area or move around? Each area has its own challenges. Some are heavily guarded; others have many hazards to unsuspecting visitors.

**Notable Features:** Important rooms, subsections and unusual architectural features of the area. If a hull sigil is in the area, it will be listed in this part of the descriptions.

**Encounters:** A few potential encounters the PCs may run across as they explore the area.

# The Bazaar

## Observations

### Sight

- A crowded shantytown built on the top deck.
- Dozens of wooden shacks and tents vie for space on the hulk.
- Swarms of goblins hurry through the narrow openings between each shanty.
- Visitors such as other humanoid species and exotic races such as a minotaur.
- The glint of precious metals reflects as merchants examine jewelry in the sunlight.
- Merchant stalls selling everything from weapons, spell components to rare spices.
- A slave trading block, with an auction underway. Elves and humans for sale.
- A goblin chieftain surrounded by hobgoblin guards forces its way through the crowd.
- An unlucky goblin thief having his hand chopped off by an orc mercenary.
- Several crewmembers climbing the masts and riggings above you.

### Sound

- The roar of a crowd as they watch a knife fight to the death, somewhere out of sight.
- The clanging of a blacksmith fixing a damaged sword.
- Merchants and hawkers yelling out to the crowd, advertising their goods for sale.
- The rustling of cloth as a servant folds out an order of silk bed sheets for the goblin chieftain.
- A tiefling and a gnome argue in an unknown language.
- The squealing of livestock as a butcher slaughters them.
- A dozen orcs singing a drinking song far in the distance.
- A goblin high above shouting to another right next to you.
- The ritual chanting of a goblin shaman as she repairs the hulk with a ritual.
- A human visitor, hung over, puking over the side of the rails.

### Taste/Smell

- The ocean air, still fresh as a strong breeze wipes through bazaar.
- The scent of a gourmet feast prepared for a VIP visitor, heavily spiced.
- Perfume from a beautiful veiled courtesan as she passes you.
- The sickly-sweet stench of death, faint but unmistakable.
- The bitterness of the cheap grog served as your meal at the One-Eyed Dolphin.

### Touch

- The bony hardness of the weird lump you just found in your grog. What the hell is that?
- Shoving past the crowd as you make your way through the bazaar – sweat, greasy cloth, scarred and tensed flesh.
- Rusted nails hammered into the wall of a shanty for no particular reason.
- Thick damp rope tearing your hands as you climb the rigging.
- A thin leathery hand at your coin pouch, trying to wriggle free from your grasp.

### Who Lives Here

Merchants, their servants and guards compose most of the full time residents of the bazaar. Most are too paranoid to wander far from their goods. A few foolhardy thieves, scavengers and beggars scrape a meager existence from the largesse of visitors.

As the only attraction for outsiders, the bazaar has several dozen visitors at any given time, night or day. Selfish humans trade in the day while drow and undead do business at night. The goblins don't care who they do business with.

The current merchants of note are:

**Bel the Fat:** Goblin chieftain and arms-dealer. Ruthless and paranoid. Likes to employ visitors for his 'errands', usually of a dark and violent nature.

**Shala the Knife:** Mother of five ruthless assassins, Shala has cornered the fur and silk trade on the hulk. Anyone who competes with her winds up with a dagger in their back.

**Melgab the Friendly:** Owner of the One-Eyed Dolphin, an inn noted for a still moving one-eyed zombie dolphin hanging over the bar. Despite its name, it's the safest place for a visitor to sleep. Melgab charges top gold for his rooms and his income depends on a solid reputation for safety.

## What's Going On

Despite their raids, rampant pillaging and frequent wars, trade is the lifeblood of the goblin clans. As a weaker, smaller species they rely on becoming vital business partners with the other humanoid species in order to avoid being slaughtered. Furthermore, trade provides valuable lore on distant lands ripe for the plunder.

Currently, the goblins on this hulk are acquiring as many slaves, plants and animals from the New World as possible in exchange for poisons, weapons, alchemist-made potions and livestock from the old world. They deal primarily with unscrupulous natives and a few rogue merchants from the colony although a few undead from the new world have struck deals with the merchants.

## Getting Around

Characters must fly, climb a rope ladder or take a crane from the docks to get to the bazaar. Flying requires magic or a powerful flying creature, the rope ladder is free but requires a DC 10 endurance check or the character loses a healing surge from the long climb and taking a ride with the newest cargo shipment costs 5 gold coins per person.

Characters can push their way through the crowd, hire guards to do the pushing for them or take to the rigging above for a quick but dangerous alternate route.

If a character pushes through the crowd, a successful DC 10 Athletics check is needed or the character can only move at a greatly reduced speed, which makes them vulnerable to pickpockets. The character must make a DC 12 Perception check or lose 2d6 gold coins from a goblin thief.

A character can hire goblin bravos to push through the crowd for them, costing only 5 gold pieces for the duration of the visit.

Finally, a character can climb above it all by using the rigging above the bazaar. This requires a DC 10 acrobatics check as the wind will toss the character back and forth. Failure indicates a drop of 20 feet into an angry goblin.

## Notable Features

There are three inns in the bazaar.

**The One-Eyed Dolphin**, known for its relative safety and owned by Melgab. Zeernebooch the orc warlock is the bouncer.

**The Slaughtered Fool**, known for its absolutely low prices and absolute lack of safety

**The Royal**, an inn available only to goblin chieftains and important visitors.

Bel the Fat has a weapons stall that offers a unique 'try before you buy' feature. Characters can take a few swings at an amputated troll with any weapon before they buy it. The troll is chained up and regenerates injuries quickly. Of course, good characters should think twice before taking advantage of this service.

Cranes constantly haul up supplies from the docks to the top deck. The cranes can drop a crate nearly anywhere on the top deck and more than once, an 'accident' has taken the life of an unfortunate too slow to avoid a falling crate.

## Encounters

### The Hawkers

Melgab's hawkers prowl the bazaar looking for well-dressed visitors. If they find one, they encourage him to visit the One-Eyed Dolphin, maybe get a few drinks or even stay the night. If the visitor refuses, the hawkers pretend to leave but tail him. After a few hours, they will try to rob the visitor, either picking his pocket or outright mugging him. The hawkers fight if confronted. Use four level 1 goblin monsters for stats. They are cowardly and will flee if two or more are killed.

### Tangled Harpy

A mean harpy has been tangled up in the rigging of the ship and left to die. She can't escape and goblins lazily pelt rocks at her and otherwise torture her. She'll die an agonizing death over the next few days. While the harpy is evil, even she

doesn't deserve to die such a horrible death. Good characters should try to free her, which requires an easy skill challenge to climb up, cut the right ropes without hurting the harpy (3 successes before 2 failures, DC based on level of party, use acrobatics and athletics as primary skills). If the party frees her, they will receive no reward, as the harpy will simply fly off without so much as saying thanks.

### **Drunken Brawl**

Several drunk orcs and goblins have gotten into a fight and the characters are about to get caught up into it. An orc throws a goblin into a PC, causing no damage but knocks the character prone. At this point, the characters can either join in the fray, attempt to stop the fight, run away or stand back and watch the fight.

The fight is composed of 6 goblins fighting 4 orcs. All are level 1 monsters (use any appropriate stat blocks from the MM or from this PDF). Both the goblins and orcs will attack the nearest target and will not ally with characters, unless a character makes a successful DC 20 diplomacy, bluff or intimidate check to convince one of the groups (either goblin or orc) that they are friends.

Stopping the fight is a skill challenge requiring 4 successes before 3 failures with the primary skills being diplomacy, bluff, insight and intimidate. The DC is based on party level. A level 1 party would have a DC 13 for the challenge.

Running away or watching the fight does not require any rolls. The battle becomes a brutal street fight that eventually ends up with all of the fighters dead or dying. Once it is over, a few servants loot the bodies of the dead and throw them over the side, while the dying crawl away to hide.



*Entrance to the One-Eyed Dolphin Inn.*



# Exterior Docks

## Observations

### Sight

- Ships bobbing in the water, tied up to rickety docks that look as though they could fall apart at any moment.
- Countless workers and slaves loading and unloading cargo from ships. Crates, barrels, livestock, chained up slaves and other more exotic cargo are moved constantly, yet the flimsy gangways of the docks somehow support the massive weight.
- A goblin-built crane lifts up a pallet of goods to the top deck of the ship. It sways unsteadily in the wind, yet no one seems to pay heed to the potential hazard.
- A goblin with a knife in his back staggers around. No one pays attention to him, until he falls into the water. Sharks begin tearing at the corpse.
- Giant torches and magical spotlights made by goblin shamans keep the docks illuminated at night, more to keep aquatic monsters at bay than to aid the nocturnal goblins.
- A goblin engineer and several junked men repair a broken section of the docks. Their work is surprisingly skilled. Perceptive characters notice that the engineer is somehow able to reinvigorate rotten and decayed materials, making them stronger than when they were new.
- A single open air wine shop called the Red Barrel, where captains, sailors and merchants make deals, find work and trade gossip.

### Sound

- Argument between a hobgoblin captain and a goblin merchant over the price of elven silk. Words become louder until blades are drawn from sheathes then a deadly silence falls as both the merchant's entourage and the captain's crew stand off. Finally, the captain laughs and agrees to the price.
- Churning of the water underneath as dozens of aquatic scavengers bicker and fight for the scraps casually thrown off the docks.
- The twang of crossbows and a scream as slavers shoot down a slave trying to jump off the docks and swim to safety.

- Exotic music coming from an unseen source, a sailor playing tunes from a distant land to wile away the hours.
- A vampire being burned in the sunlight after being kicked out of its coffin for failing to pay its bill to the captain that transported it.

### Smell/Taste

- The scent of dead fish permeates the area. Many scales and bones have wedged themselves between the planks of the docks.
- The aroma of a dead sea monster's bloated carcass floats in the water, tied onto a pier.
- A piece of fresh fruit taken from a basket carried by an overworked slave. The citrus sweetness is surprising given the time it must have spent in a dank ship's hold.

### Touch

- Slime covered tentacles wrapping around your ankles, as an unseen sea monster tries to drag you off the docks for a feast.
- The fur robe of a rich merchant and a hard elbow to the stomach shoving past you in order to inspect the wares of a newly arrived ship. His bodyguards eye you warily, ready to pounce on you if you object to the rough treatment.
- The rough ceramic wine flask as you take a swig of the finest goblin vintage available for a few copper pieces.

### Who Lives Here

Dozens of stevedores and dockworkers and the staff of the Red Barrel live full time on the docks, leaving only when a storm threatens to sweep them overboard. Many sailors visit the docks, although quite a few remain onboard their ships to guard them from thieves.

### What's Going On

A bustling hub of trading and commerce, the docks are busy night and day. Not as busy as the bazaar, but still quite active. There are no peacekeepers or watchmen or any laws whatsoever. However, the presence of many armed gangs, crews, and factions ensures that no one group gets too violent, lest it be taken down by the rest for acting out. The docks are too profitable for too many separate groups to let a single group take them over or destroy it. They are maintained by engineers and shamans from the



hulk, who do so in order to keep the rest of the goblins happy.

## Getting Around

Characters have to either swim or take a ship to the docks. This can be an adventure in of itself, as predators swarm the ship, looking for easy prey and ships that frequent the hulk aren't safe for inexperienced travelers. A character in the bazaar on the top deck can climb down from a rope ladder or hitch a ride with the crane.

The docks are actually quite strong, reinforced by the best in goblin engineering and shamanic magic, in order to bear the strain of so much cargo shipped through it. However, there are no railings to speak of and it is quite easy to fall or get knocked off the docks and into the water below.

A character who falls into the water is fair game to the countless aquatic scavengers and predators who gather under the docks to feast. It is pointless to fight them off, as more will gather. Instead, characters must evade the hungry critters and get back onto the docks.

## Notable Features

On any given day, one might see pirate ships, slave ships, the yachts of noblemen, steam-powered gnome or dwarven built warships side by side at the docks conducting business. Practically any ship might stop by sooner or later. Currently an adventurer named Rigor watches the ships, waiting for a particular one. No one knows what his abilities are or what ship he's looking for. He's been known to help other adventurers with directions, if asked politely.

The Red Barrel, an open air wine shop, where deals are made and sailors gamble their pay away. The wine is kept in the water to keep it cool, in thick nets guarded by a few goblins who use harpoons to kill any curious sea creatures. Brant, a mysterious cleric works as information broker, buying and selling secrets to anyone with gold in his purse. Of course, he has a personal agenda but he's not letting on what that might be.

The Cranes, mighty contraptions able to pick up multi-ton cargo pallets easily. No one knows what

powers them or how to operate them, except a few select goblin engineers and dockworkers. Bribing them to move cargo is a tradition.

## Encounters

### Want to join the navy?

A press gang of 7 humanoids looking to recruit a few more sailors for the next voyage. They usually collect drunks and weaklings from the docks but characters who look unthreatening are taken as well. Players will see the gang picking up passed out drunks and throwing them into a wooden cage. The gang leader will ask them if they want to join a naval expedition that pays handsomely. No insight check is necessary to see the orc is lying through his teeth.

The characters can either fight the gang (level appropriate encounter of humanoids) or intimidate them into leaving them alone. The press gang is trying to raise the numbers of the ship's crew, so even a single death on their side will cause them to flee.

### The Escaped Slaves

two rail-thin half-elves in rags, a man and a woman, rush to a nearby character and beg for help. They've just escaped from a slave ship and want help before the slavers find them. Characters can already hear the shouts of the slavers offering a 25 gold coin reward for each slave. The slaves are half out of their mind with fear. Characters can easily hide them for now, but the slaves want more than just protection from the slavers. They will demand an additional service from the characters. This could be anything – pick one of the following options or make up one of your own.

### Rescue mission

The slaves know others from the ship they were on. These are family members or dear friends that the escaped slaves won't leave. The characters must get 2d6 additional slaves off the ship.

### Transportation

The slaves are needed back home. Perhaps they were taken from their children and need to find them or they must plant crops now or their village will starve in the winter. Whatever the reason, the

slaves won't be satisfied with being dropped at the nearest safe city.

### Revenge

The slaves hate the head slaver with a passion and demand that he must be punished for his crimes. The head slaver is of course an elite monster level appropriate for the characters.

The characters can either talk the escaped slaves out of this mission with a successful DC 25 diplomacy check or help them complete the mission. If the characters don't talk them out of it or help them, the escaped slaves abandon the characters and attempt to complete it without them. They will almost certainly die or be recaptured without the help of the PCs.



*Axgore, half-ogre slave trader and merchant lord.*



*Bel the Fat, a goblin chieftain and merchant.*

# The Dragon Skeleton side rigging

## Observations

### Sight

- A massive elder dragon's skeleton, half-embedded in the side of the hulk, between the top deck and the waterline. Rope ladders, ziplines and pulley pushed carts connect it to the top deck and docks.
- Small tents and lean-tos built around the skeleton, forming a village of kobolds. Some tents are teardrop shaped and are attached only by a single rope to the skeleton. Yet, each kobold seems adept at climbing as a monkey and as sure-footed as a mountain goat.
- A kobold engaged in a crossbow sniping duel with a goblin on the top deck. Both take turns firing at each other. Finally, the kobold is shot in the leg, pinned down, but manages to fight through the pain to launch a bolt into the goblin's neck. The goblin falls over the side into the water.
- Small pseudo-dragons fly around the skeleton. The kobolds feed and talk to them, treating them as equals.
- A kobold artisan building ingenious lobster traps and other tools while sitting on a rib bone of the dragon. The bone sways wildly in the wind, but the artisan seems at ease.

### Sound

- The constant clattering of the dragon bones hitting the wooden hull of the goblin hulk. Despite years of weather and abuse, the bones seem as strong as ever.
- A kobold elder speaking in draconic to a crowd of younger kobolds. He speaks of the power of dragons and how they provide for their kin, even in death, using the skeleton as an example. He also speaks of the need for self-reliance in times of crisis.
- Strong winds rattling the entire skeleton, a mournful howl that chills the soul.
- Debris, rocks and waste smacking the tents, thrown by goblins from the top deck and accompanied by guttural cat-calls from the smirking goblins.
- The chanting of a kobold sorcerer as she performs a ritual in her tent.

### Smell/Taste

- The unmistakable odor of salted fish being prepared for long term storage.
- The scent of leather that has dried out in the sun. Leather bindings, ropes, straps, weathered from years under a bright sun.
- The exotic fumes of a makeshift alchemist lab, where various potions are being brewed for sale and use.

### Touch

- The smooth bone of the dragon, cool to the touch.
- Rough hemp ropes, used to form ladders between each section of the skeleton. Kobolds scabble past slower characters without so much as a word.
- The scaly hide of a kobold's shoulder, after the skeleton lurches in the wind and you grab onto the nearest solid object to hold on. The kobold is not amused.

### Who Lives Here

A tribe of kobolds has colonized the skeleton, fighting off the goblins with a tenacity that surprised everyone. The goblins aren't united or organized enough to drive them out once and for all and some goblins trade for alchemist-made items manufactured by the kobolds, so an uneasy cease-fire holds over the skeleton. Many pseudo-dragons nest within the skeleton, helping the kobolds as scouts and watchmen in exchange for scraps of food and entertainment. A few visitors, mostly scalykind, stop by the skeleton to trade with the kobolds or simply gossip in draconic. A single dwarf lives with the kobolds, a strange hermit who says little but apparently hates goblins. Some believe he is an exiled mercenary hired by the kobolds to protect them against the goblins. He doesn't talk about it.

### What's Going On

Only a few still remember when the elder dragon crashed into the side of the goblin hulk and died. No one even knows what color it was or what it was doing. Many crewmembers boast about killing the dragon but some believe that it had been mortally wounded by a powerful enemy before it lost consciousness and slammed into the ship.

At any rate, the dragon embedded itself into the hulk and nearly sank the ship. However, the engineers and shamans worked round the clock to save the hulk and they managed to keep it together by actually using the dragon's corpse as a substitute bulkhead. For the first few months, the corpse worked well for this purpose, but the voracious crew quickly devoured the flesh right off the corpse and the remaining skeleton was structurally unsound.

The engineers and shamans were planning to remove the dragon skeleton and simply rebuild the bulkheads but a tribe of kobold squatters literally appeared overnight and reinforced the skeleton. They lashed every bone together, replacing the cartilage and remaining bits of flesh with magical bonds that held the skeleton intact. When the engineers learned of this, they were enraged that another group had repurposed part of the hulk without their permissions.

A brief war followed. The engineers placed bounties on the kobolds and greedy crewmembers raided and harassed the kobolds. However, the squatters held onto their turf with a fierce determination. The goblins could not budge them off the skeleton. Eventually, the engineers gave up when they learned that the kobolds had several skilled alchemists with them and were willing to trade their potions to the goblins.

Since then, the kobold tribe has grown in numbers and transformed the skeleton in a village of sorts. The goblins merely tolerate their presence out of apathy and no goblin would raise a hand to protect them. Fortunately for the kobolds, goblins seldom avenge the death of their comrades, even if they were killed by kobolds. Most goblins believe that a dead goblin got what he deserved.

The kobolds do not tell outsiders where they came from, why they live on the skeleton and what they plan to do.

## Getting Around

Characters must climb down from the bazaar, take a pulley cart from the docks or climb through the crew quarters in order to get on the skeletal rigging. Kobold guards constantly keep an eye to keep goblins from sneaking onboard and have created

a make-shift DMZ to keep the skeleton rigging separate from the rest of the ship.

The rigging itself is mostly safe to walk around, as there are numerous nets, handholds and footholds to keep someone from falling overboard. However, visitors must make a DC 10 acrobatics check or lose one healing surge from stumbling around and getting bonked on the head every few minutes.

## Notable Features

The kobolds maintain an elaborate pulley cart system to move goods and people to other parts of the hulk. It can reach the docks, bazaars and some parts of the crew quarters. However, it is under constant guard by the kobolds.

Several kobolds are skilled alchemists and they share a single communal lab, working in shifts. Day and night, the kobolds crank out alchemist products for trade and use by the tribe. They favor tanglefoot bags, as they make great weapons when fighting the goblins.

The elders share the largest tent in the village. The kobold elders are capable healers and channel divine power to raise the dead and curse illness. However, they seldom reveal their powers to outsiders and will never say who they worship.

## Encounters

### An Imperfect Storm

A storm sweeps over the hulk. To the goblins, it's merely an inconvenience, as the hulk is far too massive to be threatened by a normal storm. However, on the skeleton a storm is dangerous to visitors not used to the wind, which can slam an unwary visitor into the bones incredibly hard.

### Dirty Business

A kobold trader asks the characters to accompany him as he visits the docks to pick up a shipment. The trader does not mention that a band of thugs want to kill the trader for cheating them out of 2,000 gold pieces with a fake magical sword. The characters must either fight off an ambush of a level appropriate group of thugs, talk them into a fair deal with the trader or flee and earn the ire of the kobold tribe.

### Grab and Fly

A pseudo-dragon steals a necklace, trinket or similar item from a player and flies in front of them, taunting them with the stolen item. The players must either chase after the flying creature or give up the item.

A chase is a simple skill challenge, requiring athletics and acrobatics checks of DC 15, 3 successes before 2 failures.

Once caught, the dragon gives the item back then tries to escape. It appears as though this was just a joke to the dragon.

*Kobolds on the dragon skeletal rigging.*



## Orlop Deck

### Observations

#### Sight

- A darkened deck, barely illuminated by the eerie blue glow of the magic used to sustain the central moon pool chamber. The chamber is airtight and the only way in or out of the chamber is a magical airlock portal. It appears as a normal open doorway, but an invisible field keeps the air from flowing out.
- Numerous side corridors and chambers crowd around the central moon pool.
- Piles of trash, rusted tools and endless coils of rope left to rot in the darkness. Goblin bones are intermixed with the stored tools.
- Sinister figures lurking in every niche and hiding spot, watching and waiting for a sign of weakness.
- Goblin weavers repairing and making fishing nets. Rows of nets hang from the ceilings, forming a strange maze that only the weavers can safely navigate.
- Weird lights playing over the walls, reflections of the moon pool that somehow are visible everywhere on the orlop deck.

#### Sound

- The echoes of water splashing, churning and dripping.
- A goblin fisherman singing an obscene sea-shanty, chuckling every time he repeats the chorus.
- The sounds of fish being gutted – flesh tearing, guts being pulled out, fish feebly flopping around as they suffocate.
- Ominous creaking from the water-logged boards that make up the bottom deck. Is the ship about to collapse?
- Something large slamming into the bottom of the hulk, right below the character's feet. The wood groans and bends inward for a moment, but unbelievably it manages to hold together.

#### Smell/Taste

- Water-soaked wood and metal, rust and rot.
- A sickly dead fish smell near the fish market, strangely not as horrible as one would think. Incense is burned night and day near the fish

market to minimize the stench.

- The scent of fresh moss. No source can be found and certainly nothing in this dark level would smell so pleasant. An odd mystery indeed...in reality, the albino grippli smells of fresh moss, an odd mutation that betrays his presence.

#### Touch

- Virtually everything is dank and cool to the touch – the moisture is thick and heavy in the air. Nothing is dry.
- The faint crackle of magical energy when passing through the airlock portal of the central chamber.

#### Who Lives Here

The exiles, pariahs and outcasts of goblin society live in the orlop deck, too cowardly, defiant or paranoid to live in the upper decks. Most live here because they've made too many enemies and need a place to hide. Others are simply tired of the goblin lifestyle and want to get away from the chaos. All value their privacy highly. The one unwritten rule of the deck is to keep your distance. A person who gets too curious about the inhabitants of the deck will soon find themselves feeding the fish.

Very few non-goblins live here, as the idea of living in a cramped, dank and dismal chamber with little food or drinkable water somehow seems less than appealing. Still, there are three notable non-goblin residents. Solarus, an exiled human wizard, conducts his research in a cramped storage room, protected by only a curtain and the wizard's not inconsiderable magical skills. The last two burglars wound up as mentally dominated slaves and sold for profit. His apprentice, a tiefling and former street urchin named Werckmeister, buys food for the two.

The third non-goblin resident is a malevolent creature known as an albino grippli. Unlike their surface cousins, the albino grippli are evil beings bent on world domination and pleasing their dark gods through ritual sacrifice. They have only recently rediscovered the way to the surface so they have sent scouts to explore the surface world. This albino grippli is one of these scouts. It has infiltrated its way into the ship and has decided to take it over. In order to do this, it needs a power



base and has begun recruiting goblins to serve it as loyal cultists.

## What's Going On

The moon pool was designed as a way for the goblins to feed themselves even if the hulk was under attack. It allows fishermen to throw nets into the water and harvest vast quantities of fish. Of course, this isn't quite enough to feed the entire crew and it depletes the waters quickly but the goblins don't really care. Groups of fishermen work in shifts around the clock to bring in as many fish as possible. Nothing is wasted or thrown away. Even the worst tasting fish will be eaten by some goblin.

Not every goblin on the bottom deck works as a fishermen. Some are just loafers who steal just enough food to survive. The albino grippli has built a cult by brainwashing the weak-willed goblins who dwell here. It will soon rise up and make a bid to take over the entire hulk. Of course, in the meantime it can't risk detection and will eliminate pesky adventurers that nose around the orlop deck.

Solarus the wizard is researching some kind of powerful ritual but won't let tell anyone about it. Rumors run wild though...

## Getting Around

The easiest way to get into the orlop deck is to take one of the elevators that carry fresh fish from the market to every other deck of the ship. No one will stop or even charge the characters, as most goblins avoid the orlop deck whenever possible.

A few staircases from the crew deck lead into the orlop deck, but they are hard to find and seldom used.

Daring characters can swim under the hulk and up into the moon pool. This is a skill challenge with athletics, endurance and perception as primary skills. It requires 4 successes before 3 failures. Failure indicates that the character is unable to reach the moon pool before turning back for air and loses one healing surge from the exertion of swimming.

## Notable Features

A hull sigil is embedded in the ceiling above the moon pool. It is an obvious mystical symbol, approximately three feet in diameter and glows with blue mystical energy. It has 25 hit points, although damaging brings the wrath of every goblin in the chamber. Destroying it breaks the magic keeping the chamber airtight and starts an emergency procedure to lock the chamber down. Characters have 3 rounds to flee the chamber before an iron shutter closes, trapping them inside. Then the chamber will flood and the moon pool will be gone. The hulk remains afloat as the iron shutter keeps the hulk safe from flooding.

The goblin fish market works constantly, harvesting, gutting and preparing fish for consumption by the crew and then moving it up through various elevators located around the market. Some merchants and chefs actually visit the fish market in person to strike deals with the fishermen

The albino grippli lairs in a hidden altar to nameless dark gods. It is very difficult to find and requires a careful search to uncover. Unless the party makes an effort to track the albino down, they are unlikely to find the altar. It has no inherent magical powers yet.

## Encounters

### The Friendly Drunk

The albino grippli sends a single goblin cultist to size the characters up. The goblin pretends to be drunk and tries to talk to the characters and find out why they are here and what they intend to do. The goblin is easily killed but will try to pry out their characters' secrets by appearing to be harmless.

### The Apprentice

Werckmeister, the tiefling apprentice to Solarus the wizard, sees the characters and immediately runs from them. In his experience armed adventurers mean trouble and he means to get away from it. Characters can chase after him if they can beat his athletics skill bonus of +13 in an opposed skill check. If successful, the apprentice will demand to be let go and will not betray his master.



# Prison Deck

## Observations

### Sight

- An open deck covered in fungus. The walls and ceilings are overflowing with strange mushrooms, toadstools and moulds. It was once obviously an open cargo deck. Bio-luminescent mushrooms provide a hazy greenish light.
- Every grate and entrance to the prison deck is locked and barred. The only way in are a few heavily guarded gates, manned by goblins with torches to keep the fungus from spreading to the other decks.
- Gaunt prisoners curiously left unchained or guarded but all seem to be infected with cancerous fungal growths on their bodies.
- Orderly rows of grey mushrooms tended by slaves. The mushrooms are being raised as food for the hulk's crew.
- Thick organic tendrils winding across the entire length of the deck. All of them lead to a single source in the aft. Dark shadows conceal the section.

### Sound

- Soft moans from the prisoners. A pathetic mewling of pain as the fungus grows roots deep into their flesh, utterly corrupting their bodies.
- The rustle of fungus growing and absorbing nutrients from nearby corpses and waste.
- Water dripping from the ceiling.
- Massive jaws slowly chewing on a corpse in the aft section.
- The screams of a new prisoner begging to be let out before he becomes infected with the rot.

### Smell/Taste

- A thick earthy smell of soil and mushrooms.
- The bland but filling taste of the grey mushrooms, which seem to pass for rations in the goblin hulk.
- A foul acidic smell, the stench of the Shoggothic Garden.

### Touch

- Spores so thick, they hang heavy in the air and coat the character's clothing and skin. It feels

like a thick grainy coating that gets everywhere and seems to burrow under the skin.

- The clammy hands of heavily infected prisoners around you as they drag you towards their master.

### Who Lives Here

The prisoners and captives of the goblin hulk are forced to dwell here. Most are simply those unfortunate enough to fall into the goblins' hands or fall into debt with them. If they are not enslaved, they are thrown into the prison. Others have made enemies of powerful chieftains or merchants who paid to have them arrested.

The prison warden is a monstrous creature known only as the shoggothic garden. No one knows where it came from, but it controls the prison.

### What's Going On

The goblin shamans and engineers who build and maintain the hulk have made a deal with the shoggothic garden. The goblins allow the garden to exist and in exchange the garden provides food and keeps watch over the prisoners left in its care.

Usually the garden simply infects the prisoners, transforming them into mind-controlled slaves. However, the garden can control the infections and even cure the fungal growths and will take care of 'special' prisoners if requested to do so.

The garden is content to lord over the prisoners, although its tendrils have been known to find their way on parts of the hulk. The garden denies kidnapping and killing anyone but no one has ever checked to make sure it's true.

### Getting Around

The prison deck is accessible only through two heavily guarded gates, constantly monitored by large groups of armed goblins. Prisoners are usually stripped of all weapons and equipment and then thrown into the prison. Of course, characters can bribe the guards to let them in but the guards won't let them out so easily.

In order to get out of the prison, the characters must either destroy the shoggothic garden and then use the crawlspace behind it to sneak up to another



deck or break out when the guards attempt to throw more prisoners in. More prisoners are added on a daily basis, so the characters must overpower, trick or threaten the guards into letting them out. This is fully detailed in the rescue scenario.

The crawlspace behind the garden is a series of tunnels where the garden's tendrils have burrowed far and wide to find new victims. They connect to the bazaar, docks and crew deck but it is a one way trip. Once a character crawls through the tunnel, it becomes structurally unsound and will collapse soon afterwards.

### **Notable Features**

The shoggothic garden guards the prison deck's hull sigil. It can only be destroyed if the garden itself is first destroyed. The sigil is fragile and easily smashed once uncovered.

The entire aft section of the prison deck is dark. Characters who bring light into it see a massive fungal monster, the shoggothic garden. It will attempt to intimidate the characters into fleeing and then attack if it feels threatened by the party. See its section for more information.

### **Encounters**

#### **Help me!**

A newly infected prisoner is desperately trying to cure himself by tearing chunks of fungal infected flesh out. He's peeling skin off and biting fingernails off. It's fairly gruesome. Good aligned characters should at least give him a healing potion or use a healing spell on him while neutral or evil characters could offer to take him out of his misery.

#### **Attack of the fungus zombies!**

Four infected prisoners mindlessly attack the characters. They are easily subdued as they were merely commoners and are too weak to seriously harm the characters. However, if they are not destroyed quickly they could raise an alarm and summon more dangerous zombies. Is it right to destroy such unfortunate souls?



*Watcher, warforged fighter and adventurer.*

# Crew Deck

## Observations

### Sight

- A seemingly endless maze of barracks, mess halls, gambling halls, fighting rings, and armories – the perfect goblin warrens. The crew deck actually takes up several decks of the hulk, but few can tell where
- Two goblins knife-fighting with one of their wrists tied to the other's wrist. A group of drunken bystanders take bets and watch the fighters.
- Rats feed on a feeble elderly goblin who is desperately trying to fend them off. Several kids laugh at the elder as a rat the size of a house cat rips a finger off.
- A goblin surgeon amputates a gangrenous and mangled limb from a sailor on a table in the mess hall. No one seems to care, least of all the goblins eating at the next table over. They seem to enjoy the dinner show.
- A junked man grafts a rusted dagger onto its leg, ropes magically weaving around it, seamlessly transforming the dagger into an integral piece of the construct.

### Sound

- Raucous laughter and singing from a nearby gambling hall. Those who understand the goblin language learn the lyrics concern the dubious lineage of an elven king and his clumsy attempts to romance a braying donkey.
- Feet pounding the deck and shouting as a thief desperately tries to outrun the sailors he's stolen from before they can corner and kill him.
- Blades being sharpened in various dark corner, a favorite habit of many residents.
- The squealing of rats being skewered by crossbow bolts.
- A crash as a goblin from the bazaar falls through some rotten wood and falls through to the crew deck, quite dead.

### Smell/Taste

- Strong spiced stew, made with mushrooms, rats and fish, a favorite dish of the goblins.
- Fumes from a dozen organic sources, most unmentionable, left to rot in a dark corner of

the deck, unnoticed by the junked men.

- Blood in the air from a recent stabbing. The blood stains haven't even dried yet.

### Touch

- Passing through a bead curtain, your hand feels that the beads are oddly shaped and textured. On closer inspection, you realize each bead is in fact a vertebrae from a humanoid creature.
- Thick muscled fingers prying at your pouches and clothing, a blatant pickpocket who doesn't care if you notice him or not. Killing him will only anger his fellow thieves.
- A thick grease coated over the floor by bratty kids. Characters who slip up are taunted by the kids.

### Who Lives Here

The bulk of the crew lives on this deck. Several generations of goblins have been born, raised and died on this deck and a few have spent their entire lives without seeing another deck. Few visitors ever spend any time here, as non-goblins are fair game for theft or murder by any resident. Of course, heavily armed visitors aren't worth bothering with.

### What's Going On

While the hulk has no form of centralized leadership, it does have a remarkably effective method for ensuring that the chaotic goblin crew actually mans their posts and does their jobs. The shamans and engineers are obsessive by nature and will never give up working on the ship but the rest of the crew needs encouragement. To this end, food is only dispensed to goblins who can hand in wooden tokens proving that they have worked. One of the few laws of the hulk is that no one can serve food to a crewmember unless he pays with a wooden token. Any cook who breaks the rule is executed.

The hulk only needs about 10% of its current crew to be fully functional. The other 90% of the ship's population is redundant, which is why it can tolerate excessive losses, lax discipline and a level of violence among its crew that would make Thomas Hobbes weep.

The tokens are strictly controlled by the taskmasters, merchants, engineers, shamans and chieftains that control the ship in a loose alliance but the crew

trade tokens for drugs, booze and favors. Still, the system works more or less, as the hulk is never short of crew and the various leaders make sure it stays afloat.

## Getting Around

The crew deck is connected to every other deck some way or the other. For example, it is easy to take a ladder or staircase from the bazaar or an elevator from the orlop deck. Assume that characters can enter the crew deck from any other section of the ship. They can even enter the deck directly, if they can fly through one of the numerous holes in the ship's sides to get in.

## Notable Features

A hull sigil is prominently affixed to the wall next to the door between the crew deck and the shamanic engineering deck. It is reinforced and must take 100 points of damage before it is destroyed and four junked men guard it at all times.

There are numerous bars, taverns, fighting rings and mess halls but they come and go on a regular basis. Seldom does a single establishment last more than a few weeks.

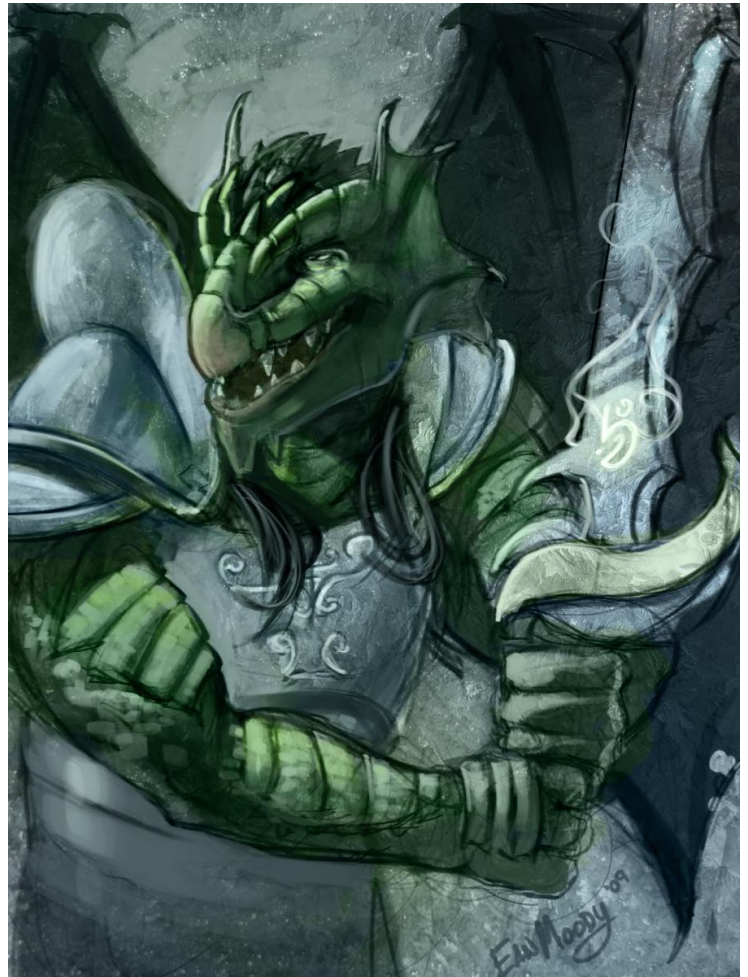
## Encounters

### Excuse me, I'm not quite dead

A junked man is dragging a wounded goblin away to be thrown into the ocean. The goblin is quite alive and begs to be let go. He'll ask for help from the player characters and promises them valuable information if they destroy the junked man. Of course, destroying a junked man may get the PCs noticed by the engineers and shamans. The exact nature of the goblin's aid is left up to the DM.

### Fire!

A fire has broken out in a mess hall. A mob of panicked goblins stampedes the characters followed by a quick burning inferno. Such fires are common on the hulk and the junked men can put them out quickly but quick a few goblins die in the meantime.



*Vasshyk, dragonborn fighter and adventurer.*

# Shamanic Engineering Deck

## Observations

### Sight

- A mad scientist's steampunk dream. Countless machines, boilers, gears and dials powering and maintaining the goblin hulk. Shamanic runes are carved into many pieces of machinery and all glow with residual mystical energy.
- A goblin engineer fabricates a junked man by assembling a crude goblin effigy out of trash and discarded parts.
- Shamans chant while meditating in a mystic rune circle, performing a powerful ritual.
- Massive furnaces fed with skeletal remains by junked men. The furnace visibly glows with necromantic energy as the spirits of the dead become fuel for the hulk.
- A ship's wheel with a periscope guarded by six junked men. No one is allowed to touch it unless the goblin engineers and shamans all agree the hulk needs to move.

### Sound

- The cackling of an engineer as he builds a new steampowered magical weapon.
- The roar of bound demons and spirits as they futilely try to break their mystical cages.
- The grinding and clanking of metal gears, both small and huge.
- A muffled explosion from a failed weapon's experiment, followed by laughter and screaming.
- A furious argument between engineers and shamans over the direction of the next expansion of the hulk.

### Smell/Taste

- Ozone, from the lightning bolts leaping from one tesla coil to the other.
- Brimstone from the many demons and fire elemental spirits bound within the machinery of the hulk.
- The taste of ash in your mouth, from the smoke expelled by the machinery of the hulk.

### Touch

- Oil dripping on your cheek, from an overhead cable.
- Metal shavings from a nearby ledge you touched momentarily.
- Acid from a spilled beaker melting your boots.

### Who Lives Here

The engineers and shamans of goblin society all dwell within here. They seldom let others even visit this deck, but they do take on acolytes to replenish their ranks on a regular basis. Only extremely knowledgeable sages are allowed to stay on this deck and only if they help the goblins with their experiments.

### What's Going On

This deck is a never ending hive of activity, as rituals and experiments are conducted around the clock. Every engineer and shaman works independently most of the time and simply tries to stay out of each other's way but it rarely works out well. They get into arguments over shared resources and space, which impedes progress on research and development. Most of their work never pans out or only produces insignificant results but the goblins did manage to produce a few success stories, such as the junked men and the hulk itself.

If the hulk comes under attack, the engineers and shamans band together to protect the hulk. After all, their work can't continue if their workstations are destroyed.

The many inventors and spellcasters can be commissioned by a sufficiently rich patron to create any type of machine or perform any sort of magic necessary. They will raise the dead, cure diseases, brew lethal poisons, erase someone's memory... anything is possible.

### Getting Around

The shamanic engineering deck is the heart of the hulk, so it is heavily guarded. Only authorized visitors can enter the deck. Thick iron gates armed with junked men and goblin artillery guards are the only way in or out. Almost.

Clever characters can find air ducts that lead into the shamanic engineering deck. These ducts are



found in concealed pipes in the bazaar and lead straight into the deck.

Rich characters can pay to visit the deck if they promise to be peaceful. It costs 100 gold to tour the esteemed shamanic engineering deck. They will be closely watched by the guards and if a fight breaks out, the goblins will do everything in their power to stop them.

### **Notable Features**

The machinery of the deck is everywhere. Goblins constantly cannibalize older machines to build new ones while shamans inscribe new runes over older ones.

The major hull sigil covers a 20 foot diameter section of the deck's floor. It is incredibly delicate though, so a single scratch would destroy it. In order to get to the hull sigil, the characters must first fight through a horde of junked men, artilleryists and other nasty monsters.

### **Encounters**

#### **This will only hurt for a moment**

A goblin shaman wants to try out a new magical potion he's brewed. He's not sure what it will do, but offers the character a free potion of healing if they drink it in front of him. The DM may ask for a saving throw or make the player nervous before finally informing him that the potion was a dud. The shaman sighs and hands the healing potion over.

#### **Your theory is bad and you should feel bad!**

Two engineers are screaming at each other, arguing over a theory about a new gear design. The actual sides of the lecture are too esoteric to be recounted here but characters can take advantage of the situation, as limited by their imaginations. For example, characters could get everyone on the deck to take sides and then whip them into a fury, thus starting a riot. Or they could use the distraction to sabotage or steal some machinery. See Destroy the Hulk for more information.



*Cassius, orc warlord and adventurer.*

# Stray Dogs

An adventure for level 1-2 characters.

## Synopsis

Bel the Fat, a powerful goblin merchant, wants the player characters to do a simple job for them. Take a sealed crate to a mysterious cloaked stranger at the One-Eyed Dolphin, without killing anyone or looking into the crate. Unfortunately, everyone wants the crate and is willing to kill for it.

## Background

Bel the Fat has come across a very rare magical item, the Flower of Innocence. It can lift powerful curses, even those from demi-gods and abominations. However, it is quite delicate and will wither if someone is murdered in its vicinity. It is sealed in a magically resistant crate built by a goblin shaman that might be able to keep the Flower from dying if someone is killed nearby but Bel doesn't want to take chances. He's found a buyer and needs some non-goblins to move the package. Goblins will undoubtedly kill someone or look into the crate.

Thus, enter the party.

Unfortunately for Bel, someone else wants the crate. Who this person is and what he or she or it intends to do with it is up to you. All the players will know is that a bunch of orcs are going to try to take it from them. Fortunately, the orcs are also under orders not to kill anyone and they will follow the orders to the best of their ability.

Of course neither side knows that the other side is under the same restriction, so getting the crate to the buyer will be...interesting to say the least.

## Running this adventure

This is a skill focused adventure. Hopefully the players will restrain themselves from combat, as it is unnecessary to complete the job. Instead, this adventure should emphasize roleplaying and problem solving through creative solutions. At its core, this is a simple premise used in many movies – everyone is chasing after the same item. Feel free to expand on it by adding additional challenges.

## Opening

The players meet Bel in a heavily guarded shack at the fore section of the bazaar. Over a dozen goblin warriors protect the merchant. Bel is blunt and to the point. He wants the characters to deliver a sealed crate to the man in the blue and gold cloak at the One-Eyed Dolphin. The cloaked man will prove his identity by saying “Deliverance is at hand”. The players have one hour to get the box to the stranger.

However, it is of the utmost importance that the characters do NOT kill anyone while transporting the crate. If the characters kill any type of creature, they will not be paid a single gold coin. Furthermore, if they fail to deliver the crate to the cloaked stranger, Bel will place a large bounty on their heads, making them quite unpopular on the goblin hulk. If the crate is damaged, the characters may have their reward reduced or removed altogether. It is at the discretion of the cloaked stranger.

The reward is variable. A recommended reward should be equal to two or three treasure parcels of the party's level.

## The Box

The box measures 2.5 feet square. It appears as a relatively normal wooden crate nailed shut. Its boards are placed together tightly enough that it is impossible to peek inside the box. It is sturdy and does not make a sound when shaken. It weighs 10 pounds.

The box glows with a bright blue aura. It is very hard to conceal or hide.

## Grabbing the box

Characters can take the box by making a successful opposed Athletics or Thievery/Insight check against the person holding the box. Only one check per turn is allowed.

## Optional skill challenge: What's in the box?

Wise and cunning player characters may get an idea of what is in the box by examining. This is best done at the beginning of the scenario, soon after the player characters get the box.

Complexity: 4 successes before 2 failures

XP:

Primary skills: Arcana, Religion, Thievery

Secondary skills: Insight, Streetwise

DC: 13

- Arcana: The design of the box seems mundane, but it is in fact magical. The box seems designed to mute or block outside influences, particularly the psychic residue from strong emotional states.
- Religion: The no-murder sanction is obviously not based on Bel's personal beliefs. It must tie into the nature of whatever is inside the box. Perhaps a magical item or creature that is affected by violence or death. Killing someone in proximity to the box would alter or damage the object, thus ruining its value.
- Thievery: The box is heavily padded, cushioning for a very small but delicate object.
- Insight: Bel is deadly serious about the conditions of the job and won't tolerate any deviation from the rules.
- Streetwise: Bel has been known to deal in strange and unique items and has sold to practically everyone at one time or the other.

**Challenge Success:** The item is a delicate magical item that would be altered or destroyed if someone is killed near it. The box seems to block the item off from the outside world but there is no way of knowing if it will save the item if someone dies near it. Nothing else can be learned about the item without opening the box.

**Challenge Failure:** the players cannot learn anything else about the box.

### **We got the box, now what?**

Once the players receive the box, they will have a few options available to them. The One-Eyed Dolphin is on the other side of the hulk, so the characters must determine which path to take and how they should move the box.

The available paths are:

**Straight through the bazaar:** The shortest path but the most heavily trafficked.

Suggested Challenges: Chase, Stare-down, Lost, Con Artist, Kind Beggar,

**Above the bazaar:** The rigging can be climbed across the entire length of the hulk. However, one failed athletics check and a player character falls into the bazaar, taking 1d6 damage.

**Suggested Challenges:** Chase, Stare-down, Hazardous Terrain, Hungry Sea Gulls, Grappling Hook.

**The long way:** Sneaky characters can climb down to the dragon skeletal rigging, ask permission from the kobolds to go to the docks, then go from the docks to the One-Eyed Dolphin. This long path will require the characters to move fast as the distance is much greater, but it should be safer than going through the bazaar.

Suggested Challenges: Chase, Stare-Down, Hazardous Terrain, Kobold Diplomacy, Press Gang.

### **Encounters**

The following encounters can be mixed and matched, depending on which of the three paths the characters take the box. The players should at least go through three of the encounters. Unless otherwise noted, all skill DCs are 11.

The PC carrying the box is known as the courier.

### **Chase**

A group of unsavory orcs spot the characters and start chasing after them. Run!

Complexity: Special – the courier must get 3 more successes than the orcs. The orcs make all skill checks with a +6 bonus.

Primary Skills: Athletics, Acrobatics

Secondary Skills: Thievery, Streetwise, Bluff, Intimidate

The chase works on a round by round basis. Each round, every player character can make one skill check. The orcs can only make one athletics check per round to chase the courier but can make as many other skill checks as necessary.

Athletics/Acrobatics: The courier must get 3 more total athletics and/or acrobatics checks than the orc pursuers in order to get away from them. Other characters in the party cannot make these checks as the orcs are doggedly chasing after the courier



only. Characters using athletics just use raw speed, pushing through the crowd to outrun the orcs while characters using acrobatics weave and tumble through the crowds.

**Thievery:** A character can set up a makeshift trap to delay the orcs, tipping over tables, stalls, breaking bottles on the ground as caltrops and so on. If the thievery check is successful, the orcs will get an athletics check to avoid the trap, with a DC equal to the thievery skill check. If the orcs fail to avoid the trap, they lose one success. The party can only attempt one trap per round of the challenge.

**Streetwise:** A successful check lets the character figure out a shortcut to gain ground on the orcs. This gives a +3 bonus on the courier's next athletics or acrobatics check. Failure means that the orcs gain a +2 bonus on their athletics check next round.

**Bluff:** A character can trick the orcs into chasing after a different member of the party. The orcs are highly suspicious and are anticipating this trick so they will make their insight check at +10. If successful, the orcs lose one athletics success.

**Intimidate:** A character who makes a DC 13 intimidate check gives the orcs a slight pause in their pursuit. They take a -1 penalty to their next athletics check. Multiple characters can intimidate in a single round and the penalties are cumulative. They only last for one check though.

**Success:** If the courier has 3 more successes than the orcs, the party gets away from the orcs.

**Failure:** The characters are surrounded by the orcs. The party must get beat the Stare-down challenge in order to get away.

### **Stare-down**

The characters are cornered by a group of large and tough looking orcs. They have to talk their way out. A fight would almost certainly result in someone's death.

**Complexity:** 6 successes before 3 failures

**Primary skills:** Intimidate, Insight, Bluff

**Secondary skills:** Diplomacy, Streetwise

**Intimidate:** Each character may attempt one Intimidate check in order to get the orcs to back off.

**Insight (DC 15):** A successful check reveals that the orcs want to scare the characters into giving the box up. Perhaps they are under the same restriction as the player characters regarding killing?

**Bluff (DC 12):** The characters can make up any number of lies to get the orcs off their backs.

**Diplomacy:** A successful diplomacy check lets a character grant a +4 bonus on the next Bluff or Intimidate check.

**Streetwise:** The orcs are obviously hired muscle and their commitment is shaky at best.

**Success:** The orcs waver and the characters are able to flee.

**Failure:** The orcs manage to wrest the box away from the courier. Now the players will have to chase the orcs to get the box back. Use the Chase challenge as before.

### **Lost**

The party is lost somewhere in the bazaar. They will have to either backtrack or get a new view by climbing up. But they must figure out a way to get back on track. If they spend too long, they will draw the notice of the orcs.

**Complexity** 3 successes before 2 failures.

**Primary skills:** Perception, streetwise diplomacy

**Perception:** The character can get a visual clue about where the Inn is from here.

**Streetwise:** the character looks around and remembers some familiar landmarks to orient himself.

**Diplomacy:** The character talks to a passerby and manages to get directions, although the quality of these directions is highly uncertain.

**Success:** The characters can continue on their way.

**Failure:** The characters are too slow and the orcs descend on them. Run Chase or Stare-down.



**Minor encounters:** These are not fully stated out, but use them as guidelines for other encounters.

## Con Artist

A beautiful elven maiden rushes towards the characters and tells them that they are being pursued by evil forces and must come with her if they want to live. She will lead them away from the inn, towards the crew deck. She is a con artist and is working with the orcs to get the box.

She will try to lure or separate the characters from the party and get the box for herself. She has diplomacy, bluff and insight at +7. Her thievery is +9. If she can't get the box by herself or if the party decides not to trust her, she will call on the orcs.

Skills: Insight, bluff, streetwise, thievery.

Success: The players figure out that the maiden is a con artist and can trick her into leading the orcs away.

Failure: The con artist can attempt to swipe the box with a thievery check opposed by the courier's insight. If she is successful, she grabs the box and runs away with it. The players must chase after her to get it back.

## Kind Beggar

An old goblin beggar asks the characters for some change. If the characters refuse, he follows them and says he can help them out. He offers to carry something for them or show them around the bazaar. Insight reveals the beggar is honest and doesn't seem interested in the box.

The beggar is a useful guide but has his own problems. He owes a few hobgoblins 50 gold and wants to stay with the player characters in the hopes that they will scare off the hobgoblins. The hobgoblins will show up at some point and try to get their money back, either from the beggar or the player characters. The thugs are more of the 'break legs first ask questions second' variety so there is ample room for confusion and misdirection.

Skills: Diplomacy, streetwise, insight.

Success: The thugs realize their mistake and let the characters go. If the characters pay for the beggar's debt, the thugs will offer to help the characters get

to the inn.

Failure: The hobgoblins demand payment from the characters. The characters must flee or risk a fight to the death with the thugs.

## Hazardous Terrain

The group comes across a dangerous section of terrain. The terrain will be hard to cross in a timely manner. Cautious characters can take a slow and safe route but will lose precious time. Bold characters can test their agility against the terrain, at the risk of great injury.

Above the bazaar, it's either a section of rigging that's gone bad, with heavily frayed ropes or the rigging is coated with glue and rusty nails, a surprise left by a mischievous goblin.

In the docks, the characters come across a section of rotten planks that threaten to send anyone who puts too much weight on them tumbling into the ocean below or a stack of crates and other cargo that blocks the path. Characters must scramble over the cargo without falling off.

Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics

Success: The characters easily get around the terrain without losing time or getting hurt.

Failure: Characters might lose a healing surge from an injury or they might attract the attention of the orc pursuers.

## Hungry Sea Gulls

While the characters climb the rigging above the bazaar, a group of hungry sea-gulls descend on them, looking for an easy meal. As the characters can't kill the gulls, they will find themselves harassed by the birds relentlessly. Beaks peck at the characters' flesh and the squawking draws the attention of everyone in the vicinity. The characters must scare or trick the birds into flying away.

Skills: Bluff, intimidate, thievery, nature

Success: The characters can get the birds to fly away or better yet harass someone else, like the orcs chasing after them.

Failure: The gulls are vicious enough to distract the courier that he either drops the box down into the bazaar or gets tangled up in the rigging. The party must either leap into the bazaar to get the box back

or help the courier out before the orcs find them.

### Grappling Hook

The orc pursuers see the characters climbing the rigging and decide to pull the courier down with grappling hooks! One hook latches onto the box and the characters have to fight a tug of war until someone can cut the line off.

Skills: Athletics, Acrobatics, Intimidate, Thievery

Success: The characters get free of the grappling hooks, either by climbing out of range or the orcs run out of hooks and ropes to use on the player characters.

Failure: the orcs rip the box out of the courier's hands and run away with it.

### Kobold Diplomacy

Before the characters can get to the docks, they should go through the dragon skeletal rigging first, because it is much quicker than going straight from the bazaar to the docks. The kobolds are highly suspicious of strangers so the players must first convince the kobolds to let them in.

Skills: Diplomacy, insight, bluff, streetwise

Success: the kobolds let the characters in without charging a toll. They will even block the orc pursuers.

Failure: The kobolds demand a toll to pass through the rigging or might not even let the characters through at all. In that case, the characters must take another path.

### Press Gang

While the characters move through the docks, a group of goblin sailors spots them and decides that they would be great sailors. The sailors will surround the characters and attempt to intimidate them into surrendering. The player characters will need to scare or trick them or simply outrun them. The press gang is not willing to kill simply because they need live sailors, not corpses and they are not willing to die to recruit some sailors.

Skills: Intimidate, insight, diplomacy, bluff

Success: The press gang changes their minds and leaves the characters alone. Perhaps they are intimidated into leaving or perhaps the characters

persuade them peacefully.

Failure: the press gang drags one or more characters away! The characters can either bribe the gang into giving up, rescue the character now and fail the mission or come back later after delivering the box.

### Finale

Assuming the characters get to the One-Eyed Dolphin, the cloaked stranger is there waiting for the box. The orcs show up a moment later, intent on getting the box by any means necessary.

Just before the inn descends into the chaos of a mass brawl, the cloaked stranger stands up and reveals that he is an angel from the higher planes. Everyone at the Inn is stunned to say the least. The angel thanks the characters, pays them and then the plane shifts away. The characters may talk to him for a few moments before he leaves, but the angel is elusive and vague. The DM may introduce new plot hooks through the angel. The NPCs at the inn are too stunned and confused to act while the angel is around.

Once the angel leaves, the orcs sigh and leave. Their job is over. They will not attack the players but the players may wish to attack the orcs. In that case, the orcs flee.

The angel will know if the players have killed anyone. If this is the case, it will sigh, take the box and leave without paying the characters.

### Aftermath

By delivering the crate without killing anyone, the characters have made a name for themselves on the hulk. Bel the fat is quite happy and will offer them more work if they want it. The other power-brokers on board the ship will also take notice and the players may find themselves wrapped up in the political struggles of the ship before they know it.

# Break Out

## A level 6 adventure framework

### Synopsis

The players or a valuable NPC has been captured by the goblins and has been thrown into the prison deck. The PCs have to break out of the prison deck. The exact reason for the imprisonment should be based on the campaign you're running. Perhaps the PCs angered an important goblin leader who paid to have them arrested and thrown in. Perhaps the goblin shamans and engineers just decided to capture them because they might become a threat to the goblins or they just want hold someone for ransom. Whatever the cause, the prisoner is at the mercy of the shoggothic garden, a powerful monster and warden of the prison deck.

### New prisoners

Every new prisoner has their equipment taken from them. The goblins keep it outside the prison deck in vaults placed at the guard stations between the prison deck and crew deck. Only a few trusted guards and engineers have the keys needed to unlock the vaults.

Prisoners are allowed to keep their own clothes because the goblins don't bother to make uniforms. Characters can attempt to smuggle small items inside the prison by making an opposed thievery skill check against the guards' notice skill of +10. Success indicates that the character can sneak one wand or dagger sized item in. Success by more than 10 allows a character to sneak two items inside. It is impossible to sneak in armor or large items in without magic. For example, a character could sneak in summonable armor if the goblins were not aware the character owned it or bluffed them into believing the armor was gone for good. The guards aren't too concerned about contraband because the shoggothic garden soon infects most of the prisoners, rendering them mindless slaves.

Once inside the prison deck, the characters have about 10 minutes before the fungal zombies show up. If they loiter near the gates, the guards will fire crossbows through the bars of the gate at them for fun.

The other prisoners: The fully infected fungal zombies are the first prisoners the characters will see. Every time new prisoners are throw in, the zombies shamble over towards them, instinctively seeking to infect the uninfected. If the players stand around and don't try to hide or move away from the gates, a group of zombies will attack, attempting to incapacitate the characters so they can be infected.

If the characters take any kind of precautionary actions, they can avoid the zombies...for now. Sooner or later they will run into them, but they can buy some time to figure out a plan.

Players will also find recently infected prisoners who have yet to become fungal zombies. They are a miserable lot, malnourished, exhausted and many are on the verge of madness. There are only a few dozen such prisoners at any given time at the most, but they can be useful to crafty players.

Some prisoners have given up and just want to be left alone while some hold out hold for an escape or rescue. The former group is useless but the latter can be very helpful to the players. They can do the following in exchange for a promise to let them escape with the players. Each favor adds one more NPC prisoner, which imposes a -1 cumulative penalty on appropriate skill checks, at the DM's discretion. The prisoners are malnourished and desperate, so they may interfere with the actions of the players.

In general, each favor grants either a +1 bonus to all skill checks of a given skill or a single +4 skill bonus to a single check. For example, a prisoner could provide makeshift thieves tools to aid in all thievery skill checks or back up a character's story when trying to bluff the guards for a one time bonus.

### Getting Out

Unfortunately the shoggothic garden is too powerful to face head-on without proper weapons and equipment. The players have to escape without slaying it. There are three main ways to escape:

**Trick the guards into opening the gate:** Simple

skill checks will not alone suffice to convince the guards to open the gates. The characters must come up with a believable story. The guards are used to hearing all kinds of lies from the prisoners and don't care whether the prisoners will live or die. The characters must get the guards to want to open the gate.

Greed will work best on the guards. They aren't stupid though, so the players should create some proof that will help trick the guards. For example, the party could tell the goblins that they know of a hidden treasure onboard a ship in the docks and would be willing to let the guards in on the heist if they freed them. As proof, the players could offer a forged receipt listing the treasure on the ship or a sketch of the goblin merchant who owns the ship.

The guards have a base bluff skill of +15 when it comes to prisoners asking to be let out. Characters can gain a +2 bonus for each prop to back up their claim. The party can make a check for every version of the story they can come up with. For example, if the goblins don't believe the story about the treasure on the ship, the players can mention the magical wish-granting harp that they were going to keep for themselves but they could part with it if that's what it will take to get out of the prison.

If the players fail to make their check, it doesn't mean total failure. The goblins may believe the story but still don't trust the players. The guards may impose a condition in order to guarantee that the characters will stay in line. For example, the guards may want to keep a character hostage while the others retrieve the loot or keep most or some of the equipment locked away.

Ultimately, if the players can convince the guards to open the gates, they're free. The guards dramatically underestimate the fighting prowess of the characters as they are only level 1. The characters can easily overpower, intimidate or outwit the guards, retrieve their gear and escape.

**Make a tunnel to the crew deck:** The prison deck is still inside the ship, so the party could simply make a new tunnel through a bulkhead to escape. Of course, the zombies and the shoggothic garden aren't keen on letting anyone escape, so the players

have to devise a way to keep them from learning about the escape tunnel.

First, the characters have to find a suitable site to start work and gather some tools to do so. If they don't get help from the other prisoners, then they need to make a DC 20 perception check to find a good site first. Finding the tools is more problematic. Digging tools are easy to come by, as the characters can steal a few of the rusted farming implements used by the zombies to harvest the edible fungus.

However, tools strong enough to cut through the outer walls of the prison deck are harder to acquire. If the characters snuck in any bladed weapons, they could work, although they will be useless after sawing through the thick wood of the bulkheads. Furthermore, a new, well-made saw lies hidden in the refuse pile near the center of the deck. A few of the prisoners know about it and characters can find out about it independently with a careful search of the entire deck. Finally, the teeth of the shoggothic garden are strong enough to cut through the walls. The characters can find some of them by searching the refuse pile or asking the prisoners to gather some up.

Once the site is found and the characters gather a few tools, they can begin digging. All of the walls are lined with dirt and fungal growths, which must be cleared away before the characters can start dismantling the walls. Then the characters must carefully cut a tunnel through the wall, so as to not trigger a collapse or alert the shoggothic garden.

The last consideration is keeping the tunnel secret. The shoggothic garden isn't the most attentive warden but it may notice the tunnel before it is finished. It has two ways of detecting a tunnel – through its many tendrils that flow throughout the deck or through the fungal zombies. The tendrils detect tremors but are only moderately sensitive so as long as the characters are careful, they won't alert the garden. The zombies are more problematic.

The fungal zombies are instinctively driven to infect others as new zombies. They endlessly patrol the entire deck looking for uninfected prisoners. They are mindless so they don't know to simply wait at the gates looking for prisoners and the shoggothic



garden finds the cat and mouse game quite entertaining. 1d10 zombies will shamble by the dig site every 1d8 hours (or whenever the DM finds it dramatically appropriate). The characters can fight off the zombies, hide from them or distract them.

To fight them off, simply build a level appropriate encounter with humanoid creatures and add the fungal zombie template. Keep in mind that the template makes a normal monster elite so adjust the number of zombies accordingly. Also, the players will not have as much equipment as before, so make the fight easier than a standard fight.

Of course, violence isn't the only option. Hiding from the zombies is a perfectly valid option. The typical zombie has a perception bonus of +8 and a canny group can disguise the entire dig site so only one character would have to make a stealth check, instead of every member. Disguising the dig site takes two hours.

Distracting the zombies is easy enough. They will follow after any uninfected person who makes their presence known. They are slow (base speed is 4 and they are unable to run) but the prison deck is only so big. The hunted prisoner must decide to either let the zombies infect him or lose them in a chase. The hunted must complete a skill challenge – set the DC based on the character's level, with 4 successes before 2 failures, using athletics, stealth and perception as primary skills. Failure indicates the character is cornered and must either fight or surrender to the zombies.

The characters need at least 12 hours to make a functional tunnel. Treat the construction as a skill challenge: 10 successes before 5 failures. The primary skills are dungoneering (to know how to make the tunnel), athletics (to actually make the tunnel) and stealth (to keep the tunnel construction secret). At least 5 successes must come from athletics checks and 1 success minimum from dungoneering and stealth. Furthermore, each character who contributes at least one athletics check must make an endurance or lose a healing surge from the work.

Failure indicates that the tunnel is discovered by either the shoggothic garden or the fungal zombies.

The characters must defeat a large group of zombies or convince the shoggothic garden to let them go.

Success means that the tunnel is complete and the group can escape! Of course, they have to deal with the rest of the ship.

### **Convince the shoggothic garden to let the party**

**go:** The final option is to negotiate with the warden to let them go. The garden isn't very loyal to the goblins but it won't betray them without a proper incentive. It primarily wants three things:

**Food:** In the form of living creatures and soil. Living creatures become fungal zombies which become fungal infested corpses, which are consumed by the garden, along with various nutrients provided by the soil. The characters either promise two living creatures for each party member or twice their weight in soil.

**Power:** The garden is interested in expanding its powerbase. It needs more gold in order to recruit various goblins into its service. It wants 1,000 gold per character released.

**Knowledge:** The garden is curious about what the engineers and shamans are planning. If the characters can either lure an engineer or shaman into the prison deck, kidnap one and bring it to the garden or steal some documents from them.

Each task is a separate adventure in of itself. In order to ensure compliance, the shoggothic garden infects each adventurer with the fungal zombie spores and promises to cure them if they complete their side of the bargain.

**Getting through the ship:** Getting out of the prison deck is only part of the problem. The characters will have to sneak through the ship, make allies out of some goblins or fight their way through. Every exit out of the prison deck leads to the crew deck. From there, the characters can go up to the top deck, go below to the orlop deck or go to the skeletal dragon rigging to get out of the ship. Let the characters which path they should take to get out of the hulk.

Whatever path they do take present appropriate challenges along the way. The hulk is a vast and

chaotic place so they can meet virtually any kind of monster, hazard, trap or puzzle imaginable.

A note on rescuing prisoners from the outside: A rescue party will have a different adventure obviously. However, many of the elements work the same work way. The guards at the gate must be bypassed. Trickery works better than brute force. If the characters kill the guards at the gate, a new group will be waiting for them by the time they find their rescue target and return. The zombies are numerous and an encounter with them is inevitable. Finally, get out is just as much of a hurdle.

## Destroying The Hulk

In order to sink the hulk, characters must destroy the magical sigils holding it together. There are four sigils in all: one in the orlop deck, the prison deck, the crew deck and the shamanic engineering deck. If even one sigil is allowed to survive, then the hull will hold together. However, for each sigil that is destroyed, the hulk becomes increasingly unstable and dangerous to everyone dwelling in it.

With one sigil destroyed, the hulk is a little more unstable than normal. Bulkheads and floors collapse more frequently and the hulk trembles in a strong wind.

Two sigils destroyed: The docks break away, as the hulk is too shaky to keep them tied on long enough. The skeletal rigging partially falls apart. The kobolds either flee or cling to the remains for dear life.

Three sigils destroyed: the orlop deck is flooded, totally gone. The skeletal rigging falls into the ocean. Most of the goblins abandon the ship. Only the most desperate remain along with the shamans and engineers.



*Pontifex, a nice lich whose actions are greatly misunderstood, especially by self-righteous 'heroes' who don't know what they're talking about and if they would just leave well enough alone, everything will work out for the best. Except for those poor unfortunate souls who must be sacrificed for the greater good. That can't be helped. But, really you can trust Pontifex.*

*Seriously.*



## The Albino Gribpli

Dark cousins to the gribpli, these degenerate creatures worship a dark nameless entity - perhaps an ancient god whose name was forgotten by civilized man or a demon lord so corrupting that even to name it is to grant it power. The albino gribpli have wormed their way ever closer to the surface and are now ready to strike. While their ultimate plans are unknown, they have sent many scouts and agents into the surface world to learn of it and to establish footholds. These agents are sly creatures, adept at blades, subterfuge but most importantly they are masters of hypnotism. A single scout can hypnotize dozens or even hundreds of weak-willed creatures and organize them into a secretive cult that obeys only the albino's commands. With these lackeys, the albino can subvert the local powers

that be and prepare the way for the rest of his kin to invade. That's what's happening onboard the goblin hulk. In the bottom deck of the hulk, a lone albino gribpli has started a small cult among the goblins. He wants to take over the hulk and has found the goblins to be the perfect minions. They are ruthless, easy to hypnotize and totally expendable. No one misses a goblin if breaks the hypnosis or has outlived its usefulness. Despite these advantages, the albino's cult is still small and vulnerable if it is detected by the goblin shamans or chieftains of the upper decks. If a group of adventurers enters the bottom deck, the albino will try to either kill or hypnotize them as he is afraid that their presence will draw the attention of the goblin leadership and thus reveal his cult. He strikes from the shadows when the adventurers least expect it.



**Albino Gripli****Level 6 Solo Controller****Medium natural humanoid (aquatic)****EXP 1,250**

Initiative: +7 Senses: +8 Darkvision

HP: 228; Bloodied: 114

AC: 22 Fortitude: 17 Reflex: 21 Will: 20

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6 swim 6

Action Points 2

⊕ Bite (standard; at will)

+13 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

↘ Dagger (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon

Range 5/10; +10 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.

↶ Spray of Blades (standard; recharge ☹️) ♦ Weapon

Close Blast 3; +11 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4

↘ Hypnotic Glare (Minor 1/round; at-will)

Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; Target is dazed (save ends). Second Failed Save: Target is dominated (save ends).

↶ All Hail the Dark Entity! (Standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ♦ Psychic

Close Burst 5; Each creature in burst; 1d8+4 psychic damage and an additional 2d8 damage if the creature is dazed, and the creature may make a saving throw with a +2 power bonus.

↶ His Master's Voice (Free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Psychic

The Albino Gripli's All Hail the Dark Entity recharges, and the Albino Gripli uses it immediately.

Powerful Leaping (Move; at-will)

The albino gripli jumps up to its full move speed either horizontally or vertically, but not both in the same jump. It ignores difficult terrain while jumping. If it jumps horizontally, the height of the jump is equal to one quarter of the horizontal distance it travels. It is still subject to opportunity attacks from enemies when moving with this ability.

Unnatural Reflexes

The Albino Gripli does not roll initiative. It has two turns per round, on initiative counts 25 and 15.

Alignment Chaotic Evil

Languages Common, Elven, Deep Speech

Skills Athletics +14, Endurance +7, Stealth +12

Str: 10 (+1) Dex: 19 (+7) Wis: 10 (+3)

**Tactics**

The Albino Gripli starts battle by targeting a character with its hypnotic glare and moving into range while attacking with its dagger throwing. Then once it has dazed at least one character, it will use All Hail the Dark Entity. It uses its powerful leaping to remain mobile and to keep itself from being flanked or boxed in.





## Goblin Puppeteer

a goblin slaver that specializes in dominating larger creatures to be used in battle. Many years ago, a clever goblin jumped on the back of an ogre while it was eating some of the goblin's kinsmen. The goblin whispered into the ogre's ears that he was the ogre's conscience and it was wrong to eat goblins. Only the humans, elves and other enemies of goblinkind

were worthy of being eaten. This goblin was the first puppeteer. Since then, goblins have learned how to make even the strongest willed slave into a hapless mind controlled slave through a combination of brainwashing, Pavlovian conditioning and sheer goblin nastiness. Many goblin puppeteers direct their mind-controlled slaves in battle, even riding them when necessary.

## Level 6 Controller

small natural humanoid

Senses: Perception +8 low-light vision

Initiative: +6 Exp: 250

HP: 75; Bloodied: 37

AC: 20 Fortitude: 19 Reflex: 18 Will: 18

Str: 19 (+7) Dex: 16 (+6) Wis: 16 (+6)

Con: 19 (+7) Int: 16 (+6) Cha: 16 (+6)

**Whip** – Basic Melee attack – Weapon – Standard – At Will

+11 vs AC

1d6+4 damage

**Get ‘em!** Standard – At Will

Ranged 5 The goblin puppeteer gives an allied creature with the living marionette template an additional basic melee attack with a +2 bonus to hit and damage.

**You ain’t hurt!** Standard – Encounter

Ranged 5: The goblin puppeteer allows an allied creature with the living marionette template to spend a healing surge.

**Stomp ‘em!** Standard – Recharge 6

Ranged 5: The goblin puppeteer gives an allied creature with the living marionette template an additional basic melee attack with a +3 bonus to hit and damage against all enemies within 2 squares of the allied creature.

**Back off!** Standard – Recharge 4, 5, 6

Close Burst 2: The goblin puppeteer pushes all enemies 3 squares.

**Hey Idiot! Look at me!** Minor – at will

Range 10: The goblin puppeteer distracts one target enemy, giving them a -2 penalty to their next attack roll.

**Monster-Rider:** The goblin puppeteer can occupy an allied creature’s space. If the ally has the living marionette template, the puppeteer can redirect all melee attacks targeting it to the living marionette instead. Furthermore, the puppeteer is always considered to have cover from ranged attacks while he occupies the same space as an allied creature with the living marionette template.

## Tactics

The puppeteer supports allied living marionettes with its abilities, preferring to attack strikers and leaders first but it will use Back off! to get defenders away from it.



## Goblin Artillerist

Goblin engineers with a preference for heavy hitting weapons. The artillerists envy creatures like dragons that are born with incredible destructive powers like their famous breath weapons.

This envy translated into research aimed at making the most powerful handheld weapons possible. Many of them have even learned how to make primitive firearms. Each artillerist prides himself on his skill

and thus they relish any chance to 'fieldtest' their latest experiments. They are found in any goblin society advanced enough to support alchemy.

On the goblin hulk, most engineers are artillerists at heart and it is thought that the hulk was only built so it could be used as a firing platform for a massive cannon - the likes of which could slay the mightiest dragon with a single shot. Of course, no one knows if this cannon is actually being built or simply another rumor.

## Level 12 Artillery

small natural humanoid

Senses: +15 Perception low-light vision

Initiative: +10 Exp: 700

HP: 100; Bloodied: 50

AC: 24 Fortitude: 25 Reflex: 26 Will: 24

Str: 22 (+12) Dex: 19 (+10) Wis: 19 (+10)

Con: 22 (+12) Int: 22 (+12) Cha: 19 (+10)t

**Brace of Pistols** – Standard – At Will – Ranged 10 +19 vs. AC – 3d6+5 damage.

**Pistol Whip** – Standard – At Will – Basic +19 vs. AC 2d6+3 damage.

**Alchemist Fire-thrower** – Standard – Recharge 6 Close Blast 5: +17 vs Reflex – 4d10+5 fire damage plus ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Goblin Artillery Field Test** – Standard – Recharge 4, 5, 6

A unique creation of an individual artillerist, this is the first (and possibly last) field test of a new weapon. As a result, it is impossible to predict what shape or form it will take exactly. The attack roll always has a +16 attack bonus. The artillerist can roll the weapon effects before moving so he can position himself correctly. If he cannot get within range with his move, the field test is wasted.

Roll 1d4 for each category.

Damage

1: 3d8+5

2: 4d8+5

3: 4d10+5

4: 6d10 plus 1d10+5 to the artillerist

Range

1: Melee!

2: Close Burst 1d10 squares

3: Close Blast 1d6 squares

4: Ranged 1d20 squares

Attack Type

1: AC

2: Fort

3: Reflex

4: Will

Secondary Effects:

1: Ongoing Damage 1d20 – save ends

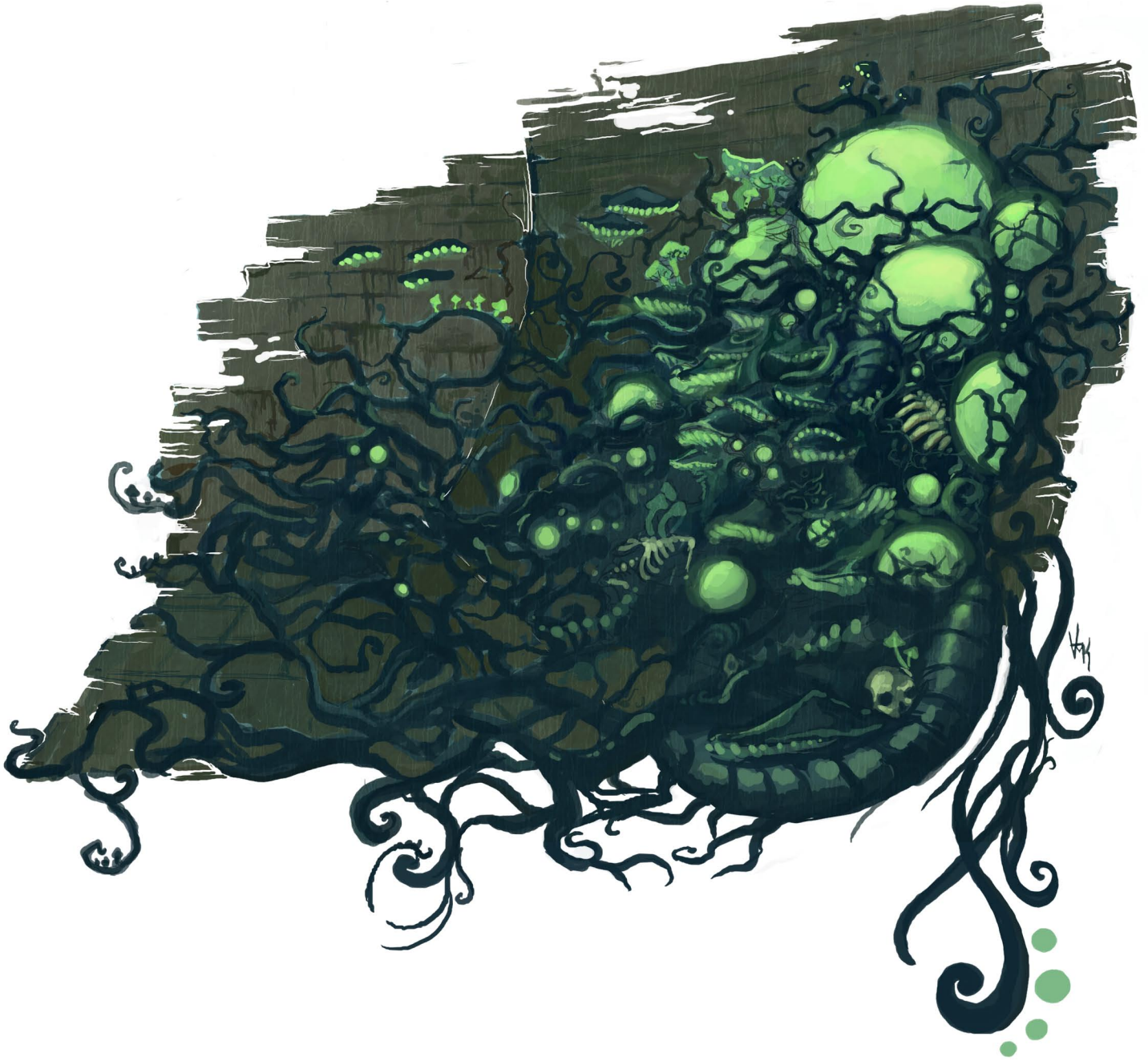
2: Target is dazed – save ends

3: Target is stunned until the end of the artillerist's next turn.

4: Target slides 1d10 squares in a random direction.

**Oops!** If the artillerist rolls a natural 1 when using the goblin artillery field test, resolve the attack against himself.

**Eureka!** If the artillerist rolls a natural 20 for ANY roll, the goblin artillery field test is recharged.



## Shoggothic Garden

A sapient fungal entity of enormous size and power. Exceedingly rare, only a handful exists in the world at any given time. No one knows their origins, although many suspect that they are created as a result of magical experimentation or as a byproduct of toxic waste produced from alchemist labs. The one in the hulk was probably an experiment, perhaps in growing vast quantities of food quickly, but regardless it now controls the prison deck.

It is a truly selfish creature, caring only about

prolonging its own existence and increasing its power, at any cost.

Aside from its brute power, the garden is also able to mentally control other fungus. It can even control living creatures infected with its spores. Of course, the spores greatly damage the creature, thus transforming it into a living zombie of sorts. The infection can be cured either through ritual magic or the shoggothic garden can remove the infection at will.

## Level 12 Solo Lurker

Huge Plant

Initiative: +14 Exp: 3500

HP: 630; Bloodied: 315

AC: 28 Fortitude: 27 Reflex: 24 Will: 26

Action points: 2

Str: 22 (+12) Dex: 19 (+10) Wis: 19 (+10)

Con: 22 (+12) Int: 19 (+10) Cha: 19 (+10)

**Tentacle** – Standard – At will - Basic

Melee 3 +17 vs. AC 2d6+5 damage

**Spore Cloud** – Minor – At Will

Close Blast 3 +15 vs. Fort 3d8+5 damage

Secondary effects: The character is exposed to the fungal zombie spores.

**Enwrapping Tendrils** – Minor – At Will

Range 15

+15 vs. Reflex

Target is pulled 3 squares. Secondary effect: Target is immobilized. Save ends.

**Death Spores** – Standard – Encounter

Close Blast 5: +15 vs. Fort 4d10+5 damage.

Secondary effect: target takes 10 ongoing poison damage. Save Ends.

**Dominance of the Garden** – Immediate Reaction

– at will – triggered when a character is exposed to fungal zombie spores.

Effect: Death Spores recharge.

**Tactics:** The Shoggothic Garden seeks to expose all characters with the fungal zombie spore disease and then attempts to kill them, using spore cloud and death spores freely. It uses enwrapping tendrils to lock down defenders and pull ranged characters towards it.

## Fungal Zombie Spores

Level 12 Disease

Endurance Improve DC 26, Maintain DC 23, Worsen DC 22 or less

The target is cured

Initial Effect: The target loses 2 points of Intelligence and Dexterity

Stage 2: The target is dazed.

Final stage: The target gains the fungal zombie template and becomes a NPC under the DM's control or if the Shoggothic Garden is dead, the character dies and becomes a new Shoggothic Garden.





## Junked Man

The junked men were created by the shamans and engineers as servants to keep the hulk running. At first, they resembled standard magical constructs but the engineers soon found out that these servants needed almost as much maintenance as the hulk itself. So they upgraded them to become self-repairing constructs. They soon also gave them the ability to build more of themselves. The

constructs began to use the trash produced by the goblins as fuel and materials for repair and building new constructs. They became known as the junked men. The junked men quickly took over the day-to-day tasks of the hulk, keeping it from sinking into the ocean. No one realizes quite how much power the junked men hold in the ship nor do they know what they are planning amongst themselves...



## Level 6 Skirmisher

medium natural animate (construct)

Sense +6 Perception; Darkvision

Initiative: +8 Exp: 250

HP: 75; Bloodied: 37

AC: 20 Fortitude: 19 Reflex: 18 Will: 18

Str: 19 (+7) Dex: 16 (+6) Wis: 16 (+6)

Con: 19 (+7) Int: 16 (+6) Cha: 16 (+6)

### **Improved Implements of Impalement** –

Standard – at Will – Basic

Melee or Ranged 20 +11 vs AC 1d10+4 damage.

### **Mechanical Mitigation** – Immediate Reaction – At

Will – Trigger – hit by an attack

Effects: The Junked man shifts its parts around instantly, reconfiguring itself to gain resistance 5 of whatever damage type just attacked it.

### **Furnace Smog Cloud**– Minor – At Will

Close Burst 3 +9 vs. Fort

Effect: Target is blinded until the end of the junked man's next turn.

### **Automechanical Adaptation** – Minor – at Will

Ranged 10

The junked man adjusts its weapons to exploit the weaknesses of its prey.

Effect: The target gains vulnerability 5 to all attacks from the Junked Man until the end of the junked man's next turn.

### **Reconstruction** – Standard – Encounter

The Junked Man grabs nearby terrain to rebuild itself, wrecking the terrain around it.

Effect: The junked man spends a healing surge. All terrain in a close burst 1 area become difficult terrain.

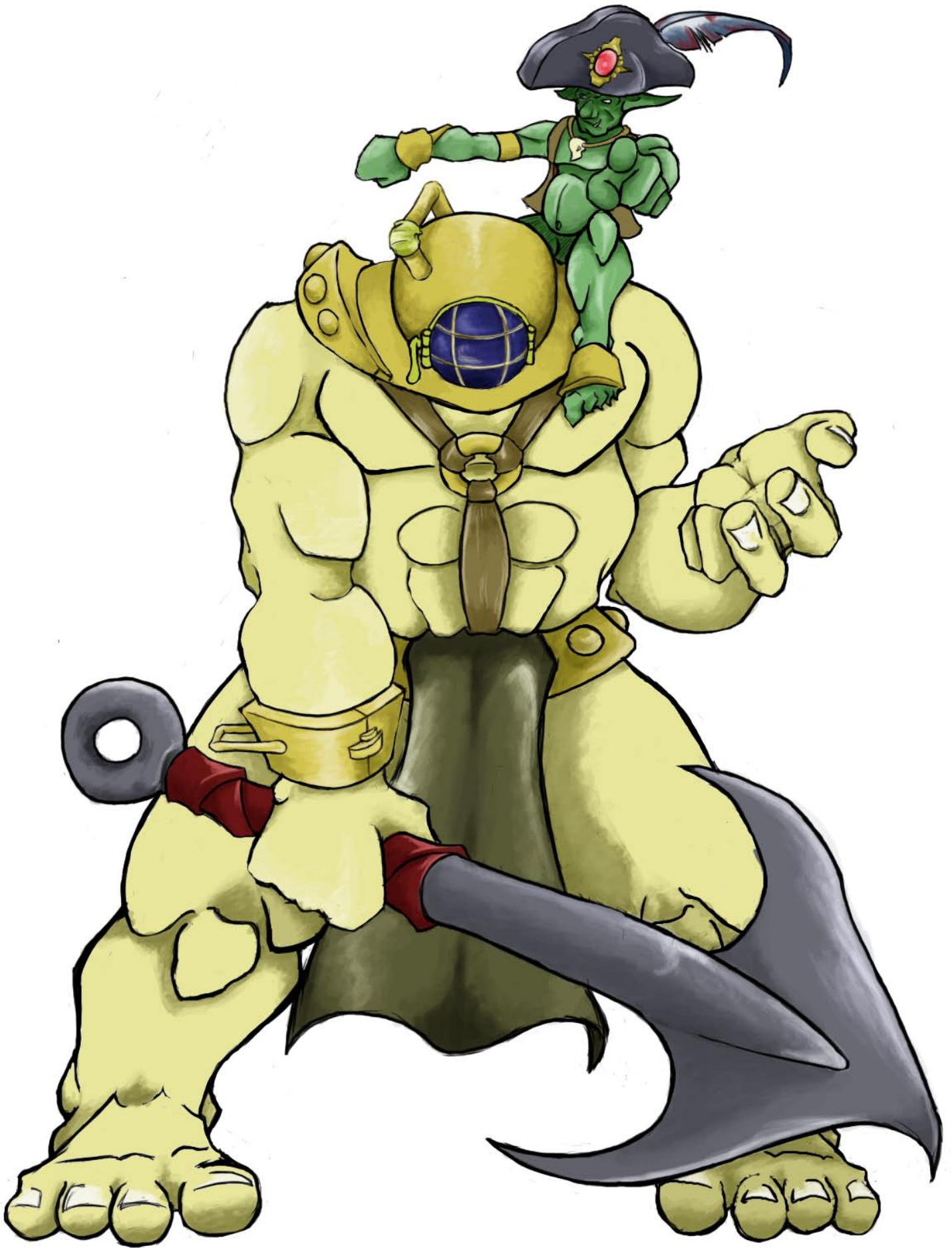
### **Garbage Grenade** – Standard – Recharge 4, 5, 6

Burst 5 within 10

+10 vs Reflex

3d8+4 damage

Secondary effect: Target takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls. Save ends.



## Living Marionette

the goblin slavers have made a science out of brainwashing large, strong and dumb humanoids, particularly ogres and over-sized orcs, into fighting in combination with specially trained goblins called puppeteers. Such pitiful creatures are called Living Marionettes and they obey the puppeteer's every command. Should the puppeteer be slain before the enslaved creature, it will break free of its conditioning.

Elite Brute

Humanoid

XP Elite

Defenses +2 AC, +2 Fort

Saving Throws +2

Action Point 1

Hit Points +10 per level + Constitution Score

Powers

**Carry the Master:** If an allied goblin puppeteer occupies the same space as the living marionette, it will move with the marionette, including forced movement.

**The Will of the Master:** Minor - Encounter If an allied goblin puppeteer is in the same square as the marionette, it can reroll a failed savings throw.

**Strength of the Master:** Standard – Encounter

Effect: The Living Marionette can use two melee attack abilities as a single action. These do not need to be basic attacks but they must use a standard action.

**Brutish Retaliation** – Immediate Reaction – Triggered when damaged by melee attack  
Effect: The marionette makes a basic melee attack against the character who damaged it.

**Freedom!** Immediate Reaction – Triggered when last allied goblin puppeteer dies in combat.

Effect: the creature loses the living marionette template, reverting to its basic stats. Its hit points are immediately changed to its standard bloodied value. It becomes neutral to the player characters and will not attack them unless attacked again. How it reacts beyond that is up to the individual creature.



# Fungal infected zombie

A vile spore-infested creature under the control of the Shoggothic Garden. The garden gradually drains the zombies of various nutrients, a process that takes years and results in the zombie's destruction. Until the zombie is drained dry, it mindlessly serves the Garden. A fragment of the Garden's mind is embedded in each zombie, so it can regrow itself from a single zombie if its main body is destroyed. It will take the Garden months to regrow itself, so if it is destroyed in the hulk, the player characters won't have to deal with it for the rest of their adventure on the ship.

Elite Brute

Humanoid

XP Elite

Senses Darkvision

Defenses +2 AC, +2 Fort +2 Will

Saving Throws +2

Action Point 1

Hit Points +10 per level + Constitution Score

Powers

**Fungal Spores** – Immediate Reaction – Triggered when hit with a melee attack

Close Burst 1 – all enemies are exposed to the fungal zombie spore disease.

## **Slave to the Shoggothic Garden**

A fungal zombie is always dominated by the Shoggothic Garden. This effect cannot be stopped unless the Garden is slain.

## **Brute Force**

The fungal zombie gains +3 plus one half the zombie's level to hit and damage with basic melee attacks.

# Artist Bios

## **Josh Hunter**

I currently attend Texas State University - San Marcos for my nearly-finished undergraduate degree. I am double-majoring in Painting and Communication Design.

I primarily focus on illustration in sci-fi and fantasy artwork, though I do have a small number of designs, posters, editorial illustrations and whatnot under my belt as well. I began with oil paints and quickly moved up the art materials historical scale to acrylics and now I'm entranced with digital media, with Corel Painter being my program of choice. I am available for freelance work and my website is located at <http://joshbot.carbonmade.com/>

## **Violet Kirk**

Violet is an illustrator currently living in Sarasota Florida and finishing a degree at Ringling College of Art and Design. She enjoys drawing monsters and creepy things and hopes to become either become a concept artist or do fantasy and scifi illustrations after graduating.

<http://aazureddragon.blogspot.com/>

## **Ean Moody**

Ean Moody is a freelance illustrator in Sarasota, Florida. He graduated from the Ringling College of Art and Design with a BA in Illustration. His illustrative art is mostly for fantasy and science fiction, with a digital, painterly style that involves the use of vivid color and incorporated textures. He is also a GM and game designer, and enjoys running and playing in the "story game" style of tabletop RPG. You can view his professional work at [moodyillustrator.blogspot.com](http://moodyillustrator.blogspot.com) and his sketchblog at <http://artfulshrapnel.blogspot.com>.

## **Kevin Kircus**

Artist website: <http://syresyphirin.deviantart.com/>



## Role Playing Public Radio

[slangdesign.com/rppr](http://slangdesign.com/rppr)

RPPR looks at RPGs with humor and insight. Our mission is to make gaming more fun, whether it's giving advice, interviewing game designers or making you laugh with hilarious comedy sketches.

Hosted by Ross Payton and Tom Church.

## Raillery

[raillery.tv](http://raillery.tv)

Original comedy videos from Ross Payton. Raillery celebrates the weirdness in life with shorts like Oregon Trail 13, Angst & Katanas, Trees are Stupid and X-treme XP. Visit us for your comedy fix.

# The Goblin Hulk

## Nasty Brutish and Short Meet the Goblins!

No one welcomes the goblin horde into their land. No one wants the goblins as guests or friends. No one, not even the other monstrous races, trusts the goblins. They are as the locust, a ravenous swarm consuming or despoiling all within reach. Normally, they are held back by the armies of civilized nations but the New World lacks an organized defense.

The first goblin ship has laid anchor off the shore of the New World, a massive hulk that holds together despite its improbable construction. It is a ramshackle floating fortress with countless goblins nesting within it. Its very presence destabilizes the region and if left unchecked, the goblins could overrun the New World.

**5 New Monsters**

**2 New Templates**

**7 Major Areas**

**1 Goblin horde & a whole lot of trouble!**



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